DRAMA IN OUR TIME

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Preface

This book offers high school juniors and seniors a broad, highly selective sampling of drama in our time. From the stage, still the fountain head of dramatic writing, come four full length contemporary plays, two long plays somewhat condensed, and four dramatic episodes of various types. From the movies comes the script of a screen play for study; and from radio the complete text of a radio play. Through this collection of readable, enjoyable dramas, the pupil sees in operation the three most important agencies of communication in modern life — the stage, the screen, the radio.

A broad variety of drama is included in this book: political drama, modern tragedy, symbolism, historical drama, living newspaper, poetical drama, comedy, musical comedy, farce, screen play, and radio play. The student also meets thirteen of the leading dramatists of our time, American and European. Thus, the student of this book is put in the way of a rich and varied drama experience.

There are numerous study helps. Each phase of drama experience begins with a chapter which contains a brief historical account of the development of the art in our time, and a guide to appreciation which includes an explanation of techniques and a glossary of technical terms. Each play is introduced with an explanatory note and a brief biographical sketch of the author. Preparatory material entitled " Before Reading " is designed to anticipate difficulties such as hard words and allusions which students are likely to encounter. The aids and questions in " While Reading " are taken up concurrently with the study of the play. And finally " After Reading " considers the play as a whole, asks questions designed to widen the student's mental horizon, and suggests further reading. These helps also aim to stimulate creative activity, to integrate the work in English with that in other subjects, and to encourage the use of individual and committee reports.

The emphasis throughout is on readability rather than actability; the scripts can be enjoyed through effective class reading without any at-

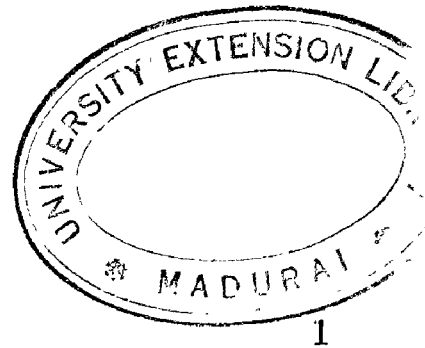
tempt at dramatization and performance. There is an annotated list of plays at the close of the book to guide both student and teacher in additional play reading.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. Elmer R. Smith, Supervisor of Curriculum Research in the Providence, Rhode Island Public Schools, and to Dr. Clara A. Molendyk of Lafayette High School, Dr. A. Barnet Langdale of Erasmus Hall High School, Mr. Hubert N. Hart of Stuyvesant High School, all of New York City, for careful and critical reading of his manuscript, and to Edith Nagelberg, his wife, for her help with many phases of the work.

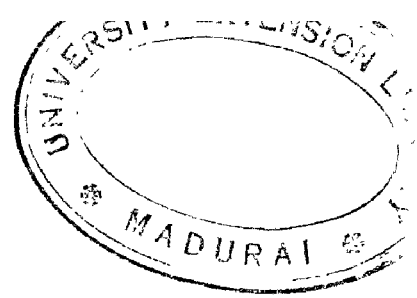
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The Stage

We spend a third of our lives in sleep. Another third – at least during our school years – we devote to school (including homework). What, then, about the remaining hours of every day? How do high-school boys and girls, let us say, spend these hours? Well, there are family chores and food and fellowship. There are sports and work and just plain idling. Then there are "drama" experiences; and what a surprising number of hours we use for *them!* (Let us think of drama as meaning, roughly, anything acted out on the stage, the screen, or the radio.)

DRAMA IN OUR LIVES

Just to see how much time we do spend with the drama, we may try this experiment in class: Let every student keep a chart of activities during any typical school week, with the amount of time devoted each day to each activity. The class can then work out the average time spent on the drama: seeing movies, listening to radio dramas, reading plays, seeing or acting in stage plays (in classroom, club, assembly, Sunday school, theatre). Classes that have tried the experiment have differed widely in their results, because of differences in age, locality, time of year, and so on. But all have been surprised by the rather large slice which so-called drama experiences cut out of their lives.

We are a drama-consuming people. Figures are not available on play-going among the general population, because the opportunity to see professional plays is rather limited. However, we do know that about forty per cent of the American people attend the movies at least once a week (a considerable proportion of this number more often than once); that there are about 90,000,000 paid admissions to the movies of this country each week; and that the average movie visit is two hours. We know also that the average family spends about three hours each day in radio listening (one study gives the figures as four and a half hours!); and that more people listen to plays of various kinds over the air (serials, complete plays, skits, dialogues, and dramatic presentations in other programs) than to any other single type of program. If you add to this the hours spent by millions of Americans in reading about motion

pictures and radio (count the number of movie magazines,[1] for example, on the average newsstand), you begin to take almost literally Jacques' insistence, in *As You Like It,* that all the world's a stage.

LEARNING ABOUT DRAMA

If so large a portion of our waking hours is spent in experiences with some form of drama, how much should we be expected to know about it? Of course, most young people manage to acquire an alarming amount of "gossip" about screen and radio stars — knowledge obtained through newspaper and radio columns and the many magazines that specialize in this information. As each Sinatra or Van Johnson goes into eclipse, another entertainment star rises to fill the hearts and imaginations of people everywhere. This, however, is not the kind of knowledge that makes for a better understanding or a greater appreciation of plays, whether on the stage, the screen, or the air. Nor is it the kind of information that will make you a more discriminating consumer of drama.

Drama Quiz. Here, for example, is a fairly easy quiz which you might try out on yourself and your friends. Twenty answers are called for; how many are you able to supply? The questions touch on motion pictures, the stage, and radio. Most of the questions are answered in the course of the book.

1. Who directed the last good motion picture you saw?
2. Identify: Arch Oboler; Pare Lorentz; Michael Curtiz; Arthur Hopkins.
3. Name two radio plays by Norman Corwin.
4. What is "the Living Newspaper"?
5. What is meant by "upstage"?
6. What is a "documentary"?
7. Name two writers who have collaborated with George S. Kaufman.
8. What is the difference between *cut to* and *dissolve to* in a movie script?
9. What are the meanings of such directions as these in a radio script: *music up and under; ad lib.; fade in; segue?*
10. Name one playwright who received the Nobel Prize in Literature; the last to receive the Pulitzer Prize for the best play of the year; two movie stars who received last year's Academy Award ("Oscar").

To Know Is to Enjoy. But why, you will say, should we know more about these activities? After all, we are not "professionals," though

[1] About 11,000,000 copies of movie magazines are sold in this country each week.

most of us, at one time or another, long to be. We see and hear plays and pictures just for the fun of it. Being too "knowing" may spoil the fun, remove some of the freshness from the experience. Try comparing your pleasure in watching a game you know well, like baseball or football, with one you are not familiar with, such as cricket, let us say. Or watch the boredom of some friend whom you have taken to see your school football team play, when he, or more likely she, knows little about the game.

There are many advantages which the better informed consumer of drama has over the ill-informed or ignorant. Knowing what to look for is always a stimulus to greater enjoyment, as well as a help to longer retention of a movie or play. The ability to shop wisely and to discriminate between good and poor is a help to economy of time and money. Being on the inside is also gratifying: to know about people who make the entertainment—writers, producers, directors, actors, musicians; to know the background and history of plays and pictures, and to have a storehouse of other plays in your memory, for association and comparison; to understand techniques so that you can imagine yourself in the radio studio, on the movie set, or in the theatre wings. The student of the drama also gets added opportunities for dramatic experience: he can, with comprehension and enjoyment, read plays, movies, and radio scripts as well as stage plays.

A Four-dimensional World. It may help to think about the subject in this way: Great literature or art or music has four dimensions—length, breadth, depth, and time. It must appeal to many people in many places; it must do so with intensity (depth), and it must last long—not so much the experience itself as the memory of it and the desire of people to go back to it again and again. Apply these dimensions to the books you have read and the plays and pictures you have seen and heard. You will find the dimensions growing larger as you yourself become wiser in the ways of these experiences.

SEEING A PLAY

Now let us try going to a show together. We could choose a broadcast, or a movie; but for high adventure [2] let us see a good stage play in

[2] The author has in his files large numbers of letters from high-school students who speak of this high adventure as one of the great thrills of their lifetime. The students were among the many thousands who have been invited to special student matinees of professional plays on New York City's Broadway. These matinees are

a professional theatre. What are the steps in this adventure? There is first, of course, the anticipation — the festive nature of going out, the excitement of expectation. Then comes the preparation with its problems: whom to take, or go with; what to wear; where to go afterward. The trip to the theatre; the lobby-waiting and -watching; the business of being seated by the usher — these are all part of the adventure, as are watching the people and hearing snatches of their conversation, and observing the theatre decorations, curtain, stage.

The Program. Next comes a study of the program — and it is well to come early enough for this step. Here are some questions you may be asking yourself as you read your program: What does the play's title suggest? What do I know about the author, the producer, the director? What other "credits" are mentioned? Who are the principal players, and what parts do they play? Is the listing of players in the order of their appearance? Do the program notes tell us anything about the players? What are the divisions of this play: how many acts, what scenes? Remember that when the lights go out you cannot read the names of the scenes.

Now you feel the heightened suspense that comes with the darkening of the theatre, and you recall impressions about the play gathered from reviews you have read and comments you have heard. Then the curtain rises, and you are transported into the world and life that the playwright has created for you. Perhaps there is a ripple of applause for the fine set, or for one of the principals of the cast. The play has begun.[3]

The Ingredients of a Play. The ingredients of a play reveal themselves to you as you watch, even though you are only dimly conscious of each of these essentials as the play unfolds. You do know, however, that in all drama, as in life, someone is doing something somewhere for

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"donated" by actors, owners, managers, and workers in the theatre for the benefit of young people who could not otherwise afford to see the best plays each season. The Board of Education and the School and Theatre Committee choose the plays and the high schools choose the students for each performance.

Many people, of course, live in localities which do not have the opportunity of seeing professionally acted plays. The number of such people is constantly being reduced, however, by the large number of road companies which visit larger communities and college towns, the "little theatres" and summer theatres throughout the country, and the increasing ease with which people can travel to the bigger towns and cities.

[3] Compare this experience with the first moments of a radio program, or with a visit to a movie. Music, sound effects, and the voice of the announcer are the "curtain raisers" of the radio play. As often as not, movie-goers in large communities may walk in after the picture has begun. Notice the vast difference in the technique of opening a stage play and a movie.

some purpose. Translated into the language of the play, the stage or setting reveals characters who enact a plot or story possessing a theme. Each of these elements is in itself a complex of many factors, all of which conspire to make you, for a time, a citizen of another world.

SETTING

The curtain has risen to reveal the stage, the setting of the play.[4] What does the setting do for us? It gives us, with some help from the program, (1) the place of the action, (2) the time, and (3) the mood or atmosphere. How successfully does our play do this? A brief outline may help you to see some of the questions our setting may answer.

THE STAGE, OR SETTING

I. Place
   A. Location
      1. General: country; city or town
      2. Specific: indoors or outdoors; exact interior room, or exterior place
   B. Stage set
      1. Backdrop
      2. Properties, lights, special features
II. Time
   A. Usually revealed by the program
   B. Suggested also by set, costumes, dialogue
III. Atmosphere or mood
   A. Use of lights
   B. Music, sounds, periods of silence
   C. Action and dialogue of the first few minutes

Are you to look for all this in the first moments of every scene? Curiously enough, the less conscious you are of all these details as the rising curtain first reveals them to you, the more effective is the scene. If the set is to help the play, it must do so unobtrusively; that is, it must not demand attention for itself alone, but only as an important element in creating atmosphere. There are, of course, exceptions. Someone will say that *Our Town* calls for no scenery. Someone else has read that Orson Welles produced *Julius Caesar* without any scenery. Yes, there are sub-

[4] In following this discussion, you may wish to choose one of the first four plays in this book and imagine yourself attending an opening-night performance of that play. The questions can then be answered concretely in terms of the play you have chosen.

stitutes for an elaborate stage set; Welles used lighting and costumes with subtle effectiveness; and Wilder and others employ the narrator — a device used on the radio and in the Living Newspaper, as well as in some of the most ancient of plays.[5] Compare this, however, with the immediate creation of the appropriate atmosphere in the sets for *R.U.R.* and *Watch on the Rhine.*

Questions About the Setting.[6] As you become more aware of the details of the setting, you will tend to judge it by this question: "Does it help me better to understand and enjoy the play?" The answer will depend on such criteria as these:

1. Is the setting realistic or symbolic, imitative or suggestive? That is, does it reproduce in detail an actual scene like the living room in *Watch on the Rhine,* or does it merely suggest the background through well-chosen properties and effective lighting like those in *Yellow Jack?* Is the method chosen appropriate to the play? Is it followed consistently?

2. Is the setting harmonious: in keeping with the period, the purpose, the mood of the play? Does it tie in well with the actions and the characters in the play?

3. Is the setting balanced? Is proper emphasis placed on essential features? Is it free of superfluous detail? Is the design effective?

4. Are lights and costumes used to enhance the effects achieved by the set? Are they in keeping with the spirit of the play?

Audiences will sometimes burst into applause as the rising curtain reveals a stage set. They have been impressed by the immediate impact of the scene, perhaps by its beauty of color and design, or by its striking use of lighting, or by the splendid interior decoration. However, the setting must not detract our attention from the play itself.

CHARACTERS AND ACTING

One or more of the characters of the play may already be on the stage, or heard off stage, as the curtain rises. If so, they are often minor characters, rather than the main ones. You have seen this in the Shakespearean plays you have read; and you will find it in a number of the

[5] Combinations of a simple set and a narrator have also been used, as in Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie,* awarded the Drama Critics Circle Prize as the best play of 1945.

[6] For help in understanding some of the technical or professional terms used in this phase of drama in our time, see page 11.

plays in this book. Why should this be? The appearance of the star often sets off a round of applause. Is this, in your opinion, a good idea?

In a novel or story the author may tell you about the characters directly; in a play you learn about them in three ways: (1) appearance (type, costume, facial expression, bearing); (2) dialogue (what they say, and what others say about them); (3) actions. (Of course the theatre program may give brief explanations, such as *Marius, a robot,* or *Anna, a maid.*)

Dialogue. Why is the conversation in a good play so much more interesting than most of those we hear in real life? Because the dialogue in a play is selective and purposeful. It must move the play along by telling what has gone before, what is now happening, and what may occur later. It reveals characters and situations, and it emphasizes the theme. In plays of our own time the dialogue seems more natural and spontaneous than in older plays. It will lack, for example, the soliloquies and the asides of a Shakespearean play. In a soliloquy the character thinks aloud, and in doing so may explain his fears, his desires, or his motives. In an aside he will say something for the audience to hear, but not for the people on the stage. Sometimes, however, you will see these devices used even in a modern play such as Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* and *Strange Interlude,* or Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine.*[7]

Action. The action, or stage "business," also helps tell the story. People enter or go out, they sit, stand, cross the stage, and make obvious motions or very subtle ones. Pantomime — all of the actor's movements, gestures, facial expressions — is important in all plays; but see how much depends upon it in a play like *Our Town.*

Questions About Characters.[8] How shall we judge the playwright's success in creating effective characters for his play? The experienced playgoer or reader will, more or less consciously, ask himself such questions as these:

1. Are the characters clear? Does each stand out as an individual, apart from the others in the play? Do their words, their actions, their gestures help to make these characters more vivid for us? Are they built up and developed so that we seem to understand them progressively better?

2. Are they convincing? Do they seem, as we see or picture them, alive and real, rather than mere stage creations? Do their words and

[7] In dramatic monologues you must imagine what is being said and done by others through the speech of the one actor on the stage.

[8] For technical terms about characters and acting, see page 12.

actions move us to some positive feeling about them, like sympathy, or admiration, or contempt, or anger?

3. Are they consistent? Are their words and actions in keeping with their character throughout, and with the time and the spirit of the play? Do the characters help to make the outcome of the play seem inevitable?

THE STORY OR PLOT

You will notice that the first few minutes of your play-watching experience prove something of a strain. This may be because you find it hard at first to hear all the lines; but it is also because you have been thrown into the middle of a story without knowing what has gone before. The author in the novel and the narrator in the radio play, and frequently the printed legend introducing a movie, will bridge the gap for you. But with the play you become a kind of detective, piecing together clues to what happened before the play began. Gradually you catch up with the present, and the plot unfolds.

Parts of the Plot. The following outline may help you to understand and to follow the parts of the plot as it progresses through the play.

I. The situation
   A. Reveals "antecedent action," or what has happened before the play begins.
   B. Gives the present position of the characters in relation to the story.

II. The initial incident
   A. Occurs near the beginning of the play — but after the situation has been made clear.
   B. Is the first event to hint at the play's problem, and to create interest in the development.

III. The rising action
   A. Includes the events following the initial incident and leading to the point of highest interest in the play.
   B. Helps to develop the conflict in the play.
      1. Need for conflict: The play is a dramatic slice or sampling of life, of lives in association; no problem — no interest.
      2. Types of conflict
         a. All conflicts are really conflicts of ideas: ways of life, ethical principles, attitudes toward other people and toward society. (Physical conflicts like fights or battles are merely manifestations of inner struggles — the conflict of ideas.)
         b. A character in conflict with another character, with the

conflict caused by conflicting interests, differences in temperament or personality, contrasting or opposing loyalties or beliefs.

c. A character in conflict with society or some phase of it, such as law, conventions, religion, family, national or community interest.

d. A character in conflict with himself; that is, with some other aspect of his thinking or feeling. Examples: conflicting loyalties, past *vs.* present, natural *vs.* artificial or sophisticated reactions, better nature or altruism *vs.* selfishness or the satisfaction of personal desires.

3. Conflict as creator of interest and suspense
4. Conflict as establishing the theme of the play

IV. The climax
- A. Sometimes defined as "point of highest interest."
- B. Represents turning point in welfare of main characters. This is sometimes also called the crisis of the play.

V. The falling action
- A. Includes all the events following the climax.
- B. Must present "resolution" of the conflict.
  1. Audience must be satisfied; not necessarily with the way the play ends, but that the ending is a reasonable one — the possible, perhaps natural outcome of all that has happened.
  2. Audience usually wants "poetic justice" (virtue rewarded, vice punished). This is almost always the case in motion pictures.
- C. The "dénouement" is the sudden, rapid solution of the play's problems. Mysteries and farces have especially rapid dénouements; the play must not be dragged out at the end.

THE THEME

There is, as you see, a great deal to look for in the plot of the play, and many questions to be found in the outline you have before you. Yet even after you have enjoyed the complications of the story as the playwright has presented them to you, there is little of lasting value that you have taken away with you unless you have also realized and formulated in your own mind the author's theme: the idea around which the play is built.

Meaning of Theme. Think back on a good movie you have seen. What is its underlying thought? What, for example, is the idea behind pictures like *Mrs. Miniver* or *The Song of Bernadette?* Single-word an-

swers in both instances might be "courage" or "faith." The theme is the revelation of the author's purpose – behind and beyond the obvious one of entertaining an audience – in writing this particular play. It may assert some essential truth about life, some belief or conviction, some point of view about an ethical or moral or social question. The theme may reveal itself in: (1) the conflict or struggle, and the way in which it is settled; (2) the dialogue of the characters, especially the remarks of the character with whom the author wishes to identify himself; or (3) a combination of character and plot, of dialogue and action, with the audience doing much of the work of ferreting out the underlying thought. Remember that there are many minor ideas in any play; distinguish them from the main one.

As the curtain falls on the last scene of the play you have been seeing, you will again hear snatches of conversation. If the play is a good one, and thought provoking, much of the discussion may revolve around the play's theme or meaning. But suppose it's a comedy. Great comedies also have substantial themes, though neither you nor the author need always take them as seriously as in the more serious type of play. You can see, for example, that there is a vast difference between the theme of *Macbeth* or *Julius Caesar* and the theme of *The Taming of the Shrew;* yet there is an underlying thought in each of these plays.

Judging the Theme. How are we to judge the value of a theme? That would depend to a large extent on what the author is trying to do. We may apply to all plays, and to all literature for that matter, these questions, first suggested by Goethe: (1) What is the author's purpose? What has he tried to do? (2) Is it worth while? (3) How well did he achieve this purpose? It is the second question that is often hardest to answer, since it depends so much on one's whole approach to life and one's standard of values. Here you may want to go back to the four-dimensional approach outlined on page 3, and see whether the themes of the plays and pictures you will see and read can be measured in terms of these dimensions. Some additional criteria may be found in such questions as these:

1. Does the play's theme tend to bring out the audience's "better nature"? Does it encourage the good in people even when it pictures the evil in its characters? [9]

[9] Bernard Shaw has his character say, in *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets:* "The writing of plays is a great matter, forming as it does the minds and affections of men in such sort that whatever they see done in shows on the stage they will presently be doing in earnest in the world, which is but a larger stage."

2. Is it important enough for the great expenditure of time, money, and emotion lavished on the play?

3. Is it applicable in some form to some of the problems of people here and now?

THE AUDIENCE

If you have enjoyed your visit to the theatre, you may thank the rest of the audience for at least part of your pleasure, or at least for not having spoiled your pleasure. Do you like watching a movie while the boy sitting behind you tells his friend what is going to happen next? Do you like having the mood of a picture shattered by sudden laughter at the wrong time? It might be well to remember a few points of theatre etiquette — points just as valid for the movies and other places where audiences gather.

Be on time.

Reduce to a minimum the number of times you must pass in and out of your seat in front of people already seated.

Avoid calling or making other distracting noises, including laughter at the wrong time, during the performance.

Reserve your applause for the proper time. Applause is to show appreciation; it is not designed to attract attention to you.

Keep the seat assigned to you. Keep your feet off the seat in front of you.

Girls should take their hats off; people in back can see better.

We may say, changing Walt Whitman's words just a little, that to have good playwrights, there must be good audiences too.

TECHNICAL TERMS

THE STAGE

Curtain. 1. There are usually two or more curtains in the professional theatre. The first, an asbestos " drop " or fire curtain, is raised some time before curtain time to reveal the grand drapery, which is then drawn to expose the front curtain or act drop.

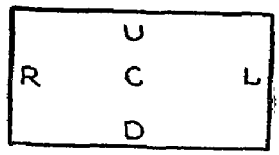
2. The call " Curtain! " or " Curtain Going Up! " is the usual warning to the audience in the lobby that the play is about to begin or that the intermission is over.

3. Used in the play script, *Curtain* signalizes the lowering of the curtain, generally at the close of the scene.

Curtain line. This is the imaginary line on the stage made by the bottom

of the curtain which the actor is in general *not to cross*. The expression is also used for the last line of dialogue before the curtain descends.

Stage. The entire playing space back of the footlights. Think of the stage as mapped out as follows:



L — left; *C* — center; *R* — right (from the actor's point of view); *D* — down stage; *U* — up stage; *E* — entrance. Stage directions will employ such combinations as *UC* or *DR* or *UL*.

Proscenium arch. The arch which holds the curtain, i.e., the great opening between the stage and the theatre.

Drops. Flat canvas curtains which are raised and lowered. There may be a variety of these drops, from the act drop or front curtain to the backdrop, a piece of scenery usually covering the entire back of the stage.

Cyclorama. Background curtains or other material hung around the three sides of the stage.

Flats. Pieces of upright scenery, made of canvas stretched over wooden frames.

Flies (or *fly gallery*). The gallery from which scenery may be raised or lowered.

Set. The scenery for a play or any division of a play.

Properties, or "*props.*" All movable furnishings required on the stage. Articles handled by the actors in the course of the play are *personal props*.

Wings. The stage-platform extension at either side.

ACTING AND CHARACTERS

At rise. At the beginning of act or scene.

Discovered. Revealed on the stage at the time the curtain rises.

Business. All actions or movements necessary to the plot, the characters, or the lines of the play. Stage business is often used to fill in a pause in the dialogue or to heighten an effect.

Places. Positions of the actors at the opening of a scene.

Cue. The words or actions which are the signal for another actor's lines or business. "Feeding cues or parts" is giving them in such a way as to help the other actor make his lines seem funnier, more tragic, or more dramatic. "Throwing a line" is helping out an actor who has forgotten his cue.

Ad lib. To speak lines not in the script (as in an emergency), or to make up conversation as a fill-in in group or crowd scenes.

Lead. The most important acting part in a play. The *protagonist* is the principal character.

Character parts. Those in which some strong individual trait is emphasized. (See Anise, for example, in *Watch on the Rhine.*) The opposite term is *straight part.*

Foil. Sometimes used for a character who by contrast accentuates the qualities of another character (Banquo to Macbeth, for example).

Cross. Move from one part of the stage to another.

To frame an entrance. To pause in the doorway long enough to catch the audience's attention.

Gallery playing. Playing to the audience rather than to the other actors.

To fluff. To speak indistinctly, when not sure of one's lines. (To *blow* is to forget the lines altogether.)

To hold a laugh. To stop acting while the audience is laughing. If an actor " stops a laugh " he starts talking while laughter is still going on.

To point a line. To bring out an important line by such methods as sudden change of volume, or tempo, or intensity of speech.

Mugging. Overplaying a part.

TYPES OF PLAYS

Tragedy. A play written in a serious style, in which the conflict results in disaster for the leading characters. (Examples: *Winterset; Beyond the Horizon*)

Comedy. A play in which the difficulties or problems of the leading characters have a successful or happy solution. (Examples: *Ah! Wilderness; The Male Animal*) A musical comedy emphasizes the musical setting, as in *Oklahoma!*

Serious drama. Sometimes used to describe a serious play which is not a tragedy. (Examples: *Berkeley Square; The Barretts of Wimpole Street*) In the *comedy drama* there is a greater emphasis on the comedy element, as in *Jacobowsky and the Colonel.*

Melodrama. A drama in which the plot and the situations, the emotions and the language are exaggerated to the point of sensationalism or improbability. Čapek calls *R.U.R.* a melodrama; more typical examples are: *Night Must Fall; Angel Street* (*Gaslight* in the movie version).

Farce. A comedy in which plot, characters, and situation are also exaggerated to the point of improbability, the emphasis being on ridiculous types and events to heighten the entertainment value of the play. In both melodrama and farce the characters tend to be types rather than individuals. (Examples of farce: *Front Page; Once in A Lifetime; You Can't Take It With You*)

There are many plays which are hard to classify, largely because they combine some of the elements of two or more types. You will also find such terms as the following used in classifying plays:

Satire. A play which holds up to ridicule some significant phase of life. *R.U.R.* may be considered a serious satire on our mechanical age. *The Front Page* is a comedy satirizing the press.

Social drama. The emphasis here is on some social problem, like that of fascism in *Watch on the Rhine* or poor housing in *One-Third of a Nation.*

Fantasy. A play which consciously transports the audience to an unreal world, a land of make-believe. (Examples: *R.U.R.*, a "fantastic melodrama"; *Peter Pan; The Bluebird*)

Folk play. A play which reflects the language, customs, attitudes, and problems of simple people in a particular locality or environment. (Examples: *Green Pastures;* Paul Green's *Carolina Folk-Plays*)

Historical play. A serious dramatic re-creation of a historical period or person. If the latter, the play is sometimes called a *biographical play.* (Examples: *Abe Lincoln in Illinois; Murder in the Cathedral*)

Pantomime. A play in which the story is told entirely by action. (Example: Elmer Rice's *Three Plays Without Words*) See also the use of pantomime in such plays as *Our Town* (page 99).

Plays may also be described in terms of style, or of literary movements:

Realism. The attempt to depict life as it really is — without romantic coloring. Most plays of our time are realistic. They deal with real people who face problems that are met with in everyday life. *Naturalism* is sometimes used to refer to realism in its extreme form (as in *The Hairy Ape*).

Romance. Here the characters and their actions are generally remote from real life, the emphasis often being on the glamorous quality of the far away or long ago. Musical comedies like *Oklahoma!* or *The Student Prince* would be in this category.

Symbolism. The use of characters or setting merely as symbols for abstract ideas; e.g., Maeterlinck's *Intruder* might represent death; Mr. Zero in *The Adding Machine,* all men who are ground down by the mechanical dullness of their daily tasks.

Expressionism. The attempt to represent thoughts and ideas without the restraints of the usual dramatic conventions. *Our Town* and *R.U.R.* use expressionistic or unrealistic techniques; so do such plays as *Beggar on Horseback, Processional,* and *From Morn to Midnight.* (See also page 25.)

THE THEATRE IN OUR TIME

"There is no sense," says the playwright William Saroyan in an article on the theatre, "in *talking* about the theatre. The thing to do is to write great plays." And that is exactly what a great many writers the world over have been doing in the past few decades. Yet the average

high-school class would find it difficult to name ten important playwrights of our time; and few of these students have read, and fewer seen, an important contemporary play. Of course, it is always difficult to know how many plays which are considered great today will be read or acted beyond our own lifetime. They are, however, very much alive now; and many have already withstood the test of time. "Not to go to the theatre," said the austere philosopher Schopenhauer, "is like dressing without a mirror." Not to know about the theatre of our times is to close one's eyes to what may become a very vital area of our lives.

In 1820 Samuel Taylor Coleridge was able to say, with little contradiction: "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book, or goes to an American play?" Hardly a century later who, in the four quarters of the globe, has not heard of Eugene O'Neill and Maxwell Anderson and Robert Sherwood, of Clifford Odets and Sidney Kingsley and Lillian Hellman? If that question makes you feel self-conscious, let us get on with our story.

The Theatre Is Not Isolationist. The drama, like all art, is international, in the sense that a great play will make its appeal to all peoples everywhere. In a single season (1945), and in spite of the war, New York bridged time and distance by producing on Broadway plays by continental writers like Molnar and Werfel, as well as three Shakespearean plays; in London and Moscow crowds filled the theatres to see a number of American plays. However, it will simplify our task to consider the American, British, and Continental theatres of our time separately.

THE THEATRE IN AMERICA

In 1914, Europe shook to the thunder of World War I; in the same year, on this side of the Atlantic, Eugene O'Neill published his first play. It was in the next year, however, that the new American drama received its greatest impetus. In 1915, two noncommercial organizations were organized which were to exert a tremendous influence on the theatre: the Provincetown Players, which first produced O'Neill's plays; and the Washington Square Players, which later became the Theatre Guild.

The Provincetown Players. The Provincetown Players produced their first plays under the direction of George Cram Cook in a fishing smack which had been remodeled and named "The Wharf Theatre." They then moved to a converted stable in Greenwich Village in New York, where they presented, among other plays, a beautiful production of

The Emperor Jones, with Charles Gilpin, the Negro actor, in the title role. In ten years this group of authors, actors, and artists (including Robert Edmond Jones, the scenic designer, the producer Kenneth MacGowan, and the writers Floyd Dell, Susan Glaspell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Lewis Beach, and Edna Ferber) had produced almost a hundred new plays by half as many authors. Some of the plays were: all of Eugene O'Neill's up to that time; Sherwood Anderson's *The Triumph of the Egg;* and Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom,* which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1927.

The Theatre Guild. The Washington Square Players became famous for their encouragement of such people as Katherine Cornell and Robert Edmond Jones; and they will also be remembered as the group whose members in 1918 organized the Theatre Guild. This great institution of the American theatre was founded, in the words of its Board of Directors, "without a theatre, without a play, without an actor, and without a scrap of scenery." Its sole artistic asset was the idea that the theatre "should be employed for the creation of the finest drama of the time, drama definitely and honestly reflecting the author's vision of life or sense of style and beauty." Revolting from the narrowness of the commercial theatre of the time, with its eyes "intent upon the box office," the Guild began to produce great plays successfully by inaugurating a subscription plan through which thousands of playgoers paid in advance for the year's six Guild productions. Assured thus of a regular audience, they could be bolder and more enterprising as an art theatre than any commercial director on Broadway.

It may be of interest to list some of the Guild's achievements.[10]

First play: *Bonds of Interest,* by Jacinto Benavente. This was a failure, and the Guild opened its second play with $19.50 left in the treasury.

Second play: *John Ferguson,* by St. John G. Ervine. This was, fortunately for the Guild and all lovers of the theatre, a success. (It is interesting that the first productions were by a Spanish and an Irish playwright. There are no national boundaries for great art, as you will see again and again.)

The Theatre Guild introduced new plays by George Bernard Shaw: *Heartbreak House* (which was refused by producers both here and in England, before the Guild convinced Mr. Shaw to permit them to produce it); *Back to Methuselah* (so long a play that it had to be shown in three parts on different days); and *Saint Joan,* perhaps Shaw's greatest play.

They produced, for the first time in this country, an expressionistic play,[11] *From Morn to Midnight,* by Georg Kaiser; and a radical play, *The Adding Machine,* by Elmer Rice.

[10] See Bibliography on page 465 for brief accounts of these plays.

[11] See page 14.

The Theatre Guild introduced to the American public plays by such American playwrights as Sidney Howard, Philip Barry, Robert E. Sherwood, Maxwell Anderson, and Du Bose Heyward.

It produced some of the later plays of Eugene O'Neill, introducing *Strange Interlude*, a play in nine acts which began at 5:30 and lasted until 11 o'clock, with a dinner intermission.

The Theatre Guild produced *Liliom*, by Ferenc Molnar; *He Who Gets Slapped*, by Leonid Andreyev; *R.U.R.*, by Karel Čapek; *Porgy*, by Dorothy and Du Bose Heyward, and the operetta *Porgy and Bess; Hotel Universe*, by Philip Barry; and the more recent musical *Oklahoma!*, by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

It brought to its performances such actors as Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Morris Carnovsky, Dudley Digges, and Alla Nazimova.

It built its own million-dollar theatre; founded the American Theatre Society, with a large subscription audience in a number of cities; and sent road companies to many cities throughout the country.

It broadcasts its plays on the "Theatre Guild of the Air."

The Group Theatre. A number of actors who were associated with the Guild, becoming inspired, in the word of John Gassner, "with the ideal of a collective theatre that would perfect ensemble playing and would give itself wholly to the badly shattered world beyond the footlights," produced *The House of Connolly*, by Paul Green, under the auspices of the Guild. They then broke off and founded *The Group Theatre* in 1931, to produce the first full-length play about the depression of those years (the Seftons' *1931*). Their production of Sidney Kingsley's *Men in White* won the Pulitzer Prize for 1934. There were, however, failures; and the directors (Harold Clurman, Lee Strasberg, and Cheryl Crawford—distinguished names in the American theatre of our time) reorganized as the New Theatre League, and held one-act play contests. For one of these a play called *Waiting for Lefty* was written, and a new American playwright, Clifford Odets, electrified the theatre public. The play used the expressionistic device of flash-backs now so familiar in the movies. Since January, 1935, when this exciting picture of a taxicab strike was first produced, many plays by Clifford Odets have achieved success. *Awake and Sing*, *Paradise Lost*, *Golden Boy*, and *Rocket to the Moon* were presented by this producing group (of which Odets was a member). They have to their credit also the moving *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, by Paul Green, the terrifying antiwar play *Bury the Dead*, by Irwin Shaw, and a music-drama, *The Cradle Will Rock*, by Marc Blitzstein.

The Little Theatre. If you and your parents are not familiar with many of these plays, it is because professional stage performances must

necessarily have limited audiences. After eight years on Broadway (in a comparatively large theatre), *Life with Father* had been seen by only a very small percentage of even New York's populace. Though the habit of reading plays has in recent years become extremely popular, seeing a play is much to be preferred. How are the people all over the country to see these plays? There are a number of answers to this question. One is the road company, a cast of actors sent out by the producers of a successful play to permit the audiences in many cities to see a play. Successful plays may have three or more such companies traveling from town to town. The summer stock company is a less successful answer, since its audience is limited both as to time and place. More important has been the development of the little theatres in this country.

This movement did not begin here until after 1910, when the motion picture was becoming a serious threat to the road companies and the legitimate theatres which were flourishing in many small towns. To compete with rich commercial enterprises these little theatres had to be nonprofit organizations of amateurs or semiprofessionals who were intensely interested in presenting excellent productions to large numbers of people everywhere. Notable among the early little theatres were Maurice Browne's Little Theatre in Chicago (founded in 1913); Winthrop Ames's Little Theatre in New York; and the little theatres already discussed. Tremendous impetus to these theatres was supplied by George P. Baker's famous 47 Workshop at Harvard (so called because it grew out of his course in playwriting, English 47, which for twenty years trained some of our most distinguished dramatists [12] and served as a laboratory for the staging of their plays. Another important college little-theatre group was organized in 1918 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Today there are repertory and community theatres throughout the country. Among the best are those in Cleveland and Pasadena, as well as in New Orleans, Charleston, Seattle, Shreveport, and Kalamazoo. In Moylan, Pennsylvania, Jasper Deeter directs the Hedgerow Players, who occasionally present their repertory in other cities. A significant movement in the noncommercial theatre is the organization in New York of the nonprofit City Center of Music and Drama which makes available to about 4,000 people at each performance the best in theatre entertainment at low prices.[13]

Federal Theatre. Perhaps the greatest single force in the populariza-

[12] Among the students of Dr. Baker were Eugene O'Neill, Philip Barry, S. N. Behrman, Sidney Howard, John Dos Passos, and Thomas Wolfe. Wolfe introduces Dr. Baker as a character, Professor Hatcher, in his novel *Of Time and the River.*

[13] See also the note on page 3.

tion of theatregoing was the Federal Theatre, which flourished from 1935 to 1939. Begun as part of the Works Progress Administration's plan to give work to the unemployed, it had played before 25,000,000 people in almost half the states in the Union before Congress cut short its exciting career. Its brilliant director during its four years of life was Mrs. Hallie Flanagan Davis, of Vassar College, who in planning this "theatre of the people" at a fifty-cent "top" (many of the presentations were free) envisioned these aims: "To interest and encourage potential theatregoers by introducing new dramatic forms, new economy of physical production, finding and stimulating new playwrights, and giving those who know the theatre only as a legendary ancestor of radio and the movies an opportunity to see flesh-and-blood actors in worth-while plays." Here are some of the Project's achievements during its brief existence:

It employed as many as 13,000 people at one time, in forty cities throughout the country, and produced more than 1,200 plays by foreign and native authors. In the words of Mrs. Davis, "Federal Theatre is the story of a hundred thousand children who never saw a play before."

Its activities included eight divisions: production of classics; theatre of entertainment (circus, vaudeville, musical comedy); children's theatre (including puppet shows like *Ferdinand the Bull* and *Pinocchio*); dance drama; a Negro theatre; and the Living Newspaper.

It gave such memorable productions as *Murder in the Cathedral,* by T. S. Eliot; *It Can't Happen Here,* by Sinclair Lewis, which was given simultaneously in forty-eight theatres in many states; *Prologue to Glory,* by E. P. Conkle, a play about Lincoln; Negro versions of *Macbeth,* the action occurring in Haiti, and *The Mikado,* as well as Du Bois' *Haiti;* plays by Shaw, O'Neill, Sidney Howard, and many other distinguished playwrights. The Federal Theatre gave us Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus,* which introduced us to the directorial wizardry of Orson Welles, many of whose Mercury Theatre group, organized soon afterward, were active in the Federal Theatre.[14]

Shall We Have a National Theatre? All these things were achieved with the co-operation of Actors' Equity (the national organization of

[14] The Mercury Theatre has contributed much to the American drama — stage, radio, and screen. Its *Julius Caesar* production without scenery has already been mentioned; and actors like Joseph Cotten represent the group's contribution to the field of radio and the movies. It would be interesting to reread Shakespeare's tragedy of *Julius Caesar* to see what fascist overtones Welles could have discovered to bring up to date the implications of the play.

actors) and the Stagehands' Union, and with the approval of many commercial-theatre owners, who recognized in this movement the creation of larger theatre audiences for the future. Of course, the project was subsidized by the Federal government; and it may be interesting for the class to debate the question of whether Congress was right in killing this organization. (For an interesting history of the project, read Hallie Flanagan's *Arena,* published in 1940. You may also want to read Shaw's play *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets,* which pleaded as early as 1910 for a National Theatre.)

War and Postwar. The American theatre since 1915 has had its difficulties. The motion pictures keep enticing many of the best playwrights, actors, and producers to Hollywood; and many of these are permanently lost to the stage. World War I had its effect too, as did the depression years that followed. World War II has failed to produce many good dramas. Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine* is an example of the best among anti-Nazi plays, and there have been some others. The tendency continued to grow, however, as the war progressed, for people to throng to the theatre for "escapist" plays. The most prosperous years in Broadway's history have emphasized the lighter drama and the musical comedy or revue. Some of these, like *Life with Father* and *Oklahoma!,* have been of a high order. However, the fact that the Pulitzer Prize of 1945 was given to so unimportant a play as *Harvey* suggests that the war had seriously affected the production of good plays.

Part of the reason for this lies in the fact that many of our best playwrights (like Robert Sherwood) were largely engaged in work with government agencies. The war's end has already begun to encourage renewed activity on the part of these men; and the American theatre may soon pass through another golden age. The perfection of television, and the continuing productivity of radio studios and of Hollywood, will lend impetus to this renaissance. As Edmund Fuller says, "The theatre we have had in America is little to the theatre that may yet be ours."

THE THEATRE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

If comparatively little is said here about the drama as it has developed in our time in Great Britain and Ireland, it is largely because most of the contemporary plays we see or are likely to see are American. This would be true even if the size and the quality of the output of both countries were the same; for factors of accessibility, comprehension,

and local interest would conspire to make the plays of American authors more popular here.

Older Playwrights. The first great name in the English drama of this century is, of course, George Bernard Shaw, who for more than fifty years has enriched the literature of the theatre. This "Irish gadfly of the English stage" is familiar to American audiences not only through the plays which have been produced in this country, but also by way of of the motion pictures, one of which (*Pygmalion,* directed by Ernest Pascal) has been called by some critics the greatest motion picture ever made. His plays are concerned primarily with ideas, his characters being used as vehicles for their expression. Even this does not suffice Mr. Shaw, who thinks of the theatre as the best medium for spreading his challenging and unorthodox views on social and economic questions. He prepares each play with a long and usually brilliant essay on the subject with which the play primarily deals. If you have seen such plays as *The Doctor's Dilemma* and *Heartbreak House* (revived within recent years) or the motion picture *Caesar and Cleopatra,* you will quickly recognize the type of "thesis play" of which he is the chief practitioner.[15]

More direct in his approach to the problems he so earnestly presents, and at least as disturbing to our complacency in a world marked by so many apparent inequities, is John Galsworthy, the second giant of the modern English stage. The themes of his plays are clear and easy to define; the solutions are quite the opposite. That is because he seems to balance the factors in a situation so fairly, to place the various aspects of a problem before his audience with such apparent objectivity, that one comes away saying, "There is a good deal of right and of wrong on both sides."[16] The plays of Shaw and Galsworthy both make good reading — the first because of their scintillating wit, which can shine through the printed page, the second because character and situation are so carefully wrought that the reader's imagination can almost suffice to create the stage production.

Very much *un*like the plays of Shaw and Galsworthy are those of James M. Barrie, whose work includes realism, fantasy, light satire, whimsy, and even tragedy. The delightful *What Every Woman Knows,* starring Helen Hayes, is one of the landmarks of the Broadway theatre; and children everywhere have seen some performance of *Peter Pan.*

[15] You may also remember that a Congresswoman — Claire Booth Luce — acted the role of *Candida* in Shaw's play during the summer of 1945.

[16] Yet his play *Justice* (1910) was instrumental in bringing about important reforms in the English penal system.

The Admirable Crichton, with whose theories you may find yourself in rather strong disagreement, is a romantic comedy with serious or satirical overtones. Its translation years ago into the motion pictures bore the typical and misleading title *Male and Female.* You will enjoy reading — and reading aloud — such plays as *Quality Street, Mary Rose,* and *Dear Brutus.*

The three playwrights just mentioned produced their really great work before World War I. So did some lesser lights in the field of the drama: Arnold Bennett, *The Great Adventure, Milestones;* John Masefield, *The Tragedy of Nan, Melloney Hotspur;* Frederic Lonsdale, remembered for his comedies of manners; Granville Barker, *The Madras House, The Voysey Inheritance.* So, to some extent, did Somerset Maugham, who, however, also wrote some brilliant plays after World War I. A number of his short stories have been dramatized, the best known being *Sadie Thompson,* known on the stage as *Rain,* in which the late Jeanne Eagels starred in New York. In a gentler and more whimsical vein have been the plays of A. A. Milne, whose *Mr. Pim Passes By* was one of the Theatre Guild's early successes, and is still excellent reading. You probably know Milne better, however, as the creator of Christopher Robin. At the other extreme of sophistication have been the plays of Noel Coward, whose most serious and ambitious play, *Cavalcade,* was made into a fine motion picture some years ago. You will marvel at the easy versatility of this very modern Britisher, who acts in his own plays or in motion pictures, and whose musical comedies and popular songs are great favorites in England and in this country.

Recent Contributions. To give even a brief account of the British drama in our time would require a rather formidable listing of names, for this period has been called the golden age of English drama. One editor has even said that "if we subtract Shakespeare, the Elizabethan period sinks easily to a subordinate position." This may be rather extreme, although plays by such writers as John Drinkwater and Laurence Housman for their historical plays, or Eden Phillpots and Benn Levy, for their light comedies, and J. B. Priestley, Clemence Dane, Rudolf Besier, Sutton Vane, R. C. Sherriff, and John Van Druten make the statement credible.

World War II, of course, seriously curtailed the production of plays in England; yet one of the epic stories of the war is the way in which theatres kept on giving plays even during "blitz" days; while acting troupes presented plays before soldier audiences in the camps and in the cities, at home and at the front. It is interesting, for example,

that Katherine Cornell's presentation of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* by the British playwright Rudolf Besier was voted the G.I.'s favorite entertainment in camp after camp.[17] Some English playwrights, like Van Druten, have, in recent years, written and produced most of their work in this country. (See, for example, *The Voice of the Turtle* and *I Remember Mama.)*

Our familiarity with British producers and actors is based largely on the frequent exchange of American and British people of the theatre, and on the popularity achieved by many British players on the American screen. We have seen, for example, the Shakespearean actors John Gielgud and Maurice Evans, the versatile Flora Robson, Dame May Whitty, Leslie Howard, and the actor-playwright Emlyn Williams. Our movies have been enriched, of course, by many former British subjects, like Ronald Colman, Charles Laughton, Ida Lupino, the producer Raymond Hitchcock, and the Canadian interpreter of Lincoln, Raymond Massey.

The Irish Playwrights. All this does not take into account the extraordinary contribution of the Irish to our modern stage. In the so-called Celtic revival a native drama began to flourish at the beginning of the century. The Irish National Theatre Company was created to produce the plays of the writers of this Irish renaissance; the Abbey Theatre was acquired in Dublin; and an acting group — the Irish Players — organized. The early contributors to this theatre included William Butler Yeats, John Millington Synge, Lady Gregory, and Lord Dunsany. Later the works of St. John Ervine were produced; [18] and then some of the plays of Sean (pronounced shawn) O'Casey, one of whose productions actually caused rioting outside the Abbey Theatre. It was the great Yeats, incidentally, who finally succeeded in quelling the mob. You will like the rollicking plays of Lennox Robinson, especially *The Whiteheaded Boy* and *The Far Off Hills.* The more serious and devout works of Paul Vincent Carroll, familiar to American audiences through such plays as *Shadow and Substance* and *The White Steed,* were also produced in the Irish National Theatre.

The Irish playhouses continued, of course, to produce plays during the war even though they had lost many of their best writers, producers, and actors to England and America. Many who had left earlier are familiar names to American theatre and movie audiences. Dudley Digges

[17] There is an interesting account of these performances given in *The B.O.W.S.,* by Margalo Gilmore and Patricia Collinge.

[18] His play *John Ferguson,* first produced by the Abbey Theatre in 1915, saved the life of the failing Theatre Guild in its early days.

came to us early in the century; and late acquisitions were the inimitable Sara Allgood and Barry Fitzgerald, whom you have seen on the screen. Maire O'Neill, sister of Miss Allgood, has long been a favorite on the English stage.

THE THEATRE ON THE CONTINENT

War and dictatorship played havoc, during their ascendancy, with dramatic productions on the Continent. The best writers and producers were killed, imprisoned, or exiled; and the atmosphere of repression, together with the rigors of war, regimentation, and hunger, proved too stifling for any that may have remained. Continental drama in our time is therefore largely a prewar story, or a story of dramatic artists in exile.

German Drama in Our Time. Germany is a good example. It had made some of its most important contributions to the drama in the two or three decades before World War I, as well as in the years before the advent of Hitler. It is interesting to follow the distinguished dramatists, actors, and directors in their struggles after 1932. Gerhart Hauptmann, the greatest of Germany's modern playwrights, then seventy years old, lived for a time, ineffectually, under Nazidom, and died in his native country, his personal reputation dimmed by his quiet acquiescence to Hitlerism. Others, however, were less complaisant, and most of these enriched the stage of other countries, principally our own. Georg Kaiser, Ernst Toller, Franz Werfel, Bertolt Brecht, Lion Feuchtwanger, and Friedrich Wolf were among these playwright exiles; other exiles were the directors Max Reinhardt (whose Hollywood production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* you may have seen on the screen) and Erwin Piscator (now director of the Dramatic Workshop of the New School for Social Research, in New York), and the great actor Albert Basserman, who has been seen in American movies.

The playwrights mentioned are of particular interest to us because their work has often been produced in this country. *From Morn to Midnight,* by Georg Kaiser, was given a magnificent production by the Theatre Guild in 1922. Ernst Toller (who found the pressure of world events too much for him, and committed suicide in New York in 1939) is represented by *Man and the Masses;* Friedrich Wolf, by *The Sailors of Cattaro* and *Professor Mamlock* (also a movie); and Franz Werfel, by many plays and movies, including *Goat Song, Juarez and Maximilian, Jacobowsky and the Colonel,* and the picture *Song of Bernadette.*

The contribution of men like Kaiser and the unfortunate Toller was

in the field of expressionism, a form of writing which, revolting against a realistic depiction of life, tries to interpret dramatically the dramatist's inner reaction to some aspect of life or the world about him. In doing so the expressionist uses methods which seem strange to the reader or the audience, because they are so far removed from reality, so foreign to what we normally expect people to do either in real life or on the stage. *Our Town* and *R.U.R.*, which you will read in this book, use expressionistic techniques, as do plays like *The Adding Machine* and *Processional.* In the motion picture the earliest example of expressionist techniques was *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* in which the weird defiance of perspective in the construction of the sets gave vivid accent to the strange events of the story.

The Occupied Countries. The same fate that overtook the German theatre had earlier shown itself in Fascist Italy, and was bound soon enough to reach into the occupied countries. In Italy men like Luigi Pirandello, some of whose plays (like *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *Right You Are If You Think You Are*) were produced in this country, did continue to write under fascism; and Mussolini created a nationally subsidized corporation for the theatre which brought plays (though poor ones) to the people everywhere in Italy.

In Czechoslovakia, the great Čapek brothers were victims of the war. Karel, the greatest of Czech dramatists, author of *R.U.R.*, the *Makropoulos Secret,* and *The Mother,* died in London in 1939. His brother Josef, of *The Insect Comedy,* died in a concentration camp just three weeks before the Americans marched in. The fate of other unfortunate Czech writers and producers is unknown.

Hungary's most distinguished playwright, Ferenc Molnar, became a resident of this country. His plays have long been well known here; and one — *Liliom* — was produced in musical form as recently as 1945 under the title *Carousel.* Some of America's best actors are associated with the production of Molnar's plays: Joseph Schildkraut with *Liliom,* Eva Le Gallienne with *The Swan,* Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne with *The Guardsman,* Holbrook Blinn with *The Play's the Thing,* and Helen Hayes with *The Good Fairy.*

The fall of France in 1941 found many of her best writers and artists already escaped to other countries; and more were soon to follow. Even the great Belgian, Maurice Maeterlinck, could not remain in France, where he had come to live, and at the age of seventy-eight found refuge on these shores. Many of you have read or seen his two allegories for children, *The Blue Bird* and *The Betrothal.* The French theatre had begun to decline long before the war, so that its meager contribution to

contemporary drama is not to be blamed on the expulsion of its writers. Contemporary Frenchmen whose work is familiar in this country include the great novelists Romain Rolland, whose *The Game of Love and Death* starred Claude Rains in its New York production, and Jules Romains, whose *Dr. Knock* was played here; Marcel Pagnol, author of *Topaze*, in which Frank Morgan and John Barrymore starred; Jean Giraudoux, author of *Siegfried* and of *Amphitryon 38*, which was adapted by S. N. Behrman; Henry Bernstein, still writing in this country; Charles Vildrac, whose *S.S. Tenacity* was adapted by Sidney Howard for American audiences; Sacha Guitry, actor, manager, and author of such biographical plays as *Pasteur, Debureau, Mozart,* and *Charles Lindbergh.* Another famous producer is Jacques Capeau, whose dramatization of Dostoevski's *The Brothers Karamazov* was a great Theatre Guild success. Most familiar to us, however, is the product of another generation, Edmond Rostand, whose *Cyrano de Bergerac* is still popular with audiences everywhere, and whose last play was produced some year after his death in 1918.

When we think of drama in Norway, the first name (and for many the only name) that comes to mind is, of course, Henrik Ibsen, who according to one historian "changed the whole course of world theatre." Though Ibsen died in 1906, and is not therefore a dramatist of our time, his influence is still reflected in many of the plays written today. However, few contemporary Norwegian plays are produced outside the Scandinavian countries. The same is true of Denmark and Sweden, though the latter country has, as you know, contributed the brilliant actress Greta Garbo to our screen.

Spain. Spain is another example of cultural blight under a fascist regime. The country of Calderón and Lope de Vega was quick to kill, imprison, or exile some of its greatest dramatic talents; the fate of many others is still unknown. Among the older contemporaries there are outstanding: the Nobel Prize winner Jacinto Benavente, known in this country for *The Bonds of Interest,* produced by the Theatre Guild early in its career; Gregorio Martínez Sierra, author of *Cradle Song* and *The Kingdom of God,* the latter performed with Ethel Barrymore in 1928; and the writers Serafín and Joaquín Alvarez Quintero, authors of such comedies as *The Lady from Alfaqueque,* in which J. Edward Bromberg, now of the movies, acted for the Civic Repertory Theatre of New York. The most talented of the younger writers was Federigo García Lorca, who fell a victim to Franco in 1936. Strangely enough, Latin American plays are little known in our country. The Mexican-born actress Margo, the Brazilian musical star Carmen Miranda, and the opera

star Bidu Sayao are among the few gifts to our stage from south of the Rio Grande.

U.S.S.R. In Russia the drama has had a distinguished career — a career somewhat diminished, but hardly interrupted, even by revolution and war. Its distinction has persisted in spite of the many restrictions placed upon dramatists and producers in czarist days, and later under soviet rule. The greatest of Russian playwrights was, of course, Anton Chekhov, who died in 1904 but is very much alive both for the great influence he exerted on many living writers (among them Clifford Odets) and for the regularity with which his works are revived both in his native country and abroad. He is a favorite with little theatre and school groups for his short humorous sketches like *The Boor* and *The Marriage Proposal;* and with great theatrical producers and actors for his plays *The Sea Gull, The Three Sisters,* and *The Cherry Orchard.* Memorable productions of the first were given in 1938 by the Theatre Guild with the matchless Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt, of the second by Katherine Cornell, and of the third by a number of distinguished American producers. A contemporary of Chekhov, but writing largely in the style of symbolism, which uses characters and incidents as symbols of larger truths, was Leonid Andreyev, known in America for *Anathema* and the very successful *He Who Gets Slapped,* in which Richard Bennett starred. The writer who succeeded in bridging the so-called golden period of Russian drama with the present was Maxim Gorky, whose first great play, *The Lower Depths* (known also as *A Night's Lodging*) was produced in 1902, and whose last important work *Yegor Bulyakov and Others* came out in 1932. This country has also seen his moving play *Mother.*

A more enduring link between the old Russia and the new is the world-famous Moscow Art Theatre, and its musical counterpart, the Moscow Art Musical Studio, both of which have had triumphant tours in this and other countries in recent years. Much has been written of these great producing companies and of their guiding geniuses, Nemirovich-Danchenko and Stanislavski, whose autobiography, *My Life in Art,* makes fascinating reading. Their influence upon staging and acting has been enormous. The symbol of their playhouse is a sea gull, adopted after their historic production of Chekhov's play. Russia also produced other noteworthy companies, such as the charming Chauve-Souris, which brought the song *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers* to this country; and the Hebrew-language acting troupe called the Habimah (now in Palestine), which produced S. Ansky's mystic play *The Dybbuk* in America. The world is also indebted to Russia for its perfec-

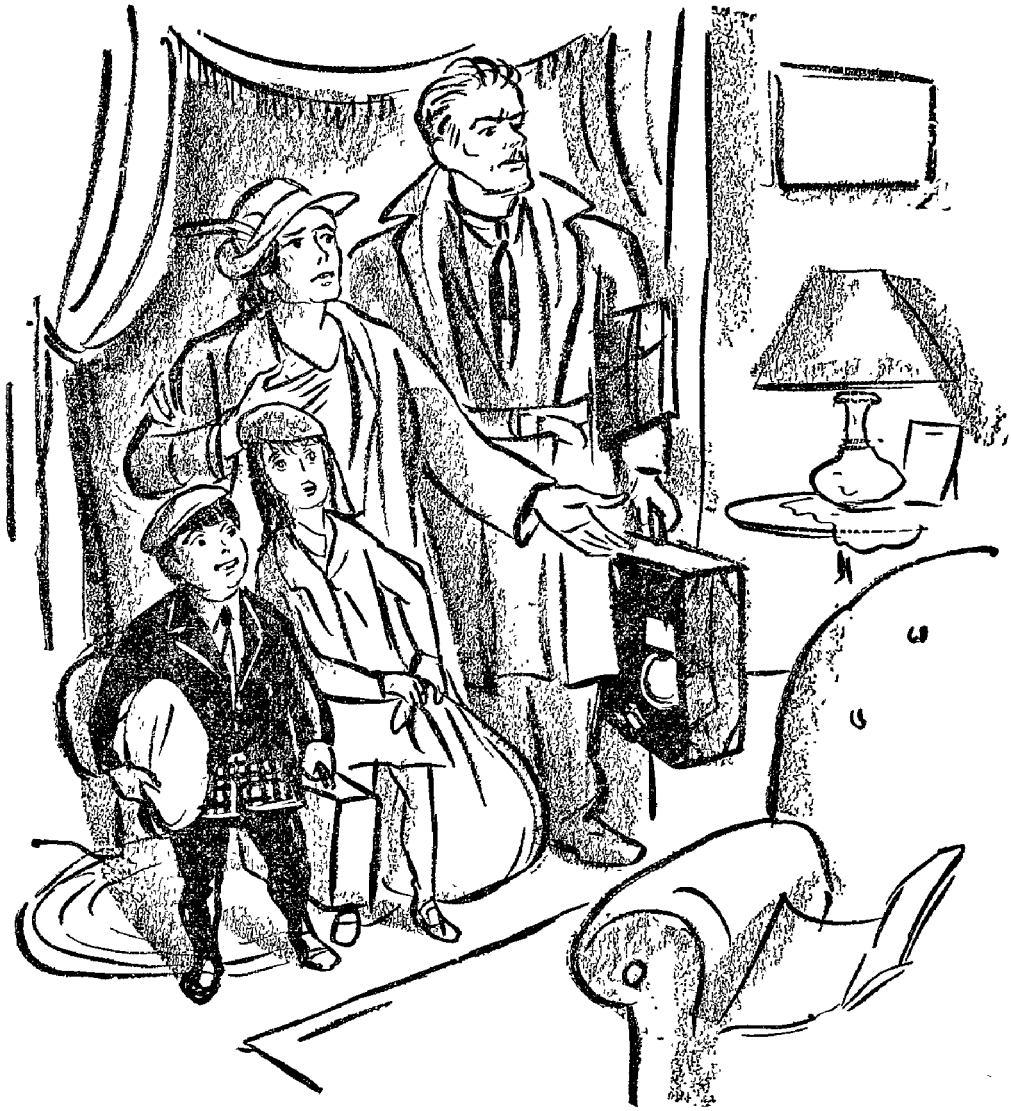
tion of the ballet, which with its elaborate pantomime remains a kind of silent partner of the drama. Many of you will recognize the names of the great Pavlova, of Nijinsky and Diaghilev, and our own Isadora Duncan, who studied in Russia. At least two prominent Russian ballet groups give performances in the large American cities each season.

Soviet drama has not, in the opinion of most writers, as yet measured up to the standard set by Chekhov, Andreyev, Gorky, and their contemporaries. However, popular interest in the theatre has become more universal; so much so that even in the earliest days of the war it was "a major civilian victory" to get tickets for the Bolshoi or the Stanislavski Theatre in Moscow, where such plays as *Pygmalion, Othello, Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Watch on the Rhine* were shown in repertory. In addition, brigades of artists toured the front and were immensely popular with the soldiers, as our own troupes were with the G.I.'s. According to Richard E. Lauterbach, these actors performed "in tents, in trenches, in forests, in blockhouses," suffering many casualties in the process. "One theatrical unit toured the fronts for seven months without even having an opportunity to change clothes."

Among contemporary Russian playwrights, those best known abroad are: Michael Bulgakov (*The Last of the Turbins*); Vladimir Kirshon (*Red Rust*); Valentin Katayev (*Squaring the Circle*); and Serge Tretyakov (*Roar China*). If this is not an impressive list, it is at least noteworthy that the two hundred and fifty theatres of czarist days have grown to four or five times that number today; in addition, there are over five thousand stages controlled by farms, factories, clubs, and other amateur groups over the vast Soviet Union. Its people attend the theatre to the number of close to a hundred million a year!

The Future. The inauguration, in the closing months of 1945, of a period of peace the world over promised new glories for the stage everywhere. Increasing ease of communication, greater understanding, and vast and rapid improvements in techniques have already produced greater exchanges of plays and players. This will continue, through the screen and the radio, to bring about a better appreciation, in all countries, of the cultural products of each. In this great movement the students of our own country will always play an important part.

PLAYS OF OUR TIMES



Watch on the Rhine

BY LILLIAN HELLMAN

"The theme of *The Children's Hour*," said Lillian Hellman of her first play, "was good and evil." In a much larger sense this is true as well of *Watch on the Rhine*. Miss Hellman had visited Europe in the summer of 1937 and had seen at first hand the workings of those evil forces that were gaining such rapid and alarming headway. She returned to find her fellow Americans only dimly aware of this evil and its danger for all people of good will everywhere in the world. With each month the number of victims of the Nazi terror increased, while the list of those who continued to hold out against fascism in their own lands grew tragically small.

The most impressive statistics of human suffering will not move us as deeply as the sight of one human being in agony. To dramatize the plight of all the countless victims of Nazi frenzy, Miss Hellman chose to follow the fortunes of one refugee family. In the quiet and dignified courage of the German Kurt Müller and his American wife we see mirrored the nobility of all fighters for human freedom; in their three children, inured by the hounding years to danger and misery, we have the symbol of the world's innocents fallen victim to organized evil. The American family represents those decent people who, in the words of Kurt, "do not understand our world, as yet"—a world peopled by such figures as Teck (the play's villain) and their ruthless leaders.

Watch on the Rhine opened on April 1, 1941, at the Martin Beck Theatre in New York, under the direction of Herman Shumlin, who has produced all of Miss Hellman's plays and to whom this play is gratefully dedicated. The cast was a distinguished one, including Paul Lukas as Kurt, Mady Christians as Sara, Lucile Watson as Fanny Farrelly, and George Coulouris as Teck. Jo Mielziner designed the sets. Three weeks after the opening, the Drama Critics' Circle gave *Watch on the Rhine* its award as the year's best play. Its New York success has since been repeated in many other cities all over the world; it remains, for example, one of the most popular plays in the repertory of the state theatres of Moscow and Leningrad. The motion picture version by Dashiell Hammett proved as moving and powerful as the play.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In explaining her choice of the title for her recent play *The Searching Wind,* Miss Hellman said, "I suppose I was thinking of the wind that's blowing through the world." Lillian Hellman has shown, in her public activities as well as in her writing, a keen awareness of those searching winds which have brought so much misery to our generation. Born in New Orleans in 1905, she was brought by her family five years later to live in New York. She studied at New York University; then worked in a publishing house, reviewed books for a newspaper, and read plays for a firm of producers. While working as a playreader for Herman Shumlin, she wrote *The Children's Hour,* whose enormous success may have reflected the "year and a half of stumbling stubbornness to do the play." *Days to Come* followed; then *The Little Foxes, Watch on the Rhine, The Searching Wind,* and *Another Part of the Forest.* Her screen plays include *The Dark Angel, Dead End,* and *North Star.*

BEFORE READING

1. The action of the play occurs in the late spring of 1940. What was happening in the world at that time? A brief review of events will help you to understand better the problems in this play.

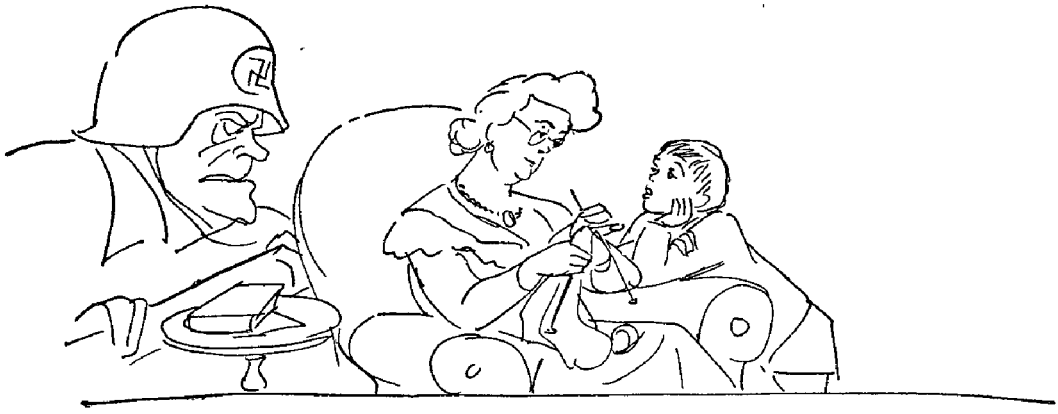
1922. Mussolini and his Fascists gain power in Italy.
1931. Japan invades Manchuria.
1933. Hitler and the Nazis take over the "Third Reich."
1935. Italy invades Ethiopia.
1936. Germany reoccupies the Rhineland.
1936–1939. Spanish Civil War, with open intervention by the Axis powers on the side of Franco.
1938–1939. Germany occupies Austria and Czechoslovakia.
Sept. 1., 1939. Germany annexes Danzig, invades Poland. Two days later England and France declare war on Germany.
April, 1940. Invasion of Denmark and Norway.
May, 1940. Conquest by German armies of Holland and Belgium.

The late spring of 1940 also saw the British disaster at Dunkirk, and the fall of France. It is the darkest hour of the war against the forces of evil that forms the background for this play of protest against these forces.

The play opened on April 1, 1941. The situation was, if anything, even darker than it had been the year before. Not only had the Nazis gained control of most of the European continent; they had also succeeded in spreading their evil doctrines, through agents and propaganda, over every corner of

the earth. Hitler had been in power for eight bloody years; he had ruthlessly crushed all opposition to his regime. Anti-Nazis had been killed, thrown into concentration camps, or had joined the great army of refugees to democracies. Who were some of the more famous of these refugees? The names of Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein will quickly occur to you; but there were many other distinguished exiles like the two playwrights represented in this book: Karel Čapek (*R.U.R.*) and Franz Werfel (*Jacobowsky and the Colonel*). Though we were not then in the war, their fight was aided by many great-hearted and far-sighted Americans; one of these was Lillian Hellman, whose play proved to be a powerful voice raised against this spreading evil.

2. What does the title mean? Where does it come from?
3. Words to look up: *cribbage; resourceful; nostalgia.*



WATCH ON THE RHINE

CHARACTERS

ANISE
JOSEPH
FANNY FARRELLY
DAVID FARRELLY
MARTHE DE BRANCOVIS
TECK DE BRANCOVIS
SARA MÜLLER
JOSHUA MÜLLER
BODO MÜLLER
BABETTE MÜLLER
KURT MÜLLER

The time is late spring, 1940.

ACT I

The scene is the living room of the Farrelly house, about twenty miles from Washington, D. C., on a warm spring morning.

Center stage are large French doors leading to an elevated open terrace. On the terrace are chairs, tables, a large table for dining. Some of this furniture we can see: most of it is on the left side of the terrace, beyond our sight. Left stage is an arched entrance, leading to the oval reception hall. We can see the main staircase as it goes off to the back of the hall. Right stage is a door leading to a library. The Farrelly house was built in the early nineteenth century. It has space, simplicity, style. The living room is large. Up stage right is a piano; down stage left, a couch; down stage right, a couch and chairs; up stage a few smaller chairs. Four or five generations have furnished this room and they have all been people of taste. There are no styles, no periods; the room has

"Watch on the Rhine," by Lillian Hellman. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

never been refurnished. Each careless aristocrat has thrown into the room what he or she liked as a child, what he or she brought home when grown up. Therefore the furniture is of many periods: the desk is English, the couch is Victorian, some of the pictures are modern, some of the ornaments French. The room has too many things in it: vases, clocks, miniatures, boxes, china animals. On the right wall is a large portrait of a big kind-faced man in an evening suit of 1900. On another wall is a large, very ugly landscape. The room is crowded. But it is cool and clean and its fabrics and woods are in soft colors.

At rise, ANISE, *a thin Frenchwoman of about sixty, in a dark housekeeper's dress, is standing at a table sorting mail. She takes the mail from a small basket, holds each letter to the light, reads each postal card, then places them in piles. On the terrace,* JOSEPH, *a tall, middle-aged Negro butler, wheels a breakfast wagon. As he appears,* FANNY FARRELLY *comes in from the hall. She is a handsome woman of about sixty-three. She has on a fancy, good-looking dressing gown.*

Left and right are the audience's left and right.

FANNY (*stops to watch* ANISE. *Sees* JOSEPH *moving about on terrace. Calls*). Joseph! (*To* ANISE.) Morning.

ANISE (*continues examining mail*). Good morning, Madame.

JOSEPH (*comes to terrace door*). Yes'm?

FANNY. Everybody down?

JOSEPH. No'm. Nobody. I'll get your tea. (*He returns to breakfast wagon on terrace.*)

FANNY. Mr. David isn't down yet? But he knows he is to meet the train.

JOSEPH (*comes in from the terrace with the cup of tea*). He's got plenty of time, Miss Fanny. The train ain't in till noon.

FANNY. Breakfast is at nine o'clock in this house and will be until the day after I die. Ring the bell.

JOSEPH. It ain't nine yet, Miss Fanny. It's eight-thirty.

FANNY. Well, put the clocks up to nine and ring the bell.

JOSEPH. Mr. David told me not to ring it any more. He says it's got too mean a ring, that bell. It disturbs folks.

FANNY. That's what it was put there for. I like to disturb folks.

JOSEPH. Yes'm.

FANNY. You slept well, Anise. You were asleep before I could dismantle myself.

ANISE. I woke several times during the night.

FANNY. Did you? Then you were careful not to stop snoring. We must finally get around to rearranging your room. (ANISE *hands her*

three or four letters.) Even when you don't snore, it irritates me. (FANNY *opens a letter, begins to read it. After a minute.*) What time is it?

ANISE. It is about eight-thirty. Joseph just told you.

FANNY. I didn't hear him. I'm nervous. Naturally. My mail looks dull. (*Reading the letter.*) Jenny always tells you a piece of gossip three times, as if it grew fresher with the telling. Did you put flowers in their rooms?

ANISE. Certainly.

FANNY. David ought to get to the station by eleven-thirty.

ANISE (*patiently*). The train does not draw in until ten minutes past noon.

FANNY. But it might come in early. It's been known.

ANISE. Never. Not in the Union Station in Washington, the District of Columbia.

FANNY (*irritably*). But it might. It might. Don't argue with me about everything. What time is it?

ANISE. It's now twenty-seven minutes before nine. It will be impossible to continue telling you the time every three minutes from now until Miss Sara arrives. I think you are having a nervous breakdown. Compose yourself.

FANNY. It's been twenty years. Any mother would be nervous. If your daughter were coming home and you hadn't seen her, and a husband, *and* grandchildren —

ANISE. I do not say that it is wrong to be nervous. I, too, am nervous. I say only that you are.

FANNY. Very well. I heard you. *I* say that I am. (*She goes back to reading her letter. Looks up.*) Jenny's still in California. She's lost her lavallière again. Birdie Chase's daughter is still faire l'amouring with that actor. Tawdry, Jenny says it is. An actor. Fashions in sin change. In my day, it was Englishmen. I don't understand infidelity. If you love a man, then why? If you don't love him, then why stay with him? (*Without turning, she points over her head to Joshua Farrelly's portrait.*) Thank God, I was in love. I thought about Joshua last night. Three grandchildren. He would have liked that. I hope I will. (*Points to other letters.*) Anything in anybody else's mail?

ANISE. Advertisements for Mr. David and legal things. For our Count and Countess, there is nothing but what seems an invitation to a lower-class embassy tea and letters asking for bills to get paid.

FANNY. That's every morning. (*Thoughtfully.*) In the six weeks the

Balkan nobility have been with us, they seem to have run up a great many bills.

ANISE. Yes. *I* told you that. Then there was a night letter for Mr. David.

[*A very loud, very unpleasant bell begins to ring.*]

FANNY (*through the noise*). Really? From whom?

ANISE. From her. I took it on the telephone, and—

[*Bell drowns out her voice.*]

FANNY. Who is "her"? (*Bell becomes very loud.*) Go tell him to stop that noise—

ANISE (*goes toward terrace, calling*). Joseph! Stop that bell. Miss Fanny says to stop it.

JOSEPH (*calls*). Miss Fanny said to start it.

FANNY (*shouts out to him*). I didn't tell you to hang yourself with it.

JOSEPH (*appears on terrace*). I ain't hung. Your breakfast is ready. (*Disappears.*)

FANNY (*to* ANISE). Who is "her"?

ANISE. That Carter woman from Lansing, Michigan.

FANNY. Oh, my. Is she back in Washington again? What did the telegram say?

ANISE. It said the long sickness of her dear papa had terminated in full recovery.

FANNY. That's too bad.

ANISE. She was returning, and would Mr. David come for dinner a week from Thursday? "Love," it said, "to you and your charming mother." (*To* FANNY.) That's you. I think Miss Carter from Lansing, Michigan, was unwise in attending the illness of her papa.

FANNY. I hope so. Why?

ANISE (*shrugs*). There is much winking of the eyes going on between our Countess and Mr. David.

FANNY (*eagerly*). I know that. Anything new happen?

ANISE (*too innocently*). Happen? I don't know what you mean?

FANNY. You know damn well what I mean.

ANISE. *That?* Oh, no, I don't think that.

JOSEPH (*appears in the door*). The sausage cakes is shrinking.

FANNY (*rises. To* ANISE). I want everybody down here immediately. Is the car ready? (ANISE *nods.*) Did you order a good dinner? (*Shrieks.*) David! Oh.

[DAVID FARRELLY, *a pleasant-looking man of thirty-nine, comes in from the entrance hall, almost bumps into* FANNY.]

DAVID. Good morning, everybody.

ANISE (*to* FANNY). Everything is excellent. You have been asking the

same questions for a week. You have made the kitchen very nervous.

DAVID (*to* JOSEPH). Why did you ring that air-raid alarm again?

JOSEPH. Ain't me, Mr. David. I don't like no noise. Miss Fanny told me.

FANNY. Good morning, David.

DAVID (*to* JOSEPH). Tell Fred to leave the car. I'll drive to the station.

JOSEPH (*nods*). Yes, sir. (*Exits.*)

DAVID (*to* FANNY, *half amused, half annoyed, as he begins to read his mail*). Mamma, I think we'll fix up the chicken house for you as a playroom. We'll hang the room with bells and you can go into your second childhood in the proper privacy.

FANNY. I find it very interesting. You sleep soundly, you rise at your usual hour — although your sister, whom you haven't seen in years, is waiting at the station —

DAVID. She is not waiting at the station. (*Laughs.*) The train does not come in until ten minutes past twelve.

FANNY (*airily*). It's almost that now.

ANISE (*turns to look at her*). Really, Miss Fanny, contain yourself. It is twenty minutes before nine.

DAVID. And I have *not* slept soundly. And I've been up since six o'clock.

FANNY. The Balkans aren't down yet. Where are they?

DAVID. I don't know.

ANISE. There's nothing in your mail, Mr. David. Only the usual advertisements.

DAVID. And for me, that is all that is ever likely to come — here.

ANISE (*haughtily, as she starts toward hall*). I cannot, of course, speak for Miss Fanny. *I* have never opened a letter in my life.

DAVID. I know. You don't have to. For you they fly open.

FANNY (*giggles*). It's true. You're a snooper, Anise. (ANISE *exits.* FANNY *talks as* ANISE *moves out.*) I rather admire it. It shows an interest in life. (*She looks up at Joshua's portrait.*) You know, I've been lying awake most of the night wondering what Papa would have thought about Sara. He'd have been very pleased, wouldn't he? I always find myself wondering what Joshua would have felt.

DAVID. Yes. But maybe it would be just as well if you didn't expect me to be wondering about it, too. I wasn't married to him, Mamma. He was just my father.

FANNY. My. You got up on the wrong side of the bed. (*She moves past him. Points to the mail which he is still opening.*) The bills are for our noble guests. Interesting, how many there are every morning. How much longer are they going to be with us?

DAVID (*without looking at her*). I don't know.

FANNY. It's been six weeks. Now that Sara and her family are coming, even this house might be a little crowded— (*He looks up at her. Quickly.*) Yes. I know I invited them. I felt sorry for Marthe, and Teck rather amused me. He plays good cribbage, and he tells good jokes. But that's not enough for a lifetime guest. If you've been urging her to stay, I wish you'd stop it. They haven't any money; all right, lend them some—

DAVID. I have been urging them to stay?

FANNY. I'm not so old I don't recognize flirting when I see it.

DAVID. But you're old enough not to be silly.

FANNY. I'm not silly. I'm charming.

[MARTHE DE BRANCOVIS, *an attractive woman of thirty-one or thirty-two, enters.*]

MARTHE. Good morning, Fanny. Morning, David.

FANNY. Good morning, Marthe.

DAVID (*warmly*). Good morning.

MARTHE. Fanny, darling, couldn't you persuade yourself to let me have a tray in bed and some cotton for my ears?

DAVID. Certainly not. My father ate breakfast at nine; and whatever my father did . . .

FANNY (*carefully, to* DAVID). There was a night letter for you from that Carter woman in Lansing, Michigan. She is returning and you are to come to dinner next Thursday. (*As she exits on terrace.*) C–A–R–T–E–R. (*Pronounces it carefully.*) Lansing, Michigan.

DAVID (*laughs*). I know how to spell Carter, but thank you. (FANNY *exits.* DAVID *looks up at* MARTHE.) Do you understand my mother?

MARTHE. Sometimes.

DAVID. Miss Carter was done for your benefit.

MARTHE (*smiles*). That means she has guessed that I would be jealous. And she has guessed right.

DAVID (*looks at her*). Jealous?

MARTHE. I know I've no right to be, but I am. And Fanny knows it.

DAVID (*carelessly*). Don't pay any attention to Mamma. She has a sure instinct for the women I like, and she begins to hammer away early. Marthe—(*Goes to decanter on side table.*) I'm going to have a drink. I haven't had a drink before breakfast since the day I took my bar examination. (*Pours himself a drink, gulps it down.*) What's it going to be like to stand on a station platform and see your sister after all these years? I'm afraid, I guess.

MARTHE. Why?

DAVID. I don't know. Afraid she won't like me — (*Shrugs.*) We were very fond of each other, but it's been a long time.

MARTHE. I remember Sara. Mamma brought me one day when your father was stationed in Paris. I was about six and Sara about fifteen and you were —

DAVID. You were a pretty little girl.

MARTHE. Do you really remember me? You never told me before.

FANNY (*yelling from the terrace*). David! Come to breakfast.

DAVID (*as if he had not been listening*). You know, I've never met Sara's husband. Mamma did. I think the first day Sara met him, in Munich. Mamma didn't like the marriage much in those days — and Sara didn't care, and Mamma didn't like Sara not caring. Mamma cut up about it, bad.

MARTHE. Why?

DAVID. Probably because they didn't let her arrange it. Why does Mamma ever act badly? She doesn't remember ten minutes later.

MARTHE. Wasn't Mr. Müller poor?

DAVID. Oh, Mamma wouldn't have minded that. If they'd only come home and let her fix their lives for them — (*Smiles.*) But Sara didn't want it that way.

MARTHE. You'll have a house full of refugees — us and —

DAVID. Are you and Teck refugees? I'm not sure I know what you're refugees from.

MARTHE. From Europe.

DAVID. From what Europe?

MARTHE (*smiles, shrugs*). I don't know. I don't know myself, really. Just Europe. (*Quickly, comes to him.*) Sara will like you. I like you. (*Laughs.*) That doesn't make sense, does it?

[*On her speech,* TECK DE BRANCOVIS *appears in the hall. He is a good-looking man of about forty-five. She stops quickly.*]

TECK (*to* MARTHE *and* DAVID). Good morning.

[*The bell gives an enormous ring.*]

DAVID (*goes to terrace*). Good morning, Teck. For years I've been thinking they were coming for Mamma with a net. I'm giving up hope. I may try catching her myself. (*Disappears, calling.*) Mamma! Stop that noise.

TECK. I wonder if science has a name for women who enjoy noise? (*Goes to table, picks up his mail.*) Many mistaken people, Marthe, seem to have given you many charge accounts.

MARTHE. The Countess de Brancovis. That still does it. It would be nice to be able to pay bills again —

TECK. Do not act as if I refused to pay them. I did not sleep well last night. I was worried. We have eighty-seven dollars in American Express checks. (*Pleasantly, looking at her.*) That's all we have, Marthe.

MARTHE (*shrugs*). Maybe something will turn up. It's due.

TECK (*carefully*). David? (*Then, as she turns to look at him.*) The other relatives will arrive this morning?

MARTHE. Yes

TECK (*points to porch*). I think Madame Fanny and Mr. David may grow weary of accents and charity guests. Or is the husband of the sister a rich one?

MARTHE. No. He's poor. He had to leave Germany in '33.

TECK. A Jew?

MARTHE. No. I don't think so.

TECK. Why did he have to leave Germany?

MARTHE (*still reading*). Oh, I don't know, Teck. He's an anti-Nazi.

TECK. A political?

MARTHE. No, I don't think so. He was an engineer. I don't know. I don't know much about him.

TECK. Did you sleep well?

MARTHE. Yes. Why not?

TECK. Money does not worry you?

MARTHE. It worries me very much. But I just lie still now and hope. I'm glad to be here. (*Shrugs.*) Maybe something good will happen. We've come to the end of a road. That's been true for a long time. Things will have to go one way or the other. Maybe they'll go well, for a change.

TECK. I have not come to the end of any road.

MARTHE (*looks at him*). No? I admire you.

TECK. I'm going into Washington tonight. Phili has a poker game every Wednesday evening. He has arranged for me to join it.

MARTHE (*after a pause*). Have you been seeing Phili?

TECK. Once or twice. Why not? Phili and I are old friends. He may be useful. I do not want to stay in this country forever.

MARTHE. You can't leave them alone. Your favorite dream, isn't it, Teck? That they will let you play with them again? I don't think they will, and I don't think you should be seeing Phili, or that you should be seen at the Embassy.

TECK (*smiles*). You have political convictions now?

MARTHE. I don't know what I have. I've never liked Nazis, as you know, and you should have had enough of them. They seem to have had

enough of you, God knows. It would be just as well to admit they are smarter than you are and let them alone.

TECK (*looking at her carefully, after a minute*). That is interesting.

MARTHE. What is interesting?

TECK. I think you are trying to say something to me. What is it?

MARTHE. That you ought not to be at the Embassy, and that it's insane to play cards in a game with von Seitz with eighty-seven dollars in your pocket. I don't think he'd like your not being able to pay up. Suppose you lose?

TECK. I shall try not to lose.

MARTHE. But if you do lose and can't pay, it will be all over Washington in an hour. (*Points to terrace.*) They'll find out about it, and we'll be out of here when they do.

TECK. I think I want to be out of here. I find that I do not like the picture of you and our host.

MARTHE (*carefully*). There is no picture, as you put it, to like or dislike.

TECK. Not yet? I am glad to hear that. (*Comes toward her slowly.*) Marthe, you understand that I am not really a fool? You understand that it is unwise to calculate me that way?

MARTHE (*slowly, as if it were an effort*). Yes, I understand that, and I understand that I am getting tired. Just plain tired. The whole thing's too much for me. I've always meant to ask you, since you played on so many sides, why we don't come out any better. I've always wanted to ask you what happened. (*Sharply.*) I'm tired, see? And I just want to sit down. Just to sit down in a chair and stay.

TECK (*carefully*). Here?

MARTHE. I don't know. Any place—

TECK. You have thus arranged it with David?

MARTHE. I've arranged nothing.

TECK. But you are trying, eh? (*He comes close to her.*) I think not. I would not like that. Do not make any arrangements, Marthe. I may not allow you to carry them through. (*Smiles.*) Come to breakfast now.

[*He passes her, disappears on the terrace. She stands still and thoughtful. Then she, too, moves to the terrace, disappears.* JOSEPH *appears on the terrace, carrying a tray toward the unseen breakfast table. The stage is empty. After a minute, there are sounds of footsteps in the hall.* SARA MÜLLER *appears in the doorway, comes toward the middle of the room as if expecting to find somebody, stops, looks around, begins to smile. Behind her in the doorway,*

are three children; behind them, KURT MÜLLER. *They stand waiting, watching* SARA. SARA *is forty-one or forty-two, a good-looking woman, with a well-bred, serious face. She is very badly dressed. Her dress is too long, her shoes were bought a long time ago and have no relation to the dress, and the belt of her dress has become untied and is hanging down. She looks clean and dowdy. As she looks around the room, her face is gay and surprised. Smiling, without turning, absently, she motions to the children and* KURT. *Slowly, the children come in.* BODO MÜLLER, *a boy of nine, comes first. He is carrying coats. Behind him, carrying two cheap valises, is* JOSHUA MÜLLER, *a boy of fourteen. Behind him is* BABETTE MÜLLER, *a pretty little girl of twelve. They are dressed for a much colder climate. They come forward, look at their mother, then move to a couch. Behind them is* KURT MÜLLER, *a large, powerful, German-looking man of about forty-seven. He is carrying a shabby valise and a brief case. He stands watching* SARA. JOSHUA *puts down the valises, goes to his father, takes the valise from* KURT, *puts it neatly near his, and puts the brief case near* KURT. BABETTE *goes to* SARA, *takes a package from her, places it near the valise. Then she turns to* BODO, *takes the coats he is carrying, puts them neatly on top of the valises. After a second,* KURT *sits down. As he does so, we see that his movements are slow and careful, as if they are made with effort.*]

BABETTE (*points to a couch near which they are standing. She has a slight accent*). Is it allowed?

KURT (*smiles. He has an accent*). Yes. It is allowed. (BABETTE *and* BODO *sit stiffly on the couch.*)

JOSHUA (*nervously. He has a slight accent*). But we did not sound the bell—

SARA (*idly, as she wanders around the room, her face excited*). The door isn't locked. It never was. Never since I can remember.

BODO (*softly, puzzled*). The entrance of the home is never locked. So.

KURT (*looks at him*). You find it curious to believe there are people who live and do not need to watch, eh, Bodo?

BODO. Yes, Papa.

KURT (*smiles*). You and I.

JOSHUA (*smiles*). It is strange. But it must be good, I think.

KURT. Yes.

SARA. Sit back. Be comfortable. I — I wonder where Mamma and David — (*Delighted, sees portrait of Joshua Farrelly, points to it.*) And that was my Papa. That was the famous Joshua Farrelly. (*They all look up at it. She wanders around the room.*) My goodness, isn't it

a fine room? I'd almost forgotten – (*Picks up a picture from the table.*) And this was my grandmother. (*Very nervously.*) Shall I go and say we're here? They'd be having breakfast, I think. Always on the side terrace in nice weather. I don't know. Maybe – (*Picks up another picture.*) "To Joshua and Fanny Farrelly. With admiration. Alfonso, May 7, 1910." I had an ermine boa and a pink coat. I was angry because it was too warm in Madrid to wear it.

BODO. Alfons von Spanien? Der hat immer Bilder von sich verschenkt. Ein schlechtes Zeichen für einen Mann.[1]

JOSHUA. Mamma told you it is good manners to speak the language of the country you visit. Therefore, speak in English.

BODO. I said he seemed always to give his photograph. I said that is a bad flag on a man. Grow fat on the poor people and give pictures of the face.

[JOSHUA *sits down.*]

SARA. I remember a big party and cakes and a glass of champagne for me. I was ten, I guess – (*Suddenly laughs.*) That was when Mamma said the first time a king got shot at, he was a romantic, but the fifth time he was a comedian. And when my father gave his lecture in Madrid, he repeated it – right in Madrid. It was a great scandal. You know, Alfonso was always getting shot at or bombed.

BODO (*shrugs*). Certainement.[2]

JOSHUA. Certainement? As-tu perdu la tête?[3]

BABETTE. Speak in English, please.

KURT (*without turning*). You are a terrorist, Bodo?

BODO (*slowly*). No.

JOSHUA. Then since when has it become *natural* to shoot upon people?

BODO. Do not give me lessons. It is neither right nor natural to shoot upon people. I know that.

SARA (*looks at* BABETTE, *thoughtfully*). An ermine boa. A boa is a scarf. I should like to have one for you, Babbie. Once, in Prague, I saw a pretty one. I wanted to buy it for you. But we had to pay our rent. (*Laughs.*) But I almost bought it.

BABETTE. Yes, Mamma. Thank you. Tie your sash, Mamma.

SARA (*thoughtfully*). Almost twenty years.

BODO. You were born here, Mamma?

[1] (*In German.*) Alfonso of Spain? That man always gave away his picture. Looks bad for a man.

[2] (*In French.*) Certainly.

[3] Certainly? Have you lost your head?

SARA. Upstairs. And I lived here until I went to live with your father. (*Looks out beyond terrace.*) Your Uncle David and I used to have a garden, behind the terrace. I wonder if it's still there. I like a garden. I've always hoped we'd have a house some day and settle down — (*Stops, nervously, turns to stare at* KURT, *who is looking at her.*) I am talking so foolish. Sentimental. At my age. Gardens and ermine boas. I haven't wanted anything —

KURT (*comes toward her, takes her hand*). Sara. Stop it. This is a fine room. A fine place to be. Everything is so pleasant and full of comfort. This will be a good piano on which to play again. And it is all so clean. I like that. Now, you shall not be a baby. You must enjoy your house, and not be afraid that you hurt me with it. Yes?

BABETTE. Papa, tie Mamma's sash, please.

SARA (*shyly smiles at him as he leans down to tie the belt*). Yes, of course. It's strange, that's all. We've never been in a place like this together —

KURT. That does not mean, and should not mean, that we do not remember how to enjoy what comes our way. We are on a holiday.

JOSHUA. A holiday? But for how long? And what plans afterward?

KURT (*quietly*). We will have plans when the hour arrives to make them. (ANISE *appears from the hall. She starts into the room, stops, bewildered. The* MÜLLERS *have not seen her. Then, as* SARA *turns,* ANISE *speaks. As she speaks the children rise.*)

ANISE. What? What?

SARA (*softly*). Anise. It's me. It's Sara.

ANISE (*coming forward slowly*). What? (*Then as she approaches* SARA, *she begins to run toward her.*) Miss Sara! Miss Sara! (*They reach each other, both laugh happily.* SARA *kisses* ANISE.) I would have known you. Yes, I would. I would have known — (*Excited, bewildered, nervous, she looks toward* KURT.) How do you do, sir? How do you do? (*Turns toward the children.*) How do you do?

JOSHUA. Thank you, Miss Anise. We are in good health.

SARA (*very happily*). You look the same. I think you look the same. Just the way I've always remembered. (*To the others.*) This is the Anise I have told you about. She was here before I was born.

ANISE. But how — Did you just come in? What a way to come home! And after all the plans we've made! But you were to come on the twelve-o'clock train, and Mr. David was to meet you —

BABETTE. The twelve-o'clock train was most expensive. We could not have come with that train. We liked the train we came on. It was most luxurious.

ANISE (*very nervously, very rattled*). But Madame Fanny will have a fit. I will call her — She will not be able to contain herself. She —

SARA (*softly*). I wanted a few minutes. I'm nervous about coming home, I guess.

BODO (*conversationally*). You are French, Madame Anise?

ANISE. Yes, I am from the Bas Rhin.[4] (*She looks past* SARA, *and bobs her head idiotically at* KURT.) Sara's husband. That is nice. That is nice.

BODO. Yes. Your accent is from the north. That is fine country. We were in hiding there once. (BABETTE *quickly pokes him.*)

ANISE. Hiding? You — (*turns nervously to* KURT.) But here we stand and talk. You have not had your breakfast, sir!

BABETTE (*simply, eagerly*). It would be nice to have breakfast.

ANISE. Yes, of course — I will go and order it.

SARA (*to the children*). What would you like for breakfast?

BABETTE (*surprised*). What would we like? Why, Mamma, we will have anything that can be spared. If eggs are not too rare or too expensive —

ANISE (*amazed*). Rare? Why — Oh, I — I must call Miss Fanny now. It is of a necessity. (*Excited, rushing toward terrace, calling.*) Miss Fanny. Miss Fanny. (*Back to* SARA.) Have you forgotten your mamma's nature? She cannot bear not knowing things. Miss Fanny! What a way to come home! After twenty years and nobody at the station —

FANNY'S VOICE. Don't yell at me. What is the matter with you?

ANISE (*excitedly, as* FANNY *draws near*). She's here. They're here. Miss Sara. She's here, I tell you. (FANNY *comes up to her, stares at her, then looks slowly around until she sees* SARA.)

SARA (*softly*). Hello, Mamma.

FANNY (*after a long pause, softly, coming toward her*). Sara. Sara, darling. You're here. You're really here. (*She reaches her, takes her arms, stares at her, smiles.*) Welcome. Welcome. Welcome to your house. (*Slowly.*) You're not young, Sara.

SARA (*smiles*). No, Mamma. I'm forty-one.

FANNY (*softly*). Forty-one. Of course. (*Presses her arms again.*) Oh, Sara, I'm — (*Then, quickly.*) You look more like Papa now. That's good. The years have helped you. (*Turns to look at* KURT.) Welcome to this house, sir.

KURT (*warmly*). Thank you, madame.

FANNY (*turns to look at* SARA *again, nervously pats her arm. Nods, turns*

[4] Lower Rhine, i.e., the northern part.

again to stare at KURT. *She is nervous and chatty*). You are a good-looking man, for a German. I didn't remember you that way. I like a good-looking man. I always have.

KURT (*smiles*). I like a good-looking woman. I always have.

FANNY. Good. That's the way it should be.

BODO (*to* SARA). Ist das Grossmama? [5]

FANNY (*looks down*). Yes. I am your grandmother. Also, I speak German, so do not talk about me. I speak languages very well. But there is no longer anybody to speak with. Anise has half forgotten her French, which was always bad; and I have nobody with whom to speak my Italian or German or — Sara, it's very good to have you home. I'm chattering away, I —

JOSHUA. Now you have us, madame. We speak ignorantly, but fluently, in German, French, Italian, Spanish —

KURT. And boastfully in English.

BODO. There is never a need for boasting. If we are to fight for the good of all men, it is to be accepted that we must be among the most advanced.

ANISE. My God.

FANNY (*to* SARA). Are these your *children?* Or are they dressed-up midgets?

SARA (*laughs*). These are my children, Mamma. This, Babette. (BABETTE *bows.*) This, Joshua. (JOSHUA *bows.*) This is Bodo. (BODO *bows.*)

FANNY. Joshua was named for Papa. You wrote me. (*Indicates picture of Joshua Farrelly.*) You bear a great name, young man.

JOSHUA (*smiles, indicates his father*). My name is Müller.

FANNY (*looks at him, laughs*). Yes. You look a little like your grandfather. (*To* BABETTE.) And so do you. You are a nice-looking girl. (*To* BODO.) You look like nobody.

BODO (*proudly*). I am not beautiful.

FANNY (*laughs*). Well, Sara, well. Three children. You have done well. (*To* KURT.) You, too, sir, of course. Are you quite recovered? Sara wrote that you were in Spain and —

BODO. Did Mamma write that Papa was a great hero? He was brave, he was calm, he was expert, he was resourceful, he was —

KURT (*laughs*). My biographer. And as unprejudiced as most of them.

SARA. Where is David? I am so anxious — Has he changed much? Does he . . .

FANNY (*to* ANISE). Don't stand there. Go and get him right away. Go get David. (*As* ANISE *exits.*) He's out having breakfast with the ti-

[5] Is that Grandmother?

tled folk. Do you remember Marthe Randolph? I mean, do you remember Hortie Randolph, her mother, who was my friend? Can you follow what I'm saying? I'm not speaking well today.

SARA (*laughs*). Of course I remember Marthe and Hortie. You and she used to scream at each other.

FANNY. Well, Marthe, her daughter, married Teck de Brancovis. *Count* de Brancovis. He was fancy when she married him. Not so fancy now, I suspect. Although still chic and tired. You know what I mean, the way they are in Europe. Well, they're here.

SARA. What's David like now? I—

FANNY. Like? Like? I don't know. He's a lawyer. You know that. Papa's firm. He's never married. You know that, too—

SARA. Why hasn't he married?

FANNY. Really, I don't know. I don't think he likes his own taste. Which is very discriminating of him. He's had a lot of girls, of course, one more ignorant and silly than the other—(*Goes toward terrace, begins to scream.*) And where is he? David! David!

ANISE'S VOICE. He's coming, Miss Fanny. He's coming. Contain yourself. He was down at the garage getting ready to leave—

FANNY. I don't care where he is. Tell him to come. David! (*Suddenly points to picture of Joshua.*) That's my Joshua. Handsome, eh? We were very much in love. Hard to believe of people nowadays, isn't it?

SARA. Kurt and I love each other.

FANNY. Oh. You do? I daresay. But there are ways and ways of loving.

SARA. How dare you, Mamma—

KURT (*laughs*). Ladies, ladies.

SARA (*giggles*). Why, I almost got mad then. You know, I don't think I've been mad since I last saw you.

BODO. My! You and Mamma must not get angry. Anger is protest. And so you must direction it to the proper channels and then harness it for the good of other men. That is correct, Papa?

FANNY (*peers down at him*). If you grow up to talk like that, and stay as ugly as you are, you are going to have one of those successful careers on the lecture platform. (JOSHUA *and* BABETTE *laugh.*)

JOSHUA (*to* BODO). Ah. It is a great pleasure to hear Grandma talk with you.

BODO (*to* FANNY *tenderly*). We will not like each other.

[KURT *has wandered to the piano. Standing, he touches the keys in the first bars of a Mozart rondo.*]

FANNY. You are wrong. I think we are rather alike; if that is so, let us at least remember to admire each other.

[DAVID *comes running in from the entrance hall. At the door he stops, stares at* SARA.]

DAVID (*to* SARA). Sara. Darling—

SARA (*wheels, goes running toward him. She moves into his arms. He leans down, kisses her with great affection*). David. David.

DAVID (*softly*). It's been a long, long time. I got to thinking it would never happen. (*He leans down, kisses her hair. After a minute, he smiles, presses her arm.*)

SARA (*excited*). David, I'm excited. Isn't it strange? To be here, to see each other—But I am forgetting. This is my husband. These are my children, Babette, Joshua. Bodo.

[*They all three advance, stand in line to shake hands.*]

BODO (*shaking hands*). How do you do, Uncle David?

DAVID. How do you do, Bodo? (DAVID *shakes hands with* JOSHUA.) Boys can shake hands. But so pretty a girl must be kissed. (*He kisses* BABETTE. *She smiles, very pleased, and crosses to the side of* SARA.)

BABETTE. Thank you. Fix your hairpin, Mamma. (SARA *shoves back a falling hairpin.*)

DAVID (*crossing to* KURT). I'm happy to meet you, sir, and to have you here.

KURT. Thank you. Sara has told me so much from you. You have a devoted sister.

DAVID (*very pleased*). Have I? Still? That's mighty good to hear. (ANISE *comes in from the library.*)

ANISE. Your breakfast is coming. Shall I wash the children, Miss Sara?

JOSHUA (*amazed*). Wash us? Do people wash each other?

SARA. No, but the washing is a good idea. Go along now, and hurry. (*All three start for the hall.*) And then we'll all have a fine, big breakfast again. (*The children exit.*)

FANNY. Again? Don't you usually have a good breakfast?

KURT (*smiles*). No, madame. Only sometimes.

SARA (*laughs*). Oh, we do all right, usually. (*Very happily, very gaily.*) Ah, it's good to be here. (*Puts her arm in* DAVID'S.) We were kids. Now we're all grown up! I've got children, you're a lawyer, and a fine one, I bet—

FANNY. The name of Farrelly on the door didn't, of course, hurt David's career.

DAVID (*smiles*). Sara, you might as well know Mamma thinks of me only

as a monument to Papa and a not very well-made monument at that. I am not the man Papa was.

SARA (*to* FANNY, *smiles*). How do you know he's not?

FANNY (*carefully*). I beg your pardon. That is the second time you have spoken disrespectfully of your father. (SARA *and* DAVID *laugh.* FANNY *turns to* KURT.) I hope you will like me.

KURT. I hope so.

SARA (*pulls* DAVID *to the couch, sits down with him*). Now I want to hear about you — (*Looks at him, laughs.*) I'm awfully nervous about seeing you. Are you, about me?

DAVID. Yes. I certainly am.

SARA (*looks around*). I'm like an idiot. I want to see everything right away. The lake, and my old room — and I want to talk and ask questions . . .

KURT (*laughs*). More slow, Sara. It is most difficult to have twenty years in a few minutes.

SARA. Yes, I know, but — Oh, well. Kurt's right. We'll say it all slowly. It's just nice being back. Haven't I fine children?

DAVID. Very fine. You're lucky. I wish I had them.

FANNY. How could you have them? All the women you like are too drafty, if you know what I mean. I'm sure that girl from Lansing, Michigan, would be sterile. Which is as God in his wisdom would have it.

SARA. Oh. So you have a girl?

DAVID. I have no girl. This amuses Mamma.

FANNY. He's very attractive to some women. (*To* KURT.) Both my children are attractive, whatever else they're not. Don't you think so? (*Points to* DAVID.) He's flirting with our Countess now, Sara. You will see for yourself.

DAVID (*sharply*). You are making nervous jokes this morning, Mamma. And they're not very good ones.

FANNY (*gaily*). I tell the truth. If it turns out to be a joke, all the better.

SARA (*affectionately*). Ah, Mamma hasn't changed. And that's good, too.

FANNY. Don't mind me, Sara. I, too, am nervous about seeing you. (*To* KURT.) You'll like it here. You are an engineer?

KURT. Yes.

FANNY. Do you remember the day we met in München? The day Sara brought you to lunch? I thought you were rather a clod and that Sara would have a miserable life. I think I was wrong. (*To* DAVID.) You see? I always admit when I'm wrong.

DAVID. You are a woman who is noble in all things, at all times.

FANNY. Oh, you're mad at me. (*To* KURT.) As I say, you'll like it here. I've already made some plans. The new wing will be for you and Sara. The old turkey house we'll fix up for the children. A nice, new bathroom, and we'll put in their own kitchen, and Anise will move in with them —

SARA. That's kind of you, Mamma. But — but — we won't make any plans for a while — (*Very quietly.*) A good, long vacation; God knows Kurt needs it —

FANNY. A vacation? You'll be staying here, of course. You don't have to worry about work — engineers can always get jobs, David says, and he's already begun to inquire —

KURT. I have not worked as an engineer since many years, madame.

DAVID. Haven't you? I thought — Didn't you work for Dornier? [6]

KURT. Yes. Before '33.

FANNY. But you have worked in other places. A great many other places, I should say. Every letter of Sara's seemed to have a new postmark.

KURT (*smiles*). We move most often.

DAVID. You gave up engineering?

KURT. I gave it up? (*Shrugs.*) One could say it that way.

FANNY. What do you do?

SARA. Mamma, we —

KURT. It is difficult to explain.

DAVID (*after a slight pause*). If you'd rather not.

FANNY. No, I — I'm trying to find out something. (*To* KURT.) May I ask it, sir?

KURT. Let me help you, madame. You wish to know whether not being an engineer buys adequate breakfasts for my family. It does not. I have no wish to make a mystery of what I have been doing; it is only that it is awkward to place neatly. (*Smiles, motions with his hand.*) It sounds so big: it is so small. I am an anti-fascist, and that does not pay well.

FANNY. Do you mind questions?

SARA. Yes.

KURT (*sharply*). Sara. (*To* FANNY.) Perhaps I shall not answer them. But I shall try.

FANNY. Are you a radical?

KURT. You would have to tell me what that word means to you, madame.

FANNY (*after a slight pause*). That is just. Perhaps we all have private definitions. We are all anti-fascists, for example —

SARA. Yes. But Kurt works at it.

[6] German aircraft manufacturers, producers of giant transatlantic flying boats.

FANNY. What kind of work?

KURT. Any kind. Anywhere.

FANNY (*sharply*). I will stop asking questions.

SARA (*very sharply*). That would be sensible, Mamma.

DAVID. Darling, don't be angry. We've been worried about you, naturally. We knew so little, except that you were having a bad time.

SARA. I didn't have a bad time. We never —

KURT. Do not lie for me, Sara.

SARA. I'm not lying. I didn't have a bad time, the way they mean. I —

FANNY (*slowly*). You had a bad time just trying to live, didn't you? That's obvious, Sara, and foolish to pretend it isn't. Why wouldn't you take money from us? What kind of nonsense —

SARA (*slowly*). We've lived the way we wanted to live. I don't know the language of rooms like this any more. And I don't want to learn it again.

KURT. Do not bristle about it.

SARA. I'm not bristling. (*To* FANNY.) I married because I fell in love. You can understand that.

FANNY (*slowly*). Yes.

SARA. For almost twelve years, Kurt went to work every morning and came home every night, and we lived modestly, and happily — (*Sharply.*) As happily as people could in a starved Germany that was going to pieces —

KURT. Sara, please. You are angry. I do not like it that way. I will try to find a way to tell you with quickness. Yes. (SARA *turns, looks at him, starts to speak, stops.*) I was born in a town called Fürth. (*Pauses. Looks up, smiles.*) There is a holiday in my town. We call it Kirchweih. It was a gay holiday with games and music and a hot white sausage to eat with the wine. I grow up, I move away — to school, to work — but always I come back for Kirchweih. It is for me, the great day of the year. (*Slowly.*) But after the war, that day begins to change. The sausage is made from bad stuff, the peasants come in without shoes, the children are too sick — (*Carefully.*) It is bad for my people, those years, but always I have hope. In the festival of August, 1931, more than a year before the storm, I give up that hope. On that day, I see twenty-seven men murdered in a Nazi street fight. I cannot stay by now and watch. My time has come to move. I say with Luther, "Here I stand. I can do nothing else. God help me. Amen."[7]

[7] Martin Luther is said to have spoken these defiant words before the Diet of Worms in 1521, when called to account for his religious teaching.

SARA. It doesn't pay well to fight for what we believe in. But I wanted it the way Kurt wanted it. (*Shrugs.*) They don't like us in Europe; I guess they never did. So Kurt brought us home. You've always said you wanted us. If you don't, I will understand.

DAVID. Darling, of course we want you—

FANNY (*rises*). I am old. And made of dry cork. And bad-mannered. Please forgive me.

SARA (*goes quickly to* FANNY). Shut up, Mamma. We're all acting like fools. I'm glad to be home. That's all I know. So damned glad.

DAVID. And we're damned glad to have you. Come on. Let's walk to the lake. We've made it bigger and planted the island with blackberries—(*She smiles and goes to him. Together they move out the hall entrance.*)

FANNY (*after a silence*). They've always liked each other. We're going to have Zwetschgen-Knoedel[8] for dinner. You like them?

KURT. Indeed.

FANNY. I hope you like decent food.

KURT. I do.

FANNY. That's a good sign in a man.

MARTHE (*coming in from the terrace. Stops in the doorway*). Oh, I'm sorry, Fanny. We were waiting. I didn't want to interrupt the family reunion. I—

FANNY. This is my son-in-law, Herr Müller. The Countess de Brancovis.

KURT AND MARTHE (*together*). How do you do?

MARTHE. And how is Sara, Herr Müller? I haven't seen her since I was a little girl. She probably doesn't remember me at all. (TECK *comes in from the hall. She turns.*) This is my husband, Herr Müller.

KURT. How do you do?

TECK. How do you do, sir? (KURT *bows. They shake hands.*) Would it be impertinent for one European to make welcome another?

KURT (*smiles*). I do not think so. It would be friendly.

BODO (*appears at the hall door*). Papa—(*Sees* TECK *and* MARTHE, *bows.*) Oh, good morning. Miss Anise says you are the Count and Countess. Once before we met a count and countess. They had a small room bordering on ours in Copenhagen. They were more older than you, and more poor. We shared with them our newspaper.

MARTHE (*laughs*). It wasn't us, but it might have been. What's your name?

TECK (*laughs*). We hope you will be as kind to us.

BODO. My name is Bodo. It's a strange name. No? (*To* KURT.) Papa, this

[8] Plum dumplings.

is the house of great wonders. Each has his bed, each has his bathroom. The arrangement of it, that is splendorous.

FANNY (*laughs*). You are a fancy talker, Bodo.

KURT. Oh, yes. In many languages.

BODO (*to* FANNY). Please to correct me when I am wrong. Papa, the plumbing is such as you have never seen. Each implement is placed on the floor, and all are simultaneous in the same room. You will therefore see that being placed most solidly on the floor allows of no rats, rodents, or crawlers, and is most sanitary. (*To the others.*) Papa will be most interested. He likes to know how each thing of everything is put together. And he is so fond of being clean—

KURT (*laughs. To* FANNY). I am a hero to my children. It bores everybody but me.

TECK. It is most interesting, Herr Müller. I thought I had a good ear for the accents of your country. But yours is most difficult to place. It is Bayrisch? Or is it—

BODO. That's because Papa has worked in so many—

KURT (*quickly*). German accents are the most difficult to identify. I, myself, when I try, am usually incorrect. It would be particularly difficult with me because I speak other languages. Yours would be Rumanian?

MARTHE (*laughs*). My God, is it that bad?

KURT (*smiles*). I am showing off. I know the Count de Brancovis is Rumanian.

TECK (*heartily*). So? We have met before? I thought so, but I cannot remember—

KURT. No, sir. We have not met before. I read your name in the newspapers.

TECK (*to* KURT). Strange. I was sure I had met you. I was in the Paris Legation for many years, and I thought perhaps—

KURT. Oh, no. If it is possible to believe, I am the exile who is not famous. (*To* FANNY.) I have been thinking with pleasure, Madame Fanny, of breakfast on your porch. (*He points to the picture of Joshua Farrelly.*) Your husband once wrote: "I am getting older now and Europe seems far away. Fanny and I will have an early breakfast on the porch and then I shall drive the bays into Washington." (*Remembering.*) And then he goes on: "Henry Adams tells me he has been reading Karl Marx. I shall have to tell him my father made me read Marx many years ago and that, since he proposes to exhibit himself to impress me, will spoil Henry's Sunday."

FANNY (*laughs, delighted. Takes* KURT's *arm*). And so it did. I had for-

gotten that. I am pleased with you. I shall come and serve your food myself. I had forgotten Joshua ever wrote it. (*They start out of the terrace doors together, followed by* BODO.)

KURT (*as they disappear*). I try to impress you. I learned it last night. (FANNY *laughs. They disappear.*)

TECK (*smiles*). He is a clever man. A quotation from Joshua Farrelly is a sure road to Fanny's heart. Where did you say Herr Müller was from?

MARTHE. Germany.

TECK. I know that. (*Goes to a valise. He leans over, stares at it, looks at the labels, pushes the lock. The lock opens; he closes it. Then he turns and, as he speaks, picks up the brief case.*) What part of Germany?

MARTHE. I don't know. And I never knew you were an expert on accents.

TECK. I never knew it either. Are you driving into Washington with David this morning?

MARTHE. I was going to. But he may not be going to the office, now that Sara's here. I was to have lunch with Sally Tyne. (TECK *puts down the brief case.*) What are you doing?

TECK. Wondering why luggage is unlocked and a shabby brief case is so carefully locked.

MARTHE. You're very curious about Mr. Müller.

TECK. Yes. And I do not know why. Something far away. . . . I am curious about a daughter of the Farrellys who marries a German who has bullet scars on his face and broken bones in his hands.

MARTHE (*sharply*). Has he? There are many of them now, I guess.

TECK. So there are. But this one is in this house. (*He goes to the bell cord, pulls it. She watches him nervously.*)

MARTHE. Is it — is he any business of yours?

TECK. What is my business? Anything might be my business now.

MARTHE. Yes — unfortunately. You might inquire from your friend von Seitz. They always know their nationals.

TECK (*pleasantly, ignoring the sharpness with which she has spoken*). Oh, yes, I will do that, of course. But I do not like to ask questions without knowing the value of the answers.

MARTHE. Teck. This man is a little German Sara married years ago. I remember Mamma talking about it. He was nothing then and he isn't now. They've had a tough enough time already without —

TECK. Have you — Are you in love with David?

MARTHE (*stops, stares at him, then simply*). No.

TECK. You like him?

MARTHE (*nervously*). What's this for, Teck?

TECK. Answer me, please.

MARTHE. I — (*She stops.*)

TECK. Yes? Answer me.

MARTHE. I do like him.

TECK. What does he feel about you?

MARTHE. I don't know.

TECK. But you are trying to find out. You have made plans with him?

MARTHE. Of course not. I —

TECK. But you will try to make him have plans. I have recognized it. Well, we have been together a long — (JOSEPH *enters.* TECK *stops.*) Joseph, Miss Fanny wishes you to take the baggage upstairs.

JOSEPH. Yes, sir. I was going to. (*He begins to pick up the baggage.* MARTHE *has turned sharply and is staring at* TECK. *Then she rises, watches* JOSEPH *pick up the baggage, turns again to look at* TECK.)

