

SOMETHING CLOUDY, SOMETHING CLEAR

CLARE: May I . . . ? *[No response from August. She enters.]*
Oh, I'm sorry. I'm interrupting your work.

AUGUST: You did me a favor by that. I was about to make a concession to the taste of someone else, a powerful man with practically no taste.

CLARE: Then why were you about to make the concession?

AUGUST: Because there are certain vital necessities such as money on which to survive.

CLARE: I think any kind of an artist—but never mind—my presumption—I'm—breathless—

AUGUST: You do seem breathless. Been running on the beach?

CLARE: No, no, just—an argument with my brother.

AUGUST: Breathtaking, is he? —Sit down.

CLARE: On what?

AUGUST: Chair or the—?

CLARE: That cot's a mess.

AUGUST: I'm a restless sleeper.

CLARE: I was about to offer a moral judgment of some kind.

AUGUST *[smoothing covers]*: On disorderly cots?

CLARE: No, not cots. Concessions in art, no less. *[She clears her throat.]* You resume your seat while I—

PART ONE

AUGUST: Pontificate?

CLARE: I think.

AUGUST: Do you? Are you sure that you're thinking?

CLARE *[with sudden urgency]*: Not yet!

AUGUST *[smiling, slowly]*: The double exposure. You're right. I concede that point.

KIP *[at the window, interrupting]*: Excuse me.

CLARE: What is it, Kip? Oh, Kip, this is—

KIP *[extending his hand through the window]*: Oh. Yes, we met last night. Do you have any drinking water in here?

AUGUST: A bottle of tepid soda.

KIP: Fine. Anything wet but not salty.

CLARE *[to Kip]*: I'm about to deliver a lecture to him on making concessions in art.

KIP: For or against?

CLARE: I think any kind of artist—a painter like Van Gogh, a dancer like Nijinsky—

AUGUST: Both of them went mad.

CLARE: But others didn't, refused to make concessions to bad taste and yet managed survival without losing their minds. That's purity. You've got to respect it or not.

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AUGUST: I do, I will. But it will be years before I've mastered the craft of my work. I'll try to survive the time till then.

CLARE: You're young and strong and healthy. I don't know your talent, but if you do and it's good—forget concessions.

AUGUST: You have a rather precocious—knowledge of such things.

CLARE: Had to have that, exigency of—

AUGUST: —Survival?

CLARE: Had to have that early.

AUGUST: Why so early?

CLARE: My family in Newport, Rhode Island, were shocked by my lack of the conventions they valued too much.

KIP: Wow! I'll continue my exercises. [*He returns to the platform. Over the following he begins a series of slow, lyrical warm-up exercises which will blend gracefully, later, into the pavane.*]

CLARE: So—I learned to outwit them precociously, had no other option.

AUGUST: I'll make many mistakes but they'll be my own mistakes, I'll never concede to manipulation by—

CLARE: Don't—don't ever. In the end you'll take pride in having never.

AUGUST: We can delude ourselves, you know, now and then. Let's—drop this subject of why—

PART ONE

CLARE: Yes. A heavy subject. I just came in to ask you if it's all right to use your platform out there as a—

AUGUST: I don't own anything here but the typewriter and paper, and this little assortment of records for my silver victrola. I'm—just a squatter. [*He is pouring rum drinks into two glasses. Outside, the light lowers as Kip continues his slow, lyrical movements.*]

CLARE [*as August offers her the rum*]: None of that for me, August.

AUGUST: You know my name?

CLARE: You don't remember meeting me last night on the wharf?

AUGUST: You knew I did. But people seldom remember last night's names.

CLARE: What's my name?

AUGUST: Yours is Clare and your brother is Kip. Sure you won't have a drink?

CLARE: I can't. I have diabetes.

AUGUST: I thought only middle-aged people had diabetes.

CLARE: I'm sorry to say there's such a thing as congenital diabetes and I've got it.

AUGUST: I never heard of it, you look very healthy to me.

CLARE: Hmmm. —Doesn't it rain in, without any windowpanes or door to close?

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AUGUST: Oh, sure. But I have this tarpaulin that I put over the cot, and I put my portable typewriter and silver victrola under the platform out there.

