

Week Seven: Literary  
Renaissance / A Literature of  
Social and Cultural  
Challenge Part II - Drama

## Susan Glaspell

(1876?–1948)

Although she never lived in the Midwest after leaving it in 1913, the region and especially her birthplace—Davenport, Iowa—strongly influenced Susan Glaspell’s fiction. She was descended from one of Davenport’s pioneer families and educated in its public schools. After graduating from Drake University and working two years as a reporter and columnist for the Des Moines *Daily News*, she returned to Davenport “to give all my time to my own writing.”

Intending to support herself by writing fiction, Glaspell targeted an audience of popular magazine readers. Although her early fiction has not received much critical praise, she succeeded in crafting individualized characters and defining settings with realistic detail. Her stories, often constructed around opening flashbacks and surprise endings, proved popular enough that she was able to publish two or three every year between 1903 and 1922, when she stopped writing short fiction. Her early stories were collected in *Lifted Masks* (1912).

Glaspell’s relationship with George Cram Cook was crucial to her life and her artistic development. A member of one of Davenport’s first families, Cook was a free-thinking intellectual. His advocacy of political purposes for literature impressed her. The sentimental romance of her first novel, *The Glory of the Conquered* (1909), was replaced by explicit social purpose in her second, *The Visioning* (1911).

Cook was married when they met; after his divorce they married (1913) and moved to Provincetown, Massachusetts, at the tip of Cape Cod. In summers on the Cape and winters in Greenwich Village, they were at the center of a group of productive artists and intellectuals. After the publication of her third novel, *Fidelity* (1915), Glaspell turned her attention to writing for the theater, especially for the Provincetown Players, founded by Cook in 1915.

Producing original plays by American playwrights was the Players’ stated purpose. In the summer of 1915, the group converted an old fish house at the end of a Provincetown wharf into a theater and presented Cook’s and Glaspell’s sophisticated satire on Freudian analysis, *Suppressed Desires*, and a play by Neith Boyce. The plays were so well received that by the next summer the founders had been joined by other New Yorkers, including the young playwright Eugene O’Neill.

For the Provincetown’s second season, Glaspell wrote her first solo play, a one-act drama called *Trifles*. Sitting on one of the wooden benches in the wharf theater, she remembered the bleak kitchen of an Iowa farmhouse where a killing had taken place; she had entered it years earlier as a reporter and the desolate image was engraved on her mind. The spare and concentrated drama, so appropriate for its intended theatrical setting, is her best-known play. Along with Eugene O’Neill’s *Bound East for Cardiff*, it was the high point of the Players’ second summer on Cape Cod. Back in New York, Glaspell adapted the material into a short story called “A Jury of Her Peers.” It was published in *Every Week* (March 5, 1917) and selected by E. J. O’Brien for his *Best Short Stories of 1917*.

Glaspell continued to write both one-act and full-length plays for the theater group, now established for its winter seasons in a building on MacDougal Street under the name The Playwright’s Theater. She often took roles in its productions, and she was much admired for her acting. In addition she served as a business manager, set designer, and publicist. *The Outside*, a play set in a Cape Cod lifesaving station, was produced in 1917, and her first full-length play, *Bernice*, staged in 1919. A collection *Plays* was published in 1920. Among her most important writings for the theater are *The Inheritors* (1921), on the theme of preserving the values of the pioneer tradition, and *The Verge* (1921), treating a woman’s rejection of social convention. *Chains of Dew* (1922) was the last Glaspell play produced by the Provincetown Players. This play, along with *The Comic Artist* (1928) and

*Plays by Susan Glaspell* (1987), edited by C. W. E. Bigsby, reprints four of her best-known works. Arthur E. Waterman’s *Susan Glaspell* (1966) is a critical biography.

*Alison's House* (1930), inspired by Emily Dickinson and winner of a Pulitzer Prize, deals with the lives of artists.

In 1922 Cook, declaring that the Provincetown Players were too commercially successful to achieve their founding goals, quit the company and with Glaspell went to live in Greece, where he worked to establish a Greek national theater and regain the glories of its classic heritage. He died there in 1924. Glaspell's biography of him is entitled *The Road to the Temple* (1927). She was married from 1925 to 1931 to Norman Matson, with whom she wrote *The Comic Artist*.

Returning to Cape Cod after Cook's death, she also turned again to novels and the regionalist flavor of her earlier fiction. *Brook Evans* (1928) covers three generations of a Midwest family. *Fugitive's Return* (1929) treats the experience of living in Greece from a female vantage point. *Ambrose Holt and Family* (1931) is a dramatic novel based on the play *Chains of Dew*. *The Morning Is Near Us* (1939) is Glaspell's most successful evocation of the Midwest. *Cherished and Shared of Old* (1940) is a Christmas story. *Norma Ashe* (1942) and *Judd Rankin's Daughter* contain explicit criticism of Glaspell's native region.

Glaspell's most experimental writing was done for the theater, and it is this work that has primarily shaped her reputation.

## Trifles

Susan Glaspell

### CHARACTERS

george henderson, *County Attorney*

henry peters, *Sheriff*

lewis hale, *A neighboring farmer*

mrs. peters

mrs. hale

### Scene

The kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of john wright, a gloomy kitchen, and left 1  
without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside  
the breadbox, a dish towel on the table—other signs of incompleting work. At the rear the  
outer door opens and the sheriff comes in followed by the county attorney and hale.  
The sheriff and hale are men in middle life, the county attorney is a young man;  
all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by two women—  
the sheriff's wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face, mrs. hale is larger  
and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks  
fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together  
near the door.

county attorney. (*Rubbing his hands*) This feels good. Come up to the fire, 2  
ladies.

mrs. peters. (*After taking a step forward*) I'm not—cold. 3

sheriff: (*Unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the 4  
beginning of official business*) Now, Mr. Hale, before we move things about, you explain  
to Mr. Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

county attorney. By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you 5  
left them yesterday?

sheriff. (*Looking about*) It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night 6  
I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use get-  
ting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except  
the stove—and you know Frank.

county attorney. Somebody should have been left here yesterday. 7

sheriff. Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that 8  
man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday, I knew  
you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything  
here myself—

county attorney. Well, mr. hale, tell just what happened when you came here 9  
yesterday morning.

hale. Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along 10  
the road from my place and as I go there I said, "I'm going to see if I can't get John

Wright to go in with me on a party telephone.” I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn’t know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

county attorney. Let’s talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house. 11

hale. I didn’t hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o’clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, “Come in.” I wasn’t sure, I’m not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door (*Indicating the door by which the two women are still standing*) and there in that rocker—(*Pointing to it*) sat Mrs. Wright. 12

*They all look at the rocker.* 13

county attorney. What—was she doing? 14

hale. She was rockin’ back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it. 15

county attorney. And how did she—look? 16

hale. Well, she looked queer. 17

county attorney. How do you mean—queer? 18

hale. Well, as if she didn’t know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up. 19

county attorney. How did she seem to feel about your coming? 20

hale. Why, I don’t think she minded—one way or other. She didn’t pay much attention. I said, “How do, Mrs. Wright, it’s cold, ain’t it?” And she said, “Is it?”—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn’t ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, “I want to see John.” And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: “Can’t I see John?” “No,” she says, kind o’ dull like. “Ain’t he home?” says I. “Yes,” says she, “he’s home.” “Then why can’t I see him?” I asked her, out of patience. “Cause he’s dead,” says she. “Dead?” says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin’ back and forth. “Why—where is he?” says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that (*Himself pointing to the room above*). I got up, with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says, “Why, what did he die of?” “He died of a rope round his neck,” says she, and just went on pleatin’ at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin’— 21

county attorney. I think I’d rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story. 22

hale. Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked . . . (*Stops, his face twitches*) . . . but Harry, he went up to him, and he said. “No, he’s dead all right, and we’d better not touch anything.” So we went back down stairs. She was still sitting that same way. “Has anybody been notified?” I asked. “No,” says she, unconcerned. 23

“Who did this, Mrs. Wright?” says Harry. He said it businesslike—and she stopped pleatin’ of her apron. “I don’t know,” she says. “You don’t *know?*” says Harry. “No,” says she. “Weren’t you sleep in’ in the bed with him? says Harry. “Yes,” says she, “but I was on the inside.” “Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn’t wake up?” says Harry. “I didn’t wake up,” she said after him. We must ’a looked as if we didn’t see how that could be, for after a minute she said, “I sleep sound.” Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers’ place, where there’s a telephone.

county attorney. And what did Mrs. Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner? 24

hale. She moved from that chair to this one over here (*Pointing to a small chair in the corner*) and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared. (*The county attorney, who has had his notebook out, makes a note*) I dunno, maybe it wasn’t scared. I wouldn’t like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that’s all I know that you don’t. 25

county attorney. (*Looking around*) I guess we’ll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there. (*To the sheriff*) You’re convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive. 26

sheriff. Nothing here but kitchen things. 27

The county attorney, *after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky* 28

county attorney. Here’s a nice mess. (*The women draw nearer*) 29

mrs. peters. (*To the other woman*) Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. (*To the county Attorney*) She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire’d go out and her jars would break. 30

sheriff. Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin’ about her preserves. 31

county attorney. I guess before we’re through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about. 32

hale. Well, women are used to worrying over trifles. (*The two women move a little closer together*) 33

county attorney. (*With the gallantry of a young politician*) And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? 34

The women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller towel, turns it for a cleaner place. 35

county attorney. Dirty towels! (*Kicks his foot against the pans under the sink*) Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies? 36

- mrs. hale. (*Stiffly*) There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm. 37
- county attorney. To be sure. And yet (*With a little bow to her*) I know there are 38  
some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels. (*He gives it  
a pull to expose its full length again*)
- mrs. hale. Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean 39  
as they might be.
- county attorney. Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs. Wright were 40  
neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.
- mrs. hale. (*Shaking her head*) I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not 41  
been in this house—it's more than a year.
- county attorney. And why was that? You didn't like her? 42
- mrs. hale. I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, 43  
Mr. Henderson. And then—
- county attorney. Yes—? 44
- mrs. hale. (*Looking about*) It never seemed a very cheerful place. 45
- county Attorney. No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the home- 46  
making instinct.
- mrs. hale. Well, I don't know as Wright had, either. 47
- county attorney. You mean that they didn't get on very well? 48
- mrs. hale. No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheer- 49  
fuller for John Wright's being in it.
- county attorney. I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay 50  
of things upstairs now. (*He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door*)
- sheriff. I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does'll be all right. She was to take in 51  
some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry  
yesterday.
- county attorney. Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs. Peters, and 52  
keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.
- mrs. peters. Yes, Mr. Henderson. (*The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs,  
then look about the kitchen*) 53
- mrs. hale. I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around 54  
and criticizing. (*She arranges the pans under sink which the county attorney had shoved  
out of place*)
- mrs. peters. Of course it's no more than their duty. 55
- mrs. hale. Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make 56  
the fire might have got a little of this on. (*Gives the roller towel a pull*) Wish I'd thought  
of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when  
she had to come away in such a hurry.
- mrs. peters. (*Who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and  
lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan*) She had bread set. (*Stands still*) 57
- mrs. hale. (*Eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the breadbox, which is on a low  
shelf at the other side of the room. Moves slowly toward it.*) She was going to put this 58  
in there. (*Picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar things.*)  
It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. (*Gets up on the chair and looks*) I  
think there's some here that's all right, Mrs. Peters. Yes—here; (*Holding it toward*

*the window*) this is cherries, too. (*Looking again*) I declare I believe that's the only one. (*Gets down, bottle in her hand. Goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside.*) She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer. (*She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth.*)

**mrs. peters.** Well, I must get those things from the front room closet. (*She goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back*) You coming with me, Mrs. Hale? You could help me carry them. 59

*They go in the other room; reappear, mrs. peters carrying a dress and skirt, mrs. hale following with a pair of shoes.* 60

**mrs. peters.** My, it's cold in there. (*She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove*) 61

**mrs. hale.** (*Examining her skirt*) Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in? 62

**mrs. peters.** She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. (*Opens stair door and looks*) Yes, here it is. (*Quickly shuts door leading upstairs*) 63

**mrs. hale.** (*Abruptly moving toward her*) Mrs. Peters? 64

**mrs. peters.** Yes, Mrs. Hale? 65

**mrs. hale.** Do you think she did it? 66

**mrs. peters.** (*In a frightened voice*) Oh, I don't know. 67

**mrs. hale.** Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit. 68

**mrs. peters.** (*Starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice.*) Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up. 69

**mrs. hale.** Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck. 70

**mrs. peters.** No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that. 71

**mrs. hale.** That's just what Mr. Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand. 72

**mrs. peters.** Mr. Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling. 73

**mrs. hale.** (*Who is standing by the table*) Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here. (*She puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at* 74

*table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy*) It's wiped to here. (*Makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.*) Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. I hope she had it a little more red-up up there. You know, it seems kind of *sneaking*. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

**mrs. peters.** But Mrs. Hale, the law is the law. 75

**mrs. hale.** I s'pose 'tis. (*Unbuttoning her coat*) Better loosen up your things, 76  
Mrs. Peters. You won't feel them when you go out.

**mrs. peters** *takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table.* 77

**mrs. peters.** She was piecing a quilt. (*She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces*) 78

**mrs. hale.** It's log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt 79  
it or just knot it?

*Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The sheriff enters followed by hale and the county attorney.* 80

**sheriff:** They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it! 81

*The men laugh; the women look abashed* 82

**county attorney.** (*Rubbing his hands over the stove*) Frank's fire didn't do much 83  
up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up.

*The men go outside.* 84

**mrs. hale.** (*Resentfully*) I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' 85  
up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. (*She sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision*) I don't see as it's anything  
to laugh about.

