

BY MOUTH | Martin Garrison, Producer
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ROLE: **CHUCK**

CHUCK: An comically amiable, young Italian American who serves as the day bartender. He shares a pipe dream with his lover and whore Cora about getting married and buying a farm in Jersey.

3 takes + pickups = \$375.

IMPORTANT: Looking for ACTIVE, natural, well-paced reads rather than SLOW, self-indulgent "actor-y" ones.

Be mindful of UNDERSCORING for emphasis-- and THROW AWAY non-emphasized words (please no reads emphasising every word).

Don't let the above make you rush or act stilted--simply keep it in mind.

For those who want an edge (casting process will be slow), read the entire SCRIPT before auditioning.

PLEASE READ CHUCK LINES 2891-2935

CHUCK LINES BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE

1024 MARGIE: And her on the turf long before me and you!
1025 And bot' of 'em ahguin' all de time.

1026 PEARL: And him swearin' ta never go on no more
1027 periodicals! An' den her pretendin' [that she]--
1028 It gives me a pain just to talk about.

1029 ROCKY: Of all de dreams in dis dump, dey got de
1030 nuttiest! What would gettin' married get 'em. De farm
1031 stuff is de sappiest part--when de bot' of 'em ain't
1032 never been nearer a farm dan Coney Island! Dey'd get
1033 D.T.s if dey ever hoid a cricket choip! [with deeper
1034 disgust] Can you pitcha a good bahtender like Chuck
1035 diggin' spuds? And imagine a whore hustlin' de cows
1036 home! For Christ sake--ain't dat a pretty pitcha!

1037 MARGIE: Yuy oughtn't to call Cora dat, Rocky--she's a
1038 good kid. She may be a tart, but--

1039 ROCKY: Sure dats all I meant--a tart.

1040 PEARL [giggling]: He's right about de cows, Mahgie.
1041 Jeez I bet Cora don't know which end of de cow
1042 has de horns--I'm gonna ask her.

1043 [Noise of a door opening in the hall and a couple
1044 arguing.]

1045 CORA: An' how do I know yuh won't [get drunk no more]--

1046 CHUCK: Cuz I say so!

1047 ROCKY: Here's your chance--dat's dem two nuts now.

1048 CORA [gaily]: Hello, bums. [pause] Jeez, de Moigue on a
1049 rainy night! [pause] Hello, Old Wise Guy--ain't you
1050 croaked yet?

1051 LARRY: Not yet, Cora. It's tiring, this waiting for the
1052 end.

1053 CORA: Aw, gwan, you'll never die--you'll have to hire
1054 someone to croak yuh wid an axe.

1055 BESS HOPE [cocks a sleepy eye at her]: You dumb hookers,
1056 cut the noise! This ain't a cathouse!

1057 CORA: My, Bess! Such language!

1058 BESS [grunts]: Huh.

1059 [Cora sits.]

1060 PARRITT: If I'd known this was a hooker hangout,
1061 I'd never have come here.

1062 LARRY: A bit down on the ladies, aren't you?

1063 PARRITT: I hate every bitch that ever lived! They're all
1064 alike! [catching himself--guiltily] You can understand,
1065 can't you--it was getting mixed up with a tart that made
1066 me have that fight with Mother? [then, with a resentful
1067 sneer] But what the hell does it matter to you? You're
1068 in the grandstand--you're through with life.

1069 LARRY: And don't you forget it! I don't want to know a
1070 damned thing about your business.

1071 CORA: Who's de guy wid Larry!

1072 ROCKY: A tightwad--to hell wid him.

1073 PEARL: Say, Cora, wise me up--which end of a cow is de
1074 horns on?

1075 CORA: Ah, don't bring dat up--I'm sick of hearin' about
1076 dat farm.

1077 ROCKY: You got nuttin' on us!

1078 CORA: Me and dis overgrown tramp has been scrappin'
1079 about it. He says Joisey's de best place, and I says
1080 Long Island because we'll be near Coney. And I says to
1081 him, how do I know yuh're off of periodicals for good?
1082 I don't give a damn how drunk yuh get the way we are,
1083 but I don't wanta be married to no soak.

1084 CHUCK: And I says, I'm off de stuff for life. Den she
1085 beefs we won't be married a month before I'll trow it in
1086 her face she was a tart. "Jeez, Baby," I tells her.
1087 "What de hell yuh tink I tink I'm marryin', a voigin?
1088 Why should I kick as long as yuh lay off it and don't do
1089 no cheatin' wid de iceman or nobody?

1090 NARRATOR: He kisses Cora and she kisses him.

1091 CORA: Aw, yuh big tramp!

1092 ROCKY: Can you two tie it? I'll buy yuh a trink, I'll do
1093 anythin'.

1094 CORA: No, dis rounds on me. I run into luck--dat's why I
1095 dragged Chuck outa bed to celebrate. It was a sailor--
1096 I rolled him. [she chuckles] Say, Chuck's kiddin' about
1097 the iceman reminds me--where de hell's Hickey?

1098 ROCKY: Dat's what we was wonderin'.

1099 CORA: He ought to be here--me and Chuck seen him.

1100 ROCKY [excited]: You seen Hickey? [nudges Bess]
1101 Hey, Boss, come to--Cora's seen Hickey.

1102 NARRATOR: Bess is instantly awake and everyone--except
1103 Hugo and Parritt--begins to rouse hopefully.

1104 BESS HOPE: Where'd you see him, Cora?

1105 CORA: On de next corner--he was standin' dere. I kidded
1106 him, "How's de iceman, Hickey--how's he doing at your
1107 house?" He laughs and says, "Fine." And he says, "Tell
1108 de gang I'll be along in a minute--I'm just figurin' out
1109 de best way to save dem and bring dem pease."

1110 BESS HOPE [chuckles]: Bejeez he's thought up a new gag!
1111 It's a wonder he didn't borrow a Salvation Army uniform
1112 and show up in that! Go out and get him, Rocky--tell him
1113 we're waitin' to be saved!

1114 NARRATOR: Rocky goes out, grinning.

1115 CORA: Yeah, Bess, he was only kiddin'--but he
1116 was...different somehow.

1117 CHUCK: Sure, he was sober, Baby--we ain't never seen him
1118 when he wasn't on a drunk.

1119 CORA [uncertain] Sure. Gee, ain't I dumb?

1120 BESS HOPE: Sober? That's funny--he's always lapped up a
1121 good starter on his way here. Well, bejeez, he won't be
1122 sober long--he'll be good and ripe for my birthday party
1123 tonight at twelve. [chuckles with anticipation; to all]
1124 Listen--he's fixed some new gag to pull on us--we'll
1125 pretend to let him kid us, see--and we'll kid the pants
1126 off him.

1127 ED: Sure, Bess!

1128 MAC: Righto!

1129 JOE: Dat's de stuff!

1130 JIMMY: We'll fix him!

1131 THE CAPTAIN: You bet your life!

1132 THE GENERAL: O' course!

ED: I'll miss the Doc. I bet he's standing on a street corner in hell right now, telling those damned suckers that there's nothin' like snake oil for a bad burn.

HICKEY [raising his head a little and forcing his eyes open]: That's the spirit! All I want is to see you happy--

NARRATOR: As Hickey slips back into sleep, they all stare at him--their faces puzzled, resentful, uneasy.

Later on, around midnight, the back room has been decorated for a party.

Four tables have been pushed together to form an improvised banquet table, which is covered with old table cloths and laid with glasses, plates and utensils before each chair. Bottles of whiskey have been placed at the reach of any sitter--and an old upright piano with stool has been moved in.

On a separate small table is a birthday cake with six candles, and several wrapped presents.

The floor's been swept clean of sawdust and the light fixtures have been adorned with red ribbon.

Chuck, Rocky and the three girls have dressed up for the occasion. Cora arranges flowers in a large schooner glass on top of the piano. Chuck, who has turned so he can watch Cora, sits in a chair at the banquet table.

A few chairs away sits Larry, staring straight ahead, a drink of whiskey before him, deep in disturbed thought.

Next to him, passed out, is Hugo.

Rocky stands by Margie and Pearl as they arrange the cake and presents.

Though all of the gang are trying to act in the spirit of the occasion, there's something forced about their manner, an undercurrent of nervous irritation and preoccupation.

CORA [standing back from piano to regard the effect of her flower arrangement]: How's dat, Kid?

CHUCK:[grumpily]: What de hell do I know about flowers?

1478 CORA: Yuh can see dy're pretty, can't yuh, yuh big
1479 dummy?

1480 CHUCK [mollifyingly]: Yeah, Baby, sure--if you like 'em,
1481 dey're aw right wid me.

1482 MARGIE: Some cake, huh, Poil--lookit--six candles--
1483 each for ten years.

1484 PEARL: When da we light 'em, Rocky?

1485 ROCKY [grumpily]: Ask that bughouse Hickey--he's elected
1486 himself boss of dis boithday racket.

1487 MARGIE: Well, anyways, it's some cake, ain't it?

1488 ROCKY [without enthusiasm]: Sure, it's aw right by me--
1489 but what de hell is de Boss goin' to do wid a cake?
1490 If she ever et a hunk, she'd eat the whole ting, and
1491 it'd croak her.

