OS 10

(Idea during Pasquaney retirement; written, ~~[illegible]~~ July 20, 1919. E.N.)

The Last Laugh. 10

The Reverend Selwyn Prendergast M.A.; B.D. 150
Captain James Anstruther R. A. 35
Theodore Grant M.D. (hearted, elderly, scholar.) 60
Lieut Walter Trevena R.N.R. 30
Maud Trevena, his wife, late of Rotollies, 25
(The God of Laughter.)

The scene represents the deck of a schooner. The sail is spread, and filled by a gentle breeze. The scenery - unbroken ocean - slowly passes behind. But thick darkness reigns.

The Reverend Selwyn Prendergast consults his watch by the light of a match, which shows a glimpse of the persons

52

30

90

32

20

of the drama, asleep except for Trevana, who is at the helm.

Prendergast. Two bells!

Trevena. It'll be dawn in a few minutes. There's Venus high in the east, and the Wolfs' Tail wags. (Pause.) Wake Austruther, and send him aloft.

P. touching his shoulder. Here's your shaving water, sir!

A. (yawns and stretches) a-ow-oo! Dear me, dear me! Do you know, I thought I was in my old college having a fresh breakfast. It was

Friday; we were rather high Anglican, you know. Haw!

P. Dreams come true sometimes; there's two fine pots on the lines.

T. Maud can cook them in that bacon fat.

A. Love, Trevena, you're a lucky man. What a triumph she's been! Never turned a hair! Look at her now; pert as paint, and twice as pretty.

P. I suppose it is a rather extraordinary thing, a lady who can wake in the morning in a schooner and look as if she were going to a dinner-party at ~~Windsor~~ Buckingham Palace!

T. Sin, old boy, SHIN it up the stick; I sort of smell land.

A. Ay, ay, sir! (Climbs the mast)

Grant (waking) Ha Ha! There goes a monkey on a stick.

P. He seems to me more like a bear climbing after a bun. I saw some at Berne Race.

T. Say, boys, I'm peckish. PECKISH

A. (above) It's a shame to wake the cook; let her have her sleep out!

(Dawn breaks, quickly, about 5 minutes)

Maud. (waking) Who said cook?

My gummy, where am we? GUMMY

(sings) Afloat on the briny deep!

Avast there, belay! All hands to the pumps — oh what lovely fish! My friends, it's Fry-Day! AVAST BELAY

P. It certainly is worth while to wake up when you think we're rich for life.

(a laugh, off, very cheery and frank. It is very peculiar in tone & cadence, easily recognizable.)

G. Oh, we're not ashore yet.

T. You lousy landlubber! We've had a peach of a voyage, and we'll hit the island to-day, or I'm a Dutch longshoreman.

G. Well, let's hope so. Lord, I've been so seasick.

M. Physician, heal thyself! Is the island really near, Walter?

T. Don't know these currents well. We may have dragged half the night — — —.

A (above) Land ho! Right off the port bow!

They jump up excitedly, and gaze where he points.

T. Steady. Austrutter, you ass, you've forgotten the glass. (A. descends)

M (sniffed the toast pass!
Drink to the lass!
I warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

(A. up again with binoculars.)

Hush! Captain Austrutter presents — presents — well, what's the name of the play?

A. England, Home, and Beauty.

I can see the Jack flying from the Governor's house on the hill.

G. This, lady and gentlemen, is where we enjoy breakfast with some of the champagne, hitherto reserved for strictly medical purposes.

M. That is, for the poor sea-sick doctor! (She has been getting the food ready, while Grant lights the stove, and Prendergast lays the table.)

T. If this breeze holds, which it will, we'll be in harbour by noon.

M. Come out me, all ye that be an-HUNGERED ~~hungered and~~ — oh, I beg your pardon, Mr Prendergast. I got so excited over being in sight of home.

P. The certain latitude, madam, once extended to Mary Magdalene, may I think be extended with propriety to cover the Stars in the Firmament of Vaudeville.

M. Oh, come, now you're getting at me. Tit for tat, as you may say.

(sings) When the one-eyed clergyman went in to bat,
It was Tit for Tat – Tit for Tat!

(They sit for breakfast, Trevena LASHING lashing the bacon.)

P. Lord bless this food to our use, and us to thy service. Amen.

(He ~~[illegible]~~ fills the plates.)

[Note. This breakfast is to be done properly. Real fish really cooked. In any decent

coming there will be real champagne, to help the actors, and save the mortgage of repeated performance)

G. I say, I think that's a bit of keeping the world safe for hypocrisy. We haven't been shining lights.

P. (his mouth full) Under a bushel, Doctor, merely under a bushel.

T. Where's that champagne?

A. Here, sir, ready, sir, coming, sir, please remember the waiter!

(Wine poured)

M. Here's a toast: To the jolly little God of Laughter!

P. That's made us all rich! Rich for life!

(all DRINK the toast.)

A. Bumpers! Three times three! TIMES

(all drink, ~~[illegible]~~, and give three cheers)

M. Here he is, the darling! Let him on high!

P. I am afraid this conduct savours strongly of idolatry.

G. The wee free meenister (MEENISTER) at Invercuchullain (INVERCUCHULLAIN) would have ground it to powder.

A. Huh! the best piece of jade in five continents. I'd slit his

M. wizzard! Mine now! Remember your bargain!

T. But, doctor, about what you said just now. I haven't done anything unbecoming an officer

and a gentleman, and I don't see that many of you have.

G. Well, we start on a job that is either brigandage or piracy, it would be a Lottery to say which.

T. We took our lives in our hands.

G. So does every burglar. However, things turn out rather jolly; the natives are willing to deal.

T. Mark that! Willing to deal. (very solemnly.)

G. Too willing to deal, I thought myself. Anyhow, we get away with the rubies and the rest of it (the time of about three million sterling. — —

T. And my darling God of Laughter!

G. For a few rifles and a case or

and a gentleman, and I don't see that many of you have.

G. Well, we start on a job that is either brigandage or piracy, it would be a Lottery to say which.

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T. And my darling God of Laughter!

G. For a few rifles and a case or

two of cartridges.

T. Well, they liked it. Never saw natives so friendly.

NEVER ME

M. Never in me puff-puff!

G. Too friendly, I thought myself.

T. Oh, that's bile on the liver, my medical friend. Now recount; the breeze is stiffening; you'll have another go of — (imitates sea-sick man.)

G. Mercy, great chief! Don't suggest things.

A. Thoughts are things, didn't some dam feller say? Haw!

G. Those natives, you know. I thought they were laughing at us.

T. Nonsense!

P. I should like to be permitted to say, in the words of the old saw, that he who laughs last laughs best. I think I will take a little more champagne. Hi! Hi Hi!

M. Yes, old dear, it's our turn to laugh now. (a laugh rings, off, as before; all look up, but conclude it is Maud, & say nothing.)