**mrs. peters:** (*Apologetically*) Of course they've got awful important things on 86  
their minds. (*Pulls up a chair and joins mrs. hale at the table.*)

**mrs. hale:** (*Examining another block*) Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is 87  
the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so  
nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't  
know what she was about! (*After she has said this they look at each other, then start to  
glance back at the door. After an instant mrs. hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the  
sewing*)

**mrs. peters.** Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale? 88

**mrs. hale.** (*Mildly*) Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. 89  
(*Threading a needle*) Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

**mrs. peters.** (*Nervously*) I don't think we ought to touch things. 90

**mrs. hale.** I'll just finish up this end. (*Suddenly stopping and leaning forward*) 91  
Mrs. Peters?

- mrs. peters. Yes, Mrs. Hale? 92
- mrs. hale. What do you suppose she was so nervous about? 93
- mrs. peters. Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes 94  
sew awful queer when I'm just tired. (mrs. hale starts to say something, looks at  
mrs. peters, then goes on sewing) Well, I must get these things wrapped up. They may  
be through sooner than we think. (Putting apron and other things together) I wonder  
where I can find a piece of paper, and string.
- mrs. hale. In that cupboard, maybe. 95
- mrs. peters. (Looking in cupboard) Why, here's a birdcage. (Holds it up) Did 96  
she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?
- mrs. hale. Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for 97  
so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as  
she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.
- mrs. peters. (Glancing around) Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must 98  
have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.
- mrs. hale. I s'pose maybe the cat got it. 99
- mrs. peters. No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have 100  
about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset  
and asked me to take it out.
- mrs. hale. My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it? 101
- mrs. peters. (Examining the cage) Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge 102  
is pulled apart.
- mrs. hale. (Looking too) Looks as if someone must have been rough with it. 103
- mrs. peters. Why, yes (She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table) 104
- mrs. hale. I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't 105  
like this place.
- mrs. peters. But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lone- 106  
some for me sitting here alone.
- mrs. hale. It would, wouldn't it? (Dropping her sewing) But I tell you what I do 107  
wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(Looking  
around the room)—wish I had.
- mrs. peters. But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your 108  
children.
- mrs. hale. I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's 109  
why I ought to have come. I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down  
in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is but it's a lonesome place  
and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see  
now—(Shakes her head)
- mrs. peters. Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale, Somehow we just 110  
don't see how it is with other folks until—something comes up.
- mrs. hale. Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, 111  
and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know  
John Wright, Mrs. Peters?
- mrs. peters. Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a 112  
good man.

mrs. hale. Yes—good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, 113  
and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day  
with him—(*Shivers*) Like a raw wind that gets to the bone. (*Pauses, her eye falling*  
*on the cage*) I should think she would 'a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went  
with it?

mrs. peters. I don't know, unless it got sick and died. (*She reaches over and swings* 114  
*the broken door, swings it again. Both women watch it.*)

mrs. hale. You weren't raised round here, were you? (*mrs. peters shakes her head*) 115  
You didn't know—her?

mrs. peters. Not till they brought her yesterday. 116

mrs. hale. She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real 117  
sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. (*Silence;*  
*then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to every day things*) Tell you  
what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her  
mind.

mrs. peters. Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn't pos- 118  
sibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her  
patches are in here—and her things. (*They look in the sewing basket*)

mrs. hale. Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. (*Brings* 119  
*out a fancy box*) What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give  
you. Maybe her scissors are in here. (*Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose.*)  
Why—(*mrs. peters bends nearer, then turns her face away*) There's something wrapped  
up in this piece of silk.

mrs. peters. Why, this isn't her scissors. 120

mrs. hale. (*Lifting the silk*) Oh, Mrs. Peters—it's—(*mrs. peters bends closer*) 121

mrs. peters. It's the bird. 122

mrs. hale. (*Jumping up*) But, Mrs. Peters—look at it! Its neck! Look at its neck! 123  
It's all—other side to.

mrs. peters. Somebody—wrung—its—neck. 124

*Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside.* 125

mrs. hale *slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter sheriff and county*  
*attorney. mrs. peters rises.*

county attorney. (*As one turning from serious things to little pleasantries*) Well, 126  
ladies have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

mrs. peters. We think she was going to—knot it. 127

county attorney. Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. (*Seeing the bird cage*) Has 128  
the bird flown?

mrs. hale. (*Putting more quilt pieces over the box*) We think the—cat got it. 129

county attorney. (*Preoccupied*) Is there a cat? 130

mrs. hale *glances in a quick covert way at mrs. peters* 131

mrs. Peters: Well, not *now*. They're superstitious, you know. They leave. 132

county attorney. (*To sheriff peters, continuing an interrupted conversation*) 133  
No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go

up again and go over it piece by piece. (*They start upstairs*) It would have to have been someone who knew just the—

**mrs. peters** sits down. *The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they can not help saying it.* 134

**mrs. hale.** She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box. 135

**mrs. peters.** (*In a whisper*) When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there—(*Covers her face an instant*) If they hadn't held me back I would have—(*Catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly*)—hurt him. 136

**mrs. hale:** (*With a slow look around her*) I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around. (*Pause*) No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too. 137

**mrs. peters.** (*Moving uneasily*) We don't know who killed the bird. 138

**mrs. hale.** I knew John Wright. 139

**mrs. peters.** It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him. 140

**mrs. hale.** His neck. Choked the life out of him. (*Her hand goes out and rests on the birdcage*) 141

**mrs. peters.** (*With rising voice*) We don't know who killed him. We don't know. 142

**mrs. hale.** (*Her own feeling not interrupted*) If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still. 143

**mrs. peters.** (*Something within her speaking*) I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then— 144

**mrs. hale.** (*Moving*) How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for the evidence? 145

**mrs. peters.** I know what stillness is. (*Pulling herself back*) The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale. 146

**mrs. hale.** (*Not as if answering that*) I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. (*A look around the room*) Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that? 147

**mrs. peters.** (*Looking upstairs*) We mustn't—take on. 148

**mrs. hale.** I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be— for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing. (*Brushes her eyes; noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it*) If I was you I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not. 149

**mrs. peters.** (*Takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the* 150

*bottle. In a false voice.*) My, its a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn't they *laugh!* (*The men are heard coming down stairs*)

**mrs. hale.** (*Under her breath*) Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't. 151

**county attorney.** No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing. Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it—

*The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter hale from outer door.* 153

**hale.** Well, I've got the team around. Pretty cold out there. 154

**county attorney.** I'm going to stay here a while by myself. (*To the sheriff*) You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

**sheriff.** Do you want to see what Mrs. Peters is going to take in? 156

*The county attorney goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs.* 157

**county attorney.** Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out. (*Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box. Steps back.*) No, Mrs. Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?

**mrs. peters.** Not—just that way. 159

**sheriff.** (*Chuckling*) Married to the law. (*Moves toward the other room*) I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

**county attorney.** (*Scoffingly*) Oh, windows! 161

**sheriff.** We'll be right out, Mr. Hale. 162

**hale goes outside. The sheriff follows the county attorney into the other room. Then mrs. hale rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at mrs. peters, whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting mrs. hale's. A moment mrs. hale holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly mrs. peters throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room. mrs. hale snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter county attorney and sheriff.** 163

**county attorney.** (*Facetiously*) Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies? 164

**mrs. hale.** (*Her hand against her pocket*) We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson. 165

Curtain

## EUGENE O'NEILL

(1888–1953)

Eugene O'Neill was foremost among the playwrights who, from 1916 to 1924, brought about in American drama a revolution which fundamentally changed its character. European drama had already been vastly altered by the imaginative energy and inventiveness of such dramatists as Ibsen, Strindberg, Maeterlinck, and Hauptmann. On the British stage, only Shaw had been able to break the well-established conventions of the theater. In the United States, the theater had had a long history and had produced notable playwrights and some great actors, but it was for that reason the more enmeshed in a proven pattern of successful drama based on the marriage between the Elizabethan tradition and the "well-made" play. Only a decade before O'Neill's works began to appear, the dramas of Clyde Fitch and Augustus Thomas, although excellent of their sort, were only strengthening the rooted conventions.

O'Neill did more than anyone else to destroy these stereotypes and to substitute an essentially different dramatic imagination. Fundamentally, his liberation was psychological. He enriched his art by an understanding of the new psychology—not simply Freudianism, but the enlarged awareness of all conscious and subconscious realities. The result was a new depth of seriousness, a new vitality, in the dramas themselves, and the free use, in stagecraft and acting, of experimental techniques which completely ignored the "well-made" conventions and called directly upon the subconscious responses of the audience.

O'Neill's work was remarkably free from direct influences, and his imagination was so opulent that in all his many dramas he never echoed even himself. He was a master of the organic form; each play grew from the inner nature of its own conflict and psychology, and almost every one is basically different from the others. It is very difficult to name the "typical" O'Neill play. The three characteristics almost universally present, however, are all powerfully illustrated in *The Hairy Ape*. O'Neill perhaps reflects his acquaintance with the dramas of Ibsen and Strindberg in his preference for expressionism, a device first developed by nineteenth-century artists. In order to "express" the inner significance of his work, to convey it to the imagination as well as the intellect of the beholder, the artist may stylize or distort the representation of literal reality as O'Neill does when he indicates in his stage directions that the ceiling of the firemen's forecastle is to be so low that it "crushes down upon the men's heads." The play also illustrates O'Neill's adoption of the language of poetic symbolism, which had become associated with the new European drama from Ibsen to Maeterlinck. As O'Neill pointed out, he was "a bit of a poet," although his plays are not written in verse; he recognized that the imagination and emotion of high drama are more nearly those of poetry than those of prose. Finally, he cherished a faith in the dignity of humanity, which he announced early in his career. In this he is most strikingly different from Strindberg and Hauptmann, with their naturalistic view that human beings' destiny is determined by forces quite beyond their control. O'Neill proclaimed as his object the representation of "man's self-destructive struggle to be expressed in the Life-Force" and not to become, like another animal, "a mere incident in its expression."

The playwright was born in a Broadway hotel on October 16, 1888, and was christened Eugene Gladstone O'Neill. He was an infant and juvenile trouper with

his father, an eminent romantic actor, and was educated by tutors and in private schools. His attendance at Princeton (1906–1907) terminated in an undergraduate prank. He shipped aboard a Norwegian freighter to Buenos Aires; he loitered in Latin ports, with the sailors, stevedores, and waifs who became his dramatic personae, along with characters encountered in offices where he worked or on a gold-seeking expedition in Honduras. Back home, he briefly served his father as advance agent and box-office man. He had success as a reporter for the New London *Telegraph*. Recuperating from tuberculosis in 1912, he read the classic repertoire of the theater; he spent the winter of 1914 at Harvard, in George Baker's famous dramatic workshop. The next year he was a member of the Provincetown Players on Cape Cod with other fledglings named Susan Glaspell, "Jig" Cook, Robert Edmond Jones, Mielziner, and Macgowan—all soon to follow their bright stars to Greenwich Village and Broadway. Writing for this group, O'Neill won success with such one-act plays as the *S. S. Glencairn* group and other plays combining realism with experimental forms. He also acquired a reading audience when a number of them were published by Mencken and Nathan in their magazine, *The Smart Set*, during 1917–1918. In 1920, O'Neill's first long play to be produced, *Beyond the Horizon*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Within the next two years, the production of such powerful plays as *The Emperor Jones*, *Anna Christie*, and *The Hairy Ape* left no doubt that a dramatist of great power had appeared. Before long these and later plays of O'Neill were being performed in the capitals of Europe, and he became an international influence.

Between 1924 and 1931, O'Neill produced nine plays, most of them tragedies with complex psychological implications. *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (1924), *Desire under the Elms* (1924), *The Great God Brown* (1926), and *Strange Interlude* (1928) were challenging in their thematic use of miscegenation, incest, passionate crime, and polyandrous relationships. *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), the climax and triumph of his career, exploited the Greek tragedies of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, Orestes and Electra in an Aeschylean trilogy dealing with a New England family of the Civil War period. *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933) was a brilliant domestic comedy, his only venture into this field.

O'Neill was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1936, two years after he was stricken with a fatal malady. During intervals of improved health he completed four full-length plays and the scenario for a cycle of eleven plays dramatizing several successive generations of a family. Two plays of the cycle were completed; he destroyed the remaining manuscripts before his death in 1953.

In the shadow of the Second World War he temporarily shelved the cycle for work on three plays which, as he said, he knew he could finish. *The Iceman Cometh* was completed in 1939 but not produced and published until 1946. The three plays were all motivated by the dominant theme of the first, a dramatic allegory of the average person withstanding the fears and futility of this age by clinging irrationally to hope or to those illusions which transmit a visionary light. This is also the theme of *Hughie*, the only survivor of eight one-acters drafted in 1940. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1952), written in 1943, is an intensely personal exploration of the spiritual disorders of an American family, possibly his own. Powerful but difficult, it did not fare so well with audiences but deserves to be studied. In 1941 he had written a play on his family which proved to be a masterpiece, *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956). It is an overwhelming tragedy based on

the playwright's impression of the drama of love, madness, and death played out between his frail parents. He had postponed writing it, he said, until he could "face my dead \* \* \* with pity, understanding, and forgiveness." Magnificently produced and performed in Stockholm in 1955 and in New York in 1956–1957, it won the first Pulitzer Prize ever awarded posthumously and was the fourth of his plays to win that award. To the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Stockholm, which had produced his earlier plays with noteworthy insight, O'Neill gave first production rights to his other posthumous plays. *A Touch of the Poet* (1957) was successful there in 1956 and in New York in 1958. This is one of the two plays of the family cycle which O'Neill preserved; the other, *More Stately Mansions* (1963), survived only in a huge early draft but has been produced in edited versions. *Hughie* (1959), the only one completed of a planned series of one-act plays to be called *By Way of Obit*, was first performed in the United States in 1964.

Complete to its date of publication is *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, 12 vols., 1934–1935. The following collections are also available: *The Complete Works* \* \* \*, 2 vols., 1925; *Collected Plays* \* \* \*, 4 vols., 1933; *Nine Plays*, 1932; *Lost Plays* \* \* \*, 1950, 1958, edited by L. Gellert; *Ten "Lost" Plays*, edited by Bennett Cerf, 1963; *Selected Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, 1969; and "Children of the Sea" and *Three Other Unpublished Plays*, edited by Jennifer McCabe Atkinson, 1972. Donald Gallup edited *Poems 1912–1944*, 1980. Virginia Floyd edited *Eugene O'Neill at Work: Newly Released Ideas for Plays*, 1981. Travis Bogard edited *The Complete Plays, 1913–1920, 1920–1931, and 1932–1943*, all in 1988, and *Unknown O'Neill: Unpublished or Unfamiliar Writings of Eugene O'Neill*, 1988. Travis Bogard and Jackson T. Bryer edited *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, 1988.

Arthur and Barbara Gelb's *O'Neill: Life with Monte Cristo*, 2000, is the first of three volumes projected as a major revision of their earlier work. Other biographical and critical studies include B. H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays*, 1947; A. Boulton, *Part of a Long Story*, 1958; C. Bowen and S. O'Neill, *Curse of the Misbegotten*, 1959; R. D. Skinner, *Eugene O'Neill: A Poet's Quest*, 1935; S. K. Winther, *Eugene O'Neill, a Critical Study*, 1934; E. A. Egel, *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill*, 1953; and D. V. Falk, *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension*, 1958. See, further, for biography, Arthur and Barbara Geith, *O'Neill*, 1962 (revised and enlarged, 1973); Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill. Son and Playwright*, 1968, and Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist*, 1973. For recent criticism see Doris Alexander, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill*, 1961; Clifford Leech, *Eugene O'Neill*, 1963; John Raleigh, *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, 1965; Jordan Y. Miller, *Playwright's Progress: O'Neill and the Critics*, 1965; Timo Tiusanon, *O'Neill's Scenic Images*, 1968; Egil Törnqvist, *Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Super-naturalistic Technique*, 1970; Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, rev. ed., 1988; Frederick I. Carpenter, *Eugene O'Neill*, 1979; John Henry Raleigh, *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, 1965; Normand Berlin, *Eugene O'Neill*, 1982; and Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill, Son and Playwright*, 1989.



