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HAPPY DEATHDAY

**Adapted for
the screen and
directed by
Henry Cass
from the play by
PETER HOWARD**

Westminster Productions

HAPPY DEATHDAY

Technicolor®

Josiah Swinyard Cyril Luckham

Dr John Sylvester Harry Baird

Professor Esteban Zoltan Clement McCallin

Jetta Zoltan Yvonne Antrobus

Dr Oliver Tarquin Bryan Coleman

Rebecca Zoltan Harriette Johns

Biggs John Comer

Director of Photography Jo Jago BSC

Associate Producer Clive Freedman

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Sound Mixer Ivan Sharrock

Art Director Millie Burns

First Assistant Director Aivar Kaulins

Camera Operator Kelvin Pike

Assistant Sound Operator Richard Laughton

Assistant Editor John Ralph

Continuity Suzanne Haig

Stills Photography Julian Nieman

Adapted for the screen and directed by **Henry Cass**

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Produced for Westminster Productions by **Louis Fleming and Donald Loughman**

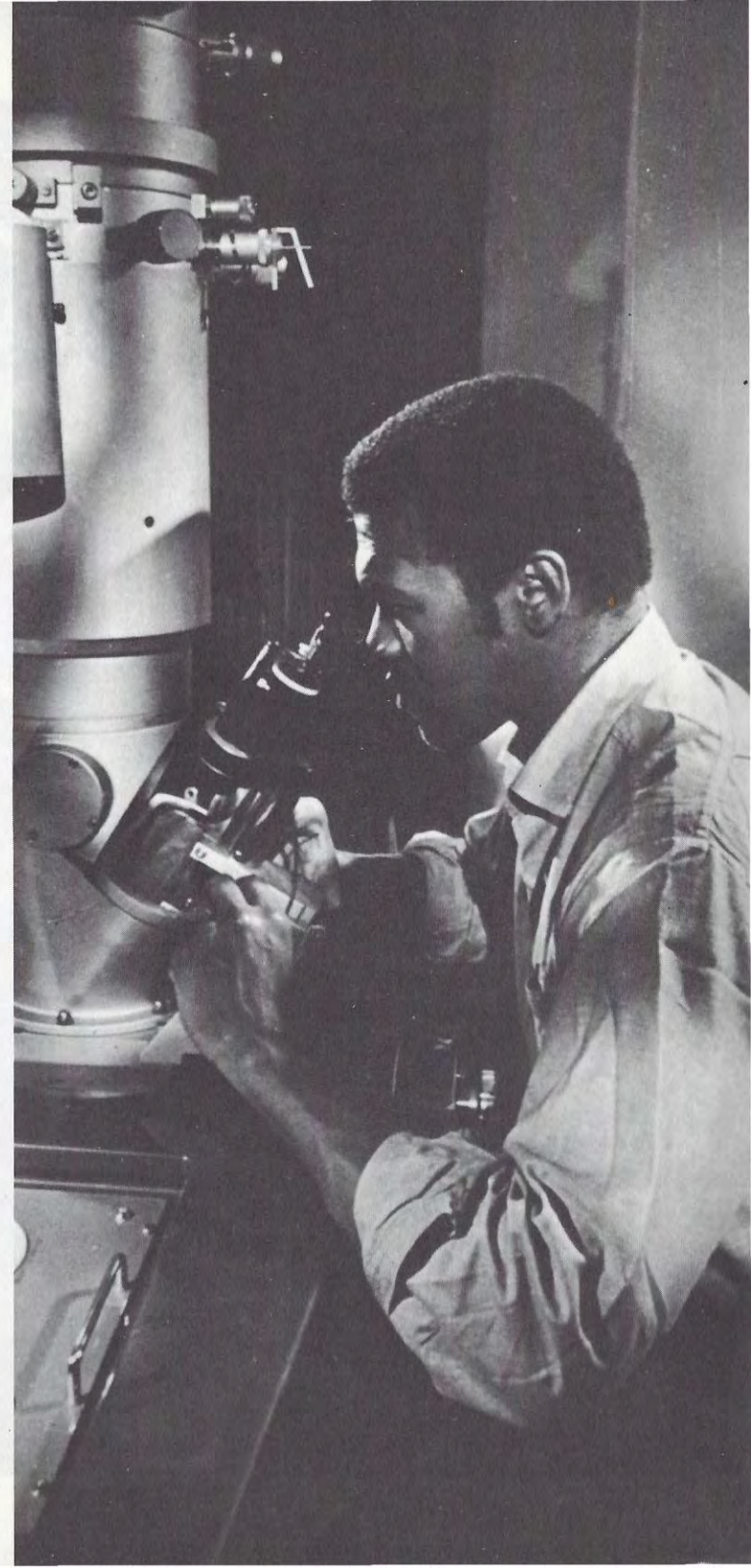
Music composed and directed by **Brian Easdale**

Filmed at **Aston Bury, Stevenage, England**

Enquiries concerning the television rights, distribution and rental of the film should be addressed to

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INTRODUCTION

“Happy Deathday” is the play Peter Howard was writing at the time of his death in 1965. It was completed by his daughter Anne Wolrige Gordon, and subsequently ran for 112 performances at the Westminster Theatre, London, in 1967.

Happy Deathday is about a family, but in that context it deals with some of the most explosive issues of our day—the rifts between generations, between races and between differing philosophies of life, faith versus atheism. It is also a comment on the power of science to transform the world we live in and yet its limitations in the realm of human values. In *The Guardian* of 20 February 1968, in an article entitled “Bomb from the Biologists”, Anthony Tucker, after referring to the atomic bomb writes: “There is another ‘bomb’ already on the horizon, and its consequences could be of unprecedented importance because they are biological.” He goes on to describe the concept of genetic manipulation, which also comes into the dialogue of *Happy Deathday*, and concludes: “Will we, in the future, hold the individuality of human beings as something curiously sacred? And, if we do not, would such a trend spell out one of the worst social and moral catastrophes that could befall humanity?”

Peter Howard dramatizes this dilemma. The scientist is on the verge of a breakthrough which will mean prolonged life for many, but he fails to understand his own daughter who finds life no longer worth living. The grandfather professes a faith but finds himself unable to communicate it to either of them.

Today the generations are divided. Youth everywhere questions the values of our modern society. At Berkeley and the Sorbonne, in London, Prague and Tokyo, students erupt into protest. The student newspaper of the London School of Economics, *Beaver*, reflecting the views of many students who saw the play during its

London run wrote: “If you wonder how the human animal is going to survive the final third of the twentieth century, go to *Happy Deathday*—the play tackles the question head-on—(it) is moving, humorous, thought-provoking and, at times, profoundly disturbing.”

It was for these reasons that a number of doctors, scientists and technologists decided that *Happy Deathday* should be filmed. A fund-raising committee was formed to raise the £45,000 needed in June 1967, as the play ended its London run. The money has been contributed and raised by hundreds of people in 22 countries. The film was made on location in the autumn of 1968.



“Happy Birthday, Grandpa”



Facing page top, left to right

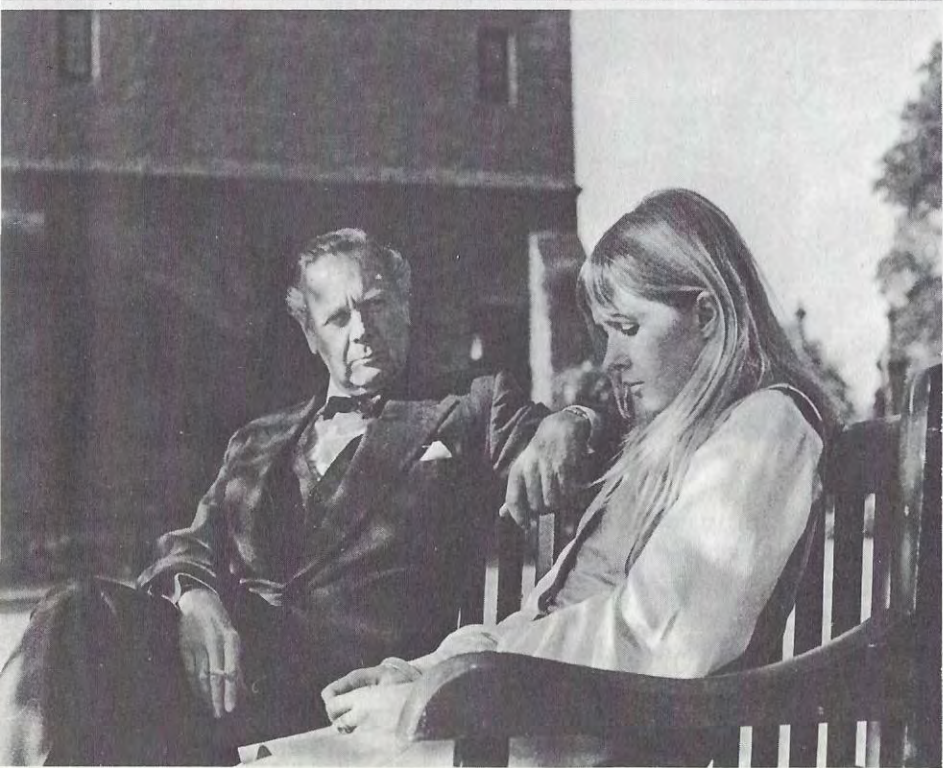
**“You can’t live in a world of
dreams all your life, Jetta”**

**“You did that well,
cunning little bitch”**

Bottom, left to right

“You must tell your parents”

**“No, no, Josh,
you must not give up now”**





Cyril Luckham is perhaps best known for his portrayal of Cranmer in the film *A Man For All Seasons* and his major rôle of Sir Lawrence Mont in the BBC TV epic serial *The Forsyte Saga*.

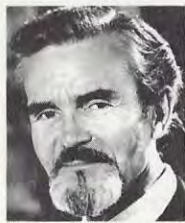
On stage Cyril Luckham has played leading parts both with the Old Vic

Company and the Royal Shakespeare Company, with which he spent nearly three years. In the West End of London he played in *The Family Reunion* with Paul Scofield, in *Photo Finish* with Peter Ustinov, and in a highly successful revival of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*. Films in which Cyril Luckham has appeared include *Billy Budd*, *The Pumpkin Eaters* and *The Naked Runner*. On television he has starred in plays and drama series.



Harry Baird came to the filming of *Happy Deathday* straight from work in Italy and Ireland on the Paramount film *The Italian Job*, in which he features with Michael Caine and Noël Coward. He played a feature rôle in *Castle Keep*, starring Burt Lancaster, which took him to the USA and Yugoslavia. He had a co-starring rôle in the 20th Century-Fox short film *The Touchables* and starred in the French film *La Permission*.

He has been five times to East Africa and has made two *Tarzan* films for TV. Harry Baird was born in Guyana but has lived most of his life in England.



Clement McCallin has a wide range of acting experience. In pre-war days he appeared in Sir John Gielgud's production of *Richard of Bordeaux* and did seasons at the Old Vic (under Henry Cass's direction) and at Stratford-upon-Avon, where he played a memorable *Henry V*—a rôle he repeated on television after the war. He spent nine years in Australia, appearing with the Australia Elizabethan Trust and opposite Googie Withers in *Winter Journey* and *The Constant Wife*.

His recent West End credits include *Number 10*, the lead in *Bishop's Move*, the Rat King in *Give a Dog a Bone*, and the creation of the rôle of Esteban Zoltan in *Happy Deathday* on stage.



Yvonne Antrobus has her first screen rôle in *Happy Deathday*.

After leaving RADA this rising young actress first of all understudied and eventually took over the part of Susan in *Two Stars For Comfort* with Trevor Howard at the Garrick Theatre. Since then she has played leading rôles in *The Erpingham Camp* by Joe Orton and *The Houses By The Green* at the Royal Court Theatre.

Yvonne Antrobus has starred in several important television plays and has played feature rôles in many series, having appeared in more than forty TV shows.



Bryan Coleman, who created the rôle of Dr Oliver Tarquin on stage, has appeared in many films as well as in scores of television series and serials. His film credits include *Reach For The Sky*, *Loser Takes All*, *Blood Of The Vampire*, *Crooks Anonymous* and *The Longest Day*.

His stage career began before the war with Sir John Gielgud's London productions of *Richard of Bordeaux* and *Hamlet*. After distinguished war service he returned to the theatre in *Private Lives* by Noël Coward. Recent West End rôles include Thomas Fielding in *Bishop's Move* and Lord Swill in five seasons of *Give A Dog A Bone*, a part he also played in the film version.



Harriette Johns made her West End debut in *Madame Louise* at the Garrick Theatre.

She was then signed up for films by Alexander Korda. Her first rôle was Lady Basildon in *An Ideal Husband*.

She played a leading rôle in the first Arthur Miller play to be presented in London—*All My Sons*. She appeared in the stage and screen versions of *Edward My Son* and *Meet Mr Callaghan*.

