

Man at Bar
 Woman at Bar
 Telephone Girl
 Young Woman
 Man Behind Bar
 Girl
 Man

Michael Brogan
 Rachel Power
 Matilda Ziegler
 Fiona Shaw
 Marcus Heath
 Harriet Harrison
 Michael Bott

EPIQUE SIX: INTIMATE

Man
 Young Woman

Ciaran Hinds
 Fiona Shaw

EPIQUE SEVEN: DOMESTIC

George H Jones
 Young Woman

John Woodvine
 Fiona Shaw

EPIQUE EIGHT: THE LAW

Bailiff
 Clerk
 Court Reporter
 Judge
 Defense Lawyer
 First Reporter
 Second Reporter
 Young Woman
 Prosecution Lawyer
 Third Reporter

Alec Wallis
 David Holdaway
 Christopher Rozycki
 Bill Wallis
 Roger Sloman
 James Duke
 Michael Brogan
 Fiona Shaw
 Colin Stinton
 David Bark-Jones

EPIQUE NINE: A MACHINE

Priest
 Singer
 Jailer
 Young Woman
 Matron
 Barber 1
 Barber 2
 First Guard
 Second Guard

Allan Mitchell
 Marcus Heath
 Paul Benzing
 Fiona Shaw
 Lynn Farleigh
 Bill Wallis
 David Holdaway
 Alec Wallis
 Christopher Rozycki

Director
 Settings
 Costumes
 Lighting
 Music
 Movement
 Dialect Coach
 Company Voice Work

Stephen Daldry
 Ian MacNeil
 Clare Mitchell
 Rick Fisher
 Stephen Warbeck
 Quinny Sacks
 Joan Washington
 Patsy Rodenburg

Old
 Inglei
 327
 4216

Introduction

Machinal is the most famous work of Sophie Treadwell, a playwright, journalist, novelist, producer and sometime actor and director who was born and raised in California. She began writing plays and acting at the University of California, from which she graduated in 1906. Treadwell hoped to be a performer but her onstage career was limited to a brief stint in vaudeville and occasional dramatic roles, usually in her own works. Like many American women playwrights of her generation she was trained as a reporter, and in her early years she covered everything from theatrical premieres to baseball games for the *San Francisco Bulletin*. Treadwell soon became a respected journalist whose accomplishments included an 'undercover' series on homeless women, an exclusive interview with Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa, a European tour as a war reporter during World War One, and a year as a special correspondent in Mexico during World War Two.

As Nancy Wynn records in her dissertation on Treadwell, the playwright had a long and extraordinary life. Although she suffered from debilitating illnesses (with symptoms resembling those attributed to Helen in *Machinal*) she was an indefatigable worker and traveler. Her journeys throughout the world were sometimes the inspiration for her plays, whose settings extend from Moscow to Mexico. Treadwell was married for two decades until his death to journalist William O. McGeehan, but she retained her own name and career and often maintained a residence separate from his. A member of the feminist Lucy Stone League, she marched in favor of women's suffrage and wrote about society's oppression of women. She occasionally produced and even directed her own work, a rare accomplishment in the male-dominated world of the American commercial theater. In the course of her career Treadwell – who died in 1970 at the age of 84 – completed hundreds of newspaper stories, four novels and more than thirty plays, seven of which appeared on New York stages.

Treadwell's early works include *Gringo*, based on her experiences in Mexico, and *O Nightingale*, a comedy about a stage-struck young woman that Treadwell herself co-produced. She wrote *Machinal* (the term is French for 'mechanical' or 'automatic'), the play for which she is best remembered today, in 1928. Loosely based on the sensational murder trial of Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray, *Machinal* was a critical success, ran for

91 performances in New York, and was chosen by Burns Mantle for his volume *The Best Plays of 1928-29*. Reviewers compared the work favorably to Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* in theme and Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* in technique. Brooks Atkinson of *The New York Times* – who was so intrigued by *Machinal* that he reviewed the production twice – called it 'a triumph of individual distinction, gleaming with intangible beauty . . . an illuminating, measured drama such as we are not likely to see again.' *Machinal* was even lauded in a *Times* editorial as a play that 'in a hundred years . . . should still be vital and vivid.' In 1931 the drama premiered in London under the title *The Life Machine*. Although some reviewers were offended by the play's sexual content, the London *Times* critic had no such problem and considered all but the last scene 'expressive and beautifully clean-cut.' *Machinal* had its greatest triumph in Russia, where it enjoyed a long run at Moscow's Kamerny Theatre before touring the provinces. A television adaptation was aired in the United States in 1954, and a revival with choreography by Sophie Maslow was performed a few years later.

Machinal uses expressionist techniques to create a parable about 'an ordinary young woman' who lives in a mechanized, materialistic world. Treadwell takes Helen through the stages of a kind of modern Everywoman: work in a boring office, marriage to a boss who offers her financial security ('he's a Vice-President – of course he's decent' her mother insists), a motherhood that oppresses her and a lover who abandons her. The expressionist form – flat characters, repetitive dialogue and action, numerous short scenes, harsh audio effects, confusion of inner and outer reality – is the perfect medium for presenting the life of a young woman who asks an impersonal society 'Is nothing mine?'

Treadwell attacks capitalism for putting even intimate relationships on an economic footing, but her critique extends to technology, medicine, law, motherhood, the press, romance (including a speakeasy that closely resembles a contemporary singles bar) and even religion. It is a recognizably feminist critique as well: the audience looks through Helen's eyes, understands the events from her perspective. Throughout the nine scenes – perhaps echoing the nine months of gestation – Treadwell shows her protagonist confronting a phalanx of male characters with the power to determine her life. Again and again Helen complains of claustrophobia, a motif of entrapment that runs as a common thread through the plays of such female contemporaries of Treadwell as Susan Glaspell, Zona Gale, Georgia Douglas Johnson and Lillian Hellman.

Sophie Treadwell never had another success comparable to *Machinal*, although she continued writing novels and plays for many years. Closest in theme and style to *Machinal* is the expressionist *For Saxophone* which relies heavily on music, dance

and the voices of unseen characters to tell the story of another young woman trapped in a marriage of convenience. Her works also include *Plumes in the Dust*, based on the life of writer Edgar Allan Poe; *Rights*, an unproduced drama about eighteenth-century feminist Mary Wollstonecraft; and *Hope for a Harvest*, an autobiographical play exposing prejudice and environmental destruction in her native California. Embittered by the lukewarm reception of *Harvest*, Treadwell presented no more plays on the New York stage. In 1941, the very same year *Hope for a Harvest* appeared, the eminent critic George Jean Nathan sneered that 'even the best of our [American] women playwrights falls immeasurably short of the mark of our best masculine' because women 'by nature' lack 'complete objectivity' and the emotional control enjoyed by their male counterparts. It was in such an atmosphere of condescension that Sophie Treadwell strove to make her mark as a dramatist.

Unfortunately, most of the standard histories of drama in the United States reveal similar attitudes, and Treadwell rarely rates more than a line or two if she is acknowledged at all. Even granted that *Machinal* is her only outstanding work, the obscurity into which she and her play fell obviously has much to do with her gender (her sister playwrights suffered a similar fate) and to *Machinal's* biting indictment of a world ruled by men. The current scholarly and theatrical interest in Treadwell and *Machinal* in the United States is partly due to feminist efforts to write women back into the theatrical history from which they have been erased, but it also stems from the fact that *Machinal's* universe is uncomfortably like our own. The cacophony of urban sounds that underlies each scene is remarkably similar, while *Machinal's* repetitive dialogue, woven of clichés, foreshadows the work of playwrights like Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and, as critic Frank Rich recently observed, David Mamet. As our lives become ever more mechanized and standardized, the story of one lone individual seeking to make her voice heard grows in relevance. Just as timely is the way Helen – like Treadwell herself – tries to find financial security without sacrificing her dreams, to control her own body and shape her own future, in a world in which women's power to do so remains severely limited.

Judith E. Barlow
State University of New York at Albany

Characters

YOUNG WOMAN
TELEPHONE GIRL
STENOGRAPHER
FILING CLERK
ADDING CLERK
MOTHER
HUSBAND
BELLBOY
NURSE
DOCTOR
YOUNG MAN
GIRL
MAN
BOY
MAN
ANOTHER MAN
WAITER
JUDGE
LAWYER FOR DEFENSE
LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION
COURT REPORTER
BAILIFF
REPORTER
SECOND REPORTER
THIRD REPORTER
JAILER
MATRON
PRIEST

EPISODE I To Business
EPISODE II At Home
EPISODE III Honeymoon
EPISODE IV Maternal
EPISODE V Prohibited
EPISODE VI Intimate
EPISODE VII Domestic
EPISODE VIII The Law
EPISODE IX A Machine

The Plot is the story of a woman who murders her husband – an ordinary young woman, any woman.

The Plan is to tell this story by showing the different phases of life that the woman comes in contact with, and in none of which she finds any place, any peace. The woman is essentially soft, tender, and the life around her is essentially hard, mechanized. Business, home, marriage, having a child, seeking pleasure – all are difficult for her – mechanical, nerve nagging. Only in an illicit love does she find anything with life in it for her, and when she loses this, the desperate effort to win free to it again is her undoing.

The story is told in nine scenes. In the dialogue of these scenes there is the attempt to catch the rhythm of our common city speech, its brassy sound, its trick of repetition, etc.

Then there is, also, the use of many different sounds chosen primarily for their inherent emotional effect (steel riveting, a priest chanting, a Negro singing, jazz band, etc.), but contributing also to the creation of a background, an atmosphere.

The Hope is to create a stage production that will have 'style,' and at the same time, by the story's own innate drama, by the directness of its telling, by the variety and quick changingness of its scenes, and the excitement of its sounds, to create an interesting play.

Scenically this play is planned to be handled in two basic sets (or in one set with two backs)

The first division – the first Four Episodes – needs an entrance at one side, and a back having a door and a large window. The door gives, in

Episode 1 – to Vice President's office.

Episode 2 – to hall.

Episode 3 – to bathroom.

Episode 4 – to corridor.

And the window shows, in

Episode 1 – An opposite office.

Episode 2 – An inner apartment court.

Episode 3 – Window of a dance casino opposite.

Episode 4 – Steel girders. (Of these, only the casino window is important. Sky could be used for the others.)

The second division – the last Five Episodes – has the same side entrance, but the back has only one opening – for a small window (barred).

Episode 5, window is masked by electric piano.

Episode 6, window is disclosed (sidewalk outside).

Episode 7, window is curtained.

Episode 8, window is masked by Judge's bench.

Episode 9, window is disclosed (sky outside).

There is a change of furniture, and props for each episode – only essential things, full of character. For Episode 9, the room is closed in from the sides, and there is a place with bars and a door in it, put straight across stage down front (back far enough to leave a clear passageway in front of it).

Lighting concentrated and intense. – Light and shadow – bright light and darkness. – This darkness, already in the scene, grows and blacks out the light for dark stage when the scene changes are made.

Offstage Voices: Characters in the Background Heard, but Unseen:

- A Janitor
- A Baby
- A Boy and a Girl
- A Husband and Wife
- A Husband and Wife
- A Radio Announcer
- A Negro Singer

Mechanical Offstage Sounds

- A small jazz band
- A hand organ
- Steel riveting
- Telegraph instruments
- Aeroplane engine

Mechanical Onstage Sounds

- Office Machines (typewriters, telephones, etc.)
- Electric piano.

Characters: in the Background Seen, Not Heard

(Seen, off the main set; i.e., through a window or door)

- Couples of men and women dancing
- A Woman in a bathrobe
- A Woman in a wheel chair
- A Nurse with a covered basin
- A Nurse with a tray
- The feet of men and women passing in the street.

EPISODE ONE

To Business

Scene: an office: a switchboard, filing cabinet, adding machine, typewriter and table, manifold machine.

Sounds: office machines: typewriters, adding machine, manifold, telephone bells, buzzers.

Characters and their machines

- A YOUNG WOMAN (typewriter)
- A STENOGRAPHER (typewriter)
- A FILING CLERK (filing cabinet and manifold)
- AN ADDING CLERK (adding machine)
- TELEPHONE OPERATOR (switchboard)
- JONES

Before the curtain

Sounds of machines going. They continue throughout the scene, and accompany the YOUNG WOMAN's thoughts after the scene is blacked out.

At the rise of the curtain

All the machines are disclosed, and all the characters with the exception of the YOUNG WOMAN.

Of these characters, the YOUNG WOMAN, going any day to any business. Ordinary. The confusion of her own inner thoughts, emotions, desires, dreams cuts her off from any actual adjustment to the routine of work. She gets through this routine with a very small surface of her consciousness. She is not homely and she is not pretty. She is preoccupied with herself – with her person. She has well kept hands, and a trick of constantly arranging her hair over her ears.

The STENOGRAPHER is the faded, efficient woman office worker. Drying, dried.

The ADDING CLERK is her male counterpart.

The FILING CLERK is a boy not grown, callow adolescence.

The TELEPHONE GIRL, young, cheap and amorous.

Lights come up on office scene. Two desks right and left.

Telephone booth back right center. Filing cabinet back of center. Adding machine back left center.

ADDING CLERK (*in the monotonous voice of his monotonous thoughts; at his adding machine*). 2490, 28, 76, 123, 36842, 1, 1/4, 37, 804, 23 1/2, 982.

— FILING CLERK (*in the same way – at his filing desk*). Accounts – A. Bonds – B. Contracts – C. Data – D. Earnings – E.

STENOGRAPHER (*in the same way – left*). Dear Sir – in re – your letter – recent date – will state –

TELEPHONE GIRL. Hello – Hello – George H. Jones Company good morning – hello hello – George H. Jones Company good morning – hello.

— FILING CLERK. Market – M. Notes – N. Output – O. Profits – P. – ! (*Suddenly*.) What's the matter with Q?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Matter with it – Mr. J. – Mr. K. wants you – What you mean matter? Matter with what?

— FILING CLERK. Matter with Q.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Well – what is? Spring 1726?

— FILING CLERK. I'm asking yuh –

TELEPHONE GIRL. WELL?

— FILING CLERK. Nothing filed with it –

TELEPHONE GIRL. Well?

— FILING CLERK. Look at A. Look at B. What's the matter with Q?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Ain't popular. Hello – Hello – George H. Jones Company.

— FILING CLERK. Hot dog! Why ain't it?

ADDING CLERK. Has it personality?

STENOGRAPHER. Has it Halitosis?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Has it got it?

— FILING CLERK. Hot dog!

TELEPHONE GIRL. What number do you want? (*Recognizing but not pleased*). Oh – hello – sure I know who it is – tonight? Uh, uh – (*Negative, but each with a different inflection*.) You heard me – No!

— FILING CLERK. Don't you like him?

STENOGRAPHER. She likes 'em all.

TELEPHONE GIRL. I do not!

STENOGRAPHER. Well – pretty near all!

TELEPHONE GIRL. What number do you want? Wrong number. Hello – hello – George H. Jones Company. Hello, hello –

STENOGRAPHER. Memorandum – attention Mr. Smith – at a conference of –

ADDING CLERK. 125 – 83 3/4 – 22 – 908 – 34 – 1/4 – 28593.

— FILING CLERK. Report – R, Sales – S, Trade – T.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Shh – ! Yes, Mr. J. – ? No – Miss A. ain't in yet – I'll tell her, Mr. J. – just the minute she gets in.

STENOGRAPHER. She's late again, huh?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Out with her sweetie last night, huh?

— FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

ADDING CLERK. She ain't got a sweetie.

STENOGRAPHER. How do you know?

ADDING CLERK. I know.

— FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

ADDING CLERK. She lives alone with her mother.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Spring 1876? Hello – Spring 1876. Spring! Hello, Spring 1876? 1876! Wrong number! Hello! Hello!

