

BY MOUTH | Martin Garrison, Producer  
martin@bymouth.org

ROLE: **NARRATOR**

NARRATOR: Down-to-earth, matter-of-fact, American, mature, female voice.  
Natural good diction. Doesn't call attention to herself.

**2 takes + pickups = \$700.**

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 NARRATOR LINES 1-23**

**NARRATOR 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' pinned. 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!

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

161 ROCKY: Aw, Boss...

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

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

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

168 NARRATOR: Soon, Bess is asleep again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

181 ROCKY: Time you begun to sweep up de bar.

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

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

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

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

235 [Sound of footsteps]

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

239 PARRITT: Hello, Larry.

240 NARRATOR: He nods to Rocky and Joe.

241 PARRITT: Hello.

242 LARRY [without cordiality]: What's up?

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

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

246 [Parritt sits]

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

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

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

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

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

267 ROCKY: What're you having?

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

269 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!

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

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

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

NARRATOR: Rocky shakes Willie by the shoulder roughly.

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

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

ROCKY: Come on, Bum!

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

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

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

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

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

ED: That's right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LARRY [guffaws sardonically]:

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: But soon the three are asleep again.

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

BESS HOPE: What? What d'you say?

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

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

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

849 MAC: Sure I will and it will make your reputation,  
850 Willie.

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

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

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

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

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

867 BESS HOPE: Do I Bejeez! [cackles]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

936 [Rocky walks to the back door.]

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

947 MARGIE (laughs):

948 ROCKY: Quiet!

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

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

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

955 PEARL: Ah, he's passed out--hell wid him!

956 BESS HOPE: Ya dumb broads--cut the gabbin', will ya?

957 ROCKY [admonishing them good-naturedly]: Sit down

958 before I knock yuh down.

959 [The girls sit and Rocky pours drinks.]

960 ROCKY [in a lowered voice]: Well, how'd you tramps do?

961 MARGIE: Pretty good--didn't we, Poil?

962 PEARL: Sure. We nailed a coupla all-night guys.

963 MARGIE: On Sixth Avenoo. Booms from de sticks.

964 PEARL: Stinko, de bot' of 'em.

965 MARGIE: Steered 'em to to a real hotel. Figgered de was

966 too stinko to bother us much and we could cop a good

967 sleep in beds dat ain't got cobble stones in de mattress

968 like de ones in dis dump.

969 PEARL: But we was out of luck--dey wouldn't go to sleep,

970 see? I never hoid such gabby guys.

971 MARGIE: We was glad when de house come up and told us

972 all to get dressed and take de air!

973 PEARL [proud of her lie]: We told de guys we'd wait for

974 dem 'round de corner, see?

975 MARGIE: So here we are.

976 ROCKY: Yeah? I see ya--but I don't see no dough yet.

977 PEARL: Right on da job, ain't he, Mahgie?

978 MARGIE: Our little business man!

979 ROCKY: Come on--dig!

980 NARRATOR: As Rocky watches carefully, the girls pull up

981 their skirts to get money from their stockings.

982 MARGIE: Scared we's holdin' out on ya, yeah?

983 PEARL: Way he grabs, yuh'd tink it was him done de woik.

984 [Holds out bills to Rocky.]

985 PEARL: Here y'are, Grafter!

986 MARGIE: Hope it chokes yuh.

987 [Rocky counts money quickly then pockets it.]

988 ROCKY: And what would you do wit' money if I wasn't  
989 around? Give it to some pimp?

990 PEARL: Jeez what's the difference--? [hastily]  
991 Aw, I don't mean that, Rocky.

992 ROCKY: A lotta difference, get me?

993 PEARL: Don't get sore. Jeez can't yuh take a little  
994 kiddin'?

995 MARGIE: Sure, Rocky, Poil was on'y kiddin'. We know yuh  
996 got a reg'lar job. Dat's why we like yuh, see? Yuh don't  
997 live offa us--yuh're a bahtender.

998 ROCKY: I'm a bahtender--everyone knows me knows dat.  
999 And I treat ya goils right, don't I? [brief pause]  
1000 I'm wise yuh hold out on me, but I know it ain't much,  
1001 so what the hell, I let yuh get away wid it. I tink  
1002 yuh're a coupla good kids. Yuh're aces wid' me, see?

1003 PEARL: Yuh-re aces wid us, too--ain't he, Mahgie?

1004 MARGIE: Sure.

1005 NARRATOR: Rocky beams and takes glasses to the bar.

1006 MARGIE [whispers]: Yuh sap, don't yuh know enough not to  
1007 kid him on dat? Serves ya right if he beat yuh up!

1008 PEARL: Jeez I'll bet he'd give yuh an awful beatin', too  
1009 once he started. Ginnies got awful tempers.

1010 MARGIE: Anyway we wouldn't keep no pimp, like we was  
1011 reg'lar old whores.

1012 PEARL: No we're tarts--dat's all.

1013 ROCKY [rinsing glasses] Cora got back around three.  
1014 Woke up Chuck and dragged him outa de hay to go get  
1015 chop suey. [disgustedly] Imagine him standin' for dat!

1016 MARGIE: Bet dey been sittin' around kiddin' demselves  
1017 wid dat old dream about gettin' married and settlin'  
1018 down on a farm. Jeez when Chuck's on de wagon, de never  
1019 lay off dat dope!

1020 PEARL: Yeah, Chuck wid a silly grin on his ugly mug and  
1021 Cora gigglin' like she was in grammah school and some  
1022 tough guy'd just told her babies wasn't brung down de  
1023 chimney by a boid!

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

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

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

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

1071 CORA: Who's de guy wid Larry!

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

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

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

1077 ROCKY: You got nuttin' on us!

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

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

1090 NARRATOR: He kisses Cora and she kisses him.

1091 CORA: Aw, yuh big tramp!

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1114 NARRATOR: Rocky goes out, grinning.

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

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

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

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

1127 ED: Sure, Bess!

1128 MAC: Righto!

1129 JOE: Dat's de stuff!

1130 JIMMY: We'll fix him!

1131 THE CAPTAIN: You bet your life!

1132 THE GENERAL: O' course!

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

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

NARRATOR: They all stand and greet him.

JIMMY: Hello, Hickey!

ED: If it ain't...

JOE: It sho is.

MAC: Hickey!

WILLIE: My boy!

THE CAPTAIN: How goes it old chum?

THE GENERAL: Velcome, Hickey.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Hickey sits.]

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

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

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

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

1173 WILLIE: To Hickey!

1174 ED: Hickey!

1175 JOE: To you, suh!

1176 MAC: Bottoms up!

1177 JIMMY: To your health!

1178 THE CAPTAIN: Cheers!

1179 THE GENERAL: Vat's right!

1180 HICKEY: Drink hearty, boys and girls!

1181 NARRATOR: All drink but Hickey.

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

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

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

1190 [The gang laughs.]

