

# WEST WITH FITZWILLIAM

A Comedy  
In Three Acts

by

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## ACT I

### SCENE I

TIME: LATE SEPTEMBER, 1863  
PLACE: SOMEWHERE ON THE WESTERN PRAIRIES

THE STAGE IS BARE WITH A BACKDROP  
SUGGESTING THE WIDE AND DISTANT EXPANSE  
OF THE MIDWEST

TWO MEN WALK ON STAGE LEFT CARRYING PACKS  
AND DOUBLE-BARRELLED HUNTING GUNS. BOTH  
ARE DRESSED IN HIGH BOOTS, CORDUROY  
PANTS, AND LONG SHIRTS BUCKLED AT THE  
WAIST. THE LEADER, LORD JOHN WILLIAM  
FITZWILLIAM IS 27, SLENDER WITH SANDY  
HAIR, BLUE EYES AND A SCHOOL-BOYISH  
COMPLEXION. HE IS BARE-HEADED BUT WEARS A  
FINE KERCHIEF AROUND HIS NECK. WEARILY  
FOLLOWING IS PETE HENLEY. HE IS 29,  
DARKER AND SHORTER. HE SPORTS A RATHER  
ELEGANT HUNTING HAT WHICH HE TAKES OFF AS  
HE FLOPS DOWN MIDSTAGE LEANING AGAINST  
HIS PACK. JOHN SHADES HIS EYES TO STARE  
OFF INTO THE DISTANCE.

PETER

That's it. You carry on if you must.

JOHN

(turning) What's wrong, Peter?

PETER

Oh, don't mind me — carry on, John!

JOHN

(a trifle disappointed) Look, old chap —  
I do want to see  
what lies beyond that ridge...

REALIZING THAT PETER WILL NOT BUDGE  
JOHN RETURNS TO CENTRE STAGE AND  
REMOVES HIS PACK

But you're quite right —we must rest now  
and then.

HE SITS DOWN ON HIS PACK

PETER  
(after an uncomfortable pause) This is ridiculous, John.

JOHN  
Ridiculous?

PETER  
Don't stare in that vacant way. You know what I'm going to say.

JOHN  
But we've only strayed from our track, I'm positive of that.

PETER  
(wearily but firmly) We have not merely strayed from our track. We are lost. We are lost on a boundless, hostile desert.

JOHN  
(patiently) Prairie, Peter, prairie.

PETER  
We have no food. We have one blanket apiece, and winter is coming on. John, don't you understand? These are not the Scottish moors, John. This is western North America, and there is no one here — no one but savages who would prefer to see our bones withering in the sun rather than gathered together and walking along in the form of a couple of English gentlemen.

JOHN  
I think you're looking on the dark side, Peter, I really do. The Indians are basically friendly.

PETER  
Friendly! Last night they stole our horses — all but your beloved Bucephalus... (looking off) ... who I hope is well hobbled and not running away again. They would have stolen our packs, too, but for the fact that I woke up and chased them off. And for that impertinence one of them threw a hatchet at me. Had I not ducked you'd have had to disturb the graves of the splendid warriors you admire in order to find room for my corrupt body.

JOHN

(cheerfully he rises and exercises his arms) Can you really blame these Indians, Peter? After all, we're strangers on their land —and a serious threat to the buffalo which they depend upon for their survival. You should try to understand them.

PETER

I understand them only too well. The unfortunate thing is that you do not. And if the Indians fail to finish us off, we shall certainly starve to death. Oh, I know you'll blast away at these little prairie animals — but you won't hit one. (JOHN has now started to exercise his legs, lifting them high up against his chest) I can't understand it. You love hunting and yet you never manage to hit anything — whereas I hate hunting and it is I who bring in whatever game happens to blunder into our gunsights. But no more. Wishing to survive, the game has migrated far from here.

JOHN

(still exercising) What do you mean? I saw buffalo tracks this morning.

PETER

(gloomily) Old, old tracks — probably prehistoric. The woolly mammoth, John.

JOHN

(coming over to his pack to pick up his gun) I'm surprised at you, I really am. A little setback and you go into a black depression.

PETER

It's the responsibility which is wearing me down.

JOHN

(surprised) Responsibility!

PETER

I know —you regard yourself as the leader of this expedition. But the fact is — I "feel• responsible. Here you are — a lord of the realm, younger than me by two years, the great hope of your illustrious family...and look at us now.

JOHN

I am quite able to...

PETER

Oh, you're quite able to make the decisions, I know that — but there's an awesome gap between your splendid decisions and what humble reality requires. That's what's wearing me down. It's your incredible optimism in the face of the facts.

JOHN

(holding his rifle by the stock as the extension of one arm and sighting along it) If I may say so it is that spirit and that spirit alone which has made human progress possible.

PETER

(with great patience) You must listen, John, because I think our lives depend upon it. I have followed your lead, often against my better judgment, but on the whole I have done so without complaint — you must admit that ...

JOHN

(he breaks open his gun and examines the barrels by peering through them skyward) Very well, I'll admit that.

PETER

Then perhaps you'll admit that this is the third time we have been lost? Oh, yes, it is! The first time you led us into a marsh. I claimed we should skirt it. But no, you had seen a flock of birds landing there. So of course we must go after them. It took us fourteen hours to find our way out, John. And we didn't get a single goose. (JOHN lowers the gun, snaps it shut, and with a handkerchief proceeds to wipe off spots he thinks he perceives on the barrel) The second time we must follow a buffalo trail which I'm sure was weeks old, and then I had to go after you because night came on and you hadn't returned. Well, John, what happened? We spent another two days circling around the prairies looking for one another and shooting off our ammunition.

JOHN

(laughing) I'm afraid I have been a little headstrong, Peter. Do forgive me.

PETER

You actually enjoy it!

JOHN

I don't mind saying that I do, Peter! (He throws the gun to his right hand and swings it in a wide arc so that it comes to rest on his right shoulder) What does it matter if one goes astray in a country like this. It's a boundless wilderness as you say, but therein lies its magic. (strides to stage right, looks far off) It's an empire in itself, a savage, untamed empire, and the farther I get into it the more exhilarated I become. (strides to stage left and peers in that direction) It's as if I were throwing off all the worn out, suffocating clothing of... of stuffy, overcivilized generations...and I can feel the wind and the sun on me for the first time. It's an elemental sort of purity. Don't you feel it?

PETER

(in deep melancholy) I feel tired, hungry, and rather desperate.

JOHN

(returns to center front and looks out) But isn't it worth it, Peter? We may be having the odd difficulty, it's true, but soon we shall be where the gold is plentiful —where I've heard it can be scooped up from the creeks — beyond the Rocky Mountains. Then I shall add to my family fortunes and you will pay your various debts — (turning to Peter) — which is why you left England, is it not? Oh yes — in the hope of restoring your wealth and resuming your life of total irresponsibility. Am I mistaken? Isn't that why you came with me?

PETER

I don't know why I came with you. I really don't know anymore. I must have been a little mad.

JOHN

Come, come, Peter. Where's your old gambling spirit? At least you always had that.

PETER

My gambling spirit, as you call it, has faded away in the face of the massive odds against our continuing survival. But

you won't understand that. (He rises slowly and begins to search in his pack) Here I am on the most perilous journey in the western world with a dreamer. I thought I might have had some pemmican left... (he stops searching)... somewhere...

JOHN

(comes over to Peter, concerned) Come now, Peter — have I ever failed you? Have I? What do you really want me to do?

PETER

(with a trace of hope) Do? I want us to go back, John. I want us to return to some outpost of human society where we have a chance of surviving the winter. Is that asking too much? Will you do that?... (JOHN turns away from him, clearly not wanting to listen) John, listen to me — I don't blame you for what you are — brought up in the lap of privilege and taught the highest ideals known to man even at your father's knee — and then sent off to school to be pumped full of heroic stuff from Homer and Virgil. Oh, I understand your idealism very well, and I admire you for it, more than I can say, sometimes even beyond my better judgement. It's just that I don't like death by starvation — for either of us, John — even when it is hurried on by freezing temperatures. Nor do I want to be carved up by the scalping knives of your friendly Indians. (He holds up his hand to stop John's objection) Oh, I know they're only giving vent to their feelings of injustice, and they have a perfect right to do that, of course they do.

But haven't I some right to value my own life — uninspiring as it may be, fraught with folly as it has been? We've already gone half way across North America — far beyond the reach of civilized man. It's simply a magnificent accomplishment, and it's all yours — but enough is enough, John. What did the Greeks call it? — letting success go to your head? — hubris, that was it. And look what happened to all those lovely people who committed hubris? They came to horrible ends.

May we stop here for the night, John, and then head back the way we came? At least we know which way is East.

JOHN

(after a brief struggle with himself) Ah well, you're tired, I can see that. Yes, we'll camp right here, even if there is no water nearby. Not another step.

HE HAS CRADLED HIS GUN AND SHADES HIS EYES, LOOKING OFF STAGE RIGHT. PETER, SITTING ON HIS PACK, LOOKS AT HIM

PETER

What are you looking at now? There's nothing out there.

JOHN

There's a patch of high grass about a half mile off. Might be a prairie hen there. You said you were starving.

PETER

Please don't go, John. Forget about food. I really can't spend the night looking for you — I'm not up to it.

JOHN

You will feel better when I return with a hen. (cradles his gun)

PETER

But you won't. When you get there you'll find no hen, and you'll see another clump of grass another half mile off and you'll go on to it, and so on, until I have to search for you, shooting my gun off half the night. And then we'll both be lost, God help us.

JOHN

Now, now, Peter, we're not really lost. We know which way is West, don't we?

JOHN EXITS RIGHT. PETER SITS HUMPED AGAINST HIS PACK, STARING DESPONDENTLY AT THE GROUND.

PETER

working out a letter he will never write)  
Dear Mother....I hope you are well...Knowing you I cannot imagine your being other than well, in fact in splendid form. I suppose I should have told you that I left dear old England about four months ago for a hunting

holiday in North America — the western plains actually —untravalled by civilized men until now. At least I don't see any of your average Chelsea set around here...

AS HE SPEAKS, LOUIS MACDONALD O'FLYNN WARILY APPROACHES FROM STAGE LEFT. HE'S FRENCH-IRISH-SCOT, A HUGE MAN, BLACK-BEARDED AND DRESSED IN EXTRAVAGANTLY BEADED BROADCLOTH AND MOCCASINS. HE CRADLES A RATHER ANCIENT FIREARM AND WEARS A LARGE HUNTING KNIFE IN A TASSELLED LEATHER SCABBARD. AS HE COMES CLOSER TO PETER'S BACK HE MOVES HIS FIREARM TO THE READY POSITION.

PETER

(continuing) You always told me that I would come to a bad end and you were absolutely right on. At least I have never disappointed you, but resolutely lived up to your gloomiest predictions — I have squandered my inheritance in bizarre ventures, borrowed heavily from all your closest friends, and even dipped into the trust fund set up to support some of our tenants in their declining years. I doubt that I shall be returning to the old sod. At least, dear Mater, as I come to the bad end you predicted for me, you'll be happy to know that I'm with a Lord of the Realm —yes, Lord John William Fitzwilliam —a member of our oldest aristocracy....Isn't that wonderful? ..Doesn't that gladden your bleak heart?...

LOUIS

(now within a few feet of Peter) Hey!

PETER STARTS UP AS THOUGH SHOT. THEY STARE AT ONE ANOTHER

PETER

(recovering) How do you do...

LOUIS CONTINUES TO SURVEY PETER INTENTLY, WITHOUT MOVING

PETER

May I introduce myself? Peter Henley, of Brixton, England. And my companion...(pointing at Peter's pack) ... he's off hunting, you know ... is Lord John William Fitzwilliam. (a long



pause, with no response from Louis) We've been travelling west, you see.

LOUIS  
Got whiskey? ... Rum?

PETER  
Whiskey? Rum? (not certain what to make of the question) Well, no, though that would be rather nice, wouldn't it? No. But, more to the point is that we're without any food. We're cleaned out. Utterly.

LOUIS CLEARLY DECIDES THAT PETER IS HARMLESS AND TURNS BACK TO MAKE A BECKONING GESTURE

LOUIS  
Hey! Bring dose packs! We stay here!

PETER  
(a little dismayed) Well, now ...as for that...I'm not sure we....

IGNORING HIM, LOUIS SITS CROSSLEGGED ON THE GROUND. HE TAKES OUT A STUB OF A PIPE AND PROCEEDS TO FILL IT AS TWO WOMEN COME ONSTAGE CARRYING ENORMOUS PACKS. THE FIRST IS LOUIS' WIFE, MARY-MARIE, A HALF-BREED WOMAN WEIGHING AT LEAST 200 POUNDS. THE OTHER IS THEIR DAUGHTER, ROSANNE, ROSE FOR SHORT, A GIRL OF NINETEEN, SLIM, DARK-EYED AND SULTRY. THE WOMEN SET DOWN THEIR PACKS AND BUSY THEMSELVES PULLING OUT VARIOUS ARTICLES. LOUIS, PUFFING ON HIS PIPE, WATCHES PETER.

LOUIS  
What you do here? Dis one hell of place to be. Dere's a stream five mile on. You go dere.

PETER  
Well, that is good news. Our canteens are almost empty.

LOUIS  
You want to go dere?

PETER  
As you say, that might...

LOUIS  
Hoho! No, no! You stay here, Mac, or turn fas' an' run like hell de oder way!

PETER  
(utterly confused) Eh? What?

LOUIS  
Goddamn trouble dere goin' to be, dat's  
what!

MARY-MARIE  
(nodding her head emphatically and  
giggling so that her whole frame shakes)  
Injins! Hehehe! All go drunk. All hell  
cut loose. Heehee. Dey start shootin'  
'fore long.

LOUIS  
Injins! Dey camp at de stream, Mac, and  
dey raisin' bloody hell. It aint safe for  
man or bitch. Dey got rum.

PETER  
Oh, I see!

LOUIS  
Oderwise, you tink we camp out here?  
(lighting his pipe again)

PETER  
Well! We were lucky to stop when we did  
then. I may as well tell you — we're  
quite lost.

LOUIS  
Uh?

PETER  
Lost! We do not know where we are.

LOUIS AND MARY-MARIE BEGIN TO LAUGH,  
CLUTCHING THEIR SIDES. PETER LOOKS AT  
THEM ASTONISHED. AFTER A BIT THEY SUBSIDE  
AND LOUIS RELIGHTS HIS PIPE.

PETER  
(ANNOYED) Your sense of humour somewhat  
escapes me.

LOUIS  
(BETWEEN PUFFS) Yer not lost. Yer on  
buffalo trail.

PETER  
Trail? (looking around) I can't see any  
trail.

LOUIS AND MARY-MARIE AGAIN CLUTCH THEIR  
SIDES IN HELPLESS LAUGHTER

PETER

(deeply offended) I'm glad to afford you so much entertainment. But perhaps you would not be so ready to laugh if you were Englishmen like us, and strangers to this country.

LOUIS

Dat trail, you can't miss her. She is a mile wide. You settin' in de middle of it. Look — nodding but buffalo poop all around. See?

PETER

(still miffed) I'm afraid I'm not a student of buffalo dung. The sight of it merely reminds me of the large meaty animal which produced it and the fact that I have subsisted on very small birds for a long time.

LOUIS

Rosie! Get up an' get dis gennilmun some grub. Now up!

ROSE

Goddamn.

HALF LYING ON HER PACK, HER LEGS THROWN UP CARELESSLY ON HER MOTHER'S PACK, ROSE SLOWLY STIRS HERSELF, ROLLING OVER TO RUMMAGE FOR FOOD

PETER

(rising from his pack) I'd better give John a shout. He won't want to miss this. (cupping his hands) John! Oh John! Dashed nuisance! He's gone out of earshot.

PETER WANDERS OFF RIGHT CALLING

LOUIS

(after a moment as PETER'S voice dims) Quick!

LOUIS JUMPS UP AND RUMMAGES THROUGH PETER'S PACK. MARY-MARIE MOVES WITH SURPRISING SPEED TO JOHN'S PACK AND SHE COMES UP WITH A BAG OF COIN. LOUIS GRABS IT FROM HER WITH AN "AHAH" AND POURS A FEW COINS IN HIS HAND. IN THE MEANTIME, PETER HAS BEEN CALLING OFF RIGHT AND THERE'S A DISTANT ANSWERING "HALLOO", THEN SILENCE. LOOKING UP, STARTLED, LOUIS SHOVES THE BAG OF COIN BACK IN JOHN'S BAG.

PETER ENTERS RIGHT.

PETER

He's coming at last. (seeing Louis at John's bag, he stops) I say — look here! What are you doing in that pack?

LOUIS

I trust no one, Mister. I tought you was sellin' de rum. Dat's what sends dose Injins crazy — rum. Dey're tradin' it up an' down dis unholy country, see? 'Tis a bad ting. But don' you worry, Mister. I trust you now. But bad traders come here, and we got to be careful.

PETER

(half reassured) Oh, I see ...

LOUIS

(generously) Come on now, sit down now...Dere's grub aint dere, Mary-Marie? Rose — bring dat grub for de gennilmun. Quick now!

ROSE HANDS PETER SOME PEMMICAN WHICH, AFTER A MOMENT OF DISTASTE, HE CHEWS HUNGRILY.

LOUIS

'Tis a hard blessed life for an oldtimer like me born an' brought up in de nort' wes'. My moder she was French, my fader he was Scotch an' Irish. Dat's me — Louis MacDonald O'Flynn. No country to call his own. Livin' by his sweat an' his wits — you don' get to trust no one, leas' of all white men in dis unholy land. It's fight and cheat an' go hungry an' wonder which winter you die in. A man has to fare for hisself, see — an' de good God help de man who don'. (As an afterthought, he furtively crosses himself) You like the grub, hey ?

PETER

(chewing for a long interval before swallowing with difficulty) Yes, yes, very good indeed. It is pemmican, isn't it?

LOUIS

It aint much but de best we got. It has de guts in it anyway. Rose, get off de gennilmun's pack. You wanna kick in de rump?

(ROSE moves off angrily, returning to her own pack where she flops down) ...An' do I get tanks from my goddamn family? Not dis side of hell! —wid dere mouts hangin'open —grab —grab —grab —goddamn...(he spits on the ground)

JOHN  
(off right) Hulloooo!

PETER  
(standing up, shouting) This way! This way!

LOUIS  
I tell you dis much, Mister —you got to know de tricks to stay alive. I, Louis Macdonald O'Flynn, I stay alive. You need me, Mister, to stay alive in dis unholy land.

JOHN ENTERS RIGHT. HE CARRIES A SMALL BEDRAGGLED BIRD FOR THE POT.

PETER  
(almost cheerily) Hullo, John!

JOHN  
(looking around) Well, well...

PETER  
Yes, John —these good people arrived while you were away shooting ...(he looks uncertainly at the small bird)...our supper. (turning to Louis) Louis, I'd like you to meeet Lord John William Fitzwilliam.

LOUIS  
(quite formally, standing up and offering his hand) Louis Macdonald O'Flynn — your Lordships — at your service!

JOHN  
(changing the bird to his left hand and shaking Louis' hand) How do you do.

PETER  
And his wife —uh — Mary—Marie...

JOHN  
How do you do.

PETER TURNS TO ROSE WHO, HOWEVER, RECLINES ON HER PACK STUDYING HERSELF IN A TINY MIRROR.

LOUIS  
Goddamn, Rose, get up! Say how do to his lordships.

ROSE SLOWLY UNCOILS AND STANDS BEFORE HIM, NOT LOOKING AT HIM, FINGERING HER HAIR.

ROSE  
How do, lordchips.

JOHN  
(with an effort, shaking away the effect of her) My name is John. Let's not mind the formalities, Louis. We're in a land where all men are equal —aren't we?

LOUIS  
Dat's where we are, your lordships. Rose, get de lordships some grub. (she pays no attention) Quick! (she makes a ferocious expression, and he kicks at her, to John's dismay) Huh!

PETER  
What about women, John —are they equal, too?

ROSE SULKILY GETS PEMMICAN FROM HER BAG, WHICH SHE HANDS TO JOHN WHO DROPS THE SMALL BIRD AT HIS FEET AND BEGINS TO EAT THE PEMMICAN HUNGRILY.

PETER  
Louis has arrived at a very propitious moment, don't you think, John? That swallow you brought in wouldn't have gone very far, would it?

JOHN  
That was not a swallow, Peter. You're travelling west, Louis?