CLARE: You're a playwright. You told me that last night.

AUGUST: I write plays. Stories. Poems. Right now it's a play, yes. I was about to make a change in it that I didn't believe in when you called through the window, like my—like a—*conscience*?

CLARE: Don't you ever look at people directly when you talk to them?

AUGUST: Not unless I'm drunk.

CLARE: Why?

AUGUST: Why?

CLARE: Uh-hmm.

AUGUST: Because I'm getting a little walleyed and—a little dishonest, I guess.

CLARE: If you were dishonest, you wouldn't make such an honest confession of it.

AUGUST [*looking out*]: Beautiful dancer, your brother.

CLARE: You met him on the wharf last night, too.

AUGUST: I know, but—I was blind last night.

CLARE [*with an edge*]: Not too blind to stare at him like a bird dog at a—quail.

PART ONE

AUGUST [*turning to smile at her*]: No. No, not too blind for that. Well. He seemed oblivious to my attention, so I turned it on a much less attractive object, a drunk merchant sailor at the bar. He was a dog, in comparison, a mongrel dog. However. Beggars can't be very particular in their—choices, you know, and—beautiful as it is out here, it's also very lonely out here at night.

[*He goes to the victrola, places a record on it, and winds it up.*]

CLARE: You have a strange voice.

AUGUST: Are you sure you hear it?

[*We hear the record, Ravel's Pavane pour une infante défunte.*]

CLARE: It isn't as clear as it was, that summer.

AUGUST: Forty years ago, Clare.

CLARE [*closing her eyes for a moment*]: I feel—light-headed. Is it *déjà vu*?

AUGUST: You said not yet.

KIP [*from the platform*]: Not yet! [*He clasps his head.*]

AUGUST: Artists always continue a theme with variations. If lucky, several themes with numerous variations.

CLARE: But they musn't get tiresome.

AUGUST: Must take a chance on that as making concessions.

CLARE [*turning her head in sudden anguish*]: That, oh, I know that!

AUGUST [*looking out dreamily in the direction of the audience*]: All my life, at least since I started to shave, I've been like a kid on a grandstand, flag-draped, you know, waiting for a circus parade to come by. I hear the callopie in the distance. It gets louder slowly, that light, haunting music. But there's another sound, the sound of a thunderstorm approaching much more quickly. There's a sudden torrent of rain, a deluge—disperses all, all are dispersed except me. I stay on the deserted grandstand among drenched, motionless flags—always the obstinate waiter.

AUGUST: I waited until a sort of faceless policeman in a black raincoat tapped my shoulder and said, "The parade's been rained out, son, it's been called off till later." But later still hasn't come. . . .

The black policeman was—

—Death?

AUGUST: Sort of a likeness to it, yes. More a likeness to not yet being completely alive, I reckon.

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CLARE: What is?

AUGUST: Me loving your brother who hardly knows I'm alive.

CLARE: If you mean that, well, your vision in both eyes is clouded over.

AUGUST: We're talking around something, aren't we? [*Clare nods.*] What are we talking around?

CLARE [*looking out at Kip, dancing*]: Kip's got to have someone keep him when he goes back to New York.

AUGUST: —Who? —Has he got anyone in mind for that?

CLARE: He has you in mind for that, August.

AUGUST: *Are you crazy!?*

CLARE: Shh, don't let him hear us.

AUGUST: What did you mean by that fantastic statement?

CLARE: —Well—

AUGUST: Hmm?

CLARE: You want to know all about him? Briefly?

AUGUST: Of course. Briefly or longly.

CLARE: He isn't really my brother.

AUGUST: Why did you tell me he was last night?

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CLARE: Kip's a Canadian in the States illegally. He sneaked into the country to escape the draft because he has this passion for dancing, and he knew if he was drafted into the Canadian Army it would be too late, when he got out, if he got out alive, to learn to be a great dancer, which Kip is going to be, I mean he's going to be as great as Nijinsky. Well. He's in the States illegally. He could be stopped on the streets any time and asked for his draft card. That's why we stay off the streets nearly always. Oh, somebody gave him their draft card, but any time he might be stopped and not get by with that card and be sent back to Canada and not be drafted but thrown in jail for God knows how long, longer than he would even have to stay in the army if he hadn't skipped out of Canada before he was drafted. Are you following this? You're still staring at Kip.