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 EUGENE O'NEILL
 

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The Hairy Ape<sup>1</sup>

## CHARACTERS

Robert Smith, "Yank"	Her Aunt
Paddy	Second Engineer
Long	A Guard
Mildred Douglas	A Secretary of an Organization
Stokers, Ladies, Gentlemen, etc.	

## SCENES

Scene I: The firemen's forecastle of an ocean liner—an hour after sailing from New York.	Scene V: Fifth Avenue, New York. Three weeks later.
Scene II: Section of promenade deck, two days out—morning.	Scene VI: An island near the city. The next night.
Scene III: The stokehole. A few minutes later.	Scene VII: In the city. About a month later.
Scene IV: Same as Scene I. Half an hour later.	Scene VIII: In the city. Twilight of the next day.

## Scene I

SCENE: *The fireman's forecastle of a transatlantic liner an hour after sailing from New York for the voyage across. Tiers of narrow, steel bunks, three deep, on all sides. An entrance in rear. Benches on the floor before the bunks. The room is crowded with men, shouting, cursing, laughing, singing—a confused, inchoate uproar swelling into a sort of unity, a meaning—the bewildered, furious, baffled defiance of a beast in a cage. Nearly all the men are drunk. Many bottles are passed from hand to hand. All are dressed in dungaree pants, heavy ugly shoes. Some wear singlets, but the majority are stripped to the waist.*

*The treatment of this scene, or of any other scene in the play, should by no means be naturalistic. The effect sought after is a cramped space in the bowels of a ship, imprisoned by white steel. The lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage. The ceiling crushes down upon the men's heads. They cannot stand upright. This accentuates the natural stooping posture which shoveling coal and the resultant over-development of back and shoulder muscles have given them. The men themselves should resemble those pictures in which the appearance of Neanderthal Man is guessed at. All are hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their*

1. First produced on March 9, 1922, by the Provincetown Players at the Playwrights' Theatre on MacDougal Street in New York's Greenwich Village. With Louis Wolheim as Yank, *The Hairy Ape* succeeded at once and within a few years had been produced all over the world. It has been revived repeatedly, particularly in little theaters. For general comment on the play, see the early paragraphs of the introduction.

*small, fierce, resentful eyes. All the civilized white races are represented, but except for the slight differentiation in color of hair, skin, eyes, all these men are alike.*

*The curtain rises on a tumult of sound. YANK is seated in the foreground. He seems broader, fiercer, more truculent, more powerful, more sure of himself than the rest. They respect his superior strength—the grudging respect of fear. Then, too, he represents to them a self-expression, the very last word in what they are, their most highly developed individual.*

VOICES. Gif me trink dere, you!

'Ave a wet!

Salute!

Gesundheit!

Skoal!

Drunk as a lord, God stiffen you!

Here's how!

Luck!

Pass back that bottle, damn you!

Pourin' it down his neck!

Ho, Froggy! Where the devil have you been?

*La Touraine.*

I hit him smash in *yaw*, py Gott!

Jenkins—the First—he's a rotten swine—

And the coppers nabbed him—and I run—

I like peer better. It don't pig head gif you.

A slut, I'm sayin'! She robbed me aslape—

To hell with 'em all!

You're a bloody liar!

Say dot again!

[*Commotion. Two men about to fight are pulled apart.*]

No scrappin' now!

To-night—

See who's the best man!

Bloody Dutchman!

To-night on the for'ard square.

I'll bet on Dutchy.

He packa da wallop, I tella you!

Shut up, Wop!

No fightin', maties. We're nil chums, ain't we?

[*A voice starts bawling a song.*]

“Beer, beer, glorious beer!

Fill yourselves right up to here.”

YANK. [*For the first time seeming to take notice of the uproar about him, turns around threateningly—in a tone of contemptuous authority.*] Choke off dat noise! Where d'you get dat beer stuff? Beer, hell! Beer's for goils—and Dutchmen. Me for somep'n wit a kick to it! Gimme a drink, one of youse guys. [*Several bottles are eagerly offered. He takes a tremendous gulp at one of them; then, keeping the bottle in his hands, glares belligerently at the owner, who hastens to acquiesce in this robbery by saying.*] All righto, Yank. Keep it and have another. [YANK con-

*temptuously turns his back on the crowd again. For a second there is an embarrassed silence. Then—*

VOICES. We must be passing the Hook.<sup>2</sup>  
 She's beginning to roll to it.  
 Six days in hell—and then Southampton.  
 Py Yesus, I vish somepody take my first vatch for me!  
 Gittin' seasick, Square-head?  
 Drink up and forget it!  
 What's in your bottle?  
 Gin.  
 Dot's nigger trink.  
 Absinthe? It's doped. You'll go off your chump, Froggy!  
 Cochon!  
 Whisky, that's the ticket!  
 Where's Paddy?  
 Going asleep.  
 Sing us that whisky song, Paddy.

*[They all turn to an old, wizened Irishman who is dozing, very drunk, on the benches forward. His face is extremely monkey-like with all the sad, patient pathos of that animal in his small eyes.]*

Singa da song, Caruso Pat!  
 He's gettin' old. The drink is too much for him.  
 He's too drunk.

PADDY. *[Blinking about him, starts to his feet resentfully, swaying, holding on to the edge of a bunk.]* I'm never too drunk to sing. 'Tis only when I'm dead to the world I'd be wishful to sing at all. *[With a sort of sad contempt.]* "Whisky Johnny," ye want? A chanty, ye want? Now that's a queer wish from the ugly like of you, God help you. But no matter. *[He starts to sing in a thin, nasal, doleful tone.]*

Oh, whiskey is the life of man!  
 Whiskey! O Johnny! *[They all join in on this.]*  
 Oh, whiskey is the life of man!  
 Whiskey for my Johnny! *[Again chorus.]*  
 Oh, whiskey drove my old man mad!  
 Whiskey! O Johnny!  
 Oh, whiskey drove my old man mad!  
 Whiskey for my Johnny!

YANK. *[Again turning around scornfully.]* Aw hell! Nix on dat old sailing ship stuff! All dat bull's dead, see? And you're dead, too, yuh damned old Harp, on'y yuh don't know it. Take it easy, see. Give us a rest. Nix on de loud noise. *[With a cynical grin.]* Can't youse see I'm tryin' to t'ink?

ALL. *[Repeating the word after him as one with the same cynical amused mockery.]* Think! *[The chorused word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a general uproar of hard, barking laughter.]*

VOICES. Don't be cracking your head wit ut, Yank.  
 You gat headache, py yingo!  
 One thing about it—it rhymes with drink!

2. Sandy Hook, New York Harbor, gateway to the open sea.

Ha, ha, ha!  
 Drink, don't think!  
 Drink, don't think!  
 Drink, don't think!

[*A whole chorus of voices has taken up this refrain, stamping on the floor, pounding on the benches with fists.*]

YANK. [*Taking a gulp from his bottle—good-naturedly.*] Aw right. Can de noise. I get yuh de foist time.

[*The uproar subsides. A very drunken sentimental tenor begins to sing.*]

“Far away in Canada,  
 Far across the sea,  
 There's a lass who fondly waits  
 Making a home for me—”

YANK. [*Fiercely contemptuous.*] Shut up, yuh lousy boob! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Home? Home, hell! I'll make a home for yuh! I'll knock yuh dead. Home! T'hell wit home! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Dis is home, see? What d'yuh want wit home? [*Proudly.*] I runned away from mine when I was a kid. On'y too glad to beat it, dat was me. Home was lickings for me, dat's all. But yuh can bet your shoit no one ain't never licked me since! Wanter try it, any of youse? Huh! I guess not. [*In a more placated but still contemptuous tone.*] Goils waitin' for you, huh? Aw, hell! Dat's all tripe. Dey don't wait for no one. Dey'd doublecross yuh for a nickel. Dey're all tarts, get me? Treat 'em rough, dat's me. To hell wit'em. Tarts, dat's what, de whole bunch of 'em.

LONG. [*Very drunk, jumps on a bench excitedly, gesticulating with a bottle in his hand.*] Listen 'ere, Comrades! Yank 'ere is right. 'E says this 'ere stinkin' ship is our 'ome. And 'e says as 'ome is 'ell. And 'e's right! This is 'ell. We lives in 'ell, Comrades—and right enough we'll die in it. [*Raging.*] And who's ter blame, I arks yer? We ain't. We wasn't born this rotten way. All men is borne free and ekal. That's in the bleedin' Bible, maties. But what d'they care for the Bible—them lazy, bloated swine what travels first cabin? Them's the ones. They dragged us down 'til we're on'y wage slaves in the bowels of a bloody ship, sweatin', burnin' up, eatin' coal dust! Hit's them's ter blame—the damned Capitalist clarss!

[*There had been a gradual murmur of contemptuous resentment rising among the men until now he is interrupted by a storm of catcalls, hisses, boos, hard laughter.*]

VOICES. Turn it off!  
 Shut up!  
 Sit down!  
 Closa da face!  
 Tamn fool! [*Etc.*]

YANK. [*Standing up and glaring at LONG.*] Sit down before I knock yuh down! [*LONG makes haste to efface himself. YANK goes on contemptuously.*] De Bible, huh? De Cap'tlist class, huh? Aw nix on dat Salvation Army-Socialist bull. Git a soapbox! Hire a hall! Come and be saved, huh? Jerk us to Jesus, huh? Aw g'wan! I've listened to lots of guys like you, see. Yuh're all wrong. Wanter know what I t'ink? Yuh ain't no good for no one. Yuh're de bunk. Yuh ain't got no noive, get me? Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Yellow, dat's you. Say! What's dem slobs in de foist cabin got to do wit us? We're better men dan dey are, ain't we? Sure! One of us guys could clean up de whole mob wit one mit. Put one of 'em down here for one

watch in de stokehole, what'd happen? Dey'd carry him off on a stretcher. Dem boids don't amount to nothin'. Dey're just baggage. Who makes dis old tub run? Ain't it us guys? Well den, we belong, don't we? We belong and dey don't. Dat's all. [*A loud chorus of approval. YANK goes on.*] As for dis bein' hell—aw, nuts! Yuh lost your noive, dat's what. Dis is a man's job, get me? It belongs. It runs dis tub. No stiffs need apply. But yuh're a stiff, see? Yuh're yellow, dat's you.

VOICES. [*With a great hard pride in them.*]

Righto!

A man's job!

Talk is cheap, Long.

He never could hold up his end.

Divil take him!

Yank's right. We make it go.

Py Gott, Yank say right ting!

We don't need no one cryin' over us.

Makin' speeches.

Throw him out!

Yellow!

Chuck him overboard!

I'll break his jaw for him!

[*They crowd around LONG threateningly.*]

YANK. [*Half good-natured again—contemptuously.*] Aw, take it easy. Leave him alone. He ain't woth a punch. Drink up. Here's how, whoever owns dis. [*He takes a long swallow from his bottle. All drink with him. In a flash all is hilarious amiability again, backslapping, loud talk, etc.*]

PADDY. [*Who has been sitting in a blinking, melancholy daze—suddenly cries out in a voice full of old sorrow.*] We belong to this, you're saying? We make the ship to go, you're saying? Yerra<sup>3</sup> then, that Almighty God have pity on us! [*His voice runs into the wail of a keen,<sup>4</sup> he rocks back and forth on his bench. The men stare at him, startled and impressed in spite of themselves.*] Oh, to be back in the fine days of my youth, ochone!<sup>5</sup> Oh, there was fine beautiful ships them days—clippers wid tall masts touching the sky—fine strong men in them—men that was sons of the sea as if 'twas the mother that bore them. Oh, the clean skins of them, and the clear eyes, the straight backs and full chests of them! Brave men they was, and bold men surely! We'd be sailing out, bound down round the Horn maybe. We'd be making sail in the dawn, with a fair breeze, singing a chanty song wid no care to it. And astern the land would be sinking low and dying out, but we'd give it no heed but a laugh, and never a look behind. For the day that was, was enough, for we was free men—and I'm thinking 'tis only slaves do be giving heed to the day that's gone or the day to come—until they're old like me. [*With a sort of religious exaltation.*] Oh, to be scudding south again wid the power of the Trade Wind driving her on steady through the nights and the days! Full sail on her! Nights and days! Nights when the foam of the wake would be flaming wid fire, when the sky'd be blazing and winking wid stars. Or the full of the moon maybe. Then you'd see her driving through the gray night, her sails stretching aloft all silver and white,

3. An Irish exclamation, loosely equivalent to “verily,” “truly.”

4. An Irish lamentation, as for the dead.

5. Irish, “alas.”

not a sound on the deck, the lot of us dreaming dreams, till you'd believe 'twas no real ship at all you was on but a ghost ship like the *Flying Dutchman* they say does be roaming the seas forevermore without touching a port. And these was the days, too. A warm sun on the clean decks. Sun warming the blood of you, and wind over the miles of shiny green ocean like strong drink to your lungs. Work—aye, hard work—but who'd mind that at all? Sure, you worked under the sky and 'twas work wid skill and daring to it. And wid the day done, in the dog watch, smoking me pipe at ease, the lookout would be raising land maybe, and we'd see the mountains of South Americy wid the red fire of the setting sun painting their white tops and the clouds floating by them! [*His tone of exaltation ceases. He goes on mournfully.*] Yerra, what's the use of talking? 'Tis a dead man's whisper. [*To YANK resentfully.*] 'Twas them days men belonged to ships, not now. 'Twas them days a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one. [*Scornfully.*] Is it one wid this you'd be, Yank—black smoke from the funnels smudging the sea, smudging the decks—the bloody engines pounding and throbbing and shaking—wid divil a sight of sun or a breath of clean air—choking our lungs wid coal dust—breaking our backs and hearts in the hell of the stokehole—feeding the bloody furnace—feeding our lives along wid the coal, I'm thinking—caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the Zoo! [*With a harsh laugh.*] Ho-ho, divil mend you! Is it to belong to that you're wishing? Is it a flesh and blood wheel of the engines you'd be?

YANK. [*Who has been listening with a contemptuous sneer, barks out the answer.*] Sure ting! Dat's me. What about it?

PADDY. [*As if to himself—with great sorrow.*] Me time is past due. That a great wave wid sun in the heart of it may sweep me over the side sometime I'd be dreaming of the days that's gone!