1492 PEARL: Jeez yuh're a dope--ain't he, Mahgie?

1493 MARGIE: A dope is right!

1494 ROCKY [stung]: You broads better watch your step or--

1495 PEARL [defiantly]: Or what?

1496 MARGIE: Yeah! Or what?

1497 CORA [to Chuck--acidly]: A guy what can't see flowers is
1498 pretty must be some dumbbell.

1499 CHUCK: Yeah? Well, if I was as dumb as you--
1500 [then mollifyingly] All I'm tinkin is, flowers is dat
1501 louse Hickey's stunt--we never had no flowers for
1502 de Boss's boithday before--she's like one o' de guys.
1503 What de hell can de Boss do wid flowers--she don't
1504 know a cauliflower from a geranium.

1505 ROCKY: Yeah, same ting with de cake--dat's Hickey's
1506 doin', too. [bitterly] Jeez, ever since he woke up,
1507 yuh can't stop 'im--he's taken on de party like it was
1508 his boithday.

1509 MARGIE: Well, he's payin' for everything, ain't he?

1510 ROCKY: I don't mind de boithday stuff so much--what gets
1511 my goat is de way he's tryin' to run de whole dump and
1512 everyone in it. He's buttin' in all over de place--
1513 tellin' everybody where dey gets off. On'y he don't
1514 really tell yuh--he just keeps hintin' around.

1515 PEARL: He was hintin' to me and Mahgie.

1516 MARGIE: Yeah, de lousy drumma.

1517 ROCKY: He gives yuh an earful of dat bull about yuh got
1518 to be honest wid yourself and not kid yourself, and have
1519 de guts to be what yuh are. I told him dat's
1520 aw right for de bums in dis dump--I'm sick of listenin'
1521 to dem hop demselves up--but it don't go wid me, see!
1522 I don't kid myself wid no pipe dream. [pause] What are
1523 you two grinnin' at?

1524 PEARL [her face hard--scornfully]: Nuttin'.

1525 MARGIE: Nuttin'.

1526 ROCKY: It better be nuttin'! Don't let Hickey put no
1527 ideas in your nuts if you wanta stay healthy! [then
1528 angrily] I wish de louse never showed up! I hope he
1529 don't come back from de deli--he's gettin' everyone
1530 nuts--he's ridin' someone every minute. He's got de Boss
1531 and Jimmy run ragged, and de rest is hidin' in deir
1532 rooms so dey won't have to listen to him. Dey're all
1533 actin' cagey wid de booze, too, like dey was scared
1534 if dey get too drunk, dey might spill deir guts or
1535 sometin'. And everybody's gettin' a prize grouch on.

1536 CORA: Yeah, he's been hintin' to me and Chuck, too.
1537 Yuh'd tink he suspected we had no real intention of
1538 gettin' married--that Chuck wasn't goin' to stop gettin'
1539 drunk--or maybe didn't even wanta.

1540 CHUCK: He didn't say it right out or I'da socked him
1541 one. I told him, "I'm on de wagon for keeps and
1542 Cora knows it."

1543 CORA: "Sure, I know it." I tells him. "And Chuck ain't
1544 never goin' to trow it in my face dat I was a tart,
1545 neider. And if yuh tink we're just kiddin' ourselfs,
1546 we'll show yuh!"

1547 CHUCK: Yeah!

1548 CORA: We've decided Joisey is where we want de farm, and
1549 we'll get married dere, too, because yuh don't need no
1550 license. We're goin' to get married tomorrow--ain't we,
1551 Honey?

1552 CHUCK: You bet, Baby.

1553 ROCKY [disgusted]: Christ, Chuck, are yuh lettin' dat
 1554 bughouse louse Hickey kid yuh into--

1555 CORA [turns on him angrily]: Nobody's kiddin' him into
 1556 nuttin'--nor me neider! And Hickey's right--if dis big
 1557 tramp's goin' to marry me, he ought to do it, and not
 1558 just shoot off his old bazoo about it.

1559 ROCKY [ignoring her]: Yuh can't be dat dumb, Chuck.

1560 CORA; You keep outa dis! And don't start beefin' about
 1561 crickets on de farm drivin' us nuts. You and your
 1562 crickets--yuh'd tink dey was elephants!

1563 MARGIE [coming to Rocky's defense--sneeringly]:
 1564 Don't listen to dat brad, Rocky--yuh heard her say
 1565 "tomorrow," didn't yuh--it's de same old crap.

1566 CORA [glares at her] Is dat so?

1567 PEARL [lines up with Margie--sneeringly]: Imagine Cora
 1568 a bride--dat's a hot one! Jeez, Cora if all de guys you
 1569 been wid was side by side, yuh could walk on 'em from
 1570 here to Texas!

1571 CORA [starts moving toward her threateningly]: Yuh can't
 1572 tak ta me like dat, yuh fat Dago hooker! I may be a
 1573 tart, but I ain't a cheap old whore like you!

1574 PEARL [furiously]: I'll show yuh who's a whore!

1575 NARRATOR: They start to fly at each other, but Chuck and
 1576 Rocky grab them from behind and Chuck forces Cora into a
 1577 chair.

1578 CHUCK: Sit down and cool off, Baby.

1579 ROCKY [doing the same to Pearl]: Nix on de rough stuff,
 1580 Poil.

1581 MARGIE [glares at Cora]: Why don't you leave Poil alone!
 1582 She'll fix dat blonde's clock--or if she don't, I will!

1583 ROCKY--Shut up, you! [disgustedly] D'yuh wanna gum up
 1584 de Boss's party?

1585 PEARL [a bit shamefaced--sulkily]: Who wants ta?
 1586 But nobody can't call me a--

1587 ROCKY--[exasperatedly] Aw, bury it--what are ya,
 1588 a voigin?

1589 PEARL [after a pause]: Yuh mean you tink I'm a whore,
1590 too?

1591 MARGIE: An' me?

1592 ROCKY: Now don't youse start nuttin'!

1593 PEARL: I suppose it'd tickle ya if me and Mahgie did
1594 what dat louse, Hickey, was hintin' at and come right
1595 out and admitted we was whores.

1596 ROCKY: Aw right--what of it--it's de truth, ain't it?

1597 CORA [lining up with Pearl and Margie--indignantly]:
1598 Jeez, Rocky, dat's a hell of a ting to say to two goils
1599 dat's been as good to yuh as Poil and Mahgie! [pause]
1600 I didn't mean to call yuh dat, Poil--I was on'y mad.

1601 PEARL [accepts the apology gratefully]: Sure, I was
1602 mad, too--no hard feelin's.

1603 ROCKY [relieved]: Dere--dat fixes everything, don't it?

1604 PEARL [turns on him--hard and bitter]: Aw right, Rocky--
1605 we're whores--you know what dat makes you, don't it?

1606 ROCKY [angrily]: Look out, now!

1607 MARGIE: A lousy little pimp, dat's what!

1608 ROCKY: I'll loin yuh!

1609 [He gives her a slap on the face.]

1610 PEARL: A doity little Ginny pimp, dat's what!

1611 [He gives her a slap too.]

1612 ROCKY: Dat'll loin you too!

1613 MARGIE: He's provin' it to us, Poil.

1614 PEARL: Yeah, Hickey's convoyed him--he's give up his
1615 pipe dream!

1616 ROCKY [furious and at the same time bewildered by their
1617 defiance] Lay off me or I'll beat de hell [out of ya!]

1618 CHUCK [growls]: Lay off now--de Boss's party ain't no
1619 time to beat up your stable.

1620 ROCKY: Whose stable? Who d'yuh tink yuh're talkin' to?
1621 I ain't never beat dem up--what d'yuh tink I am? I jus'
1622 give dem a slap, like any guy would his wife, if she got

1663 Soon, leedle proletarians, ve vill have free picnic in
 1664 ze cool shade, ve vill eat hot dogs and trink free beer
 1665 beneath the villow trees! Like hogs, yes! Like beautiful
 1666 leedle hogs! [Then he abruptly stops--confused and at
 1667 what he's heard himself say] Huh...[then gutturally]
 1668 Dot Gottamned liar, Hickey--it is he who makes me want
 1669 to sleep.

1670 [His head hits the wood table.]

1671 CORA [uneasily]: Hickey ain't overlookin' no bets,
 1672 is he--he's even give Hugo de woiks.

1673 LARRY: I warned you this morning he wasn't kidding.

1674 MARGIE [sneering]: De old wise guy!

1675 PEARL: Yeah, still pretendin' he's de one exception,
 1676 like Hickey said--he don't do no pipe dreamin'--oh, no!

1677 LARRY [sharply resentful]: Huh! [pause] All right, take
 1678 it out on me, if it makes ya feel good. I love every
 1679 hair on your heads, my great big beautiful baby dolls--
 1680 and there's nothing I wouldn't do for ya!

1681 PEARL [stiffly]: Yeah? Well we ain't big. And we ain't
 1682 your baby dolls! [Suddenly mollified, she smiles]
 1683 But we admit we're beautiful--huh, Mahgie?