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

1194 NARRATOR: They all stare a bit uneasily.

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

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

do ya? You know me better than that! Just because I'm through with the stuff don't mean I'm going Prohibition. Hell, I'm not that ungrateful--it's given me too many good times. I feel exactly like I always did--if anyone wants to get drunk, if that's the only way they can be happy and feel at peace with themselves, why the hell shouldn't they? Why I know all about that game from soup to nuts--I'm the guy that wrote the book. The only reason I've quit is-- Well, I finally had the guts to face myself and throw overboard the damned lying pipe dream that'd been making me miserable, and do what I had to do for the happiness of all concerned--and then all at once I found I was at peace with myself--and I didn't need booze any more. That's all there was to it.

NARRATOR: They stare uneasily. He looks around and grins affectionately.

HICKEY: But what the hell--don't let me be a wet blanket. Set 'em up again, Rocky--here. [pulls out a big roll and peels off a bill] Keep 'em comin' until this is killed--then ask for more.

ROCKY: Jeez, a roll dat'd choke a hippopotamus! Fill up, youse guys.

[They all pour drinks.]

BESS HOPE: That sounds more like you, Hickey. That on-the wagon bull-- Cut out the act and have a drink, for Christ's sake.

HICKEY: It's no act, Bess--but don't get me wrong--that don't mean I'm a teetotal grouch and can't be in the party. Hell, why d'you think I'm here except to have a party, same as I've always done, and help celebrate your birthday tonight? You've all been good pals to me, the best friends I've ever had. I've been thinkin' about you ever since I left the house--all the time I was walking over here--

BESS HOPE: Walking? Bejeez you mean to say you walked?

HICKEY: I sure did--all the way from the wilds of Astoria. Didn't mind it, either--I'm a bit tired and sleepy but otherwise I feel great. [Addressing Bess] That ought to encourage you, Bess--show you a little walk around the ward is nothing to be scared about.

NARRATOR: As Hickey winks at the others, Bess stiffens.

HICKEY: I didn't make such bad time either, considering it's a hell of a ways and I sat in the park a while thinking. It was going on twelve when I went in the bedroom to tell Evelyn I was leaving. Six hours. No, less than that--I'd been standing on the corner for a while before Chuck and Cora came along. Of course, I was only kidding Cora with that stuff about saving you. [then seriously] No, I wasn't either. But I didn't mean booze--I meant save you from your pipe dreams. I know now, from my experience, they're the things that really poison and ruin a guy's life and keep him from finding peace. If you knew how free and contented I feel now--I'm like a new man. And the cure is so damned simple, once you have the nerve. Just the old dope of honesty--honesty with yourself, I mean. Just stop lying to yourself and kidding yourself about tomorrow. [talking to himself as much as to them] Hell, this is beginning to sound like a damned sermon on how to lead the good life. It's in my blood, I guess--my old man used to whale salvation into my behind with a birch rod. He was a preacher in the sticks of Indiana, like I've told you--I got my knack of sales gab from him, too--he sold Hoosier hayseeds building lots along Golden Street! [with a salesman's persuasiveness] Now listen, boys and girls, don't look at me as if I was trying to sell ya the Brooklyn Bridge. Nothing up my sleeve, honest--let's take an example--any one of you--take you, Bess--that walk around the ward you never take--

BESS HOPE [defensively]: What about it?

HICKEY [grinning affectionately]: Why you know as well as I do, Bess.

BESS HOPE: Bejeez I'm going to take it!

HICKEY: Sure you're going to--this time--because I'm going to help you. I know it's the thing you've got to do before you'll ever know what real peace means. [pause] Same thing with you, Jimmy--you've got to try and get your old job back. And no tomorrow about it!

NARRATOR: Jimmy stiffens.

HICKEY: No, don't tell me, Jimmy, I know all about tomorrow--I'm the guy that wrote the book.

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 Mccoy and not poison.

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

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

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

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



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

[The gang roars w/ laughter.]

NARRATOR: Even Hugo looks up.

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

[The gang jeers.]

HUGO [giggles good-naturedly]:

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

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

[The gang roars w/ laughter.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next to him, passed out, is Hugo.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1566 CORA [glares at her] Is dat so?

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

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

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

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

1578 CHUCK: Sit down and cool off, Baby.

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

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

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

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

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

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!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Joe pours a big drink.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1770 PEARL: He coitinly has!

1771 ROCKY: Cut it out, I told yuh!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1811 NARRATOR: The gang looks relieved.

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

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

NARRATOR: Catching his excitement, Chuck and Rocky go out, grinning expectantly. The girls gather around Hickey, full of thrilled curiosity.

PEARL: Jeez, yuh got us all heated up--what is it?

HICKEY: I got it as a treat for the three of ya more than anyone. I thought to myself: I'll bet this is what'll please those whores more than anything.

NARRATOR: Before they have a chance to be angry...

HICKEY [affectionately]: I said to myself: I don't care how much it costs, they're worth it--they're the best little scouts in the world, and they've been damned kind to me when I was down and out--nothing's too good for them. [earnestly] I mean every word of that, too--and then some! [jubilantly]: Look--here it comes!

NARRATOR: Chuck and Rocky enter carrying a huge wicker basket full of champagne.

PEARL [with childish excitement]: Look Mahgie--it's dat wine wid bubbles! Jeez, Hickey, you is a sport!

NARRATOR: She gives him a hug, forgetting all animosity, as do the other girls.

MARGIE: I never been soused on dis kinda wine--let's get stinko, Poill.

PEARL: You betcha--de bot' of us!

NARRATOR: A holiday spirit has seized them all. Even Joe stands up to grin at the champagne--and Hugo raises his head to blink at it.

JOE: You sure is hittin' de high spots, Hickey.  
[boastfully] Man, when I runs my gamblin' joint, I'm gonna drink dat old bubbly water in steins!  
[He stops guiltily--then with defiance] I's goin' to drink it dat way, too, Hickey--soon's I make my stake! And dat ain't no pipe dream, neider!

ROCKY: What'll we drink it outa--we ain't got no wine glasses.

HICKEY [enthusiastically]: Joe has the right idea--schooners! That's the spirit for Bess's birthday!

HUGO [with his silly giggle]: Ve vill trink vine beneath the villow trees!



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

1858 HUGO [mutter]: 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!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: He sits down next to Larry.

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

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

LARRY--[masking pity behind a sardonic tone] If you want  
my advice, you'll put the nearest bottle to your mouth  
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 you.

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 you. [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.

