Anna Christie

di Eugene O'Neill (1921)

ACT I

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Scene: "Johnny-The-Priest's" saloon near South Street, New York City. The stage is divided into two sections, showing a small back room on the right. On the left, forward, of the barroom, a large window looking out on the street. Beyond it, the main entrance--a double swinging door. Farther back, another window. The bar runs from left to right nearly the whole length of the rear wall. In back of the bar, a small showcase displaying a few bottles of case goods, for which there is evidently little call. The remainder of the rear space in front of the large mirrors is occupied by half- barrels of cheap whiskey of the "nickel-a-shot" variety, from which the liquor is drawn by means of spigots. On the right is an open doorway leading to the back room. In the back room are four round wooden tables with five chairs grouped about each. In the rear, a family entrance opening on a side street.

It is late afternoon of a day in fall.

As the curtain rises, Johnny is discovered. "Johnny-The-Priest" deserves his nickname. With his pale, thin, clean-shaven face, mild blue eyes and white hair, a cassock would seem more suited to him than the apron he wears. Neither his voice nor his general manner dispel this illusion which has made him a personage of the water front. They are soft and bland. But beneath all his mildness one senses the man behind the mask--cynical, callous, hard as nails. He is lounging at ease behind the bar, a pair of spectacles on his nose, reading an evening paper.

Two longshoremen enter from the street, wearing their working aprons, the button of the union pinned conspicuously on the caps pulled sideways on their heads at an aggressive angle.

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN: *As they range themselves at the bar.* Gimme a shock. Number Two. *He tosses a coin on the bar.*

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN: Same here. *Johnny sets two glasses of barrel whiskey before them.*

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN: Here's luck! *The other nods. They gulp down their whiskey.*

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN: *Putting money on the bar.* Give us another.

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN: Gimme a scoop this time--lager and porter. I'm dry.

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN: Same here. *Johnny draws the lager and porter and sets the big, foaming schooners before them. They drink down half the contents and start to talk together hurriedly in low tones. The door on the left is swung open and Larry enters. He is a boyish, red-cheeked, rather good-looking young fellow of twenty or so.*

LARRY: *Nodding to Johnny--cheerily.* Hello, boss.

JOHNNY: Hello, Larry. *With a glance at his watch.* Just on time. *LARRY goes to the right behind the bar, takes off his coat, and puts on an apron.*

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN: *Abruptly.* Let's drink up and get back to it. *They finish their drinks and go out left. The POSTMAN enters as they leave. He exchanges nods with JOHNNY and throws a letter on the bar.*

THE POSTMAN: Addressed care of you, Johnny. Know him?

JOHNNY: *Picks up the letter, adjusting his spectacles. LARRY comes and peers over his shoulders. JOHNNY reads very slowly.* Christopher Christopherson.

THE POSTMAN: *Helpfully.* Square-head name.

LARRY: Old Chris--that's who.

JOHNNY: Oh, sure. I was forgetting Chris carried a hell of a name like that. Letters come here for him sometimes before, I remember now. Long time ago, though.

THE POSTMAN: It'll get him all right then?

JOHNNY: Sure thing. He comes here whenever he's in port.

THE POSTMAN: *Turning to go.* Sailor, eh?

JOHNNY: *With a grin.* Captain of a coal barge.

THE POSTMAN: *Laughing.* Some job! Well, s'long.

JOHNNY: S'long. I'll see he gets it. *The POSTMAN goes out. JOHNNY scrutinizes the letter.* You got good eyes, Larry. Where's it from?

LARRY: *After a glance.* St. Paul. That'll be in Minnesota, I'm thinkin'. Looks like a woman's writing, too, the old divil! JOHNNY--He's got a daughter somewheres out West, I think he told me once. *He puts the letter on the cash register.* Come to think of it, I ain't seen old Chris in a dog's age. *Putting his overcoat on, he comes around the end of the bar.* Guess I'll be gettin' home. See you to-morrow.

LARRY: Good-night to ye, boss. *As JOHNNY goes toward the street door, it is pushed open and CHRISTOPHER CHRISTOPHERSON enters. He is a short, squat, broad-shouldered man of about fifty, with a round, weather-beaten, red face from which his light blue eyes peer short-sightedly, twinkling with a simple good humor. His large mouth, overhung by a thick, drooping, yellow mustache, is childishly self-willed and weak, of an obstinate kindliness. A thick neck is jammed like a post into the heavy trunk of his body. His arms with their big, hairy, freckled hands, and his stumpy legs terminating in large flat feet, are awkwardly short and muscular. He walks with a clumsy, rolling gait. His voice, when not raised in a hollow boom, is toned down to a sly, confidential half-whisper with something vaguely plaintive in its quality. He is dressed in a wrinkled, ill-fitting dark suit of shore clothes, and wears a faded cap of gray cloth over his mop of grizzled, blond hair. Just now his face beams with a too-blissful happiness, and he has evidently been drinking. He reaches his hand out to JOHNNY.*

CHRIS: Hello, Yohnny! Have drink on me. Come on, Larry. Give us drink. Have one yourself. *Putting his hand in his pocket.* Ay gat money--plenty money.

JOHNNY: *Shakes CHRIS by the hand.* Speak of the devil. We was just talkin' about you.

LARRY: *Coming to the end of the bar.* Hello, Chris. Put it there. *They shake hands.*

CHRIS: *Beaming.* Give us drink.

JOHNNY: *With a grin.* You got a half-snootful now. Where'd you get it?

CHRIS: *Grinning.* Oder fallar on oder barge--Irish fallar--he gat bottle vhiskey and we drank it, yust us two. Dot vhiskey gat kick, by yingo! Ay yust come ashore. Give us drink, Larry. Ay vas little drunk, not much. Yust feel good. *He laughs and commences to sing in a nasal, high-pitched quaver.*

To the accompaniment of this last he waves his hand as if he were conducting an orchestra.

JOHNNY: *With a laugh.* Same old Yosie, eh, Chris?

CHRIS: You don't know good song when you hear him. Italian fallar on oder barge, he learn me dat.

Give us drink. *He throws change on the bar.*

LARRY: *With a professional air.* What's your pleasure, gentlemen?

JOHNNY: Small beer, Larry.

CHRIS: Vhiskey--Number Two.

LARRY: *As he gets their drinks.* I'll take a cigar on you.

CHRIS: *Lifting his glass.* Skoal! *He drinks.*

JOHNNY: Drink hearty.

CHRIS: *Immediately.* Have oder drink.

JOHNNY: No. Some other time. Got to go home now. So you've just landed? Where are you in from this time?

CHRIS: Norfolk. Ve make slow voyage--dirty vedder--yust fog, fog, fog, all bloody time! *There is an insistent ring from the doorbell at the family entrance in the back room. Chris gives a start--hurriedly.* Ay go open, Larry. Ay forgat. It vas Marthy. She come with me. *He goes into the back room.*

LARRY: *With a chuckle.* He's still got that same cow livin' with him, the old fool!

JOHNNY: *With a grin.* A sport, Chris is. Well, I'll beat it home. S'long. *He goes to the street door.*

LARRY: So long, boss.

JOHNNY: Oh--don't forget to give him his letter.

LARRY: I won't. *JOHNNY goes out. In the meantime, CHRIS has opened the family entrance door, admitting MARTHY. She might be forty or fifty. Her jowly, mottled face, with its thick red nose, is streaked with interlacing purple veins. Her thick, gray hair is piled anyhow in a greasy mop on top of her round head. Her figure is flabby and fat; her breath comes in wheezy gasps; she speaks in a loud, mannish voice, punctuated by explosions of hoarse laughter. But there still twinkles in her blood-shot blue eyes a youthful lust for life which hard usage has failed to stifle, a sense of humor mocking, but good-tempered. She wears a man's cap, double-breasted man's jacket, and a grimy, calico skirt. Her bare feet are encased in a man's brogans several sizes too large for her, which gives her a shuffling, wobbly gait.*

MARTHY: *Grumblingly.* What yuh tryin' to do, Dutchy--keep me standin' out there all day? *She comes forward and sits at the table in the right corner, front.*

CHRIS: *Mollifyingly.* Ay'm sorry, Marthy. Ay talk to Yohnny. Ay forgat. What you goin' take for drink?

MARTHY: *Appeased.* Gimme a scoop of lager an' ale.

CHRIS: Ay go bring him back. *He returns to the bar.* Lager and ale for Marthy, Larry. Vhiskey for me. *He throws change on the bar.*

LARRY: Right you are. *Then remembering, he takes the letter from in back of the bar.* Here's a letter for you--from St. Paul, Minnesota--and a lady's writin'. *He grins.*

CHRIS: *Quickly--taking it.* Oh, den it come from my daughter, Anna. She live dere. *He turns the letter over in his hands uncertainly.* Ay don't gat letter from Anna--must be a year.

LARRY: *Jokingly.* That's a fine fairy tale to be tellin'--your daughter! Sure I'll bet it's some bum.

CHRIS: *Soberly.* No. Dis come from Anna. *Engrossed by the letter in his hand--uncertainly.* By golly, Ay tank Ay'm too drunk for read dis letter from Anna. Ay tank Ay sat down for a minute. You bring drinks in back room, Larry. *He goes into the room on right.*

MARTHY: *Angrily.* Where's my lager an' ale, yuh big stiff?

CHRIS: *Preoccupied.* Larry bring him. *He sits down opposite her. LARRY brings in the drinks and sets them on the table. He and MARTHY exchange nods of recognition. LARRY stands looking at CHRIS curiously. MARTHY takes a long draught of her schooner and heaves a huge sigh of satisfaction, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. CHRIS stares at the letter for a moment--slowly opens it, and, squinting his eyes, commences to read laboriously, his lips moving as he spells out the words. As he reads his face lights up with an expression of mingled joy and bewilderment.*

LARRY: Good news?

MARTHY: *Her curiosity also aroused.* What's that yuh got--a letter, fur Gawd's sake?

CHRIS: *Pauses for a moment, after finishing the letter, as if to let the news sink in--then suddenly pounds his fist on the table with happy excitement.* Py yiminy! Yust tank, Anna say she's comin' here right avay! She gat sick on yob in St. Paul, she say. It's short letter, don't tal me much more'n dat. *Beaming.* Py golly, dat's good news all at one time for ole fallar! *Then turning to MARTHY, rather shamefacedly.* You know, Marthy, Ay've tole you Ay don't see my Anna since she vas little gel in Sveden five year ole.

MARTHY: How old'll she be now?

CHRIS: She must be--lat me see--she must be twenty year ole, py Yo!

LARRY: *Surprised.* You've not seen her in fifteen years?

CHRIS: *Suddenly growing somber--in a low tone.* No. Ven she vas little gel, Ay vas bo'sun on vindjammer. Ay never gat home only few time dem year. Ay'm fool sailor fallar. My voman--Anna's mother--she gat tired vait all time Sveden for me ven Ay don't never come. She come dis country, bring Anna, dey go out Minnesota, live with her cousins on farm. Den ven her mo'der die ven Ay vas on voyage, Ay tank it's better dem cousins keep Anna. Ay tank it's better Anna live on farm, den she don't know dat ole davil, sea, she don't know fader like me.

LARRY: *With a wink at MARTHY.* This girl, now, 'll be marryin' a sailor herself, likely. It's in the blood.

CHRIS: *Suddenly springing to his feet and smashing his fist on the table in a rage.* No, py God! She don't do dat!

MARTHY: *Grasping her schooner hastily--angrily.* Hey, look out, yuh nut! Wanta spill my suds for me?

LARRY: *Amazed.* Oho, what's up with you? Ain't you a sailor yourself now, and always been?

CHRIS: *Slowly.* Dat's yust vhy Ay say it. *Forcing a smile.* Sailor vas all right fallar, but not for marry gel. No. Ay know dat. Anna's mo'der, she know it, too.

LARRY: *As CHRIS remains sunk in gloomy reflection.* When is your daughter comin'? Soon?

CHRIS: *Roused.* Py yiminy, Ay forgat. *Reads through the letter hurriedly.* She say she come right avay, dat's all.

LARRY: She'll maybe be comin' here to look for you, I s'pose. *He returns to the bar, whistling. Left alone with MARTHY, who stares at him with a twinkle of malicious humor in her eyes, CHRIS suddenly becomes desperately ill-at-ease. He fidgets, then gets up hurriedly.*

CHRIS: Ay gat speak with Larry. Ay be right back. *Mollifyingly.* Ay bring you oder drink.

MARTHY: *Emptying her glass.* Sure. That's me. *As he retreats with the glass she guffaws after him derisively.*

CHRIS: *To LARRY in an alarmed whisper.* Py yingo, Ay gat gat Marthy shore off barge before Anna

come! Anna raise hell if she find dat out. Marthy raise hell, too, for go, py golly!

LARRY: *With a chuckle.* Serve ye right, ye old divil--havin' a woman at your age!

CHRIS: *Scratching his head in a quandary.* You tal me lie for tal Marthy, Larry, so's she gat off barge quick.

LARRY: She knows your daughter's comin'. Tell her to get the hell out of it.

CHRIS: No. Ay don't like make her feel bad.

LARRY: You're an old mush! Keep your girl away from the barge, then. She'll likely want to stay ashore anyway. *Curiously.* What does she work at, your Anna?

CHRIS: She stay on dem cousins' farm 'till two year ago. Dan she gat yob nurse gel in St. Paul. *Then shaking his head resolutely.* But Ay don't vant for her gat yob now. Ay vant for her stay with me.

LARRY: *Scornfully.* On a coal barge! She'll not like that, I'm thinkin'.

MARTHY: *Shouts from next room.* Don't I get that bucket o' suds, Dutchy?

CHRIS: *Startled--in apprehensive confusion.* Yes, Ay come, Marthy.

LARRY: *Drawing the lager and ale, hands it to CHRIS--laughing.* Now you're in for it! You'd better tell her straight to get out!

CHRIS: *Shaking in his boots.* Py golly. *He takes her drink in to MARTHY and sits down at the table. She sips it in silence. LARRY moves quietly close to the partition to listen, grinning with expectation. CHRIS seems on the verge of speaking, hesitates, gulps down his whiskey desperately as if seeking for courage. He attempts to whistle a few bars of "Yosephine" with careless bravado, but the whistle peters out futilely. MARTHY stares at him keenly, taking in his embarrassment with a malicious twinkle of amusement in her eye. CHRIS clears his throat.* Marthy--

MARTHY: *Aggressively.* Wha's that? *Then, pretending to fly into a rage, her eyes enjoying CHRIS' misery.* I'm wise to what's in back of your nut, Dutchy. Yuh want to git rid o' me, huh?--now she's comin'. Gimme the bum's rush ashore, huh? Lemme tell yuh, Dutchy, there ain't a square-head workin' on a boat man enough to git away with that. Don't start nothin' yuh can't finish!

CHRIS: *Miserably.* Ay don't start nutting, Marthy.

MARTHY: *Glares at him for a second--then cannot control a burst of laughter.* Ho-ho! Yuh're a scream, Square-head--an honest-ter- Gawd knockout! Ho-ho! *She wheezes, panting for breath.*

CHRIS: *With childish pique.* Ay don't see nutting for laugh at.

MARTHY: Take a slant in the mirror and yuh'll see. Ho-ho! *Recovering from her mirth--chuckling, scornfully.* A square-head tryin' to kid Marthy Owen at this late day!--after me campin' with barge men the last twenty years. I'm wise to the game, up, down, and sideways. I ain't been born and dragged up on the water front for nothin'. Think I'd make trouble, huh? Not me! I'll pack up me duds an' beat it. I'm quittin' yuh, get me? I'm tellin' yuh I'm sick of stickin' with yuh, and I'm leavin' yuh flat, see? There's plenty of other guys on other barges waitin' for me. Always was, I always found. *She claps the astonished CHRIS on the back.* So cheer up, Dutchy! I'll be offen the barge before she comes. You'll be rid o' me for good--and me o' you--good riddance for both of us. Ho-ho!

CHRIS: *Seriously.* Ay don' tank dat. You vas good gel, Marthy.

MARTHY: *Grinning.* Good girl? Aw, can the bull! Well, yuh treated me square, yuhself. So it's fifty-fifty. Nobody's sore at nobody. We're still good frien's, huh? *LARRY returns to bar.*

CHRIS: *Beaming now that he sees his troubles disappearing.* Yes, py golly.

MARTHY: That's the talkin'! In all my time I tried never to split with a guy with no hard feelin's. But what was yuh so scared about--that I'd kick up a row? That ain't Marthy's way. *Scornfully.* Think I'd break my heart to lose yuh? Commit suicide, huh? Ho-ho! Gawd! The world's full o' men if that's all I'd worry about! *Then with a grin, after emptying her glass.* Blow me to another scoop, huh? I'll drink your kid's health for yuh.

CHRIS: *Eagerly.* Sure tang. Ay go gat him. *He takes the two glasses into the bar.* Oder drink. Same for both.

LARRY: *Getting the drinks and putting them on the bar.* She's not such a bad lot, that one.

