

Archie and the Wallflower

By Kevin Stone

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Dedication:
For Caleb
~

ARCHIE AND THE WALLFLOWER

By KEVIN STONE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<u># of lines</u>
<u>Employees of the New Leaf Greenhouse</u>	
FILMORE POTTSfatherly and amiable owner of the greenhouse	144
POLLY WATERSkind-hearted, dysfunctional girl who talks only to plants	114
PETE MOSSstrong but not necessarily bright young man	63
IVY VINErather possessive girl who spends most of her time trying to capture Pete's attention	102
NATEscientist who develops new plant hybrids; the quintessential nerd	56
<u>The Butterfly Club</u>	
MRS. STICKLEBACKimperious, snobbish leader	44
PHYLLISmember who loves butterflies, hats, lemonade and gossip	4
CLARAanother	4
MAUREENanother	5
OPALanother	5
<u>The Customers</u>	
CUSTOMER 1interested in Sparkle Soil	22
CUSTOMER 2likes Nate's plant hybrids	6
CUSTOMER 3also interested in the hybrids	10
CUSTOMER 4wants to buy Archie	12
<u>The Others</u>	
MR. JAFFREYScold, business-by-the-book bank representative	27
MAIL LADY/MANdelivers a fateful package	5
ARCHIBALD (ARCHIE)very special flower (See PRODUCTION NOTES)	104



SETTING

Time: Present day, one weekday morning.

Place: The New Leaf Greenhouse.

RIGHT is an open doorway leading to the office. DOWN RIGHT is a door leading to a basement laboratory. Along the RIGHT wall is a counter with a cash register, a phone and a bell. DOWN LEFT is a table with Pitcher 1, a stirring spoon and a small record player (or other stereo system). LEFT is a doorway leading outside. Plants are everywhere—hanging, on stands, on shelves, on the floor—a veritable jungle. For the original production, several sets of free-standing, stair-step shelves were built to hold the greenhouse plants. One set of shelves must accommodate the puppeteer for Archie, UP CENTER. See PRODUCTION NOTES for details.

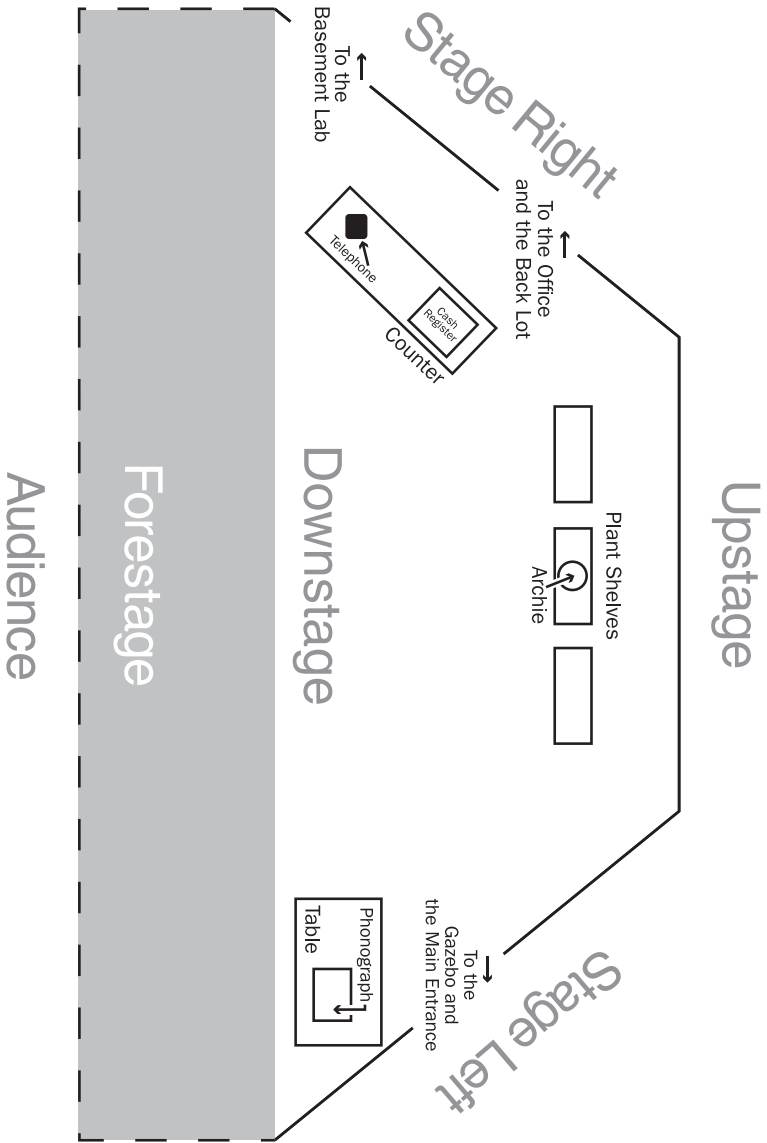
SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE: About nine o'clock in the morning.

ACT TWO: About one o'clock the same day.

ACT THREE: A few minutes later.

Archie and the Wallflower - Set Design



ARCHIE AND THE WALLFLOWER

ACT ONE

1 LIGHTS UP: The interior of the greenhouse, one weekday morning. STICKLEBACK is UP CENTER among the plants, hidden from view except for her hat, which is decorated with flowers.

5 **POLLY:** (*ENTERS LEFT. Speaks to the plants.*) Good morning! How is everyone today? Feeling verdant, I hope! Hold just a minute—I know what we need. (*Moves to the record player, starts it up and places the needle on the record. [NOTE: A record player suggests Polly's old-fashioned nature, but any type of stereo will do.] CLASSICAL MUSIC PLAYS.*) Music to grow by! Your favorite, I think. (*Picks up*
10 *Pitcher 1. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*) And now for some Power Plant Solution Number Three. (*Begins to water.*) My, how big we're getting. Is this a new frond? And what a cute little shoot! And these flowers are new— (*Pours some water on some flowers that are actually part of STICKLEBACK'S hat.*)

15 **STICKLEBACK:** (*Promptly rises from the midst of the plants with a startled scream. Holds a potted begonia plant. Shrieks and sputters.*) Help! Help! Dear me. I nearly drowned. Drowned to death in a greenhouse, no less. Oh, my poor hat! My poor coiffure! Is this how you treat your paying customers? Nearly drowning them to death
20 when they least expect it? What have you got to say for yourself, girl? Well, speak up! Oh, I forgot. Catnip's got your tongue. Well, for your information, I was wanting to buy some begonias for my window box, but now— (*POLLY sets the pitcher down and attempts to dry off the hat with a towel, crushing the hat's flowers in the process.*) No, no, you silly girl. You've done quite enough!