T. Laughing – and quaffing! (He drinks)

SCLAFFING

G. And sclaffing - you brassie!
Come, blow, thou summer wind!

A. Grant cheerful at last! Take
care you don't - (imitates sea-sick
man)

A' VERRA WEEL, MY BRAW CALLANT

G. ~~A~~ verra weel, my braw callant!
Wait till I have ye with malaria!
You island ~~&~~ fair STINKS wi' it!

A. You poor fish, I've had malaria
more times than I've HAD you have had
shaves. (all laugh)

G. I'll shave for the Dinner with
the Governor.

M. At least you might have had
a date with me.

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the Governor.

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a date with me.

WARNINGLY

T. (warningly, but in jest) Maud!

M. (sings) Oh boys, I'm crazy for you;
I just simply have to adore you;
I would love to be your poppy-woppy
queen;
And I'm sure of what I'm saying;
I wouldn't keep you waiting
If it wasn't for the husband in between
(She falls into T's arms, and kisses him)

G. (as if drunk) This laughter's simply
p-p-p-pathological!

T. (mimicking him) You're always p-p-p-p-pathological.

MIMICS

P. And you, sir, are in my opinion
~~reprehensibly~~ EVASIVELY UXORIOUS.

(The laughter redoubles.)

J'you

A. J'you know, I shwear I heard a laugh. Fellah larfin', dit'ye know?

P. Keep up the traditions of the service!

T. Service yourself! I'm in the senior service.

M. Not much. I'm in the diplomatic service.

P. Diplomatic, from diploos, double; hence, a thrice.

M. Walter, can you sit there and hear the wife of your bosom BUZZUM insulted?

A. Insults, on a day like this!

P. Yea, verily, lay not up for yourselves treasure on earth; we've got it on the sea. We're rich for life!

(a laugh, off, as before; but the company join in peals of merriment.)

A. Say, Trevena, when we get ashore, I'll match you. Hundred yards, quarter, mile, high jump, long jump, throwing the hammer, and single wicket.

T. Put in three swimming events, good fellow, your mean.

A. It's a bet! (They shake hands.)

P. I'll back Trevena! A tiers and pounds a side!

M. What! do parsons gamble?

P. Like lambs, madam, like lambs. David says so.

M. Well, Mr. Wolf, mayn't a lamb drink? (She knocks the toddy off.

(a laugh, off, as before; but the company join in peals of merriment.)

A. Say, Trevena, when we get ashore, I'll match you. Hundred yards, quarter, mile, high jump, long jump, throwing the hammer, and single wicket.

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M. What! do parsons gamble?

P. Like lambs, madam, like lambs. David says so.

M. Well, Mr. Wolf, mayn't a lamb drink? (She knocks the toddy off.

a bottle, fills her beaker, and drinks it off.)

P. Madam, at sea all things are possible.

A. Lord, but it's getting hot. Steward, bring the ice.

G. That's the one luxury we lack. Food, drink, a sound ship, a good navigator, a favouring breeze, and a lady's conversation – but no ice!

M. D'ye mean my conversation needs it?

T. Mrs Trevelyan, you are not on the stage any more!

M. Nor you on the quarter-deck. Royal Naval Reserve!

P. What! the turtle-doves fall out?

A. Out of the schooner, haw!

G. Seems RUM to me, Prendergast.

How did a ship-pilot ever steer this course?

P. Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. I was necessary to provide ecclesiastical sanction for the Five Jolly Robbers.

G. Come to the point, man!

P. It would surprise you to know how hard it is for the most pious and stupid people to realize "How HOW hardly shall they that have RICHES riches enter into the kingdom of God." They hang on to it. Even the Bishop of London is STONY stony-broke; and I, poor careless curate? "If they call the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more" et cetera

M. Oh cut it out! How can we cut those millions into five? Five

int. Three won't go.

T. Prendergast, if you are not lost to all feelings of decency, you will open another two quarts.

P. For what we have received may the Lord make us truly thankful!

M. Gratitude is a lively anticipation of favours to come.

A. And they're on the way, eh? Haw!

G. Drink, pretty creature, drink!

M. Drink to me only with thine eyes!

A. I shall drink the regular way.

T. No, Sir, no more drinks for you. Even trick at the helm, you know, if the trade turns cranky.

A. (saluting) Ay, ay sir!

T. Not that there's a chance of it. Blue sea, blue sky, and the barometer holding 30.50, steady all the week.

G. See, there's land! I can pick out the church on the hill.

P. I'll have a church of my own now, and be a bishop in ten years.

M. Ten years is a devil of a long time.

(During this whole conversation the laughter constantly increases in freedom, volume, and duration. Every speech brings some laugh, whether or no it seem funny to any normal person.)

A. 'Twas to some I've known. Was stationed near a PRISON once. Haw!

G. Who's gloomy now?

T. Gloomy!

P. To think I should have lived to see this day!

M. Is this a day to be talking of days? (she imitates a DOUR Scots elder)

T. The wind's dropping; let's have a swim. Here, Arthur, let's swim the hundred now!

A. Right! Once round the schooner!

M. Oh, jolly!

(They strip their outer garments, and dive.)

P. Go it, Trevena! Hearts of oak!

G. Arthur! Arthur!

M. Walter's winning!

(A long pause. A laugh, off.)

G. The sharks seem to have won.

M. What a dam silly thing to do!

(All shriek with laughter)

P. Only three of us left to share the treasure!

M. Three goes into three.

G. Only three to share the treasure!

M. I hope you are polite enough to ~~[illegible]~~ me; I'm a widow now, ain't I?

P. I fear the canonical law does not exactly contemplate a partition in such cases!

M. O Mr Prendergast!

G. Madam, I offer you my heart and hand.

P. I've got a wife in Pimlico.

M (sing) I have a wife and bairnies three
and I'm no sure how ye'd agree, lassie!

G (with glasses) Luckily we're near home, Mrs T. Prendergast and I would be poor sailors.

M. Oh, I declare, I clean forgot. My Walter! (Begins to cry; then turns to hysterical laughter, in which all join.)

G. This laughter's positively pathological.

M. (mimics him) Pos-i-tive-ly path-ological!

P. I shall die of laughing!

(Pause; a laugh, off.)

G. What was that? 'Twasn't you, Maud?

M. It's Maud now, is it? Belay there! BEZAY

P. Permit me t add: Avast, you bubber!

G. Oh well!

M. Quit, both of you! I've VOWED it my
God of Laughter.

(Laugh, off.)

G. I'll kiss you for all that.
(He chases her round the deck,
catches her, and does so.)

M. Unhand me, villain!

P. (Theatrically) Is there no kiss for me?

M. Oh yes, here's the other cheek,
Selwyn, may I call you?

P. Dear me, dear me, that was
indeed delicious. Purely Platonic,
madam, may not I call you
Maud?

G. Maudlin, by the Lord!

P. The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

(Pause. a laugh, off.)

M. Say, who laughed then?

P. Aren't we all laughing?

G. Only pathologically.

M. Was that pathological?

G. Pure hallucination.

M. My! That's a bully word. Somebody hits me again!

G. No; that's pathological. #

(Extreme laughter.)

Here, buck up, old man!

