

ROLE: **LARRY**

LARRY: The play's "Foolosopher." Larry is a man about 60 with a dry, sardonic wit. Once a member of the Anarchist "Movement" and lover of Parritt's Movement-devoted mother, he now drinks away his remaining years at the bar. He claims not to have a pipe dream but to be a detached observer—"in the grandstand". He can be kindhearted to his friends but is quick to anger. He is bothered by Hickey's need to strip the men of their dreams and is the salesman's harshest critic. Parritt seeks Larry out as a father figure but Larry wants none of it; he eventually tells Parritt he ought to commit suicide to atone for turning his Mother in.

3 takes + pickups = \$1,200.

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 LARRY LINES 378-422

LARRY LINES BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE

NARRATOR: Welcome to By Mouth...bringing classic plays to sonic life...in their essence.

By Mouth presents: The Iceman Cometh by Eugene O'Neill.

The year: 1912. The setting: New York City.

We're in the back room of Hope's Saloon & Rooming House.

A dirty black curtain separates it from the bar. This-- along with an crusty, old sandwich on every table-- allows liquor to be served after hours due to a legal technicality.

Strewn over four tables, passed out drunk, are the usual gang: nine male barflys who room upstairs-- and their bark-but-no-bite, sixty-year-old, female proprietor and benefactor, Bess Hope.

Rocky, the night bartender, enters through the curtain and stands looking over the back room.

ROCKY [signals to Larry cautiously]: Sstt.

NARRATOR: Opening his eyes to check on Bess--and nod-- is Larry. Rocky goes back to the bar and returns with a bottle of whiskey and a glass.

ROCKY [in a low voice out of the side of his mouth]: Make it fast.

NARRATOR: Larry pours a drink and gulps it down. Rocky takes the bottle and puts it on the table.

ROCKY: Don't want de Boss to get wise when she's got one o' her tightwad buns on. [chuckles] "Not a damned drink on de house," she tells me, "and all dese bums got to pay up dir room rent--beginnin' tomorrow," she says. Jeez, yuh'd tink she meant it!

LARRY [grinning]: I'll be glad to pay up--tomorrow. And I know my fellow inmates will promise the same. [with half-drunken mockery] It'll be a great day for them, tomorrow. Their ships will come in, loaded to the gills with cancelled regrets, and promises fulfilled and clean slates and new leases!

ROCKY:[cynically]: Yeah, and a ton of hop!

LARRY: Have you no respect for religion, you unrepentant Wop? So what if their favoring breeze has the stink of nickel whiskey, and their sea is a growler of lager and

39 ale. And their ships are long since looted and scuttled
40 on the bottom? To hell with the truth! It's irrelevant
41 and immaterial, as the lawyers say. The lie of the
42 pipe dream is what gives life to the whole mad
43 lot of us, drunk or sober. And that's enough wisdom to
44 give ya for one drink of rot-gut.

45 ROCKY: De old Foolosopher, like Hickey calls yuh,
46 ain't yuh? I s'pose you don't fall for no pipe dream?

47 LARRY [a bit stiffly]: I don't, no. Mine are all
48 dead and buried behind me. What I do have is the
49 comforting fact that death is a fine long sleep,
50 and it can't come soon enough.

51 ROCKY: Just hangin' around hopin' you croak, are yuh?
52 Well, I'm bettin' you'll have a good long wait.
53 Jeez, somebody'll have to take an axe to croak you!

54 LARRY [grins]: Yes, it's my bad luck to be cursed with a
55 constitution even Bess's booze can't corrode.

56 ROCKY: De old anarchist wise guy knows all de answers!

57 LARRY [frowns]: Forget the anarchist part--I'm through
58 with the movement--a long time ago. I saw men didn't
59 want be saved--that would mean they'd have to give up
60 greed, and they'll never pay that price. So I said:
61 God bless, and may the best man win and die of gluttony!
62 And I took a seat in the grandstand to observe the
63 other cannibals.

64 NARRATOR: Larry shakes his buddy Hugo.

65 LARRY [chuckling]: Ain't I telling the truth,
66 Comrade Hugo?

67 ROCKY: Aw, fer Christ sake...

68 NARRATOR: Raising his head, Hugo peers through thick
69 glasses.

70 HUGO [thick German accent]: Capitalist swine! Bourgeois
71 stool pigeons! Have the slaves no right to speak even?
72 [grins playfully] Hello, leedle Rocky--leedle monkey-
73 face--vere are your slave girls? [abruptly bullying
74 tone] Don't be a fool--lend me a dollar--damned
75 bourgeois Wop--buy me a trink!

76 NARRATOR: His head falls--and he's asleep again.

77 ROCKY [exasperated not angry]: He's lucky we know him--
78 or he'd wake up every morning in a hospital.

79 LARRY: No one takes him seriously.

80 ROCKY: He's gonna pull dat slave-girl stuff on me once
81 too often. [defensively] Hell, yuh'd tink I was a pimp or
82 sometin'--everybody knows me knows I ain't--I'm a
83 bahtender. Dem tarts, Margie and Poirl, dey're just a
84 side line to pick up some extra dough--strictly
85 business. I fix de cops for dem so's dey can hustle
86 widout gettin' pinched. Hell, dey'd be in the clink if
87 it weren't fer me. And I don't beat dem up like a pimp
88 would--I treat dem fine. So what if I do take deir
89 dough--dey'd on'y trow it away. Tarts can't hang on to
90 dough--me, I'm a bahtender and I work hard for my livin'
91 in dis dump--you know dat, Larry.

92 LARRY [flatteringly]: A shrewd business man, who doesn't
93 miss any opportunity to get on in the world. That's what
94 I'd call you.

95 ROCKY [pleased]: Sure ting--dat's me--have another,
96 Larry.

97 NARRATOR: Larry pours himself another drink from the
98 bottle.

99 ROCKY: Yuh'd tink dese bums didn't have a good bed
100 upstairs to go to. Scared if dey hit de hay de wouldn't
101 be here when Hickey showed up and dey'd miss a coupla
102 drinks. Dat's what keeps you up too, ain't it?

103 LARRY: It's not so much--for me--the hope of booze, if
104 you can believe that. It's that Hickey is such a great
105 one for making a joke of everything--it cheers me up.

106 ROCKY: Yeah, he's some kidder! Remember how he woiks up
107 dat gag about his wife, when he's cockeyed, cryin' over
108 her picture and den springin' it on yuh all of a sudden
109 dat he left her in de hay wid de iceman? [laughs] What's
110 happened to him? Yuh could set yer watch by his
111 periodicals before dis. Always a coupla days before
112 Bess's birthday party, and now he's only got tonight to
113 make it. Dis dump is like de moigue wid all dese bums
114 passed out.

115 NARRATOR: Willie jerks and twitches in his sleep.

116 WILLIE [mumbling from his dream]: It's a lie! It's a
117 lie!

ROCKY [frowning]: Jeez I've seen him bad before but never this bad. Look at dat get-up. Sold his suit and shoes at Solly's two days ago. Solly give him two bucks and a bum outfit. Yesterday, he sells de bum one back to Solly fer four bits and gets dese rags to put on. Now he's through. Solly's final edition he wouldn't take back fer nuttin'.

LARRY: It's a great game, the pursuit of happiness.

ROCKY: De Boss dunno what to do about him. She called up Willie's old lady's lawyer like she always does when Willie gets licked. Yuh remember dey used to send somebody down to bring him somewheres to dry out? This time the lawyer says the old lady's off Willie for keeps--that he can go to hell.

LARRY: I think he's knocking on the door right now.

WILLIE [yelling in his nightmare]: It's a God-damned lie! [begins to sob]

ROCKY: Hey you! Cut out de noise!

NARRATOR: Proprietor Bess Hope opens one eye over her spectacles.

BESS HOPE: Who's that yellin'?

ROCKY: Willie, Boss. De Brooklyn boys is after him again.

BESS HOPE: Well, why don't you give the poor bugger a drink to keep him quiet? Bejeez, can't I get a wink of sleep in my own back room.

ROCKY [indignantly to Larry in a low voice]: Listen to that blind and deef old gal, will yuh? She give me strict orders not to let Willie have no more drinks, no matter what—

NARRATOR: Bess puts her hand to her ear.

BESS HOPE: What's that? I can't hear you. [Then drowsily irascible] You're a cockeyed liar. Never refused a drink to anyone needed it bad in my life! Told you to use your judgement. You're too busy thinking up ways to cheat me. Oh, I ain't as blind as you think--I can still see a cash register bejeez!

ROCKY [grins at her affectionately]: Sure, Boss. [flatteringly] Swell chance of foolin' you!

BESS HOPE: I'm wise to ya. Bejeez, you're a burglar not a barkeep. Laughin' behind my back, tellin' people you throw money up in the air and whatever sticks to the ceilin' is my share! A fine crook you are--you'd steal the pennies off your dead mother's eyes!

ROCKY: Aw, Boss...

BESS HOPE [more drowsily]: I'll fire ya, bejeez, if you think you can play me for an easy mark. No one ever played Bess Hope for a sucker!

ROCKY [aside to Larry]: No one but everybody.

BESS HOPE [eyes shut again--mutters]: Least you could do is keep things quiet--

NARRATOR: Soon, Bess is asleep again.

WILLIE [pleading]: Give me a drink, Rocky--Bess said it was all right.

ROCKY: Den grab it--it's right under your nose.

NARRATOR: With twitching hands, Willie takes the bottle, tilts it to his lips and gulps down the whiskey.

ROCKY [sharply]: When--when! [grabs bottle] I didn't say take a bath!

LARRY: Leave him be, poor devil. A half pint in one swig will fix him for a while--if it doesn't kill him.

ROCKY: Aw right--it ain't my booze.

JOE: Whose booze--gimme some. Where's Hickey? What time's it, Rocky?

ROCKY: Time you begun to sweep up de bar.

JOE: I was dreamin' Hickey come in, crackin' one of his drummer's jokes, wavin' a big bankroll and we was all goin' be drunk for two weeks. [Suddenly his eyes go wide.] Wait a minute--I got an idea--say, Larry, how 'bout dat young guy came to look you up last night and rented a room? Where's he at?

LARRY: In his room--asleep. Anyway, he's broke.

JOE: Dat what he told ya? Me and Rocky knows different. Had a roll--didn't he--when he paid his room rent--I seen it.

ROCKY: Yeah, he flashed it like he forgot and den tried to hide it quick.

LARRY: Huh...

ROCKY: I figgered he don't belong, but he said he was a friend of yours.

LARRY: He's a liar--I wouldn'ta known him if he hadn't told me who he was. His mother and I were friends years ago. [Hesitates--then lowers voice] You've read in the papers about that bombing on the Coast where several people got killed? Well, the one woman they pinched, Rosa Parritt, is his mother. They'll be coming up for trial soon, and they have no chance--she'll get life, I'm sure. I'm telling you this so you'll know why the boy acts a bit strange, and not jump on him. He must be hit hard--he's her only kid.

ROCKY [nods--then thoughtfully]: So why ain't he out dere stickin' by her?

LARRY [frowns]: Maybe there's a good reason.

ROCKY [after a pause, understandingly]: Sure, I get it. [then wonderingly] But, den what kind of sap is he to hang on to his right name?