1684 MARGIE [smiling]: Sure ting--but what would he do wid
 1685 beautiful dolls, even if he had de price, de old goat?
 1686 [She laughs teasingly] Aw yuh're aw right at dat, Larry,
 1687 even if yuh are full of bull!

1688 PEARL: Sure, yuh're aces wid us--we're noivous, dat's
 1689 all. Dat lousy drummer--why can't he be like he's always
 1690 been? I never seen a guy change so. You pretend to be
 1691 such a fox, Larry--what d'yuh tink's happened to him?

1692 LARRY: I don't know. With all his gab, I notice he's
 1693 kept that to himself. Maybe he's saving the great
 1694 revelation for Bess's party. [then irritably] To hell
 1695 with him--I don't wanna know! Let him mind his own
 1696 business and I'll mind mine.

1697 CHUCK: Yeah, dat's what I say.

1698 CORA: Say, Larry, where's dat young friend of yours
 1699 disappeared ta?

1700 LARRY: I don't care where he is--except I wish it was a
 1701 thousand miles away!

ROCKY [preoccupied]: I know what's goin' to happen if he don't watch his step. I told him, "I'll take a lot from you, Hickey, like everyone else in dis dump, because yuh've always been a standup guy. But dere's tings I don't take from nobody, see? Remember dat, or you'll wake up in a hospital--or maybe worse, wid your wife and de iceman walkin' slow behind yuh."

CORA [excitedly]: D'yuh suppose dat he did catch his wife cheatin'? I don't mean wid no iceman, but wid some guy.

ROCKY: Naw dat's bunk--he ain't pulled dat gag or showed her photo 'round cuz he ain't drunk. And if he'd caught her cheatin' he'd be drunk, wouldn't he? He'd a beat her up and den gone on de woist drunk he'd evah pulled--like any other guy'd do.

CHUCK: Dat's right--he'd be paralyzed.

NARRATOR: Joe enters from the hall. There's a noticeable change in him--he walks with a tough, truculent swagger and his good-natured face is set in sullen suspicion.

JOE [to Rocky--defiantly]: I's stood tellin' folks dis dump is closed for de night all I's goin' to. Let de Boss hire a doorman--pay him wages--if she wants one.

ROCKY [scowling]: Yeah? De Boss's pretty damned good to ya.

JOE [shamefaced]: Sure she is--I don't mean dat. Anyways, it's all right--I told de cop we's closed for de party--he'll keep folks away. [aggressively again] I want a big drink, dat's what!

CHUCK: Who's stoppin' yuh? Yuh can have all yuh want on Hickey.

NARRATOR: Joe's hand is on a bottle when Hickey's name is mentioned. After drawing his hand back, he grabs it defiantly.

[Joe pours a big drink.]

JOE: Aw right, I's earned all de drinks on him I could drink in a year for listenin' to his crazy bull. And here's hopin' he gets de lockjaw! [He drinks and pours out another.] I drinks on 'im but I don't drink wid him. No, suh, never no more!

1741 ROCKY: Aw, Hickey's aw right--what's he done to you?

1742 JOE [sullenly]: Dat's my business--I ain't buttin' in
1743 yours, is I? [bitterly] Sure, you think he's all right--
1744 he's a white man, ain't he? [His tone becomes
1745 aggressive.] Listen to me, white boys! Don't you get it
1746 into your heads I's pretendin' to be what I ain't--or
1747 dat I ain't proud to be what I is--get me? Or we's goin'
1748 to have trouble!

1749 NARRATOR: Picking up his drink, he walks as far from
1750 them as he can get and slumps down on the piano stool.

1751 MARGIE [in a low angry tone]: What a noive! Just because
1752 we act nice to him, he gets a swelled nut--if dat ain't
1753 a coon all over!

1754 CHUCK: Talkin' fight talk, huh--I'll moider de dinge!

1755 JOE [speaks up shamefacedly]: Listen, boys, I's sorry--
1756 I didn't mean dat--you been good friends to me--I's
1757 nuts, I guess. Dat Hickey, he gets my head all mixed up
1758 wit' craziness.

1759 CORA: Aw, dat's aw right, Joe--de boys wasn't takin' yuh
1760 serious. [then to the others, forcing a laugh] Jeez,
1761 what'd I say: Hickey ain't overlookin' no bets--even
1762 Joe. [She pauses--then adds puzzledly] De funny ting is:
1763 yuh can't stay sore at de bum when he's around. When he
1764 forgets de preachin', and quits tellin' yuh where yuh
1765 get off, he's de same old Hickey. Yuh can't help likin'
1766 de louse. And yuh got to admit he's got de right dope--
1767 [She adds hastily] I mean, on some of de bums here.

1768 MARGIE [with a sneering look at Rocky]: Yeah, he's
1769 coitinly got one guy I know sized up right--huh, Poil?

1770 PEARL: He coitinly has!

1771 ROCKY: Cut it out, I told yuh!

1772 LARRY [more to himself than to them] I have a feeling
1773 he's dying to tell us--but he's afraid. He's like that
1774 damned kid--it's strange the way he seemed to recognize
1775 him. If he's afraid, it explains why he's off booze--
1776 like that damned kid again--afraid if he got drunk,
1777 he'd spill his [guts]--

1778 NARRATOR: Hickey appears in the rear doorway--arms piled
1779 with packages, beaming like a little boy.

1780 HICKEY [booms with rising volume] Well! Well!! Well!!!
1781 Here I am in the nick o' time--give me a hand with these
1782 bundles, somebody.

1783 NARRATOR: Margie and Pearl start taking them and putting
1784 them on the table. Now that Hickey's here, what Cora
1785 said is true: they can't help liking and forgiving him.

1786 MARGIE: Jeez, Hickey, yuh scared me half ta death,
1787 sneakin' in like dat.

1788 HICKEY: You were all so busy drinking in words of wisdom
1789 from the Old Wise Guy here, you couldn't hear anything
1790 else. [He grins at Larry.] From what I heard, Larry,
1791 you're not so good at playin' detective--ya got me all
1792 wrong--I'm not afraid of anything now--not even myself.
1793 You better stick to the part of Old Cemetery, the
1794 Barker for the Big Sleep--that is, if you can still
1795 let yourself get away with it! [chuckles]

1796 CORA [giggles]: Old Cemetery--that's him--we'll have to
1797 call him dat.

1798 HICKEY [with a simple persuasive earnestness]:
1799 Startin' to do a lot of puzzling about me, aren't you,
1800 Larry? But that won't help you--you've got to think of
1801 yourself. I can't give you my peace--you've got to
1802 find your own. All I can do is help you and the
1803 rest of the gang by showin' ya the way to find it.

1804 NARRATOR: He pauses, and for a moment they stare at him
1805 with resentful uneasiness.

1806 ROCKY [breaks the spell]: Aw, hire a church!

1807 HICKEY [placatingly]: All right--all right--don't get
1808 sore, boys and girls. I guess that did sound too much
1809 like a lousy preacher--let's forget it and get busy with
1810 the party.

1811 NARRATOR: The gang looks relieved.

1812 CHUCK: Is dose bundles grub, Hickey--ya bought enough to
1813 feed an army.

1814 HICKEY [with boyish excitement]: Can never be too much!
1815 I want this to be the biggest birthday Bess's ever had.
1816 You and Rocky go in the hall and get the big surprise--
1817 my arms are busted from luggin' it.

2296 like, I can't spend my life sitting here with you,
 2297 ruining my stomach with rotgut. I'm tapering off, and in
 2298 the morning I'll be fresh as a daisy. I'll have me a
 2299 private chat with the Commissioner. [with forced
 2300 enthusiasm] Man alive, from what the boys tell me,
 2301 there's sugar galore these days, and I'll soon be
 2302 ridin' around in a big red automobile--

2303 ED [derisively--in a Chinese accent]: One Lung Hop put
 2304 fresh peanut oil in lamp and cook Lieutenant nice fine
 2305 poppy! It Lieutenant night off!

2306 MAC [stung--pulls back a fist threateningly]:
 2307 One more crack like that and I'll [knock your]--!

2308 ED [putting up his fists]: Yeah? You start it--!

2309 ROCKY: Hey--are you guys nuts--it's de Boss's boithday
 2310 party--sit down and behave!

2311 ED [grumpily]: All right--only tell him to lay off me.

2312 MAC [grumpily]: And tell him to lay off me.

2313 NARRATOR: Hickey bursts in from the hall, excited.

2314 HICKEY: Everything all set? Fine--half a minute to go--
 2315 Bess's starting down with Jimmy. I had a hard time
 2316 getting them to move--they'd rather stay hiding up
 2317 there, kidding each other along. [He chuckles.]
 2318 Bess don't even wanna remember it's her birthday now!
 2319 [There's a noise from the stairs.] Here they come!
 2320 [urgently] Light the candles! Get ready to play, Cora!
 2321 Stand up, everybody! Get that champagne ready, boys!

2322 NARRATOR: Rocky and Chuck go behind the bar. Margie and
 2323 Pearl light the candles on the cake. Cora puts her hands
 2324 over the piano keys. Everybody at the table stands up--
 2325 Hugo the last, suddenly coming to and scrambling to his
 2326 feet. Bess and Jimmy appear from the hall, and Hickey
 2327 looks up from his watch.

