

The Nursery (eng.)

See also La Nursery (fr.)

Summary

[to be written]

Cast

Georgie

Enos

Mother

The Nursery (eng.) Text Act I only:

ACT I

The scene is a nursery. The set is stylized, suggesting rather than depicting a nursery equipped for children in the four to five year old bracket. There is, however, a section of playpen (one or two sides only). There is a box of toys, mostly of the pulltoy variety. There are oversized alphabet blocks with at least the following letters which are visible to the audience: B R O D L O A W. They should stand roughly in that order. There are other sides with other letters, and at least one blank side. There is also a small box--the size of a shoe box-- with small toys in it. These are unimportant unless the front rows might be able to see details, in which case the toys are of the flat, cast or charm type, representing men and/or animals, about 3/4 inch. There can be a few larger toys among these. (In case the front rows are far enough from the stage, such things as small nuts and bolts would be equally acceptable, of course.) Also visible are a few teddy bears and dolls, as well as bottles with pacifiers, and one over-sized pacifier.

A beach ball rolls slowly across the stage. There is a sound of shouting as the two occupants of the nursery come running in in pursuit. Toy both got the ball at the same time.

BOTH 80YS

It's mine! It's mine! I wannit! You ha4 it long enough! You never let me play with it! All right for you! (Etc.)

(The boys are dressed as little boys, but in somewhat stylized fashion. ENOS is dressed neatly: neat, short-sleeve, button-down-collar shirt, nearly cut-off white Levis, white tennis shoes. His hair is short and combed. GEORGIE is messier. Rumped shirt with ragged short sleeves, roughly cut-off dark Levis, non-descript shoes (or no shoes at all). He needs a haircut and his hair is never combed, in any event. The two roles are played by adult males. ENOS would be the heavier of the two if, indeed, there were any difference at all. GEORGIE has a few scars visible from close view on face and hands.)

The two children tussle over the ball until ENOS succeeds in wresting it definitely from the hands of GEORGIE, who, immediately bursting into tears, has the usual child's recourse:

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GEORGIE (bawling)

All right for you! I'm gonna go tell Mommy!

ENOS (taunting and shouting)

Cry baby! Cry baby!

GEORGIE

It's not your ball!

ENOS

It is so!

GEORGIE

It is not!

ENOS

it is so!

GEORGIE

'Snot!

ENOS

'Tis too!

GEORGIE

'Snot!

ENOS

'Tis! . . . Look! I'm gonna break it!

(He puts it on the floor, foot poised menacingly over it)

GEORGIE (Screaming)

Don't!

(He bursts into tears again and flees the room)

GEORGIE (Off-stage)

Mommy! Mommy! Enos is gonna break my beach ball!

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MOTHER (entering with GEORGIE)

Now, will you two *please* stop fighting! Enos! Where is the ball?

(ENOS intensifies his feigned absorption in the big box. The MOTHER is a very attractive woman in her twenties. She looks less like a typical mother than like a model or a movie star. In short, she is well-dressed and appealing to all the adult male senses. She is about the same height as the boys)

MOTHER (commanding)

Enos! Where . . . is . . . the . . . ball! You didn't break it, did you? Of course you didn't Now, just tell Mommy where it is.

(She crouches beside him and pats his hand)

ENOS (pouting)

Well, it's not Georgie's ball!

GEORGIE

'Tis too!

(ENOS stands. MOTHER follows as there is a repeat of the earlier quarrel to high pitch, where MOTHER, no longer able to stand it, shouts)

MOTHER

Will you two please stop it! This noise will drive me completely insane! I'll take the ball. Where is it, Enos?

(ENOS points to the ball. Goes back to picking over the box. GEORGIE looks expectant)

MOTHER

No, Georgie. Neither of you! The ball belongs to both of you. If you're going to fight over it, I'll simply have to hide it until you can learn to behave. Now we'll have no more scenes like this if you want to have your ice-cream this afternoon. Mind you!

(She leaves. GEORGIE, sulking, goes to the playpen where

GEORGIE

I still don't see why you and Mommy can't let me paint my bicycle yellow. What's wrong with yellow?

ENOS

Mommy told you and it's all settled. You can't paint your bicycle yellow because it's a new bicycle and you don't paint new bicycles.

GEORGIE

Why not?