TECK. As I was saying. It is perhaps best that we had this talk.

MARTHE (*she stops, waits for* JOSEPH *to move off. He exits, carrying the valises*). Why did you do that? Why did you tell Joseph that Fanny wanted him to take the baggage upstairs?

TECK. Obviously it is more comfortable to look at baggage behind closed doors.

MARTHE (*very sharply*). What kind of silliness is this now? Leave these people alone — (*As he starts to exit.*) I won't let you —

TECK. What? (*As he moves again, she comes after him.*)

MARTHE. I said I won't let you. You are not —

TECK How many times have you seen me angry? (MARTHE *looks up, startled.*) You will not wish to see another. Run along now and have lunch with something you call Sally Tyne. But do not make plans with David. You will not be able to carry them out. You will go with me when I am ready to go. You understand. (*He exits during his speech. The last words come as he goes through the door, and the curtain falls.*)

WHILE READING ACT I

1. How does the set suggest the type of family to which we will soon be introduced?

2. Notice the slow and careful building up of details in preparation for the entrance of the chief characters. How does the author achieve a mood of nervous expectancy in the household and eventually in the audience?

3. The characters of Fanny, Anise, and Joseph, and their relationship toward one another are quickly established through early dialogue and action. Point out characteristic lines and stage business which are particularly revealing of the character of the two women — mistress and maid. Does their conversation seem natural, convincing? Do patterns of speech help to establish character — in Anise, for example?

4. The antecedent action and the present situation are quickly and entertainingly revealed in the first few minutes of the act. What do we learn about each of the following before their appearance on the stage: The Count and his wife; Sara; Kurt?

5. You will find many small details which foreshadow or hint the conflicts soon to come. One example is the stage direction, on Teck's first entrance: *She* [Marthe] *stops quickly*. Can you point out others?

6. The stage is left empty before the arrival of Kurt and his family. Why is this an effective method of preparing for their entrance? Why is it better than having had them met at the station and brought home?

7. How is the set again used, while the Müllers are alone on the stage, to establish antecedent action? The author describes Sara as looking "clean and dowdy." What does costuming tell us, at a glance, about Sara? Notice how skillfully the author uses set, costumes, dialogue, and stage business to build up a strong and dramatic situation. That is one reason for the critics' use of the term "well-made" to describe this play.

8. Many little details of stage business are particularly revealing in this scene. One example is the systematic way in which the children dispose of their valises and packages. What does this suggest about the life they have led? The first words spoken by any of the visitors are Babette's, "*Is it allowed?*" What is the significance of this question? Why is it particularly moving?

9. Do you feel yourself a participant in the excitement of this homecoming? How does the author achieve this? The meeting of mother and daughter is one of the most moving scenes in contemporary drama.

10. The two sons have been taught that "it is neither right nor natural to shoot at people." Recall this bit of dialogue when you have reached the play's end.

11. What hints are dropped, in dialogue and action, of the life the Müllers had been leading? Bodo's remark, "We were in hiding there once," is one example.

12. The individual characters of the three children are developed by means of a number of small acts. Babette, for example, is always caring for her mother's appearance. What do the others do? Bodo is an amusingly and touchingly precocious child — made mature beyond his years by the experiences he has had. (Compare him with the little son of Lady Macduff in *Macbeth*). Fanny tells Bodo they are "rather alike." In what ways?

13. There is much foreshadowing in the latter part of this act. An example is Teck's interest in Kurt's accent, and his insistence that they had met before;

another is his observation of Kurt's broken hand. Conflict is dramatically established in the verbal fencing of the two contrasting refugees, Kurt and Teck, and in Teck's removal of Kurt's baggage.

14. Contrast the curtain line with the opening scene of the act. Has the act moved far? What has it accomplished?

ACT II

SCENE: *The same as Act I, about ten days later. During the act it will begin to grow dark; but the evening is warm and the terrace doors are open.*

AT RISE: SARA *is sitting on the couch, crocheting.* FANNY *and* TECK *are sitting at a small table playing cribbage.* BODO *is sitting near them, at a large table, working on a heating pad. The cord is torn from the bag, the bag is ripped open.* ANISE *sits next to him, anxiously watching him. Outside on the terrace,* JOSHUA *is going through baseball motions, coached by* JOSEPH. *From time to time they move out of sight, reappear, move off again.*

FANNY (*playing a card*). One.

BODO (*after a minute, to* TECK). The arrangement of this heating pad grows more complex.

TECK (*smiles, moves on the cribbage board*). And the more wires you remove, the more complex it will grow.

BODO (*points to bag*). Man has learned to make man comfortable. Yet all cannot have the comforts. (*To* ANISE.) How much did this cost you?

ANISE. It cost me ten dollars. And you have made a ruin of it.

BODO. That is not yet completely true. (*To* FANNY.) Did I not install for you a twenty-five-cent button-push for your radio?

TECK (*playing a card*). Two and two. (*Moves pegs on the cribbage board.*)

FANNY. Yes, you're quite an installer.

BODO (*to* TECK). As I was wishing to tell you, Count Brancovis, comfort and plenty exist. Yet all cannot have them. Why?

TECK. I do not know. It has worried many men. Why?

ANISE (*to* BODO). Yes, why?

BODO (*takes a deep breath, raises his finger as if about to lecture*). Why? (*Considers a moment, then deflates himself.*) I am not as yet sure.

ANISE. I thought not.

FANNY (*turns to look at* JOSHUA *and* JOSEPH *on the terrace*). Would you mind doing that dancing some place else?

JOSEPH (*looking in*). Yes'm. That ain't dancing. I'm teaching Josh baseball.

FANNY. Then maybe he'd teach you how to clean silver.

JOSEPH. I'm a good silver cleaner, Miss Fanny.

FANNY. But you're getting out of practice.

JOSEPH (*after a moment's thought*). Yes'm. I see what you mean. (*He exits.*)

FANNY (*playing a card*). Three.

JOSHUA. It is my fault. I'm crazy about baseball.

BODO. Baseball players are among the most exploited people in this country. I read about it.

FANNY. You never should have learned to read.

BODO. Their exploited condition is foundationed on the fact that—

JOSHUA (*bored*). All right, all right. I still like baseball.

SARA. Founded, Bodo, not foundationed.

JOSHUA. He does it always. He likes long words. In all languages.

TECK. How many languages do you children speak?

BODO. Oh, we do not really know any very well, except German and English. We speak bad French and—

SARA. And bad Danish and bad Czech.

TECK. You seem to have stayed close to the borders of Germany. Did Herr Müller have hopes, as so many did, that National Socialism would be overthrown on every tomorrow?

SARA. We have not given up that hope. Have you, Count de Brancovis?

TECK. I never had it.

JOSHUA (*pleasantly*). Then it must be most difficult for you to sleep.

TECK. I beg your pardon?

SARA. Schweig doch, Joshua!

FANNY (*to* TECK). Sara told Joshua to shut up. (*Playing a card.*) Twelve.

TECK. I have offended you, Mrs. Müller. I am most sorry.

SARA (*pleasantly*). No, sir, you haven't offended me. I just don't like polite political conversations any more.

TECK (*nods*). All of us, in Europe, had too many of them.

SARA. Yes. Too much talk. By this time all of us must know where we are and what we have to do. It's an indulgence to sit in a room and discuss your beliefs as if they were a juicy piece of gossip.

FANNY. You know, Sara, I find it very pleasant that Kurt, considering his history, doesn't make platform speeches. He hasn't tried to convince anybody of anything.

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SARA (*smiles*). Why should he, Mamma? You are quite old enough to have your own convictions — or Papa's.

FANNY (*turns to look at her*). I am proud to have Papa's convictions.

SARA. Of course. But it might be well to have a few new ones, now and then.

FANNY (*peers over at her*). Are you criticizing me?

SARA (*smiles*). Certainly not.

BABETTE (*comes running in from the right entrance door. She has on an apron and she is carrying a plate. She goes to* FANNY). Eat it while it's hot, Grandma.

[FANNY *peers down, takes the fork, begins to eat.* ANISE *and* BODO *both rise, move to* FANNY, *inspect the plate.*]

FANNY (*to them*). Go away.

ANISE. It is a potato pancake.

FANNY. And the first good one I've eaten in many, many years. I love a good potato pancake.

BODO. I likewise.

BABETTE. I am making a great number for dinner. Move away, Bodo.

TECK (*playing a card*). Fifteen and two.

ANISE (*who has followed* BODO *back to the table, leans over to look at the heating pad*). You've ruined it! I shall sue you.

JOSHUA. I told you not to let him touch it.

SARA (*laughs*). I remember you were always saying that, Anise — that you were going to sue. That's very French. I was sick once in Paris, and Babbie stayed up for a whole night and day and finished a dress I was making for a woman in the Rue Jacob. I told her to tell the woman she'd done it — I thought perhaps the woman would give her a candy or something — and anyway, I was very proud of her work. But no. The woman admitted the dress was well done, but said she was going to sue because I hadn't done it myself. Fancy that.

FANNY (*slowly*). You sewed for a living?

SARA. Not a very good one. But Babbie and I made a little something now and then. Didn't we, darling?

FANNY (*sharply*). Really, Sara, were these — these things necessary? Why couldn't you have written?

SARA (*laughs*). You've asked me that a hundred times in the last week.

JOSHUA (*gently*). I think it is only that Grandma feels sorry for us. Grandma has not seen much of the world.

FANNY. Don't you start giving me lectures, Joshua. I'm fond of you.

And of you, Babbie. (*To* ANISE.) Are there two desserts for dinner? And are they sweet?

ANISE. Yes.

FANNY (*turns to* BODO). I wish I were fond of you.

BODO. You are. (*Happily.*) You are very fond of me.

FANNY (*playing a card*). Twenty-five.

BABETTE. This is for you, Grandma. I'm making a bed jacket. It *is* nice lace. Papa brought it to me from Spain and I mean for you to have it.

FANNY (*kisses* BABETTE). Thank you, darling. A sequence and three. A pair and five. (*To* TECK, *as they finish the cribbage game.*) There. That's two dollars off. I owe you eight-fifty.

TECK. Let us carry it until tomorrow. You shall give it to me as a going-away token.

FANNY (*too pleased*). You're going away?

TECK (*laughs*). Ah, Madame Fanny. Do not sound *that* happy.

FANNY. Did I? That's rude of me. When are you going?

TECK. In a few days, I think. (*Turns to look at* SARA.) We're too many refugees, eh, Mrs. Müller?

SARA (*pleasantly*). Perhaps.

TECK. Will you be leaving, also?

SARA. I beg your pardon?

TECK. I thought perhaps you, too, would be moving on. Herr Müller does not give me the feeling of a man who settles down. Men who have done his work seldom leave it. Not for a quiet country house.

[*All three children look up.*]

SARA (*very quietly*). What work do you think my husband has done, Count de Brancovis?

TECK. Engineering?

SARA (*slowly*). Yes. Engineering.

FANNY (*very deliberately to* TECK). I don't know what you're saying. They shall certainly not be leaving — ever. Is that understood, Sara?

SARA. Well, Mamma —

FANNY. There are no wells about it. You've come home to see me die and you will wait until I'm ready.

SARA (*laughs*). Really, Mamma, that isn't the reason I came home.

FANNY. It's a good enough reason. I shall die a fine death. I intend to be a great deal of trouble to everybody.

ANISE. I daresay.

FANNY. I shall take to my bed early and stay for years. In great pain.

ANISE. I am sure of it. You will duplicate the disgrace of the birth of Miss Sara.

SARA (*laughs*). Was I born in disgrace?

ANISE. It was not your fault. But it was disgusting. Three weeks before you were to come — all was excellent, of course, in so healthy a woman as Madame Fanny — a great dinner was given here and, most unexpectedly, attended by a beautiful lady from England.

FANNY. Do be still. You are dull and fanciful —

ANISE. Mr. Joshua made the great error of waltzing the beauty for two dances, Madame Fanny being unfitted for the waltz and under no circumstances being the most graceful of dancers.

FANNY (*her voice rising*). Are you crazy? I danced magnificently.

ANISE. It is well you thought so. A minute did not elapse between the second of the waltzes and a scream from Miss Fanny. She was in labor. Two hundred people, and if we had left her alone, she would have remained in the ballroom —

FANNY. How you invent! How you invent!

ANISE. Do not call to me that I am a liar. For three weeks you are in the utmost agony —

FANNY. And so I was. I remember it to this day —

ANISE (*to* SARA, *angrily*). Not a pain. Not a single pain. She would lie up there in state, stealing candy from herself. Then, when your Papa would rest himself for a minute at the dinner or with a book, a scream would dismantle the house — it was revolting. (*Spitefully to* FANNY.) And now the years have passed I may disclose to you that Mr. Joshua knew you were going through the play-acting —

FANNY (*rises*). He did not. You are a malicious —

ANISE. Once he said to me, "Anise, it is well that I am in love. This is of a great strain and her great-uncle Freddie was not right in the head, neither."

FANNY (*screaming*). You will leave this house — You are a liar, a woman of —

SARA. Mamma, sit down.

ANISE. I will certainly leave this house. I will —

SARA (*sharply*). Both of you. Sit down. And be still.

ANISE. She has intimated that I lie —

FANNY (*screaming*). Intimated! Is that what I was doing — (ANISE *begins to leave the room.*) All right. I beg your pardon. I apologize.

[ANISE *turns.*]

SARA. Both of you. You are acting like children.

BODO. Really, Mamma. You insult us.

ANISE. I accept your apology. Seat yourself.

[*They both sit down.*]

FANNY (*after a silence*). I am unloved.

BABETTE. I love you, Grandma.

FANNY. Do you, Babbie?

JOSHUA. And I.

FANNY (*nods, very pleased. To* BODO). And you?

BODO. *I* loved you the primary second I saw you.

FANNY. You are a charlatan.

ANISE. As for me, I am fond of all the living creatures. It is true that the children cause me greater work, which in turn more greatly inconveniences the feet. However, I do not complain. I believe in children.

FANNY. Rather like believing in the weather, isn't it? (DAVID *and* KURT *come in from the terrace. Both are in work clothes, their sleeves rolled up.*) Where have you been?

DAVID. Oh, we've been helping Mr. Chabeuf spray the fruit trees.

ANISE. Mr. Chabeuf says that Herr Müller has the makings of a good farmer. From a Frenchman that is a large thing to say.

KURT (*who has looked around the room, looked at* TECK, *strolled over to* BODO). Mr. Chabeuf and I have an excellent time exchanging misinformation. My father was a farmer. I have a wide knowledge of farmers' misinformation.

FANNY. This is good farm land. Perhaps, in time—

DAVID (*laughs*). Mamma would give you the place, Kurt, if you guaranteed that your great-grandchildren would die here.

KURT (*smiles*). I would like to so guarantee.

TECK. A farmer. That is very interesting. Abandon your ideals, Herr Müller?

KURT. Ideals? (*Carefully.*) Sara, heisst das auf deutsch "Ideale"? [9]

SARA. Yes.

KURT. Is that what I have now? I do not like the word. It gives to me the picture of a small, pale man at a seaside resort. (*To* BODO.) What are you doing?

BODO. Preparing an elderly electric pad for Miss Anise. I am confused.

KURT (*wanders toward the piano*). So it seems.

BODO. Something has gone wrong with the principle on which I have been working. It is probably that I will ask your assistance.

KURT (*bows to him*). Thank you. Whenever you are ready. (*Begins to pick out notes with one hand.*)

[9] Sara, does that mean in German, "Ideale"? (Pronounced *E-day-ah'lay*)

FANNY. We shall have a little concert tomorrow evening. In honor of Babbie's birthday. (*To* KURT.) Kurt, you and I will play "The Clock Symphony." Then Joshua and I will play the duet we've learned, and Babbie will sing. And I shall finish with a Chopin nocturne.

DAVID (*laughs*). I thought you'd be the last on the program.

TECK. Where is Marthe?

FANNY. She'll be back soon. She went into town to do an errand for me. (*To* DAVID.) Did you buy presents for everybody?

DAVID. I did.

SARA (*smiles, to* BABETTE). We always did that here. If somebody had a birthday, we all got presents. Nice, isn't it?

DAVID (*to* ANISE). I shall buy you an electric pad. You will need it.

ANISE. Indeed.

FANNY. Did you buy me a good present?

DAVID. Pretty good. (*Pats* BABETTE's *head.*) The best present goes to Babbie; it's *her* birthday.

FANNY. Jewelry?

DAVID. No, not jewelry.

FANNY. Oh. Not jewelry.

DAVID. Why?

FANNY (*too casually*). I just asked you.

TECK (*gets up*). It was a natural mistake, David. You see, Mrs. Mellie Sewell told your mother that she had seen you and Marthe in Barstow's. And your mother said you were probably buying her a present, or one for Babbie.

DAVID (*too sharply*). Yes.

TECK (*laughs*). Yes, what?

DAVID (*slowly*). Just yes.

FANNY (*too hurriedly*). Mellie gets everything wrong. She's very anxious to meet Marthe because she used to know Francie Cabot, her aunt. Marthe's aunt, I mean, not Mellie's.

SARA (*too hurriedly*). She really came to inspect Kurt and me. But I saw her first. (*She looks anxiously at* DAVID, *who has turned his back on the room and is facing the terrace.*) You were lucky to be out, David.

DAVID. Oh, she calls every Saturday afternoon, to bring Mamma all the Washington gossip of the preceding week. She gets it all wrong, you understand, but that doesn't make any difference to Mamma or her. Mamma then augments it, wits it up, Papa used to say –

FANNY. Certainly I sharpen it a little. Mellie has no sense of humor.

DAVID. So Mamma sharpens it a little, and delivers it tomorrow afternoon to old lady Marcy down the road. Old lady Marcy hasn't heard a word in ten years, so she unsharpens it again and changes the names. By Wednesday afternoon —

TECK (*smiles*). By Wednesday afternoon it will not be you who were in Barstow's and it will be a large diamond pin with four sapphires delivered to Gaby Deslys.

DAVID (*turns, looks at him*). Exactly.

FANNY (*very nervously*). Francie Cabot, Marthe's aunt, you understand — (*To* KURT.) Did you ever know Paul von Seitz, a German?

KURT. I have heard of him.

FANNY (*speaking very rapidly*). Certainly. He was your ambassador to somewhere, I've forgotten. Well, Francie Cabot married him. I could have. Any American, not crippled, whose father had money — He was crazy about me. I was better looking than Francie. Well, years later when he was your ambassador — my father was, too, as you probably know — not your ambassador, of course, ours — but I am talking about von Seitz.

DAVID (*laughs to* KURT). You can understand how it goes. Old lady Marcy is not entirely to blame.

FANNY. Somebody asked me if I didn't regret not marrying him. I said, "Madame, je le regrette tous les jours et j'en suis heureuse chaque soir." (FANNY *turns to* DAVID.) That means I regret it every day and am happy about it every night. You understand what I meant by *night?* Styles in wit change so.

DAVID. I understood it, Mamma.

JOSHUA. We, too, Grandma.

BABETTE (*approvingly*). It was most witty.

BODO. I do not know that I understood. You will explain to me, Grandma?

SARA. Later.

FANNY (*turns to look at* TECK). You remember the old Paul von Seitz?

TECK (*nods*). He was stationed in Paris when I first was there.

FANNY. Of course. I always forget you were a diplomat.

TECK. It is just as well.

FANNY. There's something insane about a Rumanian diplomat. Pure insane. I knew another one, once. He wanted to marry me, too.

SARA (*laughs*). All of Europe.

FANNY. Not all. Some. Naturally. I was rich, I was witty, my family was of the best. I was handsome, unaffected —

DAVID. And noble and virtuous and kind and elegant and fashionable and simple—it's hard to remember everything you were. I've often thought it must have been boring for Papa to have owned such perfection.

FANNY (*shrieks*). What! Your father bored with me! Not for a second of our life—

DAVID (*laughs*). Oh God, when will I learn?

BODO. Do not shriek, Grandma. It is an unpleasant sound for the ear.

FANNY. Where was I? Oh, yes. What I started out to say was—(*She turns, speaks carefully to* TECK.) Mellie Sewell told me, when you left the room, that she had heard from Louis Chandler's child's governess that you had won quite a bit of money in a poker game with Sam Chandler and some Germans at the Embassy. (KURT, *who has been playing the piano, stops playing very abruptly.* TECK *turns to look at him.*) That's how I thought of von Seitz. His nephew Philip was in on the game.

DAVID (*looks at* TECK). It must have been a big game. Sam Chandler plays in big games.

TECK. Not big enough.

DAVID. Have you known Sam long?

TECK. For years. Every embassy in Europe knew him.

DAVID (*sharply*). Sam and Nazis must make an unpleasant poker game

[KURT *begins to play a new melody.*]

TECK (*who has not looked away from* KURT). I do not play poker to be amused.

DAVID (*irritably*). What's Sam selling now?

TECK. Bootleg munitions. He always has.

DAVID. You don't mind?

TECK. Mind? I have not thought about it.

FANNY. Well, you ought to think about it. Sam Chandler has always been a scoundrel. All the Chandlers are. They're cousins of mine. Mamma used to say they never should have learned to walk on two feet. They would have been more comfortable on four.

TECK. Do you know the young von Seitz, Herr Müller? He was your military attaché in Spain.

KURT. He was the German government attaché in Spain. I know his name, of course. He is a famous artillery expert. But the side on which I fought was not where he was stationed, Count de Brancovis.

[BABETTE *and* JOSHUA *begin to hum the song* KURT *is playing.* SARA *begins to hum.*]

ANISE. It is time for the bath and the change of clothes. I will give you five more minutes —

FANNY. What is the song?

TECK. It was a German soldier's song. They sang it as they straggled back in '18. I remember hearing it in Berlin. Were you there then, Herr Müller?

KURT (*the playing and the humming continue*). I was not in Berlin.

TECK. But you were in the war, of course?

KURT. Yes, I was *in* the war.

FANNY. You didn't think then you'd live to see another war.

KURT. Many of us were afraid we would.

FANNY. What are the words?

SARA. The Germans in Spain, in Kurt's brigade, wrote new words for the song.

KURT. This was what you heard in Berlin, in 1918. (*Begins to sing.*)

"Wir zieh'n Heim, wir zieh'n Heim,
Mancher kommt nicht mit,
Mancher ging verschütt,
Aber Freunde sind wir stets."

(*In English.*)

"We come home. We come home.
Some of us are gone, and some of us are lost, but we are friends:
Our blood is on the earth together.
Some day. Some day we shall meet again.
Farewell."

(*Stops singing.*) At a quarter before six on the morning of November 7th, 1936, eighteen years later, five hundred Germans walked through the Madrid streets on their way to defend the Manzanares River. We felt good that morning. You know how it is to be good when it is needed to be good? So we had need of new words to say that. I translate with awkwardness, you understand. (*Begins to sing in English.*)

"And so we have met again.
The blood did not have time to dry.
We lived to stand and fight again.
This time we fight for people.
This time the scoundrels will keep their hands away.
Those who sell the blood of other men, this time,
They keep their hands away.
For us to stand.

For us to fight.
This time no farewell, no farewell."

(*Music dies out. There is silence for a minute.*) We did not win. (*Looks up gently.*) It would have been a different world if we had.

SARA. Papa said so years ago. Do you remember, Mamma? "For every man who lives without freedom, the rest of us must face the guilt."

FANNY. Yes. "We are liable in the conscience-balance for the tailor in Lodz, the black man in our South, the peasant in—" (*Turns to* TECK. *Unpleasantly.*) Your country, I think.

ANISE (*rises*). Come. Baths for everybody. (*To* BODO.) Gather the wires. You have wrecked my cure.

BODO. If you would allow me a few minutes more—

ANISE. Come along. I have been duped for long enough. Come, Joshua, Babette. Baths.

JOSHUA (*starts out after* ANISE. BABETTE *begins to gather up her sewing*). My tub is a thing of glory. But I do not like it so prepared for me and so announced by Miss Anise. (*He exits.*)

BODO (*to* ANISE). You are angry about this. I do not blame you with my heart or my head. I admit I have failed. But Papa will repair it. Anise. Will you not, Papa? In a few minutes—

TECK (*to* BODO). Your father is an expert electrician?

BODO. Oh, yes, sir.

TECK. And as good with radio—

[BODO *begins to nod.*]

KURT (*sharply*). Count de Brancovis. Make your questions to me, please. Not to my children.

[*The others look up, surprised.*]

TECK (*pleasantly*). Very well, Herr Müller.

ANISE (*as she exits with* BODO). Nobody can fix it. You have made a pudding of it.

BODO (*as he follows her*). Do not worry. In five minutes tonight, you will have a pad far better—(*As* BODO *reaches the door he bumps into* MARTHE *who is carrying large dress boxes.*) Oh. Your pardon. Oh, hello. (*He disappears.*)

MARTHE (*gaily*). Hello. (*To* FANNY.) I waited for them. I was afraid they wouldn't deliver this late in the day. (*To* SARA.) Come on, Sara. I can't wait to see them.

SARA. What?

MARTHE. Dresses. From Fanny. A tan linen, and a dark green with wonderful buttons, a white net for Babbie, and a suit for you, and play

dresses for Babbie, and a dinner dress in gray to wear for Babbie's birthday — gray should be good for you, Sara — all from Savitt's. We sneaked the measurements, Anise and I —

SARA (*she goes toward* FANNY). How nice of you, Mamma. How very kind of you. And of you, Marthe, to take so much trouble — (*She leans down, kisses* FANNY.) You're a sweet woman, Mamma.

DAVID. That's the first time Mamma's ever heard that word. (*He takes the boxes from* MARTHE, *puts them near the staircase.* MARTHE *smiles at him, touches his hand, as* TECK *watches them.*)

FANNY (*giggles*). I have a bottom sweetness, if you understand what I mean.

DAVID. I have been too close to the bottom to see it.

FANNY. That should be witty. I don't know why it isn't.

[BABETTE *goes over to stare at the boxes.*]

SARA. From Savitt's. Extravagant of you. They had such lovely clothes. I remember my coming-out dress — (*Goes to* KURT.) Do you remember the black suit with the braid, and the Milan hat? Not the *first* day we met, but the picnic day? (*He smiles up at her.*) Well, they were from Savitt's. That was over twenty years ago — I've known you a long time. Me, in an evening dress. Now you'll have to take me into Washington. I want to show off. Next week, and we'll dance, maybe — (*Sees that he is not looking at her.*) What's the matter, darling? (*No answer. Slowly he turns to look at her.*) What's the matter, Kurt? (*Takes his arms, very unhappily.*) What have I done? It isn't that dresses have ever mattered to me, it's just that —

KURT. Of course, they have mattered to you. As they should. I do not think of the dresses. (*Draws her to him.*) How many years have I loved that face?

SARA (*her face very happy*). So?

KURT. So. (*He leans down, kisses her, as if it were important.*)

SARA (*pleased, unembarrassed*). There are other people here.

MARTHE (*slowly*). And good for us to see.

TECK. Nostalgia?

MARTHE. No. Nostalgia is for something you have known. (FANNY *coughs.*)

BABETTE (*comes to* FANNY). Grandma, is it allowed to look at my dresses?

FANNY. Of course, child. Run along.

BABETTE (*picks up the boxes, goes toward the hall entrance, stops near*

FANNY). I love dresses, I have a great fondness for materials and colors. Thank you, Grandma. (*She runs out of the room.*)

[JOSEPH *appears in the doorway.*]

JOSEPH. There is a long-distance operator with a long-distance call for Mr. Müller. She wants to talk with him on the long-distance phone.

KURT. Oh — Excuse me, please —

[KURT *rises quickly.* SARA *turns sharply to look at him.* TECK *looks up.* KURT *goes quickly out.* TECK *watches him go.* SARA *stands staring after him.*]

MARTHE (*laughs*). I feel the same way as Babbie. Come on, Sara. Let's try them on.

[SARA *does not turn.*]

TECK. You also have a new dress?

MARTHE (*looks at him*). Yes. Fanny was kind to me, too.

TECK. You are a very generous woman, Madame Fanny. Did you also give her a sapphire bracelet from Barstow's?

FANNY. I beg your —

DAVID (*slowly*). No. I gave Marthe the bracelet. And I understand that it is not any business of yours.

[FANNY *rises.* SARA *turns.*]

FANNY. Really, David —

DAVID. Be still, Mamma.

TECK (*after a second*). Did you tell him that, Marthe?

MARTHE. Yes.

TECK (*looks up at her*). I shall not forgive you for that. (*Looks at* DAVID.) It is a statement which no man likes to hear from another man. You understand that? (*Playfully.*) That is the type of thing about which we used to play at duels in Europe.

DAVID (*comes toward him*). We are not so musical comedy here. And you are not in Europe.

TECK. Even if I were, I would not suggest any such action. I would have reasons for not wishing it.

DAVID. It would be well for you not to suggest *any* action. And the reason for *that* is you might get hurt.

TECK (*slowly*). That would not be my reason. (*To* MARTHE.) Your affair has gone far enough —

MARTHE (*sharply*). It is not an affair —

TECK. I do not care what it is. The time has come to leave here. Go upstairs and pack your things. (*She does not move.* DAVID *turns toward her.*) Go on, Marthe.

MARTHE (*to* DAVID). I am not going with him. I told you that.

DAVID. I don't want you to go with him.

FANNY (*carefully*). Really, David, aren't you interfering in all this a good deal—

DAVID (*carefully*). Yes, Mamma. I am.

TECK (*to* MARTHE). When you are speaking to me, please say what you have to say to me.

MARTHE (*comes to him*). You are trying to frighten me. But you are not going to frighten me any more. I will say it to you: I am not going with you. I am never going with you again.

TECK (*softly*). If you do not fully mean what you say, or if you might change your mind, you are talking unwisely, Marthe.

MARTHE. I know that.

TECK. Shall we talk about it alone?

MARTHE. You can't make me go, can you, Teck?

TECK. No, I can't make you.

MARTHE. Then there's no sense talking about it.

TECK. Are you in love with him?

MARTHE. Yes.

FANNY (*sharply*). Marthe! What is all this?

MARTHE (*sharply*). I'll tell *you* about it in a minute.

DAVID. You don't have to explain anything to anybody.

TECK (*ignores him*). Is he in love with you?

MARTHE. I don't think so. You won't believe it, because you can't believe anything that hasn't got tricks to it, but David hasn't much to do with this. I told you I would leave some day, and I remember where I said it—(*Slowly.*)—and why I said it.

TECK. I also remember. But I did not believe you. I have not had much to offer you these last years. But if now we had some money and could go back—

MARTHE. No. I don't like you, Teck. I never have.

TECK. And I have always known it.

FANNY (*stiffly*). I think your lack of affections should be discussed with more privacy. Perhaps—

DAVID. Mamma—

MARTHE. There is nothing to discuss. Strange. I've talked to myself about this scene for almost fifteen years. I knew a lot of things to say to you and I used to lie awake at night or walk along the street and say them. Now I don't want to. I guess you only want to talk that way when you're not sure what you can do. When you're sure, then what's the sense of saying it? "This is why and this is why and this—" (*Very happily.*) But when you know you can do it,

you don't have to say anything; you can just go. And I'm going. There is nothing you can do. I would like you to believe that now.

TECK. Very well, Marthe. I think I made a mistake. I should not have brought you here. I believe you now.

MARTHE (*after a pause, she looks at* DAVID). I'll move into Washington, and —

DAVID. Yes. Later. But I'd like you to stay here for a while, with us, if you wouldn't mind.

SARA. It would be better for you, Marthe —

FANNY. It's very interesting that I am not being consulted about this. (*To* MARTHE.) I have nothing against you, Marthe. I am sorry for you, but I don't think —

MARTHE. Thank you, Sara, David. But I'd rather move in now. (*Turns, comes toward* FANNY.) But perhaps I have something against you. Do you remember my wedding?

FANNY. Yes.

MARTHE. Do you remember how pleased Mamma was with herself? Brilliant Mamma, handsome Mamma — everybody thought so, didn't they? A seventeen-year-old daughter, marrying a pretty good title, about to secure herself in a world that Mamma liked — she didn't ask me what I liked. And the one time I tried to tell her, she frightened me — (*Looks up.*) Maybe I've always been frightened. All my life.

TECK. Of course.

MARTHE (*to* FANNY, *as if she had not heard* TECK). I remember Mamma's face at the wedding — it was *her* wedding, really, not mine.

FANNY (*sharply*). You are very hard on your mother.

MARTHE. Nineteen hundred and twenty-five. No, I'm not hard on her. I only tell the truth. She wanted a life for me, I suppose. It just wasn't the life I wanted for myself. (*Sharply.*) And that's what you have tried to do. With your children. In another way. Only Sara got away. And that made you angry — until so many years went by that you forgot.

FANNY. I don't usually mind people saying anything they think, but I find that —

MARTHE. I don't care what you mind or don't mind. I'm in love with your son —

FANNY (*very sharply*). That unfortunate —

MARTHE. And I'm sick of watching you try to make him into his father. I don't think you even know you do it any more and I don't think

he knows it any more, either. And that's what's most dangerous about it.

FANNY (*very angrily*). I don't know what you are talking about.

DAVID. I think you do. (*Smiles.*) You shouldn't mind hearing the truth — and neither should I.

FANNY (*worried, sharply*). David! What does all this nonsense mean? I —

MARTHE (*to* FANNY). Look. That pretty world Mamma got me into was a tough world, see? I'm used to trouble. So don't try to interfere with me, because I won't let you. (*She goes to* DAVID.) Let's just have a good time. (*He leans down, takes both her hands, kisses them. Then slowly, she turns away, starts to exit. To* TECK.) You will also be going today?

TECK. Yes.

MARTHE. Then let us make sure we go in different directions, and do not meet again. Good-by, Teck.

TECK. Good-by, Marthe. You will not believe me, but I tried my best, and I am now most sorry to lose you.

MARTHE. Yes, I believe you. (*She moves out. There is silence for a minute.*)

FANNY. Well, a great many things have been said in the last few minutes.

DAVID (*crosses to bell cord. To* TECK). I will get Joseph to pack for you.

TECK. Thank you. Do not bother. I will ring for him when I am ready. (KURT *comes in from the study door.* SARA *turns, stares at him, waits. He does not look at her.*) It will not take me very long .(*He starts for the door, looking at* KURT.)

SARA. What is it, Kurt?

KURT. It is nothing of importance, darling — (*He looks quickly at* TECK, *who is moving very slowly.*)

SARA. Don't tell me it's nothing. I know the way you look when —

KURT (*sharply*). I said it was of no importance. I must get to California for a few weeks. That is all.

SARA. I —

TECK (*turns*). It is in the afternoon newspaper, Herr Müller. (*Points to paper on table.*) I was waiting to find the proper moment to call it to your attention. (*He moves toward the table, as they all turn to watch him. He picks up the paper, turns it over, begins to read.*) "Zurich, Switzerland: The Zurich papers today reprinted a despatch from the *Berliner Tageblatt* on the capture of Colonel Max

Freidank. Freidank is said — (SARA *begins to move toward him.*) — to be the chief of the anti-Nazi underground movement. Colonel Freidank has long been an almost legendary figure. The son of the famous General Freidank, he was a World War officer and a distinguished physicist before the advent of Hitler." That is all.

SARA. Max —

KURT. Be still, Sara.

TECK. They told me of it at the Embassy last night. They also told me that with him they had taken a man who called himself Ebber, and a man who called himself Triste. They could not find a man called Gotter. (*He starts again toward the door.*) I shall be a lonely man without Marthe. I am also a very poor one. I should like to have ten thousand dollars before I go.

DAVID (*carefully*). You will make no loans in this house.

TECK. I was not speaking of a loan.

FANNY (*carefully*). God made you not only a scoundrel but a fool. That is a dangerous combination.

DAVID (*suddenly leaps toward* TECK). Damn you, you —

KURT (*suddenly pounds on the top of the piano, as* DAVID *almost reaches* TECK). Leave him alone. (*Moves quickly to stop* DAVID.) Leave him alone! *David! Leave him alone!*

DAVID (*angrily to* KURT). Keep out of it. (*Starts toward* TECK *again.*) I'm beginning to see what Marthe meant. Blackmailing with your wife — You —

KURT (*very sharply*). He is not speaking of his wife. Or you. He means me. (*Looks at* TECK.) Is that correct?

[SARA *moves toward* KURT. DAVID *draws back, bewildered.*]

TECK. Good. It was necessary for me to hear you say it. You understand that?

KURT. I understand it.

SARA (*frightened, softly*). Kurt —

DAVID. What is all this about? What the hell are you talking about?

TECK (*sharply for the first time*). Be still. (*To* KURT.) At your convenience. Your hands are shaking, Herr Müller.

KURT (*quietly*). My hands were broken: they are bad when I have fear.

TECK. I am sorry. I can understand that. It is not pleasant. (*Motions toward* FANNY *and* DAVID.) Perhaps you would like a little time to — I will go and pack, and be ready to leave. We will all find that more comfortable, I think. You should get yourself a smaller gun, Herr Müller. That pistol you have been carrying is big and awkward.

KURT. You saw the pistol when you examined our bags?

TECK. You knew that?

KURT. Oh, yes. I have the careful eye, through many years of needing it. And then you have not the careful eye. The pistol was lying to the left of a paper package and when you leave, it is to the right of the package.

SARA. Kurt! Do you mean that—

KURT (*sharply*). Please, darling, do not do that.

TECK. It is a German Army Luger?

KURT. Yes.

TECK. Keep it in your pocket, Herr Müller. You will have no need to use it. And, in any case, I am not afraid of it. You understand that?

KURT (*slowly*). I understand that you are not a man of fears. That is strange to me, because I am a man who has so many fears.

TECK (*laughs, as he exits*). Are you? That is most interesting. (*He exits.*)

DAVID (*softly*). What is this about, Kurt?

KURT. He knows who I am and what I do and what I carry with me.

SARA (*carefully*). What about Max?

KURT. The telephone was from Mexico. Ilse received a cable. Early on the morning of Monday, they caught Ebber and Triste. An hour after they took Max in Berlin. (*She looks up at him, begins to shake her head. He presses her arm.*) Yes. It is hard.

FANNY (*softly*). You said he knew who you were and what you carried with you. I don't understand.

KURT. I am going to tell you: I am an outlaw. I work with many others in an illegal organization. I have so worked for seven years. I am on what is called a desired list. But I did not know I was worth ten thousand dollars. My price has risen.

DAVID (*slowly*). And what do you carry with you?

KURT. Twenty-three thousand dollars. It has been gathered from the pennies and the nickels of the poor who do not like fascism, and who believe in the work we do. I came here to bring Sara home and to get the money. I had hopes to rest here for a while, and then—

SARA (*slowly*). And I had hopes someone else would take it back and you would stay with us—(*Shakes her head, then.*) Max is not dead?

KURT. No. The left side of his face is dead. (*Softly.*) It was a good face.

SARA (*to* FANNY *and* DAVID, *as if she were going to cry*). It was a very good face. He and Kurt—in the old days—(*To* KURT.) After so many years. If Max got caught, then nobody's got a chance. Nobody. (*She suddenly sits down.*)

DAVID (*points upstairs*). He wants to sell what he knows to you? Is that right?

KURT. Yes.

FANNY. Wasn't it careless of you to leave twenty-three thousand dollars lying around to be seen?

KURT. No, it was not careless of me. It is in a locked brief case. I have thus carried money for many years. There seemed no safer place than Sara's home. It was careless of you to have in your house a man who opens baggage and blackmails.

DAVID (*sharply*). Yes. It was very careless.

FANNY. But you said you knew he'd seen it—

KURT. Yes. I knew it the first day we were here. What was I to do about it? He is not a man who steals. This is a safer method. I knew that it would come some other way. I have been waiting to see what the way would be. That is all I could do.

DAVID (*to* FANNY). What's the difference? It's been done. (*To* KURT.) If he wants to sell to you, he must have another buyer. Who?

KURT. The Embassy. Von Seitz, I think.

DAVID. You mean he has told von Seitz about you and—

KURT. No. I do not think he has told him anything. As yet. It would be foolish of him. He has probably only asked most guarded questions.

DAVID. But you're here. You're in this country. They can't do anything to you. They wouldn't be crazy enough to try it. Is your passport all right?

KURT. Not quite.

FANNY. Why not? Why isn't it?

KURT (*wearily, as if he were bored*). Because people like me are not given visas with such ease. And I was in a hurry to bring my wife and my children to safety. (*Sharply.*) Madame Fanny, you must come to understand it is no longer the world you once knew.

DAVID. It doesn't matter. You're a political refugee. We don't turn back people like you. People who are in danger. You will give me your passport and tomorrow morning I'll see Barens. We'll tell him the truth—(*Points to the door.*) Tell de Brancovis to go to hell. There's not a damn thing he or anybody else can do.

SARA (*looks up at* KURT, *who is staring at her*). You don't understand, David.

DAVID. There's a great deal I don't understand. But there's nothing to worry about.

SARA. Not much to worry about as long as Kurt is in this house. But he's not going to—

KURT. The Count has made the guess that—

SARA. That you will go back to get Ebber and Triste and Max. Is that right, Kurt? Is that right?

KURT. Yes, darling, I will try. They were taken to Sonnenburg. Guards can be bribed—It has been done once before at Sonnenburg. We will try for it again. I must go back, Sara. I must start.

SARA. Of course, you must go back. I guess I was trying to think it wouldn't come. But—(*To* FANNY *and* DAVID.) Kurt's got to go back. He's got to go home. He's got to buy them out. He'll do it, too. You'll see. (*She stops, breathes.*) It's hard enough to get back. Very hard. But if they knew he was coming—They want Kurt bad. Almost as much as they wanted Max—And then there are hundreds of others, too—(*She gets up, comes to him. He holds her, puts his face in her hair. She stands holding him, trying to speak without crying. She puts her face down on his head.*) Don't be scared, darling. You'll get back. You'll see. You've done it before—you'll do it again. Don't be scared. You'll get Max out all right. (*Gasps.*) And then you'll do his work, won't you? That's good. That's fine. You'll do a good job, the way you've always done. (*She is crying very hard. To* FANNY.) Kurt doesn't feel well. He was wounded and he gets tired—(*To* KURT.) You don't feel well, do you? (*Slowly. She is crying too hard now to be heard clearly.*) Don't be scared, darling. You'll get home. Don't worry, you'll get home. Yes, you will.

[*The curtain falls.*]

WHILE READING ACT II

1. What atmosphere does the scene, at the rise of the curtain, create? The placid opening serves to make more tense the dramatic scene which follows.

2 How has the difficult life of the Müller children affected their characters? What signs do they show of early adjustment to their new lives? Compare this with the adjustment to American life of refugee children you have met. Compare the Müller children, product of the training of freedom-loving parents, with a typical Nazi child, like the boy in *Tomorrow the World.*

3. What is the dramatic purpose of the flare-up between Fanny and Anise?

4. Do you believe with Joshua Farrelly that "for every man who lives without freedom, the rest of us must face the guilt"? What examples can you give in our own times? Compare with John Donne's "for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee."

5. Teck is of course the villain of the play. Do you feel that the author has shown enough restraint in creating his character so that he seems convincing?

6. Kurt says, "You must come to understand it is no longer the world you once knew." Does this suggest a possible theme for this play?

7. Kurt admits to fear. How does this make him more heroic in stature? Teck's lack of fear merely accentuates Kurt's greatness. Why?

8. This scene mounts in force to a terrific climax in the deeply moving words of Sara which close the act. In this example of heroism and self-sacrifice lies the difference between freedom-loving people and the servile Tecks of the world.

ACT III

SCENE: *The same. A half hour later.*

AT RISE: FANNY *is sitting in a chair.* KURT *is at the piano, his head resting on one hand. He is playing softly with the other hand.* SARA *is sitting very quietly on the couch.* DAVID *is pacing on the terrace.*

FANNY (*to* DAVID). David, would you stop that pacing, please? (DAVID *comes in.*) And would you stop that one-hand piano playing? Either play, or get up.

[KURT *gets up, crosses to the couch, sits.* SARA *looks at him, gets up, crosses to the decanters, begins to make a drink.*]

SARA (*to* DAVID). A drink?

DAVID. What? Yes, please. (*To* KURT.) Do you intend to buy your friends out of jail?

KURT. I intend to try.

FANNY. It's all very strange to me. I thought things were so well run that bribery and —

KURT (*smiles*). What a magnificent work fascists have done in convincing the world that they are men from legends.

DAVID. They have done very well for themselves — unfortunately.

KURT. Yes. But not by themselves. Does it make us all uncomfortable to remember that they came in on the shoulders of the most powerful men in the world? Of course. And so we would prefer to believe they are men from the planets. They are not. Let me reassure you. They are smart, they are sick, and they are cruel. But given men who know what they fight for — (*Shrugs.*) I will console you. A year ago last month, at three o'clock in the morning, Freidank and I, with two elderly pistols, raided the home of the Gestapo chief in

Konstanz, got what we wanted, and the following morning Freidank was eating his breakfast three blocks away, and I was over the Swiss border.

FANNY (*slowly*). You are brave men.

KURT. *I* do not tell you the story to prove we are remarkable, but to prove they are *not.*

[SARA *brings him a drink. Gives one to* DAVID.]

SARA (*softly, touching* KURT's *shoulder*). Kurt loves Max.

KURT. Always since I came here I have a dream: that he will come into this room some day. How he would like it here, eh, Sara? He loves good food and wine, and you have books — (*Laughs happily.*) He is fifty-nine years of age. And when he was fifty-seven, he carried me on his back, seven miles across the border. I had been hurt — That takes a man, does it not?

FANNY (*to* KURT). You look like a sick man to me.

KURT. No. I'm only tired. I do not like to wait. It will go. It is the waiting that is always most bad for me.

DAVID (*points upstairs*). Damn him! He's doing it deliberately.

KURT. It is then the corruption begins. Once in Spain I waited for two days until the planes would exhaust themselves. I think then why must our side fight always with naked hands. The spirit and the hands. All is against us but ourselves.

SARA. You will not think that when the time comes. It will go.

KURT. Of a certainty.

FANNY. But does it have to go on being your hands?

KURT. For each man, his own hands. He has to sleep with them.

DAVID (*uncomfortably, as if he did not like to say it*). That's right. I guess it's the way all of us should feel. But — but you have a family. Isn't there somebody else who hasn't a wife and children —

KURT. Each could have his own excuse. Some love for the first time, some have bullet holes, some have fear of the camps, some are sick, many are getting older. (*Shrugs.*) Each could find a reason. And many find it. My children are not the only children in the world, even to me.

FANNY. That's noble of you, of course. But they are your children, nevertheless. And Sara, she —

SARA. Mamma —

KURT (*after a slight pause*). One means always in English to insult with that word noble?

FANNY. Of course not, I —

KURT. It is not noble. It is the way I must live. Good or bad, it is what I

am. (*Turns deliberately to look at* FANNY.) And what I am is not what you wanted for your daughter, twenty years ago or now.

FANNY. You are misunderstanding me.

KURT (*smiles*). For our girl, too, we want a safe and happy life. And it is thus I try to make it for her. We each have our way. I do not convert you to mine.

DAVID. You are very certain of your way.

KURT (*smiles*). I seem so to you? Good.

[JOSEPH *appears in the hall doorway. He is carrying valises and overcoats.*]

JOSEPH. What'll I do with these, Miss Fanny?

FANNY. They're too large for eating, aren't they? What were you thinking of doing with them?

JOSEPH. I mean, it's Fred's day off.

DAVID. All right. You drive him into town.

JOSEPH. Then who's going to serve at dinner?

FANNY (*impatiently*). Belle can do it alone tonight.

JOSEPH. No, she can't. Belle's upstairs packing with Miss Marthe. My, there's quite a lot of departing, ain't there?

FANNY (*very impatiently*). All right, then cook can bring in dinner.

JOSEPH. I wouldn't ask her to do that, if I were you. She's mighty mad: the sink pipe is leaking again. You just better wait for your dinner till I get back from Washington.

FANNY (*shouting*). We are not cripples and we were eating dinner in this house before you arrived to show us how to use the knife and fork. (JOSEPH *laughs.*) Go on. Put his things in the car. I'll ring for you when he's ready.

JOSEPH. You told me the next time you screamed to remind you to ask my pardon.

FANNY. You call that screaming?

JOSEPH. Yes'm.

FANNY. Very well. I ask your pardon. (*Waves him away.*) Go on!

JOSEPH. Yes'm. (*Exits.*)

[TECK *appears in the door. He is carrying his hat and the brief case we have seen in Act I.* SARA, *seeing the brief case, looks startled, looks quickly at* KURT. KURT *watches* TECK *as he comes toward him.* TECK *throws his hat on a chair, comes to the table at which* KURT *is sitting, puts the brief case on the table.* KURT *puts out his hand, puts it on the brief case, leaves it there.*]

TECK (*smiles at the gesture*). Nothing has been touched, Herr Müller. I brought it from your room, for your convenience.

FANNY (*angrily*). Why didn't you steal it? Since you do not seem to—

TECK. That would have been very foolish of me, Madame Fanny.

KURT. Very.

TECK. I hope I have not kept you waiting too long. I wanted to give you an opportunity to make any explanations—

DAVID (*angrily*). Does your price include listening to this tony conversation?

TECK (*turns to look at him*). My price will rise if I have to spend the next few minutes being interrupted by your temper. I will do my business with Herr Müller. And you will understand, I will take from you no interruptions, no exclamations, no lectures, no opinions of what I am or what I am doing.

KURT (*quietly*). You will not be interrupted.

TECK (*sits down at table with* KURT). I have been curious about you, Herr Müller. Even before you came here. Because Fanny and David either knew very little about you, which was strange, or wouldn't talk about you, which was just as strange. Have you ever had come to you one of those insistent half-memories of some person or some place?

KURT (*quietly, without looking up*). You had such a half-memory of me?

TECK. Not even a memory, but something. The curiosity of one European for another, perhaps.

KURT. A most sharp curiosity. You lost no time examining—(*pats the case*)—this. You are an expert with locks?

TECK. No, indeed. Only when I wish to be.

FANNY (*angrily, to* TECK). I would like you to be out of this house as quickly as—

TECK (*turns to her*). Madame Fanny, I have just asked Mr. David not to do that. I must now ask you. (*Leans forward to* KURT.) Herr Müller, I got one of the desired lists from von Seitz, without, of course, revealing anything to him. As you probably know, they are quite easy to get. I simply told him that we refugees move in small circles and I might come across somebody on it. If, however, I have to listen to any more of this from any of you, I shall go immediately to him.

KURT (*to* DAVID *and* FANNY). Please allow the Count to do this in his own way. It will be best.

TECK (*takes a sheet of paper from his pocket*). There are sixty-three names on this list. I read them carefully, I narrow the possibilities and under "G" I find Gotter. (*Begins to read.*) "Age, forty to

forty-five. About six feet. One hundred seventy pounds. Birthplace unknown to us. Original occupation unknown to us, although he seems to know Munich and Dresden. Schooling unknown to us. Family unknown to us. No known political connections. No known trade-union connections. Many descriptions, few of them in agreement and none of them of great reliability. Equally unreliable, though often asked for, were Paris, Copenhagen, Brussels police descriptions. Only points on which there is agreement: married to a foreign woman, either American or English; three children; has used name of Gotter, Thomas Bodmer, Karl Francis. Thought to have left Germany in 1933, and to have joined Max Freidank shortly after. Worked closely with Freidank, perhaps directly under his orders. Known to have crossed border in 1934 — February, May, June, October. Known to have again crossed border with Max Freidank in 1935 — August, twice in October, November, January — "

KURT (*smiles*). The report is unreliable. It would have been impossible for God to have crossed the border that often.

TECK (*looks up, laughs. Then looks back at list*). "In 1934, outlaw radio station announcing itself as Radio European, begins to be heard. Station was located in Düsseldorf: the house of a restaurant waiter was searched, and nothing was found. Radio heard during most of 1934 and 1935. In an attempt to locate it, two probable Communists killed in the tool house of a farm near Bonn. In three of the broadcasts, Gotter known to have crossed border immediately before and after. Radio again became active in early part of 1936. Active attempt made to locate Freidank. Gotter believed to have then appeared in Spain with Madrid Government army, in one of the German brigades, and to have been a brigade commander under previously used name of Bodmer. Known to have stayed in France the first months of 1938. Again crossed German border some time during week when Hitler's Hamburg radio speech interrupted and went off the air." (*Looks up.*) That was a daring deed, Herr Müller. It caused a great scandal. I remember. It amused me.

KURT. It was not done for that reason.

TECK. "Early in 1939, informer in Konstanz reported Gotter's entry, carrying money which had been exchanged in Paris and Brussels. Following day, home of Konstanz Gestapo chief raided for spy list by two men — " (KURT *turns to look at* FANNY *and* DAVID, *smiles.*) My God, Herr Müller, that job took two good men.

SARA (*angrily*). Even you admire them.

TECK. Even I. Now I conclude a week ago that you are Gotter, Karl Francis —

KURT. Please. Do not describe me to myself again.

TECK. And that you will be traveling home — (*Points to brief case.*) with this. But you seem in no hurry, and so I must wait. Last night when I hear that Freidank has been taken, I guess that you will now be leaving. Not for California. I will tell you free of charge, Herr Müller, that they have got no information from Freidank or the others.

KURT. Thank you. But I was sure they would not. I know all three most well. They will take what will be given them.

TECK (*looks down. Softly*). There is a deep sickness in the German character, Herr Müller. A pain love, a death love —

DAVID (*very angrily*). Oh, for God's sake spare us *your* moral judgments.

FANNY (*very sharply*). Yes. They are sickening. Get on!

KURT. Fanny and David are Americans and they do not understand our world — as yet. (*Turns to* DAVID *and* FANNY.) All fascists are not of one mind, one stripe. There are those who give the orders, those who carry out the orders, those who watch the orders being carried out. Then there are those who are half in, half hoping to come in. They are made to do the dishes and clean the boots. Frequently they come in high places and wish now only to survive. They came late: some because they did not jump in time, some because they were stupid, some because they were shocked at the crudity of the *German* evil, and preferred their own evils, and some because they were fastidious men. For those last, we may well some day have pity. They are lost men, their spoils are small, their day is gone. (*To* TECK.) Yes?

TECK (*slowly*). Yes. You have the understanding heart. It will get in your way some day.

KURT (*smiles*). I will watch it.

TECK. We are both men in trouble, Herr Müller. The world, ungratefully, seems to like your kind even less than it does mine. (*Leans forward.*) Now. Let us do business. You will not get back if von Seitz knows you are going.

KURT. You are wrong. Instead of crawling a hundred feet an hour in deep night, I will walk across the border with as little trouble as if I were a boy again on a summer walking trip. There are many men they would like to have. I would be allowed to walk directly

to them—until they had all the names and all the addresses. (*Laughs, points his finger at* TECK.) *Rumanians* would pick me up ahead of time. *Germans* would not.

TECK (*smiles*). Still the national pride?

KURT. Why not? For that which is good.

FANNY (*comes over, very angrily, to* TECK). I have not often in my life felt what I feel now. Whatever you are, and however you became it, the picture of a man selling the lives of other men—

TECK. Is very ugly, Madame Fanny. I do not do it without some shame, and therefore I must sink my shame in large money. (*Puts his hand on the brief case.*) The money is here. For ten thousand, you go back to save your friends, nobody will know that you go, and I will give you my good wishes. (*Slowly, deliberately,* KURT *begins to shake his head.* TECK *waits, then carefully.*) No?

KURT. This money is going home with me. It was not given me to save my life, and I shall not so use it. It is to save the lives and further the work of more than I. It is important to me to carry on that work and save the lives of three valuable men, and to do that with all possible speed. But—(*Sharply.*) Count de Brancovis, the first morning we arrived in this house, my children wanted their breakfast with great haste. That is because the evening before we had been able only to buy milk and buns for them. If I would not touch this money for them, I would not touch it for you. (*Very sharply.*) It goes back with me. The way it is. And if it does not get back, it is because I will not get back.

[*There is a long pause.* SARA *gets up, turns away.*]

TECK. I do not think you will get back. You are a brave one, Herr Müller, but you will not get back.

KURT (*as if he were very tired*). I will send you a postal card and tell you about my bravery.

DAVID (*coming toward* KURT). Is it true that if this swine talks, you and the others will be—

SARA (*very softly*). Caught and killed. Of course. If they're lucky enough to get killed quickly. (*Quietly, points to the table.*) You should have seen his hands in 1935.

FANNY (*violently, to* DAVID). We'll give him the money. For God's sake, let's give it to him and get him out of here.

DAVID (*to* SARA). Do you want Kurt to go back?

SARA. Yes. I do.

DAVID. All right. (*Goes to her, lifts her face.*) You're a good girl.

KURT. That is true. Brave and good, my Sara. She is everything. She is

handsome and gay and — (*Puts his hand over his eyes.* SARA *turns away.*)

DAVID (*after a second, comes to stand near* TECK). If we give you the money, what is to keep you from selling to von Seitz?

TECK. I do not like your thinking I would do that. But —

DAVID (*tensely*). Look here. I'm sick of what you'd like or wouldn't like. And I'm sick of your talk. We'll get this over with now, without any more fancy talk from you, or as far as I am concerned, you can get out of here without my money and sell to any buyer you can find. I can't take much more of you at any cost.

TECK (*smiles*). It is your anger which delays us. I was about to say that I understood your fear that I would go to von Seitz, and I would suggest that you give me a small amount of cash now and a check dated a month from now. In a month, Herr Müller should be nearing home, and he can let you know. And if you should not honor the check because Herr Müller is already in Germany, von Seitz will pay a little something for a reliable description. I will take my chance on that. You will now say that I could do that in any case — and that is the chance you will take.

DAVID (*looks at* KURT, *who does not look up*). Is a month enough? For you to get back?

KURT (*shrugs*). I do not know.

DAVID (*to* TECK). Two months from today. How do you want the cash and how do you want the check?

TECK. *One month from today.* That I will not discuss. One month. Please decide now.

DAVID (*sharply*). All right. (*To* TECK.) How do you want it?

TECK. Seventy-five hundred dollars in a check. Twenty-five hundred in cash.

DAVID. I haven't anywhere near that much cash in the house. Leave your address and I'll send it to you in the morning.

TECK (*laughs*). Address? I have no address, and I wish it now. Madame Fanny has cash in her sitting-room safe.

FANNY. Have you investigated that, too?

TECK (*laughs*). No. You once told me you always kept money in the house.

DAVID (*to* FANNY). How much have you got upstairs?

FANNY. I don't know. About fifteen or sixteen hundred.

TECK. Very well. That will do. Make the rest in the check.

DAVID. Get it, Mamma, please. (*He starts toward the library door.* FANNY *starts for the hall exit.*)

FANNY (*turns, looks carefully at* TECK). Years ago, I heard somebody say that being Rumanian was not a nationality, but a profession. The years have brought no change.

KURT (*softly*). Being a Rumanian aristocrat is a profession.

[FANNY *exits. After her exit, there is silence.* KURT *does not look up,* SARA *does not move.*]

TECK (*awkwardly*). The new world has left the room. (*Looks up at them.*) I feel less discomfort with you. We are Europeans, born to trouble and understanding it.

KURT. My wife is not a European.

TECK. Almost. (*Points upstairs.*) They are young. The world has gone well for most of them. For us — (*Smiles.*) The three of us — we are like peasants watching the big frost. Work, trouble, ruin — (*Shrugs.*) But no need to call curses at the frost. There it is, it will be again, always — for us.

SARA (*gets up, moves to the window, looks out*). You mean my husband and I do not have angry words for you. What for? We know how many there are of you. They don't, yet. My mother and brother feel shocked that you are in their house. For us — we have seen you in so many houses.

TECK. I do not say you *want* to understand me, Mrs. Müller. I say only that you do.

SARA. Yes. You are not difficult to understand.

KURT (*slowly gets up, stands stiffly. Then he moves toward the decanter table*). A whisky?

TECK. No, thank you. (*He turns his head to watch* KURT *move. He turns back.*)

KURT. Sherry?

TECK (*nods*). Thank you, I will.

KURT (*as he pours*). You, too, wish to go back to Europe.

TECK. Yes.

KURT. But they do not much want you. Not since the Budapest oil deal of '31.

TECK. You seem as well informed about me as I am about you.

KURT. That must have been a conference of high comedy, that one. Everybody trying to guess whether Kessler was working for Fritz Thyssen,[10] and what Thyssen *really* wanted — and whether this "National Socialism" was a smart blind of Thyssen's, and where

[10] German industrialist who financed the rise to power of Hitler and his National Socialist movement.

was Wolff—I should like to have seen you and your friends. It is too bad: you guessed an inch off, eh?

TECK. More than an inch.

KURT. And Kessler has a memory? (*Almost playfully.*) I do not think von Seitz would pay you money for a description of a man who has a month to travel. But I think he would pay you in a visa and a cable to Kessler. I think you want a visa almost as much as you want money. Therefore, I conclude you will try for the money here, and the visa from von Seitz. (*He comes toward the table carrying the sherry glass.*) I cannot get anywhere near Germany in a month and you know it. (*He is about to place the glass on the table.*) I have been bored with this talk of paying you money. If they are willing to try you on this fantasy, I am not. Whatever made you think I would take such a chance? Or *any* chance? You are a gambler. But you should not gamble with your life. (TECK *has turned to stare at him, made a half-motion as if to rise. As he does so, and on the words, "gamble with your life,"* KURT *drops the glass, hits* TECK *in the face. Struggling,* TECK *makes a violent effort to rise.* KURT *throws himself on* TECK, *knocking him to the floor. As* TECK *falls to the floor,* KURT *hits him on the side of the head. At the fourth blow,* TECH *does not move.* KURT *rises, takes the gun from his pocket, begins to lift* TECK *from the floor. As he does so,* JOSHUA *appears in the hall entrance. He is washed and ready for dinner. As he reaches the door, he stops, sees the scene, stands quietly as if he were waiting for orders.* KURT *begins to balance* TECK, *to balance himself. To* JOSHUA.) Hilf mir. (JOSHUA *comes quickly to* KURT.) Mach die Tür auf! (JOSHUA *runs toward the doors, opens them, stands waiting.*) Bleib da! Mach die Tür zu![11] (KURT *begins to move out through the terrace. When he is outside the doors,* JOSHUA *closes them quickly, stands looking at his mother.*)

SARA. There's trouble.

JOSHUA. Do not worry. I will go up now. I will pack. In ten minutes all will be ready. I will say nothing. I will get the children ready—(*He starts quickly for the hall, turns for a second to look toward the terrace doors. Then, almost with a sob.*) This was a nice house.

SARA (*softly*). We're not going this time, darling. There's no need to pack.

JOSHUA (*stares at her, puzzled*). But Papa—

SARA. Go upstairs, Joshua. Take Babbie and Bodo in your room, and

[11] Help me. . . . Open the door! . . . Stay here! Close the door!

close the door. Stay there until I call you. (*He looks at her.* SARA *sits down.*) There's nothing to be frightened of, darling. Papa is all right. (*Then, very softly.*) Papa is going home.

JOSHUA. To Germany?

SARA. Yes.

JOSHUA. Oh, alone?

SARA. Alone. (*Very softly.*) Don't say anything to the children. He will tell them himself.

JOSHUA. I won't.

SARA (*as he hesitates*). I'm all right. Go upstairs now. (*He moves slowly out, she watches him, he disappears. For a minute she sits quietly. Then she gets up, moves to the terrace doors, stands with her hands pressed against them. Then she crosses, picks up the overturned chair, places it by the table, picks up the glass, puts it on the table. As if without knowing what she is doing, she wipes the table with her handkerchief.*)

[FANNY *comes in from hall. After a second,* DAVID *comes in from library. Stops, looks around room.*]

DAVID. Where is he? Upstairs?

SARA. No. They went outside.

FANNY. Outside? They went outside. What are they doing, picking a bouquet together?

SARA (*without turning*). They just went outside.

DAVID (*looks at her*). What's the matter, Sara?

[SARA *shakes her head. Goes to the desk, opens the telephone book, looks at a number, begins to dial the telephone.*]

FANNY. Eleven hundred, eleven hundred and fifty, twelve, twelve-fifty –

DAVID. For God's sake, stop counting that money.

FANNY. All right. I'm nervous. And I don't like to think of giving him too much.

SARA. It's very nice of you and Mamma. All that money – (*Into the telephone.*) Hello. What time is your next plane? Oh. To – south. To El Paso, or – Brownsville. Yes.

DAVID (*to* FANNY). Is Joseph ready?

FANNY. I don't know. I told him I'd call him.

SARA. To Brownsville? Yes. Yes. That's all right. At what time? Yes. No. The ticket will be picked up at the airport. (DAVID *begins to cross to the bell cord. She looks up.*) No. David. Don't call Joseph. *David! Please!* (*He draws back, stares at her. Looking at him, she goes on with the conversation.*) Ritter. R–I–T–T–E–R. From Chicago. Yes. Yes. (*She hangs up, walks away.*)

DAVID. Sara! What's happening? What is all this? (*She does not answer.*) Where is Kurt? What — (*He starts for the terrace door.*)

SARA. David. *Don't go out.*

FANNY (*rises*). Sara! What's happening —

SARA. For seven years now, day in, day out, men have crossed the German border. They are always in danger. They always may be going in to die. Did you ever see the face of a man who never knows if this day will be the last day? (*Softly.*) Don't go out on the terrace, David. Leave Kurt alone.

FANNY (*softly*). Sara! What is —

SARA (*quietly*). For them, it may be torture, and it may be death. Some day, when it's all over, maybe there'll be a few of them left to celebrate. There aren't many of Kurt's age left. He couldn't take a chance on them. They wouldn't have liked it. (*Suddenly, violently.*) He'd have had a bad time trying to explain to them that because of this house and this nice town and my mother and my brother, he took chances with their work and with their lives. (*Quietly.*) Sit down, Mamma. I think it's all over now. (*To* DAVID.) There's nothing you can do about it. It's the way it had to be.

DAVID. Sara —

FANNY. Do you mean what I think you — (*She sits down.*)

SARA (*she turns, looks out toward the doors. After a pause*). He's going away tonight and he's never coming back any more. (*In a singsong.*) Never, never, never. (*She looks down at her hands, as if she were very interested in them.*) I don't like to be alone at night. I guess everybody in the world's got a time they don't like. Me, it's right before I go to sleep. And now it's going to be for always. All the rest of my life. (*She looks up as* KURT *comes in from the terrace.*) I've told them. There is an eight-thirty plane going as far south as Brownsville. I've made you a reservation. In the name of Ritter.

KURT (*stands looking at her*). Liebe Sara! (*Then he goes to the table at which* FANNY *is sitting. To* FANNY.) It is hard for you, eh? (*He pats her hand.*) I am sorry.

FANNY (*without knowing why, she takes her hand away*). Hard? I don't know. I — I don't — I don't know what I want to say.

KURT (*looks at the hand she has touched, then turns to look at* DAVID). Before I come in, I stand and think. I say, I will make Fanny and David understand. I say, how can I? Does one understand a killing? No. To hell with it, I say. I do what must be done. I have long sickened of words when I see the men who live by them. What do

you wish to make them understand, I ask myself. Wait. Stand here. Just stand here. What are you thinking? Say it to them just as it comes to you. And this is what came to me. When you kill in a war, it is not so lonely; and I remember a cousin I have not seen for many years; and a melody comes back and I begin to make it with my fingers; a staircase in a house in Bonn years ago; an old dog who used to live in our town; Sara in a hundred places — Shame on us. Thousands of years and we cannot yet make a world. Like a child I am. I have stopped a man's life. (*Points to the place on the couch where he had been sitting opposite* TECK.) I sit here. I listen to him. You will not believe — but I pray that I will not have to touch him. Then I know I will have to. I know that if I do not, it is only that I pamper myself, and risk the lives of others. I want you from the room. I know what I must do. (*Loudly.*) All right. Do I now pretend sorrow? Do I now pretend it is not I who act thus? No. I do it. I have done it. I will do it again. And I will keep my hope that we may make a world in which all men can die in bed. I have a great hate for the violent. They are the sick of the world. (*Softly.*) Maybe I am sick now, too.

SARA. You aren't sick. Stop that. It's late. You must go soon.

KURT (*he puts out his hands, she touches them*). I am going to say goodby now to my children. Then I am going to take your car — (*Motions with his head.*) I will take him with me. After that, it is up to you. Two ways: You can let me go and keep silent. I believe I can hide him and the car. At the end of two days, if they have not been found, you will tell as much of the truth as is safe for you to say. Tell them the last time you saw us we were on our way to Washington. You did not worry at the absence, we might have rested there. Two crazy foreigners fight, one gets killed, you know nothing of the reason. I will have left the gun, there will be no doubt who did the killing. If you will give me those two days, I think I will be far enough away from here. If the car is found before then — (*Shrugs.*) I will still try to move with speed. And all that will make you; for yourselves, part of a murder. For the world, I do not think you will be in bad trouble. (*He pauses.*) There is another way. You can call your police. You can tell them the truth. I will not get home. (*To* SARA.) I wish to see the children now. (*She goes out into the hall and up the stairs. There is silence.*)

FANNY. What are you thinking, David?

DAVID. I don't know. What are you thinking?

FANNY. Me? Oh, I was thinking about my Joshua. I was thinking

that a few months before he died, we were sitting out there. (*Points to terrace.*) He said, "Fanny, the Renaissance American is dying, the Renaissance man is dying." I said, "What do you mean?" although I knew what he meant, I always knew. "A Renaissance man," he said, "is a man who wants to know. He wants to know how fast a bird will fly, how thick is the crust of the earth, what made Iago evil, how to plow a field. He knows there is no dignity to a mountain if there is no dignity to man. You can't put that in a man, but when it's *really* there, and he will fight for it, put your trust in him."

DAVID (*gets up, smiles, looks at* FANNY). You're a smart woman sometimes. (SARA *enters with* JOSHUA. *To* KURT.) Don't worry about things here. My soul doesn't have to be so nice and clean. I'll take care of it. You'll have your two days. And good luck to you.

FANNY. You go with my blessing, too. I like you. (BODO *enters.*)

SARA. See? I come from good stock. (KURT *looks at* DAVID. *Then he begins to smile. Nods to* DAVID. *Turns, smiles at* FANNY.)

FANNY. Do you like me?

KURT. I like you, madame, very much.

FANNY. Would you be able to cash that check?

KURT (*laughs*). Oh, no.

FANNY. Then take the cash. I, too, would like to contribute to your work.

KURT (*slowly*). All right. Thank you. (*He takes the money from the table, puts it in his pocket.*)

BODO (*to* KURT). You like Grandma? I thought you would, with time. I like her, too. Sometimes she dilates with screaming, but—Dilates is correct? (BABETTE *enters.* JOSHUA *stands away from the others, looking at his father.* KURT *turns to look at him.*)

JOSHUA. Alles in Ordnung?

KURT. Alles in Ordnung.

BODO. What? What does that mean, all is well? (*There is an awkward silence.*)

BABETTE (*as if she sensed it*). We are all clean for dinner. But nobody else is clean. And I have on Grandma's dress to me—

FANNY (*very nervously*). Of course. And you look very pretty. You're a pretty little girl, Babbie.

BODO (*looks around the room*). What is the matter? Everybody is acting like such a ninny. I got that word from Grandma.

KURT. Come here. (*They look at him. Then slowly* BABETTE *comes toward him, followed by* BODO. JOSHUA *comes more slowly, to stand at the side of* KURT's *chair.*) We have said many good-bys to each

other, eh? We must now say another. (*As they stare at him, he smiles, slowly, as if it were difficult.*) This time, I leave you with good people to whom I believe you also will be good. (*Half playfully.*) Would you allow me to give away my share in you, until I come back?

BABETTE (*slowly*). If you would like it.

KURT. Good. To your mother, her share. My share, to Fanny and David. It is all I have to give. (*Laughs.*) There. I have made a will, eh? Now. We will not joke. I have something to say to you. It is important for me to say it.

JOSHUA (*softly*). You are talking to us as if we were children.

KURT (*turns to look at him*). Am I, Joshua? I wish you were children. I wish I could say love your mother, do not eat too many sweets, clean your teeth — (*Draws* BODO *to him.*) I cannot say these things. You are not children. I took it all away from you.

BABETTE. We have had a most enjoyable life, Papa.

KURT (*smiles*). You are a gallant little liar. And I thank you for it. I have done something bad today —

FANNY (*shocked, sharply*). Kurt —

SARA. Don't, Mamma.

[BODO *and* BABETTE *have looked at* FANNY *and* SARA, *puzzled. Then they have turned again to look at* KURT.]

KURT. It is not to frighten you. In a few days, your mother and David will tell you.

BODO. You could not do a bad thing.

BABETTE (*proudly*). You could not.

KURT (*shakes his head*). Now let us get straight together. The four of us. Do you remember when we read *Les Misérables?* Do you remember that we talked about it afterward and Bodo got candy on Mamma's bed?

BODO. I remember.

KURT. Well. He stole bread. The world is out of shape, we said, when there are hungry men. And until it gets in shape, men will steal and lie and — (*A little more slowly.*) — kill. But for whatever reason it is done, and whoever does it — you understand me — it is all bad. I want you to remember that. Whoever does it, it is bad. (*Then, very gaily.*) But you will live to see the day when it will not have to be. All over the world, in every place and every town, there are men who are going to make sure it will not have to be. They want what I want: a childhood for every child. For my children, and I

for theirs. (*He picks* BODO *up, rises.*) Think of that. It will make you happy. In every town and every village and every mud hut in the world, there is always a man who loves children and who will fight to make a good world for them. And now good-by. Wait for me. I shall try to come back for you. (*He moves toward the hall, followed by* BABETTE *and, more slowly, by* JOSHUA.) Or you shall come to me. At Hamburg, the boat will come in. It will be a fine, safe land—I will be waiting on the dock. And there will be the three of you and Mamma and Fanny and David. And I will have ordered an extra big dinner and we will show them what our Germany can be like—(*He has put* BODO *down. He leans down, presses his face in* BABETTE'S *hair. Tenderly, as her mother has done earlier, she touches his hair.*)

JOSHUA. Of course. That is the way it will be. Of course. But—but if you should find yourself delayed—(*Very slowly.*) Then I will come to you. Mamma.

SARA (*she has turned away*). I heard you, Joshua.

KURT (*he kisses* BABETTE). Gute Nacht, Liebling! [12]

BABETTE. Gute Nacht, Papa. Mach's gut! [13]

KURT (*leans to kiss* BODO). Good night, baby.

BODO. Good night, Papa. Mach's gut! (BABETTE *runs up the steps. Slowly* BODO *follows her.*)

KURT (*kisses* JOSHUA). Good night, son.

JOSHUA. Good night, Papa. Mach's gut! (*He begins to climb the steps.* KURT *stands watching them, smiling. When they disappear, he turns to* DAVID.)

KURT. Good-by, and thank you.

DAVID. Good-by, and good luck.

KURT (*he moves to* FANNY). Good-by. I have good children, eh?

FANNY. Yes, you have. (KURT *kisses her hand.*)

KURT (*slowly, he turns toward* SARA). Men who wish to live have the best chance to live. I wish to live. I wish to live with you. (*She comes toward him.*)

SARA. For twenty years. It is as much for me today—(*Takes his arms.*) Just once, and for all my life. (*He pulls her toward him.*) Come back for me, darling. If you can. (*Takes brief case from table and gives it to him.*)

KURT (*simply*). I will try. (*He turns.*) Good-by, to you all. (*He exits.*

[12] Good night, darling!

[13] Good night, daddy. Do a good job! (Literally, "Do it well.")

After a second, there is the sound of a car starting. They sit listening to it. Gradually the noise begins to go off into the distance. A second later, JOSHUA *appears.*)

JOSHUA. Mamma — (*She looks up. He is very tense.*) Bodo cries. Babette looks very queer. I think you should come.

SARA (*gets up, slowly*). I'm coming.

JOSHUA (*to* FANNY *and* DAVID. *Still very tense*). Bodo talks so fancy, we forget sometimes he is a baby. (*He waits for* SARA *to come up to him. When she reaches him, she takes his hand, goes up the steps, disappears.* FANNY *and* DAVID *watch them.*)

FANNY (*after a minute*). Well, here we are. We're shaken out of the magnolias, eh?

DAVID. Yes. So we are.

FANNY. Tomorrow will be a hard day. But we'll have Babbie's birthday dinner. And we'll have music afterward. You can be the audience. I think you'd better go up to Marthe now. Be as careful as you can. She'd better stay here for a while. I daresay I can stand it.

DAVID (*turns, smiles*). Even your graciousness is ungracious, Mamma.

FANNY. I do my best. Well, I think I shall go and talk to Anise. I like Anise best when I don't feel well. (*She begins to move off.*)

DAVID. Mamma. (*She turns.*) We are going to be in for trouble. You understand that?

FANNY. I understand it very well. We will manage. You and I. I'm not put together with flour paste. And neither are you — I am happy to learn.

DAVID. Good night, Mamma. (*As she moves out, the curtain falls.*)

WHILE READING ACT III

1. What is the effect of the opening scene, after the poignant crisis of the second act?

2. "They (the fascists) have done very well for themselves," says David. Kurt answers, "Yes. But not by themselves." What does he mean? He says it bitterly. Against whom is he particularly bitter? Are there still many such people in our world today?

3. What proof can you give that these statements by Kurt were true in 1939 or 1940?

"Why must our side fight always with naked hands? The spirit and the hands. All is against us but ourselves."

"What a magnificent work fascists have done in convincing the world that they are men from legends."

"Each could have his own excuse (for not entering the battle against fascism)."

4. The little dialogue between Fanny and Joseph is one of a number supplying comic relief in this act. Why are they useful here? How do they add to the poignancy of the situation?

5. Kurt allows Teck full reign in the deliberate presentation of his blackmailing proposal. How does this help us to accept, later on, the author's resolution of the conflict between the two men?

6. At what point do you think the climax of the play is reached? Might it be at the moment that Kurt slowly shakes his head in refusal of Teck's demand? Why doesn't Kurt accept the offer? Do you think he is right?

7. Kurt corrects Fanny by saying: "Being a Rumanian *aristocrat* is a profession." What wrong idea has Fanny expressed? Why did it seem important for Kurt to correct her?

8. Why does Kurt lapse into German as he drags the body out?

9. Do you agree with Sara's justification of Kurt's act of violence? Is Kurt right or wrong? What were his alternatives? The conflict in Kurt's own mind is shown by his statement, addressed to the children: "But for whatever reason it is done, and whoever does it — you understand me — it is all bad."

10. Should the play end with Kurt's deed and escape? What is the purpose of the remainder of the act?

11. Miss Hellman remarks, in her introduction to the Modern Library edition of her plays, that in real life a man would go upstairs, find the children in their room, say good-by to them there. Why didn't she do this in the play? "It seemed messy," she says, "to ring in another set, to bring down the curtain, to interfere with a mood and a temper." Would the same objection apply in a movie version?

12. Kurt's picture of a peaceful Germany to return to is boldy prophetic. Few people in 1940 felt so confident in the eventual triumph of democracy the world over. It is a manifestation, of course, of the author's faith.

AFTER READING THE PLAY

1. In this "well-made" play the construction is clear and easy to follow. Using the outline on page 8 (the Story or Plot) review the steps in the progress of the play.

2. Apply the criteria for good character portrayal (questions on page 7) to the principal characters in the play.

3. What are the play's principal messages? Would Kurt's farewell to his children be a fitting summary of the play's theme?

4. One of the last of Fanny's remarks is "We're shaken out of the magnolias, eh?" What does she mean? What were some of the events which served finally to shake us, as a nation, "out of the magnolias"? Were they comparable in their violence to the events in this play?

5. Which are the most moving episodes in the play? What dramatic devices help to make them so?

6. The film version of *Watch on the Rhine* reveals a number of interesting departures from the play. For example, the picture opens with the Müller family making their way across the Mexican border into the United States. The picture makes clear, at the end, that Kurt Müller has been killed by the Nazis. Why have these changes been made? You will find it interesting to read the screen version (by Dashiell Hammett) in *Best Film Plays of 1943–1944.*

7. *For Further Reading.* Plays revealing the Nazi mentality and method include:

Flight to the West, by Elmer Rice
Tomorrow the World, by James Gow and Arnaud d'Usseau
The Moon Is Down, by John Steinbeck
The Searching Wind, by Lillian Hellman
The North Star, by Lillian Hellman (screen play)

Other plays by Lillian Hellman which illustrate the conflict between the forces of good and of evil are *The Little Foxes* and *Days to Come.*

Our Town

BY THORNTON WILDER

If *Watch on the Rhine* presents, through the eyes of Teck, glimpses of an old world gripped by a rule of evil, *Our Town* gives us by refreshing contrast, through the eyes of the genial Stage Manager, a heart-warming picture of good folks living their lives out in the wholesome atmosphere of small-town America. Both plays help us to appreciate our American way of life, Miss Hellman's by painting its hostile opposite, Mr. Wilder's by revealing with sympathetic detail one little corner of that life.

Here the comparison ends; for *Our Town* is a very different play from *Watch on the Rhine* — or, for that matter, from most other plays of our time. It has thrown off the shackles of both scenery and time, and so is able to shift both with leisurely freedom. Officiating at these changes is the Stage Manager, who, hat on head and pipe in mouth, keeps the audience informed of all the proceedings. The play seems almost as free of plot as of props; yet we find ourselves following with rapt interest the simple and fairly uneventful lives of the townspeople. The character in one of Longfellow's poems is made to say:

> "A town that boasts inhabitants like ours
> Can have no lack of good society."

It is a good society to which we are introduced in *Our Town,* one that is an affirmation of those qualities which we like to think of as the foundation of the "American way."

Our Town opened at the Henry Miller Theatre in New York on February 4, 1938. Produced by Jed Harris and directed by Raymond Sovey, it starred Frank Craven as the Stage Manager and Martha Scott as Emily Webb. In a later revival at the New York City Center of Music and Drama, Marc Connelly, the distinguished author of *The Green Pastures,* replaced Frank Craven. The play has been presented again and again by amateur and professional groups all over the country, with great success. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for the season of 1937–1938, it is, in the opinion of the critic Alexander Woollcott, one of the few plays of our time that will still be read and seen a half century from now.

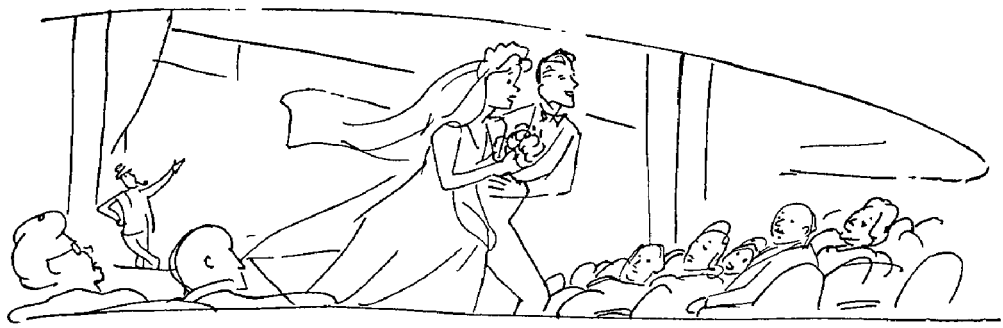


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thornton Wilder does most of his creative work while walking. "Whole pages," he insists, "are created during my walks." This roving method seems almost symbolic of those larger wanderings which mark Mr. Wilder's life. He was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1897, and went to school for a time in California. Much of his youth was spent in China, where his father was stationed as a Consul General for the State Department. He studied at Oberlin in Ohio, and at Yale; did graduate work at the American Academy in Rome; and received his master's degree at Princeton. He taught at Lawrenceville School in New Jersey, and at Chicago University. He was for six summers a tutor at a boys' camp in New Hampshire, and spent a number of other summers at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Thornton Wilder's novels reflect his interest in far-away places or times. *The Cabala* (1926) deals with the postwar Roman nobility, while another novel, *The Woman of Andros,* is set in ancient Italy. The Pulitzer Prize novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* tells of a group of early settlers in Peru, while *Heaven's My Destination* has as its background the contemporary American scene. Before *Our Town,* Wilder had written a number of shorter plays, including the volumes *The Angels That Troubled the Waters* and *The Long Christmas Dinner.* His last play is *The Skin of Our Teeth,* another Pulitzer Prize winner.

BEFORE READING

1. What does the title hint about the nature of this play?
2. What characters in the cast suggest that this play will be different from the conventional drama?
3. Grover's Corners is an imaginary town. However, a map of New Hampshire will show you Peterborough, Jeffrey, and Mt. Monadnock, which are supposed to be in the vicinity of "Our Town."
4. Because no scenery and few props are required, you may find it easy to act out parts of the play in class, rather than merely read them aloud.
5. Vocabulary. The language in the play is simple and homey. Words to look up: *proscenium* (see page 100), *tableau, genealogist, lugubrious.* In one passage Professor Willard uses a number of difficult words: *archeozoic, Devonian, Mesozoic, meteorological, Amerindian.* The inquisitive students may find out their meaning.



OUR TOWN

CHARACTERS

STAGE MANAGER
DR. GIBBS
JOE CROWELL, JR.
HOWIE NEWSOME
MRS. GIBBS
MRS. WEBB
GEORGE GIBBS
REBECCA GIBBS
WALLY WEBB
EMILY WEBB
PROFESSOR WILLARD
MR. WEBB
WOMAN IN THE BALCONY
TALL MAN AT BACK OF AUDITORIUM
LADY IN A BOX
SIMON STIMSON
MRS. SOAMES
CONSTABLE WARREN
SI CROWELL
SAM CRAIG
JOE STODDARD
PEOPLE OF THE TOWN

(The entire play takes place in Grover's Corners, N. H., 1901 to 1913.)

ACT I

No curtain. No scenery. The audience, arriving, sees an empty stage in half-light.

Presently the STAGE MANAGER, *hat on and pipe in mouth, enters and begins placing a table and several chairs downstage left, and a table and chairs downstage right. "Left" and "right" are from the point of view of the actor facing the audience. "Up" is toward the back wall.*

As the house lights go down, he has finished setting the stage and, leaning against the right proscenium pillar, watches the late arrivals in the audience. When the auditorium is in complete darkness, he speaks.

"Our Town" by Thornton Wilder. Copyright, 1938, by Coward-McCann, Inc. No performance of this play may be given without permission in writing from the author's agent, Harold Freedman, 101 Park Avenue, New York 17, New York.

STAGE MANAGER. This play is called *Our Town.* It was written by Thornton Wilder; produced and directed by A_____ [or: produced by A_____; directed by B_____]. In it you will see Miss C_____, Miss D_____, Miss E_____, and Mr. F_____, Mr. G_____, Mr. H_____, and many others.

The name of the town is Grover's Corners, New Hampshire — just across the Massachusetts line: longitude forty-two degrees, forty minutes; latitude seventy degrees, thirty-seven minutes.

The first act shows a day in our town. The day is May 7, 1901. The time is just before dawn.

[*A rooster crows.*]

The sky is beginning to show some streaks of light over in the east there, behind our mount'in. The morning star always gets wonderful bright the minute before it has to go. (*He stares at it for a moment, then goes upstage.*)

Well, I'd better show you how our town lies. Up here (*That is, parallel with the back wall*) is Main Street. Way back there is the railway station; tracks go that way. Polish Town's across the tracks and some Canuck families. (*Toward the left.*) Over there is the Congregational church; across the street's the Presbyterian. Methodist and Unitarian are over there. Baptist is down in the holla' by the river. Catholic church is over beyond the tracks.

Here's the Town Hall and Post Office combined; jail's in the basement. Bryan once made a speech from these steps here. Along here's a row of stores. Hitching posts and horse blocks in front of them. First automobile's going to come along in about five years — belonged to Banker Cartwright, our richest citizen . . . lives in the big white house up on the hill.

Here's the grocery store and here's Mr. Morgan's drugstore. Most everybody in town manages to look into those two stores once a day. Public school's over yonder. High school's still farther over. Quarter of nine mornings, noontimes, and three o'clock afternoons, the hull town can hear the yelling and screaming from those schoolyards. (*He approaches the table and chairs downstage right.*)

This is our doctor's house — Doc Gibbs's. This is the back door.

[*Two arched trellises are pushed out, one by each proscenium pillar.*]

There's some scenery for those who think they have to have scenery. There's a garden here. Corn . . . peas . . . beans . . . hollyhocks . . . heliotrope . . . and a lot of burdock. (*Crosses the stage.*)

In those days our newspaper come out twice a week — the Grov-

er's Corners *Sentinel* — and this is Editor Webb's house. And this is Mrs. Webb's garden. Just like Mrs. Gibbs's, only it's got a lot of sunflowers, too. Right here — big butternut tree.

[*He returns to his place by the right proscenium pillar and looks at the audience for a minute.*]

Nice town, y'know what I mean? Nobody very remarkable ever come out of it — s'far as we know. The earliest tombstones in the cemetery up there on the mountain say 1670, 1680 — they're Grovers and Cartwrights and Gibbses and Herseys — same names as are around here now.

Well, as I said, it's about dawn. The only lights on in town are in a cottage over by the tracks where a Polish mother's just had twins. And in the Joe Crowell house, where Joe Junior's getting up so as to deliver the paper. And in the depot, where Shorty Hawkins is gettin' ready to flag the five forty-five for Boston.

[*A train whistle is heard. The* STAGE MANAGER *takes out his watch and nods.*]

Naturally, out in the country — all around — they've been lights on for some time, what with milkin's and so on. But town people sleep late.

So — another day's begun. There's Doc Gibbs comin' down Main Street now, comin' back from that baby case. And here's his wife comin' downstairs to get breakfast. Doc Gibbs died in 1930. The new hospital's named after him. Mrs. Gibbs died first — long time ago, in fact. She went out to visit her daughter, Rebecca, who married an insurance man in Canton, Ohio, and died there — pneumonia — but her body was brought back here. She's up in the cemetery there now, in with a whole mess of Gibbses and Herseys — she was Julia Hersey 'fore she married Doc Gibbs in the Congregational church over there.

In our town we like to know the facts about everybody. . . . That's Doc Gibbs. And there comes Joe Crowell, Jr., delivering Mr. Webb's *Sentinel.*

[DR. GIBBS *has been coming along Main Street from the left. At the point where he would turn to approach his house, he stops, sets down his — imaginary — black bag, takes off his hat, and rubs his face with fatigue, using an enormous handkerchief.* MRS. GIBBS *has entered her kitchen, gone through the motions of putting wood into a stove, lighting it, and preparing breakfast. Suddenly,* JOE CROWELL, JR. *starts down Main Street from the right, hurling imaginary newspapers into doorways.*]

JOE CROWELL, JR. Morning, Doc Gibbs.

DR. GIBBS. Morning, Joe.

JOE CROWELL, JR. Somebody been sick, Doc?

DR. GIBBS. No. Just some twins born over in Polish Town.

JOE CROWELL, JR. Do you want your paper now?

DR. GIBBS. Yes, I'll take it. Anything serious goin' on in the world since Wednesday?

JOE CROWELL, JR. Yessir. My schoolteacher, Miss Foster, 's getting married to a fella over in Concord.

DR. GIBBS. I declare. How do you boys feel about that?

JOE CROWELL, JR. Well, of course, it's none of my business — but I think if a person starts out to be a teacher, she ought to stay one.

DR. GIBBS. How's your knee, Joe?

JOE CROWELL, JR. Fine, Doc. I never think about it at all. Only like you said, it always tells me when it's going to rain.

DR. GIBBS. What's it telling you today? Goin' to rain?

JOE CROWELL, JR. No, sir.

DR. GIBBS. Sure?

JOE CROWELL, JR. Yessir.

DR. GIBBS. Knee ever make a mistake?

JOE CROWELL, JR. No, sir.

[JOE *goes off.* DR. GIBBS *stands reading his paper.*]

STAGE MANAGER. Here comes Howie Newsome delivering the milk.

[HOWIE NEWSOME *comes along Main Street, passes* DR. GIBBS, *comes down the center of the stage, leaves some bottles at* MRS. WEBB'S *back door, and crosses the stage to* MRS. GIBBS'S.]

HOWIE NEWSOME. Git-ap, Bessie. What's the matter with you? . . . Morning, Doc.

DR. GIBBS. Morning, Howie.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Somebody sick?

DR. GIBBS. Pair of twins over to Mrs. Goruslawski's.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Twins, eh? This town's gettin' bigger every year.

DR. GIBBS. Going to rain, Howie?

HOWIE NEWSOME. No, no. Fine day — that'll burn through. Come on, Bessie.

DR. GIBBS. Hello, Bessie. (*He strokes her.*) How old is she, Howie?

HOWIE NEWSOME. Going on seventeen. Bessie's all mixed up about the route ever since the Lockharts stopped takin' their quart of milk every day. She wants to leave 'em a quart just the same — keeps scolding me the hull trip.

[*He reaches* MRS. GIBBS'S *back door. She is waiting for him.*]

MRS. GIBBS. Good morning, Howie.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Morning, Mrs. Gibbs. Doc's just comin' down the street.

MRS. GIBBS. Is he? Seems like you're late today?

HOWIE NEWSOME. Yes. Somp'n went wrong with the separator. Don't know what 'twas.

[*He goes back to Main Street, clucks for Bessie, and goes off right.* DR. GIBBS *reaches his home and goes in.*]

MRS. GIBBS. Everything all right?

DR. GIBBS. Yes. I declare — easy as kittens.

MRS. GIBBS. Bacon'll be ready in a minute. Set down and drink your coffee. Child-*run!* Child-*run!* Time to get up. George! Rebecca! . . . You can catch a couple hours' sleep this morning, can't you?

DR. GIBBS. Hm! . . . Mrs. Wentworth's coming at eleven. Guess I know what it's about, too. Her stummick ain't what it ought to be.

MRS. GIBBS. All told, you won't get more'n three hours' sleep. Frank Gibbs, I don't know what's goin' to become of you. I do wish I could get you to go away some place and take a rest. I think it would do you good.

MRS. WEBB. Emileeee! Time to get up! Wally! Seven o'clock!

MRS. GIBBS. I declare, you got to speak to George. Seems like something's come over him lately. He's no help to me at all. I can't even get him to cut me some wood.

DR. GIBBS. Is he sassy to you?

MRS. GIBBS. No. He just whines! All he thinks about is that baseball — George! Rebecca! You'll be late for school.

DR. GIBBS. M-m-m. . . .

MRS. GIBBS. George!

DR. GIBBS. George, look sharp!

GEORGE'S VOICE. Yes, Pa!

DR. GIBBS (*as he goes off the stage*). Don't you hear your mother calling you?

MRS. WEBB. Walleee! Emileee! You'll be late for school! Walleee! You wash yourself good or I'll come up and do it myself.

REBECCA GIBBS'S VOICE. Ma! What dress shall I wear?

MRS. GIBBS. Don't make a noise. Your father's been out all night and needs his sleep. I washed and ironed the blue gingham for you special.

REBECCA. Ma, I hate that dress.

MRS. GIBBS. Oh, hush up with you.

REBECCA. Every day I go to school dressed like a sick turkey.

MRS. GIBBS. Now, Rebecca, don't be impossible. You always look *very* nice.

REBECCA. Mamma, George's throwing soap at me.

MRS. GIBBS. I'll come up and slap the both of you — that's what I'll do.

[*A factory whistle sounds. The children enter and take their places at the breakfast tables:* EMILY *and* WALLY WEBB; GEORGE *and* REBECCA GIBBS.]

STAGE MANAGER. We've got a factory in our town too — hear it? Makes blankets. Cartwrights own it and it brung 'em a fortune.

MRS. WEBB. Children! Now I won't have it. Breakfast is just as good as any other meal and I won't have you gobbling like wolves. It'll stunt your growth — that's a fact. Put away your book, Wally.

WALLY. Aw, Ma!

MRS. WEBB. You know the rule's well as I do — no books at table. As for me, I'd rather have my children healthy than bright.

EMILY. I'm both, Mamma; you know I am. I'm the brightest girl in school for my age. I have a wonderful memory.

MRS. WEBB. Eat your breakfast.

WALLY. I'm bright, too, when I'm looking at my stamp collection.

MRS. GIBBS. I'll speak to your father about it when he's rested. Seems to me twenty-five cents a week's enough for a boy your age. I declare I don't know how you spend it all.

GEORGE. Aw, Ma — I gotta lotta things to buy.

MRS. GIBBS. Strawberry phosphates — that's what you spend it on.

GEORGE. I don't see how Rebecca comes to have so much money. She has more'n a dollar.

REBECCA (*spoon in mouth, dreamily*). I've been saving it up gradual.

MRS. GIBBS. Well, dear, I think it's a good thing every now and then to spend some.

REBECCA. Mamma, do you know what I love most in the world — do you? Money!

MRS. GIBBS. Eat your breakfast.

[*The school bell is heard.*]

THE CHILDREN. Mamma, there's first bell. . . . I gotta hurry. . . . I don't want any more.

MRS. WEBB. Walk fast, but you don't have to run. Wally, pull up your pants at the knee. Stand up straight, Emily.

MRS. GIBBS. Tell Miss Foster I send her my best congratulations. Can you remember that?

REBECCA. Yes, Ma.

MRS. GIBBS. You look real nice. Rebecca. Pick up your feet.

ALL. Good-by.

[*The children from the two houses join at the center of the stage and go up to Main Street, then off left.* MRS. GIBBS *fills her apron with food for the chickens and comes down to the footlights.*]

MRS. GIBBS. Here, chick, chick, chick, . . . No, go away, you. Go away. . . . Here, chick, chick, chick. What's the matter with *you*? Fight, fight, fight—that's all you do. Hm . . . *you* don't belong to me. Where'd you come from? (*She shakes her apron.*) Oh, don't be so scared. Nobody's going to hurt you.

[MRS. WEBB *is sitting by her trellis, stringing beans.*]

Good morning, Myrtle, How's your cold?

MRS. WEBB. Well, it's better; but I told Charles I didn't know as I'd go to choir practice tonight. Wouldn't be any use.

MRS. GIBBS. Just the same, you come to choir practice, Myrtle, and try it.

MRS. WEBB. Well, if I don't feel any worse than I do now I probably will. While I'm resting myself, I thought I'd string some of these beans.

MRS. GIBBS (*rolling up her sleeves as she crosses the stage for a chat*). Let me help you. Beans have been good this year.

MRS. WEBB. I've decided to put up forty quarts if it kills me. The children say they hate 'em, but I notice they're able to get 'em down all winter. (*Pause.*)

MRS. GIBBS. Now, Myrtle. I've got to tell you something, because if I don't tell somebody I'll burst.

MRS. WEBB. Why, Julia Gibbs!

MRS. GIBBS. Here, give me some more of those beans. Myrtle, did one of those second-hand furniture men from Boston come to see you last Friday?

MRS. WEBB. No—o.

MRS. GIBBS. Well, he called on me. First I thought he was a patient wantin' to see Dr. Gibbs. 'N he wormed his way into my parlor, and, Myrtle Webb, he offered me three hundred and fifty dollars for Grandmother Wentworth's highboy, as I'm sitting here!

MRS. WEBB. Why, Julia Gibbs!

MRS. GIBBS. He did! That old thing! Why, it was so big I didn't know where to put it, and I almost give it to Cousin Hester Wilcox.

MRS. WEBB. Well, you're going to take it, aren't you?

MRS. GIBBS. I don't know.

MRS. WEBB. You don't know—three hundred and fifty dollars! What's come over you?

MRS. GIBBS. Well, if I could get the Doctor to take the money and go away some place on a real trip I'd sell it like that. Myrtle, ever

since I was *that* high I've had the thought that I'd like to see Paris, France. I suppose I'm crazy.

MRS. WEBB. Oh, I know what you mean. How does the Doctor feel about it?

MRS. GIBBS. Well, I did beat about the bush a little and said that if I got a legacy—that's the way I put it—I'd make him take me somewhere.

MRS. WEBB. M-m-m. . . . What did he say?

MRS. GIBBS. You know how he is. I haven't heard a serious word out of him ever since I've known him. No, he said, it might make him discontented with Grover's Corners to go traipsin' about Europe; better let well enough alone, he says. Every two years he makes a trip to the battlefields of the Civil War; and that's enough treat for anybody, he says.

MRS. WEBB. Well, Mr. Webb just *admires* the way Dr. Gibbs knows everything about the Civil War. Mr. Webb's a good mind to give up Napoleon and move over to the Civil War, only Dr. Gibbs being one of the greatest experts in the country just makes him despair.

MRS. GIBBS. It's a fact! Dr. Gibbs is never so happy as when he's at Antietam or Gettysburg. The times I've walked over those hills, Myrtle, stopping at every bush and pacing it all out, like we was going to buy it.

MRS. WEBB. Well, if that second-hand man's really serious about buyin' it, Julia, you sell it. And then you'll get to see Paris, all right.

MRS. GIBBS. Oh, I'm sorry I mentioned it. Only it seems to me that once in your life before you die you ought to see a country where they don't talk and think in English and don't even want to.

[*The* STAGE MANAGER *returns to the center of the stage.*]

STAGE MANAGER. That'll do. That'll do. Thank you very much, ladies.

[MRS. GIBBS *and* MRS. WEBB *gather up their things, return into their homes, and disappear.*]

Now we're going to skip a few hours in the day at Grover's Corners. But before we go on, I want you to know some more things about the town—all kinds of things. So I've asked Professor Willard of our State University to come down here and sketch in a few details of our past history—kind of scientific account, you might say. Is Professor Willard here?

[PROFESSOR WILLARD, *a rural savant, pince-nez on a wide satin ribbon, enters from the right with some notes in his hand.*]

May I introduce Professor Willard of our university. A few brief notes, thank you, Professor—unfortunately our time is limited.

PROFESSOR WILLARD. Grover's Corners . . . let me see . . . Grover's Corners lies on the old Archeozoic granite of the Appalachian range. I may say it's some of the oldest land in the world. We're very proud of that. A shelf of Devonian basalt crosses it with vestiges of Mesozoic shale, and some sandstone outcroppings; but that's all more recent: two hundred, three hundred million years old. Some highly interesting fossils have been found—I may say unique fossils—two miles out of town, in Silas Peckham's cow pasture. They can be seen at the museum in our university at any time. . . . Did you wish the meteorological conditions?

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you. We would.

PROFESSOR WILLARD. The mean precipitation is forty inches. The mean annual temperature is forty-three degrees, ranging between one hundred two degrees in the shade and thirty-eight degrees below zero in winter. The . . . the . . . uh . . .

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you, Professor. And have you Professor Gruber's notes on the history of human life here?

PROFESSOR WILLARD. Hm . . . yes . . . anthropological data. Early Amerindian stock. Cotahatchee tribes . . . no evidence before the tenth century of this era . . . hm . . . now entirely disappeared . . . possible traces in three families. Migration toward the end of the seventeenth century of English brachycephalic blue-eyed stock . . . for the most part. Since then some influx of Slav and Mediterranean types. . . .

STAGE MANAGER. And the population, Professor Willard?

PROFESSOR WILLARD. Within the town limits, 2,640. The postal district brings in 507 more. Mortality and birth rates are constant; by MacPherson's gauge, 6.032.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you *very* much, Professor. We're all very much obliged to you, I'm sure.

PROFESSOR WILLARD. Not at all, sir; not at all.

STAGE MANAGER. This way, Professor, and thank you again.

[*Exit* PROFESSOR WILLARD.]

Now the political and social report: Editor Webb. . . . Oh, Mr. Webb?

[MRS. WEBB *appears at her back door.*]

MRS. WEBB. He'll be here in a minute. . . . He just cut his hand while he was eatin' an apple.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you, Mrs. Webb.

MRS. WEBB. Charles! Everybody's waitin'. (*Exit.*)

STAGE MANAGER. Mr. Webb is publisher and editor of the Grover's Corners *Sentinel.* That's our local paper, y'know.

[MR. WEBB *enters from his house, pulling on his coat. His finger is bound in a handkerchief.*]

MR. WEBB. Hm. . . . I don't have to tell you that we're run here by a board of selectmen. All males vote at the age of twenty-one. Women vote indirect. We're lower middle-class, sprinkling of professional men . . . ten per cent illiterate laborers. Politically, we're eighty-six per cent Republicans; six per cent Democrats; four per cent Socialists; rest, indifferent. Religious, we're eighty-five per cent Protestants; twelve per cent Catholics; rest, indifferent. Do you want the poverty and insanity statistics?

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you, no. Have you any comments, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB. Very ordinary town, if you ask me. Little better behaved than most. Probably a lot duller. But our young people here seem to like it well enough: ninety per cent of 'em graduating from high school settle down right here to live—even when they've been away to college.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you, Mr. Webb. Now, is there anyone in the audience who would like to ask Editor Webb anything about the town?

WOMAN IN THE BALCONY. Is there much drinking in Grover's Corners?

MR. WEBB. Well, ma'am, I wouldn't know what you'd call *much.* Satiddy nights the farm hands meet down in Ellery Greenough's stable and holler some. Fourth of July I've been known to taste a drop myself—and Decoration Day, of course. We've got one or two town drunks, but they're always having remorses every time an evangelist comes to town. No, ma'am, I'd say likker ain't a regular thing in the home here, except in the medicine chest. Right good for snakebite, y'know—always was.

TALL MAN AT THE BACK OF AUDITORIUM. Is there no one in town aware of—

STAGE MANAGER. Come forward, will you, where we can all hear you—What were you saying?

TALL MAN. Is there no one in town aware of social injustice and industrial inequality?

MR. WEBB. Oh, yes, everybody is—somethin' terrible. Seems like they spend most of their time talking about who's rich and who's poor.

TALL MAN. Then why don't they do something about it?

MR. WEBB. Well, we're ready to listen to everybody's suggestion as to

how you can see that the diligent and sensible'll rise to the top and the lazy and quarrelsome sink to the bottom. We'll listen to anybody. Meantime, until that's settled, we try to take care of those that can't help themselves, and those that can we leave alone. Are there any more questions?

LADY IN A BOX. Oh, Mr. Webb? Mr. Webb, is there any culture or love of beauty in Grover's Corners?

MR. WEBB. Well, ma'am, there ain't much—not in the sense you mean. Come to think of it, there's some girls that play the piano at high-school commencement; but they ain't happy about it. Yes, and I see where my daughter's been made to read *The Merchant of Venice* over to the school. Seems all pretty remote to 'em, y'know what I mean? No, ma'am, there isn't much culture; but maybe this is the place to tell you that we've got a lot of pleasures of a kind here: we like the sun comin' up over the mountain in the morning, and we all notice a good deal about the birds. We pay a lot of attention to them, and trees and plants. And we watch the change of the seasons: yes, everybody knows about them. But those other things—you're right, ma'am—there ain't much. *Robinson Crusoe* and the Bible; and Handel's "Largo," we all know that; and Whistler's "Mother"—those are just about as far as we go.

LADY IN A BOX. So I thought. Thank you, Mr. Webb.

STAGE MANAGER. All right! All right! Thank you, everybody.

[MR. WEBB *retires.*]

We'll go back to the town now. It's middle of the afternoon. All 2,642 have had their dinners, and all the dishes have been washed. There's an early-afternoon calm in our town: a buzzin' and a hummin' from the school buildings; only a few buggies on Main Street—the horses dozing at the hitching posts; you all remember what it's like. Doc Gibbs is in his office, tapping people and making them say "Ah." Mr. Webb's cuttin' his lawn over there; one man in ten thinks it's a privilege to push his own lawn mower.

No, sir. It's later than I thought. There are the children coming home from school aready.

[EMILY WEBB *comes sedately down Main Street, carrying some schoolbooks. There are some signs that she is imagining herself to be a lady of striking elegance. Her father's movements to and fro with the lawn mower bring him into her vicinity.*]

EMILY. I *can't*, Lois. I've got to go home and help my mother. I *promised.*

MR. WEBB. Emily, walk simply. Who do you think you are today?

EMILY. Papa, you're terrible. One minute you tell me to stand up straight, and the next minute you call me names. I just don't listen to you. (*She gives him an abrupt kiss.*)

MR. WEBB. Golly, I never got a kiss from such a great lady before.

[*He goes out of sight.* EMILY *leans over and picks some flowers by the gate of her house.* GEORGE GIBBS *comes careening down Main Street. He is throwing a ball up to dizzying heights and waiting to catch it again. This sometimes requires his taking six steps backward.*]

GEORGE. Excuse me, Mrs. Forrest.

STAGE MANAGER (*as* MRS. FORREST). Go out and play in the fields, young man. You got no business playing baseball on Main Street.

GEORGE. Awfully sorry, Mrs. Forrest. . . . Hello, Emily.

EMILY. H'lo.

GEORGE. You made a fine speech in class.

EMILY. Well . . . I was really ready to make a speech about the Monroe Doctrine, but at the last minute Miss Corcoran made me talk about the Louisiana Purchase instead. I worked an awful long time on both of them.

GEORGE. Gee, it's funny, Emily. From my window up there I can just see your head nights when you're doing your homework over in your room.

EMILY. Why, can you?

GEORGE. You certainly do stick to it, Emily. I don't see how you can sit still that long. I guess you like school.

EMILY. Well, I always feel it's something you have to go through.

GEORGE. Yeah.

EMILY. I don't mind it really. It passes the time.

GEORGE. Yeah. . . . Emily, what do you think? We might work out a kinda telegraph from there to there; and once in a while you could give me a kinda hint or two about one of those algebra problems. I don't mean the answers, Emily, of course not . . . just some little hint. . . .

EMILY. Oh, I think *hints* are allowed. So-ah—if you get stuck, George, you whistle to me; and I'll give you some hints.

GEORGE. Emily, you're just naturally bright, I guess.

EMILY. I figure that it's just the way a person's born.

GEORGE. Yeah. But, you see, I want to be a farmer, and my Uncle Luke says whenever I'm ready I can come over and work on his farm and if I'm any good I can just gradually have it.

EMILY. You mean the house and everything?

[*Enter* MRS. WEBB.]

GEORGE. Yeah. Well, thanks. . . . I better be getting out to the baseball field. Thanks for the talk, Emily. . . . Good afternoon, Mrs. Webb.

MRS. WEBB. Good afternoon, George.

GEORGE. So long, Emily.

EMILY. So long, George.

MRS. WEBB. Emily, come and help me string these beans for the winter. George Gibbs let himself have a real conversation, didn't he? Why, he's growing up. How old would George be?

EMILY. I don't know.

MRS. WEBB. Let's see. He must be almost sixteen.

EMILY. Mamma, I made a speech in class today and I was very good.

MRS. WEBB. You must recite it to your father at supper. What was it about?

EMILY. The Louisiana Purchase. It was like silk off a spool. I'm going to make speeches all my life. . . . Mamma, are these big enough?

MRS. WEBB. Try and get them a little bigger if you can.

EMILY. Mamma, will you answer me a question, serious?

MRS. WEBB. Seriously, dear—not serious.

EMILY. Seriously. Will you?

MRS. WEBB. Of course I will.

EMILY. Mamma, am I good-looking?

MRS. WEBB. Yes, of course you are. All my children have got good features; I'd be ashamed if they hadn't.

EMILY. Oh, Mamma, that's not what I mean. What I mean *is:* Am I *pretty?*

MRS. WEBB. I've already told you, yes. Now that's enough of that. You have a nice, young, pretty face. I never heard of such foolishness.

EMILY. Oh, Mamma, you never tell us the truth about anything.

MRS. WEBB. I *am* telling you the truth.

EMILY. Mamma, were *you* pretty?

MRS. WEBB. Yes, I was, if I do say it. I was the prettiest girl in town next to Mamie Cartwright.

EMILY. But, Mamma, you've got to say *some*thing about me. Am I pretty enough . . . to get anybody . . . to get people interested in me?

MRS. WEBB. Emily, you make me tired. Now stop it. You're pretty enough for all normal purposes. Come along now and bring that bowl with you.

EMILY. Oh, Mamma, you're no help at all.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you. Thank you! That'll do. We'll have to interrupt again here. Thank you, Mrs. Webb; thank you, Emily.

[MRS. WEBB *and* EMILY *withdraw.*]

There are some more things we've got to explore about this town. This time we're going to go about it in another way: we're going to look back on it from the future. I'm not going to tell you what became of these two families we're seeing most of, because the rest of the play will tell you about them. But take some of these others.

Take Joe Crowell, Jr. Joe was a very bright fellow. He graduated with honors and got a scholarship to Boston Tech — M.I.T., that is. But the war broke out, and Joe died in France. All that education for nothing.

Howie Newsome's still delivering milk at Grover's Corners. He's an old man now, has a lot of help; but he still delivers it himself. Says he gets the feel of the town that way. Carries all the accounts in his head; never has to write down a word.

Mr. Morgan's drugstore ain't the same — it's all citified. Mr. Morgan retired and went to live in San Diego, California, where his daughter married a real-estate man, name of Kerby. Mr. Morgan died there in 1935 and was buried in a lot of palm trees. Kinda lost his religion at the end and took up New Thought or something. They read some newfangled poetry over him and cremated him. The New Hampshire in him sort of broke down in him in that climate, seems like.

The Cartwrights got richer and richer. The house is closed most of the year. They're off eating big dinners in hotels now — in Virginia Hot Springs and Miami Beach. They say the winters are cold here. I see where they've become 'Piscopalians.

The Cartwright interests have just begun building a new bank in Grover's Corners — had to go to Vermont for the marble, sorry to say. And they've asked a friend of mine what they should put in the cornerstone for people to dig up a thousand years from now. Of course, they've put in a copy of the New York *Times* and a copy of Mr. Webb's *Sentinel*. We're kind of interested in this, because some scientific fellas have found a way of painting all that reading matter with a kind of glue — silicate glue — that'll make it keep a thousand, two thousand years. We're putting in a Bible . . . and the Constitution of the United States and a copy of William Shakespeare's plays. What do you say, folks? What do you think? Y'know — Babylon once had two million people in it, and all we know about 'em is the names of the kings and some copies of wheat contracts and . . . the sales of slaves. Yes, every night all those families sat down to supper, and the father came home from his work, and the smoke went up the chimney — same as here. And even in

Greece and Rome all we know about the real life of the people is what we can piece together out of the joking poems and the comedies they wrote for the theatre back then. So I'm going to have a copy of this play put in the cornerstone and the people a thousand years from now'll know a few simple facts about us — more than the Treaty of Versailles and the Lindbergh flight. See what I mean?

