Beyond the Horizon

by Eugene O'Neill

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BEYOND THE HORIZON By EUGENE O'NEILL PUBLISHED FOR THE DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE by RANDOM HOUSE NEW YORK

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CHARACTERS

James Mayo, a farmer Kate Mayo, his wife Captain Dick Scott, of the bark Sunda, her brother Andrew Mayo son of James Mayo Robert Mayo son of James Mayo Ruth Atkins Mrs. Atkins, her widowed mother Mary Ben, a farm hand Doctor Fawcett

ACT I SceneI: The Road. Sunset of a day in Spring. Scene II: The Farm House. The same night. ACT II (Three years later) SceneI: The Farm House. Noon of a Summer day. Scene II: The top of a hill on the farm overlooking the sea. The following day. ACT III (Five years later) SceneI: The Farm House. Dawn of a day in late Fall. Scene II: The Road. Sunrise.

BEYOND THE HORIZON ACT ONE

Scene One

A section of country highway. The road runs diagonally from the left, forward, to the right, rear, and can be seen in the distance winding toward the horizon like a pale ribbon between the low, rolling hills with their freshly plowed fields clearly divided from each other, checkerboard fashion, by the lines of stone walls and rough snake

fences.

The forward triangle cut off by the road is a section of a field from the dark earth of which myriad bright-green blades of fall-sown rye are sprouting. A straggling line of piled rocks, too low to be called a wall, separates this field from the road.

To the rear of the road is a ditch with a sloping, grassy bank on the far side. From the center of this an old, gnarled apple tree, just budding into leaf, strains its twisted branches heavenwards, black against the pallor of distance. A snake-fence sidles from left to right along the top of the bank, passing beneath the apple tree.

The hushed twilight of a day in May is just beginning. The horizon hills are still rimmed by a faint line of flame, and the sky above them glows with the crimson flush of the sunset. This fades gradually as the action of the scene progresses.

At the rise of the curtain, ROBERT MAYO is discovered sitting on the fence. He is a tall, slender young man of twenty-three. There is a touch of the poet about him expressed in his high forehead and wide, dark eyes. His features are delicate and refined, leaning to weakness in the mouth and chin. He is dressed in gray corduroy trousers pushed into high laced boots, and a blue flannel shirt with a bright colored tie. He is reading a book by the fading sunset light. He shuts this, keeping a finger in to mark the place, and turns his head toward the horizon, gazing out over the fields and hills. His lips move as if he were reciting something to himself.

His brother ANDREW comes along the road from the right, returning from his work in the fields. He is twenty-seven years old, an opposite type to ROBERT—husky, sun-bronzed, handsome in a large-featured, manly fashion—a son of the soil, intelligent in a shrewd way, but with nothing of the intellectual about him. He wears overalls, leather boots, a gray flannel shirt open at the neck, and a soft, mud-stained hat pushed back on his head. He stops to talk to ROBERT, leaning on the hoe he carries.

ANDREW. (seeing ROBERT has not noticed his presence—in a loud shout) Hey

there! (ROBERT turns with a start. Seeing who it is, he smiles) Gosh, you do take the prize for daydreaming! And I see you've toted one of the old books along with you. (He crosses the ditch and sits on the fence near his brother) What is it this time—poetry, I'll bet. (He reaches for the book) Let me see.

ROBERT. (handing it to him rather reluctantly) Look out you don't get it full of dirt.

ANDREW. (glancing at his hands) That isn't dirt—it's good clean earth. (He turns over the pages. His eyes read something and he gives an exclamation of disgust) Hump! (With a provoking grin at his brother he reads aloud in a doleful, sing-song voice) "I have loved wind and light and the bright sea. But holy and most sacred night, not as I love and have loved thee." (He hands the book back) Here! Take it and bury it. I suppose it's that year in college gave you a liking for that kind of stuff. I'm darn glad I stopped at High School, or maybe I'd been crazy too. (He grins and slaps ROBERT on the back affectionately) Imagine me reading poetry and plowing at the same time! The team'd run away, I'll bet.

ROBERT. (laughing) Or picture me plowing.

ANDREW. You should have gone back to college last fall, like I know you wanted to. You're fitted for that sort of thing—just as I ain't.

ROBERT. You know why I didn't go back, Andy. Pa didn't like the idea, even if he didn't say so; and I know he wanted the money to use improving the farm. And besides, I'm not keen on being a student, just because you see me reading books all the time. What I want to do now is keep on moving so that I won't take root in any one place.

ANDREW. Well, the trip you're leaving on tomorrow will keep you moving all right. (At this mention of the trip they both fall silent. There is a pause. Finally ANDREW goes on, awkwardly, attempting to speak casually) Uncle says you'll be gone three years.

ROBERT. About that, he figures.

ANDREW. (moodily) That's a long time.

ROBERT. Not so long when you come to consider it. You know the Sunda sails around the Horn for Yokohama first, and that's a long voyage on a sailing ship; and if we go to any of the other places Uncle Dick mentions—India, or Australia, or South Africa, or South America—they'll be long voyages, too.

ANDREW. You can have all those foreign parts for all of me. (After a pause) Ma's going to miss you a lot, Rob.

ROBERT. Yes—and I'll miss her.

ANDREW. And Pa ain't feeling none too happy to have you go—though he's been trying not to show it.

ROBERT. I can see how he feels.

ANDREW. And you can bet that I'm not giving any cheers about it. (He puts one hand on the fence near ROBERT).

ROBERT. (putting one hand on top of ANDREW'S with a gesture almost of shyness) I know that, too, Andy.

ANDREW. I'll miss you as much as anybody, I guess. You see, you and I ain't like most brothers—always fighting and separated a lot of the time, while we've always been together—just the two of us. It's different with us. That's why it hits so hard, I guess.

ROBERT. (with feeling) It's just as hard for me, Andy—believe that! I hate to leave you and the old folks—but—I feel I've got to. There's something calling me——(He points to the horizon) Oh, I can't just explain it to you, Andy.

ANDREW. No need to, Rob. (Angry at himself) Hell! You want to go—that's all there is to it; and I wouldn't have you miss this chance for the world.

ROBERT. It's fine of you to feel that way, Andy.

ANDREW. Huh! I'd be a nice son-of-a-gun if I didn't, wouldn't I? When I know

how you need this sea trip to make a new man of you—in the body, I mean—and give you your full health back.

ROBERT. (a trifle impatiently) All of you seem to keep harping on my health. You were so used to seeing me lying around the house in the old days that you never will get over the notion that I'm a chronic invalid. You don't realize how I've bucked up in the past few years. If I had no other excuse for going on Uncle Dick's ship but just my health, I'd stay right here and start in plowing.

ANDREW. Can't be done. Farming ain't your nature. There's all the difference shown in just the way us two feel about the farm. You—well, you like the home part of it, I expect; but as a place to work and grow things, you hate it. Ain't that right?

ROBERT. Yes, I suppose it is. For you it's different. You're a Mayo through and through. You're wedded to the soil. You're as much a product of it as an ear of corn is, or a tree. Father is the same. This farm is his life-work, and he's happy in knowing that another Mayo, inspired by the same love, will take up the work where he leaves off. I can understand your attitude, and Pa's; and I think it's wonderful and sincere. But I—well, I'm not made that way.

ANDREW. No, you ain't; but when it comes to understanding, I guess I realize that you've got your own angle of looking at things.

ROBERT. (musingly) I wonder if you do, really.

ANDREW. (confidently) Sure I do. You've seen a bit of the world, enough to make the farm seem small, and you've got the itch to see it all.

ROBERT. It's more than that, Andy.

ANDREW. Oh, of course. I know you're going to learn navigation, and all about a ship, so's you can be an officer. That's natural, too. There's fair pay in it, I expect, when you consider that you've always got a home and grub thrown in; and if you're set on traveling, you can go anywhere you're a mind to without paying fare.

ROBERT. (with a smile that is half sad) It's more than that, Andy.

ANDREW. Sure it is. There's always a chance of a good thing coming your way in some of those foreign ports or other. I've heard there are great opportunities for a young fellow with his eyes open in some of those new countries that are just being opened up. (Jovially) I'll bet that's what you've been turning over in your mind under all your quietness! (He slaps his brother on the back with a laugh) Well, if you get to be a millionaire all of a sudden, call 'round once in a while and I'll pass the plate to you. We could use a lot of money right here on the farm without hurting it any.

