

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

ED: A born grafter, con man, and practical joker, Ed is a man in his 50's. The brother of Bess's deceased husband Harry Hope--and so Bess's brother-in-law--Ed is untidy, lazy, and amusing. He used to take tickets in the circus and his pipe dream is to return to that life. He is usually accompanied by Mac.

3 takes + pickups = \$400.

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 ED LINES 865-895

ED LINES BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE

Enough to wake the dead, Till he heard a damsel [rap,
rap, rap], On a window right over his head."

BESS HOPE [with fuming irritation]: Bejeez Rocky--can't
you keep that crazy bastard quiet?

WILLIE: "Oh, come up," she cried, "my sailor lad, And
you and I'll agree, And I'll show ya the prettiest [rap,
rap, rap], That ever you did see."

NARRATOR: Rocky shakes Willie by the shoulder roughly.

ROCKY: What d'yuh tink dis dump is, a dump?

BESS HOPE: Go on--lock him in his room!

ROCKY: Come on, Bum!

WILLIE: No, please, Rocky--I'll go crazy up in that room
alone! Please, Bess--let me stay--I'll be quiet!

BESS HOPE [immediately relents--indignantly]: What the
hell you doing to him, Rocky? I didn't tell you to
beat up the poor guy--leave him alone, long as he's
quiet.

WILLIE: Thanks, Bess--you are an esteemed lady.

BESS HOPE [to Ed & Mac]: Leave it to that Dago to keep
order and it's like bedlam in a cathouse. [brief pause]
And you two barflies are a hell of a help to me, ain't
ya? Eat and sleep and get drunk--all you're good for,
bejeez! Well, you can take that "I'll-have-the-same"
look off your mugs--there ain't gonna to be no more
drinks on the house til hell freezes over!

MAC [winking at each other]: Sure, Bess.

ED: That's right.

BESS HOPE: Yeah, grin--wink, bejeez! Fine pair of slobs
to have glued on me for life!

THE CAPTAIN: Have I been drinking at the same table with
a bloody Kaffir?

JOE [grinning] Hello, Captain--you comin' up for air?
Kaffir--who's he?

THE GENERAL: Dot's a nigga, Joe--dot's joke on him. He's
still plind drunk, the ploody Limey chentlemen! A great
mistake I missed him at the pattle of Modder River.
Vit mine rifle I shoot damn fool Limey officers py da

672 THE CAPTAIN: There was a time when my conversation was
673 more comprehensive.

674 BESS HOPE: How much room rent do you owe me, tell me
675 that?

676 THE CAPTAIN: Sorry--addition has always baffled me.
677 Subtraction is my forte.

678 BESS HOPE: Think you're funny, eh? Showing off your old
679 wounds! This ain't no Turkish bath! Put on your clothes
680 for Christ's sake! Lousy Limey army! Took 'em years to
681 lick a gang of Dutch hayseeds!

682 THE GENERAL: Dot's right, Bess--gif him hell!

683 BESS HOPE: No lip out of you, neither, you Dutch
684 spinach! General, hell! Salvation Army, that's what
685 you'd be General in! Bragging what a shot you were, and,
686 bejeez, you missed him! And he missed you! And now the
687 two of ya bum on me. You've broke the camel's back this
688 time bejeez! You pay up tomorrow or out you both go!

689 THE CAPTAIN: My dear lady, I give you my word of honor
690 as an officer and a gentleman, you shall be paid
691 tomorrow.

692 THE GENERAL: Ve swear it, Bess! Tomorrow vidout fail!

693 MAC [twinkle in his eye]: There you are, Bess. What
694 could be fairer?

695 ED: Ya can't ask any more than that. A promise is a
696 promise.

697 BESS HOPE: I mean the both of you, too! An old grafting
698 flatfoot and a circus bunco steerer! Fine company for
699 me, bejeez! Couple of con men living in my house since
700 Christ knows when! Getting fat as hogs, too! And ya
701 ain't even got the decency to help me upstairs where
702 I got a good bed! Let me sleep in a chair like a bum!
703 Keep me down here waitin' for Hickey to show up,
704 hoping I'll treat ya to more drinks!

705 MAC: Ed and I did our damnedest to get you up, didn't
706 we, Ed?

707 ED: We did--but you said you couldn't bear your flat
708 because it was one of those nights your memory brought
709 poor Harry back to ya.

710 BESS HOPE [face instantly turns sad; mournfully]:
711 Yes, that's right, boys--I remember now. I could almost
712 see him in every room just as he used to be--and it's
713 twenty years since he--

714 LARRY: By all accounts, Harry nagged the hell out of
715 'er.

716 PARRITT: Really?

717 JIMMY: No more of this sitting around and loafing. Time
718 I took hold of myself. Must have my shoes soled and
719 heeled--and shined--first thing tomorrow morning.
720 A general spruce-up. I want to have a well-groomed
721 appearance when I--

722 LARRY [sardonically]: Tommorow.

723 MAC [with a sigh, calculating] Poor old Harry--you don't
724 find 'em like him these days. A more decent man never
725 drew breath.