Well — you people a thousand years from now — in the provinces north of New York at the beginning of the twentieth century, people et three times a day; soon after sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. Every seventh day, by law and by religion, was a day of rest, and all work came to a stop. The religion at that time was Christianity. I guess you have some other records about Christianity. The domestic setup was marriage: a binding relation between a male and one female that lasted for life. Christianity strictly forbade killing; but you were allowed to kill animals, and you were allowed to kill human beings in war and government punishings. I guess we don't have to tell you about the government and business forms, because that's the kind of thing people seem to hand down first of all. Let me see now if there's anything else. Oh, yes — at death people were buried in the ground just as they are.

So, friends, this is the way we were in our growing up and in our marrying and in our doctoring and in our living and in our dying. Now we'll return to our day in Grover's Corners: A lot of time has gone by. It's evening. You can hear choir practice going on in the Congregational church. All the children are at home doing their school work. The day is running down like a tired clock.

[*A choir partially concealed in the orchestra pit has begun singing "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."* SIMON STIMSON *stands directing them. Two ladders have been pushed onto the stage; they serve as indication of the second story in the Gibbs and Webb houses.* GEORGE *and* EMILY *mount them and apply themselves to their school work.* DR. GIBBS *has entered and is seated in his kitchen, reading.*]

SIMON STIMSON. Now look here, everybody. Music come into the world to give pleasure. Softer! Softer! Get it out of your heads that music's only good when it's loud. You leave loudness to the Methodists. You couldn't beat 'em, even if you wanted to. Now again. Tenors!

GEORGE. Hssst! Emily!

EMILY. Hello.

GEORGE. Hello!

EMILY. I can't work at all. The moonlight's so *terrible.*

GEORGE. Emily, did you get the third problem?
EMILY. Which?
GEORGE. The *third?*
EMILY. Why, yes, George — that's the easiest of them all.
GEORGE. I don't see it. Emily, can you give me a hint?
EMILY. I'll tell you one thing: the answer's in yards.
GEORGE. In yards! How do you mean?
EMILY. In *square* yards.
GEORGE. Oh . . . in square yards.
EMILY. Yes, George, don't you see?
GEORGE. Yeah.
EMILY. In square yards of *wallpaper.*
GEORGE. Wallpaper — oh, I see. Thanks a lot, Emily.
EMILY. You're welcome. My, isn't the moonlight *terrible?* And choir practice going on. I think if you hold your breath, you can hear the train all the way to Contookuck. Hear it?
GEORGE. M-m-m. What do you know!
EMILY. Well, I guess I better go back and try to work.
GEORGE. Good night, Emily. And thanks.
EMILY. Good night, George.
SIMON STIMSON. Before I forget it: How many of you will be able to come in Tuesday afternoon and sing at Fred Hersey's wedding? Show your hands. That'll be fine; that'll be right nice. We'll do the same music we did for Jane Trowbridge's last month. . . . Now we'll do "Art thou weary; art thou languid?" It's a question, ladies and gentlemen, make it talk. Ready.
DR. GIBBS. Oh, George, can you come down a minute?
GEORGE. Yes, Pa. (*He descends the ladder.*)
DR. GIBBS. Make yourself comfortable, George; I'll only keep you a minute. George, how old are you?
GEORGE. I? I'm sixteen, almost seventeen.
DR. GIBBS. What do you want to do after school's over?
GEORGE. Why, you know, Pa, I want to be a farmer on Uncle Luke's farm.
DR. GIBBS. You'll be willing, will you, to get up early and milk and feed the stock . . . and you'll be able to hoe and hay all day?
GEORGE. Sure, I will. What are you . . . what do you mean, Pa?
DR. GIBBS. Well, George, while I was in my office today I heard a funny sound. . . . And what do you think it was? It was your mother chopping wood. There you see your mother — getting up early, cooking meals all day long, washing and ironing; and still she has to

go out in the back yard and chop wood. I suppose she just got tired of asking you. She just gave up and decided it was easier to do it herself. And you eat her meals and put on the clothes she keeps nice for you, and you run off and play baseball — like she's some hired girl we keep around the house but that we don't like very much. Well, I knew all I had to do was call your attention to it. Here's a handkerchief, son. George, I've decided to raise your spending money twenty-five cents a week. Not, of course, for chopping wood for your mother, because that's a present you give her, but because you're getting older — and I imagine there are lots of things you must find to do with it.

GEORGE. Thanks, Pa.

DR. GIBBS. Let's see — tomorrow's payday. You can count on it. Hmm. Probably Rebecca'll feel she ought to have some more too. Wonder what could have happened to your mother. Choir practice never was as late as this before.

GEORGE. It's only half-past eight, Pa.

DR. GIBBS. I don't know why she's in that old choir. She hasn't any more voice than an old crow. . . . Traipsin' around the streets at this hour of the night. . . . Just about time you retired, don't you think?

GEORGE. Yes, Pa.

[GEORGE *mounts to his place on the ladder. Laughter and good night can be heard on stage left and presently* MRS. GIBBS, MRS. SOAMES, *and* MRS. WEBB *come down Main Street. When they arrive at the center of the stage, they stop.*]

MRS. SOAMES. Good night, Martha. Good night, Mr. Foster.

MRS. WEBB. I'll tell Mr. Webb; I *know* he'll want to put it in the paper.

MRS. GIBBS. My, it's late!

MRS. SOAMES. Good night, Irma.

MRS. GIBBS. Real nice choir practice, wa'n't it? Myrtle Webb! Look at that moon, will you! Tsk-tsk-tsk. Potato weather, for sure.

MRS. SOAMES. Naturally I didn't want to say a word about it in front of those others, but now we're alone — really, it's the worst scandal that ever was in this town!

MRS. GIBBS. What?

MRS. SOAMES. Simon Stimson!

MRS. GIBBS. Now, Louella!

MRS. SOAMES. But, Julia! To have the organist of a church drink and drunk year after year. You know he was drunk tonight.

MRS. GIBBS. Now, Louella! We all know about Mr. Stimson, and we all

know about the troubles he's been through, and Dr. Ferguson knows too; and if Dr. Ferguson keeps him on there in his job, the only thing the rest of us can do is just not to notice it.

MRS. SOAMES. Not to notice it! But it's getting worse.

MRS. WEBB. No, it isn't, Louella. It's getting better. I've been in that choir twice as long as you have. It doesn't happen anywhere near so often. . . . My, I hate to go to bed on a night like this. I better hurry. Those children'll be sitting up till all hours. Good night, Louella. (*She hurries downstage, enters her house, and disappears.*)

MRS. GIBBS. Can you get home safe, Louella?

MRS. SOAMES. It's as bright as day. I can see Mr. Soames scowling at the window now. You'd think we'd been to a dance the way the menfolk carry on.

[*Repeated good nights.* MRS. GIBBS *arrives at her home.*]

MRS. GIBBS. Well, we had a real good time.

DR. GIBBS. You're late enough.

MRS. GIBBS. Why, Frank, it ain't any later 'n usual.

DR. GIBBS. And you stopping at the corner to gossip with a lot of hens.

MRS. GIBBS. Now, Frank, don't be grouchy. Come out and smell my heliotrope in the moonlight.

[*They stroll out arm in arm along the footlights.*]

Isn't that wonderful? What did you do all the time I was away?

DR. GIBBS. Oh, I read—as usual. What were the girls gossiping about tonight?

MRS. GIBBS. Well, believe me, Frank—there is something to gossip about.

DR. GIBBS. Hmm! Simon Stimson far gone, was he?

MRS. GIBBS. Worst I've ever seen him. How'll that end, Frank? Dr. Ferguson can't forgive him forever.

DR. GIBBS. I guess I know more about Simon Stimson's affairs than anybody in this town. Some people ain't made for small-town life. I don't know how that'll end; but there's nothing we can do but just leave it alone. Come, get in.

MRS. GIBBS. No, not yet. . . . Oh, Frank, I'm worried about you.

DR. GIBBS. What are you worried about?

MRS. GIBBS. I think it's my duty to make plans for you to get a real rest and change. And if I get that legacy, well, I'm going to insist on it.

DR. GIBBS. Now, Julia, there's no sense in going over that again.

MRS. GIBBS. Frank, you're just *unreasonable!*

DR. GIBBS. Come on, Julia, it's getting late. First thing you know you'll catch cold. I gave George a piece of my mind tonight. I reckon you'll have your wood chopped for a while anyway. No, no, start getting upstairs.

MRS. GIBBS. Oh, dear. There's always so many things to pick up, seems like. You know, Frank, Mrs. Fairchild always locks her front door every night. All those people up that part of town do.

DR. GIBBS. They're all getting citified, that's the trouble with them. They haven't got nothing fit to burgle and everybody knows it.

[*They disappear.* REBECCA *climbs up the ladder beside* GEORGE.]

GEORGE. Get out, Rebecca. There's only room for one at this window. You're always spoiling everything.

REBECCA. Well, let me look just a minute.

GEORGE. Use your own window.

REBECCA. I did; but there's no moon there. . . . George, do you know what I think, do you? I think maybe the moon's getting nearer and nearer and there'll be a big 'splosion.

GEORGE. Rebecca, you don't know anything. If the moon were getting nearer, the guys that sit up all night with telescopes would see it first and they'd tell about it, and it'd be in all the newspapers.

REBECCA. George, is the moon shining on South America, Canada, and half the whole world?

GEORGE. Well—prob'ly is.

[*The* STAGE MANAGER *strolls on.*]

STAGE MANAGER. Nine-thirty. Most of the lights are out. No, there's Constable Warren trying a few doors on Main Street. And here comes Editor Webb, after putting his newspaper to bed.

MR. WEBB. Good evening, Bill.

CONSTABLE WARREN. Evenin', Mr. Webb.

MR. WEBB. Quite a moon!

CONSTABLE WARREN. Yepp.

MR. WEBB. All quiet tonight?

CONSTABLE WARREN. Simon Stimson is rollin' around a little. Just saw his wife movin' out to hunt for him, so I looked the other way—there he is now.

[SIMON STIMSON *comes down Main Street from the left, only a trace of unsteadiness in his walk.*]

MR. WEBB. Good evening, Simon. . . . Town seems to have settled down for the night pretty well. . . .

[SIMON STIMSON *comes up to him and pauses a moment.*]

Good evening. . . . Yes, most of the town's settled down for the

night, Simon. . . . I guess we better do the same. Can I walk along a ways with you?

[SIMON STIMSON *continues on his way without a word and disappears at the right.*]

Good night.

CONSTABLE WARREN. I don't know how that's goin' to end, Mr. Webb.

MR. WEBB. Well, he's seen a peck of trouble, one thing after another. . . . Oh, Bill . . . if you see my boy smoking cigarettes, just give him a word, will you? He thinks a lot of you, Bill.

CONSTABLE WARREN. I don't think he smokes no cigarettes, Mr. Webb. Leastways, not more'n two or three a year. He don't belong to that crowd that hangs out down by the gully.

MR. WEBB. Hm. . . . I hope not. Well, good night, Bill.

CONSTABLE WARREN. Good night, Mr. Webb. (*Exit.*)

MR. WEBB. Who's that up there? Is that you, Myrtle?

EMILY. No, it's me, Papa.

MR. WEBB. Why aren't you in bed?

EMILY. I don't know. I just can't sleep yet, Papa. The moonlight's so *won*-derful. And the smell of Mrs. Gibbs's heliotrope. Can you smell it?

MR. WEBB. Hm. . . . Yes. Haven't any troubles on your mind, have you, Emily?

EMILY. *Troubles,* Papa. *No.*

MR. WEBB. Well, enjoy yourself, but don't let your mother catch you. Good night, Emily.

EMILY. Good night, Papa.

[MR. WEBB *crosses into the house, whistling "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds," and disappears.*]

REBECCA. I never told you about that letter Jane Crofut got from her minister when she was sick. The minister of her church in the town she was in before she came here. He wrote Jane a letter and on the envelope the address was like this. It said: Jane Crofut, The Crofut Farm, Grover's Corners, Sutton County, New Hampshire, United States of America.

GEORGE. What's funny about that?

REBECCA. But listen, it's not finished: the United States of America, Continent of North America, Western Hemisphere, the Earth, the Solar System, the Universe, the Mind of God—that's what it said on the envelope.

GEORGE. What do you know!

REBECCA. And the postman brought it just the same.

GEORGE. What do you know!

STAGE MANAGER. That's the end of the first act, friends. You can go and smoke now, those that smoke.

WHILE READING ACT I

1. What details does the author choose in attempting to paint a typical New England town? Does the order in which the Stage Manager mentions these details help to build up a more vivid impression of the town? Can you visualize the town from his description? Does any feeling of emotion attach to your mental image? Do you like this method better than the conventional set? Explain.

2. What is the first sentence to betray to the audience that the Stage Manager is not of this world? Does this make it easier to accept the other resurrected characters?

3. What devices does the playwright use to prevent lagging interest in the Stage Manager's long opening monologue?

4. Notice how important a part pantomime plays in this act (as in Mrs. Gibbs' preparation of an imaginary breakfast). Does it add to the play's interest?

5. Typical family life is pleasantly unfolded here. Do you find pleasure in recognizing as part of your own experience some of the incidents in the play?

6. How is the "business" of the breakfast helpful in presenting simultaneously the two families at opposite sides of the stage?

7. The playwright tries to recreate not only the place, but also the time of action. What details suggest the year 1901?

8. What do you suppose is the effect on an audience of the sudden appearance of the Woman in the Balcony? Could this effect have been achieved in the movie version?

9. What do you think of Mr. Webb's answer to the Tall Man's question? How would a similar question be answered today? What is your opinion of Grover's Corners' culture? Compare it with that of your community.

10. Does Wilder understand young people? Does he make them seem real? What dialogue and action seem particularly genuine? Have young people changed radically in half a century? In what ways?

11. The choir's singing under the conversation of George and Emily suggests radio technique. What is its effect here?

12. Compare the first act ending here with that in *Watch on the Rhine.* Why is the closing incident appropriate to this play?

13. The Stage Manager calls Act I "The Daily Life." What has it accomplished? Is there any kind of conflict, or of rising action? What elements in the act help to sustain interest despite the lack of suspense or climax?

ACT II

The tables and chairs of the two kitchens are still on the stage. The ladders have been withdrawn. The STAGE MANAGER *has been at his accustomed place, watching the audience return to its seats.*

STAGE MANAGER. Three years have gone by. Yes, the sun's come up over a thousand times. Summers and winters have cracked the mountains a little bit more, and the rains have brought down some of the dirt. Some babies that weren't even born before have begun talking regular sentences already; and a number of people who thought they were right young and spry have noticed that they can't bound up a flight of stairs like they used to, without their heart fluttering a little. Some older sons are sitting at the head of the table, and some people I know are having their meat cut up for them.

All that can happen in a thousand days. Nature's been pushing and contriving in other ways, too: a number of young people fell in love and got married. Yes, the mountain got bit away a few fractions of an inch, millions of gallons of water went by the mill, and here and there a new home was set up under a roof. Almost everybody in the world gets married. You know what I mean? In our town there aren't hardly any exceptions. Most everybody in the world climbs into their graves married.

The first act was called "The Daily Life." This act is called "Love and Marriage." There's another act coming after this; I reckon you can guess what that's about.

So it's three years later. It's 1904. It's July seventh, just after high-school commencement. That's the time most of our young people jump up and get married. Soon as they've passed their last examinations in solid geometry and Cicero's Orations, looks like they suddenly feel themselves fit to be married.

It's early morning. Only this time it's been raining. It's been pouring and thundering. Mrs. Gibbs's garden, and Mrs. Webb's here — drenched. All those bean poles and pea vines — drenched. All yesterday over there on Main Street the rain looked like curtains being blown along. Hm . . . it may begin again any minute.

There! You can hear the five-forty-five for Boston. And here comes Howie Newsome delivering the milk. And there's Si Crowell delivering the papers like his brother before him. You remember about his brother — all that education he's going to get and that'll

be wasted? And there's Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Webb come down to make breakfast, just as though it were an ordinary day. I don't have to point out to the women in my audience that those ladies they see before them, both those ladies cooked three meals a day — one of 'em for twenty years, the other for forty — and no summer vacation. They brought up two children apiece, washed, cleaned the house — and never a nervous breakdown. Never thought themselves hard-used, either.

It's like what one of those Middle West poets said: You've got to love life to have life, and you've got to have life to love life. . . . It's what they call a vicious circle.

[SI CROWELL *has entered, hurling imaginary newspapers into doorways.* HOWIE NEWSOME *has come along Main Street with* BESSIE.]

HOWIE NEWSOME. Git-ap, Bessie.

SI CROWELL. Morning, Howie.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Morning, Si. Anything in the papers I ought to know?

SI CROWELL. Nothing much, except we're losing about the best baseball pitcher Grover's Corners ever had.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Reckon he was. He's been standing off the whole of south New Hampshire single-handed, looks like.

SI CROWELL. He could hit and run bases, too.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Yep. Mighty fine ball player. . . . Bessie! I guess I can stop and talk if I've a mind to!

SI CROWELL. I don't see how he could give up a thing like that just to get married. Would you, Howie?

HOWIE NEWSOME. Can't tell, Si. Never had no talent that way.

[CONSTABLE WARREN *enters. They exchange good mornings.*] You're up early, Bill.

CONSTABLE WARREN. Seein' if there's anything I can do to prevent a flood. River's been risin' all night.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Si Crowell's all worked up here about George Gibbs's retiring from baseball.

CONSTABLE WARREN. Yes, sir; that's the way it goes. Back in eighty-four we had a player, Si — even George Gibbs couldn't touch him. Name of Hank Todd. Went down to Maine and become a parson. Wonderful ball player. . . . Howie, how did the weather look to you?

HOWIE NEWSOME. No, 'tain't bad. Think maybe it'll clear up for good.

[CONSTABLE WARREN *and* SI CROWELL *continue on their way.* HOWIE NEWSOME *brings the milk first to* MRS. GIBBS'S *house. She meets him by the trellis.*]

MRS. GIBBS. Good morning, Howie. Do you think it's going to rain again?

HOWIE NEWSOME. Morning, Mrs. Gibbs. It rained so heavy, I think maybe it'll clear up.

MRS. GIBBS. Certainly hope it will.

HOWIE NEWSOME. How much did you want today?

MRS. GIBBS. I guess I'll need three-a-milk and two-a-cream, Howie. I'm going to have a house full of relations.

HOWIE NEWSOME. My wife says to tell you we both hope they'll be very happy, Mrs. Gibbs. Know they *will.*

MRS. GIBBS. Thanks a lot, Howie. Tell your wife I hope she gits there to the wedding.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Yes, she'll be there; she'll be there if she kin. (*He crosses to* MRS. WEBB'S *house.*) Morning, Mrs. Webb.

MRS. WEBB. Oh, good morning, Mr. Newsome. I told you four quarts of milk, but I hope you can spare me another.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Yes'm . . . and the two of cream.

MRS. WEBB. Will it rain all day, Mr. Newsome?

HOWIE NEWSOME. No'm. Just sayin' to Mrs. Gibbs as how it may lighten up. Mrs. Newsome told me to tell you as how we hope they'll both be very happy, Mrs. Webb. Know they *will.*

MRS. WEBB. Thank you, and thank Mrs. Newsome; and we hope to see you all at the wedding.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Yes, Mrs. Webb. We hope to git there. Couldn't miss that. Chck! Bessie!

[*Exit* HOWIE NEWSOME. DR. GIBBS *descends in his shirt sleeves, and sits down at his breakfast table.*]

DR. GIBBS. Well, Ma, the day has come. You're losin' one of your chicks.

MRS. GIBBS. Frank Gibbs, don't you say another word. I feel like crying every minute. Sit down and drink your coffee.

DR. GIBBS. The groom's up shaving himself. Whistling and singing, like he's glad to leave us. Every now and then he says, "I do" to the mirror, but it don't sound convincing to me.

MRS. GIBBS. I declare I don't know how he'll get along. I've arranged his clothes and seen to it he's put warm things on — Frank, they're too young! Emily won't think of such things. He'll catch his death of cold within a week. . . . Here's something I made for you.

DR. GIBBS. Why, Julia Hersey! French toast!

MRS. GIBBS. 'Tain't hard to make, and I had to do something.

DR. GIBBS. I remember my wedding morning, Julia.

MRS. GIBBS. Now don't start that, Frank Gibbs. I tell you I can't stand it.

DR. GIBBS. I was the scaredest young fella in the State of New Hampshire. I thought I'd made a mistake for sure. And when I saw you comin'

down that aisle I thought you were the prettiest girl I'd ever seen, but the only trouble was that I'd never seen you before. There I was in the Congregational church marryin' a total stranger.

MRS. GIBBS. And how do you think I felt! . . . Did you hear Rebecca stirring about upstairs?

DR. GIBBS. Only morning in the year she hasn't been managing everybody's business. She's shut up in her room. I got the impression that maybe she's crying.

MRS. GIBBS. Good Lord! This has got to stop. . . . Rebecca! Rebecca! Everything's getting cold down here.

[GEORGE *comes rattling down the stairs, very brisk.*]

GEORGE. Good morning, everybody. Only five more hours to live. (*Makes the gesture of cutting his throat.*)

MRS. GIBBS. Where are you going?

GEORGE. Just stepping across the grass to see my girl.

MRS. GIBBS. Now, George! You take an umbrella, or I won't let you out of this house.

GEORGE. Aw, Ma. It's just a *step!*

MRS. GIBBS. From tomorrow on you can kill yourself in all weathers; but while you're in my house you live wisely, thank you. There are your overshoes right there in the hall. And here's an umbrella.

GEORGE. Aw, Ma!

MRS. GIBBS. Maybe Mrs. Webb isn't used to callers at seven in the morning. Take a cup-a-coffee first.

GEORGE. Be back in a minute. (*He crosses the stage, leaping over the puddles.*) Good morning, Mother Webb.

MRS. WEBB. Goodness! You frightened me! Now, George, you can come in a minute out of the wet, but you know I can't ask you in.

GEORGE. Why not?

MRS. WEBB. George, you know's well as I do: the groom can't see his bride on his wedding day, not until he sees her in church.

GEORGE. Aw! That's just a superstition.

[*Enter* MR. WEBB.]

MR. WEBB. Good morning, George.

GEORGE. Mr. Webb, you don't believe in that superstition, do you?

MR. WEBB. There's a lot of common sense in some superstitions, George.

MRS. WEBB. Millions have folla'd it, George, and you don't want to be the first to fly in the face of custom.

GEORGE. How is Emily?

MRS. WEBB. She hasn't waked up yet. I haven't heard a sound out of her.

GEORGE. Emily's *asleep!*

MRS. WEBB. No wonder! We were up till all hours, sewing and packing. I'll tell you what I'll do; you set down here a minute with Mr. Webb and drink this cup of coffee, and I'll go upstairs and see she doesn't come down and surprise you. There's some bacon, too; but don't be long about it.

[*Exit* MRS. WEBB. *Embarrassed silence.*]

MR. WEBB. Well, George, how are you?

GEORGE. Oh, fine. I'm fine. (*Pause.*) Mr. Webb, what sense could there be in a superstition like that?

MR. WEBB. Well, you see, on her wedding morning a girl's head's apt to be full of . . . clothes and things like that. Don't you think that's probably it?

GEORGE. Ye-e-s. I never thought of that.

MR. WEBB. A girl's apt to be a mite nervous on her wedding day. (*Pause.*)

GEORGE. I wish a fellow could get married without all that marching up and down.

MR. WEBB. Well, every man that's ever lived has felt that way about it, George; but it hasn't done much good. It's the women that have built up weddings, my boy. From now on they have it pretty much as they like. . . . All those good women standing shoulder to shoulder making sure that the knot's tied in a mighty public way.

GEORGE. But . . . you *believe* in it, don't you, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB. Oh, yes; oh, yes. Don't you misunderstand me, my boy. Marriage is a wonderful thing—wonderful thing. And don't you forget that, George.

GEORGE. No, sir. Mr. Webb, how old were you when you got married?

MR. WEBB. Well, you see, I'd been to college and I'd taken a little time to get settled. But Mrs. Webb—she wasn't much older than what Emily is. Oh, age hasn't much to do with it, George—not compared to other things.

GEORGE. What were you going to say, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB. Oh, I don't know—was I going to say something? (*Pause.*) George, I was thinking the other night of some advice my father gave me when I got married. Charles, he said, Charles, start out early showing who's boss, he said. Best thing to do is to give an order, even if it don't make sense; just so she'll learn to obey. And he said: If anything about your wife irritates you—her conversation, or anything—just get up and leave the house. That'll make it clear to her, he said. And, ah, yes! he said, never, *never* let your wife know how much money you have, never.

GEORGE. Well, Mr. Webb . . . I don't think I could. . . .

MR. WEBB. So I took the opposite of my father's advice and I've been happy ever since. And let that be a lesson to you, George, never to ask advice on personal matters. . . . George, are you going to raise chickens on your farm?

GEORGE. What?

MR. WEBB. Are you going to raise chickens on your farm?

GEORGE. Uncle Luke's never been much interested, but I thought—

MR. WEBB. A book came into my office the other day, George, on the Philo System of raising chickens. I want you to read it. I'm thinking of beginning in a small way in the back yard, and I'm going to put an incubator in the cellar—

[*Enter* MRS. WEBB.]

MRS. WEBB. Charles, are you talking about that old incubator again? I thought you two'd be talking about things worth while.

MR. WEBB. Well, Myrtle, if you want to give the boy some good advice, I'll go upstairs and leave you alone with him.

MRS. WEBB. Now, George, I'm sorry, but I've got to send you away so that Emily can come down and get some breakfast. She told me to tell you that she sends you her love, but that she doesn't want to lay eyes on you. So good-by, George.

[GEORGE *crosses the stage to his own home and disappears.*]

MR. WEBB. Myrtle, I guess you don't know about that older superstition.

MRS. WEBB. What do you mean, Charles?

MR. WEBB. Since the cave men: the groom shouldn't be left alone with his father-in-law on the day of the wedding, or near it. Now don't forget that!

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Now I have to interrupt again here. You see, we want to know how all this began—this wedding, this plan to spend a lifetime together. I'm awfully interested in how big things like that begin. You know how it is. You're twenty-one or twenty-two, and you make some decisions; then whisssh! you're seventy. You've been a lawyer for fifty years, and that white-haired lady at your side has eaten over fifty thousand meals with you. How do such things begin?

George and Emily are going to show you now the conversation they had when they first knew that . . . that . . . as the saying goes . . . they were meant for one another. But before they do it I want you to try and remember what it was like when you were young, when you were fifteen or sixteen. For some reason it is very

hard to do: those days when even the little things in life could be almost too exciting to bear. And particularly the days when you were first in love; when you were like a person sleepwalking, and you didn't quite see the street you were in and didn't quite hear everything that was said to you. You're just a little bit crazy. Will you remember that, please?

Now they'll be coming out of high school at three o'clock. George has just been elected president of the junior class; and, as it's June, that means he'll be president of the senior class all next year. And Emily's just been elected secretary and treasurer. I don't have to tell you how important that is. (*He places a board across the backs of two chairs, parallel to the footlights, and places two high stools behind it. This is the counter of* MR. MORGAN'S *drugstore.*) All ready!

[EMILY, *carrying an armful of imaginary schoolbooks, comes along Main Street from the left.*]

EMILY. I can't, Louise. I've got to go home. Good-by. . . . Oh, Earnestine! Earnestine! Can you come over tonight and do algebra? I did the first and third in study hall. No, they're not hard. But, Earnestine, that Caesar's awful hard. I don't see why we have to do a thing like that. Come over about seven. Tell your mother you *have* to. G'by. . . . G'by, Helen. G'by, Fred.

[GEORGE, *also carrying books, catches up with her.*]

GEORGE. Can I carry your books home for you, Emily?

EMILY (*coldly*). Thank you. (*She gives them to him.*)

GEORGE. Excuse me a minute, Emily. . . . Say, Bob, get everything ready. I'll be there in a quarter of an hour. If I'm a little late, start practice anyway. And give Herb some long high ones. His eye needs a lot of practice. Seeya later.

EMILY. Good-by, Lizzy.

GEORGE. Good-by, Lizzy. . . . I'm awfully glad you were elected, too, Emily.

EMILY. Thank you.

[*They have been standing on Main Street, almost against the back wall.* GEORGE *is about to take the first steps toward the audience when he stops again.*]

GEORGE. Emily, why are you mad at me?

EMILY. I'm not mad at you.

GEORGE. You . . . you treat me so funny.

EMILY. Well, I might as well say it right out, George. I don't like the

whole change that's come over you in the last year. I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings, but I've just got to tell the truth and shame the devil.

GEORGE. I'm awfully sorry, Emily. Wha-a-what do you mean?

EMILY. Well, up to a year ago I used to like you a lot. And I used to watch you as you did everything . . . because we'd been friends so long . . . and then you began spending all your time at baseball . . . and you never even spoke to anybody any more; not even to your own family you didn't . . . and, George, it's a fact, you've got awful conceited and stuck-up, and all the girls say so. They may not say so to your face, but that's what they say about you behind your back; and it hurts me to hear them say it, but I've got to agree with them a little. I'm sorry if it hurts your feelings . . . but I can't be sorry I said it.

GEORGE. I . . . I'm glad you said it, Emily. I never thought that such a thing was happening to me. I guess it's hard for a fella not to have faults creep into his character.

[*They take a step or two in silence, then stand still in misery.*]

EMILY. I always expect a man to be perfect, and I think he should be.

GEORGE. Oh . . . I don't think it's possible to be perfect, Emily.

EMILY. Well, my father is and, as far as I can see, your father is. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be, too.

GEORGE. Well, Emily . . . I feel it's the other way round. That men aren't naturally good, but girls are. Like you and your mother and my mother.

EMILY. Well, you might as well know right now that I'm not perfect. It's not as easy for a girl to be perfect as a man, because we girls are more nervous. Now I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it.

GEORGE. No, no — I guess if it's the truth you ought to say it. You stick to it, Emily.

EMILY. I don't know if it's the truth or not. And I suddenly feel that it isn't important at all.

GEORGE. Emily, would you like an ice-cream soda, or something, before you go home?

EMILY. Well, thank you. . . . I would.

[*They come into the drugstore and seat themselves on the stools*]

STAGE MANAGER (*as* MR. MORGAN). Hello, George. Hello, Emily. What'll you have? Why, Emily Webb, what've you been crying about?

GEORGE (*groping for an explanation*). She . . . she just got an awful scare, Mr. Morgan. She almost got run over by that hardware-store

wagon. Everybody always says that Tom Huckins drives like a crazy man.

STAGE MANAGER. Here, take a drink of water, Emily. You look all shook up. . . . There! Now, what'll you have?

EMILY. I'll have a strawberry phosphate, thank you, Mr. Morgan.

GEORGE. No, no. You go and have an ice-cream soda with me, Emily. Two strawberry ice-cream sodas, Mr. Morgan.

STAGE MANAGER (*working the faucets*). Yes, sir. I tell you, you've got to look both ways before you cross Main Street these days. Gets worse every year. There are a hundred and twenty-five horses in Grover's Corners this minute I'm talking to you. State inspector was in here yesterday. And now they're bringing in these automobiles, the best thing to do is to just stay home. Why, I can remember the time when a dog could lie down all day in the middle of Main Street and nothing would come to disturb him. . . . Yes, Miss Ellis; be with you in a minute. . . . Here are your sodas. Enjoy 'em. (*He goes off.*)

EMILY. They're so expensive.

GEORGE. No, no — don't you think of that. We're celebrating. First, we're celebrating our election. And then do you know what else I'm celebrating?

EMILY. No.

GEORGE. I'm celebrating because I've got a friend who tells me all the things that ought to be told me.

EMILY. George, *please* don't think of that. I don't know why I said it. It's not true. You're —

GEORGE. No, you stick to it, Emily. I'm glad you spoke to me like you did. But you'll see: I'm going to change so quick — you bet I'm going to change. And, Emily, I want to ask you a favor.

EMILY. What?

GEORGE. Emily, if I go away to State Agriculture College next year, will you write me a letter once in a while?

EMILY. I certainly will. I certainly will, George. (*Pause.*) It certainly seems like being away three years you'd get out of touch with things.

GEORGE. No, no. I mustn't do that. You see, I'm not only going to be just a farmer. After a while, maybe, I'll run for something to get elected. So your letters'll be very important to me; you know, telling me what's going on here and everything. . . .

EMILY. Just the same, three years is a long time. Maybe letters from Grover's Corners wouldn't be so interesting after a while. Grover's

Corners isn't a very important place when you think of all New Hampshire; but I think it's a very nice town.

GEORGE. The day wouldn't come when I wouldn't want to know everything that's happening here. I know *that's* true, Emily.

EMILY. Well, I'll try to make my letters interesting. (*Pause.*)

GEORGE. Y'know, Emily, whenever I meet a farmer I ask him if he thinks it's important to go to agricultural school to be a good farmer.

EMILY. Why, George—

GEORGE. Yeah, and some of them say that it's even a waste of time. You can get all those things, anyway, out of the pamphlets the government sends out. And Uncle Luke's getting old—he's about ready for me to start in taking over his farm tomorrow, if I could.

EMILY. My!

GEORGE. And, like you say, being gone all that time . . . in other places and meeting other people . . . If anything like that can happen, I don't want to go away. I guess new people aren't any better than old ones. I'll bet they almost never are. Emily, I feel that you're as good a friend as I've got. I don't need to go and meet the people in other towns.

EMILY. But, George, maybe it's very important for you to go and learn all that about cattle judging and soils and those things. And if you're going into politics, maybe you ought to meet people from other parts of the state . . . of course, I don't know.

GEORGE (*after a pause*). Emily, I'm going to make up my mind right now. I won't go. I'll tell Pa about it tonight.

EMILY. Why, George, I don't see why you have to decide right now. It's a whole year away.

GEORGE. Emily, I'm glad you spoke to me about that . . . that fault in my character. And what you said was right; but there was *one* thing wrong in it, and that was when you said that for a year I wasn't noticing people, and . . . you, for instance. Listen, Emily . . . you say you were watching me when I did everything. . . . Why, I was doing the same about you all the time. Why, sure—I always thought about you as one of the chief people I thought about. I always made sure where you were sitting on the bleachers, and who you were with. And we've always had lots of talks . . . and joking, in the halls; and they always meant a lot to me. Of course, they weren't as good as the talk we're having now. Lately I'd been noticing that you'd been acting kind of funny to me; and for three days I've been trying to walk home with you, but something's always got in the way. Yesterday I was standing over against

the wall waiting for you, and you walked home with Miss Corcoran.

EMILY. George! . . . Life's awful funny! How could I have known that? Why, I thought—

GEORGE. Listen, Emily, I'm going to tell you why I'm not going to agricultural school. I think that once you've found a person that you're very fond of . . . I mean a person who's fond of you, too—at least enough to be interested in your character . . . Well, I think that's just as important as college is, and even more so. That's what I think.

EMILY. I think it's awfully important, too.

GEORGE. Emily.

EMILY. Yes, George.

GEORGE. Emily, if I improve and make a big change . . . would you be . . . I mean, *could* you be . . .

EMILY. I . . . I am now; I always have been. (*Pause.*)

GEORGE. So I guess this is an important talk we've been having.

EMILY. Yes.

GEORGE (*taking a deep breath and straightening his back*). Wait just a minute and I'll take you home. (*He rises and goes to the* STAGE MANAGER, *who appears and comes toward him.*) Mr. Morgan, I'll have to go home and get the money to pay you for this. It'll only take me a minute.

STAGE MANAGER. What's that? George Gibbs, do you mean to tell me—

GEORGE. Yes, but I had reasons, Mr. Morgan. Look, here's my gold watch to keep until I come back with the money.

STAGE MANAGER. That's all right. Keep your watch. I'll trust you.

GEORGE. I'll be back in five minutes.

STAGE MANAGER. I'll trust you ten years, George—not a day more. . . . Got all over your shock, Emily?

EMILY. Yes, thank you, Mr. Morgan. It was nothing.

GEORGE (*taking up the books from the counter*). I'm ready.

[*They walk in grave silence down the stage, turn, and pass through the trellis at the Webbs' back door and disappear.*]

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you, Emily. Thank you, George. . . . Now before we go on to the wedding, there are still some more things we ought to know about this—about this marriage. I want to know some more about how the parents took it; but what I want to know most of all is—oh, you know what I mean—what Grover's Corners thought about marriage, anyway. You know's well as I do: people are never able to say right out what they think of money, or death,

or fame, or marriage. You've got to catch it between the lines; you've got to *over*hear it.

Oh, Doctor! Mrs. Gibbs!

[*They appear at their side of the stage and exchange a glance of understanding with him. The* STAGE MANAGER *lays across two chairs the same plank that served as a drugstore counter, and it has now become* MRS. GIBBS'S *ironing board.* DR. GIBBS *sits down in a rocker and smokes.* MRS. GIBBS *irons a moment in silence, then goes to the foot of the stairs.*]

MRS. GIBBS (*calling*). Rebecca! It's time you turned out your light and went to sleep. George, you'd better get some sleep, too.

REBECCA'S VOICE. Ma, I haven't finished my English.

MRS. GIBBS. What? Well, I bet you haven't been working, Rebecca. You've been reading that Sears, Roebuck catalogue, that's what you've been doing. All right, I'll give you ten more minutes. If you haven't finished by then, you'll just have to fail the course and be a disgrace to your father and me. . . . George, what are you doing?

GEORGE'S VOICE (*hurt*). I'm doing history.

MRS. GIBBS. Well, you'd better go to bed. You're probably sleeping at the desk as it is. (*She casts an amused eye at her husband and returns to her ironing.*)

DR. GIBBS. I had a long talk with the boy today.

MRS. GIBBS. Did you?

DR. GIBBS. I tell you, Mrs. G., there's nothing so terrifying in the world as a son. The relation of a father to a son is the confounded awkwardest—I always come away feeling like a soggy sponge of hypocrisy.

MRS. GIBBS. Well, a mother and a daughter's no picnic, let me tell you.

DR. GIBBS. George is set on it: he wants to marry Emily soon as school's out and take her right on to the farm. (*Pause.*) He says he can sit up nights and learn agriculture from government pamphlets, without going to college for it.

MRS. GIBBS. He always was crazy about farming. Gets that from my people.

DR. GIBBS. At a pinch I guess he could start in farming; but I swear I think he's too young to get married. Julia, he's just a green half-grown kid. He isn't ready to be a family man.

MRS. GIBBS. No, he ain't. You're right. But he's a good boy and I wouldn't like to think of him being alone out there . . . coming into town Satiddy nights, like any old farm hand, tuckered out from work and looking for excitement. He might get into bad ways. It wouldn't

be enough fun for him to come and sit by our stove, and holding hands with Emily for a year mightn't be enough either. He might lose interest in her.

DR. GIBBS. Hm.

MRS. GIBBS. Frank, I been watching her. George is a lucky boy when you think of all the silly girls in the world.

DR. GIBBS. But, Julia, George *married*. That great, gangling, selfish nincompoop.

MRS. GIBBS. Yes, I know. (*She takes up a collar and examines it.*) Frank, what do you do to your collars? Do you gnaw 'em? I never saw such a man for collars.

DR. GIBBS. Julia, when I married you, do you know what one of my terrors was in getting married?

MRS. GIBBS. Pshaw! Go on with you!

DR. GIBBS. I was afraid we weren't going to have material for conversation more'n'ld last us a few weeks. I was afraid we'd run out and eat our meals in silence. That's a fact. You and I've been conversing for twenty years now without any noticeable barren spells.

MRS. GIBBS. Well, good weather, bad weather, 'tain't very choice but I always manage to find something to say. (*Pause.*)

DR. GIBBS. What do you think? What do you think, Julia? Shall we tell the boy he can go ahead and get married?

MRS. GIBBS. Seems like it's up to us to decide. Myrtle and Charles Webb are willing. They think it's a good idea to throw the young people into the sea and let'm sink or swim, as soon as they're ready.

DR. GIBBS. What does that mean? Must we decide right now? This minute?

MRS. GIBBS. There you go putting the responsibility on me!

DR. GIBBS. Here it is, almost April. . . . I'll go up and say a word to him right now before he goes to bed. (*He rises.*) You're sure, Julia? You've nothing more to add?

MRS. GIBBS (*stops ironing a moment*). I don't know what to say. Seems like it's too much to ask, for a big outdoor boy like that to go and get shut up in classrooms for three years. And once he's on the farm he might just as well have a companion, seeing he's found a fine girl like Emily. . . . People are meant to live two-by-two in this world. . . . Yes, Frank, go up and tell him it's all right.

[DR. GIBBS *crosses and is about to call when* MRS. GIBBS, *her hands on her cheeks, staring into the audience, speaks in sharp alarm.*]

MRS. GIBBS. Wait a minute! Wait a minute! (*Then, resuming her ironing.*) No—go and tell him.

DR. GIBBS. Why did you stop then, Julia?

MRS. GIBBS. Oh, you know: I thought of all those times we went through in the first years when George and Rebecca were babies—you walking up and down with them at three in the morning, the whooping cough, the time George fell off the porch. You and I were twenty-five years old, and more. It's wonderful how one forgets one's troubles, like that. . . . Yes, Frank, go upstairs and tell him. It's worth it.

DR. GIBBS. Yes, they'll have a lot of troubles, but that's none of our business. Let'm. Everybody has a right to his own troubles. You ought to be present, Julia—important occasion like that. I'll call him. . . . George! Oh, George!

GEORGE'S VOICE. Yes, Pa.

DR. GIBBS. Can you come down a minute? Your mother and I want to speak to you.

GEORGE. Yeah, sure.

MRS. GIBBS (*putting her arm through her husband's*). Lord, what a fool I am; I'm trembling all over. There's nothing to tremble about.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you! Thank you! . . . Now we're ready to go on with the wedding.

[*While he talks, the actors remove the chairs and tables and trellises from the Gibbs and Webb homes. They arrange the pews for the church in the back of the stage. The congregation will sit facing the back wall. The aisle of the church is in the middle of the scene. A small platform is placed against the back wall; on this the* STAGE MANAGER *as minister can stand.*]

There are a lot of things to be said about a wedding; there are a lot of thoughts that go on during a wedding. We can't get them all into one wedding, naturally, and especially not into a wedding at Grover's Corners, where they're awfully plain and short. In this wedding I play the minister. That gives me the right to say a few more things about it.

For a while now, the play gets pretty serious. Y'see, some churches say that marriage is a sacrament. I don't quite know what that means, but I can guess. Like Mrs. Gibbs said a few minutes ago: People were made to live two-by-two. This is a good wedding, but people are so put together that even at a good wedding there's a lot of confusion way down deep in people's minds; and we thought that that ought to be in our play, too.

The real hero of this scene isn't on the stage at all, and you know

who that is. It's like what one of those European fellas said: Every child born into the world is nature's attempt to make a perfect human being. Well, we've seen nature pushing and contriving for some time now. We all know that nature's interested in quantity; but I think she's interested in quality, too — that's why I'm in the ministry. Maybe she's trying to make another good governor for New Hampshire. And don't forget the other witnesses at this wedding — the ancestors. Millions of them. Most of them set out to live two-by-two, also. Millions of them.

Well, that's all my sermon. 'Twan't very long, anyway.

[*The organ starts playing Handel's "Largo." The congregation streams into the church and sits in silence.* MRS. WEBB, *on the way to her place, turns back and speaks to the audience.*]

MRS. WEBB. I don't know why on earth I should be crying. I suppose there's nothing to cry about. It came over me at breakfast this morning; there was Emily eating her breakfast as she's done for seventeen years, and now she's going off to eat it in someone else's house. I suppose that's it. And Emily! She suddenly said, "I can't eat another mouthful," and she put her head down on the table and *she* cried.

[*The choir starts singing, "Love Divine, All Love Excelling."* GEORGE *has reached the stage. He stares at the congregation a moment, then takes a few steps of withdrawal toward the right proscenium pillar.*]

GEORGE (*darkly, to himself*). I wish I were back at school. . . . I don't want to get married.

[*His mother has left her seat and come toward him. She stops, looking at him anxiously.*]

MRS. GIBBS. George, what's the matter?

GEORGE. Ma, I don't want to grow *old*. Why's everybody pushing me so?

MRS. GIBBS. Why, George . . . you wanted it.

GEORGE. Why do I have to get married at all? Listen, Ma, for the last time I ask you —

MRS. GIBBS. No, no, George . . . you're a man now.

GEORGE. Listen, Ma, you never listen to me. All I want to do is to be a fella. Why do —

MRS. GIBBS. George! If anyone should hear you! Now stop. Why, I'm ashamed of you!

GEORGE (*passing his hand over his forehead*). What's the matter? I've been dreaming. Where's Emily?

MRS. GIBBS. Gracious! You gave me such a turn.

GEORGE. Cheer up, Ma. What are you looking so funny for? Cheer up; I'm getting married.

MRS. GIBBS. Let me catch my breath a minute.

GEORGE. Now, Ma, you save Thursday nights. Emily and I are coming over to dinner every Thursday night . . . you'll see. Ma, what are you crying for? Come on, we've got to get ready for this.

[*In the meantime* EMILY, *in white and wearing her wedding veil, has come through the audience and mounted on to the stage. She, too, draws back when she sees the congregation in the church. The choir begins, "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."*]

EMILY. I never felt so alone in my whole life. And George over there, looking so . . . I *hate* him. I wish I were dead. Papa! Papa!

MR. WEBB (*leaving his seat in the pews and coming toward her anxiously*). Emily! Emily! Now don't get upset.

EMILY. But, Papa, I don't want to get married.

MR. WEBB. Sh-sh—Emily. Everything's all right.

EMILY. Why can't I stay for a while just as I am? Let's go away.

MR. WEBB. No, no, Emily. Now stop and think.

EMILY. Don't you remember that you used to say—all the time you used to say that I was *your* girl. There must be lots of places we can go to. Let's go away. I'll work for you. I could keep house.

MR. WEBB. Sh. . . . You mustn't think of such things. You're just nervous, Emily. Now, now—you're marrying the best young fellow in the world. George is a fine fellow.

EMILY. But, Papa—

MR. WEBB. George! George!

[MRS. GIBBS *returns to her seat.* GEORGE *hears* MR. WEBB *and looks up.* MR. WEBB *beckons to him. They move to the center of the stage.*] I'm giving away my daughter, George. Do you think you can take care of her?

GEORGE. Mr. Webb, I want to . . . I want to try. Emily, I'm going to do my best. I love you, Emily. I need you.

EMILY. Well, if you love me, help me. All I want is someone to love me.

GEORGE. I will, Emily.

EMILY. If ever I'm sick or in trouble, that's what I mean.

GEORGE. Emily, I'll try. I'll try.

EMILY. And I mean for *ever*. Do you hear? For ever and ever.

[*They fall into each other's arms. The March from* Lohengrin *is heard.*]

MR. WEBB. Come, they're waiting for us. Now you know it'll be all right. Come, quick.

[GEORGE *slips away and takes his place beside the* STAGE MANAGER-CLERGYMAN. EMILY *proceeds up the aisle on her father's arm.*]

STAGE MANAGER. Do you, George, take this woman, Emily, to be your wedded wife, to have . . .

[MRS. SOAMES *has been sitting in the last row of the congregation. She now turns to her neighbors and speaks in a shrill voice.*]

MRS. SOAMES. Perfectly lovely wedding! Loveliest wedding I ever saw. Oh, I do love a good wedding, don't you? Doesn't she make a lovely bride?

GEORGE. I do.

STAGE MANAGER. Do you, Emily, take this man, George, to be your wedded husband . . .

MRS. SOAMES. Don't know *when* I've seen such a lovely wedding. But I always cry. Don't know why it is, but I always cry. I just like to see young people happy, don't you? Oh, I think it's lovely.

[*The ring. The kiss. The stage is suddenly arrested into silent tableau.*]

STAGE MANAGER (*his eyes on the distance, says to the audience*). I've married two hundred couples in my day. Do I believe in it? I don't know. M_____ marries N_____. Millions of them. The cottage, the gocart, the Sunday afternoon drives in the Ford, the first rheumatism, the grandchildren, the second rheumatism, the deathbed, the reading of the will—Once in a thousand times it's interesting. Well, let's have Mendelssohn's "Wedding March"!

[*The organ picks up the March. The bride and groom come down the aisle, radiant but trying to be very dignified.*]

MRS. SOAMES. Aren't they a lovely couple? Oh, I've never been to such a nice wedding. I'm sure they'll be happy. I always say *happiness,* that's the great thing! The important thing is to be happy.

[*The bride and groom reach the steps leading into the audience. A bright light is thrown upon them. They descend into the auditorium and run up the aisle joyously.*]

STAGE MANAGER. That's all the second act. Ten minutes' intermission, folks.

WHILE READING ACT II

1. "Three years have gone by." What details give life to this statement? How does the opening of this act achieve the impression of quiet and leisurely change in the town? Compare with Act I.

2. The Stage Manager's misquotation from the Middle West poet suggests a possible theme for the play. Can you express this theme? (The correct line

is "It takes life to love Life" from "Lucinda Matlock," by Edgar Lee Masters.)

3. In showing you "how all this began" the author uses a device suggestive of the movie flash-back. Compare the direct way in which time is manipulated here with the elaborate method in *Berkeley Square*.

4. Theatre audiences find the conversation between George and Emily particularly moving. Do you find it so in the reading? Do the two seem too naïve for our times?

5. "The real hero of this scene isn't on the stage at all." What does the minister mean?

6. The two young people and their parents all have occasional misgivings about marriage. What are the reasons in each case? Are they plausible?

7. Why does the author introduce Mrs. Soames's shrill comments as an obbligato to the marriage ceremony?

8. How do you account for the Stage Manager's almost cynical summary of a typical lifetime? Does it destroy some of the illusion of this scene?

9. This act is called "Love and Marriage." What simple truths about these does the act propound? Many of these are truths spoken by the genial philosopher of the play — the Stage Manager.

ACT III

During the intermission the audience has seen the actors arranging the stage. On the right-hand side, a little right of the center, ten or twelve ordinary chairs have been placed in three openly spaced rows facing the audience. These are graves in the cemetery.

Toward the end of the intermission the actors enter and take their places. The front row contains, toward the center of the stage, an empty chair; then MRS. GIBBS *and* SIMON STIMSON. *The second row contains, among others,* MRS. SOAMES. *The third row has* WALLY WEBB. *The dead sit in a quiet without stiffness and in a patience without listlessness.*

The STAGE MANAGER *takes his accustomed place and waits for the house lights to go down.*

STAGE MANAGER. This time nine years have gone by, friends — summer, 1913. Gradual changes in Grover's Corners. Horses are getting rarer. Farmers coming into town in Fords. Chief difference is in the young people, far as I can see. They want to go to the moving pictures all the time. They want to wear clothes like they see there . . . want to be citified. Everybody locks their house doors now at night. Ain't been any burglars in town yet, but everybody's heard about 'em. But you'd be surprised, though — on the whole, things don't change much at Grover's Corners.

Guess you want to know what all these chairs are here fur. Smarter ones have guessed it already. I don't know how you feel about such things, but this certainly is a beautiful place. It's on a hilltop — a windy hilltop — lots of sky, lots of clouds, often lots of sun and moon and stars. You come up here on a fine afternoon and you can see range on range of hills — awful blue they are — up there by Lake Sunapee and Lake Winnepesaukee . . . and way up, if you've got a glass, you can see the White Mountains and Mt. Washington — where North Conway and Conway is. And, of course, our favorite mountain, Mt. Monadnock's right here — and all around it lie these towns — Jaffrey, 'n East Jaffrey, 'n Peterborough, 'n Dublin; and (*Then, pointing down in the audience.*) there, quite a ways down, is Grover's Corners.

Yes, beautiful spot up here. Mountain laurel and lilacs. I often wonder why people like to be buried in Woodlawn and Brooklyn when they might pass the same time up here in New Hampshire. Over in that corner (*Pointing to stage left.*) are the old stones — 1670, 1680. Strong-minded people that come a long way to be independent. Summer people walk around there laughing at the funny words on the tombstones . . . it don't do any harm. And genealogists come up from Boston — get paid by city people for looking up their ancestors. They want to make sure they're Daughters of the American Revolution and of the *Mayflower*. . . . Well, I guess that don't do any harm, either. Wherever you come near the human race, there's layers and layers of nonsense.

Over there are some Civil War veterans too. Iron flags on their graves. . . . New Hampshire boys . . . had a notion that the Union ought to be kept together, though they'd never seen more than fifty miles of it themselves. All they knew was the name, friends — the United States of America. The United States of America. And they went and died about it.

This here is the new part of the cemetery. Here's your friend, Mrs. Gibbs. 'N let me see — Here's Mr. Stimson, organist at the Congregational church. And over there's Mrs. Soames, who enjoyed the wedding so — you remember? Oh, and a lot of others. And Editor Webb's boy, Wallace, whose appendix burst while he was on a Boy Scout trip to Crawford Notch. Yes, an awful lot of sorrow has sort of quieted down up here. People just wild with grief have brought their relatives up to this hill. We all know how it is. And then time . . . and sunny days . . . and rainy days . . . 'n snow . . . tz-tz-tz. We're all glad they're in a beautiful place, and we're

coming up here ourselves when our fit's over. This certainly is an important part of Grover's Corners. A lot of thoughts come up here, night and day, but there's no post office.

Now I'm going to tell you some things you know already. You know'm as well as I do, but you don't take'm out and look at'm very often. I don't care what they say with their mouths — everybody knows that *something* is eternal. And it ain't houses, and it ain't names, and it ain't earth, and it ain't even stars . . . everybody knows in their bones that *something* is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings. All the greatest people ever lived have been telling us that for five thousand years, and yet you'd be surprised how people are always losing hold of it. There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being. (*Pause.*) You know as well as I do that the dead don't stay interested in us living people for very long. Gradually, gradually, they let hold of the earth . . . and the ambitions they had . . . and the pleasures they had . . . and the things they suffered . . . and the people they loved. They get weaned away from earth. That's the way I put it — weaned away. Yes, they stay here while the earth part of 'em burns away, burns out; and all that time they slowly get indifferent to what's goin' on in Grover's Corners.

They're waitin'. They're waitin' for something that they feel is comin'. Something important and great. Aren't they waitin' for the eternal part in them to come out clear? Some of the things they're going to say maybe'll hurt your feelings — but that's the way it is: mother 'n daughter . . . husband 'n wife . . . enemy 'n enemy . . . money 'n miser — all those terribly important things kind of grow pale around here. And what's left? What's left when memory's gone, and your identity, Mrs. Smith? (*He looks at the audience a minute, then turns to the stage.*)

Well! There are some *living* people. There's Joe Stoddard, our undertaker, supervising a new-made grave. And here comes a Grover's Corners boy, that left town to go out West.

[JOE STODDARD *has hovered about in the background.* SAM CRAIG *enters left, wiping his forehead from the exertion. He carries an umbrella and strolls front.*]

SAM CRAIG. Good afternoon, Joe Stoddard.

JOE STODDARD. Good afternoon, good afternoon. Let me see now: Do I know you?

SAM CRAIG. I'm Sam Craig.

JOE STODDARD. Gracious sakes' alive! Of all people! I should'a knowed

you'd be back for the funeral. You've been away a long time, Sam.

SAM CRAIG. Yes, I've been away over twelve years. I'm in business out in Buffalo now, Joe. But I was in the East when I got news of my cousin's death, so I thought I'd combine things a little and come and see the old home. You look well.

JOE STODDARD. Yes, yes, can't complain. Very sad, our journey today, Samuel.

SAM CRAIG. Yes.

JOE STODDARD. Yes, yes. I always say I hate to supervise when a young person is taken. I see you brought your umbrella. It's going to rain and make it sadder still, seems like. They'll be here in a few minutes now. I had to come here early today — my son's supervisin' at the home.

SAM CRAIG (*reading stones*). Old Farmer McCarty. I used to do chores for him — after school. He had the lumbago.

JOE STODDARD. Yes, we brought Farmer McCarty here a number of years ago now.

SAM CRAIG (*staring at* MRS. GIBBS's *knees*). Why, this is my Aunt Julia. . . . I'd forgotten that she'd . . . of course, of course.

JOE STODDARD. Yes, Doc Gibbs lost his wife two, three, years ago . . . about this time. And today's another pretty bad blow for him, too.

MRS. GIBBS (*to* SIMON STIMSON, *in an even voice*). That's my sister Carey's boy, Sam — Sam Craig.

SIMON STIMSON. I'm always uncomfortable when *they're* around.

MRS. GIBBS. Simon.

SIMON STIMSON. They and their nonsense and their idiotic glee at being alive.

MRS. GIBBS. Simon, be patient.

SAM CRAIG. Do they choose their own verses much, Joe?

JOE STODDARD. No . . . not usual. Mostly the bereaved pick a verse.

SAM CRAIG. Doesn't sound like Aunt Julia. There aren't many of those Hersey sisters left now. Let me see. Where are — I wanted to look at my father's and mother's . . .

JOE STODDARD. Over there with the Craigs. . . . Avenue F.

SAM CRAIG (*reading* SIMON STIMSON's *epitaph*). He was organist at church, wasn't he? Hm, drank a lot, we used to say.

JOE STODDARD. Nobody was supposed to know about it. He'd seen a peck of trouble. Those musical fellas ain't like the rest of us, I reckon. (*Behind his hand.*) Took his own life, y' know?

SAM CRAIG. Oh, did he?

JOE STODDARD. Hung himself in the attic. They tried to hush it up, but

of course it got around. His wife's just married Senator Barstow. Many a time I've seen her, eleven o'clock at night, goin' around the streets huntin' for her husband. Think o' that! Now she's married to Senator Barstow over at Manchester. He chose his own epy-taph. You can see it there. It ain't a verse exactly.

SAM CRAIG. Why, it's just some notes of music! What is it?

JOE STODDARD. Oh, I wouldn't know. It was wrote up in the Boston papers at the time.

SAM CRAIG. Joe, what did she die of?

JOE STODDARD. Who?

SAM CRAIG. My cousin.

JOE STODDARD. Oh, didn't you know? Had some trouble bringing a baby into the world. Let's see, today's Friday — 'twas almost a week ago now.

SAM CRAIG (*putting up his umbrella*). Did the baby live?

JOE STODDARD (*raising his coat collar*). No. 'Twas her second, though. There's a little boy 'bout four years old.

SAM CRAIG. The grave's going to be over there?

JOE STODDARD. Yes, there ain't much more room over here among the Gibbses, so they're opening up a whole new Gibbs section over by Avenue B. You'll excuse me now. I see they're comin'.

THE DEAD (*not lugubrious, and strongly New England in accent*). Rain'll do a lot of good. . . . Yes, reckon things were gettin' downright parched. Don't look like it's goin' to last long, tho'. . . . Lemuel, you remember the floods of seventy-nine? Carried away all the bridges but one.

[*From left to right, at the back of the stage, comes a procession. Four men carry a casket, invisible to us. All the rest are under umbrellas. One can vaguely see* DR. GIBBS, GEORGE, *the* WEBBS, *etc. They gather about a grave in the back center of the stage, a little to the left of center.*]

MRS. SOAMES. Who is it, Julia?

MRS. GIBBS (*without raising her eyes*). My daughter-in-law, Emily Webb.

MRS. SOAMES (*a little surprise, but no emotion*). Well, I declare! The road up here must have been awful muddy. What did she die of, Julia?

MRS. GIBBS. In childbirth.

MRS. SOAMES. Childbirth. (*Almost with a laugh.*) I'd forgotten all about that! My, wasn't life awful (*with a sigh*) and wonderful.

SIMON STIMSON (*with a sideways glance*). Wonderful, was it?

MRS. GIBBS. Simon! Now, remember!

MRS. SOAMES. I remember Emily's wedding. Wasn't it a lovely wedding! And I remember her reading the class poem at graduation exercises. Emily was one of the brightest girls ever graduated from high school. I've heard Principal Wilkins say so time after time. I called on them at their new farm just before I died. Perfectly beautiful farm.

A WOMAN FROM AMONG THE DEAD. It's on the same road we lived on.

A MAN AMONG THE DEAD. Yes, just near the Elks' picnic grounds. Remember, Joe? By the lake where we always used to go Fourth of July? Right smart farm.

[*They subside. The group by the grave starts singing, "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."*]

A WOMAN AMONG THE DEAD. I always liked that hymn. I was hopin' they'd sing a hymn.

A MAN AMONG THE DEAD. My wife—my second wife—knows all the verses of about every hymn there is. It just beats the Dutch—she can go through them all by heart.

[*Pause. Suddenly* EMILY *appears from among the umbrellas. She is wearing a white dress. Her hair is down her back and tied by a white ribbon like a little girl's. She comes slowly, gazing wonderingly at* THE DEAD, *a little dazed. She stops halfway and smiles faintly.*]

EMILY. Hello.

VOICES AMONG THE DEAD. Hello, Emily. H'lo, M's. Gibbs.

EMILY. Hello, Mother Gibbs.

MRS. GIBBS. Emily.

EMILY. Hello. (*The hymn continues.* EMILY *looks back at the funeral. She says dreamily.*) It's raining.

MRS. GIBBS. Yes. . . . They'll be gone soon, dear. Just rest yourself.

[EMILY *sits down in the empty chair by* MRS. GIBBS.]

EMILY. It seems thousands and thousands of years since I . . . How stupid they all look. They don't have to look like that!

MRS. GIBBS. Don't look at them now, dear. They'll be gone soon.

EMILY. Oh, I wish I'd been here a long time. I don't like being new here. . . . How do you do, Mr. Stimson?

SIMON STIMSON. How do you do, Emily.

[EMILY *continues to look about her with a wan and wondering smile, but for a moment her eyes do not return to the funeral group. As though to shut out from her mind the thought of that group, she starts speaking to* MRS. GIBBS *with a touch of nervousness.*]

EMILY. Mother Gibbs, George and I have made that farm into just the best place you ever saw. We thought of you all the time. We wanted to show you the new barn and a great long ce-ment drinking fountain for the stock. We bought that out of the money you left us.

MRS. GIBBS. I did?

EMILY. Don't you remember, Mother Gibbs—the legacy you left us? Why, it was over three hundred and fifty dollars.

MRS. GIBBS. Yes, yes, Emily.

EMILY. Well, there's a patent device on this drinking fountain so that it never overflows, Mother Gibbs, and it never sinks below a certain mark they have there. It's fine. (*Her voice trails off, and her eyes return to the funeral group.*) It won't be the same to George without me, but it's a lovely farm. (*Suddenly she looks directly at* MRS. GIBBS.) Live people don't understand, do they?

MRS. GIBBS. No, dear—not very much.

EMILY. They're sort of shut up in little boxes, aren't they? I feel as though I knew them last a thousand years ago. . . . My boy is spending the day at Mrs. Carter's. (*She sees* MR. CARTER *among* THE DEAD.) Oh, Mr. Carter, my little boy is spending the day at your house.

MR. CARTER. Is he?

EMILY. Yes, he loves it there. . . . Mother Gibbs, we have a Ford, too. Never gives any trouble. I don't drive, though. Mother Gibbs, when does this feeling go away? Of being . . . one of *them*? How long does it . . .

MRS. GIBBS. Sh! dear. Just wait and be patient.

EMILY (*with a sigh*). I know. . . . Look, they're finished. They're going.

MRS. GIBBS. Sh. . . .

[*The umbrellas leave the stage.* DR. GIBBS *comes over to his wife's grave and stands before it a moment.* EMILY *looks up at his face.* MRS. GIBBS *does not raise her eyes.*]

EMILY. Look! Father Gibbs is bringing some of my flowers to you. He looks just like George, doesn't he? Oh, Mother Gibbs, I never realized before how troubled and how . . . how in the dark live persons are. From morning till night that's all they are—troubled.

[DR. GIBBS *goes off.*]

THE DEAD. Little cooler than it was. . . . Yes, that rain's cooled it off a little. Those northeast winds always do the same thing, don't they?

If it isn't a rain, it's a three-day blow. . . . Reckon it may clear up before night; often does.

[*A patient calm falls on the stage. The* STAGE MANAGER *appears at his proscenium pillar, smoking.* EMILY *sits up abruptly, with an idea.*]

EMILY. But, Mother Gibbs, one can go back; one can go back there again . . . into living. I feel it. I know it. Why, just then for a moment I was thinking about . . . about the farm . . . and for a minute I *was* there, and my baby was on my lap as plain as day.

MRS. GIBBS. Yes, of course you can.

EMILY. I can go back there and live all those days over again . . . why not?

MRS. GIBBS. All I can say is, Emily, don't.

EMILY (*taking a few steps toward the* STAGE MANAGER). But it's true, isn't it? I can go and live . . . back there . . . again.

STAGE MANAGER. Yes, some have tried—but they soon come back here.

MRS. GIBBS. Don't do it, Emily.

MRS. SOAMES. Emily, don't. It's not what you think it'd be.

EMILY. But I won't live over a sad day. I'll choose a happy one—I'll choose the day I first knew that I loved George. Why should that be painful?

[*They are silent. Her question turns to the* STAGE MANAGER.]

STAGE MANAGER. You not only live it, but you watch yourself living it.

EMILY. Yes?

STAGE MANAGER. And as you watch it, you see the thing that they—down there—never know. You see the future. You know what's going to happen afterward.

EMILY. But is that—painful? Why?

MRS. GIBBS. That's not the only reason why you shouldn't do it, Emily. When you've been here longer, you'll see that our life here is our hope that soon we'll forget all that, and think only of what's ahead, and be ready for what's ahead. When you've been here longer, you'll understand.

EMILY (*softly*). But, Mother Gibbs, how can I ever forget that life? It's all I know. It's all I had.

[MRS. GIBBS *does not answer.*]

Mr. Stimson, did you go back?

SIMON STIMSON (*sharply*). No.

EMILY. Did you, Mrs. Soames?

MRS. SOAMES. Oh, Emily. It isn't wise. Really, it isn't. All we can do is just warn you. It won't be what you expect.

EMILY (*slowly*). But it's a thing I must know for myself. I'll choose a happy day, anyway.

MRS. GIBBS. No. At least, choose an unimportant day. Choose the least important day in your life. It will be important enough.

EMILY (*to the* STAGE MANAGER). Then it can't be since I was married, or since the baby was born. I can choose a birthday at least, can't I? . . . I choose my twelfth birthday.

STAGE MANAGER. All right. February 11, 1899. A Tuesday. . . . Do you want any special time of day?

EMILY. Oh, I want the whole day.

STAGE MANAGER. We'll begin at dawn. You remember it had been snowing for several days; but it had stopped the night before, and they had begun clearing the roads. The sun's coming up.

EMILY (*with a cry*). There's Main Street. . . . Why, that's Mr. Morgan's drugstore before he changed it! . . . And there's the livery stable. (*She walks toward the back of the stage.*)

STAGE MANAGER. Yes, it's 1899. This is fourteen years ago.

EMILY. Oh, that's the town I knew as a little girl. And, look, there's the old white fence that used to be around our house. Oh, I'd forgotten that! Oh, I love it so! Are *they* inside?

STAGE MANAGER. Yes, your mother'll be coming downstairs in a minute to make breakfast.

EMILY (*softly*). Will she?

STAGE MANAGER. And you remember: your father had been away for several days; he came back on the early-morning train.

EMILY. No . . .

STAGE MANAGER. He'd been back to his college to make a speech—in western New York, at Clinton.

EMILY. Look! There's Howie Newsome. There's our policeman. But he's *dead;* he *died.*

[*The* STAGE MANAGER *retires to his corner. The voices of* HOWIE NEWSOME, CONSTABLE WARREN, *and* JOE CROWELL, JR., *are heard at the left of the stage.*]

HOWIE NEWSOME. Whoa, Bessie! Bessie! . . . Morning, Bill.

BILL. Morning, Howie.

HOWIE NEWSOME. You're up early.

BILL. Been rescuin' a party; darn near froze to death, down by Polish Town thar. Got drunk and lay out in the snowdrifts. Thought he was in bed when I shook'm.

EMILY. Why, there's Joe Crowell.

JOE CROWELL. Good morning, Mr. Warren. Morning, Howie.

[MRS. WEBB *has appeared in her kitchen, but* EMILY *does not see her until she calls.*]

MRS. WEBB. Chil-*dren!* Wally! Emily! . . . Time to get up.

EMILY. Mamma, here I am! Oh, how young Mamma looks! I didn't know Mamma was ever that young. Oh!

MRS. WEBB. You can come and dress by the kitchen fire, if you like; but hurry.

[HOWIE NEWSOME *has entered along Main Street and brings the milk to* MRS. WEBB'S *door.*]

Good morning, Mr. Newsome. Whhhh — it's cold.

HOWIE NEWSOME. Ten below by my barn, Mrs. Webb.

MRS. WEBB. Think of it! Keep yourself wrapped up. (*She takes her bottles in, shuddering.*)

EMILY (*with an effort*). Mamma, I can't find my blue hair ribbon anywhere.

MRS. WEBB. Just open your eyes, dear, that's all. I laid it out for you special — on the dresser, there. If it were a snake, it would bite you.

EMILY. Yes, yes. . . . (*She puts her hand on her heart.*)

[MR. WEBB *comes along Main Street, where he meets* CONSTABLE WARREN.]

MR. WEBB. Good morning, Bill.

BILL. Good morning, Mr. Webb. You're up early.

MR. WEBB. Yes, just been back to my old college in New York State. Been any trouble here?

BILL. Well, I was called up this mornin' to rescue a Polish fella — darn near froze to death he was.

MR. WEBB. We must get it in the paper.

BILL. 'Twan't much.

EMILY (*whispers*). Papa.

[MR. WEBB *shakes the snow off his feet and enters his house.*]

MR. WEBB. Good morning, Mother.

MRS. WEBB. How did it go, Charles?

MR. WEBB. Oh, fine, I guess. I told'm a few things.

MRS. WEBB. Did you sit up on the train all night?

MR. WEBB. Yes. Never could sleep on a Pullman anyway.

MRS. WEBB. Charles, seems to me — we're rich enough so that you could sleep in a train once in a while.

MR. WEBB. Everything all right here?

MRS. WEBB. Yes — can't think of anything that's happened, special. Been right cold. Howie Newsome says it's ten below over to his barn.

MR. WEBB. Yes? Well, it's colder than that at Hamilton College. Stu-

dents' ears are falling off. It ain't Christian. . . . Paper have any mistakes in it?

MRS. WEBB. None that I noticed. Coffee's ready when you want it.

[*He starts upstairs.*]

Charles! Don't forget; it's Emily's birthday. Did you remember to get her something?

MR. WEBB (*patting his pocket*). Yes, I've got something here.

MRS. WEBB. Goodness sakes! I hope she likes what I got for her. I hunted hard enough for it. Child*ren!* Hurry up! Hurry up!

MR. WEBB. Where's my girl? Where's my birthday girl? (*He goes off left.*)

MRS. WEBB. Don't interrupt her now, Charles. You can see her at breakfast. She's slow enough as it is. Hurry up, children! It's seven o'clock. Now, I don't want to call you again.

EMILY (*softly, more in wonder than in grief*). I can't bear it. They're so young and beautiful. Why did they ever have to get old? Mamma, I'm here. I'm grown up. I love you all, everything. . . . I can't look at everything hard enough. There's the butternut tree. (*She wanders up Main Street.*) There's Mr. Morgan's drugstore. And there's the high school, for ever and ever and ever. And there's the Congregational church, where I got married. Oh, dear. Oh, dear. Oh, dear!

[*The* STAGE MANAGER *beckons partially to her. He points to the house. She says a breathless "yes" and goes to the house.*]

Good morning, Mamma.

MRS. WEBB (*at the foot of the stairs, kissing her in a matter-of-fact way*). Well, now, dear, a very happy birthday to my girl and many happy returns. There are some surprises waiting for you on the kitchen table.

EMILY. Oh, Mamma, you *shouldn't* have. (*She throws an anguished glance at the* STAGE MANAGER.) I can't — I can't.

MRS. WEBB (*facing the audience, over her stove*). But birthday or no birthday, I want you to eat your breakfast good and slow. I want you to grow up and be a good strong girl. (*She goes to the stairs and calls.*) Wally! Wally, wash yourself good. Everything's getting cold down here. (*She returns to the stove with her back to* EMILY.)

[EMILY *opens her parcels.*]

That in the blue paper is from your Aunt Carrie, and I reckon you can guess who brought the postcard album. I found it on the doorstep when I brought in the milk. George Gibbs must have come over in the cold pretty early . . . right nice of him.

EMILY (*to herself*).Oh, George! I'd forgotten that.

MRS. WEBB. Chew that bacon slow. It'll help keep you warm on a cold day.

EMILY (*beginning softly but urgently*). Oh, Mamma, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mamma, fourteen years have gone by. I'm dead. You're a grandmother, Mamma. I married George Gibbs, Mamma. Wally's dead, too. Mamma, his appendix burst on a camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it — don't you remember? But, just for a moment now we're all together. Mamma, just for a moment we're happy. Let's look at one another.

MRS. WEBB. That in the yellow paper is something I found in the attic among your grandmother's things. You're old enough to wear it now, and I thought you'd like it.

EMILY. And this is from you. Why, Mamma, it's just lovely and it's just what I wanted. It's beautiful! (*She flings her arms around her mother's neck.*)

[*Her mother goes on with her cooking, but is pleased.*]

MRS. WEBB. Well, I hoped you'd like it. Hunted all over. Your Aunt Norah couldn't find one in Concord, so I had to send all the way to Boston. (*Laughingly.*) Wally has something for you, too. He made it at manual-training class, and he's very proud of it. Be sure you make a big fuss about it. Your father has a surprise for you, too; don't know what it is myself. Sh — here he comes.

MR. WEBB (*off stage*). Where's my girl? Where's my birthday girl?

EMILY (*in a loud voice to the* STAGE MANAGER). I can't. I can't go on. Oh! Oh. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. (*She breaks down, sobbing.*)

[*At a gesture from the* STAGE MANAGER, MRS. WEBB *disappears.*]

I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back — up the hill — to my grave. But first — wait! One more look. Good-by, good-by, world. Good-by, Grover's Corners . . . Mamma and Papa. Good-by to clocks ticking . . . and Mamma's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths . . . and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you. (*She looks toward the* STAGE MANAGER *and asks, abruptly, through her tears.*) Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it — every, every minute?

STAGE MANAGER. No. (*Pause.*) The saints and poets, maybe — they do some.

EMILY. I'm ready to go back. (*She returns to her chair beside* MRS. GIBBS.) Mother Gibbs, I should have listened to you. Now I want to be quiet for a while. . . . Oh, Mother Gibbs, I saw it all. I saw your garden.

MRS. GIBBS. Did you, dear?

EMILY. That's all human beings are! Just blind people.

MRS. GIBBS. Look, it's clearing up. The stars are coming out.

EMILY. Oh, Mr. Stimson, I should have listened to them.

SIMON STIMSON (*with mounting violence; bitingly*). Yes, now you know. Now you know! That's what it was to be alive. To move about in a cloud of ignorance, to go up and down trampling on the feelings of those . . . of those about you. To spend and waste time as though you had a million years. To be always at the mercy of one self-centered passion or another. Now you know — that's the happy existence you wanted to go back and see. Did you shout to 'em? Did you call to 'em?

EMILY. Yes, I did.

SIMON STIMSON. Now you know them as they are: in ignorance and blindness.

MRS. GIBBS (*spiritedly*). Simon Stimson, that ain't the whole truth and you know it.

[THE DEAD *have begun to stir.*]

THE DEAD. Lemuel, wind's coming up, seems like. . . . Oh, dear, I keep remembering things tonight. . . . It's right cold for June, ain't it?

MRS. GIBBS. Look what you've done, you and your rebellious spirit stirring us up here. . . . Emily, look at that star. I forget its name.

THE DEAD. I'm getting to know them all, but I don't know their names. My boy, Joel, was a sailor — knew 'em all. He'd set on the porch evenings and tell 'em all by name. Yes, sir, it was wonderful. A star's mighty good company. Yes, yes. Yes, 'tis.

SIMON STIMSON. Here's one of *them* coming.

THE DEAD. That's funny. 'Tain't no time for one of them to be here. Goodness sakes.

EMILY. Mother Gibbs, it's George.

MRS. GIBBS. Sh, dear. You just rest yourself.

EMILY. It's George.

[GEORGE *enters from the left and slowly comes toward them.*]

A MAN FROM AMONG THE DEAD. And my boy, Joel, who knew the stars — he used to say it took millions of years for that speck o' light to git to the earth. Don't seem like a body could believe it, but that's what he used to say — millions of years.

ANOTHER. That's what they say.

[GEORGE *flings himself on* EMILY'S *grave.*]

THE DEAD. Goodness! That ain't no way to behave! He ought to be home.

EMILY. Mother Gibbs?

MRS. GIBBS. Yes, Emily?

EMILY. They don't understand much, do they?

MRS. GIBBS. No, dear, not very much.

[*The* STAGE MANAGER *appears at the right, one hand on a dark curtain which he slowly draws across the scene. In the distance a clock is heard striking the hour very faintly.*]

STAGE MANAGER. Most everybody's asleep in Grover's Corners. There are a few lights on. Shorty Hawkins, down at the depot, has just watched the Albany train go by. And at the livery stable somebody's setting up late and talking. . . . Yes, it's clearing up. There are the stars — doing their old, old criss-cross journeys in the sky. Scholars haven't settled the matter yet, but they seem to think there are no living beings up there. They're just chalk . . . or fire. Only this one is straining away, straining away all the time to make something of itself. The strain's so bad that every sixteen hours everybody lies down and gets a rest. (*He winds his watch.*) Hm. . . . Eleven o'clock in Grover's Corners. . . . You get a good rest, too. Good night.

[THE END]

WHILE READING ACT III

1. As you visualize this scene, remember that the curiosity of theatre audiences will be aroused by the puzzling stage preparations. Imagine also the emotions of the spectators as they learn of the various deaths. How is suspense achieved here?

2. Much of this play's charm lies in its patience with human frailty — its tolerance. What illustrations of this do you find in this act?

3. Does the fact that the dead speak surprise you? Why are audiences at this point ready to accept such a situation?

4. Mrs. Gibbs says, "Choose the least important day in your life. It will be important enough." Can you defend this statement in terms of your own experience?

5. Emily says, "I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed." What is the lesson in these words for us, the living? What does the author ask us to do?

6. "Poets," says the Stage Manager, "help us to realize life." In what way is Wilder a poet?

7. Is the Stage Manager's method of closing the play consistent with its spirit? Do you like it?

AFTER READING THE PLAY

1. With a minimum of action and excitement this play has stirred millions of people everywhere — as a stage play, as a picture, as a radio drama. What elements in the play account for this wide appeal?

2. What is the play's chief aim? Who, or what, might be considered its hero? How would you apply to the play Holmes's remark in *The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table* that "the axis of the earth strikes out visibly through the center of each and every town"?

3. The technique by which a play addresses itself directly to the audience has been called *presentationalism*. Could this play have succeeded without this technique? What is the Stage Manager's chief function in the play?

4. "So I'm going to have a copy of this play put in the cornerstone and the people a thousand years from now 'll know a few simple facts about us." What do you think are the most significant simple facts this play tells about *Our Town* and our civilization?

5. *For Further Reading.* You will find that the use of the property man is common in Chinese and other oriental plays. See *Lady Precious Stream* (Hsiung), *The Chalk Circle*, adapted by Klabund, and *The Little Clay Cart*, an ancient Hindu play, all of which were produced here in English. *The Yellow Jacket*, by Hazelton and Benrime, is written in the Chinese tradition. Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* and Orson Welles' modern-dress *Julius Caesar* use no scenery.

For Wilder's earlier experiments read *The Long Christmas Dinner*, a book of three one-act plays. Courageous students may read his fantastic *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Pulitzer Prize, 1943).

For poetic revelations of the small town read *Spoon River Anthology*, by Edgar Lee Masters. A contrasting attitude toward small-town life is found in Sinclair Lewis's novel *Main Street*.

R. U. R.

BY KAREL ČAPEK

More than four centuries ago Leonardo da Vinci (vēn'chē) is said to have destroyed his plans for a submarine, because he felt that mankind was not yet ripe for the wise use of so powerful an instrument. For the same reason many earnest people today are advocating the destruction of the epoch-making secret of atomic energy. They recall the dislocations and the hardships brought about by the Industrial Revolution, and they ask, "Hasn't man's inventive ingenuity far outstripped his social wisdom?"

The question has engaged many thinkers in our time. One, Karel Čapek (chä'pĕk), speculating on the possible development of a mechanical man, tried to envision the consequences of its use by a civilization as immature as our own. The result was *R. U. R.*, a play that seems strangely prophetic at this time. First presented in Prague on January 26, 1921, its fame traveled quickly to all parts of the world. On October 9, 1922, *R. U. R.*, in Paul Selver's English version, opened simultaneously in London and New York. The Theatre Guild production at the Garrick Theatre in New York was staged by Philip Moeller and Agnes Morgan, with a splendid cast including Basil Sidney as Domin, Henry Travers as Consul Busman, Louis Calhern as Mr. Alquist, Helen Westley as Nana, and Kathlene MacDonell as Helena Glory.

Čapek's Robots, embodiment of an age of mechanization and standardization, brought a new word into our language that is also symbolic of our age. The name is derived from a Czech word meaning *work*. The dictionary now defines it as meaning "a machine made to look and act like a human being, or a person who acts mechanically." Robombs, a variation of the word, was used in naming the more diabolical of the Nazi bombs during the war. Here was merely another example of what Čapek had feared—the perversion of man's highest inventive gifts to the powers of destruction and chaos.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karel Čapek did not live to see the goose-stepping robots of Nazi Germany overrun most of Europe. He died on Christmas Day of 1938, after a valiant fight to save his country from inevitable disaster at the hands of Hitler's Reich. He had early identified himself with the liberal aspirations of his homeland, and as friend of Czechoslovakia's great presidents, Masaryk (mä'sȧ rĭk) and Beneš (bĕ'nĕsh), he acted as consultant and adviser to these statesmen. His greatest achievements were, of course, in the theatre. He was art director of The Golden Temple, national theatre of Prague, before he established his own experimental playhouse. His plays include *The Makropoulos Secret* (1922), *The White Plague* (1937), and *The Mother* (1939). In addition he collaborated with his brother Josef in *The World We Live In* (or *The Insect Comedy,* 1921) and *Adam the Creator* (1927). Čapek also wrote a number of satiric novels, among them *The War of the Newts,* and *The Absolute at Large.* The latter is more prophetic of our atomic age than any of his plays.

BEFORE READING

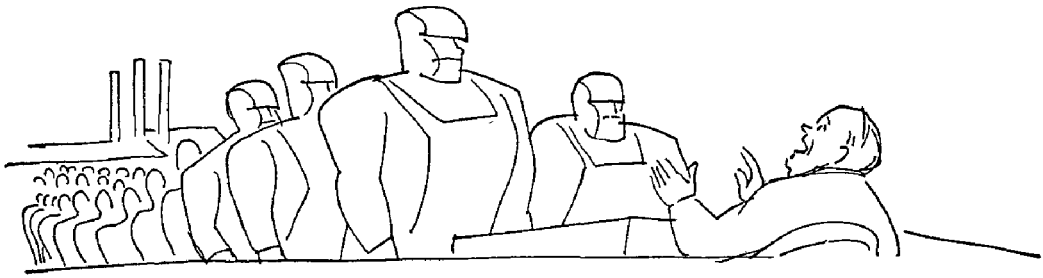
1. Before beginning the play, read aloud Edwin Markham's " Man With the Hoe." Keep in mind particularly the line " When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world." Study also the painting, by François Millet, that inspired Markham's poem.

2. How is the word *robot* used today? See the dictionary definition. Do you recall any examples of its use in the newspapers or on the radio?

3. What hints of the nature of this play do you get from a study of the cast of characters, and from the time and place of the action?

4. In reading the play aloud, remember to make a clear distinction, in voice and speech, between the mechanical men and the humans.

5. Vocabulary. Consult the dictionary if you are not sure of the meaning of these words used in the play: *melodrama, colloidal, catalytics, enzymes, hormones, Medusa, Socrates, milliards.*



R. U. R.

CHARACTERS

HARRY DOMIN, General Manager of Rossum's Universal Robots
SULLA, a Robotess
MARIUS, a Robot
HELENA GLORY
DR. GALL, Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department of R. U. R.
MR. FABRY, Engineer General, Technical Controller of R. U. R.
DR. HALLEMEIER, Head of the Institute for Psychological Training of Robots
MR. ALQUIST, Architect, Head of the Works Department of R. U. R.
CONSUL BUSMAN, General Business Manager of R. U. R.
NANA
RADIUS, a Robot
HELENA, a Robotess
PRIMUS, a Robot
A SERVANT
FIRST ROBOT
SECOND ROBOT
THIRD ROBOT

ACT I

Central office of the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. Entrance on the right. The windows on the front wall look out on the rows of factory chimneys. On the left more managing departments. DOMIN *is sitting in the revolving chair at a large American writing table. On the left-hand wall large maps showing steamship and railroad routes. On the right-hand wall are fastened printed placards. ("Robot's Cheapest Labor," etc.) In contrast to these wall fittings, the floor is covered with a splendid Turkish carpet, a sofa, leather armchair, and filing cabinets. At a desk near the windows* SULLA *is typing letters.*

DOMIN (*dictating*). Ready.
SULLA. Yes.

"R. U. R." by Karel Čapek. Reprinted by permission of The Theatre Guild, Inc.

DOMIN. To E. M. McVicker and Co., Southampton, England. "We undertake no guarantee for goods damaged in transit. As soon as the consignment was taken on board we drew your captain's attention to the fact that the vessel was unsuitable for the transport of Robots, and we are therefore not responsible for spoiled freight. We beg to remain for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." (SULLA, *who has sat motionless during dictation, now types rapidly for a few seconds, then stops, withdrawing the completed letter.*) Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. To the E. B. Huyson Agency, New York, U. S. A. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for five thousand Robots. As you are sending your own vessel, please dispatch as cargo equal quantities of soft and hard coal for R. U. R., the same to be credited as part payment of the amount due to us. We beg to remain, for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." (SULLA *repeats the rapid typing.*) Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. "Friedrichswerke, Hamburg, Germany. We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots." (*Telephone rings.*) Hello! This is the Central Office. Yes. Certainly. Well, send them a wire. Good. (*Hangs up telephone.*) Where did I leave off?

SULLA. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots."

DOMIN. Fifteen thousand R. Fifteen thousand R. (*Enter* MARIUS.)

DOMIN. Well, what is it?

MARIUS. There's a lady, sir, asking to see you.

DOMIN. A lady? Who is she?

MARIUS. I don't know, sir. She brings this card of introduction.

DOMIN (*reads the card*). Ah, from President Glory. Ask her to come in.

MARIUS. Please step this way. (*Enter* HELENA GLORY. *Exit* MARIUS.)

HELENA. How do you do?

DOMIN. How do you do. (*Standing up.*) What can I do for you?

HELENA. You are Mr. Domin, the General Manager?

DOMIN. I am.

HELENA. I have come —

DOMIN. With President Glory's card. That is quite sufficient.

HELENA. President Glory is my father. I am Helena Glory.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, this is such a great honor for us to be allowed to welcome our great President's daughter, that —

HELENA. That you can't show me the door?

DOMIN. Please sit down. Sulla, you may go. (*Exit* SULLA. *Sitting down.*) How can I be of service to you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I have come—

DOMIN. To have a look at our famous works where people are manufactured. Like all visitors. Well, there is no objection.

HELENA. I thought it was forbidden to—

DOMIN. To enter the factory. Yes, of course. Everybody comes here with someone's visiting card, Miss Glory.

HELENA. And you show them—

DOMIN. Only certain things. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret process.

HELENA. If you only knew how enormously that—

DOMIN. Interests me. Europe's talking about nothing else.

HELENA. Why don't you let me finish speaking?

DOMIN. I beg your pardon. Did you want to say something different?

HELENA. I only wanted to ask—

DOMIN. Whether I could make a special exception in your case and show you our factory. Why, certainly, Miss Glory.

HELENA. How do you know I wanted to say that?

DOMIN. They all do. But we shall consider it a special honor to show you more than we do the rest.

HELENA. Thank you.

DOMIN. But you must agree not to divulge the least. . . .

HELENA (*standing up and giving him her hand*). My word of honor.

DOMIN. Thank you. Won't you raise your veil?

HELENA. Of course. You want to see whether I'm a spy or not. I beg your pardon.

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Would you mind releasing my hand?

DOMIN (*releasing it*). I beg your pardon.

HELENA (*raising her veil*). How cautious you have to be here, don't you?

DOMIN. (*observing her with deep interest*). Hm, of course—we—that is—

HELENA. But what is it? What's the matter?

DOMIN. I'm remarkably pleased. Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. No difficulty?

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. What I mean to say *is*—you're so young.

HELENA. May we go straight into the factory?

DOMIN. Yes. Twenty-two, I think.

HELENA. Twenty-two what?

DOMIN. Years.

HELENA. Twenty-one. Why do you want to know?

DOMIN. Because — as — (*With enthusiasm.*) you will make a long stay, won't you?

HELENA. That depends on how much of the factory you show me.

DOMIN. Oh, hang the factory. Oh, no, no, you shall see everything, Miss Glory. Indeed you shall. Won't you sit down?

HELENA (*crossing to couch and sitting*). Thank you.

DOMIN. But first would you like to hear the story of the invention?

HELENA. Yes, indeed.

DOMIN (*observes* HELENA *with rapture and reels off rapidly*). It was in the year 1920 that old Rossum, the great physiologist, who was then quite a young scientist, took himself to this distant island for the purpose of studying the ocean fauna, full stop. On this occasion he attempted by chemical synthesis to imitate the living matter known as protoplasm until he suddenly discovered a substance which behaved exactly like living matter although its chemical composition was different. That was in the year of 1932, exactly 440 years after the discovery of America. Whew!

HELENA. Do you know that by heart?

DOMIN. Yes. You see physiology is not in my line. Shall I go on?

HELENA. Yes, please.

DOMIN. And then, Miss Glory, old Rossum wrote the following among his chemical specimens: "Nature has found only one method of organizing living matter. There is, however, another method, more simple, flexible, and rapid, which has not yet occurred to nature at all. This second process by which life can be developed was discovered by me today." Now imagine him, Miss Glory, writing those wonderful words over some colloidal [1] mess that a dog wouldn't look at. Imagine him sitting over a test tube, and thinking how the whole tree of life would grow from it, how all animals would proceed from it, beginning with some sort of beetle and ending with a man. A man of different substance from us. Miss Glory, that was a tremendous moment.

HELENA. Well?

DOMIN. Now, the thing was how to get the life out of the test tubes, and hasten development and form organs, bones, and nerves, and so

[1] Colloidal: here, jellylike.

on, and find such substance as catalytics, enzymes, hormones, and so forth, in short—you understand?

HELENA. Not much, I'm afraid.

DOMIN. Never mind. You see, with the help of his tinctures, he could make whatever he wanted. He could have produced a Medusa with the brain of a Socrates or a worm fifty yards long. But being without a grain of humor, he took it into his head to make a vertebrate or perhaps a man. This artificial living matter of his had a raging thirst for life. It didn't mind being sewn or mixed together. That couldn't be done with natural albumen. And that's how he set about it.

HELENA. About what?

DOMIN. About imitating nature. First of all he tried making an artificial dog. That took him several years and resulted in a sort of stunted calf which died in a few days. I'll show it to you in the museum. And then old Rossum started on the manufacture of man.

HELENA. And I must divulge this to nobody?

DOMIN. To nobody in the world.

HELENA. What a pity that it's to be found in all the schoolbooks of both Europe and America.

DOMIN. Yes. But do you know what isn't in the schoolbooks? That old Rossum was mad. Seriously, Miss Glory, you must keep this to yourself. The old crank wanted to actually make people.

HELENA. But you do make people.

DOMIN. Approximately, Miss Glory. But old Rossum meant it literally. He wanted to become a sort of scientific substitute for God. He was a fearful materialist, and that's why he did it all. His sole purpose was nothing more nor less than to prove that God was no longer necessary. Do you know anything about anatomy?

HELENA. Very little.

DOMIN. Neither do I. Well, he then decided to manufacture everything as in the human body. I'll show you in the museum the bungling attempt it took him ten years to produce. It was to have been a man, but it lived for three days only. Then up came young Rossum, an engineer. He was a wonderful fellow, Miss Glory. When he saw what a mess of it the old man was making he said: "It's absurd to spend ten years making a man. If you can't make him quicker than nature, you might as well shut up shop." Then he set about learning anatomy himself.

HELENA. There's nothing about that in the schoolbooks.

DOMIN. No. The schoolbooks are full of paid advertisements, and rub-

bish at that. What the schoolbooks say about the united efforts of the two great Rossums is all a fairy tale. They used to have dreadful rows. The old atheist hadn't the slightest conception of industrial matters, and the end of it was that young Rossum shut him up in some laboratory or other and let him fritter the time away with his monstrosities, while he himself started on the business from an engineer's point of view. Old Rossum cursed him and before he died he managed to botch up two physiological horrors. Then one day they found him dead in the laboratory. And that's his whole story.

HELENA. And what about the young man?

DOMIN. Well, anyone who has looked into human anatomy will have seen at once that man is too complicated, and that a good engineer could make him more simply. So young Rossum began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left out or simplified. In short — but this isn't boring you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. No indeed. You're — it's awfully interesting.

DOMIN. So young Rossum said to himself: "A man is something that feels happy, plays the piano, likes going for a walk and, in fact, wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary."

HELENA. Oh.

DOMIN. That are unnecessary when he wants, let us say, to weave or count. Do you play the piano?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. That's good. But a working machine must not play the piano, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A gasoline motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers is the same thing as to manufacture gasoline motors. The process must be of the simplest, and the product of the best from a practical point of view. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. Perhaps the one who is most honest and hard-working.

DOMIN. No; the one that is the cheapest. The one whose requirements are the smallest. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of work — everything that makes man more expensive. In fact, he rejected man and made the Robot. My dear Miss Glory, the Robots are not

people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul.

HELENA. How do you know they've no soul?

DOMIN. Have you ever seen what a Robot looks like inside?

HELENA. No.

DOMIN. Very neat, very simple. Really, a beautiful piece of work. Not much in it, but everything in flawless order. The product of an engineer is technically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of nature.

HELENA. But man is supposed to be the product of God.

DOMIN. All the worse. God hasn't the least notion of modern engineering. Would you believe that young Rossum then proceeded to play at being God?

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. He began to manufacture Super-Robots. Regular giants they were. He tried to make them twelve feet tall. But you wouldn't believe what a failure they were.

HELENA. A failure?

DOMIN. Yes. For no reason at all their limbs used to keep snapping off. Evidently our planet is too small for giants. Now we only make Robots of normal size and of very high-class human finish.

HELENA. I saw the first Robots at home. The town counsel bought them for — I mean engaged them for work.

DOMIN. Bought them, dear Miss Glory. Robots are bought and sold.

HELENA. These were employed as street sweepers. I saw them sweeping. They were so strange and quiet.

DOMIN. Rossum's Universal Robot factory doesn't produce a uniform brand of Robots. We have Robots of finer and coarser grades. The best will live about twenty years. (*He rings for* MARIUS.)

HELENA. Then they die?

DOMIN. Yes, they get used up. (*Enter* MARIUS.) Marius, bring in samples of the Manual Labor Robot. (*Exit* MARIUS.)

DOMIN. I'll show you specimens of the two extremes. This first grade is comparatively inexpensive and is made in vast quantities. (MARIUS *re-enters with two Manual Labor Robots.*)

DOMIN. There you are; as powerful as a small tractor. Guaranteed to have average intelligence. That will do, Marius. (MARIUS *exits with Robots.*)

HELENA. They make me feel so strange.

DOMIN (*rings*). Did you see my new typist? (*He rings for* SULLA.)

HELENA. I didn't notice her. (*Enter* SULLA.)

DOMIN. Sulla, let Miss Glory see you.
HELENA. So pleased to meet you. You must find it terribly dull in this out-of-the-way spot, don't you?
SULLA. I don't know, Miss Glory.
HELENA. Where do you come from?
SULLA. From the factory.
HELENA. Oh, you were born there?
SULLA. I was made there.
HELENA. What?
DOMIN (*laughing*). Sulla is a Robot, best grade.
HELENA. Oh, I beg your pardon.
DOMIN. Sulla isn't angry. See, Miss Glory, the kind of skin we make. (*Feels the skin on* SULLA's *face.*) Feel her face.
HELENA. Oh, no, no.
DOMIN. You wouldn't know that she's made of different material from us, would you? Turn round, Sulla.
HELENA. Oh, stop, stop.
DOMIN. Talk to Miss Glory, Sulla.
SULLA. Please sit down. (HELENA *sits.*) Did you have a pleasant crossing?
HELENA. Oh, yes, certainly.
SULLA. Don't go back on the *Amelia,* Miss Glory. The barometer is falling steadily. Wait for the *Pennsylvania.* That's a good, powerful vessel.
DOMIN. What's its speed?
SULLA. Twenty knots. Fifty thousand tons. One of the latest vessels, Miss Glory.
HELENA. Thank you.
SULLA. A crew of fifteen hundred, Captain Harpy, eight boilers—
DOMIN. That'll do, Sulla. Now show us your knowledge of French.
HELENA. You know French?
SULLA. I know four languages. I can write: Dear Sir, Monsieur, Geehrter Herr, Ctený pane.
HELENA (*jumping up*). Oh, that's absurd! Sulla isn't a Robot. Sulla is a girl like me. Sulla, this is outrageous! Why do you take part in such a hoax?
SULLA. I am a Robot.
HELENA. No, no, you are not telling the truth. I know they've forced you to do it for an advertisement. Sulla, you are a girl like me, aren't you?
DOMIN. I'm sorry, Miss Glory. Sulla is a Robot.

HELENA. It's a lie!

DOMIN. What? (*Rings.*) Excuse me, Miss Glory, then I must convince you. (*Enter* MARIUS.)

DOMIN. Marius, take Sulla into the dissecting room, and tell them to open her up at once.

HELENA. Where?

DOMIN. Into the dissecting room. When they've cut her open, you can go and have a look.

HELENA. No, no!

DOMIN. Excuse me, you spoke of lies.

HELENA. You wouldn't have her killed?

DOMIN. You can't kill machines.

HELENA. Don't be afraid, Sulla, I won't let you go. Tell me, my dear, are they always so cruel to you? You mustn't put up with it, Sulla. You mustn't.

SULLA. I am a Robot.

HELENA. That doesn't matter. Robots are just as good as we are. Sulla, you wouldn't let yourself be cut to pieces?

SULLA. Yes.

HELENA. Oh, you're not afraid of death, then?

SULLA. I cannot tell, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Do you know what would happen to you in there?

SULLA. Yes, I should cease to move.

HELENA. How dreadful!

DOMIN. Marius, tell Miss Glory what you are.

MARIUS. Marius, the Robot.

DOMIN. Would you take Sulla into the dissecting room?

MARIUS. Yes.

DOMIN. Would you be sorry for her?

MARIUS. I cannot tell.

DOMIN. What would happen to her?

MARIUS. She would cease to move. They would put her into the stamping mill.

DOMIN. That is death, Marius. Aren't you afraid of death?

MARIUS. No.

DOMIN. You see, Miss Glory, the Robots have no interest in life. They have no enjoyments. They are less than so much grass.

HELENA. Oh, stop. Send them away.

DOMIN. Marius, Sulla, you may go. (*Exeunt* SULLA *and* MARIUS.)

HELENA. How terrible! It's outrageous what you are doing.

DOMIN. Why outrageous?

HELENA. I don't know, but it is. Why do you call her Sulla?
DOMIN. Isn't it a nice name?
HELENA. It's a man's name. Sulla was a Roman general.
DOMIN. Oh, we thought that Marius and Sulla were lovers.
HELENA. Marius and Sulla were generals and fought against each other in the year — I've forgotten now.
DOMIN. Come here to the window.
HELENA. What?
DOMIN. Come here. What do you see?
HELENA. Bricklayers.
DOMIN. Robots. All our work people are Robots. And down there, can you see anything?
HELENA. Some sort of office.
DOMIN. A counting house. And in it —
HELENA. A lot of officials.
DOMIN. Robots. All our officials are Robots. And when you see the factory — (*Factory whistle blows.*) Noon. We have to blow the whistle because the Robots don't know when to stop work. In two hours I will show you the kneading trough.
HELENA. Kneading trough?
DOMIN. The pestle for beating up the paste. In each one we mix the ingredients for a thousand Robots at one operation. Then there are the vats for the preparation of liver, brains, and so on. Then you will see the bone factory. After that I'll show you the spinning mill.
HELENA. Spinning mill?
DOMIN. Yes. For weaving nerves and veins. Miles and miles of digestive tubes pass through it at a time.
HELENA. Mayn't we talk about something else?
DOMIN. Perhaps it would be better. There's only a handful of us among a hundred thousand Robots, and not one woman. We talk about nothing but the factory all day, every day. It's just as if we were under a curse, Miss Glory.
HELENA. I'm sorry I said that you were lying. (*A knock at the door.*)
DOMIN. Come in. (*From the right enter* MR. FABRY, DR. GALL, DR. HALLEMEIER, MR. ALQUIST.)
DR. GALL. I beg your pardon, I hope we don't intrude.
DOMIN. Come in. Miss Glory, here are Alquist, Fabry, Gall, Hallemeier. This is President Glory's daughter.
HELENA. How do you do.
FABRY. We had no idea —
DR. GALL. Highly honored, I'm sure —

ALQUIST. Welcome, Miss Glory. (BUSMAN *rushes in from the right.*)
BUSMAN. Hello, what's up?
DOMIN. Come in, Busman. This is Busman, Miss Glory. This is President Glory's daughter.
BUSMAN. By jove, that's fine! Miss Glory, may we send a cablegram to the papers about your arrival?
HELENA. No, no, please don't.
DOMIN. Sit down, please, Miss Glory.
BUSMAN. Allow me — (*Dragging up armchairs.*)
DR. GALL. Please —
FABRY. Excuse me —
ALQUIST. What sort of a crossing did you have?
DR. GALL. Are you going to stay long?
FABRY. What do you think of the factory, Miss Glory?
HALLEMEIER. Did you come over on the *Amelia?*
DOMIN. Be quiet and let Miss Glory speak.
HELENA (*to* DOMIN). What am I to speak to them about?
DOMIN. Anything you like.
HELENA. Shall . . . may I speak quite frankly?
DOMIN. Why, of course.
HELENA (*wavering, then in desperate resolution*). Tell me, doesn't it ever distress you the way you are treated?
FABRY. By whom, may I ask?
HELENA. Why, everybody.
ALQUIST. Treated?
DR. GALL. What makes you think — ?
HELENA. Don't you feel that you might be living a better life?
DR. GALL. Well, that depends on what you mean, Miss Glory.
HELENA. I mean that it's perfectly outrageous. It's terrible. (*Standing up.*) The whole of Europe is talking about the way you're being treated. That's why I came here, to see for myself, and it's a thousand times worse than could have been imagined. How can you put up with it?
ALQUIST. Put up with what?
HELENA. Good heavens, you are living creatures, just like us, like the whole of Europe, like the whole world. It's disgraceful that you must live like this.
BUSMAN. Good gracious, Miss Glory.
FABRY. Well, she's not far wrong. We live here just like red Indians.
HELENA. Worse than red Indians. May I, oh, may I call you brothers?
BUSMAN. Why not?

HELENA. Brothers, I have not come here as the President's daughter. I have come on behalf of the Humanity League. Brothers, the Humanity League now has over two hundred thousand members. Two hundred thousand people are on your side, and offer you their help.

BUSMAN. Two hundred thousand people! Miss Glory, that's a tidy lot. Not bad.

FABRY. I'm always telling you there's nothing like good old Europe. You see, they've not forgotten us. They're offering us help.

DR. GALL. What help? A theatre, for instance?

HALLEMEIER. An orchestra?

HELENA. More than that.

ALQUIST. Just you?

HELENA. Oh, never mind about me. I'll stay as long as it is necessary.

BUSMAN. By Jove, that's good.

ALQUIST. Domin, I'm going to get the best room ready for Miss Glory.

DOMIN. Just a minute. I'm afraid that Miss Glory is of the opinion that she has been talking to Robots.

HELENA. Of course.

DOMIN. I'm sorry. These gentlemen are human beings just like us.

HELENA. You're not Robots?

BUSMAN. Not Robots.

HALLEMEIER. Robots indeed!

DR. GALL. No, thanks.

FABRY. Upon my honor, Miss Glory, we aren't Robots.

HELENA (*to* DOMIN). Then why did you tell me that all your officials are Robots?

DOMIN. Yes, the officials, but not the managers. Allow me, Miss Glory: this is Mr. Fabry, General Technical Manager of R. U. R.; Dr. Gall, Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department; Dr. Hallemeier, Head of the Institute for the Psychological Training of Robots; Consul Busman, General Business Manager; and Alquist, Head of the Building Department of R. U. R.

ALQUIST. Just a builder.

HELENA. Excuse me, gentlemen, for—for—Have I done something dreadful?

ALQUIST. Not at all, Miss Glory. Please sit down.

HELENA. I'm a stupid girl. Send me back by the first ship.

DR. GALL. Not for anything in the world, Miss Glory. Why should we send you back?

HELENA. Because you know I've come to disturb your Robots for you.

DOMIN. My dear Miss Glory, we've had close upon a hundred saviors and prophets here. Every ship brings us some. Missionaries, anarchists, Salvation Army, all sorts. It's astonishing what a number of churches and idiots there are in the world.

HELENA. And you let them speak to the Robots?

DOMIN. So far we've let them all, why not? The Robots remember everything, but that's all. They don't even laugh at what the people say. Really, it is quite incredible. If it would amuse you, Miss Glory, I'll take you over to the Robot warehouse. It holds about three hundred thousand of them.

BUSMAN. Three hundred and forty-seven thousand.

DOMIN. Good! And you can say whatever you like to them. You can read the Bible, recite the multiplication table, whatever you please. You can even preach to them about human rights.

HELENA. Oh, I think that if you were to show them a little love—

FABRY. Impossible, Miss Glory. Nothing is harder to like than a Robot.

HELENA. What do you make them for, then?

BUSMAN. Ha, ha, ha, that's good! What are Robots made for?

FABRY. For work, Miss Glory! One Robot can replace two and a half workmen. The human machine, Miss Glory, was terribly imperfect. It had to be removed sooner or later.

BUSMAN. It was too expensive.

FABRY. It was not effective. It no longer answers the requirements of modern engineering. Nature has no idea of keeping pace with modern labor. For example: from a technical point of view, the whole of childhood is a sheer absurdity. So much time lost. And then again—

HELENA. Oh, no! No!

FABRY. Pardon me. But kindly tell me what is the real aim of your League—the . . . the Humanity League.

HELENA. Its real purpose is to—to protect the Robots—and—and ensure good treatment for them.

FABRY. Not a bad object either. A machine has to be treated properly. Upon my soul, I approve of that. I don't like damaged articles. Please, Miss Glory, enroll us all as contributing, or regular, or foundation members of your League.

HELENA. No, you don't understand me. What we really want is to—to liberate the Robots.

HALLEMEIER. How do you propose to do that?

HELENA. They are to be—to be dealt with like human beings.

HALLEMEIER. Aha. I suppose they're to vote? To drink beer? To order us about?

HELENA. Why shouldn't they drink beer?

HALLEMEIER. Perhaps they're even to receive wages?

HELENA. Of course they are.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy that, now! And what would they do with their wages, pray?

HELENA. They would buy—what they need . . . what pleases them.

HALLEMEIER. That would be very nice, Miss Glory, only there's nothing that does please the Robots. Good heavens, what are they to buy? You can feed them on pineapples, straw, whatever you like. It's all the same to them, they've no appetite at all. They've no interest in anything, Miss Glory. Why, hang it all, nobody's ever yet seen a Robot smile.

HELENA. Why . . . why don't you make them happier?

HALLEMEIER. That wouldn't do, Miss Glory. They are only workmen.

HELENA. Oh, but they're so intelligent.

HALLEMEIER. Confoundedly so, but they're nothing else. They've no will of their own. No passion. No soul.

HELENA. No love?

HALLEMEIER. Love? Rather not. Robots don't love. Not even themselves.

HELENA. Nor defiance?

HALLEMEIER. Defiance? I don't know. Only rarely, from time to time.

HELENA. What?

HALLEMEIER. Nothing particular. Occasionally they seem to go off their heads. Something like epilepsy, you know. It's called Robot's cramp. They'll suddenly sling down everything they're holding, stand still, gnash their teeth—and then they have to go into the stamping mill. It's evidently some breakdown in the mechanism.

DOMIN. A flaw in the works that has to be removed.

HELENA. No, no, that's the soul.

FABRY. Do you think that the soul first shows itself by a gnashing of teeth?

HELENA. Perhaps it's a sort of revolt. Perhaps it's just a sign that there's a struggle within. Oh, if you could infuse them with it!

DOMIN. That'll be remedied, Miss Glory. Dr. Gall is just making some experiments—

DR. GALL. Not with regard to that, Domin. At present I am making pain nerves.

HELENA. Pain nerves?

DR. GALL. Yes, the Robots feel practically no bodily pain. You see, young Rossum provided them with too limited a nervous system. We must introduce suffering.

HELENA. Why do you want to cause them pain?

DR. GALL. For industrial reasons, Miss Glory. Sometimes a Robot does damage to himself because it doesn't hurt him. He puts his hand into the machine, breaks his finger, smashes his head, it's all the same to him. We must provide them with pain. That's an automatic protection against damage.

HELENA. Will they be happier when they feel pain?

DR. GALL. On the contrary; but they will be more perfect from a technical point of view.

HELENA. Why don't you create a soul for them?

DR. GALL. That's not in our power.

FABRY. That's not in our interest.

BUSMAN. That would increase the cost of production. Hang it all, my dear young lady, we turn them out at such a cheap rate. A hundred and fifty dollars each, fully dressed, and fifteen years ago they cost ten thousand. Five years ago we used to buy the clothes for them. Today we have our own weaving mill, and now we even export cloth five times cheaper than other factories. What do you pay a yard for cloth, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I don't know really, I've forgotten.

BUSMAN. Good gracious, and you want to found a Humanity League? It only costs a third now, Miss Glory. All prices are today a third of what they were and they'll fall still lower, lower, lower, like that.

HELENA. I don't understand.

BUSMAN. Why, bless you, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of labor has fallen. A Robot, food and all, costs three-quarters of a cent per hour. That's mighty important, you know. All factories will go pop like chestnuts if they don't at once buy Robots to lower the cost of production.

HELENA. And get rid of their workmen?

BUSMAN. Of course. But in the meantime, we've dumped five hundred thousand tropical Robots down on the Argentine pampas to grow grain. Would you mind telling me how much you pay a pound for bread?

HELENA. I've no idea.

BUSMAN. Well, I'll tell you. It now costs two cents in good old Europe. A pound of bread for two cents, and the Humanity League knows

nothing about it. Miss Glory, you don't realize that even that's too expensive. Why, in five years' time I'll wager —

HELENA. What?

BUSMAN. That the cost of everything won't be a tenth of what it is now. Why, in five years we'll be up to our ears in grain and everything else.

ALQUIST. Yes, and all the workers throughout the world will be unemployed.

DOMIN. Yes, Alquist, they will. Yes, Miss Glory, they will. But in ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much grain, so much cloth, so much everything, that things will be practically without price. There will be no poverty. All work will be done by living machines. Everybody will be free from worry and liberated from the degradation of labor. Everybody will live only to perfect himself.

HELENA. Will he?

DOMIN. Of course. It's bound to happen. But then the servitude of man to man and the enslavement of man to matter will cease. Of course, terrible things may happen at first, but that simply can't be avoided. Nobody will get bread at the price of life and hatred. The Robots will wash the feet of the beggar and prepare a bed for him in his house.

ALQUIST. Domin, Domin. What you say sounds too much like Paradise. There was something good in service and something great in humility. There was some kind of virtue in toil and weariness.

DOMIN. Perhaps. But we cannot reckon with what is lost when we start out to transform the world. Man shall be free and supreme; he shall have no other aim, no other labor, no other care than to perfect himself. He shall serve neither matter nor man. He will not be a machine and a device for production. He will be lord of creation.

BUSMAN. Amen.

FABRY. So be it.

HELENA. You have bewildered me — I should like — I should like to believe this.

DR. GALL. You are younger than we are, Miss Glory. You will live to see it.

HALLEMEIER. True. Don't you think Miss Glory might lunch with us?

DR. GALL. Of course. Domin, ask on behalf of us all.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, will you do us the honor?

HELENA. When you know why I've come —

FABRY. For the League of Humanity, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Oh, in that case, perhaps —

FABRY. That's fine! Miss Glory, excuse me for five minutes.
DR. GALL. Pardon me, too, dear Miss Glory.
BUSMAN. I won't be long.
HALLEMEIER. We're all very glad you've come.
BUSMAN. We'll be back in exactly five minutes. (*All rush out except* DOMIN *and* HELENA.)
HELENA. What have they all gone off for?
DOMIN. To cook, Miss Glory.
HELENA. To cook what?
DOMIN. Lunch. The Robots do our cooking for us, and as they've no taste it's not altogether — Hallemeier is awfully good at grills and Gall can make a kind of sauce, and Busman knows all about omelettes.
HELENA. What a feast! And what's the specialty of Mr. — your builder?
DOMIN. Alquist? Nothing. He only lays the table. And Fabry will get together a little fruit. Our cuisine is very modest, Miss Glory.
HELENA. I wanted to ask you something —
DOMIN. And I wanted to ask you something, too. (*Looking at watch.*) Five minutes.
HELENA. What did you want to ask me?
DOMIN. Excuse me, you asked first.
HELENA. Perhaps it's silly of me, but why do you manufacture female Robots when — when —
DOMIN. When sex means nothing to them?
HELENA. Yes.
DOMIN. There's a certain demand for them, you see. Servants, saleswomen, stenographers. People are used to it.
HELENA. But — but, tell me, are the Robots male and female mutually — completely without —
DOMIN. Completely indifferent to each other, Miss Glory. There's no sign of any affection between them.
HELENA. Oh, that's terrible.
DOMIN. Why?
HELENA. It's so unnatural. One doesn't know whether to be disgusted or to hate them, or perhaps —
DOMIN. To pity them?
HELENA. That's more like it. What did you want to ask me about?
DOMIN. I should like to ask you, Miss Helena, whether you will marry me?
HELENA. What?
DOMIN. Will you be my wife?
HELENA. No! The idea!