ROBERT. (forced to laugh) I've never considered that practical side of it for a minute, Andy.

ANDREW. Well, you ought to.

ROBERT. No, I oughtn't. (Pointing to the horizon—dreamily) Supposing I was to tell you that it's just Beauty that's calling me, the beauty of the far off and unknown, the mystery and spell of the East which lures me in the books I've read, the need of the freedom of great wide spaces, the joy of wandering on and on—in quest of the secret which is hidden over there, beyond the horizon? Suppose I told you that was the one and only reason for my going?

ANDREW. I should say you were nutty.

ROBERT. (frowning) Don't, Andy. I'm serious.

ANDREW. Then you might as well stay here, because we've got all you're looking for right on this farm. There's wide space enough, Lord knows; and you can have all the sea you want by walking a mile down to the beach; and there's plenty of horizon to look at, and beauty enough for anyone, except in the winter. (He grins) As for the mystery and spell, I haven't met 'em yet, but they're probably lying around somewheres. I'll have you understand this is a first class farm with all the fixings. (He laughs)

ROBERT. (joining in the laughter in spite of himself) It’s no use talking to you, you chump!

ANDREW. You’d better not say anything to Uncle Dick about spells and things when you’re on the ship. He’ll likely chuck you overboard for a Jonah. (He jumps down from fence) I’d better run along. I’ve got to wash up some as long as Ruth’s Ma is coming over for supper.

ROBERT. (pointedly—almost bitterly) And Ruth.

ANDREW. (confused—looking everywhere except at ROBERT—trying to appear unconcerned) Yes, Ruth’ll be staying too. Well, I better hustle, I guess, and—— (He steps over the ditch to the road while he is talking).

ROBERT. (who appears to be fighting some strong inward emotion—impulsively) Wait a minute, Andy! (He jumps down from the fence) There is something I want to—— (He stops abruptly, biting his lips, his face coloring).

ANDREW. (facing him; half-defiantly) Yes?

ROBERT. (confusedly) No—— never mind—— it doesn’t matter, it was nothing.

ANDREW. (after a pause, during which he stares fixedly at ROBERT’S averted face) Maybe I can guess—— what you were going to say—— but I guess you’re right not to talk about it. (He pulls ROBERT’S hand from his side and grips it tensely; the two brothers stand looking into each other’s eyes for a minute) We can’t help those things, Rob. (He turns away, suddenly releasing ROBERT’S hand) You’ll be coming along shortly, won’t you?

ROBERT. (dully) Yes.

ANDREW. See you later, then. (He walks of down the road to the left. ROBERT stares after him for a moment; then climbs to the fence rail again, and looks out over the hills, an expression of deep grief on his face. After a moment or so, RUTH enters hurriedly from the left. She is a healthy, blonde, out-of-door girl of twenty,

with a graceful, slender figure. Her face, though inclined to roundness, is undeniably pretty, its large eyes of a deep blue set off strikingly by the sun-bronzed complexion. Her small, regular features are marked by a certain strength—an underlying, stubborn fixity of purpose hidden in the frankly-appealing charm of her fresh youthfulness. She wears a simple white dress but no hat).

RUTH. (seeing him) Hello, Rob!

ROBERT. (startled) Hello, Ruth!

RUTH. (jumps the ditch and perches on the fence beside him) I was looking for you.

ROBERT. (pointedly) Andy just left here.

RUTH. I know. I met him on the road a second ago. He told me you were here. (Tenderly playful) I wasn't looking for Andy, Smarty, if that's what you mean. I was looking for you.

ROBERT. Because I'm going away tomorrow?

RUTH. Because your mother was anxious to have you come home and asked me to look for you. I just wheeled Ma over to your house.

ROBERT. (perfunctorily) How is your mother?

RUTH. (a shadow coming over her face) She's about the same. She never seems to get any better or any worse. Oh, Rob, I do wish she'd try to make the best of things that can't be helped.

ROBERT. Has she been nagging at you again?

RUTH. (nods her head, and then breaks forth rebelliously) She never stops nagging. No matter what I do for her she finds fault. If only Pa was still living—— (She stops as if ashamed of her outburst) I suppose I shouldn't complain this way. (She sighs) Poor Ma, Lord knows it's hard enough for her. I suppose it's natural to be cross when you're not able ever to walk a step. Oh, I'd like to be going away some place—like you!

ROBERT. It’s hard to stay—and equally hard to go, sometimes.

RUTH. There! If I’m not the stupid body! I swore I wasn’t going to speak about your trip—until after you’d gone; and there I go, first thing!

ROBERT. Why didn’t you want to speak of it?

RUTH. Because I didn’t want to spoil this last night you’re here. Oh, Rob, I’m going to—we’re all going to miss you so awfully. Your mother is going around looking as if she’d burst out crying any minute. You ought to know how I feel. Andy and you and I—why it seems as if we’d always been together.

ROBERT. (with a wry attempt at a smile) You and Andy will still have each other. It’ll be harder for me without anyone.

RUTH. But you’ll have new sights and new people to take your mind off; while we’ll be here with the old, familiar place to remind us every minute of the day. It’s a shame you’re going—just at this time, in spring, when everything is getting so nice. (With a sigh) I oughtn’t to talk that way when I know going’s the best thing for you. You’re bound to find all sorts of opportunities to get on, your father says.

ROBERT. (heatedly) I don’t give a damn about that! I wouldn’t take a voyage across the road for the best opportunity in the world of the kind Pa thinks of. (He smiles at his own irritation) Excuse me, Ruth, for getting worked up over it; but Andy gave me an overdose of the practical considerations.

RUTH. (slowly, puzzled) Well, then, if it isn’t—— (With sudden intensity) Oh, Rob, why do you want to go?

ROBERT. (turning to her quickly, in surprise—slowly) Why do you ask that, Ruth?

RUTH. (dropping her eyes before his searching glance) Because—— (Lamely) It seems such a shame.

ROBERT. (insistently) Why?

RUTH. Oh, because—everything.

ROBERT. I could hardly back out now, even if I wanted to. And I'll be forgotten before you know it.

RUTH. (indignantly) You won't! I'll never forget—— (She stops and turns away to hide her confusion).

ROBERT. (softly) Will you promise me that?

RUTH. (evasively) Of course. It's mean of you to think that any of us would forget so easily.

ROBERT. (disappointedly) Oh!

RUTH. (with an attempt at lightness) But you haven't told me your reason for leaving yet?

ROBERT. (moodily) I doubt if you'll understand. It's difficult to explain, even to myself. Either you feel it, or you don't. I can remember being conscious of it first when I was only a kid—you haven't forgotten what a sickly specimen I was then, in those days, have you?

RUTH. (with a shudder) Let's not think about them.

ROBERT. You'll have to, to understand. Well, in those days, when Ma was fixing meals, she used to get me out of the way by pushing my chair to the west window and telling me to look out and be quiet. That wasn't hard. I guess I was always quiet.

RUTH. (compassionately) Yes, you always were—and you suffering so much, too!

ROBERT. (musingly) So I used to stare out over the fields to the hills, out there—(He points to the horizon) and somehow after a time I'd forget any pain I was in, and start dreaming. I knew the sea was over beyond those hills,—the folks had told me—and I used to wonder what the sea was like, and try to form a picture of it in my mind. (With a smile) There was all the mystery in the world to me then about that—far-off sea—and there still is! It called to me then just as it does now. (After a slight pause) And other times my eyes would follow this road, winding off

into the distance, toward the hills, as if it, too, was searching for the sea. And I'd promise myself that when I grew up and was strong, I'd follow that road, and it and I would find the sea together. (With a smile) You see, my making this trip is only keeping that promise of long ago.

RUTH. (charmed by his low, musical voice telling the dreams of his childhood) Yes, I see.