AUGUST: Go on.

CLARE: All right, now that's one reason why Kip has got to be cared for, I mean kept, by someone, and it can't be me. I'm too young, I'm—a year younger than he is, I'm twenty, and I've got to finish my education, and—and—

AUGUST: Go on, go on, and what?

CLARE: I love Kip but I'm not *in* love with Kip. I was. Till I found out it wasn't possible.

AUGUST: Why wasn't it possible?

CLARE: Do you have to know that, too?

AUGUST: All you can tell me. Please.

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CLARE: All right. [*She sighs.*] Well. I'm sexually precocious. You know how Alabama kids are. [*August laughs.*] Shh. —I mean I was doing it in the attic with my second cousin when I was twelve. We called it playing house. House in the attic. Awful?

AUGUST: No. Wonderful. But what's it got to do with Kip?

CLARE: Yes, you do want to know all about Kip. Well. He's lucky. —Maybe.

[*August shakes his head slightly, his face turning suddenly very grave. He rises and kicks a shell off the porch, for no reason.*]

CLARE: *Maybe!* —Well. —This part is embarrassing. He'd hate me to tell this part but I have to because you've got to keep him. He's, well—

AUGUST: —What?

CLARE: Well, he's—impotent with me, and he—well, we—just share a bed together on the wharf this summer, for economy and because we like to be with each other, I mean we're like a brother and sister with each other with absolutely no incest, except I sometimes, well, I reach out to see if he wants me and he—well, he still doesn't want me. . . .

AUGUST: How do I fit into—?

CLARE: The picture? Christ, you're not a dumbo! Look! You're crawling around the frame of the picture. You've got to get off the frame, now, and into the picture. I mean you've been crawling around the frame of it and now you've got to get off the frame and hop right into the picture.

AUGUST: Hop? Into the picture?

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CLARE: Yes.

AUGUST: How?

CLARE: Look, good God, you write plays. Just write a curtain to it. Can't you do that? Can't you?

AUGUST: —I—don't know, I—when I want something very badly, I—

CLARE: What?

AUGUST: —I start shaking all over.

CLARE: That's all right, do that, he'll understand that, August. [*She puts an arm about his crouched shoulders.*] Look, if you don't keep him with you in New York this fall, who will? Not me. I can't. I think your play will be a success, a hit as they call it. You'll have plenty of money coming in then, won't you? You can buy him dancing lessons; you can pay somebody to fake a better draft card for him. Can't you? Can't you?

AUGUST: This is a crazy, wild—dream. . . .

CLARE: Dreams are true, they're the truest things in the world, only dreams are the true things in the world, you know . . .

[*She has gotten to her feet, does an arabesque with her head thrown back and her eyes shut tight against the sun's glare.*]

I'll be in touch. I'll keep in touch with you boys. I'll—I'll fly to New York some weekends and for the Christmas holidays and so forth.

AUGUST: Wait! I want to ask you something.

[Sea wind. Kip reappears over the dunes and slowly approaches August.]

You've taken your walk and thought.

KIP: Yes.

AUGUST: Me, too. —I thought—I didn't use to know it was such a bargaining table!

KIP: But you know that, now?

AUGUST: As suddenly as if the sea wind blew it over me like this—storm of sand today. —What did *you* think as you—walked? [Pause.]

KIP [*with difficulty*]: I thought I'm forced to do now, the sort of things that don't demand—papers of citizenship—you know . . .

AUGUST: But do demand other things, not papers, but—other—things.

KIP: I—let's not talk about that. Huh? —I—don't want to talk about that.

AUGUST: —But, Kip, these other demands, you *do* submit to them, don't you.

KIP: Don't I have to? When I can't—you know—appeal to their better natures if they have them?

AUGUST: Do you think I have one?

KIP: —Yes. —I think I see it in the eye that's clear.

AUGUST: But even in the clear eye—surely you see *this*? [*He places his fingers on Kip's face.*]

KIP: Let's just talk, just—talk. I know how—involved this is.

AUGUST: Do you?