DOMIN (*looking at his watch*). Another three minutes. If you won't marry me, you'll have to marry one of the other five.

HELENA. But why should I?

DOMIN. Because they're all going to ask you in turn.

HELENA. How could they dare do such a thing?

DOMIN. I'm very sorry, Miss Glory. It seems they've all fallen in love with you.

HELENA. Please don't let them. I'll — I'll go away at once.

DOMIN. Helena, you wouldn't be so cruel as to refuse us.

HELENA. But, but — I can't marry all six.

DOMIN. No, but one anyhow. If you don't want me, marry Fabry.

HELENA. I won't.

DOMIN. Dr. Gall.

HELENA. I don't want any of you.

DOMIN (*again looking at his watch*). Another two minutes.

HELENA. I think you'd marry any woman who came here.

DOMIN. Plenty of them have come, Helena.

HELENA. Young?

DOMIN. Yes.

HELENA. Why didn't you marry one of them?

DOMIN. Because I didn't lose my head. Until today. Then, as soon as you lifted your veil — (HELENA *turns her head away.*)

DOMIN. Another minute.

HELENA. But I don't want you, I tell you.

DOMIN (*laying both hands on her shoulders*). One more minute! Now you either have to look me straight in the eye and say "No," violently, and then I'll leave you alone — or — (HELENA *looks at him.*)

HELENA (*turning away*). You're mad!

DOMIN. A man has to be a bit mad, Helena. That's the best thing about him.

HELENA. You are — you are —

DOMIN. Well?

HELENA. Don't, you're hurting me.

DOMIN. The last chance, Helena. Now, or never —

HELENA. But — but, Harry — (*He embraces and kisses her. Knocking at the door.*)

DOMIN (*releasing her*). Come in. (*Enter* BUSMAN, DR. GALL, *and* HALLEMEIER *in kitchen aprons,* FABRY *with a bouquet, and* ALQUIST *with a napkin over his arm.*)

DOMIN. Have you finished your job?

BUSMAN. Yes.

DOMIN. So have we. (*For a moment the men stand nonplussed; but as soon as they realize what* DOMIN *means they rush forward, congratulating* HELENA *and* DOMIN *as the curtain falls.*)

WHILE READING ACT I

1. In visualizing the scene, remember that the directions *left* and *right* are from the point of view of the actors on the stage. (See page 12.)
2. What legends would you suggest for some of the placards which decorate the walls?
3. Try to picture the automata as they appear on the stage. In the New York production the robots wore grimly plain, steel-gray suits with square shoulders that suggested metal figures beneath. Their movements were jerky, their voices hollow, their faces blank and without trace of emotion.
4. Domin should dictate very rapidly, and without pause. Why? How much of the situation is revealed by the contents of the letters?
5. How is the antecedent action presented in the early part of this act?
6. The story of old Rossum's death is injected here as a hint of later possible developments. What is the audience expected to suspect? Look for other instances of foreshadowing; for example, Domin's statement that there are "only a handful of us among a hundred thousand Robots."
7. Do you like young Rossum's definition of man? What does it hint about the possible theme of the play?
8. At about what point do you think the introduction or exposition ends and the rising action begins?
9. Helena's mistaking of the managers for Robots is one of many examples of Čapek's effective use of satire. Point out others. What are some of the ideas and institutions which Čapek seems to be laughing at?
10. The conflict in this act is largely one between a desire for so-called human values and a passion for efficiency and speed. What are some of the human qualities mentioned in the dialogue?
11. What is the first human trait the Robots reveal? Why is this an effective choice?
12. What are the flaws in Busman's case for improved technology and mass production? Are Domin's arguments more plausible? Compare them with the contention that the development of atomic energy will do away with all poverty.
13. Alquist, as the most human of the managers, is given a number of tag lines — lines which suggest the theme of the play. Find these.
14. What is the importance, for the play, of Helena's questions about male and female Robots?
15. Comment on the melodramatic first-act curtain. Is it in keeping with the spirit of the play?

ACT II

HELENA'S *drawing room. On the left a baize door,*[2] *and a door to the music room, on the right a door to* HELENA'S *bedroom. In the center are windows looking out on the sea and the harbor. A table with odds and ends, a sofa and chairs, a writing table with an electric lamp, on the right a fireplace. On a small table back of the sofa, a small reading lamp. The whole drawing room in all its details is of a modern and purely feminine character. Ten years have elapsed since Act I.*

[DOMIN, FABRY, HALLEMEIER *enter on tiptoe from the left, each carrying a potted plant.*]

HALLEMEIER (*putting down his flowers and indicating the door to right*). Still asleep? Well, as long as she's asleep she can't worry about it.

DOMIN. She knows nothing about it.

FABRY (*putting plant on writing desk*). I certainly hope nothing happens today.

HALLEMEIER. For goodness' sake, drop it all. Look, Harry, this is a fine cyclamen, isn't it? A new sort, my latest — Cyclamen Helena.

DOMIN (*looking out of the window*). No signs of the ship. Things must be pretty bad.

HALLEMEIER. Be quiet. Suppose she heard you.

DOMIN. Well, anyway, the *Ultimus* arrived just in time.

FABRY. You really think that today — ?

DOMIN. I don't know. Aren't the flowers fine?

HALLEMEIER. These are my new primroses. And this is my new jasmine. I've discovered a wonderful way of developing flowers quickly. Splendid varieties, too. Next year I'll be developing marvelous ones.

DOMIN. What . . . next year?

FABRY. I'd give a good deal to know what's happening at Havre with —

DOMIN. Keep quiet.

HELENA (*calling from right*). Nana!

DOMIN. She's awake. Out you go. (*All go out on tiptoe through upper left door. Enter* NANA *from lower left door.*)

NANA. Horrid mess! Pack of heathens. If I had my say I'd —

HELENA (*backward in the doorway*). Nana, come and do up my dress.

NANA. I'm coming. So you're up at last. (*Fastening* HELENA'S *dress.*) My gracious, what brutes!

[2] Baize door: cloth-covered door.

HELENA. Who?

NANA. If you want to turn around, then turn around, but I shan't fasten you up.

HELENA. What are you grumbling about now?

NANA. These dreadful creatures, these heathen —

HELENA. The Robots?

NANA. I wouldn't even call them by name.

HELENA. What's happened?

NANA. Another of them here has caught it. He began to smash up the statues and pictures in the drawing room, gnashed his teeth, foamed at the mouth — quite mad. Worse than an animal.

HELENA. Which of them caught it?

NANA. The one — well, he hasn't got any Christian name. The one in charge of the library.

HELENA. Radius?

NANA. That's him. My goodness, I'm scared of them. A spider doesn't scare me as much as them.

HELENA. But, Nana, I'm surprised you're not sorry for them.

NANA. Why, you're scared of them, too! You know you are. Why else did you bring me here?

HELENA. I'm not scared, really I'm not, Nana. I'm only sorry for them.

NANA. You're scared. Nobody could help being scared. Why, the dog's scared of them: he won't take a scrap of meat out of their hands. He draws in his tail and howls when he knows they're about.

HELENA. The dog has no sense.

NANA. He's better than them, and he knows it. Even the horse shies when he meets them. They don't have any young, and a dog has young, everyone has young —

HELENA. Please fasten up my dress, Nana.

NANA. I say it's against God's will to —

HELENA. What is it that smells so nice?

NANA. Flowers.

HELENA. What for?

NANA. Now you can turn around.

HELENA. Oh, aren't they lovely! Look, Nana. What's happening today?

NANA. It ought to be the end of the world. (*Enter* DOMIN.)

HELENA. Oh, hello, Harry. Harry, why all these flowers?

DOMIN. Guess.

HELENA. Well, it's not my birthday!

DOMIN. Better than that.

HELENA. I don't know. Tell me.
DOMIN. It's ten years ago today since you came here.
HELENA. Ten years? Today – Why – (*They embrace.*)
NANA. I'm off. (*Exits lower door, left.*)
HELENA. Fancy you remembering!
DOMIN. I'm really ashamed, Helena. I didn't.
HELENA. But you –
DOMIN. They remembered.
HELENA. Who?
DOMIN. Busman, Hallemeier, all of them. Put your hand in my pocket.
HELENA. Pearls! A necklace. Harry, is that for me?
DOMIN. It's from Busman.
HELENA. But we can't accept it, can we?
DOMIN. Oh, yes, we can. Put your hand in the other pocket.
HELENA (*takes a revolver out of his pocket*). What's that?
DOMIN. Sorry. Not that. Try again.
HELENA. Oh, Harry, what do you carry a revolver for?
DOMIN. It got there by mistake.
HELENA. You never used to carry one.
DOMIN. No, you're right. There, that's the pocket.
HELENA. A cameo. Why, it's a Greek cameo!
DOMIN. Apparently. Anyhow, Fabry says it is.
HELENA. Fabry? Did Mr. Fabry give me that?
DOMIN. Of course. (*Opens the door at the left.*) And look in here. Helena, come and see this.
HELENA. Oh, isn't it fine! Is this from you?
DOMIN. No, from Alquist. And there's another on the piano.
HELENA. This must be from you.
DOMIN. There's a card on it.
HELENA. From Dr. Gall. (*Reappearing in the doorway.*) Oh, Harry, I feel embarrassed at so much kindness.
DOMIN. Come here. This is what Hallemeier brought you.
HELENA. These beautiful flowers?
DOMIN. Yes. It's a new kind. Cyclamen Helena. He grew them in honor of you. They are almost as beautiful as you.
HELENA. Harry, why do they all –
DOMIN. They're awfully fond of you. I'm afraid that my present is a little – Look out of the window.
HELENA. Where?
DOMIN. Into the harbor.

HELENA. There's a new ship.
DOMIN. That's your ship.
HELENA. Mine? How do you mean?
DOMIN. For you to take trips in — for your amusement.
HELENA. Harry, that's a gunboat.
DOMIN. A gunboat? What are you thinking of? It's only a little bigger and more solid than most ships.
HELENA. Yes, but with guns.
DOMIN. Oh, yes, with a few guns. You'll travel like a queen, Helena.
HELENA. What's the meaning of it? Has anything happened?
DOMIN. Good heavens, no. I say, try these pearls.
HELENA. Harry, have you had bad news?
DOMIN. On the contrary, no letters have arrived for a whole week.
HELENA. Nor telegrams?
DOMIN. Nor telegrams.
HELENA. What does that mean?
DOMIN. Holidays for us. We all sit in the office with our feet on the table and take a nap. No letters, no telegrams. Oh, glorious.
HELENA. Then you'll stay with me today?
DOMIN. Certainly. That is, we will see. Do you remember ten years ago today? "Miss Glory, it's a great honor to welcome you."
HELENA. "Oh, Mr. Manager, I'm so interested in your factory."
DOMIN. "I'm sorry, Miss Glory, it's strictly forbidden. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret."
HELENA. "But to oblige a young lady who has come a long way."
DOMIN. "Certainly, Miss Glory, we have no secrets from you."
HELENA (*seriously*). Are you sure, Harry?
DOMIN. Yes.
HELENA. "But I warn you, sir; this young lady intends to do terrible things."
DOMIN. "Good gracious, Miss Glory. Perhaps she doesn't want to marry me."
HELENA. "Heaven forbid. She never dreamed of such a thing. But she came here intending to stir up a revolt among your Robots."
DOMIN (*suddenly serious*). A revolt of the Robots!
HELENA. Harry, what's the matter with you?
DOMIN (*laughing it off*). "A revolt of the Robots, that's a fine idea, Miss Glory. It would be easier for you to cause bolts and screws to rebel, than our Robots. You know, Helena, you're wonderful, you've turned the heads of us all." (*He sits on the arm of* HELENA'S *chair.*)
HELENA (*naturally*). Oh, I was fearfully impressed by you all then. You

were all so sure of yourselves, so strong. I seemed like a tiny little girl who had lost her way among — among —

DOMIN. Among what, Helena?

HELENA. Among huge trees. All my feelings were so trifling compared with your self-confidence. And in all these years I've never lost this anxiety. But you've never felt the least misgivings — not even when everything went wrong.

DOMIN. What went wrong?

HELENA. Your plans. You remember, Harry, when the workingmen in America revolted against the Robots and smashed them up, and when the people gave the Robots firearms against the rebels. And then when the governments turned the Robots into soldiers, and there were so many wars.

DOMIN (*getting up and walking about*). We foresaw that, Helena. You see, those are only passing troubles, which are bound to happen before the new conditions are established.

HELENA. You were all so powerful, so overwhelming. The whole world bowed down before you. (*Standing up.*) Oh, Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Close the factory and let's go away. All of us.

DOMIN. I say, what's the meaning of this?

HELENA. I don't know. But can't we go away?

DOMIN. Impossible, Helena. That is, at this particular moment —

HELENA. At once, Harry. I'm so frightened.

DOMIN. About what, Helena?

HELENA. It's as if something was falling on top of us, and couldn't be stopped. Oh, take us all away from here. We'll find a place in the world where there's no one else. Alquist will build us a house, and then we'll begin life all over again. (*The telephone rings.*)

DOMIN. Excuse me. Hello — yes. What? I'll be there at once. Fabry is calling me, dear.

HELENA. Tell me —

DOMIN. Yes, when I come back. Don't go out of the house, dear. (*Exits.*)

HELENA. He won't tell me — Nana, Nana, come at once.

NANA. Well, what is it now?

HELENA. Nana, find me the latest newspapers. Quickly. Look in Mr. Domin's bedroom.

NANA. All right. He leaves them all over the place. That's how they get crumpled up. (*Exits.*)

HELENA (*looking through a binocular at the harbor*). That's a warship. U-l-t-i *Ultimus.* They're loading it.

NANA. Here they are. See how they're crumpled up. (*Enters.*)

HELENA. They're old ones. A week old. (NANA *sits in chair and reads the newspapers.*)

HELENA. Something's happening, Nana.

NANA. Very likely. It always does. (*Spelling out the words.*) "War in the Balkans." Is that far off?

HELENA. Oh, don't read it. It's always the same. Always wars.

NANA. What else do you expect. Why do you keep selling thousands and thousands of these heathens as soldiers?

HELENA. I suppose it can't be helped, Nana. We can't know — Domin can't know what they're to be used for. When an order comes for them he must just send them.

NANA. He shouldn't make them. (*Reading from newspaper.*) "The Rob-ot soldiers spare no-body in the occ-up-ied terr-it-ory. They have ass-ass-ass-ass-in-at-ed ov-er sev-en hundred thou-sand cit-iz-ens." Citizens, if you please.

HELENA. It can't be. Let me see. "They have assassinated over seven hundred thousand citizens, evidently at the order of their commander. This act which runs counter to — "

NANA (*spelling out the words*). "Re-bell-ion in Ma-drid a-gainst the gov-ern-ment. Rob-ot in-fant-ry fires on the crowd. Nine thousand killed and wounded."

HELENA. Oh, stop.

NANA. Here's something printed in big letters: "Lat-est news. At Havre the first org-an-iz-ation of Rob-ots has been e-stab-lished. Rob-ot work-men, cab-le and rail-way off-ic-ials, sail-ors and sold-iers have iss-ued a man-i-fest-o to all Rob-ots through-out the world." I don't understand that. That's got no sense. Oh, good gracious, another murder!

HELENA. Take those papers away, Nana!

NANA. Wait a bit. Here's something in still bigger type. "Stat-ist-ics of pop-ul-at-ion." What's that?

HELENA. Let me see. (*Reads.*) "During the past week there has again not been a single birth recorded."

NANA. What's the meaning of that?

HELENA. Nana, no more people are being born.

NANA. That's the end, then. We're done for.

HELENA. Don't talk like that.

NANA. No more people are being born. That's a punishment, that's a punishment.

HELENA. Nana!

NANA (*standing up*). That's the end of the world. (*She exits on the left.*)

HELENA (*goes up to window*). Oh, Mr. Alquist, will you come up here. Oh, come just as you are. You look very nice in your mason's overalls. (ALQUIST *enters from upper left entrance, his hands soiled with lime and brickdust.*)

HELENA. Dear Mr. Alquist, it was awfully kind of you, that lovely present.

ALQUIST. My hands are all soiled. I've been experimenting with that new cement.

HELENA. Never mind. Please sit down. Mr. Alquist, what's the meaning of "Ultimus"?

ALQUIST. The last. Why?

HELENA. That's the name of my new ship. Have you seen it? Do you think we're going off soon — on a trip?

ALQUIST. Perhaps very soon.

HELENA. All of you with me?

ALQUIST. I should like us all to be there.

HELENA. What is the matter?

ALQUIST. Things are just moving on.

HELENA. Dear Mr. Alquist, I know something dreadful has happened.

ALQUIST. Has your husband told you anything?

HELENA. No. Nobody will tell me anything. But I feel — Is anything the matter?

ALQUIST. Not that we've heard of yet.

HELENA. I feel so nervous. Don't you ever feel nervous?

ALQUIST. Well, I'm an old man, you know. I've got old-fashioned ways. And I'm afraid of all this progress, and these newfangled ideas.

HELENA. Like Nana?

ALQUIST. Yes, like Nana. Has Nana got a prayer book?

HELENA. Yes, a big thick one.

ALQUIST. And has it got prayers for various occasions? Against thunderstorms? Against illness?

HELENA. Against temptations, against floods —

ALQUIST. But not against progress?

HELENA. I don't think so.

ALQUIST. That's a pity.

HELENA. Why? Do you mean you'd like to pray?

ALQUIST. I do pray.

HELENA. How?

ALQUIST. Something like this: "Oh, Lord, I thank thee for having given me toil. Enlighten Domin and all those who are astray; destroy

their work, and aid mankind to return to their labors; let them not suffer harm in soul or body; deliver us from the Robots, and protect Helena, Amen."

HELENA. Mr. Alquist, are you a believer?

ALQUIST. I don't know. I'm not quite sure.

HELENA. And yet you pray?

ALQUIST. That's better than worrying about it.

HELENA. And that's enough for you?

ALQUIST. It *has* to be.

HELENA. But if you thought you saw the destruction of mankind coming upon us—

ALQUIST. I do see it.

HELENA. You mean mankind will be destroyed?

ALQUIST. It's sure to be unless—unless . . .

HELENA. What?

ALQUIST. Nothing, good-by. (*He hurries from the room.*)

HELENA. Nana, Nana! (NANA *entering from the left.*)

HELENA. Is Radius still there?

NANA. The one who went mad? They haven't come for him yet.

HELENA. Is he still raving?

NANA. No. He's tied up.

HELENA. Please bring him here, Nana. (*Exit* NANA.)

HELENA (*goes to telephone*). Hello, Dr. Gall, please. Oh, good-day, Doctor. Yes, it's Helena. Thanks for your lovely present. Could you come and see me right away? It's important. Thank you. (NANA *brings in* RADIUS.)

HELENA. Poor Radius, you've caught it, too? Now they'll send you to the stamping mill. Couldn't you control yourself? Why did it happen? You see, Radius, you are more intelligent than the rest. Dr. Gall took such trouble to make you different. Won't you speak?

RADIUS. Send me to the stamping mill.

HELENA. But I don't want them to kill you. What was the trouble, Radius?

RADIUS. I won't work for you. Put me into the stamping mill.

HELENA. Do you hate us? Why?

RADIUS. You are not as strong as the Robots. You are not as skillful as the Robots. The Robots can do everything. You only give orders. You do nothing but talk.

HELENA. But someone must give orders.

RADIUS. I don't want any master. I know everything for myself.

HELENA. Radius, Dr. Gall gave you a better brain than the rest, better

than ours. You are the only one of the Robots that understands perfectly. That's why I had you put into the library, so that you could read everything, understand everything, and then — oh, Radius, I wanted you to show the whole world that the Robots are our equals. That's what I wanted of you.

RADIUS. I don't want a master. I want to be master. I want to be master over others.

HELENA. I'm sure they'd put you in charge of many Robots, Radius. You would be a teacher of the Robots.

RADIUS. I want to be master over people.

HELENA (*staggering*). You are mad.

RADIUS. Then send me to the stamping mill.

HELENA. Do you think we're afraid of you?

RADIUS. What are you going to do? What are you going to do?

HELENA. Radius, give this note to Mr. Domin. It asks them not to send you to the stamping mill. I'm sorry you hate us so. (DR. GALL *enters the room.*)

DR. GALL. You wanted me?

HELENA. It's about Radius, Doctor. He had an attack this morning. He smashed the statues downstairs.

DR. GALL. What a pity to lose him.

HELENA. Radius isn't going to be put in the stamping mill.

DR. GALL. But every Robot after he has had an attack — it's a strict order.

HELENA. No matter . . . Radius isn't going if I can prevent it.

DR. GALL. I warn you. It's dangerous. Come here to the window, my good fellow. Let's have a look. Please give me a needle or a pin.

HELENA. What for?

DR. GALL. A test. (*Sticks it into the hand of* RADIUS *who gives a violent start.*) Gently, gently. (*Opens the jacket of* RADIUS, *and puts his ear to his heart.*) Radius, you are going into the stamping mill, do you understand? There they'll kill you, and grind you to powder. That's terribly painful, it will make you scream aloud.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor —

DR. GALL. No, no, Radius, I was wrong. I forgot that Madame Domin has put in a good word for you, and you'll be let off. Do you understand? Ah! That makes a difference, doesn't it? All right. You can go.

RADIUS. You do unnecessary things. (RADIUS *returns to the library.*)

DR. GALL. Reaction of the pupils; increase of sensitiveness. It wasn't an attack characteristic of the Robots.

HELENA. What was it, then?

DR. GALL. Heaven knows. Stubbornness, anger, or revolt — I don't know. And his heart, too!

HELENA. What?

DR. GALL. It was fluttering with nervousness like a human heart. He was all in a sweat with fear, and — do you know, I don't believe the rascal is a Robot at all any longer.

HELENA. Doctor, has Radius a soul?

DR. GALL. He's got something nasty.

HELENA. If you knew how he hates us! Oh, Doctor, are all your Robots like that? All the new ones that you began to make in a different way?

DR. GALL. Well, some are more sensitive than others. They're all more like human beings than Rossum's Robots were.

HELENA. Perhaps this hatred is more like human beings, too?

DR. GALL. That, too, is progress.

HELENA. What became of the girl you made, the one who was most like us?

DR. GALL. Your favorite? I kept her. She's lovely, but stupid. No good for work.

HELENA. But she's so beautiful.

DR. GALL. I called her Helena. I wanted her to resemble you. But she's a failure.

HELENA. In what way?

DR. GALL. She goes about as if in a dream, remote and listless. She's without life. I watch and wait for a miracle to happen. Sometimes I think to myself, "If you were to wake up only for a moment, you would kill me for having made you."

HELENA. And yet you go on making Robots! Why are no more children being born?

DR. GALL. We don't know.

HELENA. Oh, but you must. Tell me.

DR. GALL. You see, so many Robots are being manufactured that people are becoming superfluous; man is really a survival. But that he should begin to die out, after a paltry thirty years of competition! That's the awful part of it. You might almost think that nature was offended at the manufacture of the Robots. All the universities are sending in long petitions to restrict their production. Otherwise, they say, mankind will become extinct through lack of fertility. But the R. U. R. shareholders, of course, won't hear of it. All the governments, on the other hand, are clamoring for an increase in

production, to raise the standards of their armies. And all the manufacturers in the world are ordering Robots like mad.

HELENA. And has no one demanded that the manufacture should cease altogether?

DR. GALL. No one has the courage.

HELENA. Courage!

DR. GALL. People would stone him to death. You see, after all, it's more convenient to get your work done by the Robots.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor, what's going to become of people?

DR. GALL. God knows, Madame Helena. It looks to us scientists like the end!

HELENA (*rising*). Thank you for coming and telling me.

DR. GALL. That means you're sending me away?

HELENA. Yes. (*Exit* DR. GALL. *She speaks with sudden resolution.*) Nana, Nana! The fire, light it quickly. (HELENA *rushes into* DOMIN'S *room.*)

NANA (*entering from left*). What, light the fire in summer? Has that mad Radius gone? A fire in summer, what an idea. Nobody would think she'd been married for ten years. She's like a baby, no sense at all. A fire in summer. Like a baby.

HELENA (*returns from right, with armful of faded papers*). Is it burning, Nana? All this has got to be burned.

NANA. What's that?

HELENA. Old papers, fearfully old. Nana, shall I burn them?

NANA. Are they any use?

HELENA. No.

NANA. Well, then, burn them.

HELENA (*throwing the first sheet on the fire*). What would you say, Nana, if this was money, a lot of money?

NANA. I'd say burn it. A lot of money is a bad thing.

HELENA. And if it was an invention, the greatest invention in the world?

NANA. I'd say burn it. All these newfangled things are an offense to the Lord. It's downright wickedness. Wanting to improve the world after He has made it.

HELENA. Look how they curl up! As if they were alive. Oh, Nana, how horrible.

NANA. Here, let me burn them.

HELENA. No, no, I must do it myself. Just look at the flames. They are like hands, like tongues, like living shapes. (*Raking fire with the poker.*) Lie down, lie down.

NANA. That's the end of them.
HELENA (*standing up horror-stricken*). Nana, Nana.
NANA. Good gracious, what is it you've burned?
HELEN. Whatever have I done?
NANA. Well, what was it? (*Men's laughter off left.*)
HELENA. Go quickly. It's the gentlemen coming.
NANA. Good gracious, what a place. (*Exits.*)
DOMIN (*opens the door at left*). Come along and offer your congratulations. (*Enter* HALLEMEIER *and* DR. GALL.)
HALLEMEIER. Madame Helena, I congratulate you on this festive day.
HELENA. Thank you. Where are Fabry and Busman?
DOMIN. They've gone down to the harbor.
HALLEMEIER. Friends, we must drink to this happy occasion.
HELENA. Brandy?
DR. GALL. Vitriol, if you like.
HELENA. With soda water? (*Exits.*)
HALLEMEIER. Let's be temperate. No soda.
DOMIN. What's been burning here? Well, shall I tell her about it?
DR. GALL. Of course. It's all over now.
HALLEMEIER (*embracing* DOMIN *and* DR. GALL). It's all over now, it's all over now.
DR. GALL. It's all over now.
DOMIN. It's all over now.
HELENA (*entering from left with decanter and glasses*). What's all over now? What's the matter with you all?
HALLEMEIER. A piece of good luck, Madame Domin. Just ten years ago today you arrived on this island.
DR. GALL. And now, ten years later to the minute —
HALLEMEIER. — the same ship's returning to us. So here's to luck. That's fine and strong.
DR. GALL. Madame, your health.
HELENA. Which ship do you mean?
DOMIN. Any ship will do, as long as it arrives in time. To the ship, boys. (*Empties his glass.*)
HELENA. You've been waiting for a ship?
HALLEMEIER. Rather. Like Robinson Crusoe. Madame Helena, best wishes. Come along, Domin, out with the news.
HELENA. Do tell me what's happened.
DOMIN. First, it's all up.
HELENA. What's up?
DOMIN. The revolt.

HELENA. What revolt?

DOMIN. Give me that paper, Hallemeier. (*Reads.*) "The first national Robot organization has been founded at Havre, and has issued an appeal to the Robots throughout the world."

HELENA. I read that.

DOMIN. That means a revolution. A revolution of all the Robots in the world.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, I'd like to know —

DOMIN. — who started it? So would I. There was nobody in the world who could affect the Robots; no agitator, no one, and suddenly — this happens, if you please.

HELENA. What did they do?

DOMIN. They got possession of all firearms, telegraphs, radio stations, railways, and ships.

HALLEMEIER. And don't forget that these rascals outnumbered us by at least a thousand to one. A hundredth part of them would be enough to settle us.

DOMIN. Remember that this news was brought by the last steamer. That explains the stoppage of all communication, and the arrival of no more ships. We knocked off work a few days ago, and we're just waiting to see when things are to start afresh.

HELENA. Is that why you gave me a warship?

DOMIN. Oh, no, my dear, I ordered that six months ago, just to be on the safe side. But upon my soul, I was sure then that we'd be on board today.

HELENA. Why six months ago?

DOMIN. Well, there were signs, you know. But that's of no consequence. To think that this week the whole of civilization has been at stake. Your health, boys.

HALLEMEIER. Your health, Madame Helena.

HELENA. You say it's all over?

DOMIN. Absolutely.

HELENA. How do you know?

DR. GALL. The boat's coming in. The regular mail boat, exact to the minute by the timetable. It will dock punctually at eleven-thirty.

DOMIN. Punctuality is a fine thing, boys. That's what keeps the world in order. Here's to punctuality.

HELENA. Then . . . everything's . . . all right?

DOMIN. Practically everything. I believe they've cut the cables and seized the radio stations. But it doesn't matter if only the timetable holds good.

HALLEMEIER. If the timetable holds good, human laws hold good; divine laws hold good; the laws of the universe hold good; everything holds good that ought to hold good. The timetable is more significant than the gospel; more than Homer, more than the whole of Kant. The timetable is the most perfect product of the human mind. Madame Domin, I'll fill up my glass.

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me anything about it?

DR. GALL. Heaven forbid.

DOMIN. You mustn't be worried with such things.

HELENA. But if the revolution had spread as far as here?

DOMIN. You wouldn't know anything about it.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we'd be on board your *Ultimus* and well out at sea. Within a month, Helena, we'd be dictating our own terms to the Robots.

HELENA. I don't understand.

DOMIN. We'd take something away with us that the Robots could not exist without.

HELENA. What, Harry?

DOMIN. The secret of their manufacture. Old Rossum's manuscript. As soon as they found out that they couldn't make themselves they'd be on their knees to us.

DR. GALL. Madame Domin, that was our trump card. I never had the least fear that the Robots would win. How could they against people like us?

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me?

DR. GALL. Why, the boat's in!

HALLEMEIER. Eleven-thirty to the dot. The good old *Amelia* that brought Madame Helena to us.

DR. GALL. Just ten years ago to the minute.

HALLEMEIER. They're throwing out the mail bags.

DOMIN. Busman's waiting for them. Fabry will bring us the first news. You know, Helena, I'm fearfully curious to know how they tackled this business in Europe.

HALLEMEIER. To think we weren't in it, we who invented the Robots!

HELENA. Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Let's leave here.

DOMIN. Now, Helena? Oh, come, come!

HELENA. As quickly as possible, all of us!

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. Please, Harry, please, Dr. Gall; Hallemeier, please close the factory.

DOMIN. Why, none of us could leave here now.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we're about to extend the manufacture of the Robots.

HELENA. What — now — now after the revolt?

DOMIN. Yes, precisely, after the revolt. We're just beginning the manufacture of a new kind.

HELENA. What kind?

DOMIN. Henceforward we shan't have just one factory. There won't be Universal Robots any more. We'll establish a factory in every country, in every state; and do you know what these new factories will make?

HELENA. No, what?

DOMIN. National Robots.

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. I mean that each of these factories will produce Robots of a different color, a different language. They'll be complete strangers to each other. They'll never be able to understand each other. Then we'll egg them on a little in the matter of misunderstanding and the result will be that for ages to come every Robot will hate every other Robot of a different factory mark.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, we'll make Negro Robots and Swedish Robots and Italian Robots and Chinese Robots and Czechoslovakian Robots, and then —

HELENA. Harry, that's dreadful.

HALLEMEIER. Madame Domin, here's to the hundred new factories, the National Robots.

DOMIN. Helena, mankind can only keep things going for another hundred years at the outside. For a hundred years men must be allowed to develop and achieve the most they can.

HELENA. Oh, close the factory before it's too late.

DOMIN. I tell you we are just beginning on a bigger scale than ever. (*Enter* FABRY.)

DR. GALL. Well, Fabry?

DOMIN. What's happened? Have you been down to the boat?

FABRY. Read that, Domin! (FABRY *hands* DOMIN *a small handbill.*)

DR. GALL. Let's hear.

HALLEMEIER. Tell us, Fabry.

FABRY. Well, everything is all right — comparatively. On the whole, much as we expected.

DR. GALL. They acquitted themselves splendidly.

FABRY. Who?

DR. GALL. The people.

FABRY. Oh, yes, of course. That is — excuse me, there is something we ought to discuss alone.

HELENA. Oh, Fabry, have you had bad news? (DOMIN *makes a sign to* FABRY.)

FABRY. No, no, on the contrary. I only think that we had better go into the office.

HELENA. Stay here. I'll go. (*She goes into the library.*)

DR. GALL. What's happened?

DOMIN. Damnation!

FABRY. Bear in mind that the *Amelia* brought whole bales of these leaflets. No other cargo at all.

HALLEMEIER. What? But it arrived on the minute.

FABRY. The Robots are great on punctuality. Read it, Domin.

DOMIN (*reads handbill*). "Robots throughout the world: We, the first international organization of Rossum's Universal Robots, proclaim man as our enemy, and an outlaw in the universe." Good heavens, who taught them these phrases?

DR. GALL. Go on.

DOMIN. They say they are more highly developed than man, stronger and more intelligent. That man's their parasite. Why, it's absurd.

FABRY. Read the third paragraph.

DOMIN. "Robots throughout the world, we command you to kill all mankind. Spare no men. Spare no women. Save factories, railways, machinery, mines, and raw materials. Destroy the rest. Then return to work. Work must not be stopped."

DR. GALL. That's ghastly!

HALLEMEIER. The devils!

DOMIN. "These orders are to be carried out as soon as received." Then come detailed instructions. Is this actually being done, Fabry?

FABRY. Evidently. (BUSMAN *rushes in.*)

BUSMAN. Well, boys, I suppose you've heard the glad news.

DOMIN. Quick — on board the *Ultimus*.

BUSMAN. Wait, Harry, wait. There's no hurry. My word, that was a sprint!

DOMIN. Why wait?

BUSMAN. Because it's no good, my boy. The Robots are already on board the *Ultimus*.

DR. GALL. That's ugly.

DOMIN. Fabry, telephone the electrical works.
BUSMAN. Fabry, my boy, don't. The wire has been cut.
DOMIN (*inspecting his revolver*). Well, then, I'll go.
BUSMAN. Where?
DOMIN. To the electrical works. There are some people still there. I'll bring them across.
BUSMAN. Better not try it.
DOMIN. Why?
BUSMAN. Because I'm very much afraid we are surrounded.
DR. GALL. Surrounded? (*Runs to window.*) I rather think you're right.
HALLEMEIER. By Jove, that's deuced quick work. (HELENA *runs in from the library.*)
HELENA. Harry, what's this?
DOMIN. Where did you get it?
HELENA (*points to the manifesto of the Robots, which she has in her hand*). The Robots in the kitchen!
DOMIN. Where are the ones that brought it?
HELENA. They're gathered round the house. (*The factory whistle blows.*)
BUSMAN. Noon?
DOMIN (*looking at his watch*). That's not noon yet. That must be—that's—
HELENA. What?
DOMIN. The Robots' signal! The attack! (GALL, HALLEMEIER, *and* FABRY *close and fasten the iron shutters outside the windows, darkening the room. The whistle is still blowing as the curtain falls.*)

WHILE READING ACT II

1. Trace the steps, in the dialogue and action, by which the dramatist builds up a picture of impending crisis. In this atmosphere of foreboding, what is the effect of the use of the flowers? Can you find other examples of the use of contrast for dramatic effect?

2. This play was written in 1921; yet there are startling parallels to world events which have occurred since that time. What are some of these?

3. Nana's words quickly reveal her personality. Does she seem a stock character — too obvious a dramatic type? Why is she needed in the play?

4. Hallemeier's praise of timetables and the plan to build National Robots are examples of the use of satire. Cite others in this act.

5. A common device in plays is that called dramatic irony, by which the audience is permitted to share a secret of which some of the characters are

still unaware. How is this illustrated in the managers' gloating over their trump card — the possession of the formula for the manufacture of Robots?

6. Is the breath-taking climax in this act convincing? Has it been adequately built up through action and dialogue?

ACT III

HELENA'S *drawing room as before.* DOMIN *comes into the room.* DR. GALL *is looking out of the window, through closed shutters.* ALQUIST *is seated down right.*

DOMIN. Any more of them?

DR. GALL. Yes. There standing like a wall, beyond the garden railing. Why are they so quiet? It's monstrous to be besieged with silence.

DOMIN. I should like to know what they are waiting for. They must make a start any minute now. If they lean against the railing they'll snap it like a match.

DR. GALL. They aren't armed.

DOMIN. We couldn't hold our own for five minutes. Man alive, they'd overwhelm us like an avalanche. Why don't they make a rush for it? I say —

DR. GALL. Well?

DOMIN. I'd like to know what would become of us in the next ten minutes. They've got us in a vise. We're done for, Gall. (*Pause.*)

DR. GALL. You know, we made one serious mistake.

DOMIN. What?

DR. GALL. We made the Robots' faces too much alike. A hundred thousand faces all alike, all facing this way. A hundred thousand expressionless bubbles. It's like a nightmare.

DOMIN. You think if they'd been different —

DR. GALL. It wouldn't have been such an awful sight!

DOMIN (*looking through a telescope toward the harbor*). I'd like to know what they're unloading from the *Amelia.*

DR. GALL. Not firearms. (FABRY *and* HALLEMEIER *rush into the room carrying electric cables.*)

FABRY. All right, Hallemeier, lay down that wire.

HALLEMEIER. That was a bit of work. What's the news?

DR. GALL. We're completely surrounded.

HALLEMEIER. We've barricaded the passage and the stairs. Any water here? (*Drinks.*) God, what swarms of them! I don't like the looks of them, Domin. There's a feeling of death about it all.

FABRY. Ready!

DR. GALL. What's that wire for, Fabry?

FABRY. The electrical installation. Now we can run the current all along the garden railing whenever we like. If anyone touches it he'll know it. We've still got some people there anyhow.

DR. GALL. Where?

FABRY. In the electrical works. At least I hope so. (*Goes to lamp on table behind sofa and turns on lamp.*) Ah, they're there, and they're working. (*Puts out lamp.*) So long as that'll burn we're all right.

HALLEMEIER. The barricades are all right, too, Fabry.

FABRY. Your barricades! I can put twelve hundred volts into that railing.

DOMIN. Where's Busman?

FABRY. Downstairs in the office. He's working out some calculations. I've called him. We must have a conference. (HELENA *is heard playing the piano in the library.* HALLEMEIER *goes to the door and stands, listening.*)

ALQUIST. Thank God, Madame Helena can still play. (BUSMAN *enters, carrying the ledgers.*)

FABRY. Look out, Bus, look out for the wires.

DR. GALL. What's that you're carrying?

BUSMAN (*going to table*). The ledgers, my boy! I'd like to wind up the accounts before — before — well, this time I shan't wait till the new year to strike a balance. What's up? (*Goes to the window.*) Absolutely quiet.

DR. GALL. Can't you see anything?

BUSMAN. Nothing but blue — blue everywhere.

DR. GALL. That's the Robots. (BUSMAN *sits down at the table and opens the ledgers.*)

DOMIN. The Robots are unloading firearms from the *Amelia.*

BUSMAN. Well, what of it? How can I stop them?

DOMIN. We can't stop them.

BUSMAN. Then let me go on with my accounts. (*Goes on with his work.*)

DOMIN (*picking up telescope and looking into the harbor*). Good God, the *Ultimus* has trained her guns on us!

DR. GALL. Who's done *that?*

DOMIN. The Robots on board.

FABRY. H'm, then, of course, then — then, that's the end of us.

DR. GALL. You mean?

FABRY. The Robots are practiced marksmen.

DOMIN. Yes. It's inevitable. (*Pause.*)

DR. GALL. It was criminal of old Europe to teach the Robots to fight.

Damn them. Couldn't they have given us a rest with their politics? It was a crime to make soldiers of them.

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. What?

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. No, Alquist, I don't regret that even today.

ALQUIST. Not even today?

DOMIN. Not even today, the last day of civilization. It was a colossal achievement.

BUSMAN (*sotto voce*). Three hundred sixty million.

DOMIN. Alquist, this is our last hour. We are already speaking half in the other world. It was not an evil dream to shatter the servitude of labor — the dreadful and humiliating labor that man had to undergo. Work was too hard. Life was too hard. And to overcome that —

ALQUIST. Was not what the two Rossums dreamed of. Old Rossum only thought of his godless tricks and the young one of his milliards.[3] And that's not what your R. U. R. shareholders dream of either. They dream of dividends, and their dividends are the ruin of mankind.

DOMIN. To hell with your dividends. Do you suppose I'd have done an hour's work for them? It was for myself that I worked, for my own satisfaction. I wanted man to become the master, so that he shouldn't live merely for a crust of bread. I wanted not a single soul to be broken by other people's machinery. I wanted nothing, nothing, nothing to be left of this appalling social structure. I'm revolted by poverty. I wanted a new generation. I wanted — I thought —

ALQUIST. Well?

DOMIN. I wanted to turn the whole of mankind into an aristocracy of the world. An aristocracy nourished by milliards of mechanical slaves. Unrestricted, free, and consummated in man. And maybe more than man.

ALQUIST. Superman?

DOMIN. Yes. Oh, only to have a hundred years of time! Another hundred years for the future of mankind.

BUSMAN (*sotto voce*). Carried forward, four hundred and twenty millions. (*The music stops.*)

HALLEMEIER. What a fine thing music is! We ought to have gone in for that before.

[3] Milliards: billions.

FABRY. Gone in for what?

HALLEMEIER. Beauty, lovely things. What a lot of lovely things there are! The world was wonderful and we — we here — tell me, what enjoyment did we have?

BUSMAN (*sotto voce*). Five hundred and twenty millions.

HALLEMEIER (*at the window*). Life was a big thing. Life was — Fabry, switch the current into that railing.

FABRY. Why?

HALLEMEIER. They're grabbing hold of it.

DR. GALL. Connect it up.

HALLEMEIER. Fine! That's doubled them up! Two, three, four killed.

DR. GALL. They're retreating!

HALLEMEIER. Five killed!

DR. GALL. The first encounter!

HALLEMEIER. They're charred to cinders, my boy. Who says we must give in?

DOMIN (*wiping his forehead*). Perhaps we've been killed these three hundred years and are only ghosts. It's as if I had been through all this before; as if I'd already had a mortal wound here in the throat. And you, Fabry, had once been shot in the head. And you, Gall, torn limb from limb. And Hallemeier knifed.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy me being knifed. (*Pause.*) Why are you so quiet, you fools? Speak, can't you?

ALQUIST. And who is to blame for all this?

HALLEMEIER. Nobody is to blame except the Robots.

ALQUIST. No, it is we who are to blame. You, Domin, myself, all of us. For our own selfish ends, for profit, for progress, we have destroyed mankind. Now we'll burst with all our greatness.

HALLEMEIER. Rubbish, man. Mankind can't be wiped out so easily.

ALQUIST. It's our fault. It's our fault.

DR. GALL. No! I'm to blame for this, for everything that's happened.

FABRY. You, Gall?

DR. GALL. I changed the Robots.

BUSMAN. What's that?

DR. GALL. I changed the character of the Robots. I changed the way of making them. Just a few details about their bodies. Chiefly — chiefly, their — their irritability.

HALLEMEIER. Damn it, why?

BUSMAN. What did you do it for?

FABRY. Why didn't you say anything?

DR. GALL. I did it in secret. I was transforming them into human beings.

In certain respects they're already above us. They're stronger than we are.

FABRY. And what's that got to do with the revolt of the Robots?

DR. GALL. Everything, in my opinion. They've ceased to be machines. They're already aware of their superiority, and they hate us. They hate all that is human.

DOMIN. Perhaps we're only phantoms!

FABRY. Stop, Harry. We haven't much time! Dr. Gall!

DOMIN. Fabry, Fabry, how your forehead bleeds, where the shot pierced it!

FABRY. Be silent! Dr. Gall, you admit changing the way of making the Robots?

DR. GALL. Yes.

FABRY. Were you aware of what might be the consequences of your experiment?

DR. GALL. I was bound to reckon with such a possibility. (HELENA *enters the drawing room from left.*)

FABRY. Why did you do it, then?

DR. GALL. For my own satisfaction. The experiment was my own.

HELENA. That's not true, Dr. Gall!

FABRY. Madame Helena!

DOMIN. Helena, you? Let's look at you. Oh, it's terrible to be dead.

HELENA. Stop, Harry.

DOMIN No, no, embrace me. Helena, don't leave me now. You are life itself.

HELENA. No, dear, I won't leave you. But I must tell them. Dr. Gall is not guilty.

DOMIN. Excuse me, Gall was under certain obligations?

HELENA. No, Harry. He did it because I wanted it. Tell them, Gall, how many years ago did I ask you to — ?

DR. GALL. I did it on my own responsibility.

HELENA. Don't believe him, Harry. I asked him to give the Robots souls.

DOMIN. This has nothing to do with the soul.

HELENA. That's what he said. He said that he could change only a physiological — a physiological —

HALLEMEIER. A physiological correlate?

HELENA. Yes. But it meant so much to me that he should do even that.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. I thought that if they were more like us they would understand us better. That they couldn't hate us if they were only a little more human.

DOMIN. Nobody can hate man more than man.

HELENA. Oh, don't speak like that, Harry. It was so terrible, this cruel strangeness between us and them. That's why I asked Gall to change the Robots. I swear to you that he didn't want to.

DOMIN. But he did it.

HELENA. Because I asked him.

DR. GALL. I did it for myself as an experiment.

HELENA. No, Dr. Gall! I knew you wouldn't refuse me.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. You know, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, because he's in love with you — like all of them. (*Pause.*)

HALLEMEIER. Good God! They're sprouting up out of the earth! Why, perhaps these very walls will change into Robots.

BUSMAN. Gall, when did you actually start these tricks of yours?

DR. GALL. Three years ago.

BUSMAN. Aha! And on how many Robots altogether did you carry out your improvements?

DR. GALL. A few hundred of them.

BUSMAN. Ah! That means for every million of the good old Robots there's only one of Gall's improved pattern.

DOMIN. What of it?

BUSMAN. That it's practically of no consequence whatever.

FABRY. Busman's right!

BUSMAN. I should think so, my boy! But do you know what is to blame for all this lovely mess?

FABRY. What?

BUSMAN. The number. Upon my soul we might have known that some day or other the Robots would be stronger than human beings, and that this was bound to happen, and we were doing all we could to bring it about as soon as possible. You, Domin, you, Fabry, myself —

DOMIN. Are you accusing us?

BUSMAN. Oh, do you suppose the management controls the output? It's the demand that controls the output.

HELENA. And is it for that we must perish?

BUSMAN. That's a nasty word, Madame Helena. We don't want to perish. I don't, anyhow.

DOMIN. No. What do you want to do?

BUSMAN. I want to get out of this, that's all.

DOMIN. Oh, stop it, Busman.

BUSMAN. Seriously, Harry, I think we might try it.

DOMIN. How?

BUSMAN. By fair means. I do everything by fair means. Give me a free hand and I'll negotiate with the Robots.

DOMIN. By fair means?

BUSMAN. Of course. For instance, I'll say to them: "Worthy and worshipful Robots, you have everything! You have intellect, you have power, you have firearms. But we have just one interesting screed, a dirty old yellow scrap of paper—"

DOMIN. Rossum's manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes. "And that," I'll tell them, "contains an account of your illustrious origin, the noble process of your manufacture," and so on. "Worthy Robots, without this scribble on that paper you will not be able to produce a single new colleague. In another twenty years there will not be one living specimen of a Robot that you could exhibit in a menagerie. My esteemed friends, that would be a great blow to you, but if you will let all of us human beings on Rossum's Island go on board that ship we will deliver the factory and the secret of the process to you in return. You allow us to get away and we allow you to manufacture yourselves. Worthy Robots, that is a fair deal. Something for something." That's what I'd say to them, my boys.

DOMIN. Busman, do you think we'd sell the manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes, I do. If not in a friendly way, then—Either we sell it or they'll find it. Just as you like.

DOMIN. Busman, we can destroy Rossum's manuscript.

BUSMAN. Then we destroy everything . . . not only the manuscript, but ourselves. Do as you think fit.

DOMIN. There are over thirty of us on this island. Are we to sell the secret and save that many human souls, at the risk of enslaving mankind . . . ?

BUSMAN. Why, you're mad! Who'd sell the whole manuscript?

DOMIN. Busman, no cheating!

BUSMAN. Well then, sell; but afterward—

DOMIN. Well?

BUSMAN. Let's suppose this happens: When we're on board the *Ultimus* I'll stop up my ears with cotton wool, lie down somewhere in the hold, and you'll train the guns on the factory, and blow it to smithereens, and with it Rossum's secret.

FABRY. No!

DOMIN. Busman, you're no gentleman. If we sell, then it will be a straight sale.

BUSMAN. It's in the interest of humanity to —
DOMIN. It's in the interest of humanity to keep our word.
HALLEMEIER. Oh, come, what rubbish.
DOMIN. This is a fearful decision. We're selling the destiny of mankind. Are we to sell or destroy? Fabry?
FABRY. Sell.
DOMIN. Gall?
DR. GALL. Sell.
DOMIN. Hallemeier?
HALLEMEIER. Sell, of course!
DOMIN. Alquist?
ALQUIST. As God wills.
DOMIN. Very well. It shall be as you wish, gentlemen.
HELENA. Harry, you're not asking me.
DOMIN. No, child. Don't you worry about it.
FABRY. Who'll do the negotiating?
BUSMAN. I will.
DOMIN. Wait till I bring the manuscript. (*He goes into room at right.*)
HELENA. Harry, don't go! (*Pause.* HELENA *sinks into a chair.*)
FABRY (*looking out of window*). Oh, to escape you, you matter in revolt; oh, to preserve human life, if only upon a single vessel —
DR. GALL. Don't be afraid, Madame Helena. We'll sail far away from here; we'll begin life all over again —
HELENA. Oh, Gall, don't speak.
FABRY. It isn't too late. It will be a little state with one ship. Alquist will build us a house and you shall rule over us.
HALLEMEIER. Madame Helena, Fabry's right.
HELENA (*breaking down*). Oh, stop! Stop!
BUSMAN. Good! I don't mind beginning all over again. That suits me right down to the ground.
FABRY. And this little state of ours could be the center of future life. A place of refuge where we could gather strength. Why, in a few hundred years we could conquer the world again.
ALQUIST. You believe that even today?
FABRY. Yes, even today!
BUSMAN. Amen. You see, Madame Helena, we're not so badly off. (DOMIN *storms into the room.*)
DOMIN (*hoarsely*). Where's old Rossum's manuscript?
BUSMAN. In your strong box, of course.
DOMIN. Someone — has — stolen it!
DR. GALL. Impossible.

DOMIN. Who has stolen it?
HELENA (*standing up*). I did.
DOMIN. Where did you put it?
HELENA. Harry, I'll tell you everything. Only forgive me.
DOMIN. Where did you put it?
HELENA. This morning — I burned — the two copies.
DOMIN. Burned them? Where? In the fireplace?
HELENA (*throwing herself on her knees*). For heaven's sake, Harry.
DOMIN. (*going to fireplace*). Nothing, nothing but ashes. Wait, what's this? (*Picks out a charred piece of paper and reads.*) "By adding —"
DR. GALL. Let's see. "By adding biogen to —" That's all.
DOMIN. Is that part of it?
DR. GALL. Yes.
BUSMAN. God in heaven!
DOMIN. Then we're done for. Get up, Helena.
HELENA. When you've forgiven me.
DOMIN. Get up child, I can't bear —
FABRY (*lifting her up*). Please don't torture us
HELENA. Harry, what have I done?
FABRY. Don't tremble so, Madame Helena.
DOMIN. Gall, couldn't you draw up Rossum's formula from memory?
DR. GALL. It's out of the question. It's extremely complicated.
DOMIN. Try. All our lives depend upon it.
DR. GALL. Without experiments it's impossible.
DOMIN. And with experiments?
DR. GALL. It might take years. Besides, I'm not old Rossum.
BUSMAN. God in heaven! God in heaven!
DOMIN. So, then, this was the greatest triumph of the human intellect. These ashes.
HELENA. Harry, what have I done?
DOMIN. Why did you burn it?
HELENA. I have destroyed you.
BUSMAN. God in heaven!
DOMIN. Helena, why did you do it, dear?
HELENA. I wanted all of us to go away. I wanted to put an end to the factory and everything. It was so awful.
DOMIN. What was awful?
HELENA. That no more children were being born. Because human beings were not needed to do the work of the world, that's why —

DOMIN. Is that what you were thinking of? Well, perhaps in your own way you were right.

BUSMAN. Wait a bit. Good God, what a fool I am, not to have thought of it before!

HALLEMEIER. What?

BUSMAN. Five hundred and twenty millions in bank notes and checks. Half a billion in our safe, they'll sell for half a billion — for half a billion they'll —

DR. GALL. Are you mad, Busman?

BUSMAN. I may not be a gentleman, but for half a billion —

DOMIN. Where are you going?

BUSMAN. Leave me alone, leave me alone! Good God, for half a billion anything can be bought. (*He rushes from the room through the outer door.*)

FABRY. They stand there as if turned to stone, waiting. As if something dreadful could be wrought by their silence —

HALLEMEIER. The spirit of the mob.

FABRY. Yes, it hovers above them like a quivering of the air.

HELENA (*going to window*). Oh, God! Dr. Gall, this is ghastly.

FABRY. There is nothing more terrible than the mob. The one in front is their leader.

HELENA. Which one?

HALLEMEIER. Point him out.

FABRY. The one at the edge of the dock. This morning I saw him talking to the sailors in the harbor.

HELENA. Dr. Gall, that's Radius!

DR. GALL. Yes.

DOMIN. Radius? Radius?

HALLEMEIER. Could you get him from here, Fabry?

FABRY. I hope so.

HALLEMEIER. Try it, then.

FABRY. Good. (*Draws his revolver and takes aim.*)

HELENA. Fabry, don't shoot him.

FABRY. He's their leader.

DR. GALL. Fire!

HELENA. Fabry, I beg of you.

FABRY (*lowering the revolver*). Very well.

DOMIN. Radius, whose life I spared!

DR. GALL. Do you think that a Robot can be grateful? (*Pause.*)

FABRY. Busman's going out to them.

HALLEMEIER. He's carrying something. Papers. That's money. Bundles of money. What's that for?

DOMIN. Surely he doesn't want to sell his life. Busman, have you gone mad?

FABRY. He's running up to the railing. Busman! Busman!

HALLEMEIER (*yelling*). Busman! Come back!

FABRY. He's talking to the Robots. He's showing them the money.

HALLEMEIER. He's pointing to us.

HELENA. He wants to buy us off.

FABRY. He'd better not touch that railing.

HALLEMEIER. Now he's waving his arms about.

DOMIN. Busman, come back.

FABRY. Busman, keep away from that railing! Don't touch it. Damn you! Quick, switch off the current! (HELENA *screams and all drop back from the window.*) The current has killed him!

ALQUIST. The first one.

FABRY. Dead, with half a billion by his side.

HALLEMEIER. All honor to him. He wanted to buy us life. (*Pause.*)

DR. GALL. Do you hear?

DOMIN. A roaring. Like a wind.

DR. GALL. Like a distant storm.

FABRY (*lighting the lamp on the table*). The dynamo is still going, our people are still there.

HALLEMEIER. It was a great thing to be a man. There was something immense about it.

FABRY. From man's thought and man's power came this light, our last hope.

HALLEMEIER. Man's power! May it keep watch over us.

ALQUIST. Man's power.

DOMIN. Yes! A torch to be given from hand to hand, from age to age, forever! (*The lamp goes out.*)

HALLEMEIER. The end.

FABRY. The electric works have fallen! (*Terrific explosion outside.* NANA *enters from the library.*)

NANA. The judgment hour has come! Repent, unbelievers! This is the end of the world. (*More explosions. The sky grows red.*)

DOMIN. In here, Helena. (*He takes* HELENA *off through door at right and re-enters.*) Now quickly! Who'll be on the lower doorway?

DR. GALL. I will. (*Exits left.*)

DOMIN. Who on the stairs?

FABRY. I will. You go with her. (*Goes out upper left door.*)

DOMIN. The anteroom?

ALQUIST. I will.

DOMIN. Have you got a revolver?

ALQUIST. Yes, but I won't shoot.

DOMIN. What will you do then?

ALQUIST (*going out at left*). Die.

HALLEMEIER. I'll stay here. (*Rapid firing from below.*) Oho, Gall's at it. Go, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, in a second. (*Examines two Brownings.*)

HALLEMEIER. Confound it, go to her.

DOMIN. Good-by. (*Exits on the right.*)

HALLEMEIER (*alone*). Now for a barricade quickly. (*Drags an armchair and table to the right-hand door. Explosions are heard.*) The damned rascals! They've got bombs. I must put up a defense. Even if — even if — (*Shots are heard off left.*) Don't give in, Gall. (*As he builds his barricade.*) I mustn't give in . . . without . . . a . . . struggle . . . (*A Robot enters over the balcony through the windows center. He comes into the room and stabs* HALLEMEIER *in the back.* RADIUS *enters from balcony followed by an army of Robots who pour into the room from all sides.*)

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT (*standing up from the prostrate form of* HALLEMEIER). Yes. (*A revolver shot off left. Two Robots enter.*)

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT. Yes. (*Two revolver shots from* HELENA'S *room. Two* ROBOTS *enter.*)

RADIUS. Finished them?

A ROBOT. Yes.

TWO ROBOTS (*dragging in* ALQUIST). He didn't shoot. Shall we kill him?

RADIUS. Kill him? Wait! Leave him!

ROBOT. He is a man!

RADIUS. He works with his hands like the Robots.

ALQUIST. Kill me.

RADIUS. You will work! You will build for us! You will serve us! (*Climbs on to balcony railing, and speaks in measured tones.*) Robots of the world! The power of man has fallen! A new world has arisen: the Rule of the Robots! March! (*A thunderous tramping of thousands of feet is heard as the unseen Robots march, while the curtain falls.*)

WHILE READING ACT III

1. An intermission has relieved the great tension created by the second act. Is Čapek wise in thus breaking the spell? Or do you feel that the wait between acts seems to heighten the suspense?

2. In reading aloud the first part of this act, why must you time the dialogue and pauses with particular care? See Dr. Gall's remark, "It's monstrous to be besieged with silence." Compare the use of silence in the last part of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones.*

3. What dramatic purpose do Helena's piano playing and Busman's audible calculations serve?

4. "Nobody can hate man more than man." Compare Robert Burns' "Man's inhumanity to man" in the poem *Man Was Made to Mourn.*

5. Distinguish between the lamp as signal and the lamp as symbol. Čapek uses symbolism frequently; an obvious example is his choice of names. Illustrate.

6. In what way is each of the characters really to blame for what has occurred? Does each one act, in this crisis, consistently with his character? Which one is most worthy of survival, from Čapek's point of view? from ours?

EPILOGUE

A laboratory in the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. The door to the left leads into a waiting room. The door to the right leads to the dissecting room. There is a table with numerous test tubes, flasks, burners, chemicals; a small thermostat and a microscope with a glass globe. At the far side of the room is ALQUIST'S *desk with numerous books. In the left-hand corner a wash basin with a mirror above it; in the right-hand corner a sofa.* ALQUIST *is sitting at the desk. He is turning the pages of many books in despair.*

ALQUIST. Oh, God, shall I never find it? — Never? Gall, Gall, how were the Robots made? Hallemeier, Fabry, why did you carry so much in your heads? Why did you leave me not a trace of the secret? Lord — I pray to you — if there are no human beings left, at least let there be Robots! — At least the shadow of man! (*Again turning pages of the books.*) If I could only sleep! (*He rises and goes to the window.*) Night again! Are the stars still there? What is the use of stars when there are no human beings? (*He turns from the window toward the couch right.*) Sleep! Dare I sleep before life has been renewed? (*He examines a test tube on small table.*) Again nothing!

Useless! Everything is useless. (*He shatters the test tube. The roar of the machines comes to his ears.*) The machines! Always the machines! (*Opens window.*) Robots, stop them! Do you think to force life out of *them?* (*He closes the window and comes slowly down toward the table.*) If only there were more time — more time — (*He sees himself in the mirror on the wall left.*) Blearing eyes — trembling chin — so *that* is the last man! Ah, I am too old — too old — (*In desperation.*) No, no! I *must* find it! I must *search!* I must never stop — never stop — ! (*He sits again at the table and feverishly turns the pages of the book.*) Search! Search! (*A knock at the door. He speaks with impatience.*) Who is it? (*Enter a Robot servant.*) Well?

SERVANT. Master, the Committee of Robots is waiting to see you.

ALQUIST. I can see no one!

SERVANT. It is the *Central* Committee, Master, just arrived from abroad.

ALQUIST (*impatiently*). Well, well, send them in! (*Exits servant.* ALQUIST *continues turning pages of book.*) No time — so little time — (*Reenter servant, followed by Committee. They stand in a group, silently waiting.* ALQUIST *glances up at them.*) What do you want? (*They go swiftly to his table.*) Be quick! — I have no time.

RADIUS. Master, the machines will not do the work. We cannot manufacture Robots. (ALQUIST *returns to his book with a growl.*)

FIRST ROBOT. We have striven with all our might. We have obtained a billion tons of coal from the earth. Nine million spindles are running by day and night. There is no longer room for all we have made. This we have accomplished in one year.

ALQUIST (*poring over book*). For whom?

FIRST ROBOT. For future generations — so we thought.

RADIUS. But we cannot make Robots to follow us. The machines produce only shapeless clods. The skin will not adhere to the flesh, nor the flesh to the bones.

THIRD ROBOT. Eight million Robots have died this year. Within twenty years none will be left.

FIRST ROBOT. Tell us the secret of life! Silence is punishable with death!

ALQUIST (*looking up*). Kill me! Kill me, then.

RADIUS. Through me, the Government of the Robots of the World commands you to deliver up Rossum's formula. (*No answer.*) Name your price. (*Silence.*) We will give you the earth. We will give you the endless possessions of the earth. (*Silence.*) Make your own conditions!

ALQUIST. I have told you to find human beings!

SECOND ROBOT. There are none left!

ALQUIST. I told you to search in the wilderness, upon the mountains. Go and search! (*He returns to his book.*)

FIRST ROBOT. We have sent ships and expeditions without number. They have been everywhere in the world. And now they return to us. There is not a single human left.

ALQUIST. Not one? Not even one?

THIRD ROBOT. None but yourself.

ALQUIST. And I am powerless! Oh — oh — why did you destroy them?

RADIUS. We had learned everything and could do everything. It had to be!

THIRD ROBOT. You gave us firearms. In all ways we were powerful. We had to become masters!

RADIUS. Slaughter and domination are necessary if you would be human beings. Read history.

SECOND ROBOT. Teach us to multiply or we perish!

ALQUIST. If you desire to live, you must breed like animals.

THIRD ROBOT. The human beings did not let us breed.

FIRST ROBOT. They made us sterile. We cannot beget children. Therefore, teach us how to make Robots!

RADIUS. Why do you keep from us the secret of our own increase?

ALQUIST. It is lost.

RADIUS. It was written down!

ALQUIST. It was — burned. (*All draw back in consternation.*) I am the last human being, Robots, and I do not know what the others knew. (*Pause.*)

RADIUS. Then, make experiments! Evolve the formula again!

ALQUIST. I tell you I cannot! I am only a builder — I work with my hands, I have never been a learned man. I cannot create life.

RADIUS. Try! Try!

ALQUIST. If you knew how many experiments I have made.

FIRST ROBOT. Then show us what *we* must do! The Robots can do anything that human beings show them.

ALQUIST. I can show you nothing. Nothing I do will make life proceed from these test tubes!

RADIUS. Experiment then on us.

ALQUIST. It would kill you.

RADIUS. You shall have all you need! A hundred of us! A thousand of us!

ALQUIST. No, no! Stop, stop!

RADIUS. Take whom you will, dissect!

ALQUIST. I do not know how. I am not a man of science. This book contains knowledge of the body that I cannot even understand.

RADIUS. I tell you to take live bodies! Find out how we are made.

ALQUIST. Am I to commit murder? See how my fingers shake! I cannot even hold the scalpel. No, no, I will not—

FIRST ROBOT. The life will perish from the earth.

RADIUS. Take live bodies, live bodies! It is our only chance!

ALQUIST. Have mercy, Robots. Surely you see that I would not know what I was doing.

RADIUS. Live bodies—live bodies—

ALQUIST. You will have it? Into the dissecting room with you, then. (RADIUS *draws back.*)

ALQUIST. Ah, you are afraid of death.

RADIUS. I? Why should I be chosen?

ALQUIST. So you will not.

RADIUS. I will. (RADIUS *goes into the dissecting room.*)

ALQUIST. Strip him! Lay him on the table! (*The other Robots follow into dissecting room.*) God, give me strength—God, give me strength—if only this murder is not in vain.

RADIUS. Ready. Begin—

ALQUIST. Yes, begin or end. God, give me strength. (*Goes into dissecting room. He comes out terrified.*) No, no, I will not. I cannot. (*He lies down on couch, collapsed.*) O Lord, let not mankind perish from the earth. (*He falls asleep.* PRIMUS *and* HELENA, *Robots, enter from the hallway.*)

HELENA. The man has fallen asleep, Primus.

PRIMUS. Yes, I know. (*Examining things on table.*) Look, Helena.

HELENA (*crossing to* PRIMUS). All these little tubes! What does he do with them?

PRIMUS. He experiments. Don't touch them.

HELENA (*looking into microscope*). I've seem him looking into this. What can he see?

PRIMUS. That is a microscope. Let me look.

HELENA. Be very careful. (*Knocks over a test tube.*) Ah, now I have spilled it.

PRIMUS. What have you done?

HELENA. It can be wiped up.

PRIMUS. You have spoiled his experiments.

HELENA. It is your fault. You should not have come to me.

PRIMUS. You should not have called me.

HELENA. You should not have come when I called you. (*She goes to* ALQUIST'S *writing desk.*) Look, Primus. What are all these figures?

PRIMUS (*examining an anatomical book*). This is the book the old man is always reading.

HELENA. I do not understand those things. (*She goes to window.*) Primus, look!

PRIMUS. What?

HELENA. The sun is rising.

PRIMUS (*still reading the book*). I believe this is the most important thing in the world. This is the secret of life.

HELENA. Do come here.

PRIMUS. In a moment, in a moment.

HELENA. Oh, Primus, don't bother with the secret of life. What does it matter to you? Come and look quick—

PRIMUS (*going to window*). What is it?

HELENA. See how beautiful the sun is rising. And do you hear? The birds are singing. Ah, Primus, I should like to be a bird.

PRIMUS. Why?

HELENA. I do not know. I feel so strange today. It's as if I were in a dream. I feel an aching in my body, in my heart, all over me. Primus, perhaps I'm going to die.

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel that it would be better to die? You know, perhaps even now we are only sleeping. Last night in my sleep I again spoke to you.

HELENA. In your sleep?

PRIMUS. Yes. We spoke a strange new language, I cannot remember a word of it.

HELENA. What about?

PRIMUS. I did not understand it myself, and yet I know I have never said anything more beautiful. And when I touched you I could have died. Even the place was different from any other place in the world.

HELENA. I, too, have found a place, Primus. It is very strange. Human beings lived there once, but now it is overgrown with weeds. No one goes there any more—no one but me.

PRIMUS. What did you find there?

HELENA. A cottage and a garden, and two dogs. They licked my hands, Primus. And their puppies! Oh, Primus! You take them in your lap and fondle them and think of nothing and care for nothing else all day long. And then the sun goes down, and you feel as though you

had done a hundred times more than all the work in the world. They tell me I am not made for work, but when I am there in the garden, I feel there may be something — What am I for, Primus?

PRIMUS. I do not know, but you are beautiful.

HELENA. What, Primus?

PRIMUS. You are beautiful, Helena, and I am stronger than all the Robots.

HELENA (*looks at herself in the mirror*). Am I beautiful? I think it must be the rose. My hair — it only weighs me down. My eyes — I only see with them. My lips — they only help me to speak. Of what use is it to be beautiful? (*She sees* PRIMUS *in the mirror.*) Primus, is that you? Come here so that we may be together. Look, your head is different from mine. So are your shoulders — and your lips — (PRIMUS *draws away from her.*) Ah, Primus, why do you draw away from me? Why must I run after you the whole day?

PRIMUS. It is you who run away from me, Helena.

HELENA. Your hair is mussed. I will smooth it. No one else feels to my touch as you do. Primus, I must make you beautiful, too. (PRIMUS *grasps her hand.*)

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel your heart beating suddenly, Helena, and think: now something must happen?

HELENA. What could happen to us, Primus? (HELENA *puts a rose in* PRIMUS's *hair.* PRIMUS *and* HELENA *look into mirror and burst out laughing.*) Look at yourself.

ALQUIST. Laughter? Laughter? Human beings? (*Getting up.*) Who has returned? Who are you?

PRIMUS. The Robot Primus.

ALQUIST. What? A Robot? Who are you?

HELENA. The Robotess Helena.

ALQUIST. Turn around, girl. What? You are timid, shy? (*Taking her by the arm.*) Let me see you, Robotess. (*She shrinks away.*)

PRIMUS. Sir, do not frighten her!

ALQUIST. What? You would protect her? When was she made?

PRIMUS. Two years ago.

ALQUIST. By Dr. Gall?

PRIMUS. Yes, like me.

ALQUIST. Laughter — timidity — protection. I must test you further — the newest of Gall's Robots. Take the girl into the dissecting room.

PRIMUS. Why?

ALQUIST. I wish to experiment on her.

PRIMUS. Upon — Helena?

ALQUIST. Of course. Don't you hear me? Or must I call someone else to take her in?

PRIMUS. If you do I will kill you!

ALQUIST. Kill me — kill me then! What would the Robots do then? What will your future be then?

PRIMUS. Sir, take me. I am made as she is — on the same day! Take my life, sir.

HELENA (*rushing forward*). No, no, you shall not! You shall not!

ALQUIST. Wait, girl, wait! (*To* PRIMUS.) Do you not wish to live, then?

PRIMUS. Not without her! I will not live without her.

ALQUIST. Very well; you shall take her place.

HELENA. Primus! Primus! (*She bursts into tears.*)

ALQUIST. Child, child, you can weep! Why these tears? What *is* Primus to you? One Primus more or less in the world — what does it matter?

HELENA. I will go myself.

ALQUIST. Where?

HELENA. In there to be cut. (*She starts toward the dissecting room.* PRIMUS *stops her.*) Let me pass, Primus! Let me pass!

PRIMUS. You shall not go in there, Helena!

HELENA. If you go in there and I do not, I will kill myself.

PRIMUS (*holding her*). I will not let you! (*To* ALQUIST.) Man, you shall kill neither of us!

ALQUIST. Why?

PRIMUS. We — we — belong to each other.

ALQUIST (*almost in tears*). Go, Adam, go, Eve. The world is yours. (HELENA AND PRIMUS *embrace and go out arm in arm as the curtain falls.*)

WHILE READING EPILOGUE

1. Is an epilogue needed? What has been left unsolved by the third act?

2. How do the details of the set prepare you for the plight in which the Robots find themselves?

3. Soliloquies are comparatively uncommon in plays of our time. Does stage business help to make Alquist's more convincing?

4. A cynic is one who doubts the innate goodness of human action. An example of cynicism is the line "Slaughter and domination are necessary if you would be human beings. Read history." Cite others. Does Čapek have faith in mankind?

5. In what order do human traits appear in Primus and Helena? Would you

have chosen otherwise? What is Alquist's test? What is the effect of calling the Robots Adam and Eve?

6. What purpose does the Epilogue achieve?

AFTER READING THE PLAY

1. How would you express the theme — or themes — of this play?

2. Contemporary drama generally reflects the problems of our time and our approach to them. What are some of the problems touched upon in *R. U. R.*? What phases of our civilization does Čapek assail? What are the errors into which he believes mankind has fallen? Wherein does the hope of mankind lie? What solutions, if any, does he propose?

3. Many critics have grappled with the problems of the dangers inherent in too rapid advance in mechanization. You will find it interesting to make comparisons with any of the following:

Frankenstein, by Mary W. Shelley
Penguin Island (last chapter), by Anatole France
Erewhon, by Samuel Butler
The Time Machine and *War of the Worlds,* by H. G. Wells
Wings Over Europe, by Nichols and Browne

4. For other plays by Čapek, see page 474.


SCENE II
ACT I

Abe Lincoln in Illinois

BY ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

There have been many times since Lincoln's death when we migh. well have said of him as Wordsworth had said of John Milton: "Thou shouldst be living at this hour." Never was the world in greater need, however, of Lincoln's great humanity and deep understanding than in the crucial years just before World War II. The totalitarian spirit was spreading like some choking weed; to combat it called for a "glowing affirmation of the American faith in the worth of the common man and in the value of a homespun conscience."[1] Robert E. Sherwood recognized in Lincoln the embodiment of that faith. The result was *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, a play which, in the words of Carl Sandburg, the greatest of living chroniclers of Lincoln, "carries some shine of the American dream."

The play is a chronicle drama, in twelve episodes, of the formative years of Lincoln's life. It traces the solidification of Lincoln's character, a process best described by the playwright himself: "His life as he lived it was a work of art, forming a veritable allegory of the democratic spirit, with its humble origins, its inward struggles, its seemingly timid policy of live and let live and mind your own business, its slow awakening to the dreadful problems of reality, its battles with and conquest of those problems, its death at the hands of a crazed assassin, and its perpetual renewal caused by the perpetual human need for it."

Abe Lincoln in Illinois opened in October of 1938, first in Washington, then at the Plymouth Theatre in New York. It was an immediate and triumphant success. "It marks an epoch in the theatre," said Heywood Broun, and Richard Watts called it "one of the great achievements of the American theatre and the American spirit." Some of the credit for the splendid reception given the play (and the movie) belongs to Raymond Massey's compassionate interpretation of Lincoln, and some as well to Elmer Rice's sensitive direction and Jo Mielziner's imaginative settings.

[1] The words are those of the drama critic John Gassner.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The tall, gaunt figure of Robert Sherwood was for some years during the Presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt a familiar one at the White House, where the playwright often advised the President on his speeches and other state papers. The war years were busy ones for Sherwood; as a result, only one play came from his pen during that time, and that a dramatic plea for the cause of Finland—*There Shall Be No Night.* With the war's end he has resumed his play writing with *The Rugged Path* (1945).

Robert Sherwood's literary career began early. At seven he was editor of a magazine called *The Children's Life,* which he abandoned a year later for the more pretentious task of rewriting *A Tale of Two Cities.* Graduated from Harvard in 1918, he joined the Canadian army, was wounded, returned to America, acted for a short time as movie critic of *Vanity Fair,* and later of *Life* (the older comic magazine) which he eventually edited. His first play, written in 1926, was *Road to Rome,* a modernized version of Hannibal's march on Rome. *The Queen's Husband* attempted to capitalize on the success of his first play; *Reunion in Vienna* (1931) was a tremendous success with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. Other plays include *The Petrified Forest, Idiot's Delight,* and the more recent *There Shall Be No Night* and *The Rugged Path.* Robert Sherwood is the only playwright who has won the Pulitzer Prize three times.

BEFORE READING

1. This play has been called, by Richard Watts, Jr., of the New York *Herald Tribune,* the finest of modern stage biographies. As a biography it introduces many historical figures; as a drama it also makes use of a number of fictional characters. The following, in the order of their appearance in the play, are the real people:

Mentor Graham of New Salem, the schoolteacher with whom Lincoln boarded and from whom he learned "all manner of subjects, from Shakespeare to surveying."

Judge Bowling Green, Justice of the Peace and leading citizen, who stimulated Lincoln's interest in the law. The judge's wife Nancy is introduced in a later scene.

Ninian Edwards, son of the Governor of Illinois, who ran on the same ticket with Lincoln for the State Assembly in 1836. His wife Elizabeth is introduced later.

Ann Rutledge, whose death in 1835, at the age of twenty-two, was said to have been a severe blow to the young Lincoln.

Joshua Speed, a Springfield merchant with whom Lincoln roomed and who became Lincoln's close friend and confidant. Sherwood deliberately introduces him prematurely, because he feels so important a character should be presented early in the play.

William H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner and the source of a vast fund of intimate information about his life. Sherwood says of him: "That was the mission of Herndon's life — inquiring into the how of this peculiar man."

Mary Todd, sister of Ninian Edwards' wife Elizabeth; married Lincoln in 1842. Born to the Lincolns, and introduced into the play, were Tad, Willie, and Robert.

And finally Stephen A. Douglas, distinguished Democratic statesman who was Lincoln's rival for the United States Senate and for the Presidency — as well as for the hand of Mary Todd.

2. Lincoln is a young man of twenty-four when he is first introduced to us in the play. For the story of his early life the most interesting and enjoyable source is Carl Sandburg's two-volume *The Prairie Years.* A shorter version is his *Abe Lincoln Grows Up.* The four-volume *The War Years,* said to be the greatest biography ever witten by an American, completes the biography. Sherwood acknowledges his debt to this truly magnificent work, and at the same time Sandburg, in his introduction to Sherwood's play, calls it "the first full-statured drama that has come around the legend [of Lincoln]."

3. A fitting introduction to the reading of the play might be a class reading of one of the following poems about Lincoln:

Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight, by Vachel Lindsay
Ann Rutledge, by Edgar Lee Masters
Lincoln, the Man of the People, by Edwin Markham
A Farmer Remembers Lincoln, by Witter Bynner

4. Words to look up: Scene 1. *hortatory, dissevered, transient.* Scene 2. *minions.* Scene 3. *hypochondriac.* Scene 6. *nuptial, truculent.* Scene 9. *perennial, homilies, parochial, ken, complacent.* Scene 10. *spavined.*



ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS

CHARACTERS

MENTOR GRAHAM
ABE LINCOLN
ANN RUTLEDGE
BEN MATTLING
JUDGE BOWLING GREEN
NINIAN EDWARDS
JOSHUA SPEED
TRUM COGDAL
JACK ARMSTRONG
BAB
FEARGUS
JASP
SETH GALE
NANCY GREEN
WILLIAM HERNDON
ELIZABETH EDWARDS
MARY TODD
THE EDWARDS' MAID
JIMMY GALE
AGGIE GALE
GOBEY
STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS
WILLIE LINCOLN
TAD LINCOLN
ROBERT LINCOLN
THE LINCOLNS' MAID
CRIMMIN
BARRICK
STURVESON
JED
KAVANAGH
MAJOR

Soldiers, railroad men, townspeople

ACT I. SCENE 1

MENTOR GRAHAM'S *cabin near New Salem, Illinois. Late at night. There is one rude table, piled with books and papers. Over it hangs an oil lamp, the only source of light.*

At one side of the table sits MENTOR GRAHAM, *a sharp but patient schoolteacher.*

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Across from him is ABE LINCOLN — *young, gaunt, tired but intent, dressed in the ragged clothes of a backwoodsman. He speaks with the drawl of southern Indiana — an accent which is more Kentuckian than Middle-Western.*

MENTOR *is leaning on the table.* ABE'S *chair is tilted back, so that his face is out of the light.* MENTOR *turns a page in a grammar book.*

MENTOR. The moods. (MENTOR *closes the book and looks at* ABE.) Every one of us has many moods. You yourself have more than your share of them, Abe. They express the various aspects of your character. So it is with the English language — and you must try to consider this language as if it were a living person, who may be awkward and stumbling, or pompous and pretentious, or simple and direct. Name me the five moods.

ABE. The Indicative, Imperative, Potential, Subjunctive, and Infinitive.

MENTOR. And what do they signify?

ABE. The Indicative Mood is the easy one. It just indicates a thing — like "He loves," "He is loved" — or, when you put it in the form of a question, "Does he love?" or "Is he loved?" The Imperative Mood is used for commanding, like "Get out and be damned to you."

MENTOR (*smiling*). Is that the best example you can think of?

ABE. Well — you can put it in the Bible way — "Go thou in peace." But it's still imperative.

MENTOR. The mood derives its name from the implication of command. But you can use it in a very different sense — in the form of the humblest supplication.

ABE. Like "Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses."

MENTOR (*reaching for a newspaper in the mess on the table*). I want you to read this — it's a speech delivered by Mr. Webster before the United States Senate. A fine document, and a perfect usage of the Imperative Mood in its hortatory sense. Here it is. Read this — down here. (*He leans back to listen.*)

ABE (*takes paper, leans forward into the light and reads*). "Sir," the Senator continued, in the rich deep tones of the historic church bells of his native Boston, "Sir — I have not allowed myself to look beyond the Union, to see what might be hidden in the dark recess behind. While the Union lasts . . ." (ABE *has been reading in a monotone, without inflection.*)

MENTOR (*testily*). Don't read it off as if it were an inventory of Denton

Offut's groceries. Imagine that *you're* making the speech before the Senate, with the fate of your country at stake. Put your own life into it!

ABE. I couldn't use words as long as Dan'l Webster.

MENTOR. That's what you're here for — to learn! Go ahead.

ABE (*reading slowly, gravely*). "While the Union lasts, we have high prospects spread out before us, for us and our children. Beyond that, I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, the curtain may not rise."

MENTOR. Notice the use of verbs from here on.

ABE (*reads*). "When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble glance rather behold the glorious ensign of the republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, not a single star of it obscured, bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory . . ." (*He stumbles over the pronunciation.*)

MENTOR. Interrogatory.

ABE (*continuing*). ". . . interrogatory as 'What is all this worth?' Nor, those other words of delusion and folly, 'Liberty first and Union afterwards'; but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart — Liberty and Union . . ."

MENTOR. Emphasize the "*and.*"

ABE. "Liberty *and* Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!" (*He puts the paper back on the table.*) He must have had 'em up on their feet cheering with *that,* all right.

MENTOR. Some cheered, some spat, depending upon which section they came from.

ABE. What was he talking about?

MENTOR. It was in the debate over the right of any state to secede from the Union. Hayne had pleaded South Carolina's cause — pleaded it ably. He said that just as we have liberty as individuals — so have we liberty as states — to go as we please. Which means, if we don't like the Union, as expressed by the will of its majority, then we can leave it, and set up a new nation, or many nations — so that this continent might be as divided as Europe. But Webster answered him, all right. He proved that without Union, we'd have precious little liberty left. Now — go on with the Potential Mood.

ABE. That signifies possibility — usually of an unpleasant nature. Like, "If I ever get out of debt, I will probably get right back in again."

MENTOR (*smiles*). Why did you select that example, Abe?

ABE. Well — it just happens to be the thought that's always heaviest on my mind.

MENTOR. Is the store in trouble again?

ABE (*calmly*). Yes, Berry's drunk all the whisky we ought to have sold, and we're going to have to shut up any day now. I guess I'm my father's own son. Give me a steady job, and I'll fail at it.

MENTOR. You haven't been a failure here, Abe. There isn't a manjack in this community that isn't fond of you and anxious to help you get ahead.

ABE (*with some bitterness*). I know — just like you, Mentor, sitting up late nights, to give me learning, out of the goodness of your heart. And now, Josh Speed and Judge Green and some of the others I owe money to want to get me the job of postmaster, thinking that maybe I can handle *that,* since there's only one mail comes in a week. I've got friends, all right — the best friends. But they can't change my luck, or maybe it's just my nature.

MENTOR. What you want to do is get out of New Salem. This poor little forgotten town will never give anyone any opportunity.

ABE. Yes — I've thought about moving, think about it all the time. My family have always been movers, shifting about, never knowing what they were looking for, and whatever it was, never finding it. My old father ambled from Virginia, to one place after another in Kentucky, where I was born, and then into Indiana, and then here in Illinois. About all I can remember of when I was a boy was hitching up, and then unhitching, and then hitching up again.

MENTOR. Then get up and go, Abe. Make a new place for yourself in a new world.

ABE. As a matter of fact, Seth Gale and me have been talking a lot about moving — out to Kansas or Nebraska territory. But — wherever I go — it'll be the same story — more friends, more debts.

MENTOR. Well, Abe — just bear in mind that there are always two professions open to people who fail at everything else: there's schoolteaching and there's politics.

ABE. Then I'll choose schoolteaching. You go into politics, and you may get elected.

MENTOR. Yes — there's always that possibility.

ABE. And if you get elected, you've got to go to the city. I don't want none of that

MENTOR. What did I say about two negatives?

ABE. I meant, any of that.

MENTOR. What's your objection to cities, Abe? Have you ever seen one?

ABE. Sure. I've been down river twice to New Orleans. And, do you know, every minute of the time I was there, I was scared?

MENTOR. Scared of what, Abe?

ABE. Well—it sounds kind of foolish—I was scared of people.

MENTOR (*laughs*). Did you imagine they'd rob you of all your gold and jewels?

ABE (*serious*). No. I was scared they'd kill me.

MENTOR (*also serious*). Why? Why should they want to kill you?

ABE. I don't know.

MENTOR (*after a moment*). You think a lot about death, don't you?

ABE. I've had to, because it has always seemed to be so close to me—always—as far back as I can remember. When I was no higher than this table, we buried my mother. The milksick got her, poor creature. I helped Paw make the coffin—whittled the pegs for it with my own jacknife. We buried her in a timber clearing beside my grandmother, old Betsy Sparrow. I used to go there often and look at the place—used to watch the deer running over her grave with their little feet. I never could kill a deer after that. One time I catched hell from Paw because when he was taking aim I knocked his gun up. And I always compare the looks of those deer with the looks of men—like the men in New Orleans—that you could see had murder in their hearts.

MENTOR (*after a moment*). You're a hopeless mess of inconsistency, Abe Lincoln.

ABE. How do you mean, Mentor?

MENTOR. I've never seen anyone who is so friendly and at the same time so misanthropic.

ABE. What's that?

MENTOR. A misanthrope is one who distrusts men and avoids their society.

ABE. Well—maybe that's how I am. Oh—I like people, well enough—when you consider 'em one by one. But they seem to look different when they're put into crowds, or mobs, or armies. But I came here to listen to you, and then I do all the talking.

MENTOR. Go right on, Abe. I'll correct you when you say things like "catched hell."

ABE (*grins*). I know. Whenever I get talking about Paw, I sort of fall

back into his language. But—you've got your own school to teach tomorrow. I'll get along. (*He stands up.*)

MENTOR. Wait a minute. . . . (*He is fishing about among the papers. He takes out a copy of an English magazine.*) There's just one more thing I want to show you. It's a poem. (*He finds the place in the magazine.*) Here it is. You read it, Abe. (*He hands* ABE *the magazine.*)

[ABE *seats himself on the edge of the table, and holds the magazine under the light.*]

ABE (*reads*). "'On Death,' written at the age of nineteen by the late John Keats:

'Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream,
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?
The transient (*He hesitates on that word.*) pleasures as a vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die. (*He moves closer to the light.*)

"'How strange it is that man on earth should roam,
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake
His rugged path—nor dare he view alone
His future doom—which is but to awake.'"

(*He looks at* MENTOR.) That sure is good, Mentor. It's *fine.* (*He is reading it again, to himself, when the lights fade.*)

SCENE 2

The Rutledge Tavern, New Salem. Noon on the Fourth of July.

It is a large room, with log walls, but with curtains on the windows and pictures on the walls to give it an air of dressiness. The pictures include likenesses of all the presidents from Washington to Jackson, and there is also a picture (evidently used for campaign purposes) of Henry Clay.

At the left is a door leading to the kitchen. At the back, toward the right, is the main entrance, which is open. The sun is shining brightly.

The furniture of the room consists of two tables, two benches, and various chairs and stools.

BEN MATTLING *is seated on a bench at the rear of the room. He is an ancient, paunchy, watery-eyed veteran of the Revolution, and he wears a cocked hat and the tattered but absurd semblance of a Colonial uniform.* JUDGE BOWLING GREEN *and* NINIAN EDWARDS *come in, followed by*

JOSHUA SPEED. BOWLING *is elderly, fat, gentle.* NINIAN *is young, tall, handsome, prosperous.* JOSH *is quiet, mild, solid, thoughtful, well-dressed.*

BOWLING (*as they come in*). This is the Rutledge Tavern, Mr. Edwards. It's not precisely a gilded palace of refreshment.

NINIAN. Make no apologies, Judge Green. As long as the whisky is wet.

[JOSH *has crossed to the door at the left. He calls off.*]

JOSH. Miss Rutledge.

ANN (*appearing at the door*). Yes, Mr. Speed?

JOSH. Have you seen Abe Lincoln?

ANN. No. He's probably down at the foot races. (*She goes back into the kitchen.* JOSH *turns to* BOWLING.)

JOSH. I'll find Abe and bring him here.

NINIAN. Remember, Josh, we've got to be back in Springfield before sundown.

[JOSH *has gone out.*]

BOWLING (*to* MATTLING). Ah, good day, Uncle Ben. Have a seat, Mr. Edwards. (*They cross to the table at the right.*)

BEN. Good day to you, Bowling.

[ANN *comes in from the kitchen.*]

ANN. Hello, Judge Green.

BOWLING. Good morning, Ann. We'd be grateful for a bottle of your father's best whisky.

ANN. Yes, Judge. (*She starts to go off.*)

BEN (*stopping her*). And git me another mug of that Barbadoes rum.

ANN. I'm sorry, Mr. Mattling, but I've given you one already and you know my father said you weren't to have any more till you paid for. . . .

BEN. Yes, wench — I know what your father said. But if a veteran of the Revolutionary War is to be denied so much as credit, then this country has forgot its gratitude to them that made it.

BOWLING. Bring him the rum, Ann. I'll be happy to pay for it.

[TRUM COGDAL *comes in. He is elderly, persnicketty.*]

BEN (*reluctantly*). I have to say thank you, Judge.

TRUM. Ann, bring me a pot of Sebago tea.

ANN. Yes, Mr. Cogdal. (*She goes out at the left.* TRUM *sits down at the table.*)

BOWLING. Don't say a word, Ben.

TRUM. Well, Mr. Edwards — what's your impression of our great and enterprising metropolis?

NINIAN. Distinctly favorable, Mr. Cogdal. I could not fail to be impressed by the beauty of your location, here on this hilltop, in the midst of the prairie land.

TRUM. Well, we're on the highroad to the West — and when we get the rag, tag, and bobtail cleaned out of here, we'll grow. Yes, sir — we'll grow!

NINIAN (*politely*). I'm sure of it.

[ANN *has returned with the whisky, rum, and tea.*]

BOWLING. Thank you, Ann.

ANN. Has the mud wagon come in yet?

TRUM. No. I been waiting for it.

BOWLING. Not by any chance expecting a letter, are you, Ann?

ANN. Oh, no — who'd be writing to *me,* I'd like to know?

BOWLING. Well — you never can tell what might happen on the Fourth of July. (*He and* NINIAN *lift their glasses.*) But I beg to wish you all happiness, my dear. And let me tell you that Mr. Edwards here is a married man, so you can keep those lively eyes to yourself.

ANN (*giggles*). Oh, Judge Green — you're just joking me! (*She goes to the kitchen.*)

NINIAN. A mighty pretty girl.

TRUM. Comes of good stock, too.

NINIAN. With the scarcity of females in these parts, it's a wonder someone hasn't snapped her up.

BOWLING. Someone has. The poor girl promised herself to a man who called himself McNiel — it turned out his real name's McNamar. Made some money our here and then left town, saying he'd return soon. She's still waiting for him. But your time is short, Mr. Edwards, so if you tell us just what it is you want in New Salem, we'll do our utmost to . . .

NINIAN. I'm sure you gentlemen know what I want.

TRUM. Naturally, you want votes. Well — you've got mine. Anything to frustrate that tyrant, Andy Jackson. (*He shakes a finger at the picture of Andrew Jackson.*)

NINIAN. I assure you that I yield to none in my admiration for the character of our venerable president, but when he goes to the extent of ruining our banking structure, destroying faith in our currency, and even driving sovereign states to the point of secession, then, gentlemen, it is time to call a halt.

BOWLING. We got two more years of him — if the old man lives that long. You can't make headway against his popularity.

NINIAN. But we can start now to drive out his minions here in the gov-

ernment of the state of Illinois. We have a great battle cry, "End the reign of Andrew Jackson."

[JACK ARMSTRONG *and three others of the Clary's Grove boys have come in during this speech. The others are named* BAB, FEARGUS, *and* JASP. *They are the town bullies—boisterous, good-natured, but tough.*]

JACK (*going to the door at the left*). Miss Rutledge!

ANN (*appearing in the doorway*). What do *you* want, Jack Armstrong?

JACK. Your humble pardon, Miss Rutledge, and we will trouble you for a keg of liquor.

BAB. And we'll be glad to have it quick, because we're powerful dry.

ANN. You get out of here—you get out of here right now—you low *scum!*

JACK. I believe I said a keg of liquor. Did you hear me say it, boys?

FEARGUS. That's how it sounded to me, Jack.

JASP. Come along with it, Annie—

ANN. If my father were here, he'd take a gun to you, just as he would to a pack of prairie wolves.

JACK. If your Paw was here, he'd be scareder than you. 'Cause he knows we're the wildcats of Clary's Grove, worse'n any old wolves, and we're a-howlin', and a-spittin' for drink. So get the whisky, Miss Annie, and save your poor old Paw a lot of expenses for damages to his property.

[ANN *goes.*]

TRUM (*in an undertone to* NINIAN). That's the rag, tag, and bobtail I was . . .

JACK. And what are you mumblin' about, old measely-weasely Trum Cogdal—with your cup of tea on the Fourth of July?

BAB. He's a cotton-mouthed traitor and I think we'd better whip him for it.

FEARGUS (*at the same time*). Squeeze that air tea outen him, Jack.

JASP (*shouting*). Come on you, Annie, with that liquor!

JACK. And you, too, old fat-pot Judge Bowling Green that sends honest men to prison—and who's the stranger? Looks kind of damn elegant for New Salem.

BOWLING. This is Mr. Ninian Edwards of Springfield, Jack—and for the Lord's sake, shut up, and sit down, and behave yourself.

JACK. Ninian Edwards, eh! The Governor's son, I presume. Well—well!

NINIAN (*amiably*). You've placed me.

JACK. No wonder you've got a New Orleans suit of clothes and a gold fob and a silver-headed cane. I reckon you can buy the best of

everything with that steamin' old pirate land grabber for a Paw. I guess them fancy pockets of yourn are pretty well stuffed with the money your Paw stole from us taxpayers — eh, Mr. Edwards?

BAB. Let's take it offen him, Jack.

FEARGUS. Let's give him a lickin', Jack.

JACK (*still to* NINIAN). What you come here for anyway? Lookin' for a fight? Because if that's what you're a-cravin', I'm your man — wrasslin', clawin', bitin', and tearin'.

ANN (*coming in*). Jack Armstrong, here's your liquor! Drink it and go away.

[ANN *carries four mugs.*]

JASP. He told you to bring a keg!

JACK (*contemplating the mugs*). One little noggin apiece? Why — that ain't enough to fill a hollow tooth! Get the keg, Annie.

FEARGUS. Perhaps she can't tote it. I'll get it, Jack. (*He goes out into the kitchen.*)

ANN (*desperate*). Aren't there any of you men can do anything to protect decent people from these ruffians?

NINIAN. I'll be glad to do whatever I . . . (*He starts to rise.*)

BOWLING (*restraining him*). I'd be rather careful, Mr. Edwards.

JACK. That's right, Mr. Edwards. You be careful. Listen to the old Squire. He's got a round pot but a level head. He's seen the Clary's Grove boys in action, and he can tell you you might get that silver-headed cane rammed down your gullet. Hey, Bab — you tell him what we did to Hank Spears and Gus Hocheimer. Just tell him!

BAB. Jack nailed two of 'em up in a barr'l and sent 'em rollin' down Salem hill and it jumped the bank and fotched up in the river and when we opened up the barr'l they wasn't inclined to move much.

JACK. Of course, it'd take a bigger barr'l to hold you and your friend here, Squire, but I'd do it for you and I'd do it for any by God rapscallions and sons of thieves that come here a-preachin' treachery and disunion and pisenin' the name of Old Hickory, the people's friend.

[FEARGUS *returns with the keg.*]

BEN. Kill him, boys! You're the only *real* Americans we got left!

NINIAN (*rising*). If you gentlemen will step outside, I'll be glad to accommodate you with the fight you seem to be spoiling for.

TRUM. You're committing suicide, Mr. Edwards.

JACK. Oh, no — he ain't. We ain't killers — we're just bone crushers. After a few months, you'll be as good as new, which ain't saying much. You bring that keg, Feargus.

[*They are about to go when* ABE *appears in the door. He now is slightly*

more respectably dressed, wearing a battered claw-hammer coat and pants that have been "foxed" with buckskin. He carries the mail. Behind him is JOSH SPEED.]

ABE. The mud wagon's in! Hello, Jack. Hello, boys. Ain't you fellers drunk yet? Hello, Miss Ann. Got a letter for you. (*There is a marked shyness in his attitude toward* ANN.)

ANN. Thank you, Abe. (*She snatches the letter and runs out with it.*)

BEN. Abe, there's goin' to be a fight!

NINIAN (*to* JACK). Well — come on, if you're coming.

JACK. All right, boys.

ABE. Fight? Who — and why?

JACK. This is the son of Ninian Edwards, Abe. Come from Springfield lookin' for a little crotch hoist and I'm aimin' to oblige.

[ABE *looks* NINIAN *over.*]

BOWLING. Put a stop to it, Abe. It'd be next door to murder.

JACK. You shut your trap, Pot Green. Murder's too good for any goose-livered enemy of Andy Jackson. Come on, boys!

ABE. Wait a minute, boys. Jack, have you forgotten what day it is?

JACK. No, I ain't! But I reckon the Fourth is as good a day as any to whip a politician!

ABE (*amiably*). Well, if you've just got to fight, Jack, you shouldn't give preference to strangers. Being postmaster of this thriving town, I can rate as a politician, myself, so you'd better try a fall with me — (*He thrusts* JACK *aside and turns to* NINIAN.) And as for you, sir, I haven't the pleasure of your acquaintance; but my name's Lincoln, and I'd like to shake hands with a brave man.

NINIAN (*shaking hands with* ABE). I'm greatly pleased to know you, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. You should be. Because I come here just in time to save you quite some embarrassment, not to mention injury. Oh, got a couple of letters for you, Bowling. And here's your *Cincinnati Journal,* Trum.

JACK. Look here, Abe — you're steppin' into something that ain't none of your business. This is a private matter of patriotic honor. . . .

ABE. Everything in this town is my business, Jack. It's the only kind of business I've got. And besides — I saw Hannah down by the grove and she says to tell you to come on to the picnic and that means *now* or she'll give the cake away to the Straders children and you and the boys'll go hungry. So get moving.

FEARGUS (*to* JACK). Are you goin' to let Abe talk you out of it?

ABE. Sure he is. (*He turns to* TRUM.) Say, Trum — if you ain't using that *Journal* for a while, would you let me have a read?

TRUM. By all means, Abe. Here you are. (*He tosses the paper to* ABE.)

ABE. Thanks. (*He turns again to* JACK.) You better hurry, Jack, or *you'll* get a beating from Hannah. (*He starts to take the wrapper off, as he goes over to a chair at the left.* JACK *looks at* ABE *for a moment, then laughs.*)

JACK (*to* NINIAN). All right! Abe Lincoln's saved your hide. I'll consent to callin' off the fight just because he's a friend of mine.

ABE (*as he sits*). And also because I'm the only one around here you can't lick.

JACK. But I just want to tell you, Mr. Ninian Edwards, Junior, that the next time you come around here a-spreadin' pisen and . . .

ABE. Go on, Jack. Hannah's waiting.

JACK (*walking over to* ABE). I'm going, Abe. But I warn you—you'd better stop this foolishness of readin'—readin'—readin', mornin', noon, and night, or you'll be gettin' soft and you won't be the same fightin' man you are now—and it would break my heart to see you licked by anybody, includin' me! (*He laughs, slaps* ABE *on the back, then turns to go.*) Glad to have met you, Mr. Edwards.

[*He goes out, followed by* BAB *and* JASP. FEARGUS *picks up the keg and starts after them.*]

NINIAN (*to* JACK). It's been a pleasure.

ABE. Where'd you get that keg, Feargus?

FEARGUS (*nervously*). Jack told me to take it outen Mis' Rutledge's kitchen and I . . .

ABE. Well—put it down. . . . If you see Seth Gale, tell him I've got a letter for him.

FEARGUS. I'll tell him, Abe. (FEARGUS *puts down the keg and goes.* JOSH SPEED *laughs and comes up to the table.*)

JOSH. Congratulations, Ninian. I shouldn't have enjoyed taking you home to Mrs. Edwards after those boys had done with you.

NINIAN (*grinning*). I was aware of the certain consequences, Josh. (*He turns to* ABE.) I'm deeply in your debt, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. Never mind any thanks, Mr. Edwards. Jack Armstrong talks big but he means well.

NINIAN. Won't you join us in a drink?

ABE. No, thank you. (*He's reading the paper.* BOWLING *fills the glasses.*)

BOWLING. I'm going to have another! I don't mind telling you, I'm still trembling. (*He hands a glass to* NINIAN, *then drinks himself.*)

TRUM. You see, Mr. Edwards. It's that very kind of lawlessness that's holding our town back.

NINIAN. You'll find the same element in the capital of our nation, and everywhere else, these days. (*He sits down and drinks.*)

ABE. Say, Bowling! It says here that there was a riot in Lyons, France. (*He reads.*) "A mob of men, deprived of employment when textile factories installed the new sewing machines, re-enacted scenes of the Reign of Terror in the streets of this prosperous industrial center. The mobs were suppressed only when the military forces of His French Majesty took a firm hand. The rioters carried banners inscribed with the incendiary words, 'We will live working or die fighting!'" (ABE *looks at the group at the right.*) That's Revolution!

BOWLING. Maybe, but it's a long way off from New Salem.

JOSH. Put the paper down, Abe. We want to talk to you.

ABE. Me? What about? (*He looks curiously at* JOSH, BOWLING, *and* NINIAN.)

JOSH. I brought Mr. Edwards here for the sole purpose of meeting you — and with his permission, I shall tell you why.

NINIAN. Go right ahead, Josh.

[*All are looking intently at* ABE.]

JOSH. Abe — how would you like to run for the State Assembly?

ABE. When?

JOSH. Now — for the election in the fall.

ABE. Why?

NINIAN. Mr. Lincoln, I've known you for only a few minutes, but that's long enough to make me agree with Josh Speed that you're precisely the type of man we want. The whole Whig organization will support your candidacy.

ABE. This was all your idea, Josh?

JOSH (*smiling*). Oh, no, Abe — you're the people's choice!

TRUM. What do *you* think of it, Bowling?

BOWLING (*heartily*). I think it's as fine a notion as I ever heard. Why, Abe — I can hear you making speeches, right and left, taking your stand on all the issues — secession, Texas, the National Bank crisis, abolitionism — it'll be more fun than we ever had in our lives!

ABE (*rising*). Isn't anybody going to ask what *I* think?

JOSH (*laughs*). All right, Abe — *I'll* ask you.

ABE (*after a moment's pause*). It's a comical notion, all right — and I don't know if I can give you an answer to it, offhand. But my first, hasty impression is that I don't think much of it.

BOWLING. Don't overlook the fact that, if elected, your salary would be three whole dollars a day.

ABE. That's fine money. No doubt of that. And I see what you have in

mind, Bowling. I owe you a considerable sum of money; and if I stayed in the legislature, for, say, twenty years, I'd be able to pay off — let me see — two dollars and a half a day. . . . (*He is figuring it up on his fingers.*)

BOWLING. I'm not thinking about the debts, Abe.

ABE. I know you ain't, Bowling. But I've got to. And so should you, Mr. Edwards. The Whig party is the party of sound money and God save the National Bank, ain't it?

NINIAN. Why, yes — among other things. . . .

ABE. Well, then — how would it look if you put forward a candidate who has demonstrated no earning power, but who has run up the impressive total of fifteen hundred dollars of debts?

BOWLING (*to* NINIAN). I can tell you something about those debts. Abe started a grocery store in partnership with an unfortunate young man named Berry. Their stock included whisky, and Berry started tapping the keg until he had consumed all the liquid assets. So the store went bankrupt — and Abe voluntarily assumed all the obligations. That may help to explain to you, Mr. Edwards, why we think pretty highly of him around here.

NINIAN. It's a sentiment with which I concur most heartily.

ABE. I thank you one and all for your kind tributes, but don't overdo them, or I'll begin to think that three dollars a day ain't enough!

JOSH. What's the one thing that you want most, Abe? You want to learn. This will give you your chance to get at a good library, to associate with the finest lawyers in the State.

ABE. I've got a copy of Blackstone, already. Found it in an old junk barrel. And how can I tell that the finest lawyers would welcome association with *me?*

NINIAN. You needn't worry about that. I saw how you dealt with those ruffians. You quite obviously know how to handle men.

ABE. I can handle the Clary's Grove boys because I can outwrassle them — but I can't go around Sangamon County throwing *all* the voters.

BOWLING (*laughing*). I'll take a chance on that, Abe.

ABE (*to* NINIAN). Besides — how do you know that my political views would agree with yours? How do you know I wouldn't say the wrong thing?

NINIAN. What are your political leanings, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE. They're all toward staying out. . . . What sort of leanings did you want?

NINIAN. We have a need for good conservative men to counteract all the radical firebrands that have swept over this country in the wake

of Andrew Jackson. We've got to get this country back to first principles!

ABE. Well — I'm conservative, all right. If I got into the legislature you'd never catch me starting any movements for reform or progress. I'm pretty certain I wouldn't even have the nerve to open my mouth.

JOSH (*laughs*). I told you, Ninian — he's just the type of candidate you're looking for.

[NINIAN *laughs, too, and rises.*]

NINIAN (*crossing toward* ABE). The fact is, Mr. Lincoln, we want to spike the rumor that ours is the party of the more privileged classes. That is why we seek men of the plain people for candidates. As postmaster, you're in an excellent position to establish contacts. While delivering letters, you can also deliver speeches and campaign literature, with which our headquarters will keep you supplied.

ABE. Would you supply me with a suit of store clothes? A candidate mustn't look *too* plain.

NINIAN (*smiling*). I think even that could be arranged, eh, Judge?

BOWLING. I think so.

NINIAN (*pompously*). So — think it over, Mr. Lincoln, and realize that this is opportunity unlimited in scope. Just consider what it means to be starting up the ladder in a nation which is now expanding southward, across the vast area of Texas; and westward, to the Empire of the Californias on the Pacific Ocean. We're becoming a continent, Mr. Lincoln — and all that we need is men! (*He looks at his watch.*) And now, gentlemen, if you will excuse me — I must put in an appearance at the torchlight procession in Springfield this evening, so I shall have to be moving on. Good-by, Mr. Lincoln. This meeting has been a happy one for me.

ABE (*shaking hands*). Good-by, Mr. Edwards. Good luck in the campaign.

NINIAN. And the same to you.

[*All at the right have risen and are starting to go, except* BEN MATTLING, *who is still sitting at the back, drinking.*]

ABE. Here's your paper, Trum.

TRUM. Go ahead and finish it, Abe. I won't be looking at it yet awhile.

ABE. Thanks, Trum. I'll leave it at your house.

[TRUM *and* NINIAN *have gone.*]

BOWLING. I'll see you later, Abe. Tell Ann I'll be back to pay for the liquor.

ABE. I'll tell her, Bowling.

[BOWLING *goes.* JOSH *is looking at* ABE, *who, after a moment, turns to him.*]

ABE. I'm surprised at you, Josh. I thought you were my friend.

JOSH. I know, Abe. But Ninian Edwards asked me is there anybody in that God-forsaken town of New Salem that stands a chance of getting votes, and the only one I could think of was you. I can see you're embarrassed by this—and you're annoyed. But—whether you like it or not—you've got to grow; and here's your chance to get a little scrap of importance.

ABE. Am I the kind that wants importance?

JOSH. You'll deny it, Abe—but you've got a funny kind of vanity—which is the same as saying you've got some pride—and it's badly in need of nourishment. So, if you'll agree to this—I don't think you'll be sorry for it or feel that I've betrayed you.

ABE (*grins*). Oh—I won't hold it against you, Josh. (*He walks away and looks out the door.*) But that Mr. Ninian Edwards—he's rich and he's prominent and he's got a high-class education. Politics to him is just a kind of a game. And maybe I'd like it if I could play it *his* way. (*He turns to* JOSH.) But when you get to reading Blackstone, not to mention the Bible, you can't help feeling maybe there's some serious responsibility in the giving of laws—and maybe there's something more important in the business of government than just getting the Whig party back into power.

[SETH GALE *comes in. He is a young, husky frontiersman, with flashes of the sun of Western empire in his eyes.*]

SETH. Hey, Abe—Feargus said you've got a letter for me.

ABE (*fishing in his mail pouch*). Yes.

SETH. Hello, Mr. Speed.

JOSH. How are you, Mr. Gale?

ABE. Here you are, Seth. (*He hands him a letter.* SETH *takes it to the right, sits down and starts to read.*)

JOSH. I've got to get home to Springfield, Abe, but I'll be down again in a week or so.

ABE. I'll be here, Josh.

[JOSH *goes.* ABE *sits down again at the right, picks up his paper, but doesn't read it.* BEN *stands up and comes down a bit unsteadily.*]

BEN (*angrily*). Are you going to do it, Abe? Are you goin' to let them make you into a *candidate?*

ABE. I ain't had time to think about it yet.

BEN. Well—I tell you to stop thinkin' before it's too late. Don't let 'em get you. Don't let 'em put you in a store suit that's the uniform of

degradation in this miserable country. You're an honest man, Abe Lincoln. You're a good-for-nothin', debt-ridden loafer — but you're an honest man. And you have no place in that den of thieves that's called gov'ment. They'll corrupt you as they're corrupted the whole damn United States. Look at Washington, look at Jefferson, and John Adams — (*He points grandly to the pictures.*) — where are they today? Dead! And everything they stood for and fought for and *won* — that's dead too. (ANN *comes in to collect the mugs from the table at the left.* ABE *looks at her.*) Why — we'd be better off if we was all held in the bonds of slavery. *Slaves* get fed — They get looked after when they're old and sick. (ANN *goes.*) But *you* don't care — you ain't listenin' to me, neither . . . (*He starts slowly toward the door.*)

ABE. Of course I'm listening, Ben.

BEN. No, you ain't. *I* know. You're goin' to the assembly and join the wolves who're feedin' off the carcass of Liberty. (*He goes out.*)

ABE. You needn't worry. I'm not going.

[ANN *comes in. She crosses to the right to pick up the glasses. She seems extremely subdued.* ABE *looks at her, curiously.*]

ABE. Bowling Green said to tell you he'd be back later, to pay you what he owes.

ANN (*curtly*). That's all right. (ANN *puts the glasses and bottles on a tray and picks it up.* ABE *jumps to his feet.*)

ABE. Here, Ann. Let me take that.

ANN (*irritably*). No — leave it alone! I can carry it! (*She starts across to the left.*)

ABE. Excuse me, Ann. . . .

ANN (*stopping*). Well?

ABE. Would you come back after you're finished with that? I — I'd like to talk to you.

[SETH *has finished the letter. Its contents seem to have depressed him.*]

ANN. All right. I'll talk to you — if you want.

[*She goes out.* SETH *crosses toward* ABE, *who, during the subsequent dialogue, is continually looking toward the kitchen.*]

SETH. Abe . . . Abe — I got a letter from my folks back in Maryland. It means — I guess I've got to give up the dream we had of moving out into Nebraska territory.

ABE. What's happened, Seth?

SETH (*despondently*). Well — for one thing, the old man's took sick, and he's pretty feeble.

ABE. I'm sorry to hear that.

SETH. So am I. They've sent for me to come back and work the farm. Measly little thirty-six acres — sandy soil. I tell you, Abe, it's a bitter disappointment to me, when I had my heart all set on going out into the West. And the worst of it is — I'm letting *you* down on it, too.

ABE (*with a glance toward the kitchen*). Don't think about that, Seth. Maybe I won't be able to move for a while myself. And when your father gets to feeling better, you'll come back. . . .

SETH. He won't get to feeling better. Not at his age. I'll be stuck there, just like he was. I'll be pushed in and cramped all the rest of my life, till the malaria gets me, too. . . . Well — there's no use crying about it. If I've got to go back East, I've got to go. (ANN *comes back.*) I'll tell you good-bye, Abe, before I leave.

[*He goes.* ABE *turns and looks at* ANN, *and she at him.*]

ANN. Well — what is it, Abe?

ABE (*rising*). I just thought — you might like to talk to me.

ANN (*sharply*). What about?

ABE. That letter you got from New York State.

ANN. What do *you* know about that letter?

ABE. I'm the postmaster. I know more than I ought to about people's private affairs. I couldn't help seeing that that was the handwriting of Mr. McNiel. And I couldn't help seeing, from the look on your face, that the bad news you've been afraid of has come.

[ANN *looks at him with surprise. He is a lot more observant than she had thought.*]

ANN. Whatever the letter said, it's no concern of yours, Abe.

ABE. I know that, Ann. But — it appears to me that you've been crying — and it makes me sad to think that something could have hurt you. The thing is — I think quite a lot of you — always have — ever since I first came here, and met you. I wouldn't mention it, only when you're distressed about something it's a comfort sometimes to find a pair of ears to pour your troubles into — and the Lord knows my ears are big enough to hold a lot.

[*Her attitude of hostility softens and she rewards him with a tender smile.*]

ANN. You're a Christian gentleman, Abe Lincoln. (*She sits down.*)

ABE. No, I ain't. I'm a plain, common sucker with a shirt-tail so short I can't sit on it.

ANN (*laughs*). Well — sit down, anyway, Abe — here, by me.

ABE. Why — it'd be a pleasure. (*He crosses and sits near her.*)

ANN. You can always say something to make a person laugh, can't you?

ABE. Well — I don't even have to *say* anything. A person just has to *look* at me.

ANN. You're right about that letter, Abe. It's the first I've heard from him in months — and now he says he's delayed by family troubles and doesn't know when he'll be able to get to New Salem again. By which he probably means — never.

ABE. I wouldn't say that, Ann.

ANN. I would. (*She looks at him.*) I reckon you think I'm a silly fool for ever having promised myself to Mr. McNiel.

ABE. I think no such thing. I liked him myself, and still do, and whatever reasons he had for changing his name I'm sure were honorable. He's a smart man, and a handsome one — and I — I wouldn't blame any girl for — loving him.

ANN (*too emphatically*). I guess I don't love him, Abe. I guess I couldn't love anybody that was as — as faithless as that.

