



Thank you for downloading this script from the Great War Theatre project.

The project team has undertaken a significant amount of work to identify the copyright status of the plays made available on the website and strives to indicate as clearly as possible what others are able to with it within the boundaries of the law. For more information on this please read the **Copyright and Reuse Guidelines on the website**. If you have any questions about how you can use the script please contact greatwartheatre@kent.ac.uk.

Anonymous, Deliver the Goods, 1917

Citing this script.

If you wish to use the script, or cite from it, please reference it in the following way.

Anonymous, Deliver the Goods, British Library, Lord Chamberlain's Collection of Plays 1917/22, Add MS. 66177 M. Licensed for performance on 8 November 1917. Great War Theatre Project database, (www.greatwartheatre.org.uk, accessed *insert date*)

Subsequent citations to the same manuscript (consulted at the same time) could use a shortened form, such as:

Deliver the Goods, GWT, LCP1917/22

Copyright Status: Public Domain

This play has been identified by the project as being in the **Public Domain**. This indicates that the project team have researched the author's date of death and have determined that the copyright in the work has expired. Although we cannot guarantee that our research is 100% accurate and that no one will have a claim to the work, we can confirm that we have carried out a due diligence search and believe that the risk of using the work is low. Even though the material may be free from copyright restrictions we ask that you always provide a citation or reference back to the Great War Theatre project as the source and that you treat the material respectfully.

Script Source: Transcription

This script is a transcription from a manuscript which is part of their Lord Chamberlain's collection at the British Library. The script has been transcribed by a volunteer on the Great War Theatre project and we are grateful for the time and effort they have given to make this text available.

!!

!!

DELIVER THE GOODS!

=====

A Drama of the Great Conflict – and AFTER!

A Story of Selfishness and Sacrifice.

An Argument for Justice and Reward For our Fighting Forces.

A Plea for Patriotic Reason – An appeal For Our Future Great Prosperity – AFTER The Great Victory Is Secured.

By An Ordinary Englishman.

THE FATHER = Head of A Great Manufacturing Firm =

“So my son you shall take the reins. As they have bullied and beaten me – so you shall beat them down and break them. The Works shall close for weeks, months – even years until our bitter punishment is complete”!

THE SON = A British Army Captain – Returned from France=

Father, you are as great an enemy to The State as the loudest shrieking fanatic whom in his selfish greed howls for Revenge and Revolution! Punish whom? The Workers? Who are the true Workers? I will tell you that! Those brave Giants who are coming across the seas in their tens of thousands daily! Would you punish them? Make way and let THEM punish the idle drones – the slackers when they come. Revenge may be your policy my father – it isn't mine. Patriotism! TRUE Patriotism is my aim. Our Works shall open – our Gates flung wide for that fine blood that bled for us. Come with me – and over our Temple of Industry you shall help me to raise our banner.

“Welcome! Thrice welcome Loyal True Sons of Britain who fought so well for Her! Your Prosperity is your Right! Your future is OUR future! Our Prosperity we will gladly share with you. One united effort all men of our glorious land = DELIVER THE GOODS”. (THE TWO MEN CLASP HANDS.)

The Story is told by =

KENYON ROSS, Head of the Firm.

PETER ROSS, Afterwards Captain Ross, V. C., His Son.

JOHN WILLIAMS, A Shipping-Clerk with Ideas and Side Lines.

IVOR HICKMAN, A Working Lad – who heard the Call.

MARY HASLEWOOD, Betrothed to John Williams.

HANNAH WILLIAMS, Her Aunt – and John’s Mother.

CINDERELLA WELLS, A Charity Girl from Somerset.

VESTA MARIE WOOD, From Birmingham.

&&&&&&&& &&&&&&&&

1.

SCENE 1. 1915.

(INTERIOR OF JOHN WILLIAMS' DAIRY ===== IN A LITTLE TOWN IN SOUTH WALES.)

A SPOTLESSLY CLEAN INTERIOR OF A MODEL MODERN DAIRY. MILK PANS – CHURNS – BUTTER CHURNS – CHEESE PRESS AND OTHER DAIRY UTENSILS SET ABOUT. THERE ARE WINDOWS AT BACK OF SCENE AND DOWN R.C. TO R. DOOR L.C. AND DOOR DOWN L. (THE DAIRY IS SITUATED ON THE HIGH ROAD LEADING INTO A PROSPEROUS BUSY LITTLE TOWN.) A VERY PRETTY ROADSIDE IS SEEN OUTSIDE THE WINDOWS – AND THE ROAD IS SEEN WINDING DOWN TO A TYPICAL WELSH TOWN. IN THE DISTANCE – ON THE RIGHT A COLLIERY – AND IN THE NEAR DISTANCE L.C. ROSS'S WORKS. IT IS A BEAUTIFUL SUMMER'S AFTERNOON – AND THERE IS AN ATMOSPHERE OF PROSPERITY AND PEACE.

CINDERELLA WELLS (A NEATLY ATTIRED GIRL OF ABOUT 20) IS DISCOVERED BUSY AT THE BUTTER TABLE. SHE APPEARS TO BE VERY FLURRIED AND ILL AT EASE. HANNAH WILLIAMS (A WOMAN OF 60 YEARS) APPEARS AT DOOR L.C. SHE IS LOADED WITH PARCELS AND LOOKS VERY HOT AND ANGRY.

HAN. You Cinderella Wells – You! Look you I have just come in from Cardiff. Well! Don't gape – help me with the parcels – whatever! (CINDERELLA GOES TO HER AID.)

CIN. I went down to the Station. You did not come by the 1-52.

2.

HAN. Are there not others? Did you think I had run away from house and home and would never come? There ARE other Trains – Did you go to see? Indeed you did not! (GLARES.)

CIN. There was my work.

HAN. Well I don't know. There is the hour – (SHE POINTS OUT TO CHURCH CLOCK.) Three! Three hours beyond the hour you should be finished. I regret I took you from the Reformatory Miss Cinderella Wells.

CIN. (HUMBLY) I will leave you if you wish ma'am.

HAN. Insolence from you – in my days if I dared – Independence! Mutiny! There's coming out in her true colours she is!

CIN. I hate to think that I am in the way.

HAN. Your work is in the way. Why don't you strive to push it out of your way by doing it? What have you done since sunrise I would like to know.

CIN. I am afraid ALL that I have done is quite beyond my memory.

HAN. Yes yes! Some things doubtless you would like to forget. (CIN. FLUSHES AND TURNS AWAY.) What time is sunrise now?

CIN. Three o'clock.

HAN. You got up with the sun?

CIN. (SMILES WEARILY) Your son John attends to that. He raps loudly at my bedroom wall – fiercely so it seems – and there is no sleeping.

HAN. There is no right you should be sleeping. The cows – the pigs – the hens all want attention. And then the house – would you have me live in dust and idleness? The parlour – the kitchens – the breakfast room and then the dairy – all made sweet and spotless as a pin. All these have been done? (CIN. NODS.) The Brasses! How I like to see them shine – they remind me of the virtues! – and the laundry – my son John's fine linen – and his socks to darn – (SHARPLY) – you saw to this? Then your morning round with milk and eggs – five miles or so – good healthy exercise! The Kitchen garden – manured in parts and weeded. My Sunday shawl – tis torn – you saw that? Yes! And the parlour curtains faded with the sun – you dipped them with the Dorothy Dye? And John's Cardigan Jacket – yes yes – no no! You have not darned it – no whatever? Oh! how you have lazed away the day.

CIN. I walked down to the Station to see the 12-6 train in. Young Mr. Peter Ross came in by that. He's back from Switzerland today.

HAN. No business of yours.

CIN. He's looking bronzed and strong.

HAN. What is that to you? (CIN. SIGHS.)

CIN. He has been very ill.

HAN. Or perhaps trying to dodge the army?

CIN. (WARMLY) Oh! I don't think that. Other ---- MEN I know are doing – are doing that.

HAN. (HARSHLY) If you mean my John -- ?

CIN. I said other – MEN.

HAN. Did John come in to dinner – it is half-holiday in Cardiff?

CIN. Oh yes ma'am he had his dinner. Hasn't he a splendid appetite! Five cups of tea – and then he went off to a meeting down by Ross Works.

HAN. My splendid boy! And my niece Mary of course she went with him.

CIN. No, Mr. Ross looked in and she went out – oh dear! Oh! dear! Of course I should not tell you that ---!

HAN. Indeed! Indeed! And why not whatever.

CIN. Because you try to crush her love of freedom – her joyous fresh young spirit – as completely – as ruthlessly as you have crushed mine – during my twelve years of servitude in this prim and proper household.

HAN. Oh! Such spirit!

CIN. (PICKING UP THE NUMEROUS PARCELS AND GOING L.) Mr. John will tell you spirit is a fine thing Mrs. Williams –

HAN. His spirit perhaps – certainly not yours.

(JOHN WILLIAMS – A YOUNG MAN OF THE AGITATOR ORDER – WELL-DRESSED – ENTERS DOOR C. HE LOOKS VERY FLUSHED AND EXCITED.)

4.

JOHN. (BRIGHTLY) So you're back old lady from your trip to town.

HAN. (ANXIOUSLY) How hot and flushed you are! You're overdoing it John.

JOHN. Hot --- and happy Mother – (LAUGHS.) My blood's at boiling point. I'll give in to that. It's been a splendid meeting outside the Valley Works! I'll get 'em Mother – never doubt.

HAN. Ross's workmen John?

JOHN. Babies! Sheep – lambs – trashy bloodless frozen mutton! A packet of tacks and I'm going to be the hammer.

HAN. No opposition John?

JOHN. Some lout ventured I should be in the army –

HAN. Should you John? NOT MY JOHN –

JOHN. Oh! We're not discussing that. (UNEASILY WALKS ABOUT,)

HAN. I didn't mean to worry you whatever – of course they'll never make my son a soldier?

JOHN. Don't be so unpleasant.

HAN. Let Ross's men alone John. They earn good pay and Ross is a good master.

JOHN. He was my good master a half-a-dozen years ago. I should have been a partner if his brat Peter hadn't grown industrious and put me in the street. Today I am a shipping clerk in Cardiff and the strongest bitterest enemy the firm of Ross have got.

HAN. What do Ross's workmen want for?

JOHN. (SMILES GRIMLY) Nothing – that's my trouble. But I've been down to create an appetite for much.

HAN. Will you do any good John, God's Good John, I mean?

JOHN. (PEEVISHLY) Even my own mother doubts me. Have I done no good? Have I not been a model son to you, my model mother? Who got you the American organ for our chapel?

HAN. You John – you – at least you got up the sale of work and the evening concert.

JOHN. Who bought up – secretly I must admit – Ross's rat-hole cottages – patched 'em – thatched 'em and made 'em fit for human flesh and blood?

HAN. And raised the rent to double! Splendid splendid John!

JOHN. Business – just good business – and the work of the Lord. I'm getting on old lady! I'll be on the Council shortly and then the town will buzz. We starved to buy that row of hovels. I want more than one row of workers' homes. Two three – three and thirty rows – a town! My town! I could tell you heaps that I have done – whatever – I will – in good time, in good time.

HAN. (UNEASILY) Tell me of the meeting.

JOHN. (SMILES – REFLECTIVELY) Well, I don't know. I had 'em! Had 'em in my hands and held 'em! Soft contented clay! (TIGHTENS HIS FIST.) Ice! – until my words of restless fire made their stagnant cold blood bubble! Then I twisted them – this way – that way! Oh! so easily!

HAN. Clever clever John!

JOHN. I've heard that Peter Ross is back. Come home for the fireworks. Come home to flatten me! They've patched up that wheezy chest of his in Switzerland – got him ready for the army so I'm told – packed the precious pup in cotton wool and sent him to his father! And before he goes to butcher Germans he's got to break the shipping clerk from Cardiff. (LAUGHS.) Oh! Oh! Not likely! He will never do it mother.

HAN. Isn't it ungodly John. All your thoughts of revenge?

JOHN. Revenge? Because I have a memory? Because I just hit back? Because I drag Old Ross and Son down from their giddy height? I level up! Some day I'll reach their level – beat 'em – pass 'em – push 'em underneath – push 'em down – always, always down. That is not revenge – it's human nature mother – and it's good.

(HE WALKS UP TO THE WINDOW R.C. EXALTING. A DISTANT BAND IS HEARD PLAYING THROUGH THE VILLAGE.)

6.

HAN. I hear music John – can it be the fair?

JOHN. The Fair! (HE GRINS.) You may call it fair – I call it damned dishonest. It's a recruiting band out to dope good Christians with thoughts of blood and conquest – why don't they play The Dead March and say the end is but a grave?

(IN THE DISTANCE LOUD CHEERS.)

HAN. The children seem to like it John?

JOHN. (QUIETLY) Yes --- They are children – a penny box of soldiers is a pretty toy.

(A STONE IS HURLED THROUGH THE DAIRY WINDOW. A CRASH OF GLASS.)

HAN. (SCREAMS OUT) What is that whatever?

JOHN. A stone – and hurled at me – by one of Ross's Baa-lambs – the beast who said I should be in the army. (WIPES HIS FOREHEAD NERVOUSLY.) Oh! The rat! I don't like this mother.

HAN. Never heed them boy. (SHE CHANGES THE TICKETS OF THE PRICES OF NEW LAID EGGS FROM '5 A SHILLING' TO '4 A SHILLING' AND "BEST BUTTER – 1/8 PER LB." TO "1/10 PER LB.") – but they must pay for the window.

JOHN. Where is Mary mother?

HAN. Out.

JOHN. Out? (HE STARES ODDLY.) Out?

HAN. Out walking – so I understand – with young Peter Ross.

JOHN. Dear God!

HAN. Sometimes I fear you'll lose your pretty cousin John.

7.

JOHN. Lose her! Stop that! If I lost Mary I should lose the fire that sets my tongue aflame! The Hope that helped me starve to buy the cottages – the salt of life – my soul – all that is good – sincere – complete in me. Mother - I should crack up if I lost her – break!

(THE BAND APPEARS TO BE NEARER.)

(MARY HASLEWOOD, A PRETTY GIRL ABOUT 24 AND VESTA MARIE WOOD, A YOUNG LADY WITH VERY “FUTURIST” IDEAS OF DRESS ARE SEEN AT DOOR L.C. WAVING BACK TO THE SOLDIER.)

JOHN. (ASIDE TO HIS MOTHER) Mary is here – not with Peter Ross! How I am relieved.

MARY. Home John? Do not the soldiers interest you? “Men of Harlech”! That melody should impart a tingle to your blood. (JOHN GIVES AN UNEASY LAUGH.) This is John Williams – Cousin John (TO VESTA.) Miss Vesta Marie Wood from Birmingham – she is staying here with Aunty over Sunday.

(JOHN BOWS AWKWARDLY AND APPEARS VERY ILL AT EASE. VESTA GIVES HIM A VERY BEWITCHING SMILE. HE LOOKS DOWN SHYLY.)

VESTA. Not a word – not a teeny-weeny little word. Oh! Isn't he a good young man! Pull yourself together Johnny Morgan. (MARY LAUGHS HEARTILY – JOHN LOOKS UP ANGRILY.) And can you be the fiery giant whom I saw breathing smoke and flames and red-hot revolution only half-an-hour ago!

MARY. John is rather timid with the ladies. And we have been official sweethearts as long as I can remember -

JOHN. Yes Mary – (HIS EYES SHINING) – we ARE sweethearts – as long as we can remember -

8.

VESTA. Oh! He is decidedly waking up! Does he ever kiss you Mary? Would you like to kiss me John. Do – dearie! I should love it – you look as saintly as a stained glass window. Lovie-umps? Mary won't object ---?