LARRY [irritably]: I'm tellin' ya I don't know anything and I don't want to know. To hell with the Movement and everybody connected to it!

JOE: If dere's one ting more'n annuder I cares nuttin' about, it's the Movement. [chuckles--reminiscently] Reminds me of an ahgument me and a guy has the udder night. He's drunk and I'm drunker. He says, "Socialist and Anarchist, we ought to shoot dem dead." I says, "Hold on, you talk 's if Anarchists and Socialists was de same." "Dey is," he says. "Dey's both no-good bastards." "No, dey ain't," I says. "De Anarchist drinks but never buys, and if he do get a nickel, he blows it on bombs, and wouldn't give you nothin'. But de Socialist, if he gets ten bucks, he's bound by his religion to split it wid ya fifty-fifty." So don't shoot no Socialists while I'm around. Of course, if dey's broke, den dey's no-good bastards, too.

LARRY: By God, Joe, you've got all the beauty of human nature and the practical wisdom of the world in that one story.

ROCKY: Larry ain't de on'y wise guy in dis dump, hey, Joe?

[Sound of footsteps]

NARRATOR: Rocky turns as Parritt appears from the hall. Glancing around defensively, Parritt sees Larry then comes forward.

PARRITT: Hello, Larry.

NARRATOR: He nods to Rocky and Joe.

PARRITT: Hello.

LARRY [without cordiality]: What's up?

PARRITT: Couldn't sleep. Thought I might as well see if you were around.

LARRY [not friendly]: Sit down and join the bums then.

[Parritt sits]

PARRITT: I get you--but, hell, I'm just about broke. [Brief pause] Oh, I know you guys saw-- You think I got a roll--well, you're wrong, I'll show ya. [Takes out small wad of dollar bills] It's all ones--and I've got to live on it till I get a job. [Then defensively] You think I fixed up a phony, don't you? Why the hell would I? You don't get rich doing what I've been doing. Ask Larry--you're lucky in the Movement if you have enough to eat.

ROCKY: What's de song and dance about--we ain't said nuttin'.

PARRITT: Just don't want you to think I'm a tight-wad--I'll buy a drink if you want one.

JOE: If? When I don't want a drink, you call de morgue, tell dem come take Joe's body away, 'cause he's sure enuf dead. Gimme de bottle quick, Rocky, before he changes his mind!

NARRATOR: Rocky passes him a bottle and glass. Pouring a brimful drink, Joe tosses it down and passes the bottle and glass to Larry.

ROCKY: What're you having?

PARRITT: Nothing--I'm on the wagon. What's the damage?

ROCKY: Fifteen cents.

270 [Makes change from pocket.]

271 PARRITT: Must be some booze!

272 LARRY: It's cyanide cut with carbolic acid to give it a

273 mellow flavor. To luck!

274 NARRATOR: While Larry drinks, Rocky squeezes through the

275 tables and disappears behind the curtain.

276 JOE: Well, dat well run dry. No hope til Bess's birthday

277 party. 'Less Hickey shows up. [to Larry] If Hickey comes

278 Larry, you wake me up if you has to bat me wid a chair.

279 NARRATOR: Joe settles himself and goes back to sleep.

280 PARRITT: Who's Hickey?

281 LARRY: A hardware drummer. Old friend of Bess and the

282 gang. Comes here twice a year on a periodical and blows

283 all his money.

284 PARRITT: Must be hard up for a place to hang out.

285 LARRY: It has it's pluses for him. He never runs into

286 anyone he knows in his business here.

287 PARRITT: Yeah, that's what I want, too--like I told ya

288 last night.

289 LARRY: You did a lot of hinting--you didn't tell me

290 anything.

291 PARRITT: You can't guess? [changing subject abruptly]

292 I've been in some dumps on the Coast but this takes the

293 cake. What kind of joint is this, anyway?

294 LARRY: Why, it's the No Chance Saloon. The Bedrock Bar,

295 The End of the Line Cafe. Don't you notice the beautiful

296 calm of the atmosphere? That's because it's the last

297 harbor--nobody here has to worry about where they're

298 going next, because there's no farther they can go.

299 No, you couldn't find a better place for lyin' low.

300 PARRITT: I'm glad, Larry--I ain't been feelin too good--

301 that business on the Coast--it knocked me off base, and

302 since then it's been no fun dodgin' around the country,

303 thinking every guy I see might be a cop.

304 LARRY: Well, you're safe here--the cops ignore this

305 dump--they think it's as harmless as a graveyard--

306 and, by God, they're right.

PARRITT: Christ, Larry, was I glad to find you. "If I can only find Larry," I kept saying to myself. "He's the one guy in the world who can...understand."

LARRY [After a pause]: Understand what?

PARRITT: Why, all I've been through. [looks away] Oh, I know what you're thinkin', this guy has a hell of a nerve--I haven't seen him since he was a kid--I forgot he was alive. But I never forgot you, Larry--you were the only friend of Mother's who ever paid any attention to me--all the others were too busy with the Movement. You used to take me on your knee and tell me stories and crack jokes and make me laugh. You'd ask me questions and take what I said seriously. I got to feel in the years you lived with us that, well, you'd taken the place of my Old Man. [embarrassedly] But, hell, that sounds like a lot of mush--I'm sure you don't remember a damned thing about it.

LARRY [moved in spite of himself]: I remember well--
you were a serious, lonely little bugger. [resenting being moved, changes subject] How is it they didn't pick
you up when they got your mother and the rest?

PARRITT: I wasn't around--and as soon as I heard, I went underground. You've noticed my duds--it's a disguise, sort of. I hung around pool rooms and gambling joints and whore houses, where they'd never look for a Wobblie.

LARRY: But the papers say the cops got 'em all dead to
rights, that they knew every move before it was made.
That somebody inside the Movement must have tipped 'em
off.

NARRATOR: Parritt slowly turns to look Larry straight in the eyes.

PARRITT: Yeah, I...guess that must be true, Larry.
I guess whoever it was made a bargain with the cops to
keep them out of it.

LARRY: I hate to believe it of any in the Movement--
I know they're damned fools, as greedy for power as the
worst capitalist they attack--but I'd swear there wasn't
a yella stool pigeon among them.

PARRITT: I'd a sworn that, too, Larry.

LARRY: I hope his soul rots in hell, whoever it is!

347 PARRITT [uncertain]: Yes.

348 LARRY [after a pause]: How did you find me?

349 PARRITT: I found out through Mother.

350 LARRY: I asked her not to tell anyone.

351 PARRITT: She didn't. But she kept all your letters and
352 I found where she hid them in her flat--I sneaked
353 up there one night after she was arrested.

354 LARRY: I'd never have thought she'd be the one to keep
355 letters.

356 PARRITT: Me neither. There's nothing soft or sentimental
357 about Mother.

358 LARRY: I never answered her last letters. I haven't
359 written her in a couple of years--or anyone else.

360 PARRITT: It's funny Mother kept in touch with you so
361 long. When she's finished with someone, she's finished.
362 And you know how she feels about the Movement. Anyone
363 who loses faith in it is dead to her--a Judas who ought
364 to be boiled in oil. Yet she seemed to forgive you.

365 LARRY [sardonically] She didn't--she wrote to denounce
366 me and try to bring the sinner to repentance--to belief
367 again in the faith.

368 PARRITT: What made you leave the Movement, Larry? Was it
369 because of Mother?

370 LARRY: What the hell put that in your head?

371 PARRITT: Nothing--except I remember what a fight you had
372 with her before you left.

373 LARRY: If you do, I don't. If we did quarrel, it was
374 because I told her I'd become convinced that the
375 Movement was just a beautiful pipe dream.

376 PARRITT [with a strange smile]: I don't remember it that
377 way.

378 LARRY: Then you can blame your imagination--and forget
379 it. [changes subject abruptly] You asked me why I quit
380 the Movement? I had a lot of good reasons. One was
381 myself. Another was my comrades. The last was the breed
382 of swine called men in general. For myself, I was forced
383 to admit, after thirty years devotion to the Cause, that
384 I was never cut out for it. I am condemned to be one of

those who has to see all sides of a question. When you're damned like that, the questions multiply until in the end it's all question and no answer. As history proves, to be a success at anything, especially revolution, you have to wear blinders like a horse and only see straight in front of you. You have to see, too, that this is all black and that is all white. As for my comrades in the Cause, I felt as Horace Walpole did about England, that he could love it if it weren't for the people in it. [chuckles--then with irritation] Well, that's why I quit the Movement, if it leaves you any wiser.

PARRITT: Sure, I see. But I'll bet Mother's always thought it was because of her. You know her, Larry--to hear her talk, you'd think she was the Movement.

LARRY [puzzled and repelled--sharply]: That's a hell of a way for you to talk, after what just happened to her!

PARRITT: Don't get me wrong, Larry--I was only kidding. I've said the same thing to her lots of time to kid her. But you're right--I forgot--she's in jail. It doesn't seem real--she's always been so free, so...I don't wanna think about it.

LARRY [covering up the fact he's moved--clears throat]:

PARRITT [changing the subject]: What have you been doing all these years since you left the Coast, Larry?

LARRY: I've been a philosophical drunken bum and proud of it. [tone abruptly sharpens] Listen, I hope you've deduced I have my own reasons for evading the impertinent questions of a stranger--for that's all you are to me. I've a strong hunch you've come here expecting something from me. I'm warning you, so there'll be no misunderstanding, that I have nothing left to give, and I want to be left alone, and I'll thank you to keep your life to yourself. I have no answer to give anyone, not even myself. Unless you call what Heine wrote in his poem to morphine an answer. [quoting sardonically] "Lo, sleep is good; better is death; in sooth, The best of all were never to be born."

PARRITT [shrinks in fright]: That's a hellava answer.

LARRY [pause; then forcing casual tone]: Don't suppose you've had much chance to hear news of your mother since she's been in jail?

PARRITT: No, no, no chance. [hesitates--then blurts out]
I don't think she wants to hear from me--we had a fight
just before--she bawled me out--said I was going around
with tarts--I told her, "You've always been a free
woman, you never let anything stop you from--"
[checks himself--then hurriedly] That made her sore--
she said she wouldn't of given a damn except she'd begun
to suspect I was losing interest in the Movement.

LARRY: And were you?

PARRITT: Sure! I'm no fool--I couldn't go on forever
believing that gang was going to change the world by
shooting off their traps on soapboxes and sneaking
around blowing up a lousy building or two. I got wise,
Larry--same as you. That's why I came--I knew you'd
understand.

HUGO [declaims aloud in guttural style]: "The days grow
hot, O Babylon! 'Tis cool beneath thy villow trees!"
[not recognizing Parritt] Who are you? Gottammed stool
pigeon!

PARRITT [startled]: What--you can't call me that--you
lousy bum!

HUGO [recognizing him now; teasing]: Oh, hello, little
Parritt--leedle monkey-face--I did not recognize you.
You have grown big boy. How is your mother? [breaks into
wheedling/bullying tone] Don't be a fool--loan me a
dollar--buy me a trink!

