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SF PERUSALS

PULLMAN CAR
HIAWATHA

A Play in One Act

by

THORNTON WILDER

SAMUEL  FRENCH

LONDON

NEW YORK TORONTO SYDNEY HOLLYWOOD

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CHARACTERS

THE STAGE MANAGER
A MAIDEN LADY
A PORTER
AN ENGINEER
ANOTHER ENGINEER
A STOUT AMIABLE WOMAN
A MIDDLE-AGED DOCTOR
PHILIP MILBURY
HARRIET MILBURY
AN INSANE WOMAN
HER NURSE
HER ATTENDANT
GROVERS COMERS, represented by a Grinning Boy
THE FIELD, represented by Somebody in Shirt Sleeves
A TRAMP
PARKERSBURG, OHIO, represented by a Farmer's Wife and Three Young People
A WORKMAN
ANOTHER WORKMAN
THE WEATHER, represented by a Mechanic
TEN O'CLOCK, ELEVEN O'CLOCK, TWELVE O'CLOCK } represented by Three Beautiful Girls
SATURN
VENUS
JUPITER
THE EARTH
GABRIEL
MICHAEL

PULLMAN CAR *HIAWATHA*

At the back of the stage is a balcony or bridge or runway leading out of sight in both directions. Two flights of stairs descend from it to the stage. There is no further scenery.

At the rise of the CURTAIN, THE STAGE MANAGER *is making lines with a piece of chalk on the floor of the stage by the footlights.*

THE STAGE MANAGER. This is the plan of a pullman car. Its name is *Hiawatha*, and on December the twenty-first it is on its way from New York to Chicago. Here at your left are three compartments. Here is the aisle, and five lowers. The berths are all full, uppers and lowers, but for the purposes of this play we are limiting our interest to the people in the lower berths on the further side only. The berths are already made up. It is half-past nine. Most of the passengers are in bed behind the green curtains. They are dropping their shoes on to the floor, or wrestling with their trousers, or wondering whether they dare hide their valuables in the pillow-slips during the night. All right! Come on, everybody.

(*The actors enter carrying chairs. Each improvises his berth by placing two chairs 'facing one another' in his chalk-marked space. They then sit in one chair, profile to the audience, and rest their feet on the other. This must do for lying in bed. The passengers in the compartments do the same.*

Reading from L *to* R *we have:*
Compartment Three: an insane woman with a male attendant and a trained nurse.
Compartment Two: PHILIP MILBURY, *and*
Compartment One: HARRIET, *his young wife.*
LOWER ONE: *a maiden lady.*
LOWER THREE: *a middle-aged doctor.*

LOWER FIVE: *a stout amiable woman of fifty.*
LOWER SEVEN: *an engineer going to California.*
LOWER NINE: *another engineer.*

There is a pleasant confusion while these characters make up their berths. Then THE STAGE MANAGER *cries:* All right. We're ready; begin)

LOWER ONE. Porter, be sure and wake me up at quarter of six.

PORTER. Yes, ma'am.

LOWER ONE. I know I shan't sleep a wink, but I want to be told when it's quarter of six.

PORTER. Yes, ma'am.

LOWER SEVEN (*putting his head through the curtains*) Hsst Porter! Hsst! How the hell do you turn on this other light?

PORTER (*fussing with it*) I'm afraid it's out of order, sah. You'll have to use the other end.

THE STAGE MANAGER (*falsetto—substituting for some woman in an upper berth*) May I ask if someone in this car would be kind enough to lend me some aspirin?

PORTER (*rushing about*) Yes, ma'am.

LOWER NINE (*descending the aisle and falling into Lower Five*). Sorry, lady, sorry. Made a mistake.

LOWER FIVE (*grumbling*) Never in all my born days!

LOWER ONE (*in a shrill whisper*) Porter! Porter!

PORTER. Yes, ma'am.

LOWER ONE. My hot-water bag's leaking. I guess you'll have to take it away. I'll have to do without it tonight. How awful!

LOWER FIVE (*sharply; to the passenger above her*) Young man, you mind your own business or I'll report you to the conductor.

THE STAGE MANAGER (*substituting for Upper Five*) Sorry, ma'am, I didn't mean to upset you. My suspenders fell down and I was trying to catch them.

LOWER FIVE. Well, here they are. Now go to sleep. Everybody seems to be rushing into my berth tonight. (*She puts her head out*) Porter! Porter! Be a good soul and bring me a glass of water, will you? I'm parched.

LOWER NINE. Bill! (*No answer*) Bill!

LOWER SEVEN. Ya? What d'y'a want?

LOWER NINE. Slip me one of those magazines, willya?

LOWER SEVEN. Which one d'y'a want?

LOWER NINE. Either one. *Detective Stories.* Either one.

LOWER SEVEN. Aw, Fred. I'm just in the middle of one of 'm in *Detective Stories.*

LOWER NINE. That's all right. I'll take *The Western.* Thanks.

THE STAGE MANAGER (*to the actors*) All right. Sh-sh-sh. That's enough of that. (*To the audience*) Now I want you to hear them thinking.

(*There is a pause and then they all begin a murmuring-swishing noise, very soft. In turn each of them can be heard above the others*)

LOWER FIVE (*the lady of fifty*) Let's see: I've got the doll for the baby. And the slip-on for Marietta. And the fountain-pen for Herbert. And the subscription to *Time* for George . . . (*Her voice subsides into the humming*).

LOWER NINE (*the engineer*) That was the craziest thing I ever did. It's set me back three whole years. I could have saved up thirty thousand dollars by now if I'd only stayed over here. What business had I got to fool with contracts with the goddarned Soviets! Hell, I thought it would be interesting! Interesting, what-the-hell! It's set me back three whole years. I don't know if the company'll even take me back. I'm green, that's all. I just don't grow up.

(*Then*)

LOWER THREE (*the doctor; reading aloud to himself from a medical journal the most hair-raising material, every now and then punctuating his reading with an interrogative*) So?

(*Then*)

LOWER ONE (*the maiden lady*) I know I'll be awake all night. I might just as well make up my mind to do

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