726 ED [similarly calculating]: Good old Harry--a man
727 couldn't want a better brother than he was to me.

728 BESS HOPE: Twenty years, and I've never set foot out of
729 this house since the day I buried him. Didn't have the
730 heart. Without him, nothing seemed worth the trouble.
731 You remember, Ed, you, too, Mac--the boys were going to
732 nominate me for Alderman. It was all fixed. Harry was so
733 proud. But when he was taken, I told them, "No, boys,
734 I can't do it--I haven't the heart--I'm through."
735 [defiantly] Oh, I know there was jealous wise guys said
736 the boys was giving me the nomination because they knew
737 I couldn't win. But that's a lie--I knew every man,
738 woman, and child in the ward--I'd have been elected
739 easily.

740 MAC: You sure would, Bess.

741 ED: A dead cinch. Everyone knows that.

742 BESS HOPE: Sure they do. Still, I know while he'd
743 appreciate my grief, he wouldn't want it to keep me
744 cooped up in here all my life. So I've made up my mind
745 I'll go out--soon--take a walk around the ward, see all
746 the friends I used to know, get together with the boys
747 and let 'em deal me a hand in their game again. Yes,
748 bejeez, I'll do it. My birthday, tomorrow, that'd be the
749 right time to turn over a new leaf. Sixty, that ain't
750 too old.

MAC: Why it's the prime of life--

ED: And the wonderful thing about you, Bess, you keep young as you ever was.

JIMMY: Get my things from my laundry--they must still have them. Clean collar and shirt--socks, too--I want to make a good appearance. I met Dick Trumbull on the street a year or two ago--he said, "Jimmy, the publicity department's never been the same since you got--resigned. It's dead as hell." I said, "I know--I've heard management is at their wit's end and would only be too glad to have me run it again for them." He said, "Sure, they would, Jimmy--only take my advice and wait a while until business conditions are better--then you can strike 'em for a bigger salary than you got before, don't you see?" I said, "Yes, I do see, Dick, and many thanks for the tip." Well, conditions must be better by this time--all I have to do is get fixed up with a decent front tomorrow, and it's as good as done.

BESS HOPE: Poor Jimmy's off in the land of tomorrow again. Bejeez, he takes the cake!

LARRY [guffaws sardonically]:

THE CAPTAIN: I'm sorry, General, we had to postpone our trip again this year. We'll make it next year, even if we have to work and earn our passage money, eh? England in April! I want you to see that.

THE GENERAL: And I vil enjoy it, Captain. But de veldt! Py Gott, dere is space to be free, the air like vine is, you need no booze to be drunk! My relations vill so surprised be. Dey vil not know me, it is so many years. Dey vil be so glad I haf come home at last.

JOE: I'll make my stake and get my new gamblin' joint open before you boys leave. You got to come to the openin'. If you're broke, I'll stake you to any game you chooses. If you wins, dat's velvet for ya. If you loses, it don't count.

BESS HOPE: Jimmy's got them smoking the same hop.

NARRATOR: But soon the three are asleep again.

LARRY: By God, this bughouse will drive me stark, raving loony!

BESS HOPE: What? What d'you say?

LARRY: Nothin', Bess. Just had a crazy thought in my head.

BESS HOPE: Crazy is right--yah old wise guy! Wise, hell!
A damned old fool Anarchist-I-Won't-Work-er! I'm sick of
you--and Hugo, too. You'll pay up tomorrow or I'll start
a Bess Hope Revolution! I'll tie bombs to your tails
that'll blow ya out to the street! Bejeez I'll make your
Movement move! [cackles]

MAC & ED [guffaw]:

ED: Bess, you sure say the funniest things. [pause]
Hell, where's my drink? That damn Rocky's too fast
cleaning tables--why, I'd only taken a sip of it.

BESS HOPE: No, you don't! Any time you only take one sip
of a drink, you'll have lockjaw or paralysis! Think you
can kid me with those old circus con games? Me, that's
known ya since you was knee-high, and, bejeez, you was a
crook even then!

MAC: It's not like you to be so hard-hearted, Bess.
It's hot, parching work laughin' at your jokes so early
in the mornin' on an empty stomach!

BESS HOPE: Yah! You, Mac--another crook! Who asked you
to laugh? Bejeez, Harry'd never forgive me if he knew
I had you two bums living in his house, throwin' ashes
and cigar butts on his floor. "That Mac is the biggest
drunken grafter that ever disgraced the police force,"
he used to say.

MAC: He was angry because you used to get me drunk.
But he knew I was innocent of all the charges.

WILLIE: Lieutenant Mac--are you aware you are under
oath? Do you realize what the penalty for perjury is?
Come now, Lieutenant, isn't it a fact that you're as
guilty as hell? Gentleman of the jury, the court will
now recess while the D.A. sings a little ditty he
learned at Harvard. [sings] "Oh, come up, " she cried,
"my sailor lad, And you and I'll agree. And I'll show
you the prettiest [rap, rap, rap] That ever you did
see."

BESS HOPE [threatening]: Rocky!

WILLIE: Please, Bess--I'll be quiet--don't make him
bounce me upstairs--I'll go crazy alone! [pause]
I apologize, Mac--don't be sore--I was only kidding you.

NARRATOR: Seing Bess relent, Rocky returns to the bar.

MAC: Sure, Willilie, kid all you like--I'm used to it.
[pauses--then seriously] But I'm tellin' ya--some day
before long I'm going to make 'em reopen my case.
Everyone knows there was no real evidence against me,
and I took the fall for the ones higher up. This time
I'll be found innocent and reinstated. My old job on the
force. The boys tell me there's fine pickings these
days, and I'm not getting rich here, sitting with a
parched throat waiting for Bess to buy me a drink.

