



-:- "THE PIT" -:-

-:- ACT I -:-

-:- "THE PIT" -:-

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

Adapted from Frank Norris' Novel of the Same Name

BY

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0114  
D.K. 10 1903

A C T I:      The lobby of the Auditorium Theatre.

Two months intervene.

A C T II:      Drawing-room in the home of Mr. and Mrs.  
Charles Cressler.

Over twenty-two months intervene.

A C T III:      A private room in the residence of Mr. and  
Mrs. Jadwin.

Nearly three months intervene.

A C T IV:      Scene I: Offices of Gretry, Converse &  
Co., the Board of Trade Building.

No time intervenes.

Scene II: THE PIT.

Four hours intervene.

A C T V:      Same as Act III.

The action of the entire play takes place in Chicago.

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-:- A C T I -:-

S c e n e:

The foyer of the Auditorium, Chicago. A lofty interior of marble. Rather a radical departure from the real arrangement of the building must be made in order to provide suitable exits and entrances. At L., running from the first to the third entrance a succession of heavy wooden and glass doors, behind which the ticket-takers may stand. At L.U.E., set obliquely a window, back of which may be placed the BOY in charge of wraps. In the flat five swinging doors leading to various sections of the orchestra. Above these are the letters A, B, C, D, and E. A grand staircase from R.U.E. turning down stage in such a way as to make a nook at the right. In this nook a small writing desk, a chair, a great leather sofa and similar lobby furnishings. The retreat is just visible around the staircase from the coat-room afore-mentioned. Near the coat-room a large water-cooler and a rack holding trays of glasses; further front a table with books of the opera.

D i s c o v e r e d:

At rise, the DOOR-KEEPERS, BOY in coat-room, another BOY behind the libretto table, others offering water from trays, some fifteen or twenty persons disposed about the stage. As the finale of the fourth act of "Faust" is sung off stage the throng entering increases. There is loud chatter ad lib., and general animation. This business is left to the stage-manager with the following

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suggestions for incidents: A gentleman out of humor quarrels with the coat-boy, finally gets his coat, rushes past a door-keeper, refusing a check; another gentleman, very slightly inebriated, takes three glasses of water in quick succession and drains them; two women, being unable to regain their seats, rush up to a hackman and demand that he conduct them thither, he explaining the while that he is a driver, not an usher; a young man goes about shaking hands with everybody; a group of men and women talk noisily, etc.

A voice

(Off stage)

Margherita! Maledetta!  
Tu morrai trai cenci vil,  
Io moro per te come  
Un soldato muor.

Chorus

(Off stage)

Che il signore l' accolga  
Pietoso nel suo sen.

(A burst of music off stage. The noise of conversation increases. From the general chatter may be heard the following lines)

Water-boy

(To individuals)

Water, sir? Have a glass of water?

A man

(Standing at L. with a woman. Both well-garbed and apparently cultured)

How do you like it?

The Woman

Marguerite is too fat - as usual. Why are all the Marguerites

so stout? Virtue must be healthful.

(Enter on staircase TWO WOMEN and a MAN; evidently father and mother with daughter just out of school)

Daughter

Wasn't it too heavenly? Such a cunning Valentine. And Faust as handsome as a picture. I don't blame Marguer --

Mother

(Interrupting)

My dear!

A Man

(At foot of stairs)

He got back today. Says he's crossed nine times this year. Doesn't think any more of going to Europe than you or I do of going to Joliet.

Another Man

(To a male companion)

Have you heard "The Cannibal King"? Best show they've had at the Studebaker this season.

A Woman

(To male companion on stairs)

It didn't cost a cent less than eighty dollars. I'll bet her husband says things when he sees the bill.

Her Companion

Poor chap. He doesn't make five thousand a year.

The Woman

They are always the kind that get extravagant wives.

A Man

(To male companion at L.)

I'm glad he lost it. These New Yorkers who come here to teach us business generally find we're not as dull as we are supposed to be.

His Companion

Did you know Waldron? He was one of the worst of the lot. Never forgot for a minute that he was from New York and never let you forget it.

A Woman

(With two others, going upstairs)

She found the programme in his pocket. She went to him with it right away. "What were you doing in a place like this?" she says. "Just dropped in to hear a few of the new ditties," says he. "I guess you mean to SEE the nudities," she says. Oh, she's a bright one.

A Second

But SO coarse. I don't see how she ever got into society.

A Third

Broke in, my dear. That's easy enough if you can afford the tools.

Norman Everard

(An amateur actor, at centre with others)

Of course they know how to sing, but if I couldn't act better than that I'd keep off the stage.

George Larkin

(Another)

That fight was funny. Valentine only thrust with his sword. He had no notion of the parry. Faust could have pinked him any time he pleased. Thank heaven, I CAN fence.

Fred Hartley

(With them)

You're going to play Romeo at that affair at the Cresslers', aren't you?

George Larkin

No - Tybalt. They've cast Roland for Romeo and Isabel Gretry for Juliet. I don't know why, unless it's because they are in love with each other. I think I'd look Romeo, at least. When I have a sword girded on I tell you I'm something like a cavalier.

(Struts about)

Fred Hartley

Are the Cresslers getting up the performance?

Norman Everard

Yes, for some poor children in whom Mr. Jadwin is interested.

George Larkin

Curtis Jadwin? I should think he had enough money to look after all the children in Chicago without getting it from "Romeo and Juliet".

Norman Everard

Well, you see, he wants to get other people interested in them, too. When you ask a man for money you get him interested

George Larkin

(To Hartley)

You're coming up, aren't you? I want you to see me with a sword. I'll make Romeo look like thirty cents.

Norman Everard

Roland can fence too, can't he?

George Larkin

Roland! He never drew a sword in his life, unless it was in a raffle.

Fred Hartley

When is it going to be?

George Larkin

The thirtieth at the Cresslers. All the really smart people will be there. Mrs. Frank Manners is going to play the nurse, and there'll be Laura and Page Dearborn - they're with the Jadwin set, you know - and - and - Miss Gretry's the daughter of Sam Gretry of the Board of Trade, you know - and - well, lots of big bugs.

Fred Hartley

I suppose Landry Court is in it if Page Dearborn is.

Norman Everard

Court, that young fellow in Gretry's office? Oh yes, he's to be Mercutio.

George Larkin

Mercutio? I wonder if I fence with him.

(MISS CURTIS, a newspaper woman, who has been writing in the nook, sees HENRY KNAPP, press agent of the opera company, coming downstairs and heads him off)

Miss Curtis

Pardon me. This is Mr. Knapp?

Knapp

Yes.

Miss Curtis

Business manager of the company.  
(Nodding toward the theatre)

Knapp

Yes; what can I do for you?

Miss Curtis

I'm from the Record-Herald. Miss Tanner, who has been doing the society end of this, is ill, and I'm taking her place for a while.

Knapp

Oh, yes, I know Miss Tanner.

Miss Curtis

I'm new to this sort of thing and I do n't know just who's who. I've got the names of a few people. I thought you might be able to tell me of some others who are present.

(They go into the nook)

Knapp

(Looks at watch)

I'm not overfly well up on the Blue Book, but I may be able to help you a little.

(Miss Curtis rests paper on her knee and writes)

You have the list of regular subscribers?

Miss Curtis

Yes.

Knapp

The Knights have a box and the Holbrooks and Mrs. De Pussant is giving a party to the Baron von Burlaw.



Miss Curtis

That's good. Keep on.

Knapp

(Pointing)

There's young Slade. He wrote that comic opera at the Studebaker.

Miss Curtis

Yes. I'm well acquainted with him. He used to be a newspaper man.

Knapp

Let's see. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cressler have a box.

Miss Curtis

The Michigan Avenue Cresslers?

Knapp

I don't know whether they're from Michigan Avenue or Hogan's Alley, but they seem to cut some ice. Curtis Jadwin's with them.

Miss Curtis

Ah, there's a paragraph. Mr. Jadwin's name doesn't often appear in the society columns. He's a man who DOES things.

Knapp

Better than that. He's a man who owns things. I understand he owns everything in Chicago except the lake.

Miss Curtis

(Laughing)

Well - not quite. I've met him myself.

(Writing)

I suppose the Dearborn girls are with the Cresslers?

Knapp

I'm not sure. There are eight in the party.

Miss Curtis

I'll risk it. The Dearborn girls are proteges of theirs. I'll risk Sheldon Corthell too. He has accompanied Laura

Dearborn into every newspaper notice I've seen of late.

(Suddenly looking up)

I wonder if it would do to risk an announcement of their engagement.

(Shakes head and continues writing)

I guess not.

(Enter CALVIN HARDY CROOKES and SWEENEY. Crookes aged about 45, tall, thin, prehensile fingers, sharp face with sharper eyes, dark hair, decidedly Jewish cast of countenance. He speaks in a very low, measured tone, Sweeney, a short, wiry Irishman with a deep voice and a slight brogue.)

Miss Curtis

who are they?

Knapp

The tall man is Calvin Hardy Crookes. You've heard of him; he's said to be the biggest operator and about the biggest rogue in the Stock Exchange.

Miss Curtis

Oh yes, I have heard of him - something about personal enmity being back of his opposition to Mr. Jadwin in an important deal.

Knapp

Yes, I saw that printed somewhere.

Miss Curtis

And the short man?

Knapp

One of Crookes' lieutenants; a fellow named Sweeney. The other, Dave Scannel, is here too.

Miss Curtis

Oh yes; with a particularly over-dressed - or underdressed woman. They had some trouble inside at the end of the last act. The man tried to bring the woman into a box and the people in the box resented it.

Knapp

I should think any respectable person would resent Mrs. Ferguson, but he's had her here with him almost every night, just the same.

(Enter DAVE SCANNEL and MRS. FERGUSON. Scannel is aged 48, large, red-faced. Mrs. F., aged 40, also large, hair bleached, loudly dressed, apparently a woman of little breeding)

There they are now.

(Scannel and Mrs. F. join Crookes and Sweeny. Knapp talks in dumb show to Miss Curtis)

Scannel

How are you Crookes? I haven't seen you this evening.

Crookes

(Very low tone)

No; I haven't been inside much. How are you enjoying it Kate?

Mrs. Ferguson

Pretty well, thank you.

Sweeny

What was the trouble you had upstairs?

Scannel

Some of these sham society people. I was going to introduce Kate to them and they cut me.

Crookes

I should think you'd keep away from such people Dave.

Scannel

Keep away! Not by a damn sight. We're just as good as they are. We'll keep at them until they are glad to know us - or pretend to be glad.

Crookes

You know what you're doing, Dave, but don't you think, Kate, that it would be --

Mrs. Ferguson

I think it's ridiculous. I've got just as much right in society as lots of other people.

Crookes

Ah, well then, there's no use talking about it.

(They go up stage where they continue to converse in dumb show.)

(Enter SAMUEL GRETRY and ISABEL GRETRY, MR. and MRS CRESSLER and GEORGE ROLAND)

(Gretry is about 50, a large, placid, smooth-faced man now, in common with everyone else, dressed in evening attire, but always afterward in blue serge. Isabel, aged 22, a tall, colorless girl clad in bad taste. Cressler aged 50, tall, slim, grey beard, slightly stoop-shouldered. Mrs. Cressler, aged 48, stout, motherly, dressed in black silk. Roland is 25, of the build known as "stocky" and has red hair. During the ensuing conversation between Knapp and Miss Curtis they all talk in dumb show, slowly going to join Everard, Larkin and Hartley)

Knapp

There are the Cresslers. The elderly gentleman with them is - is - by George, I've forgotten.

Miss Curtis

Samuel Gretry, the broker and his daughter. I don't know the young man, do you?

Knapp

No.

Miss Curtis

I don't suppose he's anybody. Wonder how I could get to see Mr. Jadwin?

(Writes. Knapp continues pointing out people to her)

Mrs. Cressler

Ah, Tybalt.

(Shakes hands with Larkin)

Capulet.

(Shakes hands with Everard)

You know Mr. Cressler of course.

(They bow)

Cressler

Glad to meet you, young men. Always glad to meet young men. Makes me feel like a young man myself.

Everard

Permit me to present Mr. Hartley - Mrs. Cressler, Mr. Cressler, Miss Gretry, Mr. Gretry, Mr. Roland.

(Hartley acknowledges the introduction)

Larkin

(To Hartley)

Mr. Roland is to be our Romeo. He is the best actor in the company.

Roland

Bonsense! Wait until you see Miss Gretry's Juliet.

Isabel

I'm afraid I'm not going to know my part. It's so long and I've such a bad memory. I study it wherever I go.

(Shows yellow book)

I don't suppose some of it could be cut out - could it, Mrs. Cressler?

Mrs. Cressler

I don't know - you'll have to ask Mons. Gerardy.

(To Hartley)

He's the coach.

Gretry

When's the first rehearsal?

Mrs. Cressler

A week from Friday.

Gretry

Don't forget that Isabel.

(Enter LANDRY COURT and PAGE DEARBORN on stairs. Landry is 23, small-made, alert, debonair and blonde. Page is 17, garbed quietly and becomingly)

Page

(Angrily)

All right, Landry Court. But you needn't speak to me until you've got a better explanation than that.

Landry

Ah now, Page, don't let's quarrel again.

Page

Quarrel? Quarrel. Who's quarrelling? I'm not. Only

next time you come to the theatre with me look at me and not at Isabel Gretry.

Landry

Mayn't I look at the stage now and then?

Page

Isabel never took her eyes off you.

Landry

You wouldn't have been so sure of that if you'd stopped staring at George Roland.

Page

Aren't you ashamed of yourself? I never even saw George Roland until you pointed him out. Well, just don't you speak to me, that's all. I don't want to -- Sch! They they are.

(They go to the group at centre)

How are you - everybody?

Landry

Here we are again - as the clown says.

Page

(To him, spitefully)

Precisely.

(To others)

Good evening, Isabel. Mr. Roland, good evening.

Everard

We're going to smoke, won't you join us, Court?

Landry

I don't mind.

(Page gives him a savage nudge)

No, thank you; I think I'll stay.

Larkin

Well, see you all later. I'm glad to have met you, Mr. Cressler.

(Cressler nods and talks with Gretry)

Hartley

I'm glad to have met you all. I hope to see you again.

(Everard, Larkin and Hartley exeunt L., lighting cigarettes. Enter MRS. WESSELS, short, thin, aged about 55, grey hair, combed straight down the sides of her head. Wears old-fashioned bonnet, ching-silk gown with lace about the throat, altogether most respectable and austere looking)

Miss Curtis

I know her - Mrs. Emily Wessels. She's the aunt of the Dearborns.

(Writes)

Mrs. Cressler

Where's Laura, Page?

Page

I wish I knew. With Sheldon Corthell, I guess. She keeps Aunt Wess and me in a constant stew. Aunt Wess is looking for her.

Roland

Here's Mrs. Wessels now.

(Mrs. Wessels joins them. Roland tries to engage Isabel in conversation but she is studying her part)

Page

(To Mrs. W.)

Did you see them?

Mrs. Wessels

No; it's dreadful.

Page

It's worse than dreadful. There'll be talk.

Cressler

I thought Laura had definitely refused Corthell.

Gretry

I'd like to see her spend more time with Jadwin. "J's" a good deal struck with her.

Landry

Oh, that'll be all right. She likes Mr. Jadwin too. She told me so.

Mrs. Cressler

Laura doesn't know who she likes. She loves to be loved, but I don't think she really loves anybody.

Page

Then she shouldn't encourage Mr. Corthell.

Cressler

If "J" really tries he can make her love him. I believe "J" can do anything.

Landry

You'd have thought so if you'd been in our office last week when he made that fifty thousand on wheat.

Cressler

Is Curtis Jadwin speculating again? I must talk to him about that. There's no man rich enough to pay the doctor bills for the fever of speculation. I had one attack - years ago, you know, Sam and I've never had another.

Gretry

Oh Charlie, you over-estimate the danger.

Cressler

No, I don't. I know and you know just how much chance a lamb has got with the bulls and bears of La Salle Street.

Landry

But Mr. Jadwin's not a lamb. He knows the game.

Gretry

"J" made \$50,000 on a sure thing and then he pulled out. You're always croaking about speculation Charlie, just because you were squeezed.

(They walk up stage together)

Page

(Nervously)

Laura left the box the minute the act was over. I intend to speak to her about it.



Mrs. Cressler

Page, remember you're younger than Laura.

Page

Well, I don't care. Someone has got to speak to her.

Isabel

(Studying part)

"I would thou hadst my bones and I thy news."

(Everyone laughs)

Oh, excuse me.

(Steps a trifle apart from the others and resumes study. Roland follows her.)

(Enter SHELDON CORTHELL and LAURA DEARBORN at top of stairs. Corthell, aged 30, slightly built, dark, small, pointed beard, appearance of an artist. Laura aged 20, tall, slender, dark hair and skin, gowned simply, wears one rose in her corsage. They are talking in dumb show)

Page

Here they are alone. Now where's Curtis Jadwin. I want to know?

(Goes to them, meets them at bottom of stairs. The three converse a moment. Then Corthell joins the group at centre and goes up stage with Mrs. Cressler, Mrs. Wessels and Landry who looks back after Page a moment but finally shrugs his shoulders and follows the others. Isabel remains down stage studying and Roland attempting to chat with her)

Miss Curtis

There's Laura Dearborn and - yes, I was right - Sheldon Corthell.

Knapp

Well, you seem to have spotted everyone. I must go back to my desk.

Miss Curtis

Good evening and thank you.

Knapp

Good evening.

(Runs up stage and exits. Miss Curtis continues writing)

Page  
 Laura Dearborn! I must say!

Laura  
 Do be quiet, Page.

Page  
 Quiet! I am quiet. I don't go running around with Sheldon Corthell.

Laura  
 Don't you think I'm about old enough to take care of myself?

Page  
 I used to think so. There isn't a soul in Mrs. Cressler's party who hasn't asked about you and Mr. Corthell.

Laura  
 They might find something better to talk about. Why don't they ask about you and Landry Court?

Page  
 Landry and I don't run out of the box the minute the curtain drops. Besides -- well, Landry's very different.

Laura  
 How, different,

Page  
 He's a MAN. He WORKS for a living. He doesn't spend all his time painting windows. What's the sense of painting windows anyway?

Laura  
 (Trying to step past her)  
 Don't be silly, Page. You're a child.

Page  
 I'm very glad of it when I see the way you act. Now Laura, there's no use talking, you've got to stop carrying on with Mr. Corthell.

Laura  
 You'd better speak to Mr. Corthell, Page. He's doing all the carrying on. I've asked him to spend his time with someone else.

Page

(Looks at her scornfully)

I may be a child, Laura, but I'm no fool. Men don't dance around after women unless SOMEONE is playing for them. What will Curtis Jadwin think?

Laura

(Much annoyed)

Why should I care what Curtis Jadwin thinks?

Page

Oh, no reason in particular, except that you wouldn't be so angry if you didn't.

Laura

(Pushing past her)

Page, you're ridiculous.

Page

All right - all right, Laura of course, I'm the younger and it's none of my business. But if you wake up some bright morning and find yourself married to Sheldon Corthell or something else dreadful happens it's not my fault.

(They go up stage to join Landry, Mrs. Wessels, Corthell and the Cresslers. The staircase is clear. Enter CURTIS JADWIN. He is a heavy, large man of 40, with hair and moustache slightly tinged with grey. He walks down steps quietly. At bottom Miss Curtis reaches him)

Miss Curtis

Mr. Curtis Jadwin, I believe?

Jadwin

Yes, so do I.

Miss Curtis

(Laughs)

I've been lying in wait for you. Do you remember me?

Jadwin

(Embarrassed)

Perfectly - oh, perfectly.

Miss Curtis

I've seen you often in La Salle Street.

Jadwin

I'm often there. Was there anything in particular Miss-Miss --

Miss Curtis

Yes. You said once that you'd be glad to help me. I thought you might give me some names.

Jadwin

(Absently)

For a boy or a girl?

Miss Curtis

For the Record-Herald. I have you and the other members of Mrs. Cressler's party. Do you know who has the next box?

Jadwin

The Carters. Then this is for the society column, Miss - (In desperation sits on sofa, where Miss Curtis has left her card case, opens it, deftly extracts a card, which he reads. Isabel and Roland exeunt together at back)

Miss Curtis

Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Carter.

(Writes)

Who is with them?

Jadwin

(Comes down with card)

Oh, you're the Miss Curtis who wrote the article about my poor boys. Pardon me for not remembering at once.

Miss Curtis

(Writing busily)

That's all right. Is that Miss Mulford with them?

Jadwin

Yes. Then two boxes nearer the door are Mr. and Mrs. Stokes.

Miss Curtis

(Writing)

Mrs. Stokes. What is she wearing?

Jadwin

(Confused)

Oh, great Scott! I don't know. Something black - black or yellow, I don't remember which - and lace on it.

Miss Curtis

(Looks up laughing)

Now I beg your pardon. I forgot you were a man.

Jadwin

An unmarried man without mother or sister. Honestly Miss Curtis, I don't think I know the difference between a dress sleeve cut on the bias and an omelette souffle.

Miss Curtis

(Looks up laughing)

You'd know the difference if you'd ever tried to eat a sleeve.

(They talk in dumb show, Miss Curtis taking notes and Jadwin intently watching the following scene)

Scannel

(Down stage at L. with Mrs. F.)

Here's a chance Kate. Some of Curtis Jadwin's friends. He's so almighty big, we'll see how they are.

Mrs. Ferguson

Do you know them?

Scannel

Know them? Why, I used to know Laura Dearborn's father when he ran a mill in Massachusetts.

(They go toward centre. Crookes and Sweeny up stage are joined by Cressler. Gretry converses with Larkin, Hartly and Everard, who have re-entered)

Ah, Miss Dearborn, I haven't seen you since you were a girl in Barrington. I'm David Scannel. Let me present--

Laura

Is it quite fair to presume on that acquaintance, Mr. Scannel?

Scannel

I want you to meet my friend --

Laura

Please!

(Corthell steps forward hesitatingly)

Landry

Oh, I say Scannel --

Scannel

I want you all to meet my friend, Mrs. --

Jadwin

(Putting Miss Curtis politely aside and walking into the group. Miss Curtis observes keenly)

Miss Dearborn has said that she does not desire the acquaintance, Mr. Scannel.

Mrs. W.

I hope there won't be any trouble.

Mrs. Cressler

Sch!

Mrs. Ferguson

(To Scannel)

Who's he?

Scannel

What business is this of yours, MISTER Curtis jadwin?

Jadwin

None; I'm simply repeating what Miss Dearborn said. Miss Dearborn told you that she did not desire to meet Mrs. Ferguson. That ought to be enough.

Scannel

Well, don't you mix in my affairs. That's all I've got to say; don't you mix in my affairs. I knew Laura Dearborn before you

(Bell rings loudly - a signal that the act is about to begin)

Jadwin

That's the act. Good evening.

(He turns to go, taking Laura with him)

Scannel

(Clutching his arm)

I don't give a damn whether it's the act or not. She can't cut me.

Jadwin

(Ready to strike him if necessary)

If you again forget that you're in the presence of ladies, I will.

Mrs. Ferguson

(Taking Scannel across and up steps)

Don't bother about him, Mr. Scannel. It's not worth while.

(Exeunt Scannel and Mrs. F.)

Jadwin

(To Laura)

You'll have to do without them at your "at homes", Miss Dearborn.

(The group goes to the stairs. Miss Curtis exits at L. with a nod to Jadwin. Others begin leaving to re-enter the theatre. General confusion. At steps)

If you don't mind, I believe I'll hunt for the smoking room. Mrs. Cressler, I'll be up pretty soon.

Mrs. Cressler

Poor man; hasn't had a cigar this evening. Well, we'll be patient while you enjoy one, but you mustn't light another.

Jadwin

I won't.

Mrs. W.

You'll smoke yourself to death, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin

It's better than living myself to death. You'll excuse me, Miss Dearborn?

Laura

Certainly. And I thank you.

(They go up the stairs. Mrs. C. with Mrs. W., Laura with Gerthell, Page with Landry, these refraining from conversation. Afterward Cressler, Crookes and

Sweeny. Jadwin and Crookes nod coldly)

Cressler

Coming, "J"?

Jadwin

Presently.

(Larkin, Hartley and Everard exeunt at back. Gretry goes to stairs, but remains with Jadwin. The stage is cleared of every one except this couple, the coat boys and the doorkeepers, who begin taking down the brass rails before doors.)

Gretry

Aren't you coming?

Jadwin

After a while.

Gretry

You don't seem to care much for the opera.

Jadwin

I don't. Grand Opera may be all right and perhaps I ought to be ashamed of not appreciating it, but give me something easy - like "I'm a Jonah" or "Under the Bamboo Tree".

Gretry

(Descends the steps he has climbed. FROM THIS POINT THE FIFTH ACT OF "FAUST" IS SUNG OFF STAGE)

Do you know "J", for all Charlie Cressler's croaking about speculation I shouldn't be surprised to see him in on some deal. Crookes has had him all the evening.

Jadwin

What, Charlie? Nonsense. Crookes has been telling him how to brew tea.

Gretry

Crookes doesn't like you.



Jadwin

I don't lie awake nights worrying about it. I don't like Crookes.

Gretry

It might be a good idea to patch the thing up. He's a big man on La Salle Street. What's the matter?

Jadwin

I don't know - don't think he does. Those things aren't easily explained. I couldn't tell you to save me why I DO like Miss Dearborn.

Gretry

You are pretty much interested, aren't you?

Jadwin

I've sat through four acts of "Faust" to be near her.

Gretry

Do you suppose Crookes could be angry about that deal we pulled off in May wheat?

Jadwin

It cost him about \$30,000. You can buy a lot of enmity for \$30,000, Sam.

Gretry

How about another little fling into the market next week?

Jadwin

Not for me, thank you Sam. I'm through with that sort of gambling. You lose your senses if you win and your money if you don't.

Gretry

You were very eager about the wheat deal, "J" and you won.

Jadwin

That's it, Sam. The trouble is not that I don't want to speculate but that I do - too much. The game attracts me. With half a show I'd be in trying to throw some BIG thing, the big thing would throw me and then - No, I've got enough money and I'm going to find some safer way of having fun with it.

Gretry

Well, maybe you're right. I suppose you'll be at that dress rehearsal?

Jadwin

The performance for my youngsters? You bet!

Gretry

Good night.

(Exit R.U.E. Jadwin walks to the coat room)

Jadwin

Getting ready for the crowd?

Coat-boy

(Busily sorting wraps)

Yep.

Jadwin

Must keep you pretty busy for a while?

Coat-boy

Yep

Jadwin

Ever think of being anything but a coat-boy?

Coat-boy

Yep.

Jadwin

What?

Coat-boy

I used to want to be a burglar.

(Jadwin returns to nook, sits at desk and begins figuring.  
Enter Landry and PAGE. They run down steps and take  
centre)

Page

I won't stand it another minute, so there.

Landry

But Page, will you listen to reason?

Page

Where am I going to hear any? You haven't taken your eyes off that Gretry girl since the act began.

