

ALTRINCHAM GARRICK PLAYHOUSE - AUDITION INFORMATION:

"Win the race, find the answer, win the war."

Meet the father of the Atomic Bomb...

A powerfully compelling study of a tragic hero, forever haunted by the destructive power of his achievement.

OPPENHEIMER

by **Tom Morton-Smith**

**altrincham
garrick
playhouse**

**Monday
24 February –
Saturday 1 March**



Evenings at 7:30pm
Matinée, Saturday 1 March at 2:30pm

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Thank you for expressing your interest in auditioning for “**OPPENHEIMER**”.
This production will be part of our Spring/Summer 2025 Season at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

The Audition Date for this production is
The Rehearsal Start Date for this production is
The Production Dates for this production are

Tuesday 19th November
Sunday 5th January
Monday 24th February -
Saturday 1st March

Rehearsals

Rehearsals will be every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7.30pm - 10pm, and every Sunday from 2pm - 5.30pm.

We do ask that all those auditioning are able to make every rehearsal. We do, of course, understand that sometimes you may have other commitments and special occasions during the rehearsal process, and we therefore ask that you inform us of any dates you are not available in advance (at the audition) and we will try and make this work. If you have a date that you're unable to rehearse within ten days of the opening night (24th February) we may have to ask you to withdraw from the production.

You may not be called to every rehearsal, and the Director will produce a rehearsal schedule as far in advance as possible, but we do still ask that those successful in being cast in the production remain flexible, as rehearsal schedules can often change during the process.

OPPENHEIMER

Monday 24th February - Saturday 1st March 2025
(Matinee at 2.30pm 1st March)
Altrincham Garrick Playhouse

Written by Tom Morton-Smith
Directed by John Cunningham
Associate Direction by Carole Carr

1939: fascism spreads across Europe, Franco marches on Barcelona and two German chemists discover the processes of atomic fission. In Berkeley, California, theoretical physicists recognise the horrendous potential of this new science: a weapon that draws its power from the very building blocks of the universe.

Struggling to cast off his radical past and thrust into a position of power and authority, the charismatic J Robert Oppenheimer races to win the 'battle of the laboratories' and create a weapon so devastating that it would bring about an end not just to the Second World War but to all war.

Originally written for the RSC in 2015, Tom Morton-Smith's play takes us into the heart of science, politics and humanity clashing in the propulsive story of the Manhattan Project and the development of the world's first nuclear bombs.

Characters

Oppenheimer tells the story of the Manhattan Project whose aim was the development of the first nuclear bomb. After its initial test it was used a few weeks later to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki, bringing the surrender of Japan and ending the war in the Far East. The leader of the project was J. Robert Oppenheimer (Oppie). The play covers the period from 1939 to 1945.

The ages are for guidance only. These are their ages in 1939 when the play begins. The right person for the part is more important than the actor's age. Younger actors are encouraged to audition.

Character	DOB	Occupation	
J Robert Oppenheimer "Oppie"	1904 35yo	Theoretical Physicist He is underweight (128lbs) and suffers from TB.	Womaniser. Was a professor in the physics department at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1942, He was recruited to work on the Manhattan Project. In 1943 he was promoted to Colonel when the project was handed over to the army. He was appointed director of the project at the Los Alamos Laboratory, tasked with developing the first nuclear weapons.

Character	DOB	Occupation	
Frank Oppenheimer (Oppie's brother)	1912 27yo	Particle Physicist (and cattle rancher)	A communist. Professor of physics at the University of Colorado. He conducted research on aspects of nuclear physics during the time of the Manhattan Project.
Jackie Oppenheimer (Frank's wife)	1911 28yo	Economist	She was active in the Young Communist League despite her brother in law's (Oppie's) advice. Frank and Jackie were married in 1936
Jean Francis Tatlock	1914 25yo	Psychiatrist (Committed suicide Jan 1944)	She was a member of the Communist Party USA before it was banned and criminalized in the 1950s She is also known for her romantic relationship with J. Robert Oppenheimer

