POCHE. Yes, I like! I do like to be Poche! I like to wear a uniform!
(Finache enters up center, followed by Etienne.)
FINACHE. What is all this? (Sees Poche.) Hello, Victor.
POCHE. Victor? Who's calling me Victor?
FINACHE. Very funny, old man. (To Raymonde.) So what's going
on here?
RAYMONDE. This gentleman is pickled, that's what. Just smell
him. Go on, smell him! (Poche breathes like a dragon into Finache's
face to save him the trouble.)
FINACHE. Eugh! It's not possible. You, of all people?
POCHE. (Another alcoholic blast.) Me of what people?
FINACHE. Eugh! My poor friend. How much have you been
forced to swallow to attain this condition?
POCHE. I'm no drunker than you are, buddy!
FINACHE. (Trying to calm him.) All right, all right, fine ...
POCHE. Somebody's been making a fool out of me ever since I
got here. (Going to each in turn.) I got no idea who you are. I don't
know what you want from me. I'm here to see Monsieur Chandelier.
Period! So do I see him or do I not?
FINACHE. Chandelier wants to see Chandelier?
TOURNEL. And he keeps asking to be called Poche.
FINACHE. "Poche," eh? It may be short for "potion," from the
Latin potio, potare, to drink.
TOURNEL. What the hell are you talking about, Finache?
RAYMONDE. He has these moments of lucidity, and then ...fftt!
Nothing!
LUCIENNE. He's been like this all afternoon.
POCHE. What are you all looking at? I'm a very nice person, but
I don't like it when people make fun of me.
FINACHE. I understand, my friend, I understand ...
ALL. Absolutely. — Me too. — I know, I know ...Finache. I can't get over it! Hallucinations, amnesia, loss of per-
sonality — these symptoms only manifest themselves in terminal
alcoholics.
ALL. No, No!
FINACHE. Next stop — delirium tremens.
ALL. (Murmur of commiseration.) Aww. (Poche suddenly hits the
desk. They all jump.)
RAYMONDE. But he never has more than half a glass after meals.
TOURNEL. He doesn't drink most of it anyway.
ETIENNE. I usually finish it — to avoid the waste.

FINACHE. Well, well, my friend.
POCHE. Good thing you got rid of them. Things were going to
get very ugly.
FINACHE. Yes, I saw that.
POCHE. Hey, are they all — you know — a little cracked?
FINACHE. Maybe they are a little cracked.
POCHE. What did I tell you? They're cracked! You should've
given me a high sign. You know, like — "These people are
cracked." (Finache uses this gesture to take Poche's hand and take his
pulse.) What are you doing with my hand?
FINACHE. Nothing. Just being friendly.
POCHE. Well, I wouldn't get carried away.
FINACHE. That's curious. You have almost no pulse.
POCHE. No surprise there. "No wrist for the wicked." (He finds
that hilarious.)
FINACHE. (Laughing to humor him.) Oh, that's funny. That's
good. (Quietly, to Etienne) Laugh. Laugh. (Etienne laughs without
conviction.)
POCHE. Really tickled the flunkey, didn't I? (Etienne swings to hit
him, but Finache stops his arm.)
FINACHE. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Well now that we've had our lit-
tle laugh, we're going to be rational and reasonable.
POCHE. Huh?
FINACHE. A good start. Now I've been a friend of yours for how
many years now? (Poche just stares at him blankly.) You do know me.
POCHE. No.
FINACHE. Ah. You see, I'm the doctor, the person who takes care
of sick people. Broken bones, operations ...
POCHE. I'm not senile, you know. You're a doctor. Who's the
idiot now?
FINACHE. In any case, I sense — just looking at you, I sense that
you're becoming very, very tired.
POCHE. Me? No.
FINACHE. Yes, you're very, very tired. You're exhausted.
POCHE. Well, sure. I get up at five, sweep the hotel, clean the toi-
et-les, stack the firewood ...
FINACHE. (Nodding his head.) That's a reason!
ETIENNE. (Nodding his head.) That's a reason.
FINACHE. (Still nodding, and Etienne also nodding.) And now
you're going to take off all your clothes and lie down.
POCHE. (Nodding) Okay. (Shaking his head.) Oh, no. No.
FINACHE. Fine, fine! But at least you want to take off this hat
and this itchy old jacket ... (Starts to pull jacket off; Poche pulls it
back on.) ... while Etienne here brings you a robe. ( Gestures to
Etienne and Etienne exits down right.) How about that? Would we
feel more comely in a robe?
POCHE. Yeah, but my uniform ...
FINACHE. You'll get your uniform. (Finache moves up behind
him, pressing his breast to Poche's back, putting his right arm around
Poche's chest. Poche wonders what this is all about.) Now. There's a
very nice bed in there. (He points with his left hand toward the door
down right while raising Poche's left arm, so that Poche is pointing,
too.) You see? And we're going to go in there. (He walks, forcing
Poche to step right along with him.)
POCHE. What is this? A tango? (Poche backs up, forcing the doctor
to walk backwards, too.)
FINACHE. (Walking forward again so that Poche walks forward,
too.) We're going to go in there and stretch out ...
POCHE. (Sways back and Finache sways with him.) I'm getting
seasick.
FINACHE. (Moving him forward again.) ... because it's time to go
beddybye. Beddybye! Beddybye!
POCHE. ( Stops, stopping them both.) Hang on a second here.
What about Monsieur Chandebise?
FINACHE. Monsieur Chandebise? (Raising his arms to heaven, and
raising Poche's arms, too, in a petitioner shrug) Good Lord! (Whispers
in Poche's ear.) If he says anything to you, you just come tell me.
POCHE. All right. (They start marching toward the room down
right again as Etienne enters down right with a robe.)
ETIENNE. Here's the robe. (Finache grabs the robe.)
FINACHE. Good. Now take off his coat. (Finache lets go, and
Poche sways dizzyly.)
POCHE. That was fun. Look, you do whatever you want. (Etienne
takes off Poche's jacket and drapes it over a chair.)
FINACHE. There! Easy as pie, you see? (Slips the robe onto him.)
You just tell me that doesn't feel better.
POCHE. Sure is cozier than any old uniform. Summon my coach
and stallions!
FINACHE. Now I have a little finger here that tells me you're get-
ning thirsty.
POCHE. That's a shrewd little finger.
FINACHE. A very shrewd little finger. So my little finger is going
to give you something to drink.
POCHE. A finger of something?
FINACHE. A finger of something. Now it may not taste very