PARRITT [with relief]: Sure, I'll buy you a drink, Hugo.
I'm broke but I can afford one for you. I'm sorry I got
sore--I should've remembered when you're soused you call
everyone a stool pigeon. [turns to Larry] Gee, he's
passed out again.[defensively] What's that look for,
Larry? Think I was going to hit him? I've always stood
up for Hugo--especially when people in the movement
wrote him off as drunken has-been. He had the guts to
serve ten years in the can in his own country and get
his eyes ruined in solitary. I'd like to see some of
them here do that. Well, they'll get their chance now--
[hastily to cover] I don't mean...Anyway, tell me
some more about this dump--who are all these tanks?
Who's that guy trying to catch pneumonia?

LARRY: That's The Captain, one-time hero of the British
Army. That scar on his back he got from a native spear.

He displays it whenever he's completely plastered. The bloke opposite him is The General, who led a commando in the Boer War. The two of them met when they came here to work in the war exhibit at the World's Fair and they've been bosom pals ever since. They dream away the hours in happy dispute over the brave days in South Africa when they tried to murder each other. The little guy between 'em was in it, too--correspondent for some English paper. Jimmy Tomorrow we call him. He's the leader of our Tomorrow Movement.

PARRITT: What do they do for a living?

LARRY: As little as possible. Once in a while one of 'em makes a successful touch somewhere, and some of 'em get a few dollars a month from back home on the condition they never come back. For the rest, they live on free lunch and their old friend, Bess Hope.

PARRITT: Must be a tough life.

LARRY: It's not. Oh, they manage to get drunk, by hook or by crook. In fact, I've never known more contented men. Same applies to Bess and her two cronies there. She's so satisfied with life she's not set foot out of this place since her husband died twenty years ago. The place has a decent trade from the Market folks and waterfront workers across the street, so in spite of Bess's thirst and her generous heart, she comes out even. Don't ask me what her friends work at because they don't--except at being her guests. The one facing this way is her brother-in-law Ed. He once worked for the circus. The other one, Mac, was a police lieutenant back in the flush times of graft. But he got too greedy and when the usual reforms came he was caught red-handed and thrown off the Force. Joe here...his yesterday was in the same flush period. He ran a colored gambling house and was a hell of a sport, so they say. Well, that's the family circle. Except for Rocky the barkeep and his girls, two "ladies of the evening" that room on the third floor.

WILLIE: Why omit me from your Who's Who in Dypsomania, Larry? An unpardonable slight, especially as I am the only inmate of royal blood.[to Parritt--ramblingly] Educated at Harvard, you see--you must have noticed the atmosphere of culture here--my humble contribution. Yes, Generous Stranger--I trust you're generous--I was born

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

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

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

PARRITT: Really?

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

LARRY [sardonically]: Tommorrow.

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

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

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

MAC: You sure would, Bess.

ED: A dead cinch. Everyone knows that.

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

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

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

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

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

771 LARRY [guffaws sardonically]:

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

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

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

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

787 NARRATOR: But soon the three are asleep again.

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

790 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.
21.

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

MAC: Sure, Willie, 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,
Willie.

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

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

ED: Poor Willie 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

There's no use in hanging around this dive, taking care of you and shooing away your snakes, when I don't even get an eye-opener for my trouble.

BESS HOPE: No! Go to hell--or the circus, for all I care. Good riddance bejeez! I'm sick of ya! [then worriedly] Say, Ed, what the hell you think's happened to Hickey? I hope he'll turn up. Always got a million funny stories. You and the other bums are beginning to give me the willies. I'd like a good laugh with old Hickey. [chuckles at old memory] Remember that gag he always pulls about his wife and the iceman? He'd make a cat laugh!

NARRATOR: Rocky appears from behind the bar and begins pushing the black curtain towards the back wall.

ROCKY: Openin' time, Boss. [grumpily]: Why don't you go up to bed? Hickey'd never turn up dis time of de mornin'!

BESS HOPE [starts]: Listen--someone's comin'.

ROCKY [listens]: Ah, dat's on'y my two pigs--it's about time dey showed.

[Rocky walks to the back door.]

BESS HOPE [disappointed]: You keep them dumb broads quiet--I'm going to catch a couple more winks here and I don't want no damn-fool laughin' and screechin'. [grumbling] Never thought I'd see the day when Hope's would have tarts rooming in it--what would Harry think? But I don't let 'em use my rooms for business--and they're good kids--good as anyone else. And they pay their rent, too, which is more than I can say for--Bejeez, Ed, I'll bet Harry is doing somersaults in his grave!

MARGIE (laughs):

ROCKY: Quiet!

MARGIE [glancing around]: Jeez, Poil, it's de Moigue wid all de stiffs on deck. [pause] Hello, Old Wise Guy, ain't you dead yet?

LARRY [grinning]: Not yet, Margie--but I'm waitin'.

MARGIE: Who's de new guy? Friend of yours, Larry? [pause] Wanta have a good time, kid?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1046 CHUCK: Cuz I say so!

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

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

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

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

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

1057 CORA: My, Bess! Such language!

1058 BESS [grunts]: Huh.

1059 [Cora sits.]

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

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

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

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

1071 CORA: Who's de guy wid Larry!

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

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

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

1077 ROCKY: You got nuttin' on us!

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

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

1090 NARRATOR: He kisses Cora and she kisses him.

1091 CORA: Aw, yuh big tramp!

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

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

1283 JIMMY: I don't understand you--I admit I've foolishly
1284 delayed, but as it happens, I'd just made up my mind
1285 that as soon as I could get straightened out--

1286 HICKEY: Fine--that's the spirit! And I'm gonna help you.
1287 You've been damned kind to me, Jimmy, and I wanna prove
1288 how grateful I am. When it's all over and you don't have
1289 to beat yourself up any more, you'll be grateful to me,
1290 too! [pause] And all the rest of you are in the same
1291 boat, one way or another.

1292 LARRY: By God, you've hit the nail on the head, Hickey!
1293 This dump is the Palace of Pipe Dreams!

1294 HICKEY [grins, kidding] Well, well! The Old Grandstand
1295 Foolosopher speaks! You think you're the big exception,
1296 eh? Life don't mean a damn to you any more, does it--
1297 you're retired from the circus--you're just waiting
1298 impatiently for the end--the good, Long Sleep!
1299 [chuckles] Well I think a lot of you, Larry, you old
1300 bastard--I'll try and make an honest man of you, too!

1301 LARRY [stung]: What the devil are you hinting at,
1302 anyway?

1303 HICKEY: You don't have to ask me--do ya?--a wise old guy
1304 like you?

1305 PARRITT [watching Larry's face with satisfaction]:
1306 He's got your number all right, Larry! [to Hickey]
1307 That's the stuff, Hickey--show the old faker up!
1308 He's got no right to sneak out of everything.

1309 HICKEY: Hello. A stranger in our midst. I didn't notice
1310 you before, Brother.

1311 PARRITT: I'm an old friend of Larry's.

1312 NARRATOR: Parritt sees Hickey sizing him up.

1313 PARRITT [defensively]: Well--what are you staring at?

1314 HICKEY: No offense, Brother, I was just trying to
1315 figure-- Haven't we met before someplace?

1316 PARRITT [reassured]: No. First time I've ever been East.

1317 HICKEY: No, you're right--that's not it. In my game,
1318 to be good at it, you teach yourself never to forget
1319 a name or a face--but still--I know I recognized
1320 something about you.

1321 PARRITT [uneasy again]: What are you talking about--
1322 you're nuts.

1323 HICKEY: Don't try to kid me, Boy--I'm a good salesman--
1324 so good the firm was glad to take me back after every
1325 drunk--and what made me good was I could size up anyone.
1326 [frowns, puzzled again] But-- [suddenly good-natured
1327 again] Never mind--I can tell you're having trouble with
1328 yourself and I'll be glad to do anything I can to help a
1329 friend of Larry's.

1330 LARRY: Mind your own business, Hickey. He's nothing to
1331 you--or to me, either.

1332 HICKEY: Hell, don't get sore, Larry--we've always been
1333 good pals, haven't we? I've always liked you a lot.

1334 LARRY: Forget it, Hickey.

1335 HICKEY: Fine--that's the spirit!

1336 NARRATOR: Hickey glances around at the others, who have
1337 forgotten their drinks.

1338 HICKEY: What is this, a funeral? Come on, drink up!

1339 [They all drink.]

1340 HICKEY: Hell, this is a celebration! If anything I've
1341 said sounds too serious, forget it! [He yawns.] I'm not
1342 trying to put anything over on you, boys and girls--
1343 it's just that I now know from experience what a
1344 pipe dream can do to ya--and how relieved and
1345 contented with yourself you feel when you're rid of it.
1346 [yawns again] God, I'm sleepy--that long walk is
1347 startin' to get me. [starts to get up but relaxes again]
1348 No, boys and girls, I never knew what real peace was
1349 until now. You know when you're sick and suffering like
1350 hell and the Doc gives you a shot in the arm, and the
1351 pain goes, and you drift off? [his eyes close] You can
1352 let go at last--let yourself sink to the bottom of the
1353 sea--there's no farther you can go--not a single damned
1354 hope or dream left to nag ya. You'll all know what I
1355 mean after you--[pauses, mumbling] Excuse...all in...got
1356 to grab some...Drink up everybody, on me--

1357 NARRATOR: Sleep overpowers him, chin sagging to his
1358 chest. All stare with uneasy fascination.

1359 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, that's a fine stunt, to go to sleep
1360 on us! [fumingly to the crowd] Well, what the hell's

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 MCoy 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

1623 too gabby. Why don't yuh tell 'em to lay off me--I don't
 1624 want no trouble at de Boss's boithday party.

1625 MARGIE [a victorious gleam in her eye--tauntingly]:
 1626 Aw right, den, yuh poor little Ginny--I'll lay off yuh
 1627 till de party's over if Poil will.

1628 PEARL [tauntingly]: Sure I will--for Bess's sake not
 1629 yours yuh little Wop!

1630 ROCKY [stung]: Say listen youse!

1631 LARRY [bursts into a sardonic laugh]:

1632 ROCKY [transferring anger to him]: Who de hell yuh
 1633 laughin' at, yuh half-dead old stew bum?

1634 CORA [sneeringly]: At himself, he ought to be! Jeez,
 1635 Hickey's sure got his number!

1636 NARRATOR: Ignoring them, Larry turns to Hugo and shakes
 1637 him by the shoulder.

1638 LARRY [in a comically intense, crazy whisper]: Wake up,
 1639 Comrade! The Revolution's starting right in front of you
 1640 and you're sleeping through it! By God it's not to
 1641 Bakunin's ghost you ought to pray in your dreams, but to
 1642 the great Nihilist, Hickey! He's started a movement
 1643 that'll blow up the world!