[*Kip nods slightly and gravely. A drunk merchant seaman staggers into sight and shouts:*]

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SEAMAN: Hey! One Eye!

AUGUST: Jesus. He's coming back.

KIP: Who is he?

AUGUST: Merchant seaman I picked up last night, turned out to be sort of disgusting, puking and trying to make me do things I don't care to do.

[He rises and confronts the Seaman.]

Go away! Get away from here.

PART ONE

[The Fiddlers are a stoutish middle-aged man, Maurice, and his wife, Celeste. A world of opulence and fashion and of Medici illusions is apparent in them. Beneath this surface is an unfathomed depth of venality. In Maurice, the surface affability more successfully obscures the basic inhumanity, but in his tall, thin mate, you can almost hear the hiss of a venomous snake.]

[There is the sound of the surf as they stand quite still for several moments, looking awesome in a Gothic way. Celeste slowly lifts an arm to shield her face with a gloved hand as the sea wind rises, lifting a cloud of sand.]

MAURICE: She wanted me to see a film with Miriam Hopkins. I said, "Mrs., uh, Pardon." I call her Mrs. Pardon since I want to make it quite plain that her name's of no importance. "Mrs., uh, Pardon," I said, "Being a man of the theater, I don't go to the movies."

[Celeste laughs with a vicious inflection.]

And without batting an eye, she came back with this: "Mr.—uh—Fiddler, don't you want to know how the other half lives?" Then I topped her with, "I think you mean the other ninety-nine percent."

CELESTE: The woman's a real operator. You've got to be firm with her young client about your adamant refusal to negotiate with her or through her. Explain to him the nature of ten-percenters. That's what she is. And, please don't be taken in by his pretension of incorruptible commitment to his "art." We've heard it all before. He's just another male whore. I mean, imagine sending you that snapshot of himself in swim trunks. The implication being he thinks you're—

MAURICE: I'll thank him for it and say I've had it enlarged and hung up in my bedroom.

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CELESTE: He'll believe it and price himself out of sight.

MAURICE: That shack must be where he stays.

CELESTE: Oh, yes, probably—to impress us with his pure child of nature spirit. Oh, Maurice, it's getting late, call him.

[Maurice stalks down the dunes, calling "August, August!" Wind and sea sounds are heard again. Maurice cups his mouth and calls louder.]

[Now another woman, an actress, Caroline Wales, joins Celeste on top of the dune. She is beautiful, arrogant with pride.]

CAROLINE *[loudly]*: The wind's too much, sand blowing in hair and eyes.

MAURICE: Let me know when it blows up your vagina!

CELESTE: Maurice! Don't be vulgar.

MAURICE: She loves it, don't you, dear? Don't you love it?

CAROLINE: Sometimes from someone but, sorry, not from you.

CELESTE: Oh, now, Caroline, you know Maurice loves to be outrageous.

CAROLINE: Oh, is that what Maurice loves. *[She comes down the dune.]*

[Maurice shouts "August!" again.]

CAROLINE: Oh, God, Maurice, you can't call August back in mid-September.

PART ONE

MAURICE: His name is August.

CAROLINE: I know, I know, but this *sand!*

CELESTE *[coming down the dunes]*: Darling, put your scarf over your head, here, let me do it, I'll fix it. *[She ties a chiffon scarf about the famous head.]*

CAROLINE: Thank you, but if he's not here?

MAURICE: There he is, getting out of the ocean. *August!*

CELESTE: Naked!

CAROLINE: Shall we pretend we don't see him?

CELESTE: He must think he's back at the "Y." That's where he stayed in New York.

CAROLINE: Now, Celeste, how can you expect a man that lives at the "Y" to write a play for me?

MAURICE: Playwrights are spawned in tenements and bordellos, then they graduate to the YMCA, then they graduate suddenly to Park Avenue apartments and grand hotels, and then they lose everything but their taste for booze and their outraged, outrageous egos, and finally, usually, they die in Bowery gutters from delirium tremens or an overdose of narcotics. We have to remember this cycle and make allowances for them. This boy has something, I think. We need fresh blood and he has it. Look at him running up here, like a—whippet . . .

CAROLINE: What do you want me to say about the play?