2328 HICKEY: On the dot--it's twelve! [like a cheerleader]
 2329 Come on now, everybody:

2330 HICKEY/WILLIE/PEARL/MAGGIE/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK/JOE/
 2331 THE CAPTAIN/THE GENERAL [spiritless except Hickey]:
 2332 Happy Birthday, Bess!

2333 [Cora begins playing.]

2449 HICKEY [ignoring this--with a kidding grin]: I'll bet
 2450 when you admit the truth to yourself, you'll confess you
 2451 were pretty sick of her hatin' you for getting' drunk.
 2452 I'll bet you were really damned relieved when she gave
 2453 ya such a good excuse. [pause] I know how it is, Jimmy.
 2454 [then losing his confidence and becoming confused]
 2455 I know how it is...

2456 LARRY [seizing on this with vindictive relish]:
 2457 Ha! So that's what happened to you, is it? Your iceman
 2458 joke finally came home to roost. [He grins tauntingly.]
 2459 You should have remembered there's truth in the old
 2460 saying you'd better look out what you call because in
 2461 the end it comes to you!

2462 HICKEY--[himself again--grins to Larry kiddingly]
 2463 Is that a fact. Well, well! Then you'd better watch out
 2464 how you keep calling for that Big Sleep! [abruptly
 2465 changing back to his jovial, master-of-ceremonies self]
 2466 But what are we waitin' for, boys and girls? Let's start
 2467 the party rollin'! [He shouts to the bar] Hey Chuck and
 2468 Rocky--bring on the big surprise! Bess, you sit at the
 2469 head of the table, here. Come on, girls, sit down.

2470 ROCKY [with forced cheeriness]: Real champagne, bums!
 2471 Cheer up! What is dis, a funeral? Jeez, mixin' champagne
 2472 wid Bess's redeye'll knock yuh paralyzed--ain't yuh
 2473 never satisfied?

2474 NARRATOR: After he and Chuck finish filling up the
 2475 schooners, they grab the last two themselves and
 2476 sit down in the remaining chairs. As they do, Hickey
 2477 rises--schooner in hand.

2478 HICKEY: This time I'm going to drink with you all,
 2479 Larry--to prove I'm not teetotal because I'm afraid
 2480 booze would make me spill my secrets, as you think.
 2481 [brief pause] I don't need booze or anything else any
 2482 more but I wanna be sociable and propose a toast in
 2483 honor of our good friend, Bess, and drink it with ya.
 2484 [pause] Wake up our demon bomb-tosser, Chuck--we don't
 2485 want corpses at this feast.

2486 CHUCK [gives Hugo a shake]: Hey, Hugo, come up for air--
 2487 don't yuh see de champagne?

2488 HUGO [giggling]: Ve will eat birthday cake and trink
 2489 champagne beneath the villow tree!

2490 [He grabs his schooner and takes a greedy gulp--
 2491 then sets it back down on the table.]

2492 HUGO [in an arrogantly disdainful tone, as if he were
 2493 rebuking a butler]: Dis vine is unfit to trink--it has
 2494 not been properly iced!

2495 HICKEY [amusedly]: Always a high-toned swell at heart,
 2496 eh, Hugo? God help us poor bums if you ever get to
 2497 telling us where to get off! You'd be drinking our blood
 2498 beneath those willow trees! [chuckles--then as he goes
 2499 on he becomes more moved and obviously sincere] A toast,
 2500 Ladies and Gents! To Bess Hope, who's been a friend in
 2501 need to every one of us! Here's to the old gal, the
 2502 best sport and the kindest, biggest-hearted gal in the
 2503 whole world! Here's wishin' ya all the luck there is,
 2504 and long life and happiness! Come on, everybody!
 2505 To Bess! Bottoms up!

2506 MAC/ED/WILLIE/JOE/JIMMY/PEARL/MARGIE/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK
 2507 [they've caught his enthusiasm]: **To Bess!**

2508 [They drain their drinks down.]

2509 HOPE [deeply moved--her voice husky] Thanks, all of ya.
 2510 Bejeez, Hickey you old son of a gun, that's good of ya!
 2511 Bejeez, I know you meant it, too.

2512 HICKEY [moved]: Of course I meant it! And I mean it when
 2513 I say I hope today will be the best day of your life,
 2514 and in the lives of everyone here, the beginning of a
 2515 new life of peace and happiness where no pipe dreams can
 2516 ever nag at you again. Here's to that, Bess!

2517 NARRATOR: But this time he drinks alone--in an instant,
 2518 the attitude of the gang has become uneasy and
 2519 defensive.

2520 ROCKY [growls]: Aw, forget dat bughouse line of bull for
 2521 a minute, can't yuh?

2522 HICKEY [sitting--good-naturedly]: No, you're right--it's
 2523 Bess we want to hear from. Come on, Bess! [He pounds his
 2524 schooner on the table.] Speech! Speech!

2525 [The gang raps their schooners on the table.]

2526 BESS HOPE [lamely]: Bejeez, I'm no good at speeches.
 2527 All I can say is--thanks to everybody for remembering me
 2528 on my birthday. [bitterness coming out] Only don't think
 2529 because I'm sixty I'll be a bigger damned fool easy mark

2616 MAC [spitefully]: Yes!

2617 ED [spitefully]: That's right!

2618 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, you've hit it, Larry! I've noticed he
2619 hasn't shown her picture around this time!

2620 ED: He hasn't got it--the iceman took it away from him!

2621 MARGIE: Jeez, look at him--who could blame her?

2622 PEARL: She must be hard up to fall for an iceman!

2623 CORA: Imagine a sap like him advisin' me and Chuck to
2624 git married!

2625 CHUCK: Yeah he done so good wid it!

2626 JIMMY: Least I can say my Mary chose an officer and a
2627 gentleman.

2628 THE CAPTAIN: Look at him, chaps, he's sprouted horns
2629 like a bloody antelope!

2630 THE GENERAL: Pigger, py Gott--like water buffalo!

2631 WILLIE [sings his Sailor Lad tune]: "Come up," she
2632 cried, "my iceman lad, And you and I'll agree--"

2633 WILLIE/ED/JOE/THE CAPTAIN/THE GENERAL/MAC/
2634 PEARL/MARGIE/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK "And I'll show ya the
2635 prettiest [rap, rap, rap] That ever you did see!"
2636 [A roar of derisive, dirty laughter]

2637 HICKEY [joining in the laughter--enjoying the joke at
2638 his expense]: Well, boys and girls, I'm glad to see you
2639 in good spirits for Bess's party, even if the joke's
2640 on me. I admit I asked for it by always pulling that
2641 iceman gag in the old days. [w good-natured generosity]
2642 So laugh all you like.

2643 NARRATOR: But this time they don't laugh--they only
2644 stare at him with baffled uneasiness.

2645 HICKEY: Well, this forces my hand--your bringing up the
2646 subject of Evelyn. I didn't want to tell you--not yet--
2647 I wanted to wait until the party was over. But you're
2648 getting the wrong idea about poor Evelyn--and I've got
2649 to stop that.

2650 NARRATOR: As he pauses, there's a tense stillness in the
2651 room.

2848 dead, dey pinched a coupla bottles and brung dem up ta
 2849 deir room and got stinko. I don't get a wink of sleep,
 2850 see? Just as I'd drop off--here--in my chair, dey'd come
 2851 down lookin' for trouble. Or else dey'd raise hell
 2852 upstairs, laughin' and singin', so I'd get scared dey'd
 2853 get de joint pinched and go up to tell dem to can it--
 2854 and every time dey'd gimme de same old ahgument--dey'd
 2855 say, "So yuh agree wid Hickey, do yuh, yuh dirty little
 2856 Ginny? We're whores, are we? Well, we agree wid Hickey
 2857 about you, see! Yuh're nuttin' but a lousy pimp!"
 2858 Den I'd slap 'em--not beat 'em up, like a pimp would--
 2859 just slap dem--but it don't do no good--dey'd keep at it
 2860 ovah and ovah. Jeez, I get de earache just tinkin' of
 2861 it! "Listen," dey'd say, "if we're whores we gotta right
 2862 to have a reg'lar pimp and not stand for no punk
 2863 imitation! We're sick of wearin' out our dogs poundin'
 2864 sidewalks for a double-crossin' bahtender, when all de
 2865 tanks we gets is he looks down on us. We'll find a guy
 2866 who really needs us to take care of him and ain't
 2867 ashamed of it. Don't expect us to woik tonight, 'cause
 2868 we won't, see? Not if de streets was blocked wid
 2869 sailors--we're goin' on strike and yuh can like it or
 2870 lump it!" [He shakes his head.] Whores goin' on strike!
 2871 Can yuh tie dat? [going on with his story] Dey says,
 2872 "We're takin' a holiday--we're goin' to beat it down to
 2873 Coney Island. An' maybe we'll come back and maybe we
 2874 won't. And you can go to hell!" Can you believe dat,
 2875 Larry?