YANK. Aw, yuh crazy Mick! [*He springs to his feet and advances on PADDY threateningly—then stops, fighting some queer struggle within himself—lets his hands fall to his sides—contemptuously.*] Aw, take it easy. Yuh're aw right at dat. Yuh're bugs, dat's all—nutty as a cuckoo. All dat tripe yuh been pullin'—Aw, dat's all right. On'y it's dead, get me? Yuh don't belong no more, see. Yuh don't get de stuff. Yuh're too old. [*Disgustedly.*] But aw say, come up for air onct in a while, can't yuh? See what's happened since yuh croaked. [*He suddenly bursts forth vehemently, growing more and more excited.*] Say! Sure! Sure I meant it! What de hell—Say, lemme talk! Hey! Hey, you old Harp! Hey, youse guys! Say, listen to me—wait a moment—I gotter talk, see. I belong and he don't. He's dead but I'm livin'. Listen to me! Sure, I'm part of de engines! Why de hell not! Dey move, don't dey? Dey're speed, ain't dey! Dey smash trou, don't dey? Twenty-five knots a hour! Dat's goin' some! Dat's new stuff! Dat belongs! But him, he's too old. He gets dizzy. Say, listen. All dat crazy tripe about nights and days; all dat crazy tripe about stars and moons; all dat crazy tripe about suns and winds, fresh air and de rest of it—Aw hell, dat's all a dope dream! Hittin' de pipe of de past, dat's what he's doin'. He's old and don't belong no more. But me, I'm young! I'm in de pink! I move wit it! It, get me! I mean de ting dat's de guts of all dis. It ploughs trou all de tripe he's been sayin'. It blows dat up! It knocks dat dead! It slams dat offen de face of de oith; It, get me! De engines and de coal and de smoke and all de rest of it! He can't breathe and swallow coal dust, but I kin, see? Dat's fresh air for me! Dat's food for me! I'm new, get me? Hell in de stokehole? Sure! It takes a man to work in hell. Hell, sure, dat's my fav'rite climate. I eat it up! I git fat on it! It's me makes it

hot! It's me makes it roar! It's me makes it move! Sure, on'y for me everyting stops. It all goes dead, get me? De noise and smoke and all de engines movin' de woild, dey stop. Dere ain't nothin' no more! Dat's what I'm sayin'. Everyting else dat makes de woild move, somep'n makes it move. It can't move witout somep'n else, see? Den yuh get down to me. I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! I start somep'n and de woild moves! It—dat's me!—de new dat's moiderin' de old! I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin; I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting in noise dat makes yuh hear it; I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes it money! And I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel—steel—steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it! [*As he says this he pounds with his fist against the steel bunks. All the men, roused to a pitch of frenzied self-glorification by his speech, do likewise. There is a deafening metallic roar, through which YANK's voice can be heard bellowing.*] Slaves, hell! We run de whole woiks. All de rich guys dat tink dey're somep'n, dey ain't nothin'! Dey don't belong. But us guys, we're in de move, we're at de bottom, de whole ting is us! [*PADDY from the start of YANK's speech has been taking one gulp after another from his bottle, at first frightenedly, as if he were afraid to listen, then desperately, as if to drown his senses, but finally has achieved complete indifferent, even amused, drunkenness. YANK sees his lips moving. He quells the uproar with a shout.*] Hey, youse guys, take it easy! Wait a moment! De nutty Harp is sayin' somep'n.

PADDY. [*Is heard now—throws his head back with a mocking burst of laughter.*] Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho—

YANK. [*Drawing back his fist, with a snarl.*] Aw! Look out who yuh're givin' the bark!

PADDY. [*Begins to sing the "Miller of Dee" with enormous good nature.*]

"I care for nobody, no, not I,  
And nobody cares for me."

YANK. [*Good-natured himself in a flash, interrupts PADDY with a slap on the bare back like a report.*] Dat's de stuff! Now yuh're gettin' wise to somep'n. Care for nobody, dat's de dope! To hell wit 'em all! And nix on nobody else carin'. I kin care for myself, get me! [*Eight bells sound, muffled, vibrating through the steel walls as if some enormous brazen gong were imbedded in the heart of the ship. All the men jump up mechanically, file through the door silently close upon each other's heels in what is very like a prisoners' lockstep. YANK slaps PADDY on the back.*] Our watch, yuh old Harp! [*Mockingly.*] Come on down in hell. Eat up de coal dust. Drink in de heat. It's it, see! Act like yuh liked it, yuh better—or croak yuhself.

PADDY. [*With jovial defiance.*] To the divil wid it! I'll not report this watch. Let thim log me and be damned. I'm no slave the like of you. I'll be sittin' here at me ease, and drinking, and thinking, and dreaming dreams.

YANK. [*Contemptuously.*] Tinkin' and dreamin', what'll that get yuh? What's tinkin' got to do with it? We move, don't we? Speed, ain't it? Fog, dat's all you stand for. But we drive trou dat, don't we? We split dat up and smash trou—twenty-five knots a hour! [*Turns his back on PADDY scornfully.*] Aw, yuh make me sick! Yuh don't belong! [*He strikes out the door in rear. PADDY hums to himself, blinking drowsily.*]

[*Curtain.*]

## Scene II

SCENE: *Two days out. A section of the promenade deck. MILDRED DOUGLAS and her AUNT are discovered reclining in deck chairs. The former is a girl of twenty, slender, delicate, with a pale, pretty face marred by a self-conscious expression of disdainful superiority. She looks fretful, nervous, and discontented, bored by her own anemia. Her AUNT is a pompous and proud—and fat—old lady. She is a type even to the point of double chin and lorgnette. She is dressed pretentiously, as if afraid her face alone would never indicate her position in life. MILDRED is dressed all in white.*

*The impression to be conveyed by this scene is one of the beautiful, vivid life of the sea all about—sunshine on the deck in a great flood, the fresh sea wind blowing across it. In the midst of this, these two incongruous, artificial figures, inert and disharmonious, the elder like a gray lump of dough touched up with rouge, the younger looking as if the vitality of her stock had been sapped before she was conceived, so that she is the expression not of its life energy but merely of the artificialities that energy had won for itself in the spending.*

MILDRED. [*Looking up with affected dreaminess.*] How the black smoke swirls back against the sky! Is it not beautiful?

AUNT. [*Without looking up.*] I dislike smoke of any kind.

MILDRED. My great-grandmother smoked a pipe—a clay pipe.

AUNT. [*Ruffling.*] Vulgar.

MILDRED. She was too distant a relative to be vulgar. Time mellows pipes.

AUNT. [*Pretending boredom but irritated.*] Did the sociology you took up at college teach you that—to play the ghoul on every possible occasion, excavating old bones? Why not let your great-grandmother rest in her grave?

MILDRED. [*Dreamily.*] With her pipe beside her—puffing in Paradise.

AUNT. [*With spite.*] Yes, you are a natural born ghoul. You are even getting to look like one, my dear.

MILDRED. [*In a passionless tone.*] I detest you, Aunt. [*Looking at her critically.*] Do you know what you remind me of? Of a cold pork pudding against a background of linoleum tablecloth in the kitchen of a—but the possibilities are wearisome. [*She closes her eyes.*]

AUNT. [*With a bitter laugh.*] Merci for your candor. But since I am and must be your chaperon—in appearance, at least—let us patch up some sort of armed truce. For my part you are quite free to indulge any pose of eccentricity that beguiles you—as long as you observe the amenities—

MILDRED. [*Drawling.*] The inanities?

AUNT. [*Going on as if she hadn't heard.*] After exhausting the morbid thrills of social service work on New York's East Side—how they must have hated you, by the way, the poor that you made so much poorer in their own eyes!—you are now bent on making your slumming international. Well, I hope Whitechapel<sup>6</sup> will provide the needed nerve tonic. Do not ask me to chaperon you there, however. I told your father I would not. I loathe deformity. We will hire an army of detectives and you may investigate everything—they allow you to see.

MILDRED. [*Protesting with a trace of genuine earnestness.*] Please do not mock at my attempts to discover how the other half lives. Give me credit for some sort

6. A poor district of London.

of groping sincerity in that at least. I would like to help them. I would like to be some use in the world. Is it my fault I don't know how? I would like to be sincere, to touch life somewhere. [*With weary bitterness.*] But I'm afraid I have neither the vitality nor integrity. All that was burnt out in our stock before I was born. Grandfather's blast furnaces, flaming to the sky, melting steel, making millions—then father keeping those home fires burning, making more millions—and little me at the tail-end of it all. I'm a waste product in the Bessemer process—like the millions. Or rather, I inherit the acquired trait of the by-product, wealth, but none of the energy, none of the strength of the steel that made it. I am sired by gold and damned by it, as they say at the race track—damned in more ways than one. [*She laughs mirthlessly.*]

AUNT. [*Unimpressed—superciliously.*] You seem to be going in for sincerity to-day. It isn't becoming to you, really—except as an obvious pose. Be as artificial as you are, I advise. There's a sort of sincerity in that, you know. And, after all, you must confess you like that better.

MILDRED. [*Again affected and bored.*] Yes, I suppose I do. Pardon me for my outburst. When a leopard complains of its spots, it must sound rather grotesque. [*In a mocking tone.*] Purr, little leopard. Purr, scratch, tear, kill, gorge yourself and be happy—only stay in the jungle where your spots are camouflage. In a cage they make you conspicuous.

AUNT. I don't know what you are talking about.

MILDRED. It would be rude to talk about anything to you. Let's just talk. [*She looks at her wrist watch.*] Well, thank goodness, it's about time for them to come for me. That ought to give me a new thrill, Aunt.

AUNT. [*Affectedly troubled.*] You don't mean to say you're really going? The dirt—the heat must be frightful—

MILDRED. Grandfather started as a puddler. I should have inherited an immunity to heat that would make a salamander shiver. It will be fun to put it to the test.

AUNT. But don't you have to have the captain's—or someone's—permission to visit the stokehole?

MILDRED. [*With a triumphant smile.*] I have it—both his and the chief engineer's. Oh, they didn't want to at first, in spite of my social service credentials. They didn't seem a bit anxious that I should investigate how the other half lives and works on a ship. So I had to tell them that my father, the president of Nazareth Steel, chairman of the board of directors of this line, had told me it would be all right.

AUNT. He didn't.

MILDRED. How naïve age makes one! But I said he did, Aunt. I even said he had given me a letter to them—which I had lost. And they were afraid to take the chance that I might be lying. [*Excitedly.*] So it's ho! for the stokehole. The second engineer is to escort me. [*Looking at her watch again.*] It's time. And here he comes, I think. [*The SECOND ENGINEER enters. He is a husky, fine-looking man of thirty-five or so. He stops before the two and tips his cap, visibly embarrassed and ill-at-ease.*]

SECOND ENGINEER. Miss Douglas?

MILDRED. Yes. [*Throwing off her rugs and getting to her feet.*] Are we all ready to start?

SECOND ENGINEER. In just a second, ma'am. I'm waiting for the Fourth. He's coming along.

MILDRED. [*With a scornful smile.*] You don't care to shoulder this responsibility alone, is that it?

SECOND ENGINEER. [*Forcing a smile.*] Two are better than one. [*Disturbed by her eyes, glances out to sea—blurts out.*] A fine day we're having.

MILDRED. Is it?

SECOND ENGINEER. A nice warm breeze—

MILDRED. It feels cold to me.

SECOND ENGINEER. But it's hot enough in the sun—

MILDRED. Not hot enough for me. I don't like Nature. I was never athletic.

SECOND ENGINEER. [*Forcing a smile.*] Well, you'll find it hot enough where you're going.

MILDRED. Do you mean hell?

SECOND ENGINEER. [*Flabbergasted, decides to laugh.*] Ho-ho! No, I mean the stokehole.

MILDRED. My grandfather was a puddler. He played with boiling steel.

SECOND ENGINEER. [*All at sea—uneasily.*] Is that so? Hum, you'll excuse me, ma'am, but are you intending to wear that dress?

MILDRED. Why not?

SECOND ENGINEER. You'll likely rub against oil and dirt. It can't be helped.

MILDRED. It doesn't matter. I have lots of white dresses.

SECOND ENGINEER. I have an old coat you might throw over—

MILDRED. I have fifty dresses like this. I will throw this one into the sea when I come back. That ought to wash it clean, don't you think?

SECOND ENGINEER. [*Doggedly.*] There's ladders to climb down that are none too clean—and dark alleyways—

MILDRED. I will wear this very dress and none other.

SECOND ENGINEER. No offense meant. It's none of my business. I was only warning you—

MILDRED. Warning? That sounds thrilling.

SECOND ENGINEER. [*Looking down the deck—with a sigh of relief.*] There's the Fourth now. He's waiting for us. If you'll come—

MILDRED. Go on. I'll follow you. [*He goes. MILDRED turns a mocking smile on her aunt.*] An oaf—but a handsome, virile oaf.

AUNT. [*Scornfully.*] Poser!

MILDRED. Take care. He said there were dark alleyways—

AUNT. [*In the same tone.*] Poser!

MILDRED. [*Biting her lips angrily.*] You are right. But would that my millions were not so anemically chaste!

AUNT. Yes, for a fresh pose I have no doubt you would drag the name of Douglas in the gutter!

MILDRED. From which it sprang. Goodby, Aunt. Don't pray too hard that I may fall into the fiery furnace.

AUNT. Poser!

MILDRED. [*Viciously.*] Old hag! [*She slaps her AUNT insultingly across the face and walks off, laughing gayly.*]

AUNT. [*Screams after her.*] I said poser!

[*Curtain.*]

## Scene III

SCENE: *The stokehole. In the rear, the dimly-outlined bulks of the furnaces and boilers. High overhead one hanging electric bulb sheds just enough light through the murky air laden with coal dust to pile up masses of shadows everywhere. A line of men, stripped to the waist, is before the furnace doors. They bend over, looking neither to right nor left, handling their shovels as if they were part of their bodies, with a strange, awkward, swinging rhythm. They use the shovels to throw open the furnace doors. Then from these fiery round holes in the black a flood of terrific light and heat pours full upon the men who are outlined in silhouette in the crouching, inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas. The men shovel with a rhythmic motion, swinging as on a pivot from the coal which lies in heaps on the floor behind to hurl it into the flaming mouths before them. There is a tumult of noise—the brazen clang of the furnace doors as they are flung open or slammed shut, the grating, teeth-gritting grind of steel against steel, of crunching coal. This clash of sounds stuns one's ears with its rending dissonance. But there is order in it, rhythm, a mechanical regulated recurrence, a tempo. And rising above all, making the air hum with the quiver of liberated energy, the roar of leaping flames in the furnaces, the monotonous throbbing beat of the engines.*

*As the curtain rises, the furnace doors are shut. The men are taking a breathing spell. One or two are arranging the coal behind them, pulling it into more accessible heaps. The others can be dimly made out leaning on their shovels in relaxed attitudes of exhaustion.*

PADDY. [*From somewhere in the line—plaintively.*] Yerra, will this divil's own watch nivr end? Me back is broke. I'm destroyed entirely.