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--

2140 LARRY: I've guessed nothing!

2141 PARRITT: But I want you to guess--I'm glad you have!  
 2142 I know now, since Hickey's been after me, that I meant  
 2143 you to guess from the start. That's why I came here.  
 2144 [hurrying on with an attempt at a plausible frank air  
 2145 that makes what he says seem doubly false] I want you to  
 2146 understand the reason. You see, I began studying  
 2147 American history--I got to admiring Washington and  
 2148 Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln. I began to feel  
 2149 patriotic and love this country. I saw it was the best  
 2150 government in the world, where everybody was equal and  
 2151 had a chance. I saw that all the ideas behind the  
 2152 Movement came from a lot of Russians like Bakunin and  
 2153 Kropotkin and were meant for Europe, but we didn't need  
 2154 them here in a democracy where we were free already.  
 2155 I didn't want this country to be destroyed for a foreign  
 2156 pipe dream--after all, I'm from American pioneer stock--  
 2157 I began to feel like a traitor for helping a lot of  
 2158 cranks and bums and free women plot to overthrow our  
 2159 government. I saw it was my duty to my country [to turn  
 2160 in]--

2161 LARRY [nauseated--turns on him]: You stinking rotten  
 2162 liar! Do you think you can fool me with that hypocrite's  
 2163 blather! [then turning away] I don't give a damn what  
 2164 you did--it's on your head--whatever it was--I don't  
 2165 want to know--and I won't know!

2166 PARRITT [as if Larry had never spoken--falteringly]:  
 2167 But I never thought Mother would be caught. You have to  
 2168 believe that, Larry--you know I never would have [done  
 2169 it if]--

2170 NARRATOR: Drawing a deep breath, Larry closes his eyes--  
 2171 as if he were trying to hammer something into his own  
 2172 brain.

2173 LARRY: All I know is I'm sick of life! I'm through!  
 2174 I've forgotten myself--I'm drowned and happy on the  
 2175 bottom of a bottle. Honor or dishonor, faith or  
 2176 treachery are nothing but the opposites of the same  
 2177 stupidity which is the ruler of life, and in the end  
 2178 they rot into dust in the same grave. Everything's the  
 2179 same meaningless joke to me--grinnin' at me from the  
 2180 same skull of death. So go away--you're wasting your  
 2181 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2333 [Cora begins playing.]

NARRATOR: Both Bess and Jimmy have been drinking heavily. Bess is touchy and pugnacious--entirely different from the usual easygoing beefing she delights in and which no one takes seriously. Now, she has a real chip on her shoulder.

Jimmy, beneath a pathetic veneer of gentlemanly poise, is obviously terrified and shrinks into himself.

Hickey grabs Bess's hand and pumps it up and down. Bess appears unaware of this handshake--then she jerks her hand away.

BESS HOPE: Cut out the glad hand, Hickey. D'you think I'm a sucker? I know you, bejeez, you sneakin', lyin' drummer! [with rising anger, to the others] And all you bums--what the hell you trying to do, yellin' and raisin' the roof--you want the cops to close the joint and take my license? [pause as Cora continues to play] Hey, you dumb tart, quit banging on that box! Bejeez, the least you could do is learn the tune!

CORA [stops--deeply hurt]: Aw, Bess! Jeez, ain't I [any good any more?]

BESS HOPE: And you two hookers, screamin' at the top of your lungs--what d'you think this is, a dollar cathouse?

PEARL [miserably]: Aw, Bess-- [She begins to cry.]

MARGIE: Jeez, Bess I never thought you'd say that-- like yuh meant it. [Pause] Aw, don't bawl, Poil-- she don't mean it.

HICKEY [reproachfully]: Now, Bess--don't take it out on the gang because you're upset about yourself. Anyway, I've promised you you'll come through all right, haven't I? So quit worrying.

BESS HOPE [dismissive]: Huh!

HICKEY: Just be yourself--you don't want to bawl out the old gang just when they're congratulatin' you on your birthday, do ya?

HOPE [looking guilty and shamefaced--forcing an unconvincing attempt at her natural tone] Bejeez, they ain't as dumb as you--they know I was only kidding 'em. They know I appreciate their congratulations. Don't you, gang?

2373 ED [uninspired]: Sure, Bess.

2374 WILLIE: [uninspired]: Yes.

2375 MCLOIN [uninspired]: Of course we do.

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

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

2380 MARGIE: Sure we know, Bess.

2381 PEARL: Sure.

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

2385 BESS HOPE [bitterly]: Huh.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2409 PEARL: It was Hickey got it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2508 [They drain their drinks down.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

than ever! Like Hickey says, it's going to be a new day!  
 This dump has got to be run like other dumps, so I can  
 make some money and not just split even. People has got  
 to pay what they owe me! I'm not runnin' a damned orphan  
asylum for bums and crooks! Nor a God-damned hooker  
shanty, either! Nor an Old Men's Home for lousy  
Anarchist tramps that ought to be in jail! I'm sick of  
 being played for a sucker!

NARRATOR: They stare at her in stunned bewilderment--  
 yet she goes on as if she hated herself for every word,  
 but can't stop.

BESS HOPE: And don't think you're kiddin' me right now,  
either! I know damned well you're giving me the laugh  
 behind my back, thinking to yourselves: that old, lyin',  
pipe-dreamin' bitch, we've heard her bull about taking a  
 walk around the ward for years, she'll never make it--  
 she's yella, she ain't got the guts, she's scared you'll  
 find out--[She glares around almost with hatred] But  
 I'll show ya, bejeez! [Pause] I'll show you, too, ya  
 son of a bitch of a frying-pan-peddlin' bastard!

HICKEY [heartily encouraging]: That's the stuff, Bess!  
 Of course you'll show me--that's what I want you to do!

NARRATOR: Bess glances at him with helpless dread.  
 Dropping her eyes, she looks furtively around the table.  
 All at once she becomes miserably sorry.

BESS HOPE [her voice catching]: Listen, all o' ya!  
Bejeez, forgive me--I lost my temper! I ain't feeling  
 well--I got a hell of a grouch on! Bejeez, you know  
 you're all as welcome here as the flowers in May!

ROCKY: Sure, Boss--you're always aces wid us, see?

NARRATOR: Hickey again rises to his feet.

HICKEY [with the convincing sincerity of one making a  
 confession of which he is genuinely ashamed]:  
Listen, everybody--I know you're sick of my gabbin'--  
 but I think this is where I owe ya an explanation and an  
 apology for some of the rough stuff I've had to pull on  
 ya. I know how it must look--as if I was a damned  
busybody, not only interferin' in your private business,  
 but sickin' some of ya onto one another. Well I have to  
admit that's true, and I'm damned sorry about it. But it  
had to be done. You know old Hickey--I was never one to  
 start trouble--but this time I had to--for your own

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!

2616       MAC [spitefully]: Yes!

2617       ED [spitefully]: That's right!

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

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

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

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

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

2625       CHUCK: Yeah he done so good wid it!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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!

