

Spa 13

DEVIL'S BRIG

A Play

by

Maurice Rowdon.

CHARACTERS.

Godfrey Johnson.

Margaret Johnson, his wife.

Jack Meadows.

Julia Meadows, his wife.

Ted Lowell.

'Mr Johnson', Godfrey's father.

Jock Murphy.

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SCENE: An office in the Barnley Ridge Electric works.
 GODFREY JOHNSON, alone, performing a dance.
 ENTER MARGARET JOHNSON.

MARGARET: What the hell are you doing?
 JOHNSON: Come in. Come in.
 MARGARET: Why are you out of breath?
 JOHNSON: Been dancing. Silly, isn't it? I remembered being with old Bull's Eye. It was just outside Bizerta. We rigged up a stage and did a sketch together.
 MARGARET: There's a letter from him this morning.
 JOHNSON: No! Now that's telepathy!
 MARGARET: You've got a man waiting.
 JOHNSON: Who?
 MARGARET: Jack Meadows.
 JOHNSON: Didn't I see him before?
 MARGARET: Once. About a month ago. He didn't have much to say.
 JOHNSON: So what brings him here again?
 MARGARET: He's decided to talk, I suppose.
 JOHNSON (reading from a book) 'Monotony, inducing state of revery.' Hear that?
 MARGARET: Godfrey.
 JOHNSON: All right. Read.
 MARGARET: 'Jack Meadows. Thirty-four. Technical department. Fifteen years in the plant.'
 JOHNSON: Fifteen? That's unusual for his age. He came when he was nineteen.
 MARGARET: He's married. No children.

JOHNSON: What's the Personnel Report like?

MARGARET: Good. And that's the fourth interview this morning.

JOHNSON: Anyone after that?

MARGARET: Jock Murphy.

JOHNSON: Been here before?

MARGARET: No.

JOHNSON: I wonder what old Bull's Eye's got to say!

MARGARET: Don't forget the name,---Jack Meadows.

Exit MARGARET.
JOHNSON opens door to JACK MEADOWS.

JOHNSON: Come in, Mr Meadows. Won't you sit down?

MEADOWS: Thank you, sir.

JOHNSON: You were here before, weren't you?

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: About a month ago?

MEADOWS: Yes.

JOHNSON: Well, how are things in the Technical department?

MEADOWS: I'm in a nice little group, sir. I wanted to come before, sir---

JOHNSON: Yes, you didn't want to say much last time.

MEADOWS: Well, I had an idea it was all going down on my Personnel Report.

JOHNSON: Oh, no! The two things are quite separate. Anything you say up here is quite confidential. You've been here since you were nineteen, haven't you?

MEADOWS: Yes, sir.

JOHNSON: That's unusual. You must know a lot about the firm.

MEADOWS: Yes, sir. There were five hundred hands when I came.

JOHNSON: Could you name all the different departments in the plant?

MEADOWS: Yes, sir. Now?

JOHNSON: Well, I only wanted to know if---

MEADOWS: Yes, of course, sir! Well, there are eight in all. Accounts, Operation, Production, Inspection, Technical, Speciality Products, Public Relations and Industrial Relations.

JOHNSON: Good!

MEADOWS: Ten out of ten, sir!

JOHNSON: Are you quite happy with the Technical people, Mr Meadows, or do you hope one day to...?

MEADOWS: Well, I really aspire to Speciality Products, sir. You work right under the scientists there. You've got experiments going on all the time. Is all this going down on the tape?

JOHNSON: What?

MEADOWS: Haven't you got a tape-recorder there?

JOHNSON: Yes.

MEADOWS: They say you keep it on all the time, sir, then play it over afterwards.

JOHNSON: That's not true at all, Mr Meadows! Come and see for yourself.

MEADOWS: It's a nice set, isn't it?

JOHNSON: Clear as a bell!

MEADOWS: One of ours, sir?

JOHNSON: I don't think so.

MEADOWS: We put out so many models these days you can never tell, can you? Nice job, though.

JOHNSON: My goodness, Mr Meadows, fancy anybody using one of these for interviews! But a bunch of people did, you know, in a steel-works near York. Then they wondered afterwards why people were reticent!

MEADOWS: That's right, sir. It's like the Personnel Report---if a man thinks what he says is going down on the Personnel Report he's not going to say much.

JOHNSON: Well, you needn't be afraid about that, Mr Meadows, as I said before. There are two ideas behind our scheme: first, the happiness of the people working on this plant, and secondly output. You've no idea how long it has taken industry to realise that the two go together! Yet it isn't a very profound idea, is it?

MEADOWS:
~~JOHNSON:~~ Are you interviewing everybody, sir?

JOHNSON: In time I hope to, yes.

MEADOWS: Do you deal with complaints?

JOHNSON: We listen to everything a man likes to tell us. But we don't deal with the complaint. Our job is to prepare a permanent interviewing scheme for this plant, so that when we've finished everybody here knows he can get a confidential interview whenever he wants it. And that's part of my job, too, to prepare a body of trusty interviewers from the Public Relations department. You look a bit puzzled. Would you like me to explain the whole scheme, Mr Meadows?

MEADOWS: Yes, sir, I would.

JOHNSON: I expect you are wondering what happens to the complaints. They are still in the hands of the Personnel Department. You see, Mr Meadows, our idea is to find out what's on a man's mind. You've got to realise, you see, that when a man makes a persistent complaint about ventilation, in one of the wiring rooms, let us say, it may not really be about ventilation at all but the expression of a grudge he feels against another worker whose bench is by the window and who likes to keep the window closed all day. The complaint is a pretext for something much deeper. Now all the Personnel department can do is to deal with the official complaint. It alters the ventilation. But we can tell the Personnel department that this is quite useless. The man will only find something else to complain about, and again it will involve the other worker.

MEADOWS: Oh, I see now, sir---

JOHNSON: Before the last war, when these interviewing schemes began, people only thought in terms of working conditions---ventilation, rest-pauses, sanitation, wage-incentives and so forth. But changes in that field didn't raise the output as much as they expected. Their mistake was to listen to the complaints and not to the people who were making them. After all, it's no good giving a man good piece-rates, a well-ventilated room, meals with the correct number of calories, long rest-pauses and decent wash-rooms if you then put him on the same bench as a man he detests, is it? It sounds very simple, to say that a man is much more than a wage-unit to be properly fed and ventilated, but it has taken us nearly two hundred years of industrial development to find out!

MEADOWS: Well, you've certainly given me a lot to think about.

JOHNSON: Sometimes one of our interviews---in a few minutes of quiet discussion---can bring out a grievance which has preyed on a man's mind for twenty years. And just because he never had a chance of airing it that grievance may have become obsessive and started to warp his whole character. Now what we're introducing here, Mr Meadows, is a permanent interviewing scheme conducted by the Public Relations department, that will end this state of affairs. How absurd it is, when you come to look at it, to bring about two thousand people into daily contact with each other ~~xxxx~~ and expect no problem. Yet there are plants up and down the country which won't hear a word said in our favour.

MEADOWS: That's right, sir. You get these people with backward minds, don't you?

JOHNSON: Backward in their own interests, too.

MEADOWS: It's a scheme for everybody, isn't it? Not just for the people on top. I think any scheme's good that doesn't go up to the Personnel people. I used to be on assembly work. Shortly after that I got a nasty report. Thirteen years ago. I was twenty-one at the time. I used to do a lot of gallivanting around. I don't think these

Personnel people liked it.

JOHNSON: You were too much of a spark for them?

MEADOWS: Yes, that's right! Yet you'd think a spark in an electric plant would be useful, wouldn't you? They gave us a test once, when I was just turned twenty. It was called the Finger Dexterity Test. You got about fifty tiny little pegs about an eighth of an inch thick and you had to fit them into holes just a bit bigger. It took some doing, Mr Johnson.

JOHNSON: Were you good at that?

MEADOWS: No. There didn't seem to be any brains in it. I like to use my brains. That was under your father. You own the plant now sir, don't you?

JOHNSON: Well, I'm chairman of the board. That's not exactly ownership, you know. There isn't much ownership nowadays. It's all shares and boards and shareholders' meetings and that sort of thing.

MEADOWS: Do you explain the scheme to everybody, sir?

JOHNSON: I try to.

MEADOWS: I bet some of them get out of their depth, don't they, sir? Some of the soldermen! I was on solder-work for a bit, too. You wear goggles all the time. The other people think they can push you about. Yes, there aren't many trades in this plant I'm not familiar with. Now the assembly room, that's fiddly work. I used to turn out fifty-five telephone-relays in a day. I think it's better work for the girls. None of those parts are bigger than your finger-nail. Do you read poetry, sir? I see you've got a lot of books up there.

JOHNSON: Now and then I do, yes. I like singing.

MEADOWS: This hasn't anything to do with the works, sir---

JOHNSON: No, tell me. Please do.

MEADOWS: I've bought a poem along.

JOHNSON: You write poetry?

MEADOWS: Yes, quite a bit, sir.

JOHNSON: Most interesting!

MEADOWS: One or two of the boys do. Only in the Technical department. It was partly me hearing you'd got a tape recorder---

JOHNSON: Oh, yes!

MEADOWS: I expect you think I'm mad.

JOHNSON: I think writing poetry is very sane, Mr Meadows.

MEADOWS: No, what I mean is, would you mind if I recited this into your tape-machine?

JOHNSON: Well, I suppose not. Not at all!

MEADOWS: You know why, don't you?

JOHNSON: No?

MEADOWS: Well, it's no good me going down the assembly room where all the recording stuff is. They'd pull my leg. It wouldn't do for a Technical man. I've never heard my lines being spoken, you see.

JOHNSON: Well, of course. (Handing him the microphone) Got the poem here?

MEADOWS: In my head. It's called 'A Prayer'.

JOHNSON: A prayer? All right, shoot.

MEADOWS: Give us this day
Our heart
O Lord, give us our part
To play;
Undo our settled clause
Of pain,
But keep the cause
For which we came,
Give us this day
Our daily heart.

JOHNSON (winding the tape back) Give us this day our daily heart! Most interesting!

MEADOWS: It just came out like that---like a prayer.

JOHNSON: I like 'the settled clause of pain.' What do you mean by that?

MEADOWS: Well, I mean how everything's closed in. The day starts early in the morning and ends at night, and there doesn't seem any escape. Always the same. It's like a finished clause, with a full stop.

JOHNSON: And did you intend a play on the word 'claws'---of a bird?

MEADOWS: No. Wish I did now. Cunning, isn't it---'clause' and 'claws'?

JOHNSON: And why the pain?

MEADOWS: What?

JOHNSON: Why the pain?

MEADOWS: I don't know.

JOHNSON: But that's remarkable---a remarkable poem---

MEADOWS: 'Undo' there means turn the clause with a full stop into a sentence which never finishes.

JOHNSON: Yes. Most interesting! Shall we play it back?

MEADOWS: I'll go all of a tis-was, like my wife says! All right, pull the plug, Mon-sewer!

Poem is repeated on tape.

MEADOWS: Marvellous, isn't it, hearing your own voice? Like talking to yourself from heaven. Uncanny, too. Not right, really. Shall I tell you what was on my mind when I wrote it?

9

JOHNSON: Yes.

MEADOWS: I was thinking of the assembly room.

JOHNSON: All those years ago?

MEADOWS: That's just what I was going to say. The parts they gave you were no bigger than your fingernail. You put them together. Then you slid them down a chute. Fifty-five times a day. I got boils on my arse on that job! Talk about laugh! They changed me over to the Fest Room and the boils went just like that! I said to the nurse, I said, now what's the hell's the use of you putting that yellow stuff on, its psychological! Talk about laugh! We had some laughs in those days!

JOHNSON: Don't you laugh any more?

MEADOWS: Not like mum and dad. Dad's name was Walter. She used to call him Water Closet. That sort of thing, you know---anything for a lark.

JOHNSON: You said something in this poem about playing a part? Don't you feel you play a part here?

MEADOWS: I don't know!

JOHNSON: How is it you haven't got into Speciality Products? I've been wondering that ever since you came in the room.

MEADOWS: Ah, well!

JOHNSON: How did this Personnel Report come into being?

MEADOWS: They can see I'm the same as them, that's what they don't like---!

JOHNSON: Who?

MEADOWS: Up at Personnel. They're College men. I was mapped out for a college, too, and they don't like it!

JOHNSON: Why didn't you go to a college?

MEADOWS: I got married.

JOHNSON: When?

MEADOWS: When I was twenty.

JOHNSON: A man goes to college at seventeen or eighteen.

MEADOWS: Oh, well! I wanted the money in my pocket, I suppose.

JOHNSON: What did you mean in this poem by 'keep the cause for which we came'? You want God to take the pain away but keep something---what's the something?

MEADOWS: Well, there must be some meaning to things, mustn't there? Originally, there must have been. Two hundred years ago, say. There must be a little spark somewhere. We've gone astray somewhere.

JOHNSON: Who?

MEADOWS: People like me.

JOHNSON: But not people like me?

MEADOWS: Well, you seem to know what you're doing. I bet you took over your father's plant because you wanted to.

JOHNSON: I did, yes. You mean you want freedom, then.

MEADOWS: What the hell am I doing down there? You could just as well get a puppet and work it with electrical shocks. Finger-work. Like this. I did that for nearly twenty years.

JOHNSON: Do you think it would have been if you'd been to a college?

MEADOWS: Yes! They have it better all right---

JOHNSON: Who?

MEADOWS: In the Personnel office! Stuck-up, bloody talleyman's ink-bottles!

JOHNSON: I'm a college man.

MEADOWS: And look at the difference. Look at you sitting back in your chair, choosing, choosing, choosing--! And I'm all stiff---look at me here, sitting on the edge of my chair, waiting to be asked questions---always waiting---always waiting to know what's going to happen to my life!

JOHNSON: Well, don't wait any more. Change your life.

MEADOWS: Do you think I could? Once in, you're in for good, Mr Johnson! That's a decision you take when you're fifteen.

JOHNSON: You think you'd be happier in Speciality Products?

MEADOWS: Oh, Speciality Products! I'm a bloody product!

JOHNSON: And I'm not?

MEADOWS: No! It's choice, choice, choice!---'What shall I be, what shall I do?' Suppose I said, 'All right, I'll change my life,' can't you see I'm a worker down to the tips of my fingers, look at the way I walk, it's the way I eat, I've got a special sort of jerk, I'm a different sort of person, Mr Johnson, that's all there is to say! Look at you, sitting there, you've got the personality---I don't know, it's something---you're comfortable---you sit well in your own body---do you see what I mean?

JOHNSON: You mustn't get worked up, Meadows.

MEADOWS: That's right, call me 'Meadows'. I'd like to cry sometimes. Five minutes ago it was Mr. Meadows. I just open my mouth and you take off the Mister. Suppose I called you 'Johnson'.

JOHNSON: Do.

MEADOWS: Oh, yes, there's no class any more, we're all equal! But I'm still a product. My mother and father didn't use to be like this. My mum

started out at half a dollar a week, twelve hours a day nearly at the match-factory, when she was just turned eleven---and you ought to see the way she laughs!

JOHNSON: You mean she laughs more than you?

MEADOWS: I'd say!

JOHNSON: Do you want to go back, then?

MEADOWS: Oh, yes, I know that one, too---

JOHNSON: The dole in those days, I mean just before the last war, was twenty-seven bob a week.

MEADOWS: Oh, you're right. You've got the facts and figures. It's no good. I could cry for people sometimes.

JOHNSON: I think your mum and dad needed crying for.

MEADOWS: You shouldn't call them mum and dad. Don't you think you have to patronise me. When you say that it feels as if you're trying to squeeze yourself down to half your size---to be level with me---

JOHNSON: I didn't meant that.

MEADOWS: It's funny. You sit there and I'm sure you expect everybody who comes here to be shyer than you. You expect to bring them out---with a few questions, don't you? Why should that be?

JOHNSON: If I went to them in a similar capacity I'd be shy, too.

MEADOWS: No, you wouldn't. This is how you'd do it. 'Good morning! How d'you do, sir? My name's Johnson!'

JOHNSON: You're a damn fine mimic!

MEADOWS: Take those words 'damn fine'. There's a sort of abandon about them, isn't there, Mr Johnson? But if you'd been brought up like me there'd always be a little fellow shivering inside you, saying, 'Yes, that's right, sir, that's right!' I reckon I've said 'That's right' a million times since I was a kid! Because that's what what you're taught---it's the other man who calls the tune! Take some of these college men who come up from nothing. Just you imagine, they've always got this shivering little chap inside them, and if they hold up their heads and stand on their own two feet without wobbling, I suppose that's marvellous enough, I couldn't do it! Yes, I often wonder what they feel like when they stand in the classy drawing-rooms---I bet people smell them out---

JOHNSON: Are there classy drawing rooms any more?

MEADOWS: No.

JOHNSON: Then the college man's O.K.!

MEADOWS: There are still classy people. Like you. You can't help walking across this room as if you owned it, and I can't help walking across

it---

JOHNSON: ---As if it owned you.

MEADOWS: Yes. It doesn't matter if the drawing rooms there or not, the people haven't changed.

JOHNSON: But that's what higher wages and health-insurance are for, my dear chap---that's why I'm here---to make you feel as if this room was yours---to make you feel like me.

MEADOWS: It won't happen like that. There's nobody under me. There's nobody shows me any respect. Nothing like the respect you got. I'll tell you the way things are going. We're all going to feel like me. Not the other way round. Your children are going to feel like me. I've thought a lot about this. I don't feel I've got a right to have a self. Sometimes I can hardly get the word 'I' out of my mouth. I want to cover it up all the time.

JOHNSON: And my self's been cultivated?

MEADOWS: That's right! You had a nurse, didn't you?

JOHNSON: A governess, yes.

MEADOWS: That was the idea, to cultivate you! To make you a pleasing shape, Mr Johnson! The idea was to make you a gentleman---

JOHNSON: My dear chap, you're out of date---!

MEADOWS: But you are a gentleman! I don't mean you feel superior to me or anybody else. A gentleman doesn't! I don't mean you're richer than me or even better educated. I mean the way your hands are laying there, like I said--- that little smile you gave me when I came in--- it's the feeling of comfort all round you--- you've been given time to grow, Mr Johnson, you've grown to full height! But I'm damned if I have.

JOHNSON: That's your test now, isn't it? As to whether you can cultivate a self as well---with equal chances, I mean?

MEADOWS: They aren't equal chances, Mr Johnson. I haven't got the time for one thing. You need time to cultivate a self in.

JOHNSON: So your only hope is a win on the football pools?

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: And become a member of the class that sweated your mother and father twelve hours a day!

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: Except that the class is now under control socially and can't sweat people any more. They can haven't got uninterrupted time either, now, have they?

MEADOWS: No.

JOHNSON: Well, I don't find you very realistic.

- MEADOWS: Look at it this way. If you sat down and talked to me you'd be talking about a real self. You're an individual---
- JOHNSON: 'Bourgeois' would suit you better, wouldn't it? A man of free choice?
- MEADOWS: That's right. 'Borjoy'. It sounds right, too. 'Bore-joy', like boring into life. Kill-joy, sort of thing. Takes all the joy out of life, that's what the so-called individuals have done.
- JOHNSON: Very well, then, when I, the bourgeois, talk, it's about a real self, but when you---
- MEADOWS: When I talk it's about a social problem. See what I mean? Like now. I'm not myself. I'm a hand down in the Technical department. And your class stopped me having a self in the first place. It put my life on a schedule. And it's up to the same game now. See what I mean? You're kind now. You don't sweat me any more like you did my mother and father. You don't look down your nose at me. But I'm still a 'hand'. Well-paid, nicely ventilated. But a hand. With problems. And you're here to settle the problems. It's the same world, Mr Johnson. You remember what I said---
Give us ~~saxxxkxxt~~ this day
Our heart
O Lord, give us our part
To play.
You've got your part to play, Mr Johnson. I haven't. When I die I shall have a flat life like an operating table to look backon! We're bodies without faces, Mr Johnson.
- JOHNSON: Who's we?
- MEADOWS: The workers.
- JOHNSON: That isn't true. I can tell you the people who come in this room have deeper faces than any I've seen in my own class. The fact that they hold their faces still doesn't make any difference. Also I don't think of you as a social problem at all, Mr Meadows. I listen to every man, or try to, as if he was the first man I'd ever listened to.
- MEADOWS: Do you know, the only time I really enjoy myself is down at the camp every summer. We go there every year, the wife and me. It's called the Sea Bells Holiday camp. It's funny, they clock you in and clock you out like a factory, you can't call your soul your own, but talk about laugh! You don't stop laughing from the time you get there! My wife's a scream. She's got a real gift for burlesque.
- JOHNSON: Likeyou, if I may say so.
- MEADOWS: Have you seen our turn? At Christmas?
- JOHNSON: No.
- MEADOWS: Do it every year. Boys love it. I married her fourteen years ago. She's a magnificent woman, Mr Johnson. She's a favourite at Sea

Bells. Her name's always coming over the loudspeakers. 'Mrs Meadows, come and give us a hand, will you? There's a kiddy says he's lost!' It's a wonder they never gave her a job down there, she'd be marvellous. There's always somebody to have a laugh with. It's like going back to old times. That's what my street was like before I was born. Easy-come, easy-go, sort of thing.

JOHNSON: And it changed?

MEADOWS: People didn't change inside. That takes time. But all the old-time things stopped. You don't see the muffin man any more with a tray on his head and a big bell, and that piece of green felt over the muffins, do you, on Sunday afternoons? You can't get peas-pudding and faggots. I can remember those carts with cockles and winkles. I can remember my uncle Harry coming over in a black suit and a bowler hat on Sunday afternoons and picking the winkles out with a pin. Nasty habits he had. Gobbled his tea. I'll never forget that noise. And Aunt Ada with those boots that used to button up the ankle. And Guy Fawkes night! Do you remember the old Crystal Palace at Sydenham?

JOHNSON: Yes. Don't they still have Guy Fawkes night?

MEADOWS: Yes, but it's not the same.

JOHNSON: Aren't bon-fires and fireworks good enough for you?

MEADOWS: I know. I can't put my finger on it. The fires don't have that glow like the old ones. Faces have changed.

JOHNSON: You mean you're not young any more.

MEADOWS: No. Oh, no. That whole race has gone, like my aunt Ada, I can tell you. I tell you what, Mr Johnson, borjoy people smell at you. They sniff round you like dogs. Have you ever noticed that? They've always got something going on in their brains---'Who is he?', 'What sort is he?' And the people round here are getting like that. I'm a bit like that myself. It's the money, I suppose. We're all getting like the gentlemen, but without the fun and without the neck! You can't have twenty million gentlemen, Mr Johnson!

JOHNSON: God forbid!

MEADOWS: You ought to have seen my aunt Ada and uncle Harry come in the room. Uncle Harry never smiled. Ever such a tall man. Not if there wasn't something funny. But we sort of orange. Do you see what I mean? We smile all the time. People want to be getting on with each other all the time, whereas in the old days they didn't worry. People don't sit inside themselves like they used to, they're peeping outside all the time!

JOHNSON: But down at the camp they're different?

MEADOWS: That's right. They slip back to their old

selves down at Maughley Bay.

- JOHNSON: Did you say Maughley Bay? That's twenty miles from where I live! Used to paddle in the sea there when I was a kid!
- MEADOWS: Go on?
- JOHNSON: Devil's Brig. Heard talk of it?
- MEADOWS: Devil's what?
- JOHNSON: Devil's Brig. Sounds grim, doesn't it? Lovely old house, though. It's been called that for a couple of hundred years. Supposed to look like a ship in the distance.
- MEADOWS: And you know every nook and cranny, I bet?
- JOHNSON: Oh, yes!
- MEADOWS: Well, fancy that! Twenty miles from old Maughley Bay. My wife'll scream! Has it got lovely big grounds and a lake and all that?
- JOHNSON: I suppose you'd call it a lake, yes.
- MEADOWS: Your father doesn't come to the works any more, does he, sir?
- JOHNSON: No, he stays down at Devil's Brig most of the time. He's past it, you know. He put in a good many years here.
- MEADOWS: Yes. He was a good man, they say.
- JOHNSON: Do they say that?
- MEADOWS: Oh, yes! Mind you, he could drive a man hard. He could be rough, couldn't he?
- JOHNSON: Oh, yes!
- Enter MARGARET.
- MARGARET: Mr Murphy's waiting.
- JOHNSON: I see. By the way, do you know Mr Meadows? My wife.
- MEADOWS: Good morning, Mrs Johnson. We've just been talking about old Maughley Bay.
- MARGARET: Old who?
- JOHNSON: Devil's Reach.
- MARGARET: Oh!
- MEADOWS: Well, Mr Johnson, I've taken up a lot of your time gassing.
- JOHNSON: Not at all. I want to see more of you, Mr Meadows. More of your poems, too. And meanwhile we'll get to the bottom of that Personnel report.
- MEADOWS: Thank you, sir. Good morning. I expect those Personnel boys are all right when you get to know

them!

JOHNSON: That's right!

Exit MEADOWS.

MARGARET: Did you say poems?

JOHNSON: Yes. Extraordinary, isn't it? Read a poem, and told me not to call him Meadows! Did you like the look of him?

MARGARET: No.

JOHNSON: That makes him interesting. Extraordinary chap! Imitated relay-work with his fingers--- you ought to have seen him---like a pantomime!

MARGARET: I like the way you think he's mad! I wonder what they think of you, doing all this?

JOHNSON: 'They'. It's always 'they' with you, isn't it? That's just what he said. For your class, he said, we're a social problem, not individuals.

MARGARET: They're a problem in your head---in your imagination---that's all.

JOHNSON: I think I'm asking too many leading questions, Margaret. Must learn not to lecture. (Dictating) Meadows. Technical department. He doesn't like what he calls the college men in the Personnel section. He's got ~~mr~~ their brains, and he feels they look down on him.

MARGARET: They probably do!

JOHNSON: It's a lot of bunkum! There isn't a college man among them! That's what I say, you've no instinct for these people. (Dictating) Aspires to Speciality Products. I'll try and fix him up.

MARGARET: Well?

JOHNSON: I wouldn't mind being out there with Bull's Eye. Sun beating down. Life for a man, eh?

MARGARET: Is that all?

JOHNSON: It's funny, Margaret, they're calling me 'sir' more than they used to.

MARGARET: They look up to you, that's why. Do you hold that against them?

JOHNSON: He said he could see my class in the way I eat--- what do you think of that?

MARGARET: We've all got characteristics. I could see his class in him, too. It's what you might the imprisonment of birth. For instance, I'm a county girl with a 'hard moral core'---

JOHNSON: Oh, for Christ's sake, not now! Keep that bloody jangle for Devil's Brig! (Opens letter) 'Dear God'---'God'! always tickles me!---'Dear God, Well, it's been a long time since I dropped you a line and I'd better get down to describing

the sort of life we're having out here. So here goes, in the company of John Walker, Esquire, sitting on the table before me. I've been up to my eyes in work and this is the first clear week I've had since Christmas. Gill has her hands full with the children and the servants, who come and go at the most alarming rate. You'll be glad to hear the farm's paying its way at last. We turned over even last month, and by the summer of next year we should be turning over a modest profit. I watch the old red sun going down every evening, and there's nothing better. After dinner we close the french windows and get down to the accounts. Gill and the children are as brown as berries. Wonderfully quiet at night, except for the jackals and the occasional roar of a man-eating lion. Heard a lioness quite close to the house the other night, and there was a scare at the local village. When you get tired of sitting at a desk trying to promote production-rates, why don't you pay us a visit? Or, better still, come and live here. By the way---'. Hey, look at the time! Who's next?

- MARGARET: Jock Murphy. Bull's Eye's the same as you, really. He couldn't make a good life here, so he ran away.
- JOHNSON: Jock Murphy?
- MARGARET: Solder-man. Production department.
- JOHNSON: Has he been up before?
- MARGARET: No. Fifty-one years old. Three children. Been here since 1918.
- JOHNSON: One of dad's original customers! All right!
- Exit MARGARET.
JOHNSON opens door to JOCK MURPHY.
- JOHNSON: Come in, Mr Murphy. Just said to my wife, 'One of my dad's original customers'. Been with us since 1918, that right?
- MURPHY: That's right, sir!
- JOHNSON: Sit down, won't you? Now then. You're in Production, aren't you?
- MURPHY: No, sir. I'm on the main door. Telephones.
- JOHNSON: Telephones? What the devil's this, then? Says here 'Production', plain as your finger. Solder-man.
- MURPHY: That was twelve or fourteen years ago.
- JOHNSON: Good God! We're not that out of date, I hope! Anyway, I'll see to the file later. Well, Mr Murphy, how are things downstairs?
- MURPHY: All right, sir. Mustn't grumble.
- JOHNSON: I expect you've heard about my pet little scheme, haven't you? I want to know what's on people's minds. You never know, a man might have something on his mind, and a word here or

there might clear it up.

MURPHY: That's right, sir.

JOHNSON: And what about your mind, Mr Murphy? Anything on it?

MURPHY: Not that I can say, sir.

JOHNSON: Well, you know where to come if anything crops up. I treat this first interview as an introduction. Just a hand-shake.

MURPHY: That's right, sir. How's the old Mr Johnson, is he keeping all right?

JOHNSON: Fine! He's beyond it now, as I expect you realise. He's past eighty, you know.

MURPHY: I can remember him when I was a boy, sir. He used to fly round.

JOHNSON: He'd still like to, if he could! We have to keep an eye on him!

MURPHY: You've taken over now, have you, sir?

JOHNSON: That's right.

MURPHY: I can hear the old Mr Johnson in your voice, sir.

JOHNSON: You can? Well, like father, like son, as they say!

MURPHY: That's right, sir!

JOHNSON: So there's nothing on your mind at all? No problem? No little worry?

MURPHY: No, sir. Not that I can say.

JOHNSON: Well, you know where to come if there is. And I'll get this file straight.

MURPHY: Right you are, sir. Well, regards to the old Mr Johnson.

JOHNSON: He'll remember you for sure! One of the Old Contemptibles!

MURPHY: That's right! Well, good-morning, sir!

JOHNSON: Good morning!

Exit MURPHY.

JOHNSON rings for MARGARET, and she enters.

JOHNSON: What the hell's this? Says he isn't a solderman at all. He's on the main door, telephones.

MARGARET: What?

JOHNSON: He isn't in Production at all.

MARGARET: That's funny. (Looking at files) He's on Production's pay-roll, either. It says, 'See Personal File.'

JOHNSON: Personnel?

19

MARGARET: No, personal.

JOHNSON: What, the old man's file?

MARGARET: I suppose so.

JOHNSON: Look it up.

MARGARET: Murphy. 'I spoke to Murphy and he was willing not to register the accident if I could assure him a position here for the rest of his working days, and a pension. I put him on the tele-phones at the main door.' Signed by your father.

JOHNSON: Good Lord! What accident?

MARGARET: That's all it says.

JOHNSON: When did it happen?

MARGARET: Fourteen years ago.

JOHNSON: He was always so punctilious about these things. Anyway, make a note of it.

MARGARET: It might have been something small.

JOHNSON: Then I can't understand why there was any question of registration. All right, that's another morning!

MARGARET: I'm getting to hate them more and more.

JOHNSON: Well, you could always take a horse out and ride over the faces of the poor for a bit of amusement!

MARGARET: Oh, dear, here comes the lunch-time humour!

JOHNSON: I tell you what, you interview the women while I do the men! We'd have the men in hacking jackets in a week---the Barnely Ridge Electric Hunt! It's no good, Margaret, your brain sits on top of your body like a weasel on a plum pudding. Give yourself up to the life of the hips and be damned!

MARGARET: I wish I could!

JOHNSON: You could always go back home and have Ted Lowell to tea and do a bit of wild duck-shooting in the hours of the pearly dew, and drive round the estate on Saturday mornings, and have a bit of slap-and-tickle in the library after dinner! You don't shout like you used to. What's gone wrong? You and Ted Lowell used to stand on opposite sides of the boom and bellow at each other---'Hard going yesterday, I heard!' 'REALLY?' 'Amy's filly likes it soft!' What was all that hard and soft business, Margaret, a sort of erotic morse-code?