CELESTE: Just say if he makes the changes it might be possible for you.

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CAROLINE: You talk to him about the changes, that's really not my department. I'm an actress. I'll look at him in speechless adoration. Struck dumb by his genius! He'll expect that, won't he?

CELESTE: You need a change of pace, my dear. The play might give you one, you know, it just might.

MAURICE: This boy's got something, it just needs bringing out.

CELESTE: What he's got is the biggest conceit of any pretentious young writer I've ever run into, and as for bringing it out, it's so far out it'll never go back in.

MAURICE: It isn't easy for a poet in the theater. Remember Gene, poor Gene. They say his hands are so shaky lately he can hardly sign a letter, and his wife says that it's—

[*The sea booms.*]

CELESTE: What's he doing now, Maurice? What's holding him up?

MAURICE: His towel fell off.

CELESTE: Just get the rewrites from him, if he's done any rewrites, and let's go on to Dennis. It's very late.

CAROLINE: Surely they'll hold the curtain for us since they know the Fiddlers are coming.

MAURICE [*shouting*]: We'd just about given you up!

AUGUST: Your telegram just arrived. [*He faces Caroline.*] Oh! Miss Wales! You! Does this mean you'll do my play?

PART ONE

CAROLINE: Well, it's quite a challenge—if you think I'd be worthy of it, Mr., uh—

MAURICE: This is our young genius. August, you remember Celeste?

AUGUST: Yes, of course. Mrs. Fiddler. I was so stunned at seeing Miss Wales here that—

CAROLINE: Sweet! Maurice tells me you're doing some revisions. Are you?

AUGUST: Yes.

CAROLINE: How are they coming?

AUGUST: I don't know. I hope so. Let's say, just say, I'm working hard as I can and—

[*The sea booms.*]

—my nerves are shot: it's chronic, they're always shot.

CELESTE: What's wrong with your nerves, August?

AUGUST: Constant hemorrhage.

CELESTE: Hemorrhage of the nerves? That's a new one.

MAURICE: He's speaking figuratively.

CELESTE: Oh. But there *are* some rewrites, August?

AUGUST: Yes, there are always rewrites, but how do I know they're what Mr. Fiddler wants?

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AUGUST: No, you're too drunk.

[He sits down on the platform, his back to the lurching approach of the Seaman. The Seaman sits beside August. After a few moments he says buskily:]

SEAMAN: Las' night you wanted to fuck me.

AUGUST *[wearily]*: Yes. But you wanted to fuck *me* and I couldn't accommodate you that way, Spud.

SEAMAN: Tonight I'm too drunk to fuck you, kid.

AUGUST *[with a quick, harsh laugh]*: I wouldn't dream of disputing the matter with you, Spud.

[Pause: the dusk deepens.]

SEAMAN: So you can fuck me for another fin and a drink. — Okay? 'Sat a deal?

[Pause.]

AUGUST: Yes, I reckon—we've made a deal this time.

[There is a sound of the surf.]

DIM OUT

PART TWO

SCENE ONE

The set is the same as in Part One. An actress appears on the upstage dune, a scarf covering her face.

ACTRESS *[in a thunderously resonant voice]*: Where is he? What part of the garden?

[August is dimly seen rising in the shack and crossing to the door.]

No, no, I want him to repeat it to my face!

[August steps off the porch to confront her.]

There you are, you drunk little bastard! What was it you said I did to your goddamn play?

AUGUST *[quietly but clearly]*: I said that you pissed on my play.

ACTRESS: Come in my house and repeat that in the presence of witnesses. My lawyers will haul you to court for defamation of character, personal and professional. They'll sue you for every fucking cent you've begged, borrowed, or stolen, you gutter rat, you impertinent walleyed little—come in the house! Say it. Shout it! Well, no guts? Are you scared to?

AUGUST: No. We both have courage, but I'll not enter that leprosarium with you.

ACTRESS: Ho ho ho! Ho *ho!*

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AUGUST: Are you playing Santa Claus now? Is it a better part for you than that of the desperate lady you travestied tonight?

ACTRESS: There's an extension phone. Bobby! No . . . Tony . . . no . . . Archie! Bring that extension phone. I can get him for defamation of character right here in the garden. Courage, have you? Then address my lawyers. Repeat the scurrilous charges you made against me to them.