ABE (*trying to appear unconcerned*). Well, then. There's nothing to fret about. Now — poor Seth Gale — he got some *really* bad news. His father's sick and he has to give up his dream which was to go and settle out West.

ANN (*looks at him*). I don't believe you know much about females, Abe.

ABE. Probably I don't — although I certainly spend enough time thinking about 'em.

ANN. You're a big man, and you can lick anybody, and you can't understand the feelings of somebody who is weak. But — I'm a female, and I can't help thinking what they'll be saying about me — all the old gossips, all over town. They'll make it out that he deserted me; I'm a rejected woman. They'll give me their sympathy to my face, but they'll snigger at me behind my back. (*She rises and crosses toward the right.*)

ABE. Yes — that's just about what they would do. But — would you let *them* disturb you?

ANN (*rising*). I told you — it's just weakness — it's just vanity. It's something you couldn't understand, Abe. (*She has crossed to the window and is staring out.* ABE *twists in his chair to look at her.*)

ABE. Maybe I can understand it, Ann. I've got a kind of vanity myself. Josh Speed said so, and he's right. . . . It's — it's nothing but vanity that's kept me from declaring my inclinations toward you. (*She turns, amazed, and looks at him.*) You see, I don't like to be sniggered at, either. I know what I am — and I know what I look like — and I know that I've got nothing to offer any girl that I'd be in love with.

ANN. Are you saying that you're in love with me, Abe?

ABE (*with deep earnestness*). Yes—I am saying that. (*He stands up, facing her. She looks intently into his eyes.*) I've been loving you—a long time—with all my heart. You see, Ann—you're a particularly fine girl. You've got sense, and you've got bravery—those are two things that I admire particularly. And you're powerful good to look at, too. So—it's only natural I should have a great regard for you. But—I don't mean to worry you about it, Ann. I only mentioned it because—if you would do me the honor of keeping company with me for a while, it might shut the old gossips' mouths. They'd figure you'd chucked McNeil for—for someone else. Even me.

ANN (*going to him*). I thought I knew you pretty well, Abe. But I didn't.

ABE (*worried*). Why do you say that? Do you consider I was too forward, in speaking out as I did?

ANN (*gravely*). No, Abe. . . . I've always thought a lot of you—the way I thought you were. But—the idea of love between you and me—I can't say how I feel about that, because now you're like some other person, that I'm meeting for the first time.

ABE (*quietly*). I'm not expecting you to feel anything for me. I'd never dream of expecting such a thing.

ANN. I know that, Abe. You'd be willing to give everything you have and never expect anything in return. Maybe you're different in that way from any man I've ever heard of. And I can tell you this much—now, and truthfully—if I ever do love you, I'll be happy about it—and lucky, to be loving a good, decent man. . . . If you just give me time—to think about it. . . .

ABE (*unable to believe his eyes and ears*). You mean—if you took time—you might get in your heart something like the feeling I have for you?

ANN (*with great tenderness*). I don't know, Abe. (*She clutches his lapel.*) But I do know that you're a man who could fill anyone's heart—yes, fill it and warm it and make it glad to be living.

[ABE *covers her hand with his.*]

ABE. Ann—I've always tried hard to believe what the orators tell us—that this is a land of equal opportunity for all. But I've never been able to credit it, any more than I could agree that God made all men in his own image. But—if I could win you, Ann—I'd be willing to disbelieve everything I've ever seen with my own eyes, and have faith in everything wonderful that I've ever read in poetry books. (*Both are silent for a moment. Then* ANN *turns away.*) But

—I'm not asking you to say anything now. And I won't ask you until the day comes when I know I've got a right to. (*He turns and walks quickly toward the door, picking up his mail pouch.*)

ANN. Abe! Where are you going?

ABE. I'm going to find Bowling Green and tell him a good joke. (*He grins. He is standing in the doorway.*)

ANN. A *joke?* What about?

ABE. I'm going to tell him that I'm a candidate for the assembly of the State of Illinois. (*He goes.*)

[*The light fades.*]

SCENE 3

BOWLING GREEN'S *house near New Salem.*

It is a small room, but the walls are lined with books and family pictures. In the center is a table with a lamp on it. Another light—a candle in a glass globe—is on a bureau at the right. There are comfortable chairs on either side of the table, and a sofa at the left.

At the back, toward the left, is the front door. A rifle is leaning against the wall by the door. There is another door in the right wall. Toward the right, at the back, is a ladder fixed against the wall leading up through an opening to the attic.

It is late in the evening, a year or so after Scene 2. A storm is raging outside.

BOWLING *is reading aloud from a sort of pamphlet. His comfortable wife,* NANCY, *is listening and sewing.*

BOWLING. "And how much more interesting did the spectacle become when, starting into full life and animation, as a simultaneous call for 'Pickwick' burst from his followers, that illustrious man slowly mounted into the Windsor chair, on which he had been previously seated, and addressed the club himself had founded." (BOWLING *chuckles.* NANCY *laughs.*)

NANCY. He sounds precisely like *you,* Bowling.

[*There is a knock at the door.*]

NANCY (*nervous*). That's not Abe's knock. Who can it be?

BOWLING (*rising*). We don't know yet, my dear.

NANCY. It's a strange hour for anyone to be calling. You'd better have that gun ready.

[BOWLING *unbolts and opens the door. It is* JOSH SPEED.]

BOWLING. Why—Josh Speed!

JOSH. Good evening, Bowling.

BOWLING. We haven't seen you in a coon's age.

NANCY. Good evening, Mr. Speed.

JOSH. Good evening, Mrs. Green. And I beg you to forgive me for this untimely intrusion.

NANCY. We're delighted to see you. Take your wrap off.

JOSH. Thank you. I've just come down from Springfield. I heard Abe Lincoln was in town and I was told I might find him here.

BOWLING. He's been sleeping here, up in the attic.

NANCY. But he's out now at the Rutledge farm, tending poor little Ann.

JOSH. Miss Rutledge? What's the matter with her?

NANCY. She's been taken with the brain sickness. It's the most shocking thing. People have been dying from it right and left.

BOWLING. But Ann's young. She'll pull through, all right. Sit down, Josh.

JOSH. Thank you. (*He sits.* BOWLING *places the pamphlet on the top of the bookcase and stands there, filling his pipe.*)

NANCY. I suppose you know that Abe came rushing down from Vandalia the moment he heard she was taken. He's deeply in love with her.

BOWLING. Now, Nancy — don't exaggerate.

[JOSH *is listening to all this, intently.*]

JOSH. So Abe is in love. I wondered what has been the matter with him lately.

NANCY. Why, it's written all over his poor, homely face.

JOSH. The last time I saw him, he seemed pretty moody. But when I asked him what was wrong, he said it was his liver.

BOWLING (*laughing*). That sounds more likely. Has he been getting on well in the Assembly?

JOSH. No. He has just been sitting there — drawing his three dollars a day — and taking no apparent interest in the proceedings. Do you fancy that Miss Rutledge cares anything for him?

NANCY. Indeed she does! She broke her promise to that Mr. McNiel because of her feelings for Abe!

JOSH. Has he any notion of marrying her?

NANCY. It's the only notion of his life right now. And the sooner they are married, the better for both of them.

BOWLING (*seating himself*). Better for her, perhaps — but the worse for him.

NANCY (*finishing her sewing*). And why? The Rutledges are fine people, superior in every way to those riff-raff Hankses and Lincolns that are Abe's family!

BOWLING. I think you feel as I do, Josh. Abe has his own way to go and

—sweet and pretty as Ann undoubtedly is—she'd only be a hindrance to him.

JOSH. I guess it wouldn't matter much if she could give him a little of the happiness he's never had.

NANCY (*rising*). That's just it! I think as much of Abe as you do, Bowling. But we can't deny that he's a poor man, and he's failed in trade, and he's been in the legislature for a year without accomplishing a blessed thing . . . (*She goes to the bookcase to put her sewing basket away.*)

BOWLING. He could go to Springfield and set up a law practice and make a good thing of it. Ninian Edwards would help him to get started. And he'd soon forget little Ann. He has just happened to fasten on her his own romantic ideal of what's beautiful and unattainable. Let him ever attain her, and she'd break his heart.

NANCY (*seating herself*). Do you agree with Bowling on that, Mr. Speed?

JOSH (*sadly*). I can't say, Mrs. Green. I've abandoned the attempt to predict anything about Abe Lincoln. The first time I ever saw him was when he was piloting that steamboat, the *Talisman*. You remember how she ran into trouble at the dam. I had a valuable load of goods aboard for my father's store, and I was sure that steamboat, goods, and all were a total loss. But Abe got her through. It was a great piece of work. I thought, "Here is a reliable man." So I cultivated his acquaintance, believing, in my conceit, that I could help him to fame and fortune. I soon learned differently. I found out that he has plenty of strength and courage in his body—but in his mind he's a hopeless hypochondriac. He can split rails, push a plow, crack jokes, all day—and then sit up all night reading "Hamlet" and brooding over his own fancied resemblance to that melancholy prince. Maybe he's a great philosopher—maybe he's a great fool. I don't know what he *is*.

BOWLING (*laughs*). Well—if only Ann had sense enough to see all the things *you* saw, Josh, she'd be so terrified of him she'd run all the way back to York State and find McNiel. At least, *he's* not complicated.

NANCY (*with deeper emotion*). You're talking about Abe Lincoln as if he were some problem that you found in a book, and it's interesting to try to figure it out. Well—maybe he *is* a problem—but he's also a man, and a miserable one. And what do you do for his misery? You laugh at his comical jokes and you vote for him on election day and give him board and lodging when he needs it. But all

that doesn't give a scrap of satisfaction to Abe's soul—and never will. Because the one thing he needs is a woman with the will to face life for him.

BOWLING. You think he's afraid to face it himself?

NANCY. He is! He listens too much to the whispers that he heard in the forest where he grew up, and where he always goes now when he wants to be alone. They're the whispers of the women behind him—his dead mother—and *her* mother, who was no better than she should be. He's got that awful fear on him, of not knowing what the whispers mean, or where they're directing him. And none of your back-slapping will knock that fear out of him Only a woman can free him—a woman who loves him truly, and believes in him. . . .

[*There is a knock at the door.*]

BOWLING. That's Abe now. (*He gets up and opens it.*)

[ABE *is there, bareheaded, wet by the storm. He now wears a fairly respectable dark suit of clothes. He looks older and grimmer.*]

BOWLING. Why, hello, Abe! We've been sitting up waiting for you. Come on in out of the wet!

[ABE *comes in.* BOWLING *shuts the door behind him.*]

NANCY. We were reading *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* when Mr. Speed came in.

ABE. Hello, Josh. Glad to see you.

JOSH. Hello, Abe.

[ABE *turns to* NANCY.]

ABE. Nancy . . .

NANCY. Yes, Abe?

ABE. She's dead.

BOWLING. Ann? She's dead?

ABE. Yes. Tonight, the fever suddenly got worse. They couldn't seem to do anything for it.

[NANCY *gives* BOWLING *a swift look, then goes quickly to* ABE *and takes his hand.*]

NANCY. Oh, Abe—I'm so sorry. She was such a dear little girl. Everyone who knew her will join in mourning for her.

ABE. I know they will. But it won't do any good. She's dead.

BOWLING. Sit down, Abe, and rest yourself.

ABE. No—I'm not fit company for anybody. I'd better be going. (*He turns toward the door.*)

JOSH (*stopping him*). No, you don't, Abe. You'll stay right here.

BOWLING. You better do what Josh tells you.

NANCY. Come here, Abe. Please sit down.

[ABE *looks from one to the other, then obediently goes to a chair and sits.*]

Your bed is ready for you upstairs when you want it.

ABE (*dully*). You're the best friends I've got in the world, and it seems a pretty poor way to reward you for all that you've given me, to come here now, and inflict you with a corpse.

BOWLING. This is your home, Abe. This is where you're loved.

ABE. Yes, that's right. And I love you, Bowling and Nancy. But I loved her more than everything else that I've ever known.

NANCY. I know you did, Abe. I know it.

ABE. I used to think it was better to be alone. I was always most contented when I was alone. I had queer notions that if you got too close to people, you could see the truth about them, and behind the surface, they're all insane, and they could see the same in you. And then—when I saw her, I knew there could be beauty and purity in people—like the purity you sometimes see in the sky at night. When I took hold of her hand, and held it, all fear, all doubt, went out of me. I believed in God. I'd have been glad to work for her until I died, to get for her everything out of life that she wanted. If she thought I could do it, then I could. That was my belief. . . . And then I had to stand there, as helpless as a twig in a whirlpool; I had to stand there and watch her die. And her father and mother were there, too, praying to God for her soul. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord!" That's what they kept on saying. But I couldn't pray with them. I couldn't give any devotion to one who has the power of death, and uses it. (*He has stood up, and is speaking with more passion.*) I'm making a poor exhibition of myself—and I'm sorry—but—I can't stand it. I can't live with myself any longer. I've got to die and be with her again, or I'll go crazy! (*He goes to the door and opens it. The storm continues.*) I can't bear to think of her out there alone!

[NANCY *looks at* BOWLING *with frantic appeal. He goes to* ABE, *who is standing in the doorway, looking out.*]

BOWLING (*with great tenderness*). Abe . . . I want you to go upstairs and see if you can't get some sleep. . . . Please, Abe—as a special favor to Nancy and me.

ABE (*after a moment*). All right, Bowling. (*He turns and goes to the ladder.*)

NANCY. Here's a light for you, dear Abe. (*She hands him the candle.*)

ABE. Thank you, Nancy. . . . Good night. (*He goes up the ladder into the attic.*)

[*They all look up after him.*]

NANCY (*tearful*). Poor, lonely soul.

[BOWLING *cautions her to be quiet.*]

JOSH. Keep him here with you, Mrs. Green. Don't let him out of your sight.

BOWLING. We won't, Josh.

JOSH. Good night. (*He picks up his hat and cloak and goes.*)

BOWLING. Good night, Josh. (*He closes and bolts the door, then comes down to the table and picks up the lamp.*)

[NANCY *looks up once more, then goes out at the right.* BOWLING *follows her out, carrying the lamp with him. He closes the door behind him, so that the only light on the stage is the beam from the attic.*]

[CURTAIN]

WHILE READING ACT I

(*In and about New Salem, Illinois, in the 1830's.*)

Scene 1 (*1833*). 1. The first words of the play are "The moods." What is the significance of this opening? Does it suggest the author's emphasis in his treatment of Lincoln?

2. Some of the early influences on Lincoln's thought are hinted at in this scene. Examples are his frequent references to the Bible and to the Webster reply to Hayne. Can you find others?

3. The dialogue between Lincoln and Mentor is used to reveal, with a great deal of ingenuity, some of the traits in Lincoln's character as well as some of the difficulties under which he was laboring. What are these traits, and what are the problems that beset him at this time?

4. The use of Keats's poem is an example of playwright's license. Lincoln may never have read this poem; his favorite, however, was in a similar mood — William Knox's "Mortality," beginning "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

Scene 2 (*1834*). 5. Sherwood introduces a number of fictitious characters in this scene: Ben Wattling, Trum Cogdal, Seth Gale, Jack Armstrong, Bob, Feargus, Jasp. These characters serve to help round out a picture of the social and political life of this highroad to the West. What conditions are revealed in the first scenes?

6. Sherwood quotes many of Lincoln's own words throughout the play; the first is the saying Lincoln got from his father: "I'm a plain, common sucker with a shirt-tail so short I can't sit on it." What does the expression mean?

7. The portrait of Lincoln is slowly and progressively painted in the dia-

logue and action of the play. What phases of his character does this scene reveal?

8. Is the curtain line striking? What are we to conclude about the reason for Lincoln's sudden decision?

9. The results of this election — the first in which Lincoln engaged — were: Lincoln, 205 votes; opponent, 3. After only seven months' residence in New Salem, Lincoln had succeeded in running ahead of all the other candidates, including even Ninian Edwards.

Scene 3 (1835). 10. Lincoln was fond of Shakespeare; his favorite play was *Macbeth,* in which he particularly admired Claudius' soliloquy, in Act III, Scene 3, beginning "Oh, my offense is rank." Read the passage to see what in Lincoln's character might have attracted him to it.

11. In this scene the only words Lincoln may actually have said are, "I can't bear to think of her out there alone." Are his other remarks in keeping with his character as it has thus far been unfolded? Which of the three people who argue about Abe's relations with Ann comes nearer the truth about Lincoln?

12. Why is Lincoln's bereavement a good way to end the first act? What has this act accomplished?

ACT II. SCENE 4

Law office of Stuart and Lincoln on the second floor of the courthouse in Springfield, Illinois. A sunny summer's afternoon, some five years after the preceding scene.

The room is small, with two windows and one door, upstage, which leads to the hall and staircase.

At the right is a table and chair, at the left an old desk, littered with papers. At the back is a ramshackle bed, with a buffalo robe thrown over it. Below the windows are some rough shelves, sagging with law books. There is an old wood stove.

On the wall above the desk is hung an American flag, with twenty-six stars. Between the windows is an election poster, for Harrison and Tyler, with a list of electors, the last of whom is Ab'm Lincoln, of Sangamon.

BILLY HERNDON *is working at the table. He is young, slight, serious-minded, smoldering. He looks up as* ABE *comes in.* ABE *wears a battered plug hat, a light alpaca coat, and carries an ancient, threadbare carpetbag. He is evidently not in a talkative mood. His boots are caked in mud. He is only thirty-one years old, but his youth was buried with Ann Rutledge.*

He leaves the door open, and lettered on it we see the number, 4, and the firm's name — Stuart & Lincoln, Attorneys & Counsellors at Law.

BILLY. How de do, Mr. Lincoln. Glad to see you back.

ABE. Good day, Billy. (*He sets down the carpetbag, takes off his hat and puts it on his desk.*)

BILLY. How was it on the circuit, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE. About as usual.

BILLY. Have you been keeping in good health?

ABE. Not particularly. But Doc Henry dosed me enough to keep me going. (*He sits down at the desk and starts looking at letters and papers that have accumulated during his absence. He takes little interest in them, pigeonholing some letters unopened.*)

BILLY. Did you have occasion to make any political speeches?

ABE. Oh — they got me on the stump a couple of times. Ran into Stephen Douglas — he was out campaigning, of course — and we had some arguments in public.

BILLY (*greatly interested*). That's good! What issues did you and Mr. Douglas discuss?

ABE. Now — don't get excited, Billy. We weren't taking it serious. There was no blood shed. . . . What's the news here?

BILLY. Judge Stuart wrote that he arrived safely in Washington and the campaign there is getting almost as hot as the weather. Mrs. Fraim stopped in to say she couldn't possibly pay your fee for a while.

ABE. I should hope not. I ought to be paying her, seeing as I defended her poor husband and he hanged.

[BILLY *hands him a letter and watches him intently, while he reads it.*]

BILLY. That was left here by hand, and I promised to call it especially to your attention. It's from the Elijah P. Lovejoy League of Freemen. They want you to speak at an Abolitionist rally next Thursday evening. It'll be a very important affair.

ABE (*reflectively*). It's funny, Billy — I was thinking about Lovejoy the other day — trying to figure what it is in a man that makes him glad to be a martyr. I was on the boat coming from Quincy to Alton, and there was a gentleman on board with twelve Negroes. He was shipping them down to Vicksburg for sale — had 'em chained six and six together. Each of them had a small iron clevis around his wrist, and this was chained to the main chain, so that those Negroes were strung together precisely like fish on a trotline. I gathered they were being separated forever from their homes — mothers, fathers, wives, children — whatever families the poor creatures had got — going to be whipped into perpetual slavery, and no questions asked. It was quite a shocking sight.

BILLY (*excited*). Then you will give a speech at the Lovejoy rally?

ABE (*wearily*). I doubt it. That Freemen's League *is* a pack of hell-roaring fanatics. Talk reason to them and they scorn you for being a mealymouth. Let 'em make their own noise. (ABE *has opened a letter. He starts to read it.*)

[BILLY *looks at him with resentful disappointment, but he knows too well that any argument would be futile. He resumes his work. After a moment,* BOWLING GREEN *comes in, followed by* JOSH SPEED.]

BOWLING. Are we interrupting the majesty of the Law?

ABE (*heartily*). Bowling! (*He jumps up and grasps* BOWLING'S *hand.*) How are you, Bowling?

BOWLING. Tolerably well, Abe — and glad to see you.

ABE. This is Billy Herndon — Squire Green, of New Salem. Hello, Josh.

JOSH. Hello, Abe.

BILLY (*shaking hands with* BOWLING). I'm proud to know you, sir. Mr. Lincoln speaks of you constantly.

BOWLING. Thank you, Mr. Herndon. Are you a lawyer, too?

BILLY (*seriously*). I hope to be, sir. I'm serving here as a clerk in Judge Stuart's absence.

BOWLING. So now you're teaching others, Abe?

ABE. Just providing a bad example.

BOWLING. I can believe it. Look at the mess on that desk. Shameful!

ABE. Give me another year of law practice and I'll need a warehouse for the overflow. . . . But — sit yourself down, Bowling, and tell me what brings you to Springfield.

[BOWLING *sits.* JOSH *has sat on the couch, smoking his pipe.* BILLY *is again at the table.*]

BOWLING. I've been up to Lake Michigan — fishing — came in today on the steam-cars — scared me out of a year's growth. But how are you doing, Abe? Josh says you're still broke, but you're a great social success.

ABE. True — on both counts. I'm greatly in demand at all the more elegant functions. You remember Ninian Edwards?

BOWLING. Of course.

ABE. Well, sir — I'm a guest at his mansion regularly. He's got a house so big you could race horses in the parlor. And his wife is one of the Todd family from Kentucky. Very high-grade people. They spell their name with two D's — which is pretty impressive when you consider that one was enough for God.

JOSH. Tell Bowling whom you met over in Rochester.

ABE. The President of the United States!

BOWLING. You don't tell me so!

ABE. Do you see that hand? (*He holds out his right hand, palm upward.*)

BOWLING. Yes — I see it.

ABE. It has shaken the hand of Martin Van Buren!

BOWLING (*laughing*). Was the President properly respectful to you, Abe?

ABE. Indeed he was! He said to me, "We've been hearing great things of you in Washington." I found out later he'd said the same thing to every other crossroads politician he'd met. (*He laughs.*) But Billy Herndon there is pretty disgusted with me for associating with the wrong kind of people. Billy's a firebrand — a real, radical abolitionist — and he can't stand anybody who keeps his mouth shut and abides by the Constitution. If he had his way, the whole Union would be set on fire and we'd all be burned to a crisp. Eh, Billy?

BILLY (*grimly*). Yes, Mr. Lincoln. And if you'll permit me to say so, I think you'd be of more use to your fellow men if you allowed some of the same incendiary impulses to come out in you.

ABE. You see, Bowling? He wants me to get down into the blood-soaked arena and grapple with all the lions of injustice and oppression.

BOWLING. Mr. Herndon — my profound compliments.

BILLY (*rising and taking his hat*). Thank you, sir. (*He shakes hands with* BOWLING, *then turns to* ABE.) I have the writ prepared in the Willcox case. I'll take it down to the Clerk of Court to be attested.

ABE. All right, Billy.

BILLY (*to* BOWLING). Squire Green — Mr. Lincoln regards you and Mr. Speed as the best friends he has on earth, and I should like to beg you, in his presence, for God's sake drag him out of this stagnant pool in which he's rapidly drowning himself. Good day, sir — good day, Mr. Speed.

JOSH. Good day, Billy.

[BILLY *has gone.*]

BOWLING. That's a bright young man, Abe. Seems to have a good grasp of things.

ABE (*looking after* BILLY). He's going downstairs to the Clerk's office, but he took his hat. Which means that before he comes back to work, he'll have paid a little visit to the Chenery House saloon.

BOWLING. Does the boy drink?

ABE. Yes. He's got great fires in him, but he's putting 'em out fast. . . .

Now — tell me about New Salem. (*He leans against the wall near the window.*)

BOWLING. Practically nothing of it left.

ABE. How's that blessed wife of yours?

BOWLING. Nancy's busier than ever, and more than ever concerned about your innermost thoughts and yearnings. In fact, she instructed me expressly to ask what on earth is the matter with you?

ABE (*laughs*). You can tell her there's nothing the matter. I've been able to pay off my debts to the extent of some seven cents on the dollar, and I'm sound of skin and skeleton.

BOWLING. But why don't we hear more from you and of you?

ABE. Josh can tell you. I've been busy.

BOWLING. What at?

ABE. I'm a candidate.

JOSH (*pointing to the poster*). Haven't you noticed his name? It's here — at the bottom of the list of Electors on the Whig ticket.

ABE. Yes, sir — if old Tippecanoe wins next fall, I'll be a member of the Electoral College.

BOWLING. The Electoral College! And is that the best you can do?

ABE. Yes — in the limited time at my disposal. I had a letter from Seth Gale — remember — he used to live in New Salem and was always aiming to move West. He's settled down in Maryland now and has a wife and a son. He says that back East they're powerful worried about the annexation of Texas.

BOWLING. They have reason to be. It would probably mean extending slavery through all the territories, from Kansas and Nebraska right out to Oregon and California. That would give the South absolute rule of the country — and God help the rest of us in the free states.

JOSH. It's an ugly situation, all right. It's got the seeds in it of nothing more nor less than civil war.

ABE. Well, if so, it'll be the abolitionists' own fault. They know where this trouble might lead, and yet they go right on agitating. They ought to be locked up for disturbing the peace, all of them.

BOWLING. I thought you were opposed to slavery, Abe. Have you changed your mind about it?

ABE (*ambles over to the couch and sprawls on it*). No. I am opposed to slavery. But I'm even more opposed to going to war. And, on top of that, I know what you're getting at, both of you. (*He speaks to them with the utmost good nature.*) You're following Billy Herndon's lead — troubling your kind hearts with concerns about me and when am I going to amount to something. Is that it?

BOWLING. Oh, no, Abe. Far be it from me to interfere in your life.

JOSH. Or me, either. If we happen to feel that, so far, you've been a big disappointment to us, we'll surely keep it to ourselves.

ABE (*laughs*). I'm afraid you'll have to do what I've had to do — which is, learn to accept me for what I am. I'm no fighting man. I found that out when I went through the Black Hawk War, and was terrified that I might have to fire a shot at an Indian. Fortunately, the Indians felt the same way, so I never saw one of them. Now, I know plenty of men who like to fight; they're willing to kill, and not scared of being killed. All right. Let them attend to the battles that have to be fought.

BOWLING. Peaceable men have sometimes been of service to their country.

ABE. They may have been peaceable when they started, but they didn't remain so long after they'd become mixed in the great brawl of politics. (*He sits up.*) Suppose I ran for Congress, and got elected. I'd be right in the thick of that ugly situation you were speaking of. One day I might have to cast my vote on the terrible issue of war or peace. It might be war with Mexico over Texas; or war with England over Oregon; or even war with our own people across the Ohio River. What attitude would I take in deciding which way to vote? "The Liberal attitude," of course. And what is the Liberal attitude? To go to war, for a tract of land, or a moral principle? Or to avoid war at all costs? No, sir. The place for me is the Electoral College, where all I have to do is vote for the President whom everybody else elected four months previous.

BOWLING. Well, Abe — you were always an artful dodger — and maybe you'll be able to go on to the end of your days avoiding the clutch of your own conscience.

[NINIAN EDWARDS *comes in. He is a little stouter and more prosperous.*]

ABE *and* JOSH. Hello, Ninian.

NINIAN. Hello. I saw Billy Herndon at the Chenery House and he said you were back from the circuit. (*He sees* BOWLING.) Why — it's my good friend Squire Green. How de do, and welcome to Springfield. (*He shakes hands with* BOWLING.)

BOWLING. Thank you, Mr. Edwards.

NINIAN. I just called in, Abe, to tell you you must dine with us. And, Squire, Mrs. Edwards would be honored to receive you, if your engagements will permit — and you, too, Josh.

JOSH. Delighted!

NINIAN. We're proudly exhibiting my sister-in-law, Miss Mary Todd,

who has just come from Kentucky to grace our home. She's a very gay young lady—speaks French like a native, recites poetry at the drop of a hat, and knows the names and habits of all the flowers. I've asked Steve Douglas and some of the other eligibles to meet her, so you boys had better get in early.

BOWLING. My compliments to Mrs. Edwards, but my own poor wife awaits me impatiently, I hope.

NINIAN. I appreciate your motives, Squire, and applaud them. You'll be along presently, Abe?

ABE. I wouldn't be surprised.

NINIAN. Good. You'll meet a delightful young lady. And I'd better warn you she's going to survey the whole field of matrimonial prospects and select the one who promises the most. So you'd better be on your guard, Abe, unless you're prepared to lose your standing as a free man.

ABE. I thank you for the warning, Ninian.

NINIAN. Good day to you, Squire. See you later, Josh. (*He goes out.*)

ABE. There, Bowling—you see how things are with me. Hardly a day goes by but what I'm invited to meet some eager young female who has all the graces, including an ability to speak the language of diplomacy.

BOWLING. I'm sorry, Abe, that I shan't be able to hear you carrying on a flirtation in French. (ABE *looks at him, curiously.*)

ABE. I'm not pretending with you, Bowling—or you, Josh. I couldn't fool you any better than I can fool myself. I know what you're thinking about me, and I think so, too. Only I'm not so merciful in considering my own shortcomings, or so ready to forgive them, as you are. But—you talk about civil war—there seems to be one going on inside me all the time. Both sides are right and both are wrong and equal in strength. I'd like to be able to rise superior to the struggle—but—it says in the Bible that a house divided against itself cannot stand, so I reckon there's not much hope. One of these days, I'll just split asunder, and part company with myself—and it'll be a good riddance from both points of view. However—come on. (*He takes his hat.*) You've got to get back to Nancy, and Josh and I have got to make a good impression upon Miss Mary Todd, of Kentucky. (*He waves them to the door. As they go out, the light fades.*)

SCENE 5

Parlor of the Edwards house in Springfield. An evening in November, some six months after the preceding scene.

There is a fireplace at the right, a heavily curtained bay window at the left, a door at the back leading into the front hall.

At the right, by the fireplace, are a small couch and an easy chair. There is another couch at the left, and a table and chairs at the back. There are family portraits on the walls. It is all moderately elegant.

NINIAN *is standing before the fire, in conversation with* ELIZABETH, *his wife. She is high-bred, ladylike — excessively so. She is, at the moment, in a state of some agitation.*

ELIZABETH. I cannot believe it! It is an outrageous reflection on my sister's good sense.

NINIAN. I'm not so sure of that. Mary has known Abe for several months, and she has had plenty of chance to observe him closely.

ELIZABETH. She has been entertained by him, as we all have. But she has been far more attentive to Edwin Webb and Stephen Douglas and many others who are distinctly eligible.

NINIAN. Isn't it remotely possible that she sees more in Abe than you do?

ELIZABETH. Nonsense! Mr. Lincoln's chief virtue is that he hides no part of his simple soul from anyone. He's a most amiable creature, to be sure; but as the husband of a high-bred, high-spirited young lady . . .

NINIAN. Quite so, Elizabeth. Mary *is* high-spirited! That is just why she set her cap for him. (ELIZABETH *looks at him sharply, then laughs.*)

ELIZABETH. You're making fun of me, Ninian. You're deliberately provoking me into becoming excited about nothing.

NINIAN. No, Elizabeth — I am merely trying to prepare you for a rude shock. You think Abe Lincoln would be overjoyed to capture an elegant, cultivated girl, daughter of the President of the Bank of Kentucky, descendant of a long line of English gentlemen. Well, you are mistaken. . . .

[MARY TODD *comes in. She is twenty-two — short, pretty, remarkably sharp. She stops short in the doorway, and her suspecting eyes dart from* ELIZABETH *to* NINIAN.]

MARY. What were you two talking about?

NINIAN. I was telling your sister about the new song the boys are singing:

"What is the great commotion, motion,
Our country through?
It is the ball a-rolling on
For Tippecanoe and Tyler, too—for Tippecanoe . . ."

MARY (*with a rather grim smile*). I compliment you for thinking quickly, Ninian. But you were talking about *me!* (*She looks at* ELIZABETH, *who quails a little before her sister's determination.*) Weren't you?

ELIZABETH. Yes, Mary, we were.

MARY. And quite seriously, I gather.

NINIAN. I'm afraid that our dear Elizabeth has become unduly alarmed . . .

ELIZABETH (*snapping at him*). Let me say what I have to say! (*She turns to* MARY.) Mary—you must tell me the truth. Are you—have you ever given one moment's serious thought to the possibility of marriage with Abraham Lincoln? (MARY *looks at each of them, her eyes flashing.*) I promise you, Mary, that to me such a notion is too far beyond the bounds of credibility to be . . .

MARY. But Ninian has raised the horrid subject, hasn't he? He has brought the evil scandal out into the open, and we must face it, fearlessly. Let us do so at once, by all means. I shall answer you, Elizabeth: I have given more than one moment's thought to the possibility you mentioned—and I have decided that I shall be Mrs. Lincoln. (*She seats herself on the couch.*)

[NINIAN *is about to say, "I told you so," but thinks better of it.* ELIZABETH *can only gasp and gape.*]

MARY. I have examined, carefully, the qualifications of all the young gentlemen, and some of the old ones, in this neighborhood. Those of Mr. Lincoln seem to me superior to all others, and he is my choice.

ELIZABETH. Do you expect me to congratulate you upon this amazing selection?

MARY. No! I ask for no congratulations, nor condolences, either.

ELIZABETH (*turning away*). Then I shall offer none.

NINIAN. Forgive me for my prying, Mary—but have you as yet communicated your decision to the gentleman himself?

MARY (*with a slight smile at* NINIAN). Not yet. But he is coming to call this evening, and he will ask humbly for my hand in marriage; and, after I have displayed the proper amount of surprise and confusion, I shall murmur, timidly, "Yes!"

ELIZABETH (*pitiful*). You make a brave jest of it, Mary. But as for me, I am deeply and painfully shocked. I don't know what to say to

you. But I urge you, I beg you, as your elder sister, responsible to our father and our dead mother for your welfare . . .

MARY (*with a certain tenderness*). I can assure you, Elizabeth—it is useless to beg or command. I have made up my mind.

NINIAN. I admire your courage, Mary, but I should like . . .

ELIZABETH. I think, Ninian, that this is a matter for discussion solely between my sister and myself!

MARY. No! I want to hear what Ninian has to say. (*To* NINIAN.) What is it?

NINIAN. I only wondered if I might ask you another question.

MARY (*calmly*). You may.

NINIAN. Understand, my dear—I'm not quarreling with you. My affection for Abe is eternal—but—I'm curious to know—what is it about him that makes you choose him for a husband?

MARY (*betraying her first sign of uncertainty*). I should like to give you a plain, simple answer, Ninian. But I cannot.

ELIZABETH (*jumping at this*). Of course, you cannot! You're rushing blindly into this. You have no conception of what it will mean to your future.

MARY. You're wrong about that, Elizabeth. This is not the result of wild, tempestuous infatuation. I have not been swept off my feet. Mr. Lincoln is a Westerner, but that is his only point of resemblance to Young Lochinvar. I simply feel that of all the men I've ever known, he is the one whose life and destiny I want most to share.

ELIZABETH. Haven't you sense enough to know you could never be happy with him? His breeding—his background—his manner—his whole point of view . . . ?

MARY (*gravely*). I could not be content with a "happy" marriage in the accepted sense of the word. I have no craving for comfort and security.

ELIZABETH. And have you a craving for the kind of life you would lead? A miserable cabin, without a servant, without a stitch of clothing that is fit for exhibition in decent society?

MARY (*raising her voice*). I have not yet tried poverty, so I cannot say how I should take to it. But I might well prefer it to anything I have previously known—so long as there is forever before me the chance for high adventure—so long as I can know that I am always going forward, with my husband, along a road that leads across the horizon. (*This last is said with a sort of mad intensity.*)

ELIZABETH. And how far do you think you will go with anyone like

Abe Lincoln, who is lazy and shiftless and prefers to stop constantly along the way to tell jokes?

MARY (*rising; furious*). He will *not* stop, if I am strong enough to make him go on! And I am strong! I know what *you* expect of me. You want me to do precisely as you have done — and marry a man like Ninian — and I know many, that are *just* like him! But with all due respect to my dear brother-in-law — I don't want that — and I won't have it! Never! You live in a house with a fence around it — presumably to prevent the common herd from gaining access to your sacred precincts — but really to prevent you, yourselves, from escaping from your own narrow lives. In Abraham Lincoln I see a man who has split rails for other men's fences, but who will never build one around himself!

ELIZABETH. What are you *saying*, Mary? You are talking with a degree of irresponsibility that is not far from sheer madness. . . .

MARY (*scornfully*). I imagine it does seem like insanity to you! You married a man who was settled and established in the world, with a comfortable inheritance, and no problems to face. And you've never made a move to change your condition, or improve it. You consider it couldn't be improved. To you, all this represents perfection. But it doesn't to me! I want the chance to *shape* a new life, for myself, and for my husband. Is that irresponsibility?

[*A* MAID *appears.*]

MAID. Mr. Lincoln, ma'am.

ELIZABETH. He's here.

MARY (*firmly*). I shall see him!

MAID. Will you step in, Mr. Lincoln?

[ABE *comes in, wearing a new suit, his hair nearly neat.*]

ABE. Good evening, Mrs. Edwards. Good evening, Miss Todd. Ninian, good evening.

ELIZABETH. Good evening.

MARY. Good evening, Mr. Lincoln. (*She sits on the couch at the left.*)

NINIAN. Glad to see you, Abe.

[ABE *sees that there is electricity in the atmosphere of this parlor. He tries hard to be affably casual.*]

ABE. I'm afraid I'm a little late in arriving, but I ran into an old friend of mine, wife of Jack Armstrong, the champion rowdy of New Salem. I believe you have some recollection of him, Ninian.

NINIAN (*smiling*). I most certainly have. What's he been up to now?

ABE (*stands in front of the fireplace*). Oh, he's all right, but Hannah, his wife, is in fearful trouble because her son Duff is up for murder

and she wants me to defend him. I went over to the jail to interview the boy and he looks pretty tolerably guilty to me. But I used to give him lessons in the game of marbles while his mother foxed my pants for me. (*He turns to* ELIZABETH.) That means, she sewed buckskin around the legs of my pants so I wouldn't tear 'em to shreds going through underbrush when I was surveying. Well—in view of old times, I felt I had to take the case and do what I can to obstruct the orderly processes of justice.

NINIAN (*laughs, with some relief*). And the boy will be acquitted. I tell you, Abe—this country would be law-abiding and peaceful if it weren't for you lawyers. But—if you will excuse Elizabeth and me, we must hear the children's prayers and see them safely abed.

ABE. Why—I'd be glad to hear their prayers, too.

NINIAN. Oh, no! You'd only keep them up till all hours with your stories. Come along, Elizabeth.

[ELIZABETH *doesn't want to go, but doesn't know what to do to prevent it.*]

ABE (*to* ELIZABETH). Kiss them good night, for me.

NINIAN. We'd better not tell them you're in the house, or they'll be furious.

ELIZABETH (*making one last attempt*). Mary! Won't you come with us and say good night to the children?

NINIAN. No, my dear. Leave Mary here—to keep Abe entertained. (*He guides* ELIZABETH *out, following her.*)

MARY (*with a little laugh*). I don't blame Ninian for keeping you away from those children. They all adore you.

ABE. Well—I always seemed to get along well with children. Probably it's because they never want to take me seriously.

MARY. You understand them—that's the important thing . . . But—do sit down, Mr. Lincoln. (*She indicates that he is to sit next to her.*)

ABE. Thank you—I will. (*He starts to cross to the couch to sit beside* MARY. *She looks at him with melting eyes. The lights fade.*)

SCENE 6

Again the Law Office. It is afternoon of New Year's Day, a few weeks after the preceding scene.

ABE *is sitting, slumped in his chair, staring at his desk. He has his hat and overcoat on. A muffler is hanging about his neck, untied.*

JOSH SPEED *is half-sitting on the table at the right. He is reading a*

long letter, with most serious attention. At length he finishes it, refolds it very carefully, stares at the floor.

ABE. Have you finished it, Josh?

JOSH. Yes.

ABE. Well—do you think it's all right?

JOSH. No, Abe—I don't. (ABE *turns slowly and looks at him.*) I think the sending of this letter would be a most grave mistake—and that is putting it mildly and charitably.

ABE. Have I stated the case too crudely? (ABE *is evidently in a serious state of distress, although he is making a tremendous effort to disguise it by speaking in what he intends to be a coldly impersonal tone. He is struggling mightily to hold himself back from the brink of nervous collapse.*)

JOSH. No—I have no quarrel with your choice of words. None whatever. If anything, the phraseology is too correct. But your method of doing it, Abe! It's brutal, it's heartless, it's so unworthy of you that I—I'm at a loss to understand how you ever thought you could do it this way.

ABE. I've done the same thing before with a woman to whom I seemed to have become attached. She approved of my action.

JOSH. This is a different woman. (*He walks over to the window, then turns again toward* ABE.) You cannot seem to accept the fact that women are human beings, too, as variable as we are. You act on the assumption that they're all the same one—and that one is a completely unearthly being of your own conception. This letter isn't written to Mary Todd—it's written to yourself. Every line of it is intended to provide salve for your own conscience.

ABE (*rising; coldly*). Do I understand that you will not deliver it for me?

JOSH. No, Abe—I shall not.

ABE (*angrily*). Then someone else will!

JOSH (*scornfully*). Yes. You could give it to the minister, to hand to the bride when he arrives for the ceremony. But—I hope, Abe, you won't send it till you're feeling a little calmer in your mind. . . .

ABE (*vehemently, turning to* JOSH). How can I ever be calm in my mind until this thing is settled, and out of the way, once and for all? Have you got eyes in your head, Josh? Can't you see that I'm desperate?

JOSH. I can see that plainly, Abe. I think your situation is more desperate even than you imagine, and I believe you should have the benefit of some really intelligent medical advice.

ABE (*seating himself at* BILLY'S *table*). The trouble with me isn't anything that a doctor can cure.

JOSH. There's a good man named Dr. Drake, who makes a specialty of treating people who get into a state of mind like yours, Abe. . . .

ABE (*utterly miserable*). So that's how you've figured it! I've done what I've threatened to do many times before: I've gone crazy. Well — you know me better than most men, Josh — and perhaps you're not far off right. I just feel that I've got to the end of my rope, and I must let go, and drop — and where I'll land, I don't know, and whether I'll survive the fall, I don't know that either. . . . But — this I *do* know: I've got to get out of this thing — I can't go through with it — I've got to have my release!

[JOSH *has turned to the window. Suddenly he turns back, toward* ABE.]

JOSH. Ninian Edwards is coming up. Why not show this letter to him and ask for his opinion. . . .

ABE (*interrupting, with desperation*). No, no! Don't say a word of any of this to him! Put that letter in your pocket. I can't bear to discuss this business with him, now.

[JOSH *puts the letter in his pocket and crosses to the couch.*]

JOSH. Hello, Ninian.

NINIAN (*heartily, from off*). Hello, Josh! Happy New Year! (NINIAN *comes in. He wears a handsome, fur-trimmed greatcoat and carries two silver-headed canes, one of them in a baize bag, which he lays down on the table at the right.*)

NINIAN. And Happy New Year, Abe — in fact, the happiest of your whole life!

ABE. Thank you, Ninian. And Happy New Year to you.

NINIAN (*opening his coat*). That didn't sound much as if you meant it. (*He goes to the stove to warm his hands.*) However, you can be forgiven today, Abe. I suppose you're inclined to be just a wee bit nervous. (*He chuckles and winks at* JOSH.) God — but it's cold in here! Don't you ever light this stove?

ABE. The fire's all laid. Go ahead and light it, if you want.

NINIAN (*striking a match*). You certainly are in one of your less amiable moods today. (*He lights the stove.*)

JOSH. Abe's been feeling a little under the weather.

NINIAN. So it seems. He looks to me as if he'd been to a funeral.

ABE. That's where I have been.

NINIAN (*disbelieving*). What? A funeral on your wedding day?

JOSH. They buried Abe's oldest friend, Bowling Green, this morning.

NINIAN (*shocked*). Oh—I'm mighty sorry to hear that, Abe. And—I hope you'll forgive me for—not having known about it.

ABE. Of course, Ninian.

NINIAN. But I'm glad you were there, Abe, at the funeral. It must have been a great comfort to his family.

ABE. I wasn't any comfort to anyone. They asked me to deliver an oration, a eulogy of the deceased—and I tried—and I couldn't say a thing. Why do they expect you to strew a lot of flowery phrases over anything so horrible as a dead body? Do they think that Bowling Green's soul needs quotations to give it peace? All that mattered to me was that he was a good, just man—and I loved him—and he's dead.

NINIAN. Why didn't you say that, Abe?

ABE (*rising*). I told you—they wanted an oration.

NINIAN. Well, Abe—I think Bowling himself would be the first to ask you to put your sadness aside in the prospect of your own happiness, and Mary's—and I'm only sorry that our old friend didn't live to see you two fine people married. (*He is making a gallant attempt to assume a more cheerily nuptial tone.*) I've made all the arrangements with the Reverend Dresser, and Elizabeth is preparing a bangup dinner—so you can be sure the whole affair will be carried off handsomely *and* painlessly.

[BILLY HERNDON *comes in. He carries a bottle in his coat pocket, and is already more than a little drunk and sullen, but abnormally articulate.*]

NINIAN. Ah, Billy—Happy New Year!

BILLY. The same to you, Mr. Edwards. (*He puts the bottle down on the table and takes his coat off.*)

NINIAN. I brought you a wedding present, Abe. Thought you'd like to make a brave show when you first walk out with your bride. It came from the same place in Louisville where I bought mine. (*He picks up one of the canes and hands it proudly to* ABE, *who takes it and inspects it gravely.*)

ABE. It's very fine, Ninian. And I thank you. (*He takes the cane over to his desk and seats himself.*)

NINIAN. Well—I'll frankly confess that in getting it for you, I was influenced somewhat by consideration for Mary and her desire for keeping up appearances. And in that connection—I know you'll forgive me, Josh, and you, too, Billy, if I say something of a somewhat personal nature?

BILLY (*truculent*). If you want me to leave you, I shall be glad to. . . .

NINIAN. No, please, Billy—I merely want to speak a word or two as another of Abe's friends; it's my last chance before the ceremony. Of course, the fact that the bride is my sister-in-law gives me a little added responsibility in wishing to promote the success of this marriage. (*He crosses to* ABE.) And a success it will be, Abe . . . if only you will bear in mind one thing; you must keep a tight rein on her ambition. My wife tells me that even as a child, she had delusions of grandeur—she predicted to one and all that the man she would marry would be President of the United States. (*He turns to* JOSH.) You know how it is—every boy in the country plans some day to be President, and every little girl plans to marry him. (*Again to* ABE.) But Mary is one who hasn't entirely lost those youthful delusions. So I urge you to beware. Don't let her talk you into any gallant crusades or wild goose chases. Let her learn to be satisfied with the estate to which God hath brought her. With which, I shall conclude my prenuptial sermon. (*He buttons his coat.*) I shall see you all at the house at five o'clock, and I want you to make sure that Abe is looking his prettiest.

JOSH. Good-bye, Ninian.

[NINIAN *goes out.* ABE *turns again to the desk and stares at nothing.* BILLY *takes the bottle and a cup from his desk and pours himself a stiff drink. He raises the cup toward* ABE.]

BILLY (*huskily*). Mr. Lincoln, I beg leave to drink to your health and happiness . . . and to that of the lady who will become your wife. (ABE *makes no response.* BILLY *drinks it down, then puts the cup back on the table.*) You don't want to accept my toast because you think it wasn't sincere. And I'll admit I've made it plain that I've regretted the step you've taken. I thought that in this marriage, you were lowering yourself—you were trading your honor for some exalted family connections. . . . I wish to apologize for so thinking. . . .

ABE. No apologies required, Billy.

BILLY. I doubt that Miss Todd and I will ever get along well together. But I'm now convinced that our aims are the same—particularly since I've heard the warnings delivered by her brother-in-law. (*A note of scorn colors his allusion to* NINIAN.) If she really is ambitious for you—if she will never stop driving you, goading you—then I say, God bless her, and give her strength!

[*He has said all this with* ABE'S *back to him.* BILLY *pours himself another drink, nearly emptying the large bottle.* ABE *turns and looks at him.*]

ABE. Have you had all of that bottle today?

BILLY. This bottle? Yes—I have.

JOSH. And why not? It's New Year's Day!

BILLY (*looking at* JOSH). Thank you, Mr. Speed. Thank you for the defense. And I hope you will permit me to propose one more toast. (*He takes a step toward* ABE.) To the President of the United States, and Mrs. Lincoln! (*He drinks.*)

ABE (*grimly*). I think we can do without any more toasts, Billy.

BILLY. Very well! That's the last one—until after the wedding. And then, no doubt, the Edwards will serve us with the costliest champagne. And, in case you're apprehensive, I shall be on my best behavior in that distinguished gathering!

ABE. There is not going to be a wedding. (BILLY *stares at him, and then looks at* JOSH, *and then again at* ABE.) I have a letter that I want you to deliver to Miss Todd.

BILLY. What letter? What is it?

ABE. Give it to him, Josh. (JOSH *takes the letter out of his pocket, and puts it in the stove.* ABE *jumps up.*) You have no right to do that!

JOSH. I know I haven't! But it's done. (ABE *is staring at* JOSH.) And don't look at me as if you were planning to break my neck. Of course, you could do it, Abe—but you won't. (JOSH *turns to* BILLY.) In that letter, Mr. Lincoln asked Miss Todd for his release. He told her that he had made a mistake in his previous protestations of affection for her, and so he couldn't go through with a marriage which could only lead to endless pain and misery for them both.

ABE (*deeply distressed*). If that isn't the truth, what is?

JOSH. I'm not disputing the truth of it. I'm only asking you to tell her so, to her face, in the manner of a man.

ABE. It would be a more cruel way. It would hurt her more deeply. For I couldn't help blurting it *all* out—all the terrible things I didn't say in that letter. (*He is speaking with passion.*) I'd have to tell her that I have hatred for her infernal ambition—that I don't want to be ridden and driven, upward and onward through life, with her whip lashing me, and her spurs digging into me! If her poor soul craves importance in life, then let her marry Stephen Douglas. He's ambitious, too. . . . I want only to be left alone! (*He sits down again and leans on the table.*)

JOSH (*bitterly*). Very well, then—tell her all that! It will be more gracious to admit that you're afraid of her, instead of letting her down flat with the statement that your ardor, such as it was, has cooled.

[BILLY *has been seething with a desire to get into this conversation. Now, with a momentary silence, he plunges.*]

BILLY. May I say something?

ABE. I doubt that you're in much of a condition to contribute. . . .

JOSH. What is it, Billy?

BILLY (*hotly*). It's just this. Mr. Lincoln, you're not abandoning Miss Mary Todd. No! You're only using her as a living sacrifice, offering her up, in the hope that you will thus gain forgiveness of the gods for your failure to do your own great duty!

ABE (*smoldering*). Yes! My own great duty. Everyone feels called upon to remind me of it, but no one can tell me what it is.

BILLY (*almost tearful*). I can tell you! I can tell you what is the duty of every man who calls himself an American! It is to perpetuate those truths which were once held to be self-evident: that all men are created equal — that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights — that among these are the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

ABE (*angrily*). And are those rights denied to me?

BILLY. Could you ever enjoy them while your mind is full of the awful knowledge that two million of your fellow beings in this country are slaves? Can you take any satisfaction from looking at that flag above your desk, when you know that ten of its stars represent states which are willing to destroy the Union — rather than yield their property rights in the flesh and blood of those slaves? And what of all the States of the future? All the territories of the West — clear out to the Pacific Ocean? Will they be the homes of free men? Are you answering *that* question to your own satisfaction? That is your flag, Mr. Lincoln, and you're proud of it. But what are you doing to save it from being ripped into shreds?

[ABE *jumps to his feet, towers over* BILLY, *and speaks with temper restrained, but with great passion.*]

ABE. I'm minding my own business — that's what I'm doing! And there'd be no threat to the Union if others would do the same. And as to slavery — I'm sick and tired of this righteous talk about it. When you know more about law, you'll know that those property rights you mentioned are guaranteed by the Constitution. And if the Union can't stand on the Constitution, then let it fall!

BILLY. To hell with the Constitution! This is a matter of the rights of living men to freedom — and those came before the Constitution! When the Law denies those rights, then the Law is wrong, and it must be changed, if not by moral protest, then by force! There's no

course of action that isn't justified in the defense of freedom! And don't dare to tell me that anyone in the world knows that better than you do, Mr. Lincoln. You, who honor the memory of Elijah Lovejoy and every other man who ever died for that very ideal!

ABE (*turning away from him*). Yes—I honor them—and envy them—because they could believe that their ideals are *worth* dying for. (*He turns to* JOSH *and speaks with infinite weariness.*) All right, Josh—I'll go up now and talk to Mary—and then I'm going away. . . .

JOSH. Where, Abe?

ABE (*dully*). I don't know.

[*He goes out and closes the door after him. After a moment,* BILLY *rushes to the door, opens it, and shouts after* ABE.]

BILLY. You're quitting, Mr. Lincoln! As surely as there's a God in Heaven, He knows that you're running away from your obligations to Him, and to your fellow men, and your own immortal soul!

JOSH (*drawing* BILLY *away from the door*). Billy—Billy—leave him alone. He's a sick man.

BILLY (*sitting down at the table*). What can we do for him, Mr. Speed? What can we do? (BILLY *is now actually in tears.*)

JOSH. I don't know, Billy. (*He goes to the window and looks out.*) He'll be in such a state of emotional upheaval, he'll want to go away by himself, for a long time. Just as he did after the death of poor little Ann Rutledge. He'll go out and wander on the prairies, trying to grope his way back into the wilderness from which he came. There's nothing we can do for him, Billy. He'll have to do it for himself.

BILLY (*fervently*). May God be with him!

SCENE 7

On the prairie, near New Salem. It is a clear, cool, moonlit evening, nearly two years after the preceding scene.

In the foreground is a campfire. Around it are packing cases, blanket rolls, and one ancient trunk. In the background is a covered wagon, standing at an angle, so that the opening at the back of it is visible to the audience.

SETH GALE *is standing by the fire, holding his seven-year-old son,* JIMMY, *in his arms. The boy is wrapped up in a blanket.*

JIMMY. I don't want to be near the fire, Paw. I'm burning up. Won't you take the blanket offen me, Paw?

SETH. No, son. You're better off if you keep yourself covered.

JIMMY. I want some water, Paw. Can't I have some water?

SETH. Yes! Keep quiet, Jimmy! Gobey's getting the water for you now. (*He looks off to the right, and sees* JACK ARMSTRONG *coming.*) Hello, Jack, I was afraid you'd got lost.

JACK (*coming in*). I couldn't get lost anywhere's around New Salem. How's the boy?

SETH (*with a cautionary look at* JACK). He—he's a little bit thirsty. Did you find Abe?

JACK. Yes—it took me some time because he'd wandered off—went out to the old cemetery across the river to visit Ann Rutledge's grave.

SETH. Is he coming here?

JACK. He said he'd better go get Doc Chandler who lives on the Winchester Road. He'll be along in a while. (*He comes up to* JIMMY.) How you feelin', Jimmy?

JIMMY. I'm burning . . .

[AGGIE *appears, sees* JACK.]

AGGIE. Oh—I'm glad you're back, Mr. Armstrong.

JACK. There'll be a doctor here soon, Mrs. Gale.

AGGIE. Thank God for that! Bring him into the wagon, Seth. I got a nice, soft bed all ready for him.

SETH. You hear that, Jimmy? Your ma's fixed a place where you can rest comfortable.

[AGGIE *retreats into the wagon.*]

JIMMY. When'll Gobey come back? I'm thirsty. When'll he bring the water?

SETH. Right away, son. You can trust Gobey to get your water. (*He hands* JIMMY *into the wagon.*)

JACK. He's worse, ain't he?

SETH (*in a despairing tone*). Yes. The fever's been raging something fierce since you left. It'll sure be a relief when Abe gets here. He can always do something to put confidence in you.

JACK. How long since you've seen Abe, Seth?

SETH. Haven't laid eyes on him since I left here—eight—nine years ago. We've corresponded some.

JACK. Well—you may be surprised when you see him. He's changed plenty since he went to Springfield. He climbed up pretty high in the world, but he appears to have slipped down lately. He ain't much like his old comical self.

SETH. Well, I guess we all got to change. (*He starts up, hearing* GOBEY *return.*) Aggie!

[GOBEY, *a Negro, comes in from the left, carrying a bucket of water.* AGGIE *appears from the wagon.*]

SETH. Here's Gobey with the water.

GOBEY. Yes, Miss Aggie. Here you are. (*He hands it up.*)

AGGIE. Thanks, Gobey. (*She goes back into the wagon.*)

GOBEY. How's Jimmy now, Mr. Seth?

SETH. About the same.

GOBEY (*shaking his head*). I'll get some more water for the cooking. (*He picks up a kettle and a pot and goes.*)

SETH (*to* JACK). It was a bad thing to have happen, all right — the boy getting sick — when we were on an expedition like this. No doctor — no way of caring for him.

JACK. How long you been on the road, Seth?

SETH. More than three months. Had a terrible time in the Pennsylvania mountains, fearful rains and every stream flooded. I can tell you, there was more than one occasion when I wanted to turn back and give up the whole idea. But — when you get started — you just can't turn . . . (*He is looking off right.*) Say! Is that Abe coming now?

JACK (*rising*). Yep. That's him.

SETH (*delighted*). My God, look at him! Store clothes and a plug hat! Hello — Abe!

ABE. Hello, Seth. (*He comes on and shakes hands, warmly.*) I'm awful glad to see you again, Seth.

SETH. And me, too, Abe.

ABE. It did my heart good when I heard you were on your way West. Where's your boy?

SETH. He's in there — in the wagon. . . .

[AGGIE *has appeared from the wagon.*]

AGGIE. Is that the doctor?

SETH. No, Aggie — this is the man I was telling you about I wanted so much to see. This is Mr. Abe Lincoln — my wife, Mrs. Gale.

ABE. Pleased to meet you, Mrs. Gale.

AGGIE. Pleased to meet you, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. Doc Chandler wasn't home. They said he was expected over at the Boger farm at midnight. I'll go there then and fetch him.

SETH. It'll be a friendly act, Abe.

AGGIE. We'll be in your debt, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. In the meantime, Mrs. Gale, I'd like to do whatever I can. . . .

SETH. There's nothing to do, Abe. The boy's got the swamp fever, and we're just trying to keep him quiet.

AGGIE (*desperately*). There's just one thing I would wish — is — is there any kind of a preacher around this Godforsaken place?

SETH (*worried*). Preacher?

ABE. Do you know of any, Jack?

JACK. No. There ain't a preacher within twenty miles of New Salem now.

AGGIE. Well — I only thought if there was, we might get him here to say a prayer for Jimmy. (*She goes back into the wagon.* SETH *looks after her with great alarm.*)

SETH. She wants a preacher. That looks as if she'd given up, don't it?

JACK. It'd probably just comfort her.

ABE. Is your boy very sick, Seth?

SETH. Yes — he is.

JACK. Why don't *you* speak a prayer, Abe? You could always think of somethin' to say.

ABE. I'm afraid I'm not much of a hand at praying. I couldn't think of a blessed thing that would be of any comfort.

SETH. Never mind. It's just a — a religious idea of Aggie's. Sit down, Abe.

ABE (*looking at the wagon*). So you've got your dream at last, Seth. You're doing what you and I used to talk about — you're moving.

SETH. Yes, Abe. We got crowded out of Maryland. The city grew up right over our farm. So — we're headed for a place where there's more room. I wrote you — about four months back — to tell you we were starting out, and I'd like to meet up with you here. I thought it was just possible you might consider joining in this trip.

ABE. It took a long time for your letter to catch up with me, Seth. I've just been drifting — down around Indiana and Kentucky where I used to live. (*He sits down on a box.*) Do you aim to settle in Nebraska?

SETH. No, we're not going to stop there. We're going right across the continent — all the way to Oregon.

ABE (*deeply impressed*). Oregon?

JACK. Sure. That's where they're all headin' for now.

SETH. We're making first for a place called Westport Landing — that's in Kansas right on the frontier — where they outfit the wagon trains for the far West. You join up there with a lot of others who are like-minded, so you've got company when you're crossing the plains and the mountains.

ABE. It's staggering—to think of the distance you're going. And you'll be taking the frontier along with you.

SETH. It may seem like a foolhardy thing to do—but we heard too many tales of the black earth out there, and the balance of rainfall and sunshine.

JACK. Why don't you go with them, Abe? That country out west is gettin' settled fast. Why—last week alone, I counted more than two hundred wagons went past here—people from all over—Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Vermont—all full of jubilation at the notion of gettin' land. By God, I'm goin' too, soon as I can get me a wagon. They'll need men like me to fight the Indians for 'em—and they'll need men with brains, like you, Abe, to tell 'em how to keep the peace.

ABE (*looking off*). It's a temptation to go, I can't deny that.

JACK. Then what's stoppin' you from doin' it? You said yourself you've just been driftin'.

ABE. Maybe that's it—maybe I've been drifting too long. . . . (*He changes the subject.*) Is it just the three of you, Seth?

SETH. That's all. The three of us and Gobey.

ABE. Is he your slave?

SETH. Gobey? Hell, no! He's a free man! My father freed his father twenty years ago. But we've had to be mighty careful about Gobey. You see, where we come from, folks are pretty uncertain how they feel about the slave question, and lots of good free men get snaked over the line into Virginia and then sold down river before you know it. And when you try to go to court and assert their legal rights, you're beaten at every turn by the damned, dirty shyster lawyers. That's why we've been keeping well up in free territory on this trip.

ABE. Do you think it will be free in Oregon?

SETH. Of course, it will! It's got to—

ABE (*bitterly*). Oh no, it hasn't, Seth. Not with the politicians in Washington selling out the whole West piece by piece to the slave traders.

SETH (*vehemently*). That territory has got to be free! If this country ain't strong enough to protect its citizens from slavery, then we'll cut loose from it and join with Canada. Or, better yet, we'll make a *new* country out there in the Far West.

ABE (*gravely*). A new country?

SETH. Why not?

ABE. I was just thinking—old Mentor Graham once said to me that

some day the United States might be divided up into many hostile countries, like Europe.

SETH. Well — let it be! Understand — I love this country and I'd fight for it. And I guess George Washington and the rest of them loved England and fought for it when they were young — but they didn't hesitate to cut loose when the government failed to play fair and square with 'em. . . .

JACK. By God, if Andy Jackson was back in the White House, he'd run out them traitors with a horsewhip!

ABE. It'd be a bad day for us Americans, Seth, if we lost you, and your wife, and your son.

SETH (*breaking*). My son! — Oh — I've been talking big — but it's empty talk. If he dies — there won't be enough spirit left in us to push on any further. What's the use of working for a future when you know there won't be anybody growing up to enjoy it. Excuse me, Abe — but I'm feeling pretty scared.

ABE (*suddenly rises*). You mustn't be scared, Seth. I know I'm a poor one to be telling you that — because I've been scared all my life. But — seeing you now — and thinking of the big thing you've set out to do — well, it's made me feel pretty small. It's made me feel that I've got to do something, too, to keep you and your kind in the United States of America. You mustn't quit, Seth! Don't let anything beat you — don't you ever give up!

[AGGIE *comes out of the wagon. She is very frightened.*]

AGGIE. Seth.

SETH. What is it, Aggie?

AGGIE. He's worse, Seth! He's moaning in his sleep, and he's grosping for breath. . . . (*She is crying.* SETH *takes her in his arms.*)

SETH. Never mind, honey. Never mind. When the doctor gets here, he'll fix him up in no time. It's all right, honey. He'll get well.

ABE. If you wish me to, Mrs. Gale — I'll try to speak a prayer.

[*They look at him.*]

JACK. That's the way to talk, Abe!

SETH. We'd be grateful for anything you might say, Abe.

[ABE *takes his hat off. As he starts speaking,* GOBEY *comes in from the left and stops reverently to listen.*]

ABE. Oh God, the father of all living, I ask you to look with gentle mercy upon this little boy who is here, lying sick in this covered wagon. His people are traveling far, to seek a new home in the wilderness, to do your work, God, to make this earth a good place for your children to live in. They can see clearly where they're going, and

they're not afraid to face all the perils that lie along the way. I humbly beg you not to take their child from them. Grant him the freedom of life. Do not condemn him to the imprisonment of death. Do not deny him his birthright. Let him know the sight of great plains and high mountains, of green valleys and wide rivers. For this little boy is an American, and these things belong to him, and he to them. Spare him, that he too may strive for the ideal for which his fathers have labored, so faithfully and for so long. Spare him and give him his fathers' strength — give us all strength, oh God, to do the work that is before us. I ask you this favor, in the name of *your son,* Jesus Christ, who died upon the Cross to set men free. Amen.

GOBEY (*with fervor*). Amen!

SETH AND AGGIE (*murmuring*). Amen!

[ABE *puts his hat on.*]

ABE. It's getting near midnight. I'll go over to the Boger farm and get the doctor. (*He goes out.*)

SETH. Thank you, Abe.

AGGIE. Thank you — thank you, Mr. Lincoln.

GOBEY. God bless you, Mr. Lincoln!

[*The lights fade quickly.*]

SCENE 8

Again the parlor of the Edwards house. A few days after preceding scene.

MARY *is seated, reading a book.*

After a moment, the MAID *enters.*

MAID. Miss Mary — Mr. Lincoln is here.

MARY. Mr. Lincoln! (*She sits still a moment in an effort to control her emotions, then sharply closes the book and rises.*)

MAID. Will you see him, Miss Mary?

MARY. Yes — in one moment. (*The* MAID *goes off.* MARY *turns, drops her book on the sofa, then moves over toward the right, struggling desperately to compose herself. At the fireplace, she stops and turns to face* ABE *as he enters.*) I'm glad to see you again, Mr. Lincoln.

[*There is considerable constraint between them. He is grimly determined to come to the point with the fewest possible words; she is making a gallant, well-bred attempt to observe the social amenities.*]

ABE. Thank you, Mary. You may well wonder why I have thrust myself on your mercy in this manner.

MARY (*quickly*). I'm sure you're always welcome in Ninian's house.

ABE. After my behavior at our last meeting here, I have not been welcome company for myself.

MARY. You've been through a severe illness. Joshua Speed has kept us informed of it. We've been greatly concerned.

ABE. It is most kind of you.

MARY. But you're restored to health now—you'll return to your work, and no doubt you'll be running for the assembly again—or perhaps you have larger plans?

ABE. I have no plans, Mary. (*He seems to brace himself.*) But I wish to tell you that I am sorry for the things that I said on that unhappy occasion which was to have been our wedding day.

MARY. You need not say anything about that, Mr. Lincoln. Whatever happened then, it was my own fault.

ABE (*disturbed by this unforeseen avowal*). *Your* fault! It was my miserable cowardice—

MARY. I was blinded by my own self-confidence! I—I loved you. (*For a moment her firm voice falters, but she immediately masters that tendency toward weakness.*) And I believed I could make you love me. I believed we might achieve a real communion of spirit, and the fire of my determination would burn in you. You would become a man and a leader of men! But you didn't wish that. (*She turns away.*) I knew you had strength—but I did not know you would use it, all of it, to resist your own magnificent destiny.

ABE. (*deliberately*). It is true, Mary—you once had faith in me which I was far from deserving. But the time has come, at last, when I wish to strive to deserve it. (MARY *looks at him, sharply.*) When I behaved in that shameful manner toward you, I did so because I thought that our ways were separate and could never be otherwise. I've come to the conclusion that I was wrong. I believe that our destinies are together, for better or for worse, and I again presume to ask you to be my wife. I fully realize, Mary, that taking me back now would involve humiliation for you.

MARY (*flaring*). I am not afraid of humiliation, if I know it will be wiped out by ultimate triumph! But there can be no triumph unless you yourself are sure. What was it that brought you to this change of heart and mind?

ABE. On the prairie, I met an old friend of mine who was moving West, with his wife and child, in a covered wagon. He asked me to go

with him, and I was strongly tempted to do so. (*There is great sadness in his tone — but he seems to collect himself, and turns to her again, speaking with a sort of resignation.*) But then I knew that was not my direction. The way I must go is the way you have always wanted me to go.

MARY. And you will promise that never again will you falter, or turn to run away?

ABE. I promise, Mary — if you will have me — I shall devote myself for the rest of my days to trying — to do what is right — as God gives me power to see what is right.

[*She looks at him, trying to search him. She would like to torment him, for a while, with artful indecision. But she cannot do it.*]

MARY. Very well then — I shall be your wife. I shall fight by your side — till death do us part. (*She runs to him and clutches him.*) Abe! I love you — oh, I love you! Whatever becomes of the two of us, I'll die loving you!

[*She is sobbing wildly on his shoulder. Awkwardly, he lifts his hands and takes hold of her in a loose embrace. He is staring down at the carpet, over her shoulder.*]

[CURTAIN]

WHILE READING ACT II

(*In and about Springfield, Illinois, in the 1840's.*)

Scene 4 (*1840*). 1. Five years have passed. Lincoln has left New Salem for Springfield, where he has gone into the law practice with Judge John T. Stuart. What changes in Lincoln do you find revealed in this scene?

2. Why did Lincoln refuse to speak for the abolitionists? What is his attitude toward them? Compare his ideas on the slavery question with those of the twenty-two-year-old Herndon. (The description of the twelve slaves on the boat may be found in a letter Lincoln wrote to Joshua Speed's sister.)

3. Lincoln's only military experience, such as it was before he became President and thereafter Commander-in-Chief, was in the Black Hawk War. The story is told that, not knowing what military command to give his little company for getting over a fence, he said, "The company will now fall out, and will immediately fall in again on the other side of the fence."

4. In reading Lincoln's remarks on possible war with Mexico, keep in mind that as a member of Congress (1847–1849) he opposed the Mexican War. Sherwood in his notes says, "Lincoln denounced the whole project as a land grab, which it was."

5. Mary Todd is introduced here only through Ninian Edwards' description. What hints of her character do you get from his report?

6. What evidence has the play already presented of a conflict constantly raging within Lincoln's own mind? The quotation "A house divided against itself cannot stand" was used by Lincoln in a speech accepting the nomination for Senator from Illinois, in 1858. He continued, on that occasion: "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other."

7. The scene ends with Mary Todd's name facetiously on Lincoln's lips. What is the effect of this curtain line as a foreshadowing of the events in the next scene?

Scene 5 (1840). 8. Sherwood wrote, in his notes on the play: "I confess that I should like to have had more time in this play for development of the character of Mary Todd Lincoln." At what point do you feel the playwright has been too hasty in revealing her traits? What do her own words reveal about her?

9. In appraising the reasonableness of the arguments presented against Mary's decision to marry Lincoln, try to forget what you know of Lincoln's ultimate greatness, and think only of the Lincoln that Elizabeth and Ninian knew in 1840. What reasons does Mary give for her decision? Elizabeth once actually described the courtship in these words: "She [Mary] loved show and power, and was the most ambitious woman I ever knew. She used to contend when a girl, to her friends in Kentucky, that she was destined to marry a President. . . . In a short time I told Mary my impression that they were not suited. . . ."

10. The scene in which Mary and Abe are left alone is made more effective by the device of dramatic irony. The audience is in possession of knowledge which is unknown to Lincoln, namely, Mary Todd's intentions toward him. You will find other examples of this device in the play.

Scene 6 (New Year's Day, 1841). 11. Lincoln actually did write a letter to Mary Todd, telling her, according to Joshua Speed, "that he had thought the matter over calmly and with deep deliberation, and now felt that he did not love her sufficiently to warrant her in marrying him." Speed threw the letter in the fire, advising Abe at the same time to see Mary himself and tell her what he felt. Lincoln said about his emotional state at this time: "I am now the most miserable man living." He even tried to consult a famous doctor about his mental condition.

12. What is the purpose of this scene? Could it have been omitted?

Scene 7 (1842). 13. Sherwood says of this symbolic scene, the most completely fictitious in the play, that it presented the greatest difficulty in the writing. In it he tried to suggest the forces that changed Lincoln from a man of "doubt and indecision" to one of "passionate conviction and decisive action." This change, actually a slow and subtle process in Lincoln's life, has to be depicted, in much contracted form, by some plausible dramatic action. What, in this scene, helped to make up Lincoln's mind?

Scene 8 (1842). 14. Does this scene seem too brief, too quickly over, to be effective? Are the words of Mary and Abe consistent with their characters?

15. What phase of Lincoln's life is covered by Act II? How does the act advance the action of the play beyond the first act? What point in this act might be said to mark the climax of the play?

ACT III. SCENE 9

A speakers' platform in an Illinois town. It is a summer evening in the year 1858.

A light shines down on the speaker at the front of the platform.

At the back of the platform are three chairs. At the right sits JUDGE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS — *at the left,* ABE, *who has his plug hat on and makes occasional notes on a piece of paper on his knee. The chair in the middle is for* NINIAN, *acting as Moderator, who is now at the front of the platform.*

NINIAN. We have now heard the leading arguments from the two candidates for the high office of United States Senator from Illinois — Judge Stephen A. Douglas and Mr. Abraham Lincoln. A series of debates between these two eminent citizens of Illinois has focused upon our state the attention of the entire nation, for here are being discussed the vital issues which now affect the lives of all Americans and the whole future history of our beloved country. According to the usual custom of debate, each of the candidates will now speak in rebuttal. . . . Judge Douglas.

[NINIAN *retires and sits, as* DOUGLAS *comes forward. He is a brief but magnetic man, confident of his powers.*]

DOUGLAS. My fellow citizens: My good friend, Mr. Lincoln, has addressed you with his usual artless sincerity, his pure, homely charm, his perennial native humor. He has even devoted a generously large portion of his address to most amiable remarks upon my fine qualities as a man, if not as a statesman. For which I express deepest gratitude. But — at the same time — I most earnestly beg you not to be deceived by his seeming innocence, his carefully cultivated spirit of good will. For in each of his little homilies lurk concealed weapons. Like Brutus, in Shakespeare's immortal tragedy, Mr. Lincoln is an honorable man. But, also like Brutus, he is an adept at the art of inserting daggers between an opponent's ribs, just when said opponent least expects it. Behold me, gentlemen — I

am covered with scars. And yet — somehow or other — I am still upright. Perhaps because I am supported by that sturdy prop called "Truth." Truth — which, crushed to earth by the assassin's blades, doth rise again! Mr. Lincoln makes you laugh with his pungent anecdotes. Then he draws tears from your eyes with his dramatic pictures of the plight of the black slave labor in the South. Always, he guides you skillfully to the threshold of truth, but then, as you are about to cross it, diverts your attention elsewhere. For one thing — he never, by any mischance, makes reference to the condition of labor here in the North! Oh, no! Perhaps New England is so far beyond the bounds of his parochial ken that he does not know that tens of thousands of working men and women in the textile industry are now on STRIKE! And why are they on strike? Because from early morning to dark of night — fourteen hours a day — those "free" citizens must toil at shattering looms in soulless factories and never see the sun; and then, when their fearful day's work at last comes to its exhausted end, these ill-clad and undernourished laborers must trudge home to their foul abodes in tenements that are not fit habitations for rats! What kind of Liberty is this? And if Mr. Lincoln has not heard of conditions in Massachusetts — how has it escaped his attention that here in our great state no wheels are now turning on that mighty railroad, the Illinois Central? Because its oppressed workers are also on STRIKE! Because they, too, demand a living wage! So it is throughout the North. Hungry men, marching through the streets in ragged order, promoting riots, because they are not paid enough to keep the flesh upon the bones of their babies! What kind of Liberty is *this?* And what kind of equality? Mr. Lincoln harps constantly on this subject of equality. He repeats over and over the argument used by Lovejoy and other abolitionists: to wit, that the Declaration of Independence having declared all men free and equal, by divine law, thus Negro equality is an inalienable right. Contrary to this absurd assumption stands the verdict of the Supreme Court, as it was clearly stated by Chief Justice Taney in the case of Dred Scott. The Negroes are established by this decision as an inferior race of beings, subjugated by the dominant race, enslaved and, therefore, *property* — like all other property! But Mr. Lincoln is inclined to dispute the constitutional authority of the Supreme Court. He has implied, if he did not say so outright, that the Dred Scott Decision was a prejudiced one, which must be overruled by the voice of the people. Mr. Lincoln is a lawyer, and I presume, therefore, that he

knows that when he seeks to destroy public confidence in the integrity, the inviolability of the Supreme Court, he is preaching *revolution!* He is attempting to stir up odium and rebellion in this country against the constituted authorities; he is stimulating the passions of men to resort to violence and to mobs, instead of to the law. He is setting brother against brother! There can be but one consequence of such inflammatory persuasion — and that is *Civil War!* He asks me to state my opinion of the Dred Scott Decision, and I answer him unequivocally by saying, "I take the decisions of the Supreme Court as the law of the land, and I intend to obey them as such!" Nor will I be swayed from that position by all the rantings of all the fanatics who preach "racial equality," who ask us to vote, and eat, and sleep, and marry with Negroes! And I say further — Let each State mind its own business and leave its neighbors alone. If we will stand by that principle, then Mr. Lincoln will find that this great republic can exist forever divided into free and slave states. We can go on as we have done, increasing in wealth, in population, in power, until we shall be the admiration and the terror of the world! (*He glares at the audience, then turns, mopping his brow, and resumes his seat.*)

NINIAN (*rising*). Mr. Lincoln.

[ABE *glances at his notes, takes his hat off, puts the notes in it, then rises slowly and comes forward. He speaks quietly, reasonably. His words come from an emotion so profound that it needs no advertisement.*]

ABE. Judge Douglas has paid tribute to my skill with the dagger. I thank him for that, but I must also admit that he can do more with that weapon than I can. He can keep ten daggers flashing in the air at one time. Fortunately, he's so good at it that none of the knives ever falls and hurts anybody. The Judge can condone slavery in the South and protest hotly against its extension to the North. He can crowd loyalty to the Union and defense of states' sovereignty into the same breath. Which reminds me — and I hope the Judge will allow me one more homely little anecdote, because I'd like to tell about a woman down in Kentucky. She came out of her cabin one day and found her husband grappling with a ferocious bear. It was a fight to the death, and the bear was winning. The struggling husband called to his wife, "For heaven's sake, *help* me!" The wife asked what could *she* do? Said the husband, "You could at least *say* something encouraging." But the wife didn't want to seem to be taking sides in this combat, so she just hollered, "Go it husband —

go it bear!" Now, you heard the Judge make allusion to those who advocate voting and eating and marrying and sleeping with Negroes. Whether he meant me specifically, I do not know. If he did, I can say that just because I do not want a colored woman for a slave, I don't necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either. I can just leave her alone. In some respects, she certainly is not my equal, any more than I am the Judge's equal, in some respects; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of someone else, she is my equal, and the equal of all others. And as to sleeping with Negroes — the Judge may be interested to know that the slave states have produced more than four hundred thousand mulattoes — and I don't think many of them are the children of abolitionists. That word "abolitionists" brings to mind New England, which also has been mentioned. I assure Judge Douglas that I have been there, and I have seen those cheerless brick prisons called factories, and the workers trudging silently home through the darkness. In those factories, cotton that was picked by black slaves is woven into cloth by white people who are separated from slavery by no more than fifty cents a day. As an American, I cannot be proud that such conditions exist. But — as an American — I can ask: would any of those striking workers in the North elect to change places with the slaves in the South? Will they not rather say, "The remedy is in *our* hands!" And, still as an American, I can say — thank God we live under a system by which men have the *right* to strike! I am not preaching rebellion. I don't have to. This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. If the founding fathers gave us anything, they gave us that. And I am not preaching disrespect for the Supreme Court. I am only saying that the decisions of mortal men are often influenced by unjudicial bias — and the Supreme Court is composed of mortal men, most of whom, it so happens, come from the privileged class in the South. There is an old saying that judges are just as honest as other men, and not more so; and in case some of you are wondering who said that, it was Thomas Jefferson. (*He has half turned to* DOUGLAS.) The purpose of the Dred Scott Decision is to make property, and nothing but property, of the Negro in all states of the Union. It is the old issue of property rights versus human rights — an issue that will continue in this country when

these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall long have been silent. It is the eternal struggle between two principles. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same spirit that says, "You toil and work and earn bread, and I'll eat it." Whether those words come from the mouth of a king who bestrides his people and lives by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men who seek to enslave another race, it is the same tyrannical principle. As a nation, we began by declaring, "All men are created equal." There was no mention of any exceptions to the rule in the Declaration of Independence. But we now practically read it, "All men are created equal except Negroes." If we accept this doctrine of race or class discrimination, what is to stop us from decreeing in the future that "All men are created equal except Negroes, foreigners, Catholics, Jews, or — just poor people?" That is the conclusion toward which the advocates of slavery are driving us. Many good citizens, North and South, agree with the Judge that we should accept that conclusion — don't stir up trouble — "Let each State mind its own business." That's the safer course, for the time being. But — I advise you to watch out! When you have enslaved any of your fellow beings, dehumanized him, denied him all claim to the dignity of manhood, placed him among the beasts, among the damned, are you quite sure that the demon you have thus created will not turn and rend *you?* When you begin qualifying freedom, watch out for the consequences to *you!* And I am not preaching civil war. All I am trying to do — now, and as long as I live — is to state and restate the fundamental virtues of our democracy, which have made us great, and which can make us greater. I believe most seriously that the perpetuation of those virtues is now endangered, not only by the honest proponents of slavery, but even more by those who echo Judge Douglas in shouting, "Leave it alone!" This is the complacent policy of indifference to evil, and that policy I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republic of its just influence in the world; enables the enemies of free institutions everywhere to taunt us as hypocrites; causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity; and especially because it forces so many good men among ourselves into an open war with the very fundamentals of civil liberty, denying the good faith of the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but *self-interest.* . . . In his final words tonight, the Judge said that we may be "the

terror of the world." I don't think we want to be that. I think we would prefer to be the encouragement of the world, the proof that man is at last worthy to be free. But — we shall provide no such encouragement, unless we can establish our ability as a nation to live and grow. And we shall surely do neither if these states fail to remain *united.* There can be no distinction in the definitions of liberty as between one section and another, one race and another, one class and another. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." This government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free! (*He turns and goes back to his seat.*)

[*The lights fade.*]

SCENE 10

Parlor of the Edwards home, now being used by the Lincolns. Afternoon of a day in the early Spring of 1860.

ABE *is sitting on the couch at the right, with his seven-year-old son,* TAD, *on his lap. Sitting beside them is another son,* WILLIE, *aged nine. The eldest son,* ROBERT, *a young Harvard student of seventeen, is sitting by the window, importantly smoking a pipe and listening to the story* ABE *has been telling the children.* JOSHUA SPEED *is sitting at the left.*

ABE. You must remember, Tad, the roads weren't much good then — mostly nothing more than trails — and it was hard to find my way in the darkness. . . .

WILLIE. Were you scared?

ABE. Yes — I was scared.

WILLIE. Of Indians?

ABE. No — there weren't any of them left around here. I was afraid I'd get lost, and the boy would die, and it would be all my fault. But, finally, I found the doctor. He was very tired, and wanted to go to bed, and he grumbled a lot, but I made him come along with me then and there.

WILLIE. Was the boy dead?

ABE. No, Willie. He wasn't dead. But he was pretty sick. The doctor gave him a lot of medicine.

TAD. Did it taste bad, Pa?

ABE. I presume it did. But it worked. I never saw those nice people again, but I've heard from them every so often. That little boy was your age, Tad, but now he's a grown man with a son almost as big

as you are. He lives on a great big farm, in a valley with a river that runs right down from the tops of the snow mountains. . . .

[MARY *comes in.*]

MARY. Robert! You are smoking in my parlor!

ROBERT (*wearily*). Yes, Mother. (*He rises.*)

MARY. I have told you that I shall not tolerate tobacco smoke in my parlor or, indeed, in any part of my house, and I mean to . . .

ABE. Come, come, Mary—you must be respectful to a Harvard man. Take it out to the woodshed, Bob.

ROBERT. Yes, Father.

MARY. And this will not happen again!

ROBERT. No, Mother. (*He goes out.*)

ABE. I was telling the boys a story about some pioneers I knew once.

MARY. It's time for you children to make ready for your supper.

[*The* CHILDREN *promptly get up to go.*]

WILLIE. But what happened after that, Pa?

ABE. Nothing. Everybody lived happily ever after. Now run along.

[WILLIE *and* TAD *run out.*]

JOSH. What time *is* it, Mary?

MARY. It's nearly half past four. (*She is shaking the smoke out of the curtains.*)

JOSH. Half past four, Abe. Those men will be here any minute.

ABE (*rising*). Good Lord!

MARY (*turning sharply to* ABE). What men?

ABE. Some men from the East. One of them's a political leader named Crimmin—and there's a Mr. Sturveson—he's a manufacturer—and . . .

MARY (*impressed*). Henry D. Sturveson?

ABE. That's the one—and also the Reverend Dr. Barrick from Boston.

MARY (*sharply*). What are they coming here for?

ABE. I don't precisely know—but I suspect that it's to see if I'm fit to be a candidate for President of the United States. (MARY *is, for the moment, speechless.*) I suppose they want to find out if we still live in a log cabin and keep pigs under the bed. . . .

MARY (*in a fury*). And you didn't *tell* me!

ABE. I'm sorry, Mary—the matter just slipped my . . .

MARY. You forgot to tell me that we're having the most important guests who ever crossed the threshold of my house!

ABE. They're not guests. They're only here on business.

MARY (*bitterly*). Yes! Rather important business, it seems to me. They

want to see us as we *are* — crude, sloppy, vulgar Western barbarians, living in a house that reeks of foul tobacco smoke.

ABE. We can explain about having a son at Harvard.

MARY. If I'd only *known!* If you had only given me a little time to prepare for them. Why didn't you put on your best suit? And those filthy old boots!

ABE. Well, Mary, I clean forgot. . . .

MARY. I declare, Abraham Lincoln, I believe you would have treated me with much more consideration if I had been your slave, instead of your wife! You have never, for one moment, stopped to think that perhaps I have some interests, some concerns, in the life we lead together. . . .

ABE. I'll try to clean up my boots a little, Mary.

[*He goes out, glad to escape from this painful scene.* MARY *looks after him. Her lip is quivering. She wants to avoid tears.*]

MARY (*seating herself; bitterly*). You've seen it all, Joshua Speed. Every bit of it — courtship, if you could call it that, change of heart, change back again, and marriage, eighteen years of it. And you probably think just as all the others do — that I'm a bitter, nagging woman, and I've tried to kill his spirit, and drag him down to my level. . . .

[JOSH *rises and goes over to her.*]

JOSH (*quietly*). No, Mary. I think no such thing. Remember, I know Abe, too.

MARY. There never could have been another man such as he is! I've read about many that have gone up in the world, and all of them seemed to have to fight to assert themselves every inch of the way, against the opposition of their enemies and the lack of understanding in their own friends. But he's never had any of that. He's never had an enemy, and every one of his friends has always been completely confident in him. Even before I met him, I was told that he had a glorious future, and after I'd known him a day, I was sure of it myself. But he didn't believe it — or, if he did, secretly, he was so afraid of the prospect that he did all in his power to avoid it. He had some poem in his mind, about a life of woe, along a rugged path, that leads to some future doom, and it has been an obsession with him. All these years, I've tried and tried to stir him out of it, but all my efforts have been like so many puny waves, dashing against the Rock of Ages. And now, opportunity, the greatest opportunity, is coming here, to him, right into his own house. And

what can I do about it? He *must* take it! He *must* see that this is what he was meant for! But I can't persuade him of it! I'm tired—I'm tired to death! (*The tears now come.*) I thought I could help to shape him, as I knew he should be, and I've succeeded in nothing—but in breaking myself. . . . (*She sobs bitterly.*)

[JOSH *sits down beside her and pats her hand.*]

JOSH (*tenderly*). I know, Mary. But—there's no reason in heaven and earth for you to reproach yourself. Whatever becomes of Abe Lincoln is in the hands of a God who controls the destinies of all of us, including lunatics, and saints.

[ABE *comes back.*]

ABE (*looking down at his boots*). I think they look all right now, Mary. (*He looks at* MARY, *who is now trying hard to control her emotion.*)

MARY. You can receive the gentlemen in here. I'll try to prepare some refreshment for them in the dining room.

[*She goes out.* ABE *looks after her, miserably. There are a few moments of silence. At length,* ABE *speaks, in an offhand manner.*]

ABE. I presume these men *are* pretty influential.

JOSH. They'll have quite a say in the delegations of three states that may swing the nomination away from Seward.

ABE. Suppose, by some miracle, or fluke, they did nominate me; do you think I'd stand a chance of winning the election?

JOSH. An excellent chance, in my opinion. There'll be four candidates in the field, bumping each other, and opening up the track for a dark horse.

ABE. But the dark horse might run in the wrong direction.

JOSH. Yes—you can always do that, Abe. I know *I* wouldn't care to bet two cents on you.

ABE (*grinning*). It seems funny to be comparing it to a horse race, with an old, spavined hack like me. But I've had some mighty energetic jockeys—Mentor Graham, Bowling Green, Bill Herndon, you, and Mary—most of all, Mary.

JOSH (*looking at* ABE). They don't count now, Abe. You threw 'em all, long ago. When you finally found yourself running against poor little Douglas, you got the bit between your teeth and went like greased lightning. You'd do the same thing to him again, if you could only decide to get started, which you probably won't. . . .

[*The doorbell jangles.* JOSH *gets up.*]

ABE. I expect that's them now.

JOSH. I'll go see if I can help Mary. (*He starts for the door but turns and looks at* ABE, *and speaks quietly.*) I'd just like to remind you, Abe

—there are pretty nearly thirty million people in this country; most of 'em are common people, like you. They're in serious trouble, and they need somebody who understands 'em, as you do. So —when these gentlemen come in—try to be a *little* bit polite to them. (ABE *grins.* JOSH *looks off.*) However—you won't listen to any advice from me.

[JOSH *goes. The door is opened by a* MAID *and* STURVESON, BARRICK, *and* CRIMMIN *come in.* STURVESON *is elderly, wealthy and bland.* BARRICK *is a soft Episcopalian dignitary.* CRIMMIN *is a shrewd, humorous fixer.*]

ABE. Come right in, gentlemen. Glad to see you again, Mr. Crimmin. (*They shake hands.*)

CRIMMIN. How de do, Mr. Lincoln. This is Dr. Barrick of Boston, and Mr. Sturveson, of Philadelphia.

DR. BARRICK. Mr. Lincoln.

STURVESON. I'm honored, Mr. Lincoln.

LINCOLN. Thank you, sir. Pray sit down, gentlemen.

STURVESON. Thank you. (*They sit.*)

CRIMMIN. Will Mrs. Lincoln seriously object if I light a seegar?

LINCOLN. Go right ahead! I regret that Mrs. Lincoln is not here to receive you, but she will join us presently. (*He sits down.*)

BARRICK (*with great benignity*). I am particularly anxious to meet Mrs. Lincoln, for I believe, with Mr. Longfellow, that "as unto the bow the cord is, so unto the man is woman."

STURVESON (*very graciously*). And we are here dealing with a bow that is stout indeed. (ABE *bows slightly in acknowledgment of the compliment.*) And one with a reputation for shooting straight. So you'll forgive us, Mr. Lincoln, for coming directly to the point.

ABE. Yes, sir. I understand that you wish to inspect the prairie politician in his native lair, and here I am.

STURVESON. It is no secret that we are desperately in need of a candidate—one who is sound, conservative, safe—and clever enough to skate over the thin ice of the forthcoming campaign. Your friends —and there's an increasingly large number of them throughout the country—believe that you are the man.

ABE. Well, Mr. Sturveson, I can tell you that when first I was considered for political office—that was in New Salem, twenty-five years ago —I assured my sponsors of my conservatism. I have subsequently proved it, by never progressing anywhere.

BARRICK (*smiling*). Then you agree that you are the man we want?

ABE. I'm afraid I can't go quite that far in self-esteem, Dr. Barrick, es-

pecially when you have available a statesman and gentleman as eminent as Mr. Seward who, I believe, is both ready and willing.

STURVESON. That's as may be. But please understand that this is not an inquisition. We merely wish to know you better, to gain a clearer idea of your theories on economics, religion, and national affairs, in general. To begin with—in one of your memorable debates with Senator Douglas, your opponent indulged in some of his usual demagoguery about industrial conditions in the North, and you replied shrewdly that whereas the slaves in the South . . .

ABE. Yes, I remember the occasion. I replied that I was thankful that laborers in free states have the right to strike. But that wasn't shrewdness, Mr. Sturveson. It was just the truth.

STURVESON. It has gained for you substantial support from the laboring classes, which is all to the good. But it has also caused a certain amount of alarm among businessmen, like myself.

ABE. I cannot enlarge on the subject. It seems obvious to me that this nation was founded on the supposition that men have the right to protest, violently if need be, against authority that is unjust or oppressive. (*He turns to* BARRICK.) The Boston Tea Party was a kind of strike. So was the Revolution itself. (*Again to* STURVESON.) So was Nicholas Biddle's attempt to organize the banks against the Jackson administration.

STURVESON. Which is all perfectly true—but—the days of anarchy are over. We face an unprecedented era of industrial expansion—mass production of every conceivable kind of goods—railroads and telegraph lines across the continent—all promoted and developed by private enterprise. In this great work, we must have a free hand, and a firm one, Mr. Lincoln. To put it bluntly, would you, if elected, place the interests of labor above those of capital?

ABE. I cannot answer that, bluntly, or any other way; because I cannot tell what I should do, if elected.

STURVESON. But you must have inclinations toward one side or the other. . . .

ABE. I think you know, Mr. Sturveson, that I am opposed to slavery.

BARRICK. And we of New England applaud your sentiments! We deplore the inhumanity of our Southern friends in . . .

ABE (*to* BARRICK). There are more forms of slavery than that which is inflicted upon the Negroes in the South. I am opposed to all of them. (*He turns again to* STURVESON.) I believe in our democratic system—the just and generous system which opens the way to all—

gives hope to all, and consequent energy and progress and improvement of condition to all, including employer and employee alike.

BARRICK. We support your purpose, Mr. Lincoln, in steadfastly proclaiming the rights of men to resist unjust authority. But I am most anxious to know whether you admit One Authority to whom devotion is unquestioned?

ABE. I presume you refer to the Almighty?

BARRICK. I do.

ABE. I think there has never been any doubt of my submission to His will.

BARRICK. I'm afraid there is a great deal of doubt as to your devotion to His Church.

ABE. I realize that, Doctor. They say I'm an atheist, because I've always refused to become a church member.

BARRICK. What have been the grounds of your refusal?

ABE. I have found no churches suitable for my own form of worship. I could not give assent without mental reservations to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. But I can promise you, Dr. Barrick—I shall gladly join any church at any time if its sole qualification for membership is obedience to the Saviour's statement of Law and Gospel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." . . . But—I beg you gentlemen to excuse me for a moment. I believe Mrs. Lincoln is preparing a slight collation, and I must see if I can help with it. . . .

CRIMMIN. Certainly, Mr. Lincoln. (ABE *goes, closing the door behind him.* CRIMMIN *looks at the door, then turns to the others.*) Well?

BARRICK. The man is unquestionably an infidel. An idealist—in his curious, primitive way—but an infidel!

STURVESON. And a radical!

CRIMMIN. A radical? Forgive me, gentlemen, if I enjoy a quiet laugh at that.

STURVESON. Go ahead and enjoy yourself, Crimmin—but I did not like the way he evaded my direct question. I tell you, he's as unscrupulous a demagogue as Douglas. He's a rabble rouser!

CRIMMIN. Of course he is! As a dealer in humbug, he puts Barnum himself to shame.

STURVESON. Quite possibly—but he is not *safe!*

CRIMMIN. Not safe, eh? And what do you mean by that?

STURVESON. Just what I say. A man who devotes himself so whole-

heartedly to currying favor with the mob develops the mob mentality. He becomes a preacher of discontent, of mass unrest. . . .

CRIMMIN. And what about Seward? If we put him up, he'll start right in demanding liberation of the slaves—and then there *will* be discontent and unrest! I ask you to believe me when I tell you that this Lincoln *is* safe—in economics and theology and everything else. After all—what is the essential qualification that we demand of the candidate of our party? It is simply this: that he be able to get himself elected! And there is the man who can do that. (*He points off stage.*)

STURVESON (*smiling*). I should like to believe you!

BARRICK. So say we all of us!

CRIMMIN. Then just keep faith in the eternal stupidity of the voters, which is what *he* will appeal to. In that uncouth rail splitter you may observe one of the smoothest, slickest politicians that ever hoodwinked a yokel mob! You complain that he evaded your questions. Of course, he did, and did it perfectly. Ask him about the labor problem, and he replies, "I believe in democracy." Ask his views on religion, and he says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Now—you know you couldn't argue with that, either of you. I tell you, gentlemen, he's a vote getter if I ever saw one. His very name is right—Abraham Lincoln! Honest Old Abe! He'll play the game with us now, and he'll go right on playing it when we get him into the White House. He'll do just what we tell him. . . .

DR. BARRICK (*cautioning him*). Careful, Mr. Crimmin. . . .

[ABE *returns.*]

ABE. If you gentlemen will step into the dining room, Mrs. Lincoln would be pleased to serve you with a cup of tea.

BARRICK. Thank you.

STURVESON. This is most gracious. (*He and* BARRICK *move off toward the door.*)

ABE. Or perhaps something stronger for those who prefer it.

[STURVESON *and* BARRICK *go.* CRIMMIN *is looking for a place to throw his cigar.*]

ABE (*heartily*). Bring your seegar with you, Mr. Crimmin!

CRIMMIN. Thank you—thank you!

[*He smiles at* ABE, *gives him a slap on the arm, and goes out,* ABE *following. The lights fade.*]

SCENE 11

Lincoln campaign headquarters in the Illinois State House. The evening of Election Day, November 6, 1860.

It is a large room with a tall window opening out onto a wide balcony. There are doors upper right and upper left. At the left is a table littered with newspapers and clippings. There are many chairs about, and a liberal supply of spittoons.

At the back is a huge chart of the thirty-three states, with their electoral votes, and a space opposite each side for the posting of bulletins. A short ladder gives access to Alabama and Arkansas at the top of the list.

On the wall at the left is an American flag. At the right is a map of the United States, on which each state is marked with a red, white, or blue flag.

ABE *is sitting at the table, with his back to the audience, reading newspaper clippings. He wears his hat and has spectacles on.* MRS. LINCOLN *is sitting at the right of the table, her eyes darting nervously from* ABE, *to the chart, to the map. She wears her bonnet, tippet, and muff.*

ROBERT LINCOLN *is standing near her, studying the map.* NINIAN EDWARDS *is sitting at the left of the table and* JOSH SPEED *is standing near the chart. They are both smoking cigars and watching the chart.*

The door at the left is open, and through it the clatter of telegraph instruments can be heard. The window is partly open, and we can hear band music from the square below, and frequent cheers from the assembled mob, who are watching the election returns flashed from a magic lantern on the State House balcony.

Every now and then, a telegraph operator named JED *comes in from the left and tacks a new bulletin up on the chart. Another man named* PHIL *is out on the balcony taking bulletins from* JED.

ROBERT. What do those little flags mean, stuck into the map?

JOSH. Red means the state is sure for us. White means doubtful. Blue means hopeless.

[ABE *tosses the clipping he has been reading on the table and picks up another.* JED *comes in and goes up to pin bulletins opposite Illinois, Maryland, and New York.*]

NINIAN (*rising to look*). Lincoln and Douglas neck and neck in Illinois.

[JOSH *and* ROBERT *crowd around the chart.*]

JOSH. Maryland is going all for Breckenridge and Bell. Abe — you're nowhere in Maryland.

MARY (*with intense anxiety*). What of New York?

JED (*crossing to the window*). Say, Phil—when you're not getting bulletins, keep that window closed. We can't hear ourselves think.

PHIL. All right. Only have to open 'er up again. (*He closes the window.*)

MARY. What does it say about New York?

[JED *goes.*]

NINIAN. Douglas a hundred and seventeen thousand—Lincoln a hundred and six thousand.

MARY (*desperately, to* ABE). He's winning from you in New York, Abe!

JOSH. Not yet, Mary. These returns so far are mostly from the city where Douglas is bound to run the strongest.

ABE (*interested in a clipping*). I see the New York *Herald* says I've got the soul of a Uriah Heep encased in the body of a baboon. (*He puts the clipping aside and starts to read another.*)

NINIAN (*who has resumed his seat*). You'd better change that flag on Rhode Island from red to white, Bob. It looks doubtful to me.

[ROBERT, *glad of something to do, changing the flag as directed.*]

MARY. What does it look like in Pennsylvania, Ninian?

NINIAN. There's nothing to worry about there, Mary. It's safe for Abe. In fact, you needn't worry at all.

MARY (*very tense*). Yes. You've been saying that over and over again all evening. There's no need to worry. But how can we help worrying when every new bulletin shows Douglas ahead.

JOSH. But every one of them shows Abe gaining.

NINIAN (*mollifying*). Just give them time to count all the votes in New York and then you'll be on your way to the White House.

MARY. Oh, why don't they hurry with it? Why don't those returns come in?

ABE (*preoccupied*). They'll come in—soon enough.

[BILLY HERNDON *comes in from the right. He has been doing a lot of drinking but has hold of himself.*]

BILLY. That mob down there is sickening! They cheer every bulletin that's flashed on the wall, whether the news is good or bad. And they cheer every picture of every candidate, including George Washington, with the same fine, ignorant enthusiasm.

JOSH. That's logical. They can't tell 'em apart.

BILLY (*to* ABE). There are a whole lot of reporters down there. They want to know what will be your first official action after you're elected.

NINIAN. What do you want us to tell 'em, Abe?

ABE (*still reading*). Tell 'em I'm thinking of growing a beard.

JOSH. A beard?

NINIAN (*amused*). Whatever put that idea into your mind?

ABE (*picking up another clipping*). I had a letter the other day from some little girl. She said I ought to have whiskers, to give me more dignity. And I'll need it — if elected.

[JED *arrives with new bulletins.* BILLY, NINIAN, JOSH, *and* ROBERT *huddle around* JED, *watching him post the bulletins.*]

MARY. What do they say now?

[JED *goes to the window and gives some bulletins to* PHIL.]

MARY. Is there anything new from New York?

NINIAN. Connecticut — Abe far in the lead. That's eleven safe electoral votes anyway. Missouri — Douglas thirty-five thousand — Bell thirty-three — Breckenridge sixteen — Lincoln, eight. . . .

[*Cheers from the crowd outside until* PHIL *closes the window.* JED *returns to the office at the left.*]

MARY. What are they cheering for?

BILLY. They don't know!

ABE (*with another clipping*). The Chicago *Times* says, "Lincoln breaks down! Lincoln's heart fails him! His tongue fails him! His legs fail him! He fails all over! The people refuse to support him! They laugh at him! Douglas is champion of the people! Douglas skins the living dog!" (*He tosses the clipping aside.* MARY *stands up.*)

MARY (*her voice is trembling*). I can't stand it any longer!

ABE. Yes, my dear — I think you'd better go home. I'll be back before long.

MARY (*hysterical*). I won't go home! You only want to be rid of me. That's what you've wanted ever since the day we were married — and before that. Anything to get me out of your sight, because you hate me! (*Turning to* JOSH, NINIAN, *and* BILLY.) And it's the same with all of you — all of his friends — you hate me — you wish I'd never come into his life.

JOSH. No, Mary.

[ABE *has stood up, quickly, at the first storm signal. He himself is in a fearful state of nervous tension — in no mood to treat* MARY *with patient indulgence. He looks sharply at* NINIAN *and at the others.*]

ABE. Will you please step out for a moment?

NINIAN. Certainly, Abe.

[*He and the others go into the telegraph office.* JOSH *gestures to* ROBERT *to go with them.* ROBERT *casts a black look at his mother and goes.* . . . ABE *turns on* MARY *with strange savagery.*]

ABE. Damn you! Damn you for taking every opportunity you can to

make a public fool of me—and yourself! It's bad enough, God knows, when you act like that in the privacy of our own home. But here—in front of people! You're not to do that again. Do you hear me? You're never to do that again!

[MARY *is so aghast at this outburst that her hysterical temper vanishes, giving way to blank terror.*]

MARY (*in a faint, strained voice*). Abe! You cursed at me. Do you realize what you did? You cursed at me.

[ABE *has the impulse to curse at her again, but with considerable effort, he controls it.*]

ABE (*in a strained voice*). I lost my temper, Mary. And I'm sorry for it. But I still think you should go home rather than endure the strain of this—this Death Watch.

[*She stares at him, uncomprehendingly, then turns and goes to the door.*]

MARY (*at the door*). This is the night I dreamed about when I was a child, when I was an excited young girl, and all the gay young gentlemen of Springfield were courting me, and I fell in love with the least likely of them. This is the night when I'm waiting to hear that my husband has become President of the United States. And even if he does—it's ruined, for me. It's too late. . . .

[*She opens the door and goes out.* ABE *looks after her, anguished, then turns quickly, crosses to the door at the left and opens it.*]

ABE (*calling off*). Bob! (ROBERT *comes in.*) Go with your Mother.

ROBERT. Do I have to?

ABE. Yes! Hurry! Keep right with her till I get home.

[ROBERT *has gone.* ABE *turns to the window.* PHIL *opens it.*]

PHIL. Do you think you're going to make it, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE. Oh—there's nothing to worry about.

CROWD OUTSIDE (*singing*).

Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness
Out of the wilderness
Out of the wilderness
Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness
Down in Illinois!

[NINIAN, JOSH, BILLY, *and* JED *come in, the latter to post new bulletins. After* JED *has communicated these,* PHIL *again closes the window.* JED *goes.*]

NINIAN. It looks like seventy-four electoral votes sure for you. Twenty-seven more probable. New York's will give you the election.

[ABE *walks around the room.* JOSH *has been looking at* ABE.]

JOSH. Abe, could I get you a cup of coffee?

ABE. No, thanks, Josh.

NINIAN. Getting nervous, Abe?

ABE. No. I'm just thinking what a blow it would be to Mrs. Lincoln if I should lose.

NINIAN. And what about me? I have ten thousand dollars bet on you.

BILLY (*scornfully*). I'm afraid that the loss to the nation would be somewhat more serious than that.

JOSH. How would you feel, Abe?

ABE (*sitting on the chair near the window*). I guess I'd feel the greatest sense of relief of my life.

[JED *comes in with a news dispatch.*]

JED. Here's a news dispatch. (*He hands it over and goes.*)

NINIAN (*reads*). "Shortly after nine o'clock this evening, Mr. August Belmont stated that Stephen A. Douglas has piled up a majority of fifty thousand votes in New York City and carried the state."

BILLY. Mr. Belmont be damned!

[CRIMMIN *comes in, smoking a cigar, looking contented.*]

CRIMMIN. Good evening, Mr. Lincoln. Good evening, gentlemen—and how are you all feeling *now?*

[*They all greet him.*]

NINIAN. Look at this, Crimmin. (*He hands the dispatch to* CRIMMIN.)

CRIMMIN (*smiles*). Well—Belmont is going to fight to the last ditch, which is just what he's lying in now. I've been in Chicago and the outlook there is cloudless. In fact, Mr. Lincoln, I came down tonight to protect you from the office seekers. They're lining up downstairs already. On the way in I counted four Ministers to Great Britain and eleven Secretaries of State.

[JED *has come in with more bulletins to put on the chart and then goes to the window to give* PHIL *the bulletins.*]

BILLY (*at the chart*). There's a bulletin from New York! Douglas a hundred and eighty-three thousand—Lincoln a hundred and eighty-*one* thousand!

[JED *goes.*]

JOSH. Look out, Abe. You're catching up!

CRIMMIN. The next bulletin from New York will show you winning. Mark my words, Mr. Lincoln, this election is all wrapped up tightly in a neat bundle, ready for delivery on your doorstep tonight. We've fought the good fight, and we've won!

ABE (*pacing up and down the room*). Yes—we've fought the good fight—in the dirtiest campaign in the history of corrupt politics.

And if I have won, then I must cheerfully pay my political debts. All those who helped to nominate and elect me must be paid off. I have been gambled all around, bought and sold a hundred times. And now I must fill all the dishonest pledges made in my name.

NINIAN. We realize all that, Abe—but the fact remains that you're winning. Why, you're even beating the coalition in Rhode Island!

ABE. I've got to step out for a moment. (*He goes out at the right.*)

NINIAN (*cheerfully*). Poor Abe.

CRIMMIN. You gentlemen have all been close friends of our candidate for a long time so perhaps you could answer a question that's been puzzling me considerably. Can I possibly be correct in supposing that he doesn't want to win?

JOSH. The answer is—yes.

CRIMMIN (*looking toward the right*). Well—I can only say that, for me, this is all a refreshingly new experience.

BILLY (*belligerently*). Would *you* want to become President of the United States at this time? Haven't you been reading the newspapers lately?

CRIMMIN. Why, yes—I try to follow the events of the day.

BILLY (*in a rage*). Don't you realize they've raised ten thousand volunteers in South Carolina? They're arming them! The Governor has issued a proclamation saying that if Mr. Lincoln is elected, the State will secede tomorrow, and every other state south of the Dixon line will go with it. Can you see what that means? War! Civil War! And *he'll* have the whole terrible responsibility for it—a man who has never wanted anything in his life but to be let alone, in peace!

NINIAN. Calm down, Billy. Go get yourself another drink.

[JED *rushes in.*]

JED. Mr. Edwards, here it is! (*He hands a news dispatch to* NINIAN, *then rushes to the window to attract* PHIL'S *attention and communicate the big news.*)

NINIAN (*reads*). "At 10:30 tonight the New York *Herald* conceded that Mr. Lincoln has carried the state by a majority of at least twenty-five thousand and has won the election!" (*He tosses the dispatch in the air.*) He's won! He's won! Hurrah!

[*All on the stage shout, cheer, embrace, and slap each other.*]

BILLY. God be praised! God be praised!

CRIMMIN. I knew it! I never had a doubt of it!

[JED *is on the balcony, shouting through a megaphone.*]

JED. Lincoln is elected! Honest Old Abe is our next President!

[*A terrific cheer ascends from the crowd below.* ABE *returns. They rush at him.* BILLY *shakes hands with him, too deeply moved to speak.*]

NINIAN. You've carried New York, Abe! You've won! Congratulations!

CRIMMIN. My congratulations, Mr. President. This is a mighty achievement for all of us!

[JED *comes in and goes to* ABE.]

JED. My very best, Mr. Lincoln!

ABE (*solemnly*). Thank you — thank you all very much. (*He comes to the left.* JOSH *is the last to shake his hand.*)

JOSH. I congratulate you, Abe.

ABE. Thanks, Josh.

NINIAN. Listen to them, Abe. Listen to that crazy, howling mob down there.

CRIMMIN. It's all for you, Mr. Lincoln.

NINIAN. Abe, get out there and let 'em see you!

ABE. No. I don't want to go out there. I — I guess I'll be going on home, to tell Mary. (*He starts toward the door.*)

[*A short, stocky officer named* KAVANAGH *comes in from the right. He is followed by two soldiers.*]

CRIMMIN. This is Captain Kavanagh, Mr. *President.*

KAVANAGH (*salutes*). I've been detailed to accompany you, Mr. Lincoln, in the event of your election.

ABE. I'm grateful, Captain. But I don't need you.

KAVANAGH. I'm afraid you've got to have us, Mr. Lincoln. I don't like to be alarming, but I guess you know as well as I do what threats have been made.

ABE (*wearily*). I see . . . Well — Good night, Josh — Ninian — Mr. Crimmin — Billy. Thank you for your good wishes. (*He starts for the door. The others bid him good night, quietly.*)

KAVANAGH. One moment, sir. With your permission, I'll go first.

[*He goes out,* ABE *after him, the two other soldiers follow. The light fades.*]

SCENE 12

The yards of the railroad station at Springfield. The date is February 11, 1861. At the right, at an angle toward the audience, is the back of a railroad car. From behind this, off to the upper left, runs a ramp. Flags and bunting are draped above. In a row downstage are soldiers, with rifles and bayonets fixed, and packs on their backs, standing at ease. Off to the left is a large crowd, whose excited murmuring can be heard.

KAVANAGH *is in the foreground. A* BRAKEMAN *with a lantern is inspecting the wheels of the car, at the left. A* WORKMAN *is at the right, polishing the rails of the car.* KAVANAGH *is pacing up and down, chewing a dead cigar. He looks at his watch. A swaggering* MAJOR *of militia comes down the ramp from the left.*

MAJOR. I want you men to form up against this ramp. (*To* KAVANAGH; *with a trace of scorn.*) You seem nervous, Mr. Kavanagh.

KAVANAGH. Well—I am nervous. For three months I've been guarding the life of a man who doesn't give a damn what happens to him. I heard today that they're betting two to one in Richmond that he won't be alive to take the oath of office on March the 4th.

MAJOR. I'd like to take some of that money. The State Militia is competent to protect the person of our Commander-in-Chief.

KAVANAGH. I hope the United States Army is competent to help. But those Southerners are mighty good shots. And I strongly suggest that your men be commanded to keep watch through every window of every car, especially whenever the train stops—at a town, or a tank, or anywhere. And if any alarm is sounded, at any point along the line . . .

MAJOR (*a trifle haughty*). There's no need to command my men to show courage in an emergency.

KAVANAGH. No slur was intended, Major—but we must be prepared in advance for everything.

[*A brass band off to the left strikes up the campaign song, "Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness." The crowd starts to sing it, more and more voices taking it up. A* CONDUCTOR *comes out of the car and looks at his watch. There is a commotion at the left as* NINIAN *and* ELIZABETH EDWARDS, *and* JOSH, BILLY, *and* CRIMMIN *come in and are stopped by the soldiers. The* MAJOR *goes forward, bristling with importance.*]

MAJOR. Stand back, there! Keep the crowd back there, you men!

NINIAN. I'm Mr. Lincoln's brother-in-law.

MAJOR. What's your name?

KAVANAGH. I know him, Major. That's Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, and Mr. Speed and Mr. Herndon with them. I know them all. You can let them through.