LOUIS  
(lighting his pipe) Haha! Well, your lordships, we move about. Dis is bad country.

PETER  
He was telling me, John, that there are dangerous Indians nearby. They're drunk. Doing the war dance.

LOUIS  
Dey go off dere heads, lordships — shoot up de whole bloody country.

MARY-MARIE  
Hehehe! Goddamn Injins.

PETER  
Louis knows where we are, John — he'll show us the quick route back to civilization. Isn't that right, Louis?

LOUIS  
East, Sout'— or straight down to Hell — Louis knows de way.

MARY-MARIE SHAKES WITH SILENT LAUGHTER.  
ROSE GETS MORE PEMMICAN FOR JOHN.

JOHN  
I see. (takes pemmican from Rose) Thank you ...Rose. (to Louis) And do you know the way west?

LOUIS  
I know nort', sout', east, west — anywhere. Louis Macdonald O,Flynn is de only scout who can find you anywhere in dis unholy country.

JOHN  
Do you know the Pass through the Rocky Mountains?

LOUIS  
I know two Passes t'rough de Rockies — Kanaki Pass and Tete Juan Pass. I know dem all.

JOHN  
This is good news. Peter, I think we've found our man, don't you? He could take us all the way to the goldfields.

PETER  
Now hold on a minute, John. Louis will take us east. Back where we came from.

JOHN  
(ignoring him) Smashing, Louis!

PETER  
John, now look...Louis, old chap, you must tell Lord Fitzwilliam — such a journey is dangerous, in fact impossible at this time of the year — isn't it, Louis?

LOUIS  
Hard country alright. You need mos' best scout like me. You

go to gold diggins, heh?

JOHN  
(breezily) We wouldn't mind a bit of a look at this gold they talk about.

LOUIS  
(slyly) You wan' gold, your Lordships?

JOHN  
(winking at Peter) Oh, we don't need the gold, old chap. We thought that we might just buy an estate out there and settle Peter on it. Eh, Peter? Wouldn't that be splendid? You could set up your own gambling palace.

PETER  
(not amused) John, you cannot do this. Louis is prepared to take us back, not forward. It's utter madness to think of going on. Winter will be upon us and we shall have to go through hundreds and hundreds of miles of ..of unknown country...

JOHN  
But, Peter, it's not unknown. Louis knows it — don't you, Louis? With Louis' expert assistance we shall get through in no time — and well before the winter snows are upon us — eh, Louis?

LOUIS  
(pushing Rose, who continues to linger near John, back to her pack) Sure, — Louis will take you anywhere.

JOHN  
"Anywhere" is not quite it, Louis. We want to go to the gold fields beyond the Rockies. Can you take us there? Before winter sets in?

MARY-MARIE HUMS TO HERSELF AND SHAKES HER HEAD. ROSE SHARPENS A KNIFE LOVINGLY.

LOUIS  
Louis will take you ... where gold paves de bloody streets!

JOHN  
There you are, Peter. (PETER gestures hopelessly, turns away to notice the women) Louis, I think my terms will satisfy you.



LOUIS  
Is dat money, your Lordships?

JOHN  
Haha — that's what it is. What would you say to a shilling a day? (...thinking this is very generous)

LOUIS  
"Tis a long hard way, and I'm de only man in de whole bloody country would do it...

JOHN  
Well, Louis, yes or no.

LOUIS  
Sure! (He spits into the ground)  
Goddam...

MARY-MARIE SHAKES WITH SILENT LAUGHTER, ROSE SMILES AT PETER, TRYING THE EDGE OF HER KNIFE.

JOHN  
Good! This is a stroke of luck, Peter. We'll make it in no time — you shall see. Now, who's for turning in? I think we all are, eh? Tomorrow we'll go for a hunt, what say, Louis, and stock up some meat, eh? (Louis grunts assent) Dangerous Indians about? Then we must post a watch. Louis, you can take the first one. I'll go next. And Peter, you last, eh?

DURING THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE BETWEEN JOHN AND PETER THE TWO MEN TAKE OUT AND UNROLL THEIR BLANKETS ON THE GROUND. THEY REMOVE THEIR BOOTS, AND THRUST VARIOUS ITEMS INTO THEM — WATCHES, COMPASSES, FLINTS ETC — THEN DISROBE TO THEIR LONG UNDERWEAR AND CLIMB INTO THEIR BLANKETS. THE O'FLYNN'S WATCH THIS STRANGE PROCEDURE FASCINATED.

JOHN  
You'll feel better after a good night's sleep

PETER  
I have nothing more to say.

JOHN  
Quite impossible for you, Peter.

PETER  
John, I tell you you are in for a dismal brush with reality one of these days. The

shattering of your idyllic vision is in the books, John.

JOHN

Will you allow me to tell you something?

PETER

No. I'm not interested.

JOHN

It is true we are taking a great risk.

PETER

Well, one up for you!

JOHN

I mean how do we know if all the gold in the goldfields has not been snapped up. (PETER groans in response) But at least we have a goal. Knowing ones goal, Peter, and achieving it without compromising ones ideals — that is the secret of success. That is why we shall reach the goldfields.

JOHN HAS BEGUN TO DO PUSH-UPS BEFORE TURNING IN. PETER CLIMBS UNDER HIS BLANKET. LOUIS TAKES HIS POST STAGE LEFT AND LIGHTS HIS PIPE, LOOKING OFF. MARY-MARIE HUMMING A TUNE SETTLES HER HUGE BULK UNDER A BUFFALO ROBE. ROSE, LOOKING BACK NOW AND THEN TO SEE IF LOUIS IS WATCHING, BEGINS A SLOW WRIGGLE TOWARDS JOHN.

PETER

Well, John, I hope you never have to choose.

JOHN

Choose? Between what?

PETER

Between life and those ideals of yours.

JOHN

If one must live without ideals — it would be better not to live, I should think.

PETER

You're beyond help, John. Goodnight. (He rolls over away from John)

ROSE HAS NOW COME UP BESIDE JOHN WHILE HE COMPLETES HIS PUSH-UPS. HE SUDDENLY BECOMES AWARE OF HER AS SHE TRIES TO

SNUGGLE IN UNDER HIM. THEY ROLL CENTRE FRONT AS SHE TRIES TO HOLD HIM, AND HE TRIES TO DISENGAGE HIMSELF. THEN THEY ROLL BACK THE OTHER WAY.

JOHN

Rose?...What?... It's time for bed, you know....And we all need our sleep, don't we?....

ROSE

(mimicking him) ..I should t'ink...

JOHN

Rose ...this... I mean, we can't... the others... I mean ... it just won't do... will it? ...

ROSE

...won't do, won't do...

JOHN

...do go back, Rose.. I mean... what will your parents say?...I mean... Please, Rose ...do go back...oh...

AT LAST SHE STANDS UP, SMOOTHING HER HAIR, LOOKING DOWN AT HIM.

ROSE

(disdainfully) Lord Chips!

ROSE SAUNTERS BACK TO HER PLACE AND FLOPS DOWN.

FAR OFF WE HEAR THE DRUMS AND CHANTING AT THE INDIAN ENCAMPMENT.

LOUIS RISES, LISTENING, THEN PUTS OUT HIS PIPE. HE MOVES OVER TO CENTRE STAGE TO LOOK DOWN ON PETER AND JOHN.

FADE TO COMPLETE DARKNESS.

SCENE II

MARY-MARIE AND ROSE SIT ALONE IN THE CAMP. MARY-MARIE IS BEADING A MOCCASIN. ROSE IS SPRAWLED WITH HER HEAD ON A PACK, NOW AND THEN SWATTING AT A FLY.

MARY-MARIE

You lie aroun' all yer life?

ROSE

I'm t'inkin'.

MARY-MARIE

T'inkin'! I know what you t'inkin' I guess. Yah ...yah ... la la la .. swee-swee, Rosie. You wan' yerself a man, but I tell you not one of dem. Oh no.

ROSE

Yahhhh!

MARY-MARIE

You jus' dirty headen like me, Rose. Dey turn away from you -ugh — brown an' stinkin'—live like Injin. Nooooo. I know. I know. Dey wan' pink, pink, see — blue eyes, an' curly hair —wheee! Not you, Rose! Not you! You clot of dirt.

ROSE LEAPS UP, FURIOUS, AND KICKS A SPRAY OF DIRT ON MARY-MARIE, SCREAMING CURSES. MARY-MARIE HEAVES TO HER FEET, MOVES OVER AND SWINGS A MIGHTY RIGHT WHICH ROSE EASILY DUCKS. ROSE KICKS HER REAR AS SHE TURNS ALL THE WAY AROUND TO GRAB ROSE BY THE HAIR. THEY FALL TO THE GROUND CLAWING AT ONE ANOTHER.

LOUIS, CARRYING A HUGE HUNK OF MEAT DRIPPING BLOOD, STRIDES OVER CALMLY AND KICKS AT THE TWO WOMEN...

LOUIS

(kicking) Goddamn family. Goddamn.

ANGRILY THEY GET UP, STRAIGHTENING THEIR CLOTHES...

LOUIS

(dropping the meat at Mary-marie's feet)  
Cut it up! (to Rose) Come here! (she comes, grudgingly) Sit down! (She sits glumly on a pack)

HE SURVEYS THE TWO OF THEM, RUMINATING. THEN HE SPITS ON THE GROUND...

LOUIS

No more fightin' or I shoot you bot'!  
T'ank God dose gennilmun are huntin'!....  
We happy family, see!

HE SITS DOWN, TAKES OUT HIS PIPE, LIGHTS  
IT AND PUFFS...

ROSE

Whad we do wit' dem, Papa — we kill dem?

LOUIS

Sacre pig! Kill a lordships here? Don'  
you know Fort Carlton on'y fifty mile  
back dere ? You wan' de whole country  
after us? You got no brains? No. (he  
puffs his pipe ruminatively)

MARY-MARIE

Dey got gold. Dey got a bag of gold.

LOUIS

I know dey got gold! —You t'ink we kill  
'em now, eh? You know whad happen? When  
you kill a lordships dey send an army  
after you. A whole goddamn army. An' dey  
offer big reward. An' dey send out scouts  
here, dere —until dey get us. Den Louis  
strung up whoosh like dat! ...(he  
clutches his neck in a stranglehold)...  
You, too, Mama — lucky you got ass like  
elephant — you die quick.

MARY-MARIE

(quickly) We no kill 'em — jus' tak'  
gold — run to Californie.

LOUIS

Sacre maudit! You know whad happen when  
de lordships tell de bloody lawmen dat  
Louis Macdonald O'Flynn took dere bloody  
gold? A lordships' gold? —worse dan  
murder! Dose lawmen chase us to de end of  
de eart'—dat's Californie — an' over de  
goddamn edge.

ROSE

So? We go west wid' dem?

LOUIS

We go west — we go t'rou' de Rockies. No  
lawmen dere — noding — dere even de  
mosquitoe get lost. Den one night —  
sssst! (he makes a slitting notion across  
his throat)...Maybe in de Spring dey find

dem —what wolf leave for coyote — white bones!

MARY-MARIE

Maybe we get lost, ourself, and dey find our bones, too — just as white.

LOUIS

Louis will never get lost — not even in Hell. No. We go to Californie wit'de gold, an' I buy you a nice business — a whorehouse for English gennilmun!

MARY-MARIE BEGINS TO LAUGH BUT STOPS, RISING SLOWLY, HEARING THE DISTANT RUMBLE OF HOOVES, GROWING RAPIDLY LOUDER. LOUIS LEAPS TO HIS FEET...

MARY-MARIE

Bufflo! Bufflo!

MARY-MARIE RUNS AND CROUCHES BEHIND A PACK WHICH IS A QUARTER HER SIZE

LOUIS

Quick... (he tosses a gun to Rose who catches it deftly)... Shoot! Shoot!!

HE TAKES A GUN HIMSELF AND FIRES IT IN THE AIR, RELOADS AND FIRES AGAIN. ROSE, LIKEWISE.

A LONG FIGURE EMERGES AT STAGE LEFT RUNNING AT TOP SPEED.

HE FALLS OVER A PACK ALMOST LANDING ON TOP OF MARY-MARIE. HE LIES ON HIS BACK CLUTCHING HIS "WIDE-AWAKE" HAT, MOTIONLESS. ROSE AND LOUIS SHOOT OFF ANOTHER FEW ROUNDS AND THEN CROUCH WAITING UNTIL THE SOUND OF HOOVES FADES. LOUIS SLOWLY RISES STARING AT THE NEWCOMER, GUN READY. DOMINICK JENKINS GIVES A CRY OF TERROR WHEN HE OPENS HIS EYES TO PEER INTO THE FACE OF MARY-MARIE INCHES FROM HIS OWN FACE. HE SCRAMBLES BACK AGAINST A PACK.

FORMERLY IN ANGLICAN ORDERS, HE IS A TALL THIN MAN OF ABOUT 45 WITH A GAUNT LONG FACE AND HAIR ALMOST TO HIS SHOULDERS. HE WEARS A LONG BATTERED COAT OF CLERICAL CUT, CORDUROY TROUSERS, AND HIGH MOCCASINS, OR MUK-LUKS, TIED WITH STRING. HE HAS A SMALL PACK WITH HIM.

MARY-MARIE

Who you?

JENKINS  
Sanctus Maria! Barbarians!

AS LOUIS APPROACHES WITH GUN POINTED,  
JENKINS EDGES AWAY STILL IN A SITTING  
POSITION...

JENKINS  
Heh. Heh. Whatever ..whatever .. you may  
do... I am sure... you will not regret...  
sparing my life... a good life... though... it  
has had... have we not all had?... patchy  
moments... misfortune...

LOUIS  
(following Jenkins step by step, he  
reaches down and seizes him by the  
collar, jerking him to his feet) Who you?  
Whad you wan'?!)

JENKINS  
I...I...I...I...I...I...I...

GETTING NO OTHER RESPONSE, LOUIS HURLS  
JENKINS TO THE GROUND AND PICKS UP HIS  
PACK TO EXAMINE IT. PETER AND JOHN ENTER  
STAGE LEFT. THEY DO NOT AT FIRST NOTICE  
JENKINS WHO HAS COLLAPSED BEHIND A PACK.

JOHN  
Hullo, Louis! Did you get any of those  
buffalo?

LOUIS  
(Dropping Jenkins' pack and whirling  
around) Buffalo!

JOHN  
Why we scared up an entire herd. We fired  
at them but the blighters wouldn't fall.  
We must have wounded a few, eh, Peter?

PETER  
You must have, John.

JOHN  
They all ran off this way. I thought you  
might bring down one or two....(Louis  
shakes his head) ...Ah, pity .. (noticing  
Jenkins who has climbed to his feet) ..I  
say, who's this...?

JENKINS  
(approaching them with hand outstretched)  
Englishmen!

Christian gentlemen! (he pumps John's hand and then Peter's) ...Allow me to introduce myself —Dominick Jenkins, sirs, of Cambridge!

PETER

Peter Henley, sir, of Brixton, and this is Lord John William Fitzwilliam.

JENKINS

(ecstatic at meeting aristocracy) Lord John William Fitzwilliam! Why, milord, allow me, sir.. (he pumps John's hand again) I should have recognized you at once, bless me, but you must understand that the inroads of age and the extreme rigor of the moment rendered me speechless. Of course... (pumping his hand)... of course ... I remember your family well, milord!

JOHN

You remember my family, Sir?

JENKINS

If not in person, milord, certainly in every particular of their histories, milord, for it is my pleasure to have studied the lives of the English nobility in the minutest detail, and your family, I am delighted to say, I have always considered the finest representatives of our country aristocracy — the foundation of our ancient civilization. An honour, milord, an inestimable honour. (to Peter, with amiable condescension)... And you also, Mr. Henley. I am quite certain that his lordship was at Cambridge, and were you not also, Mr.Henley?

PETER

For a term I... I believe I was... As a matter of fact, Lord Fitzwilliam and I were roommates.

JENKINS

Ah, to think that on these desolate moors, so appallingly removed from the farthest reaches of civilization —three Cambridge gentlemen should meet — splendid augur of the world to come, even in our time... wouldn't you say so, milord?

JOHN

Well, sir, we are very pleased to meet you, indeed. May I ask...?



JENKINS

(raising his hand) Not another word, milord. You have every right to know whence came this lonely traveller named Dominique Jenkins, M.A. Ah me. A humble scholar, milord, I was in Carolina when the war between the States commenced. Dies irae et vindictae. They would have offered me a Captaincy in the Confederacy, but not for me the thrust of pike and bayonet. I am a scholar and find my adventure in the realm of thought. This being the case, I began to travel throughout the west hoping to establish a school of classical learning, but the inhabitants of these lands are all barbarians, milord, who scarcely speak the English language, nor know what culture means, and asked me, if you can believe it, what was the good of Greek and Latin!? You see? Without enlightenment, milord, or even concern for the life of the mind. And so you find me, milord, travelling west, hoping to reach some day the Pacific coast where, I have heard, a form of civilized society struggles to be born at a place called Fort Victoria.

PETER

And you would be its midwife, Mr. Jenkins?

JENKINS

(greatly abashed by the terminology) Well, sir, as to that, Mr. Henley, I would not presume... I mean ...It's not within my... the scope of my...Midwife, sir? I mean, really... All I want to do is teach a little Latin and Greek.

JOHN

But, sir, this amazes me! You have come this far alone?

JENKINS

Ah, milord, alone! Night falls upon one solitary within the heathen fold! Alone, milord, often near death. Often...It is an infinite desolation, milord...

PETER

I'm afraid milord will not agree with you, Mr. Jenkins...

JOHN

Mm. Well — well — welcome, Mr. Jenkins!  
You look hungry, and we are about to  
serve lunch, are we not, Louis? (LOUIS  
looks surprised, then brusquely gestures  
to MARY-MARIE to get some food, which she  
does) Will you join us, Mr. Jenkins?

JENKINS

Thank you so much, milord — no.

JOHN

No?

JENKINS

I happen to have a portion of what the  
natives call pemmican, milord. (reaching  
in his pack he finds a small portion.  
MARY-MARIE hands around other portions,  
and they all set to) I obtained it from  
the Indians, and do you know what they  
wanted in return, milord?

LOUIS

(chewing) Rum!

JENKINS

(looking astounded at Louis) Why ...  
yes...

JOHN

And what did you give the Indians, Mr.  
Jenkins, since I gather you had no rum.

JENKINS

Virgil. My only copy of the sacred poet.  
Otherwise, I should have starved, milord.

PETER

I thought that the things of the mind  
were all that mattered to you, Mr.  
Jenkins.

JENKINS

They are, Mr. Henley, but sadly, my mind  
is attached to my body, which contains a  
stomach...

PETER

...which must be replenished. And so the  
Indians were pleased with acquiring your  
sacred poet, Virgil?

JENKINS

Pleased, sir! One would have thought so,  
indeed. But do you know I had to run for  
my very life? (LOUIS and MARY-MARIE  
hardly contain their laughter) Ah,

milord, but it is an inhuman land, and one must expect inhuman things. Had I not happened upon you I'm afraid my bones would be numbered among those one sees scattered about. But that, in the midst of this desolation, I should come upon an English Lord — and also, of course, (condescendingly) Mr. Henley. It is a miracle sufficient to restore one's faith in something. Ah, milord, how delighted I shall be to share your company. And yours, Mr. Henley.

PETER

It's nothing, Mr. Jenkins.

JOHN

Join us, sir? Why, I had not thought — well, as to your joining us — I don't think —uh — we're really — I mean, what do you think, Peter?

PETER

(blandly) John, you know that I am perfectly willing to go along with any decision of yours.

JENKINS

(quickly) Then it's settled.

JOHN

But, Mr. Jenkins .. I mean .. you hadn't really intended to cross the Rocky Mountains alone, had you? All the way to the Pacific coast?

JENKINS

To open my school of classical learning I would travel to the moon, milord. I have travelled thus far alone — I would endure worse terrors... (he looks sideways fearfully at Louis, and shifts a little farther away).. by the grace of God. But tut, tut. That's nonsense. There is no God, of course. Merely a way of speaking, milord. You understand.

JOHN

As to God being merely a way of speaking, I don't think I would go quite that far...

ROSE HAS COME UP BESIDE HIM AND HE BECOMES IMMEDIATELY FLUSTERED BY HER PRESENCE

JENKINS

Then I shall not go that far, milord, I shall not!