25 **POTTS:** (*ENTERS LEFT.*) Is anything the matter? Mrs. Stickleback? I heard a scream.

STICKLEBACK: That was I, Mr. Potts, in the throes of death!

POTTS: Mrs. Stickleback—

30 **STICKLEBACK:** The very throes, I tell you. It's bad enough that you employ a girl who will speak only to the vegetation and has nothing to say to the rest of us, but someone needs to teach her the difference between a paying customer and a potted plant. A person and a plant are quite different, Mr. Potts. Quite different. And the
35 sooner she learns that, the better. Good day, sir! (*Hands the potted plant to POTTS.*) And you may keep your begonias! (*Begins to EXIT LEFT.*)

POTTS: Mrs. Stickleback, please don't leave angry.

STICKLEBACK: I'm not leaving angry. I'm leaving wet!

1 **POTTS:** What about this afternoon? The Butterfly Club meeting in our gazebo?

STICKLEBACK: I'll have to think about it. But I shall do my thinking in a drier place. (EXITS LEFT.)

5 **POTTS:** (*Lifts the needle from the record player. MUSIC STOPS.*) I don't suppose you told Mrs. Stickleback that you were sorry, did you? (*POLLY remains silent, looking at the floor.*) No, of course not. She is a paying customer, Polly, the only one who buys our begonias. Not to mention the Butterfly Club holds its monthly meetings here.
10 And Mrs. Stickleback is the Grand Poobah of the Butterflies. So, whatever happened—what did happen, anyway? (*POLLY points feebly.*) She was over there... (*POLLY points to the top of her head.*) ...and you saw her hat... (*POLLY points to her pitcher.*) ...and so, naturally, you watered her flowers. (*POLLY nods.*) Well, an honest
15 mistake. But in the future, when you go to water a plant, check to be sure no one is wearing the plant. (*POLLY nods.*) That's a good girl. (*CUSTOMER 1 ENTERS LEFT.*) Welcome to the New Leaf Greenhouse! I'm Filmore Potts. How can we help you?

CUSTOMER 1: I need some dirt.

20 **POTTS:** You've come to the right place. Dirtiest place in town. Now, what kind of dirt did you have in mind? Topsoil, subsoil, midsoil or our spectacular Sparkle Soil—great for landscaping, really brightens a place up!

CUSTOMER 1: I'd like to see some of the sparkle dirt.

25 **POTTS:** Sparkle Soil? Right this way. You'll love it. A New Leaf exclusive. (EXITS LEFT with CUSTOMER 1.)

POLLY: (*Sighs, picks up Pitcher 1 and sees that it is empty. To plants.*) I'll be right back with your drink. (EXITS RIGHT.)

30 **PETE:** (*ENTERS RIGHT carrying a potted tree, followed closely by IVY carrying Pitcher 2 and empty Glasses 1 and 2.*) Not now, Ivy.

IVY: But I made it for you. I squeezed the lemons straight off the tree and left the rinds hanging. It couldn't be fresher!

PETE: I'm not thirsty.

IVY: I thought you liked lemonade.

35 **PETE:** Got my hands full right now.

IVY: I can hold the straw for you. Slow down, Petey! (*PETE EXITS LEFT. IVY pouts for a moment, then sets the glasses down on the table and pours herself a drink into Glass 1. POLLY ENTERS RIGHT with Pitcher 1.*) Pete? Oh, it's you. (*Sets Glass 1 and Pitcher 2 on the table. POLLY begins to water the plants with Pitcher 1.*) Why is it
40 that every time I'm here, Pete is always busy? (*No response.*) Don't worry. The question was rhetorical. I've tried everything to get his



1 attention. I've tried the hair. I've tried the makeup. I've tried the
perfume. Some new scent "guaranteed to drive your man wild."
As it turned out, it was made of some kind of bee pheromone. It
5 didn't faze Pete, but every honeybee within 10 miles started doing
his little honey-dance around my head! I was stung 14 times. I've
tried poise—don't think I haven't. I took lessons. (*Demonstrates
each move.*) I tried the glide. I tried the sashay. I tried the slink.
I had savoir faire oozing out my pores. He never noticed. I think
10 poise is greatly overrated, if you want to know the truth. And the
clothing—the skirts, the dresses, the wraps, the pumps, the mules,
the whole caboodle—but I might as well be invisible. I've given up
thinking I'm wearing the wrong thing. No matter how much I put on
or take off, nothing works. (*PETE ENTERS LEFT and crosses RIGHT.*)
Pete! There you are!

15 **PETE:** I gotta get another tree.

IVY: After that—

PETE: Another tree. I need a whole forest. (*EXITS RIGHT.*)

IVY: You see what I mean? Maybe if I was a tree, he'd notice. Maybe
if I showed up as a big potted sassafras, I'd get some attention.
20 Maybe if I had a flower growing out the top of my head. (*Beat.*)
Maybe I should see if he needs help with those trees. (*EXITS
RIGHT.*)

POLLY: (*Goes to the record player and starts it. MUSIC PLAYS. Tends
to the plants.*) I know how she feels. No one much notices me,
25 either. Of course, there's only one person I'd really like to notice.
But he won't. That's just a dream. You plants are lucky. You don't
have dreams to not come true. (*POTTS ENTERS LEFT and crosses
to the counter. He carries a small paper sack and is followed by
CUSTOMER 1 and JAFFREYS, who carries a briefcase.*)

30 **JAFFREYS:** Mr. Potts, this is a matter of utmost urgency! I really must
have a moment of your time.

