The Time of Your Life

William Saroyan

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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To George Jean Nathan

AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS PLAYS

In the sequence of plays written by me "Love's Old Sweet Song" is the fourth. The first and second are "My Heart's in the Highlands" and "The Time of Your Life." These three plays have been produced in New York and are published in this book. The third and fifth plays, as yet unproduced or unpublished, are "The Hero of the World" and "Something About a Soldier." All of these plays, excepting "My Heart's in the Highlands," were written sometime after March, 1939. A sixth play, "Sweeney in the Trees," was completed on the last day of 1939.

My work has always been the product of my time. Although the world was at peace when I wrote "My Heart's in the Highlands," there was every indication that it would be at war again before long. The poet of this play, Ben Alexander, speaks to the world on the subject of war as follows: "Go ahead. Fire your feeble guns. You won't kill anything. There will always be poets in the world."

The shadow of impending war is over the whole of my second play "The Time of Your Life," and its central character, Joe, spends most of his time examining maps, guns, and the effect of contemporary reality (which includes the constant likelihood of war) on the little and unknown human beings of the world, and on their natural instinct to live gracefully and decently. The Arab of this play says over and over again: "No foundation. All the way down the line."

The theme of my third play, "The Hero of the World," is the effect of this world-disorderliness on both ordinary and superior human beings, canceling the integrity and dignity of the first, and destroying the faith and personal force of the second, leaving man in art speechless, un-

willing to act, incapable of accepting responsibility to himself and to society.

"Love's Old Sweet Song" is my fourth play.

I began to write my fifth play, "Something About a Soldier," on September 3, 1939, when it was evident that the war which the world for twenty years had been making inevitable was now to come about. Art and religion would not be able to stop the war any more than they would be able to stop tomorrow. In this play a man of seventy who has lived a truly civilized life, along with his adopted son of eleven, who has not so much as begun to live *consciously* at all, declare war against the political leaders of the world. These two, the old and the young, build a trench in their front yard, put on military uniforms, and *appear* to be making fools of themselves, but only because their foolishness is on a much smaller scale than the historical foolishness of the world. At first the man is regarded as crazy. We, too, at first regard large-scale trouble-makers as crazy. Crazy or sane, however, their persistence, their energy, and the support of millions of simple human beings reduces any aberration in them to something that is irrelevant. And soon after my soldier's declaration of war, his seeming craziness also becomes irrelevant. Since World War II had unquestionably arrived and would unquestionably do its damage, and there was nothing I or you could do about it, I found it necessary to foresee its end and to return to the essential labor of art.

As far as it is possible to do so, in writing my sixth play, "Sweeney in the Trees," I dismissed the war. It had started; consequently it would end. All of us were disgraced once more, and the most (as well as the least) we could do was seek to bring the spirit of man together again.

Wars, for us, are either inevitable, or created. Whatever they are, they should not wholly vitiate art. What art needs is greater men, and what politics needs is better men. If the creation and execution of vast active human projects are necessary for the health of the people, and or the security of the state, they must be the work of men more imaginative than militarists and politicians, and men less fond of their own privacy than artists. Art and politics must move closer together. Reflection and action must be equally valid in good men if history is not to take one course and art another. The weakness of art is that great poems do not ennoble politics, as they certainly should, and the trouble with politics is that they inspire poets only to mockery and scorn.

Art can no longer afford to be contemptuous of politics, and it appears to be time politics took a little instruction from art. Not only is the individual an inhabitant of the world, so also is the nation, and as the world goes, so goes the individual and the nation. What is necessary is greater art in the determining of *how* the world shall go. During this war we have come to accept all manner of artless and base behavior simply because of the tremendous quantity of it in operation. This is historically inevitable. Whatever beauty there may be in a vast military success, it is no beauty that can delight anything in us excepting that which is most uncultivated or inhuman. There is no longer occasion, however, for us to grieve foolishly over the destruction of half a million lives in so short a space of time as twenty days.

We have always believed that art should be one thing, religion one thing, politics one thing, morality one thing, and so on. This kind of isolation of entities, while convenient, is, I believe, foolish. All things must come together as one, which is man. The functioning of all things

should be to the glory of living. Art is answerable to politics, and politics is answerable to religion, and all are answerable to man, so that when there is disgrace in life, as there is now, we are *all* guilty, the poet with the statesman, the general with the Pope, and so on. If we can pretend that evil is unnatural or that it is undesirable, all men who are conscious, all functioning men, all men with superior natural endowment, all men of thought, all men of action, all men of faith, must be responsible for the occurrence of evil. Force is the simplest and easiest method in the world by which to settle any kind of dispute. Intelligence and grace, however, are the means of canceling disputes, which are unimaginative *creations*, not realities. Political systems, however deeply and emotionally integrated in the legend and behavior of a people, are worthless when they can survive only at the cost of the actual lives of the people whom they claim to protect. And yet we know one political system or another is still necessary for the management of the world. For this reason, art must enter the arena. It must be *part* of one large thing: the world and its management, life and its instruction. Art must not be a separate and special thing. The intention of art has always been to deepen, extend, elevate, ennoble, strengthen, and refresh the experience of living. It cannot begin to do these things until it accepts part of the management of the *physical* life of man, which is now in the hands of inferior men.

There are many sound arguments in favor of *all* of the things of life and the world, seemingly good or seemingly bad. There is no argument against grace, however, and the way of art, and the companion of art, is grace. This is a word, I think, which must now begin to take the place in our vocabulary of a word long since outworn and for the time being dangerous, if not useless: *truth*. Truth, in

our time, has so many variations it has become an actual nonentity. Except statistically, we know no truth, because we have little grace and less honor. There are arguments in favor of war, and I am sure there could be arguments in favor of disease and death. There are times, even in the healthiest of lives, when destruction appears to be more compelling than construction, when death seems more in order than life. Part of the infinite wonder of man is the simultaneous reality of varying and contradictory states. In the flux of inner reality, however, the good and positive appear to be much more abundant and natural than the evil and negative. To have been born is surely our end. To die is beside the point. And to live is our pleasure and law. There may be exhilaration in death, but most of us prefer to survive exhilaration. Most of us cannot help enduring our emotions.

As the conscious individual has intelligence and conscience, in addition to instinct, so also has the *mass.* What it lacks in quality, it makes up in quantity. Simple and relatively uncultivated men of energy who find themselves in the leadership of great masses very often contain within themselves both the intelligence and instinct of the whole mass, plus a compulsion to be somehow superior and immortal. These men are seldom actually evil, although they may seem to be. They are *naïve.* They are not to be scorned or dismissed by men individually superior. While no member of the mass is deprived of his *special* individuality until he dies or is killed, that individuality is so nearly the same as the individuality of millions of others, he and the millions are essentially one, and this one, numbering hundreds of millions, has its model in the *uncultivated* man who is their leader. This man knows which way the mass wishes to go, or can be led, and therein is his superiority—and his essential

inferiority. If he leads, he *cannot* lead to anything like a worthy destination, and if he fulfills the wish of the mass, that fulfillment will carry him and the mass to death or disgrace. The instinct of the mass in our time is toward regimentation. Toward the security of narrower limits. The mass appears to be either fearful or unappreciative of the kind of individual freedom the poet, for instance, must insist upon. For the mass this instinct may or may not be proper. Improper or proper, the mass appears to be fearful of exposure to leisure and individual choice. It appears to want the time of its life carefully mapped out and organized, and it appears to want its behavior dictated. (There are good arguments in favor of all this. There are better arguments in favor of truly superior men exerting a truly superior influence.) Without completely abandoning old techniques (which would swiftly bring about even greater chaos), the imperative requirement of our time is to restore faith to the mass and integrity to the individual. The integration of man is still far from realized. In a single age this integration can be immeasurably improved, but it is impossible and useless to seek to imagine its full achievement. Integration will begin to occur when the individual is uninhibited, impersonal, simultaneously natural and cultured, without hate, without fear, and rich in spiritual grace. Strong men of poor, coarse, or undeveloped sensibilities usually find themselves in control of the mass. Strong men of rich sensibilities usually find themselves in control of themselves. This situation would be equitable and satisfactory only if we found it possible to accept as perfectly natural all the kinds of mass behavior which now shock and disgust us. If it were possible or desirable for a man to inhabit only his own personal world, without regard for the lesser (and greater) world of the mass, the present

distribution of balance would offend no one. It becomes increasingly true, however, that the most superior man in the world finds a valid variation of himself in the most inferior man in the world, and is hurt by that which hurts this man.