(Prendergast is fallen back, faint with the exhaustion of laughing.)

~~[illegible]~~

M. This is pathological.

G. (angrily) You bet: I'll have to stick some strychnine in him; his heart's rotten.

(They are helpless with laughter.)

And here I am — the worst of the gang! Helpless! Utterly helpless!

M. Smiles or self-help!

(Prendergast chokes and dies.)

G. Good God! he's gone.

M. Ain't that a sunny 'un?

G. (sings) Fifteen men on the dead man's chest

Yo! heave ho! and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil have done for the rest
Yo! heave ho! and a bottle of rum!

M. (sings) and his is all because

dive

Who put to sea with seventy-five!

(She dances wildly, THROWING her head

back, with peals of laughter. G.

G. joins her. They sit down, weary,

and pledge each other in a drink.

G. very serious. This is certainly ——

M. Pathological!

G. It really is, you know. Neurosis of a

sort.

M. Pressure on the occipital

sub-clavian masillary, doc!

G. We'd better throw the body over the

side.

M. He can introduce Walter and James to Saint Peter!

(They throw him over.)

G. Pity he can't read his own burial service.

M. Isn't dust to dust, though.

G. No; it ~~water~~ water-strong waters!- to water.

M. To Walter!

G. This is like the Panic laughter they used to have in Greek and Roman days.

M. Pan was a good skate!

G. They used to invoke him in a song: something like this:

(chants)

Ai Pan Pan! Pan Pan Pan!

Io Pan Aegipan, Io Pan Pan!

Io Pan Pan! Ae-gi-Pan!

Aegipan, Aegipan, Aegipan, Aegipan, Aegipan, Aegipan, Io Pan Pan!

(They both catch up this, and go on with variations. It makes them wild to dance. At last they stop, falling on each others' necks in absolute fatigue.)

G. Lord! This is pathological.

(They burst out laughing again.)

Look here, Maud! Will you really be my little wife?

M. Don't be silly!

(She pushes him away. He reels, catches his foot and goes overboard.)

Now I've been and gone and done it!

(She rocks with laughter.)

Oh you darling! Now I'm yours!

(She puts her arms round the jade image, and rubs her cheek against it)

I seem to be having the last laugh!

(She dances wildly, yelling with laughter, then falls limp once more on the image, her sides shaking and heaving. A. [Then her eyes open in a ghastly stare; she laughs, catches her breath, and dies. Pause. The laugh rings, off.]

Curtain.

3. [In uncultivated country, a big fat very jolly man in green, resembling the image, climbs aboard, ~~[illegible]~~ catches her under his arm, she still

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Curtain.

B. [In uncultivated country, a big fat man in green, very jolly, resembling the Image, climbs aboard, ~~[illegible]~~ catches her under his arm, she still

laughing, goes to the helm and puts it hard over, as the curtain falls. After its fall, the laugh off is once repeated, faintly, as if dying away in the distance.]

Diabetes.

To find flies greedy over your urine
Argues: a Specialist should now be seen.
He will raise eyes, and wag his head,
and snort
On sea your last laboratory report.

"Sugar for you is just as bad as meat is;
You are a sufferer from diabetes,
a deadly and insidious disease.
There is no hope of cure. Three guineas, please"
It's quite a good deal for a little money;
And, to some people, might appear as funny.
But to the folks who neither drink nor
smoke
And yet have got to crook, it seems no joke.

Joe. Bill, you don't for one moment seriously believe in that sort of stuff, do you?

W. Joe, I do. In this corrupt age there is no way for a man to prove his faith except by betting on it. Therefore: I hereby (a) wager the sum of one Dollar and (b) propose to earn it by betting you that sum that you make a million dollars between now and midnight.

Joe. You silly ass! It's impossible. You can't make money where there isn't any money to make.

W. Never mind: only one proviso, that you take a chance if it comes.

J. Sure; but it's impossible. Nobody even knows I'm here.

W. Is it a bet?

J. If you say so. (They shake hands)

A. He certainly is game to take a chance.

B. Some people will grab anything

A. Some people are sorry when they've got what they grabbed.

B. Some people – have sense enough to let it go again.

J. What in the devil's name is the matter with you two women?

B. a matter of taste.

A. No matter.

J It's a mystery to me.

B Most things are.

J. Now what does she mean by that?

A. Mischief.

W. Now listen, Joe. Mrs Davies, you said a whole lot there. Most things are a mystery to him. Do you know that there is a definite equation between time and greatness? The earth seems to be always changing its place, but time shows that it moves in a more or less unchanging cycle. So do the fixed stars, if you take a long enough period. Now you can only recognize a cycle as such by repeated observation of it. We only know a thing when we have gone round

and round it, and round again.
Joe understands very well indeed
the movements in his tiny cycle
of business. I, in the immense
cycle of art, am still half lost
in wonder as each new phenomenon
bursts upon my gaze. It will take
countless centuries for me to be the
master of my cycle as Joe is to-day
of his. This low man goes on adding
one to one, His hundred's soon hit;
That high man, aiming at a
million, misses a mint.

Joe Ah, I aimed at a million,
and Bill at a mint. Ha! Ha!

B. You poor fool!

W. Can't get outside that cycle,
Mr Davies!

B. Thank the Lord I was never in it.

A. We of finer clay feel otherwise, don't we, Mrs Davies?

B. We artistic people!

J. (desperately) I don't see my million to-night, anyhow!

T. (anxious to help keep peace) And shall I get my thousand?

B. You're always in debt; it's incredible to me: a thousand a year and all found, and you're in debt.

T. It's the children, madam.

J. Damn it, Blanche, you're always in debt too!

A. How lucky to have a multimillionaire for a husband!

W. Oh, it's nature's way. It's the children of the Times that make

the millions for the Joes. Why, Tim himself founded your fortune, old boy! He brought the news of Hafer's death. –

J. He didn't know how to use it. But I was grateful; I gave him a competence for life.

W. How do you feel about it, Tim?

T. I'm very comfortable, thank you, sir (a knock)

W. Now, by my faith, who knocks so late?

Walter Neville (without) May I come in for a second, Wilbur?

W. Sure thing (aside) Walter Neville, from the ~~British~~ Embassy (opens door)

(Enter Neville. Introductions.
Joe is in a corner in the dark.
He comes forward.)

N. Mrs Davies! This is plain Providence.
Do you know, Mrs Davies, I have
ten messenger boys out this minute
looking for you.
(takes out watch)
At the eleventh hour — and
twenty minutes.
Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going
to be most awfully rude. Do
excuse Mrs Davies and myself
for about five minutes! It's life
and death.
(all retire, W. smoking his pipe
in a settee, B Cuche gazing
at him eagerly, Adela quietly

embroidering, Tim and Emily blotted out as ever.)

J. Well, Neville, what's the news?

N. Oh it's an option on building lots. Half a million dollars - expires at midnight. My man got cold feet this morning, or he's really stuck, as he says. I offered the man - Gans, the banker - ten thousand francs for a three-day extension, and he turned me down. The secret is - the Government want those lots for barracks - we've been working secretly for it, you understand, and Gans has got wind to it. I can sell at a big profit to-morrow.

