

ANDELANA

by
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CHARACTERS

(Many characters are doubled.)

On Ship:

- BUCK** (18) Apprentice. Bolton, England. Best friends with Richard Hanze. Literal. Nieve but wants to be worldly. Abscessed tooth. Practicing his knots. “With our feet on the ground...”
- RICHARD** (18) Apprentice. Ostend, Belgium. Best friends with Percy Buck. Loves language, stories, himself. Bursts into song at the drop. Captivating. Story’s dynamo. “...we have flights of fantasy.”
- CAPTAIN** (42) George W. Stalling. Nova Scotia, Canada. Dejected from just losing his officers and several men to other ships. Preoccupied.
- CHARLES** (49) Boatswain. American but speaks a seafaring language. Oldest by far. Grizzled curmudgeon. A face to sour sugar.
- JENSEN** (20) Seaman. Denmark. Kind, accepting.
- BROWN** (28) Cook. Barbados, West Indies. Humble mountain of a man. Admires his crew.
- DOE** (23) Second Mate. Blackpool, England. Scheming.
- NEILSON** (22) Able Seaman. Norway. Loves his heritage as much as his drink.
- YANG** (20s) Apprentice. Shanghai. Humble. Reserved. Speaks quietly with great weight. Working his way to prosperity.

Off Ship:

- HOSKA** (50s) Coroner. Relishes power. Slow, deliberate, commanding showoff. Completely changed by the end.
- TZE** (70s) (Pronounced “See.”) Shanghai. Gaunt. Salesman. Robed in many amulets.
- FIRST MATE**(35) Officer. English. Tall, powerful. Left Andelana with several others for safer ships. Conflicted.
- CHRISTINA** (16) Norwegian-American. Determined. Runs ‘The Seaman’s Rest Mission House’ with her mother. Brilliant. Vibrant. Filled with sunlight.
- DOTY** (45) Captain of *Walter H. Wilson*. Nova Scotia, Canada. Friend of George Staling.
- MURDOCH** Robert. Locked in ship on last voyage then transferred to Tacoma jail for being crazy. Eventual suicide at Old St. Peter’s Church, Tacoma.
- HAM** See Roger.
- BURLEY** (29) Captain of Tacoma tugboat *Fairfield*. Holland.
- FREDERICK, SCRAGGLY SAILORS and Off Stage VOICES**

(As audience enters SOUNDS of beach WAVES. Occasional SEAGULL CRIES, SHIP's BELLS, pelting RAIN and WIND WHISTLING through rigging.)

AT OPEN

1-1

(VIDEO of SHORE WAVES flowing over STAGE FLOOR.)

BUCK (V.O.)

(as if a thought)

Richard...

(a long beat)

Release me Richard. ...Let me go, Boy-O. Let me live. Away from you, Dear Friend. I'm drowning here with you. Let me go. Let me live...

(SPECIALS RISE on...)

INQUEST

(BURLEY sits in the harsh light of the Witness Chair. HOSKA oversees from his seat of power. Prerecorded CROWD noises.)

HOSKA

While giving testimony in my coroner's inquest, Captain Burley, you will remove your hat.

BURLEY

Yessir. Sorry Sir.

HOSKA

Captain Ole Burley off the steam powered tugboat Fairfield of Tacoma Tug and Barge Company...

BURLEY

Yessir...

HOSKA

You marshaled the barque Andelana into grain silos at Eureka Dock...

BURLEY

Yessir...

HOSKA

You are prepared to accurately describe, for the record Captain, the barque Andelana.

BURLEY

Yessir.

HOSKA

I am no seafaring man, sir, just a county coroner. Allow me time to write and understand. Precise language, Captain. ...Proceed.

BURLEY

Yessir. Well, yes. Andelana. built by R. Williamson and Son in Workington, England. Three hundred four foot long, four masted, steel hulled barque. Launched ten year ago in October of 1889.

HOSKA

Quite large.

BURLEY

Huge. My own tug was but a toy next to her, sir.

HOSKA

Precision, Captain. Her weight?

BURLEY

Ah, yes well, a clever captain never inquires a lady's weight, sir...

(he chuckles... consults his notes)

Right. Yes. Ah, two thousand, five hundred eighty gross tonnage, sir. Cargo ship, mostly grain. Had her cargo hatches wide open as men painted inside the holds. I moved her from Eureka Docks to moor up in the harbor. Ah, her Main stood one hundred sixty foot above... Now that's sixteen stories tall, sir. Taller mast than most, four masts of course but, but that is a correct figure, sir, I checked: one hundred, sixty foot Mainmast. Company had her masts extended in Shanghai before setting out for Tacoma, I gather. A tender ship, the Andelana.

HOSK

Tender? What does Tender mean, sir...?

BURLEY

Tender is a sluggish ship, sir. Easy to heel over and slow to right herself. And once she do tilt too far... Well, she's done. So what we do, sir, to prevent tilting here in Tacoma Harbor, we chain mooring logs on both sides of the ship, for and aft. To keep tall ships upright. Sir.

HOSKA

(writing)

Ballast gone. Holds empty- wide open, she's riding high. Mooring logs... Topheavy from mast extensions.

BURLEY

Captains usually keep some grain in their holds as ballast, to Stiffen their ship -opposite of Tender- but that's expensive and this captain chose not to.

HOSKA

I see. ...And the Andelana's crew? Competent would you say? Captain?

BURLEY

Couldn't say, sir. No dealings with her crew, per say. But I can speak to Andelana's captain.

HOSKA

Very well.

BURLEY

(consulting notes)

Ah, George W. Spalling, out of Nova Scotia. Going on six year as Captain. Spoke to me about giving up the sea, actually. Going back to his Nova Scotia land. Live... Live the soft life.

HOSKA

How many sailors aboard the Andelana, Captain Burley?

(From offstage a tin whistle, hurdy gurdy and concertina begin playing "Don't Forget Your Old Shipmate" SHANTY INSTRUMENTAL.)

BURLEY

Oh. Well, ah, Captain Stalling told me the very day he arrived in Tacoma Bay he lost eight of his finest, sir. Same day. Including First and Second Officers. Just took their pay and jumped ship, I gather. ...Leaving fifteen poor souls still aboard the Andelana.

*(As BURLEY and HOSKA EXIT,
LIGHTS CROSSFADE to...)*

LOWER RAILING

1-2

(BUCK and RICHARD share a hip flask.)

RICHARD

(toying with a fist sized MAGIC BOX)

Love standing out here on the railing, surveying the shore, remembering there's still dirt somewhere on earth.

BUCK

Anything to leave the stench Bellowdecks. ...What's that?

RICHARD

A magic box straight from the bilge. Doe gave it to me. Said if anyone can figure how to open it, I can.

BUCK

Ghoulish Doe gave you something?

RICHARD

Ghoulish Doe.

BUCK

Must be one of his evil plans. ...Looks old.

RICHARD

It's Asian. Many layered tricks to open these things. Still looking for the first step.

BUCK

Richard. Been meaning to ask you: Have you written mum lately?

RICHARD

Here we go...

BUCK

Parents paid for my apprenticeship. Yours paid for you. Least we can do is send Mum a letter.

I sent one.

RICHARD

One. When?

BUCK

From Shanghai, early November.

RICHARD

Over two months ago? Richard! Mum deserves a...

BUCK

Understand...

RICHARD

Write your mum, Richard!

BUCK

Yeah. I know, I know...

RICHARD

Mine went off-boat today, right here in Tacoma Harbor. Three of 'em, Richard. Wrote myself three whole letters to dear old Mum.

BUCK

Well aren't you the hero.

RICHARD

No such thing as heroes, Richard.

BUCK

This is our story, Percy. And every story's got one.

RICHARD

What are you on about...

BUCK

You, Percy Buck. You are the ship's hero. Proof: What do you want most outa life?

RICHARD

BUCK

Most outa my life? Damn tooth outa my head.

RICHARD

Besides your simpering tooth. What do you require outa life?

BUCK

Oh, easy: I require a smart and beautiful girl to take me home.

(RICHARD laughs uncontrollably.)

BUCK (Cont'd.)

What!

RICHARD

How! How are you going to find a lusty...

BUCK

And smart!

RICHARD

And smart...

BUCK

Mostly smart...

RICHARD

Okay. A mostly smart girl while you're out here climbing waves, Perce? How?

BUCK

After months of climbing waves, I'll return to a tidy cottage with daffodils and a, a gramophone playing her sweet music...

RICHARD

There. See? You want'n to work waves makes you...

BUCK

Love the waves...

RICHARD

You Love'n to work waves makes you, Bucky-Boy, my Hero.

BUCK

Ride'n the top yard? Hang'n on for dear life? Skimming high above the far below shimmer. Then, little by little summoning every fiber of courage to raise each hands and reach high to scrape the sky! Clutch'n clouds and scrape'n sky! ...Don't you love it?

RICHARD

It's work.

BUCK

Ohhh. ...Some hero am I. Try, try trying, always trying but never allowed to Do. And aboard this ship all I can do is be misfit.

RICHARD

Misfit!?

BUCK

Everyone's think'n it.

RICHARD

Bucky-Boy: Can't tell a man's life till he's through living it.

BUCK

...That almost sounds intelligent, Richard. Why does that almost sound intelligent?

RICHARD

Cause you've almost had enough rum.

BUCK

Damn tooth. Side of my face is sliding off my skull!

RICHARD

Doctor's remedy right here...

(RICHARD lifts BUCK's hand with hip flask to BUCK's mouth.)

BUCK

Ha...

(sputters, gulps)

Okay, okay! You're sounding smarter...!

RICHARD

My intelligence rises by the amount of rum you consume... Did you know, an Englishman sailed a beagle to South America and brought back a whole new science? ...Yeah! To some it's fast becoming a new religion.

BUCK

Science becoming religion?

(grabbing hip flask)

Sounds intelligent to me!

RICHARD

You are The Hero of this ship, Bucky-Boy, because you actually want to be here. Want, Buck. 'Want' makes you my hero.

BUCK

Doing what I'm supposed to? ...Holy whole of glory. Count me the hero!

(From OFF STAGE the CREW softly sing along the SHANTY INSTRUMENTAL "Don't Forget Your Old Shipmate." It grows during this scene.)

BUCK (Cont'd.)

Sure are my best mate, Richard, best I've ever had. Quick with a smile. Overflowing with soft, brilliant, gigantic words and ideas...

RICHARD

Yeah, well you're mine too, Perce. Careful though: My best mates have a proclivity towards contretemps.

BUCK

Contra, yeah. Tone...

(drinks)

Know what I done? I spilled my full plate o'beans n horse meat right on top of ol' Charles, of all.

RICHARD

I know.

BUCK

He told. Know what Charles said? He told me I'm so damn clumsy my own turd'll rear up and bite off my balls... Yeah! Charles, yeah.

RICHARD

That's just Charles, mate! His relentless pursuit to the moral low ground. It's our choices that make us, Lad, not our disasters... No, Perce, you, my dear friend, you make doing this God-Awful back-broken skin-scraping job bearable. ...Bearable, Bucky-Boy. You do that.

BUCK

Well, to you, maybe, because you're, you're joyous and frolicsome an all, but, but I'm just, you know, I'm normal.

(drinks)

Never used to be clumsy or...

RICHARD

I know...

BUCK

or dumb or...

RICHARD

I know, I know you're...

BUCK

But all they see aboard is my worst, Richard. I mean I could save Lives but my mistakes, Ohhh. And then one mistake builds on top of another and then those build and no one forgets. No, not 'round here, no, nooo... They talk an' stab my back -always with a smile, mind- to get me cinched an' bridled as worthless.

(BUCK quaffs)

You're my only ally here, Richard. Only, only ally. You know my deep feeling...

