ACT TWO

The Frisky Puss Hotel, up one flight from the street. Gaudy, suggestive décor: Up center/left, stairways going up and down. A corridor leads off up left, and a door to a room is just visible in that corridor (Room 2). Down left, the front desk, with a row of coat pegs hanging behind it. On the coat pegs, a bellboy's jacket and cap. Upstage of the desk, the door to Rugby's room (Number 4). High on that wall, a set of room buzzers. A bench opposite the desk. At center stage, a partition wall with doors to two rooms. The upstage door leads to a room (Number 3) that we cannot see. Its adjoining, downstage, room (Number 5) is fully visible to our view at right. It has a curtained bed which we will find out is on a revolving platform; a small table; and a door down right to an unseen bathroom. In the paneling to either side of the bed are buttons that, surrounded by decorative concentric circles, somewhat resemble targets. As curtain, Eugenie is featherdusting in Number 5. Ferraillon is heard.

FERRAILLON. (Offstage.) Eugenie! Eugenie! (Enters from down the hall.) Eugenie!
EUGENIE. I'm in Number 5!
FERRAILLON. (Entering Number 5.) What are you doing?
EUGENIE. I just made up the room.
FERRAILLON. You call this bed made up?
EUGENIE. It looks made up to me.
FERRAILLON. Looks to me like five people just had a go on it.
EUGENIE. They probably did.
FERRAILLON. Insubordination, eh? Next thing you'll be telling me that this hotel is a bordello.
EUGENIE. Well —
FERRAILLON. That's enough. I'll have you know that this a deluxe hotel, a high-class establishment, and all of our guests are married.
EUGENIE. Yeah, but not to each other.
FERRAILLON. That's that to you? It makes them twice as mar-
ried — a tribute to matrimony. Now remake that bed, corporal, and
double-time! *(He throws back the covers and goes out into the hall.)*
EUGENIE. Thanks. You doubled my time, all right ... *(Olympia
entraps from upstage carrying a pile of sheets. Tight corset, lots of make-
up and flashy jewelry.)*
OLYMPIA. Who are you after now, Ferraillon?
FERRAILLON. Our young dame is itching for a shake-up. I wish
I'd had her under me just once back at the regiment. I'd have made
her shake all right ...
OLYMPIA. *(Severely)* Ferraillon.
FERRAILLON. Shake in her boots, I mean. You think I was talking
about the old in-and-out? I see enough of that every day. It dis-
gusts me.
OLYMPIA. Well, I should hope so. *(Baptiste enters along the hall
with the air of a beaten dog.)*
FERRAILLON. Well, well, Uncle Baptiste! Which tavern are you
crawling home from?
BAPTISTE. Who, me?
FERRAILLON. It's five o'clock! Do you want this job or not?
BAPTISTE. Well — yeah.
FERRAILLON. Okay, then, get out your rheumatism and hop in
the sack. What if we needed a sick old man when you weren't here?
Huh? Somebody comes here trying to catch their spouse in the act
and he finds me instead? Not on your life. It's disgusting.
BAPTISTE. I was thinking ...
FERRAILLON. Shut up! And back to your post! *(Baptiste shuffles
off into the unseen room up right.)* That's the modern family for you.
It's all me, me, me. But what about me? *(Rugby, a quick-tempered
English fellow, bursts out of the room at left.)*
RUGBY. *(Thick English accent.)* Nobody called? I say, did nobody
call for me?
FERRAILLON. What's that?
RUGBY. Nobody called, I said? Nobody called? *(Ferraillon and
Olympia look at each other and shrug.)* I'm asking you, did nobody call?
OLYMPIA. *(Shouting as if he were deaf.)* No! Nobody! Nobody,
monsieur!
RUGBY. Oh. Rightlyo. Thanks. *(Rugby goes back into his room.)*
FERRAILLON. What did our British friend say?
OLYMPIA. I think he asked if anybody called.
FERRAILLON. It's amazing, this fixation he's got about speaking
English. Don't I speak to him in good plain French?
OLYMPIA. He doesn't speak your language.
FERRAILLON. Does that mean I should understand his?
"Nobodécol," And he might learn to smile once in a while.
OLYMPIA. Poor man. This is the third time he's been stood up,
so to speak.
FERRAILLON. No surprise there. "Nobodécol." That'd make
anybody keep their clothes on.
OLYMPIA. It would me. Well, sheets to the linen closet.
FERRAILLON. Hang on, hang on, don't you soil your fingers,
sweetheart. *(Calls:)* Eugenie! *(Eugenie has been in Number 5's bath-
room all this time. She now comes into the hall carrying a chamber pot.)*
EUGENIE. Yes, sir?
FERRAILLON. You finished the room?
EUGENIE. Just now, monsieur.
FERRAILLON. Oh, I know. A room is always done once it's
needed.
EUGENIE. Just like it always needs to be redone once it's done.
FERRAILLON. Thank you for the pathetic attempt at philoso-
phy. Now take these rags to the linen closet.
OLYMPIA. Before I forget — Monsieur Chandebose sent a wire.
Eugenie, you remember Monsieur Chandebose?
EUGENIE. Sure I do. *(Imitating Camille.)* Hee huh whuh hoo
haw hai hih. *(He's the one who talks like this.)*
FERRAILLON. That's the one — and mind your lip. Let me see ...
*(Takes wire and reads it.)* "Coming five P.M., reserve same room
as last time. Chandebose." That'll mean Number 5. So if anybody
comes for Chandebose, it's Number 5. Now get on the march.
EUGENIE. *(Loading sheets onto chamber pot and muttering.)*
Horse's ass ...
FERRAILLON. What was that?
EUGENIE. I say a horse is an ass if you put a load on it. *(Eugenie
exits via the upstage corridor.)*
FERRAILLON. And remember that! — Olympia, we'd better give
Number 5 the old pinper eye. *(Goes into the room with Olympia.)*
Yes, that's more like it.
OLYMPIA. I'll check the bathroom, make sure the toilet's comme
il faut. *(Olympia goes into the bathroom.)*
FERRAILLON. Now let's hit the button and see if my idiot
uncle's at his post. *(He presses the button to the left of the bed. The
bed and partition wall turn on a pivot, carrying away the bed and
bringing a replica bed from the neighboring room. Baptiste is lying on*