2729 LARRY [turns on him]: You lyin' punk--remember what I  
2730 warned you--!

2731 ROCKY [scowls at Parritt]: Yeah, keep outta dis, you!  
2732 Where d'yuh get a license to butt in? Shall I give him  
2733 de bum's rush, Larry? If you don't want him around,  
2734 nobody else don't.

2735 LARRY [forcing an indifferent tone]: Na--let him stay--  
2736 I don't mind him--he's nothing to me.

2737 ROCKY: A'right. [yawns sleepily]

2738 PARRITT [to Larry]: You're right--I have nowhere to go.  
2739 You're the only one I can turn to.

2740 ROCKY [drowsily]: Yuh're a soft old sap, Larry--he's a  
2741 no-good louse like Hickey--he don't belong. [yawns  
2742 again] I'm all in--not a wink of sleep--can't keep my  
2743 peepers open.

2744 NARRATOR: No sooner than Rocky's eyes close and his head  
2745 nods, Parritt slinks over to the chair next to Larry.

2746 PARRITT--[bending toward him--in a low, ingratiating,  
2747 apologetic voice] I'm sorry for riding you, Larry.  
2748 But you get my goat when you act as if you don't give a  
2749 damn what happens to me, and keep your door locked so I  
2750 can't talk to you. [then hopefully] But that was to keep  
2751 Hickey out, wasn't it? I don't blame you--I'm getting to  
2752 hate him. I'm getting more and more scared of him--  
2753 especially since he told us his wife was dead--it's that  
2754 strange feeling he gives me that I'm mixed up with him  
2755 somehow. I don't know why, but it started me thinkin'  
2756 about Mother--as if she was dead. [with a strange  
2757 undercurrent of something like satisfaction in his  
2758 pitying tone] I suppose she might as well be--inside,  
2759 I mean. It must kill her when she thinks of me. I know  
2760 she doesn't want to, but she can't help it. After all,  
2761 I'm her only kid. She used to spoil me and make a  
2762 pet o' me--once in a while--when she remembered me.  
2763 As if she wanted to make up for something--as if she  
2764 felt guilty. So she musta loved me a little, even if she  
2765 never let it interfere with her freedom. [with a strange  
2766 pathetic wistfulness] Do you know, Larry, I once had a  
2767 sneaking suspicion that maybe you were my father.

2768 LARRY [violently]: Ya damned fool--who put that  
2769 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

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

2876     NARRATOR: But Larry hasn't heard--he's deep in thought.

2877     Chuck enters from the rear doorway wearing his Sunday-  
 2878     best suit. A straw hat with a gaudy band is in his hand  
 2879     and he looks hot, uncomfortable and grouchy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2949 ROCKY: Aw right...

2950 CHUCK: Yeah...

2951 JOE: Okay...

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

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

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

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

2971 bad luck--it can't jinx me! [pause--clears his throat--  
2972 then stiffly]: De bread's cut, Rocky and I's finished my  
2973 job. Do I get de drink I's earned?

2974 NARRATOR: Rocky gives him a hostile look but shoves a  
2975 bottle and glass at him.

2976 [Joe pours a drink.]

2977 JOE [sullenly]: I's finished wid dis dump for keeps.  
2978 [takes a key from his pocket and slaps it on the bar]  
2979 Here's de key to my room--I ain't comin' back--I's goin'  
2980 to my own folks where I belong--I don't stay where  
2981 I's not wanted--I's sick and tired of messin' round  
2982 wid white men.

2983 NARRATOR: Gulping down his drink, he looks around  
2984 defiantly then smashes his whiskey glass on the floor.

2985 [Smashing glass.]

2986 ROCKY: What de hell--!

2987 JOE [with a sneering dignity]: I's on'y savin' you de  
2988 trouble, White Boy. Now you don't have to break it,  
2989 soon as my back's turned, so's no white man complains  
2990 about drinkin' from de same glass.

2991 NARRATOR: Walking stiffly to the street door, he turns  
2992 for a parting shot.

2993 JOE [boastfully]: I's tired of loafin' 'round wid a lot  
2994 of bums--I's a gamblin' man--I's gonna get in a big  
2995 crap game and win me a big bankroll. Den I'll open up my  
2996 gamblin' joint for colored men. Den maybe I comes back  
2997 here sometime to see de bums--maybe I throw a hundred  
2998 dolla bill on de bar and say, "Drink it up," and listen  
2999 when dey all pat me on de back and say, "Joe, you sure  
3000 is white." But I'll say, "No, I'm black and my dough is  
3001 black man's dough, and you's proud to drink wid me or  
3002 you don't get no drink!" Or maybe I just says, "You can  
3003 all go to hell--I don't lower myself drinkin' wid no  
3004 white trash!" [Joe opens the door and turns back around]  
3005 And dat ain't no pipe dream! I'll git de money for my  
3006 stake, somehow, somewheres--if I has to get me a gun and  
3007 stick up some white man, I gets it--you wait and see!  
3008 [He swaggers out through the swinging doors.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3031 CHUCK: Yuh're really goin' dere?

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

3038 NARRATOR: He turns away from the bar.

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

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

3043 The Captain appears from the hall.

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

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



is clean. Though full of a put-on self-assurance,  
he's sick--and his face shows it.

THE CAPTAIN: Good morning, gentlemen. [clears throat]  
A jolly fine morning, too.

NARRATOR: He approaches the bar.

THE CAPTAIN: An eye-opener? No, I think not--  
not required, Rocky, old chum. Feel extremely fit, as a  
matter of fact. Though can't say I slept much, thanks to  
that interfering ass, Hickey, and that stupid bounder of  
a Boer. [His face hardens.] I've had about all I can  
take from that fellow--it's my own fault, of course, for  
allowing a brute of a Dutch farmer to become familiar.  
Well, it's come to a parting of the ways now, and  
good riddance--which reminds me, here's my key. [Key  
slapped on bar.] I shan't be coming back. Sorry to be  
leaving good old Bess and the rest of you, of course,  
but I can't continue to live under the same roof with  
that fellow.

NARRATOR: He stiffens with hostility as The General  
enters from the hall. He, too, has made an effort to  
spruce up his appearance. But behind a forced swagger,  
he is sick and feebly holding his booze-sodden body  
together.

ROCKY [disgustedly]: So Hickey's kidded the pants offa  
you, too? Yuh tink yuh're leavin' here, huh, Captain?

THE GENERAL [jeeringly] Ja! Dot's vhat he kids hisself.

THE CAPTAIN [ignores him--airily]: Yes, I'm leaving.  
But that ass, Hickey, has nothing to do with it.  
Been thinking things over. Time I turned over a  
new leaf, and all that.

THE GENERAL: He's going ta get job--dot's what he says!

ROCKY: What at, for Christ sake?

