

ONIONS, COLOURS, LOVE AND DEATH

A SHORT PLAY IN ONE ACT

by

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CAST...

PETAL -	Mid 30's
HUGH -	Late 40's
EDMERALDA -	60's Very Glamorous
BERTIE -	60's Jolly Sort

(A LIVING ROOM. We hear the front-door slam shut. PETAL ENTERS and throws down her brief-case; then takes off her gloves, hat, scarf and winter-coat. She is considerably agitated and flings these items of clothing down, anywhere)

PETAL I'm home. (*Muttering to herself*) Oxford Circus! Hell Hole, Circus!

(HUGH rushes in, wearing an apron and holding a tea-towel. He narrowly avoids tripping over the brief-case)

I've had a totally dreadful day.

(HUGH leads her to an easy-chair)

Another bomb scare at Oxford Circus.

(HUGH moves across the room to pick up her brief-case. As he does so:)

Have you seen my slippers?

HUGH Threw them out. They were quite disgusting. Drinkies? (*As he EXITS*) I've got the Evening Paper if you'd like to see it.

(HUGH goes OFF. PETAL leans back exhausted HUGH returns with a cardboard-box under one arm. He also holds a drinks-tray and has the newspaper between his teeth. He offers the newspaper to PETAL, then puts down the cardboard-box and drinks-tray)

PETAL If I see another piece of paper, I'll scream. My day was truly awful. Sorry, I'm just fed up and browned off.

HUGH Brown! How can *brown* ever be the colour of misery. (*Hands a drink to PETAL*) Now, black... is the beast of misery.

PETAL (*Wearily*) Don't start all that, again.

(HUGH goes around the room picking up her clothes and takes them, OFF. PETAL covers her face with the newspaper. HUGH returns and fetches an upright chair from the other side of the stage and draws it up alongside her)

HUGH (*Peeping*) Darling, your eyes are fantastic when you're upset. Sort of smouldering in maroon.

PETAL Mouldering? Did you say, mouldering?

HUGH Smouldering! And I meant magenta! Your eyes, Mrs Bianchi, are a wonderful, magnifico, *smouldering* magenta.

(PETAL takes the newspaper off her face)

PETAL My eyes are blue, green, grey!

HUGH Are you sure? (*Looks closely*) I spy... I do spy a wee bit of blue...

PETAL (*Interrupting*) It depends whether you start from the inside out or the outside in. What am I saying, justifying my eyes to you! Tell me about your day, Mr Bianchi?

HUGH (*Stands up, dramatically*) Housework is heaven!

PETAL Really?

HUGH It's *so* exciting. I have to make a conscious effort not to dust every day.

PETAL You do?

HUGH Extraordinary satisfying. This morning, I did our bedroom with special attention to the dressing-table.

PETAL Oh...the everyday clutter of everyday...

HUGH Quite.

(HUGH stands behind her)

(Low voice) I haven't done it for a fortnight.

PETAL **(Low voice, back)** Oh... Frustrated, pet?

HUGH I meant, have such a *fundamental* dust. And when I'd finished... I stood back and wallowed. Completely dust free, mirrors; clean table-top, your sewing-box, the two, lilac vases...

PETAL **(Interrupting)** Yes, I get the picture.

HUGH **(Holds his hands together as if in prayer)** Well, it was a sublime moment.

PETAL Personally, I used to find it all profoundly boring. Dull as ditch-water.

HUGH And ditchwater is definitely a muddy grey. **(Pause)** Now, what about a "Speciality of the Maison"? A *Chez Bianchi* special. *Coq au cerises*.

PETAL I'm not sure.

HUGH Not sure, what?

PETAL I'm just not sure!