ENOS

Because you don't, that's all! And even if you did you wouldn't paint it yellow!

GEORGIE

Why not?

ENOS

Because you don't do that, that's all! Did you hear Mommy say...

MOTHER (entering)

Now! That's much nicer! Aren't you playing nice . . . Georgie, why are you sucking on that pacifier again? You're much too old for that sort of thing!

(She tries to take it from him, but he pulls away and she gives up)

MOTHER

Why can't you be like other children? Like Enos! See? He smokes cigarettes like a normal child should!

GEORGIE

I don't wanna smoke! I don't like the way it tastes!

ENOS

You don't even know how it tastes!

GEORGIE

I do so. Remember when you took me out behind the barn and made

me take a puff?

MOTHER

Behind the barn?

ENOS

Of course! That's the way all kids start smoking!

MOTHER

Of course! I guess I'd forgotten . . .

GEORGIE

It tasted lousy!

MOTHER

Oh, you'd get used to it, I'm sure! You have to get used to a lot of things, you know! I'm afraid you're going to be a very unhappy child, Georgie. Won't you please . . .

GEORGIE

I wanna paint my bicycle yellow!

MOTHER

Good heavens, child! Are we going to get involved in that all over again?

GEORGIE

Well, why can't I?

ENOS

I just told him, he can't paint a bicycle yellow because nobody paints bicycles yellow!

GEORGIE

They do in the circus, I betcha.

MOTHER

In the what?

GEORGIE

The circus!

GEORGIE

I do too!

ENOS

Do not!

GEORGIE

Do too!

ENOS

Don't!

MOTHER (stopping the rising voices)

All right! Stop! We just won't talk about it anymore! Now, I have my mending to do, so can't you . . .

ENOS

Mommy! Can't we play hide the thimble?

MOTHER

Yes, that would be nice. You two play hide the thimble (She removes her thimble from her finger) and I'll . . .

ENOS

We can't play it just the two of us, Mommy. Come on! Play with us!

GEORGIE

I don't like that kind of game.

ENOS

Just because you can't find the thimble! That's all!

GEORGIE

'Tie not.

ENOS

'Tis So !

GEORGIE

'Tis not.

MOTHER

All right! All right! I'll stay here and play hide the thimble with you Enos. And, Georgia, please do try to find the thimble this time, won't you? Enos will let you find it.

ENOS

Can I hide it first, Mommy?

MOTHER (sensing an impending conflict)

No, I think I'd better hide it first. Now, you two go out. But no fighting!

(ENOS leaves immediately. GEORGIE lags from lack of enthusiasm. MOTHER starts to look for a place to hide the thimble)

ENOS (coming back)

Georgie! Come on! . . . Mommy! Georgia's stalling so he can see where you put the thimble.

GEORGIE

I don't like this game!

ENOS

That's no reason to cheat!

GEORGIE

I'm not cheating, Mommy!

MOTHER (exasperated)

Will you two ever stop fighting! Now, just go on. Get a drink of water. I'll only take a second. Then we can play nicely all three of us together!

(The two boys go. MOTHER looks around quickly. She tries one place, changes her mind. There are cries

All right, boys!

GEORGIE (whimpering, coming in first, a splotch of water spilled on his pants)

Mommy! Enos spilled water all over me!

ENOS

Cry baby! It just splashed out of the basin is all!

MOTHER (controlling her temper)

Let me see, Georgie.

(Enos starts looking for the thimble)

MOTHER

Oh, you're not very wet. That will dry out very quickly. Now, go look for the thimble.

(Meanwhile, ENOS has quickly located the thimble. He goes to it, picks it up and puts it back. He turns innocently and walks in a different direction)

GEORGIE (after a too-rapid, eye-check of the room from where he stands:)

I can't find it.

MOTHER

Georgie! You have to move around a little. Now go ahead. Move a little and I'll tell you when you're hot or cold.

(GEORGIE takes a disconsolate step)

MOTHER

That's right, Georgie. You're a teeny-weeny bit warmer.

(GEORGIE takes several steps in the right direction)

MOTHER

Oh! My! You're almost burning up, Georgie!

(GEORGIE takes another step, is next to the thimble, but fails to see it. ENOS, who has been prowling nearby, swoops in and siezes it triumphantly)

ENOS

I found it!