CHRIS: *Jovially.* She's good gel, Ay tal you! Py golly, Ay calabrate now! Give me vhiskey here at bar, too. *He puts down money. LARRY serves him.* You have drink, Larry.

LARRY: *Virtuously.* You know I never touch it.

CHRIS: You don't know what you miss. Skoal! *He drinks--then begins to sing loudly.*

He picks up the drinks for MARTHY and himself and walks unsteadily into the back room, singing.

MARTHY: *Grinning, hands to ears.* Gawd!

CHRIS: *Sitting down.* Ay'm good singer, yes? Ve drink, eh? Skoal! Ay calabrate! *He drinks.* Ay calabrate 'cause Anna's coming home. You know, Marthy, Ay never write for her to come, 'cause Ay tank Ay'm no good for her. But all time Ay hope like hell some day she vant for see me and den she come. And dat's vay it happen now, py yiminy! *His face beaming.* What you tank she look like, Marthy? Ay bet you she's fine, good, strong gel, pooty like hell! Living on farm made her like dat. And Ay bet you some day she marry good, steady land fallar here in East, have home all her own, have kits-- and dan Ay'm ole grandfader, py golly! And Ay go visit dem every time Ay gat in port near! *Bursting with joy.* By yiminy crickens, Ay calabrate dat! *Shouts.* Bring oder drink, Larry! *He smashes his fist on the table with a bang.*

LARRY: *Coming in from bar--irritably.* Easy there! Don't be breakin' the table, you old goat!

CHRIS: *By way of reply, grins foolishly and begins to sing.* "My Yosephine comes board de ship--"

MARTHY: *Touching CHRIS' arm persuasively.* You're soused to the ears, Dutchy. Go out and put a feed into you. It'll sober you up. *Then as CHRIS shakes his head obstinately.* Listen, yuh old nut! Yuh don't know what time your kid's liable to show up. Yuh want to be sober when she comes, don't yuh?

CHRIS: *Aroused--gets unsteadily to his feet.* Py golly, yes.

LARRY: That's good sense for you. A good beef stew'll fix you. Go round the corner.

CHRIS: All right. Ay be back soon, Marthy. *CHRIS goes through the bar and out the street door.*

LARRY: He'll come round all right with some grub in him.

MARTHY: Sure. *LARRY goes back to the bar and resumes his newspaper. MARTHY sips what is left of her schooner reflectively. There is the ring of the family entrance bell. LARRY comes to the door and opens it a trifle--then, with a puzzled expression, pulls it wide. ANNA CHRISTOPHERSON enters. She is a tall, blond, fully- developed girl of twenty, handsome after a large, Viking-daughter fashion but now run down in health and plainly showing all the outward evidences of belonging to the world's oldest profession. Her youthful face is already hard and cynical beneath its layer of make-up. Her clothes are the tawdry finery of peasant stock turned prostitute. She comes and sinks wearily in a chair by the table, left front.*

ANNA: Gimme a whiskey--ginger ale on the side. *Then, as LARRY turns to go, forcing a winning smile*

at him. And don't be stingy, baby.

LARRY: *Sarcastically.* Shall I serve it in a pail?

ANNA: *With a hard laugh.* That suits me down to the ground. *LARRY goes into the bar. The two women size each other up with frank stares. LARRY comes back with the drink which he sets before ANNA and returns to the bar again. ANNA downs her drink at a gulp. Then, after a moment, as the alcohol begins to rouse her, she turns to MARTHY with a friendly smile.* Gee, I needed that bad, all right, all right!

MARTHY: *Nodding her head sympathetically.* Sure--yuh look all in. Been on a bat?

ANNA: No--travelling--day and a half on the train. Had to sit up all night in the dirty coach, too. Gawd, I thought I'd never get here!

MARTHY: *With a start--looking at her intently.* Where'd yuh come from, huh?

ANNA: St. Paul--out in Minnesota.

MARTHY: *Staring at her in amazement--slowly.* So--yuh're--[She suddenly bursts out into hoarse, ironical laughter.] Gawd!

ANNA: All the way from Minnesota, sure. *Flaring up.* What you laughing at? Me?

MARTHY: *Hastily.* No, honest, kid. I was thinkin' of somethin' else.

ANNA: *Mollified--with a smile.* Well, I wouldn't blame you, at that. Guess I do look rotten--yust out of the hospital two weeks. I'm going to have another 'ski. What d'you say? Have something on me?

MARTHY: Sure I will. T'anks. *She calls.* Hey, Larry! Little service! *He comes in.*

ANNA: Same for me.

MARTHY: Same here. *LARRY takes their glasses and goes out.*

ANNA: Why don't you come sit over here, be sociable. I'm a dead stranger in this burg--and I ain't spoke a word with no one since day before yesterday.

MARTHY: Sure thing. *She shuffles over to ANNA'S table and sits down opposite her. LARRY brings the drinks and ANNA pays him.*

ANNA: Skoal! Here's how! *She drinks.*

MARTHY: Here's luck! *She takes a gulp from her schooner.*

ANNA: *Taking a package of Sweet Caporal cigarettes from her bag.* Let you smoke in here, won't they?

MARTHY: *Doubtfully.* Sure. *Then with evident anxiety.* On'y trow it away if yuh hear someone comin'.

ANNA: *Lighting one and taking a deep inhale.* Gee, they're fussy in this dump, ain't they? *She puffs, staring at the table top. MARTHY looks her over with a new penetrating interest, taking in every detail of her face. ANNA suddenly becomes conscious of this appraising stare--resentfully.* Ain't nothing wrong with me, is there? You're looking hard enough.

MARTHY: *Irritated by the other's tone--scornfully.* Ain't got to look much. I got your number the minute you stepped in the door.

ANNA: *Her eyes narrowing.* Ain't you smart! Well, I got yours, too, without no trouble. You're me forty years from now. That's you! *She gives a hard little laugh.*

MARTHY: *Angrily.* Is that so? Well, I'll tell you straight, kiddo, that Marthy Owen never--[She catches herself up short--with a grin.] What are you and me scrappin' over? Let's cut it out, huh? Me, I don't want no hard feelin's with no one. *Extending her hand.* Shake and forget it, huh?

ANNA: *Shakes her hand gladly.* Only too glad to. I ain't looking for trouble. Let's have 'nother. What d'you say?

MARTHY: *Shaking her head.* Not for mine. I'm full up. And you-- Had anythin' to eat lately?

ANNA: Not since this morning on the train.

MARTHY: Then yuh better go easy on it, hadn't yuh?

ANNA: *After a moment's hesitation.* Guess you're right. I got to meet someone, too. But my nerves is on edge after that rotten trip.

MARTHY: Yuh said yuh was just outa the hospital?

ANNA: Two weeks ago. *Leaning over to MARTHY confidentially.* The joint I was in out in St. Paul got raided. That was the start. The judge give all us girls thirty days. The others didn't seem to mind being in the cooler much. Some of 'em was used to it. But me, I couldn't stand it. It got my goat right--couldn't eat or sleep or nothing. I never could stand being caged up nowheres. I got good and sick and they had to send me to the hospital. It was nice there. I was sorry to leave it, honest!

MARTHY: *After a slight pause.* Did yuh say yuh got to meet someone here?

ANNA: Yes. Oh, not what you mean. It's my Old Man I got to meet. Honest! It's funny, too. I ain't seen him since I was a kid--don't even know what he looks like--yust had a letter every now and then. This was always the only address he give me to write him back. He's yanitor of some building here now--used to be a sailor.

MARTHY: *Astonished.* Janitor!

ANNA: Sure. And I was thinking maybe, seeing he ain't never done a thing for me in my life, he might be willing to stake me to a room and eats till I get rested up. *Wearily.* Gee, I sure need that rest! I'm knocked out. *Then resignedly.* But I ain't expecting much from him. Give you a kick when you're down, that's what all men do. *With sudden passion.* Men, I hate 'em--all of 'em! And I don't expect he'll turn out no better than the rest. *Then with sudden interest.* Say, do you hang out around this dump much?

MARTHY: Oh, off and on.

ANNA: Then maybe you know him--my Old Man--or at least seen him?

MARTHY: It ain't old Chris, is it?

ANNA: Old Chris?

MARTHY: Chris Christopherson, his full name is.

ANNA: *Excitedly.* Yes, that's him! Anna Christopherson--that's my real name--only out there I called myself Anna Christie. So you know him, eh?

MARTHY: *Evasively.* Seen him about for years.

ANNA: Say, what's he like, tell me, honest?

MARTHY: Oh, he's short and--

ANNA: *Impatiently.* I don't care what he looks like. What kind is he?

MARTHY: *Earnestly.* Well, yuh can bet your life, kid, he's as good an old guy as ever walked on two feet. That goes!

ANNA: *Pleased.* I'm glad to hear it. Then you think's he'll stake me to that rest cure I'm after?

MARTHY: *Emphatically.* Surest thing you know. *Disgustedly.* But where'd yuh get the idea he was a

janitor?

ANNA: He wrote me he was himself.

MARTHY: Well, he was lyin'. He ain't. He's captain of a barge--five men under him.

ANNA: *Disgusted in her turn.* A barge? What kind of a barge?

MARTHY: Coal, mostly.

ANNA: A coal barge! *With a harsh laugh.* If that ain't a swell job to find your long lost Old Man working at! Gee, I knew something'd be bound to turn out wrong--always does with me. That puts my idea of his giving me a rest on the bum.

MARTHY: What d'yuh mean?

ANNA: I s'pose he lives on the boat, don't he?

MARTHY: Sure. What about it? Can't you live on it, too?

ANNA: *Scornfully.* Me? On a dirty coal barge! What d'you think I am?

MARTHY: *Resentfully.* What d'yuh know about barges, huh? Bet yuh ain't never seen one. That's what comes of his bringing yuh up inland--away from the old devil sea--where yuh'd be safe--Gawd! *The irony of it strikes her sense of humor and she laughs hoarsely.*

ANNA: *Angrily.* His bringing me up! Is that what he tells people! I like his nerve! He let them cousins of my Old Woman's keep me on their farm and work me to death like a dog.

MARTHY: Well, he's got queer notions on some things. I've heard him say a farm was the best place for a kid.

ANNA: Sure. That's what he'd always answer back--and a lot of crazy stuff about staying away from the sea--stuff I couldn't make head or tail to. I thought he must be nutty.

MARTHY: He is on that one point. *Casually.* So yuh didn't fall for life on the farm, huh?

ANNA: I should say not! The old man of the family, his wife, and four sons--I had to slave for all of 'em. I was only a poor relation, and they treated me worse than they dare treat a hired girl. *After a moment's hesitation--somberly.* It was one of the sons--the youngest--started me--when I was sixteen. After that, I hated 'em so I'd killed 'em all if I'd stayed. So I run away--to St. Paul.

MARTHY: *Who has been listening sympathetically.* I've heard Old Chris talkin' about your bein' a nurse girl out there. Was that all a bluff yuh put up when yuh wrote him?

ANNA: Not on your life, it wasn't. It was true for two years. I didn't go wrong all at one jump. Being a nurse girl was yust what finished me. Taking care of other people's kids, always listening to their bawling and crying, caged in, when you're only a kid yourself and want to go out and see things. At last I got the chance--to get into that house. And you bet your life I took it! *Defiantly.* And I ain't sorry neither. *After a pause--with bitter hatred.* It was all men's fault--the whole business. It was men on the farm ordering and beating me--and giving me the wrong start. Then when I was a nurse, it was men again hanging around, bothering me, trying to see what they could get. *She gives a hard laugh.* And now it's men all the time. Gawd, I hate 'em all, every mother's son of 'em! Don't you?

MARTHY: Oh, I dunno. There's good ones and bad ones, kid. You've just had a run of bad luck with 'em, that's all. Your Old Man, now--old Chris--he's a good one.

ANNA: *Sceptically.* He'll have to show me.

MARTHY: Yuh kept right on writing him yuh was a nurse girl still, even after yuh was in the house, didn't yuh?

ANNA: Sure. *Cynically.* Not that I think he'd care a darn.

MARTHY: Yuh're all wrong about him, kid, *Earnestly.* I know Old Chris well for a long time. He's talked to me 'bout you lots o' times. He thinks the world o' you, honest he does.

ANNA: Aw, quit the kiddin'!

MARTHY: Honest! Only, he's a simple old guy, see? He's got nutty notions. But he means well, honest. Listen to me, kid--[She is interrupted by the opening and shutting of the street door in the bar and by hearing CHRIS' voice.] Ssshh!

ANNA: What's up?

CHRIS: *Who has entered the bar. He seems considerably sobered up.* Py golly, Larry, dat grub taste good. Marthy in back?

LARRY: Sure--and another tramp with her. *CHRIS starts for the entrance to the back room.*

MARTHY: *To ANNA in a hurried, nervous whisper.* That's him now. He's comin' in here. Brace up!

ANNA: Who? *Chris opens the door.*

MARTHY: *As if she were greeting him for the first time* Why hello, Old Chris. *Then before he can speak, she shuffles hurriedly past him into the bar, beckoning him to follow her.* Come here. I wanta tell yuh somethin'. *He goes out to her. She speaks hurriedly in a low voice.* Listen! I'm goin' to beat it down to the barge--pack up me duds and blow. That's her in there-- your Anna--just come--waitin' for yuh. Treat her right, see? She's been sick. Well, s'long! *She goes into the back room--to ANNA.* S'long, kid. I gotta beat it now. See yuh later.

ANNA: *Nervously.* So long. *MARTHY goes quickly out of the family entrance.* LARRY--[Looking at the stupefied CHRIS curiously.] Well, what's up now?

CHRIS: *Vaguely.* Nutting--nutting. *He stands before the door to the back room in an agony of embarrassed emotion--then he forces himself to a bold decision, pushes open the door and walks in. He stands there, casts a shy glance at ANNA, whose brilliant clothes, and, to him, high-toned appearance awe him terribly. He looks about him with pitiful nervousness as if to avoid the appraising look with which she takes in his face, his clothes, etc--his voice seeming to plead for her forbearance.* Anna!

ANNA: *Acutely embarrassed in her turn.* Hello--father. She told me it was you. I yust got here a little while ago.

CHRIS: *Goes slowly over to her chair.* It's good--for see you-- after all dem years, Anna. *He bends down over her. After an embarrassed struggle they manage to kiss each other.*

ANNA: *A trace of genuine feeling in her voice.* It's good to see you, too.

CHRIS: *Grasps her arms and looks into her face--then overcome by a wave of fierce tenderness.* Anna lilla! Anna lilla! *Takes her in his arms.*

ANNA: *Shrinks away from him, half-frightened.* What's that-- Swedish? I don't know it. *Then as if seeking relief from the tension in a voluble chatter.* Gee, I had an awful trip coming here. I'm all in. I had to sit up in the dirty coach all night-- couldn't get no sleep, hardly--and then I had a hard job finding this place. I never been in New York before, you know, and--

CHRIS: *Who has been staring down at her face admiringly, not hearing what she says--impulsively.* You know you vas awful pooty gel, Anna? Ay bet all men see you fall in love with you, py yiminy!

ANNA: *Repelled--harshly.* Cut it! You talk same as they all do.

CHRIS: *Hurt--humbly.* Ain't no harm for your fader talk dat vay, Anna.

ANNA: *Forcing a short laugh.* No--course not. Only--it's funny to see you and not remember nothing. You're like--a stranger.

CHRIS: *Sadly.* Ay s'pose. Ay never come home only few times ven you vas kit in Sveden. You don't remember dat?

ANNA: No. *Resentfully.* But why didn't you never come home them days? Why didn't you never come out West to see me?

CHRIS: *Slowly.* Ay tank, after your mo'der die, ven Ay vas avay on voyage, it's better for you you don't never see me! *He sinks down in the chair opposite her dejectedly--then turns to her-- sadly.* Ay don't know, Anna, vhy Ay never come home Sveden in ole year. Ay vant come home end of every voyage. Ay vant see your mo'der, your two bro'der before dey vas drowned, you ven you vas born--but--Ay--don't go. Ay sign on oder ships--go South America, go Australia, go China, go every port all over world many times-- but Ay never go aboard ship sail for Sveden. Ven Ay gat money for pay passage home as passenger den--[He bows his head guiltily.] Ay forgat and Ay spend all money. Ven Ay tank again, it's too late. *He sighs.* Ay don't know vhy but dat's vay with most sailor fallar, Anna. Dat ole davil sea make dem crazy fools with her dirty tricks. It's so.

ANNA: *Who has watched him keenly while he has been speaking--with a trace of scorn in her voice.* Then you think the sea's to blame for everything, eh? Well, you're still workin' on it, ain't you, spite of all you used to write me about hating it. That dame was here told me you was captain of a coal barge--and you wrote me you was yanitor of a building!

CHRIS: *Embarrassed but lying glibly.* Oh, Ay work on land long time as yanitor. Yust short time ago Ay got dis yob cause Ay vas sick, need open air.

ANNA: *Sceptically.* Sick? You? You'd never think it.