THE CAPTAIN [keeping his airy manner]: Oh, anything--  
I mean, not manual labor, naturally, but anything that  
calls for a bit of brains and education--however humble.  
Beggars can't be choosers. I'll see a pal of mine at the  
Consulate. He promised any time I felt an energetic fit  
he'd get me a post with the Cunard--clark in the office  
or something of the kind.

3127 chentleman, and dot liar, Hickey! Und I need vork only  
 3128 leetle while to save money for passage home. I need not  
 3129 much money because I am not ashamed to travel steerage.  
 3130 I don't put on first-cabin airs! [tauntingly] Und I can  
 3131 go home to my country! Vhen I get dere, dey vill let me  
 3132 come in!

3133 THE CAPTAIN [grows rigid--his voice trembling with  
 3134 repressed anger]: There was a rumor in South Africa,  
 3135 Rocky, that a certain Boer officer--if you call the  
 3136 leaders of a rabble of farmers officers--kept advising  
 3137 Cronje to retreat--not stand and fight--

3138 THE GENERAL: And I vas right--I vas right--he got  
 3139 surrounded at Poardeberg--und had to surrender!

3140 THE CAPTAIN [ignoring him]: Good strategy, no doubt,  
 3141 but a suspicion grew afterwards into a conviction among  
 3142 the Boers that the officer's caution was prompted by a  
 3143 desire to make his personal escape. His countrymen felt  
 3144 extremely savage about it, and his family disowned him--  
 3145 so I imagine there would be no welcoming committee  
 3146 waiting on the dock, nor delighted relatives making the  
 3147 veldt ring with their happy cries--

3148 THE GENERAL [with guilty rage]: All lies--you Gottamned  
 3149 Limey--[trying to control himself] I also haf heard de  
 3150 rumors of a Limey officer who, after de war, lost all  
 3151 his money gambling vhen he vas tronk. Den they found out  
 3152 it vas regiment money, too, he lost--

3153 NARRATOR: The Captain loses control and starts for him.

3154 THE CAPTAIN: You bloody Dutch scum!

3155 NARRATOR: Rocky leans over the bar and delivers a  
 3156 straight-arm to the chest of The Captain.

3157 ROCKY: Cut it out!

3158 NARRATOR: Having grabbed The General, Chuck yanks him  
 3159 back.

3160 THE GENERAL [struggling]: Let him come! I saw dem come  
 3161 before--at Modder River waving deir silly swords,  
 3162 so afraid they could not show off how brave they vas!--  
 3163 and I kill them vith my rifle so easy! [vindictively]  
 3164 Listen to me, Captain! Often vhen I am tronk and kidding  
 3165 you I say sorry I missed you, but now, py Gott, I am  
 3166 sober, and I don't joke, and I say it!

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

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

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

NARRATOR: He starts for the door to the street.

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

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

ROCKY: Well why don't yuh beat it?

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

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

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

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

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

CHUCK: Jeez, can yuh beat dem simps!

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

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

NARRATOR: He disappears with the drink into the hall.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: Willie winces and shrinks down in his chair.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3346 CORA: Here, yuh big tramp!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHUCK: Let's get outa here!

CORA: Yeah.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



3400 BESS HOPE [humiliated and guilty, by way of escape she  
3401 glares around at the others.] Bejeez, what are all you  
3402 bums staring at me for? Think you was watchin' a circus!  
3403 Why don't you get the hell out o' here and 'tend to your  
3404 own business, like Hickey's told ya?

3405 NARRATOR: Looking at her reproachfully, they fidget as  
3406 if they were trying to move.

3407 HICKEY: I thought they'd have the guts to be gone by  
3408 this time. [He grins.] Okay--maybe I did have my doubts.  
3409 [Abruptly he becomes sincerely sympathetic and earnest.]  
3410 Because I know exactly what you're up against, boys.  
3411 I know how damned yellow a person can be when it comes  
3412 to facin' the truth. I've had to face a worse bastard in  
3413 myself than any of you'll have to. I know how it is to  
3414 become such a coward you'll grab at any lousy excuse to  
3415 get out of killin' your pipe dreams. And yet, as I've  
3416 told you over and over, it's exactly those damn tomorrow  
3417 dreams which keep you from makin' peace with yourself.  
3418 So you've got to kill 'em like I did.

3419 NARRATOR: They glare at him with fear and hatred.

3420 HICKEY [His manner changing as he becomes kindly  
3421 bullying]: Come on, boys--get moving--who'll start the  
3422 ball rolling? You, Captain, and you, General--you're old  
3423 war heroes--you ought to lead the charge--come on now,  
3424 show us a little of that Battle of Modder River spirit  
3425 we've heard so much about! You can't hang around all day  
3426 as if the street outside would bite ya!

3427 THE CAPTAIN [turns with humiliated rage in an attempt at  
3428 jaunty casualness] Right you are, Mister Bloody Nosey  
3429 Parker! Time I pushed off--was only waiting to say  
3430 good-bye to you, Bess, old gal.

3431 BESS HOPE [dejectedly]: Good-bye, Captain--hope you  
3432 have luck.

3433 THE CAPTAIN: Oh, I'm bound to, my dear--and the same to  
3434 you.

3435 NARRATOR: Pushing open the swinging doors, The Captain  
3436 marches off right.

3437 THE GENERAL: Py Gott, if dot Limey can, I can!

3438 NARRATOR: Lumbering through the doors, The General  
3439 marches off left.

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

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

3445 HICKEY: That's the stuff, Mac.

3446 ED: Good-bye, Bess.

3447 NARRATOR: Ed goes out, turning right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

BESS HOPE: Well, so long--

NARRATOR: She stops and looks back--frightened.

BESS HOPE: Bejeez, where are you, Hickey--it's time we got started.

HICKEY [grins & shakes his head]: No, Bess, I'm sorry--you've got to do this one by yourself.

HOPE [with forced fuming]: Hell of a guy, you are--thought you'd be willing to help an old lady across the street, one who's half blind--half deaf, too--damn those automobiles! The hell with ya! I've never needed no one's help and I don't now! [egging herself on] I'll make it a long walk now I've started--see all my old friends--bejeez, they must have given me up for dead--twenty years is a long time. But they know it was Harry's death that made me-- Well, the sooner I get started--

NARRATOR: Suddenly she drops her hand from the door.

BESS HOPE [with sentimental melancholy] You know, that's the one that gets me--can't help thinkin' the last time I went out was Harry's funeral. After he'd gone, I didn't feel life was worth livin'. Swore I'd never go out again. [pathetically] Somehow, I don't feel it's right for me to go, Hickey, even now--it's like I was doing wrong to his memory.

HICKEY: Now, Bess--you can't let yourself get away with that one any more!

BESS HOPE [cupping her hand to her ear] What's that? Can't hear ya. [sentimentally again but with desperation] I remember now clear as day the last time before he-- It was a fine Sunday morning--we went out to church together. [Her voice breaks on a sob.]