1644 HUGO [with guttural denunciation]: You, Larry! Renegade!
 1645 Traitor! I will have you shot! [He giggles.] Don't be a
 1646 fool--buy me a trink! [spying a drink in front of him]
 1647 Ah! [he downs it in one gulp--in a low tone of hatred]:
 1648 That bourgeois svine, Hickey--he laughs like good
 1649 fellow, he makes jokes, he dares make hints to me so I
 1650 see vhat he dares to sink. He sinks I am finish, it is
 1651 too late, and so I do not vish the Day come because it
 1652 will not be my Day--oh, I see vhat he sinks--he sinks
 1653 lies even vorse, dat I--

1654 NARRATOR: He stops abruptly with a guilty look--afraid
 1655 he's about to let something slip.

1656 HUGO [vengefully guttural]: I will have him hanged on
 1657 de first lamppost! [abruptly giggling again]: Vhy you so
 1658 serious, leedle monkey-faces? It's all great joke, no?
 1659 So ve get drunk, and ve laugh like hell, and den ve die,
 1660 and de pipe dream vanish! [A bitter mocking contempt
 1661 creeps into his tone.] But be of good cheer, leedle
 1662 stupid peoples! "The days grow hot, O Babylon!"

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

1670 [His head hits the wood table.]

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

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

1674 MARGIE [sneering]: De old wise guy!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1770 PEARL: He coitinly has!

1771 ROCKY: Cut it out, I told yuh!

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

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

1856 HICKEY [grins at him]: That's the spirit, Brother--and
1857 let the lousy slaves drink vinegar!

1858 HUGO [mutters]: Gottamned liar!

1859 NARRATOR: He puts his head back on his arms and
1860 closes his eyes--but this time his customary pass-out
1861 looks like hiding.

1862 LARRY [in a low tone of anger]: Leave Hugo be! He rotted
1863 ten years in prison for his faith--he's earned his
1864 dream. Have you no decency or pity?

1865 HICKEY [quizzically]: Hello, what's this--I thought you
1866 were in the grandstand.

1867 LARRY [dismissive]: Huh.

1868 HICKEY [with simple earnestness]: Listen--Larry--you're
1869 gettin' me all wrong. Hell ya ought to know me better--
1870 I've always been the best-natured slob in the world--
1871 of course I have pity. But now I've seen the light,
1872 it isn't my old kind of pity--the kind yours is--
1873 the kind that lets itself off easy by encouraging some
1874 poor guy to go on kidding himself with a lie--the kind
1875 that leaves the poor slob worse off because it makes him
1876 feel guiltier than ever--so his lying hopes nag at him
1877 and eat at him until he's a rotten skunk in his own
1878 eyes. I know all about that kind of pity. I've had a
1879 bellyful of it in my time, and it's all wrong! [with a
1880 salesman's persuasiveness] No, sir, the kind of pity
1881 I feel now is the kind that will really save the poor
1882 guy, make him content with what he is and quit battling
1883 himself--so he can find peace for the rest of his life.
1884 Oh, I know how you resent the way I have to show you up
1885 to yourself--I don't blame ya--I know from my own
1886 experience it's bitter medicine, facin' yourself in the
1887 mirror with the old false whiskers off--but you'll
1888 forget that, once you're cured--you'll be grateful--when
1889 all at once you find you're able to admit, without
1890 shame, that all the grandstand foolosopher bunk and the
1891 waiting for the Big Sleep stuff is a pipe dream. You'll
1892 say to yourself: I'm just an old man who's scared of
1893 life--and even more scared of dyin'--so I'm stayin'
1894 drunk and hanging on to life at any price--and what of
1895 it? Then you'll know what real peace means, Larry,
1896 because you won't be scared of life or death any more--
1897 you simply won't give a damn. Any more than I do!

LARRY: **By God, I'm starting to think you've gone mad!**
[with a rush of anger] **You're a liar!**

HICKEY [injured]: Why that's no way to talk to an old pal who's trying to help ya. Hell if you really wanted to die, you'd just hop off your fire escape, wouldn't ya? And if you really were in the grandstand, you wouldn't be showin' pity to everyone. Oh, I know the truth is tough at first--it was for me. All I ask is for you ta give it a chance. I'll absolutely guarantee--Hell, Larry, I'm no fool--ya think I'd deliberately set out to get under everyone's skin and put myself in dutch with my old pals--if I wasn't certain, from my own experience, it would mean happiness in the end for all of you? [long pause] As for my being bughouse--hell, I'm too damned sane--I can size up guys--and turn 'em inside out--better than I ever could. Even where they're strangers like that Parritt kid. He's licked, Larry. I think there's only one possible way out you can help him take. That is, if you have the right kind of pity for him.

LARRY [uneasily]: **What do you mean?** [attempting indifference] **I'm not advising him. Except to leave me out of his troubles. He's nothing to me.**

HICKEY [shakes his head]: I think you'll find he won't agree. He'll keep after you until he makes you help him. Because he has to be punished--so he can forgive himself. He's lost all his guts--he can't manage it alone--you're the only one he can turn to.

LARRY: **For the love of God, mind your own business!**
[with forced scorn] **A lot you know about him--he's hardly spoken to you!**

HICKEY: No, that's right--but I do know a lot about him just the same. I've had hell inside me--I can spot it in others. [frowning] Maybe that's what gives me the feeling there's something familiar about him, something between us. [He shakes his head.] No, it's more than that--I can't figure it. Tell me about him. He's not married, is he?

LARRY: **No.**

HICKEY: But he's mixed up with some woman. I don't mean tarts--I mean the real love stuff that crucifies you.

1939 LARRY [encouraging him along this line]: Maybe you're
 1940 right--I wouldn't be surprised.

1941 HICKEY: I see--you think I'm on the wrong track and
 1942 you're glad I am. Because then I won't suspect whatever
 1943 he did is about the Great Cause. That's another lie you
 1944 tell yourself, Larry, that the Cause means nothing to
 1945 you any more.

1946 LARRY [blows thru lips in dismissal]:

1947 HICKEY: But that isn't what's got him stopped---it's
 1948 what's behind that. And it's a woman--I recognize the
 1949 symptoms.

1950 LARRY [sneers]: And you're the one who's never wrong!
 1951 Don't be a damned fool--his trouble is he was brought up
 1952 a devout believer in the Movement--and now he's lost his
 1953 faith--it's a shock, but he's young and he'll soon find
 1954 another dream just as good. [sardonically] Or as bad.

1955 HICKEY: All right, I'll let it go at that. But I'm glad
 1956 he's here because he'll help me make you wake up to
 1957 yourself. I don't even like the guy, or the feeling
 1958 there's anything between us--but you'll find I'm right
 1959 just the same, when you two get to the final showdown.

1960 LARRY: There'll be no showdown! I don't give a tinker's
 1961 damn [what you say]--

1962 HICKEY: Sticking to the old grandstand, eh? Well, I knew
 1963 you'd be the toughest to convince--of all the gang. And
 1964 you're the one I most want to help.

1965 NARRATOR: He puts an arm around Larry's shoulder.

1966 HICKEY: I've always liked you a lot, you old bastard!

1967 NARRATOR: Getting up, he reverts to his bustling party
 1968 self--glancing at his watch.

1969 HICKEY: Well, well, not much time before twelve--let's
 1970 get busy, boys and girls. [Pause] Cake all set--good.
 1971 And my presents, and yours girls--and Chuck's and
 1972 Rocky's--fine. Bess'll certainly be touched by your
 1973 thought of her. [back to the girls.] You go in the bar,
 1974 Pearl and Margie, and get the grub ready so it can be
 1975 brought right in. There'll be some drinking and toasts
 1976 first, of course--we'll use the champagne for that, so
 1977 get it all set. I'll go upstairs and root everybody out.
 1978 Bess'll be the last--I'll come back with her. Somebody

1979 light the candles on the cake when you hear us coming,
1980 and Cora you start playing Bess's favorite song. Hustle
1981 now, everybody--we want this to come off in stye.

1982 CORA: Jeez, I ain't laid my mits on a box in Gawd knows
1983 when.

1984 [She begins to play "The Sunshine of Paradise Alley"]

1985 LARRY [suddenly laughs--in his comically intense, crazy
1986 tone] By God, it's the second feast of Belshazzar, with
1987 Hickey doing the writing on the wall!

1988 CORA [while playing]: Aw, shut up, Old Cemetery--always
1989 beefin'!

1990 NARRATOR: Willie emerges from the hall in a terrible
1991 state--his face pasty, his eyes sick and haunted.

1992 CORA: If it ain't Prince Willie! [then kindly] Gee, kid,
1993 yuh look sick--git a coupla shots in yuh.

1994 WILLIE [tensely]: No, thanks--not now--I'm tapering off.

1995 NARRATOR: He sits down next to Larry.

1996 CORA [astonished]: What d'yuh know--he means it!

1997 WILLIE [confidentially--in a low shaken voice] It's been
1998 hell up in that damned room, Larry! The things I've
1999 imagined! [He shudders.] I thought I'd go crazy. [with
2000 pathetic boastful pride] But I've got it beat now. By
2001 tomorrow morning I'll be on the wagon. I'll get back my
2002 clothes the first thing. Hickey's loaning me the money.
2003 I'm going to do what I've always said--go to the D.A.'s
2004 office. He was a good friend of my Old Man's. He was
2005 only assistant, then. He was in on the graft, but my Old
2006 Man never squealed on him. So he certainly owes it to me
2007 to give me a chance. And he knows I was a brilliant
2008 law student. [self-reassuringly] Oh, I know I can make
2009 good, now I'm getting off the booze forever. [moved]
2010 I owe a lot to Hickey--he's made me wake up to myself--
2011 see what a fool-- It wasn't nice to face but-- [with
2012 bitter resentment] It isn't what he says--it's what you
2013 feel behind--what he hints--Christ, you'd think all I
2014 really wanted to do with my life was sit here and stay
2015 drunk. [with hatred] I'll show him!

2016 LARRY--[masking pity behind a sardonic tone] If you want
2017 my advice, you'll put the nearest bottle to your mouth
2018 until you don't give a damn about Hickey!

NARRATOR: Willie stares at a bottle greedily--tempted.

WILLIE [bitterly]: That's fine advice--I thought you were my friend!

NARRATOR: Willie moves to the end of the table, where he sits shaking in misery--chin to chest.

Parritt enters from the hall looking frightened. Relieved when he sees Larry, he slips into the chair next to him. Larry pretends not to notice.

PARRITT: Gee, I'm glad you're here, Larry. That damned fool Hickey knocked on my door. I opened it because I thought it was you--and he came busting in and made me come downstairs. I don't know what for--I don't belong at this birthday celebration--I don't know this gang and I don't want to be mixed up with 'em. All I came here for was to find yo.

LARRY [tensely]: I've warned you--

PARRITT [goes on as if he hadn't heard]: Can't you make Hickey mind his own business? I don't like that guy--the way he acts, you'd think he had something on me. Why, just now he pats me on the shoulder, like he was sympathizing with me, and says, "I know how it is, son, but you can't hide from yourself, not even here on the bottom of the sea--you've got to face the truth and then do what must be done for your own peace and the happiness of all concerned." What did he mean by that, Larry?

LARRY [snaps]: How the hell would I know?

PARRITT: Then he grins and says, "Never mind. Larry's getting wise to himself. I think you can rely on his help in the end. He'll have to choose between livin' and dyin', and he'll never choose to die while there's a breath left in the old bastard!" And then he laughed like it was a joke on yo. [pause] Well, what do you say to that, Larry?

LARRY: I say nothing. Except you're a bigger fool than he is to listen to him.

PARRITT [with a sneer]: Is that so? He's no fool where you're concerned--he's got your number, all right!

NARRATOR: Larry's face tightens but he keeps silent.