We may feel grateful that the war is on, since we know its beginning is its end, and once again our chance has come to *attempt* the establishment of a not *too* ambitious style of human order, and yet one at least a little finer than the one which created the war. Man wages his wars against himself. It is the same war each of us must wage within himself: good in conflict with evil. In the world the strong are better than the weak only if the strong have love for the weak, and in ourselves virtue is true only if we recognize vice and know it to be an inseparable part of virtue. We cannot begin to be truly good until we know we cannot be *constantly* good. It is hard to imagine anything more likely to be offensive to nature than permanent goodness. What we need is a better proportion of grace and a more generous distribution of understanding.

The majesty of art lies in its simultaneous aloofness and democracy, its *aloneness* and fraternity, and its quietude and tumult. Art begins by being a personal exercise in grace for its creator. Before all others, it refines its maker. The inner calisthenics of art tempers and gives form first to the spirit of the artist. It is the similar affection for and need of form in the many which has carried art into the world, and it is according to the needs of the living that art is given its texture and shape. The first creator of art is one's world and time. The material of art is provided by the world abundantly but chaotically. The labor of art is to take this material and instruct it in grace and form. In ratio to the *rawness* of the material, art exercises its discipline, its precision, and its faith.

Insofar as the world lacks these things, art must provide them. And it must do so blandly, with delight, with ease, and with casualness. It must entertain as it instructs. Its instruction cannot be direct. Since its boundaries are form, and since its cargo is pleasure, in order to accomplish more than the trivial and tentative, art must know deeply and intimately the grief, the despair, and the frustration of its time. It must know the sources of these things and the destinations of them. The source of the grief of man is the monotony of peaceful living. The source of his despair is his lack of resourcefulness and imagination. The source of his frustration is the pain he suffers in the attempt and failure to escape boredom. True escape for man can be provided only by art. To taste life in its full flavor he has not the experience or equipment or style. To accept only as much as he has the equipment to enjoy he has not the discipline or courage. And therefore to evade his defeat, he is eager to enter into any project which provides a substitute somehow or *any*-how for the fullness his dream needed. Such a substitute is participation in war, directly or indirectly, as soldier, instructed, in order, and close to ultimates, murder or death, obvious and immediate triumph or failure; or as bystander, excited by war, pleased, frightened, or fretted. Naturally, when there is war in the world the artist's material in addition to being raw is complex, and very hard to work with. The ecstatic pitch, which art itself seeks to reach, now exists in the world, but is such a base ecstasy that it cannot be given back to the world as great art. What usually happens, therefore, is that artists, at such times, either give up and join the others in bluffing or fretting, or sink deeper and deeper into remoteness and inutility, doing work which is repetitious and beside the point. It is a mistake to imagine that we are *forced* into unpleasant activities, such as war. Our absence of

vigilance and industry when there was time to instruct ourselves and the world in alternatives to war is at least partly responsible for the repetition of war. Behavior repeats itself, and great behavior cannot begin to repeat itself until it has *once* occurred, and it cannot begin to occur until art has made it as natural, as easy, and as inevitable as war has been for a long time. *During* a war there is absolutely no chance for correction, just as *after* a gun has been fired there is no chance to deprive its shell of its destination. After the explosion of a gun the most any of us can do is protect our eardrums. We are not forced into unpleasant activities. We either allow them to come about or we encourage them to come about.

There are many who believe art cannot do anything about history. I am not one of these. I believe art can do a good deal about history. Art cannot charge with the infantry or roll along with the armored car units of an army, but there has always been less charging and rolling in history than quietude and conversation; fewer parachute jumps and power dives, less strafing and bombing than poems and the reading of them.

In a time of war if art abandons its labor, war wins its victory, and cheap history tells the fable of the world. If it is impossible for art to reach the soldier who is on the verge of killing or being killed, it can get ready for the soldier's son. If art cannot improve the tone and meaning of the statesman's radio speech, it can anticipate his burial and be ready for his successor. If the world is amuck and there is no one for art to talk to, it can prepare itself for the next generation. War is tentative. Aberration is tentative. Art is not tentative.

It is *true* that as long as there are poets in the world war can kill nothing.

The world now provides art new and more difficult

material. Art has no alternative but to accept this material and to remove from it all foolishness, all feebleness, and all foolish and feeble fantasy.

WILLIAM SAROYAN

San Francisco
June 1, 1940.

NOTE

"The Time of Your Life" was produced by Eddie Dowling in conjunction with The Theatre Guild, and directed by Mr. Dowling and myself. It was first performed in New Haven at the Shubert Theatre, Saturday evening, October 7, 1939. From New Haven it moved to the Plymouth Theatre in Boston for a run of two weeks. It opened in New York at the Booth Theatre on Wednesday, October 25.

This is the cast which opened the play:

THE NEWSBOY ..... Ross Bagdasarian
THE DRUNKARD ..... John Farrell
WILLIE ..... Will Lee
JOE ..... Eddie Dowling
NICK ..... Charles De Sheim
TOM ..... Edward Andrews
KITTY DUVAL ..... Julie Haydon
DUDLEY ..... Curt Conway
HARRY ..... Gene Kelly
WESLEY ..... Reginald Beane
LORENE ..... Nene Vibber
BLICK ..... Grover Burgess
ARAB ..... Houseley Stevens, Sr.
MARY L. ..... Celeste Holm
KRUPP ..... William Bendix
MCCARTHY ..... Tom Tully
KIT CARSON ..... Len Doyle
NICK'S MA ..... Michelette Burani
SAILOR ..... Randolph Wade
ELSIE ..... Cathie Bailey
A STREET WALKER ..... Evelyn Geller
HER SIDE KICK ..... Mary Cheffey

A SOCIETY LADY . . . . . Eva Leonard Boyne
A SOCIETY GENTLEMAN . . . . . Ainsworth Arnold
FIRST COP . . . . . Randolph Wade
SECOND COP . . . . . John Farrell

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to each member of the cast.

William Bendix, who plays Krupp, contributed an excellent line to his part, as well as a delightful piece of business, for which I thank him.

The play would not be what it is without the piano-playing, and presence, of Reginald Beane, who plays Wesley; Gene Kelly's hoofing and monologue-reciting as Harry; Manuel Tolegian's off-stage harmonica-playing, for the Arab. My sincere thanks to each of these fine artists.

Charles de Sheim, as Nick, and Edward Andrews, as Tom, improved some of my lines, and Len Doyle, as Kit Carson, introduced pleasant business into his part. My sincere thanks.

My greatest debt of gratitude is to Mr. Dowling, whose great experience in the theater improved the playing of the play throughout.

I must thank Miss Julie Haydon for her splendid portrayal of Kitty Duval. I feel that no other actress in America could give this part the quality Miss Haydon gives it, and the quality which I feel the part should have.

John Farrell, as The Drunkard, made a small role into something, which to me at least, shall always be unforgettable, and Ross Bagdasarian, as The Newsboy, brought youth and foreign-American vigor to another small, but important, part. These two parts were written into the play in Boston, and were expertly performed by these two players almost immediately after the parts were written. My sincere thanks.

The character of Anna, Nick's daughter, although in the play long before the New York opening, was omitted from the cast when the play opened, owing to the fact that in Boston children are not allowed to act on the stage, and there wasn't time enough in New York before the opening to rehearse someone. The part will undoubtedly be in the play by the time this book is published.