STENOGRAPHER. Director's meeting semi-annual report card.

— FILING CLERK. Shipments – Sales – Schedules – S.

ADDING CLERK. She doesn't belong in an office.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Who does?

STENOGRAPHER. I do!

ADDING CLERK. You said it!

— FILING CLERK. Hot dog!

TELEPHONE GIRL. Hello – hello – George H. Jones Company – hello – hello –

STENOGRAPHER. I'm efficient. She's inefficient.

— FILING CLERK. She's inefficient.

TELEPHONE GIRL. She's got J. going.

STENOGRAPHER. Going?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Going and coming.

— FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

Enter JONES.

JONES. Good morning, everybody.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Good morning.

FILING CLERK. Good morning.

ADDING CLERK. Good morning.

STENOGRAPHER. Good morning, Mr. J.

JONES. Miss A. isn't in yet?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Not yet, Mr. J.

FILING CLERK. Not yet.

ADDING CLERK. Not yet.

STENOGRAPHER. She's late.

JONES. I just wanted her to take a letter.

STENOGRAPHER. I'll take the letter.

JONES. One thing at a time and that done well.

ADDING CLERK (*yessing*). Done well.

STENOGRAPHER. I'll finish it later.

JONES. Hew to the line.

ADDING CLERK. Hew to the line.

STENOGRAPHER. Then I'll hurry.

JONES. Haste makes waste.

ADDING CLERK. Waste.

STENOGRAPHER. But if you're in a hurry.

JONES. I'm never in a hurry - That's how I get ahead! (*Laughs. They all laugh.*) First know you're right - then go ahead.

ADDING CLERK. Ahead.

JONES (*to TELEPHONE GIRL*). When Miss A. comes in tell her I want her to take a letter. (*Turns to go in - then.*) It's important.

TELEPHONE GIRL (*making a note*). Miss A. - important.

JONES (*starts up - then*). And I don't want to be disturbed.

TELEPHONE GIRL. You're in conference?

JONES. I'm in conference. (*Turns - then.*) Unless its A.B. - of course.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Of course - A.B.

JONES (*starts - turns again; attempts to be facetious*). Tell Miss A. the early bird catches the worm.

Exit JONES.

TELEPHONE GIRL. The early worm gets caught.

ADDING CLERK. He's caught.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Hooked.

ADDING CLERK. In the pan.

FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

STENOGRAPHER. We beg leave to announce -

Enter YOUNG WOMAN. Goes behind telephone booth to, desk right.

STENOGRAPHER. You're late!

FILING CLERK. You're late.

ADDING CLERK. You're late.

STENOGRAPHER. And yesterday!

FILING CLERK. The day before.

ADDING CLERK. And the day before.

STENOGRAPHER. You'll lose your job.

YOUNG WOMAN. No!

STENOGRAPHER. No?

Workers exchange glances.

YOUNG WOMAN. I can't!

STENOGRAPHER. Can't?

Same business.

FILING CLERK. Rent - bills - installments - miscellaneous.

ADDING CLERK. A dollar ten - ninety-five - 3.40 - 35 - 12.60.

STENOGRAPHER. Then why are you late?

YOUNG WOMAN. Why?

STENOGRAPHER. Excuse!

ADDING CLERK. Excuse!

FILING CLERK. Excuse.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Excuse it, please.

STENOGRAPHER. Why?

YOUNG WOMAN. The subway?
 TELEPHONE GIRL. Long distance?
 FILING CLERK. Old stuff!
 ADDING CLERK. That stall!
 STENOGRAPHER. Stalled?
 YOUNG WOMAN. No –
 STENOGRAPHER. What?
 YOUNG WOMAN. I had to get out!
 ADDING CLERK. Out!
 FILING CLERK. Out?
 STENOGRAPHER. Out where?
 YOUNG WOMAN. In the air!
 STENOGRAPHER. Air?
 YOUNG WOMAN. All those bodies pressing.
 FILING CLERK. Hot dog!
 YOUNG WOMAN. I thought I would faint! I had to get out in the air!
 FILING CLERK. Give her the air.
 ADDING CLERK. Free air –
 STENOGRAPHER. Hot air.
 YOUNG WOMAN. Like I'm dying.
 STENOGRAPHER. Same thing yesterday. (*Pause.*) And the day before.
 YOUNG WOMAN. Yes – what am I going to do?
 ADDING CLERK. Take a taxi! (*They laugh.*)
 FILING CLERK. Call a cop!
 TELEPHONE GIRL. Mr. J. wants you.
 YOUNG WOMAN. Me?
 TELEPHONE GIRL. You!
 YOUNG WOMAN (*rises*). Mr. J.!
 STENOGRAPHER. Mr. J.
 TELEPHONE GIRL. He's bellowing for you!

YOUNG WOMAN gives last pat to her hair – goes off into door – back.

STENOGRAPHER (*after her*). Get it just right.
 FILING CLERK. She's always doing that to her hair.
 TELEPHONE GIRL. It gives a line – it gives a line –
 FILING CLERK. Hot dog.
 ADDING CLERK. She's artistic.
 STENOGRAPHER. She's inefficient.
 FILING CLERK. She's inefficient.
 STENOGRAPHER. Mr. J. knows she's inefficient.
 ADDING CLERK. 46 – 23 – 84 – 2 – 2 – 2 – 1,492 – 678.
 TELEPHONE GIRL. Hello – hello – George H. Jones Company – hello – Mr. Jones? He's in conference.
 STENOGRAPHER (*sarcastic*). Conference!
 ADDING CLERK. Conference.
 FILING CLERK. Hot dog!
 TELEPHONE GIRL. Do you think he'll marry her?
 ADDING CLERK. If she'll have him.
 STENOGRAPHER. If she'll have him!
 FILING CLERK. Do you think she'll have him?
 TELEPHONE GIRL. How much does he get?
 ADDING CLERK. Plenty – 5,000 – 10,000 – 15,000 – 20,000 – 25,000.
 STENOGRAPHER. And plenty put away.
 ADDING CLERK. Gas Preferred – 4's – steel – 5's – oil – 6's.
 FILING CLERK. Hot dog.
 STENOGRAPHER. Will she have him? Will she have him? This agreement entered into – party of the first part – party of the second part – will he have her?
 TELEPHONE GIRL. Well, I'd hate to get into bed with him. (*Familiar melting voice.*) Hello – humhum – hum – hum – hold the line a minute – will you – hum hum. (*Professional voice.*) Hell, hello – A.B., just a minute, Mr. A.B. – Mr. J.? Mr. A.B. – go ahead, Mr. A.B. (*Melting voice.*) We were interrupted – huh – huh – huh – huhuh – hum – hum.

Enter YOUNG WOMAN – she goes to her chair, sits with folded hands.

FILING CLERK. That's all you ever say to a guy –

STENOGRAPHER. Hum – hum – or uh huh – (*Negative.*)

TELEPHONE GIRL. That's all you have to. (*To phone.*) Hum – hum – hum hum – hum hum –

STENOGRAPHER. Mostly hum hum.

ADDING CLERK. You've said it!

FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Hum hum huh hum humhumhum – tonight? She's got a date – she told me last night – humhumhuh – hum – all right. (*Disconnects.*) Too bad – my boy friend's got a friend – but my girl friend's got a date.

YOUNG WOMAN. You have a good time.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Big time.

STENOGRAPHER. Small time.

ADDING CLERK. A big time on the small time.

TELEPHONE GIRL. I'd ask you, kid, but you'd be up to your neck!

STENOGRAPHER. Neckers!

ADDING CLERK. Petters!

FILING CLERK. Sweet papas.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Want to come?

YOUNG WOMAN. Can't.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Date?

YOUNG WOMAN. My mother.

STENOGRAPHER. Worries?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Nags – hello – George H. Jones Company – Oh hello –

YOUNG WOMAN sits before her machine – hands in lap, looking at them.

STENOGRAPHER. Why don't you get to work?

YOUNG WOMAN (*dreaming*). What?

ADDING CLERK. Work!

YOUNG WOMAN. Can't.

STENOGRAPHER. Can't?

YOUNG WOMAN. My machine's out of order.

STENOGRAPHER. Well, fix it!

YOUNG WOMAN. I can't – got to get somebody.

STENOGRAPHER. Somebody! Somebody! Always somebody! Here, sort the mail, then!

YOUNG WOMAN (*rises*). All right.

STENOGRAPHER. And hurry! You're late.

YOUNG WOMAN (*sorting letters*). George H. Jones and Company – George H. Jones Inc. George H. Jones –

STENOGRAPHER. You're always late.

ADDING CLERK. You'll lose your job.

YOUNG WOMAN (*hurrying*). George H. Jones – George H. Jones Personal –

TELEPHONE GIRL. Don't let 'em get your goat, kid – tell 'em where to get off.

YOUNG WOMAN. What?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Ain't it all set?

YOUNG WOMAN. What?

TELEPHONE GIRL. You and Mr. J.

STENOGRAPHER. You and the boss.

FILING CLERK. You and the big chief.

ADDING CLERK. You and the big cheese.

YOUNG WOMAN. Did he tell you?

TELEPHONE GIRL. I told you!

ADDING CLERK. I told you!

STENOGRAPHER. I don't believe it.

ADDING CLERK. 5,000 – 10,000 – 15,000.

FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

YOUNG WOMAN. No – it isn't so.

STENOGRAPHER. Isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Not yet.

ADDING CLERK. But soon.

FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

Enter JONES.

TELEPHONE GIRL (*busy*). George H. Jones Company – Hello – Hello.

STENOGRAPHER. Awaiting your answer –

ADDING CLERK. 5,000 – 10,000 – 15,000 –

JONES (*crossing to YOUNG WOMAN – puts hand on her shoulder, all stop and stare*). That letter done?

YOUNG WOMAN. No. (*She pulls away.*)

JONES. What's the matter?

STENOGRAPHER. She hasn't started.

JONES. O.K. – want to make some changes.

YOUNG WOMAN. My machine's out of order.

JONES. O.K. – use the one in my room.

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm sorting the mail.

STENOGRAPHER (*sarcastic*). One thing at a time!

JONES (*retreating – goes back center*). O.K. (*To YOUNG WOMAN.*) When you're finished. (*Starts back to his room.*)

STENOGRAPHER. Haste makes waste.

JONES (*at door*). O.K. – don't hurry.

Exits.

STENOGRAPHER. Hew to the line!

TELEPHONE GIRL. He's hewing.

FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Why did you flinch, kid?

YOUNG WOMAN. Flinch?

TELEPHONE GIRL. Did he pinch?

YOUNG WOMAN. No!

TELEPHONE GIRL. Then what?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing! – Just his hand.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Oh – just his hand – (*Shakes her head thoughtfully.*) Uhhuh. (*Negative.*) Uhhuh. (*Decisively.*) No! Tell him no.

STENOGRAPHER. If she does she'll lose her job.

ADDING CLERK. Fired.

FILING CLERK. The sack!

TELEPHONE GIRL (*on the defensive*). And if she doesn't?

ADDING CLERK. She'll come to work in a taxi!

TELEPHONE GIRL. Work?

FILING CLERK. No work.

STENOGRAPHER. No worry.

ADDING CLERK. Breakfast in bed.

STENOGRAPHER (*sarcastic*). Did Madame ring?

FILING CLERK. Lunch in bed!

TELEPHONE GIRL. A double bed! (*In phone.*) Yes, Mr. J. (*To YOUNG WOMAN.*) J. wants you.

YOUNG WOMAN (*starts to get to her feet – but doesn't*). I can't – I'm not ready – In a minute. (*Sits staring ahead of her.*)

ADDING CLERK. 5,000 – 10,000 – 15,000 –

FILING CLERK. Profits – plans – purchase –

STENOGRAPHER. Call your attention our prices are fixed.

TELEPHONE GIRL. Hello – hello – George H. Jones Company – hello – hello –

YOUNG WOMAN (*thinking her thoughts aloud – to the subdued accompaniment of the office sounds and voices*). Marry me – wants to marry me – George H. Jones – George H. Jones and Company – Mrs. George H. Jones – Mrs. George H. Jones. Dear Madame – marry – do you take this man to be your wedded husband – I do – to love honor and to love – kisses – no – I can't – George H. Jones – How would you like to marry me – What do you say – Why Mr. Jones I – let me look at your little hands – you have such pretty little hands – let me hold your pretty little hands – George H. Jones – Fat hands – flabby hands – don't touch me – please – fat hands are never weary – please don't – married – all girls – most girls – married – babies – a baby – curls – little curls all over its head – George H. Jones – straight – thin – bald – don't touch me – please – no – can't – must – somebody – something – no rest – must rest – no rest – must rest – no rest – late today – yesterday – before – late – subway – air – pressing – bodies pressing – bodies – trembling – air – stop – air – late – job – no job – fired – late – alarm clock – alarm clock – alarm clock – hurry – job – ma – nag – nag – nag – ma – hurry – job – no job – no money – installments due – no money – money – George H. Jones –

money – Mrs. George H. Jones – money – no work – no worry
 – free! – rest – sleep till nine – sleep till ten – sleep till noon –
 now you take a good rest this morning – don't get up till you
 want to – thank you – oh thank you – oh don't! – please don't
 touch me – I want to rest – no rest – earn – got to earn –
 married – earn – no – yes – earn – all girls – most girls – ma –
 pa – ma – all women – most women – I can't – must – maybe –
 must – somebody – something – ma – pa – ma – can I, ma? Tell
 me, ma – something – somebody.

*The scene blacks out. The sounds of the office machines
 continue until the scene lights into Episode Two – and the
 office sounds become the sound of a radio, offstage.*

EPISODE TWO

At Home

*Scene: a kitchen: table, chairs, plates and food, garbage can, a
 pair of rubber gloves. The door at the back now opens on a hall –
 the window, on an apartment house court.*

Sounds: buzzer, radio (voice of announcer; music and singer).

Characters

YOUNG WOMAN
 MOTHER

Outside voices: characters heard, but not seen

A JANITOR
 A BABY
 A MOTHER and a SMALL BOY
 A YOUNG BOY and YOUNG GIRL
 A HUSBAND and a WIFE
 ANOTHER HUSBAND and a WIFE

*At rise: YOUNG WOMAN and MOTHER eating – radio off-
 stage – radio stops.*

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma – I want to talk to you.

MOTHER. Aren't you eating a potato?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

MOTHER. Why not?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't want one.

MOTHER. That's no reason. Here! Take one.

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't want it.

MOTHER. Potatoes go with stew – here!

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma, I don't want it!

MOTHER. Want it! Take it!

YOUNG WOMAN. But I – oh, all right. (*Takes it – then.*) Ma, I want to ask you something.

MOTHER. Eat your potato.

YOUNG WOMAN (*takes a bite – then*). Ma, there's something I want to ask you – something important.

MOTHER. Is it mealy?

YOUNG WOMAN. S'all right. Ma – tell me.

MOTHER. Three pounds for a quarter.

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma – tell me – (*Buzzer.*)

MOTHER (*her dull voice brightening*). There's the garbage. (*Goes to door – or dumbwaiter – opens it. Stop radio.*)

JANITOR'S VOICE (*offstage*). Garbage.

MOTHER (*pleased – busy*). All right. (*Gets garbage can – puts it out. YOUNG WOMAN walks up and down.*) What's the matter now?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

MOTHER. That jumping up from the table every night the garbage is collected! You act like you're crazy.

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma, do all women –

MOTHER. I suppose you think you're too nice for anything so common! Well, let me tell you, my lady, that it's a very important part of life.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, but, Ma, if you –

MOTHER. If it weren't for garbage cans where would we be? Where would we all be? Living in filth – that's what! Filth! I should think you'd be glad! I should think you'd be grateful!

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma!