POTTS: You'll get your moment as soon as I give my customer his
moment. (*Punches information into the cash register.*) One very
35 small bag of Sparkle Soil. Are you sure you don't need more than
this?

CUSTOMER 1: It's just a small plant that I have.

POTTS: I see. Is there anything else you need? A small garden hose?
A miniature rake?

CUSTOMER 1: No thanks. How much?

40 **POTTS:** Tell you what. It's on the house. (*Hands him the bag.*) A free
sample of Sparkle Soil.

CUSTOMER 1: Thank you.

1 **POTTS:** You're welcome. Come again.
CUSTOMER 1: Yes. (EXITS LEFT.)
JAFFREYS: Mr. Potts.
POTTS: Yes, Mr. Jaffreys?

5 **JAFFREYS:** Far be it from me to tell you how to run your business,
but giving merchandise away for free is not the quickest road to
solvency.
POTTS: It was a sample. I can't charge for that.
JAFFREYS: That would be fine if you had no charges of your own to
10 pay.
POTTS: I know I'm a little behind—
JAFFREYS: A little behind? You are \$10,000 in arrears, Mr. Potts. I
would not call that "a little behind"! (Takes out a paper from his
briefcase.) I'm here to serve notice. (Hands the paper to POTTS.)
15 The bank is foreclosing. Today is your last day of business. When
your doors close this evening, it will be with a note of finality. You
will not be open tomorrow.
POTTS: Can't you give me more time? Things might turn around.
JAFFREYS: How many customers have you had today?

20 **POTTS:** You just saw one—
JAFFREYS: Paying customers.
POTTS: None.
JAFFREYS: Yesterday?
POTTS: We were busy. (Beat.) No one actually bought anything, but
25 lots of traffic.
JAFFREYS: Within the past week?
POTTS: Yes! I remember. I sold a ton of mulch two days ago.
JAFFREYS: (Pulls another paper from his case.) Let's see. One ton of
mulch, paid for with a check for \$525, signed by a Joe Smith.

30 **POTTS:** Yes! You see? A sale!
JAFFREYS: That check bounced, Mr. Potts.
POTTS: (Takes the paper.) Oh. And he seemed like such a normal guy.
But hey, these things happen. So the business is in a slump. We'll
pull out of it. For cryin' out loud, we're a greenhouse. We have to
35 grow!
JAFFREYS: (Snaps his case shut.) I'm sorry, Mr. Potts. The bank needs
your back mortgage payments in the amount of \$10,000 by closing
time today or you'll be out of business. Good day. (EXITS LEFT.)
POTTS: Good day. (Crosses to the record player.) We need more
40 customers, Polly. Paying customers. And we need them today. Do

- 1 you really think your plant music works? (*POLLY nods.*) If only we could find some music to grow our business. (*SOUND EFFECT: A BIG BOOM. The DOWN RIGHT door flies OPEN and SMOKE POURS OUT. MUSIC SCREECHES and STOPS.*) Oh, no, not again! Polly! Give
- 5 me a hand. (*POLLY sets Pitcher 1 on the table and follows POTTS through the door, DOWN RIGHT. Pause. PETE ENTERS RIGHT with another tree, followed by IVY. They move to CENTER.*)
- IVY:** Can't I carry something? A twig? A leaf?
- PETE:** I got it. (*EXITS LEFT.*)
- 10 **IVY:** (*Pouts. Sniffs the air.*) Is something burning? (*PETE RE-ENTERS LEFT.*) Lemonade now? We're all alone, and—yikes! (*POTTS and POLLY ENTER DOWN RIGHT, supporting NATE between them. NATE is very disheveled. His clothes are torn and patches of it are smoking. He groans and stumbles as he moves.*)
- 15 **POTTS:** Make way. Make way!
- IVY:** (*Runs to them.*) What happened?
- POTTS:** Set him down easy. (*Leads NATE CENTER and sets him gently on the floor.*)
- PETE:** Anything I can do, boss?
- 20 **POTTS:** Yes, go down there and open some windows. Try to ventilate the lab.
- PETE:** I'm on it. (*EXITS DOWN RIGHT.*)
- POTTS:** Ivy, can you get some water, please?
- IVY:** Sure. (*EXITS RIGHT.*)
- 25 **NATE:** (*Coughs.*) I'm sorry, Mr. Potts. I seem to be the cause of incessant trials for you.
- POTTS:** Nonsense. A little explosion every now and then is the price one pays for keeping a scientific genius in one's employ. The only question is, are you all right?
- 30 **NATE:** All major biological systems seem to be intact.
- POTTS:** That's good.
- NATE:** Any damage you see to my person is purely cosmetic. But I fear the laboratory is in a state of disarray.
- IVY:** (*ENTERS RIGHT with Pitcher 3.*) Water.
- 35 **POTTS:** Good! Let's wash down some of that smoke. (*IVY grabs Glass 2 from the table and pours some water into it.*) What about the formula, Nate?
- NATE:** I have unfortunate news to relate there, Mr. Potts. (*IVY hands him Glass 2.*) Thank you, Miss Vine. (*Takes a sip. IVY sets Pitcher 3 on the table.*)
- 40

1 **POTTS:** Go ahead and relate.

NATE: The minuscule amount of Power Plant Solution Number Four that I was able to produce was, in all likelihood, destroyed in the blast.

5 **POTTS:** That is unfortunate. But don't worry. We'll get the lab fixed. Until then we still have Power Plant Solution Number Three.

NATE: It's curious. The memory of the explosion and your subsequent rescue has already begun to take on a dream-like quality in my mind. I remember a flash, a noise and a great quantity of smoke—
10 and then, in the cloud, a vision of pink ribbons coming toward me.

IVY: I don't think that was Mr. Potts.

POTTS: That would have been Polly. She helped me bring you upstairs.

15 **NATE:** Polly? *(Looks at her for the first time.)* Oh, yes. *(Looks away.)*

POTTS: Are you going to be all right, Nate?

NATE: The prognosis is good, I assure you.

POTTS: Then we have work to do. Mrs. Stickleback and her friends will be here at one o'clock.