WILLIE: Of course, you'll be reinstated, Mac. All you
need is a brilliant young attorney to handle your case.
I'll be straightened out and on the wagon in a day or
two. I've never practiced but I was one of the most
brilliant law students in Law School and your case is
just the opportunity I need to start. You will let me
take your case, won't you, Mac?

MAC: Sure I will and it will make your reputation,
Willilie.

NARRATOR: Ed wiinks at Bess, shaking his head, and Bess
does the same.

LARRY: I'll be damned if I haven't heard their visions a
thosand times? Why should it get under my skin now?
[pause] I wish to hell Hickey'd turn up.

ED: Poor Willilie needs a drink bad, Bess--and I think if
we all joined him it'd make him feel he was among
friends and cheer him up.

BESS HOPE: More circus con tricks! Harry had you sized
up--he used to tell me, "I don't know what you see in
that worthless, drunken, petty-thief brother of mine.
If I had my way," he'd say, "he'd get booted out into
the gutter on his fat behind." Sometimes he didn't say
behind, either.

ED: Remember the time he sent me down to the bar to
change a ten-dollar bill for him?

BESS HOPE: Do I Bejeez! [cackles]

ED: I was sure surprised when he gave me the
ten-spot. Harry usually had better sense, but he was in
a hurry to get to church. I didn't really mean to do it,
but you know how habit gets you. Besides, I still worked
then and the circus season was going to begin soon, and

I needed a little practice to keep my hand in. [chuckles]
I said, "I'm sorry, Harry, but I had to take it all in dimes--here hold out your hands, and I'll count it out for you, so you won't say afterwards I short-changed ya." [counting ever more rapidly] Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, a dollar. Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty-- You're counting with me, Harry, aren't you?--eighty, ninety, two dollars. Ten, twenty-- Those are nice shoes you got on, Harry--forty, fifty, seventy, eighty, ninety, three dollars. Ten, twenty, thirty, fifty, seventy, eighty, ninety--That's a swell new jacket, Harry, where'd you get it--six dollars. [chuckles] I'm bum at it now for lack of practice, but in those days I could have short-changed the Keeper of the Mint.

BESS HOPE: Stung him for two dollars and a half, wasn't it?

ED: Yes, fine percentage, if I do say so myself. Especially when you're dealing with someone who's sober and who can count. I'm sorry to say that he discovered my mistakes in arithmetic just after I beat it around the corner. Harry never did have the confidence in me a brother should.

BESS HOPE: You're a fine one bragging how you short-changed your own brother! Bejeez, if there was a war and you was in it, they'd have to padlock the pockets of the dead!

ED: I always gave a sucker some chance, Bess. There wouldn't be no fun in robbing the dead. [reminiscently melancholy] Gosh thinking of the old ticket wagon brings those days back. The greatest life on earth with the greatest show on earth! The grandest crowd of regular guys ever gathered under one tent! I'd sure like to shake their hands again!

BESS HOPE: They'd have guns in 'em! They'd shoot you on sight. You tapped every one of 'em--bejeez, you even borrowed fish from the trained seals and peanuts from the elephants! [Tickled with her own wit, Bess cackles.]

ED: I tell ya I've made up my mind. In a couple days I'll see the boss and ask for my old job back. I can get my magic touch with change back easy, and I can throw him a line of bull that'll kid him I won't be so unreasonable about sharing the profits next time.

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!

NARRATOR: Rocky appears in the rear doorway, his arm around Hickey.

ROCKY: Here's the old son of a gun!

NARRATOR: They all stand and greet him.

JIMMY: Hello, Hickey!

ED: If it ain't...

JOE: It sho is.

MAC: Hickey!

WILLIE: My boy!

THE CAPTAIN: How goes it old chum?

THE GENERAL: Velcome, Hickey.

NARRATOR: Even Hugo raises his head and blinks through his glasses.

HICKEY [jovially]: Hello, Gang! [He immediately puts on on entrance act.] "It's always fair weather, when good fellas get together!" [changing to bass and another tune] "And another little drink won't do us any harm!"
[The gang cheers.]

NARRATOR: Rocky grins and goes to get drinks. Hickey comes forward and doffs his cap affectionately to Bess.

HICKEY [smiling]: Hickey, at your service, fine lady.

BESS HOPE [blushing]: Bejeez Hickey, you old bastard, it's good to see you!

NARRATOR: As Hickey shakes hands with the gang, Rocky sets out whiskey glasses and a bottle on every table.

BESS HOPE: Sit down, Hickey--sit down.

[Hickey sits.]

BESS HOPE: Bejeez Hickey, it seems natural as rain to see your grinnin' mug. This dumb broad here was tryin' to tell us you'd changed, but you ain't changed a bit. How you been doin'? Bejeez you look like a million bucks.

ROCKY: Here's your key, Hickey--same old room.

1361 the matter with you bums--why don't you drink up?
1362 You're always crying for booze, and now you've got it
1363 under your nose, you sit like dummies!

1364 [They gulp down their whiskies and then pour another.]

1365 BESS HOPE: Well, bejeez, I still say he's kidding us.
1366 Kid his own grandmother, Hickey would. What d'you think,
1367 Jimmy?

