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**THREE PLAYS ^{AND}
A
CURTAIN RAISER**

BY

JOSEPH NOEL

**THE CLARIDGE PRESS
NEW YORK**

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CURTAIN RAISER

BY

JOSEPH NOEL
^{||}
Author of Love's Breadline

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THE CLARIDGE PRESS
NEW YORK

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1916

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INTRODUCTION

The plays in this volume are in a sense an attempt to translate into terms of the stage a strip or two of reality. **TERMS OF PEACE**, although written before the present debacle in Europe, comes under this head. While it has been modified recently, it was first copyrighted in 1912. At that time an astute Broadway manager, after seriously considering a production, refused it because the conditions depicted were too far away. Now no doubt they are too near.

A combination of two ideas gave birth to **THE WASTERS**. One of these was furnished by Laurence Shubert of the well known theatrical family. Against a background of divorce and its effect on children with two houses to live in and no home, which I had long contemplated as the basis of a drama, I laid in Mr. Shubert's conception of tit for tat. Credit is therefore due him for suggesting that a play might be fashioned out of a brother seeking revenge in kind for an injury done his sister.

THE AUTHOR.

AUTHORS' LEAGUE
ÆOLIAN BUILDING
NEW YORK CITY

THE HOUSE OF REST

THE HOUSE OF REST

CHARACTERS

LOUIS..... *A Man about town*

FANCHON

*A truth-seeking young woman able to reason from cause to effect.
Curiosity seekers, and a gendarme.*

SCENE—*Interior of the Paris morgue. Entire rear of stage is encased in glass. Behind the glass are a half dozen suicides. These are:*

*AN ANARCHIST
A BEGGAR
A BUSINESS MAN
A MIDINETTE
A BOULEVARDIER
THE WIFE*

Fanchon is one of the morbid crowd moving from figure to figure that enters L. and exits R. A Sister of Charity enters and tells her beads in front of each figure as she moves slowly along. A Gendarme sits on a chair and searches his pocket for tobacco for his pipe. He finds it, and makes it obvious that he goes off to smoke.

TIME—*Early morning. Enter Louis R. He wears evening clothes, silk hat and overcoat. He carries a cane, and is quite tipsy.*

LOUIS (*Addressing no one in particular*)—What hotel is this?

PASSER-BY—This is not a hotel, monsieur.

LOUIS—Strange (*Comes down*). And I haven't been drinking more than usual. (*Addresses a woman*) What church is this? I always like to know the name of the saint that

protects the church I pray in. (*The woman moves away without speaking.*) (*Louis grabs a man by arm*) What's the name of this church?

MAN—This is not a church, monsieur.

LOUIS—No! You surprise me (*The man breaks away*). Then it's a museum.

MAN (*Going up toward figures*)—It's not a museum either.

LOUIS (*Looking at figures*)—I have it. It's silent vaudeville. What an improvement! I'll recommend this. (*Fanchon moves near him*) Pardon me, but can you tell me the inventor of this inarticulate cabaret?

FANCHON—This is not a cabaret, monsieur. It is the morgue.

LOUIS—The two are not so far apart as you think. This is the real house of mirth. (*With slight laugh*) And these (*Indicating figures*) are all life's comedians grown tired of the applause.

FANCHON—Possibly, monsieur.

LOUIS—It's not merely possible. It's true. Are they here for good?

FANCHON—No. Only until they are identified.

LOUIS—They sit there grinning at us until we discover what label they used among us, then we tuck them away and make room for more. In my opinion the government should freeze these and let them stay here permanently as a warning.

FANCHON—More room would have to be furnished for those who decided today that the Seine makes a nice bed.

LOUIS—But these would be here as horrible examples.

FANCHON—That wouldn't reduce the disenchantment with life. Then there's tomorrow's disenchantment to be reckoned with, and next week and next year's. A definite percentage of Paris' population goes out by the back door every day.

LOUIS (*Soberly*)—A definite percentage! You seem to have considered this subject very curiously.

FANCHON—You flatter me, monsieur.

LOUIS—Do I? Well, I didn't intend to. You see, a person that knows the arithmetic of disenchantment must be immune to anything so ordinary as a compliment.

FANCHON (*Retreating as if offended*)—Bon jour, monsieur, I only answered your questions.

LOUIS—Yes, that's right you did. Only you seem to have figured out the answers in advance. That's enough to make one lose his sense of humor. Do you lose yours in this place?

FANCHON—I don't know, monsieur.

LOUIS—You come here often?

FANCHON—Yes.

LOUIS—Looking for some one?

FANCHON (*Making it obvious that she is not taking him into her confidence*)—Well, just to see the latest additions.

LOUIS—Mon Dieu, you never had a sense of humor to lose.

FANCHON (*Going toward R.*)—Thank you—for nothing.

LOUIS (*Following her, indifferent to her displeasure*)—Do you know any of the guests? (*Takes off hat and bows*) Ladies and gentlemen, at your service.

FANCHON—I know all that I want to know.

LOUIS—Ah, indeed! Before or after?

FANCHON—Both. There's little new to be said about any of us after we kiss the lips of the one true democracy.

LOUIS—Do we all become so hopelessly and emphatically similar after we cross the border?

FANCHON—We don't become—we are. Nothing is being said that hasn't been said; nothing is being done that hasn't been done. By the clothes a man wears, more than anything else, you can determine his life, what he thinks and what he is.

LOUIS—Well, my vocabulary in skirts, unfold me the private life of yon grizzly customer. (*He indicates one of the figures.*)

FANCHON (*After glancing at figure*)—Anarchist. A product of Montmartre tainted by philosophy just enough to keep from being a brawler. To prove his own individuality he denied the individuality of everyone else that didn't think as he did.

LOUIS—Right. Went to meetings nightly where the members practice their discourtesies on one another. (*Goes up to figure*) Bon jour, you quenched fire-brand! Are you a Syndicalist over there? Do you still screech for the proletariat that in your heart you despise? You turned your back on God. Now God turns his back on you!

FANCHON—Pardon, monsieur, you are showing heat. You are vindictive beyond the grave.

LOUIS (*Comes down*)—The enemies of our social order must be taught their place, living or dead.

FANCHON—That's why you would use God as a scourge?

LOUIS—When God ceases to be a scourge, he ceases to be God.

FANCHON—Indeed. Evidently your God is the creation of a moralist who needed help to inflict his morality.

LOUIS (*Addressing another figure*)—What do you think of that? Is it true? You know everything there is to know. You tore aside the veil. What's on the other side?

FANCHON—That fellow was a grocer. His desertion of life was not that he might pursue knowledge.

LOUIS—He looks as if his soul had the double chin of success. It is evident that he took a headlong plunge into the hereafter to escape the need of meeting himself face to face every morning.

FANCHON—Where do you think his double-chined soul is now?

LOUIS—Haggling with Charon at the Styx. He'll cheat the ferryman out of his fare.

FANCHON—Possibly trick him out of his boat and get a monopoly of the right of way.

LOUIS—When we go, we may be compelled to ride on the Styx Limited, and pay tribute to a corporation.

FANCHON—Old Cinquocento seems quite calm about it.

LOUIS—That's the calmness of superior stupidity. Leave him to his ledgers. Do you know Celestin? (*Indicating figure of girl.*)

FANCHON (*She shows that she is affected*)—A little.

LOUIS—She brought her smiles to market. Yes?

FANCHON (*Sadly*)—With few buyers at the end.

LOUIS (*Addressing female figure*)—Your face I have forgotten, ma belle, and I knew them all.

FANCHON—The river washed away the rouge that made recognition possible.

LOUIS (*To figure*)—You were no cloistered Venus. Neither fear nor reason held your emotions in check. What of those glances you hungered for? What of those nights incarnadined—? (*Turns to Fanchon*) Come to think of it, this sad-eyed daughter of Joy was no better and no worse than every charming woman I have ever met.

FANCHON—Do you wish to compliment the dead or reflect on the living?

LOUIS—Merely state a truth. Like them she was graciously immoral without a feeling of guilt.

FANCHON—Ah, you are a student of the sex.

LOUIS—Just that. A student. At the end of my millionth reincarnation, I'll still be just a student. This much I do know: the more men any normal woman can be faithful to at one time, the happier she is.

FANCHON—Evidently you have made your investigations pay you in exact knowledge.

LOUIS—I wonder if Celestin found in her multiplicity of loves all the platitudes of marriage?

FANCHON—What do you think? You have had a great deal of experience.

LOUIS—That's why she's here. Having nothing left in life to be curious about, she put an end to it.

FANCHON (*Showing that the talk about Celestin is more or less displeasing*)—Do you consider the old gentleman interesting? (*Indicating old man's figure.*)

LOUIS—Looks as if he had a soft boiled intellect. (*Makes a closer inspection.*) Why he's the old beggar that used to stand near the bridge. Poor old devil, life had become to him just a dull headache on a noisy street.

FANCHON—He did well to stuff his ears with the cotton of oblivion.

LOUIS—I'm sorry to see him go—this way.

FANCHON—How like a man! The latch string of your sympathy is out for him. Why? Because as a beggar he was never possible as a rival. You could never imagine him robbing you of a kiss or taking the bread out of your mouth. In payment for his discretion you dole him out a tear.

LOUIS—Do you think you have me on the operating table searching for my soul with a scalpel?

FANCHON—I have no curiosity about your soul. I know it too well.

LOUIS—When did it receive an introduction to you?

FANCHON—When I first met your type. Your three meals a day, your bed, your coat, your hat, your habit of thought, your left-handed love affairs—how different are they from his? (*Indicating figure of Boulevardier*) Instead of waiting until Saturday as you are doing, he died on Monday and gained a whole week on eternity.

LOUIS (*Looking closely at the figure*)—I knew him. That is my friend Gilbert Goncourt.

FANCHON—You do know him!

LOUIS—And you?

FANCHON—Oh, yes. I knew him. We're all of a family here this morning. Gilbert found life a continual recurrence of minor idiocies.

LOUIS—Celestin might have been one of them.

FANCHON—She was.

LOUIS—Strange they should both be here at once. Was she his?

FANCHON (*Gloomily*)—For a week, a month, a year. He plucked the blossom of her youth, then tossed her away.

LOUIS (*Lightly*)—Well, someone else would have plucked the blossom if he had overlooked the chance.

FANCHON—True, monsieur.

LOUIS—She had the laughter and the song.

FANCHON—The song, I remember, had a sob in it. The laughter—! There was no laughter.

LOUIS—You knew her very well?

FANCHON—She was my sister.

LOUIS—Pardon me, but do you think this is the place to keep her on exhibition?

FANCHON—How tender we are of our wrecks once we prove our success as wreckers. I kept her here until he should come.

LOUIS (*Starting*)—You knew he would come?

FANCHON—I did.

LOUIS—Perhaps you brought him to this?

FANCHON—He rushed headlong into it—our little Celestin here died because she couldn't satisfy desires for luxury he had cultivated in her.

LOUIS—At least he gave her one sip of the wine of life.

FANCHON—But the dregs were near the rim of the cup. He left her to gulp them while he went off to drink deep.

LOUIS—Of happiness with someone else. Did it ever strike you as odd that the joy water of existence must be taken in company?

FANCHON—The company this time had a triple veil on her face.

LOUIS—Ah! Interesting. Married, no doubt. (*Turns to figure*) Gilbert, you always were a rogue.

FANCHON—I was never able to penetrate her identity, but I learned that she was the wife of his best friend.

LOUIS (*Laughing*)—His best friend! Oh, Gilbert! You rascal, you carry your sense of humor beyond the grave. That's one of the finest things I've heard in a month.

FANCHON—That's the laughter that puts a halo on the head of Sin.

LOUIS—I agree with you. Sin needs a halo once in a while.

FANCHON—Do you know what his actions meant?

LOUIS—Assuredly, Happiness! Stolen happiness, the sweetest. Think of all those kisses and caresses! They belonged to someone else and he collected them. Oh, if you were only married! What joy to hoodwink a stupid husband. All husbands are stupid.

FANCHON—I believe you.

LOUIS—I can see her going home— (*Looks at figure of Boulevardier.*) Oh, you rogue! She is quite sedate. Very gentle, very kind. Ah, much kinder than usual. There's an air of lassitude about her. She looks as if she were praying. The husband is sure that she is going in for charity, possibly religion. Oh, the clown! What a joke on him!

FANCHON—Yes, monsieur, but it was a sad joke for me when I found my little Celestin here last night.

LOUIS—Oh, well, that's all in the game. I'd like to know that other one. Is she waiting for him at their rendezvous? Perhaps the husband found him out. That's why he's here.

FANCHON—No, I found him out, monsieur.

LOUIS—I knew you had a hand in it, you kill-joy. What did you do?

FANCHON—Last night I left my little Celestin at the end of her journey, and went in search of the man who had started her on the road.

LOUIS—You're making a tragedy of nothing. Wasn't it better for her after all, this taste of life, than an eternity of thoroughly domesticated passion?

FANCHON—Be that as it may, I arrived at his hotel in time to see the woman of the triple veil enter.

LOUIS—The wife of his best friend!

FANCHON—I waited.

LOUIS—That was considerate of you. Nothing equals that first ten minutes of heaven—with the wife of your best friend.

FANCHON—Then I bought the services of an Apache that I knew. Together we dashed at the door of their room. I screamed for her to run as all was discovered. She jumped out of the window.

LOUIS—And Gilbert?

FANCHON—I was one of a mob that chased him to the river. There was a splash. Here he is.

LOUIS—What a climax to such a tender romance! You have no mercy. Tell me, what became of the wife of his best friend?

FANCHON—The fall killed her. She is also here, monsieur.

LOUIS—Here! (*Looks around*) Where?

FANCHON (*Points to female figure*)—There she is.

LOUIS (*Goes to figure*)—It is possible that I may know her—good God, it's my wife.

FANCHON (*Afraid*)—Your wife!

LOUIS (*Shakes fist at wife's figure*)—Oh—you—to betray— (*He turns to Boulevardier*) And you, you dog. You cur. You robbed me of everything worth while in my life.

FANCHON (*Grimly*)—Things look just a little different now.

LOUIS—They are different. (*Goes to Fanchon*) You are responsible for it all. I was going along with my eyes shut. Happy. We all have to keep our eyes shut to be happy. Then you came looking for justice and truth and morality. You broke into her life (*Indicating Celestin*), then into his (*Indicating Boulevardier*), then into hers (*Indicating wife*), and mine. Mine worst of all. But, by God, you're going to pay.

FANCHON (*Trying to get past him*)—Help!

LOUIS (*Grasping her by throat*)—Too late.

(*Enter Gendarme and some of the crowd. They rush to Louis and seize him. Fanchon falls from his grasp. One of the crowd bends over her and feels her heart.*)

MAN—She is dead.

LOUIS—An addition to your collection, gentlemen. She was too moral for this world.

Curtain

TERMS OF PEACE

TERMS OF PEACE

CHARACTERS

JOHN STEVENSON

An American Millionaire, appointed delegate to the PEACE CONGRESS at the Hague.

CRANDALL.....*Deposed delegate to the Congress*
CARIN MEREDITH.....*With whom Stevenson is in love*
PRINCE SOBLOV.....*Russian delegate*
MANNIE.....*Secretary to Stevenson*
PASCUAL.....*Assistant to Carin*
MING.....*Servant*
VON HOLST.....*German delegate to the Congress*
GRAHAM.....*English delegate*
TAKAHARI.....*Japanese delegate*
MRS. PIERSON.....*Carin's sister*
DELPHINE.....*Mrs. Pierson's daughter*

Commandant, General, stretcher bearers, soldiers, etc.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

The first act takes place in the living room of the American Peace Mansion.

ACT II

Act two takes place in the same room, next day.

ACT III

Act three takes place in the living room of an old chateau at the front.

'WAR'

ACT I

SCENE—*Interior of well-furnished living room in the American Mansion of Peace. Entrances rear and R. and L. There is a window on an angle in upper L. corner. Curtains are draped in front of it, and as it is in a sort of recess, a bench or couch, with cushions, is built in so as to conform to the shape of the recess. Between this window, and door rear, is a good sized desk. Down front is a large library table on which are books and papers and a telephone. Right is a couch. There are two chairs near table and a few other chairs scattered about room. All show, with the rest of the surroundings, the dignity of the position held by the occupants. At rise Carin and Pascual are discovered. Pascual is operating typewriter at desk. Carin is glancing through official papers at table.*

CARIN (*Looking up from document she is reading*)—Are you nearly done, Pascual?

PASCUAL (*Stops writing*)—Your ladyship shall have the last page in two more minutes. (*Writes. House bell rings. Enter Ming with card. He is in dress of high class Chinese servant.*)

MING—Mr. Crandall, him not here? (*Pascual stops writing and reads MSS., though showing that he is listening. Carin takes quick look at him.*)

CARIN (*Taking card from salver held my Ming*)—Show Prince Soblov in. (*Pascual resumes writing.*) Mr. Crandall will be disengaged shortly. (*Exit Ming, rear.*)

CARIN (*To Pascual*)—Are you nearly through, Pascual?

PASCUAL—Your Highness shall have the last page in two minutes.

CARIN—It is five minutes since you said that before.

PASCUAL—Your Supreme Graciousness is right. (*Writes very fast. Enter Ming showing in Soblov. Rear exit Ming. Soblov advances and kisses Carin's hand.*)

CARIN—Good evening.

SOBLOV—You grow more charming every day, Miss Meredith.

CARIN (*Lightly*)—I'm afraid you formed the habit of saying that in Washington, and now think you must keep it up in Europe. (*Goes L.*)

SOBLOV—Wait, I have news for you. (*She stops at door*) John Stevenson has arrived from America. (*She turns*) I thought that would interest you.

CARIN (*Coldly*)—Have you a special reason for thinking so, Prince Soblov?

SOBLOV—Ask your heart that question.

CARIN—You seem to forget that I am engaged to marry Mr. Crandall.

SOBLOV (*Quizzically*)—We have records of hands being bound and hearts remaining free.

CARIN—I see you are not in a serious mood. I'll tell Mr. Crandall you are here. (*Exit L. Soblov gives a peculiar snapping signal with his fingers. Pascual comes to him.*)

SOBLOV—Well?

PASCUAL (*After furtively looking around*)—The Prime Minister of England sent two messages, your highness.

SOBLOV—One yesterday, the other this morning.

PASCUAL—Your Highness has said it.

SOBLOV—I know all about them. What else?

PASCUAL—Andraive sent a message from Russia.

SOBLOV—What? (*Starts*). Another! How did it come?

PASCUAL—An English gentleman brought it.

SOBLOV (*Half to himself*)—The devil! These peace fanatics are becoming tricky; calling on an English gentleman for courier! (*Takes Pascual by arm*). Andraive is now close to the Czar. He may mean defeat of our plans to stop

the destruction of the Russian Army, and the Russian Empire under guise of peace. You must learn the contents of that letter. Sh— (*Enter Ming rear. Ming goes to window and pulls back curtain and exits R.*)

PASCUAL (*Goes up to desk*)—I am on the last page of the answer, your highness.

SOBLOV (*Watching Ming as he goes*)—Takahari should change his man.

PASCUAL (*Comes with sheet of paper taken from typewriter. Holding out letter*)—Here's the answer, Prince.

SOBLOV (*Knocking letter from his hand*)—Fool. That's not an answer to Andraive's letter. If they trust you to copy it, there is nothing in it to interest me.

PASCUAL (*Picking up letter humbly*)—Right, my prince. (*Soblov gives peculiar signal again with his fingers. Pascual stands erect and tense*).

SOBLOV (*Under his breath*)—Go. (*Pascual starts rear. Enter Crandall L. He is a direct, straightforward man with one idea. He is somewhat of an idealist and dreamer, though trying to be practical and is about fifty years of age.*)

CRANDALL—Good evening, Prince Soblov.

SOBLOV (*Shaking hands with him*)—There's always a welcome in your handclasp.

CRANDALL (*To Pascual*)—You may go, Pascual. Leave that letter. (*Pascual lays letter on table and exits rear.*)

SOBLOV—You sent for me?

CRANDALL—A very important matter has come up.

SOBLOV—Ah, the leader of our great movement to establish peace in the world needs my humble services?

CRANDALL—Prince Soblov, I sometimes question if some who identify themselves with the peace movement are not fervent advocates of war.

SOBLOV (*Surprise simulated*)—You think we have traitors in our camp?

CRANDALL—I know we have (*Looks directly at Soblov*).

SOBLOV—That is unfortunate. Still, we need have no concern. The delegates to the Peace Congress will vote to

forbid this war. Universal disarmament will follow as a matter of course.

CRANDALL—The delegates to the Peace Congress are evenly divided.

SOBLOV (*Making light of it*)—Then you as President of the Congress will cast the deciding vote.

CRANDALL—I'll cast the deciding vote if I am permitted to cast it, Prince Soblov.

SOBLOV—Why, who can stop you?

CRANDALL—The enemies of Peace are powerful. There has been a presidential election at home since my appointment.

SOBLOV (*Evidently relieved*)—Ah, I see. You wish me to use whatever influence I possess to have you retained as delegate? I shall be honored.

CRANDALL—This is the crucial period of modern history. The change of one vote from the side of peace in this Congress to the side of war will leave the destructive element in the ascendancy.

SOBLOV (*Seriously*)—Such a change is to be regretted.

CRANDALL—You know what it will mean, Prince Soblov? The vast armies taken from the shop and the plough to learn the trade of murder in a uniform, will continue to learn that trade. The waste to maintain those armies will continue. Every working man will have a soldier on his back. The crushing of the hearts of the wives and mothers of the world will go on.

SOBLOV (*Affected*)—A horrible picture. Can it be possible there are traitors among us who want that?

CRANDALL (*Leaning over table close to Soblov*)—There is one traitor among us.

SOBLOV—You know who he is?

CRANDALL—I do.

SOBLOV—Who?

CRANDALL—You.

SOBLOV (*Puts hand in breast as if for weapon*)—Be careful!

CRANDALL—Put that away—(*They hold steady look for a second, then Soblov drops his eyes, and takes hand from breast.*) I say nothing I cannot prove. (*Pause.*) I intend to place my proofs before your master.

SOBLOV—The Czar?

CRANDALL—The Czar. The meeting of the Peace Conference will be postponed. I leave tonight for St. Petersburg. The audience has been arranged.

SOBLOV—By Andraive?

CRANDALL—By Andraive. A true friend of peace! The one man of Russia who, if he had been sent to this conference in your place, would have obeyed the mandate of the Czar and forbidden this war the militarists have set their hearts on.

SOBLOV—What's your price?

CRANDALL—Now we'll talk business. Sit down. (*They sit.*) My price is your resignation, Prince Soblov. (*Soblov makes vigorous movement.*)

SOBLOV—No.

CRANDALL—You must resign immediately as delegate to THE PEACE CONGRESS.

SOBLOV—Never!

CRANDALL—And in a letter to his Imperial Majesty, the Czar of Russia, you will clear the way for Andraive to be appointed your successor immediately.

SOBLOV—May I burn in hell if I do.

CRANDALL (*Rising as if thing was settled*)—Very good. War or no war, you will be dismissed in disgrace. I have documents to prove that you are in league with the military cliques in every European capital. You are not only a traitor to peace, you are a traitor to Russia, to the Russian people, to the Russian Czar.

SOBLOV (*Stopping in front of Crandall. He has recovered his poise*)—You have played the great American game of poker?

CRANDALL—Some.

SOBLOV—You bluffed.

CRANDALL—One doesn't last long otherwise.

SOBLOV—You are bluffing now.

CRANDALL—You think so, Prince Soblov? You have heard of that inner circle of men in every European nation who call themselves The State? They are looked upon as The State no matter who may be the ruler, no matter what the form of government?

SOBLOV—Who has not?

CRANDALL—The group of men that constitute the Inner State in each country of Europe is a military group. They alone know the general who will lead an invasion or repel invaders. They know the secret formulæ for the manufacture of explosives.

SOBLOV—What has this to do with me?

CRANDALL—This. You are a secret member of the Inner State of Russia. (*Soblov shows that he is hit.*) That group has entered into an alliance with every other military group in Europe to maintain the prestige of the Military caste.

SOBLOV—Where are your proofs? Show them to me.

CRANDALL—I'll show them to his Imperial Majesty, the Czar of Russia.

SOBLOV (*After long pause*)—When shall I resign?

CRANDALL—At once. I want two copies of the resignation, both signed by you.

SOBLOV—Call your secretary. (*Crandall goes to door L. and opens it. He calls.*)

CRANDALL—Carin—

SOBLOV—Just a minute. I don't want her to know. (*Carin appears at door L.*)

CRANDALL (*After second of hesitation. To Carin*)—Pasqual has finished the letter. (*Takes letter from table and gives it to her.*) Look it over.

CARIN—Shall I send it off?

CRANDALL—If you please. If it's alright. (*Exit Carin.*)

SOBLOV—Thank you. I'll write the resignation myself. (*Sits at table and picks up pen. By his attitude he gives the impression that he will trick Crandall.*)

CRANDALL (*Thoughtfully. He suspects a trick*)—I want them worded exactly alike. Can you use a typewriter? (*Crandall brings typewriter to table.*)

SOBLOV—I'm going to write in Russian.

CRANDALL—You're going to write in English.

SOBLOV—I'm a little afraid of my English. Make it French.

CRANDALL (*Bringing down box of carbons to table*)—English. Do you use the machine?

SOBLOV (*Glad at last*)—Never touched one in my life.

CRANDALL (*Placing sheet of carbon between two sheets of paper*)—Very good, I'll act as your secretary. (*Sits at machine.*)

SOBLOV—What shall I say?

CRANDALL—Write the letter to me as President of the Peace Congress.

SOBLOV—Go on.

CRANDALL (*Writes as he talks*)—

To the President of The Peace Congress, The Hague.

Dear Sir:

Owing to the fact that my heart is no longer with the mandate of my Imperial Master, the Czar, to have peace at any price—

SOBLOV—No. I'll write a straightforward resignation—nothing else.

CRANDALL—(*Writing*)—

And because I am a member of the Military Organization existing only for the purpose of strangling peace—

SOBLOV—That will do.

CRANDALL (*Looking up*)—That's enough. (*Writes.*)
I hereby tender my resignation as a member of the Peace Congress.

SOBLOV—Do you want to ruin my life? One of those copies is for Andraive!

CRANDALL—Sign. (*Lays sheets on table, the carbon still between.*)

SOBLOV—I won't.

CRANDALL—Very good. I'll see the Czar.

SOBLOV—You are bent on my destruction.

CRANDALL—You are bent on your own destruction. It must be written so to keep you in your proper place, Prince Soblov. (*Soblov seizes pen and signs.*)

SOBLOV—You always win. In our first encounter while I was still an attache of the Russian legation at Washington, you won. (*Crandall pulls sheet of carbon from between the sheets of paper.*)

CRANDALL—Why rake up the past? We have enough in the present on which to base antagonism. See, you have signed both copies at once. One is a carbon copy.

SOBLOV—Shall I sign it twice? (*Reaching for carbon copy.*)

CRANDALL—No, this will do. You cannot deny your signature. You will not dare.

SOBLOV—Dare!

CRANDALL—I still hold the proofs. (*Laying carbon sheet in box of carbons.*)

SOBLOV—Those proofs come to me now for these. It's a fair exchange. (*He lays hand on resignations.*)

CRANDALL—What? Give up the weapon that defeated you? You could easily say that I coerced you to sign that. (*Indicating resignation.*) You can never deny my proofs that you betrayed your master, the Czar.

SOBLOV—(*Placing resignations in pocket*)—Unless you give me your proofs so that I can destroy them, I cannot give you these.

CRANDALL—Very good. You know the price. If you are willing to fight, alright.

SOBLOV—We have run counter to one another, Crandall, since we first met.

CRANDALL—No doubt we always shall.

SOBLOV—It is sometimes a hard matter for an intelligent man to forgive.

CRANDALL—When I ask forgiveness, Prince Soblov, you may grant it.

SOBLOV—I only want to warn you not to interfere with my life.

CRANDALL—Is that a threat?

SOBLOV—Call it what you like—(*Pause.*) Do you go to St. Petersburg?

CRANDALL—My train leaves at midnight.

SOBLOV—Very good. This is *au revoir*. (*At door rear.*) I'll return to say good bye. (*Exit rear. Crandall pushes button. Enter Carin L.*)

CRANDALL—I must go to St. Petersburg.

CARIN—You could not force a resignation?

CRANDALL—He wanted to see my proofs. God, I wish they were real. I wish they were not so indefinite, so non-conclusive.

CARIN—You must see the Czar.

CRANDALL—I will. Let him decide. With Andraive in Soblov's place, peace would have a chance, even with a United States delegate in my place voting for militarism.

CARIN—Hush—(*Going up. Quietly opens door, rear. Enter Pascual with letters. It is evident that he has been listening.*) Thank you, Pascual. (*Taking letters. He bows and exits rear. She waits at door until sure he has gone, then turns to Crandall.*) Has the news that you are no longer delegate been given to the embassies?

CRANDALL—They have an inkling of it somehow. My forced resignation should be in the hands of the President today. I firmly believe that's why the opposition is ready to set a time for the vote.

CARIN—They know you'll be unable to vote. I wonder who will be appointed your successor!

CRANDALL—Someone who will come full-armed to tear down in a day what it has taken me a lifetime to build up. Carin, dear, the world is turned wrong.

CARIN—We are here to turn it right.

CRANDALL—Brave as ever! If I had only ten days more, if I had five, I'd place in your lap the victory for which you have fought so well. I'd give my life, for just ten days as delegate. Do you know the fear that's pressing in on me, Carin? (*Dejected.*)

CARIN—What is it?

CRANDALL—With every ring of the door bell I expect to see my successor, a believer in legalized murder, enter with his credentials from the President of the United States, and order me out and war in. (*Enter Ming.*)

MING (*Announcing*)—Mr. John Stevenson.

CRANDALL—I knew it! There he is. (*To Ming*) Show him in. (*Exit Ming.*)

CARIN—He's the man! (*Enter Stevenson, rear. They look at him strangely.*)

STEVENSON (*To Crandall and coming down*)—You don't seem particularly glad to see me, Mr. Crandall.

CRANDALL—I was just talking about you, John Stevenson.

STEVENSON—I am honored. (*To Carin*) You had something to say, too?

CARIN (*Intense*)—Why did you come here now?

STEVENSON—Shall I tell you?

CARIN—Yes.

STEVENSON—In the presence of Mr. Crandall?

CRANDALL—Perhaps if I withdraw. (*Goes to door L.*)

CARIN—Wait. (*Crandall stops.*) There is nothing Mr. Stevenson has to say to me that cannot be said in public.

STEVENSON—Very well, Carin. I have the reputation of being a simple man and a direct one. I came here to get you. I want you to be my wife. You broke off our engagement in response to a whim.

CRANDALL (*Surprised*)—Huh!

CRANDALL—Is that all you came to—to see about?

CARIN—I am engaged to marry Mr. Crandall.

STEVENSON—Is that not enough?

STEVENSON (*Shows he is hit, but recovers*)—Engaged! I beg your pardon. (*Goes to Crandall.*) Permit me to congratulate you. (*Shakes hands with him.*) Of course, I'm sorry I intruded.

CRANDALL (*Warmly*)—Why, I thought you came to displace me as delegate to the Peace Congress, Stevenson. That accounts for the coldness of my welcome. Won't you sit down? (*Takes his arm and leads him to chair. To Carin*) Let's make amends, Carin. Let Ming fetch some refreshments.

CARIN (*Grudgingly*)—I'll get them. (*Carin goes out R.*)

CRANDALL—You know, Stevenson, although we're on different sides of this war question, I'm really glad to see you.

STEVENSON—Thank you.

CRANDALL—Most of you millionaires at home are so busy piling up more millions that you don't have time to study social forces. There's no reflection intended, Stevenson, none whatever. You simply don't have time, that's all.

STEVENSON—Some haven't the inclination.

CRANDALL—Don't tell me you're one of those. I won't believe it.

STEVENSON—You forget that I am a manufacturer of armor plate. I thrive on war.

CRANDALL—I don't forget it, Stevenson. But you are too big a man, you have too big a brain to let your economic chains bind you to the destructive forces of society. Some day when you realize there are blood stains on your dividends, you'll refuse to take them.

STEVENSON—I'll travel long on the present road before I reach that turning.

CRANDALL—You'll reach it quicker than you think. Remember the lowly Nazarene. His gospel of peace and good will to man grips the heart when you least expect it. Yours is an American heart.

STEVENSON—Men are alike the world over. Their hearts are the same where profits are concerned.

CRANDALL—Maybe. Anyhow, I want you to stay and see us turn Europe from a military camp, where half the people are ready to cut the throats of the other half, into a group of peace-loving countries, where the brotherhood of man will have a chance to get a foothold. Make this your headquarters.

STEVENSON—You forget that I came here to take Carin away.

CRANDALL (*Indifferently*)—Well?

STEVENSON—You are going to marry her.

CRANDALL—What has that to do with it? Our engagement was so sudden and unexpected I haven't quite adjusted myself to it yet.

STEVENSON (*Anxiously and with suggestion of surprise*)—Indeed! When did it happen?

CRANDALL—Last Thursday.

STEVENSON (*Thoughtfully*)—You became engaged last Thursday?

CRANDALL—Yes, Thursday.

STEVENSON—That was the very day the newspapers announced *my* arrival in Europe. When will the marriage take place?

CRANDALL (*Tenderly*)—You'll have to ask Carin. She says it would be criminal to let love interfere with our work of the Peace Congress.

STEVENSON—That sounds like her. (*Enter Carin with tray, liquor and glasses.*)

CRANDALL—Doesn't it?

STEVENSON (*Obviously trying to change the subject*)—You say the Peace Congress will soon vote on the all-important question of war or no war.

CRANDALL (*Hesitating, yet sticking to his ideal of truthfulness*)—Well, I cannot say. You see, I have been afraid of forcing it to a decision right now. The elements we have to deal with are uncertain. You understand, Steven-

son, there's a traitor in our camp. There are traitor governments, too, working openly for peace and secretly for war.

CARIN (*Offering liquor to Stevenson. Filling glasses.*)—In spite of that we are in hopes that orders will go forth to beat the swords into plowshares.

STEVENSON (*To Crandall*)—If the dove of peace builds a permanent nest in the world, Crandall, most of the credit goes to you.

CRANDALL—Oh, no, Carin deserves more than I.

CARIN (*Giving him liquor*)—I was the clerk, the book-keeper of the movement. That's all.

CRANDALL—You always kept a stout heart. Many of us stumbled, some fell by the wayside. Even in our darkest days, when we were forcing on the consciousness of the world the possibility of democracy compelling the governments of Europe to forbid war, you never faltered. (*Enter Mannie, rear. About 24.*)

MANNIE (*To Stevenson*)—Excuse me. This is an important telegram.

STEVENSON (*To Crandall and Carin. Takes telegram.*)—This is my private secretary, Mr. Mannie. Miss Meredith, Mr. Crandall. (*They bow in acknowledgment.*)

MANNIE—I'm glad to meet you. (*Exit Mannie, rear.*)

STEVENSON—A valuable man, that. Used to be an actor. Pardon me. (*Opens and glances at telegram.*)

CARIN (*To Stevenson*)—*He* seemed to think that you are master of the house.

CRANDALL (*Fearfully*)—You *are* the delegate come to displace me!

STEVENSON—Have I presented any credentials? Has the President sent you a cablegram accepting your resignation? And naming your successor?

CRANDALL—You know that my resignation is on the way to him?

STEVENSON (*Assuming indifference*)—Oh, many of us on the other side know that. As a matter of fact, it was expected long ago.

CRANDALL (*Overcome*)—I forced delay to the very last minute. I want the vote against this war to be taken before I am compelled to retire.

CARIN (*To Stevenson*)—Mr. Stevenson, I believe that you were the direct cause of Mr. Crandall being eliminated as delegate.

STEVENSON (*With non-committal air*)—You over-estimate my powers, Carin.

CRANDALL (*To Stevenson*)—You were a strong factor in my defeat, Stevenson. Can you deny it?

STEVENSON (*Laughingly*)—Oh, we all play politics more or less at home.

CARIN—This is not politics. War is never politics. It's murder. (*Enter Ming with card.*)

CRANDALL (*Reading card*)—The German Delegate, the Baron Von Holst. Show him into my study. I'll see him at once. (*Exit Ming, rear. Crandall goes L.*) I'm leaving for St. Petersburg at midnight, Stevenson. I want to talk to you before I go.

STEVENSON—If Carin lets me stay until you get back, I'll be here.

CRANDALL—She will let you stay. There's not much she wouldn't do to win you to the side of peace. (*Exit L.*)

STEVENSON (*To Carin*)—You'd do anything but give up the desire for individual war.

CARIN—I am quite ready to war with you. You can't object. Those who advocate the sword should be willing to perish by the sword.

STEVENSON—Did you break off our engagement and run away from America through fear that you might be tempted to use the sword on me?

CARIN—I came here to aid Mr. Crandall in his work.

STEVENSON—Of converting men into milk sops.

CARIN—That's the usual argument. You would draw imaginary lines across a continent, give the inhabitants on either side a different language, and a different uniform, then order them to kill one another on sight.

STEVENSON—You express nationality in the simplest terms.

CARIN—In its truest terms.

STEVENSON—The development of a people and their institutions, backed up by manly courage, make a nation. The men and the institutions that survive do so because they are fittest.

CARIN—The egotism of success is now talking. Everybody is successful in America. I ran away to Europe to escape the echo of it.

STEVENSON—You ran away to Europe, Carin Meredith, to escape marriage.

CARIN—You forget, Mr. Stevenson, that I am engaged to marry Mr. Crandall. He is here.

STEVENSON—You engaged yourself to him on Thursday, the day I arrived in Europe. Shall I tell you why?

CARIN—Suppose you try.

STEVENSON—Because you love me.

CARIN—You forget the respect due the woman who is virtually the wife of your host.

STEVENSON—I forget nothing. You once were engaged to me. You broke that engagement without cause. You broke it in spite of the fact that you love me and I love you. I never went after anything in my life that I didn't get. (*She is held by his eyes as if fascinated, then recovers and backs away.*) And I never wanted anything in my life so much as I want you. (*Pascual appears rear.*)

CARIN (*Seeing Pascual*)—Pascual!

PASCUAL (*Comes down*)—Yes, your highness.

CARIN—There is an American church on King William street, two blocks from here.

PASCUAL—I know where it is, your highness.

CARIN—Go there at once. Get the Rev. Mr. Vedder. Tell him that I want to see him.

PASCUAL—Yes, madame. (*Goes up.*)

CARIN—Tell him to come ready to perform a marriage ceremony.

PASCUAL—'Tis done, your supreme graciousness. (*Exit Pascual rear.*)

CARIN (*Turning to Stevenson*)—There's your answer.

STEVENSON—You are going to marry him now?

CARIN—When Mr. Crandall goes to St. Petersburg to-night, he shall leave me the protection of his name.

STEVENSON—You do not love Crandall.

CARIN—I love the nobility of his life.

STEVENSON—But you don't love the man.

CARIN—I love him enough to marry him.

STEVENSON—There is room in your heart for only one man. You cannot forget those hours we spent together when you were trying to win me to your cause. You said it was the sweetest time of your life. It was the dearest time of mine. Your eyes told me that your soul belonged to me. They tell it to me now, Carin. (*She backs away slowly from him.*) See the tears. Just as in the old days. You sway. I keep you from falling. (*He takes her in his arms.*) As in the old days—

CARIN—Good God! (*She covers her face with her hands and goes up.*)

STEVENSON—You are mine, Carin Meredith. You belong to me.

CARIN (*Turning quickly*)—No——(*Comes down to table. Stevenson is on the other side. She speaks slowly and distinctly, placing emphasis on every word.*) If ever a woman hated a man, John Stevenson, I hate you. I hate your success, I hate your life, I hate what you stand for before the world. (*Enter Crandall L. followed by Von Holst.*)

CRANDALL—The Baron Von Holst wants to greet you, Stevenson.

STEVENSON (*Shaking hands with Von Holst*)—How do you do, Baron?

VON HOLST—I'm glad to see you again, Herr Stevenson. (*To Carin*)—Fraulein Meredith, good evening. (*Bowing to her.*)

CARIN—Good evening, Baron Von Holst.

VON HOLST (*To Stevenson*)—Fraulein Meredith is converting you to her ideas about the pending war, Herr Stevenson!

STEVENSON—Her success has been slight.

CARIN—No, Herr Baron, he is just as anxious for maintenance of the war spirit as you are yourself. He has as much at stake.

VON HOLST—I'm glad to hear it. War is needed to keep the race from becoming enfeebled.

CRANDALL—But chiefly is war needed to secure the old aristocracy of blood in its special privilege niche in the world.

CARIN (*Looking significantly at Stevenson*)—And to guarantee the new aristocracy of money its dividends. (*Enter Ming followed by Takahari rear.*)

MING—Count Takahari.

VON HOLST—Takahari here, too?

STEVENSON—This is becoming the rendezvous of the war party in the Peace Congress.

CRANDALL (*To Takahari, bowing*)—My dear Count, this is an honor.

TAKAHARI (*With dignity*)—'Tis an honor to be received in such noble company. (*Bowing slowly.*)

VON HOLST—Count Takahari, we were just wondering what was the special attraction for the advocates of war in this abode of peace.

TAKAHARI—Peace is such a beautiful ideal, it attracts even the warriors who are determined to maintain war to achieve it.

VON HOLST—I'll confess that the Fraulein Meredith was the magnet that drew my feet.

CARIN—Are you sure it wasn't Mr. Stevenson that attracted you both? (*Von Holst seems to resent the implication. He assumes a stern expression.*)

STEVENSON—Why should I draw the Baron Von Holst and Count Takahari here?

CARIN—Shall I tell you?

STEVENSON—Go ahead.

CARIN (*To Stevenson*)—You are the most important manufacturer of armor plate in the United States. (*He*

nods.) After you have the ships and the forts of the world covered with your armor, it is to your interest to find something that will penetrate it—a torpedo! (*Von Holst and Takahari register this. She watches the effect.*) I am right. (*To Stevenson*) You have found a torpedo. You are here making the nations of Europe bid against one another to get possession of it.

CRANDALL—Are you sure of your facts, Carin?

CARIN—Yes, I am sure. I am also sure that Mr. Stevenson has found his proper level.

CRANDALL—His proper level!

CARIN—He is a peddler.

CRANDALL—Remember he is my guest.

CARIN—He was the first to forget it. (*Enter Pascual rear, followed by Soblov.*)

PASCUAL (*To Carin*)—Your highness, the Rev. Mr. Vedder will be here in five minutes.

CARIN—I wish to bid the gentlemen present to remain for the marriage ceremony.