CHRIS: And, Anna, dis ain't real sailor yob. Dis ain't real boat on sea. She's yust ole tub--like piece of land with house on it dat float. Yob on her ain't sea yob. No. Ay don't gat yob on sea, Anna, if Ay die first. Ay swear dat, ven your mo'der die. Ay keep my word, py yingo!

ANNA: *Perplexed.* Well, I can't see no difference. *Dismissing the subject.* Speaking of being sick, I been there myself--yust out of the hospital two weeks ago.

CHRIS: *Immediately all concern.* You, Anna? Py golly! *Anxiously.* You feel better now, dough, don't you? You look little tired, dat's all!

ANNA: *Wearily.* I am. Tired to death. I need a long rest and I don't see much chance of getting it.

CHRIS: What you mean, Anna?

ANNA: Well, when I made up my mind to come to see you, I thought you was a yanitor--that you'd have a place where, maybe, if you didn't mind having me, I could visit a while and rest up--till I felt able to get back on the job again.

CHRIS: *Eagerly.* But Ay gat place, Anna--nice place. You rest all you want, py yiminy! You don't never have to vork as nurse gel no more. You stay with me, py golly!

ANNA: *Surprised and pleased by his eagerness--with a smile.* Then you're really glad to see me--honest?

CHRIS: *Pressing one of her hands in both of his.* Anna, Ay like see you like hell, Ay tal you! And don't you talk no more about gatting yob. You stay with me. Ay don't see you for long time, you don't forgat dat. *His voice trembles.* Ay'm gatting ole. Ay gat no one in vorld but you.

ANNA: *Touched--embarrassed by this unfamiliar emotion.* Thanks. It sounds good to hear someone--talk to me that way. Say, though-- if you're so lonely--it's funny--why ain't you ever

married again?

CHRIS: *Shaking his head emphatically--after a pause.* Ay love your mo'der too much for ever do dat, Anna.

ANNA: *Impressed--slowly.* I don't remember nothing about her. What was she like? Tell me.

CHRIS: Ay tal you all about everytang--and you tal me all tangs happen to you. But not here now. Dis ain't good place for young gel, anyway. Only no good sailor fallar come here for gat drunk. *He gets to his feet quickly and picks up her bag.* You come with me, Anna. You need lie down, gat rest.

ANNA: *Half rises to her feet, then sits down again.* Where're you going?

CHRIS: Come. Ve gat on board.

ANNA: *Disappointedly.* On board your barge, you mean? *Dryly.* Nix for mine! *Then seeing his crestfallen look--forcing a smile.* Do you think that's a good place for a young girl like me--a coal barge?

CHRIS: *Dully.* Yes, Ay tank. *He hesitates--then continues more and more pleadingly.* You don't know how nice it's on barge, Anna. Tug come and ve gat towed out on voyage--yust water all round, and sun, and fresh air, and good grub for make you strong, healthy gel. You see many tangs you don't see before. You gat moonlight at night, maybe; see steamer pass; see schooner make sail--see everytang dat's pooty. You need take rest like dat. You work too hard for young gel already. You need vacation, yes!

ANNA: *Who has listened to him with a growing interest--with an uncertain laugh.* It sounds good to hear you tell it. I'd sure like a trip on the water, all right. It's the barge idea has me stopped. Well, I'll go down with you and have a look--and maybe I'll take a chance. Gee, I'd do anything once.

CHRIS: *Picks up her bag again.* Ye go, eh?

ANNA: What's the rush? Wait a second. *Forgetting the situation for a moment, she relapses into the familiar form and flashes one of her winning trade smiles at him.* Gee, I'm thirsty.

CHRIS: *Sets down her bag immediately--hastily.* Ay'm sorry, Anna. What you tank you like for drink, eh?

ANNA: *Promptly.* I'll take a--[Then suddenly reminded-- confusedly.] I don't know. What'a they got here?

CHRIS: *With a grin.* Ay don't tank dey got much fancy drink for young gel in dis place, Anna. Yinger ale--sas'prilla, maybe.

ANNA: *Forcing a laugh herself.* Make it sas, then.

CHRIS: *Coming up to her--with a wink.* Ay tal you, Anna, we calabrate, yes--dis one time because we meet after many year. *In a half whisper, embarrassedly.* Dey gat good port wine, Anna. It's good for you. Ay tank--little bit--for give you appetite. It ain't strong, neider. One glass don't go to your head, Ay promise.

ANNA: *With a half hysterical laugh.* All right! I'll take port.

CHRIS: Ay go gat him. *He goes out to the bar. As soon as the door closes, Anna starts to her feet.*

ANNA: *Picking up her bag--half--aloud--stammeringly.* Gawd, I can't stand this! I better beat it. *Then she lets her bag drop, stumbles over to her chair again, and covering her face with her hands, begins to sob.*

LARRY: *Putting down his paper as CHRIS comes up--with a grin.* Well, who's the blond?

CHRIS: *Proudly.* Dat vas Anna, Larry.

LARRY: *In amazement.* Your daughter, Anna? *CHRIS nods. LARRY lets a long, low whistle escape him and turns away embarrassedly.*

CHRIS: Don't you tank she vas pooty gel, Larry?

LARRY: *Rising to the occasion.* Sure! A peach!

CHRIS: You bet you! Give me drink for take back--one port vine for Anna--she calabrate dis one time with me--and small beer for me.

LARRY: *As he gets the drinks.* Small beer for you, eh? She's reformin' you already.

CHRIS: *Pleased.* You bet! *He takes the drinks. As she hears him coming, ANNA hastily dries her eyes, tries to smile. CHRIS comes in and sets the drinks down on the table--stares at her for a second anxiously--patting her hand.* You look tired, Anna. Veil, Ay make you take good long rest now. *Picking up his beer.* Come, you drink vine. It put new life in you. *She lifts her glass--he grins.* Skoal, Anna! You know dat Svedish word?

ANNA: Skoal! *Downing her port at a gulp like a drink of whiskey-- her lips trembling.* Skoal? Guess I know that word, all right, all right!

The Curtain Falls

ACT II

ACT II

ACT II

Scene: Ten days later. The stern of the deeply-laden barge, "SIMEON WINTHROP," at anchor in the outer harbor of Provincetown, Mass. It is ten o'clock at night. Dense fog shrouds the barge on all sides, and she floats motionless on a calm. A lantern set up on an immense coil of thick hawser sheds a dull, filtering light on objects near it--the heavy steel bits for making fast the tow lines, etc. In the rear is the cabin, its misty windows glowing wanly with the light of a lamp inside. The chimney of the cabin stove rises a few feet above the roof. The doleful tolling of bells, on Long Point, on ships at anchor, breaks the silence at regular intervals.

As the curtain rises, ANNA is discovered standing near the coil of rope on which the lantern is placed. She looks healthy, transformed, the natural color has come back to her face. She has on a black, oilskin coat, but wears no hat. She is staring out into the fog astern with an expression of awed wonder. The cabin door is pushed open and CHRIS appears. He is dressed in yellow oilskins--coat, pants, sou'wester--and wears high sea-boots.

CHRIS: *The glare from the cabin still in his eyes, peers blinkmgly astern.* Anna! *Receiving no reply, he calls again, this time with apparent apprehension.* Anna!

ANNA: *With a start--making a gesture with her hand as if to impose silence--in a hushed whisper.* Yes, here I am. What d'you want?

CHRIS: *Walks over to her--solicitously.* Don't you come turn in, Anna? It's late--after four bells. It ain't good for you stay out here in fog, Ay tank.

ANNA: Why not? *With a trace of strange exultation.* I love this fog! Honest! It's so--[She hesitates, groping for a word.]--Funny and still. I feel as if I was--out of things altogether.

CHRIS: *Spitting disgustedly.* Fog's vorst one of her dirty tricks, py yingo!

ANNA: *With a short laugh.* Beefing about the sea again? I'm getting so's I love it, the little I've seen.

CHRIS: *Glancing at her moodily.* Dat's foolish talk, Anna. You see her more, you don't talk dat vay.

Then seeing her irritation, he hastily adopts a more cheerful tone. But Ay'm glad you like it on barge. Ay'm glad it makes you feel good again. *With a placating grin.* You like live like dis alone with ole fa'der, eh?

ANNA: Sure I do. Everything's been so different from anything I ever come across before. And now--this fog--Gee, I wouldn't have missed it for nothing. I never thought living on ships was so different from land. Gee, I'd just love to work on it, honest I would, if I was a man. I don't wonder you always been a sailor,

CHRIS: *Vehemently.* Ay ain't sailor, Anna. And dis ain't real sea. You only see nice part. *Then as she doesn't answer, he continues hopefully.* Vell, fog lift in morning, Ay tank.

ANNA: *The exultation again in her voice.* I love it! I don't give a rap if it never lifts! *CHRIS fidgets from one foot to the other worriedly. ANNA continues slowly, after a pause.* It makes me feel clean--out here--'s if I'd taken a bath.

CHRIS: *After a pause.* You better go in cabin--read book. Dat put you to sleep.

ANNA: I don't want to sleep. I want to stay out here--and think about things.

CHRIS: *Walks away from her toward the cabin--then comes back.* You act funny to-night, Anna.

ANNA: *Her voice rising angrily.* Say, what're you trying to do-- make things rotten? You been kind as kind can be to me and I certainly appreciate it--only don't spoil it all now. *Then, seeing the hurt expression on her father's face, she forces a smile.* Let's talk of something else. Come. Sit down here. *She points to the coil of rope.*

CHRIS: *Sits down beside her with a sigh.* It's gatting pooty late in night, Anna. Must be near five bells.

ANNA: *Interestedly.* Five bells? What time is that?

CHRIS: Half past ten.

ANNA: Funny I don't know nothing about sea talk--but those cousins was always talking crops and that stuff. Gee, wasn't I sick of it-- and of them!

CHRIS: You don't like live on farm, Anna?

ANNA: I've told you a hundred times I hated it. *Decidedly.* I'd rather have one drop of ocean than all the farms in the world! Honest! And you wouldn't like a farm, neither. Here's where you belong. *She makes a sweeping gesture seaward.* But not on a coal barge. You belong on a real ship, sailing all over the world.

CHRIS: *Moodily.* Ay've done dat many year, Anna, when Ay vas damn fool.

ANNA: *Disgustedly.* Oh, rats! *After a pause she speaks musingly.* Was the men in our family always sailors--as far back as you know about?

CHRIS: *Shortly.* Yes. Damn fools! All men in our village on coast, Sveden, go to sea. Ain't nutting else for dem to do. My fa'der die on board ship in Indian Ocean. He's buried at sea. Ay don't never know him only little bit. Den my tree bro'der, older'n me, dey go on ships. Den Ay go, too. Den my mo'der she's left all 'lone. She die pooty quick after dat--all 'lone. Ve vas all avay on voyage when she die. *He pauses sadly.* Two my bro'der dey gat lost on fishing boat same like your bro'ders vas drowned. My oder bro'der, he save money, give up sea, den he die home in bed. He's only one dat ole davil don't kill. *Defiantly.* But me, Ay bet you Ay die ashore in bed, too!

ANNA: Were all of 'em yust plain sailors?

CHRIS: Able body seaman, most of dem. *With a certain pride.* Dey vas all smart seaman, too--A one. *Then after hesitating a moment-- shyly.* Ay vas bo'sun.

ANNA: Bo'sun?

CHRIS: Dat's kind of officer.

ANNA: Gee, that was fine. What does he do?

CHRIS: *After a second's hesitation, plunged into gloom again by his fear of her enthusiasm.* Hard vork all time. It's rotten, Ay tal you, for go to sea. *Determined to disgust her with sea life-- volubly.* Dey're all fool fallar, dem fallar in our family. Dey all vork rotten yob on sea for nutting, don't care nutting but yust gat big pay day in pocket, gat drunk, gat robbed, ship avay again on oder voyage. Dey don't come home, Dey don't do anytang like good man do. And dat ole davil, sea, sooner, later she svallow dem up.

ANNA: *With an excited laugh.* Good sports, I'd call 'em. *Then hastily.* But say--listen--did all the women of the family marry sailors?

CHRIS: *Eagerly--seeing a chance to drive home his point.* Yes-- and it's bad on dem like hell vorst of all. Dey don't see deir men only once in long while. Dey set and vait all 'lone. And vhen deir boys grows up, go to sea, dey sit and vait some more. *Vehemently.* Any gel marry sailor, she's crazy fool! Your mo'der she tal you same tang if she vas alive. *He relapses into an attitude of somber brooding.*

ANNA: *After a pause--dreamily.* Funny! I do feel sort of--nutty, to-night. I feel old.

CHRIS: *Mystified.* Old?

ANNA: Sure--like I'd been living a long, long time--out here in the fog. *Frowning perplexedly.* I don't know how to tell you yust what I mean. It's like I'd come home after a long visit away some place. It all seems like I'd been here before lots of times--on boats--in this same fog. *With a short laugh.* You must think I'm off my base.

CHRIS: *Gruffly.* Anybody feel funny dat vay in fog.

ANNA: *Persistently.* But why d'you s'pose I feel so--so--like I'd found something I'd missed and been looking for--'s if this was the right place for me to fit in? And I seem to have forgot-- everything that's happened--like it didn't matter no more. And I feel clean, somehow--like you feel yust after you've took a bath. And I feel happy for once--yes, honest!--happier than I ever been anywhere before! *As CHRIS makes no comment but a heavy sigh, she continues wonderingly.* It's nutty for me to feel that way, don't you think?

CHRIS: *A grim foreboding in his voice.* Ay tank Ay'm damn fool for bring you on voyage, Anna.

ANNA: *Impressed by his tone.* You talk--nutty to-night yourself. You act's if you was scared something was going to happen.

CHRIS: Only God know dat, Anna.

ANNA: *Half-mockingly.* Then it'll be Gawd's will, like the preachers say-what does happen.

CHRIS: *Starts to his feet with fierce protest.* No! Dat ole davil, sea, she ain't God! *In the pause of silence that comes after his defiance a hail in a man's husky, exhausted voice comes faintly out of the fog to port.* "Ahoy!" *CHRIS gives a startled exclamation.*

ANNA: *Jumping to her feet.* What's that?

CHRIS: *Who has regained his composure--sheepishly.* Py golly, dat scare me for minute. It's only some fallar hail, Anna--loose his course in fog. Must be fisherman's power boat. His engine break down, Ay guess. *The "ahoy" comes again through the wall of fog, sounding much nearer this time. CHRIS goes over to the port bulwark.* Sound from dis side. She come in from open sea. *He holds his hands to his mouth, megaphone-fashion, and shouts back.* Ahoy, dere! Vhat's trouble?

THE VOICE: *This time sounding nearer but up forward toward the bow.* Heave a rope when we come alongside. *Then irritably.* Where are ye, ye scut?

CHRIS: Ay hear dem rowing. Dey come up by bow, Ay tank. *Then shouting out again.* Dis vay!

THE VOICE: Right ye are! *There is a muffled sound of oars in oar- locks.*

ANNA: *Half to herself--resentfully.* Why don't that guy stay where he belongs?

CHRIS: *Hurriedly.* Ay go up bow. All hands asleep 'cepting fallar on vatch. Ay gat heave line to dat fallar. *He picks up a coil of rope and hurries off toward the bow. ANNA walks back toward the extreme stern as if she wanted to remain as much isolated possible. She turns her back on the proceedings and stares out into the fog. THE VOICE is heard again shouting "Ahoy" and CHRIS answering "Dis way" Then there is a pause--the murmur of excited voices--then the scuffling of feet. CHRIS appears from around the cabin to port. He is supporting the limp form of a man dressed in dungarees, holding one of the man's arms around his neck. The deckhand, JOHNSON, a young, blond Swede, follows him, helping along another exhausted man similar fashion. ANNA turns to look at them. Chris stops for a second--volubly.* Anna! You come help, vill you? You find vhiskey in cabin. Dese fallars need drink for fix dem. Dey vas near dead.

ANNA: *Hurrying to him.* Sure--but who are they? What's the trouble?

CHRIS: Sailor fallars. Deir steamer gat wrecked. Dey been five days in open boat--four fallars--only one left able stand up. Come, Anna. *She precedes him into the cabin, holding the door open while he and JOHNSON carry in their burdens. The door is shut, then opened again as JOHNSON comes out. CHRIS'S voice shouts after him.* Go gat oder fallar, Yohnson.