On television Harriette Johns played Lady Blakeney in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and she compèred and wrote her own series—*Beauty Box*—besides appearing in numerous plays and series.

Her other films include *Two Headed Spy*, *A Night To Remember* and *The Yellow Teddy Bears*.



John Comer's film career began when in 1959 he and his brother won the £6,000 British Talent Contest. Among the judges were the Boulting Brothers who immediately signed John up for six films. They include *I'm Alright*, *Jack*, *Heavens Above*, *Rotten To The Core*, *In*

The Family Way—in which he co-starred with John and Hayley Mills and Hywel Bennet—and, most recently—*Twisted Nerve*.



PETER HOWARD

“Howard and Brecht are the two writers who will be remembered when many of today’s dramatists are dead and gone. I had great expectations of Howard’s last play. *Happy Deathday* has far exceeded them.”

This was the judgement of Gabriel Marcel, the French critic, playwright and philosopher.

“Howard’s dramatic works,” he added, “were for him often the most effective means of reaching and renewing the inner life of the individual. In this respect his work can be compared with that of Brecht. Both men are out to create a new type of man—the one from the standpoint of Marxist reality, the other from the imperative of the Christian conscience.”

Howard himself confirmed that he was a committed dramatist. “Do not believe those who say the theatre is no place for a man with a message,” he wrote in his Preface to *Mr Brown Comes Down The Hill*. “A man who writes as if life had no meaning is the man with a strong message. My plays are propaganda plays. I write them to give people a purpose. The purpose is clear, the aim is simple. It is to encourage men to accept the growth in character that is essential if civilization is to

survive. It is to help all who want peace in the world to be ready to pay the price of peace in their own personalities. It is to end the censorship of virtue which creates vicious society. It is to enlist everybody everywhere in a revolution to remake the world.”

His plays are staged in many languages all over the world, and attract the most varied of audiences. When *Through the Garden Wall*—a story of two families, representing the Communist and non-Communist worlds, living either side of a wall which only existed in their prejudices—was shown in Italy, it was noticeable that the Communist press was as enthusiastic as its Catholic counterpart. *L’Unita*, the Communist daily, wrote: “Peter Howard is up to his neck in the reality of our time and committed in an intense battle to bring about an easing of international tension. At first, in Rome, the audience was composed of the usual habitués of the theatre, but gradually more and more workers appeared in the theatre. So for the first time in Italy the company decided to give special attention to the workers. Everywhere the workers responded. A popular play and a popular success.”

“He has shown us how a real theatre of the people can be created,” wrote Egon Karter, the distinguished Director of the Komödie Theatre, Basel. “He has left behind the psychological drama of Ibsen and Sartre and has made the stage a platform not for a discussion of self-realization, but to hold up a mirror in front of man so that he sees himself clearly. It is a shock therapy for the human heart.”

Howard wrote fourteen plays and musicals, six of which have now been filmed and are showing all over the world. He began his writing career as a political columnist and leader writer on the Express Newspapers. In 1940 he was joint author of *Guilty Men*, the best-selling indictment of the men of Munich and, in the following year, after the dramatic change in his life, he wrote *Innocent Men*, the first of a series of books about Moral Re-Armament which sold more than four million copies all over the world. In the year before his death he published *Beaverbrook, a study of Max the unknown*, a biography of Lord Beaverbrook.

THE FILM SCRIPT

The house of Josiah (Josh) Swinyard. He lies in bed. Beside him is a table with a Bible. A clock and bottles of pills stand on a chest of drawers.

SWINYARD I'm an old man, a very old man. I lie here so you do not know whether I dream or wake—and at times I hardly know myself. The hours go crawling with slow, night feet. Heavy feet, with their claws of memory. Hopes, fears, hurts, disappointments, loves that staled to hate. Till the pain and mumbles of memory drug me to drowsiness and I sleep and snore a little and dream once more of pain. Sometimes I wish those heavy feet would hurry, race, gallop to journey's end where pain marches me into—what? Long sleep and everlasting darkness? Who can be sure of an end—or a beginning? Dreams may go on beyond this journey—and pain too. None can tell for sure. Sometimes I wish those feet would slow and stop, to give me time, a year or two perhaps, to bear the known rather than to face the unknown. For a moment I forget the years, as some lust or struggle, hating or kissing dull with time is scratched alive by memory. Like an old tree that mistakes the bite of winter frost at the root for the spur of sap in the spring branches. Then I feel I could rise and strive and run, and snatch one last prize from life. Then I know I'm dreaming. Where's that fool with my tea? *(He sits up in bed)* He's coming. I must be reading my Bible. I can't see without my spectacles. *(He looks for his spectacles under the pillows)* I can never find them. He knows I can't read without my spectacles. But it's good for him to find me with my Bible. He thinks I know it by heart, and indeed I do.

“Our transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them.”

(Biggs enters the bedroom with a tray of early morning tea)

“He said unto me, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness’. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

BIGGS Your spectacles, Mr Swinyard.

SWINYARD Thank you, Biggs. I was looking everywhere for them. Where were they?

BIGGS Under the pillow. As usual.

SWINYARD Well I looked. They weren't there.

BIGGS Well, whoever moved them must have put them back again. They were there just now. Sir, it's just on the half-hour and it is a lovely morning.

SWINYARD Nonsense. I heard the rain on the roof most of the night. Why do you say it is lovely?

BIGGS It's always a lovely day for you, sir. The doctor says we must keep you cheerful. Nothing gloomy. Tea, sir. And morning pill, sir.

SWINYARD Only one, mind. Doctor says they're dangerous.

BIGGS It says, “One at morning, one at night. It is dangerous to exceed the stated dose”. You can rely on me only to give what I am told to give.

Josh Swinyard's dining-room. Biggs is serving him his breakfast.

BIGGS And happy birthday, sir.

SWINYARD Heavens, my birthday. I had forgotten all about it.

BIGGS I didn't.

SWINYARD Well, when you reach my age, birthdays are best forgotten. You start thinking of death.

BIGGS Now you mustn't talk like that, sir. The doctor will blame me if you are in that sort of mood. He does not like any talk of death. Perhaps he is a superstitious gentleman.

SWINYARD Well, I'm not superstitious.

BIGGS Nor am I. Not a bit. But I was brought up in a village and my mother taught me to take precautions.

SWINYARD Precautions?

BIGGS Well, it is like this, sir. If I walk under a ladder, I always keep my fingers crossed until I see a dog. It doesn't do me or the dog any harm—it might do us some good, and if I spill any salt, I always throw some over my left shoulder. It's good for the salt merchants anyway. And then, there was last night.

SWINYARD What happened last night?

BIGGS I saw an old owl go floating across the moon before the rain came. So I put my pillow at the foot of the bed and slept the wrong way round in it.

SWINYARD Whatever for, Biggs?

BIGGS A ring around the moon—and rain
With owls a-flying
Means crops to grow, but brings the bane
Of someone dying.

Mother said if you slept with your head at the foot of the bed on nights like that, it was safer. It's a lot of nonsense. But I sleep better for the doing of it.

SWINYARD Haven't you got a present for me, Biggs?

BIGGS Not my place to give one, sir. I leave that to the family. They'll all be here in the next half-hour with the presents.

SWINYARD All hoping I'll leave them something when I go.

BIGGS You said it, Mr Swinyard. You shouldn't have said it. But you did.

SWINYARD Don't you hope I will leave you something, Biggs?

BIGGS Oh, I know you haven't, sir. I was witness to your will, and I know enough to know that if I witness a will, there's nothing in it for me. Besides, I wouldn't like anyone to think I had helped you on your way, sir, after you were gone, if you see what I mean. People always say nasty things if people like me are left money.

SWINYARD Don't you mind talking to me about my dying?

BIGGS Why ever should I, sir? It's a natural thing to us all, isn't it? It's like football pools and racing. We all do it sometime or another. But there are those that don't much like talking about it. Now you're not like that, sir. You're not afraid of facing the facts of life or death. You're a great Christian gentleman.

SWINYARD What makes you think so, Biggs?

BIGGS You've often told me so, Mr Swinyard.

A car approaches up the drive of the house. Dr Tarquin gets out and walks to the front door. It is opened by Biggs.

BIGGS Good morning, sir.

TARQUIN Good morning, Biggs. How's our patient this morning?

BIGGS Cheerful but apprehensive if I may say so, sir.

(He takes the doctor to the sitting-room where Swinyard is waiting)

BIGGS The doctor, sir.

TARQUIN Good morning, Josh. And how are you feeling this morning?

SWINYARD I don't know. Nobody's told me yet.

TARQUIN Very well, we'll soon see. *(The doctor feels Josh's pulse)*

SWINYARD Well?

TARQUIN Oh, very well indeed. Yes, steady as a clock, strong as a hammer this morning.

SWINYARD I don't pay you to tell me lies.

TARQUIN Nor do I tell them, Josh.

SWINYARD Then tell me the truth now. You know my heart flutters like a bird with a broken wing. I can feel it even as you hold that artery of mine in your fingers.

TARQUIN For a man of your age, it is a good pulse.

SWINYARD Forget that. Just tell me how long I have to live. You took photographs. You made tests. Two days ago you left me shaking like a twig yourself, looking worse than I've looked in years, and saying you had to get a specialist's report on my condition. What's the verdict?

TARQUIN Look, Josh. It's always hard to know how much to tell a patient. Some of them can't bear the truth. They die happy if you keep telling them they'll live for ever. Others try to force the truth out of you—then curse you and change their doctor when you give it them. It is even harder when the patient's an old friend, as you are, Josh.

SWINYARD I will shake it out of you, Oliver. *(He tries to stand)* Tell me at once.

TARQUIN Keep still, man. You mustn't do this sort of thing.

SWINYARD Tell me.

TARQUIN It's bad, Josh.

SWINYARD How bad?

TARQUIN There's always hope on these occasions. And even specialists aren't infallible.

SWINYARD How bad?

TARQUIN They give you three months at the most.

SWINYARD And the least?

TARQUIN Any moment.

SWINYARD And the least is more likely?

TARQUIN The truth is it's a miracle you are still alive. You should have died years ago. The specialist looked at the X-rays and the analysis of the tests and said to me, "Hurry back, doctor. Or you'll find your man has left you."

SWINYARD So you did—and I haven't?

TARQUIN Exactly. I told the specialist I was thinking of giving you the facts. He advised me not to do it. He said the shock might kill you.

SWINYARD Well, it hasn't. Not yet, anyway. I've something to do before

I go. Time's short. It would be strange if I died on my birthday.

TARQUIN Good heavens, Josh. Is it your birthday? Many happy . . .

SWINYARD Many happy returns of the day was what you meant to wish me, I take it, Oliver. Oh, for heaven's sake, man, sit down. Don't keep jumping up and down like that. You'll give yourself a heart attack and I'll be telephoning that specialist of yours asking him why he didn't do something for you instead of giving me my death sentence. Now, I want you to help me.

TARQUIN Of course, Josh. Anything.

SWINYARD My family will be here soon. They always come on my birthday. What do you think of them?

TARQUIN Think of them? Charming. Delightful people.

SWINYARD You've just told me I may die at any minute. Can't you in these circumstances tell me the truth? What do you think of Zoltan?

TARQUIN Your son-in-law is one of the most brilliant brains alive. He's further ahead of most scientists than a jet plane is of a wheelbarrow. He's exploring worlds whose existence man has never known and perhaps never will know.

SWINYARD But what about this world, Oliver? How does he live on this one? He reserves the right to dwell in his unknown worlds but mocks my belief in a next world. Why he had to hire a coloured man as his assistant God alone knows.

TARQUIN I imagine because he thought Sylvester was the best one for the job.

SWINYARD Come, Oliver, don't talk nonsense. I think my son-in-law only did it to annoy me. You surely don't suggest that we have to go into the jungles and forests of Asia or Africa to find the best scientific brains?

TARQUIN Sylvester is a great scientist in the making. I know enough of what they're doing to know that. I think also your son-in-law wanted to train someone from a country where professional men are still scarce. I can't believe there's anything in that black Bible of yours which tells you that white men are superior to black men.

SWINYARD And nothing which says black men are superior to white. It's something people forget nowadays, God made us different because He wanted us different. If He'd wanted all men the same colour He'd have made us so. What do you think of my daughter?

TARQUIN She's been a good wife to Zoltan, I suppose. It can't be easy to be married to a man like that. She loves him as much as he loves his work. She's shared her husband with that work and the world is the richer for it.

SWINYARD She was brought up with faith. She married a man who argued her out of it. Now she's as hard as nails with everyone, including her father. She's turned against me.

TARQUIN You're unjust.

SWINYARD Today you're going to help me find out. What about my grand-daughter, Jetta? She's the only one I'm sure about.

TARQUIN I'm not sure about her.