MOTHER. Well, are you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Am I what?

MOTHER. Glad! Grateful.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes!

MOTHER. You don't act like it!

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma, don't talk!

MOTHER. You just said you wanted to talk.

YOUNG WOMAN. Well now – I want to think. I got to think.

MOTHER. Aren't you going to finish your potato?

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma!

MOTHER. Is there anything the matter with it?

YOUNG WOMAN. No –

MOTHER. Then why don't you finish it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Because I don't want it.

MOTHER. Why don't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma! Let me alone!

MOTHER. Well, you've got to eat! If you don't eat –

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma! Don't nag!

MOTHER. Nag! Just because I try to look out for you – nag! Just because I try to care for you – nag! Why, you haven't sense enough to eat! What would become of you I'd like to know – if I didn't nag!

Offstage – a sound of window opening – all these offstage sounds come in through the court window at the back.

WOMAN'S VOICE. Johnny – Johnny – come in now!

A SMALL BOY'S VOICE. Oh, Ma!

WOMAN'S VOICE. It's getting cold.

A SMALL BOY'S VOICE. Oh, Ma!

WOMAN'S VOICE. You heard me! (*Sound of window slamming.*)

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm grown up, Ma.

MOTHER. Grown up! What do you mean by that?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing much – I guess. (*Offstage sound of baby crying. MOTHER rises, clatters dishes.*) Let's not do the dishes right away, Ma. Let's talk – I gotta.

MOTHER. Well, I can't talk with dirty dishes around – you may be able to but – (*Clattering – clattering.*)

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma! Listen! Listen! – There's a man wants to marry me.

MOTHER (*stops clattering – sits*). What man?

YOUNG WOMAN. He says he fell in love with my hands.

MOTHER. In love! Is that beginning again! I thought you were over that!

Offstage BOY's voice – whistles – GIRL's voice answers.

BOY'S VOICE. Come on out.

GIRL'S VOICE. Can't.

BOY'S VOICE. Nobody'll see you.

GIRL'S VOICE. I can't.

BOY'S VOICE. It's dark now – come on.

GIRL'S VOICE. Well – just for a minute.

BOY'S VOICE. Meet you round the corner.

YOUNG WOMAN. I got to get married, Ma.

MOTHER. What do you mean?

YOUNG WOMAN. I gotta.

MOTHER. You haven't got in trouble, have you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Don't talk like that!

MOTHER. Well, you say you got to get married – what do you mean?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

MOTHER. Answer me!

YOUNG WOMAN. All women get married, don't they?

MOTHER. Nonsense!

YOUNG WOMAN. You got married, didn't you?

MOTHER. Yes, I did!

Offstage voices.

WOMAN'S VOICE. Where you going?

MAN'S VOICE. Out.

WOMAN'S VOICE. You were out last night.

MAN'S VOICE. Was I?

WOMAN'S VOICE. You're always going out.

MAN'S VOICE. Am I?

WOMAN'S VOICE. Where you going?

MAN'S VOICE. Out.

End of offstage voices.

MOTHER. Who is he? Where did you come to know him?

YOUNG WOMAN. In the office.

MOTHER. In the office!

YOUNG WOMAN. It's Mr. J.

MOTHER. Mr. J.?

YOUNG WOMAN. The Vice-President.

MOTHER. Vice-President! His income must be – Does he know you've got a mother to support?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

MOTHER. What does he say?

YOUNG WOMAN. All right.

MOTHER. How soon you going to marry him?

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm not going to.

MOTHER. Not going to!

YOUNG WOMAN. No! I'm not going to.

MOTHER. But you just said –

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm not going to.

MOTHER. Are you crazy?

YOUNG WOMAN. I can't, Ma! I can't!

MOTHER. Why can't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't love him.

MOTHER. Love! – what does that amount to! Will it clothe you? Will it feed you? Will it pay the bills?

YOUNG WOMAN. No! But it's real just the same!

MOTHER. Real!

YOUNG WOMAN. If it isn't – what can you count on in life?

MOTHER. I'll tell you what you can count on! You can count that you've got to eat and sleep and get up and put clothes on your back and take 'em off again – that you got to get old – and that you got to die. That's what you can count on! All the rest is in your head!

YOUNG WOMAN. But Ma – didn't you love Pa?

MOTHER. I suppose I did – I don't know – I've forgotten – what difference does it make – now?

YOUNG WOMAN. But then! – oh Ma, tell me!

MOTHER. Tell you what?

YOUNG WOMAN. About all that – love!

Offstage voices.

WIFE'S VOICE. Don't.

HUSBAND'S VOICE. What's the matter – don't you want me to kiss you?

WIFE'S VOICE. Not like that.

HUSBAND'S VOICE. Like what?

WIFE'S VOICE. That silly kiss!

HUSBAND'S VOICE. Silly kiss?

WIFE'S VOICE. You look so silly – oh I know what's coming when you look like that – and kiss me like that – don't – go away –

End of offstage voices.

MOTHER. He's a decent man, isn't he?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know. How should I know – yet.

MOTHER. He's a Vice-President – of course he's decent.

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't care whether he's decent or not. I won't marry him.

MOTHER. But you just said you wanted to marry –

YOUNG WOMAN. Not him.

MOTHER. Who?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know – I don't know – I haven't found him yet!

MOTHER. You talk like you're crazy!

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma – tell me!

MOTHER. Tell you what?

YOUNG WOMAN. Tell me – (*Words suddenly pouring out.*) Your skin oughtn't to curl – ought it – when he just comes near you – ought it? That's wrong, ain't it? You don't get over that, do you – ever, do you or do you? How is it, Ma – do you?

MOTHER. Do you what?

YOUNG WOMAN. Do you get used to, it – so after a while it doesn't matter? Or don't you? Does it always matter? You ought to be in love, oughtn't you, Ma? You must be in love, mustn't you, Ma? That changes everything, doesn't it – or does it? Maybe if you just like a person it's all right – is it? When he puts a hand on me, my blood turns cold. But your blood oughtn't to run cold, ought it? His hands are – his hands are fat, Ma – don't you see – his hands are fat – and they sort of press – and they're fat – don't you see? – Don't you see?

MOTHER (*stares at her bewildered*). See what?

YOUNG WOMAN (*rushing on*). I've always thought I'd find somebody – somebody young – and – and attractive – with wavy hair – wavy hair – I always think of children with curls – little curls all over their head – somebody young – and attractive – that I'd like – that I'd love – But I haven't found anybody like that yet – I haven't found anybody – I've hardly known anybody – you'd never let me go with anybody and –

MOTHER. Are you throwing it up to me that –

YOUNG WOMAN. No – let me finish, Ma! No – let me finish! I just mean I've never found anybody – anybody – nobody's ever asked me – till now – he's the only man that's ever asked me – And I suppose I got to marry somebody – all girls do –

MOTHER. Nonsense.

YOUNG WOMAN. But, I can't go on like this, Ma – I don't know why – but I can't – it's like I'm all tight inside – sometimes I feel like I'm stifling! – You don't know – stifling. (*Walks up and down.*) I can't go on like this much longer – going to work – coming home – going to work – coming home – I can't – Sometimes in the subway I think I'm going to die – sometimes even in the office if something don't happen – I got to do something – I don't know – it's like I'm all tight inside.

MOTHER. You're crazy.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma!

MOTHER. You're crazy!

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma – if you tell me that again I'll kill you! I'll kill you!

MOTHER. If that isn't crazy!

YOUNG WOMAN. I'll kill you – Maybe I am crazy – I don't know. Sometimes I think I am – the thoughts that go on in my mind – sometimes I think I am – I can't help it if I am – I do the best I can – I do the best I can and I'm nearly crazy! (*MOTHER rises and sits.*) Go away! Go away! You don't know anything about anything! And you haven't got any pity – no pity – you just take it for granted that I go to work every day – and come home every night and bring my money every week – you just take it for granted – you'd let me go on forever – and never feel any pity –

Offstage radio – a voice singing a sentimental mother song or popular home song. MOTHER begins to cry – crosses to chair left – sits.

Oh Ma – forgive me! Forgive me!

MOTHER. My own child! To be spoken to like that by my own child!

YOUNG WOMAN. I didn't mean it, Ma – I didn't mean it! (*She goes to her mother – crosses to left.*)

MOTHER (*clinging to her hand*). You're all I've got in the world – and you don't want me – you want to kill me.

YOUNG WOMAN. No – no, I don't, Ma! I just said that!

MOTHER. I've worked for you and slaved for you!

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, Ma.

MOTHER. I brought you into the world.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, Ma.

MOTHER. You're flesh of my flesh and –

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, Ma, I know.

MOTHER. And –

YOUNG WOMAN. You rest, now, Ma – you rest –

MOTHER (*struggling*). I got to do the dishes.

YOUNG WOMAN. I'll do the dishes – You listen to the music, Ma – I'll do the dishes.

MA sits. YOUNG WOMAN crosses to behind screen. Takes a pair of rubber gloves and begins to put them on. The MOTHER sees them – they irritate her – there is a return of her characteristic mood.

MOTHER. Those gloves! I've been washing dishes for forty years and I never wore gloves! But my lady's hands! My lady's hands!

YOUNG WOMAN. Sometimes you talk to me like you're jealous, Ma.

MOTHER. Jealous?

YOUNG WOMAN. It's my hands got me a husband.

MOTHER. A husband? So you're going to marry him now!

YOUNG WOMAN. I suppose so.

MOTHER. If you ain't the craziest –

The scene blacks out. In the darkness, the mother song goes into jazz – very faint – as the scene lights into

EPISODE THREE

Honeymoon

Scene: hotel bedroom: bed, chair, mirror. The door at the back now opens on a bathroom; the window, on a dancing casino opposite.

Sounds: a small jazz band (violin, piano, saxophone – very dim, at first, then louder).

Characters

YOUNG WOMAN
HUSBAND
BELLBOY

Offstage: seen but not heard, MEN and WOMEN dancing in couples.

At rise: set dark. BELLBOY, HUSBAND, and YOUNG WOMAN enter. BELLBOY carries luggage. He switches on light by door. Stop music.

HUSBAND: Well, here we are. (*Throws hat on bed; BELLBOY puts luggage down, crosses to window; raises shade three inches. Opens window three inches. Sounds of jazz music louder. Offstage.*)

BELLBOY (*comes to man for tip*). Anything else, Sir? (*Receives tip. Exits.*)

HUSBAND. Well, here we are.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, here we are.

HUSBAND. Aren't you going to take your hat off – stay a while? (*YOUNG WOMAN looks around as though looking for a way out, then takes off her hat, pulls the hair automatically around her ears.*) This is all right, isn't it? Huh? Huh?

YOUNG WOMAN. It's very nice.

HUSBAND. Twelve bucks a day! They know how to soak you in these pleasure resorts. Twelve bucks! (*Music.*) Well – we'll get our money's worth out of it all right. (*Goes toward bathroom.*)

I'm going to wash up. (*Stops at door.*) Don't you want to wash up?

YOUNG WOMAN *shakes head 'No'*.

I do! It was a long trip! I want to wash up!

Goes off - closes door; sings in bathroom. YOUNG WOMAN *goes to window - raises shade - sees the dancers going round and round in couples. Music is louder. Re-enter* HUSBAND.

Say, pull that blind down! They can see in!

YOUNG WOMAN. I thought you said there'd be a view of the ocean!

HUSBAND. Sure there is.

YOUNG WOMAN. I just see people - dancing.

HUSBAND. The ocean's beyond.

YOUNG WOMAN (*desperately*). I was counting on seeing it!

HUSBAND. You'll see it tomorrow - what's eating you? We'll take in the boardwalk - Don't you want to wash up?

YOUNG WOMAN. No!

HUSBAND. It was a long trip. Sure you don't? (YOUNG WOMAN *shakes her head 'No'*. HUSBAND *takes off his coat - puts it over chair.*) Better make yourself at home. I'm going to. (*She stares at him - moves away from the window.*) Say, pull down that blind! (*Crosses to chair down left - sits.*)

YOUNG WOMAN. It's close - don't you think it's close?

HUSBAND. Well - you don't want people looking in, do you? (*Laughs.*) Huh - huh?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND (*laughs*). I guess not. Huh? (*Takes off shoes. YOUNG WOMAN leaves the window, and crosses down to the bed.*) Say - you look a little white around the gills! What's the matter?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

HUSBAND. You look like you're scared.

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. Nothing to be scared of. You're with your husband, you know. (*Takes her to chair, left.*)

YOUNG WOMAN. I know.

HUSBAND. Happy?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

HUSBAND (*sitting*). Then come here and give us a kiss. (*He puts her on his knee.*) That's the girlie. (*He bends her head down, and kisses her along the back of her neck.*) Like that? (*She tries to get to her feet.*) Say - stay there! What you moving for? - You know - you got to learn to relax, little girl - (*Dancers go off. Dim lights. Pinches her above knee.*) Say, what you got under there?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

HUSBAND. Nothing! (*Laughs.*) That's a good one! Nothing, huh? Huh? That reminds me of the story of the pullman porter and the - what's the matter - did I tell you that one? (*Music dims off and out.*)

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know.

HUSBAND. The pullman porter and the tart?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. It's a good one - well - the train was just pulling out and the tart -

YOUNG WOMAN. You did tell that one!

HUSBAND. About the -

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes! Yes! I remember now!

HUSBAND. About the -

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes!

HUSBAND. All right - if I did. You're sure it was the one about the -

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm sure.

HUSBAND. When he asked her what she had underneath her seat and she said -

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes! Yes! That one!

HUSBAND. All right - But I don't believe I did. (*She tries to get up again, as he holds her.*) You know you have got something under there - what is it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing - just - just my garter.

HUSBAND. Your garter! Your garter! Say did I tell you the one about -

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes! Yes!

HUSBAND (*with dignity*). How do you know which one I meant?

YOUNG WOMAN. You told me them all!

HUSBAND (*pulling her back to his knee*). No, I didn't! Not by a jugful! I got a lot of 'em up my sleeve yet – that's part of what I owe my success to – my ability to spring a good story – You know – you got to learn to relax, little girl – haven't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

HUSBAND. That's one of the biggest things to learn in life. That's part of what I owe my success to. Now you go and get those heavy things off – and relax.

YOUNG WOMAN. They're not heavy.

HUSBAND. You haven't got much on – have you? But you'll feel better with 'em off. (*Gets up.*) Want me to help you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. I'm your husband, you know.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know.

HUSBAND. You aren't afraid of your husband, are you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No – of course not – but I thought maybe – can't we go out for a little while?

HUSBAND. Out? What for?

YOUNG WOMAN. Fresh air – walk – talk.

HUSBAND. We can talk here – I'll tell you all about myself. Go along now. (*YOUNG WOMAN goes toward bathroom door. Gets bag.*) Where are you going?

YOUNG WOMAN. In here.

HUSBAND. I thought you'd want to wash up.

YOUNG WOMAN. I just want to – get ready.

HUSBAND. You don't have to go in there to take your clothes off!

YOUNG WOMAN. I want to.

HUSBAND. What for?

YOUNG WOMAN. I always do.

HUSBAND. What?

YOUNG WOMAN. Undress by myself.

HUSBAND. You've never been married till now – have you? (*Laughs.*) Or have you been putting something over on me?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. I understand – kind of modest – huh? Huh?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

HUSBAND. I understand women – (*Indulgently.*) Go along.

She goes off – starts to close door. YOUNG WOMAN exits.

Don't close the door – thought you wanted to talk.

He looks around the room with satisfaction – after a pause – rises – takes off his collar.

You're awful quiet – what are you doing in there?