1368 JIMMY: It must be another of his jokes, although--
1369 Well, he does appear changed. But he'll probably be his
1370 natural self again tomorrow--I mean when he wakes up.

1371 LARRY: You'll be making a mistake if you think he's
1372 only kidding.

1373 PARRITT: I don't like that guy, Larry--he's too
1374 damned nosy.

1375 JIMMY: Still, I have to admit there was some sense in
1376 his nonsense. It is time I got my job back--although I
1377 hardly need him to remind me.

1378 BESS HOPE: Yes, and I ought to take a walk around the
1379 ward. But I don't need no Hickey to tell me that, seeing
1380 I got it all set for my birthday tomorrow.

1381 LARRY [sardonically]: Ha! By God, it looks like he's
1382 going to make two sales of his peace at least! But you'd
1383 better make sure it's the real McCoy and not poison.

1384 BESS HOPE: You bughouse I-Wont-Work harp, who asked you
1385 to shove in an oar? What the hell d'you mean, poison?
1386 Just because he has your number-- [feels ashamed so adds
1387 apologetically] Bejeez, Larry, you're always croaking
1388 about death--it's gets my goat. Come on, gang, drink up.

1389 NARRATOR: As they drink, Bess's eyes go to Hickey.

1390 BESS HOPE: Stone cold sober and dead to the world!
1391 Bejeez, I don't get it. [bursting out again in anger]
1392 He ain't like the old Hickey--he'll be a fine wet
1393 blanket to have around at my birthday party--I wish to
1394 hell he'd never turned up!

1395 ED: Give him time, Bess--he'll come out of it.
1396 I've watched many cases of almost fatal teetotalism,
1397 but they all came out of it completely cured and as
1398 drunk as ever. My opinion is the poor sap is temporarily
1399 bughouse from overwork. You can't be too careful about

work--it's the deadliest habit known to science, a great physician once told me. He was positively the only doctor in the world who claimed that rattlesnake oil, rubbed on the butt-ocks, would cure heart failure in three days. I remember well his saying to me, "You are naturally delicate, Ed, but if you drink a pint of bad whiskey before breakfast and never work if you can help it, you may live to a ripe old age. It's staying sober and working that cuts men off in their prime."

[The gang roars w/ laughter.]

NARRATOR: Even Hugo looks up.

HUGO [giggling]: Laugh, leedle bourgeois monkey-faces! Laugh like fools, leedle stoopid peoples! [tone changes; pounds fist on table] I vil laugh, too--but I vil laugh last--I vil laugh at you! [reciting] "The days grow hot, O Babylon! 'Tis cool beneath thy willow trees!"

[The gang jeers.]

HUGO [giggles good-naturedly]:

THE CAPTAIN [tipsily]: Well, now that our little Robespierre has got his daily bit of guillontining off his chest, tell me more about this doctor friend, Ed. He strikes me as the only bloody sensible medic I ever heard of. I think we should appoint him house physician here without delay.

ED: The old Doc passed on, I'm afraid. He didn't follow his own advice--kept his nose to the grindstone and sold one bottle of snake oil too many. The last time we got paralyzed together he told me: "This game will get me yet, Ed. You see before you a broken man, a martyr to medical science. If I had any nerves, I'd have a nervous breakdown. You won't believe me, but this last year there was actually one night I had so many patients, I didn't even have time to get drunk. The shock to my system brought on a stroke, which, as a doctor, I recognized as the beginning of the end." Poor old Doc--when he said this he started crying. "I hate to go before my task is completed, Ed," he sobbed. "I'd hoped I'd live to see the day when, thanks to my miraculous cure, there wouldn't be a single vacant cemetery lot left in this glorious country."

[The gang roars w/ laughter.]

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?

2218 ROCKY [astonished, amused and irritated]: Can yuh
2219 beat it--I've heard youse two call each odder every name
2220 yuh could tink of but I never seen ya--[indignantly]
2221 A swell time to stage your first bout, on de Boss's
2222 boithday! What started it?

2223 THE CAPTAIN [forcing a casual tone]: Nothing, old chap.
2224 Our business, you know. That bloody ass, Hickey, made
2225 some insinuation about me, and the boorish Boer had the
2226 impertinence to agree with him.

2227 THE GENERAL: Dot's a lie! Hickey made joke on me, and
2228 Limey said yes, it vas true!

2229 ROCKY: Well, sit down, de bot' of yuh, and cut out de
2230 rough stuff.

2231 NARRATOR: Dumped into adjoining chairs, they turn their
2232 backs on each other as far as possible.

2233 MARGIE [laughs]: Lookit de two bums--like a coupla kids!
2234 Kiss and make up, for Gawd's sakes!

2235 ROCKY: Yeah, de Boss's party begins in a minute and we
2236 don't want no soreheads around.

2237 THE CAPTAIN [stiffly]: Very well. In deference to the
2238 occasion, I apologize, General--provided you do as well.

2239 THE GENERAL [sulkily]: Yes, I sorry, too--because Bess
2240 is goot lady.

2241 ROCKY: Aw ya mean yuh can't do better'n dat?

2242 NARRATOR: Ed and Mac enter together from the hall.
2243 Both have been drinking but are not drunk.

2244 MAC: I'm tellin' ya, Ed, it's serious this time. That
2245 bastard Hickey has got Bess by the hip. And you know it
2246 isn't going to do us no good if he gets her to take that
2247 walk tomorrow.