JOHNSON: Yes, sir. *He goes. The door is closed again. MAT BURKE stumbles in around the port side of the cabin. He moves slowly, feeling his way uncertainly, keeping hold of the port bulwark with his right hand to steady himself. He is stripped to the waist, has on nothing but a pair of dirty dungaree pants. He is a powerful, broad-chested six-footer, his face handsome in a hard, rough, bold, defiant way. He is about thirty, in the full power of his heavy-muscled, immense strength. His dark eyes are bloodshot and wild from sleeplessness. The muscles of his arms and shoulders are lumped in knots and bunches, the veins of his forearms stand out like blue cords. He finds his way to the coil of hawser and sits down on it facing the cabin, his back bowed, head in his hands, in an attitude of spent weariness.*

BURKE: *Talking aloud to himself.* Row, ye divil! Row! *Then lifting his head and looking about him.* What's this tub? Well, we're safe anyway--with the help of God. *He makes the sign of the cross mechanically. JOHNSON comes along the deck to port, supporting the fourth man, who is babbling to himself incoherently. BURKE glances at him disdainfully.* Is it losing the small wits ye iver had, ye are? Deck-scrubbing scut! *They pass him and go into the cabin, leaving the door open. BURKE sags forward wearily.* I'm bate out--bate out entirely.

ANNA: *Comes out of the cabin with a tumbler quarter-full of whiskey in her hand. She gives a start when she sees BURKE so near her, the light from the open door falling full on him. Then, overcoming what is evidently a feeling of repulsion, she comes up beside him.* Here you are. Here's a drink for you. You need it, I guess.

BURKE: *Lifting his head slowly--confusedly.* Is it dreaming I am?

ANNA: *Half smiling.* Drink it and you'll find it ain't no dream.

BURKE: To hell with the drink--but I'll take it just the same. *He tosses it down.* Aah! I'm needin' that--and 'tis fine stuff. *Looking up at her with frank, grinning admiration.* But 'twasn't the booze I meant when I said, was I dreaming. I thought you was some mermaid out of the sea come to torment me. *He reaches out to feel of her arm.* Aye, rale flesh and blood, divil a less.

ANNA: *Coldly. Stepping back from him.* Cut that.

BURKE: But tell me, isn't this a barge I'm on--or isn't it?

ANNA: Sure.

BURKE: And what is a fine handsome woman the like of you doing on this scow?

ANNA: *Coldly.* Never you mind. *Then half-amused in spite of herself.* Say, you're a great one, honest--starting right in kidding after what you been through.

BURKE: *Delighted--proudly.* Ah, it was nothing--aisy for a rale man with guts to him, the like of me. *He laughs.* All in the day's work, darlin'. *Then, more seriously but still in a boastful tone, confidentially.* But I won't be denying 'twas a damn narrow squeak. We'd all ought to be with Davy Jones at the bottom of the sea, be rights. And only for me, I'm telling you, and the great strength and guts is in me, we'd be being scoffed by the fishes this minute!

ANNA: *Contemptuously.* Gee, you hate yourself, don't you? *Then turning away from him indifferently.* Well, you'd better come in and lie down. You must want to sleep.

BURKE: *Stung--rising unsteadily to his feet with chest out and head thrown back--resentfully.* Lie down and sleep, is it? Divil a wink I'm after having for two days and nights and divil a bit I'm needing now. Let you not be thinking I'm the like of them three weak scuts come in the boat with me. I could lick the three of them sitting down with one hand tied behind me. They may be bate out, but I'm not--and I've been rowing the boat with them lying in the bottom not able to raise a hand for the last two days we was in it. *Furiously, as he sees this is making no impression on her.* And I can lick all hands on this tub, wan be wan, tired as I am!

ANNA: *Sarcastically.* Gee, ain't you a hard guy! *Then, with a trace of sympathy, as she notices him swaying from weakness.* But never mind that fight talk. I'll take your word for all you've said. Go on and sit down out here, anyway, if I can't get you to come inside. *He sits down weakly.* You're all in, you might as well own up to it.

BURKE: *Fiercely.* The hell I am!

ANNA: *Coldly.* Well, be stubborn then for all I care. And I must say I don't care for your language. The men I know don't pull that rough stuff when ladies are around.

BURKE: *Getting unsteadily to his feet again--in a rage.* Ladies! Ho-ho! Divil mend you! Let you not be making game of me. What would ladies be doing on this bloody hulk? *As ANNA attempts to go to the cabin, he lurches into her path.* Aisy, now! You're not the old Square-head's woman, I suppose you'll be telling me next-- living in his cabin with him, no less! *Seeing the cold, hostile expression on ANNA's face, he suddenly changes his tone to one of boisterous joviality.* But I do be thinking, iver since the first look my eyes took at you, that it's a fool you are to be wasting yourself--a fine, handsome girl--on a stumpy runt of a man like that old Swede. There's too many strapping great lads on the sea would give their heart's blood for one kiss of you!

ANNA: *Scornfully.* Lads like you, eh?

BURKE: *Grinning.* Ye take the words out o' my mouth. I'm the proper lad for you, if it's meself do be saying it. *With a quick movement he puts his arms about her waist.* Whisht, now, me daisy! Himself's in the cabin. It's wan of your kisses I'm needing to take the tiredness from me bones. Wan kiss, now! *He presses her to him and attempts to kiss her.*

ANNA: *Struggling fiercely.* Leggo of me, you big mut! *She pushes him away with all her might. BURKE, weak and tottering, is caught off his guard. He is thrown down backward and, in falling, hits his head a hard thump against the bulwark. He lies there still, knocked out for the moment. ANNA stands for a second, looking down at him frightenedly. Then she kneels down beside him and*

raises his head to her knee, staring into his face anxiously for some sign of life.

BURKE: *Stirring a bit--mutteringly.* God stiffen it! *He opens his eyes and blinks up at her with vague wonder.*

ANNA: *Letting his head sink back on the deck, rising to her feet with a sigh of relief.* You're coming to all right, eh? Gee, I was scared for a moment I'd killed you.

BURKE: *With difficulty rising to a sitting position-- scornfully.* Killed, is it? It'd take more than a bit of a blow to crack my thick skull. *Then looking at her with the most intense admiration.* But, glory be, it's a power of strength is in them two fine arms of yours. There's not a man in the world can say the same as you, that he seen Mat Burke lying at his feet and him dead to the world.

ANNA: *Rather remorsefully.* Forget it. I'm sorry it happened, see? *BURKE rises and sits on bench. Then severely.* Only you had no right to be getting fresh with me. Listen, now, and don't go getting any more wrong notions. I'm on this barge because I'm making a trip with my father. The captain's my father. Now you know.

BURKE: The old square--the old Swede, I mean?

ANNA: Yes.

BURKE: *Rising--peering at her face.* Sure I might have known it, if I wasn't a bloody fool from birth. Where else'd you get that fine yellow hair is like a golden crown on your head.

ANNA: *With an amused laugh.* Say, nothing stops you, does it? *Then attempting a severe tone again.* But don't you think you ought to be apologizing for what you said and done yust a minute ago, instead of trying to kid me with that mush?

BURKE: *Indignantly.* Mush! *Then bending forward toward her with very intense earnestness.* Indade and I will ask your pardon a thousand times--and on my knees, if ye like. I didn't mean a word of what I said or did. *Resentful again for a second.* But divil a woman in all the ports of the world has iver made a great fool of me that way before!

ANNA: *With amused sarcasm.* I see. You mean you're a lady-killer and they all fall for you.

BURKE: *Offended. Passionately.* Leave off your fooling! 'Tis that is after getting my back up at you. *Earnestly.* 'Tis no lie I'm telling you about the women. *Ruefully.* Though it's a great jackass I am to be mistaking you, even in anger, for the like of them cows on the waterfront is the only women I've met up with since I was growed to a man. *As ANNA shrinks away from him at this, he hurries on pleadingly.* I'm a hard, rough man and I'm not fit, I'm thinking, to be kissing the shoe-soles of a fine, dacent girl the like of yourself. 'Tis only the ignorance of your kind made me see you wrong. So you'll forgive me, for the love of God, and let us be friends from this out. *Passionately.* I'm thinking I'd rather be friends with you than have my wish for anything else in the world. *He holds out his hand to her shyly.*

ANNA: *Looking queerly at him, perplexed and worried, but moved and pleased in spite of herself--takes his hand uncertainly.* Sure.

BURKE: *With boyish delight.* God bless you! *In his excitement he squeezes her hand tight.*

ANNA: Ouch!

BURKE: *Hastily dropping her hand--ruefully.* Your pardon, Miss. 'Tis a clumsy ape I am. *Then simply--glancing down his arm proudly.* It's great power I have in my hand and arm, and I do be forgetting it at times.

ANNA: *Nursing her crushed hand and glancing at his arm, not without a trace of his own admiration.* Gee, you're some strong, all right.

BURKE: *Delighted.* It's no lie, and why shouldn't I be, with me shoveling a million tons of coal in the stokeholes of ships since I was a lad only. *He pats the coil of hawser invitingly.* Let you sit down, now, Miss, and I'll be telling you a bit of myself, and you'll be telling me a bit of yourself, and in an hour we'll be as old friends as if we was born in the same house. *He pulls at her sleeve shyly.* Sit down now, if you plaze.

ANNA: *With a half laugh.* Well--[She sits down.] But we won't talk about me, see? You tell me about yourself and about the wreck.

BURKE: *Flattered.* I'll tell you, surely. But can I be asking you one question. Miss, has my head in a puzzle?

ANNA: *Guardedly.* Well--I dunno--what is it?

BURKE: What is it you do when you're not taking a trip with the Old Man? For I'm thinking a fine girl the like of you ain't living always on this tub.

ANNA: *Uneasily.* No--of course I ain't. *She searches his face suspiciously, afraid there may be some hidden insinuation in his words. Seeing his simple frankness, she goes on confidently.* Well, I'll tell you. I'm a governess, see? I take care of kids for people and learn them things.

BURKE: *Impressed.* A governess, is it? You must be smart, surely.

ANNA: But let's not talk about me. Tell me about the wreck, like you promised me you would.

BURKE: *Importantly.* 'Twas this way, Miss. Two weeks out we ran into the divil's own storm, and she sprang wan hell of a leak up for'ard. The skipper was hoping to make Boston before another blow would finish her, but ten days back we met up with another storm the like of the first, only worse. Four days we was in it with green seas raking over her from bow to stern. That was a terrible time, God help us. *Proudly.* And if 'twasn't for me and my great strength, I'm telling you--and it's God's truth--there'd been mutiny itself in the stokehole. 'Twas me held them to it, with a kick to wan and a clout to another, and they not caring a damn for the engineers any more, but fearing a clout of my right arm more than they'd fear the sea itself. *He glances at her anxiously, eager for her approval.*

ANNA: *Concealing a smile--amused by this boyish boasting of his.* You did some hard work, didn't you?

BURKE: *Promptly.* I did that! I'm a divil for sticking it out when them that's weak give up. But much good it did anyone! 'Twas a mad, fightin' scramble in the last seconds with each man for himself. I disremember how it come about, but there was the four of us in wan boat and when we was raised high on a great wave I took a look about and divil a sight there was of ship or men on top of the sea.

ANNA: *In a subdued voice.* Then all the others was drowned?

BURKE: They was, surely.

ANNA: *With a shudder.* What a terrible end!

BURKE: *Turns to her.* A terrible end for the like of them swabs does live on land, maybe. But for the like of us does be roaming the seas, a good end, I'm telling you--quick and clane.

ANNA: *Struck by the word.* Yes, clean. That's yust the word for-- all of it--the way it makes me feel.

BURKE: The sea, you mean? *Interestedly.* I'm thinking you have a bit of it in your blood, too. Your Old Man wasn't only a barge rat--begging your pardon--all his life, by the cut of him.

ANNA: No, he was bo'sun on sailing ships for years. And all the men on both sides of the family have gone to sea as far back as he remembers, he says. All the women have married sailors, too.

BURKE: *With intense satisfaction.* Did they, now? They had spirit in them. It's only on the sea you'd find

rale men with guts is fit to wed with fine, high-tempered girls *Then he adds half-boldly* the like of yourself.

ANNA: *With a laugh.* There you go kiddin' again. *Then seeing his hurt expression--quickly.* But you was going to tell me about yourself. You're Irish, of course I can tell that.

BURKE: *Stoutly.* Yes, thank God, though I've not seen a sight of it in fifteen years or more.

ANNA: *Thoughtfully.* Sailors never do go home hardly, do they? That's what my father was saying.

BURKE: He wasn't telling no lie. *With sudden melancholy.* It's a hard and lonesome life, the sea is. The only women you'd meet in the ports of the world who'd be willing to speak you a kind word isn't woman at all. You know the kind I mane, and they're a poor, wicked lot, God forgive them. They're looking to steal the money from you only.

ANNA: *Her face averted--rising to her feet--agitatedly.* I think--I guess I'd better see what's doing inside.

BURKE: *Afraid he has offended her--beseechingly.* Don't go, I'm saying! Is it I've given you offence with my talk of the like of them? Don't heed it at all! I'm clumsy in my wits when it comes to talking proper with a girl the like of you. And why wouldn't I be? Since the day I left home for to go to sea punching coal, this is the first time I've had a word with a rale, dacent woman. So don't turn your back on me now, and we beginning to be friends.

ANNA: *Turning to him again--forcing a smile.* I'm not sore at you, honest.

BURKE: *Gratefully.* God bless you!

ANNA: *Changing the subject abruptly.* But if you honestly think the sea's such a rotten life, why don't you get out of it?

BURKE: *Surprised.* Work on land, is it? *She nods. He spits scornfully.* Digging spuds in the muck from dawn to dark, I suppose? *Vehemently.* I wasn't made for it, Miss.

ANNA: *With a laugh.* I thought you'd say that.

BURKE: *Argumentatively.* But there's good jobs and bad jobs at sea, like there'd be on land. I'm thinking if it's in the stokehole of a proper liner I was, I'd be able to have a little house and be home to it wan week out of four. And I'm thinking that maybe then I'd have the luck to find a fine dacent girl--the like of yourself, now--would be willing to wed with me.

ANNA: *Turning away from him with a short laugh--uneasily.* Why, sure. Why not?

BURKE: *Edging up close to her--exultantly.* Then you think a girl the like of yourself might maybe not mind the past at all but only be seeing the good herself put in me?

ANNA: *In the same tone.* Why, sure.

BURKE: *Passionately.* She'd not be sorry for it, I'd take my oath! 'Tis no more drinking and roving about I'd be doing then, but giving my pay day into her hand and staying at home with her as meek as a lamb each night of the week I'd be in port.

ANNA: *Moved in spite of herself and troubled by this half- concealed proposal--with a forced laugh.* All you got to do is find the girl.

BURKE: I have found her!

ANNA: *Half-frightenedly--trying to laugh it off.* You have? When? I thought you was saying--

BURKE: *Boldly and forcefully.* This night. *Hanging his head-- humbly.* If she'll be having me. *Then raising his eyes to hers-- simply.* 'Tis you I mean.

ANNA: *Is held by his eyes for a moment--then shrinks back from him with a strange, broken laugh.*

Say--are you--going crazy? Are you trying to kid me? Proposing--to me!--for Gawd's sake!--on such short acquaintance? *CHRIS comes out of the cabin and stands staring blinkingly astern. When he makes out ANNA in such intimate proximity to this strange sailor, an angry expression comes over his face.*

BURKE: *Following her--with fierce, pleading insistence.* I'm telling you there's the will of God in it that brought me safe through the storm and fog to the wan spot in the world where you was! Think of that now, and isn't it queer--

CHRIS: Anna! *He comes toward them, raging, his fists clenched.* Anna, you gat in cabin, you hear!

ANNA: *All her emotions immediately transformed into resentment at his bullying tone.* Who d'you think you're talking to--a slave?

CHRIS: *Hurt--his voice breaking--pleadingly.* You need gat rest, Anna. You gat sleep. *She does not move. He turns on BURKE furiously.* What you doing here, you sailor fallar? You ain't sick like oders. You gat in fo'c's'tle. Dey give you bunk. *Threateningly.* You hurry, Ay tal you!

ANNA: *Impulsively.* But he is sick. Look at him. He can hardly stand up.

BURKE: *Straightening and throwing out his chest--with a bold laugh.* Is it giving me orders ye are, me bucko? Let you look out, then! With wan hand, weak as I am, I can break ye in two and fling the pieces over the side--and your crew after you. *Stopping abruptly.* I was forgetting. You're her Old Man and I'd not raise a fist to you for the world. *His knees sag, he wavers and seems about to fall. ANNA utters an exclamation of alarm and hurries to his slde.*

ANNA: *Taking one of his arms over her shoulder.* Come on in the cabin. You can have my bed if there ain't no other place.

BURKE: *With jubilant happiness--as they proceed toward the cabin.* Glory be to God, is it holding my arm about your neck you are! Anna! Anna! Sure it's a sweet name is suited to you.

ANNA: *Guiding him carefully.* Sssh! Sssh!

BURKE: Whisht, is it? Indade, and I'll not. I'll be roaring it out like a fog horn over the sea! You're the girl of the world and we'll be marrying soon and I don't care who knows it!

ANNA: *As she guides him through the cabin door.* Ssshh! Never mind that talk. You go to sleep. *They go out of sight in the cabin. CHRIS, who has been listening to BURKE's last words with open-mouthed amazement stands looking after them helplessly.*

CHRIS: *Turns suddenly and shakes his fist out at the sea--with bitter hatred.* Dat's your dirty trick, damn ole davil, you! *Then in a frenzy of rage.* But, py God, you don't do dat! Not while Ay'm living! No, py God, you don't!