YOUNG WOMAN. Just – getting ready –

HUSBAND (*still in his mood of satisfaction*). I'm going to enjoy life from now on – I haven't had such an easy time of it. I got where I am by hard work and self denial – now I'm going to enjoy life – I'm going to make up for all I missed – aren't you about ready?

YOUNG WOMAN. Not yet.

HUSBAND. Next year maybe we'll go to Paris. You can buy a lot of that French underwear – and Switzerland – all my life I've wanted a Swiss watch – that I bought right there – I coulda' got a Swiss watch here, but I always wanted one that I bought right there – Isn't that funny – huh? Isn't it? Huh? Huh?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

HUSBAND. All my life I've wanted a Swiss watch that I bought right there. All my life I've counted on having that some day – more than anything – except one thing – you know what?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. Guess.

YOUNG WOMAN. I can't.

HUSBAND. Then I'm coming in and tell you.

YOUNG WOMAN. No! Please! Please don't.

HUSBAND. Well hurry up then! I thought you women didn't wear much of anything these days – huh? Huh? I'm coming in!

YOUNG WOMAN. No – no! Just a minute!

HUSBAND. All right. Just a minute. (*YOUNG WOMAN is silent. HUSBAND laughs and takes out watch.*) 13 – 14 – I'm counting the seconds on you – that's what you said, didn't you – just a minute! – 49 – 50 – 51 – 52 – 53 –

Enter YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG WOMAN (*at the door*). Here I am. (*She wears a little white gown that hangs very straight. She is very still, but her eyes are wide with a curious, helpless, animal terror.*)

HUSBAND (*starts toward her – stops. The room is in shadow except for one dim light by the bed. Sound of girl weeping*). You crying? (*Sound of weeping.*) What you crying for? (*Crosses to her.*)

YOUNG WOMAN (*crying out*). Ma! Ma! I want my mother!

HUSBAND. I thought you were glad to get away from her.

YOUNG WOMAN. I want her now – I want somebody.

HUSBAND. You got me, haven't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Somebody – somebody –

HUSBAND. There's nothing to cry about. There's nothing to cry about.

The scene blacks out. The music continues until the lights go up for Episode Four. Rhythm of the music is gradually replaced by the sound of steel riveting for Episode Four.

EPISODE FOUR

Maternal

Scene: a room in a hospital: bed, chair. The door in the back now opens on a corridor; the window on a tall building going up.

Sounds: outside window – riveting.

Characters in the scene

YOUNG WOMAN
DOCTORS
NURSES
HUSBAND

Characters seen but not heard

WOMAN IN WHEEL CHAIR
WOMAN IN BATHROBE
STRETCHER WAGON
NURSE WITH TRAY
NURSE WITH COVERED BASIN

At rise YOUNG WOMAN lies still in bed. The door is open. In the corridor, a stretcher wagon goes by. Enter NURSE.

NURSE: How are you feeling today? (*No response from YOUNG WOMAN.*) Better? (*No response.*) No pain? (*No response.*) NURSE takes her watch in one hand, YOUNG WOMAN's wrist in the other – stands, then goes to chart at foot of bed – writes.) You're getting along fine. (*No response.*) Such a sweet baby you have, too. (*No response.*) Aren't you glad it's a girl? (*YOUNG WOMAN makes sign with her head 'No'.*) You're not! Oh, my! That's no way to talk! Men want boys – women ought to want girls. (*No response.*) Maybe you didn't want either, eh? (*YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'. Riveting machine.*) You'll feel different when it begins to nurse. You'll just love it then. Your milk hasn't come yet – has it? (*Sign – 'No'.*) It will! (*Sign – 'No'.*) Oh, you don't know Doctor! (*Goes to door – turns.*) Anything else you want? (*YOUNG WOMAN points to window.*) Draft? (*Sign – 'No'.*) The noise? (*YOUNG WOMAN signs 'Yes'.*) Oh, that can't be helped. Hospital's got to have a new wing. We're the biggest Maternity Hospital in the world.

I'll close the window, though. (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) No?

YOUNG WOMAN (*whispers*). I smell everything then.

NURSE (*starting out the door - riveting machine.*) Here's your man!

Enter HUSBAND with large bouquet. Crosses to bed.

HUSBAND. Well, how are we today? (YOUNG WOMAN - no response.)

NURSE. She's getting stronger!

HUSBAND. Of course she is!

NURSE (*taking flowers*). See what your husband brought you.

HUSBAND. Better put 'em in water right away. (*Exit NURSE.*) Everything O.K.? (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) Now see here, my dear, you've got to brace up, you know! And - and face things! Everybody's got to brace up and face things! That's what makes the world go round. I know all you've been through but - (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) Oh, yes I do! I know all about it! I was right outside all the time! (YOUNG WOMAN makes violent gestures of 'No'. *Ignoring.*) Oh yes! But you've got to brace up now! Make an effort! Pull yourself together! Start the up-hill climb! Oh I've been down - but I haven't stayed down. I've been licked but I haven't stayed licked! I've pulled myself up by my own bootstraps, and that's what you've got to do! Will power! That's what conquers! Look at me! Now you've got to brace up! Face the music! Stand the gaff! Take life by the horns! Look it in the face! - Having a baby's natural! Perfectly natural thing - why should -

YOUNG WOMAN *chokes - points wildly to door. Enter NURSE with flowers in a vase.*

NURSE. What's the matter?

HUSBAND. She's got that gagging again - like she had the last time I was here.

YOUNG WOMAN *gestures him out.*

NURSE. Better go, sir.

HUSBAND (*at door*). I'll be back.

YOUNG WOMAN *gasping and gesturing.*

NURSE. She needs rest.

HUSBAND. Tomorrow then. I'll be back tomorrow - tomorrow and every day - goodbye. (*Exits.*)

NURSE. You got a mighty nice husband, I guess you know that? (*Writes on chart.*) Gagging.

Corridor life - WOMAN IN BATHROBE passes door. Enter DOCTOR, YOUNG DOCTOR, NURSE, wheeling surgeon's wagon with bottles, instruments, etc.

DOCTOR. How's the little lady today? (*Crosses to bed.*)

NURSE. She's better, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Of course she's better! She's all right - aren't you? (YOUNG WOMAN *does not respond.*) What's the matter? Can't you talk? (*Drops her hand. Takes chart.*)

NURSE. She's a little weak yet, Doctor.

DOCTOR (*at chart*). Milk hasn't come yet?

NURSE. No, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Put the child to breast. (YOUNG WOMAN - 'No - no!' - *Riveting machine.*) No? Don't you want to nurse your baby? (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) Why not? (*No response.*) These modern neurotic women, eh, Doctor? What are we going to do with 'em? (YOUNG DOCTOR *laughs.* NURSE *smiles.*) Bring the baby!

YOUNG WOMAN. No!

DOCTOR. Well - that's strong enough. I thought you were too weak to talk - that's better. You don't want your baby?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

DOCTOR. What do you want?

YOUNG WOMAN. Let alone - let alone.

DOCTOR. Bring the baby.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor - she's behaved very badly every time, Doctor - very upset - maybe we better not.

DOCTOR. I decide what we better and better not here, Nurse!

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Bring the baby.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR (*with chart*). Gagging - you mean nausea.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor, but -

DOCTOR. No buts, nurse.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Nausea! – Change the diet! – What is her diet?

NURSE. Liquids.

DOCTOR. Give her solids.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor. She says she can't swallow solids.

DOCTOR. Give her solids.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor. (*Starts to go – riveting machine.*)

DOCTOR. Wait – I'll change her medicine. (*Takes pad and writes prescription in Latin. Hands it to NURSE.*) After meals. (*To door.*) Bring her baby.

Exit DOCTOR, followed by YOUNG DOCTOR and NURSE with surgeon's wagon.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

Exits.

YOUNG WOMAN (*alone*). Let me alone – let me alone – let me alone – I've submitted to enough – I won't submit to any more – crawl off – crawl off in the dark – Vixen crawled under the bed – way back in the corner under the bed – they were all drowned – puppies don't go to heaven – heaven – golden stairs – long stairs – long – too long – long golden stairs – climb those golden stairs – stairs – stairs – climb – tired – too tired – dead – no matter – nothing matters – dead – stairs – long stairs – all the dead going up – going up – to be in heaven – heaven – golden stairs – all the children coming down – coming down to be born – dead going up – children coming down – going up – coming down – going up – coming down – going up – coming down – going up – stop – stop – no – no traffic cop – no – no traffic cop in heaven – traffic cop – traffic cop – can't you give us a smile – tired – too tired – no matter – it doesn't matter – St. Peter – St. Peter at the gate – you can't come in – no matter – it doesn't matter – I'll rest – I'll lie down – down – all written down – down in a big book – no matter – it doesn't matter – I'll lie down – it weighs me – it's over me – it weighs – weighs – it's heavy – it's a heavy book – no matter – lie still – don't move – can't move – rest – forget – they say you forget – a girl – aren't you glad it's a girl – a little girl – with no hair – none – little curls all over his head – a little bald girl – curls – curls all over his head – what kind of hair had God? no matter – it doesn't matter – everybody loves God – they've got to – got to – got to love God – God is love – even if he's bad they got to love him – even if he's got fat hands – fat hands – no no – he wouldn't be God – His hands make you well – He lays on his hands – well – and happy – no matter – doesn't matter – far – too far – tired – too tired Vixen crawled off under bed – eight –

there were eight – a woman crawled off under the bed – a woman has one – two three four – one two three four – one two three four – two plus two is four – two times two is four – two times four is eight Vixen had eight – one two three four five six seven eight – eight – Puffie had eight – all drowned – drowned – drowned in blood – blood – oh God! God – God never had one – Mary had one – in a manger – the lowly manger – God's on a high throne – far – too far – no matter – it doesn't matter – God Mary Mary God Mary – Virgin Mary – Mary had one – the Holy Ghost – the Holy Ghost – George H. Jones – oh don't – please don't! Let me rest – now I can rest – the weight is gone – inside the weight is gone – it's only outside – outside – all around – weight – I'm under it – Vixen crawled under the bed – there were eight – I'll not submit any more – I'll not submit – I'll not submit –

The scene blacks out. The sound of riveting continues until it goes into the sound of an electric piano and the scene lights up for Episode Five.

EPISODE FIVE

Prohibited

Scene: bar: bottles, tables, chairs, electric piano.

Sound: electric piano.

Characters

MAN behind the bar

POLICEMAN at bar

WAITER

At Table 1: a MAN and a WOMAN

At Table 2: a MAN and a BOY

At Table 3: TWO MEN waiting for TWO GIRLS, who are TELEPHONE GIRL of Episode One and YOUNG WOMAN.

At rise: everyone except the GIRLS on. Of the characters, the MAN and WOMAN at Table 1 are an ordinary man and woman. THE MAN at Table 2 is a middle-aged fairy; the BOY is young, untouched. At Table 3, FIRST MAN is pleasing, common, vigorous. He has coarse wavy hair. SECOND MAN is an ordinary salesman type.

At Table 3.

FIRST MAN. I'm going to beat it.

SECOND MAN. Oh, for the love of Mike.

FIRST MAN. They ain't going to show.

SECOND MAN. Sure they'll show.

FIRST MAN. How do you know they'll show?

SECOND MAN. I tell you you can't keep that baby away from me – just got to – (*Snaps fingers.*) – She comes running.

FIRST MAN. Looks like it.

SECOND MAN (*to WAITER makes sign '2' with his fingers.*)
The same. (*WAITER goes to the bar.*)

At Table 2.

MAN. Oh, I'm sorry I brought you here.

BOY. Why?

MAN. This Purgatory of noise! I brought you here to give you pleasure – let you taste pleasure. This sherry they have here is bottled – heaven. Wait till you taste it.

BOY. But I don't drink.

MAN. Drink! This isn't drink! Real amontillado is sunshine and orange groves – it's the Mediterranean and blue moonlight and – love? Have you ever been in love?

BOY. No.

MAN. Never in love with – a woman?

BOY. No – not really.

MAN. What do you mean really?

BOY. Just – that.

MAN. Ah! (*Makes sign to WAITER.*) Two – you know what I want – Two. (*WAITER goes to the bar.*)

At Table 1.

MAN. Well, are you going through with it, or ain't you?

WOMAN. That's what I want to do – go through with it.

MAN. But you can't.

WOMAN. Why can't I?

MAN. How can yuh? (*Silence.*) It's nothing – most women don't think anything about it – they just – Bert told me a doctor to go to – gave me the address –

WOMAN. Don't talk about it!

MAN. Got to talk about it – you got to get out of this. (*Silence – MAN makes sign to WAITER.*) What you having?

WOMAN. Nothing – I don't want anything. I had enough.

MAN. Do you good. The same?

WOMAN. I suppose so.

MAN (*makes sign '2' to WAITER.*) The same. (*WAITER goes to the bar.*)

At Table 3.

FIRST MAN. I'm going to beat it.

SECOND MAN. Oh say, listen! I'm counting on you to take the other one off my hands.

FIRST MAN. I'm going to beat it.

SECOND MAN. For the love of Mike have a heart! Listen – as a favor to me – I got to be home by six – I promised my wife – sure. That don't leave me no time at all if we got to hang around – entertain some dame. You got to take her off my hands.

FIRST MAN. Maybe she won't fall for me.

SECOND MAN. Sure she'll fall for you! They all fall for you – even my wife likes you – tries to kid herself it's your brave exploits, but I know what it is – sure she'll fall for you.

Enter two girls – TELEPHONE GIRL and YOUNG WOMAN.

GIRL (*coming to table*). Hello –

SECOND MAN (*grouch*). Good night.

GIRL. Good night? What's eatin' yuh?

SECOND MAN (*same*). Nothin's eatin' me – thought somethin' musta swallowed you.

GIRL. Why?

SECOND MAN. You're late!

GIRL (*unimpressed*). Oh – (*Brushing it aside.*) Mrs. Jones – Mr. Smith.

SECOND MAN. Meet my friend, Mr. Roe. (*They all sit. To the WAITER.*) The same and two more. (*WAITER goes.*)

GIRL. So we kept you waiting, did we?

SECOND MAN. Only about an hour.

YOUNG WOMAN. Was it that long?

SECOND MAN. We been here that long – ain't we Dick?

FIRST MAN. Just about, Harry.

SECOND MAN. For the love of God what delayed yuh?

GIRL. Tell Helen that one.

SECOND MAN (*to YOUNG WOMAN*). The old Irish woman that went to her first race? Bet on the skate that came in last – she went up to the jockey and asked him, 'For the love of God, what delayed yuh'.

All laugh.

YOUNG WOMAN. Why, that's kinda funny!

SECOND MAN. Kinda! – What do you mean kinda?

YOUNG WOMAN. I just mean there are not many of 'em that are funny at all.

SECOND MAN. Not if you haven't heard the funny ones.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh I've heard 'em all.

FIRST MAN. Not a laugh in a carload, eh?

GIRL. Got a cigarette?

SECOND MAN (*with package*). One of these?

GIRL (*taking one*). Uhhuh.

He offers the package to YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG WOMAN (*taking one*). Uhhuh.

SECOND MAN (*to FIRST MAN*). One of these?

FIRST MAN (*showing his own package*). Thanks – I like these.

He lights YOUNG WOMAN's cigarette.

SECOND MAN (*lighting GIRL's cigarette*). Well – baby – how they comin', huh?

GIRL. Couldn't be better.

SECOND MAN. How's every little thing?

GIRL. Just great.

SECOND MAN. Miss me?

GIRL. I'll say so – when did you get in?

SECOND MAN. Just a coupla hours ago.

GIRL. Miss me?

SECOND MAN. Did I? You don't know the half of it.

YOUNG WOMAN (*interrupting restlessly*). Can we dance here?

SECOND MAN. Not here.

YOUNG WOMAN. Where do we go from here?

SECOND MAN. Where do we go from here! You just got here!