Kitty Harrison	1910 29yo	Botanist	Flirtatious. A radical Berkeley student and former Communist Party member. Kitty's first marriage lasted only a few months. In 1938 she married Richard Harrison. She married Oppie in 1940.
Giovanni Rossi Lomanitz	1921 18yo	Theoretical Physicist	In the early 1940s, Lomanitz started graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley. His communist views prevented him from getting teaching posts in the US after the war.
Bob Serber	1909 30yo	Physicist	Serber's lectures explained the basic principles and goals of the Manhattan project. He was called "the intellectual midwife at the birth of the atomic bomb."
Charlotte Serber (Bob's wife)	1911 28yo	Librarian	She was the librarian for the Manhattan Project and the laboratory's only female group leader.
Joe Weinberg	1917 22yo	Physicist	Taught at Berkeley until 1937. Then worked on the Manhattan Project.
Robert R Wilson	1914 25yo	Physicist	In 1943, Wilson and many of his colleagues joined the Manhattan Project where he became the head of its Cyclotron Group, and later its Research Division.
Haakon Chevalier	1901 38yo	Writer	A communist with a relationship with a recruiter for Soviet intelligence. His friendship with Oppie was noted by the security forces.
Klaus Fuchs (German)	1911 28yo	Theoretical Physicist	Worked on the Manhattan Project. Fuchs was responsible for many significant theoretical calculations relating to the first nuclear weapons. He later spied for Russia supplying information from the American, British and Canadian atomic research.
Richard Harrison		Medical Doctor (British)	Richard Stewart Harrison met Kitty Puening while completing his internship in the US. They were married on November 23, 1938

Character	DOB	Occupation	
Edward Teller (Hungarian-American)	1908 31yo	Theoretical Physicist	Referred to as "the father of the hydrogen bomb". Known for his scientific ability and his difficult interpersonal relations and volatile personality. He had a false foot from a teenage accident.
Hans Bethe (German-American)	1906 33yo	Theoretical Physicist	During World War 2, he was head of the Theoretical Division at the Manhattan Project.
Groves (Leslie Richard)	1896 43yo	Army General	Oversaw the construction of the Pentagon. He directed the Manhattan Project when it became an army project.
Kenneth Nichols (Colonel)	1907 32yo	Chief of counter-intelligence West coast	Nichols led both the uranium production facility at the Clinton Engineer Works at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the plutonium production facility at Hanford Engineer Works in Washington state.
Richard Feynman	1918 21yo	Theoretical Physicist	He assisted in the development of the atomic bomb.
Luis W Alvarez	1911 28yo	Experimental Physicist	Participated in the development of the atomic bomb. In 1944–45. He suggested the technique for detonating the implosion type of atomic bomb.
Peer Da Silva	1917 22yo	Captain US Army	A station chief in the CIA. He served as an Army officer providing security for the Manhattan Project.
Ruth Tolman	1893 46yo	psychologist and professor	Known for her close relationship with J Robert Oppenheimer
Doctor			Appears in one scene
Waitress			Appears in one scene
Military Policeman			Appears in a couple of scenes

What to Prepare

Because there are 22 characters, it will not be possible to audition each one individually. Auditions will be open, with characters reading against each other. The following major roles will be auditioned:

J. Robert Oppenheimer (Oppie) and Kitty Harrison (Act 1 sc12 pages 30 to 32)

Frank and Jackie Oppenheimer (Act 1 sc10 pages 28 to 29)

Bob Serber and Charlotte Serber (Act 2 sc20 pages 103 to 105)

J. Robert Oppenheimer (Oppie) and Jean Tatlock (Act 2 sc2 pages 72 to 74)

General Groves (Monologue page 43)

Klaus Fuchs, Luis Alvarez, Hans Bethe, Richard Feynman, Robert Wilson, Edward Teller (Act 2 sc 16 pages 98 to 100)

Giovanni Lomanitz, Joe Weinberg (Act 1 sc9 pages 27 to 28)

The following roles are doubled and not auditioned separately:

- Jackie Oppenheimer is doubled with **Ruth Tolman** and **the Waitress**
- Richard Feynman with **Haakon Chevalier**
- Klaus Fuchs with **Richard Harrison**
- Luis Alvarez with **the Doctor**
- Lomanitz with the **Military Policeman**
- Joe Weinberg with **Kenneth Nichols**

Peer Da Silva is a small role and will be cast from one of the auditionees.

All actors will be involved in Scene changing and ensemble pieces e.g, Party scenes, Research Workers, Military personnel, Etc.

All characters have American accents except Teller (Hungarian), Fuchs (German/British), Richard Harrison (British). Hans Bethe (German/American)

The Audition Evening

Auditionees will need to sign in and complete a contact sheet in the Theatre Bar at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse from 6.30pm on Tuesday 19th November. We will then see the auditionees in the Annexe in front of the audition panel from about 7pm.

There will be Garrick personnel to show you around and help you through the process. Please be aware that these audition evenings often include quite a bit of waiting around and can be long, but we will try to move as quickly as we can.