HAN. (INDIGNANTLY) Cheeky Godless creature! She shan't stay in my house.

MARY. Oh Aunt! Miss Wood is only teasing John.

VESTA. (SMILING) Oh! Aunt Williams – judge me not too harshly! John to me – (SHE GIVES JOHN A SWEET SMILE) – is quite beyond reproach. Faultless! Perfect! As pure as your golden butter – and as full of righteousness as those eggs are full of meat. You'll forgive me Mr. Williams? Yes? (JOHN OFFERS HIS HAND AND SMILES.) What a tender smile! Your hand is very cold John. (SHE STROKES IT) but --- your heart? Aren't you REALLY – just a tin of Colman's? Umphs? (ALL LAUGH EXCEPT HANNAH.)

JOHN. (TURNS TO MARY – JEALOUSLY) Where have you been Mary?

MARY. ((SURPRISED – THEN REPLIES COLDLY) Picking buttercups and daisies. (JOHN FROWNS) Am I to suffer just another cross examination? I have dared to walk as far as Aberdare with Mr. Ross.

JOHN. (QUITE TAKEN ABACK) With --- Ross? (SHE NODS) WHY --- Ross?

MARY. He is --- very entertaining – he comes from a broader world than ours --- He seems – human! Manly – that's it! That's how I remember him – a MAN!

JOHN. Our girl Wells shall make some tea and after – I want you to come with me to Cardiff – just we alone. There's a good opera company at the theatre –

MARY. I'm playing golf with Mr. Ross John – after tea.

JOHN. Playing what! That nonsense. (SAVAGELY.) You're not! I say you're not!

MARY. (COLDLY) Aren't you just forgetting? We may have been sweethearts – boy and girl sweethearts John – but we are not yet man and wife. (SHE WALKS UP.) I don't think we shall ever be – (JOHN MAKES A MOVE TOWARDS HER – THEN SINKS DOWN AT TABLE – THE PICTURE OF DESPAIR.) There – (TENDERLY) I didn't mean to hurt you –

JOHN. (SEIZING ONE OF HER HANDS) Don't do it Mary. Don't try to hurt me. Something snaps inside me when you talk like that – (A SLIGHT PAUSE. HE LOOKS UP AT HER.) You WILL come to Cardiff?

9.

MARY. (FIRMLY) No. I've given Mr. Ross my word and you wouldn't have me break it?

JOHN. I would! (RISING PASSIONATELY) Break anything with him! Don't break me – my heart – my life or I'll break him! Sure! Sure as God I'll do it! (HE WORKS HIMSELF UP INTO A VOICELESS FRENZY THEN WITH AN EFFORT CONQUERS HIMSELF.) At least you won't go out till I've seen you again? I'm damp and hot – when I have had a wash I'll be cool and collected. (HE GOES L.) And you'll forgive my temper and my rudeness – (MARY SMILES BACK) – and you won't go out – till I come back?

MARY. No John I won't go out.

(HE EXITS L. DOOR.)

HAN. (BITTERLY) Don't you see what you are doing? You are breaking my boy's heart.

(SHE EXITS AFTER HIM.)

VESTA. (SOFTLY) Goodbye-ee! (TO MARY.) Awful wretched rotten for you Mary. He loves you – REALLY loves you – in his way.

MARY. Yes. --- It troubles me a deal.

VESTA. Troubles you?

MARY. Oh! --- (SHE UTTERS A CRY OF PENT-UP PROTEST) I'm in chains here. My life has been lived in chains. I do not love him – I feel I never shall!

VESTA. He's so strong – big – healthy – so good looking. Oh! Isn't it a pity?

MARY. (SHARPLY) What's a pity? --- Just say what you're thinking --- ?

VESTA. That he isn't --- a REAL --- MAN.

MARY. (STARING IN FRONT OF HER) How --- why ---?

10.

(IVOR HICKMAN, A WELSH COLLIER LAD IS SEEN AT BACK – IN HIS COLLIERY GARB. HE LOOKS IN CASUALLY – BUT INSTANTLY RECOGNISES VESTA. BECOMES VERY INTERESTED.) (BUS.)

VESTA. Have I got to tell you that? Contrast him with Peter Ross and then you get the answer. Mary I'm not blind – he's the man who's won your love and truthfully you can't deny it. (MARY TURNS AWAY CONFUSED. VESTA SIGHS.) It's a lovely feeling – love! It gets me all dithery. Mary – I have got MY secret. (LOOKS AROUND – IVOR DISAPPEARS FOR THE MOMENT.) I met a man! My man last summer! It was at Llandudno – and he WAS a man! Not much of him – but real prime cut. He said he was a diamond merchant – but I didn't believe him. I said I was well connected and he blushed! A Diamond Merchant Dearie! I wonder if his precious stones were black? (BUS AT BACK.) We never met again. (SHE SIGHS HEAVILY.) I picture him – My Hero! A Brave Soldier Lad – out THERE! He said his name was Ivor – that is Welsh? (MARY NODS) But I just dream of him in kilts! My bare-kneed Soldier Beau!

IVOR. (ADVANCING) Honey! My Sweetness! My Pound of Lovely Loaf!

VESTA. (UTTERS A PIERCING SCREAM) Look! Look! There is a Lulu!

MARY. Vesta dear – a WHAT?

VESTA. A Lulu! No no I mean a Zulu! I've never seen 'em quite like that. (IN MOCK HORROR.)

IVOR. Luscious Lady of Llandudno – it's your Baby-Beau!

VESTA. That silver voice!

IVOR. Ah! Ha!

VESTA. His nose WAS tilted and his figure small.

IVOR. My Pot of Tickler's Plum and Apple!

VESTA. His income was enormous – but not quite so large as his lies.

IVOR. Saccharine! Gem of a starry night! I'm really – REALLY – your little diamond merchant – but I pack 'em up in sacks.

(HANNAH HAS COME OUT L. SHE GAZES AT IVOR IN DISGUST.)

11.

VESTA. You really are my own gold-mounted! Peel off that Brunswick black that I may know you.

HAN. You Ivor Hickman! Look you! Be out of my Dairy with your filthy black!

IVOR. Crystal Candy I am going! But I will come back! Your dear command?

VESTA. Wash your face!

IVOR. And when I am pure as Driven Snowflakes --?

VESTA. Join the Army.

IVOR. If the Horse Guards should say nay?

VESTA. Join the Gordon Highlanders – buzz about my honey and get yourself in kilts.

IVOR. The sun may shine today – but a gale may blow tomorrow?

HAN. You Ivor – mind my butter! Will you go whatever?

IVOR. I would tarry Auntie Hannah but you hath an evil optic! My precious bit of fluff anon I'll hold thee – (HANNAH MAKES A MOVE TOWARDS HIM) Goodbye-EE!

(HE DARTS OFF L.C. THE GIRLS LAUGH HEARTILY.)

VESTA. Isn't he some nut?

(KENYON ROSS IS SEEN PASSING THE WINDOW R.C. HE KNOCKS AT DOOR. ENTERS – BOWS GRAVELY TO THE LADIES.)

KEN. Good afternoon Mrs. Williams. Good afternoon young ladies. (THEN TO HANNAH.) I should be obliged if I can see your son.

HAN. (NERVOUSLY) Indeed sir – I hope there's nothing wrong?

KEN. (EVADING HER QUESTION) If you will excuse me --?

MARY. Aunty – if we may go?

12.

KEN. No no young ladies – you must not make my call here an intrusion. Women have been wonderful during the sad crisis that has fallen on our country – and even here I feel that you may do a little good --- please stay.

(JOHN WILLIAMS ENTERS DOOR L. - STARTS WHEN HE SEES KENYON ROSS – MARY AND THE OTHERS ARE WATCHING HIM CLOSELY. HE PULLS HIMSELF TOGETHER. KENYON TURNS TO HIM WITH A KINDLY SMILE.)

My business is with you John.

JOHN. Mother – Mary – (DISMISSING THEM.)

KEN. No no – I beg! We are neighbours John and I always thought that we were friends. Am I to understand that we cannot remain so? (JOHN SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS.) It seems a grievous pity. Be candid – let me know your grievance.

JOHN. (IN HARD TONES) I don't like you Mr. Ross.

KEN. (SMILES) Well come come – that's my loss sir not yours. You left my employ six years ago – my son came into my business – and – you don't regard that as a wrong?

JOHN. You hold it is a right. You had the best of me down there –

KEN. Blood is thicker than water John. You made way for my son.

JOHN. After you had steamed my brains – after I had put you on a firm foundation –

KEN. I appreciate your modesty – but are you hardly fair?

JOHN. I'm straight and honest – just! Do you understand me?

KEN. Precisely. – I accept your own opinion – if it will allow us to get on. Now please understand me Mr. Williams – (A STERN NOTE IS IN HIS VOICE NOW) Your meetings outside the Valley Works have got to be stopped.

JOHN. Who says so – the Police?

KEN. I say so, They concern me most.

13.

JOHN. I'm breaking no law. I just tell the truth down there. The truth that jabs and bites.

HAN. Go easy John my boy.

MARY. Are you sure John – it is all truth you tell.

JOHN. Don't interfere. I know my way.

KEN. Very well. I'll bring a little of my truth to your door. I've been a fair employer to my men – at least I've tried to understand their lives. Your mad wretched eloquence has brought them to a state of thinly veiled revolt, and these conditions can't continue. You strike at me John Williams! You force my hand. I must hit you back.

JOHN. (LAUGHS SCORNFULLY) I'm waiting for it! He who fights expects hard knocks – Well? ---

KEN. You are my tenant ---?

JOHN. --- Was your tenant.

KEN. If we can't be peaceful neighbours – the town becomes too small to contain us. One of us must go. It's going to be you.

JOHN. (LAUGHING SCORNFULLY) Oh! Oh! Our rooster's crowing loudly.

KEN. I've anticipated your defiance. I've sold the dairy to a new firm in Cardiff – so we part.

MARY. Oh! Mr. Ross – John will be more reasonable –

HAN. The Dairy! The Dairy! You are not serious sir whatever. We are so prosperous here.

KEN. Your on does not appreciate his present sound position. Even now matters may be mended. I might – cancel the sale?

JOHN. He can't! He won't! The money's paid – The purchase is concluded!

KEN. (QUICKLY) How do YOU know THAT?

JOHN. Because MY agent paid your price – because the Dairy's mine.

(KENYON ROSS STANDS SPEECHLESS WITH SURPRISE.)

14.

Hits you on the raw Ross – don't it? Reddens your white knuckles? It's mine – yours – Mary's – Ours! Each stone – each brick – each sheet of glass – each flower that blossoms in the garden. Bought and paid for sir by me – so --- get out! (THE MOTHER AND THE TWO GIRLS UTTER A CRY OF PROTEST) Now out! I hate you as I hate your son. You came here to dictate to me – to crush me! Now go back beaten! broke! Humiliated – as you and yours deserve.

KEN. (BOWS) The score is yours John – you've played your sly cards very well. I admit I am surprised. I appreciate your victory! Even now I don't see why we can't be friends. I like strong men – and I despise a weakling. (HE BOWS TO THE LADIES AND IS GOING.) We can be friends – if you don't come down the Valley – if you leave my men alone.

JOHN. Leave them alone! They are my clay! I mould them – (HE EXTENDS HIS HAND) - Here! - and I shan't let them go. My work is here --!

KEN. (HARSHLY) It's not! Your work's out there – across the sea – fighting with the manhood of the Nation --- and soon you'll HAVE to go!

JOHN. (SNEERS) Have to! So then that's the next trick you will play?

KEN. You won't go willingly perhaps but you WILL go just the same. (TURNS TO APOLOGISE TO HANNAH AND THE GIRLS) Ladies I will not pain you further. I had hoped if Headstrong John had not listened to me – he might have been advised by you. (GOING L.C.)

JOHN. (STANDS WITH FOLDED ARMS – LAUGHING BACK AT KEN.) So you are going to put me in the Army Mr. Ross?

KEN. That I did not say. The Government will soon be doing that.

JOHN. Let them fight out there who like it. You've put me out! I'll put you out. MY fight is with YOU – at HOME!

(KENYON ROSS EXITS L.C. JOHN TURNS IN TRIUMPH TO MARY AND HIS MOTHER.)

Well -- (HE WAITS FOR APPROVAL – THEY ARE SILENT.) Aren't you all surprised? (HE EXTENDS HIS HANDS PROUDLY.) Ours Mother – Mary's – mine – our little nest! I've schemed and slaved and starved for it and today I've cut

15.

my harvest! (HE RUBS HIS HANDS TOGETHER.) It's good! It's good! It's real! Well Mary dear! He got just what he asked for?

MARY. I thought he took it rather well. (JOHN STARES HARD AT HER.) What did he mean about you going in the army?

JOHN. A London Rag is howling for conscription – wish 'em Joy! They'll never get it.

MARY. Are you sure of that? I should have thought that Mr. Ross would have known more about this thing than you?

JOHN. (CROSSING DOWN L. WITH AN ANGRY STRIDE) WELL – they won't get ME.

(PETER ROSS IS SEEN AT DOOR L.C. HE STANDS IN A LANGUID ATTITUDE. HE IS EXTREMELY WELL-DRESSED.)

PETER. Anyone at home you people? (SEES JOHN – WHO SCOWLS.) Hallo! Jack! How goes it? Jaw-ache John or have you been backing horses? Those naughty threepenny-bits will slip through your pockets! And how is MRS. Williams? Butter going up? 4 Eggs for a Bob! Aren't THEY rising? We shall have to cut 'Em out!

HAN. (ANGRILY) They're rising with the price of glass.

PETER. Someone been digging holes in windows.

MARY. Well won't you come -- RIGHT in Mr. Ross?

PETER. Overjoyed! What a sunny place you've got here – and isn't it a real good sunny day! Well Jack old sport buck up. Play you a game of Snooker at the "Bull"?

JOHN. I never enter Public Houses.

PETER. My Hat! What? – (STARES AT HIM – THEN GRINS.) I thought I heard you saying Jack they wouldn't "get" you. Were you referring to "The Red Lion" or "The Bull".

JOHN. As a matter of fact I was referring to the Army – if it interests you.

PETER. Really does. I got my commission through this morning.

16.

VESTA. Topping Mr. Ross – that is real fine.

PETER. Hallo Ginger! I thought I heard your squeaker. (GRINS.)

HAN. This war is a dreadful business Mr. Ross.

PETER. Not a mothers' meeting is it? I'm betting that we break the blighters before the coming Spring.

JOHN. We ---? (WITH A SNEER.)

PETER. Well – just the mob out there – and YOU Jack and me – YOU. You're coming in of course?

JOHN. Are – YOU?

PETER. I'm in – they've made me a member. They've patched up my Air Tubes over there in Switzerland and the doctors say I'm fit.

JOHN. Well the army won't get me! That's settled.

MARY. (INDIGNANTLY) Oh! John you don't mean that.

PETER. Got a definite reason?

JOHN. I have got my conscience.

PETER. (GASPS. A MERRY GRIN STEALS OVER HIS FACE.) Mildred! – that's a joke!

HAN. A man can have a conscience Mr. Ross.

PETER. A man can have the measles – but a conscience! That won't keep him home to pat the butter! Don't try that junk Jack – tisn't worthy of you – come out with the crush.

HAN. You are fit and strong – my John has his "football knee".

PETER. (TO JOHN) Your what? Ye Gods and little apples.

HAN. It's half-past three – (TO JOHN) You're forgetting your appointment with the doctor.

JOHN. I'll be going mother. Mary – Miss Wood – Mother – I just want a word alone with Mr. Ross. (THE GIRLS CROSS TO L.)