The Curtain Falls

ACT III

ACT III

ACT III

Scene: The interior of the cabin on the barge, "Simeon Winthrop" at dock in Boston --a narrow, low-ceilinged compartment the walls of which are painted a light brown with white trimmings. In the rear on the left, a door leading to the sleeping quarters. In the far left corner, a large locker-closet, painted white, on the door of which a mirror hangs on a nail. In the rear wall, two small square windows and a door opening out on the deck toward the stern. In the right wall, two more windows looking out

on the port deck. White curtains, clean and stiff, are at the windows. A table with two cane-bottomed chairs stands in the center of the cabin. A dilapidated, wicker rocker, painted brown, is also by the table.

It is afternoon of a sunny day about a week later. From the harbor and docks outside, muffled by the closed door and windows, comes the sound of steamers' whistles and the puffing snort of the donkey engines of some ship unloading nearby.

As the curtain rises, CHRIS and ANNA are discovered. ANNA is seated in the rocking-chair by the table, with a newspaper in her hands. She is not reading but staring straight in front of her. She looks unhappy, troubled, frowningly concentrated on her thoughts. CHRIS wanders about the room, casting quick, uneasy side glances at her face, then stopping to peer absentmindedly out of the window. His attitude betrays an overwhelming, gloomy anxiety which has him on tenter hooks. He pretends to be engaged in setting things ship-shape, but this occupation is confined to picking up some object, staring at it stupidly for a second, then aimlessly putting it down again. He clears his throat and starts to sing to himself in a low, doleful voice: "My Yosephine, come aboard de ship. Long time Ay wait for you."

ANNA: *Turning on him, sarcastically.* I'm glad someone's feeling good. *Wearily.* Gee, I sure wish we was out of this dump and back in New York.

CHRIS: *With a sigh.* Ay'm glad vhen ve sail again, too. *Then, as she makes no comment, he goes on with a ponderous attempt at sarcasm.* Ay don't see vhy you don't like Boston, dough. You have good time here, Ay tank. You go ashore all time, every day and night veek ve've been here. You go to movies, see show, gat all kinds fun--[His eyes hard with hatred.] All with that damn Irish fallar!

ANNA: *With weary scorn.* Oh, for heaven's sake, are you off on that again? Where's the harm in his taking me around? D'you want me to sit all day and night in this cabin with you--and knit? Ain't I got a right to have as good a time as I can?

CHRIS: It ain't right kind of fun--not with that fallar, no.

ANNA: I been back on board every night by eleven, ain't I? *Then struck by some thought--looks at him with keen suspicion--with rising anger.* Say, look here, what d'you mean by what you yust said?

CHRIS: *Hastily.* Nutting but what Ay say, Anna.

ANNA: You said "ain't right" and you said it funny. Say, listen here, you ain't trying to insinuate that there's something wrong between us, are you?

CHRIS: *Horrified.* No, Anna! No, Ay svear to God, Ay never tank dat!

ANNA: *Mollified by his very evident sincerity--sitting down again.* Well, don't you never think it neither if you want me ever to speak to you again. *Angrily again.* If I ever dreamt you thought that, I'd get the hell out of this barge so quick you couldn't see me for dust.

CHRIS: *Soothingly.* Ay wouldn't never dream--[Then, after a second's pause, reprovingly.] You vas gatting learn to svear. Dat ain't nice for young gel, you tank?

ANNA: *With a faint trace of a smile.* Excuse me. You ain't used to such language, I know. *Mockingly.* That's what your taking me to sea has done for me.

CHRIS: *Indignantly.* No, it ain't me. It's dat damn sailor fallar learn you bad tangs.

ANNA: He ain't a sailor. He's a stoker.

CHRIS: *Forcibly.* Dat vas million times vorse, Ay tal you! Dem fallars dat vork below shoveling coal vas de dirtiest, rough gang of no-good fallars in vorld!

ANNA: I'd hate to hear you say that to Mat.

CHRIS: Oh, Ay tal him same tang. You don't gat it in head Ay'm scared of him yust 'cause he vas stronger'n Ay vas. *Menacingly.* You don't gat for fight with fists with dem fallars. Dere's oder vay for fix him.

ANNA: *Glancing at him with sudden alarm.* What d'you mean?

CHRIS: *Sullenly.* Nutting.

ANNA: You'd better not. I wouldn't start no trouble with him if I was you. He might forget some time that you was old and my father-- and then you'd be out of luck.

CHRIS: *With smouldering hatred.* Vell, yust let him! Ay'm ole bird maybe, but Ay bet Ay show him trick or two.

ANNA: *Suddenly changing her tone--persuasively.* Aw come on, be good. What's eating you, anyway? Don't you want no one to be nice to me except yourself?

CHRIS: *Placated--coming to her--eagerly.* Yes, Ay do, Anna--only not fallar on sea. But Ay like for you marry steady fallar got good yob on land. You have little home in country all your own--

ANNA: *Rising to her feet--brusquely.* Oh, cut it out! *Scornfully.* Little home in the country! I wish you could have seen the little home in the country where you had me in jail till I was sixteen! *With rising irritation.* Some day you're going to get me so mad with that talk, I'm going to turn loose on you and tell you--a lot of things that'll open your eyes.

CHRIS: *Alarmed.* Ay don't vant--

ANNA: I know you don't; but you keep on talking yust the same.

CHRIS: Ay don't talk no more den, Anna.

ANNA: Then promise me you'll cut out saying nasty things about Mat Burke every chance you get.

CHRIS: *Evasive and suspicious.* Vhy? You like dat fallar--very much, Anna?

ANNA: Yes, I certainly do! He's a regular man, no matter what faults he's got. One of his fingers is worth all the hundreds of men I met out there--inland.

CHRIS: *His face darkening.* Maybe you tank you love him, den?

ANNA: *Defiantly.* What of it if I do?

CHRIS: *Scowling and forcing out the words.* Maybe--you tank you-- marry him?

ANNA: *Shaking her head.* No! *CHRIS' face lights up with relief. ANNA continues slowly, a trace of sadness in her voice.* If I'd met him four years ago--or even two years ago--I'd have jumped at the chance, I tell you that straight. And I would now--only he's such a simple guy--a big kid--and I ain't got the heart to fool him. *She breaks off suddenly.* But don't never say again he ain't good enough for me. It's me ain't good enough for him.

CHRIS: *Snorts scornfully.* Py yiminy, you go crazy, Ay tank!

ANNA: *With a mournful laugh.* Well, I been thinking I was myself the last few days. *She goes and takes a shawl from a hook near the door and throws it over her shoulders.* Guess I'll take a walk down to the end of the dock for a minute and see what's doing. I love to watch the ships passing. Mat'll be along before long, I guess. Tell him where I am, will you?

CHRIS: *Despondently.* All right, Ay tal him. *ANNA goes out the doorway on rear. CHRIS follows her out and stands on the deck outside for a moment looking after her. Then he comes back inside and shuts the door. He stands looking out of the window--mutters-- "Dirty die davil, you." Then he goes to the table, sets the cloth straight mechanically, picks up the newspaper ANNA has let fall to the floor and sits down in the rocking-chair. He stares at the paper for a while, then puts it on table,*

holds his head in his hands and sighs drearily. The noise of a man's heavy footsteps comes from the deck outside and there is a loud knock on the door. CHRIS starts, makes a move as if to get up and go to the door, then thinks better of it and sits still. The knock is repeated-- then as no answer comes, the door is flung open and MAT BURKE appears. CHRIS scowls at the intruder and his hand instinctively goes back to the sheath knife on his hip. BURKE is dressed up-- wears a cheap blue suit, a striped cotton shirt with a black tie, and black shoes newly shined. His face is beaming with good humor.

BURKE: *As he sees CHRIS--in a jovial tone of mockery.* Well, God bless who's here! *He bends down and squeezes his huge form through the narrow doorway.* And how is the world treating you this afternoon, Anna's father?

CHRIS: *Sullenly.* Pooty goot--if it ain't for some fallars. BURKE--[With a grin.] Meaning me, do you? *He laughs.* Well, if you ain't the funny old crank of a man! *Then soberly.* Where's herself? *CHRIS sits dumb, scowling, his eyes averted. BURKE is irritated by this silence.* Where's Anna, I'm after asking you?

CHRIS: *Hesitating--then grouchily.* She go down end of dock.

BURKE: I'll be going down to her, then. But first I'm thinking I'll take this chance when we're alone to have a word with you. *He sits down opposite CHRIS at the table and leans over toward him.* And that word is soon said. I'm marrying your Anna before this day is out, and you might as well make up your mind to it whether you like it or no.

CHRIS: *Glaring at him with hatred and forcing a scornful laugh.* Ho-ho! Dat's easy for say!

BURKE: You mean I won't? *Scornfully.* Is it the like of yourself will stop me, are you thinking?

CHRIS: Yes, Ay stop it, if it come to vorst.

BURKE: *With scornful pity.* God help you!

CHRIS: But ain't no need for me do dat. Anna--

BURKE: *Smiling confidently.* Is it Anna you think will prevent me?

CHRIS: Yes.

BURKE: And I'm telling you she'll not. She knows I'm loving her, and she loves me the same, and I know it.

CHRIS: Ho-ho! She only have fun. She make big fool of you, dat's all!

BURKE: *Unshaken--pleasantly.* That's a lie in your throat, divil mend you!

CHRIS: No, it ain't lie. She tal me yust before she go out she never marry fallar like you.

BURKE: I'll not believe it. 'Tis a great old liar you are, and a divil to be making a power of trouble if you had your way. But 'tis not trouble I'm looking for, and me sitting down here. *Earnestly.* Let us be talking it out now as man to man. You're her father, and wouldn't it be a shame for us to be at each other's throats like a pair of dogs, and I married with Anna. So out with the truth, man alive. What is it you're holding against me at all?

CHRIS: *A bit placated, in spite of himself, by BURKE'S evident sincerity--but puzzled and suspicious.* Vell--Ay don't vant for Anna gat married. Listen, you fallar. Ay'm a ole man. Ay don't see Anna for fifteen year. She vas all Ay gat in vorld. And now ven she come on first trip--you tank Ay vant her leave me 'lone again?

BURKE: *Heartily.* Let you not be thinking I have no heart at all for the way you'd be feeling.

CHRIS: *Astonished and encouraged--trying to plead persuasively.* Den you do right tang, eh? You ship

avay again, leave Anna alone. *Cajolingly.* Big fallar like you dat's on sea, he don't need vife. He gat new gel in every port, you know dat.

BURKE: *Angry for a second.* God stiffen you! *Then controlling himself--calmly.* I'll not be giving you the lie on that. But divil take you, there's a time comes to every man, on sea or land, that isn't a born fool, when he's sick of the lot of them cows, and wearing his heart out to meet up with a fine dacent girl, and have a home to call his own and be rearing up children in it. 'Tis small use you're asking me to leave Anna. She's the wan woman of the world for me, and I can't live without her now, I'm thinking.

CHRIS: You forgat all about her in one veek out of port, Ay bet you!

BURKE: You don't know the like I am. Death itself wouldn't make me forget her. So let you not be making talk to me about leaving her. I'll not, and be damned to you! It won't be so bad for you as you'd make out at all. She'll be living here in the States, and her married to me. And you'd be seeing her often so--a sight more often than ever you saw her the fifteen years she was growing up in the West. It's quare you'd be the one to be making great trouble about her leaving you when you never laid eyes on her once in all them years.

CHRIS: *Guiltily.* Ay taught it vas better Anna stay avay, grow up inland where she don't ever know ole davil, sea.

BURKE: *Scornfully.* Is it blaming the sea for your troubles ye are again, God help you? Well, Anna knows it now. 'Twas in her blood, anyway,

CHRIS: And Ay don't vant she ever know no-good fallar on sea--

BURKE: She knows one now.

CHRIS: *Banging the table with his fist--furiously.* Dat's yust it! Dat's yust what you are--no-good, sailor fallar! You tank Ay lat her life be made sorry by you like her mo'der's vas by me! No, Ay svear! She don't marry you if Ay gat kill you first!

BURKE: *Looks at him a moment, in astonishment--then laughing uproariously.* Ho-ho! Glory be to God, it's bold talk you have for a stumpy runt of a man!

CHRIS: *Threateningly.* Vell--you see!

BURKE: *With grinning defiance.* I'll see, surely! I'll see myself and Anna married this day, I'm telling you! *Then with contemptuous exasperation.* It's quare fool's blather you have about the sea done this and the sea done that. You'd ought to be shamed to be saying the like, and you an old sailor yourself. I'm after hearing a lot of it from you and a lot more that Anna's told me you do be saying to her, and I'm thinking it's a poor weak thing you are, and not a man at all!

CHRIS: *Darkly.* You see if Ay'm man--maybe quicker'n you tank.

BURKE: *Contemptuously.* Yerra, don't be boasting. I'm thinking 'tis out of your wits you've got with fright of the sea. You'd be wishing Anna married to a farmer, she told me. That'd be a swate match, surely! Would you have a fine girl the like of Anna lying down at nights with a muddy scut stinking of pigs and dung? Or would you have her tied for life to the like of them skinny, shrivelled swabs does be working in cities?

CHRIS: Dat's lie, you fool!

BURKE: 'Tis not. 'Tis your own mad notions I'm after telling. But you know the truth in your heart, if great fear of the sea has made you a liar and coward itself. *Pounding the table.* The sea's the only life for a man with guts in him isn't afraid of his own shadow! 'Tis only on the sea he's free, and him roving the face of the world, seeing all things, and not giving a damn for saving up money, or stealing from his friends, or any of the black tricks that a landlubber'd waste his life on. 'Twas

yourself knew it once, and you a bo'sun for years.

CHRIS: *Sputtering with rage.* You vas crazy fool, Ay tal you!

BURKE: You've swallowed the anchor. The sea give you a clout once knocked you down, and you're not man enough to get up for another, but lie there for the rest of your life howling bloody murder. *Proudly.* Isn't it myself the sea has nearly drowned, and me battered and bate till I was that close to hell I could hear the flames roaring, and never a groan out of me till the sea gave up and it seeing the great strength and guts of a man was in me?

CHRIS: *Scornfully.* Yes, you vas hell of fallar, hear you tal it!

BURKE: *Angrily.* You'll be calling me a liar once too often, me old bucko! Wasn't the whole story of it and my picture itself in the newspapers of Boston a week back? *Looking CHRIS up and down belittlingly.* Sure I'd like to see you in the best of your youth do the like of what I done in the storm and after. 'Tis a mad lunatic, screeching with fear, you'd be this minute!

CHRIS: Ho-ho! You vas young fool! In ole years when Ay was on windyammer, Ay vas through hundred storms vorse'n dat! Ships vas ships den--and men dat sail on dem vas real men. And now what you gat on steamers? You gat fallars on deck don't know ship from mudscow. *With a meaning glance at BURKE.* And below deck you gat fallars yust know how for shovel coal--might yust as veil vork on coal vagon ashore!

BURKE: *Stung--angrily.* Is it casting insults at the men in the stokehole ye are, ye old ape? God stiffen you! Wan of them is worth any ten stock-fish-swilling Square-heads ever shipped on a windbag!

CHRIS: *His face working with rage, his hand going back to the sheath-knife on his hip.* Irish svine, you!

BURKE: *Tauntingly.* Don't ye like the Irish, ye old babboon? 'Tis that you're needing in your family, I'm telling you--an Irishman and a man of the stokehole--to put guts in it so that you'll not be having grandchildren would be fearful cowards and jackasses the like of yourself!

CHRIS: *Half rising from his chair--in a voice choked with rage.* You look out!

BURKE: *Watching him intently--a mocking smile on his lips.* And it's that you'll be having, no matter what you'll do to prevent; for Anna and me'll be married this day, and no old fool the like of you will stop us when I've made up my mind.

CHRIS: *With a hoarse cry.* You don't! *He throws himself at BURKE, knife in hand, knocking his chair over backwards. BURKE springs to his feet quickly in time to meet the attack. He laughs with the pure love of battle. The old Swede is like a child in his hands. BURKE does not strike or mistreat him in any way, but simply twists his right hand behind his back and forces the knife from his fingers. He throws the knife into a far corner of the room--tauntingly.*

BURKE: Old men is getting childish shouldn't play with knives. *Holding the struggling CHRIS at arm's length--with a sudden rush of anger, drawing back his fist.* I've half a mind to hit you a great clout will put sense in your square head. Kape off me now, I'm warning you! *He gives CHRIS a push with the flat of his hand which sends the old Swede staggering back against the cabin wall, where he remains standing, panting heavily, his eyes fixed on BURKE with hatred, as if he were only collecting his strength to rush at him again.*

BURKE: *Warningly.* Now don't be coming at me again, I'm saying, or I'll flatten you on the floor with a blow, if 'tis Anna's father you are itself! I've no patience left for you. *Then with an amused laugh.* Well, 'tis a bold old man you are just the same, and I'd never think it was in you to come tackling me alone. *A shadow crosses the cabin windows. Both men start. ANNA appears in the doorway.*

ANNA: *With pleased surprise as she sees BURKE.* Hello, Mat. Are you here already? I was down--[She stops, looking from one to the other, sensing immediately that something has happened.] What's

up? *Then noticing the overturned chair--in alarm.* How'd that chair get knocked over? *Turning on BURKE reproachfully.* You ain't been fighting with him, Mat--after you promised?