MARGARET: You're more like the old man than you think.

JOHNSON: It's you who likes him, not me! Anyway, keep him out of it.

MARGARET: That's how he killed your mother.

JOHNSON: Now, shut up! Anyway, what's that got to do with it?

MARGARET: I mean you can't arrange the world by sheer force of will.

JOHNSON: Who tries to?

MARGARET: You do.

JOHNSON: Do I? Just you listen to this. He plays over Meadows's poem again.

MARGARET: Who's that?

JOHNSON: That fellow Meadows. He calls it a prayer. You see, he comes to me. They come to me with their troubles. That's not forcing my will. Not like the old man.

MARGARET: It might be our prayer, too.

C U R T A I N .

2.

SCENE: A bungalow at Sea Bells Holiday Camp. A month later.

ANNOUNCER:

Your attention, please, folks, attention, please! First of all, don't forget that tonight's Saturday night and Saturday night is Carnival night. Tickets as usual at Bay No. 3. By the way, some people are slipping up with their number-bagges. You'd be surprised how many turn up in the sand every day! Please wear your badges at all times. For the benefit of newcomers may I repeat that your number badge will secure free entrance to the cinema, pierrot theatre, dining halls, beach cabins and ballroom. Tickets for all outings, at all times, Bay No. 3. We always go to Bay No.3 for tickets, folks. You lucky people! I wish I could be down at the beach on a day like this! And the soothsayers say it's going to hold, too! Well, folks, we had two new arrivals last night. They crept in after supper and, believe it or not, they were the annual life of the party, Mrs Meadows, with her husband, the bard of Barnley Ridge Electric works. To all those who aren't acquainted with this famous pair who've been coming here for the last five years and have put their heart and soul into Sea Bells vaudeville--- by the way, it's on tomorrow night, so let's try and get a full theatre---I repeat, to all those who don't know them, my advice is ask your nearest neighbour, and if he doesn't know ask his nearest neighbour; somebody's sure to know! Sea Bells welcomes you all, newcomers and old-timers alike. You're going to have what our friends across the Atlantic call a whale of a time---yes, sirree! On today's menu there's roast pork, baked potatoes, a choice of cabbage or Brussel sprouts, and apple sauce; and for afters there's prunes and custard. Thank you, folks.

Enter JACK and JULIA MEADOWS.

JULIA: Hear what he said?
 MEADOWS: Is that the cheeky one?
 JULIA: Yes. He's keen on me. Ever noticed?
 MEADOWS: Everybody's keen on you!

JULIA: No, but honestly. Do you know what he said to me last night when we got in?

MEADOWS: No.

JULIA: When you were signing up in the office. He said, what about us going on the Dreamboat together tomorrow night, Mrs Meadows? Did you ever hear such sauce? Do you know what I said?

MEADOWS: No.

JULIA: I said, I would if you could leave your mouth behind. You ought to have seen his face! It's that moustache! Like a piece of cat-fur!

MEADOWS: You really tell them, don't you?

JULIA: Mind my coiffeur!

MEADOWS: Your what?

JULIA: My fur!

TOGETHER: 'There's nothing like love at first sight---if it's close---oo!---and at night!'

ANNOUNCER: Attention, please. Don't forget, folks, there are the usual races for kiddies at the cricket ground after lunch. At three-thirty we've got the egg-race, at three-forty-five the three-legged, at four the high jump for under fifteens.

JULIA: That's what I'd like to give you---the high jump!

MEADOWS: He gets on your nerves, does he?

JULIA: Well---

MEADOWS: Go on, you find him attractive.

JULIA: Well---

MEADOWS: Say so!

JULIA: I say so!

TOGETHER: 'If you can love an old baboon like me, it must be---yes, it must be---because we're HAPPY AT THE SEA!'

MEADOWS: You do, don't you?

JULIA: Well, yes, a bit. He's got such sauce, if you see what I mean.

MEADOWS: And you don't get much of that at Barnley Ridge Electric, do you?

JULIA: I'd say not!

MEADOWS: You get brick walls, a quadrangle like a military square, and ghosts. Mostly ghosts. That's what we all look like to you, isn't it?

JULIA: To me?

MEADOWS: To you women.

JULIA: How do you mean?

MEADOWS: They never give you the glad eye and that sort of thing over at Barnley Ridge, do they? They shoot quick glances: face-bosom-legs; up again, legs-bosom-face; switch off; pass along the conveyor-belt; cup o' tea's coming up; dirty piece of relay-wire there, report to shop steward. But you women are different. You're soft. Look at those arms. And feel what a lot of cheek there is to pinch. Why, you're lovely, you're gorgeous, you're extravagant with flesh, old sweet. That's because you've got time flowing through you every day, things can grow inside you like flowers, thoughts and all that; you can wander in and out of yourself, take a stroll up and down your own lanes; whereas I've got to stay on the tracks all the time, and take a little peek-o outside when nobody's looking. I've got to be on the qui vive all the time.

JULIA: On the what?

MEADOWS: Qui vive!

JULIA: What's that?

MEADOWS: 'You know what I mean when I talk French, darling. It means I'll never learn to quench my love, darling!'

JULIA: People'd think we were crackers, wouldn't they?

MEADOWS: And they'd be right. I am. When I swim and look up at the sky like we did this morning I feel crackers.

JULIA: How do you mean?

MEADOWS: I feel the sunshine and the sea are sane, and I'm a little white, peculiar thing floating about and belonging nowhere.

JULIA: And what am I?

MEADOWS: You're all right.

JULIA: How do you mean, I'm all right, and you're not?

MEADOWS: You're sane. Your body's sane. You seem all right with the sun and water and all that.

JULIA: Yes; the men are funny at Barnley Ridge.

MEADOWS: As if something got behind their faces and twisted up their skins, and put something round their eyes to make them smaller. Don't you feel that?

JULIA: No!

MEADOWS: As if something got inside their bodies and told them all the wrong movements? Come on, try, Julia!

JULIA: Are you like that, then?

MEADOWS: Am I?

JULIA: You move all right.

MEADOWS: Let's put it this way---do I move like the others?

JULIA: Yes. No, not really!

ANNOUNCER: Attention, please, folks. First prize in yesterday's raffle went to Mrs Willcox of Cheam, and second prize to Mr Jameson who hails from Courtney Suffolk. Thank you, folks!

JULIA: But I couldn't say what the difference was.

MEADOWS: Try.

JULIA: It's that extra little bit of---I don't know!

MEADOWS: Haven't any of them got it, too?

JULIA: Well, yes. The shop-steward in Speciality Products has. He's a real good-looker. But it isn't that.

MEADOWS: Then you do see what I mean. I'm sure you do. It's something secret, isn't it---

JULIA: Yes, it puts you all of a tis-was!

MEADOWS: But not a tis-was strange, a tis-was lovely, eh?

JULIA: That's right!

MEADOWS: It's something you can't see, it's in the dark, but the light shows you where it is. Tell me its name.

JULIA: I couldn't!

MEADOWS: Love! That's the name. In some men you can still see it, in their bodies, sort of easy-come, easy-go bodies. And in the others it's got all closed up, and it won't stay in the body any more, it's afraid. One day it might get in me, too. It started getting in me on assembly work, like a piece of steel---

JULIA: No! Talk about something else quick. They say that shop-steward drinks. Leads his wife a hell of a dance.

MEADOWS: You can see it in his eyes. It's a dry look. Skin's like parchment. He can get all the girls he likes with his looks, but they feel they've had the blood sucked out of them afterwards.

JULIA: How do you know?

MEADOWS: It's written in the sky over Barnley Ridge Electric. Voices have told me over the relay-wires.

ANNOUNCER: Here's a further announcement, folks. Talk of the devil---remember I was talking about that life of the party just now, and her bardic husband's husband? Well, here's a visitor for them.

You see how popular they are? Will Mr or Mrs Meadows trip along to the office and pick him up? He's rolled up in one of the very latest Alfa-Romeos! And he's called Mr Johnson!

JULIA: Who?

MEADOWS: Mr Johnson?

ANNOUNCER: I'll just repeat that. There's a gentleman by the name of Mr Johnson waiting in the office and would Mr or Mrs Meadows please come along and pick him up? Blimey, I haven't got to say it again, have I? Thank you, folks!

JULIA: Mr Johnson? Who's Mr Johnson?

MEADOWS: You mean to say you don't know?

JULIA: Oh, I couldn't! Not the Mr Johnson?

MEADOWS: Must be!

JULIA: But not the Mr Johnson?

MEADOWS: The-the himself. Must be.

JULIA: Yes, but---he can't! Here, quick, I've got to get dressed! Take him down to the beach or something!

MEADOWS: You're a snob.

JULIA: Well, I might be, but just you keep him out of here while I get dressed.

MEADOWS: He might like to see you in your beach-wear, Julia. They say he takes after his dad.

JULIA: Fancy Mr Johnson coming down here to see us!

MEADOWS: He's got a house up the road, that's why. Small place with seventy-three rooms.

Exit JULIA.

Enter GODFREY JOHNSON.

MEADOWS: Blimey!

JOHNSON: Surprised? Never forgot you, you see? I thought I'd walk over. They told me your bungalow. Embarrassing chap that, at the door. Has a voice that carries. Do you mind me walking in like this?

MEADOWS: No!

JOHNSON: 'Give us this day---' Remember?

MEADOWS: Yes!

JOHNSON: Well, how are you?

MEADOWS: Fine, sir! Won't you sit down?

JOHNSON: No sirs down here, please.

MEADOWS: My wife went into a blue panic when she heard

you were coming. She's getting into a dress.

JULIA (from the other room) Jack!

MEADOWS: I said you'd probably prefer her as she was!

JOHNSON: I'm sure she's charming in any dress!

MEADOWS: She is, Mr Johnson. Well, what a surprise! You could have knocked me down with a feather when your name came over the speakers! Then I thought, Oh, yes, Mr Johnson lives just up the road, what was it you called it, Mr Johnson, Devil's something or other?

JOHNSON: Devil's Brig. And we always used to call old Maughley Bay Devil's Reach. Sort of family name!

MEADOWS: Go on! What a lot of devils!

JOHNSON: That's right. Yes, I suddenly got an idea. I'll go ~~and~~ over and see old Meadows. I knew you were on holiday. I was having a chat with Personnel about you, and they told me.

MEADOWS: Oh! Those boys are real seers, aren't they? Know everything!

JOHNSON: I can tell you something, Mr Meadows---I don't want to talk shop, lovely day like this, but there never was a bad Personnel report about you.

MEADOWS: Go on! Are you sure?

JOHNSON: There's no doubt about it. And I'll tell you another fact, which I knew all along. There isn't a college man in the Personnel section.

MEADOWS: Oh, well, it's spurred me on all these years, I suppose. Sad, in a way. Like losing a dirty old friend.

JOHNSON: If you've got your eye on a place in Speciality Products, why don't you apply? It's perfectly simple!

MEADOWS: Never thought of it!

JOHNSON: That's what I say, you'd spend the next ten years dreaming of Speicliay Products, and all you've got to do is get an application form.

MEADOWS: That's right. It's funny.

JOHNSON: I'll tell you something, Mr Meadows, you're the first chap in the plant who's really talked to me. I won't beat about the bush. I'm going to tell you outright, you're the first working man I've ever had a conversation with.

MEADOWS: Go on!

JOHNSON: The first real conversation. They won't talk to me, you see!

JULIA (From the other room) He's always been a talker, Mr Johnson!

JOHNSON: Oh. Yes, indeed, Mrs Meadows!

MEADOWS: She's a scream! You want to see her on vaudeville, Mr Johnson!

Enter JULIA.

MEADOWS: Julia! What have you done that for?

JULIA: Good morning, Mr Johnson. It certainly is a pleasure seeing you down here with us!

JOHNSON: Good morning, Mrs Meadows. I don't ~~xxxx~~ think your husband exaggerated. Pleasure's all on my side!

MEADOWS: What did I tell you?

JULIA: And you came all this way to see us?

JOHNSON: That's right! I was telling your husband--- well, you heard, didn't you?

JULIA: That's right! I always listen when I'm next door. It's silly not to, isn't it?

JOHNSON: Oh, I agree!

MEADOWS: Talk about scream!

JULIA: My Jack's always been a talker. I knew when he told me he was going up for an interview, I said to myself, he'll talk the hind-leg off a donkey, even if it's the prime minister!

MEADOWS: I took a poem along.

JULIA: You what?

MEADOWS: I took one of those poems along. 'Give us this day.'

JULIA: You didn't!

JOHNSON: He had me beat for a moment. Wanted to borrow my tape recorder! Did you ever hear anything like it? Comes to the boss to record his own voice!

MEADOWS: Talk about laugh!

JULIA: I think you've got more sauce than Casanova!

JOHNSON: Who?

MEADOWS: The camp announcer. Always call him Casanova.

JULIA: You know, the man with the voice!

JOHNSON: Oh, yes.

MEADOWS: She told him to leave it behind last night when he tried to get fresh!

JULIA: Well, it's a nuisance, isn't it, Mr Johnson, when men are always on?

JOHNSON: I agree!

MEADOWS: You're a real wire, Julia!

JULIA: Have we had you at our Christmas party yet,

Mr Johnson?

- JOHNSON: No. But I shall be there this year. With my wife.
- JULIA: Oh, lovely! The old Mr Johnson always used to come!
- MEADOWS: Used to laugh himself sick!
- JULIA: That's right! I see your wife sometimes, Mr Johnson, at the works. Such a lonely lady she looks, so sad!
- JOHNSON: She looks sad?
- JULIA: Well, lovely with it, if you see what I mean.
- JOHNSON: She isn't too keen on the work. She won't give it up, either. She must work, and that's the only work I can offer her.
- JULIA: At the works, you mean?
- JOHNSON: Yes.
- JULIA: She ought to stay at home, then. Jack said you'd got a lovely big lake. You wouldn't catch me going to Barnley Ridge Electric if I had a lake and grounds and a butler, Jack said, and horses and stables!
- JOHNSON: It's still my father's. There's all you could wish there, that's true.
- JULIA: And she doesn't like it? What a shame!
- JOHNSON: Oh, she'd like it well enough if I was there all the time. But our money's in Barnley Ridge Electric, and without that there wouldn't be a house, so there's no solution, you see!
- JULIA: What a shame!
- JOHNSON: She doesn't like my scheme too well, either. The interviewing scheme. But your husband's been a triumph for me, Mrs Meadows. He was the first chap who really talked. And it makes the whole scheme worthwhile. I do believe my dad never really talked to one man in the works. Just those quick, gruff exchanges employers and their workmen go in for, if you see what I mean.
- JULIA: Oh, yes! It's better to get down to a nice talk if you can! And Jack'd talk the hens to roost, he really would!
- MEADOWS: And now you're here, Mr Johnson, what do you think about old Sea Bells?
- JOHNSON: Well, haven't seen much of it yet. The sea's all right, but how do you stand these loudspeakers all day?
- MEADOWS: Thought you'd say that. You can turn them down. Turn them off if you like, can't you, Julia?
- JULIA: That's right!

MEADOWS: But then you miss all the news. Privacy's a matter of the heart, Mr Johnson, don't you think so? It isn't a matter of geography.

JOHNSON: Well-said!

MEADOWS: How did I get privacy when I was a boy, with the radio on and my mum and dad talking across the table all the time? But I did. More so than now. Sea ^{be}els is all right if you let yourself go. Just sink in. Other people aren't outside each other in this little wrld, if you see what I mean. Not like in your world---

JOHNSON: How do you know about my world? Excuse us, Mrs Meadows, this was our theme last time.

MEADOWS: That's right! Well, I use my eyes. In your world you're not joined together inside, not like we are. You're all alone. So I am, partly. But they're not, outside. Some of the young ones might be. But most not.

JOHNSON: Well, you may be right, damn it! We are alone.

MEADOWS: Listen to that, Julia! When he says (damn it!' He's got ~~my~~ real style, hasn't he?

JULIA: I think it's lovely!

MEADOWS: Know what they call their house?

JULIA: No?

MEADOWS: Devil's Brig.

JULIA: No!

JOHNSON: Yes, it's supposed to look like a ship.

MEADOWS: Listen to the way he says it! Nothing namby-pamby. Not like some of these boys who shoot up from college!

JOHNSON: God knows where the devil came from!

MEADOWS: 'God', 'damn'! It's a scream!

JOHNSON: They say one of the squires used to play hell with his tenants a couple of hundred years ago. Looks like a ship with two masts---long chimneys, you know. Has to be seen in a mist, then it really does look like an eerie sort of brig, especially if some of the windows are lighted up, it casts a shadow on to the mist!

JULIA: Oh, I couldn't bear it!

JOHNSON: You'd love it!

MEADOWS: Of course, she would. She's only saying.

JOHNSON: I'd like to invite you both over one day.

JULIA: You wouldn't! You never would!

MEADOWS: She'd love it! Look at her face, Mr Johnson. Now who's the snob here? Look at that dress

she put on. All for you. That's exactly what she would have done fifty years ago, a hundred, two hundred. Women never change. That's what I was trying to tell her when you came in. And she's right. Her snobbery's right. Well, isn't it? You're the boss, there's no getting away from that. You call the tune. And I'm one of the pipers. You can't get away from that, either. All that lovely womanly softness realises that if you like, Mr Johnson, I can rise, and that if you like I can fall. Of course, we've got trade unions, health insurance and all that. But you're still the boss. That hasn't changed and it never will. Communism'd be the same, I always tell the boys that down in Production, when they're on about the withering away of the state, and anarchy, and all that. I say, it'd be the same. He'd be a commissar, then. If he didn't like the shape of my nose he could send up a report that I was a deviationist, and I'd be liquidated. You've still got the boss. Do you know what stabbed me on poetry, Mr Johnson?

JOHNSON:

No.

MEADOWS:

Green fields. That was my nickname at school. Meadows, you see. You can't get poetry unless you've got green fields inside you, Mr Johnson.

JULIA:

What was that one once, about a heath in summer?

MEADOWS:

I remember a heath in summer
When the grass was burned brown
And we turned in the grass in the summer
Knowing we were slaves of the town,---
that one?
Slaves of the town in the summer,
Cogs in a wheel we can't see,
Let's turn in the grass this summer
And try to imagine we're free!

JULIA:

They just pour out of him. They always about prison. Sad. But he isn't a sad man. Look at him now.

MEADOWS:

Look at yourself. The ambition of her life is to have her name put up for chair man of the social committee at Barnley Ridge, Mr Johnson. When you come to the Christmas vaudeville this year, she'll be thinking of that. She'll say, Come on, Jack, let's give it to them tonight, Mr and Mrs Johnson are there and my name might go up, you never know!

JULIA:

Well, it's true. I can't but tell the truth, can I?

JOHNSON:

And why not? Better that someone who wants it has it, than someone who begrudges the time.

JULIA:

Well, it's true, it does take time! Rigging up the stage, and the catering. And there's no pecuniary motive!

MEADOWS:

No what?

TOGETHER:

'You know what I mean when I talk French, darling; it means I'll never learn to quench my

love, darling!

JULIA: Mr Johnson thinks we're mad!

MEADOWS: It's in our turn. We do it at Sea Bells, too. You know, we add little touches each time.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes!

JULIA: Life is sad sometimes, isn't it? You don't know where you are exactly. It comes over you, that's what we often say. How would you like a swim, Mr Johnson? The sea's like a mill-pond today!

JOHNSON: Just what I thought on my way down. But I've got nothing with me. Nothing to swim in.

JULIA: Oh, that's easy! Bay No. 3'll fix you up, won't they, Jack? Trunks Trunks, towels, bathing caps, dressing gowns, anything you like!

JOHNSON: Sounds delightful!

MEADOWS: The big mistake, Mr Johnson, is to think of working people as the same as you only they get less money. Yet they're not so different, either! See what I mean? I'm sure you've got lurking in your mind somewhere that the worker gets used to it---because he hasn't been developed like you have. Don't you say that to yourself? And you'll bring him out, won't you? Questions, sympathy. I bet you never sit down and think, now what would I feel like doing finger-dexterity work?

JOHNSON: It's true, to a point. It's because I just can't imagine myself doing it! Not day after day! I just can't imagine it, much as I might try. And I've often tried.

MEADOWS: Just what I say. It's never been in your life. And nor can I imagine it, either. Sounds funny, that, ~~either~~ doesn't it? Yet I've done the work. I did assembly work for going on seven years. Fifty-five telephone-relays a day. I did it, but I can't imagine it. So I'm not so different from you. Yet I am. See what I mean? You say to yourself, Well, my mind's been developed, their's hasn't. So their's is asleep while they're on the job. It isn't true, Mr Johnson. They're numb. The mind gets numbed. The same as yours would. That's why I can't imagine doing it. Because there's nothing to imagine. So where does that get us? I'll tell you what. Stage Two. You think you're more responsible than working people. You've got more responsibilities. You talk, move about places, you're always looking round to see what you can do and organise something. The worker doesn't say anything, does he, he stays inside his work, he doesn't look after anybody else like you, he reads his paper like a slave in the morning, he takes what he gets all the time, peace or war, it's all dished up to him, isn't it? See what I mean? Isn't that more responsible, what you've got?

JOHNSON: I've got more responsibilities on my shoulders,

yes. Well, it's obvious. A worker's got himself and his family to look after. I've got about two thousand workers, and a few other concerns as well.

MEADOWS:

Just what I say! See, Julia? If I've got fifteen chicken runs to look after, I'm fifteen times as responsible as a man with one! It doesn't make sense! Suppose I let all my chickens get fowl-pest, and let them tread each other to death? Am I still fifteen times as responsible? Suppose the fellow with one chicken-run, just five or six capons and a couple off hens, suppose he looks after them and goes down to have a look at them four or five times a day? Suppose he gets eggs as big as your fist, double yolkers, and the man with fifteen runs leaves it all to somebody else and stinks up the neighbourhood with his leavings? Who's more responsible? Logic, Mr Johnson?

JOHNSON:

All right, you've got me floored. Not quite what I meant, but still---

MEADOWS:

Of course I've got you floored. A man can look after his wife and two kids and a little bit of garden and have more responsibility in his little finger than a fellow who owns a street-full of houses. It's like privacy, Mr Johnson: it isn't a matter of geography. People don't wear it. You never see it. And here's Stage Three. Just thought of it. Sorry to hurry you along, Mr Johnson, but why don't you see it? Why don't you see this man's responsibility? Because he doesn't show it. He doesn't wear it in his talk like you. He doesn't affect other people, does he? He's small. It doesn't go beyond his tiny little house and his wife and his little bit of back garden. But who's to say he's less responsible for that? And who's to say he's more responsible? Me. I'll say it. He's more responsible. Here's the reason. Because he doesn't show it. See what I mean? He doesn't wear it on the outside. It's real responsibility. It's not in his brain, you see. It's an automatic reaction. It's like having a heart of gold. It doesn't come out in talk. You wear it inside, and it's never seen. See what I mean? Stage Four. Here's the real difference between you and the working man. He doesn't want to organise anything. Really he doesn't want to get on. He's all right as he is. He'll get a better wage ~~as~~ he can. But he won't leave his street in a hurry, he won't sort of try and think of himself outside his job, in another one. That's why I never thought of applying for Speciality Products. I've got my life already, you see. It wouldn't change my life. What is my life? It's in the front room at home, it's my wife sitting here, it's in old Maughley Bay every year, in my mum and dad, the canteen of a morning when we go down for a smoke. Work's not my life, you see. Only the work'd change. But work's your life. I can see it is. It's underneath all the time. It's in your mind, working round all the time. I can feel it while you're looking at me. It's like a heart beating inside you. Thoughts--- that's your life. But we're not like that. We don't make our own lives, if you see what I

mean. We don't make it with thoughts. It's just there in the morning when you get up, and you sort of fall into it every day. In that sense we're not responsible. We don't make our lives as we go along. We don't look outside. It's the same for all the workers, Mr Johnson, all the world over, I don't care what you say. They've got real responsibility. To the people they live with.

JOHNSON: And what have I got responsibility to?

MEADOWS: Thoughts. Happiness of your workers, before you've even shaken hands with them, That's a thought. A better world: that's another thought. Better output. A worker doesn't go on like that.

JOHNSON: No, he leaves it to me.

MEADOWS: That's right. But don't you think you don't need him for all that. You do. You need him like he is, too. Because if he thought like you, with all those ideas, if his brain went round all the time like yours does, he wouldn't do the work, he wouldn't let himself get numbed, his old brain wouldn't give him any peace. He'd say the same as you, 'I can't imagine myself going, not day after day.' But he doesn't think like that. He doesn't think of 'day-after-day'. It's just now he thinks of. The canteen, the wife at home, Friday night shopping night, a kip over the fire ~~Staxax~~ Saturday afternoon. It's not day after day. That's a thought. See what I mean? See what I mean, Julia?

JULIA: Yes, well, I do, sort of!

MEADOWS: There's a good girl. You want a swim, don't you, duck?

JULIA: Well, I would, yes!

MEADOWS: That's right! See what I mean, Mr Johnson? You think you can change the working man with higher wages and all that, you think you can get that mind un-numbed. You can't! He's got no ambitions. Good thing for you he hasn't! He wouldn't do the work otherwise! So don't try and get his mind un-numbed too much, because he'll lay down his tools! ~~But~~ But he isn't a scrap less clever than you are for that, and he isn't less responsible. He doesn't have ideas like you. That's the only difference. He hasn't got these organising ideas.

JOHNSON: If it's true that you've got no ambitions, why do you want to get into Speciality Products?

MEADOWS: To be under the scientists. It's just a fad. It isn't the money. It's just the feel of it. Do you see what I mean? But then again, I'll tell you something, Mr Johnson. I'm different. Perhaps they're all getting like me. Perhaps we're all on the move! But I'm one of those people the middle classes are made out of!

JOHNSON: Ah!

MEADOWS: I don't feel at home with the boys any more.

I'm looking out all the time. That's a bit of ambition starting, I suppose. The front room's started to feel stuffy to me.

JULIA: How do you mean there, Jack?

MEADOWS: It's all right, Duck! It's like waking up, it's a bad world I'm waking up to, but I can't put myself back to sleep again, if you see what I mean. I'm the sort that goes to America and never thinks of the old country again, I fall for all the gadgets and the democratic politeness and the feeling I don't have to touch my cap to anybody. I know it's a lot of rot, but it's like a kind of seed in me, if you see what I mean.

JOHNSON: You're very clear about yourself, aren't you?

MEADOWS: I've got to be. As I say, once awake, you can't go to sleep again. You've got to think it out.

JOHNSON: And suppose all the world lacked ambition, including people like me?

MEADOWS: It'd be all right. We wouldn't have this sort of world. But life'd go on. What's thinking, Mr Johnson? It's just a speck on the world! We're just alive. We haven't got to push it along all the time with our thoughts. That's all ambitions are,---thoughts. It doesn't need our thoughts, you see, not to get going. Life's already there. But that scares you a bit, doesn't it? You like to have it clear. You don't want to close your eyes and just get moved along. You like to see where you're going.

JOHNSON: Yes. I'm scared of the dark. Men do wicked things in the dark. Ever noticed that?

MEADOWS: Do they? You can abolish the dark but they'll do it in the light just the same, if they're going to do it at all.

JOHNSON: You can talk like that because your mother and father refused to live in the dark any more. They started protecting themselves against people like my father.

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: And now their lives are clear.

MEADOWS: And the heart's gone out of it. You can change Barnley Ridge Electric as much as you like, Mr Johnson, you can give me air-conditioning and lovely lavatories and a recreation-room and holidays with pay, but that work'll never be quite right, it'll never be quite right to sit down in that assembly room turning out fifty-five relays in a day, I don't care what you say. There'll always be something wrong with it. Just take the schedule---clocking in and clocking out---

JOHNSON: We can change the schedule. We can reduce the hours of work. We're trying to all the time.

MEADOWS: Why, if the work's so congenial? Work's good

for a man, they say. There's something wrong with that work, you know it, that's why you want to cut it down. And that's what you can't bear, Mr Johnson. You can't bear the idea that nothing's going to solve the problem, short of rolling up the whole thing. You can't bear the thought that it's all wrong, from top to bottom, can you? What, all these buildings, and people with big desks, and millions of money, how can all that be wrong? But why not? Why shouldn't the whole world go wrong?

JOHNSON: Where would it get us to say so? Into a rather lonely position, that's all.

MEADOWS: Exactly! You don't like the idea any more than your father did! Because it's your world. You say, Where would the truth get us? You don't seem to care if it is the truth or not. I'm just saying what the truth is. And you have to ask all the time, Where will it get us? Will it do us any good? And that's ambition. That's what I mean by ambition. It's behind everyone of your thoughts. You can't think without it! It's what you mean by thinking. You mean thinking what to do. And I mean saying the truth. You can't let go of the world and say, 'It's all rot!' You've got to have your nose in it all the time, organising. But I can. It's a kind of relief. I say, it's a lot of rot. Then I can say, All right, I want to live, I'll sink myself in a bit of rot. It means twisting myself up a bit, but it's got to be done.

JOHNSON: Doesn't that mean, I agree to be rotten?

MEADOWS: No, no! The work doesn't touch me, you see! The work doesn't touch us! That's where you're wrong. There you are again. Ambition again. You'd have to think to yourself, All right, I'll go rotten! There'd always have to be a thought in your life, always something deliberate, you couldn't get away from it!

JOHNSON: And my work's rot, too?

MEADOWS: Yes, of course! But you won't let yourself see it! You cling to it. I don't. I've got my life. My work isn't my life.

JOHNSON: So we all become little selves believing in nothing, only how rotten everything is outside?

MEADOWS: Oh, no! It's no good being a little self. That's your world! That's what I said just now, people aren't joined together in your world. You're all little individuals. Not in my world. When I say my life I mean the other man's life, too, it's the same in my world! We're all joined together underneath. We've got the same heart---the same thoughts, almost.

JULIA: Yes, it's funny, we seem to accept things more.

MEADOWS: There you are. She's got it. Trust a woman. It's accepting things. People don't stick out of themselves in our world. But in your world people have got to make conversation all the

time, haven't they? They've got to be sociable. I've noticed it. In our world it just comes. Yet we make it as well. It's funny. We aren't thinking. That's the difference.

ANNOUNCER: Attention, please. Just a reminder---on today's menu there's roast pork, baked potatoes, a choice of cabbage or Brussel sprouts, and apple sauce; and for afters there's prunes and custard. Now there are still a lot of uncollected tickets for tonight's dinner---there'll be a special sitting at five-forty-five for those lucky people who've booked for the Dreamboat. The Dreamboat leaves South Pier at ~~sixteen~~ minutes a quarter to seven prompt. Will all Moonlight Dreamers please remember to take woollies along, it gets chilly out at sea when the sun goes down? The Dreamboat docks again at 1.20. tomorrow morning, and the Dreamers can dream in bed until nine-thirty if they want to, there'll be a special late sitting for breakfast, until ten o'clock. Well, that's about all, folks. Bon appetit, that's French for have a good blow-out! And may I remind you that the clearance bays are open all day for queries? Thank you, everybody!

JULIA: The Dreamboat's lovely, Mr Johnson. You look over the side. It feels like gliding, doesn't it, Jack?

MEADOWS: That's right.

JULIA: They switch the engines off. Right out at sea, and you can see the lights of Maughley Bay! And there's glass underneath in one of the cabins, and you can see the fish through. You get a lovely supper. Remember, Jack? 'Our faces'?

MEADOWS: 'Our faces in the water
Shake when there's wind---' I can't remember it, duck.

JULIA: No more can I! It's about the Dreamboat, Mr Johnson!

MEADOWS: 'Shake when there's wind...' Well, Mr Johnson, have I given you something to think about this time?

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, you've done that! It's partly why I came. I expected it.

JULIA: He's a marvellous talker, really. He tells me things I never knew about myself. Shall we book for the Dreamboat? All of us? Let's!

JOHNSON: What, me as well?

MEADOWS: Why not?

JOHNSON: It's so late!

MEADOWS: We'll give you lunch and show round Sea Bells. I'm not scared of you like I was.

JOHNSON: You were scared?

MEADOWS: Oh, yes!