The audition panel will consist of the Director and members of the Altrincham Garrick's Artistic and Casting Team (ACT).

We are a diverse theatre and we welcome auditionees of all ages (above the age of 18) and all genders, ethnicities, sexualities, disabilities and races, to enrich the work of the production.

What Next?

If you've read all the information in this pack, and wish to audition, then please email casting@altrinchamgarrick.co.uk stating "**OPPENHEIMER**" in the subject heading and detailing your name and contact number. By emailing, you will have registered for an audition on Tuesday 19th November.

We'd like to wish you the very best of luck, and we look forward to welcoming you, or seeing you again! Thank you for taking the time and interest to prepare for this audition and Break-A-Leg!

Best wishes,

Joseph Meighan (Artistic Director/ Artistic and Casting Team)

Carole Carr (Artistic and Casting Team)

Mike Shaw (Artistic and Casting Team)

Val Watkinson (Artistic and Casting Team)

Fiona Primrose (Artistic and Casting Team)

Gemma Sales (Artistic and Casting Team)

TOM MORTON-SMITH

11 – LECTURE SERIES: A LETTER TO A PRESIDENT

Albert EINSTEIN reads from a letter.

EINSTEIN: 'Mr Roosevelt ... Mr President ... Sir. I believe that it may soon become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of the element uranium ... thus generating a vast amount of power. This phenomenon may lead to the construction of a new type of extremely powerful bomb. A single bomb that may very well flatten a city. I understand that, since her expansion into the Sudetenland, Germany has stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines that she has taken over. Are the Nazis aware of the potential of uranium? Of course. May I suggest that this situation calls for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of your administration. Yours truly ...'

12 – THE LINCOLN BATTALION

*A garden party in Pasadena.**The sun is shining and music is playing. Partygoers are having an excellent time. HAAKON is chatting to a group of people. OPPIE stands to one side.**A band strikes up and sings a jaunty version of 'Jarama Valley', a soldier's song of the Spanish Civil War. KITTY Harrison approaches OPPIE with a drink.*

KITTY: Here.

OPPIE: What's this?

KITTY: A Scotch and soda. You look like a Scotch and soda.

OPPIE: Thank you ...

KITTY: Kitty Harrison.

OPPIE: Thank you, Kitty.

KITTY: That's no problem at all.

OPPIE: Are you not joining in with the ...?

KITTY: Discussions ... debates? No. My husband dragged me along. This is very much his sort of thing.

OPPIE: It isn't yours?

KITTY: Maybe once. My first husband died pointlessly in Spain. To hear the band sing of the Lincoln Battalion ... of the brave Americans ... volunteers in the noble battle against Franco ...

OPPIE: I am sorry.

OPPENHEIMER: ACT ONE

KITTY: All of his friends ... all of our friends ... and that includes my current husband ... all believe passionately in the Communist ideal. Europe's either becoming a bootcamp or a graveyard ... and these people think they have the answer ... but they only ever talk to each other.

OPPIE: Then why are you here?

KITTY: There's a free bar.

HAAKON: *(Waves for OPPIE to come over.)*

OPPIE: *(Declines.)*

KITTY: A friend of yours? He wants you to go meet some people.

OPPIE: He wants to wheel me around. I expect he's losing an argument he'd like to win.

KITTY: You're his secret weapon?

OPPIE: Hardly.

KITTY: Please. I cannot bear false modesty – my husband is British. *(Beat.)* What is it you do?

OPPIE: I'm a professor of physics.

KITTY: You're a smart one then ... you're a thinker.

OPPIE: It has been known.

KITTY: If we left together now ... where would we go? If we said 'screw it'. If we flipped the bird to all the Party Men ... the card carriers ... the ideologues. If we threw off the bullshit of the world ... where would you, professor of physics, take me?

OPPIE: If we were to leave right now?

KITTY: Right now.

OPPIE: I have a ranch ... up in the mountains of New Mexico. A simple, wooden ranch. A forest glade ... horse riding ... the stars in the sky. A wood burning stove.

KITTY: It sounds perfect.

OPPIE: It's a bit of a drive.

KITTY: If we could swing by a drugstore, I could pick up a toothbrush.

OPPIE: You don't want to stay for the lecture?

KITTY: Spontaneism and the dialectics of revolutionary yadda yadda yadda ... I would rather eat glass.

RICHARD Harrison approaches.

TOM MORTON-SMITH

RICHARD: Darling ... the talk is about to begin ...

KITTY: Richard, do you know ...?

OPPIE: Robert Oppenheimer.

KITTY: Robert, my husband Richard.