YANK. [*From the center of the line—with exuberant scorn.*] Aw, yuh make me sick! Lie down and croak, why don't yuh? Always beefin', dat's you! Say, dis is a cinch! Dis was made for me! It's my meat, get me! [*A whistle is blown—a thin, shrill note from somewhere overhead in the darkness. YANK curses without resentment.*] Dere's de damn engineer crackin' de whip. He tinks we're loafin'.

PADDY. [*Vindictively.*] God stiffen him!

YANK. [*In an exultant tone of command.*] Come on, youse guys! Git into de game! She's gittin' hungry! Pile some grub in her. Trow it into her belly! Come on now, all of youse! Open her up!

*[At this last all the men, who have followed his movements of getting into position, throw open their furnace doors with a deafening clang. The fiery light floods over their shoulders as they bend round for the coal. Rivulets of sooty sweat have traced maps on their backs. The enlarged muscles form bunches of high light and shadow.]*

YANK. [*Chanting a count as he shovels without seeming effort.*] One—two—tree—*[His voice rising exultantly in the joy of battle.]* Dat's de stuff! Let her have it! All togedder now! Sling it into her! Let her ride! Shoot de piece now! Call de toin on her! Drive her into it! Feel her move! Watch her smoke! Speed, dat's her middle name! Give her coal, youse guys! Coal, dat's her booze! Drink it up, baby! Let's see yuh sprint! Dig in and gain a lap! Dere she go-o-e-s. [*This last in the chanting formula of the gallery gods at the six-day bike race. He slams his furnace door shut. The others do likewise with as much unison as their wearied bodies will permit. The effect is of one fiery eye after another being blotted out with a series of accompanying bangs.*]

PADDY. [*Groaning.*] Me back is broke. I'm bate out—bate—

[*There is a pause. Then the inexorable whistle sounds again from the dim regions above the electric light. There is a growl of cursing rage from all sides.*]

YANK. [*Shaking his fist upward—contemptuously.*] Take it easy dere, you! Who d'yuh tink's runnin' dis game, me or you? When I git ready, we move. Not before! When I git ready, get me!

VOICES. [*Approvingly.*] That's the stuff!

Yank tal him, py golly!

Yank ain't afeerd.

Goot poy, Yank!

Give him hell!

Tell 'im 'e's a bloody swine!

Bloody slave-driver!

YANK. [*Contemptuously.*] He ain't got no noive. He's yellow, get me? All de engineers is yellow. Dey got streaks a mile wide. Aw, to hell wit him! Let's move, youse guys. We had a rest. Come on, she needs it! Give her pep! It ain't for him. Him and his whistle, dey don't belong. But we belong, see! We gotter feed de baby! Come on! [*He turns and flings his furnace door open. They all follow his lead. At this instant the SECOND and FOURTH ENGINEERS enter from the darkness on the left with MILDRED between them. She starts, turns paler, her pose is crumbling, she shivers with fright in spite of the blazing heat, but forces herself to leave the ENGINEERS and take a few steps nearer the men. She is right behind YANK. All this happens quickly while the men have their backs turned.*]

YANK. Come on, youse guys! [*He is turning to get coal when the whistle sounds again in a peremptory, irritating note. This drives YANK into a sudden fury. While the other men have turned full around and stopped dumfounded by the spectacle of MILDRED standing there in her white dress, YANK does not turn far enough to see her. Besides, his head is thrown back, he blinks upward through the murk trying to find the owner of the whistle, he brandishes his shovel murderously over his head in one hand, pounding on his chest, gorilla-like, with the other, shouting.*] Toin off dat whistle! Come down outa dere, yuh yellow, brass-buttoned, Belfast bum, yuh! Come down and I'll knock yer brains out! Yuh lousy, stinkin', yellow mut of a Catholic-moiderin' bastard! Come down and I'll moider yuh! Pullin' dat whistle on me, huh? I'll show yuh! I'll crash yer skull in! I'll drive yer teet' down yer troat! I'll slam yer nose trou de back of yer head! I'll cut yer guts out for a nickel, yuh lousy boob, yuh dirty, crummy, muck-eatin' son of a—[*Suddenly he becomes conscious of all the other men staring at something directly behind his back. He whirls defensively with a snarling, murderous growl, crouching to spring, his lips drawn back over his teeth, his small eyes gleaming ferociously. He sees MILDRED, like a white apparition in the full light from the open furnace doors. He glares into her eyes, turned to stone. As for her, during his speech she has listened, paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless. As she looks at his gorilla face, and his eyes bore into hers, she utters a low, choking cry and shrinks away from him, putting both hands up before her eyes to shut out the sight of his face, to protect her own. This startles YANK to a reaction. His mouth falls open, his eyes grow bewildered.*]

MILDRED. [*About to faint—to the ENGINEERS, who now have her one by each arm—whimperingly.*] Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast! [*She faints. They carry*

her quickly back, disappearing in the darkness at the left, rear. An iron door clangs shut. Rage and bewildered fury rush back on YANK. He feels himself insulted in some unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride. He roars.] God damn yuh! [And hurls his shovel after them at the door which has just closed. It hits the steel bulkhead with a clang and falls clattering on the steel floor. From overhead the whistle sounds again in a long, angry, insistent command.]

[Curtain.]

#### Scene IV

SCENE: *The firemen's forecastle. YANK'S watch has just come off duty and had dinner. Their faces and bodies shine from a soap and water scrubbing but around their eyes, where a hasty dousing does not touch, the coal dust sticks like black make-up, giving them a queer, sinister expression. YANK has not washed either face or body. He stands out in contrast to them, a blackened, brooding figure. He is seated forward on a bench in the exact attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker."<sup>7</sup> The others, most of them smoking pipes, are staring at YANK half-apprehensively, as if fearing an outburst; half-amusedly, as if they saw a joke somewhere that tickled them.*

VOICES. He ain't ate nothin'.

Py golly, a fallar gat to gat grub in him.

Divil a lie.

Yank feeda da fire, no feeda da face.

Ha-ha.

He ain't even washed hisself.

He's forgot.

Hey, Yank, you forgot to wash.

YANK. [*Sullenly.*] Forgot nothin'! To hell wit washin'.

VOICES. It'll stick to you.

It'll get under your skin.

Give yer the bleedin' itch, that's wot.

It makes spots on you—like a leopard.

Like a piebald nigger, you mean.

Better wash up, Yank.

You sleep better.

Wash up, Yank.

Wash up! Wash up!

YANK. [*Resentfully.*] Aw say, youse guys. Lemme alone. Can't youse see I'm tryin' to tink?

ALL. [*Repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery.*] Think! [*The word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

YANK. [*Springing to his feet and glaring at them belligerently.*] Yes, tink! Tink, dat's what I said. What about it? [*They are silent, puzzled by his sudden resentment at what used to be one of his jokes. YANK sits down again in the same attitude of "The Thinker."*]

VOICES. Leave him alone.

7. Auguste Rodin (1840–1917), French sculptor. "The Thinker" is the figure of a powerful man sitting in deep concentration of thought.

He's got a grouch on.

Why wouldn't he?

PADDY. [*With a wink at the others.*] Sure I know what's the matter. 'Tis aisy to see. He's fallen in love, I'm telling you.

ALL. [*Repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery.*] Love! [*The word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

YANK. [*With a contemptuous snort.*] Love, hell! Hate, dat's what. I've fallen in hate, get me?

PADDY. [*Philosophically.*] 'Twould take a wise man to tell one from the other. [*With a bitter, ironical scorn, increasing as he goes on.*] But I'm telling you it's love that's in it. Sure what else but love for us poor bastes in the stokehole would be bringing a fine lady, dressed like a white quane, down a mile of ladders and steps to be havin' a look at us?

[*A growl of anger goes up from all sides.*]

LONG. [*Jumping on a bench—hectically.*] Hinsultin' us! Hinsultin' us, the bloody cow! And them bloody engineers! What right 'as they got to be exhibitin' us 's if we was bleedin' monkeys in a menagerie? Did we sign for hinsults to our dignity as 'onest workers? Is that in the ship's articles? You kin bloody well bet it ain't! But I knows why they done it. I arsked a deck steward 'o she was and 'e told me. 'Er old man's a bleedin' millionaire, a bloody Capitalist! 'E's got enuf bloody gold to sink this bleedin' ship! 'E makes arf the bloody steel in the world! 'E owns this bloody boat! And you and me, Comrades, we're 'is slaves! And the skipper and mates and engineers, they're 'is slaves, too! And she's 'is bloody daughter and we're all 'er slaves, too! And she gives 'er orders as 'ow she wants to see the bloody animals below decks and down they takes 'er!

[*There is a roar of rage from all sides.*]

YANK. [*Blinking at him bewilderedly.*] Say! Wait a moment! Is all dat straight goods?

LONG. Straight as string! The bleedin' steward as waits on 'em, 'e told me about 'er. And what're we goin' ter do, I arks yer? 'Ave we got ter swaller 'er hinsults like dogs? It ain't in the ship's articles. I tell yer we got a case. We kin go to law—

YANK. [*With abysmal contempt.*] Hell! Law!

ALL. [*Repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery.*] Law! [*The word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

LONG. [*Feeling the ground slipping from under his feet—desperately.*] As voters and citizens we kin force the bloody governments—

YANK. [*With abysmal contempt.*] Hell! Governments!

ALL. [*Repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery.*] Governments! [*The word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

LONG. [*Hysterically.*] We're free and equal in the sight of God—

YANK. [*With abysmal contempt.*] Hell! God!

ALL. [*Repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery.*] God! [*The word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

YANK. [*Witheringly.*] Aw, join de Salvation Army!

ALL. Sit down! Shut up! Damn fool! Sea-lawyer!

[LONG *slinks back out of sight.*]

PADDY. [*Continuing the trend of his thoughts as if he had never been interrupted—bitterly.*] And there she was standing behind us, and the Second pointing at us like a man you'd hear in a circus would be saying: In this cage is a queerer kind of baboon than ever you'd find in darkest Africa. We roast them in their own sweat—and be damned if you won't hear some of thim saying they like it! [*He glances scornfully at YANK.*]

YANK. [*With a bewildered uncertain growl.*] Aw!

PADDY. And there was Yank roarin' curses and turning round wid his shovel to brain her—and she looked at him, and him at her—

YANK. [*Slowly.*] She was all white. I thought she was a ghost. Sure.

PADDY. [*With heavy, biting sarcasm.*] 'Twas love at first sight, divil a doubt of it! If you'd seen the endearin' look on her pale mug when she shriveled away with her hands over her eyes to shut out the sight of him! Sure, 'twas as if she'd seen a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo!

YANK. [*Stung—with a growl of rage.*] Aw!

PADDY. And the loving way Yank heaved his shovel at the skull of her, only she was out the door! [*A grin breaking over his face.*] 'Twas touching, I'm telling you! It put the touch of home, swate home in the stokehole.

[*There is a roar of laughter from all.*]

YANK. [*Glaring at PADDY menacingly.*] Aw, choke dat off, see!

PADDY. [*Not heeding him—to the others.*] And her grabbin' at the Second's arm for protection. [*With a grotesque imitation of a woman's voice.*] Kiss me, Engineer dear, for it's dark down here and me old man's in Wall Street making money! Hug me tight, darlin', for I'm afeerd in the dark and me mother's on deck makin' eyes at the skipper!

[*Another roar of laughter.*]

YANK. [*Threateningly.*] Say! What yuh tryin' to do, kid me, yuh old Harp?

PADDY. Divil a bit! Ain't I wishin' myself you'd brained her?

YANK. [*Fiercely.*] I'll brain her! I'll brain her yet, wait 'n' see! [*Coming over to PADDY—slowly.*] Say, is dat what she called me—a hairy ape?

PADDY. She looked it at you if she didn't say the word itself.

YANK. [*Grinning horribly.*] Hairy ape, huh? Sure! Dat's de way she looked at me, aw right. Hairy ape! So dat's me, huh? [*Bursting into rage—as if she were still in front of him.*] Yuh skinny tart! Yuh whitefaced bum, yuh! I'll show yuh who's a ape! [*Turning to the others, bewilderment seizing him again.*] Say, youse guys. I was bawlin' him out for pullin' de whistle on us. You heard me. And den I seen youse lookin' at somep'n and I thought he'd sneaked down to come up in back of me, and I hopped around to knock him dead wit de shovel. And dere she was wit de light on her! Christ, yuh coulda pushed me over with a finger! I was scared, get me? Sure! I thought she was a ghost, see? She was all in white like dey wrap around stiffs. You seen her. Kin yuh blame me? She didn't belong, dat's what. And den when I come to and seen it was a real skoit and seen de way she was lookin' at me—like Paddy said—Christ, I was sore, get me? I don't stand for dat stuff from nobody. And I flung de shovel—on'y she'd beat it. [*Furiously.*] I wished it'd banged her! I wished it'd knocked her block off!

LONG. And be 'anged for murder or 'lectrocuted? She ain't bleedin' well worth it.

YANK. I don't give a damn what! I'd be square wit her, wouldn't I? Tink I wanter let her put somep'n over on me? Tink I'm goin' to let her git away wit dat stuff? Yuh don't know me! No one ain't never put nothin' over on me and got away wit it, see!—not dat kind of stuff—no guy and no skoit neither! I'll fix her! Maybe she'll come down again—

VOICE. No chance, Yank. You scared her out of a year's growth.

YANK. I scared her? Why de hell should I scare her? Who de hell is she? Ain't she de same as me? Hairy ape, huh? [*With his old confident bravado.*] I'll show her I'm better'n her, if she on'y knew it. I belong and she don't, see! I move and she's dead! Twenty-five knots a hour, dat's me! Dat carries her but I make dat. She's on'y baggage. Sure! [*Again bewilderedly.*] But, Christ, she was funny lookin'! Did yuh pipe her hands? White and skinny. Yuh could see de bones trough 'em. And her mush,<sup>8</sup> dat was dead white, too. And her eyes, dey was like dey'd seen a ghost. Me, dat was! Sure! Hairy ape! Ghost, huh? Look at dat arm! [*He extends his right arm, swelling out the great muscles.*] I coulda took her wit dat, wit just my little finger even, and broke her in two. [*Again bewilderedly.*] Say, who is dat skoit, huh? What is she? What's she come from? Who made her? Who give her de noive to look at me like dat? Dis ting's got my goat right. I don't get her. She's new to me. What does a skoit like her mean, huh? She don't belong, get me! I can't see her. [*With growing anger.*] But one ting I'm wise to, aw right, aw right! Youse all kin bet your shoits I'll get even wit her. I'll show her if she tinks she—She grinds de organ and I'm on de string, huh? I'll fix her! Let her come down again and I'll fling her in de furnace! She'll move den! She won't shiver at nothin', den! Speed, dat'll be her! She'll belong den! [*He grins horribly.*]

PADDY. She'll never come. She's had her belly-full, I'm telling you. She'll be in bed now, I'm thinking, wid ten doctors and nurses feedin' her salts to clean the fear out of her.