Landry

I haven't even thought of her.

Page

You say that because I can't tell WHAT you THINK. I saw you looking at her.

Landry

Say now, Page, honestly --

Page

The moment we came into the theatre you said "There's Isabel Gretry". Didn't you say "There's Isabel Gretry"?

Landry

There's nothing criminal about that.

Page

All right; perhaps there isn't about THAT. But then ten minutes later you said, "I never saw Isabel look as well as she does tonight." Didn't you?

Landry

Well. I --

Page

Did you or didn't you?

Landry

But couldn't I --

Page

Simply yes or no. Did you or didn't you?

Landry

(Shoves his hands into his pockets and walks away, half good-humoredly)

I did.

Page

You did'. And you confess it. There can be no excuse for a thinglike that. I simply won't listen to any explanation.

Landry

I only said that I'd never seen Isabel look so well -

Page

I know what you said. Well, are you going to explain?

Landry

I thought you wouldn't listen to an explanation?

Page

I - I - I may not want to listen, but it certainly behooves you to try to make one.

Landry

Well, I might have meant that Isabel didn't usually look well.

Page

Humph!

Landry

And I might have used the word "well" in the sense of health. I'd never seen her look so well -- healthy - before.

Page

You might but you know perfectly well you didn't.

Landry

Look here, Page dear, don't be silly. You're the only girl in the world I love --

Page

But you'd be willing to marry Isabel Gretry because her father has money -- I understand.

Landry

Page, you don't think that of me.

Page

I'd hate to tell you just what I do think of you. Never took your eyes off that girl through four acts - four long acts -

of "Faust". Then when Faust made love to Marguerite she winked at you.

Landry

Nonsense!

Page

It's true. And all the while there was the saddest look on the face of Mr. Roland.

Landry

(Turns on her)

Aha! So YOU were watching Mr. Roland.

(Jadwin hearing their voices, looks up from his paper, walks front, peers out, smiles and returns to his figures)  
That's how you know so much about my behavior toward the young woman with him.

Page

Why Landry Court, how dare you?

Landry

Such a sad look in his beautiful eyes --

Page

I didn't say that.

Landry

Such a sad look in his some-kind-of-eyes-or-other. It doesn't matter what kind of eyes he had; you were looking at them.

(Pause; then loudly)

Ah!

(Jadwin jumps)

I see now. That's why you wanted to play Juliet.

Page

What's why?

Landry

Because George Roland was to play Romeo. And yet you accuse ME of flirting.

Page

No, Landry, no - really. I wanted to play Juliet - well, just because I thought I could -that's all.

Landry

Perhaps. But it's very suspicious.

Page

Oh Landry.

(He doesn't relent.)

Landry!

(Still adamant)

Oh, very well. Of course, that was a ruse. A ruse to keep me from seeing that you were flirting with Isabel Greytry the minx - I'll tell her what I think of her.

Landry

I'll see to Roland.

(They are both talking at once and Lib., when enter ISABEL GRETRY and ROLAND at back. They come down and take the other side of the stage)

Roland

There's no need for your coming. I'm going home.

Isabel

I didn't come to keep you from going. I'm going too.

Roland

You nodded to Landry Court six times in one act.

Isabel

I didn't. You stared at Page Dearborn.

Roland

No such thing.

Isabel

And she was very glad to be stared at. She's too smart altogether. I'd like to scratch her eyes out.

Roland

Be careful. She'll hear you, she's over there.

Isabel

I don't care. I understand now why she wanted to be Juliet. She knew that you were to play Romeo.

Roland

How absurd! The love-making would have been only pretence.

Isabel

She'd have been glad enough to have pretended with you.

Roland

Well, certainly I didn't show half the interest in her that you did in Court.

Isabel

Landry Court! Why, he works for my father.

Roland

And waits for you. I'll thrash the life out of him.  
(Dumb show)

Page

I stood it all until she winked at you. No girl winks with good intentions.

Landry

Or with good eyes. If she winked it was because the light was in her face.

Page

(Sneering)

Yes. ~~The light~~ of your countenance. There she is now. What did she come out here for? What, indeed, unless it was to see you?

Landry

Or unless Roland came out for you.

Page

If he did it was because he knew I'd be alone.

Landry

I'll bet on that.

Page

I mean he thought you'd have gone to Isabel.

Landry

Well, we'll settle this right now.

(Walks swiftly toward Isabel; Roland goes to Page;  
all meet in centre)

Did you see how your escort was making eyes at Miss Dearborn?

Isabel

(To Landry)

You mean how Miss Dearborn was trying to attract Mr. Roland's attention.

Roland

(To Page)

The whole thing is an outrage. Mr. Court never took his eyes off Miss Gretry.

Page

(To Roland)

No such thing; Isabel winked at him.

Isabel

(To Page)

Winked? How can you say that?

Page

(To Isabel)

Because it's true.

Roland

(To Landry)

I'll settle with you when we've left the ladies.

Landry

(To Roland)

I guess that'll be anew experience for you, won't it?

(All are talking at once ad lib. when Jadwin, unable to work for the din, strolls out)



Jadwin

(Humorously)

'Tis dogs delight to bark and bite for 'tis their nature to,  
but children should be seen and not heard.

The Four

Well, Mr. Jadwin he--  
Isabel was flirting right across the theatre.  
I'm simply defending myself.  
I'm through. I'll never speak to him again.

Jadwin

Pardon me if I seem dull, but I don't quite understand.

Landry

Miss Dearborn got the absurd notion --

Page

Absurd'. I saw him. The minute we got into the theatre,  
Mr. Jadwin, he said "Isn't Miss Gretry the most beautiful  
girl you ever saw?" He sat and stared at him - she stared  
at her - I mean he stared at him - they sat and stared at  
each other.

The Four

You never saw such behavior.  
She must have been very much interested herself, don't you  
think so?  
I was simply looking at the stage. I can tell you about every  
scene in the opera.  
Mr. Jadwin will you please listen to me, etc. ad lib.

Jadwin

(Interrupting)

One at a time. You're not a woman's club.  
(Bus. of all talking together repeated.)  
Landry, you tell the story. You can talk the loudest.

Landry

(Somewhat shamefacedly)

You see it was this way, Mr. Jadwin. Mr. Gretry and his  
party are in a stage box and when I was really watching the  
performance I seemed to be -

Page

Seemed to be! You were!

Jadwin

Tandem! You can't drive conversation double.

Landry

Looking at Miss Gretry. Miss Dearborn got angry and in her anger revealed the fact that she had been flirting with Mr. Roland.

(Bus. of all talking repeated)

Jadwin

Now! Now! You can't expect me to untangle conversation like that. Go on, Landry.

Landry

That's all.

Roland

Except that Miss Gretry kept glancing at HIM every few minutes.

Isabel

And Mister Roland at HER.

Landry and Page

I never noticed it. I was listening to De Reszke, etc.

Jadwin

You silly youngsters! Don't you see that all of you couldn't have been flirting at once? The glances you've been talking about would have been dreadfully mixed up.

Landry

I never thought of that.

Jadwin

Each of you was watching to see a flirtation and consequently was accused of flirting, I'll tell you a story.

Page

What?

Jadwin

(As though addressing children)

Once upon a time an old negro who thought someone was stealing his chickens set a trap. The trap was so arranged that if anyone opened the door of the hen-house it exploded a gun loaded with salt and pepper.

Isabel

And powder?

Jadwin

And powder. The old darkey used to go out every night to see if the trap had got anybody. At last he thought he heard someone in the hen-house. He made up his mind that the trap hadn't worked and opened the door with the purpose of putting the intruder out of business himself. And as he opened the door - what do you think?

Isabel

He found the thief?

Jadwin

Wrong. He found the salt and pepper. Most of it was in his bag but there was so much of it in his stomach that he never had to use spice in his salad dressing any more. And the moral of that is: "What you do suspect is sure to come true." Now run along and play.

Page

But we aren't children, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin

I hope not.

(Enter CRESSLER on stairs.)

Now run along. Here comes Mr. Cressler.

Landry

Thank you very much.

Page

We've been awful idiots.

Isabel

Thank you, Mr. Jadwin.

(To Roland)

Let's go back.

Page

(To Landry)

Will you forgive me?

Landry

(To Page)

Of course. You know I was only pretending.

(Exeunt Landry and Page up steps and Roland and

Isabel at back. Cressler joins Jadwin)

Cressler

What in the world have you been doing "J"? That cigar must have been finished long ago.

Jadwin

Been playing nurse. Did you come out after me?

Cressler

Yes, they're all asking what has become of you.

Jadwin

All? Did Miss Dearborn ask?

Cressler

She was the first.

(Smiles)

Rather a new thing to find you anxious about a girl "J".

Jadwin

Yes.

(Pause)

Charlie, I don't mind telling you that I'm pretty well gone. She's worth more than all the other girls I ever met rolled into a heap.

Cressler

I'd like to have a dollar for every time you've said that in the past week.

Jadwin

I'd give a hundred dollars for a chance to say it to her. The trouble is that I don't know just what to say to her. I'm not exactly what you'd call a ladies man.

Cressler

You ought to be mighty glad of that. I've never known a ladies man yet who was much of anything else.

Jadwin

How did you and Carrie come to be so much interested in the girls, Charlie?

Cressler

Their father and I were boys together. We lived in a little

Massachusetts town called Barrington and he ground the wheat I raised. Carrie and I had him send Page out here to a seminary; Laura had a tutor.

Jadwin

Old nearborn is dead?

Cressler

Died about a year ago. Left the girls very little except their Aunt Wess - Mrs. Wessels, you know - who has some money. She and I both urged Laura to come to Chicago. We bought a little house for them and finally Laura came.

Jadwin

Been here about two weeks she tells me.

Cressler

Just about. She's a little rustic yet. This is the first time she's ever heard an opera.

Jadwin

It didn't take Corthell long to discover her, did it?

Cressler

Sheldon Corthell? Oh, he met her in Barrington. He's been in love with her a year or two.

Jadwin

She seems to like him pretty well.

Cressler

I don't know about that. I think Carrie's right in saying that she simply loves to be loved. She's one of those girls who need affection just as badly as they need food, "J" and twice as often. You know the kind.

Jadwin

But she spends such a lot of time with Corthell.

Cressler

She likes attention - they all do "J". Corthell's an artist and a poet and a good many other useless things. I suppose he makes pretty speeches; and they all like those too.

Jadwin

(Absently)

Do they?

Cressler

Of course. They all pretend not to but you can take my word for it "J", the only compliment a woman doesn't like is the compliment paid to another woman.

Jadwin

Then you don't think it's serious?

Cressler

I won't say that. Corthell wants her a good deal. I'm sure he asked her to marry him the other day; he goes around looking so much like a dog just robbed of its ears.

Jadwin

(Reflectively)

Asked her to marry him? And I don't think he wants her any more than I do. By George, I'll ask her myself.

Cressler

Good Lord, "J";

Jadwin

I'll ask her tonight and I'll make her say yes, I'll MAKE her. I'll put in all the pretty speeches I can think of.

(A familiar aria from the last act of "Faust" heard off stage)

Come on Charlie. I like that one bit they're playing. I've heard it on the hand-organs.

(Exeunt hastily at back. LAURA and CORTHELL enter on stairs and come down)

Laura

I'm glad to be out of there. After the beauty of Marguerite's garden that prison is depressing.

Corthell

What a temperamental little woman you are.

Laura

Am I? I don't know. Only this is my first opera and it

seems very wonderful. All this excitement, this world of flowers, of perfume, of exquisite costumes, of brave men and fine women lifts me out of myself.

Corthell

You ought to have been an actress.

Laura

I thought of it at one time .

Corthell

Temperament is a rare thing these practical days. The only goddess men worship sits enthroned on a dollar and her creed is, "In unity there is strength". I suppose that means in unity of dollars.

Laura

It seems dreadful the way you put it, and yet - isn't there grandeur in any brave fight, even if it is a fight for wealth?

Corthell

I don't quite understand.

Laura

There is some big fighting done for dollars; bigger than for most other things. I thought tonight how small all our chatter about art must seem to a man like - like Curtis Jadwin.

Corthell

(With a slight show of jealousy)  
Why Curtis Jadwin especially?

Laura

Oh, just because he is a fighter. I've heard him called Napoleonic.

Corthell

Napoleon didn't make a very good husband, you'll remember.

Laura

Now I don't understand.

Corthell

I should like to be your husband, Laura.

Laura

Please, please, Mr. Corthell; I thought we weren't to speak of this again.

Corthell

But I love you.

Laura

Yes, I rather like that. But I can't love you; I don't think I love anybody. Let's not mention it again.

Corthell

Won't you listen --

Laura

(Starts for steps)

You'll drive me away.

Corthell

(Resigned but a little piqued)

I yield. What do you want me to talk about -- the weather?

Laura

(Relieved)

If you wish.

(Going to door at L.)

There seems to be a lot of it.

Corthell

There generally is in Chicago.

(Pause)

If the making of money appeals to you so why don't you fancy Mr. Crookes? He is a regular king on 'Change.

Laura

I don't know. He gets on my nerves. Do you believe me, I actually am a little afraid of him. I wish Mr. Cressler wouldn't have him at the house.

Corthell

(Carelessly)

I didn't know he visited the Cresslers.

Laura

He does. Before Page and I moved into our own home he was there very often. Mr. Cressler seemed quite fond of him.



Corthell

That's queer.

(Pause)

You oughtn't to have come out without your wraps. It's rather chilly here.

Laura

They were hanging over the rail and I couldn't have got them without attracting everybody's attention. I'm not cold.

Corthell

We'll go back presently. I didn't ask you out to talk about Mr. Crookes.

Laura

I want to hear that tenor solo at the end of the act.

Corthell

De Reszke isn't in very good voice tonight. You should have heard his "Lohengrin". Tenors are all like the little girl with the curl; when they are good they are very good indeed and when they are bad they are unspeakable.

Laura

I enjoyed everything up to this act. It's my first opera, you remember.

Corthell

(Surveying her)

There isn't much of the country girl in your appearance. You look charming.

Laura

(Pleased)

Do you think so?

(Stops on her way to the stairs)

Corthell

I do, indeed. Only - you haven't worn my poor flowers.

Laura

(Touching rose in her corsage)

One - the deepest red I ever saw. I selected it because I thought it was the prettiest.

Corthell

Since you have selected it it is the prettiest.

(She turns away and goes to steps. He follows her)

Oh, Laura, Laura dear girl, I must tell you how I love you.  
You MUST listen. You cannot throw away such a love as mine.

Laura

I'm not throwing it away. I appreciate its value. But I cannot take it for I have nothing to give you in return.

Corthell

Give me yourself.

(She walks up a few steps)

Laura, some day you may be willing to give life itself for love like this.

Laura

Some day - perhaps. Come to me THEN.

Corthell

That means I may wait; you promise --

(Enter MRS. W. on stairs)

Laura

I promise nothing.

(Makes room for Mrs. W. to pass)

Here we are, Aunt Wess.

Mrs. W.

(Excessively annoyed)

And a good thing too. Carrie asked me to bring you back for the end. I should think you'd feel that you'd missed about enough of this opera.

Laura

I missed the prison scene on purpose. It was so gloomy.

Mrs. W.

But Carrie says that at the last Marguerite goes to heaven. Don't you want to see Marguerite go to heaven?

Corthell

(Chagrined)

By all means. It must be both interesting and instructive.

(Enter JADWIN at back)

Jadwin

Ah, a searching party? Looking for me? I tried to get through that way to the box, but it was no use. Too big a crowd.

Mrs. W.

I came out for Laura. For all the good she's got out of this opera she might just as well have stayed home.

Corthell

You're not angry with me, Mrs. Wessels?

Mrs. W.

Well, I have liked you better than I do at this minute.

(To Laura)

You'll come back.

Jadwin

(As Corthell steps toward Laura)

Of course. You mustn't miss the transformation. Marguerite goes right up into the clouds you know. Mr. Corthell will tell you how it is worked, Mrs. Wessels. He knows all about it.

Corthell

(Alarmed at the prospect)

Oh, it's very ordinary - just wires you see - ah -

Jadwin

To you perhaps, but scarcely to Mrs. Wessels.

(Laura steps back to him)

Mrs. W.

(Forgetting her anger on the instant)

No indeed. Have you been behind the scenes, Mr. Corthell.

Corthell

(Defeated and annoyed)

Oh yes - often.

Mrs. W.

(Taking his arm and going up steps with him)

Then you must tell me about it.

(Boy closes coat-room window)

Corthell

(Looking back at Laura)

Well, an effect like this is carried out very simply. The woman who plays Marguerite, etc., etc. ad lib.

(Exeunt Corthell and Mrs. W.)

Laura

(Joining Jadwin up stage)

That's not fair, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin

Isn't there an adage about all being fair in love and war?

Laura

But this is neither. How do you know that I didn't want to talk with Mr. Corthell?

Jadwin

I don't. I don't pretend to know anything about women.

Laura

You must have been acquainted with a great many.

Jadwin

That's why I don't pretend to know any of them.

(Comes down stage)

A man who has never studied the sex and who says he understands it may be a fool, Miss Dearborn, but the man who has studied it and claims to comprehend is -- a liar.

Laura

I don't believe that. Women may have certain queer little ways --

Jadwin

Yes, and there are as many kinds of queer little ways as there are women.

Laura

Isn't that a trifle cynical?

Jadwin

No, Miss Dearborn. I'm not cynical about women. I believe in them. I don't believe they were made to live in a sort of warmed-over, dilettante, stained glass world of seclusion and exclusion. I believe they were made to help and to point the straight way. If I were in love with a woman there'd be no kind of life worth anything to me that didn't include her.

Laura

I shouldn't think you'd have much time to - for that sort of thing, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin

(Glances about and sees that they are alone)

That's just the sort of thing I would MAKE time for, Miss Dearborn. I make time to look after my real estate, and real estate isn't half as important as -

(The coat-room window is opened noisily, disclosing boy.

Jadwin's tone changes)

Well, as some other things.

Laura

(Doesn't see boy):

It is important, isn't it? Now and then I tell myself and even poor, dear Aunt Wess, that I shall never care for anybody, that I shall never marry. But I should be bitterly sorry if I thought that was true. It is one of the greatest happinesses to which I look forward that some day I shall love someone with all my heart and soul, and shall be a true wife, and shall find my husband's love for me the sweetest thing in my life.

Jadwin

(Takes a step toward her almost ardently, his eye meets that of the coat-boy and he stops)

Have you ever been on a yacht.

Laura

(Surprised)

No. Why?

Jadwin

Because I'm having one built. I've always been fond of the water. When I was a boy in Michigan I used to go yachting in a soap box. She was a trim little craft and her name was painted on her sides in big red letters. I think it was Babbitt's.

Laura

Babbitt's? What a queer name.

Jadwin

Yes, wasn't it? But you see it wasn't her name by rights. It was the name of the soap that came in her.

Laura

I can see that you're used to sailing by the fact that you call your boat "she".

Jadwin

Yes. And then I've always thought that a sailing boat is like a woman - rather. They're graceful and pretty, you know, and they're worth while and they're not easy to handle.

(Boy closes coat-room window. Jadwin gives sigh of relief)

Laura

Men are, I suppose.

Jadwin

I think you'd find a man easy to handle, Miss Dearborn.

A man who really was fond --

(Coat-room window open again. Jadwin checks himself, walks up to the boy, hands him a dollar bill, boy closes the window, emerges from behind it, wearing hat and exits at left)

I was saying that a man who really was fond of you ought to be glad to do anything for you.

Laura

I agree with you that he ought; but would he?

Jadwin

Of course that would depend somewhat on the man. The right sort of man is only too happy to do for the woman he loves -

without hope of return, without thought of reward.

Laura

(Ruminating)

Without thought of reward.

Jadwin

Of any reward beyond the pleasure of using his power to save hers, of feeling the blows that might have fallen on her. Miss Dearborn why do you think that nine men out of ten love a woman?

Laura

I don't know. Because she is fine and strong?

Jadwin

No; because she isn't. Because she required fineness and strength in them and, requiring, gives it. You have given me so much, Miss Dearborn, which I should like to use for your good --

Laura

We met ten days ago, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin

I'm a business man, Miss Dearborn. It doesn't take me long to discover what I want and when I find that thing I generally get it. I want you to marry me.

Laura

But I - I don't want to marry anyone.

Jadwin

I would wait for you.

Laura

Or to be engaged.

Jadwin

But the day must come when you must be both engaged and married. You must ask yourself some time if you love the man who wishes to be your husband. Why not ask yourself now?

Laura

(Perturbed)

I do - I do ask myself.

Jadwin

And you decide?

Laura

That I don't know.

Jadwin

I love you, I love you, not as a boy, but as a man. I want you to be my wife. Laura, my dear girl, I know I could make you happy.

Laura

It isn't so much a question of that, Mr. Jadwin, it's a question of not knowing myself. A short while ago another man asked me to be his wife. I almost told him Yes. I realize now that if I had done so I should have made a dreadful mistake because - because now I am SURE that I do not love him.

Jadwin

Then you think you could love me?

Laura

No; I don't say that. I only know that what I told him was true - that I do not love him.

Jadwin

At least when I have a clear field. And I'll win. I know I'll win. I always get what I try to get. I'll make you love me.

(Pause. Laura has picked Corthell's rose to pieces. The concluding notes of the Opera are heard clearly as the attendants open the doors. The door-keepers who have been visible through the glass, busy themselves with bolts and latches)

Laura

The opera is over.

(Certain men appear at the head of the stairs and at back. They help the women on with their wraps. Enter the coat-



boy running and hands Jadwin a little sack of cigars)

Coat-boy

Here you are sir.

Jadwin

Keep the change.

(The boy goes to his room, opens the window and begins handing coats to those who apply. Jadwin looks at his cigars, smells them and tosses the sack away. Voices off at L. crying "Carriage", "Carriage sir," "Hansom" etc. Once more general bustle and animation. The lobby begins to be crowded. The petals of Corthell's rose lie in a little heap on the floor, untouched)

Laura

Aunt Wess WILL be angry.

(A young man crosses the back of the stage whistling "The Jewel Song" loudly)

What an awful whistle.

Jadwin

Time for wraps. Excuse me.

(Forces his way through the crowd and exits at back)  
(Hubbub of conversation. Boy selling librettos: "Books of the opera in MYETalian and English." Men and women complain of being pushed. Crookes, Sweeny, Scannel, Mrs. Ferguson, Everard, Larkin, Hartley and others pass across the stage, bowing and shaking hands and exeunt at L.)

(In the Ad Lib talk these lines are distinguished:)

A Woman

Why, it's raining.

Her husband

I can't help that, can I?

Well, that's the cheapest looking heaven I ever saw.

A great chorus.

I never heard Nordica sing better.

The play is to be produced at the Grand. It's my first attempt at serious work, etc., etc., etc.

(Enter MR. and MRS. CRESSLER, LANDRY, PAGE to Laura. They greet each other.)

Mrs. C.

Laura, my dear child, why didn't you come back? You'd have enjoyed it so much.

Page

You oughtn't to be here without your coat Laura.

Laura

Oh, I'm all right.

(To Mrs. C.)

I didn't know the act was so short, Mrs. Cressler.

(Enter GRETRY, ISABEL and ROLAND. They pass the Cresslers with a nod and a "good evening")

Isabel

See you a week from Friday Page.

(To Roland)

Come George.

(They exeunt L.)

Cressler

Well, hadn't we better see about getting home?

(Yawns)

I'm sleepy. Landry, I suppose you'll drive back with Page and Aunt Wess?

Landry

Yes.

Cressler

And Mr. Corthell with Laura. We'll have to come alone, Carrie.

(Porter outside crying "Sixty-seven!" "Eighty!" "Mrs. Brooks' carriage!" "Twenty?" etc.)

Laura

Don't you think you ought to be chaperoned?

Mrs. C.

Bless me, why? So that he could make love to the chaperone?  
 (Kisses Laura and Page)  
 Good night, my dears. I hope you've enjoyed yourselves.

Laura

Immensely.

Page

Thank you, yes.

Cressler

You'll be at the house tomorrow?  
 (Greetings all around. Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Cressler.  
Enter on stage CORTHELL and MRS. W.)

Mrs. W.

It was doubly interesting to me to know how it was all done.  
 I shall never see a play now without remembering.

Corthell

But the heroine doesn't go to heaven in all plays, Mrs.  
 Wesley. Often I wish she would.  
 (They come down. The stage is almost clear)

Page

Here they are now. They've taken their time, I must say.

Mrs. W.

(As they come up with the others)  
 Well, here you are, Laura. I thought maybe you'd have  
 eloped by this time. Where's Mr. Jadwin?

Laura

I don't know - gone for his hat and coat. I wish you'd  
 get mine, Mr. Corthell.

Corthell

With pleasure.  
 (Starts back and returns. Page, Landry and Mrs. W.  
 expecting Laura to drive with Corthell, call "goodnight"  
"We'll beat you home" etc. and exeunt at L.)

Laura

I AM rather chilly now. Please hurry. They'll have  
 locked the doors.

Corthell

And of course I'm to go home with you?

(The stage is vacant save for these two and the officials, who are putting things to rights for the night)

Laura

(Triflingly annoyed)

I can't very well go home at all unless I get my wraps.

Corthell

Oh, I beg your pardon.

(Starts back)

(Enter JADWIN walking very fast. He goes past Corthell to Laura, whom he helps into a cloak)

Jadwin

Here's your cloak. It had dropped into the next box. I had to search for it. All right?

(To Corthell)

Goodnight Mr. Corthell.

(To Laura)

I'll drive you home.

(They exeunt at L., Laura half undecided but yielding to his arm. Corthell in centre of stage strikes a match to light a cigarette. His eye falls on the heap of red rose petals at his feet. He recognizes them, drops his match, kicks them aside and, cigarette in mouth stands looking after Laura and Jadwin)

Porter

(Who has been silent for several seconds off at L.)

Mr. Jadwin's carriage!

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--:-- " T H E P I T " --:--

--:-- A C T II --:--

-:- "THE PIT" -:-

-:- ACT II -:-

Oct 10 1963  
CLASS 2  
4410



THE PIT

ACT II

SCENE:-

Parlor in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cressler. A particularly well furnished room. Door L.I.E. leading to a smaller apartment through which departing visitors may gain the street. Another door R.I.E. giving access to the remainder of the house. These are the only exits required. At the back of the stage, near the centre, a large platform has been erected on saw-horses. This platform is equipped like a miniature theatre, with foot and border lights, curtain and grooves. It has a back drop on which is painted a street scene and, at rise, part of a set house on its left. The rest of the stage may be filled ad lib., but there should be a piano at R., a sofa near it, and a table at L.  
LANDRY, PAGE, MRS. CRESSLER, MRS. WESSELS, LAURA and BIGGS,  
a butler, discovered on or about the miniature theatre, attempting to place in position the front of the set house.

AT RISE:-

Page.

(Endeavoring to hold up the piece of scenery.)  
Quick now, Landry, before it falls!

Landry

(Leisurely)  
Quick what? I don't know what to do with it!