SWINYARD You're more old-fashioned than I am. If you allow those pants and that awful music she wobbles and shakes at and her sloppy ways to worry you, you're crazy. It's a sign of the times. Means nothing.

Josh Swinyard is sitting in a wheelchair on the lawn in the garden. Dr Tarquin is with him.

SWINYARD Have you ever wondered how much money I have?

TARQUIN That's not my business.

SWINYARD Have you never wondered if I'll leave you anything when I go?

TARQUIN Certainly I have not. I try hard to keep you alive, and you've paid me well to do it.

SWINYARD So far you've been pretty successful at it. But the job's getting a bit shaky, it seems. Only a few more fees before the final fade-out.

TARQUIN I want no money of yours except what I can honestly earn. When rich patients leave something to poor doctors, people always gossip.

SWINYARD Well, I'll save you any more worry. I don't intend to leave you one shilling—not a picture, not a book, not a suit of clothes, not a memento of any kind. You've looked after me well for twenty years. I'm grateful for it. Now, I'm going to tell you something nobody else knows except my lawyer. I've made a will leaving everything I have to Jetta. Don't say a word of this to anyone. Now, I want you to do me a favour. You go and tell my family the truth about my health. Tell them I'm bound to die soon and may die at any moment. You give it to them straighter than you had the guts to give it to me. Then I'll know by the end of the day about my daughter and my son-in-law—and Jetta.

TARQUIN I don't like this at all.

SWINYARD It's your duty to tell my family the truth.

TARQUIN I know. I was going to tell your daughter anyway.

SWINYARD Well, I've no time to waste. It's absurd, but when you find death staring at you eyeball to eyeball, what happens to your property becomes important. It's the one link left with what lies ahead, the one card in life left for you to play.

TARQUIN I thought you believed in life after death?

SWINYARD I do. With all my heart I do—and with most of my head most of the time. That's why I don't want any of my money to be used

by those who destroy men's faith. That's why I want to be sure. I want to see how they react, how they treat me when they know I'm going.

TARQUIN Right, I'll go and see them.

Dr Tarquin meets Jetta as he walks to the house.

JETTA How's Grandpa?

TARQUIN Not very good. And you're not looking too good yourself. When did you go to bed last night?

JETTA Oh—couple of hours ago.

TARQUIN I'll have a word with your mother.

JETTA Shouldn't bother if I were you.

TARQUIN You need a tonic.

JETTA I'd only put it down the drain.

Jetta runs to her grandfather.

JETTA Happy birthday, Grandpa. I wanted to be the first of the family to see you and give you a present.

SWINYARD Oh, that's sweet of you, Jetta. Can I open it now?

JETTA I hope you will. It's chocolate. I'm hungry. I thought you might share my present with me for breakfast.

SWINYARD Chocolate for breakfast?

JETTA It doesn't feel like breakfast when you haven't been to bed all night. It's just something to eat. Something to chew for comfort's sake. And I know you'll give me some, because you don't like chocolate.

SWINYARD Well, I like it. It's just that I cannot eat it nowadays. But I will today to celebrate my birthday.

JETTA Oh, Grandpa, it's not much of a present, I know. But it's so difficult to know what to give you when I've got so little money and you've got so much of everything.

SWINYARD So much of everything? You have so much more. What wouldn't I give for your youth and your laughter and your beauty.

JETTA Life's awfully unfair, isn't it? When you're young, all you want madly is money to do all the things you'd like to do. And when you're old, you have the money. At least, a lot of old people seem to have it. But then you don't have the strength or even the wish to do anything with it except hoard it. All you seem to do is to spend your life remembering what you think it was like to be young. But old people forget what youth is really like.

SWINYARD And youth can never know what age is like. You'll have money one day, Jetta.

In another part of the garden Becky and Esteban Zoltan are having coffee with Dr Tarquin and Dr Sylvester, Professor Zoltan's coloured assistant.

BECKY I know all about specialist's reports and medical uncertainties. But can't you tell me in clear terms how long my father is likely to live?

TARQUIN Becky, I am not God.

ZOLTAN You're as good a version of God as any of us are ever likely to see, Oliver.

BECKY Be quiet, Esteban. Well, Oliver?

TARQUIN At most, three months. But he could go at any moment.

SYLVESTER Cases of this type sometimes recover.

TARQUIN Oh, yes. I've seen men who should have died twenty years ago. There they still are, swilling brandy, guzzling rich foods, even producing babies. Then I've seen others who seemed sure to puff on for another thirty years. Suddenly they stop puffing. But the probability is, Becky, that within a few days we shall all be attending your father's funeral.

ZOLTAN No flowers by request. At least, that's my request. I shall miss the old boy, to tell you the truth. His unreasonable dogmas plus his utter disapproval of me as a son-in-law have been my best recreation for years. I love arguing with him. He gets so angry. Tries to look so saintly. Feeds the cruelty in my nature, I suppose. It's like teasing a kitten. Don't want to waste any money on flowers. God, how quickly I could advance, how much more I could do, if only I had the money to do it.

SYLVESTER But surely, Professor, you'll have the money now? Your father-in-law is a very rich man.

ZOLTAN As rich as Solomon. Swinyard's Pink Pills for Piles and Depression, Swinyard's Soap for Skin Cancer, Eczema and Warts, Swinyard's Tonic for Troubled Tubes, Swinyard's Perfumed Powders for Perspiration and Pimples—God knows what the stuff is called. But it's been pouring gold rain into the bucket of Josh Swinyard for fifty years. But he won't leave me a penny.

Jetta wheels Swinyard through the gardens.

JETTA And Father spends every penny he has on research and science and computers and test-tubes and stuff. He's always asking societies and foundations and things for money. He never seems to have enough, poor Father.

SWINYARD Do you feel sorry for your father?

JETTA Sorry for him? He's marvellous. He's got the most amazing brain on earth. He's cleverer than I used to think God was. He's the last person on earth to be sorry for.

SWINYARD I'd feel sorry for any man who thought he was cleverer than God.

The coffee-party is still in progress in the other part of the garden.

SYLVESTER Doesn't he understand what you're trying to do?

BECKY He never has understood Esteban. He's never tried to understand him.

SYLVESTER Surely, your father will leave you his money? You're his only child.

BECKY He'll leave me nothing. He's never forgiven me for marrying Esteban. He'll leave it to some fool charity—or to Jetta. I'm sure of it.

SYLVESTER That's all right. Jetta's a sensible person. Surely she'll let you have what you need.

ZOLTAN Not her. She's got the Swinyard strain right down the middle of her backbone.

Jetta pushes Josh in his chair to the garden swing.

JETTA I love Father. But he's always so busy, he never seems to have much time to talk to me. I know I should love Mother—but I don't. It's like the things you believe in—should but can't.

SWINYARD More likely could but won't.

JETTA Anyway, I love you, Grandpa, that's for sure. You never want anything from me. So many people want things.

SWINYARD I'm satisfied with your love, Jetta.

JETTA Everybody talks about love. Nobody seems to understand it. At least I don't. All the old people talk about it but then they seem to hate you nowadays for being young and wanting to be happy and do all the things you like and not all the things you don't like and they want to make you do.

SWINYARD Nobody hates you for being young, Jetta.

JETTA Mother does. I know she does. And I hate her too. That's the truth if you want to know it.

SWINYARD You shouldn't say things like that, Jetta. You know you don't mean it.

JETTA I do mean it. At least quite often I do. I hate her for not understanding, for always expecting me to understand why she's always right and I'm always wrong. For being old, I guess. Oh, Grandpa, I didn't mean that. You're old and I don't hate you. I love you. It's just that the young and the old seem so far apart nowadays. Was it always like that? What's it feel like to be old?

SWINYARD The tragedy is that much of the time you feel no different at all, Jetta. You only know by the way people look at you and treat you, that you are different. You still feel a surge of longing to grip life by the throat, to shake men to their senses. You long to give advice although you know the young will never take it. It would save so much hurt if they did. Your mind, your will, your heart all leap as they did in all the yesterdays. You feel your brain like a greyhound, your body ready to eat and drink, no matter what the doctor says, yes, and to make love.

JETTA Oh, Grandpa, I wish I'd had you dancing with me last night. Modern men don't seem much like men. They just seem to wiggle and waggle and look bored with women.

SWINYARD Dance? "Then shall the virgins rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together."

JETTA What's that mean? I suppose it comes from that old black book of yours. It's the only place where people talk about virgins nowadays.

SWINYARD Well, it's not something to talk about.

JETTA Grandpa, do you think making love and all that sort of thing matters as much as old people say it does? After all, it doesn't harm anybody.

SWINYARD You're too young to know about these things.

(She sits on the swing and starts to swing backwards and forwards)

JETTA Yes, of course I am. That's why I was asking you.

SWINYARD People do what they call fall in love, and they can't wait for marriage, or perhaps they don't mean to marry anyway, or one of them doesn't. And then one of them wants to break it off. Or they have a child they don't want. And there's a wound that hurts for ever and a scar that marks one or two—or three of them—all life long. Not all the old ways are bad ways, Jetta. They were born out of hundreds of years of experience and there's something of wisdom in them.

JETTA Wisdom is something I don't want. It's so cold and calculating and often it seems cruel to me. I wouldn't mind having a child if it came from somebody I loved. Honestly I wouldn't. Why should I? It would be an adventure. It'd be fun. And think how furious Mother would be. Besides, I'd give any child of mine fun too. I wouldn't bully and bribe and kiss it one minute when the visitors came to the house, and kick it or smack it or shake it as soon as they'd left for not doing credit to me. A child of mine would be wonderful and happy and beautiful—never would there be a child like mine—and my child would never, never, never grow older than two or three, and every time I looked at it,

I'd laugh and cry and think of the man I'd loved even if he'd left me. Oh, Grandpa, I do talk nonsense, don't I? I want to live, live, live. It's like dying at home, half the time. If I had a child, I'd keep it wonderful and happy and glorious for ever.

SWINYARD You'll have children one day, Jetta. I shan't be there to see them.

JETTA I doubt it. And of course you'll be there, Grandpa.

SWINYARD No, I won't be. At least this old body of mine won't be. But I may know what's going on, be watching over you.

JETTA Do you really believe we go somewhere after we die?

SWINYARD I know it.

JETTA How can anybody know?

SWINYARD By faith.

JETTA That's not the same as knowing.

SWINYARD It takes as much faith to disbelieve in God and an after-life as it does to believe in them. Anyone who looks at the mysteries of life, the order of the world, the way humanity has struggled and climbed out of primaeval mud and slime, and is able to ride the stars and plunge beneath the Arctic ice-cap, to talk to his friends, and see them, across the continents and oceans—anyone who studies these things and declares "I believe there is no God", is a man of faith.

JETTA Why do you believe?

SWINYARD Because I know the power that gave me my flesh can rule it; the hand that built me, holds me fast; the God that made me can guide me.

JETTA Aren't you afraid of dying?

SWINYARD I am not afraid.

JETTA You mustn't get excited, Grandpa. I think you need a bit of a rest before the family sees you. *(She wheels Swinyard into his bedroom)*

SWINYARD Do you remember that song you used to sing as a child? Sing it to me now.

JETTA Little Jesus sweetly sleep
Do not stir
We will lend a coat of fur.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you
We will rock you, rock you, rock you

(She leaves the room as Swinyard sleeps)

Outside in the garden the coffee party is still in progress.

BECKY Esteban, you must ask him.

(Jetta comes running up to join them)

JETTA Ask who what?

BECKY Jetta, don't rush about like a child of six in those awful clothes—with chocolate or something all over your face.

JETTA If you treat me like a child of six, I'll go on rushing like a child of six. I'm old enough to wipe my own face, at least to use my own spit.

BECKY And what are you rushing for?

JETTA To tell you Grandpa's expecting you.

BECKY How is he?

JETTA Marvellous. I gave him my birthday present and he gave it me back again and he talked to me for ages—more than for years—and he told me I'm going to be rich, rich, rich one day and made me ever so happy.

BECKY You see?

TARQUIN Do calm down, Jetta. You get far too excited.

JETTA I've got plenty to be excited about. I'm coming to see you, and you'll need a tonic yourself when I'm through. *(To Sylvester)* Hello you. Come and see Grandpa. Come on, all of you.

They rise and follow Jetta into the Swinyard house. Josh is waiting for them in the drawing-room.

BECKY Happy birthday, Father. And very many happy returns of the day. I haven't seen you look so well for years.

SWINYARD Haven't you, Becky? Well, it's amazing how I last, and it's all thanks to Oliver. *(To Tarquin)* Did you do what I asked? Thank you. *(To Biggs)* Well, that will do Biggs. I'll send for you when I want you.

BIGGS Very well, sir. And I do trust that you have a very happy birthday with all your loved ones near.

SYLVESTER Happy birthday, Mr Swinyard.

SWINYARD Thank you, Dr Sylvester. I'm astonished that you remembered it, and came.

