BORN YESTERDAY

was presented by Max Gordon at the Lyceum Theatre, New York City, on February 4, 1946. It was staged by the author. Donald Oenslager designed the setting, and Miss Holliday was dressed by Mainbocher.

The cast was as follows:

BILLIE DAWN ......................................... Judy Holliday
HARRY BROCK ........................................... Paul Douglas
PAUL VERRALL ........................................ Paul Douglas
ED EVANS .................................................... Gary Merrill
SENATOR NORVAL HEDGES ................................. Otto Hulitt
MRS. HEDGES ............................................ Larry Oliver
EDDIE BROCK ............................................. Mona Bruns
THE ASSISTANT MANAGER ............................. Frank Otto
HELEN ...................................................... Carroll Ashburn
A BELLHOP .................................................... William Harmon
ANOTHER BELLHOP ..................................... Rex King
A BARBER ..................................................... Ted Mayer
A MANICURIST .......................................... Mary Laslo
A BOOTBLACK ............................................ Parris Morgan
A WAITER .................................................... C. L. Burke

ASSISTANT TO MRS. KANIN ........................................ Hal Getson
COSTUMES (OTHER THAN MISS HOLLIDAY'S) ................... Ruth Kanin
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER ........................... David M. Pardoll
STAGE MANAGER ........................................... William Harmon
UNDERSTUDIES ............................................. Adele Robertson

The scene is Washington, D.C.
Time: 1946
ACT ONE: September
ACT TWO: About two months later
ACT THREE: Late that night
**BORN YESTERDAY**

**ACT ONE**

**SCENE:** This happens in the sitting room of Suite 67D, a large part of the best hotel in Washington, D.C. 67D is so called because it is a duplex apartment occupying the sixth and seventh floor of Wing D. It is a masterpiece of offensive good taste, colorful and lush and rich. C. a circular staircase and balcony. On balcony a huge ottoman and two doors which lead to bedroom suites. In C. of R. wall is an ornate fireplace, complete with andirons, logs, etc., and flanked on either side by a small, decorative chair. On mantel of fireplace is an antique vase, empty. Directly over fireplace unit is a large mirror in an elaborate gilt frame. There are glass light-brackets above and on either side of fireplace. Upright of fireplace is a swinging door which leads to service wing. This door has a step on its lower downstage corner so that it can be left open when necessary. In up r. corner a Swedish modern sideboard. The two main doors are in U.L.C. wall, opening on stage. On either side of doors is a high-backed chair. The area from balcony to L. wall is a platform 14 inches high and 3 feet deep with two steps on the D.S. edge, leading into room.

Directly below L. side of platform is a bookcase unit, empty. Back of bookcase and out of sight of audience is a small rack on which hats are placed. L. side of stage consists of a large circular window with drapes and curtains, and two French doors leading to terrace. In the distance the Capitol dome can be seen. D.L.C. are a Lawson-type sofa and coffee table. L. of sofa is an end table, with drawer. D.R.C. is a single pedestal, ornate round table. L. of table, an armchair. R. of table, a straight-back chair and up-stage of table a small satin chair. On table there is a gilded telephone.

**AT RISE:** It is nine P.M. The main doors are open, as are doors on balcony, U.B.C. Up R.C., in front of balcony steps is
a chambermaid's cleaning unit, which consists of a rolling platform with a cabinet for clean linens in C. of it, and a large cloth bag on each end for dirty linen. It also contains a broom, dust-pan, whisk-broom and feather duster.

Telephone on table is ringing as curtain rises. On second ring, a maid (HELEN) comes in from service wing, carrying a vase of lilies of the valley. She crosses L. and sets vase on end-table L. of sofa, then goes off to service wing. She passes the ringing phone, looks at it, but does not condescend to answer it. On fourth ring a MAN in ball walks by open door. He looks in, but passes. Phone rings once more, then stops. A moment later, MAN returns and stands in doorway, then comes into room, looks around, picks up matches from top of bookcase U.L.C., and lights cigarette with them. This is PAUL VERRALL, of the New Republic's Washington staff. VERRALL is in his middle thirties, personable, alert, energetic. He has a tendency to take things, and himself, too seriously. He knows this. He carries two books, a copy of The New Republic and some newspapers. He wears eyeglasses. HELEN comes in from service wing, carrying five ashtrays, as he lights his cigarette.

PAUL. Who's coming in here, Helen, do you know?
HELEN. (Crossing to end-table L.) Hello, Mr. Verrall. No, I don't.
PAUL. A Harry Brock, by any chance?
HELEN. I'm not the room clerk, please.
PAUL. . . supposed to meet this guy, that's all. I wondered if maybe he was coming in here. (HELEN looks at card stuck in among flowers.)
HELEN. Brock.
PAUL. (Looking around.) I figured.
HELEN. Who's Brock?
PAUL. Harry Brock.
HELEN. (Putting card back into flowers.) Never heard of him.
PAUL. You will, Helen. Big man. Ran a little junk yard into fifty million bucks, with no help from anyone or anything—except World War II.
HELEN. Anybody checks into 67D I got no desire to meet. Believe me.
PAUL. Why not?

HELEN. Listen, you know what they charge for this layout? (About to continue, impressively, when PAUL interrupts.)
PAUL. Two hundred and thirty-five a day.
HELEN. Who told you?
PAUL. Frank.
HELEN. Oh.
PAUL. What about it?
HELEN. (Placing ashtray on coffee table.) Listen, anybody's got two hundred and thirty-five a day to spend on a hotel room there oughta be a law.
PAUL. . . too many laws already.
HELEN. (Crossing to table D.R.C.) While I'm getting eighteen a week I don't see why anybody should spend two hundred and thirty-five a day.
PAUL. . . for a hotel room.
HELEN. (Placing ashtray on table.) That's what I say.
PAUL. (Smiling.) I know some people who'd call you a Communist.
HELEN. (Crossing to fireplace, placing ashtray. Darkly.) Tell 'em I'm thinkin' about it. Seriously. (PAUL is at window, looking out over the city. HELEN crosses U.L.) Changed much, you think?
PAUL. What?
HELEN. (Placing ashtray on bookcase.) Washington?
PAUL. Not enough. I could stand a little more change. The idea of the war wasn't to leave everything the same, you know.
HELEN. . . . trouble with you, Mr. Verrall, you think too much. Most fellas your age get more—(she breaks off abruptly as BELLHOP enters, carrying two large suitcases, overnight bag and a jeweled box. HE has a large ring with a hotel pass key around his neck. HE is followed by EDDIE BROCK, who is HARRY BROCK's cousin—and servant—carrying a large leather liquor case and an old Gladstone suitcase. SECOND BELLHOP follows EDDIE, carrying BROCK'S luggage—two large suitcases and a two-suiter.)
EDDIE. This stays down. The rest goes up. (EDDIE crosses R., sets bag near fireplace, liquor box on floor below sideboard U.R.)
BELLHOP. Yes, sir. (Goes upstairs and into upstage room. SECOND BELLHOP follows, goes into other room. HELEN pulls her cleaning unit out service door and goes. PAUL is on his way out. As HE reaches door, however, he steps aside. HARRY BROCK stamps in, followed by ASSISTANT MANAGER. He wears his hat, carries a camelhair coat. Then BILLIE DAWN appears. BROCK is a huge man
in his early forties. Gross is the word for him. BILLIE is breathtakingly beautiful and breathtakingly simple.)

ASSISTANT MANAGER. (Proudly.) Here we are! (BROCK and BILLIE are looking around. BILLIE wears a mink coat and carries another. Also a large box of candy and an armful of movie magazines. BROCK is impressed by the room, but tries to conceal it. HE sees PAUL, but does not particularly notice him.)

BROCK. (Without enthusiasm. Crossing R. to fireplace.) It's all right. (BILLIE stands in front of chair R. of main door. EDDIE takes BROCK'S coat and hat and puts them on chair at fireplace.)

ASSISTANT MANAGER. (Pointing off R.) Service wing. (Pointing off L.) Terrace. (Going toward staircase.) And the bedchambers are right this way. (HE goes up. BILLIE follows. EDDIE is unpacking bottles of liquor from leather box and putting them on sideboard U.R. PAUL is still present. BROCK crosses to sofa, sits and takes off one shoe.)

PAUL. (A step forward to R. of sofa, extending his hand.) Hello, Mr. Brock.

BROCK. (Brusquely, ignoring PAUL'S hand.) How are ya? (He turns away. PAUL shrugs and leaves. BROCK removes his other shoe. A sudden glance at door.) Who the hell was that?

EDDIE. Search me.

BROCK. What kinda a joint is this, people in and outa your place all the time? (ASSISTANT MANAGER returns.)

ASSISTANT MANAGER. Mrs. Brock seems delighted with the bedchambers.

BROCK. It's not Mrs. Brock! (FIRST BELLHOP comes down and EDDIE tups him as he reaches first step.)

ASSISTANT MANAGER. (A gulp.) I see.

BROCK. All right. Just don't get nosey. (FIRST BELLHOP closes main doors and goes.)

ASSISTANT MANAGER. Not at all.

BROCK. There ain't no Mrs. Brock except my mother and she's dead.

ASSISTANT MANAGER. I see.

BROCK. (Snapping fingers. To EDDIE.) Eddie! ... Take care of 'im. (ASSISTANT MANAGER turns to EDDIE. EDDIE comes over, reaches into pocket, takes out roll of bills. Looks at BROCK. They reach a swift, silent understanding as to how much. EDDIE hands ASSISTANT MANAGER two ten dollar bills.)

ASSISTANT MANAGER. (To EDDIE.) Thank you. (Then, to BROCK.)

That is, thank you. So much. (SECOND BELLHOP comes down, EDDIE tups him as he goes.)

BROCK. (Loud and fast.) All right, all right. Just listen. Anybody works in this room just tell 'im to do it good and do it quick and nobody'll get hurt. I'm a big tipper, tell 'em, and I don't like a lotta people around all the time and I don't like to wait for nothin'. I ain't used to it.

ASSISTANT MANAGER. I'm sure everything will be just that, Mr. Brock. (He bows, low.)

BROCK. (With a backhand wave.) Okay! Knock off! (ASSISTANT MANAGER is caught at the bottom of his bow. Straightens up, awkwardly.)

ASSISTANT MANAGER. Thank you very much, Mr. Brock. (He leaves.)

BROCK. (Rising and shouting.) Billie! (Buzzer sounds.)

BILLIE. (Appearing on balcony, echoing his tone.) What?

BROCK. (Indicating room.) Not bad, huh?

BILLIE. (Without enthusiasm, circling ottoman.) It's all right.

EDDIE crosses L. to door.

BROCK. (Sore.) All right, she says! You know what this place costs a day?

BILLIE. (Still moving.) Two thirty-five. You told me. (She leaves, with a bored wave of her hips. BROCK walks back to sofa and sits. Takes off tie. EDDIE opens door. ED DEVERY comes in, slightly drunk.)

DEVERY. Hello, Eddie.

EDDIE. Hello. (About ED DEVERY. Thirty years ago, when he was secretary to a great Supreme Court Justice, he was known as a young man destined for greatness. The white star shine clearly on his forehead. Fifteen years later, he was still so known except to himself. He knew then that he had lost his way. Now everyone knows. They speak of his past brilliance in law and charitablely forget that he now has but one client, HARRY BROCK, who might have difficulty in finding a reputable lawyer to serve him. But ED DEVERY is past caring. Brock represents over $100,000 a year, which buys plenty of the best available Scotch. He puts his hat and briefcase on chair R. of door.)

DEVERY. (To BROCK, as he comes down into room.) Welcome to our city.

BROCK. Yeah.

EDDIE. (Following DEVERY.) Say, I got this ticket to be fixed.
(Reaches into his pocket, searching for it.)
DEVEREY. (Annoyed.) What's it about?
EDDIE. Ah, some loose just as we blew into town. Here. (Hands over pink traffic summons.)
DEVEREY. (Loud because irritated) I should like to impress one thing on your non-existent intellect—the fact that I am a lawyer does not mean that I own the law.
EDDIE. (Outraged innocence.) What'd I do? What'd I do?
DEVEREY. (Resigned.) All right. I'll see what I can manage. (Takes deep, weary breath, puts traffic ticket in pocket. EDDIE goes to side-board.)
BROCK. (To DEVEREY.) You plastered again?
DEVEREY. (Crossing to BROCK.) . . . going to be all right. May cost slightly more than we estimated, but no cause for alarm.
BROCK. (Suspicious.) How much more?
DEVEREY. It's negligible.
BROCK. Why more?
DEVEREY. Supply and demand, Harry. Crooks are becoming rare in these parts. Therefore they come high. Don't worry.
BROCK. What do you mean, don't worry? This kinda stuff ain't deductible, y'know.
DEVEREY. (Thinks a moment, smiling, then crossing c.s.) I'm not so sure. Perhaps we should make a trial issue of it. (As though dictating.) "Item: one bribe, $80,000."
BROCK. (Outraged.) Eighty? (Phone rings.)
DEVEREY. (Turning to BROCK.) What's the matter? (EDDIE crosses to phone.)
BROCK. You said—uh—negligible.
DEVEREY. . . figured fifty, didn't we?
EDDIE. (Answering phone.) Yeah?
BROCK. (To DEVEREY.) You're very handy with my dough, you know it?
EDDIE. (On phone.) . . . Yeah, he is. Who wants 'im? . . . Wait a second. (To DEVEREY.) Some guy for you. Verrall. (BROCK chews on match-stick pétulantly.)
DEVEREY. (Going to phone.) Thanks. (Takes phone from EDDIE.

EDDIE takes BROCK's coat and hat, and his own suitcase into service wing. DEVEREY, into phone.) How are you, Paul? . . . Good . . .
How's the crusade business? (He laughs at PAUL's reply.) . . . Sure, any time now. Sooner the better. Fine. . . . See you . . .
(Hangs up.)
BROCK. What's all that?
DEVEREY. Paul Verrall. I told you about him.
BROCK. I don' remember no Verrall.
DEVEREY. (Crossing to BROCK.) He's a writer. New Republic. Wants an interview. Smart boy. He's just back from a long time in Europe with lots of ideas and lots of energy.
BROCK. I don' wanna talk to no writers. I gotta get shaved.
DEVEREY. I think you'd better talk to this one.
BROCK. What's so important?
DEVEREY. Just do it.
BROCK. Why?
DEVEREY. This is one of the few fellows in Washington to look out for. Thing to do is take him in. Then he doesn't go poking.
BROCK. (Loud.) Eddie!
DEVEREY. How's Billie?
BROCK. She's all right. Upstairs. (EDDIE comes in from service wing.) Get me a shave up here.
EDDIE. (Crossing to table D.R.C.) Right. ( Picks up phone.)
DEVEREY. Harry—
BROCK. What?
EDDIE. (On phone.) Barber Shop.
DEVEREY. Tell Billie to wear something nice and plain for the Senator. He may be bringing his wife.
BROCK. Tell'er yourself. You ain't pregnant.
EDDIE. (On phone.) This is Harry Brock's apartment. Send up a barber and a manicure. Right away. . . Harry Brock! . . . That's right. . . . Okay, make it snappy. (Starts to hang up.)
BROCK. And a shine!
EDDIE. (An overlapping echo, into phone.) And a shine! (He hangs up.) Be right up.
DEVEREY. (At c.s., lighting cigarette.) Eddie, how would you like to save my life?
EDDIE. Soda or plain water?
DEVEREY. Next.
EDDIE. Right! (Goes to mix drinks up R.)
BROCK. (Rising, removing jacket.) Don't worry about Billie. One
thing, she knows how to dress. You know what it costs me for
clothes for her?

DEVEREY. (Crossing down to table.) That's not all I'm worried
about, Harry.

BROCK. What? (Tosses jacket on back of sofa.)

DEVEREY. Well, did you have to bring Billie?

BROCK. (Big.) I may be here God knows how long. (Rolls up
tshirt sleeves.)

DEVEREY. (Crossing to sofa.) Trouble is, this is a city of few
secrets and much chat.

BROCK. Anybody chats me I'll bust 'em in half;

DEVEREY. Fine. That'll get you right where you want to go. Up
with the dress-for-dinner bunch. (EDDIE crosses L., bringing drink
to DEVEREY, and holding one for himself.)

BROCK. (Sits.) What do I care?

DEVEREY. I don't know. What do you care? (EDDIE hands him
drink.) Thanks. (EDDIE goes out to service wing, consuming his
drink en route. DEVEREY sits beside BROCK.) Listen, Harry, you've
got a chance to be one of the men who runs this country. Better
than that. You can run the men who run it. It takes power. You've
got some. It takes money. You've got plenty. Above all, it takes
judgment and intelligence. (A long pause. DEVEREY calmly sips
his drink. BROCK gets the inference with a sudden spasm.) That's
why you pay me a hundred thousand a year. (EDDIE returns with
bottle of Poland Water. He puts it on floor near sideboard.)

BROCK. What's all the excitement?

DEVEREY. Nothing. I'm just trying to make it clear where I fit in.

BROCK. You don't have to holler.

DEVEREY. All right.

BROCK. (Rising.) Honest to God, I thought I done sump'n wrong!

(He moves around to back of sofa, and crosses R.)

DEVEREY. (In charge.) When Verrall gets here, be friendly. Treat
him nicely. Don't bully him. Just be yourself. Treat him like a doll
you're trying to make.

BROCK. (Whirling in his tracks, shocked.) Wait a minute! (Buzzer
rings, EDDIE starts for door.)

DEVEREY. (Rising.) . . . leave you alone with him. Better that way. I
want to see Billie, anyway. (DEVEREY crosses to door, beading off
EDDIE with a gesture. ADMITS VERRALL. EDDIE goes out to service
wing.) Hello, Paul.

PAUL. Ed. (THEY shake hands.)

DEVEREY. (As PAUL comes into room.) Harry Brock, Paul Verrall.

PAUL. How do you do, sir? (Bow, slightly and sharply. A habit.
THEY shake hands.)

BROCK. How are ya? (Looks at PAUL, quizzically.) Ain't I see you
some place before? Lately? (PAUL smiles.) Excuse me for my coat
off. I have to get shaved and so forth. I hope you don't mind.

PAUL. (To DEVEREY.) What've you been telling this guy about me?

DEVEREY. If you gentlemen will excuse me—(GOES upstairs.)

BROCK. (To DEVEREY.) Sure—(To PAUL.) Siddown! What'll you
drink? (CROSSES R. of table. PAUL sits L. of table.)

PAUL. Scotch, please—if you've got it.