SOBLOV (*Coming down*)—Am I included? May I offer my congratulations?

CRANDALL—What does this mean, Carin?

CARIN—It means, with your permission, that before you leave tonight for Russia, I shall be your wife. I want the protection that position warrants.

CRANDALL—You mean it, Carin? (*Takes her hands in his.*)

VON HOLST (*To Crandall*)—You are the only man in the world I envy.

TAKAHARI (*To Crandall*)—The honorable lady will confer much honor upon your household.

STEVENSON (*To Crandall*)—You leave for St. Petersburg soon? (*Enter Ming with liquors R.*)

CRANDALL—At midnight.

SOBLOV (*With meaning*)—You are going to St. Petersburg, Mr. Crandall?

CRANDALL (*Slowly and with emphasis*)—At midnight, Prince Soblov.

STEVENSON (*Goes up*)—Good-bye.

CARIN (*Insinuatingly*)—Won't you stay to see the marriage, Mr. Stevenson?

STEVENSON—Thank you, no. Can you spare Mr. Crandall for a few seconds; I want to talk to him. (*She bows acquiescence.*)

CARIN—Don't keep him long.

CRANDALL (*To Stevenson*)—I'll walk with you as far as the gate. Pardon me, gentlemen. I'll be back immediately.

STEVENSON—Good evening.

SOBLOV—Good-bye. (*Exeunt Stevenson and Crandall, rear. Soblov gives the peculiar signal with his fingers. Pascual comes down and busies himself with glasses. He takes tray from Ming, who protests in Chinese. Takahari says something to Ming in Chinese that causes him to withdraw. Enter Mannie L. He surveys the scene, getting intimation of correspondence between Soblov and Pascual. Von Holst and Carin are up stage.*)

VON HOLST (*Advancing to Takahari*)—Count Takahari, Miss Meredith suggests that we draw lots for the honor of being groomsman at her marriage.

TAKAHARI—If I win, I shall make a memorial of it as the brightest historical event in the annals of the Takahari family.

VON HOLST—If the honor falls to me, I shall consider it worth a chapter in my memoirs. (*During this Soblov has been tapping wine glass with his nails. Pascual has been answering by tapping tray. Mannie observes the two closely. Exit Pascual rear. Soblov looks suspiciously at Mannie, who goes up as if going out rear.*)

SOBLOV (*To Mannie. It is evident that he wants to keep Mannie away from Stevenson*)—Just a minute, Mr. Secretary. (*Mannie stops.*) Mr. Stevenson asked me to have you take this document to compare with one you will find on the desk in that room. (*Leads Mannie R.*)

MANNIE (*Taking paper*)—This?

SOBLOV—Yes, Mr. Secretary. When you read you will understand. (*He urges Mannie into room R. and closes the door. Soblov turns up and joins Carin, Von Holst and Takahari. Enter Ming with card.*)

CARIN (*Taking card and reading it.*) Show him in. (*Exit Ming.*) The Rev. Mr. Vedder has arrived, gentlemen. (*Enter Mr. Vedder rear.*)

CARIN—I'm glad to see you. (*Shakes hands with him.*) You have met Prince Soblov and Count Takahari and Baron Von Holst. (*He bows to each. They acknowledge the salutation.*)

SOBLOV (*To Carin from near window*)—You are fully decided to marry Mr. Crandall?

CARIN—I am. When Mr. Crandall was born God leaned out of Heaven and breathed into his heart a prayer that has become a benediction to the entire race. (*Soblov goes near window. A shot is fired off.*) What's that? (*They all rush to window.*)

SOBLOV—A signal of some kind. Wait. (*Carin is about to go out of window. He holds her back.*) Here comes some one.

CARIN—Somebody may be injured. I hear cries.

VON HOLST (*Holding Carin back from window*)—Let the men look after that. You stay here. (*Enter Ming rear.*)

MING—Mr. Crandall. He is shot!

CARIN—My God!

MING—Him shot in garden.

TAKAHARI (*In Chinese to Ming*)—Shut up, you fool.

CARIN (*Going rear*)—I must go to him.

SOBLOV—You'll find that it is a mistake. (*Exit Ming L. Von Holst, Carin and Takahari and Soblov go off rear quickly. Pascual crawls into room through window. Pascual crosses to rear. Enter Ming L. He looks at Pascual closely.*)

MING—You here all the time?

PASCUAL (*Frightened*)—Yes, yes. I was in Mr. Crandall's study. (*Exit rear.*)

MING (*Looking after him*)—Maybe. (*Ming looks at window, then bends down on knees and picks up mud from carpet, studies it. Enter Mannie R., who sees Ming rising from knees and looking as if he had just entered through the window. He withdraws R. Enter Takahari and Von Holst and Rev. Vedder rear. Ming goes in alcove, closes window and pulls down curtains.*)

VON HOLST—We can only wait the decision of the doctors. (*Enter Stevenson rear with Soblov.*)

STEVENSON—It's the most cowardly thing I've ever heard of.

VON HOLST (*To Stevenson*)—You think he'll die?

SOBLOV—The doctor announces that his death is only a matter of hours.

STEVENSON—It seems impossible. I just left him a second or two before the shot was fired.

SOBLOV—You are to be congratulated just the same.

STEVENSON—Congratulations over the possible death of Mr. Crandall? What do you mean? (*Carin appears rear.*)

SOBLOV—It clears the way for you to assume his duties as delegate to this Peace Conference at once.

STEVENSON—Do you think I needed to wait for some one to shoot him for that?

VON HOLST—Then you *are* the delegate! (*Shakes Stevenson's hand.*)

CARIN (*To Stevenson, advancing into room.*) You are?

STEVENSON—My credentials are here. (*Taps his pocket.*)

CARIN—Our suspicions were right. You are for war. The people of the United States are for peace. In a final test the people are the government. Now when you vote in the conference, what government will you represent?

STEVENSON—I shall represent the silent government of finance.

Curtain

END OF ACT I

TERMS OF PEACE

ACT II

SCENE—*Same as Act I.*

TIME—*The next evening. Mannie and Stevenson are discovered. Mannie is on his knees near window. Stevenson is watching him.*

MANNIE—It looked as if Ming was crawling through the window just that way.

STEVENSON—But there was no motive for Ming to do the shooting.

MANNIE (*Rising*)—You forget Takahari?

STEVENSON—Less motive than ever. Takahari knew Crandall was no longer delegate.

MANNIE—The bullet may have been meant for you.

STEVENSON—Impossible.

MANNIE—Now you're on the ground, you must agree that nothing's impossible to the war party.

STEVENSON (*With suggestion of impatience*)—But I'm one of that party.

MANNIE—And the strongest one. Don't forget that. (*Pause.*)

STEVENSON—Well, where are you leading?

MANNIE—To the torpedo. Takahari may think he stands no show to buy it and if you die the secret of manufacturing it will die with you.

STEVENSON (*Doubtfully*)—That might be. What have the police done?

MANNIE—Surrounded the house and talked Dutch to one another in relays. Why they don't know their own names.

I'm sure they don't know ours. I was saluted as Herr Stevenson as I came in just now.

STEVENSON—We must clear this murder up ourselves. Wire Scotland Yard for a detective. Get Takahari here first. I'll try him out.

MANNIE—Takahari is on the way. (*Enter Pascual L. with box of papers that he proceeds to lay on table. They watch him.*)

STEVENSON (*To Pascual*)—Where were you when Mr. Crandall was shot?

PASCUAL (*After a moment of hesitation*)—In the blue room, your honor, closing the windows.

STEVENSON—That's on this side of the house, isn't it? (*Indicating R.*)

MANNIE—It adjoins this room on the north.

STEVENSON (*To Pascual*)—If you were closing the windows, you saw the man run this way after the shot was fired!

PASCUAL (*Off his guard*)—No, he ran away from the house out of the garden.

STEVENSON—Oh, you did see someone? What did he look like?

PASCUAL (*Nonplussed*)—Why, it was so dark, your honor.

STEVENSON—Can't you give any idea?. Was he tall?

PASCUAL—No, not tall, your highness.

MANNIE—Did he wear European clothes?

PASCUAL (*Craftily*)—It might be he had on a robe.

MANNIE—Chinese?

PASCUAL—Perhaps.

STEVENSON—Then you'd have said a woman did it.

PASCUAL—No, it was a man, your highness.

STEVENSON (*Emphatically*)—Wearing a Chinese robe, he'd have looked in the dim light of the garden like a woman.

PASCUAL—It was a man, your worship. And he wore a robe. (*Goes towards door L.*)

MANNIE—Oh, would you mind letting Count Takahari in when he calls.

STEVENSON (*To Pascual*)—You'd better take charge of our visiting list until we are settled. Let no one in you don't know personally. (*Exit Stevenson R.*)

PASCUAL—It shall be as you command, your honor. (*Exit L. Enter Ming rear.*)

MING (*Announcing*)—Mrs. Pierson.

MANNIE—Miss Meredith's sister. (*Goes R. then turns to Ming at door*)—Is Mrs. Pierson's daughter with her?

MING—She is. (*Enter Mrs. Pierson rear. Mannie glances at her quickly and exits R. Delphine enters rear. Enter Carin L. She exes and kisses Mrs. Pierson and Delphine.*)

MRS. PIERSON—How terrible, sister!

CARIN—Yes, terrible is the word! We'll talk it over later. (*To Ming*)—Tell Mr. Stevenson that I am ready to go, and will turn over the documents of the office to him in a few minutes. We'll check them off here.

MING—Yes, madame. (*Exit Ming R.*)

MRS. PIERSON (*To Carin*)—We came right back as soon as we heard.

CARIN—Thank you.

DELPHINE (*Goes to Carin with show of affection*)—I'm so sorry for you, auntv.

CARIN—Thank you, Delphine. I gave orders to pack your things so we can leave at once. Mr. Stevenson is in a great hurry to get possession.

MRS. PIERSON—Not John Stevenson? (*Carin nods acquiescence.*)

DELPHINE—He's a horrid thing. He's always bobbing up to interfere.

CARIN (*Quickly*)—You mustn't speak that way about him.

DELPHINE (*Looking quizzically at her*)—Oh, is that so? And I thought all along you hated him!

CARIN (*To Mrs. Pierson*)—Let us get ready to go. (*Exit L.*)

DELPHINE—I think she'd better go after that.

MRS. PIERSON—What do you mean, child?

DELPHINE—Do you know, you're getting so simple, mother, I can't trust you out of my sight.

MRS. PIERSON—Don't talk nonsense.

DELPHINE—Didn't you see how she flared up when I said that little nothing about Mr. Stevenson?

MRS. PIERSON—Well?

DELPHINE—Well. There's only one answer to it.

MRS. PIERSON—What is it?

DELPHINE—She's in love with him.

MRS. PIERSON—How you go on! You know more about affairs of the heart than I ever did.

DELPHINE—No wonder. I began where you left off.

MRS. PIERSON—You'd better leave off before I begin—again.

DELPHINE—Don't threaten me with a stepfather.

MRS. PIERSON (*Going L.*)—I've a notion to marry someone that will keep you in your place. (*Exit L. Enter Mannie R.*)

DELPHINE (*Calling after her*)—If you do, I'll elope with him.

MANNIE—Did you mention my name?

DELPHINE (*To Mannie*)—You?

MANNIE—Glad as if you saw your own funeral, aren't you?

DELPHINE—Don't you know my mother's here?

MANNIE—It's your mother's daughter that keeps me guessing.

DELPHINE—How ever did you get away from America? And how did you get here? You didn't break into the house, did you? (*Enter Pascual rear with bundle of documents, which he lays on table. Mannie goes over and looks through them with business-like air.*)

MANNIE (*To Pascual*)—Bring the others later. I want to check these off now.

PASCUAL (*Going rear*)—It shall be as you command, your highness. (*Mannie sits and sorts over the papers indifferent to Delphine, who stands watching him.*)

DELPHINE—Well, I never!

MANNIE (*With dignity*)—I beg your pardon, Miss. Were you speaking?

DELPHINE (*Disarranges papers on table*)—What's the meaning of all this?

MANNIE (*Fearfully*)—Don't touch those.

DELPHINE (*Starting back*)—What are they?

MANNIE (*Indicates documents*)—They are the tail feathers of the Dove of Peace.

DELPHINE—Look as if they'd just been plucked. What have you to do with them? What have you to do with this place? Why did Pascual bow before you and take your commands? Why did he call you "your highness"?

MANNIE—Oh— (*Indifferently*) That—well (*Looking through papers*) That, you see—it's this way. I rather like being called "your highness." Sort of fits in with my personality. (*Engrossed with document.*)

DELPHINE—Oh, you— (*Snatching documents from him and stamping her foot.*)

MANNIE (*Indifferently picking up document*)—Um—no—that's wrong. I'll change that. This one, too. Your punctuation marks are all wrong. Plenty of periods, but no full stop.

DELPHINE—Stop this nonsense. Why are you here? What are you doing? What's your office?

MANNIE—I am a true patriot.

DELPHINE—For a living? What else have you been doing since I saw you?

MANNIE—Nothing.

DELPHINE—Innocent!

MANNIE—Cross my heart. I'm really here because I wouldn't do something.

DELPHINE—What?

MANNIE—Marry.

DELPHINE—Who?

MANNIE—Janet Craden.

DELPHINE—That cat?

MANNIE—Janet's a nice girl.

DELPHINE (*Huffed*)—Why don't you marry her?

MANNIE (*Indifferently*)—Oh, I may.

DELPHINE—She has scads of money.

MANNIE—Come to think of it, she does resemble a bank roll. A nice fat one.

DELPHINE—Well, why don't you marry her?

MANNIE—Shall I tell you?

DELPHINE (*Assuming indifference*)—I don't care.

MANNIE—I'll tell you, anyhow. I didn't marry her because I'm in love with someone else.

DELPHINE—What has love to do with it?

MANNIE—Just this. (*Kisses her.*)

DELPHINE—What will mamma say?

MANNIE—Are you going to take her into your confidence?

DELPHINE—I always do.

MANNIE—Under similar circumstances?

DELPHINE—Under exactly similar circumstances.

MANNIE (*Quickly*)—Oh, then you've had some experience of the same nature?

DELPHINE (*Deliberately*)—Of exactly the same nature. Do you think I'm an amateur?

MANNIE (*Throws documents down and shows that he is angry*)—That's what you meant when you spoke of eloping a minute ago.

DELPHINE—Well, suppose it is?

MANNIE (*Towering over her*)—Who is the man?

DELPHINE—That's right, strike me.

MANNIE—I will not.

DELPHINE—Then don't. Though I expect it from you. You're with the military party. Liable to hit anyone just to see him fall.

MANNIE—I am. We need wars! You understand, wars! There are too many people in the world.

DELPHINE—Horrors!

MANNIE—Too many women, especially.

DELPHINE—When you stopped my runaway horse in Central Park I thought you were just a nice movie leading man.

MANNIE—I want to play all parts. I entered this branch of activity so I could learn character. You know my range, from light comedian to heavy old man. I have all my make-up wigs and everything with me.

CARIN—As long as you're for war why not play the part of a butcher!

MANNIE—Wait! Butcher! Did you say butcher? (*Changing*) As a matter of cold-blooded fact, I am dead set against the military party. I think war should be abolished.

DELPHINE (*Taking opposite position*)—Is that so? Well, I think war is just splendid. We ought to have a new war every week. Just think how grand the soldiers look on parade.

MANNIE—That's right. I forgot. Women always fall for a uniform. That's what keeps the military bunk going.

DELPHINE—Well, why not?

MANNIE—I know you're going to elope with some cheap little whipper-snapper with gold braid on his sleeve.

DELPHINE (*Mischievously*)—How did you ever guess it?

MANNIE—All right, I'm through.

VOICE (*Off*)—Delphine! (*They look at one another.*)

DELPHINE (*To Mannie*)—It's about time.

MANNIE—That's your mother calling?

DELPHINE (*Exes L*)—I'm going right now to tell her you stole a kiss from me.

MANNIE—Heavens, don't.

DELPHINE—I will, unless you give it right back.

MANNIE—Wait a minute. (*Going to her. He almost has Delphine in his arms. Enter Mrs. Pierson L. Mannie keeps on walking past Delphine with indifference. Mrs. Pierson watches him. Exit Mannie L.*)

MRS. PIERSON—Wasn't that your Central Park hero?

DELPHINE (*Innocently*)—Who do you mean, Mamma?

MRS. PIERSON—You know very well whom I mean. The scamp of an actor that scared your horse so it ran away.

DELPHINE (*Snapping*)—He didn't.

MRS. PIERSON—Then chased you, and rescued you, and—

DELPHINE—That's all he did.

MRS. PIERSON—Kept on chasing you so he could rescue your fortune.

DELPHINE—You don't give my fatal attractiveness any credit at all.

MRS. PIERSON—I know him. He's just an ordinary fortune hunter.

DELPHINE—Does an ordinary fortune hunter turn up his nose at a fat one?

MRS. PIERSON—Fat what?

DELPHINE—Fortune. And female to go with it.

MRS. PIERSON—He wouldn't.

DELPHINE—He did.

MRS. PIERSON—Who?

DELPHINE—Janet Craden.

MRS. PIERSON—Lucky for her. You introduced him to Janet, didn't you?

DELPHINE—I did. To put your theory to the test. All the Craden family just went wild to have him marry Janet.

MRS. PIERSON—Fools. They accepted him socially at your valuation.

DELPHINE—Oh no, they accepted him on Janet's. She thought him some Prince out of the Arabian Nights, cause she had seen him play in "Kismet."

MRS. PIERSON—You think something similar. I'm very glad Carin is through here so I'll be at liberty to take you away.

DELPHINE (*With mock seriousness*)—I'm afraid he'll follow us.

MRS. PIERSON—You're afraid he won't. For that reason you'll send the address. (*Enter Mannie rear. He comes down to the table. Mrs. Pierson looks at him through lorgnette.*) Evidently the clerk wishes to use the room, Delphine. We'd better go. (*Exes L.*)

DELPHINE (*Innocently. To Mannie.*)—Do you wish to use this room, Mr. Clerk? (*Enter Pascual with Ming R. Ming goes to table with documents.*)

MANNIE (*To Pascual*)—Would you kindly show the ladies through the building, Pascual? And, oh, yes, send word to Cook's that the House of Peace is closed to visitors. (*Delphine registers enjoyment.*)

MRS. PIERSON—Who is this person, Pascual?

MANNIE (*To Pascual with command*)—The ladies are waiting for you, Pascual. Take them away.

PASCUAL—Yes, your highness.

DELPHINE—Come, Mamma. He's simply awful when he's cross. (*Exit Pascual, Delphine and Mrs. Pierson. Enter Stevenson R. with bundle of documents and bundle of red tape.*)

STEVENSON (*To Ming*)—Here, Ming, I want you to make neat bundles of all the documents.

MING (*Beginning to tie the documents with the tape*)—Yes, sir.

STEVENSON (*Signs to Mannie to watch Ming*)—Do you recollect just where you were when Mr. Crandall was shot?

MING—I was upstairs.

STEVENSON—Didn't you see anyone through a window, say?

MING—Not look through window.

MANNIE—Did anyone see you?

MING—Nobody see me, I see nobody. I hear nothing, I see nothing, I know nothing. (*Enter Pascual rear.*)

PASCUAL—Count Takahari.

STEVENSON (*To Pascual, after significant look at Mannie*)—Tell him I'll see him in the blue room. You keep on Ming. (*Exit Stevenson rear. Mannie hides back of curtains at recess. Ming after hasty look around extracts document from bundle and hides it in blouse. Mannie appears from behind curtain. Ming takes another document from one of the bundles and slips it in blouse.*)

MANNIE (*Coming to table*)—Hadn't you better sit down, Ming? (*Pushes chair over. Ming sits. Mannie stands behind Ming and watches him.*)

MING—Very kind.

MANNIE—Would you like to stay on and work for Mr. Stevenson?

MING—Very much. Mr. Stevenson delegate to Peace Congress. He take all these papers over.

MANNIE—Well he'll take over what's left of them. I'll tell him that you want to stay on. Shall I?

MING—Very kind.

MANNIE (*Toying with end of Ming's queue*)—Not at all. Of course there are a few little things. Concessions, you know. Things you must give up before you get the job.

MING—I know, liken. All same graft. How much?

MANNIE (*Wrapping end of queue around back of chair and tying it*)—Oh, we won't split hairs over that. (*Goes to other side of table and faces Ming, who still ties up the papers.*) It will all depend on how much you get for the information.

MING (*Quickly*)—Information? What information?

MANNIE—The letters you just stole from this bundle.

MING (*Jumping to his feet*)—You say I stole letters? (*When he jumps, the queue which is tied to chair comes off, showing Ming to be a Japanese.*)

MANNIE—I meant hair. You've lost your queue.

MING—You Yankee pig! (*Ming takes queue from back of chair and rushes at Mannie. They struggle towards recess. Mannie is borne back, but recovers and bears Ming to floor. He snatches queue from Ming and wraps it around his throat and pulls it until Ming is senseless, then drags Ming to recess and is seen exchanging clothes with him. Enter Takahari rear. Mannie wraps handkerchief around face and enters.*)

TAKAHARI (*Quickly*)—What's wrong? (*Mannie making signs that his jaw is swollen and makes guttural sounds. He hands two documents to Takahari. Takahari glances at them.*) Good. Now, who fired the shot? You must find out. If Stevenson did it, the torpedo belongs to Japan without spending a yen.

MANNIE—Sh— (*He disappears quickly in recess. Enter Stevenson rear.*)

STEVENSON—Pardon me for keeping you waiting, Count. My secretary made a mistake in the room.

TAKAHARI—I am much honored for being privileged to wait for you, Mr. Stevenson.

STEVENSON—Won't you sit down? (*They sit.*)

TAKAHARI—Of course you know why I imposed myself on your honorable privacy at this hour.

STEVENSON—The torpedo?

TAKAHARI—You are right, as is your habit, Mr. Stevenson. War will be declared very soon. Japan wants to be ready.

STEVENSON—Well, the torpedo is for sale.

TAKAHARI—How much?

STEVENSON—Ten million dollars.

TAKAHARI—You will permit a brief investigation?

STEVENSON—None whatever. Your government must purchase it on the strength of the official tests already made. You must judge by the results. The time is too short before fighting begins.

TAKAHARI—With your honorable permission we should like to see it manufactured.

STEVENSON—A great many people would like to see it manufactured. When the money is paid, I'll teach the secret of making the torpedo, not before. (*Enter Pascual followed by Von Holst rear.*)

PASCUAL—Pardon, your highness. I thought you were in the blue room.

STEVENSON—It's all right, Pascual. (*Exit Pascual.*) Glad to see you, Baron Von Holst.

VON HOLST—I am happy to meet you. (*Shaking Stevenson's hand.*) And you, too, Count Takahari. (*Takahari has risen.*) You are not going? (*Takahari bows.*)

TAKAHARI—Yes, Baron Von Holst, I just called to extend my congratulations to the honorable successor of the honorable Mr. Crandall. Good evening. (*Goes up.*)

STEVENSON—Good evening, Count Takahari. (*Exit Takahari rear.*)

VON HOLST (*Looks after Takahari dubiously*)—Remember, Stevenson, these new people that sprang up over night in the far Pacific, are the Greeks bearing gifts of destruction to our civilization.

STEVENSON—Unless I am mistaken, Baron, you are here now to secure one of my personal gifts of destruction.

VON HOLST—I am here to buy, Mr. Stevenson.

STEVENSON—Takahari also wants to buy.

VON HOLST—You don't seem to grasp my meaning.

STEVENSON—Very clearly, Herr Baron. You say in essence: "Don't sell your torpedo to the Japanese. They might use it to hurt us."

VON HOLST—They would use it to destroy European civilization.

STEVENSON—I have no sentimentalities about European civilization. If Japan pays me my price, the torpedo will go to Tokio.

VON HOLST—You wouldn't use the yellow peril as a factor in our bargaining?

STEVENSON—Now look here, Baron Von Holst, I have a torpedo that has almost human intelligence. By means of a certain ray discovered by me, it can be guided anywhere within a radius of twenty miles on land or sea, against any fort or any ship. I offered it to Japan for ten million dollars. Do you raise me?

VON HOLST—Then you do use the Japanese as a factor? You know that race is beyond the pale. Their culture is not our culture.

STEVENSON—I'm not going to haggle about cultures or the people that developed them. I'm now a salesman, pure and simple.

VON HOLST—It is money, pure and simple—money.

STEVENSON—Right.

VON HOLST—What's your lowest figure?

STEVENSON—As much as I can get over ten millions.

VON HOLST—I want an option at ten million dollars.

STEVENSON—There shall be no option. The torpedo goes to the first person that brings a certified check for ten million dollars. In three seconds he can have in his possession the documents containing the secret of the torpedo. Like all great inventions it is very simple.

VON HOLST—But that's hardly business-like, do you think?

STEVENSON—The torpedo has been on the market fully tested for six months. You have all been waiting to see how this vote on war or no war would go before buying it. Now that war is inevitable you all want it.

VON HOLST—You seem to forget that you and I are in agreement about the horrors of peace.

STEVENSON—I don't forget it. But, also, I don't forget that during the agitation for disarmament my factories were compelled to shut down.

VON HOLST—You can't expect me to sympathize with business reverses.

STEVENSON—I don't want your sympathy at all, Baron Von Holst. I have no use for sympathy. I want you to know, however, that it cost the manufacturers of war material in the United States seven million dollars to throttle the peace movement there. (*Enter Pascual rear.*)

PASCUAL (*To Stevenson*)—Sir Edward Graham craves to be permitted to see you.

STEVENSON—Send him in. (*Exit Pascual rear.*)

VON HOLST—I don't want to meet the Englishman here.

STEVENSON—He's one of the genuine peace advocates, isn't he?

VON HOLST—Well, before *you* came he was. Do you mind if I go out this way? (*Goes L.*)

STEVENSON—Not at all.

VON HOLST (*Turning at door*)—You'll find the English delegate very charming. And a good man at a bargain. Promise you won't sell the torpedo until you hear from me.

STEVENSON—I promise. (*Exit Von Holst L. Enter Graham rear, escorted by Pascual.*)

GRAHAM—Good afternoon, Stevenson.

STEVENSON (*Shaking hands*)—Very glad to see you, Sir Edward.

GRAHAM—I have called to ask you some questions about your latest engine of destruction.

STEVENSON—My torpedo? I have made public all the data possible until it is sold.

GRAHAM—I was in hopes that I could persuade you not to sell it, Stevenson. I know what it can do.

STEVENSON—Glad to hear you know something of the technique of my little pacifier.

GRAHAM—Yes. I know your little pacifier can kill as many peasants or fishermen as can be crowded into a fortress or battleship.

STEVENSON—Well?

GRAHAM—It can add to the fictitious glory of a number of gentlemen who sit comfortably in their offices wearing high hats and frock coats.

STEVENSON—Anything else?

GRAHAM—It can make profits for you.

STEVENSON—There you've said all that need be said.

GRAHAM—Do you know, Stevenson, I think that the mission of America is to tear the mask of glorified hypocrisy from the face of war. You reduce militarism to terms of dollars and cents.

STEVENSON—War was never anything else but a struggle over dollars and cents. Do you want to buy my torpedo?

GRAHAM—Personally, if I had the money I should purchase it and destroy it and its secret forever.

STEVENSON—My price is ten million dollars, to be paid at once.

GRAHAM—Ten million? May I request you not to sell it until you hear from me again?

STEVENSON—You'll have to hurry. You Englishmen have fallen into the easy habit of thinking that the universe will wait your convenience. My torpedo goes to the first that planks down the change. We are in for a war, Graham. You'll have to act quickly to beat the thunder of the guns.

GRAHAM—I believe you are right. War is merely a matter of hours now. That's why I have put aside, by this visit, my conviction that the world had arrived at a sane, normal, man-to-man way of dealing with international problems. I see how impossible that ideal is so long as the freemasonry of destruction is allowed to persist.

STEVENSON—Freemasonry of destruction?

GRAHAM—That is the web and woof of a cold, calculating patriotism. That is why the Hun is at the gate. All the institutions built up by a plodding, inefficient, but kindly and tolerant democracy will go down before the oncoming military machine driven by an autocrat. And all because this freemasonry of destruction, which is the archenemy of free institutions, has its ramifications everywhere. The question you have to ask yourself is this: "Are you going to allow your torpedo to become an integral part of the paraphernalia of terror?"

STEVENSON—My torpedo goes to the first comer with the cash. The people of Europe want war; I am not going to

stop them. If they didn't want it, they would wipe out this freemasonry of destruction of yours in a day, with all its secret treaties and its hidden, treacherous diplomacy. Do you know why they want war?

GRAHAM—I have spent some time trying to find out.

STEVENSON—Each national group is impelled toward war by a sort of divine egoism, back of which is the dominating desire for loot. You Englishmen, with your far-flung empire of self-governing units, are the greatest egoists of all. You think that because any given question is settled for you, it becomes automatically settled for the rest of mankind. Because you find easy pickings on every shore of the Seven Seas, and are well fed in consequence, you imagine that no one in the world should complain of hunger.

GRAHAM—You are a gross materialist. Your sense of national morality is atrophied.

STEVENSON—National morality stops at the water's edge. After that it becomes the cant of statesmen to cover a hidden design of aggression.

GRAHAM—I have muddled through so far with an entirely different conception.

STEVENSON—The days of successful muddling are over. A hammer is being forged in Fate's blacksmith shop for muddlers that will beat them to their knees.

GRAHAM—Once on my knees, I'll pray to the God of my fathers for you, Stevenson. I'll pray that your eyes may be opened, your heart softened. (*Enter Carin L.*)

CARIN—Pardon me. (*Is about to return L.*)

STEVENSON (*To Carin*)—Don't leave us, please.

GRAHAM—I'm sorry you weren't here earlier, Miss Meredith.

CARIN—Yes?

GRAHAM—You would have learned that we, in our dream of universal democratic control of the war spirit, were living a truth that time has turned to lies. Good-bye.

CARIN—Good-bye. (*Exit Graham, rear. Carin follows him to door, and looks after him. Enter Mannie from recess.*)

MANNIE (*Crossing to Stevenson quickly*)—We are on the wrong track. Takahari had no hand in the killing of Crandall.

STEVENSON—Sh—

CARIN (*Coming down*)—I'm very glad you have a few minutes to spare, Mr. Stevenson.

STEVENSON—I am always at your service, Carin.

CARIN—Thank you. I'll detain you just long enough to comply with the usual formalities incident to turning the office over to you.

STEVENSON—That can wait. Why not keep on as before? Now your sister and niece are here you. . . .

CARIN—Thank you, no.

STEVENSON—It will take my secretary some time to learn all the ins and outs of the office.

CARIN—I wish to leave at once.

MANNIE—It will take only a few days until I get the routine.

CARIN—It is my intention to leave within the hour.

STEVENSON—You can't run off that way. (*To Mannie*) Get that large portfolio on my desk. I want to ask some questions about its contents. (*To Carin*) We can't be left in the dark about everything. (*Ming's head appears at alcove. He is dressed in blouse, and has his Chinese wig on.*)

MANNIE (*Seeing Ming*)—Come along, Ming, and help me.

MING (*In halting dazed fashion*)—What's matter? (*Feels head and throat.*)

MANNIE (*Putting arm through Ming's*)—You've been dreaming, Ming. Wake up. (*Exeunt Ming and Mannie L.*)

CARIN (*Exes L.*)—I'll go and instruct your secretary just what the portfolio contains.

STEVENSON (*Interrupting her*)—Don't go, please. I want to ask you what has been done about trying to capture the assassin of Mr. Crandall.

CARIN—That matter is in the hands of the American Consul.

STEVENSON—Is there anyone you suspect?

CARIN—No one.

STEVENSON—You don't seem over-anxious.

CARIN—Possibly I have become reconciled to the methods of the war party.

STEVENSON—But this is murder.

CARIN—Well, you justify murder, don't you? Militarists do automatically.

STEVENSON—I stand for war. That's different.

CARIN—When one man is killed, it's murder. When a thousand or a hundred thousand are killed, it's war. Personally I can see no difference.

STEVENSON—I'll not follow the argument. My one wish is that we be friends.

CARIN—You lost your opportunity, Mr. Stevenson, in this room—yesterday.

STEVENSON—Let me ask forgiveness. Crandall forgave me the hatred I confessed I felt.

CARIN (*With touch of surprise*)—You hated Mr. Crandall?

STEVENSON—As I would hate any man that would come between us.

CARIN (*Watching him curiously*)—You actually hated him?

STEVENSON—I did, for a minute. What strikes me as strange is the coincidence that Fate should remove him within the hour I learned he had won you.

CARIN—You think Fate was fighting on your side?

STEVENSON—Oh, no. If Fate had been fighting on my side, you'd never have broken off our engagement. We would be married by now.

CARIN (*Interrupting him*)—I will not hear another word. You took advantage yesterday of a temporary weakness. Today! Well, it's different.

STEVENSON—What are you going to do?

CARIN—I am going back to America.

STEVENSON—You think you will put the barrier of the ocean between us? *Pascual and Soblov appear rear. Soblov signals for Pascual to leave. Pascual exits without being seen by Carin or Stevenson.*

SOBLOV (*Entering rear*)—Pardon me. Do I intrude? (*Looks from one to the other.*)

CARIN (*Joyously*)—Why, no, not at all. On the contrary, Prince Soblov.

SOBLOV (*To Stevenson, with cunning sneer*)—Then I am not sorry I made a mistake. Your man said I should find you in the blue room. Isn't this it?

CARIN (*Shaking head*)—No.

STEVENSON—One is permitted to be color blind on occasion. (*Going towards door L and turning handle.*)

SOBLOV (*Bowing to Stevenson*)—Thank you. Don't leave us, Mr. Stevenson. I want to see you.

STEVENSON (*Turning*)—Yes? Anything particular?

SOBLOV—Very particular. I want to warn you.

STEVENSON—Warn me? About what?

SOBLOV—Your life is in danger.

CARIN (*With anxiety, thereby betraying her genuine feeling for Stevenson*)—His life! (*The men pause and look at her. She proceeds with touch of embarrassment.*) Why . . . what is wrong?

SOBLOV (*To Carin*)—I am afraid it would affect you too much to know.

CARIN—I insist on knowing. (*She turns and sees Stevenson watching her, then speaks lightly.*) Of course, if you don't wish to tell me, Prince Soblov, there is no harm done. You see, in addition to being a fellow human being, Mr. Stevenson is one of our representative Americans. I am still national enough in feeling to be interested. You understand..

SOBLOV (*With meaning*)—Yes, I understand.

CARIN (*Laughing to cover her real feelings*)—I'm so glad. I'll go now. I'll leave you and Mr. Stevenson to

talk this matter over. Then come back. You see, I don't want to hear a word about it—not a word. (*Exit R.*)

SOBLOV (*Going to all doors, opening them, looking out, then closing them*)—Do you mind?

STEVENSON—Not at all. I like privacy.

SOBLOV—If we work in harmony, Mr. Stevenson, we can both make a good bargain.

STEVENSON—Bargain! You are using the language I can understand. But is this what you want to warn me about? Does my life hang on making a bargain?

SOBLOV—It does.

STEVENSON—Indeed! Go on.

SOBLOV—You personally own and control this new torpedo?

STEVENSON—I am the inventor. I alone know its mechanism.

SOBLOV—You have always confined yourself to armor plate heretofore, for ships and steel coverings for forts.

STEVENSON—At home we call that working both ends against the middle. I build the house, then find a new way to set fire to it.

SOBLOV—Very good. But my government paid your company very well for armor plate, because it was impenetrable.

STEVENSON—There was no guarantee given that something would NOT be invented to penetrate it.

SOBLOV—When your new torpedo is sold, you will at once try to make armor plate that it cannot penetrate.

STEVENSON—I am on the track of such an improvement right now.

SOBLOV—One might call that the vicious circle. Where is it going to stop?

STEVENSON—Come now, Prince Soblov, we understand one another. You don't want it stopped any more than I do. I know it.

SOBLOV—You do?

STEVENSON—If it ever stopped you would be worse off than most men. Armor plate, guns, torpedoes, armies and

army officers create war. War creates jobs for kings, courtiers, generals, diplomats (*Pause*) and peace envoys.

SOBLOV—You are very cynical.

STEVENSON—Merely truthful. If your country wants this torpedo you will have to bid against the other nations that are burdened as she is with military caste.

SOBLOV—Leave my country out of the discussion. We are going to deal for this torpedo man to man.

STEVENSON—Oh, a personal purchase!

SOBLOV—Yes, a personal purchase.

STEVENSON—Very good. I have been offered ten million dollars for the secret of its manufacture. I'll warrant it to float in the air or on the water. It will go straight to any battleship or fort within a radius of twenty miles, and put them out of business.

SOBLOV—You were offered ten million dollars?

STEVENSON—Do you offer more?

SOBLOV—I do.

STEVENSON—You're my man.

SOBLOV—I offer you silence.

STEVENSON—What?

SOBLOV—I offer you silence.

STEVENSON (*As if about to go out of room*)—This is a serious question. When you are in a serious mood, I'll take it up with you.

SOBLOV—I am serious, Mr. Stevenson. When I offer you silence in exchange for your torpedo, I am offering you your life.

STEVENSON—You may talk English, but you think in a language I don't quite get.

SOBLOV (*Comes close to Stevenson*)—I'll make myself clear. Who fired the shot at Mr. Crandall?

STEVENSON—Oh, that's it?

SOBLOV—An American-made revolver was found in the garden. One chamber was empty. It still smelled of smoke.

STEVENSON—Well, Europe is full of American-made revolvers.

SOBLOV—Who went out of this room with Mr. Crandall ten minutes before he died?

STEVENSON—I did.

SOBLOV—You were seen by two witnesses leave Mr. Crandall in the garden, (*Pause*) after a quarrel with him.

STEVENSON—So that's the game. What else?

SOBLOV—You were seen to turn and whip out a revolver and fire.

STEVENSON (*Quietly*)—Of course, the nationality of those two witnesses is the same as yours?

SOBLOV—It is. But what has that to do with it?

STEVENSON—Oh, nothing. Only little details like that help out where it's a frame-up. Well, understand once for all, Prince Soblov, that I won't make the least concession to a blackmailer. Mr. Crandall and I were good friends. There was no motive for me to kill him.

SOBLOV—No motive! At your trial it will be shown that you had him removed from the position of Peace Envoy on the very eve of a vote to forbid this war. He gave his life to peace; you were on the side of militarism. You defeated him; it made you enemies.

STEVENSON—I stood for militarism right out in the open, not as a damned hypocrite like yourself.

SOBLOV—This is not going to be reduced to bickering between us. I'm giving you the motive for the murder of Mr. Crandall.

STEVENSON—The motive you give wouldn't carry enough weight in court to attract the judge's attention.

SOBLOV—Then I'll give the real motive.

STEVENSON—Oh, after you've given the motive, you'll give the real motive.

SOBLOV—Yes. Jealousy.

STEVENSON—Jealousy!!

SOBLOV—You love Carin Meredith.

STEVENSON (*Threateningly*)—Keep her name out of this.

SOBLOV—You came here and learned that she was going to marry Mr. Crandall. In this very room you forced your attentions on her. You seized her in your arms.

STEVENSON (*Jumps at Soblov and grabs him by the throat*)—Damn you.

SOBLOV (*Crying aloud*)—Help! Help! (*Carin enters hurriedly R.*)

CARIN—What is it? (*Stevenson sees her and lets Soblov go.*) What does it mean?

SOBLOV—He would murder me as he murdered Mr. Crandall.

CARIN—Murder! Great God! Is it possible!

SOBLOV (*To Carin*)—He told you there was nothing he wouldn't do to get you.

CARIN—No, I'll never believe it.

STEVENSON (*Advancing towards her*)—I knew you wouldn't, Carin.

CARIN (*Horried, drawing away from him*)—Keep away from me. That good old man. I brought his death on him. I didn't love him. He didn't love me. Our engagement was— Our engagement was—

STEVENSON—Yes, I know, it was a foil; a barrier between us.

CARIN (*Half to herself*)—It brought his death about—It cannot be! No, no.

SOBLOV—I'll prove that it did.

CARIN (*To Soblov*)—You can prove it?

SOBLOV—Come with me and I shall. (*She goes up.*)

STEVENSON—No, Carin. For God's sake, don't go. Give me a chance. Let's fight this out in the open. I am ready to go into the courts.

SOBLOV—You'll have your day in court, Stevenson. It will be a brief one. The evidence against you is overwhelming. (*To Carin*) I have witnesses who saw him fire the shot. (*Enter Pascual rear.*)

STEVENSON (*Indicating Pascual*)—Is this one of them?

SOBLOV—It is.

STEVENSON (*To Carin*)—The other is also a spy in his pay. He is holding this charge over my head to blackmail me into giving him the secret of my torpedo.

CARIN (*To Pascual, excitedly*)—Where were you when Mr. Crandall was killed? Were you in the garden? Were you close enough to see—to see Mr. Stevenson?

PASCUAL (*Doubtfully watching Soblov*)—I—I—Go— (*Soblov strikes eyeglass case with finger nails, and gives signal to Pascual. Stevenson watches Soblov.*)

CARIN (*To Pascual*)—Where did you go? Where were you when the shot was fired?

PASCUAL (*Showing that he is paying attention to the signal*)—I will tell what I know when the time comes. (*Exit R.*)

SOBLOV—He will have much to tell. (*Enter Mrs. Pierson and Delphine L. They have grips and are dressed to travel.*)

CARIN (*To Mrs. Pierson*)—I see you are ready. (*Goes up with Mrs. Pierson.*)

STEVENSON (*To Carin*)—You are going?

CARIN—Yes, Mr. Stevenson. Good-bye. (*To Mrs. Pierson*) Let us go. (*Exeunt Carin, Mrs. Pierson, Delphine, rear.*)

SOBLOV—When you change your mind about that torpedo, send for me. (*Exit rear. Stevenson comes down to table and sits dejected. Delphine enters L.*)

DELPHINE—Oh, I just ran around by the side door to tell you that—eh—that women are funny.

STEVENSON—Indeed?

DELPHINE—And say what they don't mean.

STEVENSON—Yes? (*Enter Mannie R. He listens.*)

DELPHINE—Sometimes they love most where they pretend to hate most.

STEVENSON—Do all women love most where they pretend to hate most?

DELPHINE (*Tossing her head when she sees Mannie*)—Oh, no, just a few.

MANNIE (*To Delphine*)—Do you love most where you pretend to hate most?

DELPHINE—No, I hate most where I pretend to love most. (*Exit Delphine rear.*)

STEVENSON (*Drumming on table*)—Did you ever hear Soblov signal to any one that way?