J. Where do I come in?

N. You help me to take up the option - four hundred thousand

is wanted – and –

Joe. I clear?

N. (figures on paper) a million dollars.

Joe. I know you, Neville; but if you were the most obvious con man in the profession, I should write you a cheque. (Mysteriously) This is the night of the big fire.

N. (misunderstanding, laughs.)

W. Converted, by Jove!

Joe. (takes out note-book & check-book) Put it there.

(N. writes contract and J. check. They exchange.)

N. But, damn it, how can I get down before twelve? Gans

lives at 76 bis Boulevard Haussmann,
but – there's no taxi within a mile
of here, and the brutes won't come up
the hill.

T. (advances) Excuse me, sir, but!
that is, Emily thought how Mrs
Davies might be tired, and I took
the liberty of having the Napier sent
to the door (Emily at window)

E. Yes, sir, she's there now.

J. Tim, you've done it again! Here
and now I announce publicly
my belief in fairies, and I present
you with the sum of One Thousand
Dollars (Pulls it from his wallet.)

By the way, William, I really forgot what I came up for. ~~The~~ I want you to drop in at the Embassy first chance. The Government are making you their expert in that art business — so give a dollar-a-year man now.

W. The Three Wishes!

N. (misunderstanding) Health, Wealth, and Happiness!

Now, Tim, put Mr Neville in the car - ~~and take~~ plenty of time!

E. Perhaps Tim and I had better go home to see all right in the house, madam.

B. Yes, you had.

J. and more solemnly still, o Willie Owen, I present you with this dollar, won in honest-betting.

N. a thousand thanks, Davies, I'll be off. (He takes his leave, and goes out with Tim and Emily)

B (very slowly and clearly) I've been wishing, too. Wishing that I had come into that ~~to~~ room about ten minutes before I did.

J. Damn it, Blanche, are you making love to the man before my eyes?

B. Now that you have exhibited your well-known force of character, perhaps you will rest the afflicted part. So if you've got anything else to say, shut up!

J. Remember where you are!

B. I've borne too much; to-night I'll cut loose.

J. Borne? What have I borne? Constant intrigues with Dagos and niggers, ~~[illegible]~~, anarchists, tango lizards ——

B. Never with you!

J. Do I care? What did I want you for?

B. My money!

J. You lawyers looked damned well after that. and yet you're always

B. running after me for money! What do you pay it for? Blackmail!

B. More reason and justice for you to pay it – the blackmailer blackmailed!

J: Was there any other man you could get? When the night before our marriage you were caught with a wop chauffeur?

B. Only – a blackmailer, a scoundrel, a fence, a —

J. Quit that, you dirty dyed street-walker!

B. You-low-dirty-dog!

J. You can't do it again, and get away with it. (He catches her arm)

B. Nor can you, now I know what the law is. (She brings out a gun, and points it at him) I should love to ~~shoot you~~ put a slug in your greasy guts, you hound!

W. Don't, please, Mrs Davies, not here. They are crazy about these things in France - no end of trouble if you shoot a man. G. to ~~Long~~ Island!

B. (wrenches herself away) Hell!

A. Tim and Emily would say that money does not always bring happiness.

W. True, but it brings about some amusing scenes.

B. I wish – I wish – oh if I'd been in that room ten minutes earlier.

A. The early bird eh, ~~Mrs Deane~~ Blanche dearest.

B. My sweet Adela! The early sportsman sometimes catches the early bird.

W. Excuse me, ladies, but I haven't the slightest idea what you're talking about. Who got into what room, and why? And what would have happened if there had

been a Daylight Saving Act?

B. Joe's room, you blind man!

A. None so blind as those who won't see!

W. Leave her alone, cousine!

B. If I'd been in the room when you came in that morning, you'd never have noticed that sly quiet cat!

W. I rather like these red Persians, don't you know.

B. I would have loved you all your life - passionately.

J. She'll be sober in an hour; I hope; meanwhile I'll smoke some.

W. That is a long time, and an exhausting manner.

B. Are you absolutely callous? Don't you see what shame I've put on myself? But I just had to speak — I've loved you all these years. You've haunted my dreams; you've come between me and the —

J. Chauffeurs!

(B pulls out her pistol; W. jumps in, disarms her, and puts the gun out of reach.)

W. Don't spoil our nice quiet chat! These reminiscences of childhood's happy days! "I have had playmates, I have had companions."

B. Oh, never mind; you can't spoil it like that. I love you. I've never loved any one else – all these years I've wanted you.

W. That's absurd, really; you never gave me a thought till we met by chance yesterday on the Boulevard.

B. Ah, you may not believe it; perhaps I didn't know it myself.

W. Now we're getting a bit nearer; we can never tell what the subconscious is after; and I am awfully humbly jolly lovable, of course. But that's no reason for me to love you.

I (chuckling) That's blown a type!

B. Don't you admire me? Am not I beautiful?

W. I admire the cloth-hall at Ypres - it is beautiful.

B. Oh you low dirty dog. I'm of an age with Adela, Twenty-eight.

A. I'm Thirty-four.

W. Pardon me, no; she is of no age. She is older than the Sphinx and a long sight more mysterious.

B. These shining rats look young till they're fifty; and then they wither.

A. These white guinea-pigs look fifty when they're thirty-four —

Joe (begins to be thoroughly amused)
Had you there, Blanchy!

B. Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!
Will – my Will – you are my Will –
I'll give you a million dollars if
you'll come and live with me
six months:

J. Here, you're getting the wishes ~~wrong~~ mixed!

B. Eh!

W. Thank you very much, Blanche, but
I'm afraid I might get to like
the taste –

A. Of money.

W. Exactly. As I was about to say when I was rudely interrupted, I might get to like money – the taste of it – and lose my art. Do you see, Blanche, when I wished for that dollar it was to buy a book, & book of magick spells to buy me beauty. And I bought it. It was the Book of Art, inexhaustible well of joy. Did Joe buy better value for his million? I haven't repented my choice; I dine sumptuously every day – or nearly every day – on fresh air and exercise. I have the

greatest gallery of pictures in the world. I have Adele!

B. Aren't you sure tired of Adele?

W. Now and again, as one tires of Goya, Leonardo, Greuze, now and again.

B. I wouldn't tire you — — I dare say you're right, and I only want you for a little while.

W. Six months, I think you said. Three I might manage.

B. Three minutes would be paradise.

A. Some snake!

W. Hush! Adele, you've been cattish about this all evening; I must say it isn't like you.

A. I'm sorry. I beg your pardon, Blanche; will you kiss me?

B. One more or less doesn't matter (They kiss)

A. Now I ought to have said that!

B. Oh my dear, I'm a fool. I ought to be glad you've such a great man to love you, to be true to you.

W. Wait, wait; you're all in too much of a hurry.

B. I'm sorry, Will. I loved you; I couldn't help telling you. I love you more than ever for that speech about the million.