PARRITT: Oh, I don't mean that. But you keep acting as if you were sore at me, and that gets my goat. Ya see what I want most is to be friends with you, Larry. I haven't a single friend left in the world. I hoped you--[bitterly] And you could be, too, without it hurting you. You ought to, for Mother's sake--she really loved you. You loved her, too, didn't you?

LARRY [tensely]: Leave what's dead in the grave.

PARRITT: I suppose because I was only a kid, you didn't think I knew about you and her. Well, I did. I knew about all the boyfriends she's had, even though she tried to pretend they weren't. That was silly for a free Anarchist woman, wasn't it--bein' ashamed of being free?

LARRY: Shut your damned trap!

PARRITT [guiltily but with a strange undertone of satisfaction]: Yes, I know I shouldn't say that now--I keep forgetting she isn't free any more. [He pauses.] Do you know, Larry, you're the one she cared the most about? Anyone else who left the Movement would have been dead to her, but she couldn't forget you. She'd always make excuses for you. I used to try and get her goat, I'd say, "Larry's got brains and yet he thinks the Movement is just a crazy pipe dream." She'd blame it on booze getting you--she'd kid herself that you'd give up booze and come back to the Movement--tomorrow! She'd say, "Larry can't kill in himself a faith he's given his life to, not without killing himself." [He grins sneeringly.] How about it, Larry? Was she right? [Pause.] I guess what she really meant was, come back to her. [chuckle] She was always getting the Movement mixed up with herself. But I'm sure she really loved you, Larry. As much as she could love anyone besides herself. But she wasn't faithful to you, even at that, was she? That's why you finally walked out on her, isn't it? I remember the last fight you two had--I was listening--I was on your side, even if she was my mother, because I liked you so much--you'd been so good to me--like a father. I remember her putting on her high-and-mighty free-woman stuff, saying you were still a slave to bourgeois morality and you thought a woman you loved was a piece of property you owned. I remember you got mad and told her, "I don't like living with a whore, if that's what you mean!"

2101 LARRY [bursts out]: You lie--I never called her that!

2102 PARRITT [goes on as if Larry hadn't spoken]: I think
2103 that's why she still respects you, because it was you
2104 who left her. You were the only one to beat her to it.
2105 She got sick of the others and I don't think she ever
2106 cared much about them, anyway--she just had to keep on
2107 having lovers to prove to herself how free she was.
2108 [He pauses--then with bitter repulsion] It made home a
2109 lousy place--I felt like you did about it--it was like
2110 living in a whorehouse--only worse, because she didn't
2111 have to make her living [from it]--

2112 LARRY: You bastard--she's your mother--have you no
2113 shame?

2114 PARRITT [bitterly]: No--she brought me up to believe
2115 that family-respect is all bourgeois, property-owning
2116 crap--why should I be ashamed?

2117 LARRY [moving to get up]: I've had enough!

2118 PARRITT [catching his arm]: No, don't leave me--please!
2119 I promise I won't mention her again! [Larry sinks back
2120 into his chair.] I only did it to make you understand
2121 better--I know this isn't the place to-- Why didn't you
2122 come up to my room, like I asked you? I kept waiting.
2123 We could talk over everything there.

2124 LARRY: There's nothing to talk over!

2125 PARRITT: But I've got to talk to you. Or I'll talk to
2126 Hickey. He won't let me alone! I feel he knows, anyway!
2127 And I know he'd understand, all right--in his way. But I
2128 hate his guts--I don't want anything to do with him!
2129 I'm scared of him, honest. There's something not human
2130 behind his damn grinning and kidding.

2131 LARRY: Ah--you feel that too?

2132 PARRITT [pleadingly]: But I can't go on like this--I've
2133 got to decide what to do--I've got to tell you, Larry!

2134 LARRY [rises again]: I won't listen!

2135 PARRITT [again pulls his arm]: All right--I won't--
2136 don't go!

2137 NARRATOR: Larry allows himself to be pulled down again.

2138 PARRITT [insultingly scornful]: Who do you think you're
2139 kidding? I know you've guessed--

LARRY: I've guessed nothing!

PARRITT: But I want you to guess--I'm glad you have! I know now, since Hickey's been after me, that I meant you to guess from the start. That's why I came here. [hurrying on with an attempt at a plausible frank air that makes what he says seem doubly false] I want you to understand the reason. You see, I began studying American history--I got to admiring Washington and Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln. I began to feel patriotic and love this country. I saw it was the best government in the world, where everybody was equal and had a chance. I saw that all the ideas behind the Movement came from a lot of Russians like Bakunin and Kropotkin and were meant for Europe, but we didn't need them here in a democracy where we were free already. I didn't want this country to be destroyed for a foreign pipe dream--after all, I'm from American pioneer stock--I began to feel like a traitor for helping a lot of cranks and bums and free women plot to overthrow our government. I saw it was my duty to my country [to turn in]--

LARRY [nauseated--turns on him]: You stinking rotten liar! Do you think you can fool me with that hypocrite's blather! [then turning away] I don't give a damn what you did--it's on your head--whatever it was--I don't want to know--and I won't know!

PARRITT [as if Larry had never spoken--falteringly]: But I never thought Mother would be caught. You have to believe that, Larry--you know I never would have [done it if]--

NARRATOR: Drawing a deep breath, Larry closes his eyes--as if he were trying to hammer something into his own brain.

LARRY: All I know is I'm sick of life! I'm through! I've forgotten myself--I'm drowned and happy on the bottom of a bottle. Honor or dishonor, faith or treachery are nothing but the opposites of the same stupidity which is the ruler of life, and in the end they rot into dust in the same grave. Everything's the same meaningless joke to me--grinnin' at me from the same skull of death. So go away--you're wasting your breath--I've forgotten your mother.

2182 PARRITT [jeers angrily]: The old foolosopher, eh?
2183 [spits out contemptuously] You lousy old faker!

2184 LARRY [pleads weakly]: For the love of God, leave me in
2185 peace the little time I have left!

2186 PARRITT: Aw don't pull that pitiful old-man junk on me--
2187 you'll never die as long as there's a free drink of
2188 whiskey left!

2189 LARRY [stung--furiously]: You watch how you try to taunt
2190 me back into life, I warn you! I might remember the
2191 thing they call justice, and the punishment for [ratting
2192 out your]--

2193 NARRATOR: With effort, he checks himself.

2194 LARRY [with an indifference that comes from exhaustion]:
2195 Aw, I'm old and tired--to hell with you--you're as mad
2196 as Hickey, and as big a liar--I don't believe a word you
2197 say to me.

2198 PARRITT [threateningly]: The hell you don't! Wait till
2199 Hickey gets through with you!

2200 NARRATOR: Pearl and Margie enter from behind the bar.
2201 At the sight of them, Parritt instantly becomes
2202 self-conscious and defensive.

2203 MARGIE [jeeringly]: Why, hello, Tightwad Kid. Come to
2204 join de party? Gee, don't he act bashful, Poill?

2205 PEARL: Yeah--especially wid his dough.

2206 THE CAPTAIN [Fight vocalizations/shouts/grunts]:

2207 THE GENERAL [Fight vocalizations/shouts/grunts]:

2208 PEARL: Hey, Rocky! Fight in de hall!

2209 NARRATOR: Rocky and Chuck run from behind the bar and
2210 into the hall.

2211 ROCKY: What de hell?

2212 [The scuffle stops.]

2213 NARRATOR: Rocky appears holding The Captain, followed by
2214 Chuck with a similar hold on The General. Although
2215 they've been drinking, they're both--for them--sober.
2216 Clothes dishelved from the tussle, they are sullen and
2217 angry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

good! I had to get ya to help me--and I saw I couldn't do it alone--not in the time I had. I knew when I came here I wouldn't be able to stay long--I'm leavin' on a trip, see--so I knew I'd have to hustle and use every means I could. [with a joking boastfulness] Why if I had enough time I'd sell my line of salvation to each of ya personally--like in the old days, when I traveled house to house to convince some dame, who was sicking the dog on me, her house wouldn't be properly furnished unless she bought another washer. And I could do it, all right, hell, I know every one of ya, inside and out, by heart. I may've been drunk when I've been here before, but old Hickey could never be so drunk he couldn't see through people. I mean--everyone except himself. And, finally, he had to see through himself, too.

NARRATOR: As he pauses, they stare at him--bitter, uneasy but riveted.

HICKEY [deeply earnest]: Now, I swear I'd never act like I have if I wasn't absolutely sure it'll be worth it to you in the end, after you're rid of the damned guilt that makes you pretend you're something you're not--and the remorse that nags at you and makes you hide behind lousy pipe dreams about tomorrow. You'll be in a today where there is no yesterday or tomorrow to worry you. You won't give a damn what you are any more. I wouldn't say this unless I knew. Because I've got it-- here--now--right in front of you--you can see it! You remember how I used to be! Even with two quarts of rotgut under my belt--joking and singing "Sweet Adeline" I still felt like a rotten skunk. But you can see I don't give a damn about anything now. And I promise you, by the time this day is done, I'll have every one of you feeling the same way! [long pause] Well...I guess that'll be it from me, boys and girls--for the present. So let's get on with the party, eh?

LARRY [sharply]: Wait! [insistently--with a sneer] I think it would help us poor pipe-dreaming sinners if you explained what happened that converted you to this great peace you've found. [with deliberate taunting] I notice you didn't deny it when I asked about the iceman. Did this great revelation of the evil habit of dreaming about tomorrow come to ya after you found your wife was sick of ya?

WILLIE [taunting sneer]: Ah, ha!

2652 HICKEY [quietly]: I'm sorry to tell you, friends--
2653 my dearly beloved wife Evelyn is dead.

2654 [A quick intake of breath is heard from the gang.]

2655 LARRY [aloud to himself with a superstitious shrinking]:
2656 By God, I felt the touch of death on him!

2657 NARRATOR: Then suddenly he's ashamed of himself.

2658 LARRY [stammers]: Forgive me, Hickey--I'd like to cut my
2659 dirty tongue out!

2660 CORA: Sorry, Hickey.

2661 MARGIE: We're sorry, Hickey.

2662 PEARL: Yeah.

2663 HICKEY [in a kindly, reassuring tone]: Now look here,
2664 everybody--don't let this be a wet blanket on Bess's
2665 party. There's no reason-- You're getting me all wrong
2666 see--I don't feel any grief.

2667 NARRATOR: They gaze at him startled.

2668 HICKEY [with convincing sincerity]: No, I'm glad--for
2669 her sake. Because she's at peace--she's rid of me at
2670 last. Hell, I don't have to tell you--you all know what
2671 I was like. You can imagine what she went through,
2672 married to a no-good cheater and drunk like I was. And
2673 there was no way out of it for her. Because she loved
2674 me. But now she's at peace like she always longed to be.
2675 So why should I feel sad? She wouldn't want me to feel
2676 sad. Why, all Evelyn ever wanted out of life was to make
2677 me happy.

2678 [Significant Musical Interlude]

2679 NARRATOR: It's now the morning of Bess's birthday.

2680 Joe moves around, a box of sawdust under his arm--
2681 throwing it onto the floor. His manner is sullen, his
2682 face gloomy. When he runs out of sawdust, he goes behind
2683 the counter and begins cutting loaves of bread.