ROBERT. Those were the only happy moments of my life then, dreaming there at the window. I liked to be all alone—those times. I got to know all the different kinds of sunsets by heart. And all those sunsets took place over there—(He points) beyond the horizon. So gradually I came to believe that all the wonders of the world happened on the other side of those hills. There was the home of the good fairies who performed beautiful miracles. I believed in fairies then. (With a smile) Perhaps I still do believe in them. Anyway, in those days they were real enough, and sometimes I could actually hear them calling to me to come out and play with them, dance with them down the road in the dusk in a game of hide-and-seek to find out where the sun was hiding himself. They sang their little songs to me, songs that told of all the wonderful things they had in their home on the other side of the hills; and they promised to show me all of them, if I'd only come, come! But I couldn't come then, and I used to cry sometimes and Ma would think I was in pain. (He breaks off suddenly with a laugh) That's why I'm going now, I suppose. For I can still hear them calling. But the horizon is as far away and as luring as ever. (He turns to her—softly) Do you understand now, Ruth?

RUTH. (spellbound, in a whisper) Yes.

ROBERT. You feel it then?

RUTH. Yes, yes, I do! (Unconsciously she snuggles close against his side. His arm steals about her as if he were not aware of the action) Oh, Rob, how could I help feeling it? You tell things so beautifully!

ROBERT. (suddenly realizing that his arm is around her, and that her head is resting on his shoulder, gently takes his arm away. RUTH, brought back to herself, is overcome with confusion) So now you know why I'm going. It's for that reason—that and one other.

RUTH. You've another? Then you must tell me that, too.

ROBERT. (looking at her searchingly. She drops her eyes before his gaze) I wonder if I ought to! You'll promise not to be angry—whatever it is?

RUTH. (softly, her face still averted) Yes, I promise.

ROBERT. (simply) I love you. That's the other reason.

RUTH. (hiding her face in her hands) Oh, Rob!

ROBERT. I wasn't going to tell you, but I feel I have to. It can't matter now that I'm going so far away, and for so long—perhaps forever. I've loved you all these years, but the realization never came 'til I agreed to go away with Uncle Dick. Then I thought of leaving you, and the pain of that thought revealed to me in a flash—that I loved you, had loved you as long as I could remember. (He gently pulls one of RUTH'S hands away from her face) You mustn't mind my telling you this, Ruth. I realize how impossible it all is—and I understand; for the revelation of my own love seemed to open my eyes to the love of others. I saw Andy's love for you—and I knew that you must love him.

RUTH. (breaking out storming) I don't! I don't love Andy! I don't! (ROBERT stares at her in stupid astonishment. RUTH weeps hysterically) Whatever—put such a fool notion into—into your head? (She suddenly throws her arms about his neck and hides her head on his shoulder) Oh, Rob! Don't go away! Please! You mustn't, now! You can't! I won't let you! It'd break my—my heart!

ROBERT. (The expression of stupid bewilderment giving way to one of overwhelming joy. He presses her close to him—slowly and tenderly) Do you mean that—that you love me?

RUTH. (sobbing) Yes, yes—of course I do—what d'you s'pose? (She lifts up her head and looks into his eyes with a tremulous smile) You stupid thing! (He kisses her) I've loved you right along.

ROBERT. (mystified) But you and Andy were always together!

RUTH. Because you never seemed to want to go any place with me. You were always reading an old book, and not paying any attention to me. I was too proud to let you see I cared because I thought the year you had away to college had made you stuck-up, and you thought yourself too educated to waste any time on me.

ROBERT. (kissing her) And I was thinking—— (With a laugh) What fools we've both been!

RUTH. (overcome by a sudden fear) You won't go away on the trip, will you, Rob? You'll tell them you can't go on account of me, won't you? You can't go now! You can't!

ROBERT. (bewildered) Perhaps—you can come too.

RUTH. Oh, Rob, don't be so foolish. You know I can't. Who'd take care of ma? Don't you see I couldn't go—on her account? (She clings to him imploringly) Please don't go—not now. Tell them you've decided not to. They won't mind. I know your mother and father'll be glad. They'll all be. They don't want you to go so far away from them. Please, Rob! We'll be so happy here together where it's natural and we know things. Please tell me you won't go!

ROBERT. (face to face with a definite, final decision, betrays the conflict going on within him) But—Ruth—I—Uncle Dick——

RUTH. He won't mind when he knows it's for your happiness to stay. How could he? (As ROBERT remains silent she bursts into sobs again) Oh, Rob! And you said—you loved me!

ROBERT. (conquered by this appeal—an irrevocable decision in his voice) I won't

go, Ruth. I promise you. There! Don't cry! (He presses her to him, stroking her hair tenderly. After a pause he speaks with happy hopefulness) Perhaps after all Andy was right—righter than he knew—when he said I could find all the things I was seeking for here, at home on the farm. I think love must have been the secret—the secret that called to me from over the world's rim—the secret beyond every horizon; and when I did not come, it came to me. (He clasps RUTH to him fiercely) Oh, Ruth, our love is sweeter than any distant dream! (He kisses her passionately and steps to the ground, lifting RUTH in his arms and carrying her to the road where he puts her down).

RUTH. (with a happy laugh) My, but you're strong!

ROBERT. Come! We'll go and tell them at once.

RUTH. (dismayed) Oh, no, don't, Rob, not 'til after I've gone. There'd be bound to be such a scene with them all together.

ROBERT. (kissing her—gayly) As you like—Little Miss Common Sense!

RUTH. Let's go, then. (She takes his hand, and they start to go off left. ROBERT suddenly stops and turns as though for a last look at the hills and the dying sunset flush).

ROBERT. (looking upward and pointing) See! The first star. (He bends down and kisses her tenderly) Our star!

RUTH. (in a soft murmur) Yes. Our very own star. (They stand for a moment looking up at it, their arms around each other. Then RUTH takes his hand again and starts to lead him away) Come, Rob, let's go. (His eyes are fixed again on the horizon as he half turns to follow her. RUTH urges) We'll be late for supper, Rob.

ROBERT. (shakes his head impatiently, as though he were throwing off some disturbing thought—with a laugh) All right. We'll run then. Come on! (They run of laughing as

(The Curtain Falls)

ACT ONE Scene Two

The sitting room of the Mayo farm house about nine o’clock the same night. On the left, two windows looking out on the fields. Against the wall between the windows, an old-fashioned walnut desk. In the left corner, rear, a sideboard with a mirror. In the rear wall to the right of the sideboard, a window looking out on the road. Neat to the window a door leading out into the yard. Farther right, a black horse-hair sofa, and another door opening on a bedroom. In the corner, a straight-backed chair. In the right wall, near the middle, an open doorway leading to the kitchen. Farther forward a double-heater stove with coal scuttle, etc. In the center of the newly carpeted floor, an oak dining-room table with a red cover. In the center of the table, a large oil reading lamp. Four chairs, three rockers with crocheted tidies on their backs, and one straight-backed, are placed about the table. The walls are papered a dark red with a scrolly-figured pattern.

Everything in the room is clean, well-kept, and in its exact place, yet there is no suggestion of primness about the whole. Rather the atmosphere is one of the orderly comfort of a simple, hard-earned prosperity, enjoyed and maintained by the family as a unit.

JAMES MAYO, his wife, her brother, CAPTAIN DICK SCOTT, and ANDREW are discovered. MAYO is his son ANDREW over again in body and face—an ANDREW sixty-five years old with a short, square, white beard. MRS. MAYO is a slight, round-faced, rather prim-looking woman of fifty-five who had once been a school teacher. The labors of a farmer’s wife have bent but not broken her, and she retains a certain refinement of movement and expression foreign to the MAYO part of the family. Whatever of resemblance ROBERT has to his parents may be traced to her. Her brother, the CAPTAIN, is short and stocky, with a weather-beaten, jovial face and a white mustache—a typical old salt, loud of voice and given to gesture. He

is fifty-eight years old.

JAMES MAYO sits in front of the table. He wears spectacles, and a farm journal which he has been reading lies in his lap. THE CAPTAIN leans forward from a chair in the rear, his hands on the table in front of him. ANDREW is tilted back on the straight-backed chair to the left, his chin sank forward on his chest, staring at the carpet, preoccupied and frowning.

As the Curtain rises the CAPTAIN is just finishing the relation of some sea episode. The others are pretending an interest which is belied by the absent-minded expressions on their faces.