ROSE

(very close to John) Papa... he want dat we start right away, your Lordchips...

JOHN

Yes...very good ... indeed.. jolly good..

ROSE

Huh?

ROSE BACKS AWAY SULLENLY FROM HIM AND EVERYONE PREPARES TO LEAVE, PICKING UP PACKS ETC. PETER, HOWEVER, MAKES NO MOVE. JENKINS SLIPS ON HIS PACK AND THEN STARES FROM ONE TO THE OTHER OF THE O'FLYNN'S IN SOME ALARM

JENKINS

(moving closer to John) One moment, milord —these...these people —they're not going with us also —are they, milord?

JOHN

The O'Flynn's, you mean? Why, of course. They're to guide us across the Rockies.

JENKINS

(pulling John somewhat aside) Milord, in all earnestness, I would implore you to revise your opinion. These people are extremely dangerous, milord. Why, just before you came along I was about to be assaulted by that man, Louis...

JOHN

(tolerantly) Now, now, Mr. Jenkins — I'm sure he didn't mean anything by it...

JENKINS

But milord, he did mean something most vehemently by it! With a club he meant it! Oh yes, milord, he was about to club me to death when you happened along. That man is a... a predator, milord!

JOHN

I think you do exaggerate just a little, don't you? It's true he's a rather, well, simple, straightforward sort. There's an honest roughness about him which is just the kind of rough, practical energy we shall be needing before long —and thanking God for it, too. (SHOUTING

ACROSS) Well, Louis! Are we on our way, then?

LOUIS

(coming up to glare at Jenkins, who shrinks away) We ready, your Lordships.

JOHN

Ah yes, Louis — I've invited Mr, Jenkins to come along with us. I'm sure he'll fit in very well.

LOUIS

(after a hard stare at Jenkins) Your lordships — he slow us down.

JOHN

(surprised to be questioned by a member of the lower class) I beg your pardon, Louis?

LOUIS

I say — don' tak' him! (seeing John's shock, he moderates his tone) Dis one no good for de hard road, your lordships. Look at him — a scare-crow dat talks!

JENKINS

(hopping with anger) You see, milord — you see!

JOHN

Louis, I am in charge of this expedition and Mr. Jenkins is coming with us. I shall thank you for showing him proper respect. (He moves to stage centre and raises his voice to address everyone)...

To my knowledge, what we are about to do has never been attempted by civilized man — crossing western North America on foot. It will be difficult, of course. I know that I can count on all of you to pull your full weight without complaining, but beyond helping ourselves we must make that little extra effort to help others. Cooperation is the key to our success. (While John is speaking ROSE is expertly rifling through Jenkins' pack, which is on his back, and handing the odd little object to MARY-MARIE. Jenkins notices nothing, being totally taken up with John's speech. Peter sees them, but makes no move.)

Without cooperation we have little chance of success. With cooperation we cannot

but succeed. So that while I am the leader of this expedition and will make all final decisions, we are really a single unit with each man pulling together. If I may say so I am looking forward to every moment of this, and I hope you are, too... Now, shall we be off?

JENKINS

(clapping, but no one joins him) Bravo, milord!

JOHN MOVES OFF STAGE RIGHT FOLLOWED BY LOUIS, THEN ROSE, AND MARY-MARIE SHUFFLING ALONG. PETER WITH A HOPELESS SHRUG THROWS HIS PACK ON HIS SHOULDER AND BEGINS TO MOVE OFF, THEN TURNS TO REGARD JENKINS WHO IS STANDING WITH TWO FINGERS AT HIS LIPS AS IF PREPARING TO BITE HIS NAILS.

PETER

Come on, Jenkins — I don't want to go either, but the choice is to go with them or turn back alone. I doubt that you ever had any intention of crossing the Rockies alone. You probably heard about our party passing through when you were back at Fort Carleton, and you decided to catch up with us. I mean how could you go wrong attached to a Lord of the Realm, and a Viscount to boot? (He takes a few paces, then turns back again) By the way, Jenkins, you may as well stop playing the scholar prince with me. You're a defrocked Anglican cleric, that's my guess. (Jenkins hops back in surprise) What went wrong, Jenkins? Fooling with the girls — or the choir boys? Eh? Oh, there's no use looking offended — not out here, my lad, among all these "scattered bones." Well, ta ta, Jenkins.

PETER EXITS RIGHT. JENKINS IS TRANSFIXED FOR A MOMENT, THEN GIVES A LITTLE JUMP AND HURRIES AFTER HIM.

JENKINS

(exiting right) Mr. Henley — wait for me!

## ACT II

SOMEWHERE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

### SCENE 1

EVERYONE BUT LOUIS SITS AROUND A CAMPFIRE AT DUSK. JENKINS SITS TO ONE SIDE READING THROUGH A PAIR OF BATTERED SPECTACLES. ROSE IS SPRAWLED NEAR PETER AND GIVES HIM ALL HER ATTENTION. MARY-MARIE SEWS A PATCH ON A MOCCASIN.

JOHN  
(poking the fire) I wonder where Louis is? He should be back by now.

PETER  
John, about Bucephalus — I really don't see what else we can do.

JOHN  
It's a very serious matter for me, Peter.

PETER  
It's a very serious matter for me, too — and for these others. Survival is a very serious matter, John.

JOHN  
We have not exhausted all of the alternatives, I'm sure.

PETER  
There is only one alternative, and that is starvation. What is more important — the life of a human or the life of a horse?

JOHN  
Well ...

PETER  
You hesitate, John?

JOHN  
I don't think the situation is quite that critical. I mean — we did find game the day before yesterday...

PETER  
The day before yesterday we shot a small, undernourished grouse, John —and we divided it into six. A small grouse divided into six gives about one ounce of meat per person, when you subtract the

innards, the feathers and the bones. Yet by your definition that grouse, so enfeebled that it could not even fly, amounted to what you call game and so you spared your horse for yet another day. It won't do, John. The time has come to spread the table cloth.

JOHN

To shoot my Bucephalus — so loyal, so willing ...

PETER

I feel almost as kindly toward that horse as you do —though horses have cost me a good deal in my time. But we have no choice, John — Bucephalus must be shot — the fate of that horse is to be eaten.

JOHN

Very well, Peter. If Louis does not bag something while he's out, we shall shoot the horse tonight.

PETER

Good for you, John. You're showing true leadership.

JOHN

Such a fine horse.

PETER

It's life is over, John.

JOHN

Never wavered ...never complained ...It's not that I'm sentimental towards horses, you understand. It's simply.. well, it's...

JENKINS

(looking up from his book) Not another word, milord —I know exactly what you mean. It's fellow feeling. If it were not for fellow feeling we would all be savages. (goes back to book)

PETER

If I do not eat something soon, Jenkins, I will be more savage than the most savage of savages. I could even turn to cannibalism. Even you will look good to me, Jenkins.

JENKINS

(not looking up) That's perfectly ridiculous. As you know, Mr. Henley,



there was never the case of an Englishman becoming a cannibal.

PETER

Ah, but there was, Jenkins. Not so long ago there was the case of four English sailors cast adrift in an open boat who finally turned on one of their number, killed him, and ate him — with relish.

JENKINS

(distastefully) But those were sailors, Mr. Henley. I am referring to English gentlemen.

PETER

I have never heard of a starving gentleman.

JENKINS

(looking up) Though his lordship, like you, is extremely hungry, yet he shrinks even from shooting his horse. That is gentlemanly — and certainly represents the highest ethical standards.

PETER

As a former clergyman of the Church of England, you must be allowed your little sermon, I suppose.

JOHN

Clergyman?

JENKINS

(his book sinking to his lap) May I ask how you came to know that, Mr. Henley?

PETER

Actually, I had a glance at the book you're reading. Evidences of Christianity I believe it's called. There's a note on the fly-leaf. "To Dominick Jenkins", it says — "Priest of St. Mary's Parish in Margate."

JOHN

You should have told us, Jenkins! To have a man of God in our party — that is surely propitious.

JENKINS

(gravely) Would that it were that simple, milord. It's true that I was ordained in the Church of England — but I am no longer even a believing Christian.

JOHN  
Then why...?

JENKINS  
"Why" this book —(holding it up) —  
Evidences of Christianity? I suppose  
because I have the forlorn hope that I  
will someday regain my lost faith. But so  
far, milord, these pages have done little  
to remove my doubts — alas.

JOHN  
Cheer up, Mr. Jenkins! Perhaps out here  
in the wilderness things will get sorted  
out.

JENKINS  
Ah, yes, milord, the wilderness — where  
one may find rebirth of spirit —where  
one can "fuge, tace et quiesce."

PETER  
Where one can what?

JENKINS  
Why — "flee, keep silent, and be at  
rest"...

PETER  
I can see you fleeing, Jenkins, but  
keeping silent and being at rest —  
never!

LOUIS ENTERS, CARRYING HIS GUN AND A VERY  
SMALL ANIMAL...

JOHN  
Hullo, Louis —what have you there?

LOUIS  
(disgustedly) A skunk for de pot. (tosses  
it on the ground)

JOHN  
Good for you, Louis! We'll eat it at  
once.

PETER  
John, this won't do, you know. A skunk by  
no means comes under the definition of  
game.

JOHN  
But, Peter, a skunk, on the contrary, is  
a very well-known, fox-like, game animal.

PETER

John, I say it will not do. Bucephalus must die, and if you do not do it in, then I shall.

JOHN

Have it your way, Peter, but in the meantime we may as well eat the skunk.

JENKINS

Ah, well, we must after all make a compromise with practical considerations, but your feelings were very fine, milord, very fine.

LOUIS BEGINS TO SHARPEN HIS HUGE BOWIE KNIFE. AT EACH SCRAPE JENKINS WINCES...

JENKINS

I have always noticed —wherever I have travelled in the world — the true gentlemen is always revealed in the crises of life —and I have come to — I say I have come to certain conclusions about this. I feel that it is the classical foundation of English society — the classical foundation of our upper classes — a foundation laid in our public schools — teaching the virtues of — of restraint and of — of calm endurance —which are traceable back to — back to — You must stop that at once Mr. O'Flynn or I shall go mad!

LOUIS

Uh?

JENKINS

Stop it! Stop that!

LOUIS

(surprised and angry, he stops sharpening the knife) Fah!

JENKINS

(leaping up) You see — you see —he directly threatens me! He points the knife at my stomach!

LOUIS

Sacre maudit! —bloody hell! I t'reaten nobody — leas' of all you! You make trouble like a cat's flea on a dog's arse..!

JENKINS

You hear! You hear!

JOHN

Stop it, both of you. Jenkins, Louis was not threatening you. You've let your imagination run away with you again. This constant friction between you and Louis menaces our whole expedition. You must control your fears, Jenkins. Now do sit down — do calm yourself...

JENKINS

(slowly sitting down) I have warned you, milord.

JOHN

Louis, you must calm yourself also.

LOUIS

I tol' you dis beanpole no good for de trail, your lordships.

JOHN

That will do, Louis.

LOUIS

(holding out the knife to Mary-Marie)  
Cook de skonk!

MARY-MARIE TAKES THE KNIFE AND PROCEEDS TO SKIN THE SKUNK DEFTLY. PETER WATCHES FASCINATED

JOHN

Now let's all forget our little differences, shall we? We must try to keep our sense of humour and our sense of proportion. We have a long road yet to go — haven't we, Louis? What did you find up ahead?

LOUIS

Dere's a ford in de river about two mile on. Den we hit de big timber. Goddamn rough country.

JOHN

Well, at least we know we're on the way down. We've crossed the Rocky Mountains, gentlemen! Any signs of Indians, Louis?

LOUIS

No —we fin' dem soon enough. Or dey find us.

JOHN

Mr. Henley thinks we should shoot my horse, Louis, so that we shall have meat

to carry with us. What do you say to that?

LOUIS

I t'ought we camp here tomorra an' hunt game.

JOHN

Well, you see —Mr. Henley thinks otherwise.

LOUIS

Old horsemeat goddamn tough, your lordships.

JOHN

I know that, Louis, but what can we do? We have not seen a single sign of game about anywhere.

LOUIS

Your lordships — I seen t'ree goat on mountain slope today.

JOHN

Really? But why didn't you tell me, Louis?

LOUIS

Haha! Big surprise!

JOHN

Well, that puts a different light on things, don't you think, Peter? Eh?

PETER

It puts a darker light on things. It means we're to go chasing wild goats up sheer rocks while a perfectly docile horse practically begs to be eaten.

JOHN

That's what makes it so hard for me. Not another word, Peter. We shall go after the goats tomorrow. Damn fine news, Louis! Is that little beast ready yet, Rose?

ROSE

(turning the clay-covered skunk over the fire) De leetle beast is raddy, your lordchips.

JOHN

By jove, eh?

PETER

(looking into the tea box) It looks — sorry to dampen your enthusiasm for the leetle skunk —but it looks, I say, as if this is the last of the tea.

JOHN  
The last of the tea?

JENKINS  
How very sad indeed. No more tea, and the tobacco gone, too.

JOHN  
I never thought that a former cleric would be so concerned about the things that merely delight the flesh.

JENKINS  
Milord, it is simply that tea and tobacco represent, you might say, our last touch with civilization. From now on, as after the fall of Rome, nothing but savagery and the barbarous hand of fate.  
(reflecting on this) Dear me!

PETER  
Well, Jenkins, we still have our Christian morality, haven't we ?

JENKINS  
(wistfully) Have we? For those who have lost the faith? Assuredly we shall hang on to what shreds of righteousness remain... (staring fearfully at Louis who catches his stare) — unlike those who have never known anything but barbarity...

ROSE SMASHES A ROCK AGAINST THE CLAY COVER OF THE SKUNK. A CLOUD OF STEAM ARISES...

ROSE  
The leetle skonk smell batter dan when she leeved, huh?

PETER  
Which is more than one can say for most of us...

ROSE CUTS OFF PORTIONS, HANDS THEM AROUND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MARY—MARIE...

JOHN  
(eating) Very good.

JENKINS

Indeed, as you say, quite acceptable,  
indeed, milord.

PETER

Concerning your own "shreds of  
righteousness", Jenkins, have you managed  
to hang on to any of them?

MARY-MARIE CLIMBS TO HER FEET AND LUMBERS  
OVER TO WHERE ROSE RECLINES, EATING

JENKINS

Why certainly, Peter. I mean, was there  
ever any question?

PETER

Well, yes, there was. Do you remember the  
forest fire, Jenkins, back at what Louis  
called Lac du Lune, and which I therefore  
call Loon Lake?

JENKINS

I remember it well, Peter. We might have  
perished there.

MARY-MARIE PICKS UP THE REMAINS OF THE  
SKUNK AND EXAMINES IT FOR REMAINING  
EDIBLE PORTIONS, TRYING TO GNAW A PIECE  
HERE AND THERE...

PETER

Indeed, we might have. Our campfire  
caught in the trees and in a matter of  
seconds the forest was ablaze. We had  
great difficulty escaping, and had to  
work like mad to remove our gear to a  
safe location. But you never offered any  
help, Jenkins — you never even appeared.  
Where did we eventually find you? We  
found you sitting by the side of a stream  
with your feet in the water reading  
Paley's Evidences of Christianity by the  
light of the fire... How would you  
describe your moral status on that  
occasion, Jenkins?

JENKINS

Well, in the case of the fire, you might  
put me in the position of a person hors  
de combat — I mean, as a scholar without  
physical pretensions...Morality is doing  
the right thing within one's physical  
limitations...

MARY-MARIE

(hurling the skunk carcass at Rose)  
Goddamn bitch! Why you no offer your  
Momma food?

ROSE  
(throwing it back at Mary-Marie) Yaaa!  
Eat guts!

MARY-MARIE  
(picking up the skinning knife) You wan'  
dis between rib, huh?

JOHN  
Now — look here...

LOUIS  
Drop dat!

MARY-MARIE  
(dropping the knife and picking up a hunk  
of wood) I show you, you piece of shit!

M-M STRIKES AT ROSE WITH THE WOOD BUT  
MISSES AND HITS JENKINS WHO FALLS  
PROSTRATE, HOLDING HIS HEAD...

JENKINS  
Oh!...Oh!...Oh!

JOHN  
This is too much! Really, you must stop  
this!

ROSE  
Dirty fat whore!

ROSE RUSHES AT M-M AND GRABS HER HAIR.  
PETER STRUGGLES WITH ROSE TO PULL HER  
AWAY AND SHE BECOMES STRANGELY QUIET.  
LOUIS, IN THE MEANTIME, HAS SUBDUED MARY-  
MARIE...

LOUIS  
Godamn family!

JOHN  
Now calm down —every one calm down!

MARY-MARIE  
(wailing) Her own Momma she call whore!

JOHN  
Rose, you should be ashamed of yourself!

ROSE  
Yes, your lordchips, but dat what she is.



LOUIS

(slaps at her, but she ducks) Shut yer mout', she bitch, or I cut yer tongue out! Fine dodder you are!

JOHN

Louis! Rose! We cannot put up with this sort of thing!

JENKINS

Oh...oh...oh...

JOHN

Are you alright, Jenkins?

JENKINS

Alright, milord? Alright!? The end is upon us! I warned you, milord, I warned you. They are appalling! We shall all be murdered!

JOHN

Now, Jenkins, no one meant to hit you. It was an accident.

JENKINS

Ah, milord — that is how these fiends from hell will describe it...An accident befell Lord Fitzwilliam, his distinguished companion, Dominick Jenkins MA, and one Peter Henley ...A monstrous, inexplicable accident befell these healthy wayfarers, leaving only their bones to turn to dust in the summer sun of a wild land ...

JOHN

That's all very well, Jenkins. I do believe you're looking a little better already, now that you've had the opportunity to express yourself. I really think the best thing we can all do is to settle down for the night, and rise tomorrow in a brighter frame of mind. We have a long way to go and, do or die, we must learn to get along with one another. Peter, you will take the first watch. Louis next. And myself last.

JENKINS

Then we have no hope, for so it is fated. The flame of faith gone out, all hope must die.

JOHN

(cheerfully) At least we shall have tea, Jenkins! No one can drink tea without

regaining hope, isn't that so? (he pours the tea)

I'm surprised at everyone —fighting like so many mad dogs.

JENKINS

That is precisely what they are, milord —mad dogs!

LOUIS

(whirling on him) Uh!? Dogs, old one? I cut yer tongue out an' hang it where it wag in de win' an' say noding!

JENKINS

(having jumped up in his fright, he spills his tea) The tea! I spilt my tea!

LOUIS

(settling down for the night with Mary—Marie) Fah! I heard de Anglish were crazy —now I know!

JOHN

Never mind, Jenkins. There's one more cup. You may take it.

JENKINS

Thank you, milord. (he holds out his cup for John to pour, and then takes a careful sip) Now you see before you, Peter, in the person of his lordship, the true exemplar of an English gentleman.

JOHN AND PETER TOUCH THEIR CUPS IN A TOAST

JOHN

The gold of Cariboo, Peter.

PETER

Well, John. The last cup. Take it bravely. (he swallows it in a gulp)

JOHN

You drained it off!

PETER

Sipping it would be torture.

JOHN

I shall sip mine.

PETER

No more tea. No more tobacco. And a skunk for dinner. If only Sally could see me now.

JOHN  
Sally who?

THEY PREPARE FOR BED FOLLOWING THE PROCEDURE OF THE NIGHT BEFORE. ROSE EDGES TOWARD PETER.

PETER  
Sally Sutton—Brookhaven. An exquisite creature. You should have seen her among the candlelights as she downed her champagne and caviar. Unworldly. She could sing in tune, too. (sighs deeply)  
Dear Sally.

JOHN  
Was she the one who ruined you?

PETER  
You mean the debts? I was always in debt...or rather frequently in debt.

JOHN  
But your mother always set you up again.

PETER  
My dear mater couldn't bear to see me absolutely flat. At least not for long...not in those good old days before the peanut scandal.

JOHN IS NOW DOING HIS VARIOUS EXERCISES. NOT FAR AWAY, UNSEEN BY JOHN, BUT NOT BY PETER, ROSE PERFORMS A KIND OF DANCE/MIME OF EXERCISING. IT IS EXTREMELY PROVOCATIVE.