RICHARD

You really need a mostly smart girl, my friend.

BUCK

Told ya.

RICHARD

Keep your eyes open... Listen, Perce. My own self. I'm not what you polish me up to be, you know. I... I'm not the pure, upright... I, I can't ever. If people could see my thoughts, Percy, they'd lock me up or worse.

BUCK

Inside our own skull is nobody's worry but our own. No-bo-dy's.

RICHARD

Percy. ...Do you believe humans can change?

BUCK

What?

RICHARD

Our nature, I mean. Is, is it possible? To become something new?

BUCK

New! What do you have to drown?

RICHARD

You'd be shocked.

BUCK

Well, yes. I do believe so. Have to. Least I, I hope we can change.

RICHARD

Nobody knows the real me.

BUCK

Nobody knows the real me.

RICHARD

(toasting)

Always remember, Dear Friend: Death gives life it's beauty.

(BUCK drinks rum but winces from pain.)

BUCK

What the. That almost sounds smaaarr... Ohhh!

RICHARD

What.

BUCK

Cold rum on gosh darn tooth.

RICHARD

Well: Drink with your other ‘Gosh Darn’ tooth, Bucky-boy!

BUCK

My other... My Other..!

RICHARD

My humor rises by the amount, of rum, you...

(They both laugh!

RICHARD SINGS the SHANTY's lead to BUCK.)

RICHARD (Cont'd.)

(singing to BUCK)

Safe and sound at home again!

Let the waters roar, Jack.

Safe and sound at home again!

Let the waters roar, Jack.

Long we've tossed on the rolling main,

Now we're safe ashore, Jack...

Don't forget your old shipmate,

faldee raldee raldee raldee rye-eye-doe!

(speaking to BUCK)

Race ya, Bucky-Boy!

(RICHARD, singing the second verse, sprints OFF STAGE with BUCK close behind as SHANTY continues...

CROSSFADE to...)

FORECASTLE

1-3

(Filthy, dark, claustrophobic, testosterone soaked living space. A firkin barrel stands bright on the floor. Rigging knives, marlinspikes, Rosary beads, thurible hang with flickering lanterns.

During Off Stage SHANTY BROWN, JENSEN and DOE ENTER.)

BROWN

Laddies! Come see what Jensen and I have down in the forecastle!

JENSEN

What means, our Captain?

BROWN

How do you recon?

JENSEN

Why leaving this bung o'rum where we sleep?

DOE

Tis the flypaper and we're the flies.

BROWN

Celebrate arriving Tacoma, America, I spect.

JENSEN

Tacoma so special?

DOE

Right ship o' dipsomaniacs, this.

(CHARLES, NEILSON and YANG ENTER.)

NEILSON

Sose Capt'n can hear our boisterous shanty, I recon.

YANG

Get us to shut up more like.

(RICHARD and BUCK ENTER.

By now, SHANTY is petering out.)

JENSEN

Ain't like him, giving whole firkin o'scrumpy. What thinking you, Charles?

CHARLES

(approaching with cup)

I'm think'n you'll stop yer fannying about an fill 'er up.

BROWN

Charles, you want cup or funnel?

(filling CHARLES' cup)

This in our gullet, pockets full o' pay, time we play some Whist!

(CHARLES swigs deep as CREW watch.)

CHARLES

Lord!

DOE

Lord won't help you with that barnacle dissolver.

(shoving his cup forward)

Next!

NEILSON

Skål.

JENSEN

Skål.

(BROWN fills DOE's mug while BUCK and RICHARD wait.)

BROWN

(while pouring)

Whist anyone? Play a rubber of Whist wid ol' Brown? Need three more ya know.

BUCK

Seafaring men through n through, that's us, eh Richard?

(BUCK thumps empty mugs with RICHARD.)

RICHARD

Not me, Percy Lad, I'm jump'n off this lazar house soon as we moor up in England. Maybe Belgium.

BUCK

Can't jump, Richard. Signed ourselves contracts. Parents paid good Pounds...

RICHARD

Yesterday we lost eight sailors to other ships, Lad. Even the second and third in command didn't give an iota for contracts. Just jumped.

BUCK

We started together, Richard. We'll end together.

BROWN

Second and Third wern't indentured, lad.

JENSEN

Laddie! Aboard ship we do things what never thought possible and yer already full o'the sea?

BUCK

Speeding 12, 14 knots with tight billowed sails you made with these very own hands, Richard. Six thousand tonnes boiling along where we tell her, not where she wills.

RICHARD

I myself, never intended running up 'n down ratlines like a, a Burmese monkey my whole life.

BUCK

Fly'n above the sea, clutch'n clouds an scrape'n sky, Mate!

RICHARD

May be wrong of me but Mum taught me to actually value my life.

BROWN

Aimin' to be a rustic, Richard? 'Lord Rustic!' Live, work an play with permanent smell o'manure in yer nostrils?

RICHARD

Couldn't smell worse than this place! Aim to become 'Mr Grits the Grocer' in ol' Angleterre.

BUCK

Richard! Whatever on earth for?

DOE

Wants a life of penury and want!

RICHARD

I want steady dirt beneath my toes for one! Grow skin back on feet and hands for another. Live in a country hamlet or some such with, with girls, and flowers and lovesick birds whistling while I sell what every single person on God's green needs.

BUCK

...What's that?

RICHARD

Food, Bucky-Boy!

BROWN

Well, don't eat much, Lad. There's plenty a chap what put his prospects in his own stomach. Who's for Whist, then?

CHARLES

Sea-life don't cozy with bird songs.

DOE

Brown, I betcha Richard and Percy don't know about your miraculous fruit transformation.

BROWN

Mister Doe, the lads don't want a hear that one, BigMan.

JENSEN

Everyone likes a miracle, Brown. Tell the Lads!

RICHARD

Your horse meat ambrosia is miraculous, Brown. Sinewy as armadillo, tough as rhinoceros, anything but horse meat. 'Pray tell: What can you possibly do with fruit?'

BROWN

Play Whist instead?

DOE

Come on, Brown. Show the li'le cus's an actual shipboard miracle.

BUCK

Daffodils in this forecastle would be a miracle.

BROWN

Yeah right. Okay, fine. ...GranDad teach it me. See lads, if my gally runs dry of vegetable, I just transform rotten fruit into vegetable.

BUCK

Holy Whole of Glory!

RICHARD

Really...

DOE

Not just ship's cook, lads. Works miracles, does Brown!

(Cheers and jeers from CREW.)

JENSEN

Saint Brown!

BROWN

See, first I go below, find myself the rottenest, heaviest watermelon there be.

BUCK

Then what!

RICHARD

Yeah...

BROWN

Well, then I takes that fat ol' melon up to top deck and I throws it up high, high in the air.

RICHARD & BUCK

...Well?

BROWN

An' it come down: Squash!

(Chuckles from some CREW. ...RICHARD and BUCK are silent.)

BUCK

...All you do is throw it up?

RICHARD

Percy. I am going to throwup you.

BUCK

But how does throwing watermelon upwards transform...

NEILSON (O.S.)

Richard! Percy! Captain wants apprentices on bridge. Sharpish!

RICHARD

This can't be good.

(Racing out, RICHARD EXITS.)

BUCK

(EXITING)

But... But it doesn't make sense, Richard. ...Richard!

BROWN

A good game of Whist? Anyone?

CHARLES

Chicanery. Noth'n but chicanery aboard. Where's that damn rum got to, then!

NEILSON

Skål!

JENSEN

Skål!

*(LIGHTS CROSSFADE as we follow
RICHARD and BUCK up to the...)*

TOP DECK

1-4

CAPTAIN

(yelling through brass loudhailer)

No! You cleat that end of the chain to the log, right?! Wrap the chain around the aft mast then cleat the other end back to that same log. ...Of course! Do the same to the fore mast. Lads Our only ballast is lash'n these logs to our sides. So get it right! ...No! Starboard and port! God. These kids'll kill us all. ...Lads.

(RICHARD and BUCK ENTER)

RICHARD

Sent for us, Captain?

CAPTAIN

Percy. Yes, I want you to go...

RICHARD

Pardon sir. Sorry: I'm Richard.

BUCK

Percy, here sir!

CAPTAIN

Percy? Percy Buck? ...By the time I straighten you two out I'll be back in Nova Scotia.

RICHARD

Richard, that's me, just remember Richard has beautiful light flowing hair like rays of sunshine (*or some distinguishing feature of the actor*), sir, and I simply ooze with astounding sagacity. But Percy here, poor monk...

BUCK

Percy Buck. Sir, I'm the one with dark hair (*or some distinguishing feature of the actor*). Plus, I have no, what-he-has, that, that oozing sagacity stuff. Fact is I am infection free, Sir!

CAPTAIN

...Lads: I need one of you to go ashore and...

(*BUCK and RICHARD happy to leave*)

I'm sending you, Richard. Because you won't run afoul, Richard. Very important: take my regrets to the the old Norwegian Christian woman at Seaman's Rest in Tacoma Town. Buck, you remain aboard and help the crew empty that firkin of rum I put out.

RICHARD

Volunteer to stay, Sir.

BUCK

I'll stay. I can remain aboard, Sir. Richard needs all the intimate female prodding and poking he can muster, Sir.

RICHARD

Heh, heh. Percy Buck's last girl crawled out of a Shanghai cesspool, Sir. He deserves...

CAPTAIN

Lads...

BUCK

Been stroking his ivory ever since China, Sir. Needs a female or poor Richard'll go blind!

CAPTAIN

Lads...

RICHARD

Et tu, Percé?...

CAPTAIN

Boys! You know Richard, my problem is I can't make out if you're bloody bad mannered or just half witted.

RICHARD

I have that same problem, Captain.

CAPTAIN

Shut up. Okay listen, Listen: Richard'll go. Richard won't lose the address the second I give it him, Richard won't forget my message or fall in love with a wounded seagull or, or spend his whole time helping some poor bloke find his hungry dog.

RICHARD & BUCK

(for completely different reasons)

...Sir. That's not fair.

CAPTAIN

Captains. Are never Fair! When are you going to... God boys! Certainly do earn my fee with you apprentices... Jeez, alright. Alright! ...Can't believe I'm saying this, I will flip a coin for my dear greenhorns.

RICHARD

If I must stay, Sir, I'll content myself knowing my poor buddy's sharing a clean feather bed with an elderly Christian Norwegian...

CAPTAIN

Good of you Richard. Call it Percy Buck.

(CAPTAIN flips, catches and holds coin on his hand.)

RICHARD

Call it to get Head, Bucky-Boy, or call it to get Tail.

BUCK

...Heads? ...No, no! Taa...

CAPTAIN

Tails! Your choice, Richard.

RICHARD

Smell that, Lad? That would be Old Woman Love Aroma fill'n the air, Bucky-Boy!

(CAPTAIN and BUCK watch RICHARD's grand EXIT)

CAPTAIN

Guess he's staying.

BUCK

Captain Stalling. Sir, it's, it's my tooth...

CAPTAIN

Sailors are the lifeblood of my ship Apprentice Buck and I am hemorrhaging. My First Mate. Himself from my own Nova Scotia! And my Number Three. Both gone. Took six more of my sailors with them!

BUCK

Yessir.

CAPTAIN

Fifteen, Buck. Fifteen sailors left aboard my ship today. Now, how can I possibly..!

BUCK

Yessir.

CAPTAIN

(handing BUCK a note)

Here. Should just toss this address overboard but I'll give it to you, son. ...Mrs. Funnemark. Seamen's Rest Mission House. Tacoma. Relay your Captain's most sincere regrets for missing dinner, Buck. I remain aboard to prevent more hemorrhaging. But, but don't tell her that, Apprentice. Just, oh god, just relay my regrets...

BUCK

Yessir.