(GEORGIE puts the pacifier in his mouth)

MOTHER (wearily)

All right, Enos! You can hide it. Georgie! Take that pacifier out of your mouth and come with me.

(GEORGIE takes out pacifier promptly when ordered to. Then, as he exits with MOTHER, he puts in back in. ENOS looks around. He takes up a doll and considers putting it in some improper place. Reconsiders reluctantly and finds a more obvious place: a ledge outside of the window. Goes to the box and calls)

ENOS

Ready! . . . You can come in now!

(MOTHER and GEORGIE enter)

MOTHER

Now I just wonder where that might be. we have to think where we would put it if we were Enos, Georgie.

(GEORGIE goes automatically to the doll, picks it up and shakes it)

MOTHER

Georgie! what on earth . . . ! (Laughs) Did you think Enos would hide it somewhere on the doll?

GEORGIE

Well, you said we should . . .

ENOS (cutting him off)

The next thing he'll think is that I put it in the crayon dish.

(GEORGIE races for the toy box and searches frantically. ENOS laughs. MOTHER has located the thimble and so indicates to ENOS)

GEORGIE (aloud to himself)

If I was a thimble, where would I hide?

MOTHER

Don't talk nonsense, Georgie. Maybe we should look on ledges first. Try all the ledges you can see, Georgie. Try the ones nearest you first.

(GEORGIE is almost on top of the thimble as she says this. He looks around)

GEORGIE (triumphant)

Hey, Mommy! Enos! Look! I found it! I found the thimble!

ENOS (with an air of complicity)

Look, Mommy! Georgie found the thimble before you did! He's pretty smart.

GEORGIE (disillusioned, examining it)

It's just the same as it was before you hid it.

MOTHER

Well, now that Georgie's found it, I guess it's our turn to go out. Now, you find a good place for it, Georgie! Come, Enos!

(They leave. GEORGIE, turning slowly, contemplating the thimble and the possibilities for hiding it. ENOS comes to the door and peeks in)

MOTHER'S voice

Enos! Where are you?

(ENOS disappears as GEORGIE turns around. GEORGIE starts for an unknown Destination but then stops)

GEORGIE

No. If I put it there, they'll never find it. (Looks some more) I have to put it somewhere where they can find it. That's why it's so hard! (He puts it between two of the blocks) There. (Calling) Ready! (to himself) Gee, I wonder if that's too easy!

(ENOS and MOTHER enter. ENOS starts looking immediately)

MOTHER (condescending)

Now, I wonder where I would put the thimble if I were Georgie.

GEORGIE (worried)

Don't look anywhere around the blocks . . . cuz it isn't there!

MOTHER (pitying)

Georgie!

ENOS

Oh, that's where it is!

(He attacks the boxes and finds the thimble immediately)

Here it is!

MOTHER (putting her arm around GEORGIE)

I'm afraid you have a lot to learn yet, Georgie.

GEORGIE

Gee, Enos found that quick, didn't he Mommy?

ENOS

Let's play hide and seek. I've got a good idea where to hide. Georgie, you be "It."

GEORGIE

I don't want to play that game either. It's just another hiding game.

MOTHER

Maybe you should be "It," Enos.

ENOS

We can pick out by "eeny meeny miney moe"l

MOTHER

Or "One-potato." Let's do it by "one-potato."

(GEORGIE is resigned. Puts out hands with the others. ENOS counts. They do the "My mother gave your mother a punch in the nose" routine. GEORGIE laughs and interrupts)

GEORGIE

Mommy would have to punch herself in the none, then!

MOTHER

I guess I would, wouldn't I?

ENOS

Come on! Where were we? "What color was the blood?"

MOTHER  
Red!

(ENDS is about to continue)

GEORGIE  
Yellow!

MOTHER (surprised)  
Yellow! That's not a nice way to think about your mother, Georgie!

ENOS  
Besides, blood is never yellow.

GEORGIE  
Does it always have to be red?

ENOS  
No, stupid! It can be blue and . . . and . . .

MOTHER  
It can be green.

ENOS  
Yes, it can be blue or green, but it's never orange or violet or yellow.

GEORGIE  
Not even a canary's blood?

MOTHER  
Of course not, Georgie! Just remember that neither one, neither blood nor bicycles are ever, ever yellow. That's a rule that will help you a lot as you get bigger.