PETER. (TO MARY) I'm going North for training in the morning. You'll not disappoint me on the links this afternoon?

17.

MARY. (BRIGHTLY) I'll be there.

(THEY EXIT L. HANNAH GIVES HER SON AN APPEALING LOOK AS SHE EXITS. PETER QUIETLY STROLLS UP C.)

JOHN. Stop You! Peter Ross! Don't you slink away!

PETER. (TURNS, FACES HIM) Say my lady bird – you'll get me cross.

JOHN. Mary won't go out today – at least she won't with you.

PETER. That sounds rude. Have you ever seen me in a temper?

JOHN. Damn your temper!

PETER. (QUIETLY) They use that word in public houses.

JOHN. Well we'll use it here and more. What's your hellish game with Mary?

PETER. (RESTRAINING HIS TEMPER) Golf this afternoon.

JOHN. It's not – what's been your game with her on other afternoons?

PETER. I don't want to punch you John because your King and Country needs you ---

JOHN. Mary's not your class – what is a simple country girl to you? Something to pass your lazy hours away – something to amuse – something damn you to deceive – to flatter – lie to and destroy!

PETER. (HARSHLY) Stop that! (HE DROPS HIS STICK – AND STEPS FORWARD BLAZING WITH PASSION) My god! You lout! You dare!

(CINDERELLA WELLS IS SEEN PASSING THE DOOR AT BACK WITH EGG BASKET. SHE HEARS PETER'S ANGRY VOICE - STOPS AND LISTENS.)

(THE TWO MEN FACE EACH OTHER – A PAINFUL SILENCE.)

You mean that? ALL that! That I meant harm to her?

18.

JOHN. (AWED) I – don't --- know.

PETER. I thought I knew you. I thought you decent. I gave you credit for thought and deed – you don't deserve. Now I know your narrow mind – your little heart – your puny soul. (JOHN BLAZES UP. PETER CONTINUES VERY FIRMLY AND QUIETLY) You'll just take all back – all you meant and said – all of it – each ounce of gutter thought.

JOHN. I shan't! I can't! I won't! I think it – SO --- you may strike.

PETER. (MASTERING HIMSELF WITH A GREAT EFFORT) Honest? You – honestly believe I meant to do her --- Oh!

JOHN. (PASSIONATELY) We've grown up here as boy and girl – as man and maid – sweethearts until you came and dazzled her with London ways. You don't pretend – to LOVE her?

PETER. I don't --- pretend. I won't tell you that I do. It would be low and coarse to discuss the matter with you – now. Today I'm going to tell her what I do think – (VERY QUIETLY) – before I go out there to fight for HER – for you – for your old mother and all the girls and little 'uns at home.

JOHN. You won't say a word to Mary. (HARSHLY)

PETER. (SHARPLY) Who says that?

JOHN. I say that! – and if you have an ounce of decency you'll agree. Mary and I are getting married a month along from Sunday – so do you think you have a right to tell her of your love?

(CINDERELLA UTTERS A LOW CRY OF PROTEST FROM THE BACK.)

PETER. If this is true --?

JOHN. True – Gospel truth – God's own truth – as I hope to --!

PETER. I have no right.

JOHN. You'll get away – and you won't come back – and you won't hang around in that accursed khaki to turn her simple head ---?

19.

PETER. (SMILES PITYINGLY AT HIM) Don't you EVER think of big things as well as the little things that crawl?

JOHN. (UNEASILY) I don't understand.

PETER. You don't. Your world is just a narrow strip of soulless thought that bears no fruit – or knows no finer feeling. (HE PICKS UP HIS GLOVES AND STICK) And she is going to marry YOU –! John?

JOHN. (GLEEFULLY) Yes it's all settled – all the deposits have been paid. (PETER IS GOING UP SLOWLY) I'll admit I am a little sorry if you're sweet on her –

PETER. (LOOKS BACK) A LITTLE sorry? I'm tons and acres sorry John for Mary.

JOHN. Well I'll be getting off to see my doctor, I don't like this chat about conscription and I want to see just how I stand. (PETER EYES HIM WITH CONTEMPT) Better luck Ross in the Army. (OFFERS HIS HAND.)

PETER. (LOOKS AT IT.) You see I DON'T pretend John. I wish I could – I can't.

(JOHN GIVES HIM A HARD LOOK, SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS AND EXITS L.)

(GOING L.C. PETER ENCOUNTERS CIN.)

Hallo! little woman how's the luck?

CIN. I'm puzzled sir – a little bit afraid – Is it very wrong to tell the truth?

PETER. All according Matey – I'd lie like the Kaiser to save a pal some tears.

CIN. I must speak out – it can't be wrong to speak – if I only hurt myself a lump – and make you and Miss Mary very happy.

PETER. You've set yourself a handful.

CIN. I'm not ungrateful to John Williams and his mother – I'm not a sneak – a spy! For all that they have given me – I have given strength – gratitude and tears. But I've got to hit him the back – I got to tell you that he lied –

PETER. Hold on --

20.

CIN. He lied – lied on his chapel oath to trick you --- lied to get you over there without a word to Mary of your love. Lied to break her heart and yours –

PETER. You're telling me she is not pledged to him – that they are not getting married --?

CIN. To him! She loathes him as she hates the chains that hold her here – hates them as I hate them – though she can break her bondage – while I - ? (SHE SINKS DOWN SOBBING L.)

Peter. Buck up little soldier – not like you to yield a trench.

CIN. I'm a girl without a name – a girl without a mother and a father – a girl from the reformatory – a girl with a big soft heart to love with Cold Charity my lover.

PETER. I'd be honoured little matey if you'll book me up your pal.

CIN. That's it – I AM! – real Gospel! I am your pal and I'm hitting him to prove it. (LOOKS AROUND.) Mary's eating out her soul for you. (HE STARTS.) Real honest! I found this in her bedroom – isn't that enough. (GIVES HIM A PHOTO.)

PETER. My chiv!

CIN. And all the bits of writing round it – it – is herself – her heart – her love.

PETER. Dear Lord! You've pushed a big hot sun out of a chilly foggy day – Oh! – kid what you have done for me – what can I do for you?

CIN. You're going over there to France. Not because you're forced to go - but just because your blood tells you – you must!

PETER. Righto!

CIN. Some of you will make the flowers grow redder – some of you will fall and not come back. I've given you your comfort – give me just a golden moment in return.

PETER. If that can be done?

CIN. You won't laugh – you are not that sort – just look at me with those kind eyes as you are looking now. I'm awful lonely Mr. Ross – no mother to whom I can take a cracking heart for patching up. I ---- (SHE STOPS AND STARES AT HIM AFRAID) – I want you to be MY sweetheart for a second – I want to

21.

remember that a clean brave gentleman like you --- Oh!

(SHE TURNS AWAY AS IF ASHAMED OF HER DARING. HE COMES GENTLY BEHIND HER – PLACES HIS TWO HANDS ON HER SHOULDERS AND TURNS HER TOWARDS HIM.)

PETER. Look up little Sister – I beg your pardon – little Sweetheart – for a second – don't be lonely any longer – count me your just, your solid faithful pal. (HE KISSES HER HANDS GALLANTLY. SHE IS ABOUT TO TURN AWAY.) I suppose a chap's a fool when he sees the Gates of Heaven – not to kiss the little Angel doing Sentry-Go !? (HE KISSES HER. SHE BREAKS AWAY WITH A JOYFUL SIGH.)

CIN. I'll pray for you out there – each night and morning – twice on Sundays and Good Fridays – and if (GOING L.) I bring her to you now you make her promise to be true till you come back?

PETER. Lay odds I'll do my best.

CIN. Good-bye – God bless you Soldier Ross.

PETER. Cheero – little sunbeam – till Peace breaks out – So long.

(SHE EXITS L. SHE HAS LEFT HER BASKET AT DOOR L.C. PETER WALKS ABOUT WHISTLING AND LOOKING AT THE PHOTO. IVOR HICKMAN, VERY MUSH WASHED – DRESSED UP COMES BUSTLING THROUGH DOOR L.C. AND NEARLY FALLS INTO THE EGG BASKET.)

IVOR. (SEES PETER.) Beg pardon – sorry! I'll look round again. I'm waiting for my girl.

PETER. (LAUGHS.) So am I.

IVOR. Well I can't be mooning on your beat – I'll find a better 'Ole. What about these Eggs?

PETER. They're marked up 4 a shilling.

IVOR. Some smartness you! I'll look back. (DISAPPEARS.)

22.

(MARY COMES OUT L. FOLLOWED BY CINDERS WHO CROSSES QUIETLY UP TO DOOR L.C. SMILES BACK ENCOURAGINGLY TO PETER.)

MARY. I thought that you had gone and were coming back for me at 5?

PETER. Five minutes ago I thought that I was going and never coming back. But --- the world's turned round since then --- I have something to tell you.

(CINDERS EXITS SLOWLY – LOOKING BACK THROUGH WINDOW R.)

MARY. Is it very pressing?

PETER. I hope things will be very pressing before I go – I hope I shall press you.

MARY. (SMILES) Oh! you're making fun.

PETER. Well it's not quite fun to me! --- Tomorrow I am going North – I had my training before my recent illness hit me – and now that I fit and well – another month will see me over there in France.

MARY. Must you go away? Oh! I don't mean that. Here in our little world we don't seem to realise the great war calamity.

PETER. (FIDGETING) Mr. --- sit down please.

MARY. (SMILES) May I stand. I want to look at you.

PETER. You make me awfully nervous.

MARY. (LAUGHING) Nervous? Good gracious! Of what?

PETER. I can't quite sort that out. Just tell me right away – you don't belong to John?

MARY. To John! Oh! --- (THEN BITTERLY) I don't belong to anybody. I'm just set down in this little town – caged in like a hapless bird – ever beating at the bars of my narrow hateful prison – desperate to get out.

PETER. I want to taske you out – if God wills that I am spared. I want to take you to a world of bigger things – I want to make you happy – honest! To give all that's good and best of me to you.

MARY. You – mean – you – want – ME?

23.

(DISTANT BAND HEARD.)

PETER. I DO mean that. And I want you to wait until the God of War is dead and a Glorious Victorious Peace shall come, then if the luck is chummy I will come and take you to me dear for keeps.

MARY. Oh! (JOYOUSLY.) – if you mean all this!!

PETER. You understand I do. I can't write pretty poetry – or sing tenor songs – but I can ride a horse and use a rifle – play a game of snooker and just love a real girl. I can do that best of all!

MARY. Don't you know how happy you have made me – I'm not ashamed to say it. You've opened wide my prison gates and released my poor starved heart. I glory in your love for me! I glory in your strength! Your courage – your sincerity – your pride.

PETER. You'll wait till the boys come marching home – for me and happy days?

MARY. I'll wait all my days! I feel God will be good to us and send you safely home.

(PETER TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS – IVOR WEARING A SOLDIER'S KHAKI HAT AND BELT AND BAYONET LOOKS IN.)

IVOR. (SEEING THE LOVERS) The end of a perfect day. (THEY TURN ROUND QUICKLY.)

PETER. I'll break your neck young Ivor.

IVOR. Sorry Mr. Peter I am sure. (GRINS) Glad to see you've clicked. I wish I could tell the tale like you can tell it.

(VESTA FOLLOWED BY HANNAH COMES OUT L.)

VESTA. You!

24.

IVOR. Me! Himself! Myself! The Goods! Vesta Matchless Mine! I've done the trick! I've become a member!

WESTA. You mean you've joined the army?

IVOR. Right! These are the best that they can do for me at the present. Oh! My Plum and Apple! Let me clasp you to my breast.

VESTA. Get back! I'm firm! Not till you have transferred and got into your kilts!

(THE RECUITING BAND IS HEARD NEARER.)

(JOHN WILLIAMS ENTERS FLUSHED AND ANGRY – HE
TURNS AT DOOR AND CALLS BACK)

JOHN. Damn your insults! I'll go when I please.

HAN. You've been up to the doctor's John?

JOHN. (WHO HAS NOT NOTICED MARY AND PETER R.) Yes – his report of
me was ready – here! (HE TAKES OUT SEALED ENVELOPE. SEES
MARY AND PETER.) What are you doing here? Come away from her
before I kill you! You said that you would go away! Liar! This is how you
keep your word.

PETER. Stop that! The lie was yours! You tricked me with the lie that Mary was
pledged to you –

MARY. (ANGRILY) Who gave you that right?

JOHN. My right! The right that I still claim and I will hold it. He's leaving you
today – to me! To me! And while he's absent I will fight to hold you – as
I'll fight his father and his class.

PETER. Not so fast! You may have to go out there – there's a man's work
waiting for you.

HAN. My John! My John! They'll never take him!

JOHN. Take me! Take me! They'll take me dead – Don't you fear that Mother I
shall never go. (SUDDENLY REMEMBERS THE DOCTOR'S REPORT
IN HIS HAND.

25.

FEVERISHLY TEARS THE ENVELOPE OPEN. A TENSE PAUSE –
THEN HE SHRIEKS OUT IN TRIUMPH) I beat you – beat you Peter
Ross! They can't have me! The doctor's say so! My heart is weak! You
hear! You hear! I am exempt!

(THE EXCITEMENT IS TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HE FALLS
HEAVILY AT HIS MOTHER'S FEET. THE RECRUITING BAND
PLAYING "THE MEN OF HARLECH" ARE SEEN PASSING
THE DAIRY DOOR.)

ACT TWO.

=====

SCENE 1.

(VESTA MARIE'S LODGINGS IN BIRMINGHAM. A COSY BUT PLAINLY FURNISHED ROOM. A TEA TABLE SET R. DOORS R. AND L. VESTA DISCOVERED L. READING EVENING PAPER – BY LIGHT OF LAMP ON TABLE L.)

VESTA. “No Winter Racing.” “Tea and Butter Queues.” “Italy’s Great Recovery.” Ah! That’s more cheerful for a lonely little War Fiancée!

“The news from the Italian Front is more reassuring every hour. Most gallantly has Britain responded to her brave Ally’s pressing need – the comforting roar of the British Artillery!” – Good old British Artillery! God bless those splendid boys with the big guns with a punch!

(CONTINUES) “The comforting roar of the British Artillery is heard on – (A LOUD RAT-TAT-TAT AT DOOR L.) Ugh! (SHE DROPS THE PAPER AND SPRINGS UP.) I’ll give that postman butter beans! Does he want to wreck my nerves. (RISES – CALLS OFF) Bring it right up to me Mrs. Chatter – if it happens to be a post-card – AFTER you have read it dear of course. It will be from him! My him! My chunky little Welsh Boy arrayed in Scottish shorts! Well Mrs. Chatters is it “I am well” (MARY HASLEWOOD ENTERS) Mary! Sweetness! Delicious Pal! T’is you. Give me a bunny hug. Oh! It’s good to see you.

(THROWS HER ARMS AROUND HER NECK AND GIVES HER A REAL WELCOME.)

MARY. (SMILES) It’s just the welcome I expected.

VESTA. Well it's just the welcome you have got. Take off that coat! You've come to stop! Don't answer you have come to stop! What can I get you dear for tea?

27.

A chop! Do you like tin tomatoes! A nice thick steak or would you care for something solid – if you would I'll recommend War Bread. Now DO sit down we are not going to eat YOU anyway.

MARY. Well I would like a cup of tea.

VESTA. Bless her Welsh blue eyes – she shall have a couple. I'll just stick the kettle on the fire and then I want all the news. And my spare bedroom! Can't you picture it you lump of cuddle! Well it's just snuggled up to me – and God bless you for coming – it's enough to freeze you these cold nights. (GOING R.) two little war fiancées snuggled up so cosy –

(EXITS LAUGHING DOOR R.)