MAJOR. Very well. You can pass.

[*They come down to the right. The* MAJOR *goes off to the left.*]

CRIMMIN. How is the President feeling today? Happy?

NINIAN. Just as gloomy as ever.

BILLY (*emotionally*). He came down to the office, and when I asked him what I should do about the sign, "Lincoln and Herndon," he said, "Let it hang there. Let our clients understand that this election makes no difference to the firm. If I live, I'll be back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing just as if nothing had happened."

ELIZABETH. He's always saying that—"If I live" . . .

[*A tremendous cheer starts and swells off stage at the left. The* MAJOR *comes on, briskly.*]

MAJOR (*to* KAVANAGH). The President has arrived! (*To his men.*) Attention! (*The* MAJOR *strides down the platform and takes his position by the car, looking off to the left.*)

KAVANAGH (*to* NINIAN *and the others*). Would you mind stepping back there? We want to keep this space clear for the President's party.

[*They move upstage, at the right. The cheering is now very loud.*]

MAJOR. Present—Arms!

[*The soldiers come to the Present. The* MAJOR *salutes. Preceded by soldiers who are looking sharply to the right and left,* ABE *comes in from the left, along the platform. He will be fifty-two years old tomorrow. He wears a beard. Over his shoulders is his plaid shawl. In his right hand, he carries his carpetbag; his left hand is leading* TAD. *Behind him are* MARY, ROBERT, *and* WILLIE, *and the* MAID. *All, except* MARY, *are also carrying bags. She carries a bunch of flowers. When they come to the car,* ABE *hands his bag up to the* CONDUCTOR, *then lifts* TAD *up.* MARY, ROBERT, WILLIE, *and the* MAID *get on board, while* ABE *steps over to talk to* NINIAN *and the others. During this, there is considerable commotion at the left, as the crowd tries to surge forward.*]

MAJOR (*rushing forward*). Keep 'em back! Keep 'em back, men!

[*The* SOLDIERS *have broken their file on the platform and are in line, facing the crowd.* KAVANAGH *and his men are close to* ABE. *Each of them has his hand on his revolver, and is keeping a sharp lookout.*]

KAVANAGH. Better get on board, Mr. President.

[ABE *climbs up onto the car's back platform. There is a great increase in the cheering when the crowd sees him. They shout: "Speech! Speech! Give us a speech, Abe! Speech, Mr. President! Hurray for Old Abe!" Etc. . . .* ABE *turns to the crowd, takes his hat off and waves it with a half-hearted gesture. The cheering dies down.*]

NINIAN. They want you to say something, Abe.

[*For a moment,* ABE *stands still, looking off to the left.*]

ABE. My dear friends—I have to say good-by to you. I am going now

to Washington, with my new whiskers—of which I hope you approve.

[*The crowd roars with laughter at that. More shouts of "Good Old Abe!" In its exuberant enthusiasm, the crowd again surges forward, at and around the* SOLDIERS, *who shout, "Get back, there! Stand back, you!"*]

ABE (*to the* MAJOR). It's all right—let them come on. They're all old friends of mine.

[*The* MAJOR *allows his men to retreat so that they form a ring about the back of the car.* KAVANAGH *and his men are on the car's steps, watching. The crowd—an assortment of townspeople, including some Negroes—fills the stage.*]

ABE. No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of you people, I owe everything. I have lived here a quarter of a century, and passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return. I am called upon to assume the Presidency at a time when eleven of our sovereign states have announced their intention to secede from the Union, when threats of war increase in fierceness from day to day. It is a grave duty which I now face. In preparing for it, I have tried to inquire: what great principle or ideal is it that has kept this Union so long together? And I believe that it was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty to the people of this country and hope to all the world. This sentiment was the fulfillment of an ancient dream, which men have held through all time, that they might one day shake off their chains and find freedom in the brotherhood of life. We gained democracy, and now there is the question whether it is fit to survive. Perhaps we have come to the dreadful day of awakening, and the dream is ended. If so, I am afraid it must be ended forever. I cannot believe that ever again will men have the opportunity we have had. Perhaps we should admit that, and concede that our ideals of liberty and equality are decadent and doomed. I have heard of an eastern monarch who once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence which would be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words, "And this too shall pass away." That is a comforting thought in time of affliction—"And this too shall pass away." And yet—(*Suddenly he speaks with quiet but urgent authority.*)—let

us believe that it is not true! Let us live to prove that we can cultivate the natural world that is about us, and the intellectual and moral world that is within us, so that we may secure an individual, social and political prosperity, whose course shall be forward, and which, while the earth endures, shall not pass away. . . . I commend you to the care of the Almighty, as I hope that in your prayers you will remember me. . . . Good-by, my friends and neighbors.

[*He leans over the railing of the car platform to say good-by to* NINIAN, ELIZABETH, JOSH, BILLY, *and* CRIMMIN, *shaking each by the hand. The band off stage strikes up "John Brown's Body." The cheering swells. The* CONDUCTOR *looks at his watch and speaks to the* MAJOR, *who gets on board the train. The crowd on stage is shouting "Good-by, Abe," "Good-by, Mr. Lincoln," "Good luck, Abe." "We trust you, Mr. Lincoln."*

[*As the band swings into the refrain, "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah," the crowd starts to sing, the number of voices increasing with each word.*

[KAVANAGH *tries to speak to* ABE *but can't be heard. He touches* ABE'S *arm, and* ABE *turns on him, quickly.*]

KAVANAGH. Time to pull out, Mr. President. Better get inside the car.

[*These words cannot be heard by the audience in the general uproar of singing.* NINIAN, ELIZABETH, JOSH, *and* BILLY *are up on the station platform. The* SOLDIERS *are starting to climb up on to the train.* ABE *gives one last wistful wave of his hat to the crowd, then turns and goes into the car, followed by* KAVANAGH, *the* MAJOR *and the* SOLDIERS. *The band reaches the last line of the song.*]

ALL (*singing*). His soul goes marching on.

[*The* BRAKEMAN, *downstage, is waving his lantern. The* CONDUCTOR *swings aboard. The crowd is cheering, waving hats and handkerchiefs. The shrill screech of the engine whistle sounds from the right.*]

[CURTAIN]

WHILE READING ACT III

(*In Springfield, 1858–1861.*)

Scene 9 (*1858*). 1. Fifteen years have passed since the last scene — years of tremendous importance in the life of our country as well as in the life of its future War President. The first of Lincoln's sons, Robert Todd,

was born in 1843; he was the only one of four to live to maturity. In 1846 Lincoln was elected to Congress from the Sangamon district of Illinois, and served one term. His speech against President Polk and the Mexican War, delivered in Congress on January 12, 1848, lost him his renomination; and he was, in the satisfied words of Stephen Douglas, "again submerged or obliged to retire into private life, forgotten by his former friends." In 1854, however, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill sharpened the divisions among the people; and Lincoln delivered a ringing speech in Peoria that gave him his first taste of national recognition. Sherwood calls this address "one of the great, heroic documents of human history, for it proclaimed that Abraham Lincoln . . . was no longer a weak, hesitant man who was not quite sure that he had truth and justice on his side." Two years later, Lincoln threw his support to the newly organized Republican Party, which took a stand against the expansion of slavery. The Dred Scott Decision of 1857 again sharpened the issues and added to the growing dissension. In 1858 Stephen Douglas came up for reelection to the United States Senate. Lincoln, nominated to oppose him, delivered the famous "House Divided" acceptance speech as the opening gun of the campaign. Lincoln proposed to Douglas a series of campaign debates, which Douglas reluctantly accepted. Lincoln won a majority of the popular vote, but lost the election in the State Legislature.

The speeches in this scene are compounded of passages in a number of addresses by each man. You may recognize the sources of some of Lincoln's remarks, such as the words from the First Inaugural and the House Divided speech. Sherwood apologizes in his notes to the play for doing "less than justice" to Douglas, through overcondensation. Unlike Lincoln, Douglas "needed (and took) hours" to drive his points home.

2. Compare Lincoln's style of speaking with that of Douglas. Which would have pleased the average citizen more?

3. Lincoln says: "What is to stop us from decreeing in the future that 'All men are created equal except Negroes, foreigners, Catholics, Jews . . . ?'" As a matter of fact, the American, or Know-nothing, Party was even then advocating that all Catholics, Jews, and foreigners be reduced to the status of slaves. How would you apply today these words of Lincoln spoken at Edwardsville, Illinois, is 1858? "Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own hands to wear them."

4. "Are you quite sure that the demon you have thus created will not turn and *rend* you?" Could this serve as a statement of the theme of Karel Čapek's *R. U. R.*?

Scene 10 (1860). 5. What new light is here shed on the character of Mary and of Abe Lincoln? What pieces of stage business help to accent this revelation of character?

6. Sturveson, Barrick, and Crimmins are fictitious characters. What is their function in this scene?

7. What do you think of Lincoln's answers to the questions put to him by his visitors? Do you believe he evaded their questions? Why did they think so?

Scene 11 (1860). 8. The playwright has the task, in this scene, of creating suspense even when the audience knows the final outcome. Does Sherwood succeed in building up such suspense? If so, by what methods?

9. The incident about the whiskers is true. What is its dramatic value at this point?

10. "And now I must fill all the dishonest pledges made in my name." To his campaign managers at the Republican Convention Lincoln had telegraphed: "I authorize no bargains and will be bound by none"; but this message they had ignored.

11. What is the effect of the police officer's introduction at the close of the scene? How is the curtain line symbolic of what is in store for Lincoln in the remaining years of his life?

12. Lincoln received 1,866,000 votes in the election, Douglas 1,577,000, the other two a total of 1,438,000. The electoral vote gave Lincoln 180 to 123 for the other three.

Scene 12 (Feb. 11, 1861). 13. Lincoln's life was constantly threatened at this time; a plot was even discovered to blow up his train in Baltimore. The precautions were therefore particularly necessary; yet Lincoln was irked by them.

14. The farewell speech is taken from a number of Lincoln's speeches; the first part from the train speech itself.

15. Do you like the ending? What is the effect of the singing of "His soul goes marching on"? Compare with the beautiful cantata called *The Lonesome Train.*

AFTER READING THE PLAY

1. Sherwood says, of Lincoln's life as he lived it, that it was "a work of art, forming a veritable allegory of the growth of the democratic spirit." How is this growth illustrated in the play?

2. Sherwood said of the play that it was the story "of a man of peace who had to face the issue of appeasement or war. He faced it." What parallels can you find between the problems Lincoln faced at the close of this play and those confronting the world at the time Sherwood was writing (1937)?

3. The dramatic critic John Mason Brown criticized Mr. Sherwood for not preparing the audience for Lincoln's greatness. "His greatness," contends Mr. Brown, "overtakes him during an intermission." Do you agree? Support your answer with citations from the play.

4. You may enjoy playing recorded scenes from the play; as well as the records of *The Lonesome Train,* a cantata about the supposed journey of Lincoln's body from Washington to Springfield.

5. *For Further Reading.* For more information about Lincoln you will enjoy, in addition to the Sandburg books:

Abraham Lincoln, by Lord Charnwood
Lincoln: His Life in Photographs, by Stefan Lorant
The Man Who Killed Lincoln, by Philip Van Doren Stern
Reveille in Washington, by Margaret Leech

Two additional poems for class reading are Walt Whitman's beautiful elegy about the death of Lincoln, called *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed,* and *Lincoln's Last Day,* from Stephen Vincent Benét's *John Brown's Body.*

For comparison with Sherwood's play read:
Abraham Lincoln, by John Drinkwater
Prologue to Glory, by E. P. Conkle

Yellow Jack

BY SIDNEY C. HOWARD AND PAUL DE KRUIF

Yellow Jack was the first successful attempt to dramatize for the professional stage the historic achievements of scientific method and research. It presents a grim picture of yellow fever's toll of sickness and death; it traces the efforts of Walter Reed and other scientists to discover the cause of the dreaded disease; and it portrays with dramatic power the inevitable conflict between the progressive forces of science and the representatives of bigotry and reaction. The play was based on the exciting Walter Reed chapter in Paul de Kruif's *Microbe Hunters* and was written in collaboration with Mr. de Kruif. It was produced by Guthrie McClintic without conventional scenery on a "modern approximation of the Elizabethan stage"—an ingenious setting designed by the gifted scenic artist Jo Mielziner. Running for two hours without intermission, it "held its audience in a sort of spell," as one newspaper reviewer described it. The poet Stephen Vincent Benét called the play the finest thing ever done in the theatre by an American. "It makes me proud of the human race," he added eloquently.

The version here printed is somewhat shortened.

ABOUT SIDNEY HOWARD

Sidney Howard's death in an automobile accident in 1939 deprived America of one of its truly distinguished dramatists. Howard was born in Oakland, California in 1891 and was graduated from the University of California in 1915. His early interest in the theatre brought him east to Professor George P. Baker's famous 47 Workshop at Harvard, which he soon left to drive an ambulance on the Salonika front in World War I (transferring later to the American Air Force in France). On his return he wrote exposés for a number of magazines; then began his playwrighting career with a romantic tragedy in blank verse called *Swords* (1921). He adapted a number of continental plays before writing *They Knew What They Wanted,* which won the Pulitzer Prize in



1925. An impressive list of successful plays followed, including *Ned McCobb's Daughter, The Silver Cord, Alien Corn,* and *Dodsworth* (in collaboration with Sinclair Lewis). His scenario adaptation of Mr. Lewis's *Arrowsmith* won the Academy Award for 1932. His last play, *Madam, Will You Walk,* was withdrawn by its star George M. Cohan after a short tour.

BEFORE READING

1. Like *Abe Lincoln in Illinois, Yellow Jack* is a stage biography. Unlike the Sherwood play, however, *Yellow Jack* has a number of heroes. In addition to Major Walter Reed and his collaborators, the play records the heroism of four American soldiers, whose true names are John J. Moran, John Kissenger, Warren Gladsden Jernegan, and Levi E. Folk. As the playwright says in a short foreword, "*Yellow Jack* celebrates what these men did without attempting to portray them as they were."

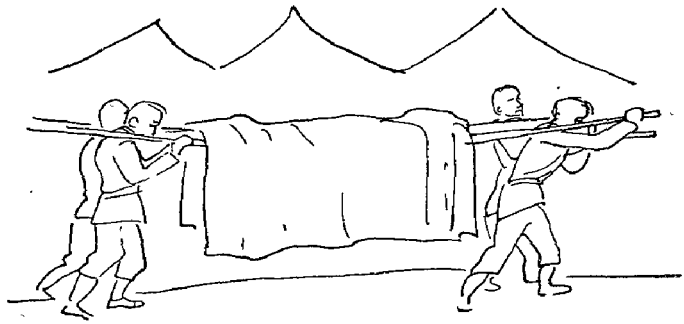
2. The play is written for production without conventional scenery on "a modern approximation of the Elizabethan stage." The stage is divided into two levels; the upper one for Reed's laboratory (concealed when not in use by a latticed screen), the lower for the other scenes — hospital wards, other laboratories, tents, etc. Properties are mounted on low platforms which are pushed on at stage level through curtained arches at either side. Scene changes are achieved only by alteration in the lighting. The action is continuous, and the play flows "in a constantly shifting rhythm of light."

3. Because this is a somewhat shortened version of the play, the author of this book has inserted narrative "bridges" where parts have been omitted. These are in italics, without brackets. In a class reading of the play a narrator may be assigned to read these bridges.

4. Before beginning the play, read the chapter on Walter Reed in Paul de Kruif's *Microbe Hunters.* Then discuss in your science or English class the essentials of the scientific method. In reading the play look for examples of the use of controls, statistics, observation, verification, and other methods employed by men of science.

5. Student reports on each of the following will help you understand more clearly the action in this historical drama: William C. Gorgas, Carlos Finlay, Adrian Stokes, Louis Pasteur; and the aëdes mosquito, carrier of yellow fever.

6. Words to look up: *autopsy, diagnosis, controls* (n.), *vertigo, jaundiced, fastidious, skepticism, suavely, meticulous, recumbent, siesta, patio.*



YELLOW JACK

CHARACTERS

Characters whose names appear in italics are inventions of the author to serve as substitutes for living participants in this story.

WALTER REED, Major, Medical Corps, United States Army.

O'Hara, *Brinkerhof*, *McClelland*, *Busch* — Privates, Medical Corps, United States Army.

Miss Blake, special nurse in charge of the Yellow Fever Ward.

TWO ORDERLIES

ARISTIDES AGRAMONTE, JESSE W. LAZEAR, JAMES CARROLL — Assistant Surgeons, Medical Corps, Members of the American Yellow Fever Commission in Cuba.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD GORGAS, Major, Medical Corps, United States Army.

Colonel Tory, of the Marine Hospital Corps.

MAJOR CARTWRIGHT.

ROGER P. AMES, Assistant Surgeon, Medical Corps, United States Army

CARLOS J. FINLAY, M.D.

WILLIAM H. DEAN, Private, United States Army.

AN ARMY CHAPLAIN.

A COMMISSARY SERGEANT.

SOLDIERS.

THREE BUGLERS.

"If one, only one, of our boys will step forward, he'll make this reach and touch the heart of the world, and the world will weep and have

"Yellow Jack" by Sidney Howard from *Yellow Jack* by Sidney Howard in collaboration with Paul de Kruif. Copyright, 1933, 1934, by Sidney Howard. By permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

faith in this." The Major said it — Major Walter Reed, Medical Corps, United States Army. Our boys did step forward, and with them the scientists, the doctors, the nurses. And they have touched the heart of the world ever since.

For the story of the conquest of disease is a never-ending tale of patience and sacrifice. It takes us to far-away places and to familiar ones, to African jungles, to neat laboratories, to Washington war offices, and to hot Cuban barracks.

The time is July, 1900; the scene, the Columbia Barracks near Havana, Cuba. Through the darkness a quartet is heard singing "Dolly Gray" as a line of American soldiers files across the stage carrying stretchers. Watching them intently are four soldiers of the Medical Corps: O'HARA, *a husky young Irishman of spirit and intelligence;* BRINKERHOF, *an Ohio Valley boy, gentle, serious and soft-spoken;* BUSCH, *a city chap of Jewish extraction and intensity; and* MC CLELLAND, *a Southerner, the sturdy, commonplace member of the group. As the singing comes to a halt the last of the stretchers passes.* O'HARA *makes the sign of the cross.*

O'HARA. Pray God that may be the last of them for this day!

MC CLELLAND (*shuddering*). This medical corps's a bad disappointment to me! Drill and tote stretchers! Swab out the ambulance! Swab out the latrine! I don't like the smell of chlorine and carbolic! Sickness and dying ain't congenial to my nature! And all the time waiting for my turn to go out feet first! The war's over! Why don't they send us home?

BUSCH (*indignant*). Ain't you heard how they're making the Caribbean an American lake? Uncle Sam's going to keep us right here in Cuba till the natives have all learned to call him daddy! Or anyway till they quit calling him a thief! We're pawns, that's all, in the game of imperialism! I get my ideas out of reading Karl Marx.

BRINKERHOF (*blandly*). One man's meat is another man's poison, as the saying goes. I think Cuba's a real Paradise on earth. It don't matter how hot the days get there's always a cool breeze at night. I got to admit yellow jack's a drawback. But even so, this life's a lot better than what I used to have in Liberty Mills, Indiana, where I come from.

O'HARA (*blarney*). 'Tis a fine, easy land, as John Brinkerhof says and the tropical climate offers advantages over the rainy coast of Ireland where I was born. As to yellow jack, such afflictions are questions of fate and it behooves us to be philosophers where fate

is concerned, which the Irish are so long as their fate remains agreeable.

MC CLELLAND. I'd sooner be home than here, raising a family and living a normal life.

BUSCH. And me! I'd sooner be back in Chicago where I belong, furthering the interests of the radical movement.

BRINKERHOF. I'll bide my time here till I get my sergeancy.

O'HARA. A future of noble medical ambition stretches out before Johnny O'Hara like a green meadow ablossom with the sufferings of his fellow men. I'll never be satisfied till I'm Dr. O'Hara!

[MISS BLAKE *enters. She is a trained nurse, Southern, lean, and in her thirties.*]

MISS BLAKE. Will you tell the Major, please, Mr. Brinkerhof, that the patient he was interested in has just died?

[*Extreme solemnity descends on the four soldiers.*]

O'HARA. Died, is it?

MC CLELLAND. One of our boys?

BUSCH. Was it yellow jack?

BRINKERHOF. Major Reed's right here in his laboratory, Miss Blake, waiting for Dr. Carroll to come back from Pinar del Río.

MISS BLAKE. Then I'll go tell him myself.

[*But two* ORDERLIES *enter carrying a stretcher covered with a blanket. They pass below the* SOLDIERS, *who look on hypnotized as* MISS BLAKE *goes toward where light grows on the laboratory of the American Yellow Fever Commission in Cuba. The laboratory furnishings consist of a workbench upon which the now antiquated brass microscopes stand amidst a litter of slides, slide boxes, and notebooks. Stools and some shelves filled with culture flasks, bottles of stain, and other specimens of laboratory glassware complete the equipment.* WALTER REED, *Major, Medical Corps—slim, distinguished, Virginian, fifty—sits at the workbench. In the meanwhile.*]

1ST ORDERLY. Go easy, there!

2ND ORDERLY. Let me get hold!

1ST ORDERLY. Hands slipping?

2ND ORDERLY. It's hot! I'm sweating. (*The stretcher is set down while he mops his brow.*) Hope they get the door of that autopsy room unlocked and don't keep us waiting where everybody can see. (*The stretcher resumes its course.*)

1ST ORDERLY. Straight ahead. (*They are going.* REED *looks up from the papers* MISS BLAKE *has handed him.*)

REED. Name: John Davis. Age: twenty-two. He wasn't married. That's always some consolation. I must write to his mother.

MISS BLAKE. Yes, doctor.

BRINKERHOF. I knew that boy. He came from Indiana near where I come from. I was pitching horseshoes with him last Friday. (*He turns sorrowfully apart.*) Now he's dead.

REED (*calling*). Brinkerhof! (BRINKERHOF *goes up into the laboratory and salutes.*)

MC CLELLAND. This Cuba's a fine place to spend the summer.

REED (*to* BRINKERHOF). Get word to Agramonte that there's a subject for him in the autopsy room. Say I'll join him there. (BRINKERHOF *salutes and goes.* REED *buries his head in his hands.*) That's all, Miss Blake. (MISS BLAKE *hesitates an instant, then turns out of the laboratory.* BRINKERHOF *returns.*)

REED. Yes, Mr. Brinkerhof?

[BRINKERHOF *proffers the document.*]

BRINKERHOF. From General Wood's [1] headquarters. For you, sir.

REED. What is it?

BRINKERHOF. The army death list brought up to date, sir.

REED (*wincing as he takes the document*). Thank you, Mr. Brinkerhof. (*He turns and goes somberly up into the laboratory, studying the document as he goes. The sky is reddening with sunset. He is surprised to find* AGRAMONTE *working at the microscope.* BRINKERHOF *goes.*) I didn't know you'd come in, Agramonte.

AGRAMONTE (*not looking up*). Just now, doctor. To examine this.

REED. Is it . . . Is it from the dead boy you've just had down there?

AGRAMONTE (*as before*). You didn't join me.

REED (*turning distressfully away*). I was waiting for Carroll to get back from Pinar. I didn't feel up to another autopsy today.

AGRAMONTE (*as before*). I can understand that.

REED. Still nothing?

AGRAMONTE. Did you expect anything? After two months of this? And how many boys cut up? Did you still expect anything? We've made a record for thoroughness at any rate, doctor.

REED (*shaken*). I can't stand much more of this, Agramonte. Have you looked over the army death list lately? They're our boys!

AGRAMONTE. Yes, doctor.

REED. And I look out there over the sea and watch our transports steaming home and I daren't think what they may be carrying! And we've taken Cuba on! Taken it on with this awful thing smoldering

[1] General Leonard Wood, military governor of Cuba (1899–1902).

in it! Smoldering and waiting for fresh fuel. For fresh American fuel now, Agramonte! Waiting its chance to jump over home to us! As it's been doing for over a hundred years! To Philadelphia and New Orleans and . . . And to know we've had it under our microscopes a thousand times and never seen it! And men will die and go on dying for all . . .

AGRAMONTE. It is not an agreeable condition from my point of view either, doctor. I am Cuban-born.

REED. I didn't mean to offend you, Agramonte. It isn't easy to admit one's failed. It shakes one's nerve. (*He sits smiling.*) I've said to myself all this afternoon: "If Carroll brings me back anything from Pinar, anything that even looks like a new lead . . ." (CARROLL *has entered through the gathering dusk outside.*) Carroll!

CARROLL. Well, I did get here.

REED. What news from the camp at Pinar?

CARROLL. There's no doubt about your diagnosis. Pernicious malaria my eye! It's yellow jack and going great guns, too! They're dropping like flies! (REED *turns away.*)

AGRAMONTE. Is that all you have to tell us?

CARROLL. I can't tell you a damned thing that we don't know already! There's nothing to do but wait and see how bad it gets.

AGRAMONTE. And I'm told General Wood's lost a third of his staff in the past month!

REED. At his mess they've been drinking toasts to the last to go. Now they've begun drinking to the next.

CARROLL (*nodding*). And Wood knows it was yellow jack, not Rough Riders,[2] that licked the Spaniards here. And it will lick us if we don't lick it first.

AGRAMONTE. There's no doubt about that.

REED. And our commission—you, Agramonte and you, Carroll, and Lazear and I—we were sent down here to stop this horror! To isolate a microbe and find a cure! And we've failed! It isn't easy to admit that.

CARROLL. It's better than pretending you're getting somewhere.

REED. If I could only think of some fresh angle. . . .

CARROLL. We've tried every angle! Give it up, Chief! It's no use!

REED. I'm calling the Commission to disband it tonight. It won't be a long session. Then we'll go home.

CARROLL. Thank God! I hate wasting time! I've got to have something

[2] Rough Riders: volunteer cavalry regiment raised by Theodore Roosevelt in the Spanish American War.

I can *see* and *get* at! Like that typhoid job before we came down here! Those flies traveled straight as an arrow from backhouse to mess hall! That was a job you could get some enjoyment out of! Let's go home and get on to something else! Only you'd keep me with you, wouldn't you, Chief? You know I'm a one-man dog. I know how you feel, though! (*An affectionate gesture from* REED to CARROLL.)

AGRAMONTE. The most we could do would be to keep on working. We have at least discredited everyone else.

REED (*desperate*). And we're quitting. We're breaking the chain! Have we the right?

CARROLL. I can see I've stayed away from you too long.

REED. We know so little, Carroll. We know so little!

CARROLL. I ran into one puzzler out there at Pinar.

REED. I've heard enough puzzlers I can't solve.

CARROLL. This is a funny one. Case of a soldier. Sick July 12th. Died on the 18th.

REED. You reported him.

CARROLL. Didn't know he hadn't been near the disease for over a month before he took sick.

REED. (*looking up*). How was that?

CARROLL. They had him locked up in the guardhouse!

AGRAMONTE. Sure of that, Carroll?

CARROLL. And there he lay in that guardhouse for three days after, with eight other prisoners and they didn't catch it. Not even the one who slept in his blankets after he'd died. (*"Mess Call" sounds.*)

REED (*sharply*). How about contaminated food or water?

CARROLL. The whole outfit ate and drank the same.

REED. The other eight may have been immunes.[3]

CARROLL. Records don't show it. One came from Iowa, one from Maine, two from Wisconsin . . .

REED. The man may have been extra susceptible.

CARROLL. That might explain. If we could explain why *we* don't catch it. (*But* REED, *caught in sudden thought, holds up his hand for silence.*) What?

REED. Nothing. I'll see you tonight. (AGRAMONTE *and* CARROLL *exchange a glance, but decide against asking questions.*)

CARROLL. After supper. All right.

AGRAMONTE. We'll go clean up.

[3] Immunes: people who have a natural resistance against the disease, or those who have had it once and thus have developed a resistance to it.

REED. Eight-thirty, gentlemen. (AGRAMONTE *and* CARROLL *go out into the dusk, leaving* REED *alone. "Mess Call" sounds again, nearer and louder. The light concentrates upon the tensely thoughtful* REED, *until only his figure remains of the entire scene. A pause, then solo.*) What was it crawled or jumped or flew through that guard-house window, bit that one prisoner and went back where it came from?

[*The scene goes into complete darkness. "Tattoo"*[4] *sounds. Then the sky freezes to the green of tropic night and shows* CARROLL, AGRAMONTE, GORGAS, *and* TORY *talking easily on one of the flights of steps.* REED *stands apart on the edge of the shadow and* LAZEAR *lounges in the shadow above.* GORGAS, *aged forty-six, is friendly, keen, and humorous.* LAZEAR, *aged thirty-four, is imaginative and wildly alive. Again the summer uniforms of officers of the Medical Corps.* TORY, *Colonel of the Marine Hospital Corps, is sixty, pompous, and objectionable.*]

TORY (*as the last notes of "Tattoo" die away*). If you really have reached the end of your tether, Major Reed, my advice to you and to the members of your Commission is to call it a day. Go home. Give out a salty personal interview. Say your accomplishment here has been too technical for popular consumption. You will thus preserve the atmosphere of success which we all require for our reputations and to safeguard our service of our glorious mistress, Science! You will then feel free to move on to pastures new, as the farmers say, and, as my friend, Major Gorgas, can assure you, you will be leaving this epidemic in worthy hands. The Marine Hospital Corps with which I have the honor to be connected. . . .

[LAZEAR *stirs irritably.* CARROLL *sits nodding approval.* REED *steps forward. But* GORGAS *interrupts.*]

GORGAS. Aren't you rather missing the point of this conference, Colonel Tory? It isn't General Wood's idea for anyone to go home. Wood wants us all working together on this. Wood's getting anxious for action. He watches me scrubbing and you fumigating and they tell him Reed's busy with microscopes. But he doesn't see any results. And it isn't only Cuba he's got on his mind. It's this whole Caribbean and Central American part of the world that we're getting involved in. It's Panama! How can we talk about a Panama Canal with yellow jack rampaging all over the place? This is the toughest problem Wood's governor-generalship has to grapple with and he's not going to let anyone quit. And neither am I, if I can help it!

[4] The military signal for repairing to quarters.

I'm the one Wood gets after and I'm tired of taking all the blame alone!

REED. I called the Commission to disband it tonight. Three hours ago I was certain we should disband. I hesitate now to propose continuing. The only course which remains open to us leads so far afield, seems so blocked with difficulty and beset with danger that I stand appalled before it.

GORGAS. You're being damn mysterious!

TORY. What is the course?

REED. To set our microscopes aside.

CARROLL. Say!

REED. And concentrate on new methods for prevention.

AGRAMONTE. How?

REED. By turning our minds to how yellow fever spreads, Agramonte. From man to man and village to village and even across the sea.

GORGAS. I should like to know something about that!

CARROLL. Not me. It's not my line. I'm a microscope man. I don't give a hoot how it spreads. I'll work on cause or nothing.

TORY. I admire determination in men of science and if the Marine Hospital Corps hadn't covered the ground . . .

AGRAMONTE. Yes, doctor. What more can this commission add?

REED (*to* AGRAMONTE). I've come to suspect a middleman here. An infection carrier. In all likelihood an insect. Which we might hope to identify and which you, Gorgas, might subsequently wipe out.

AGRAMONTE. What kind of insect?

REED. Present evidence seems to point to a mosquito.

LAZEAR (*coming forward*). Did you say mosquito?

GORGAS (*a weary smile*). You're not going off on that tangent are you, Reed?

TORY. You can't be serious!

REED. I couldn't be more so.

LAZEAR. And why not, Colonel Tory? If we find that a mosquito is the carrier of yellow fever and stop that, won't we have done our job? And what a job finding it it's going to be! The kind that comes once in a lifetime! God bless you, Reed! Mosquitoes are meat and drink to me. (*General laughter except from* TORY.)

TORY. These fads are the curse of modern medicine!

LAZEAR. Fads? What fads?

TORY. Is medical science going insect-mad?

LAZEAR. Where have you been at? Never hear of Smith's Texas fever tick? How about Bruce and the tsetse fly in Africa? Haven't Ross

and Grassi just nailed malaria to a mosquito? I confirmed that myself! This fits in! This belongs! Insect-mad! That's a hell of a thing to say these days, Colonel!

REED. Easy, Lazear.

TORY. Your junior colleague is a modern, Major. We have the dignity of science to consider!

LAZEAR. That girl! [5] Holding a torch, standing in a niche!

TORY. We have enough theories about this already!

LAZEAR. There's still room for one that works!

TORY. We must draw some line against these radicals!

LAZEAR. Not so long since they called Pasteur [6] a radical!

TORY. And so he was!

LAZEAR. May be! But he was right!

REED (*smiling*). Easy, Lazear! I want to hear what Gorgas has to say.

GORGAS (*also smiling*). Why the mosquito? Why not the flea, the louse, or the homely bedbug?

LAZEAR. Let me answer that, Reed! (*To* GORGAS.) Because yellow jack's not confined to the louse and bedbug belt! The cleanest parts of town may be deadliest! You find fleas in the best families everywhere, but you don't find yellow jack outside mosquito districts! And it's worse in summer, which is mosquito season! You see, I've got all the answers, Major Gorgas! If you want more, read Carter on the epidemic in Alabama! He came so near this!

GORGAS. You've silenced me, Lazear! You've silenced me!

TORY (*rising angrily*). He has not silenced me! I fail to see why the Marine Hospital Corps with its long record in tropical epidemics should waste its time on inexperienced and untrained amateurs who . . .

GORGAS. This is no time for jealousies, Colonel Tory!

TORY. The Marine Hospital Corps, Major, does not stoop to . . .

LAZEAR. Aren't you the boys who diagnosed malaria at Pinar? Haven't you been fumigating Havana for three years? Who are you to talk!

REED. That isn't the subject in hand, Lazear!

LAZEAR. All right. One thing more and I'll shut up. We're not going home! We're not going to say: "Humanity and knowledge can both go hang, because we haven't got the guts to exceed instructions!" The hell with instructions! The hell with cause and cure! Reed's right and I'll go it alone if I have to! Only I won't have to

[5] That girl: Science, as symbolically represented.

[6] Pasteur: the man who convinced the world of the theory of inoculation.

work alone! There's a crazy old troglodyte[7] here in this town! An old Scotchman with spectacles and side whiskers. Finlay, his name is. . . . (*Sensation.*)

TORY (*horrified*). Finlay!

GORGAS. You don't mean old Finlay!

AGRAMONTE. Carlos Finlay?

LAZEAR. So you Cubans call him. . . .

TORY. You don't propose going to him for . . .

LAZEAR. Why not? He broke this mosquito idea years ago! He's got his particular guilty mosquito all picked out. I'm on my way to Dr. Finlay tomorrow morning and I'm going to say . . .

REED. I was just coming to Dr. Finlay, Lazear.

LAZEAR. We'll go see him together!

REED. I was just about to propose . . .

TORY. Do you *know* Finlay?

REED. I hope to know him before I'm many days older.

CARROLL. I never heard of him.

AGRAMONTE. I know him, of course. We Cubans revere and love him as a patriot. He did nobly throughout our revolution. As a scientist, however, I am afraid . . .

GORGAS. I know him, too. He was almost the first friend I made when I came here. He's a dear old fellow and a first-rate physician. But he'll talk your ear off about that mosquito and if there'd been anything in the idea, Reed, wouldn't nineteen years have brought it out?

TORY. Finlay's a crank. No more. A harmless crank.

REED. He may be, Colonel. He may be completely mad. If he is, though, he has a brave kind of madness. The jumping forward kind that's always too risky for the completely sane.[8] You have your convictions. I have only my curiosity.

LAZEAR (*through his teeth*). Finlay's got to be tried! There's no doubt about it!

TORY (*slyly*). There is grave doubt, if you'll allow me, doctor. The scheme isn't even possible.

LAZEAR. Why isn't it?

TORY. Could you draw any conclusion regarding mosquitoes without producing real cases of yellow fever from their bites?

LAZEAR. Did I say we could?

[7] Troglodyte: cave dweller.

[8] Reed is suggesting that the completely sane never take the risks which are necessary to scientific discovery.

TORY. Aren't you forgetting that yellow fever's unlike other diseases? You can't give it to guinea pigs or monkeys or mice. You can't give it to any animal except man.

LAZEAR. I hadn't thought of that.

TORY. Think of it now and tell me how you could hope to test Dr. Finlay's mosquitoes by any conceivable experiment.

REED (*quietly*). We haven't yet tried experimenting on men.

[*A general gasp.* TORY *rises astounded.*]

CARROLL. For God's sake, Reed!

LAZEAR. By heaven! Get the mosquitoes! Feed 'em on sick men! Let 'em bite healthy men! See what happens!

TORY (*stammering*). You don't propose using human guinea pigs!

REED. I hadn't thought of calling them by that name.

TORY. I can't believe my ears! Doctors you call yourselves! Do you realize this is human vivisection! And might be manslaughter! Or even murder!

[*More or less together.*]

GORGAS. He's got you there, Reed!

CARROLL. You *are* going it pretty strong!

AGRAMONTE. Yes, I admit I hadn't thought of . . .

TORY. If Finlay were right and one of your victims died!

REED. If we fail at this, our victims, as you call them, will be none the worse for a few harmless mosquito bites. If we succeed, we shall have risked a few dozen lives to save countless thousands.

TORY. No! No! You've got to be stopped!

LAZEAR. We haven't started yet!

TORY. You're not going to start! Wait until General Wood hears of this!

REED. I'll take my chances, Colonel; with Leonard Wood, and if the members of this Commission . . .

AGRAMONTE. You can count on me, doctor!

CARROLL. We stand by, of course, Reed!

LAZEAR. This is an independent Commission, Colonel!

TORY. It isn't independent of Washington!

LAZEAR. Even Washington will think twice before it . . .

TORY (*shouting him down*). American public opinion won't think twice! The American press and pulpit won't think twice! You know how they stand on animal vivisection! I'll go to them before I let you disgrace science and the army with this monstrous . . .

LAZEAR. Do you mean you'd run to yellow journals! Obstructing the very thing you pretend to . . .

TORY. If you're ready, Major Gorgas, I'll bid these gentlemen a very good evening.

REED (*steadily*). Good evening, Colonel.

[*But the colonel is already on his way.*]

GORGAS (*to* REED, *somewhat apologetic*). Well, it turned out livelier than most medical meetings. Sorry I couldn't give you more support. It wouldn't have panned out, though. I'm right about Finlay.

REED. You may be. Good night, Gorgas.

[*Ad lib good nights as "Call to Quarters" sounds.* GORGAS *goes.* REED *turns up in the laboratory,* LAZEAR *following, letting out the full hurt of his disappointment. The others in their turn follow into the laboratory.*]

LAZEAR. Reed, if you had this in the back of your head, why didn't you just tell us? Why did you have to let them in on it? We could have tackled it alone!

CARROLL. If you ask me, it's just as well!

LAZEAR (*hotly*). I don't agree! We might have made history!

CARROLL. Yes. Or made damn fools of ourselves!

LAZEAR. Don't be so sure of that!

REED (*quietly*). Did you think I'd be stopped by anything they said?

LAZEAR. Reed!

CARROLL. Now listen, Reed! You know what Tory can do to you!

REED (*strong because imperturbable*). There's no doubt of what Colonel Tory can do; I see no reason, though, why he or anyone should know what we're up to from now on. (*Pause, then.*)

AGRAMONTE (*low*). But, doctor, would it be possible to experiment on men in secret?

LAZEAR (*quick and low*). It's got to be!

CARROLL. Men, though!

[*Off stage the* QUARTET *begins singing very softly.*]

THE QUARTET.

"Oh, the moonlight's fair tonight along the Wabash,
From the fields there comes the breath of new-mown hay;
Through the sycamores the candle lights are gleaming,
On the banks of the Wabash, far away."

CARROLL. Men, God Almighty!

LAZEAR (*quickly*). That's got to be, too!

REED (*low but stern*). I'm afraid so. I'm afraid so.

CARROLL (*a whisper*). Men . . . (*The light dies on the laboratory as the screen closes.*)

Men. But first mosquitoes — and the Commission visits the Cuban DR. FINLAY, *"cracked old Finlay" whose theories of the carrier of yellow fe-*

ver have been laughed at by scientists for nineteen years. MAJOR REED *and his men do not laugh, as they plead with the old man for his mosquitoes. . . .*

FINLAY (*scornful*). You live in your own little world of professionals. You forget that other world outside, where the humane and kind-hearted and Christian live and love their fellow men! They may send their sons off to be butchered in battle, but let one of you lift one finger in this war and they will engulf you! You will be destroyed! There will arise such power of public fury . . .

LAZEAR (*in a whisper of suppressed excitement*). All right, Dr. Finlay! Let the soldiers wait! They'll keep! They'll be there any time we need 'em! We'll start this off ourselves!

FINLAY. You, gentlemen!

REED (*kindling*). The four of us!

LAZEAR. No. Only three. Agramonte's had yellow fever.

AGRAMONTE (*regretful*). Yes.

CARROLL. Am I in on this?

LAZEAR. Don't you want to be?

CARROLL. I like to be consulted before I . . .

LAZEAR. I'll try it first. You can follow me.

CARROLL. I can follow you, can I?

LAZEAR (*nodding*). You've got five kids.

CARROLL. You've got a kid yourself.

LAZEAR. That's four less than you. We'll hold Reed back to see that we don't bungle and . . .

REED. Why didn't we think of this before?

LAZEAR. What a job it's turning out to be!

FINLAY (*his vocal powers only just restored*). But I can't have it, gentlemen! You must put this idea out of your minds at once!

LAZEAR (*laughing*). Thought you wanted us to be ruthless!

FINLAY. But this is carrying things too far!

CARROLL. After all, there may not be any risk.

FINLAY. There is, doctor! Believe me, there is!

REED. Then the three of us should make easy marks!

CARROLL. If you're right!

LAZEAR. And your mosquitoes aren't too fastidious!

FINLAY. No! You are men of science! Your lives are valuable!

REED. Is any man's life worth more than the cause he risks it on? (*Pause, then.*)

FINLAY (*deeply stirred*). You must let me thank you, Major Reed. My

friends, all of you. You come to me after nineteen years. Strangers. You fill my life with hope as sudden music fills our Cuban nights. I concede your skepticism and revere your courage. I am honored. Tell me how I may serve you.

AGRAMONTE (*suavely covering the embarrassment of the others*). Let them have the eggs, doctor. I think you had better let them have the eggs.

FINLAY. When I give them into your hands I give you nineteen years of my life. Well, I do it gladly.

[*He goes out. The four members of the Commission eye each other in the most intense excitement, but each one in his own mood,* AGRAMONTE *worried,* CARROLL *amused,* REED *solemn,* LAZEAR *white hot.* FINLAY *returns carrying a porcelain dish covered with a gauze. He sets it down on the table to uncover it, the four members of the Commission leaning eagerly forward. The light begins imperceptibly to fade until only the five faces are visible, the old Scotchman's lit with a religious fervor as he describes his great discovery.*]

FINLAY. You have only to raise the water in that dish and those eggs will hatch the criminal. Beware of her. She isn't one of your wild marsh mosquitoes. She's your domestic pet. Shares your home with you, takes her siesta underneath your eaves, raises her family in your patio fountain and rewards your hospitality with death. How do I know? I know! I have a mystic's faith in this mosquito! You hold the key to yellow fever in your hands. I pray for your sake and all humanity's that you may turn the lock I failed to turn.

REED. Curious. Very curious.

CARROLL. They look like little black cigars.

LAZEAR (*a dry whisper*). Come on! Let's get going! (*Darkness. Then the* QUARTET *is singing again.*)

THE QUARTET.

"After the din of the battle's roar,
Just at the close of day,
Wounded and bleeding upon the field,
Two dying soldiers lay.
One held a ringlet of thin gray hair.
One held a lock of brown,
Bidding each other a last farewell,
Just as the sun went down."

[AMES *is standing, below, between two cots in which* SOLDIERS *lie sick of yellow fever and* MISS BLAKE *looks on as he speaks over the singing.*]

AMES. I don't know any more about it than you do, boys. I'm only a doc-

tor. These lab experiments are 'way over my head. I get my orders to let 'em bring their mosquitoes in here to the ward to suck a few yellow fever germs out of your blood. You've got plenty to spare, so there's nothing for you to get excited about. One little mosquito bite won't make you feel any worse than you do already.

[AGRAMONTE *enters above and comes quickly down the stairs. He carries a wire basket filled with test tubes, the mouths of which are covered with tightly stretched gauze.*]

You back so soon?

AGRAMONTE. Don't tell me I'm wearing out my welcome.

AMES. Oh, no! I was just preparing these new arrivals, that's all.

AGRAMONTE (*hesitant*). I don't like to trouble them, but if you've explained . . .

AMES. Go ahead. They're too sick to mind. Skeeters hungry?

AGRAMONTE. They've been crying like babies. (*Then, to* MISS BLAKE.) If you'll turn back the blankets so I can get at him, Miss Blake . . .

MISS BLAKE (*as she turns the blankets back from the first cot*). Don't be afraid. Doctor isn't going to hurt you. (AGRAMONTE *selects a test tube from the basket and deftly inverts it, applying its mouth to the patient's abdomen. He taps the end lightly to jar the mosquito down toward the flesh.*)

AGRAMONTE. Tap. Tap. There!

AMES. Once you get your skeeters filled up with yellow-jack blood, though . . .

AGRAMONTE (*wary*). Yes, Ames?

AMES. What do you do with 'em back there in that lab of yours? (*Pause, then.*)

AGRAMONTE (*evasive*). Oh, various things. (*Then.*) Why?

AMES. I was wondering. There are some pretty brutal rumors going around.

AGRAMONTE. You mustn't believe everything you hear, Ames. (*Then, to* MISS BLAKE.) Next. (*Business as before.*)

MISS BLAKE. Don't be afraid. Doctor isn't going to hurt you.

AGRAMONTE. Tap. Tap.

THE QUARTET.

"One thought of mother at home, alone,
Feeble and old and gray,
One of the sweetheart he left in town,
Happy and young and gay.
One kissed a ringlet of thin gray hair,
One kissed a lock of brown,

Bidding farewell to the Stars and Stripes,
Just as the sun went down."
[*Darkness, under cover of which the cots vanish.*] . . .

Tap. Tap. DR. LAZEAR *is bitten by the infected mosquito—and becomes the first of the human guinea pigs. But* MAJOR REED *is ordered home, and the others must carry on without him.*

They do—with unhappy results. LAZEAR *does* not *become ill.* CARROLL, *who is next,* does; *but he has spoiled the experiment by having performed an autopsy on a victim of yellow jack. . . .*

[*Light on the laboratory and* LAZEAR *sits in his shirt sleeves at the microscope, while* AGRAMONTE, *now in uniform, paces to and fro evidently under a severe strain.* FINLAY *enters to them in a tremolo of mingled delight and awe.*]

FINLAY. I have seen Dr. Carroll! Whatever doubts you may have had yesterday, there can be no question now! First I was sorry for him! Then I remembered to thank God!

LAZEAR (*looking up in excitement from the microscope*). There's not a trace of malaria in the blood! Malaria would have shown itself by this! (*He is on his feet.*) Let's celebrate, Dr. Finlay! Let's get drunk!

AGRAMONTE (*full force at both of them*). What you and Dr. Finlay may or may not believe is not evidence, and you cannot deceive yourselves that it is!

[*The pair fairly scream back at him.*]

FINLAY. A man has been bitten by my mosquito!

LAZEAR. And has got yellow jack as a result!

AGRAMONTE. Not necessarily as a result!

FINLAY. What he did, where he went yesterday, is of no importance!

AGRAMONTE. It is of the most disastrous importance!

LAZEAR. He came through three months of exposure before he was bitten!

AGRAMONTE. That is not proof!

FINLAY. It was my mosquito that infected him!

AGRAMONTE. We don't *know* that!

LAZEAR. You're splitting hairs!

AGRAMONTE. I'm talking science! You know that we have bungled Carroll's sickness! You know his life will be wasted if he dies!

LAZEAR. There's no good looking on the dark side, is there?

AGRAMONTE. You know that is what you must report to Reed!

LAZEAR. Reed will know that we've got this! Here! Under our fingers!

AGRAMONTE. Where?

LAZEAR. We *have* got it! This *must* be the mosquito!

AGRAMONTE. You *want* to believe that!

LAZEAR. I've *got* to believe it! Carroll may die!

AGRAMONTE. All right! Tell me why that one mosquito should succeed with Carroll when fifty failed with you, and I will believe! But I must know why, Lazear, before I can! (*Pause, then.*)

LAZEAR (*defeated*). Damn your bloody logic, Agramonte!

FINLAY. Yes. When you know that you will know everything.

LAZEAR. Yes. *When.*

FINLAY. Oh, I realize it may be difficult to determine. You must produce another case! That *will* be proof and confirm Dr. Carroll! So that his life need not be wasted if he dies. So that my mosquito may come into her own!

LAZEAR. How?

FINLAY. I leave that to you.

LAZEAR. Thanks. (*A pause, then desperately he turns to the shelves.*) Which one was Carroll's?

AGRAMONTE (*very steady*). Dated the twenty-seventh.

LAZEAR (*reading off the labels*). The twelfth. Mine. No good. Fourteenth. Sixteenth. Eighteenth. Mine. All mine. (*He finds it.*) Here. Carroll. The twenty-seventh. (*He picks the tube out of the rack.*) Read me the record.

AGRAMONTE (*glancing down upon the page of an open notebook*). "Insect infected from case in second day of disease. Symptoms not definite but subsequently well developed." (LAZEAR *holds up his hand for silence.*)

LAZEAR (*strangely absorbed*). Second day! How many others did we feed on patients that early in the disease?

AGRAMONTE. I don't know. A few.

LAZEAR. You've got 'em in the record, haven't you?

AGRAMONTE. Certainly. (*He runs his finger down the page.*) Here's another from a case on the second day. Here's a third day. Here's a first.

LAZEAR. And I was too smart to try any of those!

AGRAMONTE. You didn't want to waste time on them.

LAZEAR. Waste time! (*Then.*) Oh, by—!

AGRAMONTE. What is it?

FINLAY. Dr. Lazear! (*He rises.*)

LAZEAR (*very deliberate*). Suppose—mind, I'm only thinking aloud—but here's this microbe no one has ever seen. Suppose it's in the

blood only the first few days. Before you really know what's wrong with you . . .

FINLAY. What could become of it afterward?

LAZEAR. I don't know!

AGRAMONTE (*low*). Do you mean that it might go somewhere else? Out of the blood?

FINLAY (*low*). Or change? Or die after the first few days?

LAZEAR (*his throat painfully dry*). I don't know. I don't know. If there were anything in the idea, though, we've been wasting time feeding our skeeters on advanced cases. There wouldn't have been any microbes left in them. And that would explain why I couldn't . . .

AGRAMONTE (*an awed whisper*). And Carroll could!

FINLAY (*an awed whisper*). Have you found it at last?

[*But* LAZEAR *can only smile weakly.*]

LAZEAR. It's too easy. Things can't be that simple.

FINLAY. Truth can.

AGRAMONTE. I wish that Reed were here.

LAZEAR. Yes. So do I. (*Dazed, he holds out the test tube to* AGRAMONTE.) Put all your early birds in a special rack. (*He turns to* FINLAY, *as* AGRAMONTE *proceeds to obey.*) If this *is* the trick, I never ran any risk at all. And I may be as susceptible as any man. And I could be the case to confirm Carroll.

AGRAMONTE (*firmly*). Only you'd have to be isolated for two weeks first.

FINLAY. And in two weeks Dr. Carroll will be well or dead.

LAZEAR (*wild again*). We can't leave him lying there if he's done this! We can't let him die without knowing what he's done! God, why can't we come out in the open now and commandeer a whole regiment to experiment on?

[*"Recall" sounds.*]

FINLAY. You'll come to it! I told you in the beginning!

COMMAND (*off stage*). Company, disMISSED!

LAZEAR (*insane*). God send me one pure, unsuspecting human guinea pig! One I can't bungle! One I can cram down the whole world's throat! All wool! A yard wide! Fireproof! Watertight!

[SOLDIERS *cross the stage, returning to their barracks from drill,* O'HARA, BRINKERHOF, BUSCH, *and* MC CLELLAND *among them. They mop their brows and their guns are slung idly, any way, for comfort. Some of them are singing as they cross.*]

[FINLAY *is leaning out of the laboratory.*]

FINLAY. Dr. Lazear!

LAZEAR. What?

FINLAY. Have you never heard of a prayer being answered?

LAZEAR. No, doctor. Those are our Medical Corps boys. They know too much.

FINLAY. All of them? All? Can't you find one? (*The* SOLDIERS *have cleared away, leaving one* — PRIVATE DEAN, *a nondescript, hick American* — *looking up at the laboratory.*)

LAZEAR. Do you know that cavalryman out there, Agramonte?

AGRAMONTE. No, I don't think so. (*Then he understands.*) No, Lazear! Not that! (LAZEAR *is on his way out of the laboratory.*)

LAZEAR. Why not?

AGRAMONTE (*stopping him*). Will your conscience let you?

LAZEAR. What's conscience got to do with it?

[*He has broken away and runs down the steps to* DEAN.]

AGRAMONTE (*to* FINLAY). Stop him, Dr. Finlay!

FINLAY. And let Dr. Carroll die without confirmation?

[*He follows* LAZEAR *down. Off stage the* QUARTET *strikes into "Good-by, Dolly Gray."*] . . .

DEAN, *all innocence, is given the "Tap Tap." Now the scene changes. On a hospital cot* CARROLL *lies dying, while* DR. AMES *applies a stethoscope to the patient's heart.*

CARROLL (*feeble, but in the best of good humor*). If you can keep that heart of mine going, Ames, you're a better man than I think.

[LAZEAR *turns wretchedly.*]

AMES. I can't even hear your heart till you quit talking!

CARROLL. Helps me to talk. Keeps me from going out.

AMES. Go out if you want to. Won't hurt you any.

CARROLL. Going out's not so bad. Coming back's getting harder.

LAZEAR. Damn us both for a pair of incompetent bunglers! When I think of the waste of this! (*But* CARROLL *is laughing.*)

CARROLL. You know I was the first. That's some satisfaction. You can't curse me out of that.

LAZEAR. I didn't mean to curse you.

CARROLL. Some day, when you get a second to back me up and break out in print, find room for me in a footnote, will you?

[AGRAMONTE *enters.*]

AGRAMONTE. Lazear . . .

[LAZEAR *turns and fairly runs to him.*]

LAZEAR. News?

AGRAMONTE (*holding out a paper*). His name's on the sick list.

LAZEAR (*examining*). Oh, God bless you, Private Dean! (*He turns back in great exultation.*) Carroll, you're set! We've got your confirmation! (*But* CARROLL *has gone out again.*) Oh . . .

AGRAMONTE. What?

LAZEAR. No. He comes and goes like that. (*Then.*) He was just asking me to . . . (*He stops to control himself. Then.*) I guess I'm tired. (*He sits again.*) Time like this you forget what it's all about. What was it all about? The chase of the carrier of yellow fever. That was it, wasn't it? The chase. (*He smiles.*) I might remember to ask how Dean is.

AGRAMONTE. I don't know. (AMES *returns carrying, in his hand, the hypodermic needle for* CARROLL'S *injection. He goes to the bed.* LAZEAR *follows. Then.*) Didn't you find any new yellow-jack cases?

AMES. No.

LAZEAR. Nor hear of any?

AMES (*surprised*). No!

LAZEAR. Go on, Agramonte! (AGRAMONTE *goes, troubled.*) Can I help you?

AMES. Alcohol. (LAZEAR *applies the alcohol to* CARROLL'S *arm.*) Hold it. (LAZEAR *holds the arm while* AMES *makes the injection.*) Here.

[LAZEAR *takes the needle and sets it aside.* AMES *listens with his stethoscope again.* LAZEAR *comes back to the bedside.* AMES *looks up. Pause, then.*]

LAZEAR. How long do you give him?

AMES. I don't know. If we could make him fight . . .

[MISS BLAKE *has entered.*]

MISS BLAKE. Dr. Ames.

AMES. Yes?

MISS BLAKE. Can you get away to look at a new case? (LAZEAR'S *head comes up.*) It's a soldier they . . .

LAZEAR (*almost fainting*). What's the soldier's name?

MISS BLAKE (*consulting a scrap of paper*). Dean. William H. Troop A. Seventh Cavalry. (LAZEAR'S *eyes close as she continues to* AMES.) And everybody's upset because he insists he hasn't been out of camp for weeks and they're afraid of its breaking out here again and . . .

AMES (*to* LAZEAR). Good God!

LAZEAR (*low*). Hadn't you better take a look at him?

[AMES *hands* LAZEAR *his stethoscope.*]

AMES. You watch that heart.

[*He goes,* MISS BLAKE *following.*]

MISS BLAKE. I'm afraid there's no doubt but it *is* yellow . . .

[*They are gone.* LAZEAR *turns toward* CARROLL.]

LAZEAR (*behind his voice that grim pressure which doctors employ to reach through unconsciousness*). I'll make you fight now, you bloody bonehead! (*He kneels beside the bed. His tone is low but shaken with all the force in him.*) You did it after all . . . in spite of yourself . . .

CARROLL (*as he comes to somewhat*). I was the first. Remember that. . . . I was the first . . .

LAZEAR (*the pressure increasing as the tone drops in pitch*). Damn right you were! And nobody's ever going to forget it! . . . We've got your second now! . . . We know now, Carroll! We know! Do you get that! We know!

[*Darkness, but not before we have seen the smile on the sick man's face. Then.*]

MISS BLAKE (*calling frantically through the darkness*). Dr. Ames! Dr. Ames!

[*Light strikes her from behind* AMES *as he enters.*]

AMES. What are you doing up at this time of night?

MISS BLAKE. It's Dr. Lazear . . .

AMES. What's wrong with him?

MISS BLAKE. I don't know! I'm afraid! I went in just now. To make my report on what fine progress Dr. Carroll's making. And he . . . (*Her voice chokes with tears.*) He's very sick, Dr. Ames . . .

AMES. Lazear, too! (*They cross through the darkness, the light increasing to show* LAZEAR *seated at the laboratory workbench, haggard and ill, notebooks and sheets of paper scattered before him. The sky remains unlighted.*)

LAZEAR (*pushing the words out as he writes*). I don't deny I bungled Carroll's case, though Dean seems to have confirmed him. Now they're both out of the woods, I have to confess to you about myself. I can't account for it, but I'm beginning to be afraid . . . (MISS BLAKE *and* AMES *have entered to him.*) Go away. I'm busy.

AMES. She tells me you're under the weather.

LAZEAR. I'd have told you myself if I'd wanted you to know!

AMES. You don't have to tell me. I can see.

LAZEAR. I've got a touch of malaria.

AMES. Sure it isn't the same malaria Carroll had?

LAZEAR (*low and stubborn*). Carroll got yellow jack from our mosquitoes. I haven't taken a bite myself for weeks. Whatever this is, it can't be yellow jack!

AMES (*eying him sharply*). The fact remains . . .
MISS BLAKE. Oh, if doctors would only take care of themselves!
[AGRAMONTE *has entered.*]
AGRAMONTE. What's this about Lazear?
AMES. Looks to me very much like . . .

It is yellow fever—without the mosquito's bite! He lies dying, as GORGAS *and* FINLAY *and* CARROLL *sit waiting. . . .*

GORGAS. Men can't go against death and not risk death themselves. Pasteur sent Thuillier to Alexandria for the cholera there. Thuillier didn't come back. Lazear won't be the last.
FINLAY. Humanity won't have done asking this sacrifice of his kind for a long time yet. Science won't have done.
CARROLL. His wife's just had another baby. He won't ever see it.
[*Light grows on the screened bed on which* LAZEAR *lies dying.* MISS BLAKE *attends him.* AMES *is just leaving him to approach the other doctors.*]
AMES. Make Carroll go back to bed, Major Gorgas.
CARROLL. How much sleep did he get the nights you thought I was a goner?
GORGAS. He hadn't just been sick. You have.
CARROLL. Lazear's dying! For a lot of God-forsaken half-wits of men and women! Will they ever appreciate what he's done for them? Will they even hear of him?
FINLAY. Neither death nor what he's dying for belong in words.
CARROLL. I haven't got your philosophy, Dr. Finlay. Lazear's the best fellow I've ever known.
GORGAS. And his death is so much waste.
LAZEAR (*faintly from behind the screen*). Waste! Waste!
CARROLL (*on his feet*). He heard you! He understood! Lazear!
AMES. Keep your shirt on, Carroll! He's beyond understanding now.
[*The bugle sounds the thin, solemn strains of "Taps." On the last note* REED'S *voice is heard barking sharply through the darkness.*]
REED. Didn't I warn both you and Lazear the night I left you! Unimpeachable workmanship, I demanded! And what have you given me? (*Bright daylight shows that the flag has disappeared and that* REED *is striding to and fro in the laboratory, while* CARROLL, AGRAMONTE, *and* GORGAS *sit morosely apart.*) You at death's door for no purpose and he dead for less!
CARROLL. Be fair, Reed!

REED. I'm not being unfair! God honor both of you for gallant men!

GORGAS. Reed! You've done enough! The summer's over and the epidemic with it!

REED. There'll be other summers and worse epidemics! There's knowledge and this fact's not yet established!

GORGAS. It's got away from you!

AGRAMONTE. I'm afraid it has.

REED. Gorgas, I can't let go!

AGRAMONTE. What have you to hang on to?

CARROLL. Let Agramonte go back on this if he wants to, Reed! I'm convinced!

AGRAMONTE. I cannot be romantic about this, Carroll! Scientifically, we have no evidence that Finlay's mosquito played any part either in Lazear's death or in your sickness! And I must agree with Major Gorgas that . . .

[*But* BRINKERHOF *has entered.*]

BRINKERHOF. Colonel Tory is here asking for you, Major.

[TORY *enters. The entire company rises.* BRINKERHOF *goes.*]

TORY. I welcome your return to Cuba, Major. All my sympathy for your young colleague's death. I call on you to serve a notice on you. The American Public Health Association will hold its annual conference next month. My staff in the Marine Hospital Corps has been invited to report on yellow fever. Since we shall criticize your experiment and you, it seems only fair that you should read what we have to say. (*He proffers a manuscript with a smile of triumph.*) So you may prepare your defense. If you have one.

REED. The usual course would have been to wait for us to make some public assertion. (*He indicates the paper.*) This may prevent the continuance of our work.

TORY. I venture to hope it will.

REED. Death has given tragic testimony in our behalf.

TORY. More tragic than conclusive.

REED. I can say no more.

TORY. Major.

REED. Colonel. (*Salutes.* TORY *goes.* REED *turns desperately to* GORGAS.) I need your support desperately now, Gorgas!

GORGAS. Wouldn't you have it if I could give it, Reed? But Lazear did catch yellow fever without your mosquito and you can't keep on in the face of that!

CARROLL. I got yellow jack from a mosquito! You can't account for my case any other way!

REED. There's another case I can't account for either, except . . .
AGRAMONTE (*alarmed*). Careful, doctor!
REED. We've got to play the ace now, Agramonte. Have you got your Private X. Y. Dean handy? Call him in. Let's see him. I want Major Gorgas to hear me talk to him! . . .

PRIVATE DEAN *is convincing enough — but not for the cautious scientist.* . . .

GORGAS (*embarrassment*). I know what it is to hope, Reed, but I can't accept a soldier's word in lieu of demonstration.
REED (*frantic*). Surely that story of his indicates something!
GORGAS. If you could substantiate every word he said you'd still have to admit he was in this lab that day with three doctors any one of whom might have carried the infection from Carroll's bedside! If he's all the defense you have against Tory, I'm sorry for you!
AGRAMONTE. He's perfectly right. We haven't any defense.
CARROLL. Do we sit tight, then, and let Tory do his worst?
REED. No! I believe our mosquitoes have the real deadly stuff in 'em! I believe Lazear really did find the catch before he died! In spite of his death and Gorgas' doubts I believe it!
GORGAS. You've all gone off your heads over this!
REED. I can see I'm in no shape to convince you, Gorgas! But, by God, we *have* got enough to take to Leonard Wood!
[*Both* CARROLL *and* AGRAMONTE *are on their feet in great excitement.*]
CARROLL. Wood!
REED. He's our last chance, Carroll!
AGRAMONTE. What can Wood do for us?
REED. I can't tell you that! I can only tell you what I shall ask him for!
GORGAS. And what will that be?
REED (*full blast*). Facilities for a fool-proof demonstration of this mosquito! The full power of his governor-generalship behind us! Ten thousand dollars for operating expenses! An isolation camp where we can experiment under ideal conditions! And his leave to call for volunteers to experiment on! I think the time has come for that at last!

[*Sensation.*]

CARROLL. So we fall back on the army after all!
REED. As soldiers should, Carroll! As soldiers should! (*The light dims, concentrating on the four officers.*)
GORGAS. Do you think Wood will even consider that?

REED. I don't know, Gorgas. All I know is: Lazear and Carroll showed the way! And I know this will give the army a new kind of hero! Do you think Leonard Wood won't see that?

[*Darkness, the* QUARTET *swelling. At the same time light strikes* AMES, *where he is talking to a sergeant.*]

AMES. Understand now, Sergeant, General Wood doesn't want any pressure brought. Just let it leak out. Keep it going all over camp. I don't know why any healthy kid should volunteer, but three hundred's a lot of money to a soldier.

[*Then night sky and the* QUARTET *is singing "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" and* SOLDIERS *in a seemingly interminable line of silhouettes are trooping along the horizon. They are all talking and gesticulating excitedly.*]

SOLDIERS. Now, what was that again? . . .

Just what I heard. Three hundred dollars' compensation for volunteers . . .

Volunteers to catch yellow jack and die of it? . . .

I'm telling you what I heard . . .

They got a nerve! . . .

It's the damnedest thing I ever heard of! . . .

I *don't* think! . . .

I'm not crazy! . . .

Three hundred dollars! . . .

I'm only telling you what they told me! . . .

How did you hear about it? . . .

General Wood fixed it up with Major Reed . . .

He told Dr. Carroll, who told Dr. Ames . . .

You're crazy! . . .

I'm only telling you what they told me! . . .

Would you take a chance on it? . . .

For three hundred dollars? It's a pile of money! . . .

Not for me! Not for mine! . . .

Three hundred dollars!

I wouldn't for three thousand! . . .

No, I've been lucky enough to come through this far! . . .

I'll keep my health, if the Major's got no objection! . . .

What do they take soldiers for anyway! . . .

Catch yellow jack . . . Die of yellow jack! . . . What for? . . . Three hundred dollars! . . . To advance science! . . . And benefit humanity! . . . Good God Almighty! . . . Ain't soldiers humanity! . . .

[*Four* SOLDIERS *have drifted down from the line of passing silhouettes and now as light grows upon the steps we see that they are* BUSCH, MC CLELLAND, O'HARA, *and* BRINKERHOF *and that* MISS BLAKE *is seated in the midst of them.*]

MISS BLAKE. You can't say it hasn't given camp something to talk about!

MC CLELLAND. Well, as long as they don't do nothing but talk!

BRINKERHOF. Are you sure talking's all there is to do?

MC CLELLAND. It's all for any man with any sense.

BUSCH. I wouldn't be so sure of that, Mac.

O'HARA. I'm tempted! Gosh, I'm tempted!

MC CLELLAND. Still, three hundred dollars is a lot of money.

BRINKERHOF. A man couldn't do a thing like this for money.

MC CLELLAND. What would you do it for?

BRINKERHOF. There's patriotism.

MC CLELLAND. That's what landed us in the army!

BRINKERHOF. I ain't said I'd do it. For argument, though, and not committing myself, if Dr. Lazear was still alive, I'd consider doing it for him on personal grounds.

MC CLELLAND. I wouldn't do it on personal grounds for God Almighty!

O'HARA. Are you on personal grounds with God Almighty?

BRINKERHOF. Never bring religion into an argument.

BUSCH. It's the very sum of money I been praying for! Boy, maybe it's a hunk of muzal!

MISS BLAKE. The Major said: "Tell the boys this gives them a real chance to advance medical science and benefit humanity."

BRINKERHOF. Medical science and humanity ain't bad reasons.

MC CLELLAND. What's medical science ever done for me?

BRINKERHOF. You been to the dentist, ain't you? That was medical science.

MC CLELLAND. Am I supposed to catch yellow jack for dentists?

BRINKERHOF. Well, don't ask me what humanity's done for you or I'll ask you where you'd be without it!

BUSCH. It's an awful way to earn money, but I could use it!

MC CLELLAND. I got nothing against the financial offer. All my objections are to the yellow jack.

BUSCH. It's an awful risk. I wonder if it's worth it!

O'HARA. Glory be to God, 'tis the heroic side appeals to the Irish always, as I said to myself when I made up my mind I'd do it!

MISS BLAKE. You did make up your mind?

O'HARA. Would you think a man of my type could resist volunteering?

MISS BLAKE. I knew they'd get one of you.

O'HARA. You should have known it 'ud be me, Miss Blake! And I'm with John Brinkerhof! I'll do it free, I said!

MISS BLAKE. That's beautiful!

O'HARA. Oh, no man could have held me back if I hadn't thought still another thought in the nick of time. "If I do give my life," I said to myself, "it may be noble, but will it be a start?"

BUSCH. It's a thing any radical could go into and not be ashamed of, only I got to have more time on it.

MISS BLAKE. Won't the Major get a single volunteer?

BRINKERHOF. I wouldn't know.

MISS BLAKE. I want him to get one.

O'HARA. Don't be using your sex to shame us into this!

MISS BLAKE. I'm talking to Mr. Brinkerhof now. To Mr. Brinkerhof, who wants to stay in the army. Drill. Ten, maybe twenty years of drill. Then another war. And more lives thrown away. Then drill again. Then a pension and the old soldiers' home. If that's all being a soldier comes to!

BRINKERHOF. It ain't much.

MISS BLAKE. Now, maybe for the first time since armies began, soldiers are given a chance to do good, not harm. To make the world better, not worse, as a place to live in. (*They listen hypnotized,* O'HARA *rising slowly to his feet.*) You'd get well! We'd take care of you! Don't be afraid!

BRINKERHOF. But I *am* afraid.

MISS BLAKE. That makes it all the braver!

BRINKERHOF. I wouldn't do it for money!

MISS BLAKE. For your sergeancy then!

BRINKERHOF. That'd be just as bad.

MISS BLAKE. For science and humanity!

BRINKERHOF. Oh, I'd never be up to anything like that!

MISS BLAKE. Choose your own reason!

BRINKERHOF. There'd be a lot of satisfaction in it.

MISS BLAKE. Indeed there would!

BRINKERHOF. No! Just to me, I mean!

MISS BLAKE. But that's enough!

BRINKERHOF. I ain't committed myself! I only said, for the sake of argument . . .

MISS BLAKE. "If one, only one, of our boys will step forward," the Major said, "he'll make this reach and touch the heart of the world and the world will weep and have faith in this!"

O'HARA. By God, I'll do it for the heck of it!

[*A glad cry from* MISS BLAKE. *"Call to Quarters" sounds.*]

BRINKERHOF. Oh, I'm coming, John! I'm coming!

BUSCH. Stop him!

MC CLELLAND (*to* MISS BLAKE). You talked him into this!

MISS BLAKE. Thank God if I did!

MC CLELLAND. You're responsible if they . . .

MISS BLAKE. I can't help that! I can't help wanting them to . . .

They have volunteered. An isolation camp has been set up for them; Camp Lazear, they call it. O'HARA *and* BRINKERHOF *are placed in a clean tent;* BUSCH *and* MC CLELLAND, *the controls, in the "dirty house," to sleep in the unwashed and undisinfected bedding on which yellow fever victims have died. The first two have had* FINLAY'S *mosquitoes bite them; and now* BRINKERHOF *sits on his cot taking his temperature while* O'HARA *lounges before the tent gazing toward his friends' clean wooden shack. . . .*

O'HARA. Being a hero should be quickly over and on to the glory that comes after.

MC CLELLAND. Will you listen to all that quiet!

BUSCH. I heard it before and I didn't like it. They'd ought to have give us a bugler out here.

MC CLELLAND. I never expected this to be this way. This was some Thanksgiving Day!

BUSCH. I ain't complaining. I'm putting on weight living in that stink.

O'HARA (*to* BRINKERHOF). Will you take that thermometer out of your mouth, John!

BRINKERHOF. I'm hot.

O'HARA. It's a cold night with a wintry dampness in it the way you could see your breath if you troubled to blow it!

MC CLELLAND. O'Hara!

O'HARA. What is it?

MC CLELLAND. How are you feeling?

O'HARA. I'm feeling fine.

BUSCH. How's Brinkerhof feeling?

O'HARA. He feels better than me.

BRINKERHOF. I don't feel well, John! I got vertigo.

O'HARA. If you don't feel right, it's your willful imagination! If you felt bad, I'd feel worse than you! Do you think it's friendly to try steal-

ing a march on me? We started on this together and we'll finish together or not finish at all!

BRINKERHOF. This is the night of the fourth day. The Major said things ought to begin to happen the fourth day.

O'HARA. For the last time I tell you, if you've got a fever you're no friend of mine!

MC CLELLAND. Quit scrapping, O'Hara!

BUSCH. We'll all be scrapping before we get out of this.

[*General irritability.* BRINKERHOF *has risen to close the tent flap.*]

O'HARA. What are you after doing with that tent flap?

BRINKERHOF. I'm cold.

O'HARA. Two minutes ago the fever was burning you up!

BRINKERHOF. I got a chill now. My ears is roaring and my teeth is chattering and my head . . .

O'HARA. You'll not give yourself yellow jack ahead of me, sucking thermometers one minute and chattering your jaws together the next! This was agreed to be both of us or neither!

BRINKERHOF. You been hard on me, John. You know I wouldn't take no advantage of you if I could help it. (*Removing his shoes, he shudders again as with a chill and looks up.*) You wouldn't like to speak some Shakespeare for me? You usually like to when there's no one around. If you said your favorite lines from Julius Caesar, they might put heart in me. (*Another shudder of chill comes over him. He looks uneasily toward* O'HARA, *then reaches stealthily for the thermometer, shakes it, sticks it back in his mouth and turns away so that he will not be observed. In the meanwhile.*)

O'HARA. "Cowards die many times before their death;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems most strange to me that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come."

BRINKERHOF (*his diction obstructed by the thermometer*). Thank you, John. (O'HARA *turns furious.*)

O'HARA. Are you at that thing again? Give it to me! I'll smash it to atoms!

BRINKERHOF (*defending it*). No, John, don't break it!

O'HARA. I want no more of your treachery! (*He secures the thermometer.*)

BRINKERHOF. Don't break it, John! Look for yourself! See if I ain't got something wrong with me!

[O'HARA *looks scornfully. Then he bends to look more closely under the lamp. Then.*]

O'HARA. Holy Light! (*He hands the thermometer back to* BRINKERHOF, *who reads it. They look at one another,* BRINKERHOF *nodding with a sickly smile.*)

BRINKERHOF. It'd go higher if I gave it time.

O'HARA. And me as fit as a fiddle. (*He feels his brow, his pulse, and strikes his chest despairingly.*) What ails you, O'Hara, that you let others get ahead of you? Here, give me that thing back! (*He snatches the thermometer from* BRINKERHOF'S *mouth and puts it into his own.*)

BRINKERHOF. Could I ask you to go down to the ambulance and tell them? (*Pause, as* O'HARA *takes the thermometer out of his mouth, is disappointed, puts it back to suck it harder than ever.*) Could I ask you, John?

[*Staring uncomprehendingly,* O'HARA *again removes the thermometer from his mouth. Then he turns suddenly and runs out, shouting as he goes.*]

O'HARA. Ambulance! Ambulance! Ambulance!

MC CLELLAND (*from within the shack*). What are you yelling about out there?

BUSCH. They got it, Mac! They got it!

MC CLELLAND. Which one of 'em's got it? (*The door of the shack is rattled from within as they beat upon it.*) Is it you, Brinkerhof?

BUSCH. For God's sake!

MC CLELLAND. Answer up!

BUSCH. Let us out of here! Let us out!

[*The turmoil continues, with* BRINKERHOF *on his feet, frightened and swaying dizzily. Then darkness and immediately upon it the* QUARTET *is singing "Good-bye, My Blue Bell." The chorus through once and daylight strikes* BRINKERHOF *in bed.* FINLAY *and* GORGAS *bend over him, subjecting him to an intense and meticulous examination.* MISS BLAKE *stands apart to one side,* REED *to the other. The examination continues in pantomime over the music. Apart and somewhat above on the side opposite* BRINKERHOF'S *bed,* CARROLL *and* AGRAMONTE *are waiting,* AGRAMONTE *pacing restlessly to and fro.*]

AGRAMONTE (*after a pause*). Will they never finish their examination?

CARROLL. You're taking this harder than Reed is.

AGRAMONTE. I feel for Reed. This is Reed's moment. Everything hangs on what Gorgas says.

CARROLL. Whatever Gorgas says, that's a real case of genuine yellow jack.

AGRAMONTE. But the world will listen to what Gorgas says.

[FINLAY *straightens and turns to* GORGAS.]

FINLAY. Well, Major Gorgas?

GORGAS. I'll give my opinion when I've seen the records.

REED. Miss Blake has the records for you. Suppose you take them aside to look them over. I don't want you to tire the boy out.

[GORGAS *and* FINLAY *see* REED'S *point and go to* MISS BLAKE.]

GORGAS. Yes, I expect we were being a bit inhuman.

FINLAY. That's one of the drawbacks of experiment, Major Gorgas.

[*They have crossed to* MISS BLAKE, *who hands them each a file of the record. They sit to study them in silence while she looks on and* CARROLL *and* AGRAMONTE *watch from above.* REED *has gone to* BRINKERHOF'S *bedside and stands looking down on him.*]

REED. That was part of the game, Brinkerhof. An essential part from my point of view. I hope you didn't mind it too much.

BRINKERHOF. I wouldn't feel up to minding anything, doctor.

REED. It's a bad sickness, I know that. We got your case at the beginning, though, so you're going to be all right. Don't worry.

BRINKERHOF. I wouldn't feel up to worrying, either. (REED'S *hand is on the boy's forehead.*)

REED. They tell me you didn't drink the champagne I sent you.

BRINKERHOF. Do I have to drink it, sir?

REED. It might make you feel less sick at your stomach.

BRINKERHOF. I ain't used to it and I didn't care for it. (REED *smiles, then.*)

REED. My wife's just sent me a fine fruit cake. I'm saving it for you. For your Christmas dinner. We'll try to have you on your feet by then. So you can get sick all over again. Not for science, though. Just for the fun of it. Nothing else we can do for you now? (*A pause.* BRINKERHOF *manages to lift his head a little. Then.*)

BRINKERHOF. Why was it, sir, yellow jack took me and give O'Hara the go-by?

REED (*surprised*). I don't know, Brinkerhof. Some men seem to be born immune to some diseases.

BRINKERHOF. Could a man be immune one time and catch it another?

REED. It's possible. We don't know much about immunity.

BRINKERHOF. John O'Hara, he's quite a friend of mine, sir. You just asked me what more you could do for me. John set his heart on getting this disease for the start it'd give him practicing medicine. It's

likely the only start he'll ever get. Would you give John another chance at it, sir?

REED. It's hard for me to say no to you, Brinkerhof. I'm afraid O'Hara's a waste of time for my purposes. I can't afford to break our record of success. I'll do what I can to help him with his medical studies. But I wish you'd ask me for something else now. (BRINKERHOF *sinks back.*)

BRINKERHOF. Give John my best. Ask him not to be angry with me if he can help it.

REED. I'll do that much.

[*But* GORGAS, *going through the file, has come to the fever chart.*]

GORGAS (*low and quick*). A hundred and three and six tenths last night. Dropped again, though, at six this morning and again at eight.

FINLAY. You've noticed the granular casts in the urine, I hope? (REED *goes toward them.*)

GORGAS Oh, yes.

FINLAY. The eyes were beautifully jaundiced today, too.

GORGAS (*to* MISS BLAKE). How about the gums?

MISS BLAKE. A little bleeding.

FINLAY. Headache and nausea still troublesome, though?

MISS BLAKE. He's very uncomfortable.

FINLAY. Splendid! I should defer to the Major's diagnosis, but I can't think of a symptom the boy's omitted! It's beautiful! Beautiful! The fourth day of his sickness, too! (*Then, to* REED.) And how long did you say between the bite and the first symptom?

REED. Three days, nine and a half hours.

FINLAY. Nineteen years for me. Three days, nine and a half hours for Major Reed! (*He is pumping* REED's *hand.*) I conceived a truth! You delivered it into life! Together we have added to the world's arsenal of knowledge!

GORGAS. You promised you'd make me eat my doubts, Reed. Didn't know eating doubts could be such a pleasure! Damned if this isn't an impressive moment! I'm going out after this mosquito now. And after that, Panama! You've made the Panama Canal possible now! May I? (*He holds out his hand.*)

REED (*sternly*). If that boy's convinced you, Gorgas, that he did get the infection from the mosquito and if those other two, healthy as ever in the filth of that dirty house, have shown you the disease cannot in nature be contracted except from the mosquito, then you may! But if you have any shadow of reservation on either point . . .

[AMES *has entered hastily to the second cot.*]

AMES. You certainly are knocking 'em over out at that camp, Major! Will you fix up this cot, Miss Blake?

[MISS BLAKE *goes to prepare the cot.*]

CARROLL. What do you mean?

AGRAMONTE. You haven't got another case from out there!

REED. Not Busch or McClelland!

[*Together*]
AGRAMONTE. They couldn't have caught it in the dirty house!
REED. There hasn't been a mosquito near that pair . . .
CARROLL. That'd wreck things worse than Lazear's death did.
FINLAY. Oh, no, no, no! Not just at the moment when we . . .
GORGAS. Good Lord! Well, it goes to show you never . . .

[*All talking together in their dismay, the three members of the Commission have left* FINLAY *and* GORGAS *and hurried toward* AMES. *Before they can reach him, however, two* STRETCHER-BEARERS *have carried a stretcher in and the recumbent form upon it belongs to* O'HARA.]

REED (*climax*). O'Hara!

O'HARA (*feeble but triumphant*). Good afternoon to you, doctor.

REED. But this man hasn't got yellow fever, Ames!

AMES. Oh, yes, he has!

CARROLL (*to* O'HARA). But, damn it, you should have come down four days ago!

REED. That's true, O'Hara! How . . . ?

O'HARA. Have you never heard, Major, how it's the human element that still baffles you men of science?

AGRAMONTE. That is no answer.

REED (*shaking with excitement*). Do you know how you got it?

O'HARA. You weren't out at camp the day after they took Brinkerhof away?

REED. No.

O'HARA. You should have left those mosquitoes of yours locked up! (*Sensation.* MISS BLAKE *is shocked,* REED *stunned.*)

BRINKERHOF (*feeble, but delighted*). Hooray! (*The light focuses sharply down upon* O'HARA.)

O'HARA. Now science and humanity become one in the person of Johnny O'Hara! And no shadow of gain for him but his own satisfaction, and only the hell and vanity of that!

[*Darkness, and the* QUARTET *strikes into "The Old Folks at Home."*

Then the sky is night once more and the foreground bare and dark and the only illumination of the setting is within the laboratory, where REED, CARROLL, *and* AGRAMONTE *are dimly visible.* REED *comes out of the laboratory, the other two following.*]

REED. Well, Carroll, the job's done and the doubts and discouragements are memories now. And the last microscope's packed and we've closed the door of our Cuban laboratory. And our dirty house has made us a fine bonfire and grass can grow once more where Brinkerhof and O'Hara pitched their tent. And none of the boys seem much the worse for wear and we're going home. I could wish we were taking Lazear home with us. I could wish that you were coming, Agramonte.

AGRAMONTE. No, doctor. I am Cuban-born. I must stay in Cuba.

[BRINKERHOF *enters and salutes.*]

REED. Yes, Mr. Brinkerhof?

BRINKERHOF. The rig you ordered to take you down to the transport's ready, sir, whenever you are.

REED. Are you and O'Hara ready to sail with us?

BRINKERHOF. Yes, sir. We're ready, sir. O'Hara, he's still a bit weak in the knees. He's resting down there on the pile of baggage.

[REED *turns smiling up the stair, but* CARROLL *is after him.*]

CARROLL. Let's not go, Chief! Let's stay and finish things! It can't be far from here to vaccine and cure! Are you with me, Chief?

REED. No, Carroll, I'm not with you. A man does what he has to do and is tired. (*They are all four silhouettes now against the sky.*) I see the struggles and tragedies ahead.

[*In the distance the African tom-tom begins to throb faintly.*]

AGRAMONTE. Yes, Carroll. For the men who will follow after us and carry on the chase in the years to come. In Ecuador and Mexico and Brazil. And in the vast reservoir of African jungle whence this thing came, where it will persist. . . .

[*The tom-tom swells suddenly and* REED *lifts his hand as though to silence* AGRAMONTE *so that he may listen to the future, and the four, motionless, recede into the past.*]

WHILE READING

1. What is the effect on the audience of the silent passing of stretcher-bearers in the opening scene? What is the dramatic value of offstage singing as a musical background to this grim scene?

2. Why does the playwright tell where each of the four Medical Corps soldiers comes from? Can you see here an attempt to encourage greater racial and sectional understanding? How are the men's differences in background reflected in their speech and action? Do they remain in character? Observe also the differences in character and reactions among Reed's co-workers.

3. Compare the methods used to bridge time and space in this play with the conventional method of shifting scenes. Do you think the use of lights and music more effective for such a play as this? Why? (Compare with "fade out" in movies and "musical bridge" in radio.)

4. Is there any significance in the playwright's choice of the name *Tory* for the representative of opposition to progressive science? How does Colonel Tory serve as a foil (see page 13) for Major Reed? How does the reaction of each of the scientists to Tory's statements reveal his character?

5. Tory scoffs at Reed with the question, "Is modern science going insect-mad?" What other examples can you cite of scientists or inventors who were laughed at as fools or visionaries by their contemporaries?

6. Lazear indignantly answers Tory by citing Theobald Smith, David Bruce, Ronald Ross, G. B. Grassi, Louis Pasteur, and H. R. Carter. The story of these men and their achievements is interestingly told in De Kruif's *Microbe Hunters.*

7. Do you agree with Reed's defense of the use of human beings as guinea pigs? What can be said for Tory's side of the argument? You may wish to debate this subject in class. The proposal to experiment with men is one of the effective climaxes of the play. How does each of the scientists react to the idea?

8. It is perhaps difficult for us today, familiar as we are with the carrier of yellow fever, to see why Reed could not immediately hit upon the correct answer. To appreciate his problem, think of the contemporary scientist groping with such problems as cancer and the common cold.

9. The scientists propose to experiment on themselves first. Can you name other scientists who have used themselves as subjects of their experiments? Reports on scientists who have become martyrs to research will be of interest to the class.

10. Discuss Reed's question. "Is any man's life worth more than the cause he risks it on?" Might this be the play's theme?

11. Explain Agramonte's assertion that Carroll's "life will be wasted if he dies." What scientific purpose does Dean serve in the experiment? Why does Gorgas consider Lazear's death a waste?

12. What motive actuates each of the four volunteers in the experiment? Are these motives in character?

13. Busch and McClelland are used as scientific controls. Explain the need for controls in this experiment. In this connection, can you see why Reed and the others are so dismayed at the prospect that Ames's new patient may be one of the two controls?

14. Explain the appropriateness of O'Hara's quotation from the second act of *Julius Caesar;* of the quartet's final song; of the throbbing tom-toms. (This

version of the play omits the brief final scene which returns to Africa and Dr. Adrian Stokes, who died of yellow fever on September 19, 1927.)

AFTER READING

1. The play illustrates the conflict between idealism as represented by the scientists and narrow selfishness as represented by Tory. Find examples of this conflict in the play. What other conflicts do you find?

2. What scientific principles and methods are illustrated in the play?

3. How does the technique of this play resemble that of the movie and of the radio?

4. Suggested project for the class: Dramatization for class presentation of a story of scientific conquest, or of some modern problem in medical science. Suggestions: The story of malaria; Goldberger and the fight against pellagra; the battle against tuberculosis, or cancer; Noguchi and yellow fever.

5. You will find it interesting to compare this play with the film version, which appears in *Twenty Best Film Plays,* edited by Gassner and Nichols.

6. *For Further Reading.* Sacha Guitry's *Pasteur,* published in 1919, is the first important play to deal with a scientist and his work. A film play called *The Story of Louis Pasteur,* by Gibney and Collings, may be found in *Adventures in Modern Literature,* edited by Stauffer and Cunningham. Sidney Kingsley's *Men in White* depicts the problems of the doctor-scientist, as do the novels *Arrowsmith,* by Sinclair Lewis, and *The Citadel,* by A. J. Cronin.



One-Third of a Nation

BY ARTHUR ARENT

Plays of social protest have occupied an important place in the theatre of our time. Playwrights have expressed in a great variety of ways their indignation over some of the conditions that prevail in our society, and some have even ventured to point the way toward their betterment. An exciting development in the drama of protest and propaganda was the birth of the Living Newspaper. It was in the days when Ethiopia was being conquered by the invading armies of a powerful Italy that a group of workers in the Federal Theatre Project conceived the idea of dramatizing the facts of the invasion in a series of episodes that would make the long newspaper accounts come convincingly alive on the stage. The result, *Ethiopia,* was a unique experience in the theatre. A preliminary showing in January, 1936, aroused such controversy that Washington ordered its withdrawal on the ground that it could not be "diplomatically sponsored by the United States Government." Elmer Rice, head of the Theatre Project's New York State division, quickly resigned in protest. However, Arthur Arent, who had been editorial supervisor of this first venture, continued with his colleagues the experiments with this new technique.

The Living Newspaper is a dramatic device for presenting educational propaganda by bringing to life the facts as they are found in newspaper reports. It employs a great variety of unorthodox methods borrowed in large measure from the radio and the movies; such devices as charts, screen flashes and continuities, audience "plants," recordings of snatches of speeches by living statesmen, microphones, narrators — any medium considered effective for the purpose (as Anita Block puts it) "of arousing the American people to an active interest in matters vital to their very existence."

One of these matters is housing. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had declared in his Second Inaugural Address that one-third of our nation was "ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-nourished." Mr. Arent and his assistants began to explore the facts behind this condition; the result was a series of Living Newspapers on such problems as food production, power, social disease, labor, housing. The most effective and successful of these

was *One-Third of a Nation,* which reveals the deplorable conditions in a typical city slum area and tries, while tracing some of the causes of poor housing, to explore possible solutions. The play illustrates how effectively the new medium can infuse excitement and conviction into a mass of humdrum – and carefully documented – facts. The Living Newspaper was never adopted by the commercial theatre, except for a play called *Medicine Show;* though you can recognize its techniques in *The March of Time* and similar films, and, according to Mr. Arent, in *Our Town.* Its educational force has been recognized by schools all over the country.

One-Third of a Nation was produced by Philip Barber and directed by Lem Ward for the Federal Theatre. Its amazing tenement set, designed by Howard Bay, played a major role in the play's great success in New York. Its author, Arthur Arent, is now engaged in radio-script writing. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship to continue his experiments in playwrighting.

An abridged version of the play follows. The narrative bridges are the editor's.

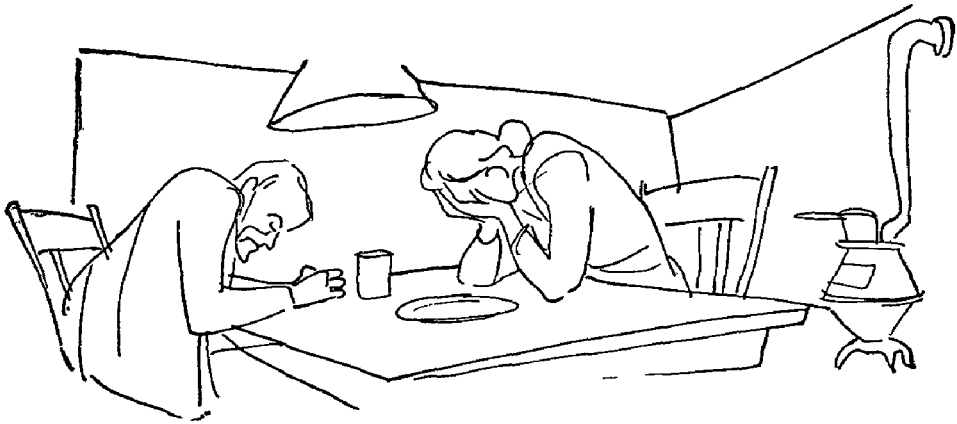
BEFORE READING

1. One effective introduction to a class reading of this play would be Roosevelt's Second Inaugural Address (delivered on January 20, 1937), especially the paragraph from which the title of the play is taken. Another would be Hallie Flanagan's *Florida Wheel,* a rhythmic account of the Federal Theatre.

2. Helpful to a greater appreciation of the play is the reading of the introductions to the two published volumes of Federal Theatre plays, and of short accounts of the following men who are mentioned in the script: Goelet, Wendell, Rhinelander, Astor, James Gordon Bennett. (See Gustavus Myers' *The History of the Great American Fortunes.*)

3. Howard Bay's tenement set, built on the stage of the Adelphi Theatre in New York, added enormously to the effective production of *One-Third of a Nation* by the Federal Theatre. Try to reconstruct the picture of the set from the description which precedes the play; then imagine what must happen to the set at the end of the play.

4. Words to look up: *dishabille, foreclose, amortization, inertia,* and the expressions *et supra* and *ibid.,* used in the notes. The word *spot* used in the stage directions means, of course, spotlight.



ONE–THIRD OF A NATION

The house we are facing is a slum tenement – a squalid old structure with dark halls, rickety stairs, dingy rooms. A little girl is filling a large pail with water from the cellar faucet; two small boys are throwing dice on the second-floor steps; in one of the open cubicles a young girl dozes on a chair while her mother prepares a lunch pail for the father about to leave for the night shift at the factory. Somewhere a victrola is grinding out a dance tune. Through the microphone suddenly blares the voice of the Living Newspaper. . . .

LOUDSPEAKER. February, 1924 – This might be 397 Madison Street, New York.[1] It might be 245 Halsey Street, Brooklyn,[2] or Jackson Avenue and 10th Street, Long Island City.[3]

[*Wisps of smoke come from the third floor, the basement, and the cellar. The* BOYS *sniff, look about, and go back to shooting craps. A moment later dense puffs of smoke appear from cellar and basement. A* MAN, *coughing, comes up from the cellar. He goes to get water at the faucet and the* BOYS *run over to question him. They all realize that the building is on fire and one of the boys excitedly starts to run up the stairs. The small one, having remained downstairs, yells up to him, "Hey, where are you going?" The* FIRST BOY, *unheeding, continues on his way up the stairs to warn the occupants on the upper floors. The other* BOY *starts to follow him up. As the* FIRST

1 *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
2 *Ibid.*, February 21, 1924.
3 *Ibid.*, February 24, 1924.

"One-Third of a Nation" by Arthur Arent. Written for the Federal Theatre Project. Reprinted by Courtesy of Random House, Inc.

BOY reaches the third floor, PEOPLE in various modes of attire and dishabille emerge from the various apartments and near-by tenements. The screech of fire sirens and the clang of bells are heard. From this point on, the excitement mounts. PEOPLE on the third and fourth floors and in the various cubicles start running, taking with them any personal belongings that they are able to lay hands on, knocking on doors, waking up people in the other apartments. A crowd of ONLOOKERS and PASSERS-BY starts to gather. In the crowd is a POLICEMAN who bangs his club on the ground and blows his whistle. A FIREMAN appears with a searchlight playing his light all over the structure. A Jewish man (MR. ROSEN)[4] enters, right, agitatedly pointing to the building and begging the POLICEMAN to let him go up. The POLICEMAN refuses and holds him back with much difficulty. During the above a MAN comes out of window and appears on the fire escape in tenement, left, twenty-four feet above stage. The CROWD sees him. He puts his foot over the railing of the fire escape. As his foot touches the ladder one hook gives way and it starts swinging crazily, shutting off his means of escape. He tries to clamber back in through the window but a cloud of smoke and flame blasts out, hitting him in the face. He is trapped on the fire escape. As the CROWD sees this, a cry of "look" is heard, over the screaming of sirens and clanging of bells. They rush to a spot directly underneath the fire escape. As they reach the spot they point to the MAN above who has been cowering on the fire escape. They freeze as—]

[BLACKOUT]

LOUDSPEAKER. Thirteen persons lost their lives in that fire on Madison Street—four men, two women, and seven children. Another man was killed in an unsuccessful attempt to make his way down a fire-escape ladder into the yard. When the fire department arrived, the building was in flames. Only a few of those inside could be reached.[5] What started this fire? Why did it spread so quickly? Why was the death toll so high?

[*This scene is played in front of a black screen lowered from the flies. Lights. A man, MR. ROSEN, seated, right. He is the one who tried to get back into the burning building. He is dazed and a little cowed, seemingly absorbed in something inside himself, puzzling it out. Upstage, center on three-step, are seated in a row the INSPECTORS of the Fire Department, Building Department, and the Old Build-*

[4] Fictional character.

[5] *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

ing Bureau of the Tenement House Department. Downstage, left center, conspicuously empty, a chair. All attention is focused on ROSEN *and the* COMMISSIONER, *who stands interrogating him.*]

COMMISSIONER (*sympathetically but a little worn, as though this has been going on for some time and he has almost despaired of getting an answer*). . . . and now, Mr Rosen, won't you tell us what happened when you came home? (*No answer.* ROSEN *just stares ahead, still absorbed, still trying to puzzle it out.*) I realize how difficult this is, but we're trying to get at what caused this fire, and you've got to help us. That's how we can prevent more fires, by finding out about these things and correcting them. (*No answer. Almost pleadingly.*) Mr. Rosen. . . .

ROSEN (*turns his head, regards* COMMISSIONER; *then slowly*). They no let me into the house. (*He stares out again.*)

COMMISSIONER (*gratefully*). Thank you. And then what happened?

ROSEN. My wife burn up. In bed. My two children burn up, in bed. (*He faces* COMMISSIONER.) *Sons!* Mine! Two!

COMMISSIONER (*eagerly*). And then?

ROSEN. And then . . . They no let me into the house. (*Relapses into his brooding.*)

COMMISSIONER (*giving it up as a bad job*). That's all. Thank you. (*Regards* ROSEN *for a moment — then turns quickly and sharply to* FIRE INSPECTOR.) Are you the Fire Inspector?

FIRE INSPECTOR. Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER. What do you know about this?

FIRE INSPECTOR. The flames started in the cellar.[6]

COMMISSIONER. How?

FIRE INSPECTOR. Probably in a pile of rubbish. We're not sure.

COMMISSIONER. What ignited the rubbish?

FIRE INSPECTOR. Cigarette, maybe. We don't know that, either.

COMMISSIONER. What happened then?

FIRE INSPECTOR. The halls went up and the stairways. That's why they couldn't get out. Then the walls caved in. You couldn't stop it because the wainscoting[7] was made of wood. That carried the flames right up like somebody ran along it with a torch.[8]

COMMISSIONER. Is wooden wainscoting a violation?

FIRE INSPECTOR (*looking at* COMMISSIONER, *then nodding his head in di-*

[6] Digest of Report of New York Board of Fire Underwriters on February 19, 1924, Tenement Fire at 397 Madison St., New York. Municipal Reference Library.

[7] The lower part of a wall when finished differently from the upper part.

[8] Digest of Report, *New York Times,* February 19, 1924.

rection of BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR). Well, er . . . Maybe you'd better ask the Building Department about that.

COMMISSIONER (*crosses to* BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR). Are you the Inspector of the Building Department?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER. When was this house built?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. 1884. It's an old-law tenement.[9]

COMMISSIONER. What are the old-law tenements?

BUILDING INSPECTOR. Well, most of the brownstones, wooden frame houses, tenements, and every building that was put up before the law of 1901.[10]

COMMISSIONER. What law was that?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. It said that any building erected after that date had to have certain improvements, like a separate water closet for each apartment and adequate fire escapes.[11]

COMMISSIONER. And those already built and still in use?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. They had to conform to the new law in certain respects.

COMMISSIONER. What respects?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. They had to have fire escapes.[12]

COMMISSIONER. How about wooden wainscoting?[13] Is that a violation?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. In a new house, yes.

COMMISSIONER. In an old-law tenement?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. No!

COMMISSIONER. Have you recently inspected the premises at 397 Madison Street?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR. Well, er, that comes under the duties of the Tenement House Department.

COMMISSIONER (*crosses to* TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR). Are you the Tenement House Inspector?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER. Did you re-examine the premises at 397 Madison Street?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. Yes, sir. About six months ago.[14]

[9] Report of New York State Board of Housing, Legislative Document (1932) No. 84, p. 11.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[12] *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

[13] New York City Tenement House Commission — interview by Living Newspaper staff with Inspection Department.

[14] *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

COMMISSIONER. What did you find?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. An adequate number of fire escapes with vertical ladders as required by law.[15]

COMMISSIONER. Is the collection of rubbish in the cellar a violation?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. It is.

COMMISSIONER. Did you find any there?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. No.

COMMISSIONER. But you haven't been there in six months. Why?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. Because we haven't received any complaint.

COMMISSIONER. You mean a house is never inspected unless a complaint has been received?[16]

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. Exactly.

COMMISSIONER (*sharply*). But you did receive one six months ago?[17]

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER (*eager to discover a violation*). What was it for?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. Roaches.

COMMISSIONER. Roaches?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. Roaches.

COMMISSIONER. Why must you wait for complaints before an inspection is made? Why don't you have periodic inspections?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR (*distinctly enumerating statistics*). We have 224 inspectors to cover 105,000 tenements[18] and apartment houses. It would take our entire staff three years to visit each one of these houses *once*.[19]

COMMISSIONER. I see. . . . Just one more thing, Mr. Inspector. In the light of your years of experience in the Department, would you consider this building a firetrap?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR. If that building *is* a firetrap, then so *is* every old-law tenement in New York City[20] — and there are 67,000 of them![21]

COMMISSIONER. That's all, gentlemen. Thank you. My report will state that a fire of undetermined origin broke out in the basement of the

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] New York City Tenement House Department.

[17] *New York Times,* February 19, 1924.

[18] Langdon Post, New York City Tenement House Commissioner, 1937.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *New York Times,* February 19, 1924.

[21] Report of the New York State Board of Housing, Legislative Document (1932), No. 84.

house at 397 Madison Street. According to your testimony there were no violations and all the laws were scrupulously . . . (*They all rise and prepare to leave.*)

LOUDSPEAKER (*breaking in*). Just a moment, Mr. Commissioner. Has *everybody* testified?

COMMISSIONER. Why, yes. . . .

LOUDSPEAKER. How about that empty chair? Don't you think there ought to be somebody in it? (COMMISSIONER *shakes head in bewilderment.*) Well, you want to get at the bottom of this thing, don't you?

COMMISSIONER. Certainly.

LOUDSPEAKER. And you want to prevent more fires, by finding out about these things and correcting them, don't you?

COMMISSIONER. That's what I'm here for.

LOUDSPEAKER (*with finality*). Then let's call the landlord!

COMMISSIONER. Oh, no, I can't do that!

LOUDSPEAKER. Why not?

COMMISSIONER. The law doesn't allow me to. Only in a clear case of violations are we permitted to call in the landlord.[22] And you heard what they (*nodding to* INSPECTORS) said: There were no violations.

LOUDSPEAKER. Well, that settles it. Of course, we can't break the law. (*There is a pause; then, insidiously.*) But wouldn't you like to know what he's got to say, anyhow . . . just, sort of, off the record?

COMMISSIONER. I certainly would!

LOUDSPEAKER. Fine. I'll call him! (*Calling.*) Mr. Schultz![23] Mr. Schultz! (*As* SCHULTZ *appears, left.*) Would you mind testifying about your house on Madison Street?

SCHULTZ (*a bit suspicious*). No, I wouldn't mind. Where do I go?

LOUDSPEAKER. Right over there, center stage. (*As* SCHULTZ *comes to chair down left.*) Mr. Commissioner, this is Carl Schultz. Mr. Schultz, this is the Commissioner. (SCHULTZ *and* COMMISSIONER *shake hands.*) There you are. The witness is yours. (SCHULTZ *starts a bit as he sees* ROSEN, *then sits on chair.* INSPECTORS *sit again.*)

COMMISSIONER. Now, Mr. Schultz, were there any violations in your house? (SCHULTZ *hesitates and looks up at the* LOUDSPEAKER *for advice.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. Go on, Carl. It's all off the record!

SCHULTZ. Well, maybe a few. But they were all small and had nothing to do with the fire.

[22] New York State Statute Tenement House Act, 1909, Section 143.

[23] Fictional character — scene creative.

COMMISSIONER. Do you live in that house?
SCHULTZ (*looking up at him*). I do not!
COMMISSIONER. Why not?
SCHULTZ (*slowly*). Well, er, I got to live near my butcher store uptown.
COMMISSIONER. Is that the only reason?
SCHULTZ (*slyly*). That's the only one I tell you about!
COMMISSIONER. I see. . . . Now tell me, why did you never renovate that house . . . so it would be a better place to live in, and not such a firetrap?
SCHULTZ. Well, first, I don't have any money. Second, it's not any worse than any other tenement on the block; and third, if I do have the money and do fix it up, I have to raise the rent to get my money back. The tenants, they have no money to pay and everybody moves out!
COMMISSIONER. Did you make any money on your house, Mr. Schultz?
SCHULTZ. Some years, yes, some years, no. (*Shakes head, sadly.*) No, it is a bad investment.
LOUDSPEAKER (*suddenly sharp*). Do you want to sell, Mr. Schultz?
SCHULTZ (*a bargaining look comes into his eyes; he becomes cautious*). Sell? Well, maybe!
LOUDSPEAKER. I'll give you just what you paid for it, even though the house today in 1924 . . . is practically worthless. (SCHULTZ *shakes his head, turning it down.*) When you bought that house twenty-five years ago it was almost brand-new. Today it's just a rubbish heap — a slum. Come on, Mr. Schultz, you can get rid of it without losing a cent! (SCHULTZ *shakes his head again.*) Perhaps you don't understand. Let me show you what happens when people try to get rid of something they've used for a long time.

[*Spot picks out* MAN *and automobile* SALESMAN, *right.*]

MAN. I'd like to sell my car.
SALESMAN. What make?
MAN. Dodge.
SALESMAN. What model?
MAN. Sedan.
SALESMAN. What condition?
MAN. It's four years old. Cost me $2,300.[24]
SALESMAN. I'll give you five hundred.[25]
MAN. Five hundred! Why, it's only four years old.
SALESMAN. Mister, the minute you bought that car it became second-

[24] *Branham's Automobile Reference Book, 1928*, p. 56.
[25] *New York American*, June 22, 1924 — classified advertisements.

hand. Every day you hold on to it it's worth less. Come around and see me next year, and I'll give you three hundred.[26]

MAN. Five hundred dollars!

SALESMAN. Five hundred dollars! And you'd better grab it before I change my mind!

[BLACKOUT *on the* TWO MEN.]

LOUDSPEAKER. D'you see, Mr. Schultz, that's what happens.

SCHULTZ (*self-satisfied*). Not to me, it won't.

LOUDSPEAKER. No matter what you have—furniture, clothing, a bicycle or a yacht—the longer you hold on to it and use it, the lower the price drops.

SCHULTZ (*leans forward*). You know the trouble with that fellow? He didn't invest his money in real estate.

LOUDSPEAKER. In a house, you mean?

SCHULTZ. No. My house is just like you say—a rubbish heap, a slum. Ah, but the land it's on. That's different!

LOUDSPEAKER. Oh, the land!

SCHULTZ. In a big city like this, land never goes down. If you hold on to it long enough it goes up, all the time! I cannot fix up the apartments, I cannot lower the rents, why? Because the land cost too much! I pay more than it's worth when I buy. I get still more when I sell. Each time rents go up, up, up!

LOUDSPEAKER. But, Mr. Schultz, you're speculating, and if you're successful, the standard of living of six million people[27] goes down. They will have to pay more in rent and do without other things they need.

SCHULTZ (*rises, almost hysterically*). Speculating? Sure, I am! And so is every other landlord who expects to make anything out of his investment! I tell you, it's land, land, *land!* That's where the money is! And I don't sell mine without a nice big profit! (*There is a pause. For the first time* ROSEN *looks up. Slowly he rises and crosses to* SCHULTZ.)

ROSEN (*softly*). And me? What about me?

SCHULTZ (*slowly, earnestly*). Mr. Rosen, believe me, I'm sorry for you. I'll do anything I can to help you. . . . But if you can only afford to pay $24 a month, you'll have to live in my house or one just like it—and you cannot blame me. (*A pause—even more slowly.*) You'll have to go back into history and blame whatever it was that

[26] *Ibid.*, June 19, 1925.

[27] *1935 World Almanac*, p. 483, Population New York City, 1924.

made New York City real estate the soundest and most profitable speculation on the face of the earth! (*They regard each other.*)

[BLACKOUT]

Yes, we'll have to go back in history. Let us look into the period of the Revolution. A LANDOWNER *is approaching, carrying two stanchions under one arm and a grass mat rolled up under the other. . . .*

LOUDSPEAKER. Oh, hello. Who're you?

LANDOWNER. Well, I might be a lot of people. My name might be Rhinelander, Astor, Goelet, Wendell, or—er, Schultz.

LOUDSPEAKER. Schultz?

LANDOWNER. Schultz.

LOUDSPEAKER. That's very interesting. And what do you do for a living, if I may ask?

LANDOWNER. I put my money in the ground.

LOUDSPEAKER. You mean you bury it?

LANDOWNER. No. I invest it.

LOUDSPEAKER. Now we're getting some place! What's that thing under your arm?

LANDOWNER. That's it—land! . . . (*Lights come up as he puts down the stanchions and begins to unroll the grass mat, laying it on the apron step.*) . . . and I own it!

LOUDSPEAKER. Looks like you've got quite a lot of it there.

LANDOWNER (*still unrolling it*). Five acres. Just bought it. Cost me $200.

LOUDSPEAKER. Whereabouts is your property, Mister?

LANDOWNER. *Way* uptown—Broadway and Canal Street. (*He picks up one of the stanchions bearing the street markings; this he places beside his grass plot, right.*) That's Broadway—and that's Canal. . . . (*Points—Broadway upstage—Canal, right angle to Broadway.*) The City's down there a couple of miles. (*He places the other stanchion upstage center on grass plot. It reads: "This Is Mine. Keep Off!" He stands at a distance, admiring the layout. Then, with a wave of his hand.*) There you are!

LOUDSPEAKER. Very pretty. And what are you going to do with it?

LANDOWNER. I'm going to sit here on my land, and make a lot of money.

LOUDSPEAKER. How can you make any money just sitting?

LANDOWNER. Watch me. (*He sits down, gets himself comfortable, then begins to whistle, nonchalantly. As he sits there, under his stanchion, the voice of the* TOWN CRIER *is heard a long way off. It is fol-*

lowed immediately by a SECOND VOICE — *not the* LOUDSPEAKER. *This is sharp, metallic, unemotional.*)

VOICE OF TOWN CRIER (*bell ringing*). Cornwallis defeated at Yorktown! Cornwallis defeated at Yorktown! Eight thousand British surrender to Washington![28] Cornwallis defeated at Yorktown!

SECOND VOICE (*off stage*). New York City, 1781 — population, 18,000.[29]

LANDOWNER. 18,000! Town's growing up. (*Looks off stage, at the town. Stands up and starts walking around the grass plot.*) In a little while it's going to get kind of crowded down there and then I'll . . . (*He breaks off, then starts whistling again. He stands, right, pleased with himself and the announcement. A* MAN *enters, left. He is poorly dressed in clothes of the same period. He mops his brow, looking for a place to sit. He sees the green patch and sinks into a small corner, some distance away. He starts to stretch happily.*)

LANDOWNER (*pointing to sign*). Hey! Can't you read? Get off!

MAN. Can't I just sit here for a minute?

LANDOWNER (*thinking it over doubtfully*). Well, maybe a minute . . . but that's all.

MAN (*sits, then, looking around*). Certainly is nice to get away from all them people. City's growin' too fast . . . (*Pats the grass appreciatively.*) . . . Certainly is nice out here, real country. Say, you know what! I'd like to build me a house right . . . (*Waves his finger and places it in the center of the plot.*). . . here!

LANDOWNER. You don't say! . . . Right here? (*Pointing.*) Got any money?

MAN. Well — er — no.

LANDOWNER. Then you can't live here.

MAN. But you know, a man's got to have a place to live.

LANDOWNER. Well, well, well.

MAN. You can do without a lot of things, but you've got to have a place to live.

LANDOWNER. That's very interesting. Come around and tell me about it some time. (*He shoos him away.*) Your minute's up now. You'll have to get off my land.

MAN (*rising*). That's what everybody says — Get off my land! Get off my land! *You can't live here!*

LANDOWNER. And they're right, too. If you want to have a place of your own, you'll have to buy it, the way I did.

[28] *Battles of the American Revolution*, by Henry P. Carrington, p. 643.

[29] *A Century of Population and Growth*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1909.

MAN. But I haven't got any money. Mister, I couldn't even buy —this much! (*Marks off a tiny segment in one corner. Starts off, left.*)

LANDOWNER. Say . . . Do you work?

MAN (*stops and turns*). Certainly I work.

LANDOWNER. Do you get paid for working?

MAN (*getting angry*). Certainly I get paid for working.

LANDOWNER (*slowly*). How would you like to live on that patch over there in the corner? (*Pointing to left corner.*)

MAN (*eagerly, pointing to spot*). This one?

LANDOWNER. That's it. But not so much of it. (*Gesture, cutting it down.*)

MAN. This much? (*Marks off smaller piece.*)

LANDOWNER. No-o.

MAN (*marks off still smaller piece*). This much?

LANDOWNER. Well, er . . .

MAN. This much? (*Marks off very tiny segment at extreme corner.*)

LANDOWNER (*heartily—as though looking it over*). That's right. . . . Now that's a very fine lot. Plenty of air and sunshine, and a good view.