YANK. [*Enraged.*] Yuh tink I made her sick, too, do yuh? Just lookin' at me, huh? Hairy ape, huh? [*In a frenzy of rage.*] I'll fix her! I'll tell her where to git off! She'll git down on her knees and take it back or I'll burst de face offen her! [*Shaking one fist upward and beating on his chest with the other.*] I'll find yuh! I'm comin', d'yuh hear? I'll fix yuh, God damn yuh! [*He makes a rush for the door.*]

VOICES. Stop him!

He'll get shot!

He'll murder her!

Trip him up!

Hold him!

He's gone crazy!

Gott, he's strong!

Hold him down!

Look out for a kick!

Pin his arms!

[*They have all piled on him and, after a fierce struggle, by sheer weight of numbers have borne him to the floor just inside the door.*]

PADDY. [*Who has remained detached.*] Kape him down till he's cooled off. [*Scornfully.*] Yerra, Yank, you're a great fool. Is it payin' attention at all you are to the like of that skinny sow widout one drop of rale blood in her?

YANK. [*Frenziedly, from the bottom of the heap.*] She done me doit! She done me doit, didn't she? I'll git square wit her! I'll get her some way! Git offen me, youse guys! Lemme up! I'll show her who's a ape!  
[*Curtain.*]

### Scene V

SCENE: *Three weeks later. A corner of Fifth Avenue in the Fifties on a fine Sunday morning. A general atmosphere of clean, well-tidied, wide street; a flood of mellow, tempered sunshine; gentle, genteel breezes. In the rear, the show windows of two shops, a jewelry establishment on the corner, a furrier's next to it. Here the adornments of extreme wealth are tantalizingly displayed. The jeweler's window is gaudy with glittering diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, etc., fashioned in ornate tiaras, crowns, necklaces, collars, etc. From each piece hangs an enormous tag from which a dollar sign and numerals in intermittent electric lights wink out the incredible prices. The same in the furrier's. Rich furs of all varieties hang there bathed in a downpour of artificial light. The general effect is of a background of magnificence cheapened and made grotesque by commercialism, a background in tawdry disharmony with the clear light and sunshine on the street itself.*

*Up the side street YANK and LONG come swaggering. LONG is dressed in shore clothes, wears a black Windsor tie, cloth cap. YANK is in his dirty dungarees. A fireman's cap with black peak is cocked defiantly on the side of his head. He has not shaved for days and around his fierce, resentful eyes—as around those of LONG to a lesser degree—the black smudge of coal dust still sticks like make-up. They hesitate and stand together at the corner, swaggering, looking about them with a forced, defiant contempt.*

LONG. [*Indicating it all with an oratorical gesture.*] Well, 'ere we are. Fif' Avenoo. This 'ere's their bleedin' private lane, as yer might say. [*Bitterly.*] We're trespassers 'ere. Proletarians keep orf the grass!

YANK. [*Dully.*] I don't see no grass, yuh boob. [*Staring at the sidewalk.*] Clean, ain't it? Yuh could eat a fried egg offen it. The white wings<sup>9</sup> got some job sweepin' dis up. [*Looking up and down the avenue—surlily.*] Where's all de white-collar stiffs yuh said was here—and de skoits—*her* kind?

LONG. In church, blarst 'em! Arskin' Jesus to give 'em more money.

YANK. Choich, huh? I useter go to choich onct—sure—when I was a kid. Me old man and woman, dey made me. Dey never went demselves, dough. Always got too big a head on Sunday mornin', dat was dem. [*With a grin.*] Dey was scrapers for fair, bot' of dem. On Satiday nights when dey bot' got a skinful dey could put up a bout oughter been staged at de Garden.<sup>1</sup> When dey got trough dere wasn't a chair or table wit a leg under it. Or else dey bot' jumped on me for somep'n. Dat was where I loined to take punishment. [*With a grin and a swagger.*] I'm a chip offen de old block, get me?

LONG. Did yer old man follow the sea?

YANK. Naw. Worked along shore. I runned away when me old lady croaked wit de tremens. I helped at truckin' and in de market. Den I shipped in de stoke-hole. Sure. Dat belongs. De rest was nothin'. [*Looking around him.*] I ain't never

9. A term once common for street cleaners, who wore white suits.

1. Madison Square Garden, sports arena in New York.

seen dis before. De Brooklyn waterfront, dat was where I was dragged up. [*Taking a deep breath.*] Dis ain't so bad at dat, huh?

LONG. Not bad? Well, we pays for it wiv our bloody sweat, if yer wants to know!

YANK. [*With sudden angry disgust.*] Aw, hell! I don't see no one, see—like her. All dis gives me a pain. It don't belong. Say, ain't dere a back room around dis dump? Let's go shoot a ball. All dis is too clean and quiet and dolled-up, get me! It gives me a pain.

LONG. Wait and yer'll bloody well see—

YANK. I don't wait for no one. I keep on de move. Say, what yuh drag me up here for, anyway? Tryin' to kid me, yuh simp, yuh?

LONG. Yer wants to get back at 'er, don't yer? That's what yer been sayin' every bloomin' hour since she hinsulted yer.

YANK. [*Vehemently.*] Sure thing I do! Didn't I try to get even with her in Southampton? Didn't I sneak on de dock and wait for her by de gangplank? I was goin' to spit in her pale mug, see! Sure, right in her pop-eyes! Dat woulda made me even, see? But no chanct. Dere was a whole army of plain-clothes bulls around. Dey spotted me and gimme de bum's rush. I never seen her. But I'll git square wit her yet, you watch! [*Furiously.*] De lousy tart! She tinks she kin get away wit moi-der—but not wit me! I'll fix her! I'll think of a way!

LONG. [*As disgusted as he dares to be.*] Ain't that why I brought yer up 'ere—to show yer? Yer been lookin' at this 'ere 'ole affair wrong. Yer been actin' an' talkin' 's if it was all a bleedin' personal matter between yer and that bloody cow. I wants to convince yer she was on'y a representative of 'er clarss. I wants to awaken yer bloody clarss consciousness. Then yer'll see it's 'er clarss yer've got to fight, not 'er alone. There's a 'ole mob of 'em like 'er, Gawd blind 'em!

YANK. [*Spitting on his hands—belligerently.*] De more de merrier when I gits started. Bring on de gang!

LONG. Yer'll see 'em in arf a mo', when that church lets out. [*He turns and sees the window display in the two stores for the first time.*] Blimey!<sup>2</sup> Look at that, will yer? [*They both walk back and stand looking in the jeweler's. LONG flies into a fury.*] Just look at this 'ere bloomin' mess! Just look at it! Look at the bleedin' prices on 'em—more'n our 'ole bloody stokehole makes in ten voyages sweatin' in 'ell! And they—'er and 'er bloody clarss—buys 'em for toys to dangle on 'em! One of these 'ere would buy scoff for a starvin' family for a year!

YANK. Aw, cut de sob stuff! T' hell wit de starvin' family! Yuh'll be passin' de hat to me next. [*With naïve admiration.*] Say, dem tings is pretty, huh? Bet yuh dey'd hock for a piece of change aw right. [*Then turning away, bored.*] But, aw hell, what good are dey? Let her have 'em. Dey don't belong no more'n she does. [*With a gesture of sweeping the jewelers into oblivion.*] All dat don't count, get me?

LONG. [*Who has moved to the furrier's—indignantly.*] And I s'pose this 'ere don't count neither—skins of poor, 'armless animals slaughtered so as 'er and 'ers can keep their bleedin' noses warm!

2. A British vulgarian, "blimey" (short for "Gawblimey," meaning "God blind me!") is rigidly banned by the respectable, as is the term "bloody" (from "by Our Lady!"), also used by the cockney Long.

YANK. [*Who has been staring at something inside—with queer excitement.*] Take a slant at dat! Give it de once-over! Monkey fur—two t'ousand bucks! [*Bewilderedly.*] Is dat straight goods—monkey fur? What de hell—?

LONG. [*Bitterly.*] It's straight enuf. [*With grim humor.*] They wouldn't bloody well pay that for a 'airy ape's skin—no, nor for the 'ole livin' ape with all 'is 'ead, and body, and soul thrown in!

YANK. [*Clenching his fists, his face growing pale with rage as if the skin in the window were a personal insult.*] Trowin' it up in my face! Christ! I'll fix her!

LONG. [*Excitedly.*] Church is out. 'Ere they come, the bleedin' swine. [*After a glance at YANK'S lowering face—uneasily.*] Easy goes, Comrade. Keep yer bloomin' temper. Remember force defeats itself. It ain't our weapon. We must impress our demands through peaceful means—the votes of the on-marching proletarians of the bloody world!

YANK. [*With abysmal contempt.*] Votes, hell! Votes is a joke, see. Votes for women! Let dem do it!

LONG. [*Still more uneasily.*] Calm, now. Treat 'em wiv the proper contempt. Observe the bleedin' parasites but 'old yer 'orses.

YANK. [*Angrily.*] Git away from me! Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Force, dat's me! De punch, dat's me every time, see!

[*The crowd from church enter from the right, sauntering slowly and affectedly, their heads held stiffly up, looking neither to right nor left, talking in toneless, simpering voices. The women are rouged, calcimined, dyed, overdressed to the nth degree. The men are in Prince Alberts, high hats, spats, canes, etc. A procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankenstein's<sup>3</sup> in their detached, mechanical unawareness.*]

VOICES. Dear Doctor Caiaphas! He is so sincere!

What was the sermon? I dozed off.

About the radicals, my dear—and the false doctrines that are being preached.

We must organize a hundred per cent American bazaar.

And let everyone contribute one one-hundredth per cent of their income tax.

What an original idea!

We can devote the proceeds to rehabilitating the veil of the temple.

But that has been done so many times.

YANK. [*Glaring from one to the other of them—with an insulting snort of scorn.*] Huh! Huh!

[*Without seeming to see him, they make wide detours to avoid the spot where he stands in the middle of the sidewalk.*]

LONG. [*Frightenedly.*] Keep yer bloomin' mouth shut, I tells yer.

YANK. [*Viciously.*] G'wan! Tell it to Sweeney! [*He swaggers away and deliberately lurches into a top-hatted gentleman, then glares at him pugnaciously.*] Say, who d'yuh tink yuh're bumpin'? Tink yuh own de oith?

GENTLEMAN. [*Coldly and affectedly.*] I beg your pardon. [*He has not looked at YANK and passes on without a glance, leaving him bewildered.*]

LONG. [*Rushing up and grabbing YANK'S arm.*] 'Ere! Come away! This wasn't what I meant. Yer'll 'ave the bloody coppers down on us.

3. Frankenstein created the monster that horribly destroyed him, in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1817). In many other literary references the monster is erroneously called "Frankenstein," as here.

YANK. [*Savagely—giving him a push that sends him sprawling.*] G'wan!

LONG. [*Picks himself up—hysterically.*] I'll pop orf then. This ain't what I meant. And whatever 'appens, yer can't blame me. [*He slinks off left.*]

YANK. T' hell wit youse! [*He approaches a lady—with a vicious grin and a smirking wink.*] Hello, Kiddo. How's every little ting? Got anything on for to-night? I know an old boiler down to de docks we kin crawl into. [*The lady stalks by without a look, without a change of pace. YANK turns to others—insultingly.*] Holy smokes, what a mug! Go hide yuhself before de horses shy at yuh. Gee, pipe de heine on dat one! Say, youse, yuh look like de stoin of a ferryboat. Paint and powder! All dolled up to kill! Yuh look like stiffs laid out for de boneyard! Aw, g'wan, de lot of youse! Yuh give me de eye-ache. Yuh don't belong, get me! Look at me, why don't youse dare? I belong, dat's me! [*Pointing to a skyscraper across the street which is in process of construction—with bravado.*] See dat building goin' up dere? See de steel work? Steel, dat's me! Youse guys live on it and tink yuh're somep'n. But I'm *in* it, see! I'm de hoistin' engine dat makes it go up! I'm it—de inside and bottom of it! Sure! I'm steel and steam and smoke and de rest of it! It moves—speed—twenty-five stories up—and me at de top and bottom—movin'! Youse simps don't move. Yuh're on'y dolls I winds up to see 'm spin. Yuh're de garbage, get me—de leavins—de ashes we dump over de side! Now, what 'a' yuh gotta say? [*But as they seem neither to see nor hear him, he flies into a fury.*] Bums! Pigs! Tarts! Bitches! [*He turns in a rage on the men, bumping viciously into them but not jarring them the least bit. Rather it is he who recoils after each collision. He keeps growling.*] Git off de oith! G'wan, yuh bum! Look where yuh're goin', can't yuh? Git outa here! Fight, why don't yuh? Put up yer mits! Don't be a dog! Fight or I'll knock yuh dead! [*But, without seeming to see him, they all answer with mechanical affected politeness.*] I beg your pardon. [*Then at a cry from one of the women, they all scurry to the furrier's window.*]

THE WOMAN. [*Ecstatically, with a gasp of delight.*] Monkey fur! [*The whole crowd of men and women chorus after her in the same tone of affected delight.*] Monkey fur!

YANK. [*With a jerk of his head back on his shoulders, as if he had received a punch full in the face—raging.*] I see yuh, all in white! I see yuh, yuh white-faced tart, yuh! Hairy ape, huh? I'll hairy ape yuh! [*He bends down and grips at the street curbing as if to pluck it out and hurl it. Foiled in this, snarling with passion, he leaps to the lamp-post on the corner and tries to pull it up for a club. Just at that moment a bus is heard rumbling up. A fat, high-hatted, spatted gentleman runs out from the side street. He calls out plaintively.*] Bus! Bus! Stop there! [*And runs full tilt into the bending, straining YANK, who is bowled off his balance.*]

YANK. [*Seeing a fight—with a roar of joy as he springs to his feet.*] At last! Bus, huh? I'll bust yuh! [*He lets drive a terrific swing, his fist landing full on the fat gentleman's face. But the gentleman stands unmoved as if nothing had happened.*]

GENTLEMAN. I beg your pardon. [*Then irritably.*] You have made me lose my bus. [*He claps his hands and begins to scream:*] Officer! Officer!