W. Well, that was certainly a stumbling-block and a rock of

offence. I think he'll cut that out, but I'll go with you.

That's cruel; for I'm serious.

B. Rats! (Adela believes him, sits down, and suddenly begins to cry.)

W. Adela! this is Freudian. You have a complex; you are jealous only because you were subconsciously ~~jealous of Blanche~~ years ago. You haven't been jealous of fifty other women, where cause existed, as it does not here - at present.

A. Thanks, Bill, I was a fool. Go to it!

B. Wha-a-t? Do you mean —

(Pause. Joe chuckles, thinking B. is being made a fool of.)

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(Pause. Joe chuckles, thinking B. is being made a fool of.)

W. I mean what I say. I, William Owen, to take thee, Blanche Davies, to have and to hold, for richer or poorer, for better or worse, till three months do us part.

You remind me of an overripe Camembert cheese – which I love most of cheeses – and therefore do I love you.

You remind me of the leaves as they turn ~~red~~ orange and flamingo at the fall – and therefore do I love you!

You ~~remin~~ are hot, spicy, fiery – and thereby remind me of frangipani

curry, the best dish of Singapore — and therefore do I love you.

You remind me of a strawberry shortcake with vanilla ice all over the top — and therefore do I love you.

You are dressed like a peacock — a ~~white~~ peacock with a white body — and therefore do I love you.

You smell of musk and patchouli and Trèfle Incarnat and onions and old brandy — and therefore do I love you.

End of Epithalamium: Exeunt. So long, Adela, see you this day three months. So long, Joe, take care of yourself

— I'm giving you a chance!
Now then, all things being accomplished by the blessing of God, I will embrace my lady, and we walk forth on our adventure under the starry night!

(They come together, and kiss long, voluptuously, intensely.)

Joe. (on his feet) Can you stand this?

A. Why not? It often happens.

J. That's so (bitterly) Even in my limited cycle, that's so.

A. Take no notice; keep right on with the business of life. Follow your own star; don't worry about the eccentricities — real or apparent — of other people's orbits.

Joe. Bill, do you mean that? Do you mean to tell me that in all these years you've never sold a picture?

W. Not yet. But to-morrow is also a day. I live in hope. What with the high cost of living, and the strenuous life, and trying to make out what the Presidents' manifestos mean, so many people are going insane that I might sell one any day. And so — farewell, my boyhood's friend!

J. By George, that's wisdom! What a business woman you would have made!

a. Perhaps I am one. Here, Bill, break away; what if anyone should come in your absence to buy a picture? (releases Blanche)

W. Don't ~~tell~~ me ~~[illegible]~~ hear; I might believe it, and then I'd know for sure I was ~~[illegible]~~ asleep.

a. You'll want some things to take with you.

W. Pension the thought, kindly think of it he. Blanche and I are going to walk from this spot, without money or baggage, to Gibraltar.

B. Indeed I'm not!

W. The less need for preparation.

B. I'll go with you to hell!

(They blow kisses to the others, and walk out.)

J. Jesus Christ! Tamed that wild-cat with a word. Am I going crazy?

A. Not at all, Mr Davies, it's all perfectly natural. Let me mix you another grog.

J. Thanks, I guess I will. Dye know, this is funny – lotte of us left grass-widows, as you may say.

A. So you are about to propose to take a villa for me at Deauville?

J. Say, how dye know what

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I'm thinking? / It sounds good – but
It sure was my idea.

A. I know because you're hurt – God knows why – and that would be about your primitive idea of getting even.

J. I suppose that's it. But you're a damned pretty woman, and I like your style. Call it on?

A. Who taught you to woo so exquisitely?

J. Look here, that isn't fair. I never had no education.

A. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that; but you complained.

Joe. Yes, by God, I do complain. Here aunt, not bad-looking, strong as a bull, healthy as a baby, innocent born, power all over the world; and I can't do a thing with two women who'll just howl with joy for Bill Owen to tread on them!

A. It's that cycle, Joe. You believe there are such things as women. He doesn't We're only the moths fluttering round his big light. He's busy with other things; women are an incidental to his art. He doesn't take us seriously. That piques us; we go — too often

we go for wool, and come back shorn.
But it's worth it.

J. All the same, what about Deauville?

A. Quite impossible, I fear. There's an unexpected rush of certain Government business which keeps two of my paramours in Paris all summer.

J. (his jaw drops) Mrs Owen!

A. Mrs Grey, please; or Adelaide if you like.

J. Good God! And here I've been assuming you were true to Bill!

A. So I am.

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at the time: Why, ~~it~~ amourettes
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J. I find this a little hard to follow.

A. It's the mountain air, of Montmartre; Joë! Air of freedom! Air of art! Air of

beauty, health, good sense — damn it, everybody does it, who can; only some of us don't say so, and those who can't kick up a fuss — sour grapes!

J. But society — — —

A. Society — the Four Hundred (and the Big Four) and the Forty Antis — does it. Leave it for Tim to say that the foundations of human intercourse quake when a married lady winks.

J. That's true, too, now you say it. But what about my question? Why don't women love

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A. Mrs Grey, please; or Adelaide if you like.

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A. Society — the Four Hundred (and the Big Four) and the Forty Antis — does it. Leave it for Tim to say that the foundations of human intercourse quake when a married lady winks.

J. That's true, too, now you say it. But what about my question? Why don't women love

me? Say, I'll tell you a secret. I blackmailed Blanchly into marriage — for her money. Then I fell in love with her; and I never got anything but contempt.

A. Bill not only takes no notice of me; he expects me to take no notice of him. He treats me as if I were a man, fully responsible; of all importance to my own life, none at all to his. So we can be friends and lovers, and live on together — oh these ten, twelve years since passion died!

I. Blanchly knows all this, too?

A. Every woman knows it, either consciously or instinctively. Every man who knows it takes his fill of us. Notice how often the toy men, half men, homosexuals, attract women? That's because they understand feminine psychology. You did a perfectly foolish thing to-night. We were both in a diminuendo passage of our lives; we ought to have been very polite, and parted coolly. You can only make love successfully on a crescendo passage.

I should have thought that Nature herself might have taught you that!

J. (Shakes head sadly) Yes, by heck, some falling market! The wise guys buy at the bottom, and wait for the rise.

A. That's better, Joe. I believe I could teach you. You've got the essence of the thing, manhood. But you're clumsy – you twist people's arms on a falling market! Look here! Blanche wrote me the story of your tactful marriage proposal. Low dirty dog is what

you were. But all women
love low dirty days. Hence, by the
way, various legends of the Parsiphae
type. But you ~~had~~ ~~been when~~
got her, not from scare, but because you tortured
her market was rising - she was
when
raging at having her affair with
Rocco interrupted by the fire. She
was sexually wild; so she slapped
you, and said "I will - you swine",
which is actual honest English for the romantic
"Darling, I love you". If you had
raped her then and there, she
would have loved you instead.
You showed that you cared for
nothing but her money - she

and all the time he was exciting her
by long romantic speeches, the artist's
point of view, and all that, when
he saw how she sucked down the bait.

would have forgotten that if you had let her!