FIRST MAN. What's the hurry?

SECOND MAN. What's the rush?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know.

GIRL. Helen wants to dance.

YOUNG WOMAN. I just want to keep moving.

FIRST MAN (*smiling*). You want to keep moving, huh?

SECOND MAN. You must be one of those restless babies! Where do we go from here!

YOUNG WOMAN. It's only some days – I want to keep moving.

FIRST MAN. You want to keep moving, huh? (*He is staring at her smilingly.*)

YOUNG WOMAN (*nods*). Uhhuh.

FIRST MAN (*quietly*). Stick around a while.

SECOND MAN. Where do we go from here! Say, what kind of a crowd do you run with, anyway?

GIRL. Helen don't run with any crowd – do you, Helen?

YOUNG WOMAN (*embarrassed*). No.

FIRST MAN. Well, I'm not a crowd – run with me.

SECOND MAN (*gratified*). All set, huh? – Dick was about ready to beat it.

FIRST MAN. That's before I met the little lady.

WAITER *serves drinks.*

FIRST MAN. Here's how.

SECOND MAN. Here's to you.

GIRL. Here's looking at you.

YOUNG WOMAN. Here's – happy days.

They all drink.

FIRST MAN. That's good stuff!

SECOND MAN. Off a boat.

FIRST MAN. Off a boat?

SECOND MAN. They get all their stuff here – off a boat.

GIRL. That's what *they* say.

SECOND MAN. No! Sure! Sure they do! Sure!

GIRL. It's all right with me.

SECOND MAN. But they do! Sure!

GIRL. I believe you, darling!

SECOND MAN. Did you miss me?

GIRL. Uhhuh. (*Affirmative.*)

SECOND MAN. Any other daddies?

GIRL. Uhhuh. (*Negative.*)

SECOND MAN. Love any daddy but daddy?

GIRL. Uhhuh. (*Negative.*)

SECOND MAN. Let's beat it!

GIRL (*a little self-conscious before YOUNG WOMAN*). We just got here.

SECOND MAN. Don't I know it – Come on!

GIRL. But – (*Indicates YOUNG WOMAN.*)

SECOND MAN (*not understanding*). They're all set – aren't you?

FIRST MAN (*to YOUNG WOMAN*). Are we? (*She doesn't answer.*)

SECOND MAN. I got to be out to the house by six – come on – (*Rising – to GIRL.*) Come on, kid – let's us beat it! (*GIRL indicates YOUNG WOMAN. Now understanding – very elaborate.*) Business is business, you know! I got a lot to do yet this afternoon – thought you might go along with me – help me out – how about it?

GIRL (*rising, her dignity preserved*). Sure – I'll go along with you – help you out. (*Both rise.*)

SECOND MAN. All right with you folks?

FIRST MAN. All right with me.

SECOND MAN. All right with you? (*To YOUNG WOMAN.*)

YOUNG WOMAN. All right with me.

SECOND MAN. Come on, kid. (*They rise.*) Where's the damage?

FIRST MAN. Go on!

SECOND MAN. No!

FIRST MAN. Go on!

SECOND MAN. I'll match you.

YOUNG WOMAN. Heads win!

GIRL. Heads I win – tails you lose.

SECOND MAN (*impatiently*). He's matching me.

FIRST MAN. Am I matching you or you matching me?

SECOND MAN. I'm matching you. (*They match.*) You're stung!

FIRST MAN (*contentedly*). Not so you can notice it. (*Smiles at YOUNG WOMAN.*)

GIRL. That's for you, Helen.

SECOND MAN. She ain't dumb! Come on.

GIRL (*to FIRST MAN*). You be nice to her now. She's very fastidious. – Goodbye.

Exit SECOND MAN and GIRL.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know what business is like.

FIRST MAN. You do – do yuh?

YOUNG WOMAN. I used to be a business girl myself before –

FIRST MAN. Before what?

YOUNG WOMAN. Before I quit.

FIRST MAN. What did you quit for?

YOUNG WOMAN. I just quit.

FIRST MAN. You're married, huh?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes – I am.

FIRST MAN. All right with me.

YOUNG WOMAN. Some men don't seem to like a woman after she's married –

WAITER *comes to the table.*

FIRST MAN. What's the difference?

YOUNG WOMAN. Depends on the man, I guess.

FIRST MAN. Depends on the woman, I guess. (*To WAITER, makes sign of '2'.*) The same. (*WAITER goes to the bar.*)

At Table 1.

MAN. It don't amount to nothing. God! Most women just –

WOMAN. I know – I know – I know.

MAN. They don't think nothing of it. They just –

WOMAN. I know – I know – I know.

Re-enter SECOND MAN and GIRL. They go to Table 3.

SECOND MAN. Say, I forgot – I want you to do something for me, will yuh?

FIRST MAN. Sure – what is it?

SECOND MAN. I want you to telephone me out home tomorrow – and ask me to come into town – will yuh?

FIRST MAN. Sure – why not?

SECOND MAN. You know – business – get me?

FIRST MAN. I get you.

SECOND MAN. I've worked the telegraph gag to death – and my wife likes you.

FIRST MAN. What's your number?

SECOND MAN. I'll write it down for you. (*Writes.*)

FIRST MAN. How is your wife?

SECOND MAN. She's fine.

FIRST MAN. And the kid?

SECOND MAN. Great. (*Hands him the card. To girl.*) Come on, kid. (*Turns back to YOUNG WOMAN.*) Get this bird to tell you about himself.

GIRL. Keep him from it.

SECOND MAN. Get him to tell you how he killed a couple of spig down in Mexico.

GIRL. You been in Mexico?

SECOND MAN. He just came up from there.

GIRL. Can you teach us the tango?

YOUNG WOMAN. You killed a man?

SECOND MAN. Two of 'em! With a bottle! Get him to tell you – with a bottle. Come on, kid. Goodbye.

Exit SECOND MAN and GIRL.

YOUNG WOMAN. Why did you?

FIRST MAN. What?

YOUNG WOMAN. Kill 'em?

FIRST MAN. To get free.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh.

At Table 2.

MAN. You really must taste this – just taste it. It's a real amontillado, you know.

BOY. Where do they get it here?

MAN. It's always down the side streets one finds the real pleasures, don't you think?

BOY. I don't know.

MAN. Learn. Come, taste this! Amontillado! Or don't you like amontillado?

BOY. I don't know. I never had any before.

MAN. Your first taste! How I envy you! Come, taste it! Taste it! And die.

BOY *tastes wine – finds it disappointing.*

MAN (*gilding it*). Poe was a lover of amontillado. He returns to it continually, you remember – or are you a lover of Poe?

BOY. I've read a lot of him.

MAN. But are you a lover?

At Table 3.

FIRST MAN. There were a bunch of bandidos – bandits, you know, took me into the hills – holding me there – what was I to do? got the two birds that guarded me drunk one night, and then I filled the empty bottle with small stones – and let 'em have it!

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh!

FIRST MAN. I had to get free, didn't I? I let 'em have it –

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh – then what did you do?

FIRST MAN. Then I beat it.

YOUNG WOMAN. Where to – ?

FIRST MAN. Right here. (*Pause.*) Glad?

YOUNG WOMAN (*nods*). Yes.

FIRST MAN (*makes sign to WAITER of '2'*). The same. (*WAITER goes to the bar.*)

At Table 1.

MAN. You're just scared because this is the first time and –

WOMAN. I'm not scared.

MAN. Then what are you for Christ's sake?

WOMAN. I'm not scared. I want it – I want to have it – that ain't being scared, is it?

MAN. It's being goofy.

WOMAN. I don't care.

MAN. What about your folks?

WOMAN. I don't care.

MAN. What about your job? (*Silence.*) You got to keep your job, haven't you? (*Silence.*) Haven't you?

WOMAN. I suppose so.

MAN. Well – there you are!

WOMAN (*silence – then*). All right – let's go now – You got the address?

MAN. Now you're coming to.

They get up and go off. Exit MAN and WOMAN.

At Table 3.

YOUNG WOMAN. A bottle like that? (*She picks it up.*)

FIRST MAN. Yeah – filled with pebbles.

YOUNG WOMAN. What kind of pebbles?

FIRST MAN. Pebbles! Off the ground.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh.

FIRST MAN. Necessity, you know, mother of invention. (*As YOUNG WOMAN handles the bottle.*) Ain't a bad weapon – first you got a sledge hammer – then you got a knife.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh. (*Puts bottle down.*)

FIRST MAN. Women don't like knives, do they? (*Pours drink.*)

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

FIRST MAN. Don't mind a hammer so much, though, do they?

YOUNG WOMAN. No –

FIRST MAN. I didn't like it myself – any of it – but I had to get free, didn't I? Sure I had to get free, didn't I? (*Drinks.*) Now I'm damn glad I did.

YOUNG WOMAN. Why?

FIRST MAN. You know why. (*He puts his hand over hers.*)

At Table 2.

MAN. Let's go to my rooms – and I'll show them to you – I have a first edition of Verlaine that will simply make your mouth water. (*They stand up.*) Here – there's just a sip at the bottom of my glass –

BOY *takes it.*

That last sip's the sweetest – Wasn't it?

BOY (*laughs*). And I always thought that was dregs. (*Exit MAN followed by BOY.*)

At Table 3.

The MAN is holding her hand across the table.

YOUNG WOMAN. When you put your hand over mine! When you just touch me!

FIRST MAN. Yeah? (*Pause.*) Come on, kid, let's go!

YOUNG MAN. Where?

FIRST MAN. You haven't been around much, have you, kid?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

FIRST MAN. I could tell that just to look at you.

YOUNG WOMAN. You could?

FIRST MAN. Sure I could, What are you running around with a girl like that other one for?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know. She seems to have a good time.

FIRST MAN. So that's it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Don't she?

FIRST MAN. Don't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

FIRST MAN. Never?

YOUNG WOMAN. Never.

FIRST MAN. What's the matter?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing – just me, I guess.

FIRST MAN. You're all right.

YOUNG WOMAN. Am I?

FIRST MAN. Sure. You just haven't met the right guy – that's all – girl like you – you got to meet the right guy.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know.

FIRST MAN. You're different from girls like that other one – any guy'll do her. You're different.

YOUNG WOMAN. I guess I am.

FIRST MAN. You didn't fall for that business gag – did you – when they went off?

YOUNG WOMAN. Well, I thought they wanted to be alone probably, but –

FIRST MAN. And how!

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh – so that's it.

FIRST MAN. That's it. Come along – let's go –

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, I couldn't! Like this?

FIRST MAN. Don't you like me?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

FIRST MAN. Then what's the matter?

YOUNG WOMAN. Do – you – like me?

FIRST MAN. Like yuh? You don't know the half of it – listen – you know what you seem like to me?

YOUNG WOMAN. What?

FIRST MAN. An angel. Just like an angel.

YOUNG WOMAN. I do?

FIRST MAN. That's what I said! Let's go!

YOUNG WOMAN. Where?

FIRST MAN. Where do you live?

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, we can't go to my place.

FIRST MAN. Then come to my place.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh I couldn't – is it far?

FIRST MAN. Just a step – come on –

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh I couldn't – what is it – a room?

FIRST MAN. No – an apartment – a one room apartment.

YOUNG WOMAN. That's different.

FIRST MAN. On the ground floor – no one will see you – coming or going.

YOUNG WOMAN (*getting up*). I couldn't.

FIRST MAN (*rises*). Wait a minute – I got to pay the damage – and I'll get a bottle of something to take along.

YOUNG WOMAN. No – don't.

FIRST MAN. Why not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Well – don't bring any pebbles.

FIRST MAN. Say – forget that! Will you?

YOUNG WOMAN. I just meant I don't think I'll need anything to drink.

FIRST MAN (*leaning to her eagerly*). You like me – don't you, kid?

YOUNG WOMAN. Do you me?

FIRST MAN. Wait!

He goes to the bar. She remains, her hands outstretched on the table, staring ahead. Enter a MAN and a GIRL. They go to one of the empty tables. The WAITER goes to them.

MAN (*to GIRL*). What do you want?

GIRL. Same old thing.

MAN (*to the WAITER*). The usual. (*Makes a sign '2'.*)

The FIRST MAN crosses to YOUNG WOMAN with a wrapped bottle under his arm. She rises and starts out with him. As they pass the piano, he stops and puts in a nickle – the music starts as they exit. The scene blacks out.

The music of the electric piano continues until the lights go up for Episode Six, and the music has become the music of a hand organ, very very faint.

EPISODE SIX

Intimate

Scene: a dark room.

Sounds: a hand organ; footbeats, of passing feet.

Characters

MAN

YOUNG WOMAN

At rise: darkness. Nothing can be discerned. From the outside comes the sound of a hand organ, very faint, and the irregular rhythm of passing feet. The hand organ is playing Cielito Lindo, that Spanish song that has been on every hand organ lately.

MAN. You're awful still, honey. What you thinking about?

WOMAN. About sea shells. (*The sound of her voice is beautiful.*)

MAN. Sheshells? Gee! I can't say it!

WOMAN. When I was little my grandmother used to have a big pink sea shell on the mantle behind the stove. When we'd go to visit her they'd let me hold it, and listen. That's what I was thinking about now.

MAN. Yeah?

WOMAN. You can hear the sea in 'em, you know.

MAN. Yeah, I know.

WOMAN. I wonder why that is?

MAN. Search me. (*Pause.*)

WOMAN. You going? (*He has moved.*)

MAN. No. I just want a cigarette.

WOMAN (*glad, relieved*). Oh.

MAN. Want one?

WOMAN. No. (*Taking the match.*) Let me light it for you.

MAN. You got mighty pretty hands, honey. *(The match is out.)*
This little pig went to market. This little pig stayed home. This
little pig went –

WOMAN *(laughs)*. Diddle diddle dee. *(Laughs again.)*

MAN. You got awful pretty hands.

WOMAN. I used to have. But I haven't taken much care of them
lately. I will now – *(Pause. The music gets clearer.)* What's
that?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. That music?

MAN. A dago hand organ. I gave him two bits the first day I got
here – so he comes every day.

WOMAN. I mean – what's that he's playing?

MAN. *Cielito Lindo.*

WOMAN. What does that mean?

MAN. Little Heaven.

WOMAN. Little Heaven?

MAN. That's what lovers call each other in Spain.

WOMAN. Spain's where all the castles are, ain't it?

MAN. Yeah.

WOMAN. Little Heaven – sing it!

MAN *(singing to the music of the hand organ)*. Da la sierra
morena viene, bajando viene, bajando; un par de ojitos negros –
cielito lindo – da contrabando.

WOMAN. What does it mean?

MAN. From the high dark mountains.

WOMAN. From the high dark mountains – ?

MAN. Oh it doesn't mean anything. It doesn't make sense. It's
love. *(Taking up the song.)* Ay-ay-ay-ay.

WOMAN. I know what that means.

MAN. What?

WOMAN. Ay-ay-ay-ay. *(They laugh.)*

MAN *(taking up the song)*. Canta non llores – Sing don't cry –

WOMAN *(taking up song)*. La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la – Little
Heaven!

MAN. You got a nice voice, honey.

WOMAN. Have I? *(Laughs – tickles him.)*

MAN. You bet you have – hey!

WOMAN *(laughing)*. You ticklish?

MAN. Sure I am! Hey! *(They laugh.)* Go on, honey, sing
something.

WOMAN. I couldn't.

MAN. Go on – you got a fine voice.

WOMAN *(laughs and sings)*. Hey, diddle, diddle, the cat and the
fiddle, The cow jumped over the moon, The little dog laughed
to see the sport, And the dish ran away with the spoon –

Both laugh.

I never thought that had any sense before – now I get it.

MAN. You got me beat.