BROCK. (A short laugh.) If I got it! (Calls out, loudly.) Eddie!!

(To PAUL.) I got everything. Where you think you are? (EDDIE
comes in from service wing on the run.) Where the hell you been?

EDDIE. Nothing. —

BROCK. Stick around, willya, for Christ sake an' give the man a
Scotch and—(To PAUL.) soda?

PAUL. Plain water.

BROCK. (To EDDIE.) Plain water.

EDDIE. (To BROCK.) Right. Rye ginger ale for you?

BROCK. Right. (EDDIE crosses up R. to sideboard, mixes drinks.
BROCK continues to PAUL, happily, indicating EDDIE with his
thumb.) He always knows what I feel to drink. Yeah. He's worked
for me I don't know how many years. Also, he's my cousin. He
knows me insides out. (To EDDIE.) Right?

EDDIE. (Brightly.) That's right!

PAUL. Maybe I should be interviewing Eddie. (BROCK bowls at
the idea.)

BROCK. Hey, you maybe got sump'n there. That's pretty good.

(PUTS his foot on chair and leans toward PAUL.) What's it gonna
be, pal? A plug or a pan?

PAUL. Why——

BROCK. I like to know these things. Then I know how to talk, if I
know your angle.

PAUL. No angle. Just—well—just the facts.

BROCK. Oh, a pan! (Laughs, confident of his boorish charm. EDDIE
comes down with drinks.)

PAUL. Not exactly. (Taking drink.) Thanks. (EDDIE goes to liquor
case, begins unpacking cigarettes, monogrammed matchboxes and
humidor.)

BROCK. (To PAUL, picking up his drink.) It's okay. Don' worry.
Write what you want. See, the way I look at it is this way. You can't hurt me, you can't help me. Nobody can. (Raies silent roast to PAUL. THEY DRINK.) I'm only here talkin' with you 'cause Ed Devery asked me. (EDDIE crosses L., carrying humidor.) What the hell, I pay a guy a hundred grand a year for advice so I'm a sucker if I don' take it. Right?

EDDIE. (Automatically.) That's right!

BROCK. (Shouting angrily across room.) Butt out, willya?! (EDDIE bounces around, startled and scared, wondering what he has done to offend. He places humidor on C. section of bookcase, then goes back to liquor case for cigarettes. BROCK picks up his soft soap again and continues to PAUL.) Devery likes it when I get wrote about. (Goes to humidor, brings forth an individually boxed cigar.)

PAUL. Well, of course, in Washington, Mr. Brock, there's a certain value in the right kind of——

BROCK. (Crossing back to PAUL and interrupting.) Cut it out, willya? You're breakin' my heart. Washington! I licked every town I ever decided, so what's different? (Offering cigar to PAUL.) Have a cigar! (EDDIE crosses L. front of sofa and around back of it, putting cigarettes and matches on coffee table. Then, during following, crosses to table R., puts down boxes of cigarettes and matches, removes BROCK's glass, and returns to sideboard.)

PAUL. (Taking cigar.) Thanks. (Looking at it carefully.) I'll give it to a Congressman. (Puts it in pocket.)

BROCK. (Crossing to C.) Five bucks apiece they cost me. From Cuba some place.

PAUL. (Smiling.) Well, in that case I'll give it to a Senator!

BROCK. (Thoughtfully.) Senators're pretty big stuff around here, huh?

PAUL. Yes. (BROCK snorts in disgust.) Why? Shouldn't they be?

BROCK. Listen, you know what's a Senator to me? A guy who makes around two hundred bucks a week. (PAUL smiles, takes a few sheets of folded note-paper from breast pocket, pencil from another pocket, and makes note. BROCK crosses L., sits on sofa. Lighting cigarette.) What you puttin' in?

PAUL. (Writing.) Your little joke.

BROCK. (Delighted.) You like it, huh?

PAUL. First class.

BROCK. Maybe I oughta be on the radio!

PAUL. Maybe.

BROCK. How much you wanna bet I make more money than those AMOS and Andy? (EDDIE takes bottle of Poland Water upstairs into Brock's room)

PAUL. No bet. (BROCK leans back happily. He feels he is doing well. He likes PAUL. Stretches out comfortably.)

BROCK. (Expansively.) Well, fella, what d'you wanna know?

PAUL. (Suddenly.) How much money have you got?

BROCK. (Startled.) What?

PAUL. (Rising, crossing to him.) How much money have you got?

BROCK. (Sitting up.) How should I know? (Spreading arms wide.) What am I, an accountant?

PAUL. You don't know?

BROCK. Not exactly.

PAUL. Fifty million?

BROCK. I tell you the truth. I don' know.

PAUL. Ten million?

BROCK. Maybe.

PAUL. One million?

BROCK. More.

PAUL. (Pressing.) How much?

BROCK. (With finality.) Plenty!

PAUL. (Giving up.) Okay. (Turns away, crosses back to his chair.)

BROCK. (Sitting up.) And listen, I made every nickel. Nobody ever gave me nothin'!

PAUL. Nice work. (Sits.)

BROCK. (Rising, crossing C.) I can tell a'ready. You're gonna give me the business.

PAUL. (Trying to charm him.) Wait a minute——

BROCK. (Overlapping.) Go ahead. I like it.

PAUL.—You've got me wrong.

BROCK. (Moving to PAUL.) Go ahead! Work for me! I got more people workin' for me than knows it. (Turns away.)

PAUL. What's your feeling on——?

BROCK. (Turning back.) Go ahead! Pan me. Tell how I'm a mugg and a roughneck. You'll do me good.

PAUL. Listen, Mr. Brock——

BROCK. (Crossing R. to PAUL, he takes off in high, gesturing graphically throughout.) Lemme tell you about Cleveland. In 1937 there's a big dump there, see, and the city wants to get rid of it. High class scrap. So I go out there to look it over myself. There's a lots of other guys there, too. From Bethlehem even and like that.
I didn't have a chance and I knew it. I figure I'm outta my class and I'm all ready to pull out when all of a sudden the goddamn-est thing comes out there in one of the papers. About me. A big write-up. It says my name and about how come the city is gonna do business with hoodlums. Mind ya, I was outa my class. I didn't have the kinda buttons a guy needs for a deal like that. So the next day—again. This time they got a picture of me. Next thing you know, a guy calls me up. A guy from the Municipal Commission. He comes up to see me and he says they don't want no trouble. So I naturally string 'im along and I get busy on the phone and I raise some dough with a couple of boys from Detroit. Then comes the big pan. On the front page. Next day I close the deal and in a week (Snaps his fingers.) I'martin'. (Eddie comes down stairs, goes to board.)

Paul. What's your point?

Brock. (Turning to him.) My point is you can't do me no harm if you make me out to be a mugg. Maybe you'll help me. Everybody gets scared, and for me that's good. Everybody scares easy.

Paul. Well, not everybody.

Brock. Well, enough. You can't hurt me. All you can do is build me up or shut up. Have a drink. (Snaps his fingers at Eddie, who comes down stairs, takes Paul's glass.)

Paul. (To Eddie.) No thanks. Really. (Eddie puts glass back, starts to turn away.)

Brock. (To Eddie, fiercely.) Do what I'm tellin' you! Who the hell pays you around here? (Eddie bounces, takes glass, looks at Brock, cowered, then goes to board. Brock indicates Eddie and continues gently.) When I'm home, he shaves me in the morning. I got my own barber chair. (To Eddie.) Right?

Eddie. (As usual.) That's right!

Brock. (Returning to sofa.) Well, go ahead, pal. I thought you wanted to intraview me. (A pause.)

Paul. Where were you born?

Brock. (Settling back.) Jersey. Plainfield, New Jersey. 1907. I went to work when I was twelve years old and I been workin' ever since. I tell you my first job. A paper route. (He pronounces it 'row!' Eddie puts drink beside Paul.) I bought a kid out with a swift kick in the keester.

Paul. (Writing.) And you've been working ever since.

Brock. (Missing the point.) Right. I tell you how I'm the top man in my racket. I been in it over twenty-five years. In the same
BROCK. (Darkly.) We'll make it good.
PAUL. (Quickly.) Who's we? (BROCK senses he is being cornered.)
BROCK. (Triumphant.) We is me, that's who!
PAUL. I see.
BROCK. Fancy talk don't go with me. (EDDIE opens door for BARBER, MANICURIST and BOOTBLACK.)
BARBER. Good evening. In here, sir?
BROCK. Yeah. (Removes his shirt, hands it to EDDIE. He wears a silk undershirt. Crosses R.)
PAUL. (Rising and crossing L.) Well, I'll get out of your——
BROCK. Don't go. Siddown! Siddown! (BARBER and MANICURIST go about their work. BROCK looks at PAUL and smiles.) Siddown—I like you. You play your cards right, I'll put you on the payroll. You know what I mean? (EDDIE takes BROCK's shirt upstairs. PAUL sits R. arm of sofa.)
PAUL. Sure.
BROCK. (To BARBER.) Once over easy and no talkin'. (BARBER nods head in understanding. To MANICURIST.) Just brush 'em up. I get a manicure every day. (He sits.)
MANICURIST. Yes, sir. (BOOTBLACK gets into position with his polishing kit, then notices BROCK's lack of shoes, looks up, confused.)
BROCK. (To BOOTBLACK, with an impatient motion.) Over there some place! (BOOTBLACK finds shoes on floor R. of sofa, picks them up, takes them, along with his equipment, upstage where he sits on second step and works. BROCK continues, to PAUL.) Keep goin'. It's okay. (BARBER puts towel around back of BROCK's neck.)
PAUL. I've been wondering what you're doing in Washington?
BROCK. (Genuinely.) None o' your goddamn business. (BARBER starts to put hair cloth on BROCK. EDDIE comes downstairs and goes out to service wing.)
PAUL. Sure it is.
BROCK. How come?
PAUL. You're a big man, Mr. Brock. (BARBER tucks in hair cloth.)
BROCK. (To BARBER, frantically.) Not so tight!
BARBER. Sorry, sir.
BROCK. (To PAUL.) Sightseein'. That's what I'm in Washington for. Sightseein'!
PAUL. All right.
BROCK. (Face to ceiling.) Put that in the write-up, then nobody'll be scared. (BARBER starts to apply brushless shaving cream to
working and waits, razor poised.)

BILLIE. (At foot of stairs. Slightly scared.) What's a matter?

BROCK. Where you think you're goin' with that?

BILLIE. (Casually.) Upstairs.

BROCK. Put it back! (MANICURIST and BOOTBLACK stop working as BROCK turns further out of position.)

BILLIE. I just wanted ——

BROCK. (Cutting her off sharply.) I know what you wanted. Put it back!

BILLIE. Why can't I ——?

BROCK. (Mean.) Because I say you can't, that's why. We got somebody comin'. Somebody important. I don't want you stinkin'! (A pause.)

BILLIE. Well, can't I just have ——?

BROCK. No! Now put it back and go on upstairs and change your clothes and don't gimme no trouble. (BILLIE stands motionless, humiliated. BROCK, in a sudden burst of impatience.) Do what I'm tellin' ya! (A tense moment, then BILLIE obeys. PAUL and DEVERY have half turned away in embarrassment. BROCK settles back in his chair. BARBER resumes shaving. BILLIE has replaced bottle, then starts upstairs, her flashing eyes on BROCK as she ascends. Her lips form a choice collection of invective. Silence. Nobody watches her go. At top of stairs, she turns and regards PAUL with strange interest, but continues her move. If we were close enough we might recognize the faint beginning of a smile. She goes into her room. EDIE enters from service wing, carrying pail of ice. Puts it on sideboard.)

DEVERY. (Crossing to C.) Barber, what'll you take to cut his throat? (BROCK sits up so suddenly that BARBER almost does so. BROCK rises, in a fury, whips off hair cloth, throws it on chair, crosses to DEVERY, towel in hand.)

BROCK. There's some kinda jokes I don't like, Ed ——

DEVERY. Don't get excited.

BROCK. Don't tell me what to do! (Suddenly pushes DEVERY's face, bard. DEVERY is startled and almost falls. PAUL steadies him. A gasp from MANICURIST as the room freezes in shocked surprise.)

DEVERY. (Straightening up, coming back to BROCK.) Jesus, Harry! It was just a joke.

BROCK. (Turning to BARBER.) That's all.

BARBER. Not quite finished, sir.

BROCK. (Sharply.) That's all, I told you. Beat it!

BARBER. Very good, sir.

BROCK. (To MANICURIST.) You, too. (To EDDIE, indicating the help.) Eddie, take care of 'em. (BARBER and MANICURIST gather their equipment. BOOTBLACK places shoes near sideboard. DEVERY crosses to sideboard, pours himself a double drink.)

PAUL. (A step u.c.) I guess I'd better be —— (EDDIE tips MANICURIST, then BARBER, then BOOTBLACK.)

BROCK. (Crossing to PAUL.) Don't go.

PAUL. I really should. I've got some work.

BROCK. (Wiping his face.) Stick around, can't you? Looks like you're about the only friend I got left around here.

PAUL. Well, I'm not far. If anyone starts beating you, just scream and I'll come running. (BROCK Laughs. BARBER, MANICURIST and BOOTBLACK leave, regarding BROCK expressively. EDDIE is clearing glasses.)

BROCK. (Shaking hands with PAUL.) You live in the hotel here?

PAUL. Right down the hall.

BROCK. Fine. (EDDIE goes out to service wing.)

PAUL. Other side of the tracks, of course.

BROCK. Say, don't kid me. I hear you do fine.

PAUL. (To DEVERY.) Good night, Ed.

DEVERY. (Quietly.) Night. (He drinks.)

BROCK. (To PAUL.) See you soon.

PAUL. (As he leaves.) Good night. Thanks for everything. (DEVERY crosses up C. to get brief-case at door.)

BROCK. (Moving to back of sofa.) Don't mention it.

DEVERY. I need Billie's signature on a few things. Eddie, too.

BROCK. (Still wiping face.) Sure. (Yells.) Billie! (DEVERY crosses to table L.)

BILLIE'S VOICE. What?

BROCK. Come on down here! Right away! (To DEVERY.) What you sore about?

DEVERY. Not sore, Harry.

BROCK. You look funny.

DEVERY. (Opening his case.) I know.

BROCK. Don't you feel good? You want a aspirin?

DEVERY. No, no. I'm fine. In fact, considering that I've been dead for sixteen years, I'm in remarkable health. (BILLIE comes down, fastening cuffs of the dignified dress into which she has changed.)

BROCK. (To DEVERY.) Swear to God, some time I don't understand
you at all.

DEVERY. (Smiling.) Some time?

BILLIE. (To BROCK.) What do you want?

BROCK. Ed.

DEVERY. ... few things I want you to sign, honey.

BILLIE. (Crossing to table k.) That's all I do around here is sign.

BROCK. Too bad about you. (To DEVERY.) When's he comin'? This Senator guy?

DEVERY. Any time now.

BROCK. I better get fixed up, huh? (DEVERY nods. Still in his undershirt, and shoeless, BROCK picks up his jacket and tie, starts up, then stops, looks at BILLIE. Goes behind her, then to her L., examining every detail of her get-up. She follows him with her eyes. U.L. of table BROCK looks at DEVERY, concerned.) She look all right to you?

BILLIE. (Disainfully.) Look who's talkin'!

DEVERY. (To BROCK.) Perfect.

BROCK. You sure, now?

BILLIE. (In a prideful whine.) What's the matter with me? (BROCK pays no attention to her.)

BROCK. (To DEVERY, as he goes upstairs.) Tell me if sump'n's wrong. I don't want to start off on no left foot.

DEVERY. Don't worry. (BROCK goes into his room. DEVERY brings out sheet of legal papers, spreads them out for BILLIE to sign. Hands her his fountain pen.)

BILLIE. What's got into him? (EDDIE comes in from service wing, picks up BROCK'S shoes, goes upstairs.)

DEVERY. Nothing. He just wants to make a good impression.

BILLIE. (Aloof.) So, let 'im.

DEVERY. (Pointing out a line.) Two places on this one, please.

BILLIE. (Signing first document, head close to paper.) What happened to all that stuff I signed last week?

DEVERY. (Smiling.) All used up.

BILLIE. I bet I signed about a million of these.

DEVERY. What you get for being a multiple corporate officer.

BILLIE. (Signing second document.) I am? (She looks up. DEVERY nods; she smiles.) What do you know!

DEVERY. ... come a long way from the chorus, all right.

BILLIE. (Proudly.) I wasn't only in the chorus. In "Anything Goes" I spoke lines.

DEVERY. Really?
BILLIE. (At liquor cabinet up r.) Look now, don't you start.
DEVERY. Better if you drink later, Billie, after they've gone.
BILLIE. What's the deal, anyway?
DEVERY. (Crossing back to l. of table.) No deal. Just important
people, that's all.
BILLIE. (U.R. of table.) Who? This Senator guy?
DEVERY. And Mrs. Hedges.
BILLIE. Harry told me this fella works for him.
DEVERY. In a way.
BILLIE. So what's he puttin' it on for?
DEVERY. I suppose he wants him to keep working for him.
BILLIE. (After a moment.) Too deep for me. (Buzzer sounds.)
DEVERY. (With a step to her, lowering his voice.) All you have to
do is be nice and no rough language.
BILLIE. (Does not like being coached. Crossing to sofa.) I won't
open my mush! (Pronounced to rhyme with 'push.' EDDIE comes
downstairs, goes to door.)
DEVERY. I didn't mean that.
BILLIE. I don't have to be down here at all, y'know. I could go up-
stairs. In fact I think I will. (She starts out, having decided she
has been insulted.)
DEVERY. (Intercepting her.) I'm telling you, Billie. Harry wouldn't
like it.
BILLIE. (Making violent about face.) All right all right all right!
(She moves to sofa, bristling, and sits. EDDIE opens door to admit
SENATOR NORVAL HEDGES and MRS. HEDGES. DEVERY moves
to greet them.)
DEVERY. (Washington jovially.) How are you, Norval?
HEDGES. Can't complain. (Comes down into room.)
DEVERY. (To MRS. HEDGES.) Haven't seen you for a long time,
Anna.
MRS. HEDGES. (Sweetly.) No, you haven't.
DEVERY. Come on in. (HEDGES is a worried man of sixty. Thin,
pale, and worn. MRS. HEDGES bears out Fanny Dixwell Holmes' com-
ment that Washington is a city filled with great men and the
women they married when they were very young. Except that the
Senator is not a great man. He merely looks like a great man.)
HEDGES. (C. to BILLIE.) Good evening.
BILLIE. Good evening.
DEVERY. (Moving between HEDGES and MRS. HEDGES.) Senator,
bursting into laughter.)