Sol. I see; I ought to have caught her on the rising market.

a. See how Bill worked Blanche! He began by contemptuous indifference, that put her on her mettle. Once he got her going he whispered in her ear half-jokes, like her being old-fashioned, & till he made her mad to the limit. Then he slewed round suddenly and snatched her. He just tested his sword with that walk to Gibraltar; it's true tempered steel; he sheathes it, and

whistles. She's his spaniel bitch!

Jol. Sometimes I think I'm in a madhouse, only all the time there's something tells me you're right.

A. Well that's enough: lesson one for my big dance! Let's go to bed.

J. (rising) Why, Mrs Grey, I'm awfully sorry to have kept you up to such an unreasonable hour (takes hat & cane) Good-night!

A. (sweetly) Good night, Mr Davies. So dear of you to have looked us

up.

J. I hope I may have the pleasure of seeing you again shortly.

A. Indeed, I trust it may be so.

(He is at door)

Didn't you hear what I said?

J. (turns sharply) Hear what you said?

A. Yes. Four words.

J. Four words!

A. Let's go to bed.

J. What d'ye mean?

A. What I say.

J. I drank too much: I'm dizzy.

A. It's merely that I pity your ignorance; I should like to teach

you how to win Blanche, for her sake, poor darling; and that can only be done by personal instruction. I don't love you at all.

A. J. (pained) Nor I you, Miss Grey.

A. Very good, very good! You see, to men you may seem a power, a mermaid, a monster, a — oh all sorts of terrible things. To women you are a big simple-hearted fool!

J. (angrily) Am I?

A. One can't take you seriously, can one?

J. I'll make 'em.

A. Good, very good, in theory. Beware

of theorizing, Joe, my Jo!

J. (sits down) Yes; there's something radically wrong with me. What's lacking?

A. Possibly what the late J.M.W. Turner used to mix his paints with.

J. What's that?

A. Brains, madam, Brains.

J. Damnation!

A. Well, shall I mix you another grog? a stiff one?

J. Stiff nothing!

A. I'm sorry, Joe. — —
I didn't mean to make you angry.

Ad. I'm not angry; I'm just done — and out. I don't know anything any more!

A. You're tired — — — let's go to bed.

J. I'm damned if I do!

(rushes out of door and slams it. Adela takes out her watch and counts the seconds..)

A. One — two — — — — (up to) — forty-four.

(Joe dashes in; flings his hat & cane down hysterically)

J. I'm damned if I don't!

A. Small chance of salvation, in that

case, Joe. You get it coming, and you get it going!

A. J. Adela, I love you. I'd die for you. I never knew what it was to love before. Come over here!

A. (in his arms, very sadly and seriously) Oh Joe, I'm so sorry. I've played with you. I never thought you'd stay. It's utterly absolutely impossible — really and truly. Yes; you understand, I'm sure. Take me to dinner two nights from now — will you?

Joe. (very affected, drooping, hugging her hopelessly) Sure I understand,

sweetheart. I'll be here at six o'clock. Take care of yourself, honey! Sleep well!

(He kisses her again, patronizingly, and goes out.)

A. And I quite forgot to mention that I'm going to Deauville with Mimi Lalangue to-morrow morning!

(She breaks into fit after fit of laughter.)

I must – really must. The end (goes to 'phone) of a perfect day!

Chichy 31-69 ——

Non: 31-69.

Monsieur de Malmaison?

~~Ah!~~

Oui! moi-même. — —

Je suis seule! — — —

Bon. goes to door & leaves it ajar;
(mys off, & begins to undress,
humming a love-song.)

The curtain falls.

(Finished
July 21 10.30 P.M.
1919.)

Joe (50) is old, paunchy, haggard, nervous, bloated, bald, very red-faced. Tim old, fat, stupid, crying. White hair.

Blanche, a complete ruin newly decorated by a bad firm.

Emily, dowdier than ever.

Adela, hardly older than before, looks at most 35. In green ~~and faded~~ (rich dark ivy) and lilac.

Act III.

The Breakfast-Room at Joe's Palace on Fifth Avenue. It is overloaded with bad bronzes, clutter, and objets d'art. The table is a mass of chafing-dishes and gold plate.

Joe going through a pile of letters. Blanche smoking, in an extravagant negligée. Emily waiting at table. Tim as secretary.

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July 22 11.30 am.

Joe, passing letters to Tim.

Holy answers that.

No.

No.

Send him a statement.

I'll talk this over with Holy.

Gol dam it – this is awful. Look here, Blandy, you better cut out that violinist. Do you realize we're paupers? Income tax, property tax, supertax, assessments; I'll die in the workhouse; it's abominable.

B languidly but coldly. There's always my five millions.

J. Which I made into thirty-five, don't forget that.

B. Well, I suppose I can have a cheque

for the cats' meat man on Saturday.

Joe. I guess so. Fact is, they haven't got on to some of my profits yet. I move a bit too quick, maybe, for the old one-eyed uncles in Washington.

B. You were always quick on the draw

J. Yes: I've done well. What's this?

Adela Grey? That's that red-haired wench of poor old Bill's. Wants to come up and see me this morning - exhibition over here - can I help to arrange it? Sure I will; poor old Bill. God! what a rotten mess that chap made of his life! Had brains too. and he never sold one picture, and died in absolute

penury. 'Phone her at her hotel, Tim, she can come here at ten.' Wonder what she looks like at fifty.

B. (sharply) She's not fifty yet. and she looks a pretty good, I guess. She had a real man to love her.

J. Send this on to McGrath.
I'll answer this.
and this.
Tell Holy never to bother me with this kind again.
No.
Yes: tell him to call.
all right; send Miss Bann to the library. I'll be along.
(Tim goes out, with letters)
Oh yes! Wonder what that fool President said to me

Barber's association last night

(picks up paper & reads and comments)

"President scores Wealth."

He would, wants the Bolshevik vote in the Fall.

"Intolerable tyranny – malefactors of great wealth – find no criminal is above the law – organized robbery and oppression – a treacherous and I believe a suicidal policy –"

Lord, what a topsy-turvy world we're drifting into for lack of a little firmness – and vote-catching, damn his eyes! –

"Retribution is imminent. May I not –"

May he not? He'll get what the

camel got, might in the place where the camel got it.

"We must tax these invidious traitors to death; they must be killed white."

The dam fool – with half the capital in the country going to England, and the other half buying diamonds to salt down.

"Wealth is the cancer of the body politic."

That's what I get: might as well have died unknown like Bill. At least he got a little peace now and again.

B. He's at peace now.

J. Oh, sure! But I like a fellow

"Bustpie in Chicago. Eight hundred
hunt alive – all right, nowhere
near our interests –

(Runs page)

who makes his mark. He's dead and rotten; and not half-a-dozen people remember him.

(Turns page to paper.)

"France honours America's greatest son."

Not me - though I did get the old Legion of Honour.

(appalled) Wilbur Owen!

(calmer) But can't be our Bill.