JOHNSON: It's true, it's a sad life. Scaring people

before I start.

JULIA: It's because he's talked, Mr Johnson. Once he's talked himself out, he's never scared.

JOHNSON: All right, I'll strike a bargain! I've come into your world. You come into mine. We'll go on the Dreamboat. Then we'll drive to Devil's Brig and you'll stay the week-end!

JULIA: Oh, Mr---!

JOHNSON: Yes! I won't hear you say no!

MEADOWS: All right. Fair's quits!

JULIA: Jack!

JOHNSON: It's done! You'll both come out with me!

JULIA: But we couldn't, Mr Johnson! The house is so big, from what they say!

JOHNSON: Well, it's a new experience for you.

JULIA: And think of the trouble! To your wife!

JOHNSON: Servants! You see, none of your objections hold!

JULIA: I've got nothing to wear!

MEADOWS: She's arguing with herself, Mr Johnson, that's all. Give her time.

JULIA: And Jack can't dress for dinner. He hasn't got one!

JOHNSON: We hardly ever dress for dinner, unless the old man comes down.

JULIA: The old man?

MEADOWS: The old Mr Johnson.

JULIA: Well, there you are, that settles it, we couldn't!

JOHNSON: But he doesn't bite, Mrs Meadows! He might come down after dinner. But Sunday nights he usually stays upstairs with his whisky.

JULIA: But, Jack, I wouldn't know which knife and fork and that sort of thing!

MEADOWS: Well, here's your chance to learn. You'd think she was scared, wouldn't you? I'm the one who's scared. She'll carry it through like a queen.

JOHNSON: There'll be nothing to carry through, nothing intimidating! You might even find us jolly people!

JULIA: All right, then!

MEADOWS: She's said it.

JOHNSON: There! You've made me happy. Now we can go for a swim!

JULIA: I'm all of a tremble!

MEADOWS: You're a woman. Natural reserves, eh, Mr Johnson?

JOHNSON: That's right!

MEADOWS: I can't remember those lines. 'Our faces in the water---'

JOHNSON: They'll come to you, I expect.

JULIA: Here are your things, Jack. Let's go for a swim. It feels so funny.

JOHNSON: What?

JULIA: Being with you!

Exeunt.

ANNOUNCER: Attention, please, folks. May I remind you to wear your number-badges at all times, please? They're still turning up in the sand! Please wear your badges at all times. For the benefit of newcomers may I repeat that your number-badges will secure free entry to the cinema, pierrot theatre, dining halls, beach-cabins, and ball room. Thank you, folks!

C U R T A I N

3.

SCENE: A room in Devil's Brig, the following evening.

Enter MARGARET AND JULIA.

- JULIA: You look over the side, and you can see your faces in the water. It's ever so lovely! What do you think of us being here, Mrs Johnson?
- MARGARET: We lead different kinds of lives, I'd say. We don't really mix. It's another of my husband's big ideas. Am I too frank?
- JULIA: Oh, no!
- MARGARET: Do sit down.
- JULIA: It's the men make the differences. If it was left to the women there wouldn't be any.
- MARGARET: There'd just be naked power.
- JULIA: How do you mean?
- MARGARET: There'd only be the simple things. Rooms, roads, food. Nothing to dream about. But then they say I've got a masculine turn of mind.
- JULIA: Have you got any children, Mrs Johnson?
- MARGARET: No.
- JULIA: Why not?
- MARGARET: They just haven't come. My husband doesn't seem very keen, either.
- JULIA: Why not?
- MARGARET: He said to me once, Animals in captivity don't breed.
- JULIA: Animals?
- MARGARET: That's us.
- JULIA: But you aren't in captivity. You're free. Look at this house.
- MARGARET: We could be free. So could we all. I could

run off with Ted Lowell. He's in love with me. But I don't.

JULIA: Has he said so?

MARGARET: Oh, yes.

JULIA: He really smells of horses, doesn't he?

MARGARET: I must tell him that! He'd be proud!

JULIA: No, I mean in a nice way. Very outdoors. But it wouldn't do to let go, would it?

MARGARET: In what way?

JULIA: Let men come it over you. They always will, given the chance!

MARGARET: I don't have any temptations like that because I've never really got started with my husband. I'm always waiting for that.

JULIA: Are you, really? But he's ever so nice and kind! You never know, do you? You ought to have seen him on the Dreamboat last night. And you're so pretty!

MARGARET: He says he's fed up with my hard moral code. I'm from one of those country families that run rough-shod over their children. Grew up rough.

JULIA: I've seen you at Barnley Ridge Electric. You're always alone. It seems so sad. You ought to come and join in with us.

MARGARET: I'd make everyone uncomfortable.

JULIA: He got interested in Jack. It was the poems. And Jack told him about Sea Bells. Wasn't that funny? I nearly went through the floor when I heard Casanova say over the blower---

MARGARET: Who's Casanova?

JULIA: The announcer at Sea Bells. He's keen on me. That's why I say it wouldn't do to let go. Well, all of a sudden his voice comes through saying that Mr Johnson's waiting for us at the gate! But it doesn't seem so strange now. I'll never forget this house. Fancy having a lake of your own! And that lovely dinner-table, with pictures round the wall!

MARGARET: I'd change over with you any day.

JULIA: You wouldn't!

MARGARET: Yes, I would.

JULIA: Of course, I suppose you can't get very snug here. You can't twinkle your toes at the fire.

MARGARET: Oh, I've got a little sneak-hole upstairs. It's so tiny you'd laugh.

JULIA: They won't be drunk, will they?

MARGARET: Who?

- JULIA: The men.
- MARGARET: Oh, no! They only stay a moment.
- JULIA: I wondered what you taking me outside for!
- MARGARET: It's always been done here. The men like their port and a bit of manly talk. All except my husband. He says it's conservative.
- JULIA: But it doesn't seem right. Sending the women away!
- MARGARET: The women leave. They aren't sent away. My mother always used to tell me that. They leave to powder their noses and have a bit of womanly talk. My mother was an independent woman with a clear, forceful mind. And I know, nowadays, it's better to stay with the men if you can and drink their disgusting port, because the women aren't up to much.
- JULIA: You ought to come to our socials, Mrs Johnson. You'd have ever such a good time!
- MARGARET: I wanted to ask you just now, do you have any children?
- JULIA: Oh, no!
- MARGARET: But you will have?
- JULIA: I'm scared. It's silly, isn't it?
- MARGARET: Scared of what?
- JULIA: Scared of having a baby. It's so silly in a woman!
- MARGARET: But what scares you?
- JULIA: I don't know! It's just the idea of it coming down there! It doesn't seem right, if you see what I mean!
- MARGARET: But where else would it come out?
- JULIA: Well, that's what I say, it's silly. I can't think about it. I told Jack, I said, I couldn't think of having a baby!
- MARGARET: And what did he say?
- JULIA: He said if fate had a child in mind it wouldn't ask my permission. But I take all the precautions! It's ever so silly, but I can't think about it!
- MARGARET: Is it the pain?
- JULIA: Oh, no! It's just the idea! I tried to explain it to myself one day and I thought, It's like mixing up pleasure with, well, lovely little babies! It doesn't seem right! But it isn't that exactly, either. I just can't think about it!
- MARGARET: Why shouldn't babies come out of pleasure?
- JULIA: Yes, but you have to look after them, don't you, and how are you going to do it? And then

you get all the doctors, and that laughing gas they give you. A woman at Barnely Ridge told me whenever you feel a twinge you press the button and hold it over your mouth and you go out like a light!

- MARGARET: It is the pain, then?
- JULIA: No, it isn't! It's like having a lovely little baby down there---criticising me.
- MARGARET: Criticising?
- JULIA: No, you don't see what I mean. Nobody could who wasn't me! And Jack's a man.
- MARGARET: What a funny world!
- JULIA: I know you'll laugh at me and think me nothing!
- MARGARET: Not at all. Let me tell you something. I do believe I could talk to you now.
- JULIA: I feel like crying.
- MARGARET: Here are the men.
- Enter MEADOWS, TED LOWELL and JOHNSON.
- LOWELL: But hard in the mouth, but he moves, Mr Meadows!
- MEADOWS: Sounds a beauty to me! Hear that, Julia? Mr Lowell's going to show us round the stables tonight.
- JULIA:
JOHNSON:
~~LOWELL:~~ Very nice!
- It's horrible the way these two like each other, Margaret! They've been talking horse all the way through port. Not that Meadows know the front from the back of a horse.
- LOWELL: He'll learn. Everyone of them's an individual, eh, Mr Meadows?
- MEADOWS: That's right. I've always loved horses.
- LOWELL: What I always tell the squire here---they're just like people, only they run faster and eat hay.
- JOHNSON: Noble sort of people, of course?
- LOWELL: Of course! He's pulling my leg, Mrs Meadows!
- JOHNSON: And for God's sake don't call me 'squire'! I can't stand it!
- LOWELL: He thinks it's old-fashioned.
- JOHNSON: Thank Christ for the women, anyway, they'll talk to me. Well, I never thought Barnley Ridge Electric'd mix with the local hunt! That I could never have foreseen.
- MEADOWS: It's just liking horses, that's all.
- JOHNSON: You've never been up on one! You said so yourself.

- MEADOWS: I just like hearing him talk.
- JOHNSON: Hear that, Lowell? I don't believe you've heard that said in this house before!
- JULIA: It's the same with me.
- LOWELL: I'm proud to hear you say it.
- JOHNSON: There's something you've always overlooked, old chap. People are different from horses, there's no getting away from it! Mind you, a nose-bag now and again---I keep one myself upstairs in the bedroom---but not all the time!
- JULIA: Your husband's a real leg-pull, isn't he, Mrs Johnson?
- LOWELL: It's like the squire-thing, Mr Meadows. He's touchy about it. Know why? Because he's a squire. What I always tell him. He's got tenants, he's got a farm, he's got a manor-house and a steward. That's a squire. But he won't have it.
- JOHNSON: You always come out with that historical survey when we've got guests, don't you? His conversation never changes, Meadows. You see, the horses he talks to aren't---well, they're not frightfully interesting, if you see what I mean. I told him at the outset, I said, Lowell, these horses simply aren't your level. They aren't talkers, I said. Know what he said? Johnson, he said, don't be an intellectual snob!
- LOWELL: Horses are famous talkers, that's another thing.
- JOHNSON: But---
- LOWELL: ---you've got---
- JOHNSON: ---to know their language! That's right. Now finish it: 'And with a little pride---
- LOWELL: I think I can say I do.
- JOHNSON: Well-done!
- MARGARET: It's true that he can talk to horses. I've seen him switch a horse in the middle of a jump without moving a muscle.
- JOHNSON: Tricky fence, was it?
- MARGARET: Yes.
- JOHNSON: Rather! Know how he did it? Talked through his arse! What I've always said!
- JULIA: Oh, Mr Johnson, you're a scream! In a big house, too!
- MEADOWS: He's a spark, isn't he?
- MARGARET: Yes, they're a ribald family.
- JOHNSON: Listen to Lowell's laugh. It's the original horse-laugh.

MEADOWS: Cards, the whole lot!

MARGARET: My husband won't go near the stables, Mrs Meadows. He only keeps them for me.

JOHNSON: And Lowell, of course.

LOWELL: Well, I seriously believe he does, sometimes.

JOHNSON: Of course, I do! I can't see animals suffer, Margaret. He hasn't got a penny to his name, have you, Lowell? Lives with his father in an old barn. Least I can do is to give him a ride!

LOWELL: All true enough!

MARGARET: But one thing you won't do, Godfrey, and that's play the squire, eh?

JOHNSON: That's right.

MARGARET: It might make everything fit together.

LOWELL: What beats me is why there can't be modern squires. The land's still got to be farmed, there's still got to be keepers, and I dare say poachers, too. There's got to be farmers' hands---

JOHNSON: Oh, no more, for Christ's sake! We get it every time a visitor comes, Meadows.

LOWELL: Dairymen---

JOHNSON: ---And men to look after the timber!

LOWELL: You've still got to have it, I don't care---

JOHNSON: ---How mechanised you get!

LOWELL: Isn't it true? The tradition's gone, it went out a couple of hundred years ago, really, but you've still got to sit downstairs of a Saturday morning and go through the accounts, eh, Mag?

JOHNSON: That's right, now call her 'Mag'! Of all abbreviated names that's about the worst!

MARGARET: Rhymes with 'hag', 'bag', 'sag'.

JOHNSON: Now you've started her hating herself.

LOWELL: It's just intimate. I've always said 'Mag'.

MARGARET: Godfrey doesn't any sort of label. That's why he hates to hear 'squire'. He is a squire, but the name frightens him.

JOHNSON: I'm a fake squire. Mine's a commercial family. It's been counting the sheekles for three or four generations. When my grandfather came into this house he did so because the squire's initials were the same as his own and they were engraved all over the church pews. That's what I call a fake squire. He made his money out of sweated mill-labour.

LOWELL: He didn't inherit this place, that's true.

But you did.

MARGARET: That's a cunning argument.

JOHNSON: But my work's in the modern world, Lowell.

LOWELL: So are horses. More interest in horses now than ever there was, eh, Mr Meadows? Riding schools in all the new towns, people have got money in their pockets nowadays---

JOHNSON: Well, I do believe ~~that~~ there is a new mood in people. Not just more money. I could feel it last night.

JULIA: You could see the enjoyment in his face, Mrs Johnson!

MARGARET: He usually wakes me up if he comes back late. But last night he got into bed like a saint.

JOHNSON: It's strange. We just floated along and the band was playing. Most of us were downstairs in the cabin, sitting on benches along the side, with oil-lamps swinging in the middle. You could hardly see across the room. Full moon. We could just see it through the portholes. That right, Meadows?

MEADOWS: That's right!

JOHNSON: I even danced with a strange lady.

JULIA: Oh, I wasn't going to say---

JOHNSON: It was the ladies' invitation waltz. She came across and gave Meadows a look first. Then she asked me. It wasn't touching or anything ~~like~~ of that kind. It was simply extraordinarily simple and natural. That's all I can say. But it wasn't natural in our sense, either---it wasn't relaxed or what we call spontaneous. She was even a bit nervous. She was strained. She bit her lip. I don't know why she asked me. I think, to put me at my ease. She could see I wasn't a resident at Sea Bells. Perhaps she knew already. It was so wonderfully comradely---I hate the word, but I wonder if you see what I mean, Lowell? There wasn't any sex or vanity in it. Yet she had sex. She was just natural and equal to me, and I'd never felt anything quite like that in my life, while I danced with her. And I didn't see her again. I didn't really think of her as a single person. I didn't say to myself that she was attractive, or nice to know. She was the whole room for me, all the boat as it floated along, and the band stopped, and everybody talked in a kind of homely undertone, as if there wasn't any danger in the world and couldn't ever be. It seemed such a wonderfully safe and snug world! I hadn't realised before.

MEADOWS: That's right. He's got it word for word.

JOHNSON: And I do believe they really did talk to me as an equal, the men as well. They didn't jump when Meadows said I was his boss. That's a big change of course, from the old man's world. But I felt so cosy. I didn't have to make an

effort. It's true, Meadows, one doesn't have to think in that world. There's a kind of hum underneath everything. It's a kinder world.

MEADOWS: Oh, it can be cruel, don't you worry, people let their tongues go sometimes---

JOHNSON: Yes, but I mean it's kinder to the nerves. One can't see it from the outside, from their faces, if you just see them at the works. Meadows gave me long speeches a month short time ago about the 'borjoys', Lowell, and I didn't quite know what he meant.

LOWELL: Borjoys?

JOHNSON: He means us. And I thought at the time, it's the old envious talk about a higher class with more money in it a pocket. But that isn't true. Really, he was talking about a different state of life---it's a different kind of nervous system, almost, that we don't know anything about.

MEADOWS: Just as they don't know anything about your life, either. They don't see what it is to make life out of thoughts.

JOHNSON: That's another thing he says. Making life with thoughts. Their's just hums on. But we've got this investigating quality. We're searching life all the time. We think that's how everybody lives. It isn't. Partly, I see what he means. But I can't alter myself.

MEADOWS: That's what I say, you can't put the brain to sleep again, after it's been woken up.

LOWELL: Well, to tell the truth, I've never been much of a brain---

JOHNSON: No, my dear old chap, perhaps we shouldn't include you. Your mind's been asleep for generations back, hasn't it? You're a real squire, old chap!

MEADOWS: You can see he isn't a borjoy, not a proper one.

LOWELL: I always thought that was a dog.

JOHNSON: It's French. Means middle-class, old chap!

LOWELL: Oh, I see!

MARGARET: I wondered what it was!

LOWELL: Well, they say we're all middle class nowadays, don't they?

JOHNSON: Well, as long as the horses don't change, my dear fellow!

LOWELL: That's right! It'd be awful if they got ideas as well, wouldn't it?

Enter MR JOHNSON.

MEADOWS: Blimey!

- JOHNSON: Well, hullo, there, father, how are you? Come in!
- MR JOHNSON: Thank you. Thank you very much. Nice to be invited into me own house. You always had a generous side, Godfrey. Like your mother. Your laugh's been echoing through the house all day, Lowell. Who the devil's this?
- JOHNSON: That's Mr Meadows, sir. You haven't met before.
- MR JOHNSON: Oh, I'm used to not meeting people in my own house. I signed the company over to you, lad, but you haven't got the house yet!
- JOHNSON: Father---
- MR JOHNSON: Don't interrupt! You've dagned-well interrupted since you were five years old. I've never met such an incorrigible young---
- MARGARET: Guests, Harry!
- MR JOHNSON: Oh, how do you do? Nice-looking young woman! Who is it?
- JOHNSON: That's Mrs Meadows.
- MR JOHNSON: I didn't ask you. I know you're always ready with an answer.
- MEADOWS: It's my wife, sir.
- MR JOHNSON: Oh, I saw you in the corridor this morning, and I thought to myself, who the devil's that, another of Godfrey's week-end surprises, I expect! Who did you say this chap was?
- JOHNSON: One of your employees, sir.
- MR JOHNSON: One of my employees? Haven't got a company! Don't own a bean! Don't know what you're talking about. My employees, he says! I thought I signed the lot over to you, sir? Or did you wriggle out of that one as well?
- JOHNSON: Re's one of my employees.
- MR JOHNSON: Oh, one of yours. That's different. That's more likely. Because, I'll tell you something, in my day, when I was in charge of Barnley Ridge Electric and a dozen other companies as well, no employee of mine, I don't care what his name was, or how beautiful his wife was, ever set foot in my house!

MEADOWS: Oh, well, times have changed since then. Thank God!

MR JOHNSON: You can thank Him all right, because you didn't do anything to bring it about yourself.

MEADOWS: My father did!

MR JOHNSON: Who's your father?

MEADOWS: A soldier-man like I was to start with!

MR JOHNSON: Oh. Fellow here says he's got a father. Remarkable, isn't it?

MEADOWS: He was remarkable.

MR JOHNSON: He carried out a one-man revolution, did he?

MEADOWS: No. He helped a little bit. Trade unions and all that.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, I don't mind trade unions. Had a fight with them in my time. They fought me and I fought them, and we both played dirty. I expect you can imagine that, can't you?

MEADOWS: Yes.

MR JOHNSON: That's right. Well, let me tell you I had some friends in my day. Worker came to me once and said, You're the finest employer I've ever had. How many others have you had, I said. None, ~~xxxx~~ he said. Not much of a compliment, was it? Thought I was going to tell you a little how-they-all-loved-me story, didn't you? Wrong. I could trip you up on a dozen or more other things like that. You can't make me out.

MEADOWS: I didn't say you weren't clever.

MR JOHNSON: Yes, you did. You thought I was a damned old fool. That's what my son thinks. Because I gave him the best schooling in the land and a stable of his own. Ought to be punished for that. He and his mum wouldn't speak to me. Naughty fellow, gave his son the best he could think of. Mustn't do that.

MARGARET: Godfrey appreciates everything you did for him, don't you, Godfrey?

JOHNSON: Oh, Christ, yes, and the beatings, too, you mustn't forget those! The number of times I lay in bed thinking to myself, If only he'd give me another beating! I think I looked forward to them more than anything in childhood! They were so unatinted, you know! Father showed such a delicate awareness of childish fears!

MR JOHNSON: Clever, isn't he? Has to have his say. All right, if you're one of my employees,

which you are in view of the fact that I started Barnley Ridge Electric and sustained it through two world wars, what are you exactly? The fellow who pours the tea? They tell me there's a special job nowadays. If another fellow touches the pot they go on strike. A fellow asked for three lumps of sugar instead of two once, and the electrical industry was paralysed for a month! Clever, isn't it?

- MEADOWS: It's marvellous to hear you talk. Anybody'd wonder where your money came from to keep this place up! Not out of cups of tea, Mr Johnson. We still do an hour or two's work every day.
- MR JOHNSON: That's good of you. Wear gloves, of course?
- MEADOWS: Sometimes. Goggles, too. I seem to remember a man in your works didn't wear goggles once, and he was blinded for life, and then you weren't so generous, were you?
- JOHNSON: What are you talking about?
- MEADOWS: Your father knows. It's common knowledge down in the canteen.
- JULIA: Jack!
- MARGARET: What's common knowledge?
- MEADOWS: That there's a man blinded for life. And he didn't give him a penny.
- MARGARET: What's his name?
- MEADOWS: Ask Mr Johnson.
- JOHNSON: What's his name?
- MEADOWS: Jock Murphy's his name.
- JOHNSON: Good God, is that the one---
- MARGARET: You'd better change the subject.
- JOHNSON: I thought he didn't move properly. He felt for the chair. He said something about my voice. I thought that was funny.
- MR JOHNSON: Mind if I speak?
- MARGARET: It's past your bed-time, Harry.
- MR JOHNSON: A man was blinded in my works?
- MEADOWS: That's right.
- MR JOHNSON: And I didn't pay compensation?
- MEADOWS: That's right.
- MR JOHNSON: You'll prove that to me, young man. By God, I'll bring the slander-laws against you!
- JULIA: There, Jack, you've done it now!
- Mr Johnson: I've paid compensation for every industrial accident in every concern of mine. And I'll

be in that office of yours within a week from now to prove it! Meanwhile, we'll keep our mouths shut. Ladies present. Look at the wife. She doesn't like it when you talk like that. She's flattered to be here, aren't you, ma'am?

MEADOWS: Not by you!

MR JOHNSON: Oh, don't you be too sure! I may be old and ugly, but they like a bit of gruff authority. Men haven't got any punch nowadays. You like this house, don't you, my dear?

JULIA: Well, I think it's lovely, yes!

MR JOHNSON: Know how much it costs me to keep it up? That lake out there. It's artificial. Wasn't there in my dad's time. Look at all these windows. Takes nearly a week to clean the lot. Think yourself lucky to have three rooms and a kitchen, my dear, and a husband who pours out tea for the masses all day.

MEADOWS: We're called by our names now. That's the big change. We're considered people.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, yes, I forgot! 'The people'! They vote in elections and put the conservatives in, don't they? I wonder why they do that? I'll tell you, Mr Tea-pot. It's because people like me and my dad before me worked themselves to the bone while all you were doing was claiming higher wages and new lavatory-pans. I couldn't afford to go home at five in the evening and take two weeks holiday with pay every year. Too much work to do. Barnley Ridge Electric and five other companies besides would have gone to pot. First time I sat down and looked at this lake was when I retired. So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it. My wife used to have week-end guests. Never saw them. Never saw my own son. Too much work!

MEADOWS: Who asked you to do it, though? Did you do it for me? If so, what I get out of it?

MR JOHNSON: Two weeks holiday with pay every year. That's two weeks for doing nothing. Very nice! And it got you more money than you deserve. Pension. Latrines. Look at your wife's dress, you didn't pick that up in the Old Kent Road, did you, Mr Tea-pot? Tell you another thing. Know why I'm keeping up this house?

MEADOWS: No.

MR JOHNSON: Not for that fellow sitting over there. Corridors too long. Gives him corns. Mustn't do that. Cruel. The stables are naughty, too, they make the horses run. Mustn't do that. So who am I doing it for?

MEADOWS: Not for me, that's all I know.

MR JOHNSON: You're wrong, Tea-pot. That's just who I am doing it for. I'm keeping up a monument. Nothing I'd like better than three rooms and a kitchen, and a little wife to fluff the dust

off! Takes me fourteen minutes to make the rounds in the morning. Electric light bill comes to about twice your wage. Can't get servants any more. When you do you have to call them sir. If I sold this place up I'd be a rich man, Tea-pot. But then your wife'd come along and say, Oh, don't do that, Mr Johnson, what'll happen to the old country if all the big houses go? And I'll tell you the answer to that one. The old country'd go to pot. There wouldn't be an old country. And we must have an old country, mustn't we, Tea-pot, for hikes and trade-union outings?

MEADOWS: Oh, I agree there.

JOHNSON: What, with everything he said?

MEADOWS: More or less.

MR JOHNSON: So in go the conservatives. No wonder the poor old liberal party got dished. So you give in, do you, Tea-pot?

MEADOWS: No, I'd never give in to you. What I say is, now you've made a mess of our world, let's try and save something from before you made the mess, like this house, for instance.

MR JOHNSON: I made a mess, did I? Listen to me, this house wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for people like my dad. Tell you why? Simple. He bought this estate from a seedy old squire who needed the money to drink himself to death. The country squires weren't looking so good then. They needed new blood. They were after money. And we were making it. Your life's based on that money, my lad. This country became the richest trading country in the world through people like me.

MEADOWS: Well, to say you made a mess of it doesn't mean the others didn't before you, the squires as well.

MR JOHNSON: Then we're all messers. End of argument. I'm not such a damned fool, after all, am I, Mr Tea-pot? You haven't got it all in your brain-box, have you?

MEADOWS: Oh, you've got an argument. I said that.

MR JOHNSON: Don't take it too hard, then. Don't want your hand to get unsteady for Monday morning tea.

JOHNSON: I think I was right to show you my world, Meadows.

MR JOHNSON: What's that? It's your world, is it? Must tell the steward that. He'll come to you with the accounts instead of me.

MARGARET: You know you hate him to touch the accounts, Harry. Shall I give you your whisky?

MR JOHNSON: No, I'll have it upstairs. Nobody gives a damn for me down here.

JOHNSON: Now, for God's sake, father, don't get maudlin.

MR JOHNSON: Just what your mother used to say! I'm going to bed. Well, good night, my dear, you've got a pretty little face.

JULIA: Good night, sir!

MR JOHNSON: As for you, we'll see more of you in the slander-courts. The old fool doesn't forget, you know!

MEADOWS: He forgot Murphy.

JULIA: Jack!

MEADOWS: It's common knowledge.

MR JOHNSON: And, meanwhile, go to hell, the lot of you! Good night, Lowell. Heaven's paved with horses' hoofs, ever heard that?

LOWELL: That's right, sir! Good night!

Exit MR JOHNSON.

MEADOWS: Fancy having a dad like that!

JOHNSON: We'll go into that Murphy-case on Monday morning. I'll see you at the office, Meadows. You can tell me all you know.

MARGARET: It's quite possible that---

JOHNSON: And meanwhile we'll say no more about it. Yes, he doesn't mince his words, does he? Of course, he's only showing off. Always does in front of visitors.

MEADOWS: He's got something in him. Like a machine that moves him along. You feel it.

JOHNSON: I'll say this. He was one of the finest men in the electrical trade at one time.

JULIA: You were cheeky with him, Jack.

JOHNSON: He loves it. You can always see a little glint in his eyes.

MEADOWS: The smell of battle.

LOWELL: He's a terror down at the stables sometimes. But you can deal with him, can't you, Mag?

MARGARET: I treat him like a child.

JOHNSON: That's because he didn't bring you up.

MEADOWS: My dad never touched me with a strap or anything like that. Only once with the back of his hand.

JOHNSON: I didn't mind the beatings so much, not really.

MEADOWS: Why not?

JOHNSON: Well, they were a kind of relationship. I hated it more when he didn't notice me.

MARGARET: He had the habit of not noticing your mother

for a week at a time.

JOHNSON: Do you know, I used to be frightened of workers when I was a kid?

MEADOWS: Go on!

JOHNSON: They were like ogres for me. There's still a kind of gory fascination for me in working at Barnley Ridge Electric. They used to come in all my worst nightmares. I had one once about this house and woke up screaming. I dreamed that the house was in a terrible storm and the trees were bending right over, and the hills were like waves. I saw hundreds and thousands of workers pouring towards me in a single file and I was hitting them over the head like cattle and their bodies were taken off in a kind of chute, the hall was streaming with blood, but the special horror was that my father had built a ~~run~~ drain in the hall-floor like you see in slaughter-yards, and the blood was streaming down it. Then I noticed that all the outside was turning to blood, with waves mounting up in huge, congealed, shining spouts, and the house was rocking to and fro, while the remainder of the file of workers floundered and drowned, their faces red and their hair matted with blood. As I say, I woke up screaming, and my mother was standing over me. I remember she had sad eyes.

JULIA: What a horrible dream!

MARGARET: You've never told me that.

JOHNSON: Perhaps you're not the kind one tells things to.

LOWELL: That's a bitter thing to say, old chap.

MEADOWS: They aren't ogres.

JOHNSON: I've seen them fight. And I used to hear stories about the old days, what they used to do to blackleg labour.

MEADOWS: I can remember those lines now.
'Our faces in the water,
They shake in the wind;
Our faces close together,
They show we must have sinned.'

JOHNSON: I said they'd come, didn't I? The other day, Meadows, I got a letter from a friend of mine in Kenya. Important letter from your point of view.

MEADOWS: Mine?

JOHNSON: We were in the army together. I call him Bull's Eye. He wanted to know if I had a good man to send out to him, a married man. Decent salary. Native servants. Detached house. Free travel. Take your wife. Christmas bonus, that sort of thing.

MEADOWS: Me?

JOHNSON: I thought of you, yes.

MEADOWS: You're talking rot!

JOHNSON: Think about it.

JULIA: Did you know, Mrs Johnson?

MARGARET: No.

JOHNSON: You're afraid of what's in you? You might shout at an African---find out you're not as liberal as you thought---something like that?

MEADOWS: No. I'm not afraid of that.

JOHNSON: You said yesterday morning we should float through all the rot of modern life, let it pass over us. Why not do it in Kenya?

JULIA: He never could. He couldn't leave the boys.

MEADOWS: I could leave the boys any time I liked, don't you worry about that.

JULIA: He couldn't, Mr Johnson. He's got to have somebody to smile with.

JOHNSON: Bull's Eye smiles. Quite a lot.

JULIA: And then there's me. I couldn't handle servants.

MARGARET: You'd handle them better than I can.

JULIA: I'm not a lady! And all those dark skins!

MEADOWS: What a life that'd be, eh? Dark skins all round you, the sun! By God!

JOHNSON: See what I mean? It's a chance.

JULIA: Anyway, it's no use thinking about it. We couldn't leave old Barnley Ridge Electric now.

JOHNSON: I'd assure you the same position to come back to, if you didn't like it out there.

JULIA: Oh, you wouldn't!

JOHNSON: I would.

LOWELL: It sounds to me like a hell of a good chance.

JOHNSON: Old Bull's Eye's a first-rate chap. Straight as a dye. That's why we called him Bull's Eye. Always on the mark.

MEADOWS: What do you mean by 'old' Barnley Ridge Electric, Julia? Barnley Ridge Electric's just an idea. The idea was realised in the form of eighteen sheds and an asphalt yard a hundred feet by seventy-two. Well, I don't like living all my days inside an idea. I'll tell you straight off, this Kenya-thing appeals to me.

JULIA: You'll do what's best for you. But what about the clothes?

JOHNSON: You'll get an advance.

MARGARET: It sounds like an experiment.