BURKE: *His old self again.* I've not laid a hand on him, Anna. *He goes and picks up the chair, then turning on the still questioning ANNA--with a reassuring smile.* Let you not be worried at all. 'Twas only a bit of an argument we was having to pass the time till you'd come.

ANNA: It must have been some argument when you got to throwing chairs. *She turns on CHRIS.* Why don't you say something? What was it about?

CHRIS: *Relaxing at last--avoiding her eyes--sheepishly.* Ve vas talking about ships and fallars on sea.

ANNA: *With a relieved smile.* Oh--the old stuff, eh?

BURKE: *Suddenly seeming to come to a bold decision--with a defiant grin at CHRIS.* He's not after telling you the whole of it. We was arguing about you mostly.

ANNA: *With a frown.* About me?

BURKE: And we'll be finishing it out right here and now in your presence if you're willing. *He sits down at the left of table.*

ANNA: *Uncertainly--looking from him to her father.* Sure. Tell me what it's all about.

CHRIS: *Advancing toward the table--protesting to BURKE.* No! You don't do dat, you! You tal him you don't vant for hear him talk, Anna.

ANNA: But I do. I want this cleared up.

CHRIS: *Miserably afraid now.* Vell, not now, anyvay. You vas going ashore, yes? You ain't got time--

ANNA: *Firmly.* Yes, right here and now. *She turns to BURKE.* You tell me, Mat, since he don't want to.

BURKE: *Draws a deep breath--then plunges in boldly.* The whole of it's in a few words only. So's he'd make no mistake, and him hating the sight of me, I told him in his teeth I loved you. *Passionately.* And that's God truth, Anna, and well you know it!

CHRIS: *Scornfully--forcing a laugh.* Ho-ho! He tal same tang to gel every port he go!

ANNA: *Shrinking from her father with repulsion--resentfully.* Shut up, can't you? *Then to BURKE--feelingly.* I know it's true, Mat. I don't mind what he says.

BURKE: *Humbly grateful.* God bless you!

ANNA: And then what?

BURKE: And then--[Hesitatingly.] And then I said--[He looks at her pleadingly.] I said I was sure--I told him I thought you have a bit of love for me, too. *Passionately.* Say you do, Anna! Let you not destroy me entirely, for the love of God! *He grasps both her hands in his two.*

ANNA: *Deeply moved and troubled--forcing a trembling laugh.* So you told him that, Mat? No wonder he was mad. *Forcing out the words.* Well, maybe it's true, Mat. Maybe I do. I been thinking and thinking--I didn't want to, Mat, I'll own up to that--I tried to cut it out--but--[She laughs helplessly.] I guess I can't help it anyhow. So I guess I do, Mat. *Then with a sudden joyous defiance.* Sure I do! What's the use of kidding myself different? Sure I love you, Mat!

CHRIS: *With a cry of pain.* Anna! *He sits crushed.*

BURKE: *With a great depth of sincerity in his humble gratitude.* God be praised!

ANNA: *Assertively.* And I ain't never loved a man in my life before, you can always believe that--no matter what happens.

BURKE: *Goes over to her and puts his arms around her.* Sure I do be believing ivery word you iver said or iver will say. And 'tis you and me will be having a grand, beautiful life together to the end of our days! *He tries to kiss her. At first she turns away her head--then, overcome by a fierce impulse of passionate love, she takes his head in both her hands and holds his face close to hers, staring into his eyes. Then she kisses him full on the lips.*

ANNA: *Pushing him away from her--forcing a broken laugh.* Good- bye. *She walks to the doorway in rear--stands with her back toward them, looking out. Her shoulders quiver once or twice as if she were fighting back her sobs.*

BURKE: *Too in the seventh heaven of bliss to get any correct interpretation of her word--with a laugh.* Good-bye, is it? The divil you say! I'll be coming back at you in a second for more of the same! *To CHRIS, who has quickened to instant attention at his daughter's good-bye, and has looked back at her with a stirring of foolish hope in his eyes.* Now, me old bucko, what'll you be saying? You heard the words from her own lips. Confess I've bate you. Own up like a man when you're bate fair and square. And here's my hand to you--[Holds out his hand.] And let you take it and we'll shake and forget what's over and done, and be friends from this out.

CHRIS: *With implacable hatred.* Ay don't shake hands vith you fallar--not vhile Ay live!

BURKE: *Offended.* The back of my hand to you then, if that suits you better. *Growling.* 'Tis a rotten bad loser you are, divil mend you!

CHRIS: Ay don't lose--[Trying to be scornful and self-convincing.] Anna say she like you little bit but you don't hear her say she marry you, Ay bet. *At the sound of her name ANNA has turned round to them. Her face is composed and calm again, but it is the dead calm of despair.*

BURKE: *Scornfully.* No, and I wasn't hearing her say the sun is shining either.

CHRIS: *Doggedly.* Dat's all right. She don't say it, yust same.

ANNA: *Quietly--coming forward to them.* No, I didn't say it, Mat.

CHRIS: *Eagerly.* Dere! You hear!

BURKE: *Misunderstanding her--with a grin.* You're waiting till you do be asked, you mane? Well, I'm asking you now. And we'll be married this day, with the help of God!

ANNA: *Gently.* You heard what I said, Mat--after I kissed you?

BURKE: *Alarmed by something in her manner.* No--I disremember.

ANNA: I said good-bye. *Her voice trembling.* That kiss was for good-bye, Mat.

BURKE: *Terrified.* What d'you mane?

ANNA: I can't marry you, Mat--and we've said good-bye. That's all.

CHRIS: *Unable to hold back his exultation.* Ay know it! Ay know dat vas so!

BURKE: *Jumping to his feet--unable to believe his ears.* Anna! Is it making game of me you'd be? 'Tis a quare time to joke with me, and don't be doing it, for the love of God.

ANNA: *Looking him in the eyes--steadily.* D'you think I'd kid you now? No, I'm not joking, Mat. I mean what I said.

BURKE: Ye don't! Ye can't! 'Tis mad you are. I'm telling you!

ANNA: *Fixedly.* No I'm not.

BURKE: *Desperately.* But what's come over you so sudden? You was saying you loved me--

ANNA: I'll say that as often as you want me to. It's true.

BURKE: *Bewilderedly.* Then why--what, in the divil's name--Oh, God help me, I can't make head or tail to it at all!

ANNA: Because it's the best way out I can figure, Mat. *Her voice catching.* I been thinking it over and thinking it over day and night all week. Don't think it ain't hard on me, too, Mat.

BURKE: For the love of God, tell me then, what is it that's preventing you wedding me when the two of us has love? *Suddenly getting an idea and pointing at CHRIS--exasperatedly.* Is it giving heed to the like of that old fool ye are, and him hating me and filling your ears full of bloody lies against me?

CHRIS: *Getting to his feet--raging triumphantly before ANNA has a chance to get in a word.* Yes, Anna believe me, not you! She know her old fa'der don't lie like you.

ANNA: *Turning on her father angrily.* You sit down, d'you hear? Where do you come in butting in and making things worse? You're like a devil, you are! *Harshly.* Good Lord, and I was beginning to like you, beginning to forget all I've got held up against you!

CHRIS: *Crushed--feebly.* You ain't got nutting for hold against me, Anna.

ANNA: Ain't I yust! Well, lemme tell you--[She glances at BURKE and stops abruptly.] Say, Mat, I'm s'prised at you. You didn't think anything he'd said--

BURKE: *Glumly.* Sure, what else would it be?

ANNA: Think I've ever paid any attention to all his crazy bull? Gee, you must take me for a five-year-old kid.

BURKE: *Puzzled and beginning to be irritated at her too.* I don't know how to take you, with your saying this one minute and that the next.

ANNA: Well, he has nothing to do with it.

BURKE: Then what is it has? Tell me, and don't keep me waiting and sweating blood.

ANNA: *Resolutely* I can't tell you--and I won't. I got a good reason--and that's all you need to know. I can't marry you, that's all there is to it. *Distractedly.* So, for Gawd's sake, let's talk of something else.

BURKE: I'll not! *Then fearfully.* Is it married to someone else you are--in the West maybe?

ANNA: *Vehemently.* I should say not.

BURKE: *Regaining his courage.* To the divil with all other reasons then. They don't matter with me at all. *He gets to his feet confidently, assuming a masterful tone.* I'm thinking you're the like of them women can't make up their mind till they're drove to it. Well, then, I'll make up your mind for you bloody quick. *He takes her by the arms, grinning to soften his serious bullying.* We've had enough of talk! Let you be going into your room now and be dressing in your best and we'll be going ashore.

CHRIS: *Aroused--angrily.* No, py God, she don't do that! *Takes hold of her arm.*

ANNA: *Who has listened to BURKE in astonishment. She draws away from him, instinctively repelled by his tone, but not exactly sure if he is serious or not--a trace of resentment in her voice.* Say, where do you get that stuff?

BURKE: *Imperiously.* Never mind, now! Let you go get dressed, I'm saying, *Then turning to CHRIS.* We'll be seeing who'll win in the end--me or you.

CHRIS: *To ANNA--also in an authoritative tone.* You stay right here, Anna, you hear! *ANNA stands looking from one to the other of them as if she thought they had both gone crazy. Then the*

expression of her face freezes into the hardened sneer of her experience.

BURKE: *Violently.* She'll not! She'll do what I say! You've had your hold on her long enough. It's my turn now.

ANNA: *With a hard laugh.* Your turn? Say, what am I, anyway?

BURKE: 'Tis not what you are, 'tis what you're going to be this day--and that's wedded to me before night comes. Hurry up now with your dressing.

CHRIS: *Commandingly.* You don't do one tang he say, Anna! *ANNA laughs mockingly.*

BURKE: She will, so!

CHRIS: Ay tal you she don't! Ay'm her fa'der.

BURKE: She will in spite of you. She's taking my orders from this out, not yours.

ANNA: *Laughing again.* Orders is good!

BURKE: *Turning to her impatiently.* Hurry up now, and shake a leg. We've no time to be wasting. *Irritated as she doesn't move.* Do you hear what I'm telling you?

CHRIS: You stay dere, Anna!

ANNA: *At the end of her patience--blazing out at them passionately.* You can go to hell, both of you! *There is something in her tone that makes them forget their quarrel and turn to her in a stunned amazement. ANNA laughs wildly.* You're just like all the rest of them--you two! Gawd, you'd think I was a piece of furniture! I'll show you! Sit down now! *As they hesitate--furiously.* Sit down and let me talk for a minute. You're all wrong, see? Listen to me! I'm going to tell you something--and then I'm going to beat it. *To BURKE--with a harsh laugh.* I'm going to tell you a funny story, so pay attention. *Pointing to CHRIS.* I've been meaning to turn it loose on him every time he'd get my goat with his bull about keeping me safe inland. I wasn't going to tell you, but you've forced me into it. What's the dif? It's all wrong anyway, and you might as well get cured that way as any other. *With hard mocking.* Only don't forget what you said a minute ago about it not mattering to you what other reason I got so long as I wasn't married to no one else.

BURKE: *Manfully.* That's my word, and I'll stick to it!

ANNA: *Laughing bitterly.* What a chance! You make me laugh, honest! Want to bet you will? Wait 'n see! *She stands at the table rear, looking from one to the other of the two men with her hard, mocking smile. Then she begins, fighting to control her emotion and speak calmly.* First thing is, I want to tell you two guys something. You was going on's if one of you had got to own me. But nobody owns me, see?--'cepting myself. I'll do what I please and no man, I don't give a hoot who he is, can tell me what to do! I ain't asking either of you for a living. I can make it myself--one way or other. I'm my own boss. So put that in your pipe and smoke it! You and your orders!

BURKE: *Protestingly.* I wasn't meaning it that way at all and well you know it. You've no call to be raising this rumpus with me. *Pointing to CHRIS.* 'Tis him you've a right--

ANNA: I'm coming to him. But you--you did mean it that way, too. You sounded--yust like all the rest. *Hysterically.* But, damn it, shut up! Let me talk for a change!

BURKE: 'Tis quare, rough talk, that--for a dacent girl the like of you!

ANNA: *With a hard laugh.* Decent? Who told you I was? *CHRIS is sitting with bowed shoulders, his head in his hands. She leans over in exasperation and shakes him violently by the shoulder.* Don't go to sleep, Old Man! Listen here, I'm talking to you now!

CHRIS: *Straightening up and looking about as if he were seeking a way to escape--with frightened foreboding in his voice.* Ay don't vant for hear it. You vas going out of head, Ay tank, Anna.

ANNA: *Violently.* Well, living with you is enough to drive anyone off their nut. Your bunk about the farm being so fine! Didn't I write you year after year how rotten it was and what a dirty slave them cousins made of me? What'd you care? Nothing! Not even enough to come out and see me! That crazy bull about wanting to keep me away from the sea don't go down with me! You yust didn't want to be bothered with me! You're like all the rest of 'em!

CHRIS: *Feebly.* Anna! It ain't so--

ANNA: *Not heeding his interruption--revengefully.* But one thing I never wrote you. It was one of them cousins that you think is such nice people--the youngest son--Paul--that started me wrong. *Loudly.* It wasn't none of my fault. I hated him worse 'n hell and he knew it. But he was big and strong--[Pointing to Burke]-- like you!

BURKE: *Half springing to his feet--his fists clenched* God blarst it! *He sinks slowly back in his chair again, the knuckles showing white on his clenched hands, his face tense with the effort to suppress his grief and rage.*

CHRIS: *In a cry of horrified pain.* Anna!

ANNA: *To him--seeming not to have heard their interruptions.* That was why I run away from the farm. That was what made me get a yob as nurse girl in St. Paul. *With a hard, mocking laugh.* And you think that was a nice yob for a girl, too, don't you? *Sarcastically.* With all them nice inland fellers yust looking for a chance to marry me, I s'pose. Marry me? What a chance! They wasn't looking for marrying. *As BURKE lets a groan of fury escape him--desperately.* I'm owning up to everything fair and square. I was caged in, I tell you--yust like in yail--taking care of other people's kids--listening to 'em bawling and crying day and night-- when I wanted to be out--and I was lonesome--lonesome as hell! *With a sudden weariness in her voice.* So I give up finally. What was the use? *She stops and looks at the two men. Both are motionless and silent. CHRIS seems in a stupor of despair, his house of cards fallen about him. BURKE's face is livid with the rage that is eating him up, but he is too stunned and bewildered yet to find a vent for it. The condemnation she feels in their silence goads ANNA into a harsh, strident defiance.* You don't say nothing--either of you--but I know what you're thinking. You're like all the rest! *To CHRIS--furiously.* And who's to blame for it, me or you? If you'd even acted like a man--if you'd even been a regular father and had me with you--maybe things would be different!

CHRIS: *In agony.* Don't talk dat vay, Anna! Ay go crazy! Ay von't listen! *Puts his hands over his ears.*

ANNA: *Infuriated by his action--stridently.* You will too listen! *She leans over and pulls his hands from his ears--with hysterical rage.* You--keeping me safe inland--I wasn't no nurse girl the last two years--I lied when I wrote you--I was in a house, that's what!--yes, that kind of a house--the kind sailors like you and Mat goes to in port--and your nice inland men, too--and all men, God damn 'em! I hate 'em! Hate 'em! *She breaks into hysterical sobbing, throwing herself into the chair and hiding her face in her hands on the table. The two men have sprung to their feet.*

CHRIS: *Whimpering like a child.* Anna! Anna! It's lie! It's lie! *He stands wringing his hands together and begins to weep.*

BURKE: *His whole great body tense like a spring--dully and gropingly.* So that's what's in it!

ANNA: *Raising her head at the sound of his voice--with extreme mocking bitterness.* I s'pose you remember your promise, Mat? No other reason was to count with you so long as I wasn't married already. So I s'pose you want me to get dressed and go ashore, don't you? *She laughs.* Yes, you do!

BURKE: *On the verge of his outbreak--stammeringly.* God stiffen you!