MARY. Free! Free! I can breathe freedom here! Everything seems greater – wider – bigger – away from him! I have broken down the chains that held me near John Williams! I glory in my new found liberty! I've run away from home! (SHE HUGS HER HANDS AND LAUGHS.)

(VESTA ENTERS WIPING HER HANDS.)

VESTA. Did you hear that tap of mine? It's like Niagra Falls. I've put the kettle on. Have I blacked my face? Now – come – don't you see I'm bursting – what is all the news?

MARY. I've run away from home.

VESTA. Oh! That's a dead stead cert. I knew that frosty cousin wouldn't let you come to Brum.

MARY. 15 months since Peter went over there to France.

VESTA. 15 months since Ivor fell into kilts.

MARY. I've had 80 letters from him.

VESTA. I've had 29 and sent out 90 parcels.

28.

MARY. Aren't those letters just rays from God's own sunshine! What does dear Ivor write to you –

VESTA. All Charles Service ever thought of – and don't send "Plum and Apple". Why have you come to Brum – just to see me scrumptious – just to have a fling? To feel your feet.

MARY. I've come to get a situation –

VESTA. What! You? A situation?

MARY. And put a hundred miles or so between my unhappy heart and John.

VESTA. Won't he give you any peace?

MARY. Peace! I have never known the meaning of that word while I have been at home. There can be no peace between John and I until I consent to marry him – and would there be real peace even then. Oh! The whole thing is too hateful to think of for a moment.

VESTA. John is doing pretty well down there?

MARY. So well he has become more arrogant than ever. Everything he touches seems to turn to gold. Yes, John is doing VERY well rest assured of that.

VESTA. Well – aren't you very glad?

MARY. Glad? Oh! Vesta – how can you say that? Why should I be glad when in my heart I know – every pound he's hoarding up has been gained at the expense of some brave fellow's blood who has made the great sacrifice over there. Or by the cruel privation of helpless children – uncomplaining noble women who may not be gathering the harvest of vital essential work. This cruel war has brought un-dreamt of prosperity to many – but think – think of the awful price the silent sufferers of the war are paying day by day.

(WHISTLE OF KETTLE HEARD OFF R.)

VESTA. There's my kettle boiling Luvvy. A cup of Lipton's Un-controlled and you'll be as chirpy as a sparrow. I'll find you a situation sweetness- and

I'll find you a home. Until Capt. Peter comes home with the lads – you're going to find your peace with me.

29.

(SHE EXITS QUICKLY R.)

MARY. Dear God – why is there war? The wolves devour the lamb – and Wrong for a while will triumph over Right – and so this Tragedy of Blood must be. Brave men must give their lives and women shed their tears! It is the awful price of this Grim Conflict! (SHE DASHES HER TEARS ASIDE) Has my heart grown afraid. No, no! Even as the day may die in darkness – so shall tomorrow's morning come in all its golden splendour.

(MUSIC. THE LIGHTS ARE SLOWLY LOWERED – AND SHE SINKS GRADUALLY TO SLEEP. THE BACK OF THE ROOM FADES AWAY AND A GRIM WINTER LANDSCAPE OF THE FRONT IN FLANDERS IS DISCLOSED. IN THE FOREGROUND IS SEEN A DEEP SHELL CRATER. DISTANT GUNS ARE HEARD – SEARCHLIGHTS SCAN THE SKY. THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE ARE SLOWLY DYING AWAY. IVOR HICKMAN A "SCOTCH" TOMMY IS SEEN LYING UNCONSCIOUS. HE GRADUALLY RECOVERS – PROPS HIMSELF UP – AND WITH BLINKING ASTONISHED EYES LOOKS ABOUT HIM.)

IVOR. Has the last train gone for Aberdare? (OR LOCAL TOWN.) Any you fellows got a match? (A PAUSE.) There ain't none of you fellows here. I'm just surrounded by myself – and I'm feeling very lonely. I remember going over the top! I recollect that wild rush forward with our pack – and – and – twice one are two – and twice two are four – and – that's all I can remember! I must have got an awful clout! (TRIES TO RISE) Oh! Good afternoon (HE GIVES A GROAN OF PAIN.) I've copped alright! Punctured in my little grey home in the vest and no error about it. But I can't stop here! That's all stuff and nonsense! It may look alright on picture postcards – but I'm ravenous enough to go a slice of "Plum and Apple".

(A GERMAN SOLDIER IS SEEN CRAWLING ROUND L. IVOR SITS UP CAUTIOUSLY.)

30.

I feel I'm not alone! I feel a little stranger is dropping in to enquire about my general health! (PICKS UP HIS RIFLE.) I know there's not an odd in it – but it looks the goods!

(RISES SUDDENLY AND CONFRONTS THE GERMAN EXACTLY THE SAME TIME AS THE GERMAN COVERS IVOR.)

BOTH. (TOGETHER) Hands up! (THEY BOTH BRING THEIR RIFLES DOWN AND IVOR LAUGHS.)

IVOR. Well I never did – if we ain't travelling in the same kind of pastry.

FRITZ. Hands up.

IVOR. Sit down Fritz – you're getting feverish. Sit down! Any more of your mob round the corner?

FRITZ. Tousands and tousands more.

IVOR. Oh! Fritz you are a one! (GIVES HIM A GENTLE DIG.) Ask 'em in. Have you got a pack of cards.

FRITZ. Ach! You are my prisoner.

IVOR. Aren't you a comic? Bless him! Not Fritz you well-done ruffian you're MY prisoner. I'm taking you home to frighten our bald parrot. Well old sport – how goes it?

FRITZ. Rotten! I'm feds up!

IVOR. You're lucky. I haven't had a munch since Tuesday afternoon.

FRITZ. I mean – I vant the war to finish.

IVOR. So it will old Love Bird – when we have finished you.

FRITZ. Neffer! Neffer!

IVOR. Have it your own way Brother Hun – but we're rather having ours.

FRITZ. And after ze war is ofer! Ach! You make vey for us ofer dere – to Londons in our tousands ve vill come!

31.

IVOR. No Fritz! Sweetheart – No! Not really. There may be a few tender hearts with fatheads attached across the water who might like to see you swarming in again in Gentle England – but we boys at the front will have the final word – and we say – “Out out! Mr. Penny Bazaar! Out out damned spot! Never never again.” (FIRING STARTS AGAIN.) your mob are getting nasty.

FRITZ. Come! I vaste mine dime mit you. You are wounded and mine prisoner and you come mit me.

IVOR. Help me up old darling – gently does it – Oh! Be matey Fritz or I won't let you shave me – if they ever let you in – careful! Got you!
(SUDDENLY SEIZES HIM AND THROWS HIM.)

FRITZ. Kamerad! Kamerad! Ze filthy drick you do on me!

IVOR. Dry up Fritz – another howl and I'll tighten your collar! I've waited for you three whole days – three of my dearest pals “Gone West” through you “Strassburg Saus”! Oh! You won't keep still – must you really have it?

(THEY STRUGGLE – THE GERMAN SUDDENLY THROWS HIM AND ENDEAVOURS TO CHOKE HIM.)

FRITZ. I haf you! Ach! I haf you!

(IVOR SUDDENLY KICKS OUT – THE GERMAN IS THROWN – AND IVOR IS ON HIM. A SHORT STRUGGLE AND FRITZ IS NO MORE.)

IVOR. One more black spot erased from “The Book of all that's Decent Anything worth the taking Fritz”. (SHOTS.) I'm spotted sure – (TEARS OPEN THE GERMAN'S TUNIC. FINDS SAUSAGE – BITES – THROWS IT DOWN IN DISGUST. FINDS PACKET. QUICK

EXAMINATION.) Sweetness! What a capture – you’re no common Fritz old thing – this junk will be worth a ton of clear fine Sundays to our Head over there! If I can only get! I’ve got to try! (RISES. SHOTS RING OUT – HE FALLS.) Vesta Sweetness! No more kisses! No more parcels – no more “plum and apple” – no more home! Oh! Sweet God – no more home ---

32.

(HE FALLS BACK. THE FIRING CONTINUES. A SEARCHLIGHT IS SEEKING OUT THE CRATER. CAPT. PETER ROSS WHO IS CRAWLING ALONG TOWARDS IT – CROUCHES DOWN.)

PETER. Close by the poor lad was located. Are you here Private Hickman? Don’t shout my lad if you are dead – but if you’re alive and frisky let’s have a pally chuckle. (FLASH OF LIGHT.) I’m afraid these pigs have twigged me. If the boy is here – alive – I’d like to get him back. (STUMBLES OVER IVOR.) Hi -- ! Found! My hat! (IVOR GROANS.) Push your chin out Cockbird you’re not for a cross and a pail of tear-drops – not by miles. Tut! Tut! Sonny – let’s see your nice white teeth! Grin your savage grin and say your convalescent’s Good-bye-ee! (IVOR RISES AND GRINS.) Ah I thought that would fetch you.

IVOR. Captain Ross! I’m awful glad they haven’t downed you.

PETER. Righto my Cock Robin – I’ve come to take you in.

IVOR. I’m done sir – got it awful.

PETER. You’re too dashed particular. Let me have you up – and we’ll be a’moving.

IVOR. ‘Fraid it ain’t no use sir – rather you got back. Take this with you sir – the O.C. will be pleased.

PETER. Love junk to the birdie! Snakes! (HE IS LOOKING AT PACKET BY THE LIGHT OF HIS FLASH LAMP.) Where did you get this?

IVOR. He came over – I had to put him out.

PETER. What a blunder we’ve been making – this stuff puts all matters straight. It shows they’ve shifted their accursed “Heavies” from the wood –

before dawn the whole ridge will be ours. Stewed Tripe! What a capture! Hickman D.C.M. – we’ve got to up and hustle.

IVOR. It can’t be done sir – leave me here.

PETER. (ANGRILY) Demme! Don’t insult me! Confound you where’s your manners. Take a swig of Mother’s Comfort and get up on your stilts. (IVOR DRINKS FROM HIS WATER BOTTLE.) Grateful and Comforting? What? What? Ready? No? Oh! you’re a lot too cosy – Up-si-daisy.

33.

(HELPS HIM TO RISE. A SHOT RINGS OUT. THE CAPTAIN STAGGERS)

I’ve got it Cock – Just like a red hot poker! You’ve got to get back with that real stuff – no fooling Hickman – cut the soft stuff out! Those plans are worth a whole division and I only count as one! Sainly Scotch and Soda they’re coming over – Cock-bird – crawl as you have never crawled before – back to our line! Fly as only Dicky-Birds can fly. Go! Hickman I’m your officer! I command you – you’ll earn your V.C. with that – Chuck me out of the question – so long and good luck.

(HICKMAN SEIZES PETER’S TWO HANDS, PRESSES THEM TO HIS LIPS AND STAGGERS OFF R.)

Good boy! S’elp me bob! He’ll beat ‘em! (SHOTS.) So – (LOOKING OFF L.) So my Brother Huns you are coming on to gather up the pieces! I’ll try to make you five the less to make the world more fragrant.

(HE RISES AND FIRES HIS REVOLVER AT THE ADVANCING GERMANS. HE STAGGERS – PUTS HIS HANDS TO HIS FACE – STAGGERS ROUND FACING AUDIENCE.)

(IN THE DISTANCE A SCOTCH BAND IS PLAYING “WEE
MACGREGOR” MARCH.)

They are playing the boys back – the relief is in. England My England!
Mary! My Mary! Always always think of me.

(HE FALLS. THE VISION DIES AWAY. MARY AWAKENS WITH
A SCREAM. VESTA ENTERS R. WITH TEA-THINGS. THE
BAND CONTINUES.)

34.

VESTA. What's the matter Luvvy?

MARY. That music! Don't you hear that music! “They are playing the boys back
– the relief is in”! He said those words! I saw him fall! I saw my Peter
fall!

VESTA. You're dreaming girl alive! There's a Scotch band playing down to New
St. Station – there's some boys home here on leave.

MARY. Oh! That dream - that awful cruel REAL dream! (RAT-TAT AT DOOR.)

VESTA. That's real enough! What a saucy knock! Just in time to mess our tea
up nicely. Wait here. (GOING L.) I'll have a peep. (LOOKING
THROUGH KEYHOLE. SUDDENLY CALLS OUT) Mrs. Chatters close
that door! Close it! Close it! Ker-lose! Oh! you've done it now, Mary!
The worst has happened! Your Aunty Hannah's here.

MARY. The worst --- ?

VESTA. I mean that she has come to take you back. Do you want to miss her?
Up with you to my bedroom – you'll find a candle on the shelf – and a
new “Charles Service” novel on my bed.

MARY. Not a word to Aunty I am here.

VESTA. No – a thousand you are not! (MARY EXITS R. KNOCK AT THE
DOOR.) Come in sweetness! Oh! Do come in.

(HANNAH WILLIAMS - “DRESSED UP” FOR HER LONG
JOURNEY – FUSSES IN.)

HAN. I'm so glad to find you girl whatever! That niece of mine – that wilful Mary – she is here?

VESTA. How you DO surprise me!

HAN. Tell me girl! Indeed to goodness tell me ---

VESTA. Do have a cup of tea.

HAN. She is not here – Oh! that awful journey – and that awful fare – and she is not here? I will have a cup of tea.

35.

VESTA. One or TWO pieces Mrs. Williams?

HAN. One at home and two when I am visiting –

VESTA. One piece Mrs. Williams. Fancy you've got back.

HAN. Your tongue is smarter than your gown young lady. Are you not so prosperous?

VESTA. So prosperous I'm ashamed.

HAN. Yes yes – so – whatever.

VESTA. I'm engaged to a soldier Mrs. Williams. I make the shots – he fires them. They pay my boy seven shillings weekly – they pay me four pounds five.

HAN. A power of money – yes indeed.

VESTA. Indeed it is – FOR ME! But what of him. 7/- for the Soldier! £4-50-0 for me. Add the sums together - £4-12-0. £2 of my wages each week go into the bank for him. £2-7-0 weekly for the soldier! I've become the Government! I've given my brave boy a rise.

HAN. You have a Godly conscience.

VESTA. I am a Conscientious Objector! I object to Germans. DO have another cup of tea? No – are you REALLY sure. What time does your train go back – I'm sure you will be late – (HANNAH RISES – AND GASPS)
And I am SO pleased to see you.

HAN. But I am waiting for my niece – our Mary. If she is not here I am sure that she will come. And I want to see this amazing City. Such Shops! Such gowns! Such boots! Oh! The awful highness of those boots

whatever – such prosperity I did not see before. (RAT-TAT-TAT AT DOOR L.) There is John.

VESTA. (STARTING) John! Sakes alive woman what is he doing here?

HAN. He's come to find his cousin Mary – and to take her back.

(JOHN WILLIAMS ENTERS DOOR L.)

JOHN. You found her Mother? I've grave news for Mary.

36.

HAN. The girl's not here John. All our money wasted.

JOHN. I'm not sure. (TO VESTA) Well young woman - what have you to say.

VESTA. Nothing very much. This is not a mansion. Sitting room – one bedroom and a scullery. So if she's here and wants to see you – she can answer for herself. (GOES TO DOOR) Mary your cousin John is here and brings you news. Are you here and are you at home to him. (A PAUSE) She does not answer – and that's my bedroom so I'll be obliged if you'll get out.

(MUSIC. MARY ENTERS SLOWLY THROUGH DOOR R.)

JOHN. (GLEEFULLY) Ah!

HAN. (TO VESTA) Oh! You brazen little sinner!

MARY. Well cousin John – what have you to say to me? (HE GLANCES TOWARDS VESTA) You wish to speak to me alone? (HE BOWS)

VESTA. (TO MARY) Certainly my sweetness – if you want me to evaporate. Come along Mrs. Williams – have five minutes of real reckless riot! Come and see the shops.