JOHN  
You were jolly lucky —that your mother was able to —as you say pick you up — when you fell flat. If I had had — your penchant — for the splendid life — tripping off to France — buying extravagant gifts for my lady-love — whoever that happened to be — at the time — not to speak of — keeping up my end — at the gaming tables — and at the race tracks. —None of that for me, by Jove! — Though we were of the nobility — we never seemed to be — that well off. — I mean, lots of old hangings — great threadbare carpets — old paintings of... of old ancestors — old old servants

toting tea trays to ancient aunts — not exactly the high life, Peter...

ROSE HAVING HELD PETER'S UNDIVIDED ATTENTION, SLITHERS TO THE GROUND AND DISAPPEARS UNDER A BUFFALO ROBE

PETER  
...no ...not exactly...

JOHN  
(following his gaze, but seeing nothing)  
I say, Peter, what are you looking at?

PETER  
Oh, nothing, John ... the enchantment of the night, I suppose...

JOHN  
(lying down and getting under his blanket) Well, that's a new tune, coming from you. You must be dreaming about England. Poor old Peter. You won't find a Sally Sutton-Brookhaven about here ...You'll just have to get used to living the life of a celibate for a time, difficult as that may be for you...

AS JOHN TALKS, ROSE LIFTS THE BUFFALO ROBE INVITINGLY AND PETER, AFTER HESITATING FOR A LONG MOMENT, GLANCING OVER AT JOHN WHOSE BACK IS TOWARD HIM, CRAWLS OVER AND CLIMBS IN WITH ROSE.

JOHN  
...Well, it won't be for long, my friend. Once you've made your fortune beyond the Rockies, you can go back to England — and there will be many a Sally Sutton-Brookhaven who will welcome you with open arms... But I have an idea you may yet settle down with an innocent country girl, somebody like my sister, Catherine. I'll have to warn her about you. Good night, old chap...

PETER  
(extremely muffled) ...Good night...old...chap...

THE LIGHT FADES TO COMPLETE DARKNESS.

SCENE II

EARLY MORNING. EVERYONE IS RISING, PETER FROM HIS OWN BLANKET. JOHN, FIRST UP, EXERCISES ENERGETICALLY — TOUCHING HIS TOES, JUMPING ON ONE SPOT ETC...

JOHN  
Where did you see those goats, Louis?

LOUIS  
Far up de oder side, yer lordship — two or tree mile ...

JOHN  
(peering) Up on that side slope?

LOUIS  
(pointing) In de saddle — see?

JOHN  
By Jove, you have good eyesight, Louis.

LOUIS  
Yah...

JOHN  
Do you see them now?

LOUIS  
No, but dey up dere.

JOHN  
Then with good luck, Louis, we shan't have to shoot Bucephalus, after all. I mean, what is a hunt without a good horse? Eh, Peter?

PETER  
I would say, what is a good horse without anything to hunt?

JOHN  
I was hoping you would rise this morning with a little more firmness of purpose.

PETER  
Right now, I have no firmness of anything.

JENKINS  
(coming up to him) I have something to say, milord. I believe that I should go with you on your hunt. I was once a good shot.

JOHN

You? Hunting, Jenkins? I don't really think...

JENKINS

But of course, milord. It's a wonderful fall day and I should like to look out from the peaks. I can certainly help to describe the birdlife to you, milord. Among my other interests is the study of ornithology. Once, on a walk in Devon, I counted twenty-three different species of bird, without the aid of a scope.

JOHN

But we're going hunting, old chap — not bird watching.

JENKINS

There's nothing at all wrong with hunting, milord. It is an old and honourable sport.

JOHN

(laughing) Really, Jenkins...

PETER

Starving in the wilderness — an old and honourable sport!

JOHN

Why, you're shaking, Jenkins. Is anything wrong?

JENKINS

There is a great deal wrong. Could you step to one side for a moment, milord?

JOHN

(leading downstage right) Of course.

JENKINS

Without wishing to make a demonstration of my emotions, milord — I am fearful for my life.

JOHN

Your life, sir?

JENKINS

It is threatened.

JOHN

Are you ill?

JENKINS

Not ill, milord. In danger. I would go further.

I would say we are all in grave danger,  
which is to say that we are in danger of  
an early grave.

JOHN

You must speak clearly. Danger from what,  
Jenkins?

JENKINS

Last night I heard dark murmurs, milord.  
I could not hear every word, of course,  
but what I did not hear I could surmise.  
Louis is plotting my death —I believe  
all our deaths, milord.

JOHN

(turning from him) Really, Jenkins! Now  
do stop this!

JENKINS

I am quite serious, milord. There was no  
doubt about it. I cupped my hand beneath  
my ear —I strained every nerve —and I  
heard what he said!

JOHN

Nonsense! I heard Louis myself —he was  
talking in his sleep. Louis is reliable,  
Jenkins, if I know anything about human  
nature. It's true he may be a little on  
the rough side, but who wouldn't be with  
his upbringing? You must show more faith  
in your fellow man, even if you have none  
in God.

JENKINS

He is not my fellow man, milord — he is  
a savage, unendurable beast, and we shall  
all be murdered! Your poor family!

JOHN

I order you not to mention this matter  
again. (starts back)

JENKINS

At least let me come with you on the  
hunt, milord.

JOHN

Louis is coming with us. I thought you  
were afraid of him.

JENKINS

You do not understand the workings of the  
savage mind, milord. I know Louis is to  
go with you. He has left instructions  
with those two witches of Endor to do  
away with me while you three are off

hunting. And while you and Peter are divided on the hunt, he plans to do each of you in. If I come with you, that will ruin their plan. I shall be the wrench in their works.

JOHN

Oh, very well, Jenkins —if it will give you peace of mind to come with us, then come — though your accusations are ridiculous.

JENKINS

An excellent decision, milord. And you will not regret it... (raising his voice as he sees Louis approaching)... I will show you some fine birds, milord — unusual birds!

LOUIS

(approaching) Do we go, yer lordships?

JOHN

We go, Louis. And Mr. Jenkins is coming with us. (to Louis' evident annoyance) Not a word, Louis. My decision is final. Jenkins is coming with us. We shall be back before sunset, ladies.

LOUIS AND JOHN EXIT RIGHT

JENKINS

May I accompany you, Peter?

PETER

Why not? Then you can tell me at length why you left the priesthood, or had you no choice? I tend to think that your loss of faith had little to do with it —or was that her name?

PETER EXITS RIGHT. FOR A MOMENT JENKINS STARES FEARFULLY AT THE WOMEN, THEN HURRIES AFTER PETER.

THE WOMEN ARE SEATED ON THEIR PACKS, MARY-MARIE REPAIRING A MOCASSIN.

MARY-MARIE

You like dat Peder, Rosie? Hee, hee...No? ...Hee, hee. You t'ink I deaf, uh? (she kisses her arm noisily) ...like dis all night long. (rocking) ...He hol' you ...Roseeee ...Roseeee ... Swee-swee Roseeee ... lalalala ...You like him ver' much?



ROSE

Someday, Mama, I cut yer troad —if I could find it.

MARY-MARIE

You like him. Too bad. Tch tch. Too bad. He no good wid his troad cud. Ha? Hee, hee, hee!

ROSE

Wha'd Papa say? (in response M-M shakes with laughter) Tonight? Tonight?

MARY-MARIE

Tonight, Rosie. De Anglich so tired after der' long hunt, dey sleep good. Dey sleep so good dey wake up wid dere troads cud — nice food for wolves. Den we take gold an' go to Californie an' be rich. Ha ha! ..Poor, Rosie. She like dat Peder better dan she like de money, uh?

ROSE

I don' care.

MARY-MARIE

Lie! I see you —I know. But you no say anyt'ing or Papa cud you up fer good. Ha, Rosie? You like dat like you like him? Hah?

ROSE

I don' care.

MARY-MARIE

She don' care! Hee, hee, hee!

LIGHTS FADE TO DARKNESS, THEN COME UP ON THE SAME SCENE AS DUSK APPROACHES. ROSE IS THROWING WOOD ON THE FIRE. MARY-MARIE SITS AND SEWS. FROM RIGHT EMERGE THE THREE WEARY FIGURES OF JOHN, PETER, AND LOUIS. PETER FLOPS TO THE GROUND...

ROSE

No goat, Peder?

PETER

No goat, no deer, no bear, no grouse, nor anything else this country is supposed to be teeming with. Except flies. There were multitudes of flies. They're supposed to be dead at this time of the year. But when they saw us coming, they resurrected.

JOHN

Where's Jenkins?

ROSE

Don't know, Lordchips.

JOHN

But we thought he returned to camp ahead of us.

LOUIS

He come soon. Don' worry 'bout dat one.

JOHN

But it's going to be dark soon. We must look for him.

LOUIS

We look fer him — we get los' like him.

PETER

I couldn't have said it better myself, Louis. Anyway, you could never keep Jenkins lost even if you wanted to. He's terrified at the very thought of getting lost, and of everything out there — the dark, the wilderness, animals, death, God...

JOHN

It's all very well for you to be superior, but we cannot simply dismiss him like that. It's going to be a cold night.

PETER

Please don't go looking for him, John. Losing Jenkins is one thing, losing you is — a damned nuisance.

JOHN

Thank you for your deepfelt concern for me, though there's none for poor Jenkins.

HE EXITS LEFT

PETER

(shouting after John) I have one deepfelt concern for you both! You're both equally hazardous to this expedition! — Jenkins because he's afraid of everything, and you because you're afraid of nothing... (to himself) Damn him!

LOUIS

(shaking his head) No good. No damn good.

PETER

And nothing to eat. We shall starve, Louis. They will be packing my bleached bones next Spring to send home to my mother, but she won't know what to do with them. So she will give them to my stepfather who will mount them on the wall among his other stuffed animals. And he will use my skull for an ashtray. "Poor Peter," he will say, flicking a burning ash in the hole where my eye once was — "I always thought he might be useful for something."

ROSE

Here, Peder —dis good fer you.

SHE HANDS HIM A TINY ROASTED BIRD

PETER

Good heavens — what is it? A roasted capon?

ROSE

A liddle bird.

PETER

Wonderful! (biting into it) While we're scaling cliffs in pursuit of mountain goats, you're snagging little birds. It tastes very good, too. The kings of Europe eat little birds, Rose —But is this the only one?

ROSE

De on'y one. I waid long to snare him, but I snare him for good. (she mimics her snaring action) Fer you, Peder.

PETER

(looking at what's left) But I shall have to save some for John.

ROSE

No! Dis one fer you.

PETER

I hate to spare even a claw, Rose, but we must not be stingy. And there's your father to consider. Here, Louis, what about a wing..? (searching for the wing, then holding the tiny thing out to Louis)

LOUIS

(outraged) My own dodder! Goddamn!

PETER

Here, Louis — take it.

LOUIS TAKES THE WING AND THROWS IT INTO  
THE BUSHES...

LOUIS  
Goddamn! She I go hungry for — starve  
for! One time I fed her my own dog!  
(distressed) My own black dog!

PETER  
Now look here, Louis —I know what we'll  
do. I've been thinking about it all day.  
We shall shoot Bucephalus and have a  
royal feast. Enough of this nonsense!  
Where's my gun? (he looks for it, and  
checks the action)

LOUIS  
Good. (still grumpy) Godamn!

PETER  
Would you like to shoot the horse, Louis?

LOUIS  
No, no —you.

PETER  
By George — I think we're both a little  
afraid of John. Never mind, Louis, I  
shall shoot Bucephalus.

HE STRIDES OFF LEFT. LOUIS TAKES HIS  
KNIFE OUT AND BEGINS TO SHARPEN IT...

ROSE  
Dey get you dis time. Dey get you for  
murder.

LOUIS  
Dirty kloodch! I teach you lesson some  
day. Fine dodder!

ROSE  
Dey hang you dis time fer sure.

LOUIS  
(whirling on M-M who remains impassive)  
You tol' her, huh? A fine bloody wife!  
(Louis moves over to Rose) You keep yer  
mout' shut, you hear! ...Huh? ...Or you  
know whad I do? Huh!

ROSE  
Yes.

LOUIS

(gripping her by the arm) Yes whad?!  
Huh?! Huh?!

ROSE  
(gritting her teeth) Yes, Papa.

LOUIS  
You talk proper or I kick yer backside  
off. You hear?

ROSE  
Yes, Papa. I hear.

LOUIS  
Fine dodder. (returning to his place, he  
sits down) Tonighd you go to bed an' stay  
dere! Don' move! You hear?!

THE SOUND OF A SHOT NOT FAR OFF. LOUIS  
CROSSES HIMSELF AUTOMATICALLY.

ROSE  
(rubbing her arm where he gripped her) I  
hear...

LOUIS  
(sharpening his knife) Dey won' hang yer  
Papa, don' worry.

ROSE  
(through her teeth) I don' worry, Papa.

PETER ENTERS LEFT A LITTLE SADLY

PETER  
You can cut a steak from Bucephalus,  
Louis.

LOUIS  
Sure t'ing. I cut him good. (getting up  
and feeling the edge of his blade) Dis  
cut anyt'ing.

HE STARTS TO EXIT LEFT —STOPS, LOOKS  
DOWN AT HIS KNIFE, THEN AT PETER WHOSE  
BACK IS TOWARD HIM — STARTS TO MOVE  
SILENTLY TOWARD HIM...

PETER  
Bucephalus looked at me with great  
bedevilled eyes as much as to say —  
you're not really going to murder me, are  
you —me, such a fine horse, named after  
the horse of Alexander the Great? —you  
mustn't do it, Peter. But I did it, Rose,  
because the growling in my stomach was  
even more persuasive...

ROSE, SEEING WHAT LOUIS IS ABOUT TO DO,  
LEADS PETER TO A LOG AND SITS HIM DOWN,  
TURNING HIM TOWARD LOUIS, WHO ABRUPTLY  
EXITS IN DISGUST.

JOHN ENTERS RIGHT...

PETER  
No Jenkins, eh?

JOHN  
(sitting near fire and warming his hands)  
No, and it's getting to be devilish cold.  
Poor old chap. It's my fault. I should  
never have let him come with us today.  
But he was so insistent. And then he kept  
talking about some peculiar bird which he  
had spotted —said he'd never seen such a  
bird in England —that it might be an  
altogether new species —that it had an  
enormously long neck and made strange  
whistling sounds so he was sure it was a  
portent of something. He kept saying "I  
think it's time we returned, your  
lordship, for that bird is surely an evil  
omen." And then we came across those  
immense grizzly bear tracks. Jenkins was  
convinced that the bear was waiting for  
us and that our guns would have no effect  
on such a monster which would mangle us  
beyond recognition if not eat us on the  
spot, and that his lifelong commitment to  
classical scholarship precluded his  
spending a moment more in our company —  
at which he turned around and fled the  
way we had come. I thought he'd come  
straight back to camp.

PETER  
He insisted on going with us, John.

JOHN  
I should not have given way. By heavens,  
if he does not see our fire, we shall  
have to look for him tomorrow until we  
find him. He's so helpless ...so timid...

LOUIS ENTERS LEFT WITH MEAT. ROSE GETS UP  
TO PREPARE IT, THEN COOKS IT ON POINTED  
STICK. LOUIS SITS DOWN SHEATHING HIS  
KNIFE.

PETER  
The timid are often those who do the most  
dangerous things. That's why they're  
timid.

JOHN

I never expected philosophy from you,  
Peter.

PETER

It comes from talking religion with  
Jenkins. Or lack of religion.

JOHN

Whatever you're cooking smells very good,  
Rose.

ROSE

It's a —

PETER

(quickly) —a rabbit, John.

JOHN

A rather hefty piece of meat for a  
rabbit.

PETER

Do you think so? These mountain rabbits  
are very large — huge — have to be, you  
know, in order to bound up the  
mountainsides to escape the mountain  
lions.

JOHN

Sounds like a pack of nonsense to me...

PETER

How would you know? They're peculiar to  
this habitat.

JOHN

I've never heard of any such rabbit.

PETER

They're called hares — Rocky Mountain  
Hares. A form of rabbit.

JOHN

Like the Australian hare, you're going to  
tell me.

PETER

That's right. Cousins to the Australian  
hare. Only bigger. Much, much bigger.  
(jumps up and looks out into the  
darkness) Colossal.

JOHN

What's wrong? (jumps up himself and looks  
out)

PETER

I thought I heard something. Hoped it might be old Jenkins. (sits down again) He'll see our fire, I'm sure.

JOHN

(continuing to peer out) I do hope so. It's getting to be quite cold, and he must be famished. (turning back) You know, when Jenkins gets back I think I'll buck up his spirits and tell him that he will find the going much easier from here on — I think we all will. There should be plentiful game in the forests ahead, and we'll travel faster.

PETER

Oh, how is that?

JOHN

I've studied the maps closely, and they all indicate that the area to the west is traversed by dozens of streams. Part of our way, at least, we should be able to float.

PETER

That would be nice. Float on what?

JOHN

On a raft, of course.

PETER

How do we make a raft? We haven't even a hatchet.

JOHN

Ever the doubter! We shall find a way, Peter.

PETER

Frankly, I'm not so much worried about making a raft as I am about travelling on it. These are mountain streams, you know. We may find ourselves travelling a great deal faster than you'd have wished even in your wildest dreams.

JOHN

Some of them are mountain streams, it's true, but — (Rose hands him a hunk of meat from her forked stick) — thank you, Rose — however, (taking a bite) we have not crossed a stream yet we could not have floated down, at least part of the



way. (stares at the meat in his hand)...  
This doesn't taste like rabbit.

PETER  
(quickly) But, of course, don't forget  
that it is far more mountainous where we  
are going, and therefore —

JOHN  
(nibbling reflectively) I say, this  
doesn't taste a bit like rabbit!

PETER  
...therefore the streams will be running  
much faster there...

JOHN  
This is not rabbit, Peter!

PETER  
Oh? (taking a bite from the piece Rose  
has handed him) Don't you think it tastes  
like rabbit?

JOHN  
Not at all!

PETER  
Not even like a hare? I mean, one of  
these very large mountain hares...?

JOHN  
Not like any member of the rabbit or hare  
family — not even a distant cousin.

PETER  
I wonder what it could be, then.

JOHN  
Well, who shot it? I definitely heard a  
shot when I was off looking for  
Jenkins...

PETER  
Rose, did you shoot it?

ROSE  
(laughing) You shoot it, Peder!

PETER  
Yes, I suppose I did. (a long pause) Yes.  
I'm awfully sorry, John, but the fact is  
I had to shoot your horse... You're  
eating Bucephalus.

JOHN

(jumping up and throwing the meat from him) Bucephalus! My horse! (he slumps down, holding his head in his hands)

PETER

Now, look, John, we had to eat something, hadn't we? I, for one, was actually starving. And anyway you promised you would shoot your horse if we found no game today. I simply took the opportunity, John —while you were looking for Jenkins.

JOHN

You might at least have told me.

PETER

I meant to, John, but somehow, at the last moment — I could not.

JOHN

My horse.

PETER

I think it came as no surprise to him. I think he understood.

JOHN

Without my permission — you simply went ahead and shot my horse. Then fed him to me.

PETER

I don't think you're being fair, John. Bucephalus has made his grand leap into oblivion so that you can go on living.

JOHN

You're a bit of a bounder, Peter.

PETER

At least I may survive, with a bit of luck. I wonder about you. Whatever you think of me, Bucephalus is dead —you might as well eat him as he would have wished.

JOHN

(stiffly) I think that I shall go to bed.

JOHN, OMITTING HIS USUAL EXERCISES,  
PREPARES FOR BED. LOUIS, WATCHING HIM,  
THROWS AWAY THE BONE HE HAS BEEN WORKING  
ON.

LOUIS

Good! I go to bed, too. We all go to bed,  
uh? You too, Rosie, uh?

LOUIS GESTURES ROUGHLY FOR ROSE TO MOVE  
WELL AWAY FROM PETER. RELUCTANTLY SHE  
DOES SO MOVING TO RIGHT DRAGGING BUFFALO  
ROBE. MARY-MARIE HUMMING TO HERSELF, LIES  
DOWN BACK LEFT. LOUIS CLIMBS UNDER HIS  
ROBE NOT FAR FROM PETER WHO WATCHES AS  
JOHN ROLLS OVER IN HIS BLANKET TURNING  
HIS BACK TO HIM. PETER STARES AT THE BONE  
IN HIS HAND AND THROWS IT IN THE FIRE.  
THEN HE PREPARES FOR BED, AND CLIMBS IN.  
DURING PETER'S MONOLOGUE LOUIS, IN HIS  
BUFFALO ROBE, WAITS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO POSITION HIMSELF NEAR PETER IN ORDER  
TO KILL HIM. AT EVERY PAUSE IN PETER'S  
SPEECH HE GLANCES UP—AT LEAST ONCE WE  
SEE THE FLASH OF THE LONG KNIFE IN HIS  
HAND. TOWARDS THE END OF PETER'S  
MONOLOGUE LOUIS BEGINS TO WRIGGLE INCH BY  
INCH TOWARD PETER.