CAPTAIN
Gottit?

BUCK
Yessir.

CAPTAIN
Do You Have It?

BUCK
...Yes. Sir.

CAPTAIN
Good.... What the hell's wrong with your cheek, Lad?

BUCK
Got the toothache, Sir. How will you keep more from jump'n ship, Sir?

CAPTAIN
(looking into BUCK's mouth)
Already set the bait, Apprentice Buck. But I do not know how to keep them aboard ship. You come back immediately from shore, Gotit? I can pull that tooth, you know. On your return.

BUCK
Regrets to Norwegian woman. Turn 'round. Get back aboard. Yessir.

CAPTAIN
Good. Don't... Do not run afoul, Buck. I want you back on board before dark. If you're late, I'm afraid I'll have to dock ya.

BUCK
But Sir. My parents pay you for my privilege to work here.

CAPTAIN
...That was 'Captain Humor' Son. Answer me: Can you manage. ...Apprentice?

BUCK
Well, don't know when dark, is... Havta locate Seaman's Rest, then...

CAPTAIN

Buck! Always, always, always answer your Captain with: 'Yes Sir.'... Can You Manage?

BUCK

Yessir! Yes I can. Yes, Sir. ...Captain?

CAPTAIN

Buck?

BUCK

Manage what?

CAPTAIN

Go, Buck. Go Please, please go and use what God gave you. Please...

(BUCK begins to EXIT)

On your return, get yourself a steaming mug of Bovril down your neck and I'll pull that tooth.

BUCK

(EXITING)

Certain rum'll fix what ails me, Sir.

(CROSSFADE to...)

LOWER RAILING

1-5

(SPECIALS. All else is DARK.

Both boys speak in low tones.

Ship's BELL TOLLS.)

RICHARD

Twilight and evening bell.

And after that the dark.

And may there be no sadness of farewell,

When I embark.

BUCK

(ENTERING)

Thought I'd find you at your railing spot, surveying the shore...

RICHARD

(handing BUCK his mug of rum)

Bucky-Boy! Wanna slurp before disembarkin'?

BUCK

Cheers, Mate.

(drinks)

Oh, it do hit the spot, this.

RICHARD

Look. Been meaning to tell you... In a spot of bother, back home.

BUCK

Not you. Not 'Everything-Comes-Easy-Richard'!

RICHARD

I was a fresh graduate, Buck. Home from English Public School. First thing I get myself with all the old lads and proceed to get ourselves well and truly debauched. But my best mate, all night long, keeps needling and pinching Father arranged my public school prospects. Didn't quit. Finally he disparages Father, horrible lies. Well, several pints in, I'm full of myself too and I explode. We get in a row to burst all rows which turns into a proper drag out.

BUCK

Right sod, huh?

RICHARD

Lifelong Mate, Percy. ...He brought his two strong fists but... But I brought a knife. ...Understand? ...Well, Father finds me the first boat out and here I am. ...See, Perce. I am not what you polish.

BUCK

Richard. Most everyone aboard's running away from somth'n or other. Some worsen you, Lad.

RICHARD

I deserve death.

BUCK

Deserve? We all deserve death. Many dead deserve life. 'Deserving' is a myth, Richard, a mirage. All there really is is continuing. We continue to continue. Anything more is a, a self absorbed lie.

RICHARD

Jeee-Sus, Perce. Right Public School philosophy, that.

BUCK

...Steer clear o'me, Mate. I'm a famous Beetle Brain 'round here: 'Stupid and clumsy, is Percy Buck.' ...Captain said giving me this paper address was as good as tossing it overboard...

RICHARD

To hell with Captain. Ol Man don't know the sterner stuff you're made on.

BUCK

Think so?

RICHARD

Know so. ...Listen: Your ol' buddy'll set aside a brimming mug o' rum just for you when you get back -well for you and that damned abscessed tooth of yours.

BUCK

Really?

RICHARD

Count on it!

BUCK

I do care for you.

RICHARD

Tell it to that smart lusty. ...But, Perce, do keep a grip on that slip address, Lad.

BUCK

Right. I know, I know.

RICHARD

Don't flutter about, Bucky-Boy. Get there. Do your business. Get back...

BUCK

Yup, right. Don't worry. I'll...

(BUCK drops the address paper which flutters.

RICHARD snaps it out of the air, holds it beside BUCK's head and

pulls it out of his ear like a coin trick and gives it back.)

BUCK

Wow! How'd you do that?

RICHARD

I'm ambidextrous.

BUCK

Amber, ambax...

RICHARD

Ambidextrous. Means I can do manifold miracles -all at once.

BUCK

Wow. Am-bi-dex-trous.

RICHARD

Brothers forever?

BUCK

...Forever Brothers.

(LIGHTS CROSSFADE to...)

INQUEST

1-6

DOTY

I tell ya Doctor Hoska, never have I seen any ship's Captain so low. Never.

HOSKA

Captain Stalling?

DOTY

Yessir. I was well acquainted with George Stalling from childhood. As lads we were proper friends back in Nova Scotia. Only fitting he moor Andelana a few hundred yards off my own ship.

HOSKA

You saw him then?

DOTY

On Friday, thirteen January. Bid him come for morning meal. Couldn't believe what I saw. Gone was the demonstrative man I knew. In his place stood a husk of a man, a ghost of his former self.

HOSKA

You'll need to explain, Captain Doty.

DOTY

(packing and smoking his pipe)

White as canvas. Soul crushed. Torn up over losing two officers and half his crew. Worse still, said he hadn't slept proper in months. Ramblings about a singular dream keeping him awake... I told Staling about the Atlanta disaster off Oregon coast. All hands lost including our mutual friend Captain McBride. Should have just kept my damn mouth shut. That news deflated what little wind George Staling held. Couldn't speak. Couldn't meet my eye. Just sat a table drawing his pipe. ...Finally, George confided in me two facts which I can, I can now relate. First: George told me he promised his wife he would return home, give up the sea for good. Second: ...second, poor man was plagued by that recurring nightmare... Tormented by water filling his cabin, washing over him a bed and all he could do was... Sir, all he could do was drown.

(CROSSFADE to...)

LOWER RAILING

1-7

(Quiet carousing in the dark Forecastle below.

JENSEN is drinking, looking out to Tacoma. He holds a telegram.)

YANG

(ENTERS)

You like ship's railing too, Mister Jensen?

JENSEN

Guess I do... Sometimes I come out here just to be alone.

YANG

You want I should...?

JENSEN

No. Please, Yang. ...Stay with me.

YANG

...What's that Mister Jensen hold?

JENSEN

My brother.

YANG

Brother very small.

JENSEN

He was my baby brother, Jørgen.

YANG

Was?

JENSEN

Yes. He died while we was out to sea.

YANG

...Very sorry for dead brother, Mister Jensen.

JENSEN

Jørgen was steadfast, Yang. A sweet man. Looked after me and Mother and now Mother's alone in Denmark. Jørgen was...He was. ...What's the answer, Yang.

YANG

Answer?

JENSEN

Why? Answer me that: Why?

YANG

(beat)

To endure, Mister Jensen.

(A long pause.)

JENSEN

Endure...

(putting his telegram away)

Thought maybe I could see Percy stridin' the shore out here. It's getting dark. Think I should go look for him?

YANG

He okay. Good boy, is Percy Buck.

JENSEN

(looking back to land)

He is, he is. Not a single arc lamp nor an inch of tarmacadam here. Just mud, mud, mud, mud... Uff da. Think it rains much in Tacoma?

YANG

Yes... In Tacoma it pours.

JENSEN

You been here before?

YANG

No. But family been here before. Family enjoy America freedom. Three uncle work, live in lovely tin shack between train rail themself build in Tacoma America. Warm, dry, rail tin shack.

JENSEN

Did you just... Is that, humor coming from you Yang? Go off, Lad. Find yer family.

YANG

Hell no.

JENSEN

...Did you just cus, Yang? Miracles never cease here...!

YANG

I know Tacoma America, Mister Jensen. Here three uncle first dig through root of that mountain for making train road. Here three uncle find work in hotel and restaurant.

(handing JENSEN a PHOTO. Gold Spike PHOTO PROJECTED behind.)

I have photo. First time west train touch east train in America. Gold Spike Photo, Mister Jensen. You see.

JENSEN

Your uncles are in this photo, Yang?

YANG

You see.

JENSEN

(examining photo)

Wow. First railroad across the entire continent. Built by Chinese muscle.

YANG

You see.

JENSEN

Your uncles tunneled through frozen mountains across scorching prairies.... You, must be...

YANG

You see.

JENSEN

...be very proud... Your uncles are in this photo?

YANG

You see.

JENSEN

...But Yang. There are no. I mean, I mean I don't see... There are no Chinese, Yang. No Asians at all in this photo.

(Gold Spike PHOTO FADES OUT.)

YANG

(taking photo back)

...Now you see.

(Over this monologue, SOUNDS come from ACTORS behind the black audience curtains)

...They good sweet uncle, Sir. Send money, news to Little Yang. But all uncle letter stop ten year ago. Mother get letter from girl cousin.

(SOUNDS of WHISPERS)

YANG (Cont'd.)

Girl cousin say many Tacoma businessmen even Tacoma mayor himself make many lie about Chinese worker. Stir up gossip. But Tacoma mayor honorable man, Mister Jensen. Like sharp knife, mayor grind lying gossip into hysteria. Join many, many Tacoma policemen.

(SOUNDS of ANGRY MOB)

All carry gun and torch on stick to capture Chinese. Sound delicious: Torch on Stick! But Tacomans are honorable, Mister Jensen.

(SOUNDS of JEERS, SHOUTING CHANTS intensify:

“Rid Tacoma of Chinese RATS!” “Real Americans!” “Destroy the Ungodly!”

“Tacoma Jobs for Tacoma Men!” “Manifest Destiny” “Clean Our Tacoma!”

“Freedom’s Not for Freeloaders!” “God’s Ritious Will” “God Hates Chinks!”)

Surround all Chinese people in railroad shack. Capture Chinese children. Take out then burn, burn all shack, burn all Chinese possession.

(LIGHTS of FIRES flicker on YANG)

Just... Burn! But Tacoma mayor, policeman mob honorable men, Mister Jensen. Mob take all Chinese people to train. Free ride Portland! Free ride anywhere but no Tacoma, America. That night my three uncle disappear.

(SOUNDS of THREE GUNSHOTS)

...Over ten year ago and still no letter from three sweet uncle...

(All SOUNDS / FIRE LIGHTS STOP)

‘Most reprehensible ocrance,’ someone of honor say. Word with no meaning, Mister Jensen. No meaning. No word strong enough for Mother’s broken heart. My own word weak, poor, here on this place. Brave Chinese man, brave Chinese woman, Chinese people living and dead, who struggle here, right there, Mister Jensen. See! There! Those brave Chinese make Taocoma, America holy, sacred far above my weak word.

(After a long pause.)

...Hell no, Mister Jensen. I am more safe on cursëd ship than step in honorable Tacoma,. Land of Free: Free trip Portland. Free... Torch on stick.

JENSEN

...How do your people continue?

YANG

Ahh, yes, yes. ...Chinese bear all thing, Sir, believe all thing, hope all thing. Chinese endure all thing.

JENSEN

Endure.

YANG

And Mister Jensen. ... We never cease.

(CROSSFADE to...)

FORECASTLE

1-8

(CREW is drinking.)

RICHARD

If the clergyman's daughter
Drinks nothing but water
She's certain to finish on gin!

JENSEN

Skål!

NEILSON

Skål!

BROWN

(to RICHARD)

You play Whist, Richard?

RICHARD

I don't think so, Brown...

JENSEN

Neilson.

NEILSON

Yes Jensen?