20 **IVY:** Even after you-know-who doused her this morning?

POTTS: Mrs. Stickleback won't cancel. She's been planning this event for too long. Ivy, please set out the centerpieces.

IVY: The chartreuse butterflies?

POTTS: Those are the ones she likes. *(IVY EXITS LEFT.)* Polly, we'll let
25 you tend to your normal duties inside. I have a banner to hang. Nate, you be careful. *(EXITS LEFT. Pause. POLLY goes to the table, picks up Pitcher 1 and starts toward the plants.)*

NATE: *(Stands.)* Oh, Miss Waters! *(POLLY stops and turns. NATE sets Glass 2, still full of water, on the table beside Glass 1.)* I want to
30 thank you for aiding my extraction from the wreckage downstairs. *(She nods.)* I was quite glad to see those pink bows coming through the smoke, although I assumed at the time that they were nothing more than a mirage. In any event, I extend my thanks. *(They face each other for an awkward moment. PETE ENTERS DOWN RIGHT. POLLY and NATE turn away from each other sharply.)*
35

PETE: Yep, you made a mess down there. But the smoke is pretty much gone.

NATE: Thank you, Mr. Moss, for your efforts.

PETE: You can call me "Pete," you know. I found this. *(Holds up a
40 beaker.)*



1 **NATE:** *(Takes the beaker from him.)* It's the formula! Power Plant Solution Number Four! It survived! *(POLLY stops watering the plants and listens, looks cheerful.)*

PETE: Not much of it survived.

5 **NATE:** We won't need much to test it.

POTTS: *(ENTERS LEFT.)* There you are, Pete. Can you help me with this banner?

PETE: Sure, boss. *(Points a finger at NATE as he and POTTS EXIT LEFT.)* No more blowing stuff up.

10 **NATE:** This is wonderful! To have thought it destroyed and to have discovered it safe is beyond my ability to express. Miss Waters, we must test this. *(Moves to the table and picks up Pitcher 3.)* We'll use this water to dilute it. *(Unstops the beaker.)* Power Plant Solution Number Four! *(Smells beaker.)* It possesses a mild citrus
15 fragrance. *(POLLY smells it and nods. NATE pours the contents of the beaker into Pitcher 3.)* Oh, this is thrilling, don't you think? *(POLLY nods.)* Spoon! *(She hands him a spoon, and he stirs.)* A super-hydronic growth formula for plants. We've been using the old Solution Number Three for years with fairly good results, but
20 with Solution Number Four, results should be astronomical! Stem strength. Leaf count! Bloom radius. Everything should be affected. And we should see results almost immediately! *(Stops stirring.)* There. Now, Miss Waters, we need a plant. Let's test the solution on a weak and sickly specimen. That way, the results will be the most dramatic. Do you have such a plant? One that is faring
25 poorly? *(POLLY nods and motions for him to wait then EXITS RIGHT.)* I hold in my hands a breakthrough in botanical science! I feel like Orville at Kitty Hawk. Or maybe Wilbur. I feel like Leeuwenhoek when he peered through that microscope for the very first time. I
30 feel like—

MAIL LADY: *(ENTERS LEFT.)* Mail lady!

NATE: The mail lady?

MAIL LADY: Got a package here, honey. For Ivy Vine. She work here?

35 **NATE:** Miss Vine? *(Sets Pitcher 3 on the table.)* Yes, she is one of the employees here at the greenhouse. I'm not sure exactly what she does.

MAIL LADY: Well, with a name like Ivy Vine she couldn't work anywhere else. *(Hands him the package.)* Honey, what happened to you? You fall in a blender?

40 **NATE:** No, I was working with a centrifuge at the time.

MAIL LADY: Yes, you have to watch out for those centrifuges. Anyway, if you can see that Ivy gets the package—

1 **NATE:** I shall.

MAIL LADY: Thanks, darlin'. And stay outta the blender. (*EXITS LEFT.*)

NATE: (*Nonplused.*) It was—a centrifuge. (*Sets the package on the table. POLLY ENTERS RIGHT with a sickly plant in a pot [experimental plant].*) Ah, you have a specimen. (*Takes a closer look.*) Flaccid stem, yellowed leaves and an overall lack of turgidity—a perfect test subject. Set it down right over here. (*POLLY sets the plant down with the other plants near CENTER. SPOTLIGHT UP on the plant. NATE gets Pitcher 3.*) One of the improvements in Power Plant Solution Number Four is the rapidity of response. One treatment, and we should see results within a matter of moments. The transmutation from dying to thriving should be observable and quite dramatic. Are you ready? (*POLLY nods and crosses her fingers. As he pours.*) One small drop for a plant, one giant splash for the plant kingdom! (*Stands back. They wait.*) Any moment now, and we'll witness vegetation history. (*Checks his watch.*) Any moment now... any... moment... (*The flower suddenly wilts and sinks down into the dirt. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*) I've killed it. (*Looks at the pitcher in his hands.*) I've—I've committed herbicide! (*Slowly returns Pitcher 3 to the table. POLLY wants to reach out to him, but doesn't. Pause.*) I'll be down in the laboratory. If I can find the drawing board, that's what I'll be back to. (*Shuffles OFF DOWN RIGHT.*)

POLLY: (*Agonizes for him, silently. After NATE EXITS, goes to the plant.*) For a moment, it looked like we had a chance. Like the first scent of rain after a long drought. Like a new bud beginning to open and catching its first glimpse of the sunshine. (*Lifts the flower.*) Please live. Please. (*Releases the bloom, and it falls into the dirt again. Sighs.*)

IVY: (*ENTERS LEFT with CUSTOMER 2, who carries a plant with small red bananas on it. POLLY begins pruning some other plants.*) I'll ring you up over here.

CUSTOMER 2: I never saw such a plant. What did you say it was called?

IVY: It's bananaberry. Take a banana, cross it with a strawberry, and voila! Bananaberry!

CUSTOMER 2: How unusual!