PETER

There's something seriously wrong with  
your grasp of shabby everyday reality,  
John. I mean it's perfectly  
understandable that you're upset about  
Bucephalus having to die in order that we  
might live. I like horses, too — must  
have, since I threw so much money their  
way at the race track. But blaming me for  
the death of Bucephalus after agreeing  
that we should shoot him is weird — like  
winding up the clock and throwing it out  
the window. Good Lord, you'd think I  
loved to shoot horses — that I had to  
restrain myself until now from taking a  
crack at one — that I'm hopelessly  
addicted to chewing morsels of horse  
flesh. Isn't that ridiculous? John, old  
chap, all I want is for us to survive  
this magnificent expedition relatively  
unscathed. I can't believe you don't know  
that and so I must think your snit has  
some other cause. (no response) Ah, well  
... te dum te dum ... (he lies still)

ROSE, SEEING LOUIS WRIGGLE TOWARDS PETER,  
BEGINS TO MOVE, MUCH MORE RHYTHMICALLY IN  
THE SAME DIRECTION...

JOHN

Peter...

PETER

Yes, John?

JOHN

You told me that you were in debt before I met you.

PETER

John, I was in debt from the day I was born.

JOHN

Well, we met at Lady Plimley's, remember? And you talked to me about investing in that bean growing project in Africa.

PETER

Oh yes — the Somaliland Bean Company.

JOHN

Did such a company really exist, Peter?

PETER

Of course it did.

JOHN

To what extent did it exist?

PETER

Well, it existed —uh —to the point where it had been formed —I mean, as a limited company. You see, I had heard that beans in Africa were a good thing. But we needed capital, of course. You can't have a company without capital, John.

JOHN

You're a bit of a bounder, Peter.

PETER

Is that all you have to say to me?

JOHN

The only reason you made my acquaintance in the first place was to get at my money. And when you found I had none to offer, you used me — and my name —to meet people who did have money. I think you dunned quite a few of my friends, if I am not mistaken.

PETER

John, I never deliberately deceived anyone. I may have exaggerated the bean thing a little, but my intentions were of the purest — which was to make all my investors a fortune. The fact is, I really did believe in the beans.

JOHN

What did you do with the money you received, Peter?

PETER

I put it into the company —every pound note.

JOHN

And where did every pound note go?

PETER

We sent down some chaps to get the thing going. And they did start in alright.

JOHN

What then?

PETER

Well, the beans did not grow.

JOHN

Why did the beans not grow?

PETER

Apparently, beans do not grow in Somaliland. At least, not our beans.

JOHN

Do any variety of beans grow in Somaliland?

PETER

I don't know. Ours did not.

JOHN

You should not have used me, Peter.

PETER

The beans did not grow. That was the whole trouble. The beans did not and would not grow. We tried everything. We even sent sheep manure from the Isle of Man. But the beans would not grow. What could I do about it? Should I have hired a witch doctor to sprinkle frog semen on them and cast highland spells? We did not fail — the company did not fail. The beans failed.

JOHN

You could have found out about the beans —that they would not grow in Somaliland.

PETER

To do that we would have had to go down to Somaliland and plant some beans to see if they would grow—which is exactly what we did. You see why I am not the optimist I once was, John, why I tend to believe that every cloud has a dark lining? I agree I was not cut out for business ventures. I don't know what I was cut out for—I suppose the horse races. Although I lost money there, too.

JOHN

There's another thing which deeply disturbs me, Peter

PETER

Ahah! The truth comes ou—

ROSE, REACHING PETER, A COUPLE OF FEET AHEAD OF LOUIS, PUTS HER HAND OVER HIS MOUTH, AND SLIPS UNDER HIS BLANKET WITH HIM. LOUIS, FOR THE MOMENT IMMOBILIZED, FURIOUSLY STRIKES THE GROUND WITH HIS KNIFE...

JOHN

I don't like having to mention it, but I have no choice. You must not get involved with Rose.

PETER

(completely embroiled with Rose) Rose! ..how did you...uh?

LOUIS SEEKS A WAY TO STRIKE AT PETER, BUT ROSE SUCCEEDS EACH TIME IN INTERPOSING HER BODY. PETER TAKES THIS AS WILDLY EROTIC PLAY...

JOHN

How did I find out about Rose and you? Last night I awoke in the night. You were not under your blanket. I looked over and saw that you were with Rose.... I mean, really, Peter... After Sally Sutton—Brookhaven, how could you?...I mean there are limits, and there are standards...

PETER

(to Rose) No, you mustn't!... Please don't go on ...not now...

JOHN

But I shall go on, Peter. As the leader of this expedition, I must say what I'm going to say...

PETER  
(to Rose) Please don't ...no!..no!

JOHN  
On the contrary —yes, yes. I tell you there are certain things one must not do. We are the only representatives of civilization for many hundreds of miles, and we must not lower our standards, or else what do they have to model themselves on. Do you understand?

LOUIS GIVES UP HIS ATTEMPT AND SWIFTLY WRIGGLES BACK TO HIS PLACE. AFTER GIVING PETER A LONG KISS, ROSE ALSO RETURNS.

JOHN  
I mean how can you expect these people to respect us if they have nothing to look up to? We must be above all that, and we must be firm.

PETER  
Oh, you can depend on that, John.

JENKINS  
(some way off in a quavering, sing-song voice) Do I see a fire yonder? Or is it the fancy of a purblind vision that mocks my lonely heart...?

JOHN LEAPS UP AND LOOKS OUT. PETER SITS UP...

JENKINS  
The fire of faith once did burn so bright — but it, too, vanished in the midnight air...

HE EMERGES BACKSTAGE RIGHT AND STANDS STILL STARING AT THE FIRE BLINKING HIS AMAZEMENT.

JOHN  
Jenkins, thank God you found your way back!

JENKINS  
Thank God, you may say so —thank God, indeed. I have been wandering in the darkness of Hades for too long...

HE HURRIES FORWARD TO THE FIRE HANDS HELD OUT TO THE WARMTH AND ALMOST STUMBLES ON LOUIS WHO LOOKS UP BALEFULLY —HIS BIG FACE CAUGHT IN THE FIRELIGHT. JENKINS

RECOILS WITH HORROR AND RUSHES AROUND TO JOHN...

JENKINS

Milord, thank heavens you're awake and also alive! I had almost given you up, milord!

PETER

We had almost given you up, Jenkins.

JENKINS

You don't seem to understand, Mr. Henley. Milord, we are in great and present danger! Grasp your weapons!

JOHN

Jenkins, please do calm yourself.

JENKINS

I warned you, milord! The barbarian is murderous —he plans to kill us all —you and Peter tonight. As for me, he thought I was gone forever. Ha ha, he was misled...

JOHN

Oh, for heaven's sake, Jenkins! Must we go through this again?

PETER

(lying back) Please let us sleep, Jenkins —please.

JENKINS

Sleep! How can you think of sleep?! The murderer is there — waiting! A devil he is —a very hideous devil who will cut our throats should we sleep one instant!

JOHN

Stop this, Jenkins! At once, do you hear?!

JENKINS

Milord, please, you must listen —

JOHN

Not another word! I find this most acutely embarrassing. Louis has served us well and shown total loyalty under very trying circumstances. If it had not been for him, heaven only knows where we would be now...

JENKINS

At least we would be safe, milord!



JOHN

Enough! (controlling himself with an effort) Now —we are very glad to have you back with us safe and sound, Jenkins. But it is a mystery to me what happened today —how you became lost. Can you tell us without histrionics?

JENKINS

Very well, milord. If danger shall have no tongue...

JOHN

(warningly) Jenkins ...

JENKINS

Climbing through the trees today I fell well behind the rest of the party ...

PETER

You did not fall behind, you ran behind — at the sight of those grizzly tracks.

JENKINS

I will not argue with you, Peter, because, as Cardinal Newman said, a gentlemen does not argue. In any case, I knew there was no hope of trying to keep up with you —so I followed along as best I could. There were beautiful flowers in that part of the wood and as it happened I was picking a few flowers when I heard the crack of a branch near me. It was — him. (pointing at Louis) —la sauvage — moving toward me — in a crouching position — like an ape or one of those hideous bears. I fled, milord, as weakness must seek sanctity.

JOHN

(beginning to be amused) Now, was this really the case, Jenkins?

JENKINS

On my word, milord, as a scholar and a pedagogue, it is gospel truth.

JOHN

Are you sure it wasn't your imagination again?

JENKINS

He pursued me, milord! I could hear him immediately at my back growling like some maddened beast —I could feel his breath hot and moist on my neck...

JOHN

(laughing) Jenkins, it was your own perspiration! We sent Louis back to look for you! We began to worry about where you had gone and Louis said he would soon scare you up. He certainly succeeded. — Louis! You should have told us that you found Mr. Jenkins!

LOUIS

(sitting up) Ha! ha! He run like deer. I t'ought he head back to camp.

JOHN

You see, Jenkins —there's no harm! Louis was simply looking for you, at our request!

PETER

Can't we sleep? Please?

JOHN

Yes, let's everyone go to sleep — (lifting his blanket, he lies down) And please, no bad dreams, Jenkins.

JENKINS

There can be no sleep for me, milord. I must tell you, I am very much aggrieved. My words are laughed to scorn.

PETER

What else can we do with them Jenkins? You sound like a King Lear who has forgotten his Shakespeare.

JOHN

Please, Jenkins, do go to bed.

JENKINS

I cannot, milord. The terror broods on me, and I must bear it all alone.

JOHN

Let the rest of us sleep, at least.

JENKINS

Please do —please do. I shall not sleep again. I cannot allow murder to happen. An English lord murdered while he slept — unthinkable. I could never forgive myself. As the Roman soldier said as he waited for the Picts on the wall of Hadrian —

PETER

Have mercy, Jenkins...

JENKINS

I am sorry, Mr. Henley. Of course, you're quite modern, and wouldn't care for history.

JENKINS HUMS A LATIN HYMN WHILE THE OTHERS FALL ASLEEP. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, ROSE RISES AND SITS BESIDE HIM. HE LOOKS AT HER WARILY AND SHIFTS AWAY A LITTLE...

ROSE

Don' be afraid, old one. I no sleep — like you.

JENKINS

Afraid —why on earth should I be afraid?

HE TAKES OUT A PAIR OF BROKEN SPECTACLES AND HANGS THEM ON HIS NOSE, THEN OPENS HIS BOOK. A WOLF HOWLS FAR OFF AND JENKINS' GLASSES FALL OFF.

JENKINS

What was that dreadful sound?

ROSE

That was a wolf, old man.

JENKINS

More like a werewolf. It sounds near, doesn't it?

ROSE

No, it far away.

JENKINS

It will come nearer though.

HE DOES NOT PICK UP HIS GLASSES OR OPEN HIS BOOK.

THE LIGHT FADES TO END ACT II.

## ACT THREE

### SCENE I

A FOREST GLADE PARTIALLY ENCUMBERED BY LOW BUSHES AND FALLEN LOGS. AT STAGE RIGHT HALF HIDDEN IN THE GLOOM AND BRUSH IS A SEATED FIGURE. IT IS DRAPED IN ANIMAL SKINS AND WEARS A HEADDRESS MADE UP OF BITS OF FUR AND BONE. THE FACE IS A MASK WITH ENORMOUS VERMILLION EYES AND A WIDE SLASH OF A MOUTH, ALSO VERMILLION.

THE PARTY ENTERS IN SINGLE FILE — JOHN FIRST, THEN LOUIS, PETER, ROSE, AND MARY-MARIE. JOHN LOWERS HIS PACK AND RECLINES ON IT, AS DO THE OTHERS. THEY ARE TIRED AND DEJECTED. ONLY MARY-MARIE SEEMS ALERT. JENKINS, WEAVING WITH EXHAUSTION, FOLLOWS SOME YARDS AFTER THE OTHERS. HE LIES FULL LENGTH ON THE GROUND.

A WOLF HOWLS DISTANTLY.

JENKINS

Closer — it's getting closer ...

JOHN

(after a pause) We can't be far from the diggings now.

PETER

Diggings?

JOHN

Yes, the diggings. Where the miners are digging for gold.

PETER

You talk of miners, and diggings — but there's been no sign of a human anywhere — not even an old campfire, not a trail, not a footprint, not a blaze on a tree — nothing but that accursed wolf which seems to be following us in the certain knowledge that we will soon provide him an excellent meal... Rose, do you have anymore of those delicious dried pieces of Bucephalus? No? (Rose does not respond) What next, John? What's next on our menu? ... How about some grapes from Picardy — cheese from Lucerne — bread warm from the ovens of Gascony? No? Not even roast beef and those heavy, heavy Yorkshire dumplings dripping rich fat into the black abyss of my stomach...? If

it weren't for Mary-Marie's roots and grubs we'd all be dead.

JOHN

Stop torturing yourself.

PETER

Well, then, what shall we have to eat, John, for we must eat something, mustn't we? What about a munch of saddle? I mean, saddles are made from animal skin, aren't they, and are quite digestible? Particularly our English saddles which must be made of the very finest leather — the hide of Abyssinian Antelope if I am not mistaken. It chews well, I would think, and churns around for quite a while in the stomach. But of course we can't eat a saddle even if we wished to. We left it behind on poor Bucephalus — a saddle of such splendid quality that it graced the arse of an aristocrat.

JOHN

And who would have been willing to carry the saddle along with us, Peter? Would you?

PETER

Well, perhaps a small piece of it. Our Cambridge scholar, Jenkins, would, though. He reveres everything aristocratic, including saddles.

JOHN

Jenkins can hardly carry himself, let alone a saddle.

DURING THE FOLLOWING JOHN GETS UP AND EXPLORES THE GLADE BUT, AMAZINGLY, WITHOUT NOTICING THE SEATED FIGURE AT STAGE RIGHT.

PETER

Well, if we cannot eat saddle, what about boots? That's it. We shall eat our boots and make travelling much lighter. Will you let me have your boots, Jenkins? They look almost tasty to me — in fact positively delicious. And, let's be realistic, you won't be needing them much longer, old chap. (JENKINS twitches nervously) Anyway, they're little good to you by the look of them — (JENKINS swings his legs away. During the following, PETER, on hands and knees, attempts to creep up on Jenkins' feet, but each time,

just as he's about to make a grab,  
JENKINS swings them away again)) They're  
worn almost as thin as your religious  
faith — but that's not quite gone yet,  
has it, Jenkins? — I mean your belief  
that there's something wonderfully  
blessed out there — only it's being worn  
thinner the deeper you go into this  
dashed wilderness. Do you know what I  
think, as a gambling man? I think the  
odds have to be about even whether God  
exists or not. So just in case you meet  
your maker, why not be the Good Samaritan  
by saving the life of a starving  
Englishman — and give him your bloody  
boots! (PETER sits back, for the moment  
defeated) As far as God is concerned the  
Englishman doesn't have to be a  
gentleman, Jenkins — even I would do  
...Poor chap doesn't answer me — maybe  
he's passed to the other world already.  
Well, too bad for you, Jenkins! — I gave  
you your chance to set things right with  
the Lord. Now you're going to be damned  
for sure, and I'll get your boots anyway.

JOHN WATCHES MARY-MARIE WHO HAS BEGUN TO  
SEARCH FOR ROOTS, AND THEN RETURNS TO THE  
VICINITY OF HIS PACK WHERE HE EXAMINES  
AND RELOADS HIS GUN. PART WAY THROUGH THE  
FOLLOWING MONOLOGUE, PETER GETS UP AND  
BEGINS TO FOLLOW MARY-MARIE IN HER  
SEARCH...

JENKINS

(slowly sitting up) Good deeds will not  
purchase a seat in heaven, Mr. Henley.  
One has to have faith, which is not like  
placing a bet on a horse. In any case, if  
I were going to do a deed which might  
please God I would not give my boots to  
you, Mr. Henley. In the Gospel, one is  
required to love one's enemies, and  
though I do not regard you with unbridled  
affection, we are not enemies. No, I  
would have to give my boots to Louis  
MacDonald O'Flynn! — for assuredly that  
would please God. I could not do so, of  
course — never could! — proving that I  
do not come up to God's mark. Alas, I  
shall keep my boots, thank you, Mr.  
Henley, and bear the consequences.

MARY-MARIE, SEARCHING FOR ROOTS ON HANDS  
AND KNEES, PARTS SOME BUSHES AND STARES  
INTO THE "FACE" OF THE SEATED FIGURE. SHE  
COVERS HER HEAD IN TERROR. PETER,

FOLLOWING HER ON HANDS AND KNEES,  
SUDDENLY STARES AT THE FIGURE, AND  
FREEZES...

JOHN

All this morbid talk can only inspire  
gloom—an attitude of mind which I  
simply cannot respect. Now, I admit that  
it's strange we have not found any sign  
of human habitation, but....

PETER

(In a strained voice) John —

JOHN

(after a pause) Well, speak out. Nothing  
you say surprises me anymore.

PETER

We are not alone ...

JOHN

(truly surprised) What ? ... (moving  
toward him) ..Who?...

JENKINS

Not alone, Mr. Henley? (standing up)  
Could it possibly be one of us?

JOHN COMES UP BEHIND PETER AND STARES AT  
THE FIGURE.

LOUIS

(coming over) Uh? What you got dere?

SEEING THE FIGURE, LOUIS CROSSES HIMSELF.  
MARY-MARIE COVERS HER HEAD AND MOANS.  
JENKINS ALSO APPROACHES AND SEEING THE  
FIGURE, JUMPS BACK BUMPING INTO ROSE WHO  
SHIFTS SULLENLY TO ONE SIDE.

JENKINS

Oh dear ...

PETER

Say something to him, John.

JOHN

I — I —

PETER

That won't do, John.

JOHN

I — I don't think that he would  
understand me...What about you, Louis?  
Could you speak to him? — (getting no

response) — or your wife? I mean, she's an Indian.

LOUIS

I don' t'ink Marie wan' spik dat one ...

JOHN

He's awfully still, Peter. Perhaps he's in a trance.

PETER

(approaching the figure closer on hands and knees) Name's Peter Henley. And yours? (tentatively holds out a hand) ...No, he's not well, John. In fact, I don't think he's breathing. And that face, if I'm not mistaken, is not a face... It's ...some sort of mask...

JENKINS

I think we should leave this place at once, milord. We've entered upon a heathen sacred grove — a place of human sacrifice. I really do think we should depart forthwith, milord.

PETER

(getting very close to the mask) It resembles someone I do not like...

HE REACHES FOR THE HEADDRESS AND PLUCKS IT OFF — THE MASK TUMBLES TO THE GROUND — EXPOSING AN UPRIGHT WOODEN STAKE WHICH HAS SERVED AS SUPPORT. PETER SITS BACK, HOLDING THE MASK...

PETER

I remember now — it's the look of my old headmaster when he was about to thrash me — which was often...

JOHN

There you are, Jenkins — it's not a place of the dead. As usual, your gloom has no foundation.

JENKINS

I remain full of the deepest foreboding, milord. To find such a heathen idol alone in the middle of the wilderness, is not propitious. Who put it here, and why? What is the meaning of it? It must have been put here to warn us away, or ...(he glances fearfully at Louis). I think we should go back the way we have come, milord, without a moment's delay.



JOHN

I tell you —it's nothing, Jenkins. You can see for yourself —it's nothing but a wooden post holding together a headdress, this ridiculous mask and some skins of...

ROSE, REACHING PAST PETER PULLS APART THE SKIN CAPE, AND DRAWS SHARPLY BACK...

ROSE

Ooooch! Son of bitch!

JOHN

What is it? What do you see?

PETER

(holding the cape open, and looking) A human body —phew!

JOHN

Without a head?

PETER

Without a head. (he stands up and looks down at it) Its head appears to have been severed neatly from its shoulders, though where the head is ...(looking around) ...seems to be a mystery. Rather odd isn't it?

JOHN

Well, of course, it's odd —but we can make far too much out of it. It's a well known Indian custom.

PETER

It is? Cutting off the head and dressing up the body like this? I've never heard of it.