JENSEN

Tell the story of Christopher Columbus teaching the Red Indian how to make a toast.

NEILSON

Jensen, Jensen. INsensitive.

JENSEN

Then I tell story.

NEILSON

Jensen! What would Konge Oscar av Norg say?

JENSEN

“Konge Oscar Born Svensk, he Always be Svensk!”

NEILSON

Uff da.

JENSEN

So lads, when Christopher Columbus first invent Amer... ‘Invent’ right word, Neilson?

NEILSON

All er Greek for my, Jensen.

JENSEN

Christopher Columbus say, “When my people invent new peop... “discover!...”

JENSEN

Discover.

NEILSON

Discover!

JENSEN

...“When we discover new people, we make toast. I, Christopher Columbus, the greatest explorer of all world...”

NEILSON

Uff da...

JENSEN

Shall now teach you kind...

NEILSON

Kind!..

JENSEN

-Kind- savages how we make toast...”

NEILSON

“A toast.”

JENSEN

“A toast.” And Columbus raise his cup and he say, “Cheers!”

NEILSON

“*cheers...*”

JENSEN

(really enjoying his joke)

...And all kind Native American raise their cup and they say:

JENSEN

SKÅL!

NEILSON

SKÅL!

(CREW's bewildered but JENSEN and NEILSON love their joke.)

JENSEN

...Leif Erikson?

JENSEN & NEILSON

Come on.

(Laughing at themselves, their heritage. CREW is bewildered.)

NEILSON

...Five hundred year before Columbus?

JENSEN & NEILSON

(Only ones roaring at their Viking humor.)

Come on!

JENSEN

...Kind Native American all say...

JENSEN & NEILSON

‘Skål?!’ ...Come ON!!

(JENSEN and NEILSON look in disbelief at one another...)

JENSEN

Neilson. Should I to tell joke again?

CREW

NO!

NEILSON

Heathen.

JENSEN

Surrounded by Non Viking heathen.

CHARLES

We're in for it, Lads. With a bone dry bilge n empty ballast we're topheavy, make no mistake. No stiffening, neither. Canvas heavy sagg'n round the yards. Topheavy ships turn turtle, I tell ye.

BROWN

We're in port, Charles.

YANG

Soft seas here, Quartermaster.

NEILSON

What can we do... Captain wants us drunk.

CREW

Cheers!

BROWN

Good man, Ol' Captain.

YANG

...Smart man.

JENSEN

Viking believe a working man must be well and truly lubricated.

NEILSON

And especially when not working, absoLÜTEly!

DOE

Never a reason not to be drunk.

(CREW agrees.)

JENSEN

Skål.

NEILSON

Skål.

CHARLES

We'll keep us afloat Neilson! Muster the ol' rhyme to save our mortals. To keep quick, listen an drink when I says, Lads:

"This rum I drink to save my soul
From toppl'n ships an death below."

(he drinks, others just look at each other)

Drink! "I drink it deep to keep this barque
Above the ink in day an dark." Drink, ye lads!

(he drinks, some others drink)

"I drink me spirit deep to sail
this ship upon the sea in gale." Yer duty to drink, I say!

(He drinks, more do)

"An never will I die!"

CREW

Never Will I Die!

YANG

What's that rhyme Charles speak?

DOE

Sea Dog's Superstition, Yang.

RICHARD

Feckless fabulation!

CHARLES

More 'an superstition, lad! A lovely verse to keep yer bones afloat. Said it these countless years and here I be. Who's not drink'n condemns us all to inky depths. Everyone! "Never Will I Die!"

CREW

"Never Will I Die!"

(CREW drinks deep.)

BROWN

~~‘Superstition...’ Twas but a boy first time Mother rush me to a small hut on the wide path outside our village. There was this Moaning Lady most unnatural large with more than one baby inside her. Mother tell me most quiet the Moaning Lady have the Ju-Ju Man curse most virile. So Mother she draw the sacred sign on the floor with ash and she bring the first infant out of the cursed Moaning Lady, out into our own world. He slip out take breath and began his strange baby murmuring. He murmur and murmur of secret only he an his little twin still inside understand. Mother’s white powder face lean clean down to infant and she listen. She say, Mother say, “This Little infant tell me the one still inside push his brother out and now too tired to push his own same-self out. I myself must now reach inside this Moaning Lady and coax the little one left behind, coax him out to breathe the air lest he drown inside his cursed Mother.”~~

~~...Mother be speaking soft and slow to Moaning Lady but her hand be fast with they own reason. She reach in that ol’ patch bag for her dark bottle and she fill her mouth with the liquid and spit it out on her hand, on her own hand. This she do three time and she rub her hand and blow tobacco smoke on her hand, on her own hand. This she do three time. And with these hand she cress Murmuring Baby face and Murmuring Baby he relax. And she cress Moaning Lady face an Moaning Lady she relax. All the while she be speaking her strange Mother language as she work her way inside Moaning Lady. She tell me to turn my own same-self away, an I do what she say. But I still see reflection in the big kettle pot and blood it pour from Moaning Lady and still Mother coax that little baby out first by his heel then by his leg. Baby come out, finely, most unnatural tired, limp from pushing his big brother out before him. Red wax covered and cinch tight with the cord. Mother use her blade to cut the cord then she drink the dark bottle to cress the limp baby face to cress his own same-self, and she even use the candle and bone and blood, even the blood of the chicken. We all wait in that small hut breathing air filled with quiet moaning and murmuring. Mother’s white dress mingled red with Lady and chicken blood. And we all wait still. Listening. ...Little tired infant he take only five breath more then, to be true, he forget how to breathe again... Mother speak her soft language to his murmuring brother laying aside. And to him she speak of sorrow, to ease his own same-self sorrow. An she lay there with Moaning Lady holding on to Moaning Lady, whispering into her ear all that night through Mother’s tear streak powder face she whisper. ...Apologizin’. She could only saved One from Ju-Ju Man.~~

DOE

It wasn’t your mother’s fault, Brown. Weak babies die.

BROWN

~~Weak. All infant weak, but this li’lman was like a bale of cotton, cinched and wrapped with cord, was he. Even strong men forget, Mister Doc. When wrapped with cord even you forget to breathe, Doc. ...No. Ju-Ju Man be real, I do know. I see him come an go like the wind his own same-self.~~

BROWN'S BACKGROUND

(Print this whole page. Glue it on top of page 38 in the scripts of BROWN, DOE & NIELSON.)

DOE

You know all about superstition Brown what with your mother's dark religion and all.

BROWN

Mother is the most non-superstitious person I know. In our village, people come to her for healing, Mister Doe. I have seen her restore the aching body and re-harmonize the sorrowful spirit. Mother saves many persons just with her old patch bag filled with tools and faith. No room for superstition in her bag, no sir.

DOE

In some of those island towns I've see hog heads, tucked away in corner streets, grinning up from clay pots. Can't tell me those aren't superstition, Brown.

BROWN

The head of the pig is not superstition, Mister Doe. T'is Honor. Or maybe Remembrance. Laid there to feed the good spirit of those who left, or maybe to warn away the evil spirit. But I say again, Mother don't use superstition, only her tools and most robust Faith.

NEILSON

No such thing as a spirit evil or good, Brown.

JENSEN

Never touched a ghost. Never see nor heard a ghost. But ghosts scare the hell out of me!

RICHARD

Bigotry and cruelty too often wear the mask of religion.

BROWN

Naw. Me faith I know for fact.

RICHARD

Mother would be proud of you, Brown. But once faith becomes fact it's no longer faith. Faith must necessarily be factless. Thus the beauty of Faith.

BROWN

What can I say? I have me Muter's fait. ...Tis Duty!

CHARLES

To Duty!

(drinks)

Took myself to a music hall show once.

JENSEN & NEILSON

(to one another)

Charles go to Music Hall?

CHARLES

Saw something called "Slave of Duty." Most outlandish scheme of pirates, constables, young maidens all corralled by their fast singing father... Laughed myself horse!

NEILSON & JENSEN

(to one another)

...Charles Laugh!?!

CHARLES

(seeing RICHARD's Magic Box)

Here now, where'd ye come by that?

RICHARD

Doe found it floating in the bilge. Gave it to me because he called it unsanitary. Like he's the paragon of hygiene.

CHARLES

Putrid evil thing. Came aboard with them Japanese sailors. I seen it. Best throwd overboard. Better yet burnet.

RICHARD

Just a magic box, Charles. Takes a trick to open...

CHARLES

Japanesemen brung it aboard many a year ago. Burn it, say I!

(CROSSFADE to...)

LOWER RAILING**1-9**

DOE

(ENTERS, abruptly stops - Alone on stage)

Jesus! What do you want? Aye. Aye it's all yours. The entire ship. Even the crew. Aye! ...That's not my fault. I can't do every... What do you require? ...Already give it to Richard. If anyone can open it, Richard will. ...I can do that. ...I can do that. ...That I'll need a little help. ...On my way to talk to Captain now. ...Perfect. ...Aye. Just like Rats in a Sack.

*(CROSSFADE to...)***TOP DECK**

DOE (Cont'd.)

(ENTERING)

...captain ...captain ...captain

CAPTAIN

(writing in his Ship's Log)

Mister Doe.

DOE

Been meaning to thank you for making me your new Second Mate. Here in port.

CAPTAIN

All my officers abandoned me, Mister Doe. You're what's left.

DOE

Still. I'm grateful. captain.

(uncomfortable pause)

Belowdecks-talk you should hear, captain. I'm again' it. Know that at first. I don't agree with the lads. But comes a time, sir. When honest men, when Second Mates must report to their betters.

CAPTAIN

Not interested in belowdecks tittle-tattle, Mister Doe.

DOE

We've had our rankles, you an' me, captain. sir. But I do honor your position. I honor yer service to the company. Yer wee family await'n your retirement...

(beat)

We two men can honor without befriending. Am I right?

CAPTAIN

Get to what tore you away from the rum, Mister Doe.

DOE

Well. Duty, sir. 'Tis all duty. It's about their insidious instigations, I've come. sir.

CAPTAIN

Instigations?

DOE

I'm here, captain. Concern only for you. And your family. Forecastle's fairly reverberate'n with discontent. At you. And it's a shame. sir. A bloody shame what plans the lads have laid down. In store for you.

CAPTAIN

...Go on.

DOE

Being a man of honor, I'll tell ya. They show you no respect. The lads. Not to your wife. Not to your wee babes. A motley crew, belowdecks.

CAPTAIN

Best crew I've ever had.

DOE

But poison churning in their hearts. Ours hearts pure. They're whispers, devious. Ours honorable. Yer new Second Mate wants no part of their bastard plan. sir.

CAPTAIN

...Get to it.

DOE

They know this: With no crew there's no ship. No ship, no sailing. No sailing, captain loses his position, his home, his wee family. Bellowdecks scheming to abandon you. sir. Every last one. Gone. But they do it, they do it out of spite. Because of yer... yer shipboard 'Mishaps.' sir. They do it to destroy yer good and hard-workin' name. They plan to quietly abandon you which will force the company to fire you. Which will set yer young family starv'n on the street, I dare say...

If we don't sail, the company'll send you home: you lose yer job - lose yer severance - lose that fat life rightfully wait'n yer dotage. sir. But. ...But because you saw fit to make Ol' Mister Doe your new Second Mate... I have a plan most honorable to keep the lads aboard and... To save your position. ...sir.

*(CAPTAIN closes his Ship's Log to look at DOE as
CROSSFADE to...)*

FORECASTLE

1-10

(CREW carousing.)

RICHARD

If the wife of the vicar
Never touched liqueur
Look out when she finds the chanpegne!

JENSEN

Skål!

NEILSON

Skål!

BROWN

(to JENSEN)

I should dearly enjoy a rubber of Whisp, Mister Jensen.