Page

Well, do SOMETHING! I can't stay here all the afternoon!

Mrs. W.  
Seems to me it ought to be propped up somehow.

Page  
(With fine sarcasm)  
There's no doubt of that.  
(To Landry)

DON'T stand there with your hands in your pockets!

Landry  
I haven't heard anybody suggest a better place to put them.

Mrs. C.  
Why don't you rest it against that table, Page dear?

Laura  
Can't you tell us, Biggs? I thought you used to set scenery in a theatre.

Biggs  
Not exactly in a theatre, Miss; I was with a Punch and Judy show.

Page.  
Well! (Drops the piece)  
Aunt Wess said you knew all about it. If she hadn't we'd have got a professional scene shifter.

Biggs  
(Apologetically.)  
I can work a Punch and Judy show.

Mrs. W.  
I thought all stages were alike.

Landry  
Sorry, Biggs, but your'e a disappointment. Romeo and Juliet don't work on a stick.

Biggs.  
(With his best professional manner.)  
Neither do Punch and Judy, sir. You put them on your hands, sir.

Mrs. W.  
(Suddenly inspired)  
Why not give up this Shakespeare nonsense and HAVE a Punch and Judy show?

The Others  
Aunt Wess!  
After going to all this trouble!  
Nonsense, Aunt Wess!  
Oh, I don't think we ought to give this up now!

Mrs. W.

All right! Only I don't see how you're going to put that house together.

Mrs. C.

It doesn't matter so much this afternoon. This is only a rehearsal.

Laura

Yes, but everybody'll be here.

Page

Yes--everybody--and that actor, Mr. Childer. He'll laugh at us if we aren't ready.

Landry

Why not nail the pieces together?

The others

Why, Yes!

That's a good idea!

Why didn't you say so before? Etc.

Page

If your ideas only weren't fired with such a fuse, Landry. Where are the nails?

Some nails, -Biggs.  
( exit Biggs R.)

Mrs. C.

Landry

Well, I didn't know you'd want it nailed.

Page

Stupid! Come on; help me!

(together they lift the piece, up-side-down, and hold it in position.)

This is as heavy as a real house.

Laura

When did you ever lift a real house, Page?

Page

I know about how heavy a real house would be. Now where's Biggs?

Mrs. C.

He had to go to the kitchen. He'll be back in a minute.

Page

(Leaning against the house in attitude of extreme fatigue)

Oh, gracious!

Landry

(Surveying the back drop)

Who painted this scenery for you, Mrs. Cressler?

Mrs. C.

Charlie bought most of it ready-made. Why?

Landry

Oh, just because there are telegraph poles and a laundry sign in that street. I don't believe there was a telegraph in those days.

Mrs. W.

There must have been laundries.

Page

(disgusted)

Not in Juliet's garden! What's to be done?

Mrs. C.

We'll have to get another scene, I guess.

Laura

Oh, I wouldn't, Mrs. Cressler. It'll be so dark during that act that no one can see the telegraph poles.

(Enter Biggs)

Biggs

(giving nails to Landry)

Here you are, sir.

Landry

Pound them in; Biggs.

(Biggs mounts stage and nails piece in place)

Laura

(Looking at clock)

One o'clock. I thought Mr. Jadin was to be here right after lunch.

(This to Mrs. C.)

Mrs. C.

Don't get impatient, Laura. "J" has a good deal of business in the exchange now. Charlie says that doesn't let out until three.

Laura.

Mr. Cressler hasn't anything to do with that sort of thing, has he?

Mrs. C.

Dear me! But he had a good many years ago. It cost him a lot of money once.

Laura  
Yes; I've heard him tell about it.

Page  
(Sinking into a chair)  
There !

Landry  
Done!  
(Standing off)  
Great Scott, Page, wev'e got it upside down!

Page  
(Starting up)  
Upside down!

Landry  
Yes. They don't have doors in the tops of houses, you know.

Page  
I thought that was the door to the balcony.

Laura  
But the door's upside down, too, Page.

Page  
I don't care! It'll have to stay that way now. I won't fool with it any longer.

Mrs. C.  
Isabel won't be able to climb through that window.

Mrs. W.  
Why don't you turn the whole house upside down?

Page  
As if that would help!

Landry  
(To Page)  
Never mind, girlie. Sit down over there and Biggs and I will fix it.

Page  
All right!  
(sits herself)  
I'll superintend the job.

Landry  
Here; will you hold the nails?

Page  
What! The superintendent?

Mrs. W.  
Go on, Landry. I'll hold them.  
(She goes on the stage. Bus. of adjusting the setting during the following conversation)

Laura  
They haven't MUCH time.

Mrs. C.  
Half an hour.

Laura  
Why did Mons. Gerardy call the rehearsal so early?

Mrs. C.  
To give time for serving tea after it's over.  
(Laura goes to piano and, after looking at the clock seats herself on sofa)

Laura  
(As the door-bell rings)  
That must be Mr. Jadwin.  
(Biggs exits at L. Noise of opening and closing door off stage)

Mrs. C.  
It doesn't sound like his ring.

Laura  
No; he always tugs at the bell as though he wanted to break it.  
(Biggs enters and crosses stage with tray.)

Mrs. C.  
A card?

Biggs.  
Telegram for Mr. Cressler, Madam.  
(Exit at R.)

Laura  
Pshaw! If he wanted very much to see me he'd let his business go for once.

Mrs. C.  
Don't be unreasonable, Laura. You won't get on with "J", or any other man, if you are. It takes a wise woman to have a good husband.  
(Goes to Laura)  
Are you so fond of "J", Laura.

6-4

*find*  
 How fond IS so find, Mrs. Cressler? I don't know. I don't know whether I'm fond of him at all.

Mrs. C.

Laura!

(Enters Biggs and returns to work on stage)

Laura

It's true; I told him so.

Mrs. C.

Then why are you going to marry him?

Laura

Because I can't help myself.

(Mrs. C. attempts to speak.)

Oh, I realize that that sounds foolish. But it's a fact just the same.

Mrs. C.

I don't understand you, Laura.

Laura

That's because you don't understand Curtis Jadwin, Mrs. Cressler, you can't say "no" to that man!

Mrs. C.

Of course not; of course not; He IS a man!

Laura

Mrs. Cressler, as long as I said nothing definite he waited and waited and seemed willing to wait. Then one day I gave him a square "no". It was the same day Sheldon Corthell proposed for the third time and I said "no" to both of them, Mr. Corthell sent me some roses with a verse.

Mrs. C.

And "J"?

Laura

Curtis sent me his card. Then he began. He was at the house morning, noon and night. Once he came in a driving rainstorm. He was drenched to the skin and even at dinner he had a low fever. I couldn't keep him away.

Mrs. C.

(Delighted)

That's "J" all over! I might have known he'd have you if he set out for you!

Laura

I just had to say "Yes", and then I was angry with myself for doing it.

Mrs. C.

But you must love him or you wouldn't be so anxious about him.

Laura

Yes, I--I suppose I must love him. He seems to worship me. He thinks of nothing but to please me. And when I finally said I would marry him, why, Mrs. Cressler, he choked all up, and the tears ran down his face, and all he could say was "May God bless you! May God bless you!" over and over again. His hand shook so that---Oh, well! Somehow it makes tears come to my eyes to think of it.

Mrs. C.

Ah, you do love him!

Laura

Sometimes I'm sure of it, and then again---well, I don't know. I used to think that when love came to me it would be glorious, uplifting, like Juliet's or Marguerite's. I thought that was the only kind of love there was.

Mrs. C.

Oh, you'd been reading trashy novels!

Laura

I suppose I'll be happy. I hope so. I hope I won't come to myself some day, when it's too late, and find that I've made a dreadful mistake.

Mrs. C.

Well, Laura, if you don't love "J" don't marry him. That's very simple.

Laura

It will be all right, I guess. He's so much in love with me and that will make me love him if I don't now. You know what I mean, Mrs. Cressler; that's the sort of girl I am. I like the people who like me and I hate those who don't. It's very uncharitable and unchristianlike, but I can't help it. We'll be all right.

(Wiping her eyes and rising)

Anyway, I don't see anything to cry about.

Mrs. C.

My dear girl-----

(Enter Cressler at R.)

Why, Charlie!

Cressler

(during the entire act he is rather preoccupied and nervous)

I got tired sitting in my room. I thought it would do me good to join the young people.



Laura  
Why, Mrs. Cressler didn't tell me you weren't well.

Cressler  
Well? Oh, simply a little over-worked.

Laura.  
(Persisting kindly)  
But I thought you didn't do anything now.

Cressler  
I don't usually do very much. My property has to be looked after.

Mrs. C.  
He's been very busy this week.

Cressler  
Well, not exactly what you'd call busy, either.

(To Page)  
Hm! That's quite a pretty scene.

Page  
(All except Biggs abandon their work and come to the front of the platform)  
The balcony hasn't come, and so we've got to use a step-ladder.

Landry  
What's the difference?

Page  
A good deal of difference. Step-ladders aren't to make love from; they're for washing windows.

Mrs. W.  
Hain't you two better be dressing for your parts?

Mrs. C.  
Plenty of time after Isabel and Mr. Roland come. They've got to dress, too.

Page  
No. Isabel's going to wear her Juliet gown in the carriage and Mr. Roland will put on his street clothes over his costume.

Laundry  
Good thing for him that it's winter.  
(Bell rings off at Laura starts and restrains herself from crossing.)  
(Exit Biggs L.)

Page  
There's someone now. Come on, Landry!

Landry  
(Steps from platform and assists Page.)  
Right!  
(Returns)  
Wait until I lower the curtain.  
(Does so)

Page  
We're not going to have an orchestra this afternoon, are we, Mrs. Cressler?

Mrs. C.  
No. Somebody will have to play the piano.

Page  
My dress is in your room, isn't it?

Mrs. C.  
Yes. Just ring for my maid.

Page  
Thank you.  
(To Landry)  
Hurry!  
(They exeunt at R. Enter Biggs)

Biggs  
(Announcing informally)  
Mr. Jadwin. Mr. Gretry.  
(Exit R.)  
(Enter Jadwin and Gretry.)  
(There is a general exchange of greetings. Jadwin immediately crosses to Laura, shaking hands with the Cresslers on the way.)

Jadwin  
Hello, Charlie! How are you, Carrie? Afraid I'm a little later than I said I'd be. Sam kept me down town.  
(To Laura)

I came just as fast as I could/ Laura. Made it in a little less than four minutes. See how the reins split my gloves.

Gretry  
I didn't expect to get away this soon--especially with Court gone---but things were quiet.

Cressler  
Quiet! Good Lord! And the price of wheat climbing away beyond reach!

Jadwin  
Why, how do you know, Charlie? You're not mixed up in the thing are you?

Cressler  
I? I should say not! But I read the reports!

Jadwin  
That's the first symptom of the return of the fever.  
(To Mrs. C.)

It never quite leaves a man who has once speculated, Carrie.

Mrs. W.  
It must be something like the asthma.

Jadwin  
It is, except that it brings shortness of money instead of shortness of breath.

Cressler  
(Irritably)  
It's simply a form of gambling.

Laura  
Gambling! Oh, not so bad as that!

Cressler  
Worse, because its consequences are wider spread. Just think Laura, here in Chicago men pretend to buy and sell wheat that they have never seen. Some poor devil sells wheat that he hasn't got, the price goes up, he has to get the grain somehow, at any price, and he's ruined.

Gretry  
Why not look at it from the other side? The man who sells make a fortune;

Cressler  
And keeps it until HE gets caught. How many of the chaps who made fortunes five years ago are being measured for yachts or automobiles this season?

Gretry  
It's a game--like everything else!

Cressler  
But that isn't the worst of it, Laura. When the price goes up because a lot of men are trying to buy the wheat to sell again it goes beyond the reach of millions of other poor devils--farmers in the fields of England; peasants on the steppes of Russia. They don't want it to speculate with, they want it to EAT, and when they can't get it they starve.

Mrs. W.

Why don't they eat something else?

Laura

It does seem wrong.

Cressler

Wrong! Sheldon Cortshell told me once that when some speculator was trying to corner the market--that is to buy all the wheat in sight, Laura--he met a boy in Bavaria, five thousand miles from Chicago, cursed the name of America because an American was taking bread out of his mouth. "I can live on cress and berries", he said, "but my mother is dying of hunger." Wrong! By George, it's criminal!

Jadwin

Whoa, Charlie, whoa! You passed the Judge's stand five minutes ago!

Cressler

(Apologetically and then nervously)

Well, it makes me angry! Of course, I haven't any personal interest in the thing, but it makes me angry!

Mrs. C.

Come have a cup of tea, Charlie.

(To Gretry)

He hasn't eaten a bite since morning.

Gretry

Neither have I. I didn't remember it until now; I've been so busy.

Mrs. C.

You and Charlie can share what Biggs can find. We've lunched.

(Cressler, Gretry, Mrs. W., Mrs. C. and Laura start toward door at R. Laura is in the rear. Jadwin stands apart)

Gretry

With my present appetite I think I could eat Biggs.

Cressler

I'm not hungry.

Mrs W.

You shouldn't go all day without food. It's bad for you.

(Exeunt all except Jadwin and Laura at R., as Laura is going Jadwin detains her.)

Jadwin  
Wait a minute, Laura, I've got your gloves.

Laura  
(returning)  
My gloves! What gloves?

Jadwin  
Don't you remember about a month ago you said you couldn't get any long gloves to suit you?

Laura  
Oh, yes! I'd forgotten all about it.

Jadwin  
Well, I think these may fill the bill.  
(Gives her several pairs of gloves)

Laura  
(Delighted)  
Oh, where did you get them? At Marshal Fields?

Jadwin  
No; in Bohemia. Or, at least, my agent got them in Bohemia.

Laura  
(Trying one)  
They're perfect! Just the right size, too! How good of you!

Jadwin  
(Disappointed)  
Aren't you going to kiss me?

Laura  
Yes, of course; if you want me to.  
(Kisses him, Jadwin walks to corner of platform and returns)

Jadwin  
(Somewhat embarrassed)  
Do you know, Laura, I was thinking the other day that you never kiss me?

Laura  
I do! Why, I did just a minute ago!

Jadwin  
No, I kissed you. It is always I who kiss you. If you think a minute you will remember that you haven't kissed me once of your own free will since we've been engaged.

Laura

(lightly)  
So long as there ARE kisses what does it matter  
who gives them?

Jadwin

It matters a great deal Laura, I suppose you wonder how a  
man of my age, a business man, can be so silly, but I DO  
mind.

Laura

I don't think you're silly. Only I don't---just--

Jadwin

A kiss isn't anything of itself, Laura--merely a touching of  
lips. It's the feeling back of the thing that counts, and  
when you don't offer to kiss me I wonder if there IS any  
feeling.

Laura

(Seriously)  
I told you I didn't know whether I loved you or not. I-I  
haven't ever felt impelled to kiss you. Perhaps that's  
a proof that I don't love you. Perhaps it's only a proof  
that I haven't found out yet, and when I do find out I may  
want to kiss you--ever so much.

Jadwin

All right. I'll wait.

Laura

There's one thing I DO care about, Curtis, that may seem more  
foolish to you than you thought the--the other would to me.  
Your speculating.

Jadwin

Speculating? How do you know I'm speculating?

Laura

You owned it then. If you hadn't been you'd have said,  
"What makes you THINK I'm speculating?"

Jadwin

(Surprised)  
Huh? By Jingo, what a bright little woman we are!

Laura

Oh, I suspected long ago. I was sure of it when I saw how  
you evaded discussion with Mr. Cressler.

Jadwin

I didn't want to argue with Charlie. He's my best friend.  
(Goes to her and takes her arms caressingly.)  
You mustn't pay any attention to his nonsense, Laura. My  
little deals couldn't hurt anybody.

Laura.

I don't care what you know or what you believe! I tell you I don't care!

Page.

Then why did you say you were searching for a locket when you were really looking for that box?

Laura.

Because--because--I--because--

(Facing her hotly.)

Have I got to answer to you for what I do? Have I got to explain? All your life long you've pretended to judge me! Now you've gone too far! I forbid it--from this day I forbid it! What I do is my own affair; I'll do as I please! Do you understand? I'll do as I please!

Page.

And your husband?

Laura.

I'll do as I please! He attends to his affairs; why should he inquire into mine? He leaves me alone, day in and day out! He doesn't care whether I'm wretched or not! But I'll be happy in spite of him; in spite of you all! I WILL be happy.

(Pounding table with riding-crop.)

I will! I will! I have a right to be.

Page.

(Starting toward her.)

Laura!

Laura.

(Hysterically.)

Go way! I hate you all! I hate you! I hate you!

(Enter Jadwin at back.)

Jadwin.

Well, old girl?

(Laura throws herself on her knees before the table in a paroxysm of weeping. Page, alarmed, runs to her and strokes her hair.)

Page.

Darling, Dearest! I didn't mean-----

Laura.

(Thrusting her aside.)

So away! Let me alone! Don't touch me!

Jadwin

Just that, Mind, I don't acknowledge I've gone in deep enough to hurt anybody. But I'll drop the whole business--soon as I can get out. Then some day before long when I'm not thinking of it you throw both arms around my neck and kiss me. Is it a bargain?

(Bell rings off L. Biggs enters R., crosses stage and exits at L.)  
Is it a bargain?

Laura

Oh, if you put it that way I suppose so-yes.

Jadwin

I'll get out and no one will be the worse for it.

(Enter Biggs with card)  
Some of the guests, Biggs?

Biggs

Gentleman wants to see Mr. Cressler private.

(Exit Biggs R.)

Laura

More business! We'd better go into Mrs. Cressler. He may want this room.

Jadwin

All right.

(Enter Cressler R. They meet him as they are about to leave)  
Just going, Charlie?

Cressler

Thank you, "J" I'll be through in a minute.

(Exit Jadwin and Laura)

You'll find the rest of the family in the dining room.

(Enter Biggs R.)

Bring him in here.

Biggs

(Opening door at L., and speaking to occupant of next room.)

This way, sir.

(Announces.)

Mr. Crookes.

(Enter Crookes.)

(The two men wait until Biggs has made his exit at R.?  
Cressler showing signs of impatience at the delay.)

Cressler

Well, what is it?

Crookes

Wheat? A dollar two and an eighth.



Cressler  
( Steadying Himself against the proscenium of the miniature stage.)  
 Then I'm wiped out.

Crookes  
 Not necessarily.

Cressler  
(Very loud)  
 Not necessarily? I tell you I'M WIPED OUT! You sold one million bushels of wheat I was supposed to own at ninety-one. I've got to cover an eleven cent jump. That calls for over a hundred thousand dollars right now-- and I haven't got that much ready money in the world!

Crookes  
 Sch! Don't get excited!

Cressler  
 Excited! I'm a bankrupt! I'm a bankrupt or a pauper!

Crookes  
 You don't want to tell the household about it do you?  
(Cressler opens the door at R., and listens. Burst of laughter heard, the voices of Jadwin and Mrs. C. being distinguishable.)  
 Now look here! I didn't leave my office to tell you that wheat was up. I want to tell you that it can't possibly go up another cent!

Cressler  
 I couldn't stand another eighth!

Crookes  
 All right. I'll take the rest of the risk to a dollar three. You give me your check for margins on that wheat at present market price and I'll keep it for awhile. If wheat goes past a dollar three I'll add the necessary amount and buy your million bushels at once. If it begins dropping, as I believe it will, you'll be able to cover at less than you sold for. Is that clear?

Cressler  
(Moistening his lips with his tongue.)  
 Yes--that's clear. It gives me a fighting chance.  
(Rings bell.)  
 I'll have to date the check a few days ahead so that I'll have time to get the money together.

Crookes  
 That's satisfactory.  
(Enter Biggs R.)

Cressler  
Biggs, get my check book out of my desk.

(Exit Biggs.)  
You remember when I went into this clique I stipulated that our operations were not to be speculative.

Crookes  
You knew-----

Cressler  
Yes, I knew. I knew from the first. I simply tried to deceive myself. It's all right.  
(Walks up stage nervously. Enter Biggs with check book which he hands to Cressler, and exits. Cressler goes to table, takes out fountain pen and figures on fly leaf.)

One million times eleven and eighth. Cypher, cypher, cypher, five, two---one hundred and eleven thousand two hundred and fifty dollars.

Crookes  
(Who has been figuring.) That's what I make it.

Cressler  
(Writes check)  
I've dated it to-morrow. I can arrange with the bank by telephone.  
(Gives him check.)  
Every dollar---every dollar!

Crookes  
The receipt.  
(Hands it to him. Pockets check.)  
I suppose you know that if we have to buy most of this will go to Gretry, Converse & Co?

Cressler  
Yes; they've been buying big lots for someone. That's what's bulled the market.  
(This wearily)

Crookes  
Someone-yes, and that someone your friend, Curtis Jadwin!

Cressler  
(Starts up dazed.)  
Jadwin! You mean "J"---Curtis- my friend?

Crookes  
That's who has your money.

Cressler  
But--but he told me his speculations were-were very small.

Crookes  
Well, that depends upon what you call small. He must have three-fourths of the May supply. If the price holds he ought to make a million.

Cressler  
Jadwin! By God!  
(More quietly)  
Does he know? Do you suppose he could have heard I was in this ring of yours?

Crookes  
No unless you told him yourself.  
(Bell rings off L. Enter Biggs, crossed stage as before and exits at L.)

Cressler  
I have not told him, Mr. Crookes. You would do me an especial favor if you would keep it from the public, from everybody, particularly from Mr. Jadwin, that I was a member of this ring.

Crookes  
Well! I'm not going to talk.  
(Takes his hat and gloves from table.)  
Consider no news good news. If I have to use your money I'll telegraph you.  
(Enter Biggs L.)

Biggs  
(Announces)  
Mr. Corthell.

Cressler  
(To Crookes)  
Thank you.  
(Enter Corthell)  
How are you, Mr. Corthell.  
(To Biggs)  
Biggs, tell the ladies.  
(Exit Biggs R. Crookes and Corthell exchange nods and Crookes exits L.)

Corthell  
Fine day, Mr. Cressler.

Cressler  
(Evidently under great mental strain.)  
Fine day? Oh, yes, yes, yes,--very.  
(Goes down stage and drums on piano lid with his fingers.)  
We haven't seen you often of late

Corthell

(Scrutinizes Cresser to learn whether his remark had  
a hidden meaning)  
I've been working hard.  
(Nodding toward platform.)  
This is the dress rehearsal isn't it.

Cressler.

A dress rehearsal - yes, we've been having them for the past  
two weeks.

Corthell

That isn't the professional method you know.  
(Enter Jadwin, Laura Mrs. C. Gretry and Mrs. W. together  
at R.)

Good afternoon I'm a few minutes late.  
(Looks at clock)

Mrs. C.

I'm afraid that clock's a trifle fast. No one else is  
here yet.

Laura

It's so hard to get business people before five.

Mrs. C.

Mons. Gerardy's evenings are taken. He's quite the vogue  
now.

(Cressler has slipped to door)  
Where are you going, Charlie.

Cressler.

(Non plussed)

I - I was going to the library. Some business...

Laura

You see he's just as bad as the rest.

Jadwin

(Taking him by the shoulders and thrusting him down stage)  
Come on, Charlie! Your business will wait. It can't be  
so very important.

(Cressler sinks into a chair at R.)

Mrs. C.

He hasn't been in good health.

Mrs. W.

It's his liver. I can see that in his face. You ought to make him die t. Carrie.

(Bell rings. Enter Biggs R. and crosses stage)

Mrs. C.

(To Biggs)

You'd better stay in the ante room now.

(Exit Biggs L)

Mrs. W.

(Joins Corthell at R.)

I saw one of your windows the other day at the Art institute.

Corthell

Oh yes, Paolo and Francesca.

Mrs. W.

A man and a woman hugging each other. I thought all stained glass windows had saints on them Mr. Corthell.

Corthell

Not all.

(Enter Biggs)

Biggs

(Announces)

Mr. Everard, Mr. Larkin, Mr. Hartley.

(Enter Everard, Hartley and Larkin)

(Biggs exits L. General handshaking and an exchange of greetings. In the midst of this Enter Landry and Page L. dressed as Mercutio and a Court Lady)

Larkin

Oh, I didn't know this was to be a dress rehearsal.

Everard

We haven't brought our costumes.

Page

(Annoyed)

Oh dear - you ought ---

(Cressler, Jadwin and Laura talking in dumb show R.  
Corthell and Mrs. W. at L)

Landry

It doesn't matter so much.

Larkin

I don't mind the custome, but I ought to have a sword. Can  
anyone lend me a sword.

Mrs. C.

We have one that Mr. Cressler used during the war.

Larkin

That'll doo.

(Mrs. C. rings.)

Grety

You'll find it he avy Mr. Larkin.

86

I don't mind.  
(Enter servant)

Mrs. C.  
 Get that sword off the library wall and bring it in.  
(Exit servant)

Everard  
 Hasn't Mons. Gerardy come?

Mrs. C.  
 Not yet. I've had a note from Mrs. Manners saying she  
 can't be here. Mons. Gerardy will have to read the part  
 of the nurse.  
(Bell rings)

Jadwin  
 He'll look so beautifully.

Biggs  
(Announces)  
 Mr. Gerardy.

(Enter Gerardy at L.)  
(Gerardy is aged 40; a small, excitable frenchman in  
 a frock coat too small for him, wearing a purple  
 cravatte drawn through a finger ring, enormous cuffs  
 set off with buttons of Mexican onyx, and a withered  
 carnation. He speaks with an accent.)

Gerardy  
 MONSIEUR Gerardy, eef you pbase .  
(Exit Biggs)

The others  
 Ah, Mons. Gerardy.--Here at last.--We've been waiting for  
 you, etc.,

Gerardy  
 I salute you. I have made a ~~little~~ delay, is it not?  
 Vairy good. Then I propose we begin at once. Ze first  
 act. I expect ze first act to be letter perfect. You  
 understand? Let-ter per-fect. There is nothing there but  
 that.  
(Bustling about, taking off gloves, etc.,)

Mrs. C.  
 Mr. Roland and Miss Gretry have not yet arrived.

Gerardy  
(Without noticing her)  
 Ze first act.  
(Consulting book)  
 "Act 1. Scene 1--- A public place. Enter Sampson and  
 Gregory! Now, Sampson and Gregory."

Mrs. C.

Mr. Roland and Miss Gretry have not arrived yet.

Gerardy

Not yet arrived; Romeo and Juliet not yet here! Sacred blood!  
What is to explain this?

Gretry

My daughter has been visiting relatives on the North side.  
Mr. Roland was to have called for her.

Gerardy

I am offend.

Laura

Nonsense, Mons. Gerardy. They'll be here in a moment.

Gerardy

A moment will not be now. I am offend.

Mrs. C.

Well, we'll have to wait. There is no other way.

Gerardy

Ah, there is no other way! None!

(Walks up stage and sits on front of platform.

Enter Servant with large sword which he gives Mrs. C.  
who delivers it to Larkin. Exit servant.)