JOHN

Well, I have. I read an account of it. The idea is that when you go into the next world you need to be able to cope with spirits and that sort of thing. So it's best to be rather supernatural — somebody the gods and demons will respect. That's why one must acquire this new identity, so to speak, which is what the mask gives one. And then, you see, the old self represented by the old earthy head is discarded —it has no further use.

PETER

As for me I'd keep my old earthy head  
attached to my old earthy body, thank you  
very much. What bloody rubbish!

JOHN

Well, but you can see how this account  
does cast light on what happened to this  
poor chap here.

PETER

Of course it does, John! And wasn't it  
handy that you read this account just  
before setting sail for places where they  
do this sort of thing. It takes the gloom  
you so dislike right out of the picture,  
doesn't it? We may be starving and  
finding headless people scattered about  
but no matter — you'll find some way to  
turn it into a picture that would warm  
the heart of our beloved Queen Victoria.

JOHN

Well, why not? As a matter of fact this  
discovery is a very good sign — it means  
that we cannot be far from human  
habitation. Human mortuaries are always  
to be found near human settlements, are  
they not?

PETER

Yes, but what kind of people? You're  
doing it again to me, John — fishing for  
diamonds in the mud.

JENKINS

(approaching John) Goodbye, milord. It  
has been a privilege to know you.

JOHN

But where are you going, Jenkins?

JENKINS

I cannot continue on this journey,  
milord. I shall go back the way we have  
come.

JOHN

Go back! Are you quite mad?

JENKINS

If so, it is the truth that has driven me  
mad. I have told you over and over again,  
milord, that O'Flynn has led us here to  
do away with us. Like that poor  
unfortunate wretch there, we shall soon  
be slaughtered and beheaded...

PETER

...without benefit of clergy.

JENKINS

And since you do not heed me, I shall leave. I cannot live to see a noble lord murdered. I could not bear it.

PETER

You would not have to bear it for long, Jenkins, since your turn would be next — and then you could pass on to an afterlife among the aristocrats. That would be heaven for you, though hell for them.

JENKINS

Mr. Henley, I do not believe that I was speaking to you. But if out of courtesy I partly included you, it was a horrible mistake, which I deeply regret....Milord, I thought that I might by my vigilance save you, but now it is impossible. We are in O'Flynn's trap, soon to be overpowered by his savage henchmen who live nearby. Make no mistake — Louis has been here before, having lured others to their dreadful fate. As usual, he was scouting ahead yesterday, and has well prepared the final act. Of course, he did not expect us to stumble across one of his former victims...a traveller like us.

JOHN

One like us? Surely not a man of our race, Jenkins. I mean...

JENKINS

Ah! You do well to pause as the dreadful thought strikes you — could it be so? Could this headless wretch decked out in animal skins and wearing a hideous heathen mask have been such as one of us? Yes, milord, — perhaps an Englishman — even an Oxford gentleman!

PETER

Perhaps even a clergyman...

JOHN

There is no reasoning with you, Jenkins! What would you have me do?

JENKINS

Flee this evil place! Come back with me to civilization, milord, or you are lost

forever! (JOHN TAKES OFF A BOOT AND  
EMPTIES IT...A STONE FALLS OUT) Ah, but  
you will not — I see that. Your ideals  
are as noble as your birth and blind you  
to the brutal facts of mere existence. I  
understand, milord. Acta est fabula.

JENKINS GIVES A GESTURE OF BENEDICTION  
AND EXITS RIGHT. HOLDING HIS BOOT, JOHN  
HOPS A FEW PACES AFTER HIM, AND STOPS...

JOHN  
Jenkins, come back! Come back at once! Do  
you hear me?

PETER  
You cannot force him to stay, John. As  
you said yourself — this country makes  
everyone free and equal —free of  
civilization and equally miserable. Let  
him go. The first bear track he sees will  
suddenly propel him back to us — though  
I don't know whether I want to see him  
again —the old hypocrite — pretending  
to be a freethinker when he's not.  
Yesterday I caught him reading the  
Anglican prayer book, which is hidden  
away at the bottom of his pack.

JOHN  
(slowly returning to stage centre) Out of  
respect for the old faith, no doubt —  
and out of nostalgia...

PETER  
Out of a trembling fear, I think. He  
fears he's finished, and a man at the end  
of his rope will reveal what he really  
believes.

JOHN  
Perhaps so —though he is not at the end  
of his rope just yet.

PETER  
He thinks he is...

JENKINS  
(a distant pitiable cry of fear...) Help!  
Mercy! Help! Help!!

PETER  
...You see what I mean?

JOHN  
Now what's he got himself into? (walking  
to stage right)

PETER

Let him be, John — there's nothing wrong with him. He simply wants our attention.

JENKINS

Help! Oh! Help...!

JOHN

I thought you said he was near the end of his rope. It sounds as though he's reached it.

PETER

It's in his head, not around it. At least not yet. You'll see him bound along here in a moment.

JENKINS

(with sharpened fear) Help! Help! Milo-o-o-rd!

JOHN

Peter, he sounds really in distress.

PETER

I'd really let him stew, the old duffer!

JENKINS

Oh help! Oh mercy! Oh! Oh!

JOHN

We must go.

HE EXITS RIGHT

PETER

(crossly, following him) It's absolutely nothing but dramatics.

LOUIS FOLLOWS THEM TO FAR RIGHT STAGE. HE WATCHES THEM GO —THEN WHIRLS —

LOUIS

Now...! (returning to centre he grabs his rifle, and checks it) You two stay back! Stay back!

ROSE

Whad you do?

LOUIS

Dey come t'rou opening — I get dem bot' easy — bang, bang! Den we dress dem up like dat one —(gesturing at the headless figure) If someone fin' dem dey blame Injin! Uh? Yer Papa nod so dumb, hey?

ROSE  
(deeply upset) Papa, dey hang you high!

LOUIS  
(reloading his gun, a double barrelled muzzle loader) Nod Louis. Nod dis one. When I shoot, I don' miss. (almost cheerfully) You know dat, Rosie...

ROSE  
Goddamn!... You don' do it! ... I shout to dem!

LOUIS  
(astounded) Huh!?

ROSE  
I say I shout to dem!... I shout to dem!..

LOUIS  
(slowly he puts his gun down and approaches Rose menacingly) You shout to dem, an' I cut your liver out — (pulling out his knife) —even my own dodder, I cut it out!

ROSE  
I don' care — I shout!

LOUIS  
(grabbing her by the hair, he twists it) By God — you wan' never shout again, uh? By God you like dat Peter, uh, batter dan you like to live?! Uh!?

MARY-MARIE, STARTING FROM STAGE LEFT REAR, NOW PROPELS HER MASSIVE BODY FORWARD WITH GATHERING MOMENTUM AND COLLIDES WITH LOUIS, CAUSING HIM TO STAGGER BACK...

MARY-MARIE  
You leave my dodder alone! By God, you don' touch her!

LOUIS  
(utterly shocked) Huh!

MARY-MARIE  
Son of bitch! Don' you dare touch her! De on'y one to fight dat Rose is me —Marie!

LOUIS

You Injin slut! Out of my way! I pick you  
out of bush when yer goddamn tribe lef'  
you wid buffalo shit! Get out of my way!

ROSE GRABS HIS GUN AND AIMS IT AT HIM  
UNWAVERINGLY...

ROSE  
One step, Papa, an' I blow yer balls off!

LOUIS  
(quite beside himself) You crazy bitches!  
What you do? —huh? — You let dem dump  
us when we get to gold diggin's — huh?  
Dey got some law dere — an' a hangin'  
judge. Dey soon find out dis Louis is  
Cutt'roat Louis — known t'roughout de  
West —an' dey hang me sure.

MARY-MARIE  
Batter you hang dan my dodder lose her  
goddamn liver! We go to Injin camp!  
Dere's no law dere...

LOUIS  
Injin camp! Never mind liver —dey cut  
yer goddamn head off! ...(looking  
furtively over at the headless man)  
..jus' like him.

JENKINS  
(offstage right) Easy, milord, I implore  
you —easy! Ah! Terrible! terrible!....

LOUIS  
Goddamn! We happy family, see!

LOUIS BUSIES HIMSELF WITH HIS PACK. THE  
WOMEN MELT BACK, LAYING DOWN LOUIS'  
GUN...JENKINS IS CARRIED ONSTAGE BY JOHN  
AND PETER...

JENKINS  
Oh, oh...let me down easily...I am in  
great pain ...great pain...

THEY CAREFULLY LOWER HIM TO THE GROUND  
AND PROP HIM AGAINST A PACK...

JENKINS  
Great heavens great heavens oh great  
heavens...Sum in articulo mortis. Ad  
patres. Ad patres...

PETER  
What the devil's he saying?

JOHN

Something about going to the  
fathers...Easy old boy, you will be  
fine...

JENKINS

Will I be fine? Yes, milord, I will be  
dead. Oh! Oh!

JOHN

Easy...

JOHN EXAMINES HIS ANKLE AND LIGHTLY  
PRESSES HIS CHEST. JENKINS WINCES...

JENKINS

Above all, be easy. Although I should  
never have put it in quite that way to a  
dying man. I should have said —be at  
rest —rest forever...

LOUIS

Whad happen?

JOHN

He jumped into a ravine. Mmmm.  
(continuing to examine him) How's your  
shoulder, old chap?

JENKINS

Is it there? I thought it was gone.

JOHN

You've only wrenched it, I believe. But  
I'm afraid your ankle is a mess, old  
chap.

JENKINS

Then I am done. Old Dominic Jenkins,  
Bachelor Cum Laude — let him die  
quietly. No — no signs of sympathy,  
please —no wreaths, no weeping, no hymns  
among the elms —only a little shallow  
grave scooped out by bare hands among the  
pebbles of this savage land...

JOHN

Don't be ridiculous, Jenkins. You're a  
long way from dying.

JENKINS

It's kind of you to say so, milord, but  
the wild beasts shall scatter my bones,  
and the Kingdom is not yet. No pity,  
please — I understand perfectly. Faith  
is folly, folly — absurd —  
ridiculous...



HE CONTINUES MUMBLING AND HALF SINGING  
BITS OF PSALMS AND POPULAR SONGS...

JOHN  
He's becoming delirious.

PETER  
Really? I can't see any great difference  
in him. A little more flowery, perhaps.

JENKINS  
...this must change my plans, indeed,  
indeed...Did you know, I took a step and  
fell into the universe. Who-o-o-o...!  
There's little comfort, I should tell  
you. The sun is simply a pompous beast  
and the dogstar —whoof! —utterly  
immoral! ...(continues muttering)

JOHN  
It would be quite a shock, you know,  
running along and suddenly there's no  
ground under you. I'd say he fell fifteen  
feet.

PETER  
Yes, that would shake up the old  
vertebrae.

JENKINS  
...I have come into deep waters, where  
the floods overflow me...I am weary of my  
crying ... deliver me... hear me...

JOHN  
Who's he speaking to, I wonder?

PETER  
He wouldn't know...

JENKINS  
...oh my dove, in the clefts of the rock,  
in the secret places...open to me my  
love, my dove ...lily of the valleys...  
arise...

PETER  
I knew there was a woman involved...

JENKINS  
...the floods have lifted up, the floods  
have lifted up their voice, the floods  
lift up their waves...

JOHN

That doesn't sound like a woman to me. We have to do something about that ankle of his Peter, it looks terrible...

PETER

Well, what? A leg you can set straight, but not an ankle.

JOHN

We shall have to carry him, Peter.

PETER

Carry him? Where? We had a bad enough time getting him back to camp. How far can we carry him in this country? A couple of miles a day? I doubt we can do that. We haven't the strength to carry our shadows at noon.

JOHN

Then what do you suggest? We can't leave him like this. If he doesn't starve, he will freeze.

THEY STARE AT ONE ANOTHER FOR A LONG MOMENT.

PETER

I don't have any answers, John — and, for once, neither do you.

THEY ARE SILENT

JENKINS

...sursum corda...sursum corda...soli Deo gloria...(begins to mumble again)

JOHN

The night is coming on, and I think it's going to freeze.. We must try to sleep now. Perhaps tomorrow we'll find some answers...I believe we will...

SURPRISED AT JOHN'S LACK OF CERTAINTY, PETER STARES AT HIM AS JOHN SPREADS A BLANKET, LIES DOWN AND ROLLS HIMSELF INTO IT. JENKINS CONTINUES TO MUMBLE INCOHERENTLY AND FROM TIME TO TIME BREAKS INTO HALF-SONG, MADE UP OF SNATCHES OF OLD HYMNS... PETER IS SOON JOINED BY ROSE. HE HAS WRAPPED HIMSELF IN A BLANKET AGAINST THE COLD... ROSE PULLS AT HIS BLANKET...

PETER

Not tonight, Rose dear. Im simply not up to it. Utterly fagged...

ROSE

(after a moment accepting this) Peter — we build leettle ranch, huh? You nod leave me ever, huh?

SHE KISSES HIM AND ALMOST SUCCEEDS IN PULLING HIS BLANKET AWAY...

PETER

Rose, not tonight, please. I mean, the others may hear.

ROSE

(desisting) You lak me — don' you Peder?

PETER

I like you enormously, Rose.

ROSE

You damn right. I tell you, Peder, you badder lak me good.

PETER

Ssssh. You shouldn't take this thing too seriously, Rose.

ROSE

Huh? Whad you say?

PETER

I mean by that — I would like to know you better, Rose — d'you see what I mean? — I mean before, uh,— I mean we must be sure of one another first.

ROSE

I sure of me, Peder. You mak goddamn sure you sure of you.

PETER

Exactly...and we need a litle time for that, don't we?

ROSE

Now is time.

PETER

Eh?

ROSE

Now, Peder, you say yes now —from now for good. See?

PETER

Of course, yes, I mean I ... I really must sleep, Rose...

ROSE KISSES HIM TRIUMPHANTLY

ROSE

(standing up) Good. You mine, Peder.  
Sleep now.

PETER SETTLES DOWN, ROLLING HIMSELF IN  
HIS BLANKET. ROSE GOES BACK TO HER PLACE  
AND DRAWS A BUFFALO ROBE AROUND HER. SHE  
LIES DOWN. A WOLF HOWLS, NOT SO  
DISTANTLY. LOUIS CRAWLS TO WHERE ROSE IS  
LYING...

LOUIS

(in a hoarse whisper) Rose...Rose!

ROSE

(half sitting up) Huh?! ...No, Papa. Go  
back now. Go back!

LOUIS

Ssssst! You wake dem.

ROSE

I wake dem sure if you don' sleep.

AS LOUIS SPEAKS, MARY-MARIE CIRCLES  
BEHIND ROSE...

LOUIS

We do it now, Rosie. We don' do it now,  
we never do it — we all dead.

ROSE

No! We don' do it —ever! Go back!

LOUIS

You wan' starve to deat'? Snow soon, I  
tell you — if you don' starve, you  
freeze. You no like dis man, Rosie. He  
jus' firs' man you ever know. Afder dis I  
show you real men. Nod a lordship, but a  
man. You have money, too, Rosie - - you  
have good time,— nod like dis...

MARY-MARIE, WHO HAS BEEN CIRCLING BEHIND  
ROSE (AS STEALTHILY AS HER BULK WILL  
ALLOW) MAKES A LUNGE FOR ROSE...

ROSE

(jumping to evade Marie) Ha! I see you  
trick!...

AS MARY-MARIE HURTLES PAST HER, ROSE  
GIVES HER A KICK, THEN PICKS UP A  
CLUBLIKE STICK AND HITS LOUIS ON THE HEAD

AS HE LUNGES AT HER. MARY-MARIE HAS PICKED UP A LARGISH ROCK WHICH SHE NOW HEAVES AT ROSE. IT MISSES HER, HOWEVER, AND HITS LOUIS WHO IS JUST BEGINNING TO GET TO HIS FEET, LAYING HIM FLAT A SECOND TIME. THEN ROSE, SWINGING HER CLUB, FELLS MARY-MARIE. DURING THIS MELEE THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TAKES PLACE AS PETER AND JOHN AWAKEN AND SIT UP...

PETER  
I say! What! ...

JOHN  
What is going on here?

PETER  
This is unbelievable. This is mayhem...

JOHN  
Will you people never learn self control?  
I say, stop this at once!

PETER  
Can we never have a decent night's sleep?

ROSE  
(having levelled her father) Okay, Peder.  
You go sleep now.

JOHN  
But, good heavens — what was that thud?  
(Louis gives a rending groan) Who was that?

ROSE  
Ever't'ing good. You sleep now. Mama trip over stump goin' to wood.

JOHN  
Is she alright now?

ROSE  
Yah —yah. She alright. She asleep now.

JOHN  
I thought I saw someone fighting ...

ROSE  
Jus' goddamn fam'ly.... They okay now. I tell you — go sleep.

PETER  
(lying back) I don't think we've ever had a night's quiet sleep.

JOHN

Is it time for my watch yet?

ROSE

No, no. Papa still watch.

JOHN

Tell him to wake me. And do try to keep the peace, Rose. I mean, we must hang together, mustn't we? ...

ROSE

I no hang, lordchips — nod togedder, nod apart.

JENKINS

(in great solemnity)...and God said ...set them in the firmament ...and let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life ...and God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...and man became a living soul ...And Adam said.... (begins to mutter)...

JENKINS QUAVERINGLY SINGS A FEW BARS OF "JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL" AS THE DARKNESS DEEPENS.

SCENE II

EARLY NEXT MORNING. FROST HAS FALLEN, AND THE PLACE WHERE THE HEADLESS FIGURE HAD BEEN IS EMPTY. JOHN ATTEMPTS A FEW MORNING EXERCISES, MORE FOR WARMTH THAN EXERCISE. JENKINS, PROPPED AGAINST A LOG, WATCHES JOHN. PETER SLOWLY RISES FROM SLEEP. LOUIS AND MARY-MARIE SIT ON A LOG —HE WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS —SHE WITH A SOILED KERCHIEF WRAPPED AROUND HER HEAD.

JOHN

(going over to Jenkins) Well, how are you feeling this morning, Jenkins?

JENKINS

(absently) Fine, milord. Fine. Very fine.

JOHN

How's your ankle?

JENKINS

I think, milord, it is broken.

JOHN

I'm afraid it is. Let's have a look at it.

JENKINS

If you wish, milord, but the ankle is quite useless.

JOHN

(examining the ankle) Do be cheerful, Jenkins.

JENKINS

I shall try to be, milord. And if not cheerful, resigned. Nevertheless, the ankle is quite useless, and I don't want to look at it — for it represents merely a piece of decaying nature — Ouch! — cast up by the primeval bog whence we emerged for a few moments of squandered existence.

JOHN

I would say years, not moments, Jenkins.

JENKINS

And what is a year but a series of moments, milord?

JOHN

(standing up) Laid end to end those moments pave the way to forever. What's wrong with your head, Louis?

LOUIS  
Nodding.

JOHN  
(going closer to him) But I believe you have a large lump on your noggin.

LOUIS  
I fall over log las' night.

JOHN  
And did Mrs. O'Flynn fall over a log, too?

LOUIS  
Yah. We fall togedder. (He grins) Dat why I have large lump on noggin.

PETER  
Better look out, Louis —too much wedded bliss will be the end of you... (pulling on his boots) Have you noticed the frost, John?

JOHN  
It's hardly noticeable, is it?

PETER  
It is frost, though, which means that winter is upon us. Perhaps we can build an igloo and live in it for the winter.

JOHN  
I do not find that very amusing, Peter...

JOHN WANDERS OVER TO WHERE THE HEADLESS FIGURE WAS, AND STOPS, LOOKING AT THE EMPTY PLACE...

PETER  
I mean the Eskimos survive quite nicely in their igloos. They hibernate, you know, like the bears, and therefore don't need much food. The Eskimo mother chews a choice lump of fat from time to time and then passes it on to the others. They sit chewing contentedly in their little ice houses and listen to the blizzards howling outside. They don't speak, for that would expend too much energy — they just grunt from time to time to relieve the boredom. Yes, ennui might be a problem, but that wouldn't bother us too



much were we to build an ice house. We would have Jenkins endlessly breathing his last breath, in a reverential manner, which would keep us in some suspense, wouldn't it? ... Why what's wrong, John? You look as though you'd seen a ghost...

JOHN

It's gone....quite vanished...

PETER

(crossing to John) By Jove, so it has... as though it had never been...

LOUIS

(crossing over to look, is shocked and crosses himself) Eh bien dieu du tabernacle... Bloody hell...