2684 Behind the bar, Rocky washes glasses--looking sleepy,
2685 irritable and worried.

2686 At a table without a drink, deep in thought, sits Larry.
2687 Next to him, Hugo's asleep on his arms, a whiskey glass
2688 beside his hand.

Next to them sits Parritt, who stares straight ahead--
tense and strained.

Finishing his work, Rocky comes out from behind the bar
and drops wearily into a chair.

ROCKY: Nuttin' now till de noon rush from de Market--
I'm goin' to rest my fanny. [irritably] If I ain't a sap
to let Chuck talk me into workin' his shift. But I got
sick of arguin' wid 'im. I says, "Aw right, git married,
what's it to me?" Hickey's got de bot' of dem bugs.
[bitterly] Some party last night, huh? Jeez, what a
funeral! It was jinxed from de start, but his tellin'
about his wife croakin' put de K.O. on it.

LARRY: Yes, it wasn't a birthday party but a wake!

ROCKY: Him promisin' he'd cut out de bughouse bull about
peace--and den he went on talkin' and talkin'! And all
de gang sneakin' upstairs, leavin' free booze and eats
like dey was poison! Didn't do dem no good neider--he's
been hoppin' from room to room all night. And dis
mornin' he's got his Reform Wave goin' strong--did yuh
notice him drag Jimmy out foist ting to get his laundry
and his clothes pressed so he wouldn't have no excuse?
And he give Willie de dough to buy his stuff back from
Solly's. And all de rest been brushin' and shavin'
demselves wid de shakes.

LARRY [defiantly]: He didn't come to my room!
He's afraid I might ask him a few questions.

ROCKY [scornfully] Yeah? It don't look to me he's scared
of yuh. I'd say you was scared o' him.

LARRY [stung]: You'd lie, then!

PARRITT [jerks round to look at Larry--sneeringly]:
Don't let him kid you, Rocky--he had his door locked--
I couldn't get in, either.

ROCKY: Yeah, who d'yuh tink yuh're kiddin', Larry?
He's showed you up, aw right. Like he says, if yuh was
so anxious to croak, why wouldn't yuh hop off your
fire escape, huh?

LARRY [defiantly]: Because it'd be a coward's way out,
that's why!

PARRITT: He's all quitter, Rocky--he's a old yellow
faker!

LARRY [turns on him]: You lyin' punk--remember what I warned you--!

ROCKY [scowls at Parritt]: Yeah, keep outta dis, you! Where d'yuh get a license to butt in? Shall I give him de bum's rush, Larry? If you don't want him around, nobody else don't.

LARRY [forcing an indifferent tone]: Na--let him stay--I don't mind him--he's nothing to me.

ROCKY: A'right. [yawns sleepily]

PARRITT [to Larry]: You're right--I have nowhere to go. You're the only one I can turn to.

ROCKY [drowsily]: Yuh're a soft old sap, Larry--he's a no-good louse like Hickey--he don't belong. [yawns again] I'm all in--not a wink of sleep--can't keep my peepers open.

NARRATOR: No sooner than Rocky's eyes close and his head nods, Parritt slinks over to the chair next to Larry.

PARRITT--[bending toward him--in a low, ingratiating, apologetic voice] I'm sorry for riding you, Larry. But you get my goat when you act as if you don't give a damn what happens to me, and keep your door locked so I can't talk to you. [then hopefully] But that was to keep Hickey out, wasn't it? I don't blame you--I'm getting to hate him. I'm getting more and more scared of him--especially since he told us his wife was dead--it's that strange feeling he gives me that I'm mixed up with him somehow. I don't know why, but it started me thinkin' about Mother--as if she was dead. [with a strange undercurrent of something like satisfaction in his pitying tone] I suppose she might as well be--inside, I mean. It must kill her when she thinks of me. I know she doesn't want to, but she can't help it. After all, I'm her only kid. She used to spoil me and make a pet o' me--once in a while--when she remembered me. As if she wanted to make up for something--as if she felt guilty. So she musta loved me a little, even if she never let it interfere with her freedom. [with a strange pathetic wistfulness] Do you know, Larry, I once had a sneaking suspicion that maybe you were my father.

LARRY [violently]: Ya damned fool--who put that insane idea in your head? Anyone in the Coast crowd

2770 could tell ya I never laid eyes on your mother till
2771 after you were born.

2772 PARRITT: Well I'd hardly ask them, would I? I know
2773 you're right though, because I asked her. She brought me
2774 up to be frank and ask her anything, and she'd always
2775 tell me the truth. [abruptly] But I was talkin' about
2776 how she must feel now about me--my bein' through with
2777 the Movement. She'll never forgive that--the Movement's
2778 her life--it must be the final knockout for her if she
2779 knows I was the one who [sold her out]--

2780 LARRY: Shut up, god damn you!

2781 PARRITT: It'll kill 'er--and I'm sure she knows it must
2782 have been me. [suddenly with desperate urgency] But I
2783 never thought the cops would get 'er--you've got to
2784 believe me--you've got to see what my reason was--
2785 I admit what I told you last night was a lie--about
2786 being patriotic and all that--but here's the real
2787 reason, Larry--the only reason--it was just for money--
2788 I got stuck on a whore and wanted dough to blow on her
2789 and have a good time--that's all I did it for--just
2790 money--honest!

2791 NARRATOR: Larry grabs him and shakes him.

2792 LARRY: God damn you, shut up! What the hell is it to me?

2793 ROCKY [startled awake]: What's goin' on here?

2794 LARRY [controlling himself]: Nothing--this gabby young
2795 punk was talking my ear off, that's all. He's a worse
2796 pest than Hickey.

2797 ROCKY [drowsily]: Yeah, Hickey...Say, what did yuh
2798 mean about him bein' scared you'd ask him questions?
2799 What questions?

2800 LARRY: Well, I feel he's hiding somethin'--you notice he
2801 didn't say what his wife died of.

2802 ROCKY [rebukingly]: Aw, c'mon--de poor guy--what are yuh
2803 gettin' at, anyway--yuh don't tink it's just a gag of
2804 his?

2805 LARRY: No I don't--I'm damned sure he's brought death
2806 here with 'im--I feel the cold touch of it on him.

2807 ROCKY: Aw, you got croakin' on de brain, Old Cemetery.
2808 [Suddenly Rocky's eyes widen.] Say! D'yuh mean yuh tink

2809 she committed suicide, 'count of his cheatin' or
2810 sometin'?

2811 LARRY [grimly]: It wouldn't surprise me.

2812 ROCKY [scornfully]: But dat's crazy--jeez, if she'd done
2813 dat, he wouldn't tell us he was glad about it, would he?
2814 He ain't dat big a bastard.

2815 PARRITT--[speaks from his own preoccupation--strangely]
2816 You know better than that, Larry--you know she'd never
2817 commit suicide--she's like you--she'll hang on to life
2818 even when there's nothing left but--

2819 LARRY [stung--turns on him viciously]: And how about
2820 you? By God if you had any guts or decency [left in
2821 you]--!

2822 PARRITT [sneeringly]: I'd take that hop off your
2823 fire escape you're too yellow to take, right?

2824 LARRY [as if to himself]: No! Who am I to judge--
2825 I'm done with judging.

2826 PARRITT [tauntingly]: You'd like that, wouldn't you?
2827 Wouldn't you?

2828 ROCKY [irritably mystified]: What de hell's all dis
2829 about? [to Parritt] What d'you know about Hickey's wife?
2830 How d'yuh know she didn't [croak herself]--?

2831 LARRY [with forced belittling casualness]: He doesn't--
2832 Hickey's addled the little brains he's got. Shove him
2833 back to his own table, Rocky--I'm sick of him.

2834 ROCKY [to Parritt, threateningly]: Yuh heard Larry--
2835 I'd like an excuse to give yuh a good punch in de
2836 snoot--so move quick!

2837 [Parritt moves to another table.]

2838 ROCKY [going back to his train of thought]: Jeez, if she
2839 committed suicide, yuh can understand how he'd go
2840 bughouse and not be responsible for all de crazy stunts
2841 he's pullin' here. [then puzzledly] But how can yuh be
2842 sorry for him when he says he's glad she croaked, and
2843 yuh can tell he means it? [with weary exasperation]
2844 Aw, nuts--ya don't get nowhere tryin' to figger his
2845 game. [face hardening] But I know dis--he better lay off
2846 me and my stable! [He pauses--then sighs.] Jeez, Larry,
2847 what a night dem two pigs give me! When de party went

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2949 ROCKY: Aw right...

2950 CHUCK: Yeah...

2951 JOE: Okay...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: He starts for the door to the street.

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

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

ROCKY: Well why don't yuh beat it?

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

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

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

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

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

CHUCK: Jeez, can yuh beat dem simps!

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

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

NARRATOR: He disappears with the drink into the hall.

3204 ROCKY [in disgust]: Dat's right, wait on her and
3205 spoil her, yuh poor sap!

3206 NARRATOR: He shakes his head and begins to mechanically
3207 wipe the bar.

3208 Willie regards Parritt across the table with a
3209 calculating eye.

3210 WILLIE: [leaning over, in a low confidential tone.]
3211 Look here, Parritt--I'd like to have a talk with you.

3212 PARRITT [scowling defensively]: What about?

3213 WILLIE [his manner becoming his idea of a crafty
3214 criminal lawyer's] About the trouble you're in.
3215 Oh, I know--you don't admit it--you're quite right--
3216 that's my advice--deny everything--keep your mouth shut.
3217 Make no statements whatsoever without first consulting
3218 your attorney.

3219 PARRITT: Say! What the hell--?

3220 WILLIE: But you can trust me--I'm a lawyer, and it's
3221 just occurred to me you and I ought to co-operate.
3222 Of course I'm going to see the D.A. this morning about a
3223 job on his staff. But that may take time--there may not
3224 be an immediate opening. Meanwhile it would be a
3225 good idea for me to take a case or two, on my own--
3226 prove my brilliant record in law school was no
3227 flash in the pan. So why not retain me as your attorney?

3228 PARRITT: You're crazy--what do I want with a lawyer?

3229 WILLIE: That's right--don't admit anything--but you can
3230 trust me, so let's not beat around the bush--you got in
3231 trouble out on the Coast--and now you're hiding out--
3232 any fool can see that. [lowering his voice even more]
3233 You feel safe here, and maybe you are, for a while--
3234 but remember, they get you in the end--I know from my
3235 father's experience--no one could have felt safer than
3236 he did. When anyone mentioned the law to him, he nearly
3237 died laughing. But--

3238 PARRITT: You crazy mutt! [turning to Larry with a
3239 strained laugh] Did you get that, Larry? This damned
3240 fool thinks the cops are after me!

3241 LARRY [bursts out with his true reaction before he
3242 thinks to ignore him] I wish to God they were--and so
3243 should you, if you had the honor of a louse!