RICHARD: We should take our seat.

KITTY: Will you not join us?

OPPIE: Please. I know what will be said.

KITTY: Yes.

RICHARD: Darling ... we really must ...

KITTY: It was a pleasure to meet you, Robert.

OPPIE: And you.

KITTY: I hope that our paths cross again.

OPPIE: We should make certain of it.

KITTY: Yes. We should.

13 – PEAS IN A POD

HAAKON: I want your advice ... suggestions ... rewrites if necessary. Will you cast your eye over ...?

OPPIE: I'm flattered that you would ask, but you're the novelist, not I.

HAAKON: This isn't the novel, this is ... this is a pamphlet on behalf of the League of American Writers. This is for the College Faculties Committee of the Communist Party of California. This is a letter to be sent to Soviet Russia Today ... to be published in their September issue.

OPPIE: And what do these pamphlets say?

HAAKON: They are petitioning against war. Now more than ever, we have to be vocal. Europe is on a precipice and political discourse in this country is lurching to the right. The politicians are stoking our hate ... stoking our fear ... priming us for violence.

OPPIE: You would have me throw my weight behind the Communist Party?

HAAKON: The Party's beliefs are your beliefs.

OPPIE: My beliefs would not allow for treaties with fascists.

TOM MORTON-SMITH

WILSON: ... let's look at uranium.

SERBER: Uranium is still made of protons, electrons and neutrons

...

WEINBERG: ... but in far greater quantities.

LOMANITZ: There are 92 protons in the nucleus of a uranium atom ...

WILSON: ... orbited by 92 electrons ...

SERBER: ... and it can bind between 141 and 146 neutrons.

WEINBERG: That's a whole big heap of sub-atomic particles.

SERBER: Half of a perfect atom is an imperfect one.

LOMANITZ: So if you were to use a neutron to split a uranium nucleus ... it wouldn't divide neatly into two equally sized stable elements.

WILSON: It's a watermelon shot by a rifle ... it will be blown into chunks.

LOMANITZ: As we said, uranium can hold a lot of neutrons at its core. Lighter elements cannot contain nearly as many.

SERBER: So if you start splitting uranium into lighter elements ... that's a lot of neutrons left with no place to go.

WEINBERG: You split one atom and you'd have neutrons firing off in all directions ...

WILSON: ... bombarding any surrounding atoms ...

SERBER: ... any surrounding *uranium* atoms ...

LOMANITZ: ... and what you'd have ...

WILSON: ... would be a ...

SERBER: ... in all likelihood, would be ...

WEINBERG: ... a chain reaction.

LOMANITZ: The nuclear force that bonds particles together is incredibly strong.

WILSON: You start tearing into atoms ... start pulling them apart ... that's an awful big mess of energy you're releasing.

SERBER: An awful big mess.

10 – FRANK AND JACKIE JOIN THE PARTY

JACKIE: There was a membership coupon in People's World ...

FRANK: ... the local communist newspaper in Pasadena ...

JACKIE: ... Frank was reading it at the time ...

FRANK: ... at the kitchen table ...

JACKIE: ... there was an article about the working conditions of
Negro farm workers ...

FRANK: ... horrendous state of affairs ... inhuman treatment ...

JACKIE: ... I was reading over his shoulder and I saw the coupon ...

FRANK: ... and without a word exchanged between us ...

JACKIE: ... I fetched some scissors from the drawer ...

FRANK: ... and I took an envelope from my desk ...

JACKIE: ... we posted it that afternoon.

FRANK: It was some time before they contacted us ...

JACKIE: ... they sent us these little green Party cards ... like
library cards ...

FRANK: ... they assigned us to a 'street unit' ...

JACKIE: ... all people from the local community ...

FRANK: ... the neighborhood ...

JACKIE: ... some unemployed ...

FRANK: ... some blacks ...

JACKIE: ... some black unemployed.

FRANK: We gather every week ...

JACKIE: ... it's mostly talk ...

FRANK: ... which is frustrating ...

JACKIE: ... we hold meetings in our front room ...

FRANK: ... my famous avocado dip ...

JACKIE: ... we want to get things done ...

FRANK: ... we'd like you to attend.

JACKIE: The Pasadena municipal swimming pool is segregated.
Wednesday afternoons are set aside for blacks, and then they
drain the pool on Thursday mornings. We're trying to get that
changed.

OPPIE: Have you thought about your career?

FRANK: I have no problem calling myself a communist.
And neither should you.

UPPENHEIMER: ACT TWO

FRANK: Ah ... my position is somewhat more precarious than yours, Hans.