IVY: (*At the cash register.*) It's really just like a strawberry, except you have to peel it first. Our resident mad scientist makes all kinds of hybrids. That'll be \$32.05. (*CUSTOMER 2 rummages for some money.*) He grew a cocomelon tree once—combined a coconut and a watermelon. But we never sold it. For one thing, the rind was very hard to crack. And the other thing was when the cocomelons were ripe, they would fall off the tree. That's a 20-pound fruit falling 30 feet.

1 **CUSTOMER 2:** Oh, no.

IVY: Oh, yes! Not the type of tree you'd want to park your car under. Or build the kids' swing set under. Smash!

5 **CUSTOMER 2:** No, I mean, I don't have my money. No checkbook or anything. I'm so embarrassed.

IVY: Don't be. We can never find our money around here, either.

CUSTOMER 2: Oh, and I wanted that bananaberry, too!

IVY: It'll be here when you come back.

CUSTOMER 2: Thank you, and I'm sorry. (*EXITS LEFT.*)

10 **IVY:** Bye, now. (*Picks up the bananaberry plant, moves to the plants where POLLY is pruning and notices the experimental plant.*) What happened to that one? Eww! We need to get rid of it. (*POLLY shakes her head.*) What? We don't need to get rid of it? (*POLLY shakes her head again.*) The plant's a goner, Polly. And it's right out here where everybody can see it. Come on, Polly. I know you like plants and all,

15 but there comes a time when you just have to let things go. (*POLLY shakes her head.*) Don't you ever have anything to say? (*Sighs.*) I can see it now, "Come to the New Leaf Greenhouse and pick from our wide selection of dead plants!"

20 (*POLLY strokes the plant.*) Business is never gonna pick up with dead plants in the showroom! (*Spies the package on the table and grabs it, sets the bananaberry down.*) Hey! It's here! It's really—when did this come? Nobody else saw this, did they? (*POLLY points toward the basement door.*) Nate saw it? He doesn't count. As long as Pete didn't see it. Polly, Polly, can you do me a big favor?

25 Can you please put that bananaberry back and finish the table decorations while I take care of this? (*POLLY hesitates.*) Look, I'm sorry for all the mean things I ever said to you, and I promise I'll leave your stupid dead plant alone. (*Beat. POLLY nods.*) Thank you!

30 I owe you one. (*POLLY pockets the pruners and EXITS LEFT with the bananaberry. IVY tears into the package and pulls out two vials and an instruction sheet and reads.*)

"Congratulations on your purchase of Passion Bouquet Love Potion. You are about to enter the most intensely romantic, passionately alive relationship of your life." Oooh! It couldn't happen to a nicer girl. (*Reads.*) "Directions for making Passion Bouquet Love Potion. Pour the contents of one vial into one glass of water." (*Grabs Glass 2.*) One glass of water. (*Opens the vial.*) One vial. (*Empties yellow powder into the water and watches it fizz. The water turns yellow.*

40 *Reads.*) "To aid palatability, Passion Bouquet Love Potion has a tasty lemon flavor. May contain artificial flavorings." Great. Fine. What else? Ah! (*Reads.*) "To capture the love of your life, simply administer the lemon-flavored Passion Bouquet Love Potion to

1 the object of your affection. Upon drinking just one mouthful, the subject will fall madly in love with the next person to come in direct physical contact with him or her.” This is so easy! (*Reads.*)

“Important! Follow directions carefully. Any touch, no matter how
5 small, will trigger the potent reaction of Passion Bouquet Love Potion. For best results, at the time of ingestion, ensure your target can touch or be touched only by you. Not responsible for—” blah, blah, blah. (*Reads.*) “To make Passion Bouquet Love Potion
10 in larger quantities, simply pour the second vial into two quarts of water.” I’d better, just in case. I can use the water I brought in earlier. (*Goes down the line of pitchers.*) Let’s see, don’t want to get these mixed up. (*Touches Pitcher 1.*) This is Power Plant Solution Number Three. (*Touches Pitcher 2.*) This is the lemonade I made for Pete. And, this (*Touches Pitcher 3.*) is the water I brought in. (*Pours the remaining vial into Pitcher 3.*) There! (*Folds the instruction sheet and tucks it in a pocket and picks up Glass 1 by mistake.*)
15 Time for the love of my life to realize that’s who he is. Petey-baby, here I come! (*Begins to EXIT LEFT with Glass 1. As she does, PETE ENTERS LEFT.*) There you are!

20 **PETE:** I gotta get a hammer.

IVY: But don’t you need a break?

PETE: No, I need a hammer. Besides, the boss is waiting on top of a ladder.

IVY: But a sip of lemonade only takes a moment.

25 **PETE:** You’ve been trying to get that lemonade in me all morning.

IVY: Because I see how hard you’re working. Plus, it’s really good lemonade.

PETE: Ivy, there comes a time when you just gotta let things go.

IVY: Don’t say that to me. Just drink. Please?

30 **PETE:** (*With a resigned sigh.*) If it will make you happy.

IVY: Very happy! (*PETE takes the glass and drinks a little. As he does, IVY touches him with one finger.*) What do you think? (*Touches him again, harder.*)

PETE: (*Hands the glass back to IVY.*) Good lemonade. Thanks.

35 **IVY:** (*Pokes his arm.*) How do I seem to you?

PETE: You seem to be in my way. (*Tries to step around her, but she blocks him.*)

IVY: (*Pokes harder.*) But how do I look? Do I seem different to you at all?