There was a good deal of hard work for me to do in getting this play ready for its opening. Even so, because the players were all so capable and enthusiastic, the work was pleasant. I am grateful to everybody.

W. S.

New York
November 1, 1939

PREFACE

Statistics

The first draft was written in six days, in New York, beginning Monday, May 8, 1939, and ending Saturday, May 13. The first title was "The Light Fantastic." There were to have been six acts, one for each day of work. It turned out that the number of acts was five instead of six. Five or six, however, the idea was to write the play in six days. In the number of days of any worker's week. Writers are workers.

George Jean Nathan read the play, liked it and wrote about it in *Newsweek*. Eddie Dowling bought the play.

The writing of the play was, in great part, the consequence of the encouragement of George Jean Nathan and John Mason Brown who voted for "My Heart's in the Highlands," my first play, as the best play of the 1938–1939 season; which, in turn, landed me as a guest at the Drama Critics' Circle Dinner at The Algonquin; which, in another turn, enabled me to meet all the critics who are members of the Circle, as well as Mr. Dowling, who sat across the table from me, and along about ten o'clock at night said, "Any play you write, I'll buy sight unseen." This is the kind of American talk I respect. I asked Mr. Dowling if he was on the level and he assured me that he was. I asked him why, and he told me he believed in my future as a playwright. I felt fine and pretty sure I would have a good play for him very soon, so I began to brag about myself to John Anderson and Tallulah Bankhead and any other critic or actress or playwright who happened to be near by and unable to get away swiftly.

I didn't begin to write the play the next morning because at the time I was living a social life, I began not

living a social life the next day, and by Monday, May 8th, I was ready to be a writer again. I began to write.

The idea was also to find out why a writer can't write in New York. What's to stop him? The answer is, of course, nothing. A writer can write anywhere, under any circumstance or complication of circumstances, and nothing's to stop him. He can write well, and he can do it as swiftly as the work involved needs to be done swiftly. In the case of this play it needed to be done very swiftly. The weather was muggy. My room at The Great Northern Hotel had no view, little ventilation, and as soon as possible I wanted to go to Ireland for a long-delayed visit. I also needed money urgently and knew I couldn't earn any unless I had a play to offer Mr. Dowling.

The play was written on a rented Royal Portable Typewriter, which I later bought for $30 from Miss Sophe Rabson, manager of Rabson's, which was across the street from The Great Northern on 56th Street, but is now in a new building, on 52nd Street, and where Miss Rabson graciously allowed me to listen to any phonograph record I cared to listen to, without any obligation; and where a young clerk named Bill was always ready to listen to me on the theme of human nature and so on; and where Miss Rabson's brothers, numbering, I believe, seven, were always pleased to let me watch their television sets and inquire two or three times a day about the cost of new and used Capeharts.

The cigarettes smoked were Chesterfields. The cigars were panatelas. I have forgotten the name of the brand, but they were ten cents straight. The food was Automat food, mainly chicken pie, and occasionally a late supper at the Golden Horn, after which I would sleep an hour or so. The liquor was Scotch.

The play was written night and day. The work did me

good. The social life makes me feel ridiculous after a while. Six days of hard work is all I need to restore me to the pride and dignity of the worker, however.

This work was the first substantial work I had ever done in New York. It was also the longest work I had ever done, anywhere. I felt very good about it. Even if it was a bad play (and I had no reason to believe that it was not a good play), there was nothing lost, nothing to lose, and if the worst came to the worst I was simply broke and would have to borrow money somewhere and go back to San Francisco, instead of visiting Dublin.

Nathan, as I've said, liked the play and Dowling drew up a contract with me and advanced me an enormous sum of money. The title by that time was "The Time of Your Life." I studied the play every now and then and made certain changes in it. I considered other titles, inasmuch as I wasn't sure people wouldn't imagine the play wasn't some fluffy drawing-room comedy. Mr. Nathan's "Sunset Sonata" didn't seem quite right. Certain things were lifted out of the play. New things were put into it. I went to Dublin.

As I write these notes, the play has been revised four or five times, and is still likely to be revised. Even now, there are certain changes I would like to make in my first play, "My Heart's in the Highlands." Everything is there of course, as everything is in a child of three, or a man of thirty, or a man of sixty, but there is always room for refinement.

The World of a Play

Like "My Heart's in the Highlands," "The Time of Your Life" will very likely take an important place in the development of the new American theater. I know why, but I am going to leave the full details to the critics, as I

believe in the right of every profession to function. In one dimension I shall probably always understand the play better than anybody else, but in another I shall certainly never understand it as fully as critics, professional or amateur. Every performance of a play varies, if ever so little. Every audience beholding a play varies, if ever so little. Every individual in every audience varies, if ever so little. A play is a world, with its own inhabitants and its own laws and its own values. Although the real world is always essentially the same, it is actually never the same from one hour to another, never exactly the same, so that the same thing today as yesterday, is a different thing, nevertheless. One world furnishes itself to us every morning, and we furnish ourselves to a new world every morning. The world never changes and is always changing, and we in turn never change and are always changing. The world of a play is slightly more secure because considerably less complex, since a play consists of isolation, whereas the world has nothing to be isolated from. The writer of a play himself varies, if ever so little. The parts in a play vary, greatly or less greatly. The people taken from the world and placed in a play vary, greatly superficially, only very little deeply. The players in a play, as themselves, vary considerably.

Unlike the poem, essay, story, or novel, a play is not fully created in itself, as a play. It is not an affair, finally, between one man and one man: the writer and the reader. It becomes fully created only through the deliberate and cultivated functioning of a considerable number of people rehearsed to behave harmoniously and on schedule, so that a desired meaning and message will be conveyed to each individual beholding the play, a meaning which more or less should be the same to all the individuals in the audience.

"The Time of Your Life" is a play of our time. The people in the play are people you are likely to see any day in almost any part of America, certainly at least in certain kinds of American places. Most of the critics said they didn't understand my first play. After a while a few of them turned around and said they did, but on the whole the critics appeared not to like the play because they didn't know why they liked it. I predict that fewer critics this time will need to imagine that they cannot understand this play. I know a few critics won't like it at all, and that many critics will not like all of it.

I don't want this state of affairs to change.

WILLIAM SAROYAN

San Francisco

In the time of your life, live—so that in that good time there shall be no ugliness or death for yourself or for any life your life touches. Seek goodness everywhere, and when it is found, bring it out of its hiding-place and let it be free and unashamed. Place in matter and in flesh the least of the values, for these are the things that hold death and must pass away. Discover in all things that which shines and is beyond corruption. Encourage virtue in whatever heart it may have been driven into secrecy and sorrow by the shame and terror of the world. Ignore the obvious, for it is unworthy of the clear eye and the kindly heart. Be the inferior of no man, nor of any man be the superior. Remember that every man is a variation of yourself. No man's guilt is not yours, nor is any man's innocence a thing apart. Despise evil and ungodliness, but not men of ungodliness or evil. These, understand. Have no shame in being kindly and gentle, but if the time comes in the time of your life to kill, kill and have no regret. In the time of your life, live—so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it.

THE PEOPLE

JOE, a young loafer with money and a good heart
TOM, his admirer, disciple, errand boy, stooge and friend
KITTY DUVAL, a young woman with memories
NICK, owner of Nick's Pacific Street Saloon, Restaurant, and Entertainment Palace
ARAB, an Eastern philosopher and harmonica-player
KIT CARSON, an old Indian-fighter
MCCARTHY, an intelligent and well-read longshoreman
KRUPP, his boyhood friend, a waterfront cop who hates his job but doesn't know what else to do instead
HARRY, a natural-born hoofer who wants to make people laugh but can't
WESLEY, a colored boy who plays a mean and melancholy boogie-woogie piano
DUDLEY, a young man in love
ELSIE, a nurse, the girl he loves
LORENE, an unattractive woman
MARY L., an unhappy woman of quality and great beauty
WILLIE, a marble-game maniac
BLICK, a heel
MA, Nick's mother
A STREET WALKER
HER SIDE KICK
A COP
ANOTHER COP
A SAILOR
A SOCIETY GENTLEMAN
A SOCIETY LADY
THE DRUNKARD
THE NEWSBOY
ANNA, Nick's daughter

THE PLACE

Nick's Pacific Street Saloon, Restaurant, and Entertainment Palace at the foot of Embarcadero, in San Francisco.