MANNIE—Why, yes. To Pascual. On the side of a wine glass, once.

STEVENSON—When?

MANNIE—Not five minutes before Crandall was shot. It was just before Soblov told me to get busy with that letter. You remember, said you told him to have me compare it.

STEVENSON (*Rising*)—Get Pascual here, quick. (*Mannie presses button of call bell. Stevenson taps, in imitation of Soblov, on the side of his eyeglass case.*) I wonder! Could that be the Morse Code in Russian?

MANNIE—Let's try Pascual out. He's as superstitious as a Russian. You'd better dictate a letter to him. (*Goes to typewriter.*)

STEVENSON—Turn that table so I can watch his face. (*Mannie turns table. He arranges paper and carbons.*)

MANNIE—What's this? (*Holds up carbon.*) A fresh carbon with a perfect letter on it!

STEVENSON—Is it important?

MANNIE—Read it. (*Holds carbon up to light.*)

STEVENSON—Soblov's resignation from the Peace Conference. It is signed by him.

MANNIE—The date is yesterday.

STEVENSON—Crandall was shot last night. (*Enter Pascual rear. He is dressed for the street. They hide the carbon.*) You are not going to leave us, Pascual?

PASCUAL—Would your highness want me to remain in his service after—after— Well, your highness knows I am to appear at his trial for killing Mr. Crandall.

MANNIE (*To Stevenson*)—Do they accuse you?

STEVENSON—Yes. (*To Pascual*) That will be all right, Pascual. You are going to tell only the truth.

PASCUAL—Only the truth, your highness.

STEVENSON—I cannot take offense at that. In the meantime, retain your old position. You are the only one acquainted with the routine of the office. Kindly take a letter. (*Pascual seats himself at typewriter.*)

PASCUAL—I am ready, your highness.

STEVENSON—"To the Honorable James F. Burton, United States Ambassador to Russia, Dear Sir: Owing to the delegates to the Peace Conference failing in their efforts to avert or even to postpone the war that is inevitable between the nations of Europe, many of us feel that further efforts are useless. Prominent among these is Prince Soblov, delegate representing Russia. He tendered his resignation to my predecessor, Mr. Crandall, one hour before the latter was shot to death by a cowardly assassin—" (*Stops dictating*) You know how to spell cowardly assassin, Pascual?

PASCUAL (*Trembling*)—Yes, your highness.

STEVENSON—Very good. You'll have occasion to write it frequently while in my service.

PASCUAL—Yes, your highness.

STEVENSON—Write. (*Pascual writes.*) "I wish to confirm that resignation, a certified copy of which I herewith send you. I hold the original."

PASCUAL (*In surprise*)—You have the original?

STEVENSON—Why not?

PASCUAL—I thought it was destroyed.

STEVENSON—All you know is that an attempt was made to destroy it! Of course that failed. Perhaps you could tell us why Prince Soblov resigned?

PASCUAL—I don't know, your highness.

STEVENSON—You know the resignation was written, that it was signed. Now why? Was it forced from Prince Soblov?

PASCUAL—I don't know.

STEVENSON—Well, why did he try to destroy the resignation? At least you know that.

PASCUAL—I cannot tell, your highness.

STEVENSON—You mean you won't tell. Very good. I see you are faithful to the Prince. That is a recommendation.

PASCUAL—Thank you, your highness.

STEVENSON—I have the original resignation in my room. I'll bring it to you to copy. In the meantime, busy yourself with this letter. (*Gives Pascual paper to copy. Exit Stevenson L. Pascual works typewriter. The lights are lowered. A reproduction of Soblov's signal is heard. Pascual looks up. Mannie disguised as Crandall appears L. A spot light shines on him. Pascual sits awe-struck at the apparition.*)

MANNIE (*Imitating voice of Crandall*)—I return to bring the judgment of God unto the soul of him that kills his fellow man. He shall be as a weed that rots in the garden of life. What seeds he gives forth shall grow again in poison stocks and they shall bear bitter fruit from generation unto generation. For him that lives by the sword shall perish by the sword. The lowly Nazarene, Who brought the message of peace and good will to men, has conquered where the battalions of the marshals have failed. I charge you, wear His message in your heart, for there lies the profit that shall be stored against your need in the day of days.

PASCUAL—Mercy! Mercy!

MANNIE—Mercy is for him that repents.

PASCUAL (*Backing away towards R*)—My soul is damned! My soul is damned! (*Exit Pascual R. Mannie snatches off disguise and turns up light. Enter Carin rear. She gives evidence of being excited.*)

CARIN—Where is Mr. Stevenson? Quick.

MANNIE—He's somewhere about.

CARIN—They are coming for him. They are going to arrest him.

MANNIE—Arrest him! What for?

CARIN—Murder. (*Noise of door closing off.*) There they are. (*Enter policemen rear.*) Too late.

POLICEMAN (*Speaking Dutch*)—I have a warrant for John Stevenson.

MANNIE—Go away. I don't understand. (*Goes towards L.*) Nicht for stay.

POLICEMAN (*Seizing Mannie. Two policemen advance and stand on either side of Mannie*)—Are you Herr Stevenson?

CARIN (*Speaking Dutch*)—Yes, that's your man.

POLICEMAN (*To Mannie. Still speaking Dutch*)—Now, will you come?

MANNIE—Go on, you big saphead. You're in Dutch, I tell you. (*To Carin*) What did you say to him?

POLICEMAN (*Addressing the two gendarmes*)—March. (*Exeunt Mannie and Policemen rear, Mannie protesting.*)

MANNIE (*As he is taken off*)—Wait till I turn the United States army on you for this. You wait! (*Carin goes up and hastily shuts door rear as Stevenson enters L.*)

STEVENSON—I'm glad you changed your mind, Carin, and came back.

CARIN (*Nervously*)—I just . . . just came in to see you.

STEVENSON—You are in trouble. What is it? Sit down. You know, anything I can do would be happiness for me.

CARIN (*Sitting*)—Anything?

STEVENSON—Try me.

CARIN—Suppose I asked you to go away at once?

STEVENSON—Go away at once? What's on your mind?

CARIN—Will you go?

STEVENSON—Where?

CARIN—Home. Get over the border. Go anywhere so you go right now.

STEVENSON (*Thoughtfully*)—Oh, I see. Andraive is on the way to take Soblov's place in the congress, and with me out of it, the peace party will have a clear majority.

CARIN—Will you go?

STEVENSON—No. I'm not fighting on your side of this war question.

CARIN (*Rising quickly*)—It's not that. I want to save you. They are going to arrest you for the murder of Mr. Crandall.

STEVENSON—Ah, Soblov wants a clear field.

CARIN—While you are searching for the motive, you are losing your chance to escape. The police have already been here.

STEVENSON (*Going to door rear*)—Police here!

CARIN (*Running up and getting between Stevenson and door*)—Don't go there. They arrested your secretary, thinking it was you.

STEVENSON—Arrested Mannie! You saw them take him? (*She nods acquiescence.*) You saw them take him? Then you did it! You identified Mannie as John Stevenson!

CARIN—Will you go?

STEVENSON—You are the one that must go now. Helping a criminal to escape is worse in Europe than being the criminal.

CARIN—But you! The proofs against you are overwhelming. I saw them.

STEVENSON (*Holds handle of door rear*)—All the more reason why you should leave at once. Get your sister and niece and go over the border as soon as you can. Quick. That way. (*Indicating L.*) I hear them.

CARIN—Are you sure they are the police?

STEVENSON—Run. I have a way to save myself. Get a good start. I'll hold them back. (*Holds handle of door rear.*)

CARIN—Well, I did the best I could for you. Good-bye. (*Exit L. Enter Ming R.*)

MING—Honorable Takahari he say he have much gold for you. He come here quick to see you. You stay?

STEVENSON (*Holding door handle*)—Oh, I'll stay. Something tells me I'll stay. (*Boom of cannon is heard off.*)

MING—Ah, you hear. ONE! (*Takes quick backward step R. Cannon booms out again.*) TWO!! (*Takes another backward step. Cannon repeats.*) THREE!!! (*Ming pulls off Chinese wig and blouse, showing dapper young Japanese.*) Banzai! Banzai!! I am done with these honorable garments, honorable sir. (*Exit Ming R.*)

STEVENSON (*Takes step or two towards door R.*)—Well, what struck him? (*Enter Von Holst rear.*)

VON HOLST—Pardon the lack of ceremony, Herr Stevenson. Here is that check for your money. Give me the instructions.

STEVENSON—Things are moving rapidly, aren't they? (*Takes check and gives Von Holst documents which he takes from breast pocket.*)

VON HOLST—They are. (*Goes up, reading documents. Turns at door rear.*) Did you hear the guns?

STEVENSON—What did they mean?

VON HOLST—War has been declared. (*Exit Von Holst rear.*)

STEVENSON (*Goes rear*)—War! (*He opens door R. and hurriedly shuts it.*) The police! (*Goes L. Opens door and shuts it quickly.*) There, too. (*Goes to door rear and opens it. Beckons for policeman. Enter policeman. He leads policeman down stage.*) Look, I have a check for ten million dollars here. (*Shows check. The policeman nods.*) I want to go out and spend it. (*Switches off lights and exit closing door. Enter Von Holst L. He turns on lights.*)

VON HOLST—Did he go?

POLICEMAN—Yes.

VON HOLST—Off with that coat. (*Policeman takes off coat, so do the other policemen, who enter from doors R. and L. Von Holst picks up telephone.*) Hello, get me the chief of police. (*Pause.*) Thank you. Is this the chief of police? Good evening, your honor. This is Baron Von Holst talking. Your men made a mistake. Oh, yes, I assure you. You wanted them to get John Stevenson for this Crandall affair, didn't you? Well, they arrested his secretary instead. It's true. If you want Stevenson, stay close to the Hague National Bank. I know. He'll go there to verify a certified check. Don't mention it. Good-bye.

(Hangs up receiver. (Enter Carin L.) Von Holst does not see her. He addresses the policeman)—Get ready for a jail delivery tomorrow morning.

POLICEMAN—You want someone rescued, your honor?

VON HOLST—Yes. At no matter what cost, I want you to get John Stevenson over the border.

CARIN—Thank you, Baron Von Holst.

Curtain

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE—*Living room of an old chateau converted into a hospital near the front of a small neutral country that has been invaded. More than half of the rear wall has been shot away. Doors L. and R. Table center on which are hospital supplies. The hangings and pictures show that the owner of the house was a person of taste.*

Through the opening in the rear is seen a garden in the Italian style. Soldiers and Red Cross nurses are seen at intervals going back and forth. DELPHINE and other women in Red Cross dresses are discovered at rise of curtain. A wounded soldier is being carried out. Delphine is bandaging eyes of a boy. A DOCTOR turns away from the boy's cot as though he had just concluded an examination.

TIME—*Late afternoon, a few months after previous Act.*

DELPHINE—It's the same story, doctor. (*The boy on cot shows that he is paying attention.*)

DOCTOR—Yes.

DELPHINE—No chance whatever? (*Doctor shakes his head.*)

BOY (*Rising on elbow*)—Well, why don't you answer, doctor? Is there no chance for me? Am I going to be blind? (*Pause.*) Blind! Mother, I am blind. The eyes you kissed before I left home are of no use any more. I'll never see your face. I'll never be able to tell you the roses are blooming at the end of the garden walk. I'll never be able to see the roses. I'll never be able to see the day. It's going to be night always where I am. Always night. (*To doctor, fiercely*)—Is it? Why don't you answer, doctor?

DELPHINE—Lie down, now.

BOY—Why should I lie down? Why should I do anything? Who cares for me? Who? The government that

took me away without asking me? The government that made treaties without asking me? The government that broke treaties without asking me? And then stole the eyes that God gave me. Not all the treaties that were ever written or ever broken were worth my two eyes. Do you hear? Not all the treaties in the world.

DOCTOR—Take him away. (*Enter CARIN L.*)

CARIN (*As stretcher bearers pick up cot with boy*)—Gently. He is so young. (*To boy*) I have written to your mother.

BOY (*Clinging to her*)—Don't let them take me away from you. Your voice is like a prayer said at dusk. Keep me near you until my mother comes for me.

DELPHINE—Do let him stay. He won't be a bit in our way here. (*Doctor shakes his head.*)

BOY (*Turning towards doctor. After Pause*)—You don't answer. I'm headed for the scrap heap, eternal night clinging to my eyelashes. Do you hear me? Go tell the government officials what I think. Tell them I am blind and they can see, but that I can look into the future as far as they. Tell them I wished I had been born of the strong peoples that are trampling us under foot. Tell them that from the depth of darkness into which they have plunged me, I send up a prayer for the great dominating nation to swallow us at a gulp and put an end for all time to the hates born of differences of language. Tell them that the future holds only scorn for their betrayals and their little-ness. Tell them that they are so small, history will dismiss them with a footnote—just a footnote. (*Exeunt stretcher bearers with boy R. Delphine follows sympathetically.*)

CARIN (*Looking after boy*)—A boy. Suffering has made him a poet; possibly a prophet. (*Enter stretcher bearers with another wounded man on cot.*)

BEARER—That's all in this load, sir. (*Sits on edge of cot.*) I'm all in.

DOCTOR—How many altogether?

BEARER—Seventy-eight. More coming soon, though. I hear we've got to fall back again.

CARIN—Not another retreat?

DOCTOR—Our left wing's in danger.

BEARER—So's our center. The other fellows have the guns, the gas, the get-up and go. Say, what took us into this mix-up anyhow? We have nothing; they have everything.

DOCTOR—The enemy has everything on their side but right.

BEARER—After their guns blow all our forts into kingdom come, they'll have all the right on their side they'll be able to use. It's that way. Make a gun big enough to blow a country off the map and you can make anything you want right. (*Whirring of aeroplane is heard. The stretcher bearer runs rear and looks up.*) Gee, that plane's hit. Look at it. (*The doctor and Carin go rear and look up.*)

CARIN—The poor fellows! They'll be killed!

DOCTOR—Well played! He got under the wind. That's volplaning for you. (*The aeroplane glides to ground outside of the windows rear. STEVENSON is at the wheel. Mannie is wounded. Stevenson affects the dialect of a French-Canadian, has a beard and wears goggles.*)

STEVENSON—Lend one hand here, please. (*Doctor and stretcher bearer go out and assist in carrying Mannie into room. Carin goes to table and prepares bandages.*)

STRETCHER BEARER—Pretty limp. But he'll pull through.

STEVENSON—Pretty sure you been. How you can know?

BEARER (*Goes up*)—Oh, from the way he hangs. I'm getting to be able to spot the guys that'll kick out before sundown as soon as I squint them. (*Exit stretcher bearer rear.*)

STEVENSON (*Helping doctor*)—Quick, doctor. I'm afraid they've what you call, got him. Ah, Ma Belle, the nurse, you help heim?

CARIN (*Advances to cot. Looks at Mannie in surprise*)—Mr. Mannie! (*Looks closely at Stevenson.*)

DOCTOR—You know him?

CARIN (*Ignoring Stevenson's signs to her*)—Yes.

DOCTOR—American?

CARIN (*As Stevenson places finger on lips, Carin hesitates*)—I first met him in Europe.

DOCTOR—Well, it doesn't look serious. Concussion mostly, I think.

STEVENSON—Thank le Bon Dieu. A valuable man he is. Know each cloud and call him by name, just so quick. Say hello, there snow cap; ah there drizzle. Speak to the stars the same way. Laugh in the face of the bullets. But one get him, and he no laugh. You are sure, Monsieur le doctor, that he is not killed dead?

DOCTOR—Come back in an hour or so. He'll be able to talk to you.

STEVENSON—Just so. I'll come and tell him that the big gun with the voice of le tonner it get the reach of le diable, too. (*Exit rear.*)

BEARER (*Enters R.*)—Chief wants you, Doc. (*Exit.*)

DOCTOR—Right. (*To Carin*) Force a drop or two of this between his teeth.

CARIN—May I let him stay here a while?

DOCTOR—Well, being he's a countryman of yours, yes. Until we clear the place for the staff. You know the headquarters are going to be located here. (*Exit R. Enter Stevenson; takes off goggles.*)

STEVENSON—Carin!

CARIN (*She busies herself with Mannie and looks up only occasionally during the scene with Stevenson*)—What is it?

STEVENSON—I heard you had joined this corps.

CARIN—Well?

STEVENSON—Dropped in to see you. Thought your antagonism for a certain self-made American millionaire would vanish with his millions. (*Pause.*) Would you like to hear that with the millions went my reverence for the maker?

CARIN—I have no time to waste solving puzzles.

STEVENSON—Come to think of it, poverty is a puzzle, and I'm as poor as a neutral country between two belligerents.

CARIN—What do you want to prove by that?

STEVENSON—Oh, nothing, only I thought that it might make me more interesting.

CARIN—Indeed?

STEVENSON—Yes, indeed. Would you like some details about my factory being blown up by a good American with a dialect in his citizenship?

CARIN (*Abruptly*)—It will be an easy matter to rebuild with the ten million dollars you received for that death-dealing torpedo.

STEVENSON (*Sitting down*)—Argument is the sincerest form of flattery. If I'd got that money you'd display as much curiosity as if I told you that I had rabbit stew for lunch. By the way, lunches are quite intermittent around here, aren't they? Rabbits are, too.

CARIN (*Exasperated*)—You are very serious!

STEVENSON—When I used to be a malefactor of great wealth and paid my rent in advance to prove it, I was serious enough. You showed it by keeping far away from me. Now I'm broke.

CARIN (*With rising anger*)—Don't tell me you didn't sell your torpedo!

STEVENSON—It depends on what you call selling.

CARIN—Selling is selling. The invaders are using that very torpedo to crush this helpless country. Over half our patients, soldiers and civilians alike, are victims of the liquid fire it lets loose. Just now a mere boy was taken away from here a raving maniac because it had burned his eyes out.

STEVENSON—Liquid fire! That's the kindly, intellectual improvement made on my handiwork by the enemy. I contributed a dirigible torpedo, designed to carry dynamite against a fort or ship. That's war. They put in acids, gases, liquid fire and that's—something else.

CARIN—Anyhow, you took money for it.

STEVENSON (*Pulls out blank piece of paper*)—Do you call that money?

CARIN (*Looking at paper*)—It's blank.

STEVENSON—That immaculate bit of paper was once an order on the Hague National Bank for ten million dollars in gold. Do you remember how I used to insist on gold! Those good old times! Anyhow, this called for the gold and I called for the gold. I yelled for it. Then the police came. I was arrested.

CARIN—How did you escape?

STEVENSON—Wait, one thing at a time. Do you know, there was an Oriental touch about that arrest. Sometimes I see the long, lean hand of Takahari in it. Do you think Von Holst and Takahari went fifty-fifty on that torpedo?

CARIN—I don't know anything about it.

STEVENSON—I was just wondering. Anyhow, I had a brief but exciting introduction to a Dutch jail. Were you ever in a Dutch jail?

CARIN—Acting on your advice, no.

STEVENSON—Lucky for you. They're the worst ever.

CARIN—Is that where you found Mr. Mannie?

STEVENSON—Yes. By the way, he sent his regards to you as soon as he saw me. It was Mannie that convinced me I was going to be railroaded. He had studied the mass of evidence Soblov had accumulated against me. With the war on and everybody's sense of justice cut on the bias, do you blame me for accepting Von Holst's help and getting away in a sort of informal manner?

CARIN—Why didn't you go home?

STEVENSON—Home? I'm a celebrated case! I couldn't move without being discovered. Everything's dead set against me. Why, when it comes to a frame-up we in America are mere amateurs compared with these highly civilized Europeans that are giving each other the gas route. Look at that as just a little bit of an indication. (*Holds out the blank check.*) Everything, even the printing, faded out in twenty-four hours. Then think of Von Holst giving the police the tip they'll get me at the bank, and, on the heels of that, organizing a rescue party with a little trip over the border. Why, all the time I was one of the predatory rich, I never suspected that life was such a joke.

CARIN—I'm glad you find it funny.

STEVENSON—Who said anything about it being funny? It's a joke. J-O-K-E. (*Enter bearer R.*)

BEARER (*To Carin*)—Chief wants you.

CARIN (*To bearer*)—I'll be right in. (*Exit bearer R. Stevenson folds up check.*) No doubt you'll be able to get some chemical to revive the ink on that check. I know your fingers must itch to count those ten million . . . in gold. (*Exit R.*)

STEVENSON—Itch! Well, do they! (*He puts on goggles. Goes up. Enter SOBLOV and COMMANDANT rear. Stevenson steps back, salutes and goes rear.*)

SOBLOV (*Thoughtfully*)—Pardon me, my friend. I seem to have met you before.

STEVENSON (*Coming down and effusively shaking hands with Soblov*)—Jean Baptist Moreau has the fine honor to know you, monsieur? Good. Maybe I see you when habitant in Canada, I not can say.

SOBLOV (*To Commandant*)—What branch of the service is he in?

STEVENSON (*Deliberately takes off goggles*)—Ah, monsieur, over there, I learn the what you call, to fly. With all my money I buy one aeroplane. When the war come, I give my aeroplane.

COMMANDANT—He is our most valued air scout.

STEVENSON (*To Soblov*)—Think, monsieur, I won this, the medal of le merit. (*Shows medal.*) And this. (*Shows shoulder straps under his cloak.*)

SOBLOV (*Looking at shoulder straps*)—An officer!

COMMANDANT—He's division commander of our air forces. Came up from the line.

STEVENSON—My wings are there (*Indicating plane rear.*) Much wounded. Very much wounded. There is him also, my comrade of the aeroplane, also much wounded. Just now, I bring him here.

SOBLOV—I'm very glad you did. It gave me a chance to meet you. I always like to shake hands with a brave man.

STEVENSON (*They shake hands*)—*Merci, monsieur. Brave men are brothers. I know monsieur is brave. (Exit Stevenson rear after salute.)*

SOBLOV (*Looking after him*)—I was mistaken.

MANNIE (*Moves on cot as if in pain*)—Water. For God's sake, water. (*Soblov starts at the sound of the voice. Mannie gets up on his elbow. Soblov watches him.*)

COMMANDANT—Here—(*Pours out water from pitcher to tin cup*) my poor fellow.

SOBLOV (*With suggestion of sneer*)—Just a moment. (*Taking cup from commandant.*) I wish the honor of serving one who serves his country. (*He gives Mannie the cup; Mannie is about to drink when his eyes meet Soblov's. He stops.*)

SOBLOV—Why don't you drink?

MANNIE (*Sinking back on cot*)—Soblov!

SOBLOV (*With meaning, to Commandant*)—I told you we'd get the other one also. There he is.

MANNIE (*Half rising*)—You have him?

SOBLOV—Of course we have him. He flew with you on that aeroplane right into my arms.

MANNIE (*Turning away*)—That's tough luck.

SOBLOV (*To Commandant*)—My first suspicion was the correct one. Jean Baptist Moreau, habitant of Canada, is John Stevenson, wanted in Holland for murder. Get him!

MANNIE (*Half rising*)—Get him! You haven't got him yet?

SOBLOV—Not yet. We were not sure of our man until you convinced us.

MANNIE—You put something over on me, didn't you? You haven't him. Well, you won't get him. He's not here. Commandant, don't listen to him. Stevenson's not here.

SOBLOV (*To Commandant*)—Are you going to arrest him or not?

COMMANDANT—Moreau is a valuable officer. We have no time just now for investigation of anyone's past history.

MANNIE—Don't forget, Commandant, Moreau saved your army. He has been in the thick of it from the start and never hedged once. Don't insult him by listening to this fellow's chatter.

SOBLOV (*To Commandant, with dignity*)—I am a representative within your lines of your country's ally. I make the formal charge against Jean Baptist Moreau that he is John Stevenson, murderer and spy.

MANNIE—Spy! (*He sinks back on the cot insensible.*)

COMMANDANT—That's a serious charge, Prince Soblov, you bring against one of our bravest and most efficient officers. I warn you that I personally bear somewhat the relation of a patron of his. Where possible I shall stretch a point in his favor. (*Exit rear. Enter Officer L. He looks at Soblov then advances slowly to table and pulls out small book of cigarette papers. Leans against table as he rolls cigarette. Soblov watches him.*)

OFFICER—You smoke, monsieur?

SOBLOV (*Calmly looks at officer, then takes out cigarette case*)—Why, yes.

OFFICER—Bien. Would you like to try one of my cigarettes?

SOBLOV—With pleasure. (*Takes cigarette papers and tobacco. Starts to take out paper.*)

OFFICER—Pardon, monsieur, is he asleep? (*Indicating Mannie.*)

SOBLOV—Sound. He may even be dead.

OFFICER—Very well, take the paper from the end. (*Turns book of papers around. Soblov glances at papers and starts.*)

SOBLOV—You are——?

OFFICER (*Glancing around*)—Sh! All the data you need is written there. (*Indicating cigarette papers.*)

SOBLOV (*Looking at papers*)—The retreat is ordered?

OFFICER—Within ten minutes this chateau will be converted from a hospital to the staff headquarters. The range of this spot from hill 65 (*Turns one of the cigarette papers over*) of map 7X is here.

SOBLOV—Where are the reinforcements for the right wing? (*Indicating cigarette papers and glancing off.*)

OFFICER—Everything is there. Quick, someone is coming. (*Soblov puts cigarette papers in his pocket with tobacco. The officer goes to Mannie and bends over him. Enter Carin R.*)

SOBLOV (*Indicating Mannie*)—Yes, he lost consciousness on hearing some bad news.

OFFICER—He'll be all right now. (*Exit rear.*)

CARIN (*Stops as she is crossing to cot*)—Prince Soblov! (*She shows anxiety about Stevenson by looking off rear and watching Soblov while she talks.*)

SOBLOV (*Turns to her*)—Miss Meredith! Carin! (*Carin leans over Mannie and administers medicine.*)

CARIN—I didn't think you were within a thousand miles of here.

SOBLOV—I'd never be content to stay a thousand miles from any place you might be.

CARIN—Even war can't interfere with your old habit.

SOBLOV (*With touch of warmth*)—Of speaking the truth. Wherever you are, there my heart is.

CARIN—And I was once inclined to think modern war the most awful thing in the world.

SOBLOV—What do you think is?

CARIN—Speeches like yours.

SOBLOV (*In decidedly hurt tone*)—You do not take what I say seriously.

CARIN (*Looks off rear anxiously*)—Do you want me to think the awfulness even more awful?

SOBLOV—Listen, Carin.

CARIN (*Coming to him*)—Miss Meredith, if you please, Prince Soblov.

SOBLOV (*Passionately*)—No, it is Carin to me. Always Carin. When I learned where you had gone, I set the machinery in motion to get a commission to visit this front. It was to see you that I pulled the wool over the eyes of my government.

CARIN—Pulling the wool over the eyes of your government seems to be your favorite amusement.

SOBLOV (*Showing annoyance*)—I don't seem to make myself clear.

CARIN—As clear as a Prince of the House of Soblov and an ardent lover of universal peace at the point of gun need make himself.

SOBLOV—You are inclined to be satirical.

CARIN—You are inclined to be forgetful. Do you recall the night Mr. Crandall was killed he was on his way to lay before your Imperial Master proofs you had betrayed him into the hands of the party of blood and ruin?

SOBLOV (*Astonished*)—Proofs I had betrayed my Czar? (*She nods.*) This is the first time I have ever heard of it.

CARIN (*Nonplussed*)—Why, he told me that he had forced you to sign your resignation from the Peace Conference.

SOBLOV—He told you that? Did you see the resignation? (*She shakes her head.*) Can it be the old fellow was out of his mind? The ideal you made sacred to me in Washington, I held against every temptation. Before I met you, I was an open and avowed advocate of war, you remember.

CARIN (*She gives Mannie medicine*)—I do.

SOBLOV—More than that, I was a member of THE STATE.

CARIN—The silent government.

SOBLOV (*Craftily*)—The real governing power of the world, the military league. When you won me to the side of peace, I turned against that organization. In doing so, I made enemies—implacable enemies, who would not hesitate to furnish Mr. Crandall or anyone else proofs of all sorts to destroy me.

CARIN (*Doubtfully*)—It may be so.

SOBLOV—It is so. At this moment they are arresting a spy I denounced, a confirmed militarist.

CARIN (*Anxiously*)—Here?

SOBLOV (*Looking off L.*)—I think they have him out there.

CARIN (*Goes toward L.*)—Where? I'll go see. (*Exit L. Enter Stevenson rear between two soldiers. The Commandant follows. Mannie regains consciousness slowly.*)

STEVENSON—But I do not understand, mon commandant. I go but a few paces, then, presto, I am asked to return under guard.

SOBLOV—You are under arrest.

STEVENSON (*Addressing Commandant*)—Ah, then I have done something not amiable, mon commandant. (*Mannie half rises.*)

SOBLOV—Yes, Mr. John Stevenson, you have done something decidedly unamiable.

STEVENSON—Pardon me, you are evidently laboring under a misapprehension, monsieur. You called me by a name with which I am unfamiliar.

SOBLOV—Indeed. Well, you'll be quite familiar with it before we are done with you. (*To Mannie*) Here you, tell your commandant that this is John Stevenson.

MANNIE (*Craftily*)—Well, suppose I tell him, what are you going to pay me for it? If I lie for you, I want something worth while.

SOBLOV—I expected something like that from you. However, I have a witness. Get my man Pascual. He is at the automobile out there.

COMMANDANT (*To soldier*)—Bring him here. (*Exit soldier rear. Enter Carin L.*)

SOBLOV (*To Carin*)—You recognize this man? (*Carin looks at Stevenson.*) Well, well, is he not John Stevenson, inventor of the torpedo that's killing off all the commandant's soldiers.

COMMANDANT—Say yes or no, is he Stevenson? (*Carin looks from Stevenson to the Commandant, then to Soblov.*)

STEVENSON—Stevenson is my name, Commandant. (*Mannie falls back on cot.*)

MANNIE—Wouldn't that explode a gas bomb?

STEVENSON—Permit me, my Commandant. Before receiving this medal of merit from the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, I took him into my confidence about my true name.

COMMANDANT—And about this charge of murder against you?

STEVENSON—Yes. He assured me that I should get a hearing on the charge anywhere and at any time I desired if it came up while I was in the service.

CARIN—I wish to give my testimony at his trial.

SOBLOV—The trial of a spy is a mere formality.

COMMANDANT (*Severely*)—Whatever this man is, he is not a spy; I told you at the outset I would stretch every point to serve him. The Commander-in-Chief wishes it. We know how faithful he has been.

SOBLOV—Those who would betray, first win confidence.

STEVENSON—He's well acquainted with that system. Trained by the ochrana of Holy Russia, the Black Hundred, agents provocator, manipulators of every form of underhand political crime, he should be. (*Soblov registers this insult.*)

CARIN (*To Commandant*)—Mr. Stevenson is an American, he is also my friend. I pledge my honor he is not a spy.

STEVENSON—Thank you, Carin. It is worth while being under suspicion to hear you say that.

SOBLOV (*To Commandant, with touch of asperity*)—It is no longer suspicion. You killed Crandall.

STEVENSON (*To Commandant*)—May I presume on the promise of our Commander-in-Chief to demand from you an official investigation of that charge at once?

COMMANDANT—As an officer you are entitled to it. Under my personal direction I grant you immediate and unlimited opportunity to sift it to the bottom.

STEVENSON—That's all I want.

SOBLOV (*Hotly*)—But that's not the charge at present. Holland will press that one.

STEVENSON—Ah, you are changing your indictment. Do you know why you don't press the killing of Crandall to the issue here now? You are afraid. (*Soblov falls back a step. He shows that he is affected.*)

CARIN—Are you afraid, Prince Soblov?

MANNIE—Look at him. He is.

SOBLOV (*Recovering quickly*)—Why should I fear?

STEVENSON—You know better than any of us why you should fear, Prince Soblov.

SOBLOV (*Recovering and turning, smiling, to Commandant*)—Very subtle, these Americans. He merely suggests the old trick of the counter accusation. The more clumsy follow the historic precedent of Potiphar's wife, and make a blunt charge.

CARIN—But there was no counter accusation. He didn't say *you* had anything to do with Mr. Crandall's death.

STEVENSON—His guilty conscience said it for him. (*To Commandant*) I call your attention to that, sir. (*Saluting.*)

COMMANDANT—I have been observing. Evidently there is something beneath it all.

SOBLOV—You are right, Commandant. There is much beneath it. There is an attempt to sway you from a consideration of the facts that prove he is a spy in the pay of the enemy. (*To Stevenson*) Deny that you received ten million dollars for the torpedo that is shattering the ranks of this little army.

CARIN (*Hotly*)—I deny it. (*Stevenson looks gratefully at her.*)

SOBLOV—You!

CARIN (*Defiantly*)—I know it is not true. He didn't get a dollar for it.

COMMANDANT—Enough officers are here. (*Indicating room L.*) We'll get down to business at once. (*To soldiers*) Bring the prisoner. (*Exeunt Soblov, Stevenson, Commandant and soldiers. Enter other soldiers and orderly with PASCUAL rear.*)

CARIN—Pascual!

PASCUAL—Ah, your highborn highness, is it not terrible, this war?

MANNIE (*Seeing Pascual*)—A drink. Quick! (*Carin gives Mannie a drink. Pascual is taken off L. by soldiers.*)

Mannie glances around and sees that Pascual has gone. He then throws the water out of the tin cup.) Where's Pascual?

CARIN—Do you want him?

MANNIE—No. Here take this. (*Gives her tin cup.*) Hide it. Get close to him. Every chance you have, do this. (*He takes cup from her and taps it.*) Listen. One, two, three; one, two; one. Now one, two, three, four. Then back to the first, skip the next two and do the fourth, then one. Repeat that one three times—like this. (*He taps the tin cup again through the formula. He falls back on the cot.*)

CARIN—What is it?

MANNIE—The Siberian code. Pascual's afraid of it. Don't miss a chance to put him up against it. Sh! (*Enter Pascual with soldier L.*)

PASCUAL—I am to wait here, your highness.

CARIN—What are they doing? (*Goes to door L. and looks off.*) The court is sitting. Now they are getting Prince Soblov's story.

PASCUAL (*At door L.*)—The prince accuses the honorable American, Mr. Stevenson.

CARIN (*As if talking off*)—No, no, you are wrong. He did not sell the torpedo. They stole it from him. No, it was before war had been declared—days before it was declared on this country.

MANNIE (*Calling*)—Miss Meredith!

CARIN—Yes. (*She comes to Mannie.*)

MANNIE—Did you forget?

CARIN—What?

MANNIE—The Siberian code. (*It grows gradually darker.*)

PASCUAL (*Looking off and taking up story where Carin has left off*)—Mr. Stevenson is now talking. Ah, they tricked the honorable American with disappearing ink. How unfortunate! See he has the blank check. How sad! But he laughs, my God! He laughs at the loss of ten million dollars. Twenty million rubles! The brave commandant does not seem to care about that. He wants to know of—of the murder. (*Carin has gone near Pascual and taps the cup.*)

MANNIE—The murder of Mr. Crandall, Pascual! The murder that haunts your soul night and day. (*Adopting the deeper tone of Mr. Crandall.*) I return to bring the judgment of God unto him that kills his fellow man. He shall be as a weed that rots in the garden of life.

PASCUAL (*Backing into corner in fear and trembling*)—My God, it's there—there! (*Enter Soblov L. with two soldiers. Carin comes down to Mannie.*)

SOBLOV (*To Pascual*)—They want you next. Come. (*Carin taps cup.*)

PASCUAL (*With touch of mysticism*)—I heard it; it follows me. Listen.

SOBLOV (*In Russian*)—Shut up, fool.

MANNIE (*In same tone as before*)—The Lowly Nazarene has conquered where the battalions of the marshals have failed. I charge you wear this message in your heart.

PASCUAL—There! There! Don't you hear the voice?

SOBLOV (*Placing arm through Pascual's and leading him out*)—You are delaying the court. (*In Russian*) Tell your story. Be careful. (*Exeunt Pascual, Soblov and soldiers.*)

MANNIE (*To Carin*)—Keep it up. For God's sake, keep it up. We've got him going. (*Enter Delphine R. Mannie snatches cup from Carin and signals.*) Here you, go in there and tap that. This way. Listen. One, two, three; one, two. Now one, two, three, four.

DELPHINE (*With astonishment, going to Mannie*)—You? Here? (*Carin has gone up and looks off L.*)

MANNIE (*To Delphine*)—Go in. Go in.

DELPHINE—Wait a minute. Let me say hello.

MANNIE—We've got no time for that. Get busy. Stick close to Pascual. (*To Carin*) What are they doing now?

CARIN (*As Delphine goes up and looks off*)—Pascual's beginning. He's trembling all over.

MANNIE (*To Delphine who goes up and stands by Carin*) What are you doing there? Why don't you go in? Tap it close to Pascual. Quietly. Don't let him see you. Don't let Soblov see you. Well, why don't you do it? (*Impatiently.*)

DELPHINE—My, if you do that now, what'll it be when we're married! (*Exit L.*)

MANNIE (*To Carin*)—What is he saying?

CARIN—He's telling all about the night of the murder.

MANNIE—When he's through go in and get the commandant to ask him where he got the mud on his boots. Get him to ask why he crawled through the window. Ming saw him. He told me. I'll get Ming to testify if it comes to a regular trial.

CARIN—God, he says he saw John shoot Mr. Crandall. Listen, the Commandant is making him repeat it.

MANNIE (*To soldiers*)—Drag me up to that door. It's life and death.

CARIN (*To soldiers*)—Carry him up here. (*The soldiers guarding the door enter and take Mannie in cot to door L.*)

MANNIE—That's enough. Right there. I see Pascual now.

CARIN (*As if talking off. Propping Mannie up with pillows*)—Do you hear? He's giving the details. Listen: Followed Mr. Crandall and Mr. Stevenson into the garden, heard the argument. It was about—about me. Mr. Crandall never said that. Not a word of it. Oh, and Mr. Stevenson threatened him, if he married me. God, to put such a sin on his shoulders. Now listen! He saw Crandall push Stevenson back. Ordered him away. Then out came the revolver. Just one shot was fired. Stevenson dropped the revolver and ran. I'll prove that he lies. (*Is about to go off L.*)

MANNIE—Wait. Wait. There's something I forgot. My head's in a muddle. (*He gets out of the cot and staggers to his feet.*)

CARIN (*Coming to him*)—Get back into bed.

MANNIE—No, just a minute. (*He opens his shirt and pulls out copy of Soblov's resignation. Gives it to Carin.*)

CARIN—What is it?

MANNIE (*Sinking on the cot*)—The resignation. Soblov's.

CARIN—Where did you get this?

MANNIE—It's a photographic copy. Made it through a sheet of carbon we found in Crandall's desk.

CARIN (*With horror as she reads*)—He did resign! The date is the same. It's his signature! He did it.

MANNIE—No, no. Pascual did the shooting. Don't forget.

CARIN—But Soblov placed his finger on the trigger. (*Exit Carin L.*)

MANNIE—Give him the code. (*Falling on his knees beside cot facing door L.*) That's right. Now he's cringing. Spring the resignation. Spring it! Why don't you make Pascual identify it? Why don't you? Ah, Commandant, you're doing the good work. Don't shrink away, Pascual. It will do you no good. Yes, just as you say, the devil always leaves a hoof print. Watch out, Stevenson—(*He screams*) Soblov's going for it. Too late. He's torn it. Now he's tramping on it. That's right, my soldier boy. Give him another. Give it to him good. The code, Delphine, the code for Pascual. He'll break down sure. He'll confess. He's on his knees. Ah, what did I tell you? It's all over but the shouting. Huh! Look out, Stevenson, Soblov's got a gun. It's all off. (*Shot is fired.*) He's killed Pascual. (*Mannie sinks on cot. Struggle sounds off. Enter Delphine running L.*)

DELPHINE (*Showing fear. To soldiers as she shields Mannie from possible attack*)—Quick! Save him. (*Indicates Mannie.*) Carry him in here. (*Exeunt Delphine and soldiers carrying Mannie R. Soblov comes in, revolver in hand, struggling with soldiers, who disarm him. Enter Commandant, officers and soldiers L.*)

COMMANDANT—Search him. (*Soldiers search Soblov.*)

SOBLOV—Permit me to retain my cigarettes?

COMMANDANT (*To soldiers*)—Give them back. (*Soldiers return cigarette papers and tobacco.*)

SOBLOV—Thank you. (*Enter soldiers with Pascual on stretcher, followed by Carin and Stevenson.*)

PASCUAL (*As he passes Soblov*)—Say you forgive me, my prince. (*To Commandant*) I did it. I killed Mr. Cran-

dall in the garden, all alone. I waited for him. He had insulted me. That's the truth. It is all my fault.

SOBLOV—In my country dogs are not permitted to die in the presence of their masters. (*The Commandant makes sign to soldiers to carry Pascual off R.*)

PASCUAL—Just a word from you, my prince.

SOBLOV—I have a word for you. (*The soldiers stop near door R.*)

PASCUAL—Say it. Say it.

SOBLOV (*Speaking in Russian*)—It will give great comfort to you. Hell awaits the soul of every fool. (*Pascual gives a despairing cry as he is carried out R.*)

STEVENSON (*To Commandant*)—What are the formalities of transferring the charge of killing Mr. Crandall from my shoulders to his? (*Indicating Soblov.*)

SOBLOV (*Rolling cigarette*)—That matter is trite, I assure you, Mr. Stevenson. Monsieur, the Commandant, and I are quite en rapport on the important issue.

COMMANDANT—The shooting of a witness before a military tribunal.

SOBLOV (*To Stevenson*)—See, I told you. That is immediate death. (*To Commandant*) Not even the fact that I am a representative of a great ally could persuade you into any other interpretation of the military code. I have two requests to make before I am stood against the wall. First, may I smoke a few cigarettes?

COMMANDANT—You may.

SOBLOV (*Lighting cigarette*)—Thank you. Next, permit Miss Meredith to take possession of my personal effects that are in the automobile.

CARIN—You can hardly expect me to consider your secrets inviolate?

SOBLOV—Secrets! All my secrets, my dear Miss Meredith, have gone up in smoke. (*He tosses cigarette away as if it had bad taste and grinds it under his heel.*) May I light another? (*Takes out tobacco and book of cigarette papers and rolls and lights cigarette.*)

COMMANDANT—Yes.

SOBLOV—Thank you. (*To Carin. Stevenson watches Soblov suspiciously.*) You may find a few records of my earlier indiscretions written in my journal—a list of my debts, those annoying obligations that death cancels.

COMMANDANT—Nothing else?

SOBLOV—My indiscretions are longer than my memory of them. Let me see, I made a few notes as a result of my observations. Somehow I think I wrote down the arguments of the militarists.

CARIN—Being one.