WILSON: *(Getting up.)* I'm sorry ... I think I need to ... sleep or ... something ... I need to ... I need ... I don't ... *(Stumbles.)*

BETHE: Hey ...

WILSON: I'm sorry ... I'm ... it's the eggs ... it's probably just the eggs ...

FRANK: Can I get you some water?

WILSON: No, I ... I ... *(Beat.)* This project ... this is the one thing ... we all have that one thing ... and all you can hope for is that your one thing is something to take pride in. This ... my life's keystone ... is carved from one hundred percent pure ambivalence. And ambivalence is, by its nature ... is not an element. Ambivalence is a chemical compound. My particular variation ... my particular compound ... the molecular structure of my ambivalence ... is one part pride bonded to one part horror. I don't know if I will ever be at ease again.

BETHE: Come on ... come with me ... I'll get you to your room.

WILSON: Can we undo it, please? Can we ... before it's actually ... actually used?

BETHE supports WILSON as they exit.

FRANK looks at his eggs, he cannot bring himself to eat them.

OPPIE in the doorway.

FRANK: Oh ... hey. I didn't know you were up. I didn't know you were out. Can I get you some ... can I get you ...?

Silence.

FRANK: I was just saying to Hans ... just saying to Wilson ... I was sorry to hear about Jean ... about ... I should've said something before ... it should've been the first thing I said. I wish I could've been ...

OPPIE: *(Falteringly, awkwardly, he finds himself on the ground and begins to shake, begins to rock.)*

FRANK: *(Comforts him, holds him.)* Hey ... hey ...

20 - SAYONARA

SERBER is packing.

CHARLOTTE: *(Hands him a book.)*

TOM MORTON-SMITH

SERBER: What is this?

CHARLOTTE: It's a book.

SERBER: So I see.

CHARLOTTE: The only book we had on Japan. Left over from the Boy's School ... not one of the ... not one of the titles we brought with us.

SERBER: Bushidō.

CHARLOTTE: It's a chivalric code. Thought it might come in handy ... holding doors for people ... which chopsticks for mains ... which chopsticks for soup.

SERBER: I don't think it's etiquette. I don't think it's table manners.

CHARLOTTE: It's all we had.

SERBER: I'll treasure it.

CHARLOTTE: It's not to keep. I must show no preferential treatment.

SERBER: Yes, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE: I've stamped it out for a month.

SERBER: I might be longer.

CHARLOTTE: Then you'll pay the fine. You have to bring it back.

SERBER: I'll bring it back.

CHARLOTTE: In one piece.

SERBER: In one piece.

CHARLOTTE: Where will you be ... when the first bomb drops?

SERBER: I don't know ... some airbase somewhere ... a thousand miles away.

CHARLOTTE: You can't wear that ... on the plane.

SERBER: I won't.

CHARLOTTE: You should wear your grey slacks ... the ones with the larger waist. You'll need to be comfortable ... such a long flight. You know how you are with flying.

SERBER: I'll have to be in uniform.

CHARLOTTE: The whole time?

SERBER: The whole time.

CHARLOTTE: On the flight?

SERBER: On the flight. On the ground.

CHARLOTTE: You can't.

SERBER: No?

CHARLOTTE: It'll make you a target ... army uniform ... an enemy combatant ... a legitimate target.

SERBER: By the time I get to Japan they'll be beaten. They won't fight.

CHARLOTTE: Ask to be issued with baggier pants.

SERBER: I'll write you.

CHARLOTTE: You must.

SERBER: Every day.

CHARLOTTE: You must.

SERBER: I'll bring you a dressing gown. Silk. With embroidered cherry blossom.

CHARLOTTE: Don't.

SERBER: No?

CHARLOTTE: I won't wear it.

SERBER: Don't be silly. Kiss me.

CHARLOTTE: It's goodbye.

SERBER: It's sayonara.

CHARLOTTE: Stop it. Their walls are made of paper.

SERBER: Their cities are modern.

CHARLOTTE: There will be nothing to learn.

SERBER: I'm interested. God help me, but I'm interested. We have to know ... the effects ... how bad ... the pressures ... the temperatures ... to compare with our calculations. How else to know if we were right? Sorry ... if we were *correct*. Correct is different to right. I've got to hold this Little Boy's hand ... I've got to see him off. Kiss me.

CHARLOTTE: I love you.

TOM MORTON-SMITH

BAND: One day and it ain't far away
I'll call a spade a spade
And let you know I love you so
You are my secret flame

2 - A VISIT TO JEAN

JEAN's apartment in San Francisco.