ZOLTAN Well, why the astonishment? The bottom has a longer memory than the boot.

SWINYARD Now, what exactly is the meaning of that remark?

ZOLTAN Oh, it's just that you have often been so unpleasant to John that though you may forget many things about him, he never forgets anything about you—and that includes your birthday.

JETTA Don't let Father make you mad.

SWINYARD Well, I've no time to be mad today. I've something extremely important to decide. Jetta made me very happy. She brought me a present.

BECKY Oh, what was it?

JETTA Secret.

SWINYARD Oliver wouldn't approve of it.

BECKY We would all have brought you something, Father, if we'd known what you wanted.

ZOLTAN I've brought you something.

SWINYARD What is it? Can I have it now?

BECKY You never told me you'd brought him anything.

TARQUIN Nothing to eat or drink, I hope?

ZOLTAN No, it's nothing to eat. It's nothing to drink. Nothing I've bought. In fact, you have to pay a price for it, Josh. But it's priceless.

SWINYARD Pay a price? I guessed you'd want money from me.

ZOLTAN You guessed right. Well, isn't it better to give than to receive? Isn't that what your God tells you and what you keep telling me and all of us until we are numbed and drugged and drowsy with your piosity? Well, now's your chance to do some giving.

SWINYARD Be careful, Esteban. You can mock me. You always do. But don't mock your Maker.

ZOLTAN He's not my Maker. He's yours and you made Him. He belongs to you, He never made me. I made myself after the lust of my father sowed the seed. I made myself out of liquids and chemicals and solids that I swallowed and turned into blood, and bone and hair inside me. And one day they'll scatter again in the dust of the earth and the waters of the sea to make other animals like us, wearing shirts and skirts, walking the world for a short season until they dissolve in kindly corruption—unless there's one of your miracles.

SWINYARD And the soul, Esteban, the soul?

ZOLTAN Ah, yes—the soul. You're interested in souls just now, aren't you, Josh? Oliver told me the state of your health. I imagine as a man of faith, you are not afraid.

SWINYARD I am not afraid.

ZOLTAN Good, neither am I. Then we can talk without sentimentality. Fear is unscientific you know. At least you're scientific to that extent. Now you are close to death. It's as normal as sleep and I imagine equally as pleasant—unless, of course, you've got a soul to reckon with. Perhaps you won't mind telling me, Josh, how much your soul—or mine—weighs? I'll believe anything I can see, weigh, touch, measure or deduce by theory, and then prove by experiment.

SWINYARD My soul will be there when I am gone.

ZOLTAN Are you sure of that, Josh? Are you quite sure? Now don't answer in a hurry, because if you are quite sure, you won't be interested in the gift I'm going to offer you.

SWINYARD What is it?

ZOLTAN Something that you've been looking for all your life but never quite believed in. Something that God of yours promises but never will

perform. Something that science can now offer you—in return for your money.

SWINYARD What is it?

ZOLTAN A miracle—you believe in miracles, don't you?

SWINYARD What miracle?

ZOLTAN The gift of eternal life.

SWINYARD Blasphemy!

ZOLTAN Don't be silly. Don't be childish. Be your age. At a time like this I wouldn't offer you what I couldn't perform. I offer you your life for your money. It's a practical, scientific suggestion—provided, of course, you don't expect me to give you a soul as well.

SWINYARD I'll not give you a penny.

ZOLTAN Oh, very well then. Go ahead and die. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul. Oh, not mine of course, I haven't got one.

SWINYARD You're mad. You can't be serious.

ZOLTAN Deadly serious. Scientists always are when they talk about science. You see, we've been experimenting with the human genes. It's possible now, with parents' consent, to decide before a child is born whether it will be male, female, twins, triplets, or quads. It's possible to decide, within reasonable limits, the mental capacity of a child. That is rather important, you know. Not only birth control, but control of the types and species born. In the ages that lie ahead, somebody's got to do the dirty work. Of course, we shall have to kill off the old and the infirm before the planet gets too crowded. Painlessly but ruthlessly. We'll need brain men to run the earth and muscle men to serve them. We've had to think of space travel. Space is opening. Have no doubt about that. It's going to take between twenty and fifty years to reach some planets. You can't put fifty years' food and drink inside a space capsule. Besides, if when they took off they were twenty, well, they'd be seventy by the time they landed. Haldane suggested creating men without legs so that they'd take up less room and eat less food. Well, of course, it's perfectly practicable—but not entirely satisfactory. Then I had the idea of frozen animation.

SWINYARD You're not suggesting you could freeze a living man?

ZOLTAN No, I am not suggesting. We've done it. We've kept a man unconscious, frozen so that his whole life stood still for more than a year, and brought him back to vigorous, active participation in affairs again. He remembered nothing.

SWINYARD It's criminal.

ZOLTAN Well, it's already possible for somebody like yourself to sleep in peace, frozen, for twenty, fifty, a hundred years until medical science can equip you with new health, new life and new knowledge when they awaken you.

SWINYARD You are mad.

ZOLTAN Not at all. We have been experimenting not only how to arrest

but how to turn back the processes of age. We dipped our fingers, black and white, deep into the mysteries of life and death. We found no mystery at all. Just the scientific fact that man who made man can preserve man in youth and health indefinitely. I tell you, Josh, within a few years we will be able to preserve human life, yes, and human youth indefinitely. It'll be a static and permanent population. Almost no births, almost no deaths. No growing old or ill or feeble. Well, that's heaven on earth and Thy Kingdom come, all that stuff for you. I offer you the chance to share it.

SWINYARD Can they do it, Oliver?

TARQUIN They say they can. They believe they can, though men like myself may not believe it. But then of course, they said they could do things which seemed just as impossible twenty-five years ago—and they've done them.

ZOLTAN I offer you your life for your money. I offer to give you the taste of the fruit of the tree that was once in Eden—the tree that God of yours forbade Adam to taste—the tree of life itself.

SWINYARD Don't forget, Esteban, that other tree in Eden.

ZOLTAN What other tree?

SWINYARD The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

JETTA I don't know anything about trees. But do it, Grandpa.

SWINYARD Why?

JETTA Because I love you.

SWINYARD Do you believe this stuff your father's been telling me?

JETTA I don't know what I believe. But he believes it, and he tells the truth when he talks about science. Oh, honestly, Grandpa, give him a chance to try.

SWINYARD I'm not afraid to die.

JETTA Nor am I. Sometimes it's more frightening to live, isn't it? But this is the offer of a great adventure. You must say yes.

SWINYARD Death to me is the greatest adventure of all.

JETTA That's the way to look at it. If you believe in nothing, then death's nothing. What else can it be? And if you believe in God, then death's far more fun than life. But I want you to stay alive, Grandpa.

SWINYARD Thank you, dear Jetta. That's the best birthday gift I have ever had. Most people are glad to say farewell to the old. Especially when they hope to get money from them afterwards. Now, I must answer your father. You are offering me what it is not in your hands to offer.

ZOLTAN It's within touching distance, it's almost within our grasp.

SWINYARD You will never grasp it. Life and death remain in the hands of God and Him alone. I offer my soul to Him. I offer you my prayers and my pity—nothing else.

ZOLTAN I don't want your prayers and pity. Come on, Josh, you can't

throw over an opportunity like this. I offer you your life for your money.

JETTA Oh! Grandpa.

SWINYARD You'd better make friends with your daughter, Esteban. She may still be able to give you more than I can. Oliver, please.

(Dr Tarquin wheels him out of the room)

BECKY *(To Jetta)* You did that well, cunning little bitch.

ZOLTAN Leave her alone, Becky. She did her best for me.

BECKY For herself you mean. You fool. She's putting on an act. She knew quite well Josh would never agree. She twists you all round her little finger.

SYLVESTER That's unfair.

BECKY You keep out of this.

JETTA Don't start bullying him, Mother.

BECKY *(Slaps Jetta hard across the face)* Don't talk to me like that.

SYLVESTER She's not a child.

BECKY She's my child.

ZOLTAN She's mine too.

JETTA Forget that. Otherwise there'll be two of you hitting me.

SYLVESTER No more hitting. If there's any more to be done, I'll do it. I hate wrongs.

BECKY Then hate that child getting the money.

ZOLTAN She's not got it yet.

BECKY But she will. And she won't give you a penny. You fool.

JETTA Why should I?

SYLVESTER Because your father needs it.

BECKY She hates her father.

JETTA I don't. I hate you.

ZOLTAN Don't say it, Jetta. It's ugly. It hurts people.

JETTA Getting slapped in the face hurts. That's ugly too.

BECKY And you'll get slapped again.

(Dr Sylvester steps forward and stops her hitting Jetta)

BECKY Take your black hands off me.

JETTA Keep your white hands off me.

(Biggs comes into the room)

BIGGS Mr Swinyard has asked me to tell you that he's expecting you all to the birthday dinner this evening.

ZOLTAN He's too ill for dinner, Biggs.

BIGGS If you'll pardon me, Mr Zoltan, he's too ill not to have it. He's expecting you all. He's been talking so much about it, and if he thinks

the dinner's off, he'll get very angry indeed. And the doctor says that's bad for him.

TARQUIN Dinner will be fine—if he's still there to eat it.

BIGGS Oh, and black ties please.

(The Zoltans, Dr Sylvester and Jetta leave the house)

SYLVESTER Professor, I would like to show you something over at the lab.

ZOLTAN All right, John, see you there.

(Jetta speaks alone to Dr Sylvester)

JETTA Thank you for what you said to my mother.

SYLVESTER Thank you for what you said to your grandfather. It was worth a lot to hear someone speak like that. Almost makes the bottom forget the boot.

Professor Zoltan's laboratory. He and Dr Sylvester are studying a graph.

ZOLTAN You're right, John. That's it. You know more about this now than I do.

SYLVESTER That's not true.

ZOLTAN Sometimes I think it is. Certainly I'd never be so far ahead without you. You're going to be one of the great ones.

SYLVESTER It all seems so important. Suddenly it means nothing—at times like this morning.

ZOLTAN Oh, don't let rows about money worry you. If you're an experimental scientist you've got to reckon you'll always be opening up territory which will not profit you but make a fortune for those who come after you. There's always a fight for money going on around you. You've got to learn to disregard it, like bagpipes or the weather.

SYLVESTER It's not just the money. It's Mrs Zoltan hitting Jetta. People are only collections of particles—nothing more. You taught me that, and I believe you. I hope you don't think it was wrong of me to stop your wife from hitting her again?

ZOLTAN Not particularly. Not particularly right either. On the whole I think it best to let people fight if they want to fight. Oh, I know, they say they hate it. But men don't go on doing so enthusiastically what they really hate.

SYLVESTER These were women.

ZOLTAN Even more enthusiastic when it comes to a slugging match.

SYLVESTER It's odd.

ZOLTAN What's odd?

SYLVESTER When a black man tries to stop white folk from fighting. It's often been the other way round.

ZOLTAN Why? What's colour got to do with it? That's just an accident of genes and pigmentation. You know, John, if we had time, we could show humanity how to produce black babies from white parents and vice versa. No real problem at all. As a matter of fact, we shall soon have to decide how many of each colour we shall need on earth.

SYLVESTER Why?

ZOLTAN We're heading straight for a stabilization of the population. By the end of this century there'll be no more involuntary deaths—apart from accidents or violence. It's necessary to decide how many black, brown, white and yellow we shall need. Personally, I think it will be best to go for a new colour altogether, a sort of universal buff shade. It'll save an awful lot of trouble.

SYLVESTER I don't really know about that.

ZOLTAN It would end the black man's burden.

SYLVESTER Would it? I'm not so sure that colour is the problem. White people used to think all black men were black devils. Nowadays if a man is black it's fashionable to think he's some kind of a black angel. Black men can do no wrong. But, of course, we can—and do. No colour has a monopoly of vice or virtue. We had better see if we can change man's character before we think of stabilizing the population.

ZOLTAN Interesting suggestion. Only a matter of molecules if we get down to it. Did I ever tell you about that experiment Gillespie and his team carried out on rats some time ago? They fed them, they looked after them and studied them. Now, the rats flourished. When the food came they ate it. And when it went away they slept. Well, that was their instinct. Then they tried stimulating various areas of the brain. They gave them the same amount of food. When they put pressure on one part of the brain the rats shared their food, made friends, lived together in peace. But when they excited the other area, they tore each other apart and fought to the death. That is controlled emotion. There's no reason why we shouldn't try the same thing with human beings. With the population explosion and the selfishness in men, it's entirely necessary to do it. Human beings must be controlled and directed properly. Well, science will be able to offer you instant happiness, love and understanding. Combined with our new shade of colour, it should do a great deal for the happiness of mankind. However, it's outside the range of our present experiment.

SYLVESTER Doesn't colour mean anything to you at all?

ZOLTAN Nothing. How could it to an intelligent scientist? I wouldn't have you working with me here if it did.

