

*As he dies, he accidentally drops the dagger. He quickly places the dagger back under his arm and dies on the floor. All gasp. Except CRAWFORD who is now completely out of it. ALEXANDER dashes over to the INSPECTOR's dead body to take his pulse.)*

ALEXANDER. Good God. He's dead!

*(The INSPECTOR raises his arm. ALEXANDER reacts and takes the pulse.)*

PENELOPE. You mean...

*(Everyone waits for CRAWFORD to deliver her line. She merely stands facing the wall.)*

HAZ. "Murder."

CONSTANCE. What?

HAZ. "Murder!"

CONSTANCE. Is it me?

PHILLIP. "Murder!"

CONSTANCE. I'm sorry. I'm lost, Mr. Le Pew!

VICTOR. "Murder!"

CONSTANCE. Does anyone know the line?

ALL. "Murder!"

CONSTANCE. Let me check the script.

*(CRAWFORD exits backstage. ALABAMA MILLER dashes onstage from the audience. He wears rumpled shirt and pants, a raggedy cardigan sweater, a loose tie, and horn-rimmed glasses. His hair is wild. He carries a 576 page manuscript. He is wild with rage.)*

ALABAMA. What the hell do you people think you're doing?

VICTOR. Get him out of here, Phillip! This is a non-stop dress rehearsal, dammit!

*(Work lights come up as PHILLIP enters from backstage.)*

ALABAMA. Why is Penelope dressed like that?

VICTOR. How did you get in here?

ALABAMA. What the hell kind of a set is this?

(*re: BRENT*)

This man is sitting on the painting of a chair!

(*BRENT rises, trying to regain some dignity.*)

This play was written for black curtains and music stands.

VICTOR. Look, everyone. The playwright is here. Alabama Miller, I don't believe you know everyone...

ALABAMA. What have you done to my play? A lifetime of torment...bearing my soul...and you've slashed the guts out of it!

CHAZ. (*innocent*) When did you get out of the rehab center, Mr. Miller?

MONA. Clam up, Looney.

ALABAMA. (*re: CANDY*) Why is she dressed like that? Choir robes! Everyone in this play should be wearing choir robes!

VICTOR. Look, Alabama...if there's one thing I know how to mount, it's a show! Now, I have taken your soul, as you so nicely put it, and I have embellished it with the style only a Victor Le Pewe could give it. Now it is not only a dramatic triumph, now it is a commercial triumph as well. People will take one look at this show and say, "Le Pewe! Le Pewe!"

CANDY. I represent "women's repression and a new sexual freedom." Is that right, Mr. Le Pewe?

VICTOR. Yes. Yes. That is a statement that was just screaming to be made.

PHILLIP. Besides, Mr. Banks says T & A will goose the box office.

VICTOR. There comes a time, Mr. Miller, when it is best to just "go with the flow."

ALABAMA. "Go with the flow?" My play was 576 pages. Now it's 18 pages. And that includes the prop list.

PHILLIP. Yes, but now we can do three shows a night.

ALABAMA. You even changed my title.

VICTOR. "Drop Dead" is a catchy title.