2248 ED: Yer damn right--Bess'll mosey around the ward,
2249 dropping in on everyone who knew her when. [indignantly]
2250 And they'll all give her a phony glad hand and a ton of
2251 advice about what a sucker she is to put up with us.

2252 MAC: She's sure to call on your relations to do a little
2253 cryin' over dear Harry. And you know what that S.O.B.
2254 thought o' me.

2255 ED [with a flash of his usual humor--rebukingly]
 2256 Remember, Lieutenant, you're speaking of my brother!
 2257 Dear Harry wasn't an S.O.B. He was a God-damned S.O.B.!
 2258 But if you think my loving relatives will have time to
 2259 discuss you, you don't know them--they'll be too busy
 2260 telling Bess what a drunken crook I am and saying she
 2261 ought to have me put in Sing Sing!

2262 MAC [dejectedly]: Yes, once your relations get their
 2263 hooks in her, it'll be as tough for us as if he wasn't
 2264 gone.

2265 ED [dejectedly]: Bess's always been weak and easily
 2266 influenced--now she's getting old she'll be an easy mark
 2267 for those grafters. [then with forced reassurance]
 2268 Ah, hell, Mac, we're saps to worry--we've heard her pull
 2269 that bluff about taking a walk every birthday she's had
 2270 for twenty years.

2271 MAC [doubtfully]: But Hickey wasn't egging her on those
 2272 times--just the opposite--he was saying "What you want
 2273 to go out for when there's plenty of whiskey here."

2274 ED [with forced indifference]: Well, after all, I don't
 2275 care whether she goes out or not--I'm clearing out in
 2276 the morning anyway--I'm just sorry for you, Mac.

2277 MAC [resentfully]: You needn't be--I'm going myself--
 2278 I was only feeling sorry for you.

2279 ED: Yes my mind's made up--Hickey may be a lousy,
 2280 interfering pest now he's gone teetotal on us, but
 2281 there's a lot of truth in some of his bull--hanging
 2282 around here getting plastered with you, Mac, is
 2283 pleasant, I won't deny, but the old booze gets you in
 2284 the end, if you keep lapping it up--so it's time I quit
 2285 for a while. [with forced enthusiasm] Besides, I feel
 2286 the call of the old carefree circus life in my blood
 2287 again. I'll see the boss tomorrow--it's late in the
 2288 season but he'll be glad to take me on. And won't all
 2289 the old gang be tickled to death when I show up on the
 2290 lot!

2291 MAC: Maybe--if they've got a rope handy!

2292 ED [turns on him--angrily]: Listen--I'm damned sick of
 2293 that kidding!

2294 MAC: You are, are ya? Well I'm sicker of you kidding me
 2295 about getting reinstated on the Force. Whatever you'd

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.]

2373 ED [uninspired]: Sure, Bess.

2374 WILLIE: [uninspired]: Yes.

2375 MCLOIN [uninspired]: Of course we do.

2376 NARRATOR: Bess comes forward to the two girls--with
2377 Jimmy and Hickey following--and pats them awkwardly.

2378 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, I like you broads--you know I was
2379 only kiddin'.

2380 MARGIE: Sure we know, Bess.

2381 PEARL: Sure.

2382 HICKEY [grinning]: Bess's the greatest kidder in this
2383 dump and that's sayin' somethin'! Look how she's kidded
2384 herself for twenty years!

2385 BESS HOPE [bitterly]: Huh.

2386 HICKEY: Unless I'm wrong, my good lady--and I'm
2387 bettin' I'm not--we'll know soon, eh? Tomorrow morning.
2388 No, by God, it's this morning now!

2389 JIMMY [with a dazed dread]: This morning?

2390 HICKEY: Yes, it's tomorrow at last, Jimmy. [Pause]
2391 Don't be so scared--I've promised I'll help ya.

2392 JIMMY [masking his dread behind an offended, drunken
2393 dignity]: I don't understand you. Kindly remember
2394 I'm fully capable of settling my own affairs!

2395 HICKEY [earnestly]: Well isn't that exactly what I
2396 want you to do--settle with yourself once and for all?
2397 [a confidential whisper] Only be careful of the booze,
2398 Jimmy--not too much from now on--you've had a lot
2399 already and you don't want to let yourself duck out of
2400 it by being too drunk to move--not this time!

2401 BESS HOPE [to Margie--still guiltily] Bejeez, Margie you
2402 know I didn't mean it--it's that lousy drummer riding me
2403 that's got my goat.

2404 MARGIE: I know. [waving her head] Come on--you ain't
2405 noticed your cake yet--ain't it grand?

2406 BESS HOPE [trying to brighten up]: Say, that's pretty.
2407 Ain't had a cake since Harry--six candles--each for
2408 ten years, eh--bejeez that's thoughtful of ya.

2409 PEARL: It was Hickey got it.

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.