40 **PETE:** You seem pokier. I don’t see much else different. (*Crosses to the counter.*)



- 1 **IVY:** *(Follows him and pokes with each syllable.)* But—you—have—to—no—
tice—some—thing!
- PETE:** Ow! *(Pulls a hammer out of a drawer.)* Ivy!
- IVY:** *(Offers the glass again.)* Here. Take another drink.
- 5 **PETE:** Not now. *(Attempts to EXIT LEFT while IVY pokes him all over in
quick, staccato strokes.)* Ow! Ow! Ivy!
- IVY:** Don't I look pretty? I mean, prettier than normal? Don't you love
me? Think about it real hard.
- PETE:** Have you gone crazy? I've got bruises!
- 10 **IVY:** Oh, just—just go back to work! *(Pushes him OUT LEFT and looks at
Glass 1 in her hand.)* Stupid stuff doesn't work. What a rip-off! I'm
gonna write them a strongly worded note and— *(Stops suddenly,
notices Glass 2 still on the table and moves closer.)* Oh. Oh! *(Picks
up Glass 2 and looks back and forth at both glasses.)* This... this
- 15 is... I gave him the real lemonade. Pete! *(CUSTOMER 3 ENTERS
LEFT carrying a potted plant bearing bright red, potato-like fruit.)*
- CUSTOMER 3:** Hello. Do you work here?
- IVY:** Uh—
- CUSTOMER 3:** Can you help me? I have some questions regarding
20 this plant.
- IVY:** I, uh—
- CUSTOMER 3:** I'm quite baffled as to its classification. You see, at first
I thought it was the genus *Lycopersicon*. But on closer inspection,
it seemed to have some qualities of *Solanum*.
- 25 **IVY:** It's actually both. It's a potatomato.
- CUSTOMER 3:** A hybrid?
- IVY:** A potato and a tomato, crossed. A potatomato. You can make
French fries with them and never need ketchup.
- CUSTOMER 3:** Fascinating. I'll take it!
- 30 **IVY:** I—are you sure? Oh, I'll ring you up. *(Gingerly sets both glasses on
the table, giving each a good hard look.)* Right over here. *(Crosses
to the cash register.)*
- NATE:** *(ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.)* It's even more depressing down there
than it is up here.
- 35 **IVY:** Oh, there's Nate. If you have more questions about this plant—
- CUSTOMER 3:** Oh, I'm sold. A fascinating idea!
- NATE:** Miss Vine, a mail delivery person delivered a package for you
earlier.
- IVY:** Found it, thanks. *(To CUSTOMER 3.)* That'll be \$25.11.

- 1 **CUSTOMER 3:** \$25.11? On second thought, I'm wondering if you would mind... (*Takes out a small pair of clippers. NATE moves to the table and picks up Glass 2.*) All I really need is a cutting.
- NATE:** (*Smells the contents of the glass.*) Ah, lemonade.
- 5 **IVY:** Normally, we don't allow cuttings to be made— (*NATE walks to the doorway LEFT and looks out, still holds the glass.*)
- CUSTOMER 3:** Ah, but this is for research purposes. You see, I'm a researcher. Funds are limited, and I don't really need the whole plant.
- 10 **IVY:** Still, we're a greenhouse. We sell plants in one piece.
- CUSTOMER 3:** (*Clips a leaf.*) There! That's all I need. Now, how much do I owe you for this?
- IVY:** Let's just call it a dollar.
- CUSTOMER 3:** Oh! Would you believe I left my wallet in my other
- 15 pants?
- IVY:** Tell you what, I'll pay it myself. This time only. (*Grabs his arm and marches him out the LEFT door.*) Thanks-for-your-business—we appreciate-it-have-a-good-day-bye! (*Turns to the table and stops short.*) My glass. Where— (*Turns to see NATE take a sip from it and pounces on him.*) Nate! What are you doing? (*Wrests Glass 2 away from his lips and out of his hand.*) Did you—did you drink any of this?
- 20
- NATE:** Perhaps one or two fluid ounces. Hardly enough to satisfy— (*A change comes over him. Smacks his lips.*) Miss Vine!
- 25 **IVY:** Uh-oh. You drank it. (*Beat. Steps away from him.*) And I touched you.
- NATE:** Miss Vine, have I ever expressed to you how delightful your presence is in this place? (*Sets Glass 2 on the table with a bang.*) In the diffused light of the greenhouse, your very regular and
- 30 symmetrical features possess a soft radiance that utterly captures one's attention.
- IVY:** This wasn't supposed to happen!
- NATE:** Ah, who can account for the whimsies of the heart? Allow me to declare, Miss Vine, the fervor of my longing for you.
- 35 **IVY:** Nate, this is a big mistake. And when I say big, I mean humongous. You just need to stay away.
- NATE:** Ah, separation is a word of loathing to me. May we never be parted asunder, my dearest, my most cherished Miss Vine! May I call you "Ivy"?
- 40 **IVY:** I think you'd better stick to "Miss Vine."

1 **NATE:** Perhaps we can brainstorm together and think of some terms of endearment for each other. I could call you “Ivy-Wivey,” and you could call me “Natsey-Watesy.” (*Giggles.*)

IVY: I’ve created a monster. (*Runs to the LEFT doorway.*) Help!

5 **NATE:** You make my heart palpitate so.

IVY: Help! I’ve got a mad scientist after me! (*Runs OFF LEFT.*)

NATE: Ivy-Wivey! Come back! (*EXITS LEFT.*)

POLLY: (*ENTERS LEFT, casts a puzzled look after her then continues on to the experimental plant.*) How are we doing? Any change?

10 Nothing. But you know what? I’m not giving up on you. (*Moves to the table where she retrieves Pitcher 3. Crosses to the experimental plant.*) I’m going to give you a second dose, and we’ll just see what happens. (*Pours.*)

PETE: (*ENTERS LEFT, cautiously.*) Ivy’s not in here, is she? Good. Well, the banner’s up, and the butterfly party’s ready to go. (*Picks up Glass 2.*) Hope somebody remembered to invite the butterflies. (*Takes a drink.*) You know, this wasn’t bad stuff. (*Drains the rest of the contents of the glass. POLLY brings Pitcher 3 back to the table. As she sets it down, PETE sets down Glass 2, accidentally bumps POLLY. He puts an apologetic hand on her shoulder.*) Sorry. Didn’t see you. (*POLLY smiles and turns back to the plants. A change comes over PETE. He licks his lips.*) Polly? (*She turns to look at him.*) What a sweet name! Polly. Polly, Polly, Polly! (*Advances on her.*) You are—wow! Golly, Polly, what do you say about me and you? What are you doin’ for the rest of your life? (*POLLY backs away, alarmed.*) You are—wow! If you was a flower, Polly, you’d be, like, the most prettiest flower in the whole greenhouse. If you was a tomato, you’d be, like, the reddest, plumpest tomato there ever was. (*POLLY runs out, RIGHT. PETE calls after her.*) If you was a jellybean, you’d be—like, licorice! ‘Cause licorice is, like, my favorite! Polly Waters, I love you! (*EXITS RIGHT. LIGHTS DIM except for the SPOTLIGHT on the plant. CLASSICAL MUSIC PLAYS. Slowly, the stalk straightens, and the bloom begins to rise. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.] When the flower reaches its full height, BLACKOUT.*)