DEVEREY. Lots of people would like to know the answer to that one, Billie! (HEDGES and MRS. HEDGES now settle for BILLIE'S remark as a piece of big-town humor which they have never been able to appreciate. THEY join in laughter. EDDIE serves HEDGES with drink; then MRS. HEDGES. BILLIE indicates to EDDIE that she wants a drink. EDDIE shakes head in refusal and crosses back to sideboard. DEVEREY crosses to HEDGES.) What's back of this jam Mrs. R's gotten herself into?

HEDGES. Give her enough rope. I've said so from the start.

DEVEREY. I know.

HEDGES. . . trouble with these professional do-gooders is they never seem to — (BROCK enters from above. HE has changed his clothes, spruced up, wears red carnation. HE looks fine.)

BROCK. (Like a fanfare.) Hello, everybody!

DEVEREY. Here we are! (HEDGES rises. For some reason MRS. HEDGES rises, too.) Senator Hedges, Harry Brock.

BROCK. (Heartily) Say, it's about time us two got together, Senator. (Shakes hands with HEDGES, using both hands.)

HEDGES. About time.

BROCK. (Crossing to MRS. HEDGES.) And I suppose this is Mrs. Hedges?

MRS. HEDGES. That's right.

BROCK. (Extending his hand.) I certainly am happy to make your acquaintance. (She takes his hand, he unbalances her with cordiality.)

MRS. HEDGES. (Holding her pained hand.) Thank you so much. BROCK. (To MRS. HEDGES.) Sit down. (To HEDGES.) Senator, sit down. (They do so. BROCK stands C. EDDIE brings BROCK drink, then goes out.)

HEDGES. Have a good trip down?

BROCK. Oh, sure. I come down in my car. I came. (Sips his drink.) Had to stop off in Baltimore on the way. I got a yard there, you know. A junk yard.

HEDGES. Is that so?

BROCK. Yeah. Just a little racket. Tell you the truth, it ain't worth the trouble it takes to run it, but I like it. It was the second yard I picked up . . . Before that I only had one yard.

MRS. HEDGES. How many do you have now?

BROCK. Hell, I don't know. ( Stops abruptly. Then blushingly apologizes to MRS. HEDGES.) Excuse me!
BILLIE. Hah! I'll say! (BROCK's head snaps around.)
HEDGES. Eleven?
BROCK. Okay.
DEVERY. Where'll you be?
BROCK. (Awkwardly.) Well, I can drop by here if that's all right.
DEVERY. Sure.
BROCK. (Lamely.) It's right on my way. (BROCK and HEDGES drink. DEVERY smokes. BILLY rises. Pause.)
BILLIE. (To MRS. HEDGES.) You wanna wash your hands or anything, honey? (HEDGES and BROCK hastily drink, while DEVERY smokes furiously.)
MRS. HEDGES. (So shocked that her reply is soundless.) No, thank you. (BILLIE moves upstairs, languidly, through an atmosphere of tense embarrassment. EDDIE crosses to BROCK, takes his glass to sideboard, goes out.)
DEVERY. (To HEDGES.) I hope you're free on Friday night?
HEDGES. I think so. (To MRS. HEDGES.) Are we, dear?
MRS. HEDGES. Well, we can be.
DEVERY. Fine.
BROCK. (Crossing to sofa, sitting beside MRS. HEDGES.) Atta girl!
DEVERY . . . doing a little dinner. Few people I want Harry to meet.
HEDGES. And who want to meet him, I'm sure.
BROCK. (Coyly.) Say, listen, Senator. I'm just a junk man.
HEDGES. (For the record.) That's no disgrace in America.
DEVERY. (Almost sardonic.) No, not if you're a big junk man. (Crosses r. to back of table. A pause. BROCK puts arm on back of sofa, almost embracing MRS. HEDGES. She glances at his hand behind her.)
HEDGES. (Rises, crosses l. to BROCK. Softly.) I want to thank you, Mr. Brock. For everything.
BROCK. Call me Harry, Senator, will ya?
HEDGES. I haven't written you about it, Harry, because—well, you understand. But I want you to know that I'm grateful for all you've done. For your support.
BROCK. Don't mention it. Just tit for tat. (He stops, confused, then turns to MRS. HEDGES.) Excuse me!! (A horrified, apologetic look at HEDGES. He looks at floor, plainly ashamed of himself.)
MRS. HEDGES. (At sea.) Quite all right. (DEVERY goes to sideboard for further fortification.)

BROCK. (To HEDGES.) You see, Senator, what I think is like this—there's a certain kind of people oughta stick together.
HEDGES. My feeling. (Returns to his chair.)
BROCK. You know what I'm interested in. Scrap iron. I wanna buy it—I wanna move it—and I wanna sell it. And I don't want a lot of buttin' in with rules and regulations at no stage of the game.
HEDGES. Obviously.
BROCK. (Rising, moving to HEDGES.) I ain't talkin' about peanuts, mind you. All this junk I been sellin' for the last fifteen years—well, it's junk again. And I can sell it again once I lay my hands on it. Do you know how much scrap iron is layin' around all over Europe? Where the war was?
HEDGES. No, I don't.
BROCK. Well, I don't neither. Nobody knows. Nobody ever will know. It's more than you can think of. Well, I want to pick it up and bring it back where it belongs. Where it came from. Where I can use it. Who does it belong to, anyways?
MRS. HEDGES. Why, isn't that interesting!
HEDGES. I have a copy for you of the preliminary survey made by—
BROCK. (Crossing r. above table, sitting chair r. of table.) Boil it down and give it to me fast. I didn't come down here to have to do a lotta paper work. See, the way I work is this way. It's every man for himself. Like dog eat dog. Like you gotta get the other guy before he gets you.
HEDGES. Exactly.
BROCK. (With relish.) What I got in mind is an operatin' combo—all over the world. There's enough in it for everybody—if they're in, that is. Up to now, I'm doin' fine. Everybody's lined up, everybody understands everybody. I wanna get movin', see?
—That's all. Only thing is, Ed here comes up with some new trouble every day. This law, that law, tariffs, taxes, State Department, this department, that department—(EDDIE comes in from service wing, goes to sideboard.)
DEVERY. (Crossing to table, taking position between BROCK and HEDGES.) I'm sure you understand, Norval, that in an operation of this kind—
BROCK. Listen, all that stuff is just a lotta hot air to me. There's a way to do anything. That's all I know. It's up to you guys to find out how.
DEVERY. Norval's been working along those lines.
HEDGES. Yes. The Hedges-Keller Amendment, for example, guarantees no interference with free enterprise—foreign or domestic. We're doing everything we can to get it through quickly.

BROCK. Well, see that you do, 'cause that's why I'm here. To see that I get what I paid for.

DEVERY. (Picking up HEDGES' glass.) One more?

HEDGES. I think not.

BROCK. (Insisting.) One for the road.

HEDGES. (Giving in.) All right. (DEVERY gives glass to EDDIE, who refills it.)

BROCK. (Leaning back.) How's things look to you, Senator?

HEDGES. Generally?

BROCK. Yeah, generally.

HEDGES. Well, not too bad. Just a question of staying on the alert.

BROCK. Tellin' me! (DEVERY gets drink from EDDIE, brings it to table.)

HEDGES. (A look at DEVERY.) I said to Sam only last week, "This country will soon have to decide if the people are going to run the Government or the Government is going to run the people."

BROCK. You said it. You know where I'd be if I had to start my business today? Up the creek! (Again mortified, looks across to MRS. HEDGES.) Excuse me! (This time she simply nods.)

DEVERY. That's good sound thinking, Norval.

HEDGES. Thank you.

DEVERY. Worthy of Holmes.

HEDGES. Great man, Holmes.

DEVERY. My personal god.

BROCK. Who?

DEVERY. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Junior.

HEDGES. A wonderful man.

BROCK. Is he comin' Friday night? (Awkward pause. EDDIE takes MRS. HEDGES' glass.)

DEVERY. (Quietly.) I don't think so.

BROCK. Oh.

HEDGES. (Rising.) Well, we mustn't keep you.

MRS. HEDGES. (Rising.) No, we mustn't.

BROCK. (Rising.) Don't go. We stay up all the time.

HEDGES. Well, don't think of this as a proper visit. We just wanted to say hello. We'll be seeing a lot of each other, I'm sure.

(The HEDGES start to go.)

BROCK. (Putting hand on HEDGES' shoulder.) Right. Now, wait a

SECOND! (Moves quickly to cigar box, takes out a double handful of cigars.) Brought these down special. (Hands them to HEDGES.)

HEDGES. (Taking them.) Very kind of you. (Moves to door.)

BROCK. Don't mention it.

HEDGES. Good night, Harry. (BILLIE returns.)

BROCK. (Putting HEDGES on back as they cross to door.) Senator, it's a pleasure.

MRS. HEDGES. (Going to door.) Good-night, Mrs. Brock.

DEVERY prompts BILLIE.

BILLIE. (On stairs.) Good-night.

MRS. HEDGES. Good-night and thank you so much. (She starts to shake hands with BROCK, changes mind, withdraws hand.)

BROCK. For what? Wait till I get settled down here. I'll show you jumpin' to thank me for.

MRS. HEDGES. Good-night, Good-night, Ed. (GETS HEDGES' hat.)

DEVERY. (Moving to door.) See you tomorrow, Norval.

HEDGES. That's right. Good-night. (The HEDGES leave. DEVERY closes door after them. BROCK mops his brow, unbuttons coat.)

BILLIE. (Crossing to sofa.) Good-night, all. (EDDIE clears glasses.)

BROCK. Okay, Eddie. Knock off.

EDDIE. Right. (He starts out.)

DEVERY. Wait a minute. (EDDIE stops. DEVERY goes to his briefcase, gets out some papers, which EDDIE signs during following scene, sitting R. of table.)

BILLIE. Drips.

BROCK. What?

BILLIE. I said they're drips.

BROCK. Who the hell are you to say?

BILLIE. (Sitting.) I'm myself, that's who.

BROCK. Well, shut up. Nobody asked you.

BILLIE. (Haughtily.) Pardon me for livin'. (BROCK crosses to chair L. of table, sits, takes off shoes. Looks at DEVERY—then, to BILLIE.)

BROCK. Get upstairs.

BILLIE. Not yet.

BROCK. (Rising and crossing C. angrily.) Get upstairs! (The usual tenseness between them. Finally BILLIE rises, goes upstairs with an air of going because she wants to. Closes her door behind her. BROCK moves to sofa and sits. Lights cigarette, and
cogitates moodily.)

EDDIE. (Pointing to document.) Here, too?

DEV. Yes.

EDDIE. (Looking up at DEV., offended.) Since when I'm only the Vice-President?

DEV. You're slipping.

EDDIE. I used to be the whole President. Right?

BROCK. (Automatically.) That's right! (He comes to, shoves across to EDDIE.) Butt out, willya? (EDDIE resumes signing.) She's gonna be in the way, that dame.

DEV. What're you going to do about it?

BROCK. I don't know. Right now I feel like to give her the brush.

DEV. Pretty complicated.

BROCK. I know.

DEV. At the moment, she owns more of you than you do. On paper.

BROCK. Your idea.

DEV. (Crossing to r. of sofa.) Yes, and a damned good one, too. Keeps you in the clear and you know what it saves you?

BROCK. I know, I know. You told me a million times.

DEV. Sorry.

BROCK. You better think sump'n up. She's gonna louse me up all the way down the line... God damn dumb broad!

DEV. Send her home.

BROCK. No.

DEV. Why not?

BROCK. (Softly.) I'm nuts about 'er. (DEV. looks at him quickly, in surprise.)

DEV. (Turning away, crossing r. to table.) Can't have your cake and eat it.

BROCK. What?

DEV. Just a saying.

BROCK. It don't make sense.

DEV. All right. (BROCK thinks it over. Then apparently giving up, leans back on sofa. A long pause. Suddenly straightens up.)

BROCK. (To DEV.) What's cakes got to do with it?

DEV. Nothing, Harry. (EDDIE finishes signing.)

EDDIE. Okay? (DEV. picks up papers, looks over signatures.)

DEV. Okay. (EDDIE picks up BROCK's shoes, goes upstairs to BROCK's room.)

BROCK. . . . must be a way to smarten 'er up a little. Ain't there?
slumps into chair l. of table, and sulks. Pause. BROCK smells his carnation, absentm.) What's so important I should get married all of a sudden?
DEVER. (Patiently.) You're moving up, Harry.
BROCK. (Turning to DEVER.) Huh?
DEVER. (Coming down to table.) Bigger places. Bigger people. No matter what goes on underneath, these people make sure of their respectable fronts.
BROCK. The hell with 'em.
DEVER. That's just talk. You're in the Big League now, and there are certain rules.
BROCK. Like what? Like you got to be married?
DEVER. (Crossing r. of table.) No. Like you can't expect to just pass off a setup like this. There's such a thing as being too colorful.
(Sits at table across from BROCK.)
BROCK. All right. I'll let you know. (Rising, crossing c., worried.) But if I do or if I don't, we gotta do sump'n with her! (Looks upstairs.) She just don't fit in. Do you think so?
DEVER. Fit?
BROCK. Every time she opened her kisser tonight, sump'n wrong come out!
DEVER. The hell of it is she doesn't realize.
BROCK. (Crossing r. Desperately.) Ed, couldn't you have a talk with 'er?
DEVER. . . . take more than a talk, I'm afraid.
BROCK. Then what? (Crosses l.c. to back of sofa, wrestling with his problem.)
DEVER. (As BROCK crosses.) It's a big job, Harry. It's not easy to make a person over. Maybe impossible. She has to have a great many things explained to her. I won't be around enough, and even if I were, I couldn't do it. No patience. Too old and I don't know enough myself. Not the kind of things she—(BROCK snaps his fingers and cuts in, suddenly.)
BROCK. Wait a minute!
DEVER. What?
BROCK. (Quietly, for a change.) The guy from down the hall?
(He does not get ideas often. When he does, he thrills to the sensation.)
DEVER. Who?
BROCK. (Moving c.) The intrview guy. There's a smart little cookie.
DEVER. Well—

BROCK. (Selling it.) Knows the town. Knows the angles. Very classy, with that bowing. (Illustrates, in imitation of Paul's mannerism.)
DEVER. He could do it, probably, but he won't.
BROCK. Why not?
DEVER. Well, he's not—
BROCK. I'll pay 'im whatever he wants.
DEVER. I don't think so.
BROCK. Make you a bet. (Goes to phone.) What's his name again?
DEVER. Wait a minute, Harry.
BROCK. (Insistent. Picks up phone.) What?
DEVER. Verrall. Paul Verrall. Harry, I'm not sure—
BROCK. I like it. (Into phone.) Give me Verrall . . . yeah . . . Mr. Verrall.
DEVER. (Rising and losing his temper.) I wish you wouldn't sail into things!
BROCK. (In charge.) Shutup! (DEVER moves to other side of room. BROCK speaks into phone.) Hello, pal . . . Harry Brock . . . You got a minute? I wanna have a little talk. . . . Got a proposition to make you . . . What? . . . No, no. Nothin' like that. This is all right. . . . Absolutely legitimate. . . . Do that, will you? . . . Fine . . . I'll be right here. (Hangs up, points to phone.) I like that guy.
DEVER. (Coming back.) Well enough to have him around with Billie all the time?
BROCK. Are you kiddin'? With them glasses? Listen, this is all right. I can feel it. I might even tap 'im for a little dope myself once in a while.
DEVER. What about Billie? She may not care for the idea.
BROCK. (r. of table.) She'll do what I tell 'er.
DEVER. That's not the point, Harry. People don't learn anything unless they want to.
BROCK. She knows what's good for her, she'll want to.
DEVER. (Resigned.) You know best.
BROCK. Damn right. Listen, what do you think I ought to give 'im?
DEVER. (Sitting l. of table.) Seems to me you ought to try just putting it on a friendly basis.
BROCK. (Definitely.) I don't believe in nothin' on no friendly basis. (Buzzer sounds.)
DEVER. I know this fellow.
BROCK. (Crossing up to door.) I know lots of fellas. Money talks.
I don’t want nobody doin’ me no favors.

DEVERY. Why not talk it over with him and see what—? (BROCK
opens door. PAUL comes in.)

BROCK. (Heartily.) Come on in, pal. Come on in.

PAUL. Thanks.

BROCK. (Slapping PAUL’S shoulder.) Have a drink.

PAUL. No, thanks. I’m just in the middle of something. (BROCK
points to L. end of sofa.)

BROCK. Sit down, I wanna ask you sump’n. (PAUL sits.)

PAUL. Sure.

BROCK. How much you make a week?

PAUL. (Leaning back on a sofa in imitation of BROCK, his arms
spread wide.) How should I know? What am I, an accountant?
(BROCK is delighted to hear himself quoted. Laughs.)

BROCK. (To DEVERY.) I love this guy! (To PAUL, as he sits beside
him.) What’s your name again?

PAUL. Verrall.

BROCK. No, I mean your—uh—regular name?

PAUL. Paul.

BROCK. Listen, Paul. Here’s the layout. I got a friend. Nice kid. I
think you probably seen her in here before. Billie?

PAUL. Oh, yes.

BROCK. (In confidence.) Well, she’s a good kid. Only to tell you
the truth, a little on the stupid side. Not her fault, y’understand. I
got ’er out of the chorus. For the chorus she was smart enough, but
I’m scared she’s gonna be unhappy in this town. She’s never been
around with such kind of people, you know what I mean?

PAUL. No.

BROCK. Well, I figure a guy like you could help her out. And me,
too.

PAUL. How?

BROCK. (Persuasively.) Show ’er the ropes, sort of. Explain ’er
what goes on and all like that. In your spare time. What do you
say?

PAUL. No, I don’t think I could handle it, Mr. Brock.

BROCK. Means a lot to me. I’ll give you two hundred bucks a week.

PAUL. All right, I’ll do it. (All three are surprised.)

BROCK. (To DEVERY.) I’m tellin’ you. I love this guy!

PAUL. When do I start?

BROCK. Right now. Why not right now?

PAUL. Fine.

BROCK. Let me like introduce you and you take it from there.

PAUL. Good.

BROCK. (Rises, crosses a step U.C., gestures derisively to DEVERY.
Shouts up stairs.) Billie!!

BILLIE’S VOICE. What?

BROCK. Come on down here a minute! (To PAUL.) She’s a hell of a
good kid. You’ll like ’er. (BILLIE comes out onto landing, brushing
hair. She wears a repulsive negligee, which reveals and explains
much. Almost anyone could succeed in it. PAUL rises.)