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

3476 HICKEY [brushing the whiskey off his coat--humorously]:
 3477 I needed an alcohol rub anyway! But no hard feelings--
 3478 I know how he feels--I wrote the book. There was a day
 3479 when if anybody tried to force me to face the truth
 3480 about my pipe dreams, I'd have shot 'em dead. [He turns
 3481 to Bess--encouragingly] Well, ya brave old gal, Jimmy
 3482 made the grade--now it's up to you. If he's got the guts
 3483 to go through with it--

3484 LARRY [bursts out]: Leave Bess alone, damn you!

3485 HICKEY [grins at him]: I'd worry about myself if I was
 3486 you, Larry, and not bother about Bess--she'll come
 3487 through all right--I've promised her that. She doesn't
 3488 need anyone's bum pity--do you, Bess?

3489 BESS HOPE [with a pathetic attempt at her old fuming
 3490 assertiveness]: No, bejeez--keep your nose out of this,
 3491 Larry. What's Hickey got to do with it? I've always been
 3492 going to take this walk, ain't I? Bejeez, you bums want
 3493 to keep me locked up in here like I was in jail! I've
 3494 stood it long enough! I'm free, and I'll do as I damn
 3495 well please, bejeez! You keep your nose out, too,
 3496 Hickey! You'd think you was boss of this dump, not me.
 3497 Sure, I'm all right! Why shouldn't I be? What the hell's
 3498 to be scared of, just taking a stroll around my own
 3499 ward.

3500 NARRATOR: As she talks, she's been moving toward the
 3501 door--now she reaches it.

3502 BESS HOPE: What's the weather like outside, Rocky?

3503 ROCKY: Fine day, Boss.

3504 BESS HOPE: What's that--can't hear ya--don't look fine
 3505 to me--looks 's if it'd pour down cats and dogs any
 3506 minute. My rheumatism--[She catches herself.] No, must
 3507 be my eyes--half blind, bejeez--makes things look black.
 3508 I see now it's a fine day--too damned hot for a walk,
 3509 though, if you ask me. Well, do me good to sweat the
 3510 booze out of me--but I'll have to watch out for the
 3511 automobiles--wasn't none of them around twenty years
 3512 ago--from what I've seen of 'em through the winda,
 3513 they'd run over ya as soon as look at ya--not that I'm
 3514 scared of 'em--I can take care of myself.

3515 NARRATOR: She puts a reluctant hand on the
 3516 swinging door.

NARRATOR: She pushes the door open and strides blindly out into the street.

ROCKY [in amazement]: Jeez, she made it--I'd a given yuh fifty to one she'd never [go out]--

NARRATOR: He moves to the end of the bar to look out the window.

ROCKY [disgustedly]: Aw, she's stopped. I'll bet yuh she's comin' back.

HICKEY: Of course, she's coming back--so are all the others. By tonight they'll all be here again--that's the whole point.

ROCKY [excitedly]: No, she ain't neider--she's gone to de coib--she's lookin' up and down--scared stiff of automobiles--jeez, dey ain't more'n two an hour comes down dis street, de old scaredy pants!

NARRATOR: He watches as if it were a race he had bet on, oblivious to what happens in the bar.

LARRY [turns on Hickey with bitter defiance]: And now it's my turn, I suppose. What am I to do to achieve this blessed peace of yours?

HICKEY [grins at him]: Why, just stop lying to yourself, Larry.

LARRY: So when I say I'm finished with life--an' I'm tired of watching the stupid greed of the human circus--and that I'll welcome closing my eyes in the long sleep of death--you think that's a coward's lie?

HICKEY [chuckling]: What do you think, Larry?

LARRY [with increasing bitter intensity, as if he were fighting with himself more than Hickey]: I'm afraid to live, am I?--and even more afraid to die! So I sit here, with my pride drowned on the bottom of a bottle, keeping drunk so I won't see myself shaking in my boots with fright, or hear myself whining and praying: Dear Lord, let me live just a little longer at any price--if it's only for a few days more, or a few hours even, have mercy, Almighty God, and let me clutch greedily to my yellow heart this sweet treasure, this jewel beyond price--the dirty, stinkin' bit of withered old flesh which is my beautiful little life! [He laughs with a sneering, vindictive self-loathing, contempt and hatred.

3598 He then abruptly makes Hickey again the antagonist.]

3599 You think you'll make me admit that to myself?

3600 HICKEY [chuckling]: But you just did--didn't you?

3601 PARRITT: That's the stuff, Hickey--show the old yellow
3602 faker up--he can't play dead on me--he's got to help me!

3603 HICKEY: You've got to settle with him, Larry. Hell,
3604 he'll do as good a job as I could at making you give up
3605 that old grandstand bluff.

3606 LARRY [angrily]: I'll see the two of you in hell first!

3607 ROCKY [calls excitedly]: De Boss's startin' across de
3608 street! She's goin' to fool yuh, Hickey, yuh bastard!
3609 [He pauses, watching--then worriedly] What de hell's she
3610 stoppin' for--right in de middle of de street--yuh'd
3611 tink she was paralyzed or somethin'! [disgustedly]
3612 Aw, she's quittin'--she's turned back--jeez, look at de
3613 old gal travel--here she comes!

3614 NARRATOR: Bess comes lurching through the swinging doors
3615 and stumbles up to the bar.

3616 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, give me a drink quick--scared me out
3617 of my head! Bejeez, that fella oughta be pinched--it
3618 ain't safe to walk the streets! Bejeez, that ends me--
3619 never again--gimme that bottle!

3620 NARRATOR: She slops a glass full, drains it and pours
3621 another.

3622 BESS HOPE [to Rocky]: You seen it, didn't you, Rocky?

3623 ROCKY [scornfully]: Seen what?

3624 BESS HOPE: That automobile, you dumb Wop! Feller drivin'
3625 must be crazy--he'd a run right over me if I hadn't
3626 jumped. [ingratiatingly] Come on, Larry, have a drink--
3627 everybody have a drink--have a drink, Rocky--I know ya
3628 hardly ever touch it.

3629 ROCKY [resentfully]: Well, dis time I do touch it!
3630 [pouring a drink] I'm goin' to get stinko, see! And if
3631 yuh don't like it, yuh know what yuh can do! I gotta
3632 good mind to chuck dis job, anyways. [disgustedly]
3633 Jeez, Boss, I thought yuh had some guts! I was bettin'
3634 yuh'd make it and show dat bughouse preacher up.
3635 [He looks at Hickey--then snorts] Automobile, hell!

3636 Who d'yuh tink yuh're kiddin'? Dey wasn' no automobile!
3637 Yuh just quit--cold!

3638 BESS HOPE [feebly]: Guess I oughta know! Bejeez, it
3639 almost killed me!

3640 HICKEY [kindly]: Now, now, Bess--you've faced the test
3641 and come through--you're rid of all that nagging dream
3642 stuff now--you know you can't believe it any more.

3643 BESS HOPE [appeals pleadingly to Larry]: Larry you saw
3644 it, didn't you--drink up--have another--have all you
3645 want--bejeez, we'll go on a grand old souse together--
3646 you saw that automobile, didn't ya?

3647 LARRY [compassionately, avoiding her eyes]:
3648 Sure, I saw it, Bess--you had a narrow escape--by God,
3649 I thought you were a goner!

3650 HICKEY [turns on him with a flash of indignation]:
3651 What the hell's the matter with you, Larry--you know
3652 what I said about the wrong kind of pity--leave Bess
3653 alone--you'd think I'd harm her--my oldest friend--what
3654 kind of a louse do you think I am? There isn't anything
3655 I wouldn't do for Bess, and she knows it! All I wanna do
3656 is fix it so she'll finally be at peace for the rest of
3657 her days! And if you'd only wait, why--! [He turns to
3658 Bess coaxingly]: Come now, Bess--it's all over and dead!
3659 Give up that ghost of an automobile.

3660 BESS HOPE [beginning to collapse within herself--dully]:
3661 Yes, what's the use--now--all a lie--no automobile.
3662 But, bejeez, something ran over me! Must have been
3663 myself, I guess. [She forces a feeble smile--then
3664 wearily] Guess I'll sit down--feel all in--like a
3665 corpse, bejeez.

3666 NARRATOR: She picks a bottle and glass from the bar,
3667 walks to the first table and slumps down in a chair.
3668 The sound of the bottle on the table rouses Hugo.

3669 BESS HOPE [a flat, dead voice]: Hello, Hugo--coming up
3670 for air? Stay passed out, that's the right dope--
3671 there ain't any cool willow trees--except the ones that
3672 come in a bottle.

3673 [He pours a drink and gulps it down.]

3674 HUGO [with his silly giggle]: Hello, Bess, stupid
3675 proletarian monkey-face! I vill trink champagner beneath
3676 the--[with a change to aristocratic fastidiousness]

But the slaves must ice it properly! [with guttural rage] Gottamned Hickey--peddler pimp for nouveau-riche capitalism! Vhen I lead the jackass mob to the sack of Babylon, I vill make them hang him to a lamppost the first one!

BESS HOPE [spiritlessly]: That's right an' I'll help ya pull on the rope! Have a drink, Hugo.

HUGO [frightened]: No, sank you--I am too trunk now--I hear myself say crazy sings. Do not listen, please--Larry vill tell you I haf never been so crazy trunk--I must sleep it off.

NARRATOR: Starting to put his head on his arms, he stops and stares at Bess with growing uneasiness.

HUGO: What's matter, Bess--you look funny--you look dead--what's happened? I don't know you--listen, I feel I am dying, too--because I am so crazy trunk--it is very necessary I sleep--but I can't sleep here vith you--you look dead.

NARRATOR: In a panic, Hugo scrambles to his feet. Turning his back on Bess, he plops down at the next table--thrusting down his head on his arms like an ostrich in the sand.

LARRY [to Hickey with bitter condemnation]: Another one who's begun to enjoy your peace!

HICKEY: Oh, I know it's tough on him right now, same as it is on Bess--but that's only the first shock--I promise you they'll both be fine.

LARRY: And you believe that! I see you do--you mad fool!

HICKEY: Of course I believe it! I tell you I know from my own experience!

BESS HOPE [spiritlessly]: Close that big clam o' yours, Hickey--you're a worse gabber than that nagging asshole Harry was.

[She drinks her drink mechanically and pours another.]

ROCKY [in amazement]: Jeez, did yuh hear dat?

BESS HOPE [dully]: What's wrong with this booze--there's no kick in it.

3714 ROCKY [worried]: Jeez, Larry, Hugo had it right--
3715 she does look like she croaked.

3716 HICKEY [annoyed]: Don't be a damn fool--give her time--
3717 she's coming along fine. [He calls to Hope with a first
3718 trace of underlying uneasiness.] You're all right,
3719 aren't you, Bess?

3720 BESS HOPE [dully]: I want to pass ot like Hugo.

3721 LARRY [turns to Hickey--with bitter anger]: It's the
3722 peace o' death you've brought her.

3723 HICKEY [for the first time loses his temper]: That's a
3724 lie! [controls this instantly and grins.] Well, well,
3725 you did manage to get a rise out of me that time. But
3726 you know it's damned foolishness--look at me--I've been
3727 through it--do I look dead? [pause] Just wait until the
3728 shock wears off and you'll see--she'll be a new person--
3729 like me. [He calls her coaxingly] How's it coming, Bess?
3730 Beginning to feel free, aren't you--relieved and not
3731 guilty any more.

