

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

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Play Memory

A Drama in Two Acts

Joanna McClelland Glass

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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**In Memory Of
Morrill MacKenzie McClelland
and Kate**

LONGACRE THEATRE

A Shubert Organization Theatre

Gerald Schoenfeld, *Chairman*

Bernard B. Jacobs, *President*

ALEXANDER H. COHEN and HILDY PARKS

present

PLAY MEMORY

by

JOANNA M. GLASS

starring

DONALD MOFFAT

JO HENDERSON VALERIE MAHAFFEY

with

TOM BRENNAN MARILYN ROCKAFELLOW

REX ROBBINS JAMES GREENE JERRY MAYER

EDWIN J. McDONOUGH STEVEN MOSES

CURT WILLIAMS

Scenery by CLARKE DUNHAM Costumes by WILLIAM IVEY LONG Lighting by KEN BILLINGTON Incidental Music by LARRY GROSSMAN

Presented in association with
SAMUEL KLUTZNICK

Co-presented by
BERNARD GERSTEN

Directed by

HAROLD PRINCE

*The Producers and Theatre Management are Members
of The League of New York Theatres and Producers, Inc.*

BROADWAY CAST

(in order of appearance)

Cam MacMillan	DONALD MOFFAT
Ruth MacMillan	JO HENDERSON
Jean MacMillan	VALERIE MAHAFFEY
Billy	JERRY MAYER
Ken	EDWIN J. McDONOUGH
Roy	JAMES GREENE
Miss Halverson	MARILYN ROCKAFELLOW
Mike Melzewski	TOM BRENNAN
Duncan	REX ROBBINS
Ross	CURT WILLIAMS
Ernest	STEVEN MOSES

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION.

STANDBYS AND UNDERSTUDIES

Standbys and understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made at the time of the performance.

Understudy for Mr. Moffat — Rex Robbins; for Ms. Henderson — Marilyn Rockafellow; Standby for Ms. Mahaffey — Lizbeth Mackay; Understudy for Mr. Robbins — Edwin J. McDonough; for Messrs. Williams & Brennan — Jerry Mayers; for Messrs. Greene, Mayer & McDonough — Curt Williams; for Mr. Moses — Glen Gardali.

The play is set in the city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. The time expanse is nineteen thirty-nine to nineteen sixty-eight.

The city, at this time, had a population of about sixty thousand. It is called "The Hub City," the only other major city (in a province as large as Texas), being the capitol, Regina.

Saskatoon is the seat of the provincial university. The Saskatchewan River flows through the city, cutting it in two. The city is a late "plains" city, founded in 1903. For literally hundreds of miles around the town there is nothing but wheat-flatlands and small prairie towns always signalling themselves, on the horizon, by their tall red grain elevators.

The site of the town was selected by a group of Temperance Followers, who came up the river in 1882. The city is an important milling center, and meat processing plants and breweries were the main industries at the time of the play.

The British tended to send Scots to colonize Canada, first to trap and then to handle the fiscal responsibilities of the fur trade. An Anglo-Scot coalition remains the backbone, the class "establishment" of most Canadian cities.

CHARACTERS

CAM MACMILLAN — *Approximately fifty, fifty-five years old.*

RUTH MACMILLAN — *Cam's wife, forty-five to fifty years old.*

JEAN MACMILLAN — *Cam's daughter. This character ranges from four, to puberty, to adulthood at twenty-eight in the play.*

THREE ACTORS — *Intended to play BILLY, KEN, ROY, the salesmen who worked for CAM. (Two of these actors may, if so desired, play DUNCAN and ROSS, CAM's sponsors from Alcoholics Anonymous. All of these characters are forty to fifty years old.)*

MIKE MELZEWSKI — *A middle-aged, Ukrainian bootlegger.*

MISS HALVERSON — *A high-school counselor, approximately thirty.*

ERNEST — *MELZEWSKI's nephew, a twenty-year-old delivery boy who appears briefly at the end of the play.*

THE SET

The set for PLAY MEMORY should be abstract enough to allow an aura of memories conjured. An easy fluidity and melding of scenes is essential.

There should be a living room area with a front door, a telephone desk area which can become Miss Halverson's office, a dining room area, and a hint of a kitchen. CAM has an antique rocking chair.

On a second level, stairs, a landing with acting area, and JEAN's bedroom, are necessary.

PLAY MEMORY

ACT ONE

A spotlight comes up on a table phone, which is ringing. CAM shuffles to the phone. He wears a baggy old sweater, with the elbows gone.

CAM. Hello? No, Jean's not here. Wait a minute — wait a *min-ute!* I have a sinking feeling that this call is settin' a precedent. I have a distinctly sinking feeling that I am speaking with a young person of the masculine gender. Am I? (*He frowns.*) Oh, dear. What's your name? MacLeod. God, I've always hated that tartan. Plaid, man, *tartan!* The MacLeods have sported a putrid sort of tartan for several hundred years now. It's a kind of bilious yellow with great blobs of black. It is, in my considered opinion, the most undistinguished of Scottish tartans. If you don't mind my asking, MacLeod, what do you want with my Jeannie as if I didn't know? (*He listens.*) Uh huh. Uh huh. Uh huh. Jean's fourteen, how old are you? Ah. Sixteen's a bad age. Horny all the time at sixteen. Listen, lad, I think what you really want is one of those floozies from the West Side. Y'see, Jean's a member of the noble clan MacMillan.

Yes. If there is any such thing as a Canadian aristocracy, we are it. (*becoming irritated*) Look, fish and chips and a hockey game is a lot of crap. What you're lookin' to do, MacLeod, is slip it to my Jeannie. And I won't have it. I'm old and battered. I've suffered more losses than you'll ever know gains. I'm dirt poor and I drink too much and my brain cells have run amok. (*He almost whispers, feigning begging.*) Please, lad, spare me. Don't saddle me with a bastard MacLeod in a putrid yellow tartan. (*He hangs up, smiles at the audience, and exits.*)

(*An adult JEAN enters, smiling at this memory. She walks onto the stage slowly, somewhat preoccupied. She wears a fine woolen suit, silk blouse, high heels. She is dignified and assured. She is not lofty or preachy or grudge-bearing. One feels that she has achieved a healthy perspective on her past.*)

JEAN. I am Jean. The boy, Ian MacLeod, reported that conversation to me several days later. At the time, we were ending our term as a family. (*She slips her hands into her pockets, and ambles a bit, across the stage.*) I like to think that I remember that conversation, but of course, I don't. As is the case with so much of memory, it's an amalgam of what actually happened, and what was reported. I've discovered that what actually happened is often the most suspect — only half of the story. We were too entangled then, too mired in the dailiness of living to ever see ourselves as others saw us. Some memories are startlingly accurate, right down to the shoelaces. Some are sporadic; they don't happen in sequence. Images crop up, helter-skelter, at unpredictable times. There was a bar of soap in

a hotel room recently. When I unwrapped it and smelled the scent, I was suddenly with my mother in our yard on the Saskatchewan prairie. She was snipping sweet peas from a vine. (*She moves again.*) I began, of course, with my mother.