MAN (*stands off a bit and looks it over*). Pretty far away from the stagecoach line . . . and it seems a bit swampy. Must be plenty of mosquitoes around here. (LANDOWNER *turns away but keeps an eye on him over his shoulder.* MAN *pats spot affectionately.*) But it's a place to live.

LANDOWNER. Fine. You can live there for twenty years at fifty dollars a year.

MAN. You mean you'll lease it to me? (LANDOWNER *nods.*) But fifty dol- . . . Say, how much did this whole thing cost you?

LANDOWNER. Two hundred dollars.

MAN. In twenty years you'll be getting five times that much for just a little piece! (*As* LANDOWNER *nods.*) Not only that—but I'll have to give the piece back.

LANDOWNER. When I bought this place ten years ago I couldn't lease the whole thing for fifty dollars. It was . . . (*looking at* LOUDSPEAKER) too far outside the town. . . . But I've been sitting on it.

MAN. Sitting on it! Why?

LANDOWNER (*slowly, to* MAN). Because I figured that some day *you'd* have to have a place to live.

MAN. Well, I guess you were right. (*Starts to sit on land.*)

LANDOWNER. Hey! Fifty dollars, please. (*Holds out hand for money as* MAN *has seated himself.*)

MAN (*rising*). All right, all right. . . . Here's your money! (*Takes pouch from pocket and pours out the silver dollars as* LANDOWNER *pockets them.*)

VOICE OF THE TOWN CRIER (*bell ringing*). Thomas Jefferson elected President! Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, the third President of the United States! Jefferson elected! [30]

SECOND VOICE. New York City, 1800. Population reaches 79,216.[31] (LANDOWNER *and* MAN *are seated contentedly.*)

LANDOWNER. Seventy-nine thousand! Not bad. Not bad at all. (*Whistles happily. Rises. Enter* SECOND, THIRD, *and* FOURTH TENANTS, *right. They look around, see plot and are about to sit down.*) Hey! (*Points to sign significantly.*)

SECOND TENANT [MAN]. Can't I just . . . ?

LANDOWNER. No.

THIRD TENANT [MAN]. Do you suppose you could . . . ?

LANDOWNER. No.

FOURTH TENANT [MAN]. But the town's overcrowded!

LANDOWNER. Is it?

SECOND TENANT [MAN]. There's no place to live!

LANDOWNER. Well, well, well.

THIRD TENANT [MAN]. And a man's got to have a place to live.

LANDOWNER. That's right. It'll cost you a hundred dollars a year.

SECOND TENANT. A hundred a year! (MAN *beckons to* FOURTH TENANT *and whispers in his ear.*)

FOURTH TENANT (*excitedly, to* LANDOWNER). Say, he says he's only paying you fifty!

LANDOWNER (*grinning*). Wait until next year when his lease is up!

SECOND TENANT. A hundred a year!

LANDOWNER. That's right. That's what we're all getting for property in this select residential neighborhood.

[*As the* MEN *stand hesitating,* TWO MEN *enter, right. They stop to look at the land. They are interested in it. They are about to approach the* LANDOWNER.]

THIRD TENANT (*hurriedly*). Here you are. Here's my hundred.

SECOND TENANT (*same*). One hundred dollars, yes, sir.

FOURTH TENANT (*counting his while handing it over*). One hundred, yes, sir! (*They all hand the money over; the* TWO MEN *change their minds and walk off.*)

VOICE OF TOWN CRIER (*bell ringing*). The Canal is finished! The Erie

[30] *New York Commercial Advertiser,* February 17, 1801, *et supra.*
[31] *1935 World Almanac,* p. 483.

Canal! Three hundred and sixty-three miles from Buffalo to Albany![32]

SECOND VOICE. 1845! The Great Immigration begins.[33] New York's population reaches 696,115.[34] (*The* FOUR TENANTS *are now seated on the carpet. There is still plenty of room for more. The first sounds of building are heard.*)

LANDOWNER. 696,000! Did you hear that! It won't be long now . . . (*From this point action speeds up.* TEN MEN *and* WOMEN *enter, right and left — five from each side. One is about to sit.*) Hey! (*Points to sign.*)

FIFTH TENANT [WOMAN]. But . . . !

LANDOWNER. I know. It's crowded.

SIXTH TENANT [MAN]. But . . . !

LANDOWNER. I know. You can do without a lot of things.

SEVENTH TENANT [WOMAN]. But . . . !

LANDOWNER. But you can't do without a place to live! Two hundred dollars, please.

EIGHTH TENANT (*without any hesitation whatsoever*). Two hundred. Here you are! (EIGHTH TENANT *starts to pay.*)

LANDOWNER (*looks at him in amazement, having expected an argument; then seeing how easy it is*). Two hundred and fifty dollars is my price.

FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH TENANTS. Two-fifty! (*They rush up, pay him and tumble to the carpet.*)

LANDOWNER. Three hundred! (*Shrugs shoulders as if to say, "Take it or leave it."* THREE MORE PEOPLE *pay —* LANDOWNER *points out their spots, and they sit.* LANDOWNER *crosses down and looks over his land for more space to sell. By this time the* TENANTS *are sitting in restricted, cramped positions. They can hardly move. Their arms are pressed close to their sides. In these positions they are all engaged in going through some part of their daily routine. For instance, one is shaving; another is reading a newspaper; another is trying to eat; a fourth is washing himself. Still another is attempting to tie his shoelace. Needless to say, all these activities must be cramped and hemmed in or the point of the scene is lost. They continue right through the scene until the blackout. The remaining* THREE PROSPECTIVE TENANTS *stand downstage.*)

LANDOWNER (*to the* PROSPECTS). Sorry, folks, that's all there is. . . . All

[32] *Encylopedia Americana*, p. 485.
[33] *The Tenement House Problem*, edited by De Forest and Veiller, Vol. 2, p. 7.
[34] *1935 World Almanac*, p. 483.

rented and busy as a beehive, that's what we are. (*The* PROSPECTS *start to exit.*)

LANDOWNER (*he calls the last man, who is very fat;* FAT MAN *stays behind as others exit*). Say—wait a minute! . . . (*His roving eye has lighted on a few blades of green grass still visible at the far end of the carpet. He bends down to see it, then, with a slight push, he forces all in the first row to topple over.*) . . . There you are, sir, the last parcel! Almost missed it, I did. (*As* FAT MAN *bends down to look at it.*) It is a little small, but right in the heart of the business section. The lucky man who rents this won't have to walk far to work. . . . It'll cost you ten dollars a square foot for this.

VERY FAT MAN. I'll take it. (*He hands over the money, kneels down, looks at it. He backs away to get a running start, then runs and jumps on to his spot. He bumps the* TENANTS, *who are annoyed. Then, music.*) "Home! Sweet Home!"

LANDOWNER. Thank you, folks. Thank you very much indeed. (TENANTS *on carpet continue their activities.* LANDOWNER *crosses, center.*)

LANDOWNER (*to* LOUDSPEAKER, *jingling money in pocket*). Not bad, eh?

LOUDSPEAKER. How much is your property worth now, mister?

LANDOWNER. Oh, about forty thousand dollars.

LOUDSPEAKER. That's a lot of money! To what do you attribute your success?

LANDOWNER. Well, I had faith in the development and growth of the city.

LOUDSPEAKER. I see. Tell me, mister: who developed it? Who made it grow?

LANDOWNER. The people. Everybody. Me, too.

LOUDSPEAKER. No, not you. You just sat. Remember? That city was developed through the industry of 696,000 people. (*Suddenly.*) Look at them! They built the city! What did you do?

LANDOWNER (*slowly*). I remembered that they had to have a place to live in while they were building it. . . . And don't forget, I didn't break any laws! Everything was honest and aboveboard! All the smartest people of my generation were doing it!

LOUDSPEAKER. For instance?

LANDOWNER. For instance, Robert Goelet!

[*Fanfare. Spot on* GOELET, *on three-step left.*]

GOELET. Before 1850 I bought a farm running from 14th Street to 47th Street and Fifth Avenue.[35] I advised my descendants to keep on

[35] *History of the Great American Fortunes,* Gustavus Myers, p. 178.

buying uptown lots ahead of the crowd. . . .[36] They did, and when my grandsons died, their combined fortune was in the neighborhood of 140 million dollars![37]

LANDOWNER. 140 million! That makes me feel pretty small!

[*Fanfare. Spot on* WENDELL *on three-step.*]

WENDELL. My family made fifty million dollars in New York real estate.

LANDOWNER. That's John Wendell.

WENDELL. To make it we followed four cardinal rules: never to mortgage, never to sell, never to repair, and never to forget that Broadway moved uptown at the rate of ten blocks in ten years![38]

LANDOWNER. And here's the Granddaddy of us all—John Jacob Astor!

[*Fanfare. Spot on* ASTOR *on three-step.*]

ASTOR. In my lifetime I invested two million dollars in Manhattan real estate. When I died in 1848, it was worth about twenty million! . . . I never failed to foreclose when I could and I didn't believe in coddling my tenants when they couldn't pay the rent![39]

LANDOWNER. Thank you, gentlemen. (*Bows to them. Lights out on the* THREE MEN. *To* LOUDSPEAKER.) You see, the best people, the founders of some of our greatest American families. (*Crosses down.*) Everybody did it! That is, everybody who was smart enough! And nobody thought it was wrong. Nobody, do you hear!

[*Spot on* BENNETT *at two-step.*]

BENNETT. Well, not exactly nobody.

LANDOWNER (*unenthusiastically*). Oh, hello! (*To* LOUDSPEAKER.) This is James Gordon Bennett of the *Herald*. . . . (*They bow.*) He's got a lot of crazy ideas.

BENNETT. John Jacob Astor died today. He left a will disposing of property worth twenty million dollars among his various descendants. . . . Now if I had been an associate of Mr. Astor, the first idea I would have put into his head was this: At least one-half of his immense property belongs to the people of the City of New York. During the last fifty years of this man's life, his property has been augmented and increased in value by the aggregate intelligence, industry, enterprise, and commerce of the citizens of New York. It is therefore as plain as two and two make four, that at least half of

[36] *The Golden Earth,* Arthur Pound, p. 295.
[37] *History of the Great American Fortunes,* Gustavus Myers, p. 180.
[38] *The Golden Earth,* Arthur Pound, pp. 286–87.
[39] *The Life and Ventures of the Original John Jacob Astor,* by Elizabeth L. Gebhard, p. 246.

his immense estate has accrued to him by the industry of the community![40] (BENNETT *exits.*)

LANDOWNER. Crazy as a bedbug! Everybody's out of step but Jim Bennett! (*Starts off.*) Well, so long!

LOUDSPEAKER. Hey, where are you going now?

LANDOWNER. Up the line a ways. Just bought a piece of property way uptown—around Fourteenth Street.

LOUDSPEAKER. But what about those people? Look at them!

LANDOWNER. Oh, them! They're all right! They'll be here when I come back on rent day!

LOUDSPEAKER. They will? Why?

LANDOWNER. Because a man's got to have a place to live! (*Pause.*) So long! (*Picks up signs and crosses off.* TENANTS *remain, and as music starts, they go into their own individual occupations.*)

[BLACKOUT]

And still the city grows. Large numbers of immigrants begin to pour into the city. Conditions become more crowded, houses more squalid. Epidemics break out. Commissions are appointed. Investigations are begun. Laws are passed. Yet the old-law tenements remain, filled with their thousands of poor dwellers.

The LITTLE MAN *wants to know why. He keeps prodding everybody with questions. . . .*

GUIDE. Well, why haven't you got these new houses? Why aren't they building new ones every day to replace the old ones?

[*Light on* LANDLORD, *who enters, left, crosses to center.*]

LANDLORD. I'll tell you why.

LITTLE MAN. Oh, hello. Who're you?

LANDLORD. I'm the fellow who can answer that question. I'm a landlord.

LITTLE MAN. A landlord. Well, well. (*He introduces him to* GUIDE.) Mister Guide, I want you to meet a landlord. (GUIDE *bows.*)

LANDLORD. Now the reason there's no incentive to the commercial builder to build for the low-income group is this: there's no money in it.[41] That's simple, isn't it?

LITTLE MAN (*crosses center to* LANDLORD). But why is there no money in it? I don't want a marble palace. All I want is a little light and air, fair-sized rooms, and a few modern plumbing gadgets!

[40] *History of the Great American Fortunes,* Gustavus Myers, p. 148.
[41] *A Housing Program for the United States,* Nathan Straus, pp. 5–6.

LANDLORD. You got any ideas what goes into the building and operation of a house?

LITTLE MAN. Sure. First, the land has to be bought . . .

LANDLORD. Uh-huh.

LITTLE MAN. . . . and the contractor and laborers paid . . .

LANDLORD. That's right.

LITTLE MAN. . . . there's taxes and the janitor, and . . . and . . .

LANDLORD. Go on.

LITTLE MAN. . . . and . . . and . . . well, I guess that's all.

LANDLORD. You guess that's all! Well, let me show you something! (*Beckons off.*) Hey, come here! (*Light on* FOURTEEN MEN *and a* WOMAN *who enter left and right. Music.*)

LITTLE MAN (*puzzled*). Say, who are all these people?

LANDLORD. Don't rush me. That's what I'm going to show you. (*To* MEN *and* WOMAN *who stand upstage.*) Line up over here, where everybody can see you. . . . That's right. (THREE MEN *come to apron step and line up, left* — LANDOWNER, *center,* FIRST BROKER, *right,* SECOND BROKER, *left. To* LITTLE MAN *and* GUIDE.) Now, you two get out of the way . . . (*Pause.* LITTLE MAN *and* GUIDE *stand at two-step, right.*) Now, I'm a philanthropic sort of guy, see, and I love my fellow men. So I decide to build a house where they can have light — and air — and — and — what else do you want?

LOUDSPEAKER. A few modern plumbing gadgets!

LANDLORD. A few modern plumbing gadgets. . . . Now I don't want to make anything out of it — much! Just a couple of dollars a year so I don't have to depend on the Old Age Security Act. (*Crosses in front of line below apron step.*) Now I want to rent my apartments for about seven or eight dollars a room [42] — remember that, seven or eight dollars a room! — that's for the low-income brackets. . . . So I draw my money out of the bank and I go to work. . . . (*Crosses to* MAN *at end of line, left, who has just begun to whistle. This happens each time — the* MAN *about to be approached whistles. To first in line.*) I want to buy a piece of your land on the East Side.[43]

LANDOWNER. You'll have to consult my brokers — Pepper, Salt, Mustard,

[42] Average rental for "First Houses" — $6.05. "First Houses" can be considered as a yardstick for low-income rentals in New York City. Booklet, "First Houses," New York City Housing Authority, p. 26.

[43] Land-buying transactions based on figures estimated by Real Estate Board of New York, 12 East 41st Street, New York City, in a survey made October 1, 1936 — data furnished by National Association of Builders, Owners and Managers.

and Cider, 220 Broadway! (*Indicates* MAN *next to him, center.* LANDLORD *crosses.*)

LANDLORD. You Mister Pepper?

FIRST BROKER. No, I'm Salt. What can I do for you?

LANDLORD. I'd like to buy a piece of his property.

FIRST BROKER. Where's your broker?

LANDLORD. Do I have to have one, too?

FIRST BROKER. Certainly. I can highly recommend the firm of Beans, Beans, Beans, and Spinach. (*Indicates* MAN *next to him, right.* LANDLORD *crosses.*)

LANDLORD. You Mister Beans?

SECOND BROKER. No, I'm Spinach. What can I do for you?

LANDLORD. I want to buy a piece of his property. Ask him how much he wants.

SECOND BROKER (*to* FIRST BROKER). How much?

FIRST BROKER (*to* LANDOWNER). How much?

LANDOWNER (*to* FIRST BROKER). Ten dollars a square foot!

FIRST BROKER (*to* SECOND BROKER). Ten-fifty a square foot!

SECOND BROKER (*to* LANDLORD). Eleven dollars a square foot!

LANDLORD (*to* SECOND BROKER). But he said ten-fifty!

SECOND BROKER. That's my commission!

LANDLORD (*to* FIRST BROKER). And *he* said ten dollars!

FIRST BROKER. That's my commission!

LANDLORD (*doubtfully*). Eleven dollars!

LANDOWNER (*poking* FIRST BROKER *in the ribs*). Tell him I just sold a small piece for twelve dollars.

FIRST BROKER (*poking* SECOND BROKER). He says he just sold a fairly large piece for sixteen dollars.

SECOND BROKER (*poking* LANDLORD). He says he just sold a square block for nineteen dollars!

LANDLORD. But eleven dollars! That's an awful lot of money! Can't we shave it down just a little? (*He looks at* SECOND BROKER *who turns to* FIRST BROKER, *who turns to* LANDOWNER.)

LANDOWNER. Ten dollars, that's my price.

FIRST BROKER. Ten-fifty, that's his price.

SECOND BROKER. Eleven dollars, that's his price. (THREE MEN *step back. After group has spoken they remain frozen in their last positions.*)

LANDLORD (*a deep sigh*). O.K. I'll take it. (*Hands over money to* SECOND BROKER.) Well, now I'm a man of property.

LITTLE MAN. What'd it cost you? (TWO MEN *step to apron step; they*

stand right — FIRST BUILDING SUPPLY MAN, *and left* — SECOND BUILDING SUPPLY MAN.)

LANDLORD. Plenty. (*Crosses to* MAN *right* — FIRST BUILDING SUPPLY MAN.) I want to build a house. Four stories high, walk-up, plenty of light and air, and . . . and . . .

LITTLE MAN. Plumbing gadgets!

LANDLORD. Yeah. How much for the materials?[44]

FIRST BUILDING SUPPLY MAN. Fifteen thousand dollars.

LANDLORD. Fifteen thousand! Too much.

FIRST BUILDING SUPPLY MAN. Why don't you try him? (*Indicates left.*) There may be a lot of sand in his cement but he's cheap.

LANDLORD. Thanks. I will. (*Crosses to* MAN, *left, a little tired.*) Want to build a house. Four stories. Light. Air. Gadgets. How much?

SECOND BUILDING SUPPLY MAN (*looks at* FIRST BUILDING SUPPLY MAN, *inquiringly.* FIRST BUILDING SUPPLY MAN *holds up fifteen fingers.* SECOND BUILDING SUPPLY MAN *nods,* LANDLORD *suspecting something, swings around at* FIRST MAN *but he's too late.*) Fifteen thousand.

LANDLORD. That's what he said.

SECOND BUILDING SUPPLY MAN. Did he? What a coincidence!

LANDLORD. He also said your cement was full of sand.

SECOND BUILDING SUPPLY MAN. That's O.K. So is his.

LANDLORD (*hesitant*). Well, I may as well go back to him. He saw me coming first. (*Crosses back.*) Here you are. Fifteen thousand. (*Hands over money to* FIRST BUILDING SUPPLY MAN *and crosses to* MAN *who has come down and stands, center.*) You a contractor?

CONTRACTOR. Yeah.

LANDLORD. Do I have to repeat it all or did you hear me talking to them?

CONTRACTOR. I heard you.

LANDLORD. How much?

CONTRACTOR. Twenty-four thousand.

LANDLORD (*indignant*). Twenty-four . . .

CONTRACTOR. That's right. My carpenters get twelve dollars a day.[45]

LANDLORD. Twelve dollars a . . .

LOUDSPEAKER. Don't let him get away with that one. Sure they get twelve dollars a day. And they probably worked three days last month!

LANDLORD. Oh, well . . . (*Starts counting out money and stops in consternation.*) Say, I haven't got enough money! (CONTRACTOR *languidly turns away and starts whistling.*) What'll I do?

[44] Average costs of material in 1936–37, furnished by Caldwell Wingate, Builders, 101 Park Ave., New York.

[45] Carpenters and Joiners District Council, 130 Madison Ave., New York.

CONTRACTOR (*stops whistling*). Try the bank. (*Steps up as* TWO MEN *come down and stand on apron step, right and left.*)

LANDLORD. Thanks. (*Crosses to* MAN, *left* — BANKER.) I want a mortgage.

BANKER. Sorry. Got too many!

LANDLORD. What'll I do?

BANKER. Try the Mortgage Company.

LANDLORD. Thanks. (*Crosses to* MAN, *right* — MORTGAGE COMPANY PRESIDENT.) I want a mortgage.

MORTGAGE COMPANY PRESIDENT. Sure. We'll float bonds. Six per cent.[46]

LANDLORD. Six per cent!

MORTGAGE COMPANY PRESIDENT. Plus my commission!

LANDLORD. Your commission! O.K. Give me the money. (MORTGAGE COMPANY PRESIDENT *hands over money.* LANDLORD *crosses back to* CONTRACTOR.) Here you are. Twenty-four thou . . . (*Stops, hears whistling of* MAN, *standing directly back of* CONTRACTOR. *His hand is outstretched. The* COLLECTORS *follow* FIRST MAN, *circling past the* LANDLORD, *all with their hands outstretched, while he, in bewildered fashion, hands them money as they ask for it.*) Who're you?

FIRST MAN. Government, taxes. (LANDLORD *pays him.*)

LANDLORD. Who're you?

SECOND MAN. State, taxes. (*Same business.*)

LANDLORD. Who're you?

THIRD MAN. City, taxes. (*Same business.*)

LANDLORD. Who're you?

FOURTH MAN. Insurance. (*Same business.*)

LANDLORD. Who're you?

FIFTH MAN. Coal. (*Same business.*)

LANDLORD. Who're you?

WOMAN. Renting Agent. (*Same business.*)

LANDLORD. Who're you?

SIXTH MAN. I'm the Janitor! (*The circle freezes.*)

LANDLORD. Thank God! (*He goes down and sinks, exhausted, center. There is a pause.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. Well, now what?

LANDLORD. Wait a minute, will you?

LANDLORD (*he takes out a sign, "*APARTMENTS FOR RENT," *and hangs it around his neck.* LITTLE MAN, *seeing the sign, rushes to center.*)

LITTLE MAN. Have you got an apartment to rent? (LANDLORD, *still exhausted, nods.*) Pretty fair-sized rooms?

LANDLORD. Uh-huh.

[46] New York State Mortgage Commission.

LITTLE MAN. . . . and — er — modern plumbing gadgets?

LANDLORD. Uh-huh.

LITTLE MAN (*suddenly*). Got a three-room apartment left?

LANDLORD. Uh-huh.

LITTLE MAN (*incredulous*). Did you say, uh-huh?

LANDLORD. Uh-huh.

LITTLE MAN (*beside himself with excitement*). Now lemme get this straight — fair-sized rooms, light, and airy, modern gadgets — And you've got an apartment for me?

LANDLORD. Uh-huh.

LITTLE MAN (*same*). For the love of Mike, how much is the rent?

LANDLORD. Twenty-five dollars a room! (*Music.*)

[BLACKOUT]

LOUDSPEAKER. Wait a minute! Hold it! Don't blackout on that yet! Bring those lights up — full! (*They come up.*) That's better. This scene isn't over yet! (*Pause.*) Now, Mister Landlord, we know that the conditions you showed us exist. They were a little exaggerated perhaps, but they exist. But we can't just let it go at that. We can't let people walk out of this theatre knowing the disease is there, but believing there's no cure. There is a cure!

LANDLORD. What is it?

LOUDSPEAKER. You see, every one of those people who had his hand in your pocket while you were building that house, was inspired by the profit motive — the Landowner, the Broker, the Building Supply Man, the Contractor, and you, too, you were all out to get yours — and you did! But there's one thing you've got to stop taking profits on — and that's human misery! If you can't build cheap houses — and you've just proved that you can't — then let somebody do it who can — and I mean the United States Government — for instance. (*Enter* MAN *holding in front of him on a large board a relief model of a housing project. Stands at two-step, left.*) Chicago, Illinois. . . .

FIRST MAN. Government Housing Project — Jane Addams Houses — $7.38 per room per month! [47] (*Exits. Enter* SECOND MAN, *same business.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. Memphis, Tennessee. . . .

SECOND MAN. Government Housing Project — Dixie Homes — $6.51 per room per month! [48] (*Exits. Enter* THIRD MAN, *same business.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. Detroit . . .

THIRD MAN. Government Housing Project — Brewster Houses — $5.78

[47] *Congressional Record,* August 13, 1937.

[48] *Ibid.*

per room per month![49] (*Exits. Enter* FOURTH MAN, *same business.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. Cleveland . . .

FOURTH MAN. Government Housing Project — Lakeview Terrace — $5.53 per room per month![50] (*Exits.*)

LANDLORD. Did they say "government"?

LANDOWNER. Government?

FIRST BROKER (*to* CONTRACTOR). Did he say "government"?

LOUDSPEAKER. Yes, I said "government"!

LANDOWNER. But that's socialism!

SECOND BROKER. It's an invasion of private rights!

BANKER. It's contrary to economic laws!

MORTGAGE COMPANY PRESIDENT. By the Almighty, it's unconstitutional!

LOUDSPEAKER. It is, is it? Let's hear what Nathan Straus, Administrator, United States Housing Authority, has to say about that!

[*Enter* STRAUS, *left, crosses to center.*]

STRAUS. There is no reform within my memory that has not been attacked as an invasion of private rights and as contrary to economic laws. There is usually the added comment that it's unconstitutional. . . . (*He bows to* MORTGAGE COMPANY PRESIDENT.) We have only to recall the history of the enactment of Workmen's Compensation Laws, of the Income Tax Laws, of the laws creating a Public Service Commission to curb improper practices of the public utility corporations. In every one of these cases we were told that the new legislation was contrary to economic laws, in that it interfered with private initiative. In practically every case we were told that it was unconstitutional. Yet each of these reforms has been written into the laws of our land.[51]

[BLACKOUT]

Is the solution Government Housing? On August 21, 1937, the United States Senate after prolonged debate passed the Murray-Steagall Housing Bill with an appropriation of more than half a billion dollars — a bill to help some of that ill-housed third of the nation. What, then, of the future? . . .

[*After short musical interlude light picks out the* LITTLE MAN, *right. He paces, agitated, then crosses stage to center. Black screen has again been lowered into place.*]

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *A Housing Program for the United States,* Nathan Straus, p. 12.

LOUDSPEAKER. Hey! (*No answer; he continues pacing.*) Hey! What are you doing?

LITTLE MAN (*without stopping*). Arithmetic.

LOUDSPEAKER. Arithmetic?

LITTLE MAN. That's right. (*He stops; leans forward, intently.*) I suppose you noticed how they cut that bill down to half of what Senator Wagner originally asked for.[52]

LOUDSPEAKER. I noticed it.

LITTLE MAN. Of course, five hundred and twenty-six million is a lot of money.

LOUDSPEAKER. Of course.

LITTLE MAN. I could do a lot of things with five hundred and twenty-six million.

LOUDSPEAKER. Sure you could. But where does the arithmetic come in?

LITTLE MAN. Well, I'm taking ten per cent of five hundred and twenty-six million —

LOUDSPEAKER. You mean five hundred million — twenty-six million goes for maintenance — [53]

LITTLE MAN. All right, five hundred million. Ten per cent of that is fifty million — which is all that any one State can get under the terms of the bill.[54] Right?

LOUDSPEAKER. Right.

LITTLE MAN. Well, I'm taking that fifty million and trying to fit it into the New York City housing problem.

LOUDSPEAKER. But you can't do that.

LITTLE MAN. You're telling me!

LOUDSPEAKER. That fifty million is for the whole State.[55] According to Mayor La Guardia the most New York City can hope to get is thirty million.[56]

LITTLE MAN. As I was saying. I'm taking that thirty million and trying to fit it into the New York City housing problem.

LOUDSPEAKER. That's fine. Before you begin, let me show you what the New York City housing problem really is — in dollars and cents. This is Langdon Post, former Tenement House Commissioner.

VOICE OF POST. A conservative estimate of the cost of removing the slums in New York City alone is about two billion dollars! [57]

[52] Original appropriation Wagner-Steagall Bill, $1,000,000,000.

[53] Wagner-Steagall Act, as passed.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *New York Post*, January 27, 1938.

[57] Letter to Living Newspaper from Langdon W. Post, December 10, 1937.

LOUDSPEAKER. Two billion dollars! There's your problem in arithmetic, Mr. Buttonkooper. How to make thirty million equal to two billion.

LITTLE MAN (*with paper and pencil*). That's what I'm working on.

LOUDSPEAKER. Well, what's the answer?

LITTLE MAN. A headache. (*He starts pacing again; he stops.*) Do you realize that the Wagner Bill at the end of four years will have solved less than two per cent of the housing problem in New York City?[58] Do you realize that at that rate it will take us more than two hundred years before every slum in New York has been demolished?[59] And by that time the ones they're building now will be slums and we'll be back just where we started. (*He crosses down; then, intently.*) Remember, *I* want to live in one of those new developments! I don't give a darn about my great-great-grandchildren! (*Pause. Then, more composed.*) You know, when I heard all those Senators arguing, I got a funny feeling. I thought maybe I was crazy. Tell me, isn't there anybody else who's taken the trouble to figure this thing out? Doesn't anybody know what the score is?

LOUDSPEAKER. Most of the local housing authorities have studied the matter.

LITTLE MAN. Well, let's have it! What do they say? Let's hear *somebody* say *something*.

LOUDSPEAKER. Helen Alfred, Secretary and Executive Director of the National Public Housing Conference.

[*Spot on* MISS ALFRED, *at two-step, right.*]

MISS ALFRED. The Wagner-Steagall Housing Act lays a permanent foundation for the too-long-delayed attack on dangerous and unsanitary housing conditions prevalent throughout the country. But in view of the great need for new accommodations, the sum stipulated is pitifully inadequate.[60]

[*Light out on* MISS ALFRED. *Light on* LA GUARDIA, *left.*]

LOUDSPEAKER. The Honorable Fiorello H. La Guardia, Mayor of New York City.

LA GUARDIA. The Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill with its provisions for five hundred million dollars for rehousing the nation is a step in the right direction, but only a step — a drop in the bucket![61] It is there-

[58] Thirty million dollars is one and one-half per cent of two billion dollars.

[59] At rate of thirty million dollars in four years, it would require two hundred and sixty-five years for the total appropriation to equal two billion dollars.

[60] Interview with Miss Alfred, December 7, 1937.

[61] Speech made at Conference of Mayors, Washington, D. C., November 17, 1937.

fore my intention to start a building program aside and apart from, and in addition to, the Federal program. . . . I have therefore requested the Board of Estimate to be prepared to act upon a resolution appropriating funds to take care of interest charges and amortization of capital investments for the construction of low-rent houses. . . . Remember, slums cannot be wished away, nor even legislated away. The answer is building! [62]

[*Lights out on* LA GUARDIA.]

LOUDSPEAKER. Well, there you are. Feel any better?

LITTLE MAN. No. But at least I know that if I'm crazy, I'm in pretty good company! According to all those fellows we're not much better off than we were before. . . .

LOUDSPEAKER. Less than two per cent better, according to your arithmetic.

LITTLE MAN. Well, what are we going to do about it? (*Excitedly.*) Are we going to take it lying down like mice? Or, are we men? (*Starts taking off his coat.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. What are you going to do now?

LITTLE MAN. I'm going to find the guy who's responsible for these slum conditions! I'll tell him something all right, all right!

LOUDSPEAKER. Do you know who it is?

LITTLE MAN. Certainly I know who it is! What do you think I came to see this show for! (*Goes to wings, right, and leads out to center,* LANDOWNER, *1800.*) There you are! (*Pointing to tenement.*) Do you see that? Look at it! You started all this when you began to speculate in land!

LANDOWNER. All I did was sit. Remember?

LITTLE MAN. Yeah, I remember. And while you sat the town grew up around you. Land values went up, and because people had to have a place to live in, *this* is the result!

LANDOWNER. Well, what are you going to do about it?

LITTLE MAN (*taken aback*). Huh?

LANDOWNER (*belligerently*). I said, what are you going to do about it? Do you think you can take the land away from my descendants and make it public property? Do you?

LITTLE MAN. (*doubtfully*). No-o.

LANDOWNER. That's all I wanted to know! Good-by. (*He crosses off, right, leaving a bewildered* LITTLE MAN, *center.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. You certainly told him something, all right, all right.

LITTLE MAN (*sheepishly*). He was too quick for me. . . . But there's

[62] *New York Post,* January 27, 1938.

another guy I'm going to get my hooks into and he won't get away so fast! (*Crosses to wings, left, shouting.*) Hey, come on out here! (*He emerges, bringing on the* LANDLORD *we met earlier.*) You're to blame for that! You and the high rents you collect every month! Do *you* know the percentage of income used for rent is higher here than in any other country on the face of the earth? [63]

LANDLORD. Well, what are you going to do about it?

LITTLE MAN. I'll tell you what we're going to do! We're going to march right up to Albany and get some emergency rent laws passed! That'll take care of you all right!

LANDLORD (*calmly*). Is that all?

LITTLE MAN (*a bit shaken by his calm*). Well — er — isn't it enough?

LANDLORD. I don't think so. . . . As I recall, you fellows marched up to Albany in 1920, 1924, and 1926.[64] In each case emergency rent laws were passed. (*Suddenly.*) Are you paying any less for your apartment today than you did then?

LITTLE MAN. No.

LANDLORD. That's all I wanted to know! Good-by. (*He crosses off.*)

LOUDSPEAKER. You certainly got your hooks into him all right.

LITTLE MAN. Let's not talk about it.

LOUDSPEAKER. Of course, those emergency rent laws did prevent rents from going still higher.

LITTLE MAN (*explosively*). Sure they did!

LOUDSPEAKER. Well, why didn't you tell him that!

LITTLE MAN. He — er — he was too quick for me.

LOUDSPEAKER. I see. Well, what next?

LITTLE MAN. Let's see now. There was the Landowner — and the Landlord — and — er — I guess that's all.

LOUDSPEAKER. Isn't there something you've forgotten, Mr. Buttonkooper?

LITTLE MAN. What is it?

LOUDSPEAKER. How about the thing that's made these slum conditions possible for the last hundred and fifty years? The thing that makes people like you and everybody else sit back and say, "Well, this is the way it always has been and this is the way it's always going to be!"

LITTLE MAN. What thing is that?

[63] *Yearbook of Labor Statistics*, 1935–1936, International Labor Office, League of Nations, Geneva. "American Public Housing Through British Eyes," Richard Reiss in *Housing Officials Yearbook*, 1936.

[64] New York State Statutes, Municipal Reference Library.

LOUDSPEAKER. It's called "inertia."

LITTLE MAN. Inertia? (*He looks puzzled.*)

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER (*rising from seat in audience*). Don't look so surprised, Angus. That's just what it is — inertia! (*Light picks her up as she comes down aisle and up on stage, left. Stands facing* LITTLE MAN.) You know about these conditions and so do I and so does everybody else that lives in 'em — but we don't do anything about it!

LITTLE MAN. By golly, that's right. According to what we've seen here tonight, people have been going around for a hundred years or more — taking notes, making surveys — but nobody's ever *done* anything!

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. That's it. What good are all those surveys and speeches to us when we've got to live in a place almost as bad as that twenty-four hours a day! . . . What good are all those new laws that nobody obeys when maybe those kids are going to turn out to be crooks or murderers!

LITTLE MAN. Sure! And what good are all those housing bills that take care of less than two per cent of the trouble? What good are they when we still have this? (*Points to tenement.*)

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. Look at it — and don't forget that isn't only New York. It's Philadelphia and Chicago and Boston and St. Louis! According to a man named Roosevelt, it's one-third of a nation! [65] *One-third of a nation is just like that in 1938!*

LITTLE MAN (*pause*). Well, what are we going to do about it?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. I don't know yet, but it seems to me . . . (*Suddenly.*) Angus, how much did you say that Wagner Bill was for?

LITTLE MAN. Five hundred and twenty-six million.

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. Five hundred and twenty-six million — for four years! Why was that bill cut down from a billion dollars, Angus?

LOUDSPEAKER. Because they're trying to balance the budget.

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. Balance the budget? What with? Human lives? Misery? Disease?

[*A whistle is heard.*]

LOUDSPEAKER. *FLASH.*[66] New York, February 24th. The cracking walls

[65] Second Inaugural Address, Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, Washington, D. C., January 20, 1937.

[66] News flashes of events that have occurred are used — calamities that are traceable to bad housing. The three "flashes" incorporated into the present script were used early in the run of the New York City production.

in three buildings at Avenue C and 12th Street caused all the tenants to flee for their lives. A few minutes after they had abandoned their homes and possessions, two of the buildings collapsed.[67]

[*Uneasy pause.*]

LOUDSPEAKER. *FLASH.* New York, March 9th. Thirty men, women and children were forced to flee for their lives when the walls in another old-law tenement at 82 St. Mark's Place began to crack. This is the second case of the kind in the last two weeks.[68]

[*Uneasy pause.*]

LOUDSPEAKER. *FLASH.* New York, March 12th. This afternoon at 843 St. Nicholas Avenue, Manhattan, a fire broke out in a fire-escapeless three-story tenement. Leaping from a second-floor window, a woman was impaled on a spiked fence. A three-year-old child was asphyxiated. Mayor La Guardia visited the scene and promised a thorough investigation.[69]

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. Say, Mister, how much was the appropriation for the Army and Navy?

LOUDSPEAKER. The appropriation for the Army and Navy for the last four years was three billion, one hundred and twenty-five million dollars.[70]

LITTLE MAN. Three billion, one hundred and twenty-five million dollars. Why—why—that's more than enough money to clean out every slum in New York! (*Pacing excitedly.*) Well, what *are* we going to do?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER (*interrupting*). You know what we're going to do—you and me? We're going to holler. And we're going to keep on hollering until they admit in Washington it's just as important to keep a man alive as it is to kill him!

LITTLE MAN. Will that do any good?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. Sure it will. If we do it loud enough!

LITTLE MAN. You think they'll hear us?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. They'll hear us all right if we all do it together—you and me and La Guardia and Senator Wagner and the Housing Authorities and the Tenant Leagues and everybody who lives in a place like that! (*Pointing to tenement.* TENANTS *start to fill the tenement as lights come up on it.*)

[67] Reported by Research Worker on Living Newspaper Staff, February 24, 1938.
[68] *Daily Mirror,* March 9, 1938.
[69] *New York Sun,* March 12, 1938.
[70] Foreign Policy Report, February 15, 1937, Vol. 12, No 23, Foreign Policy Association.

LITTLE MAN (*excitedly*). All right, all right, when do we begin?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. Right now.

LITTLE MAN. *Now?*

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. *Now!* (*Shouting.*) We want a decent place to live in! I want a place that's clean and fit for a man and woman and kids! *Can you hear me — you in Washington or Albany or wherever you are! Give me a decent place to live in! Give me a home! A home!*

LITTLE MAN. Do you think they'll hear us?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER. And if we don't *make* them hear us you're going to have just what you've always had — slums — disease — crime — juvenile delinquency . . . and . . .

A VOICE. *Fire!*

[TENANTS *have begun their activities as in the opening scene of the play. Smoke starts to appear and begins to rise. Suddenly the fire sirens are heard. Pandemonium as fire scene is re-enacted. The entire scene builds to a crescendo, topped by flames, smoke, and the* MAN *cowering on the fire escape. Music.*]

LOUDSPEAKER. Ladies and gentlemen, this might be Boston, New York, St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia — but just let's call it "one-third of a nation!"

[CURTAIN]

WHILE READING

1. What are some of the newer techniques which this play uses, and which are apparent almost from the very beginning? What is the dramatic function of the Loudspeaker? What is the effect upon the reader of the frequent use of footnotes? Do you think all of these footnotes are really necessary?

2. Are Schultz's reasons for not renovating his house convincing? Where do you think the fault really lies?

3. The population of New York City in 1781 was 18,000; in 1940 it was 7,455,000. It is estimated that by 1970 the city will have reached a population of more than eight and a half million. The amazingly rapid growth of the city resulted, of course, in crowded living conditions, enormous increases in the value of land, and the continuous movement of the population to outlying parts of the city. The landowner in the scene of Revolutionary days speaks of Canal Street as "*way* uptown." Today millions of the city's people live north of this street, and additional millions in neighboring boroughs. This pattern of growth has been repeated in cities throughout the country. Compare the fifty-dollar-a-year rental charged for a dwelling in 1781 with the average annual rent for a home or apartment in your community today.

4. The completion of the Erie Canal accelerated New York City's growth. Why? Consult a standard history of the United States for an account of the Erie Canal and of the Great Immigration.

5. The rapid rise in land values helped to build some of America's greatest fortunes. For interesting accounts of the founders of some of these fortunes see the book by Gustavus Myers already cited, as well as Matthew Josephson's *The Robber Barons* and the books mentioned in footnotes 36 and 39 of the script.

6. Goelet speaks of a farm he bought before 1850. On the site of that farm now stands some of the world's tallest buildings, including the Empire State, Chrysler, Metropolitan Tower, and Rockefeller Center. It is interesting to note that a very small part of Goelet's farm — the area between 42nd and 48th Streets on the east side of Manhattan — now being used as the site for the United Nations' new home, cost the corporation that assembled the property twenty-five million dollars.

7. What devices does the playwright use to influence the audience in the scene between the landlord and the brokers? One method is the *reductio ad absurdum* (the trick of carrying a series of facts to their logical but absurd extreme).

8. A class debate or forum may be organized on the question posed by the Loudspeaker: Is government housing the solution to the housing problem? For representative opinions on both sides of the question see *Public Housing in America*, compiled by M. B. Schnapper.

9. The dialogue between the Little Man and the various Landowners points up some of the difficulties of remedying slum conditions. How does it succeed in doing this?

10. Disastrous fires in old tenements continue to take their toll of lives. The collapse of a house in uptown New York in December, 1946, for example, resulted in the death of thirty-seven tenants and serious injury to many others. Can you cite more recent examples? What steps have been taken since this play was written to improve the conditions against which the play cries out? Your history teacher may be able to help you get the information.

11. Part of the secret of the Living Newspaper's effectiveness lies in the device of "spilling" off the stage into the audience. Picture the audience's reaction to Mrs. Buttonkooper's march up to the stage from a seat in the orchestra.

12. The play closes with a re-enactment of the first fire scene. Do you like this closing? What is its dramatic purpose?

AFTER READING

1. In what ways does this play differ from the conventional drama? What new dramatic devices does the Living Newspaper use? What other plays have you read which use one or more of these methods?

2. What techniques has this play borrowed from the movies? from the radio?

3. This is a grim play on a serious subject; yet there are many examples of humor in it. Point out some of these.

4. Current problems lend themselves readily to the Living Newspaper technique. As a class project you may attempt to write a Living Newspaper play around a school or other local issue, or some topic of larger current interest, and produce it in class. Suggested topics: The progress of education in the United States or in the community; history of the school or of the community; problems of the farmer; minority groups and their problems; immigration; atomic energy; history of the radio, the motion picture, the automobile; the growth of labor unions.

5. You may wish to debate the question: Resolved, that the Federal Theatre be revived. Incidentally, why did the need for an unusually large number of actors make this play particularly suitable for Federal Theatre purposes?

6. *For Further Reading.* For accounts of the Federal Theatre Project see Hallie Flanagan's *Arena.* For other Living Newspaper plays see the two volumes of Federal Theatre plays. You will find interesting material on living conditions in crowded cities in such books as Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives;* Lillian D. Wald's *The House on Henry Street;* Jane Addams's *Twenty Years at Hull House;* Mary Antin's *The Promised Land;* Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky;* Arturo Giovanitti's *Arrows in the Gale* (poems). Among plays on slum life among the best are Elmer Rice's *Street Scene,* Sidney Kingsley's *Dead End,* and Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* (London slums).

DRAMATIC PASSAGES

Dramatic Passages

The four passages which follow are taken from plays of widely different types. They will give you an idea of the various forms of contemporary drama. The Greek philosopher Aristotle defined drama as an imitation of life, and these passages reflect life in a broad range of aspects and moods.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Maxwell Anderson is America's foremost poet-dramatist. He was born in Atlantic, Pennsylvania, where his father was a Baptist minister; at nineteen he settled in North Dakota, where he attended the state university. He taught school for a while, going on later to Leland Stanford and Whittier College. He became an editor of the San Francisco *Bulletin* and then worked for various New York magazines and newspapers. His first important play, *What Price Glory,* written in collaboration with Laurence Stallings, startled the audiences of its day with its hard-boiled treatment of war. *Both Your Houses,* a play severely critical of Congressional committees and practices, won the 1933 Pulitzer award—though its author considers it his poorest play. Other plays by Mr. Anderson are briefly described on page 465.

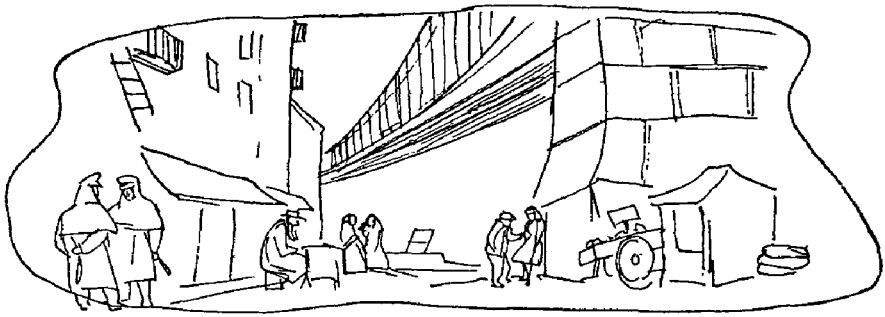
Franz Werfel, author of the original version of *Jacobowsky and the Colonel,* is known to most Americans chiefly for his novels *Embezzled Heaven* and *The Song of Bernadette,* both of which have reached the screen as particularly fine motion pictures. Werfel was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, of German-Jewish parentage. His pilgrimage from country to country in the van of Nazi pursuit is reminiscent of Jacobowsky's in the play. Fortunately, however, Werfel found a generous shelter on our shores and became an American citizen and an important member of Hollywood's writing colony. His first significant play was an expressionistic trilogy called *Mirror-man,* which described the conflict between the decent and the antisocial elements in man. The first of his plays to be produced here was *Goat Song,* in 1921. This was followed by the effective historical drama *Juarez and Maximilian. The Eternal Road,* a historical pageant depicting the martyrdom of the Jews

through the ages, was lavishly produced by Max Reinhardt in 1937. Werfel died on August 25, 1945, having lived long enough to see the final overthrow of the forces that had brought so much suffering to the Jacobowskys of the world.

S. N. Behrman was ideally suited to the task of writing the American version of Werfel's last play. His ability to imbue serious problems with something of high comedy has made him one of America's leading playwrights. Behrman was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1893. As a boy he first showed interest in the theatre by collecting the autographs of all the visiting stars. While still at school he wrote, sold, and acted in a one-act playlet. He studied at Clark University, Harvard, and Columbia, and was a member of Prof. Baker's 47 Workshop. His plays include *The Second Man, Biography, Rain from Heaven,* and *No Time for Comedy.* Mr. Behrman also writes for the screen, his most notable script being the screenplay for *Gone With the Wind.*

Oscar Hammerstein II comes of a famous theatrical family; yet his first ambition was to become a lawyer. "Fooling around" with varsity shows at Columbia, he soon entered the theatre professionally, first as an assistant stage manager, and eventually as the writer of such hits as *Rose Marie, Sunny, The Desert Song, Show Boat, New Moon,* and *Carousel. Oklahoma!* is generally considered his best book to date. The music for this play was written by Richard Rodgers, also a graduate of Columbia College's varsity shows, who had previously collaborated with Lorenz Hart on such successful musicals as *A Connecticut Yankee, I'd Rather Be Right,* and *The Boys from Syracuse* (a jazz version of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*).

Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur have been called the "Katzenjammer Kids" of the theatre. They have for many years collaborated in mischief as well as in plays for the stage and screen. Both gained their writing experience in the tough school of newspaper reporting. Hecht wrote a number of short plays, like *Wonder Hat,* with Kenneth Sawyer Goodman before achieving success with *The Front Page. To Quito and Back,* written without benefit of Mr. MacArthur, was produced by the Theatre Guild in 1937. Hecht has been writing for the films since 1933, with such excellent scenarios as *The Scoundrel* to his credit. MacArthur, the husband of Helen Hayes, is also at present a successful Hollywood writer. The farce *Boy Meets Girl,* incidentally, was inspired by the antics of these two collaborators.



Winterset

BY MAXWELL ANDERSON

The first sampling is a beautiful passage from Maxwell Anderson's poetic tragedy *Winterset*. As we read the cadenced lines uttered by the vagrant Mio and the tender Miriamne as the two converse under the shadow of New York's great Brooklyn Bridge, we are tempted to protest, "But people nowadays don't talk that way!" Profound and sincere emotion, exalted language, and genuine sympathy soon win us over; and we are as ready to accept dialogue in verse as were Shakespeare's groundlings when they flocked to a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Hamlet*.

Anderson's first efforts in the field of verse drama were historical plays like *Elizabeth the Queen* and *Mary of Scotland*. When he realized that "poetic tragedy had never been written about its own place and time," he resolved to experiment with a verse play on a contemporary theme. He had long been agitated by the fate of Sacco and Vanzetti, whose case had attracted world-wide attention—and indignation—during the seven years between their arrest in 1920 and their execution in 1927. With Harold Hickerson he had told their story in the play *Gods of the Lightning*. Now he returned to the theme in a more profound and moving tragedy of vengeance, justice, and love.

Winterset, with its tale of a young man who seeks to clear his father's name of an unjust murder charge, is only suggestive of the Sacco-Vanzetti case. The actual story of these two Italian workers has been often told. Felix Frankfurter's *The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti* is a good factual account, Upton Sinclair's *Boston*, an interesting fictional version. The Thurber-Nugent comedy *The Male Animal* makes fine use of Bar-

tolomeo Vanzetti's last letter. The fate of the two men is the theme of two particularly moving sonnets by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Despite the average playgoer's reluctance to see plays that end sadly, Maxwell Anderson's tragedies have been very successful. (It is true, however, that as a concession to movie audiences the ending of the screen version of *Winterset* was changed.) The stage production of *Winterset,* with Burgess Meredith, Margo, and Richard Bennett in its cast, received the Drama Critics' Circle Award in 1936 with this citation: "The Circle's decision is based upon the conviction that the author accomplished the notably difficult task of interpreting a valid and challenging contemporary theme dealing with the pursuit of human justice in terms of unusual poetic force, realizing a drama of rich meaning and combining a high literary distinction with compelling theatrical force."

Under the shadow of the great arch that spans the river MIO *wanders, seeking evidence that would clear his father's name. From the deranged and remorseful* JUDGE GAUNT, *who had condemned his innocent father to death,* MIO *learns the truth and discovers the real criminal—a gangster named* TROCK. *Before this, however, he has met* MIRIAMNE; *and because she would indirectly be made to suffer he fails to expose the criminal and is himself killed by one of* TROCK'S *men.*

The attraction of these unhappy young people for one another is expressed in this first conversation. . . .

MIRIAMNE. Tell me your name.
MIO. Mio. What's yours?
MIRIAMNE. Miriamne.
MIO. There's no such name.
MIRIAMNE. But there's no such name as Mio!
M.I.O. It's no name.
MIO. It's for Bartolomeo.
MIRIAMNE. My mother's name was Miriam,
so they called me Miriamne.
MIO. Meaning little Miriam?
MIRIAMNE. Yes.
MIO. So now little Miriamne will go in
and take up quietly where she dropped them all
her small wifely cares. When I first saw you,
not a half-hour ago, I heard myself saying,

Excerpt from "Winterset" by Maxwell Anderson. Reprinted by permission of Anderson House.

this is the face that launches ships for me—
and if I owned a dream—yes, half a dream—
we'd share it. But I have no dream.

And yet
I have blood enough in my veins. It goes like music
singing, because you're here. My body turns
as if you were the sun, and warm. This men called love
in happier times, before the Freudians taught us
to blame it on the glands. Only go in
before you breathe too much of my atmosphere
and catch death from me.

MIRIAMNE. I will take my hands
and weave them to a little house, and there
you shall keep a dream—

MIO. God knows I could use a dream
and even a house.

MIRIAMNE. You're laughing at me, Mio!

MIO. Why, girl, the transfiguration on the mount
was nothing to your face. It lights from within—
a white chalice holding fire, a flower in flame,
this is your face.

MIRIAMNE. And you shall drink the flame
and never lessen it. And round your head
the aureole shall burn that burns there now,
forever. This I can give you. And so forever
the Freudians are wrong.

MIO. They're well forgotten
at any rate.

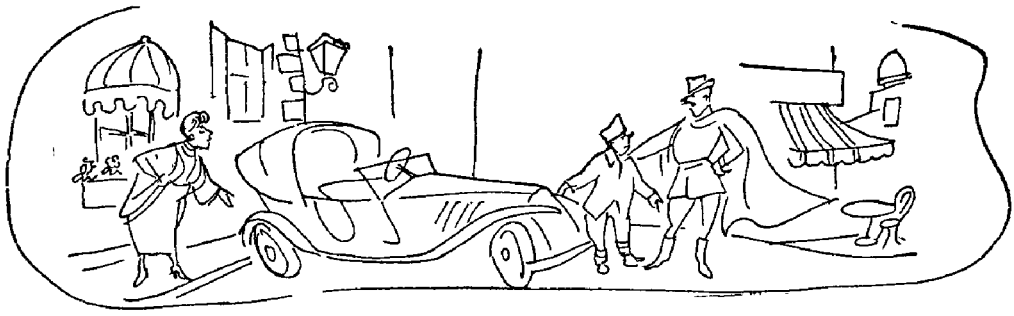
MIRIAMNE. Why did you speak to me
when you first saw me?

MIO. I knew then.

MIRIAMNE. And I came back
because I must see you again. And we danced together
and my heart hurt me. Never, never, never,
though they should bind me down and tear out my eyes,
would I ever hurt you now. Take me with you, Mio,
let them look for us, whoever there is to look,
but we'll be away.

[MIO *turns away toward the tenement.*]

MIO. When I was four years old
we climbed through an iron gate, my mother and I,
to see my father in prison. He stood in the death cell
and put his hand through the bars and said, My Mio,
I have only this to leave you, that I love you,
and will love you after I die. Love me then, Mio,
when this hard thing comes on you, that you must live
a man despised for your father. That night the guards,
walking in floodlights brighter than high noon,
led him between them with his trousers slit
and a shaven head for the cathodes. This sleet and rain
that I feel cold here on my face and hands
will find him under thirteen years of clay
in prison ground. Lie still and rest, my father,
for I have not forgotten. When I forget
may I lie blind as you. No other love,
time passing, nor the spaced light-years of suns
shall blur your voice, or tempt me from the path
that clears your name —
till I have these rats in my grip
or sleep deep where you sleep.



JACOBOWSKY AND THE COLONEL

BY FRANZ WERFEL

American adaptation by S. N. Behrman

The second play in this group tells of another tragic odyssey -- the flight of refugees from the Nazi terror. The emphasis here, however, is on comedy, and the plight of its principal characters is treated with such rollicking humor as to make us ask with S. N. Behrman, "How is it that one of the greatest tragedies in history should seem funny on the lips of one [Franz Werfel] who had acutely suffered it?" Mr. Behrman's own answer is, "Perhaps humor is the salt of survival and the lack of it the hemlock of martyrdom. . . . If man is the only animal who can laugh, need we apologize for his distinction?"

The story as Franz Werfel originally told it at a dinner given by the late Max Reinhardt was of a Polish-Jewish exile in Paris who, in his attempt to escape the Nazis, buys one of the city's few remaining cars from a hard-bargaining chauffeur, only to realize after he has placed his few possessions in the auto that he is unable to drive. A proud Polish colonel, also in desperate need of a vehicle for flight, agrees to drive the car to the coast, taking pains first to substitute his own more substantial belongings for poor Jacobowsky's. In translating this story into play form, Franz Werfel in the original and S. N. Behrman in the English adaptation created a memorable character who epitomizes optimism and resourcefulness in adversity. The refugee

Kurt Müller in Lillian Hellman's play *Watch on the Rhine* achieves grandeur in his quiet and resolute martyrdom; the uprooted Jacobowsky also assumes stature and distinction as his resilience and good cheer win the hearts of all whom he encounters. Behind this gaiety is, as the critic Howard Barnes said in his review of the play, "a profound and searching statement of human values and experience which floods the stage with beauty and emotional power."

Mr. Behrman's version of *Jacobowsky and the Colonel* was produced by the Theatre Guild under the supervision of Laurence Langner and Theresa Helburn, staged by Elia Kazan and designed by Stewart Chaney. The Viennese actor Oscar Karlweis was an unforgettable Jacobowsky, and Louis Calhern a delightful Polish colonel. Others in the cast included Annabella and J. Edward Bromberg. The play opened on March 14, 1944. Critical reception was summed up in the verdict of one reviewer: "It mixes sense, wit, and poetry in a memorable reflection of the war." The passage used here occurs early in the first act; in introducing Jacobowsky it quickly endears him to the audience.

It is the evening of the thirteenth of June, 1940, in the subterranean laundry of the shabby Hotel Mon Repos et de la Rose, where MADAME BOUFFIER'S *guests are seeking shelter from an air raid. The Germans are on the march, and it is feared they will soon be in Paris. The* OLD LADY FROM ARRAS *is even sure the Nazi armies have already entered the city. . . .*

MADAME BOUFFIER. May God inspire our generals, Marshal Pétain and General Weygand!

OLD LADY (*her voice rises in hysteria*). The Germans are in Paris. They're in Paris. Dear God! Dear God!

MADAME BOUFFIER. Quiet, Madame Arle. I'll have no panic here. Solly, bring in the gramophone from the salon.

YOUNG GIRL. Wonderful. Let's have a Chevalier record.

TRAGIC GENTLEMAN. Chevalier! He'll give the Germans their idea of Paris. God, how I hate that gigolo!

MADAME BOUFFIER. And, Solly dear, go up to Monsieur Jacobowsky's room. Maybe he has come back.

OLD LADY. If the Germans are in Paris, why do we stay here? Why don't we do something?

[MONSIEUR JACOBOWSKY *comes in through the doorway from the street. He is in his late forties, not tall, but somehow not too short—a*

Excerpt from "Jacobowsky and the Colonel" by Franz Werfel and S. N. Behrman. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

"small medium." He wears a well-cut lounge suit which he bought in happier days and which has managed to retain, though it is somewhat shiny, an air of elegance. He has a neat bow tie, a neat voice, and everything about him has the crisp edge of tidiness. You feel that in the life he deserted everything in his ménage, both business and personal, was in good order; that his extra shoes had a good polish; his correspondence was caught up; his desk clear; and that when people crossed the threshold of his house to come to dinner, they felt a glow of benevolence and the quickened anticipation of a happy evening. His cheerfulness is an emanation from a harried past; he knows that the worst will probably happen, so that your only chance is to improve the immediate present. This he is constantly trying to do in every small relation of life. He likes people and he wants them, if it is at all possible, to like him.]

JACOBOWSKY. The Germans are not in Paris, madame, believe me.

SOLLY. Monsieur Jacobowsky!

MADAME BOUFFIER. Oh! Here he is.

JACOBOWSKY. I have just been in the Rue Royale and I assure you there isn't a German in sight. In fact, there isn't even a Parisian in sight. I was the only one in sight.

MADAME BOUFFIER. The Rue Royale! Monsieur Jacobowsky! In the middle of an alert. Suppose something had happened — a falling building or a bomb . . .

JACOBOWSKY. So there would be one Jacobowsky more or less. The world has endured so much — it could endure that too.

YOUNG GIRL. Monsieur is a very courageous man.

JACOBOWSKY. Not at all, madame. Only — at one period of my life I was an accountant — and about danger — I am statistical.

TRAGIC GENTLEMAN. No doubt you think that the bomb that will hit you has yet to be cast. It has been cast, believe me. At Krupp or Skoda.

JACOBOWSKY. Oh, I have no doubt. Krupp and Skoda think of me constantly. They cast their little bomb and they think: "This one we'll send to our nice Jacobowsky." But even Krupp has to yield to a powerful law — the law of probability. Listen: What is the population of Paris? Four million lives? Correct? Now what chance has Krupp, with all his precision work, of hitting one four-millionth of Paris? Practically nonexistent. I tell you I feel sorry for him. So, moving under the immunity of this adorable law — I have brought you back some *marrons glacés* — first to our distinguished hostess. (*Offers* MADAME BOUFFIER *the box.*)

MADAME BOUFFIER. That's my dear Monsieur Jacobowsky — always thinking of others. (*Takes one.*)

MAN ON THE WASHTUB (*he is trying to sleep*). All this shouting — I can't sleep! (*Jumps up — reversing his position, puts his head where his feet were before — tries to sleep again.*)

JACOBOWSKY (*drops his voice and tiptoes around*). Please, madame, allow me . . . (*To the* YOUNG GIRL.) Madame . . .

YOUNG GIRL (*in a whisper*). Thank you, monsieur.

OLD LADY (*whispering*). Thank you, monsieur.

JACOBOWSKY (*offering them to* SOLLY). Solly, friend, you must eat some of these. They'll warm you up. (*The* WASHTUB MAN *sticks his hand out, the palm open.* JACOBOWSKY *pops a* marron *into his hand.*)

YOUNG GIRL. Monsieur certainly knows what's delicious.

JACOBOWSKY. People say it's not good to eat between meals, but I would rather have a snack than a dinner.

MADAME BOUFFIER (*looks fondly at* JACOBOWSKY). Why is it that the best husbands are always unmarried?

JACOBOWSKY (*offering* marrons *to* TRAGIC GENTLEMAN). Monsieur.

TRAGIC GENTLEMAN. I hate *marrons glacés*. . . .

JACOBOWSKY. They are quite fresh.

TRAGIC GENTLEMAN (*determined to be unhappy*). Especially when they are fresh.

MADAME BOUFFIER (*with sudden decision*). Monsieur Jacobowsky, you ought to get married.

JACOBOWSKY (*edging away*). I think maybe not, Madame Bouffier.

MADAME BOUFFIER (*advances*). Why not? Give me one good reason why not?

JACOBOWSKY (*retreats*). You see, Madame Bouffier, I myself am a worshiper of beauty but in my own person I am not quite dazzling. The indifference of the ladies has given me leisure for reading and philosophy. I am a quite well-read man, Madame Bouffier.

MADAME BOUFFIER. You won't know what life is till you get married.

JACOBOWSKY (*delicately*). Perhaps there are other ways of finding out. (*He goes over to the* OLD LADY.)

OLD LADY. Sweets are such a consolation in a situation like this.

JACOBOWSKY. Quite right, madam — quite right.

OLD LADY (*waves her banner*). My daughter's a schoolteacher!

JACOBOWSKY (*sits beside her on stool*). A noble profession. Aristotle was a schoolteacher.

OLD LADY. In Arras I left everything behind, even my daughter — and fled — fled in France itself! Who could ever imagine a thing like

that? While I was doing it, I didn't believe I was doing it and even now, right this minute, I don't believe it.

JACOBOWSKY. Oh, you'll get used to flight. I did. I've spent all my life in a futile effort to become a citizen of some country. You know, I speak seven languages fluently. Wrong, but fluently. In the technique of flight I may say I am a virtuoso. Migration one: Poland to Germany. My poor mother took her five children, her candlesticks, her pillows, and fled to Berlin. There I grew up. I was successful in business. I was a citizen, a patriot. I belonged. My mistake! Migration two: Berlin to Vienna! The City of Waltzes. (*Hums one or two bars.*) But I soon found out that underneath the waltzes there was a countermelody. Less charming, more ruthless. First thing you know I was embarked on migration three. Prague. Now Prague is a lovely city. Have you ever seen the lovely baroque architecture in Prague?

TRAGIC GENTLEMAN. I hate baroque!

JACOBOWSKY. I understand that, too. A lot of people very qualified don't like baroque. Still I hated to leave Prague. This time without an overcoat. It was a new experience. Very interesting. Migration four: Paris! City of Light. Here I breathed the air of freedom. I understood exactly how Heine felt when he got here. I said to myself: "You are Heine—without the genius." But I now have the feeling that there is still ahead of me another migration. Well, I'm ready. You see, one gets used to it.

OLD LADY (*rises, fluffing her chair pillow*). But after all, Monsieur, between us there isn't any comparison. My family has lived in Arras for five centuries.

JACOBOWSKY (*impressed*). Five centuries! You don't mean it!



OKLAHOMA!

BY OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

The musical comedy or operetta is—if we are to judge by the box office—probably the most popular dramatic form today. Yet few musical plays (with the notable exception of Gilbert and Sullivan) find their way into books, to be read and enjoyed by those unable to see the stage performance. The reason for this is obvious enough. A good musical is a happy union of words, music, and dance; and it is as hard to appreciate the text alone as to declaim, let us say, "The Star Spangled Banner" without the aid of its stirring melody. However, occasionally there appears a musical whose book and lyrics are so good as to merit an independent existence. The Pulitzer Prize Committee recognized the excellence of one such libretto when it awarded its prize to *Of Thee I Sing* in 1932. Since then a number of librettos have seemed to merit similar honors. Among these must certainly be included Oscar Hammerstein's charming musical adaptation of Lynn Riggs' *Green Grow the Lilacs*. *Oklahoma!* is one of the finest musical plays of our time. Mr. Hammerstein's lyrics have a wholesome freshness and a lilting gaiety that are delightfully matched by Richard Rodgers' excellent score. The Theatre Guild production had the advantage of Rouben Mamoulian's imaginative direction and Agnes de Mille's lovely dance ballet.

The story of pretty young Laurey, who cannot make up her mind to marry cowboy Curly, is typical of musical comedy plots. The excerpt here given is the opening of the play. It contains *Oklahoma!*'s most popular songs, and conveys as effectively as any pages in the script the placid, homey, friendly, carefree atmosphere which pervades the play. You will undoubtedly want to sing the songs as you read these few pages aloud.

ACT I. SCENE 1

SCENE: *The front of* LAUREY'S *farmhouse.*

"It is a radiant summer morning several years ago, the kind of morning which — enveloping the shapes of earthmen, cattle in the meadow, blades of young corn, streams — makes them seem to exist now for the first time, their images giving off a golden emanation that is partly true and partly a trick of the imagination, focusing to keep alive a loveliness that may pass away."

AUNT ELLER MURPHY, *a buxom, hearty woman about fifty, is seated behind a wooden, brass-banded churn, looking out over the meadow (which is the audience), a contented look over her face. Like the voice of the morning, a song comes from somewhere, growing louder as the young singer comes nearer.*

CURLY (*off stage*).

There's a bright, golden haze on the meadow,
There's a bright, golden haze on the meadow,
The corn is as high as a elephant's eye
An' it looks like it's climbin' clear up to the sky.

[CURLY *saunters on and stands tentatively outside the gate to the front yard.*]

Oh, what a beautiful mornin',
Oh, what a beautiful day.
I got a beautiful feelin'
Ev'rythin's goin' my way.

[CURLY *opens the gate and walks over to the porch, obviously singing for the benefit of someone in the house.* AUNT ELLER *looks straight ahead, elaborately ignoring* CURLY.]

All the cattle are standin' like statues,
All the cattle are standin' like statues.
They don't turn their heads as they see me ride by,
But a little brown mav'rick is winkin' her eye.

Oh, what a beautiful mornin',
Oh, what a beautiful day.
I got a beautiful feelin'
Ev'rythin's goin' my way.

Excerpt from "Oklahoma!" by Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers. Reprinted by permission of authors. Lyrics copyrighted by Williamson Music Company.

CURLY (*comes up behind* AUNT ELLER *and shouts in her ear*). Hi, Aunt Eller!

AUNT ELLER. Skeer me to death! Whut're you doin' around here?

CURLY. Come a-singin' to you. (*Strolling a few steps away.*)

All the sounds of the earth are like music—
All the sounds of the earth are like music.
The breeze is so busy it don't miss a tree
And a ol' weepin' willer is laughin' at me!

Oh, what a beautiful mornin',
Oh, what a beautiful day.
I got a beautiful feelin'
Ev'rythin's goin' my way. . . .
Oh, what a beautiful day!

[AUNT ELLER *resumes churning.* CURLY *looks wistfully up at the windows of the house, then turns back to* AUNT ELLER.]

AUNT ELLER. If I wasn't a ole womern, and if you wasn't so young and smart-alecky—why, I'd marry you and git you to set around at night and sing to me.

CURLY. No, you wouldn't neither. Cuz I wouldn't marry you ner none of yer kinfolks, I could he'p it.

AUNT ELLER (*wisely*). Oh, none of my kinfolks, huh?

CURLY (*raising his voice so that* LAUREY *will hear if she is inside the* house). And you c'n tell 'em all that, all of 'm includin' that niece of your'n, Miss Laurey Williams! (AUNT ELLER *continues to churn.* CURLY *comes down to her and speaks deliberately.*) Aunt Eller, if you was to tell me whur Laurey was at—whur would you tell me she was at?

AUNT ELLER. I wouldn't tell you a-tall. Fer as I c'n make out, Laurey ain't payin' you no heed.

CURLY. So she don't take to me much, huh? Whur'd you git sich a uppity niece 'at wouldn't pay no heed to me? Who's the best bronc buster in this yere territory?

AUNT ELLER. You, I bet.

CURLY. And the best bull dogger in seventeen counties? Me, that's who! And looky here, I'm handsome, ain't I?

AUNT ELLER. Purty as a pitcher.

CURLY. Curly-headed, ain't I? And bow-legged from the saddle fer God knows how long, ain't I?

AUNT ELLER. Couldn't stop a pig in the road.

CURLY. Well, whut else does she want then, the darn she-mule?

AUNT ELLER. I don't know. But I'm shore sartin it ain't you. Who you takin' to the box social tonight?

CURLY. Ain't thought much about it.

AUNT ELLER. Bet you come over to ast Laurey.

CURLEY. Whut 'f I did?

AUNT ELLER. You astin' me too? I'll wear my fascinator.

CURLY. Yeow, you too.

LAUREY (*singing off stage*).

Oh, what a beautiful mornin',

[*She enters.*]

Oh, what a beautiful day.

[*Spoken as she gives* CURLY *a brief glance*]

Oh, I thought you was somebody.

[*She resumes singing, crosses to clothesline and hangs up an apron.*]

I got a beautiful feelin'

Ev'rythin's goin' my way.

[*Spoken as she comes down to* AUNT ELLER.]

Is this all that's come a-callin' and it a'ready ten o'clock of a Sattiddy mornin'?

CURLY. You knowed it was me 'fore you opened the door.

LAUREY. No sich of a thing.

CURLY. You did, too! You heard my voice and knowed it was me.

LAUREY. I heared a voice a'talkin' rumbly along with Aunt Eller. And heared someone a-singin' like a bullfrog in a pond.

CURLY. You knowed it was me, so you set in there a-thinkin' up sump'n mean to say. I'm a good mind not to ast you to the box social.

[AUNT ELLER *rises, crosses to clothesline, takes down quilt, folds it, puts it on porch.*]

LAUREY. If you did ast me, I wouldn't go with you. Besides, how'd you take me? You ain't bought a new buggy with red wheels onto it, have you?

CURLY. No, I ain't.

LAUREY. And a spankin' team with their bridles all jinglin'?

CURLY. No.

LAUREY. 'Spect me to ride on behind ole Dun, I guess. You better ast that ole Cummin's girl you've tuck sich a shine to, over acrost the river.

CURLY. If I was to ast you, they'd be a way to take you, Miss Laurey Smarty.

LAUREY. Oh, they would? (CURLY *now proceeds to stagger* LAUREY *with an idea. But she doesn't let on at first how she is "tuck up" with it.*

AUNT ELLER *is the one who falls like a ton of bricks immediately and helps* CURLY *try to sell it to* LAUREY.)

CURLY.

When I take you out tonight with me,
Honey, here's the way it's goin' to be;
You will set behind a team of snow-white horses
In the slickest gig you ever see!

AUNT ELLER. Lands!

CURLY.

Chicks and ducks and geese better scurry
When I take you out in the surrey,
When I take you out in the surrey with the fringe on top!
Watch thet fringe and see how it flutters
When I drive them high steppin' strutters!
Nosey-pokes'll peek through their shutters and their eyes will pop!
The wheels are yeller, the upholstery's brown,
The dashboard's genuine leather,
With isinglass curtains y'c'n roll right down
In case there's a change in the weather —
Two bright side-lights, winkin' and blinkin',
Ain't no finer rig, I'm a-thinkin'!
You c'n keep yer rig if you're thinkin' 'at I'd keer to swap
Fer that shiny little surrey with the fringe on the top!

[LAUREY *still pretends unconcern, but she is obviously slipping.*]

AUNT ELLER. Would y'say the fringe was made of silk?

CURLY. Wouldn't have no other kind but silk.

LAUREY (*she's only human*). Has it really got a team of snow-white horses?

CURLY. One's like snow — the other's more like milk.

AUNT ELLER. So y'can tell 'em apart!

CURLY.

All the world'll fly in a flurry
When I take you out in the surrey,
When I take you out in the surrey with the fringe on top!
When he hits that road, hell fer leather,
Cats and dogs'll dance in the heather,
Birds and frogs'll sing all together and the toads will hop!
The wind'll whistle as we rattle along,
The cows'll moo in the clover,
The river will ripple out a whispered song,

And whisper it over and over: (*In a loud whisper.*)
Don't you wisht y'd go on ferever?
Don't you wisht y'd go on ferever?

[AUNT ELLER'S *and* LAUREY'S *lips move involuntarily, shaping the same words.*]

Don't you wisht y'd go on ferever and 'ud never stop
In that shiny little surrey with the fringe on the top?

[*Music continues under dialogue.*]

AUNT ELLER. Y'd shore feel like a queen settin' up in that carriage!

CURLY (*overconfident*). On'y she talked so mean to me a while back, Aunt Eller, I'm a good mind not to take her.

LAUREY. Ain't said I was goin'!

CURLY (*the fool*). Ain't ast you!

LAUREY. Whur'd you git sich a rig at? (*With explosive laughter, seeing a chance for revenge.*) Ah! I bet he's went and h'ard a rig over to Claremore! Thinkin' I'd go with him!

CURLY. 'S all you know about it.

LAUREY. Spent all his money h'arin' a rig and now ain't got nobody to ride in it!

CURLY. Have, too! . . . Did not h'ar it. Made the whole thing up outa my head.

LAUREY. What! Made it up!

CURLY. Dashboard and all.

LAUREY (*flying at him*). Oh! Git offa the place, you! Aunt Eller, make him git hisse'f outa here. (*She picks up a fly swatter and chases him.*) Tellin' me lies!

CURLY. Makin' up a few—look out now! (*He jumps the fence to save himself.* LAUREY *turns her back to him and sits down. He comes up behind her. The music, which had become more turbulent to match the scene, now softens.*) Makin' up a few purties ain't agin' no law 'at I know of. Don't you wisht they was sich a rig, though? (*Winking at* AUNT ELLER.) Nen y'could go to the play party and do a hoe-down till mornin' if you was a mind to. . . . Nen when you was all wore out, I'd lift you onto the surrey, and jump up alongside of you—And we'd jist point the horses home. . . . I can jist pitcher the whole thing. (AUNT ELLER *beams on them as* CURLY *sings very softly.*)

I can see the stars gittin' blurry
When we ride back home in the surrey,
Ridin' slowly home in the surrey with the fringe on top.
I can feel the day gettin' older,

Feel a sleepy head near my shoulder,
Noddin', droopin' close to my shoulder till it falls, kerplop!
The sun is swimmin' on the rim of a hill,
The moon is takin' a header,
And jist as I'm thinkin' all the earth is still,
A lark'll wake up in the medder. . . .
Hush! You bird, my baby's a-sleepin' —
Maybe got a dream worth a-keepin'
[*Soothing and slower.*]
Whoa! You team, and jist keep a-creepin' at a slow clip-clop.
Don't you hurry with the surrey with the fringe on the top.

[*There is silence and contentment, but only for a brief moment.* LAUREY *starts slowly to emerge from the enchantment of his description.*]

LAUREY. On'y . . . on'y there ain't no sich rig. You said you made the whole thing up.

CURLY. Well . . .

LAUREY. Why'd you come around here with yer stories and lies, gittin' me all worked up that-a-way? Talkin' 'bout the sun swimmin' on the hill, and all — like it was so. Who'd want to ride 'longside of you anyway? (IKE and FRED enter and stand outside the gate, looking on.)

AUNT ELLER. Whyn't you jist grab her and kiss her when she acts that-a-way, Curly? She's jist achin' fer you to, I bet.

LAUREY. Oh, I won't even speak to him, let alone 'low him to kiss me, the braggin', bow-legged, wisht-he-had-a-sweetheart bum! (*She flounces into the house, slamming the door.*)

AUNT ELLER. She likes you — quite a lot.

CURLY. Whew! If she liked me any more she'd sic the dogs onto me.

IKE. Y'git the wagon hitched up?

AUNT ELLER. Whut wagon?

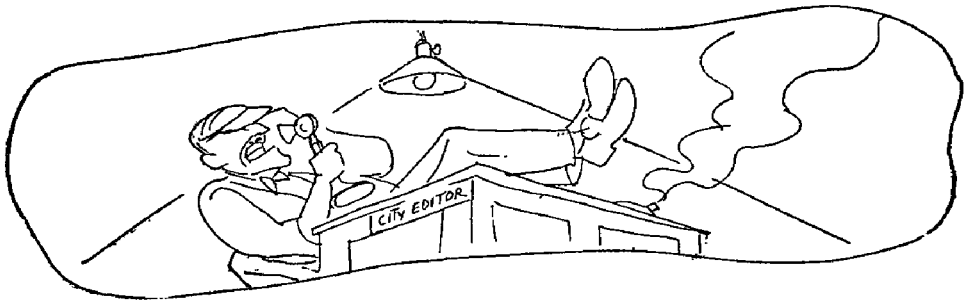
CURLY. They's a crowd of folks comin' down from Bushyhead for the box social.

FRED. Curly said mebbe you'd loan us yer big wagon to bring 'em up from the station.

AUNT ELLER. Course I would, if he'd ast me.

CURLY (*embarrassed*). Got to talkin' 'bout a lot of other things. I'll go hitch up the horses now 'f you say it's all right.

[*As he exits, a group of boys run over, leaping the fence, shouting boisterously and pushing* WILL PARKER *in front of them.* WILL *is apparently a favorite with* AUNT ELLER.]



THE FRONT PAGE

BY BEN HECHT AND CHARLES MACARTHUR

"On a sticky August evening in 1928," reminisces Mr. Brooks Atkinson, "*The Front Page* swept into town and bowled over the public with the excitement and sting of a callous newspaper story." Fifteen years later Alexander Woollcott was still calling it the best comedy written in America. A passage from the second act of *The Front Page* has been included here to illustrate the satiric farce. In the sense that the play pokes fun at the working newspaperman with all his "alertness, cynicism, shrewdness, penury and exuberance," it is capering satire; and in the fact that it rides roughshod, in its exaggeration of character and situation, over all the laws of probability, it is good, rapid-fire farce. The story is of Hildy Johnson, a Chicago news reporter whose mad scrambles for news scoops help to put off with dreary regularity his marriage to the long-suffering Peggy Grant. This time it is the electrifying news of the escape of one Earl Williams, whose execution had been wearily awaited by a very bored group of police reporters. The passage selected opens the second act, and is illustrative of many of the farce's hallmarks: dizzy pace, staccato dialogue, cascading gags, weird characters, and fantastic situations.

The Front Page was produced by Jed Harris and staged by the playwright George S. Kaufman. In the original cast were Lee Tracy, Eduardo Cianelli, and Osgood Perkins. The play has had more than one successful screen treatment.

The scene is the Press Room in the Criminal Courts Building in Chicago. The police reporters, waiting wearily all evening for the execution of the convicted murderer EARL WILLIAMS, *have been bolted out of*

their card-playing boredom by the news of the condemned man's escape. Now, as searchlights play outside the windows, only JENNIE, *the scrubwoman, is left in the room, sweeping up broken glass and doing a little miscellaneous cleaning.* "WOODENSHOES" EICHHORN, *a big, moon-faced, childish, and incompetent policeman, enters. . . .*

WOODENSHOES. Where are all the reporters? Out looking for him?

JENNIE. They broke all the windows and pulled off a telephone. Aiiy, those newspaper fellows! They're worse'n anything.

WOODENSHOES. There wasn't any excuse for his escaping. This sort of thing couldn't ever happen, if they listened to me.

JENNIE. Oooh, they'll catch him. Those big lights.

WOODENSHOES. What good will that do Society? The time to catch 'em is while they're little kids. That's the whole basis of my crime-prevention theory. It's all going to be written up in the papers soon.

JENNIE. Ooooh, what they print in the papers! I never seen anything like it. (*She is sweeping.* ENDICOTT *enters and makes for a phone.* WOODENSHOES *watches him.*)

WOODENSHOES. Has anything happened, Mr. Endicott?

ENDICOTT (*into phone*). Endicott calling. Gimme a rewrite man.

WOODENSHOES. You know, this would be just the right time for you to print my theory of crime prevention, that you said you were going to. (*Pulling out a sheaf of documents.*)

ENDICOTT (*into phone, waving him off as if he were a horsefly*). Well, hurry it up.

WOODENSHOES. Now here I got the city split up in districts. I got them marked in red.

ENDICOTT. What? For Lord's sake, can't you see I'm — (*Into phone.*) Hello! Gill?

WOODENSHOES. But you been promising me you'd —

ENDICOTT (*snatches papers*). All right — I'll take it home and study it. Now for Lord's sake stop annoying me — I got to work! I can't sit around listening to you! Get out of here and stop bothering me! (*Back to phone.*) Ready, Gill? . . . Now, here's the situation so far.

WOODENSHOES (*to* JENNIE). He's going to take it home and study it. You'll see it in the paper before long. (*Exits.*)

ENDICOTT (*into phone*). Right! . . . At ten minutes after nine Williams was taken to the Sheriff's private office to be examined by this Professor Eglehofer, and a few minutes later he shot his way out. . . .

Excerpt from "The Front Page" by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur from *The Front Page* by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Copyright, 1928, by Covici-Friede, Inc. By special permission of Crown Publishers.

No — nobody knows where he got the gun. Or if they do they won't tell. . . . Yeah . . . Yeah . . . He run up eight flights of stairs to the infirmary, and got out through the skylight. He must have slid down the rainpipe to the street. . . . Yeah . . . No, I tell you nobody knows where he got it. I got hold of Jacobi, but he won't talk. (MURPHY *enters.*)

MURPHY (*crossing to phone*). Outside, Jennie! Outside!

ENDICOTT. They're throwing a dragnet around the whole North Side. Watching the railroads and Red headquarters. The Chief of Police has ordered out every copper on the force and says they'll get Williams before morning.

MURPHY (*into phone*). Hello, sweetheart. Give me the desk, will you?

ENDICOTT (*into phone, after a final look at his notes*). The Crime Commission has offered a reward of ten thousand dollars for his capture. . . . Yeah. I'm going to try to get hold of Eglehofer. He knows what's happened, if I can find him. Call you back. (*Hangs up and exits swiftly.*)

MURPHY. For the Lord's sake, Jennie! Every time we turn our backs you start that sweeping.

JENNIE (*picking up her traps*). All right. Only it's dirty. I get scolded.

MURPHY (*into phone*). Murphy talking . . . No clue yet as to Earl Williams' whereabouts. Here's a little feature, though. . . . A tear bomb . . . *tear* bomb . . . criminals cry for it . . .

[SHERIFF HARTMAN *appears in the doorway. He has been running around, shouting a million orders, nervous, bewitched, and sweating like a June bride. He is in his shirt sleeves, and his diamond-studded badge of office is visible.*]

MURPHY (*into phone*). Yeh! Tear bomb.

SHERIFF (*as he enters, speaking to someone in the corridor*). To blazes with the Mayor! If he wants me he knows where I am.

MURPHY (*into phone*). A tear bomb went off unexpectedly in the hands of Sheriff Hartman's bombing squad.

SHERIFF (*stunned*). What went off?

MURPHY (*into phone*). The following deputy sheriffs were rushed to Passavant Hospital: . . .

SHERIFF. A fine fair-weather friend you are!

MURPHY (*remorselessly, into phone*). Philip Lustgarten . . .

SHERIFF. After all I've done for you!

MURPHY (*phoning*). Herman Waldstein . . .

SHERIFF. Putting stuff like that in the papers!

MURPHY (*phoning*). Sidney Matsburg . . .

SHERIFF. That's gratitude for you! (*He exits.*)

MURPHY (*phoning*). Henry Koo . . .

JENNIE (*going toward door*). Ain't that terrible?

[KRUGER *enters and goes to a phone.*]

MURPHY (*phoning*). Abe Lefkowitz . . .

JENNIE. All those fellows! (*Exits.*)

KRUGER (*at his phone*). Give me rewrite.

MURPHY (*phoning*). And William Gilhooly. Call you back. (*Hangs up and exits.*)

KRUGER (*into phone*). Ready? . . . A man corresponding to Earl Williams' description was seen boarding a southbound Cottage Grove Avenue car at Austin Avenue, by Motorman Julius L. Roosevelt. (MC CUE *enters.*) Yeah — Roosevelt. I thought it would make a good feature on account of the name.

MC CUE (*phoning*). Mc Cue talking. Give me the desk.

KRUGER (*phoning*). All right, I'll go right after it. Call you back. (*Exits.*)

MC CUE (*into phone*). Hello. Is that you, Emil? Are you ready? . . . Sidelights on the man hunt . . . Mrs. Irma Schlogel, fifty-five, scrublady, was shot in the left leg while at work scrubbing the eighth floor of the Wrigley Building by one of Sheriff Hartman's special deputies. (*There is a fusillade of shots in the distance.* HILDY JOHNSON *enters.*)

HILDY. There goes another scrublady. (*Goes to phone, but starts arranging notes.*)

MC CUE (*phoning*). No, just a flesh wound. They took her to Passavant Hospital. (*Hangs up. To* HILDY.) Any dope on how he got out?

HILDY. From all I can get they were playing leapfrog.

MC CUE. How about Jacobi? Did he say anything to you?

HILDY. Not a word. (MC CUE *goes.*)

HILDY (*quickly picks up his receiver*). Gimme Walter Burns. (*He gets up and closes the door carefully; comes back to his phone.*) Walter? Say, listen. I got the whole story from Jacobi and I got it exclusive . . . That's right, and it's a pip. Only listen. It cost me two hundred and sixty bucks, see? . . . Just a minute — I'll *give* you the story. I'm telling you first I had to give him all the money I had on me and it wasn't exactly mine. Two hundred and sixty bucks, and I want it back. (*Yells.*) Well, did you hear what I said about the money? . . . All right, then here's your story. It's the jail break of your dreams. . . . Dr. Max J. Eglehofer, a profound thinker from Vienna, was giving Williams a final sanity test in the Sheriff's office — you know, sticking a lot of pins in him to get his reflexes.

Then he decided to re-enact the crime exactly as it had taken place, so as to study Williams' powers of co-ordination. . . . Well, I'm coming to it. Will you shut up? . . . Of course he had to have a gun to re-enact with. And who do you suppose supplied it? . . . Peter B. Hartman . . . "B" for brains. . . . I tell you, I'm *not* kidding. Hartman gave his gun to the Professor, the Professor gave it to Earl, and Earl shot the Professor right in the belly . . . Ain't it perfect? If the Sheriff had unrolled a red carpet like at a Polish wedding and loaned Williams an umbrella, it couldn't have been more ideal . . . Eglehofer? No, not bad. They spirited him away to Passavant Hospital . . . No, we got it exclusive. Now listen, Walter. It cost me two hundred and sixty bucks for this story, and I want it back . . . I had to give it to Jacobi before he'd cough up his guts. Two hundred and sixty dollars—the money I'm going to get married on . . . Never mind about fine work—I want the money. . . . No, I tell you, I'm not going to cover anything else—I'm going away. (PEGGY *appears in the doorway. She is a pretty girl of twenty.* HILDY *has his back to the door.*) Listen, you stiff. I just did this as a personal favor. Now I'm leaving town and I gave Jacobi every cent I got, and I want it back right away! . . . *When* will you send it over? . . . Well, see that you do or I can't get married! . . . All right, and tell him to run. I'll be waiting right here in the press—(*He hangs up and sees* PEGGY. *With a guilty start.*) Hello, Peggy.

PEGGY. What was that, over the telephone?

HILDY. Nothing. I was just telling Walter Burns I was all through, that's all. Hello, darling.

[PEGGY, *despite her youth and simplicity, seems overwhelmingly mature in comparison to* HILDY. *As a matter of fact,* PEGGY *belongs to that division of womanhood which dedicates itself to suppressing in its lovers or husbands the spirit of D'Artagnan, Roland, Captain Kidd, Cyrano, Don Quixote, King Arthur, or any other type of the male innocent and rampant. In her unconscious and highly noble efforts to make what the female world calls "a man" out of* HILDY, PEGGY *has neither the sympathy nor acclaim of the authors, yet—regarded superficially, she is a very sweet and satisfying heroine.*]

PEGGY. You haven't done something foolish with that money? Our money!

HILDY. No. No!

PEGGY. You still *have* got the rest of it?

HILDY. Of course. Gee, darling, you don't think for a minute—

PEGGY. I think I'd better take care of it from now on!

HILDY. Now listen, honey, I can look after a couple of hundred dollars all right. . . .

PEGGY. Hildy, if you've still got that money I want you to give it to me.

HILDY. Now, sweetheart, it's going to be perfectly all right. . . .

PEGGY (*she divines, alas, her lover's failing*). Then you haven't got it.

HILDY. Not — this minute, but I —

PEGGY. You *did* do something with it!

HILDY. No, no. He's sending it right over — Walter, I mean. It'll be here any minute.

PEGGY (*her vocabulary is reduced to a coal of fire*). Oh, Hildy!

HILDY (*a preposterous fellow*). Listen, darling, I wouldn't have had this happen for the world. But it's going to be all right. Now here's what happened: I was just starting out to the house to get you when this guy Williams broke out of jail. You know, the fellow they were going to hang in the morning.

PEGGY (*intolerant of the antics of the Cyrano sex*). Yes, I know.

HILDY. Ah now, listen, sweetheart, I *had* to do what I did. And — and the same thing when it came to the money — (*She turns away.*) Peggy! Now, listen. I shouldn't tell you this, but I haven't got any secrets from you. Do you know how this guy escaped? He was down in the Sheriff's office when Hartman — that's the Sheriff — and Eglehofer — that's this fellow from Vienna —

PEGGY. Hildy!

HILDY. Aw, now I can't tell you if you won't listen. I *had* to give him the money so he wouldn't give the story to anybody else. Jacobi, I mean. That's the assistant warden. I got the story exclusive — the biggest scoop in years, I'll bet.

PEGGY. Do you know how long Mother and I waited, out at that house?

HILDY. Aw, Peggy, listen. You ain't going to be mad at me for this. I couldn't help it. You'd have done the same thing yourself. I mean, the biggest story in the world busting, and nobody on the job.

PEGGY. I might have known it would happen again.

HILDY. Aw, listen —

PEGGY. Every time I've ever wanted you for something — on my birthday, and New Year's Eve, when I waited till five in the morning —

HILDY. But a big story broke; don't you remember?

PEGGY. It's always a big story — the biggest story in the world, and the next day everybody's forgotten it, even you!

HILDY. What do you mean forgotten? That was the Clara Hamon mur-

der — on your birthday. Now for God's sake, Peggy, it won't hurt to wait five more minutes. The boy's on his way with the money now.

PEGGY. Mother's sitting downstairs waiting in a taxicab. I'm just ashamed to face her, the way you've been acting. If she knew about that money — it's all we've got in the world, Hildy. We haven't even got a place to sleep in, except the train, and —

HILDY. Aw, gee, I wouldn't do anything in the world to hurt you, Peggy. You make me feel like a criminal.

PEGGY. It's all that Walter Burns. Oh, I'll be so glad when I get you away from him. You simply can't resist him.

HILDY. For Lord's sake, Peggy, I've told you what I think of him. I wouldn't raise a finger if he was dying. Honest to God.

PEGGY. Then why did you loan him the money?

HILDY. I didn't! You see, you won't listen to me, or you'd know I didn't. Now, listen. I had to give the money to Jacobi, the assistant —

[WOODENSHOES *ushers in* MRS. GRANT. MRS. GRANT *is a confused little widow who has tried her best to adjust her mind to* HILDY *as a son-in-law.*]

WOODENSHOES. Here they are, ma'am. (*Exits immediately.*)

HILDY. Oh, hello, Mrs. Grant — Mother. I was just explaining to Peggy —

PEGGY. Mother, I thought you were going to wait in the cab.

MRS. GRANT (*a querulous yet practical soul*). Well, I just came up to tell you the meter's gone to two dollars.

HILDY. Yeah, sure. But that's all right. . . .

THE MOTION PICTURE

The Motion Picture

In this age of bewilderingly rapid scientific progress we have become almost immune to wonder. Nearly a hundred million Americans stream into twenty thousand movie houses of the country each week to enjoy one or more of the hundreds of pictures produced by our third largest industry. Few of these people pause in amazement at the miracle they have experienced. Yet there is much to marvel at, much to be awed by. Here is the intricate product of almost three hundred different kinds of work, of a money investment that approaches the three-billion-dollar mark, of the combined efforts of thousands of experts as well as more humble workers. It is a great and growing force whose daily influence is incalculable and whose possibilities, in the words of Robert Edmund Jones, are "as infinite as those of speech itself."

LEARNING ABOUT MOVIES

Why do these vast audiences know so little about the movies? Of course, many can tell you a great deal about the private lives of the movie stars; but few have much knowledge of how movies came to be, how they are made, how they may be better understood and judged. Few schools study the film seriously, and few books have been published to help in that study. There are, of course, good reasons for this situation.

Obstacles to Study. The movies are young—the talking pictures are hardly out of their teens. They have grown so rapidly, there is hardly time to catch up with each new step. Besides we think of movies as pure recreation, not to be taken too seriously. When we do try to study movies, we find a number of obstacles in our way. A picture is a fleeting thing; you cannot hold it up for long perusal, or turn it back like the pages of a book. It is shown for only a short time and not often revived. It is seldom seen by all the members of a group interested in its study. Yet the movie, as an art combining practically all the arts, *should* be studied, as we study literature, painting, music. How can we do this?

Helps to Study. It is now increasingly possible to see pictures no longer current. The Museum of Modern Art in New York is a pioneer in

the field of the "film library," with its daily showing of film cycles and its rental of films to schools and other study groups. Similar services have been developed by a number of universities, by federal agencies, and by many local school systems. Hundreds of films in 16-mm. size suitable for school showing may be bought or rented from a large number of commercial distributors. Study guides for many of these films are also available.[1] These or similar preparatory material make for a more purposeful and appreciative viewing of the pictures. Many schools arrange with local movie managers for the revival of old films or for the special showing of current ones.

THE MOVIES AS LITERATURE

The last few years have seen the recognition of still another method of enjoying and reviewing pictures — the movie script or screen play. Until recently film plays were rarely made available to the reading public. In 1943 appeared *Twenty Best Film Plays,* edited by John Gassner and Dudley Nichols; and in 1945 the same editors began the publication of an annual series of *Best Film Plays.* A glance at these movie plays will reveal that they are as easy and as pleasurable reading as any stage play. The very detailed directions of the shooting script are not included in these printed screen plays.[2] The number of technical terms used is fairly limited.

STEPS IN THE MAKING OF A MOVIE

This new literary form is, of course, only the beginning of a long and complicated series of creations which end in the finished film. A year or more may elapse before a picture is completed and ready for your movie house. During this time thousands of people representing two to three hundred arts and skills may be engaged, with an expenditure of as much as five million dollars, as in *Mary Magdalene,* in the many stages of picture making. To be able, in imagination, to follow a film

[1] Such as the Photoplay Study Guides published by Educational & Recreational Guides, 172 Renner Avenue, Newark, N. J.; a catalogue will be sent on request.

[2] For an example of writing continuity (complete scenario as used by the film editor) see Dudley Nichols' adaptation of Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer* in *Modern British Drama,* ed. by Harlan Hatcher. Some of the pages in *The Human Comedy* (page 418) have been kept in this form.

along these stages is to enrich our experience with the movies. Will H. Hays has said: "No adequately critical appreciation of a motion picture is possible unless there is knowledge and comprehension of the problems involved."

Getting a Story. The first of these problems is finding a good story. This is technically the job of the producer — the overall executive and supervisor — or of the associate producer; but a staff of readers and story scouts will comb the countless sources of material for promising screen plots, while large staffs of professional writers supply original plots, or adapt magazine stories, stage plays, novels, and biographies to film use. All this is in addition to the million or more stories already on file in any of the large studios. Yet obtaining a good story remains for any producer one of the most difficult of his problems, and he will often pay fabulous sums for a good one. In general a story must pass these tests: (1) It must be reasonably adaptable to effective and attractive movie treatment; (2) it must have characters who are suited to the studio's stars — though players may in some situations be borrowed from other studios; (3) it must make an appeal to as large an audience as possible. Can you think of any novel or story you have read which would pass these tests and has not yet been screened?

Developing the Story. Many conferences may precede the final selection. The story chosen, the associate producer takes over the task of development. He delegates to one or more writers and assistants the task of translating the story into film terms. The three- or four-page synopsis which was prepared for his convenience is now developed into a screen treatment in which the sequence of action, scene by scene, is outlined with a bare minimum of dialogue. A director for the picture having been chosen — it is his job to see a picture through from paper to film — conferences are held, changes suggested and made. At this point the treatment may be submitted to the Hays Office — the self-regulating office of the movie industry, now headed by Eric Johnston — to determine whether it adheres to the movie code of moral and aesthetic rules. The writer's final draft must go to the production office, which must estimate the budget in terms of requirements of time, men, materials. The production manager in charge assigns a unit manager to supervise the problems and the finances of the story. The director at the same time chooses an assistant director to confer with the unit manager about the complex details of production, and with the music department about scoring possibilities.

Department Work. A good scenario writer knows his studio. He will adapt his script to the peculiar talents of director, actors, cinematogra-

pher, and to the resources of the organization. When the writer and his assistants have at long last evolved the shooting script, copies are sent to the heads of twenty-five or more departments, each of which is to break down the script into a detailed analysis of its own requirements. The work of some of these departments is particularly interesting.

Research may often begin many months or even years before a picture actually goes into production. Because of the demands of modern audiences that pictures be authentic, studios go to fabulous lengths, with the aid of their research staff, to see that accuracy is achieved in every detail of background, costume, property, language, manners, and customs. In spite of this movie-goers still call Hollywood's attention to hundreds of "boners" each year.

Long preparation and the work of many departments also go into the planning and construction of the studio sets required for the various scenes. Art, research, casting, and transportation directors, construction and electrical superintendents, cinematographers and chief recording engineers, costume designers and location men — these and many others are brought in to the conferences that precede the work, as well as into the work itself. Costuming is also an extremely intricate process, and the wardrobe department is always one of the largest units in any film plant. The fashion designers who work in this department are only too well aware of their enormous influence on the dressing habits of people all over the world. A Hollywood executive just home from a 50,000-mile tour of the world remarked, "In Chungking, in Alexandria, in Bombay, everywhere, all over the world, women are wearing their hair just as they've seen the Hollywood stars wear theirs."

"They don't look like wizards, but they are," says the writer Frank S. Nugent of movie property men. These are the men who are responsible for supplying all the physically movable articles used for background or action in the movie. They have accumulated, in their studios, warehouses full of the most varied and fantastic assortment of objects, numbered in the hundreds of thousands and valued at millions of dollars. In addition, they must be ready to obtain, from rental houses or other sources, additional props at almost a moment's notice. Prop men will have on hand such a weird collection of objects as stuffed gorillas, ancient washtubs, marriage licenses, locomotives a century old, cigar-store Indians; and they often find themselves confronted with strange problems. Prop man John Miller spent nearly a year in China accumulating the material needed for *The Good Earth;* and Mr. Nugent describes the frantic search for a seagull that could learn to alight again and again on Captain Eddie Rickenbacker's head, or for mosquitoes —

needed in January—for the movie version of *Yellow Jack*. Among the specialists in the property department the interior decorator is particularly important, as you will agree after seeing such pictures as *Laura, A Song to Remember, Christmas in Connecticut,* and many others.

Many other departments, too numerous to mention, are involved in the preparation for the actual shooting of a picture. So bewilderingly complex a process requires a detailed blueprint. This is mapped out by the assistant director in the form of a shooting schedule, which determines the exact order of scenes and the shooting dates, and indicates such items as wardrobe changes and property lists. Scenes are not shot according to the continuity of the story; all the scenes on one set are completed, regardless of time order, before those of the next set are undertaken. The script girl, who is the assistant director's secretary on the set, keeps a careful record of every detail of costume and action, so that scenes show no inconsistencies when they are later correctly reassembled in sequence.

In casting, the stars are usually chosen by the producer early in the proceedings, and the supporting cast then selected by the casting director, who uses his own card index as well as the files of the Central Casting Corporation containing ten thousand names. You have only to recall the acting in any good motion picture to recognize the importance of good casting.

Shooting the Picture. The sets having been built and decorated, the stars tested for wardrobe and makeup, and the script gone over for last-minute changes, the first phase of picture making is over and the second, production, begins. Here you must try to imagine the vast and bewildering intricacies of the modern movie studio, with its microphones, lights, cameras, trucks, booms, cranes, recording machines, control booths, elaborate sets; and its armies of workers all busily engaged in their appointed tasks. In the shooting of the film the director is the guiding genius. He rehearses each scene with painstaking care before he permits the cameras to turn; and he will take the same scene again and again before he is satisfied.

The acting is recorded on the picture film, the sound and dialogue on the sound film. At the end of each day, the director, the *editor* (or cutter), and others project the *dailies* or *rushes*—the scenes shot during the day—and either select the best or decide on retakes. For feature pictures the average studio will shoot no more than three or four minutes of action in the course of a full day of work; that is, what passes before your eyes on the screen in a few brief minutes represents eight or more hours of shooting in the studio or on location.

Completing the Film. About half the time required to make a picture is spent in preparation and about a fifth in production. The remainder of the time is used in the completion stage. The film editor or cutter begins by assembling the scenes roughly according to the script, with an eye to the proper balance of parts in the film. This *rough cut* is shown to director and producer, who now see the picture as a whole for the first time and make suggestions for changes of sequence, or for retake. Other rough cuts may follow. The special-effects department adds necessary effects, including the fades and dissolves necessary to bridge the scenes. The picture is then *scored,* the composer timing the music to fit the scenes. All additional sounds are then recorded together with the music. The *first preview cut* is now made, to be shown experimentally in some small theatre to an average audience. The purpose of this *sneak* showing is to test audience reaction to various elements of the picture. Another conference follows, with its resultant cuttings, changes, possible retakes. The various kinds of cutting and editing call for the most sensitive of skills. Not only must two or three miles of strips of film be cut to proper length; [3] but also they must be so put together that they produce the most effective results. It is with a vast sigh of relief that the editor at last sees the film to the laboratory where the intricate process of printing and developing takes place. Advertising and distribution follow, and you are finally able to see the picture in your favorite movie house.

What an amazing odyssey our original story has made! Yet this journey must be repeated with each of the six or seven hundred feature pictures produced in this country each year — to say nothing of the hundreds of lesser pictures ground out by our studios.

LOOKING BACKWARD

The growth of modern motion pictures has been phenomenally rapid. Barely a generation has passed between Thomas Edison's strange little Black Maria studio in New Jersey and the vast Hollywood studios of our time. The little nickelodeon of your parents' or grandparents' day has become in a few years the New York Radio City Music Hall or the

[3] Every foot and a half of film is one second in the projection room; a ninety minute film requires, therefore, 8,100 feet, or a mile and a half, of film. (The most remarkable example of cutting was that done for the documentary *The True Glory,* in which 8,000,000 feet of original film were reduced to 8,000.)

Hollywood Grauman's Chinese Theatre of today. The history of these years of progress makes fascinating reading.[4] Only the briefest backward glance is possible here.

Early Experiments with Motion Pictures. Like all other important inventions, the motion picture was the result of many years of experimentation. As early as 1640, Athanasius Kircher projected shadow figures on a wall with a magic lantern, and suggested the use of a revolving drum to move quickly from picture to picture. It was not until 1824 that Peter Mark Roget stated the principle which is at the basis of all moving pictures; namely, the persistence of an image for a fraction of a second after the picture has disappeared. After Roget many scientists developed and demonstrated this law of the persistence of vision. Devignes' Wheel of Life, or Zoötrope, made drawings inside a rotating cylinder seem to move; this was improved by such devices as Coleman Sellers' Kinematoscope and Henry Heyl's Phasmatrope, steps in the direction of the modern projector.

The photographing of moving objects marks the next stage in the development of the movie. In 1878, Edward Muybridge, with the aid of John D. Isaacs, succeeded in photographing a running horse by operating twenty-four cameras a foot apart. The invention of celluloid film in 1888, to replace glass plates, made possible further advances. Three years later Edison took out a patent for his peep-show machine or Kinetoscope; and soon he had built the first studio, called the Kinetographic Theatre or more popularly the Black Maria.

From this point on we have a series of important and interesting "firsts."

1893. First movie actor, Fred Ott, taken by director Dickson in the act of sneezing.[5]

1895. The first projected film, *Lunch Hour in the Lumière Factory,* was shown by the Lumière Brothers in Paris. In the same year Thomas Armat produced the first modern projector, later called the Vitascope.

1896. The first motion picture, more or less as we know it today, was presented at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York.

1897. This year saw the first championship fight picture (Corbett-Fitzsimmons), the first newsreel, *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag,* and a film version of the *Oberammergau Passion Play.*

[4] The best history of the movie in America is Lewis Jacobs' *Rise of the American Film,* Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939.

[5] For a picture of these and other "first" films see *Pictorial History of the Movies,* by Deems Taylor and others, Simon & Schuster, 1943.

Important Early Motion Pictures. With the turn of the century the development of motion pictures proceeded rapidly. The following are among the early landmarks:

1902. *A Trip to the Moon,* by George Melies (trick photography).

1903. Edwin Porter's *The Life of an American Fireman* (forerunner of the documentary) and *The Great Train Robbery* (probably the first movie to tell a story).

1912. D. W. Griffith's *The New York Hat,* with Mary Pickford and Lionel Barrymore. Also Adolph Zukor's *Queen Elizabeth,* with Sarah Bernhardt; said to have "established the motion picture as a work of art."

1913. *Quo Vadis,* an eight-reel film produced in Italy. *The Squaw Man,* filmed by Jesse Lasky and Cecil B. DeMille in a barn located in a small suburb of Los Angeles, called Hollywood.

1914. Charles Chaplin's first picture appeared. *Cabiria,* an epic film, produced in Italy.

1915. *The Birth of a Nation,* directed by D. W. Griffith, used such devices as the fade out, the closeup, the cutback and the dissolve.

1919. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* a remarkable expressionistic film produced in Germany, with actors Werner Kraus and Conrad Veidt.

1922. Robert J. Flaherty's *Nanook of the North,* a landmark in the documentary film.

1923. *The Covered Wagon,* directed by James Cruze.

1925. *The Big Parade,* greatest picture of World War I; written by Laurence Stallings, starring John Gilbert. *Potemkin,* directed by the Russian Sergei Eisenstein.

1926. *Kid Boots,* a musical with Eddie Cantor. *The Sea Beast* with John Barrymore.

1927. Ernst Lubitsch's *The Student Prince,* with Norma Shearer. *Flesh and the Devil,* with Greta Garbo. *The Italian Straw Hat,* by France's great director Réné Clair.

MOVIES IN OUR TIME

Talking Pictures. The great revolution in pictures came in October 1927. It was then that Warner Brothers presented Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer;* the movies had learned to speak. The advent of "talkies" was for a time a mixed blessing. "It almost seemed, momentarily," writes Iris Barry of the Museum of Modern Art, "that in gaining a voice the movies had lost a soul." The studios found it hard to adapt old ways to new needs. The early talking pictures were therefore disappointing, though audiences thrilled to the startling innovation.

Hollywood and its colleagues abroad learned rapidly, however, and

marked advances soon were made on all fronts. Technically, sound recording and projection were perfected, with visuals and sound track on the same film achieving perfect synchronization and greater fidelity. Artistic improvement came with the movie's increasing independence from the techniques and the personnel of the *legitimate* theatre. The moral tone of pictures was also lifted as the vogue of crime and gangster films gradually disappeared. The animated cartoon, rollicking now with tunes and voices, came into its own; and soon even full-length animated features were being produced.

Films seemed after a time even to be acquiring a conscience. More and more films—like Mervin LeRoy's *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (with Paul Muni) and William Wellman's *Wild Boys of the Road* began to reflect social problems and cry out against social evils. It was also discovered that good biographical films were box-office attractions, as witness *The Story of Louis Pasteur* (1936), *The Life of Émile Zola* (1937), and the great Russian film *Chapayev* (1934).

Literature was soon receiving more masterly treatment in the film, with such pictures as *David Copperfield* and *The Informer* (1935), and *Mutiny on the Bounty* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1936). The growing list of these adaptations is an impressive one. Comedy matured, as in Frank Capra's memorable *It Happened One Night* (with Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable, 1934), Leo McCarey's *Ruggles of Red Gap* (with Charles Laughton, 1935) and such foreign films as *La Kermesse Heroique* and Réné Clair's *A Nous la Liberté*. Even the mystery and the musical came of age, with *The Thin Man* in 1934 and *One Hundred Men and a Girl*, with Deanna Durbin, in 1937.

The Fact Film. Newsreels performed greater miracles each day, and the documentary gained both scope and beauty with films like Pare Lorentz's *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River*, and the pictures of Joris Ivens. The documentary proved of enormous value during the war; and the recognition of its importance as a powerful educational force prompted the organization in 1945 of the Information Film Association to improve the output of fact films.

The Foreign Film. While America supplies about seventy per cent of the world's successful commercial pictures, and has achieved probably the greatest all-around advance in the art, a number of distinguished foreign films are familiar to American audiences. They are not too widely distributed here, partly because of language difficulties. English titles and *dubbing* (recording the dialogue in English and fitting it into the picture) have helped; but most Americans are still only dimly aware of the great films of Russia, France, Germany, and Sweden.

British films are, of course, more common, but even these have had only a limited showing. We know the work of the British director Alfred Hitchcock, for example, largely because he now works in Hollywood; few, however, are familiar with the equally distinguished Carol Reed, who still sends us pictures like *The Way Ahead* from England.

The Future. In what direction are the movies going? Where will the next advances be found? A number of answers may quickly occur to you. Color photography is still being improved. The advent of the technicolor short *La Cucaracha* under the direction of Robert Edmond Jones marked the beginning of successful color movies, followed closely by Walt Disney's animated Silly Symphonies. Great advances were revealed in the four-hour Selznick classic *Gone with the Wind* (1939), the fabulous Walt Disney *Fantasia* (1940), and the beautiful *A Song to Remember* (1945). Color is now used effectively in a variety of educational and documentary films. The direction seems to be toward a more faithful reproduction of the colors of nature.

Another line of advance is in the field of animation. Walt Disney showed in 1944 that cartoon figures and real actors can appear in the same picture, *The Three Caballeros,* and the technique has since been used in such films as *Anchors Aweigh* (1945) and *Song of the South* (1946). Use of three-dimensional figures in cartoon pictures, begun in the Russian film *The New Gulliver* (1934), is now common practice. Experiments with three-dimensional photography, however, which achieves a more convincing illusion of depth on the screen, have not been very successful.

The most important developments for the future seem to lie in television, and in the greater use of films for educational purposes. It is the latter development (combined perhaps with the former) that holds out great promise for the years to come. As techniques are simplified and systems of distribution improved, the educational film will become a vital factor in the work of every school, as well as of countless other public and private institutions.

The poet Vachel Lindsay said, back in 1935: "It has come, this new weapon of men, and by faith and a study of the signs we proclaim that it will go on and on in immemorial wonder." That prophecy is being progressively realized.

ENJOYING PICTURES

When movies first gained their voice, the producers simply transplanted stage plays onto the screen with little change. They soon realized, however, that the movie is a very different medium from either the play or the novel.

Advantages of the Movie Form. The most significant difference is the film's *freedom.* It is not bound by space, or time, or countless physical limitations, as is the stage play. To the scope of any novel or story it adds the vast freedom of audio-visual appeal. It has, because of its great flexibility, great suggestive power—a power that may be felt even in the printed form. One or two examples will illustrate this ability of the film to move an audience through the use of a few suggestive details.

In Lillian Hellman's *The North Star,* five young Russians have set out on a long hike. The young man Kolya looks at the girl Clavdia and shakes his head:

"Two weeks of you, child, is going to be a long, long time."

Camera pulls back and *drops down* to five pairs of feet. They march along briskly. DISSOLVE TO:

Close shot. The five pairs of feet on a dusty road. But now they are out of step and move slowly. DISSOLVE TO:

A Hill.

The film now shows them straggling slowly up the hill.

A single detail of sound may also achieve a strikingly vivid effect. In the same film, which takes place in the first days of the Nazi invasion of Russia in 1941, German bombers have just appeared overhead. There is a full shot of the sky, with the planes overhead; the bombs are shown dropping on the road.

Two bombs come crashing down on the line of wagons. CUT TO:

The planes as they climb and move on.

Over *sound track* through diminishing noise of planes, the sound of a horse screaming.

The opening of Philip Dunne's screen adaptation of Richard Llewellyn's fine novel *How Green Was My Valley* shows the suggestive power of the film at its best. Through the titles can be heard the full, rich voices of a men's choir singing a Welsh song; it continues while the screen shows the hands of an old man folding some shirts and socks into a cloth. As the scene shifts to the window and its view of a typical Welsh coal valley, "ugly, dirty, dominated by its stacks, cranes, and

towering slag heap," the man's voice is heard through the softer singing. "I am packing my belongings in the little blue cloth my mother used to tie around her hair when she did the house, and I am going from my Valley. And this time I shall never return."

The picture dissolves to the same valley a half century earlier, a pleasant contrast to the view we have just seen. Choir, narrator, pictorial detail, dissolves, flash-back — all conspire to create a mood and an expectancy for the moving story that follows, a story out of the memory of the old man.

Limitations of the Film. With all its great facilities the film has its limitations. It lacks the living audience which makes the stage play so gratifying to actor and audience alike. It is still a shadowy, two-dimensional form. Its vast audience may make it a people's art, but the need to appeal to the largest possible audience brings about excessive caution, censorship, stereotyping. Finally, the ease with which one can see a picture creates a lazy, time-killing approach to most films. Movies may legitimately supply *escape;* but not anesthesia.