WOMAN. It's you and me – La-lalalalalala – lalalalalalala – Little
Heaven. You're the dish and I'm the spoon.

MAN. You're a little spoon all right.

WOMAN. And I guess I'm the little cow that jumped over the
moon. *(A pause.)* Do you believe in sorta guardian angels?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. Guardian angels?

MAN. I don't know. Maybe.

WOMAN. I do. *(Taking up the song again.)* Lalalalala – lalalalala
– lalalala – Little Heaven. *(Talking.)* There must be something
that looks out for you and brings you your happiness, at last –
look at us! How did we both happen to go to that place today if
there wasn't something!

MAN. Maybe you're right.

WOMAN. Look at us!

MAN. Everything's us to you, kid – ain't it?

WOMAN. Ain't it?

MAN. All right with me.

WOMAN. We belong together! We belong together! And we're
going to stick together, ain't we?

MAN. Sing something else.

WOMAN. I tell you I can't sing!

MAN. Sure you can!

WOMAN. I tell you I hadn't thought of singing since I was a little bit of a girl.

MAN. Well sing anyway.

WOMAN (*singing*). And every little wavelet had its night cap on – its night cap on – its night cap on – and every little wave had its night cap on – so very early in the morning. (*Talking*.) Did you used to sing that when you were a little kid?

MAN. Nope.

WOMAN. Didn't you? We used to – in the first grade – little kids – we used to go round and round in a ring – and flop our hands up and down – supposed to be the waves. I remember it used to confuse me – because we did just the same thing to be little angels.

MAN. Yeah?

WOMAN. You know why I came here?

MAN. I can make a good guess.

WOMAN. Because you told me I looked like an angel to you! That's why I came.

MAN. Jeez, honey, all women look like angels to me – all white women. I ain't been seeing nothing but Indians, you know for the last couple a years. Gee, when I got off the boat here the other day – and saw all the women – gee I pretty near went crazy – talk about looking like angels – why –

WOMAN. You've had a lot of women, haven't you?

MAN. Not so many – real ones.

WOMAN. Did you – like any of 'em – better than me?

MAN. Nope – there wasn't one of 'em any sweeter than you, honey – not as sweet – no – not as sweet.

WOMAN. I like to hear you say it. Say it again –

MAN (*protesting good humoredly*). Oh –

WOMAN. Go on – tell me again!

MAN. Here! (*Kisses her*.) Does that tell you?

WOMAN. Yes. (*Pause*.) We're going to stick together – always – aren't we?

MAN (*honestly*). I'll have to be moving on, kid – some day, you know.

WOMAN. When?

MAN. Quien sabe?

WOMAN. What does that mean?

MAN. Quien sabe? You got to learn that, kid, if you're figuring on coming with me. It's the answer to everything – below the Rio Grande.

WOMAN. What does it mean?

MAN. It means – who knows?

WOMAN. Keen sabe?

MAN. Yep – don't forget it – now.

WOMAN. I'll never forget it!

MAN. Quien sabe?

WOMAN. And I'll never get to use it.

MAN. Quien sabe.

WOMAN. I'll never get – below the Rio Grande – I'll never get out of here.

MAN. Quien sabe.

WOMAN (*change of mood*). That's right! Keen sabe? Who knows?

MAN. That's the stuff.

WOMAN. You must like it down there.

MAN. I can't live anywhere else – for long.

WOMAN. Why not?

MAN. Oh – you're free down there! You're free!

A street light is lit outside. The outlines of a window take form against this light. There are bars across it, and from outside it, the sidewalk cuts across almost at the top. It is a basement room. The constant going and coming of passing feet, mostly feet of couples, can be dimly seen. Inside, on the ledge, there is a lily blooming in a bowl of rocks and water.

WOMAN. What's that?

MAN. Just the street light going on.

WOMAN. Is it as late as that?

MAN. Late as what?

WOMAN. Dark.

MAN. It's been dark for hours – didn't you know that?

WOMAN. No! – I must go! (*Rises*.)

MAN. Wait – the moon will be up in a little while – full moon.

WOMAN. It isn't that! I'm late! I must go!

She comes into the light. She wears a white chemise that might be the tunic of a dancer, and as she comes into the light she fastens about her waist a little skirt. She really wears almost exactly the clothes that women wear now, but the finesse of their cut, and the grace and ease with which she puts them on, must turn this episode of her dressing into a personification, an idealization of a woman clothing herself. All her gestures must be unconscious, innocent, relaxed, sure and full of natural grace. As she sits facing the window pulling on a stocking.

What's that?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. On the window ledge.

MAN. A flower.

WOMAN. Who gave it to you?

MAN. Nobody gave it to me. I bought it.

WOMAN. For yourself?

MAN. Yeah – Why not?

WOMAN. I don't know.

MAN. In Chinatown – made me think of Frisco where I was a kid – so I bought it.

WOMAN. Is that where you were born – Frisco?

MAN. Yep. Twin Peaks.

WOMAN. What's that?

MAN. A couple of hills – together.

WOMAN. One for you and one for me.

MAN. I bet you'd like Frisco.

WOMAN. I know a woman went out there once!

MAN. The bay and the hills! Jeez, that's the life! Every Saturday we used to cross the Bay – get a couple nags and just ride – over the hills. One would have a blanket on the saddle – the other, the grub. At night, we'd make a little fire and eat – and then roll up in the old blanket and –

WOMAN. Who? Who was with you?

MAN (*indifferently*). Anybody. (*Enthusiastically*). Jeez, that dry old grass out there smells good at night – full of tar weed – you know –

WOMAN. Is that a good smell?

MAN. Tar weed? Didn't you ever smell it? (*She shakes her head 'No.'*) Sure it's a good smell! The Bay and the hills.

She goes to the mirror of the dresser, to finish dressing. She has only a dress to put on that is in one piece – with one fastening on the side. Before slipping it on, she stands before the mirror and stretches. Appreciatively but indifferently.

You look in good shape, kid. A couple of months riding over the mountains with me, you'd be great.

WOMAN. Can I?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. Some day – ride mountains with you?

MAN. Ride mountains? Ride donkeys!

WOMAN. It's the same thing! – with you! – Can I – some day?
The high dark mountains?

MAN. Who knows?

WOMAN. It must be great!

MAN. You ever been off like that, kid? – high up? On top of the world?

WOMAN. Yes.

MAN. When?

WOMAN. Today.

MAN. You're pretty sweet.

WOMAN. I never knew anything like this way! I never knew that I could feel like this! So, – so purified! Don't laugh at me!

MAN. I ain't laughing, honey.

WOMAN. Purified.

MAN. It's a hell of a word – but I know what you mean. That's the way it is – sometimes.

WOMAN (*she puts on a little hat, then turns to him*). Well – goodbye.

MAN. Aren't you forgetting something? (*Rises.*)

She looks toward him, then throws her head slowly back, lifts her right arm – this gesture that is in so many statues of women – Volupte. He comes out of the shadow, puts his arm around her, kisses her. Her head and arm go further back – then she brings her arm around with a wide encircling gesture,

her hand closes over his head, her fingers spread. Her fingers are protective, clutching. When he releases her, her eyes are shining with tears. She turns away. She looks back at him – and the room – and her eyes fasten on the lily.

WOMAN. Can I have that?

MAN. Sure – why not?

She takes it – goes. As she opens the door, the music is louder. The scene blacks out.

WOMAN. Goodbye. And – (Hesitates.) And – thank you.

Curtain

The music continues until the curtain goes up for Episode Seven. It goes up on silence.

EPISODE SEVEN

Domestic

Scene: a sitting room: a divan, a telephone, a window.

Characters

HUSBAND

YOUNG WOMAN

They are seated on opposite ends of the divan. They are both reading papers – to themselves.

HUSBAND. Record production.

YOUNG WOMAN. Girl turns on gas.

HUSBAND. Sale hits a million –

YOUNG WOMAN. Woman leaves all for love –

HUSBAND. Market trend steady –

YOUNG WOMAN. Young wife disappears –

HUSBAND. Owns a life interest –

Phone rings. YOUNG WOMAN looks toward it.

That's for me. (*In phone.*) Hello – oh hello, A.B. It's all settled? – Everything signed? Good. Good! Tell R.A. to call me up. (*Hangs up phone – to YOUNG WOMAN.*) Well, it's all settled. They signed! – aren't you interested? Aren't you going to ask me?

YOUNG WOMAN (*by rote*). Did you put it over?

HUSBAND. Sure I put it over.

YOUNG WOMAN. Did you swing it?

HUSBAND. Sure I swung it.

YOUNG WOMAN. Did they come through?

HUSBAND. Sure they came through.

YOUNG WOMAN. Did they sign?

HUSBAND. I'll say they signed.

YOUNG WOMAN. On the dotted line?

HUSBAND. On the dotted line.

YOUNG WOMAN. The property's yours?

HUSBAND. The property's mine. I'll put a first mortgage. I'll put a second mortgage and the property's mine. Happy?

YOUNG WOMAN (*by rote*). Happy.

HUSBAND (*going to her*). The property's mine! It's not all that's mine! (*Pinching her cheek - happy and playful.*) I got a first mortgage on her - I got a second mortgage on her - and she's mine!

YOUNG WOMAN *pulls away swiftly.*

What's the matter?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing - what?

HUSBAND. You flinched when I touched you.

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. You haven't done that in a long time.

YOUNG WOMAN. Haven't I?

HUSBAND. You used to do it every time I touched you.

YOUNG WOMAN. Did I?

HUSBAND. Didn't know that, did you?

YOUNG WOMAN (*unexpectedly*). Yes. Yes, I know it.

HUSBAND. Just purity.

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. Oh, I liked it. Purity.

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

HUSBAND. You're one of the purest women that ever lived.

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm just like anybody else only - (*Stops.*)

HUSBAND. Only what?

YOUNG WOMAN (*pause*). Nothing.

HUSBAND. It must be something.

Phone rings. She gets up and goes to window.

HUSBAND (*in phone*). Hello - hello, R.A. - well, I put it over - yeah, I swung it - sure they came through - did they sign? On the dotted line! The property's mine. I made the proposition. I sold them the idea. Now watch me. Tell D.D. to call me up.

(*Hangs up.*) That was R.A. What are you looking at?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

HUSBAND. You must be looking at something.

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing - the moon.

HUSBAND. The moon's something, isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

HUSBAND. What's it doing?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

HUSBAND. It must be doing something.

YOUNG WOMAN. It's moving - moving - (*She comes down, restlessly.*)

HUSBAND. Pull down the shade, my dear.

YOUNG WOMAN. Why?

HUSBAND. People can look in.

Phone rings.

Hello - hello D.D. - Yes - I put it over - they came across - I put it over on them - yep - yep - yep - I'll say I am - yep - on the dotted line - Now you watch me - yep. Yep yep. Tell B.M. to phone me. (*Hangs up.*) That was D.D. (*To YOUNG WOMAN who has come down to davenport and picked up a paper.*) Aren't you listening?

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm reading.

HUSBAND. What you reading?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

HUSBAND. Must be something. (*He sits and picks up his paper.*)

YOUNG WOMAN (*reading*). Prisoner escapes - lifer breaks jail - shoots way to freedom -

HUSBAND. Don't read that stuff - listen - here's a first rate editorial. I agree with this. I agree absolutely. Are you listening?

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm listening.

HUSBAND (*importantly*). All men are born free and entitled to the pursuit of happiness. (*YOUNG WOMAN gets up.*) My, you're nervous tonight.

YOUNG WOMAN. I try not to be.

HUSBAND. You inherit that from your mother. She was in the office today.

YOUNG WOMAN. Was she?

HUSBAND. To get her allowance.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh –

HUSBAND. Don't you know it's the *first*.

YOUNG WOMAN. Poor Ma.

HUSBAND. What would she do without me?

YOUNG WOMAN. I know. You're very good.

HUSBAND. One thing – she's grateful.

YOUNG WOMAN. Poor Ma – poor Ma.

HUSBAND. She's got to have care.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes. She's got to have care.

HUSBAND. A mother's a very precious thing – a good mother.

YOUNG WOMAN (*excitedly*). I try to be a good mother.

HUSBAND. Of course you're a good mother.

YOUNG WOMAN. I try! I try!

HUSBAND. A mother's a very precious thing – (*Resuming his paper.*) And a child's a very precious thing. Precious jewels.

YOUNG WOMAN (*reading*). Sale of jewels and precious stones.

YOUNG WOMAN *puts her hand to throat.*

HUSBAND. What's the matter?

YOUNG WOMAN. I feel as though I were drowning.

HUSBAND. Drowning?

YOUNG WOMAN. With stones around my neck.

HUSBAND. You just imagine that.

YOUNG WOMAN. Stifling.

HUSBAND. You don't breathe deep enough – breathe now – look at me. (*He breathes.*) Breath is life. Life is breath.

YOUNG WOMAN (*suddenly*). And what is death?

HUSBAND (*smartly*). Just – no breath!

YOUNG WOMAN (*to herself*). Just no breath.

Takes up paper.

HUSBAND. All right?

YOUNG WOMAN. All right.

HUSBAND (*reads as she stares at her paper. Looks up after a pause.*) I feel cold air, my dear.

YOUNG WOMAN. Cold air?

HUSBAND. Close the window, will you?

YOUNG WOMAN. It isn't open.

HUSBAND. Don't you feel cold air?

YOUNG WOMAN. No – you just imagine it.

HUSBAND. I never imagine anything. (*YOUNG WOMAN is staring at the paper.*) What are you reading?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

HUSBAND. You must be reading something.

YOUNG WOMAN. Woman finds husband dead.

HUSBAND (*uninterested*). Oh. (*Interested.*) Here's a man says 'I owe my success to a yeast cake a day – my digestion is good – I sleep very well – and – (*His wife gets up, goes toward door.*) Where you going?

YOUNG WOMAN. No place.

HUSBAND. You must be going some place.

YOUNG WOMAN. Just – to bed.

HUSBAND. It isn't eleven yet. Wait.

YOUNG WOMAN. Wait?

HUSBAND. It's only ten-forty-six – wait! (*Holds out his arms to her.*) Come here!

YOUNG WOMAN (*takes a step toward him – recoils*). Oh – I want to go away!

HUSBAND. Away? Where?

YOUNG WOMAN. Anywhere – away.

HUSBAND. Why, what's the matter?

YOUNG WOMAN. I'm scared.

HUSBAND. What of?

YOUNG WOMAN. I can't sleep – I haven't slept.

HUSBAND. That's nothing.

YOUNG WOMAN. And the moon – when it's full moon.

HUSBAND. That's nothing.

YOUNG WOMAN. I can't sleep.

HUSBAND. Of course not. It's the light.

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't see it! I feel it! I'm afraid.

HUSBAND (*kindly*). Nonsense – come here.

YOUNG WOMAN. I want to go away.

HUSBAND. But I can't get away now.

YOUNG WOMAN. Alone!

HUSBAND. You've never been away alone.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know.

HUSBAND. What would you do?

YOUNG WOMAN. Maybe I'd sleep.

HUSBAND. Now you wait.

YOUNG WOMAN (*desperately*). Wait?

HUSBAND. We'll take a trip – we'll go to Europe – I'll get my watch – I'll get my Swiss watch – I've always wanted a Swiss watch that I bought right there – isn't that funny? Wait – wait. (YOUNG WOMAN *comes down to davenport – sits. Husband resumes his paper.*) Another revolution below the Rio Grande.

YOUNG WOMAN. Below the Rio Grande?

HUSBAND. Yes – another –

YOUNG WOMAN. Anyone – hurt?

HUSBAND. No.

YOUNG WOMAN. Any prisoners?

HUSBAND. No.

YOUNG WOMAN. All free?

HUSBAND. All free.