- JOHNSON: No, it isn't! There's no need to try and turn me into some scheming bloody rascal like you always do! There's no experiment attached to it. Old Bull's Eye just put the question, as you well know, because you read the letter yourself.
- MARGARET: I only said it sounds like an experiment.
- MEADOWS: That's all right, Mrs Johnson. It's in him from his father, fiddling about with other people's lives. It excites them. I could see it in his eyes. But it's all right. It's up to me to fight a way through.
- JOHNSON: You've discovered a very sound principle, Meadows, which my wife has been slow to learn, that there's no power where there isn't submission.
- MEADOWS: Yes, it's right. I only make you powerful if I submit.
- LOWELL: The ticklish thing is, do you submit by going or staying?
- MEADOWS: That's what I'd like to know.
- JULIA: He'll never do it! What, get on an aeroplane and all that, Mrs Johnson? I'm frightened!
- MARGARET: Perhaps you're better out of all this. You could start a family.
- JULIA: But what about the vaudeville? and Sea Bells? and dad's back?
- MEADOWS: Dad's what?
- JULIA: Back. You know I massage him once a week. Regular.
- LOWELL: Women always put the personal side, don't they?
- MARGARET: It's funny, Godfrey, you're full of suggestions for other people. I always seem to be listening to them. Why can't our own lives have a little bit of magic as well? We always seem to be sending people off. And we're left with the files and graphs and account-books.
- JOHNSON: I don't know what you mean.
- MARGARET: I'd like a child, for one thing.
- JOHNSON: Oh, for Christ's sake, not in public, Margaret!
- MARGARET: Why not? We're all very frank with each other, aren't we? Mrs Meadows told me she was frightened of having a child.
- MEADOWS: She always has been, haven't you, duck?
- MARGARET: I'm not. Yet I can't have one. And if you're so miserable at Devil's Brig why can't we leave? Why can't we leave Barnley Ridge Electric? Why do you send people off to their freedom and leave us prisoners? Even riding's forbidden!
- JOHNSON: You do enough of it, don't you?

- MARGARET: I mean you forbid it to yourself. And these people think we live so grandly! Stables, servants, fifteen bedrooms! They don't realise how hollow it is, just because you can't bear a little colour, it'd make you feel guilty!
- JOHNSON: I've got to atone all the time, that's true.
- MARGARET: Atone for what? You haven't done anything.
- JOHNSON: He has.
- MARGARET: But he was the same as you! He led your mother the same life! Because he didn't have a sense of colour inside him, he didn't know what magic meant, he didn't know what your mother was talking about when she said she wanted a ballroom here and the servants lining up on Christmas day! He thought it was all piffle!
- JOHNSON: So it was.
- MARGARET: Exactly! You don't ~~xxx~~ know what this frail need is, which most of us have! You don't seem to need magic!
- JOHNSON: As Meadows said, there's no power unless you submit to it.
- MARGARET: I want to submit! But you never shout or forbid me things!
- JOHNSON: It might not last long, Meadows, but it's worth the experience, and you might move on to something else.
- MEADOWS: It's a borjoy test, that's all. It's the one every borjoy of the first generation has to take; but it's sad. It's sad to think of what my children'll grow up into. They won't have that substance behind them like me.
- JOHNSON: They'll grow up like me. No 'magic'!
- MEADOWS: I've noticed, you're troubled all the time. All borjoys are. Have my children got to be like that? Well, I'm not going to say yes to that job. I'm going to think a bit.
- JULIA: It might be nice out there. All that sun. One of the women on the social committee said she was out there with her husband and, it's silly to mention it, but she only had things out on the line for a minute and they were dry! Well, that's a relief, isn't it?
- JOHNSON: Do you know that lovely Schubert song, 'Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel'? when she's yearning for Faust? You hear the spinning wheel turning in the piano part, diddle-di-daddle-di-diddle, like a torture wheel, but lovely. 'My quiet has gone, she says, 'my heart is dark, I shall never find peace as long as I live.' That's the first verse. Then 'Whenever I look out of the window it's only for him, and when I leave the house I leave only for him. His gracious step, his wonderful presence, his smile, the strength of his gaze, the magical flow of his speech, the touch of his hand, then---oh, his kiss!' First

verse again, 'My quiet has gone, my heart is dark, I shall never find peace as long as I live.' Well, that's how I feel about life. Couldn't put it in my own words. I don't know who I'm looking for. I don't know who touched me. Somebody did, once. It's the magic Margaret talks about. I'm always looking for it. But the person's gone. Meanwhile there's work to do.

- JULIA:** You shouldn't be sad. Think of the Dreamboat last night!
- JOHNSON:** It's a person I'm in love with. I'll never find it. It's always round the corner.
- MARGARET:** I've never known what my function is with you, Godfrey. Perhaps that's the trouble.
- MEADOWS:** It's what I said yesterday. The borjoy's always alone. And the more borjoy the more alone.
- LOWELL:** Are we ready, then, Mr Meadows? Shall we go to the stables?
- MEADOWS:** Yes, let's! Coming, Julia?
- JULIA:** All right. I feel so funny. It's like a dream.
- MEADOWS:** Aren't you coming, too?
- JOHNSON:** Oh, we've seen them often enough.
- MEADOWS:** I'm going to think all night. It's exciting. It's like making your life with your own hands.
- Exeunt **LOWELL**, **MEADOWS** and **JULIA**.
- MARGARET:** You're going to wreck their lives.
- JOHNSON:** No. People wreck their own. I give them freedom. What do you think of that Murphy-case, eh? We've caught the old man out at last!

C U R T A I N

4.

SCENE: The same as in 1. A fortnight later.

JULIA and MARGARET.

MARGARET: We'll send invitations to all the departments. What about outsiders?

JULIA: Why couldn't we have Casanova? He'd make a wonderful M.C.!

MARGARET: But you said he was horrible.

JULIA: He is. But he's such a lark!

MARGARET: We don't really need an M.C.

JULIA: Oh, we do! For the floor!

MARGARET: He won't expect to be paid, will he?

JULIA: Oh, no! I'll talk to him. It's funny how people look up to me now. Ever since we walked round the works together. The women are different.

MARGARET: You look different, too.

JULIA: How?

MARGARET: More managerial. It's brought something out in you---the organiser.

JULIA: Well, I am an organiser, Mrs Johnson. Jack's always said it. I always used to organise the parties. But never a big thing like this. Imagine the canteen lit up! And Casanova giving me the glad eye while he holds the microphone, and his evening dress twinkles!

MARGARET: Why does it twinkle?

JULIA: He wears it in his lapels, like diamonds. He says it flashes and catches the eye.

MARGARET: What about the judges?

JULIA: Well, you should be one. The heads of every department. What about that?

MARGARET: It's always the heads, you see. We always come back to the same thing.

- JULIA: Why not? They're educated!
- MARGARET: Why can't we choose a judge at random from all the ticket-buyers? By lottery?
- JULIA: We could. But there wouldn't be the magnificence about it, would there? Think of Speciality Products with his lovely accent reading out the winner! And Production puffing at his fat cigar!
- MARGARET: We'll let Godfrey decide, then. I think I know every man and woman in the works now. You're wrong. They'd be good judges. Better, perhaps.
- JULIA: All right, then. We'll make it democratic!
- MARGARET: You mean dull, don't you, dear?
- JULIA: Well, you can't starve people's hearts, Mrs Johnson, I don't care what you say! You called me 'dear'. That's nice. I'd like you next door. But it won't last.
- MARGARET: What won't last?
- JULIA: Our being together. We'll never come to Devil's Brig again, you'll see.
- MARGARET: Why not?
- JULIA: It's too like a dream. I'll never forget that house, Mrs Johnson!
- MARGARET: I like it less since you came. I like it here. I never thought I would. Perhaps it's the autumn coming on. I love your little front room where you gave me tea. You see how strange we are? I remember it glowing, like a fairy-tale. And the fog over the works, too, with the light shining through it. The way the trams creak in the morning. The brick walls, even. And now I've learned to love Barnley Ridge---you'll see, he'll snatch the work away from me.
- JULIA: Who?
- MARGARET: My husband. Whenever I learn to love something he grows cold on it. It seems I always love too late. It's like never catching up in a race.
- JULIA: I do feel sorry for you. They told me this morning that old Mr Johnson's on one of his tours, like he used to! He'll take my Jack to the slander-courts, Mrs Johnson! He promised he would. It does frighten me so!
- MARGARET: He'd never do it. Besides, it's there in the file, with his own signature. He can't get away from it.
- JULIA: He won't come up here, will he?
- MARGARET: Oh, he's been saying such nice things about you! You needn't be afraid!
- JULIA: Do you love Mr Lowell?

- MARGARET: No. Why?
- JULIA: Well, a woman should always have a little fancy, don't you think so? You'll have him at the Social, won't you?
- MARGARET: Oh, no!
- JULIA: Why not?
- MARGARET: I think he'd make Godfrey feel ashamed.
- JULIA: Why ashamed?
- MARGARET: In front of the workers.
- JULIA: But he ought to be proud! Mr Lowell's such an easu-come, easy-go sort of person!
- MARGARET: He's proud of Bull's Eye. Set face, horn-rimmed spectacles, never says more than he means. By the way, I've got something to show you.
- JULIA: I thought that was coming. When I got up this morning. A kind of sensation.
- MARGARET hands her a letter.
- MARGARET: Are you glad?
- JULIA: I can't tell! Well, would you believe it?
- MARGARET: What's your husband going to say?
- JULIA: I don't know. He's never mentioned it again. He put it out of sight. And you say he's got a set face and horn-rimmed spectacles, don't you?
- MARGARET: That's right.
- JULIA: Oh, I couldn't bear that!
- MARGARET: But he's good-looking!
- JULIA: It's the way you said it. No, I wouldn't be right for us, I can feel it! (Reading) 'Following receipt of signed contract I shall credit your account at Barnley Ridge Electric works with a month's advance salary, and send air-passage for yourself and your wife.' I said we'd never see Devil's Brig again!
- MARGARET: But you want to go.
- JULIA: The trouble is, if I knew how to behave! I'm sure they'll pick holes in me. And suppose they didn't like the look of us? We'd be stranded out there!
- MARGARET: When you get over there, try not to look forward to their company. You'd better take my advice. I learned the bitter way. Seem not to need them. It doesn't matter how lonely you are. Then they'll be drawn towards you. It's terribly hard, doing it. You've got such a soft heart! Try and be silent for minutes on end sometimes. That interests them. You

should remember what I've said. Don't forget it, from the moment you land.

- JULIA: We'll never go! It's for Jack to decide, and he's got more sense! You mean I've got no sense when you say I'm soft-hearted, don't you?
- MARGARET: If you like. Being soft-hearted means that, partly.
- JULIA: They sound horrible, Mrs Johnson!
- MARGARET: Oh, no, I didn't mean that! They're ordinary business people. Decent. Quite jolly.
- Enter GODFREY JOHNSON.
- JOHNSON: The old man's prowling round the works like a fox.
- JULIA: I'd better go!
- JOHNSON: Hullo, Mrs Meadows! Your husband's on his way up. Broken the news?
- MARGARET: Yes.
- JOHNSON: What do you say, Mrs Meadows? It's a wonderful chance, isn't it?
- JULIA: Well, we'll have to wait for Jack. I could have fallen through the floor!
- JOHNSON: Can't we get those files out of the way?
- MARGARET: What's the matter? You're prowling round, it seems to me.
- JOHNSON: He's finding fault with everything. Won't look at the achievements,---canteens and that sort of thing. Says I could cut my labour down by five or ten percent. Well, so I could. Accounts department, for instance. I could mechanise that lot and give forty percent of the staff their cards.
- MARGARET: What does it matter what he says?
- JOHNSON: Nothing. Only it gets me worked up.
- MARGARET: I hope he isn't swearing at people.
- JOHNSON: Oh, he's cleverer than that. He stands in front of them like a stone column asking them questions, then when he's finished he turns away without a word!
- MARGARET: It isn't his plant, to do that.
- JOHNSON: He's got it all in his head. It's marvellous. He knows every wire and assembly-line in the place!
- MARGARET: You respect him, then. That's different. Then you should run the place as he used to.
- JOHNSON: That's exactly the kind of help I get from you. Well, Mrs Meadows, we're still bickering, as you can see!

JULIA: I think it's nice, in a way!

JOHNSON: If there's any trouble out there write to me. I know old Bull's Eye like the back of my hand.

JULIA: You're very good, what you've done for us.

JOHNSON: For me it's a step forward.

MARGARET: For them, you mean.

JOHNSON: No, for me.

MARGARET: And what about them?

JOHNSON: I'll tell you something else, Mrs Meadows. It all happens at once. Your husband was called up by the Personnel section this morning. He's been offered a job in Speciality Products.

JULIA: No!

MARGARET: Did you arrange that?

JOHNSON: No.

MARGARET: Little wonder the men are turning him a cold shoulder!

JOHNSON: Who said they are?

MARGARET: Isn't that true, Mrs Meadows?

JULIA: Oh, I don't think they'd ever hate Jack!

JOHNSON: And in that case, what have you been doing walking through the works with his wife? Do you think that improves his situation?

MARGARET: She's on the catering committee.

JOHNSON: She's in with you. And he's been offered a job in Speciality Products, no doubt, because he's in with me. But I didn't do anything. You'll have to accept, Margaret, that the world is made in a certain way. It isn't all my will.

MARGARET: You have a way of pushing fate along---giving it a little shove.

JULIA: Some people are nicer and some people aren't.

JOHNSON: And for God's sake don't depress the girl before she starts!

Enter JACK MEADOWS.

JOHNSON: Ah, good. The old man wants you up here.

JULIA: Oh, no!

MEADOWS: I saw him downstairs. He smiled. Funny cove, isn't he?

JULIA: Well, it's come through, Jack!

MEADOWS: What's come through?

JULIA: The job out there!

MEADOWS: Just as I thought. I thought, they've called me upstairs to sign on the dotted line. Well, would you believe it?

JOHNSON: Show him the letter.

MARGARET gives him the letter.

JULIA: It's just like a dream, Jack!

MEADOWS: I expect I seem ungrateful. Not jumping for joy.

JOHNSON: No. Good news doesn't come like that.

MEADOWS: I was called up by Personnel.

JOHNSON: Yes, he told me.

MEADOWS: Was that your doing?

JOHNSON: No. I've just answered that question.

MEADOWS: He offered me a job in Speciality Products.

JULIA: Well, let's take it, Jack! I've been thinking! You'd better stay here.

MEADOWS: You don't want me to. For weeks you've been dreaming away to yourself, quietly, like a woman, haven't you---about me chasing the flies off my knees with one of those horse-hair fly-whisks? ~~xxxx~~, clapping my hands for tiffin, eh? Our bed's been tropical for weeks. I nearly got a sunburn.

JULIA: It's all very well to pull legs!

MEADOWS: It's the truth, you damned-well know it is!

JULIA: Well, it's exciting---think of flying in an aeroplane and going in the sun, and a wooden house with great big whirring fans! But it makes me tremble. I do and I don't, sort of thing!

MEADOWS: It's funny. The Personnel manager gave me a glass of sherry. He's a nice man. And do you know what I thought? I thought, He shouldn't be nice. He ought to be nasty, like I imagined him. It made me feel let-down. The old intimacy's gone. My hands don't feel right, on the work.

JOHNSON: That's freedom. If I tell you what, I'll make you free-er still. I can give you an assurance, in writing if you like, that if things get too hot out there, say you don't settle down, this job in Speciality Products 'll be waiting for you.

MEADOWS: So I'm caught both ways. Cunning, isn't it? I've got to be a borjoy now, if I go or stay.

MARGARET: You're afraid it's in you, to be one.

MEADOWS: That's right, I am, now. I'm caught, yet I'm supposed to be free. I don't feel free, but I've got freedom. I can make life with my own

hands. Before, I used to watch life, sort of thing. It was like a procession with colours and lights. I no more thought of me or Julia being in it than flying in the air! It just went rolling by while we had a cup of tea! And now I can go up and interfere with it. Get up on one of the big golden lions. Do you see what I mean? I can make bits of it with my own hands. And it doesn't feel right.

JOHNSON: Do you want to sit in a cocoon all your life, then?

MEADOWS: Yes and no. That's where the borjoy starts. The processions' gone anyway, so life's made up its mind for me. I'm a borjoy now. You say you've been looking for something all your life, Mr Johnson: it's the procession you've been after. It's marvellous when you see it. Do you remember the girl at the spinning wheel, 'My quiet has gone, my heart is dark, I shall never have peace as long as I live?'

JOHNSON: You've got a wonderful memory.

MEADOWS: We're in the same boat now, you and me. But suppose the procession goes for everybody? Suppose there's no fairground any more?

JOHNSON: You mean, suppose everybody's free?

MEADOWS: That's right. Suppose?

JOHNSON: No more wars. A sound roof over everybody's head.

MEADOWS: That's right. Heaven on earth. Only no angels going by.

MARGARET: Or a clear sky without any sunshine.

MEADOWS: Notice we don't do our turns any more, Julia?

JULIA: There hasn't been time, duck!

MEADOWS: Was that 'duck' you said? Why---! If you can love---

JULIA: I can't, Jack!

MEADOWS: ---! an old baboon like me, it must be---

JULIA: You'll make me cry!

MEADOWS: 'Yes, it must be---because we're---

Enter MR JOHNSON.

MR JOHNSON: Tea-pot singing? You'll sing another tune by and by, lad.

MARGARET: Did nurse come, too?

MR JOHNSON: What do I want with a blasted nurse all the time?

MARGARET: Sit down, then.

MR JOHNSON: How do you do, my dear?

JULIA: How do you do, sir?

MR JOHNSON: My son tells me you'll be serving tea to the Africans soon, Mr Tea-pot. You're wasting ten percent of the plant, Godfrey Johnson, do you hear that? I could cut your overheads by a quarter in two years. I'll tell you something. You're running this firm from the Industrial Relations Department, and it should be run from here.

JOHNSON: I keep a general eye on things.

MR JOHNSON: Not good enough! Get round the plant! Shanklin's Pony! Good for your corns. See 'em touching their caps to me this morning, down in 'roduction? He's still got the old touch, eh, Mr Tea-pot?

MEADOWS: That's right.

MR JOHNSON: Servant called me 'sir' this morning, Mr Tea-pot. Have to sack him. Mustn't call me 'sir'. What the devil are those?

JOHNSON: Personnel files.

MR JOHNSON: That damned word 'personnel's been ringing in my ears ever since you took this place over! It's production, not personnel, you're after--- and I can tell from your work-sheets that the stuff's not coming off the assembly-lines as it should. Too much entertaining. Too much tea-potting. You've got a man in overalls sitting in your office like Lord Muck with his wife in the middle of the morning. Now that sort of thing wouldn't have happened in my day, and it's never happened in nearly a hundred and fifty years of Johnson firms, and I'll tell you something, it doesn't bode well!

MARGARET: I wish you wouldn't excite yourself like this, Harry!

MR JOHNSON: And I'll tell you something, Mr Tea-pot. You're on the pay-roll of this establishment, and your job's downstairs on the assembly-lines, not here. And until you've been given your cards you're a worker and a subordinate, and you touch your cap to me, do you understand?

JOHNSON: I asked him up here.

MEADOWS: Oh, that's the way the wind blows, is it? Well, just have a look at this, Mr Johnson.

He goes across and signs the contract.

JULIA:
XAEK Jack! You've done it!

MEADOWS: Free man!

MR JOHNSON: Good Lord. Mr Tea-pot did something. Boys downstairs'll go on strike. Give it to me here. (MARGARET hands him the contract) It's a contract, too! By God, you get it buttered on both sides nowadays, don't you, and along the edges, too! Two months this, six months that, a couple of air tickets---where does the work come in? I can tell you something, Tea-pot,

you're a damned sight better off than I was in my young days!

JULIA: What made you do it?

MEADOWS: It was 'touch your cap'!

MR JOHNSON: That's how the first Johnson started. Wouldn't buckle under. Signed a contract. Lost all his friends. Richest man in the country in five years. Never wanted to do it. Rum, isn't it? Your wife'll push you further in the sludge. See it in her face.

MARGARET: Let me take you home, Harry.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, no. Got to face a tribunal first, eh, Godfrey Johnson? Two judges, no witnesses. I'm here to answer a charge, directed at me first by Mr Tea-pot and then supported by my own son, that I don't pay compensation for industrial accidents. Defence: I always pay adequate compensation for industrial accidents, always have done, always will. Those are the rules of Barnley Ridge Electric Company Ltd., inception 1902. Now give me evidence, at once, to the contrary!

JOHNSON: Where's that file?

MARGARET: I don't know.

JOHNSON: I said, where's that file?

MARGARET: I think your father ought to go home.

JOHNSON (taking down a file) This is your personal file. And this is what it says about Jock Murphy. 'I spoke to Murphy and he was willing not to register the accident if I could assure him a position here for the rest of his working days, and a pension. I put him on the telephones at the main door.' That's where Murphy is now.

MR JOHNSON: Signature?

JOHNSON: Signed by you.

MR JOHNSON: Show it here.

JOHNSON: Show it to my father, Margaret.

She does so.

MR JOHNSON (after reading it) Call the fellow up here. Don't remember.

JOHNSON (at the telephone) Send up Mr Murphy at once, main door.

MR JOHNSON: This genuine?

JOHNSON: Do you think I'd fake your signature?

MR JOHNSON: Wouldn't put it past you. Rascal.

JOHNSON: This man was blinded for life.

MARGARET: All right, Godfrey.

- MR JOHNSON: Private arrangement, probably. Gave him money and didn't write it down. Often did that. Couple of hundred quid out of my own pocket---forget about it, old chap, we'll call it quits. Probably did that.
- JOHNSON: You didn't make any arrangement, private or otherwise. And that's the meaning of this word 'personnel'. 'Personnel' means I'm not having that kind of thing happening again. And that's the difference between my company and yours. I've got to repair your damage!
- MEADOWS: You'll never do that. Factories won't ever be natural and you'll never make them so. That's the trouble with your class, refusing to realise that, afraid of not being up to date.
- MR JOHNSON: Hear what he says? You're in it as well as I am, Godfrey Johnson. Mr Tea-pot wants to be natural. Wants a tiger-skin and do war-dances!
- JOHNSON: You never registered any personal accidents at all, including the personal ones to my mother, did you?
- MR JOHNSON: Why you---!
- JULIA: Please, Mr Johnson!
- MARGARET: You can't stop them.
- JOHNSON: She had such a delightful, chattering way of talking! You used to get up and walk out sometimes when she was in the middle of a story. You killed her with your hard will, didn't you?
- MR JOHNSON: She didn't give me sex!
- JULIA: He's crying!
- MR JOHNSON: I swear I loved her! But she didn't---!
- MARGARET: Haven't you said enough, Godfrey?
- MR JOHNSON: She never---!
- MEADOWS: Look out!
- Mr Johnson stumbles.
- JOHNSON: Get the doctor quick!
- JULIA: We shouldn't have done it!
- MARGARET (at the 'phone) Send the doctor up at once.
- JULIA: We shouldn't have got mixed up!
- MEADOWS: Get a cushion for his head. Here, rest your head, Mr Johnson.
- MARGARET: You'll be lucky if you haven't killed him!
- JOHNSON: Brandy in my desk, quick!
- Enter JOCK MURPHY,

MURPHY: Good morning, sir!

JOHNSON: Who the devil's that?

MURPHY: How are you, sir? You sound the same as ever! I heard you were making the rounds. It's been nearly ten years, I think!

MEADOWS: What are you talking about, Jock? It's young Mr Johnson!

MARGARET: He is blind!

MURPHY: I could have sworn that was his father!

MARGARET: My husband'll see you tomorrow.

JOHNSON: I didn't mean it!

MEADOWS: It's funny. He made me sign that. The old man.

MURPHY: Is that Mr Meadows?

JULIA: We shouldn't have got mixed up!

JOHNSON: I've killed him. I think I've killed him!

CURTAIN

- PR.
1. The ~~Personal Relations~~ ^{PR.} Office, meaning
~~not~~ public but personal relations.
 2. The den, with the school whips,
 the phone and grand piano, french
 windows.
 3. Butlin's Camp, ~~french windows~~

1. The cabaret element (the Ivor Novello record); the
 spying element (the radio outfit); Jack and Julia
 Meehan with their 'lion.' They discover an affinity.
2. The row + the father of ~~the assassin~~ All background
 of the war here: ~~the assassin's father~~ Sm's
 role in trying to prevent war, his later news-
 2) the resistance in Germany. Harry newspaper.
3. Butlin's Camp. What function? Why is ~~it~~ ^(Saw.?) ~~it~~ ^{needed?} ~~it~~ ^{there?}

DEVIL'S BRIG

A Play

by

Maurice Rowdon,

CHARACTERS.

Forbhaven

Godfrey Johnson.

Margaret Johnson, his wife.

Jack Meadows.

Julia Meadows, his wife.

Ted Lowell.

'Mr Johnson', Godfrey's father.

Jock Murphy.

1.

A

SCENE: An office in the Barnley Ridge Electric works.
 GODFREY JOHNSON, alone, performing a dance.
 ENTER MARGARET JOHNSON.

MARGARET: What the hell are you doing?

JOHNSON: Come in. Come in.

MARGARET: Why are you out of breath?

JOHNSON: Been dancing. Silly, isn't it? I remembered being with old Bull's Eye. It was just outside Bizerta. We rigged up a stage and did a sketch together.

MARGARET: There's a letter from him this morning.

JOHNSON: ~~No!~~ Now that's telepathy! I could feel him right by me!

MARGARET: You've got a man waiting.

JOHNSON: Who?

MARGARET: Jack Meadows.

JOHNSON: Didn't I see him before?

MARGARET: Once. About a month ago. He didn't have much to say.

JOHNSON: So what brings him here again?

MARGARET: He's decided to talk, I suppose.

JOHNSON (^{pick up}reading from a book^{and reads}): 'Monotony, inducing state of revery.' Hear that?

MARGARET: Godfrey.

JOHNSON: All right. ~~Head.~~ Five ahead.

MARGARET: 'Jack Meadows. Thirty-four. Technical department. Fifteen years in the plant.'

JOHNSON: ~~Fifteen? That's unusual for his age.~~ He came when he was nineteen. ~~And stayed? That's unusual.~~

MARGARET: ~~He's~~ Married. No children.

~~JOHNSON: What's the Personnel Report like?~~

MARGARET: Good. ~~And that's the fourth interview this morning.~~

JOHNSON: Anyone after that?

^{PENNY}
MARGARET: Jock Murphy.

JOHNSON: Been here before?

MARGARET: No.

JOHNSON: I wonder what old Bull's Eye's got to say?

MARGARET: Don't forget the name ---Jack Meadows.

^{PENNY! cover. "San you k the dm lcp + spec il"}
~~Exit MARGARET.~~

[^]
JOHNSON opens door to JACK MEADOWS.

JOHNSON: Come in, Mr Meadows. ^{MEADOWS came in, dressed & work.} Won't you sit down?

MEADOWS: Thank you, sir.

JOHNSON: ~~You were~~ here before, weren't you?

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: About ^A month ago?

MEADOWS: Yes.

JOHNSON: Well, how are things? ~~in the Technical department?~~

MEADOWS: I'm in a nice little group, sir. I wanted to come before, sir---

JOHNSON: ~~Yes,~~ You didn't want to say much last time.

MEADOWS: Well, I had an idea it was all going down on my PERSONNEL Report.

JOHNSON: Oh, no! The two things are quite separate. Anything you say up here is quite confidential. You've been here since you were nineteen, haven't you?

MEADOWS: Yes, sir. ^{working}

JOHNSON: ~~That's unusual.~~ You must know a lot about the firm.

MEADOWS: Yes, sir. There were five hundred hands when I came.

JOHNSON: Could you name all the different departments [?] ~~in the plant?~~

MEADOWS: Yes, sir. Now?

JOHNSON: Well, I only wanted to know if---

MEADOWS: Yes, of course, sir! Well, there are eight in all. Accounts, Operation, Production, Inspection, Technical, Speciality products, Public Relations and Industrial Relations.

JOHNSON: Good!

MEADOWS: Ten out of ten, sir!

JOHNSON: Are you quite happy with the Technical people, Mr Meadows, or do you hope one day to...?

MEADOWS: Well, I really aspire to Speciality Products, sir. You work right under the scientists there. You've got experiments going on all the time. Is all this going down on the tape? (looking me)

JOHNSON: ^{on}What? (holding his eye)

MEADOWS: Haven't you got a tape recorder ^{on the gramophone.} there?

JOHNSON: Yes. The one?

MEADOWS: ^{People} They say you keep it on all the time, ^{record what we say,} sir, then play it over afterwards, is that so?

JOHNSON: ^{Why talk!} That's not true at all, Mr Meadows! Come and see for yourself. ^{It's an ordinary gramophone.}

MEADOWS: It's a nice set, isn't it?

JOHNSON: Clear as a bell!

MEADOWS: One of ours, sir?

JOHNSON: I don't think so.

MEADOWS: ~~We put out so many models these days you can never tell, can you? Nice job, though.~~

JOHNSON: ^{Good} My goodness, Mr Meadows, fancy anybody using one of these for interviews! ~~But a bunch of people did, you know, in a steel works near York. Then they wondered afterwards why people were reticent!~~

MEADOWS: ~~That's right, sir. It's like the Personnel Report~~ ^{if a man thinks what he says is going down on the Personnel Report he's not going to say much, is he?}

JOHNSON: ^{of} Well, you needn't be afraid about that, Mr Meadows, ~~as I said before.~~ There are two ideas behind our scheme: first, the happiness of the people working on this plant, and secondly output. You've no idea how long it has taken industry to realise that the two go together! Yet it isn't a very profound idea, is it?

MEADOWS: ~~JOHNSON~~ Are you interviewing everybody, sir?

JOHNSON: In time I hope to, yes.

MEADOWS: Do you deal with complaints?

JOHNSON: We listen to everything a man likes to tell us. But we don't deal with the complaint. Our job is to prepare a permanent interviewing scheme for this plant, so that when we've finished everybody here knows he can get a confidential interview whenever he wants it. And that's part of my job, too, to prepare a body of trusty interviewers from the Public Relations department. You look a bit puzzled. Would you like me to explain the whole scheme, Mr Meadows?

MEADOWS: Yes, sir, I would.

~~(condemned, a y h d t r e n d i n g h o u s e)~~

JOHNSON: I expect you are wondering what happens to the complaints. They are still in the hands of the Personnel Department. You see, Mr Meadows, our idea is to find out what's on a man's mind. You've got to realise, you see, that when a man makes a persistent complaint about ventilation, in one of the wiring rooms, let us say, it may not really be about ventilation at all but the expression of a grudge he feels against another worker whose bench is by the window and who likes to keep the window closed all day. The complaint is a pretext for something much deeper. Now all the Personnel department can do is to deal with the official complaint. It alters the ventilation. But we can tell the Personnel department that this is quite useless. The man will only find something else to complain about, and again it will involve the other worker.

MEADOWS: Oh, I see now, sir---

JOHNSON: Before the last war, when these interviewing schemes began, people only thought in terms of working conditions---ventilation, rest-pauses, sanitation, wage-incentives and so forth. But changes in that field didn't raise the output as much as they expected. Their mistake was to listen to the complaints and not to the people who were making them. After all, it's no good giving a man good piece-rates, a well-ventilated room, meals with the correct number of calories, long rest-pauses and decent wash-rooms if you then put him on the same bench as a man he detests, is it? It sounds very simple, to say that a man is much more than a wage-unit to be properly fed and ventilated, but it has taken us nearly two hundred years of industrial development to find out!

MEADOWS: Well, you've certainly given me a lot to think about.

JOHNSON: Sometimes one of our interviews---in a few minutes of quiet discussion---can bring out a grievance which has preyed on a man's mind for twenty years. And just because he never had a chance of airing it that grievance may have become obsessive and started to warp his whole character. Now what we're introducing here, Mr Meadows, is a permanent interviewing scheme conducted by the Public Relations department, that will end this state of affairs. How absurd it is, when you come to look at it, to bring about two thousand people into daily contact with each other ~~xxxx~~ and expect no problem. Yet there are plants up and down the country which won't hear a word said in our favour.

Five hundred

MEADOWS: That's right, sir. You get these people with backward minds, don't you?

JOHNSON: Backward in their own interests, too.

MEADOWS: It's a scheme for everybody, isn't it? Not just for the people on top. I think any scheme's good that doesn't go up to the Personnel people. I used to be on assembly work. Shortly after that I got a nasty report. Thirteen years ago. I was twenty-one at the time. I used to do a lot of gallivanting around. I don't think these

Personnel people liked it.