JENSEN

You'll no longer take my money, Brown.

BROWN

You're certain to win soon.

JENSEN

Just as certain as dry cod soaked in lye to make fish jelly, is delicious.

(DOE and NEILSON playing poker in a corner.)

BROWN

(to NEILSON)

With you two an' me, we'd need only one more to play Whist.

NEILSON

Already at poker, Brown.

(BROWN meanders away.)

NEILSON (Cont'd.)

(Shuffling a deck of cards)

What was I saying, Doe?

DOE

Yer family.

NEILSON

Right. So, My whole family immigrate to America without me.

DOE

Well, Neilson, I'd leave you behind too.

NEILSON

The week before family leave Norway I fell sick, sickest I've ever been with heaving chunky vomit out the front and out the back I was shi...

DOE

I can paint my own, thank you Neilson...

NEILSON

(dealing cards)

Father was afear'd America would not take us inside with such a sick child. So he leave me in Norway with Great Aunt Dot. Father say he will send for me but that was ten year ago.

DOE

Where did yer family end up?

NEILSON

Some miserable frozen waste-land in Dakotas.

DOE

Balmy for Vikings.

NEILSON

Great Aunt die, so I must now find my own way round this wide watery world. Almost back to Father. If he hasn't gone and moved again...

DOE

Hell! If he even remembers who you are.

NEILSON

What work, you do, Doe? Afore you come a seafaring?

DOE

Mostly worked at Smithfield Market in Londontown. -I take two.

NEILSON

(dealing DOE two cards)

Beautiful metropolis girls, I spect, huh Doe? -None for me.

DOE

Not the time I come on. I scraped cobble stones from day's leftovers an castoffs; piles of offal, bare bones, heads n hoofs... -Raise a shilling. Notorious plot o'land, Smithfield. Full o'rats.

NEILSON

Hate rats. -See your shilling. Raise you three more.

DOE

Here's your three. Call.

NEILSON

Three Nines Mister Doe.

DOE

I take it with Face Cards, Mister Neilson.

(scooping change)

Scraping cobbles at Smithfield. Couldn't shovel a mound of offal without coming up rats and more rats. Kept wagers on who'd trap the most.

NEILSON

How'd you trap rats? And why?

DOE

Why! Gwaa! ...First I lay out a large sheet of scrap burlap an into the middle I sprinkle a pile of sheep or cow eyes or brain. Rats love a bit of jelly. They come in an with 'em feast'n I gently

bring in the corners, the sides, cinch it up to make a sack, an I toss 'em all cinched up into the Thames. Then the gnawing an gnashing an squealing begin in earnest. Gwaaa... Slowly thrashing sack slips low into the river, dead sogg'n the sack heavy for the struggling few. Slipp'n lower, deeper till leaving not but a ripple an silence. Smooth as glass. ...Gwa that were excit'n, though. Whadaya think, Neilson?

NEILSON

Mister Doe... In all your orphanage and union workhouses and treadmills you tell me about, did no one ever suggest you to Bedlam?

DOE

You despise me, don't you.

NEILSON

If I gave you any thought I probably would. -Deal the cards.

(ANOTHER PART of the Forecastle.)

RICHARD

(protecting a mug of rum)

No, no, no, no... Get your own grog. This is for Percy Buck's abscess. On his return.

BROWN

What about you, Quartermaster?

CHARLES

Aye? What yer jaberin?

BROWN

Women, Charles. You ever take wife?

JENSEN

Or three?

(Sniggers from CREW.)

CHARLES

When anxious, uneasy and bad thoughts come, I go to the sea...

BROWN

YANG

What?

What you say?

DOE

Didn't hear...

CHARLES

And the Sea drives 'em out with its great wide sounds...

BROWN

Charles. I ask about your women.

(Chuckles from CREW.)

CHARLES

Never seed the point of woman. What would I...? I'm a Tar, see, an a old Tar at that. What do I want with a land-locked woman when everything a Tar could ever want, ever need is aboard Ship? Ship is me woman an all the lads aboard her... Being aboard ends cuckoldry. Never deceit from Ship. Never malicious gossip. Her long sea-song always straight to the point: in her timber moans, her riggin wails n screams, midmast creeks an below deck shanties. Honorable discourse, that. Always true. Never deceit, never... Cuckoldry.

(gulps his rum, sees the lads staring)

Oh, I've had me portion o'port-whores but, none grand enough to cling to. None to build Home with. None but whats filled with essence of dust. No... Woman's not fer me.

RICHARD

Well, then. There you have it, Lads!
 'There are things in the breast
 Of mankind which are best
 In darkness and secrecy hid.
 For you never can tell
 When you've opened a Hell
 How soon you can put back the lid!'

JENSEN

Skål.

NEILSON

Skål.

DOE

(to RICHARD)

Thank you, boy. Frivolity's now submerged.

BROWN

Doe, you believe in those ghostly faces some see?

DOE

Course! I've seen 'em. Talked to 'em! ...And they reply.

RICHARD

Is that what you're doing talking to yourself?

DOE

Not to myself, boy. Talk'n to the Instigators. Ohhhh, they have plans for you lot. That, they do.

BROWN

I seed 'em but they don't talk to me.

DOE

Instigators don't trust you, Brown. Hell, they hate all of you. And there will be Hell to pay, lads. Mark me!

(nearby CREW turn their backs on DOE)

For each of you! ...Hell's come'n very soon.

JENSEN

(toasting)

I dreamed love would never die.

DOE

(toasting)

I dreamed God would forgive.

RICHARD

I dreamed of gushing water. Nightmare really.

(RICHARD drinks but CREW is silent, staring at RICHARD.)

Positively funereal, forecastle is. No one's cleaned in here for donkey's... What.

BROWN

Your water dream.

RICHARD

So?

DOE

What was it?

BROWN

Tell us your dream, LilMan.

RICHARD

I don't know... Water gushing through hatches. Between planks. Fill'n the fore-castle. An myself, suffer'n the sailor's trepidation: bunk fill'n an all I can do is thrash about. Trapped. Dreamed myself to death last niiii.... What!

CHARLES

Tis the one, Lad.

BROWN

You had it.

JENSEN

You yelled.

DOE

Yup.

RICHARD

What are you...

DOE

Andelana Death Dream. Dream what drove two Andelana captains to quit. Same dream what makes our own captain consider liv'n the fat life abed his cozy home. We've all had it, boy.

RICHARD

Not the same...

YANG

Exact.

NEILSON

Same.

JENSEN

Nightmare.

BROWN

Water spraying, lying a bunk, thrash'n yourself to death. Drown'n. look-a-dis: Lads, who dreamed themselves the Drown'n Death?

(All CREW raise their hands.)

RICHARD

More feckless fabulation.

CHARLES

Sure we dream the Death Dream. Water gushen through hatches left open, awash'n the forecastle. Trapped. An you thrash'n alone.

BROWN

A cursed ship, Lad. Folly pretend'n otherwise.

CHARLES

Arms bound, water rise'n, aught to do but drown over an over...

(Begin FADE to BLACK.)

CHARLES (Cont'd.)

an over an over an over an over an over
an over an over...

DOE

Soon, none will wake from their
nightmare. Soon. Very soon. All
will die.

(BLACK OUT.

*Shore SOUNDS and HOUSE LIGHTS FADE IN.
We're in...)*

INTERMISSION

(Shore SOUNDS and HOUSE LIGHTS FADE OUT.

Over BLACK...)

2-1

HOSKA (O.S.)

Mister Murdoch? Mister Robert Murdock! Take the Witness Chair. Give this inquest a true and faithful account of the Andelana.

(Harsh SPECIALS UP on...)

INQUEST

*(CROWD SOUNDS are prerecorded.
MURDOCH ENTERS, stumbles into the Witness Chair.)*

HOSKA

Long night, Mister Murdoch?

MURDOCH

Short one. Plagued by Spirits and wholesome Tacoma Girls.

HOSKA

You're drunk.

MURDOCH

Your eyes make me want more.

HOSKA

Tell us, Murdoch, while enroute from Shanghai to Tacoma, why did Captain Stalling see fit to place you under arrest onboard the Andelana?

MURDOCH

Hmm... Well... You know... Crew said I were crazy.

HOSKA

And when the Andelana moored here, why were you detained in our Tacoma jail?

MURDOCH

Hmm, well... Same. Same reason.

HOSKA

Then why should this inquest believe any word you say?

MURDOCH

But I'm not crazy I'm not just as sane as you they let me out I'm out. They know I'm not, you know, crazy like. ...Not.

HOSKA

If we were not in such dire need to know the atmosphere of that ship, you'd still be in jail...

MURDOCH

I'm not, I'm not... Not. Hmm.

HOSKA

Right. ...Tell us about Captain Stalling.

MURDOCH

Ask any other lad who sailed, course you can't but they'd agree. Ah, wellll... Bad luck clung to Captain like shit on sheep.

(CROWD LAUGHTER.)

HOSKA

Quiet! To remain in my inquest, and out of jail, you must...

MURDOCH

Don't you get it? people died aboard the Andelana! And not just when she turned turtle before Tacoma for years they died, didn't they! It were a floatin' palace o' the damned thank God I left when I did!

HOSKA

You didn't leave, Murdoch. You were taken to jail.

MURDOCH

Got off didn't I got off... I'm a survivor. Hmm...

HOSKA

Tell me about the temperment of the ship.

MURDOCH

Well, hmm, temperament... Captain were a stinging clump o' pecker warts, no mistake how's that for temperament but it weren't just him! That's what I'm say'n. It weren't just Captain!

HOSKA

...I'm listening.

MURDOCH

He n me boiled over more than a few times he were part to blame I were, hmm, little to blame but the real culprits the masters of our misfortune of everyone's misfortune weren't no man no... Everyone aboard talked about 'em we saw 'em for god's sake! ... We, we, we, we kept us tally of sightings, sir.

HOSKA

Sightings of whom?

MURDOCH

You must know. Somebody must've told you by now, right? I mean about,
(lowers voice)
 ...about the monsters?

(MUMMERS from CROWD.)

HOSKA

The what?

MURDOCH

Monsters! Andelana stunk with monsters. She were infested.

HOSKA

Dear lord...

MURDOCH

Clear as I'm sitt'n here now, I saw monsters aboard that ship so did everyone they'd tell...

HOSKA

I implore you...

MURDOCH

I weren't alone! Many of us, all of us...

HOSKA

We have no time for superstition...

MURDOCH

No! Listen! Dead Spirits controlled that ship! How's that for temperment - hmmm.

HOSKA

Get out.

MURDOCH

I could give you more temperment if need be... I'm free to go?

HOSKA

You must go.

MURDOCH

(EXITING)

Free at last, heartsick for them waisted lads what's still aboard the Andelana forever lay'n on the bottom of Tacoma Harbor - Hmm...

(CROWD and LIGHTS BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP in...)

FORECASTLE

2-2

(CREW carousing)

NEILSON

The most beautiful toes on the planet!
are on the long feet of dear Janet
They'll uncork a bottle
to give it a throttle
then give you a squirt like Jackrabbit!

(Uproarious drinking.)

BROWN

(to RICHARD)

I should dearly enjoy a nice rubber of Whist.

RICHARD

Brown, Mate. Everytime we offload our cargo we get paid. Then you win our fortunes at Whist. Crew's fatigued of handing over our money to you, Mate.

BROWN

...No Whist?...

RICHARD

No Whist.

(ANOTHER PART of the Forecastle.

CAPTAIN and DOE ENTER.)

CAPTAIN

Very well. I'll do just that, Doe. Thank you for the idea.

BROWN

Cap'in. T'ank you for dis... You boltin' de hatch...?

CAPTAIN

Locking you lads in the forecastle.