HICKEY [amused]: It's a great act, Bess--but I know better, and so do you. You never did want to go to church or any place else with him--he was always on your neck, making you go out and do things, when all you wanted was to get drunk in peace.

HOPE [falteringly]: Can't hear a word you're sayin'--you're a God-damned liar, anyway! [then in a sudden fury, her voice trembling with hatred] Bejeez, you son of-- If there was a mad dog outside I'd go and shake hands with it rather than stay here with you!

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]

3677 But the slaves must ice it properly! [with guttural  
3678 rage] Gottamned Hickey--peddler pimp for nouveau-riche  
3679 capitalism! Vhen I lead the jackass mob to the sack of  
3680 Babylon, I vill make them hang him to a lamppost the  
3681 first one!

3682 BESS HOPE [spiritlessly]: That's right an' I'll help ya  
3683 pull on the rope! Have a drink, Hugo.

3684 HUGO [frightened]: No, sank you--I am too trunk now--  
3685 I hear myself say crazy sings. Do not listen, please--  
3686 Larry vill tell you I haf never been so crazy trunk--  
3687 I must sleep it off.

3688 NARRATOR: Starting to put his head on his arms, he stops  
3689 and stares at Bess with growing uneasiness.

3690 HUGO: What's matter, Bess--you look funny--you look  
3691 dead--what's happened? I don't know you--listen, I feel  
3692 I am dying, too--because I am so crazy trunk--it is very  
3693 necessary I sleep--but I can't sleep here vith you--  
3694 you look dead.

3695 NARRATOR: In a panic, Hugo scrambles to his feet.  
3696 Turning his back on Bess, he plops down at the next  
3697 table--thrusting down his head on his arms like an  
3698 ostrich in the sand.

3699 LARRY [to Hickey with bitter condemnation]: Another one  
3700 who's begun to enjoy your peace!

3701 HICKEY: Oh, I know it's tough on him right now, same as  
3702 it is on Bess--but that's only the first shock--  
3703 I promise you they'll both be fine.

3704 LARRY: And you believe that! I see you do--you mad fool!

3705 HICKEY: Of course I believe it! I tell you I know from  
3706 my own experience!

3707 BESS HOPE [spiritlessly]: Close that big clam o' yours,  
3708 Hickey--you're a worse gabber than that nagging asshole  
3709 Harry was.

3710 [She drinks her drink mechanically and pours another.]

3711 ROCKY [in amazement]: Jeez, did yuh hear dat?

3712 BESS HOPE [dully]: What's wrong with this booze--there's  
3713 no kick in it.



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--

3793 beginning to feel free--from guilt and lyin' hopes--  
 3794 finally at peace with yourself.

3795 BESS HOPE [with a dull callousness]: Somebody croaked  
 3796 your Evelyn, eh? Bejeez, my bets are on the iceman!  
 3797 But who the hell cares--let's get drunk and pass out.  
 3798 [She tosses down her drink with a lifeless, automatic  
 3799 movement--complainingly] Bejeez, what did you do to the  
 3800 booze, Hickey--there's no damned life left in it.

3801 PARRITT: [stammers]: Don't look like that, Larry--  
 3802 you've got to believe what I told you--it had nothing to  
 3803 do with her--it was just to get a few lousy dollars!

3804 [Hugo suddenly pounds on the table with his fists.]

3805 HUGO: Don't be a fool--buy me a trink! But no more vine!  
 3806 It is not properly iced! [with guttural rage] Gottamned  
 3807 stupid proletarian slaves--buy me a trink or I will have  
 3808 you shot! [He collapses into abject begging.] Please,  
 3809 for Gott's sake--I am not trunk enough--I cannot sleep--  
 3810 life is a crazy monkey-face--always there is blood  
 3811 beneath the villow trees--I hate it and I am afraid!  
 3812 [He hides his face on his arms, sobbing muffledly.]  
 3813 Please, I am crazy trunk--I say crazy sings--for Gott's  
 3814 sake, do not listen to me!

3815 HICKEY [with worried kindness] You're beginning to  
 3816 worry me, Bess--something's holding you up. I don't see  
 3817 what-- You've faced the truth about yourself--you've  
 3818 killed your nagging pipe dream. Oh I know it knocks you  
 3819 cold--but only for a minute--then you see it was the  
 3820 only way to peace--and you feel happy--like I did.  
 3821 That's what worries me, old friend--it's time you began  
 3822 to feel...happy...

3823 [Brief musical interlude]

3824 NARRATOR: Around half past one in the morning, the  
 3825 tables in the bar have a new arrangement.

3826 Two bottles of whiskey are on each--with glasses and a  
 3827 pitcher of water.

3828 At one table sit Larry, Hugo and Parritt--at another  
 3829 Cora and The Captain--at another, Mac and The General--  
 3830 and at the last, Willie, Bess, Ed and Jimmy.

3831 Slumbering in a chair next to the bar-asleep--is Joe.  
 3832 Rocky approaches him from behind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Rocky pushes a bottle toward him.]

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

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

[Chuck drinks.]

JOE [mumbles in his sleep]:

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

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

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

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

[He walks away.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3949 CHUCK [suspiciously]: Huh!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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,

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

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

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

CORA: Yeah!

ED: That's right!

MAC: We don't give a damn!

JOE: Xactly!

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

[The gang grunts in agreement.]

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

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

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

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

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

DETECTIVE #1: Guy named Hickman here?

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

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

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

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



what's she to us? All we want is to pass out in peace,  
bejeez!

THE CAPTAIN: That's right!

THE GENERAL: What's it to us?

NARRATOR: Bess drinks and the rest follow her  
mechanically.

BESS HOPE [complaining with a stupid, nagging  
insistence]: No life in the booze! No kick--dishwater--  
I'll never pass out, bejeez!

HICKEY [goes on as if there had been no interruption]:  
So I beat it to the city. I got a job easy, and it was a  
cinch for me to make good--I had the knack--it was like  
a game, sizing people up quick, spotting what their pet  
pipe dreams were, and then kidding 'em along that line,  
pretendin' you believed what they wanted to believe  
about themselves--then they liked you, they trusted you,  
they wanted to buy somethin' to show their gratitude--  
it was fun. But still, all the while I felt guilty, as  
if I had no right to be having such a good time away  
from Evelyn. In each letter I'd tell her how I missed  
her, but I'd keep warning her, too--I'd tell her all my  
faults, how I liked my booze, and so on. But there was  
no shaking Evelyn's belief in me. After each of her  
letters, I'd be as full of faith as she was. So as soon  
as I got enough saved, I sent for her and we got  
married. Christ, for a while I was happy--and was she  
happy! I don't care what anyone says, there was never  
two people who loved each other more than Evelyn and me,  
not only then but always, in spite of everything I did--

NARRATOR: As he pauses, a look of sadness comes over  
his face.