(SHE BUSTLES HER OUT L.)

MARY. (LOOKING ENQUIRINGLY AT JOHN) Yes? – Why have you come?

JOHN. To take you back – to give you the home – the care – the protection you will need –

MARY. If you persist in this – I am going out.

JOHN. I don't want to be brutal – I love you too well to give you a moment's pain. I have news – grave bitter news for you. You need me Mary sorely – (THROWS TELEGRAM ON TABLE) I am here.

MARY. What is this to me? A Telegram! (LOOKS AT ENVELOPE) Addressed to Kenyon Ross –

37.

JOHN. He knew that I was coming here to find you. I begged that I should convey its contents to you personally.

MARY. It concerns ME – so I gather - ?

JOHN. (GRAVELY) Yes ---

(SHE OPENS IT – STARES AT IT – UTTERS A GREAT CRY OF PAIN AND FALLS SOBBING BESIDE CHAIR R. JOHN PICKS UP THE TELEGRAM.)

JOHN. “His Majesty regrets to inform you Captain Peter Ross –“

MARY. No! No! Stop that! I cannot bear it! I know! I know! My dream – I saw him fall. Peter! Peter! Lost to me!

JOHN. Mary I implore you –

MARY. (RISING – TRYING TO PASS HIM) Let me out! I'm stifled – choking here! The streets – the lights – the crowds – oh! My pain! My awful pain!

JOHN. Hear me – reason – listen. Your tears can't bring him back. You're coming home with me – for your sake I demand this! I'm going to be your comforter – your shield –

MARY. Pity! Pity! In this hour be kind –

JOHN. The son is now beyond your aid – dead to your love – the father needs your help – and you CAN help him if you will – through me.

MARY. You! His savage enemy!

JOHN. I want to be his friend – I want you to appreciate my own sincerity! Kenyon Ross is tottering on the brink of commercial ruin. His son's death has robbed him of his fine audacity – his nerve. He has been compelled to throw his weak hand on the table - £2,000 to-morrow morning will be worth £50,000 to him six months hence –

MARY. (HARDLY HEEDING HIM) Brave broken proud old man! £2,000!

JOHN. (EAGERLY) I have £2,000! Ten times £2,000! I sold the cottage last Spring – every precious pound I thrust into Cardiff shipping! I saw my chance! Seized it – held it! Got right in. Lord! The sea's been liquid gold to me! The sparkling

38.

tide of fortune came flowing to my door. They cried for ships! More ships and more ships! Up went our rates! We made OUR terms! This war has been my harvest!

MARY. Don't! Don't! Are men so base! Can such things be? You even make me doubt Our Great Creator! Harvest! So you reap your guilty harvest! Each wretched pound a soldier's blood - a child's privation – or a mother's tears! Harvest? Your real harvest is not yet. That God will see you reap!

JOHN. Are you going to save that beaten man – Kenyon Ross is crying for your aid! You loved the son – save the broken wreck – HIS father! My cheque is ready in the morning – for him. £2,000! If you will share the home I have prepared for you?

MARY. Are you so mean- so low – so base – so small? Have you no respect – no tender pity – no higher feeling for a broken-hearted woman in her bitter hour? This hour is sacred – you defile it – leave this house! Leave me to my tears – my anguish! - my memories of that great heart whom I shall always love.

(SHE WALKS PROUDLY TO DOOR R. – AS SHE PASSES INTO THE OTHER ROOM – SHE TOTTERS – FALLS. HEX'S TO DOOR R. HEARS SOMEONE COMING L. QUICKLY CLOSES DOOR R. VESTA RUSHES IN L.)

VESTA. You'd better come to your Mamma John! She's broken out! She's buying up the town.

JOHN. She'll find her way back.

VESTA. Where is Mary?

JOHN. Out – she went to look for you.

VESTA. Out!!! (RAPID KNOCKING AT DOOR L.) Here's Mamma with her parcels – now you'll have a shock!

(THE DOOR IS BURST OPEN AND IVOR HICKMAN – DIRTY AND RADIANT FROM THE FRONT – (HE HAS HIS FULL EQUIPMENT ON) RUSHES ON.)

39.

IVOR. Sweetness! (HOLDS OUT HIS ARMS TO VESTA.)

VESTA. (HARDLY CREDITING HER EYES) Gladness!

IVOR. Scrumptious! Cuddle up! (THEY WILDLY EMBRACE.)

VESTA. Pinch me! Nip me awful! Let me know I am not dreaming! This really is your kilt and not a yard of Turkey Red. Ivor! My wee Scotch Lad from Tonypandy! I'm in Paradise!

IVOR. Seven days' leave my Butter Scotch every minute's precious. They tell me Miss Mary's here I want to find her right away.

VESTA. She's out!

IVOR. We'll go and find her.

VESTA. I will you WON'T. Do you think I'd trust you out in Birmingham with those clothes! She's gone to find her Aunty – I'll find her right enough – stir from here Harry Lauder if you dare.

(SHE EXITS. IVOR EXECUTES A WILD DANCE OF JOY.)

IVOR. Such news! Such news! She'll be crazed with joy when she hears it. Oh! What a welcome Ivor boy! What a home-coming is mine! It's worth

all the fighting – all the mud. (SUDDENLY SEES JOHN.) John! Here! Then Mary's not a mile away I'm betting. I've got such news for your pretty cousin and such news for you. Captain Peter has been posted dead! I've proofs the best of proofs – THE CAPTAIN IS ALIVE!

JOHN. (STAGGERED) What!

IVOR. Truth! The Blessed Gospel! Isn't it spiffing! Isn't it hot? Where's Mary John – where's Mary? I'll bet she's heard the bad news – now she's going to hear the good.

JOHN. (CONFUSED – RECOVERS HIMSELF) Yes – yes – she must know it. She's out shopping with the others – you'll come with Ivor boy whatever – we'll find them in the town. We'll make a night of it together – You Mary Vesta Mother

40.

- Me! Wine – real Champagne! The best the city offers – Come Ivor! I'll take you in charge – Quickly! Quickly! We are going out.

IVOR. Wine John You! Has the world turned topsy-turvy – You putting your hand down – you buying a bottle! I could eat a dozen Gerhuns but you make me afraid!

JOHN. We're going out! We're going to make things buzz! Come on you young fool – let's get out of this – we're wasting time – hurry! Hurry! (PUSHING HIM TOWARDS DOOR.)

IVOR. But Mary! She comes first before the wine! I've got to tell her God's own message – I can't go out till I have seen her – (MARY COMES OUT R.) Look John our luck is in you rascal – Mary! Mary's here.

MARY. Ivor!

IVOR. Such news Mary! Oh such glorious tidings --- !

JOHN. Silence! Silence!

IVOR. (C. JOHN TRIES TO HOLD HIM BACK) For you – for you -- !

MARY. For me --- !

IVOR. Captain Peter Ross! –

MARY. Captain Peter Ross!

IVOR. Is Alive! Alive! ALIVE!

=====

SCENE II.

(THE EXTERIOR OF JOHN WILLIAMS' DAIRY IN A SOUTH WALES VILLAGE. SUMMER, 19--?THE DAIRY – A PICTURESQUE LOW-ROOFED BUILDING – IS SET R. A TYPICAL WELSH LANDSCAPE AT BACK – A CHESTNUT TREE SET R.C. WELL DOWN STAGE. AN INN SET UP AND DOWN STAGE L.)

(CINDERELLA IS DISCOVERED C. – LOOKING DOWN INTO THE VALLEY. A TRAIN WHISTLE IS HEARD. MRS. WILLIAMS – IN HER "SUNDAY BEST" BUSTLES OUT OF DAIRY DOOR R.)

HAN. Is the train in Cinderella? Are they coming up?

CIN. I can see the Engine smoke just down by the Pit head Station. Yes – the train is drawing in.

HAN. And they'll be here! Back from their honeymoon in Weston. My John and his wife! Mary! My John's wife! (GLEEFULLY) And she wasn't going to marry him whatever! But she did! John is an avalanche! A Mountain torrent! – sweeping all before him – not to be denied. So he conquered stubborn Mary! So he had his way! (LOUD CHEERS.)

CIN. You can hear the cheering Mrs. Williams?

HAN. I can! I can! It's Heaven's music! Where are the false prophets now! So they would hiss and hoot him through the town if he dared to marry Captain Ross's promised wife! (CHEERS AGAIN) Don't sound like it girl whatever? My John's on the Council! A few may hate him but they fear him – a few may cross him – but he bends them to his will. My John's the wealthiest – sharpest – most respected BIG man of the town.

(CHEERS LOUDER AND IVOR HICKMAN (IN FULL UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT) ENTERS WITH VESTA. MRS. WILLIAMS

THROWS HER ARMS AROUND IVOR'S NECK – MISTAKING HIM FOR JOHN.)

42.

HAN. Welcome! Welcome back my darling boy!

IVOR. Steady on old lady – I've never seen you quite so fond of me as this before!

VESTA. I'm surprised at you Mrs. Williams! You said you hated khaki and considered kilts indecent.

IVOR. She said that?

HAN. Not John! Not Mary! I thought it was my John and Mary back from their honeymoon.

IVOR. Their honey-what? You mean to say she's married that saintly blighter John!

HAN. Yes indeed whatever! In spite of your wicked falsehood that you brought back six months that Capt. Peter Ross is still alive.

IVOR. He is alive! (STAGGERED)

HAN. He's dead buried and forgotten – somewhere over there in France. We read it in the Sunday Papers – it's official.

IVOR. Official! Oh! What a body-blow! Then the story that they told me – that he is a prisoner over there in Germany – isn't true.

VESTA. It's awful Ivor Sweetness – awful. But I never thought that Mary would throw herself away like this!

HAN. Throw herself away indeed! My son's a man of money –

VESTA. Money doesn't always make the love-birds sing. I prefer the tiny seeds of love when I walk in the matrimonial cage.

IVOR. Coming in to have a glass of milk my priceless precious! The walk up from the valley's made my throat as dry as sad John's sermons.

HAN. No milk today whatever – we are closed.

IVOR. But my mouth's open – No Milk! I was hoping you would say that. No Milk! Vesta darling then it's beer.

VESTA. Beer indeed!

IVOR. No beer in pints!

(A FAINT BOOING IS HEARD.)

43.

CIN. Here's John and Mary coming from the station Mrs. Williams.

IVOR. Cinders! Hiding yourself away as ever. Haven't you got a kiss –

VESTA. (QUICKLY) Ivor! Laddie –

IVOR. I beg your pardon – Welcome – for a real Welsh boy in Scottish shorts?
(SEARCHING FOR LETTER.)

CIN. Yes indeed. (SMILES) We are also all so very proud of you –

VESTA. Don't turn his silly head dear. I wish he'd get into trousers and give me a little peace.

IVOR. (LOOKING UP – GRINS) Eh? Got it! Here's a letter for you Cinders. They asked me at the letter-office if I'd bring it up for you.

HAN. (SHARPLY) A letter for you Cinderella. Who on earth would write to you.

CIN. Not many folk on earth Mrs. Williams – (SHE SMILES) – Perhaps someone has given me a thought in Heaven.

IVOR. Aren't you going to open it?

CIN. (SADLY) Perhaps it doesn't matter. The postmark is London East and that's very much on earth. (SHE PUTS IT IN HER POCKET.)

HAN. (HEARING BOOING OFF) What's that? (SHARPLY.)

CIN. Some of the men from the colliery are not taking too kindly to John. Hardly the welcome you expected for the bride and bridegroom Mrs. Williams. –

(ANGRY CRIES NEARER. CIN. EXITS INTO DAIRY R.)

HAN. They dare! They dare! My boy on the Council! My boy who got the organ for the chapel! The sugar and potatoes for the market –

IVOR. And bunches of "Bradburys" for his pocket!

(JOHN AND MARY (DRESSED FOR JOURNEY) ENTER R.C. HE IS VERY ANGRY – MARY COMES DOWN R. SILENT AND ASHAMED.)

HAN. My boy!

44.

JOHN. Don't heed them Mother! I'll break those low beasts in – as I've tamed Ross's lambs. (TO VESTA) A good day to you Miss Vesta – have you no welcome for my bride? (MARY LOOKS AT VESTA – SMILING SADLY) Back again Young Ivor – you're lucky with your leave.

IVOR. Oh! YES! I'm extra lucky I am thinking – lucky I'm alive! You haven't done so dusty Mr. Homebird – they tell me you have cornered everything down here – potatoes – sugar tea and milk – Captain Ross's sweetheart and nearly all the money.

JOHN. (ANGRILY) My business.

IVOR. Yes – and it's been my business to fight for chaps like you.

JOHN. And a precious lot you've got for all your fighting.

IVOR. I've got peace of conscience – self-satisfaction in the daytime Master Williams – and healthy sleep at nights.

VESTA. Sweetness you are getting ratty – darling – I think you'd better lubricate your throat. Good day Mary. We shall be seeing you again.

MARY. (QUIETLY) Good day Vesta. (NOT LOOKING AT HER.)

VESTA. I'm awful sorry for you Mary.

MARY. Sorry? (TO JOHN WHO IS TALKING ASIDE TO HIS MOTHER – BITTERLY) Sorry for me! Do you hear that John.

IVOR. (TO JOHN) And if you feel like putting your hand down – I know a score of real deserving cases. Mothers without sons – children without fathers – Fine tonic for your conscience Mr. Profiteer when it becomes too hot.

(VESTA AND IVOR EXIT INTO THE INN. HANNAH CALLS OFF INTO DAIRY R.)

HAN. Cinderella! Don't stand mooning with that letter there whatever. Serve dinner there immediately. Set out the new glass and the silverware from Cardiff. Ah Mary you will appreciate the home that's waiting for you over there. Look right behind you – down the Valley – John has built that house for you – "The Nest

beside the Fall". My John has made a lady of you! Pictures! Oh! such pictures – including my enlargement and his father's William Williams – A grand piano up from London – GERMAN too! Carpets – rugs – fine silks –

MARY. Stop! Stop! I cannot bear much more.

45.

JOHN. You can! In time you'll grow to care for me. I've schemed – I've slaved – I've fooled – fought and beat my rivals – all – all – for you – (ADVANCING – SHE SHRINKS BACK) – my WIFE.

HAN. And to-night John brings his pretty bride to the home of his father! And your bedroom John and Mary! I've moved in some of your furniture – snowy sheets of delicate white linen – curtains of the finest Swiss Embroidered Lace – ah! You must see your bedroom John and Mary.

MARY. (QUIETLY) BEDROOMS Aunt Hannah.

HAN. Bedrooms? – and you a bride! What new fangled London manners! Never in my time ---

MARY. I have my private bedroom until I am a bride in heart as well as name. That is my definite understanding with your son and it will be respected or I shall leave your house. (EXITS R.)

HAN. (GASPING) John!! –

JOHN. (IRRITABLY) Well Well Mother well?

HAN. Fine linen – cut glass – silverplate and grand piano – but you haven't got her heart! Where is your Victory?

JOHN. (GOING R.) Where? Where? I ask myself. I have not got her heart, sometimes I think I have no God! But I have got my patience and my power and I will break her down.

(THEY EXIT R. INTO DAIRY. A PAUSE – AND CAPTAIN PETER ROSS ENTERS QUIETLY R.C. HE COMES DOWN TO TREE R.C. HE SITS ON SEAT SMILING AND IS TRACING "HER" NAME WITH HIS STICK IN THE DUST.)