BILLIE. (A tone of complaint.) I’m gettin’ dressed. (Stops as she
sees PAUL.)

BROCK. It’s all right. It’s all right. He’s a friend of the family.
(BILLIE hesitates.) Come on, I’m tellin’ you!! (BILLIE drops brush
on ottoman, comes down.) Honey, this is Paul Verrall.

BILLIE. Yes, I know.

BROCK. (Propels her toward PAUL.) He wants to talk to you.

BILLIE. What about?

BROCK. You’ll find out. Sit down. (HE sits her.) Come on up a
minute, willya, Ed?

DEVERY. Sure.

BROCK. Bring the stuff. (BROCK looks at PAUL, cheers him on with
a fist as gesture of confidence. DEVERY picks up brief-case, fol-

-
PAUL. Yes.
BILLIE. I'd like to take that in.
PAUL. Sure. We're on, then?
BILLIE. (Suspiciously.) How do you mean?
PAUL. The arrangement.
BILLIE. I don't mind. I got nothin' much to do.
PAUL. Good.
BILLIE. (Looking up at Brock's door.) What's he payin' you?
PAUL. Two hundred.
BILLIE. You're a sucker. You could of got more. He's got plenty.
PAUL. I'd have done it for nothing. (Billie throws him a look of rare disbelief, makes the sound of a mirthless, mocking laugh.)
BILLIE. Hah!
PAUL. (Protesting.) I would.
BILLIE. Why?
PAUL. This isn't work. I like it.
BILLIE. He thinks I'm too stupid, huh?
PAUL. Why, no —
BILLIE. He's right. I'm stupid and I like it.
PAUL. You do?
BILLIE. Sure. I'm happy. I got everything I want. Two mink coats. Everything. If there's sump'n I want, I ask. And if he don't come across, I don't come across. (Paul is startled.) If you know what I mean.
PAUL. (Repeating swiftly.) Yes, I do.
BILLIE. (Practically.) So as long as I know how to get what I want, that's all I wanna know.
PAUL. As long as you know what you want.
BILLIE. Sure. (A pause.) What?
PAUL. As long as you know what you want.
BILLIE. (Annoyed.) . . . you tryin' to mix me up?
PAUL. No.
BILLIE. (Rising, crossing r. to chair 1. of table.) I tell you what I would like.
PAUL. Yes?
BILLIE. (Back of chair 1. of table.) I'd like to learn how to talk good.
PAUL. All right.
BILLIE. (Turning to him.) Is it hard to learn?
PAUL. I don't think so.
BILLIE. What do I have to do?
PAUL. Well, I might give you a few books to start with. Then, if you don't mind, I'll correct you now and then.
BILLIE. (Crossing back to sofa.) Go ahead.
PAUL. When I know, that is. I don't—talk so good myself.
BILLIE. You'll do.
PAUL. Fine. (We sense that she is warming to him.)
BILLIE. (Sitting.) I never say "ain't." Did you notice that? Never.
PAUL. I do.
BILLIE. Well, I'll correct you, then.
PAUL. Do that.
BILLIE. Since I was very small I never say it. We had this teacher. She used to slug you if you did it.
PAUL. Did what?
BILLIE. Said "ain't."
PAUL. Oh.
BILLIE. So I got outa the habit.
PAUL. You think it was worth the slugging?
BILLIE. Well, not hard.
PAUL. It's the principle of the thing. There's too much slugging. I don't believe in it.
BILLIE. (Aping his seriousness.) All right, I don't believe in it, either.
PAUL. Good.
BILLIE. (Softly, leaning toward him with a smile.) I learn pretty fast, don't I?
PAUL. (Smiling.) You're great, Miss Dawn.
BILLIE. (Correcting him.) Billie.
PAUL. Billie. (A tiny pause.) Sort of an odd name, isn't it?
BILLIE. (Surprised.) What're you talkin'? Half the kids I know are named it. Anyway, it's not my real name.
PAUL. What is?
BILLIE. (Has to think a moment before she can answer.) My God! —Emma.
PAUL. What's the matter?
BILLIE. Do I look to you like an Emma?
PAUL. No. You don't look like a Billie, either.
BILLIE. So what do I look like?
PAUL. To me?
BILLIE. Yuh, to you.
PAUL. You look like a little angel. (A pause.)
BILLIE. Lemme ask you—(Looks at Brock's door, then leans to-
ward PAUL.) Are you one of these talkers, or would you be inna-
rested in a little action?
PAUL. (Amazed.) Huh?
BILLIE. I got a yen for you right off.
PAUL. Do you get many?
BILLIE. Now and then.
PAUL. What do you do about them?
BILLIE. (Invitingly.) Stick around. You’ll find out.
PAUL. All right. I will.
BILLIE. And if you want a tip, I’ll tell you. Sweet talk me. I like it.
Like that angel line. (PAUL looks upstairs, rues.) Don’t worry
about him. He don’t see a thing. He’s too dizzy from bein’ a big
man.
PAUL. (Crossing L. to back of sofa.) This is going to be a little
different than I thought.
BILLIE. (Leaning back.) You mind?
PAUL. (Hands on back of sofa, bends to her. His tie hangs down.)
No.
BILLIE. (Playing with his tie.) It’s only fair. We’ll educate each
other. (PAUL straightens up, walks R. around sofa. BILLIE sits up,
facing him.)
PAUL. (Weakly attempting to get on safer ground.) Now, about
those books.
BILLIE. Yes?
PAUL. I’ll get them for you tomorrow. I’ll look around my place,
too. If there’s anything interesting, I’ll drop it by later.
BILLIE. All right.
PAUL. We can figure out time every day the day before.
BILLIE. (Beckons to him. He bends over, but not far enough. She
books her finger into his breast pocket, draws him closer.) Or the
night!
PAUL. Sure. (BROCK and DEVERY appear. PAUL and BILLIE separate
quickly. BROCK wears a foulding lounging jacket.)
BROCK. Well. You two gonna get together?
PAUL. (Looking at BILLIE.) I think we’re all set.
BROCK. Great! Great! (DEVERY picks up his hat.)
PAUL. (Starting out.) Well, if you’ll excuse me ——
BROCK. Have a drink.
PAUL. No, thanks.
DEVERY. (Leaving.) See you tomorrow, Harry.
BROCK. Right.

DEVERY. Good-night, Billie.
BILLIE. So long. (DEVERY leaves, closing door.)
PAUL. (To BILLIE.) Good-night.
BROCK. (Following PAUL. On second step C. THEY shake hands.)
So long, kid. I appreciate it.
PAUL. (Still shaking hands. A look at BILLIE.) So do I.
BILLIE. (Tantalizingly.) So long, kid! (PAUL leaves. BROCK comes
back into room, standing below stairs. Alone now for the first time
in the play, it is obvious that they have nothing whatever to say to
one another. However, there are ways and ways of social inter-
course. We are about to see one of the most common. BROCK takes
a Gin Rummy kit [two decks of cards—pencil—score pad] from
pocket of his robe, goes into action. He moves to table R., puts
down cards. BILLIE takes cigarettes, comes over to table, cuts cards.
He cuts, they compare. She slams hers down. He does same. BROCK
puts phone on floor, sits R. of table. Shuffles, then deals two hands
of Gin Rummy. BILLIE goes to mix drinks, comes back to table, sets
them down. BROCK, arranging his hand, draws cards to his breast
with a jerk, with the alertness of one who has been bitten and is
twice shy. BILLIE sits, tears out top page of score pad, drops it in
ashtray. She pushes her bracelet up on her arm and straightens her
hair. She begins to sort her cards. You get the idea that this is their
nightly routine. BROCK downs his drink, a straight shot of rye.
BILLIE arranges her cards swiftly and at length, giving the unmis-
takable impression of many sets, a fine hand. BROCK watches her
with something less than patience. Finally, when she is ready,
game begins. They play swiftly, professionally, with no sense of
enjoyment. She discards. BROCK cannot use it, picks one from deck.
He looks at it, discards it. BILLIE scoops it up. She discards, then
rearranges her hand, having obviously completed a run. BROCK
notes this, unhappily, picks another card from deck. He looks at it,
discards it. BILLIE scoops it up. She discards, then rearranges her
hand, having obviously completed a run. BROCK notes this, unhappily, picks another card from deck, puts it down.
BILLIE again scoops his discard. She moves two cards over to it,
completing another run, then discards. BROCK, simmering, picks
up another card from deck. His inefficient poker face breaks into a
smile as he finds he can use it. He discards. BILLIE, as though it
were coming to her, picks it up and after a pause, during which
she sits motionless, discards. BROCK starts to draw.
BILLIE. (A big note.) Gin! (BROCK pulls back his hand quickly.
She lays out her hand. BROCK scores his.)
BROCK. (Mumbling.) Forty-one. (BILLIE shoves cards to BROCK,
picks up pencil, ready to score.)
BILLIE.  (Quietly.)  Forty-one?
BROCK.  (Loudly.)  Forty-one!  (She marks score, then takes a sip of her drink.  He shuffles, cuts, hands her the pack.  He takes cigarette, lights it.  She deals slowly, moving her lips as she counts inaudibly.  They pick up their cards and play.  Brock discards first.)
BILLIE draws, discards.  Brock draws again.  If you pay attention, that Vernall guy can do you some good.
BILLIE.  (Not looking up.)  All right.  (Draws and discards.)
BROCK.  (Draws.)  You’re in the Big League now.  I want you to watch your step.  (Discards.)
BILLIE.  (Still absorbed in game.)  All right.  (Draws and discards.)
BILLIE draws and discards.
BROCK.  You gotta learn to fit in.  If not, I can’t have you around, and that’s no bull.  (A pause, as they play.  Billie draws and discards.)  You gotta be careful what you do.  (Draws and discards.)
And what you say!
BILLIE.  (Picking up his discard.)  Three!  (Lays out her hand.)
BROCK.  (Scores his cards.  Lays one off on her hand.)  Twenty-eight.
BILLIE.  (Pencil poised, ready to score.  She wants to hear him say it again.)  Twenty-eight?
BROCK.  (Too clearly.)  Twenty-eight!  (Billie shoves cards to Brock for him to shuffle. She starts to score. Arithmetic is not her strong point, so using her left hand, on which she is resting her head, she counts with her fingers, tapping them in sequence against her forehead. In this way, she achieves total, scores it, then leans back.)
BILLIE.  You could use a little education yourself, if you ask me.
BROCK.  Who asked you?
BILLIE.  Nobody.
BROCK.  So shut up!  (Hands cards over.  Billie deals, her annoyance speeding tempo, and again counting inaudibly. When she has finished, she slams down remainder of deck.)
BILLIE.  Can’t I talk?
BROCK.  Play your cards.  (Pause.  She begins to sort cards.)
BILLIE.  (Loudly.)  It’s a free country.
BROCK.  (Discards.)  That’s what you think.  (A pause.  Billie starts to sing “Anything Goes,” without words.  Her memory of the song includes the orchestration, complete with breaks, trumpet figures and percussion.  She gets through sixteen bars, Brock becoming increasingly annoyed. He has picked up a card, but her singing has so disconcerted him that he cannot make a decision.)

BILLIE.  (Imitating muted trumpet.)  Tyah—dah—!
BROCK.  (Yelling.)  Do you mind?  (Looks first at his card, then at his hand, discards.)
BILLIE.  (Picking up his discard.)  Gin.  (She lays out her hand, as Brock begins to resemble the King of Diamonds.)
BROCK.  (Scores his cards.)  Thirty-four.
BILLIE.  (Ready with pencil as before.)  Thirty-four?
BROCK.  Thirty-four!
BILLIE.  (Scores, as before, at he shuffles, then with a smile and a shout.)  Schneider!
BROCK.  (Stops shuffling.)  Where do you get the snedieh?  (Billie twits score-pad around to prove it.)
BILLIE.  Fifty-five dollars.  And sixty cents.
BROCK.  (Petulantly.)  All right, that’s all!  (Brock throws down cards, rises.  Crosses to sideboard, pours drink.)
BILLIE.  Pay me now.
BROCK.  (Yelling.)  What the hell’s the matter?  Don’t you trust me?
BILLIE.  What are you hollerin’?  You always make me pay.
BROCK.  (Annoyed.)  Christ sake!
BILLIE.  (Taunting him in sing-song.)  Sore loser!
BROCK.  Shut up!
BILLIE.  (With perfect, ladylike control.)  Fifty-five dollars and sixty cents.  (He comes down to table, takes large roll of bills from his pocket, pays off fifty-five dollars. He starts to go, but Billie stops him with a querying look.  Pained, but resigned to defeat, he counts out change, two quarters and a dime, tosses them to her across table.  She slaps each one into possession.)  Thanks.  (He starts for staircase, stops directly behind Billie, looks down at her with predatory eyes.)
BROCK.  Come on up.
BILLIE.  (Casually.)  In a minute.  (Brock starts up stairs.)
BROCK.  (Stops on second step.)  Now!  (This is the one moment in their daily life of which Billie is boss.  Both recognize the fact.)
BILLIE.  (In charge.)  In a minute, I told you!  (She ruffles cards.  Brock goes up quietly, shuts door.  Billie moves her winnings to one side, clears table in front of her and lays out a band of solitaire.  She sings, softly, as before, and plays in time to music. This time we hear the lyrics, as they were carefully coached into the chorus.)

“In olden days a glimpse of stocking
Was looked on as something shocking
But now Lord knows (tyah dah)
Anything Goes (tata tata—tata tata—zing!)
Good authors, too, who once—

(Door buzzer sounds. She stops singing, looks upstairs, makes a few personal adjustments, goes to door and opens it. Paul comes in, carrying a few books and two newspapers.)

Paul. Hello.

Billie. (Feigning surprise.) Hello!

Paul. Morning papers. (Offers them to her.)

Billie. You could of saved yourself the trouble, I don’t read papers.

Paul. Never?

Billie. Once in a while the back part.

Paul. I think you should. The front part.

Billie. Why?

Paul. It’s interesting.

Billie. Not to me.

Paul. How do you know if you never read it?

Billie. Look, if you’re gonna turn out to be a pest, we could call the whole thing off right now.

Paul. Sorry.

Billie. I look at the paper sometimes. I just never understand it. So what’s the sense?

Paul. Tell you what you do. You look through these. (He gives her newspapers.) Anything you don’t understand, make a mark. (Takes red editing pencil from his pocket and hands it to her.) Then, tomorrow, I’ll explain whatever I can. All right?

Billie. All right.

Paul. (Adding books.) And I thought you might like these.

Billie. I’ll try. (She puts books and newspapers on top of bookcase.)

Paul. No, don’t do that. Just start reading. If you don’t like it, stop. Start something else.

Billie. (Coming back to him.) There’s only one thing. My eyesight isn’t so hot.

Paul. Well, why don’t you wear glasses?

Billie. (Agast.) Glasses!

Paul. Why not?

Billie. Because they’re terrible! (They look at each other for a time. She notices his glasses, but cannot think of anything to say that will soften her remark. She moves in closer to him. Then closer still. It is as though they were about to dance. She leans toward him. Now they are touching. All at once they melt into an embrace, and kiss. A long expert kiss. They come out of it. Billie continues, casually.) Of course, they’re not so bad on men.

Paul. (Softly.) Good-night, Billie.

Billie. Good-night. (Paul leaves, Billie looks after him, then with a new smile she starts to sing. In time to music, moves to light switch r. of door.)

“Good authors, too, who once knew better words—”

(Snaps out sitting-room lights. Balcony is still illuminated. Starts up stairs, slowly, continuing song.)

“Now only use four-letter words
Writing prose (tyah dah)—”

(She stops, pivots on last phrase, then moves down stairs, picks up newspapers and books, clutches them tightly, starts up again, singing.)

“Writing prose—”

(She reaches top of stairs, sings the break through Harry’s closed door as two notes of derision.)

“Tyah! Dah!”

(She enters her own room as she finishes the phrase triumphantly.)

“Anything goes!”

(She slams the door closed. The room is in darkness.)

FAST CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene: The same. About two months have passed. The room looks live-in. A desk has replaced table r.c. It is loaded with books, papers, copies of The New Republic, clippings, tall glass filled with pencils, phone, memo pad, desk basket. On down stage chair r. are record albums and a large paper map. In front of this chair is a large globe map on a pedestal. The shelves of the sideboard are filled with books. Also books on floor under sideboard. On chair l. and downstage of sideboard is a large framed Picasso reproduction. On floor under chair a pile of art folios. In front of balcony are four piles

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of books, mostly new. Large ottoman on balcony holds map and more pictures. On either side of main door hangs a small framed John W. borf watercolor. On chair near of main doors are some envelopes, including a large brown one, containing legal papers. Shelves back of sofa are filled with books and there are stacks of them on top of bookcases. Also on bookcase is a silver tray with liquor, ginger ale, glasses, water and ice-bucket. On top of small table L. is a stack of newspapers and magazines, such as Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, Kenyon Review, etc. On floor and step near window L. are strewn more magazines. Down L. is a huge unabridged dictionary on its stand. On shelf of this stand is a pile of New York Times and Herald-Tribune Sunday book review sections, and on floor under shelf are magazines and books. In addition to cigarette box and ashtray on top of end table L. of sofa, is a copy of "David Copperfield" with a bookmark in it, a pile of three books, a brandy snifter containing pencils, including several red editing ones and a small pad. On sofa is a copy of The New York Times and one of The Washington Post. A silver service with remains of tea and cookies is on coffee table front of sofa and under tray is a black memo book [containing a pencil] and a letter addressed to "Miss Billie Dawn". There is a copy of Flair on chair L. of desk and other magazines on floor. In front of fireplace R. is a Capehart, with many record albums on floor leaning against it. In record rack on upstage end of Capehart are three large Red Seal records and some smaller ones.

At Rise: It is early evening and Billie, wearing slacks, blouse, robe and eyeglasses, is sitting on sofa reading front page of Washington Post. She opens paper and lifts it high to continue her reading. Front page of paper is covered with red marks. It is as though this newspaper has the measles. She puts paper down and stretches, takes off glasses and puts them on coffee table, then gets up and walks across room to Capehart. She limps in an odd way, indicating that her leg has gone to sleep. At Capehart she selects three large records from record rack, holding them, one by one, close to her eyes in an effort to make out titles. Her nose touches record each time. She places records in instrument, starts it and walks back across room as music starts to play softly. The recording is of

Jascha Heifetz playing the andante movement of the Concerto in D Minor for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 47, by J. Sibelius. She sits, puts on glasses again, picks up newspaper, starts to read. Before long she comes across a point she does not understand. She takes red pencil from glass and begins to mark paper. Buzzer sounds. Eddie comes into room from service wing, wearing his hat, as always. As he enters, he sees Billie marking paper. Shakes head sympathetically and continues to door, opening it to admit Paul. At sound of his voice, Billie smiles, puts down paper, whips off glasses and puts them on end table.