BROWN

You unsatisfied wid us, Cap'in?

CAPTAIN

Couldn't pick better men but I darn't lose another sailor, Brown. Mister Doe convinced me that my schedule, therefore my job, my family depend on keeping you lot here. You too, Doe.

DOE

But Sir..!

CAPTAIN

The Andelana sails in two days and I must have a crew. So, drink hearty, boys! But stay in here.

BROWN

You tink we swim ashore, Cap'in?

DOE

But it were my idea...

CAPTAIN

All accounted for, right and proper.

(to CREW)

Drink up, Lads! See you all stay Bellow. No one leaves tonight. No one.

(CAPTAIN EXITS, locking the hatch.)

DOE

Captain! Let ME out! It were my plan! George!

(sees suspicious CREW eyeing him, laughs it off...)

Georgie Porgie ha, ha...
 Gimme a gal who loves a Jack Tar
 and weeps when he's gone ta sea
 A hard work'n gal whose bed don't get cold
 while practicing just for me!

(Inebriated SAILORS appreciate.)

YANG

My regrets to your wife, Doe.

DOE

Ain't married.

YANG

Lucky woman.

BROWN

Jensen! Jensen, our hatch is bolted and I gotta piss!

JENSEN

Just piss in the washing bucket like everyone.

BROWN

Can't find that... Hey. Hey! Somewhere's down here's my bread baking tin.

(Another part of the Forecastle.

CREW quiets, begins a SLOW FREEZE.)

RICHARD

(searching his pockets)

Just had it. Damn! Must be here...

YANG

What Richard look for?

RICHARD

Yang. Um. Searching for my Shanghai good luck charm. Bronze coins. Fangs or some kind of...

YANG

Feng Shui?

RICHARD

That's it. Feng shui coins.

YANG

More than money, Mister Hanze. Feng shui amulet of three coin tied together red string. Powerful luck, Sir. Power Protection.

RICHARD

The old Chinaman in Shanghai called it "Nine Fold Script..."

YANG

Very old. Very strong charm. Nine Fold Script Power. You must find amulet, Richard. Yang help.

*(RICHARD and YANG EXIT looking for the amulet.
LIGHTS LOWER over a FROZEN CREW.)*

*(Tranquil CHINESE MUSIC from an ERHU RISES.
From OFF STAGE, a boisterous solo of the SHANTY, "Fathom
the Bowl" tears the tranquility.)*

SHANGHAI DOCK

2-3

RICHARD (O.S.)

(singing)

My father he do lie
in the depths of the sea.
No stone at his head
but what matters to he?

There's a clear crystal fountain
near England shall roll.
Give me the punch ladle
I'll fathom the bowl!

(ENTERS singing - drunk)

I'll fathom the bowl!

I'll fathom the bowl!
 Give me the punch ladle
 I'll fathom the bowl!

(YANG ENTERS as Shanghai palm reader TZE.)

TZE

(blocking RICHARD from boarding Andelana)

Sailor leave Shanghai, yes?

RICHARD

No more money.

TZE

My name Tze.

RICHARD

No Money here. They took...

TZE

I see sailor future...

RICHARD

Took my last. All gone, my good man.

TZE

See many good luck for sailor.

RICHARD

Jus let me get back aboard.

TZE

Go home? Yes?

RICHARD

Go home, no. Hauling grain to, to... Hey, Jensen?!

JENSEN (O.S.)

Richard! That you?

RICHARD

After Shanghai where're we headed next?

(OFF STAGE mumbling)

JENSEN (O.S.)

...Richard?

RICHARD

Yeah, Mate.

JENSEN (O.S.)

Haul ship to Port Angeles, America then to... To Tacoma, America.

RICHARD

Ohhh-h-h. Thanks, Mate! Home long way, Tze. Pardon now, I...

TZE

Name?

RICHARD

Look mate. No more money here. 'Money...' Look I'm going to teach you something. Look. Very important this: 'MONEY is the ROOT of all, pleasure.'

TZE

Name?

RICHARD

I'm, I am... Richard! I am Richard.

TZE

(preventing RICHARD from boarding)

Ah Eeshard. I tell all secret, Eeshard. My name Tze. I see all sailor future. See many good luck... Open eye Eeshard, I see inside. Please for big eye, Eeshard.

RICHARD

No pounds. No Kroner. No coins with little hallow holes in 'em...

TZE

No money no problem today only, Eeshard.

RICHARD

By gad but you're good.

TZE

(holds a candle & lens CONTRAPTION up to RICHARD's eye, staring)

Big... I see. I... See!

(steps back in disbelief! adjusts CONTRAPTION, looks back in RICHARD's eye)

I see... Empty. Dead. All dead inside Eeshard.

RICHARD

(suddenly sober)

That doesn't sound good...

TZE

Pull, pulling Eeshard. Dark Evil. Spirit cover Eeshard inside. What inside spirit call?

RICHARD

Soul?

TZE

Soul! ...Dead. Dead soul.

RICHARD

Had enough insight for now...

TZE

Death. Eeshard in great danger...

RICHARD

No more!..

TZE

Evil very close. Touch, hold Eeshard Soul. This Protect Eeshard Soul.

(TZE searches his sack, comes up with three bronze coins tied in red yarn, shaking, he ties them around RICHARD's wrist)

This Feng Shui. Nine Fold Script very good power. Strong medicine. Eeshard keep always on. Never loose charm. Never let go Nine Fold Script. Always keep power on Eeshard. Always. You hear Tze? Always keep.

RICHARD

I, have no, mon...

TZE

For power most strong, Tze must give. This Tze give Eeshard. No money. Keep. Keep always. Never loose. Where Eeshard treasure ship?

RICHARD

Here. The Andelana.

(TZE lays hands on the Andelana)

TZE

I see...

(moaning...)

I see Anger. Writhing. ...One, two Japanese die here. Die on ship but... They no funereal. No greeting to heaven. Dead Japanese become terrible Funi Uré: Dead Water Spirit. Fight. Torment. Hate! Kill to greet Heaven. ...Funi Uré kill Eeshard. Kill all on ship! Kill! Kill! Kill!

(TZE burns hands on ship. Screams at his smoking, red palms.

TZE EXITS screaming!

RICHARD, shaken, clutching his charm, EXITS.

SOUNDS of DOCK and ERHU FADE OUT.

CREW slowly UNFREEZE.

LIGHTS UP in...)

FORECASTLE

2-4

RICHARD

Yang! I remember. ...Damn! These are my different trousers. Yang, come here! Yang!... I had my good luck escapulario in my other trousers. I gave Percy those trousers because his whole kit washed off in the typhoon. Damn!

YANG

Where Percy Buck now?

(Edvard Grieg's "Solveig's Song" begins FADING IN.)

RICHARD

Oh-h-h, right about now, Percy's experiencing the surreptitious passions of an older Christian Norwegian woman.

YANG

Don't be worry, Richard Hanze. When Percy Buck arrive back a-ship, you will have your esca, your es...

RICHARD

Escapulario...

YANG

Yes. Nine Fold Script. You will have, and Richard will be protect once again. When Percy Buck come back a-ship.

RICHARD

Damn.

(BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP on...)

SEAMAN'S REST

2-5

(A sailor's haven run by CHRISTINA Funnemarrk and her mother. Flowers. Streaming sunlight through lace curtains. Estrogen infused. Grieg's MUSIC, now sounding record-like, lilts from a gramophone.

HAM and a few SCRAGGLY SAILORS huddle around a book in the bright and lovely parlor.)

HAM & SCRAGGLY SAILORS

(increasingly confused, out of sync)

“You are in my faith, in my hope and in my love.
 You layest and sleep, oh virtuous boy.
 A conscience at ease is a pillow of down.
 Sleep thou, dearest boy of mine!
 I will cradle thee, I will watch thee.

HAM & SCRAGGLY SAILORS (Cont'd.)

The boy is now lying close to my heart,
 All the life-day long. He is weary now.
 Sleep thou, dearest boy of mine!
 I will cradle thee, I will watch thee.
 All the life-day long.”

CHRISTINA

keep. the. tem. po. with. the.
 mu. sic.

tem. po. gen. tel. men.

CHRISTINA

Stop, gentlemen. Stop. Thank you, stop...

HAM

(to another 'actor')

Gonna actually say it like that, are ya?

(Considering what to say to her flock, CHRISTINA turns the gramophone MUSIC OFF.)

CHRISTINA

(to herself)

Ja ja. Okay...

CHRISTINA

(to SCRAGGLY SAILORS)

So! Gentlemen. Mother built the Seaman's Rest Mission House to offer you sailors a choice away from brothels and bars and betting, ja? But. You must meet us halfway, gentlemen. Now, that was good. No. Better than good. Admirable! But, gentlemen, do give it some life, ja? We...

(seeing BUCK ENTER)

Oh, hei. ... You've made a bold entrance in our little drama. What is it you require?

BUCK

(stunned by this 'Old Norwegian Woman')

Don't mean to over complicate the, your, your plot, Ma'am.

CHRISTINA

Who doesn't appreciate a small twist, Mr...

BUCK

I. Am, ah... Buck. Apprentice Percy Buck, Ma'am. I'm off the...

CHRISTINA

(moving closer to BUCK)

Ja, ja. The Andelana. I noticed you when onboard today...

HAM

Shouldn't we be getting back to our poetical interpretations, Christina?...

CHRISTINA

(ignoring HAM)

When I invited your captain here? ...For Mother's dinner?

BUCK

That were you? Right. Regretfully, Captain sends his regrets, Ma'am, I, I regret to say.

CHRISTINA

(still closer)

Musn't cling to so much regret, Seaman Percy Buck.

HAM

Young boy. We're in the middle of beauty...

BUCK

(also ignoring HAM)

Just apprentice, Ma'am. Captain chose me outta all else aboard to come...

CHRISTINA

(moving closer to BUCK)

Didn't your mother teach you to remove your hat when speaking to a lady?

BUCK

Yes'm. Yes Ma'am. Yes, she certainly did.

CHRISTINA

...Well?

BUCK

(removing his hat)

Yes Ma'am. Sorry. See, Captain needs me special -he asked me to, to... Personally help Captain with the unruly lads aboard, Ma'am. You see, Captain trusts me to...

HAM

Someone's trying to make beautiful poetry here...

CHRISTINA

Sounds terrible important, Seaman Buck. Your cheek is greatly extended.

(holding his face softly)

Hold still. ...Frederick?

FREDERICK

Yes'um?

CHRISTINA

Take Seaman Percy Buck up the hill to Fanny Paddock immediately. Get his mouth looked after. Ja?

(to BUCK)

You have American dollars for doctor?

BUCK

Just apprentice, Ma'am...

BUCK

(searching his pockets)

Captain needs me, asked me personally to, to help him and...

CHRISTINA

Open, please. Let me see... Inside.

BUCK

You don't want to go pok'n 'round...

CHRISTINA

Just show me...

(Some SCRAGGLY SAILORS sit or lay on the floor.)

HAM

The Poets are getting ideas...

CHRISTINA

(examining BUCK's tooth)

Kjære Gud! Your mouth looks queer. Quite queer.

HAM

(trying to look into BUCK's mouth)

And what, may I ask, is wrong with that?

CHRISTINA

Frederick?

FREDERICK

Yes'um?

CHRISTINA

Sprint up that hill with young Percy in tow. Remain there with him, ja?

(to Buck)

Did you find dollars yet?

BUCK

(pulling out three Chinese coins tied with red string)

Damn. Richard loaned me his trousers. This good luck charm is all I have, Ma'am.

CHRISTINA

Charm! Do a sight better with Holy Scripture, Seaman Buck.

(BUCK begins to correct her)

CHRISTINA (Cont'd.)