MARY-MARIE COMES OVER PART WAY, THEN COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS. ROSE, DISCARDING HER BUFFALO ROBE, STANDS UP AND LOOKS, THEN SHRUGS...

JOHN

But what could have happened to it?

PETER

Perhaps it never existed. In our feeble state we imagined it. Jenkins, your demon figure is no more, you'll be happy to know! It has gone!

JENKINS

Demons come and go, Mr. Henley, but they are never gone for good.

JOHN

Seriously, what do you think, Peter?

PETER

I no longer think seriously about anything. No doubt the relatives came and took it away to give it a proper funeral.

JOHN

There's only one sensible explanation — some animal must have taken it during the night. It could be that wolf we've been hearing. What do you make of it, Louis?

LOUIS

I say we go now. Quick. If we stay here, we done.

MARY-MARIE

Yah —we go — we go now...

JOHN

Ah — so you make something of this, do you Louis?...

LOUIS

(harshly) Now! We go!

HE GLARES AT JOHN WHO IS TAKEN ABACK AT LOUIS' DEMANDING TONE.

JOHN

But Louis, we can't go now —we've got Mr. Jenkins to think of....

LOUIS

(firmly) I say we go.

JOHN

He's broken his ankle, Louis, don't you understand? He can't walk a step, and we would not make a mile a day through this brush if we tried to carry him. You know that.

LOUIS

(modifying his tone a little) Yer lordships — de ol' one — he die anyway. We go now or else all die. Dis place no good. Snow she is coming, by god, to freeze de goddamn guts out. An' no food. You t'ink we eat de trees? Huh? ...No, we go now.

JENKINS

For once, I am bound to say, I agree with Louis O'Flynn — you must go, milord. The thought that I was the cause of your death because your noble nature would not allow you to desert me would make the end of my life an agony it would not otherwise be — lying here at peace and letting the snow gently cover me.

PETER

You cannot be feeling all that poorly, Jenkins —to contrive such a noble sentence for your noble lord.

JOHN

But he is quite right, Peter, in saying that I could not desert him — nor, Louis, could I insist that you stay and risk your life or the lives of your dear ones. But I have a plan. Louis, you and your wife and daughter will leave at once for the Indian village which must be

nearby. You shall tell the Indians that they will be properly rewarded if they will send a party with food and warm clothes and help us carry Jenkins back to their village. There we shall acquire a canoe, load Jenkins aboard, and float down to the gold diggings —which cannot be far off.

JENKINS

Milord, I beg you not to trust to the machinations of that...

LOUIS

Good! By God, we go! Come, Marie! Come, Rose! (throwing his pack on his back)...

ROSE

No!

LOUIS

Uh?

ROSE

I don' go nowhere wid you! I stay wid Peder!

PETER

Oh, Rose, now don't —

ROSE

I stay wid Peder!

LOUIS

I tell you —you come!

HE THROWS HER PACK AT HER BUT SHE HURLS IT TO THE GROUND.

ROSE

I tell you —no!

THEY STARE AT ONE ANOTHER ENRAGED...

LOUIS

(hoarsely) You wan' have weddin' wid corpse, huh? You wan' dat, huh?... No, you don'! — I know you...Yer my little girl...Come, Rosie ... Don' fool yer ol' Papa...You come now? Uh? Yah? I say — come! You hear! Come!

PETER

Yes, Rose, you run along and do as your father tells you...

ROSE

(to Louis) I stay wid Peder! He's my husband!

LOUIS

Bah! Dat one? He no husband...!

ROSE

You lie! Peder say it —he say he love me! To de end!

TRIUMPHANTLY SHE LOOKS AT PETER FOR CONFIRMATION...

PETER

Well, Rose —strictly speaking — I mean when it comes right down to it, your father is correct — I'm not about to be anyone's husband.

ROSE

(shaken) Whad you say?

PETER

Well, I don't know exactly where you got the idea that I would be your husband, Rose. I like you —certainly I do — but, good heavens — there's nothing more than that. I mean, how could there be?

ROSE

You wan' me! You tak' me be yer woman!  
You tak' me!

PETER

Now, look here, Rose — I don't love you really, you know ...and please — don't get upset. I mean it's your first affair, and every girl becomes a little silly over her first affair. I've made you into a woman — and naturally that's a big change for you — but you'll rapidly grow out of it and wonder what you saw in me...

LOUIS

(to Rose) Damn fool! I tol' you!

ROSE

(to Peter) (brokenly) You say you don' love me when you love me...

PETER

But I thought — I mean — there was nothing to it, Rose. A little harmless fun, that's all.

ROSE

You say dat you love me!

PETER

Of course I did — but that was — you know — love talk. I mean that's normal, isn't it?

ROSE

You mad' love to me. You tak' me, Peder. Yer my husband.

PETER

Look, Rose, it's out of the question. I really must be firm. Marry you? How could such a wild thought cross your mind? I mean it's fantastic. My mother would have a cerebral hemorrhage! Do go along!

ROSE

(on the edge of desperation) Be my husband, Peder...

PETER

Ridiculous! We're worlds apart! What are we arguing about? You know that it's common practise for a white man to have an Indian girl when he wants one. Why did you think I would be any different?

ROSE

(in a strangled voice) Peder... I tell you...

PETER

Now do go along with your father, Rose, and let's hear no more about it. That's a good girl — obey your Papa... (he grins broadly at John, who does not grin back)

FOR A MOMENT ROSE STANDS TRANSFIXED, THEN MAKES A DASH AND GRABS LOUIS' GUN OUT OF HIS HAND, RAISES IT TO HER SHOULDER AND FIRES. PETER DROPS TO THE GROUND WITH A CRY...

ROSE

Kill dem! ...Kill dem!

LOUIS MAKES A JUMP AND RETRIEVES HIS GUN FROM ROSE

LOUIS

Now, you got sense! Quick! Tak' de lordships!

THEY FALL ON JOHN WHO IS BENDING OVER PETER AND OVERCOME HIM WITH THE HELP OF

MARY-MARIE WHO SITS ON HIM WHILE THEY  
BIND HIM...

JOHN  
Murderers! You shall pay for this! Don't  
think you shall escape! How dare you!  
Damn!!

LOUIS GOES OVER TO INSPECT PETER...

LOUIS  
Noding! You on'y clip him, Rosie! Flesh  
woun'. He be better dead.

LOUIS BINDS PETER...

JOHN  
If he should die...

LOUIS  
Hah! He live to die wid you, Lord Shit!  
(he spits at John)

JENKINS  
Ah, milord, it has come to pass as I  
feared it would. The kingdom of Satan has  
the upper hand and we can do nothing but  
endure to the end —nobly, as I know you  
will, milord — whatever dark deeds this  
unholy vermin may perform...

LOUIS PICKS UP A STOUT STICK AND MOVES  
SLOWLY TOWARD JENKINS AS THE LATTER  
CONTINUES...

JENKINS  
...as perform he will. Persta atque  
obdura. Remember, milord, he cannot touch  
your inmost being — he cannot touch your  
inviolate soul ...

STANDING IN FRONT OF JENKINS, LOUIS  
RAISES THE STICK OVER HIS HEAD...

JENKINS  
Deus misereatur...Deus misereatur...

JOHN  
Stop, you fiend!!

LOUIS BRINGS THE STICK DOWN WITH A CRACK  
ON JENKINS' HEAD...

JOHN  
(brokenly) ...oh my god...

PETER GROANS, AND SLOWLY STRUGGLES TO A SITTING POSITION...

ROSE  
(picking up a knife) I finish him fer good...

KNIFE RAISED, SHE MAKES A RUN AT PETER, BUT LOUIS BLOCKS HER AND WRESTLES THE KNIFE AWAY FROM HER.

LOUIS  
No! Nod like dat! You wan' me hang!?! (she bites him in the struggle) Goddamn!  
(shoving her so that she falls, he mimics her) He my husbin! He wan' me! He love me! (spitting on the ground) Now, you see! He play wid you. You jus' dirty headen to dat English. (turning to Peter) Too good for my dodder, huh? Now we fin' out if yer too good fer wolf meat.

MARY-MARIE  
(grotesquely dancing in front of John waving the small sack of gold coins) Wheee! Let's kill 'em now. I kill de lordchips! I kill de lordchips!

LOUIS  
(grabbing her by the hair and pulling her with him) No! You come wid me! You too, Rosie! We talk — come!

THEY RETREAT BACKSTAGE AND CONFER...

PETER  
Am I still alive? Or is this hell? I think it must be.

JOHN  
Are you alright, Peter?

PETER  
No. I'm not alright. I'm terrified. What are they going to do to us?

JOHN  
I'd rather not think..

PETER  
Well, that's some relief. I really had no idea she was so serious about me. I mean how could she seriously believe...

JOHN  
Well, she did, and it looks as though we're done for, Peter...

PETER

I shall reason with Louis — it's our only chance...

JOHN

But what will you say...?

PETER

Louis! Louis! Will you come here, like a good fellow!

LOUIS LOOKS AROUND, AND COMES OVER TO PETER AS THE LATTER SPEAKS.. THE OTHERS FOLLOW. LOUIS SHARPENS HIS KNIFE AS HE LISTENS...

PETER

Look, old chap, I understand your problem. You're really strapped —short of cash. A couple of what look like wealthy Englishmen fall into your hands and you think, by Jove, they're fair game. I mean it's what you chappies regularly do, isn't it? As you said yourself —you have to live by your wits. But we English are much too civilized to live by our wits. So we had no idea that robbery was what you had in mind all along...I do wish you'd stop sharpening that knife, Louis. It sets my teeth on edge.... Since it's money you're after I have a proposition which I think will interest you. These gold coins you've hoisted from us amount to very little — perhaps a hundred pounds —enough to keep a curate happy for a few months. But how about twenty thousand pounds? Aha, do I see the old eyes begin to sparkle with greed? I'm serious, Louis.

JOHN

Have you gone mad, Peter? Where would you get twenty thousand pounds? It's almost a king's ransom.

PETER

I wasn't thinking of a king — I was thinking of you, John.

JOHN

Me? What?

PETER

A Lord of the Realm— a Viscount — could be worth at least twenty thousand pounds if handed over alive and in the pink of



condition —together, of course, with his old comrade, Peter Henley, also in the pink. Well, think about it, Louis — you could make a fortune...

JOHN

How dare you! You're actually proposing to sell me! How dare you! Twenty thousand pounds! My family could never —

PETER

Of course they could. For you, John — their dear Johnny — their oldest son and heir? Of course they could. Why their Grange Estates alone must be worth at least twenty thousand...

JOHN

(beside himself) Stop this at once! It's totally out of the question! I will not hear of it!

PETER

You will not only hear of it, John, you will approve of it. Or else we're done for. Is that what your parents would want?

JOHN

I don't know what they would want, but if they have to pay twenty thousand pounds I know they'll be ruined.

PETER

You won't know anything at all if you don't wake up to reality. Louis is going to do us in, John, slay us, slaughter us, feed us to the first wolf he can find. Why d'you think he's sharpening that big knife? Do you see any roast beef around? Look, my life is on the block, too, John —and what about poor Jenkins if he ever comes round? Three lives, John, hang on your word...

JOHN

(after a long pause)...If it means three lives ... I guess I have no alternative, have I?

PETER

None whatever, in my view. So what do you say?

JOHN

Louis, you ...you may go ahead ...Louis, you may ransom me, I say —on the

understanding that you will also spare  
the lives of Mr. Henley and Mr. Jenkins  
... Whup!!

LOUIS HURLS HIS KNIFE INTO THE LOG  
AGAINST WHICH JOHN IS SITTING. REACHING  
DOWN, LOUIS GRASPS JOHN BY THE SCRUFF OF  
THE NECK AND LIFTS HIM TO HIS FEET,  
HOLDING HIM FIRMLY...

LOUIS  
Now, Rosie! His Lordchip is too warm. He  
wan' be cool!

WITH ALACRITY, ROSE PROCEEDS TO DISROBE  
JOHN — REMOVING HIS COAT, SHIRT, BOOTS,  
AND PANTS HANDING THESE ARTICLES TO MARY-  
MARIE WHO ACCEPTS THEM WITH GLEE...

JOHN  
(during the disrobing) What? Good  
heavens!....How dare you...? I mean,  
after all....Rose, what are you doing...?  
Is this some sort of game...? Oh, no...At  
least leave me those...This is hardly...  
I mean, really....

ROSE STARTS TO TAKE OFF HIS LONG  
UNDERWEAR...

LOUIS  
No, no, Rosie! Leave him decent, for the  
Mother of God...

ROSE  
Okay, Papa. But he was decent w'en he was  
born, an' he was nekked den.

LOUIS  
Since Adam ate dat goddamn apple, nobody  
is decent. (returning John to his seated  
position against the log) Now you sit  
down agin, lordships, an' have a good  
rest.

JOHN  
(truly hurt) But why, Louis? Why this?  
Why have you taken my clothes away?

LOUIS  
Ha ha! Because dis way, yer lordships,  
you freeze fast. Tonighd ged so cold de  
trees turn to icicles. Tomorra mornin',  
milordships, you froze so stiff I stan'  
you up an' you jus' stay dere an'  
say noding....

LOUIS PICKS UP PETER BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK AND HOLDS HIM TIGHT WHILE ROSE DISROBES HIM TO HIS LONG UNDERWEAR... WHENEVER PETER TRIES TO SPEAK, LOUIS CHOKES HIM OFF...

LOUIS  
...even dis one will have noddin' to say. His mou'd will be wide open, but noding come out of it. Dat nice.

JOHN  
What about the ransom, Louis? Peter was right about that — you could make much, much more money by ransoming me. And now I see there's no way but for me to offer myself...

LOUIS  
You offer noding! If I wan' ransom money, I ransom you. But Louis' no fool. Kidnap an English lord? De Queen, she go so crazy, she sen' de whole goddamn world out lookin' fer poor Louis — an' wen dey fin' me dey hang me so quick de judge never even ged a good look at me...(setting the disrobed Peter back against the log)... But dis way dere's no murder — dey on'y fin' two English gennilmun froze to deat'.

PETER  
I swear to you, Louis — if Lord John William Fitzwilliam is returned safely, there will be a fortune for you —twenty thousand pounds! Where could you get that in five lifetimes?

LOUIS  
I on'y got one lifetime —so says de Lord. An' one hunderd pounds is badder in my pocket today dan twenty t'ousand pounds tomorra at de end of a rope.

PETER  
I swear to you, Louis, that there'd be no risk... There's a way it could be done that would guarantee your safety. — you can make me a hostage in the deal to insure you against tricks. And Jenkins, too. Then you could hand over his lordship without fear of getting caught. They wouldn't dare touch you with two lives at stake — I'm sure they wouldn't.

LOUIS

Hah! You talk so much you can'd fart straight! You t'ink Louis a fool. Yer no lordship like dis one — dey catch me fer sure an' say sorry fer you, Peder, and string bean here, but de goddamn justice —she mus' be done. I know dese English. Dey pud justice before life.....

HE PULLS THE KNIFE OUT FROM THE LOG PETER LEANS AGAINST, TURNS TO SNATCH THE COIN SACHEL AWAY FROM MARY-MARIE AS SHE DANCES BY WITH IT, AND SHAKES OUT A COIN, LOOKING AT IT —THEN RETURNS IT TO THE SACHEL...

LOUIS  
(kissing the satchel of coins, and holding it high) Louis pud one hunderd pounds before anyt'ing!

LIGHT FADES TO DARKNESS...

SCENE III

THE CAMP TOWARDS EVENING. JOHN AND PETER SIT BOUND AT A DISTANCE FROM THE GLOWING COALS OF A FIRE. NEAR THEM LIES DOMINICK JENKINS. ALL ARE IN THEIR LONG UNDERWEAR AND THEY ARE SUFFERING FROM THE COLD... AROUND THE FIRE SIT THE O'FLYNNS ROASTING A RABBIT...

JOHN

I cannot understand how they could actually murder us for the sake of those few coins.

PETER

A few coins to you is a fortune to them.

JOHN

But murder. It's such a horrible and desperate act...

PETER

To us. To them it's one way of doing business, since there's a profit in it.

JOHN

Then why doesn't Louis kill us and get it over with?

PETER

So that no one will discover us with our throats cut — just in case the wolves don't like eating frozen Englishmen. I mean, it's just possible that we taste vile — I mean when we're frozen.

JOHN

How can you, Peter!

PETER

And by waiting overnight until we're quite stiff, he can remove the ropes that bind us and dress us up again — to look as though we had simply got lost and the northern winter had finished us off. Not unusual in this part of the world. And no great surprise to our families.

JOHN

We should have been on our guard. I blame myself, Peter. I'm sorry...

JENKINS MUMBLING BECOMES LOUDER AND THEY LISTEN ...

JENKINS

...and the flocks conceived before the  
rods, and brought forth cattle  
ringstreaked, speckled and spotted —and  
hah ... (begins to mumble)...

JOHN  
Poor chap — I think he's far gone...

PETER  
He's luckier than we are to be out of it.  
Of course he didn't have as far to go.

JOHN  
I think you're quite wrong about that —  
he had Louis figured from the beginning.  
We didn't.

PETER  
That's so...I think I'll soon be out of  
it myself. I'm going a little numb...

JOHN  
Don't let yourself relax, Peter. You've  
got to fight it. Life means hope. Fight  
hard against your bonds — the energy  
will give you a little warmth.

PETER  
What energy? I'm too damned tired...

JOHN  
Don't sleep, Peter. Fight it! Fight it!

PETER  
Anything you say. Blindly obedient to the  
end.

JOHN  
Jenkins! Jenkins!

PETER  
Let him go, John. He probably thinks he's  
preaching to the House of Lords... don't  
spoil his fantasy.

JOHN  
Jenkins! Wake up, Jenkins!

JENKINS  
(in a fairly natural voice) Milord ? You  
called me? At your service, milord...

JOHN  
Try to pull yourself together, old chap —  
—will you?

PETER

If you are going to be an English gentleman, Jenkins, you must learn to pull yourself together — especially when you're falling apart and death is a tick away.

JENKINS

Yes, death — that is the problem. I leapt into a ravine and I saw death, and there is more to it than one would think...

JOHN

Jenkins — please try...

JENKINS

(sitting up) You take on quite extraordinary things when you die — stars and streams and leaves — blossoms to ones fingers. When I taught Latin at Christminster...

PETER

(after a pause) Well, do tell us what happened at Christminster. Regale us with your life story, Jenkins. Why not, now that it is a closed book?

JENKINS

...there were shadows under her eyes and moontides in them. Her voice under the sunset birds was the swimming of waves in a summer river....(he falls back)

PETER

He's into some kind of poetry ...

JENKINS

Forgive me, my lord, forgive me...

JOHN

Of course I'll forgive you, Jenkins. But will you forgive me?

PETER

I don't think he's referring to you, John.

JENKINS

We are going to die and we have not begun. Where are you, Jenny Lind — and our child — our child, Jenny, where is our child...? Esto perpetua...et ux..et ux...Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes... bonis avibus...  
(lapses into silence)

PETER

I knew he'd left God and Country on account of a girl. He got a girl with child and was kicked out of the Church — I'll wager it.

JOHN

Peter, he might hear you.

PETER

Why on earth should it matter now? We all have our pasts, it's nice to know. Makes for fellow-feeling as we close the book. Except for you, John. You will die innocent.

JOHN

Oh, I have my past.

PETER

That isn't a past, what you had. That's a walk in the park. I'm escaping my creditors —and my family for that matter. Jenkins is escaping — well, himself. But you're not escaping anything. It's a pity really.

JOHN

Thanks. At least I have no regrets.

PETER

How sad. Nothing to regret. You're innocent. Like an unripe plum.

JOHN

I'm ripe enough to fall...

JENKINS

...Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob ... bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon...

PETER

I do wish he'd stop that. Jenkins!

JENKINS

...He saith among the trumpets haha ...and afar off thunder of the captains and the shouting ... (starts to mutter)

PETER

I'm so damned cold, John. I think I shall have a little...nap... (he falls sideways)



JOHN  
Peter! Peter, sit up! You must sit up.

PETER  
I really don't want to...

JOHN  
You must not give in, Peter!

JENKINS  
...tut, tut ... forty years old was I  
when Moses the servant of the Lord sent  
me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the  
land... and I brought him again as it was  
in my heart...

JOHN  
Peter! —Peter! We're not dead yet!  
Peter!