PETER. Home! Is here a sweeter word than home? War! Awful War! Can man think of war when all here is – PEACE! She'll be waiting for me - ! The glory of that thought out THERE! Underneath the stars – surrounded by the vastness of Man's Tragic Mystery – War! I have thought of home and Mary and over my

whole being there has come a wondrous calm. And faint hearts wonder why men dare the Great Adventure? (HE LAUGHS OUTRIGHT.) Home and Mary waiting for me! Surely little men with little minds THEY are worth the price. (HE RISES.) I'll go inside and come suddenly behind her – (GOING R. STOPS.) I won't. No, she shall find me waiting for her here – here where I first found her – all those dark cruel months ago.

46.

(HE WALKS BACK TO TREE AND LIGHTS HIS PIPE. IVOR AND VESTA COME OUT FROM INN. IVOR SLIGHTLY INTOXICATED.)

VESTA. I'm ashamed of you! Disgusted!

IVOR. (IN AN INJURED TONE) Sweetness! I still maintain the blighter gave me bad measure! Imperial Pints! The first pint was a washout! The second was beyond all praise – the third – the fourth – and did I have a fifth? (SUDDENLY SEES PETER WHO IS SMILING.) Did I have a – have a – have a --- (HORRORSTRUCK HE STARES AT PETER AND THEN COMES UP TO THE SALUTE – HIS KNEES KNOCKING TOGETHER.) Vesta! (RETREATING) I had fifty-fifths! I'm seeing things! Visioning visions – there's a barrage of bogies over there. (VESTA SEES PETER, SCREAMS) You see them Vesta! Good! Then you have had five quarts.

PETER. What's the matter Ivor? Too much Cadbury's Cocoa?

IVOR. He's speaking to me! Spirits! Spirits! I have never taken spirits – only "Over the Top" Rum!

PETER. You want a soda sonny. Well little girl – and what have you to say.

VESTA. I beg your pardon Mr. Apparition – but are you really alive?

PETER. Well - upon my soul! So that's the explanation! Alive! Well don't I look alive? (WITH MOCK SEVERITY) Private Hickman two paces forward. (LAUGHING) Now give me a Tonypandy grip!

(IVOR OBEYS AND AS HE SLOWLY REALISES PETER IS ALIVE – A BROAD GRIN STEALS OVER HIS FACE.)

IVOR. It's you Sir! Just YOU! Big-hearted breathing living YOU!

PETER. Absolutely! (LAUGHS) I'm the fellow!

(IVOR TURNS AWAY AND BRUSHES ASIDE HIS HAPPY TEARS.)

VESTA. Alive! Mr. Ross Alive – we heard –

47.

PETER. I've had a bad time Kiddy. Fritz caught me – locked me in his birdcage and he's none too generous with the seed. But he didn't have me long – since then kind hearts and skilful surgery have worked wonders – and now the best intelligence big-hearted little Welshman.

IVOR. You don't know! You haven't heard! Tell the Captain Vesta all about it.

VESTA. (ADVANCING TO DO SO – RETREATS) Ivor I'm surprised at you. I thought that you were brave.

IVOR. (ADVANCING.) You want the news sir! (A PAUSE.) – I have to play in a billiard handicap down at "Hearts of Oak".

VESTA. So we'll be going Mr. Ross – good afternoon.

PETER. You'll stop just where you are.

IVOR. So we'll be hopping Captain. My leave is up – my train has gone.

PETER. You needn't trouble much about your leave. There's wondrous rumours floating through the valleys – and if they're true – the world is going to be a brighter better world – so soon.

IVOR. A brighter world – when matches will be cheaper and we can chuck the sugar-cards. You'll excuse sir I'm sure – I promised mother I would whitewash our spare bedroom – someone else will tell you all the news sir – (SEIZES VESTA) We're going to the Band of Hope!

(THEY EXIT QUICKLY L.)

PETER. (LAUGHING) I've never seen him quite like that before. Shell shock or sherbet! – (TURNS WITH A LAUGH AS CINDERELLA ENTERS FROM THE DAIRY.) Hallo! Little Sweetheart for a second! (SHE STARES AT HIM AMAZED) What's the trouble Cindy-Lockjaw – or is your sweet mouth full of toffee! (SHE DOES NOT ANSWER) Hang it all! I know my mug's been

knocked about considerably but I thought the surgeon Johnnies had fixed me up alright. Aren't you pleased to see me little woman?

CIN. (A PAUSE) – No Mr. Ross I'm not.

PETER. Well – Anyhow- you're pretty candid. I begin to feel a little in the way – sort of butting in where I'm not wanted. Got the brokers in – in – THERE?

CIN. Not the brokers –Just the breaker – breaker of two human hearts.

48.

PETER. Sounds like Master Johnnie. Whose heart has he been breaking? (HE AVANCES TOWARDS DAIRY.)

CIN. (STOPPING HIM – DESPERATELY) – you are not going in.

PETER. Some sort of joke at this – There's nothing serious behind it –

CIN. I just want you to go away – right away – without a word to her or John –

PETER. Steady – steady Cindy. Let me get you correctly – You mean that she's been ill – IS very very ill. Is that why the others wouldn't tell me?

CIN. I mean I know you love her – as I love her – as I love you too. I'm not ashamed to say it! I rejoice – I glory in it – and you'll do just as I tell you Mr. Ross – You'll go away – just right away.

PETER. Wonderful little pal.

CIN. I knew a little boy like you in the lonely loveless school where Mrs. Williams found me. He was a generous noble unselfish little soul – that boy was my hero and my God! And when I left the school behind, I looked about me in my new narrow life to find his equal and his kind – and then you came – just as I pictured him – a man! Oh! Mr. Sweetheart for a second I want to save you such a lot of pain – please PLEASE go away.

PETER. I've only come to fetch her Cindy. I saw a new bright house some fellow's built out there on the hillside – and when my ship comes home I'm going to buy it for her. In the German prison I'd build up my fairy castles of her future home and I wrote to her about it.

CIN. You WROTE to her about it? When did you write?

PETER. Mostly every week – when I could get the letters out. John answered them – answered ALL of them – I'm remembering how he told me she was very ailing –

CIN. He told you – THAT! Go on –

PETER. He was doing all that could be done for Mary. A Specialist had seen her – her nerves had broken down – wrecked through her anxiety for me. She got better in a while – sent parcels to the prison – though she could not write.

CIN. She sent you nothing. He sent you the parcels and the lies.

PETER. Cindy I am very patient with you. I won't have she'd forgotten me. You mean John's been a real good fellow – sent me along the soft stuff and the comforts because he hadn't got the heart to tell me how very ill she'd been --? I'm sorry I've misjudged John. Cindy tell me all.

49.

CIN. Misjudged him! All! Yes I will tell you all! It's only just and right that you should know it. He lied and lied to you and her. He told you she was ailing – he told her you were DEAD! She believed it – we ALL believed it and – and then – and then – oh! No! No! Let me get away – (HE SEIZES HER ARM.)

PETER. Cindy – little pal –

CIN. I can't! I can't! It tears my heart to tell you! I feel the awful pain you MUST feel when the truth is told! If I thought that you could break her chains – and live! If I thought that you would strike him down – Kill him! Kill him! Wicked lying hypocrite – all – all that he deserves.

PETER. You've got to tell me now! I demand it! Why are you afraid! The terror in your eyes is pitiful – absurd. Tell me – am I afraid?

CIN. You won't go in? you're promising me you won't go in? You're too big – too fine – too proud to let that brute enjoy his triumph! Oh! --- I MUST TELL YOU ---

PETER. ----- Yes ----Yes -----(A TENSE PAUSE) ----- Yes!

CIN. He kept his word --- he's cheated – beaten you – with his money and his lies! He --- he married her a week ago!

(SHE SHRINKS AWAY FROM HIM AFRAID. PETER STANDS SPEECHLESS WITH SURPRISE.)

PETER. OH! ----- He MARRIED HER! Lies! Lies! Clumsy hellish fiction! She'd NEVER marry HIM! (HE LOOKS AT CIN. LAUGHS HARSHLY.) My little pal! And so you prove your sincerity! How dare you tell me such a wretched story?

CIN. She was the only one who ever spoke a gentle word to me in that heartless soulless home. I want to save her reason – I do not want her heart to break. Oh! You can do no good! She thinks you dead. Let her still believe it!

PETER. (ADVANCES – SHE CLINGS TO HIM) I'm going in. Take your hands away – I'm going in.

CIN. Not unless you're heartless – not unless – Pity! Pity!

(SHE UTTERS A GREAT CRY OF PAIN AND FALLS SOBBING AT HIS FEET. MARY HAS COME OUT OF DAIRY R.)

50.

MARY. Who is here -- ? (SEES PETER – SHE REGARDS HIM FEARFULLY – DOUBTFULLY) ----Peter!

(SHE SWAYS – RECOVERS. CIN. SHRINKS AWAY FROM PETER AND GOES TO MARY. SHE SPEAKS IN A FAR WAY VOICE)

He told me you were never coming back! Oh! My heart! --- I want to speak - my breath is short – I feel that I am stifled – (THEN GENTLY) Peter – I want to speak to you -

CIN. I have told him Mary.

MARY. That was right. Told him I have married John --?

PETER. She told me – that!

MARY. It's true dear – true. You won't look at me like that. They're not the gentle eyes I knew – I have never seen you look like that before and I am afraid! Afraid – for him the Church decrees I call husband! (PETER STEPS FORWARD – A TENSE HARD LOOK IS ON HIS FACE. MARY SCREAMS) Cinders – go to John – warn him of his danger. This man will kill him – and if he did - ? the killing would be just and right.

PETER. (TO CIN.) Stop there. There's no danger for him – yet! I hold him guilty for the lie – he'll have to defend it! Where is your defence. I had gone under over there! So he had convinced you – the soldier dead – but were the memories of me only worthless dust!

MARY. Memories – sleeping waking memories. Oh! Peter he has cheated us – yet what has he won.

PETER. What have I lost? That is decided by your vital explanation. Oh! I had such faith – such hopes – and you surrendered – married him so quickly –

MARY. Why?

PETER. Yes why?

MARY. Some day I will tell you that.

PETER. If you would save him from my violence – tell me now.

MARY. (BITTERLY) Where is your faith. Ask my neighbours for the story – tis idle gossip on the mountain side. I married John! Did he come empty-handed after his foul lie was told? Was his prosperity no passport to my vain – greedy soul? The house he had set out for me – nothing – just a sham? All the comforts he could pay for – luxuries –

51.

and power that I had never known. Ask the neighbours Peter! Ask the neighbours how this liar's sordid offerings tempted me!

PETER. Such things broke down the memories – you're lying now to save him from my fury –

MARY. I'm telling you the story that the neighbours tell and they hate me as they hate him when they tell it. If I had forgotten you – if all my memories of you had died – I'd send you away – believing such a story – but my stricken soul cries out for common justice and I'll tell you the truth –

PETER. What can you tell? Let me blot the whole thing out – I'll go away – tell me no more!

MARY. There is the truth!

PETER. The Truth?

MARY. If there is any truth on earth? I'll tell you the truth because my heart will break if you only heed the lie. I'll tell you what the neighbours cannot tell you. Your father's works were crumbling up – your blood – your sire stood on the edge of ruin. John knew it! Such priceless information! Oh! It was a clever card to play. The son was dead – YOU! I could not drag you from the soldier's tomb. Would I save the father? £2,000 were needed --- John could find £2,000 ---

PETER. His blood-guilty money! My father took his money.

MARY. Did your father know. The money came from me – invested in the works. It was the price! My price! The price John Williams paid to lead me to the House of God! I sold him the right to place his wedding ring upon my finger – no more! NO MORE! My body and my soul were not for sale.

(PETER TURNS AWAY ASHAMED. SHE COMES GENTLY TO HIS SIDE.)

Peter? (HE PRESSES HER HAND.)

CIN. He's coming out. (PETER SWINGS ROUND ANGRILY.)

MARY. No! - for my sake. If the neighbours think I broke my vows to you – let me keep my vows to him – and God.

(JOHN COMES OUT R. HE STARTS GUILTILY WHEN HE SEES PETER, THEN SMILES – TRYING TO BRAZEN IT OUT.)

52.

JOHN. Just a trip across the water Ross to look us up. We're flourishing. (MARY APPEALS SILENTLY TO PETER.)

PETER. (STERNLY) Come here! (JOHN STARTS.) I shan't soil my hands on you. Your skin is safe. Come here! (JOHN SLOWLY CROSSES TO C.)

JOHN. (WITH FORCED DEFIANCE) Well – Captain – well?

PETER. Is all well with you. Hold that spotless woman sacred. Never by word or deed forget – I hold her love – she only wears your ring.

JOHN. (PASSIONATELY) you dare! I'll use my power – my whip to-day! (TO MARY) There is your house until I find you better. Hear me and obey – go in!

PETER. Stop there Mary – you heard his lies – now hear my truth. I'm going to break you as you've broken her poor life and mine. I'll break your greedy pocket! Therein lies all that's complete and real in you – your god! Your heart! Your mind – your poor mean little soul!

JOHN. (LAUGHS) When the war is over Peter?

PETER. Yes John – if I'm spared.

(DISTANT EXCITED CRIES HEARD FROM THE VALLEY. HANNAH COMES OUT R.)

HAN. The men are out! They're surging up the mountain side – there's more trouble down at Ross's. (STARTS WHEN SHE SEES PETER.)

JOHN. You'll find your hands full Capt. Ross without bothering about me. (CHEERS DISTANT) War abroad and war at home!

(CHURCH BELLS ARE RINGING IN THE VALLEY.)

PETER. Are you sure of that? Church bells do not ring for war! Have you no imagination? Can't you see the writing on the wall – do you not see your profiteering race is nearly run?

53.

(IVOR AND VESTA RUSH ON EXCITEDLY R.C.)

IVOR. Captain! Captain! Have you heard the news! They're across the Rhine! Our flag is floating over German soil! Peace has been declared!

VESTA. Mary, Cinders – it's Peace! It's Peace!

MARY. Peace! – there is no peace on earth for me.

PETER. Peace out there! You're hearing it John Williams! The Best Peace won by the Best Blood! But it's war for you at home. I'm going to fight you here! You're going to disgorge your guilty thousands! I'm taking off my coat to it! I'll crush you. I'm going to fight you to the bitter end!

(LOUD CHEERS FROM THE MEN STREAMING UP FROM THE VALLEY – THE BELLS RING OUT.

=====

=====

ACT THREE

(AFTER THE WAR.)

SIX MONTHS LATER.

SCENE 1.

(A ROOM IN KENYON ROSS'S HOUSE. (SET IN 2.) A WELL-FURNISHED SEMI-OFFICE. EVENING. KENYON ROSS IS DISCOVERED SEATED AT TABLE DESK R.C. PHONE RINGS.)

KEN. Yes Evans?– I'm rather busy – a lady? Mrs. Williams – Mary Williams. Ask her to wait in the library a few moments. I am expecting a trunk call through from Middlesboro' – ring me directly it comes through. Don't go out – you have heard of no disturbances in the town. None! That's much more encouraging – in spite of the acute distress I think the men will quieten down and eventually see reason – unless as you say – that brute Williams gets at them again. (HE IS ABOUT TO HANG RECEIVER UP.) Mrs. Williams! Dear me – I had almost forgotten – kindly send her up.

(MUSIC. – HE ARRANGES A FEW PAPERS ON HIS DESK. BELL OFF L.)

Please come in.

(MARY WILLIAMS ENTERS L.)

MARY. It is very good of you to see me Mr. Ross.

KEN. It is very good of you to come. You are always welcome Mrs. Williams –

MARY. Mary –

KEN. Mary –

MARY. Thank you.

KEN. --- And --- Can I assist you --- ?