2876 NARRATOR: But Larry hasn't heard--he's deep in thought.
 2877 Chuck enters from the rear doorway wearing his Sunday-
 2878 best suit. A straw hat with a gaudy band is in his hand
 2879 and he looks hot, uncomfortable and grouchy.

2880 CHUCK [glumly]: Hey, Rocky--Cora wants a sherry flip--
 2881 for her noives.

2882 ROCKY [turns indignantly]: Sherry flip! Christ, what's
 2883 she tink dis is, de Waldorf?

2884 CHUCK: Yeah, I told 'er, what would we use for sherry,
 2885 and dere wouldn't be no egg unless she laid one.
 2886 She says, "Is dere a law yuh can't go out and buy de
 2887 makin's, yuh big tramp?" [resentfully] To hell wid 'er--
 2888 she'll drink booze or nuttin'!

2889 ROCKY: Look at de bridegroom, Larry--all dolled up for
 2890 de killin'!

2891 CHUCK: Aw, shut up!

2892 ROCKY: One week on dat farm in Joisey, dat's what I give
 2893 yuh! Yuh'll come runnin' in here some night yellin' for
 2894 a shot of booze 'cause de crickets is after yuh!
 2895 [disgustedly] Jeez, Chuck, dat louse Hickey's coitinly
 2896 made a prize coupla suckers outa youse.

2897 CHUCK [unguardedly]: Yeah, I'd like to give him one sock
 2898 in de jaw--just one! [then angrily] Aw, what's he got to
 2899 do wid it--ain't we always said we was goin' to?
 2900 So we're goin' to, see--and don't give me no ahgument!
 2901 [pause] If on'y she'd cut out de beefin'--she don't
 2902 gimme a minute's rest--same old stuff ovah and ovah--
 2903 do I really wanna marry her? I says, "Sure, Baby, why
 2904 not?" She says, "Yeah, but after a week yuh'll be
 2905 tinkin' what a sap you was--yuh'll make dat an excuse to
 2906 go off on a periodical--and den I'll be tied for life to
 2907 a no-good soak, and de foist ting I know yuh'll have me
 2908 out hustlin' again, your own wife!" Den she'd bust out
 2909 cryin' and I'd get sore. "Yuh're a liar," I'd say.
 2910 "I ain't never taken your dough 'cept when I was drunk
 2911 and not workin'!" "Yeah," she'd say, "and how long will
 2912 yuh stay sober now? Don't tink yuh can kid me wid dat
 2913 I'm-on-the-wagon bull--I've heard it too often." Dat'd
 2914 make me sore and I'd say, "I wish I was drunk right now,
 2915 because if I was, yuh wouldn't be keepin' me awake all
 2916 night beefin'--and if yuh opened your yap, I'd knock de
 2917 stuffin' outa yuh!" Den she'd yell, "Dat's a sweet way
 2918 to talk to de goil yuh're goin' to marry." [He sighs
 2919 explosively.] Jeez, would I like to get a quart of
 2920 redeye under my belt!

2921 ROCKY: Why de hell don't yuh?

2922 CHUCK [instantly suspicious and angry]: Sure--you'd like
 2923 dat, wouldn't yuh? Yuh don't wanta see me get married
 2924 and settle down like a reg'lar guy--yuh'd like me to
 2925 stay paralyzed all de time, so I is like you, a lousy
 2926 pimp!

2927 ROCKY [face hardening]: Listen--I don't take dat
 2928 even from you, see!

2929 CHUCK: Don't make me laugh--I can lick ten of yuhs wid
 2930 one mit!

2931 ROCKY [reaching for his hip pocket] Not wid lead in your
 2932 belly, yuh won't!

2933 JOE: Hey you two--cut it out! You's ole friends--don't
2934 let dat Hickey make you crazy!

2935 CHUCK [turns on him]: Keep out of it, yuh black bastard!

2936 ROCKY: Stay where yuh belong, yuh doity dinge!

2937 NARRATOR: Joe springs from behind the counter--
2938 bread knife in his hand.

2939 JOE [snarling with rage]: You white sons of bitches--
2940 I'll rip your guts out!

2941 NARRATOR: As Chuck raises a bottle above his head--and
2942 Rocky jerks a small revolver from his pocket--Larry
2943 pounds hard with his fist on the table.

2944 LARRY: That's it--murder each other, you damned loons!
2945 With Hickey's blessing! Didn't I tell you he's brought
2946 death with him?

2947 NARRATOR: Startled by his interruption, their fury melts
2948 and they look deflated and sheepish.

2949 ROCKY: Aw right...

2950 CHUCK: Yeah...

2951 JOE: Okay...

2952 HUGO [giggles foolishly]: Hello, leedle peeples!
2953 Neffer mind--soon you will eat hot dogs beneath the
2954 villow trees. [abruptly in a haughty fastidious tone]
2955 But the champagner vas not properly iced. [with guttural
2956 anger] Gottamned liar, Hickey! Does zat prove I vant to
2957 be aristocrat? I love only the proletariat! I will
2958 lead them! I vill be like a Gott to zem! They will be my
2959 slaves! [He stops in bewildered self-amazement] I am
2960 very trunk, no, Larry? I talk foolish--I am so trunk,
2961 Larry, old friend--I do not know vhat I say?

2962 LARRY [pityingly]: You're raving drunk, Hugo--I've never
2963 seen you so paralyzed--lay your head down now and
2964 sleep it off.

2965 HUGO [gratefully]: Yes, I vill sleep--I am too crazy
2966 trunk.

2967 JOE [behind the lunch counter--brooding]: You's right,
2968 Larry--bad luck come in de door when Hickey come.
2969 I's an ole gamblin' man and I knows bad luck when I
2970 feels it! [then defiantly] But it's white man's

3009 CHUCK [angrily]: Can yuh beat de noive of dat dinge!
3010 Jeez, if I wasn't dressed up, I'd go out and mop up de
3011 street wid him!

3012 ROCKY: Aw, let him go, de poor old dope! He'll be back
3013 tonight askin' Bess for his room and bummin' me for a
3014 drink. [vengefully] Den I'll be de one to smash de
3015 glass--I'll loin him his place!

3016 NARRATOR: The street doors swing open and Willie enters:
3017 face shaved, wearing an expensive suit, good shoes and
3018 clean linen. Though he's completely sober, he looks sick
3019 and he has a mean case of the shakes. He heads for the
3020 bar.

3021 CHUCK: Another guy all dolled up! Got your clothes from
3022 Solly's, huh, Willie? [derisively] Now yuh can sell dem
3023 back to him tomorrow.

3024 WILLIE [stiffly]: No, I--I'm through with that stuff--
3025 never again.

3026 ROCKY [sympathetically]: Yuh look sick, Willie--have a
3027 drink to pick yuh up.

3028 WILLIE [clears his throat, nervously]: No thanks--the
3029 only way to stop is to stop--I'd have no chance if I
3030 went to the D.A.'s office smelling of booze.

3031 CHUCK: Yuh're really goin' dere?

3032 WILLIE [stiffly]: I said I was, didn't I? I just came
3033 back here to rest a few minutes--not because I needed
3034 any booze. I'll show that cheap drummer I don't have to
3035 have any Dutch courage--[guiltily] But he has been very
3036 kind and generous staking me. He can't help his
3037 insulting manner, I suppose.

3038 NARRATOR: He turns away from the bar.

3039 WILLIE: My legs are a bit shaky--I better sit down a
3040 while.

3041 NARRATOR: He goes and sits across from Parritt, who
3042 gives him a suspicious glance then ignores him.

3043 The Captain appears from the hall.

3044 CHUCK [mutter]: Here's anudder one.

3045 NARRATOR: The Captain looks spruced and clean-shaven--
3046 his ancient tweed suit is brushed and his frayed linen

THE GENERAL: Ja--at Limey Consulate dey say anything to get rid of him vhen he comes dere tronk! Dey're scared to call police because it would scandal in de papers make about Limey officer and chentleman!

THE CAPTAIN: As a matter of fact, Rocky, I only wish a post temporarily. Means to an end, you know--save up enough for a first-class passage home, that's the bright idea.

THE GENERAL: He sail back ta home, sweet home--dot's biggest pipe dream of all. What leetle brain the Limey has left, dot isn't in whiskey pickled, Hickey has made crazy!

CHUCK [feeling sorry for The Captain and turning on The General--sarcastically] Hickey ain't made no sucker outa you--you're too foxy, huh? I'll betcha tink yuh're gonna land a job, too.

THE GENERAL [bristles]: I am, ja. For me, it is easy--because I put on no airs of chentleman. I am not ashamed to vork vith my hands. I vas a farmer before de war ven ploody Limey's steal my country. [boastfully] Anyone I ask for job can see vith one look I have strength of ten mens!

THE CAPTAIN [sneeringly]: Yes, he gave an ample demonstration of this incredible strength last night when he helped move the piano.

CHUCK: Yuh couldn't even hold up your corner--it was your fault de damned box almost fell down de stairs.

THE GENERAL: My hands vas sweaty--could I help dot my hands slip? I could de whole veight of it lift! In old days in Transvaal, I lift loaded oxcart by de axle! So vhy shouldn't I get job? Dot longshoreman boss, Dan, he tell me any time I like, he take me on. And Benny from de Market he promise me same.