PARRITT: 'Cha--and you're the guy who kids himself he's through with the Movement! You old lying faker, you're still in love with it! [In a low, insinuating, intimate tone]: I think I finally understand. It's really Mother you still love--isn't it?--in spite of the dirty deal she gave you. But hell, what did you expect? She was never true to anyone but herself and the Movement. But I understand how you can't help still feeling--because I still love her, too. [pleading in a strained, desperate tone] You know I do, don't you--you have to! You don't think I believed they would actually catch her, do you? You've got to believe me--I did it just to get a few lousy dollars to blow on a whore--no other reason, honest--there couldn't possibly be any other reason!

LARRY [trying not to listen, has listened too well]: For the love of Christ will you leave me in peace--I've told you you can't make me judge you--but if you don't shut up, you'll be sayin' something soon that will make you vomit your own soul like a drink of nickel rotgut that won't stay down! To hell with ya!

NARRATOR: He pushes back his chair, gets to his feet and goes to the bar.

LARRY: Set me up, Rocky. I swore I'd have no more drinks on Hickey, if I died of drought, but I've changed my mind! By God, he owes it to me, and I'll get blind to the world now if it was the Iceman of Death himself treating!

ROCKY: Aw, forget dat iceman gag--de poor lady's dead! [setting a bottle and glass before Larry] Gwan and get paralyzed! I'll be glad to see one bum in dis dump act natural.

NARRATOR: As Larry downs a drink and pours another, Ed appears from the hall. Sick, nerves shattered, eyes fearful, he, too, puts on an overly self-confident air as he saunters to the bar.

ED: Morning, Rocky. Hello, Larry. Glad to see Brother Hickey hasn't corrupted you to temperance. I wouldn't mind a shot myself. [Rocky shoves a bottle in front of him.] But--I remember the only breath-killer in this dump is coffee beans--the boss would never fall for that. No man who runs a circus would believe guys chew coffee beans because they like them. No, as much as I

3287 need one after the hell of a night I've had-- [Scowls]
3288 That son of a drummer--I had to lock him out. But I
3289 could hear him through the wall doing his spiel to
3290 someone all night long. He was still at it with Jimmy
3291 and Bess when I came down just now. But the hardest to
3292 take was that flatfoot Mac trying to tell me where
3293 to get off! I had to lock him out, too.

3294 NARRATOR: As he says this, Mac appears from the hall.
3295 The change in his appearance and manner is identical to
3296 Ed's and the others.

3297 MAC: He's a liar, Rocky--it was me locked him out!

3298 WILLIE: Come and sit here, Mac--you're just the man
3299 I want to see--if I'm to take your case, we oughta have
3300 a talk before we leave.

3301 MAC [contemptuously]: You damned fool--ya think I'd have
3302 your father's son for my lawyer? They'd take one look at
3303 you and bounce us both out on our necks!

3304 NARRATOR: Willie winces and shrinks down in his chair.

3305 MAC: I don't need a lawyer, anyway. To hell with the
3306 law! All I've got to do is see the right guys and get
3307 'em to pass the word--they will, too--they know I was
3308 framed. And once they've passed the word, it's as good
3309 as done--law or no law.

3310 ED: God, I'm glad I'm leaving this madhouse! [Key
3311 unpocketed and slapped on bar.] Here's my key, Rocky.

3312 MAC: And here's mine. [He too slaps key on bar.]
3313 I'd rather sleep in the gutter than spend another night
3314 under the same roof with that loon Hickey, and a lyin'
3315 circus grifter!

3316 NARRATOR: Ed spins on him furiously but Rocky leans over
3317 and grabs his arm.

3318 ROCKY: Take it easy now! [Rocky tosses the keys on the
3319 shelf in disgust] You boids gimme a pain--it'd soive you
3320 right if I didn't give de keys back to yuh tonight.

3321 NARRATOR: They both turn on him resentfully, but there's
3322 an interruption as Cora enters from the hall with Chuck
3323 behind her. She is drunk, dressed in her gaudy best,
3324 her face plastered with rouge and mascara, her hat on
3325 but her hair disheveled.

3440 HICKEY [exhortingly]: Next? Come on, Ed--it's a fine
3441 summer's day and the call of the old circus is in your
3442 blood!

3443 NARRATOR: Ed glares at him, then goes to the door.
3444 Mac jumps up and follows him.

3445 HICKEY: That's the stuff, Mac.

3446 ED: Good-bye, Bess.

3447 NARRATOR: Ed goes out, turning right.

3448 MAC [glowering after him]: If that crooked grifter has
3449 the guts--

3450 NARRATOR: Mac goes out, turning left. Hickey glances at
3451 Willie who jumps up from his chair before Hickey can
3452 speak.

3453 WILLIE: Good-bye, Bess, and thanks for all your
3454 kindness.

3455 HICKEY: That's the way, Willie! The D.A.'s a busy man--
3456 he can't wait all day for you, ya know.

3457 BESS HOPE [dully]: Good luck, Willie.

3458 NARRATOR: While Willie exits and turns right, Jimmy, in
3459 a sick panic, sneaks to the bar and reaches for a glass
3460 of whiskey.

3461 HICKEY: Now, now, Jimmy--you can't do that to yourself.
3462 One drink on top of your hangover an' an empty stomach
3463 and you'd be cockeyed. Then you'll tell yourself you
3464 wouldn't stand a chance if you went up soused to get
3465 your old job back.

3466 JIMMY [pleading]: Tomorrow--I will tomorrow--I'll be in
3467 good shape tomorrow! [abruptly getting control of
3468 himself--clearing his throat] All right, I'm going.
3469 Take your hands off me.