Listen: At the doctor's, scribe your tooth to Seamen's Rest, understand? Mother'll pay your bill now but you must send dollars when you can, ja? After Doctor's, we'll have a full dinner waiting. All you can eat.

BUCK

Not sure I'll be fit for food. Plus Captain specifically told me to...

CHRISTINA

Do you always do what Captain tells you?

BUCK

Yes Ma'am!

CHRISTINA

(as close as modesty allows, and then some)

Well arn't you Solomon on Sunday.

BUCK

Don't I have a say?

CHRISTINA

Nei. Your being here is your say. I'll do everything else, ja?

BUCK

Yes, Ma'am. ... You seem very smart, Ma'am.

CHRISTINA

Christina, Seaman Percy Buck. Call me Christina.

(BUCK knows when he's licked.)

HAM

The miracle of poetry.

(CROSSFADE in...)

FORECASTLE

2-6

*(Somehow it seems more claustrophobic, dingier.
CREW sit or lay around listening to RICHARD.)*

RICHARD

(finishing his oratory)

“O God! Can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! Can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem

But a dream within a dream?"

(Those still conscious cheer, clap and toast.)

RICHARD (Cont'd.)

What a highfalutin education begets ya, Lads: Poetry on the brain!

(protecting BUCK's cup)

Already told you no one's to drink from Percy's grog. It's his medicine waiting on him.

NEILSON

(to Charles)

Hey there, boy-o! Fill 'er...

CHARLES

Charles or Charlie or Quartermaster. But you. You, Squiddy. You call me God.

NEILSON

(holding out his cup)

Nice to meet you, God. Be my serf...

BROWN

Charlie don't serf.

RICHARD

Hey Charles. Is it true you were here with the all-Japanese crew?

CHARLES

Aye.

BROWN

Nothing but Japanese? On the Andelana?

CHARLES

Aye.

NEILSON

What was they like, Charles?

BROWN

Shipload of little men.

CHARLES

Best crew she ever had.

DOE

Tell us about 'em!

RICHARD

If he had fifteen pocketwatches, Charles would not give the time o'day!

CHARLES

Stand aside, squid pizzle. ...Here's a tale gospel true. Every word 'cause I seen it all on this very ship: Seven, eight year ago, Andelana were full of Chinamen and Japanesemen, sailors of foreign customs and foreign gods. But with iron in their blood and steele in their sinews. We was swamp'n off Salvador, Brazil when we run again' a hurtling typhoon. This giant ship was tempest tossed, Lads. Buck'n like a bride on her wedding night, was she.

(comes DS looking high into the rigging)

The first heathen to loose his life that night was up betwixt wind an sea clinging for his very own, rope'n off the last on the fore royal when his foot give way and down he plummet a net weight splat upon the deck.

(joined by other SAILORS, CHARLES finds the dying Japanese Sailor DS)

There he lay a diy'n heap o'broken bones and foamin' red. Twas more than these eyes could take, Lads to be true. But death weren't finished with the Andelana that night, no sir. No more an' two bells hence another heathen swep off the very deck where his brother lay oozin' and into the black boil'n sea he plunge. He rises on the heave an' down he plunge an' up again he come. He looks at Captain, looks him clean in his eye. And what do you know but the lil'e rascal smiles at Captain. Himself in the boil'n sea and with a great toothy grin, he shines! Then down he's took an' ne'er seen again. Here's the belligerent bit, me Lads: According to their heathen superstition, when one dies aboard ship their soul must be atoned fer. Must be sent Heavenward with sacrement an smoke an all. Else their spirit turns rancor, barnacles itself inside the ship where it rots an' it rots an' it rots. Well, this very ship, the Andelana, has two such rotten spirits rooted to the very grains of her woodwork. Tis those two spirits turn cankerous evil what causes Ship's

CHARLES (Cont'd.)

misfortune: running agroun, demast'n, gush'n belowdecks an' mak'n the Death Dreams to shine at night.

*(CHARLES shaves off a curl of the beam,
rubs it between his fingers, smells it)*

An' now we run a cursëd me Lads, to be true. Captain never heralded them two Oriental spirits to their Oriental heaven so they must remain here. In Ship. Among us! Their putrifiëd souls infect'n the very beams an timbers of this here ship with their hateful, cankerous malice.

(looks to CREW who are mesmerized)

Ever'one who sails upon her -Ever Single Man Jack of us- must atone fer them two hate filled spirits. We must... Expiate.

RICHARD

(quoting)

“He knows them not, that do not know Him.”

CHARLES

Aye. An that’s why we drink the rhyme. An that’s why we nightmare.

JENSEN

And that’s why the faces hover above the railing?

CHARLIES

Aye.

DOE

Sagg’n from the yards?

CHARLES

Aye!

NEILSON

Starin’ back from the glass?

BROWN

Faces mist’n over the decks?

CHARLES

Aye. Them dead Japenesemen are still among us, Lads make no mistake. Caus’n their hateful mischief...

RICHARD

Hey. I did it. ...I did it! I opened the magic box! ...Hello, there’s something inside...

(CREW surrounds RICHARD.

BEAMS of LIGHT shoot from the Magic Box in his upstretched hand, blinding bright.

BLACK OUT.

SPECIALS UP on...)

INQUEST

2-7

HOSKA

You say ‘Malfeasance’, sir? You were First Mate who jumped ship and you claim Captain’s malfeasance?

FIRST MATE

That were part of it.

HOSKA

Examples, sir. Give facts of the Captain’s impropriety.

FIRST MATE

Well, take yer pick, Doctor Hoska... In the span o’ two years Captain collides with a steamer off Ireland. We put in an lose time and money. ‘Oh, but he were exonerated, weren’t he!’ Next he runs aground along Vancouver Island. ‘But the fault wern’t his Sir!’ More money lost. She loses an anchor, a three tonne anchor. Lost! ...An Anchor, sir! Typhoons spill below decks in South China Sea. In Shanghai she gets masts too damn tall making her fairly beg to turn turtle. Again, no one’s to blame, oh no sir! Least of all Captain! All Master Stalling says is, “Considerable bad luck, First Mate! Acts of God!” says he. Stalling’s malfeasance, says I. And the men what jump with me agree!

HOSKA

And on your last voyage?

FIRST MATE

All the way from Shanghai, we groused and grumbled. Made us a pact to save our own skins once we reached Tacoma port. Tried to take more with us but the others they...

HOSKA

You were Second in Command with lawful responsibilities! I put to you, sir: you mutinied...

FIRST MATE

Don’t give me that! It were all legal. Done our duty until we reached Tacoma Bay. Then we escaped.

HOSKA

Escaped?

FIRST MATE

It weren't Captain alone, poor bugger. There were something I couldn't fix. Something rancor about that barque. Evil seethed inside.

(prevents HOSKA from cutting in)

I know. I know! Just, listen: Sailors, my sailors spoke of Oriental faces whiter than canvas hover'n like smoke above ship's railin' - hangin' from the yards - sweepin' across the deck... White Ghostly Faces! Now, how -dear Lord- how was I supposed to fix That..? Those what stayed aboard knew. They all knew. And died needless.

HOSKA

Deranged visions are hardly evidence, sir.

FIRST MATE

Deep down, Captain were a good man. Fair. Looked after the young'uns like a mother hen. But something clung to that man, gripped his ship, saturated his men. Like a, a sickness of the soul...

(seeing HOSKA stare at him)

Look. It's fantastic, I know! More than malfeasance, the ship itself were... Infected. We all knew it. Captain knew it! My Lads didn't stand a chance.

HOSKA

Sir...

FIRST MATE

When a baby's sick you give her a dollop of medicine. But nothing we tried - no prayers - no holy water - no fresh smellin' sages - no smoke of holy incense or Rosary Beads - Nothin' worked! A few days after the cleansing medication, reports of them evil blank white faces would bubble back among the crew start'n it all over again. I tried fixin' it. I told Captain but he were in a right state towards the end. I told my crew down belowdecks...

(FIRST MATE rises from the Witness Chair and leaves the Inquest scene to ENTER...)

FORECASTLE

FIRST MATE (Cont'd.)

I says to 'em... I says, "Listen Lads. Listen to me! Remain aboard this barque at your own peril. It's yer life I'm talk'n, Lads. Yer Life! As soon as we moor up some of us are jump'n. We cinch the hawsers, collect our pay and off we slip. Listen here: We should All jump, Lads. All of us! Together! Just leave this damned barque behind. There's no shame in...

BUCK

Father paid the shipping company good money for me to apprentice...

FIRST MATE

What's money compared to yer life, Boy!

RICHARD

Naw. We're bound for England by way of the Horn. I'll slip off when we get home.

FIRST MATE

You'll be too late, Lad. Too Damn Late!

(FIRST MATE EXITS Forecastle scene to ENTER back into...)

INQUEST

FIRST MATE (Cont'd.)

I tells 'em, says to 'em, "You'll be too late," I tells 'em.

(sitting back in Witness Chair)

"Too late, Lads..." And that's where I left 'em. And it's aboard where they remain... To be true, Captain were a good man. Honest. Fair. And maybe, maybe all the malfeasance aboard were just evil luck which... Which was beyond my fix'n.

(BLACKOUT.

SPECIAL ON...)

CHARLES

...Wiiind.

(Tornado of EVIL SOUNDS. 'Funayūrei' Hijinks Enssue.

BLACK OUT. SILENCE.

Over BLACK...)

HOSKA

Mister Percy Buck! Percy Buck please take the Witness Chair!

(SPECIALS UP on...)

INQUEST**2-8***(NO CROWD SOUNDS. All is bleak.)*

BUCK

Is there supposed to be a bible, Sir? That I swear on?

HOSKA

(no longer the sovereign)

No need for Bibles at a coroner's inquest, son.

(consulting notes)

First, son, let me say we're... I'm very sorry, Mr. Buck, for your ship, your shipmates. For your friends. I am... Sorry. ...So, this Christina Funnemark, from the Seaman's Rest. ...She came aboard your ship on the morning of Friday, thirteen January?

BUCK

Yes.

HOSKA

She spoke to your Captain, Seaman Buck?

BUCK

Apprentice, me Lord.

HOSKA

We don't hold with that nonsense here, Apprentice Buck.

BUCK

Yessir. The Norwegian lass, Christina, smartest girl I've ever met, rowed out, come up the ladder, spoke to Captain while we was making the Andelana resplendent and she...

HOSKA

Resplendent?

BUCK

...Yessir. Captain had us painting. Said he wanted the ship to look that way, that word. Said, "Make the Andelana resplendent." Holds were all left open to air 'em out. And we were paint...

HOSKA

So you were painting the ship while this, ah, this local girl came aboard. Help me understand, what does she have to do with the sinking? Apprentice Buck?

BUCK

Christina had nothing to do with the sinking, but it explains, Doctor, Sir, explains why I was not on board, that night. How I escaped. Why I am the onl... The only one of the ship to sur... Survive. It wasn't my fault, Sir!

HOSKA

I know, I know Lad...

BUCK

I should've been there, Sir! With my Lads. Should be there now, my lads and me. Now lying a'deep. ...But Captain sent me ashore.

HOSKA

I'm sure we all feel your dismay, Percy.

BUCK

Dismay!

HOSKA

Back to the events...

BUCK

Dismay, Sir? I do know enough to know 'dismay' don't cut the rope!

HOSKA

You're right. I apologize... You went ashore with this girl then?

BUCK

No sir. Not then. Later that evening. I lost the coin toss and won my life. Captain sent me ashore with his regrets for dinner at the Seaman's Rest and... And I got my tooth fixed.

HOSKA

Your tooth?

BUCK

The toothache was agonizing me something fierce, sir.

HOSKA

Can you tell us anything about... Ship's bad Luck? About... We've heard stories about, about "monsters."