THE CAPTAIN. (chuckling) And that mission woman, she hails me on the dock as I was acomin' ashore, and she says—with her silly face all screwed up serious as judgment—"Captain," she says, "would you be so kind as to tell me where the sea-gulls sleeps at nights?" Blow me if them warn't her exact words! (He slaps the table with the palm of his hands and laughs loudly. The others force smiles) Ain't that just like a fool woman's question? And I looks at her serious as I could, "Ma'm," says I, "I couldn't rightly answer that question. I ain't never seed a sea-gull in his bunk yet. The next time I hears one snorin'," I says, "I'll make a note of where he's turned in, and write you a letter 'bout it." And then she calls me a fool real spiteful and tacks away from me quick. (He laughs again uproariously) So I got rid of her that way. (The others smile but immediately relapse into expressions of gloom again).

MRS. MAYO. (absent-mindedly—feeling that she has to say something) But when it comes to that, where do sea-gulls sleep, Dick?

SCOTT. (slapping the table) Ho! Ho! Listen to her, James. 'Nother one! Well, if that don't beat all hell—'scuse me for cussin', Kate.

MAYO. (with a twinkle in his eyes) They unhitch their wings, Katey, and spreads 'em out on a wave for a bed.

SCOTT. And then they tells the fish to whistle to ’em when it’s time to turn out. Ho! Ho!

MRS. MAYO. (with a forced smile) You men folks are too smart to live, aren’t you? (She resumes her knitting. MAYO pretends to read his paper; ANDREW stares at the floor).

SCOTT. (looks from one to the other of them with a puzzled air. Finally he is unable to bear the thick silence a minute longer, and blurts out): You folks look as if you was settin’ up with a corpse. (With exaggerated concern) God A’mighty, there ain’t anyone dead, be there?

MAYO. (sharply) Don’t play the dunce, Dick! You know as well as we do there ain’t no great cause to be feelin’ chipper.

SCOTT. (argumentatively) And there ain’t no cause to be wearin’ mourning, either, I can make out.

MRS. MAYO. (indignantly) How can you talk that way, Dick Scott, when you’re taking our Robbie away from us, in the middle of the night, you might say, just to get on that old boat of yours on time! I think you might wait until morning when he’s had his breakfast.

SCOTT. (appealing to the others hopelessly) Ain’t that a woman’s way o’ seein’ things for you? God A’mighty, Kate, I can’t give orders to the tide that it’s got to be high just when it suits me to have it. I ain’t gettin’ no fun out o’ missin’ sleep and leavin’ here at six bells myself. (Protestingly) And the Sunda ain’t an old ship—leastways, not very old—and she’s good’s she ever was.

MRS. MAYO. (her lips trembling) I wish Robbie weren’t going.

MAYO. (looking at her over his glasses—consolingly) There, Katey!

MRS. MAYO. (rebelliously) Well, I do wish he wasn’t!

SCOTT. You shouldn’t be taking it so hard, ’s far as I kin see. This vige’ll make a

man of him. I'll see to it he learns how to navigate, 'n' study for a mate's c'tificate right off—and it'll give him a trade for the rest of his life, if he wants to travel.

MRS. MAYO. But I don't want him to travel all his life. You've got to see he comes home when this trip is over. Then he'll be all well, and he'll want to—to marry—(ANDREW sits forward in his chair with an abrupt movement)—and settle down right here. (She stares down at the knitting in her lap—after a pause) I never realized how hard it was going to be for me to have Robbie go—or I wouldn't have considered it a minute.

SCOTT. It ain't no good goin' on that way, Kate, now it's all settled.

MRS. MAYO. (on the verge of tears) It's all right for you to talk. You've never had any children. You don't know what it means to be parted from them—and Robbie my youngest, too. (ANDREW frowns and fidgets in his chair).

ANDREW. (suddenly turning to them) There's one thing none of you seem to take into consideration—that Rob wants to go. He's dead set on it. He's been dreaming over this trip ever since it was first talked about. It wouldn't be fair to him not to have him go. (A sudden uneasiness seems to strike him) At least, not if he still feels the same way about it he did when he was talking to me this evening.

MAYO. (with an air of decision) Andy's right, Katey. That ends all argyment, you can see that. (Looking at his big silver watch) Wonder what's happened to Robert? He's been gone long enough to wheel the widder to home, certain. He can't be out dreamin' at the stars his last night.

MRS. MAYO. (a bit reproachfully) Why didn't you wheel Mrs. Atkins back tonight, Andy? You usually do when she and Ruth come over.

ANDREW. (avoiding her eyes) I thought maybe Robert wanted to tonight. He offered to go right away when they were leaving.

MRS. MAYO. He only wanted to be polite.

ANDREW. (gets to his feet) Well, he'll be right back, I guess. (He turns to his father) Guess I'll go take a look at the black cow, Pa—see if she's ailing any.

MAYO. Yes—better had, son. (ANDREW goes into the kitchen on the right).

SCOTT. (as he goes out—in a low tone) There's the boy that would make a good, strong sea-farin' man—if he'd a mind to.

MAYO. (sharply) Don't you put no such fool notions in Andy's head, Dick—or you 'n' me's goin' to fall out. (Then he smiles) You couldn't tempt him, no ways. Andy's a Mayo bred in the bone, and he's a born farmer, and a damn good one, too. He'll live and die right here on this farm, like I expect to. (With proud confidence) And he'll make this one of the slickest, best-payin' farms in the state, too, afore he gits through!

SCOTT. Seems to me it's a pretty slick place right now.

MAYO. (shaking his head) It's too small. We need more land to make it amount to much, and we ain't got the capital to buy it. (ANDREW enters from the kitchen. His hat is on, and he carries a lighted lantern in his hand. He goes to the door in the rear leading out).

ANDREW. (opens the door and pauses) Anything else you can think of to be done, Pa?

MAYO. No, nothin' I know of. (ANDREW goes out, shutting the door).

MRS. MAYO. (after a pause) What's come over Andy tonight, I wonder? He acts so strange.

MAYO. He does seem sort o' glum and out of sorts. It's 'count o' Robert leavin', I s'pose. (To SCOTT) Dick, you wouldn't believe how them boys o' mine sticks together. They ain't like most brothers. They've been thick as thieves all their lives, with nary a quarrel I kin remember.

SCOTT. No need to tell me that. I can see how they take to each other.

MRS. MAYO. (pursuing her train of thought) Did you notice, James, how queer everyone was at supper? Robert seemed stirred up about something; and Ruth was so flustered and giggly; and Andy sat there dumb, looking as if he'd lost his best friend; and all of them only nibbled at their food.

MAYO. Guess they was all thinkin' about tomorrow, same as us.

MRS. MAYO. (shaking her head) No. I'm afraid somethin's happened—somethin' else.

MAYO. You mean—'bout Ruth?

MRS. MAYO. Yes.

MAYO. (after a pause—frowning) I hope her and Andy ain't had a serious fallin'-out. I always sorter hoped they'd hitch up together sooner or later. What d'you say, Dick? Don't you think them two'd pair up well?

SCOTT. (nodding his head approvingly) A sweet, wholesome couple they'd make.

MAYO. It'd be a good thing for Andy in more ways than one. I ain't what you'd call calculatin' generally, and I b'lieve in lettin' young folks run their affairs to suit themselves; but there's advantages for both o' them in this match you can't overlook in reason. The Atkins farm is right next to ourn. Jined together they'd make a jim-dandy of a place, with plenty o' room to work in. And bein' a widder with only a daughter, and laid up all the time to boot, Mrs. Atkins can't do nothin' with the place as it ought to be done. She needs a man, a first-class farmer, to take hold o' things; and Andy's just the one.

MRS. MAYO. (abruptly) I don't think Ruth loves Andy.

MAYO. You don't? Well, maybe a woman's eyes is sharper in such things, but—they're always together. And if she don't love him now, she'll likely come around to it in time. (As MRS. MAYO shakes her head) You seem mighty fixed in your opinion, Katey. How d'you know?

MRS. MAYO. It's just—what I feel.

MAYO. (a light breaking over him) You don't mean to say—(MRS. MAYO nods. MAYO chuckles scornfully) Shucks! I'm losin' my respect for your eyesight, Katey. Why, Robert ain't got no time for Ruth, 'cept as a friend!