(*RUTH enters and goes to the phone. She wears a pretty housedress. She is seated.*)

JEAN. In the time that *preceded* me, her hours were often idle. My father was gone all week, out on the road, selling. She had not even a rudimentary education. She couldn't read. I think she spent much time during the week living through the "technological" wonder of the Thirties — the telephone. (*JEAN exits.*)

RUTH. (*Picks up the phone and begins to chat. Her gossip is more wonderous, and incredulous, than sarcastic. There should now be evidence of middle-class comfort in this room: china, books, a Persian rug.*) Well, Myra, what can I say? It was dinner at the Mayor's and it *was* exciting! I *am* Myra! I'm tellin' you in my own way. I know I talk all over the barnyard, but I do, eventually, tell it all. Well, they were an awful quiet bunch. Politicians, y'know, not like Cammy and his salesmen. The liquor flowed, y'know, but it had no effect on the Mayor and the Aldermen — no — they had a look of permanent worry. And y'know, Myra, there's some kind of new fashion in the upper classes. They eat their food raw. We had to chew forever on the green beans, and there was blood runnin' out of the roast. She called it "Oh Jews,"* but I think she just didn't time it right. Well, the

* a jus

nicest thing was the biffy, downstairs. She called *it* a powder room, and you know what? She had four bottles of French perfume standing out on the counter. As the evening went on, all the ladies had to pee, as ladies always do, and we all sampled the perfumes. Well, you can imagine. The living room began to smell like a West-Side whorehouse.* And it wasn't till the end, when we were saying our goodbyes, that Cam finally broke the ice. He took her hand, and bowed, and he said, "Mrs. MacEwan, thank you for a very aromatic evening." Oh, Myra, I hear him janglin' his keys. I have to go. I'll tell you the rest tomorrow.

(CAM enters. He wears a suit, tie, and Fedora hat. He carries a box containing silk mufflers.)

CAM. Hello!

RUTH. *(She goes to him, and they embrace.)* I was so proud of you last night! The way you held your own with those people.

CAM. Thank you! And you were the best woman at the table. Maybe not the richest, or the smartest, or the prettiest, but the very best! *(Pause.)* You look happy, Ruth.

RUTH. I am!

CAM. Well, it was an event, wasn't it? Dinner at the Mayor's. But what a lot of poor, sad buggers. Not an ounce of juice left in any of 'em.

RUTH. *(She has been bursting. She can no longer hold her tongue.)* Cam, I have a piece of news.

CAM. And so have I.

* pronounced "hoor-house"

RUTH. Oh? Well, mine can wait.

CAM. (*gravely*) I heard something this morning, down at Dixwell's.

RUTH. Ah — did you order the new suit?

CAM. I did. And ... four silk mufflers. Monogrammed.

RUTH. Campbell! Four?

CAM. I have too, Ruthie. When I stroll into these little prairie towns I have to make an impression. They expect a little "sartorial splendor." (*He puts on a muffler.*)

RUTH. Well, that's nifty. Whatja hear?

CAM. It's not nice. I was standing there, looking at a bolt of wonderful British stuff, and I asked if I could see Ludwig. Ludwig, y'know — the tall, skinny one, built like a pencil—

RUTH. Oh, yes—

CAM. Well, he's gone home to Germany.

RUTH. What for?

CAM. To join the army. To fight for his country.

RUTH. (*frowning*) Ah.

CAM. There's a mood creepin' in. I felt it last week, too, on the road. There's a little town of German settlers — Neudorf. All the towns around are suspicious of 'em, Ruth.

RUTH. But I was born there! My mum and dad homesteaded — lived in a sod hut — tilled this prairie with hand-hewn ploughs!! And besides all that, they weren't German, anyway. They were Austrian.

CAM. Sweetie, it's a moot point.

RUTH. It's that damn, ugly house painter! He ought to be taken out and hung up by the—

CAM. (*going to her*) I don't want you to worry about it. I

just want to warn you that you may hear things you won't like. And with me gone all week, and you being alone ... you've got a terrible temper, Ruth. Promise me. If you hear things, let 'em pass. O.K.? *(She does not reply.)* O.K., Ruth? Let 'em pass. *(RUTH, finally, nods "yes". They sit.)* Now, what's your news?

RUTH. *(She proceeds, happily.)* Cam, I haven't come unwell.

CAM. *(He registers shock. His question is disbelieving.)* How long?

RUTH. Well, I don't keep track, y'know, I mean, all these years and nothin'. No reason to keep track—

CAM. You have to see a doctor.

RUTH. I have, Cam. *(brief pause)* I am.

CAM. *(His thoughts race in all directions. He is momentarily dumbfounded.)* Well, I ... I'm speechless. Well, for God's sake! *(He begins to smile.)* Congratulations!

RUTH. Thank you. *(holding out her arms)* Doesn't the old hen deserve a hug?

CAM. Indeed she does! From the ageing rooster.

RUTH. Isn't it grand, Cam?

CAM. It is. A miracle.

RUTH. That's exactly what I thought. God's giving us a child for our old age. It's an Act of God. *(seeing CAM's preoccupation)* Campbell? Aren't you happy?

CAM. I am. It's cause for celebration. *(He ponders the news.)* But it isn't simple, is it, at middle-age? It's major. I mean, it'll take major adjustments. Think of it, Ruth! A child. Responsibility for a life.

RUTH. Thousands less responsible than us have done it.

CAM. It's just — if I'm going to be a father, I'd want to be the very best father. I'd want to be on top of all the little situations, y'know, all the time. Jesus, Ruth, I see fifty looming, on the horizon. I give all my energy, every waking hour to—

RUTH. To the damn company!

CAM. Don't damn the company! Look around you, Ruth. Look at your china and your silver and your two Persian rugs. Go upstairs and look at your amethysts. If we want the rewards, we have to pay the price.

RUTH. Cam, when you were young you were getting together your team. You were staking out your territory. Now it's done! Why can't you sit back and be fat and sassy? Why can't you relax a bit?

CAM. I'm not fat and sassy, and the day I am is the day I go under. Yes, I've done it — bloody arduously, I've done it. Now it has to be maintained, *tended*. It won't just lie fallow, you know, like some field out in the east forty. And God knows, the men seem to get more and more dependent, the older they get. I feel drained, Ruth. I give myself to the men and the company and the ad campaigns, and the town and the clubs and the fund raisers. I go to bed at night spent. There's not an ounce of me left over, and that won't *do* with this news. That'll have to change. (*He glances at his watch.*) Christ, even now, you know what I'm thinking?

RUTH. Yes, I do know what you're thinking. You're late for your appointment with Kenneth. You have time for *his* daughter, haven't you?

CAM. She's got diabetes, Ruth. I said I'd go with him to buy the insulin kit.

RUTH. Well then, go. Go ahead and tend to Kenneth's daughter.

CAM. I promised, Ruth. It really is a matter of life and death.

RUTH. (*relenting*) I know. I know. And Heaven help me, I love you for it.

CAM. (*touching her stomach*) Dear me. It's in there, isn't it? And it's ours. What in hell are we arguing about? Surely, it's a blessing. And blessings will be accommodated! I must go!

RUTH. You'll be the very best father. You've always been the very best at everything you've turned your hand to. And, Campbell, think of this. If it's a boy, it'll carry the name.

CAM. (*genuinely happy at this thought*) That's something, isn't it? I'll think of that. (*as he goes*) Let's celebrate at dinner. I'll be calmer then, when I've got this damned injection out of the way. (*He exits.*)

(*The lights dim. RUTH moves into a spotlight.*)

RUTH. Names don't mean much to me. They mean a lot to him, though. It's his only flaw. If he hears "Powanski," "Ostafichuck," "Garfein" — he gets all of a sudden superior. Maybe because he's Scottish, and that's the safest thing to be. Or maybe because these people are staking out their own territories, and it scares him. It's amazing that he married me. A farm girl, no education, my folks were pioneers. But we clicked, y'know. The question always comes up in the eyes of people. It did last night, at the Mayor's. "What's a man like that doing with

her?" I always want to say: "We clicked, folks. That's all there is to it. We clicked." (*She exits, with the box of mufflers.*)

(*CAM enters, having removed his jacket, loosened his tie, opened his collar. He is in high spirits.*)

CAM. Somewhere in there — that year — I got a letter from headquarters. All about "consistency." (*He sighs.*) It had come to the attention of some sallow little man, at Havilland Tobacco, that all the venetian blinds, in all the regional offices, were different colors. Well, he had his knickers in a twist over that. It wasn't consistent, you see, it was *erratic*. There followed an edict that all the window blinds in all the Havilland offices, in every city in the country, had to be the same color. Well, what the hell. I'd labored in the Havilland vineyard some twenty years, successfully, profitably. And I was feeling pretty frisky that day. So I thought I could afford to have a little fun. (*He quickly whips a letter out of a pocket and flips it open.*) Here's what I replied:

The Havilland office in Charlottetown
Has window blinds that are chocolate brown
And miles away at Hudson's Bay
The Havilland man prefers his blinds gray.