SOBLOV (*With calm insolence as he smokes*)—The good bourgeois munition manufacturer, Stevenson, will no doubt agree with you.

STEVENSON (*To Soblov*)—Look here, you're stalling for some reason or other.

SOBLOV—Stalling! What a delicious colloquialism. (*To Commandant*) He means playing for time, Commandant, as if time were a factor with me now. (*Lights another cigarette.*) Pardon me, smoking makes me eloquent. I just wish to anticipate a few things you will find in my journal, Miss Meredith.

CARIN—Why not let me read them for myself?

SOBLOV—Then the great lesson would be lost on our good bourgeois munition maker, Stevenson. (*To Stevenson*) After giving a very valuable instrument of destruction into the hands of the militarists, you line up on the side of democracy. In that you are consistent. From your delightful self-governing, peace-loving nation have come the great inventions of modern war: machine gun, aeroplane, submarine. Militarism is making good use of them to throttle a few upstart democracies. Don't forget this, Stevenson. (*He lights another cigarette.*) The very knife that is cutting the throat of democracy was sharpened in the workshop of constitutional government. And it will always be so. Fighting in this war on the side of militarism and the divine right of kings to rule, are some of the staunchest enemies of royalty. They are hoodwinked. The keener intellect governs now—it will govern in the future. In addition to its own inventions, which remain a secret, militarism goes forth and purchases from the self-governing enemy the very weapon it will use to destroy the advocates of self-

government. And your councils are always open; the councils of the militarists are closed. Democracy may not use spies because it cannot, in the nature of things, know whom to trust. As for the militarists, they have spies in every democratic war congress—in every democratic peace congress. They have spies everywhere.

STEVENSON (*Grabbing Soblov's hands*)—Yes, and right here, too. Quick, the cigarettes. (*Commandant and soldiers take Soblov's cigarettes away.*)

COMMANDANT (*Looking over cigarette papers*)—My God, we are betrayed!

SOBLOV—That illustrates what I mean. Turn where you may, the enemies of your hypocritical, selfish, unidealistic self-government are constantly on guard to do their duty. Your America is full of them, as you will learn when the time comes for militarism to strike. (*Exeunt Soblov, Commandant and soldiers.*)

CARIN—I believe him. It's fearful.

STEVENSON—It is a world-wide conflict of ideas. Terms of peace can never be considered until one idea or the other prevails. Thank God, I am on the right side—with you.

CARIN (*Takes his hand*)—Thank God, you are, John, at last. We'll go home and warn every American of the danger that threatens.

Curtain

END OF ACT III

WILD OATS

WILD OATS

CHARACTERS

DOCTOR BELDEN.....	<i>Lover of his fellowman</i>
MRS. BELDEN.....	<i>His wife</i>
RANNOCK.....	<i>His eldest son</i>
SEWELL.....	<i>His younger son</i>
FREEMAN.....	<i>A visionary</i>
GERTIE.....	<i>His daughter</i>
PRESSER.....	<i>A detective</i>
MILLICENT.....	<i>A girl of the period</i>
A SERVANT.	

One set of scenery is used during entire action of play.

TIME—*Present.*

PLACE—*New York City.*

ACT I

SCENE—*Interior of living room in Dr. Belden's home, Stuyvesant Sq., New York.*

The room is well furnished. Door R. leads to the Doctor's consultation rooms. Door L. leads to interior of house. There is a window, on angle in upper corner of L., also door rear with an alcove L. Sewell is discovered looking off R. He steps back of door as Gertie enters. He is about twenty-one, impulsive and headstrong. Gertie is about eighteen. He shuts door after Gertie passes through. She is dressed as a nurse.

SEWELL (*Stands at door*)—Well, Gertie?

GERTIE (*In non-committal tone*)—Well?

SEWELL—You don't seem glad to see me.

GERTIE (*Going to bookshelf and taking down a volume. She speaks indifferently*)—It's only an hour since you made me say the same thing.

SEWELL (*Goes to her*)—We're down to cases. I never thought I'd be strong for elopements.

GERTIE (*Opening book at table, center*)—Agronomy—agronomy—where is it—Ag-agra— (*She runs down page with her finger.*)

SEWELL (*Covering book with hand*)—The Mater's coming home today. Hear that?

GERTIE—It sounds good to hear that. You're at least afraid of your mother.

SEWELL—She's only my step-mother and she's a wonder. Finds out what you want to do, then makes you do something different. Will you beat it with me before she comes?

GERTIE (*Again interested in book and indifferent to him*)—No.

SEWELL—Gee, how you must hate men.

GERTIE (*Turning page*)—Suppose I do.

SEWELL—I know why—One of them tricked you before you came here. (*Gertie registers this.*)

GERTIE (*Recovering*)—How you go on!

SEWELL—Why don't you tell me who it was. I'll punch his head for him.

GERTIE—I believe you would.

SEWELL (*Goes close to her*)—Try me. Who was it?

GERTIE—There wasn't anybody.

SEWELL—Then you just don't care for me. That's it?

GERTIE (*Busy with book*)—Agronomy—Ah, here it is.

SEWELL (*Covers book with his hand*)—I know. You think I can't get on. You think because I haven't any money, you'd have a tough time of it if you married me.

GERTIE—Why don't you say it's because you drink. You always put that in to help you over your self-pity mood.

SEWELL—I'll show you. I'll cut the booze, you'll see. I'll get a stake, too. Then I'll take you away. You'll go, won't you. (*Enter Mrs. Belden rear with Millicent, and servant carrying wraps, etc. Mrs. Belden is a well-dressed, well-preserved woman of about forty-two or three. Millicent is twenty odd, a well-dressed, vacuous, lisping girl of the period.*) Why, Mater (*Goes to Mrs. Belden*), and Millicent. How are you? (*Gertie goes R.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie*)—Kindly tell Doctor Belden that Mrs. Belden is here.

GERTIE—Yes, ma'am.

MILLICENT—Awfully pretty nurse girl, isn't she?

SEWELL—Yes. We grow them that way at our place.

MRS. BELDEN—Who is she? (*Enter Doctor Belden R. He is a kindly, tolerant student of abnormal psychology with unbounded faith in the latent good in everyone he meets. His age is about fifty-four or five.*)

DOCTOR—You did come, my dear. (*Kisses wife.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Just thought I'd surprise you. Brought Millicent along—

SEWELL—To surprise Rannock—or do you think you want to engage her to me?

MILLICENT—Sewell!

DOCTOR (*To Millicent, laughingly*)—There's the family skeleton on public view! Mrs. Belden wants to see everybody married to everybody else just as soon as they're able to repeat the marriage service from memory.

SEWELL—I've been converted to Mater's view of matrimony.

MILLICENT—Aw, Sewell, who's the girl?

MRS. BELDEN—Yes, who is it?

SEWELL—That's the way, you think a fellow can't change his mind unless a skirt's at the bottom of it.

MILLICENT—Aw, go on. Who is it?

DOCTOR—I'm sure there's no one. I'd not approve of Sewell marrying until he is established in some business or profession.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Sewell*)—You've got to learn the trick of earning money as well as spending it.

SEWELL—If I ever do it'll be some trick. I'm a joyous little spender.

DOCTOR—The young men of your period seem to boast of strange accomplishments—and with a young woman present.

MILLCENT—Oh, don't mind me. I'm used to it.

SEWELL—That would be a waste of time—Millicent favors a cash register tone of voice.

DOCTOR—This is too serious a matter to be dismissed with a factitious phrase.

SEWELL—I'm in line for a serious consideration of it.

MILLCENT (*Going L.*)—Now I know there's a girl. (*To Mrs. Belden*) It'll be my old room?

MRS. BELDEN (*Going with her to door*)—Yes—I know it's ready for you.

MILLCENT (*To Mrs. Belden*)—Don't trouble coming up. Your voice will be needed in the family council. Try and save Sewell. It would be a pity to let marriage spoil him. (*Exit L.*)

SEWELL (*To Doctor*)—I'm going to marry and I want all the money you're ever going to let me have.

MRS. BELDEN—Who is the girl?

SEWELL (*To Doctor*)—You're going to let me have some money, dad— I'll pay it back.

DOCTOR—If you are going to marry, you must get your own money.

MRS. BELDEN—Who is the girl?

SEWELL—Never mind that. (*To Doctor*) I've got to get a start. This is the first honest-to-God time I ever felt this way. I can't marry her unless I can make a living for her. I can't learn to make a living unless I have capital— Will you let me have it?

DOCTOR—Why don't you answer? Who is the girl?

SEWELL—If I tell you, will you give me a start?

DOCTOR—You can't impose conditions.

MRS. BELDEN—You're going to marry someone we'll be ashamed of.

SEWELL—I won't be ashamed of her—that's what counts. Now I'm asking for money because I know my own mother left some to Rannock and me. I want my share. (*To Mrs. Belden*) Those jewels you wear belonged to her before she died. I'm entitled to my share of them. When I get all that's coming to me, I won't need to ask anybody's permission to marry. (*Enter Gertie R.*)

GERTIE (*To Doctor*)—They have brought Mr. Van Doran.

DOCTOR—Thank you—I'll be right in. (*Mrs. Belden has been watching Sewell since Gertie entered. Gertie is about to go out.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie*)—Wait. (*To Doctor*) I presume this is your new assistant?

DOCTOR (*To Mrs. Belden*)—Yes. (*To Gertie*) Gertrude, this is Mrs. Belden.

GERTIE—Very glad to meet you, Mrs. Belden. (*Mrs. B. makes but slight acknowledgment of the introduction.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*Curtly to Gertie*)—You have had considerable experience in a sanatorium, Gertrude?

DOCTOR—Her value is far beyond the limits of her experience. She has the surest hand I know for one so young.

SEWELL (*Significantly watching Mrs. Belden*)—Of course her youth is against her, Mater?

DOCTOR—It's in her favor, I assure you.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie*)—You came to the doctor well recommended, of course. (*Gertie looks at the Doctor. The Doctor looks from Gertie to Sewell.*)

SEWELL—The best sort of recommendations.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie*)—Your family live in the city?

GERTIE—No—not at present.

MRS. BELDEN—They used to live here?

GERTIE—Well—no—I am from New England.

SEWELL—She comes from near Boston.

MRS. BELDEN—I am well acquainted in Boston. Who knows you there?

GERTIE—I don't know.

SEWELL—She left when she was younger than she is now.

MRS. BELDEN—Then where did you go? And when?

GERTIE—Dr. Belden will tell you all about it. (*Exit R.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Doctor*)—I knew that just as soon as I turned my back, you'd be picking up some undesirable.

SEWELL—I think she is very desirable.

DOCTOR—So do I. She's a positive discovery.

MRS. BELDEN—All your experiments of the past were positive discoveries—at first.

DOCTOR—She is different, my dear. Her touch is the deftest and her presence is the most re-assuring to my nervous patients I have ever seen.

MRS. BELDEN—Really, Doctor Belden, you astonish me. You allow yourself to be hoodwinked by a girl (*Looks at Sewell*) and you're not the only one in the house affected the same way.

SEWELL—You can't feaze me by hinting. I think she's all right.

DOCTOR—And I know she is.

MRS. BELDEN—From what prison did you take her?

SEWELL (*Quickly*)—She was in no prison—

MRS. BELDEN—yet. But she was headed for one. (*To Doctor*) What had she done?

SEWELL—Nothing.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Sewell in tone of rebuke*)—What do you know about it?

SEWELL—Everything.

MRS. BELDEN—Very likely. Anyhow, I'm asking your father.

DOCTOR—Sewell knows. He visited the woman's night court with me.

MRS. BELDEN—I was right. You picked her up in the night court.

DOCTOR—The judge paroled her in my keeping.

MRS. BELDEN—Why was she there in the first place?

SEWELL—There's nothing very thrilling about it. She was found screaming on the fire escape of a hotel.

MRS. BELDEN—That's all?

DOCTOR—That's all.

MRS. BELDEN—Had she no explanation?

SEWELL—She was attacked, and escaped. That's the explanation.

MRS. BELDEN—Where's her father and mother?

SEWELL—We didn't pry the lid off the life of her ancestors.

MRS. BELDEN (*Significantly*)—Naturally YOU accepted her at her FACE value.

SEWELL—And it's some value, believe me.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Doctor*)—Because this Miss Nobody from Nowhere smiles charmingly you go much further than you ever did before. You bring her right into my home. Is nothing sacred to you? Why did you not pay for her at some shelter as you did the others until she showed her true colors?

DOCTOR—Have patience until you know her, my dear. She is different. The girl has innate refinement. What her sorrow is, I don't know. When she is healed in body and soul, I'll have her leave.

SEWELL—It's in the cards that she won't go alone.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Sewell*)—She's the one you want to marry?

DOCTOR—Impossible.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Sewell*)—She is?

SEWELL (*Bravely facing them*)—Suppose she is. Suppose I love her. Suppose I know that she's the one person in the world that can keep me from going to hell.

MRS. BELDEN—You'll never marry her.

SEWELL—What do you say, dad?

DOCTOR—I agree with your mother— I don't approve.

SEWELL (*Hotly*)—What did you bring her here for? This is the first time I've had the genuine desire to be something better than a rum-soaked hanger on. I can see it plain. You won't give me a start in life. I'm facing a stone wall. (*Goes to door L.*) Don't forget, I may climb the wall. I'll get money somehow. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. BELDEN—That's where your sentimentalities are leading us. We'll be the laughing stock of every friend we have. Order her out of the house at once.

DOCTOR—You are blaming a mere child.

MRS. BELDEN (*Pushes button for servant*)—Child! She plays her cards so well in ten days that she has completely hoodwinked you, and has Sewell gasping like a fish—a fish that wants to marry—her. (*Picks up phone book and runs finger down list of names.*)

DOCTOR—My dear, I'd rather see a son of mine gasp as honestly and sincerely as Sewell does about this girl, than have him filching his emotions shamefully. (*Exit L. Mrs. Belden takes phone off hook.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*In Phone*)—Hello, get me Rector 8763. (*Pause*) Yes, is this the Woman's Night Court? This is Mrs. Belden—yes, of Doctor Belden's sanatorium, Stuyvesant Square. Could you send an officer of your court over here right away? Yes, it's special. Get a taxi; I'll meet the expense. (*Enter servant R.*)

SERVANT—Did you ring, ma'am?

MRS. BELDEN—Yes. Gather up the silverware and bring it to the safe.

SERVANT—Yes, ma'am. Anything else?

MRS. BELDEN—Bring the candle sticks in my room, also. You may also bring down that small clock, the one with the chime, in Doctor Belden's room. I'll get the rest of the things myself.

SERVANT (*Going L.*)—Yes, ma'am. (*Exit servant L.*)
(*Enter Gertie R.*)

GERTIE—Excuse me. There's a call for Doctor Belden.

MRS. BELDEN—Come here, girl. I want to speak to you.

GERTIE—Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BELDEN—Of course you heard a great deal about Doctor Belden before you came here?

GERTIE—No, ma'am.

MRS. BELDEN—You knew that he was an eccentric, kindly old doctor who had taken several girls out of your mode of life to reform them—and failed in each case.

GERTIE—The girls of my mode of life don't need reforming.

MRS. BELDEN—That's what they all thought, in the end. Some of them pretended differently for quite a while.

GERTIE—Pretended what?

MRS. BELDEN—Pretended that they wanted to reform.

GERTIE—Well, I'm not pretending.

MRS. BELDEN—I'm glad to learn that.

GERTIE—I don't want to reform.

MRS. BELDEN—Your sincerity is commendable. I'll have you repeat that speech to Dr. Belden.

GERTIE—It can give no offense.

MRS. BELDEN—I want him to know that you're one honest, straightforward brand that refuses to be snatched from the burning.

GERTIE—Dr. Belden hired me as his assistant. He didn't mention anything about brands and burning.

MRS. BELDEN—He hired you in the court room!

GERTIE—No. I was set free and out of the court room when he offered me work.

MRS. BELDEN—Don't you know that the Judge liberated you on Dr. Belden's account?

GERTIE—Yes, and I have thanked Dr. Belden, but I'd have been freed in any event. I had broken no law.

MRS. BELDEN—That's just what the others said.

GERTIE—If they said it as I say it, it was true.

MRS. BELDEN—What were you doing in the hotel previous to being discovered on the fire-escape?

GERTIE (*Losing some of her assurance*)—Oh—that? Well, I went there because— Why does a person go to a hotel?

MRS. BELDEN—Nice girls don't leave their homes and go to hotels.

GERTIE—I guess, according to that standard, I'm not a nice girl.

MRS. BELDEN—I quite agree with you.

GERTIE—Only a few, comparatively, are fortunate enough to be coddled and chaperoned. There's a great army of fine self-respecting girls in the world quite able to take care of themselves. I've tried to be one of them.

MRS. BELDEN—I want to know exactly how far you have succeeded.

GERTIE—I have succeeded to this extent, Mrs. Belden. My self-respect is still intact. If Dr. Belden had hired a man in my place, and he suited you, you wouldn't dare pry into his private life. He would be measured by his work. I demand exactly the same treatment. The instant Dr. Belden is dissatisfied with my work, I'll go.

MRS. BELDEN—You are putting yourself on a different footing than the facts of your engagement by Dr. Belden warrant. You were arrested.

GERTIE—You keep repeating that as if you were afraid I'd forget it. Some of the best men and women the world has ever known were arrested. Some were even condemned. At least, I escaped that—until I met you. (*Enter servant with card. Mrs. B. reads.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To servant*)—Show him in. (*Exit servant. Gertie starts to go. To Gertie.*) Don't go. There's someone here I want you to meet.

GERTIE—But I have my work to look after.

MRS. BELDEN (*Imperious tone*)—Stay here. (*Enter Presser rear.*) I'm glad you came, Mr. Presser. Do you recall this young woman? (*Indicating Gertie.*)

PRESSER (*To Gertie*)—Why— (*Looks closely at her*) you were up in the Woman's Night Court before Judge Miller.

MRS. BELDEN—On what charge?

PRESSER—Disturbing the peace.

GERTIE—There you are, Mrs. Belden. It's official. My serious crime was screaming.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—Why was she screaming?

PRESSER—She was attacked, it seems, by a man.

MRS. BELDEN—In a room. It's an hotel of sorts where she was?

PRESSER—All sorts.

GERTIE—They haven't special working-girl rates over at the Waldorf-Astoria.

MRS. BELDEN—What's the reputation of the place?

PRESSER—The usual Raines-law reputation.

MRS. BELDEN—What's that?

PRESSER—None at all.

GERTIE—It has one virtue. It is cheap.

PRESSER—Oh, not so very.

GERTIE—Anyhow, you'll admit it's the best I could do.

PRESSER—There's the Florence Crittenden home for girls.

GERTIE—You forget that I was a stranger in New York. I went where I was directed.

MRS. BELDEN (*Quickly*)—Who directed you?

GERTIE (*Hesitating*)—Why, a friend.

MRS. BELDEN—A man— (*Pause*) It *was* a man!

GERTIE—Look here, Mrs. Belden, I've stood just as much as I'm going to of your insinuations. I won't answer another question. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—You must learn where she came from, who her companions were and all about her.

PRESSER—That'll be a tough job.

MRS. BELDEN—I'll pay you well for it. I don't mind telling you that Dr. Belden has become as much attached to her as if she were his daughter. Then there's Dr. Belden's two sons, Rannock and Sewell. They are young men. You understand.

PRESSER—Perfectly. I'll do my best to trace her. I wish I had a photograph of her. (*Picks up photograph from table*) Why, here's one.

MRS. BELDEN—Don't talk nonsense. That's a portrait of myself taken twenty years ago.

PRESSER—I see that now. At first it looked a dead ringer for her. All right, I'll get busy. (*Enter Sewell R.*)

SEWELL—Hello, Presser, you haven't nerves, have you, that you want dad to fix up?

PRESSER—Why—er—no—can't say as I have.

MRS. BELDEN (*Quickly*)—Mr. Presser just dropped in to consult your father about his general health. That's all.

SEWELL—Your energetic attention to the arrival of pay day is telling on you. Take something for it.

PRESSER (*Goes to door rear*)—I will—I'll take my pay. (*Exit rear. Enter servant L. with jewels and ornaments.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To servant*)—Put them in the safe. (*Exit servant to safe.*)

SEWELL (*Watching servant off stage*)—What's on? What's all this fuss about the family trinkets?

MRS. BELDEN—Didn't you hear of burglars in the neighborhood? Of course not. Mr. Presser was saying that the police are keeping the matter secret in hopes of trapping the entire gang.

SEWELL—They'd get a nice haul here, wouldn't they?

MRS. BELDEN (*Watching servant off*)—This alone (*Taking off necklace*) would keep one of them and his family for a lifetime.

SEWELL (*Indicating jewels*)—Why shouldn't that be translated into terms of human happiness? It's a wonder my mother didn't give that trinket to charity before she died.

MRS. BELDEN—How do you know that this particular necklace belonged to your mother?

SEWELL—Oh, I know. She left that with her other jewels to be divided between Rannock and me. I've kept my eyes on it.

MRS. BELDEN—You'd better take a good long look at it now.

SEWELL—Thinking of planting it?

MRS. BELDEN (*Indifferently*)—Oh, I might exchange it—or sell it.

SEWELL (*Hotly*)—You wouldn't dare. It's my mother's.

MRS. BELDEN—You are positively amusing. (*Enter servant L.*)

SERVANT—The silverware's in the safe, ma'am.

MRS. BELDEN—Take this, and this— (*Gives servant objets d'art from mantel. Exit servant to alcove.*)

SEWELL—This burglar scare's certainly got you.

MRS. BELDEN—Not quite so much as the burglars have you. You're going to marry into that set, aren't you? (*Exit R.*) (*Sewell looks off, then goes to bookcase and takes volume which is a fake. He comes to table and fills glass with liquor from book and drinks. Enter Gertie dressed for street.*)

GERTIE—Gesundheit!

SEWELL—Ever read "Our Mutual Friend?" It's by Dickens. (*Holds out fake book and hides glass.*)

GERTIE—Smells as if your mutual friend was a brewer or something.

SEWELL—"Our Mutual Friend" is a dead one. Possibly that accounts for it.

GERTIE (*Uncovering glass*)—This is what gives off the fragrance, I think.

SEWELL (*As if surprised*)—That—Oh, that's my medicine. The fragrance is intended to fool my internal economy. It's one of those amiable fictions cooked up by the latest exponents of the Keeley cure.

GERTIE (*Picks up fake volume*)—After your deep study of "Our Mutual Friend" by Dickens, you graduated from the Keeley Institute? Is that it?

SEWELL (*Takes book*)—Dickens is a wonderful study. Diplomas guaranteed. I've got two signed by worthy Professor Keeley.

GERTIE—How old are you?

SEWELL—Oh, quite old, considering. I'm twenty-one.

GERTIE—When did you start this? (*Indicating drink.*)

SEWELL—So long ago I've forgotten. It was second nature. I went to a school where the head master requested the fashionable mothers not to serve champagne to his fashionable pupils at breakfast.

GERTIE—Did you have it for breakfast?

SEWELL—I got mine for lunch. The boys smuggled it in. It was great sport.

GERTIE—I can imagine.

SEWELL—About the only fun I ever had to equal it was when I sold my first Keeley cure diploma to an old classmate of mine for enough to get soused.

GERTIE—Well, good-bye. I trust you'll get all the fun you want out of life peddling your other Keeley Cure diplomas.

SEWELL—You're not going? (*Sets down glass.*)

GERTIE (*Picks up bag*)—Yes, I am.

SEWELL—For good.

GERTIE—For good. (*Goes rear.*)

SEWELL (*Getting between her and door*)—You don't know what you're saying. Don't you know I love you. I want to marry you.

GERTIE—Do you think marriage might substitute for the Keeley cure for a month or two?

SEWELL—I'll cut it all out. I'll sign the pledge now. Never touch a drop as long as I live.

GERTIE—You're a nice enough boy, Sewell, and I don't mind saying I've grown quite fond of you. But—pledges are pledges.

SEWELL—I know, you think I'm not a fighter—that I'll never win my way in the world (*Stopping her progress as she tries to go out*).

GERTIE—Never mind what I think. Kindly let me pass.

SEWELL—You can't go, I tell you. My whole life's bound up with yours. If you go I'll do something desperate.

GERTIE—That's the kind of talk would make me go, if nothing else would.

SEWELL—What started this? Why do you make up your mind to go all of a sudden? I know, it was my step-mother.

GERTIE—What has she to do with me?

SEWELL—She did it. I know. I'll make her pay.

GERTIE—You leave her alone. She did nothing. I'm just tired of the place.

SEWELL—You got tired mighty quick after she came. Only an hour ago you were going around here singing. Dad thought— (*Pause*) What does he say about your going?

GERTIE—Nothing yet. I left a note for him.

SEWELL—Afraid to face him!

GERTIE—Why should I be afraid?

SEWELL—Because you're putting over a shabby trick on him. Honest, I've never seen him take so madly to anyone. You might be his daughter the way he goes on about you.

GERTIE—I'm awfully sorry for him and I don't mind saying I'm sorry that I have to leave such a good home. I've been quite happy here. And that right on the heels of a settled conviction that I'd never be happy again.

SEWELL (*Earnestly*)—Did I help? Say I did, Gertie. Say I was some good some time.

DOCTOR (*Entering, rear*)—Going out, Gertie?

SEWELL—Dad, she's running away.

DOCTOR—Are you going to leave us, Gertrude?

GERTIE—Yes, Doctor. I left a little note thanking you for your kindness. Do you mind shaking hands with me? (*Goes to him and holds out hand.*)

DOCTOR—I'm heartily sorry you have made up your mind to leave us. I'll miss you. My patients will miss you. I had thought that you would become reconciled to the shut-in kind of life, and take to the work.

GERTIE—You don't know what this experience has been to me. I'll never forget it. Nor shall I ever forget you.

SEWELL—If it all meant so much to you, why are you running away?

DOCTOR—Miss Gertrude is not running away, Sewell. She is going of her own volition. It is not ours to question her actions or her motives. (*To Gertie*) Permit me to see you to the door. (*She picks up bag. He leads her out rear.*)

GERTIE—Good-bye, Sewell.

SEWELL—Good-bye, Gertie, good-bye. (*Long pause.*) Oh, hell. What's the use? (*He turns to table and drinks the liquor at a gulp. Fills glass and repeats. Then he drinks from the fake book. Enter Mrs. Belden L. with trinkets and a small clock. Sewell sits as if studying book.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*Lays stuff on table*)—You've become quite studious lately.

SEWELL—I'm determined to get another diploma.

MRS. BELDEN (*Exits L. and re-enters*)—Wait until you have one first.

SEWELL—I've diplomas that are not recognized among the high-brows, but I've got them.

MRS. BELDEN—Much good may they do you!

SEWELL—It's the getting them that does me the most good. That is, you know, the leading up—the preliminary studies.

MRS. BELDEN—Are you going to be here a minute or two? I want to get the rest of the things.

SEWELL—If the irrigation system holds out, I'll take root here.

MRS. BELDEN—See that nothing happens. (*Exit R.*)

SEWELL—Nothing will happen. (*Staggers to L. and looks off. Then disappears in alcove. He re-enters and resumes position. Re-enter Mrs. Belden R. with more ojets d'art. She goes to alcove.*)

MRS. BELDEN—That's about all.

SEWELL (*Laying fake book down*)—That's about enough.

MRS. BELDEN—You certainly have applied yourself more than usual this afternoon.

SEWELL—Greater incentive. First of all, the study is an enticing one, then the reward is not to be sneezed at.

MRS. BELDEN (*Coming over to him, she sniffs*)—Why, what's that?

SEWELL—What's what?

MRS. BELDEN—The smell? It's whiskey, I do believe. (*She picks up fake book and puts it to her nose. Pours out the few remaining drops.*)

SEWELL—Too late. I've completed the course in "Our Mutual Friend," by Dickens. Absolutely completed it.

MRS. BELDEN—You certainly have. And I see that third diploma waiting for you.

SEWELL—Yours is the true prophetic insight.

MRS. BELDEN—A nice mess you're making of your life.

SEWELL—Well, it's my own life.

MRS. BELDEN—It's anything but respectable.

SEWELL—Permit me. I'm rather glad I made a fizzle of my existence now.

MRS. BELDEN—Why?

SEWELL—By no stretch of the imagination can it ever be said that I even tried to be respectable. (*Exit L.*) (*Enter Doctor rear.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*Holding out fake book*)—Did you see this?

DOCTOR—"Our Mutual Friend!" (*Takes it*) Good reading, I remember, when I read it.

MRS. BELDEN—Drank it.

DOCTOR—Read it.

MRS. BELDEN—Not this "Mutual Friend." This is by Sewell, for Sewell and of Sewell for the propagation of faith in the Keeley cure. You don't read it; you drink it. (*While talking she shows him that it is a disguised bottle. She holds it to his nose.*)

DOCTOR—Bless my soul!

MRS. BELDEN—What are you going to do?

DOCTOR—What can one do?

MRS. BELDEN—He is heading straight to the devil. In fact the whole world is.

DOCTOR—From the time of the prophets to the present, the world has been on the brink of destruction. Somehow or other, we have never toppled over. Nor will we.

MRS. BELDEN—You seem sure of that.

DOCTOR—I am. Nature is always trying to establish a balance. Just as sure as there is excessive individual or social sin, so there is a swing to the opposite, and we have excessive virtue. I really don't know which is worse. (*Enter Rannock rear. He is a self-centered egoist, with the morals of a mink. About 26.*)

RANNOCK—Hello, dad. How are you, mater?

DOCTOR—We heard from you only once in two weeks, Rannock.

RANNOCK—Off on a lark. Yachting, you know. Went as far south as the Bahamas.

MRS. BELDEN—Even Dorothy didn't get a line from you.

RANNOCK—I was dropping most of my lines to the fish. The biting was good, Dad.

MRS. BELDEN (*Suspiciously*)—You're not much sunburned after the exposure.

RANNOCK—Under awnings, looking lazily at the sea. Dodged the bronzing kisses. Then we did a great deal of our fishing at night.

MRS. BELDEN (*Meaningly*)—I've noticed that peculiarity of the present-day city young men to do most of their fishing at night.

RANNOCK—Too bad, Mater, that there are no brakes on Time's car, so you could have kept in the running a year or two longer with the city young women companions of the city young men.

DOCTOR—Your mother is quite satisfied.

RANNOCK (*Cynically*)—I doubt it. You know, youth is always exceeding the speed limit, especially if feminine. Before a good-looking girl can find the right word to coax

it to stay, it lays a wrinkle on her cheek that invites rouge the rest of her life.

MRS. BELDEN (*Hotly*)—I had all the enjoyment of youth that I wanted.

RANNOCK (*Quietly and knowingly*)—I'll bet you did. I'm always suspicious of the early days of those who grow excessively good in later life.

DOCTOR—Rannock, you are over-stepping the line.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Doctor*)—I'm quite able to defend myself, thank you. (*To Rannock*) Dorothy's sister Millicent is here. She knows all about your philosophy.

RANNOCK—Oh, yes, I was told you had exposed my minor deficiencies.

MRS. BELDEN—She told you everything I said about you?

RANNOCK—Well she did the best she could with her limited time. She had only a week. (*Enter Millicent L. with jewel box which she gives to Mrs. Belden.*)

MILLICENT—The maid insisted on me bringing these to you.

MRS. BELDEN—I don't want you to run any unnecessary risks. (*Takes jewels.*) I'll put them in the safe (*Goes off into alcove.*)

RANNOCK (*Indicating Mrs. Belden*)—She hasn't succeeded in marrying you off to anyone yet.

MILLICENT—So far, I've escaped her matrimonial plans. Heaven help me in the next week or two. I think my mother's in the plot to bind me hand and foot and deliver me to some eligible.

MRS. BELDEN (*Off stage, screaming*)—They're gone! Help! (*All rush to alcove. Enter Mrs. B.*)

DOCTOR—What is it? What's wrong? (*Leading her to chair.*)

MILLICENT—Tell us. What is it?

MRS. BELDEN—My necklace. Everything I had.

MILLICENT—Stolen? Are my things gone, too?

MRS. BELDEN—Yours are in the safe. My necklace! It was there ten minutes ago!

RANNOCK—Ten minutes ago? Regular safe artists stick to the night shift. Someone in the house did it.

MRS. BELDEN (*Recovering*)—That's right. Gertrude. Get her. (*Rises and goes R.*)

MILLICENT—Not that pretty nurse?

MRS. BELDEN (*About to go off R.*)—Pretty thief! (*To Doctor*) Where is Gertie?

DOCTOR (*To Mrs. Belden*)—She's not there. (*Mrs B. turns from opening door R.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Where is she?

DOCTOR—She went away.

RANNOCK—Who are you talking about?

MRS. BELDEN—A thief. A girl of the underworld that your father picked up in the night court.

RANNOCK—At it again, dad?

DOCTOR—I don't believe the girl had anything to do with the robbery.

MRS. BELDEN—I expected you to say that. No one you know ever does anything.

RANNOCK—This is not a case for argument. It's a case for the police.

MRS. BELDEN—Call them.

RANNOCK (*In phone*)—Hello. Get me the police station. In a hurry.

Curtain

END OF ACT I

WILD OATS

ACT II

SCENE—*Same as Act I.*

TIME—*Next morning.*

Mrs. Belden is discovered with servant. The servant is standing near bookcase, her arms held out receiving books from Mrs. Belden. Mrs. Belden is standing on a chair and after picking up a volume and shaking it and showing it is a fake book, pours liquor into a pitcher. Enter Rannock rear.

RANNOCK (*Sniffs*)—Have you run into a private distillery? (*Holds finger against the flowing liquor and places it against his lips.*) It's the real stuff. (*Takes empty book from her. Reads*) "Our Mutual Friend!"

MRS. BELDEN—In five volumes. (*She indicates books held by servant.*) Count them.

RANNOCK (*Glancing at books*)—Dickens certainly spread himself.

MRS. BELDEN (*To servant*)—You may go. (*Exit servant L., carrying books and pitcher.*) It was Sewell that spread himself.

RANNOCK—*He* didn't write "Our Mutual Friend."

MRS. BELDEN—He found drinking it more to his taste.

RANNOCK—I get you. Dad tells me that Sewell hasn't been home all night.

MRS. BELDEN—I know. I wonder if he's gone off with that little thief.

RANNOCK—Now look here, Mater, that brother of mine is a rotter in a lot of ways, especially when it comes to lining up with "Our Mutual Friend" here (*Indicating liquor in books*), but he'd never crack a crib.

MRS. BELDEN—What's that?

RANNOCK—Crack a crib! Loot a safe! Didn't you hear the police use it here last night?

MRS. BELDEN—Don't let the police become your standard in the matter of language.

RANNOCK—They've got to become the standard of something. They'll never be at detecting crime. I'll catch that girl myself, before they get around to think about it.

MRS. BELDEN—What have you done?

RANNOCK—Dad told me he gave her an address. One of his temporary shelters.

MRS. BELDEN—You don't think she'd go there!

RANNOCK—She's been there. Promised to come back. Asked if she could use it as an address for her mail.

MRS. BELDEN—It seems impossible. She's running into the lion's mouth.

RANNOCK—That's just it. I have two lions ready to swallow her the minute she turns up again.

MRS. BELDEN—If she sold the jewels she'd never need to apply for shelter anywhere as long as she lived.

RANNOCK—One can't sell a fifty-thousand-dollar necklace over night. She's planted it, and is waiting until the excitement dies down. Why, her going where Dad sent her will be almost an alibi for her. Everybody'll ask why she took the chance. Didn't you? Unless you find the jewels on her, you can't prove anything.

MRS. BELDEN—What are we to do?

RANNOCK—My private detective will bring her here. We'll tell her she was seen taking the stuff.

MRS. BELDEN—She must be punished.

RANNOCK—She will be. Any promise we make needn't bind us. (*Enter Doctor R.*)

DOCTOR—Can anything have happened Sewell?

MRS. BELDEN—He's certainly old enough to take care of himself.

DOCTOR—I often wonder if we ever get old enough for that. I wish you'd go to some of his old haunts and try and find him, Rannock.

RANNOCK—I've been on the go all night trying to get track of the thief. I'm all beat up.

DOCTOR—The hunting instinct is uppermost in you.

RANNOCK—Nice thanks for my work trying to get the jewels back.

DOCTOR—Your mother will thank you for that. I am more interested in those actions of yours that show the manner of man you are than all the gew-gaws ever manufactured.

MRS. BELDEN—I may have said many things about Rannock in the past. I want to apologize. He has been a comfort to me all through my loss.

DOCTOR—Dear female of the species, how emotional congruity blinds you to the fact that I am merely reaching down into the personality of Rannock to see the soul his environment has developed.

RANNOCK—My soul's all right—if I have one.

DOCTOR—You should never doubt the existence of your soul. It is the fine, noble, forgiving part of you.

RANNOCK (*Yawning, goes L.*)—If that's the case, I'll interview it in my sleep. I never come face to face with it when I'm awake. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Rannock is really doing wonders to catch the thief.

DOCTOR—I confess I'm sorry. He shows more zeal in this than in anything he has ever taken up before. I'd hate to have a detective in the family.

MRS. BELDEN—I expect you to become maudlin over the creature when he finds her, and beg us to let her go.

DOCTOR—Unless she's an habitual criminal, I'd say restitution is punishment enough.

MRS. BELDEN—Nonsense. A term in prison will teach her better.

DOCTOR—Even if she is guilty, a term in prison will turn her out worse. She will then be mentally alienated from her social group and she'll rebel because she'll instinctively know that in taking the necklace she obeyed a primitive impulse stronger than herself, and an impulse for which she is no way responsible.

MRS. BELDEN—A rather fine spun theory, isn't it?

DOCTOR—I'm dealing with facts. We've all been first offenders.

MRS. BELDEN—Everybody?

DOCTOR—There isn't a man or woman alive that has not been, at one time or other, a criminal. I have been one—you have been one.

MRS. BELDEN (*Half fearfully*)—How do you know?

DOCTOR—Because we have obeyed the call of ancestors who have written their desires in our blood and nerves.

MRS. BELDEN (*Recovering*)—I believe that this girl is fully responsible for every act of her life.

DOCTOR—When the actions are good, yes. Do you know that almost every natural impulse of ours is vicious. It's against some law. Our environment is an aid to sin.

MRS. BELDEN—Don't tell me I've ever been a thief, even mentally.

DOCTOR—Perhaps you have been worse, according to some standards. Not mine, remember. Accepting these standards, few dare tabulate their thoughts for the world to read.

MRS. BELDEN—I'm not ashamed of what I think.

DOCTOR—You are exceptional. Only saints can hold aloof from our fellow creatures and create a Heaven in the midst of our hell here. Unfortunately we have just a limited number of saints in our city directory.

MRS. BELDEN—I don't care. If you're making a plea for this girl in advance, you can stop. She'll have to pay for what she did. I believe everyone should pay. (*Enter servant, followed by Presser.*)

PRESSER—I have good news for you, ma'am. The girl's father has been to the hotel looking for her.

MRS. BELDEN—He's one of the gang of burglars that she's in with.

DOCTOR—Isn't that jumping to a conclusion?

MRS. BELDEN (*Ignoring Doctor. To Presser*)—Do you know that she ran away with my pearl necklace?

PRESSER (*Astonished*)—No!

DOCTOR (*To Mrs. Belden*)—Neither do you.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Doctor, exasperated*)—Oh, I don't expect you to listen to reason.

PRESSER—The soft stuff don't go with her kind, Doctor. I knew she'd turn some trick.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—You can recognize her, I wish you'd go down to— (*To Doctor*) What address was that you gave her to find shelter?

DOCTOR (*Showing that he intends to keep it secret*)—Oh—that—I have forgotten.

MRS. BELDEN (*Satirically*)—You have a very convenient memory. You told Rannock on the impulse, no doubt. I'll find out from him. (*Exit L.*)

DOCTOR (*To Presser*)—You are very zealous in your pursuit of this poor creature.

PRESSER—Well, Doctor, we all know how good your heart is. But if we didn't keep hot on the trail of crooks, the world would go to the devil.

DOCTOR—Good authorities, including a number of duly accredited prophets, say that it is going there anyhow.

PRESSER—I believe that.

DOCTOR—Then why interfere with the inevitable?

PRESSER—What's that?

DOCTOR—I say, why try to stop what can't be stopped?

PRESSER—It keeps us busy. There's a mighty lot of fine men and women would be out of work if all the people turned good on a sudden.

DOCTOR—There you have the very essence of the thing. Cut off the pay of the law makers, let your law enforcers work as hard as you like for nothing, and there would be fewer statutes to break, and fewer broken.

PRESSER—What would become of the law?

DOCTOR—If I degraded myself enough to say what I think of some of our laws I'd put myself on a level with some of our law makers.

PRESSER—Do you know, Doctor, I sometimes think you're a little bit of an anarchist.

DOCTOR—If reducing the chances of a lot of people to stick their collective noses into my private affairs is anarchism, make the most of it. (*Enter Mrs. Belden L.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Here's the address. (*Holds out scrap of paper.*) You'll find a private detective waiting for her there.

PRESSER (*Takes paper*)—If she turns up, we'll nab her.

MRS. BELDEN—Bring her here.

DOCTOR—Do.

PRESSER—That's hardly regular.

MRS. BELDEN—Do it. We want to get the jewels back. We must get them. I'll make it right with you.

DOCTOR—Don't put her in a cell until you can't help yourself. I ask that as a personal favor.

PRESSER—Well, I guess it'd do no particular harm. (*Goes up, turns at door.*) Say, I left this address at that hotel for her father. He may be up here any minute.

DOCTOR—Thank you. She'll need every friend she can find.

PRESSER—You bet. Once we get our mitts on her, friends won't do her much good. (*Exit Presser rear.*)

MRS. BELDEN—I'm going to make the case of this girl a warning to you. After this you'll see the danger you run with every one of her kind that you waste your time and energy on. (*Goes R.*)

DOCTOR—So you are hounding her and holding her guilty of theft in your own mind and in the mind of every person you meet to reform me?

MRS. BELDEN—She's guilty. That settles it. (*Exit R. Enter Presser rear with Gertie and a detective. The detective appears at door rear. Presser comes down with Gertie. Exit detective rear.*)

PRESSER—Here she is. Mendal here was toting her along when I met them.

GERTIE—Doctor!

DOCTOR—I'm glad to see you back, my child.

GERTIE—Why didn't you send a note for me? These men said I had to come along, just as if I were arrested.

DOCTOR—Assure her that she is not under arrest. (*Presser hesitates.*) Do it.

PRESSER—As far as I know, you're not. You see you're paroled in the Doctor's care.

DOCTOR (*Joyfully*)—That's it. Don't you remember the Judge released you on condition that you remain in my house.