ENOS  
"What color was the blood?"

MOTHER  
"Red"!

ENOS

R-E-D.

(The count ends with MOTHER)

MOTHER

Well! I guess I'm it, then. Now, Georgie, you find a good place to hide.

GEORGIE

Aw, I'm no good at hiding!

ENOS

Oh, come on, Georgie! There are a lot of good places!

MOTHER

Now I'll cover my eyes (She goes to a block or seat, turns her back) and counts to one hundred by fives.

(She counts as ENOS goes to the side of the stage, between some files. GEORGIE follows. ENOS expulses him, indicating that that is his place. GEORGIE is disconsolate first, then, frantic, searches the room. Finally, finding no better place as the count nears 100, he hides imperfectly on the downstage side of the play pen)

MOTHER

Ready or not, here I comet

(Unwittingly, she passes on downstage of play-pen and is forced to recognize that she has seen GEORGIE)

MOTHER (almost to herself)

Oh. Georgie!

(She goes back and touches the goal)

I saw you, Georgie! You're out!

(GEORGIE gets up, finds a piece of paper and starts drawing crescents on it)

MOTHER (searching)

Well, I just can't find Enos anywhere. Do you suppose he went out of this room?

(GEORGIE, about to speak, checks himself and goes back to drawing. MOTHER leaves the room. ENOS bolts across the stage to the goal)

ENOS

Oley, oley, in-free!

MOTHER (returning)

Oh, Enos, where were you? Where on earth were you hiding?

ENOS

I'm not gonna tell! It's a good place and I can use it again sometime. Hey, Georgie! It's your turn now!

MOTHER

Yes, dear, you have to be "It," because I caught you. You really don't hide very well, do you? . . . Can you count to one hundred yet?

GEORGIE

Sure I can, Mommy. I can count up to a million.

ENOS

Gee, how old do you think we are, anyway?

MOTHER (revenue)

I'm just not sure, Enos. I really am just not sure.

GEORGIE (going reluctantly to the goal)

One - two - three - five - ten - fifteen . . .

(He counts rapidly by fives up to sixty or seventy, by which time ENOS has gone where MOTHER went to look for him. MOTHER hides behind a drape, or behind the blocks. GEORGIE stops counting. He puts the pacifier in his mouth, elbow still on chair or block, and looks into space. He is meditating)

ENOS

Hey, Georgie! Haven't you finished yet?

(GEORGIE, recalled to reality continues to 100)

GEORGIE

There! I finished! I'm coming to look for you!

(He searches where ENOS went first -- not too well -- and so, in vain. He is side-tracked by the paper he was drawing crescents on. He finds the paper near some scissors and puts out two crescents, back to MOTHER. MOTHER observes the crescents that fall near her and discloses herself)

MOTHER

Your brother decided to cut out pieces of paper. They look like moons, Georgie. Is that what they're supposed to be?

GEORGIE

I was just cutting out designs is all.

ENOS

You were supposed to look for us, idiot! You're supposed to go away from the goal so we can try to come in.

GEORGIE

Oh, yeah! Well, I did and I couldn't find you. Besides I thought you liked to hide. Anyway, this way I knew you couldn't come free.

ENOS

I did anyway.

GEORGIE

By that time I didn't care. Look at my pieces of paper!

MOTHER

I don't think you should play with scissors, Georgie. You're much too little. Enos, let's try one more time. Would you mind being "It" and showing Georgie how it should be done?

ENOS

Oh, all right. But if I find him, I'm gonna call him "out."

(ENOS starts counting by fives. MOTHER goes to ENOS' first hiding place. GEORGIE looks about again. He goes to the door where ENOS had gone the second time. ENOS peeks and sees MOTHER go, but misses GEORGIE. After all are hidden, ENOS cheats in counting, skipping to tens and jumping to 100)

ENOS

Ready or not, I'm coming!

(Looks warily for GEORGIE as he goes to "discover" his MOTHER. They run from the hiding place to the goal, ENOS first)

ENOS

You're out!

(MOTHER, out of breath and laughing, falls into ENOS'

MOTHER

You're sure you looked everywhere?

ENOS

Everywhere I can think of. Except . . . except the attic!

(He dashes out. MOTHER picks up scraps and scissors. She crushes up the crescents and scraps and puts them in her pocket. Looks at scissors and decides to pocket them as well)

ENOS'voice (shocked)  
Georgie!