He resumes his paper. YOUNG WOMAN sits, staring ahead of her. The music of the hand organ sounds off very dimly, playing Cielito Lindo. Voices begin to sing it – 'Ay-ay-ay-ay' – and then the words – the music and voices get louder.

THE VOICE OF HER LOVER. They were a bunch of bandidos – bandits you know – holding me there – what was I to do – I had to get free – didn't I? I had to get free –

VOICES. Free – free – free –

LOVER. I filled an empty bottle with small stones –

VOICES. Stones – stones – precious stones – millstones – stones – stones – millstones

LOVER. Just a bottle with small stones.

VOICES. Stones – stones – small stones –

LOVER. You only need a bottle with small stones.

VOICES. Stones – stones – small stones –

VOICE OF A HUCKSTER. Stones for sale – stones – stones – small stones – precious stones –

VOICES. Stones – stones – precious stones –

LOVER. Had to get free, didn't I? Free?

VOICES. Free? Free?

LOVER. Quien sabe? Who knows? Who knows?

VOICES. Who'd know? Who'd know? Who'd know?

HUCKSTER. Stones – stones – small stones – big stones – millstones – cold stones – head stones –

VOICES. Head stones – head stones – head stones.

The music – the voices – mingle – increase – the YOUNG WOMAN flies from her chair and cries out in terror.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh! Oh!

The scene blacks out – the music and the dim voices, 'Stones – stones – stones,' continue until the scene lights for Episode Eight.

EPISODE EIGHT

The Law

Scene: courtroom.

Sounds: clicking of telegraph instruments offstage.

Characters

JUDGE
JURY
LAWYERS
SPECTATORS
REPORTERS
MESSENGER BOYS
LAW CLERKS
BAILIFF
COURT REPORTER
YOUNG WOMAN

The words and movements of all these people except the YOUNG WOMAN are routine - mechanical. Each is going through the motions of his own game.

At rise: all assembled, except JUDGE.

Enter JUDGE.

BAILIFF (*mumbling*). Hear ye - hear ye - hear ye! (*All rise.*
JUDGE *sits*. All *sit*. LAWYER FOR DEFENSE *gets to his feet*
- *He is the verbose, 'eloquent' typical criminal defense lawyer.*
JUDGE *signs to him to wait* - *turns to LAW CLERKS,*
grouped at foot of the bench.

FIRST CLERK (*handing up a paper - routine voice*). State versus
Kling - stay of execution.

JUDGE. Denied.

FIRST CLERK *goes*.

SECOND CLERK. Bing vs. Ding - demurrer.

JUDGE *signs*. SECOND CLERK *goes*.

THIRD CLERK. Case of John King - habeas corpus.

JUDGE *signs*. THIRD CLERK *goes*. JUDGE *signs to*
BAILIFF.

BAILIFF (*mumbling*). People of the State of _____ versus Helen
Jones.

JUDGE (*to LAWYER FOR DEFENSE*). Defense ready to
proceed?

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. We're ready, your Honor.

JUDGE. Proceed.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Helen Jones.

BAILIFF. HELEN JONES!

YOUNG WOMAN *rises*.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Mrs. Jones, will you take the stand?

YOUNG WOMAN *goes to witness stand*.

FIRST REPORTER (*writing rapidly*). The defense sprang a
surprise at the opening of court this morning by putting the
accused woman on the stand. The prosecution was swept off
its feet by this daring defense strategy and - (*Instruments get*
louder.)

SECOND REPORTER. Trembling and scarcely able to stand,
Helen Jones, accused murderess, had to be almost carried to
the witness stand this morning when her lawyer -

BAILIFF (*mumbling - with Bible*). Do you swear to tell the truth,
the whole truth and nothing but the truth - so help you God?

YOUNG WOMAN. I do.

JUDGE. You may sit.

She sits in witness chair.

COURT REPORTER. What is your name?

YOUNG WOMAN. Helen Jones.

COURT REPORTER. Your age?

YOUNG WOMAN (*hesitates - then*). Twenty-nine.

COURT REPORTER. Where do you live?

YOUNG WOMAN. In prison.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. This is my client's legal address.

Hands a scrap of paper.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION (*jumping to his feet*). I object to this insinuation on the part of counsel of any illegality in the holding of this defendant in jail when the law –

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I made no such insinuation.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You implied it –

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I did not!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You're a –

JUDGE. Order!

BAILIFF. Order!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Your Honor, I object to counsel's constant attempt to –

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I protest – I –

JUDGE. Order!

BAILIFF. Order!

JUDGE. Proceed with the witness.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Mrs. Jones, you are the widow of the late George H. Jones, are you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. How long were you married to the late George H. Jones before his demise?

YOUNG WOMAN. Six years.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Six years! And it was a happy marriage, was it not? (YOUNG WOMAN *hesitates*.) Did you quarrel?

YOUNG WOMAN. No, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Then it was a happy marriage, wasn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. In those six years of married life with your late husband, the late George H. Jones, did you EVER have a quarrel?

YOUNG WOMAN. No, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Never one quarrel?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. The witness has said –

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Six years without one quarrel! Six years! Gentlemen of the jury, I ask you to consider this fact!

Six years of married life without a quarrel. (*The JURY grins.*) I ask you to consider it seriously! Very seriously! Who of us – and this is not intended as any reflection on the sacred institution of marriage – no – but!

JUDGE. Proceed with your witness.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. You have one child – have you not, Mrs. Jones?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. A little girl, is it not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. How old is she?

YOUNG WOMAN. She's five – past five.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. A little girl of past five. Since the demise of the late Mr. Jones you are the only parent she has living, are you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Before your marriage to the late Mr. Jones, you worked and supported your mother, did you not?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I object, your honor! Irrelevant – immaterial – and –

JUDGE. Objection sustained!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. In order to support your mother and yourself as a girl, you worked, did you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. What did you do?

YOUNG WOMAN. I was a stenographer.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. And since your marriage you have continued as her sole support, have you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. A devoted daughter, gentlemen of the jury! As well as a devoted wife and a devoted mother!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Your Honor!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE (*quickly*). And now, Mrs. Jones, I will ask you – the law expects me to ask you – it demands that I ask you – did you – or did you not – on the night of June 2nd last or the morning of June 3rd last – kill your husband, the late George H. Jones – did you, or did you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. I did not.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. You did not?

YOUNG WOMAN. I did not.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Now, Mrs. Jones, you have heard the witnesses for the State – They were not many – and they did not have much to say –

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I object.

JUDGE. Sustained.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. You have heard some police and you have heard some doctors. None of whom was present! The prosecution could not furnish any witness to the crime – not one witness!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Your Honor!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Nor one motive.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Your Honor – I protest! I –

JUDGE. Sustained.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. But such as these witnesses were, you have heard them try to accuse you of deliberately murdering your own husband, this husband with whom, by your own statement, you had never had a quarrel – not one quarrel in six years of married life, murdering him, I say, or rather – they say, while he slept, by brutally hitting him over the head with a bottle – a bottle filled with small stones – Did you, I repeat this, or did you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. I did not.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. You did not! Of course you did not! (*Quickly.*) Now, Mrs. Jones, will you tell the jury in your own words exactly what happened on the night of June 2nd or the morning of June 3rd last, at the time your husband was killed.

YOUNG WOMAN. I was awakened by hearing somebody – something – in the room, and I saw two men standing by my husband's bed.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Your husband's bed – that was also your bed, was it not, Mrs. Jones?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. You hadn't the modern idea of separate beds, had you, Mrs. Jones?

YOUNG WOMAN. Mr. Jones objected.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I mean you slept in the same bed, did you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Then explain just what you meant by saying 'my husband's bed'.

YOUNG WOMAN. Well – I –

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. You meant his side of the bed, didn't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes. His side.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. That is what I thought, but I wanted the jury to be clear on that point. (*To the JURY.*) Mr. and Mrs. Jones slept in the same bed. (*To her.*) Go on, Mrs. Jones. (*As she is silent.*) You heard a noise and –

YOUNG WOMAN. I heard a noise and I awoke and saw two men standing beside my husband's side of the bed.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Two men?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Can you describe them?

YOUNG WOMAN. Not very well – I couldn't see them very well.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Could you say whether they were big or small – light or dark, thin or –

YOUNG WOMAN. They were big dark looking men.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Big dark looking men?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. And what did you do, Mrs. Jones, when you suddenly awoke and saw two big dark looking men standing beside your bed?

YOUNG WOMAN. I didn't do anything!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. You didn't have time to do anything – did you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No. Before I could do anything – one of them raised – something in his hand and struck Mr. Jones over the head with it.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. And what did Mr. Jones do?

SPECTATORS *laugh.*

JUDGE. Silence.

BAILIFF. Silence.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. What did Mr. Jones do, Mrs. Jones?

YOUNG WOMAN. He gave a sort of groan and tried to raise up.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Tried to raise up!

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. And then what happened?

YOUNG WOMAN. The man struck him again and he fell back.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I see. What did the men do then? The big dark looking men.

YOUNG WOMAN. They turned and ran out of the room.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I see. What did you do then, Mrs. Jones?

YOUNG WOMAN. I saw Mr. Jones was bleeding from the temple. I got towels and tried to stop it, and then I realized he had – passed away

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I see. What did you do then?

YOUNG WOMAN. I didn't know what to do. But I thought I'd better call the police. So I went to the telephone and called the police.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. What happened then.

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing. Nothing happened.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. The police came, didn't they?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes – they came.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE (*quickly*). And that is all you know concerning the death of your husband in the late hours of June 2nd or the early hours of June 3rd last, isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. All?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes sir.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE (*to* LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION). Take the witness.

FIRST REPORTER (*writing*). The accused woman told a straightforward story of –

SECOND REPORTER. The accused woman told a rambling, disconnected story of –

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You made no effort to cry out, Mrs. Jones, did you, when you saw those two big dark men standing over your helpless husband, did you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No sir. I didn't. I –

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. And when they turned and ran out of the room, you made no effort to follow them or cry out after them, did you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No sir.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why didn't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. I saw Mr. Jones was hurt.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Ah! You saw Mr. Jones was hurt! You saw this – how did you see it?

YOUNG WOMAN. I just saw it.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Then there was a light in the room?

YOUNG WOMAN. A sort of light.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. What do you mean – a sort of light? A bed light?

YOUNG WOMAN. No. No, there was no light on.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Then where did it come from – this sort of light?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Perhaps – from the window.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes – from the window.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Oh, the shade was up!

YOUNG WOMAN. No – no, the shade was down.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You're sure of that?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes. Mr. Jones always wanted the shade down.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. The shade was down – there was no light in the room – but the room was light – how do you explain this?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You don't know!

YOUNG WOMAN. I think where the window was open – under the shade – light came in

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. There is a street light there?

YOUNG WOMAN. No – there's no street light.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Then where did this light come from – that came in under the shade?

YOUNG WOMAN (*desperately*). From the moon!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. The moon!

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes! It was bright moon!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. It was bright moon – you are sure of that!

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. How are you sure?

YOUNG WOMAN. I couldn't sleep – I never can sleep in the bright moon. I never can.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. It was bright moon. Yet you could not see two big dark looking men – but you could see your husband bleeding from the temple.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes sir.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. And did you call a doctor?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why didn't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. The police did.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. But you didn't?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why didn't you? (*No answer.*) Why didn't you?

YOUNG WOMAN (*whispers*). I saw it was – useless.

✓LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Ah! You saw that! You saw that – very clearly.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. And you didn't call a doctor.

YOUNG WOMAN. It was – useless.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. What did you do?

YOUNG WOMAN. It was useless – there was no use of anything.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I asked you what you did?

YOUNG WOMAN. Nothing.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Nothing!

YOUNG WOMAN. I just sat there.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You sat there! A long while, didn't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You don't know? (*Showing her the neck of a broken bottle.*) Mrs. Jones, did you ever see this before?

YOUNG WOMAN. I think so.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You think so.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. What do you think it is?

YOUNG WOMAN. I think it's the bottle that was used against Mr. Jones.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Used against him – yes – that's right. You've guessed right. This neck and these broken pieces and these pebbles were found on the floor and scattered over the bed. There were no fingerprints, Mrs. Jones, on this bottle. None at all. Doesn't that seem strange to you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. It doesn't seem strange to you that this bottle held in the big dark hand of one of those big dark men left no mark! No print! That doesn't seem strange to you?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You are in the habit of wearing rubber gloves at night, Mrs. Jones – are you not? To protect – to soften your hands – are you not?

YOUNG WOMAN. I used to.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Used to – when was that?

YOUNG WOMAN. Before I was married.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. And after your marriage you gave it up?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why?

YOUNG WOMAN. Mr. Jones did not like the feeling of them.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You always did everything Mr. Jones wanted?

YOUNG WOMAN. I tried to – Anyway I didn't care any more – so much – about my hands.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I see – so after your marriage you never wore gloves at night any more?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Mrs. Jones, isn't it true that you began wearing your rubber gloves again - in spite of your husband's expressed dislike - about a year ago - a year ago this spring?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You did not suddenly begin to care particularly for your hands again - about a year ago this spring?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You're quite sure of that?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Quite sure?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Then you did not have in your possession, on the night of June 2nd last, a pair of rubber gloves?

YOUNG WOMAN (*shakes her head*). No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION (*to JUDGE*). I'd like to introduce these gloves as evidence at this time, your Honor.

JUDGE. Exhibit 24.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I'll return to them later - now, Mrs. Jones - this nightgown - you recognize it, don't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Yours, is it not?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. The one you were wearing the night your husband was murdered, isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN. The night he died - yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Not the one you wore under your peignoir - I believe that it's what you call it, isn't it? A peignoir? When you received the police - but the one you wore before that - isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. This was found - not where the gloves were found - no - but at the bottom of the soiled clothes hamper in the bathroom - rolled up and wet - why was it wet, Mrs. Jones?

YOUNG WOMAN. I had tried to wash it.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Wash it? I thought you had just sat?

YOUNG WOMAN. First - I tried to make things clean.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why did you want to make this - clean - as you say?

YOUNG WOMAN. There was blood on it.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Spattered on it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. How did that happen?

YOUNG WOMAN. The bottle broke - and the sharp edge cut.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Oh, the bottle broke and the sharp edge cut!

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes. That's what they told me afterwards.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Who told you?

YOUNG WOMAN. The police - that's what they say happened.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Mrs. Jones, why did you try so desperately to wash that blood away - before you called the police?

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I object!

JUDGE. Objection overruled.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why, Mrs. Jones?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know. It's what anyone would have done, wouldn't they?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. That depends, doesn't it? (*Suddenly taking up bottle.*) Mrs. Jones - when did you first see this?

YOUNG WOMAN. The night my husband was - done away with.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Done away with! You mean killed?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why don't you say killed?

YOUNG WOMAN. It sounds so brutal.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. And you never saw this before then?

YOUNG WOMAN. No sir.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You're quite sure of that?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. And these stones – when did you first see them?

YOUNG WOMAN. The night my husband was done away with.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Before that night your husband was murdered – you never saw them? Never before then?

YOUNG WOMAN. No sir.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You are quite sure of that!

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Mrs. Jones, do you remember about a year ago, a year ago this spring, bringing home to your house – a lily, a Chinese water lily?

YOUNG WOMAN. No – I don't think I do.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You don't think you remember bringing home a water lily growing in a bowl filled with small stones?

YOUNG WOMAN. No – No I don't.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I'll show you this bowl, Mrs. Jones. Does that refresh your memory?

YOUNG WOMAN. I remember the bowl – but I don't remember – the lily.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You recognize the bowl then?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. It is yours, isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN. It was in my house – yes.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. How did it come there?

YOUNG WOMAN. How did it come there?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Yes – where did you get it?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't remember.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You don't remember?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You don't remember about a year ago bringing this bowl into your bedroom filled with small stones and some water and a lily? You don't remember tending

very carefully that lily till it died? And when it died you don't remember hiding the bowl full of little stones away on the top shelf of your closet – and keeping it there until – you don't remember?