While we on the prairie in Saskatoon
Refuse to use anything but maroon
That curious fellow down east at Broad Cove
Dresses his windows in lavender-mauve.

We Havilland men will defend this variety
And so I must say, with a certain impiety:
He who would dictate one hue of the spectrum
May shove all his window blinds far up his rectum.
(He smiles, broadly.)

(Blackout. CAM exits.)

Lights up on RUTH, carrying a casserole to the dining table, where there are plates, glasses and cutlery. There is a time lapse between this scene and the previous scene.)

RUTH. *(She begins to sing and then strut, moving into the living room area. The song is an old favorite that CAM and RUTH frequently perform at parties.)*

TIPTOE TO THE WINDOW*
BY THE WINDOW
THAT IS WHERE I'LL BE
COME TIPTOE THROUGH THE TULIPS, WITH ME.

(CAM joins RUTH. Arm in arm, they sing and strut.)

CAM & RUTH.
TIPTOE FROM YOUR PILLOW
TO THE SHADOW
OF A WILLOW TREE
AND TIPTOE THROUGH THE TULIPS, WITH ME.

*Note: "Tip-toe Thru' the Tulips With Me" is fully protected by U.S. Copyright Law. Permission to produce PLAY MEMORY does not include permission to use this song in production. This *must* be obtained by contacting Warner Bros. Music, 9000 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069.

(*BILLY, KEN and ROY enter and join them.*)

ALL.

KNEE DEEP, IN FLOWERS WE'LL STRAY
WE'LL KEEP THE SHOWERS AWAY—

(*They form a "chorus line," with RUTH in the middle.*)

AND IF I KISS YOU

IN THE GARDEN

IN THE MOONLIGHT

WILL YOU PARDON ME?

COME TIPTOE THROUGH THE TULIPS, WITH ME.

RUTH. (*At the end of the song, she stands back, plants her hands on her hips, and feigns annoyance with BILLY, KEN and ROY.*)
Don't you ever go home? You've got houses, you've got addresses, you've got wives.

ROY. (*His face drops. He pouts.*) All but me.

RUTH. Oh, for God's sake, get on with your life, man!
(*angry again*) And how come we're blessed with your presence right around dinnertime?

BILLY. We're celebrating, Ruth! Cam's come up with a solution.

RUTH. He always does, doesn't he? You ought to be ashamed. Three grown men, can't tie your shoelaces without Cam. He's got a life of his own, y'know. We've got a birthday party here tomorrow. Jean's turning three and six kids are coming. (*to CAM*) And I thought you were going to string balloons.

CAM. I will, Ruth, I will. But this is important. We've found a way around it.

RUTH. What?

CAM. The gas rationing, Ruth, the gas rationing!

ROY. We can't continue this three-day work week, Ruth. Draggin' in here Wednesday nights, sittin' on our asses Thursday and Friday. We can't cover this prairie with the coupons we're gettin'—

KEN. What are we supposed to do, Ruth? Piss in our engines?

CAM. (*a reprimand, for the language*) Kenny—

KEN. (*to RUTH*) I'm sorry.

RUTH. (*to CAM*) I thought you wrote headquarters. I thought you explained you needed special dispensation for your men.

CAM. I did. And they replied. No. Not in the national interest. Fireman, yes, ambulances, yes, but not salesmen.

RUTH. They don't like you at headquarters, Cam. Oh, they like your *earnings*, but they think you're uppity. You shouldn't have wrote that poem about the window blinds.

CAM. Oh, for Chrissake, Ruth, this has got nothing to do with window blinds! This is national policy! Those farts sit down there in the east, the towns are twenty miles apart — they've got no *conception* of the vast distances out here. Now, look, here's what we're gonna do. (*BILLY, KEN, and ROY become excited.*) These little prairie towns, they've got a cafe, a hotel, a general store — and all those people are getting the same amount of rations we are! And they don't have to *go* anywhere. So they've got coupons *left over* at the end of the week—

RUTH. They're supposed to turn 'em back to the Government.

ROY. They don't, Ruth! Nobody turns 'em back. They

sell 'em. Oh, sweet lady, gas is gold! There's a regular black market going on with gas rations.

CAM. So: We're going to start taking part of our commissions in coupons. Everybody benefits that way. The merchants get the product for less, and we get to drive four, maybe even five days a week. Swappin', see? Commissions for coupons.

RUTH. *(after a moment)* It's illegal.

CAM. *(becoming irritated)* Oh, Ruth, I wish you had a head for the larger world! *(He continues, as if talking to a child.)* Sweetie, I get the office, the expense account, the car. I get salary plus commission. The boys don't. They're on straight commission. Billy can't meet his mortgage payments, Roy can't make his alimony, Kenny's old mother's in the Sanatorium. I've built a team here, Ruth. We're the best damn hustlers in the province and we have been for twenty years. The *team* is my responsibility!

RUTH. Cam, it's a very patriotic time. I've been glued to the radio. They're rationed one egg a week in London — they're hiding their children down in the Tube at night. They've got bombers sittin' in hangars for want of gas. And you know what? Even the little Princesses are wearing gas masks!

CAM. Oh, screw the little Princesses!

RUTH. But that's the larger world, Cam! That's what you want me to know about.

CAM. *(gravely)* Billy went to Eaton's last week, applied for a job. Selling shoes in Eaton's basement. It's the Black Hole of Calcutta down there, Ruth, it'll kill him. I won't have it. I can't in a million years put a team like this together again. I won't bust up my boys on account of

frigging coupons! (*A moment passes as CAM's anger reverberates through the room.*)

RUTH. And what if you get caught?

BILLY. Ruth, do you remember when the Watson Club invited Cam to join? He said, "Thank you very much, but there are four of us."

ROY. And they said they only wanted Cam, and Campbell said, no dice. He gave 'em his motto: "Cam's boys *come* of a piece, and Cam's boys *go* of a piece."

KEN. And we all joined the Watson! That's what'll happen if we get caught.

RUTH. (*after absorbing it, slowly*) You mean you'll go of a piece. They'd have to fire the lot of you.

KEN. And that, they can't do. We'll take a united stand. Don't you see? We *are* Havilland Tobacco. We've got this province tied up tighter than a virgin's—

CAM. Kenneth!

KEN. I'm sorry. The point is, if push comes to shove, we'd go of a piece.

RUTH. (*A moment passes. She is dubious.*) Is that a deal?

ROY. What do you mean?

RUTH. I'd like to see you shake on it.

CAM. Oh, Ruth, after twenty years we're practically blood brothers!

RUTH. Shake on it! Let me see it.

CAM. (*He sighs, then reluctantly reaches out. They ad lib, "It's a deal, Cam." "We're with you, man," "Word of a gentleman," etc.*) Billy, m'boy. Roy? Kenny? Get the rye whiskey, Ruth! We'll drink to health, and prosperity, and five days o' gas in the tanks! (*RUTH leaves. CAM begins the song again. The four men move to the dining table, repeating their little "number."*)

CAM, BILLY, ROY, KEN.
AND IF I KISS YOU
IN THE GARDEN
IN THE MOONLIGHT
WILL YOU PARDON ME?
COME TIPTOE THROUGH THE TULIPS, WITH ME.