GERTIE—I can't stay here.

PRESSER—You'll be lucky if it turns out that you can.

GERTIE—What do you mean?

DOCTOR—He means that you are really more fortunate than you know being permitted to stay here.

GERTIE—I won't stay.

PRESSER (*Meaningly*)—You'd better. The Judge might order you into a cell, you know.

DOCTOR—Yes, my child—let me persuade you. Please go to your old room. (*Gertie goes R.*)

PRESSER (*Stopping her*)—Not so fast. Where's Mrs. Belden?

GERTIE (*To Presser*)—How long does that parole last?

PRESSER—Thirty days altogether.

GERTIE—That means I have to serve two weeks more.

DOCTOR—I promise to make the time as agreeable for you as possible.

GERTIE—There's only one thing I'll ask if I stay. Arrange it so I won't meet Mrs. Belden. (*Enter Mrs. B., L.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—You found her?

PRESSER—Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BELDEN—Did you get her accomplices?

DOCTOR (*To Gertie*)—You may go to your room, Gertie. (*Gertie opens door R.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie*)—You stay here.

GERTIE (*Going to Presser*)—I've changed my mind. I don't want to be paroled. I'll risk having the Judge send me to a cell for two weeks.

MRS. BELDEN—You'll spend a great deal more there than two weeks.

DOCTOR—Be careful.

MRS. BELDEN—You are going to be convinced this time so that one of her kind will never set foot in my house again.

DOCTOR—Let her go, and I'll promise now never to have a tender thought toward a fellow creature as long as I live.

MRS. BELDEN—I will if she gives up the necklace.

GERTIE—Necklace! What necklace?

DOCTOR—See, I told you she knew nothing of it.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—Injured innocence! You've encountered that before.

PRESSER—They're all angels, if you take their stories, ma'am.

GERTIE (*To Presser*)—I want to know what new charge you're fixing up against me.

PRESSER—Cut that. Just as soon as crooks get their second wind after the dope's on them for fair, they begin to holler frame-up.

GERTIE (*To Doctor*)—You tell me all about this, Doctor. I'm sure you think me entitled to an explanation.

DOCTOR—I do. I'm sorry for you and I want to say that I do not believe the charge.

MRS. BELDEN—Look here, girl, don't run off with the notion that he can save you.

GERTIE (*To Mrs. Belden*)—You tell, then. You seem to know all about everything.

MRS. BELDEN—I know all about you.

GERTIE—Then tell me about myself.

PRESSER—You copped a necklace out of the safe here before your getaway.

GERTIE (*To Doctor, incredulously*)—He says I stole a necklace out of YOUR house, Doctor?

MRS. BELDEN—I say so, too.

GERTIE (*To Doctor*)—You don't believe it?

DOCTOR—My child, I'd hardly believe it if you confessed.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Doctor*)—I wish you'd go and leave me to deal with this case. I want to get my jewels back.

GERTIE—Don't leave me alone with them, Doctor. You seem to be the only one in the world that thinks there's any truth in anything. You believe in me.

MRS. BELDEN—It's not a matter of believing in you. It's a matter of just plain proof that you are one of a gang of thieves.

DOCTOR (*To Mrs. Belden*)—You have no proofs of anything of the sort.

MRS. BELDEN—Haven't I?

GERTIE—You can't have. (*To Presser*) If you knew me, you'd know how impossible it all is.

PRESSER—Now's the time to tell all about yourself.

MRS. BELDEN—Who are you? Where did you come from?

DOCTOR—If you are frank, it will help you.

GERTIE (*After pause*)—Very well.

PRESSER—Stick to the truth.

GERTIE—I will.

MRS. BELDEN—You've decided to confess!

GERTIE (*Wearily to Doctor*)—Do you mind if I sit down?

DOCTOR—Pardon me. Here— (*Places chair for her.*)

GERTIE—About three weeks ago I came to New York from a small town.

PRESSER—There's a lot of small towns.

MRS. BELDEN—Tell us which one.

GERTIE—Brockton. It's known as a factory town. I worked in one of the factories, but not steadily.

PRESSER—Did you live in Brockton alone?

GERTIE—I lived with my father.

PRESSER—What's his name and address?

GERTIE—I'll tell you about him.

MRS. BELDEN—Tell us where we can find him. That's all we want to know.

GERTIE—I can't tell you.

PRESSER—Why not?

GERTIE—He left Brockton. I don't know where he is.

MRS. BELDEN—A likely story.

DOCTOR—Tell us why you came to New York.

GERTIE—To look for my father.

PRESSER—If you didn't know where your father went to when he left Brockton, why did you come to New York to look for him?

GERTIE—I got a letter from him.

MRS. BELDEN—Where's that letter?

GERTIE—I left it in Brockton.

PRESSER—With his address in it?

GERTIE—There was no address in it.

MRS. BELDEN—You said you came here because his letter gave you a New York address.

GERTIE—I did not. I knew he was here from the post-mark only.

PRESSER—You wriggled out of that in good shape.

DOCTOR (*Severely to Presser*)—The girl is not wriggling out of anything. I'll order you out of the house if you repeat that.

PRESSER—The hell you will. If I go, she'll go with me.

DOCTOR—Not without a warrant.

PRESSER (*Tapping pocket containing revolver*)—I've a little warrant here that goes further with crooks than any you ever saw.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—You'd better take her along. She is just heaping lie on lie. (*Presser goes to Gertie. She runs to the Doctor.*)

GERTIE—Save me, Doctor. Let me tell the rest of it in my own way. Don't question me. You'll see it's the truth.

DOCTOR (*Gets between Gertie and Presser. To Gertie*)—Stay here. (*To Presser*) Now, I'm an old man, but I swear to you, official or no official, if you interfere with this child in any way I'll—

PRESSER (*Contemptuously*)—What'll you do?

DOCTOR—Don't touch her, that's all.

PRESSER—I got your number. (*To Gertie*) Why did your father run away from Brockton. Why didn't he tell you where he was going; why didn't he give you his address in the letter he sent you? And how did he know enough to call at your hotel here to find you?

GERTIE (*Anxiously*)—Did he call?

PRESSER—He did.

GERTIE—Then he's alright. Thank God. No doubt he went back to Brockton and received the letter I sent there the first hour I was in New York.

PRESSER—That don't answer my other questions.

GERTIE—Well, if you must know, there's something wrong with my father.

MRS. BELDEN—There's something wrong with you, too.

GERTIE (*To the Doctor and ignoring Mrs. Belden*)—For months he'll go along all right. He's an accountant, well educated. He taught me nearly all I know. Then all of a sudden he'll break out. You know, Doctor, some old idea gets possession of his mind. It was some woman—my mother, I think—that caused it all. She ran away from him.

DOCTOR—He has hallucinations. Sees her. Goes off in search of her.

GERTIE—That's it. He's completely out of his mind for the time. It has been growing worse lately. He lost his position over a year ago because of it. That's why I had to give up my studies and go into the factory.

DOCTOR—And that made him brood all the more, of course.

GERTIE—It was his brooding over spoiling my life, as he said, that caused him to go away this time.

PRESSER (*Craftily*)—What made you think you could find your father in New York without any address?

GERTIE—A young man told me I could. He said he was well acquainted with the police and would organize a systematic search. I was out of work, anyhow, because of my illness, so I decided to go.

MRS. BELDEN—You left Brockton with this young man?

GERTIE—No. To keep people from talking he got on the train at the next station.

PRESSER—What was he like? Fashionable young man? Dapper, well dressed? Plenty of rings and other jewels? What name did he give?

GERTIE—Albert Marsdan.

PRESSER—A regular crook's alias.

MRS. BELDEN—How did you come to meet him?

GERTIE—One of the girls in the factory introduced me.

MRS. BELDEN—Didn't it seem strange that he should be so solicitous for your welfare?

DOCTOR—Not at all. Why should it?

PRESSER—Of course, he made love to you.

GERTIE—Well, he was educated, had fine ways, good clothes and so absolutely easy and certain of himself, that he made me long for life in his world in spite of myself.

DOCTOR—Naturally.

GERTIE—Something in here (*Pressing hands on heart*), kept saying that that was my own world—that I had been robbed of it. My eyes were opened for the first time to the people around me. How I rebelled against their sordidness! For the first time I knew I was different, that my father was different. I had always idealized my mother. Now I wanted to find my father to make him break his silence about her. I knew she was of this new world of soft voices, suave manners, long, clean, slender hands and no anxiety over the next meal.

MRS. BELDEN (*Sneering*)—You thought you might be an aristocrat?

GERTIE—Why not? My father isn't an ordinary working man. I naturally supposed my mother was of his own class.

PRESSER—Well, when did this fine gentleman with the crook's moniker quit being a heartbreaker, and let you in on his real trade of housebreaker?

GERTIE—He's no housebreaker, whatever else he may be.

PRESSER (*Surprised tone*)—Didn't he pick you for his inside worker?

MRS. BELDEN—He's the one has my jewels.

DOCTOR—Tell us the rest of your story, Gertrude.

GERTIE—Isn't that enough?

PRESSER—You've only started. How did you come to be in that Raines-Law Hotel?

GERTIE—I went there.

MRS. BELDEN—With him?

GERTIE—He took me there, yes.

PRESSER—Well, go on. How did you come to rush screaming out on the fire escape?

GERTIE (*To Doctor*)—Must I tell that?

DOCTOR—We'd better know everything if this charge is to be disproved.

GERTIE—I ran out on the fire escape to get away from him.

PRESSER—Albert Marsdan?

MRS. BELDEN—You knew what he was. Why did you run away from him?

PRESSER—Did you quarrel over a division of the loot?

GERTIE (*Wearily, to Doctor*)—They don't seem to want to understand. I'll tell you, Doctor. After we had dinner I went to my room. Presently a tap came to the door. I opened it and he stepped in.

MRS. BELDEN—Yes, go on.

GERTIE—It's all too horrible. I am trying to forget it. He had registered for me. Said I was his wife. When the

clerk brought me the book to prove it, it was there plain enough. Nothing that I could do had any effect. Everybody laughed at my protest.

DOCTOR—My poor little girl!

GERTIE—He seemed to have the hotel owner, the clerk, everybody bribed, or they were just naturally bad. I threatened to tell the police. They answered that I had entered the place willingly with—with him—don't ask me to tell any more.

PRESSER—I can riddle your story just like shooting buck-shot into it, but I want to hear it all.

MRS. BELDEN—Complete what you've started.

DOCTOR—Go on, Gertrude.

GERTIE—Well, you heard the testimony they gave in court about my being a woman—a woman of the street. That was because I fought and attracted attention to the place. The police were against me, too.

DOCTOR—I believe that.

PRESSER—How did you get to the fire escape?

GERTIE—I hit him with a drinking glass and cut him above the eye. It dazed him. Then I jumped out of the window.

MRS. BELDEN—You knew the fire escape was there to catch you.

GERTIE—I hadn't time to think of that. It was mere luck that it was there.

MRS. BELDEN—I'll tell you what I think of your story. You imagine yourself a heroine of some yellow novel you've read.

GERTIE (*To Doctor*)—You believe me, Doctor?

DOCTOR—Every word.

PRESSER—Why didn't you give your right name and address and tell your story in court?

GERTIE—It would kill my father, if he knew. I wouldn't be able to hold my head up again in Brockton.

PRESSER—Well, I guess I'm through. (*Going up.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—You don't mean to say you believe her?

PRESSER—Not exactly, but—

MRS. BELDEN—I want—my jewels. She took them. I know it.

PRESSER—Who saw her take them?

MRS. BELDEN (*Hesitating*)—Rannock says she was seen with them.

PRESSER—Who's Rannock?

DOCTOR—My eldest son. He was nowhere in the neighborhood when this happened.

MRS. BELDEN—Take her to prison. He'll appear against her. So will I unless she confesses. (*To Gertie*) Why don't you confess. We won't prosecute you if you do.

PRESSER (*To Gertie*)—That's a good offer. Come through now. Can't you see they've got the goods on you.

GERTIE—Dear God, what am I going to do?

MRS. BELDEN (*To Presser*)—She's wavering.

PRESSER (*To Gertie*)—Don't you see we're your friends. Make a clean breast of it. Lead us to the sparklers and we'll plug for you.

GERTIE (*Running at him and screaming*)—Oh, you brute. Get away from me.

PRESSER (*Grabbing her*)—Not if I know myself. You'll come right along now.

DOCTOR—Leave that girl alone! (*Picks up chair and advances on Presser.*)

PRESSER—That's your game, is it? (*Putting hand in pocket for gun.*) Try anything like that and you'll look like a sieve. (*Enter Rannock R.*)

RANNOCK—What's the matter?

GERTIE—You!

RANNOCK—Gertie!!

DOCTOR—You know her?

RANNOCK—Yes.

MRS. BELDEN—Where did you know her?

GERTIE—Wait, I'll tell you. (*To Rannock*) I met you in Brockton, didn't I? (*Rannock nods in acquiescence.*) I was a mill hand; you were like the lord of the manor of old. You condescended to smile on me.

RANNOCK—Why not? You're a pretty girl.

GERTIE—You courted me after your fashion. And under the guise of friendship you lured me from Brockton to New York. (*To others*) This is Albert Marsdan.

MRS. BELDEN—He is not.

GERTIE—Then who is he?

DOCTOR—My son.

GERTIE—Doctor, your son!

RANNOCK (*To Presser*)—It's a trifle embarrassing to have strangers about. You'd better run along.

MRS. BELDEN—Do. This is a family matter that we'll fix up among ourselves.

PRESSER—Not so's you'd notice it. How about the jewels? She was seen stealing them.

MRS. BELDEN—That was a mistake. I said it to frighten her.

PRESSER (*To Rannock*)—What she says is true? (*Indicating Gertie.*) (*Rannock nods.*) Comes from Brockton. Father ran away. She came here to find him? Straight? Eh? In with no crooks? Wouldn't pinch a necklace?

RANNOCK—Run away and forget it. She's more of a Puritan than Plymouth Rock. She's so straight up and down she leans over backwards.

PRESSER (*Approaches Rannock*)—Well, you're the one I want. Your alias is Marsdan—Albert Marsdan. I'll just take you along for fracturing the Mann law. It's federal prison for yours. You're quite a gay little boy when your father isn't around.

MRS. BELDEN—You can't arrest him.

PRESSER (*He has Rannock by the arm*)—No? Guess again.

DOCTOR (*To Gertie*)—You don't want him punished?

GERTIE (*To Doctor, tenderly*)—You love him very much?

DOCTOR—He's my first-born.

PRESSER (*To Rannock as he takes him rear*)—Come right along, sonny.

MRS. BELDEN—We'll never get over this disgrace. It will ruin us.

RANNOCK (*To Presser*)—Where's your warrant?

PRESSER—That's old stuff. I always have a little warrant here that barks what it says. (*Holds hand in pocket.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Pardon me, Mr. Presser. No one will interfere with you in the line of your duty. Suppose you allow Rannock to remain here tonight. I'll give you my word that he'll be at your service when you want him.

DOCTOR—I'll add the weight of my personal pledge to that.

RANNOCK—Give us a chance to secure a lawyer and to arrange for bail. I promise not to run away.

DOCTOR—There's a good fellow. We won't forget it.

MRS. BELDEN—I'll make everything right with you.

PRESSER—I'm strong for you, Doctor. If I was in a fix you'd give me all the time I'd ask. (*To Rannock*) I'll give you just an hour. (*Calls off.*) Here, Taggart! (*Enter detective rear.*) You go in there. (*Leading him R.*) Lamp the young guy. Don't let him out. You understand? Use your gat if you have to. (*Exit detective R.*) (*To Rannock*) I'll stay right here in this hallway. (*Goes rear.*) Take a tip from me. Don't try any fancy footwork.

DOCTOR—Don't be afraid. He'll be here when you want him.

PRESSER—You're always on the level, Doctor, and it's for you I'm taking this long chance with my meal ticket. (*Exit rear.*)

DOCTOR (*To Rannock*)—What can you say for yourself in the face of such a crime?

MRS. BELDEN—It's worse than a crime. It's a blunder.

RANNOCK—A man's life is just a series of blunders. Ninety-nine and seven-tenths of them wear skirts.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie*)—You're just as bad as he is. You drew him on.

GERTIE—Let him tell you if I did or not.

MRS. BELDEN—Oh, I know. You thought you'd use him to climb on to reach your imagined aristocratic birth-right.

RANNOCK—Easy with that. I did all the hunting. Look her over. She's alright. If God didn't intend men to pursue women, he'd have made them all flat-chested.

DOCTOR (*To Gertie*)—I knew from the outset you were fine and true.

RANNOCK—If she hadn't been such a hard-shell little Puritan I'd never gone as far as I did. She's the original essential monogamist with a marriage ceremony attachment.

DOCTOR (*To Rannock*)—It's the sheer cold-blooded immorality of your act that's appalling.

RANNOCK—It's going on a blamed sight worse right here in this city every night.

DOCTOR—I forbid you to marry Dorothy Vernon. You are a menace to the finest institution that our civilization has developed.

RANNOCK—Listen, Dad, you haven't kept up with the procession. Don't you know that every civilization is destroyed by its clever men? Whatever is accomplished they hate. Above all, they hate any perfect moral institution of a preceding generation.

DOCTOR—Are you drawing on philosophy to justify your villainies?

RANNOCK—I'm drawing on history, Dad. Human experience. My heart is plural. Why shouldn't it be so? Yours was at my age. (*To Mrs. Belden*) So was yours. (*To Doctor*) You had the harem instinct when you were young. You sowed your wild oats. So did you, Mater.

MRS. BELDEN—I—I——never!

RANNOCK—There, don't be embarrassed. You've forgotten, that's all. So has Dad. After you crossed the Rubicon of forty years you forgot how you rebelled against the established order in morals of your young days.

DOCTOR—Where are you leading with all this?

RANNOCK—To where you'll consider the case of this girl and myself without any moral hysterics. A highly virtuous middle-class attitude moves me to extinction.

MRS. BELDEN—Have you a plan?

RANNOCK—There speaks the woman. Our first move will be on the hotel. No doubt they run their register on the loose-leaf ledger system. They should. If not, you must tear the page out where I registered as Albert Marsdan and wife.

DOCTOR—That's a felony.

RANNOCK—You notice that I addressed my remarks to Mater. I'll pit the maternal instinct, plus a fear of what the neighbors will say, against any legislative enactment ever carried through.

MRS. BELDEN—Are you sure I can get at the book?

RANNOCK (*To Doctor*)—What did I tell you? (*To Mrs. Belden*) When you go, wear a veil. Turn the pages of the register until you come to the right one. Point to it with a fifty-dollar bill, and wait.

MRS. BELDEN—What next?

RANNOCK—Just a moment. (*Goes up quietly and opens door rear. Looks out, then closes it and comes down.*) This next will square the thing in law, morals and convenience. You've got to act in this, Dad.

DOCTOR—I'll not turn a hand for you.

RANNOCK—The honor of the house of Belden means more to you than a momentary prejudice against me.

DOCTOR—It's rather late in the day for you to think of the family honor.

RANNOCK—I mean publicity for a delinquency.

MRS. BELDEN—Go on with the plan. What do you want him to do?

RANNOCK—First, you must order the car. Then you must mix a good stout sleeping draught. Put it in some whiskey. When Presser is about to leave you must make him drink it.

MRS. BELDEN—That's exciting.

DOCTOR—The romance of it overshadows for you the responsibility. (*To Rannock*) I'm not going to be a party to your running away in that fashion.

RANNOCK—I am not going to run away. (*To Gertie*) You will be in the car with me.

GERTIE—You think so?

RANNOCK—Chaperoned by my father, we'll spin away quickly over the state line into Connecticut where no marriage license is needed. Once there, I'll marry you.

GERTIE—Oh—

DOCTOR—There's a spark of decency in you, after all.

MRS. BELDEN—But Dorothy!

RANNOCK—Can thank her lucky stars she missed me. (*To Gertie*) When we appear before the district attorney, legally married, Mr. Presser's story will sound like an attempt to blackmail an old and respected family.

MRS. BELDEN—Especially with the page missing from the hotel register.

GERTIE—Your plan to circumvent the law is very ingenious, but you overlooked one thing.

RANNOCK—What's that?

GERTIE—You didn't pick the right woman for a wife.

RANNOCK—Oh, yes, I did! You forget that you haven't cleared your skirts yet of stealing the jewels. I saved you from that charge for this. (*Millicent appears R. and listens.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Marry Rannock or go to prison.

Curtain

END OF ACT II

WILD OATS

ACT III

SCENE—*Same as previous act.*

TIME—*A few minutes later.*

(*Millicent tiptoes from L. to rear and beckons off for Presser, who appears rear.*)

MILLICENT—Come right in.

PRESSER—Well, I don't mind, only I said as how I'd stay in the hall.

MILLICENT—What's it all about?

PRESSER—It's a long story, miss.

MILLICENT—I love long stories. Go on. Has it a mystery in it?

PRESSER—It has.

MILLICENT—And a scandal? I dote on mysteries with a fringe of scandal.

PRESSER—You talk as if it was a bit of passementerie.

MILLICENT—Does it have a happy ending?

PRESSER—I'm not so sure of that.

MILLICENT—Oh, it must have. You know, I think that nurse girl is some class. She simply won't marry Rannock. Somebody's got to elope with somebody, that's it, isn't it?

PRESSER—My throat gets dry trying to answer questions when I don't know the answers. I wish I had a drink.

MILLICENT—Tell me why somebody has to elope with somebody.

PRESSER—I'd like to elope with a long, lean, cool thirst quencher at this minute.

MILLICENT—I'll get you something to drink right away. Will you tell me then?

PRESSER—I'll babble like a brook. (*Exit Millicent R. Enter Sewell rear.*)

SEWELL—Hello, Presser. Still on tap, I see.

PRESSER—Just waiting to get a drink.

SEWELL—Sounds familiar. If that's what you want, you met the right bartender. (*Pulls chair over to bookstand, climbs on it and picks up book. Shakes it near his ear. Lays it down and takes up another. Bus. ad lib.*)

PRESSER (*Coming down*)—I've got the habit. I can tell a ready little mixer a block away.

SEWELL—What the dickens! Where's the Dickens? (*Sits on back of chair, book in hand.*)

PRESSER—Something missing, sir?

SEWELL—Yes, "Our Mutual Friend," in five volumes.

PRESSER—Funny place to look for friends. Five of them?

SEWELL—They're books.

PRESSER—Were you going to do a little studying? I don't want no fancy drink, sir.

SEWELL (*Thoughtfully*)—I'm studying how to get you any kind of a drink.

PRESSER—You weren't trying to get a nip of liquor out of that, were you? (*Indicating book.*) (*Sewell nods.*) I've always found books dry stuff.

SEWELL (*As if a happy thought had struck him*)—Poetry! That's guaranteed 99% proof. Makes everybody drunk—(*Jumps down from chair and searches lower shelves*), especially the poets.

PRESSER (*Goes up*)—I'm not strong on poetry.

SEWELL (*Searching, picks up books and shakes them*)—Tennyson, Keats, Kipling? I have it. (*Picks up book.*) George Sterling. "A Wine of Wizardy"—did you ever drink it? (*Takes book and glasses to table.*)

PRESSER—Didn't know you could drink poems.

SEWELL (*Pours out liquor*)—It's the only way to take them. Saves wear and tear on the brain. (*Pushes glass to Presser.*)

PRESSER—Well, here's how. (*Drinks.*) You're not taking a drop?

SEWELL (*Refilling glass for Presser, who drinks again*)—I'm going to turn over a new leaf.

PRESSER (*Laying hand on book*)—Don't turn any pages for me. That's the best Scotch I've tasted since I learned the dialect.

SEWELL—I mean, I've cut the booze stuff for good.

PRESSER—That's fine. Stick to that—well, I will take a drop or two more, if you insist. (*Pushes glass over.*) I sometimes think there are too many drinkers. (*Drinks.*) Doesn't leave enough to go around. (*Picks up book.*) What did you say was the name of this?

SEWELL—"A Wine of Wizardy," by George Sterling.

PRESSER—Well, you tell George Sterling he makes damned fine whiskey. It's a shame he wastes his time in any other line.

SEWELL (*Putting book and glasses away*)—That's the third time I've succeeded in bidding the demon booze good-day without getting sloppy and kissing him.

PRESSER (*Glances longingly at book*)—When his lips are as mellow as this chap's—what'd you say his name was?—Oh, yes, Sterling—it's some fight to turn your back on him.

SEWELL (*Coming down*)—I'm through just the same.

PRESSER—You're young enough to do it. But I'll bet there's a woman at the bottom of your resolution. (*Enter Gertie R. She has on the uniform of nurse. Presser watches Gertie and Sewell.*)

GERTIE (*To Sewell, with a welcome note in her voice*)—You're back?

SEWELL—Gertie! (*Goes to her and takes both of her hands in his.*) Are you glad to see me?

PRESSER—Excuse me, Mr. Belden. Pay no attention to that question I just asked you. I know the answer. (*Exit rear.*)

SEWELL—Where did you go? How did you get back? Tell me about yourself.

GERTIE—I can't answer if you're going to squeeze my hand so.

SEWELL—I thought I'd lost you. My heart came to a dead stop. Now it's making up for lost time. (*Leads her to couch.*)

GERTIE (*Sits*)—But I have work to do. There's a patient.

SEWELL—I'm a patient, too. I need your attention more than anyone else in the world.

GERTIE—You'd better see a doctor. (*Rising.*)

SEWELL—You're my doctor. You've cured me.

GERTIE—Mighty quick work, isn't it. Just a second ago you were a patient.

SEWELL—It's my soul that's cured. You did it—you and love.

GERTIE (*Rising*)—I told you not to speak of that again.

SEWELL (*Holds her hand*)—Listen, Gertie, do let me speak of it. There's nothing in the world means so much to me. It has turned me from a boy to a man. I'm no weakling now. I've cut drinking for good.

GERTIE—That makes me happy. If you only stick to it!

SEWELL—Oh, I will. I know. And that's not the only proof I have of my love for you. (*Takes out necklace.*) See this? (*Opens case.*) I stole that for you.

GERTIE (*Rises, half-afraid*)—That's your mother's!

SEWELL—It is. I wandered around looking for you with it in my pocket. It meant thirty thousand dollars, maybe forty thousand. Anyhow enough to give us a start. You know, after we'd married. Then all of a sudden my brain cleared. I felt that you'd have nothing to do with me if I couldn't make my fight without such a beginning. As I ran towards home to put this back in the safe, all the rest of my degradation came on me like an avalanche. Twice I stopped to get a drink. As I raised the glass to my lips, you seemed to reach out and pull me away. Well, I never needed a drink worse in my life before, and I refused to take it.

GERTIE—You stole for me?

SEWELL—Just like that chap in "Sappho." She knew he loved her because he did.

GERTIE—Oh, but there's something even better than that. You decided to fight for yourself. (*Enter Rannock L.*)

RANNOCK—Do you mind if I come in without knocking?

SEWELL (*Rising*)—If you don't knock after you're in.

RANNOCK—That depends. I'm some little hammer thrower. (*Gertie goes R.*)

SEWELL—Don't go, Gertrude. Rannock is not going to stay long.

RANNOCK (*Insinuatingly*)—Don't let Sewell frighten you away, Gertie.

GERTIE (*Quietly*)—I'm not frightened by anyone, Mr. Belden.

SEWELL (*Leading Gertie to couch*)—I was just telling you that I'll be the happiest man in the world when——
(*Pause.*)

RANNOCK—When? Go on. Finish it.

SEWELL—When Rannock leaves the room.

GERTIE—You must excuse me now, Sewell. I'll see you in a few minutes, if you like.

RANNOCK (*Fired by jealousy*)—Oh, you will? In a few minutes!

GERTIE (*Quietly*)—I will.

RANNOCK—You will?

SEWELL—It seems that she will.

RANNOCK (*To Sewell*)—Don't be an emotional come-on.

SEWELL—Don't you worry. My emotions have cut their eye-teeth.

RANNOCK—But they haven't grown up. Like you, they need Pap. You're so wabby you lush up so your legs will be as unsteady as your heart.

SEWELL—Answer him for me, Gertie. Tell him I've cut the booze stuff for good. Tell him I fought it out alone, that I'm strong enough to pluck the whiskers from Professor Keeley.

GERTIE—I believe you *have* changed, Sewell. I believe that you can now face any disaster without flinching.

SEWELL—It was worth doing just to hear you say that.

RANNOCK—Well, little boy, now you've said your piece, run right along.

SEWELL—You've always put over that dodge with me. This time it won't go. I'm not the younger brother to fetch and carry for you. I'm going to stay right here with her.

RANNOCK—So, she's the powder in the magazine of your explosion? I thought so. Now I'm sure you'll run along.

GERTIE (*Trying to leave*)—Sewell, I'll go—

RANNOCK (*To Gertie, in tone of command*)—You stay right here.

SEWELL—Why should she stay here?

RANNOCK—Because I say so.

SEWELL—Don't think you're going to run everybody. (*To Gertie*) You go ahead, Gertie. I'll see you again right away. (*Gertie goes to door R.*)

RANNOCK (*To Gertie*)—I've just a word to say, then you may go. (*Gertie stops.*) (*To Sewell*) You are a nice kid to be in love with her. Don't you know about her?

SEWELL—I know all I want to know about her.

RANNOCK—I'll tell you a little more, just the same. Do you know who she is? (*Pause.*) She's as good as being my wife.

GERTIE—Good God! (*Sewell struggles to keep control of himself.*)

RANNOCK (*To Sewell*)—Emotional checkmate No. 1. (*Pause.*) Well, little boy, why don't you say something?

SEWELL (*Going to Gertie and speaking calmly*)—Gertrude, I'll take your word against the world. Tell him he's a liar.

RANNOCK—Go on, tell me I'm a liar, Gertie.

GERTIE (*To Rannock*)—Not only are you a liar, but you are a coward.

SEWELL—Net. (*To Rannock*) You're all she says, and no discount.

RANNOCK—Very good, little boy. Get ready for emotional checkmate No. 2. You want proofs. They'll be

here shortly. The Mater's down at the Raines-Law Hotel for the hotel register. There you'll see that I'm the duly accredited husband of our little friend Gertie. She can't deny it.

SEWELL—Good God, it can't be true!

RANNOCK (*To Sewell*)—You doubt my word? Sewell, I'm surprised. It would be absurd to intimate anything so banal if it could be disproved in an hour or two.

GERTIE—Listen, Sewell, I didn't think I'd grow to care for what you'd believe or not believe of me. But I do care. Now I'll tell you the whole truth.

RANNOCK (*To Gertie*)—Spare him the sordid details. This outline will be sufficient. Under an agreement with me you left Brockton. I joined you at the next station. We journeyed together to New York and went straightway to the hotel. There I registered for both. After dinner we went—

SEWELL (*Jumping at Rannock and grabbing him by throat*) You dog! I know you! I'll murder you!

GERTIE (*Struggling to break them apart*)—Sewell—listen—I'll explain—help— (*She runs to door rear.*) Help! (*Enter Presser rear. He comes down and pulls men apart.*)

PRESSER—What's the matter here?

GERTIE—Are you hurt, Sewell? (*She goes close to him.*)

SEWELL (*Drawing away*)—Don't touch me.

GERTIE—You think—you think— (*Enter servant rear.*)

SERVANT (*To Gertie*)—Your father, miss. (*Exit servant.*)

GERTIE—My father! (*Pleadingly to Sewell and Rannock*) Not a word to him, it would kill him. (*Enter Freeman rear. He is of the shabby-genteel type. The culture suggested by Gertie shows more definitely in him. He is very much of a dreamer and visionary.*)

FREEMAN—Gertrude!

GERTIE—Daddy, my dear Daddy! Why did you go away? (*Hugs him. Enter Millicent with servant. The servant carries a tray on which are a glass and a pitcher of water.*)

MILLICENT (*To Presser, as she pours water in glass*)—Here.

PRESSER—What's that?

MILLICENT (*Holding glass to him*)—Water.

PRESSER—Do you think I asked for a bath? (*Exit Presser, followed by Millicent and servant rear.*)

SEWELL (*To Rannock*)—Well, why don't you have decency enough to leave them alone?

RANNOCK—Why don't you?

SEWELL (*To Freeman*)—I trust that I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again.

FREEMAN—Thank you, sir. (*Exit Sewell R. Rannock exits L. To Gertie*) So you are a nurse?

GERTIE (*Pulling up his coat collar, picking lint off him, etc.*) Yes, I am. You don't look well. You're thinner and unkept. You've been worrying. Now I've found you again, I'll have to take you in hand.

FREEMAN—Who are the young men?

GERTIE—Those are my employer's two sons. Splendid, both of them. I have a beautiful place. Doctor Belden is so kind. You got my letter in Brockton with the hotel address?

FREEMAN—Yes. They told me at the hotel that someone answering your description had been arrested.

GERTIE (*Laughing nervously*)—Arrested! For what?

FREEMAN—Of course, it was a mistake. This address was left with the clerk for me while I was talking to the proprietor. I was fearfully anxious and started for the court.

GERTIE—And I was safe here all the time— (*Anxious to divert his attention.*) I have a splendid position. I've never liked anything so much.

FREEMAN—It's a beautiful home.

GERTIE—And everybody in it is so fine. You must meet Dr. Belden, Daddy. He has nobility of character that's wonderful.

FREEMAN—And Mrs. Belden?

GERTIE—She's the Doctor's second wife. But much younger.

FREEMAN—Is she kind to you?

GERTIE (*After slight pause*)—Yes. Oh, yes, very kind.

FREEMAN—Then the best thing for you is to remain here. I looked for you just to say good-bye, though I wanted to stay until next Thursday.

GERTIE—My birthday! I knew you wouldn't forget that.

FREEMAN—It's my one anniversary.

GERTIE—After Thursday what are you going to do?

FREEMAN—Now you're settled in the life you need, I'm going away.

GERTIE—No, Daddy. You can't go. I won't let you.

FREEMAN—I have a very good offer from Ramsey of Riverside, California. He wants me to oversee his ranch. It's a small place.

GERTIE—California! A ranch! We'll never need to go back to Brockton?

FREEMAN—But you're not going with me.

GERTIE—You know life wouldn't be anything for you without me. You've said so, often.

FREEMAN—Do *you* want to go?

GERTIE—Do I want to go, Daddy? Why nothing could ever keep me from being where you are.

FREEMAN—You'll leave this beautiful home, the chance to get an education, the chance to make something of yourself, just for me?

GERTIE—Don't I need you, Daddy? Don't you need me? What's all the rest to that? When shall we start?

FREEMAN—Right away. He sent me a ticket for you.

GERTIE (*Going L.*)—You stay here. If anyone speaks to you, don't give any satisfaction. Above all, don't say where you're going or that I'm going with you. I'll be ready in a minute. (*Exit L. Enter Mrs. Belden in street attire, rear.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Are you waiting for someone. (*Freeman starts a little at sound of her voice. She takes off hat and wrap. He watches her closely.*)

FREEMAN—May I ask your name?

MRS. BELDEN—Why, I'm Mrs. Belden, Doctor Belden's wife.

FREEMAN—Thank you. What was it previous to that?

MRS. BELDEN—Why should you ask? (*She looks at him*) Good God, you!

FREEMAN—Florence! I knew your voice.

MRS. BELDEN (*Frightened*)—What are you doing here?

FREEMAN (*Looking at door L.*)—I— Oh, I am just waiting— (*Gertie appears L. The audience sees her, Mrs. Belden and Freeman do not.*)

MRS. BELDEN—For Dr. Belden? You must not see him. You are here to betray—betray me.

FREEMAN (*He goes to her and looks steadily at her for a second*)—You have changed. The world hasn't treated you well. Your eyes are hard, your lips cruel and vindictive. Material success means everything to you now. I can hardly believe that you are the woman I used to love.

MRS. BELDEN (*Looking around anxiously*)—Sh—don't speak of that. I had forgotten.

FREEMAN—Have you forgotten our baby—our little Gertrude?

MRS. BELDEN (*Anxiously*)—She died. You wrote me she had died.

FREEMAN (*Recovering quickly*)—Yes, that's right. She died.

MRS. BELDEN—That's what broke my heart. I lost every interest in our old life then.

FREEMAN—Long before that you lost interest in our old ideals. The joy of being a free woman, of flouting the conventions of our warped and twisted social order, of standing before the world an unmarried mother meant nothing to you. That's why you ran away from us—from little Gertrude and me.

MRS. BELDEN—The revolutionary phrases of one generation become the platitudes of the next. I merely anticipated that and aligned myself with the decent minded.

FREEMAN—You wanted respectability.

MRS. BELDEN—I have it. I don't want to lose it.

FREEMAN—The secret of your free, untrammelled life, when you were an exquisite creature, before you fell into a commonplace middle-class habit of thought is perfectly safe with me.

MRS. BELDEN—That life you look back on with reverence was a daily tragedy to me. You knew nothing of being an unmarried mother among married mothers.

FREEMAN—That's why you ran away?

MRS. BELDEN—I didn't go far. My little baby pulled me back. But you were gone. Then came your letter from England, saying she was dead. Afterwards I heard that you changed your name.

FREEMAN—I did. I wanted to get as far from identification with my old life as you. But for a different reason.

MRS. BELDEN—You missed our baby too. My heart has been empty ever since. Even now I wake at night and find myself crying for her to come back to me. I have longed to feel her little head on my arm. I've prayed to God. Do you know, she would just be a beautiful age now? Eighteen. Her birthday is next Thursday.

FREEMAN—You do remember?

MRS. BELDEN—What mother can forget?

FREEMAN—No doubt if she were alive, you'd take her from me.

MRS. BELDEN—If it was the last thing I did on earth. I'd want to make up to her all the love of which I robbed her. I'd want her to love me to pay for my lonely hours. *Gertie closes door L. gently.*

FREEMAN (*Looking anxiously at door L.*)—Well, what's the use of idle wishing? She's gone. I'll say good-bye now. (*Not moving.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Yes, good-bye. It's better for you to go right away. Someone may see you and ask questions. (*Urges him rear.*)

FREEMAN (*Sparring for time and getting away from her to door L.*)—You're not interested in my affairs. You have no curiosity about myself or my life. There's no wonderment if I have climbed in the world of ideas, or slipped back into a rut of dull living.

MRS. BELDEN—I can see you are still the unpractical dreamer. The old phrases that were the very breath of your nostrils mean as much to you now as they ever did. Please go out this way. (*Indicates rear.*)

FREEMAN (*Opening door L. a little*)—Can't I go to the street this way? I'd rather.

MRS. BELDEN (*Closing door hastily*)—No. That's the way to the sleeping room. This is the way out. (*Leads him rear.*)

FREEMAN (*Still sparring for time*)—Wait a minute. Now that I know you regret having given your youthful days to me and love, I wish to say that I echo your regret. My fond desire of you that made me wander through the night with my mind a blank, my agony over the loss of you, and that reiterated determination to find you which left me at times insane—I also regret. My regret will serve some purpose. My fond desire of you is a thing of the past. From now on I know you never could know. It wasn't given to you to understand.

MRS. BELDEN—Well, not everyone can understand. You don't understand how much hangs right now on your leaving this house at once.

FREEMAN—Your life of middle class ease depends upon it. Your three meals a day. Your fine soft bed to sleep on, your automobile—all material things. Did you ever ask yourself what the world could lose during a week that you were away from it? Or a year or a hundred years?

MRS. BELDEN (*Softly and cunningly to placate him*)—Charles, let us go now. (*Takes his arm.*) You are still as eloquent as ever. Do you remember how you used to hold forth in the old days in the studios?

FREEMAN (*Mollified*)—Those were the days—our days. Ideas, ideals, thoughts, love! They made up our lives.

MRS. BELDEN—It's true. We can even forget sometimes that we couldn't eat our ideas, and that our ideals couldn't

keep a roof over our heads. Let me see you to the door, Charles. (*Takes arm again.*)

FREEMAN—Yes, I'll go now. You have gone back—far back. But we had our gold hour, don't forget that—an hour when I imagined you had a Gypsy soul to mate my own. (*Exeunt Freeman and Mrs. B. rear. Gertie enters L. in street dress. She runs rear.*)

GERTIE (*At door*)—Mother! (*Enter Sewell R.*)

SEWELL—Can you forgive me?

GERTIE—Forgive you what, Sewell?

SEWELL—My doubt of you for a minute.

GERTIE—That's nothing. You had a right to. Appearances were against me.

SEWELL—I wish I'd killed Rannock. He's no good. He's a sneak. He gum-shoes it over on us on the score of having a superior personality that must find emotional experience.

GERTIE—I'm really sorry you have such a brother, Sewell. And now good-bye. I must be going. (*Holds out hand to him.*) This time for good.

SEWELL—You're not—

GERTIE—Yes.

SEWELL—Where?

GERTIE—West.

SEWELL—Whereabouts in the West?

GERTIE—California.

SEWELL—Southern California, of course. Is your father going to take you?

GERTIE—He is.

SEWELL—Tell me just where you're going? I want to see you again. I want to write to you.

GERTIE—You'd better not.

SEWELL—Do you think I'm going to let you drop out of my life? Listen, Gertie, some day I'm going to marry you.

GERTIE—No—no, that can't be—not now.

SEWELL—It's got to be. You've made me almost human. Don't renege on the rest of the job. You care. (*Pause.*) Say you care a little. (*He goes close to her.*) Say it made you happy when I got a grip on myself.

GERTIE—It did, Sewell. I hated to see you waste your life.

SEWELL—You did what all the preaching in the country couldn't do. I'll tell you frankly that I won't slide back just because you made believe you were interested in me to get me started on the right track.

GERTIE—I didn't make believe.

SEWELL—Ah! Then the personal equation meant something?

GERTIE—It did.

SEWELL—How much? (*Pause.*) (*He tries to take her hand.*) How much? Not enough to let you tell me your address.

GERTIE—You can write to me at Riverside, California.

SEWELL (*Joyously*)—I'll come to you. I'm going to put myself to the test. I know I can buckle down and get a foothold in the world. When I do, Gertie, I'll find you. (*Enter Mrs. Belden.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Sewell!

SEWELL (*With antagonism*)—What is it?

MRS. BELDEN—Keep away from that creature.

GERTIE—Creature! That, from you?

MRS. BELDEN—What did you expect from me?

SEWELL—The treatment of an ordinary human being.

MRS. BELDEN—Do you know who and what this girl is?

SEWELL—Yes, I do.

MRS. BELDEN—You know nothing. Now you run along and let me attend to her.

SEWELL—Whatever you are going to do to her count me in as audience.

GERTIE (*To Mrs. B., very gently*)—You really misjudge me. I have done nothing. In fact, I'd like to be able to do

you a little kindness—just to show—just to show there are no hard feelings.