Paul: How are you, Eddie?

Eddie: Great.

Paul: (To Billie.) Hello, smarty-pants. (Eddie returns to service wing.)

Billie: Hello.

Paul: (Moving to her.) How you coming?

Billie: Not so bad.

Paul: (Teacher to pupil.) Hm?

Billie: Iy. Badly. (Paul laughs.) Would you like some tea?

Paul: (Sitting on sofa.) No thanks. (Listen to music.) Nice, that.

Billie: Sibelius, op. Forty-seven. (She pronounces it 'Sy-beel-ious,' they listen together for a moment.) Guess who I just had for tea?

Paul: Who?

Billie: (Impressively.) Mrs. Hedges.

Paul: Really? How was it?

Billie: Don't ask! You know, she's pretty stupid, too—but in a refined sort of a way. Of course, we didn't have very much to talk about—so then she happened to notice my book laying there—

Paul: Lying.

Billie:—my book lying there, and she says, "Oh, I've been meaning to read that again for years!"

Paul: What was it?

Billie: (Matter-of-fact.) David Copperfield.

Paul: Oh yes.

Billie: So then we got to talking about it, and you want to know something?

Paul: What?
BILLIE. *Telling a secret.*) She's never read it at all!
P A U L. How do you know?
BILLIE. I could tell from the way we were talking.
P A U L. . . . . that surprise you?
BILLIE. What, that she never read it?
P A U L. Yes.
BILLIE. No.
P A U L. Then what?
BILLIE. Well, why should she make out like she did? It's no crime
if she didn't.
P A U L. Everybody does that, more or less.
BILLIE. Do you?
P A U L. Sometimes.
BILLIE. I don't.
P A U L. I know, Billie. You're an honest one.
BILLIE. Thanks. I'm glad I got something from two months of this.
(WAITER enters from service wing, crosses to coffee table. Picks up
tray, revealing letter which lies under it.)
P A U L. You didn't get that from me, I'm afraid. (WAITER starts to
go.)
BILLIE. I'm not so sure.
P A U L. (Prompting.) Thank you.
BILLIE. (Pleasantly.) You're welcome.
P A U L. (Indicating WAITER.) No, no.
BILLIE. Oh — (Calling to WAITER.) Thank you! (WAITER turns,
bows, leaves. BILLIE picks up letter from coffee table, looks at it.)
I got this letter today. From my father.
P A U L. New York?
BILLIE. Yuh. I can't get over it.
P A U L. Why?
BILLIE. Well, it's the first time he ever wrote me in about eight
years. We had a fight, sort of. He didn't want me to go with Harry.
P A U L. What does he do?
BILLIE. My father?
P A U L. Yes.
BILLIE. Gas Company. He used to read meters, but in this letter
he says how he can't get around so good any more so they gave
him a different job. Elevator man. (A pause, as she remembers
back. Music is still playing. She continues with a little smile of
instinctive affection.) Goofy old guy. He used to take a little frying
pan to work every morning and a can of Sterno and cook his own
lunch. He said everybody should have a hot lunch. (*Another
pause.*) I swear I don't know how he did it. There were four of us.
Me and my three brothers and he had to do everything. My mother
died. I never knew her. He used to feed us and give us a bath —
buy our clothes. Everything. That's why all my life I used to think
how some day I'd like to pay him back. Funny how it worked out.
One night, I brought home a hundred dollars and I gave it to him.
You know what he did? He threw it in the toilet and pulled the
chain. I thought he was going to hit me, sure, but he didn't. In his
whole life, he never hit me once.
P A U L. (Carefully.) How'd he happen to write you? I mean, after
all this time?
BILLIE. Because I wrote him.
P A U L. Oh.
BILLIE. He says he's thought about me every day. God. I haven't
thought about him, I bet, once even, in five years. That's nothin'
against him. I haven't thought of anything.
P A U L. . . . nice to see him, maybe.
BILLIE. I guess so — but he says I should write him again and I
should have a hot lunch everyday and I should let him know how
I am but that he didn't want to see me if I was still living the
life of a concubine . . . I looked it up! . . . He always used to say:
"Don't ever do nothin' you wouldn't want printed on the front
page of the New York Times." (*Pause.*) Hey! I just realized
I've practically told you the whole story of my life by now prac-
tically. (Puts letter back on coffee table.)
P A U L. . . . enjoyed it very much.
BILLIE. (Settling back.) How about the story of your life?
P A U L. Oh no. It's too long — and mostly untrue. (They smile
at each other.) What'd you do this morning?
BILLIE. (Brightening) Oh, I went to the newsreel and then over
to the National Gallery like you said. (She rises. Takes letter
from coffee table, crosses r. to desk.)
P A U L. How was it?
BILLIE. Wonderful. Quiet and peaceful and so interesting and did
you ever notice? It smells nice. (PAUL smiles.) It does.
P A U L. How long'd you stay?
BILLIE. (Putting letter in desk drawer.) Couple hours. I'm goin'
again.
P A U L. Good.
BILLIE. Only the next time I wish you could come along.
PAUL. All right.
BILLIE. (Crossing c.) Boy, there's sure some things there that could use some explaining. (Sibelius music ends. A moment of silence, then the lovely strains of "On Hearing The First Cuckoo of Spring," by Delius, are heard.) Oh, and you know what else I did today? I went down to Brentano's and I just walked around, like you said I should, and I looked at all the different kinds of books, and then the ones I thought maybe I'd like to read I took.
PAUL. That's right.
BILLIE. Well, so pretty soon I had a whole big pile, too big to carry, even. So I stopped. And I thought, my God, it'll take me about a year to read this many! So then I looked around, and compared to all the books there, my little pile was like nothing. So then I realized that even if I read my eyes out till the day I die I couldn't even make a little dent in that store. Next thing you know I bust out cryin'. (Crosses l. behind couch.)
PAUL. (Rising, crossing b. to desk.) Nobody reads everything.
BILLIE. They don't?
PAUL. Of course not.
BILLIE. (Moving around to front of sofa and sitting.) I sure been tryin' to.
PAUL. (Looking through a copy of New Republic.) ... don't suppose you got a chance to read my piece?
BILLIE. What're you talkin'? Of course I did. Twice. (A pause.)
PAUL. What'd you think?
BILLIE. (Slowly and deliberately.) Well, I think it's the best thing I ever read. I didn't understand one word! (PAUL turns to place and looks at it.)
PAUL. What didn't you understand?
BILLIE. None of it.
PAUL. (Beckoning BILLIE to desk; holding copy out to her.) Here, show me what. (BILLIE rises, puts on glasses as she goes to desk.
PAUL laughs. She stops.)
BILLIE. What's so funny? That I'm blind practically?
PAUL. Practically blind.
BILLIE. (Continuing to desk.) — practically blind?
PAUL. You're wonderful.
BILLIE. (At desk, stiffly.) I'm sorry I look funny to you.
PAUL. You don't. They make you look lovelier than ever.
BILLIE. (Sitting at desk.) You sound like one of them ads for eye-glasses. (SHE puts her attention on article. PAUL comes to

her.)
PAUL. (Putting magazine in front of her.) What?
BILLIE. Well, like the name of it. "The Yellowing Democratic Manifesto."
PAUL. Simple.
BILLIE. To who? Whom? Whom? Well, anyway, not to me.
PAUL. Well, look. You know what 'yellowing' means?
BILLIE. Not this time.
PAUL. (Trying to explain.) When a piece of paper gets old; what happens to it? (BILLIE thinks.)
BILLIE. Throw it away?
PAUL. No, it turns yellow.
BILLIE. It does?
PAUL. Of course.
BILLIE. What do you know!
PAUL. Now, 'democratic'. You know what that means, don't you?
BILLIE. (Nodding.) Not Republican.
PAUL. Well, not exactly. It just means pertaining to our form of Government, which is a democracy.
BILLIE. (Understanding.) Oh. (A pause.) What's 'pertaining'?
PAUL. (With a descriptive gesture.) Has to do with.
BILLIE. (Musing.) 'Pertaining'. Nice word. (Writes it down.)
PAUL. All right, now — 'manifesto'?
BILLIE. I don't know.
PAUL. Why didn't you look it up?
BILLIE. I did look it up. I still don't know.
PAUL. Well, look — when I say 'manifesto', I mean the set of rules and ideals and —— principles and hopes on which the United States is based.
BILLIE. And you think it's turning yellow?
PAUL. Well, yes. I think that a lot of the original inspiration's been neglected—and forgotten.
BILLIE. And that's bad?
PAUL. And that's bad. (She thinks it over for a moment, hard. We can almost see it soaking in. She looks at magazine again.)
BILLIE. (Reading.) 'Even a... cursory?... (Looks up at PAUL, who nods.) examination of contemporary society in terms of the Greek philosophy which defines the whole as a representation—of its parts, sends one immediately—to the consideration of the individual—as a citizen and the citizen as an individual.'
PAUL. Well...?
BILLIE. (Exasperated.) I looked up every word!
P.AUL. (Closer to her.) Listen—thousands of years ago, a
Greek philosopher — (he pauses to make sure she is following.) —said that the world could only be as good as the people
who lived in it. (Billie thinks this over.)
BILLIE. (Generously.) Makes sense.
P.AUL. All right. So I said, you take one look at America today and
right away you figure you better take a look at the people in it. One
by one, sort of.
BILLIE. Yuh . . .?
P.AUL. That's all.
BILLIE. (Pointing to article.) That's this?
P.AUL. Sure.
BILLIE. Well, why didn't you say so?
P.AUL. (Crossing behind desk to C.) Too fancy, huh? (He turns
to her.) I better do that piece again. Plainer. (He sits on r. arm of
sofa. The music changes to a violin recording of "The Maid
With The Flaxen Hair" by Debussy.)
BILLIE. Oh, and you know that thing you gave me about
Napoleon?
P.AUL. No, what?
BILLIE. By Robert G. Ingersoll?
P.AUL. Oh, yes.
BILLIE. Well, I'm not sure if I get that either.
P.AUL. No deep meaning there.
BILLIE. There must be. He says about how he goes and looks in
Napoleon's tomb. . . .
P.AUL. Yuh.
BILLIE. And he thinks of Napoleon's whole sad life. . . .
P.AUL. Yuh.
BILLIE. And then in the end he says he himself would've rather
been a happy farmer.
P.AUL. (Quoting softly.) "—and I said I would rather have
been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes. I would rather
have lived in a hut with a vine growing over the door, and
the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun." (Con-
tinuing, rises and crosses D.C to r. of desk.) "I would rather have
been that poor peasant with my loving wife by my side, knitting
as the day died out of the sky —— with my children upon my
knee and their arms about me —— I would rather have been that
man and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless
dust, than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and
murder, known as 'Napoleon The Great'."
BILLIE. (AweD.) How can you remember all that stuff? (As Paul
starts to sit r. of desk, he is startled, and so it is Billie, by a burst
from the Capehart. Debussy has been followed by the hysterical
opening of T. Dorsey's recording of "Well, Get It!" It rides.
Billie rushes over and turns it off. She crosses back to desk, glanc-
ing at Paul in apologetic embarrassment.) Once in a while. Just
for a change!
P.AUL. (Laughing.) Don't try so hard, Billie. Please. You miss
the whole point.
BILLIE. Well, I like to like what's better to like.
P.AUL. There's room for all sorts of things in you. The idea of
learning is to be bigger, not smaller.
BILLIE. (Seriously.) You think I'm gettin' bigger?
P.AUL. Certainly.
BILLIE. Glad to hear it. (Sits at desk and picks up the thread of
their talk.) So he would rather been a happy peasant than to be
Napoleon. So who wouldn't?
P.AUL. So Harry wouldn't, for one.
BILLIE. What makes you think not?
P.AUL. Ask him.
BILLIE. (Aha.) He probably never heard of Napoleon.
P.AUL. What's worse, he probably never heard of a peasant.
BILLIE. You hate him like poison?
P.AUL. Who, Harry?
BILLIE. Yuh.
P.AUL. No.
BILLIE. But you don't like him?
P.AUL. No. (Rises and crosses c., below desk.)
BILLIE. Account of me and him?
P.AUL. One reason. There are lots more.
BILLIE. What?
P.AUL. (C., turning to her.) Think about it. You'll see that Harry
is a menace.
BILLIE. He's not so bad. I've seen worse.
P.AUL. (A step n.c.) Has he ever done anything for anyone, ex-
cpt himself?
BILLIE. Me.
P.AUL. What?
BILLIE. Well, I got two mink coats.
PAUL. That was a trade. You gave him something, too. (*An awkward pause before BILLIE replies, very quietly.*)

BILLIE. (*With rare dignity.*) Don't get dirty you're supposed to be so wonderful so don't get dirty!

PAUL. Has he ever thought about anybody but himself?

BILLIE. Who does?

PAUL. (*With increasing fervor and volume, crossing to her.*) Millions of people, Billie. The whole damned history of the world is a story of the struggle between the selfish and the unselfish!

BILLIE. (*Quiettly.*) I can hear you.

PAUL. (*Patiently.*) All the bad around us is bred by selfishness. Sometimes selfishness even gets to be a cause, an organized force, even a government. Then it's called Fascism. Can you understand that?

BILLIE. Sort of.

PAUL. (*Hammering.*) Well, *I* think about it, Billie.

BILLIE. (*Softly, watching him.*) You're crazy about me, aren't you?

PAUL. (*Frankly.*) Yes.

BILLIE. That's why you get so mad at Harry.

PAUL. Listen, I hate his life, what he does, what he stands for. Not him. He just doesn't know any better. (*Turns and crosses L. to front of couch.*)

BILLIE. (*Taking off glasses.*) I go for you, too.

PAUL. (*Turns to her.*) I'm glad of that.

BILLIE. That's why I started *doin'* all this. I guess you know.

PAUL. No, I didn't.

BILLIE. . . . lot of good it did me. I never had this kind of trouble before, I can tell you.

PAUL. Trouble?

BILLIE. After that first night when I met you I figured it was all going to work dandy. (*PAUL is looking at her.*) Then, when you wouldn't step across the line —— I figured maybe the way to you was through your —— head.

PAUL. (*Very slowly, crossing behind her to r. of desk.*) Well—— no.

BILLIE. Anyway what's the diff now? Difference! But I like you anyways. Too late for the rest.

PAUL. Why?

BILLIE. Why? Look, Paul, there's a certain time between a fella and a girl when it either comes off or not and if it doesn't then, then it never does.

PAUL. (*Moving to her.*) Maybe we haven't got to our time yet?

BILLIE. We did, too. And you dropped the ball.

PAUL. Don't be so sure.

BILLIE. I know. I've had lots of fellas and I *haven't* had lots of fellas. If you know what I mean.

PAUL. Yes.

BILLIE. (*Rising, crossing l.c.*) But I sure never thought I'd go through a thing like *this* for anybody!

PAUL. Like what?

BILLIE. Like gettin' all mixed up in my head. Wondering and worrying and *thinking*—stuff like that. You know last night I went to bed and I started in thinking and I couldn't get to sleep for *ten minutes*! . . . and I don't know if it's good to find out so much so quick! (*Crosses L. to sofa and sits.*)

PAUL. (*Crossing L. to her.*) What the hell, Billie! Nobody's born smart. You know what's the stupidest thing on earth? An infant.

BILLIE. What've you got against babies all of a sudden?

PAUL. Nothing. I've got nothing against a brain three weeks old and empty. But when it hags around for thirty years without absorbing anything, I began to think something's the matter with it.

BILLIE. (*Rising, deeply offended.*) What makes you think I'm thirty?

PAUL. (*Retreating.*) I didn't mean you, especially.

BILLIE. (*Crossing L. and around back of sofa, angrily.*) Oh yes, you did.

PAUL. I swear.

BILLIE. You certainly know how to get me sore.

PAUL. (*Crossing up to r. corner of sofa.*) I'm sorry.

BILLIE. (*Crossing to him, boiling.*) Thirty! Do I look thirty to you?

PAUL. No.

BILLIE. (*Face to face.*) Then what'd you say it for?

PAUL. I don't know. (*A short pause.*) How old are you?

BILLIE. Twenty-nine! (*They look at each other. PAUL smiles. She responds, reluctantly. He bends down, kisses her cheek.*)

PAUL. Don't stop. (*She moves into an embrace.*) I meant, don't stop studying.

BILLIE. Oh. (*Crosses L. back of sofa to D.L.*)

PAUL. Will you?

BILLIE. (*Crossing D.L. around front of sofa.*) I don't know why it's so important to you.

PAUL. . . . sort of a cause. I want everybody to be smart. As smart
as they can be. A world full of ignorant people is too dangerous to
live in.
BILLIE. (Sitting.) I know, that's why I wish I was doin' better.
PAPA. You're doing wonderfully.
BILLIE. Yeah, but it's just no use. I bet most people would laugh at
me if they knew what I was tryin' to.
PAPA. I'm not laughing.
BILLIE. I am. I'm sort of laughin' at myself. (Her throat clenches.)
Who do I think I am anyway?
PAPA. What's the matter?
BILLIE. (In tears.) All them books!
PAPA. (Crouching L. to sofa, sitting beside her.) It isn't only books,
Billie. I've told you a hundred times.
BILLIE. It's mostly.
PAPA. Not at all. Listen, who said this? "The proper study of
mankind is man."
BILLIE. (Gaining control.) I don't know.
PAPA. You should.
PAPA. Why?
PAPA. I've told you.
BILLIE. I forgot.
PAPA. Pope.
BILLIE. The Pope?
PAPA. No, not the Pope. Alexander Pope.
BILLIE. "The proper study of ———"
PAPA. "——- mankind is man."
BILLIE. "——mankind is man." Of course, that means womenkind,
too?
PAPA. Yes.
BILLIE. (Impatiently.) Yes, I know.
PAPA. Don't worry about books so much. (She blows her nose.
The tears end.)
BILLIE. I been studying different mankind lately. The ones you
told me? Jane Addams last week, and this week Tom Paine. And
then all by myself I got to thinkin' about Harry. Like he works so
hard to get what he wants. For instance. But he doesn't know what
he wants.
PAPA. More of what he's got, probably.
BILLIE. Money.
PAPA. Money, more people to push around, money.