(The stage darkens. Lights up on JEAN in her bedroom. She wears slippers and a flannel nightie and her hair is tied back in a ribbon.)

JEAN. I am four years old now. I have a friend named Beth. We run down the sidewalk singing, "If you step on a crack, you will break/Hitler's back." We have three new kids on our street this year. They're from England. They've been sent to aunts and uncles and cousins, so they'll be safe. And at Halloween we don't ask for apples. We ask for money, so we can ship milk to the old country. We go from house to house, knocking on doors shouting, "Bottles for Britain! Please! Open up! Bottles for Britain!"

(The salesmen and RUTH enter the living room with plates and glasses.)

JEAN. Our house is always full of people! *(She leaves her room, moving out to the stair landing, above the party.)*

(Radio music is heard: Vera Lynn, "The White Cliffs of Dover".)

JEAN. Everybody likes my Dad! He sings, and makes them laugh, he reads Bobby Burns, and makes them cry.

Sometimes he has too much to drink. I don't like that. His eyes get peculiar. Mum says salesmen are hard drinkers, and always have been. (*pointing*) We have a big mahogany dining table. When guests are coming, my Mum sends me under it, to dust the pedestal. We have three whole sets of fine, bone china. My Dad gets it, as a bonus, every Christmas. Head office gives him gifts, because he makes a lot of money. (*moving onto the stairs*) Nearly every Saturday night there's a party. My Dad comes and gets me and carries me into the living room where everyone thinks I am very cute. (*Suddenly, she slumps and closes her eyes. CAM lifts her from the stairs and carries her away. She is like a rag-doll, falling over his shoulder.*)

CAM. (*as he lifts JEAN*) Come along now, wee bairn. Oh, my wee bairn is so sleepy! They're askin' for you, lass. They all want to see Bonnie Jean. (*CAM now enters the living room area, where RUTH, KEN, BILLY and ROY are assembled. All have drinks and the air is smoky. RUTH wears a party dress, silk or tafetta. BILLY, ROY and KEN have loosened their ties and are slightly drunk. The four ad lib conversation. They discuss the wheat crop, the bushels per acre, in the towns of Melville, Weyburn, Kerrobert. There are plates, stacks of sandwiches, dirty napkins, strewn about. Setting JEAN down.*) Da-Dah! And here she is!

RUTH. Oh, Cam, I wish you wouldn't do this!

KEN. Will you look at this, boys! Look at her! My God, she's cute!

BILLY. A beauty, Cam! A beauty!

ROY. Oh, it won't be long now, Campbell! You'll soon have the tomcats, howlin' on your fence.

CAM. (*proudly*) All right now, Jeannie. Say your prayers,

lass, for the boys. (*CAM takes her onto his lap.*)

JEAN. (*She dutifully closes her eyes and holds her hands in prayer.*) Now I lay me down to sleep / I pray the Lord my soul to keep / If I should die before I wake / I pray the Lord my soul to take. (*pause*) God bless Mum, and Dad, and my friend Beth, and her Mum and Dad and all the boys fighting overseas.

CAM. *And, Jeannie?*

JEAN. And Dad's boys, too. Roy and Ken and Billy. God bless you all.

ROY, BILLY, & KEN. (*ad libs*) Beautiful, Jean, lovely, very nice, thank you.

JEAN. You're welcome.

ROY. (*going to her*) And what's all this I hear about alterations in your bedroom?

JEAN. Oh, it didn't have a closet, so Dad's put in a great big new one.

CAM. For all the frocks, you know. A space for all the frocks.

JEAN. And it's got a beautiful walnut door, all hand-carved. Dad bought it out of a mansion.

BILLY. The old Drummond place, Cam?

CAM. Yes, a bit of a *coup*, if I do say so myself.

JEAN. It's even nicer than the doors at the Bessborough Hotel. I think it's the most beautiful door in all of Saskatoon.

RUTH. It is, Jeannie. Come along now. Back to bed.

CAM. Oh, Ruth, let her stay—

RUTH. No, no, no—

ROY. Got a kiss for Uncle Roy?

BILLY & KEN. Sweet dreams, Jeannie. Nightie-night.

(RUTH and JEAN race up to JEAN's bedroom.)

(Blackout. Radio music up, "String of Pearls" or "Frenesi".

We move in time to after the party. Lights up on CAM in living room. RUTH is seen tucking JEAN in. CAM swirls a bit, to the music, finds a tray and begins to gather dirty glasses and plates. RUTH leaves JEAN's room and CAM addresses her as she comes down the stairs. There is sexual tension between them as they proceed, together, to clean up.)

CAM. *(turning the radio down)* Jeannie asleep?

RUTH. Yes.

CAM. "While visions of sugar plums dance through her head."

RUTH. Visions of frocks, Cam, frocks to fill the closet.

CAM. Nice party, Ruth. Fun.

RUTH. They do make a mess.

CAM. They do. But that's the way you gauge the success of a party. At the Mayor's, for instance, on Dominion Day? Not one good laugh the whole damned night, and not a crumb was dropped.

RUTH. Look at this. White circles on the wood. I'll have to get out the Old English and give that a polish. *(They stop activity for a moment.)*

CAM. *(He reaches for RUTH.)* Now?

RUTH. No. Tomorrow. *(CAM makes an advance. Quickly, RUTH moves away and begins shaking a finger at him.)* Campbell, we really do have a bone to pick. You do everything in your power for those men all week long. Why do we have to be entertaining them all the time? They take us for

granted. They eat our food and drink our whiskey and stain our tables — I'm tired of having no other friends. You're so well-known in town, Cam, why can't we widen our circle?

CAM. I don't see them all week! We're all off, covering our various territories. We have a lot of news to exchange on the weekends.

RUTH. I don't think that's it at all. I think being with them gives you a feeling of power.

CAM. That's just nonsense! They happen to be my favorite company, that's all. They're like my own sons.

RUTH. Sons? Roy's a year older than you.

CAM. I have a great affection for them! They move me, Ruth. They touch me. Sometimes, in the winter, we'll all be out on the road and the whole province is under a blizzard. And I always know exactly where they are. I can see them, in my mind's eye, alone in the storm, scared, shovelling their cars into Kamsack or Weyburn. We're hundreds of miles apart but I feel connected to them. *(pause)* Maybe only a man could understand it. It's a connection of men and their work. *(another pause, a smile)* Maybe you're a wee bit jealous?

RUTH. *(She sighs and smiles.)* Well, I guess there's no use ruining the rest of the evening. *(They kiss. She separates herself and says, quietly.)* I'll call you in a minute. *(She exits, up the stairs.)*

CAM. *(Cheerful and smiling, he places a few more glasses on the tray. He chuckles, then breaks out into laughter.)* We were invited one evening, oh, ten years ago, to a great celebration. The second richest man in town, Humboldt was his name, opened his house for a wedding reception. There were

two Mounties present, dressed in scarlet, and one of them couldn't keep his eyes off my Ruthie. Well. That Mountie got himself a snortful, and finally he couldn't keep his *hands* off my Ruthie. I was ready to kill the bastard, but it's intimidating, y'know, all that scarlet. By midnight, it was pretty disgusting. People were draped over bannisters, people were vomiting in the rubber plants, the hired piper stopped pipin' ceremonials and started playing laments. And that Mountie was chasing Ruth around with a shameless bulge in his pants. She ran upstairs into a bathroom and I ran after her. And I knew lust like I'd never known it before. I locked the bathroom door and I grabbed her, and I sat her up on the sink and I unzipped my fly — and you know what?

(RUTH appears on the landing, wearing a pretty peignoir.)

RUTH. We were never invited to the Humboldt's again, because the sink broke off the wall! *(She lets out a hoot of laughter. CAM dashes up the stairs, chasing her, laughing.)*

(Mood change. The adult JEAN enters, smiling. When CAM and RUTH are out of sight, she addresses the audience.)