AUGUST: No. No. But not because I'm afraid to!

[Wind and sea sound.]

ACTRESS: Tell me then why you won't speak it out to my friends and protectors.

AUGUST: I'm afraid you have none, just—sycophantic—attendants that use you without compunction. There's another reason that I won't enter the house and speak out.

ACTRESS: Name it! *[Pause.]*

AUGUST: I love you. I do, I love your fierce spirit and I will kneel at your feet.

ACTRESS: Kneel at my feet and I'll kick you in your nonexistent balls!

AUGUST: A lady wouldn't do that and you're a lady. A lady that's a tigress. What happened tonight is you gave those fat cat fags what they demanded of you. And so you pissed on the play, you performed a classic role in the style of a transvestite in a drag show. But—I love you. Now, you have to make a difficult decision. You want to close the play here or go up country with it? —Remember how you dared them to laugh at

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the raging tiger in you, up there at City Center? They didn't accept the challenge! Afterwards, yes, I did kneel at your feet, I kissed your slipper and you didn't kick me with it.

ACTRESS: Naturally, not publicly in my dressing room. Filled with—

AUGUST: Flowers, yes, and your idolators, yes! —Did anyone know who you were? —*I* did. Later, later, I'd learn through old family letters that we were blood-kin. I was proud of that, Tallulah, and later, when you were in a breathing machine, at a Manhattan hospital, they'd say to you, "What do you want?" —You'd reply, "Bourbon. Codeine!" —The last request you'd make . . .

[There are sea sounds. The actress bows her proud head slightly, then lifts it high and turns away.]

ACTRESS: —Later, later, not much later, but later. Well, good night—lover. I'm going home. Yes, I'm going to take your play up country. You go sleep. Let Frankie drive you home to bed. Drive you home carefully—I love you . . . *[She descends from the upstage dune.]*

AUGUST *[looking up at the sky]*: Life is all—it's just one time. It finally seems to all occur at one time.

[The scene dims out.]

[It is the following evening. August is working by lamp light to a record on the silver victrola.]

KIP: —August?

AUGUST *[springing up]*: —God! . . .

KIP: No, no, just a—draft dodger from Toronto.

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AUGUST: His voice, it sounded almost panicky. Was I that terrifying, forty years ago? [*He calls out.*] Stay in sight. If you don't, I'll pursue you.

KIP: Call me if you can't see me and I'll call back. I just need to clear my head.

AUGUST: Why didn't you leave your clothes so I'd be certain of your return that time? —Following, pursuing would be a useless humiliation. I'll watch from here. [*He lights a cigarette, the match trembling in his fingers.*] —Headed for the water, the—artful dodger. [*He rises and calls out.*] Kip! —Again no answer, but he didn't swim long or far. Came back slowly as if approaching an "exigency of desperation," but with his clothes bundled under his arm. —Sound of parade came with him, unearthly calliope and heart beat fast. [*Kip reappears, glistening.*] I said something, not sure what. Oh. yes. [*To Kip:*] "Clare's not yet back, you see."

KIP: I really didn't expect her before tomorrow. Go on in if you think the shack is warmer.

AUGUST: Is your head clearer, Kip?

KIP: It is clear enough to think about things that we ought to discuss.

AUGUST: All right, let's discuss them, out here on the platform, Kip.

KIP: Last winter I knew how to go hungry in a cold, abandoned loft, south of the Village, on the Hudson River, and some of the windows had no glass in them, too.

AUGUST: No heat, no glass, no nothing?

KIP: I met Clare.

PART TWO

SCENE ONE

AUGUST: Where?

KIP: In one of those all-night diners a little uptown. I'd gone in not to eat but to apply for a job as dishwasher. She was at a counter eating chili. "Sit down," she said, "you're hungry." I said, "Sorry but I couldn't pay for food." She smiled and said, "Never mind. Order something, anything you—" I sat down by her but didn't order. "Eggs with bacon or sausage or—how about corn beef hash with an egg on it, you look hungry as hell!" —I told her, I knew I could tell her, "After three days, you don't feel hunger much." —She ordered me a Delmonico steak with french fries. —It's hard to get food down when your stomach's shrunk from such a long fast. I vomited, suddenly, on the floor, like your visitor last night. But I drank a lot of water and kept that down.