THE CAPTAIN: You remember, Rocky, it was one of those rare occasions when the Boer was buying drinks and Dan and Benny were stony--they'd bloody well have promised him the moon.

ROCKY: Yeah, yuh big boob, dem boids was on'y kiddin' yuh.

THE GENERAL [angrily]: Dot's lie! You vill see dis morning I get job! I'll show dot bloody Limey

LARRY [gives a sardonic guffaw--with his comically crazy, intense whisper]: By God, you can't say Hickey hasn't the miraculous touch to raise the dead, when he can start the Boer War raging again!

NARRATOR: This interruption acts like cold water on the two adversaries--they uncoil, and Rocky and Chuck let go of them.

THE CAPTAIN [attempting a return of his jaunty manner, as if nothing had happened]: Well, time I was on my merry way to see my chap at the Consulate. The early bird catches the worm, and all that. Good-bye and good luck, everyone.

NARRATOR: He starts for the door to the street.

THE GENERAL: Py Gott, if dot Limey can go, I can go!

NARRATOR: He hurries after The Captain, who is about to push the swinging doors open when he hesitates, as though struck by paralysis, and The General has to jerk back to avoid bumping into him. For a second they stand there, one behind the other, staring over the swinging doors into the street.

ROCKY: Well why don't yuh beat it?

THE CAPTAIN [guiltily casual]: Eh? Oh just happened to think--hardly the decent thing to pop off without saying good-bye to ol' Bess--one of the finest, Bess is. And good old Jimmy, too--they ought to be down any moment.

NARRATOR: He pretends to notice The General for the first time and steps away from the door.

THE CAPTAIN [apologizing as to a stranger]: Sorry, I seem to be blocking your way out.

THE GENERAL [stiffly]: No, I vait to say bye to Bess and Jimmy, too.

NARRATOR: Both retire to barstools at opposite ends of the bar.

CHUCK: Jeez, can yuh beat dem simps!

NARRATOR: He spots Cora's drink on the bar.

CHUCK: Hell, I forgot Cora--she'll be trowin' a fit.

NARRATOR: He disappears with the drink into the hall.

3326 CORA [with a strained bright giggle]: Hello, everybody!
3327 Here we go! Hickey just told us, ain't it time we beat
3328 it, if we're really goin'--so we're showin' de bastard,
3329 ain't we, Honey? He's comin' right down wid Bess and
3330 Jimmy. Jeez, dem two look like dey was goin' to de
3331 electric chair! [with frightened anger] If I had to
3332 listen to any more of Hickey's bunk, I'd brain him.
3333 [She puts her hand on Chuck's arm.] Come on, Honey--
3334 let's get started before he comes down.

3335 CHUCK [sullenly]: Sure, anyting yuh say, Baby.

3336 CORA [turns on him belligerently]: Yeah? Well I say we
3337 stop at de foist reg'lar dump and yuh buy me a sherry
3338 flip--or four or five, if I want 'em!--or all bets is
3339 off!

3340 CHUCK: Aw, yuh got a fine bun on now!

3341 CORA: Cheapskate! I know what's eatin' you, Tightwad!
3342 Well, use my dough, den, if yuh're so stinky--yuh'll
3343 grab it all, anway, right after de ceremony!

3344 NARRATOR: She hikes up her skirt and reaches inside her
3345 stocking.

3346 CORA: Here, yuh big tramp!

3347 CHUCK [knocks her hand away--angrily]: Keep your lousy
3348 dough! And don't show off your legs to dese bums when
3349 yuh're goin' to be married, if yuh don't want a sock in
3350 de kissah.

3351 CORA [pleased--meekly]: Aw right, Honey. [looking around
3352 with a foolish laugh] Say, why don't all you barflies
3353 come to de weddin'? [pause--miserably uncertain]:
3354 Well, we're goin', guys. [Long pause] Say, Rocky, yuh
3355 gone deef? I said me and Chuck was goin'.

3356 ROCKY [wiping the bar--with elaborate indifference]:
3357 I hoid ya. Well give my love to Joisey.

3358 CORA [tearfully indignant]: Ain't yuh goin' to wish us
3359 happiness, yuh doity little Ginny?

3360 ROCKY: Sure. Here's hopin' yuh don't moider each odder
3361 before next week.

3362 CHUCK [angrily]: Aw, Baby, what d'we care for dat pimp?

NARRATOR: Rocky turns on him threateningly but just then Bess enters from the hall, followed by Jimmy, with Hickey on his heels.

CHUCK: Let's get outa here!

CORA: Yeah.

[They hurry out the double doors to the street.]

NARRATOR: Bess and Jimmy both put up a front, but there is a desperate bluff to their manner, suggesting a march of the condemned. Bess is clothed in an old black Sunday dress, which gives her the appearance of being in mourning. Jimmy's clothes are pressed, his shoes shined, his linen immaculate--but he has a hangover and his eyes have a boiled look. Hickey's face is drawn from lack of sleep and his voice is hoarse from continual talking, but he beams with triumphant accomplishment.

HICKEY: Well, here we are! We've got this far, at least! I told you, Jimmy, you weren't half as sick as you pretended. No excuse whatsoever for postponing--

JIMMY: I'll thank you to keep your hands off me! I merely mentioned I would feel more fit tomorrow. But it might as well be today, I suppose.

HICKEY: Finish it now, so it'll be dead forever, and you can be free!

NARRATOR: He passes him to clap Bess encouragingly on the shoulder.

HICKEY: Your rheumatism didn't bother you coming downstairs, did it--I told you it wouldn't.

NARRATOR: He winks around at the others and gives Bess a playful poke in the ribs.

HICKEY: You're the damnedest one for alibis--as bad as Jimmy!

BESS HOPE [putting on her deaf manner]: Eh? I can't hear you. [defiantly] You're a liar--I've had rheumatism on and off for twenty years--ever since Harry died--everybody knows that.

HICKEY: Yes, the kind of rheumatism you turn on and off! We're on to you, you old pretender! [chuckling]

ROCKY [shakes Joe by the shoulder]: Come on, yuh damned dinge--beat it--it's after hours. [pause] Aw, to hell wid it--I'm through wid dis lousy job, anyway! [He hears someone at rear and calls] Who's dat?

NARRATOR: Chuck appears in the rear doorway. He's been drinking heavily--and brawling--his knuckles are raw and an eye is black. His straw hat is gone, his tie is awry, and his suit is dirty.

ROCKY [indifferently]: Been scrappin', huh? On a periodical, ain't yuh?

CHUCK: Yeah, ain't yuh glad! [truculently] What's it to yuh?

ROCKY: Not a damn ting. But I'm on my feet holdin' down your job. Yuh said if I'd work your day, yuh'd relieve me at six, and here it's half past one A.M.--well, yuh're takin' over--get me?--no matter how plastered yuh are!

CHUCK: Plastered, hell--I wisht I was--I've lapped up a gallon, but it don't hit me right. To hell wid de job--I'm goin' to tell Bess I'm quittin'.

ROCKY: Yeah? Well, I'm quittin', too.

CHUCK: I've played sucker for dat crummy blonde long enough, lettin' her kid me into woikin'. From now on I take it easy.

ROCKY: I'm glad yuh're gettin' some sense.

CHUCK: And I hope yuh're gettin' some--what a prize sap yuh been, tendin' bar when yuh got two good hustlers in yer stable!

ROCKY: Yeah, but I ain't no sap now--I'll loin 'em, when dey get back from Coney. [sneeringly] Jeez, dat Cora sure played yuh for a dope, feedin' yuh dat marriage-on-de-farm hop!

CHUCK [dully]: Yeah--Hickey got it right--a lousy pipe dream! It was her pulling sherry flips on me dat woke me up. All de way walkin' to de ferry, every ginmill we come to she'd drag me in. I got ta tinkin', Christ, what won't she want when she gets de ring on her finzah and I'm hooked? So I tells her at de ferry, "Kiddo, yuh can go to Joisey, or to hell, but count me out."

3873 ROCKY: She says it was her told you to go to hell,
3874 because yuh'd started hittin' de booze.

3875 CHUCK [ignoring this]: I was tinkin', too, Jeez, won't I
3876 look sweet wid a wife dat if yuh put all de guys she's
3877 been wid side by side, dey'd reach to Chicago. [Sighs
3878 gloomily.] Dat kind of dame, yuh can't trust 'em.
3879 De minute your back is toined, dey're cheatin' wid de
3880 iceman or sometin'. Hickey done me a favor, makin' me
3881 wake up. [Pauses--then pathetically] On'y it was fun,
3882 kinda, me and Cora kiddin' ourselves--[Suddenly his
3883 voice hardens with hatred.] Where is dat son of a bitch,
3884 Hickey? I want one good sock at da guy--just one!--and
3885 de next buttin' in he'll be doin' is in de moigue!
3886 An' I'll take my chances a gettin' de Chair!