BUCK

Never seen 'em, myself. Heard plenty of course but I never... You want to know what I think?

HOSKA

That's why you're here.

BUCK

I think the real monster aboard was Gossip. Rumors, whispers ... 'Did you know this...?' or 'I heard that...' Some used gossip like knives. An I saw, I watched gossip carve men to nothing. And on board you can't never change Sir, can't never be something different. You see, once you're bridled, you're sunk. ...Apologize for rambling, Sir. Don't know about monsters but I do know 'Love of Power' and 'Love of Hate' and Love of just making lies up because, well... Just because then can.

(SOUND of WAVES; a slow clocklike rhythm.)

HOSKA

Thank you Percy Buck. You may step down and... I am sorry, Son.

(BUCK EXITS.)

HOSKA (Cont'd.)

Captain Burley? Be kind enough to return, please?

(BURLEY ENTERS, sits in the Witness Chair.)

HOSKA (Cont'd.)

May I ask you a final question, Captain Burley?

BURLEY

'Course.

HOSKA

Tell me, please. We've heard about the Captain, the crew, about superstition. You were first there, on your tugboat. Do you know...? What actually caused the Andelana to sink?

BURLEY

Would you care to hear my opinion?

HOSKA

Please, Sir.

BURLEY

No one saw the great ship go down. She made no sound. This is my guess you understand.

HOSKA

Please. Go one.

BURLEY

(distant SOUNDS of wind, shattering wood, gushing water, screaming men)

With the tide rushing in and the worst gale in years blowing out, the Andelana could have listed far over to one side lifting her ballast log clean out of water. That weight must have caused a defective chain link to snap. Sending her violently over. Causing water to gush into open hatchways and fill her open holds. In the blink of an eye. What happened to the men, I can only guess but without doubt, they scarcely leaped from their bunks by the time the great ship struck bottom, some twenty-three fathom below. ... Scrambling men were trapped like rats.

(BURLEY drinks from his flask, wipes his face.)

HOSKA

Sir?

BURLEY

Beggin your pardon, Sir. A forty mile an hour squall, top heavy ship, open empty holds, no ballast and a broken chain link conspired against the Andelana and her crew.

HOSKA

I see. I see, thank you, sir. Thank you... Please. If you can, please tell me... What did you and the crew of your steam powered tugboat find?

BURLEY

Find?

HOSKA

The next morning, sir. The three hundred foot, iron clad ship atop the bay Friday night. Who or what remained the next morning, Saturday, January fourteen...?

BURLEY

...No one. None. Not one aboard remained...

(drinks from his flask)

Smooth as glass. Empty, was the bay. ...On the far shore lay one of her ballast logs with that damned broken chain link. ...A rowboat stenciled 'Andelana.' Several oars. A compass. A mattress stamped 'Andelana' further along the beach. But... Not a single sailor, Sir. Not so much as a shirt or shoe. ...Set myself grappling hooks over my stern and after four hours I might have found her lying on her side. Maybe. Over one hundred forty feet below, Sir. ...But as far as the men. All lost. All still aboard.

HOSKA

...dear god.

BURLEY

God, Doctor Hoska. Had nothing to do with the Andelana.

(BLACKOUT.

All EXIT.)

*(SOUND of WAVES rustling the shore. A SEAGULL CRIES.
LIGHTS flood a barren stage. Nothing is left.*

BUCK and CHRISTINA, with a LARGE BAG, ENTER.)

2-8

BUCK

We'd stand up there for hours just cluch'n clouds and scrape'n sky. Smartest hearty aboard. By far. Knew all the words, did Richard. Sometimes he'd string together a haystack of syllables thick as. Then he'd just look to me patient like, expect'n. As if I'd unders... I'd think, "What the hell did any of that mean?" But he would wait on me. Expectn' Meee... Richard once told me, he said, "Bucky-Boy, a man's reach should exceed his grasp." What the helllll(!) But a day don't die what I'm not thinking on that, and... And I should be there with him now, Christina. Not here. Not happy. Not with all this, with you...

(BUCK looks to CHRISTINA who smiles in return waiting)

It's the word 'all' I hate. 'All' is the lie. ...Richard's at the bottom, Christina. Forever trapped in our ship... Forever death's prisoner. ...No. Time cannot. Time will not heal all wounds.

(CHRISTINA gives BUCK time and quiet before she speaks then hands him a flower from her bag.)

CHRISTINA

Come, Percy Buck. It's time to redeem.

BUCK

I can't.

CHRISTINA

Doing nothing now will devour you and sink your soul later in life.

BUCK

...Where are you From?

CHRISTINA

Land of the Tomten... Mischevious elves? ...Dressed in red? ...Living out in the barn?

BUCK

You believe in those things?

CHRISTINA

Don't be silly. Of course.

BUCK

And the Bible...

CHRISTINA

Of Course!

BUCK

Holy Whole of Glory.

CHRISTINA

(carefully)

...Death is just a new chart an star, Lad. Where deep blue waters lap silver shores, where rolling hills of green grasses rise to greet a golden forever-sunrise. There's his 'all', Lad, not yours. Where he's all ways loved. An never a lonesome again.

BUCK

(plucking petals off his flower)

That's your Bible talking.

CHRISTINA

'Tis my yearning heart, Lad. There are real miracles in this world, Percy Buck. Real. And recognizing just one miracle staring you in the face is worth a lifetime of sweating and living.

BUCK

He deserved more, Christina.

CHRISTINA

Hmm... 'Deserve...' So you'll just jump in and swim down and clutch on him? Do not revel in grief, Dear Lad. Making grief a smøragesborge, consumes yourself.

BUCK

What do you know of grief?

CHRISTINA

...Back in Norway Mamma and I buried Pappa and Brøder. Did you know? They too died in the sea and we buried what we had left of them. An we left them both there, impossible as that was, an we come across a great sea and come across a great continent and landed us here in a small town of mud. An we built us a mission for sailers because Mamma knows: clinging to what's dead is a drowning anchor for the quick. ...Percy Buck, your story must continue.

BUCK

Never seen a real miracle.

CHRISTINA

(impassioned whisper)

Dear Lad. If miracles left marks you'd be black an blue(!)

(beat)

...Do not pity the dead. Pitty the living who live without love. Who fantasize demise at night just to get to sleep. Nights into years. Without spouse. Without Pappa. Without Brøder. Without friend or family. Just. With. Out.

BUCK

Don't know what to do...

CHRISTINA

We try, Percy. We get up and try. And get up and try. That's what we do. ...Your headstone should be inscribed: "He Tried," because incessant trying IS the victory.

(after a long beat)

...You okay?

(BUCK nods his head)

Then I'll leave you to your business, Lad.

(coming back to BUCK)

...Oh, Mother says you're staying with us and that's the end of it. ...I shouldn't like to cross an "Old Christian Norwegian Woman" when her mind is set.

BUCK

No. No, no, no, no...

CHRISTINA

Then I'll meet you back at Seamen's Rest when you have finished your business here, ja?

BUCK

But I have no way to clean my teeth.

(CHRISTINA reaches into her BAG and holds up a tooth brush.)

But I have no hair brush to...

(She pulls a hair brush from her BAG.)

But I need clean...

(CHRISTINA reaches into her BAG...)

...socks!

(She flourishes out of her BAG clean socks.)

But, but, but I have no...

(CHRISTINA reaches back into her BAG...)

...pa...

BUCK (Cont'd.)

(She rummages around her BAG...)

...jam...

(CHRISTINA holds up a rolled bundle of cloth...)

...mas!

(Nonchalantly, she lets the bundle unravel revealing flannel pajamas.)

...Where Are You FROM?

CHRISTINA

Meet you back at Seaman's Rest?

BUCK

I'll meet you back, ja-ja... If you promise to wear your daffodil dress...

CHRISTINA

Mister Percy Buck! My daffodils are out of season for the likes of you.

BUCK

Those daffodils should always be IN-season... What's happening to me? Keep crashing through cellar after cellar only to land in your soft daffodils. Where I'm buoyant! Then back to crashing. ...Can't even lift a hand to write Richard's poor parents a letter.

(BUCK throws his now empty stem away)

CHRISTINA

(handing him another flower)

Already finished the letter, Dear Lad. And sent.

BUCK

I also need to... What? What?! We just talked about that during our, you know, during 'our cool down time.'...

CHRISTINA

(handing him another flower)

Ja, ja. You owe me postage.

BUCK

Holy whole of glory... Wasn't even certain what I'd say...

CHRISTINA

I was.

BUCK

But you. We... Can't even, I can't even muster myself a ship back...

CHRISTINA

The barque 'Cynthia Marie' soon leaves for Liverpool.

BUCK

Huh. Liverpool's very near my home town. Did you know...

CHRISTINA

Cynthia Marie's looking for Able Seamen.

BUCK

...good for her.

CHRISTINA

(more flowers to BUCK)

...You are her newest Able Seaman, Percy.

BUCK

'Christina. I am only an Apprent...' ...what...

CHRISTINA

(CHRISTINA hands BUCK all her flowers)

Ja, ja. Now you're Able.

(BUCK stares at CHRISTINA)

"To work your way back home," Lad. Like you told me, during our 'cool down time.'

BUCK

I ...I've got a job? At long last, I'm Able?!

CHRISTINA

More than ever, Ja.

BUCK

You are magic, Christina. A godsend!

CHRISTINA

That still surprises you? ...A miracle I found you, Lad. Because this woman does more than conceive.

BUCK

Wait. Wait, I know that word. I know! ...That means you're... You are Am-bi-dex-trous!

CHRISTINA

You'll see, Dear Boy.

BUCK

...Woah, woah, woah, whoooahh... Holy Hole of Glory!

(CHRISTINA gives BUCK her flowers.)

CHRISTINA

(giggling)

Don't rush me on that Able Seaman Percy Buck!

BUCK

But wait, Christina. Don't I...? Wouldn't you agree? I mean. Don't you think there might be, you know, between us something like, Happiness...? like Life...? ...like, like. You know...

(weeping)

You Know! ...Llllove...?

(Pitying her dear sweet boy, CHRISTINA pulls a handkerchief from her BAG, hands it to BUCK as she chuckles.)

BUCK (Cont'd.)

...Well at least, would you please...

(CHRISTINA begins to EXIT, laughing)

Wait! I mean. ...Christina? Please let me know. Am I'm going back home with you or without you...?

(CHRISTINA EXITS laughing and laughing and...)

BUCK (Cont'd.)

...Christina! ...Yes! Yes Christina you will! You will follow me back to My Home, Gosh Darn It! ...Or, I'll follow you if you prefer...

(VIDEO of SHORE WAVES flowing over STAGE FLOOR appear at his feet. SOUND of SEAGULLS and WAVES.)

BUCK (Cont'd.)

(looking out over the waves, setting flowers down as a wreath)

Richard. ...Richard

(Slides Chinese charm from his pocket. Examines it. About to throw it into the Sound. Stops himself. Says to himself...)

Release me Richard. ...Let me go, Boy-O. Let me live. Away from you, Dear Friend. Cause otherwise, I'm drowning, Richard. In grief. Let me go, Mate and.... and Let me Live...

(To himself, BUCK SINGS the first verse of the SHANTY, "Don't Forget Your Old Shipmate." On the chorus, he's joined by RICHARD who ENTERS SINGING, standing well behind. Slowly, more of his dead CREW ENTER SINGING, lining across UPSTAGE with RICHARD. Fiddle, concertina, tin whistle join. MUSIC surges. Becomes rockus. Soon the whole CAST is lined UPSTAGE singing and playing, clapping and stomping the uproaring shanty.

The ACTUAL CREW's deck board photo appears behind.)

CURTAIN CALL

(As they sing.)

THE END.