

BY MOUTH | Martin Garrison, Producer
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ROLE: JIMMY

JIMMY (TOMORROW): Jimmy is an intelligent, and reserved man of undetermined years—described as having the combined qualities of a "prim, Victorian old maid" and a boy who never grew up. Formerly a newspaper reporter during the Boer War, he dreams of returning to work. Having once worked in publicity in NYC, he was fired for drunkenness. As his name suggests, he is the leader of the so-called "Tomorrow Movement," endlessly deferring the realization of his pipe dream to tomorrow.

3 takes + pickups = \$250.

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 JIMMY LINES 4198-4218

JIMMY LINES BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE

592 dozen, but him I miss. [chuckles] Hey, wake up,
593 you ploody fool--don't you know your old friend, Joe?
594 He's no damned Kaffir--he's white, Joe is!

595 THE CAPTAIN [light dawning--contritely]: My profound
596 apologies, Joseph, old chum. Eyesight a trifle blurry,
597 I'm afraid. Proud to call you my friend--no hard
598 feelings, eh?

599 JOE: I know it's a mistake--youse regular, if you is a
600 Limey. [face hardening] But I don't stand "niggah" from
601 nobody. In de old days, people calls me "niggah" wakes
602 up in de hospital. Us gang of colored boys was tough--
603 and I was de toughest.

604 THE GENERAL [inspired to boastful reminiscence]:
605 Me, I was so tough and strong I grab axle of wagon mit
606 full load and lift like feather.

607 THE CAPTAIN: You, my balmy Boer, we should have taken to
608 the zoo and incarcerated in the baboon's cage.

609 THE GENERAL: To tink, ten better Limey officers, at
610 least, I shoot clean in mittle of forehead and you
611 I miss. I neffer forgive myself!

612 JIMMY [sentimentally]: Come, now, gentleman--Boer and
613 Briton, each fought fairly and played the game until the
614 better man won and then we shook hands. We are all
615 brothers within the Empire upon which the sun never
616 sets. [quoting with great sentiment] "Ship me somewhere
617 east of Suez--"

618 LARRY: By God, you're there already, Jimmy--worst is
619 best, and East is West, and tomorrow is yesterday--
620 what more do you want?

621 JIMMY: You can't deceive me, Larry, old friend.
622 You pretend to be a cynic but in your heart you are the
623 kindest man amongst us.

624 LARRY: The hell I am!

625 JIMMY: Tomorrow, yes--it's high time I straightened out
626 and got down to business again. [brushes his sleeve
627 fastidiously] I must have this suit cleaned and pressed.
628 I can't look like a tramp when I--

629 JOE: Yeah, in de days I was flush, Joe's de only colored
630 man dey allows in de white gamblin' houses. "You're all
631 right, Joe, you're white," dey says. [chuckling] De big

Chief in dem days--he knew I was white. I'd saved my dough so I could start my own gamblin' joint. Folks in de know tells me: you git Bess give you a letter to de Chief. And Bess does--don't you, Bess?

BESS HOPE [preoccupied with her own thoughts] Eh? Sure. Big Bill was a good friend of mine. I had plenty of friends high up in those days. Still could have if I wanted to go out and see 'em. Sure, I gave ya a letter--what the hell of it?

JOE: I went to de Chief, see, shakin' in my boots, and dere he is sittin' behind a big desk, looking as big as a freight train. He don't look up--keeps me waitin' and waitin'. Den after 'bout an hour, seems to me, he says slow and quiet-like "You want to open a gamblin' joint, does you, Joe?" But he don't give me no time to answer. He pounds his fist like a ham on de desk and he shouts, "You black son of a bitch--Bess says you're white and you better be white or dere's a little room up de river waitin' for ya!" Den he sits down and says quiet again, "All right--you can open. Now git the hell outa here!" [chuckles with pride] Dem old days! Many's de night I come in here. Dis was a first-class hangout in dem days. Good whiskey, fifteen cents--two for two bits. I t'rows down a fifty-dolla bill like it was trash paper and says "Drink it up, boys, I don't want no change." Ain't dat right, Bess?

BESS HOPE [caustically]: Yes, and bejeez, if I ever seen you throw fifty cents on the bar now, I'd know I was delirious! You've told that story ten million times and if I have to hear it again, it'll give me the DT's for certain!

THE CAPTAIN: Thank you, Bess, my dear, I will have that drink, now you mention it, seeing it's so near your birthday.