B. Suppose you were to read it?

J. The greatest since the Renaissance - whenever that was - the pure genius of his immortal conceptions is unsullied by any

flow. On our great Rodin —

Blanchy dear, this is the speech of the President of the French Republic — our our great Rodin had neither his rhythm nor his mastery of form. ~~Like~~ The American Eagle came to the ~~eye~~ eyrie of the French Eagles — and the stranger looked upon the sun with lidless eye undazzled as no man has done since Titian and Michael Angelo. Son of the morning! ~~Fame~~ Time bows his laurelled brow before thy conquering fulchrum; France, nurse of Art, thy foster-mother, confesses upon thy forehead the

wreath of bays immortal that
thy fingers twisted for thy crowned."
This is Bill! This is the President
of the French Republic & Bill!
(Gaucherie)
The idea is a simple one. Bill
became a French citizen; so we'll
put him in the Panthéon, as an
American hero, won't America
join in the celebration? Like
Kelly will.

And here's our boob Presidents'
cable "May I not be the first
— " oh damnation, what a
rotten world!

B. You always hated Bill; you
were always afraid of him;

you know in your heart that he was a better man.

Joe The hell I did!

— "death doubly lamentable in that it leaves no man worthy to raise a fitting monument over the mortal part of him."

Oh — Oh — Oh!
(He is attacked by apoplexy.)

B (screams) What's the matter?

(screams again and again)
Help! The master's sick.
(Emily and Tim enter in)

E. Ring the doctor, Tim! (She finds Joe. Blanche in violent

conspiracy of several hands — on the point of breakdown Tim 'phones.

E. — I'm afraid this is a bad business, madam. My brother went that way last year.

T. I got him just as he was starting. He'll be round in a minute.

B. A minute! a minute! I'm in eternity, and I'm a damned soul. I'm thirsty.

T. Drink some water, madam. I'm sure you'll feel better.

(B. drinks convulsively, and settles down, calmer. A little more mistress of herself, she

pulls up her dress and injects morphine in her thigh. A sig. off.)

T. That's the doctor, ma'am.

(goes to admit him.)

Doctor. Good-morning Mrs Davies. Ah, tut-tut-tut. (examining Joe)

B. That means he's dead. I thought so.

Doctor. I warned him less than a month ago that he had a tendency to apoplexy. Too much breakfast — some unusual excitement — well, we must all go one day.

B. Thank you very much for your tactful consolations. Can the

body be moved to the bedroom?

D. – Certainly, of course. I'll sign the certificate at once. There'll be no trouble.

B. (lighting a cigarette) I am too much prostrated by grief to attend to anything. Tim, ring up Mr Holy, and have him be careful about how the market takes the news, and then he can come round here and see to everything. Good-morning, doctor.

D. Good-morning, madam. (Goes)

B. (mysteriously) Come back, Tim, when you've phoned.

T. Yes, ma'am. (He goes. Blunkie, very restless, gives himself another shot of morphine, Tim returns with two footmen, who remove the body.)

B. You've got the combination of the safe, Tim?

T. Yes, ma'am. But he had the key.

B. ~~Leave me one moment with my dead.~~ (The footmen go.) They used to be on a chain. Ah, here they are. ~~Call the man back, Tim!~~

(~~They return & remove safe~~)

Get me the will out, Tim.

Get

(Tim turns safe, and fumbles with and brings it to her. She reads.)
Oh that's all right, that's fine: What's this? Oh, he surely had a sense of humour. He insured himself for a million, so that he should make that even by dying — and he left poor old Bill a dollar, and you a thousand, Tim (She laughs.)
Tim. Very satisfactory, I'm sure, ma'am. (He is moving about, very nervous, restless, distraught, as if he had something on his mind. A long pause for this.)
May I say something very frankly,

(Tim turns safe, and finds bill and brings it to her. She reads.)
Oh that's all right, that's fine: What's this? Oh, he surely had a sense of humour. He insured himself for a million, so that he should make that even by dying — and he left poor old Bill a dollar, and you a thousand, Tim (She laughs.)

Tim. Very satisfactory, I'm sure, madam. (He is moving about, very nervous, restless, distraught, as if he had something on his mind. A long pause for this.)
May I say something very frankly,

madam?

B. You may, Tim, if it's not too long.

T. Have I given satisfaction to you and the master, madam?

B. You bet you have! You have been honest, loyal, obedient, diligent, uncomplaining, faithful, truthful, careful, accurate, mindful, Jesus Christ, I never knew there were so many virtues, and you've got 'em all.

T. Yes, ma'am, I believe I have. And I can't stand it any more. Every thing I do seems to turn to a thousand dollars. This last is the crusher.... and---- and---- having no master.

B. Yes, whatever you had, you would

never have anything, because there's no you to have it. You're only a copy-book with noble precepts beautifully printed – and not even a child to scribble over it.

T. Indeed that's true, ma'am. If I've served you well – may I ask you one favour?

B. I will not – I will positively not – hood you, Tim.

T. Indeed, ma'am, Emily wouldn't like it if you did. I only wanted – tell me, isn't there an easy way to die?

B. Easier than living, Tim. Oh yes, death is a delicious delirium when

you know how.

T. Is that — (he gasps with fear at the thought of a 'drug') morphia?

B. It is, Tim.

T. May I — may I — have some — just enough, you know —.

B. Sure, take one of these tablets. Four now, ~~six~~ when you begin to feel sleepy. Engross dreams, and never wake up! (gives pill)

T Thank you ma'am, thank you. I humbly take my leave. I'm glad the queen sets Jim free, ma'am.

B. Good bye and good luck! But I say, look here, don't die about the house. Take a room in a hotel. I can't have my home all cluttered up with corpses.

T. Yes, ma'am. (He goes out.)

B (yawns.) I think I'll wear my Hungarian to-day: or shall it be my man from the Sicilian Players? Perhaps it would be more proper to go straight into full mourning. Oh, I'm so tired of men! (injects herself) So – tired! (a knock. Enter Footman.)

F. Excuse me, ma'am; there's a Miss Grey here who had an appointment.

I told her the news, and she requested to see you, madam.

B. Now that's really amusing – show her in. (He goes. Blanche dashes to the mirror and powders herself &c)

F returns Miss Grey!

(Adela walks in.)

B. Adela, you sweetest thing, how well you look!

A. My darling Blanche, you're lovelier than ever!

B. Oh I am so glad to see you!

A. Indeed, there's no friends like old friends, though we did have our quarrels.

B. I've nothing but love for you, dearest.

A. And I wish I'd been kinder to you.

B. Oh do sit down, sweetheart, and let me tell you all about Joe dying this morning.

A. Oh I should just love to hear it.

B. It was all your fault, really, for you did everything to make Bill what he was. So when Joe heard Bill, whom he despised for a fool, ~~called~~ called America's greatest ~~tenor~~ tenor, he just got apoplexy. What a lovely dress that is, my dear!