AUGUST: No water in the loft either? —Are you telling me a tall tale, Kip? —People will always give you water.

KIP: I did go out for water after dark. Till I met Clare, I was scared to go out, but I'd fill an old coffee tin with water after dark. —I would've learned how to die rather than kill, that's true, that's no tall tale.

AUGUST: —Have you thought of anything else we ought to discuss tonight, Kip?

KIP: Of course I noticed you look at me the other night. I asked Clare to talk to you.

AUGUST: Yes, we talked, mostly about you.

KIP: I know, she told me. She said you said that I looked—

AUGUST: Being drunk that night I'm not sure what I said. Oh. I think it was "saintly"—

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[Pause. Kip drops his head into his hands. After a bit he begins to sob softly. August draws close to him and puts an arm about his shoulders.]

KIP: —I don't know where I am.

AUGUST: What?

KIP: What's happening? [He rises unsteadily.] I must've been in the water, I'm wet. —Have you got a clean towel.

AUGUST: I still thought it was possible, then, that he was giving a performance, and it made me say harsh things. I said, "Yes, I've got a clean towel in the sack, the shack, not one of those towels called joy rags!"

KIP: —Joy? Rags?

AUGUST: You know what I mean or you don't. [He rises abruptly.] I'm not going to explain. I'm going in and try to get that dry vomit off the floor.

[August enters the shack and dampens some rags with half a bottle of soda and kneels to scrub the floor hard. When finished he tosses the rags out the door. He then goes to the window facing the platform and calls out.]

Kip?

KIP: Yes.

AUGUST: Why don't you come in for the clean towel, or—

KIP: Or what?

AUGUST: Go away and look for Clare again, Kip.

PART TWO

SCENE ONE

KIP: —There's things that I don't know and things that you don't know. Such as—where do the—seagulls—sleep at night?

AUGUST: Never asked them about that.

KIP: You've lost patience with me?

AUGUST: I will if you stay out there with your "exigencies of desperation," Kip.

KIP: I'll be in, I'm just—

AUGUST: What're you doing out there?

KIP: Watching another meteor, a meteor falling into the ocean, way, way, off. [Pause.] —Gone, now. —I'm coming in. [He slowly enters the shack.]

AUGUST: Here's your towel. Not immaculate, but—

KIP [drying himself with the towel]: Don't be so angry with me.

AUGUST: I'm not that.

KIP: —I'm—dried off now.

AUGUST: Then?

KIP: —Put the "Pavane" back on the victrola.

AUGUST: Yes—music. [He winds the phonograph and starts the "Pavane."] Still afraid? Of love?

KIP: Not of love, but—

AUGUST: What?

SOMETHING CLOUDY, SOMETHING CLEAR

KIP: —The—other. —Please. I don't know what to do.

AUGUST: Will you accept my instruction? [*Kip stares at him a moment, then slowly lowers his face. August waits, then takes Kip's hand.*] —He could have easily broken away, but he didn't . . .

BLACKOUT

SCENE TWO

The next evening. Clare appears on the upstage dune.

CLARE: Hey. Help me carry this stuff. [*August starts toward her.*] Both of you, Kip, you, too! [*Kip doesn't move.*] Kiiip!?

AUGUST [*as he goes to her*]: I can do it. Kip doesn't feel well today.

CLARE: What's the matter with him? Pick up the stuff back there. —Kip, what's the matter with you?

[*Kip doesn't seem to hear her. The sea booms. August follows her, laden with bleached branches in tortured shapes. Still ignoring her, Kip stretches out on the platform, arms folded over his face.*]

AUGUST: I don't think he slept last night.

CLARE: I wonder why.

AUGUST: I'll tell you about it later.

CLARE: Tell me now, not later. Did you break our agreement?

AUGUST: We—came to—terms.

CLARE: I don't believe you. He wouldn't unless you . . . —Did you?

AUGUST: The parade went by, it marched right by me, right by where I was waiting.

CLARE: He looks like it marched across him.