JEAN. Havilland Tobacco had always considered my Dad too independent, too much of a western maverick. In the spring of 1944, it was discovered that Havilland allowed the swapping of gas coupons. The practice was denounced, and the company was censured in Parliament. At that time Havilland supplied tobacco to the entire armed forces — land, sea and air. The government

threatened to cancel their contract unless Havilland took a strong, well-publicized stand against black marketeering. They needed a scapegoat, and they chose my Dad.

(During the following, the dining room table is removed and replaced with CAM's desk, from his office. Most of the china is removed, and all of the books. Two painted chairs, from the "kitchen", are placed at the desk. A few Christmas decorations are set. This action occurs behind a scrim. JEAN remains onstage.)

CAM enters, wearing a bathrobe over his trousers. He carries a telephone. He is ostensibly on the road, in a hotel room. Simultaneously, the three salesmen are seen, each carrying a phone.)

CAM. Hello? Can you hear me? We've got a bad connection. Listen, I'm in Prince Albert. I've just got word from head office. The shit's hit the fan.

ROY. *(after a moment)* Whaddya mean?

CAM. Ruthie was right. We're going to have to pay the piper. They're sending a hatchet man to my office Friday night at seven. I want you to move heaven and earth — burn rubber if you have to, and meet me there at six-thirty.

BILLY. Cam? What do you want us to do?

CAM. Absolutely nothing. Stand there and listen. He won't mince words, he'll be quick and brutal. And when he's done, I'll tell him.

KEN. Tell him what?

CAM. Oh, for Crissake, Kenny! "Cam's boys come of a

piece and Cam's boys go of a piece."

ROY. Jesus, Cam, what the hell are they looking for?

CAM. A scapegoat, Roy! Everybody's swapping coupons and they need to save face in Ottawa.

ROY. I see. And you're the sacrificial lamb.

CAM. So they think.

KEN. Cam, listen. If that's what they want, I mean if that's what they're really *intent* on, they just might take the whole damned flock.

CAM. They *won't*, Kenny! They'd have to close the province down. Christ, man, if one thing is certain, that is! Look, it's going to take less time to resolve this guy's little excursion than this phone call is taking. All I need is your bodies, and I'll guarantee your future. So be there, at six-thirty, O.K.? *(pause)* Fellas? Can you hear me? *(pause)*

BILLY. Cam? This is really a lousy connection. There's magpies or something on the goddamn line. We'll have to get back to you. *(All three salesmen hang up, simultaneously. After a moment, CAM hangs up, leaving the stage slowly as the men exit hastily.)*

JEAN. It was quick and brutal. He didn't come home that Friday night. The following day the contents of his office were sent, in a van, to the house. The day after that, Sunday, he was brought home in an ambulance. He had pneumonia. The police had found him in a hotel in Yorkton. He had taken two forty-ounce bottles to his room; he drank them, he got into a bathtub. The water turned to ice around him as he lay there, unconscious, for forty-eight hours. Billy lived on Twenty-Eighth Street, Roy on Bedford Road, Ken on Avenue H. My mother and I were never allowed to walk on those streets again. And,

gradually, things began to disappear from our house. *(She exits.)*

(In darkness, we hear the noise of high winds: a blizzard. CAM shuffles down the hall, wearing the sweater he wore at the opening. He carries an empty bottle of Canadian Club.)

CAM. Dead soldier. *(He drops the bottle into a wastebasket.)* Only one reliable man in this town. *(He goes to the phone and dials.)* Keeps his promises, delivers his goods. You have to keep in touch with a man like that. *(into phone)* Hello? I say, is this Melzewski the bootlegger? Ah, good. This is Mac-Millan, the Town Clown. *(brief pause)* I'm callin to give you a weather report. I want you to know it's forty below. *(He laughs.)* Oh, no, Michael. All the witch's tits dropped off long ago. The Saskatchewan prairie is known, Mike, world renowned, as the home of the titless witch. Tell me now, what are you chargin' tonight for a forty? Oh, that's steep. You're talkin' to a Scotsman, you know. I'm canny. I'm thrrrrrifty! Fifteen bucks you say. No wonder you're driving a Cadillac. Did I ever tell you, Michael, I don't like Cadillacs. Nope, ostentatious. Well, I've got a rifle I could let you have. A Winchester. Oh, top of the line, Mike. Bagged an awful lot of deer in it's day. Thank you, Mike. That's a good boy. Make it snappy now. *(He hangs up.)*

(RUTH and JEAN enter from the kitchen area. RUTH wears a faded housedress. She carries three Christmas cards and a sheaf of stapled papers. JEAN, now ten years old, wears saddle shoes, a skirt and sweater. She carries books and sits at the desk, to study. CAM is "dry", physically miserable, mentally

scattered. But he is mercurial, always within an inch of violence.)

RUTH. Would you believe it? Only three Christmas cards this year. From the milkman — the mailman — and of course we know what THEY want. And this great garish thing from the bootlegger. The bannister used to be so full of cards. So full we used to string 'em in the hall. I was just lookin' at the old Christmas list. What do they think we are? Lepers?

CAM. Church mice, Ruth. As in "poor as." Did I ever tell you my theory? A man's life is most accurately documented in his checkbook. Is he eatin' steak or sausage, is he dining out? Is he sendin' bouquets — is he buying season's tickets? Does he winter in the Bahamas — does he donate to charity? (*He cups his hands and calls into the distance.*) Archeologists of the world, do you hear me? (*mumbling*) Misguided fools, digging around for shards and splinters. (*calling again*) Find a checkbook, lads, and you've found it all!

RUTH. Cam, I think you need a meal. I think you think you need something else, but *I* think you need a meal. You know what they say at A.A. Regular meals are part of the cure. "The *cure* begins at the stove."

CAM. Baloney.

RUTH. I'll fix some eggs.

CAM. The very idea nauseates me. Eating some animal's *ova*.

RUTH. (*as she goes*) Nice scrambled eggs with ketchup, and a little muffin — don't worry. We'll get it down. (*She exits.*)

CAM. (*Aroused by his battle cry to the archeologists, he is suddenly hyper-alert. He paces and stares at JEAN, who is studying. She feels his stare, and meets his eyes.*) That desk is too big for this room.

JEAN. (*She knows, immediately, where he is leading. From this moment on she senses danger and tries to avoid it.*) Dad, I have to memorize the multiplication tables. Will you help me?

CAM. I might get back on my feet, y'know, might have a *chance* if I didn't have to look at the bloody desk every day.

JEAN. Would you like me to move?

CAM. For twelve years in a row my office led the national profits. For twelve years in a row *I* led the Traveler's Day Parade. Elected, by four hundred salesmen, to lead their parade! Jesus, I didn't have enough ass to *kiss* in those days.

JEAN. Mum's got the toast in. I can smell it.

CAM. When he came, y'know, the hatchet man, he stood behind that desk, my desk, as if it was his. Stripped me bare. Took away my title, my car, my pension — took my name off the door. Within twenty-four hours my name was mud in this town. And a moving van delivered the desk here, home. (*pause*) It's too big for this room.

JEAN. Maybe we should put it in the garage.

CAM. Why are you cowling like that? Makin' yourself so small?

JEAN. I'm not cowling.

CAM. You are. And you're sulking. I hate it when you make that face. I am bone dry, Jean, and the craving is on me. Try and understand. (*JEAN nods a conciliatory "yes",*

which infuriates CAM.) Leave it to Ruth to have a girl! You can't imagine how I wanted a boy to carry the name. I sat in that delivery room, I was in a cold sweat, and then he came. Dr. Kincaid. Do you know what he said?

JEAN. Dad, please—

CAM. He said, "Sad tidings, MacMillan, sad tidings. It's got a cloven crotch." (*He waits for a reaction. There is none. He sits opposite her.*) That's what the man said. So, what's on your mind?