A. Yes; it's Bee's. My circumstances have changed a good deal since Bill died, of course. The dear big boy was hardly dead three months

3

before they discovered him. It's been a fuss of work, but I've put him where he belongs – with the great Gods that pity men and come to live among them. He liked me best in ivy-green and violet because of my hair.

B. He liked me best in beggars' rags.

A. I wish you'd tell me that a bygone day. I never asked Bill what happened, nor let him tell me. I had a – a feeling about it; I can't explain it.

B. I can; he really loved me for a few minutes. You see, I had been lording it over men all my life,

and the wild beast in him wanted to have me, hurt me, humiliate me, trample me.

A. I see. And you liked it?

B. What woman wouldn't? I know lots of Suffragettes who'd give their ears to be kicked by a navvy.

A. No, some women can't enjoy anything. The Emily type!

B. Women! The world's full of blind deaf senseless sexless worms – the Emily type. I don't call her a Woman.

(a knock.)

I. Come in!

E in great agitation

O! beg pardon, madam, most

humbly, but is Tim here? Has he gone out?

B. Your agitation appears to betray some distress.

E. I've a letter of farewell, mean, from Tim, and now I can't find him!

B. Well, to cut short your anxieties, Emily, Tim went out of the house recently. His intention (as I understand) is to take a room at a hotel under an assumed name, and hoax himself.

A. Blanche, how can you?

(She goes and comforts E. who is sitting half collapsed, trembling and crying. She is more like 79 than her 49.)

E. How could he? How could he? after all these years?

B. But that's it, Emily; that's where you pay for your folly in trying to create a permanent tie in a world of impermanence!

A. There's wisdom in those words, though they seem cruel.

A. Blanche, how can you?

(She goes and comforts E. who is sitting half collapsed, trembling and crying. She is more like 79 than her 49.)

E. How could he? How could he? after all these years?

B. But that's it, Emily; that's where you pay for your folly in trying to create a permanent tie in a world of impermanence!

A. There's wisdom in those words, though they seem cruel.

B. Emily, did you ever have a good time in your life?

E. Oh, ma'am, nothing ever happened, and I kind of got used to it.

B. Well, I had only one time which counted, and I was just going to tell about it when you came in. It was a strictly temporary good time, by agreement; yes, it was when William Owen took me away from Paris.

We walked all night; by sunrise I was cold and hungry and my shoes pinched me — you remember I was dressed for dinner — and he

was more carrying me than helping me to walk.

A. Ah! you bitched that!

B. You bet. Well, a guard stopped us, thought he was an apache looking a vaudeville star, I guess. Then Bill said: "Be of good cheer, citizen. The republic is safe. We are doing it for a bet" That reassured him. When we got to the village we had the only breakfast I had ever tasted. And then he said: Mustn't change Joe's dollar, and paid the man with one of my rings. He did that all the

That's where all my pearls are.
way. There was one ring I really
loved, a great ruby set in platinum
One night – we had crossed the
Sierra something in the blazing sun
– we got down to a hamlet – nothing
to eat or drink but goats' milk.
I can taste it now!
Believe me, I drank it. I took that
ruby ring to pay for it – though
we had money by that time. Bill
Exhibited me as a wild woman
of the woods – made me eat
mice and live rabbits for a
show –

When my evening dress fell off

my back, he got me a gipsy dress - and I swear it, I looked lovely. We were walking twenty miles a day, you know. I was lean, and strong, and almost brown, I've never had the same skin since. And every night - every night! We lay under the stars, or in some stable when the weather was bad, or in some funny old inn, and drank great gobbets of wine, rough, red, strong wine poured from a goatskin into our heads thrown back. And oh! what beauty and what

skill and strength of love! The crying need of this country is technical education. He took me to the highest peak of the Pyrenees as we crossed them — we were barefoot those days — he said it filled one with the strength of the earth's currents, and there on the glittering snow he told me for the first and only time in words "I love you". Ah, but the whole world was Love! I had never seen, known, felt anything in my life until that halycon summer. When the sun rose, he

would wake me with "Come kiss me,
blanche the lily, redden your petals
with the wine of the day, the first
spilth of the sun's flagon; or else I
would wake to find him gesticulating,
dancing, crying aloud some old
Egyptian incantation to the sun:
(intones) Aha dua
Tuf ur hin
Tuf ur hin
Bi i'a chefer
Dudu ner af an nuteru
Dudu ner af an nuteru
= or else he would wake me with
cadenced caresses, every whisper,
every touch a masterpiece of
art, and yet with all the pulse

of his soul to inform it! Oh, my dear, how I hate Gibraltar! The three months was up the day we got there — I'm proud of one thing — he left me without saying good-bye. I think that shows he loved me a little, don't you?

A. No, dear. What you have described so eloquently is his Formula No 5; I have them all worked out in one of his notebooks.

B. (fiercely) Then he loved you like that?

A. Oh no, dearest. No 5 is only for very ~~bad~~ hard cases.

B. Oh don't laugh at me! Oh, I don't care. He was my formula five and twenty.

A. But, honest, Blanche dear, you were splendid. You fulled almost as he did, and you felt it, too.

B. He made a woman out of me; he gave me a soul, with gangs of fire and air —

A. But —

B. Ah, damn it, I know. I came back to Joe, to New York.

New York is the home of lost souls. Mine died when I first took chocolate in bed again. Young women, beware! The chocolate habit is the brief precursor of the morphine habit. Wine from a goatskin is the only safe drink there is.

A. and wine from the flagon of the sun!

B. He spoke words like wine.

A. His book was like strong wine.

B. I'm sobered now - I've conquered the chocolate habit. Oh if you only knew - he created me, and my soul wails within me. It's

not that I love him – it's the things he stood for – the real me wants life straight from the flayon of the sun. I've been dining gin in the slums; it's not the same things.

E. Oh madam, how can you talk so?

B. Blind, deaf, senseless, sexless worms of the slime – the temperance! – the Pillars of Society! But you, adela, how is it with you? You loved him all your life?

A. Yes, I drank his wine; but it was always my own wine. I was his mate in everything. I should always

have lived some sort of sun-life.
But he shone day and night!

E. Oh, Miss Grey, then why weren't you married to him?

A. Too busy loving. Yes, I've had all that Earth has to offer.

E. Oh, Miss Grey, but you haven't had the great joy of children!

A. Excuse me for saying so, humbly, but in this case, unless I err, you have been shamefully misinformed. It is possible, though hardly likely, that I may be mistaken on the point, but I seem to myself to have a boy of twenty-five — he's William all over! — and a

girl of twenty, whom I attribute, though with diffidence, to a very nice Spanish boy, a toreador

E. Oh Miss Gray, how can you say such things?

A. Fingers were made before forks, and nature before marriage certificates.

E. But one doesn't eat with one's fingers.

B. Oh yes, one does — asparagus.

E. It's awful — it's flying in the face of Providence.

A. Perhaps Providence made birds.

E. I don't understand. I'm afraid I've got nothing out of life.

A I've got everything.

B I've got morphine.

(She injects herself as the curtain falls.)

8.15 P.M. July 22 1919

(Very slow & interrupted)