ANNA: *Trying to keep up her hard, bitter tone, but gradually letting a note of pitiful pleading creep in.* I

s'pose if I tried to tell you I wasn't--that--no more you'd believe me, wouldn't you? Yes, you would! And if I told you that yust getting out in this barge, and being on the sea had changed me and made me feel different about things,'s if all I'd been through wasn't me and didn't count and was yust like it never happened--you'd laugh, wouldn't you? And you'd die laughing sure if I said that meeting you that funny way that night in the fog, and afterwards seeing that you was straight goods stuck on me, had got me to thinking for the first time, and I sized you up as a different kind of man-- a sea man as different from the ones on land as water is from mud--and that was why I got stuck on you, too. I wanted to marry you and fool you, but I couldn't. Don't you see how I'd changed? I couldn't marry you with you believing a lie--and I was shamed to tell you the truth--till the both of you forced my hand, and I seen you was the same as all the rest. And now, give me a bawling out and beat it, like I can tell you're going to. *She stops, looking at BURKE. He is silent, his face averted, his features beginning to work with fury. She pleads passionately.* Will you believe it if I tell you that loving you has made me--clean? It's the straight goods, honest! *Then as he doesn't reply--bitterly.* Like hell you will! You're like all the rest!

BURKE: *Blazing out--turning on her in a perfect frenzy of rage-- his voice trembling with passion.* The rest, is it? God's curse on you! Clane, is it? You slut, you, I'll be killing you now! *He picks up the chair on which he has been sitting and, swinging it high over his shoulder, springs toward her. CHRIS rushes forward with a cry of alarm, trying to ward off the blow from his daughter. ANNA looks up into BURKE'S eyes with the fearlessness of despair. BURKE checks himself, the chair held in the air.*

CHRIS: *Wildly.* Stop, you crazy fool! You vant for murder her!

ANNA: *Pushing her father away brusquely, her eyes still holding BURKE'S.* Keep out of this, you! *To BURKE--dully.* Well, ain't you got the nerve to do it? Go ahead! I'll be thankful to you, honest. I'm sick of the whole game.

BURKE: *Throwing the chair away into a corner of the room-- helplessly.* I can't do it, God help me, and your two eyes looking at me. *Furiously.* Though I do be thinking I'd have a good right to smash your skull like a rotten egg. Was there iver a woman in the world had the rottenness in her that you have, and was there iver a man the like of me was made the fool of the world, and me thinking thoughts about you, and having great love for you, and dreaming dreams of the fine life we'd have when we'd be wedded! *His voice high pitched in a lamentation that is like a keen* Yerra, God help me! I'm destroyed entirely and my heart is broken in bits! I'm asking God Himself, was it for this He'd have me roaming the earth since I was a lad only, to come to black shame in the end, where I'd be giving a power of love to a woman is the same as others you'd meet in any hooker-shanty in port, with red gowns on them and paint on their grinning mugs, would be sleeping with any man for a dollar or two!

ANNA: *In a scream.* Don't, Mat! For Gawd's sake! *Then raging and pounding on the table with her hands.* Get out of here! Leave me alone! Get out of here!

BURKE: *His anger rushing back on him.* I'll be going, surely! And I'll be drinking sloos of whiskey will wash that black kiss of yours off my lips; and I'll be getting dead rotten drunk so I'll not remember if 'twas iver born you was at all; and I'll be shipping away on some boat will take me to the other end of the world where I'll never see your face again! *He turns toward the door*

CHRIS: *Who has been standing in a stupor--suddenly grasping BURKE by the arm--stupidly* No, you don't go. Ay tank maybe it's better Anna marry you now.

BURKE: *Shaking CHRIS off--furiously* Lave go of me, ye old ape! Marry her, is it? I'd see her roasting in hell first! I'm shipping away out of this, I'm telling you! *Pointing to Anna-- passionately* And my curse on you and the curse of Almighty God and all the Saints! You've destroyed me this day and may you lie awake in the long nights, tormented with thoughts of Mat Burke and the great wrong

you've done him!

ANNA: *In anguish* Mat! *But he turns without another word and strides out of the doorway. ANNA looks after him wildly, starts to run after him, then hides her face in her outstretched arms, sobbing. CHRIS stands in a stupor, staring at the floor.*

CHRIS: *After a pause, dully.* Ay tank Ay go ashore, too.

ANNA: *Looking up, wildly.* Not after him! Let him go! Don't you dare--

CHRIS: *Somberly.* Ay go for gat drink.

ANNA: *With a harsh laugh.* So I'm driving you to drink, too, eh? I s'pose you want to get drunk so's you can forget--like him?

CHRIS: *Bursting out angrily.* Yes, Ay vant! You tank Ay like hear dem tangs. *Breaking down--weeping.* Ay tank you vasn't dat kind of gel, Anna.

ANNA: *Mockingly.* And I s'pose you want me to beat it, don't you? You don't want me here disgracing you, I s'pose?

CHRIS: No, you stay here! *Goes over and pats her on the shoulder, the tears running down his face.* Ain't your fault, Anna, Ay know dat. *She looks up at him, softened. He bursts into rage.* It's dat ole davil, sea, do this to me! *He shakes his fist at the door.* It's her dirty tricks! It vas all right on barge with yust you and me. Den she bring dat Irish fallar in fog, she make you like him, she make you fight with me all time! If dat Irish fallar don't never come, you don't never tal me dem tangs, Ay don't never know, and every tang's all right. *He shakes his fist again* Dirty ole davil!

ANNA: *With spent weariness.* Oh, what's the use? Go on ashore and get drunk.

CHRIS: *Goes into room on left and gets his cap. He goes to the door, silent and stupid--then turns.* You vait here, Anna?

ANNA: *Dully* Maybe--and maybe not. Maybe I'll get drunk, too. Maybe I'll--But what the hell do you care what I do? Go on and beat it. *CHRIS turns stupidly and goes out. ANNA sits at the table, staring straight in front of her.*

The Curtain Falls

ACT IV

ACT IV

ACT IV

Scene: Same as Act Three, about nine o'clock of a foggy night two days later. The whistles of steamers in the harbor can be heard. The cabin is lighted by a small lamp on the table. A suitcase stands in the middle of the floor. ANNA is sitting in the rocking- chair. She wears a hat, is all dressed up as in Act One. Her face is pale, looks terribly tired and worn, as if the two days just past had been ones of suffering and sleepless nights. She stares before her despondently, her chin in her hands. There is a timid knock on the door in rear. ANNA jumps to her feet with a startled exclamation and looks toward the door with an expression of mingled hope and fear.

ANNA: *Faintly.* Come in. *Then summoning her courage--more resolutely.* Come in. *The door is opened and CHRIS appears in the doorway. He is in a very bleary, bedraggled condition, suffering from the after effects of his drunk. A tin pail full of foaming beer is in his hand. He comes forward, his eyes avoiding ANNA'S. He mutters stupidly.* It's foggy.

ANNA: *Looking him over with contempt.* So you come back at last, did you? You're a fine looking sight!

Then jeeringly. I thought you'd beaten it for good on account of the disgrace I'd brought on you.

CHRIS: *Wincing-faintly.* Don't say dat, Anna, please! *He sits in a chair by the table, setting down the can of beer, holding his head in his hands*

ANNA: *Looks at him with a certain sympathy.* What's the trouble? Feeling sick?

CHRIS: *Dully.* Inside my head feel sick.

ANNA: Well, what d'you expect after being soused for two days? *Resentfully.* It serves you right. A fine thing--you leaving me alone on this barge all that time!

CHRIS: *Humbly.* Ay'm sorry, Anna.

ANNA: *Scornfully* Sorry!

CHRIS: But Ay'm not sick inside head vay you mean. Ay'm sick from tank too much about you, about me.

ANNA: And how about me? D'you suppose I ain't been thinking, too?

CHRIS: Ay'm sorry, Anna. *He sees her bag and gives a start* You pack your bag, Anna? You vas going--?

ANNA: *Forcibly.* Yes, I was going right back to what you think.

CHRIS: Anna!

ANNA: I went ashore to get a train for New York. I'd been waiting and waiting 'till I was sick of it. Then I changed my mind and decided not to go to-day. But I'm going first thing to-morrow, so it'll all be the same in the end.

CHRIS: *Raising his head--pleadingly* No, you never do dat, Anna!

ANNA: *With a sneer.* Why not, I'd like to know?

CHRIS: You don't never gat to do--dat vay--no more, Ay tal you. Ay fix dat up all right.

ANNA: *Suspiciously.* Fix what up?

CHRIS: *Not seeming to have heard her question--sadly.* You vas vaiting, you say? You vasn't vaiting for me, Ay bet.

ANNA: *Callously.* You'd win.

CHRIS: For dat Irish fallar?

ANNA: *Defiantly.* Yes--if you want to know! *Then with a forlorn laugh.* If he did come back it'd only because he wanted to beat me up or kill me, I suppose. But even if he did, I'd rather have him come than not show up at all. I wouldn't care what he did.

CHRIS: Ay guess it's true you vas in love with him all right.

ANNA: You guess!

CHRIS: *Turning to her earnestly.* And Ay'm sorry for you like hell he don't come, Anna!

ANNA: *Softened.* Seems to me you've changed your tune a lot.

CHRIS: Ay've been tanking, and Ay guess it vas all my fault--all bad tangs dat happen to you. *Pleadingly.* You try for not hate me, Anna. Ay'm crazy ole fool, dat's all.

ANNA: Who said I hated you?

CHRIS: Ay'm sorry for everytang Ay do wrong for you, Anna. Ay vant for you be happy all rest of your life for make up! It make you happy marry dat Irish fallar, Ay vant it, too.

ANNA: *Dully.--Well, there ain't no chance. But I'm glad you think different about it, anyway.*

CHRIS: *Supplicatingly.* And you tank--maybe--you forgive me sometime?

ANNA: *With a wan smile.* I'll forgive you right now.

CHRIS: *Seizing her hand and kissing it--brokenly.* Anna lilla! Anna lilla!

ANNA: *Touched but a bit embarrassed.* Don't bawl about it. There ain't nothing to forgive, anyway. It ain't your fault, and it ain't mine, and it ain't his neither. We're all poor nuts, and things happen, and we yust get mixed in wrong, that's all.

CHRIS: *Eagerly.* You say right tang, Anna, py golly! It ain't nobody's fault! *Shaking his fist.* It's dat ole davil, sea!

ANNA: *With an exasperated laugh.* Gee, won't you ever can that stuff? *CHRIS relapses into injured silence. After a pause ANNA continues curiously.* You said a minute ago you'd fixed something up--about me. What was it?

CHRIS: *After a hesitating pause.* Ay'm shipping avay on sea again, Anna.

ANNA: *Astounded.* You're--what?

CHRIS: Ay sign on steamer sail to-morrow. Ay gat my ole yob-- bo'sun. *ANNA stares at him. As he goes on, a bitter smile comes over her face.* Ay tank dat's best tang for you. Ay only bring you bad luck, Ay tank. Ay make your mo'der's life sorry. Ay don't vant make yours dat way, but Ay do yust same. Dat ole davil, sea, she make me Yonah man ain't no good for nobody. And Ay tank now it ain't no use fight with sea. No man dat live going to beat her, py yingo!

ANNA: *With a laugh of helpless bitterness.* So that's how you've fixed me, is it?

CHRIS: Yes, Ay tank if dat ole davil gat me back she leave you alone den.

ANNA: *Bitterly.* But, for Gawd's sake, don't you see, you're doing the same thing you've always done? Don't you see--? *But she sees the look of obsessed stubbornness on her father's face and gives it up helplessly.* But what's the use of talking. You ain't right, that's what. I'll never blame you for nothing no more. But how you could figure out that was fixing me--!

CHRIS: Dat ain't all. Ay gat dem fallars in steam-ship office to pay you all money coming to me every month vhile Ay'm avay.

ANNA: *With a hard laugh.* Thanks. But I guess I won't be hard up for no small change.

CHRIS: *Hurt--humbly.* It ain't much, Ay know, but it's plenty for keep you so you never gat go.

ANNA: *Shortly.* Shut up, will you? We'll talk about it later, see?

CHRIS: *After a pause--ingratiatingly.* You like Ay go ashore look for dat Irish fallar, Anna?

ANNA: *Angrily.* Not much! Think I want to drag him back?

CHRIS: *After a pause--uncomfortably.* Py golly, dat booze don't go veil. Give me fever, Ay tank, Ay feel hot like hell. *He takes off his coat and lets it drop on the floor. There is a loud thud.*

ANNA: *With a start.* What you got in your pocket, for Pete's sake--a ton of lead? *She reaches down, takes the coat and pulls out a revolver--looks from it to him in amazement.* A gun? What were you doing with this?

CHRIS: *Sheepishly.* Ay forgat. Ain't nutting. Ain't loaded, anyvay.

ANNA: *Breaking it open to make sure--then closing it again-- looking at him suspiciously.* That ain't telling me why you got it?

CHRIS: *Sheepishly.* Ay'm ole fool. Ay gat it vhen Ay go ashore first. Ay tank den it's all fault of dat Irish fallar.

ANNA: *With a shudder.* Say, you're crazier than I thought. I never dreamt you'd go that far.

CHRIS: *Quickly.* Ay don't. Ay gat better sense right avay. Ay don't never buy bullets even. It ain't his fault, Ay know.

ANNA: *Still suspicious of him.* Well, I'll take care of this for a while, loaded or not. *She puts it in the drawer of table and closes the drawer.*

CHRIS: *Placatingly.* Throw it overboard if you vant. Ay don't care, *Then after a pause.* Py golly, Ay tank Ay go lie down. Ay feel sick. *ANNA takes a magazine from the table. CHRIS hesitates by her chair.* Ve talk again before Ay go, yes?

ANNA: *Dully.* Where's this ship going to?

CHRIS: Cape Town. Dat's in South Africa. She's British steamer called Londonderry. *He stands hesitatingly--finally blurts out.* Anna--you forgive me sure?

ANNA: *Wearily.* Sure I do. You ain't to blame. You're yust--what you are--like me.

CHRIS: *Pleadingly.* Den--you lat me kiss you again once?

ANNA: *Raising her face--forcing a wan smile.* Sure. No hard feelings.

CHRIS: *Kisses her--brokenly.* Anna lilla! Ay--[He fights for words to express himself, but finds none--miserably--with a sob.] Ay can't say it. Good-night, Anna.

ANNA: Good-night. *He picks up the can of beer and goes slowly into the room on left, his shoulders bowed, his head sunk forward dejectedly. He closes the door after him. ANNA turns over the pages of the magazine, trying desperately to banish her thoughts by looking at the pictures. This fails to distract her, and flinging the magazine back on the table, she springs to her feet and walks about the cabin distractedly, clenching and unclenching her hands. She speaks aloud to herself in a tense, trembling voice.* Gawd, I can't stand this much longer! What am I waiting for anyway?--like a damn fool! *She laughs helplessly, then checks herself abruptly, as she hears the sound of heavy footsteps on the deck outside. She appears to recognize these and her face lights up with joy. She gasps:* Mat! *A strange terror seems suddenly to seize her. She rushes to the table, takes the revolver out of drawer and crouches down in the corner, left, behind the cupboard. A moment later the door is flung open and MAT BURKE appears in the doorway. He is in bad shape--his clothes torn and dirty, covered with sawdust as if he had been grovelling or sleeping on barroom floors. There is a red bruise on his forehead over one of his eyes, another over one cheekbone, his knuckles are skinned and raw--plain evidence of the fighting he has been through on his "bat." His eyes are bloodshot and heavy-lidded, his face has a bloated look. But beyond these appearances--the results of heavy drinking--there is an expression in his eyes of wild mental turmoil, of impotent animal rage baffled by its own abject misery.*

BURKE: *Peers blinkingly about the cabin--hoarsely.* Let you not be hiding from me, whoever's here--though 'tis well you know I'd have a right to come back and murder you. *He stops to listen. Hearing no sound, he closes the door behind him and comes forward to the table. He throws himself into the rocking-chair-- despondently.* There's no one here, I'm thinking, and 'tis a great fool I am to be coming. *With a sort of dumb, uncomprehending anguish.* Yerra, Mat Burke, 'tis a great jackass you've become and what's got into you at all, at all? She's gone out of this long ago, I'm telling you, and you'll never see her face again. *ANNA stands up, hesitating, struggling between joy and fear. BURKE'S eyes fall on ANNA'S bag. He leans over to examine it.* What's this? *Joyfully.* It's hers. She's not gone! But where is she? Ashore? *Darkly.* What would she be doing ashore on this rotten night? *His face suddenly convulsed with grief and rage.* 'Tis that, is it?

Oh, God's curse on her! *Raging.* I'll wait 'till she comes and choke her dirty life out. *ANNA starts, her face grows hard. She steps into the room, the revolver in her right hand by her side.*

ANNA: *In a cold, hard tone.* What are you doing here?

BURKE: *Wheeling about with a terrified gasp* Glory be to God! *They remain motionless and silent for a moment, holding each other's eyes.*

ANNA: *In the same hard voice* Well, can't you talk?

BURKE: *Trying to fall into an easy, careless tone* You've a year's growth scared out of me, coming at me so sudden and me thinking I was alone.

ANNA: You've got your nerve butting in here without knocking or nothing. What d'you want?

BURKE: *Airily* Oh, nothing much. I was wanting to have a last word with you, that's all. *He moves a step toward her.*

ANNA: *Sharply--raising the revolver in her hand.* Careful now! Don't try getting too close. I heard what you said you'd do to me.