55.

MARY. My --- husband received your cheque for £2,000 this morning. I have brought it back.

KEN. With all appreciation of your kindly thought – I must decline to use it in our business.

MARY. Is that just to me or kind?

KEN. I am following the wishes of our board – I may also add the wishes of my son.

MARY. The money is my own. I have a right to invest it as I please.

KEN. We reserve our right to decline it. Frankly we have no desire to rob you. The works have been closed two months – it may be two, six – twelve months – two years perhaps before they reopen.

MARY. You are not serious Mr. Ross – think of the terrible distress down there in the valley – the women and the children starve.

KEN. Sincerely – I am very very sorry – in fairness to me – did they ever give a passing thought to me. The men have their Union - their Union's funds – and incidentally I may add their energetic leader.

MARY. John Williams – my husband.

KEN. A clever man – a great disturbing force I reluctantly acknowledge - -

MARY. And a force to fight and break. Where is your fighter? Have you no convincing case to put before the man -- ?

KEN. Our case was the honest work we offer. They made their terms – we refused them - and they refused our work.

MARY. Criminal! The men - the women and the children suffer – YOU suffer – if your works are closed –

KEN. I grant you that. The war ended six months ago. Many works have closed.

MARY. Your son supports your harsh decision?

KEN. My son is abroad. He has not been advised of the present situation.

MARY. If he were here. Oh! Mr. Ross – I'm speaking for the mothers and the little ones –

KEN. I'm speaking for my board of directors – men who have lost tens of thousands through the selfish conduct of the men during the late fearful war. We are not whining – we admit – accept our hiding --- and the works are closed.

MARY. So I fail – good night.

KEN. (RISING) Good night.

56.

MARY. (GOING L. – HESITATES) You know there is a meeting at the Institute to-night. (HE BOWS.) My husband is to address the men.

KEN. We have that information.

MARY. Oh! Have you no blood – no answer to his devilish eloquence?

KEN. The best. We've closed the works. (PHONE RINGS.) A moment Mrs. Williams --- Yes! (ANSWERING PHONE) The trunk call from Middlesboro'? No? (A LOOK OF ANNOYANCE) - Who? NO! NO! --- Wait Evans – Mary – your husband honours me – he is waiting below. (SHE STARTS.) Is it your wish he should know of your visit here?

MARY. A matter of indifference to me.

KEN. (ON PHONE) Evans – I will see John Williams – now. (TO MARY) you are a brave fine woman Mary Williams. I only wish your husband was worthy of his wife.

(JOHN WILLIAMS ENTERS L. VERY SURPRISED TO SEE MARY.)

JOHN. Mary! What are you doing here? I'm fighting him not you – I don't want your interference.

KEN. Do you wish to see me Mr. Williams – or have you come here for your wife. (THE TWO MEN FACE EACH OTHER. JOHN FALTERS.)

JOHN. I beg your pardon Mr. Ross. I – I didn't think you'd see me.

KEN. The unexpected generally occurs.

MARY. Shall I go?

JOHN. My business here with Ross is quickly settled. (TO KEN.) Well – things are bad for you – rotten for the workers and their women ---

KEN. And very good for you.

JOHN. I'm talking to the men to-night – you'll admit I hold them? There's mischief made enough and I want this strife to end. I've come to ask you – flatly, - where are you hiding your son?

KEN. (HOTLY) You dare to say this thing!

JOHN. He's been away a month or two – I'll give him credit that he's fighting me somewhere – fighting in the dark and I don't like it. There's rumours he was seen in Bristol yesterday – that he has sneaked home to-night - (PETER HAS ENTERED QUIETLY L.) That he is here -- ?

57.

PETER. Rumour tells no lie. (THEY START.) Sit down Mary – please.

JOHN. (SAVAGELY) I am glad that you have come.

PETER. (SMILES) Do you always look like that when you are “looking glad”?

JOHN. (BLUSTERING) I suppose you know I'm speaking at the Institute?

PETER. Yes. I'm worrying about it. I hope you won't be late.

JOHN. Don't get my blood up Peter Ross!

PETER. The great war couldn't do it John – so I'm sure I shan't succeed.

JOHN. I'm sick of all this trouble – I've made my money –

PETER. (QUIETLY) Through the war --

JOHN. And I want to enjoy it – to settle down in comfort – with my wife (MARY AND PETER EXCHANGE LOOKS – JOHN REGARDS THEM JEALOUSLY. TO KENYON ROSS) - I'll admit – here – you've always treated your men fairly – and – well, and I'll tell 'em this – my way – at the meeting – if he – (INDICATES PETER) throws up the fight against me and clears out.

PETER. Clear out? From here – to WHERE?

JOHN. From here --- to --- anywhere you like – that matters little to me so long as you're quick in the going – away from her – my wife.

PETER. Why?

JOHN. Because she loves you – Wanton! (MARY UTTERS A CRY.)

PETER. Cut that out!

JOHN. (HOTLY) I WILL speak! Loves you! Hates me the man who led her to the House of God. I have no peace – her tears are my tyranny – my defeat!

MARY. Oh! Have you no respect for me.

JOHN. I only hold her as a prisoner – what is my life?

PETER. The hollow wretched life – your own villainy has made it.

JOHN. And so you've got to go! Find residence elsewhere – and then you'll get your men – willing and contented. I want to bring these things about because I respect your father – a strong clever decent man – but I hate – his son.

PETER. What do you want from me – what undertaking.

JOHN. Just your word you won't come back.

58.

PETER. Oh! You value just my word?

JOHN. You're his son – a gentleman – you'll keep it – I can trust you.

PETER. You're not a gentleman – you're not a man. I don't trust you. I've come back to fight you as I promised – and you know I'll keep my word.

JOHN. (TO MARY, ROUGHLY) Get back home – I've got you and I'll hold you. Seek to see him any time or anyhow – (THEN TO PETER) – Seek to see my wife – and I'll swing for either of you.

PETER. I shall not try to see Mary – so long as you respect her – but when she wants me or my aid – you and all your trickery will not keep me from her side.

JOHN. (TO MARY) Home! You heard me!

PETER. You brute! You fool!

JOHN. And you understand I'm speaking at the meeting - ?

PETER. I should hurry Mr. Williams or you'll be late.

JOHN. To-night I'll have the men like blazing fire – and when they have broken you – pauperised you – smashed your works – your home – driven you out of the valley – penniless – disgraced --! Then I shall have her Peter Ross – then I shall demand from her a husband's rights. (HE POINTS ANGRILY L. MARY EXITS FOLLOWED BY JOHN.)

KEN. You're going to the Institute to oppose him?

PETER. Hot air! Let them have it to themselves.

KEN. Hot air that's scorching up our vitals! What have you done?

PETER. Much for little. I admit my failure as far as new capital is concerned – but new ideas! I've brought back baskets-full of gumption – push and go! There's no help – I tried Barlow's Bristol – Ainslie's Poplar – McKenzie's on the Clyde – Tom Yarrow's at Middlesboro' – called at Fordham in New York – no luck then hurried forward to Chicago. Same old story father from the bunch. Capital is nervous – capital is tight – they're closing down. (CHEERS HEARD OFF.)

KEN. The men are in the streets – hark! They’re cheering Williams! (A CRASH OF GLASS.)

PETER. (LAUGHS) Yes and pelting us! There goes our front windows.

(IVOR HICKMAN IN WORKING CLOTHES – HIS NOSE BLEEDING
AND

LOOKING VERY KNOCKED ABOUT ENTERS L.)

59.

IVOR. I beg your pardon gentlemen – they told me below I might come up.

PETER. (LAUGHING) Hallo Ivor! What’s happened to your searchlight?

IVOR. Had it rammed! The men know you are back sir – and if you don’t come and face ‘em – they’ll think you’re what I know you not to be – a coward.

PETER. I’ll come along – but what am I to tell them?

IVOR. Tell ‘em what you know about that monkey Williams – tell them of his profiteering villainy – I’ll tell them what you did for me in France! Tell ‘em if you can the works will open soon!

PETER. Open? Our works were never closed - ?

KEN. We closed two months ago.

PETER. What!!! We’ve closed down!

KEN. So our Board decided.

PETER. Our Board was mad! I came back to fight that fellow Williams – and you and your board of imbeciles have been fighting me behind my back. You’ve closed our gates! You’re breaking down the men! – heaping suffering and sorrow on their women and their little ones! Don’t you see you’ve placed a mighty weapon in their hands! They’ve got a grievance! A real just grievance – the lack of work – the poverty that bites into the soul and kills. They shut our gates two months ago! The fools – the fools – their policy was mad!

KEN. As you see things now. You were in France – you did not see how things were going on at home. Our lives were hell! We were never sure one day to the next the works would open – and the work would be done. Williams was the tyrant – he swayed the men this way – then the other – By Gad! He punished us. We were bullied – almost beaten – now we bully – now we break – now we punish them as they have punished us. You’re going to take the reins and let them feel your whip – we’ve closed down and we’ll close down for weeks – months – even years – until our power is felt and the punishment is complete.

PETER. Do you love your country? Do you want to see it totter – fall! Do you wish to see the great victory we have won for our great Empire thrown in the melting pot of bitter hate – to burn down to worthless dust and leave us to a heritage of tears.

KEN. I claim that we are just and right.

PETER. Just perhaps – not RIGHT! You are as great an enemy to the State as the loudest shrieking fanatic who howls for revenge and revolution! To-day there are no classes! There is only ONE. Duke's Son and Cook's Son – fought and bled out there in the

60.

trenches – and on our battlefronts class hatred died! ALL men were uplifted – we became REAL men!

KEN. (PROUDLY) My son! My son!

PETER. Are you going to kill the splendid flower of loyalty and love? Who are you going to punish? The workers! (FAINT MARCH MUSIC HEARD.) Who are the workers? I will tell you sir! Those Victorious Giants who fought for Empire Home and Justice! They are returning from across the seas in their tens of thousands every day. Would you punish them? Make way for the boys! Give them their jobs!

(THE TABLEAU OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE TRANSPORTS – AND THE WELCOME HOME OF THE OVER-SEAS SOLDIERS SHOWN. AS IT FADES AWAY PETER CONTINUES.)

Come Ivor – we fought side by side out there – if needs be so we'll fight our fight to-night. I'm going to the meeting – I'm going to tackle Williams with a creed that will ring true. Our works shall open in the morning – our gates flung wide for those fine lads who fought that we may live! Over our gates you shall help me raise our banner

– “Thrice welcome all loyal sons of Britain! Your prosperity is your right! Your future is our future! Our prosperity we will gladly share with you! “

Are you ready Ivor? Let us go. One great united effort all men of our glorious land. Man – Master alike – come toe the line! Get on with the work!

(THEY EXIT L. TOGETHER.)

61.

SCENE II. A ROOM IN JOHN WILLIAMS' HOME – THE SAME
EVENING.

A TYPICAL WELSH INTERIOR. WELL-FURNISHED. THE FAMILY
“ENLARGEMENTS” ON THE WALL – PIANO – BRIGHT FIREPLACE
ETC. RECESSED WINDOW AT BACK. SOME INDOOR PLANTS.
DOOR R. LEADING INTO MARY’S BEDROOM. FIREPLACE L.)

=====

(MARY DISCOVERED C. LOOKING OUT. CLOCK ON SHELF
STRIKES 8.

MARY. 8 O'clock! The lights of the Institute are twinkling in the valley. Great
crowds surge towards the doors. I hope there'll be no trouble. Not for John –
for him I do not fear – he is their king. Peter Ross may attend the meeting.
That is why he has come back. He may denounce my husband to that
angered throng - - and then --- and then - - (RAT-TAT AT STREET DOOR.
SHE STARTS NERVOUSLY.) My nerves are shattered – gone! (COMES
DOWN TO FIREPLACE L.) Aunt Hannah I suppose. (SINKS DOWN
WEARILY INTO CHAIR.) more lectures I suppose – more “Do be good to
John”.

(VESTA – NEATLY DRESSED – LOOKS INTO ROOM.)

VESTA. It's me! I hope I'm welcome chummy.

MARY. (STARTING UP – JOYFULLY) Welcome! Oh my dear! (KISSES HER) Take your coat off – Oh! I am so glad that you have come.

VESTA. Now don't fuss about – I've had my tea – and when I've given you the blues I'm going down to Ivor's mother.

MARY. Sit just there – tell me all the news. How's that great big Birmingham?

VESTA. Ugh!

MARY. Those lovely shops in New St.! Furs! Silks! Those high-legged boots – pianos – gramophones.

VESTA. All cut out my dear – they're selling fish and chips.

62.

MARY. (LAUGHING) Oh! do be serious!

VESTA. Serious! Things are serious! Didn't you think they would be for a while? All the nice things are stored away in dealers' stables – bought from many a sad and sorry home at a knock-out price. The soldier chaps are coming home – hoping to find a bank account and only finding the dealers in buying up the waste.

MARY. What does Master Ivor say to this?

VESTA. Thumbs up! I saw the black times coming. I knew we shouldn't always be making shells to blow up Germans – so I squeezed £200 into the bank for the boy who went out there to fight for me. (KNOCK AT STREET DOOR.)

MARY. That will be my Aunt Hannah.

VESTA. I've got to see a man about a frog! Do you mind if I hop off?

MARY. Vesta!

VESTA. I can't stand her sermons and I know she hates the sight of me.

(HANNAH WILLIAMS ENTERS C.)

HAN. AH! You're in Mary Williams. Nice smell from the kitchen. I'm so delighted that you are looking after John. I'm doing all my cooking now since that hussy Cinderella ran away.

MARY. She told you she was going.

HAN. Yes yes – but when she went – she RAN!

VESTA. I shouldn't wonder.

HAN. Hallo! Saucy-box it's you whatever! Round after that boy Ivor, I thought he had more sense.

VESTA. (SINGS) She loves me –yes she loves me –

HAN. Umph! I'm glad you're learning hymns. There'll be fine doing at the meeting - ! John will score. I hear young Ivor has gone up with Peter Ross in his motto car.

MARY. There'll be trouble Aunt – that's certain!

HAN. For that puppy Ross my dear – but not for John! (QUIET KNOCK AT DOOR.) Who's there?

63.

VESTA. Too quiet for the brokers and too late for the milk!

(MUSIC – THEY ALL LOOK TOWARDS THE DOOR L.C. AND CINDERELLA, VERY NICELY DRESSED, ENTERS.)

MARY. (AMAZED) Cinderella!

VESTA. (DITTO) Cinderella!

HAN. So you forward woman you've come back.

CIN. Not back to the dairy Mrs. Williams – I've come to see your niece.

HAN. My son's wife.

CIN. (GENTLY) I would rather say your niece.

HAN. I'll give an eye to my John's supper. That girl cannot be godly to get all those fine clothes. (SHE EXITS L. F.E.)

MARY. What is the miracle! Oh Cindy I have never seen you look quite as nice before.

CIN. Only a gown that money buys – my heart has never changed.

MARY. Dear little Cindy – no. I'm afraid we never knew your value.

CIN. Do you remember the letter Ivor brought me from the office just six months ago?

MARY. Yes dear I remember that.

CIN. Once – oh! so long ago - ! I told you of a kind good little manly boy – I knew in the orphan school. I never forgot him – I always thought he'd grow up to be a big courageous man just like Capt. Ross.

MARY. Oh Cindy! (SHE SIGHS.)

CIN. And do you know that little orphan boy grew up and kept me in his memory. He made good in this world – built up a great fortune – and like Peter Ross he went out to Flanders to fight for all the women and the little ones at home. And out there he died – leading on his men –

MARY. Brave little orphan boy!

CIN. He left behind a fortune - £30,000! He left that heap of money to a memory – to a sparrow – he left it all to me!