MRS. MAYO. (warningly) Sss-h-h! (The door from the yard opens, and ROBERT enters. He is smiling happily, and humming a song to himself, but as he comes into the room an undercurrent of nervous uneasiness manifests itself in his bearing).

MAYO. So here you be at last! (ROBERT comes forward and sits on ANDY'S chair. MAYO smiles slyly at his wife) What have you been doin' all this time—countin' the stars to see if they all come out right and proper?

ROBERT. There's only one I'll ever look for any more, Pa.

MAYO. (reproachfully) You might've even not wasted time lookin' for that one—your last night.

MRS. MAYO. (as if she were speaking to a child) You ought to have worn your coat a sharp night like this, Robbie.

SCOTT. (disgustedly) God A'mighty, Kate, you treat Robert as if he was one year old!

MRS. MAYO. (notices ROBERT'S nervous uneasiness) You look all worked up over something, Robbie. What is it?

ROBERT. (swallowing hard, looks quickly from one to the other of them—then begins determinedly) Yes, there is something—something I must tell you—all of you. (As he begins to talk ANDREW enters quietly from the rear, closing the door behind him, and setting the lighted lantern on the floor. He remains standing by the door, his arms folded, listening to ROBERT with a repressed expression of pain on his face. ROBERT is so much taken up with what he is going to say that he does not notice ANDREW'S presence.) Something I discovered only this evening—very

beautiful and wonderful—something I did not take into consideration previously because I hadn't dared to hope that such happiness could ever come to me. (Appealingly) You must all remember that fact, won't you?

MAYO. (frowning) Let's get to the point, son.

ROBERT. (with a trace of defiance) Well, the point is this, Pa: I'm not going—I mean—I can't go tomorrow with Uncle Dick—or at any future time, either.

MRS. MAYO. (with a sharp sigh of joyful relief) Oh, Robbie, I'm so glad!

MAYO. (astounded) You ain't serious, be you, Robert? (Severely) Seems to me it's a pretty late hour in the day for you to be upsettin' all your plans so sudden!

ROBERT. I asked you to remember that until this evening I didn't know myself. I had never dared to dream——

MAYO. (irritably) What is this foolishness you're talkin' of?

ROBERT. (flushing) Ruth told me this evening that—she loved me. It was after I'd confessed I loved her. I told her I hadn't been conscious of my love until after the trip had been arranged, and I realized it would mean—leaving her. That was the truth. I didn't know until then. (As if justifying himself to the others) I hadn't intended telling her anything but—suddenly—I felt I must. I didn't think it would matter, because I was going away. And I thought she loved—someone else. (Slowly—his eyes shining) And then she cried and said it was I she'd loved all the time, but I hadn't seen it.

MRS. MAYO. (rushes over and throws her arms about him) I knew it! I was just telling your father when you came in—and, Oh, Robbie, I'm so happy you're not going!

ROBERT. (kissing her) I knew you'd be glad, Ma.

MAYO. (bewilderedly) Well, I'll be damned! You do beat all for gettin' folks' minds all tangled up, Robert. And Ruth too! Whatever got into her of a sudden?

Why, I was thinkin'——

MRS. MAYO. (hurriedly—in a tone of warning) Never mind what you were thinking, James. It wouldn't be any use telling us that now. (Meaningly) And what you were hoping for turns out just the same almost, doesn't it?

MAYO. (thoughtfully—beginning to see this side of the argument) Yes; I suppose you're right, Katey. (Scratching his head in puzzlement) But how it ever come about! It do beat anything ever I heard. (Finally he gets up with a sheepish grin and walks over to ROBERT) We're glad you ain't goin', your Ma and I, for we'd have missed you terrible, that's certain and sure; and we're glad you've found happiness. Ruth's a fine girl and'll make a good wife to you.

ROBERT. (much moved) Thank you, Pa. (He grips his father's hand in his).

ANDREW. (his face tense and drawn comes forward and holds out his hand, forcing a smile) I guess it's my turn to offer congratulations, isn't it?

ROBERT. (with a startled cry when his brother appears before him so suddenly) Andy! (Confused) Why—I—I didn't see you. Were you here when——

ANDREW. I heard everything you said; and here's wishing you every happiness, you and Ruth. You both deserve the best there is.

ROBERT. (taking his hand) Thanks, Andy, it's fine of you to—— (His voice dies away as he sees the pain in ANDREW'S eyes).

ANDREW. (giving his brother's hand a final grip) Good luck to you both! (He turns away and goes back to the rear where he bends over the lantern, fumbling with it to hide his emotion from the others).

MRS. MAYO. (to the CAPTAIN, who has been too flabbergasted by ROBERT'S decision to say a word) What's the matter, Dick? Aren't you going to congratulate Robbie?

SCOTT. (embarrassed) Of course I be! (He gets to his feet and shakes ROBERT'S

hand, muttering a vague) Luck to you, boy. (He stands beside ROBERT as if he wanted to say something more but doesn't know how to go about it).

ROBERT. Thanks, Uncle Dick.

SCOTT. So you're not acomin' on the Sunda with me? (His voice indicates disbelief).

ROBERT. I can't, Uncle—not now. I wouldn't miss it for anything else in the world under any other circumstances. (He sighs unconsciously) But you see I've found—a bigger dream. (Then with joyous high spirits) I want you all to understand one thing—I'm not going to be a loafer on your hands any longer. This means the beginning of a new life for me in every way. I'm going to settle right down and take a real interest in the farm, and do my share. I'll prove to you, Pa, that I'm as good a Mayo as you are—or Andy, when I want to be.

MAYO. (kindly but skeptically) That's the right spirit, Robert. Ain't none of us doubts your willin'ness, but you ain't never learned——

ROBERT. Then I'm going to start learning right away, and you'll teach me, won't you?

MAYO. (mollifyingly) Of course I will, boy, and be glad to, only you'd best go easy at first.

SCOTT. (who has listened to this conversation in mingled consternation and amazement) You don't mean to tell me you're goin' to let him stay, do you, James?

MAYO. Why, things bein' as they be, Robert's free to do as he's a mind to.

MRS. MAYO. Let him! The very idea!

SCOTT. (more and more ruffled) Then all I got to say is, you're a soft, weak-willed critter to be permittin' a boy—and women, too—to be layin' your course for you wherever they damn pleases.

MAYO. (slyly amused) It's just the same with me as 'twas with you, Dick. You

can't order the tides on the seas to suit you, and I ain't pretendin' I can reg'late love for young folks.

SCOTT. (scornfully) Love! They ain't old enough to know love when they sight it! Love! I'm ashamed of you, Robert, to go lettin' a little huggin' and kissin' in the dark spile your chances to make a man out o' yourself. It ain't common sense—no siree, it ain't—not by a hell of a sight! (He pounds the table with his fists in exasperation).

MRS. MAYO. (laughing provokingly at her brother) A fine one you are to be talking about love, Dick—an old cranky bachelor like you. Goodness sakes!

SCOTT. (exasperated by their joking) I've never been a damn fool like most, if that's what you're steerin' at.

MRS. MAYO. (tauntingly) Sour grapes, aren't they, Dick? (She laughs. ROBERT and his father chuckle. SCOTT sputters with annoyance) Good gracious, Dick, you do act silly, flying into a temper over nothing.

SCOTT. (indignantly) Nothin'! You talk as if I wasn't concerned nohow in this here business. Seems to me I've got a right to have my say. Ain't I made all arrangements with the owners and stocked up with some special grub all on Robert's account?

ROBERT. You've been fine, Uncle Dick; and I appreciate it. Truly.

MAYO. 'Course; we all does, Dick.

SCOTT. (unplacated) I've been countin' sure on havin' Robert for company on this vige—to sorta talk to and show things to, and teach, kinda, and I got my mind so set on havin' him I'm goin' to be double lonesome this vige. (He pounds on the table, attempting to cover up this confession of weakness) Darn all this silly lovin' business, anyway. (Irritably) But all this talk ain't tellin' me what I'm to do with that sta'b'd cabin I fixed up. It's all painted white, an' a bran new mattress on the bunk, 'n' new sheets 'n' blankets 'n' things. And Chips built in a book-case so's Robert could take his books along—with a slidin' bar fixed across't it, mind, so's they

couldn't fall out no matter how she rolled. (With excited consternation) What d'you suppose my officers is goin' to think when there's no one comes aboard to occupy that sta'b'd cabin? And the men what did the work on it—what'll they think? (He shakes his finger indignantly) They're liable as not to suspicion it was a woman I'd planned to ship along, and that she gave me the go-by at the last moment! (He wipes his perspiring brow in anguish at this thought). Gawd A'mighty! They're only lookin' to have the laugh on me for something like that. They're liable to b'lieve anything, those fellers is!