JOE/THE GENERAL/JIMMY TOMORROW [laugh]:

BESS HOPE [puts hand to ear--angrily]: What's that--I can't hear you.

THE CAPTAIN: I fancied you wouldn't.

BESS HOPE: I don't have to hear, bejeez! Booze is the only thing you ever talk about.

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]: Tommorrow.

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?

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.

1166 HICKEY: Thanks, Rocky--I'm going up in a little while to
1167 grab a snooze--haven't been able to sleep lately an' I'm
1168 tired as hell--a couple of hours will fix me.

1169 BESS HOPE: First time I ever heard you worry about
1170 sleep. Bejeez, you never would go to bed (cackles
1171 suggestively) Get a few slugs in ya and you'll forget
1172 sleepin'. Here's mud in your eye, Hickey.

1173 WILLIE: To Hickey!

1174 ED: Hickey!

1175 JOE: To you, suh!

1176 MAC: Bottoms up!

1177 JIMMY: To your health!

1178 THE CAPTAIN: Cheers!

1179 THE GENERAL: Vat's right!

1180 HICKEY: Drink hearty, boys and girls!

1181 NARRATOR: All drink but Hickey.

1182 BESS HOPE: Bejeez is that a new stunt, not drinkin'?

1183 HICKEY: No, I forgot to tell Rocky--you'll have to
1184 excuse me, boys and girls, but I'm off the stuff.
1185 For keeps.

1186 BESS HOPE: What the hell-- [then choosing to play along]
1187 Sure! Joined the Salvation Army, did ya? Take that
1188 bottle away from him, Rocky--we wouldn't want to tempt
1189 him into sin. [chuckles]

1190 [The gang laughs.]

1191 HICKEY: No, honest, Bess, I know it's hard to believe
1192 but--[pauses then simply] Cora was right--I've changed.
1193 I mean, about booze. I don't need it anymore.

1194 NARRATOR: They all stare a bit uneasily.

1195 BESS HOPE [her kidding's a bit forced]: Yeah, go ahead,
1196 kid the pants off us, bejeez! Cora said you was coming
1197 to save us--well, go on--start the service--sing a
1198 God-damned hymn if you like--we'll all join in the
1199 chorus.

1200 HICKEY [grinning]: Oh, hell--you don't think I'd come
1201 around here peddling some brand of temperance bunk,

JIMMY: I don't understand you--I admit I've foolishly delayed, but as it happens, I'd just made up my mind that as soon as I could get straightened out--

HICKEY: Fine--that's the spirit! And I'm gonna help you. You've been damned kind to me, Jimmy, and I wanna prove how grateful I am. When it's all over and you don't have to beat yourself up any more, you'll be grateful to me, too! [pause] And all the rest of you are in the same boat, one way or another.

LARRY: By God, you've hit the nail on the head, Hickey! This dump is the Palace of Pipe Dreams!

HICKEY [grins, kidding] Well, well! The Old Grandstand Foolosopher speaks! You think you're the big exception, eh? Life don't mean a damn to you any more, does it--you're retired from the circus--you're just waiting impatiently for the end--the good, Long Sleep! [chuckles] Well I think a lot of you, Larry, you old bastard--I'll try and make an honest man of you, too!

LARRY [stung]: What the devil are you hinting at, anyway?

HICKEY: You don't have to ask me--do ya?--a wise old guy like you?

PARRITT [watching Larry's face with satisfaction]: He's got your number all right, Larry! [to Hickey] That's the stuff, Hickey--show the old faker up! He's got no right to sneak out of everything.

HICKEY: Hello. A stranger in our midst. I didn't notice you before, Brother.

PARRITT: I'm an old friend of Larry's.

NARRATOR: Parritt sees Hickey sizing him up.

PARRITT [defensively]: Well--what are you staring at?

HICKEY: No offense, Brother, I was just trying to figure-- Haven't we met before someplace?

PARRITT [reassured]: No. First time I've ever been East.

HICKEY: No, you're right--that's not it. In my game, to be good at it, you teach yourself never to forget a name or a face--but still--I know I recognized something about you.

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

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 ot 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.

2410 BESS HOPE [her tone forced]: Well...he means well,
2411 I guess. [face hardening] Huh--to hell with his cake.

2412 PEARL: Wait Bess--yuh ain't seen de presents from all of
2413 us--and dere's a watch all engraved wid your name and de
2414 date from Hickey.