SYLVESTER I rather thought you wouldn't have me working with you here if it didn't.

Jetta and Tarquin are walking in the grounds. They sit on a garden seat.

TARQUIN It seems only yesterday that I hauled you into the world and slapped you to make you howl.

JETTA It was only today that the mother from whom you hauled me, slapped me. She didn't make me howl.

TARQUIN She doesn't mean it.

JETTA Of course she means it. Whatever makes you say a thing like that?

TARQUIN As an old family friend, it's the sort of thing I'm meant to say, I suppose. You know Jetta, as a doctor I've grown used to physical pain and suffering. Sometimes I have to cause it. I still find the cruelty and acidity of people hard to bear—especially those I like.

JETTA Do you honestly like Mother?

TARQUIN Yes. I think I can honestly say that I do. Of course I knew her before I knew your father. I knew all the trouble her marriage caused. Saw her hurt your grandfather without meaning to do it—first by marrying your father, then by coming to believe in his ideas and disbelieving in what your grandfather believed and I suppose still does believe. It was so inevitable, so well-intentioned, and yet so hard on your grandfather—and on her.

JETTA On her?

TARQUIN Don't you understand how much it hurts when you feel you have to give pain to someone you once loved—because your mother loved your grandfather once, Jetta. Just as much as you love your father. See, my dear, when loyalties conflict, someone has to be wounded. And the one who does the wounding, bleeds themselves each blow they strike. So they harden their hearts against the pain that they're afraid to feel—first an asbestos heart, then a steel heart, finally a heart of stone. Now a hard heart soon becomes a hate-filled heart. And a hating heart wounds and likes to wound without even knowing why. But you're too young to understand these things, Jetta.

JETTA Why is it that people always imagine you can't understand things when you're young? Young people understand far more than you think. Sometimes I think I understand everything. Mother hates me. She hates Grandfather. She'd hurt us both if she could. And the man who gets hurt most is Father whom she says she loves. Odd isn't it? There's Grandfather who says he's unafraid—but I'm not sure if it's true. And Father who says he believes in nothing but science and atoms and matter—but underneath it all he believes most in the things he can't explain.

TARQUIN Such as?

JETTA Why a person who is nothing but dust and liquid can love so much, feel so much, fear so much and worry so much. In many ways he's more human than Grandpa.

TARQUIN Do you worry much, Jetta?

JETTA Why should I?

TARQUIN I don't know. But there are lines under your eyes.

JETTA Mother says it's too much dancing.

TARQUIN Pale cheeks.

JETTA Mother says it's smoking and eating too many sweets.

TARQUIN Thin nose.

JETTA The one I was born with.

TARQUIN And sometimes you seem so far away.

JETTA Mother says I'm in love.

TARQUIN Are you?

JETTA You're a very bad doctor.

TARQUIN Luckily the rest of the family don't think so.

JETTA You can't diagnose the most obvious complaint. Think about it. Pale, tired, peaky, with a far-away look in her eyes—and the patient is a young woman.

TARQUIN Jetta, you're not telling me that . . . ?

JETTA I'm not telling you anything except what you've told me. And the answer is that there are loaves in the oven, a cuckoo in the nest, a kernel in the nut, and rabbits in the hutch. Don't look so amazed. The fact is I'm pregnant.

TARQUIN Good God, Jetta—you're joking.

JETTA Is that what you usually say to girls on these occasions?

TARQUIN Do I know him?

JETTA You might just as well ask if I know him myself. It might be one of twenty, fifty, a hundred men. Don't worry, it's not like that really. There's only been one man. And only one time. Bad luck really, isn't it? But when I hear Father and Dr Sylvester and you too, for that matter, saying that science is what I once thought God to be, and that everything can be explained by mathematics and environment, and that everybody can do what they like in this modern world, I wonder why people make so much fuss about lovers and babies and marriage.

TARQUIN You must marry this man at once.

JETTA I'm not sure that I want to marry him. Or he me. I haven't asked him.

TARQUIN But you'll have to get married.

JETTA Not necessarily.

TARQUIN Well, you can't produce a child as if it were a new dress or a hat or something.

JETTA I'm going to produce one. Unless, of course, you help me.

TARQUIN Naturally I'll help you, when the time comes.

JETTA You do make things difficult. I never realised before what a stupid man you were. I don't want help when the time comes. I want it now.

TARQUIN Now?

JETTA Yes, get rid of it. They say it's not too dangerous or painful. Take me to your house or a nursing home and operate on me—or whatever it is you have to do.

TARQUIN No.

JETTA Why not?

TARQUIN It's unethical.

JETTA Oh, that. Lots of doctors do it. You know they do.

TARQUIN I think it's wrong. I won't do it, Jetta. I never have—and I never will—least of all for somebody I love.

JETTA Right? Wrong? Unless something happens I'm going to cause lots of trouble to lots of people—and they're people you love and that's all wrong. Can't you think of them? If you won't do it yourself, send me to somebody who will. If it's money that worries you, Grandpa says I'm going to have lots when he dies.

TARQUIN You mustn't say these things, or think them. You're upset now naturally. But I will do everything I can to help you. I shall certainly do nothing to help you get rid of the child.

JETTA Didn't think you would. But it was worth trying. It's a relief to have told someone. You won't tell anyone else, will you?

TARQUIN No. But you must. You must tell your parents. And you must get this man to marry you, whoever he is.

JETTA "Must" and "Mustn't" parents are
Of kids who lie to Pa and Ma.

That's the old rhyme. And it's true in my case. Well, we'll see. Thank you for listening to my symptoms and then for letting me give you the diagnosis and then refusing to do anything about it. I don't know what I am going to do. But I promise you I'm going to do something. (*She runs away across the lawn*)

TARQUIN Come back. Come back, Jetta.

Sylvester and Jetta are walking together. She carries a radio which is blaring out music. They sit on a bench.

SYLVESTER Must you really have that?

JETTA I like it, particularly when I'm tired. I haven't slept for ages.

SYLVESTER Why not?

JETTA Too many worries. Too many rows. Too many people telling me what to do.

SYLVESTER I never thought you had any worries, Jetta.

JETTA Haven't you noticed it's the people with no real worries who

proclaim them to the world. And those who are in desperate trouble who keep quiet about it?

SYLVESTER Are you in some sort of trouble?

JETTA Some people would think it was glorious trouble. But it's going to make a lot of people very angry. If you think you've seen a family row, you'd better prepare yourself for this one. Because you're going to be in it.

SYLVESTER I certainly shall not. I hate the way you all go on at each other.

JETTA I hate the way everyone goes on at me. It makes me sick.

SYLVESTER There's nothing wrong with you that a good night's sleep wouldn't cure.

JETTA You're the second doctor I've seen today, and neither of you could diagnose my problem. I don't think much of your medicine.

SYLVESTER Well, now, I haven't prescribed any medicine. Neither have I diagnosed your problem. The fact of the matter is you're over-tired.

JETTA It will take more than a good sleep to cure me. Can't you guess? I'm pregnant. I'm going to have a baby.

SYLVESTER Jetta, you shouldn't make jokes about things like that. It's not funny.

JETTA I'm not joking. It's the truth.

SYLVESTER Are you sure?

JETTA 'Course I'm sure.

SYLVESTER There must be some mistake. I can't believe it.

JETTA There is no mistake, and you know it. I know most people won't believe me, but you're the only man I've ever slept with. It's your child, Johnny.

SYLVESTER You really don't expect me to believe that. You've been around. You could be having anyone's child.

JETTA I hate you!

SYLVESTER Don't make such a tragedy out of it. You're not the first girl to be pregnant.

JETTA Don't talk to me as if I were some case history. I need help.

SYLVESTER Have you told anyone else?

JETTA Dr Tarquin. I asked him to get rid of the baby. He wouldn't do it.

SYLVESTER What did he say?

JETTA He said I should tell my parents and marry the man. What do you expect him to say?

SYLVESTER Have you told your parents?

JETTA Don't be stupid.

SYLVESTER Jetta, I don't understand you. What do you want?

JETTA I don't want anything except to clear out, except to have some-

body who cares about me. You all treat me like dirt. Everyone except Grandpa.

SYLVESTER You can't live in a world of dreams all your life. You have to grow up. You have to stop being a little girl running to Grandpa every time something goes wrong. There is no tragedy in your life. A lot of people have been pregnant before.

JETTA Yes, and a lot of men like you have left them afterwards to struggle through life with nothing. You may be bitter, Johnny, but you make people bitter all round you. It's got nothing to do with colour. It's just the way you are, rotten all through.

SYLVESTER I wasn't rotten the night I made love to you. You said I was warm and strong and wonderful. I gave you what you wanted. Now you want more from me, but I am not going to pay up. Do you blame me?

JETTA No, I don't. I don't belong with any of you. You've got nothing to offer me, nothing big enough, fast enough, free enough for me. I hope I never see you again.

(Jetta runs away to the garden swing. As she swings she hears again Tarquin's voice)

TARQUIN'S VOICE You must tell your parents, you must tell your parents.

The living-room of the Zoltans' house. Jetta is there with her parents.

JETTA Now you know.

BECKY It's revolting!

ZOLTAN Becky, control yourself.

BECKY I warned you that this would happen. It's all your fault. You've spoiled and pampered her till she doesn't care what she does.

ZOLTAN Nonsense. Jetta is at perfect liberty to do what she wants, and I don't intend to stop her. She will learn by her mistakes.

BECKY She's fooled you all. Mincing up to you with her tight pants and painted eyes. Men are idiots.

ZOLTAN Well, I would say that the female sex is not immune.

BECKY At least I've seen Jetta clearly which is more than you have. I've seen her worming her way into Josh's pockets. Taking my money from him.

ZOLTAN Becky, it is not your money.

BECKY No. But it will be. Josh will never leave his money to a common tart.

ZOLTAN For God's sake, Becky, don't talk about your own daughter like that.

BECKY That's what she is. Flaunting her body, asking for trouble. Well, now she's got it. One thing I know about Josh—he's proud of the family.

The Swinyards matter to him. Once he knows Jetta's pregnant, she won't get a penny.

ZOLTAN Well, that should make you happy.

BECKY Don't be cynical. It bores me.

ZOLTAN Why should Josh be told? It would probably kill him.

BECKY He has a right to know. He's pinned all his hopes on Jetta. He must know the truth about her.

ZOLTAN Well, I'm not going to tell him.

BECKY Of course not. Jetta must tell him.

JETTA Why should I?

BECKY You've deceived enough people, Jetta, with your fantasies, your dreams and your lies. Well, now it's going to stop. Josh is old. You deliberately exploited him to get what you wanted.

ZOLTAN But you see everything in terms of black and white, good and bad, truth and lies. There are no shades of grey. No tolerance. Sometimes I think there's more of Josh in you than there is in the old man himself. You might believe in that God of his.

BECKY Well, I don't. This isn't a question of faith. It's a question of hard cash.

ZOLTAN But if it means so much to you, why don't you tell him yourself?

BECKY He'd never believe me. He'd dismiss it as gossip.

ZOLTAN Exactly.

BECKY Josh is dying. He's been fooled and he doesn't know it. If Jetta really cares for him, she has to tell him.

ZOLTAN But what is there to tell? Jetta is pregnant. Well, there's nothing to be ashamed of in that. You were once in the same condition yourself, Becky. You should remember.

JETTA She'd like to forget.

BECKY How coarse you are, Esteban. I suppose even your own daughter is an experiment in molecules. Well, I shall not lift a finger to help her, I promise you. She deserves everything that's coming to her.

JETTA Except the money.

BECKY Yes, except my money.

ZOLTAN But the fact that Jetta is pregnant isn't a bad thing. It's a natural instinct fulfilled. There's no reason to stop this instinct unless it gets out of hand. A much more important factor is who made her pregnant.

BECKY That philosophy of yours has ruined the child.

ZOLTAN It may be your lack of motherly love that ruined her. In fact it's far more likely.

BECKY I've sacrificed my life to keep this home together. But for me it would have broken up long ago. Isn't that love?

ZOLTAN No. That is duty.

BECKY Rubbish. It's Josh I'm worried about.

ZOLTAN It's Josh's money you're worried about. Who was it, Jetta? There's no reason why you shouldn't marry the man, unless he's married already. It happens in the best of families.

JETTA Especially in the best of families. But supposing I don't want to marry him, Father?

ZOLTAN Marriage is convenient for the sake of your mother's friends. It doesn't mean anything.

BECKY. Who is the man, Jetta?

JETTA Suppose I don't know?

BECKY That wouldn't surprise me in the least.

ZOLTAN You'd better tell us, Jetta.

JETTA It's John.

ZOLTAN What?

JETTA The father of my baby is Dr Sylvester.

ZOLTAN Why the hell didn't you say so?

JETTA You never asked. And what's wrong with him?

ZOLTAN Wrong?