JOHNSON: You were too much of a spark for them?

MEADOWS: Yes, that's right! Yet you'd think a spark in an electric plant would be useful, wouldn't you? They gave us a test once, when I was just turned twenty. It was called the Finger Dexterity Test. You got about fifty tiny little pegs about an eighth of an inch thick and you had to fit them into holes just a bit bigger. It took some doing, Mr Johnson.

JOHNSON: Were you good at that?

MEADOWS: No. There didn't seem to be any brains in it. I like to use my brains. That was under your father. You own the plant now sir, don't you?

JOHNSON: Well, I'm chairman of the board. That's not exactly ownership, you know. There isn't much ownership nowadays. It's all shares and boards and shareholders' meetings and that sort of thing.

MEADOWS: Do you explain the scheme to everybody, sir?

JOHNSON: I try to.

MEADOWS: I bet some of them get out of their depth, don't they, sir? Some of the soldermen! I was on solder-work for a bit, too. You wear goggles all the time. The other people think they can push you about. Yes, there aren't many trades in this plant I'm not familiar with. Now the assembly room, that's fiddly work. I used to turn out fifty-five telephone-relays in a day. I think it's better work for the girls. None of those parts are bigger than your finger-nail. Do you read poetry, sir? I see you've got a lot of books up there.

JOHNSON: ^(aght a long look at her) Now and then I do, yes. I like singing, dancing.

MEADOWS: This hasn't anything to do with the works, sir---

JOHNSON: No, tell me. Please do.

MEADOWS: I've bought a poem along.

JOHNSON: You write poetry?

MEADOWS: Yes quite a bit, sir.

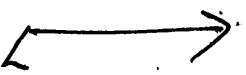
JOHNSON: Most interesting!

MEADOWS: One or two of the boys do. Only in the Technical department. It was partly me hearing you'd got a tape recorder -- ~~got a tape recorder~~ ^{got a phone up her} ~~did some recording up her~~

JOHNSON: Oh, yes? But I do so!

MEADOWS: I expect you think I'm mad. ^{Have you read Anden, Thomas, Day Lewis?}
JOHNSON: I think writing poetry is very sane, Mr Meadows.

MEADOWS: ^{Oh} ~~No, what I mean is, would you mind if I recited this into your tape-machine?~~ ^{read}

JOHNSON: ^{h/k} Well, I suppose not. Not at all! 

MEADOWS: You know why, don't you?

The ~~other~~ ^{main} ~~part~~ ^{part} goes to the
recording apparatus he has
decided previously
indicates that M should
put down at the
table where he places
Porter microphone.

JOHNSON: No?

MEADOWS: Well, it's no good me going down the assembly room where all the recording stuff is. They'd pull my leg. It wouldn't do for a Technical man. I've never heard my lines being spoken, you see.

JOHNSON: Well, of course. ~~(Handing him the microphone)~~
Got the poem here?

MEADOWS: In my head. It's called 'A Prayer'.

JOHNSON: A prayer? All right, shoot.

MEADOWS: Give us this day
Our heart
O Lord, give us our part
To play;
Undo our settled clause
Of pain,
But keep the cause
For which we came,
Give us this day
Our daily heart.

JOHNSON: ~~(winding the tape back)~~ ^{miracly of} Give us this day our daily heart! Most interesting!

MEADOWS: It just came out like that---like a prayer.

JOHNSON: I like 'the settled clause of pain.' What do you mean by that?

MEADOWS: Well, I mean how everything's closed in. ~~The~~ day starts early in the morning and ends at night, and there doesn't seem any escape? Always the same. It's like a finished clause, with a full stop. ~~And it fetches blood.~~

JOHNSON: ~~And did you intend a play on the word 'claws'--- of a bird?~~

MEADOWS: ~~No. Wish I did now. Cunning, isn't it--- 'clause' and 'claws'?~~

JOHNSON: ~~And why the pain?~~

MEADOWS: What?

JOHNSON: Why the pain?

MEADOWS: I don't know.

JOHNSON: But that's remarkable---a remarkable poem---

MEADOWS: 'Undo' there means turn the clause with a full stop into a sentence which never finishes.

JOHNSON: Yes. Most interesting! ~~Shall we play it back?~~ ^{I'll get it cut right away!}

MEADOWS: I'll go all of a tis-was, like my wife says! ~~All right, pull the plug, Mon-sewer!~~ ^{Truck}
~~Poem is repeated on tape.~~ ^{I AM eyes, hi}

MEADOWS: Marvellous, isn't it, hearing your own voice? Like talking to yourself from heaven. Uncanny, too. Not right, really. Shall I tell you what was on my mind when I wrote it?

[Faint handwritten text]

→ A clause is a contract and
the class of an angle.

[Faint handwritten notes]

[Faint handwritten text]

[Faint handwritten text]

JOHNSON: Yes.

MEADOWS: I was thinking of the assembly room.

JOHNSON: All those years ago?

MEADOWS: ~~That's just what I was going to say.~~ The parts they gave you were no bigger than your finger-nail. You put them together. Then you ~~you~~ slid them down a chute. Fifty-five times a day. I got boils on my arse on that job! Talk about laugh! They changed me over to the Test Room and the boils went just like that! I said to the nurse, I said, now what's the hell's the use of you putting that yellow stuff on, its psychological! Talk about laugh! We had some laughs in those days!

JOHNSON: Don't you laugh any more?

MEADOWS: Not like mum and dad. Dad's name was Walter. She used to call him Water Closet. That sort of thing, you know---anything for a lark.

JOHNSON: You said something in this poem about playing a part? Don't you feel you play a part here?

MEADOWS: I don't know!

JOHNSON: How is it you haven't got into Speciality Products? I've been wondering that ever since you came in the room.

MEADOWS: Ah, well!

JOHNSON: How did this Personnel Report come into being?

MEADOWS: They can see I'm ~~the~~ ^{as} the same as them, that's what they don't like---!

JOHNSON: Who?

MEADOWS: Up at Personnel. They're College men. I was mapped out for a college, too, and they don't like it!

JOHNSON: Why didn't you go to a college?

MEADOWS: I got married.

JOHNSON: When?

MEADOWS: When I was twenty.

JOHNSON: A man goes to college at seventeen or eighteen.

MEADOWS: Oh, well! I wanted the money in my pocket, I suppose.

JOHNSON: What did you mean in this poem by 'keep the cause for which we came'? You want God to take the pain away but keep something---what's the something?

MEADOWS: Well, there must be some meaning to things, mustn't there? Originally, there must have been. ~~Two hundred years ago, say.~~ There must be a little spark somewhere. We've gone astray, somewhere.

JOHNSON: Who?

MEADOWS: People like me.

JOHNSON: ~~But~~ Not people like me?

MEADOWS: Well, you seem to know what you're doing. I bet you took over your father's plant because you wanted to.

JOHNSON: *Not at all. I'd prefer freedom.*
~~I did, yes.~~ You mean you want freedom, then?

MEADOWS: ~~What the hell am I doing down there?~~ You could just as well get a puppet and work it with electrical shocks. Finger-work. Like this. I did that for nearly twenty years.

JOHNSON: Do you think it would have been ^{better} if you'd been to college?

~~MEADOWS: Yes! They have it better all right---~~

JOHNSON: ~~Who?~~
well, I would like to be like them

MEADOWS: ~~In the Personnel office!~~ Stuck-up, bloody trolleyman's ink-bottles!

JOHNSON: ~~Who on earth? Trolleyman's...?~~ M. It means ~~down~~ down of ~~it~~
~~I'm a college man.~~ *Saw: I'm a college man.*

MEADOWS: And look at the difference. Look at you sitting back in your chair, choosing, choosing, choosing! And I'm all stiff---look at me here, sitting on the edge of my chair, waiting to be asked questions---always waiting---always waiting to know what's going to happen to my life!

JOHNSON: Well, don't wait any more. Change your life.

MEADOWS: Do you think I could? Once in, you're in for good, Mr Johnson! That's a decision you take when you're fifteen.

JOHNSON: You think you'd be happier in Speciality Products?

MEADOWS: Oh, Speciality Products! I'm a bloody product!

JOHNSON: And I'm not?

MEADOWS: No! It's choice, choice, choice!---'What shall I be, what shall I do?' Suppose I said, 'All right, I'll change my life,' can't you see I'm a worker down to the tips of my fingers, look at the way I walk, it's the way I eat, I've got a special sort of jerk, I'm a different sort of person, Mr Johnson, that's all there is to say! Look at you, sitting there, you've got the personality---I don't know, it's something---you're comfortable---you sit well in your own body---do you see what I mean?

JOHNSON: You mustn't get worked up, Meadows.

MEADOWS: That's right, call me 'Meadows'. I'd like to cry sometimes. Five minutes ago it was Mr. Meadows. I just open my mouth and you take off the Mister. Suppose I called you 'Johnson'.

JOHNSON: Do.

MEADOWS: Oh, yes, there's no class any more, we're all equal! But I'm still a product. My mother and father didn't use to be like this. My mum

started out at half a dolliar a week, twelve hours a day nearly at the match-factory, when she was just turned eleven---and you ought to see the way she laughs!

JOHNSON: You mean she laughs more than you?

MEADOWS: I'd say!

JOHNSON: Do you want to go back, then?

MEADOWS: Oh, yes, I know that onxe, too---

JOHNSON: The dole in those days, ~~Al mean just before the last war, was~~ twenty-seven bob a week.

MEADOWS: Oh, you're right. You've got the facts and figures. It's no good. I could cry for people sometimes.

JOHNSON: I think your mum and dad needed crying for.

MEADOWS: You shouldn't call them mum and dad. Don't you think you have to patronise me. When you say ~~it~~ that it feels as if you're trying to squeeze yourself down to half your size---to be level with me---

like

JOHNSON: I didn't meant that.

MEADOWS: It's funny. You sit there and I'm sure you expect everybody who comes here to be shyer than you. You expect to bring them out---with a few questions, don't you? Why should that be?

JOHNSON: If I went to them in a similar capacity I'd be shy, too.

MEADOWS: No, you wouldn't. This is how you'd do it. 'Good morning! How d'you do, sir? My name's Johnson!'

JOHNSON (laughing) You're a damn ^{ed good} fine mimic!

MEADOWS: Take those words 'damn ^{ed good} fine'. There's a sort of abandon about them, isn't there, Mr Johnson? But if you'd been brought up like me there'd always be a little fellow shivering inside you, saying, 'Yes, that's right, sir, that's right!' I reckon I've said 'That's right' a million times since I was a kid! Because that's ~~what~~ what you're taught---it's the other man who calls the tune! Take some of these college men who come up from nothing. Just you imagine, they've always got this shivering little chap inside them, and if they hold up their heads and stand on their own two feet without wobbling, I suppose that's marvellous enough, I couldn't do it! Yes, I often wonder what they feel like when they stand in the classy drawing-rooms---I bet people smell them out---

JOHNSON: Are there classy drawing rooms any more?

MEADOWS: No. The war put paid to the and I can't say I'm sorry. But

JOHNSON: ~~Then the college man's O.K.!~~

MEADOWS: There are still classy people. Like you. You can't help walking across this room as if you owned it, and I can't help walking across

it---

JOHNSON: ---As if it owned you.

MEADOWS: Yes. It doesn't matter if the drawing rooms ^{are} there or not, the people haven't changed. ^R

JOHNSON: ^{my dear chap} But that's what ~~higher wages and health-insurance are for, my dear chap~~---that's why I'm here---to make you feel as if this room was yours---to make you feel like me.

MEADOWS: ^{start in the} It won't happen like that. There's nobody under me, ^L. There's nobody shows me any respect. Nothing like the respect you got. I'll tell you the way things are going. We're all going to feel like me. Not the other way round. Your children are going to feel like me. I've thought a lot about this. I don't feel I've ~~got~~ a right to have a self. Sometimes I can hardly get the word 'I' out of my mouth. I want to cover it up all the time.

JOHNSON: And my self's been cultivated? ^{1/2}

MEADOWS: That's right! You had a nurse, didn't you?

JOHNSON: A governess, yes.

MEADOWS: That was the idea, to cultivate you! To make you a pleasing shape, Mr Johnson! The idea was to make you a gentleman---

JOHNSON: My dear chap, you're out of date---

MEADOWS: But you are a gentlemen! I don't mean you feel superior to me or anybody else. A gentleman doesn't! I don't mean you're richer than me or even better educated. I mean the way your hands are laying there, like I said--- that little smile you gave me when I came in--- it's the feeling of comfort all round you--- you've been given time to grow, Mr Johnson, you've grown to full height! But I'm damned if I have.

JOHNSON: That's your test now, isn't it? As to whether you can cultivate a self as well---with equal chances, I mean?

MEADOWS: They aren't equal chances, Mr Johnson. I haven't got the time for one thing. You need time to cultivate a self in.

JOHNSON: So your only hope is a win on the football pools?

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: ^{To be} And ~~become~~ a member of the class that sweated your mother and father twelve hours a day!

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: Except that the class is ~~now under control~~ ~~socially~~ and can't sweat people any more. They ~~can~~ haven't got uninterrupted time either, now, have they?

MEADOWS: ^(with a smile) ~~Yes~~ ^{Yes} Oh, they can sweat. ~~They can do it legally.~~ ^{can get round laws.} B

JOHNSON: Well, I don't find you very realistic.

MEADOWS: Look at it this way. If you sat down and talked to me you'd be talking about a real self. You're an individual---

JOHNSON: 'Bourgeois' would suit you better, wouldn't it? A man of free choice?

MEADOWS: That's right. 'Borjoy'. It sounds right, too. 'Bore-joy', like boring into life. Kill-joy, sort of thing. Takes all the joy out of life, that's what the so-called individuals have done.

JOHNSON: Very well, then, when I, the bourgeois, talk, it's about a real self, but when you---

MEADOWS: When I talk it's about a social problem. See what I mean? Like now. I'm not myself. I'm a hand down in the Technical department. And your class stopped me having a self in the first place. It put my life on a schedule. And it's up to the same game now. See what I mean? You're kind now. You don't sweat me any more like you did my mother and father. You don't look down your nose at me. But I'm still a 'hand'. Well-paid, nicely ventilated. But a hand. With problems. And you're here to settle the problems. It's the same world, Mr Johnson. You remember what I said---
Give us ~~saxxheart~~ this day
Our heart
O Lord, give us our part
To play.
You've got your part to play, Mr Johnson. I haven't. When I die I shall have a flat life like an operating table to look backon!

MEADOWS: We're bodies without faces, Mr Johnson.

JOHNSON: Who's we?

STET

MEADOWS: The workers.

JOHNSON: ~~That isn't true. I can tell you the people who come in this room have deeper faces than any I've seen in my own class. The fact that they hold their faces still doesn't make any difference. Also I don't think of you as a social problem at all, Mr Meadows. I listen to every man, or try to, as if he was the first man I'd ever listened to.~~

MEADOWS: ~~Do you know, the only time I really enjoy myself is down at the camp every summer. We go there every year, the wife and me. It's called the Sea Bells Holiday camp. It's funny, they clock you in and clock you out like a factory, you can't call your soul your own, but talk about laugh! You don't stop laughing from the time you get there! My wife's a scream. She's got a real gift for burlesque.~~

X X

JOHNSON: Like you, if I may say so.

MEADOWS: Have you seen our turn? At Christmas?

JOHNSON: No.

MEADOWS: Do it every year. Boys love it. I married her fourteen years ago. She's a magnificent woman, Mr Johnson. She's a favourite at Sea

XX

Bells. Her name's always coming over the loudspeakers. 'Mrs Meadows, come and give us a hand, will you? There's a kiddy says he's lost!' It's a wonder they never gave her a job down there, she'd be marvellous. There's always somebody to have a laugh with. It's like going back to old times. That's what my street was like before I was born. Easy-come, easy-go, sort of thing.

JOHNSON: And it changed?

MEADOWS: ~~People didn't change inside. That takes time.~~ ~~But~~ All the old-time things stopped. You don't see the muffin man any more with a tray on his head and a big bell, and that piece of green felt over the muffins, ~~do you,~~ on Sunday afternoons? You can't get peas-pudding and faggots. I can remember those carts with cockles and winkles. I can remember my uncle Harry coming over in a black suit and a bowler hat on Sunday afternoons and picking the winkles out with a pin. Nasty habits he had. Gobbled his tea. I'll never forget that noise. And Aunt Ada with those boots that used to button up the ankle. And Guy Fawkes night! Do you remember the old Crystal Palace at Sydenham?

JOHNSON: ~~Yes.~~ Don't ~~they~~ still have Guy Fawkes night?

MEADOWS: Yes, but it's not the same.

JOHNSON: Aren't ~~bon~~fires and fireworks good enough for you?

MEADOWS: I know. I can't put my finger on it. The fires don't have that glow like the old ones. Faces have changed.

JOHNSON: You mean you're not young any more.

MEADOWS: ~~No. Oh, no. That whole race has gone, like my aunt Ada, I can tell you. I tell you what, Mr Johnson, for joy people smell at you. They sniff round you like dogs. Have you ever noticed that? They've always got something going on in their brains. 'Who is he?', 'What sort is he?' And the people round here are getting like that. I'm a bit like that myself. It's the money, I suppose. We're all getting like the gentlemen, but without the fun and without the neck! You can't have twenty million gentlemen, Mr Johnson!~~

JOHNSON: God forbid!

MEADOWS: You ought to have seen my aunt Ada and uncle Harry come in the room. Uncle Harry never smiled. Ever such a tall man. Not if there wasn't something funny. [^] But we sort of orange. Do you see what I mean? We smile all the time. People want to be getting on with each other all the time, whereas in the old days they didn't worry. [^] People don't sit inside themselves like they used to, they're peeping outside all the time!

He used to dominate by laugh from landing cart.

JOHNSON: ~~But~~ down at the camp ~~they're~~ different?

MEADOWS: That's right. ^{But} They slip back to their old

XX

~~was to~~
we slip back it = 12 times
selves down at Maughley Bay

JOHNSON: ~~Did you say~~ Maughley Bay? That's twenty miles from where I live! Used to paddle in the sea there when I was a kid!

MEADOWS: Go on?

JOHNSON: ^{The} Devil's Brig, ^{as Louise ~~is~~ called.} ~~Heard talk of it?~~

~~MEADOWS: Devil's what?~~

JOHNSON: ~~Devil's Brig. Sounds grim, doesn't it? Lovely old house, though. It's been called that for a couple of hundred years. Supposed to look like a ship in the distance.~~

~~MEADOWS: And you know every nook and cranny, I bet?~~

~~JOHNSON: Oh, yes!~~

MEADOWS: ~~Well, fancy that! Twenty miles from old Maughley Bay. My wife'll scream! Has it ^{got} lovely big grounds and a lake and all that?~~

JOHNSON: I suppose you'd call it a lake, yes.

MEADOWS: Your father doesn't come to the works any more, does he, sir?

JOHNSON: ~~No, he stays down at Devil's Brig most of the time. He's past it, you know. He put in a good many years here.~~

MEADOWS: Yes. He was a good man, they say.

JOHNSON: Do they say that?

MEADOWS: Oh, yes! Mind you, he could drive a man hard. He could be rough, couldn't he?

JOHNSON: Oh, yes!

Enter MARGARET.

MARGARET: Mr Murphy's waiting.

JOHNSON: I see. By the way, do you know Mr Meadows? My wife.

MEADOWS: Good morning, Mrs Johnson. We've just been talking about old Maughley Bay.

MARGARET: Old ^{what?} ~~what?~~

JOHNSON: Devil's Reach. ^{The Brig.} ~~The Brig.~~

MARGARET: Oh!

XX

~~MEADOWS: Well, Mr Johnson, I've taken up a lot of your time gassing.~~

JOHNSON: ^(calling in) ~~Not at all. I want to see more of you, Mr Meadows. More of your poems, too. And meanwhile we'll get to the bottom of that Personnel report. I'll get the little record out with a Christmas sheet.~~

~~MEADOWS: Thank you, sir. Good morning. I expect those Personnel boys are all right when you get to know~~

And I'll get the little recording unit.

MEADOWS: ~~them!~~
~~Think you're!~~
JOHNSON: That's right!

Exit MEADOWS. ^{leaves, left, a PENNY after. She}
^{leaves} ~~leaves the letter.~~

MARGARET: Did you say poems?

JOHNSON: ~~Yes.~~ Extraordinary, ^{what} ~~isn't it?~~ Read ^{me} a poem, ~~and~~ told me not to call him Meadows! ~~Did you like the look of him?~~

MARGARET: ~~No.~~

JOHNSON: That makes him interesting, ~~Extraordinary~~ chap! Imitated relay-work with his fingers-- you ought to have seen him--like a pantomime! ~~and~~ ^{Amusing} ~~Ralph~~ ^{up} ~~him!~~ He's a ~~rigid!~~ ^{rigid} ~~and~~ ^{you} ~~take~~ ^{the} ~~the~~

MARGARET: ~~I like the way you think he's mad! I wonder what they think of you, doing all this?~~

JOHNSON: ~~'They'. It's always 'they' with you, isn't it? That's just what he said. For your class, he said, we're a social problem, not individuals.~~

MARGARET: ~~They're a problem in your head--in your imagination--that's all.~~

JOHNSON: ~~I think I'm asking too many leading questions, Margaret. Must learn not to lecture. (Dictating) Meadows. Technical department. He doesn't like what he calls the college men in the Personnel section. He's got ~~mark~~ their brains, and he feels they look down on him.~~

MARGARET: They probably do! ^(laughs) ^{down?} ^{They're in with class, sweet head!}

JOHNSON: ~~It's a lot of bunsen!~~ There isn't a college man among them! ~~That's what I say, you've no instinct for these people. (Dictating) Aspires to Speciality Products. I'll try and fix him up.~~ ^(Wanders to the window)

MARGARET: ~~Well?~~

JOHNSON: ~~I wouldn't mind being out there with Bull's Eye. Sun beating down. Life for a man, eh?~~

MARGARET: Is that all?

JOHNSON: It's funny, Margaret, they're calling me 'sir' more than they used to.

MARGARET: ~~They look up to you, that's why. Do you hold it that against them?~~

JOHNSON: He said he could see my class in the way I sat-- what do you think of that?

MARGARET: We've all got characteristics. ^{call} ~~I could see his class in him, too.~~ It's what you might ^{call} ~~the~~ imprisonment of birth. For instance, I'm a county girl with a 'hard moral core'---

JOHNSON: Oh, for Christ's sake, ^{the} ~~not~~ now! Keep that bloody jangle for ~~Devil's~~ Brig! ^(Opens letter) 'Dear God'---'God!' always tickles me!---'Dear God, Well, it's been a long time since I dropped you a line and I'd better get down to describing

(merits) (1.2c) 17

Vineyard
was

windmills

the sort of life we're having out here. So here goes, in the company of John Walker, Esquire, sitting on the table before me. I've been up to my eyes in work and this is the first clear week I've had since Christmas. Gill has her hands full with the children and the servants, who come and go at the most alarming rate. You'll be glad to hear the farm's paying its way at last. We turned over even last month, and by the summer of next year we should be turning over a modest profit. I watch the old red sun going down every evening, and there's nothing better. After dinner we close the french windows and get down to the accounts. Gill and the children are as brown as berries. Wonderfully quiet at night, except for the jackals and the occasional roar of a man-eating lion. Haard a lioness quite close to the house the other night, and there was a scare at the local village. When you get tired of sitting at a desk trying to promote production-rates, why don't you pay us a visit? Or, better still, come and live here. ~~By the way - Hey, look at the time! Who's next? (To PENNY) arr - had idea, or no?~~

MARGARET: ~~Jock Murphy. Bull's Eye's the same as you, really. He couldn't make a good life here, so he ran away. Can I please send - his porran (wing)?~~

JOHNSON: ~~Jock Murphy? Name?~~

MARGARET: ~~Solder-man. Production department.~~

JOHNSON: ~~Has he been up before?~~

MARGARET: No. Fifty-one years old. Three children. Been here since 1918. ~~me, dad's~~

JOHNSON: ~~One of dad's original customers? All right!~~

Exit MARGARET. ~~to the door~~ ~~(she) comes.~~
JOHNSON opens door to JOCK MURPHY.

JOHNSON: Come in, Mr Murphy. Just said to my wife, 'One of my dad's original customers!' Been with us since 1918, that right?

MURPHY: That's right, sir! ~~[M. seems know diff. say. SAM down at hi.]~~

JOHNSON: Sit down, won't you? ~~New then.~~ You're in Production, aren't you?

MURPHY: No, sir. I'm on the main door. Telephones.

JOHNSON: Telephones? What the devil's this, then? ~~It says here 'Production', plain as your finger, the Solder-man.~~

MURPHY: That was ~~twelve or fourteen years~~ ago.

JOHNSON: ~~Good God! We're not that out of date, I hope! Anyway, I'll see to the file later.~~ Well, Mr Murphy, how are things downstairs?

MURPHY: All right, sir. Mustn't grumble.

JOHNSON: I expect you've heard about my pet little scheme, haven't you? I want to know what's on people's minds. You never know, a man might have something on his mind, and a word here or

there might clear it up.

MURPHY: That's right, sir.

JOHNSON: And what about your mind, Mr Murphy? Anything on it?

MURPHY: Not that I can say, sir.

JOHNSON: Well, you know where to come if anything crops up. I treat this first interview as an introduction. Just a hand-shake.

MURPHY: That's right, sir. How's the old Mr Johnson, is he keeping all right?

JOHNSON: Fine! He's beyond it now, as I expect you realise. He's past eighty, you know.

MURPHY: I can remember him when I was a boy, sir. He used to fly round.

JOHNSON: He'd still like to, if he could! We have to keep an eye on him!

MURPHY: You've taken over now, have you, sir?

JOHNSON: That's right.

MURPHY: I can hear the old Mr Johnson in your voice, sir.

JOHNSON: You can? Well, like father, like son, as they say!

MURPHY: That's right, sir!

JOHNSON: So there's nothing on your mind at all? No problem? No little worry?

MURPHY: No, sir. Not that I can say.

JOHNSON: Well, you know where to come if there is. And I'll get this file straight.

MURPHY: Right you are, sir. Well, regards to the old Mr Johnson.

JOHNSON: He'll remember you for sure! One of the Old Contemptibles!

MURPHY: That's right! Well, good-morning, sir!

JOHNSON: Good morning!

Exit MURPHY, in the heels his way. See note of PENNY
~~JOHNSON rings for MARGARET, and she enters.~~

(as the man is)
JOHNSON: What the hell's this? Says he isn't a soldier-man at all. He's on the main door, telephones.

~~MARGARET: What?~~

~~JOHNSON: He isn't in Production at all.~~

MARGARET: That's ~~funny~~. *odd I'll get the new file.* *Penny (re-acting) not* ~~(Looking at files)~~ He's on Production's pay-roll, either. It says, 'See Personal File.'

JOHNSON: Personnel?

(Write me is about he does a few Top And Tailor steps)

MARGARET: No, personal.

JOHNSON: What, the old man's file?

MARGARET: I suppose so.

JOHNSON: Look it up.

MARGARET: ^(d-o-g) Murphy. 'I spoke to Murphy and he was willing not to register the accident if I could assure him a position here for the rest of his working days, and a pension. I put him on the tele-phones at the main door.' Signed by your father.

JOHNSON: ~~Good Lord!~~ What accident?

MARGARET: That's all it says.

JOHNSON: When ^{dated} ~~did~~ it happen?

MARGARET: ^{1926.} Fourteen years ago.

JOHNSON: He was always so punctilious, ^{dad, wasn't he?} ~~about these things. Anyway, make a note of it.~~

MARGARET: ~~It might have been something small.~~

JOHNSON: Then I can't understand why there was any question of registration. All right, that's another morning!

MARGARET: ~~I'm getting to hate them more and more.~~ ^{to hate this work, die you, love? by die you}

JOHNSON: ~~Well, you could always take a horse out and ride over the faces of the poor for a bit of amusement, an afternoon!~~ ^{you may}

MARGARET: ^(in the way) Oh, dear, here comes the lunch-time humour!

JOHNSON: I tell you what, you interview the women while I do the men! We'd have the men in hacking jackets in a week---the Barnely Ridge Electric Hunt! It's no good, Margaret, your brain sits on top of your body like a weasel on a plum pudding. Give yourself up to the life of the hips and be damned!

MARGARET: I wish I could!

JOHNSON: ~~You could always~~ ^{Go} ~~back~~ home and have Ted Lowell to tea and do a bit of wild duck-shooting in the hours of the pearly dew, and drive round the estate on Saturday mornings, ~~and~~ have a bit of slap-and-tickle in the library after dinner! You don't shout like you used to. What's gone wrong? You and Ted Lowell used to stand on opposite sides of the boom and bellow at each other---'Hard going yesterday, I heard!' 'REALLY?' 'Amy's filly likes it soft!' What was all that hard and soft business, Margaret, a sort of erotic morse-code?

MARGARET: You're more like the old man than you think.

JOHNSON: It's you who likes him, not me! ~~Anyway, keep him out of it.~~

MARGARET: That's how he killed your mother.

JOHNSON: Now, shut up! Anyway, what's that got to do with it?

MARGARET: I mean you can't arrange the world by sheer force of will.

JOHNSON: Who tries to?

MARGARET: You do.

JOHNSON: Do I? Just you listen to this.

[He plays over Meadows's poem again, preceded by ~~the music~~ conversation between ~~the~~ Sam & M.]

MARGARET: Who's that?

JOHNSON: That fellow Meadows. He calls it a prayer. You see, he comes to me. They come to me with their troubles. That's not forcing my will. Not like the old man.

MARGARET: It might be our prayer, too.

CURTAIN.

Chief, the version was recorded.

Sam (as he chooses the right spot of the poem)
He doesn't know - or have this little piece
of technical technology. ~~Immediate~~ ~~to~~
He calls it....

And, don't forget, if you see a new
night musician, especially in the
sky, let us know. And all men
in the age 18 should have reported
2.

A month later
This is

SCENE: A bungalow at Sea Bells Holiday
Camp. A month later.

M.C. (Come)
ANNOUNCER

Your attention, please, folks, attention,
please! First of all, don't forget that
tonight's Saturday night and Saturday night
is Carnival night. Tickets as usual at Bay
No. 3. By the way, some people are slipping
up with their number-badges. You'd be sur-
prised how many turn up in the sand every day!
Please wear your badges at all times. For
the benefit of newcomers may I repeat that
your number badge will secure free entrance
to the cinema, pierrot theatre, dining halls,
beach cabins and ballroom. Tickets for all
outings, at all times, Bay No. 3. We always
go to Bay No. 3 for tickets, folks. You lucky
people! I wish I could be down at the beach
on a day like this! And the soothsayers say
it's going to hold, too! Well, folks, we had
two new arrivals last night. They crept in
after supper and, believe it or not, they were
the annual life of the party, Mrs Meadows, with
her husband, the bard of Barnley Ridge Electric
works. To all those who aren't acquainted
with this famous pair who've been coming here
for the last five years and have put their
heart and soul into Sea Bells vaudeville---
by the way, it's on tomorrow night, so let's
try and get a full theatre---I repeat, to all
those who don't know them, my advice is ask
your nearest neighbour, and if he doesn't know
ask his nearest neighbour; somebody's sure to
know! Sea Bells welcomes you all, newcomers
and old-timers alike. You're going to have
what our friends across the Atlantic call a
whale of a time---yes, sirree! On today's
menu there's roast pork, baked potatoes, a choice
of ~~cabbage or Brussel sprouts~~, and apple
~~sausage~~, and for afters there's prunes and
ousterd. Thank you, folks.

Your number
badge is also an
identity in case
of an emergency!

(as the speaker says)
If there
was, it's five
by me!

peas or spring greens,
~~and~~

Enter JACK and JULIA MEADOWS.

JULIA: Hear what he said?
MEADOWS: He's a
Is that the cheeky one? Tell me.
JULIA: Yes. He's keen on me. Ever noticed?
MEADOWS: Everybody's keen on you!

... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..

Run RABBIT Run comes
to speaker.