ENOS (rushing in)  
Mommy! Mommy!

MOTHER  
Whatever is the matter, Enos?

ENDS  
I found Georgie up in the attic and he had a Hallowe'en mask. You know, that skeleton kind. He had that and he was kissing it and saying "sweetheart," "sweetheart," "I love you," and "darling" and all that kind of slop. With a skeleton!

MOTHER  
I simply don't know what I'm going to do with that child. (calling)  
Georgie! . . . Georgie! Come here right away!

GEORGIE'S voice  
Just a minute, Mommy!

MOTHER  
No "just-a-minutes"! Right away, now!

GEORGIE'S voice  
O.K. I'm ready.

(He enters, dressed in a long, faded dress of some past epoch. He carries a purse and wears a woman's broad brimmed hat, also of some past era. Flowers on hat. He is wearing as well the skeleton mask referred to by ENOS, above)

GEORGIE  
Look what I found Enos! We could play dress-up! How about playing dress-up?

MOTHER  
Georgie! Women's clothes! Take those off right away. Right away! Do you understand?

MOTHER

Just the same, give me those right away. I'm going to take them up and lock the trunk right now! Georgie, you go play with the blocks. And for heaven sakes, try for once to put them together like a house! Or a tower! I do wish you'd stop inventing things!

(ENOS starts pulling the pull-toy again)

MOTHER

That's nice, Enos!

(She goes to him, puts her arm around him and kisses him as she would an adult. He is absorbed in his "work," however. She walks coquettishly with him for a moment. They stop)

MOTHER

You're such a comfort to me, Enos. Now please try not to fight with Georgie. All right?

ENOS

O.K., Mommy.

MOTHER

Now I must go and get my housework done. You'll be good, both of you, won't you?

(GEORGIE has gotten his blocks lined up so that the word LAW faces out to the audience. Construction is supervised by set designer to form "way-out" designs)

GEORGIE

O.K., Mommy.

(MOTHER leaves)

ENOS (approaching GEORGIE)

Hey, Georgie! Ernie told me a dirty story yesterday.

GEORGIE (still absorbed in combining his blocks)

I don't like those stories.

ENOS

This one was real dirty.

GEORGIE

I'll tell Mommy!

ENOS

It's about the little boy who had to go to the bathroom when he was on a picnic.

GEORGIE (starting to cry)

Stop it! Stop it! I don't wanna hear it!

ENOS (holding GEORGIE)

And his Mommy made him go in the woods!

GEORGIE (crying full blast)

Lemme go! Lemme go!

ENOS

And he had to take his pants down!

GEORGIE (crying)

Mommy!

ENOS

And while he was there, the animals came and took his pants away, and when he came out everybody saw his bare behind!

(He lets the screaming GEORGIE go. GEORGE runs into the entering MOTHER. He buries his head in her shoulder)

MOTHER

Good heavens! What on earth is going on here?

GEORGIE (sobbing)

Enos told me a dirty story.

MOTHER

Enos!

(ENOS pretends to examine his pull-toy)

MOTHER (to GEORGIE)

(She pats him on the behind as he leaves)

MOTHER (to ENOS)

Enos.

ENOS

But, Mommy! It wasn't a bad story! I've heard worse ones.

MOTHER

I know. But why must you tell them to Georgie? Sometimes I have the feeling that you tease him a little too much.

ENOS

He has to hear them sometime, Mommy!

MOTHER

Of course, Enos, of course! And you and I know that that's life. But please ask me the next time, will you? And especially if you're making him cry . . .

ENOS

What do you suppose the cir . . . cir . . . circo . . . or whatever it was that . . . he just made up . . . what do you suppose it was? Do you suppose it really was anything?

MOTHER

Oh, no! Just something he thought up. If he'd just stop sucking on that pacifier . . .

ENOS

We could throw it away!

MOTHER

Oh, no! That would be awful!

ENOS

Why?

MOTHER

It would create the reverse effect. He would resent the fact that we hid it from him and he'd be looking for it the rest of his life! Then he'd never leave off this constant making of all these odd things. Now . . . here he comes. Try not to tease him . . . or . . . let me talk to him for a while. Can you go out and play?

Is Enos going out? I think I'll go out and play too.

