



Funeral in Berlin. By Len Deighton. Putnam. \$4.95. Plotters and counter-plotters in the split city (which is admirably depicted) go about their devious and deadly businesses in this smooth, sure-footed, and thoroughly adult espionage number.

The Power. By William Harrington. Bobbs-Merrill. \$4.95. Ohio county prosecutor tries case wherein lay preacher is accused of causing death of farm woman who foreswore medical treatment after consulting him; fine performance, as expected from the author of *Which the Justice, Which the Thief*.

Safe Secret. By Harry Carmichael. Macmillan. \$3.95. Insurance-eye Piper, newsman Quinn, and Supt. Hoyle of the Yard dig into puzzle of £35,000 filched from bookie parlor; there are two murders also. Sound, heads-up job.

A Knife for the Juggler. By Manning Coles. Crime Club. \$3.50. Search for defecting Russian diplomat takes Tommy Hambleton, veteran British intelligence ace, hither and yon in France and Spain. He's still his old ebullient self, and more power to him.

Downbeat Kill. By Peter Chambers. Abelard-Schuman. \$3.50. Report of death of L.A. area top disc jockey puts Peeper Mark Preston in the money and shows him inside workings of big-time TV. Pert and flip.

Sentence of Death. By Jeremy York. Macmillan. \$3.95. Told he has six months to live by party who should know, well-heeled Englishman vows to track down faithless wife's lover. Outcome not unguessable.

The Terrors of the Earth. By Stanton Forbes. Crime Club. \$3.50. Boston area widow (two school-age children) flips when anonymous letters zero in; neighbors, plus and minus, are active; two killings no help. Highly emotive jane-in-jam situation.

Johnny Goes South. By Desmond Cory. Walker. \$3.50. Yet another British intelligence ace (Johnny Fedora this time) journeys far afield (western Argentina) in hope of aborting Communist takeover. And still they come.

The Year of the Rat. By Mladin Zarubica. Postscript by Ralph Ingersoll. Harcourt, Brace & World. \$3.95. Author, on hunting holiday in Bavarian

Alps in 1946, met guide who gave him detailed account of daring Allied deception that led to success of Normandy invasion. Take it or leave it, it's still exciting reading.

The Whirligig of Time. By Dola de Jong. Crime Club. \$3.50. Twelve-year-old lad, summering at his actress-granny's East Coast beach home, runs into nerve-twisting situation; terrapin bisque is partaken of. Atmosphere superbounds.

The Reluctant Assassin. By Alain Reynaud-Fourton. Coward-McCann. \$3.95. Top Paris mobster, readying for retirement, plans pension-providing coup—does it work out? Brisk, fast-paced tale, with intricate plotting.

From Doon with Death. By Ruth Rendell. Crime Club. \$3.50. Disappearance of suburban housewife puts English police on trail that leads into the past and as far from home as Colorado. Author's first is a memorable performance.

The Real Serendipitous Kill. By Hampton Stone. Simon & Schuster. \$3.50. New York Assistant D.A. Jeremiah Gibson tackles twin killings involving arty set; arson is also committed. Spirited and spry.

Double Defector. By Patrick Wayland. Crime Club. \$3.50. San Juan, Washington, Boston, and Montreal are foci of action in this exciting interplay of wits and guns. Author of *Counterstroke* scores again.

The Crimson Patch. By Phoebe Atwood Taylor. Norton. \$3.50. This is No. 6 in a reprint series starring Acey Mayo, Cape Cod Sherlock, whose triumphs delighted Aunt Emma and Uncle Hank a generation gone. —SERGEANT CUFF.

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The Tiny Alice Caper

ALTHOUGH the returns are far from in on Edward Albee's new play, *Tiny Alice*, post-opening discussions with its author, its director, and its two stars may be helpful to those who wish to ponder its mysteries.

As most theatergoers know by this time, *Tiny Alice* is the story of a cardinal's secretary whose soul is sold to the richest woman in the world (Miss Alice) in exchange for a huge annual contribution to the Church. However, there is such constant suggestion that each character and event symbolize larger and not fully comprehensible forces that many of us ask, "What does it all mean?" or complain that the storytelling has been exasperatingly interrupted by the endless embellishments.