[*Many police whistles shrill out on the instant and a whole platoon of policemen rush in on YANK from all sides. He tries to fight but is clubbed to the pavement and fallen upon. The crowd at the window have not moved or noticed this disturbance. The clanging gong of the patrol wagon approaches with a clamoring din.*]

[*Curtain.*]

## Scene VI

SCENE: *Night of the following day. A row of cells in the prison on Blackwell's Island. The cells extend back diagonally from right front to left rear. They do not stop, but disappear in the dark background as if they ran on, numberless, into infinity. One electric bulb from the low ceiling of the narrow corridor sheds its light through the heavy steel bars of the cell at the extreme front and reveals part of the interior. YANK can be seen within, crouched on the edge of his cot in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker." His face is spotted with black and blue bruises. A blood-stained bandage is wrapped around his head.*

YANK. [*Suddenly starting as if awakening from a dream, reaches out and shakes the bars—aloud to himself, wonderingly.*] Steel. Dis is the Zoo, huh? [*A burst of hard, barking laughter comes from the unseen occupants of the cells, runs back down the tier, and abruptly ceases.*]

VOICES. [*Mockingly.*] The Zoo. That's a new name for this coop—a damn good name!

Steel, eh? You said a mouthful. This is the old iron house.

Who is that boob talkin'?

He's the bloke they brung in out of his head. The bulls had beat him up fierce.

YANK. [*Dully.*] I musta been dreamin'. I tought I was in a cage at de Zoo—but de apes don't talk, do dey?

VOICE. [*With mocking laughter.*] You're in a cage aw right.

A coop!

A pen!

A sty!

A kennel! [*Hard laughter—a pause.*]

Say, guy! Who are you? No, never mind lying. What are you?

Yes, tell us your sad story. What's your game?

What did they jug yuh for?

YANK. [*Dully.*] I was a fireman—stokin' on de liners. [*Then with sudden rage, rattling his cell bars.*] I'm a hairy ape, get me? And I'll bust youse all in de jaw if yuh don't lay off kiddin' me.

VOICES. Huh! You're a hard boiled duck, ain't you!

When you spit, it bounces! [*Laughter.*]

Aw, can it. He's a regular guy. Ain't you?

What did he say he was—a ape?

YANK. [*Defiantly.*] Sure ting! Ain't dat what youse all are—apes? [*A silence. Then a furious rattling of bars from down the corridor.*]

A VOICE. [*Thick with rage.*] I'll show yuh who's a ape, yuh bum!

VOICES. Sssh! Nix!

Can de noise!

Piano!

You'll have the guard down on us!

YANK. [*Scornfully.*] De guard? Yuh mean de keeper, don't yuh? [*Angry exclamations from all the cells.*]

VOICE. [*Placatingly.*] Aw, don't pay no attention to him. He's off his nut from the beatin'-up he got. Say, you guy! We're waitin' to hear what they landed you for—or ain't yuh tellin'?

YANK. Sure, I'll tell youse. Sure! Why de hell not? On'y—youse won't get me. Nobody gets me but me, see? I started to tell de Judge and all he says was: "Toity days to tink it over." Tink it over! Christ, dat's all I been doin' for weeks! [*After a pause.*] I was tryin' to get even wit someone, see?—someone dat done me doit.

VOICES. [*Cynically.*] De old stuff, I bet. Your goil, huh?

Give yuh the double-cross, huh?

That's them every time!

Did yuh beat up de odder guy?

YANK. [*Disgustedly.*] Aw, yuh're all wrong! Sure dere was a skoit in it—but not what youse mean, not dat old tripe. Dis was a new kind of skoit. She was dolled up all in white—in de stokehole. I tought she was a ghost. Sure. [*A pause.*]

VOICES. [*Whispering.*] Gee, he's still nutty.

Let him rave. It's fun listenin'.

YANK. [*Unheeding—groping in his thoughts.*] Her hands—dey was skinny and white like dey wasn't real but painted on somep'n. Dere was a million miles from me to her—twenty-five knots a hour. She was like some dead ting de cat brung in. Sure, dat's what. She didn't belong. She belonged in de window of a toy store, or on de top of a garbage can, see! Sure! [*He breaks out angrily.*] But would yuh believe it, she had de noive to do me doit. She lamped me like she was seein' somep'n broke loose from de menagerie. Christ, yuh'd oughter seen her eyes! [*He rattles the bars of his cell furiously.*] But I'll get back at her yet, you watch! And if I can't find her I'll take it out on de gang she runs wit. I'm wise to where dey hangs out now. I'll show her who belongs! I'll show her who's in de move and who ain't. You watch my smoke!

VOICES. [*Serious and joking.*] Dats de talkin'!

Take her for all she's got!

What was this dame, anyway? Who was she, eh?

YANK. I dunno. First cabin stiff. Her old man's a millionaire, dey says—name of Douglas.

VOICES. Douglas? That's the president of the Steel Trust, I bet.

Sure. I seen his mug in de papers.

He's filthy with dough.

VOICE. Hey, feller, take a tip from me. If you want to get back at that dame, you better join the Wobblies. You'll get some action then.

YANK. Wobblies? What de hell's dat?

VOICE. Ain't you ever heard of the I.W.W.?<sup>4</sup>

YANK. Naw. What is it?

VOICE. A gang of blokes—a tough gang. I been readin' about 'em to-day in the paper. The guard give me the *Sunday Times*. There's a long spiel about 'em. It's from a speech made in the Senate by a guy named Senator Queen. [*He is in the cell next to YANK'S. There is a rustling of paper.*] Wait'll I see if I got light enough and I'll read you. Listen. [*He reads:*] "There is a menace existing in this country to-day which threatens the vitals of our fair Republic—as foul a menace against

4. The Industrial Workers of the World (1905), a labor organization aiming to unite workers on an industrywide rather than a craft basis and having as its underlying purpose the overthrow of capitalism in favor of socialism. It disintegrated in the years following World War I.

the very life-blood of the American Eagle as was the foul conspiracy of Catiline against the eagles of ancient Rome!”<sup>5</sup>

VOICE. [*Disgustedly.*] Aw, hell! Tell him to salt de tail of dat eagle!

VOICE. [*Reading.*] “I refer to that devil’s brew of rascals, jailbirds, murderers and cut-throats who libel all honest workingmen by calling themselves the Industrial Workers of the World; but in the light of their nefarious plots, I call them the Industrious *Wreckers* of the World!”

YANK. [*With vengeful satisfaction.*] Wreckers, dat’s de right dope! Dat belongs! Me for dem!

VOICE. Sssh! [*Reading.*] “This fiendish organization is a foul ulcer on the fair body of our Democracy—”

VOICE. Democracy, hell! Give him the boid, fellers—the raspberry! [*They do.*]

VOICE. Sssh! [*Reading:*] “Like Cato I say to this Senate, the I. W. W. must be destroyed.<sup>6</sup> For they represent an ever-present dagger pointed at the heart of the greatest nation the world has ever known, where all men are born free and equal, with equal opportunities to all, where the Founding Fathers have guaranteed to each one happiness, where Truth, Honor, Liberty, Justice, and the Brotherhood of Man are a religion absorbed with one’s mother’s milk, taught at our father’s knee, sealed, signed, and stamped upon in the glorious Constitution of these United States!” [*A perfect storm of hisses, catcalls, boos, and hard laughter.*]

VOICES. [*Scornfully.*] Hurrah for de Fort’ of July!

Pass de hat!

Liberty!

Justice!

Honor!

Brotherhood!

ALL. [*With abysmal scorn.*] Aw, hell!

VOICE. Give that Queen Senator guy the bark! All togedder now—one—two—tree—[*A terrific chorus of barking and yapping.*]

GUARD. [*From a distance.*] Quiet there, youse—or I’ll git the hose. [*The noise subsides.*]

YANK. [*With growling rage.*] I’d like to catch that Senator guy alone for a second. I’d loin him some trute!

VOICE. Sssh! Here’s where he gits down to cases on the Wobblies. [*Reads:*] “They plot with fire in one hand and dynamite in the other. They stop not before murder to gain their ends, nor at the outraging of defenseless womanhood. They would tear down society, put the lowest scum in the seats of the mighty, turn Almighty God’s revealed plan for the world topsy-turvy, and make of our sweet and lovely civilization a shambles, a desolation where man, God’s masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape!”

VOICE. [*To YANK.*] Hey, you guy. There’s your ape stuff again.

YANK. [*With a growl of fury.*] I got him. So dey blow up tings, do dey? Dey turn tings round, do dey? Hey, lend me dat paper, will yuh?

5. Lucius Sergius Catilina (108?–62 B.C.) conspired against Rome, thus provoking, in 63 B.C., the famous orations of the consul Cicero.

6. Marcus Porcius Cato, “The Censor” (234–149 B.C.), in waging his long campaign in the Roman Senate for war against Carthage, ended every speech with the same words: “For the rest, I vote that Carthage must be destroyed.”

VOICE. Sure. Give it to him. On'y keep it to yourself, see. We don't wanten listen to no more of that slop.

VOICE. Here you are. Hide it under your mattress.

YANK. [*Reaching out.*] Tanks. I can't read much but I kin manage. [*He sits, the paper in the hand at his side, in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker."* A pause. Several snores from down the corridor. Suddenly YANK jumps to his feet with a furious groan as if some appalling thought had crashed on him—bewilderedly.] Sure—her old man—president of de Steel Trust—makes half de steel in de world—steel—where I tought I belonged—drivin' trou—movin'—in dat—to make her—and cage me in for her to spit on! Christ! [*He shakes the bars of his cell door till the whole tier trembles. Irritated, protesting exclamations from those awakened or trying to get to sleep.*] He made dis—dis cage! Steel! It don't belong, dat's what! Cages, cells, locks, bolts, bars—dat's what it means!—holdin' me down wit him at de top! But I'll drive trou! Fire, dat melts it! I'll be fire—under de heap—fire dat never goes out—hot as hell—breakin' out in de night— [*While he has been saying this last he has shaken his cell door to a clanging accompaniment. As he comes to the "breakin' out" he seizes one bar with both hands and, putting his two feet up against the others so that his position is parallel to the floor like a monkey's, he gives a great wrench backwards. The bar bends like a licorice stick under his tremendous strength. Just at this moment the PRISON GUARD rushes in, dragging a hose behind him.*]

GUARD. [*Angrily.*] I'll loin youse bums to wake me up! [*Sees YANK.*] Hello, it's you, huh? Got the D. Ts., hey? Well, I'll cure 'em. I'll drown your snakes for yuh! [*Noticing the bar.*] Hell, look at dat bar bended! On'y a bug is strong enough for dat!

YANK. [*Glaring at him.*] Or a hairy ape, yuh big yellow bum! Look out! Here I come! [*He grabs another bar.*]

GUARD. [*Scared now—yelling off left.*] Toin de hose on, Ben!—full pressure! And call de others—and a straitjacket! [*The curtain is falling. As it hides YANK from view, there is a splattering smash as the stream of water hits the steel of YANK'S cell.*]

[*Curtain.*]

### Scene VII

SCENE: Nearly a month later. An I. W. W. local near the waterfront, showing the interior of a front room on the ground floor, and the street outside. Moonlight on the narrow street, buildings massed in black shadow. The interior of the room, which is general assembly room, office, and reading-room, resembles some dingy settlement boys' club. A desk and high stool are in one corner. A table with papers, stacks of pamphlets, chairs about it, is at center. The whole is decidedly cheap, banal, commonplace, and unmysterious as a room could well be. The secretary is perched on the stool making entries in a large ledger. An eye shade casts his face into shadows. Eight or ten men, longshoremen, iron workers, and the like, are grouped about the table. Two are playing checkers. One is writing a letter. Most of them are smoking pipes. A big signboard is on the wall at the rear, "Industrial Workers of the World—Local No. 57."

[YANK comes down the street outside. He is dressed as in Scene Five. He moves cautiously, mysteriously. He comes to a point opposite the door; tiptoes softly up

*to it, listens, is impressed by the silence within, knocks carefully, as if he were guessing at the password to some secret rite. Listens. No answer. Knocks again a bit louder. No answer. Knocks impatiently, much louder.]*

SECRETARY. [*Turning around on his stool.*] What the hell is that—someone knocking? [*Shouts.*] Come in, why don't you? [*All the men in the room look up. YANK opens the door slowly, gingerly, as if afraid of an ambush. He looks around for secret doors, mystery, is taken aback by the commonplaceness of the room and the men in it, thinks he may have gotten in the wrong place, then sees the signboard on the wall and is reassured.*]

YANK. [*Blurts out.*] Hello.

MEN. [*Reservedly.*] Hello.

YANK. [*More easily.*] I tought I'd bumped into de wrong dump.

SECRETARY. [*Scrutinizing him carefully.*] Maybe you have. Are you a member?

YANK. Naw, not yet. Dat's what I come for—to join.

SECRETARY. That's easy. What's your job—longshore?

YANK. Naw. Fireman—stoker on de liners.

SECRETARY. [*With satisfaction.*] Welcome to our city. Glad to know you people are waking up at last. We haven't got many members in your line.

YANK. Naw. Dey're all dead to de woild.

SECRETARY. Well, you can help to wake 'em. What's your name? I'll make out your card.

YANK. [*Confused.*] Name? Lemme tink.

SECRETARY. [*Sharply.*] Don't you know your own name?

YANK. Sure; but I been just Yank for so long—Bob, dat's it—Bob Smith.

SECRETARY. [*Writing.*] Robert Smith. [*Fills out the rest of card.*] Here you are. Cost you half a dollar.

YANK. Is dat all—four bits? Dat's easy. [*Gives the SECRETARY the money.*]

SECRETARY. [*Throwing it in drawer.*] Thanks. Well, make yourself at home. No introductions needed. There's literature on the table. Take some of those pamphlets with you to distribute aboard ship. They may bring results. Sow the seed, only go about it right. Don't get caught and fired. We got plenty out of work. What we need is men who can hold their jobs—and work for us at the same time.

YANK. Sure. [*But he still stands, embarrassed and uneasy.*]

SECRETARY. [*Looking at him—curiously.*] What did you knock for? Think we had a coon in uniform to open doors?

YANK. Naw. I tought it was locked—and dat yuh'd wanter give me the once-over trou a peep-hole or somep'n to see if I was right.

SECRETARY. [*Alert and suspicious but with an easy laugh.*] Think we were running a crap game? That door is never locked. What put that in your nut?

YANK. [*With a knowing grin, convinced that this is all camouflage, a part of the secrecy.*] Dis burg is full of bulls, ain't it?

SECRETARY. [*Sharply.*] What have the cops to do with us? We're breaking no laws.

YANK. [*With a knowing wink.*] Sure. Youse wouldn't for woilds. Sure. I'm wise to dat.

SECRETARY. You seem to be wise to a lot of stuff none of us knows about.