3470 HICKEY: That's the ticket--you'll thank me when it's all
3471 over.

3472 JIMMY [in a burst of futile fury]: You dirty swine!

3473 NARRATOR: He tries to throw the drink in Hickey's face,
3474 but his aim is poor and it lands on Hickey's coat.
3475 Jimmy turns and dashes through the door, turning right.

3987 PARRITT [starts frightenedly]: Execution? Then you
3988 do think [I did it]--?

3989 LARRY: I don't think anything!

3990 PARRITT [with forced jeering]: Because I sold out a lot
3991 of loud-mouthed fakers, who were cheatin' suckers with a
3992 phony pipe dream, and put 'em where they oughta be, in
3993 jail? [Forcing a laugh.] Don't make me laugh--I ought to
3994 get a medal! What an old sap you are--you must still
3995 believe in the Movement! [Nudging Rocky] Hickey's right
3996 about him, isn't he, Rocky--a no-good drunken old tramp,
3997 as dumb as he is, ought to take a hop off the fire
3998 escape!

3999 ROCKY [dully]: Sure, why don't he--or you--or me--
4000 what de hell's de difference?

4001 BESS HOPE: The hell with it!

4002 ED: Who cares?

4003 ROCKY: What am I doin' here wid youse two? [Pause] Oh,
4004 I got it now. [ingratiatingly] I was tinking how you was
4005 bot' reg'lar guys--I tinks, ain't two guys like dem,
4006 saps to be hangin' round a bunch o' stew bums and
4007 wastin' demselves. Not dat I blame yuh for not woikin'--
4008 on'y suckahs woik--but dere's no percentage in bein'
4009 broke when yuh can grab good jack by making someone else
4010 woik for yuh, is dere? I mean, like I do. [Pause then
4011 persuasively] So what yuh tink, Parritt--yuh ain't a
4012 bad-lookin' guy--yuh could take some gal who's a good
4013 hustlah, an' start a stable easy--I could help yuh and
4014 wise yuh up to de inside dope on de game. [Pauses--then
4015 impatiently] Well, what about it--what if dey do call
4016 yuh a pimp--what de hell do you care--any more'n I do.

4017 PARRITT [vindictively]: I'm through with whores--I wish
4018 they were all in jail--or dead!

4019 ROCKY [disappointedly]: So yuh won't touch it, huh?
4020 Aw right, stay a bum! [He turns to Larry.] How about
4021 you, Larry--you ain't dumb--sure, yuh're old, but dat
4022 don't matter--dey'd fall for yuh like yuh was deir uncle
4023 or old man or sometin--dey'd like takin' care of yuh--
4024 and de cops 'round here, dey like yuh, too--yuh wouldn't
4025 have to worry where de next drink's comin' from, or wear
4026 doity clothes. [hopefully] Well, don't it sound good to
4027 yuh?

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.

ED: Yes, Bess!

CORA: That's it, Bess.

THE CAPTAIN: That's why!

THE GENERAL: Ve knew he vas crazy!

MAC: Just to humor him!

DETECTIVE #1: A fine bunch of rats--coverin' up for a cold-blooded murderer.

BESS HOPE [stung into recovering all her old fuming truculence]: Is that so? Well, when Saint Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland they swam to New York and joined the Force! Ha! [She cackles insultingly.] Bejeez, we can believe it when we look at you, can't we, gang?

[The gang growls in ascent.]

BESS HOPE [goes on pugnaciously.] You stand up for your rights, Hickey--don't let this smart-aleck copper get funny with ya. If he pulls any rubber-hose tricks, you let me know! I've still got friends at the Hall! Bejeez, I'll have him back in uniform poundin' a beat where the only graft he'll get will be kipin' pencils from the blind!

DETECTIVE #1 [furiously]: Listen, you cockeyed old dame! For a plugged nickel I'd [give you a slap in the]--

NARRATOR: As he controls himself, his partner turns to Hickey and yanks his arm.

DETECTIVE #2: Come on, you!

HICKEY [with a strange mad earnestness]: Oh, I want to go, officer--I can hardly wait now--I should have phoned you from the house right afterwards--it was a waste of time coming here--I've got to explain to Evelyn--but I know she's forgiven me--she knows I was insane. [turning to the officer] No, you've got me all wrong, officer--I want to go to the Chair.

DETECTIVE #1: Bull-crap!

HICKEY [exasperatedly]: God, you're a dumb copper! Ya think I give a damn about life now? Why, you bone-head, I haven't got a single lyin' hope or pipe dream left!

DETECTIVE #2: Get a move on!

4615 HICKEY [as he is walked towards the rear--insistently]:
4616 All I want ya to see is I was out of my mind when I
4617 laughed at her! I was a rotten raving lunatic or I
4618 couldn't have called her a [bitch]--Why, Evelyn was the
4619 only thing on God's earth I ever loved. I'd have killed
4620 myself before I'd ever hurt her!

4621 BESS HOPE [calls after him]: Don't worry, Hickey--they
4622 won't give you the Chair--we'll testify you was crazy--
4623 crazy as a bedbug--won't we, gang?