MOTHER

Just a second, Georgie. You can go out, but I'd like to talk to you alone for a minute.

(GEORGIE takes up teddy bear and pacifier)

GEORGIE

O.K. Mommy.

(plugs pacifier in mouth)

MOTHER

Georgie, you know why Enos teases you the way he does?

GEORGIE(taking pacifier out)

He doesn't like me. (Re-inserts it)

MOTHER

No, Georgie! That's not it at all! Your brother loves you! And he doesn't know why he teases you either-any more than you do. It's just that he can't stand to see you act the way you do. He wants you to grow up! . . . I mean there are things you just do the way they are supposed to be done. When you drive a car you drive in a certain way. You act like a person driving a cars like a teenager driving a car, like a woman driving a car, like a man driving a car, like a car driving a car, like a car driving a horse, like a car driving a child, like a child driving a horse, like a dog chewing gum, like a worm eating an apple . . . You see what I mean. Don't you see how terrible our life would be if a steeplejack didn't act like a steeplejack, or a tourist like a tourist, or a doctor like a doctor, or a sailor like a sailor? What would things be like if a lawyer acted like a stevedore--I mean on the job, of course. (If he wanted to play-act a stevedore during his vacation on the docks this would be his own business and nobody would know.) What would it be like if an American acted like a Mexican? Or a minister like a carpenter? Or a mother like a virgin?

GEORGIE (having taken the pacifier out and put it back thinking to interrupt several times)

I think it sounds wonderful.

MOTHER

But how complicated!

GEORGIE (enthralled)

Is that a word you made up, Mommy?

MOTHER

Psychotic?

GEORGIE

No.

MOTHER

Neurotic?

GEORGIE

No.

MOTHER (incredulous)

Immature?

GEORGIE

Yes!

MOTHER

Heavens, no, child! Everybody knows what immature means.

GEORGIE (disappointed, plugs mouth with pacifier)

Oh.

MOTHER

Immaturity is when you don't act the way you're supposed to.

GEORGIE

How do you know how you're supposed to act?

MOTHER

Everybody knows how he's supposed to act.

GEORGIE

How?

MOTHER

By looking around you and seeing how the others who are like you act! And if you don't do it you are immature.

(ENOS enters, smoking a cigarette)

MOTHER

Look at Enos! Come hers Enos.

(ENOS approaches curiously)

MOTHER

See how Enos is? He's acting like he should. Now, how should a child act? Look around you and see! Isn't that what you do, Enos?

ENOS (looking around, bewildered)

I don't see anything.

MOTHER

I mean, you copy the other children, don't you? You wear a button-down shirt, cut-offs, sneakers, and smoke cigarettes . . .

ENOS (looking down)

I'd never noticed.

MOTHER

But you do act like a child.

ENOS

I dunno . . .

MOTHER

well, you're not like Georgie!

GEORGIE (beaming, as if by revelation)

Mediocritude!

(He hurries to his blocks and starts combining them. He quickly forms the word DO for the audience)

ENOS

What's that?

MOTHER

What do you mean?

GEORGIE

The opposite of immaturity is mediocritude.

MOTHER

You mean mediocrity.

GEORGIE (positively)

--tude.

MOTHER

--ty

GEORGIE

-tude.

MOTHER

--ty.

(They sing briefly "Tea for tood and tood for tea.")

MOTHER (abashed)

Really, Georgie!

MOTHER

Because the opposite of immaturity is maturity, that's why.

ENOS

And immaturity is bad and maturity is good.

(He starts pulling another pull-toy.  
GEORGIE, who has turned momentarily  
from his blocks is fiddling with  
something on the floor. It is a piece  
of string)

GEORGIE (Excited)

Mommy! Enos! Look!

MOTHER (bored)

Oh, what is it now? Just that old string . . .

GEORGIE

Enos! Look, it keeps coming out of the floor!

ENOS (shrugging--from the far side of the stage)

So it's that string!

GEORGIE (pulling it out of a hole in the floor)

But it keeps coming out! Maybe it never ends!

ENOS

Of course it ends, silly!

GEORGIE

Has anybody ever seen it end?

MOTHER (impatient)

For heaven's sake, Georgie! Of course it ends! It stands to reason that it ends! You certainly don't have to sit there pulling at it to see that it's going to end! Now stop it; stop the nonsense and go back to your blocks! I have to go wash the dishes. Please play nicely and don't interrupt me again or I'll never finish my work!