JEAN. I think we should go into the kitchen.

CAM. You want something, don't you? Don't sit there like a ninny. Speak up! Ask! What is it you want?

JEAN. (*She has tried to delay the combat he is looking for, but he is too persistent. She jumps up.*) All right! A Christmas tree! Why can't we afford a Christmas tree? You get rye whisky when you want it. You've given Melzewski our dining room furniture, your golf clubs and all of our bone china! Give him something and get us a tree!

CAM. I'd like to give him you, you little bitch! (*He runs for her. She runs.*) I wonder how much you'd fetch on the open market! (*CAM catches her. He hits her hard, in the face. Immediately we see blood, running from her nose. JEAN screams. The following dialogue overlaps and crosscuts.*)

JEAN. Daddy, please — no! Oh, God. Oh, damn you!

CAM. Four hundred men marched behind me in the parade! I had clout in this town. I took no sass from anyone!

(*RUTH runs in, alarmed. She carries a tea towel.*)

RUTH. Oh, Lord, Cam! Oh, Jeannie, what now? (*She*

runs to JEAN, with the towel.) What is it? A nose bleed? What did you say?

CAM. *(He doubles over, with debilitating remorse.)* Oh, sweet Jesus, sweet Jesus—

RUTH. Put your head back! — Get your head back! — Is your face O.K.?

JEAN. Just ... my nose...

RUTH. *(Gravely, in a whisper. She feels JEAN's skirt.)* Did you wet?

JEAN. No.

CAM. Oh, for Chrissake—

RUTH. She does, you know! She wets when you hit her. If you had to pay the cleaning bill, you'd know what I mean. *(to JEAN)* I think it's clotting. Hold it, there. I'll get the coats.

CAM. The coats? What the hell for?

RUTH. We have to see the doctor.

CAM. There's a raging blizzard out there!

RUTH. *(getting coats, hats, boots)* I want to be sure nothing's broken.

JEAN. The doctor'll call the school! He always does. He'll call the school counselor.

RUTH. Campbell, when are you going to stop this? You're a grown-up adult—

CAM. Grown-up adult is redundant! And you always say "rich millionaire". Millionaires are *always* rich! Adults are *always* grown-up!

JEAN. *(boldly)* Not in *your* case, Sir! You are the exception!

CAM. Oh, you're a smart-assed brat! What are you lookin' for? A fracture? *(JEAN takes her coat. She holds the tea*

towel to her face.)

RUTH. (*She stands, in her coat, holding a small bowl. She glares at CAM.*) There was five dollars bus money in this bowl this morning. Have you got it? (*CAM reluctantly nods "yes".*) GET IT! (*CAM sits down, removes his shoe, and hands RUTH the bill.*) Thief!

CAM. Now, Ruthie, what little we have we must regard as *ours*. Community property.

RUTH. You're going to need your sponsors tonight. Call them.

CAM. (*groaning*) Ruth, I've got no conviction in A.A.

RUTH. Call them! (*She takes a waiting stance.*)

CAM. (*Goes to the phone and dials, feebly.*) Hello, Duncan? Cam. Listen— (*pause*) Yeah, I need company. It's forty below, Duncan, what about your car? (*pause, anger*) Oh, for Chrissake, you've lived on this prairie all your life, you ought to know anti-freeze doesn't do sweet bugger all in forty below!

RUTH. Tell him Ross can bring him.

CAM. Maybe Ross could pick you up.

RUTH. Tell him you'll put the coffee on. You'll have it waiting.

CAM. I'll put the coffee on, Duncan. I'll have it waiting. Pardon? (*He pauses and looks at RUTH, incredulously.*) SAN-KA? (*to RUTH*) Jesus. (*to DUNCAN*) Well, lad, I'll see if we've got any. Hurry along, now. 'Bye.

RUTH. (*tying her headscarf*) With all the junk that's gone through that man's system, does he really have to worry about caffeine? (*She hands CAM some pieces of A.A. literature.*) Here's some pamphlets. Read these till they come.

CAM. Jean? (*He does not look at her. The question is a strain.*)

How is your face?

JEAN. It's still on the front of my head, thank you.
(*RUTH and JEAN exit. JEAN takes the bloodstained towel with her.*)

CAM. (*He opens a pamphlet and makes a desperate effort to concentrate on the print.*) "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol. That our lives had become unmanageable. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Made a list of all persons we had harmed."*

(*MELZEWSKI appears. He is a man of fifty. He wears a coat, scarf and hat, and carries a paper bag containing CAM's forty-ounce bottle.*)

MIKE. Goddammit MacMillan! MacMillan, the least you could do is shovel your bloody walk.

CAM. Oh, Michael, come in! It's nice of you, Mike, to come over so quick.

MIKE. Nice has got nothing to do with it. It's Christmas, Cam, and bootleg rye is flowing like the Ganges.
(*pause*) Ruth and Jean out?

CAM. Yep.

MIKE. (*handing CAM the brown paper bag*) Here it is, man. Your lifeline.

CAM. Thank you. Take your coat off. Stay awhile.

MIKE. (*sighing*) I've got a lot of calls...

CAM. Oh, for Chrissake, Michael, what's ten minutes here or there? I'm turning into a babbling idiot, living
*From "Alcoholics Anonymous" reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

with these two females.

MIKE. Well, O.K.

CAM. Good! (*He fetches two glasses and pours a shot in each one.*) There's no *chat*, y'know, in families. There's nagging and scolding, and God knows there's recrimination, but there's never any plain *chat*. (*He gives MIKE a drink, and lifts his own glass.*) You're my savior, Michael. My Bohunk St. Bernard.

MIKE. Hey, wait a minute! No toast?

CAM. (*accommodating him*) Here's to the girl in the little red shoes / She'll spend your money, and drink your booze / She's lost her cherry, but that's no sin / She's still got the box the cherry came in. (*They both laugh; CAM drinks.*) I see you've got a new coat.

MIKE. Yep, last Saturday, down at Dixwell's. (*He pauses, sensing the room.*) And you've got heat. How did you manage that?

CAM. There was one insurance policy left. Ruth cashed it in and shut 'em up for a couple of months. What are you staring at?

MIKE. That sweater. It looks like the moths had an eight course meal on the elbows. Y'know, my mother used to say, "There's shame in a hole, but there's none in a patch." I'm surprised Ruth allows it.

CAM. I won't let her near it.

MIKE. Why the hell not?

CAM. (*strutting a bit*) Oh, there's a certain aristocratic seediness to it, don't cha think? A kind of *fatalistic non-chalance*. A patch, Michael, is a pretentious thing.

MIKE. Tell me about it. I've never heard your theory about patches.

CAM. A patch announces to the world that you still care. That at some precarious level in your miserable little existence, appearance still matters. A patch puts on airs. It's a bourgeois label I don't care to wear.

MIKE. (*shaking his head*) You're one helluva specimen, Cam. You know what they ought to do? They ought to put you in a big glass jar out at the university, and leave you there for observation.

CAM. Oh, I'd like that. I'd be pickled, in a big glass jar.

MIKE. (*patting his pocket*) Hey, I gotta little something special. (*He takes out two cigars.*) Havanas!

CAM. Bless your soul. My God, Mike, these ain't cheap.

MIKE. Hang the expense.

CAM. And you're buying your threads down at Dixwell's now, too?

MIKE. Uh huh. The amazing thing is, they like Bohunk money just as well as they liked yours. Your old Watson Club is the only exception. I've applied twice, and they've refused me twice.

CAM. It's your name, Mike. Melzewski. They can't spell it and they can't pronounce it. Why do you bother? You've done very well.

MIKE. You're damn right I have! I've got a five-bedroom house with three bathrooms. I've got a new Cadillac every two years. I own three apartment buildings on the west side and I just bought half a hockey team. I've even got a library. Well — your library. I've got only one trace of the immigrant left.