McAdams & Julia, are
scared at a card table inside
the hangar at breakfast.
They do bizarre reactions to
everything said by the MC,
cowering up, looking scared etc.

in dressing gown.

The music plays in the
camp MC's voice comes
over. ~~Jack~~ Julia ...

air raid
Sirens are heard at the
distance

M... Had the emergency! A hail of
~~German~~ on Brighton rock!

under the cell hi Casanova!

- JULIA: No ~~but honestly~~. Do you know what he said ~~to me~~ last night when we got in?
- MEADOWS: No. Julia
- JULIA: When you were signing up in the office. He said, what about us going on the Dreamboat together tomorrow night, Mrs Meadows? Did you ever hear such sauce? Do you know what I said?
- MEADOWS: No.
- JULIA: I said, I would if you could leave your ¹⁹⁷¹ ~~mouth~~ ^{recorded} behind. ~~You ought to have seen his face!~~ ^{voice} ~~It's that constance! Like a piece of oat-~~ ~~and~~
- MEADOWS: ^(grinny up to forehead) You really tell them, don't you? No
- JULIA: Mind my coiffeur!
- MEADOWS: Your what?
- JULIA: My fur!
- TOGETHER: ^(in chorus) 'There's nothing like love at first sight--- if it's close---oo!---and at night!'
- ANNOUNCER: ^(on the speaker) Attention, please. Don't forget, folks, there are the usual races for kiddies at the cricket ground after lunch. At three-thirty we've got the egg-race, at three-forty-five the three-legged, at four the high jump for under fifteens.
- JULIA: ^{(no) with address the voice} That's what I'd like to give you---the high jump! This has gone all these weeks.
- ~~MEADOWS: He gets on your nerves, does he?~~
- ~~JULIA: Well---~~
- MEADOWS: Go on, you find him attractive.
- JULIA: Well---
- MEADOWS: Say so!
- JULIA: I say so! *The sea is a damn*
- TOGETHER: 'If you can love an old baboon like me, it must be---yes, it must be---because we're HAPPY AT THE SEA!'
- MEADOWS: You do, don't you?
- JULIA: Well, yes, a bit. He's got such sauce, if you see what I mean.
- MEADOWS: And you don't get much of that at Barnley Ridge Electric, do you? X
- JULIA: I'd say not!
- MEADOWS: You get brick walls, a quadrangle like a military square, and ghosts. Mostly ghosts. That's what we all look like to you, isn't it?
- JULIA: To me?

MEADOWS: To you women.

JULIA: How do you mean?

*Love me, say! My
on shorts.*

(Freddy's her)

MEADOWS: They never give you the glad eye and that sort of thing over at Barnley Ridge, do they? They shoot quick glances: face-bosom-legs; up again, legs-bosom-face; switch off; pass along the conveyor-belt; cup o' tea's coming up; dirty piece of relay-wire there, report to shop steward. But you women are different. You're soft. Look at those arms. And feel what a lot of cheek there is to pinch. Why, you're lovely, you're gorgeous, you're extravagant with flesh, old sweet. That's because you've got time flowing through you every day, things can grow inside you like flowers, thoughts and all that; you can wander in and out of yourself, take a stroll up and down your own lanes; whereas I've got to stay on the tracks all the time, and take a little peek-o outside when nobody's looking. I've got to be on the qui vive all the time.

JULIA: On the what?

MEADOWS: Qui vive!

JULIA: What's that?

MEADOWS: 'You know what I mean when I talk French, darling. It means I'll never learn to quench my love, darling!'

JULIA: People'd think we were crackers, wouldn't they?

MEADOWS: And they'd be right. ~~It is~~ ^{We are}. When I swim and look up at the sky like we did this morning I feel crackers.

JULIA: How do you mean?

MEADOWS: I feel the sunshine and the sea are sane, and I'm a little white, peculiar, thing floating about and belonging nowhere.

JULIA: And what am I? *peculiar little white thing floating*

MEADOWS: You're all right.

JULIA: How do you mean, I'm all right, and you're not?

MEADOWS: You're sane. Your body's sane. You seem all right with the sun and water and all that.

JULIA: Yes, the ~~men~~ ^{girls} are funny at Barnley Ridge.

~~MEADOWS: As if something got behind their faces and twisted up their skins, and put something round their eyes to make them smaller. Don't you feel that?
JULIA: No!
MEADOWS: As if something got inside their bodies and told them all the wrong movements? Come on, try, Julia!
JULIA: Are you like that, then?
MEADOWS: Am I?~~

→ Together (performing)

Turnle & face - little-lie-9p-ker;
The ~~pl~~ give y e - little-lie-9-ke
~~the~~ ~~pl~~ ~~give~~ ~~y~~ ~~e~~ - little-lie-9-ke

~~the~~ ~~pl~~ ~~give~~ ~~y~~ ~~e~~ - little-lie-9-ke
up & down - the water we go,
and ~~pl~~ ~~give~~ ~~y~~ ~~e~~ - little-lie-9-ke
(pause of slower romantic phrases) well

up & down - the water we go,
~~the~~ ~~pl~~ ~~give~~ ~~y~~ ~~e~~ - little-lie-9-ke
and - afterwards - oh!
(pause of slower romantic phrases)
and a lovely show
is ~~the~~ ~~pl~~ ~~give~~ ~~y~~ ~~e~~ - little-lie-9-ke place
~~the~~ ~~pl~~ ~~give~~ ~~y~~ ~~e~~ - little-lie-9-ke face to face
with happiness!

an Aston Martin! Picked to.

You see how popular they are? Will Mr or Mrs Meadows trip along to the office and pick him up? He's rolled up in one of the very latest Alfa Romeos! And he's called Mr Johnson!

Three performance steps.

JULIA: Who?

MEADOWS: Mr Johnson?!

ANNOUNCER: I'll just repeat that. There's a gentleman by the name of Mr Johnson waiting in the office and would Mr or Mrs Meadows please come along and pick him up? Blimey, I haven't got to say it again, have I? Thank you, folks!

JULIA: Mr Johnson? Who's Mr Johnson?

MEADOWS: You mean to say you don't know?

JULIA: Oh, I couldn't! Not the Mr Johnson?

MEADOWS: Must be!

JULIA: But not the the Mr Johnson?

MEADOWS: The-the himself. Must be.

JULIA: Yes, but---he can't! *He's a wob.* Here, quick, I've got to get dressed! Take him down to the beach or something!

MEADOWS: *And* You're a snob. *(rush up to the hazy-lu)*

JULIA: Well, I might be, but just you keep him out of here while I get dressed.

MEADOWS: He might like to see you in your beach-wear, Julia. They say he takes after his dad.

JULIA: *(puffs)* Fancy Mr Johnson coming down here to see us!

MEADOWS: He's got a house up the road, that's why. Small place with ~~seventy-three rooms~~.

~~ERIC JULIA:~~ *thirty bed ones.*

MEADOWS: Enter GODFREY JOHNSON, dressed in *high striped blazer with a tunic.* Blimey! Well!

JOHNSON: ~~Surprised? Never forget you, you see? I thought I'd walk over. They told me your bungalow. Embarrassing chap that, at the gate door. Has a voice that carries. Do you mind me walking in like this?~~

MEADOWS: No!

JOHNSON: 'Give us this day---' Remember?

MEADOWS: Yes!

JOHNSON: Well, how are you?

MEADOWS: Fine, sir! Won't you sit down?

JOHNSON: No sirs down here, please.

MEADOWS: My wife went into a blue panic when she heard

you were coming. She's getting into a dress.

JULIA (from the other room) Jack!

MEADOWS: I said you'd probably prefer her as she was!

JOHNSON: I'm sure she's charming in any ^{form} ~~dress~~!

MEADOWS: ~~She is, Mr Johnson. Well, what a surprise!~~
You could have knocked me down with a feather when your name came over the speakers! Then I thought, Oh, yes, Mr Johnson lives just up the road, what was it you called it, Mr Johnson, Devil's something or other?

JOHNSON: Devil's ^{and Mr called} Brig. And we always used to call old Maughley Bay/Devil's Reach. ~~Sort of family name!~~

MEADOWS: ~~Go on! What a lot of devils!~~

JOHNSON: ~~That's right. Yes, I suddenly got an idea. I'll go and over and see old Meadows. I knew you were on holiday. I was having a chat with Personnel about you, and they told me~~

MEADOWS: ~~Oh! Those boys are real seers, aren't they? Know everything!~~

JOHNSON: ^{By the way}
~~I can tell you something, Mr Meadows---I don't want to talk shop, lovely day like this, but there never was a bad Personnel report about you.~~

MEADOWS: ~~Go on! Are you sure?~~

JOHNSON: ~~There's no doubt about it. And I'll tell you another fact, which I know all along. There isn't a college man in the Personnel section.~~

MEADOWS: ^(nodding)
~~Oh, well, it's spurred me on all these years, I suppose. Sad, in a way. Like losing a dirty old friend.~~

JOHNSON: If you've got your eye on a place in Speciality Products, why don't you apply? It's perfectly simple!

MEADOWS: Never thought of it!

JOHNSON: That's what I say, you'd spend the next ten years dreaming of Speciality Products, and all you've got to do is get an application form.

MEADOWS: ~~That's right. It's funny.~~

JOHNSON: I'll tell you something, Mr Meadows, you're the first chap in the plant who's really talked to me. I won't beat about the bush. I'm going to tell you outright, you're the first working man I've ever had a conversation with.

MEADOWS: Go on!

JOHNSON: ~~The first real conversation.~~ They won't talk to me, you see!

JULIA (From the other room) He's always been a talker, Mr Johnson!

JOHNSON: Oh. Yes, indeed, Mrs Meadows!

(Ch. 7th)

MEADOWS: She's a scream! You want to see her on vaudeville, Mr Johnson! *musical-comedy*

Enter JULIA, *in high nurse attire.*

MEADOWS: Julia! What have you done that for?

JULIA: Good morning, Mr Johnson. It certainly is a pleasure seeing you down here with us!

JOHNSON: Good morning, Mrs Meadows. I don't ~~know~~ think your husband exaggerated. ~~all on my side!~~

~~MEADOWS: What did I tell you?~~

JULIA: And you came all this way to see us?

JOHNSON: *It's a mile's pleasure walk.*
~~That's right!~~ I was telling your husband--- well, you heard, didn't you?

JULIA: That's right! I always listen when I'm next door. It's silly not to, isn't it?

~~JOHNSON: Oh, I agree!~~

MEADOWS: Talk about scream!

JULIA: My Jack's always been a talker. I knew when he told me he was going up for an interview, I said to myself, he'll talk the hind-leg off donkey, even if it's the prime minister!

MEADOWS: *He's making a laugh*
I took a poem along.

JULIA: You what?

MEADOWS: ~~I took one of those poems along. 'Give us this day.'~~

JULIA: You didn't!

JOHNSON: ~~He had no beat for a moment. Wanted to borrow my tape recorder!~~ Did you ever hear anything like it? Comes to the boss to record his own voice!

MEADOWS: Talk about laugh!

JULIA: I think you've got more sauce than Casanova!

JOHNSON: Who?

MEADOWS: The camp announcer. Always call him Casanova.

~~JULIA: You know, the man with the voice!~~

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, *the loud chap at the gate.*

MEADOWS: She told him to leave *him* behind last night when he tried to get fresh!

JULIA: Well, it's a nuisance, isn't it, Mr Johnson, when men are always on?

~~JOHNSON: I agree!~~

MEADOWS: You're a real wire, Julia!

JULIA: *Would you come to*
~~Have we had you at our Christmas party yet,~~

- Mr Johnson? ^{promise !!!}
- JOHNSON: No. ~~But I shall~~ be there this year. With my wife.
- JULIA: ~~Oh, lovely!~~ The old Mr Johnson always used to come!
- MEADOWS: Used to laugh himself sick!
- JULIA: ~~That's right!~~ I see your wife sometimes, Mr Johnson, at the works. Such a lonely lady she looks, so sad!
- JOHNSON: She looks sad?
- JULIA: Well, lovely with it, if you see what I mean.
- JOHNSON: She isn't too keen on the work. She won't give it up, either. She must work, and that's the only work I can offer her.
- ~~JULIA: At the works, you mean?~~
- ~~JOHNSON: Yes.~~
- JULIA: ~~She ought to stay at home, then.~~ Jack said you'd got a lovely big lake. You wouldn't catch me going to Barnley Ridge Electric if I had a lake and grounds and a butler, Jack said, and horses and stables!
- JOHNSON: It's still my father's ^{place} There's all you could wish there, that's true.
- JULIA: And she doesn't like it? What a shame!
- JOHNSON: Oh, she'd like it well enough. If I was there all the time. But our money's in Barnley Ridge Electric, and without that there wouldn't be a house, so there's no solution, you see!
- JULIA: What a shame!
- JOHNSON: She doesn't like my scheme too well, either. The interviewing scheme. But your husband's been a triumph for me, Mrs Meadows. He was the first chap who really talked. ~~and~~ it makes the whole scheme worthwhile. I do believe my dad never really talked to one man in the works. Just those quick, gruff exchanges employers and their workmen go in for, if you see what I mean.
- JULIA: ~~Oh, yes!~~ It's better to get down to a nice talk if you can. And Jack'd talk the hens to roost, he really would!
- MEADOWS: And now you're here, Mr Johnson, what do you think about old Sea Bells?
- JOHNSON: Well, haven't seen much of it yet. The sea's all right, but how do you stand these loudspeakers all day?
- MEADOWS: Thought you'd say that. You can turn them down. Turn them off if you like, can't you, Julia?
- JULIA: That's right!

MEADOWS: But then you miss all the news. Privacy's a matter of the heart, Mr Johnson, don't you think so? ~~It isn't a matter of geography.~~

JOHNSON: Well-said!

MEADOWS: ^{wireless} How did I get privacy when I was a boy with the ~~radio~~ on and my mum and dad talking across the table all the time? ~~But I did.~~ More so than now. Sea bells is all right if you let yourself go. Just sink in. Other people aren't outside each other in this little world, ~~if you see what I mean.~~ Not like in your world---

JOHNSON: ~~How do you know about my world? Excuse us, Mrs Meadows, this was our theme last time.~~

MEADOWS: ~~That's right! Well, I use my eyes. In your world you're not joined together inside, not like we are. You're all alone. So I am, partly. But they're not, outside. Some of the young ones might be. But most not.~~

JOHNSON: Well, you may be right, damn it! ~~We are alone.~~

MEADOWS: Listen to that, Julia! When he says 'damn it!' He's got ~~sky~~ real style, ~~mean'that~~

JULIA: I think it's lovely!

MEADOWS: Know what they call their house?

JULIA: No?

MEADOWS: Devil's Brig.

JULIA: No!

JOHNSON: ~~Yes,~~ ^{Not that I've noticed.} It's supposed to look like a ship.

MEADOWS: Listen to the way he says it! Nothing nanby-pamby. Not like some of these boys who shoot up from college!

JOHNSON: ^(still to JULIA) God knows where the 'devil' came from!

MEADOWS: 'God', 'damn'! It's a scream!

JOHNSON: They say one of the squires used to play hell with his tenants a couple of hundred years ago. Looks like a ship with two masts---long chimneys, you know. Has to be seen in a mist, then it really does look like an eerie sort of brig, especially if some of the windows are lighted up, it casts a shadow on ~~the~~ the mist!

JULIA: ~~Oh, I couldn't bear it!~~

JOHNSON: You'd love it!

MEADOWS: ~~Of course, she would. She's only saying.~~

JOHNSON: I'd like to invite you both over one day.

JULIA: You wouldn't! You never would!

MEADOWS: ~~She'd love it!~~ Look at her face, Mr Johnson. Now who's the snob here? Look at that dress

she put on. All for you. That's exactly what she would have done fifty years ago, a hundred, two hundred. Women never change. That's what I was trying to tell her when you came in. And she's right. Her snobbery's right. Well, isn't it? You're the boss, there's no getting away from that. You call the tune. And I'm one of the pipers. You can't get away from that, either. All that lovely womanly softness realises that if you like, Mr Johnson, I can rise, and that if you like I can fall. Of course, we've got trade unions, health insurance and all that. But you're still the boss. That hasn't changed and it never will. Communism's the same, I always tell the boys that down in Production when they're on about the withering away of the state, and anarchy, and all that, I say, it'd be the same. He'd be a commissar, then, if he didn't like the shape of my nose he could send up a report that I was a deviationist, and he'd be liquidated. You've still got the boss. Do you know what started me on poetry, Mr Johnson?

JOHNSON ^(dazed)

No.

MEADOWS:

Green fields. That was my nickname at school. Meadows, you see. You can't get poetry unless you've got green fields inside you, Mr Johnson.

JULIA:

What was that one once, about a heath in summer?

MEADOWS:

I remember a heath in summer
When the grass was burned brown
And we turned in the grass in the summer
Knowing we were slaves of the town,---
that one?
Slaves of the town in the summer,
Cogs in a wheel we can't see,
Let's turn in the grass this summer
And try to imagine we're free!

JULIA:

They just pour out of him. They always about prison. ~~And~~. But he isn't a sad man. Look at him now.

MEADOWS:

Look at yourself. ^(my sight to me) The ambition of her life is to have her name put up for chair man of the social committee at Barnley Ridge, Mr Johnson. When you come to the Christmas vaudeville this year, she'll be thinking of that. She'll say, Come on, Jack, let's give it to them tonight, Mr and Mrs Johnson are there and my name might go up, you never know!

JULIA:

Well, it's true. I can't but tell the truth, can I?

JOHNSON:

And why not? Better that someone who wants it has it, than someone who begrudges the time.

JULIA:

Well, it's true, it does take time! ^{The cinder} Rigging up the stage, and the catering. And there's no pecuniary motive!

MEADOWS:

No what?

TOGETHER ^(crip)

'You know what I mean when I talk French, darling; it means I'll never learn to quench my

my love'll never quench

love, darling!

JULIA: Mr Johnson thinks we're mad!

MEADOWS: It's in our turn. We do it at Sea Beals, too. You know, we add little touches each time.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes!

Jan is crying here.

JULIA: Life is sad sometimes, isn't it? You don't know where you are exactly. It comes over you, that's what we often say. How would you like a swim, Mr Johnson? The sea's like a mill-pond today!

JOHNSON: Just what I thought on my way down. But I've got nothing with me. Nothing to swim in.

JULIA: ~~Oh, that's easy!~~ Bay No. 3'll fix you up, won't they, Jack? ~~Trunks~~ Trunks, towels, bathing caps, dressing gowns, anything you like!

JOHNSON: Sounds delightful!

MEADOWS: ² The big mistake, Mr Johnson, ^{Try proper 1st class.} ~~to think of working people as the same as you only they get less money,~~ ~~Yet they're not so different, either!~~ See what I mean? Well, I'm sure you've got lurking in your mind somewhere that the worker gets used to it---because he hasn't been developed like you have. Don't you say that to yourself? And you'll bring him out, won't you? Questions, sympathy. I bet you never sit down and think, now what would I feel ~~like~~ doing finger-dexterity work?

*and the new
narratives in talking
they're different
Julia: Two legs!
Mr Meadows: See
one I mean?
2: Franks, no.*

JOHNSON: It's true, to a point. ~~It's because I just can't imagine myself doing it!~~ Not day after day! I just can't imagine it, ~~much as I might try.~~ And I've often tried. And I've done it!

MEADOWS: Just what I say. ^{not} It's never been in your life. ^{But} ~~nor can I imagine it, either!~~ Sounds funny, ^{is} that, ~~doesn't it?~~ ~~Yet I've done the work.~~ I did assembly work for going on seven years. Fifty-five telephone-relays a day. I did it, but I can't imagine it. So I'm not so different from you. Yet I am. See what I mean? You say to yourself, Well, my mind's been developed, their's hasn't. So their's is asleep while they're on the job. It isn't true, Mr Johnson. They're numbed. The mind gets numbed. The same as yours would. That's why I can't imagine doing it. Because there's nothing to imagine. So where does that get us? I'll tell you what. Stage Two. You think you're more responsible than working people. You've got more responsibilities. You talk, move about places, you're always looking round to see what you can do ~~and~~ to organise something. The worker doesn't say anything, does he, he stays inside his work, he doesn't look after anybody else like you, he reads his paper like a slave in the morning, he takes what he gets all the time, peace or war, it's all dished up to him, isn't it? See what I mean? Isn't that more responsible, what you've got?

*I can't
imagine
doing it
with*

*Julia: Mr Meadows!
Julia: Shut up!
(2: 'cause' with
light)*

JOHNSON: I've got more responsibilities on my shoulders,

yes. Well, it's obvious. A worker's got himself and his family to look after. I've got about two thousand workers, and a few other concerns as well.

MEADOWS:

Just what I say! See, Julia? If I've got fifteen chicken runs to look after, I'm fifteen times as responsible as a man with one! ~~See it. It doesn't make sense!~~ Suppose I let all my chickens get rowl-pest, and ~~let them~~ tread each other to death? Am I still fifteen times as responsible? Suppose the fellow with one chicken-run, just five or six coons and a couple off hens, suppose he looks after them and goes down to have a look at them four or five times a day? Suppose he gets eggs as big as your fist, double yolkers, and the man with fifteen runs leaves it all to somebody else and stinks up the neighbourhood with his leavings? Who's more responsible? Logso, Mr Johnson?

JOHNSON

All right, you've got me floored. Not quite what I meant, but still---

MEADOWS:

Of course I've got you floored. A man can look after his wife and two kids and a little bit of garden and have more responsibility in his little finger than a fellow who owns a street-full of houses. It's like privacy, Mr Johnson, it isn't a matter of geography. People don't wear it. You never see it. And here's Stage Three. Just thought of it. Sorry to hurry you along, Mr Johnson, but why don't you see it? Why don't you see this man's responsibility? Because he doesn't show it. He doesn't wear it in his talk like you. He doesn't affect other people, does he? He's small. It doesn't go beyond his tiny little house and his wife and his little bit of back garden. But who's to say he's less responsible for that? And who's to say he's more responsible? No. I'll say it. He's more responsible. Here's the reason. Because he doesn't show it. See what I mean? He doesn't wear it on the outside. It's real responsibility. It's not in his brain, you see. It's an automatic reaction. It's like having a heart of gold. It doesn't come out in talk. You wear it inside, and it's never seen. See what I mean? Stage Four. Here's the real difference between you and the working man. He doesn't want to organise anything. He doesn't want to get on. He's all right as he is. He'll get a better wage as he can. But he won't leave his street in a hurry, he won't sort of try and think of himself outside his job, in another one. That's why I never thought of applying for Speciality Products. I've got my life already, you see. It wouldn't change my life. What is my life? It's in the front room at home, it's my wife sitting here, it's in old Maughley Bay every year, in my mum and dad, the canteen of a morning when we go down for a smoke. Work's not my life, you see. Only the work'd change. But work's your life. I can see it is. It's underneath all the time. It's in your mind, working round all the time. I can feel it while you're looking at me. It's like a heart beating inside you. Thoughts--- that's your life. But we're not like that. We don't make our own lives, if you see what I

are the droppings.

JOHNSON

MEADOWS:

It's carried inside.

He

his responsibility.



~~mean.~~ We don't make it with thoughts. It's just there in the morning when you get up, and you sort of fall into it every day. In that sense we're not responsible. We don't make our lives as we go along. We don't look outside. It's the same for all the workers, Mr Johnson, all the world over, I don't care what you say. They've got real responsibility. To the people they live with.

JOHNSON: And what have I got responsibility to?

MEADOWS: Thoughts. Happiness of your workers, before you've even shaken hands with them. That's a thought. A better world: that's another thought. Better output. A worker doesn't go on like that.

JOHNSON: No, he leaves it to me.

MEADOWS: That's right. But don't you think you don't need him for all that. You do. You need him like he is, too. Because if he thought like you, with all those ideas, if his brain went round all the time like yours does, he wouldn't do the work, he wouldn't let himself get numbed, his old brain wouldn't give him any peace. He'd say the same as you, 'I can't imagine myself doing not day after day.' But he doesn't think like that. He doesn't think of 'day-after-day'. It's just now he thinks of. The canteen, the wife at home, Friday night shopping night, a kip over the fire ~~xxxxxxx~~ Saturday afternoon. It's not day after day. That's a thought. See what I mean? See what I mean, Julia?

JULIA: Yes, well, I do, sort of!

MEADOWS: There's a good girl. You want a swim, don't you, duck?

JULIA: Well, I would, yes!

MEADOWS: That's right! See what I mean, Mr Johnson? You think you can change the working man with higher wages and all that, you think you can get that mind un-numbed. You can't! He's got no ambitions. Good thing for you he hasn't! He wouldn't do the work otherwise! So don't try and get his mind un-numbed too much, because he'll lay down his tools! ~~xxxxxxx~~ But he isn't a scrap less clever than you are for that, and he isn't less responsible. He doesn't have ideas like you. That's the only difference. He hasn't got these organising ideas.

JOHNSON: If it's true that you've got no ambitions, why do you want to get into Speciality Products?

MEADOWS: To be under the scientists. It's just a fad. It isn't the money. It's just the feel of it. Do you see what I mean? But then again, I'll tell you something, Mr Johnson. I'm different. Perhaps they're all getting like me. Perhaps we're all on the move! But I'm one of those people the middle classes are made out of!

JOHNSON: Ah!

MEADOWS: I don't feel at home with the boys any more.

→

~~JULIA Shakes Li~~

Julia: OH! SHUT UP!

He loses his senses.

SAM staves it die,
help amused.

Julia (cont.) He gets carried away. If he
hears ~~that~~ ~~she~~ ~~is~~ ~~a~~ ~~woman~~ ~~who~~ ~~loves~~ ~~him~~ ~~who~~
do not trust he kills he starts in a rage!
And in love we get any dead!

Jack: It's time. I do get carried away.
It's not personal.

To P. 36

I'm looking out all the time. That's a bit of ambition starting, I suppose. The front room's started to feel stuffy to me.

JULIA: How do you mean there, Jack?

MEADOWS: It's all right, Quack! It's like waking up, it's a bad world I'm waking up to, but I can't put myself back to sleep again, if you see what I mean. I'm the sort that goes to America and never thinks of the old country again, I fall for all the gadgets and the democratic politeness and the feeling I don't have to touch my cap to anybody. I know it's a lot of rot, but it's like a kind of seed in me, if you see what I mean.

JOHNSON: You're very clear about yourself, aren't you?

MEADOWS: I've got to be. As I say, once awake, you can't go to sleep again. You've got to think it out.

JOHNSON: And suppose all the world lacked ambition, including people like me?

MEADOWS: It'd be all right. We wouldn't have this sort of world. But life'd go on. What's thinking, Mr Johnson? It's just a speck on the world! We're just alive. We haven't got to push it along all the time with our thoughts. That's all ambitions are,---thoughts. It doesn't need our thoughts, you see, not to get going. Life's already there. But that scares you a bit, doesn't it? You like to have it clear. You don't want to close your eyes and just get moved along. You like to see where you're going.

JOHNSON: Yes. I'm scared of the dark. Men do wicked things in the dark. Ever noticed that?

MEADOWS: Do they? You can abolish the dark but they'll do it in the light just the same, if they're going to do it at all.

JOHNSON: You can talk like that because your mother and father refused to live in the dark any more. They started protecting themselves against people like my father.

MEADOWS: That's right.

JOHNSON: And now their lives are clear.

MEADOWS: And the heart's gone out of it. You can change Barnley Ridge Electric as much as you like, Mr Johnson, you can give me air-conditioning and lovely lavatories and a recreation-room and holidays with pay, but that work'll never be quite right, it'll never be quite right to sit down in that assembly room turning out fifty-five relays in a day, I don't care what you say. There'll always be something wrong with it. Just take the schedule---clocking in and clocking out---

JOHNSON: We can change the schedule. We can reduce the hours of work. We're trying to all the time.

MEADOWS: Why, if the work's so congenial? Work's good

for a man, they say! There's something wrong with that work, you know it, that's why you want to cut it down. And that's what you can't bear, Mr Johnson. You can't bear the idea that nothing's going to solve the problem, short of rolling up the whole thing. You can't bear the thought that it's all wrong, from top to bottom, can you? What, all these buildings, and people with big desks, and millions of money, how can all that be wrong? But why not? Why shouldn't the whole world go wrong?

JOHNSON: Where would it get us to say so? Into a rather lonely position, that's all.

MEADOWS: Exactly! You don't like the idea any more than your father did! Because it's your world. You say, Where would the truth get us? You don't seem to care if it is the truth or not. I'm just saying what the truth is. And you have to ask all the time, Where will it get us? Will it do us any good? And that's ambition. That's what I mean by ambition. It's behind everyone of your thoughts. You can't think without it! It's what you mean by thinking. You mean thinking what to do. And I mean saying the truth. You can't let go of the world and say, 'It's all rot!' You've got to have your nose in it all the time, organising. But I can. It's a kind of relief. I say, it's a lot of rot. Then I can say, All right, I want to live, I'll sink myself in a bit of rot. It means twisting myself up a bit, but it's got to be done.

JOHNSON: Doesn't that mean, I agree to be rotten?

MEADOWS: No, no! The work doesn't touch me, you see! The work doesn't touch us! That's where you're wrong. There you are again. Ambition again. You'd have to think to yourself, All right, I'll go rotten! There'd always have to be a thought in your life, always something deliberate, you couldn't get away from it!

JOHNSON: And my work's rot, too?

MEADOWS: Yes, of course! But you won't let yourself see it! You cling to it. I don't. I've got my life. My work isn't my life.

JOHNSON: So we all become little selves believing in nothing, only how rotten everything is outside?

MEADOWS: Oh, no! It's no good being a little self. That's your world! That's what I said just now, people aren't joined-together in your world. You're all little individuals. Not in my world. When I say my life I mean the other man's life, too, it's the same in my world! We're all joined together underneath. We've got the same heart---the same thoughts, almost.

JULIA: Yes, it's funny, we seem to accept things more.

MEADOWS: There you are. She's got it. Trust a woman. It's accepting things. People don't stick out of themselves in our world. But in your world people have got to make conversation all the

daughter
parks
marker
shorts

time, haven't they? They've got to be accountable. I've noticed it. In our world it just comes. Yet we make it as well. It's funny. We aren't thinking. That's the difference.

MC(over):
~~ANNOUNCEMENT~~

peas or spring greens

Attention, please. Just a reminder---on today's menu there's roast pork, baked potatoes, a choice of ~~celery or Brussel sprouts~~ and apple sauce; and for afters there's prunes and custard. Now there are still a lot of uncollected tickets for tonight's dinner---there'll be a special sitting at five-forty-five for those lucky people who've booked for the Dreamboat. The Dreamboat leaves South Pier at ~~six~~ minutes a quarter to seven prompt. Will all Moonlight Dreamers please remember to take woolies along, it gets chilly out at sea when the sun goes down? The Dreamboat docks again at 1.20. tomorrow morning, and the Dreamers can dream in bed until nine-thirty if they want to, there'll be a special late sitting for breakfast, until ten o'clock. Well, that's about all, folks. Bon appetit, that's French for have a good blow-out! And may I remind you that the clearance bays are open all day for queries? Thank you, everybody!

(JACK, JULIA
having the last
sentence)

JULIA: The Dreamboat's ^{nice, as they well know} lovely, Mr Johnson. You look over the side. ~~It feels like gliding, doesn't it, Jack?~~

MEADOWS: ~~That's right.~~

JULIA: ~~They switch the engines off. Right out at sea, and you can see the lights of Naughley Bay! And there's glass underneath in one of the cabins, and you can see the fish through. You get a lovely supper. Remember, Jack? 'Our faces'?~~

MEADOWS: 'Our faces in the water' ^{apple} Shake when ~~there's~~ a wind- ^{Ray gives} I can't remember it, duck.

JULIA: ~~No more can I!~~ It's about the Dreamboat, Mr Johnson!

MEADOWS: 'Shake when there's wind...' Well, Mr Johnson, have I given you something to think about this time?

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, you've done that! It's partly why I came. I expected it.

JULIA: He's a marvellous talker, really. He tells me things I never knew about myself. Shall we book for the Dreamboat? All of us? Let's!