YOUNG WOMAN. No, I don't remember.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You may have done so?

YOUNG WOMAN. No – no – I didn't! I didn't! I don't know anything about all that.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. But you do remember the bowl?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes. It was in my house – you found it in my house.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. But you don't remember the lily or the stones?

YOUNG WOMAN. No – No I don't!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION *turns to look among his papers in a brief case.*

FIRST REPORTER (*writing*). Under the heavy artillery fire of the State's attorney's brilliant cross-questioning, the accused woman's defense was badly riddled. Pale and trembling she –

SECOND REPORTER (*writing*). Undaunted by the Prosecution's machine-gun attack, the defendant was able to maintain her position of innocence in the face of rapid-fire questioning that threatened, but never seriously menaced her defense. Flushed but calm she –

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION (*producing paper*). Your Honor, I'd like to introduce this paper in evidence at this time.

JUDGE. What is it?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. It is an affidavit taken in the State of Guanajato, Mexico.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Mexico? Your Honor, I protest. A Mexican affidavit! Is this the United States of America or isn't it?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. It's properly executed – sworn to before a notary – and certified to by an American Consul.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Your Honor! I protest! In the name of this great United States of America – I protest – are we to permit our sacred institutions to be thus –

JUDGE. What is the purpose of this document – who signed it?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. It is signed by one Richard Roe, and its purpose is to refresh the memory of the witness on the point at issue – and incidentally supply a motive for this murder – this brutal and cold-blooded murder of a sleeping man by –

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I protest, your Honor! I object!

JUDGE. Objection sustained. Let me see the document. (*Takes paper which is handed to him – looks at it.*) Perfectly regular. Do you offer this affidavit as evidence at this time for the purpose of refreshing the memory of the witness at this time?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Yes, your Honor.

JUDGE. You may introduce the evidence.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I object! I object to the introduction of this evidence at this time as irrelevant, immaterial, illegal, biased, prejudicial, and –

JUDGE. Objection overruled.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Exception.

JUDGE. Exception noted. Proceed.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. I wish to read the evidence to the jury at this time.

JUDGE. Proceed.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I object.

JUDGE. Objection overruled.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Exception.

JUDGE. Noted.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Why is this witness himself not brought into court – so he can be cross-questioned?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. The witness is a resident of the Republic of Mexico and as such not subject to subpoena as a witness to this court.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. If he was out of the jurisdiction of this court how did you get this affidavit out of him?

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. This affidavit was made voluntarily by the deponent in the furtherance of justice.

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I suppose you didn't threaten him with extradition on some other trumped-up charge so that –

JUDGE. Order!

BAILIFF. Order!

JUDGE. Proceed with the evidence.

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION (*reading*). In the matter of the State of ——— vs. Helen Jones, I Richard Roe, being of sound mind, do herein depose and state that I know the accused, Helen Jones, and have known her for a period of over one year immediately preceding the date of the signature on this affidavit. That I first met the said Helen Jones in a so-called speak-easy somewhere in the West 40s in New York City. That on the day I met her, she went with me to my room, also somewhere in the West 40s in New York City, where we had intimate relations –

YOUNG WOMAN (*moans*). Oh!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION (*continues reading*). – and where I gave her a blue bowl filled with pebbles, also containing a flowering lily. That from the first day we met until I departed for Mexico in the Fall, the said Helen Jones was an almost daily visitor to my room where we continued to –

YOUNG WOMAN. No! No! (*Moans.*)

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. What is it, Mrs. Jones – what is it?

YOUNG WOMAN. Don't read any more! No more!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. Why not!

YOUNG WOMAN. I did it! I did it! I did it!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION. You confess?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes – I did it!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. I object, your Honor.

JUDGE. You confess you killed your husband?

YOUNG WOMAN. I put him out of the way – yes.

JUDGE. Why?

YOUNG WOMAN. To be free.

JUDGE. To be free? Is that the only reason?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes.

JUDGE. If you just wanted to be free – why didn't you divorce him?

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh I couldn't do that!! I couldn't hurt him like that!

Burst of laughter from all in the court. The YOUNG WOMAN stares out at them, and then seems to go rigid.

76 MACHINAL

JUDGE. Silence!

BAILIFF. Silence!

There is a gradual silence.

JUDGE. Mrs. Jones, why –

YOUNG WOMAN *begins to moan – suddenly – as though the realization of the enormity of her isolation had just come upon her. It is a sound of desolation, of agony, of human woe. It continues until the end of the scene.*

Why – ?

YOUNG WOMAN *cannot speak.*

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE. Your Honor, I ask a recess to –

JUDGE. Court's adjourned.

SPECTATORS *begin to file out. The YOUNG WOMAN continues in the witness box, unseeing, unheeding.*

FIRST REPORTER. Murderess confesses.

SECOND REPORTER. Paramour brings confession.

THIRD REPORTER. I did it! Woman cries!

There is a great burst of speed from the telegraphic instruments. They keep up a constant accompaniment to the WOMAN's moans. The scene blacks out as the courtroom empties, and two policemen go to stand by the woman. The sound of the telegraph instruments continues until the scene lights into Episode Nine – and the prayers of the PRIEST.

EPISODE NINE

A Machlne

Scene: a prison room. The front bars face the audience. They are set back far enough to permit a clear passageway across the stage.

Sounds the voice of a NEGRO singing; the whir of an aeroplane flying.

Characters

YOUNG WOMAN
A PRIEST
A JAILER
TWO BARBERS
A MATRON
MOTHER
TWO GUARDS

At rise: in front of the bars, at one side, sits a MAN; at the opposite side, a WOMAN – the JAILER and the MATRON.

Inside the bars, a MAN and a WOMAN – the YOUNG WOMAN and a PRIEST. The YOUNG WOMAN sits still with folded hands. The PRIEST is praying.

PRIEST. Hear, oh Lord, my prayer; and let my cry come to Thee. Turn not away Thy face from me; in the day when I am in trouble, incline Thy ear to me. In what day soever I shall call upon Thee, hear me speedily. For my days are vanished like smoke; and my bones are grown dry, like fuel for the fire. I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered; because I forgot to eat my bread. Through the voice of my groaning, my bone hath cleaved to my flesh. I am become like to a pelican of the wilderness. I am like a night raven in the house. I have watched and become as a sparrow all alone on the housetop. All the day long my enemies reproach me; and they that praised me did swear against me. My days have declined like a shadow, and I am withered like grass. But Thou, oh Lord, end rest forever. Thou shalt arise and have mercy, for it is time to have mercy. The time is come.

Voice of NEGRO offstage - begins to sing a Negro spiritual.

PRIEST. The Lord hath looked upon the earth, that He might hear the groans of them that are in fetters, that He might release the children of -

Voice of NEGRO grown louder.

JAILER. Stop that nigger yelling.

YOUNG WOMAN. No, let him sing. He helps me.

MATRON. You can't hear the Father.

YOUNG WOMAN. He helps me.

PRIEST. Don't I help you, daughter?

YOUNG WOMAN. I understand him. He is condemned. I understand him.

The voice of the NEGRO goes on louder, drowning out the voice of the PRIEST.

PRIEST (*chanting in Latin*). Gratiam tuam, quaesumus, Domine, metibus nostris infunde, ut qui, angelo nuntiante, Christifilii tui incarnationem cognovimus, per passionem eius et crucem ad resurrectionis gloriam perducamus. Per eudem Christum Dominum nostrum.

Enter TWO BARBERS. There is a rattling of keys.

FIRST BARBER. How is she?

MATRON. Calm.

JAILER. Quiet.

YOUNG WOMAN (*rising*). I am ready.

FIRST BARBER. Then sit down.

YOUNG WOMAN (*in a steady voice*). Aren't you the death guard come to take me?

FIRST BARBER. No, we ain't the death guard. We're the barbers.

YOUNG WOMAN. The barbers.

MATRON. Your hair must be cut.

JAILER. Must be shaved.

BARBER. Just a patch.

The BARBERS draw near her.

YOUNG WOMAN. No!

PRIEST. Daughter, you're ready. You know you are ready.

YOUNG WOMAN (*crying out*). Not for this! Not for this!

MATRON. The rule.

JAILER. Regulations.

BARBER. Routine.

The BARBERS take her by the arms.

YOUNG WOMAN. No! No! Don't touch me - touch me!

They take her and put her down in the chair, cut a patch from her hair.

I will not be submitted - this indignity! No! I will not be submitted! - Leave me alone! Oh my God am I never to be let alone! Always to have to submit - to submit! No more - not now - I'm going to die - I won't submit! Not now!

BARBER (*finishing cutting a patch from her hair*). You'll submit, my lady. Right to the end, you'll submit! There, and a neat job too.

JAILER. Very neat.

MATRON. Very neat.

Exit BARBERS.

YOUNG WOMAN (*her calm shattered*). Father, Father! Why was I born?

PRIEST. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world - I leave the world and go into the Father.

YOUNG WOMAN (*weeping*). Submit! Submit! Is nothing mine? The hair on my head! The very hair on my head -

PRIEST. Praise God.

YOUNG WOMAN. Am I never to be let alone! Never to have peace! When I'm dead, won't I have peace?

PRIEST. Ye shall indeed drink of my cup.

YOUNG WOMAN. Won't I have peace tomorrow?

PRIEST. I shall raise Him up at the last day.

YOUNG WOMAN. Tomorrow! Father! Where shall I be tomorrow?

PRIEST. Behold the hour cometh. Yea, is now come. Ye shall be scattered every man to his own.

YOUNG WOMAN. In Hell! Father! Will I be in Hell!

PRIEST. I am the Resurrection and the Life.

YOUNG WOMAN. Life has been hell to me, Father!

PRIEST. Life has been hell to you, daughter, because you never knew God! Gloria in excelsis Deo.

YOUNG WOMAN. How could I know Him, Father? He never was around me.

PRIEST. You didn't seek Him, daughter. Seek and ye shall find.

YOUNG WOMAN. I sought something - I was always seeking something.

PRIEST. What? What were you seeking?

YOUNG WOMAN. Peace. Rest and peace. Will I find it tonight, Father? Will I find it?

PRIEST. Trust in God.

A shadow falls across the passage in the front of the stage - and there is a whirring sound.

YOUNG WOMAN. What is that? Father! Jailer! What is that?

JAILER. An aeroplane.

MATRON. Aeroplane.

PRIEST. God in his Heaven.

YOUNG WOMAN. Look, Father! A man flying! He has wings! But he is not an angel!

JAILER. Hear his engine.

MATRON. Hear the engine.

YOUNG WOMAN. He has wings - but he isn't free! I've been free, Father! For one moment - down here on earth - I have been free! When I did what I did I was free! Free and not afraid! How is that, Father? How can that be? A great sin - a mortal sin - for which I must die and go to hell - but it made me free! One moment I was free! How is that, Father? Tell me that?

PRIEST. Your sins are forgiven.

YOUNG WOMAN. And that other sin - that other sin - that sin of love - That's all I ever knew of Heaven - heaven on earth! How is that, Father? How can that be - a sin - a mortal sin - all I know of heaven?

PRIEST. Confess to Almighty God.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Father, pray for me - a prayer - that I can understand!

PRIEST. I will pray for you, daughter, the prayer of desire. Behind

the King of Heaven, behold Thy Redeemer and God, Who is even now coming; prepare thyself to receive Him with love, invite him with the ardor of thy desire; come, oh my Jesus, come to thy soul which desires Thee! Before Thou givest Thyself to me, I desire to give Thee my miserable heart. Do Thou accept it, and come quickly to take possession of it! Come my God, hasten! Delay no longer! My only and Infinite Good, my Treasure, my Life, my Paradise, my Love, thy all, my wish is to receive Thee with the love with which -

Enter the MOTHER. She comes along the passageway and stops before the bars.

YOUNG WOMAN (*recoiling*). Who's that woman?

JAILER. Your mother.

MATRON. Your mother.

YOUNG WOMAN. She's a stranger - take her away - she's a stranger.

JAILER. She's come to say goodbye to you -

MATRON. To say goodbye.

YOUNG WOMAN. But she's never known me - never known me - ever - (*To the MOTHER.*) Go away! You're a stranger! Stranger! Stranger! (*MOTHER turns and starts away. Reaching out her hands to her.*) Oh Mother! Mother! (*They embrace through the bars.*)

Enter TWO GUARDS.

PRIEST. Come, daughter.

FIRST GUARD. It's time.

SECOND GUARD. Time.

YOUNG WOMAN. Wait! Mother, my child; my little strange child! I never knew her! She'll never know me! Let her live, Mother. Let her live! Live! Tell her -

PRIEST. Come, daughter.

YOUNG WOMAN. Wait! Wait! Tell her -

The JAILER takes the MOTHER away.

GUARD. It's time.

YOUNG WOMAN. Wait! Wait! Tell her! Wait! Just a minute more! There's so much I want to tell her - Wait!

The JAILER takes the MOTHER off. The TWO GUARDS take the YOUNG WOMAN by the arms, and start through the door in the bars and down the passage, across stage and off:

the PRIEST follows; the MATRON follows the PRIEST; the PRIEST is praying. The scene blacks out. The voice of the PRIEST gets dimmer and dimmer.

PRIEST. Lord have mercy - Christ have mercy - Lord have mercy - Christ hear us! God the Father of Heaven! God the Son, Redeemer of the World, God the Holy Ghost - Holy Trinity one God - Holy Mary - Holy Mother of God - Holy Virgin of Virgins - St. Michael - St. Gabriel - St. Raphael -

His voice dies out. Out of the darkness come the voices of REPORTERS.

FIRST REPORTER. What time is it now?

SECOND REPORTER. Time now.

THIRD REPORTER. Hush.

FIRST REPORTER. Here they come.

THIRD REPORTER. Hush.

PRIEST *(his voice sounds dimly - gets louder - continues until the end)*. St. Peter pray for us - St. Paul pray for us - St. James pray for us - St. John pray for us - all ye holy Angels and Archangels - all ye blessed orders of holy spirits - St. Joseph - St. John the Baptist - St. Thomas -

FIRST REPORTER. Here they are!

SECOND REPORTER. How little she looks! She's gotten smaller.

THIRD REPORTER. Hush.

PRIEST. St. Phillip pray for us. All you Holy Patriarchs and prophets - St. Phillip - St. Matthew - St. Simon - St. Thaddeus - All ye holy apostles - all ye holy disciples - all ye holy innocents - Pray for us - Pray for us - Pray for us -

FIRST REPORTER. Suppose the machine shouldn't work!

SECOND REPORTER. It'll work! - It always works!

THIRD REPORTER. Hush!

PRIEST. Saints of God make intercession for us - Be merciful - Spare us, oh Lord - be merciful -

FIRST REPORTER. Her lips are moving - what is she saying?

SECOND REPORTER. Nothing.

THIRD REPORTER. Hush!

PRIEST. Oh Lord deliver us from all evil - from all sin - from Thy wrath - from the snares of the devil - from anger and hatred and every evil will - from -

42.25

FIRST REPORTER. Did you see that? She fixed her hair under the cap - pulled her hair out under the cap.

THIRD REPORTER. Hush!

PRIEST. - Beseech Thee - hear us - that Thou would'st spare us - that Thou would'st pardon us - Holy Mary - pray for us -

SECOND REPORTER. There -

YOUNG WOMAN *(calling out)*. Somebody! Somebody!

Her voice is cut off.

PRIEST. Christ have mercy - Lord have mercy - Christ have mercy -

Curtain

3/8/12

1311254

Seminario Multidisciplinario
José Emilio González

SMJEG

Facultad de Humanidades
UPR-RP