3732 BESS HOPE [grumbles spiritlessly]: Bejeez, you must've
3733 been monkeyin' with the booze, too, you interferin'
3734 bastard--there's no life in it now! I want to get drunk
3735 and pass ot--let's all pass ot! Who the hell cares!

3736 HICKEY [lowering his voice--worriedly to Larry]: I admit
3737 I didn't think she'd be hit so hard--she's always been a
3738 happy-go-lucky slob--like I was. Course it hit me hard,
3739 too--but only for a minute--then it was as if a ton of
3740 guilt had been lifted off my mind--an' I saw that what'd
3741 happened was the only possible way for the peace of all
3742 concerned.

3743 LARRY [sharply]: What happened--tell us! And don't try
3744 to get ot of it--I want a straight answer! [spitefully]
3745 I think it was something you drove someone else to!

3746 HICKEY [puzzled]: Someone else?

3747 LARRY [accusingly]: What did your wife die of? You've
3748 kept that a deep secret, I notice--for some reason!

3749 HICKEY [reproachfully]: You're not very considerate,
3750 Larry. But, if you insist on knowing, I guess there's
3751 no reason you shouldn't. It was a bullet through the
3752 head that killed Evelyn.

3753 [There is a moment of tense silence.]

3754 BESS HOPE [dully]: Who the hell cares--to hell with her
3755 and that stupid old nag Harry.

3756 ROCKY: Christ, ya had de right dope, Larry.

3757 LARRY [revengefully]: You drove your poor wife to
3758 suicide--I knew it! By God, I don't blame her--I'd
3759 almost do as much myself to be rid of you! It's what
3760 you'd like to drive us all to-- [Abruptly he's ashamed
3761 of himself and pitying.] I'm sorry, Hickey--I'm a
3762 rotten louse to throw that in your face.

3763 HICKEY [quietly]: Oh, that's all right, Larry. But don't
3764 jump to conclsions--I didn't say poor Evelyn committed
3765 suicide--it's the last thing she'd a done, as long as
3766 I was alive for her to take care of and forgive.
3767 If you'd known her at all, you'd never get such a
3768 crazy suspicion. [He pauses--then slowly] No, I'm sorry
3769 to have to tell you...but Eveylyn was killed.

3770 NARRATOR: Larry stares at him with growing horror and
3771 shrinks back along the bar away from him. Parritt's head
3772 jerks up and looks at Larry frightened. Rocky's eyes pop
3773 and Bess stares dully at the table, where Hugo gives
3774 no signs of life.

3775 LARRY [shaken]: Then she was...murdered.

3776 PARRITT [springs to his feet--stammers defensively about
3777 his mother]: You're a liar, Larry--you must be crazy to
3778 say that to me--you know she's still alive!

3779 ROCKY [blurts out]: Moidered--who done it?

3780 NARRATOR: Larry's eyes are fixed with fascinated horror
3781 on Hickey.

3782 LARRY [frightened]: Don't ask questions, you dumb Wop--
3783 it's none of our damned business--leave Hickey alone!

3784 HICKEY--[smiles at him with affectionate amusement]:
3785 Still the old grandstand bluff, eh Larry? Or is it some
3786 more bum pity? [matter-of-factly to Rocky] The police
3787 don't know who killed her yet, Rocky--but I expect they
3788 will before long.

3789 NARRATOR: Moving to Bess, Hickey sits beside her--
3790 his arm around her shoulder.

3791 HICKEY [affectionately coaxing]: Coming along fine--
3792 aren't you, Bess--getting' over the first shock--

3949 CHUCK [suspiciously]: Huh!

3950 [Snatching it, he shoves it into his pocket.]

3951 CORA [with a tired wonder at herself rather than
3952 resentment toward him]: Jeez, imagine me kiddin' myself
3953 I wanted to marry a drunken pimp.

3954 CHUCK: Dat's nuttin', Baby--imagine de sap I'da been,
3955 when I can get your dough just as easy widout it!

3956 NARRATOR: Rocky pulls up a chair next to Larry.

3957 ROCKY [dully]: Hello, Old Cemetery. [Larry doesn't seem
3958 to hear. To Parritt] Hello, Tightwad--you still around?

3959 PARRITT [in a jeeringly challenging tone] Ask Larry--
3960 he knows I'm here all right--although he's pretending
3961 I'm not. He's trying to kid himself with that grandstand
3962 foolosopher stuff--but he knows he can't get away with
3963 it now! He kept himself locked in his room with a bottle
3964 of booze, but he couldn't make it work--he couldn't even
3965 get drunk--he had to come out! There must have been
3966 something there he was even more scared to face than
3967 Hickey and me! I guess he got lookin' at the fire escape
3968 and thinkin' how handy it was, if he was really sick o'
3969 life and only had the nerve to [die]--!

3970 NARRATOR: Larry's face tightens--but he pretends not to
3971 hear.

3972 PARRITT [tone becoming more insistent]: He's been
3973 thinking of me, too, Rocky--trying to figure out a way
3974 to get out of helpin' me! He doesn't want to be bothered
3975 understanding--but he understands all right. He used to
3976 love her too--so he thinks I ought to take a hop off
3977 the--you know!

3978 NARRATOR: Larry's hands have clenched into fists but he
3979 doesn't answer.

3980 PARRITT [breaking and starting to plead.] For God's
3981 sake, Larry, can't you say something? Hickey's got me
3982 all twisted up. Thinking of what he must've done has got
3983 me so I don't know any more what I did or why. I can't
3984 go on like this--I've got to know what I oughta do--

3985 LARRY [in a stifled tone]: God damn you--you trying to
3986 make me your executioner?

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?

LARRY [with sardonic pity]: No, it doesn't sound good, Rocky--I mean, the peace Hickey's brought ya. It isn't contented enough, if you have to make everyone else a pimp, too.

ROCKY [pushes his chair back and gets up, grumbling]: I'm a sap to waste time on yuh--a stew bum is a stew bum and yuh can't change him. [Pauses] But like I was sayin' to Chuck--if anyone asks, yuh don't know nuttin', get me--yuh never even hoid he had a wife. [His voice hardens.] Jeez, we all oughta git drunk and stage a celebration when dat bastard goes to de Chair.

LARRY [vindictively]: By God, I'll celebrate with you and drink long life to him in hell! [then guiltily and pityingly] No, the poor mad devil--[then with angry self-contempt] Ah, pity again--the wrong kind! He'll welcome the Chair!

PARRITT [contemptuously]: And what are you so damned scared o' death for--I don't want your lousy pity.

ROCKY: Christ, I hope he don't come back--we don't know nuttin' now--we're on'y guessin'--but if de bastard keeps on talkin'--

LARRY [grimly]: He'll come back--he'll keep on talkin'--he's got ta--he's lost his confidence that the peace he's sold us is the real McCoy, and it's made him uneasy about his own. He'll have to prove it to us--

NARRATOR: Suddenly Hickey can be seen in the rear doorway. He's lost his beaming salesman's grin and he looks uneasy, baffled, resentful.

HICKEY: That's a damned lie, Larry--I haven't lost my confidence a bit--why should I? [boastfully] Whenever I've made up my mind to sell someone something I knew they ought to want, I've sold 'em! [He suddenly looks confused--haltingly] I mean--it isn't kind of you, Larry, to make that crack when I've been doing my best to help [set them free]--

ROCKY [threatening]: Keep away from me--I don't know nuttin' about yuh, see?

NARRATOR: As Rocky retreats behind the bar, Hickey sits next to Larry.

HICKEY [with a strained attempt at his old affectionate jollyng manner.] Well, well--how are you coming along,

[There's a shocked intake of breath from the gang.]

LARRY [bursts out]: You mad fool, can't you keep your mouth shut! We may hate you for what you've done this time, but we remember the old times, too, when you brought kindness and laughter instead of death! We don't want to know things that'll help send you to the Chair!

PARRITT [with angry scorn]: Ah, shut up, you yellow faker--can't you face anything? Wouldn't I deserve the Chair, too, if I'd-- It's worse if you kill someone and they have to go on living.

HICKEY [disturbed and repulsed]: I wish you'd get rid of that bastard, Larry--I can't have him pretending there's something in common between us--it's what's in your heart that counts. There was love in my heart, not hate.

PARRITT [in angry terror]: You're a liar--I don't hate her--I couldn't! An' it had nothin' to do with her anyway--ask Larry!

LARRY: God damn you, stop shovin' your rotten soul in my lap!

HICKEY [goes on quietly now]: Don't you worry about the Chair, Larry--I know it's still hard for you not to be terrified by death--but when you've made peace with yourself, like I have, you won't give a damn. [Pause] Listen, everybody--I've made up my mind that the only way I can make you realize how happy and carefree you ought to feel, now that you're rid of your pipe dreams, is to show you what a pipe dream did to me and Evelyn. If I tell you about it from the beginning, I think you'll appreciate what I've done for you and why I did it, and how damned grateful you ought to be--instead of hating me. [He begins eagerly.] You see, even when we were kids, Evelyn and me--

BESS HOPE [bursts out, pounding with her glass on the table]: No!--Who the hell cares?--We don't want to hear it--All we want is to get drunk an' pass out--just a little peace!

[All pound with their glasses.]

HICKEY [with wounded hurt]: All right--if that's the way ya feel--I don't want to cram it down your throats--I don't need to tell anyone--I don't feel guilty--I'm only worried about you.

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

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

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

THE GENERAL [yell]: Dat's right!

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: The gang all grab their glasses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PARRITT: I guess you think I ought to have made those cops take me away with Hickey. But how could I prove it, they'd think I was nutty--because she's still alive. You're the only one who can understand how guilty I am. Because you know her and what I've done to her. You know I'm really much guiltier than he is--that what I did is a much worse murder--because she has to live--for a while--but she can't live long in jail--she loves freedom too much. And I can't kid myself like Hickey that she's at peace. As long as she lives, she'll never be able to forget what I've done to her even in her sleep--she'll never have a moment's peace. [He pauses--then bursts out] Jesus, Larry, can't you say something?

NARRATOR: Larry's at the breaking point but remains silent.

PARRITT: And I'm not pretending, either, that I was crazy afterwards when I laughed to myself and thought, "You know what you can do with your freedom pipe dream now, you rotten old bitch!"

LARRY--[snaps--his voice convulsed with detestation and a condemning command.] Go! Get the hell out of life, God damn you, before I choke it out of you! Go up--!

NARRATOR: Parrit's manner is at once transformed--he seems suddenly at peace with himself.

PARRITT [simply and gratefully]: Thanks, Larry. I just wanted to be sure. I can see now it's the only possible way I can get free of her. I guess I've really known that all my life. [Pauses--with a derisive smile] It ought ta comfort Mother a little, too. It'll give her the chance to play Mother of the Revolution, whose only child is the Proletariat--she'll be able to say: "Justice is done--I'm glad he's dead--may all traitors die--long live the Revolution!" [He adds with a final implacable jeer] You know her, Larry--always a ham!

LARRY [pleads distractedly]: Go, for the love of Christ, you mad tortured bastard, for your own sake!

NARRATOR: Roused by this, Hugo lifts his head and peers blankly at Larry.

PARRITT [as if he were going to break down and sob, he turns his head away, then reaches out fumblingly and pats Larry's arm and stammers] Jesus, Larry, thanks.

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 Why 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!

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!