JOHNSON: What, me as well?

MEADOWS: Why not?

JOHNSON: It's so late!

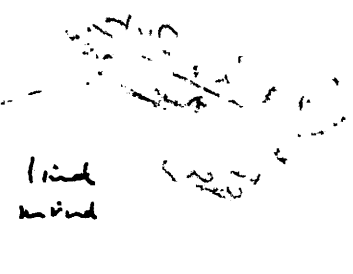
MEADOWS: ^{listen, she gives me hand, to the, will} He'll give you lunch and show round Sea Bells. ~~I'm not scared of you like I was.~~

JOHNSON: You were scared?

MEADOWS: Oh, yes!

JOHNSON: It's true, it's a sad life. Scaring people

One faces in the water
 shake in the wind, +
 they drop to the bottom
 where the fishes are pinned +
 the pressure and currents,
~~but~~ feel us weight, +
~~like~~ on face the ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~the~~
~~and~~ ~~unaware~~ this fate.



mind
 mind

~~That's one face~~
 this one ^{they say} ~~is~~
~~long~~ and me
 a floor of pink

wind.
 Sinned
 pinned
 turned

in a rippled sea,
 the son, of the daughter,

~~It seems unkind (the sea should shrink,
 that the son
 of the daughter~~

~~but yet we think,
 the son, of the daughter,
 we were the high
 of dislocation
 an abolition~~

~~And with shake us
 the son, of the daughter,
 the floor of pink~~

washed ~~into~~ ~~clear~~
~~adill~~ of the water,
~~the~~ in the ~~water~~ ^{wind}

before I start.

~~JULIA: It's because he's talked, Mr Johnson. Once he's talked himself out, he's never scared.~~

~~JOHNSON: All right, I'll strike a bargain! I've come into your world. You come into mine. We'll go on the Dreamboat. ^{Then} we'll drive to Devil's Brig and you'll stay the week-end!~~

~~JULIA: ^{But} Mr—!~~

SAM: All right! ~~And then...~~

~~JOHNSON: Yes? I won't hear you say no!~~

~~MEADOWS: All right. Fair's quite!~~

~~JULIA: Jack!~~

~~JOHNSON: It's done! You'll both come out with me!~~

~~JULIA: But we couldn't, Mr Johnson! The house is so big, from what they say!~~

~~JOHNSON: Well, it's a new experience for you.~~

~~JULIA: And think of the trouble! ^{And} to your wife!~~

~~JOHNSON: ^{I have} servants! You see, none of your objections hold!~~

~~JULIA: I've got nothing to wear!~~

~~MEADOWS: She's arguing with herself, Mr Johnson, that's all. Give her time.~~

~~JULIA: And Jack can't dress for dinner. He hasn't got one!~~

~~JOHNSON: We hardly ever dress for dinner, unless the old man comes down. ^{See, how?} ^{your}~~

~~JULIA: The old man? ^{objection hold}~~

~~MEADOWS: The old Mr Johnson.~~

~~JULIA: Well, there you are, that settles it, we couldn't!~~

~~JOHNSON: But he doesn't bite, Mrs Meadows! He might come down after dinner. But Sunday nights he usually stays upstairs with his whisky.~~

~~JULIA: But, Jack, I wouldn't know which knife and fork and that sort of thing!~~

~~MEADOWS: ^(laughs with a wink to SAM) Well, here's your chance to learn. You'd think she was scared, wouldn't you? I'm the one who's scared. She'll carry it through like a queen.~~

~~JOHNSON: There'll be nothing to carry through, nothing intimidating! You might even find us jolly people!~~

~~JULIA: All right, then! ^(The MC looks on the speakers.)~~

~~MEADOWS: She's said it. ^{By leave}~~

~~JOHNSON: There! You've made me happy. Now we can go for a swim!~~

~~JULIA: I'm all of a tremble!~~

MEADOWS: You're a woman. Natural reserves, eh, Mr Johnson?

JOHNSON: That's right!

MEADOWS: I can't remember those lines. Our faces in the water---

JOHNSON: They'll come to you, I expect.

JULIA: Here are your things, Jack. Let's go for a swim. It feels so funny.

JOHNSON: What?

JULIA: Being with you!

Jack + JULIA do a little before his announcement - pinning his badge on number badges, scratching in the sand & beach etc.

~~ANNOUNCER:~~
M(over)

~~Exit.~~

Attention, please, folks. May I remind you to wear your number-badges at all times, please? They're still turning up in the sand! Please wear your badges at all times. For the benefit of newcomers may I repeat that your number-badges will secure free entry to the cinema, pierrot theatre, dining halls, beach-cabins, and ball room. Thank you, folks!

RUN RABBIT RUN! Come on, and Jack + Julia seize SAM by the arm. They all dance CURTAIN 7/8. Perfectly synchronized.

is - heavy? coffee in the
and shared with several cups.

the — seat,

3.

SCENE: A room ^{at} ~~in~~ Devil's Brig, the following evening.
~~PENNY~~
Enter MARGARET AND JULIA, ^{at} ~~are~~ drinking coffee. ^{the evening}

JULIA: You look over the side, and you can see your faces in the water. It's ever so lovely! ~~What do you think of us being here?~~ ~~Mrs Johnson sent?~~

MARGARET: We lead different kinds of lives, I'd say. We don't really mix. It's another of my husband's big ideas. Am I too frank?

~~JULIA: Oh, no!~~

~~MARGARET: Do sit down.~~

JULIA: ^{Oh no!} It's the men make the differences, ^{is it?} If it was left to the women there wouldn't be any.

MARGARET: ^{it'd be worse} There'd ~~be~~ just ~~be~~ naked power.

~~JULIA: How do you mean?~~

~~MARGARET: There'd only be the simple things. Rooms, roads, feed. Nothing to dream about. But then they say I've got a masculine turn of mind.~~

JULIA: Have you got any children, Mrs Johnson?

MARGARET: No.

(Pause to the
glance of Julia's
social innocence)

JULIA: Why not?

MARGARET: ^(with a slight shudder) They just haven't come! ^{date} My husband ~~doesn't~~ seem very keen, either.

JULIA: Why not? ^{7' is so attractive!}

MARGARET: He said to me once, Animals in captivity don't breed.

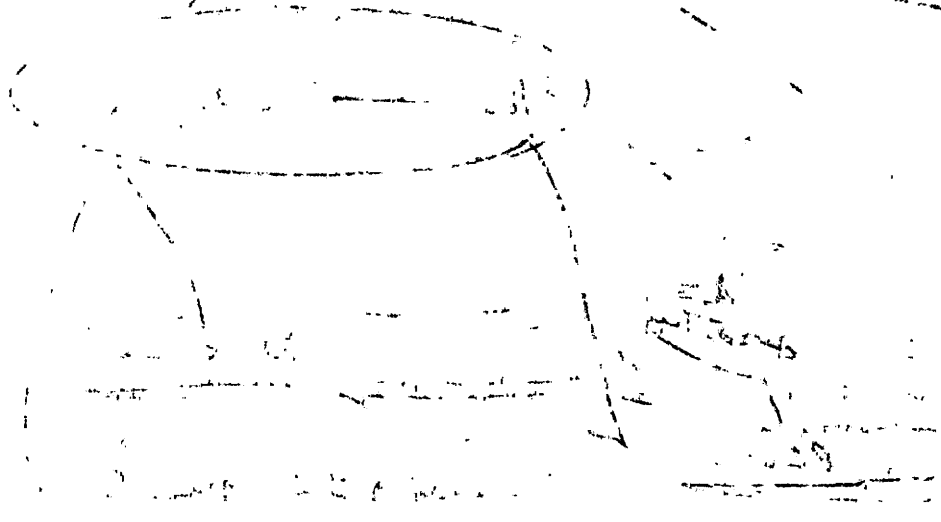
~~JULIA: Animals?~~

~~MARGARET: That's us.~~

JULIA: But you aren't ~~in~~ ^e captivity. You're free. Look at this house.

MARGARET: We could be free. So could we all. I could

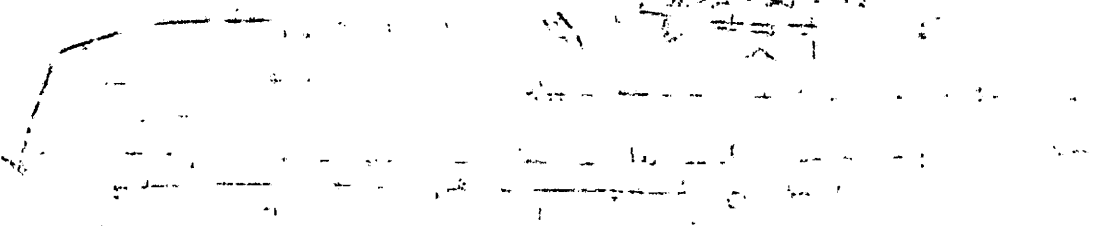
with ...
...
...
...



Henry: Sugar?

She takes sugar to Dulce.

Delia: We do you...



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run off with Ted Lowell. He's in love with me. But I don't.

~~JULIA:~~ Has he said so?

~~MARGARET:~~ Oh, yes.

JULIA: He really smells of horses, doesn't he?

~~MARGARET:~~ ^(laughing) I must tell him that! He'd be proud!

JULIA: No, I mean in a nice way. Very outdoors. But it wouldn't do to let go, would it?

~~MARGARET:~~ In what way?

JULIA: Let men come it over you. They always will, given the chance!

~~MARGARET:~~ I don't have any temptations like that because ~~it's~~ never really got started with my husband. I'm always waiting for that.

JULIA: ^{It will happen.} ~~Are you, really? But he's ever so nice and kind. You never know, do you? You ought to have seen him on the Dreamboat last night. Today. And you're so pretty!~~

~~MARGARET:~~ He says he's fed up with my hard moral core. I'm from one of those country families that run rough-shod over their children. Grew up rough. ~~So it's best just to know 'em.~~

JULIA: I've seen you at Barnley Ridge Electric. You're always alone. It seems so sad. You ought to come and join in with us.

~~MARGARET:~~ I'd make ^{you all} ~~everyone~~ uncomfortable.

JULIA: He got interested in Jack, ^{you see} ~~It was the poems. And Jack told him about Sea Bells. Wasn't that funny? I nearly went through the floor when I heard Casanova say over the blower---~~!

~~MARGARET:~~ ~~Who's Casanova? ^{God's sake!}~~

JULIA: ^{He does me...} ~~The announcer at Sea Bells. He's been on me. That's why I say it wouldn't do to let go. Well, All of a sudden his voice comes through saying that Mr Johnson's waiting for us at the gate! But it doesn't seem so strange now. I'll never forget this house. Fancy having a lake of your own! And that lovely dinner-table, with pictures round the wall!~~

~~MARGARET:~~ I'd change ~~over~~ with you any day.

~~JULIA:~~ You wouldn't!

~~MARGARET:~~ Yes, I would.

JULIA: Of course, I suppose you can't get very snug here. You can't twinkle your toes at the fire.

~~MARGARET:~~ Oh, I've got a little sneak-hole upstairs. It's so tiny you'd laugh.

JULIA: They won't be drunk, will they?

~~MARGARET:~~ Who?

Penny: See Belts?

Julia: It's a holiday camp the Trade Union organized. At Mangle Bay. 2 hundred come to see in their
his money.

Penny: I was ~~coming today~~ out with
~~the band~~ at the Race. Haven't half
of the lot yet.

Julia: Coranova's been a week...

~~JULIA:~~ ~~The men.~~

MARGARET: Oh, no! They only stay a moment.

~~JULIA:~~ ~~It's funny I've only read about that sort of thing in books!~~
~~I wondered what you taking me outside for!~~

~~MARGARET:~~ It's always been done here. The men like their port and a bit of manly talk. All except my husband. He says it's conservative.

JULIA: ^{well} But it doesn't seem right // Sending the women away!

MARGARET: The women leave, ~~They aren't sent away.~~ My mother always used to tell me that. They leave to powder their noses and have a bit of womanly talk. My mother was an independent woman with a clear, forceful mind. And I know, nowadays, it's better to stay with the men if you can and drink their disgusting port, because the women aren't up to much.

JULIA: You ought to come to our socials, Mrs Johnson. You'd have ever such a good time!

MARGARET: I wanted to ask you just now, do you have any children?

JULIA: Oh, no!

MARGARET: But you will have?

JULIA: I'm ^{scared!} ~~It's silly, isn't it?~~

~~MARGARET:~~ ~~Scared of what?~~

~~JULIA:~~ ~~Scared of having a baby.~~ It's so silly in a woman, ^{isn't it?}

MARGARET: But what scares you?

JULIA: ^{out} I don't know! It's just the idea of it coming down there! It doesn't seem right, if you see what I mean!

MARGARET: ^{Pause & Nerve.} But ~~where~~ else would it come out?

JULIA: ~~Well, that's what I say, it's silly. I can't think about it.~~ I told Jack, I said, I couldn't think of having a baby!

MARGARET: And what did he say?

JULIA: He said if fate had a child in mind it wouldn't ask my permission. But I take all the precautions! ~~It's ever so silly but I can't think about it!~~ ^{make sure Jack doesn't get a look in.}

MARGARET: Is it the pain?

JULIA: Oh, no! ~~It's just the idea!~~ I tried to explain it to myself one day and I thought, it's like mixing up pleasure with, well, lovely little babies! It doesn't seem right! But it isn't that exactly, either. I just can't think about it!

MARGARET: Why shouldn't babies come out of pleasure?

JULIA: Yes, but you have to look after them, don't you, and how are you going to do it? And then

you get all the doctors, and that laughing gas they give you. A woman at Barnely Ridge told me whenever you feel a twinge you press the button and hold it over your mouth and you go out like a light!

MARGARET:

It is the pain, then?

JULIA:

No, it isn't! It's like having a lovely little baby down there---criticising me.

MARGARET:

Criticising?

JULIA:

No, you don't see what I mean. Nobody could who wasn't me! And Jack's a man.

MARGARET:

What a funny world!

JULIA:

I know you'll laugh at me and think me nothing!

MARGARET:

Not at all. ~~Let me tell you something. I do believe I could talk to you now.~~

JULIA:

I feel like crying.

MARGARET:

Here are the men. *Sam, Jack and come in.*
~~Enter MEADOWS, TED LOWELL and JOHNSON.~~

LOWELL:

But hard in the mouth, but he moves, Mr Meadows!

MEADOWS:

Sounds a beauty to me! Hear that, Julia? Mr Lowell's going to show us round the stables tonight.

JULIA:

Very nice!

JOHNSON:
~~JOHNSON~~

(go to the office)
It's horrible the way these two like each other, Margaret! ~~They've been talking horse all the way through port. Not that Meadows know the front from the back of a horse.~~

LOWELL:

~~He'll learn.~~ Everyone of them's an individual, eh, Mr Meadows?

MEADOWS:

That's right. I've always loved horses.

LOWELL:

Same as people What I always tell the squire here---they're ~~just like people,~~ only they run faster and eat hay.

JOHNSON:

Noble sort of people, of course?

LOWELL:

Of course! He's pulling my leg, Mrs Meadows!

JOHNSON:

And for God's sake don't call me 'squire'! I can't stand it! *(To JACK) Help Jerry to office.*

LOWELL:

He thinks it's old-fashioned.

JOHNSON:

could mix properly Thank Christ for the women, anyway, they'll talk to me. Well, I never thought Barnley Ridge Electric ~~could~~ mix with the local hunt! That I could never have foreseen.

MEADOWS:

It's just liking horses, that's all.

JOHNSON:

You've never been up on one! You said so yourself.

MEADOWS: I just like hearing him talk.

JOHNSON: Hear that, Lowell? I don't believe you've heard that said in this house before! X

~~JULIA: It's the same with me. Julia: I like his talk too.~~

LOWELL: ~~I'm proud to hear you say it!~~

JOHNSON: There's something you've always overlooked, old chap. People are different from horses, there's no getting away from it! Mind you, *wife keeps* a nose-bag now and again—I keep one myself *my* ~~upstairs in the bedroom—but not all the time! in the bedroom.~~

~~JULIA: Your husband's a real leg-pull, isn't he, Mrs Johnson?~~

LOWELL: It's like the squire-thing, Mr Meadows. He's touchy about it. Know why? Because he's a squire. What I always tell him. He's got tenants, he's got a farm, he's got a manor-house and a steward. That's a squire. But he won't have it.

JOHNSON: You always come out with that historical survey when we've got guests, don't you? His conversation never changes, Meadows. You see, the horses he talks to aren't—well, they're not frightfully interesting, if you see what I mean. *long ago* I ~~told him at the outset~~, I said, Lowell, these horses simply aren't your level. They aren't talkers, I said. Know what he said? Johnson, he said, don't be an intellectual snob!

LOWELL: Horses are famous talkers, that's another thing.

JOHNSON: ~~BUT---~~

LOWELL: ~~You've got---~~

~~JOHNSON: to know their language! That's right. Now finish it! And with a little pride---~~

~~LOWELL: I think I can say I do.~~

~~JOHNSON: Well done!~~

MARGARET: It's true that he can talk to horses. I've seen him switch a horse in the middle of a jump without moving a muscle.

JOHNSON: Tricky fence, was it?

MARGARET: Yes. As a matter of fact, yes.

JOHNSON: ~~Rather?~~ Know how he did it? Talked through his arse! ~~What I've always said!~~

~~JULIA: Oh, Mr Johnson, you're a scream! In a big house, too!~~

(to Julia) ~~What~~
MEADOWS: He's a spark! ~~isn't he?~~

MARGARET: Yes, they're a ribald family.

JOHNSON: ~~Listen to Lowell's laugh.~~ *(with a smile)* It's the original horse-laugh.

(with a horseshoe double-up)

MEADOWS: Cards, the whole lot!

MARGARET: My husband won't go near the stables, Mrs Meadows. He only keeps them for me.

JOHNSON: And Lowell, of course.

LOWELL: Well, I seriously believe he does, sometimes.

JOHNSON: Of course, I do! I can't see animals suffer, Margaret. He hasn't got a penny to his name, have you, Lowell? Lives with his father in an old barn. Least I can do is to give him a ride!

LOWELL: All true enough!

MARGARET: But one thing you won't do, Godfrey, and that's play the squire, eh?

JOHNSON: That's right.

MARGARET: It might make everything fit together.

LOWELL: What beats me is why there can't be modern squires. The land's still got to be farmed, there's still got to be keepers, and I dare say poachers, too. There's got to be farmers' hands---

JOHNSON: ^{Not 'Land'} Oh, no more, for Christ's sake! ^{God's} We get it ^{I hope Dick} every time a visitor comes, Meadows. ^{had} ~~attained the end a century ago.~~ ^{These boys, my dear chap.}

LOWELL: ~~Dairymen---~~

JOHNSON: ~~--- And men to look after the timber!~~

LOWELL: ~~You've still got to have it, I don't care---~~

JOHNSON: ~~--- How mechanised you get!~~

LOWELL: ~~Isn't it true? The tradition's gone, it went out a couple of hundred years ago, really. But you've still got to sit downstairs of a Saturday morning and go through the accounts, eh, Mag? ^{Per?} ^{Per?}~~

JOHNSON: That's right, ^{Per} now call her 'Mag'!! Of all abbreviated names that's about the worst! ^{we heard!}

MARGARET: Rhymes with 'bag', 'bag', 'sag'. ^{Rather infinite.}

JOHNSON: Now you've started her ^{on} hating herself.

LOWELL: ~~It's just intimate.~~ I've always said 'Mag'. ^{Per}

MARGARET: Godfrey doesn't ^{hate} any sort of label. ^{That's why} he hates to hear 'squire'. He ^{is} a squire but the name frightens him.

JOHNSON: I'm a fake squire. Mine's a commercial family. It's been counting the shekles for three or four generations. When my grandfather came into this house he did so because the squire's initials were the same as his own and they were engraved all over the church pews. That's what I call a fake squire. He made his money out of sweated mill-labour.

LOWELL: He didn't inherit this place, that's true.

But you did.

MARGARET: ~~That's a cunning argument. Clew!~~

JOHNSON: ~~But my work's in the modern world, Lowell.~~

LOWELL: So are horses. More interest in horses now than ever there was, eh, Mr Meadows? Riding schools in all the new towns, ~~people have got money in their pockets nowadays---~~

Penny (to SAM) looks like I have a drink - doesn't he?
JOHNSON: ~~Well, I do believe ~~that~~ there is a new mood in people. Not just more money. I could feel it last night.~~

JULIA: ~~You could see the enjoyment in his face, Mrs Johnson!~~

MARGARET: ~~He usually wakes me up if he comes back late. But last night he got into bed like a saint.~~

Oh yes!
JOHNSON: ~~It's strange. We just floated along and the band was playing. Most of us were downstairs in the cabin, sitting on benches along the side, with oil-lamps swinging in the middle. You could hardly see across the room. Full moon. We could just see it through the portholes. That right, Meadows?~~

MEADOWS: ~~That's right!~~

JOHNSON: I even danced with a strange lady.

JULIA: ~~Oh, I wasn't going to say---~~ *Oh - boat - the morning!*

JOHNSON: ~~It was the ladies' invitation waltz. She came across and gave Meadows a look first. Then she asked me. It wasn't touching or anything like of that kind. It was simply extraordinarily simple and natural. That's all I can say. But it wasn't natural in our sense, either---it wasn't relaxed or what we call spontaneous. She was even a bit nervous. She was strained. She bit her lip. I don't know why she asked me. I think, to put me at my ease. She could see I wasn't a resident at Sea Bells. Perhaps she knew already. ~~It was so wonderfully comradely---I hate the word, but I wonder if you see what I mean, Lowell? There wasn't any sex or vanity in it. Yet she had sex. She was just natural and equal to me, and I'd never felt anything quite like that in my life, while I danced with her. And I didn't see her again. I didn't really think of her as a single person. I didn't say to myself that she was attractive, or nice to know. She was the whole room for me, all the boat as it floated along, and the band stopped, and everybody talked in a kind of homely undertone, as if there wasn't any danger in the world and couldn't ever be. It seemed such a wonderfully safe and snug world! I hadn't realised before.~~~~

She looks Julia (to Penny) Ya, one did.

She's

and would never be.

MEADOWS: ~~That's right. He's got it word for word.~~

JOHNSON: And I do believe they really did talk to me as an equal, the men as well. They didn't jump when Meadows said I was his boss. That's a big change of course, from the old man's world. ~~But I felt so cosy.~~ I didn't have to make an

effort. It's true, Meadows, one doesn't have to think in that world. There's a kind of hum underneath everything. It's a kinder, ~~steadier~~ ^{more decent} world.

MEADOWS: Oh, it can be cruel, don't you worry, people ^{lose} ~~let~~ their tongues ~~go~~ sometimes---

JOHNSON: ~~Yes, but I mean it's kinder to the nerves. One can't see it from the outside, from their faces, if you just see them at the works. Meadows gave me long speeches a month short time ago about the 'borjoys', Lowell, and I didn't quite know what he meant.~~

LOWELL: Borjoys?

JOHNSON: He means us. And I thought at the time, it's the old envious talk about a higher class with more money in it's pocket. But that isn't true. Really, he was talking about a different state of life---it's a different kind of nervous system, almost, that we don't know anything about.

MEADOWS: Just as they don't know anything about your life, either. They don't see what it is to make life out of thoughts.

JOHNSON: That's another thing he says. Making life with thoughts. Their's just hums on. But we've got this investigating quality. We're searching life all the time. We think that's how everybody lives. It isn't. Partly, I see what he means. But I can't alter myself.

MEADOWS: That's what I say, you can't put the brain to sleep again, after it's been woken up.

LOWELL: Well, to tell the truth, I've never been much of a brain---

JOHNSON: No, my dear old chap, perhaps we shouldn't include you. Your mind's been asleep for generations back, hasn't it? You're a real squire, old chap!

MEADOWS: You can see he isn't a borjoy, not a proper one!

LOWELL: I always thought that was a dog.

JOHNSON: It's French. Means middle-class, old chap!

LOWELL: Oh, I see!

MARGARET: I wondered what it was!

LOWELL: Well, they say we're all middle class nowadays, don't they?

JOHNSON: Well, as long as the horses don't change, my dear fellow!

LOWELL: That's right! It'd be awful if they got ideas as well, wouldn't it?

Enter MR JOHNSON, comes in, n c stick.

MEADOWS: Blimey!

Burgess gets up, ~~script~~ Burgess.

SAM
 JOHNSON: Well, hullo, there, ~~father~~ ^{dear sir!} how are you?
 Come in! ~~How are the company?~~ ^{Welcome daughter!}

MR JOHNSON: ^(As PENNY helps her to a chair) Thank you. Thank you very much. Nice to be invited into my own house. You always had a generous side, Geoffrey ~~Sam~~. Like your mother. Your laugh's been echoing through the house all day, Lowell. Who the devil's this?

JOHNSON: That's Mr Meadows, sir. You haven't met before.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, I'm used to not meeting people in my own house. I signed the company over to you, lad, but you haven't got the house yet!

JOHNSON: Father---

MR JOHNSON: Don't interrupt! You've dagned-well interrupted since you were five years old. I've never met such an incorrigible young---

^{Penny}
 MARGARET: Guests, Harry!

MR JOHNSON: Oh, how do you do? Nice-looking young woman! Who is it?

JOHNSON: That's Mrs Meadows.

MR JOHNSON: I didn't ask you. I know you're always ready with an answer.

MEADOWS: It's my wife, sir.

MR JOHNSON: ^{dear!} Oh, I saw you in the corridor, ~~this morning~~, and I thought to myself, who ~~the devil's~~ that, ~~another of Geoffrey's week-end surprises?~~ ^{expect!} Who ~~did~~ ^{Sam} you say this chap was?

JOHNSON: One of your employees, sir.

MR JOHNSON: One of my employees? Haven't got a company! Don't own a bean! Don't know what you're talking about. My employees, he says! I thought I signed the lot over to you, sir? Or did you wriggle out of that one as well?

JOHNSON: He's one of my employees.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, one of yours. That's different. That's more likely. Because, I'll tell you something, in my day, when I was in charge of Barnley ~~Edge~~ Electric and a dozen other companies ~~as well~~, no employee of mine, I don't care what his name was, or how beautiful his wife was, ever set foot in my house!

Then the cat thought - ?

MEADOWS: Oh, well, times have changed since then, Thank God! *was the M. (T. Sam)*

MR JOHNSON: You can thank Him all right, because you didn't do anything to bring it about yourself.

MEADOWS: My father did!

MR JOHNSON: Who's your father?

MEADOWS: A soldier-man like I was to start with!

MR JOHNSON: Oh. Fellow here says he's got a father. Remarkable, isn't it?

MEADOWS: He was remarkable.

MR JOHNSON: He carried out a one-man revolution, did he?

MEADOWS: ~~No~~. He helped a little bit. Trade unions and all that.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, I don't mind trade unions. ~~Had a fight with them in my time.~~ They fought me and I fought them, and we both played dirty. ~~I expect you can imagine that, can't you?~~

MEADOWS: ~~Yes, I can.~~

MR JOHNSON: ~~That's right.~~ Well, ~~let me tell you I had some friends in my day.~~ Worker came to me once and said, You're the finest employer I've ever had. How many others have you had, I said. None, ~~xxxx~~ he said! Not much of a compliment, was it? Thought I was going to tell you a little how-they-all-loved-me story, didn't you? Wrong. I could trip you up on a dozen or more other things like that. You can't make me out.

MEADOWS: I didn't say you weren't clever.

MR JOHNSON: ~~Yes, you did.~~ You thought I was a damned old fool. That's what my son thinks (-o. Because I gave him the best schooling in the land and a stable of his own. Ought to be punished for that. He and his mum wouldn't speak to me. Naughty fellow, gave his son the best he could think of. Mustn't do that.

MARGARET: ^{Sam} Godfrey appreciates everything you did for him, don't you, Godfrey?

^{SAM} JOHNSON: Oh, ~~Christ, yes,~~ and the beatings, too, you mustn't forget those! The number of times I lay in bed thinking to myself, If only he'd give me another beating! ~~I think I looked forward to them more than anything in child hood.~~ They were so unstinted, you know! ~~he~~ ~~father showed such a delicate awareness of childish fears!~~ ~~only unstinted this!~~

MR JOHNSON: Clever, isn't he? Has to have his say. ^(To Dack) All right, if you're one of my employees.

*Their boss became a lord
he did! It was a disgrace, they.*

Hills

which you are in view of the fact that I started Barnley Ridge Electric and sustained it through two world wars? what are you exactly? The fellow who pours the tea? They tell me there's a special job nowadays. If another fellow touches the pot they go on strike. A fellow asked for three lumps of sugar instead of two once, and the electrical industry was paralysed for a month! Clever, isn't it?

MEADOWS: It's marvellous to hear you talk. Anybody'd wonder where your money came from to keep this place up! Not out of cups of tea, Mr Johnson. We still do an hour or two's work every day.

MR JOHNSON: That's good of you. Wear gloves, of course?

MEADOWS: Sometimes. Goggles, too. I seem to remember a man in your works didn't wear goggles once, and he was blinded for life, and then you weren't so generous, were you?

~~or Sam.~~
JOHNSON: What ~~are~~ you talking about?

MEADOWS: Your father knows. It's common knowledge ~~down~~ ^{at} in the canteen. ~~he~~ ^{he} ~~works~~.

~~JULIA:~~ ~~Jack:~~

^{Penny}
MARGARET: What's common knowledge?

MEADOWS: That there's a man blinded for life. And he didn't give him a penny.

^{Penny}
MARGARET: What's his name?

~~MEADOWS:~~ ~~Ask Mr Johnson.~~

~~JOHNSON:~~ ~~What's his name?~~

MEADOWS: Jock Murphy's his name.

JOHNSON: ~~Good God,~~ is that the one---

^{(K SAM) well}
MARGARET: You'd better change the subject.

JOHNSON: I thought he didn't move properly. He felt for the chair. He said something about my voice. I thought that was funny.

MR JOHNSON: Mind if I speak?

MARGARET: It's past your bed-time, Harry.

MR JOHNSON: A man was blinded in my works?

MEADOWS: That's right.

MR JOHNSON: And I didn't pay compensation?

MEADOWS: That's right.

MR JOHNSON: You'll prove that to me, young man. By God, I'll bring the slander-laws against you! ^{And if you're my plant a job!}

JULIA: There, Jack, you've done it now!

Mr Johnson: I've paid compensation for every industrial accident in every concern of mine. And I'll

be in that office of yours within a week from now to prove it! Meanwhile, we'll keep our mouths shut. Ladies present. Look at the wife. She doesn't like it when you talk like that. She's flattered to be here, aren't you, ~~meant~~ my dear?

MEADOWS: Not by you!

MR JOHNSON: ~~Oh~~ Don't you be too sure! I may be old and ugly but they like a bit of gruff authority. Men haven't got any punch nowadays. You like this house, don't you, my dear?

JULIA: Well, I think it's lovely, yes!

MR JOHNSON: Know how much it costs me to keep it up? That lake out there. It's artificial. Wasn't there in my dad's time. Look at all these windows. Takes nearly a week to clean the lot. Think yourself lucky to have three rooms and a kitchen, my dear, and a husband who pours out tea for the masses all day.

MEADOWS: We're called by our names now. That's the big change. We're considered people.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, yes, I forgot! 'The people'! They vote in elections and put the conservatives in, don't they? ~~I wonder why they do that?~~ I'll tell you, Mr Tea-pot. It's because people like me and my dad before me worked themselves to the bone while all you were doing was claiming higher wages and new lavatory-pans. I couldn't afford to go home at five in the evening and take two weeks holiday with pay every year. Too much work to do. Barnley Ridge Electric and five other companies besides would have gone to pot. First time I sat down and looked at this lake was when I retired. So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it. My wife used to have week-end guests. Never saw them. Never saw my own son. Too much work!

resolved

MEADOWS: ~~Who asked you to do it, though? Did you do it for me?~~ ^{Andy} ^{all the} If so, what I get out of it?