BECKY So now you're angry. At last.

ZOLTAN I've given him everything. He'd be nothing without me. And he couldn't keep his dirty hands off Jetta.

BECKY How blind you are, Esteban. They've been carrying on under your very nose, and you never even knew it.

ZOLTAN Let her alone. It's not her fault. I've made John Sylvester a better scientist than I am. I've given him the power to break through problems, and to forge new answers. He's spat in my face. I shall never forgive him. *(He strides to the door followed by Jetta who calls after him)*

JETTA Don't go, Daddy. Don't blame John. It's not his fault.

The Laboratory, where Zoltan and Sylvester are at work.

ZOLTAN I do blame you.

SYLVESTER She encouraged me.

ZOLTAN You took advantage of her. You destroyed her. I can never forgive you.

SYLVESTER This sort of thing never mattered to you before. How was I to know you would take it like this?

ZOLTAN Jetta is my daughter. Don't you see what you've done?

SYLVESTER No. Man is a machine. What he does or does not do is irrelevant. You said so yourself—often.

ZOLTAN Why did you do it, John?

SYLVESTER Because I believed you. I believed you when you said people should be free to do what they want, when they want, as often as they want. I believed you when you said colour didn't matter. That it's an accident of pigmentation and genes. I should have known better.

ZOLTAN I gave you everything I had to offer and you had to take Jetta as well. Why?

SYLVESTER If man is an animal—he must live like an animal. Why do you expect anything more?

ZOLTAN Because you had the knowledge to know better.

SYLVESTER Knowledge? The knowledge of right and wrong?

ZOLTAN The knowledge of loyalty to somebody who tried to help you. I trusted you. You betrayed me.

SYLVESTER Can you see loyalty, Professor? Can you prove trust? What are they made of? How much do they weigh?

ZOLTAN Do you feel nothing?

SYLVESTER I feel everything, lust, hurt, hate, sorrow and shame, just as you do. I have proved that man is an animal, a clever animal who can do without God. I learnt that from you and now I learn from you that man is more than an animal. What am I to believe?

ZOLTAN I believe nothing. Nothing at all. I believe what I can prove, what I have proved. Otherwise nothing.

Jetta's room. She is seated at the dressing table brushing her hair. Her mother looks on.

BECKY Pull yourself together.

JETTA Leave me alone, Mother. Don't you care what I feel? It's impossible to tell you anything. All I get is hate. Is there nothing else inside you?

BECKY I don't know what you mean, Jetta. I've done everything for you, which is more than can be said for your father.

JETTA You've never loved me, Mother. You've never cared what happened to me. I don't think you've ever loved anybody except yourself.

BECKY You're wrong. I loved my father, I loved him very much and he loved me. But you had to have that too. You've always had everything you wanted. And now you're trying to take my money. Well, you shan't have it.

JETTA I don't care about money. I just want someone to love me.

BECKY Why should anyone love someone as selfish as you are? All

you live for is the next party, the next thrill, the next man. Now you're asking for understanding and sympathy. Well, you won't get it from me.

JETTA Why don't you take a look at yourself, Mother? You are just a frustrated, middle-aged woman who hates everybody who has got more than you.

BECKY Charming.

JETTA The one time in my life I need help and understanding and some sort of hope, you turn on me.

BECKY You've always lied to me, Jetta.

JETTA Who do you think I've learnt it from? You've pretended to be so right, Mother, but I know what you're like, pretending to care for Josh, when all you really wanted was his money. We all know what you're like, and I hate it. I tell you, I hate it.

BECKY Don't run away, Jetta. You're to go to Josh this minute, and tell him the truth.

JETTA All right, I'll tell him.

She leaves the room, goes into the garden and looks into the pool. Her mother watches from a high window. Then Jetta is seen writing a letter in her bedroom. She puts it in an envelope and takes it to the big house to Swinyard's room. She enters quietly and places it in his Bible. As she leaves she notices his bottle of pills. She takes some and runs out of the house to the garden swing.

Josh Swinyard's bedroom. He is dressing for dinner.

SWINYARD How do I look, Biggs?

BIGGS Wonderful, sir, if I may say so. I've seldom seen you looking better.

SWINYARD You old liar. I've never looked worse. I'm deadly ill. They've been waiting for me to die all day. I know. Some of them will be wondering whether I'm going to turn up for dinner.

BIGGS Oh, I don't think so at all. Everybody's been looking forward to this evening. And I'm sure they'd be very disappointed if you weren't there. *(He helps Swinyard into his wheel chair)*

SWINYARD Some of them would—and some of them wouldn't. I know my family better than you do, Biggs. I'm going to say grace tonight. Esteban doesn't like it. But this is my birthday dinner and no meal is complete without a blessing. What do you think, Biggs?

BIGGS A very suitable end to a party, sir. I always enjoy a good grace, myself. It gives the dinner a proper setting.

SWINYARD My family would disagree with you. I'll have my Bible please, Biggs.

BIGGS And your spectacles, sir? Under the pillow as usual.

SWINYARD Clever of you to find them. I never can.

BIGGS I'd just like to say, I'm sure it will be a wonderful evening, sir, and how happy I am to see you enjoying it. It's just like old times.

SWINYARD Thank you Biggs. *(Biggs wheels him out of the room)*

The dining-room of Josh Swinyard's house. Tarquin, Zoltan, Becky and Sylvester are seated round the dinner table. There is an empty place. Biggs is serving.

TARQUIN That was a wonderful dinner. Thank you, Josh. I wish you had a birthday every day.

SWINYARD This is the last one I'll have, Tarquin. But I'm glad you're here to share it. I like to be with old friends.

TARQUIN Now, now, you mustn't talk like that, Josh.

BIGGS Coffee, sir.

SWINYARD Thank you, Biggs. If I'm allowed it.

TARQUIN Oh, I should think so, just this once.

SWINYARD This doctor of mine spends his time telling me what I cannot do.

ZOLTAN And you spend your time doing it with amazing regularity.

SWINYARD Exactly. And here I am alive and well, when you would have me buried and forgotten—or is it frozen? If I'd taken your advice, Esteban, I'd have been dead long since.

ZOLTAN You never take my advice, Josh. I've been trying to tell you the scientific facts of life and death for a long time, but without success.

BECKY You might at least listen to him, Josh. Even if you don't want to believe him.

SWINYARD I believe the truth.

ZOLTAN What is the truth?

SWINYARD The truth is the choice in your heart and mine, Esteban. The choice between good and evil.

ZOLTAN Your heart beats with life, or lies still in death. That is the only choice it makes. It pumps blood to your brain, then to your body. When it stops pumping—won't be any more choice for you, Josh. I believe in the work of a man's brain, not the myth of his conscience.

TARQUIN Does it matter tonight, Esteban?

BECKY Of course not.

TARQUIN Then let's not discuss it.

BIGGS Some coffee, madam?

BECKY Thank you, Biggs. Oh, Biggs, have you seen Miss Jetta?

BIGGS No, madam.

BECKY How rude the girl is not to turn up for your birthday dinner, Josh.

SWINYARD She's young. You were young once, Becky.

BECKY I still think she's terribly rude.

SWINYARD She gave me a birthday present. Made me very happy.

TARQUIN Better keep some food hot for her, Biggs. She may turn up later.

ZOLTAN May have decided not to come. She was rather worried and upset.

BECKY She wanted to talk to you before dinner, Josh.

ZOLTAN Becky!

BECKY She had something very important to tell you. Did you see her?

ZOLTAN Becky, for heaven's sake.

BECKY I want to know.

TARQUIN I thought Jetta was looking rather tired this morning, she is probably sleeping it off.

BECKY Drinking it off more likely. It's time someone dealt with that girl. Why don't you, Esteban?

TARQUIN Not now Becky. This is not the time.

BECKY I think someone should find her, and we'll have it out with her here and now. It will be a change for her to face her father.

ZOLTAN Well, I refuse to do it.

BECKY Very well. I'll go myself.

SYLVESTER I'll go. I'll look for her.

BECKY Certainly not. You of all people.

SYLVESTER You're a vicious woman. You're full of hate.

ZOLTAN John, that's enough.

BECKY I won't have him talking to me like this. It's time you got rid of him, Esteban.

TARQUIN Now, this must stop. It's not good for any of us.

SWINYARD Silence. I am going to thank God for the meal. It's an old-fashioned custom but I believe in it. Help me, Tarquin.

TARQUIN No, Josh, I forbid it.

SWINYARD Help me, I tell you. If it's the last thing I do, I will stand for the grace. *(Tarquin helps Swinyard to his feet. All rise except Zoltan who sits smoking his cigarette)*

SWINYARD I am waiting for you, Esteban.

ZOLTAN I will not stand for the God I don't believe in. And I won't thank him for a meal he didn't cook. You're at liberty to stand, Josh. I'm at perfect liberty to sit.

SWINYARD You owe your life and liberty to the Living God. You're in my house. You will stand for grace, Esteban.

TARQUIN For heaven's sake, Esteban, get up.

SWINYARD May God have mercy on your soul.

ZOLTAN You will have need of His mercy before I will, Josh.

(Swinyard picks up his Bible and fumbles with it, looking for the right place)

SWINYARD "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction . . ."

(An envelope falls from the Bible)

SWINYARD What's this?

(Becky recognizes the handwriting)

BECKY It's from Jetta.

SWINYARD Well, give it me. *(He reads the letter slowly)* Oh God.

TARQUIN What is it, Josh?

(Josh Swinyard sinks into his chair)

SWINYARD She's taken my pills. She's taken my pills.

Zoltan and Tarquin rush from the dining-room to Zoltan's house. They go to Jetta's bedroom. She is lying on the bed and her radio is playing pop music. Zoltan lifts her in his arms. Tarquin moves Zoltan away. He examines Jetta. It is too late.

Josh Swinyard, in his wheelchair, with the Zoltans, Tarquin, Sylvester and Biggs stand beside flowers and wreaths in memory of Jetta which are laid out on the grass. Becky looks at Sylvester.

BECKY You killed her, you know.

ZOLTAN You mustn't say that, Becky.

BECKY I mean it. Jetta is dead and he killed her.

SWINYARD I've used harsh words about you, Dr Sylvester. I've said things I shouldn't have said. May God forgive me.

SYLVESTER Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm sorry. *(He leaves)*

Josh Swinyard and Becky sit in the back of the car as it travels home. They sit silently, each deep in their own thoughts. We hear what Josh is thinking.

SWINYARD'S VOICE Beloved Jetta, like the morning sunshine. These old bones live in darkness and sometimes in despair, but you warmed them with your laughter. After those long crawling nights came the day with you, Jetta. Talking, dreaming, asking, wanting so much from life, looking forward to everything that could be yours, and which I longed for you to have. *(While he is thinking there are flash-backs of Jetta as a baby and then as a small girl)* Why did you do it, Jetta? In God's name why? I loved you as my own child, I wanted to live for your sake. God knows there was little else to keep this broken body living—but for you I wanted to keep breathing, keep fighting, struggling forward to the end. I wanted you to know that death is not the end. You were hungry for faith. I wanted to give you bread, the bread of life. Was it a stone I gave you? Dear Jetta, there was joy for you on earth. I remember the day you were born. Such a tiny thing. I had happiness to see you live. First crawling, then tottering, then racing towards me—always laughing with me. There was so much for you still to do, but you've thrown it all away. Why? Questions that go on and on. But no answers. Are they right after all? Perhaps there is no God in the shadows keeping watch over His own. Perhaps I told you a lie. Old men deceive themselves often enough. It's impossible to be sure. I can't prove it. I want to believe . . . I wanted you to believe.

Josh Swinyard's bedroom. He is sitting in his chair wrapped in a rug. Zoltan is with him.

SWINYARD It was my fault. My life has been a fraud. I've spoken of God. I have believed in God. But I've helped nobody.

ZOLTAN Stop it, Josh.

SWINYARD I lost Becky. She had faith as a child, I couldn't hold her fast. Esteban, you hate the God I love. I couldn't love you enough to pull your heart to heaven.

ZOLTAN You're not to blame.

SWINYARD I wanted Jetta most of all to love the truth and live for it. I failed her. It was never strong enough, pure enough, swift enough for her. I said I had no fear—but I was afraid. I said I believed but I doubted. My whole life has been a sham.

ZOLTAN No, Josh.

SWINYARD I've nothing to offer you or any man. You were right, you've proved your case.

ZOLTAN No, Josh. It wasn't your lack of faith that killed Jetta. At least you tried to give it to her.

SWINYARD I gave her my love, but I couldn't give her the secret of life. Life is painful. It is born in pain. It grows in pain. It dies in pain. I never wanted Jetta to face the pain of the sword of truth. So she never knew how to find hope. I wanted to make her happy, but I couldn't make her believe. I have failed utterly.

ZOLTAN No, no, Josh. You mustn't give in now. Don't you realize we all depend on your steadfastness? Oh, we attack you, we laugh at you, we lie about you. But you are our faith.