End of ACT ONE

ACT TWO

35 **LIGHTS UP:** The scene is much the same as before. The three pitchers remain on the table. The difference is the experimental plant, which has been replaced by ARCHIE, a flower puppet. No one can see ARCHIE’S face, because he is bent over, facedown in the pot. POLLY, unseen by the audience, hides among the plants. IVY ENTERS RIGHT, wearing a scarf on her head and dark eyeglasses.

40

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE:

On the counter: cash register, bell, telephone

Under the counter: hand mirror, hammer

On the table: stirring spoon, Pitcher 1, record player [or any other type of stereo available], record

With the plants: towel

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE:

Pruners (POLLY)

Potted begonia, flowered hat (STICKLEBACK)

Pitcher 2, Glass 1, Glass 2, Pitcher 3 (IVY)

Tree, beaker with lid and yellow powder (PETE)

Briefcase with papers inside (JAFFREYS)

Paper sack (POTTS)

Package with instructions and two vials containing yellow powder and crushed Alka-Seltzer tablets for fizz (MAIL LADY)

Experimental flower [a smaller version of Archie] (POLLY)

Bananaberry plant (CUSTOMER 2)

Potatomato plant, clippers (CUSTOMER 3)

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO:

Butterflies tied to a pole, instruction sheet (IVY)

Business card (CUSTOMER 4)

Flower (PETE)

Pruners (POLLY)

BROUGHT ON, ACT THREE:

Weed whacker with extension cord (POTTS)

Electronic device (NATE)

Tree (PETE)

Briefcase with papers and pen (JAFFREYS)

Paper sack, check, business card (CUSTOMER 1)

COSTUMES

POTTS and the employees of the greenhouse wear everyday work clothes appropriate for greenhouse work.

POLLY'S clothes are quite plain and include an apron with a pocket for her pruners. She wears pink ribbons somewhere on her costume or in her hair.

NATE has a scientist/nerd look with glasses and a lab coat, perhaps.

IVY is more fashion conscious than POLLY and also needs a pocket in her costume. She wears dark glasses and a headscarf in ACT TWO.

STICKLEBACK wears a very proper floral dress, as over the top as possible, and a hat with lots of flowers on it for ACT ONE. For ACT TWO, she needs green face paint and a plant costume that gradually gets more “leafy.”

BUTTERFLY LADIES should dress like STICKLEBACK—very fancy, floral and proper.

CUSTOMERS wear everyday clothing.

MAIL LADY/MAN wears a uniform. JAFFREYS wears a suit and looks very stuffy.

FLEXIBLE CASTING

CUSTOMERS 1-4 and MAIL LADY/MAN can be played male or female. MR. JAFFREYS can be MRS. JAFFREYS just as easily. Doubling is possible among the smaller parts, and you can always subtract (or add) a BUTTERFLY LADY.

SOUND EFFECTS

Classical music, explosion, bee buzzing, weed whacker sounds.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Explosion with smoke.

ABOUT ARCHIE

The puppeteer who manipulates Archie will need to be completely screened from view, yet be able to see the action on stage. Try to make the puppeteer as comfortable as possible, as Archie is on stage for a long time.

For the original production, we built several sets of free-standing shelves to hold the greenhouse plants. The shelves had a “stair step” design: the back edge of the lower shelf was even with the front edge of the upper shelf. One set of shelves must accommodate the puppeteer: the lower shelf should be the proper height for the puppeteer to rest his elbow on. With the puppeteer seated in a chair, his legs should fit comfortably underneath the lower shelf, and the upper shelf should give enough clearance for his head. Mask the front of all the shelves with a thin green or brown material, with a slit cut for the puppeteer’s arm. When lit from the front, the material effectively hides the puppeteer from view while allowing him to see enough of the onstage action to interact as necessary.

Place Archie’s flower pot directly in front of the puppeteer. Any wide plastic pot will work. Cut away a section on the back side of the pot for the puppeteer’s arm. (See sketch at end of script. Photos are available online at:

<http://www.pioneerdrama.com/searchdetail.asp?pc=ARCHIEANDT.>)

For Archie's foliage, the original production used a bunch of artificial leaves plucked from a cheap plastic plant. They taped each leaf individually onto the wires, filling the wires up with leaves. When Polly needed the leaves, she just pulled them off—running her hand down the wire gave her a whole palm-full of leaves instantly. The leaves were then reattached after each performance. There are various other ways leaves can be attached and removed. Be creative!

Although Archie is to remain “frozen” while people are present, he can carry on a variety of antics behind people's backs. Most of these antics are not scripted and are left to the creativity of the director and puppeteer. Archie can move as much as he wants, as long as no one but Polly sees him do it.

ABOUT THE PLANTS (see page 44 for diagrams)

For the “experimental” plant, prepare another flower pot identical to the one used for Archie. For this pot, make a scrawny flower the same color as Archie. (We used chenille and felt as construction materials.) Prop up the flower with one or two lengths of floral wire, and secure the ends of the wire to the inside of the pot with some tape. (See sketch at end of script. Photos are online at <http://www.pioneerdrama.com/searchdetail.asp?pc=ARCHIEANDT>.) When the time comes for the flower to wilt, the puppeteer reaches through the back of the pot, detaches the floral wire from the inside of the pot and pulls the flower down. To rejuvenate the flower, the puppeteer simply uses the wire to push the flower back up. With some practice, this effect works very well!