Mrs. C.

Here, Mr. Larkin.

Larkin

Thank you.

(Buckles it on his attire.)

Gerardy

(To Larkin)

Have you no costume?

Larkin

I left it home.

(Bell rings)

Gerardy

(In despair)

Mother of Heaven! He has no other costume but a sword!

Jadwin

Mother of Heaven, indeed!

(Enter Biggs)

Biggs

(Announces)

Mr. Roland. Miss Gretry.

(Exit Biggs.)



(Enter Roland and Isabel)

Gerardy

At last!

(Bell rings)

(General exchange of greetings)

(Enter Biggs)

Biggs

(Announces)

Mr. Childer.

(Exit Biggs.)

(Enter Childer)

(This part is designed for Marshall P. Wilder. He should appear in propria persona. If Mr. Wilder does not play the part it will be cut.)

Gerardy

(To Roland)

Now you must costume yourself, is it not?

Roland

I've got on my costume. I have only to take off these things.

(Childer has gone down at L. and shaken hands with Corthell. He crosses to Jadwin, greeting others on his way.)

Mrs. C.

Go right up to Mr. Cressler's room.

(Exit Roland)

(Gerardy, Isabel, Larkin, Everard and Hartley conversing by the platform. Corthell and Mr. W. at L. Cressler, Gretry and Mrs. C. up stage at R., Laura, Jadwin and Childer down stage at R.)

Childer

Good afternoon, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin

Good afternoon. Miss Dearborn, may I present Mr. Childer?

Laura

I'm very glad to meet you.

Childer

(Bowing very low) Delighted! Delighted!

Jadwin

Mr. Childer is an actor.

Childer

Was an actor, Mr. Jadwin. I am now society entertainer.

Jadwin  
That must be pleasant for society.

Laura  
How long were you an actor, Mr. Childer?

Childer  
Many years. I've played all the best comedy parts, and some that weren't.

Laura  
Your appearance must have made you valuable in that line of work.

Childer  
Yes. I was short for money, so to speak.  
(Jadwin and Laura laugh.)

Jadwin  
It isn't often that a man gets money by being short for it.

Childer  
I often do the sort of thing Mons. Gerardy is doing now. I remember once coaching a young Irishman to play Caesar. He was a giant, this fellow, but readfully stoop-shouldered. I begged him to stand straight. He lifted his head an inch. I took his sword and prodded his chin into the proper position. Then he asked: "Misther Childer, should I stand this way th' rist av me loife?" "Certainly", said I. "Why?" "Rekasé", he answered, "if I must it's good-bye I'll be sayin' to ye, fer I'll niver see ye agin, Misther Childer".

Laura  
He over-looked you, eh?

Childer  
Then again, etc.,  
(He tells some other story from the Wilder repertoire illustrative of his lack of height.)

Jadwin  
Do you tell that to entertain society?

Childer  
I go out a great deal. I should like to have the pleasure of waltzing with you some evening, Miss Dearborn.

Jadwin  
You'd have to use a portable ladder, I'm afraid.

Childer  
Oh no! I'm a very graceful waltzer.  
(Executes a step or two. Mrs. C. comes down stage)

Mrs. C.  
Good afternoon, Mr. Childer. I want to engage you as our orchestra.

Childer  
Isn't that rather a numerous role?

Mrs. C.  
It sounds that way, but in reality you will merely have to preside at the piano.

Laura  
Then you play something besides parts?

Childer  
Yes.

(Climbs on piano stool)  
I'll begin the overture at once.  
(Plays "There'll be a Hot time in the Old Town" or  
some other ridiculous ballad.)

Jacqu  
Most appropriate.  
(Enter Roland R.)

Roland  
I'm ready.

Gerardy  
It is well.  
(Pulls up the curtain.)

My faith! Madame Cressler! We do not begin "Romeo and Juliet" wiz ze balcony scene.

Mrs. C.  
It is the only one that has come, Mons. Gerardy.

Gerardy  
An' zaire was no street to be seen from Juliet's garden.  
Zat street is an insult!

Gretry  
Oh, come now.

Gerardy  
Eet is an insult to ME!

Corthell  
I consider it a very creditable piece of landscape painting.  
(To Laura)  
Don't you Miss Dearborn?  
(Goes toward her.) She meets him at centre. He looks  
at her ardently.

Gerardy

But Juliet's garden was not a landscape. Understand me once for a time. Eet was not a landscape.

(Shrugs his shoulders)

We begin!

(Laura has strolled toward L. with Corthell.)

Ze balcony scene. Romeo and ze nurse. Ozaurs in ze wings.

(Roland helps Isabel on the platform and climbs after; Landry and Page, Larkin and Everard follow. Roland carries a coat, which he hangs over garden wall.)

Jadwin

Now we're the audience. Come, Miss Dearborn, you and I have a box.

(Arranges chairs at R. Laura comes to him; Corthell starts to follow)

Mr. Corthell you're in the dress circle.

(Corthell reluctantly seats himself at L.)

Sam, you and Charlie may have seats in the orchestra.

(Puts chairs near centre.)

Gretry

I like aisle seats.

Jadwin

All the seats are aisle seats in this theatre.

(Jadwin and Laura seat themselves, as do Gretry and Cressler?)

Mrs. Cressler, I'm afraid I'll have to put you in the dress circle.

Mrs. C.

Do you supply a divorce with every coupon?

(Seats herself by Corthell.)

Jadwin

I'm sorry. We're just out of orchestra chairs.

Mrs. W.

Where shall I sit?

Jadwin

(Glancing about and seeing no chairs.)

Looks like a case of standing room only. You see, you were late getting seats.

Mrs. W.

(Perching on short step-ladder standing at L.)

I guess I'll have to go in the gallery.

Jadwin  
 Oh, the gallery's much higher than that. Mr. Hartley had better go in the gallery.  
 (Hartley climbs the ladder and seats himself.)  
 Now Mrs. Wessels, we invite you into our box.

Mrs. W.  
 I accept with pleasure.  
 (Sits with Jadwin and Laura.)

Jadwin  
 All right, Mons. Gerardy.  
 (To Childer)  
 Incidental music for the entrance of Romeo.  
 (Childer plays "Wont You Come Home Bill Bailey?")

Gerardy  
 (Discovering coat.)  
 Wait!  
 (Childer stops. Gerardy rolls his eyes pitifully.)  
 What is zis on ze wall?

Roland  
 My coat.  
 Gerardy  
 Your coat! Mon dieu! And what is your coat doing here?  
 Juliet's wall is not a clothes-line!

Jadwin  
 (Applauding)  
 Bravo!  
 (To Laura)  
 Good dialogue that!

Gerardy  
 (Much incensed.)  
 No monkey-beezness!  
 (With elaborate sarcasm.)  
 Mister Roland, will you be so kind, so court-cous as to explain why you bring your coat to make love to Juliet?

Roland  
 (Apologetically)  
 I was afraid I might get cold. This costume's pretty thin, you know.

Gerardy  
 (Resigned. Apostrophizing the flies.)  
 What is ze use?  
 (To Roland)  
 Go on.  
 (Enter R.U.F.)

Roland

(Coming down centre.)

"He jests at scars that never---"

Gerardy

Right upper entrance!

Roland

(Not heeding him.)

"He jests at scars that never felt----"

Gerardy

Right!

Roland

"That never felt right---he jests at scars that never felt right."

Gerardy

"Felt a wound!" ENTER right. Is it God-possible to be thus stupid?

Roland

(Dropping the character)

Isn't that right?

Gerardy

That! Grand Heavens! No, that is centre!

Roland

I mean isn't that correct?

Gerardy

Correct! I have told you a million times! Is that right where you have made the entrance? In fine, I ask you a little --is that right? The stage directions are "Enter R.U.F., climbing over practical wall". A fine sight that on the night of the performance! Romeo climbs over R.U.F. and enters the practical wall- the wall enters R.--Ha! Ha! Ah, yes! That will bring down the house!

(Landry and Page, tired of waiting leave the platform and sit together on the table. During the remainder of the scene they are conversing, Landry showing his sword, etc.?)

Isabel

He climbs over the wall, Mons. Gerardy, not over the house.

Jadwin

A noble sentiment!

(Applauding)

Begin! Begin!

Gerardy

Climb where you please--only commence! " But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?"

Roland

(Timidly)

I Don't know the first part of that speech. May I begin with " The brightness of her cheek?"

Gerardy

Ah, yes, begin with "her, cheek".

Roland

(Strutting comically)

" The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars  
As daylight doth a lamp: her eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O! that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek."

Isabel

Now I say " Ah me! "

Gerardy

Plain " Ah me! "

Isabel

(Consulting book.)

No; just " Ah me."

Gerardy

(Turns away as though heroically attempting to conceal  
his emotion. Then turns again and bursts forth.)

Mademoiselle Greteree---

( Sees that she is standing on the platform.-)

Where is the balcony?

Isabel

I don't know

Gerardy

(Appealing to his audience.)

Juliet does not know where her balcony is! She has lost  
her balcony and she knows nothing where it is!

Mrs. C.

The balcony didn't come.

Gerardy

A house without a balcony!

(Mirthlessly.)

Ra! Ra!

Corthell  
What does it matter?

Page  
I thought we were going to use a step-ladder?

Gerardy  
Vairy good! Where IS the step--ladder?

Jadwin  
In the gallery. Mr. Hartley's sitting on it.

Gerardy  
Mistair Hartley on Juliet's balcony!

Hartley  
I beg your pardon. Here it is.  
( Gives him ladder which he places near house. )

Gerardy  
( Holding out his hand to Isabel )  
Now, Juliet, eef you please,

Isabel  
( Holding back. )  
Oh, I couldn't think of getting up on that thing! I should fall; I know I should.

Gerardy  
Zat were not possible.

Isabel  
But it is possible! See how wobbly the old thing is.

Jadwin  
( Who has picked up a yellow-covered copy of the play and been looking through it. )  
There's no such line in the play. I appeal to you, Mons. Gerardy, is there such a line in the play?

Gerardy  
( Lets go his hold of the ladder and comes down to address Jadwin. Isabel who has timidly mounted two steps, screams and jumps down. )  
Zat is not Shakespeare: eet's Mademoiselle Greteree.

Isabel  
PLEASE don't do that again, Mons. Gerardy. I might have broken my neck.

Gerardy  
Zaire is not ze slightest hope.



Isabel and Roland

Hope?

Gerardy

Dangair! I mean daingair!

(Helping her again)

Will you now go up?

Isabel

I'm afraid

Gerardy

But we cannot play ze scène unless Juliet is on the balcony.

Isabel

But that isn't a balcony. It's a step-ladder.

Gerardy

In rehearsals we call eet a balcony.

Isabel

How can it matter what you call it if it IS a step-ladder?

(To Jadwin)

I appeal to you, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin

The point is well taken. From here it certainly seems to be a step-ladder.

Isabel

Mrs. C.

Get on it, <sup>1</sup>Mrs. Gerardy will see that you don't fall.

Mrs. W.

It looks risky to me.

Corthell

Oh, no she couldn't fall more than a few feet.

Isabel

All right!

(Timidly perches on the top.)

Now!

Gerardy

(Triumphant.)

Now! The cue is "Ah me!"

Roland

"She speaks!

O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art  
as glorious to this night, being o'er my head--"

Gerardy

(Vindicated to the rest)

You see. O'er my head." She had to be on ze balcony.

Roland

----"O'e r my head.

As is a winged messenger of heaven  
 Unto the white up-turned wondering eyes  
 Of mortals that fall back.----"

Larkin

(Hurrying into the scene with drawn sword)

"What art thou drawn among these heartless--!"

Jadwin

(Applauding)

Bravo!

(Larkin bows seriously)

Gerardy

Mistaic Larkin, zis is not your scene!

Larkin

It's my cue.

(Coming down from ladder)

Isabel

O, Mr. Roland and I have this scene alone.

Roland

(Coming over)

If you saw me here you'd kill me.

Everard

(Joining them)

That certainly was the cue.

Gerardy

Wait!

The Four

Well, you look in the book! You never came on here before.  
 Perfec nonsense! etc! ad lib.

Corthell

I'm sure Tybalt doesn't come into Juliet's garden

Gerardy(Turning on him distracted)

Wait! Everybody? Zat is ze cue on ze first act.

(General murmur of understanf. The actors go back to places)

Everard

I knew it was the cue!

Larkin

Don't I ever get a chance to fence?  
(They go into the wings)

Gerardy

Once more! And now straight through - I beseech you.

Roland

"As is a winged messenger of Heaven  
 Unto the white upturned wondering eyes  
 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him  
 When he bestrides the lazy pacing clouds  
 And sails upon the bosom of the air."

Isabel

"Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo  
 Deny thy father and refuse thy name."  
 Or if thou wilt not be but sworn my love  
 And I'll no longer be a Capulet."  
(Gerardy highly satisfied, walks up and down)

Roland

(Stuck for his lines)

Hm! Let me see! Oh yes!!  
 Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon,  
 Who is already---"

Isabel

Where's the moon.. You're pointing at the laundry.

Jadwin

You can't expect a moon in the afternoon-- Wait until the  
 night of the performance.

Roland

There's no moon now.

Isabel

Will, then don't point.

Gerardy

(To Roland)

You have entirely gone back to the lines you said you did not  
 know. "Be a Capulet" is the cue for "Shall I hear --?"

Roland

Oh! I beg your pardon!

(Addressing Isabel)

"Shall I hear more or shall I speak at this!"

Gerardy

Zat is soliloquy.

Roland

All right.

Gerardy

Now ze nurse. Where is Mrs. Manners?

Everard

She couldn't come.

Mrs. ~~W.~~

Can't you play the nurse Mons. Gerardy.

Gerardy (Indignant)

Il Sacre Bleu. I am noy zat kind of an actor!

Laura

Page isn't on this scene, she can read the lines!

Gerardy

(Muttering)

At once ze stage managair and ze nurse.

Mrs. W.

Yes. Page can be the nurse.

Gerardy (To Page)

Miss Dearborn will you me service perform ze nurse to be?

Page (To Landry)

The cutest little bull pup you ever saw, and she gave---

Laura

Page!

Page (Starting up)

Yes. Is it my cue.

Laura

Page, you'll read the part of the nurse for Mons. Gerardy, won't you?

Page

Certainly.

(Turning pages)

Where are we.

Gerardy

Simply say "Madame!"

Ah, yes. "Madam!" Page

In ze house, please Gerardy

(On platform.) Page  
"Madam!"

Isabel  
(Looking at her book)  
I'll have to read the next speech.  
(Looks for it.)

Cressler  
(Irritably to Gretry.)  
I wish they'd hurry up somehow. They've been half an hour getting through three speeches!

Gretry  
Gerardy's so particular.

Isabel  
Here! 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy!  
Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.  
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell-----"

Gerardy  
Did you say "nose"?

Isabel  
"That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would were he not Romeo called, (Bell rings)  
Retain that dear perfection which he owns  
Without that title.  
(Enter Biggs. He takes a telegram to Cressler,  
who accepts it with great perturbation. Biggs  
waits for the answer. Cressler reads.)  
"Romeo, doff thy name!"

Cressler  
(Sinking into his chair.)  
Oh God!  
(Instant excitement. The actors come to the edge of  
the platform. Everyone else runs to him. Jadwin lifts  
him out of the chair and drags him front.)

Jadwin  
What's up Charlie ? Not bad news ?

Mrs. C.

Are you ill ?

The Others  
What's wrong- he hasn't been well.- He's all right now. Etc.,  
Ad. Lib.

Cressler  
(Crumpling telegram and putting it in his pocket.)  
No-no-no- bad news! I'm a little faint! I've been working too hard!

Jadwin  
You'd better get to your room.

Cressler  
Yes; I'll go to my room.  
(Goes to door R., Mrs. C. follows him. To her.)  
I'm all right, Carrie. Stay down here. Don't bother about me.  
(Presses her hand and exits R. Biggs follows him out.)

Everybody  
Singular- He hasn't been looking strong.- Needs rest. Etc.,  
Ad lib.

Jadwin  
Poor old Charlie !

Mrs. W.  
You ought to make him soak his feet every night, Carrie.

Mrs. C.  
Oh, it's nothing ! He had a little spell like this a week ago. He'll be down before the afternoon's over.  
(To Gerardy)  
Go on with the rehearsal.

Gerardy  
If you please, Mademoiselle Greteree.

Isabel  
Where was I ?

Gerardy  
" Romeo, doff thy name."  
(Everyone returns to his or her place.)

Isabel  
 " Romeo , doff thy name;  
 And for that name, which is no part of thee,  
 Take all myself ."

Roland  
 " I take thee at thy word! "  
( Starts forward and clutches ladder. Isabel holds  
tightly )

Isabel  
 Oh, don't touch the ladder ! "

Roland  
 "Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized."

Isabel  
 You silly ! You'll make me fall !

Roland  
 " Henceforth, I never will be Romeo."

Isabel  
 Keep away !

Roland  
 But I climb the balcony and kiss you there.

Isabel  
 You can't climb this balcony and you certainly can't kiss me.

Roland  
 But it says so in the book .

Isabel  
 Don't care what it says in the book.

Gerardy  
 Zis is outrageous !

Gretry  
 Isabel !

Jadwin  
( Touches his arm. To him. )  
 Let them break up the rehearsal. I think we'd better get  
 everybody out. Carrie must be anxious about Charlie.

Roland  
 That's the only reason I took the part.

Larkin

( Coming from the wings )

That isn't the place for the kiss, any way. It's a lot farther on.

Everard

( Coming from the wings )

He doesn't kiss her until the scene in the room.

Corthell

( Going to platform )

That's right.

Laura

Well, don't be silly about it.

Gerardy

I am offend.

(No one pays any attention to him.)

The Actors

He should kiss her there.

I won't let him kiss me.

Why, it's twelve pages farther on. etc. Ad lib.

Roland

(.To Gerardy)

Mustn't I kiss her now ?

Gerardy

I am offend .

Roland

Oh, very well ! So am I ! You can get someone else to play the part !

( He puts on his frock coat and, making a comical figure, struts across the stage. Exit R.)

Everybody

Isn't that mean ?

It doesn't make any difference to me.

Breaks up the whole rehearsal.

A whole afternoon wasted on half a scene. Etc.,

Gerardy

( Puts on gloves and hat.)

I am offend.

( At L. to Mrs. C.) Bet is my pleasure to weesh you good afternoon.



Mrs. C.

( Without observing him )  
 It's too bad to spoil the afternoon. While Landry and the others are getting dressed you all must come out and have the tea laid for you. There are stronger things for you men.

(Gerardy abandons his attention of leaving and joins the group at R.?)

Gretry

Are you sure we're not putting you to a great deal of trouble ?

Mrs. C.

No trouble at all.

( Enter Biggs R. )

Will you take them in, Mr. Jadwin ?

Jadwin

Gladly.

( Exeunt all except Mrs. C. Laura and Biggs at R.,  
 Corthell looking at painting L. )

Mrs. C.

( To Biggs )  
 How is Mr. Cressler ?

Biggs

Quite well, Madam. He's in the library writing.

( Exit Mrs. C. Biggs goes to Centre. )

You haven't seen a wallet, Miss ? Mr. Cressler's left his wallet somewhere.

Laura

( Goes to centre )  
 No.

Biggs

( after further search. )

It must be in his room.

( Exit Biggs R. )

Corthell

( As Laura starts toward R. )

Wait an instant, Laura. I want to talk to you.

Laura

They expect us in the other room.

Corthell

I'm going to Italy to-morrow, Laura. I shan't have another chance to see you.

Laura

( Returning to him )

To-morrow ! Isn't it rather late to go to Italy ?

Corthell

I'm late in leaving Chicago. I should have gone when I saw my rose lying in the lobby of the Auditorium and you driving away with Curtis Jadwin.

Laura

You know I'm going to marry Mr. Jadwin?

Corthell

I shouldn't be going to Italy if you were not.

Laura

Then don't you- don't you think we might talk of something else?

Corthell

I can speak only as I think, Laura, and I think of nothing else.

(She makes a movement toward the door.)

Oh, don't be alarmed! My love-making for an hour can't hurt Mr. Jadwin!

Laura

I cannot listen to you if you go on in that strain.

Corthell

Good, then! We'll be very practical! I'm leaving America because if I must famish I choose to famish in the desert; not where I may see and hear the water I crave any moment in the day.

Laura

Italy a desert!

Corthell

That spot is desert which has not you.

(She shows impatience; he continues hastily.)

My present plans do not provide for a return to this country. I've given up my studio and stored what things I'm not taking.

Laura

(Evidencing regret despite herself.)

You're leaving for good?

Corthell

Yes; for the good of all concerned. One thing only will bring me back.

(He waits for her to reply but she does not take advantage of the opportunity.)

I want you to know, Laura, that if at any time you need me you have but to cable to one word "Come" That will bring me to you from any part of the world.

Laura  
If I need anyone I shall have my husband.

Corthell  
You have my permanent address on the letters I wrote you last summer- The Pall Mall Exchange, London.  
( Shakes hands with her, evidencing a disposition to retain her hand. She withdraws it nervously. )  
Good bye.

Laura  
Shan't you wait to see the others ?

Corthell  
I think not.

Laura  
Is--is that exactly courteous ?

Corthell  
No--I admit it isn't. Somehow I don't care for forms with this ache at my heart.  
( Walks to door at L. )

Laura  
( Goes to bell. )  
Let Biggs help you on with your coat.

Corthell  
It isn't necessary.  
( She abandons the bell. )  
Goodbye, Laura.  
( Posing somewhat theatrically )  
Curtis Jadwin, we who are about to die salute you !

Laura  
( Frightened as a vague idea of his killing himself enters her mind. )  
Sheldon Corthell ! You are going----

Corthell  
To Italy.  
( Exit Corthell )

Laura  
( Solil ) I have indeed burned my bridges.

(The door at R., is thrown open. The entire party enters with great clatter and tumult. The company crosses the stage in groups-Larkin, Everard, Hartley and Roland discussing points of histrinnic art; Isabel, Page and Landry, the latter telling about his work; Mrs. W., Mrs. C. and Gretry, still discussing Cressler; )

Childer and Gerardy, very slightly intoxicated; finally  
Jadwin. All nod to Laura as they pass her and begin  
their adieus to Mrs. C. as they reach the door-- "We've  
had a perfectly lovely time", "So sorry about dear  
Mr Cressler", Etc. Jadwin remains at door. The  
others exeunt into the ante-room. Laura goes up  
stage, gets a head dress which Page has left on the  
platform, comes down and encounters Jadwin.)

Laura  
 Page is so careless. This rebosa was sent to me from Mexico; I wouldn't lose it for anything.

Jadwin  
 Shall I take you home ?

Laura  
 No, thank you. Aunt Wess and I are going to stop at Mrs. Manner's on the way. She's quite ill you know; that's the reason she couldn't be here to-day.

Jadwin  
 Then I'm abandoned ?  
 Page

( Off at L. )  
 Are you coming, Laura ?

Laura  
 As the comedian at Studebaker says " It listens like it."  
 ( Enter Gretry from ante-room, dressed for the street. )

Gretry  
 Well, I'm going back down town, "J". See you at the office to-morrow.

Jadwin  
 No; you won't. To-morrow belongs to Laura. It's her birhhd day

Gretry  
 ( Protesting )  
 But this little deal of ours----  
 Jadwin  
 I'm going to stop dealing, Sam----even little deals.

Gretry  
 Great Scott !  
 (turns to leave)  
 Oh well, you'll reconsider that day after to-morrow.

Jadwin  
 No, I won't Sam, I'm through.

Gretry  
Well, goodbye. Good afternoon, Miss Dearborn.  
( Exits, closing the door and shutting out the sound of voices in the next room.)

Laura  
You're doing this because I asked it ?

Jadwin  
( Perverently )  
I love you.  
( Laura clasps him about the neck and kisses him.  
Jadwin, impassioned by the embrace draws her to him. Ardently)  
My God, little woman, how I love you !  
( Recollecting, holds her off.)  
Oh, I see; you remembered our bargain.

Laura  
No, Curtis; the sweetest thing about it is that I forgot we had a bargain.  
( Pistol shot off at R.)  
What's that ?  
( Starting away from him.)

Jadwin  
( Much alarmed.)  
I don't know. I'll see.  
( Walks toward R.)  
( Enter Biggs R.)

Biggs  
( In a panic. To Jadwin.)  
Mr Cressler---

Jadwin  
Cressler ?  
( His voice expresses wonder and horror.)

Biggs  
I don't know, sir. It was in his room. The door's locked.

Jadwin  
Break it down. I'll be in as soon as I can get the women away.  
( Exit Biggs.)

Laura  
What's the matter ?

Jadwin  
Biggs says he discharged his revolver by accident. Stupid thing to do.  
( Rustling her toward door.)  
You'd better go now. Your Aunt will be impatient.

Laura

Well, goodbye--until to-morrow.

(Exit L. off stage.)

Good afternoon Mrs. Cressler.

(Enter Mrs. C. She crosses stage hastily without seeing or being seen by Jadwin, who, however, turns and catches sight of her as she reaches the door at L.)

Jadwin

(Alarmed. Quickly.)

Wait! Don't go in there!

(She turns to him, surprised and frightened. Jadwin speaks more quietly, crossing her and about to open door.)  
There's been an accident. Biggs has killed himself.

C U R T A I N .

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-- " T H E P I T " --

-- A C T I I I --



-:- "THE PIT" -:-

-:- ACT III -:-

Oct 10 1963  
CASE NO.  
H. 10

T H E   P I T

A C T .   I I I .

S C E N E :

An apartment in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Jadwin. Frank Norris makes the room containing the organ most elaborate, but this place, for reasons which will be apparent, must be more intimate to the occupants of the house. It is richly, but not showily furnished - a passage, half library and half living room, connecting the separate apartments of Jadwin and Laura. There is a high wainscoting of some dark wood, at the top of which are placed busts of musicians and poets and over which are hung various pictures. At L. 2 R., set obliquely, a large bow window, filled with palms, through which can be seen Lake Michigan, where a sunset gives way to a moonlight effect. Further up-stage a door leading to Jadwin's apartments. At back L. C. a door to the Hall. R. C. a small conservatory. At R. 1 E. a door giving entrance to Laura's boudoir. Further up-stage, set obliquely, a great pipe organ, the keyboard of which is on a platform. The furniture is characteristic of the room, the only necessities being a writing desk, a massive table, an arm chair and a divan  
R.

(At Rise: Mrs. W. discovered trimming plant which she has has taken from the bow window and placed on the table, at the risk of ruining the wood. Enter Landry and Page, dressed in riding habits. Page is liberally coated with mud.

Mrs. W.

(Seeing Page.  
Good gracious!

Landry.

Don't be frightened, Mrs. Wessels. Page had a fall; that's all.

Page.  
That's all! Isn't that enough? I might have been killed!

Landry.  
Nonsense!

Mrs. W.  
(To Page.)  
Just look at yourself!  
(Page brushes her skirt with her hand.)  
How did it happen?