BILLIE. Well, he's not so bad as you think he is.
PAPA. I know. He's got a brain of gold. (Sound of key in door.
BROCK comes in.)
BROCK. Hello.
PAPA. Hello, Harry. We were just talking about you.
BROCK. (Removing hat and coat and putting them on chair L. of
door.) Yeah? Well, that ain't what I pay ya for. (Goes to chair r.
of door, looks through mail, selects large envelope.) She knows
enough about me. Too much, in fact. (Crossing to chair L. of
desk.) Ed here?
BILLIE. No.
BROCK. God damn it! He's supposed to meet me. (PAUL and
BILLIE watch as he sits and takes off his shoes.)
PAPA. (To BILLIE.) What did you find out about Tom Paine?
BILLIE. Well, he was quite a fella.
PAPA. Where was he born, do you remember?
BROCK. What d'you mean London or England? It's the same thing.
BILLIE. It is?
BROCK. London is in England. It's a city, London. England's a
whole country.
BILLIE. I forgot.
BROCK. (To PAUL.) Honest to God, boy! You got some patience!
PAPA. Take it easy.
BROCK. How can anybody get so dumb?
PAPA. We can't all know everything, Harry.
BILLIE. (To BROCK.) Who's Tom Paine, for instance?
BROCK. What?
BILLIE. You heard me. Tom Paine?
BROCK. What the hell do I care who he is?
BILLIE. I know.
BROCK. So what? If I wanted to know who he is so I'd know
who he is. I just don't care. (To PAUL.) Go ahead. Don't let me
butt in.
PAPA. (To BILLIE.) Which of his books did you like best?
BILLIE. Well, I didn't read by him, yet—only about him.
PAPA. Oh.
BILLIE. But I made a list of ——— (She turns to get pad from end
table.)
BROCK. (Interrupting suddenly.) Who's Rabbit Maranville?
BILLIE. (Turning quickly.) Who?
BROCK. (Over-enunciating.) Rabbit Maranville.
BILLY. I don' know any rabbits!
BROCK. ... think you're so smart.
PUL. Used to play shortstop for the Braves, didn't he?
BROCK. (To PUL.) What're you? Some kind of a genius?
PUL. No.
BROCK. (Rising, crossing behind desk.) I hire and fire geniuses every day.
PUL. I'm sure you do. (He turns to BILLY.) Where's that....?
BILLY. (Handing over her list.) Here. (BROCK crosses d.r. to front of desk, thinking hard.)
PUL. (Studying list.) Well, suppose you start with "The Age of Reason."
BILLY. (Writing it down.) "The-Age-of-Reason."
PUL. Then, next, you might —
BROCK. (Front of desk.) Who's Willie Hop?
PUL. (Turning slightly.) National billiard champion. And it's pronounced — Hoppè.
BROCK. That's what I said. Anyways, I didn't ask you. I asked her.
(He crosses b. and behind desk.)
PUL. Sorry. (He turns back to BILLY.) Where were we?
BILLY. (With a look of disgust in BROCK's direction.) "Age of Reason."
PUL. All right, then try "The Rights of Man."
BILLY. (Writing.) "The-Rights-Of-Man."
BROCK. (BROCK slowly crosses to c.)
PUL. I think that'll give you a rough idea of what —
BROCK. (Suddenly, crossing to them.) What's a peninsula?
BILLY. (Waving him off.) Shhhhh!!
BROCK. Don't give me that Shhhh ——! You think you know so much —— what's a peninsula?
PUL. It's a ——
BROCK. Not you.
BILLY. (Confidently and with condescending superiority.) It's that new medicine!!! (BROCK turns away, throwing up his hands in surrender, crosses to front of desk, d.r. then comes back to sofa.)
BROCK. It is not!
BILLY. What then?
BROCK. (As a schoolboy, arms stiffly at his sides.) It's a body of land surrounded on three sides by water. (He relaxes.)
BILLY. So what's that to know?

BROCK. So what's this —— this Sam Paine to know?
BILLY. (Straightening up.) Some difference! Tom Paine —— not Sam Paine — Tom Paine practically started this whole country.
BROCK. You mean he's dead?
BILLY. Of course.
BROCK. (Yelling at PUL.) What the hell you learnin' her about dead people? I just want her to know how to act with live people!
PUL. Education's pretty hard to control, Harry. One thing leads to another. It's a matter of awakening curiosity—imagination— independence—first thing you know—
BROCK. (Crossing b. to chair l. of desk.) Work on her, not me.
PUL. No extra charge.
BROCK. I don't need nothin' you can tell me.
PUL. (With meaning.) Oh, I'm sure we could tell each other lots of interesting things, Harry.
BROCK. What the hell's that mean?
PUL. Just trying to be friendly.
BROCK. (Crossing to chair l. of desk and sitting.) Who asked ya? You know, the more I see you I don't like you as much. For a chump who's got no place, you're pretty fresh. You better watch out—I got an eye on you.
PUL. All right. Let's both watch out.
BROCK. If I wanted I could knock your block off if I wanted.
PUL. Yes, I know.
BROCK. All right, then—just go ahead and do what you're supposed—and that's all.
PUL. Well, we'll stop for now.
BROCK. (With honest interest.) No, go ahead. I wanna see how you do it. (Settles back and waits.)
PUL. (Rising and moving to door.) Not just now if you don't mind—I've got to go lie down. (He stops, turns back.) You don't realize how hard I work.
BILLY. Ha ha! Some joke.
BROCK. (Victimized.) Two hundred bucks a week and I can't even watch! (Rises and crosses back of desk.)
PUL. ... take you on separately, Harry. Glad to. I've got a special course for backward millionaires! (He goes. BROCK cannot decide whether or not he has been insulted. HE puts his attention on the material in large envelope. BILLIE curls up with her "David Copperfield.").
BROCK. (Looking at BILLIE pitifully.) London or England! Hon-
est to God! (Billie sniffs him. He returns to work, which consists of examining fat legal documents.)

Billie. (Looking up.) Harry ——

Brock. (Absorbed.) Yeah?

Billie. What's this business we're in down here? Could you tell me?

Brock. What d'you mean we?

Billie. Well, I figure I'm a sort of a partner, in a way.

Brock. A silent partner.

Billie. So?

Brock. (Looking at her.) So shut up!

Billie. I got a right to know.

Brock. You got a right to get the hell outta my hair. Just put your nose in your book and keep it. (Sits on desk back to her.)

Billie. (Turning her back to him.) I don't wanna do anything if it's against the law. That's one sure thing. (Back to book.)

Brock. You'll do what I tell ya.

Billie. I think I know what it is, only I'm not sure.

Brock. You should worry. You're doin' all right. Sump'n you want you ain't got maybe?

Billie. Yuh.

Brock. (Not looking at her.) What?

Billie. (Musing.) I wanna be like the happy peasant.

Brock. (Turning and yelling.) I'll buy it for you! (Helen enters from service wing, carrying book. Crosses L. to bookcase.) Now will you stop crabbin'? (Helen puts book on bookshelf.)

Helen. Well, I finished finally. Thanks for the loan of it.

Billie. (Giving Helen her full attention.) How'd you like it?

Helen. (Coming down to R. of sofa for a chat.) Pretty punk.


Helen. Not me. I don't go for these stories where it shows how miserable it is to be rich.

Billie. Well, it can be if a person ——

Brock. (Standing, annoyed.) All right! Can the coffee-klotch. (To Helen.) Knock off!

Helen. Sorry, Mr. Brock. (She leaves, quickly, with a little see-you-later wave to Billie.)

Brock. Don't get so pally with everybody.

Billie. (Starting a crescendo.) Paul says it's all right.

Brock. Never mind Paul says. I don't like it.

Billie. (Rising to her knees, in heat.) You know what you are?
DEVEREY. Don't be unreasonable, Harry. (BROCK TURNS TO HIM.)
There're ninety-six votes up there. Norval's just one guy. (EDDIE
COMES DOWN AND GOES OUT TO SERVICE WING.)
BROCK. Well, he's the wrong guy. What the hell—we've handled
it before!
HEDGES. (Weakly.) Things aren't the same.
BROCK. (TO DEVEREY.) We'll make 'em the same. (TO HEDGES.)
That's your job, ain't it?
DEVEREY. Pretty tough assignment.
BROCK. (TO DEVEREY.) What do I care? (TO HEDGES.) And you!
You better get movin' or I'll butcher you! You'll wind up a god-
damn Y.M.C.A. secretary again before you know it.
DEVEREY. (Shocked.) Harry!
BROCK. I'm gonna get it fixed so's I can do business where I want
and how I want and as big as I want. If you ain't with me, you're
against me.
HEDGES. I'm with you.
BROCK. All right then! (Turning and stalking upstairs.) You'll
have to pull your weight in the goddamn boat or I'll get some-
body who can. You hear me good? (He goes into his room and
slams door. Awkward pause.)
HEDGES. (Softly.) . . . quite a temper, hasn't he?
DEVEREY. Don't mind him, he's always lived at the top of his voice.
(Crossing L. to liquor. Pours drink.) Anybody with me? Norval?
HEDGES. No, thank you.
BILLIE. (TO HEDGES, SOFTLY.) I don't think Harry should talk to
you like that. After all, you're a Senator.
HEDGES. (A worried sigh.) Oh well—
BILLIE. I don't think anybody should talk to a Senator like that
—or be able to! A Senator's a wonderful thing.
HEDGES. Thank you.
BILLIE. (With a serious little frown.) The way it looks to me—
if he pushes you around, it's like he's pushing a few million peo-
ple around.
HEDGES. How do you mean?
BILLIE. The people who picked you.
HEDGES. Well, not quite that many.
BILLIE. How many then?
HEDGES. Eight hundred six thousand, four hundred and thirty-
four.
BILLIE. Well, that's quite a few to push around.

HEDGES. You're not one of my constituents by any chance, are you?
BILLIE. (Thinks a moment, then looks at dictionary stand, wish-
fully.) I don't think I know that one yet?
DEVEREY. The Senator means are you one of the people who voted
for him?
BILLIE. Oh. I never voted for anybody.
HEDGES. Why not?
BILLIE. I don't know. I wouldn't know how to, I guess.
DEVEREY. (Coming down to back of sofa, between them.) Simple.
You just press a button.
BILLIE. Yuh, but which one? Like suppose it's between different
people?
DEVEREY. (Smiling.) Well, you listen to the speeches—you read
the papers—you make up your own mind. You take a look
and see who's for who—that's very important. Once you take
a stand on something—take a look and see who's on the other
side and who's on your side. (DEVEREY CROSSES R. TO C.—STANDS
WATCHING BILLIE AND HEDGES.)
BILLIE. (Lightly.) That's all there is to it.
HEDGES. (TO HEDGES.) Yuh, but why do you take it from Harry?
That's what I wanna know. You're more important than him.
You're a Senator!
HEDGES. Yes, and as such, you see, I have a great many duties and
responsibilities and—(He stops.)
BILLIE. Yuh?
HEDGES. (Stalling.) The operation of government is—uh—very
complex.
BILLIE. Why should it be? I understand it pretty good in the books
and when Paul tells me—but then when I see a thing like this
—it's like different.
HEDGES. How?
BILLIE. Well, when it comes down to what should be laws and
what shouldn't—is Harry more important than anybody else?
HEDGES. (Meaning yes.) No.
BILLIE. Then how come he's got so much to say? Who ever voted
for him?
HEDGES. (Rising.) Well, we'll have a nice long talk about it some
time.
BILLIE. (Seriously.) All right.
HEDGES. Good-bye.
BILLIE. Good-bye. (HEDGES GOES TO DOOR. DEVEREY FOLLOWS. BILLIE
goes to large dictionary and looks up "constituent." Hedges regards her as Devery hands him his hat.)
Hedges. Quite a little girl.
Devery. Oh, yes!
Hedges. Goodbye.
Devery. See you. (Hedges goes. Devery picks up brief-case, takes out sheaf of papers. Comes down c.) Few things here for you. (Crosses to desk, spreads papers out for signing. Billie comes over. She picks up her glasses. He hands her his fountain pen, then goes and pours another drink. Billie stands looking at paper. Puts on her glasses and starts to read top one, carefully. A moment later, Devery turns back into room. He stops and looks at Billie in surprise. Then crosses c.)
Billie. (Quietly.) What is this?
Devery. Same old stuff.
Billie. What?
Devery. (Putting her off.) Take too long to explain.
Billie. No, it wouldn't. I like having things explained to me. I found that out.
Devery. Some other time.
Billie. Now.
Devery. (Crossing to her.) You want me to tell Harry?
Billie. Tell him what?
Devery. That you won't sign this stuff?
Billie. Who said anything about that? I just wanna know what it is.
Devery. A merger.
Billie. What's that?
Devery. Several companies being formed into one.
Billie. All Harry's?
Devery. No.
Billie. Whose then?
Devery. A few of Harry's and some others. French, Italian and so on.
Billie. (Whipping off glasses, suddenly.) A cartel! (Devery looks at her, amazed.)
Devery. What are you talking about?
Billie. About cartels. If that's what this is then I'm against it. Paul explained me the whole thing. (She drops papers as though afraid of contamination. Devery is dumbfounded. He stalls.)
Devery. It's perfectly all right. Don't worry.

Billie. You sure?
Devery. Ask Harry.
Billie. All right.
Devery. He won't like it.
Billie. Why not?
Devery. He just won't, that's all. He doesn't like people butting in. Billie. I'm not people.
Devery. Listen to me, Billie. Be smart.
Billie. How can I be smart if nobody ever tells me anything?
Devery. I'm telling you something.
Billie. What?
Devery. Sign the stuff and don't start up with him.
Billie. (Putting pen down.) Tomorrow.
Devery. Why tomorrow?
Billie. I wanna look 'em over, so I'll know what I'm doing.
Devery. (Losing his temper.) It's all right!
Billie. Must be something fishy. If not, you'd tell me.
Devery. Take my word for it.
Billie. No. (Devery is uncomfortable and shows it. Tries hard to think of another approach.) I know what you feel bad about. You don't like to be doin' all his dirty work —- because you know you're better than him.
Devery. (White.) That's enough.
Billie. (Plunging ahead, loudly.) But I'm not so sure —- maybe you're worse! (Devery looks at her for a moment, then goes upstairs and into Broock's room, in angry determination. Billie looks up at Broock's door, picks up papers and dictionary and brings them to sofa. Picks up papers and reads. A word baffles her. She looks it up. Then picks up papers again. Now Broock appears on balcony, coatless, sleeves rolled up. He is smoking a cigarette and wears slippers. Comes down into room, slowly. Billie does not look up, but continues what she is doing. Broock crosses room. She senses his silent fury as he passes behind her. Crosses to liquor and gets drink. Then crosses to chair in, of desk and sits down, facing Billie. She is frightened. Broock gives no sign of anger or violence. He watches her. Finally he breaks silence.)
Broock. (Quietly.) Innarresting?
Billie. (Without looking up.) Not very.
Broock. I suppose you're used to readin' more high-tone stuff?
Billie. Yes, I am. (Another long pause.)
Broock. (Gently.) What's a matter, kid?
BILLIE. Nothing.
BROCK. All of a sudden?
BILLIE. (Looks at BROCK.) I don't like that Ed.
BROCK. Why, what'd he do to you?
BILLIE. He didn't do nothin'—anything to me. It's what he's done to himself.
BROCK. Done what?
BILLIE. He used to be the Assistant Attorney General of the whole United States.
BROCK. Who?
BILLIE. Ed.
BROCK. So what's wrong with that?
BILLIE. Nothing's wrong. Just look at him now. (BROCK is puzzled.) You know he once wrote a book? "The Roots of Freedom." That was the name of it. I read it. It was beautiful.
BROCK. Where'd you get all this?
BILLIE. I looked it up.
BROCK. Why?
BILLIE. No reason. I was just in the library. And look at him now. He hangs around and helps you promote, and lets you walk all over him just because you pay 'im for it.
BROCK. Oh, so we finally got around to me!
BILLIE. Yuh. I'm not sure I like you, either. You're selfish, that's your trouble.
BROCK. Since when is all this?
BILLIE. Since now.
BROCK. You don't say!
BILLIE. I used to think you were a big man, Harry. No more. All through history there's been bigger men than you, and better. Now, too.
BROCK. Who, for instance?
BILLIE. Thousands.
BROCK. Name one.
BILLIE. (After a moment.) My father.
BROCK. (Contemptuously.) Twenty-five a week.
BILLIE. (Looking at him.) "—brain of gold."
BROCK. (Confused.) What?
BILLIE. Never mind.
BROCK. (Rising, moving to her and advising kindly.) Listen, cutie, don't get nervous just because you read a book. (Reassuring her.) You're as dumb as you ever were. (Sits near her.)

BILLIE. You think so?
BROCK. Sure, but I don't mind. You know why? (He inches closer.) Because you've got the best little —— (He lunges at her rudely.) BILLIE. (Springing away and crossing r. back of desk, with a shudder.) Leave me alone, Harry! (The tempo of their exchange accelerates.)

BROCK. Come here!
BILLIE. No!!
BROCK. (Loud.) I never seen you like this.
BILLIE. (Pacing, matching his tone.) I never been like this. I feel like I wanna go 'way some place.
BROCK. Where?
BILLIE. I don't know!
BROCK. I may wind up here in a few weeks. We'll go to Florida maybe.
BILLIE. I mean alone!
BROCK. You know what I think? I think you've gone nuts!
BILLIE. Maybe!
BROCK. Calm down!
BILLIE. I can't!
BROCK. Why not?
BILLIE. (D.R. of desk, passionately.) I don't know. I just know I hate my life. There's a better kind, I know it. If you read some of these books you'd know it, too. Maybe it's right what you say I'm still dumb. But I know one thing I never knew before. There's a better kind of life than the one I got. Or you.
BROCK. (Rising and going to her.) I suppose you figure you'da been better off with that lousy saxophone player?
BILLIE. At least he was honest! (Toe to toe, front of desk.)
BROCK. He was a dime-a-dozen chump.
BILLIE. He worked for a livin', that's one thing ——
BROCK. (Outraged.) I work. I been workin' since I was twelve years old —— nobody ever give me nothin'.
BILLIE. If a man goes and robs a house —— that's work, too.
BROCK. In my whole life—— (HELEN, carrying towels, enters from service wing. BROCK stops, abruptly. HELEN, sensing charged atmosphere, quickens her pace as she goes upstairs. BILLIE and BROCK watch her go. The moment she disappears they swing back to each other and continue the fray.) In my whole life I never robbed a house! What the hell you talkin' about?
BILLIE. (Patronizingly.) You can hardly understand anything, can
you?