4624 CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK [yell]: Dat's right!

4625 THE GENERAL [yell]: Dat's right!

4626 WILLIE/ED/MAC [yell]: We won't testify.

4627 THE CAPTAIN/JIMMY [yell]: Don't worry, Hickey.
4628 [From the hall comes the slam of the street door.]

4629 BESS HOPE [with genuine sorrow]: He's gone--the poor
4630 crazy bastard! Bejeez, I need a drink.

4631 NARRATOR: The gang all grab their glasses.

4632 BESS HOPE [hopefully]: Bejeez, maybe it'll have the
4633 old kick, now he's gone.

4634 NARRATOR: She drinks--and they all follow suit.

4635 ROCKY: Yeah, Boss--maybe we can get drunk now.

4636 NARRATOR: They all sit still--with hopeful expectancy--
4637 waiting for the effect of the booze.

4638 LARRY--[his voice full of pain and pity--in a whisper,
4639 aloud to himself] May the Chair bring him peace at last,
4640 the poor tortured bastard!

4641 PARRITT [leans toward him--in a strange low insistent
4642 voice]: Yes, but he isn't the only one who needs peace,
4643 Larry--I can't feel sorry for him--he's lucky--he's
4644 through, now--it's all decided for him. I wish it was
4645 decided for me--I've never been any good at deciding
4646 things--even about selling out. It was the tart the cops
4647 got after me who put it in my mind. You remember what
4648 Mother's like, Larry--she makes all the decisions--she's
4649 always decided what I had to do--she doesn't like anyone
4650 to be free but herself.

4651 NARRATOR: He pauses, as if waiting for Larry to comment
4652 --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!

4773 CHUCK [eagerly]: Sure ting, Baby--we kidded him we was
4774 serious.

4775 JIMMY [confidently--with a gentle, drunken zeal]:
4776 I may as well say I detected his condition almost at
4777 once. All that talk of his about tomorrow, for example.
4778 He had the fixed idea of the insane. It only makes them
4779 worse to cross them.

4780 WILLIE [eagerly]: Same with me, Jimmy--only I spent the
4781 day in the park--I wasn't such a damned fool as to [try
4782 to]--

4783 THE CAPTAIN [getting jauntily drunk]: Picture my
4784 predicament had gone to the Consulate. The pal of mine
4785 there is a humorous blighter. He would have got me a job
4786 out of pure spite. Instead I strolled about and finally
4787 came to roost in the park. [He grins with affectionate
4788 kidding at The General] And lo and behold, who was on
4789 the neighboring bench but my old battlefield companion,
4790 the Boer that walks like a man--who, if the British
4791 Government had taken my advice, would have been removed
4792 from his fetid pen on the veldt straight to the baboon's
4793 cage at the London Zoo, and little children would now be
4794 asking their nurses: "Tell me, Nana, is that the Boer
4795 General, the one with the blue behind?"

4796 [The gang laughs uproariously.]

4797 THE CAPTAIN: No offense meant, old chap.

4798 THE GENERAL [beaming]: No offense taken, you tanned
4799 Limey! [going on--grinningly] About a job--I felt de
4800 same as de Limey here.

4801 HUGO [with uneasy insistence]: What's matter, Larry--
4802 you look scared--vhat you listen for out zere?

4803 JOE [with drunken self-assurance]: No, suh, I wasn't
4804 fool enough to git in no crap game--not while Hickey's
4805 around--crazy people puts a jinx on you.

4806 MAC [with drunken earnestness]: You saw how it was--
4807 no good trying to explain to a crazy guy that it ain't
4808 the right time--you know how getting reinstated is.

4809 ED: Sure, the same with the circus. The boys tell me the
4810 rubes are spendin' all their money buying food and times
4811 was never so hard. And I never was one to cheat for
4812 chicken feed.

LARRY [arguing to himself in a shaken, tortured whisper]: It's the only way out for him! For the peace of all concerned, like Hickey said! [snapping] God damn his yellow soul--if he doesn't soon, I'll go up and throw him off!--like a dog with its guts ripped out you'd put down out of misery!

NARRATOR: He is slowly rising from his chair when from outside the window comes the sound of something hurtling down, followed by a muffled, crunching thud.

LARRY [gasps then shudders]:

NARRATOR: Dropping back in his chair, Larry buries his face in his hands.

BESS HOPE [wonderingly]: What the hell was that?

ROCKY: Aw, nuttin'. Someting fell off de fire escape-- a mattress, I'll bet. Some of dese bums've been sleepin' on de fire escapes.

BESS HOPE [an excuse to beef--testily]: They've got to cut it out! Bejeez, this ain't a fresh-air sanitorium-- mattresses cost money.

ED: Now don't start crabbin', Bess. Let's drink up.

NARRATOR: Bess grabs her glass, and they all drink.

LARRY [in a whisper of horrified pity]: Poor devil! [A long-forgotten faith returns to him for a moment and he mumbles] God rest his soul in peace. [

NARRATOR: Larry finally opens his eyes.

LARRY [with bitter self-derision]: Ah, the damned pity-- the wrong kind, like Hickey said! By God, there's no hope--life's too much for me--I'll be a weak pitying fool looking at both sides of everything till the day I die! [with an intense bitter sincerity] May that day come soon!

NARRATOR: He pauses startled. Then--with a sardonic grin...

LARRY: By God, I'm the only real convert to death Hickey made here. From the bottom of my coward's heart, I mean that now!

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 birrthday 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