HICKEY: Ya see I never could learn to handle temptation.  
I'd want to reform and I'd promise her, and I'd promise  
myself, and I'd believe it. I'd say to her "It's the  
last time"--and she'd say, "I know it's the last time,  
Teddy--you'll never do it again." That's what made it so  
hard--that's what made me feel such a rotten skunk--her  
always forgiving me. My playin' around with women, for  
instance--it was only a harmless good time to me--didn't  
mean nothin'--but I'd know what it meant to Evelyn.  
So I'd say to myself, never again--but you know how it  
is, traveling around--the damned hotel rooms--I'd get

stumble into her home, where she kept everything so spotless and clean--an' I'd sworn it would never happen again, and now I'd have to start swearin' again that this was the last time. I could see disgust havin' a battle with love in her eyes. Love always won. She'd make herself kiss me, as if nothing had happened, as if I'd just come home from a business trip--she'd never complain or bawl me out. [He bursts out in a tone of anguish that has anger and hatred beneath it] Christ, can you imagine what a guilty skunk that made me feel! If she'd only admitted once she didn't believe the pipe dream any more that some day I'd change! But she never would--Evelyn was stubborn as hell--once she'd set her heart on somethin', you couldn't shake her faith that it had to come true--tomorrow. It was the same old story, for years and years--it kept pilin' up, inside her and inside me--god, can you picture all I made her suffer, and all the guilt she made me feel, and how I hated myself! If she only hadn't been so damn good--if she'd been the same kind of wife I was a husband--god, I used to pray sometimes she'd-- I'd even say to her, "Go on, why don't you, Evelyn--it'd serve me right--I wouldn't mind--I'd forgive you." Of course, I'd pretend I was kiddin'--like I joked about her being the iceman. She'd have been so hurt if I'd said it seriously--she'd've thought I'd stopped lovin' her.

NARRATOR: He pauses and looks around at the gang.

HICKEY: I suppose you think I'm a liar, that no woman could have stood all that and still loved me--that it isn't human for any woman to be so forgiving. Well, I'm not lying, and if you'd ever seen her, you'd know I wasn't--it was written all over her face--sweetness and love and pity and forgiveness. [He reaches mechanically for the inside pocket of his coat.] Wait, I'll show ya--I always carry her picture.

NARRATOR: Suddenly he looks startled. Staring before him, his hand falls back quietly.

HICKEY: No, I forgot--I tore it up--afterwards--I didn't need it any more.

CORA [with a muffled sob]: Jeez, Hickey! Jeez!

PARRITT [to Larry in a low insistent tone]: I burned Mother's picture, Larry. Her eyes followed me all the time. They seemed to be wishing I was dead!

HICKEY: It got so I hated myself more and more--that I'd curse myself in the mirror every time I shaved. It drove me crazy--you wouldn't believe a guy could feel such pity. It got so every night I'd wind up hiding my face in her lap, bawling and beggin' her forgiveness--and, of course, she'd always comfort me and say, "Never mind, Teddy, I know you won't ever again." Christ, I loved her, but I began to hate that pipe dream! I began to think I was going bughouse, because sometimes I couldn't forgive her for forgiving me. I even caught myself hating her for making me hate myself so much--there's a limit to the forgiveness and the pity you can take--you've gotta start blaming someone. I got so sometimes when she'd kiss me it was like she did it on purpose to humiliate me--but I saw how rotten of me that was, and it made me hate myself all the more. And as it got closer to Bess's birthday, I got nearly crazy--I kept swearing to her that this time I really wouldn't--until I'd made it a final test to myself--and to her. And she kept encouraging me, saying, "I can see you really mean it now, Teddy--I know you'll conquer it this time, and we'll be so happy, dear." When she'd say that and kiss me, I'd believe it, too--then she'd go to bed, and I'd stay up alone cuz I didn't want to disturb her, tossing and turning. I'd get so lonely, thinking how peaceful it was with the old gang, getting drunk and joking and laughing and singing and swapping lies. And finally I knew I'd have to come--and I knew if I came this time, it was the last--I'd never have the guts to go back and be forgiven--and that would break Evelyn's heart because to her it would mean I didn't love her any more.

NARRATOR: The gang listens--mesmerized.

HICKEY: So that last night I drove myself crazy trying to figure some way out for her. I went to the bedroom--I was goin' to tell her it was the end. but I couldn't do that to her. She was sound asleep--I thought, God, if she never woke up, she'd never know! And then it came to me--the only possible way out, for her sake. I remembered I'd given her a gun for protection while I was away and it was in the drawer beside her. She'd never feel any pain, never wake up from her dream. So I-

BESS HOPE [tries to ward this off by pounding her glass on the table--with brutal, callous exasperation]: Give us a rest, for the love of Christ! Who the hell cares?

[Most of the gang pound with their glasses.]

HICKEY [simply]: So I killed her.

PARRITT [suddenly gives up and relaxes limply in his chair--in a low voice in which there is a strange exhausted relief] Well, there's no use lying any more--you know, anyway--I didn't give a damn about the money--it was because I hated her.

HICKEY [obliviously]: And then I saw I'd always known that was the only way to give her peace and free her from the misery of loving me. I saw it meant peace for me, too, knowing she was at peace. I felt as though a ton of guilt was lifted off my mind. I remember I stood by the bed and suddenly I had to laugh--I knew Evelyn would forgive me. [laughs] And I heard myself saying to her something I'd always wanted to say: "Well, you know what you can do with your pipe dream now, ya damned bitch!"

NARRATOR: He stops horrified, as if shocked out of a nightmare--as if he couldn't believe what he had just said.

HICKEY: No! I never--!

PARRITT [to Larry--sneeringly]: Yes, that's it--her and the whole Movement pipe dream! Eh, Larry?

HICKEY [bursts into frantic denial]: No--that's a lie--I never said [that]--! Good God, I couldn't have said that--if I did, I'd go insane! Why, I loved Evelyn more than anything in life! [He appeals brokenly to the crowd.] Boys, you're all my old pals--you've known old Hickey for years--you know I'd never [do that to]-- [His eyes fix on Bess.] You've known me longer than anyone, Bess--you know I must have been insane, don't you--old friend?

BESS HOPE [at first with the same defensive callousness] Who the hell cares?

NARRATOR: Then suddenly there is an extraordinary change in her expression--her face lights up, as if she were grasping at some dawning hope in her mind.

4538 BESS HOPE [with a groping eagerness]: Insane? You mean--  
4539 you really went insane?

4540 NARRATOR: At the tone in her voice, all the gang stare  
4541 at her as if they, too, had caught her thought. Then  
4542 they all look to Hickey eagerly.

4543 HICKEY: Yes--or I couldn't have laughed--I couldn't have  
4544 said that to her!

4545 NARRATOR: The detective with the badge nods to his  
4546 partner.

4547 DETECTIVE #2: That's enough, Hickman. You're under  
4548 arrest.

4549 [A pair of handcuffs snap around Hickey's wrists.]