BROCK. Get off that high horse — you dumb little pot!

BILLIE. (Closer to him.) You — (Tries hard to think of something worse.) — menace!

BROCK. (Crossing d... to sofa.) I picked you up out of the gutter and I can throw you back there, too. (Turning to her.) Why, you never had a decent meal before you met me.

BILLIE. (Crossing L to BROCK, face to face with him.) Yeah, but I could do without you. You eat terrible! I got no manners. Takin' your shoes off all the time — that's another thing ... and pickin' your teeth. ... (Turning away laughingly, You're just — not — cough! (HELEN comes down stairs, goes out service entrance. BROCK waits until she has gone.)

BROCK. (Shouting.) I'm cother than you are!

BILLIE. (Crossing r. to below of desk.) And that cheap perfume you put on yourself.

BROCK. Cheap?! I don't own nothin' cheap. Except you!

BILLIE. (Deeply hurt, she turns to him and speaks with quiet strength.) You don't own me. Nobody can own anybody. There's a law says.

BROCK. (Loudly.) Don't tell me about the law! If I was scared of the law, I wouldn't be where I am.

BILLIE. Where are you?

BROCK. All right, you've talked enough. If you don't like it here, beat it. You'll be back. (BILLIE starts upstairs.) Wait a minute.

(BILLIE gets papers from coffee table, crosses r. to desk.) First this.

BILLIE. (At foot of stairs.) Not now.

BROCK. (Turning to her.) Right now.

BILLIE. No!

BROCK. (Loud.) Come on!

BILLIE. (Determined.) I'm not gonna sign anything any more till I know what I'm signing. From now on.

BROCK. (Out of control.) Do what I'm tellin' ya! (HE pounds desk. BILLIE stands rigid and scared, but manages a small, grim shake of her head. BROCK moves slowly to her. He is suddenly in front of her. Raises his arm.)

BILLIE. (Gripping.) Harry, please! Don't! (HER last word is cut in two by a singeing slap! which buckles her knees. A cry escapes her as he strikes her again. The seed of her rebellion is suddenly uprooted. She sags and sob, defeated. BROCK propels her to desk in a series of rough shoves. Still sobbing, she follows his direction and signs documents, one by one. When she has finished, BILLIE's head goes to her folded arms on desk. BROCK takes papers, crosses L. to sofa, puts them down, turns to her.)

BILLIE. (Back of sofa.) All right, now get the hell outa here.

BILLIE. What?

BROCK. (Bellowing.) Don't be bawlin' around here, that's what. I don't like it. I been treatin' you too good, that's the trouble. You don't appreciate it. Nothin'. I ain't gonna have nobody around here who don't know their place. So get the hell outa here. Go sit on a park bench some place till you're ready to behave yourself.

(BILLIE doesn't move.) Go on!! (BILLIE rises brokenly, starts for stairs. BROCK points to front door.) This way out!

BILLIE. (At foot of stairs, in small voice.) I gotta put somethin' on.

BROCK. Well, hurry up! I don't want you around here like this.

(BILLIE turns to pour drink.) Ya bother me! (He drinks. BILLIE starts up. Halfway there, she stops, turns.)

BILLIE. (Loud and bitter.) Big — Fascist!

BROCK. (Turning to her.) What? (She runs up quickly, goes into her room. BROCK takes another drink. His attention goes to stack of books before him. Instantly he identifies it as the root of his problem. He pushes them to the floor, violently, finding a strange release in this. Kicks them out of his way and crosses to desk. Picks up one of the books on corner of desk and tosses it to floor, u.c. Then another. Picks up another, tears it in half. There is mingled fury, excitement and satisfaction in his heart as he completes destruction of book. Starts on another, as DEVEREY appears on balcony. BROCK stops, as though discovered in an idiotic act, lets book drop to floor.)

DEVEREY. (On steps.) All set?

BROCK. (Crossing to sofa, getting papers, handing them to ED.) Certainly all set. What'd you think — I'm gonna let a broad talk back? (He sits.)

DEVEREY. Where is she?

BROCK. I told her take a walk. One thing I can't stand it's a crier.

DEVEREY. (Crossing to him.) What's she crying about?

BROCK. What do I know?

DEVEREY. (With a sigh.) ... becoming a strange girl.

BROCK. She's all right. All this book stuff's got her nervously, that's all.

DEVEREY. (Crossing to chair L. of desk. Softly.) "A little learning is a dangerous thing."
BROCK. What!?
DEVERY. Nothing, Harry. (*Sitting.*) Looks as though your passion for educating her was a mistake.
BROCK. I didn't know it woulda turned out like *this,* did I? . . . Remind me to fire that four-eyed Verrall skunk.
DEVERY. Why blame him?
BROCK. He must of told her too much. (*A pause.*) You know what she called me before? A *fart*-ist.
DEVERY. (*Almost smiling.*) She did?
BROCK. It don't make sense. I was born in Plainfield, New Jersey. She knows that. (*Shakes his head dejectedly.*)
DEVERY. What's the matter, Harry?
BROCK. (*Softer.*) I love that broad. (*A pause.*) BROCK appears to be thinking hard. *Looks up, suddenly.* Hey! You think we could maybe find somebody to make her dumb again? (*Billie comes down, dressed for the street, and moves toward front door. As she opens it BROCK bellowls without turning.*) And don't be late if you don't want a bloody nose! (*Billie stops, turns, moves a step into room.*)
BILLIE. (*Ever so gently.*) Would you do me a favor, Harry?
BROCK. (*Mean, still not looking at her.*) What?
BILLIE. Drop dead? (*She leaves quickly, closes door behind her, before BROCK comes to. He does so with a snap! Looks at DEVERY, then rises slowly and is turning to door, flabbergasted.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: The same. Later that evening. DEVERY, coatless, sits on sofa, working on a pile of documents. He is somewhat drunker than before. BROCK, in pajamas and dressing-gown, is pacing the floor.

BROCK. What time is it a'ready?
DEVERY. (*Looking at his watch.*) One-thirty.
BROCK. (*Crossing r. to behind desk.*) I'll slug *er* senseless when she comes back.

DEVERY. If:
BROCK. Listen, I had this before with *er.* She always winds up where I want *er.*
DEVERY. I hope so. (*A pause.*)
BROCK. What time is it?
DEVERY. One-thirty.
BROCK. (*Crossing to d.l. corner of desk.*) You said that before.
DEVERY. One-thirty-one.
BROCK. What time she go out?
DEVERY. I don't know. Five, six o'clock.
BROCK. (*Crossing to c.*) Eight hours.
DEVERY. What?
BROCK. She's been gone eight hours.
DEVERY. Maybe she's seeing a double-feature.
BROCK. (*Crossing r. to desk.*) Yeah. (*A pause.*) That don't take eight hours! (*Crossing to sofa.*) She coulda got into an accident.
DEVERY. You'd hear.
BROCK. She couldn't got *raped!* (*DEVERY looks at him, quizzically.*) It happens all the time.
DEVERY. Not to Billie. Maybe the other way around, but not to Billie.
BROCK. (*Pacing again.*) You'd think Eddie'd call up at least . . .
DEVERY. Be damned inconvenient if he doesn't find her. I've got some more to be signed. It can't wait. (*Eddie comes in.*)
EDDIE. She here?
BROCK. What d'you mean she here? *No!*
EDDIE. The guy downstairs said he seen *er* go out then he seen *er* come in.
BROCK. He's blind. Go look some more.
EDDIE. (*Coming into room, protesting.*) I been all over town.
BROCK. Well, go over it again! (*The slightest possible hesitation from EDDIE.*) Do what I'm tellin' ya!!
EDDIE. (*Bouncing.*) Sure. (*Going out to service wing.*) Just change my socks.
DEVERY. (*Looking upstairs.*) If I thought I could make those stairs I'd go lie down.
BROCK. (*Sitting chair l. of desk.*) I sure never thought she was gonna turn out like this.
DEVERY. . . , you thought any more about that matter we discussed in connection with her?
BROCK. What connection?
DEVEREY. Marrying her?
BROCK. Still harpin', huh?
DEVEREY. (Rising, crossing to BROCK) ... gone beyond the reasons of appearance, Harry—if she's going to be truculent, I'm thinking of your legal safety. On paper she owns—
BROCK. (Hard.) I know what she owns!
DEVEREY. (Leaning over him.) You've got to do it, Harry. (Long pause. BROCK crosses to liquor.)
BROCK. They always hook ya in the end, them broads. (Pours drink.) It's crazy, y'know it?
DEVEREY. (U.L. of desk.) How?
BROCK. (Back of sofa.) A whole trouble account of a dame reads a book.
DEVEREY. Just goes to show you.
BROCK. Yeah. (He drinks.)
DEVEREY. (Crossing to BROCK.) It's the new world, Harry ... Force and reason changing places. Knowledge is power. You can lead a horse to water.
BROCK. What?
DEVEREY. Honesty is the best policy. A stitch in time saves nine. (Starts upstairs. Trips on bottom step. Recovers, leans on banister.)
BROCK. (Moving to him.) I don't like the way things are goin' around here. You stewed all the time—the broad outa line—and that's some fine Senator y' bought me!
DEVEREY. I think he's cute.
BROCK. I could get me a better Senator outa The Automat.
DEVEREY. Best I could do.
BROCK. I'd like to trade 'im in, no kiddin'.
DEVEREY. They're not all for sale, Harry. That's the trouble with this town—too many honest men in it. (DEVEREY goes upstairs and into BROCK's room. BROCK paces, lights cigarette—then stops, stares at books. Crosses to desk. Picks up two books, weighs them, selects the lighter and moves to sofa. Reads, with some difficulty, his lips forming the words. EDDIE comes in.)
EDDIE. I'll take a look downstairs and see if she's——(HE stops abruptly at sight of BROCK, who turns to see him gaping.)
BROCK. (Challengingly.) What's a matter?
EDDIE. Nuthin'.
BROCK. Didn't you ever see a person readin' a book, for Christ sake?

EDDIE. Sure.
BROCK. All right then. Get the hell outa here!
EDDIE. Sure. (He goes quietly. BROCK reads. He has difficulty holding the continuity as he turns a page. Turns it back and forth several times, last time speedily, in an attempt to capture the thread. Behind him door opens noiselessly and BILLIE looks in. She closes door. BROCK reads a bit longer, then gives up. Tears book in two and throws it away. Rises, goes upstairs. Turns out main light from balcony and goes into his room. BILLIE comes in, looks around. Goes upstairs, stops at BROCK's door, listens. Then comes down to main door. She motions PAUL to come in. He closes door. BILLIE moves to desk. She searches. PAUL waits U.C., watching BROCK's door. BILLIE holds letter out to PAUL. He takes it, examines it carefully, nods. Quietly, systematically, they go through desk. PAUL collects a pile of documents, letters, checkbooks, and material he wants. BILLIE crosses and picks up what was left by DEVEREY on coffee table. PAUL follows her. She hands it over, he examines it, nods.)
BILLIE. (Whispering.) Okay?
PAUL. (Quietly.) ... ought to do it fine.
BILLIE. I probably won't see you again, Paul——
PAUL. (Full voice.) What?!
BILLIE. Sshh!
PAUL. (A whisper.) What?!
BILLIE. So I want to say goodbye and thanks for everything.
PAUL. Where are you going?
BILLIE. Just away from here, that's all I know.
PAUL. Where? You can tell me.
BILLIE. I don't know. I thought I might go see my father for a while.
PAUL. And have a hot lunch every day?
BILLIE. Yeah.
PAUL. I've got a better idea.
BILLIE. What?
PAUL. Let's get married.
BILLIE. You must be daffy.
PAUL. I love you, Billie.
BILLIE. You don't love me. You just love my brain.
PAUL. That, too.
BILLIE. What would the boss of The New Republic say?
PAUL. I don't know. Probably congratulations.
BILLIE. I'll think it over, but I can tell you now the answer's no. (PAUL kisses her.) What're you doing?
PAUL. Well, if you don't know, I must be doing it wrong. (Kisses her again.)
BILLIE. (Sitting.) What's more important right now—crabbin' Harry's act or romancing?
PAUL. (Sitting beside her.) Both.
BILLIE. Honest, Paul—I wish you'd—(Door opens suddenly and EDDIE comes in. He speaks swiftly, flooding room with light. PAUL and BILLIE rise. PAUL crosses to front of desk, removing lipstick from his face with handkerchief.)
EDDIE. What's this? Night school? (To BILLIE.) Where were you, anyway? I looked all over town.
BILLIE. I walked over to the White House and back.
EDDIE. How's everybody over there? (To PAUL.) Better knock off, Buster.
PAUL. Why?
EDDIE. (Indicating BROCK'S room.) I'm supposed to tell 'im she's back. I don't think he'll like it you horsin' around with his girl in the middle of the night. He's funny that way.
PAUL. I'll take a chance.
BILLIE. You better go.
EDDIE. Take advice.
PAUL. What's it to you?
EDDIE. (Starting upstairs.) Listen, noise I can stand but blood makes me nervous. (Goes into BROCK'S room.)
BILLIE. (Crossing to PAUL.) Please, Paul.
PAUL. . . . sure you'll be all right?
BILLIE. Don't worry.
PAUL. Goodbye, Billie.
BILLIE. Goodbye. (PAUL kisses her quickly and goes. BILLIE stands alone for a moment, then moves to desk, picks up phone. Porter, please. (She sorts out a few things on desk.) Hello, porter ... This is 67D. Could you send up somebody for my bags? ... No, right now ... Thank you. (EDDIE comes out of BROCK'S room, rubbing his stomach.)
EDDIE. (Gaping.) Ooh! (Stands on balcony, bent over.)
BILLIE. What's the matter?
EDDIE. Right in the stomach he hit me.
BILLIE. Why didn't you hit him back?
EDDIE. What?
BILLY. Just where I stand around here.
BROCK. (A step to her.) That's what I'm tryin' to tell ya.
BILLY. What?
BROCK. Where you stand.
BILLY. Yuh.
BROCK. (Crossing to her.) Well—it first thing, that Verrall stuff is
out. It gets in my way—and I don' like you upset so much. It's
bad for you. And the next thing—we're gonna get married.
BILLY. No.
BROCK. Only you gotta behave yourself and—No? What do
you mean, no?
BILLY. I don't want to, that's what I mean. No! (Crosses to him.)
In fact, I've never been so insulted! (She goes to desk and
resumes collecting.)
BROCK. (Softly.) Well, that's the goddamnest thing I ever heard.
BILLY. Why?
BROCK. Who the hell are you to say no, if I tell ya?
BILLY. Don't knock yourself out, you got a lotta surprises coming.
BROCK. Just tell me first.
BILLY. What?
BROCK. How can you not wanna marry me?
BILLY. (Stopping, looking at him, seriously.) Well, you're too
dumb for one thing. I got a different kinda life in mind, Harry.
Entirely. I'm sorry but you just wouldn't fit in.
BROCK. (Crossing L. to sofa.) Listen, Billie. I don't understand
what the hell's happenin'!
BILLY. (Resuming at desk.) I do.
BROCK. (Crossing to C.) What'd I do? What did I? All right. I
talked rough to you once in a while. Maybe I hit you a couple times.
Easy. That a reason to treat me like this? I done good for you, too.
Couldn't we straighten it out?
BILLY. No.
BROCK. Why not?
BILLY. (Crossing to him.) Well, all this stuff I've been reading—and
that Paul's been tellin' me—it just mixed me up. But when you hit
me before (She points to place in room) it was like everything
knocked itself together in my head—and made sense. All of a
sudden I realized what it means. How some people are always givin'
it and some takin'. And it's not fair. So I'm not gonna let you any
more. Or anybody else! (Crosses back to desk, and rummages
through it.)

BROCK. (A new approach.) Listen, kid. I got an idea. Come on
upstairs and I'll calm ya down. (Billie replies by closing a desk
drawer with a slam.) We ust a have a pretty good time, remember?
(She slams another drawer.) You wanna come to Florida? (She
slams another drawer.) I think you oughta marry me, don't you?
(She slams still another drawer. He is suddenly off the handle.)
Listen, Billie! (Billie crosses below desk to L. of sofa.) I want you
to marry me. I don't wanna argue about it. I heard enough. Now
you do what I'm tellin' ya or you'll be damn good and sorry.
BILLY. (Smiling.) I'm not scared of you any more, Harry, that's
another thing.
BROCK. You're not, huh? (Moves toward her menacingly. She is
backing away as door buzzer sounds.)
BILLY. (Shouting.) Come on in! (Two bellhops appear, she
points to her room.) Right up there. (Bellhops start upstairs.)
BROCK. What the hell's this?
BILLY. Oh, didn't I tell you? I'm leaving.
BROCK. What?
BILLY. Yuh, for good.
BROCK. (To bellhops.) Wait a second. (They stop.) Beat it.
(Bellhops hesitate.) Hurry up! (They hurry down.)
1ST BELLHOP. (At door.) Thank you, sir. (Bellhops are gone.)
BROCK. (Crossing to Billie.) Let's get organized around here.
You can't just walk out, cutie. You're in too deep with me. I'm
right in the middle of the biggest thing I ever done. Maybe I
made a mistake hookin' you in with it—but you're in!
BILLY. Well, I'm not gonna be. I decided.
BROCK. All right, fine. You wanna wash it up?
BILLY. Yeah.
BROCK. All right, we'll wash it up. I'm too important to monkey
around with what you think. (He shouts upstairs.) Ed! (Crossing
to desk, looking through papers.) I'll fix it you can be out of here
in no time. You're spoiled. I spoiled you. You're no good to me
no more. I was ready to make you a real partner. So you don't
want it? So fine. See how you do without me. You don't look like you
looked nine years ago. In fact, you look lousy, if you want the
truth. I'm glad to get rid of you.
BILLY. (Moving toward him.) And as far as I'm concerned—
BROCK. Yeah?
BILLY. (Sneerily.) Vice-a—versa! (Devery comes down.)
DEVERY. (To Billie.) You're back. (To Brock.) All set?
BROCK. Shut up!
DEVERY. What's the matter?
BROCK. (Rummaging through desk.) She's off her nut. We're gonna settle everything up and get 'er the hell outa here.
DEVERY. (To Billie.) You sure you know what you're doing?
BILLIE. First time in my life I do know. (Sits on sofa, lights cigarette.)
BROCK. What'd you do with that stuff you wanted 'er to—?
DEVERY. (Points to coffee table.) Right there.
BROCK. Where, right there? (DEVERY looks over at table, then moves to desk. They search, feverishly. BILLIE watches.)
BILLIE. (Nonchalantly.) With blue covers?
DEVERY. (Opening a drawer.) Yeah.
BILLIE. Three copies?
BROCK. (Closing a drawer.) That's right.
BILLIE. (Easily.) I gave 'em to Paul. (BROCK and DEVERY freeze at desk in odd positions, look at each other.)
BROCK. When?
BILLIE. Just now.
DEVERY. What for?
BILLIE. What d'you think for? To put in the paper, I guess.
BROCK. (Slams drawer, crosses to her.) There's some kinda jokes I don't like.
BILLIE. (Crossing to meet him C.) It's no joke. Paul says it's the worst swindle since—uh—the teapot! (She shrugs uncertainly.) Sump'n like that. (Crosses to front of sofa. DEVERY and BROCK exchange a horrified look. BILLIE turns to them.) What're you gettin' so white about? You told me yourself it was perfectly all right.
BROCK. (Furious.) You double-crossin' little—
BILLIE. (Moving to him.) I don't see it like that! If there's a fire and I call the engines—so who am I double-crossing— the fire?
DEVERY. (Going to desk.) I'd better get Norval.
BROCK. (Crossing from desk to up R.C.) I know who to get. Eddie!!
DEVERY. (On phone.) Decatur 9124. (EDDIE appears.)
BROCK. (To EDDIE.) You know where Verrall's room is?
EDDIE. Sure.
BROCK. Tell 'im to get in here right away.
EDDIE. Right. (Starts out. BROCK follows him.)
BROCK. Wait a minute. (EDDIE stops as BROCK continues craftily.)