MR JOHNSON: Two weeks holiday with pay every year. That's two weeks for doing nothing. Very nice! And it got you more money than you deserve. Pension. Latrines. Look at your wife's dress, you didn't pick that up in the Old Kent Road, did you, Mr Tea-pot? Tell you another thing. Know why I'm keeping up this house?

MEADOWS: No. *The walk under his legs, also.*

MR JOHNSON: Not for that fellow sitting over there. Corridors too long. ~~Gives him corns.~~ Mustn't do that. Cruel. The stables are naughty, too, they make the horses run. Mustn't do that. So who am I doing it for?

MEADOWS: Not for me, that's all I know.

MR JOHNSON: You're wrong, Tea-pot. That's just who I am doing it for. I'm keeping up a monument. Nothing I'd like better than three rooms and a kitchen, and a little wife to fluff the dust

I I 51
7

off! Takes me fourteen minutes to make the rounds in the morning. Electric light bill comes to about twice your wage. Can't get servants any more. When you do, you have to call them sir. If I sold this place up I'd be a rich man, Tea-pot. But then your wife'd come along and say, Oh, don't do that, Mr Johnson, what'll happen to the old country if all the big houses go? And I'll tell you the answer to that one. The old country'd go to pot. There wouldn't be an old country. And we must have an old country, mustn't we, Tea-pot, for hikes and trade-union outings? K

MEADOWS: Oh, I agree there.

JOHNSON: What, with everything he said?

MEADOWS: More or less.

MR JOHNSON: So in go the conservatives. No wonder the poor old liberal party got dished. So you give in, do you, Tea-pot?

MEADOWS: ~~No, I'd never give in to you.~~ ^{do} What I say is, now you've made a mess of our world, let's try and save something from before you made the mess, like this house, for instance.

MR JOHNSON: I made a mess, did I? Listen to me, this house wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for people like my dad. Tell you why? Simple. He bought this estate from a seedy old squire who needed the money to drink himself to death. The country squires weren't looking so good then. They needed new blood. They were after money. And we were making it. Your life's based on that money, my lad. This country became the richest trading country in the world through people like me.

MEADOWS: Well, to say you made a mess of it doesn't mean the others didn't before you, the squires as well.

MR JOHNSON: Then we're all messers. End of argument. I'm not such a damned fool, after all, am I, Mr Tea-pot? You haven't got it all in your brain-box, have you?

MEADOWS: Oh, you've got an argument. I said that.

MR JOHNSON: ^{but} Don't take it too hard, then. Don't want your hand to get unsteady for Monday morning tea.

JOHNSON: I think I was right to show you my world, Meadows.

MR JOHNSON: What's that? It's your world, is it? Must tell the steward that. He'll come to you with the accounts instead of me.

MARGARET: You know you hate him to touch the accounts, Harry. Shall I give you your whisky?

MR JOHNSON: No, I'll have it upstairs. Nobody gives a damn for me down here.

JOHNSON: Now, for God's sake, father, don't get maudlin.

MR JOHNSON: Just what your mother used to say! I'm going to bed. Well, good night, my dear, you've got a pretty little face.

JULIA: Good night, sir! *(down)*

MR JOHNSON: As for you, we'll see more of you in the slander-courts. The old fool doesn't forget, you know!

MEADOWS: He forgot Murphy.

JULIA: Jack!

MEADOWS: ~~It's common knowledge.~~

MR JOHNSON: And, meanwhile, go to hell, the lot of you! Good night, Lowell. Heaven's paved with ~~good horses' hoofs, ever heard that?~~ *horse-shoes.*

LOWELL: That's right, sir! Good night!

Exit MR JOHNSON.

MEADOWS: Fancy having a dad like that! *Bring!*

JOHNSON: We'll go into that Murphy-case on Monday morning. I'll see you at the office, Meadows. You can tell me all you know.

MARGARET: It's quite possible that---

JOHNSON: And meanwhile we'll say no more about it. ~~Yes, he doesn't mind his words, does he?~~ Of course, he's only showing off. Always does in front of visitors.

MEADOWS: ~~He's got something in him. ^{It's} Like a machine that moves him along. You feel it.~~

JOHNSON: I'll say this. He was one of the finest men in the electrical trade at one time.

JULIA: ~~You were cheeky with him, Jack.~~

JOHNSON: He loves it. You can always see a little glint in his eyes.

MEADOWS: The smell of battle! *was a killer, Julia!*

LOWELL: ~~He's a terror down at the stables sometimes.~~ But you can deal with him, can't you, Mag? *Pen*

MARGARET: I treat him like a child.

JOHNSON: That's because he didn't bring you up.

MEADOWS: My dad never touched me with a strap or anything like that. Only once with the back of his hand.

JOHNSON: I didn't mind the beatings so much, not really.

MEADOWS: ~~Why not?~~

JOHNSON: ~~Well, they were a kind of relationship. I hated it more when he didn't notice me.~~

MARGARET: He had the habit of not noticing your mother

for a week at a time.

JOHNSON: Do you know, ^{It made me} I used to be frightened of workers when I was a kid?

MEADOWS: Go on!

JOHNSON: ^{In your all} ~~They were~~ like ogres for me. There's still a kind of gory fascination for me in working at Barnley Ridge Electric. ^{Worker came} ~~They used to come in all my worst nightmares. I had one once about this house, and woke up screaming. I dreamed that the house was in a terrible storm and the trees were bending right over, and the hills were like waves. I saw hundreds and thousands of workers pouring towards me in a single file and I was hitting them over the head like cattle and their bodies were taken off in a kind of chute, the hall was streaming with blood, but the special horror was that my father had built a ~~run~~ drain in the hall-floor like you see in slaughter-yards, and the blood was streaming down it. Then I noticed that all the outside was turning to blood, with waves mounting up in huge, congealed, shining spouts, and the house was rocking to and fro, while the remainder of the file of workers floundered and drowned, their faces red and their hair matted, with blood. As I say, I woke up screaming, and my mother was standing over me. I remember she had sad eyes.~~

JULIA: ~~What a horrible dream!~~

MARGARET: You ~~as~~ never told me that. ^{one}

JOHNSON: Perhaps you're not the kind one tells things to.

LOWELL: That's a bitter thing to say, old chap.

MEADOWS: They aren't ogres. They're passive and mild, did you know. But you could turn them wild.

JOHNSON: I've seen them fight. And I used to hear stories about the old days, what they used to do to blackleg labour.

MEADOWS: ^(to JULIA) I can remember those lines now.
'Our faces in the water,
They shake in the wind;
Our faces close together,
They show we must have sinned.'

JOHNSON: ~~I said they'd come, didn't I?~~ The other day, Meadows, I got a letter from a friend of mine in Kenya. Important letter from your point of view.

MEADOWS: ^{My} Mine?

JOHNSON: We were in the army together. I call him Bull's Eye. He wanted to know if I had a good man to send out to him, a married man. Decent salary. Native servants. Detached house. Free travel. Take your wife. Christmas bonus, that sort of thing.

MEADOWS: Me?

JOHNSON: I thought of you, yes. But ~~they were~~ ^{of course there's} ~~no~~ ^{no} travelling now.

JOHNSON: No, it isn't! There's no need to try and turn me into some scheming bloody rascal like you always do! There's no experiment attached to it. Old Bull's Eye just put the question, as you well know, because you read the letter yourself.

MARGARET: I only said it sounds like an experiment.

MEADOWS: That's all right, Mrs Johnson. It's in him from his father, fiddling about with other people's lives. It excites them. I could see it in his eyes. But it's all right. It's up to me to fight a way through.

JOHNSON: You've discovered a very sound principle, Meadows, which my wife has been slow to learn, that there's no power where there isn't submission.

MEADOWS: Yes, it's right. I only make you powerful if I submit.

LOWELL: The ticklish thing is, do you submit by going or staying?

MEADOWS: That's what I'd like to know.

JULIA: He'll never do it! What, get on an aeroplane and all that, Mrs Johnson? I'm frightened!

MARGARET: Perhaps you're better out of all this. You could start a family.

JULIA: But what about the vaudeville? and Sea Bells? and dad's back?

MEADOWS: Dad's what?

JULIA: Back. You know I massage him once a week. Regular.

LOWELL: Women always put the personal side, don't they?

MARGARET: It's funny, Godfrey, you're full of suggestions for other people. I always seem to be listening to them. Why can't our own lives have a little bit of magic as well? We always seem to be sending people off. And we're left with the files and graphs and account-books.

JOHNSON: I don't know what you mean.

MARGARET: I'd like a child, for one thing.

JOHNSON: Oh, for Christ's sake, not in public, Margaret!

MARGARET: Why not? We're all very frank with each other, aren't we? Mrs Meadows told me she was frightened of having a child.

MEADOWS: She always has been, haven't you, duck?

MARGARET: I'm not. Yet I can't have one. And if you're so miserable at Devil's Brig why can't we leave? Why can't we leave Barnley Ridge Electric? Why do you send people off to their freedom and leave us prisoners? Even riding's forbidden!

JOHNSON: You do enough of it, don't you?

MARGARET: I mean you forbid it to yourself. And these people think we live so grandly! Stables, servants, fifteen bedrooms! They don't realise how hollow it is, just because you can't bear a little colour, it'd make you feel guilty!

JOHNSON: I've got to atone all the time, that's true.

MARGARET: Atone for what? You haven't done anything.

JOHNSON: He has.

MARGARET: But he was the same as you! He led your mother the same life! Because he didn't have a sense of colour inside him, he didn't know what magic meant, he didn't know what your mother was talking about when she said she wanted a ballroom here and the servants lining up on Christmas day! He thought it was all piffle!

JOHNSON: So it was.

MARGARET: Exactly! You don't ~~may~~ know what this frail need is, which most of us have! You don't seem to need magic!

JOHNSON: As ~~Johnson~~ ^I said ^{just now,} there's no power unless you submit to it.

MARGARET: I want to submit! But you never shout or forbid me things!

JOHNSON: It might not last long, Meadows, but it's worth the experience, and you might move on to something else.

MEADOWS: It's a borjoy test, that's all. It's the one every borjoy of the first generation has to take: but it's sad. It's sad to think of what my children'll grow up into. They won't have that substance behind them like me.

JOHNSON: They'll grow up like me. No 'magic'!

MEADOWS: I've noticed, you're troubled all the time. All borjoys are. Have my children got to be like that? Well, I'm not going to say yes to that job. I'm going to think a bit.

JULIA: It might be nice out there. All that sun. One of the women on the social committee said she was out there with her husband and, it's silly to mention it, but she only had things out on the line for a minute and they were dry! Well, that's a relief, isn't it?

→ JOHNSON: Do you know that lovely Schubert song, 'Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel'? when she's yearning for Faust? You hear the spinning wheel turning in the piano part, diddle-di-diddle-di-diddle, like a torture wheel, but lovely. 'My quiet has gone, she says, 'my heart is dark, I shall never find peace as long as I live.' That's the first verse. Then 'Whenever I look out of the window it's only for him, and when I leave the house I leave only for him. His gracious step, his wonderful presence, his smile, the strength of his gaze, the magical flow of his speech, the touch of his hand, then---oh, his kiss!' First

Penny's not a pen.

verse again. 'My quiet has gone, my heart is dark, I shall never find peace as long as I live.' Well, that's how I feel. ~~about life~~. Couldn't put it in my own words. I don't know who I'm looking for. I don't know who touched me. Somebody did, once. It's the magic Penny Margaret talks about. I'm always looking for it. But the person's gone. Meanwhile there's work to do, a war.

JULIA: ~~You shouldn't be sad. Think of the dreamboat last night!~~

JOHNSON: ~~It's a person I'm in love with. I'll never find it. It's always round the corner.~~

MARGARET: ~~I've never known what my function is with you, Godfrey. Perhaps that's the trouble.~~

MEADOWS: ~~It's what I said yesterday. The boy's always alone. And the more boy the more alone.~~

LOWELL (entranced) Are we ready, then, Mr Meadows? Shall we go to the stables?

MEADOWS: Yes, let's! Coming, Julia?

JULIA: All right. I feel so funny. It's like a dream.

MEADOWS: Aren't you coming, too?

JOHNSON: Oh, we've seen them often enough.

MEADOWS: ~~I'm going to think all night. It's exciting. It's like making your life with your own hands.~~

~~Exeunt LOWELL, MEADOWS and JULIA.~~

MARGARET: You're going to wreck their lives.

JOHNSON: No. People wreck their own. I give them freedom. What do you think of that Murphy case, eh? We've caught the old man out at last!

~~Penny: I think we have.~~

~~Sam:~~ CURTAIN

~~the way to...~~

They leave.

Penny goes & sits on the floor by SAM.

She can be heard - his knee - ~~to~~ ~~to~~ ~~to~~

He puts a hand fondly on the head, leaning back & jiggling before his

4.

SAM's office at Barclay
Electrics. JULIA & PENNY

SCENE: ~~The same as in 1. A fortnight later.~~

~~JULIA and MARGARET, ^{making lists} ~~collected~~ at the table. ^{key}~~

MARGARET: ^(looking up) ~~We'll send invitations to all the departments. What about outsiders?~~

JULIA: ~~Why couldn't we have Casanova? He'd make a wonderful M.C.!~~ ^{Julia looks at this.}

MARGARET: But you said he was horrible.

JULIA: He is. But he's such a lark!

MARGARET: We don't really need an M.C.

JULIA: Oh, we do! For the floor!

MARGARET: He won't expect to be paid, will he?

JULIA: Oh, no! ^{Imagine his} ~~I'll talk to him. It's funny how people look up to me now. Ever since we walked round the works together. The women are different.~~

MARGARET: ~~You look different, too.~~

JULIA: ~~How?~~

MARGARET: ~~More managerial. It's brought something out in you--the organiser in you.~~ ^{the}

JULIA: ~~Well, I am an organiser, Mrs Johnson. Jack's always said it. I always used to organise the parties. But never a big thing like this. Imagine the canteen lit up! and Casanova giving me the glad eye while he holds the microphone, and his evening dress twinkles!~~

MARGARET: ~~Why does it twinkle?~~

JULIA: He wears it in his lapels, like diamonds. ^{2g's eyes.} ~~He says it flashes and catches the eye.~~

MARGARET: ~~What about the judges?~~ ^{2g continues his list.}

JULIA: ~~Well, you should be one of the judges? The heads of every department. What about that?~~ ^{My lawyer as of the judges?}

MARGARET: ~~It's always the heads, you see. We always come back to the same thing.~~

~~My ~~lawyer~~ ^{the judges} always have appointments? 2g's all heads of departments. There we!~~

JULIA: ~~Why not? They're educated!~~

MARGARET: ~~Why can't we choose a judge at random from all the ticket-buyers? By lottery?~~

JULIA: ~~We could.~~ But there wouldn't be ^{any} the magnificence about it, would there? Think of Speciality Products with his lovely accent reading out the winner! And Production puffing at his fat cigar!

MARGARET: We'll let ~~Godfrey~~ ^{Sam} decide, then. I think I know every man and woman in the works now. You're wrong. They'd be good judges. Better, perhaps.

JULIA: All right, ~~then.~~ ^(reluctantly) We'll make it democratic!

MARGARET: You mean dull, don't you, dear?

JULIA: Well, you can't starve people's hearts, Mrs Johnson, I don't care what you say! You called me 'dear'. That's nice. ~~I'd like you next door.~~ But it won't last.

MARGARET: What won't last?

JULIA: ~~Our being together.~~ ^{Seeing each other like this.} ~~We'll never come to Devil's Brig again, you'll see.~~

MARGARET: Why not?

JULIA: It's too like a dream. ~~I'll never forget that house, Mrs Johnson!~~

MARGARET: ~~I like it less since you came. I like it here. I never thought I would. Perhaps it's the autumn coming on. I love your little front room where you gave me tea. You see how strange we are? I remember it glowing like a fairy-tale and the fog over the works, too, with the light shining through it. The way the trams creak in the morning. The brick walls, even. And now I've learned to love Barnley Ridge. You'll see, he'll snatch the work away from me.~~

JULIA: ~~Who?~~

MARGARET: ~~My husband.~~ ^{goes} Whenever I learn to love something he grows cold on it. ~~It seems I always~~ ^{loving} love too late. It's like never catching up ~~in a race.~~

JULIA: ~~I do feel sorry for you. They told me this morning that old Mr Johnson's on one of his tours, like he used to! He'll take my Jack ~~to the slander-courts, Mrs Johnson!~~ He promised he would. It does frighten me so!~~

MARGARET: He'd never ^{do it} do it. ~~Besides, it's there in the file, with his own signature. He can't get away from it.~~

JULIA: ~~He won't come up here, will he?~~

MARGARET: ~~Oh, he's been saying such nice things about you! You needn't be afraid!~~

JULIA: ~~Do you love Mr Lowell?~~

PENNY stoves at her + continues.

~~Good God! I suppose - jolly! - I don't know!~~

MARGARET: ~~No. Why?~~

JULIA: Well, a woman should always have a little fancy, don't you think so? You'll have him at the Social, won't you?

MARGARET: ^{Smiles} Oh, no!

JULIA: Why not?

MARGARET: ~~I think he'd make Godfrey feel ashamed.~~

JULIA: ~~Why ashamed?~~

MARGARET: ~~In front of the workers.~~

JULIA: ~~But he ought to be proud! Mr Lowell's such an easy-come, easy-go sort of person!~~

MARGARET: ~~He's proud of Bull's Eye. Set face, horn-rimmed spectacles, never says more than he means. By the way, I've got something to show you.~~

JULIA: ~~I thought that was coming. When I got up this morning. A kind of sensation.~~

MARGARET hands her a letter.

MARGARET: Are you glad?

JULIA: I can't tell! Well, would you believe it?

MARGARET: What's your husband going to say?

JULIA: I don't know. He's never mentioned it again. He put it out of sight. And you say he's got a set face and horn-rimmed spectacles, don't you?

MARGARET: That's right.

JULIA: Oh, I couldn't bear that!

MARGARET: But he's good-looking!

JULIA: It's the way you said it. No, ^{it} I wouldn't be right for us, I can feel it! (Reading) 'Following receipt of signed contract I shall credit your account at Barnley Ridge Electric works with a month's advance salary, and send air-passage for yourself and your wife.' I said we'd never see Devil's Brig again!

MARGARET: But you want to go.

JULIA: The trouble is, if I knew how to behave! I'm sure they'll pick holes in me. And suppose they didn't like the look of us? We'd be stranded out there!

MARGARET: When you get over there, try not to look forward to their company. You'd better take my advice. I learned the bitter way. Seem not to need them. It doesn't matter how lonely you are. Then they'll be drawn towards you. It's terribly hard, doing it. You've got such a soft heart! Try and be silent for minutes on end sometimes. That interests them. You

should remember what I've said. Don't forget it, from the moment you land.

JULIA: We'll never go! It's for Jack to decide, and he's got more sense! You mean I've got no sense when you say I'm soft-hearted, don't you?

MARGARET: If you like. Being soft-hearted means that, partly.

JULIA: They sound horrible, Mrs Johnson!

MARGARET: Oh, no, I didn't mean that! They're ordinary business people. Decent. Quite jolly.

Enter GODFREY JOHNSON.

JOHNSON: The old man's prowling round the works like a fox.

JULIA: I'd better go!

JOHNSON: Hullo, Mrs Meadows! Your husband's on his way up. Broken the news?

MARGARET: Yes.

JOHNSON: What do you say, Mrs Meadows? It's a wonderful chance, isn't it?

JULIA: Well, we'll have to wait for Jack. I could have fallen through the floor!

JOHNSON: Can't we get those files out of the way?

MARGARET: What's the matter? You're prowling round, it seems to me.

JOHNSON: He's finding fault with everything. Won't look at the achievements,---canteens and that sort of thing. Says I could cut my labour down by five or ten percent. Well, so I could. Accounts department, for instance. I could mechanise that lot and give forty percent of the staff their cards.

MARGARET: What does it matter what he says?

JOHNSON: Nothing. Only it gets me worked up.

MARGARET: I hope he isn't swearing at people.

JOHNSON: Oh, he's cleverer than that. He stands in front of them like a stone column asking them questions, then when he's finished he turns away without a word!

MARGARET: It isn't his plant, to do that.

JOHNSON: He's got it all in his head. It's marvellous. He knows every wire and assembly-line in the place!

MARGARET: You respect him, then. That's different. Then you should run the place as he used to.

JOHNSON: That's exactly the kind of help I get from you. Well, Mrs Meadows, we're still bickering, as you can see!

JULIA: I think it's nice, in a way!

JOHNSON: If there's any trouble out there write to me. I know old Bull's Eye like the back of my hand.

JULIA: You're very good, what you've done for us.

JOHNSON: For me it's a step forward.

MARGARET: For them, you mean.

JOHNSON: No, for me.

MARGARET: And what about them?

JOHNSON: I'll tell you something else, Mrs Meadows. It all happens at once. Your husband was called up by the Personnel section this morning. He's been offered a job in Speciality Products.

JULIA: No!

MARGARET: Did you arrange that?

JOHNSON: No.

MARGARET: Little wonder the men are turning him a cold shoulder!

JOHNSON: Who said they are?

MARGARET: Isn't that true, Mrs Meadows?

JULIA: Oh, I don't think they'd ever hate Jack!

JOHNSON: And in that case, what have you been doing walking through the works with his wife? Do you think that improves his situation?

MARGARET: She's on the catering committee.

JOHNSON: She's in with you. And he's been offered a job on Speciality Products, no doubt, because he's in with me. But I didn't do anything. You'll have to accept, Margaret, that the world is made in a certain way. It isn't all my will.

MARGARET: You have a way of pushing fate along---giving it a little shove.

JULIA: Some people are nicer and some people aren't.

JOHNSON: And for God's sake don't depress the girl before she starts!

Enter JACK MEADOWS.

JOHNSON: Ah, good. The old man wants you up here.

JULIA: Oh, no!

MEADOWS: I saw him downstairs. He smiled. Funny cove, isn't he?

JULIA: Well, it's come through, Jack!

MEADOWS: What's come through?

JULIA: The job out there!

MEADOWS: Just as I thought. I thought, they've called me upstairs to sign on the dotted line. Well, would you believe it?

JOHNSON: Show him the letter.

MARGARET gives him the letter.

JULIA: It's just like a dream, Jack!

MEADOWS: I expect I seem ungrateful. Not jumping for joy.

JOHNSON: No. Good news doesn't come like that.

MEADOWS: I was called up by Personnel.

JOHNSON: Yes, he told me.

MEADOWS: Was that your doing?

JOHNSON: No. I've just answered that question.

MEADOWS: He offered me a job in Speciality Products.

JULIA: Well, let's take it, Jack! I've been thinking! You'd better stay here.

MEADOWS: You don't want me to. For weeks you've been dreaming away to yourself, quietly, like a woman, haven't you---about me chasing the flies off my knees with one of those horse-hair fly-whisks? ~~xxxx~~ clapping my hands for tiffin, eh? Our bed's been tropical for weeks. I nearly got a sunburn.

JULIA: It's all very well to pull legs!

MEADOWS: It's the truth, you damned-well know it is!

JULIA: Well, it's exciting---think of flying in an aeroplane and going in the sun, and a wooden house with great big whirring fans! But it makes me tremble. I do and I don't, sort of thing!

MEADOWS: It's funny. The Personnel manager gave me a glass of sherry. He's a nice man. And do you know what I thought? I thought, He shouldn't be nice. He ought to be nasty, like I imagined him. It made me feel let-down. The old intimacy's gone. My hands don't feel right, on the work.

JOHNSON: That's freedom. If I tell you what, I'll make you free-er still. I can give you an assurance, in writing if you like, that if things get too hot out there, say you don't settle down, this job in Speciality Products 'll be waiting for you.

MEADOWS: So I'm caught both ways. Cunning, isn't it? I've got to be a borjey now, if I go or stay.

MARGARET: You're afraid it's in you, to be one.

MEADOWS: That's right, I am, now. I'm caught, yet I'm supposed to be free. I don't feel free, but I've got freedom. I can make life with my own

hands. Before, I used to watch life, sort of thing. It was like a procession with colours and lights. I no more thought of me or Julia being in it than flying in the air! It just went rolling by while we had a cup of tea! And now I can go up and interfere with it. Get up on one of the big golden lions. Do you see what I mean? I can make bits of it with my own hands. And it doesn't feel right.

JOHNSON: Do you want to sit in a cocoon all your life, then?

MEADOWS: Yes and no. That's where the borjoy starts. The processions^o gone anyway, so life's made up its mind for me. I'm a borjoy now. You say you've been looking for something all your life, Mr Johnson: it's the procession you've been after. It's marvellous when you see it. Do you remember the girl at the spinning wheel, 'My quiet has gone, my heart is dark, I shall never have peace as long as I live?'

JOHNSON: You've got a wonderful memory.

MEADOWS: We're in the same boat now, you and me. But suppose the procession goes for everybody? Suppose there's no fairground any more?

JOHNSON: You mean, suppose everybody's free?

MEADOWS: That's right. Suppose?

JOHNSON: No more wars. A sound roof over everybody's head.

MEADOWS: That's right. Heaven on earth. Only no angels going by.

MARGARET: Or a clear sky without any sunshine.

MEADOWS: Notice we don't do our turns any more, Julia?

JULIA: There hasn't been time, duck!

MEADOWS: Was that 'duck' you said? Why---'If you can love---'

JULIA: I can't, Jack!

MEADOWS: ----'an old baboon like me, it must be---'

JULIA: You'll make me cry!

MEADOWS: 'Yes, it must be---because we're---'

Enter MR JOHNSON.

MR JOHNSON: Tea-pot singing? You'll sing another tune by and by, lad.

MARGARET: Did nurse come, too?

MR JOHNSON: What do I want with a blasted nurse all the time?

MARGARET: Sit down, then.

MR JOHNSON: How do you do, my dear?

JULIA: How do you do, sir?

MR JOHNSON: My son tells me you'll be serving tea to the Africans soon, Mr Tea-pot. You're wasting ten percent of the plant, Godfrey Johnson, do you hear that? I could cut your overheads by a quarter in two years. I'll tell you something. You're running this firm from the Industrial Relations Department, and it should be run from here.

JOHNSON: I keep a general eye on things.

MR JOHNSON: Not good enough! Get round the plant! Shanklin's Pony! Good for your corns. See 'em touching their caps to me this morning, down in 'roduction? He's still got the old touch, eh, Mr Tea-pot?

MEADOWS: That's right.

MR JOHNSON: Servant called me 'sir' this morning, Mr Tea-pot. Have to sack him. Mustn't call me 'sir'. What the devil are those?

JOHNSON: Personnel files.

MR JOHNSON: That damned word 'personnel's been ringing in my ears ever since you took this place over! It's production, not personnel, you're after--- and I can tell from your work-sheets that the stuff's not coming off the assembly-lines as it should. Too much entertaining. Too much tea-potting. You've got a man in overalls sitting in your office like Lord Muck with his wife in the middle of the morning. Now that sort of thing wouldn't have happened in my day, and it's never happened in nearly a hundred and fifty years of Johnson firms, and I'll tell you something, it doesn't bode well!

MARGARET: I wish you wouldn't excite yourself like this, Harry!

MR JOHNSON: And I'll tell you something, Mr Tea-pot. You're on the pay-roll of this establishment, and your job's downstairs on the assembly-lines, not here. And until you've been given your cards you're a worker and a subordinate, and you touch your cap to me, do you understand?

JOHNSON: I asked him up here.

MEADOWS: Oh, that's the way the wind blows, is it? Well, just have a look at this, Mr Johnson.

He goes across and signs the contract.

JULIA:
JAEK Jack! You've done it!

MEADOWS: Free man!

MR JOHNSON: Good Lord. Mr Tea-pot did something. Boys downstairs'll go on strike. Give it to me here. (MARGARET hands him the contract) It's a contract, too! By God, you get it buttered on both sides nowadays, don't you, and along the edges, too! Two months this, six months that, a couple of air tickets---where does thw work come in? I can tell you something, Tea-pot,

you're a damned sight better off than I was in my young days!

JULIA: What made you do it?

MEADOWS: It was 'touch your cap'!

MR JOHNSON: That's how the first Johnson started. Wouldn't buckle under. Signed a contract. Lost all his friends. Richest man in the country in five years. Never wanted to do it. Rum, isn't it? Your wife'll push you further in the sludge. See it in her face.

MARGARET: Let me take you home, Harry.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, no. Got to face a tribunal first, eh, Godfrey Johnson? Two judges, no witnesses. I'm here to answer a charge, directed at me first by Mr Tea-pot and then supported by my own son, that I don't pay compensation for industrial accidents. Defence: I always pay adequate compensation for industrial accidents, always have done, always will. Those are the rules of Barnley Ridge Electric Company Ltd., inception 1902. Now give me evidence, at once, to the contrary!

JOHNSON: Where's that file?

MARGARET: I don't know.

JOHNSON: I said, where's that file?

MARGARET: I think your father ought to go home.

JOHNSON (taking down a file) This is your personal file. And this is what it says about Jock Murphy. 'I spoke to Murphy and he was willing not to register the accident if I could assure him a position here for the rest of his working days, and a pension. I put him on the telephones at the main door.' That's where Murphy is now.

MR JOHNSON: Signature?

JOHNSON: Signed by you.

MR JOHNSON: Show it here.

JOHNSON: Show it to my father, Margaret.

She does so.

MR JOHNSON (after reading it) Call the fellow up here. Don't remember.

JOHNSON (at the telephone) Send up Mr Murphy at once, main door.

MR JOHNSON: This genuine?

JOHNSON: Do you think I'd fake your signature?

MR JOHNSON: Wouldn't put it past you. Rascal.

JOHNSON: This man was blinded for life.

MARGARET: All right, Godfrey.

- MR JOHNSON: Private arrangement, probably. Gave him money and didn't write it down. Often did that. Couple of hundred quid out of my own pocket---forget about it, old chap, we'll call it quits. Probably did that.
- JOHNSON: You didn't make any arrangement, private or otherwise. And that's the meaning of this word 'personnel'. 'Personnel' means I'm not having that kind of thing happening again. And that's the difference between my company and yours. I've got to repair your damage!
- MEADOWS: You'll never do that. Factories won't ever be natural and you'll never make them so. That's the trouble with your class, refusing to realise that, afraid of not being up to date.
- MR JOHNSON: Hear what he says? You're in it as well as I am, Godfrey Johnson. Mr Tea-pot wants to be natural. Wants a tiger-skin and do warr-dances!
- JOHNSON: You never registered any personal accidents at all, including the personal ones to my mother, did you?
- MR JOHNSON: Why you---!
- JULIA: Please, Mr Johnson!
- MARGARET: You can't stop them.
- JOHNSON: She had such a delightful, chattering way of talking! You used to get up and walk out sometimes when she was in the middle of a story. You killed her with your hard will, didn't you?
- MR JOHNSON: She didn't give me sex!
- JULIA: He's crying!
- MR JOHNSON: I swear I loved her! But she didn't---!
- MARGARET: Haven't you said enough, Godfrey?
- MR JOHNSON: She never---!
- MEADOWS: Look out!
- Mr Johnson stumbles.
- JOHNSON: Get the doctor quick!
- JULIA: We shouldn't have done it!
- MARGARET (at the 'phone) Send the doctor up at once.
- JULIA: We shouldn't have got mixed up!
- MEADOWS: Get a cushion for his head. Here, rest your head, Mr Johnson.
- MARGARET: You'll be lucky if you haven't killed him!
- JOHNSON: Brandy in my desk, quick!
- Enter JOCK MURPHY.

MURPHY: Good morning, sir!

JOHNSON: Who the devil's that?

MURPHY: How are you, sir? You sound the same as ever! I heard you were making the rounds. It's been nearly ten years, I think!

MEADOWS: What are you talking about, Jock? It's young Mr Johnson!

MARGARET: So He is blind! *We always knew he was pretty ill!*

MURPHY: I could have sworn that was his father!

MARGARET: My husband'll see you tomorrow.

JOHNSON: I didn't mean it!

MEADOWS: It's funny. He made me sign that. The old man.

MURPHY: Is that Mr Meadows?

JULIA: We shouldn't have got mixed up!

JOHNSON: I've killed him. I think I've killed him!

C U R T A I N