A suggestion of room 21 at The New York Hotel, upstairs, around the corner.

THE TIME

Afternoon and night of a day in October, 1939.

The Time of Your Life

ACT ONE

SCENE: *There are swing double doors to the street down* R. *with steps leading down to barroom; a bar at* R.*; a door* C. *leading to kitchen; a piano on platform up* L.C.*; a stage with steps leading up, diagonally in upper* L.*, corner.*

A marble game down R.*; tables and chairs* R.*,* C. *and* L.C.*; a wall telephone up* L.C.*; a phonograph down* L.*; a chair* R. *of door* C.*; table and chairs in back room above* L. *end of bar.*

At a table L.C.*, JOE; always calm, always quiet, always thinking, always eager, always bored, always superior. His expensive clothes are casually and youthfully worn and give him an almost boyish appearance. At the moment he is in a sort of Debussy reverie.*

Behind the bar, NICK; a big redheaded Italian with an enormous naked woman tattooed in red on the inside of his right arm. He is studying "The Racing Fo[illegible]"

The ARAB, in his place sitting on chair at the end of the bar. He is a lean old man with a rather ferocious old-country black moustache, with the ends twisted up. Between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand is the Mohammedan tattoo indicating that he has been to Mecca. He is sipping a glass of beer.

WILLIE, the marble-game maniac, explodes through the swinging doors R.*, and lifts the forefinger of his right hand comically, indicating one beer. He is a very young man, scarcely more than twenty. He is wearing heavy shoes, a pair of old and dirty cordu-*

roys, a light green turtle-neck jersey with a large letter "F" on the chest, an oversize two-button tweed coat, and a green hat, with the brim up. NICK sets out a glass of beer for him, he drinks it, straightens up vigorously, saying, Aaah, makes a solemn face, gives NICK a one-finger salute of adieu, and begins to leave, refreshed and restored in spirit. He walks by the marble game, halts suddenly, turns, studies the contraption, gestures as if to say, Oh no. Turns to go, stops, returns to the machine, studies it, takes a handful of small coins out of his pants pocket, lifts a nickel, indicates with a gesture, One game, no more. Puts the nickel in the slot, pushes in the slide, making an interesting noise.

*The marbles fall, roll, and take their places. He pushes down the lever, placing one marble in position. Takes a very deep breath, walks in a small circle, excited at the beginning of great drama. Stands straight and pious before the contest. Himself vs. the machine. Willie vs. Destiny. His skill and daring vs. the cunning and trickery of the novelty industry of America, and the whole challenging world. He is the last of the American pioneers, with nothing more to fight but the machine, with no other reward than lights going on and off, and six nickels for one. Before him is the last champion, the machine. He is the last challenger, the young man with nothing to do in the world. WILLIE grips the knob delicately, studies the situation carefully, draws the knob back, holds it a moment, and then releases it. The first marble rolls out among the hazards, and the contest is on. At the very beginning of the play "The Missouri Waltz"**

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is coming from the phonograph. The music ends here. This is the signal for the beginning of the play.

The NEWSBOY comes in.

NEWSBOY. (*cheerfully*) Good-morning, everybody. (*No answer. To NICK:*) Paper, Mister? (*NICK shakes his head, no. The NEWSBOY goes to JOE.*) Paper, Mister? (*JOE shakes his head, no. The NEWSBOY walks away, counting papers.*)

JOE. (*noticing him*) How many you got?

NEWSBOY. Five. (*JOE gives him a bill, takes all the papers, throws them over his head. The NEWSBOY takes money, exits.*)

ARAB. (*picks up papers*) No foundation. All the way down the line.

(*The DRUNK enters* R., *crosses to the telephone. NICK takes the DRUNK out. The DRUNK returns* R.)

DRUNK. (*champion of the Bill of Rights*) This is a free country, ain't it? (*WILLIE starts upstairs, looks at marble game. Returns.*)

NICK. You can't beat that machine.

WILLIE. Oh, yeah?

JOE. (*calling*)

TOM. (*to himself*) Where the hell is he, every time I need him? (*He looks around calmly: the nickel-in-the-slot phonograph in the corner; the open public telephone; the stage; the marble game; the bar; and so on. He whistles again, this time a little louder.*) Hey, Tom. (*He waits a moment, then whistles again, very loudly.*)

NICK. (*with irritation*) What do you want?

JOE. I want the boy to get me a watermelon, that's what *I* want. What do *you* want? Money, or love, or fame or what? You won't get them studying The Racing Form.

NICK. I like to keep abreast of the times.

(*TOM comes hurrying in* R. *He is a great big man of about thirty or so who appears to be much younger because of the childlike expression of his face: handsome, dumb, innocent, troubled and a little bewildered by everything. He is obviously adult in years, but it seems as if by all rights he should still be a boy. He is defensive as clumsy, self-conscious, overgrown boys are. He is wearing a flashy cheap suit, a Woolworth watch-chain across his vest, and on the little finger of his right hand, a dice-ring: number six. On the middle finger of his left hand a large skull-and-crossbones ring. JOE leans back and studies him with casual disapproval. TOM slackens his pace and becomes clumsy and embarrassed, waiting for the bawling-out he's afraid he's going to get. He crosses to below* L. *of* C. *table.*)

JOE. (*objectively, severely, but warmly*) Who saved your life?

TOM. (*sincerely*) You did, Joe. Thanks.

JOE. How'd I do it?

TOM. (*confused*) What?

JOE. How'd I do it?

TOM. Joe, you know how you did it.

JOE. (softly) I want you to answer me. How'd I save your life? I've forgotten.

TOM. (*remembering, with a big goofy smile*) You made me eat all that chicken soup three years ago when I was sick and hungry.

JOE. (*fascinated*) *Chicken* soup?

TOM. (*eagerly*) Yeah.

JOE. Three years? Is it that long?

TOM. Yeah, sure. 1937. 1938. 1939. This is 1939, Joe.

JOE. Never mind what year it is. Tell me the whole story.

TOM. You took me to the doctor. You gave me money for food and clothes, and paid my room rent. Aw, Joe, you know all the different things you did.

JOE. (*nods, turning away from TOM after each question*) You in good health now?

TOM. Yeah, Joe.

JOE. You got clothes?

TOM. Yeah, Joe.

JOE. (*nods*) You eat three times a day. Sometimes four?

TOM. Yeah, Joe. Sometimes five.

JOE. You got a place to sleep?

TOM. Yeah, Joe.

JOE. (*He nods, pauses, and studies TOM carefully. With terrible irritation:*) Then, where the hell have you been?

TOM. (*humbly*) Joe, I was out in the street listening to the boys. They're talking about the trouble down here on the waterfront.

JOE. (*very sharply*) I want you to be around when I need you.

TOM. (*pleased that the bawling-out is over*) I won't do it again. Joe, one guy out there says there's got to be a revolution before anything will ever be all right.

JOE. (*impatient*) I know all about it. Now, here. Take this money. Go up to the Emporium. You know where the Emporium is?

TOM. Yeah, sure, Joe.

JOE. All right. Take the elevator and go up to the fourth floor. Walk around to the back, to the toy department. Buy me a couple of dollars' worth of toys and bring them here.

TOM. (*amazed*) Toys? What *kind* of toys, Joe?

JOE. Any kind of toys. Little ones that I can put on this table.

TOM. What do you want toys for, Joe?

JOE. (*mildly angry*) *What*?

TOM. All right, all right. You don't have to get sore at *everything*. What'll people think, a big guy like me buying toys?

JOE. *What people*?