JEAN: Don't stand in the doorway ... don't stand in the hall ...
come in ... come in. There is wine ... I know there is wine
... there is gin and there is Scotch. There is vodka! We shall
have music and there will be dancing ... though the needle
has broken ... it doesn't matter ... we can sing! Sing me a little
song and dance with me a little dance ... if I stop moving I'll
die ... so spin ... spin me around the floor.

OPPIE: You have tired me out.

JEAN: *(Sings.)* One day and it ain't far away
I'll call a spade a spade
And let you know I love you so ...

OPPIE: *(Holds her still.)*

Silence.

JEAN: You smell of pipe tobacco.

OPPIE: We should open some windows.

JEAN: No ... no ... fresh air brings with it fresh problems.

OPPIE: It's stale ... breathed in, breathed out, a thousand times.

JEAN: You smell of pipe tobacco. You smell like my father. She
has you dressing better.

OPPIE: You think so?

JEAN: Oh yes. Very smart.

OPPIE: She is ... she's ...

JEAN: You can talk about her. I don't mind.

OPPIE: I don't have to. So I won't.

JEAN: Do you only do things when you have to?

OPPIE: Mostly.

JEAN: And you don't *have* to reply to my letters?

OPPIE: Jean ...

JEAN: Was that unsubtle? Was that a brickbat?

OPPIE: They open them. They read them. They copy them out and file them.

JEAN: I don't care.

OPPIE: There are all these sounds on my telephone ... clicks where I've never known there to be clicks before. That car across the street ... across the street from your apartment ... that black sedan ... do you see it?

JEAN: I see it.

OPPIE: FBI.

JEAN: How can you tell?

OPPIE: That car follows me. This ... this will be getting them excited ... a married man visiting his former lover ... his former lover who has been so very vocally communist. The pencils in their notebooks ... you can hear them if you listen. So I wave at them ... smile at them ... make it clear that I know that they are there. It tells them that you are nothing to hide.

JEAN: I can't picture you. I could picture you on the Berkeley campus ... with your students ... with your blackboards ... but now ... *(Beat.)* I send my letters to a post office box ... it's a number ... it's not a location ... it's not where you are.

OPPIE: No.

JEAN: Where are you?

OPPIE: You can't ask that. I can't answer.

JEAN: I need to know.

OPPIE: Stop.

JEAN: Please ...

OPPIE: If you ask again I shall get suspicious and I shall leave.

JEAN: No ... no ... I'm sorry ... I'm sorry ...

OPPIE: Have you gone back to therapy? Look at me.

JEAN: I am a doctor now ... do you know that? I have a job at a hospital.

OPPIE: But not today?

JEAN: Patients don't like their doctors to be sick.

OPPIE: When was the last time you went into work?

TOM MORTON-SMITH

JEAN: 'The work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him.'

OPPIE: (*Touches her face.*)

JEAN: What do you see?

OPPIE: A fire I can't put out.

JEAN: Kiss me if you want to.

OPPIE: Is that what you want?

JEAN: I want it to make me happy.

OPPIE: We know it won't.

JEAN: The world is ugly. It is full of ugly things. And ugly people. Doing ugly jobs. Under ugly light. For ugly money. To buy ugly food. To feed their ugly children. So that their ugly children can kill someone else's ugly child in an ugly way. I find myself embarrassed ... for my youth. Is there anything more pathetic ... more arrogant ... more self-centered ... than 'I want to change the world'? (*Beat.*) Are you going to stay? If it's the last time - stay.

3 - IN GENERAL GROVES' OFFICE

GROVES: This Tatlock woman ... she is ...?

NICHOLS: ... a known Party member.

GROVES: Very well.

NICHOLS: A wiretap will be placed on her phone.

DE SILVA: Despite his reassurances, sir, Oppenheimer has failed to fully distance himself from his many dubious associations.
Sir.

NICHOLS: The question must arise ... is this one man's contribution worth risking the security of the entire project, sir?

GROVES: His clearance will not be revoked. His inclination is to protect his own future and reputation. Trust in his vanity. He has asked to come talk with me. I would like you to be present.

NICHOLS: Of course.

This study group of yours ... it is a good start. I am pleased that finally something substantial is being done.