MAYO. (with a wink) Then there's nothing to it but for you to get right out and hunt up a wife somewheres for that spick 'n' span cabin. She'll have to be a pretty one, too, to match it. (He looks at his watch with exaggerated concern) You ain't got much time to find her, Dick.

SCOTT. (as the others smile—sulkily) You kin go to thunder, Jim Mayo!

ANDREW. (comes forward from where he has been standing by the door, rear, brooding. His face is set in a look of grim determination) You needn't worry about that spare cabin, Uncle Dick, if you've a mind to take me in Robert's place.

ROBERT. (turning to him quickly) Andy! (He sees at once the fixed resolve in his brother's eyes, and realizes immediately the reason for it—in consternation) Andy, you mustn't!

ANDREW. You've made your decision, Rob, and now I've made mine. You're out of this, remember.

ROBERT. (hurt by his brother's tone) But Andy——

ANDREW. Don't interfere, Rob—that's all I ask. (Turning to his uncle) You haven't answered my question, Uncle Dick.

SCOTT. (clearing his throat, with an uneasy side glance at JAMES MAYO who is staring at his elder son as if he thought he had suddenly gone mad) O' course, I'd be glad to have you, Andy.

ANDREW. It’s settled then. I can pack the little I want to take in a few minutes.

MRS. MAYO. Don’t be a fool, Dick. Andy’s only joking you.

SCOTT. (disgruntedly) It’s hard to tell who’s jokin’ and who’s not in this house.

ANDREW. (firmly) I’m not joking, Uncle Dick. (As SCOTT looks at him uncertainly) You needn’t be afraid I’ll go back on my word.

ROBERT. (hurt by the insinuation he feels in ANDREW’S tone) Andy! That isn’t fair!

MAYO. (frowning) Seems to me this ain’t no subject to joke over—not for Andy.

ANDREW. (facing his father) I agree with you, Pa, and I tell you again, once and for all, that I’ve made up my mind to go.

MAYO. (dumbfounded—unable to doubt the determination in ANDREW’S voice—helplessly) But why, son? Why?

ANDREW. (evasively) I’ve always wanted to go.

ROBERT. Andy!

ANDREW. (half angrily) You shut up, Rob! (Turning to his father again) I didn’t ever mention it because as long as Rob was going I knew it was no use; but now Rob’s staying on here, there isn’t any reason for me not to go.

MAYO. (breathing hard) No reason? Can you stand there and say that to me, Andrew?

MRS. MAYO. (hastily—seeing the gathering storm) He doesn’t mean a word of it, James.

MAYO. (making a gesture to her to keep silence) Let me talk, Katey. (In a more kindly tone) What’s come over you so sudden, Andy? You know’s well as I do that it wouldn’t be fair o’ you to run off at a moment’s notice right now when we’re up to our necks in hard work.

ANDREW. (avoiding his eyes) Rob’ll hold his end up as soon as he learns.

MAYO. Robert was never cut out for a farmer, and you was.

ANDREW. You can easily get a man to do my work.

MAYO. (restraining his anger with an effort) It sounds strange to hear you, Andy, that I always thought had good sense, talkin' crazy like that. (Scornfully) Get a man to take your place! You ain't been workin' here for no hire, Andy, that you kin give me your notice to quit like you've done. The farm is your'n as well as mine. You've always worked on it with that understanding; and what you're sayin' you intend doin' is just skulkin' out o' your rightful responsibility.

ANDREW. (looking at the floor—simply) I'm sorry, Pa. (After a slight pause) It's no use talking any more about it.

MRS. MAYO. (in relief) There! I knew Andy'd come to his senses!

ANDREW. Don't get the wrong idea, Ma. I'm not backing out.

MAYO. You mean you're goin' in spite of—everythin'?

ANDREW. Yes. I'm going. I've got to. (He looks at his father defiantly) I feel I oughn't to miss this chance to go out into the world and see things, and—I want to go.

MAYO. (with bitter scorn) So—you want to go out into the world and see thin's! (His voice raised and quivering with anger) I never thought I'd live to see the day when a son o' mine 'd look me in the face and tell a bare-faced lie! (Bursting out) You're a liar, Andy Mayo, and a mean one to boot!

MRS. MAYO. James!

ROBERT. Pa!

SCOTT. Steady there, Jim!

MAYO. (waving their protests aside) He is and he knows it.

ANDREW. (his face flushed) I won't argue with you, Pa. You can think as badly of me as you like.

MAYO. (shaking his finger at ANDY, in a cold rage) You know I'm speakin' truth—that's why you're afraid to argy! You lie when you say you want to go 'way—and see thin's! You ain't got no likin' in the world to go. I've watched you grow up, and I know your ways, and they're my ways. You're runnin' against your own nature, and you're goin' to be a'mighty sorry for it if you do. 'S if I didn't know your real reason for runnin' away! And runnin' away's the only words to fit it. You're runnin' away 'cause you're put out and riled 'cause your own brother's got Ruth 'stead o' you, and——

ANDREW. (his face crimson—tensely) Stop, Pa! I won't stand hearing that—not even from you!

MRS. MAYO. (rushing to ANDY and putting her arms about him protectingly) Don't mind him, Andy dear. He don't mean a word he's saying! (ROBERT stands rigidly, his hands clenched, his face contracted by pain. SCOTT sits dumbfounded and open-mouthed. ANDREW soothes his mother who is on the verge of tears).

MAYO. (in angry triumph) It's the truth, Andy Mayo! And you ought to be bowed in shame to think of it!

ROBERT. (protestingly) Pa!

MRS. MAYO. (coming from ANDREW to his father; puts her hands on his shoulders as though to try and push him back in the chair from which he has risen) Won't you be still, James? Please won't you?

MAYO. (looking at ANDREW over his wife's shoulder—stubbornly) The truth—God's truth!

MRS. MAYO. Sh-h-h! (She tries to put a finger across his lips, but he twists his head away).

ANDREW. (who has regained control over himself) You're wrong, Pa, it isn't truth. (With defiant assertiveness) I don't love Ruth. I never loved her, and the thought of such a thing never entered my head.

MAYO. (with an angry snort of disbelief) Hump! You're pilin' lie on lie!

ANDREW. (losing his temper—bitterly) I suppose it'd be hard for you to explain anyone's wanting to leave this blessed farm except for some outside reason like that. But I'm sick and tired of it—whether you want to believe me or not—and that's why I'm glad to get a chance to move on.

ROBERT. Andy! Don't! You're only making it worse.

ANDREW. (sulkily) I don't care. I've done my share of work here. I've earned my right to quit when I want to. (Suddenly overcome with anger and grief; with rising intensity) I'm sick and tired of the whole damn business. I hate the farm and every inch of ground in it. I'm sick of digging in the dirt and sweating in the sun like a slave without getting a word of thanks for it. (Tears of rage starting to his eyes—hoarsely) I'm through, through for good and all; and if Uncle Dick won't take me on his ship, I'll find another. I'll get away somewhere, somehow.

MRS. MAYO. (in a frightened voice) Don't you answer him, James. He doesn't know what he's saying. Don't say a word to him 'til he's in his right senses again. Please James, don't——

MAYO. (pushes her away from him; his face is drawn and pale with the violence of his passion. He glares at ANDREW as if he hated him) You dare to—you dare to speak like that to me? You talk like that 'bout this farm—the Mayo farm—where you was born—you—you—— (He clenches his fist above his head and advances threateningly on ANDREW) You damned whelp!

MRS. MAYO. (with a shriek) James! (She covers her face with her hands and sinks weakly into MAYO'S chair. ANDREW remains standing motionless, his face pale and set).

