

BY MOUTH | Martin Garrison, Producer  
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ROLE: **THE GENERAL**

THE GENERAL: A huge Dutch farmer in his 50's with a comic accent, The General served in the Boer War in South Africa. He still looks somewhat authoritative, but his once-strong body has become flabby. His dream is to return to the Netherlands but his conduct in the war has left him a disgraced figure. He is closest to The Captain, once his enemy in the War, but their relationship becomes fraught with tension when Hickey shows up.  
**3 takes + pickups = \$250.**

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

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

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

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

**PLEASE READ THE GENERAL LINES 3086-3118**

**THE GENERAL LINES BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE**

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

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

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

562      NARRATOR: Rocky shakes Willie by the shoulder roughly.

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

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

565      ROCKY: Come on, Bum!

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

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

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

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

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

581      ED: That's right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LARRY: The hell I am!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

771       LARRY [guffaws sardonically]:

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

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

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

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

787       NARRATOR: But soon the three are asleep again.

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

790       BESS HOPE: What? What d'you say?

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 toegether!" [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,



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.]

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.

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 hissself.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NARRATOR: The Captain loses control and starts for him.

THE CAPTAIN: You bloody Dutch scum!

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

ROCKY: Cut it out!

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

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



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

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

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

NARRATOR: They glare at him with fear and hatred.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WILLIE/ED/JOE/THE CAPTAIN/THE

GENERAL/JIMMY/MAC/CHUCK/CORA: Yeah!

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

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

ED: Yes, Bess!

CORA: That's it, Bess.

THE CAPTAIN: That's why!

THE GENERAL: Ve knew he vas crazy!

MAC: Just to humor him!

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

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

[The gang growls in ascent.]

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

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

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

DETECTIVE #2: Come on, you!

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

DETECTIVE #1: Bull-crap!

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

DETECTIVE #2: Get a move on!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4631 NARRATOR: The gang all grab their glasses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4741 [The gang laughs eagerly]

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

4747 [Many drinks are poured.]

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

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

4754 THE GENERAL: Vhat's all!

4755 JIMMY/THE CAPTAIN/WILLIE: Finest drummer!

4756 ED/MAC/JOE: Best scout!

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

4759 [They all drink.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[The gang laughs uproariously.]

THE CAPTAIN: No offense meant, old chap.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4931 [The gang howls derisively.]

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

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

4937 [They pound their glasses on the table.]

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

4940 [The gang roars with boisterous laughter.]

4941 HUGO [giggles]:

4942 THE END