LOUIS  
(calling across) You dead soon, your  
lordships! But you goin' to set dere till  
Spring before you rot! ... (he laughs and  
Mary-Marie giggles)

JOHN  
(struggling desperately with his bonds)  
Peter — will yourself to stay awake!  
Will it!

PETER  
My only will is to go to sleep...

JOHN  
Peter! ...I say, Peter!

PETER  
What? ... what?

JOHN  
Keep moving — keep wiggling...

PETER  
Wiggle what? ... Goodnight...

JOHN  
Is that all you have to say on the brink  
of eternity — goodnight?

PETER  
Yes. Goodnight.

JOHN  
(after a long desperate struggle with  
his bonds) Peter! Peter — listen to  
me...!

PETER  
Always have... uh...

JOHN  
There's one thing that might save us —  
one hope...

PETER  
Jolly good...uh...

JOHN  
Please, listen! Rose — if it weren't for  
Rose we'd be free.

PETER  
She wins ...the woman wins...uh...

JOHN  
That's just it, Peter. That's exactly it  
— she did not win — and that's why  
she's killing you.

PETER  
(after a pause, rolling over) By God,  
you're right.

JOHN  
Sit up, Peter. You've got to sit up.

STRUGGLING, PETER FINALLY SITS UP...

JOHN  
I realize what this means, Peter —it's  
an awful thing to have to do.

PETER  
It is. I'm surprised to hear you  
proposing it.

JOHN  
This is not a demand, Peter — I want you  
to know that. You're perfectly free to —

PETER  
There isn't much choice is there? Three  
lives depend on it.

JOHN  
But if you can't do it honestly — I mean  
if you don't like her....

PETER  
What has that do with it? Oh, I do admit  
that there's a certain animal attraction  
between us —she has lice.

JOHN  
I know.

PETER  
How do you know that?

JOHN  
I mean I would have guessed so.

PETER  
John — you wouldn't have — not you!

JOHN  
How dare you!

PETER  
No — I guess you haven't.

JOHN  
Good heavens.

PETER  
But I have — ah me! ...Not Sally Sutton-Brookhaven, it's true. However...

ROSE GETS UP FROM NEAR THE FIRE AND COMES TOWARD THE MEN, STOPPING HALFWAY...

ROSE  
You nod dead, huh?

PETER  
I'm not sure —it could be my ghost chattering away.

ROSE  
(turning back) You call me w'en you sure you dead.

PETER  
Rose! ...(ROSE turns back)...Could you come here, Rose? I have one last request, Rose. You can't deny the last request of a dying man...

ROSE  
(coming to him with knife drawn) Mebbe I help you die, an' den no more request from you ever.

PETER  
(when she has stopped in front of him)  
Rose, I love you.

ROSE GRABS HIM BY THE HAIR AND PUTS THE KNIFE TO HIS THROAT...

ROSE

Hah!...You — mak' - fun - of Rose —  
huh?

PETER

Rose, don't —listen to me, please — I'm  
not making f-fun - I'm quite serious —  
utterly serious, Rose dear. I want to —  
to — ask you something — —and I have n-  
n-never been more serious in my life—  
whatever's left of it...

ROSE

(still with the knife at his throat) Say  
it! You say!

PETER

Rose, please take that knife away — I-I  
can't form my c-c-consonants...

ROSE

(stands up, sheathing knife) Say.

PETER

I want ... well.. I'd like you to  
consider ...I mean I know it sounds a bit  
out of character — from me ...but would  
you marry me, Rose?

AFTER A MOMENT OF SHOCK, SHE BEGINS TO  
KICK DIRT AND RUBBLE OVER HIM...

ROSE

Hahahaha....!! Dog dung! I bury you — I  
bury you !

SHE PULLS THE KNIFE FROM ITS SHEATH AND  
GRABS HIM BY THE HAIR...

PETER

Rose, I mean to say — right now! We'll  
be married right now! Now!!

HER KNIFE HAND IS ARRESTED IN ITS  
DESCENT...

ROSE

Whad?

PETER

Right now! We'll be married immediately!  
Then I can't back out of it, can I? —not  
that I want to, Rose. Not that I shall  
ever, ever want to...

ROSE

(astonished) You marry me now?

PETER

Yes — now — this instant.

JOHN

But Peter, old boy —

ROSE

We marry now, Peder?

HE NODS, AND SHE LOWERS THE KNIFE...

JOHN

But how the deuce are you — ?

PETER

Jenkins, of course —Jenkins will marry us. He's a minister of the cloth, isn't he? A priest?

JOHN

Jenkins?

PETER

Of course Jenkins. He's our man. I knew we'd find a use for him somehow or other. You see, Rose? We can get married right here and now.

ROSE, PONDERING, TURNS TO THE FRONT  
HOLDING THE KNIFE LOOSELY ...

JOHN

Jenkins was a priest, Peter. Whether he still is I don't know...

PETER

Was — is — what does it matter? Once a priest always a priest. Eh, Rose, eh?...

ROSE

(still lost in thought) Yah, Peder...

PETER

Well, we can ask him, I suppose, whether he has the authority ... He's sleeping quietly now — must be over his delirium.

LOUIS

(coming over) Whad dis, huh?

NOBODY PAYS ANY ATTENTION TO HIM...

JOHN

Jenkins! Jenkins!

JENKINS

(sitting up) Milord?

JOHN

Jenkins — you must pay attention to what I am going to say — do you understand me?

JENKINS

Well, of course I understand you, milord — perfectly — though I do not know whether it is possible to entirely understand another human being.

JOHN

Good. You're almost talking sensibly. Your fever must be better.

JENKINS

Much better, milord, much better.

HE LIES DOWN AGAIN...

JOHN

Jenkins!

JENKINS

Yes, milord.

JOHN

Are you a priest, Jenkins? Are you still an ordained minister of the Church of England?

JENKINS

Ah, the Church of England...

PETER

It could be any church, Jenkins — any church at all.

LOUIS

(who has been looking from one to the other) I say — what is dis?!

JOHN

Our lives are at stake, Jenkins! Do you want us all to die needlessly?

JENKINS

(sitting up) No — no — what? Why do you say die? (looking around) Here? Die here....?

JOHN

Unless you can perform a marriage we shall all die. Can you? Do you know the service? The marriage service?

JENKINS

Why, milord — the sacrament of marriage  
—binding man to maid — maid to man. How  
many marriages, blessed by holy church,  
have I witnessed!

PETER

And performed, Jenkins —performed!

JENKINS

Performed? (sadly) Ah no, never. I never  
performed the rite of marriage.

JOHN

(after a shocked pause) But can you,  
Jenkins? Are you entitled to..?

JENKINS

What, milord?

JOHN

Have you the authority to perform it?

JENKINS

Have I the authority to perform a  
marriage?

THEY NOD DUMBLY AT HIM...

JENKINS

Why of course I have, milord —though I  
have never performed it. You see I had  
been ordained and..the...

(he falls back)...

...oh Diabolus ... Diabolus... Son of  
Man...devils came out of many saying —  
thou art the Christ, the Son of God...too  
late for me Jenny — Jenny, dear...

PETER

You see — he can do it, Rose. We can be  
married — yes — now.

JENKINS

...and he preached in the synagogues of  
Galilee ...

LOUIS

Rosie! You stop did right now! We kill  
'em an' go to...

ROSE

Shut yer mout!

LOUIS  
By God, you don' —

ROSE GRABS THE GUN FROM BESIDE HIS PACK  
AND POINTS IT AT HIM.

LOUIS  
My dodder — my own dodder...!

ROSE  
You no tell me what I do! No more!

LOUIS TURNS AWAY DEJECTEDLY AND SITS ON A  
LOG...

LOUIS  
I knew it I mix wid dese people ...

ROSE  
Ol' Jankins — he marry anybody?

PETER  
Yes, that's right Rose — he can marry  
anybody.

ROSE  
Good. Den I marry de lordchips.

A DAZED SILENCE...

PETER  
Now one moment, Rose. You're marrying me  
—that's the agreement — you marry me —  
remember?

ROSE  
No. Him! (pointing the gun at John) No  
one but him. (proudly) The Lordchips!

LOUIS  
Dis one hell of a worl'.

PETER  
But you can't be serious!

ROSE  
Him!

PETER  
Rose, that's impossible!

ROSE  
Den you set here till yer ass freeze off!  
Come, Papa.

ROSE WALKS BACK TO THE FIRE...



LOUIS  
(following her) You don' marry him?

ROSE  
No! He freeze in hell!

PETER  
John ... I don't know what to say? I mean, she's incredible.

JOHN  
Well, Peter, it very nearly worked.

PETER  
Oh, so very nearly.

JOHN  
It's too bad. We tried anyway.

PETER  
Didn't we? Yes, we tried alright. We did.

JOHN  
We didn't give up without a fight.

PETER  
Never. No —we didn't — no.

JOHN  
(after a pause) I suppose there's nothing for it, now.

(a long pause)

I want to thank you, Peter. You did your best.

PETER  
Oh, that's alright.

(a long pause)

Imagine her thinking such a thing. I mean — you!

JOHN  
Yes. Incredible.

PETER  
Isn't it? Isn't it?

JOHN  
I mean, she's little more than a savage.

PETER  
Absolutely savage.

(a pause)

Come to think of it — she did rather sidle up to you in the beginning, I remember.

JOHN  
Did she?

PETER  
But of course, you ignored her.

JOHN  
One must, you know.

PETER  
I think, perhaps, she was after you all along, John. She only pretended to chase me. Thought she'd make you jealous. Amazing...

JOHN  
I can't understand it.

PETER  
Well —this is the end. Rather hard to take when you've brushed up against life once again. Had a moment of hope.

JOHN  
You're a brave fellow, Peter, after all.

PETER  
The simple mind of that girl. It's really too bad. When you think that everything depends on the luck of birth — on where you happen to be brought up. It's rather a shame...

JOHN  
It is —yes.

PETER  
I mean, if a girl like that were brought up in London, you know, was educated, you know —and that sort of thing — she could be — well —rather charming.

JOHN  
I'm afraid not, Peter. The chasm is far too wide.

PETER  
Far, far too wide. I'm sure it is —for you, John.

THEY STARE AT ONE ANOTHER...

PETER

Well —the end of the road. So soon to be cut off —what a damned shame. And there's no way out, is there, John? (a pause) I'm afraid I'm too weak... goodbye, John... ( he falls over)

JOHN

(after a long pause) But it's unthinkable, Peter! I — I can't! It's not that I'm so very class conscious — you know that I'm not — but she's — as I said, she's little better than a savage!

PETER GROANS A RESPONSE

JOHN

I mean, you see what she's done to us. She is a cruel, filthy little savage!

PETER STRUGGLES UP

PETER

I just thought of something.

JOHN

What?

PETER

You could have the marriage annulled, couldn't you? It would be a contract forced on you, wouldn't it?

JOHN

No one can force me into a contract.

PETER

But that would be the case here, nonetheless.

JOHN

Peter, don't try to trick me into this thing. If I make a contract, I shall stick with it.

PETER

But John, it's perfectly legal...

JOHN

No! I still have some sense of the right! You may be prepared to make agreements which you never intend to keep, but I do not.

PETER

Some sense of the right?...Is it not right that you should save not only your own life but the lives of Jenkins and me?

JOHN

By falsehood! By making an agreement which I never intend to keep...

PETER

Then keep it! Do whatever you want with it! But give me another shot at life! ... Is that asking too much?... I realize it's a dreadful thing to do —to marry a savage. But weren't you the one who found the challenge of savagery so damned stimulating....?

JOHN

This is dreadfully different. Dreadfully.

PETER

Now that it's real and happening to you...

JOHN

I would have to give up everything — England — my family - all the values I count worthwhile...

PETER

Worthwhile? Of what worth are your family and your civilized values if they don't make way for dear old life? They're a hollow sham — words without meaning...

JOHN

There's no need to trample on me now that I'm down.

PETER

Oh, very well ...(lying down) ... My stepfather will have my skull on his mantelpiece, after all.

JOHN

I think I may be going a little numb — are you?

PETER

At least there's numbness. It's better than nothing...

JOHN

This is like some extraordinary dream that turns out to be real...Peter, tell Rose that I am ready, if she still wants me. I don't trust my own voice.

PETER STRUGGLES UP ...

PETER

Here's one for life — I can't believe it, John....Rose! Rose! Could you come here, Rose? His lordship will take you to be his wife! Even now, Rose!...Lord John William Fitzwilliam will marry Miss Rose O'Flynn!!

ROSE COMES OVER, GUN IN HAND. SHE STOPS IN FRONT OF JOHN.

ROSE

Is dis true? You marry me, lordchips?

A LONG PAUSE...

JOHN

Yes. I will marry you, Rose.

A LONG PAUSE AS THEY STARE AT ONE ANOTHER...

ROSE

Good.

SHE UNSHEATHS HER KNIFE AND CUTS THEIR BONDS...LOUIS THROWS UP HIS HANDS IN DESPAIR...

LOUIS

(coming over) You go crazy, Rose? Dey turn on you quick as wink.

ROSE

Nod dis one. Nod de lordchips.

LOUIS

Why nod de lordships? He jus' anodder man.

ROSE

He nod anodder man. He my man.

LOUIS

Rosie, listen to your Papa one las' time. You don' marry a lordships — never — never — You? Rosie?.... Dey laugh at you until dey puke. Ladee Rosie O'Flynn! Huh? ...Huh?...

ROSE TURNS ON HIM —PRODDING HIS CHEST WITH THE GUN HELD IN ONE HAND...

ROSE

You shud yer moud, Papa! I'm goin' to marry de lordchip an' be a lady an' yer goin' to say Lady Rosie O'Flynn over an' over till you go blue in de face an' turn to dus'! ...Huh!?!...Huh!?!?

UNBOUND, JOHN AND PETER ROUSE JENKINS AND DRAG HIM OVER TO THE FIRE, WHERE THEY WARM THEMSELVES. JENKINS SLUMPS ON A LOG.

ROSE

(to Marie, pointing the gun) Bring dose clothes over here, Marie, and give dem back. My man not goin' to be married in his next to nodding.

SULLENLY, MARY-MARIE OBEYS, MAKING A VULGAR SOUND AS SHE PASSES ROSE. JOHN AND PETER DRESS THEMSELVES...

JOHN

Do you think Jenkins is up to this marriage, Peter?

PETER

(going close to Jenkins who does not respond) Look sharp there, Jenkins! You're about to marry his lordship to Miss Rose O'Flynn. Isn't that nice?

JENKINS

(straightening and holding his hands out to the fire) Marry who? Who? Who did you say I shall marry?

PETER

I think you've got it all wrong, Jenkins. Lord John has asked Rose O'Flynn to marry him. It will be your pleasant duty to perform that marriage at once.

JENKINS

His lordship marry Miss O'Flynn? But that's quite impossible.

JOHN

Why is it impossible, Jenkins?

JENKINS

You, milord — a peer of the realm — a member of the house of lords spiritual and temporal — Viscount John William Fitzwilliam — marry her? Surely you are not serious, milord?

JOHN

I am completely serious, Mr. Jenkins. And if you are an ordained minister of the Church of England, as you claim, then I request that you marry Miss O'Flynn and myself at once.

JENKINS

But — I — milord —

PETER

Take out your prayer book, Jenkins, and begin the marriage service.

(Jenkins does not move)

Very well — (reaching into Jenkins' pack) —then I shall find it for you... (he finds and removes it) Ah, here it is. (opens the book and searches, holding it up to the light of the fire) The Celebration of Holy Matrimony — just where I thought it would be — right before Prayers for the Dead... (holds the book out to Jenkins who takes it)...

JENKINS

But the banns of marriage have not been read!

JOHN

We shall forego the banns of marriage, Mr. Jenkins.

JENKINS

That would be most irregular, milord.

JOHN

It may be irregular to you, Mr. Jenkins, but if the marriage vows are properly made and conscientiously observed, then the marriage will not be irregular to God.

JENKINS

But the ring! There must be a wedding ring to signify the solemn vow and covenant between man and wife.

PETER

(with a tug, pulling a ring from his little finger) I hate to part with it since it is one of my few winnings at the game of poker — but here's your wedding ring.

JENKINS

I believe that I have lost my spectacles, in which case I shall not be able to read the service.

PETER SEARCHES IN JENKINS' BAG AND COMES OUT WITH A PAIR OF CRACKED SPECTACLES. CAREFULLY, HE FITS THEM ON JENKINS' NOSE... A LONG PAUSE WHILE JENKINS BLINKS AT THE OTHERS...

JOHN  
Well — proceed, Mr. Jenkins.

ANOTHER LONG PAUSE...

JENKINS  
I do not think that I can officiate at this marriage, milord. How can a marriage which one of the partners is forced to undergo on the threat of his death be sanctified in the sight of God? It won't do, milord. It will never do. In the sight of God. No.

PETER  
For one who says he does not believe in God, you seem extraordinarily concerned about the sight of God, Jenkins.

JENKINS  
Whether I believe in him or not, Mr. Henley — and that remains to be seen — God will never approve of a marriage made under the threat of death.

JOHN  
But I do not undertake this marriage under the threat of death — I undertake it for the sake of life — that we may all go on living. I believe God would sanctify such a marriage, Mr. Jenkins — don't you?

TO MAKE THE POINT QUITE CLEAR ROSE DRAWS BACK THE HAMMER OF HER GUN WITH A LOUD CLICK, AND HOLDS IT AT THE READY...

JENKINS  
Yes — I think that satisfies the conditions for the marriage to proceed. Will the bridegroom and the bride please stand before me? I suppose you are the best man, Mr. Henley? Please take your place beside the bridegroom.

THE WEDDING PARTY TAKES POSITION BEFORE JENKINS WHO RISES SHAKILY. HE IS STILL IN



HIS LONG UNDERWEAR, AND JOHN WHISPERS  
SOMETHING TO PETER WHO GOES AND GETS A  
BUFFALO ROBE AND THROWS IT AROUND  
JENKINS' SHOULDERS...

JENKINS  
(disapprovingly) Mr. O'Flynn — you  
should stand behind your daughter. You  
are to give her away.

LOUIS MOVES BETWEEN JENKINS AND ROSE

LOUIS  
Jus' a minute. Dat's enough dis bullshit.  
Rosie — you wan' dis lordship fer  
husbin'? You wan' go to Angland and sit  
wid ladies an' drink dat tea at Bockenham  
Palace? Don' you know dat de servants run  
dere lives? You can't even scratch yer  
ass widout a servant, Rose. You wan' dat,  
huh?

ROSE WAVES HER GUN AT HIM...

ROSE  
You git back where Jankins tol' you.  
Quick now!

(after a sad shake of his head  
Louis goes back behind Rose)

Never you min', Papa. His lordchip an' I  
— we stay out here in Far Wes' — eh  
lordchips? I be a big Lady out here an'  
you better stop cussin' an' spittin'  
because you gonna have a Lady fer yer  
dodder.

LOUIS  
I should have killed 'em back on de  
prairie. Now it's too goddamn late. I  
always knew my fam'ly would be de end of  
me.

ROSE  
An' you, too, Mama — if you really are  
my Mama —you get back dere beside Papa.  
You gotta learn good manners now dat I'm  
a Lady. You don' bash me no more. An' you  
sing no more dirty songs, okay? You jus'  
be nice sweet ol' Mamma.

MARY-MARIE  
(moves her huge bulk beside Louis and  
covers her head with part of her dress)  
Yeeeeee, yeeeeee!

ROSE

Okay, John, now we get married. Rose be good wife an' you be good husbin', okay, or you know what? I on'y let you mak' love in de mornin' jus' before sunup. (she tweaks him playfully)

JOHN

May we proceed, Mr. Jenkins? We're as ready as we shall ever be, eh? ....The old world and the new world binding themselves together for better for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish...

JENKINS

I think those should be my lines, milord...

JOHN

Oh yes — sorry — carry on, Jenkins.

JENKINS

(as he speaks he seems to become larger, more alive — his voice fills out and he is transfigured in a kind of light) ... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all...

JOHN & PETER

(murmuring) And also with you...

JENKINS

Dear friends, we have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of John and Rose, and to rejoice with them. Marriage is a gift of God and a means of his grace, in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love, they shall grow together and be united in that love, as Christ is united with his Church. The union of man and woman in heart, body and mind is intended for their mutual comfort and help, that they may know each other with delight and tenderness...

ALL MOTION AND SOUND CEASE AS THE CURTAIN FALLS.