3887 ROCKY: Leave Hickey alone--he ain't here now, anyway--
3888 he went out to phone, he said. I got a hunch he's
3889 beat it--but if he does come back, yuh don't know him,
3890 get me? [in a whisper.] De Chair, maybe dat's where he's
3891 goin'. I don't know nuttin', see, but it looks like he
3892 croaked his wife.

3893 CHUCK [with a flash of interest]: Yuh mean she really
3894 was cheatin' on him? Den I don't blame de guy--

3895 ROCKY: Who's blamin' him! When a dame asks for it--
3896 But I don't know nuttin' about it, see?

3897 CHUCK: Any of de gang wise?

3898 ROCKY: Larry is. And de Boss oughta be. I tried to wise
3899 up de rest of dem to stay clear of him, but dey're all
3900 so licked, I don't know if dey got it. [Pauses--then
3901 spitefully] I don't give a damn what he done to his
3902 wife, but if he gets de Hot Seat, I won't go inta
3903 no mournin'!

3904 CHUCK: Me, neider!

3905 ROCKY: Not after his trowin' it in my face I'm a pimp.
3906 What if I am--why de hell not? And what he's done to de
3907 Boss--jeez, de poor old gal is so licked she can't even
3908 get drunk. And all de gang--dey're all licked. I'm gonna
3909 feel sorry for de poor bums tonight when dey show up,
3910 one by one, lookin' like pooches wid deir tails between
3911 deir legs. Jimmy was de last--a copper brung him in--
3912 seen him sittin' on a dock cryin'! Copper thought he was
3913 drunk--but he was cold sober--he was tryin' to jump in

3914 but didn't have de noive, I figgah'd. Jeez, dere ain't
3915 enough guts left in de whole gang to swat a mosquita!

3916 CHUCK: To hell wid 'em--who cares--gimme a drink.

3917 [Rocky pushes a bottle toward him.]

3918 CHUCK: I see you been hittin' de redeye too.

3919 ROCKY: Yeah--but it don't do no good.

3920 [Chuck drinks.]

3921 JOE [mumbles in his sleep]:

3922 CHUCK [resentfully]: Dis doity dinge was able to get his
3923 snootful and pass out. Jeez, even Hickey can't faze a
3924 dinge! He ain't got no business in here after hours--
3925 why don't yuh chuck him out?

3926 ROCKY [apathetically]: Aw, to hell wid it--who cares?

3927 CHUCK [lapsing into the same mood]: Yeah, I don't.

3928 JOE [suddenly lunges to his feet dazedly--mumbles in
3929 humbled apology]: Scuse me, White Boys--scuse me for
3930 livin'--I don't want to be where I's not wanted.

3931 [He walks away.]

3932 CHUCK [in a callous, brutal tone]: I'm gonna collect de
3933 dough from Cora I wouldn't take dis mornin', like a
3934 suckah--before she blows it.

3935 ROCKY: I'm comin', too--I'm trough woikin' as a lousy
3936 bahtender.

3937 NARRATOR: As they approach Cora, Joe flops down next to
3938 The Captain.

3939 JOE [servilely apologetic]: If ya objects to my sittin'
3940 here, Captain, just tell me and I pulls my freight.

3941 THE CAPTAIN: No apology required, old chap--I should
3942 feel honored a bloody Kaffir would lower himself to
3943 sit beside me.

3944 CHUCK [his voice hard]: I'm waitin', Baby--dig!

3945 CORA [with apathetic obedience]: Sure. I been expectin'
3946 yuh--I got it right here.

3947 NARRATOR: Without looking at him, she passes him a
3948 roll of bills.

3949 CHUCK [suspiciously]: Huh!
3950 [Snatching it, he shoves it into his pocket.]
3951 CORA [with a tired wonder at herself rather than
3952 resentment toward him]: Jeez, imagine me kiddin' myself
3953 I wanted to marry a drunken pimp.
3954 CHUCK: Dat's nuttin', Baby--imagine de sap I'da been,
3955 when I can get your dough just as easy widout it!
3956 NARRATOR: Rocky pulls up a chair next to Larry.
3957 ROCKY [dully]: Hello, Old Cemetery. [Larry doesn't seem
3958 to hear. To Parritt] Hello, Tightwad--you still around?
3959 PARRITT [in a jeeringly challenging tone] Ask Larry--
3960 he knows I'm here all right--although he's pretending
3961 I'm not. He's trying to kid himself with that grandstand
3962 foolosopher stuff--but he knows he can't get away with
3963 it now! He kept himself locked in his room with a bottle
3964 of booze, but he couldn't make it work--he couldn't even
3965 get drunk--he had to come out! There must have been
3966 something there he was even more scared to face than
3967 Hickey and me! I guess he got lookin' at the fire escape
3968 and thinkin' how handy it was, if he was really sick o'
3969 life and only had the nerve to [die]--!
3970 NARRATOR: Larry's face tightens--but he pretends not to
3971 hear.
3972 PARRITT [tone becoming more insistent]: He's been
3973 thinking of me, too, Rocky--trying to figure out a way
3974 to get out of helpin' me! He doesn't want to be bothered
3975 understanding--but he understands all right. He used to
3976 love her too--so he thinks I ought to take a hop off
3977 the--you know!
3978 NARRATOR: Larry's hands have clenched into fists but he
3979 doesn't answer.
3980 PARRITT [breaking and starting to plead.] For God's
3981 sake, Larry, can't you say something? Hickey's got me
3982 all twisted up. Thinking of what he must've done has got
3983 me so I don't know any more what I did or why. I can't
3984 go on like this--I've got to know what I oughta do--
3985 LARRY [in a stifled tone]: God damn you--you trying to
3986 make me your executioner?

everybody? Sorry I had to leave you for a while.
But there was something I had to get settled--it's all
fixed now.

BESS HOPE [mechanically voicing a hopeless complaint]:
When are you going to do something about this booze,
Hickey--bejeez, we all know you did something to take
the life out of it--it's like drinking dishwater--
we can't pass out--and you promised us peace.

WILLIE/ED/JOE/THE CAPTAIN/THE
GENERAL/JIMMY/MAC/CHUCK/CORA: Yeah!

HICKEY [bursts into resentful exasperation]: For God's
sake, are you still harpin' on that damned nonsense!
You've kept it up all afternoon and night--and you've
got everybody else singing the same crazy tune--I've had
about all I can stand--that's why I phoned-- [He gets
control of himself.] Excuse me, boys and girls--I don't
mean that--I'm just worried about you, when you play
dead on me like this. I was hoping by the time I got
back you'd be like you ought to be! Figured you were
deliberately holding back, while I was around, because
you didn't want to give me the satisfaction of showin'
me I had the right dope--and I did! I know from my own
experience. [exasperatedly] But I've explained that a
million times--by rights you should be happy now,
without a single damned hope or dream left to torment
ya! But here you are, actin' like a lot of stiffs
cheatin' the undertaker! [He looks around accusingly.]
I can't figure it--unless it's just pigheaded
stubbornness. [He breaks--miserably] Hell, you shouldn't
act this way with me--you're my old pals, the only
friends I've got. You know the one thing I want is to
see you all happy before I go--[rousing himself to his
old brisk, master-of-ceremonies self] And there's damned
little time left--I've made a date for two o'clock--
we've got to get busy right away and find out what's
wrong. [There's a long silence. He goes on
exasperatedly.] Can't you appreciate what you've got,
for God's sake--don't you know you're now free to be
yourselves, without having to feel remorse or guilt, or
lie to yourselves about reforming tomorrow? Can't you
see there is no tomorrow, now--you're rid of it forever--
you've killed it--you don't have to care a damn about
anything any more--you've finally got the game of life
licked, don't you see that? [angrily exhorting] Then why

the hell don't you get pie-eyed and celebrate--why don't you laugh and sing "Sweet Adeline"? [with bitterly hurt accusation] The only reason I can think is, you're putting on this rotten half-dead act just to spite me--because ya hate my guts! [He breaks again.] God, don't do that, gang--it makes me feel like hell to think you hate me--it makes me feel you suspect I must hate you--but that's a lie! Oh, I know I used to hate everyone who wasn't as rotten a bastard as I was! But that was before I faced the truth and saw the one possible way to free poor Evelyn and give her the peace she'd always dreamed of.

NARRATOR: He pauses and everyone in the group stirs with awakening dread--tense on their chairs.

CHUCK [with dull, resentful viciousness] Aw, put a cork in it--to hell wid Evelyn--what if she was cheatin'--an' who cares what yuh did to her--dat's your funeral--we don't give a damn, see?

CORA: Yeah!

ED: That's right!

MAC: We don't give a damn!

JOE: Xactly!

CHUCK [dully]: All we want outa you is ta keep de hell away from us and give us a rest.

[The gang grunts in agreement.]

HICKEY [as if he hadn't heard this]: The one possible way to make up to her for all I'd made her go through--and to rid 'er of me so I couldn't make her suffer any more--and she wouldn't have to forgive me any more! I saw I couldn't do it by killin' myself--like I wanted to for a long time--that would have been the last straw for her--she'd have died of a broken heart--she'd have blamed herself for it, too--and I couldn't just run away--she'd have died of grief and humiliation if I'd done that. She'd a thought I'd stopped loving her. [He adds with a strange simplicity] You see, Evelyn loved me--and I loved her--that was the trouble. It would have been easy to find a way out if she hadn't loved me so much--or if I hadn't loved her. But as it was, there was only one possible way. [He pauses--then adds simply] I had to kill her.