CAM. Oh. What's that?

MIKE. In church, on Sunday morning. I still, when I put a paper dollar down on that collection plate, I still take fifty cents back. I hate it when I do it, but, shit, I still do it! Gimme the frigging gun.

CAM. Ah, yes. (*Takes one, of two, off a rack.*) Here it is. Top of the line. Nice bit of engraving there, on the stock.

MIKE. Not bad, not bad.

CAM. You bastard, you'll sell it for thirty.

MIKE. You could sell it for thirty yourself, if you'd bother to place an ad. Or if you got *real* adventuresome and went out. You know damn well you can buy that bottle for seven bucks at the Federal Liquor Store.

CAM. The Federal Liquor Store's got the drinking population by the balls! They're open eleven to twelve on Tuesdays, four to five-thirty Wednesdays, one to two-fifteen Thursdays, and I've got no car, man! It's a plot, y'see, a conspiracy, to drive the drinking man berserk. They know our brains don't function anymore. They know I could climb Everest sooner than I can get the trolley schedule to coincide with the Liquor Store schedule.

MIKE. Bullshit, Cam, bullshit!

CAM. Michael, listen, I've got a problem.

MIKE. (*incredulously*) Really?

CAM. Seriously. Christmas. It's weighing on me something awful. God, it's a pain in the ass, the way it exaggerates everything. (*pause*) I want to get a tree for Jeannie, and a bird for Ruth.

MIKE. (*Looks around the room.*) Well ... What about the other rifle?

CAM. Let me hang onto that for a while. Look, these

Constable prints have been in the family for years. They're quite valuable.

MIKE. Constable? Constable don't mean dick in my market, Cam. My people buy pictures to cover holes in walls. I'll give you ten bucks for the frames.

CAM. Lord, you're a weasel! Fifteen.

MIKE. Twelve-fifty, final.

CAM. O.K., O.K., but look at this, now. This rocking chair's got a wonderful history. A great-great uncle of mine married a woman who fled the American Revolution. She came up to Canada on the Hudson River, with a group of Loyalists—

MIKE. Loyalists?

CAM. Loyal to the crown, Mike. They preferred majesty, y'see, to representation. This chair was made in 1770 in New York.

MIKE. Campbell, for me, this is just s piece—a used furniture. (*brief pause*) On this you should write to an antique dealer in Toronto. You should send a photograph. You should get top dollar on this. Twelve-fifty on the frames, and that's it.

CAM. What'll you give me on the chair?

MIKE. (*slightly upset*) I won't take this chair, Cam.

CAM. Fifty — sixty—

MIKE. I will not have this chair on my conscience! Now, look. *Seventeen-fifty* on the picture frames, and that's final. You'll get a tree and a bird and enough left over for Ruth to make a little fruitcake. Deal?

CAM. Deal.

MIKE. (*Peels bills off a wad from his pocket, and digs in again for the fifty cents change.*) Listen, Cam, it's getting worse. I

mean, it ain't healthy. You're holing up here like a god-damned mole. And I've heard on the street that you aren't even trying to go to A.A. meetings anymore.

CAM. Don't have to. They come here. Make house calls, y'know.

MIKE. It was good for you, going to the meetings. Why'ja stop?

CAM. Had to ride the public transportation.

MIKE. What's the matter with that?

CAM. The public transportation rather consistently carries the public. Perilous lot, the public. They believe what they read in the newspapers. And if you remember, I was all over the headlines.

MIKE. Cam, it's long forgotten!

CAM. Nope. It was a very patriotic time. *(He smokes and drinks.)* Seen 'em lately?

MIKE. *(He shrugs, making an impatient gesture.)* Saturday, at Dixwell's.

CAM. Ah ha. Buying up bolts of British tweed, no doubt. How'd they look?

MIKE. Prosperous. Is that what you want to hear? They looked prosperous.

CAM. Didja give them my regards?

MIKE. They don't act like guilty men, Cam! They're never going to apologize.

CAM. They'll have to. Sooner or later, conscience will bring them around. They owe me, Mike.

MIKE. *(patiently, quietly)* It was illegal. And it was your idea.

CAM. *(flaring)* Of course it was my idea! I was the manager — the brains of the operation. They were two-

bit salesmen. They worked for me for twenty years and *never* had an idea!

MIKE. They weren't two-bit salesmen. They were your friends. Cam, *accept* it. It's over.

CAM. Easy to say, Mike, easy to say. Not so easy to practice.

MIKE. Listen, Swift Meat's looking for a salesman. National Cash Register's lookin' for a salesman. Everyone knows you were the best. Why the hell won't you make a call?

CAM. Michael, I went down in disgrace! (*pause*) They want freshmen. Green young guys in their twenties, guys who'll take the worst territory. I'm getting old, and I'd be low man on the totem pole. They'd send me into the musk-eg, the goddamned tundra, on straight commission! (*He is irritated. He wants to get rid of MIKE, but he is careful not to alienate him.*) Oh, we've been over this a hundred times. Go home, Mike. Go home and count your blessings, and have a nice big rowdy Ukrainian Christmas. (*MIKE gets his coat and hat. CAM gives him the rifle and the frames.*) How many kids you got now?

MIKE. Eight.

CAM. Eight! Heavens! (*whispering*) Coitus interruptus, Mike. Coitus interruptus!

MIKE. Easy to say, Campbell, easy to say—

CAM & MIKE. (*together, laughing*) Not so easy to practice!

CAM. Take care now, that sidewalk's really treacherous. (*MELZEWSKI leaves, CAM guzzles from the bottle and sways slightly. His feelings are pent-up, explosive. He begins to mumble.*) Smarmy goddam foreigner. Comin' in here,

tellin' me those two-bit salesmen were my friends. Tellin' me to call Swift Meat Company. (*Moving about, in frustration. Pause.*) Tellin' me what his *mother* used to say! My mother used to read Shakespeare! My mother was fourth-generation Canadian! But when he's here, I make the appropriate noises. Because I need the bottle more than he needs the visit. Look into any man's survival kit and you'll find nothing there but appropriate noises.

(Suddenly, great noise and banging are heard. CAM immediately drops to the floor, lying on his belly. CAM stays in this position for the duration of the calling. DUNCAN and ROSS are outside. They are seen, bundled up, hovering in silhouette behind a frosted front door.)

DUNCAN. Campbell, we're here! Open up, lad!

ROSS. There's a blizzard out here, Cam, it's forty below—

DUNCAN. We know you're in there, Campbell, and we didn't come 'cross town to play hide and seek—

CAM. *(on the floor)* My God, what an arrival! The Marines at Iwo Jima!

ROSS. Now, Campbell, I'm countin' to five, and then we're leaving. One — two — three — four — five.

CAM. May all your extremities freeze and fall off!

DUNCAN. Bastard! I've a mind to take this shovel and bust in a window.

ROSS. Now, Campbell, I'm counting to ten, and then we're leaving. I mean it, man. Six — seven — eight — nine — ten. That's it! We're goin' home, Cam. Don't call your sponsors unless you intend to let them in. *(They shuffle*

away, mumbling.)

CAM. Sponsor, sponsor, go away. I'll be saved another day. *(He pounces on a pile of pamphlets from A.A.)* And take your pamphlets with you! *(Realizing they have gone, he examines the pamphlets.)* Here we have the vast and somewhat repetitive literature of Alcoholics Anonymous. Alcoholics Anonymous. *(pause)* Bad enough to be an alcoholic. Worse, to be anonymous. It's against human nature.

(RUTH and JEAN enter and see the bottle.)

RUTH. Oh, God.

JEAN. Oh, Dad.

RUTH. Well, we'd best take inventory. The Constables.

JEAN. And a Winchester.

RUTH. That's one helluva load for just one bottle.