SCOTT. (starting to his feet and stretching his arms across the table toward MAYO) Easy there, Jim!

ROBERT. (throwing himself between father and brother) Stop! Are you mad?

MAYO. (grabs ROBERT'S arm and pushes him aside—then stands for a moment gasping for breath before ANDREW. He points to the door with a shaking finger) Yes—go!—go!—You're no son o' mine—no son o' mine! You can go to hell if you want to! Don't let me find you here—in the mornin'—or—or—I'll throw you out!

ROBERT. Pa! For God's sake! (MRS. MAYO bursts into noisy sobbing).

MAYO. (he gulps convulsively and glares at ANDREW) You go—tomorrow mornin'—and by God—don't come back—don't dare come back—by God, not while I'm livin'—or I'll—I'll—— (He shakes over his muttered threat and strides toward the door rear, right).

MRS. MAYO. (rising and throwing her arms around him—hysterically) James! James! Where are you going?

MAYO. (incoherently) I'm goin'—to bed, Katey. It's late, Katey—it's late. (He goes out).

MRS. MAYO. (following him, pleading hysterically) James! Take back what you've said to Andy. James! (She follows him out. ROBERT and the CAPTAIN stare after them with horrified eyes. ANDREW stands rigidly looking straight in front of him, his fists clenched at his sides).

SCOTT. (the first to find his voice—with an explosive sigh) Well, if he ain't the devil himself when he's roused! You oughtn't to have talked to him that way, Andy 'bout the damn farm, knowin' how touchy he is about it. (With another sigh) Well, you won't mind what he's said in anger. He'll be sorry for it when he's calmed down a bit.

ANDREW. (in a dead voice) You don't know him. (Defiantly) What's said is said and can't be unsaid; and I've chosen.

ROBERT. (with violent protest) Andy! You can't go! This is all so stupid—and terrible!

ANDREW. (coldly) I'll talk to you in a minute, Rob. (Crushed by his brother's attitude ROBERT sinks down into a chair, holding his head in his hands).

SCOTT. (comes and slaps ANDREW on the back) I'm damned glad you're shippin' on, Andy. I like your spirit, and the way you spoke up to him. (Lowering his voice to a cautious whisper) The sea's the place for a young feller like you that isn't half dead 'n' alive. (He gives ANDY a final approving slap) You 'n' me'll get along like twins, see if we don't. I'm goin' aloft to turn in. Don't forget to pack your dunnage. And git some sleep, if you kin. We'll want to sneak out extra early b'fore they're up. It'll do away with more argyments. Robert can drive us down to the town, and bring back the team. (He goes to the door in the rear, left) Well, good night.

ANDREW. Good night. (SCOTT goes out. The two brothers remain silent for a moment. Then ANDREW comes over to his brother and puts a hand on his back. He speaks in a low voice, full of feeling) Buck up, Rob. It ain't any use crying over spilt milk; and it'll all turn out for the best—let's hope. It couldn't be helped—what's happened.

ROBERT. (wildly) But it's a lie, Andy, a lie!

ANDREW. Of course it's a lie. You know it and I know it,—but that's all ought to know it.

ROBERT. Pa'll never forgive you. Oh, the whole affair is so senseless—and tragic. Why did you think you must go away?

ANDREW. You know better than to ask that. You know why. (Fiercely) I can wish you and Ruth all the good luck in the world, and I do, and I mean it; but you can't expect me to stay around here and watch you two together, day after day—and me alone. I couldn't stand it—not after all the plans I'd made to happen on this place thinking—— (his voice breaks) thinking she cared for me.

ROBERT. (putting a hand on his brother's arm) God! It's horrible! I feel so guilty—to think that I should be the cause of your suffering, after we've been such

pals all our lives. If I could have foreseen what'd happen, I swear to you I'd have never said a word to Ruth. I swear I wouldn't have, Andy!

ANDREW. I know you wouldn't; and that would've been worse, for Ruth would've suffered then. (He pats his brother's shoulder) It's best as it is. It had to be, and I've got to stand the gaff, that's all. Pa'll see how I felt—after a time. (As ROBERT shakes his head)—and if he don't—well, it can't be helped.

ROBERT. But think of Ma! God, Andy, you can't go! You can't!

ANDREW. (fiercely) I've got to go—to get away! I've got to, I tell you. I'd go crazy here, bein' reminded every second of the day what a fool I'd made of myself. I've got to get away and try and forget, if I can. And I'd hate the farm if I stayed, hate it for bringin' things back. I couldn't take interest in the work any more, work with no purpose in sight. Can't you see what a hell it'd be? You love her too, Rob. Put yourself in my place, and remember I haven't stopped loving her, and couldn't if I was to stay. Would that be fair to you or to her? Put yourself in my place. (He shakes his brother fiercely by the shoulder) What'd you do then? Tell me the truth! You love her. What'd you do?

ROBERT. (chokingly) I'd—I'd go, Andy! (He buries his face in his hands with a shuddering sob) God!

ANDREW. (seeming to relax suddenly all over his body—in a low, steady voice) Then you know why I got to go; and there's nothing more to be said.

ROBERT. (in a frenzy of rebellion) Why did this have to happen to us? It's damnable! (He looks about him wildly, as if his vengeance were seeking the responsible fate).

ANDREW. (soothingly—again putting his hands on his brother's shoulder) It's no use fussing any more, Rob. It's done. (Forcing a smile) I guess Ruth's got a right to have who she likes. She made a good choice—and God bless her for it!

ROBERT. Andy! Oh, I wish I could tell you half I feel of how fine you are!

ANDREW. (interrupting him quickly) Shut up! Let's go to bed. I've got to be up long before sun-up. You, too, if you're going to drive us down.

ROBERT. Yes. Yes.

ANDREW. (turning down the lamp) And I've got to pack yet. (He yawns with utter weariness) I'm as tired as if I'd been plowing twenty-four hours at a stretch. (Dully) I feel—dead. (ROBERT covers his face again with his hands. ANDREW shakes his head as if to get rid of his thoughts, and continues with a poor attempt at cheery briskness) I'm going to douse the light. Come on. (He slaps his brother on the back. ROBERT does not move. ANDREW bends over and blows out the lamp. His voice comes from the darkness) Don't sit there mourning, Rob. It'll all come out in the wash. Come on and get some sleep. Everything'll turn out all right in the end. (ROBERT can be heard stumbling to his feet, and the dark figures of the two brothers can be seen groping their way toward the doorway in the rear as

(The Curtain Falls)

BEYOND THE HORIZON ACT TWO

Scene One

Same as Act One, Scene Two. Sitting room of the farm house about half past twelve in the afternoon of a hot, sun-baked day in mid-summer, three years later. All the windows are open, but no breeze stirs the soiled white curtains. A patched screen door is in the rear. Through it the yard can be seen, its small stretch of lawn divided by the dirt path leading to the door from the gate in the white picket fence which borders the road.

The room has changed, not so much in its outward appearance as in its general atmosphere. Little significant details give evidence of carelessness, of inefficiency, of an industry gone to seed. The chairs appear shabby from lack of paint; the table

cover is spotted and askew; holes show in the curtains; a child's doll, with one arm gone, lies under the table; a hoe stands in a corner; a man's coat is flung on the couch in the rear; the desk is cluttered up with odds and ends; a number of books are piled carelessly on the sideboard. The noon enervation of the sultry, scorching day seems to have penetrated indoors, causing even inanimate objects to wear an aspect of despondent exhaustion.

A place is set at the end of the table, left, for someone's dinner. Through the open door to the kitchen comes the clatter of dishes being washed, interrupted at intervals by a woman's irritated voice and the peevish whining of a child.

At the rise of the curtain MRS. MAYO and MRS. ATKINS are discovered sitting facing each other, MRS. MAYO to the rear MRS. ATKINS to the right of the table. MRS. MAYO'S face has lost all character, disintegrated, become a weak mask wearing a helpless, doleful expression of being constantly on the verge of comfortless tears. She speaks in an uncertain voice, without assertiveness, as if all power of willing had deserted her. MRS. ATKINS is in her wheel chair. She is a thin, pale-faced, unintelligent looking woman of about forty-eight, with hard, bright eyes. A victim of partial paralysis for many years, condemned to be pushed from day to day of her life in a wheel chair, she has developed the selfish, irritable nature of the chronic invalid. Both women are dressed in black. MRS. ATKINS knits nervously as she talks. A ball of unused yarn, with needles stuck through it, lies on the table before MRS. MAYO.