The critical response has been amazingly contradictory. Some have used such phrases as "a masterpiece," "one of the capstones of the drama's long and adventurous history," "every minute a totally engrossing evening," and "establishes Albee as the most distinguished American playwright to date." Others have deprecated it with such terms as "prolix," "tedious," "pretentious," "ostentatious," "ugly," "wilfully obscure," "an intellectual shell game," "a set trap that has no bait." Dominating the reviews, however, are those that combine extravagant praise and condemnation. "Big and brutal as an Elizabethan tragedy" is followed by "more depraved than any drama yet produced on the American stage." "Falters badly at the beginning of the second act" is balanced with "the most engrossing evening of contemporary theater you are going to find in New York this year." Many reviewers have confessed a complete inability to find meaning in it at all, while others have discovered parallels to the Bible, to *Parsifal*, and to *Alice in Wonderland*.

There is also some difference of opinion among the production's principal participants, each of whom has avoided a direct interpretation of the play's meaning.

To begin with, Mr. Albee (pronounced All-bee) is fuzzy in his recollections about the play's origins. Like the play's protagonist, Julian, he is obviously no longer sure how much of his memory about its creation is real, and how much dreamed, imagined, or hallucinated. He says, "I think the play started a couple of years ago when I read a small news item about someone in Germany who had been kept in a



—Antony di Gesù.

Edward Albee—What does it mean?

room within a room." At the time he had been working on another new play, *The Substitute Speaker*, which he decided to postpone because it contained superficial resemblances to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The title *Tiny Alice* occurred to him some time later but was not consciously arrived at from any literary source such as *Alice in Wonderland*, any more than the protagonist's name, Julian, had any relation to an actual Julian such as the emperor who renounced Christianity for paganism, or the off-Broadway producer who recently martyred himself by going to jail.

Actually, the Miss Alice we see in the play is a woman pretending to be Miss Alice, who in turn is a necessary personification of the abstraction Tiny Alice. The latter figuratively lives inside the huge model of a house, in the living room of the same house in which the play takes place. One gathers from Mr. Albee, however, that these relationships were not planned but came about as he wrote the play. He points out, "For me the process of writing is the process of discovery. I begin by learning to know my characters. To do this I keep testing them in my mind to see if I can say how they would react to situations they will not meet in the play. Then I try to pretend that these characters have their head, though perhaps there is an unwritten outline in my unconscious that pushes them one way instead of the other."

Just as Mr. Albee used the name Nick in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* to suggest that the character was related

to Nikita Khrushchev and was therefore an exponent of a totalitarian society, so he occasionally enriches moments in *Tiny Alice* with verbal puzzles. For instance, Julian will paraphrase the words of Jesus, but to interpret Julian as Jesus would be carrying the analogy further than the author intended. On a more realistic level, the playwright reminds us that most religious people relate themselves to Christ in their hallucinations. And he also believes that Julian is like many religiously dedicated people in being subconsciously motivated by sexual repression.

Sir John Gielgud, who plays Julian, has not discussed the play's mysteries with Albee. For him Julian is not Christ but a man who, like Christ, wanted to be a martyr. Furthermore, he feels that it is perfectly all right for him not to understand the meaning of the play, because Julian is written as an innocent who does not fully understand what is happening to him. Nevertheless, he has asked questions about the play's intention of the director, who could answer him in such a way as to protect his performance. Explains Sir John: "I find the cynical and rather superior attitude of the intellectual actor dangerous. Intellectually I didn't like *Endgame*. Yet if I'd played it I might have. In *The Lady's Not for Burning*, I felt I didn't understand a word of it, but somehow understanding its atmosphere was sufficient. The director should tell you just enough so that you won't have a disbelief in what you're doing. Disbelief can destroy a performance, but belief, even in tosh, can be effective."

Gielgud does not find *Tiny Alice* "tosh," but he admits having felt a tiny disappointment at the third act as it was when they went into rehearsal. While he now feels that the third act has been much improved and the second act possibly weakened by the revisions that have since been made, the end of the play still strikes him as negative, with a huge Alice coming through the door as he dies. (He prefers a discarded ending that would have left him tied to the model house with rope, facing a slower death). Nevertheless, director Alan Schneider has urged him to play the present ending more ecstatically, as if Julian in his final moments had come to discover certain things. "It's not negative," insists Mr. Schneider. "Was the death of Christ negative?"

For two other reasons the ending may seem more negative than was intended. First of all, the sound of heartbeats and heavy breathing as the doors open have been widely misinterpreted as being those of an increasingly terrified Julian, whereas they are meant to belong to whatever comes through the door. Then, too, Mr. Albee admits that his original notion (since abandoned) had been