SEWELL (*To Mrs. B.*)—After that you call her a bad girl?

MRS. BELDEN—She's a little sneak. Look at this. (*Pulls out page of hotel register.*) That's Rannock's handwriting. A page from a hotel register. She's down here as his wife—without the formality of a marriage ceremony.

SEWELL—I know all about it. Rannock wrote that. He's the sneak. He framed this all up.

MRS. BELDEN—She can be identified by a half dozen of the hotel employees.

SEWELL—Perjury! Perjury's child's play to that gang. They'd cut a throat for ten dollars.

MRS. BELDEN—Wasn't she arrested? Wasn't she found guilty?

GERTIE—I was. (*To Sewell*) Say no more about it. (*To Mrs. B.*) I'm going away on a long journey. I won't come back any more. I won't see you any more. I just wanted you to say a kind word to me—one—a little one. Say you don't believe everything against me.

MRS. BELDEN—But I do believe everything.

GERTIE—I wish you hadn't said that. I have a special reason for wanting to keep a beautiful thought of you.

MRS. BELDEN—I'm not interested in any of your thoughts.

SEWELL (*To Mrs. Belden*)—Since you took my own mother's place in our home, I've disliked you.

MRS. BELDEN—The usual pay of a step-mother.

SEWELL—Now that I see you as you really are, I hate you.

MRS. BELDEN—Because I opened your eyes to what she is?

SEWELL—Because you keep your own eyes closed to what you are yourself. You're digging into this poor girl's life to find an excuse to flay her. Do you know why? I'll tell you. You're a natural full-grown harpy, that's why.

GERTIE (*To Sewell angrily*)—Keep still, Sewell. I won't let you say a word against her.

SEWELL—There— (*To Mrs. Belden*) See, she even defends you.

MRS. BELDEN—She's playing a deep game. I know her kind. She can't pull the wool over my eyes.

GERTIE (*Sinking in chair*)—Oh!

SEWELL (*Going to Gertie*)—Now you've done it. You've killed her.

MRS. BELDEN—Don't be a fool. That's the next play in the game. Faint—that gets the sympathy.

SEWELL—She don't need to win my sympathy, she has it; yours wouldn't do her any good.

GERTIE (*Getting to her feet*)—You are wrong about that. I do want Mrs. Belden's sympathy—at least her interest. I'd give anything in the world to get it. (*To Mrs. Belden.*) However, since I can't win your confidence, I'll hold no grudge. I'm going now. Good-bye.

SEWELL—I'm going with you.

MRS. BELDEN—Sewell—you're not.

SEWELL—I am—and I'm going to marry her.

MRS. BELDEN—Good God, not that. Why, in addition to all the rest, she's a thief.

SEWELL—What?

MRS. BELDEN—She stole my necklace.

SEWELL—Now I have you dead to rights at last. (*Pulls out necklacc.*) I stole it.

MRS. BELDEN—You!

SEWELL (*To Mrs. Belden*)—Yes. When she refused to marry me, I thought it was because I hadn't my place in the world. I saw a chance to get away with this (*Indicating jewels*) and get a start. I won't excuse myself by saying my brain was befuddled with booze. I thought clearly enough to get the goods.

MRS. BELDEN—Go on! Go on! What else did she induce you to do?

SEWELL (*Angrily*)—You're even twisting that around so she'll bear the brunt. Well, this is what she did. When I sobered, I saw her fine, pure eyes look straight into my soul, you understand. I saw them accusing me of being a weakling—of being a poor wisp of personality unable to withstand temptation of any kind. I saw her through the years draw farther and farther away from me. For the first time in my life I felt lonesome.

GERTIE—Then what did you do?

SEWELL—First I vowed I'd never drink again—a vow I think I've tested myself on. Next I came here to return the necklace.

GERTIE—That's what I wanted you to tell her. (*To Mrs. Belden*) Do you hear? He's not going to drink again. He's proved to himself he can do without it.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Sewell*)—She has you hypnotised. You are ready to take her crime on your shoulders. I'll call the police and have her arrested. (*Goes up. Enter Freeman rear.*)

GERTIE (*Running into his arms*)—Daddy!

FREEMAN (*To Mrs. B., holding Gertie*)—You'd try to take her away from me, would you? You can't. No law in the land will give her to you. I nursed her. I cared for her.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Freeman, in wonder*)—Who is this child?

FREEMAN—Mine.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie softly*)—Yours! (*To Gertrude*) Your name is Gertrude?

GERTIE—Yes.

MRS. BELDEN—Next Thursday is your birthday?

GERTIE—It is.

MRS. BELDEN—You are eighteen?

FREEMAN—She is eighteen. What are you going to do about it?

MRS. BELDEN (*Taking Gertie*)—Come to me. I won't harm you. I won't keep her. You are quite big. (*Turns Gertie around.*) The last time I saw you you were that size. (*Holds hands apart.*)

SEWELL (*To Mrs. Belden*)—You're human, too! A miracle!

MRS. BELDEN (*Indifferently, to Gertie*)—Oh, yes. A miracle. I knew your mother.

GERTIE—Tell me of her. I have always had an ideal of my mother.

MRS. BELDEN—An ideal of her? Could you hold an ideal of her?

GERTIE—Daddy did too.

FREEMAN—Your mother changed a lot from what *she* used to be at eighteen.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Gertie*)—Do you mind sitting on my knee? (*Gertie sits after Mrs. Belden takes chair.*) Tell me that you forgive my cruelties to you, and I'll tell you of your mother.

GERTIE—I forgive you, Mrs. Belden. I knew you didn't understand.

MRS. BELDEN (*Stroking Gertie's hair*)—That's a dear. Well your mother was—was a relative of mine. When she was just your age she fell in love with an artist—he was a dreamer—a man that wanted to reform the world over night. After a while the life he made your mother live began to cause her great pain. She was ostracised by her old friends. Well, one day in a fit of desperation, after some of your father's intimates had called her the vilest name that can be called a woman, she ran away and left you.

GERTIE—Didn't she come back at all?

MRS. BELDEN—Yes, after her insane moment had passed, but you were gone. Your father changed his name so he couldn't be followed. He went to England and in less than a year he wrote that you had died.

GERTIE—Did my mother ever learn the truth?

MRS. BELDEN—Not until it was too late to do her any good. (*Gives Gertie to Freeman.*) Take her along—

GERTIE—We're going to California.

MRS. BELDEN—You'll write to me?

GERTIE—Would you like me to?

MRS. BELDEN—Now that I've told you everything about your mamma will you think kindly of her once in a while? And say in your letters that you do.

GERTIE—I always did think kindly of her. I'll just keep on that way.

MRS. BELDEN—What can I give you to remember *me* by. This. (*Picks up photograph.*) It was taken along ago.

GERTIE (*Taking photograph*)—Thank you.

MRS. BELDEN (*To Freeman*)—Be good to her.

GERTIE (*To Mrs. Belden*)—Would you mind if I kissed you?

MRS. BELDEN—You want to? (*Gertie kisses her. Mrs. Belden folds Gertie close to her. Enter Doctor.*)

DOCTOR (*To Mrs. Belden*)—I'm glad to see you reconciled to Gertrude, dear. (*Mrs. B. starts back.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*Anxiously*)—Yes. Yes, I am reconciled. I—I was mistaken. Wasn't I, Sewell? (*To Freeman*) This is my husband. (*Doctor bows.*)

FREEMAN—Your husband!

MRS. BELDEN—Yes, yes. This is Gertrude's father, Doctor. I was mistaken about her.

SEWELL—Very much mistaken. But I'll tell you, Mater, you've made up for it all.

MRS. BELDEN—You're a good boy, Sewell. (*To Doctor*) I think she's a fine girl.

DOCTOR (*To Freeman*)—I have always thought so. (*Enter Rannock L. Gertie sees him.*)

GERTIE (*To Freeman*)—Let's go, quick.

RANNOCK (*To Gertie*)—You're going with me?

FREEMAN—Do you know that you're speaking to my daughter?

RANNOCK—It doesn't matter. She's got to marry me.

SEWELL (*Getting between them*)—Not by a damned sight.

RANNOCK—It's so, isn't it, Mater?

MRS. BELDEN—I'd rather see her dead than married to you.

RANNOCK—You've gone back on me? You want to see me go to the penitentiary.

MRS. BELDEN—A term in prison will do you good. It will teach you not to—

FREEMAN—What has Gertrude to do with all this?

GERTIE (*Laying hand on Mrs. B's arm and interrupting her*)—Sh— (*She lets it register that Freeman must be kept in ignorance of the affair.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*To Freeman*)—She is wanted as a witness in the theft of a necklace, that's all. You'd better take her away at once.

DOCTOR (*Shaking hands with Freeman*)—I congratulate you on having such a daughter. Good-bye, sir.

FREEMAN—Thank you. Good-bye. (*Gertie and Freeman go up. Enter Presser rear. He blocks their going. Millicent appears rear.*)

PRESSER (*To Doctor*)—The hour's up, sir.

DOCTOR (*Pulling out watch*)—Is it?

RANNOCK (*To Presser*)—Your watch is running fast. (*To Mrs. Belden*) Can't you think of something to help me out?

MRS. BELDEN (*To Rannock*)—I can only think of the misery you caused that poor child.

RANNOCK—At what specific hour did you become so strong for the little nobody.

MRS. BELDEN—Don't you dare call her a nobody. She's as good as you ever were—better than you ever were.

FREEMAN—I endorse that. (*To Doctor*) Believe me, sir, her mother was a woman in ten million.

DOCTOR—I don't doubt it, sir.

PRESSER (*To Rannock*)—Well, they've all left you to shift for yourself. Come along. (*To Gertie*) You come along as witness.

SEWELL (*He has picked up book from the shelf*)—Just a minute, Presser, wouldn't you like a little more of the Sterling brew? (*Pours out liquor.*)

PRESSER (*To Sewell, who takes liquor to him*)—Something about lizzardy—isn't it. Strange a good distiller as him would call it a wine of lizzardy. (*Drinks. Glass is refilled.*) You know, sir, a lizzard ain't nothing but a snake with feet. Now snakes and this don't mix—only sometimes— (*Drinks*) when you don't want them to.

SEWELL (*Refilling glass*)—Have another.

PRESSER (*Takes glass. Sewell signs to Rannock to go. Rannock goes rear*)—Do you mind if I sit down? (*Comes down and sits.*) I'd feel more comfortable-like.

RANNOCK—Sometimes you keep your head by saving your legs. At other times you don't. (*Exit rear.*)

PRESSER (*Stopping in the middle of his drink*)—What did he say? (*Gets partly to his feet.*) My legs are just as good as ever. (*Walks*) See! He's gone. (*To Sewell*) You did it.

MILLICENT—No, I did it. I didn't want you to spoil an elopement.

SEWELL (*Holding Presser's arm*)—You're in bad. You got the wrong angle. Rannock was just bringing Gertrude here to me, so we could be married.

FREEMAN (*To Gertie*)—Is this true?

GERTIE—I'm going to marry Sewell some day, if Dr. Belden doesn't object.

MRS. BELDEN—Why should he object?

DOCTOR (*To Mrs. Belden*)—I'm glad you approve, dear.

SEWELL (*To Presser*)—You can easily see that I wouldn't like the least intimation of scandal attached to my wife. And besides, she is your chief witness. She'd upset your story. She wouldn't say a word against Rannock.

GERTIE—I certainly would not.

MRS. BELDEN (*Quietly to Presser*)—Do you see that? (*Holds out page of hotel register.*)

PRESSER—The page of the hotel register! (*Points.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*Tearing it up very small*)—That's the last link.

PRESSER—Sort of missing link, ain't it. Well, that settles the case. Can I have another drink? (*Goes R.*)

SEWELL—Here, take the bottle.

PRESSER (*Taking book*)—I'll take it along. My partner would like an introduction to a nice set of lizzards with the Scotch accent. That's his favorite language. (*Exit Presser R.*)

FREEMAN—Come, Gertrude.

GERTIE—Good-bye, Doctor. Good-bye.

SEWELL (*Going with them*)—I'll take you as far as the train. I might tackle the blind baggage and go even further. (*Exeunt Sewell and Freeman.*)

MRS. BELDEN—Gertrude!

GERTRUDE (*Stopping at door*)—Yes!

MRS. BELDEN—Won't you kiss me? (*Gertie runs into her arms.*) Wear this. (*Clasps necklace about Gertie's throat.*)

GERTIE—Thank you. I'll see you some time.

MRS. BELDEN—You're really going to marry Sewell?

GERTIE (*To both Doctor and Mrs. Belden*)—You'd want me to?

DOCTOR—If you do it very soon.

GERTIE—I will. (*Running up.*)

MRS. BELDEN—And come back from California right away to live with us.

GERTIE—I can't leave daddy for good. But I'll come and visit you if you'll promise to talk to me every day about my mother. (*Exit rear.*)

DOCTOR—I wish we had a daughter like that.

MRS. BELDEN (*Going to window and looking out*)—So do I.

DOCTOR—It's strange, men sow their wild oats, and everything is forgotten and forgiven, but a woman. I think

that all civilizations rest on the virtue of their women.

MRS. BELDEN (*Looking anxiously out of window*)—There she is. She's beautiful.

DOCTOR—What a contradiction nature is. How it laughs at eugenics! That child is handicapped by birth and breeding, yet she is a lady with brains to be a great physician if the opportunity presented itself. My sons have every advantage accruing from both birth and breeding, and one is a dipsomaniac, the other a scoundrel.

MRS. BELDEN (*Bus. at window*)—Look—look—even Rannock is finer because of meeting her. See him. He's standing humbly before her. He's pleading for forgiveness. He is actually ready to go on his knees. She is wavering. There, I knew it. Sewell is placing her hand in Rannock's. They're all laughing. It's youth. It's youth. There's nothing in the world can take the place of youth, and we live it only once. (*Sound of auto horn off. She waves handkerchief at window.*) She's gone.

DOCTOR—I'm glad she became friends with Rannock. That spirit of forgiveness is the one that differentiates us more from the brute than any other quality.

MRS. BELDEN (*Coming to him*)—Doctor, I think I understand you better today than ever before. You are good, gentle.

DOCTOR—I've learned that in life bitter fruits grow on poison stocks. Spite breeds hate; patience, peace and kindness, friends.

MRS. BELDEN—And now I—want to confess to you a great sin.

DOCTOR—A great sin? One that you committed?

MRS. BELDEN—Twenty years ago.

DOCTOR—Twenty years! That's a long time. My dear, God has forgotten your sin. I can well afford to forget. So can you.

Curtain

END OF ACT III

THE WASTERS

THE WASTERS

CAST OF CHARACTERS

EDWARD MILLWOOD.....	<i>A modern pleasure seeker</i>
ALICE.....	<i>His sister</i>
MILLWOOD.....	<i>His father</i>
MRS. MILLWOOD (divorced).....	<i>His mother</i>
BURRELL.....	<i>His friend</i>
FLORENCE.....	<i>One of his victims</i>
MABEL.....	<i>Friend of Florence</i>
LARRY.....	<i>Brother of Florence</i>
BUDWELL.....	<i>A detective</i>
ALKALI.....	<i>A subdued cowpunch</i>
SERVANT.	
NITA.....	<i>A prospective victim of Edward Millwood's.</i>
MASKERS, DANCERS, ETC.	

TIME—*The Present.*

SCENE—*Act one: Living room of the Millwood's, New York City.*

Act two: A ranch house in the Southwest.

Act three: Larabee's apartment, New York City.

ACT I

Interior of Millwood home, New York City. This is the living room, and is richly furnished to suit the tastes of a woman divorced from her millionaire husband, who still provides for her and the children.

The butler, an aloof person, is discovered at rise. Imogene, a recent addition to the household in the form of a servant, enters rear. The attitude of the butler towards Imogene is the proper one of a superior towards an inferior.

IMOGENE—I thought Miss Alice was here.

BUTLER (*Haughtily*)—Indeed!

IMOGENE—A couple of girls forced themselves into the house.

BUTLER—You mean, you let them in. What do they want? Where are their cards?

IMOGENE—They didn't have cards. (*She comes towards him and speaks confidentially to him.*) They seem to know Master Edward. The one that put her foot in the door jamb when I tried to shut it, calls him Shrimp Eddie.

BUTLER—Shrimp Eddie! What an absurd name!

IMOGENE—She talks trouble for him, too.

BUTLER—Tell them to go at once. Wait, I'll do it. (*Exit rear.*)

IMOGENE (*Calling after him*)—It won't do any good. (*Enter Alice, L. She is about seventeen, pretty and guileless.*)

ALICE—Were you speaking, Imogene?

IMOGENE—Two strange girls pushed right past me into the house, Miss Alice. They want to see your brother.

ALICE—Who are they?

COMPANION—They don't seem to be anybody in particular. They just burst right in. (*Enter Burrell R. He is a suave, well groomed hanger-on of the financially successful, about 40.*)

BURRELL (*Advancing and shaking hands with Alice*)—How do you do, Alice. Ed said I was to wait in here for him.

ALICE—How do you do, Mr. Burrell. (*To Imogene*) That will do, thank you, Imogene. (*Exit Imogene. To Burrell*) Did Edward come up with you?

BURRELL—Yes, he ran his car in back. My, but you are looking fit. You're growing younger. Do you know, I think you'll never grow old?

ALICE—Why won't I grow old like other people?

BURRELL—I mean you'll never grow old to me.

ALICE—Why not to you the same as to anyone else?

BURRELL (*Bending towards her*)—Do I mean no more to you than anyone else?

ALICE—No, I can't say you do. (*Gently*) You see, I've seen you only a few times, Mr. Burrell.

BURRELL—That's your fault. I've wanted to see you often. Do you know that I cultivated Ed just to get a glimpse of you?

ALICE (*With rising inflection*)—My brother will be glad to hear that, I'm sure.

BURRELL (*Pulling chair towards her*)—Don't tell Ed I spoke to you. You're cooped up here like a bird in a cage.

ALICE—Well, it's a nice cage. I rather like it.

BURRELL (*Leaning towards her*)—Don't tell me. You're too young to get it across. Ed keeps you shut up, away from everything. He doesn't want you to touch life at all.

ALICE—Edward is careful of me, that's all. He's a real brother.

BURRELL (*Looking around, then very insinuatingly to her*)—A real brother! He wants a monopoly of the good things, that's it. He's greedy. Now, I think everyone should know everything about life, don't you?

ALICE (*Hesitatingly*)—It's nice to know a lot about things.

BURRELL—But don't you agree with me? You should know everything about everything.

ALICE (*Questioningly*)—Know everything about everything?

BURRELL (*Forcing the issue*)—You must think as I do about it. Why shouldn't you know all there is to know?

ALICE—I never thought of it.

BURRELL (*Compelling her to agree*)—But now you have thought of it. You must want to know things. Of course you do.

ALICE—Why, yes— Of course I do.

BURRELL—I knew it. You shouldn't be compelled to stay in the middle of a ring of stupid formalities while your brother goes dancing and singing around. Do you think so?

ALICE—Why, no.

BURRELL—Do you see any reason why you should vegetate? Why should any one have the right to rob you of your share of the laughter? (*He watches her narrowly.*) Youth lasts only a little while, (*Sighs*) only a little while. If you miss it now, when you reach out for it, it will be gone like that. (*Opens and closes his hand.*) To get its just dues, youth must be free—first, last and all the time free. Don't you think so?

ALICE—Why, yes.

BURRELL—That's right. Now listen. (*Looks around and goes closer to her.*) The next time you're coming back here to your mother's from your father's house, telephone me a day ahead and I'll wait anywhere you say for you.

ALICE—Wait for me! Why?

BURRELL—Don't you see, each home will think you're with the other, and you'll be free just like Ed. This idea of letting the boy have all the individuality and the girl none is old fashioned. Everybody laughs at it. Girls have just as many rights as boys. Will you do it? (*Enter Ed Millwood L. He is about twenty-two and an undersized glutton for pleasure.*)

BURRELL (*Seeing Ed and turning to him quickly*)—Oh, hello, Ed. Just telling Alice I was growing tired of waiting for you.

EDWARD (*Laying overcoat on back of chair*)—Thought it must have been *SOMETHING* confidential.

ALICE (*To Ed.*)—You're not going away this evening again, are you?

EDWARD—Why not? (*To Burrell*) Say, Burr, would you wait for me a second? I've something to say to Alice.

BURRELL (*Lighting cigarette*) Cut the lecture short. Remember dinner and the girls are waiting, both may get cold. (*Exit Burrell rear.*)

EDWARD (*Goes to Alice, speaks quickly, emphatically*)—Didn't I tell you to look out for him? (*Indicating Burrell.*)

ALICE—Why don't *you* look out for him?

EDWARD—Oh, it's different with me. You cut him after this, will you?

ALICE—Why don't you *cut* him tonight and go with me to father's? This is the third time you've let me go there alone. Father was angry the last time.

EDWARD—You fix it up with the Governor. (*Picks up his coat.*) I'll do as much for you. This engagement's pressing. Made it without thinking. Tell him I'll run in tomorrow or next day. If he says much, tell him I'm of legal age now, and don't have to obey the court order any more. (*Goes up.*) Remember, no more palavering with Burrell.

ALICE—Oh, I forgot. Did you see the girl that called? She's in the house somewhere.

EDWARD (*Anxiously*)—In the house? What girl? (*Comes down from door.*)

ALICE—She didn't give her name.

EDWARD—What does she look like? (*Imogene appears rear. She is followed closely by Mabel and Florence. Mabel is a good looking, over-dressed girl of about twenty-five or six. Florence is a neatly dressed girl of about seventeen, quiet and restrained.*)

MABEL (*To servant*)—Trailed you right to him. (*Enters rear.*)

EDWARD—You? Here? (*He stands abashed, unable to articulate.*)

MABEL (*To Florence, who enters slowly*)—Didn't I tell you Shrimp would be glad to see us?

FLORENCE—You did. But—is he?

ALICE—These are evidently the young ladies, Edward. Who are they?

MABEL—Before we get down to the biography, *can her.* (*Indicating servant.*) (*To servant*) Say, why don't you get a job at Child's?

IMOGENE—I don't want a job.

MABEL—You should. You got the greatest buckwheat front in captivity. Take it away.

EDWARD (*To servant*)—You may go, Imogene.

IMOGENE—Yes, Sir. (*Exit servant rear.*)

EDWARD (*To Florence, roughly*)—Why did you come here?

FLORENCE (*Shrinking back of Mabel*) — Why — I — I wanted to see you.

MABEL — We're here just to make a little social call, Eddie. I suppose this is your sister. (*Indicating Alice.*) Introduce us.

EDWARD — I've no time for nonsense. Get out, both of you.

MABEL — Sh—cut the rough stuff. I said to myself when I first came here I was going to be a lady. Now you let me be a lady, that's all I've got to say.

EDWARD — You keep still. I know your line of talk. (*He goes to Alice and places hand on her shoulder urging her to go out.*)

MABEL — You bet you do. I've a full supply on hand for you. (*Ed whispers to Alice.*)

ALICE — But what do they want, Edward?

MABEL (*To Alice*) — That's it, we're down to cases. Florrie here— (*Indicating Florence*) was taking the gas route when I interrupted her. Come on along, says I, and have a chin chin with the cause of your trouble—and here we are.

EDWARD — I'm not going to stand for any blackmail. You'd better know that right away.

MABEL — I get you, Eddie, I get you. You don't want to make her bump off, do you? She's only a kid, she's too young to kick out just for you. You were trying to die (*To Flo*) when I found you, weren't you?

FLORENCE — I didn't have anything to live for.

EDWARD (*Snarling*) — Huh, you're all the same. Talk a lot about dying and keep living just for spite. (*Florence shrinks back.*)

MABEL (*Indicating Alice*) — Would you say that about her?

EDWARD (*Angrily*) — You leave her out of this, you hear? (*To Alice*) Let me settle this little matter myself. (*Leads her to door R.*)

ALICE — I can't understand it, Edward. What do they want? Why did they come here? Where did you meet them?

EDWARD—Never mind now, I'll get them out. (*Florence signs to Mabel to leave with her.*)

MABEL (*To Edward. Holding Florence in check*)—You've another guess coming. We had to pry ourselves in. Believe me, you'll have to do some prying to get us out.

FLORENCE (*To Mabel*)—Let's go.

MABEL—Can that quit stuff, the circus is just starting.

ALICE (*To Edward*)—Shall I tell Mr. Burrell? He may help you.

EDWARD—That's right, get Burr in quickly. (*Grasping at the hope.*)

MABEL (*To Alice*)—Say, you, little one, look out for that Burr. I got his number and Shrimp here's an angel child beside him.

ALICE—You're a strange girl. You seem to know everybody.

MABEL—No, only the male members of your set.

EDWARD (*Urging Alice*)—Never mind her, Alice. I'm sorry you're compelled to know that such creatures live.

MABEL (*To Alice*)—See, it's cotton wool for you, brickbats for us. You'd never suspect we were of the same flesh, would you? All the same, he was ours more than he was ever yours.

ALICE—What's the meaning of it all, Edward? The girl seems to think she knows you better than I do.

MABEL—You bet your life I do. You get him always with the soup and fish on— (*Indicating evening clothes.*) Believe me, he leaves off his conscience with his dress suit, and when he does, he's some boy.

EDWARD (*To Alice*)—Why do you bandy words with her?

ALICE—I don't know what's wrong, but it looks terrible, Edward.

EDWARD—I'll explain later. (*Urging her to leave. He finally gets her off reluctantly.*)

MABEL (*To Edward*)—Let the kid alone. She's getting a line on you so you won't pull any Sunday-school stuff on her when she's not looking.

EDWARD (*Shuts door*)—Thank heaven, she's gone.

MABEL (*To Edward*)—The little one's got a date with your past alright, alright. She won't wear blinders after this either.

EDWARD (*Advancing on Mabel*)—You infernal cat!

MABEL—Soft pedal on that; I'll scratch. You're sore 'cause I wised her up a bit.

EDWARD (*To Florence, roughly*)—Why did you come here?

FLORENCE (*Abashed*)—Just to—just to see you.

MABEL (*Florence shrinks back of Mabel*)—I'm the committee of explanation.

EDWARD (*To Mabel*)—What do you want?

MABEL—Get out your shock absorber.

EDWARD (*Dcspairingly*)—I'm not going to try to understand you.

MABEL—Too high brow, eh? Well, that's what I get for almost going to school.

EDWARD—For God's sake, cut the chatter. What do you want?

MABEL—It's going to knock you a twister. We want you! And we're going to get you.

EDWARD—What new kind of frame-up are you trying to work? (*To Florence*) Are you in on it?

FLORENCE (*Half-frightened*)—I agree with what Mabel says.

EDWARD—It's madness. I belong here. This is my home. I'm going to stay here.

MABEL—While your brain's not working your tongue's doing quite well.

EDWARD—I wish you'd train your tongue to talk some sense. (*To Florence*) Don't you see you can't have me if I stay here?

MABEL—Wake up, this is 1916, the war's nearly over. New stuff or nothing. She'll stay with you.

EDWARD (*Turns to Florence*)—Stay with me! You can't. Why don't *you* say something?

FLORENCE—Well, when Mabel found me almost—almost dead—I told her what the doctor said I—I— (*She bursts out crying.*)

MABEL (*To Edward*)—I'll knock your block off if you make her cry. She's the best kid ever, and she's got you dead to rights.

FLORENCE (*Quietly*)—Let me tell it. She got it out of me that I loved you.

EDWARD (*With sneering laugh*)—Huh, loved me—!

MABEL—That's right, I can't see why she should either. Women always were a puzzle to me. Anyhow, I said the only thing to do is to get into the house and camp. I knew you'd take up the job of being a real father if we once got snug in here.

EDWARD—A father! (*He looks from Mabel to Florence. Florence hangs her head.*)

MABEL—Yes, papa, dear.

EDWARD (*Threatening Mabel*)—Stop it! Get out, both of you. I'll call the servants.

MABEL—My trusty little forty-four— (*Pulling revolver out part way from hand bag*) was depended on to rush the first line of trenches to get us in, but it's just as good now as any time.

EDWARD (*Sarcastically*)— You've got a gun, too, eh?

MABEL—You bet. Think I'd trust you not to rough-house us? We're here and we're going to stay until you come right out in the open and say she's your wife.

EDWARD—My wife! But I'm not married to her. I never was.

MABEL—Oh, yes, you were. You kept house together, didn't you? You paid the bills, didn't you? (*Takes out some bills.*) Coal bills, grocery bills, rent. Here's some made out in your name not paid yet.

EDWARD (*Snatching bills*)—Damn them. (*Tears them up and tosses them away. Enter Burrell rear.*)

BURRELL—Ah, children, why the confetti? (*Touching scraps of paper with his toe.*)

MABEL—Well, if here isn't Burr? How are you, you old chestnut? Still sticking around?

BURRELL—Still sticking, Mabel. Glad to see you've moved up a peg socially.

MABEL—Right at your heels, Burr. Every step you climb, I go up one, too. I hope we both hold on and don't land back east of the west side.

BURRELL (*Indicating by look that he is not pleased with Mabel's reference to his former social status*)—How is little Florrie this evening?

FLORENCE—How do you do, Mr. Burrell?

BURRELL (*To Edward*)—You're to be congratulated. Nice girls, both of them.

EDWARD (*Scoffingly*)—Glad you think so.

MABEL (*To Edward*)—You don't.

EDWARD—Not by a damn sight.

BURRELL (*Laying hand on Edward's arm and interrupting him*)—Easy. They are our friends and ladies (*Bowing to the girls*), both of them.

MABEL (*To Burrell. Astonished*)—You *have* improved, Burr.

BURRELL—It's the voice with the smile that wins, Mabel. I learned that. If you'll permit me I'll give you a lesson.

EDWARD—Better give her a lesson in minding her own business. She's butting in where she don't belong.

BURRELL—I don't agree with you, Edward. Mabel's middle name is discretion.

MABEL—Well, wouldn't that furnish a flat on the installment plan? Say, Burr, the latch string's out for you again. Drop in any time.

BURRELL—With pleasure, Mabel.

EDWARD (*To Burrell*)—Where do I come in on this? I thought you were my pal, that you were going to help me out.

BURRELL—Place aux Dame, Mabel. (*To Mabel*) Mabel, dear, that's classic Greek for "Ladies First."

MABEL—I get you, Burr. I get that wop stuff quick every time.

EDWARD (*To Burrell*)—I might have known that where there's a skirt you always were a quitter.

MABEL (*To Burrell*)—You're out to see that even if we are just poor defenseless female women with a punch in both hands, we get a square deal, isn't that it, Burr?

BURRELL (*To Mabel*)—I might state my position less crudely. I am not one of those chemically pure creatures to whom God revealed himself in the form of platitudes, but I still believe in the simple element of justice.

MABEL—There you are. Florence here's got it on the Shrimp for fair.

EDWARD (*Indicating Florence*)—Why doesn't she talk for herself?

FLORENCE—I can—but—I—

MABEL (*To Burrell*)—This is no shake-down for coin, Burr. The kid's dead stuck on him. She's got used to the home stuff. Slippers by the fire, coffee and toast in bed, and the rest of it. Now there's (*She whispers to Burrell*).

BURRELL (*Sympathetically*)—Sh! I understand. (*To Edward*) As a matter of fact, you two just had a little quarrel. The usual lovers' disagreement. Come now, isn't it so?

MABEL—Nothing doing, it was a cold shake. He quit her dead.

EDWARD—I'm going to stay quit, too.

FLORENCE (*Tearfully*)—Let him, I'm going. I'll not stay another minute. (*She goes up. Mabel pursues her and grabs her at door rear. Burrell, by quick gesture, shows Edward that he is on his side, and is merely pretending friendship for the girls on purpose to blind them.*)

MABEL—You're bursting the schedule wide open. Who's putting this over, you or me?

FLORENCE—I don't care, I'm not going to stay.

MABEL (*Brings Florence down. To her*) You're insulted, that's it. You give me a pain. Don't you know a husband can never insult his wife?

FLORENCE—Yes, he can.

MABEL—But if she's a wise wife, she doesn't let on she is.

EDWARD—She's not my wife, I tell you. There was no marriage ceremony, and there never will be.

MABEL—What's a marriage ceremony between friends?

BURRELL—I think I see a solution of the problem. (*Winks to Edward.*)

MABEL—There can be only one. The kid here's got to get in right with the world, or we don't leave this place. This is new stuff that beats the law to a frazzle.

BURRELL—I offer my plan only tentatively.

MABEL—That sounds good to me, whatever it is.

BURRELL—If it's acceptable, alright. If not, we'll try something else.

MABEL—Shoot!

BURRELL (*To Mabel*)—Suppose we, you and I, go off and leave these two young people alone?

EDWARD—I don't want it. I don't want to stay alone with her.

BURRELL (*Tenderly*)—Just a moment— (*To Mabel*) Very often the real cause of a lovers' quarrel is hidden from those looking on. If Edward and Florrie were left alone, I believe they'd find their differences only superficial. (*Taking Mabel's arm*) What do you say?

FLORENCE (*To Mabel*)—Don't leave me.

MABEL—I hate to do it.

BURRELL—It's your best chance.

MABEL (*At door*)—Yes, I know it looks like a good bet.

BURRELL—There will be nothing lost. We'll be back in a few minutes.

MABEL—It's a go. Look here, kid (*To Florence*), take this bag. (*Gives hand bag with revolver in it to Florence.*) If they pull any rough stuff, use the little forty-four. (*To Edward*) Don't forget, Shrimp, if there's a catch in this somewhere, you'll get yours later. (*Exit Burrell and Mabel L. After Burrell signs for Edward to get Florence out of house.*)

EDWARD (*To Florence*)—Damn her! She engineered the whole thing.

FLORENCE—Well, after what the doctor said, I wanted to see you. I wrote and got no answer. I tried to telephone, they cut me right off, down at your club—

EDWARD—Did you go to the club?

FLORENCE—I was desperate. I didn't know you meant so much to me.

EDWARD—Cut that out. I was your bank roll. I was your monumental good thing women of your kind don't want to lose.

FLORENCE—Women of my kind?

EDWARD—You're no better than the rest. It's all you ever will be.

FLORENCE (*Fiercely*)—Good God! You know different. I was always straight, then you came along. You remember how you kept after me. You know you told me you loved me—that—that—oh, you remember what you said.

EDWARD—Yes, I remember. I should. I've said it so often. Why, there's hardly a chorus girl on Broadway who couldn't tell you I said the same to her at some time or other.

FLORENCE (*Dejectedly*)—At some time or other?

EDWARD—They know the value to put on what a fellow says. They're good sports. They get the laughter, the wine, the song, and pay with a little love, then go their way and laugh and sing—and love again.

FLORENCE—But we were happy in that little flat together, weren't we?

EDWARD—Happy! It was a nice place to rest after all the other places were shut.

FLORENCE—And I always waited up, dreading that something had happened to you. Often I thought your machine had upset and that you were lying on the roadside moaning for my care. When fear used to grip me, I'd press my face against the window pane and imagine myself flying through the night to help you. And all the time you were telling those others just what you told me.

EDWARD—Just what I told you, don't forget that. And I meant it just the same way.

FLORENCE—I wish I'd known before. It wouldn't have been so bad. Why, the second day after you didn't come home I thought I'd go insane. I was all alone. Then when you stayed away till almost three weeks passed, I simply couldn't stand it. My life was done. There's nothing left for me—nothing.

EDWARD—That's what they all say. Some rant and tear around at first and want to take a shot at a fellow. After a while they take a few hundred dollars and go off and forget it.

FLORENCE—Are you sure they forget it?

EDWARD—There, buck up! This is a nice little world, Florrie. It will treat you right if you let it. Go right back to the flat. If the money I left you isn't enough, I'll send you more.

FLORENCE—And you won't marry me?

EDWARD—Now, look here, Mabel put that in your head.

FLORENCE—It's the baby. I want to start him right.

EDWARD—Be sensible. I can't marry you. Look at the difference in our social position. It would break my mother's heart. I'm a damned fool, I admit. I go around a good bit, but I'm not crazy enough to choke myself off from everything and everybody. I can't marry you, and I won't.

FLORENCE—Then everything's over. (*She totters up stage. Enter Alice rear, dressed for street. The two girls pause and look at each other.*) You're his sister, aren't you?

ALICE—I am.

EDWARD—Don't speak to her, Alice. (*Takes Alice by arm.*)

FLORENCE—I'm not going to say much. (*To Alice*) You're a pretty girl. You're a good girl. Well, I used to be like you—until—

EDWARD—You've said enough.

FLORENCE—I just want to say to you— (*Turning to Alice*), stay good. Don't listen to anyone.

EDWARD—Keep your advice to yourself. My sister and you are of two different worlds.

FLORENCE—Different worlds! Why should we be of different worlds? We were born about the same time. (*To Alice*) You've always had it easy. I—well, never mind. Do you think God made you to get everything, every luxury without effort, and love, honor, devotion without being put to the test? Do you think He made me to struggle against starvation from the time my mother died and to wind up an outcast? Do you think that He made me to give birth to a baby that will be an outcast from the first instant it breathes? If God intended it that way, He isn't any more just than man is. (*Exit Florence rear, crying after a complete breakdown.*)

ALICE (*Struggling with Edward to get free*)—I'm going to help that poor girl.

EDWARD—Stay where you are. She doesn't need help. That's all stage stuff, just for effect.

ALICE (*Tries to free herself*)—Let me go. It seemed very real to me.

EDWARD—I tell you there's nothing to it. When she gets all those arguments out of her system, she'll settle down in the rut where she belongs and be contented.

ALICE—Papa's waiting in the car. I'm going to tell him. He'll do something for her.

EDWARD—Alice, above all, don't tell the Governor. I'll see that no harm comes to the girl. It's a nasty affair, and—well, I've already given her a great deal of money. I'll see she gets all she needs.

FLORENCE—That's a promise, Edward?

EDWARD—It is.

ALICE—Very well, let's go with father.

EDWARD—Not this time; next month sure.

ALICE—It's always next month. Mother thought you were over there last time. Father thought you were here.

EDWARD—I explained that to the Mater. (*Urges her up stage.*) I hope you enjoy yourself.

ALICE (*Stops and turns at door rear*)—Enjoy myself! I can't. I'm very unhappy.

EDWARD (*Goes to her, shuts door rear*)—What is it, little sister?

ALICE—Our home is split up so. Papa lives one place, mamma another. No matter in which house I am, I always feel that I belong somewhere else.

EDWARD—Same way with myself. All the fellows I know that have two homes and a divorce in the family say the same thing. It's one reason I've batted around so much. (*A shot is fired off.*)

ALICE (*Running close to Edward*)—What's that?

EDWARD (*Half-afraid*)—A blow-out, wasn't it? The Governor's car.

ALICE (*Opening door rear*)—It was in the house. (*Puts head out of doors.*) Sounded like a shot. It was. There's somebody hurt. (*Starts to go.*)

EDWARD (*Holding her back*)—Don't go, Alice. Don't get mixed up in it. (*Pulls her into room.*)

ALICE—I may be needed. Let go of me! Suppose it's mamma. She's been despondent lately. If she saw papa she might— (*Enter Imogene rear.*)

SERVANT (*Excited*)—She's shot herself. The girl that was here. The little one. (*Exit servant rear.*)

ALICE (*Running off rear*)—I knew it.

EDWARD (*Sinks on couch and buries his face in his hands*)—My God! (*Enter Burrell R.*)

BURRELL—What's the row?

EDWARD—She shot herself.

BURRELL (*Leaving door and crossing to Edward*)—Who? (*Mabel appears at door R.*)

EDWARD—Florence!

MABEL—Florence! Good God! (*Runs off rear.*)

BURRELL (*To Edward*)—She's not dead?

EDWARD—Don't ask me. This is fearful. What am I going to do? (*Buries his face in his hands. Re-enter Mabel rear.*)

MABEL—She's dead. Poor little Florence!

BURRELL—Why, it can't be.

MABEL—But it is.

EDWARD—Who did it?

MABEL—You! It was a frame-up. (*To Burrell*) You took me out of the way. When I told you it was a shot you stalled me. (*Goes to Edward*) Alright, Edward Cranston Millwood, you'll go to the chair. (*To Burrell*) I'll get you, too, Burrell, for being in on it.

EDWARD—So help me, God, I was here with Alice. I'd nothing to do with it. (*Enter Alice rear.*)

ALICE (*To Edward*)—Father is here.

EDWARD—Does father know? (*Alice nods her head dejectedly.*)

BURRELL (*To Alice*)—How did it happen?

ALICE—No one seems to know. She went into the reception room. (*Enter Millwood, Sr., rear. Father of Edward and Alice. A successful business man about fifty.*)

EDWARD—Father!

MILLWOOD—What does this mean? Who is the dead girl?

MABEL—She was—

BURRELL—Just a minute! Alice (*To Alice*), would you mind leaving us?

EDWARD—Yes, do go, Alice.

MILLWOOD—What's the matter? Why can't your sister stay? What is there she may not hear?

BURRELL (*To Millwood*)—I think you'd better let Alice leave us, Mr. Millwood. Your daughter is—is young. There are some things in life it would be just as well she didn't know.

ALICE (*To Burrell*)—But you said a little while ago I should know everything possible about everything. (*Burrell shrinks back a bit, abashed.*)

MILLWOOD—Go to your room, Alice. You'd better pack your things. I'll take you away this time for good.

ALICE—I won't leave mother.

MILLWOOD—Where's your mother?

ALICE—She's—she's out.

MILLWOOD—Playing bridge. I thought so. I'll see if the courts won't give me permanent care of you. Get ready to go.

ALICE—You won't take me from mother. (*Exit Alice R. crying.*)

MILLWOOD (*Indicating Mabel*)—Who is this?

BURRELL—She's a friend of that other girl, Mr. Millwood. Came here with her.

MABEL (*To Millwood*)—Yes, Mr. Millwood, and I'm going to stay here till your son pays the price.

MILLWOOD—Pays the price? For what?

MABEL—He killed that little girl out there.

MILLWOOD—Killed her! (*To Edward*) My God!

EDWARD (*Hysterically*)—I didn't. I tell you, I didn't.

MILLWOOD (*To Mabel*)—There!

MABEL (*To Millwood*)—Did you expect him to say yes? I'll see what the police do about it. (*Goes up.*)

MILLWOOD (*To Burrell*)—Don't let that girl leave the house. (*Burrell gets between Mabel and door.*)

BURRELL (*To Mabel*)—Don't run away, Mabel. We're your friends here.

MABEL—I know what kind of friends you are. You kill a poor girl 'cause she gets you in trouble. That's the kind of friends you are.

MILLWOOD—You seem very sure of your statements.

MABEL—I've a right to be.

MILLWOOD—Tell me everything.