Page.  
Well, you see-----

Landry  
(Interrupting her.)  
We were about two blocks from here and riding fast so Page could get home in time to dress for dinner. Suddenly we met an automobile. Page's horse stopped. Page didn't. She kept right on over its head and into the nearest puddle.

Page.  
(To Landry.)  
Horrid thing!

Landry.  
What? Horse, automobile or mud puddle?

Page.  
You!

Mrs. W.  
I've been trying to save this rubber plant. Laura says the head gardener looks after these shrubs, but I can't see the fun of raising flowers for other people to potter with.

Landry.  
They're rather pretty to have about.

Mrs. W.  
(Ignoring his remark.)  
Laura's always moping around with nothing to do. Should think that conservatory would keep her busy.

Page.  
She spends most of her time with Mr. Corthell since he's been back.

Landry.

I didn't know Mr. Corthell had come back.

Page.

Goodness, Landry, he's been in town nearly a month! You don't know anything outside of that office! You're as bad as Curtis!

Landry.

I hope I succeed as well.

Page.

What's the use of success that doesn't bring you happiness? Curtis may be making a lot of money - I suppose he is - but he doesn't get a chance to spend it. He's got a beautiful wife and beautiful home; and he scarcely ever sees either of them.

Mrs. W.

It isn't fair to Laura Landry. She's left alone most of the time, and she's not a girl who can stand that.

Landry.

I should think she'd be proud of her husband. He's getting to be about the biggest man in the Street.

Page.

She doesn't care what he is to other people; she wants him to be everything to her. Can't you understand? You men are so stupid.

Mrs. W.

And if he isn't first thing he knows somebody else will be!

Page.

Aunt Wess!

Mrs. W.

I don't care; Landry's as good as in the family. Everyone isn't as careless as Curtis Jadwin. Why, Sheldon Corthell's been here--

Page

(Commandingly.)

Aunt Wess!

(Mrs. W., silenced, returns the plant to the bow window.)

Landry.

I don't suppose Mr. Jadwin realizes how much time he puts in at the office. A man gets into that sort of thing by degrees; gradually. Half of them don't see how deep they're going.

Mrs. W.

(Clipping her way into the conservatory.)

Humph!

Page.

You know what the poet says? "Man's love is of his life a thing apart, 'Tis woman's whole existence."

Landry.

(Glances around and sees that Mrs. W. has disappeared into the conservatory.)

Is it your "whole existence", Page?

Page.

Is it "of your life a thing apart"?

Landry.

I should say not!

Page.

I was frightened when I saw you from the visitor's gallery yesterday, Landry. You seemed so different from what you are with me. I wondered if you would ever neglect me as Curtis neglects Laura.

Landry.

Different; yes. I'm glad you noticed that. Somehow I'm not at my best in a drawing room - among women. A crowd of men is a real inspiration to me. When everyone else is talking and shouting I seem to think more clearly.

Page.

That's what frightens me. I'm afraid you'll get more interested in the crowd and less in me.

Landry.

Oh No! I find that the companionship of one sympathetic, intelligent woman is an inspiration, too.

(Joins her at the table, against which they both lean.)

I believe in love.

Page.

It is the greatest power in the universe.

Landry.

It ought to make a man do and dare. Do you think Enoch Arden did right in going away after he found them married?

Page.

Oh, have you read that? Wasn't he noble? Wasn't he grand? Yes, indeed, he did right!

Landry.

By George, I wouldn't have gone away! I'd have walked right in and smashed the other fellow's face!

Page.

But you just said love ought to make a man do and dare.

Landry.

That's my way of doing and daring - dare the other fellow and do him, too, if necessary.

Page.

Oh, but think if you gave her up how fine it would be! If I were in Enoch Arden's place, and my husband thought I was dead, and I knew he was happy with another woman it would be just a joy to sacrifice myself. Then I'd go into a convent.

Landry.

Not much! I'd let the other fellow go to the convent!

Page.

(Admiringly.)

You have so much determination, haven't you?

Landry.

(Squaring his shoulders.)

I don't know; when it comes to love, I guess so. I'm determined about you. I'm going to be able to buy a house in about a year, and then I am just going to make you say when you'll marry me.

Page.

I don't care about the house, Landry. I ----

(Enter Mrs. W. from conservatory.)

Mrs. W.

You'd better be dressing, Page, if you expect to get any dinner.

(Looking at her soil stained hands.)

I'm going now.

Page.

(Demurely accompanying her to the door at back.)

All right.

Mrs. W.

Landry, you come into the library and wait.

(To page.)

You know, Laura doesn't like to have people brought in here.

Landry.

Here? Why not?

Page.

It's her own room - her's and Curtis".

(Pointing.)

She sleeps in there.

Landry.

Will you come to the library with me?

Page.

Oh Gracious! Why?

Landry.

Well, I--I--that is--I wanted to talk to you a minute.

Page.

You've just been talking to me.

Mrs. W.

For goodness' sake, Page! Can't you see what he's after?

(To Landry.)

Go on and kiss her, I'll wait in the hall.

(Exit Mrs. W. back.)

Landry.

I--I--I--didn't--

Page.

(Pretending to start away.)

Oh, well then, if you didn't --

Landry.

(Following her.)

Hold on, Page! Yes, I did!

Kisses her.)

Now, I'll go to the library!

(Exeunt both at back. Enter Laura and Corthell from Conservatory.)



Laura.

Here we are, come in. This is MY room.

Corthell.

YOUR room.

(looking about.)

Why, it's more like an art gallery.

Laura.

It is an art gallery, too, and a music room and a library, but not the art gallery, or THE music room, or THE library.

(Taking the rebosa from her head and throwing it across a chair.)

You see, Curtis and I wanted a place where we could enjoy our favorite pictures and songs and books intimately, without sharing them with everybody. So we chose this place between his apartments and mine.

Corthell.

(Pointing to L.)

Are those your apartments?

Laura.

No.

(Indicating R.)

Over there.

(Coming down.)

You may feel quite flattered. You're the first man, except Mr. Jadwin, I've ever invited to accompany me into this room.

Corthell.

I am flattered to be invited to accompany you anywhere.

Laura.

We have our pipe organ here. Mr. Jadwin likes it better than any other instrument. He says it's so strong and big.

Corthell.

Do you play?

Laura.

No; we have an Aeolian. Mr. Jadwin used to listen to it by the hour.

(Sighs.)

He doesn't have much time to give to anything now.

Corthell.  
Or anybody!

Laura.  
(With dignity.)  
Mr. Jadwin is a very busy man.

Corthell.  
(Examining the place.)  
This is a beautiful room. I don't think I should be able to sleep next it. In Tuscany I used to sleep out of doors.

Laura.  
You came here from Tuscany, didn't you?

Corthell.  
Straight. From Tuscan gardens and Pergolas.

Laura.  
Why anyone should leave Tuscan gardens and- and all that kind of thing for a spring in Chicago I cannot see.

Corthell.  
It is a little puzzling. But I fancy my gardens and pergolas and all the rest that come to be a bit--as the french would call it--malle. I began to long for a touch of our hard, harsh city again. Harshness has its place, I think, if it is only to cut one's teeth on.

Laura.  
I thought you had cut yours long ago.

Corthell.  
Not my wisdom teeth. I feel now that I have come to that time of life when it is expedient to have wisdom.

Laura.  
I have never known that feeling, and I live in the hard, harsh & City.

Corthell  
That is because you have never known what it meant not to have wisdom.

Laura.

Thank you.

(Sighs.)

It's been a long time since anyone has paid me a compliment.

(Pushes a box of matches to him on table.)

Do smoke. I know you want to.

Corthell.

You're a wonderfully discerning person.

(Takes out cigarette and his own match box.)

You observe that I haven't got rid of the cigarette habit yet and that cigarettes haven't got rid of me.

Laura.

What a beautiful match-safe.

Corthell.

Yes. I picked it up in a Viennese pawnshop. (Hands it over to her.) It must have been a pounce box, or possibly it held an ointment for ginger nails.

(Spills the matches into his hand and pockets them.)

You see the red stain still on the inside; and--smell.

(She does so.)

Even the odor of the matches cannot smother the quaint old perfume, distilled perhaps three centuries ago.

Laura.

What a curious device that is engraved on the side.

Corthell.

Curious and graceful. I copied it on a window I finished last month.

Laura.

You still stick to windows?

Corthell.

Yes. There is a great art in stained glass, though I believe most of my friends really consider me only a higher order of glazier.

Laura.

(Tosses the match-safe on the table, where it lies unnoticed.)

Didn't I read something about your discovery of a new color?

Corthell.

It's a fusion of two old colors. I blended the blue of a mid-

day sky with the blue of the sky at night; the result is a Cerulean more beautiful than any sky.

Laura.

(Enthusiastically.)

Ah, that is work that would appeal to me!

Corthell.

It is hard work. That discovery meant a month without leaving my studio for more than an hour at a time.

Laura.

Then even an artist may be absorbed?

Corthell.

In art -- or in love.

Laura.

And which would come first with him?

Corthell.

The greatest of arts; love.

Laura.

The same Sheldon Corthell.

(He places cigarette in tray and lights another.)

Corthell.

The same? Well - one has lost a few illusions.

Laura.

I shouldn't imagine that one lost illusions in Tuscany.

Corthell.

Quite right.

(Pointedly.)

One lost no illusions in Tuscany. One went there to cherish the few that yet remained.

(Throws away his cigarette and looks at her admiringly.)

One finds that a lost illusion can be very beautiful-- even in Chicago.

Laura.

Won't you dine with us tonight?

Corthell.

Who is "us?"

Laura.

Aunt Wess and Page and Landry and I. Mr. Jadwin won't be home. He rarely comes home to dinner now.

Corthell.

Let me see.

(Looks carefully in note book.)

No; I'm sorry. I've got to dine with Mrs. Manners. But I'll come back afterward--if I may.

Laura.

I shall be very glad to have you. You'll keep me from getting blue.

Corthell.

Thank you. I shan't be long.

(Takes his hat and gloves.)

Out the same way?

Laura.

Yes. I'll show you the way from the door.

Corthell.

Your grounds are rather complicated. I haven't mastered them yet.

(Exeunt into conservatory. Enter Page and Mrs. W.)

Page.

Laura! Laura!

(To Mrs. W.)

She's not here.

Mrs. W.

Maybe she's dressing. Dinner's a little early tonight. I'll see.

(Goes to door at R.)

Page

(Sees match-safe on table and picks it up.) S. C.

Mrs. W.

(Turning.)

What did you say?

Page.

I said "Yes. See."

Mrs. W.

Oh!

(Calls.)

Laura!

(Exit E.)

Page.

(Solil.)

S. C. She's been here with Sheldon Cortshell?

(Enter Mrs. W. As the door opens Page puts the match-safe in her pocket.)

Mrs. W.

No, she's not in there.

Page.

I know where she is. You let Landry take you into dinner and I'll bring her right away.

Mrs. W.

Well, hurry.

(Exit Mrs. W. enter Laura.)

(Laura walks quickly down to the table, on which she searches for the match-safe. After a moment she glances up and sees Page watching her.)

Laura.

Hello, Page! I thought you and Landry were riding together.  
(Looks on the floor for the safe.)

Page.

We were; it's after seven now. Dinner was served ten minutes ago. Where in the world have you been?

Laura.

Mr. Cortshell called. I've been showing him the grounds.

Page.

The grounds!

(Pause.)

What are you looking for?

Laura.

(Rising from her knees.)

My locket -- the one Curtis gave me. Have you seen it?

Page.

No.

(Produces the match-safe and hands it to her.)

I thought maybe you might be looking for this. I took it. I knew you wouldn't care to have your husband find it here.

Laura.

(With growing anger.)

What do you mean by that? What is it to me whether Curtis knows that Mr. Corthell was here or not?

Page.

If you didn't care why did you take such pains to tell me you'd been showing Mr. Corthell the grounds?

Laura.

Why? Because it was none of your business where I went or where Mr. Corthell took me! I did show him the grounds! I did!

Page.

And wound up in your room--a room even the servants are forbidden to enter.

Laura

We were here for a moment. I remember now; we came in so that I could get a wrap. We went out again at once. We didn't even sit down. He was not in this room half a minute.

Page.

(Holding up ash tray for her inspection.)

He was here long enough to smoke two cigarettes!

(Restores tray to table and crosses with some insolence.)

Really, Laura, you manage very awkwardly.

Laura.

(Snatches up Landry's riding crop from the table.)

Don't you -- don't you make me forget myself!

Page.

It seems to me that you've forgotten yourself long since!

Laura.

Forgotten myself?

(Her eye falls on the riding crop, which she holds out to page.)

It appears you are reproaching me for what you do yourself.)  
You've had Landry in here!

Page.

Yes; with Aunt Wess. We showed him the room.

Laura.

You don't deny it!

Page.

That's just the point; I don't deny it! I didn't slip him in and out through the conservatory and I - I didn't lie when you asked me about it!

Laura.

(Folding her arms but retaining crop.)

Now! Now, just what do you mean? Sit down and tell me what you mean by all this!

Page.

(Remains standing.)

Do you want me to believe that you didn't care who found that match-safe?

Laura.

Not the least! What possible harm can there be in a match-safe?

Page.

What harm could there be in a man's match safe found next the bed-room of the woman who had been receiving his visits every day for a month? Shall I ask Curtis Jadwin?

Laura.

You insult me by the question!

Page

Shall I?

Laura.

What do you believe of me?

Page.

I won't let myself believe anything I don't know! I know that you and the man who loves you, who loved you before you met your husband, have been shut in your room!



Laura  
Are they really "little deals"?

Jadwin  
Yes--on my word. I don't speculate for profit; I do it for fun.

Laura  
And that's the chief reason I want you to stop it. You speculate because you like to do it, and it will grow on you until you won't want to do anything else.

Jadwin  
That's just what I said to Sam a month ago.  
( reflectively)

Laura  
You can't imagine how much I'm afraid of that, Curtis; not that I believe you to be weak, but because I know you are strong--so strong that you would devote yourself wholly to conquering a thing that challenged you.

Jadwin  
You don't think I'd neglect you, Laura?

Laura  
You must not if you wish me to love you. I demand a great deal in return for my love, Curtis.

Jadwin  
I'd give anything for it. You're never out of my mind, little woman. Do you know where I spent my morning? I spent it--well, I remembered that to-morrow is your birthday.

Laura  
(Pleased)  
You did?

Jadwin  
Wait and see.

Laura  
(Returning to her former mood)  
Still I'm afraid.

Jadwin  
Still?  
(Walks away thoughtfully, then turns)  
I'll tell you what, Laura. I'll make a bargain with you. You want me to stop dipping into the market and I want you to kiss me. Well, you kiss me and I'll stop speculating.

Laura  
What do you mean, Curtis?

Jadwin.

(Coming down.)

Why, Laura! What's the matter?

(To Page.)

Go down to your dinner, Page, she'll be all right in a few minutes.

Page.

It's my fault.

(Putting her arms around Laura.)

Ah, sister, forgive me. I didn't realize what I was saying.

Laura.

(Springs up laughing.)

Don't bother, Page, I'm a little fool.

(Page kisses her and exits at back.)

Have you had dinner, Curtis?

Jadwin.

Yes, down town. I ate early because I had no lunch.

(Puts his arm about her shoulders.)

What was wrong, old girl?

Laura.

Nothing - nothing. Page said something I didn't like and I - I was nervous and unstrung enough to cry over it. Never mind.

Jadwin.

But I do mind. I noticed that you weren't well a long time ago. I'll tell you what, Laura; both of us need to get away for a while.

Laura.

Yes, Oh yes! Away together!

Jadwin.

I'm just about as fagged as you are.

(Strokes his forehead wearily.)

I'll get things in shape to leave with Gretry, and we'll pull up stakes and go somewhere.

Laura.

(Delighted.)

Do you mean that, Curtis? You know, so many of your plans that included me have fallen through. How soon do you think you could have things ready?

Jadwin.

Oh, in a week or ten days. Then we'll see what country air can do for unstrung nerves, and----

(With boyish enthusiasm.)

By George, Laura! Those boat-building fellows wrote me the other day that the yacht was ready. I've got the letter here.

(Searches through his pockets.)

Laura.

Curtis! Our own yacht?

Jadwin.

Fact.

(Irritably.)

I can't find the letter. Where did I put that letter?

(Rubs his brow again.)

No matter! We'll have a christening and you shall break a bottle of wine over her bows.

Laura.

What are you going to Call it?

Jadwin.

I don't know. You remember what I told you about the boat I had when I was a boy? Well, I had a kind of fancy that I'd name her after that craft--the Babbitts.

Laura.

(Laughing.)

Nonsense, Curtis. That was well enough for a soap-box, but this is a steam yacht. Why not call it the Arethusa or the -- Nereid?

Jadwin.

Too fancy! I'm not even sure what they mean.

(Illustrating the acts by gestures.)

I like to know all about anything I handle. When it comes to a boat, I can shovel coal or run the engines or steer. I don't want to understand everything on our yacht but the name.

Laura.

Well then, how about the Gull?

Jadwin.

No. I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll compromise on naming her after you. We'll christen her the Laura.

*Laura*

(Pleased, but protesting.)

Don't you think --

Jadwin.

No, I don't. I'll call her the Laura or I'll call her Babbits, and I won't consider anything else.

Laura.

All right--The Laura! That's the lesser of two evils. We can take it to sea somehow--can't we-- and then into the Mediterranean. This is just the time of the year for a trip to the Mediterranean.

Jadwin.

(Relapsing into his fatigue.)

Oh no, old girl, that's too far from home. I've got to be where I can be reached by wire.

Laura.

Then just to France, or--

Jadwin.

Too far from the Board of Trade, Laura. We'll cruise about the lakes, so that I can get back quickly if necessary.

Laura.

(Disappointed.)

And it would be necessary within a week.

(Goes to him and puts her arms about him.)

I don't care where we go, Curtis, but let's go where we can really leave your business behind. Do you know, you're not at all like you used to be--like the dear, thoughtful Curtis Jadwin I married and fell in love with. It seems as though nowadays I never had you to myself. Even when you are not looking over papers and reports or talking to Mr. Gwetry in the library your mind is away from me-- down there in La Salle Street or in the Board of Trade Building. I don't want to complain and I don't want to be exacting or selfish, but sometimes I am--I am so lonesome.

Jadwin.

Why, Laura, you never said --

Laura.

Don't interrupt. I want to say it all at once and then never speak of it again. Last night when Mr. Gwetry was here you promised,

just after dinner, that you would be all through your talk in an hour. And I waited-- I waited 'till eleven and then I went to bed. Dear, I--I wanted you so much. The evening was so long. I had put on my very prettiest gown, the one you said you liked, and you never seemed to notice.

Jadwin.

Stop Laura, stop! You're breaking me up! Why haven't you ever reminded me before? I'm a brute--a selfish, senseless brute, not worth one of your tears. I didn't realize how much time I was taking away from you. Why, Laura, old girl---

Laura

I've had to beg for every minute you've spent with me, Curtis. See what I did with your memorandum pad yesterday.

(Runs to desk and gets pad.)

I turned over to June 13 and wrote "Laura's Birthday" in big letters. I was afraid you would forget even that.

Jadwin.

Oh, Laura! As if I could have forgotten that.'

Laura.

I didn't know.

(Sitting on sofa and drawing him down to her.)

Now we won't speak of it again. I suppose I am selfish-----

Jadwin.

Selfish nothing! Don't talk that way! I'm the selfish one!

Laura.

You're my own dear husband. But some day you will get out of this speculating for good? It's not as though you had to do it, Curtis. We're so rich now that we can't spend our money.

Jadwin.

Oh, it's not the money Laura; it never was. It was the excitement. I had to do something. I couldn't sit around and twiddle my thumbs. I don't believe in lounging around clubs, or playing the races, or murdering game birds, or running some poor, helpless fox to death.

Laura.

You wouldn't have done any of those things to such excess as you've speculated.

Jadwin.

I know, but speculati on fascinated me. It was such fine fun to swing a deal that the other fellows wouldn't have dared touch I'll get out of it now. I wouldn't make you unhappy for all the wheat in the world.

Laura.

And you haven't made yourself happy. See how tired and worn out you are tonight.

(Strokes his head.)

Jadwin.)

Tired? I should say I was. I know you won't believe it, Laura, but often I wish we were both as poor as Job's turkey--both poor and back living on the farm. Lord love me, I can see that old place just as plain. The walls were logs and plaster, and there were upright supports in the corner, where we used to measure our heights--we children.

(Indicating.)

The fire-place was there, and there was the wood-box, and over here was an old kind of dresser with drawers, and under there was the place where the torty-shell cat had a litter of nine kittens once. We've got a fine home now, old girl, and a mint of money -- and all sorts of things, but I do honestly think we'd be just as happy in that tumble-down house together, penniless, working hard, chumming along shoulder to shoulder.

Laura.

(Kisses him.)

Ah, now you are yourself, Curtis. Just my dear, old, tired out husband.

(Clasps him to her.)

I love you. I love you, dear.

Jadwin.

(Stroking her hand.)

Old girl!

Laura

You won't go out again to-night, will you? We'll spend the evening together and I'll read to you. Mr. Corthell is coming, but I'll ask him to excuse me, You'll stay?

Jadwin.

I'd like to be like this all the rest of my life.

Laura.

I wish you might. You know I need a lot of loving and looking after-- I told you that before we were married. What shall I read to you; something of Stevenson's?

Jadwin

Seems to me this is pretty good.

Laura.

I'll get you "Treasure Island."

(Goes to book case.)

You remember we left off about a month ago where the Squire's party was going to attack the mutineers.

(Returns to him and sits on floor by sofa.)

Here's the place. Do you know what went before?

Jadwin.

The fight on the ship and all that, yes.

Laura.

Let's see.

(Reads.)

"Forty paces further we came to the edge of the wood and saw the stockade in front of us. We struck the inclosure about the middle of the south side, and, almost at the same time, seven mutineers -- Job Anderson, the boatswain, at their head-- appeared in full cry at the southwestern corner."

Jadwin.

This is the Doctor telling the story, isn't it?

Laura.

Yes.

(Continues.)

"They paused, as if taken aback; and before they recovered, not only the squire and I, but Hunter and Joyce from the Block House, had time to fire. The four shots came in rather a scattering volley; but they did the business; one of the enemy actually fell, and the rest ----"

(Stops. He does not notice the pause.)

You're not listening Curtis!

Jadwin

Just a minute, dear. I was wondering where I left that Government report on wheat.

Laura.

Again! Oh, Curtis!

Jadwin.

That's all right. Go on. I won't get off the track any more.

Laura.

(Reads.)

"And the rest, without hesitation, turned and plunged into the trees. After reloading, we walked down the outside of the--"  
(Telephone bell rings.)

Jadwin

(Starting up.)

That's the house phone. Someone must want to see me.

Laura.

Never mind; you're not to see ~~anyone~~ but me tonight. You know you promised.

Jadwin.

That's so.

(Bell rings again.)

I guess we're pretty comfortable without bothering about other people.

Laura.

(Reading.)

"Down the outside of the palisade to see the fallen enemy. He was stone dead-- shot through the heart. We began to rejoice over our good success, when--just at that moment a pistol cracked in the bush, a ball whistled close past my ear, and poor Tom Redruth stumbled and fell his length on the ground. Both the Squire----"

(Knock on the door. Laura starts up.)

Now, who is that? The servants know I don't permit them to come to this room!

Jadwin.

We'll have to answer.

(Calling.)

Come in!

(Laura goes to door at back. Enter Mrs. W.)

Oh, is that you, Mrs. Wessels?

(Rises.)

Mrs. W.

Yes. Mr. Gentry



Mrs. W.

Yes. Mr. Gretry's in the Library John couldn't get you on the phone, and he asked me to find you as his business was important.

Jadwin.

Will you bring him up, Mrs. Wessels?

Laura.

Oh, Curtis, not in here?

Jadwin.

I know, Laura, but I'm too tired to go into the library. We won't be a minute.

Laura.

But this was to be my evening.

Jadwin

It will be, Laura, it will be. But I can't send Sam away after he's come out here. It may be very important.

(To Mrs. W.)

Bring him up, please.

(Exit Mrs. W.)

Laura..

(After a pause during which she has returned the book to its place.)

Curtis, you see I can't depend on you. Half an hour ago you were all mine, now ----

Jadwin.

You know I love you, Laura.

Laura.

I know you love me, but there are times---oh, if I thought you did not love me---love me better than anything, anything-- I could not love you; Curtis, I could not, I could not! Maybe its wrong of me to feel that way, but I'm only a woman dear. I love you, but I love LOVE too. Women are like that; right or wrong, weak or strong, they must be--- must be loved above everything else in the world.

Jadwin.

That's the way I do love you, my girl, only---

Laura.

Only you leave me alone - alone - alone ! Curtis, I warn you, I must be loved! If you will not be my companion, I must seek companionship elsewhere.

(Enter Mrs. C. at back, she is clad in deep mourning.)

Jadwin.

Good God!

Mrs. C.

The butler said you were here, Laura, so I came over, as usual. I haven't disturbed you, have I "J"?

Jadwin.

(Much perturbed.)

No--Oh, no! I'd forgot! I--I--I--

(Enter Mrs. W. and Gretry.)

Mrs. W.

(To Gretry.)

Right in here.

Laura.

(To Mrs. C.)

He's nervous and overwrought tonight, Mrs. Gressler. That's all.

Mrs. W.

Well, Carrie! I haven't seen you in a month of Sunday's

(Goes to her and talks to her in dumb show. Gretry and Laura nod to each other.)

Jadwin.

All right, Sam; in a minute.

(To Laura.)

Leave us alone, a little while.

There's a good girl, we won't be fifteen minutes.

Laura

Couldn't I stay? Couldn't I get interested in your business? I'd be very quiet.

Jadwin.

Nonsense Laura! Take Carrie upstairs while you get something to eat; you haven't had a bite of dinner.

Laura.

(To Mrs. C.)

Won't you come into the music room, Mrs. Cressley? Curtis will join us there later

Mrs. C.

(To Jadwin.)

Still working, I see, "J." Not satisfied with your success.

Jadwin.

I don't believe in being satisfied with success, Carrie. The man who is satisfied with his success would have been satisfied with a failure.

Laura.

Come, Aunt Wess.

(Exuent Laura, Mrs. W. and Mrs. C.)

Jadwin.

(Shuddering.)

By George, Sam, I don't think I'll ever get over Charlie's death. Every time Carrie speaks to me I feel as though she were accusing me of murder.

Gretry.

Why, she doesn't know that you had anything to do with her husband's failure.

Jadwin.

I know it.

Gretry.

I'm sure you did all you could when you made up the amount of his losses.

Jadwin.

Pretty poor compensation, Sam. Don't let's talk about it. What did you want to see me about?

Gretry.

About the government report. Have you been studying it?

Jadwin.

No; just glanced at it. I've got it somewhere.

(Searches his pockets.)

Gretry.

Never mind; here's a copy. Crops have gone to blazes, "J".

(They sit together at table looking over report.)

Jadwin.