4550 DETECTIVE #1: Come along and spill your guts where we  
4551 can get it on paper.

4552 HICKEY: No, wait, officers--you owe me a break--I phoned  
4553 and made it easy for you--just a few minutes! [to Bess--  
4554 pleadingly] You know I couldn't say that to Evelyn,  
4555 don't you, Bess--unless [I was insane]--

4556 HOPE [eagerly]: You've been crazy ever since. Yes--and  
4557 everything you've said and done here--

4558 HICKEY: Yes, of course, I've been out of my mind ever  
4559 since! All the time I've been here! You saw I was  
4560 insane, didn't you?

4561 DETECTIVE #1 [with cynical disgust]: Can it--I've had  
4562 enough of your act--save it for the jury. [addressing  
4563 the gang, sharply] Listen, yous--don't fall for his  
4564 lies--he's startin' to get foxy and thinks he'll plead  
4565 insanity--but he won't get away with it.

4566 BESS HOPE [begins to bristle in her old-time manner]:  
4567 Bejeez, ya dumb flatfoot--ya got a crust trying to tell  
4568 us about Hickey! We've known him for years, and every  
4569 one of us noticed he was nutty the minute he showed up  
4570 here! Bejeez, if you'd heard all the crazy bull he was  
4571 pullin' about bringing us peace--like a bughouse  
4572 preacher escaped from an asylum! If you'd seen all the  
4573 fool things he made us do! We only did 'em because--  
4574 [She hesitates--then defiantly] Because we hoped he'd  
4575 come out of it if we kidded him along. [She appeals to  
4576 the others.] Ain't that right, gang?

ED: Yes, Bess!

CORA: That's it, Bess.

THE CAPTAIN: That's why!

THE GENERAL: Ve knew he vas crazy!

MAC: Just to humor him!

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

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

[The gang growls in ascent.]

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

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

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

DETECTIVE #2: Come on, you!

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

DETECTIVE #1: Bull-crap!

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

DETECTIVE #2: Get a move on!

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

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

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

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

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

4627 THE CAPTAIN/JIMMY [yell]: Don't worry, Hickey.

4628 [From the hall comes the slam of the street door.]

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

4631 NARRATOR: The gang all grab their glasses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4651 NARRATOR: He pauses, as if waiting for Larry to comment  
 4652 --but he ignores him.

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.



That's kind. I knew you were the only one who could understand my side of it.

NARRATOR: He gets to his feet and turns toward the hall.

HUGO [bursts into his silly giggle]: Hello, leedle Parritt, leedle monkey-face--don't be a fool--buy me a trink!

PARRITT [puts on an act of dramatic bravado--forcing a grin]: Sure, I will, Hugo! Tomorow! Beneath the willow trees!

NARRATOR: He walks into the hallway with a careless swagger then disappears.

HUGO [after Parritt stupidly]: Stupid fool! Hickey make you crazy, too. [He turns to the oblivious Larry--with a timid eagerness] I'm glad, Larry, zey take that crazy Hickey away to asylum--he makes me have bad dreams--he makes me tell lies about myself--he makes me want to spit on all I have ever dreamed. Yes, I am glad zey take him to asylum--I don't feel I am dying now. He was selling death to me, that crazy salesman. I sink I have a trink now, Larry.

[He pours a drink and gulps it down.]

BESS HOPE [jubilantly]: Bejeez, gang, I'm feeling the old kick--or I'm a liar! It's putting life back in me! Bejeez, if all I've lapped up begins to hit me, I'll be paralyzed before I know it! It was Hickey kept it from us--Bejeez, I know how that sounds, but he was crazy, and he got all of us as bughouse as he was. Bejeez, it does strange things to ya, having to listen day and night to a lunatic's pipe dreams--pretending you believe 'em, to kid him along and doing any crazy thing he wants to humor him. It's dangerous, too--look at me pretending to go for a walk just to keep him quiet. I knew damned well it wasn't the right day for it. The sun was broiling and the streets full of automobiles. Bejeez, I could feel myself getting sunstroke, and an automobile damn near ran over me.

NARRATOR: She appeals to Rocky--afraid of the result, but daring it.

BESS HOPE: Ask Rocky--he was watching. Didn't it, Rocky?

ROCKY [a bit tipsily but earnestly]: De automobile, Boss? Sure, I seen it! Just missed yuh! I thought yuh

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

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

4741 [The gang laughs eagerly]

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

4747 [Many drinks are poured.]

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

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

4754 THE GENERAL: Vhat's all!

4755 JIMMY/THE CAPTAIN/WILLIE: Finest drummer!

4756 ED/MAC/JOE: Best scout!

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

4759 [They all drink.]

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

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

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

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

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

4817 [They pour out drinks.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4837 [The gang laughs.]

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

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: He tries to embrace them but they push his arms away.

PEARL [with amazed suspicion]: What kind of a gag is dis?

BESS HOPE [calls to them warmly]: Come and join the party! Bejeez, I'm glad to see ya!

NARRATOR: The girls exchange a bewildered glance, taking in the party atmosphere.

MARGIE: Jeez, what's come off here?

PEARL: Where's dat louse, Hickey?

ROCKY: De cops got him--he gone crazy and croaked his wife.

MARGIE/PEARL [with more relief than horror]: Jeez!

ROCKY: He'll get Matteawan--but he ain't responsible. What he pulled don't mean nuttin'. So forget dat whore stuff--I'll knock de block off anyone calls you whores! I'll fill de bastard fulla lead--yuh're tarts, and what de hell of it? Yuh're as good as anyone--so forget it, see?

NARRATOR: They let him put his arms around them now--smiling and exchanging maternal glances.

MARGIE [with a wink]: Our little bahtender, ain't he, Poil?

PEARL: Yeah, and a cute little Ginny at dat!

MARGIE/PEARL [laugh]:

MARGIE: And is he stinko!

PEARL: Stinko is right. But he ain't got nuttin' on us. Jeez, Rocky, did we have some kinda time at Coney!

BESS HOPE: Bejeez, sit down, you two--welcome home--have a drink--have ten drinks, bejeez! [a host whose party is a huge success--rambling on happily.] Bejeez, this is all right--we'll make this my birthday party, and forget the other--we'll get paralyzed! But who's missing? Where's the Old Wise Guy? Where's Larry?

ROCKY: Over by de window, Boss. Jeez, he's got his eyes shut. De old bastard's asleep. To hell wid him. Let's have a drink.

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

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

LARRY [gasps then shudders]:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: Larry finally opens his eyes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4931 [The gang howls derisively.]

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

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

4937 [They pound their glasses on the table.]

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

4940 [The gang roars with boisterous laughter.]

4941 HUGO [giggles]:

4942 THE END