2415 BESS HOPE: To hell with it--he can keep it!

2416 PEARL: Jeez, she ain't even looked at our presents.

2417 MARGIE [bitterly]: Dis is all wrong--we gotta put some
2418 life in dis party or I'll go nuts! Hey, Cora, what's de
2419 matter wid dat box--can't yuh play for Bess? Yuh don't
2420 have to stop just because she kidded yuh!

2421 BESS HOPE [with forced heartiness]: Yes, come on, Cora--
2422 you was playin' fine.

2423 [Cora resumes playing.]

2424 BESS HOPE [almost tearfully sentimental]: That was
2425 Harry's favorite tune--he was always singing it.
2426 It brings him back--I wish [he were]--[She chokes up.]

2427 HICKEY [grins at her--amused]: Yes we've all heard you
2428 tell us you thought the world of him.

2429 BESS HOPE [with frightened suspicion]: Well I did,
2430 bejeez! Everyone knows I did! [threatening] Bejeez,
2431 if you say I didn't [think the world of him]--

2432 HICKEY [soothingly]: Now Bess, I didn't say anything--
2433 you're the only one knows the truth about that.

2434 JIMMY [with self-pitying melancholy out of a
2435 sentimental dream]: My Mary's favorite song was "Loch
2436 Lomond." She was beautiful and she played beautifully
2437 and she had a beautiful voice. [with gentle sorrow]
2438 You were lucky, Bess. Harry died. But there are more
2439 bitter sorrows than losing the man one loves by the hand
2440 of death--

2441 HICKEY [with an amused wink at Bess]: Now listen Jimmy--
2442 we've all heard that story about how you came back to
2443 Cape Town and found her in the hay with an officer.
2444 We know you like to believe that's what started you on
2445 the booze and ruined your life.

2446 JIMMY [stammers]: I--I'm talking to Bess. Will you
2447 kindly keep out of [my affairs]--[with a pitiful
2448 defiance] My life is not ruined!

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.

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]

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.

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

BESS HOPE: What did you do to this booze--that's what we'd like to hear. Bejeez, ya done something--there's no life or kick in it now. Ain't that right, Jimmy?

JIMMY [in a lifeless voice]: Yes--quite right--it was all a stupid lie--my nonsense about tomorrow. Naturally, they would never give me my position back--I would never dream of asking them--it would be hopeless. I didn't resign--I was fired for drunkenness--and that was years ago. I'm much worse now--and it was absurd of me to excuse my drunkenness by pretending it was my wife's adultery that ruined my life. As Hickey guessed, I was a drunkard before that--long before. I discovered early that living frightened me when I was sober. I don't know why I married Marjorie--I can't even remember now if she was pretty--she was a blonde, I think, but I couldn't swear to it--I had some idea of wanting a home perhaps--but, of course, I much preferred the nearest pub. Why Marjorie married me, God knows--she soon found I much preferred drinking all night with my pals to being in bed with her. So, naturally, she was unfaithful. I didn't blame her--I really didn't care--I was glad to be free--even grateful to her, I think, for giving me such a good tragic excuse to drink as much as I damn well pleased.

NARRATOR: He stops like a mechanical doll that has run down. No one gives any sign of having heard him and a pall of heavy silence falls over the gang.

A pair of men quietly approach the bar. One pulls back his coat to show his badge.

DETECTIVE #1: Guy named Hickman here?

ROCKY: Tink I know de names of all de bums in here?

DETECTIVE #2: Listen, you--this is murder--don't be a sap--it was Hickman himself phoned in and said we'd find him here, around two.

ROCKY [dully]: So dat's who he phoned to. [He shrugs his shoulders.] Aw right, if he asked for it. He's dat one dere. And if yuh want a confession all yuh got to do is listen--he'll be tellin' all about it soon--yuh can't stop de bastard talkin'.

HICKEY [suddenly bursts out] I've got to tell ya--your being the way you are now gets my goat--it's all wrong--it puts things in my mind--about myself--it makes me

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.

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

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

[The gang laughs eagerly]

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

[Many drinks are poured.]

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

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

THE GENERAL: Vhat's all!

JIMMY/THE CAPTAIN/WILLIE: Finest drummer!

ED/MAC/JOE: Best scout!

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

[They all drink.]

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

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

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

CORA [tipsily]: Well, I thank Gawd me and Chuck did all we could to humor de poor nut. Jeez, imagine us goin' off like we really meant to git married, when we ain't 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.

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