VESTA. Cindy!

64.

MARY. Oh! My dear!

CIN. I would rather have had the little boy who grew up to be a man.

MARY. All that money Cindy. You're a princess not a sparrow now. Oh what will you do?

CIN. I'm going to make a fine investment. I'm going to place it in the care of that fine man – so like the orphan boy who died. I'm going to place it in the firm of Ross & Co. – to build up the house and save the little town I've known as home.

MARY. (KNEELS AT HER FEET AND KISSES HER HANDS) Oh! Cindy there are angels on the earth.

CIN. If they'll only use the money – my heart will rejoice!

VESTA. You know how pleased I am dear little Cindy. I've had money left to me but it didn't turn out to be right. I'm going up to Ivor's mother – but we'll both look back. (AT DOOR C.) Till then you lumps of sweetness (GOES OUT – PUTS HER HEAD THROUGH DOOR) Goodbye-ee! (EXITS.)

CIN. He's back at Ross House – the big man whom we love?

MARY. Yes –

CIN. He wrote to me – just one brief kindly letter – (MARY LOOKS AWAY) Oh! You're not jealous of the sparrow? He called me his dear Little Sis!

MARY. To-night I've thought you will some day marry Peter.

CIN. I never think of that. I know I never shall. In God's own time – YOU will be his wife – then I shall ask to come and look upon your happiness – and then my little life will never know a cloud. (ANGRY CRIES HEARD.) What's that? (THE TWO GIRLS LISTEN. A PAUSE – CRIES NEARER.)

MARY. (DOWN L.) I know! I know! There's been trouble at the Institute! He's out there! Facing – fighting danger! He's battling with that angry crowd! (CRIES NEARER. MARY TOTTERS.)

CIN. (GOES UP TO WINDOW.) Oh! Mary! The street below is filled with angry men! He's there! The bullies! Oh! They beat him down – surround him!

MARY. Mercy! Mercy! Heaven!

CIN. We'll go – we must!

MARY. Brave little woman – yes! Helpless women! Oh! those awful cries – come Cindy – (LOUD KNOCKING AT DOOR C. THEY HALT.) Who's there? (A TENSE PAUSE. A RAPID KNOCK.) John!

65.

CIN. I did not see him there –

MARY. I must open it – the girl has gone – courage! Courage! Oh! My heart is almost still. (CIN. MAKES MOVEMENT TO OPEN DOOR.) Stop there! I will go! (SHE GOES UP.)

CIN. (DOWN R. HER HANDS CLUTCHED IN PRAYER.) Protect him from their anger.

MARY AND IVOR ENTER L.C. SUPPORTING PETER WHO STAGGERS IN BETWEEN THEM ALMOST UNCONSCIOUS. HE IS BLEEDING FREELY.)

IVOR. They're mad – the brutes! John Williams should hang for this night of evil!

CIN. He fought for them and they have done this thing!

IVOR. It's not our men – some bullies hired in Cardiff. He's left his mark upon the curs! How he thrashed them! Yet – if they find him here - ?

MARY. They shan't find him here. (TEARS KEY ON CORD ROUND HER NECK.) That door leads to my bedroom – take this key (TO CIN.) That room shall give him sanctuary until he is safe – until the doctor comes. Help me Ivor! Oh! Dear God! The blood! The blood! (LEADING PETER R. CINDY

GOES UP L.C.) Cindy – hold that door – (LOOKING BACK L.C.) Watch my little sister watch. (THEY RE-ENTER SHORTLY) The key! (TO CIN. SHE GIVES IT TO HER.)

IVOR. (GOING L.C.) The car's broke down. I'll slip down into the valley and bring the doctor back with me with all haste.

MARY. (WHO IS LOCKING THE DOOR R. LEADING TO HER BEDROOM) Yes good lad – quickly for his life – not out through the front door – slip out through the kitchen garden – (IVOR DISAPPEARS.) They'll never find him Cindy – (PUTS KEY DOWN HER BLOUSE) No man shall pass through there while I live. I hear Aunt Hannah coming here. You go to that door – (POINTS L.C. SHOUTS – LAUGHTER – CHEERS OFF. C.) They're here!

CIN. Oh! Yes! Father of the little sparrows save that brave man from their fury! (LOUD RAPID KNOCKING AT DOOR L.C.)

MARY. Open it – open it Cindy – in there he is safe. (CINDY OPENS DOOR. MARY STANDS AT BAY R.R. HANNAH ENTERS L. DOWN STAGE. JOHN WILLIAMS VERY EXCITED AND FLUSHED WITH DRINK ENTERS C.)

JOHN. Well! Well! Who's at home. (SEES CIN.) you slut! You pauper baggage! So you have come back? Where's my wife?

HAN. John! My John! You have been drinking boy! What devils have possessed you?

66.

JOHN. Drinking? So? Yes, once in a way! It's MY night my mother! My maddening night of triumph! I've got the men! I've beaten him. They've broken him! Where's Mary? I'm going to tame her Mother! I'll crush her spirit – as they've crushed out his life. (HE LAUGHS WILDLY) She's got the key! I'm going to drag it from her! This night is my Wedding Eve! ((MARY UTTERS A CRY OF HORROR)

Han. My boy has never drank before! John your mother speaks to you – tis madness!

JOHN. Madness! Oh I like that! (TURNS BRUTALLY TO CIN.) Get out hussy! Out! No-one to-night shall stand between a husband and his wife – Out! You hear girl – out!

CIN. (BOLDLY) Ehen she bids me go and not before.

JOHN. (SEES MARY FOR THE FIRST TIME) She? So you're there! – my modest bride – sentinel of the sacred door! (HE LURCHES TOWARDS HER) –

MARY. (RECOILING IN HORROR) Don't come near me! Cindy you will go bring Ivor – the neighbours – Kenyon Ross – tell them we have a drunken savage here! Oh! My heart! My brain!

JOHN. (RAISING HIS STICK TO CIN.) Get out! You got her orders!

CIN. Mary! Mary!

(UNDECIDED – SHE FALTERS. HE STRIKES HER WITH STICK – SHE FALLS.)

MARY. Oh! you evil coward!

JOHN. (STANDING IN C. OF STAGE WITH HIS STICK HALF RAISED -)I'll tame you yet! (TURNS TO HIS MOTHER WHO IS TREMBLING L.) You – mother – out! I'm your son – I give my orders! This is my house! Brick by brick - stone by stone I raised it – to hold her here – to lash her to her bitter bargain!

HAN. Oh! John! You're ill – you're crazed – beside yourself with drink you've never known and Passion – (HE SILENTLY POINTS TO DOOR R.)

MARY. Don't go ! you are his mother – he may heed you!

(HANNAH TURNS TO HIM IMPLOINGLY. HE RAISES HIS STICK AND POINTS TO DOOR. SHE EXITS TERROR-STRICKEN. JOHN FACES MARY TRIUMPHANTLY)

67.

JOHN. Well? (HE LAUGHS HARSHLY)

MARY. Let me out! Remember your sacred promise to me.

JOHN. I remember nothing – only that you are my wife. Come here!

MARY. (BOLDLY) I refuse!

JOHN. I want that key!

MARY. (STANDS PANTING WITH TERROR) You'll not get THAT! I've borne things to a breaking point – but never that! The thought of you – your mean low selfish scheming! I've looked around my home! My PRISON! Do you hear – my prison! Each luxury around me I count only as another prison bar. You bought me – bought me! With £2,000 – the money that I took from you to help the father of the man whom I shall always love!

JOHN. Hold that –

MARY. (DEFIANTLY) Always! Always! – and you want me! (SHE SHRIEKS OUT HER LOATHING.)

JOHN. I want you for that reason – I want you because you are the one bright spot in my black bartered soul – I paid the price!

MARY. Oh! Take it back! The money's here! (SHE HOLDS UP HIS CHEQUE) See I destroy it – let me out into the night – homeless – penniless but free! Free! Free! Blessed word! I don't want your house of make-believe – I want an open door! What is your home to me? I dread to hear your footsteps – What are my days! Waiting – waiting here in terror for your knocking at the door.

JOHN. You dare! You dare! (FIGHTING HIS GREAT PASSION)

Mary. And this last indignity! To come to me in drink – in such a state as this! I've battled with your puny mind – I've listened to the scornful stabs your neighbours struck at you – through me as you have passed along – I've suffered your caresses – but this!!!! - you're heaping up the terrors of my wasted martyrdom.

JOHN. The key! The key! You shan't find me selfish – I'll feed up your vanity with all money buys! I want you – You! For whom I've beggared my fellows – sold my soul – my conscience – (ADVANCING) Mary! Wife – my mate! (HE SEIZES HER – KISSES HER – AGAIN – AGAIN.)

(CIN. HAS RECOVERED – GAZES IN HORROR AT SCENE.)

68.

MARY. (SHE STRIKES HIS FACE WITH HER CLENCHED FISTS) you beast! You Bully! Oh! you coward!

JOHN. That blow ----!

MARY. Let --- me --- out! (SHE FACES HIM WITH BLAZING EYES.)

JOHN. I like you best with blazing eyes! Your fine teeth set – to listen to your panting breath – quick – short – through your defiance! You're worth the winning Mary – and you're WON! I've bent your stubborn spirit --- ! (A MOAN OF PAIN FROM MARY'S ROOM R. – HE STOPS – STARES AT THE DOOR) – Who's THERE?

MARY. There? There? (FENCING IT – GAINING TIME TO THINK.) you fool – who could be there -- ?(PETER HAS RECOVERD – FALLS HEAVILY AGAINST DOOR. CIN. MAKES A FRANTIC EFFORT TO REACH MARY.)

JOHN. Again! There – there – in the room that I'm denied! Someone there! Nothing now shall hold me – the key! I'll have it – even if I use my violence.

(HE STRUGGLES WITH HER FOR THE KEY WHICH IS IN HER HAND. HE SECURES IT – CIN. RAISES HERSELF UP BY THE TABLE AT BACK AND HURLS AN ORNAMENT THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOWS AT BACK. PETER IS BEATING FURIOUSLY AT DOOR R. JOHN ADVANCES TOWARDS MARY – HE IS C. – SHE IS R.C.)

JOHN. Now – there!

MARY. (IN DESPERATION) Peter! I need you! Come out!

JOHN. Peter!!! OH! -----!

(IN JEALOUS HORROR. HE RAISED HIS HAND TO STRIKE HER – PETER HAS SMASHED OPEN THE DOOR - - HE STAGGERS OUT TO C. – CONFRONTS JOHN.)

JOHN. You - - - - ! My wife -----!

PETER. You ----- dare! Don't speak! Not one word against her – I don't want to use my hands on you. You're not worth my strength – the outcome of my passion.

JOHN. You've ruined her good name – Oh! Stop! Can she defend it - ?

69.

PETER. OH ----- ! You'll anger me beyond control! Your wife! She's NOT your wife! You bribed your way into God's sacred House! That service was a mockery! A sham! With lies you crushed her opposition to your pleadings – with money you had wrung from starving children you gained her forced consent to your unholy union! Your wife!

JOHN. The law! I stand by that.

PETER. The law of man – there is the law of decency and truth – the law of God. And as I see that law – So I'll enforce it here! Take off his ring!

MARY. He has done that. As he dragged from me the key – his ring fell from my finger. (SHE POINTS TO THE CARPET BESIDE HIM.) His ring lies there.

PETER. And now she's going out of this. I'll take no denial! She bears your name – she need not suffer the cross your false union has created. She gave

me sanctuary from the violence of your bullies – I'm giving her protection from the violence of your broken word.

JOHN. You're not reckoning with your neighbours – what will they say of her – of you - ?

PETER. She need not falter before the seat of their crude judgment – stand your trial beside her – what can your neighbours say of you. To-night before our men I spared you – for her sake I did that. I did not tell them how you've fleeced and tricked them – built up your riches through their sorrow – gambled in their children's food – reaped profits heaped on profits from our soldiers' blood – will you face that charge -- ?

JOHN. I can – I will –

PETER. You can't! Tis truth! You have no heart to meet it! And while you raved of "Workers' Rights" - you knew no right! A creed of cant! You sweated girls and war-broken women in your match factory in a Gloucester village where no-one knew your name.

JOHN. Who told you this --?

PETER. I found you out! The truth comes bubbling to the surface! We're re-opening our works John in the morning. Our men will be sound – contented – prosperous – loyal! When the cancer of your evil teaching has been drawn from their lives.

JOHN. And so you beat and break me. You crush my hopes! You snatch away the phantom joy I schemed for – her!

PETER. She was never yours.

JOHN. You take her out – your mistress!

PETER. Take that back! Can you see no good because no good you've done! I offer her the open door – the right to live a good pure life away from you – no more.

70.

(HANNAH HAS ENTERED L.)

Do you call that sin? Answer that before she goes out from your house.

JOHN. I have no answer – (TURNS SEES HIS MOTHER) Mother!

HAN. (SHE HAS A NEWSPAPER IN HER HAND) There is much for you to face my son – the papers say that Morgan's Bank will not be opening in the morning

JOHN. (HE SNATCHES PAPER) What! They've failed --- ! My all! (HE STANDS DAZED. HE TURNS TO PETER AND LAUGHS HARSHLY) There! There! (HE HOLDS UP THE PAPER) – your victory is complete!

PETER. I see no victory there. From those ashes you can rise –

IVOR AND VESTA ENTER L.C.)

JOHN. Mother! The doctors told me that my heart was weak! I gloried in their verdict – it let me stay at home and fight my rival – make my way. (HE REELS SLIGHTLY) And now I want my heart to fight this crisis! --- It fails me when I need it! Where is my victory! (HE SINKS FOWN SLOWLY INTO CHAIR.)

(KENYON ROSS HAS ENTERED L.C.)

KEN. Peter my son – the men are coming up – they ask that you will meet them –

PETER. Yes Father - yes – just wait – (HOLDS UP HIS HAND)

JOHN. (FIGHTING FOR HIS BREATH – ENDEAVOURING TO RISE) Peter Ross – give me your hand – I want to know your strength – your manhood – I need it now – (PETER COMES DOWN TO HIS SIDE AND CLASPS HIS HAND.) Make it easier for me Peter – Mary – for my way is dark. - Mother! (SHE HOLDS HIS LEFT HAND.) --- There is Light.

(SINKS BACK PEACEFULLY. HANNAH PRESSES HIS HAND TO HER LIPS AND KNEELS BY HIS SIDE.)

71.

PETER. (GENTLY) Your son is – sleeping Mrs. Williams. His true soul has awakened – his victory is there. (HE GOES UP C. TURNS) Mary (SHE MAKES A SLIGHT MOVEMENT TOWARDS HIM) Father! Ivor - Cinders – little friends. I shall want your aid for the big task that lies before us. The Great War across the sea has not been fought in vain. Out from the Ashes of the Glorious Dead let the New World arise! (TO MARY) Your love will give me courage to go forward.

(THE LIGHTS ARE LOWERED AND THEY STAND ALONE. HE
ADVANCES TO THE FOOTLIGHTS.)

You can give me courage! Are we not brothers – sisters all! Women, Men of
British Blood. A Greater Britain is yours for the asking – See it does not slip
from your grasp. The Boys who fought for you – for me – will be returning
home across the waters. Let them find a real true peace awaiting here. Let us
toe the line and stand together! – that we may reap the Golden Harvest from
the ashes of the past. Masters – Men! True friends! Each fighting FOR the
other! Take off your coats – the work and its reward will be waiting. United let
us stand and Triumph! DELIVER THE GOODS!

(AN ILLUMINATED TABLEAU OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY
LIGHTS UP BEHIND HIM.)

(THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

=====