HICKEY [as he is walked towards the rear--insistently]:
All I want ya to see is I was out of my mind when I
laughed at her! I was a rotten raving lunatic or I
couldn't have called her a [bitch]--Why, Evelyn was the
only thing on God's earth I ever loved. I'd have killed
myself before I'd ever hurt her!

BESS HOPE [calls after him]: Don't worry, Hickey--they
won't give you the Chair--we'll testify you was crazy--
crazy as a bedbug--won't we, gang?

CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK [yell]: Dat's right!

THE GENERAL [yell]: Dat's right!

WILLIE/ED/MAC [yell]: We won't testify.

THE CAPTAIN/JIMMY [yell]: Don't worry, Hickey.

[From the hall comes the slam of the street door.]

BESS HOPE [with genuine sorrow]: He's gone--the poor
crazy bastard! Bejeez, I need a drink.

NARRATOR: The gang all grab their glasses.

BESS HOPE [hopefully]: Bejeez, maybe it'll have the
old kick, now he's gone.

NARRATOR: She drinks--and they all follow suit.

ROCKY: Yeah, Boss--maybe we can get drunk now.

NARRATOR: They all sit still--with hopeful expectancy--
waiting for the effect of the booze.

LARRY--[his voice full of pain and pity--in a whisper,
aloud to himself] May the Chair bring him peace at last,
the poor tortured bastard!

PARRITT [leans toward him--in a strange low insistent
voice]: Yes, but he isn't the only one who needs peace,
Larry--I can't feel sorry for him--he's lucky--he's
through, now--it's all decided for him. I wish it was
decided for me--I've never been any good at deciding
things--even about selling out. It was the tart the cops
got after me who put it in my mind. You remember what
Mother's like, Larry--she makes all the decisions--she's
always decided what I had to do--she doesn't like anyone
to be free but herself.

NARRATOR: He pauses, as if waiting for Larry to comment
--but he ignores him.

4735 was a goner. [Assuming the old kidding tone of the gang,
4736 but hesitantly, as if still a little afraid.] On de woid
4737 of a honest bahtender!

4738 BESS HOPE [her old self]: Huh! Bar-robber is more
4739 like it. You and Chuck ought to have cards in the
4740 Burglars' Union!

4741 [The gang laughs eagerly]

4742 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, it's good to hear someone
4743 laugh again! All the time that bastard--I mean--poor old
4744 Hickey was here, I didn't have the heart--Bejeez, I'm
4745 getting drunk and glad of it! [She cackles. Bottle being
4746 picked up.] Come on, gang--it's on the house.

4747 [Many drinks are poured.]

4748 BESS HOPE [sentimental]: Poor old Hickey--we mustn't
4749 hold him responsible for anything he's done--we'll
4750 forget that--and only remember him the way he was before
4751 --the kindest, biggest-hearted drummer who ever wore
4752 shoe leather.

4753 CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK: Dat's right, Bess!

4754 THE GENERAL: Vhat's all!

4755 JIMMY/THE CAPTAIN/WILLIE: Finest drummer!

4756 ED/MAC/JOE: Best scout!

4757 BESS HOPE: Good luck to you in Matteawan, Hickey!
4758 Come on, bottoms up!

4759 [They all drink.]

4760 NARRATOR: At his table--his hands tensely gripping the
4761 edge--sits Larry, listening intently.

4762 LARRY [cannot hold back an anguished exclamation]:
4763 Christ! Why don't he [jump for god's sake]--!

4764 HUGO [beginning to be drunk again--peers at him]:
4765 Vhy don't he what? Don't be a fool--Hickey's gone--
4766 he vas crazy. Have a trink. [then as he receives no
4767 reply--with vague uneasiness] What's matter with you?
4768 You look funny. What you listen for, Larry?

4769 CORA [tipsily]: Well, I thank Gawd me and Chuck did all
4770 we could to humor de poor nut. Jeez, imagine us goin'
4771 off like we really meant to git married, when we ain't
4772 even picked out a farm yet!

CHUCK [eagerly]: Sure ting, Baby--we kidded him we was serious.

JIMMY [confidently--with a gentle, drunken zeal]:
I may as well say I detected his condition almost at once. All that talk of his about tomorrow, for example. He had the fixed idea of the insane. It only makes them worse to cross them.

WILLIE [eagerly]: Same with me, Jimmy--only I spent the day in the park--I wasn't such a damned fool as to [try to]--

THE CAPTAIN [getting jauntily drunk]: Picture my predicament had gone to the Consulate. The pal of mine there is a humorous blighter. He would have got me a job out of pure spite. Instead I strolled about and finally came to roost in the park. [He grins with affectionate kidding at The General] And lo and behold, who was on the neighboring bench but my old battlefield companion, the Boer that walks like a man--who, if the British Government had taken my advice, would have been removed from his fetid pen on the veldt straight to the baboon's cage at the London Zoo, and little children would now be asking their nurses: "Tell me, Nana, is that the Boer General, the one with the blue behind?"

[The gang laughs uproariously.]

THE CAPTAIN: No offense meant, old chap.

THE GENERAL [beaming]: No offense taken, you tanned Limey! [going on--grinningly] About a job--I felt de same as de Limey here.

HUGO [with uneasy insistence]: What's matter, Larry--you look scared--vhat you listen for out zere?

JOE [with drunken self-assurance]: No, suh, I wasn't fool enough to git in no crap game--not while Hickey's around--crazy people puts a jinx on you.

MAC [with drunken earnestness]: You saw how it was--no good trying to explain to a crazy guy that it ain't the right time--you know how getting reinstated is.

ED: Sure, the same with the circus. The boys tell me the rubes are spendin' all their money buying food and times was never so hard. And I never was one to cheat for chicken feed.

4813 BESS HOPE [looks around her in an ecstasy of bleery
4814 sentimental content]: Bejeez, I'm cockeyed! Bejeez,
4815 you're all cockeyed! Bejeez, we're all all right!
4816 Let's have another!

4817 [They pour out drinks.]

4818 HUGO [reiterates stupidly]: Vhat's matter, Larry--vhy
4819 you keep eyes shut--you look dead--vhat you listen for?

4820 NARRATOR: Larry doesn't answer. Or open his eyes.
4821 Suddenly, Hugo bolts up and backs away from the table.

4822 HUGO [mumbling with frightened anger]: Crazy fool--you
4823 is crazy like Hickey--you give me bad dreams, too.

4824 ROCKY [greet's him with boisterous affection]:
4825 Helloo, dere, Hugo--welcome to de party!

4826 BESS HOPE: Yes, bejeez, Hugo--sit down--have a drink!
4827 Have ten drinks, bejeez!

4828 HUGO [giving his familiar giggle]: Helloo, leedle Bess!
4829 Helloo, nice, leedle, funny monkey-faces! [warming up,
4830 changes abruptly to his usual declamatory denunciation]
4831 Gottamned stupid bourgeois! Soon comes the Day of
4832 Judgment!

4833 THE CAPTAIN [good-naturedly derisive]: Sit down!

4834 CHUCK [good-naturedly derisive]: Can it!

4835 HUGO [giggling good-naturedly]: Give me ten trinks,
4836 Bess--don't be a fool.

4837 [The gang laughs.]

4838 NARRATOR: Everyone turns towards the rear as Margie and
4839 Pearl appear, drunk and disheveled.

4840 MARGIE [defensively truculent]: Make way for two good
4841 whores!

4842 PEARL: Yeah! And we want a drink quick!

4843 MARGIE: Shake de lead outa your pants, Pimp! A little
4844 soivice!

4845 ROCKY [face grinning welcome]: Well, look who's here!
4846 [He goes to them with open arms.] Helloo, dere,
4847 Sweethearts! Jeez, I was beginnin' to worry about yuh,
4848 honest!

4922 BESS HOPE [calls effusively] Hey there, Larry! Come over
4923 and get paralyzed! What the hell you douin', just sittin'
4924 there?

4925 NARRATOR: But Larry doesn't reply. Almost immediately,
4926 she forgets him and turns back to the gang.

4927 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, let's sing! Let's celebrate. It's my
4928 birthday party! Bejeez, I'm oreyeyed!

4929 HUGO [singing]: Dansons la Carmagnole! Vive le son! Vive
4930 le son! Dansons la Carmagnole! Vive le son des canons!

4931 [The gang howls derisively.]

4932 HUGO: Capitalist svine! Stupid bourgeois monkeys!
4933 [declaiming] "The days grow hot, O Babylon!"

4934 WILLIE/ED/JOE/THE CAPTAIN/THE
4935 GENERAL/JIMMY/MAC/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK [taking it up]:
4936 'Tis cool beneath thy willow trees!

4937 [They pound their glasses on the table.]

4938 NARRATOR: In his chair--staring straight ahead--
4939 oblivious to all the racket, sits Larry.

4940 [The gang roars with boisterous laughter.]

4941 HUGO [giggles]:

4942 THE END