TOM. Aw, Joe, you're always making me do crazy things for you, and *I'm* the guy that gets embarrassed. You just sit in this place and make me do all the dirty work.

JOE. (*looking away*) Do what I tell you.

TOM. O.K., but I wish I knew *why*. (*He makes to go, crosses to* R. *below bar.*)

JOE. Wait a minute. Here's a nickel. (*TOM crosses to* R. *of JOE.*) Put it in the phonograph. Number seven. I want to hear that waltz again.

TOM. (*crossing below to phonograph*) Boy, I'm glad *I* don't have to stay and listen to it. Joe, what do you hear in that song anyway? We listen to that song ten times a day. Why can't we hear number six, or two, or nine? There are a lot of other numbers.

JOE. (*emphatically*) Put the nickel in the phonograph. (*pause*) Sit down and wait till the music's over. Then go get me some toys.

TOM. O.K. O.K.

JOE. (*loudly*) Never mind being a martyr about it either. The cause isn't worth it.

(*TOM puts the nickel into the machine, with a ritual of impatient and efficient movement which plainly shows his lack of sympathy or enthusiasm. His manner also reveals, however, that his lack of sympathy is*

spurious and exaggerated. Actually, he is fascinated by the music, but is so confused by it that he tries to pretend he dislikes it. The MUSIC begins. TOM turns chair L. *of* L.C. *table and sits up stage. It is another variation of the "Missouri Waltz," played dreamily and softly, with perfect orchestral form, and with a theme of weeping in the horns repeated a number of times. At first TOM listens with something close to irritation, since he cannot understand what is so attractive in the music to JOE, and so painful and confusing to himself. Very soon, however, he is carried away helplessly by the melancholy story of grief and nostalgia in the stubborn, flowing rhythm. He stands quarreling with the grief and confusion in himself. JOE, on the other hand, listens as if he were not listening, indifferent and unmoved. What he's interested in is TOM. He turns and glances at TOM. KITTY DUVAL, who lives in a room in The New York Hotel, around the corner, comes beyond the swinging doors* R. *quietly, and walks slowly to the bar, her reality and rhythm a perfect accompaniment to the sorrowful American music, which is* her *music, as it is TOM's, which the world drove out of her, putting in its place brokenness and all manner of spiritually crippled forms. She seems to understand this, and is angry; angry with herself, full of hate for the poor world, and full of pity and contempt for its tragic, unbelievable, confounded people. She is a small powerful girl, with that kind of delicate and rugged beauty which no circumstance of evil or ugly reality can destroy. This beauty is that element of the immortal which is in the seed of good and common people, and which is kept alive in some of the female of our kind, no matter how accidentally or pointlessly they may have entered the world. KITTY DUVAL is*

somebody. There is an angry purity, and a fierce pride, in her. In her stance, and way of walking, there is grace and arrogance.)

KITTY. (*goes to bar*) Beer. (*NICK places a glass of beer before her mechanically. She swallows half the drink, and listens to the music again. TOM turns and sees her. He becomes dead to everything in the world but her. He stands like a lump, fascinated and undone by his almost religious adoration for her. JOE notices him.*)

JOE. (*gently*) Tom. (*TOM begins to move toward the bar, where KITTY is standing. Loudly.*) Tom. (*TOM halts, then turns, and JOE motions to him to come over to the table. TOM goes over. Quietly.*) Have you got everything straight?

TOM. (*out of the world, crossing down* L. *of JOE*) What?

JOE. What do you mean, what? I just gave you some instructions.

TOM. (*pathetically*) What do you want, Joe?

JOE. I want you to come to your senses. (*He stands up quietly and knocks TOM's hat off.*)

TOM. (*picks up his hat quickly*) I got it, Joe. I got it. The Emporium. Fourth floor. In the back. The toy department. Two dollars' worth of toys. That you can put on a table.

KITTY. (*to herself*) Who the hell is he to push a big man like that around?

JOE. I'll expect you back in a half hour. Don't get side-tracked anywhere. Just do what I tell you.

TOM. (*pleading*) Joe? Can't I bet four bits on a horse race? There's a long shot—Precious Time—that's going to win by ten lengths. I got to have money. (*JOE points to the street. TOM crosses below and goes out* R. *NICK is combing his hair, looking in the mirror.*)

NICK. I thought you wanted him to get you a watermelon.

JOE. I forgot. (*to KITTY, clearly, slowly, with great compassion*) What's the dream?

KITTY. (*moving to JOE, coming to*) What?

JOE. (*holding the dream for her*) What's the dream, *now*?

KITTY. (*coming still closer*) What dream?

JOE. What dream! The dream you're dreaming.

NICK. Suppose he did bring you a watermelon? What the hell would you do with it?

JOE. (*irritated*) I'd put it on this table. I'd look at it. Then I'd eat it. What do you *think* I'd do with it, sell it for a profit?

NICK. How should I know what *you'd* do with *anything*? What I'd like to know is, where do you get your money from? What work do you do?

JOE. (*looking at KITTY*) Bring us a bottle of champagne.

KITTY. (*at* R. *of JOE's table*) Champagne?

JOE. (*simply*) Would you rather have something else?

KITTY. What's the big idea?

JOE. I thought you might like some champagne. I myself am very fond of it.

KITTY. Yeah, but what's the big idea? You can't push me around.

JOE. (*gently but severely*) It's not in my nature to be unkind to another human being. I have only contempt for wit. Otherwise I might say something obvious, therefore cruel, and perhaps untrue.

KITTY. You be careful what you think about me.

JOE. (*slowly, not looking at her*) I have only the noblest thoughts for both your person, and your spirit.

NICK. (*having listened carefully and not being able to make it out*) What are you talking about?

KITTY. You shut up. You—

JOE. He owns this place. He's an important man. All kinds of people come to him looking for work. Comedians. Singers. Dancers.

KITTY. I don't care. He can't call me names.

NICK. All right, sister. I know how it is with a two-dollar whore in the morning.

KITTY. Don't you dare call me names. I used to be in burlesque.

NICK. (*profoundly, as it were*) If you were ever in burlesque, I used to be Charlie Chaplin.

KITTY. (*swallowing beer*) I *was* in burlesque. I played the burlesque circuit from coast to coast. I've had flowers sent to me by European royalty. I've had dinner with young men of wealth and social position.

NICK. You're dreaming.

KITTY. (*to JOE*) *I was in burlesque.* Kitty Duval. That was my name. Lifesize photographs of me in costume in front of burlesque theaters all over the country.

JOE. (*gently, coaxingly*) I believe you. Have some champagne.

NICK. (*going above her to* L. *of JOE's table, with champagne*) There he goes again.

JOE. Miss Duval?

KITTY. (*sincerely; going over to chair* L. *of JOE's table, sits*) That's not my *real* name. That's my *stage* name.

JOE. I'll call you by your stage name.

NICK. (*pouring*) All right, sister, make up your mind. Are you going to have champagne with him, or not?

JOE. Pour the lady some wine.

NICK. O.K., Professor. Why you come to this joint instead of one of the high-class dumps uptown is more than I can understand. Why don't you have champagne at the St. Francis? Why don't you drink with a lady?

KITTY. (*furiously*) Don't you call me names—you dentist.

JOE. Dentist?

NICK. (*amazed, loudly*) What kind of cussing is that? (*pause; looking at KITTY, then at JOE, bewildered*) This guy doesn't belong here. The only reason I've got champagne is because *he* keeps ordering it all the time. (*to KITTY*) Don't think you're the only one he drinks champagne with. He drinks with *all* of them. (*pause*) He's crazy. Or something.

JOE. (*confidentially*) Nick, I think you're going to be all right in a couple of centuries.

NICK. I'm sorry, I don't understand your English. (*He takes JOE's hat and hangs it on hook up* L. *JOE lifts his glass. KITTY slowly lifts hers.*)

JOE. (*putting everything he's got into it*) To the spirit, Kitty Duval.

KITTY. (*beginning to understand, and very grateful, looking at him*) Thank you. (*They drink.*)

JOE. (*calling*) Nick.