SWINYARD My faith has failed.

ZOLTAN You stand for hope in a world where all hope is meaningless otherwise.

SWINYARD Dear Jetta. She paid the price of our iniquity.

ZOLTAN Yes, she did.

SWINYARD What did you say?

ZOLTAN Nothing.

SWINYARD You did, Esteban.

ZOLTAN Yes, yes I did. There's too much for me to overcome. It's far too difficult.

SWINYARD It's not too difficult. It's impossible. Only one man on earth has ever done it perfectly.

ZOLTAN You mean God.

SWINYARD Yes, and we are made in His image, Esteban.

ZOLTAN I hated Him always.

SWINYARD How could you hate someone you thought was never there?

ZOLTAN I felt oppressed by the feeling that He might be there. I was angry with His interference with my ideas. Couldn't get rid of him. I killed Him quite deliberately. He couldn't live in my world. Nor could Jetta. It was easier not to believe in Him.

SWINYARD Now you have the knowledge to believe. Will you give me my Bible please, Esteban? *(Zoltan finds the Bible and hands it to him)* Thank you. *(Swinyard looks for his spectacles)*

ZOLTAN I'll read it to you, Josh, if you will let me.

SWINYARD Thank you, Esteban.

ZOLTAN *(Reads)* "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him . . ."

(Josh is at peace)

WHY MY FATHER WROTE THE PLAY

Anne Wolrige Gordon

who completed the play from her father's notes after his death

“**The great issue** in the modern world is almighty man or Almighty God. At a time when all negative forces are chipping and filing away at the Rock of Ages, we must perceive the danger and the challenge, and fearlessly in the midst of misunderstanding and misrepresentation and opposition, even from within the compromised camp of Christianity, build Almighty God once more as a modern and revolutionary factor into the lives of millions of our fellow men.”

So wrote Peter Howard a few months before his death in 1965. It was upon this great conflict of man or God that the theme of his last play, *Happy Deathday*, was based. Each one of Howard's plays is different. This is not from sheer twist of imagination, or from a sudden flash of genius, but because every day of his life Howard saw and met the needs of specific people. His plays were written with definite people in mind. Often those people represented needs common to everyone. *Happy Deathday* was written primarily for an eighteen-year-old girl. She had been listening to one of Howard's speeches:

“After my speech a young woman said: ‘Will you sit with me on the sofa?’ Well, it might have been misunderstood, but I took a look at that girl and I knew it wasn't that. So I sat down with her. Other people went into the garden. She said to me, ‘I find it awfully hard to say some things to my mother and father.’ I said, ‘Why on earth?’ She said, ‘Well, they don't understand me. Tell me this, is it all right for me to sleep with men before I am married? I just want to know.’ Now that was not a cheap question—it was not a daring question. It was the question of a hungry human heart of a child who did not know the answer. Her parents said to me later, ‘Of course, the one answer is a faith, not just a personal faith, but a faith strong enough to change the trend of



our nation.' And the mother said, 'I haven't got any faith. What am I to do?' Now there you have the dilemma of our times."

In the 1970s that dilemma is still with us. The 1960s may have produced a man on the moon, and a greater scientific knowledge than we have ever known before, but mankind is not much further forward. If anything, problems are magnified. On every continent we have race war, class war, economic war, a generation war and religious war—even in some parts of civilized Europe. Divorce, drugs and doubt seem to be normal life for many. Starvation, unemployment and bitterness the portion of many more. Those who had been strenuously advocating the end of the ideological age were disillusioned by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Africa and Asia have found themselves beset by the same problems of division, corruption and intolerance which they hoped would vanish with imperialism. The great giants of America and Russia have not been able to capture the heart of the ordinary man. A generation has grown up which seems less concerned about the shadow of atomic war, and more concerned with the abolition of authority. It was for these times that *Happy Deathday* was written.

For Peter Howard, faith was not placid. It was militant. It was related to modern events. It meant tackling moral issues without fear or favour, within a Cabinet or a university, within a factory or his own family circle. He deplored those who were self-righteous and sentimental about another race or their own, but who thought nothing of exploiting parents, wife or child. He was not a comfortable person, and *Happy Deathday* is not a comfortable story. Through it, Howard's heart reached out to bring a cure to an age in conflict.

Since *Happy Deathday* was first produced many people have written to me and said how much they miss the plays and speeches of Peter Howard. As his daughter, I share their sense of loss. However, it was my father's firm belief that everybody should be able to play a part in shifting his nation towards God. That commitment still stands. It requires simple but difficult decisions. Howard was not put off by those people who con-

sidered a change in human nature a naïve impertinence.

"I am utterly opposed to the philosophy that God no longer works through the transformation of the individual but only through social operations, such as civil rights agitation in America, anti-apartheid movements in South Africa, and the spread of Communism, which, though godless, creates an atmosphere which will help faith forward.

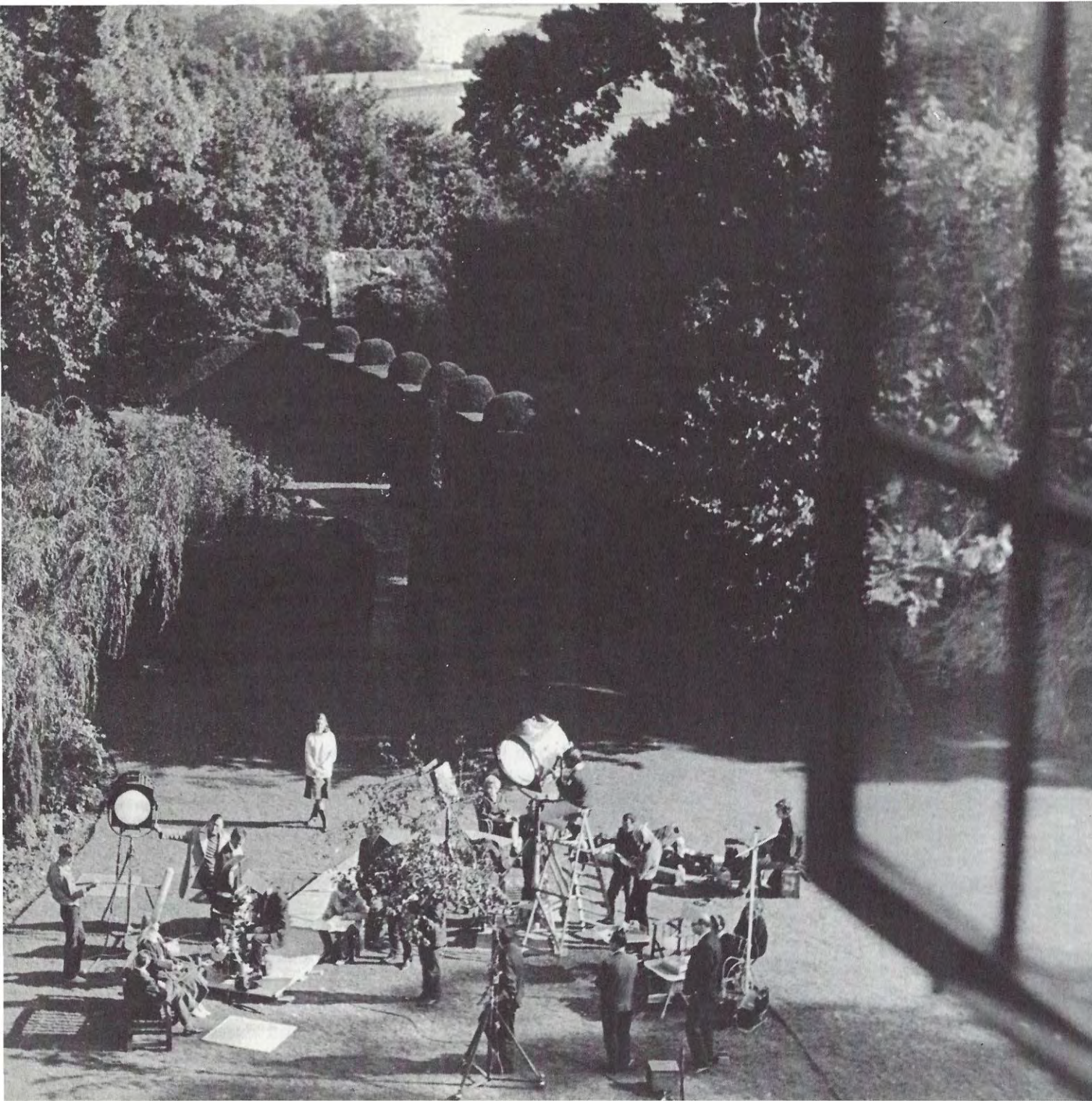
"I am quite opposed to those Christians who say that because Christ redeems we can go on being disinvolved with history and living much as we are.

"A great society will never come to birth by good works that hope to use industry and agriculture to fill belly and hand, plate and purse, but leave self-will unbroken and hearts empty of love and faith. Political, economic, social action alone will never touch the centre of the evil. Nor will sluggish and surly satisfaction at our personal and national perfections.

"We are in the midst of a struggle without scruple for the soul and character of the world. The question to be decided this century is whether it is to be God's earth or man's hell."

Howard was a revolutionary. If he had been a man with a good positive idea, and without what he describes as "the most revolutionary commitment on earth", he would never have been able to change people in the way he did. He believed in honesty—not just about what was easily told—but absolute. He believed in absolute purity. He had decided never to think of himself again. He believed in love—not only a love which does not hate but which puts God before man. And which pleases God before man.

Howard knew that such a commitment could not be forced upon anyone. He also knew that without this commitment man would destroy himself and his world. Howard had found a power greater than his own. It is the secret of this power that lies at the heart of *Happy Deathday*. It was not written primarily for young or old, but for every age of man. It was written for young people in revolt; for old people in despair; and for those of intelligence who worship their minds before God's will. To all, *Happy Deathday* presents a choice.



HOW THE FILM
WAS MADE

**HOW THE FILM
WAS MADE**

HOW THE FILM WAS MADE

To create the greatest possible realism, the Producers and the Director of *Happy Deathday* decided that it should be filmed entirely on location.

The Producers were fortunate in finding one of the few university laboratories in London that were not already over-crowded with scientists competing for every square foot of bench space. The one they chose had just been built and was not yet occupied. It was held vacant for a week to allow for the filming.

The laboratory's technical and scientific staff cooperated fully in "dressing" the empty benches with all the equipment for a modern molecular biology lab. Everything from the paper tissues to the gleaming black head of the high-speed centrifuge, from the automatic protein analyser to the neighbouring department's black and white "Panda" rats was carefully obtained

from various colleagues down the corridors. A model of the atomic structure of deoxy-ribonucleic acid (DNA)—biology's status symbol—was borrowed and on the board was scrawled the latest theory about DNA replication, which had only been published two days prior to shooting.

Meanwhile the lighting crew performed gymnastic feats to light the scenes in the tiny electron microscopy room down in the bowels of the building.

When the Professor in charge of the laboratory was invited to view the results of these scenes he commented, "I like the atmosphere of homely clutter, the dusty bottles are just right."

The Producers of *Happy Deathday* owe a great debt to Mr and Mrs Paul Petrocokino for making available their Tudor house of Aston Bury and its beautiful grounds and gardens for four-and-a-half weeks of filming. Mr Petrocokino has recorded his own impressions of those weeks of "occupation".

"For four hundred years, where the mellow, red brick manor house of Aston Bury now stands, there was a Benedictine building of flint stone, belonging to the Abbot and monks of Reading Abbey, to whom the widow of King Henry II had given the manor of Aston after the King's death. The remains of this building can still be seen in the walls of Aston Bury.

"On the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII gave the property to one of his henchmen, Sir Philip Boteler, who built most of what is now Aston Bury. His great grandson completed it by adding two superb staircases—huge, for the relatively modest size of the house.

"By the end of the nineteenth century, the old place had deteriorated into a run-down farmhouse: no garden outside, and rough and ready conditions inside; a mat of ivy on the front side threatening the brickwork, and most of the south windows bricked up to avoid window tax. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, an enterprising and far-sighted Scot, Mr Vernon Austen Malcolmson, acquired Aston Bury, and at considerable personal expense restored it to something like its original appearance and glory. He died in



1948, and in 1951 the house was put up for sale, and we acquired it that autumn.

“Since we have been here, guests have come from eighty nations and from all walks of life, but no event in all this time has given us greater joy and interest than to have Peter Howard’s *Happy Deathday* filmed here. Peter Howard was a friend who knew our home well. We are convinced supporters of the Westminster Theatre and wish to do all we can to help make its products reach the widest possible audience.

“Mr Henry Cass had been out to Aston Bury some months earlier and as he went round the house and garden he had begun to visualize the different scenes and where they would be. It was eventually decided to make the film in the autumn—late September and throughout October—as that was in tune with the atmosphere of the film. This was interesting as statistically this is about the wettest time in the average year, and it was planned to do a lot of filming outside. As it happened, these weeks coincided with about the best spell of weather in an unusually unsettled year.