YANK. [*With another wink.*] Aw, dat's aw right, see. [*Then made a bit resentful by the suspicious glances from all sides.*] Aw, can it! Youse needn't put me trou

de toid degree. Can't youse see I belong? Sure! I'm reg'lar. I'll stick, get me? I'll shoot de woiks for youse. Dat's why I wanted to join in.

SECRETARY. [*Breezily, feeling him out.*] That's the right spirit. Only are you sure you understand what you've joined? It's all plain and above board; still, some guys get a wrong slant on us. [*Sharply.*] What's your notion of the purpose of the I. W. W.?

YANK. Aw, I know all about it.

SECRETARY. [*Sarcastically.*] Well, give us some of your valuable information.

YANK. [*Cunningly.*] I know enough not to speak outa my toin. [*Then, resentfully again.*] Aw, say! I'm reg'lar. I'm wise to de game. I know yuh got to watch your step wit a stranger. For all youse know, I might be a plain-clothes dick, or somep'n, dat's what yuh're tinkin', huh? Aw, forget it! I belong, see? Ask any guy down to de docks if I don't.

SECRETARY. Who said you didn't?

YANK. After I'm 'nitiated, I'll show yuh.

SECRETARY. [*Astounded.*] Initiated? There's no initiation.

YANK. [*Disappointed.*] Ain't there no password—no grip nor nothin'?

SECRETARY. What'd you think this is—the Elks—or the Black Hand?<sup>7</sup>

YANK. De Elks, hell! De Black Hand, dey're a lot of yellow back-stickin' Ginees. Naw. Dis is a man's gang, ain't it?

SECRETARY. You said it! That's why we stand on our two feet in the open. We got no secrets.

YANK. [*Surprised but admiringly.*] Yuh mean to say yuh always run wide open—like dis?

SECRETARY. Exactly.

YANK. Den yuh sure got your noive wit youse!

SECRETARY. [*Sharply.*] Just what was it made you want to join us? Come out with that straight.

YANK. Yuh call me? Well, I got noive, too! Here's my hand. Yuh wanter blow tings up, don't yuh? Well, dat's me! I belong!

SECRETARY. [*With pretended carelessness.*] You mean change the unequal conditions of society by legitimate direct action—or with dynamite?

YANK. Dynamite! Blow it offen de oith—steel—all de cages—all de factories, steamers, buildings, jails—de Steel Trust and all dat makes it go.

SECRETARY. So—that's your idea, eh? And did you have any special job in that line you wanted to propose to us? [*He makes a sign to the men, who get up cautiously one by one and group behind YANK.*]

YANK. [*Boldly.*] Sure, I'll come out wit it. I'll show youse I'm one of de gang. Dere's dat millionaire guy, Douglas—

SECRETARY. President of the Steel Trust, you mean? Do you want to assassinate him?

YANK. Naw, dat don't get you nothin'. I mean blow up de factory, de woiks, where he makes de steel. Dat's what I'm after—to blow up de steel, knock all de steel in de woild up to de moon. Dat'll fix tings! [*Eagerly, with a touch of bravado.*] I'll do it by me lonesome! I'll show yuh! Tell me where his works is,

7. The Elks is a fraternal organization; in contrast, the Black Hand was an Italian underworld organization, formed about 1868, which conducted criminal activities in the United States. Hence "Ginees" (Guineas), meaning "Italians," is Yank's reply.

how to git there, all de dope. Gimme de stuff, de old butter—and watch me do de rest! Watch de smoke and see it move! I don't give a damn if dey nab me—as long as it's done! I'll soive life for it—and give 'em de laugh! [*Half to himself.*] And I'll write her a letter and tell her de hairy ape done it. Dat'll square tings.

SECRETARY. [*Stepping away from YANK.*] Very interesting. [*He gives a signal. The men, huskies all, throw themselves on YANK and before he knows it they have his legs and arms pinioned. But he is too flabbergasted to make a struggle, anyway. They feel him over for weapons.*]

MAN. No gat, no knife. Shall we give him what's what and put the boots to him?

SECRETARY. No. He isn't worth the trouble we'd get into. He's too stupid. [*He comes closer and laughs mockingly in YANK's face.*] Ho-ho! By God, this is the biggest joke they've put up on us yet. Hey, you Joke! Who sent you—Burns or Pinkerton?<sup>8</sup> No, by God, you're such a bonehead I'll bet you're in the Secret Service! Well, you dirty spy, you rotten agent provocator, you can go back and tell whatever skunk is paying you blood-money for betraying your brothers that he's wasting his coin. You couldn't catch a cold. And tell him that all he'll ever get on us, or ever has got, is just his own sneaking plots that he's framed up to put us in jail. We are what our manifesto says we are, neither more nor less—and we'll give him a copy of that any time he calls. And as for you—[*He glares scornfully at YANK, who is sunk in an oblivious stupor.*] Oh hell, what's the use of talking? You're a brainless ape.

YANK. [*Aroused by the word to fierce but futile struggles.*] What's dat, yuh Sheeny bum, yuh!

SECRETARY. Throw him out, boys. [*In spite of his struggles, this is done with gusto and éclat. Propelled by several parting kicks, YANK lands sprawling in the middle of the narrow cobbled street. With a growl he starts to get up and storm the closed door, but stops bewildered by the confusion in his brain, pathetically impotent. He sits there, brooding, in as near to the attitude of Rodin's "Thinker" as he can get in his position.*]

YANK. [*Bitterly.*] So dem boids don't think I belong, neider. Aw, to hell wit 'em! Dey're in de wrong pew—de same old bull—soap-boxes and Salvation Army—no guts! Cut out an hour offen de job a day and make me happy! Gimme a dollar more a day and make me happy! Tree square a day, and cauliflowers in de front yard—ekal rights—a woman and kids—a lousy vote—and I'm all fixed for Jesus, huh? Aw, hell! What does dat get yuh? Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly. Feedin' your face—sinkers and coffee—dat don't touch it. It's way down—at de bottom. Yuh can't grab it, and yuh can't stop it. It moves, and everything moves. It stops and de whole woild stops. Dat's me now—I don't tick, see?—I'm a busted Ingersoll,<sup>9</sup> dat's what. Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me. Aw, hell! I can't see—it's all dark, get me? It's all wrong! [*He turns a bitter mocking face up like an ape gibbering at the moon.*] Say, youse up dare, Man in de Moon, yuh look so wise, gimme de answer, huh? Slip me de inside dope, de information right from de stable—where do I get off at, huh?

A POLICEMAN. [*Who has come up the street in time to hear this last—with grim humor.*] You'll get off at the station, you boob, if you don't get up out of that and keep movin'.

8. Two well-known detective agencies.

9. A popular, inexpensive watch.

YANK. [*Looking up at him—with a hard, bitter laugh.*] Sure! Lock me up! Put me in a cage! Dat's de on'y answer yuh know. G'wan, lock me up!

POLICEMAN. What you been doin'?

YANK. Enuf to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge. Write it in de blotter. I was born, get me!

POLICEMAN. [*Jocosely.*] God pity your old woman! [*Then matter-of-fact.*] But I've no time for kidding. You're soused. I'd run you in but it's too long a walk to the station. Come on now, get up, or I'll fan your ears with this club. Beat it now! [*He hauls YANK to his feet.*]

YANK. [*In a vague mocking tone.*] Say, where do I go from here?

POLICEMAN. [*Giving him a push—with a grin, indifferently.*] Go to hell.

[*Curtain.*]

### Scene VIII

SCENE: *Twilight of the next day. The monkey house at the Zoo. One spot of clear gray light falls on the front of one cage so that the interior can be seen. The other cages are vague, shrouded in shadow from which chatterings pitched in a conversational tone can be heard. On the one cage a sign from which the word "Gorilla" stands out. The gigantic animal himself is seen squatting on his haunches on a bench in much the same attitude as Rodin's "Thinker." YANK enters from the left. Immediately a chorus of angry chattering and screeching breaks out. The gorilla turns his eyes but makes no sound or move.*

YANK. [*With a hard, bitter laugh.*] Welcome to your city, huh? Hail, hail, de gang's all here! [*At the sound of his voice the chattering dies away into an attentive silence. YANK walks up to the gorilla's cage and, leaning over the railing, stares in at its occupant, who stares back at him, silent and motionless. There is a pause of dead stillness. Then YANK begins to talk in a friendly confidential tone, half-mockingly, but with a deep undercurrent of sympathy.*] Say, yuh're some hard-lookin' guy, ain't yuh? I seen lots of tough nuts dat de gang called gorillas, but yuh're de foist real one I ever seen. Some chest yuh got, and shoulders, and dem arms and mits! I bet yuh got a punch in eider fist dat'd knock 'em all silly! [*This with genuine admiration. The gorilla, as if he understood, stands upright, swelling out his chest and pounding on it with his fist. YANK grins sympathetically.*] Sure, I get yuh. Yuh challenge de whole woild, huh? Yuh got what I was sayin' even if yuh muffed de woids. [*Then bitterness creeping in.*] And why wouldn't yuh get me? Ain't we both members of de same club—de Hairy Apes? [*They stare at each other—a pause—then YANK goes on slowly and bitterly.*] So yuh're what she seen when she looked at me, de white-faced tart! I was you to her, get me? On'y outa de cage—broke out—free to moider her, see? Sure! Dat's what she tought. She wasn't wise dat I was in a cage, too—worsen'n yours—sure—a damn sight—'cause you got some chanct to bust loose—but me— [*He grows confused.*] Aw, hell! it's all wrong, ain't it? [*A pause.*] I s'pose yuh wanten know what I'm doin' here, huh? I been warmin' a bench down to de Battery—ever since last night. Sure. I seen de sun come up. Dat was pretty, too—all red and pink and green. I was lookin' at de skyscrapers—steel—and all de ships comin' in, sailin' out, all over de oith—and dey was steel, too. De sun was warm, dey wasn't no clouds, and dere was a breeze blowin'. Sure, it was great stuff. I got it aw right—what Paddy said about dat bein'

de right dope—on’y I couldn’t get *in* it, see? I couldn’t belong in dat. It was over my head. And I kept tinkin’—and den I beat it up here to see what youse was like. And I waited till dey was all gone to git yuh alone. Say, how d’yuh feel sittin’ in dat pen all de time, havin’ to stand for ’em comin’ and starin’ at yuh—de white-faced, skinny tarts and de boobs what marry ’em—makin’ fun of yuh, laughin’ at yuh, gittin’ scared of yuh—damn ’em! [*He pounds on the rail with his fist. The gorilla rattles the bars of his cage and snarls. All the other monkeys set up an angry chattering in the darkness. YANK goes on excitedly.*] Sure! Dat’s de way it hits me, too. On’y yuh’re lucky, see? Yuh don’t belong wit ’em and yuh know it. But me, I belong wit ’em—but I don’t, see? Dey don’t belong wit me, dat’s what. Get me? Tinkin’ is hard—[*He passes one hand across his forehead with a painful gesture. The gorilla growls impatiently. YANK goes on gropingly.*] It’s dis way, what I’m drivin’ at. Youse can sit and dope dream in de past, green woods, de jungle and de rest of it. Den yuh belong and dey don’t. Den yuh kin laugh at ’em, see? Yuh’re de champ of de woild. But me—I ain’t got no past to tink in, nor nothin’ dat’s comin’, on’y what’s now—and dat don’t belong. Sure, you’re de best off! Yuh can’t tink, can yuh? Yuh can’t talk neider. But I kin make a bluff at talkin’ and tinkin’—a’most get away with it—a’most!—and dat’s where de joker comes in. [*He laughs.*] I ain’t on oith and I ain’t in heaven, get me? I’m in de middle tryin’ to separate ’em, takin’ all de woist punches from bot’ of ’em. Maybe dat’s what dey call hell, huh? But you, yuh’re at de bottom. You belong! Sure! Yuh’re de on’y one in de woild dat does, yuh lucky stiff! [*The gorilla growls proudly.*] And dat’s why dey gotter put yuh in a cage, see? [*The gorilla roars angrily.*] Sure! Yuh get me. It beats it when you try to tink it or talk it—it’s way down—deep—behind—you ’n’ me we feel it. Sure! Bot’ members of dis club! [*He laughs—then in a savage tone.*] What de hell! T’ hell wit it! A little action, dat’s our meat! Dat belongs! Knock ’em down and keep bustin’ ’em till dey croaks yuh wit a gat—wit steel! Sure! Are yuh game? Dey’ve looked at youse, ain’t dey—in a cage? Wanter git even? Wanter wind up like a sport ’stead of croakin’ slow in dere? [*The gorilla roars an emphatic affirmative, YANK goes on with a sort of furious exaltation.*] Sure! Yuh’re reg’lar! Yuh’ll stick to de finish! Me ’n’ you, huh?—bot’ members of this club! We’ll put up one last star bout dat’ll knock ’em offen deir seats! Dey’ll have to make de cages stronger after we’re trou! [*The gorilla is straining at his bars, growling, hopping from one foot to the other. YANK takes a jimmy from under his coat and forces the lock on the cage door. He throws this open.*] Pardon from de governor! Step out and shake hands. I’ll take yuh for a walk down Fif’ Avenoo. We’ll knock ’em offen de oith and croak wit de band playin’. Come on, Brother. [*The gorilla scrambles gingerly out of his cage. Goes to YANK and stands looking at him. YANK keeps his mocking tone—holds out his hand.*] Shake—de secret grip of our order. [*Something, the tone of mockery, perhaps, suddenly enrages the animal. With a spring he wraps his huge arms around YANK in a murderous hug. There is a crackling snap of crushed ribs—a gasping cry, still mocking, from YANK.*] Hey, I didn’t say kiss me! [*The gorilla lets the crushed body slip to the floor, stands over it uncertainly, considering; then picks it up, throws it in the cage, shuts the door and shuffles off menacingly into the darkness at left. A great uproar of frightened chattering and whimpering comes from the other cages. Then YANK moves, groaning, opening his eyes, and there is silence. He mutters painfully.*] Say—dey oughter match

him—with Zybszko.<sup>1</sup> He got me, aw right. I'm trou. Even him didn't tink I belonged. [*Then, with sudden passionate despair.*] Christ, where do I get off at? Where do I fit in? [*Checking himself as suddenly.*] Aw, what de hell! No squawkin', see! No quittin', get me! Croak wit your boots on! [*He grabs hold of the bars of the cage and hauls himself painfully to his feet—looks around him bewilderedly—forces a mocking laugh.*] In de cage, huh? [*In the strident tones of a circus barker.*] Ladies and gents, step forward and take a slant at de one and only—[*His voice weakening.*]—one and original—Hairy Ape from de wilds of—[*He slips in a heap on the floor and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail. And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs.*]

[*Curtain.*]

1922

1. Misspelling for Stanislaus Zbyszko, a wrestler, then in his prime.