NICK. Yeah?

JOE. Would you mind putting a nickel in the machine again? Number—

NICK. Seven. I know. I know. I don't mind at all, Your Highness, although, personally, I'm not a lover of music. (*going above table to the phonograph*) As a matter of fact I think Tchaikowsky was a dope.

JOE. Tchaikowsky? Where'd you ever hear of Tchaikowsky?

NICK. He was a dope.

JOE. Yeah. Why?

NICK. They talked about him on the radio one Sunday morning. He was a sucker. He let a woman drive him crazy.

JOE. I see.

NICK. I stood behind that bar listening to the God damn stuff and cried like a baby. *None but the lonely heart*! He was a dope.

JOE. What made you cry?

NICK. What?

JOE. (*sternly*) What made you cry, Nick?

NICK. (*angry with himself*) I don't know.

JOE. I've been underestimating you, Nick. Play number seven.

NICK. They get everybody worked up. They give everybody stuff they shouldn't have. (*NICK puts the nickel into the machine and the Waltz begins again. He listens to the music, then studies The Racing Form.*)

KITTY. (*to herself, dreaming*) I like champagne, and everything that goes with it. Big houses with big porches, and big rooms with big windows, and big lawns, and big trees, and flowers growing everywhere, and big shepherd dogs sleeping in the shade.

NICK. (*crossing below toward stairs* R.) I'm going next door to Frankie's to make a bet. I'll be right back.

JOE. Make one for me.

NICK. (*stopping* R. *of JOE*) Who do you like?

JOE. (*giving him money*) Precious Time.

NICK. *Ten dollars?* Across the board?

JOE. No. On the nose.

NICK. O.K. (*He goes out* R.)

(*DUDLEY R. BOSTWICK, as he calls himself, breaks through the swinging doors* R., *and pratically flings himself upon the open telephone. DUDLEY is a young man of about twenty-four or twenty-five, ordinary and yet extraordinary. He is smallish, as the saying is, neatly dressed in bargain clothes, over-*

worked and irritated by the routine and dullness and monotony of his life, apparently nobody and nothing, but in reality a great personality. The swindled young man. Educated, but without the least real understanding. A brave, dumb, salmon-spirit struggling for life in weary, stupefied flesh, dueling ferociously with a banal mind which has been only irritated by what it has been taught. He is a great personality because, against all these handicaps, what he wants is simple and basic: a woman. This urgent and violent need, common yet miraculous enough in itself, considering the unhappy environment of the animal, is the force which evaluates him from nothingness to greatness. A ridiculous greatness, but in the nature of things beautiful to behold. All that he has been taught, and everything he believes, is phony, and yet he himself is real, almost super-real, because of this indestructible force in himself. His face is ridiculous. His personal rhythm is tense and jittery. His speech is shrill and violent. His gestures are wild. His ego is disjointed and epileptic. And yet deeply he possesses the same wholeness of spirit, and directness of energy, that is in all species of animals. There is little innate or cultivated spirit in him, but there is no absence of innocent animal force. He is a young man who has been taught that he has a chance, as a person, and believes it. As a matter of fact, he hasn't a chance in the world, and should have been told by somebody, or should not have had his natural and valuable ignorance spoiled by education, ruining an otherwise perfectly good and charming member of the human race. At the telephone he immediately begins to dial furiously, hangs up furiously, and furiously begins to

turn the pages of the telephone book, looking for the right number. Not more than half a minute after the firecracker arrival of DUDLEY R. BOSTWICK, occurs the polka-and-waltz arrival of HARRY, R.

*HARRY is another story. He comes in timidly, turning about uncertainly, awkward, out of place everywhere, embarrassed and encumbered by the contemporary costume, sick at heart, but determined to fit in somewhere. His arrival constitutes a dance. His clothes don't fit. The pants are a little too large. The coat, which doesn't match, is also a little too large, and loose. He is a dumb young fellow, but he has ideas. A philosophy, in fact. His philosophy is simple and beautiful. The world is sorrowful. The world needs laughter. HARRY is funny. The world needs HARRY. HARRY will make the world laugh. He has probably had a year or two of high school. He has also listened to the boys at the pool room. He's looking for NICK. He goes to the ARAB, and says, "*Are you Nick?*" The ARAB shakes his head. He stands at the bar, waiting. He waits very busily.)*

HARRY. (*as NICK returns*) You Nick?

NICK. (*very loudly*) I am *Nick.*

HARRY. (acting) Can you use a great comedian?

NICK. (*behind the bar*) Who, for instance?

HARRY. (*almost angry*) Me.

NICK. You? What's funny about you? (*DUDLEY at the telephone, is dialing. Because of some defect in the apparatus the dialing is very loud.*)

DUDLEY. Hello. Sunset 7349? May I speak to Miss Elsie Mandelspiegel? (*pause*)

HARRY. (*with spirit and noise, dancing*) I dance and do gags and stuff.

NICK. In costume? Or are you wearing your costume?

DUDLEY. All I need is a cigar.

KITTY. I'd walk out of the house, and stand on the porch, and look at the trees, and smell the flowers, and run across the lawn, and lie down under a tree, and read a book. A book of poems, maybe.

DUDLEY. (*very, very clearly*) Elsie Mandelspiegel. (*impatiently*) She has a room on the fourth floor. She's a nurse at the Southern Pacific Hospital. Elsie Mandelspiegel. She works at night. Elsie. Yes. (*He begins waiting again.*)

(*WESLEY, a colored boy, comes from* R. *to the bar and stands near HARRY, waiting.*)

NICK. Beer?

WESLEY. No, sir. I'd like to talk to you.

NICK. (*to HARRY*) All right. Get funny.

HARRY. (*getting funny, an altogether different person, an actor with great energy, both in power of voice, and in force and speed of physical gesture*) Now, I'm standing on the corner of Third and Market. I'm looking around. I'm figuring it out. There it is. Right in front of me. The whole city. The whole world. People going by. They're going somewhere. I don't know where, but they're going. I ain't going *anywhere.* Where the hell can you go? I'm figuring it out. All right, I'm a citizen. A fat guy bumps his stomach into the face of an old lady. They were in a *hurry. Fat* and old. *They bumped.* Boom. I don't know. It may mean war. *War.* Germany. England. Russia. I don't know for sure. (*Loudly, dramatically, he salutes, about faces, presents arms, aims, and fires.*) WAAAAAR. (*He blows a call to arms. NICK gets sick of this, indicates with a gesture that HARRY should hold it, and goes to WESLEY.*)

NICK. What's on *your* mind?

WESLEY. (*confused*) Well—

NICK. Come on. Speak up. Are you hungry, or what?

WESLEY. Honest to God, I ain't hungry. All I want is a job. I don't want no charity.

NICK. Well, what can you do, and how good are you?

WESLEY. I can run errands, clean up, wash dishes, anything.

DUDLEY. (*on the telephone, very eagerly*) Elsie? Elsie, this is Dudley. Elsie, I'll jump in the bay if you don't marry me. Life isn't worth living without you. I can't sleep. I can't think of anything but you. All the time. Day and night and night and day. Elsie, I love you. I love you. What? (*burning up*) Is this Sunset 7-3-4-9? *7943*? (*calmly, while WILLIE begins making a small racket*) Well, what's *your* name? *Lorene*? Lorene Smith? I thought you were Elsie Mandelspiegel. What? Dudley. Yeah. Dudley R. Bostwick. Yeah. R. It stands for Raoul, but I never spell it out. I'm pleased to meet *you*, too. What? There's a lot of noise around here. (*WILLIE stops hitting the marble game*) Where am I? At Nick's, on Pacific Street. I work at the S. P. I told them I was sick and they gave me the afternoon off. Wait a minute. I'll ask them. I'd like to meet *you*, too. Sure. I'll ask them. (*turns around to NICKS*) What's this address?

NICK. Number 3 Pacific Street, you cad.