I knew that long ago. I've been watching pretty closely, you see.

Gretry.

(Turning leaves.)

You haven't any idea how little wheat there is in the country.

Jadwin.

Haven't I though?

(Lays hand on pamphlet.)

Wait, and see how much of an idea I've got. The spring has been backward all over the country. Dry, wintry weather all this month in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Minnesota. Freezing in this state from Ridgway County to Quincy and Waterloo. No crop to be expected from Indiana for the same reason.

Gretry.

It's not bad in Ohio.

Jadwig.

All right! But Nebraska, which is one big wheat field, won't produce as much as Grant county did alone last year.

(Taking his hand off pamphlet.)

Sam, there can't be a hundred and fifty million bushels in America.

Gretry.

Good guess! The government experts estimate about a hundred million bushels in the farmer's hands and a visible supply of about forty millions.

Jadwin.

(Whistles.)

I thought so. What's the market price?

Gretry.

The closing quotations were 64 for May wheat, sixty-five for July, sixty-six and an eighth for September.

Jadwin.

Those quotations won't hold ten minutes after the gong sounds tomorrow morning. Those fellows in the pit will fairly tear the wheat from each other.

Gretry.

There's bound to be a temporary rise on the strength of this report.

Jadwin.

I'm short about half a million bushels. I sold that much more than I owned on your assurance that I would be able to buy before long at sixty.

Gretry.

It'll touch sixty yet. There'll be a bit of reaction, but the market will go off again. It's a long time between now and May.

Jadwin.

I don't know.

(Looking at the pamphlet.)

The Argentine Republic crop a sure failure. Sam, it's a paper dime to the Sub-treasury that we've touched the bottom. Wheat will --not--go--another-- cent. I'm going to buy in that half million bushels tomorrow.

Gretry.

(Rising in astonishment.)

You're not going to quit the game ?

Jadwin.

Thunder, no! I'm going to keep on buying! I'm going to boost this market right through until the last bell rings! From now on Curtis Jadwin spells B - U - double L -- BULL!

Gretry.

Don't be too hasty, "J" Be cautious.

Jadwin.

If I were cautious, I wouldn't be in the game at all. I'd be buying United States four per-cents. No, Sir! I'm going to buy while the market's down and that's right now!

Gretry.

There's plenty of wheat, "J" Wait until the price goes up and see it come out. The farmers don't tell everything they know. That report is a lot worse than things really are. There's always an army of ancient hayseeds who have the stuff tucked away--in old stockings, I guess-- and who'll dump it on you all right if you pay enough.

Jadwin.

A mere bagatelle! Why, Sam, think, THINK

(Pointing at pamphlet.)

They've got less than a hundred million bushels. That's awfully small.

Gretry.

(Reflectively.)

It isn't what you might call colossal.

Jadwin.

Do you realize that a whole pile of wheat has to go to Europe before July? How have the shipments been?

Gretry..

About five millions a week.

Jadwin.

Well; look here! That's twenty millions a month, and it's-- April, May, June, July-- four months before another crop. Eighty million bushels will go out of the country in the next four months--eighty million out of a hundred millions.

Gretry.

Looks that way.

Jadwin.

Let's get a squint at the whole situation. A hundred millions - or less---with the farmers. The elevators here aren't exactly bursting. Paris and Liverpool together couldn't show ten millions. Five millions a week going abroad to be eaten and the mills up in the northwest grinding all the grain in sight.

Gretry.

That's right.

(Pause while they take notes from pamphlet.)

Yes; and navigation will be open in another month up there in the straights.

Jadwin

By George! I'd forgotten that! I tell you I'm going to buy tomorrow morning. I'm glad I'm short only five hundred thousand.

Gretry.

Yes; there's plenty of fellows short a whole lot more than that.

Jadwin.

(Excited.)

There are, eh? There are a lot of fellows who have sold short?

Gretry.

Oh, yes; some of Crookes' followers--yes, quite a crowd of them.

Jadwin.

(In a fever of excitement. Loosens his collar. Leans forward, his finger almost in Gretry's face.)

Why, look here, don't you see--don't you see--

Gretry.

(Puzzled.)

See what?

Jadwin.

Great Scott! I'll choke in a minute! See what? Why, I can get ten million bushels of this wheat tomorrow morning before these bears can say Jack Robinson! Europe will take eighty millions more! There isn't going to be any wheat left in Chicago by May! If I get in now and buy a long line of cash wheat, where are all the fellows who sell short going to get it to deliver to me? Say, where. Are they going to get it? Come on now, tell me, where are they going to get it?

Gretry.

(Stupefied.)

A long line of wheat! "J", you're either a colossal genius or a colossal idiot!

Jadwin.

If I'm an idiot answer me! WHERE ARE THEY GOING TO GET IT?

Gretry.

"J"--"J", I'm damned if I know!

Jadwin.

(Springing up and dragging Gretry with him.)

Well, then, Sam, do you know--great God!--do you know what this means? Sam--WE CAN CORNER THE MARKET!

Gretry.

Corner the market?

Jadwin.

You bet! Man, don't stand there stupefied! It's my scheme; now it's up to you to carry it out. Buy the minute the first brokers' clerk strikes the pit! Buy as much as you can get! Buy a hundred million bushels!

Gretry.

Good Lord!

Jadwin.

Scatter your orders so that they won't suspect. Wheat'll jump right up, of course, but we ought to get a lot between the present price and seventy.

Gretry.

Can you pay the fiddler?

Jadwin

Plenty of money, Sam! I'll deposit margins enough to cover a ten per cent fall! But there's not going to be any fall. They'll be offering a dollar for the stuff before I get through -- a dollar? Good God! Two dollars, maybe!

Gretry.

It's the biggest deal I ever handled, but by the great horn spool we'll carry it through!

Jadwin.

You can bank on that!

(Goes to telephone.)

Now we'll have Landry up. He's somewhere in the house!

Gretry.

Court's the boy to take charge of the buying. An old head on young shoulders. He can feel the pulse of the pit as accurately as any veteran.

Jadwin.

(Speaking into phone.)

Hello! Hello, John. Will you find Miss Dearborn and ask her to bring Mr. Court here? Yes, yes; Mrs. Jadwin's room.

(Turning from phone.)

Now we can plan the whole business.

Gretry.

If Court can get in touch with Foster and Jones it might be a good idea to give them their instructions right away.

(There is a knock at the door.)

Jadwin.

Come in!

(Enter Laura.)



Laura.

(Good naturedly.)

Well, are you two through with your talk?

Jadwin.

Not quite.

(Laura, evidently hurt, starts to leave.)

Oh, it's all right for you to stay. I probably shall have to go down town for a while.

Laura

Down town? Tonight?

Jadwin.

(Hurrying about, getting papers from desk, etc2)

Yes, Laura; for an hour or two. I've got a big deal on hand and I wan't to talk it over with Sam and his boys.

(Laura disappointed, walks to the book-case. After an instant she takes "Treasure Island" from the shelf, extracts the book-mark and crumples it in her hand. Enter Page and Landry.)

Landry.

Did you send for me, Mr. Jadwin?

(He is alert, business-like, strikingly in contrast with the youth seen heretofore.)

Gretry.

Yes; we've something on hand, Court. Can you communicate with Jones or Foster tonight?

Landry.

I can get Foster; he went to the Theatre with some friends and was to take supper at the Union.

Jadwin.

Then the thing to do is to catch him there. We've got to do a lot of buying at the jump tomorrow and the orders must be divided up.

Landry.

I'm ready, Sir.

(He spies his riding-crop on the table and comes down for it. Page follows him. The others in dumb show.)

Page.

You're going to the Union?

Landry.

Yes.

(She is very angry.)

I can't disobey orders and this is important.

Page.

I thought you were the man who would just love to do and dare for the sake of a woman!

Landry.

Ah, Page, now!

Page.

All right, do as you please; only don't expect me to speak to you again!

(Bus. of Page waiting to be conciliated; Landry, his mind on his work, getting ready to leave; Page attempting to attract his attention.)

Gretry.

Hurry, "J".

Jadwin.

Good night, Old girl! I'm sorry, but it can't be helped!

(His attention is elsewhere; he is sorting papers to put in his pockets.)

Laura.

Never mind; in a fortnight we'll be beyond the reach of business.

Jadwin.

En? Oh yes! You mean the yachting trip! Well--er--the fact is we may have to postpone that a month or two. I've got a big deal to swing.

Laura.

Curtis!

Jadwin.

(Turning away without kissing her.)

Oh, we'll take the trip some day.

(To Gretry.)

All right, Sam.

Gretry.

Good night, Mrs. Jadwin.

(At the door Landry leans over to Kiss Page; she turns her head; he takes her face between his palms and kisses her. Then he bows to Laura.)

Laura.

Good night Mr. Getry.

(More warmly.)

Good night, Landry.

(Exuent Jadwin, Gectry and Landry, closing the door noisily behind them.)

That's the first time Curtis ever forgot to kiss me goodbye!

Page.

(Hotly.) (Thinking of Landry.)

It's a shame, that's what is is, a shame!

Laura.

Ah, Little Sister, now you begin to understand what it means.

(Sits at table, turning leaves of government report, which has been left behind.)

It's very easy to walk in the straight was so long as the path is lined with roses.

Page.

(Putting her arms around Laura.)

I didn't realize what I was saying, Laura.

Laura.

(Taking her hands.)

I might have been sure of that.

Page.

(Quietly.)

Still, I'm not going to look up someone else just because Landry has left me alone.

Laura.

Not tonight, girlie; but if he left you every night, and if someone else took the trouble to look you up----

Page.

You know that Sheldon Corthell still cares for you, Laura.

Laura.

Hecame from Tuscany to see me.

(Sighs.)

Curtis wouldn't come from the Board of Trade.

(Rises and stretches her arms toward door through which  
Jadwin has gone.)

Ah, Curtis! Curtis! My husband!

Page.

I'm going to my room and read "Enoch Arden". You don't want me;  
do you?

Laura.

No.

(Kisses her.)

Good night, Pagle, dear.

Page.

Good night, Laura.

(Goes to door.)

I hope Curtis will be back soon.

(Exit.)

(Laura stands an instant staring at the door, then goes to  
a mirror, gives an additional touch to her hair, turns down the  
lights from a button near the exit through which Page has dis-  
appeared, and prepares to follow her. Enter Corthell from  
conservatory.)

Corthell.

Good evening, Mrs. Jadwin.

Laura.

Sheldon Corthell!

Corthell.

(Surprised at her tone of astonishment.)

Why--you expected me, didn't you? You gave me permission to  
come back.

Laura.

I was just going into the library to meet you.

(Indignantly.)

I didn't expect you to come unannounced into my own room.

Corthell.

(Humbly.)

Oh, I beg your pardon. I didn't think of the impropriety of the  
thing. It only occurred to me that I should find you here --  
perhaps with Mr. Jadwin.

(Turns back.)

If you say so I'll go around and be announced.

Laura.

(Laughing, despite herself.)

No; you might as well stay now. After all, this room isn't really more private than any other room. It's just been a silly sentiment of mine.

(Sadly.)

Mr. Jadwin ~~had~~ Mr. Gretry in here tonight talking business.

Corthell

(Removing his gloves and coat.)

I hear that Mr. Jadwin's come to be the Napoleon of the Street-- that he's absolutely crushed a number of his rivals.)

Laura.

I don't know that he has crushed them. I suppose it is a matter of the survival of the fittest.

Corthell.

"The survival of the fittest" is a theory much urged by the fit.

(Pointing to a painting.)

Is that a Bougereau?

Laura.

Yes.

Corthell.

(Going to it.)

"Bathing Nymphs". I should think Mr. Jadwin would be giving performances of "Romeo and Juliet" for the benefit of their ward- robes.

(Examines picture critically.)

If you'll pardon my Candor, it isn't very good.)

Laura.

I thought Bougereau was considered one of the greatest---

Corthell.

That's more consideration than he deserves.

(Going to another painting.)

Now this portrait of yourself is beautiful.

Laura.

It's supposed to be very like me.

Corthell.

I said as much when I declared that it was beautiful.

Laura.

Mr. Corthell, you mustn't--you really mustn't pay me compliments.

Corthell.

You ask too much of me.

(More seriously.)

Why not? You know how I feel toward you--have always felt. Need we pretend simply because you are married now?

Laura.

I need pretend nothing.

Corthell

Neither of us is happy.

(She gesticulates protestingly.)

Oh, I don't expect you to confess that. I don't expect you to confess anything. But I wish you could give me a sign-- a sign that you understand my sympathy--I scarcely know what. So little would be so much.

Laura.

Positively.)

Mr. Corthell! I must ask you to adopt another tone when you call on me, or to cease calling altogether.

Corthell.

(Shrugs his shoulders.)

There was no intention of offending.

(Crosses toward organ.)

Let me play for you.

Laura.

(The constraint gone from her manner.)

Yes, do.

Corthell

(Seating himself at the organ.)

What a noble instrument! This is the one of all your treasures that I most envy you.

Laura.

What shall you play?

Corthell.

(Running his fingers over the keys.)

Something of Mendelssohn, I think. Do you know his "Consolation".

Laura.

No. I sometimes try to play "The Spring Song."

Corthell.

(Playing.)

It is one of his best--this "Consolation." You hear the effect of questions and answers. The questions are passionate and tumultuous and varied, but the answers are always the same--always calm and soothing and dignified.

(He finishes the composition.)

Laura.

It is superb!

Corthell.

Do you care for Beethoven?

Laura.

I--I am afraid----

Corthell.

(Playing again.)

You remember this? The "Impassionata"--- the F minor Sonata--- just the second movement.

(Changes the melody.)

Here is something I've always liked.

Laura.

What is it?

Corthell.

(Swaying at the instrument and playing most feelingly.)

The "Mephisto" Walzer" of Liszt.

(Apparently throwing his whole soul into the interpretation.)

This movement; isn't it reckless and capricious, like a woman who hesitates and then takes the leap?

(Laura starts.)

Yet there's a certain nobility there, feeling for ideals. And all the while this undercurrent of the sensual, the feline, eager sentiment.

(Laura clasps her head in her hands.)

And here, I think, is the best part of it; the very essence of passion, the voluptuousness that is veritable anguish. These

long, slow rhythms, tortured, languishing, really dying.  
(She rises and walks toward the organ, as though in a dream.)

Can't you hear speaking the starved soul of a neglected woman--  
 crying out-- crying out -- Ah!-- and finally--

(Reaching the high note near the end of the melody.)  
 --with a wail of despair -- a sob of intoxication--clasping to  
 her breast--EVERYTHING!

(He stops playing- there is a pause. Laura, awakened, looks up to him. He rises.)

Laura.

Mr. Corthell, you must not come to see me any more.

Corthell.

Have I offended.

Laura.

(Shakes her head.)

No.

Corthell.

I knew it must come-- sooner or later. You are right-- of  
 course. I should not have come back to America. I should not  
 have believed so in my strength.

(Comes down the steps to her.)

Then I am never to see you again? Is that it?

Laura.

Yes.

(Comes down stage- he follows.)

Corthell.

Do you know what this means for me? Do you realize? Never to  
 see you again! To lose even the little that is left to me  
 now!

Laura.

You must go.

Corthell.

(Heatedly.)

Ah, no, no! Why should we terminate everything? You are not  
 happy. I am not blind; I can see that! Your husband neglects you;  
 he thinks only of his business! I--I--

(Kisses her hand passionately. Laura draws it away.)



Laura.

My husband does NOT neglect me! It is a lie--a lie! In his heart I am everything.

Corthell.

He leaves you alone--always--now--tonight--

Laura.

Tonight he has been taken away from me! After a little while he will remember and will come back to me! He may be on his way now! He will come to me with words of love, of repentance, of-----

(Enter Curtis Jadwin. As he opens the door he touches the button, turning up all the lights. Corthell springs away from Laura.)

Ah-----

(Holding out her arms to Jadwin.)

Jadwin.

(Unmindful of them. Enthusiastically.)

Laura, I've made a million dollars!

(There is a pause. He comes down stage and sees Corthell.)

Good evening Mr. Corthell. I didn't see you at first. That's a pretty good night's work, eh? A million dollars--maybe, ten millions! It's sure! I've got the whole thing planned. Met Foster not a block away, Laura. He was coming here with a message. Went over the whole thing with him in a cafe down the street.

(Stretching his arms.)

By George, I'm tired though! This sort of scheming is an awful strain on a man. You don't mind if I lie down a moment, Mr. Corthell?

(Lies on Sofa.)

My head throbs as if someone inside was hammering the scalp off.

(Yawns.)

Say, perhaps we won't make those fellows look sharp tomorrow. Oh, my head! I've been at it since nine o'clock! I never was so tired, etc. ad lib.

(Falls asleep, Laura walks over and looks at him. Corthell crosses her, puts on his coat, gloves and hat, and walks to the door at back.)

Corthell.

(Softly.)

Goodbye.

Laura.

(Starting and turning to him.)

Wait.

(Goes to him and takes his hand.)

Come to see me again--tomorrow.

Corthell.

It is good night then, not goodbye.

Laura.

It is good night.

(Drops his hand. Exit Corthell. Laura returns to Jadwin and looks at him. He is sleeping, deeply, vulgarly, his arms spread over his head; his breathing loud. He makes a gesture indicating that the light hurts his eyes. Laura goes up stage, touches the button, lowering the lights, returns, sits by sofa, watches the dormant figure with something of disgust, then buries her face in her hands.)

C U R T A I N .

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-- "THE PIT" --

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-- " T H R P I T " --

-- VI T O A --

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S C E N E:-

Private room in the offices of Gretry, Converse & Co. Board of Trade Building. This setting is left very largely to the stage manager, but the act was written with the following arrangement in mind. A plain interior, the fitting of which, however, are superior to those of ordinary places of business. The flat is in 3. At R. 2. E. a swinging leather door leading to the apartment occupied by clerks, Through this door are seen several desks and a wooden partition in which are small windows. At R. C. a double frosted-glass door, on which, in reversed letters are the words: "Gretry, Converse & Co." At L. a big roller-top desk and a "ticker" both used by Gretry L. C., front of stage, a table-desk belonging to Jadwin and another "ticker." A third desk at R. front assigned to Wiggin. Commodious chairs and other furniture about the room. Through the door in the flat is visible part of the customers' room, including the board for quotations, before which are a number of seats occupied by various men. A large clock on the wall indicates ten minutes past nine.

At RISE:-

Louis Wiggin, head accountant, thin to the point of emaciation, stoop-shouldered, face wrinkled and adorned with whiskers of the sort known as "mutton-chop", dressed in serge trousers and white office coat, seated at his desk. He is alternately writing and partaking of a lunch spread about him. This lunch consists of a plate of sandwiches, a pickle, a glass of water and a cigar. Wiggin has two pens behind his ear. Gretry at his desk. To him enter Landry, from back.)

Landry

(Glances at clock)

I'm a little late, sir. What are the orders this morning?

Gretry

(Continues writing)

Your orders?

(Looks up)

Same as yesterday. Keep the market up; that's all. It must not go below a dollar fifteen. You shouldn't have let it drop as it did yesterday.

Landry

I bought to the limit of my instructions.

Gretry

I know. Well, to-day you and Roland and Foster can buy up to half a million bushels apiece. If that don't keep the price up, if they still sell---well, I'll let you know what to do.

Landry

(Starts for door)

All right sir.

Gretry

(Detaining him)

And keep cool --tell the boys to keep their heads. I guess to-day will decide things. Watch the Crookes crowd pretty closely. I'm afraid they're up to something.

Landry

Yes, sir.

(Exits at back.)

Gretry

(Turning to Wiggin)

Wiggin!

Wiggin

(After staring at him an instant.)

Nine times eight --seventy-two. Two and carry seven.

Gretry

Wiggin!

(Wiggin puts third pen behind his ear and devotes his attention to Gretry.)

Have you sent those checks for storage charges?

Wiggin

This morning, sir.

(Gretry turns to his desk again. Wiggin feels about for a pen, gets his cigar, dips it in the ink, attempts to write with it, discovers what he is doing, places the inked end of the cigar in his mouth)

Faugh!

(Drops the cigar, finds a fourth pen and continues work.)



Gretry

(Speaking into one of two desk telephones.)

Hello, Jones! Yes! Has Crookes arrived? No? O. K. Good-bye.  
(Hangs up phone. ENTER Roland from R.)

Roland

Orders, Mr. Gretry?

Gretry

No. You'd better keep out of it to-day. Watch Court and you'll soon learn.

Roland

All right, Mr. Gretry.

(Walks over to Wiggin)

Well, Mr Wiggin, how goes

Wiggin

(Writing)

Nine and four are thirteen, seventeen, twenty two, thirty, thirty-six.

Roland

Busy?

(Wiggin reaches out for a sandwich, gets a pen-wiper instead, attempts to bite it, put it down and goes on writing.)

Roland hands him a sandwich

Here.

(He takes it)

Pretty busy this morning?

Wiggin

(Rises and starts for door R.)

Eighty-four thousand and ten. Eighty-four thousand and ten.

(Exits R.)

Roland

(Goes to Gretry and leans over him confidentially)

I believe that chap Wiggin would work if the building was burning down.

Gretry

Do you know the way to the wash-room?

Roland

(Bewildered)

Yes, why?

Gretry

Well, go there and stay there, will you?

Roland

(Starts toward back. Stops and turns)

You don't need me here?

No! Gretry

Oh, very well! Roland  
(Exits at back)

Fool! Gretry

(ENTER Wiggin and returns to his desk. ENTER messenger-boy at back, followed by Hargus, a short, cadaverous, watery-eyed man, probably aged 50 but looking to be 65. He wears an ancient silk hat, frayed and greasy clothing and is apparently a human wreck)

(To Boy) Hargus  
That telegram for me - Hargus?

(Looking him over) Boy  
Wouldn't that jar you? No, it ain't for you.  
(Takes message to Gretry and exits. Gretry having signed for the wire, reads)

(Whiningly) Hargus  
I kind a' expected to hear from Em'ry. He promised to give me a tip this week.  
(Goes down)  
Good morning, Mr. Gretry.)

(Abstractedly rising) Gretry  
Good morning, Hargus.  
(Exits at back)

(To Wiggin) Hargus  
Oh, Mr Wiggin!

(Looking up more quickly than usual.) Wiggin  
Ah, Mr. Hargus.

(Going down to him and speaking confidentially) Hargus  
I've got some information for you, Mr Wiggin. Make your fortune. I'm going to put you on, but you must keep it close.

Yes--yes. Wiggin

(Whispering) Hargus

The Wabash is going to buy the Peoria, Springfield and Jacksonville. Straight tip. P. S. and J.'s sure to go up on the jump.

(Wiggin writes. Hargus taps him on the shoulder)  
Sure. If you can let me have fifty dollars until-----

Wiggin

Nonsense, Hargus!  
(Hands him bill)  
Here's a dollar.

Hargus

Thank you.  
(Goes to door at back. ENTER there Crookes and Sweeny.  
He addresses them.)  
Oh, Mr. Crookes! I've got a tip on Wabash. I wouldn't tell anyone else-----

Crookes

Don't bother me.

Hargus

But this----

Crookes

This is a private office. Don't bother me.  
(Exit Hargus muttering. Crookes addressed Wiggin)  
Mr. Jadwin down yet.

Wiggin

(Continues writing)  
Eh?

Crookes

Has Mr. Jadwin come yet?

Wiggin

Not yet, sir: expect him every minute. He was here until after four this morning.  
(Resumes his labor)

Crookes

(To Sweeny)  
After four! Well, we've got him worried.

Sweeny

Looks that way.  
(They go to extreme L.)

Crookes

Two weeks ago wheat was a dollar sixty. Yesterday we brought it down to twenty. That ought to put him wise to the fact that something's going on.

Sweeny  
Still I think we'd have had a better chance if you'd let me come alone. He don't like you any too well.

Crookes  
I don't like him any better, but business is business. If I can get in on this I intend to.

Sweeny  
Sch! Somebody's coming.

Crookes  
(Looking through door)  
It's him. Now, let me do the talking.  
(ENTER Jadwin. He looks worn and tired. Without noticing anyone present, he goes to his desk, sits, and begins searching through the drawers)

Crookes  
Good morning, Mr. Jadwin.

Jadwin  
(Looking up)  
Calvin Hardy Crookes!  
(Smiles faintly)  
Well, this is nice of you.

Crookes  
It's not nice; it's business. I can talk business with you as well as anybody else, can't I?

Jadwin  
As well--or better. Sit down.  
(Sweeny sits; Crookes remains standing)  
What is it?

Crookes.  
Of course, you realize now that the games up.

Jadwin  
Whose game?

Crookes  
Yours.  
(Going to desk and indicating points by striking his finger thereon)  
You haven't any corner in wheat. The new crop's going to be the biggest in years - a whole lot bigger than you can buy. I'm short to you millions of bushels, and I'm not afraid that I can't get them pretty soon at a price way below the present one.

Sweeny  
Your wheat won't be worth much more than half what it is now.

Jadwin  
It's kind of you to tell me this.  
(Settling back in his chair)  
Well?

Crookes  
Well; as I said, there's going to be more wheat than you can buy  
(Getting very close to him)  
There won't be more than We can buy.

Jadwin  
(With repressed indignation)  
Just what do you mean by that?

Crookes  
Suppose I went in with you? I go on leading the Bear movement -  
do you see? All these fellows sell short; you buy WITH MY  
MONEY. When the new crop comes you buy that WITH MY MONEY.  
They'll have to make up their shortage from your wheat, at  
YOUR PRICE.

Jadwin  
I see; you sell your followers out.

Crookes  
Well, that's kind of a nasty way to put it.

Jadwin  
You sell them out? What's your price?

Crookes  
I don't care to talk to you in that way.

Jadwin  
All right; we'll put it more simply; how much do you want?

Crookes  
Half.

Jadwin  
And if I don't choose to go into this partnership?

Sweeny  
We're going to----

Crookes  
Keep quite, Sweeny!  
(To Jadwin)  
To-morrow night wheat'll be down to eighty and you'll be broke.

Jadwin  
(Rising and walking away)  
All the same, I don't want anything to do with the dirty business

Crookes

(Angered)

Dirty business! That's a high and mighty speech for a man that killed his best friend.

Jadwin

(Returning to him.)

What do you mean?

Crookes

You know what I mean and who I mean. I mean Charlie Cressler. You killed him as surely as if you'd held the pistol in your own hand.

Jadwin

(Ranging the desk with his fist)

Cut that! Do you understand - Cut it!

Crookes

I just wanted to bring you down to earth. Now what have you got to say?

Jadwin

(Beginning coolly)

I say "no" - "no", Mr Calvin Hardy Crookes - "NO!" Your threats don't scare me a cent's worth. If you thought you could do me you wouldn't be up here now trying to make a bargain.

Sweeny

But it means a bigger profit.

Jadwin

(Without noticing him)

I can take care of myself. You can't frighten me! And you can't buy me, M r. Calvin Hardy Crookes! If I WERE in danger of ruin, if you offered me a deal that was honest, I wouldn't go into partnership with you for all the money on God's earth! I don't want-----

Crookes

You'd better think of what you're saying!