MABEL (*To Millwood*)—If you really want to know, I'll tell you. Your boy here is the worst rounder New York has seen for many a day.

MILLWOOD—I hardly think you can convince me of that.

MABEL—No? Well, you don't need to take my word for it. All the time you thought he was in church he was in Churchill's.

MILLWOOD—Even there he could display ordinary decency.

MABEL—There ain't no such animal. At least, I haven't noticed it among the Johns. That's what your kid was—

a John. There was hardly a girl from the Circle down to Herald Square that didn't call him Shrimp. And he liked it. Queer, isn't it?

MILLWOOD (*Thoughtfully*)—Yes, it is queer, if it's true.

MABEL—True! Do you think I'm stringing you right in front of him. Why don't he deny what I'm saying? (*To Edward*) Go on, Shrimp. Deny it.

MILLWOOD—Well, what have you to say, sir? (*Edward keeps his face in his hands.*)

BURRELL (*To Mabel*)—I think Mr. Millwood can guess the rest. He is a man of the world.

MILLWOOD—I may be a man of the world, Mr. Burrell, but if you don't mind, I'll see this through in my way. (*To Mabel*) Where did you meet the dead girl?

MABEL—She was a hat model in a Fifth Avenue store. When she first started on the job she was a picture. A good kid, too. He got her on a bet.

MILLWOOD—A bet! The honor of a girl was the subject of a bet!

MABEL—Surest thing you know. When a new skirt that has some class, and hasn't been over the hurdles, shows anywhere, all the Johns go after her.

MILLWOOD (*Half gasp*)—Oh—!

MABEL—Shrimp's a favorite in the betting. He copped Florrie. Poor kid, she didn't know the ropes. It was two whiffs of champagne, and they went housekeeping together.

MILLWOOD (*Staggered*)—Then what?

MABEL—The old story. He deserted her. That's why she came here today. When she learned of the expected addition to the family, she went all to pieces.

MILLWOOD (*Overcome*)—A baby, too! (*Enter Mrs. Millwood rear. She is in street dress. Her age is better than forty, though she looks younger.*)

MRS. MILLWOOD—What is the meaning of all this?

EDWARD (*Looking up*)—Mother! (*To Millwood*) Don't tell her. Don't!

MRS. MILLWOOD (*To Millwood*)—What's this all about? (*To Mabel*) If you'll be so kind as to excuse us.

MILLWOOD (*To Mabel*)—Yes, do, for a few minutes. I want to talk to his mother. I'll see you later.

BURRELL—Come on, Mabel. They'll excuse us. (*Leads Mabel.*) They want to talk things over in the family.

MABEL (*Turning at door L.*)—Don't forget, Shrimp, you'll get yours. (*To Mrs. Millwood*) Just tell the family I'm going to the police no matter what happens. (*Exeunt Burrell and Mabel.*)

MRS. MILLWOOD—What does the creature mean?

MILLWOOD—She means, madame, that this is your son. (*Indicating Edward.*) She means that he is accused of killing the prospective mother of his child.

MRS. MILLWOOD—Impossible! Edward—you didn't—say you didn't! It's preposterous.

EDWARD—I didn't. I swear, I didn't.

MILLWOOD (*To Mrs. Millwood*)—The girl is lying dead in your reception room.

MRS. MILLWOOD—Dead! Here, in my house? This is terrible! (*She falls dejected in chair.*)

MILLWOOD—I'm afraid it is, madame. Our one concern must be to save him from the chair.

MRS. MILLWOOD (*To Edward*)—But you are innocent—. Say you're innocent.

MILLWOOD—Innocent! All the circumstantial evidence is against him. Do you know he is a rounder, a blackguard, a cynic at twenty-two, who holds the honor of a girl so lightly, he bets with his lewd companions he can ruin her?

MRS. MILLWOOD—I don't believe it.

MILLWOOD—It's not a matter of belief. It's a matter of proof. And not one girl. God knows the number. Poor little strugglers compelled to earn a livelihood have been his victims.

EDWARD—Strugglers! You don't know the type; they're all the same.

MILLWOOD—You and your kind make them all the same. (*To Mrs. Millwood*) This is all fruit that hangs on the tree of your divorce, madame. When you broke up the home, you planted the seed that bore this tragedy.

MRS. MILLWOOD—Do you expect to use this trouble as an excuse to make me regret our divorce?

MILLWOOD—See what it has brought about? It was your duty, in the face of everything, to hold the family together.

MRS. MILLWOOD—You expected all the sacrifices to be made by me.

MILLWOOD—Well, anyhow, I gave you all the money you wanted. Why didn't you use it to make a man of him? (*Indicating Edward.*)

EDWARD (*To Millwood*)—You think everything can be done with money. You made us think we could buy happiness with it. When I went to school my five hundred dollars a month and my car didn't get me anything but the envy of the boys who didn't have five hundred a month and a car. After a while I got to think that being hated because I had everything by the fellows who didn't have anything was great sport. When I was fired out of school, you stormed and tore around, but you didn't do anything but blame my mother. When I kidded you about living here one month and with you the next, and you found out I wasn't living in either place, you stormed and tore around again, and blamed my mother. That's all. You fumed a bit and shifted the responsibility. That's all you cared about— You got from under. It's all you want to do now, get from under. (*Enter Burrell L.*)

BURRELL (*To Mrs. Millwood*)—Mabel is waiting in your room, madame. Here's the key. (*Gives key to Mrs. Millwood.*) I think you can persuade her to say nothing.

MRS. MILLWOOD—That may be a way to save us the disgrace.

BURRELL—You'll have to act quickly. The police may come at any moment. (*Exit Mrs. Millwood L.*)

MILLWOOD—Give her all the money she wants. Let her keep her mouth shut.

BURRELL (*To Millwood*)—You'll have to handle the police. Tell them that you sent for them. Say the girl shot herself because she was refused a position or something.

You are influential enough to convince them of anything. (To Edward) Where can we go until this affair blows over?

EDWARD (To Burrell)—You are going to stick by me?

BURRELL—Did you ever think I wouldn't?

MILLWOOD (Taking out money and giving it to Burrell)—I have a cattle ranch in the southwest. Suppose you go there? (Noise off L. as of door being broken open.)

BURRELL—Mabel's trying to break the door! Quick! (To Edward) Let's off the back way. (Edward and Burrell exit R.)

MRS. MILLWOOD—Rest assured, the girl will say nothing.

EDWARD (At door R.) Good-bye, mother. (Enter Alice rear.)

ALICE—The police are here. (Exeunt Edward and Burrell R.)

BURRELL (As he disappears)—Quick, Edward! (Enter Mabel L.)

MABEL (She exes rear)—Where's Shrimp? A nice trick. (To Alice) Where's your brother? (Enter policeman rear.)

MILLWOOD (To policeman)—How are you, Merrick? Glad you're on the case. Here are the facts. (Policeman takes out notebook.) The dead girl came here to get a position.

POLICEMAN—Do you know her name, sir?

MILLWOOD (Turns to Mabel)—You do.

MABEL—It was Florence Pelletan. But I want to say—

MILLWOOD—Listen to me, officer, I— (Mabel tries to interrupt him.)

MABEL—Let me tell you.

POLICEMAN (To Mabel)—Let Mr. Millwood tell his story. Go on, sir.

MILLWOOD—If we had known, we could have averted the tragedy. We made choice of this young lady for the place (Indicating Mabel), because we saw in her qualities of mind and heart superior to the opportunities she has had in life so far.

MRS. MILLWOOD (*Pleadingly to Mabel*)—We'll make amends for all you have missed. We'll see you get a fine education. You can live in this house always.

POLICEMAN (*To Mrs. Millwood*)—Excuse me, ma'am.

MILLWOOD—We didn't know it meant so much to the other girl—Florence. We didn't know she was actually starving—that this was the chance she had been relying on to save herself. You understand, Merrick. We pointed out without thinking the advantages this young lady would have (*Indicating Mabel*), because she is discreet and knows when to talk and when to be silent for her own good. When we refused the other poor creature the position, she left us. The next thing we heard a shot. That's all.

MABEL—No, it's not all. (*To policeman*) You listen to me. The way it came about was this—I—

ALICE (*To Mabel*)—You came here with her. I was in the house all the time. You were the one I wanted. I wanted you because I need you. Since my father and mother were divorced, Edward and I have had no real home. You know what that means—no real home. I felt that you would be a help to me. That you would be a companion. That I would never be lonesome again. (*Pleading.*) Say you'll stay. You will learn the truth of everything. Say you'll be my friend. Say you will!

POLICEMAN—I'd better get the chief in on this. (*Turns to leave rear.*)

MABEL—Wait.

POLICEMAN (*Stopping. To Mabel*)—Well?

ALICE (*Pleadingly*)—Say you will be my friend.

POLICEMAN (*To Mabel*)—Do you want to make a statement? (*Alice makes pleading gesture towards Mabel.*)

MABEL (*To Policeman*)—No, I'll wait and make mine to the judge.

Curtain

END OF ACT I

THE WASTERS

ACT II

SCENE—*Interior of common room in ranch house. Window and door rear. Doors R. and L. There is a kitchen table covered with oil cloth down front at center. Saddles, blankets and other evidences of ranch life are strewn about and hanging from walls. A tray with glasses and bottles on upper corner of table.*

TIME—*A month later.*

Burrell and three cowboys are discovered at table playing poker. As curtain goes up, Alkali, one of the cowboys, rather old, faded and subdued, is singing as he deals the cards.

ALKALI—The long-horn started for the short cow-punch,
The pinto bucked for he had a hunch,
That the quicker they got from that there place,
The sooner he'd live to save his face.
Hi-yi-yippy-yi-hi-yi.

(Burrell and others pick up cards and look at them.)

BURRELL—Well, Alkali, I like your voice, but why do you waste it singing hymns? I pass.

ALKALI—That ain't no hymn, Mr. Burr, indeed it ain't. There's a lot more to that there song that I don't remember about the pinto running away—like—well a lot of swear words.

COWBOY *(To dealer)*—Pass me.

SECOND COWBOY—It'll cost you three chips. *(Showing chips to center of table.)* Gi' me one card.

BURRELL *(Showing out chips)*—I'll stay. Two cards, please. *(The other player pushes chips to center of table and holds up his fingers for three cards.)*

ALKALI *(Dealing cards)*—No, siree, that's no hymn.

BURRELL—I'll raise you five. (*Pushes out chips. Alkali and one cowboy raise again. Burrell drops ten chips, one at a time, on the pile. The cowboy follows suit.*)

ALKALI—That there— (*Sings*) Yi-hi-yippy-hi-yi might a' told you it wasn't no hymn. I ain't been to no church since— (*To second cowboy*) Lookee here, Cub Freeman, what you doin'? (*He counts the chips as the second cowboy drops them in the pile at center. Alkali throws in his cards.*) This is too swift for me.

COWBOY—And ten.

BURRELL (*Speaks quietly and indifferently as he pushes chips to center of table*)—You should go to church, Alkali. Better still, you should save your voice until you do go. And ten.

SECOND COWBOY (*Pushes out all his remaining chips*)—What ye got? (*Throws cards down face upwards.*)

ALKALI (*Looking at cowboy's cards*)—Full house on queens.

BURRELL (*Throwing cards down face up*)—Fours!

ALKALI—Kings! I'll be jim swiggered. You seem to have cut your eye-teeth on poker, ain't you?

BURRELL—Well, all the gifts of the gods can't be yours. (*Rakes in chips.*) You have musical talent and a voice. I have luck at cards.

SECOND COWBOY (*Filling glass and gulping drink*)—What yer think I got?

ALKALI—A chance to work steady for six months to pay off what you owe Mr. Burrell. I beat you, I can pay mine off in four. (*Enter Edward L.*)

EDWARD (*In snarling tone*)—Still at it?

SECOND COWBOY (*Rising*)—I'm through. Come on, Al. (*Exit cowboy and second cowboy. Burrell toys with cards.*)

ALKALI—Me, too.

EDWARD (*Throwing himself in chair disgruntled*)—A sweet little New Year's, isn't it?

BURRELL—You're perturbed?

ALKALI—No, he's just sore. (*To Edward*) Ain't you, Mr. Cranston, 'cause they ain't no Broadway running over the mesa?

EDWARD (*With longing*)—Broadway!

ALKALI—This is only a hold-over holiday. Larry says we're celebrating it just 'cause you're here. We put our best foot out Christmas.

EDWARD (*In tone of disgust*)—Yes, I saw her foot.

BURRELL—Size eight—G width.

ALKALI (*Half-offended, half-surprised*)—Didn't you like the Christmas dance?

EDWARD—Like it! I adored it.

BURRELL—What Mr. Cranston objected to at the dance, Mr. Alkali, is that he grew tired eating the dust. It tasted too much like your name pronounced several times in a great hurry.

ALKALI—Doggone it! I told Sweeny to sprinkle the floor and keep down the alkali so you and Mr. Cranston could see the dancers. Well, water's mighty scarce out here, Mr. Burrell.

BURRELL—What did Sweeny say?

ALKALI—Go to hell!

EDWARD—Evidently thought you wanted to cool off. (*Enter Larabee rear. He is about 26, well set up, brown from outdoor life. He speaks slowly with a suggestion of southern intonation.*)

LARRABEE (*Going to desk near window, rear*)—How's everybody? (*Takes off hat and gloves, beats his trousers with gloves and knocks dust off.*)

EDWARD—Are you early or late, Larabee?

LARRABEE—Late. (*Throws gloves on desk, hangs hat up nearby.*) The boys rounded up the skunk that made the attack on Mrs. Parkton's girl.

ALKALI—Did they plug him for keeps?

LARRABEE—Well, he'll not do any more sneaking in back doors after our girls.

EDWARD—From what I've seen of the girls out here, Larabee, anyone that would tackle them should get a medal.

LARABEE (*Coming down slowly*)—Well, that's what this chap got. They strung it around his neck with a rope, then they attached the rope to a tree. I think the boys emptied about twenty other little medals into him altogether.

ALKALI—Gee, I wish I'd been there. The hound!

BURRELL—Wasn't the justice rather swift?

LARABEE—Well, he did try to nose in later, but the job was finished.

BURRELL—I mean abstract justice.

LARABEE—We don't have any of that kind around here. Just a sheriff, and he's seldom on hand.

EDWARD—That primitive idea of shielding woman gives me a pain.

LARABEE—It gave that chap several.

EDWARD—All the women I've met have been able to shield themselves, and then some.

LARABEE—Well, you see you come from one place, this is another. We wear our women in our hearts out here. Anybody that hurts them hurts us.

EDWARD—I wish you'd come back to little old New York with me. I'd open your eyes.

LARABEE—Maybe I don't want to learn to see any different.

BURRELL—The trip would do you good.

ALKALI—Maybe the New Yorkers would *do him* good. That's what Larry's skeered of.

LARABEE—Right, Alkali, I'm not hankering for any New York, not when I've got the comfort of the ranch.

EDWARD (*Sarcastically*)—Comfort of the ranch! Good heavens!

BURRELL (*To Larry*)—Confess now it is a little short of modern conveniences.

EDWARD—It's not that, only nothing happens. (*To Larabee*) Do you know this is New Year's day?

LARABEE—Yes, one of the fellows at the store told me yesterday. That was why the boys didn't do anything but round up the stock and feed them and shoe the ponies and mend the wagon and fix the harness and—

EDWARD—And work about ten hours. Well, do you know what they're doing in New York now?

LARABEE—Can't say as I do.

EDWARD (*To Burrell*)—It doesn't seem fair to tell him. He'll go off his nut to get back there.

BURRELL—Risk it.

EDWARD—Come, Larabee, sit in a taxi with me. Here we are on Fifth Avenue. Look at the crowds. See how they're booted and gowned. All clean, fine, well set up, prosperous and happy. They're going into Delmonico's. The clubs get a share. Now we're at Forty-second Street and Broadway. Did you ever see such a jam? Listen to the horns. We're moving again. See them pour into the theatres, pleasure lovers, you bet, every one. Now the cabarets. Listen to the band! Hear that song? There's a fox trot. This is the famous Joliff's. Something doing here every minute—every minute, Larabee. You don't sit and eat your heart out waiting for something to turn up. Look at the girls. I know them all. I've loved them all. There's Sadie, Maude, Julia. Hello, Tilly. Isn't she stunning? Did you ever see such girls? Tell me, Larabee, did you ever see such beauties? I'm going back. I don't care if I go to jail I'm going back. (*Enter second cowboy rear with mail sack.*)

SECOND COWBOY—Stage is in. Letters for everybody. Here you are, Mr. Burrell. Quite a bunch in that for you. (*Gives Burrell large envelope with many letters inside.*)

BURRELL—Thank you.

SECOND COWBOY (*To Edward*)—A dozen for you, Mr. Cranston. (*Gives letters to Edward, also some to Larabee, who goes to desk and opens them. Burrell goes to door R.*)

ALKALI—I think you're hold' out on me. Cub Freeman, I'm goin' to complain to Washington.

COWBOY—Don't do nothin' reckless, Alkali. Didn't I give you that post card away back in 1902?

ALKALI—That's right, you did. I was forgettin'.

COWBOY (*At door rear*)—And didn't I know you writ it yourself, just to make me think somebody cared if you was alive? (*Exits rear.*)

ALKALI (*Following cowboy off*)—Smart, ain't you, well, I'll see what President Wilson has to say about it.

EDWARD (*Excitedly, looking up from letter*)—Burrell!! We're going to hit the trail. (*To Burrell*) Read this!

BURRELL (*Coming down takes letter, reads*)—What does it say?

EDWARD (*To Larabee*)—Say, Larabee, order two saddle horses at once. Send our things on to us any way you think best.

LARABEE—What's the rush? There's no train you can catch right now.

EDWARD (*Dictatorially*)—You do what you're told. Turn the whole damned ranch upside down to get us out of here, you understand?

LARABEE (*With calm force, but showing resentment at the tone used by Edward*)—Well, I'm not just inclined to turn the ranch upside down for you, Mr. Cranston, and I don't mind telling you.

EDWARD (*Hotly, turning at door R.*)—Oh, you don't? Well, we'll see. You get busy. I'm going to leave this rotten place so quick it'll make your head spin. (*Exit Edward R. Larabee goes toward R., anger showing in his attitude.*)

BURRELL (*Conciliatingly*)—Don't mind him, Mr. Larabee; he's a spoiled offspring.

LARABEE—He's not half so spoiled as he's likely to be if he comes much of that talk around here. (*Sound of horses' hoofs off.*)

BURRELL (*Looking out of window*)—That's a visitor! A genuine, dyed-in-the-wool visitor. Look at him. The first anti-cow person I've seen on the estate since I've been here.

LARABEE (*At open door rear*)—He's new to me. (*Enter detective rear.*)

DETECTIVE—Excuse me, I'm looking for a Mr. Larabee.

BURRELL—Come right in, Mr. Larabee's waiting to greet you; there he is. (*Indicates Larabee.*) But don't use up

all your conversation with him, I want some of it. That Manhattan dialect sounds very refreshing. (*Exits R.*)

DETECTIVE (*Looking after Burrell*)—I can't just seem to place him. Who is he?

LARABEE—You won't mind, stranger, if I ask you that there question about yourself?

DETECTIVE—Right you are. (*Pulls bundle of letters out of his pocket.*) First, am I talking to John F. Larabee?

LARABEE—That's what I've always been called.

DETECTIVE—Partner of Prescott D. Millwood, New York City?

LARABEE—Nothing like that, nothing flighty or high-toned. Just partner in this here ranch, that's all.

DETECTIVE—Very well, Mr. Larabee, we have had considerable correspondence, you and me. I am A. F. Budwell of the Budwell Private Detective Agency.

LARABEE (*Joyfully clutching detective's hand*)—You've found my sister?

DETECTIVE (*Cautiously*)—Well, yes and no.

LARABEE (*Reacting from disappointment*)—Yes and no! Hot and cold! What do you mean, Mr. Budwell?

DETECTIVE (*He checks off the various statements of Larabee during scene*)—Just what I say. Before I commit myself to anything, let us get our bearings. (*Sits at table and runs over papers as he talks.*) About what year was it that your mother left your father?

LARABEE—I was twelve then. It's just about fifteen years ago. (*Fills glass with whiskey and pushes it over to detective.*)

DETECTIVE—Thank you, here's how! (*Drinks.*) Now, how old was your sister?

LARABEE—She wasn't more than about two, a dear little one. It almost broke my heart to lose her.

DETECTIVE—You're sure her name was Florence?

LARABEE (*Calmly and deliberately*)—My sister's name was Florence, Mr. Budwell. You have no call to think I'd ring in a maverick with a different brand, have you?

DETECTIVE (*Hastily*)—Not at all, Mr. Larabee, not at all. Only I wanted to be sure. It may be important. Please tell me the history of yourself and sister as far as you know. Begin with the divorce in Chicago.

LARABEE—Well, after the divorce the family naturally split up. Mother took Florence and went East. Father hung around Chicago for a spell, but after a while he took to drinking and got downright poor and drifted to the cow country.

DETECTIVE—Was there interchange of letters?

LARABEE—For a year or so, then something was said about my mother marrying again.

DETECTIVE—Did you ever learn who she married?

LARABEE—All I know is Dad got sore. Also got drunk. He raved a lot about woman's perfidy. That's the word. I looked it up in the dictionary. And, oh yes, Dad burned all the letters.

DETECTIVE—Unfortunate! However, I think it's safe for me to go on from there. (*Pulls out letter after looking bundle over.*) In eighteen and ninety-five you were in north-eastern Texas?

LARABEE—On the Sherwood ranch. That's where I rode my first pinto.

DETECTIVE—Your mother was then living with your sister Florence in a boarding house on West Eighteenth St., New York. She married Arthur Pelletan, an artist, in November of that year.

LARABEE—I never heard who she married.

DETECTIVE—From the outset your sister was called Florence Pelletan. Did you know your mother was divorced the second time?

LARABEE—No.

DETECTIVE—Pelletan was—well, as I said before—he was an artist. Your mother died shortly after the separation. Your sister was always called Pelletan until the day—

LARABEE—What day?

DETECTIVE—I'm sorry to have to tell you. But your sister Florence is— (*Pause.*)

LARABEE—She's not gone over the divide?

DETECTIVE—Your sister Florence died in the home of your partner, Prescott D. Millwood, just five weeks ago.

LARABEE—In the home of Millwood?

DETECTIVE—I should change that by saying the home of Millwood's wife.

LARABEE—How did Florence come to be in that house?

DETECTIVE—That's just it, Mr. Larabee. (*Edging close to Larry.*) I have made this journey across the continent to talk this thing over with you. You don't get the papers here, do you? New York papers, I mean? (*Larabee shakes his head.*) Thought not. That's the reason I brought this along. (*Shows page of paper.*) See, "Suicide of Working Girl in Home of Millionaire."

LARABEE—A suicide!!

DETECTIVE—That was the verdict, anyhow. Everything was hushed up. Millwood's money, I guess. They said she called to get a position as a domestic. The name Florence, the girl's age, the fact she came originally from Chicago with her mother about the date you said your mother and sister went east, interested me.

LARABEE—Well, well, go on. For God's sake tell me everything you know.

DETECTIVE—Patience, Mr. Larabee. I've got to show the reason for every step I took. The papers told how Florence Pelletan, before she got a job as a hat model, had a long fight with starvation.

LARABEE—Starvation!

DETECTIVE—They also mentioned a girl named Mabel Banderhope. See there (*Points to paper*), it says she was a friend of your sister, but it doesn't say Mabel Banderhop went to the Millwood house with your sister the day she was shot. It doesn't say that Mabel is still there making it her home, living on the fat of the land and being made over from a face-food demonstrator into a lady.

LARABEE—What do you think? What's your theory?

DETECTIVE—Wait. I saw Mabel, and told her about you. Had to, to get her to talk. She showed me letters that didn't

reach the coroner. I held out one of them. (*Offers letter to Larabee, which latter reads.*) Do you recognize the writing?

LARABEE—It's my father's.

DETECTIVE (*Draws chair near Larabee*)—Thought so. Very good. Now listen, Mabel told me that young Ed Millwood ran away west two hours after the shooting—something she didn't tell the coroner. She didn't tell him either that young Millwood was the cause of your sister's trouble.

LARABEE—Trouble? What trouble? (*Detective rises and goes to upper end of table. He fills glass with liquor and drinks.*)

DETECTIVE—Your sister went to that house to make young Millwood marry her.

LARABEE (*Affected*)—Oh, my sister was just one of the Maudes, the Julias, the Sadies that everybody knows, that everybody loves. (*Edward's voice sounds off. Larry glances quickly in direction of sound.*) Here, have a drink. (*Fills glass, detective takes it and drinks.*)

DETECTIVE—Thanks, here's to you.

LARABEE (*Quietly*)—You say young Millwood ran away?

DETECTIVE—Well, he went away the day your sister died. I remember you told me in a letter that old man Millwood was your partner in this ranch. I thought the young scoundrel might be here.

LARABEE (*Glances at door R.*)—Here! Him! Oh, no. What does he look like? Young Millwood, I mean?

DETECTIVE—In New York he'd be called good looking. About twenty-two; undersized. They call him Shrimp Millwood on Broadway. His full name is Edward Cranston Millwood.

LARABEE (*Significantly glancing R.*)—Edward Cranston Millwood, that's a good name, I reckon. Much better than Shrimp. Edward Cranston Millwood. Quite a mouthful.

DETECTIVE—Yes, just as you say. (*Looks R. Door R. opens, voice of Edward sounds loud as if he was about to enter.*)

LARABEE—Stay here just a minute. Help yourself. (*Pulls tray of liquor down to detective.*) I'll be right back. (*Goes R. and exits R.*)

DETECTIVE (*Filling glass*)—Don't hurry on my account. (*Larabee enters very quietly R. He has gone and taken key from lock on other side of door and makes this obvious, as he now inserts key in lock on stage side of the door and turns it very gently.*)

LARABEE (*Apologetically*)—Our manners out here are not quite up to yours in the East.

DETECTIVE—Don't mention it. I know plenty around Third Avenue not very strong on manners. (*Banging is heard on door R.*)

LARABEE—They'd butt right in. Listen to that!

VOICE OFF—Open this door— (*Banging on door.*) Open, damn you!

DETECTIVE—They might get to shooting.

LARABEE—If they've got their gats handy they sure will. Now this is my affair, Mr. Budwell. You agree with me that I've a right to run my own ranch in my own way. (*Knocking on door, shouts off.*)

DETECTIVE—Why, certainly.

LARABEE (*At door L.*)—Do you mind stepping in here until I settle this little matter? (*Detective goes L.*)

DETECTIVE—Of course, I'll be pleased to. If you need help, call on me, Mr. Larabee. (*Detective exits L.*)

LARABEE (*Putting head in door L.*)—Thank you, I'll be able to handle these waddies myself. It's only the New Year's spirit cropping out. (*Closes door L. Enter second cowboy and Alkali rear.*)

ALKALI (*Going R.*)—What's the row?

LARABEE—Here Alkali (*Alkali stops*), don't go there. (*To cowboy*) Bud, you go and stampede every horse on the ranch.

SECOND COWBOY—Stampede?

LARABEE—Don't argue, hustle!

SECOND COWBOY—Well, Larry, you're the boss, you certainly are. What you say goes. (*Exits rear.*)

LARABEE (*Picking up tray of liquors*)—Here, Alkali, you take this and go in there. (*Indicating L.*) Keep that stranger tanked up.

ALKALI (*At door L. with tray*)—Sure, Larry. Kin I join him, like for a toothful now and then?

LARABEE—Sure, but give him all he wants. (*Exit Alkali L. with tray. Larry goes quickly to door R. and gently unlocks it, taking key with him. He goes off rear, knocking sounds again on door R., the handle is turned, it opens. Enter Edward R., dressed to ride.*)

EDWARD—Who the devil locked that door? (*Enter Burrell R. He is dressed to ride.*)

BURRELL—I told you it wasn't locked. (*Goes rear.*) Wait here, I'll see about the ponies. (*Exit Burrell rear. Edward goes up. Larry enters just as Edward is about to go out rear.*)

LARABEE (*Half blocking Edward's exit*)—Going?

EDWARD—Yes, and somebody wanted to keep me from going. That door was locked.

LARABEE—Some of the boys, maybe. (*Placatingly.*) Well, you won't hold a grudge. It's the way they celebrate New Year's out here. We haven't any tin horns and taxis and cabarets.

EDWARD—Did you attend to the horses?

LARABEE (*Giving evidence that he is trying to blind Edward to his purpose*)—I sure did, Mr. Cranston. You wanted me to, didn't you? I'm right sorry I didn't quite understand you at first about the horses. Indeed I am.

EDWARD—Oh, that's alright, Larabee. I was a bit impatient.

LARABEE—I'd hate to see you going off feeling sore. Look as if we hadn't treated you and Mr. Burrell just right.

EDWARD—I'm not sore. Not a bit.

LARABEE (*Getting bottle and glass*)—Prove it. (*Pours liquor in glass.*) Have a toothful.

EDWARD (*Taking glass*)—You're on.

LARABEE (*Filling own glass*)—Here's how.

EDWARD—Here's hoping I'll see you in New York soon.
(*Both drink.*)

LARABEE—Your father's been wanting me to go back for over a year now.

EDWARD (*Startled*)—My father!

LARABEE—Mr. Millwood.

EDWARD—You know who I am?

LARABEE—Knew all along. Your full name's Edward Cranston Millwood, isn't it?

EDWARD (*Sets down glass*)—What do you think of that? You Westerners are a keen bunch.

LARABEE—Of course, you wanted to get a line on the way the ranch was being run, isn't that it? So's you could report to your father?

EDWARD—Let me tell you, Larabee, that report will be A No. 1.

LARABEE—Thank you, Mr. Millwood. I was often tempted to talk to you about things in New York. I've a lot of questions to ask nobody but you can answer.

EDWARD (*Sitting down*)—Fire away. The joyous little burg hasn't any secrets from me.

LARABEE (*Growing confidential*)—It's about the women.

EDWARD (*Turning quickly to Larry*)—The what?

LARABEE—You know, the girls.

EDWARD—Girls! I could lead my ace right now. But you've got me guessing.

LARABEE (*Looking around and speaking intimately*)—Tell me of the Maudes, the Julias, the Sadies. You know, all the girls. Tell me how you get them.

EDWARD—Well, what do you think of that? Your number's in the book alright. Want to know all about the short cuts, don't you? Thinking of a flying trip to the metropolis on the quiet?

LARABEE—You're a mind reader.

EDWARD—Don't worry, Larabee, I'll be on hand to guide you among the fairies.

LARABEE (*Significantly*)—But I can't go right away. And something might happen to you in the meantime.

EDWARD—Well, I'll help you all I can, but they'll get you anyhow. There never was an alkali eater some Jane didn't trim, no matter if he knew the rules backwards.

LARABEE—What I want to know is how *you* operate.

EDWARD—Going to follow in my footsteps.

LARABEE—You go around to stage doors, don't you?

EDWARD—Stage doors! That stuff's a joke in Puck. Without it that little barber shop periodical wouldn't have a circulation beyond the Bronx. (*Bends towards Larabee.*) Listen, Larabee, the one place you *don't* go is to the stage door.

LARABEE—(*Intimately, friendly*)—You don't say so now. Well, tell me, how did you get Maude to begin with?

EDWARD—Maude? Let me think? Maude, Maude? Oh, yes, she wasn't the first and she wasn't the last.

LARABEE—Sort of just was, is that it?

EDWARD—It's funny, but it's the first girl hangs on in the memory strongest, though the last one crowds her a bit.

LARABEE—Well, with so many, no wonder. Just think of having a crowd for a wife.

EDWARD—The Mormons thrive on it.

LARABEE—The Mormons aren't thriving much to speak of on the crowd principle just now. Anyhow, tell me how you got her.

EDWARD—Well, Maude was old at ten. She knew the purr of a limousine a mile away. Estimated the make, gear, price and social and financial standing of the owner before he'd turned the corner. It was a long toot on the auto horn and two shorts for hers.

LARABEE—Easy, isn't it?

EDWARD—You can come in on your high speed with the Maudes and never use your shock absorber once.

LARABEE—Well, Julia now.

EDWARD—Julia! Ah, she was a peach, a pippin. Third from the end. Second row, the first night. The next she was down front elbowing the comedian out of the spot. It took five formal letters and two mash notes to convince her. Sadie I whistled for; Tilly used to wait for me on the front steps of the club. That was after I'd made my reputation as a spender; she already had hers as an animated appetite.

LARABEE—Don't you get tired of that kind of game?

EDWARD—I did. A fellow wants to do the hunting. You know, instinct.

LARABEE—You had to hunt for some. Florrie, for instance.

EDWARD (*Rising quickly*)—Who the devil said anything about Florrie?

LARABEE (*Quietly*)—Didn't you call her that? Maybe it was Florence. Sit down.

EDWARD—I don't remember mentioning her name.

LARABEE—You did. She seemed to be one that wasn't quite a crowd like the rest.

EDWARD (*Soberly*)—It was different about her. She—
(*Pause.*)

LARABEE—Oh, I see, it was serious.

EDWARD—No, but a fellow gets tired of the rounders. You know, the dames that can tell the price of the champagne by a whiff of the cork.

LARABEE—Naturally. What was Florrie? Chorus?

EDWARD—Did you ever hear of Thiessen's on the Avenue? (*Larabee shakes his head.*) Well, at Thiessen's a half-dozen girls circle around on a raised platform, appearing and disappearing behind heavy curtains. Each time they come out they have different hats on, that the audience of females of both sexes buy.

LARABEE—She just wore hats, is that it?

EDWARD—A model. She hadn't been doing that lock-step of fashion more than a week before the fellows down at the club were having a try at her.

LARABEE (*Nervously*)—At Florrie, that was. They all failed?

EDWARD—There are tricks the wisest never get to play just right. I bet I'd land her, and I did.

LARABEE (*Jerking forward intently, but speaking indifferently*)—Now just how did you do it on a bet?

EDWARD—Scientifically.

LARABEE—Ah, yes, scientifically. This is where I get a real lesson.

EDWARD—The introduction I worked through her landlady.

LARABEE—Down where she lived?

EDWARD—I went to live in the same boarding house. Everything was very quiet and gentle. No rah, rah stuff, remember.

LARABEE—Didn't let on you were rich?

EDWARD—Not a whisper. A big front would have scared her off. I was two months rounding her up.

LARABEE (*Pulling closer to Edward*)—We're just where I get that real lesson. Now, how did you win?

EDWARD—One night after she got through and she was too tired to think, we haggled with a chauffeur to rent us an auto cheap. It was her first ride and a plant.

LARABEE—A what?

EDWARD—A frame-up. I used to meet her half a dozen blocks from the store and when she came along the chauffeur and I were busy talking prices. Before she knew it she was interested. *She* finally made the deal to rent my own car at half rates and chortled like a kid over the bargain. Well, we had a little supper at a roadhouse. She didn't like Mumm's, she didn't like Cliquot, she didn't like the cocktails, nor the highballs, but I got her to take a sip of each just as a sample. After a while her eyes began to glaze. The mixed samples did the trick. I got her to take two solid drinks to brace her. From then on she was eating out of my hand.

LARABEE—Tell me exactly what happened.

EDWARD—What do you think? She simply didn't go home that night.

LARABEE (*Quickly and nervously pulling revolver from holster, then quietly laying it on table*)—Well go on—go on—

EDWARD—There's no more. What are you doing with the artillery? (*Indicating revolver.*)

LARABEE—That? Oh, you take it. It might go off. (*Pushes it towards Edward.*)

EDWARD (*Takes revolver*)—Nice little toy.

LARABEE—Keep it, you may have to fight for your life yet.

EDWARD—You think so? Why?

LARABEE—Out West here anything might happen. Tell me how Florrie—that's her name, isn't it—tell me how she came to die.

EDWARD (*Gets to his feet*)—Die? Who told you she was dead?

LARABEE—Why, you did. You started off with that. That's how I became so interested. What made you give her up?

EDWARD—Too much home comfort stuff. At the end of the third month the affair had all the platitudes of marriage. Pale-faced wife at the window all night while husband roystered, and all the rest of it.

LARABEE—She took it seriously? I mean, just like marriage?

EDWARD—She? She had a matrimonial mind. Used to think in terms of housekeeping—all she needed was a marriage certificate. She certainly did shed tears over that little formality. She didn't want to live without it.

LARABEE (*Leaning close to Edward*)—See here, Millwood, something may happen so that you'll never see New York again. Would you fight?

EDWARD (*Fingering revolver*)—Fight? I certainly would. (*Getting to feet.*)

LARABEE—You're sure?

EDWARD—As long as I could see to shoot.

LARABEE (*Rises*)—Good! You'll have a chance. (*Auto horn sounds off, Ed runs rear.*)

EDWARD (*Looking out of window*)—What's that? An Alco. Two of them, women, real women, girls, skirts. (*Runs to door and opens it. Enter Alice rear. She wears veil and duster. They are covered with alkali.*)

ALICE (*Whipping veil off and rushing into Ed's arms*)—Edward!

EDWARD—Alice!

MABEL (*Appearing at door rear with Imogene and chauffeur with cowboy grouped behind her*)—Well, who does the honors, I'm one of the party? (*Comes down.*)

ALICE—You know Mabel, Edward?

MABEL—Know me? Why, Shrimp (*Changing quickly*), I mean Mr. Millwood, knows me very well, thank you. Please introduce me to the magazine cover. (*Indicating Larabee.*)

EDWARD—Miss Banderhop, Mr. Larabee. (*Ed goes to Alice at rear, leads her to chair and sits whispering to her.*)

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—So you're Larabee. I'm Mabel. You've heard of me! Yes, no? Oh, all right. (*Turns to group at door.*) Bring the grips and things in here, Imy. We're at home. (*To Larabee*) We're at home?

LARABEE—You certainly are. Fred, help them straighten out. (*To cowboy at door rear.*)

MABEL (*Exit Imogene, cowboy and chauffeur rear*)—Quite a surprise party, ain't it? Excuse me, I should say: Isn't it? I've been using that kind of language five weeks now and it hurts my voice every time I try.

LARABEE—You're doing mighty well, Miss Banderhop.

MABEL—That's out. Call me Mabel.

LARABEE—Very well, Miss Mabel.

MABEL—Help! Here, I pictured you a bold bad monthly magazine hero, and you're as polite as a Broadway dip in a crowded car. What do you think I came away out here for?

LARABEE—Well, tell me what you came away out here for. And in an auto.

MABEL—Two autos. But they were shipped on the railroad. Mr. Millwood attended to that. He owns the railroad

and everything else that's loose around here and has a mortgage on all the rest, hasn't he?

LARABEE—Some of the stock in the Western & South Western Railroad is held by Mr. Millwood and he also owns half interest in this ranch.

MABEL—For God's sake, don't be so exact. Mr. Millwood thought, because Alice thought, and Alice thought because I thought it would be some little surprise for Shrimp, I mean Mr. Millwood junior, if we came and gathered him and Burrell back to the lights. Take them back to New York, you know, Mr. Solid Ivory Dome. (*Taps her head.*)

LARABEE—You're just in time. They were about to leave.

MABEL—Leave! You mean run, go away! Make a break for it? (*Glances around quickly and seizes Larabee's arm.*) Shhh— There hasn't been anybody here? A detective. Heavy set fellow with an oily tongue? His name's Budwell.

LARABEE (*Glancing at door L.*) (*Thoughtfully*)—Detective! Heavy set. Named Budwell? No.

MABEL (*Looks quickly at Ed*)—We beat him to it. Well, listen. Did you ever have a sister named Florence?

LARABEE (*Glancing quizzically at Mabel, then speaking thoughtfully*)—Florence? No.

MABEL—What! You didn't? (*Backing away from him.*) Did you ever have any sister?

LARABEE—Never.

MABEL—Wouldn't that cork you? That flat-foot, Budwell, was stringing me! (*Pause.*) And I framed up this trip to the alfalfa with two autos, a chaperone, Imogene and all the trimmings of real culture just to get that dope.

BURRELL (*Enter Burrell rear.*)—Mabel!

MABEL—Hello, Burr.

BURRELL—Is my brain toppling or is it the world's up-tipped?

MABEL—Both. But the uptipping dropped the northwest corner of Herald Square out among the sage brush. I held onto the bock beer sign. (*Alk. appears L. and beckons for Larry. Sound of singing off.*)

LARABEE (*To Mabel*)—Excuse me. (*Goes up L.*)

ALKALI (*Going close to Larry*)—Say, Larry, that there stranger's like a bucket with a hole in it. Can't seem to fill him, nohow.

LARABEE (*Urging Alkali off L.*)—I'll see what I can do. (*Exits L. with Alkali.*)

BURRELL—Hold any grudge, Mabel?

MABEL—Not so's you'd notice it. You shoed me into a soft snap, you did. A regular Delmonico meal ticket.

BURRELL—It's a life job. No more demonstrating face food at Lacey's for you if you keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.

MABEL—What do you think I am, an understudy for an oyster? Not on your platinotype. I'm the boss of the shop. Boss, do you hear? I framed this trip.

BURRELL—Discretion and floating with the tide will get you along all the same.

MABEL—Not where I want to go. When I'd Alice set on this hike to see Shrimp, I saw nothing was forgotten. I learned old Moneybags Millwood owned the railroad and asked him for it. He hated to fire the engineers and brakemen. So, instead, he gave us two autos. Two, count them.

BURRELL—Why two?

MABEL—Think I'd take a chance in one? Suppose it broke down? Then he handed up railroad tickets, baggage cars, special trucks for the autos to get us as far as his two streaks of rust and right of way runs. And here we are. Ready to go back.

BURRELL—So are we. Ed's got to go at once. (*Enter Alkali L. As he opens door singing is heard off. He tips toes to Burrell.*)

ALKALI—I hear you all are agoin' to New York. (*Burrell nods.*) Say, would you mind if I asked you to send me a letter all to myself? I just want to show that there Bud Freeman once.

MABEL—Dusty Dobbin, count on me. I'll send you a dozen letters with my photograph.

ALKALI—Honest, now, will you ma'am? And a post card with the Brooklyn Bridge on it?

MABEL—Yes, Dobbin, and one with the Flat Iron Building on it. Another with the Statue of Liberty. (*Enter Larabee L. Singing sounds loud. Alkali backs off L. at nod from Larabee.*)

ALKALI—Thank you, ma'am, thank you. (*Exit L.*)

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—Let's in on the grand opera. (*Indicating room L.*)

LARABEE—A cow punch. He's a bit loco. (*Touches his head.*)

MABEL—Maybe his regular supply of alkali has been cut off.

BURRELL (*To Larabee*)—There's not a horse in the corral.

LARABEE (*Going rear*)—Stampede!