DUDLEY. Cad? You don't know how I've been suffering on account of Elsie. I take things too ceremoniously. I've got to be more lackadaisical. (*into telephone*) Hello, Elenore? I mean, Lorene. It's number 3 Pacific Street. Yeah. Sure. I'll wait for you. How'll you know me? You'll *know* me. I'll recognize *you*. Good-bye, now. (*He hangs up, crosses to table* R. *and sits.*)

HARRY. (*continuing his monologue, with gestures,*

movements, and so on) I'm standing there. I didn't do anything to anybody. Why should *I* be a soldier? (*sincerely, insanely*) BOOOOOOOOOM. *WAR*! O.K. War. *I* retreat. *I* hate war. I move to Sacramento.

NICK. (*shouting*) All right, Comedian. Lay off a minute.

HARRY. (*broken-hearted, going to WILLIE*) Nobody's got a sense of humor any more. The world's dying for comedy like never before, but nobody knows how to *laugh.*

NICK. (*to WESLEY*) Do you belong to the union?

WESLEY. What union?

NICK. For the love of Mike, where've you been? Don't you know you can't come into a place and ask for a job and get one and go to work, just like that. You've got to belong to one of the unions.

WESLEY. I didn't know. I got to have a job. Real soon.

NICK. Well, you've got to belong to a union.

WESLEY. I don't want any favors. All I want is a chance to earn a living.

NICK. Go on into the kitchen and tell Sam to give you some lunch.

WESLEY. Honest, I ain't hungry.

DUDLEY. (*shouting*) What I've gone through for Elsie. (*NICK comes from behind bar and gives him a beer.*)

HARRY. I've got all kinds of funny ideas in my head to help make the world happy again. (*WESLEY almost faints from hunger. NICK catches him just in time. The ARAB and NICK go off with WESLEY into the kitchen.*)

NICK. (*holding WESLEY*) No, he isn't hungry.

HARRY. (*to WILLIE*) See if you think this is funny. It's my own idea. I created this dance myself. It comes after the monologue. (*HARRY begins to dance. WILLIE watches a moment, and then goes back to the game.*

It's a goofy dance, which HARRY does with great sorrow, but much energy.)

DUDLEY. Elsie. Aw, gee, Elsie. What the hell do I want to see Lorene Smith for? Some girl I don't know. (*JOE and KITTY have been drinking in silence. There is no sound now except the soft shoe shuffling of HARRY, the Comedian. ARAB re-enters and sits in chair.*)

JOE. What's the dream now, Kitty Duval?

KITTY. (*dreaming the words and pictures*) I dream of home. Christ, I always dream of home. I've no *home.* I've no place. But I always dream of all of us together again. We had a farm in Ohio. There was nothing good about it. It was always sad. There was always trouble. But I always dream about it as if I could go back and Papa would be there and Mamma and Louie and my little brother Stephen and my sister Mary. I'm Polish. Duval! My name isn't Duval, it's Koranovsky. Katerina Koranovsky. We lost everything. The house, the farm, the trees, the horses, the cows, the chickens. Papa died. He was old. He was thirteen years older than Mamma. We moved to Chicago. We tried to work. We tried to stay together. Louie got in trouble. The fellows he was with killed him for something. I don't know what. Stephen ran away from home. Seventeen years old. I don't know where he is. Then Mamma died. (*pause*) What's the dream? I dream of home. (*NICK comes out of the kitchen with WESLEY who sits at the piano.*)

NICK. Here. Sit down here and rest. That'll hold you for a *while.* Why didn't you tell me you were hungry? You all right now?

WESLEY. Yes, I am. Thank you. I didn't know I was *that* hungry.

NICK. (*to* L. *of piano*) Fine. (*to HARRY who is dancing*) Hey. What the hell do you think you're doing?

HARRY. (*stopping*) That's my own idea. I'm a natural-born dancer and comedian. (*WESLEY begins slowly, one note, one chord at a time, to play the piano.*)

NICK. (*going to back of bar*) You're no good. Why don't you try some other kind of work? Why don't you get a job in a store, selling something? What do you want to be a comedian for?

HARRY. (*to upper end of bar*) I've got something for the world and they haven't got sense enough to let me give it to them. Nobody knows me.

DUDLEY. Elsie. Now I'm waiting for some dame I've never seen before. Lorene Smith. Never saw her in my life. Just happened to get the wrong number. She turns on the personality, and I'm a cooked Indian. Give me a beer, please.

HARRY. Nick, you've got to see my act. It's the greatest thing of its kind in America. (*NICK comes to DUDLEY with beer. HARRY follows him.*) All I want is a chance. No salary to begin. Let me try it out tonight. If I don't wow 'em, O.K., I'll go home. If vaudeville wasn't dead, a guy like me would have a chance.

NICK. (*He crosses up behind bar. HARRY follows him.*) You're not funny. You're a sad young punk. What the hell do you want to try to be funny for? You'll break everybody's heart. What's there for you to be funny about? You've been poor all your life, haven't you?

HARRY. I've been poor all right, but don't forget that some things count more than some other things.

NICK. What counts more, for instance, than what else, for instance?

HARRY. Talent, for instance, counts more than money, for instance, that's what, and I've got talent. I get new ideas night and day. Everything comes natural to me. I've got style, but it'll take me a little time to round it

out. That's all. (*By now WESLEY is playing something of his own which is very good and out of the world. He plays about half a minute, after which HARRY begins to dance.*)

NICK. (*watching*) I run the lousiest dive in Frisco, and a guy arrives and makes me stock up with champagne. The whores come in and holler at me that they're ladies. Talent comes in and begs me for a chance to show itself. Even society people come here once in a while. I don't know what for. Maybe it's liquor. Maybe it's the location. Maybe it's my personality. Maybe it's the crazy personality of the joint. The old honky-tonk. (*pause*) Maybe they can't feel at home anywhere else. (*By now WESLEY is really playing, and HARRY is going through a new routine. DUDLEY grows sadder and sadder.*)

KITTY. Please dance with me.

JOE. (*loudly*) I never learned to dance.

KITTY. Anybody can dance. Just hold me in your arms.

JOE. I'm very fond of you. I'm *sorry*. I *can't* dance. I wish to God I could.

KITTY. Oh, please.

JOE. Forgive me. I'd like to very much. (*KITTY dances alone. TOM comes in* R. *with a package. He sees KITTY and goes ga-ga again. He comes out of the trance and puts the bundle on the* L.C. *table in front of JOE. NICK comes to above JOE's table, gets bottle and glasses and returns to back of bar.*)

JOE. (*taking the package*) What'd you get?

TOM. Two dollars' worth of toys. That's what you sent me for. The girl asked me what I wanted with toys. I didn't know what to tell her. (*He turns and looks at KITTY.*) Joe? I've got to have some money. After all

you've done for me, I'll do anything in the world for you, but, Joe, you got to give me some money once in a while.

JOE. What do you want it for? (*TOM turns and stares at KITTY dancing.*)

JOE. (*noticing*) Sure. Here. Here's five. (*shouting*) Can you dance?

TOM. (*proudly*) I got second prize at the Palomar in Sacramento five years ago.

JOE. (*loudly, opening package*) O.K., dance with her.

TOM. You mean *her*?

JOE. (*loudly*) I mean Kitty Duval, the burlesque queen. I mean the queen of the world burlesque. Dance with her. She wants to dance.

TOM. (*helpless*) Joe, can I tell you something?

JOE. (*He brings out a toy and winds it.*) You don't have to. I know. You love her. You *really* love her. I'm not blind. I know. But take care of yourself. Don't get sick that way again.

NICK. (*looking at and listening to WESLEY with amazement*) Comes in here and wants to be a dishwasher. Faints from hunger. And then sits down and plays better than Heifetz.

JOE. Heifetz plays the violin.

NICK. All right, don't get careful. He's good, ain't he?

TOM. (*to KITTY*) Kitty.