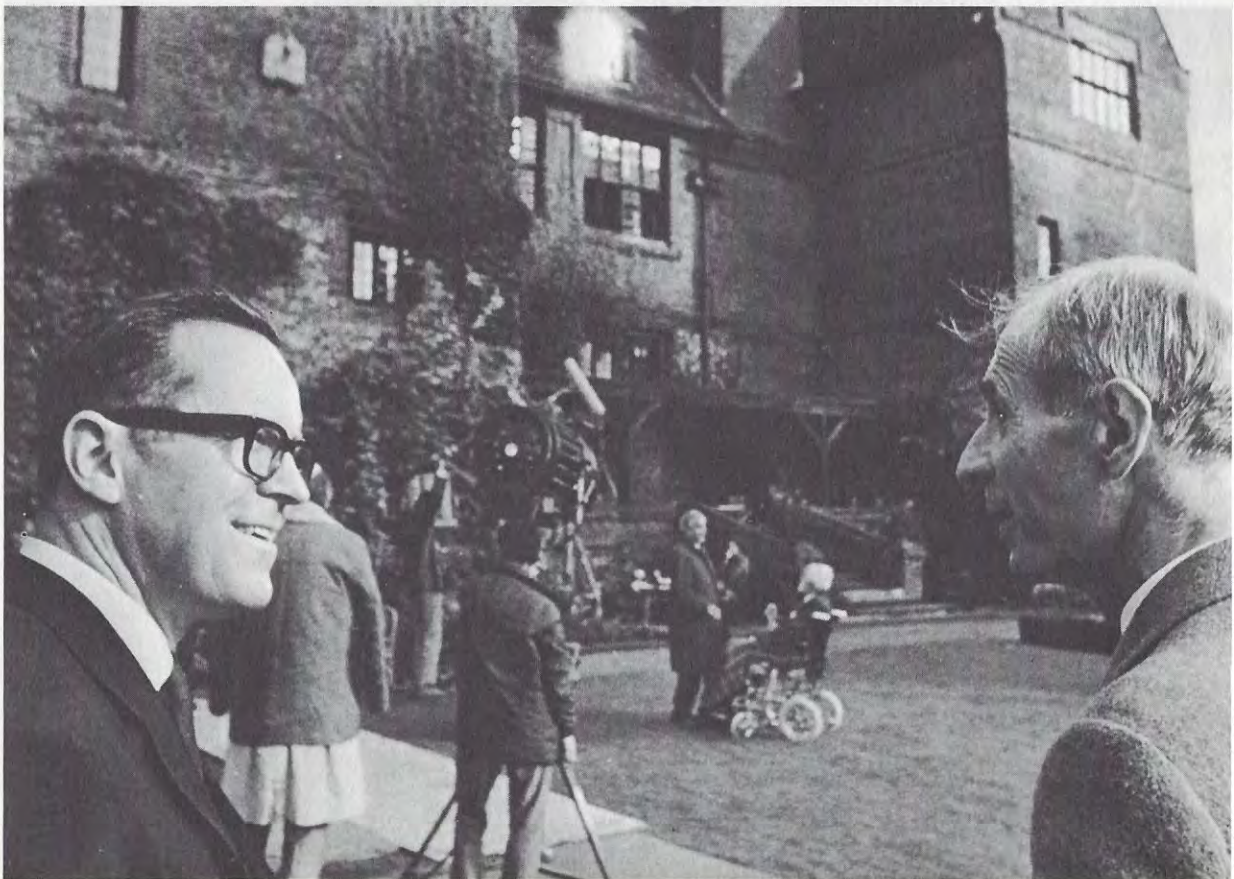
“My own approach to the film unit’s visit was that the actors and technicians were our guests and that although they were working against an almost impossible deadline, their time at Aston Bury should be made as enjoyable as possible. I personally was grateful to be invited to watch some of the actual shooting, and to see what was involved in the way of skill, patience and responsibility, and I particularly appreciated the way the technicians respected our house and garden. Although the house was a mass of cables, cameras and lights, and we were considerably disarranged for five weeks, they did their utmost to be considerate.

“It was with great regret that we saw our new friends in the cast and the technicians leave.”

Five weeks were allocated for the shooting of the film — a very tight schedule of twenty-five working days. The last shot was completed two hours ahead of schedule on the Friday afternoon of the fifth week. Bearing in mind the vagaries of the English autumn weather, this was a considerable achievement on the part of the Director, Associate Producer and technical crew.



Mrs Petrocokino



**Paul Petrocokino, (right)
owner of Aston Bury,
with co-producer Louis Fleming**

Henry Cass

Henry Cass is a director of long experience in film, theatre, opera and television.

In 1932 he was appointed producer to the Repertory Theatre, Croydon and from there he moved in 1934 to the Old Vic, where he produced Shakespeare, Shaw and a new version of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. He produced *Julius Caesar* in modern dress in 1939.

At Covent Garden he staged the original production of *Julia* by Roger Quilter, and produced *Carmen* in 1946. Among the many feature films Henry Cass has directed are *The Glass Mountain*, *No Place for Jennifer*, *Last Holiday*, with Alec Guinness, *Young Wives' Tale*, in which



Audrey Hepburn appeared, *Father's doing Fine*, with Richard Attenborough and *Castle in the Air*.

Since 1964 Henry Cass has directed eight productions at the Westminster Theatre as well as the films of *Mr Brown Comes Down The Hill*, *Give a Dog a Bone* and *Happy Deathday*.

Tom Oliver

Tom Oliver was one of the Editors of *Guns of Navarone* and of *Bonjour Tristesse*. He was Associate Editor of the Orson Welles film *Mr Akardin*. He has worked a great deal in television films, including *Around The World With Orson Welles* for Rediffusion. He is Supervising Editor for a new Nicholas Ray film, *Wha-at*.

Jo Jago

Lighting Cameraman Jo Jago BSC has photographed many feature films, documentaries and TV series as well as over 500 colour "commercials".

He was 2nd Unit Lighting Cameraman on *No Highway*, *My Cousin Rachel*, *The Sound Barrier* and *The Cruel Sea*. He was Chief Lighting Cameraman on *You're Only Young Twice*, *Blue Scar* and *The Last Load*, to mention only a few!

Brian Easdale

Brian Easdale, who composed and directed the music for *Happy Deathday*, won a First Academy Award (Oscar) in 1947 for his musical score for the film *Red Shoes*.

He composed the music for the films *Battle of The River Plate*, *Black Narcissus*, *Small Back Room*, *The Elusive Pimpernel* and *Gone to Earth*, for which he won a Venice Film Festival Award.

A composer of great versatility, Brian Easdale has written ballets and opera; works for orchestra, solo instruments and voices; music for plays, such as *Macbeth* at the Old Vic, and for numerous television plays and documentary films. He composed the music for the Finale of the European musical revue *Anything to Declare?*

WESTMINSTER THEATRE ARTS CENTRE



K D Belden

Chairman of the Westminster Memorial Trust

The Westminster Theatre Arts Centre was built as a memorial to Peter Howard. He had helped to shape the policy of the theatre ever since the Trust acquired it in 1946 as a memorial to men in Moral Re-Armament who gave their lives in the war. Ten of Peter Howard's plays and musicals have been produced at the Westminster in recent years. One of these, his pantomime for children, has been given five productions at the Westminster, and is fast becoming a Christmas institution in London.

During recent years the Westminster has reached out more and more to fresh audiences drawn from British industry, from the student world, from the immigrant communities, from the Churches and from local government, as well as to visitors to London from all over the world. During one recent musical production, people from 109 countries came through the Westminster in a month. Since the present series of plays was launched in 1961, a million people have been to the theatre, and more than 400 weekend conferences have linked the ideas in the plays with the issues in the nation.

It was to meet this growing interest that the plan was launched to build beside the old theatre the new Arts Centre to provide a range of facilities hitherto lacking, including a spacious foyer, a restaurant, new dressing-rooms, theatre library, offices, and cinema. All this was planned with Peter Howard. After his untimely death in 1965, it was decided to go forward with it as a memorial to him. For this purpose more than £500,000 was

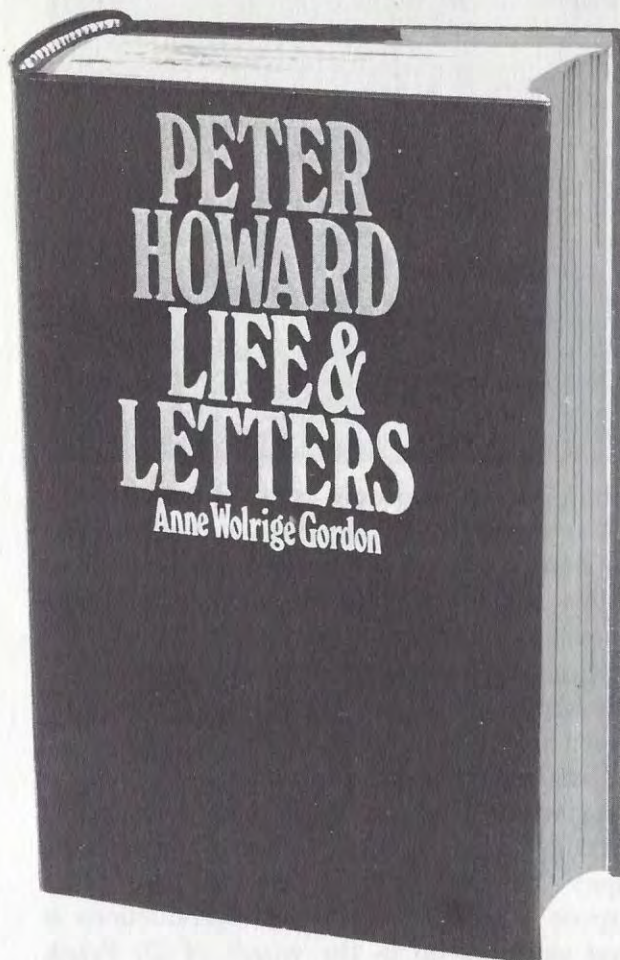


raised through gifts from people in fifty-one countries. The new Arts Centre was completed, and the money raised in less than two years. It was opened in November 1966 by Shri Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma, who was a friend of Howard.

The Arts Centre provides a continuous programme of drama, and also of experimental play-readings. It is fully equipped as a cinema, and it also has an expanding educational and musical programme.

It has long been the policy of the theatre to film its most important plays, and the latest in this series is the film of *Happy Deathday*.

The purpose of the theatre and its productions is perhaps best summed-up in the words of Dr Frank Buchman, the initiator of Moral Re-Armament, who inspired so many plays at the Westminster, words which are incorporated in mosaic on the wall of the new foyer: "Miracles of science have been the wonder of the age. But they have not brought peace and happiness to the nations. A miracle of the Spirit is what we need. There must come a spiritual dynamic which will change human nature and remake men and nations. If this miracle is to come into the world some nation must give a lead. Some nation must find God's Will as her destiny and God-guided men as her representatives at home and abroad. Some nation must produce a new leadership, free from the bondage of fear, rising above ambition and flexible to the direction of God's Holy Spirit. Will it be your nation?"



This book, like Peter Howard's own life, will disturb, challenge and bring hope. *Hodder and Stoughton 45s*

BOOKS by Peter Howard

IDEAS HAVE LEGS *Himmat Publications 5s*

BRITAIN AND THE BEAST *Heinemann 5s*

AFRICA'S HOUR and other speeches *MRA 3s 6d*

*From your bookseller or
Westminster Theatre Bookshop, Palace Street, London SW1*

FILMS from Peter Howard's plays

MR BROWN COMES DOWN THE HILL

A modern murder story, starring Eric Flynn, Mark Heath, Lillias Walker, John Richmond, Richard Warner and Bryan Coleman.

THE DICTATOR'S SLIPPERS

The Dictator is dying—who will step into his shoes? Starring Patrick Ludlow.

GIVE A DOG A BONE

An enchanting musical for the children of the world, starring Ronnie Stevens, Richard Warner, Ivor Danvers, Bryan Coleman and introducing Robert Davies. Technicolor.

written with Alan Thornhill

VOICE OF THE HURRICANE

"A film that faces the problems in Africa squarely, pulls no punches, talks turkey," wrote the *Rand Daily Mail*. Starring Muriel Smith, Reginald Owen and Phyllis Konstam. Technicolor.

DECISION AT MIDNIGHT

For twenty-four hours one man's whole world hangs in the balance. Starring Walter Fitzgerald, Nora Swinburne, Martin Landau and Torin Thatcher.

For information about the distribution and rental of these films please write to the distributors:

MRA Productions, 4 Hays Mews, London W1X 7RS.