Jadwin

I'm thinking, and I'm saying what I've wanted to say ever since I've known you and your crooked work! You can't sell anybody to me--you can't sell anybody to me as your friend Scannel sold that poor chap Hargus out there in the hall!

(His attitude becomes threatening; his voice grows louder.)

Wiggin joins him; Sweeny stands back of Crookes)

Listen to me, Calvin Hardy Crookes, and then go back to the men you've tried to ruin! You're a thief, Calvin Hardy Crookes! A cheat! A swindler! A thief!

Crookes

(Frantic with anger and starting to leave)

You'll pay for this!

Jadwin

(Seizing him by the arm and holding him)

You're a thief--a thief--a thief! Now, go on and break me! Go on with your fight and let's see who'll win! You and your crowd'll deliver to me the wheat you've sold--every bushel! I'll drive you to the wall, Calvin Hardy Crookes, or my name's---  
(The clock now points to half past nine. A gong rings outside, Jadwin grows calm)

There's the gong. The battle's on.

Crookes

(Adjusting his cuff, which Jadwin had disarranged)

You haven't chance in a million, Jadwin. You're as good as bankrupt.

Jadwin

(Returns to his desk. Wiggin does likewise)

Oh, I guess I'll pull through.

Crookes

And next time you get to speculating remember this: Don't get so far above all the other fellows. They throw bricks.

(At door)

Come on Sweeny.

(Exeunt Crookes and Sweeny. Enter Gretry. Jadwin seats himself at his desk)

Gretry

What was Crookes doing up here?

Jadwin

(Wearily)

He came up to tell me I was as good as ruined. I lost my temper. I don't know, Sam, I seem to be getting irritable.

Gretry

You're worked out, "J.", Anyone can see that.

Jadwin

I guess you're right.

Gretry

Why can't you sleep more? You stay here until all hours of the morning

Jadwin

By George, Sam, I can't sleep! I go home and lie in bed until the sheets seem hot as live coals, and the pulses in my brain throb out "Wheat -- wheat--wheat." That seems to be all I can think of now. The rattle of the cable cars, the clatter of dishes in a restaurant, the noise of the "ticker" spell the same

thing to me ---- "Wheat -- wheat -- wheat."

Gretry

(Seating himself)

Look out or you'll be sick, "J."

(Wiggin exits at L.)

So Crookes thinks we haven't a chance in a million. God, "J", I shouldn't be surprised if he was right.

Jadwin

What?

Gretry

It wouldn't astonish me if to-day finished us. The Crookes crowd is taking hold in earnest.

Jadwin

You lost nerve easier than any man I ever saw. Crookes ain't the Great Mogul.

Gretry

He ain't? Great Scott! Who is then?

Jadwin

I am!

(Rises and goes to Gretry)

I am, and the sooner Crookes finds it out the better. There's not room for both of us in this game, and if he gets in my way, by God, I'll smash him!

Gretry

That's easy enough to say. Just the same, things look pretty nasty. We believe we've cornered the wheat, but, by Jing®, it seems more like the wheat had cornered us.

Jadwin

Quit talking riddles and get down to business, What do you mean?

Gretry

Well, you saw how freely they sold to us yesterday. That proves just one thing. These chaps who have got to deliver grain they don't own are confident that they can get it without coming to us. The big prices have made the farmers plant a big crop, and when the time comes these shorts can get wheat where they please for what they choose to pay.

Jadwin

What's nonsense?

Gretry

It's no nonsense, "J." I warned you when you determined to swing this deal into July. There's a big wave of wheat rushing on now from the farms in the west to the hungry millions in the east. You can't stop it, "J" Means can stop it. When you try to corner grain, "J" you're not fighting just the brokers or the farmers, you're fighting God!



Jadwin

All damned sentiment! Two thirds of the crop won't grade and Europe will take nearly all of it.

Gretry

Still these shorts are selling---selling---selling!

Jadwin

Then we must buy--buy--buy! Buy all that's offered! Keep up the value of my property! Buy them to a standstill!

Gretry

(Impatiently rising)

But that takes millions of dollars, "J", and we haven't got them, You've mortgaged every piece of property you own now.

Jadwin

Good Lord, Sam, I've got more than forty million bushels of wheat, worth a dollar eighteen a bushel!

Gretry

It's worth that as long as you keep it. Try to sell and the price will drop to nothing.

Jadwin

Well--mm--

(Irritably)

There's no need getting scared blue over it. They can't down me in an afternoon.

Gretry

I've seen lots of men downed in an afternoon, "J" I've seen men stand down there in the pit, down there in that hole of greedy lunatics until they were stripped of every dollar. I've been in the game longer than you have, "J" You've never seen the pit at its worst--you don't know what it is.

Jadwin

I know you're a coward! You've been scared from the beginning--you're scared to death now!

Gretry

I'm scared for you; yes, and scared for myself, too. I don't want to hear the secretary of the Board of Trade read the firm out of existence, "J"

Jadwin

Well, you stick to me and you'll hear an order for closing all deals with Crookes.

Gretry

I used to be sure of you, but lately---I don't know. Sometimes you act like a crazy man.

Jadwin

(Starting violently)

Crazy! Crazy! What do you mean! For God's sake, Sam, what--- Look here, don't use that word to me! I--it don't suit! What I've done isn't exactly the work of -- of --takes brains, let me tell you!

Gretry

(Alarmed)

Why, what's the matter?

Jadwin

(Quiet again)

Oh, nothing. I'm a little nervous and that word set me off.

(Goes to desk)

Sam, you've been talking ruin, Now I'm going to show you.

(Writes on a telegraph blank)

Ring that messenger call.

Gretry  
~~Jadwin~~

(Does so)

What are you going to do?

Jadwin

I'm cabling Liverpool and Paris to sell a million bushels of my wheat at a dollar. That's eighteen cents off for them, and it's a million dollars cash for me.

Gretry

I never thought of that.

(ENTER WIGGIN R. and returns to desk)

Jadwin

There are a good many things you've never thought of, Sam.

(Enter HARGUS at back and, going to Wiggin, talks in dumb show)

Gretry

There's a man who was ruined in an afternoon.

Jadwin

Sold out, you mean. That fellow Scannel did him.

(Looks at ticker)

Still a dollar eighteen and an eighth. The price hasn't varied a cent and a half in an hour. Must be quiet down there.

Gretry

That's what worries me. Yesterday there was fight from gong to gong. This may be the calm before the storm.

Jadwin

Let's have Landry up and see what he thinks.

(Gretry uses the telephone, speaking in an undertone and asking Jones to send for Landry, while the following conversation goes on)

Hargus

(Going to Jadwin)

Say, Mr. Jadwin, confidentially, I've got a tip. The Peoria, Springfield and Jacksonville Railway is to be absorbed by the Wabash. That information ought to be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to you. Can't you let me have a hundred to put on it?

Jadwin

I can let you have a dollar, will that do?

Hargus

Make it five?

Jadwin

(Gives him bill)

Here you are.

Hargus

I'll pay you--when the Wabash buys the Peoria, Springfield and Jacksonville.

(Exit Hargus)

Jadwin

(To Gretry)

Poor wretch! You wouldn't think he ever was worth half a million (Pause)

By George, Sam, I'm going to put the screws to that fellow Scannel!

Gretry

I guess he'll be round in a few weeks. He's been pretty badly scared.

Jadwin

That so? Then I'm going to have him around in a few minutes. The market's been going his way for a while---now if it takes a sudden jump he's sure to try to cover. You go down there on the floor and put the price up another cent or two.

Gretry

But there's no use wasting our ammunition for----

Jadwin

Now, don't croak; go on!

Gretry

(Rising)

All right. It's your game.

(Goes to door)

Court'll be up in a moment.

(Exit at back)

Jadwin

Jadwin  
That'll bring him or I miss my guess.  
(ENTER messenger boy)

Boy  
Call?

Jadwin  
Yes; why weren't you all day about it? Twelve words to Liverpool; twelve to Paris. Wiggin, how much is that?

Wiggin  
(Looking up absent-mindedly)  
One million twelve hundred and sixty.

Jadwin  
Huh? What's one million---and---and the rest of it?

Wiggin  
Bushels of wheat in the Crescent Elevators.

Jadwin  
All right. Now what's the cost of cabling twelve words to Liverpool and Paris?

Wiggin  
(Looking in desk drawer)  
I'll see, sir.

Jadwin  
(To boy)  
He'll give you an I. O. U.  
(Boy goes to Wiggin. ENTER PAGE)

Page  
Hello, Curtis! Good afternoon, Mr. Wiggin.  
(They nod.)  
Where's Landry?

Jadwin  
He'll be here in a moment.

Page  
He promised to get a seat for me in the visitors' gallery so I could see the wheat pit. Is a wheat pit anything like a cock pit, Curtis?

Jadwin  
I should say not! Hasn't Landry told you any more about business than that?

Page  
He hasn't told me anything about it at all. He says he won't take his office affairs out of the office.

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Jadwin

(Smiles)

That's a good resolution.

(Messenger boy starts out. Jadwin addresses him)

Here! I want to write "Rush" across both of those.

(Does so boy exits)

The pit is a series of platforms built round so that every man is facing every other man. Then they buy and sell to each other. By George! It is about as lively as a cock pit sometimes.

Page

I heard you tell Laura once that the traders in the pit fought each other like the devil.

(Confused)

Oh, excuse me. But that's what you said.

Jadwin

I don't doubt it. How is Laura?

Page

She was very much disappointed that you didn't come home last night. To-day's her birthday, you know.

Jadwin

No, by Jingo, I'd forgotten!

Page

She said you couldn't have forgotten that. You've never missed spending it with her, she said.

(Enter messenger boy)

Jadwin

We've got to miss this time. I can't leave here.

(Takes up second phone on Gretry's desk)

I'll telephone her, though.

Boy

(Taking message to Jadwin)

Telegram for Curtis Jadwin.

Jadwin

(Takes it)

I'm Curtis Jadwin.

(Signs. Reads message)

Here; wait for an answer.

(Replaces phone, writes answer and gives it to boy who exits)

Page

(As ticker, addressing Wiggin)

What's this in the glass dish?

Wiggin  
The "ticker", Miss Dearborn.

Page  
What! A clock?  
(Both "tickers" begin working. Jadwin looks at the tape  
by Gretry's desk)  
Gracious! Did I do that?

Jadwin  
(Reading)  
Dollar eighteen and three quarters.  
(To page)  
No; I did.

Page  
How?

Jadwin  
By spending a couple of hundred thousand dollars.

Page  
Oh my! Wasn't that extravagant?

Jadwin  
(Laughing a little)  
Well, I don't have to pay that out right away----not all of it.

Page  
What made you spend it?

Jadwin  
Because I want to bring a rascal to justice.  
(Musingly)  
He'll be here in a minute or I miss my guess.  
(ENTER LANDRY)

Page  
Oh, Landry, do come here and look at this cunning little ticker!

Landry  
Just a moment, Page.  
(To Jadwin)  
You wanted me, sir?

Jadwin  
Yes. How do things look on the floor? Pretty quiet, eh?

Landry  
Quiet, but likely to break loose at any time. We've bought,  
bought, bought all the morning and the wheat hasn't jumped a cent

Jadwin  
It hasn't fallen.

Landry

Only a sudden big onslaught would bring it up or down.

Jadwin

Gretry's buying now. We mustn't let the market drop.

Landry

Suppose they keep selling after I've reached the limit of Mr. Gretry's orders?

Jadwin

Let me know when you've bought, all he instructed you to buy. Then I'll tell you what to do.

Landry

Yes, sir.

(Goes to page; Jadwin sits at Gretry's desk and figures.

After a time he rests his head in his hands, to all appearances asleep)

Page

Landry, this thing prints, doesn't it?

Landry

Yes--prints whatever is sent from the other end of the wire.

Page

Oh, a sort of telegraph! If YOU were at the other end of the wire could I send letters to you by it?

Landry

Well--mm--scarcely.

Page

Why do they keep it in this glass cage? To keep it from making a noise?

Landry

No; to keep it clean.

Page

What are those men doing outside? Why do they watch that big board? It seems to me a dreadful waste of time.

Landry

Page, dear--sch!

(The "ticker" talks.)

Something doing.

Jadwin

(Wearily leans over and looks at the tape. Landry looks, too)

Nineteen. We'll have him in a minute. He didn't expect that to-day; it will look risky to him.

(Resumes attitude at desk)

Landry

(To Page, who is intently observing "ticker". From here on the instrument is in almost continuous operation)  
I've got to go, Page. Come on and I'll try to get you a seat in the gallery. It's pretty well crowded this morning

Page

(As they start to leave)

Good bye, Mr Wiggin. Good bye, Curtis

Jadwin

(Looking up)

Oh, Landry, if you see Hargus anywhere on your way out will you tell him I'd like to talk to him?

Landry

Yes, sir.

(They exeunt. *Wiggin* realizing that he has been addressed, rises after they have gone)

Good morning, Miss---Oh!

(Sits again? Dips pen in glass of water. Fails to write with it)

Hang this pen

Put it with others behind his ear. Searches for a new pen. Not being able to find one, he nods violently, making an exclamation)

No others.

(They all drop from his ear. He looks at them sheepishly, selects one, and continues work)

Seven, ten, fourteen, etc.

Jadwin

(Starting up)

By George! I forgot all about Laura!

(Takes up telephone. As he does, ENTER Hargus, who comes down to him shufflingly. Jadwin replaces the phone)

Ah! Sit down, Hargus. I want to talk to you.

Hargus

(Ramblingly.)

I got a tip-----

Jadwin

(Pre-emptorily)

Sit down!

Hargus

(Sitting)

You want to talk to me?

Jadwin

Yes. You ran a corner in wheat once yourself.



Hargus

(Fingering his hat.)

Oh---wheat.

Jadwin

Yes; your corner. You remember?

Hargus

(Nodding his head)

Yes. Oh, that was long ago. In seventy-eight it was---the September option. And the Board made wheat in the cars "regular" (His voice dies out toward the end of the sentence. He looks vaguely about the room, sucking his cheeks)

Jadwin

Well, you lost all your money that time, I believe. Scannel, your partner, sold out on you.

Hargus

(Stares vacantly)

Hey? It was in seventy-eight.

(Strokes his chin)

The secretary of the Board announced our suspension at ten in the morning. If the Board hadn't voted to make wheat in the cars "regular"----

Jadwin

(Interrupting)

I know. It was Scannel, your partner, did for you. Scannel I say. You remember, David Scannel.

Hargus

(With momentary fire)

Yes--Scannel---damn him!

(Relapses)

It was in seventy-eight. I lost three hundred thousand dollars.

Jadwin

Scannel did for you. Since then you and your niece----

Hargus

My little niece---you mean Lizzie? I'm looking after Lizzie, I got-- I got her picture here somwheres.

(Taking large bundle of dirty papers from his pocket and searches among them)

Jadwin

Yes, I know. You showed it to me yesterday.

(Picks up paper of figures)

Now I've caught Scannel in my corner. He sold short to me soon's wheat broke. Now I've driven it up again and-----

Hargus

I--I got it here somewheres--somewheres..  
 (Continues searching, paying no attention to Jadwin)

Jadwin

Unless I'm wrong on my count he'll be here in a minute. Then I intend to square things.

(ENTER Scannel. He comes down. Hargus continues with his papers.)

Scannel

(To Jadwin)

Well, how are you, Captain?

Jadwin

(Without looking at him)

Hello!

(This gruffly)

Scannel

(Whirling a chair to the desk and seating himself)

Oh, well, if that's your style!

(There is a short silence, during which Scannel squirms in his chair. When he speaks again it is in a conciliatory tone)

Well, you've rung the bell for me. I'm a sucker. I know it. I went in without the money to stand the gaff. I counted on the wheat going down, down, down. Now what I want to know is, how much is it going to cost me to get out of your corner? What'll you let me out for? What do you say?

Jadwin

I got a good deal to say. Do you see this old man here?

Scannel

Oh, out it out!

Jadwin

It's Hargus. You know him very well. You used to know him better. You and he together once tried to swing a deal in September wheat. You sold him out.

Scannel

(Aroused)

I what?

Jadwin

You sold him out.

(Scannel springs up threateningly)

Hargus

(Thrusting out a photograph)

There it is. That's it. That's Lizzie.

Jadwin

(To Hargus, thrusting back the picture)

I know. I know, Hargus. Here's the man we were talking about. Scannel--you remember.

Scannel

(Seating himself)

Oh, what's the game? I ain't here on exhibition!

Jadwin

(To Hargus)

Here's the man, Hargus. Remember Dave Scannel, who was your partner in seventy-eight? Look at him. This is him now. He's pretty hearily a rich man. Remember Scannel?

Hargus

(Suddenly leaning forward, much excited)  
Scannel? God, yes!

Jadwin

(To Hargus)

That's Scannel. Your money was up together in a big deal---

(Turning to Scannel)

--a big deal, and you sold him out.

Scannel

That's a lie!

Jadwin

YOU SOLD HIM OUT! I'm on to you! You ruined him to save your own dirty hide, and all his life since poor old Hargus has been living off the charity of the boys down here, pinched and hungry and neglected; getting on, God knows how; yes, and supporting his little niece, too, while you, you have been loafing about your clubs, and sprawling on steam yachts, and dangling round after your kept women--on the money you stole from him!

Scannel

(Menacingly)

Look here, I don't take that kind of talk from the best man that ever wore shoe-leather! Cut it out--understand? Cut it out!

Jadwin

(Quietly, but tapping his desk with emphasis)

You interrupt me again and you'll go out of that door a bankrupt! You're here to-day to take my orders! If you think you can get your wheat somewhere else, suppose you try!

Scannel

Well, talk business!

Jadwin

You are short to our firm two million bushels of wheat which you sold at a dollar a bushel.

Scannel

Nothing of the sort! It's a million and a half!

Jadwin

All right-- that's what I wanted to know. Instead of going down, wheat's gone up until you stand a show of paying two dollars. The market price now is something over a dollar nineteen. I'll let you have it at a dollar twenty.

Scannel

A dollar twenty! Why, my God, man!

(Spreading out his hands nonchalantly)

Oh, well, I shall go into bankruptcy---just as you said.

Jadwin

Oh, no, you won't. I've had your financial standing computed very carefully, Mr. Scannel. You've no idea how much interest I've shown in you. I know what you can stand without busting to the fraction of a cent.

Scannel

Why, it's ridiculous! That handful of wheat will cost me three hundred thousand dollars!

Jadwin

Pre-cisely!

Scannel

I won't give it! I'll go into bankruptcy first!

Jadwin

Well, I guess we could get that much out of your assets.

(Scannel hesitates an instant, takes out check book and fountain pen and writes)

Make it payable to bearer.

Scannel

(Handing him check.)

There!

Jadwin

Now, watch here, Dave Scannel. You see this chekk? Well, this is where it goes.

(Hands check to Hargus, who mumbles over it)

There's the principal of your debt paid off.

Scannel

(Raging)

The Principal!

Jadwin

Yes; I don't see any way of making you pay the interest just now.

(To Wiggin)

Wiggin, after the close of the market to-day send delivery slips for a million and a half wheat to Mr. Scannel. His account with us has been settled.

(Tom Scannel)  
Good afternoon, Mr Scannel, and please don't slam the door as you go out.

(Scannel rises in great choler and exits at back, closing the door noisily. Jadwin addresses Hargus)  
He did slam it after all, didn't he?

(Wiggin makes note of transaction, and resumes work)

Hargus

(Mumbling over check)

Scannel---David Scannel?

Jadwin

Here, don't you know what that is? It's three hundred thousand dollars. Buy your little Lizzie a gold watch with a hundred of it and tell her it's from Curtis Jadwin with his compliments.

Hargus

(Rising and going to Jadwin)

I--I don't know. I am a very old man, This--this is a great deal of money. I--I can't say; I--I --I don't know--I'm an old man--an old man.

Jadwin

You won't lose it now?

Hargus

No--no. I'll deposit it in the Illinois Trust. I shall ask-- I should like---

Jadwin

Shall I send a clerk with you?

Hargus

No; no, I don't want a clerk. But I must say, Mr. Jadwin---

Jadwin

That's all right.

(Seats himself at his desk)

Hargus

(Coming down to him)

I was going to say, you--you are in--you are in control now/ You could give--hey? Just a little tip. I could make fifty dollars by noon.

Jadwin

Why, man, I've just given you about half a million.

Hargus

Half a million? Yes. I'll salt that down. But just a little

tip now, hey?

Jadwin

(To Wiggin)

Take him over to the Illinois Trust, Wiggin.  
(Wiggin rises, puts on a hat absurdly wrong, gets his own, takes Hargus' arm, and walks to door)

Hargus

Must a word, Mr. Jadwin? A little tip?  
(Exeunt Wiggin and Hargus. Jadwin rises, crosses stage, there is a clicking of the "ticker" which has been in frequent operation during the foregoing. He returns to his desk and looks at the tape)

Jadwin

Good God! Sixteen and an eighth!  
(Enters Gretry)

Gretry

Well, you see, we bolstered it for about an hour. Now it's down again. Did Scannel come around?

Jadwin

He's just left.

Gretry

Bluff him out?

Jadwin

I sold him his wheat at a dollar twenty

Gretry

Great! Got the money?

Jadwin

I gave it to Hargus --made Scannel pay back what he stole, so to speak.

Gretry

Good God! As badly as you need ready money--as we need it --- you gave away three hundred thousand dollars!

Jadwin

Why, Sam, don't you see that's not a drop in the bucket to us now? We're playing for millions; we need millions. I'll have money enough in a little while from Liverpool and Paris.

Gretry

But--why--you damned fool----

Jadwin

(Pressing his hand to his head)

Oh, don't talk about it now. My head aches)

(Enter Wiggin, who goes to his desk and works)

By George, my head does ache!

("Ticker" sounds. Jadwin and Gretry both look at the tape.)  
Sixteen even! A dollar sixteen!

Gretry

It's the beginning of the end. "J" I tell you we're gone.

Jadwin

Gone nothing! Don't lose your nerve altogether! We must buy--  
buy---buy---! Buy them to ruin! Why, man, we'll send it to  
two dollars yet!

Gretry

Buy? We haven't the money to buy a kitten!

(ENTER messenger)

Jadwin

We'll have it in a minute.

(To boy)

Here; I'm Curtis Jadwin.

(Boy delivers message, which he opens)

Gretry

What is it?

Jadwin

(Handing message to him)

I don't know; you'll have to read it. I can't see a thing but  
little red spots.

Gretry

(Signs for and then reads message)

Liverpool won't take your wheat.

(Returns telegram to Jadwin.)

Jadwin

(Blankly)

Won't take it?

(Exit Messenger)

Gretry

They're waiting for the crop, too.

Jadwin

Well--see here--by George!

("Ticker" moves. He looks at tape)

Fifteen and five eighths!

(The sound of excited chatter is heard hereafter in the  
customer's room)

Something's got to be done. Wiggin, bring Hargus back. Hurry!  
Sam, have Landry up here.

(Wiggin exits at back, Gretry telephones, as before, for  
Landry. Enter another messenger, who takes envelope to

Jadwin. He reads, holding the paper close to his eyes.)

paris?

Well- they've bought? Gretry

Jadwin  
They refuse to buy.  
(Exit messenger. Gretry hangs up phone. Jadwin paces  
the floor.)

You were right about that three hundred thousand. Even that would help now.

(Enter Wiggin and Hargus. Wiggin goes to his desk)

Gretry  
Here's Hargus now.  
(Telephone bell rings. Gretry answers in momosylabers.  
(The "ticker" clicks)

Jadwin

Say, Hargus, you know that money I gave you?

Hargus  
Yes--I got it---got it in the Illinois Trust.

J adwin.  
Well, let me have it for a month. I'll give you good security and ten per cent interest.

Hargus

You want to borrow my money?

Jadwin  
Good security and ten per cent interest.

I--I don't lend my money. Hargus

Gretry  
(Having hung up phone)  
But it's money he gave you

You'll have it back in a month. Jadwin

Hargus

(Positively and irritably)

No! I don't lend my money.

Gretry

(Angry)  
All right! Then get out of here quick!

I got a tip on Wabash--- Hargus



Gretry

Get out!

(Exit Hargus. As he opened the door the distant roar of the pit is heard. This occurs hereafter whenever the door is opened)

Jadwin

You got me right, Sam. I am a damned fool

(Noise of "ticker" Jadwin looks at tape.)  
Fifteen and an eighth. Those boys can't let it go under fifteen.

Gretry

They can't help it.

(Telephone bell rings)

Here, Wiggin, take this cursed thing!

(Wiggin goes to Gretry's desk, sits and answers telephone.)

Jadwin

We've got to get money somewhere

Gretry

(At ticker)

Fifteen.

(A great multitude of voices heard from the pit)

Lord "J" Listen to that! They're going wild down there.

Wiggin

(At telephone)

Woman wants to know if this is Huyler's.

Gretry

Well, tell her no! You know it isn't, don't you?

Wiggin

(Into Phone)

No, wait,

(To Gretry)

She wants to know what it is.

Jadwin

It's hell, that what it is!

Wiggin

(Into phone)

It's hell.

(Realizing what he has said)

No--no--it isn't, it's Gretry, Converse & Co. Oh, ring off!

(From this on the telephone bell rings frequently. Enter Landry running)

Landry

I couldn't get out sir. They're crazy down there---yelling, screaming, crazy! Crookes is in charge and his gang is selling everything in sight. Nothing can stop them? They're flooding us out---flooding us with wheat!

Jadwin  
Buy! Buy all they can sell!

Gretry  
You haven't a dollar.

Jadwin  
Laura's money. I'll get it to-morrow. She'll be glad. We've got to get something to tide us over.

Gretry  
How much has she?

Jadwin  
The house.  
(To Landry)

Buy up to half a million more; then come tome for orders.

Landry  
Right, sir!  
(Exit Landry)

Jadwin  
That ought to stop them for a while.  
(Gretry takes out his watch; Jadwin goes to the "ticker", which is in incessant operation. Trememdous noise of voices outside)  
Fifteen. God! Fourteen and ninemsixteenths! Will Landry never reach the floor?

Gretry  
Fourteen and a half.  
(Enter Emroy, a clerk running hatless in torn garments)

Emroy  
Hell'S loose, Mr Gretry. What'd to be done?

Jadwin  
Fourteen and a quarter! It can't take Landry five minutes to reach the Pit!!

Gretry  
Court's been gone just half a minute.

Emroy  
Orders?

Jadwin  
Wait; there'll be some in a minute.  
(To gretry)  
Ah! Landry's there! He's buying. Wheat's up an eighth.  
(Babel of voices from the pit again heard)  
Listen to them roaring at him.

(Enter Messenger, delivers telegram and exits. Gretry throws the message aside unopened. From this on boys are continually coming and going. As much bustle and confusion as possible)

Gretry  
It doesn't go any higher

Jadwin  
Telephone him to buy half a million in a lump.