BURKE: *Noticing the revolver for the first time.* Is it murdering me you'd be now, God forgive you? *Then with a contemptuous laugh.* Or is it thinking I'd be frightened by that old tin whistle? *He walks straight for her.*

ANNA: *Wildly.* Look out, I tell you!

BURKE: *Who has come so close that the revolver is almost touching his chest.* Let you shoot, then! *Then with sudden wild grief.* Let you shoot, I'm saying, and be done with it! Let you end me with a shot and I'll be thanking you, for it's a rotten dog's life I've lived the past two days since I've known what you are, 'til I'm after wishing I was never born at all!

ANNA: *Overcome--letting the revolver drop to the floor, as if her fingers had no strength to hold it--hysterically.* What d'you want coming here? Why don't you beat it? Go on! *She passes him and sinks down in the rocking-chair.*

BURKE: *Following her--mournfully.* 'Tis right you'd be asking why did I come. *Then angrily.* 'Tis because 'tis a great weak fool of the world I am, and me tormented with the wickedness you'd told of yourself, and drinking oceans of booze that'd make me forget. Forget? Divil a word I'd forget, and your face grinning always in front of my eyes, awake or asleep, 'til I do be thinking a madhouse is the proper place for me.

ANNA: *Glancing at his hands and--face--scornfully* You look like you ought to be put away some place. Wonder you wasn't pulled in. You been scrapping, too, ain't you?

BURKE: I have--with every scut would take off his coat to me! *Fiercely.* And each time I'd be hitting one a clout in the mug, it wasn't his face I'd be seeing at all, but yours, and me wanting to drive you a blow would knock you out of this world where I wouldn't be seeing or thinking more of you.

ANNA: *Her lips trembling pitifully* Thanks!

BURKE: *Walking up and down--distractedly.* That's right, make game of me! Oh, I'm a great coward surely, to be coming back to speak with you at all. You've a right to laugh at me.

ANNA: I ain't laughing at you, Mat.

BURKE: *Unheeding.* You to be what you are, and me to be Mat Burke, and me to be drove back to look at you again! 'Tis black shame is on me!

ANNA: *Resentfully.* Then get out. No one's holding you!

BURKE: *Bewilderedly* And me to listen to that talk from a woman like you and be frightened to close her

mouth with a slap! Oh, God help me, I'm a yellow coward for all men to spit at! *Then furiously* But I'll not be getting out of this 'till I've had me word. *Raising his fist threateningly* And let you look out how you'd drive me! *Letting his fist fall helplessly* Don't be angry now! I'm raving like a real lunatic, I'm thinking, and the sorrow you put on me has my brains drownded in grief. *Suddenly bending down to her and grasping her arm intensely* Tell me it's a lie, I'm saying! That's what I'm after coming to hear you say.

ANNA: *Dully* A lie? What?

BURKE: *With passionate entreaty* All the badness you told me two days back. Sure it must be a lie! You was only making game of me, wasn't you? Tell me 'twas a lie, Anna, and I'll be saying prayers of thanks on my two knees to the Almighty God!

ANNA: *Terribly shaken--faintly.* I can't. Mat. *As he turns away-- imploringly.* Oh, Mat, won't you see that no matter what I was I ain't that any more? Why, listen! I packed up my bag this afternoon and went ashore. I'd been waiting here all alone for two days, thinking maybe you'd come back--thinking maybe you'd think over all I'd said--and maybe--oh, I don't know what I was hoping! But I was afraid to even go out of the cabin for a second, honest-- afraid you might come and not find me here. Then I gave up hope when you didn't show up and I went to the railroad station. I was going to New York. I was going back--

BURKE: *Hoarsely.* God's curse on you!

ANNA: Listen, Mat! You hadn't come, and I'd gave up hope. But--in the station--I couldn't go. I'd bought my ticket and everything. *She takes the ticket from her dress and tries to hold it before his eyes.* But I got to thinking about you--and I couldn't take the train--I couldn't! So I come back here--to wait some more. Oh, Mat, don't you see I've changed? Can't you forgive what's dead and gone--and forget it?

BURKE: *Turning on her--overcome by rage again.* Forget, is it? I'll not forget 'til my dying day, I'm telling you, and me tormented with thoughts. *In a frenzy.* Oh, I'm wishing I had wan of them fornenst me this minute and I'd beat him with my fists 'till he'd be a bloody corpse! I'm wishing the whole lot of them will roast in hell 'til the Judgment Day--and yourself along with them, for you're as bad as they are.

ANNA: *Shuddering.* Mat! *Then after a pause--in a voice of dead, stony calm.* Well, you've had your say. Now you better beat it.

BURKE: *Starts slowly for the door--hesitates--then after a pause.* And what'll you be doing?

ANNA: What difference does it make to you?

BURKE: I'm asking you!

ANNA: *In the same tone.* My bag's packed and I got my ticket. I'll go to New York to-morrow.

BURKE: *Helplessly.* You mean--you'll be doing the same again?

ANNA: *Stonily.* Yes.

BURKE: *In anguish.* You'll not! Don't torment me with that talk! 'Tis a she-divil you are sent to drive me mad entirely!

ANNA: *Her voice breaking.* Oh, for Gawd's sake, Mat, leave me alone! Go away! Don't you see I'm licked? Why d'you want to keep on kicking me?

BURKE: *Indignantly.* And don't you deserve the worst I'd say, God forgive you?

ANNA: All right. Maybe I do. But don't rub it in. Why ain't you done what you said you was going to? Why ain't you got that ship was going to take you to the other side of the earth where you'd never

see me again?

BURKE: I have.

ANNA: *Startled.* What--then you're going--honest?

BURKE: I signed on to-day at noon, drunk as I was--and she's sailing to-morrow.

ANNA: And where's she going to?

BURKE: Cape Town.

ANNA: *The memory of having heard that name a little while before coming to her--with a start, confusedly.* Cape Town? Where's that. Far away?

BURKE: 'Tis at the end of Africa. That's far for you.

ANNA: *Forcing a laugh.* You're keeping your word all right, ain't you? *After a slight pause--curiously.* What's the boat's name?

BURKE: The Londonderry.

ANNA: *It suddenly comes to her that this is the same ship her father is sailing on.* The Londonderry! It's the same--Oh, this is too much! *With wild, ironical laughter.* Ha-ha-ha!

BURKE: What's up with you now?

ANNA: Ha-ha-ha! It's funny, funny! I'll die laughing!

BURKE: *Irritated.* Laughing at what?

ANNA: It's a secret. You'll know soon enough. It's funny. *Controlling herself--after a pause--cynically.* What kind of a place is this Cape Town? Plenty of dames there, I suppose?

BURKE: To hell with them! That I may never see another woman to my dying hour!

ANNA: That's what you say now, but I'll bet by the time you get there you'll have forgot all about me and start in talking the same old bull you talked to me to the first one you meet.

BURKE: *Offended.* I'll not, then! God mend you, is it making me out to be the like of yourself you are, and you taking up with this one and that all the years of your life?

ANNA: *Angrily assertive.* Yes, that's yust what I do mean! You been doing the same thing all your life, picking up a new girl in every port. How're you any better than I was?

BURKE: *Thoroughly exasperated.* Is it no shame you have at all? I'm a fool to be wasting talk on you and you hardened in badness. I'll go out of this and lave you alone forever. *He starts for the door--then stops to turn on her furiously* And I suppose 'tis the same lies you told them all before that you told to me?

ANNA: *Indignantly.* That's a lie! I never did!

BURKE: *Miserably.* You'd be saying that, anyway.

ANNA: *Forcibly, with growing intensity.* Are you trying to accuse me--of being in love--really in love--with them?

BURKE: I'm thinking you were, surely.

ANNA: *Furiously, as if this were the last insult--advancing on him threateningly* You mutt, you! I've stood enough from you. Don't you dare. *With scornful bitterness.* Love 'em! Oh, my Gawd! You damn thick-head! Love 'em? *Savagely.* I hated 'em, I tell you! Hated 'em, hated 'em, hated 'em! And may Gawd strike me dead this minute and my mother, too, if she was alive, if I ain't telling you the honest truth!

BURKE: *Immensely pleased by her vehemence--a light beginning to break over his face--but still uncertain, torn between doubt and the desire to believe--helplessly.* If I could only be believing you now!

ANNA: *Distractedly.* Oh, what's the use? What's the use of me talking? What's the use of anything? *Pleadingly.* Oh, Mat, you mustn't think that for a second! You mustn't! Think all the other bad about me you want to, and I won't kick, 'cause you've a right to. But don't think that! *On the point of tears.* I couldn't bear it! It'd be yust too much to know you was going away where I'd never see you again--thinking that about me!

BURKE: *After an inward struggle--tensely--forcing out the words with difficulty.* If I was believing--that you'd never had love for any other man in the world but me--I could be forgetting the rest, maybe.

ANNA: *With a cry of joy.* Mat!

BURKE: *Slowly.* If 'tis truth you're after telling, I'd have a right, maybe, to believe you'd changed--and that I'd changed you myself 'til the thing you'd been all your life wouldn't be you any more at all.

ANNA: *Hanging on his words--breathlessly.* Oh, Mat! That's what I been trying to tell you all along!

BURKE: *Simply.* For I've a power of strength in me to lead men the way I want, and women, too, maybe, and I'm thinking I'd change you to a new woman entirely, so I'd never know, or you either, what kind of woman you'd been in the past at all.

ANNA: Yes, you could, Mat! I know you could!

BURKE: And I'm thinking 'twasn't your fault, maybe, but having that old ape for a father that left you to grow up alone, made you what you was. And if I could be believing 'tis only me you--

ANNA: *Distractedly.* You got to believe it. Mat! What can I do? I'll do anything, anything you want to prove I'm not lying!

BURKE: *Suddenly seems to have a solution. He feels in the pocket of his coat and grasps something--solemnly.* Would you be willing to swear an oath, now--a terrible, fearful oath would send your soul to the divils in hell if you was lying?

ANNA: *Eagerly.* Sure, I'll swear, Mat--on anything!

BURKE: *Takes a small, cheap old crucifix from his pocket and holds it up for her to see.* Will you swear on this?

ANNA: *Reaching out for it.* Yes. Sure I will. Give it to me.

BURKE: *Holding it away.* 'Tis a cross was given me by my mother, God rest her soul. *He makes the sign of the cross mechanically.* I was a lad only, and she told me to keep it by me if I'd be waking or sleeping and never lose it, and it'd bring me luck. She died soon after. But I'm after keeping it with me from that day to this, and I'm telling you there's great power in it, and 'tis great bad luck it's saved me from and me roaming the seas, and I having it tied round my neck when my last ship sunk, and it bringing me safe to land when the others went to their death. *Very earnestly.* And I'm warning you now, if you'd swear an oath on this, 'tis my old woman herself will be looking down from Hivin above, and praying Almighty God and the Saints to put a great curse on you if she'd hear you swearing a lie!

ANNA: *Awed by his manner--superstitiously* I wouldn't have the nerve--honest--if it was a lie. But it's the truth and I ain't scared to swear. Give it to me.

BURKE: *Handing it to her--almost frightenedly, as if he feared for her safety.* Be careful what you'd swear, I'm saying.

ANNA: *Holding the cross gingerly.* Well--what do you want me to swear? You say it.

BURKE: Swear I'm the only man in the world ivir you felt love for.

ANNA: *Looking into his eyes steadily* I swear it.

BURKE: And that you'll be forgetting from this day all the badness you've done and never do the like of it again.

ANNA: *Forcibly.* I swear it! I swear it by God!

BURKE: And may the blackest curse of God strike you if you're lying. Say it now!

ANNA: And may the blackest curse of God strike me if I'm lying!

BURKE: *With a stupendous sigh.* Oh, glory be to God, I'm after believing you now! *He takes the cross from her hand, his face beaming with joy, and puts it back in his pocket. He puts his arm about her waist and is about to kiss her when he stops, appalled by some terrible doubt.*

ANNA: *Alarmed.* What's the matter with you?

BURKE: *With sudden fierce questioning.* Is it Catholic ye are?

ANNA: *Confused.* No. Why?

BURKE: *Filled with a sort of bewildered foreboding.* Oh, God, help me! *With a dark glance of suspicion at her.* There's some divil's trickery in it, to be swearing an oath on a Catholic cross and you wan of the others.

ANNA: *Distractedly.* Oh, Mat, don't you believe me?

BURKE: *Miserably.* If it isn't a Catholic you are--

ANNA: I ain't nothing. What's the difference? Didn't you hear me swear?

BURKE: *Passionately.* Oh, I'd a right to stay away from you--but I couldn't! I was loving you in spite of it all and wanting to be with you, God forgive me, no matter what you are. I'd go mad if I'd not have you! I'd be killing the world--[He seizes her in his arms and kisses her fiercely.]

ANNA: *With a gasp of joy.* Mat!

BURKE: *Suddenly holding her away from him and staring into her eyes as if to probe into her soul--slowly.* If your oath is no proper oath at all, I'll have to be taking your naked word for it and have you anyway, I'm thinking--I'm needing you that bad!

ANNA: *Hurt--reproachfully.* Mat! I swore, didn't I?

BURKE: *Defiantly, as if challenging fate.* Oath or no oath, 'tis no matter. We'll be wedded in the morning, with the help of God. *Still more defiantly.* We'll be happy now, the two of us, in spite of the divil! *He crushes her to him and kisses her again. The door on the left is pushed open and CHRIS appears in the doorway. He stands blinking at them. At first the old expression of hatred of BURKE comes into his eyes instinctively. Then a look of resignation and relief takes its place. His face lights up with a sudden happy thought. He turns back into the bedroom--reappears immediately with the tin can of beer in his hand grinning.*

CHRIS: Me have drink on this, py golly! *They break away from each other with startled exclamations.*

BURKE: *Explosively.* God stiffen it! *He takes a step toward CHRIS threateningly.*

ANNA: *Happily--to her father.* That's the way to talk! *With a laugh.* And say, it's about time for you and Mat to kiss and make up. You're going to be shipmates on the Londonderry, did you know it?

BURKE: *Astounded.* Shipmates--Has himself--

CHRIS: *Equally astounded.* Ay vas bo'sun on her.

BURKE: The divil! *Then angrily.* You'd be going back to sea and leaving her alone, would you?

ANNA: *Quickly.* It's all right, Mat. That's where he belongs, and I want him to go. You got to go, too; we'll need the money. *With a laugh, as she gets the glasses.* And as for me being alone, that runs in the family, and I'll get used to it. *Pouring out their glasses.* I'll get a little house somewhere and I'll make a regular place for you two to come back to,--wait and see. And now you drink up and be friends.

BURKE: *Happily--but still a bit resentful against the old man.* Sure! *Clinking his glass against CHRIS'.* Here's luck to you! *He drinks.*

CHRIS: *Subdued--his face melancholy.* Skoal. *He drinks.*

BURKE: *To Anna, with a wink.* You'll not be lonesome long. I'll see to that, with the help of God. 'Tis himself here will be having a grandchild to ride on his foot, I'm telling you!

ANNA: *Turning away in embarrassment.* Quit the kidding, now. *She picks up her bag and goes into the room on left. As soon as she is gone BURKE relapses into an attitude of gloomy thought. CHRIS stares at his beer absent-mindedly. Finally BURKE turns on him.*

BURKE: Is it any religion at all you have, you and your Anna?

CHRIS: *Surprised.* Vhy yes. Ve vas Lutheran in ole country.

BURKE: *Horrified.* Luthers, is it? *Then with a grim resignation, slowly, aloud to himself.* Well, damned then surely. Yerra, what's the difference? 'Tis the will of God, anyway.

CHRIS: *Moodily preoccupied with his own thoughts--speaks with somber premonition as ANNA re-enters from the left.* It's funny. It's queer, yes--you and me shipping on same boat dat vay. It ain't right. Ay don't know--it's dat funny vay ole davil sea do her vorst dirty tricks, yes. It's so. *He gets up and goes back and, opening the door, stares out into the darkness.*

BURKE: *Nodding his head in gloomy acquiescence--with a great sigh.* I'm fearing maybe you have the right of it for once, divil take you.

ANNA: *Forcing a laugh.* Gee, Mat, you ain't agreeing with him, are you? *She comes forward and puts her arm about his shoulder-- with a determined gaiety.* Aw say, what's the matter? Cut out the gloom. We're all fixed now, ain't we, me and you? *Pours out more beer into his glass and fills one for herself--slaps him on the back.* Come on! Here's to the sea, no matter what! Be a game sport and drink to that! Come on! *She gulps down her glass. Burke banishes his superstitious premonitions with a defiant jerk of his head, grins up at her, and drinks to her toast.*

CHRIS: *Looking out into the night--lost in his somber preoccupation--shakes his head and mutters.* Fog, fog, fog, all bloody time. You can't see vhere you vas going, no. Only dat ole davil, sea--she knows! *The two stare at him. From the harbor comes the muffled, mournful wail of steamers' whistles.*

The Curtain Falls

Le note di scena sono tra parentesi *quadre* o *(tonde).*

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