(Exit. ENOS' attention has just been  
drawn to another toy -- a doll)

ENOS

GEORGIE

They do so! They look like something to me!

ENOS

Yeah? Just what do they look like to you?

GEORGIE

I haven't made up the word for it yet.

ENOS (sing-song)

Yeah! Yeah! You don't even know what it is.

GEORGIE

Just because it doesn't look like something you've seen before, that doesn't mean it isn't anything.

ENDS

Well, if it is something it must have a name. It can't just be there and not look like something and not have a name.

GEORGIE (naive)

Why?

ENOS

Oh, come on, Georgie! Tell me a name or I'll kick it down.

(Makes threatening gesture with his foot)

GEORGIE (terrified)

No! I'll tell you what it is! It's a... it's a... An astronoid!

ENOS

I told you it had a name, didn't I? You see?

GEORGIE

No... not really. No... That's just a word that I invented.

ENOS

Yeah, but it's still the name of the thing.

GEORGIE(deeply concerned)

ENOS

It is so! It's right there! An astronoid if I ever saw one! The perfect astronoid! How can you say it isn't any more?

GEORGIE (panicky)

Can't you see? Now it's not it anymore. It's just its name!

(He crashes the blocks down. Builds them in a rectangle so they read:  
LAW DO ROB from the audience side)

ENOS

Why did you do that?

GEORGIE (furious)

Why? Because I wanted to, that's why. Because behind every "because" there's another "why." That's why. Does everything have to have a reason? And just one reason? Why do I want to paint my bicycle yellow? Huh? Why?

ENOS (nervous)

Well . . . I . . . I . . . I mean .

GEORGIE

Because I want to see the yellow paint shining in the pail with the little yellow dribbles dried on the outside and the new paint in the little gutter around the top of the pail. Because I want to see the mixing stick half dried and sticky on the overturned cover in the green grass. Because I want to see the wet yellow paint soak into the breadth of the brush and fill in the spaces between the bristles. Because I want to watch the yellow flow from yellow brush to yellow bicycle until everything is yellow and dripping and wet paint yellow do not touch. And it's because I could only have that feeling--all that feeling--with yellow.

ENOS

But that's no reason, Georgie! Not a real, sensible reason!

GEORGIE

I don't guess I ever had one of those about anything -- all my life long.

(Silence, as ENOS tries to figure out what to do with his doll and as GEORGIE contemplates his blocks)

ENOS (snapping out of it first)

GEORGIE

That's dirty!

ENOS

It's fun!

GEORGIE

It is not!

ENOS

How do you think you were born, anyway?

GEORGIE (getting up slowly)

Born? . . . What's being born, Enos?

(He goes in a daze to pick up the male doll  
and bring it back to where ENOS' doll is)

ENOS

Look, I'll show you how it works. . .

GEORGIE

I don't care about how it works, Enos. Just what is it?

(ENOS starts to do something behind  
the blocks. GORGIE grabs his doll)

GEORGIE

No! Don't do that! Something might happen! She might have a baby!

ENOS

Aw! Come on! Just because they eqt and drink and wet their pants doesn't mean they can have babies.

GEORGIE

They can try. Maybe they can even feel. (Talks to doll) Oswald! Oswald! Can you feel? Can you hear?

ENOS

He can't talk. Neither can Genevieve. (Mocks GEORGIE'S scene) Genevieve! Genevieve! Speak to me!

(GEORGIE looks expectantly)

MOTHER

what's all this talk about babies? Enos! Put Genevieve's skirts back down this instant!

GEORGIE

He was just doing what the other children do, Mommy!

MOTHER

Don't you be fresh, Georgie. There are some things that are right to do and some that are wrong.

GEORGIE

The mediocritudy ones are right and the immaturity ones are wrong..

MOTHER

Georgie! Go wash your mouth out with soap right away!

GEORGIE

But, Mommy!

MOTHER (taking him by the ear)

Come with me! I'll wash your mouth out with soap!