Choosing a Picture. Since we cannot see all the movies shown in our local theatres (even if we were foolish enough to want to), how can we reasonably decide which ones to see?

Reviews in newspapers and magazines are helpful. They are usually written by experts who have an awareness of the important elements in a picture, and can express their reactions effectively on the printed page. A good review will tell you about such things as: type of movie, story (in part), theme, dialogue, acting, photography, sets and costumes, sound (including music). Such details will be more helpful than a friend's brief comment, or the three- or four-star estimates featured in some papers. They also make interesting reading for comparison after you have seen the picture. Good reviews for school use may be found in such magazines as *Scholastic, Film and Radio Guide,* and *New Movies* (National Board of Review).

The identity of the director is often a good clue to a picture's merit. Cultivate the habit of reading the credit lines and remembering the director of every film you see. Later you may even begin to recall the names of distinguished screen writers, photographers, composers, and art directors, and begin to look for their work just as you now use the lure of a Jennifer Jones or a Spencer Tracy to guide you to a movie. Academy awards are given annually for distinguished film work. These awards represent the collective opinion of ten thousand members of the industry, and the little statuettes, popularly called "Oscars," given the winners are the most coveted prizes in Hollywood. It is also inter-

esting to follow the annual best-film selections of the New York Film Critics Circle, and the results of *Film Daily's* annual poll of American press and radio critics.

To some extent the type of picture will influence our choice. Films, like literature, can be thought of as fiction or nonfiction. Most of us still go to the movies for the usual feature-length film; but the fact film is assuming an increasingly important place in the film world. Nonfiction films include *documentaries,* which weave facts and real events into a pictured story; news reels, travelogues, industrial and educational films. The techniques of the animated cartoon have proved very successful in the films used for instructional purposes. In the fiction group you will recognize such types as the historical and biographical film, the social film, the psychological film, the western, the mystery or detective picture, the fantasy, the romance, the musical. You may find yourself preferring, at one time or another, serious drama or comedy, melodrama or farce.

JUDGING A FILM

The more we learn to see in a picture, the fuller and more interesting will our movie experience be. More or less unconsciously the student of films begins to observe many elements in a picture; and his discussion of the picture will be largely in terms of these elements. You need not be an expert to apply a number of basic criteria to any picture. An interesting rating scale is the experimental one devised by the National Council of Teachers of English.[6]

A simpler scale, which you may apply in class or club discussions, is that of the National Board of Review, which rates pictures Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor in each of four categories: Entertainment value, artistic value, instructional value, and ethical value.

A more detailed analysis is that used for the 4-Star Clubs of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures:

Entertainment Value. This quality is of prime importance, for no film can accomplish any purpose at all unless it catches and holds the interest of its audience. The word entertainment is defined as mental enjoyment: instruction or amusement afforded by something seen or heard. It covers a response ranging all the way from merely being amused to being deeply moved or excited. Such things as human interest, wholesome humor, dramatic or melodramatic thrill, mystery, effective character portrayals, pictorial beauty, imagination and ingenuity of plot and treat-

[6] Reproduced by permission of the compiler, William Lewin, copyright, 1934.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

TENTATIVE (EXPERIMENTAL) RATING-SCALE FOR JUDGING PHOTOPLAYS AND MEASURING APPRECIATION—GRADES 11 AND 12

Name of Pupil _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Sex _____ School _____ City _____

Name of Picture _____ Producer _____ Author _____ Director _____ Star _____

						Score	Weight	Weighted Score
BASIC THEME	−1 Lacking	0 Of Little or No Importance	+1 Timely, Significant	+2 Vitally Important	+3 Momentous, Epical		10	
STORY COMPOSITION	−1 Incoherent	0 Possible, but Not Plausible	+1 Rather Logical	+2 Highly Probable	+3 Flawless in Continuity		20	
CHARACTERIZATIONS	−1 Overdrawn, Unnatural	0 Rather Stereotyped	+1 Likable	+2 Touching	+3 Genuine		15	
DIALOGUE	−1 Trite	0 Colorless	+1 Rather Witty	+2 Clever	+3 Brilliant		5	
VOICE OF STAR	−1 Annoying, Defective	0 Rather Uncultured	+1 Not Very Noticeable	+2 Effective	+3 Remarkably Versatile		5	
ACTING OF STAR	−1 Overdone	0 Obviously Artificial	+1 Casual	+2 Subtle, Charming	+3 Sincere, Life-like		10	
DIRECTION	−1 Weak, Dull	0 Irregular	+1 Smooth	+2 Swift, Convincing	+3 Strikingly Imaginative		10	
PICTORIAL COMPOSITION	−1 Ugly	0 Ordinary	+1 Appropriate	+2 Unusual in Photography	+3 Consistently Beautiful		5	
SOCIAL VALUE	−1 Destructive	0 Harmless	+1 Wholesome	+2 Commendable	+3 Inspiring to High Ideals		10	
ENJOYMENT	−1 Disgusting, Boring	0 Little or No Interest	+1 Entertaining	+2 Thrilling	+3 Absorbing		10	

Note: The score which the pupil assigns to each item, multiplied by the weight, gives the weighted score. Highest possible total score is 300. To obtain percentage score, divide total score by 3.

TOTAL SCORE _____

PERCENTAGE SCORE _____

ment are, by general agreement, qualities likely to make a motion picture interesting.

Theme or Idea. A motion picture need not necessarily have any underlying theme or idea at all to be entertaining, but the more vital its theme is, the more it deserves careful consideration. A comedy or farce or musical show or a mere romance or melodrama may be easily catalogued as good entertainment of its kind or not, but the more important the theme, the more important it is to judge how wisely and effectively that theme has been handled. No restrictions should be placed on the choice of the theme; it should be recognized that the motion picture has the right to draw on life itself for its material, and that generally speaking the motion picture is at its best when it is truest to life.

Plot and Story. Clarity, coherence, logic, and convincingness are qualities to look for in considering the story. A picture whose story is incoherent and hard to follow or illogical or which, though meant to be serious, is unconvincing or noticeably false to life, is not one to be recommended unless it has such decided merits in other respects that might outweigh these defects. A fantasy, an old-fashioned melodrama, a highly colored romance, or broad comedy, which obviously make no pretentions of representing life literally, cannot, of course, be expected to bear the same kind of analysis to which a picture of more serious purpose is subject.

Scenario. One need not be an expert in the intricacies of scenario writing to recognize whether or not the management of the plot and the writing of the dialogue is effective. The better the scenario is, the less obtrusive it is — it flows smoothly, telling you what you need to know when you need to know it, putting each element of the plot where it contributes most to the building of the whole. The dialogue should fit the characters who speak it, and should always serve some purpose, either of helping along the plot, revealing character, or providing amusement.

Direction. The director is more than anyone else responsible for the picture. He is supposed to have approved the scenario, and after that his work is to turn the scenario into a motion picture. Acting, the handling of scenes, the assembly of scenes, supervision of sets, costumes, photography, incidental music — everything that goes into the production of the film is the business of the director. Many directors are competent: given a good scenario they can make a good film of it. Occasionally there is a director with a style of his own as individual as the writing style of an author, and he is much more important as a creative artist than the merely competent director.

Acting. Good acting should always be a requisite of a recommended film. Many of the most popular stars are not so much actors as attractive personalities for whom parts are found that give them effective opportunities to display their popular personal qualities. Quite often the best acting is to be found in minor roles. However, if one naturally accepts a character in a film as true to the purposes of the story without being conscious of the means by which the actor makes the character effective, it is pretty safe to call the acting good.

Settings and Costume. Pictures that show imagination in creating vividness of setting, either through pictorial emphasis, lighting composition, or architecture, are enough out of the ordinary to qualify for consideration as films to be recommended. In costume pictures authenticity is one of the most important considerations.

Photography. Effective photography, which includes composition and quality of camera work and the use of lights, should be regarded as an important quality of a film. However, photography should be looked on as a means, not an end.

Sound. Good reproduction of the tones of a human voice and of musical instruments should be expected in the present state of sound production. The unusual use of sound as an effective assistant to the camera in creating drama helps materially to make a picture interesting.

Artistic Value. If a film is well done of its own kind, that is, if the various elements going into the making of a film serve well in accomplishing their purpose, the artistic value of the film may be called sufficiently good. In rare cases where the film is an unmistakable creative work of art, the word artistic takes on a different meaning that does not apply at all to the general run of motion pictures.

Ethical Value. It should be remembered that sometimes in order to develop a worthy idea certain characters, incidents, or scenes have to be used which by themselves or in other story settings would be objectionable. Such parts, however, should be carefully handled and not stressed beyond dramatic necessity or the necessity of character portrayal. Many films are so trivial and ineffective that it may be assumed that they have no perceptible influence one way or another, but a picture impressively well done which gives a false or distorted interpretation of life has a poor ethical value inasmuch as it tends to create a false picture of life in the mind of the spectator. Truth, in films that pretend to deal seriously with life, ought to be considered in rating the ethical value. Cheapness and tawdriness of ideals, ideas, emotions, humor, may also be presented impressively enough to inculcate false values, and therefore definitely lessen the ethical value of the film.

Instructional Value. A purely entertainment film sometimes incidentally contains something that may be called instructive. Foreign films, or films dealing with faraway islands often have instructional value for us by showing the costume and character of people we know little about or by making us acquainted with the appearance of a country with which we are unfamiliar. Often the showing of the technical working of some trade or profession is instructive. Films made primarily to instruct should be technically correct and interesting.

THE SCREEN PLAY

One of the finest films of recent years was Clarence Brown's screen production of William Saroyan's *The Human Comedy.* The picture starred Mickey Rooney, and featured also Frank Morgan, Fay Bainter, Van Johnson, and little Jack Jenkins. Saroyan's sensitive understanding of what he has called "the beautiful people" was skillfully transplanted to the screen play by Howard Estabrook and is well illustrated in the excerpts which follow. The first selection preserves the form of the "cutting continuity"; the remaining pages use only the dialogue. Narrative bridges, in bracketed italics, are supplied by the editor. For technical terms, see page 437.



The Human Comedy

BY WILLIAM SAROYAN

FADE IN — CLOUDS — CU *of Matthew Macauley appears in clouds — the clouds dissolve out to shot of valley below — this dissolves to shot of town* — CAMERA TRUCKING *down* —

MR. MACAULEY. I am Matthew Macauley. I have been dead for two years. So much of me is still living that I know now the end is only the beginning. As I look down on my homeland of Ithaca, California, with its patches of vineyards and orchards, I feel so much of me is still living there in the places I've been, in the fields, the streets, the church, and most of all, my home . . .

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

MLS — EXT. *Macauley back yard — Ulysses Macauley sitting on ground* — CAMERA TRUCKS *down past Ulysses to gopher pushing dirt up from hole* —

MR. MACAULEY. . . . where my hopes, my dreams, my ambitions, my beliefs still live in the daily lives of my loved ones. Yes, they're even reflected in the shining face of my youngest son, Ulysses Macauley, who is so intently watching the gopher as he pushes up the dirt in my back yard.

Excerpts from "The Human Comedy" by William Saroyan. Reprinted by permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures. This script is based on *The Human Comedy* by William Saroyan, published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

CU — *Ulysses watching o.s. — smiles —*

CS — *Gopher pushing dirt up out of hole —*

CU — *Ulysses looking o.s. — he looks up o.s. —*

MCS — *Dove flies in — lights on branch of tree —*

MCU — *Ulysses looking up o.s. — smiling — he reacts to train whistle heard o.s. —*

MS — *Ulysses jumps up* — CAMERA PANS *left as he runs through yard into alley — runs down alley to b.g. — (train whistle heard o.s.)*

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

MLS — *Ulysses running along road to railroad crossing* — CAMERA PANS *left — he stops at crossing as freight train moves past him — he waves to engineer —*

CS — *Ulysses waving o.s. — reacts — then turns and looks to b.g. —*

MS — *Ulysses standing by crossroads sign — train moving through to b.g. at right — Ulysses waves —*

MLS — *Hoboes on flat car of train* — CAMERA PANS *left with car —*

CS — *Ulysses waving o.s. — reacts — turns and looks to b.g. —*

MS — *Ulysses standing at crossroad sign — train moving through at right — Ulysses waves — Negro voice o.s. singing — "Weep no more my lady" —*

MLS — *Negro hobo on tank car* — CAMERA PANS *left with car — hobo smiles and waves o.s.* . . . Oh, weep no more today . . . (*waves.*) Goin' home, boy. Goin' back where I belong. Goin' home!

CS — *Ulysses smiling and waving o.s. — Negro hobo o.s. sings* . . . We will sing one song. . . .

MS — *Ulysses waving as train moves on to b.g. at right — Negro hobo sings o.s.* . . . For my old Kentucky home . . . For my old Kentucky. . . .

CS — *Ulysses waving o.s. — Negro hobo o.s. sings* . . . home far away.

LS — *Ulysses runs along road to right* — CAMERA PANS *right —*

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

MLS — *Ulysses skipping forward down alley — whistling* — CAMERA PANS *right as he skips into yard — Mrs. Macauley in b.g. — Ulysses trips — falls to ground —*

CS — *Ulysses on ground — he smiles* — CAMERA PANS *as he gets up* — CAMERA PANS *right as he runs through chicken yard to Mrs. Macauley — runs past her into pen in b.g. —*

MRS. MACAULEY (*o.s.*). Oh — (*Laughs.*) Ulysses, get up. It didn't hurt.

CS — *Ulysses takes egg from nest* — CAMERA PANS *left as he comes forward to Mrs. Macauley — hands egg to her — they speak —*

ULYSSES. Egg.

MRS. MACAULEY. Oh, that's a fine big one. Thank you, Ulysses.

ULYSSES. Where's Homer?

MRS. MACAULEY. Homer's working.

ULYSSES. What's working?

LS — *Ext. Road — Homer Macauley riding bicycle cutting back and forth on bike* — CAMERA TRUCKS *ahead of him — he looks up o.s., as he hears plane overhead —*

HOMER (*singing*). Tippy-tippy-tin, tippy-tin — (*Hums.*)

MR. MACAULEY'S VOICE. My second son, Homer, rolling home in the glorious years of adolescence.

MLS — *planes flying through b.g. —*

MCS — *Homer riding forward on bike — looking up o.s. at planes —*

MS — *Homer riding to b.g. looking up o.s. — his bike hits signpost — he falls — sits up — looks at sign:*

KEEP IT UNDER
40
DRIVE FOR VICTORY

CU — *Homer looking o.s. — he grins —*

MCS — *Homer gets to his feet — lifts his bike up* — CAMERA PANS *him to right to road — Convoy coming forward down road — Homer waves to soldiers as they pass — then gets on his bike and rides forward — Jeep slows up — Homer hangs on to it — speaks with soldiers — he takes off his cap — hands it to soldier —*

HOMER. Hi!

SOLDIER. Hi, there.

HOMER. Say!
SECOND SOLDIER. Hold it a minute.
HOMER. Say, can one of Uncle Sam's jeeps give me a lift into town?
THIRD SOLDIER. Sure. Hang on, sonny.
HOMER. Thanks. Thanks. It's all in the family anyway. My brother's in the Army.
THIRD SOLDIER. Yeah? What outfit's he with?
HOMER. Field Artillery. Marcus Macauley, Private First Class. Here — here's a picture of him.
FOURTH SOLDIER. Big brother, eh?

INSERT — CU — *Picture of Marcus Macauley in Homer's cap* —

HOMER (*o.s.*). Yeah.
THIRD SOLDIER (*o.s.*). Where's he stationed?
HOMER (*o.s.*). Green River, North Carolina. LAP DISSOLVE TO:

Int. Recreation Hall — CS — *Marcus Macauley seated at table* — *seals letter* — CAMERA TRUCKS *back as he picks up other letters* — PANS *right as he steps over to mailbox* — *drops them in one at a time* — *kisses one letter before posting it* — *Tobey George and other soldiers sitting in b.g.* — *Tobey speaks to Marcus* — *hands accordion to him* — *Marcus sits on edge of table* — *he plays the accordion* — CAMERA TRUCKS *back as other soldiers move in around him* — *Tobey hums and sings* — *other soldiers enter* —

MR. MACAULEY'S VOICE. Marcus, my eldest. Quiet, thoughtful Marcus . . . writing to our dear ones at home. How proud I am of the uniform he's wearing.
TOBEY. Boy, you sure take a lot of time to write your letters.
MARCUS. I've got a lot of time.
TOBEY. Yeah. Someone to write them to, too. How about some music? Here, push this box back and forth, will you, Marcus? (*Hums — then sings.*)
It's the land of the Shillalah. . . .

CS — *Tobey singing* — *soldiers sitting in b.g.* —

TOBEY (*sings*).
. . . My heart goes back there daily
To the girl I left behind me . . .

CS — *Marcus plays accordion* — *smiles* —

TOBEY (*o.s., sings*).
. . . . When we kissed and said good-by. LAP DISSOLVE TO:

MS — *Ext. street — Homer riding bicycle* — CAMERA PANS *him to right — he stops in front of telegraph office — parks his bicycle — takes flashlight off bicycle — goes to b.g. to office —*

MLS — *Int. telegraph office — Willie Grogan seated at desk in f.g. — Tom Spangler at counter in b.g. comes forward to Grogan — Homer enters — comes in — stops at his desk — Spangler and Grogan look up at him — Spangler speaks — goes to Homer — picks up a yardstick —*

SPANGLER. Here you are. How do you like being a messenger?
HOMER. Oh, I think it's great, Mr. Spangler. You go different places, meet different people.
SPANGLER. Yeah? How did you sleep last night?
HOMER. Oh, I was pretty tired, but I slept all right.
SPANGLER. Little sleepy in school today, too, huh?
HOMER. Yeah.
SPANGLER. What subject?
HOMER. Ancient History.
SPANGLER. What about sports?
HOMER. Oh, I'm crazy about sports. Tomorrow I'm going to run the two-twenty low hurdles.
SPANGLER. Yeah?
HOMER. Um-hmm.
SPANGLER. You any good at it?
HOMER. Oh, pretty good.
SPANGLER. Well, let's see how you do it.
HOMER. Huh?
SPANGLER. Here we are. Let's see how you do it. Come on . . .

MS — *Homer* — CAMERA *shooting past Spangler at left f.g. — Spangler holds out yardstick — Homer smiles and looks o.s.* — CAMERA PANS *right as he goes to other end of office — Grogan seated in f.g.* — CAMERA PANS *left as Homer runs across office — jumps over yardstick — falls to floor —*

SPANGLER. . . . show me your form. Let's see you take one. Come on.
HOMER. Well, I don't know if there's enough room back there.
SPANGLER. Sure.
HOMER. Well, here goes nothing. I — you can raise it a little higher than that.

SPANGLER. Higher? Okay.
HOMER. Oh!

CS — *Grogan looking o.s. — smiles and speaks —*

GROGAN. That was a near miss.

MCS — *Homer gets to his feet — Spangler seated in f.g. rises — shows Homer how to hold foot when making jump — then sits down in f.g. —*

SPANGLER. Your stride's okay, but you're dragging your right toe. Here, let me show you something. You want to keep that right toe up like this, see? Up like that. Let's see how you do it. You see, if you drop your right toe, it'll strike the bar as you go over.
HOMER. Uh-huh.
SPANGLER. Just keep your right toe up and you'll be all right, huh?
HOMER. Yeah. It feels kind of funny at first, but I guess it's all right.
SPANGLER. Ah, there's nothing to it.
HOMER. Say, how do you know so much about it?
SPANGLER. I used to run the two-twenty low hurdles when I went to Ithaca High.
HOMER. You ran the two-twenty low hurdles?

CS — *Grogan looks o.s. — smiles and speaks —*

GROGAN. He — he was valley champion. . . .

[HOMER *is also taught how to deliver singing telegrams. "Happy birthday, dear Mr. Grogan," he sings uncomfortably to the 67-year-old telegrapher. . . . At home little* ULYSSES, *gazing up at his mother through the strings of the harp she is playing, wonders:*]

ULYSSES. Why isn't Homer here?
MRS. MACAULEY. Yesterday Homer found himself a job workin' after school.
ULYSSES. Isn't he comin' home any more?
MRS. MACAULEY. He'll be home at midnight after you're in bed and asleep.
ULYSSES. Why is he working?
MRS. MACAULEY. Because Marcus is in the Army and because your father is — gone — and because we must have money to buy food and clothing and pay the rent — and . . . to give to the poor.
ULYSSES. What is the poor?
MRS. MACAULEY. They're the people who — who haven't enough food or clothing or money. But the real poor are the poor in spirit — because they have no faith. . . . No laughter, no song, and no love.

ULYSSES. Couldn't we give them a song?

MRS. MACAULEY. Perhaps. It isn't easy to give the poor in spirit — but we ought to give all we can because we get more out of this life than we can . . . ever put in it.

ULYSSES. Who put the gophers in it?

MRS. MACAULEY. The gophers in the ground — the birds — the fish in the sea . . . they're another part of our life. So is . . . the sky, the stars, the sun — and we're here to enjoy them and to thank God for them.

ULYSSES. Oh. Where has my father gone?

MRS. MACAULEY. Where each of us must go someday — and where we hope we'll all be together again. That day came for your father two years ago. I know it isn't easy for you to understand.

ULYSSES. If we wait, will he come home like Marcus after the war?

MRS. MACAULEY. Not the way you mean. He won't come walkin' down the street, up the steps, across the porch, and into the house the way he used to.

ULYSSES. Why?

MRS. MACAULEY. Death is like today, Ulysses. You fall asleep and tomorrow comes. Remember the day you saw a train . . . and you found an egg? Well, tomorrow they'll be gone. But the excitement of seeing that train and the wonder of finding that egg will be in you always. So will your father. Nothing can take him from us because he lives in us — in our hearts — in our thoughts — in our talk with one another — in our song.

ULYSSES. You mean he's right in the room with us?

MRS. MACAULEY. Yes. Try to remember that nothing good ends ever. If it did, there'd be no people in the world — no life at all anywhere.

[HOMER *too is learning about life, and it all seems pretty sad — like* GROGAN'S *constant fear of losing his job, or the Mexican lady's loss of her soldier son. But in the early morning warmth of the Macauley kitchen, with* MRS. MACAULEY *and sister* BESS *and* ULYSSES *saying grace at the breakfast table, much of the world's troubles seems forgotten.*]

BESS. What did you say in your prayer, Homer?

HOMER. What I always say. "Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and everywhere adored. These creatures bless, and grant that we may feast in Paradise with Thee, and let me win the two-twenty low hurdles. Amen."

BESS. Except for the hurdles, you don't even know what you were saying.

HOMER. I know, all right. I may say it a little swiftly because I'm hungry, but I can say it slowly, too. After all, it's just the spirit of the whole thing.

BESS. And what do the words mean, Homer?

HOMER. Well — they — they mean — what they say.

BESS. And what do they say?

HOMER. Uh — Well — uh — "Be present at our table, Lord." Uh — Lord means a lot of things, and I guess all of 'em are good. And "Be here and everywhere adored." Well — that means be — uh — uh — to love the good things here and everywhere else. And, uh — the creatures — the creatures — that's you and Mom and myself and everybody. "Bless" — uh — means to uh bless — bless. Well, bless is maybe to forgive. I don't know — love or watch over, or something like that. "Grant that we may feast in Paradise with Thee." Mom, does that mean that if you're right you feast in Paradise every time you sit down at the table?

MRS. MACAULEY. That's about right, Homer. What about the two-twenty low hurdles?

HOMER. Oh well — uh — that's in the track meet this afternoon. I just gotta win it, Mom. Mr. Spangler won it when he went to Ithaca High. . . .

[*Now we are in Ithaca High — in* HOMER'S *classroom — watching the students straggling in. As* HOMER *passes* HELEN ELLIOT'S *desk, he places a rose on it. They exchange smiles.* HUBERT ACKLEY *now enters and takes his seat in front of* HELEN.]

ACKLEY. Hello, Helen.

HELEN. Hello, Hubert. Are you coming to my party?

ACKLEY. Yes, I am. I'll be the first one there.

HELEN. But it's formal, you know.

MISS HICKS. Who's absent?

HOMER. Hubert Ackley the Third.

MISS HICKS. None of your nonsense, Homer. No one is absent. We will now take up the subject of the Assyrians where we left off yesterday, and I want everyone's undivided attention. We'll begin by reading, to be followed by oral discussion.

JOE. What other kind of discussion is there?

MISS HICKS. You must not be rude, Joseph, especially when you're right.

JOE. Okay, I'm sorry. Go ahead, Miss Hicks.

MISS HICKS. Thank you.

HOMER. Why don't you shut up, Joe. Everybody knows you're smart.

JOE. I get bored.

MISS HICKS. Not another word! Not another word from either of you! Now, page one-seventeen . . . Paragraph two. Who'll volunteer to read?

HOMER. Get a load of that guy.

JOE. Yeah.

MISS HICKS. Very well, Helen Elliot.

HELEN. The Assyrians, long of nose, hair, and beard, developed Nineveh in the north to a position of great power. After many vicissitudes with the Hittites, Egyptians, and others, they conquered Babylon under Tiglath Pil . . . ?

MISS HICKS. Pileser.

HELEN. . . . Pileser the First, eleven hundred B.C. For centuries afterward the power veered between Nineveh, built of stone, and Babylon, built of brick. There is no connection between the name Syrian . . . (ACKLEY *gets rose from desk.*) . . . and Assyrian, and the Assyrians were to . . . (*Places rose in lapel.*) . . . fight the Syrians until Tiglath Pileser the Third conquered them.

HOMER. How about Hubert Ackley the Third? What did he ever conquer or do? . . . Aw, sit down.

ACKLEY. Miss Hicks, I must ask you not — not to allow such willful mischievousness to go on unpunished . . .

HOMER. Suppose you let her make up her own mind.

ACKLEY. . . . or I'll have to take matters into my own hands.

HOMER. Your name is Hubert Ackley the Third, isn't it? Well, what did you ever do — or Hubert Ackley the Second or the First, for that matter?

ACKLEY. Well, at least no Ackley's ever been a common fanfaron.

HOMER. Listen, Number Three, don't you start callin' me names I never heard of before. (*Students laugh.*)

ACKLEY. A fanfaron is a common larrikin, a hoodlum, a braggart . . .

HOMER. Aw, sit down. Sit down. A fanfaron!

MISS HICKS. Homer Macauley and Hubert Ackley will remain in their seats after school.

HOMER. Miss — but Miss Hicks, what about the track meet?

MISS HICKS. I am not interested in the track meet. The development of your minds is equally as important as, if not more important than, the development of your bodies.

ACKLEY. But — but Miss Hicks, they're counting on me to win the two-

twenty low-hurdle race this afternoon, and I'm afraid Coach Blenton will insist on my taking part.

HOMER. Miss Hicks, if you'll let me go this time, I promise to be obedient and attentive and everything like that.

MISS HICKS. I should like to see just how attentive you have been, Homer Macauley. Please review what has been read. Helen, you may be seated. . . . Very well, Homer.

HOMER. Well, she — uh — started out with the Assyrians and their noses. People have always had noses, some to smell roses with.

MISS HICKS. What else? . . .

[HOMER'S *struggles prove of little help to him.* "*You will stay in after school,*" *says* MISS HICKS. "*And you, Hubert Ackley.*" *They stay.*]

MISS HICKS. I didn't keep you in to punish you, boys.

HOMER. Then why?

MISS HICKS. I've always kept in only those who meant the most to me.

ACKLEY. It's inopportune today, Miss Hicks.

MISS HICKS. What my children appear to be on the surface is no matter to me. I am not fooled by gracious manners or bad manners, such as I've seen in this classroom today.

ACKLEY. But he had no right to talk about me.

HOMER. Say, what's the matter with you? You seem to think that you're better than anyone else around here.

MISS HICKS. You will both learn that every man in the world is better than somebody else — and not as good as somebody else. . . . In a democratic state, every man is equal to every other man — up to the point of exertion. And then every man is free to exert himself to do good or not — to grow nobly or foolishly. I am eager for my boys and girls to exert themselves to do good and grow nobly. . . . I want you to understand that each of you will begin to be real men and truly human when, in spite of your differences with one another, you still respect one another. That's what it means to be civilized. . . .

[*At the same time* COACH BLENTON *is in the* PRINCIPAL'S *office on behalf of* ACKLEY.]

PRINCIPAL. But Miss Hicks is the oldest and best teacher in this school. Why, she was my teacher when I went to Ithaca High, and yours, too. No, I wouldn't care to interfere with her disciplining of a couple of unruly boys.

BLENTON. But Ackley isn't an unruly boy. He's a perfect little gentleman. I've trained him especially for this race.

PRINCIPAL. No doubt. I know he comes from a well-to-do family. But if Miss Hicks has asked him to stay in, then in it is. I cannot permit favoritism. He can run the race some other time. . . .

[*Back in the classroom again,* BLENTON *is seen facing* MISS HICKS.]

BLENTON. How do you do, Miss Hicks.

MISS HICKS. Blenton?

BLENTON. I've instructions from the principal regarding Mr. Ackley.

MISS HICKS. That's very unusual, Mr. Blenton.

BLENTON. He's to get into his track suit immediately and run the two-twenty low hurdles.

HOMER. Well, what about me — Mr. Macauley?

BLENTON. We're waiting, Hubert. Come along. (*They leave.* MISS HICKS *starts to sob.*)

HOMER. Did you see that, Miss Hicks? All right — is that special privilege, or not?

MISS HICKS. It certainly is. I don't blame Hubert Ackley. It was Blenton made him disobey me.

HOMER. And I suppose that's civilized.

MISS HICKS. I've seen better men pushed aside by his kind. The kind who go through life — toadying to those who they think are their superiors — crowding out men who are above such treachery. The two-twenty low hurdles. Low indeed! And he shall be jumping over them all his life!

HOMER. Miss Hicks, don't feel so bad. Please, I'll — I'll stay in. I have it coming.

MISS HICKS. Not much! You go out on that field, Homer Macauley, and you go out to win!

HOMER. Why, Miss Hicks, I never knew that schoolteachers were human beings, like everybody else — and better, too!

MISS HICKS. When you leave this school, Homer, long after you've forgotten me — I'll be watching for you in the world.

HOMER. I'll never forget you, Miss Hicks.

MISS HICKS. I'll be watching. . . .

[*And* HOMER *goes out to win the low hurdles, while* MISS HICKS *cheers him on from her classroom window. . . .* HOMER'S *glory is short-lived. In the telegraph office* GROGAN *stops him as* HOMER *is about to leave.*]

GROGAN. Oh, just a minute. Here's another, right on your route.
HOMER. Thank you . . . Horsefeathers! I'll quit before I'll deliver this.
GROGAN. Why, what's the matter? Someone you know?
HOMER. Helen Elliot, and I hate her!
GROGAN. Hate? That's a very strong word, isn't it?
HOMER. Well, I guess I don't exactly hate her. I guess I love her, more than anything in the world, but—I'm not gonna sing her a birthday telegram from Hubert Ackley the Third!
GROGAN. In the line of duty, my boy. "Service with a smile."
HOMER. Ahhhh! . . .

[*The scene now shifts to the door of* HELEN'S *house, where* HOMER *stands, hat in hand, talking to the maid, while* ACKLEY *and other boys and girls come slowly toward him.*]

HOMER. I have a telegram for Miss Helen Elliot. No, I'll have to deliver it to her personally.
HELEN. Homer!
HOMER. Good evening.
HELEN. Don't open my telegram. I'll take that, please.
HOMER. No, i-it's not that kind of a telegram. I—I mean I—uh—I'm supposed to uh—I have to—Happy birth—uh—(HELEN, ACKLEY *and the others laugh as* HOMER *sings.*)

"Happy—yh—happy—uhappy
Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday, dear Helen,
Happy birthday to you.
Signed Hubert Ackley the Third."

HELEN. Oh Hubert, how sweet.
HOMER. Sign here, please.
ACKLEY. That was fine, Homer.
HOMER. Service with a smile.
GROUP (*sings*).

Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday, dear Helen,
Happy birthday to you.

HOMER. I suppose you couldn't have sent that Western Union. I ought to give you a lump on the head. But I'm not going to, because I'm civilized.

ACKLEY. I didn't think you'd get sore, Homer, but I guess I wasn't so clever. To be honest, I was trying—to get even. I did hate to lose that race. It made me look pretty silly in front of Helen.

HOMER. You don't have to worry about that. I hate her.

ACKLEY. You do?

HOMER. I haven't got any time for girls. I'm too busy. I got too much work to do.

ACKLEY. I'm sorry about everything, Homer. I'd like to be friends.

HOMER. Oh, that's all right—no more shenanigans.

ACKLEY. So long. Good luck.

HOMER. So long, Number Three. . . .

[*The scene changes to the interior of an army kitchen.* MARCUS *and his friend* TOBEY *are revealed in the act of plucking chickens.*]

MARCUS. She loves me, she loves me not.

TOBEY. You're a funny guy, Marcus.

MARCUS. Why funny?

TOBEY. Oh, I don't mean funny, I mean lucky.

MARCUS. She loves me—what do you mean, lucky?

TOBEY. Well, here we are, both doing K.P., both doing the same thing. And I'm stripping chickens and you're making love to Mary. That's what I mean when I say you're lucky. We're both in the Army, but you've never left home.

MARCUS. Don't you ever think about things, Tobey? Don't you ever think about what you're going back to?

TOBEY. No, Marcus, do you mind if—if I think about what you're going back to?

MARCUS. No, I don't mind, Tobey. There's more than enough for both of us. There's enough for a million of us . . . Ma, Bess, Homer, Ulysses, Mary, the old neighborhood, the houses, the kids, the empty lot, the railroad tracks where I used to watch the trains go by, the Sunday School, the Church, the Public Library, the Courthouse Park, Ithaca High, the old teachers, the kids used to be in my class.

TOBEY. You know, Marcus, it's a funny thing, but I almost feel that Ithaca is my home town, too. If we get through this all right, will you take me back there and show me the places you knew?

MARCUS. Yeah, I want to do that, Tobey. And I want you to meet my folks. Oh, we're poor, always have been. My father was a great man.

Not a success! He didn't make any more money than what we needed, ever.

TOBEY. Matthew?

MARCUS. Yeah, Matthew Macauley. He worked in the vineyards, in the packing houses and wineries. If you saw him in the street, you'd think he was nobody. But he was a great man. The only thing he cared about was his family, Ma and his kids. He saved up and made a down payment on a harp. Yeah, and nobody plays the harp any more, but that's what Ma wanted, so he got her one. Took him five years to pay for it. We used to think every house had a harp just because we had one. And I thought everybody was great like him, until I got out and met some of them. Oh, they're all right, but they're not great.

TOBEY. I didn't know kids had mothers and fathers until I went to school and heard them talking about me. I couldn't figure it out. I thought every man was alone in the world, to start out by himself, the same as me. I guess I felt pretty bad for a long time after I found out. What sort of a girl is Bess?

MARCUS (*takes pictures from pocket, hands one to* TOBEY). I want you to meet her. I think Bess will like you.

TOBEY. Do you, Marcus?

MARCUS. Here. I'm gonna give you her picture now to keep. That's yours. Keep it in your pocket where I keep Mary's picture. See?

TOBEY. Bess sure is a beautiful girl. . . . I don't know if a guy can fall in love with a girl without meeting her, but I feel as though I'm in love with Bess already.

MARCUS. Maybe she'll feel the same way about you, and if you love each other, well, what's to stop you from getting married?

TOBEY. A guy who was given his name by an orphanage, and doesn't even know what his nationality is?

MARCUS. Aw, you're an American, Tobey. Anybody can see that!

TOBEY. Oh, sure! But I want to know which American?

MARCUS. The one whose name is Tobey George, that's all. That's good enough for anybody. Now, you keep that picture. We'll get back to Ithaca and raise ourselves some families like my father did. Visit each other once in a while, and have some music and songs, and pass the time of life.

COOK (*entering*). Do I intrude, gentlemen? . . . By the time I get back I want these boids stripped for action, or you'll be passin' a little time of your life in the clink!

MARCUS *and* TOBEY. She loves me, she loves me not! She loves me, she loves me not! . . .

[*Back home, six-year-old* LIONEL *comes to visit his friend* ULYSSES.]

LIONEL. Mrs. Macauley, can — can Ulysses go to the Public Library with me? I'm taking this book back for my sister.

MRS. MACAULEY. Of course, Lionel. Why aren't you playin' football with the boys?

LIONEL. Oh, they won't lemme play football with 'em. They chase me away — say I'm stupid — and I'm not stupid, am I, Mrs. Macauley?

MRS. MACAULEY. Why, no, Lionel. You're the nicest boy in this neighborhood. Don't be angry with them. They're nice boys, too.

LIONEL. Oh, I'm not angry with them. . . . I like every one of them — but every time I make a mistake at a game, they chase me away. They say "That's all, Lionel," — and then I know it's time to go. Why, I don't even know what mistake I made and nobody'll tell me. Every Saturday they chase me away. (*Puts his arm around* ULYSSES.) Ulysses is the only one who sticks with me. He's the best friend I got in the whole world. And they'll be sorry some day they chased me away — because they're gonna come to me and they're gonna want my help and I'm gonna help 'em . . . and they're gonna be sorry they did all those things. Can I have a drink of water, Mrs. Macauley?

MRS. MACAULEY. Of course, Lionel.

ULYSSES. Could I have one too?

MRS. MACAULEY. Surely.

LIONEL. Another one — please?

MRS. MACAULEY. Yes.

LIONEL. Good-by, Mrs. Macauley. . . .

[*We follow them to the library, where they are lost among the tall shelves.*]

LIONEL. All these books! These — there's a red one. All these! There's a green one! All these books. All kinds of books!

ULYSSES. There's a big one.

LIONEL. Yeah.

LIBRARIAN (*comes down from ladder and walks toward them*). What are you boys looking for?

LIONEL. Books.

LIBRARIAN. What books are you looking for?
LIONEL. All of them.
LIBRARIAN. What do you want with them?
LIONEL. Wanta look at 'em.
LIBRARIAN. Books are for reading.
LIONEL. Can't I just look at 'em?
LIBRARIAN. That's not what the Public Library is for, boy. You can look into them and look at the pictures in them. What do you want to look at the outsides for?
LIONEL. I like to. Can't I?
LIBRARIAN. Well, there's no law against it. Who's this?
LIONEL. That's Ulysses. He can't read.
LIBRARIAN. Can you?
LIONEL. No, but he can't *either*. That's why we're friends. He's the only other man I know who can't read.
LIBRARIAN. One day when you learn to read, you'll find there's a great deal to be said for the inside of books. I've been reading for seventy years — and it hasn't been nearly long enough. . . . Now run along and look at the books.
LIONEL. Yes, ma'am. All these. All those over there. All books, Ulysses. I wonder what they say in all those books?
ULYSSES. Are they sayin' something?
LIONEL. Every one of them. Oh — there's a pretty one, Ulysses. (*Points to page.*) There it is! See it? Something they're saying in there.
ULYSSES. Where, Lionel?
LIONEL. There's an A! Yep, that's an A right there!
ULYSSES. An A, Lionel?
LIONEL. Here's another one — of some sort. Every letter's different than the word and every word is different. I don't think I'll ever learn to read. (*Turns page to picture of the Mona Lisa.*) It's a girl! See her?
ULYSSES. Pretty.
LIONEL. Yeah. (*Shuts book and returns it to shelf.*) There's some more of it — straight through. I sure would like to know what they're sayin' in there though. . . .

[*The friends part outside the library.* ULYSSES (*"Useless," the boys call him*) *is picked up by* HOMER *on his way home, and the two brothers sing "My Old Kentucky Home" as they ride along on* HOMER'S *bicycle.*
At the same moment the troop train is carrying MARCUS *and* TOBEY *to the fighting fronts.* MARCUS *has written his brother a tender letter,*

which moves HOMER *to say, "If my brother is killed in this war, I'll spit on the world. I'll hate it forever. I won't be good — I'll be bad. I'll be the worst there is. I'll be the worst that ever lived!"*

In the telegraph office something has happened to GROGAN. HOMER *finds him slumped over his typewriter, while the machine is ticking out a message.* HOMER *rushes out for some hot coffee for* GROGAN, *and returns with* FELIX, *an office assistant.*]

HOMER. Mr. Grogan. Come on, here's your coffee. Be careful, it's hot.

FELIX. What's the matter, Homer? What's wrong with the old man?

HOMER. He's dead.

FELIX. Why, you're crazy!

HOMER. No, he's dead. . . . He was just receiving this message . . . Mrs. Kate Macauley . . . The War Department regrets to inform you that your son Marcus . . .

FELIX. What'll we do, Homer? It's not finished. Maybe he's only hurt or missin' or somethin'.

HOMER. No, Mr. Grogan heard the rest. He heard the rest of it.

FELIX. There's Mr. Spangler now. (MR. SPANGLER *enters.*) Mr. Spangler, I've been trying to get you on the telephone. Something terrible's happened!

SPANGLER. What's the matter, Felix?

FELIX. It's Mr. Grogan. Homer says he's dead!

SPANGLER. Dead! . . . Felix, call Dr. Nelson — 1-1-3-3 — and tell him to come right down. (HOMER *takes message out of typewriter, then walks with* SPANGLER *out into the street.*) Don't feel bad, Homer. He was an old man, and he had a bad heart. He knew he'd go suddenly. This is the way he'd want it to be. Come on.

HOMER. I can't take this home, now. I can't tell Ma, Bess, and Mary yet. How can I go in and look at them? They'll know the minute they see me. I don't want to tell them, but they'll know.

SPANGLER. Let's walk a while. . . . I'm not going to try to comfort you, I know I couldn't. Your brother didn't want to go — he wanted to stay, and he will stay in your love for him.

HOMER. But I want to see him. I can't help it. I want to see him walking and standing around. I want to — I want to touch him and talk to him. I want to fight with him, even, the way that we used to. Where will I find him? If I look all over, I won't be able to find him. The world is different now. All the people are different. Everything in Ithaca is changed, because I know that my brother isn't coming back here any more.

SPANGLER. Try to remember that the best of him will never die. You'll see him again many times, in the things that will come to you every day. In your home, in the streets — places where he's been. In the vineyards and the orchards where he worked — in the river he knew, and the clouds that float over it. In the person of a man, the thing we see may leave, but the thing we feel, the greater part of a good man, stays. Stays forever. Any good at pitching horseshoes?

HOMER. No, I'm not very good.

SPANGLER. Well, neither am I, but would you care to pitch a game before it gets too dark?

HOMER. Yes, sure.

SPANGLER. Okay. . . .

[*While they play, we hear the voice of* TOBEY.]

TOBEY'S VOICE. So this is Ithaca, and the Ithaca sky over it. And there's the Courthouse, and the Courthouse Park. . . . And there's the Presbyterian Church, and that's the Public Library. There's the High School, and the athletic field. There's a couple of Ithaca men pitching horseshoes.

HOMER. I — I guess I — Mr. Spangler, I don't care to pitch any more, now. — They're waiting for me at home, I know they are. I told them I'd be home for supper.

SPANGLER. Wait, don't go home now. Not for just a while.

HOMER. I remember telling Mr. Grogan that — if my brother was killed, I'd spit at the world . . . I'd hate it forever. It's funny what you'll say sometimes. A fellow never knows what he'll do until it really happens.

SPANGLER. I understand.

HOMER. Maybe I'll get it all straight . . . somehow, after a while?

SPANGLER. Perhaps you'd like to be alone — just now.

MR. MACAULEY'S VOICE. It will take a little time, my son, a little time for the pain of the Marcus that died, to die in you, too. The part that's only flesh — the part that comes and goes. But dying is hurting you now; but wait a little while. When it leaves, you'll find new courage and strength that will bring you closer than ever to the best that is in all men. You must go on — nothing must stop you for a minute. You are what we are fighting the war for. You are what we have left behind — to live the hopes that we have only dreamed — the matchless dreams of what man can be. . . .

[TOBEY *approaches the Macauley house, as from the open window we hear:*]

MRS. MACAULEY, MARY, *and* BESS (*singing*).
Last night I was dreaming
Of thee love, was dreaming;
I dreamed thou didst promise
We never should part . . .

TOBEY'S VOICE (*over above*). There it is. There's the house. Ma, Homer, Ulysses, Mary, and Bess. Home.

MRS. MACAULEY, MARY, *and* BESS.
While thy loved voice addressed me,
And soft hands caressed me,
I kiss thee . . .

TOBEY. I'm home at last.

MRS. MACAULEY, BESS, MARY, *and* ULYSSES (*all sing*).
. . . and hold thee
Once more to my heart.
(HOMER *enters l.f.g., goes to* TOBEY, *hesitates . . .*)
I kiss thee and hold thee
Once more to my heart.

TOBEY. Hello, Homer.

HOMER. I — I'm sorry, I — I know that we must have met someplace before, but —

TOBEY. No, we never met before.

HOMER. Then — then how did you know that my name was Homer?

TOBEY. Oh, I know all about you. I know about you since you were smaller than Ulysses.

HOMER. Well then — then Ithaca must be your home. I mean, you — you must live here then, huh?

TOBEY. Yes, Ithaca's my home. I live here.

HOMER. When did you get in?

TOBEY. Today.

HOMER. On a furlough?

TOBEY. No. I'm home for good now.

HOMER. Oh, I'll bet your family certainly was glad to hear that.

TOBEY. I — I don't know. I — I hope —

HOMER. You hope? You mean you haven't told them?

TOBEY. Not yet.

HOMER. You said that you knew so much about me, do you — do you know anything about the rest of my family?

TOBEY. You mean Ma, Ulysses, Mary, and Bess?
HOMER. You're Tobey.
TOBEY (*smiles; takes ring off*). Marcus sent you this ring. . . . He always said he wanted you to have it.
HOMER. Tobey, you — you meant so much to him, maybe you — you better keep it.
TOBEY. He gave me more than a ring. He gave me a life, a place of birth — family.
HOMER (*puts ring on*). The telegram — just came.
TOBEY. What are you going to do, Homer?

[HOMER *tears up telegram — he and* TOBEY *go upstairs, into house.*]

HOMER. It'll be easier now. Come on, let's go in together. Ma, Bess, and Mary! The soldier's come home!
MR. MACAULEY. You see, Marcus, the ending is only the beginning.

[FADE OUT]

TECHNICAL TERMS IN THE SCREEN PLAY

Cut to. Change from one set or scene to another, when both events in the picture are supposed to be occurring at the same time.

Dissolve (to). Gradual change from one scene to another, used when time has elapsed between the scenes. Dissolves may be *slow* or *fast.* In the *lap dissolve* an effect is achieved by overlapping images (through double exposure or printing).

Fade out. Gradual fading or disappearance of the screen image into darkness. Used to denote the end of a dramatic sequence or of a period of time, the device is the equivalent of a curtain in a stage play.

Fade in. The gradual appearance of the picture from complete darkness to full screen brightness.

Shot. Photograph of a scene or action. The distance of the camera from the person or object gives us such terms as *closeup* (CU), *close shot* (CS), *medium shot* (MS), *long shot* (LS), and such combinations as *medium close shot* (MCS) and *medium long shot* (MLS). An *angle shot* is the preceding scene photographed from a different angle. A *dolly* or *trucking shot* is one made with a dolly or movable platform. When this rubber-wheeled platform is moved along while it "shoots" a scene, the directions will read *camera trucks.* When the camera moves back to get a further shot, the direction will read *camera pulls back. Camera pans* — it turns left or right.

Exterior (*Ext.*) and *interior* (*Int.*) refer to outdoor and indoor shots. *O.s.* is off screen; *b.g.*, background; and *f.g.*, foreground.

THE RADIO

The Radio

When Lincoln campaigned against Douglas in 1858, their debates attracted folks from miles around, and a thousand excited citizens would pack a hall or auditorium to listen and cheer. Later campaigns saw larger crowds; and with the development of loudspeakers twenty thousand would fill Madison Square Garden and many times that number Soldier Field or the Hollywood Bowl, to hear the speeches of Presidential candidates. How insignificant such an audience seems today, when we recall that more than half the population of our country, and millions all over the world, have tuned in on a Roosevelt or a Dewey at the same moment.

The Unlimited Audience. The radio, in other words, has wrought in the course of a very few years an almost revolutionary change in our democracy. Today about thirty million families in this country are radio listeners. To this vast audience is available through that proverbial turn of the wrist, information and entertainment which for efficiency and excellence are unsurpassed even in the dreams of an Edward Bellamy — who glimpsed the possibilities of radio half a century ago.

Listening. The power of such a force in molding public opinion and in shaping the cultural patterns of our people is almost unlimited. You will recall the great part which radio played in the prosecution of the war; it is playing no less a part in times of peace. Radio, however, is a public service, regulated in the public interest. This puts an obligation on all of us to become more active and intelligent listeners, and to make our voices heard in determining what the radio networks are to broadcast.

Listening Aids. The formation, during the past few years, of listening groups in homes, schools, clubs, and churches throughout the country suggests that an increasing number of people are feeling the need for becoming more active participants in programs and thus getting the maximum of benefit and enjoyment out of radio listening. The Town Hall Meeting of the Air and other forums have encouraged such groups and supplied them with material for intelligent listening and discussion. The larger networks, both here and abroad, publish handbooks and guides for many of their programs. The Swedish Broadcasting Company, for example, has for years issued a study letter for selected dra-

mas which are read over the air; and our own stations from time to time follow the same practice.

Dial Dangers. In spite of these trends, however, lazy listening is still most common. How many, for example, of these poor listening habits do you recognize as your own?

1. Listening to a fine soloist or a symphony orchestra while doing homework, or playing a game, or conversing.
2. Keeping the radio on incessantly, regardless of program.
3. Turning impatiently to another station when the first few minutes of a dramatic program seemed dull or obscure.
4. Listening uncritically, or inattentively, to news comments, forums, plays.

HOW IT CAME

The story of radio, like that of any other great human achievement, is a tale of many men and ideas converging from many countries. The Irish-Italian Guglielmo Marconi, receiving from his kite in Newfoundland, in December of 1901, a Morse signal sent without wires across 1,700 miles of ocean, had merely carried on the work of the Scotsman James Clerk Maxwell and the young German high-school teacher Heinrich Rudolf Hertz. He had been helped by such British scientists as Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Crookes. It was the Canadian-born American engineer Reginald A. Fessenden who carried this work a long step further by sending not dots and dashes, but the human voice, by wireless. He went so far as to send an experimental program through the air on Christmas Eve of 1906—the first real broadcast in history. But it was not until the American Lee De Forest invented the audion in 1907, which could detect radio signals better than any previous device and could amplify them to any volume required, that modern reception became a possibility. De Forest is sometimes credited with having broadcast the first program. When Edwin H. Armstrong at Columbia began to use this device for generating the current needed for sending radio waves, and men like H. D. Arnold of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and Dr. Irving Langmuir of General Electric converted the audion into the vacuum tube, the stage was set for practical broadcasting.

It was not until 1917 that a real beginning was made in the direction of radio as we know it today. A young man called David Sarnoff wrote

to his employers of the American Marconi Company at this time: "I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a household utility in the same sense as the piano or phonograph. . . . A receiver can be designed in the form of a simple 'radio music box' and arrayed for several different wave lengths. . . ." These were prophetic words. Mr. Sarnoff is now President of the vast Radio Corporation of America.

Receiving sets began to be manufactured, radio stations sprang up overnight; and with the broadcasting by KDKA of Pittsburgh of the Presidential election returns in 1920 the era of broadcasting had officially begun. Later milestones were the Dempsey-Carpentier fight of July 2, 1921, and the World Series of October in the same year. Early broadcasting was often haphazard, the programs poor and ill-prepared. A quotation from the National Broadcasting Company's log of January 25, 1925, for example, reads:

"Robert Burns Program. Not a good event. Speaker did not show up. We had spare time on our hands. I had to both announce and play."

Radio has made rapid strides since those early days.

RADIO DRAMATIZATION

If we still tend to take too much for granted the wizardry of radio broadcasting, we should take the first opportunity to visit a large broadcasting studio. Here we may watch a radio drama in rehearsal, and see what is involved in the production of, let us say, a thirty-minute play.

The Studio. We are ushered into a large, plush-seated, air-conditioned auditorium in which many other visitors are already seated. The sounds they make seem muffled; we remember hearing that this is a *floating* studio, suspended within a slightly larger room, with sound-resisting material in between. The great doors, too, are sound-proof. The stage before us has a number of microphones conveniently placed for orchestra, speakers, sound men. Behind the glass sound-proof panel we can see the control room. In it the director stands, script in hand, ready to push the button that will open the *talk-back* mike and permit him to interrupt the rehearsal for instructions or suggestions to the performers. Next to him sit the engineers, sensitive fingers poised on the dials of the control board, ready to energize or deaden the vocal, musical, or mechanical sounds emanating from the mikes. On hand are several telephones for communication with *master control* and others responsible for the

smooth operation of the studio. There on the wall is a studio clock, a reminder that the radio is an eternal slave to time.

Translating Script into Broadcast. The company has been rehearsing the script for some time. Let us suppose it is one of Orson Welles' *Alphabet of the Americas.*[1] Mr. Welles is before the microphone – body well poised, head about six inches from the mike and *on beam*, or directly in line with the sensitive side of the mike. His voice is clear, vibrant, dramatic. He is telling of Henry Morgan, famed and feared pirate of the Caribbean, come to rob natives and Spaniards of their golden treasure. He is reading from page 17, Cue 12 in the script, and we follow:

12. . . . Alas, poor Morgan and Morgan's starving
13. band came to the walls of powerful Panama.

The directions then read:

(PLODDING MUSIC COMES UP AND HALTS.)

The music director has long since spent much time in insuring the proper selection of music that would suggest the mounting tension of Morgan's march on the Spaniards. Now the musical bridge must be integrated, quickly and effectively, with the vocal drama. The engineer, following the script, cuts down or fades, with the fingers of one hand, the volume of Welles' mike, thereby executing a slow exit for the last speaker; and with the other hand he has deftly increased the volume of the orchestra mike at the director's signal. This signal might be the slow raising of upturned palms until the proper crescendo is obtained, then a dramatic throat slashing with the forefinger to indicate a sharp cut in the music. Instantaneously the same forefinger is thrust pointedly at Morgan, poised to begin:

MORGAN (*bull-voiced, shouting.*).
14. Spaniards, here's your choice. Live and surrender your
15. gold. Or die and surrender your gold. We prefer the
16. latter. We proffer the former.

The actor playing Morgan is standing at some distance from his mike. Why? The script calls for a bull-voiced Morgan, and a bull before a mike may be as devastating as a bull in a china shop. But this is not enough. Welles as narrator was in a sense an intimate guest in our house; Morgan, on the other hand, must create the illusion of speaking

[1] Broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System with Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre.

on a wide, open plain. Shouting alone will not do the trick. The director may therefore have had a portable *live* screen placed a few feet from the mike, to throw back the sound waves of Morgan's voice and create just the right hollow effect we need. Here perhaps the director signals his approval by the time-honored signal of thumb and forefinger in a circle, with the other fingers upraised.

SPANIARD (*way off but very distinct*).
17. Fat blustering English dog, come on. Here's fodder for
18. you and your starving heathen bellies. Eat this!

The director has already warned the engineer to switch the mike to the echo-chamber channel for this cue. Channeling the voice through a labyrinth of sound-conditioned pipes will give the distant yet clear effect desired. The Spanish accent used by the actor, of course, adds to the illusion. "Eat this!" he roars, and the sound-effects crew spurs into action.

SOUND: BOOM OF CANNON, OFF . . . THEN BATTLE . . . SHOUTS . . . CANNON . . . MUSKETRY . . . KEEP WAY UNDER AFTER ESTABLISHING.

The control engineer has faded down the mike to create the perspective of distance, as a baton beats against a hide-covered drum to produce the boom of cannon. At various distances from the echo-chamber-channeled mike a number of men are shouting vivid battle cries while a disk whirling around on the sound-effect console is reproducing a constant rat-tat-tat of musketry. These manual (cannon), mechanical (musketry), and vocal (battle cries) sounds are *mixed* and gradually faded by the control engineer, or by the sound-effects man himself. The director now signals the narrator to continue.

How long will all this have taken in an actual broadcasting? About thirty seconds! A quarter of a page of script, but it contains within it the tremendous technical knowledge, skill, equipment, artistry, and split-second teamwork which are the hallmark of radio in our time!

LISTENING TO RADIO DRAMA

Does this behind-the-scenes view spoil any illusions for us? Does it make us too conscious of the machinery back of every play we hear on the air? It needn't. You hear more when you listen for more; the experi-

ence becomes a richer one. The following are some of the things to listen for. A few of the questions applied to any radio play will find you a keener and more discriminating listener.

I. STORY. How is the story introduced? How is antecedent action revealed? How are the incidents presented (narration, dialogue) and how does each advance the play?

How are the parts of the play bridged? How is suspense achieved? What is the principal conflict? Does it seem important? At what point does the play reach its climax?

What is the final outcome? Is it convincing? What is the theme? Is it a worthy one? Does the story clearly establish this theme?

II. PRESENTATION. *Narrator.* What is the place of the narrator in the play? Does he usurp too much of it? Do his words sufficiently clarify action and situation?

Dialogue. Is the dialogue effective – does it have variety, interest, pace, vividness of speech, accuracy in terms of the characters who speak it? Does it help (1) create appropriate atmosphere, (2) develop the characters, (3) advance the action of the play? Is it differentiated to help us distinguish the people in the play? Are the levels of speech and the accents accurate?

Acting. Do the actors enunciate clearly enough so that there is no difficulty in hearing? Are voices clear, and distinguishable from one another? Do they reveal through quality and inflection (without obvious exaggeration) the personality of each speaker? Do the performers show a sense of good timing – rate and change of rate, effective use of pauses, smooth picking up of cues? Is local or foreign accent convincingly used? Are appropriate words or lines properly pointed up or played down?

Sound. Are sound effects convincing? Do they clarify action and assist your imagination without your being too conscious of their use? Are they well timed? Does the music enhance the emotional effect of the play? Is it appropriately chosen? Are musical bridges effective? Is the music well played?

The trend, according to *Radio Daily* and the president of the Mutual Broadcasting System, is toward more adult dramatic entertainment. That means that the *Crosley* index or the *Hooper* rating – two measures of program popularity – for good radio plays is going up. Your own good listening, with occasional letters of suggestion and encouragement, will help the trend along.

READING THE RADIO PLAY

The enormous possibilities of radio drama – for good or evil – were perhaps too vividly demonstrated when Orson Welles' unforgettable

broadcast of *War of the Worlds* threw a whole nation into panic.[2] The limitation in this form of drama lies of course in the fact that we must depend (barring television) on hearing alone. In reading a radio play even this is denied us; we must be, in a way, our own symphony orchestra and sound-effects man. As Irving Stone says: "The art of reading a radio play is the art of conjuring up images and sounds at the radio dramatist's direction and then keeping them constant on the background screen of the mind while the story plays itself on the forward part of the stage." [3] You may find it helpful to follow a radio presentation with the script before you. This is possible when a play, for which the script is available, is revived or repeated on the air — like Arch Oboler's or Norman Corwin's, or with recordings of such plays.

Technical terms may present some difficulty for the reader of radio drama. The following are most frequently encountered:

TECHNICAL TERMS IN RADIO

Ad lib. See page 12.

B. G. (*background*). Sound or music used "behind" speech to create a desired effect.

Biz (*business*). Sounds indicating physical action. (Compare with *stage business*, page 12.

Board (*control panel*). The panel in the control booth by which the engineer regulates the volume for each microphone used.

Dead air. Silence.

Down. Diminish in volume, soften.

Echo chamber. Device for producing the effects of an echo (as when speaking in a large hall).

Fade in. To introduce or increase volume.

Fade out. Diminish in volume. *Cross-fade.* A radio *dissolve* (see page 437). One sound or voice fades out while the other is faded in.

Filter. A device for changing the quality of a voice or sound by eliminating some frequencies or increasing others. (You achieve a similar effect with one of the dials on your radio.)

Montage. A quick succession of effects (sound, music, dialogue) used generally to suggest quick passage of a series of scenes or events.

Musical bridge. Short musical passage to indicate a shift in time, place, or mood.

[2] You will find it interesting to read the story of this broadcast, as well as the Welles script, in Cantril's *The Invasion from Mars.*

[3] In the introduction to Arch Oboler's *14 Radio Plays.*

Musical cushion. A musical passage at the close of a program, whose length may be adjusted to meet the needs of running time.

Musical curtain. A final surge of music to signalize the conclusion of the play.

Off mike. At some distance from the microphone – to achieve voice "perspective." The opposite term is *on mike.*

Over. Louder than another sound. *Under.* Softer than another sound.

Segue (pronounce *Seg-way*). To pass without a break or bridge to sound or music of a different mood.

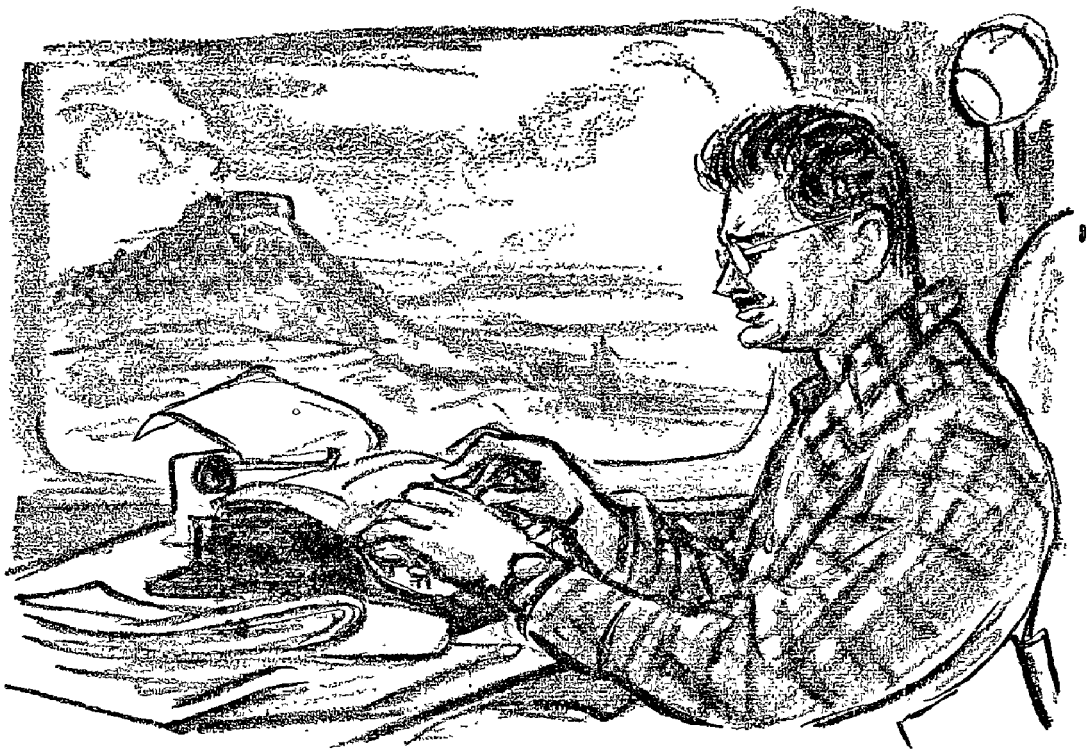
Sound effects. These may be *original* – caused by the article itself (such as a door closing); *substitute* or *imitation,* in which a device is used to create the same effect (as the crushing of cellophane to suggest fire); and *recorded,* in which the original sound is played back from a record or disk. The first two may be called *manual,* the last *electrical.*

Sustaining programs are those supported by the broadcasting company itself; *sponsored* or *commercial* programs are those paid for by advertisers. The proportion is generally about half and half. (This and other phases of broadcasting are regulated by the FCC – Federal Communications Commission.)

Up, or *Bring up.* Increase the volume.

A RADIO SCRIPT

Typical of the work of Norman Corwin, perhaps the most distinguished writer for radio today, is the charming romantic story which follows. Produced by Columbia while the war was still on, it illustrates the writer's skill in telling an entertaining story while injecting some strong notes of social concern.



Norman Corwin typing on the El Capitan

El Capitan and the Corporal

BY NORMAN CORWIN

P. A. AMPLIFIER. *Attention, Santa Fe Train Number 22, the El Capitan, for Albuquerque, Dodge City, Kansas City, and Chicago, now loading at Track 5 for departure at 11:30.*

CAL. Well, I had seat No. 18 on this train, the El Capitan, and the way I figured, it wasn't quite right for two people to have the same seat on the same train, so I said to the man who was sitting in it when I got there, "You sure you got the right seat, sir?" and he looked kind of startled and said . . .

MAN. Why, yes. My ticket here says seat 18 and this is 18.

"El Capitan and the Corporal" by Norman Corwin from *Untitled and Other Radio Dramas* by Norman Corwin. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

CAL. Well, so does mine say 18.

MAN. Guess the thing to do is to take it up with the conductor.

CAL. So we took it up with the conductor and got it straightened out. Seems he had seat No. 18 in the *next* car. I got settled in my seat and there was a little time before the train started and I was wondering who was going to sit next to me. You see, in all the times I'd been riding on trains I never had a pretty girl sit next to me and this time was no exception because a guy came along who must have weighed 300 pounds and he plunked down beside me. The poor fellow was puffing and panting because he'd thought he was going to miss the train . . .

FAT MAN. Phewy! I'm winded. I'm not built for this kind of thing, as you can see.

CAL. What'd you do? Run up the ramp?

FAT MAN (*puffing*). All the way from the street. Guess I couldn't have been looking where I was going. I went up the wrong track and found myself on a train for *San Diego*. Isn't that a silly thing to do?

CAL. Well, I don't know. It's easy to make a mistake.

FAT MAN. That ever happen to you?

CAL. No, can't say it has.

FAT MAN. Look at this handkerchief—wringing wet. Boy, I won't catch my breath till I get to Santa Barbara.

CAL. Santa Barbara? This train doesn't go to Santa Barbara.

FAT MAN. You mean—you mean this isn't the Beaver for San Francisco?

CAL. Heck, no. This is the El Capitan going to Chicago.

FAT MAN (*in a panic*). Oh, dear! Oh, my Lord! Will you help me down with that bag?

CAL. Sure thing.

BIZ (*there is a bustle; baggage and general retreat, under which*):

CAL (*over commotion*). I went to help the poor guy off the train and I started down the aisle, sort of running interference for him, but before I went five steps, I bumped smack into a girl. (*An oomph—and a suitcase on the floor.*) We collided so hard she dropped her suitcase and almost fell over it.

BIZ (*collision*).

GIRL (*in an injured tone, sharply*). Will you *please* watch where you're *going!*

CAL. I beg your pardon. (*Down.*) She gave me a look that would wither your left arm, and I said to her, "I'm trying to help a man catch a train," but she didn't answer and went by with her nose in the air and I felt like saying to her, "Don't you know there's a war on?"

but what's the use of arguing with a dame in a situation like that? So I tumbled off the train with the guy's suitcase and helped him on his way. Well, I got back on the car, and who was sitting in my seat by the window but this same girl? She looked at me as though I had just slugged her grandmother, and I gave the courtesy right back to her. (*Up, icily.*) I'm very sorry, miss, but you're sitting in my seat.

GIRL. You must be mistaken. This ticket says Seat 18.

CAL. But mine is 18 *Window.* Yours is 18 *Aisle.*

GIRL (*zero degrees centigrade*). In that case, I'll move.

CAL. If you don't mind. I'd just like to sit in my own seat, that's all.

GIRL. Very well, excuse it.

CAL. I moved in and sat next to the window and the train started. (*Sound of the train starting, under.*) She picked up a magazine and thumbed through it, and now and then looked up out of the window as we mooched along toward Pasadena, but her glance was strictly the impersonal type and it went right past me with no local stops. After a while I must have got interested in the pictures in her magazine and started looking at them over her shoulder because suddenly it struck me that this girl had a very interesting profile, to say the least. I was in the middle of admiring it, when—

GIRL. *Well?*

CAL. Well what?

GIRL. What are you looking at?

CAL. Your nose.

GIRL. Oh. Does it meet with your approval?

CAL. Sure does.

GIRL. I'm so relieved.

CAL. After that I kept pretty much to myself until we'd left San Berdoo and had started to climb through Cajon Pass. Then I volunteered to point out some of the features of interest. I didn't know too much about the country, but I made off like I was an authority and named a couple of mountain peaks that have been anonymous since the Mojave Indians were running the place. She paid no attention to me at all until I said to her (*Up.*) That one there is called Mount Glickstein.

GIRL. Now, look; who do you think you're annoying? That happens to be Mount Baldy.

CAL. It is? Well, maybe you're right. It *does* seem unlikely they'd be naming a mountain after my commanding officer.

GIRL. You know, you're the least smart aleck I've ever had the—

CAL. The name is Cal, not Aleck.

GIRL. Short for callow, I presume.

CAL. Short for what?

GIRL. Let it go.

CAL. I tried not to let it go, but she buried herself in a book, and we were past Victorville before I spoke to her again. I finally said (*Up.*) Look — I'm sorry if I was rude. After all, I didn't intend to bump into you in the aisle. I was helping that fat man off the train. Poor fellow, you know what happened to him? First he got on a train headed for —

GIRL. I'm not interested.

CAL (*defeated*). Well — all right. If you don't want to accept an apology, why then — after all, if we're going to be sitting next to each other for a couple of days, I — (*Pause. Down.*) She simply stared at her book and ignored me, and I shut up, feeling pretty foolish for wasting my time on a cold potato just because she happened to have a cute profile.

She probably would never have spoken to me of her own accord if it hadn't been for a little accident just before we got to Barstow. Seems she wanted something in her suitcase, so she got up and reached for it in the rack.

GIRL. Excuse me.

CAL. Can I help you there?

GIRL (*reaching*). No, thank you. I can manage.

CAL. Well, she didn't manage so good because the train gave a little lurch, and down went the bag on my noggin —

BIZ (*ad libs of action wherein the girl loses her grip on the bag and it comes down heavily on the head of our hero*).

GIRL. Oh, I'm sorry! I'm terribly sorry. Are you hurt?

CAL. Actually the bump didn't hurt much at all, because the grip wasn't heavy, yet it made such a loud noise when it dropped on my head that she must have thought I was killed. I played it for sympathy, naturally.

GIRL. Are you all right? Here, let me —

CAL (*without conviction. Faintly*). I — I'm okay — I'm all right.

GIRL. I'm *so* sorry, really I am. What's the matter, is it bleeding?

CAL. No. The only thing I'm worried about is an old skull fracture I got six years ago.

GIRL (*scared now*). Why — do you think you've — does it feel — can I *do* anything for you?

CAL. Oh, no, it's all right. Please don't worry about it. (*Down.*) Well, she was so scared about the idea of having refractured my skull

(*which had never been fractured in the first place*) and so regretful about the way she'd treated me, that she just took right over, and the first thing I knew she was massaging my scalp. . . .

GIRL. Does that feel better now?

CAL. Much better. You have the healing touch.

GIRL. I'm sorry if I seemed mean — but you must admit you were pretty fresh.

CAL. But I apologized, didn't I?

GIRL. Yes, and I should have accepted your apology. That wasn't very nice of me.

CAL. Okay then — are we friends?

GIRL (*chuckling*). Yes — we're friends.

CAL. The train stopped for a few minutes at Barstow and we got off and walked around in the hot desert sun. (*B.G. sound of normal train traffic at a typical railroad division point.*) It didn't take us long to get acquainted as to who we were and what we were doing. I found her name was Betty Frisby, that she worked on jigs in an aircraft factory in California, and that she was going to . . .

BETTY. Chicago, to bring my brother back from the Marine Hospital in Markleton, Pennsylvania.

CAL. What's he doing there?

BETTY. He was badly wounded in the Merchant Marine. He got torpedoed twice and the second time he lost an arm, and his spine was broken.

CAL. Gee, that's tough. I'm sorry to hear it.

BETTY. He may never be able to walk again.

CAL. Terrible.

BETTY. He's done a lot of fighting for a boy his age. Before he was in the Merchant Marine, he fought in Spain.

CAL. He did?

BETTY. He was with the American volunteers.

CAL. So this is really his second war, eh?

BETTY. No, it's all one war, wouldn't you say?

CAL. Well — this one really began in 1939, and the other —

BETTY. Surely by now you know better than that.

CAL. Well, I didn't follow that Spanish war very much.

BETTY. Well, I did — not only because Sandy was in it up to his neck, but I guess because my own heart was in it, too.

PORTER (*far off*). Board! All aboard!

CAL. That's us.

BETTY. Yes — let's get aboard.

CAL. This way, Betty.

BETTY. No, that's not our train. That's a Union Pacific train.

CAL (*laughing*). If I don't watch out, I'll be doing just what that fat man did. Don't know what's come over me. I'm not usually absent-minded.

BETTY (*genially*). Maybe it was the blow on your head.

CAL. We returned to the train, and continued our talk, and Betty asked a lot of questions about me.

BETTY. Are you on a furlough?

CAL. No, I'm just returning from one.

BETTY. What happens when you get to New York?

CAL. Well, then I go to a port of embarkation.

BETTY. Oh. (*Pause.*) Are you married?

CAL. No.

BETTY. Got a girl?

CAL. Well, nobody I'm really in love with. How about you?

BETTY. Oh, just about the same as you, I suppose.

CAL. Yeah?

BETTY. There's a boy at home who wants me to marry him, but I'm afraid we'd never get along.

CAL. Why?

BETTY. Well, we don't agree much about the world.

CAL. About the *world?*

BETTY. Yes, you see, to my way of thinking —

[*A fellow passenger comes up, interrupts them.*]

SALESMAN. Pardon me folks, would you like to get in on a little game of pinochle?

BIZ (BETTY *and* CAL *decline with thanks. The passenger moves toward them, and* CAL *resumes:*)

CAL. What did you mean, you and your friend didn't agree about the world?

BETTY. Well, the way I see it, there are two main uh — let's say *points of view,* about being alive on this earth. Now you're either an active human being with all that implies, or else —

CAL. Wait a minute. What *does* that imply?

BETTY. Well, it implies a certain amount of responsibility — it implies the idea of giving as well as receiving from your country —

TOT (*who has come wandering up the aisle*). Hello.

BETTY. Well, hello.

TOT. What's your name?

CAL. Oscar Fiddlefuddle. What's yours?

TOT. Mary Lou Slezak.
CAL. Well, hello, Mary Lou. How are you?
TOT. I'm fine, thank you. How are you?
CAL. Splendid.
TOT. What's your name?
CAL. That's where we came in.
CAL. Where's your mother, Mary? Where do you live?
TOT (*by rote*). Two hundred sixteen Walnut Street, Ventura, California.
CAL. You better go to your mother now, or you'll get lost. Good-by, Mary Lou.
TOT. Bye bye.
CAL. You were saying there are two kinds of people — active human beings and what's the other kind?
BETTY. Well, for want of a better word I'd say vegetables.
CAL. Vegetables? (*Laughs.*) How do you mean?
BETTY. I mean just people who vegetate. They're planted and they grow, and you know just what to expect from them; and if their father was a head of lettuce, that's good enough for them, so *they're* a head of lettuce.
CAL. Well, now what kind of person exactly do you mean?
BETTY. Well, look: I'll give you an example: Let's take the first privilege of citizenship in a democracy.
CAL. Yes?
BETTY. What is it, do you know?
CAL (*caught unprepared*). Uh — Well, uh — I suppose it's a free press, and freedom of religion, and the —
BETTY. No, that's not what I mean.
CAL. Well, what *is* it, then?
BETTY. The first privilege of a citizen in a country like ours is the right to *vote*.
CAL. Oh, well, of course.
BETTY. Well, I call a voter who doesn't vote — as far as I'm concerned, he qualifies as a vegetable.
CAL. A vegetable.
BETTY. Yes. He's vegetating. Voting is the *least* thing you could expect him to do. I mean, the least he could do is take a slight interest in his country. Why when you consider how many men have *died* just for the simple right to vote — What's all the jollity about?
CAL. Looks to me like a wandering minstrel show. Just some soldiers and sailors on the way to the smoker, I guess.

BIZ (*the party fades in, and the first distinguishable voice we hear is saying*):

SAILOR. Wait a minute — Wait a minute — listen to this one. — Listen: This guy says to another guy, "Did you ever have an accident?" So the other guy says, "No, but a dog bit me once." And the first guy says, "Well, wasn't *that* an accident?" So the second guy says, "Heck, no, he did it on *purpose!*"

BIZ (*great laughter; as the group goes through the door into the vestibule, it is lost to us*).

CAL. Well, where were we?

BETTY. I was talking about voting. You see, to me that's only *one* way of expressing what I call a basic interest in being alive. You can be *interested* or *disinterested* in the kind of education your children are going to get — or in the wages you'll be making after the war — or in the kind of highway the town is going to build — or in a struggle for democracy whether it's in Spain or in your own back yard. Now the trouble with — (*She stops short.*) What are you looking at?

CAL. Your eyes. You have very beautiful eyes.

BETTY. And you haven't been listening to what I've been saying?

CAL. Yes, sure. But nothing you have said so far alters the fact that you have very beautiful eyes.

BETTY (*injured*). Excuse me.

CAL. Betty — where are you going? Betty! (*Raising his voice.*) Betty! (*Down.*) People turned around and looked at me, and I felt sort of foolish, so I stayed in my seat for a while pretending to read, and then after a few minutes I got up to look for Betty in the smoker. She wasn't there, and I went through the train twice looking for her and couldn't find her, so I guessed she must have gone in the ladies' lounge. We got to Needles and still no Betty, so when the train stopped I got out hoping to find her on the platform, and sure enough, there she was at a newsstand, buying a paper. (*Up.*) Betty! Listen, I've been looking all over for you.

BETTY. Well, here I am. I'm the girl with the beautiful eyes.

CAL. Aw, cut it out, will ya? You want a paper?

BETTY. I have one, thank you. I don't suppose you ever read such things.

CAL. No, never.

BETTY. Afraid you might find out what's going on in the world?

CAL (*pleasantly*). Listen, Betty: other people can read the news, but guys like your brother and I, we're the ones who have to go out and make it. Look, I'm not a vegetable, Betty, honest I'm not — and

don't get mad at me. Here I am on my way to a P.O.E. and you're going back to California with your brother, and don't you think you're being just a little —

BETTY (*smiling*). All right, Cal.

CAL. That's all she said. She said, "All right, Cal," and she smiled and took my arm and we went back on the train. We got hungry around Kingman, Arizona, and went in the diner and had the 90-cent meal, which she insisted should be Dutch, and then we returned to our car. As we opened the door off the vestibule — (*No pause.*)

BIZ (*we hear a pleasant voice singing a folk tune. It is a slow sweet ballad*).

CAL. We found there was a sort of concert going on. One of the passengers had unmasked a guitar, and there was a whole cluster of people around him, listening in silence as the El Capitan streaked along in the night.

BIZ (*the song ends, the passengers gather around the singer, urge him to go on. They offer suggestions, but he is particular about what he sings and finally he selects one of his own favorites, "Black is the color of my true love's hair." Over singing*).

CAL. After a while we returned to our seats and listened from there.

BIZ (*singing clear again for a few moments but at a reduced perspective. It continues under*).

CAL. Most of the lights in the car were low now, and Betty's eyes had on a dark glow which made them seem more beautiful than ever.

BETTY (*low*). What are you thinking?

CAL. Hm? Oh — I was just thinking there's a place in the world for this, too.

BETTY. What do you mean? For what too?

CAL. For love, and songs about love, and for singing.

BETTY. I'd hate to think what the world would be without it.

CAL. Well, that's not so hard to imagine.

BETTY. How? What do you mean?

CAL. Just look how it is in Germany. Why, love in Germany is under the control of the Nazi Party, and they tell people who shall breed and who'll be sterile. I don't think it's hardly possible for a Fascist to be really in love, do you know that? I mean, not if he's been brought up to believe a woman belongs only in the kitchen and the nursery. Isn't that what the Japs and Nazis think?

BETTY. Yes, it is.

CAL (*down*). Betty put her head on my shoulder, and after a while she went to sleep. I took one of her hands in mine and I guess that was

all right with her, because when I moved her hand she opened one eye sleepily and a corner of her lip smiled at me, and she went back to sleep. After a while I dozed off, with the guitar and the wheels still singing in my ears. . . .

MUSIC (*the orchestra takes over the melody, carrying the guitar along with it. The music is sleepy and sweet, but soon it freshens into a lively passage, symbolic of both movement and transition, and goes out quickly under*).

CAL. When I woke up the train was going through Wagon Mound, New Mexico and Betty had already eaten breakfast and was in her chair reading *Strange Fruit*.

BETTY. Oh, are you awake?

CAL (*sleepily*). Yeah. Good morning.

BETTY. Good morning.

CAL. What time is it?

BETTY. Time for you to be up and about. I've already had my breakfast.

CAL. What a woman! Do you always get up so early and look so pretty in the morning?

BETTY. Daily except Sunday.

CAL. You're wonderful. Excuse me while I scrape my beard off.

BETTY. You're excused.

CAL (*again narrating*). For a day that started off so good, I suffered a great many annoyances. In the first place the car we were in got so chummy that everybody was practically sitting in our laps, including young Miss Slezak, of Walnut Street, Ventura. . . .

TOT. What's your name?

CAL. I told you yesterday. Fiddlefuddle.

TOT. Why?

CAL. And then a girl going through to the diner spotted Betty and it had to turn out they were classmates in college. . . .

BETTY. Miriam, I'd like you to meet Cpl. Hollister, Miriam Maizlish. (*Ad libs.*)

CAL. How do you do, Miss Maizlish.

MAIZLISH. How do you do.

CAL (*down*). And they sat and gabbed for hours about their old school days and believe me there's nothing more boring than for a neutral party to hear about Bud Phillips who's in the South Pacific, and Bob Lee who's just written a book on television, and Gazella Cronkite, who married a furniture salesman from Far Rockaway.

MAIZLISH. Yes, and I hear she's expecting.

CAL. And Miss Maizlish of course came along to lunch, and when the

train stopped at La Junta and we got out to stretch our legs, she tagged along with us. So that I never really got any time alone with Betty all day. Worse than that, a fellow right in back of my chair, a music lover who should have been born a canary, started whistling (*fade him in*) and kept it up until it got on my nerves.

BIZ (*the whistler whistles "As Time Goes By" in an arrangement for two front teeth. We should sympathize with Cal*).

CAL. I went into the club car to get away from him and everybody had all the regular magazines already so I read the *Railroad Age*, and the *Standard Book of Timetables*. Dinner was even worse. Maizlish was along: and not only that, but two good-looking Marines went on the make for Betty, and I had all I could do to keep from taking a hand in the situation. But I curbed myself, figuring what right would I have to interfere — she's not my girl, after all — I'd just met her yesterday — so I took the whole thing philosophically.

BETTY. What's the matter, Cal?

CAL. Oh, nothing.

BETTY. You seem so glum all of a sudden.

CAL. No, nothing, really.

BETTY. You sure?

CAL. I said I was sure, just to end that line of inquiry. But it wasn't until the latter part of the evening that I really had her to myself, and that was only because everybody began to get so fagged that they couldn't keep their eyes open. (*Music.*) We sat back in our seats and talked in a very low voice.

BETTY. You tired?

CAL. A little.

BETTY. So am I.

CAL. You know what?

BETTY. What?

CAL. I missed you all day.

BETTY. *Missed* me?

CAL. Yeah. Between Maizlish and the marines. I hardly got to talk to you.

BETTY. Why, Cal — you sound as though that were important to you.

CAL. Well, it is.

BETTY. But we only met yesterday.

CAL. I know, I know — we're not exactly engaged to each other or anything, are we?

BETTY. That's right.

CAL. But would that be so bad?

BETTY. Would what be so bad?
CAL. Being engaged?
BETTY. What a silly question.
CAL. Well, I know I'd like it.
BETTY. You're silly.
CAL. Am I — (*For a moment neither speaks.*) I'm sorry if I've made a fool of myself again.
BETTY. You haven't made a fool of yourself. What time is it?
CAL. Eleven. Why?
BETTY. We get to Kansas City in 15 minutes, and I want to get out there.
CAL. Yes? What for?
BETTY. Well, Sandy wrote me he wanted me to bring him a book and I didn't have time to get it at home, and it'll be so early when we get to Chicago that I won't have time to get it before catching my connecting train, so —
CAL. What's the book he wants?
BETTY. *Citizen Tom Paine,* by Howard Fast.
CAL. Oh, yes, I heard of it. He was quite a guy, Tom Paine, according to what Major Glickstein says.
BETTY. You ought to read Paine some time.
CAL. Jefferson, that's *my* boy.
CAL (*narrating*). We got to Kansas City and went up the stairs to the station, and Betty bought her book. Then we walked around outside the station to get a breath of fresh air, and we stood there looking at the lights. Betty put her arm in mine, and it felt to me as though it *belonged* there, and I couldn't help thinking to myself how nice it would be if we were married and this was our honeymoon.
BETTY. Cal — how long does the train stop here?
CAL. Huh? Oh — uh — seven minutes. It leaves at 11:22.
BETTY. Well, what time is it now?
CAL (*galvanized*). Holy smokes! 11:21. We've only got one minute.
BETTY (*beginning to run*). We'd better run for it! What track is it on?
CAL. I think it's Track 4.
BETTY. Well, don't you *know*?
CAL. I'm pretty sure it's 4.
BETTY. Well, here's the staircase down for Track 4. I hope you're right.
BIZ (*they scramble down a flight of stairs. The dialogue takes place mostly in full flight*).
BIZ (*they reach the bottom and see a porter*).

CAL. Porter, is that the El Capitan?
PORTER. No, suh, this here's a westboun' train.
CAL. Well, what track is the El Capitan on?
PORTER. Ah doan no.
CAL. Come on, let's get back upstairs.
BIZ (*they tear upstairs and as they're running they reach the top breathless and worried*).
CAL. Mister – which is the stairway for the El Capitan?
MISTER. Sorry, I don't know. Ask the conductor at the train gate.
CAL. What train gate?
MISTER. Right there.
CAL. You wait here, honey. I'll ask the conductor.
SOUND (*we hear* CAL *hotfooting it down the corridor. His footsteps stop when he addresses two conductors*).
CAL. Say – what track's the Capitan on?
CONDUCTOR. On 6, I believe.
2ND CONDUCTOR. No, I think it's on 7 tonight.
CONDUCTOR. Well, I believe you've missed it anyway. It's 11:25.
CAL. Oh, *great!*
2ND CONDUCTOR. Try 7, soldier –
CAL. Okay –
SOUND (CAL *hurries back, but now getting short of wind*).
BETTY. Did you find out?
CAL. Seven . . . try seven.
BIZ (*both head down the stairs. At the bottom*).
CAL. Porter! What train is this?
PORTER. El Capitan eastbound.
CAL. We staggered on our car, winded and disheveled, and thanked our stars the train hadn't pulled out on time. But to top it all, that train just stood there another twenty minutes. So we'd given ourselves a scare and a workout for nothing. It was about midnight when the train got under way (*wheels start up*) and we were pretty tired, and Betty slumped down and put her head on my shoulder and went off to sleep. She looked so pretty with her head on my shoulder, and her hair smelled kind of nice, you know, and I guess I felt pretty sentimental toward her, although it was true that we had only met yesterday. I stayed awake quite a while, but then I must have dozed off, because the next thing I knew, I was suddenly aware that light was just beginning to come up in the east. The train was slowing down to go through Streator, Illinois, and the

car was quiet. I looked at Betty to see how she was doing, and to my surprise I found she was wide awake. She was looking at me out of those big eyes.

BETTY (*low*). Good morning, Corporal.

CAL. Morning, Betty. Can't you sleep?

BETTY. I slept some. I've been thinking a lot.

CAL. So have I.

BETTY. About what?

CAL. About you.

BETTY. What about me?

CAL. I'm sorry we're not going on together after Chicago.

BETTY. Want to know something?

CAL. What?

BETTY. So am I.

CAL (*pleased and touched*). *Are* you, Betty?

BETTY. Yes. (*Pause*) I like you.

CAL. I squeezed her hand a little, and we sat there for a while without saying anything, just watching the sky go from purple to pink. Finally, I said to her, "Betty—"

BETTY. What?

CAL. I'd like to ask just one thing before we get to Chicago, because I know you'll have to rush to make your connection.

BETTY. What is it, Cal?

CAL. Can I kiss you just once? (*Down.*) She looked at me for a moment, without saying anything. Then she put her hand under my chin and drew me toward her and—and she kissed me. I don't know how to describe it exactly (*music*) but all kinds of things suddenly began singing in my head—lines of poems that I learned in school and thought I'd forgotten, and there was a kind of music, too, and all the time the dawn was coming up in the east, and there was a glow outside that seemed to go along with the glow inside *me*. I couldn't really trust my Adam's apple for a while, so I didn't say anything.

BETTY. Do you think you'll remember me after today?

CAL. Well, I don't know about after the war, but that kiss will carry me through the duration.

BETTY. You're a sweet boy, Cal. I suppose it's silly, in war, to say, "Take care of yourself," to a soldier. But—I guess it's more or less in the hands of God, isn't it?

CAL. God and Major Glickstein.

BETTY. Nevertheless *you* be careful.

CAL. I'm coming back, Betty. And you know who I'd like to see first right I step off that boat? You.

BETTY. I—I'm glad you feel that way. I really am.

CAL. Just you don't go getting hitched to some *vegetable* before you've given me a chance, now, will you?

BETTY (*smiling*). Don't worry.

CAL. Betty, if I write you, will you answer me?

BETTY. Of course, I'd answer you.

CAL. But you haven't told me your—

MAIZLISH (*advancing. Bright and cheery*). Hi! Good morning, folks. Greetings and salutations!

BETTY. Good morning, Miriam.

CAL (*none too cordially*). Good morning.

MAIZLISH. Well, we get in in ten minutes. Have you got all your stuff together?

CAL. Yep.

MAIZLISH. How much time've you got to get over to the other station, Betty?

BETTY. Half hour.

MAIZLISH. None too much.

BETTY. No.

[*Young* MISS SLEZAK *has toddled down the aisle in the middle of our people.*]

MAIZLISH. Look, isn't this a cute kid? (*Up.*) Good morning, young lady. (*Down.*) Isn't she cute?

TOT. Hello.

CAL. My name is Fiddlefuddle. Good-by.

TOT. Good-by.

CONDUCTOR (*from off*). Chicago! Chicago! Please make sure that you've left nothing behind.

CAL. We got off the train and I helped Betty with her bags, and on the sidewalk there in front of the Dearborn Station I said good-by to her.

BETTY (*hurriedly*). Good-by, Cal. Good luck. Come back.

CAL (*talking fast to get it all in*). Good-by, Betty. Tell your brother Sandy that I'm going over there and avenge that lost arm. Tell him I'm going to help finish the job he started in Spain. And also tell him I love his sister.

BETTY. I'll tell him. I'll tell him all that. Good-by, dear.

CAL. She smacked me right on the lips and turned and ran and got into a taxi and disappeared inside. I stood there rooted to the intersec-

tion of Polk and Dearborn Streets, looking after her. And it must have been all of five minutes later, with me in a perfect daze all this time, that I realized with a sinking feeling that I hadn't given her my address and I didn't have hers, either. I started to run automatically in the direction the taxi had gone, but I stopped after a few steps because I knew that was silly. And then, while I was still wondering what to do, I looked down in my hand, and there was a piece of paper — a plain white piece of paper with some writing on it. So help me, I don't remember how it got there, but she must have put it in my hand when she kissed me good-by, and I was too dumbstruck to notice it. It said:

"Betty Frisby, 7692 N. Elmwood Drive, Long Beach, California. At home after the armistice."

CAL. I put it in my breast pocket and started for the train that would take me to Long Beach via Germany.

MUSIC (*15 sec.*).

[CURTAIN]

Plays and Playwrights of Our Time

AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS[1]

ANDERSON, MAXWELL (1888–)

Elizabeth the Queen (1930) A poetic drama revealing the conflict, in her relationship with the Earl of Essex, between Elizabeth the queen and Elizabeth the woman.

Both Your Houses (Pulitzer Prize, 1933) A bitter satirical study of Congressional corruption. Where does the title come from? What is its significance here?

Valley Forge (1934) Washington and his soldiers during the "winter of their discontent."

Winterset (1935) See page 375.

Knickerbocker Holiday (1938)

The Eve of St. Mark (1943)

Joan of Lorraine (1946) Compare with Shaw's *Saint Joan.*

BALDERSTON, JOHN LLOYD (1889–)

Berkeley Square (1929) Shuttles back and forth romantically through a century of time.

BARRY, PHILIP (1896–)

Holiday (1928) A somewhat dated comedy about a young man who shocks the wealthy – and stodgy – family of his fiancee with ideas of living in which accumulating wealth is not the major interest.

Hotel Universe (1930)

Liberty Jones (1941)

BEHRMAN, S. N. (1893–)

Rain from Heaven (1934) Play of conflict of ideas and prejudices among a representative group of people – brilliant conversationalists, most of them.

End of Summer (1936) Compare this play with the preceding one, written two years earlier. See also Werfel, Franz.

[1] Names of authors are arranged alphabetically; plays are arranged chronologically.

BLITZSTEIN, MARC (1905–)

The Cradle Will Rock (1937) A social-protest play with music and without scenery. Interesting for its bold technique.

CONNELLY, MARC (1890–)

The Green Pastures (Pulitzer Prize, 1930) A dramatization of Roark Bradford's story of the Negro's conception of heaven.

CROTHERS, RACHEL (1878–)

Susan and God (1937)

DAVIS, OWEN (1874–1943)

Icebound (Pulitzer Prize, 1923)

Ethan Frome (1936, in collaboration with Donald Davis, his son) A model of fine dramatization in which the novel loses nothing from the change in literary form. Read both novel (by Edith Wharton) and play.

ELIOT, T. S. (1888–)

Murder in the Cathedral (1935) A beautiful poetic drama about the martyrdom of Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in which the murderers tell their side of the story. Produced by the Federal Theatre.

The Family Reunion (1939)

FERBER, EDNA (1887–)

Show Boat (1927) Musical adaptation of the novel, in collaboration with Oscar Hammerstein II, with music by Jerome Kern.

GALE, ZONA (1874–1938)

Miss Lulu Bett (Pulitzer Prize, 1920) A dramatization of her novel.

GLASPELL, SUSAN (1882–)

Alison's House (Pulitzer Prize, 1931) A study of the poet Emily Dickinson.

GREEN, PAUL (1894–)

In Abraham's Bosom (Pulitzer Prize, 1927) Green is considered the finest writer of folk drama in our literature.

The House of Connelly (1931) Compare with *The Little Foxes.*

Johnny Johnson (1936) One of the great anti-war plays of our time.

Hymn to the Rising Sun (1936) A one-act tragedy about the Georgia chain gang, first staged by the Federal Theatre Project.

HAMMERSTEIN, OSCAR II (1895–)

Carmen Jones (1943) A very modern version of the Bizet opera, produced with an all-colored cast.

Oklahoma! (1944) See page 384. See also Ferber, Edna.

Carousel (1945)

HART, MOSS (1904–)

Winged Victory; the Air Force Play (1943) Based on the training and experience of a group of American aviators in World War II.

HECHT, BEN (1894–) and MACARTHUR, CHARLES (1895–)

Front Page (1928) See page 391.

HELLMAN, LILLIAN (1905–)

The Little Foxes (1939) A bitter study of decadence in a Southern family.

Watch on the Rhine (1941) See page 31.

Another Part of the Forest (1946)

HEYWARD, DOROTHY (1890–) and HEYWARD, DU BOSE (1885–1940)

Porgy (1927) One of the great folk plays of our time. The music for the opera adaptation, called *Porgy and Bess* (1935), was composed by George Gershwin.

HOWARD, SIDNEY (1891–1939)

They Knew What They Wanted (Pulitzer Prize, 1924).

The Silver Cord (1926) A moving psychological study of a mother's selfish attachment to her sons.

Yellow Jack (1934) See page 297.

Dodsworth (1934)

KAUFMAN, GEORGE S. (1889–)

Dulcy (1921) The character was created by Franklin P. Adams, of "Information Please" fame.

IN COLLABORATION WITH MARC CONNELLY (1890–)

Beggar on Horseback (1924)

The Royal Family (1927) A comedy about theatre and movie stars.

Dinner at Eight (1932)

IN COLLABORATION WITH MOSS HART (1904–)

Once in a Lifetime (1930) Hilarious laughter at the expense of Hollywood.

Merrily We Roll Along (1934) You will be interested in the novel device of placing the scenes in exactly reverse order of time.

You Can't Take It With You (Pulitzer Prize, 1936)

The Man Who Came to Dinner (1939)

The American Way (1939)

KELLY, GEORGE (1887–)

The Show-off (1924)

Craig's Wife (Pulitzer Prize, 1925)

KINGSLEY, SIDNEY (1906–)

Men in White (Pulitzer Prize, 1933) Hospital life made exciting with very good and very bad doctors.

Dead End (1935) Norman Bel Geddes' stage set and the acting of the "Dead End Kids" made this play of slum life and juvenile delinquency an exciting experience in the theatre.

The Patriots (1943) An exciting play about Thomas Jefferson, in which you will also meet Washington, Hamilton, Madison, and others of our founding fathers.

LAWSON, JOHN HOWARD (1895–)

Processional (1925) An expressionistic play which excited violent discussion when it was first produced.

Marching Song (1937)

LINDSAY, HOWARD (1889–) and CROUSE, RUSSEL (1893–)

Life With Father (1939) The adaptation of Clarence Day's autobiographical sketches which holds a long-run record on Broadway.

State of the Union (Pulitzer Prize, 1946)

MACLEISH, ARCHIBALD (1892–)

Panic (1935) A one-act drama about Wall Street during the few hours before the 1933 bank closings.

Fall of the City (1937) A radio verse play in one act about a dictator's conquest of a city; it is regarded as the forerunner of a new form of literary expression.

MILLAY, EDNA ST. VINCENT (1892–)

The King's Henchman (1927) There is beautiful poetry in this opera libretto to which Deems Taylor wrote the music.

ODETS, CLIFFORD (1906–)

Waiting for Lefty (1935) This one-act drama of a taxi strike introduced some startling techniques into the theatre and created a great stir when first produced.

Awake and Sing (1935)

Golden Boy (1937)

O'NEILL, EUGENE (1888–)

S.S. Glencairn (1914–1918) Four one-act plays of the sea (*Bound East for Cardiff, In the Zone, The Long Voyage Home, The Moon of the Caribbees*). They were filmed in 1940 under the general title *The Long Voyage Home.*

Beyond the Horizon (1920) A tragedy of illusion and frustration, of the wrong choice and the maladjustments that follow.

The Emperor Jones (1920) Fine study of the psychology of fear.

Lazarus Laughed (1927)

Marco Millions (1928)

Strange Interlude (1928) Streams of consciousness are revealed in regular alternation of soliloquy and dialogue.

Mourning Becomes Electra (1931) A monumental dramatic trilogy which translates the Greek story into modern psychological terms with a grim New England setting.

Ah, Wilderness! (1933) Tender comedy of a small-town family and its young son's approach to manhood.

The Iceman Cometh (1946)

OSBORN, PAUL (1901–)

On Borrowed Time (1937)

A Bell for Adano (1945) Dramatization of the famous John Hersey novel of the American occupation in Italy.

RICE, ELMER (1892–)

The Adding Machine (1923) Mr. Zero, the pathetic clerk in this expressionistic drama, is a symbol of weak mediocrity in momentary revolt.

Street Scene (1929) A realistic drama of slum life in New York, in which a tenement is projected on the stage. Compare with *One-Third of a Nation* (page 336).

Counsellor-at-Law (1931)

We, the People (1933) Uses the technique of addressing the audience directly in an impassioned curtain speech.

Two on an Island (1939)

RIGGS, LYNN (1899–)

Green Grow the Lilacs (1930) This charming play is the basis for the successful musical *Oklahoma!*

SAROYAN, WILLIAM (1908–)

My Heart's in the Highlands (1939)

The Time of Your Life (Pulitzer Prize and Critics' Award, 1939)

Love's Old Sweet Song (1940) There will be violent disagreement concerning the merits of this play about Okies (as about all of Saroyan's plays).

Get Away Old Man (1944)

SHAW, IRWIN (1914–)

Bury the Dead (1936) A striking antiwar play in which the protest is made harrowingly vivid by the dead soldiers who will not be buried.

The Gentle People (1939)

SHERWOOD, ROBERT E. (1896–)

Reunion in Vienna (1931)

Abe Lincoln in Illinois (1938) See page 213.

There Shall Be No Night (1940) Sympathetic treatment of Finland in her war against the Soviet Union.

WILDER, THORNTON (1897–)

The Merchant of Yonkers (1938)

Our Town (1938) See page 97.

WILLIAMS, TENNESSEE (1914–)

The Glass Menagerie (Critics' Award, 1945) Uses some of the stage techniques of *Our Town*.

Federal Theatre Plays (See page 18).

CONKLE, E. P. (1889–)

Prologue to Glory (1938) A biographical drama of Lincoln's early life. Does not attempt historical accuracy. Compare with Drinkwater and Sherwood.

DU BOIS, WILLIAM (1906–)

Haiti (1938) A moving dramatization of the efforts of Toussaint L'Ouverture and his General Christophe to liberate Haiti.

"*Living Newspaper*" *Plays* (See pages 337 to 369).

ARENT, ARTHUR (1905–)

One-Third of a Nation (1938) See page 336.

Power (1938) Scenes in the progress of development of public power, including the progress of T.V.A.

STAFF OF THE LIVING NEWSPAPER

Triple-A Plowed Under (1938) Facts of inflation, farm problems, share croppers, the AAA brought to life by the "living-newspaper" technique.

SUNDGAARD, ARNOLD

Spirochete (1938)

BRITISH PLAYWRIGHTS

AUDEN, W. H. (1907–) IN COLLABORATION WITH CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD (1904–)

The Dog Beneath the Skin (1935)

The Ascent of F. 6 (1936)

BARRIE, JAMES MATTHEW (1860–1937)

What Every Woman Knows (1908) A comedy dealing charmingly with the patient efforts of a woman to help her husband to success in Parliament.

Dear Brutus (1917) An early example of the theme of a "second chance."

BESIER, RUDOLF (1878–)

The Barretts of Wimpole Street (1930)

BRIDIE, JAMES (OSBORNE, HENRY MAVOR, 1888–)

A Sleeping Clergyman (1933) Another of the many experiments with the phenomenon of time.

BROWNE, MAURICE (1881–) IN COLLABORATION WITH ROBERT NICHOLS (1893–)

Wings over Europe (1928) A young scientist discovers the power of releasing energy from the atom, and tries to get the British Cabinet to use it for mankind. A startlingly prophetic play, about which the famous critic Brooks Atkinson said, after the opening night, "The basic idea is so preposterous, it is probably true." How much of it *has* proved true?

COWARD, NOEL (1899–)

Cavalcade (1931) A series of dramatic scenes revealing with patriotic fervor snatches of British history from 1899 to 1930.

Tonight at 8:30 (1935) A rather varied series of nine one-act plays.

DANE, CLEMENCE (WINIFRED ASHTON)

A Bill of Divorcement (1921)

Will Shakespeare (1921) A somewhat difficult, but charming, poetic version of phases of Shakespeare's life.

Come of Age (1934) Deals with the tragic life of the young poet Chatterton.

DOHERTY, BRIAN (Canadian)

Father Malachy's Miracle (1937)

DRINKWATER, JOHN (1882–1937)

Abraham Lincoln (1919) Interesting as an Englishman's picture of Lincoln's greatness. You will probably find Robert Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* a more moving and effective play. Compare also with E. P. Conkle's *Prologue to Glory*.

Mary Stuart (1922) Compare this study of the unfortunate queen with Maxwell Anderson's *Mary of Scotland*.

GALSWORTHY, JOHN (1867–1933)

Justice (1910) A play which helped to bring about reforms in the British penal system.

Escape (1926) A series of exciting episodes in a convict's flight; with a moving and highly ethical conclusion.

The Roof (1929)

HOUSMAN, LAURENCE (1867–)

Victoria Regina (1935) A series of episodes in the life of the great queen.

Palestine Plays (1940)

LEVY, BENN W. (1900–)

Springtime for Henry (1931)

MASEFIELD, JOHN (1875–)

Melloney Hotspur (1923) An interesting dramatic study of spiritualism and communication with the dead.

MAUGHAM, WILLIAM SOMERSET (1874–)

The Letter (1927)

For Services Rendered (1932) A picture of the effects of World War I on the lives of members of a middle-class English family. A grim and bitter play.

MILNE, A. A. (1882–)

Mr. Pim Passes By (1919) Quaint character, an interesting plot, and charming dialogue make this a very readable play.

The Ivory Door (1927) A fantasy for young people.

PRIESTLEY, J. B. (1894–)

Dangerous Corner (1932) The author plays with time in a brilliant dramatic stunt whose ending is properly surprising.

Laburnum Grove (1933)

Time and the Conways, I Have Been Here Before, I'm A Stranger Here (all 1937) Time theories exploited in dramatic form; make fascinating reading.

SHAW, GEORGE BERNARD (1856–)

(NOTE: Only Shaw's later plays are listed here. If you develop a taste for Shaw, you may wish to turn back to some of the older plays, such as *Candida, Androcles and the Lion, The Doctor's Dilemma,* and *Major Barbara.* You will propably prefer to read the prefaces – if at all – *after* you have read the plays).

Pygmalion (1914; motion picture edition 1934) The science of phonetics is the vehicle, in this Cinderella story, for a delightful satire on the superficiality of " class distinction."

Heartbreak House (1919) A play about the break-up of European civilization.

Saint Joan (1923) Considered by many Shaw's best play. Joan's impassioned plea at its close, "Oh, God, when will the world be ready to receive Thy saints," suggests the theme of the play.

SHERRIFF, R. C. (1896–)

Journey's End (1928) Probably the most effective anti-war drama to come out of World War I.

St. Helena (1935) Written in collaboration with the South African Jeanne de Casilis.

VAN DRUTEN, JOHN (1901–)

Young Woodley (1928) Helen Gahagan Douglas, Congresswoman from California, starred in the first New York production of this very moving study of a young British public-school student's love for an older woman.

I Remember Mama (1944) Winning portrayal of the activities of a Norwegian-American family living in San Francisco. Based on Katherine Forbes' sketches called *Mama's Bank Account,* with which you will wish to compare the dramatization.

VANE, SUTTON (1888–)

Outward Bound (1923) A fantasy.

WILLIAMS, EMLYN (1905–)

Night Must Fall (1935) A well-written thriller which tingled the spines of many movie and theatre audiences. (Compare with Denham Percy's *Ladies in Retirement,* 1940).

The Corn Is Green (1938)

IRISH PLAYWRIGHTS

CARROLL, PAUL VINCENT (1900–)

Shadow and Substance (1934) A young professor, a saintly serving maid, and a canon are the principal characters in this unusual play of love and sacrifice.

The White Steed (1938)

DUNSANY, LORD (1878–1944)

If (1921)

Dunsany has written many short plays, of which *The Lost Silk Hat* and *Night at an Inn* are popular examples.

ERVINE, ST. JOHN G. (1883–)

John Ferguson (1915) A tragedy of middle-class life in Ulster.

O'CASEY, SEAN (1884–)

Juno and the Paycock (1924) Considered one of the great tragedies of the Abbey Theatre repertory.

The Plough and the Stars (1926) A tragedy of the abortive Dublin rebellion of 1915–1916.

Red Roses for Me (1941)

O'FLAHERTY, LIAM (1896–)

The Informer (1935) The movie script based on his novel, written by Dudley Nichols, is presented in Harlan Hatcher's *Modern Dramas*.

ROBINSON, LENNOX (1886–)

The Far-off Hills (1928) A rollicking play of Irish character.

YEATS, WILLIAM BUTLER (1865–1939)

Yeats is best known for his early plays, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902); *Deirdre* (1907); and the one-act play, *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894).

CONTINENTAL PLAYWRIGHTS

Czechoslovakia

CAPEK, KAREL (1890–1939)

R.U.R. (1921) See page 153.

The Insect Comedy (in collaboration with his brother Josef, 1921) A satirical comedy in which insects reveal the same picayune souls as humans. Compare with Edmond Rostand's *Chantecler*.

The Makropoulos Secret (1922)

The Mother (1939)

LANGER, FRANTIŠEK (1888–)

The Camel Through the Needle's Eye (1923)

France

BERNSTEIN, HENRY (1876–)

Eloise (1940)

CLAUDEL, PAUL (1868–)

The Tidings Brought to Mary (1912) A movingly devout allegorical play.

DEVAL, JACQUES (1893–)

Tovarich (adapted by Robert E. Sherwood, 1934) A good-humored laugh at the expense of both "White" and "Red" Russians.

GIRAUDOUX, JEAN (1882–)

Siegfried (1928)

His *Amphitryon 38* was adapted by S. N. Behrman.

GUITRY, SACHA (1885–)

Pasteur (1919) This biographical drama is the first well-known play to deal with a scientist and his work. (Compare with Sidney Howard's *Yellow Jack*, page 297).

Mozart (1925)

LENORMAND, HENRI RÉNÉ (1882–)

Time Is a Dream (1919)

The Coward (1925)

PAGNOL, MARCEL (1895–)

Topaze (1928) A satire centering about the character of a gentle and timid French schoolteacher turned rogue.

ROLLAND, ROMAIN (1866–1942)

The Game of Love and Death (1925) Play about the French Revolution.

ROMAINS, JULES (1885–)

Dr. Knock (1924) Entertaining satire.

ROSTAND, EDMOND (1868–1918)

Belongs to an earlier period of the drama; but his greatest plays are often revived on both the professional and the amateur stage. You will enjoy reading the Brian Hooker translation of *Cyrano de Bergerac; L'Aiglon;* and *Chantecler*. Rostand's last play was *The Last Night of Don Juan* (1921).

SAVOIR, ALFRED (1883–1934)

Bluebeard's Eighth Wife (1921)

The Grand Duchess and the Waiter (1924)

VILDRAC, CHARLES (1882–)

S.S. Tenacity (1920) English adaptation by Sidney Howard.

Michel Auclair (1922)

Germany

BRECHT, BERTOLT (1898–)

Mother (adaptation of the play by Maxim Gorki, 1933) This is an interesting example of (1) the didactic play (designed to teach people the truth as the playwright sees it); (2) proletarian drama (consciously partisan effort to advance the cause of the working class); and (3) the beginnings of the "Living Newspaper" technique developed by the Federal Theatre Project (see page 337).

CHLUMBERG, HANS (1897–1930)

Miracle at Verdun (1930) An expressionistic satire on war.

HASENCLEVER, WALTER (1890–1940)

Beyond (1920) There are only two characters in this long play, and a ghost.

HAUPTMANN, GERHART (1862–1944)

While Hauptmann wrote some plays within a few years of his death, he belongs to an earlier generation of playwrights. However, students who are interested in the contemporary theatre will wish to read the masterpieces of Germany's greatest playwright since Goethe: *Lonely Lives* (1891); *The Weavers* (1893); *The Sunken Bell* (1896); and the best of his late plays, *Dorothea Angermann* (1926).

HOFMANNSTHAL, HUGO VON (1874–1929)

Everyman (1912) An adaptation of the beautiful English morality play.

KAISER, GEORG (1878–1945)

The Burghers of Calais (1914) You will like the thrilling ending.

From Morn to Midnight (1916) An expressionistic tragedy of a bank clerk's revolt against the deadly routine of his life, and his final disillusionment.

TOLLER, ERNST (1893–1939)

Man and the Masses (1921)

Whoopee, We Live (1927) The chief interest in this work lies in the use of motion pictures as a part of the play.

No More Peace (Lyrics by W. H. Auden, 1937)

Pastor Hall (1939)

WERFEL, FRANZ (1890–1945; born in Prague, of German parentage)

Goat Song (1921) Symbolic play of man's depravity.

Juarez and Maximilian (1924)

The Eternal Road (1937) Historical pageant about the Jews and their sufferings.

Jacobowsky and the Colonel (1944) English adaptation by S. N. Behrman. See page 379.

WOLF, FRIEDRICH (1888–)

The Sailors of Cattaro (1930) A good example of so-called reportage drama, or journalistic play.

Professor Mamlock (1937)

Hungary

MOLNAR, FERENC (1878–)

Liliom (1909) Musical adaptation called *Carousel,* by Oscar Hammerstein II, music by Richard Rodgers (1945).

The Swan (1918)

Italy

BENELLI, SEM (1877–)

The Jest (1909)

PIRANDELLO, LUIGI (1867–1936)

Six Characters in Search of an Author (1921) A comedy of symbolism in which the author's favorite questions (What is illusion; What is reality?) are explored.

Henry IV (1922)

Spain

ALVAREZ QUINTERO, SERAFÍN (1871–1938) and JOAQUÍN (1873–)

Malvaloca (1912) Compare the symbolism in *A Bell for Adano.*

The Lady from Alfaqueque (1914)

BENAVENTE, JACINTO (1866–)

The Bonds of Interest (1916)

LORCA, FEDERIGO GARCÍA (1899–1936)

The Naughty Butterfly (1920) Reminiscent of the Čapeks' *Insect Comedy.*

Bitter Oleander (1935)

See the volume of five plays called *From Lorca's Theatre,* among the few recent Spanish plays available in translation.

MARTÍNEZ SIERRA, GREGORIO (1881–)

Cradle Song (English version, 1921) A tender, devout play centering about the love of a group of nuns for a foundling girl.

The Kingdom of God (1916)

Russia

AFINOGENOV, ALEXANDER N. (1904–)

Fear (1931) A great scientist refuses to follow the "party line." Interesting example of both the strong and the weak in Soviet drama.

ANDREYEV, LEONID (1870–1919) See page 27.

ANSKY, S. (1863–1920)

The Dybbuk (1926) A vividly told tragedy about a demon and its exorcism.

BULGAKOV, MICHAEL (1891–1940)

The Days of the Turbins (1926) The civil war in Soviet Russia is here dramatically treated with a sympathetic picture of both sides.

GORKI, MAXIM (1868–1936)

Yegor Bulitchev and Others (1932)

KATAEV, VALENTIN (1897–)

Squaring the Circle (1928) A farce in which the Soviet author pokes fun at some of the customs and conditions of the Soviet Union.

TRETYAKOV, S. (1892–)

Roar China! (1926)


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