19 – LECTURE SERIES:
THE MAN WHO BUILT THE PENTAGON

GROVES: September 17th 1942. I am called to the office of my superior. I know these corridors ... I built these corridors ... Colonel Leslie R Groves of the Army Corps of Engineers ... the man who built the Pentagon. My blood is in this mortar. These hinges are oiled with my sweat. 'You are familiar with the S-1 Committee?' 'I am, sir.' 'What do you know of the S-1 Committee?' 'The S-1 Committee is in charge of investigating the properties and manufacture of uranium, sir.' 'Do you understand the purpose of the S-1 Committee?' 'Not fully, sir. I can't say that I do, sir.' 'It is weapons development.' 'I see, sir. I was hoping for a combat assignment, sir. Overseas, sir.' 'That is not going to happen.' 'I see, sir.' 'The development of this new uranium bomb is to become a military operation.' 'Yes, sir.' 'It is to be instilled with a sense of urgency.' 'Yes, sir.' 'If you do this job right, it will win us the war.' '...' 'Groves?' 'Yes, sir.' 'I said it will win us the war.' 'We have bombs already, sir.' 'The decision has been made. You will be promoted to the rank of general.' 'Thank you, sir. I was hoping for a combat assignment, sir.' 'Well, you have this instead.' 'Sir, yes, sir.' 'Congratulations, General.' 'Sir, thank you, sir.' I am handed some files. I am appointed a personal aide. If I am ordered to build a wall, I buy bricks. If I am ordered to shoot a man, I count my bullets. If I am ordered to throw myself in front of a train, I consult a timetable. Where to begin ... where to begin ...?

20 – TOBACCO AND GIN

The Oppenheimer household.

OPPIE in one corner. KITTY on the other, smoking. CHARLOTTE holds baby PETER in her arms. SERBER has a ukulele. They sing PETER a lullaby – Remember Your Name and Address from Irving Caesar's Songs of Safety.

SERBER & CHARLOTTE:

Remember your name and address

And telephone number too

And if someday you lose your way

You know just what to do...

TOM MORTON-SMITH

SERBER: Well, I'll take a bottle of whiskey.

TELLER: And if we set fire to the atmosphere?

SERBER: I guess I better take two.

TELLER and the other physicists exit, leaving SERBER alone with CHARLOTTE.

SERBER: Don't grind your teeth.

CHARLOTTE: I'm not grinding my teeth.

SERBER: I know you.

CHARLOTTE: I'm the only department head who won't be present at the Trinity test.

SERBER: Don't ...

CHARLOTTE: I'm not allowed to get pissed off?

SERBER: We'll be in dugout holes in the desert. There aren't the facilities.

CHARLOTTE: What 'facilities' do you think a woman needs? You think I need to be surrounded by potpourri and doilies in order to take a shit?

SERBER: It is what it is.

CHARLOTTE: I'm a goddamn head of division. It may only be the Library Division ... but do you believe ... with the masses of data, paperwork and classified information ... that this project could succeed without an efficient and organized ...?

SERBER: Hey ... I know ... I know.

CHARLOTTE: It pisses me off.

SERBER: Yeah. Me too.

16 – THIS IS WHERE I AM FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

FUCHS: I lie in the dirt ...

ALVAREZ: ... in the dugout dust of the desert plain ...

BETHE: ... in the bunker ...

FEYNMAN: ... my eyes to the distance ...

ALVAREZ: ... my eyes to the tower ...

BETHE: ... which Wilson is climbing ...

WILSON: ... I am the last to see the bomb ...

OPPENHEIMER: ACT TWO

FUCHS: ... he attaches equipment ...

FEYNMAN: ... a measuring and monitoring device ...

TELLER: ... double check ...

BETHE: ... and triple check ...

FEYNMAN: ... the radio receives weather reports ...

ALVAREZ: ... stormfronts ...

FUCHS: ... electrical ...

BETHE: ... if lightning were to strike ...

TELLER: ... to strike a primed plutonium device ...

FEYNMAN: ... hoisted high above the desert ...

ALVAREZ: ... the tallest point for a hundred square miles ...

WILSON: ... I'd like to not think of that, thanks all the same ...

TELLER: ... double check ...

BETHE: ... triple check ...

TELLER: ... quadruple ...

WILSON: ... from the tower I can see ... through the gaps in the
corrugated housing ... from the tower I see ... lightning as it
strikes the dust bowl ...

ALVAREZ: ... the stormfront moves on ...

WILSON: ... I place my hand on the device ...

TELLER: ... do you expect it to be warm ...?

WILSON: ... no ...

BETHE: ... do you expect it to vibrate ...?

TELLER: ... or radiate ...?

WILSON: ... no ...

FEYNMAN: ... is it a sleeping bear ...?

FUCHS: ... a lizard's egg ...?

WILSON: ... it is metal ... but not the sort that sings ... the sort
that sits. I am done here ...