Gretry  
(Tries second phone, while Wiggin is using the first, in vain)  
I can't get Jones.  
- (Calls)  
Laird!  
(Enter Laird, a clerk from R.)

Laird  
Yes, sir.

Gretry  
(Scribbling)  
Take this to Court.  
(Hands it to him)

Laird  
Yes, sir.  
(Exits at back. Enter Roland)

Roland  
You can't get near the pit, Mr. Gretry. They're fighting like madmen.

Emroy  
Clean crazy. Is this the end?

Jadwin  
FOURTEEN!  
(Reading from tape.)

Gretry  
A cent at a time.

Wiggin  
(Leaving telephone and wringing his hands)  
Oh Lord, sir, oh Lord! After all these years.  
(Terrific roar outside)

Gretry  
(Reading from tape.)  
TEN! A whole nicker tail! I tell you. "J" we're ruined.

(Enter from back Hargus, clerks from outside and five or six customers, much wrought up. Clark and Read, bankers, rush forward.)

Clark  
See here, what's happened?

Read  
Something must be done.

Jadwin  
Don't you suppose we know that.

Gretry  
There's nothing to be done.

Wiggin  
Oh, Lord!

Emory  
Can't we buy what they offer?

Roland  
Won't that stop them?  
(Excited chatter ad lib)

Jadwin  
A dollar two! A dollar! A DOLLAR!  
(Reads these from "ticker")  
We've gone to hell! The bottom's out of the pit!  
(Reads)  
Ninety-eight.  
(Enter Landry, rushing in, his clothing torn etc.)

Landry  
I've bought every bushel you told me to buy, What now?

Gretry  
We've gotto suspend.  
(Writes)

Jadwin  
(Reads)  
Ninety!

Gretry  
(Reaches out paper)  
Court---to the secretary!

Jadwin  
(Springs for it.)  
No; I'm dammed if you do! We haven't failed! I'm not beaten! By God, I'm not beaten.

Gretry

(Springing up)

We are beaten, "J" and you're crazy! Even the wheat we couldn't sell won't be worth anything if this keeps up

(Again offering the paper.)

Here, Court.

Jadwin

Don't touch it, Landry!

(Seizes and crumples it.)

I'm not down! I'm NOT down! I've got credit--I can get money!

Go back to the pit--all of you---and buy--buy--buy!

(Landry starts to door; the others stand still)

Gretry

But you can't "J" You're broke, You're broke.

Jadwin

It's a lie! Keep on buying, I tell you! Take all they'll offer. We'll touch the two dollar mark before the gong sounds!

Gretry

Hold on! These are my men!

(Landry ranges himself beside Jadwin)

Not another order goes to that floor!

(More calmly)

Why, "J" ask any of these boys. They'll tell you.

Read

It's useless. You were beaten two days ago.

Wiggin

My Jadwin, for God's sake, listen to reason! Our firm---

Jadwin

(Madly)

Your firm---your firm! You've been cowards from the start! I know you--I know you! You have sold me out! Crookes has bought you! Get out of my way!

(Starting back, restrained by Wiggin, Roland and Emroy, but accompanied by Landry)

Get out of my way! Do you hear? I'll play my hand alone from now on!

Gretry

"J" old man--why---see here, man--here---where are you going?

Jadwin

That's nobody's business but mine!

Gretry

Look here--wait--here--hold him back! He don't know what he's about!

Jadwin

If you won't execute my orders I'll act for myself!

Gretry  
 (Interposing himself,)   
 You're ruined!

Jadwin  
 Then you ruined me! Get out of my way!

Gretry  
 You're mad! Where are you going?

Jadwin  
 Get out of my way, I say!

(Knocks him down)  
 I'm going into the pit!  
 (Exeunt Landry and Jadwin, the others staring after them)

DARK CHANGE TOMTHE FOLLOWING SCENE

DURING THE CHANGE THE ROAR OF THE PIT IS HEARD INCESSANTLY.

SCENE II.

The floor of the Produce Exchange. A lofty and spacious interior taking whatever area the size of the stage permits. A gallery, square in shape, bounds the place. At R, in this gallery the offices of the secretary railed off and in places partitioned. The remainder of the balcony is for spectators. Directly in its centre is a great dial which makes the price of wheat. Under it, at R. C. and L. C., swinging leather doors. Front centre is the wheat pit, to the right of which is a huge blackboard for quotations. This board is topped by a smaller dial. At the left of the pit a number of high desks, for writing while standing, and several long leather covered benches. Farther up stage a smaller pit--the corn pit. Between the two a platform bearing the desk of the official reporter. Right of the corn pit is an extended telegraph office, in which are dozens of clicking instruments. Left sundry boards, on which are tacked bulletins and other papers.

DISCOVERED:-

A throng of people. Clerks and others in the secretary's office; in the gallery a crowd of men and women, shouting, cheering excited; the stage filled with men and the wheat pit jammed to suffocation. Messenger boys and clerks run about taking and delivering messages. The animation and noise is restrained only to such a degree that it may perceptibly increase upon the entrance of Jadwin. The indicator shows the price of wheat to be eighty-eight, but steadily going down. Among the distinguishable characters in the pit are LEO GROSSMAN, a little, wirey Jew in a flannel shirt, who, when bidding, projects his hand as though throwing something; EDWARD HIRSCH, youthful, blonde, new to the exchange, whom is continually running for instructions to his senior. LUKE SIMPLE, a stout, red-faced, excited, perspiring old gentleman, who constantly wipes his face and ejaculates

"Oh Lord"; WILLIAM KELLY, a nervous alert, explosive Irishman always trying to get to the top of the pit and being thrust back; GEORGE WINSTONE and RALPH RUSHBRIDGE, Crookes, who stands at the edge of the pit, is represented by FRANK FAIRCHILD, tall, lean, who leans over the others, extending a long arm and a hand with two fingers out; FRED PATERSON, JOHN GOODLOCK, Scannel Sweeny and PORTOUS, a sinister and evil-looking small man with red hair and mustache, Jadwin's lieutenants are BERT MARBLE and JOHN ELLIOT. Hargus hovers about, absorbed, tense, button-holding everyone and asking questions. The OFFICIAL REPORTER at his desk, the clerks in the gallery and the markers at the boards have abandoned work and are looking on in a fever of excitement. Most of those persons on the floor wear white office coats. The bidding and general dialogue ad lib, while the business of the scene is left to the stage manager.

Fairchild

Sell fifty thousand July at eighty-eight!

CHORUS OF VOICES

Sell twenty-five at eighty-eight! Sell thirty thousand July eighty-eight! etc. etc.

Goodlock

(Seizing Marble)

Sell hundred thousand July at eighty-eight!

(Marble shakes his head)

Eighty seven and three quarters! Come on now---eighty-seven and three quarters!

(Marble turns away)

Marble

(To Elliot)

Good Lord, what are we going to do?

Elliot

(Phlagmatically)

What CAN we do?

Hirsch

(Running to Semple.)

What now?



Sample  
We've got to get rid of it. Take eighty-seven, Oh Lord!

Hirsch

(Rushing back)

Sold!  
(The indicator Marks eighty-seven)

Chorus of voices  
Sell sixty at eighty-seven, etc.

Crookes

(To Paterson)  
Break that!

Paterson  
Sell hundred thousand July for eighty!  
(A roar of voices; general tumult, indicator keeps descending. This sort of dialogue and business ad lib. until ENTERS Landry Court, running at top speed. He goes to Marble, front of the pit)

Landry  
Hold them in; for God's sake hold them!

Marble.  
Hold them! How can I? Look at that!

Landry  
Buy half a million bushels! We must hold them a minute. Jadwin's coming!

Marble  
(To the pit)  
Give eighty for May!  
Chorus of voices  
Here! Me! Sell fifty thousand! Sold! Sold!  
(Everyone springs at him to accept the offer)

Landry  
(To Elliott)  
Buy half a million more! Jadwin's coming!

Elliott  
Give eighty for July!

Crookes  
(To Goodlock)  
Take him!

Goodlock  
Sold!  
(Business repeated; everyone attempting to dispose of wheat)

Landry  
(Standing on the edge of the pit)  
Give eighty and an eighth for July.

(Business repeated)

Sell fifty thousand July at an eighth!

Fairchild

Landry

Sold! (With tablets out)

Goodlock

Sell a hundred thousand!

Landry

Sold! I'll take you!

Paterson

Five hundred thousand!

Landry

Sold!

(Great tumult. The indicator remains at eighty. ENTER Jadwin. Voices begin to be heard, exclaiming "Jadwin!" "Jadwin himself" "The big bull!" "There's Jadwin" "Curtis JADWIN?" Everyone cranes forward for a look at the man. The tumult is redoubled. Landry grabs him frantically.)

Mr Jadwin!

Jadwin

Now at them, Landry! Buy! Buy! Buy!  
(Marble and Emroy gather by him)

Marble

Buy how much, sir?

Jadwin

As much as they'll sell!

Elliot

But there is no limit; they are mad to get rid of it!

Jadwin

There's no limit to our buying! Buy anything! Buy them to a standstill!

(Makes a prefatory effort to get into the pit. Failing, stands on a bench at front of right of pit)  
Give eighty-five for July!

Chorus of voices

Jadwin! He's got something up his sleeves! Look out! Now watch!  
etc.

Marble & Elliot

Give eighty-five for July!

Landry  
Eighty-five!

Jadwin  
Eighty-five for July wheat! Well, where is it? You were so anxious! Eighty-five!

Crookes  
(Springing forward)  
A million bushels at eighty-five!

Jadwin  
Sold!  
(The indicator marks eighty-five. There is a roar of approval from the galleries, followed by numbers of persons springing at Jadwin and offering him their wheat. Crookes and his followers sell large orders, Jadwin, Landry Marble, Elliot and Grossman taking them. The price, marked always on the indicator, jumps up and down, finally going down slowly. In the midst of the tumult.)

Secretary  
(Appearing at the rail in balcony)  
Order!

Official reporter  
(Hammering desk)  
Order! Order!  
(Cries of "Order" and "Silence". By degrees, the noise is stilled)

Secretary  
All trades with Gretry, Converse & Co. must be closed at once!  
(In the momentary continuance of the silence)

Hargus  
He's down, too.  
(Then a roar of voices from gallery and floor--- "Beaten!" "Smashed!" "Beaten at last!" "Smashed!" "Down!" "Beaten!" etc. Men dance wildly, hugging each other, Hats are thrown in the air. Torn paper is toosed up. Great excitement)

Jadwin  
It's a trick, a lie!  
(No one pays any attention to him. He springs down from the bench and begins to fight his way up the steps of the pit. Brokers drag at him mockingly, pulling his coat tails, etc)

Landry  
(Clinging to him and being dragged along)  
Come away, sir! For God's sake, Mr Jadwin, come away!

Chorus of voices  
Yah! Whoop! Yi, yi, yi! Busted! Hip! Hip! Hip! And a tiger!

A few other voices  
Shame! Order! Let him alone now! He's down! Shame!

Jadwin

(Mad with excitement, thrusting the interposing figures right and left)

Out of my way! Get out of my way! I'm not down!

(He gains the top, dragging Landry with him, and stands there supreme, holding Landry's hand and shouting above the din)

Damn you! Damn you all! I'm not down! I'm not down! It's a trick--a trick, I say! They're trying to sell me, out! Damn them! I GIVE A DOLLAR FOR JULY WHEAT!

(His hand is aloft; Landry is sobbing)

A DOLLAR FOR JULY WHEAT! Why don't you sell if wheat's going down! Why don't you sell if you've smashed my corner? Why don't you sell, Scannel? Why don't you see to me if I'm a smashed man--you, Calvin Hardy Crookes? Come on? Come on! You're afraid to sell! Why don't you? GIVE A DOLLAR FOR JULY WHEAT! I'm in the ring yet, by God! A DOLLAR FOR JULY WHEAT! You cowards! You curs! Where's your wheat now? You're afraid of me! You're afraid--afraid--afraid! A DOLLAR FOR JULY WHEAT! Afraid--Ha!ha!ha!

(Laughing madly)

A DOLLAR--HA! HA! HA! A DOLLAR FOR JULY WHEAT HA! HA! A DOLLAR FOR JULY WHEAT!

### C U R T A I N

FOR CALL, LANDRY PULLING JADWIN DOWN THE STEPS AND OUT, THE  
STAGE IN UTTER SILENCE, JADWIN MUTTERING: " A DOLLAR FOR JULY  
WHEAT!"

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-- "THE PIT" --

-- ACT V --

--:-- " T H E P I T " --:--

---

--:-- A C T V --:--

---



DATE 12-11-63  
6-50 1963  
#110

" G E E P I Q "

T H E P I T .

A C T V .

S C E N E :

Same as that of Act III.

(AT RISE. Laura, magnificently dressed in a scarlet evening gown, is discovered, reclining in a large chair, her eyes closed, apparently asleep. Except for the twilight glow coming through the conservatory, the room is dark. To Laura, enter Mrs. W., carrying a tray of tea and toast.

Mrs. W.

(Standing at door and looking about.)

Laura! Laura! where are you?

Laura.

(Opening her eyes wearily.)

Here.

Mrs. W.

(Advancing.)

Dinner's been delayed so long I thought you might like a cup of tea---just to stay your stomach.

Laura.

(Rising and crossing to sofa.)

No; I don't want anything. Drink it yourself.

Mrs. W.

Dear Mel I just got through dinner; I knew you and Curtis always wanted to be left alone on your birthday.

Laura.

Curtis evidently thinks so.

Mrs. W.

(After a momentary hesitation partaking of the toast and tea.)

Oh, don't worry, Laura, He'll be here presently.)

Laura.

I don't see how he CAN be much longer. My birthday has always been set aside for us to be together; you know that.

Mrs. W.

Yes, I know.

Laura.

I've put on my finest dress. I wanted to make myself very, very pretty for him. I wanted to make a last effort to win him back.

Mrs. W.

Something must have delayed him.

Laura.

Nothing should have delayed him today--nothing. I've had the date marked on his desk-pad for three months. Yesterday I said: "Tomorrow must be mine; to-morrow you'll give to me if you love me." For three months I've been looking forward to this. See here.

(She goes to desk and gets pad. Reads from it.)

Deposit margins with Clark & Reade. Buy---

(Throws the pad to the other end of the room.)

He's written business notes even over the memorandum of my birthday.

(Knock at the door.)

Come in.

(Enter servant.)

Servant.

(Carrying box.)

Mrs. Cressler's man left this with Mrs. Cressler's good wishes.

Mrs. W.

(Dropping toast and running to door.)

Oh, let me see!

Laura.

(To servant.)

Take it into the library with the others.

(Exit servant.)

Mrs. W.

(Disappointed. returning to her toast.)

Laura, you are SO unreasonable.

Laura.

(Pacing up and down) Unreasonable! He hasn't sent me even a box of roses! I don't want present from anyone else! I'd rather

have just the foolishhest little present from him-- just three words on a scrap of paper. He can't have been too busy for that.

Mrs. W.

(Carelessly.)

He probably didn't think of it.

Laura.

That's just it! He should have thought! He should have forgotten everything else in his love for me!

Mrs. W.

He's making money for you.

(Pointing.)

Look at all these-----

Laura.

(Frantically.)

I don't want his money! That's all I hear now from morning until night; money, money, money! I don't want it! I want my husband!

(Knock at door. Enter Butler.)

Butler.

Madam, shall I serve dinner?

Laura.

(Angrily.)

No! I told you not to serve it until Mr. Jadwin comes!

Butler.

But it has been ready an hour. The chef says it is being spoiled.

Laura.

Let it spoil then.

(He starts out.)

Wait! Serve it for the servants. Tell them it's my birthday treat. I shan't want any dinner.

Butler.

Yes, madam.

(Exits.)

Mrs. W.

(Finishing the toast.)

My dear girl, you must-----

Laura.

I don't care for any dinner!

(Goes to door R.)

I'm going to take off this gown! Curtis isn't coming!

(Exit R.)

Mrs. W.

Laura!

(The door is closed.)

Well, I don't know any man on top of earth who could make me go without my dinner!

(Enter Page through conservatory.)

Page.

(Wearily. Her clothing is comically disarranged.)

Hello, aunt Wess!

Mrs. W.

(Aghast at her appearance.)

Page Dearborn! Where have you been? You look as if you'd fallen into a sausage machine!

Page.

I've been in the Gallery at the Produce Exchange. You never saw anything like the crowd. There must have been a million people. This is what happened to me getting out.

Mrs. W.

The Savages!

Page.

(Discovering a rent.)

Got a pin?

(She receives one and uses it.)

I don't believe they can always be as they were today. Something extraordinary must have happened. I guess Curtis lost a lot of money. He'd looked done up. But they cheered him as he went out.

Mrs. W.

Where is he now?

Page.

I don't know. Landry's with him. That's what made me so late. Landry asked me to wait for him at the Auditorium and then he sent word that he couldn't come. Look at that hat! S

(Showing it.)

Did you ever see a feather like that? Landry and I are going to be married next week, Aunt Wess.

Mrs. W.

Good gracious! What's the hurry?

Page.

I'll never tell you. Only Landry grabbed me in the hall of the Board of Trade Building and said he was sick of the whole game, and he was going to leave Mr. Gretry and take a position in a railroad office, and he'd feel so much braver and stronger for the battle if he had me at his side, and would I marry him next week. He was so excited, and I said "Yes: I'll marry you any time you like"-- and I will!

Mrs. W.

Well, I must say! Things MUST have been dreadful down there. What happened?

Page.

Oh, it was very confusing. There were hundreds of men trying to get into a little hole in the middle of a platform, and the other men fought them, and then Curtis climbed up, and one of the men was so excited that he tore Curtis' new coat right up the back.

Mrs. W.

Have you had any dinner?

Page.

No; I don't want any.

Mrs. W.

Well, I must say! Hasn't anyone in the family an appetite?

Page.

Didn't Laura go in?

Mrs. W.

No. She's been taking on dreadfully because Curtis didn't come home on her birthday.

(Enter Laura R. She stands in door, garbed in soft, loose robe.)

Page.

I think she's very inconsiderate. I didn't make trouble because Landry couldn't come home with me.

Laura.

Oh---Landry!

Page

You needn't say "Oh Landry!" Landry's just as much to me as Curtis is to you---perhaps more!

Laura.

Then you wouldn't want him to ignore and neglect you; you said you wouldn't only a few months ago.

Page.

I didn't know then that day after day he was down there in La Salle Street, down in the heat and dust and noise, fighting the battle of his life with the wheat!

Laura.

Wheat, money; money, wheat! What do I care about the wheat?

Mrs. W.

Girls!

Page.

No, you don't care; that's just it, you don't care! And I can tell you this, Laura Jadwin, if you did care a little more about wheat - about your husband's business--if you had tried to enter more into his life, and sympathize, why---Just think, he may have been fighting a big fight today, and you don't know anything about it-- no, nor want to know! What do you care about the wheat-- that's what you said! Well, I don't care either, just for the wheat itself, but it's been Landry's business, and right or wrong--wright or wrong, good or bad, I'd put my two hands into the fire to help him!

Laura.

What does he care about my daily life? No--this wealth, all this money has stolen him from me! I hate it! I wish he might lose every dollar he has in the world if that would send him back to me!

Mrs. W.

Girls!

Laura

I'm alone all day--often all night--alone! I can't stand it; I won't stand it!

Page.

I think if I were---

Mrs. W.

(Admonishingly.)

Page!

Laura.

(Drawing herself up superbly before the mirror.)

Am I not beautiful-- beautiful-- more worth while than dollars and cents? Why should he desert me for his wheat? Why should he?

Page.

But if he does sometimes leave you alone---

Laura

Sometimes!

Page.

Well, do you think I'd mope and pine because my husband left me? No, I wouldn't! I'd help him buckle on his sword, and when he came back to me I wouldn't tell him how lonesome I'd been, but I'd take care of him, and cry over his wounds, and tell him to be brave with me!

Laura.

His wounds.

Mrs. W.

Yes; Curtis got his coat torn, Laura; didn't Page tell you?

Laura.

He doesn't come to me even with his wounds! He doesn't let me be interested in his welfare! He doesn't seem to think I care!

Page.

And so you devote yourself to someone else - you ride and drive and talk with Sheldon Cortnell.

Laura.

(With quick temper.)

Suppose I do? Am I to stay here and talk to myself? Mr. Cortnell doesn't---- we've quarreled about Mr. Cortnell once, Page. I shan't take up the subject again.

(Knock at the door.)



Come in.

(Enter servant.)

Servant.

Mr. Jadwin?

Laura.

(Starting joyfully.)

Mr. Jadwin has come? Where is he? In the dining room?

Servant.

I don't know, madam, Mr. Gretry wants to see him.

Laura.

Mr. Jadwin isn't home yet.

(Servant nods and exits. Laura throws herself into a chair, sobbing a little.)

Page.

(Going to her.)

Laura!

Mrs. W.

Laura, my dear girl!

Laura.

Go away! Go away, both of you! I want to be alone!

(Mrs. W. glances at Page, who takes her by the arm and they exeunt. After a moment Laura rises and stands before a large picture of Jadwin. She walks quickly to the desk, finds the room too dark, touches button turning up lights, returns to desk, pens a note, rings for servant and then seals and addresses letter. Enter servant.)

Servant.

You rang?

Laura.

Yes. Send this to Mr. Sheldon Corthell, Fine Arts Building. At once, please.

Servant.

Yes, madam.

(Exits.)

Laura.

(Stands still for a moment, hesitates and then rushes wildly to the door, which she opens, and calls.)

Ward! Ward!

(Servant re-enters.)

You needn't send the letter after all, give it to me.

(He does so.)

That's all.

(Exit servant.)

What was I thinking of?

(Tears the letter into bits.)

Gardener.

(Off stage in conservatory.)

Good evening, sir.

Laura.

(Delighted.)

There he is! He's come at last!

(Runs to mirror, smooths her hair, returns to sofa and sits quietly, her back to the conservatory. Enter Corthell.

He walks down and stands behind her, she turns to face him.)

Corthell.

(Presenting her with a huge bunch of red roses.)

With many very happy returns of the day.

Laura.

(Springing up, astonished and somewhat frightened.)

You? You?

Corthell.

Have I startled you? I only came to-- to wish you a happy birthday.

Laura.

Oh, you remembered! YOU remembered! I might have known YOU would!

(She extends her hands, still holding the flowers; he clasps them.)

Corthell.

Remembered! I have never forgotten!

Laura.

(Withdrawing.)

No, no. You don't understand. I spoke before I thought. You don't understand.

Corthell.

I do understand-- your loneliness, your heart-hunger, everything that you have been denying for the past three months but that I have always understood.

Laura.

Then why have you let me be, why have you not made me love you-- you who did understand? Why did you stop making love to me only because I told you to stop? Why didn't you force me to understand myself?

(She is sobbing hysterically. He advances toward her and she retreats.)

Corthell.

Laura! Laura!

Laura.

No! No! Don't touch me! It is too late!

Corthell.

It is, not too late! Listen--listen to me!

Laura.

Oh, why weren't you a man strong enough to know a woman's weakness? You can only torture me now! Ah, I hate you! I hate you!

Corthell.

(Runs to her and takes her in his arms; she struggles to be free; he kisses her face and lips.)

You love me! I tell you, you love me! I defy you to say you do not love me!

Laura.

MAKE me love you then! MAKE me believe that you do love me!

Corthell.

You know--you must know how I have loved you! From the very first! My love has been my life, has been my death, my one joy and my great sorrow! You have always been in my heart, dearest; hour after hour, day after day, year after year! And now I've come to you at last when you needed me almost as I have needed you! Ah, I shall never let you go!

Laura.

(Renewing her attempt to free herself.)

No! Oh, don't, don't! Please! I am weak--weak and unstrung!  
Just a word and I would forget everything!

Corthell.

(Holding her.)

I speak that word and your own heart answers me in spite of you.  
You will forget--forget everything of unhappiness in your life---

Laura.

Please! Please!

(Suddenly abandons resistance.)

Ah, yes, yes! I will love you! I must love you! Make me love  
you!

Corthell.

Forget all your unhappiness! Forget your one mistake! Forget  
everything but that we love each other!

Laura.

Don't LET me think, then! Make me forget everything, every  
little hour, every little moment that passed before this day!  
Oh, if I remembered one I would kill you--kill you.

(Breaks away from him and sinks on the sofa.)

I don't know what I am saying! I am mad I think! Yes--it must  
be that! What have I said, what have we done, what are you  
here for?

Corthell.

(Leaning over her.)

To take you away. To give my whole life to making you happy.

Laura.

You will never leave me alone--never once?

Corthell.

Never once.

Laura.

I--I am so tired of being alone. I must never be alone again as  
long as I live-- never, never, never!

Corthell.

Never! This is my birthday too, sweetheart. I am born again to-  
night.

Laura.

(Clinging to his coat.)

You will always be my lover? Sheldon, love me always, always, with all your heart and soul and strength!

Corthell.

You shall never regret, my darling; never repent.

(Kisses her.)

We part now for a little while, and then never again. I'll come for you to-morrow.

(He walks toward a chair near the conservatory whereon are his hat and gloves. Laura sits looking straight ahead of her; her fingers picking at her dress. Corthell pauses, mounts the steps to the organ, seats himself and begins playing the "Apasionata". He has turned the lights low as they were in the similar scene in Act. III. Outside it is moonlight. As he plays, Laura rises and climbs the steps to him. She is near the top when enter Jadwin. He is worn, haggard, broken, Unmindful of the music, he staggers to the table and falls into a chair behind it. Laura, seeing him, reaches up and touches Corthell's arm. He stops playing and rises. Very slowly she walks across the stage to Jadwin and places her arm about his shoulders. Corthell follows as far as the centre of the stage.)

Jadwin.

(Smoothing her hand without looking up.)

Honey! My dear old girl!

Laura.

(Weeping softly.)

Curtis!

Jadwin.

Laura, it's dark--it's dark. Something happened. I don't remember--I can't remember very well; but it's dark--a little.

Laura.

(In a low whisper.)

Yes, it's dark. Something happened. Yes. I must not remember.

Jadwin.

(After a pause.)

It's over, dear; the long fight--over, and we're down-- together. You recollect that farm house I was talking about? I guess we've got to go back there now-- chumming, working shoulder to shoulder. You-- you won't care?

Laura.

Care? Ah, Curtis!

(There is a momentary silence. She gently withdraws and goes to Corthell, with whom she shakes hands.)

This time it is goodbye.

Corthell.

Laura! Your promise?

Laura.

It was all a mistake. I was a child; a wicked child. Ah, I love him.

Corthell.

I want you so.

Laura.

He needs me-- and I love him. Goodbye.

(She returns to Jadwin, resuming her former attitude.

Corthell slowly puts on his gloves and, hat in hand, opens the door at back. He stands looking at Laura.)

Newsboy.

(Heard through the conservatory.)

Extra! Extra! All about the smash of the wheat corner! All about the failure of Curtis Jadwin!

(Jadwin grasps convulsively at Laura; Laura sinks on her knees beside him. Corthell exits.)

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