JOE. (*He lets the toy go, loudly.*) Don't *talk.* Just *dance.*

(*TOM and KITTY dance. NICK is at the bar, watching everything. HARRY is dancing. DUDLEY is grieving into his beer. LORENE SMITH, about thirty-seven, very overbearing and funny-looking, comes to the bar from* R.)

NICK. What'll it be, lady?

LORENE. (*looking about and scaring all the young men*) I'm looking for the young man I talked to on the telephone. Dudley R. Bostwick.

DUDLEY. (*jumping, running to her, stopping, shocked*) Dudley R. (*slowly*) Bostwick? Oh, yeah. He left here ten minutes ago. You mean Dudley Bostwick, that poor man on crutches?

LORENE. Crutches?

DUDLEY. Yeah. Dudley Bostwick. That's what he *said* his name was. He said to tell you not to wait.

LORENE. Well. (*She begins to go, turns around.*) Are you sure *you're* not Dudley Bostwick?

DUDLEY. Who—me? (*grandly*) My name is Roger Tenefrancia. I'm a French-Canadian. I never saw the poor fellow before.

LORENE. It seems to me your voice is like the voice I heard over the telephone.

DUDLEY. A coincidence. An accident. A quirk of fate. One of those things. Dismiss the thought. That poor cripple hobbled out of here ten minutes ago.

LORENE. (*crossing to door* R.) He said he was going to commit suicide. I only wanted to be of help. (*She goes out* R.)

DUDLEY. Be of help? What kind of help could she be, of? (*DUDLEY runs to the telephone in the corner.*) Gee whiz, Elsie. Gee whiz. I'll never leave you again. (*He turns the pages of a little address book.*) Why do I always forget the number? I've tried to get her on the phone a hundred times this week and I still forget the number. She won't come to the phone, but I keep trying anyway. She's out. She's not in. She's working. I get the wrong number. Everything goes haywire. I can't sleep. (*defiantly*) She'll come to the phone one of these days. If there's anything to true love at all, she'll come to the

phone. Sunset 7349. (*He dials the number, as JOE goes on studying the toys. They are one big mechanical toy, whistles, and a music box. JOE blows into the whistles, quickly, by way of getting casually acquainted with them. TOM and KITTY stop dancing. TOM stares at her.*)

DUDLEY. Hello. Is this Sunset 7349? May I speak to Elsie? Yes. (*emphatically, and bitterly*) No, this is *not* Dudley Bostwick. This is Roger Tenefrancia of Montreal, Canada. I'm a childhood friend of Miss Mandelspiegel. We went to kindergarten together. (*hand over phone*) God damn it. (*into phone*) Yes. I'll wait, thank you.

TOM. I love you. (*leading KITTY to below door* R.)

KITTY. You want to go to my room? (*TOM can't answer.*) Have you got two dollars?

TOM. (*shaking his head with confusion*) I've got *five* dollars, but I *love* you.

KITTY. (*looking at him*) You want to spend *all* that money? (*TOM embraces her. They go out* R. *JOE watches, goes back to the toy.*)

JOE. Where's that longshoreman, McCarthy?

NICK. He'll be around.

JOE. What do you think he'll have to say today?

NICK. (*coming around bar*) Plenty, as usual. I'm going next door to see who won that third race at Laurel.

JOE. Precious Time won it.

NICK. That's what you think. (*He goes out* R.)

JOE. (*to himself*) A horse named McCarthy is running in the sixth race today.

DUDLEY. (*on the phone*) Hello. Hello, Elsie? Elsie? (*His voice weakens; also his limbs.*) My God. She's come to the phone. Elsie, I'm at Nick's on Pacific Street. You've got to come here and talk to me. Hello. Hello, Elsie? (*amazed*) Did she hang up? Or was I discon-

nected? (*He hangs up and goes to bar. WESLEY is still playing the piano. HARRY is still dancing. JOE has wound up the big mechanical toy and is watching it work.*)

NICK. (*returns from* R.; *goes to* R. *of JOE, watching the toy*) Say. That's some gadget.

JOE. How much did I win?

NICK. How do you know you *won*?

JOE. Don't be silly. He said Precious Time was going to win by ten lengths, didn't he? He's in love, isn't he?

NICK. (*handing JOE money*) O.K. I don't know why, but Precious Time won. You got eighty for ten. How do you do it?

JOE. (*roaring*) Faith. Faith. How'd he win?

NICK. By a nose. Look him up in The Racing Form. The slowest, the cheapest, the worst horse in the race, and the worse jockey. What's the matter with my luck?

JOE. How much did you lose?

NICK. Fifty cents.

JOE. You should never gamble.

NICK. Why not?

JOE. You always bet fifty cents. You've got no more faith than a flea, that's why.

HARRY. (*shouting*) How do you like this, Nick? (*He is really busy now, all legs and arms.*)

NICK. (*turning and watching, crossing above to piano*) Not bad. Hang around. You can wait table. (*to WESLEY*) Hey. Wesley. Can you play that again tonight?

WESLEY. (*turning, but still playing the piano*) I don't know for sure, Mr. Nick. I can play *something.*)

NICK. Good. *You* hang around, too. (*He goes behind the bar.*)

(*The atmosphere is now one of warm, natural, American*

ease; every man innocent and good; each doing what he believes he should do, or what he must do. There is deep American naïveté and faith in the behavior of each person. No one is competing with anyone else. No one hates anyone else. Every man is living, and letting live. Each man is following his destiny as he feels it should be followed; or is abandoning it as he feels it must, by now, be abandoned; or is forgetting it for the moment as he feels he should forget it. Although everyone is dead serious, there is unmistakable smiling and humor in the scene; a sense of the human body and spirit emerging from the world-imposed state of stress and fretfulness, fear and awkwardness, to the more natural state of casualness and grace. Each person belongs to the environment, in his own person, as himself: WESLEY is playing better than ever. HARRY is hoofing better than ever. NICK is behind the bar shining glasses. JOE is smiling at the toy and studying it. DUDLEY, although still troubled, is at least calm now and full of melancholy poise. WILLIE, at the marble-game, is happy. The ARAB is deep in his memories, where he wants to be. Into this scene and atmosphere comes BLICK from R. BLICK is the sort of human being you dislike at sight. He is no different from anybody else physically. His face is an ordinary face. There is nothing obviously wrong with him, and yet you know that it is impossible, even by the most generous expansion of understanding, to accept him as a human being. He is the strong man without strength—strong only among the weak—the weakling who uses force on the weaker. BLICK enters casually, as if he were a customer, and immediately HARRY begins slowing down.)

BLICK. (*oily, and with mock-friendliness*) Hello, Nick.

NICK. (*stopping his work and leaning across the bar*) What do you want to come here for? You're too big a man for a little honky-tonk.

BLICK. (*flattered*) Now, Nick.

NICK. Important people never come here. *Here.* Have a drink. (*puts out whiskey bottle and glass*)

BLICK. Thanks, I don't drink.

NICK. (*drinking the whiskey himself*) Well, why don't you?

BLICK. I have responsibilities.

NICK. You're head of the lousy Vice Squad. There's no vice here.

BLICK. (*sharply*) Street-walkers are working out of this place.

NICK. (*angry*) What do you want?

BLICK. (*loudly*) I just want you to know that it's got to *stop.* (*The music stops. The mechanical toy runs down. There is absolute silence, and a strange fearfulness and disharmony in the atmosphere now. HARRY doesn't know what to do with his hands or feet. WESLEY's arms hang at his sides. JOE quietly pushes the toy to one side of the table eager to study what is happening. WILLIE stops playing the marble-game, turns around and begins to wait. DUDLEY straightens up very, very vigorously, as if to say: "Nothing can scare me. I know love is the only thing." The ARAB is the same as ever, but watchful. NICK is arrogantly aloof. There is a moment of this silence and tension, as though BLICK were waiting for everybody to acknowledge his presence. He is obviously flattered by the acknowledgement of HARRY, DUDLEY, WESLEY, and WILLIE, but a little irritated by NICK's aloofness and unfriendliness.*)