(They leave, GEORGIE crying, MOTHER scolding.  
ENOS peeks underneath Genevieve's skirts,  
and, at what he sees, begins to laugh  
uproariously. Then he gets up and, trailing  
Genevieve absent-mindedly by an arm, drags  
her to the toy box and deposits her  
unceremoniously behind it. Pulls out  
some crayons. MOTHER returns with GEORGIE)

MOTHER

Enos! I think it's time I talked to both of you boys about life and how it starts. Come over here. (She sits down with them)  
You see . . .

GEORGIE

What's being born, Mommy?

MOTHER

That's just what I'm about to explain to you, child. You see, did you ever see the seed of a flower?

GEORGIE (positively)

Then they're the same. It's like an automobile going forward or backward. It's still an automobile.

MOTHER

I suppose . . .

ENOS

You just come from nothing and go back to nothing, that's all.

MOTHER

No, that's not quite it, dear. You see, we are all something somewhere and then, when we are born, we move to a different place . . .

GEORGIE

And when we die we move to another place . . . like going down

a ladder.

MOTHER

Or up.

GEORGIE

What did you say, Enos?

ENOS

I just said we came out of nowhere. I was just being funny.

GEORGIE

Could it be that, Mommy? Could it be that there is nothing and then suddenly we are?

MOTHER

No, child, you don't listen. You see, there is the seed and then there is the egg and this seed and this egg came from other seeds and other eggs before them and these in turn came from other egg-seeds and other seed-eggs, and there has always and always been an always and always and always and always and always.

GEORGIE (excited)

But just think, Mommy! Supposing something did just pop out of nothing!

ENOS

Why did I ever say it! I was only kidding!

MOTHER

Georgie! Georgie! Calm down, now! Calm down! Now, it simply stands to reason that the egg came from the seed and the seed from the egg. Why would eggs be able to go to seed? How would we grow eggs? Now, greater minds than ours have worked on this problem and that's why we must accept it. Besides, it couldn't be otherwise. Now I must go back to my work. Else I'll never get a thing done.

ENOS

Let's melt some crayons!

GEORGIE

ENOS

The matches and the candle are over there.

GEORGIE

The dish is in the toy box.

ENOS

Well, the matches are here.

GEORGIE

The candle's in the corner over here.

(They go and get the items except the  
dish and crayons. They root through  
the box extracting crayons as they go)

GEORGIE

Here's a blue and a red and . . . what color is this?

ENOS (briefly looking)

I dunno . . . Oh here's all those little bits from the old boxes.

GEORGIE

Here's a big thick green one.

ENOS

Here's a yellow one! Oh, oh!

GEORGIE (laughing)

What? . . . Oh, don't worry! I'm not going to talk about my  
bicycle any more.

ENOS

I don't think I wanna melt crayons, anyway. I think I'll go out  
and play.

GEORGIE

I'm going to color some of those old coloring books.

(ENOS goes out as MOTHER comes in with  
beans, cutting board, pan and knife)

MOTHER

ENOS

O.K., Mommy.

MOTHER

That means come in before I have to send for the police again!

ENOS (irritated)

O.K.!

(Goes)

MOTHER (To GEORGIE)

What are you doing, dear? Coloring your books?

GEORGIE

There were some pages I hadn't finished yet.

MOTHER

That's a good idea, sweetheart. I thought I'd come and cut these beans for supper as long as you were in the house.

GEORGIE

Beans? Yummee! I love 'em! You're not going to put onions in them, are you?

MOTHER (considering for a brief seapnd)

Oh, all right. Tonight I'll leave the opions out.

(MOTHER cuts and GEORGIE colors for a moment. Then GEORGIE moves to the string)

GEORGIE

Mommy . . .

MOTHER

Yes, dear?

GEORGIE

I was just wondering . . .

MOTHER

What was that, sweetheart?

MOTHER

Why . . . I don't know. I suppose he likes to show he loves me.

GEORGIE

If he afraid to be alone?

MOTHER

No. I don't suppose so . . . You know, you could get into my bed any time you want to.

GEORGIE

I suppose so . . . (apologetically) I love you, too, Mommy.

MOTHER

I know you do, sweet . . .

(As she pats him on the head she notices something)

MOTHER

Why, you aren't coloring any more, Georgie. What on earth are you doing with that string?

GEORGIE

Oh, I just thought I'd roll it up into a ball.

MOTHER (sitting back)

That's a nice idea, Georgie. Just so long as you don't try to find the end of that string. If you do, we'll have to move out!

(Curtain on Act I)

B