BETHE: ... he climbs from the tower ...

SERBER: ... climbs into his jeep ...

TELLER: ... and drives ...

FUCHS: ... the countdown clock begins ...

TOM MORTON-SMITH

BETHE: ... automated ...

SERBER: ... I am in the first bunker ...

TELLER: ... ten miles from zero ...

WILSON: ... I find some dirt to lie in ...

SERBER: ... my welder's mask is heavy on my arm ...

FRANK: ... I lie next to my brother ...

BETHE: ... at t-minus two he is heard to mutter ...

OPPIE: ... Lord, these affairs are hard on the heart ...

FUCHS: ... I lie in the dirt ...

TELLER: ... I lie in the dirt ...

SERBER: ... I lie in the dirt ...

WILSON: ... this is where I am ...

FEYNMAN: ... this is where I'll be ...

SERBER: ... for the end of the world ...

An incredibly bright light.

The radiance of a thousand suns.

Silence.

Shockwave.

A gale-force wind.

Debris and dust.

A distant rumble followed by the sound of the very matter of the universe pulling itself apart.

17 - ORANGE JUICE!

FEYNMAN bursts forward with a set of bongos.

FEYNMAN: Orange juice!

He bangs out a crazy rhythm on his drums and starts singing a nonsense song about orange juice. The space is suddenly alive with a thousand people all in military uniform ... physicists, civilians and army personnel ... all of them dancing ... all of them singing ... all of them celebrating. It is anarchic. It is surreal.

9 – LECTURE SERIES: THE MODEL ATOM

LOMANITZ: The internal structure of the atom consists of three subatomic particles ...

WEINBERG: ... the positively charged proton ...

WILSON: ... the negatively charged electron ...

SERBER: ... and the neutron ...

LOMANITZ: ... which remains neutral.

WILSON: Each chemical element has a differing number of protons at its core.

WEINBERG: Hydrogen ...

SERBER: ... the simplest element ...

WILSON: ... the lightest element ...

WEINBERG: ... has only a single proton at its heart.

LOMANITZ: Helium ... the next lightest element ... has a nucleus with two protons and two neutrons.

SERBER: This is lithium ...

WILSON: ... third in the periodic table.

LOMANITZ: Three protons bound to four neutrons and orbited by three electrons.

WEINBERG: The electrons are desperate to be part of the nucleus ...

SERBER: ... they're negatively charged ... the protons positively charged ... there's an attraction.

WILSON: But electrons are fidgety ... they can't keep still.

SERBER: They've got all this energy but they're tied to the nucleus.

WEINBERG: It's like having a firework on a piece of string.

WILSON: They want to be up in the sky but the center won't let them go.

LOMANITZ: So they pull in all directions at the same time ... a cloud of tethered energy.

WILSON: But that is nothing compared to the energy held within the nucleus.

SERBER: Let's look at something at the other end of the periodic table ... a much heavier nucleus ...

TOM MORTON-SMITH

WILSON: ... let's look at uranium.

SERBER: Uranium is still made of protons, electrons and neutrons

...

WEINBERG: ... but in far greater quantities.

LOMANITZ: There are 92 protons in the nucleus of a uranium atom ...

WILSON: ... orbited by 92 electrons ...

SERBER: ... and it can bind between 141 and 146 neutrons.

WEINBERG: That's a whole big heap of sub-atomic particles.

SERBER: Half of a perfect atom is an imperfect one.

LOMANITZ: So if you were to use a neutron to split a uranium nucleus ... it wouldn't divide neatly into two equally sized stable elements.

WILSON: It's a watermelon shot by a rifle ... it will be blown into chunks.

LOMANITZ: As we said, uranium can hold a lot of neutrons at its core. Lighter elements cannot contain nearly as many.

SERBER: So if you start splitting uranium into lighter elements ... that's a lot of neutrons left with no place to go.

WEINBERG: You split one atom and you'd have neutrons firing off in all directions ...

WILSON: ... bombarding any surrounding atoms ...

SERBER: ... any surrounding *uranium* atoms ...

LOMANITZ: ... and what you'd have ...

WILSON: ... would be a ...

SERBER: ... in all likelihood, would be ...

WEINBERG: ... a chain reaction.

LOMANITZ: The nuclear force that bonds particles together is incredibly strong.

WILSON: You start tearing into atoms ... start pulling them apart ... that's an awful big mess of energy you're releasing.

SERBER: An awful big mess.

10 – FRANK AND JACKIE JOIN THE PARTY

JACKIE: There was a membership coupon in People's World ...