EDWARD (*Rising*)—Never mind, we'll travel by auto. They sent two along to get us.

LARABEE—Lucky! You're certainly well fixed to travel.

MABEL—Surest thing you know. When I go out to do any kidnaping, I always bring home the bacon. Look out for me, John F. Larabee, Esquire. (*Imogene, chauffeur, appear rear with grips, etc.*)

EDWARD (*To Imogene*)—Take them back. You women would die here. No accommodations whatever. We're going right away.

IMOGENE—Right away! Well, don't it beat all? And my throat's so clogged up with lumps of the highway I can't breathe.

MABEL—We'll turn a vacuum cleaner loose on you, Imy.

EDWARD—Down in Pindlar, Imogene, they have a hotel. It has beds in it, real beds. Here they have planks. Down there they also have food, real food. Here they have beans. And above all down at Pindlar they have a railroad that can take you far away from here—far, far away.

MABEL—It was built by a man that wanted to run it to heaven, but changed his mind at the last minute and ran it to New York instead. We may use that railroad any time.

IMOGENE (*Joyfully*)—Oh, well, if you're going back to New York, that's different again. (*Imogene and chauffeur pick up grips and exit rear.*)

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—Won't you come with us, Mr. Larabee? Mr. Millwood said I wasn't to leave without you.

ALICE (*To Larabee*)—Papa said I was to be sure and ask you to visit him, Mr. Larabee.

BURRELL (*To Larabee*)—Do come along. We'll take the lid off Manhattan for your benefit.

EDWARD—Come on, Larabee, we'll make the man that wrote the Arabian Nights sound like a prize story winner in the *Ladies' Home Journal*.

LARABEE—I reckon not. The ranch's Arabian Nights enough for me.

ALICE (*Comes down*)—If I was introduced so I could talk to you, Mr. Larabee, I'd join in.

MABEL (*To Edward*)—Not introduced! My Riverside Drive manners have the blind staggers. John F. Larabee, Esquire, this is Miss Millwood.

LARABEE—I'm glad to meet you, Miss Millwood. Sorry the ranch hasn't any accommodations for ladies.

ALICE—It's fine. I love it.

EDWARD (*To Larabee*)—You'll excuse me on that introduction. Put it down to the excitement.

LARABEE (*Looking at Alice*)—There's no call for apology. No call at all. Anybody's got a right to get excited.

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—You'll do. That's just how the last installment in the continued story I'm reading sounded.

EDWARD (*To Burrell*)—Come on, Burr. We can take a few of our traps along. (*Exit Edward R.*)

BURRELL (*To Larabee*)—Better think it over, Larabee, and come along. We've got something and the Woolworth Building to show you. (*Exit Burrell R.*)

MABEL (*Exes rear with Alice*)—I'll see if the boobs have the autos wound up. (*Half slyly, to Alice*) You get next. (*Indicating Larabee*) Flash your lamps on him at the proper angle, so. Like one of them home and mother girls of the stage! (*Imitating conventional stage young girl.*) They'll have more drawing power than twenty Woolworth Buildings—or mustard plasters. (*Exits rear.*)

LARABEE—Your father's the same Millwood. He's his father, too. (*Indicating Edward.*)

ALICE—Edward's my brother. I'm sure you'd like it in New York, Mr. Larabee. Did you ever see the subway?

LARABEE—No.

ALICE—It's wonderful. Simply wonderful. And the L, did you ever see the L?

LARABEE—Never saw the L. I'm right sorry to say I've been no traveler at all, Miss Millwood.

ALICE—Oh, then you'll join our party. Say you will. We'll keep to the automobiles as far as we wish. Then take the train. It'll be such fun.

LARABEE—I'm afraid I've got to disappoint you, Miss Millwood. I got no call to go meandering off to New York at this time. A round-up's about due. Some of the stock hasn't been doing real well on account of not enough water.

ALICE—That won't make the least bit of difference, Mr. Larabee, I'm sure it won't. Papa won't care.

LARABEE—I'll care, Miss Millwood. And when I care there's nobody else got any call to worry.

ALICE—You can't tell how sorry I am. Do you know I just thought and thought of you all the time, and how fine it would be if I could take you around and show you the places.

LARABEE (*Looking at her closely*)—You take me around?

ALICE (*Embarrassed*)—Yes. That is, if all of us could, you know. You see, Mabel talked a lot about you. We wondered together if you'd be just like—just like—just like—you know, just the same as the story book western men.

LARABEE—Am I?

ALICE—Oh my, no. You're not like a best seller at all. (*Enter Edward R. with grip.*)

EDWARD—Let's beat it. (*Calls off*) Train's starting, Burr, get a move on. (*Enter Mabel rear.*)

MABEL—All set. (*Alice goes up to door rear. Mabel speaks to her.*) Any luck?

ALICE—No. He's chained to this place.

MABEL—Well, if you couldn't make him drag his anchor, it's no use any of us trying. All aboard. Supper at Pindlar in forty minutes. (*Exit Mabel and Alice rear.*)

LARABEE (*To Edward*)—Your sister's a right nice girl.

EDWARD—Alice! You bet. She's the only thing in the world I really love.

LARABEE—Oh, you love your sister, do you? That's strange. Now did it ever strike you, Millwood, that Maude or Julia or Sadie of the cabarets might be some fellow's sister?

EDWARD—Bah! Don't talk of my sister and that crowd in the same breath.

LARABEE—But they might. Other girls have brothers, you know. Now that one, what's her name? Florrie—she—

EDWARD—Cut it, I tell you. It's different. Why I'd kill the dog that tried to get the least bit gay with Alice.

LARABEE (*A change is apparent in him*)—Oh, you would?

EDWARD—I wouldn't give him time to say his prayers. (*Exit Edward rear. Enter Alice and Mabel rear.*)

MABEL—Our fat chaperon is getting hungry. That means angry. (*To Larabee*) This is your last chance to change your mind.

LARABEE (*Looking closely at Alice*)—I have changed it.

ALICE (*Joyfully*)—You're going with us?

LARABEE (*Indifferently*)—As soon as I can arrange my affairs, I'm going to New York.

ALICE—Oh, I'm so glad.

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—I'd a bet up you were human. (*Runs off rear.*)

LARABEE (*Sardonically to Alice*)—Oh, yes I'm human. Very human. But *you'll* hardly think so a year from now.

ALICE—Why not? What do you think the people of New York are going to do to you?

LARABEE—It's what I'm going to do to one of them that counts. You've heard of Tit of Tat.

ALICE—What is it, a game?

LARABEE—Yes. One we're very fond of in the west. Sometimes we call it an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

ALICE—Will you teach me to play it?

LARABEE—Why, I'm going to New York just to teach you to play it.

Curtain

END OF ACT II

THE WASTERS

ACT III

SCENE—*Interior of apartment occupied by Larabee in New York City. Buffet R. about 2, with tray on which are bottles and glasses. There is a door on either side of it leading respectively to Larabee's den and his bedroom. L. U. E. leads to main room where dance takes place. Kitchen door is at L. 1, the door leading to hallway, thence to street, at L. 2. The room is decorated with flowers and ferns. Table center, on which is a practical telephone.*

TIME—*Five months later.*

Enter L. 2, maskers, male and female, at rise. Peter, Larabee's servant, comes ahead of them bowing them on. Alice is among them. Her cloak is muffled against her face.

MASKER (*Peter brings tray of bottles and glasses to table from buffet*)—Oh, you Peter. This is the big laugh tonight, eh? (*Fills glass and drinks.*)

PETER—Mr. Larabee will be glad you came. (*Filling glasses. Maskers drink.*)

SECOND MASKER—Some swell joint, what? Here's how. (*Drinks.*)

THIRD DITTO—Great doings tonight. (*Takes glass and drinks.*)

FOURTH MASKER (*Same business*)—Where's the Millionaire Cowboy? I'm strong for him.

PETER—Mr. Larabee is in his bed room. He'll be here presently. (*Dance music starts off stage.*) (*Enter Larabee R.*)

SECOND MASKER (*Taking partners. One of the maskers goes to Larabee*)—There's the music. Let's dance. (*Some dance off L. U. E.*)

FIRST MASKER—Oh, you Larabee. (*She tries to whirl him into the dance. He resists.*) You never sent your feet to school.

LARABEE—They used to be church goers.

FIRST MASKER—Saint stuff, eh! No shinanigan. Tonight's the night you lose your halo. (*Exit L. U. E. dancing. Larabee goes up L. as if about to follow. Alice throws off the cloak. Laughs.*)

LARABEE—Alice!

ALICE (*She goes to him*)—So, you wear a halo. Let me see it.

LARABEE—You managed it! Does anyone at home suspect you are here?

ALICE (*Dancing around lightly*)—What do we care?

LARABEE—That's the spirit. Tonight will be a milestone in your life.

ALICE—You mean a smile stone. I'm bubbling over with smiles. It's the great adventure.

LARABEE (*Filling glass with liquor*)—Here, take a sip of this. It's Mumm's. (*Holds it close to her lips.*)

ALICE (*She sips and wipes her lips with a handkerchief*)—Oh, that stuff. I don't like it.

LARABEE (*Filling another glass*)—Perhaps you'd rather have this. It's Cliquot. (*Presses glass to her lips.*)

ALICE—No. I don't like any of it.

LARABEE (*Same business with third glass*)—Not even this? A mild cocktail?

ALICE (*Taking glass of liquor from Larabee, and with quiet dignity setting it on table*)—Not even that!

LARABEE—You're not going to be a good fellow. You won't enjoy yourself.

ALICE—Do I need to drink to enjoy myself?

LARABEE—Oh, all the girls take a little champagne and sip a cocktail. Ask your brother Ed. if they don't.

ALICE (*With touch of astonishment*)—The girls that associate with Edward do, possibly.

LARABEE—Oh, you're different?

ALICE (*Somewhat offended*)—Don't you think I am slightly different, Larry?

LARABEE—Why should you be?

ALICE (*Horried*)—Larry! Why should I be? And I thought—I thought—

LARABEE—What did you think?

ALICE (*She seems to wonder a little*)—Tell me, Larry, why did you call me up on the phone three days in succession—when you had just seen me an hour before?

LARABEE—There was no other way I could tell you of my plans for tonight.

ALICE (*Thoughtfully*)—Plans for tonight? Why were you so anxious to have me run away to your masquerade party without letting my father and mother know?

LARABEE—They wouldn't have let you come without Mabel. She's a—

ALICE—Not a word against Mabel.

LARABEE—For five months she's been like a great big ear, ready to catch every word I said. Why, I couldn't even whisper to you.

ALICE (*Gently*)—Was there anything you wanted to whisper, Larry?

LARABEE (*Showing affection*)—You know there was.

ALICE—What? Go on. Whisper now.

LARABEE—Can't you guess?

ALICE (*Playfully*)—I'll never guess.

LARABEE (*Close to her*)—I wanted to whisper that I love you.

ALICE—Love me! Larry! You do? (*They embrace.*)

LARABEE (*Holding her from him*)—And now you'll drink. A little to celebrate. (*Offers her glass.*)

ALICE—Why, Larry, dear, I'll do anything you say.

LARABEE—Anything? (*Holds out glass.*)

ALICE (*Takes glass and drinks*)—Watch me. Down goes Cliquot. Is this Mumm's? (*She drinks from second glass and then third.*) Tell me to drink up every drop in all these bottles. (*Drinks.*) Go on—I dare you. (*Drinks.*) You're afraid. (*She playfully goes to him. He catches her and kisses her.*)

LARABEE—And now you're mine. All mine. (*He leads her towards his bedroom R.*)

ALICE—Yes, Larry dear. All yours. Forever and ever.

LARABEE (*Stopping at door R. when about to turn handle*)—Forever and ever! (*A slow change in Larry is noticed during the following speech.*)

ALICE—We'll be so happy together when we're married. We'll go right away to the ranch, won't we? Oh, I loved it. You know, I can cook! I went to cooking school. You won't be lonesome. We'll take my piano. I'll learn to play rag-time so the boys can dance. We'll forget about this make-believe in the east, won't we? Say yes. Say you'll never bring me back. Say you won't. I've been so sad here. Homesick because I had too many homes. We'll never get a divorce no matter what happens, Larry. Will we? Say we won't. Our children are bound to be unhappy if we do. They are bound to go wrong if they get a bad start.

LARABEE—Alice!

ALICE—What is it, Larry, dear?

LARABEE (*Leads her down*)—I want you to go home.

ALICE—Home?

LARABEE—Yes. Right away. Your brother is liable to come at any minute.

ALICE (*Half frightened*)—Edward! Did you invite him? (*Loud laughter sounds off.*)

LARABEE—Listen! They're his friends. (*Indicates maskers.*) You ARE different. Quite different. Not one of them is fit to tie your shoes. Hurry. (*Leads her towards L. 2.*)

ALICE—Why must I go?

LARABEE (*Opens door and looks into hallway*)—Sh—Ed— (*Closes door.*) Quick. In here. (*Leads her to L.*)

L. I.) When the coast is clear, go home. There's a taxi at the door. (*Enter Edward with Peter, as Alice disappears L. I.*)

PETER (*To Edward*)—A great many of the guests are here already, sir.

EDWARD—Hello, Larry. (*To Peter*) You take a tip from me. Don't let this affair sag. Keep the bubble water on tap. You understand? (*To Larry*) Between us, Larabee, you have lots to learn about running a real, live, up-to-the-minute masquerade.

LARABEE—We believe that, don't we, Peter?

EDWARD—The secret of it is, keep the glasses full.

LARABEE (*To Peter*)—You hear that? Keep the glasses full.

PETER (*Taking two bottles from table*)—Yes, sir. Keep the glasses full. (*Exits L. U. E.*)

EDWARD (*To Larry. Pulls out two small black dominoes and lays them on table*)—Where's your mask?

LARABEE (*Glancing quickly at L. I, picking up mask*)—I'm not going to wear one.

EDWARD (*Holds mask back from eyes, in surprise*)—No? You should. You look as cheerful as the chief pall bearer at your own funeral. What's up? Business?

LARABEE—Possibly.

EDWARD—When business interferes with the tango, let business do the fox trot. Leave it to the peasants to worry about. (*Enter L. U. E. group of maskers, dancing, they are laughing and chatting. Ed puts on his mask and goes to them.*) (*Indicating Larry.*) Look at Sir Galahad. (*They stop dancing.*) Here is the only simon-pure-dyed-in-the-wool knight of the twentieth century (*Indicating Larry*), in our midst and he has a grouch on.

FIRST MASKER—His Jane hasn't arrived.

EDWARD—True to sex, a woman knows a man should worry about a woman.

SECOND MASKER—Or women.

EDWARD—Right—and nothing else.

ALL SING (*Joining hands and dancing around Larry.*)
 (*Enter Peter L. U. E. Exit L. 2*)—There's nothing else to worry us but woman, and nothing else should hurry us but woman, When we have cobwebs on the brain, They smile, we are ourselves again, For who can calm, or flurry us like woman? (*Alice appears L. 1, runs across stage, and exits R. again, as they pull Larry and Ed. off L. U. E. Larry re-enters and comes down stage towards L. 1, opens door and looks off L. 1. Enter Peter and Mabel L. 2.*)

MABEL (*To Larry, indicating Peter*)—Tell your watch dog not to bite me.

LARABEE (*Waving him away*)—It's all right, Peter.

PETER—Yes, sir. (*He exits.*)

MABEL—He barked and showed his teeth. Only I was in before he knew it saved me. That's what I get for leaving my happy home without an invitation.

LARABEE—I didn't know as any invitation was sent you, Miss Banderhop.

MABEL—Didn't you, now? Well, that's strange, isn't it?

LARABEE—I wouldn't want to say it was strange at all.

MABEL (*Slyly*)—Did you overlook me on purpose, Larry?

LARABEE—Miss Banderhop, I'd hardly say that.

MABEL (*Goes close to him*)—Stalling again? Well, this time you won't put it over on me. I've seen Budwell—you get me? T. F. Budwell, Esquire, high muck-a-muck of the Budwell Detective Agency and he was soused to the gills.

LARABEE—What's that got to do with this visit? At this time?

MABEL—Inopportune, they'd tell me to say on the Drive. Well, you handed me quite a line of bull when you said you didn't have a sister. And her name wasn't Florence. Oh, no, not at all, Reginald, not at all. You're some smart waddie to escape from the alkali belt. That's big league stuff you pulled, believe me.

LARABEE—If I didn't have this party on my mind I might be able to keep up with you. Your tongue does lope some, though. I wish you'd keep it going till you got outside. (*Goes toward hallway door.*)

MABEL—Look here, you, don't you hint that I should go out. I'm living in a sweller joint than this ever was.

LARABEE—I know you are. You can go back to it, and collect your blackmail as soon as you like and please me just the same.

MABEL (*Angrily*)—Blackmail!

LARRABEE—Do you think the Millwoods are keeping you because they like you?

MABEL—What do you think?

LARABEE—They're boarding you 'cause they're afraid you'd tell just how my sister Florence died in their house. They want to have you where they can keep an eye on you.

MABEL—That may be the reason they're wanting me there. It's not the reason I'm staying.

LARABEE—Mighty interesting, but it can wait. I have friends I want to see.

MABEL—Don't try to duck this. What do you think I came here for?

LARABEE (*He turns back toward table*)—I'm too busy to do any guessing.

MABEL—That's right, ask me to sit down. (*Sits.*) Thank you. You make me forget my Riverside Drive manners, you do.

LARABEE—I wish I could get you to remember what you owe my sister's memory by way of telling the truth.

MABEL (*Taking out handkerchief and wiping her eyes*)—Don't do that, you'll have my nose red in a minute. Little Florrie was my pal. That's enough, isn't it?

LARABEE—Perhaps you think so.

MABEL (*Rising and leaning over table*)—Perhaps you think you'll help her memory by ruining another innocent girl just like her.

LARABEE—Huh! (*He shows she's telling the truth.*)

MABEL—You picked Alice Millwood to practice on, didn't you?

LARABEE—I—

MABEL—Trying to stall again. Well, I've got you winging, Mr. Larabee. I can see it. (*Laughter sounds off.*) You've got Alice in there with that bunch of highbinders. (*Indicates maskers.*)

LARABEE—What makes you think so?

MABEL—It's part of the plant. Budwell's another part. This masquerade party's the rest.

LARABEE—You seem to know a great deal.

MABEL—I told you Budwell was soused. He coughed up. Then Alice's father phoned to know what had become of her. Deny this if you dare. You framed it up with Alice to tell her mother she was going to her father's house. Nifty work! This is the date she should go. Masquerade party just fitted nice. When the joy to-night is unrefined, you'll fix it so Shrimp'll catch you somewhere with Alice. He'll snap the mask off of her. Then he'll accuse you of being just as rotten to her as he's been to every woman he's ever met.

LARABEE—You almost make me believe you.

MABEL—Cut that. You haven't been long enough out of the come-on class to get it across. Alice being mixed up with this bunch of Fluzzies (*Indicating maskers*) will help some. When Shrimp gets to the high falsetto stage of the proceedings, you won't deny the charge. Not you. You'll smirk, and side-step and just make him so crazy he'll try to drill a hole in you. Then you for the grand heroic stuff: sister for sister, Florrie for Alice. On top of that Budwell will crash in and arrest Shrimp for killing Florrie. Doped out right, eh?

LARABEE—It's nice language you're using, Miss Banderhop and I like the story. But the principal chapter's missing out of the book.

MABEL—Wise me up. Where did that drunk Budwell fizzle?

LARABEE—Alice is not in the house.

MABEL (*Surprised*)—No?

LARABEE—Search the place.

MABEL—Well, you may be keener than I thought. You've got something up your sleeve. But anyhow, Budwell was just stringing you. Shrimp Millwood didn't kill your sister.

LARABEE—Who did?

MABEL—I did!

LARABEE (*As if about to grab her by the throat*)—You!

MABEL—*Can* that strong arm stuff. I killed her as much as Shrimp did. She wouldn't have gone to that house but for me. When she found out just what a dirty little piker Shrimp was she turned the gat, on herself.

LARABEE—She did it herself? You are sure?

MABEL—Sure, and you could hardly blame her. She was in love with Shrimp. When she woke up to what that meant, she couldn't survive it.

LARABEE—What proof have you?

MABEL—I had some when I started. I went to live with Mrs. Auction Bridge Millwood to get more. Believe me, she's a cold deck, but I got next.

LARABEE—How?

MABEL—Imogene, that nervy maid-of-little work, is my bosom friend. She was so close to Florence when the shot was fired she still smells the smoke.

LARABEE—What else have you?

MABEL—Say, the girl I love best, now Florrie's had it out with the head floorwalker, knows it all.

LARABEE—Alice?

MABEL—Alice. She was in the room with Shrimp when Florrie left him to go home. There's no fluff-fluff stuff in that. I got close to her. A Philadelphia lawyer couldn't have tried harder to trip her up. I know what I'm talking about. Shrimp didn't do it.

LARABEE (*Struggling to hold to his original idea*)—He's just as responsible as if he'd pulled the trigger. (*Door L. U. E. is flung open. Singing is heard. Enter Maskers.*)

MABEL (*Glancing around quickly and seeing some of the maskers enter*)—Quick. Give me a mask. (*Picks up mask left on table.*) My reputation's gone if I'm mugged in this line-up. (*She puts on domino, maskers come dancing down.*)

FIRST MASKER (*Dancing by with partner and giggling*)—
Oh, you!

MABEL (*In cultured intonation*)—Heavens, Maude, what are you doing here? Catch that young and innocent giggle? (*To Larry*) She got a patent on it in 1776.

SECOND MASKER (*Dances by with partner*)—Come on, Foxey, do the Fox trot.

MABEL—Tilly! (*To Larry*) I'd know her legs anywhere. Originally built for a piano.

THIRD MASKER (*With partner*)—Hello, kiddo, why ain't you swimmin'?

MABEL—How that mask does improve you, Sadie. Too bad you can't wear it all the time. (*All dance off L. U. E. singing. They pull Larry off with them. Mabel goes quickly to telephone after closing door at L. U. E.*) Hello—hello. Get me River one-eight-two-three. Yes, in a hurry. Ring me when you get it. (*She goes rear, opens door and looks off at dancers. She cranes her neck and stands on tiptoe looking off. Phone rings, she shuts door and runs down. In Phone*) Hello, that you Mrs. Millwood? No, I haven't found her. Wait a minute—yes, I'm inside the house. What? Her father's on the way? The devil! Keep him back. You stay away too. She's not here yet. I'll get her if she comes. Listen, your butting-in will—say, who's going this, you or me? (*Enter from hallway Peter, Burrell and Nita. Nita is wrapped in cloak that covers her from head to foot. She wears a red domino.*)

BURRELL (*To Peter*)—Get him quick.

PETER—Yes, sir. (*Peter exits L. U. E.*)

MABEL (*In phone in cultured drawl, as she presses finger on hook, which shows the audience she is talking into a "dead" phone*)—Oh, yes, they are here, but withal it's dull, very dull. Not a live one in the shop. Oh, yes, some hope yet. The night's young. It's the only thing that is young around here. (*Enter Peter with Edward L. U. E. Peter goes off through hallway door.*)

EDWARD (*To Burrell*)—You did come?

BURRELL (*Indicating Mabel*)—Shhh!

MABEL (*In phone*)—Well, good-bye, my dear, hope you get enough to pay the rent. (*Exit after close look at Nita, who is wrapped in cloak still so she cannot be recognized.*)

EDWARD—You got her?

BURRELL (*Whips off cloak and mask. She has on a dress like the one worn by Alice.*)

EDWARD (*Enraptured by her*)—Oh, you baby doll, I could kiss you. Come on, nobody's going to dance with you all night but myself. Let's get a little of the merry water, eh? (*Takes arm.*)

NITA—Yes, sir.

BURRELL (*To Nita*)—Nita, this is the fairy prince I told you about. You'll get the limousine and everything I said. (*Nita puts on red domino again.*) (*Burrell turns to Ed.*) That other little matter's all right, is it?

EDWARD—Sure, here you are. (*Gives him bills. Burrell looks bills over and is disappointed and shows it without speaking. Dancers come out and all dance, Burrell putting on mask and getting a partner. Enter Mabel as Nita disappears L. U. E. in the crowd. She watches her for a second, then comes down to phone. Quickly removes receiver.*)

MABEL (*In phone*)—Hello—Hello. River one-eight-two-three. Hurry, please. (*Pause.*) Yes. Mrs. Millwood. No, get her right away. Hello, Imogene, this is Mabel, yes, get Mrs. Millwood, tell her I've found Alice. Good night. (*Hangs up phone.*) What do you think of that? (*Dancer enters tangoing. To dancer*) When I talk to the kid in the red domino, you grab Ed., will you? She's my side kicker. I want to wise her up.

MASKER—Sure. (*They dance off together L. U. E. Two dancers dance across stage and off L. U. E. Mabel re-enters with Nita L. U. E.*)

MABEL (*Speaking off as she enters*)—Bring the champagne in here, Mr. Millwood. (*To Nita*) So, this is where you are?

NITA—Isn't it just like heaven?

MABEL—Heaven! Ring again, you've got the wrong number. You mean the other place.

NITA (*Springing back from her*)—Oh, you.

MABEL—Don't try that on your Uncle Dudley. (*Goes to Nita and takes her mask off.*) Well, I'll be— Say, kid,

my lamps need fixing. You're a marker for a little flopper I used to know. The drinks are on me. (*Enter Larry L. U. E. She turns to Larry after putting mask on Nita.*) Get this, Larry. What's her moniker?

LARABEE (*Alice appears R., glances at the scene and exits immediately. Larry goes toward Nita*)—Alice! (*Mabel whips Nita's mask off.*)

MABEL—Guess again.

LARABEE—Well—

MABEL (*To Nita*)—Who copped you out? Maybe you don't get real American yet. I mean, who brought you here?

NITA—Mr. Burr.

LARABEE—Burrell!

MABEL (*To Nita*)—Where did he glim you? Say, look here, where did he see you and when and how? You don't belong in New York.

NITA—I'm from Rockmont.

MABEL—Rockmont? They haven't got switchboards in Rockmont. You worked in a telephone exchange, didn't you?

NITA—No, I worked in a store.

MABEL—I get you. You were offered a job in New York on the stage, eh? Burr is such a nice man to poor down-trodden shop girls. Wants them all to go in for drama, by way of the chorus. How long have you been here?

NITA—Two weeks.

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—Two weeks! In two more she'll be just like the iron-jawed fluzzies in there. Are you going to let her?

LARABEE—Take her away quick.

MABEL (*To Nita*)—Come on.

NITA (*Trying to break Mabel's grip*)—But I don't want to go. This is life and I'm young enough to want to live. I never had any fun, I never heard any music, I was too tired to dance, I couldn't laugh the way others laughed because I was always thinking we were so terribly poor. I won't go, so there. (*Tries to get away.*)

MABEL—You'll go back to Rockmont tonight, you hear? This is his house. (*Indicating Larry.*) He's going to put you out.

NITA—But Mr. Burr, Mr. Wood—

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—Don't let anyone in for a second.

LARABEE (*He goes up to door L. U. E.*)—Now look here, you (*To Nita*) throw that away. (*Takes domino from Nita and throws it on floor.*) You're a nice girl. You've not been spoiled yet, but you're going to be if you go through with this. Burr brought you to this house to meet someone! A little man, isn't it so?

NITA—Yes.

MABEL—Said he was rich; that he'd get you an auto and everything and a flat with the rent paid in advance. Said you was too nice a girl to work. Too dainty and refined! Old stuff. In six months you'd be hitting the path. Do you know what that means? You'd be peddling out to the cheap skates of this burg, and believe me they're here a-plenty. If you go through with this you're going to hate to go back to Rockmont; you're going to run away and hide when one of your old friends turn the corner; you're going to be ashamed to see any of your own folks; when your mother kisses you, you're going to cry and want to throw yourself in the river. Now, are you? It's up to you.

NITA—Take me away.

MABEL (*Throwing cloak over her*)—That's a dear. I knew you were a good kid. (*To Larry*) O. K., Larry. (*Larry comes down. Exit Mabel and Nita to hallway. Enter Burrell L. U. E.*)

BURRELL (*Looking about*)—Alone, Larry? (*Takes mask off.*)

LARABEE (*Rolling cigarette*)—Oh, just hitting the Durham.

BURRELL—Is it true you're going back to the ranch?

LARABEE—To-morrow morning.

BURRELL—Why don't you stick? Give New York a chance?

LARABEE (*Indifferently*)—Oh, cliff dwellers are no treat to me. Got plenty of places where they used to live next state but one to ours.

BURRELL—Cliff dwellers?

LARABEE—Sure, the people here live in caves built on the sides of canons, that's all. Wasters cooped up on little shelves. Wasters, that's all. They waste time, they waste food, they waste money, and they waste one another. I've seen more wrecked lives here covered up with talcum and rouge than I ever hope to see again.

BURRELL—You're an advocate of the seven deadly virtues, that's what. Funny, everyone with that kind of a looking backward intellect thinks all the saints must have freckles on their noses and wear cowhide boots.

LARABEE—I'm not looking for saints. I'm satisfied with men. (*Pause.*) If they are men, not panderers and procurers.

BURRELL—Do you mean we're all that sort?

LARABEE—A few right in this neighborhood are.

BURRELL—Look here, what's on your mind?

LARABEE—I mean this, Mr. Burrell, you make yourself scarce around here right away. You don't think I'd have in my house a skunk that would lure an innocent young girl here to sell her.

BURRELL—Do you think I would?

LARABEE—I don't think, I know! Now, get out. Go on, git! You're the kind of thing that makes the worst ones what they are. For the sake of the drippings from the tables of the rich you kiss their boots and do their dirty work. Now git—or fight!

BURRELL—I'll see you later for this.

LARABEE—I'll be back in three minutes. If you're here I'll kick you out. (*Larry goes toward L. U. E. Burrell goes into hallway. Alice tiptoes from R. towards table. She looks down and sees red domino taken from Nita and thrown away. She picks it up and puts it on. Burrell appears at door leading to hallway.*)

BURRELL—Nita! (*Calling.*) Here, Nita, wait, I want to speak to you. (*Alice has backed away to door R., but finally stops.*) Don't be afraid of me, didn't I bring you here? (*Comes a step into room.*) I want you to get Mr. Wood for me, will you, Nita?

ALICE—Mr. Wood?

BURRELL—Yes, you tell him Mr. Burr wants him right away. It's very important. Life and death. Make the girls let him come out to me.

ALICE—Suppose I don't know him? He'll be masked, won't he?

BURRELL—Oh, you'll find him. Ask for Mr. Millwood, that's what they call him. Or just Shrimp. All the girls know him here.

ALICE (*Going toward L. U. E.*)—All right. (*Enter Larry L. U. E. Burrell makes quick exit in door leading to hallway.*)

LARABEE (*To Alice astonished*)—You! You decided not to go home back to Rockmont after all?

ALICE (*With altered voice*)—No, Mr. Larabee.

LARABEE—So, Mabel told you my name. Well, Nita, now why didn't you stick by her and go back to your folks. The stage is nothing after all, and you mightn't make good. They say the chorus is awful.

ALICE—I won't hear a word against the chorus, and I want to stay here.

LARABEE—Do you know, I just now put that chap Burr out because he brought you here. Won't you go home?

ALICE—No.

LARABEE (*Discouraged*)—What's the use? Everybody gets the itch for the excitement, I guess. It seems to me once a girl gets just a taste of this she gives you the laugh if you want to save her.

ALICE—Maybe what you call saving her *ain't*. Look how well I dance. (*Pirouetting.*) I want to go on the stage. Shall I sing? I've got a splendid voice for the chorus.

LARABEE (*Disgusted*)—Go your gait for all me. I'm through. (*Goes up.*)

ALICE (*Dancing in front of him*)—I won't let you go. I won't let you. (*Pulls him back.*)

LARABEE—Now see here, you're a little fool. I'm sorry I put myself out for you the least bit.

ALICE—Ah! (*Laughing.*) You only think you are. You're a real cowboy, aren't you? I love cowboys. Don't you?

LARABEE—Look here, if you were my sister, do you know what I'd do?

ALICE—I could never guess, brother Larry.

LARABEE—Larry? This is a trick. Mabel sent you here to put something over on me. Go on, speak up. (*He tries to catch her, she keeps the table between them.*)

ALICE—Cross my heart, she didn't. I just wanted to come 'cause I wanted to see you.

LARABEE—I'll give you just five minutes to clear out. (*Goes toward L. U. E.*)

ALICE—Will you dance once with me if I promise to go?

LARABEE (*Contemptuously*)—Dance! Me dance with you?

ALICE—Why not, I'll go right away if you do.

LARABEE—I don't dance, I tell you.

ALICE—If you try that will save me, sure.

LARABEE—Will you go home to your folks if I just try?

ALICE—Straight home to my folks.

LARABEE—Come on, but you'll wish you'd picked a bear instead. (*They dance L. U. E. Burrell appears L. Enter Mabel L. She brushes by Burrell making him stumble into the room.*)

BURRELL (*Drawing back*)—Oh, I beg pardon.

MABEL—Why don't you give up begging, Burr, and go to work?

BURRELL—Be serious, Mabel.

MABEL—I am serious. You make me. What's the sneak stunt for? Afraid of someone?

BURRELL (*Lightly*)—No, no, I—just a little flirtation, you know.

MABEL—Quit it. I know how you flirt. (*Changing tone to gruffness.*) Come on, kid, what kept you?

BURRELL—At least I'd use less slang and more grammar.

MABEL—Huh, grammar's only the slang of the rich.

BURRELL—Apparently it is harder to acquire than your own kind. Anyhow, it's the hallmark of the lady.

MABEL—Riverside Drive didn't succeed in making any more a lady of me than a man of you. I think I know why you're sneaking back in the hallway. Larry's seen you.

BURRELL—No, I was just waiting.

MABEL—I knew it, well, you'd better duck. I put Larry onto you.

BURRELL—You did! Your days on Riverside Drive are numbered for that.

MABEL—I should worry. Did it ever strike you, Reggie, that a lot of money is spent in the homes of the divorced rich to keep a nice innocent girl nice and innocent, while guys like you cop off the coin for pointing out to the son of the same house the short cut to hell?

BURRELL—I'm through!

MABEL—What's that?

BURRELL—I'm done, I tell you.

MABEL—On the level?

BURRELL—Believe me or not, this is the limit. That little imp in there has made me do everything that degraded me. (*Angrily.*) Now, why should he be in a position to do it?

MABEL—Search me, I didn't do it.

BURRELL—It doesn't look fair to me. I had more native ability, more brains, better character; he had only a father with money.

MABEL—You should have been wiser in picking *your* father.

BURRELL—There's something wrong with the scheme of things somewhere.

MABEL—There is. You missed out when you sloughed the bit of manhood God started you off with and turned your back on work to live by your wits. (*Alice enters L. U. E. looking back frightened. She runs lightly across stage*

to R. and makes hurried exit. Mabel doesn't see her, Burrell does.) What was that? (*As Alice shuts door R. Enter Ed. L. U. E. with bottle and champagne glass. He is under the influence of liquor.*)

EDWARD—Where is she? Where did she go?

MABEL—Who?

EDWARD—Never mind. It's not you, anyhow.

MABEL—Aw, you Shrimp, if I didn't know you, I'd think you meant that. (*Indicate Burrell.*) Say, he wants to quit.

EDWARD—Who?

MABEL—Burrell. Says right out in meeting he'll do no more kidnapping for you.

EDWARD—What's that?

MABEL—Refuses to rob any more cradles.

EDWARD (*To Burrell*)—You've been talking!

BURRELL—I only said I was going away. I feel all in. When a man can't fight, it's all right; when he can and won't, then there's something wrong in here. (*Indicating breast.*)

MABEL (*To Edward*)—Burrell want's you to stake him so he can get a fresh start. Go on, do it. He's delivered for you up to the handle.

EDWARD (*At table filling glass from bottle, and drinking it*)—Let him go to the devil.

MABEL (*To Burrell*)—You're to go to the devil. (*Alice peeps from door R. Ed. is in the act of drinking, when he sees her. He quietly lays glass down and tiptoes across to door R.*)

BURRELL (*Despairingly to Mabel*)—That's what I get for all I've done.

MABEL—Just as the fellow in the book says: Virtue and the police offer a reward, and some second story man cops it off. (*Ed. has turned handle of door R. and opened it. He goes in quickly and closes door. There's a frightened scream off.*)

BURRELL—What's that?

MABEL (*Running across to door R.*)—It's in here. (*Enter Larry L. U. E.*) Quick, Larry. (*The screaming continues.*)

LARABEE (*Pressing shoulder against door*)—What is it?

MABEL (*Knocking hard on door*)—Open!

LARABEE—Open or I'll smash it in.

EDWARD (*Off stage*)—Go away. (*Scream is repeated.*)

LARABEE—All right. Have it your way. (*He picks up chair and smashes door in. Puts hand through broken panel and turns key.*)

MABEL—Good work. (*Exeunt Larry and Mabel R.*) (*Peter, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Millwood, enters L.*)

PETER—I'll get Mr. Larabee, right away. (*Exit Peter L. U. E. Mr. and Mrs. Millwood go up as if to follow Peter. Larry enters R. dragging Edward, whom he tosses center near table.*)

LARABEE—You hound!

EDWARD—She's mine, you hear. Ask Burr. (*Turns to Burrell.*) She is, isn't she? (*He advances on Larry as if to attack him.*)

MILLWOOD (*Coming down and getting between Larry and Ed.*)—What does this brawling mean?

EDWARD (*In drunken surprise*)—You here? Governor! (*Sees Mrs. Millwood.*) And the Mater? (*Enter Mabel R. supporting Alice, who still wears her red domino. Ed. turns to Mabel and Alice.*) Come on, Nita, You're mine, you understand. (*Going towards Alice and grabbing her by the arm.*)

ALICE (*Shrinking back as Alice's domino is taken off by Mabel*)—Keep him away. How horrible! Horrible!

EDWARD—You! (*He staggers back when he sees it is Alice.*)

MRS. MILLWOOD (*Taking Alice in her arms*)—Alice!

EDWARD (*To Alice*)—What were you doing in there?

ALICE (*To Edward*)—Go away. Please. I never want to see you again.

EDWARD (*To Larry*)—You did this! You brought my sister here. You mixed her up with that gang! (*Indicating dancers.*)

MABEL (*To Larabee*)—And you lied to me, Mr. Larabee! You had her here all the time!

MILLWOOD—You did, Larabee? Good God, is there a decent man anywhere on earth?

MRS. MILLWOOD (*Patting Alice*)—Oh, my poor dear.

EDWARD (*Grabbing champagne bottle from table and advancing on Larry*)—I'll murder you. (*Larry and Edward grapple. Ed. is held back by Alice, who springs forward.*)

ALICE—Don't touch him! Don't dare! (*The men are separated.*)

MABEL (*To Alice*)—He tricked you. He wanted revenge. Little Florence, the girl that committed suicide in your house, was his sister.

ALICE—What?

MILLWOOD—Is it true?

MABEL (*To Edward*)—He knows that you were the cause of his sister's death.

EDWARD—Now I understand. That's what he was after all the time. He wanted to trick Alice to get even.

MILLWOOD (*Facing Larry as if about to strike him*)—An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. Is that it?

LARABEE (*Calmly*)—An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. A sister for a sister. Why not? (*Turns to Alice.*) I did start out to treat you in exactly the same way as your brother treated little Florrie.

ALICE—Oh, and I thought—I thought you cared.

MABEL—This masquerade was the window dressing to coax the customer in. Shrimp here was to find you and him together.

LARABEE (*To Alice*)—That's right. The little game of tit for tat. We were to be unmasked. I was to hand you over to him as much of a wreck as he made my sister.

MRS. MILLWOOD—What depths of degradation!

ALICE (*A light dawning on her*)—But you didn't! You ordered me home.

LARABEE (*To Millwood*)—There you are. I'm a quitter. I didn't go through with it.

MR. MILLWOOD (*To Larabee*)—God put it into your heart to give up your idea of revenge.

LARABEE (*Paying no attention to Mrs. Millwood, and turning to Millwood*)—When your son went into that room tonight he was pursuing another fellow's sister.

MABEL—Nita. A mere child.

LARABEE—One that he paid Burrell here to bring him.

MILLWOOD—Good God! (*He turns on Burrell and Edward. Both shrink back.*) It's true!

LARABEE—Money kept him from being anything only what he is.

MILLWOOD—It will keep him so no longer. (*To Edward*) From now on you'll earn every dollar you get by the sweat of your brow. Out of my sight.

EDWARD (*To Mrs. Millwood*)—Mother!

MRS. MILLWOOD—Come back to me when you are a man. (*Exeunt Edward and Burrell.*) To think that he was once my baby! Life is just sin. (*To Millwood*) Let us go home.

LARABEE (*To Mrs. Millwood*)—To which one? Yours or his? (*Turns to Millwood.*) Your divorce gave your children too many homes; half the time they didn't think they had any. It was the same thing that left my little sister Florence without a home at all.

MILLWOOD (*To Mrs. Millwood*)—We have been at fault.

MRS. MILLWOOD (*Placing hand on Millwood's arm*)—I was all to blame. I forgot that as soon as a child is laid in a woman's arms she becomes a guardian of the human race. And all else is nothing.

MILLWOOD (*To Larabee*)—Thank you for teaching us both. Good night.

MRS. MILLWOOD (*To Larabee*)—Good night. (*Exeunt Mrs. Millwood with Alice, and Millwood and Mabel.*)

MABEL (*Turning at door*)—Good night, Mr. Larabee.

LARABEE—Good night. (*He stands near table as maskers come out L. U. E. and go off L.*)

MASKERS—Good night, Larry. Great time we had.

DITTO—Best time ever. Good night, old sport.

DITTO—You're a regular New Yorker now. Good night.

LARABEE—Good night, everybody. Thank you for coming. (*Voices murmur off L. as crowd withdraws farther away. Enter Peter L.*)

PETER (*Turning out lights*)—Is there anything else, sir?

LARABEE—Pack my bags.

PETER—Right away, sir?

LARABEE—Yes. Call a taxi. (*Pulls watch from pocket.*) I have just time to make that next train.

PETER—Yes, sir. (*Exit R. Enter Alice L.*)

ALICE—I couldn't go without saying good-bye.

LARRY (*Coldly*)—Good-bye, Miss Millwood.

ALICE (*Close to him*)—No. It's Alice. Say Alice. (*Mabel appears L.*)

LARABEE—Alice!

ALICE—Larry!

LARABEE—You forgive me?

ALICE—If you promise there won't be any divorce.

LARABEE—I promise. (*Kissing her.*)

MABEL—Well, don't that beat the Dutch! I was off on the wrong foot all the time.

Curtain

END OF ACT III

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