The plant hybrids seen onstage (the bananaberry and the potatomato) are fun projects for any budding artists in your group. To make our bananaberry, we took some plastic bananas, spray painted them red, dotted them with white correction fluid and hung them in a bushy imitation plant. You might consider other hybrids to display: pucumber (pineapple + cucumber), lemectarine (lemon + nectarine), pumpegranate (pumpkin + pomegranate), broccokra (broccoli + okra), grapricot (grapes + apricot), kumquatermelon (kumquat + watermelon) and rhuzucchiniarb (rhubarb + zucchini). Or invent your own hybrid!

ABOUT THE PITCHERS, GLASSES AND POTIONS

Much of the plot depends on the mix-up of the pitchers and glasses. In the original production, the director thought it would be fun for the audience to try to keep track of what was in each pitcher and glass, so the four pitchers were identical, as were the two glasses. If you'd rather the humor come from the audience knowing what the characters do not, then have the pitchers and glasses identified in some way to differentiate them for the audience.

At the beginning of the play:

Pitcher 1 sits on the table, DOWN LEFT. It contains “Power Plant Solution Number Three,” which has the appearance of lemonade.

Pitcher 2 is OFF RIGHT. It contains lemonade.

Pitchers 3 and 4 are both OFF RIGHT. Both contain water at the start of the play. Later in the play, Pitcher 3 will first become love potion and then will also contain Power Plant Solution Number Four. This pitcher is the root (no pun intended!) of all the confusion onstage.

For the love potion, the beaker and vials can contain instant lemonade powder and possibly some crushed Alka-Seltzer, which creates a bubbly fizz. You could also use something like Emergen-C drink mix, which is also fizzy. A simpler solution would be to use opaque pitchers and glasses, in which case plain water would suffice.

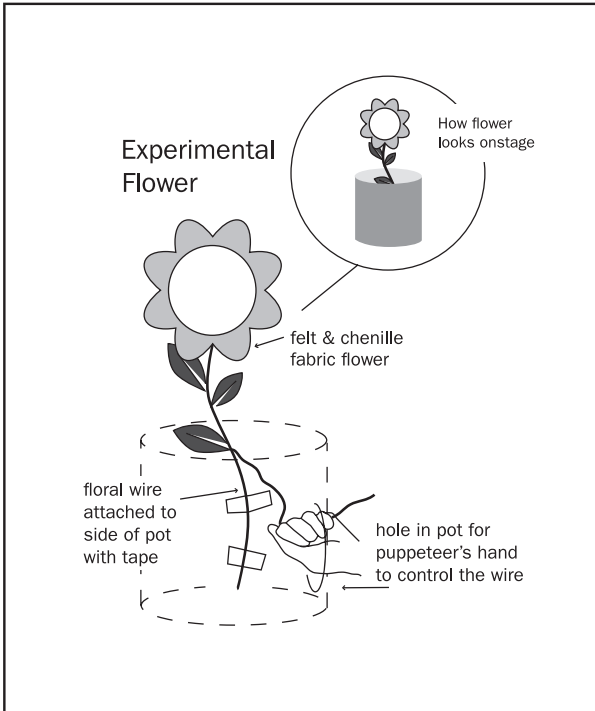
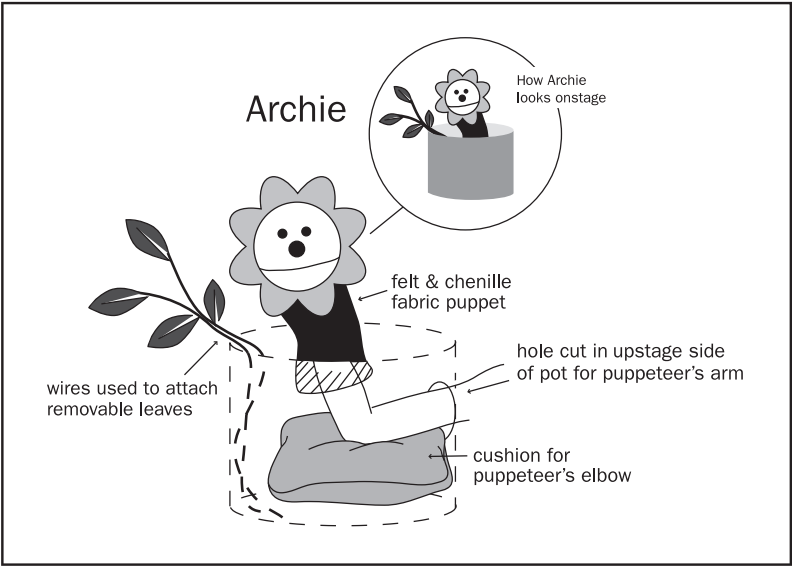
ABOUT THE WEED WHACKER

In the original production, a real weed whacker was used without the cutting string. It was plugged in backstage and the extension cord was measured and marked for the exact center of the stage. A stagehand held onto the cord at the mark, so when Mr. Potts reached center stage, the cord went taut and popped out of the weed whacker. It worked like a charm! If you prefer not to use a “live” weed whacker, the effect can still be achieved simply by using an unplugged weed whacker accompanied by sound effects.

NOTE ABOUT POLLY

Polly is silent whenever she is aware of someone else in the room, but this doesn’t mean she doesn’t want to speak. Make the most of opportunities to demonstrate that, while Polly hovers in the background, she yearns for human interaction. She has allowed something to erect an invisible barrier between herself and the rest of the world and is fast losing hope that she can ever surmount it.





ORIGINAL CAST

At Overbrook Attendance Center, March 6-8, 2008,
Overbrook, Kansas, the author directed the following cast :

Filmore PottsBen Foust
Polly WatersAlexis Cunningham
Pete MossChase Wechsler
Ivy VineMaKaila Averill
Nate.....Cooper Lyle
Mrs. SticklebackElizabeth Welch
PhyllisBarbara Sue Branson
OpalLeslie McGrew
ClaraDanielle Speck
Maureen and Customer 1Kelcey Ballou
Customer 2Caleb Stone
Customer 3Travis Tipping
Customer 4Josh Douglass
Mr. JaffreysAlex Dahl
Mail Lady.....Danielle Elwood
Archibald (Archie)Blade Wright

SoundDanny Bahner
Lights.....Brandon Ball

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