CAM. Ruthie, I wheedled some cash out of him, so you could fetch in a turkey for the Yule.

RUTH. I'll believe that, Campbell, when I put it in my mouth and chew it. I think you got in a grand supply and stashed it away somewhere.

CAM. Oh ladies, please. I need a little affection. Ruthie? I need a friend.

RUTH. You've got your friend there, in your hand.

CAM. Oh, you're a hard, hard woman.

RUTH. And you're a great big infant! You send us to the doctor, you call the bootlegger, and then you pout when you don't get a hug. And you've been diddling with the thermometer again. My God, it's like the tropics in here.

CAM. It's just comfortable, Ruth.

RUTH. *(turning down the thermometer)* Comfort COSTS.

Did your sponsors come?

CAM. Their cars wouldn't start.

RUTH. Will you look at the man? He wants hugs and cuddles.

CAM. (to JEAN) Insane, isn't it? Insane to expect affection from this woman who is the bane of my existence—

JEAN. Oh, Dad, please—

CAM. This woman who thinks there is salvation in a meal. I live in this house with a peasant mentality that wears me down like sandpaper. Get this straight, ladies. This disintegration of mine didn't start with the firing — no! — earlier! At the altar. When I took a Kraut peasant for a wife.

JEAN. (moving to leave) I cannot listen to this—

CAM. (stopping her, vocally or physically) Yes, you can! Listen and learn how to do combat! Your mother hasn't got the mental resources. Your mother's got nothin' to recommend her but goodness. Charmin' the world with her rural simplicity. Simplicity is fine when your man has lots of money, but it doesn't mean DICK in hard times!

RUTH. It means I stay, dammit! I've kept you off relief. I've gone to work!

CAM. Oh, yes, you relate to work!

JEAN. I will not stay here—

RUTH. (grabbing JEAN) Yes, you will! Stay and learn how to handle a man like this! God forbid, you might marry one someday. (She pushes JEAN into a chair.) Sit down! And listen! And get some steel in that spine of yours. And it doesn't take "mental resources" to have a good fight; all it takes is sticking power. (She whirls on CAM, doing the mental equivalent of rolling up her sleeves.) You're damned right I

relate to work! I'm proud of that. I *relate* to a minimum wage. (*The two of them now prowl around JEAN, who is penned in a chair. There is a great deal of humor underlying each of their arguments.*)

CAM. That's what these prairie farm girls relate to! The minimum. That's what they aspire to: the minimum. When you have no history, no culture, you're thankful when they give you a dollar and a quarter an hour for back-breaking, mind-boggling, monotonous work. And then she comes *home* and delivers herself of her small, diffuse, minimal thoughts!

RUTH. You were offered a job last week, you bastard. (*to JEAN*) Driving the elevator at the Connaught Apartments. (*back to CAM*) At a minimum wage, yes, and you sitting here without two cents to rub together, and you turned it down. *Explain to me* why you can't drive an elevator!

CAM. I *can* drive an elevator! I *won't* drive an elevator!

RUTH. You drove a car for thirty years!

CAM. A car goes horizontal, Ruth, natural, like the land. Oh, you'd be happy, wouldn't you, having me stand in a claustrophobic cubicle with my hand on a clutch all day — me, with my gift of gab; reduced to— (*He uses a falsetto.*) “Going Up,” “Going Down,” spending the next twenty years driving *vertical* at a minimum wage! (*to JEAN*) Do you know what your mother did on her eighteenth birthday? She was let off the farm for the first time, and she caught a bus into the city, and she went directly to the Ladies Room at Eaton's. And she stood there the entire day, watching the toilet flush at Eaton's Department Store. *Mesmerized* at the miracle of modern plumbing

because, you see, she'd peed in a hole in an outdoor biffy all her life. On *my* eighteenth birthday, I went with my grandfather to my great-grandfather's grave. Major David MacMillan of the Third Dragoon Guards. Major David fought with Wellington, at Waterloo, and saved his life, and was decorated afterward. And the Duke of Wellington *gave* Major David a tract of land in Canada. And *that* is how the MacMillans came to these shores!

RUTH. (*to JEAN, but for CAM's benefit*) You're a fool if you're impressed with all that hogwash. It's all dead stuff, a lot of old bones in graveyards. I never heard of it till he lost the job, then all of a sudden the MacMillans were bloody nobility! *My* history I seen with my own eyes! Now listen to this. I was ten and there were six kids younger, and I was drug out of school in second grade. Kept home, to mind all those kids. And one day Mum and Dad were out with the plough, and who comes roaring across the land but Indians! Wild Indians! We seen 'em on the horizon, comin' bareback on horses. If you left two sacks of milled white flour, they didn't burn your house. So I left the flour and I ran all the kids up to the attic, and I bolted the trap door. (*pause*) Now, *that* is impressive. I *remember* that. Nobody *told* me that. I'm a daughter of pioneers, strongest stock on this prairie, and no man anywheres'll make mincemeat of me! (*CAM and RUTH now revert from JEAN, to each other.*)

CAM. You're an illiterate, peasant, German-descended country bumpkin!

RUTH. And you're a wordy, Scots-descended, whisky-sodden son-of-a-bitch!

CAM. I am Canadian *aristocracy*!

RUTH. (*petering out, without CAM's resources*) You're a brute, and a bully, and besides all that, Campbell, you know what you are? (*pause*) You're no damned good!

CAM. (*Slowly, he begins to chuckle at the lameness of this remark.*) And besides all that, I'm hungry. (*A moment passes.*) You win, Ruth. The cure begins at the stove. Feed me, lady. Feed me.

RUTH. (*Feeling exorcised, as does CAM, she calms down. She is genuinely pleased that he will eat.*) Good Cam, I'm glad. I'll go fix it. (*as she goes*) Stay here, will you, Jeannie? Tend to your old dad. (*RUTH exits.*)

CAM. (*Looks at JEAN, sheepishly.*) Know what I need?

JEAN. What?

CAM. A hug and a cuddle. (*gesturing*) Come, sit down with me. (*JEAN sits beside him, on a couch. He puts his arm around her.*) Let's do something pretty. We haven't done something pretty in a long, long time.

JEAN. What'll we do?

CAM. You start, I'll follow.

JEAN. (*She thinks briefly, then recites.*) My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here—

CAM. My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer—

JEAN. A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—

CAM. My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

JEAN. Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North—

CAM. The birthplace of valour, the country of worth—

JEAN. Wherever I wander, wherever I rove—

CAM. The hills of the Highlands forever I love. (*They are*

relaxed and calm. CAM is drowsy.)

JEAN. Daddy? What does it do?

CAM. What, lass?

JEAN. The rye whisky. What does it do?

CAM. Oh, my. Well, it's like a ... great mother. Old mother rye. A great, vast, blimp of a woman. She reaches out and puts her arms around you, and envelops you. And she whispers in your ear. She says "Cam, you're a good lad. You tried. You trusted. Your heart is kind, and your mind is first-rate, and additionally, Cammy, you're awful easy on the eyes." Of course, she's a bit of a whore, old mother rye. She costs. But, oh, the comfort! The way she takes the hard edge off the day. And the whisper in the ear is like a warm zephyr. She puts her mouth right here, *(He points to his ear.)* —and she says, "Cammy, life is possible."

(RUTH bustles in, wearing an apron.)

RUTH. Cam, I want you to wash up. Come along now.

CAM. Oh, Ruthie, I'm in my nice hazy-dazy. Bring it in here.

RUTH. I will not! You need to walk, and circulate your blood—

CAM. *(rising, with JEAN)* My blue blood—

RUTH. Your blue blood, yes. You need to sit up straight in a chair and eat proper.

JEAN. *(helping him up, and out)* Come on now, Dad, into the kitchen.

RUTH. *(on the other side of him)* Up, now, baggage, up and

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