Tell 'im Billie wants 'im. (EDDIE goes.)
DEVERY. (On phone.) Hello, Norval! Ed. Wake up?
. . . Oh, good. I'm over here at Harry's. Can you drop by? Important. . . . No, it can't. . . . all right. (Hangs up. Crosses to liquor.)
BILLIE. (D.L. at end table.) Paul's got nothing to do with this. It was my own idea.
BROCK. I'll show you ideas.
BILLIE. (Crossing to him.) If you think you can strong-arm him—
you're wastin' your time. For a fellow with eye-glasses—he's very—stubborn! (She turns and moves away to sofa. BROCK crosses to D.L. of desk.)
DEVERY. (Pouring a drink.) Oh, dear.
BROCK. If you don't stop bellyachin' get the hell outa here!
DEVERY. We're in trouble, Harry.
BROCK. (Pointing to DEVERY's drink.) Is that gonna help?
DEVERY. No. (He downs it.)
BROCK. (Crossing to U.R.C.) I'll trim this guy. Watch me.
DEVERY. All right.
BROCK. (Crossing to C.) You get in a spot, you fold up. Remind me to give you a heart-to-heart.
DEVERY. (Crossing to BROCK.) Be that as it may—if this stuff breaks—nobody'll play with us.
BROCK. So what's to do?
DEVERY. Might be best—under the circumstances—to call off.
BROCK. What?
DEVERY. Let him publish. If nothing happens, he looks silly.
BROCK. What d'you mean nothin' happens? I've spent two months down here and I don't know how much dough. I'm supposed to let all that ride?
DEVERY. If you want to play it safe.
BROCK. (Crossing L. to R. of sofa.) Well, I don't. I want what I'm after.
DEVERY. (Following him.) Going to be tough to get.
BROCK. Why? 'Cause some little wasel with eyeglasses gets noisy? I'll cut his tongue out!
DEVERY. (Face to face.) Listen, Harry—
BROCK. (Loud.) You're chicken!
DEVERY. (Watching him.) You think so?
BROCK. I think so!
DEVERY. (Shouting.) You're off the handle because it looks like
I've been right and you've been wrong.

BROCK. (Crossing below DEVERY to front of desk.) Talk!

DEVERY. (Following him.) I've told you again and again. Get too big you become a target. It's easier to steal diamonds than elephants!

BROCK. (Turning sharply.) Shut up! ... I'll handle this.

DEVERY. All right. (Crosses back to liquor.)

BROCK. You brought this guy around in the first place. Remember that. You're about as much help to me as a boil on the—— (Stops at PAUL comes in, followed by EDDIE. EDDIE guards door. BROCK moves to PAUL, who senses the trap.) I think you got sump'n by mistake belongs to me.

PAUL. That so?

BROCK. How about it? (BROCK looks at BILLIE. BROCK signals EDDIE, who grabs PAUL's arms. BROCK frisks him.)

PAUL. Hey!

BROCK. (Pointing to sofa.) Siddown. (PAUL sits beside BILLIE.)

PAUL. (Casually.) Hello.

BILLIE. (Politely.) How've you been?

PAUL. Fine, and you?

BILLIE. Fine.

BROCK. (To DEVERY.) Get the stuff outa his room. (DEVERY starts out.)

PAUL. Not there, Ed. (DEVERY stops.)

BROCK. Where, then? (PAUL looks at him, smiles, shakes his head.) All right, if you wanna play it rough. I know how to do that, too. (Signals EDDIE, who locks front door. BROCK walks to service wing, bolts door. His determination and purpose strike a kind of terror in every person in the room. Moves back to sofa.)

Now you listen, you two heels. I mean business. I got too much at stake down here. You got sump'n belongs to me. And if you wanna get outa here alive—you're gonna give it back. I'm no blowhard. (To BILLIE.) Tell him.

BILLIE. (To PAUL, parrot-like.) He's no blowhard. (Then, seriously.) He's had people killed before. Like once, about six years ago there was a strike at one of his——

BROCK. Shut up! You ain't gonna be telling nobody nuthin' pretty soon.

BILLIE. (Rising to her knees, pointing at BROCK, derisively.) Double negative! (To PAUL.) Right?

PAUL. Right! (A pause. EDDIE is fixing a drink.)

BROCK. You don't seem to be gettin' the idea. You never been in trouble like you're gonna be if you don't do what I'm tellin' ya! (Starts for PAUL.)

DEVERY. (Intercepting him.) Wait a minute, Harry. There's another way to handle this. (BROCK turns away, crosses r. as DEVERY speaks to PAUL.) I really think you've pulled a boner, friend. My advice to you is lay off.

PAUL. And mine to you is stop sticking your noses into my business.

BILLIE. Yeah.

BROCK. Look who's talkin' about stickin' noses. You're the goddamnest butinski I ever run into! (EDDIE comes down and hands BROCK drink.)

PAUL. ... told you once before, Harry, that's my job.

BROCK. What? Gettin' in my way? (EDDIE crosses back to door, leans against it.)

PAUL. Not exactly.

BROCK. What then? I'd like to know. No kiddin'.

PAUL. To find out what goes on and get it to the people.

BROCK. What people?

PAUL. The people.

BROCK. Never heard of 'em.

BILLIE. You will, Harry, some day. They're gettin' to be more and more well-known all the time.

DEVERY. (To PAUL.) What if I told you this whole operation is strictly according to law?

PAUL. Then I'd say the law needs revision.

BROCK. Who're you? The government?

PAUL. Of course.

BROCK. Since when?

BILLIE. Since—uh—1779! (To PAUL.) Right?

PAUL. Right!

BROCK. What? (DEVERY is back at liquor supply.)

PAUL. (Rising, moving to BROCK.) Of course, I'm the government. What do you think the government is, Harry? A man, a monster, a machine? It's you and me and a few million more. We've got to learn to look after each other.

BROCK. Thanks, I can look after myself.

BILLIE. (To PAUL.) He doesn't get it. I think it's because you still talk too fancy. (To BROCK.) Look, Harry, the idea is you can only get away with your kind of shenanigans if nobody cares about it.
BROCK. I know what I'm doin'. I got my rights same as anybody else.

BILLIE. More! You keep buyin' more and more rights for yourself. (Buzzer sounds.)

BROCK. You got nothin' to say to me. (EDDIE opens door, HEDGES comes in, EDDIE closes door. DEVEREY crosses to L. of sofa, with drink.)

HEDGES. Good evening, Eddie! (Gay, coming into room.) Well, this is a late little party, isn't it?

BROCK. Shut up!

HEDGES. (C.) What?

BROCK. (Close to him.) Don't be so happy!

HEDGES. What's the trouble?

DEVEREY. Well, our friend Verrall here has—uh—stumbled on a little something. I don't know what he thinks it means.

PAUL. I'll tell you. Just that there may be some connection between Harry's combine and the Senator's amendment.

HEDGES. (To PAUL.) Now, just a moment, son. I've got nothing against you young radicals—used to be one myself—but you simply won't be practical. Now, what we're doing is common practice. Done every day. I don't know why you single us out to make a fuss about.

BROCK. Yeah, why?

PAUL. (To HEDGES.) Done every day, sir, right. For all I know an undiscovered murder is committed every day. What does that prove? All this undercover pressure—bribery—corruption—government between friends. Sure it goes on all the time, and it's tough to crack. Ask me. I've tried for years. You need more than the knowing about it. You've got to have the facts and the figures and most important—the names.

BILLIE. (Chirping.) And he's got 'em.

HEDGES. (Angry.) You be careful, young man, when you use the word bribery in my presence.

BILLIE. Eighty thousand dollars you got. What word do you want 'im to use? Tip? (HEDGES pales and looks helplessly at BROCK.)

HEDGES. Harry, I honestly feel —

BROCK. What the hell do I care what you feel? I feel, too.

HEDGES. I can't take any smearin' now. It's a bad time.

BROCK. (Pushing HEDGES aside.) Knock off! (HEDGES crosses to desk, as BROCK moves to PAUL.) All right, now we all had our little beat around the bush. Let's get down to it. What can we work out?

PAUL. You just heard your lawyer say it was all according to law.

BROCK. Yeah.

PAUL. If that's the case, what's bothering you?

BROCK. I don't like a lotta noise, that's all.

PAUL. I'll be very quiet.

BROCK. What'll you take, Paul?

PAUL. (Crossing to liquor and pouring drink.) I'll take a drink, please, if I may.

BROCK. Don't be fancy with me. I never yet met a guy didn't have his price.

PAUL. I have.

BROCK. (Loud.) I'm talkin' about big numbers.

BILLIE. (Louder.) You and your big numbers! If you don't watch out, you'll be wearin' one across your chest! (PAUL finishes drink.

HEDGES sits, back of desk, at sea.)

BROCK. (To BILLIE.) I'll get to you later. (To PAUL.) Make up your mind. There's two ways we can do business. One—you play ball—make it worth your while. Two—you better start watchin' your step. There'll be no place you can walk—no place you can live, if you monkey-wrench me! (A pause.) What d'you say?

PAUL. I'd like to think it over!

BROCK. All right. You got two minutes! (Crosses R. to front of desk. PAUL looks at BILLIE, at BROCK, then sits quietly. Looks at BILLIE again, then at DEVEREY. BILLIE, too, looks at DEVEREY. BILLIE looks toward window L., seeking an avenue of escape. PAUL looks at EDDIE, standing near steps of balcony. EDDIE and BROCK exchange a look. PAUL looks at BROCK, then at BILLIE again. He ponders a moment, looks at his watch.)

PAUL. Come on, Billie. (PAUL moves to door. BILLIE rises slowly to follow. BROCK starts after PAUL. Simultaneously, DEVEREY starts U.L. around couch.)

DEVEREY. Wait a minute, Harry! (HE is crossing to BROCK.)

HEDGES. (Rising.) Now, let's not lose our tempers.

BILLIE. (Rushing to phone.) Harry! Harry! (BROCK reaches PAUL and in a sudden inhuman burst, swings him around, grabs him by throat and begins to strangle him. PAUL goes to his knees, BROCK hangs on.)

DEVEREY. (In a panic.) Cut it out! Harry!

HEDGES. Oh, my God!

BILLIE. (Picks up phone and screams.) Operator! Operator! (ED-
DEVEREY. They struggle for phone noisily. Devery and
hedges are desperately attempting to prevent murder. Finally,
they tear Brock loose. Billie rushes to Paul to help him. His
glasses have been knocked off and his clothes are torn. He is
groggy. Devery throws Brock onto sofa, where he sits, spent and
subdued.

DEVEREY. (To Brock.) You goddamn fool! Where the hell do you
think you are? Can't you see all this muscle stuff is a thing of the
past? You cut it out, or you'll be a thing of the past, too. (Crosses
to liquor.)

BROCK. I got mad!

PAUL. (Coming down to him.) Who are you to get mad, you big
baboon? You ought to be grateful you're allowed to walk around
free.

DEVEREY. (Warning.) You don't know me good enough for that
kinda talk.

PAUL. (Losing his temper.) I know you. I've seen your kind down
here for years. What the hell do you guys want, anyway? You've
got all the oil and all the lumber and steel and coal—what do you
want now—all the people? All the laws?

BROCK. (Rising.) Don't blow your top! (Crosses to PAUL.) I'm
still ready to do business. How's a hundred grand?

PAUL. (Turning away, crossing to L. of desk.) A hundred grand is
beautiful—but I can't do it.

DEVEREY. Why not? (A pause.)

PAUL. (Turning to him.) My wife wouldn't like it. (Another
pause.)

BILLIE. (Softly.) She certainly wouldn't!

BROCK. (To PAUL.) All right, then, what's your idea?

PAUL. Nothing—no idea—I'm just trying to show you that—look,
there's a difference between junk and—legislation's not meant for
buying and selling.

BILLIE. "This country with its institutions belongs to the people
who inhabit it!"

PAUL. (Correcting her.) "—inhabit!"

BILLIE. "—inhabit it!"

BROCK. What the hell you two battin' about? I don't see what I'm
doing so wrong. This is America, ain't it? Where's all this free
enterprise they're always talkin' about?

DEVEREY. (Toasting.) To free enterprise! (Drinks.)

BROCK. (To PAUL.) You're just sore because I made good and you
ain't. Everybody had the same chance as me—all them kids I ust
know—so where are they now?

BILLIE. (Coming to him.) No place. Because you beat 'em out, like
you said. You always want to hold everybody down so you can get
it all for yourself. That's why there's like my father—and like
me. I wanted—and he couldn't give me—so I wind up with an
empty head and with you.

BROCK. I always did what I want and I'm always gonna.

BILLIE. (With a gesture.) Us too.

BROCK. (Contemptuously.) You're two? Don't make me split a gut.
Be some fine day when a hundred-and-a-quarter-a-week hick and
a broad ain't been off her end in ten years can stop me. (He turns
and sees DEVEREY.) What the hell you standin' around like a
dummie? What do I pay you for? Say something!

DEVEREY. All right. I'll say something.

BROCK. Well?

DEVEREY. They're right. (Eddie is getting Brock another drink.)

BROCK. Who the hell's side you on?

EDDIE. (Handing Brock drink.) Bye ginger ale.

BROCK. Who asked you? Butt out! (Hands glass back to EDDIE,
who retreats.)

PAUL. (Crouching to Brock.) Maybe another time, Harry, not now.
And if you're going to try again—do it fast. It gets harder all the
time—people get wiser—they hear more—they read more—they
talk more. When enough of them know enough—that'll be the end
of you.

BROCK. Don't worry about me.

PAUL. I do, though. I worry like hell. I stay up nights. When you
live in Washington, it's enough to break your heart. You see a per-
fect piece of machinery—the democratic structure—and some-
bodysays always tampering with it and trying to make it hit the
jackpot.

DEVEREY. (Toasting.) To the jackpot. (Drinks.)

BROCK. I'm no gambler. I'm a business man.

PAUL. You certainly are, but you tried the wrong business.

BILLIE. (To Brock, from behind PAUL.) When you steal from
the government, you're stealin' from yourself, you dumb ox! (She
flinches from the expected reaction, which fails to materialize.)

BROCK. (To them both.) Do what you want! I'm goin' right ahead.
(Moves away from them to front of desk.)
BILLIE. Wait a minute! I'll tell you where you're goin'.
BROCK. (Turning.) You?!
BILLIE. (Crossing to him.) Sure. In this whole thing—I guess you forgot about me—about how I'm a partner? Ed once told me—a hundred and twenty-six different yards I own.
DEVEREY. Control.
BILLIE. (Closer to BROCK.) Same thing. So here's how it's gonna be. I don't want 'em, I don't want anything of yours—or to do with you. So I'm gonna sign 'em all back —
BROCK. All right.
BILLIE. Only not all at once—just one at a time—one a year!
(BROCK is stunned. BILLIE crosses to PAUL, then turns back to BROCK.) But you better behave yourself—because if you don't I'm gonna let go on everything. For what you've done even since I've known you only, I'll bet you could be put in jail for about nine hundred years. You'd be a pretty old man when you got out.
(Crosses to chair r. of door, picks up hat and bag.)
BROCK. (Dazed.) What's goin' on around here?
DEVEREY. A revolution?
BILLIE. (To PAUL.) Come on, Paul. (To BROCK.) I'll send for my things. (PAUL and BILLIE start for door.)
BROCK. (Moving to BILLIE.) You little crumb—you'll be sorry for this day—wait and see. Go on—go with him—you ain't got a chance. If I ever seen somebody outsmart themself, it's you.
BILLIE. (To the room.) Goodbye, all. (She moves, PAUL follows.)
BROCK. (To PAUL.) And you!
PAUL. Me?
BROCK. Yeah—you're fired!
PAUL. I'm sorry, Harry. I enjoyed working for you. (Turns and stands behind BILLIE, who is at door, still guarded by EDIE.)
BILLIE. (Quietly to EDIE.) Open up!
EDIE. (To BROCK.) All right, Harry?
BILLIE. (Yelling in imitation of BROCK.) Do what I'm tellin' ya!
(EDIE jumps, opens door quickly. BILLIE turns, smiles sweetly at BROCK and goes, followed by PAUL. EDIE closes door. DEVEREY pours himself a drink. BROCK is incredulous.)
BROCK. (Trying to laugh it off.) How d'you like that? He coulda had a hundred grand—and she coulda had me! So they both wind up with nottin'! (A hollow laugh. He looks at door.) Dumb chump.

HEDGES. Yes.
BROCK. (Starting up stairs.) Crazy broad.
HEDGES. Quite right.
DEVEREY. (Toasting, glass held high.) To all the dumb chumps and all the crazy broads.—(BROCK stops midway up stairs and turns back to listen) past, present and future—who thirst for knowledge—and search for truth—who fight for justice—and civilize each other—and make it so tough for sons-of-bitches (To, HEDGES) like you.—(To BROCK) and you—and me. (Drinks.)

CURTAIN