MRS. ATKINS. (with a disapproving glance at the place set on the table) Robert's late for his dinner again, as usual. I don't see why Ruth puts up with it, and I've told her so. Many's the time I've said to her "It's about time you put a stop to his nonsense. Does he suppose you're runnin' a hotel—with no one to help with things?" But she don't pay no attention. She's as bad as he is, a'most—thinks she knows better than an old, sick body like me.

MRS. MAYO. (dully) Robbie's always late for things. He can't help it, Sarah.

MRS. ATKINS. (with a snort) Can't help it! How you do go on, Kate, findin' excuses for him! Anybody can help anything they've a mind to—as long as they've got health, and ain't rendered helpless like me—(She adds as a pious afterthought)—through the will of God.

MRS. MAYO. Robbie can't.

MRS. ATKINS. Can't! It do make me mad, Kate Mayo, to see folks that God gave all the use of their limbs to potterin' round and wastin' time doin' everything the wrong way—and me powerless to help and at their mercy, you might say. And it ain't that I haven't pointed the right way to 'em. I've talked to Robert thousands of times and told him how things ought to be done. You know that, Kate Mayo. But d'you s'pose he takes any notice of what I say? Or Ruth, either—my own daughter? No, they think I'm a crazy, cranky old woman, half dead a'ready, and the sooner I'm in the grave and out o' their way the better it'd suit them.

MRS. MAYO. You mustn't talk that way, Sarah. They're not as wicked as that. And you've got years and years before you.

MRS. ATKINS. You're like the rest, Kate. You don't know how near the end I am. Well, at least I can go to my eternal rest with a clear conscience. I've done all a body could do to avert ruin from this house. On their heads be it!

MRS. MAYO. (with hopeless indifference) Things might be worse. Robert never had any experience in farming. You can't expect him to learn in a day.

MRS. ATKINS. (snappily) He's had three years to learn, and he's gettin' worse 'stead of better. Not on'y your place but mine too is driftin' to rack and ruin, and I can't do nothin' to prevent.

MRS. MAYO. (with a spark of assertiveness) You can't say but Robbie works hard, Sarah.

MRS. ATKINS. What good's workin' hard if it don't accomplish anythin', I'd like to know?

MRS. MAYO. Robbie's had bad luck against him.

MRS. ATKINS. Say what you've a mind to, Kate, the proof of the puddin's in the eatin'; and you can't deny that things have been goin' from bad to worse ever since your husband died two years back.

MRS. MAYO. (wiping tears from her eyes with her handkerchief) It was God's will that he should be taken.

MRS. ATKINS. (triumphantly) It was God's punishment on James Mayo for the blasphemin' and denyin' of God he done all his sinful life! (MRS. MAYO begins to weep softly) There, Kate, I shouldn't be remindin' you, I know. He's at peace, poor man, and forgiven, let's pray.

MRS. MAYO. (wiping her eyes—simply) James was a good man.

MRS. ATKINS. (ignoring this remark) What I was sayin' was that since Robert's been in charge things've been goin' down hill steady. You don't know how bad they are. Robert don't let on to you what's happenin'; and you'd never see it yourself if 'twas under your nose. But, thank the Lord, Ruth still comes to me once in a while for advice when she's worried near out of her senses by his goin's-on. Do you know what she told me last night? But I forgot, she said not to tell you—still I think you've got a right to know, and it's my duty not to let such things go on behind your back.

MRS. MAYO. (wearily) You can tell me if you want to.

MRS. ATKINS. (bending over toward her—in a low voice) Ruth was almost crazy about it. Robert told her he'd have to mortgage the farm—said he didn't know how he'd pull through 'til harvest without it, and he can't get money any other way. (She straightens up—indignantly) Now what do you think of your Robert?

MRS. MAYO. (resignedly) If it has to be——

MRS. ATKINS. You don't mean to say you're goin' to sign away your farm, Kate Mayo—after me warnin' you?

MRS. MAYO.—I'll do what Robbie says is needful.

MRS. ATKINS. (holding up her hands) Well, of all the foolishness!—— well, it's your farm, not mine, and I've nothin' more to say.

MRS. MAYO. Maybe Robbie'll manage till Andy gets back and sees to things. It can't be long now.

MRS. ATKINS. (with keen interest) Ruth says Andy ought to turn up any day. When does Robert figger he'll get here?

MRS. MAYO. He says he can't calculate exactly on account o' the Sunda being a sail boat. Last letter he got was from England, the day they were sailing for home. That was over a month ago, and Robbie thinks they're overdue now.

MRS. ATKINS. We can give praise to God then that he'll be back in the nick o' time. He ought to be tired of travelin' and anxious to get home and settle down to work again.

MRS. MAYO. Andy has been working. He's head officer on Dick's boat, he wrote Robbie. You know that.

MRS. ATKINS. That foolin' on ships is all right for a spell, but he must be right sick of it by this.

MRS. MAYO. (musingly) I wonder if he's changed much. He used to be so fine-looking and strong. (With a sigh) Three years! It seems more like three hundred. (Her eyes filling—piteously) Oh, if James could only have lived 'til he came back—and forgiven him!

MRS. ATKINS. He never would have—not James Mayo! Didn't he keep his heart hardened against him till the last in spite of all you and Robert did to soften him?

MRS. MAYO. (with a feeble flash of anger) Don't you dare say that! (Brokenly) Oh, I know deep down in his heart he forgave Andy, though he was too stubborn ever to own up to it. It was that brought on his death—breaking his heart just on account of his stubborn pride. (She wipes her eyes with her handkerchief and sobs).

MRS. ATKINS. (piously) It was the will of God. (The whining crying of the child sounds from the kitchen. MRS. ATKINS frowns irritably) Drat that young one! Seems as if she cries all the time on purpose to set a body's nerves on edge.

MRS. MAYO. (wiping her eyes) It's the heat upsets her. Mary doesn't feel any too well these days, poor little child!

MRS. ATKINS. She gets it right from her Pa—bein' sickly all the time. You can't deny Robert was always ailin' as a child. (She sighs heavily) It was a crazy mistake for them two to get married. I argyed against it at the time, but Ruth was so spelled with Robert's wild poetry notions she wouldn't listen to sense. Andy was the one would have been the match for her.

MRS. MAYO. I've often thought since it might have been better the other way. But Ruth and Robbie seem happy enough together.

MRS. ATKINS. At any rate it was God's work—and His will be done. (The two women sit in silence for a moment. RUTH enters from the kitchen, carrying in her arms her two year old daughter, MARY, a pretty but sickly and ænemic looking child with a tear-stained face. RUTH has aged appreciably. Her face has lost its youth and freshness. There is a trace in her expression of something hard and spiteful. She sits in the rocker in front of the table and sighs wearily. She wears a gingham dress with a soiled apron tied around her waist).

RUTH. Land sakes, if this isn't a scorcher! That kitchen's like a furnace. Phew! (She pushes the damp hair back from her forehead).

MRS. MAYO. Why didn't you call me to help with the dishes?

RUTH. (shortly) No. The heat in there'd kill you.

MARY. (sees the doll under the table and struggles on her mother's lap) Dolly, Mama! Dolly!

RUTH. (pulling her back) It's time for your nap. You can't play with Dolly now.

MARY. (commencing to cry whiningly) Dolly!

MRS. ATKINS. (irritably) Can't you keep that child still? Her racket's enough to split a body's ears. Put her down and let her play with the doll if it'll quiet her.

RUTH. (lifting MARY to the floor) There! I hope you'll be satisfied and keep still. (MARY sits down on the floor before the table and plays with the doll in silence. RUTH glances at the place set on the table) It's a wonder Rob wouldn't try to get to meals on time once in a while.

MRS. MAYO. (dully) Something must have gone wrong again.

RUTH. (wearily) I s'pose so. Something's always going wrong these days, it looks like.

MRS. ATKINS. (snappily) It wouldn't if you possessed a bit of spunk. The idea of you permittin' him to come in to meals at all hours—and you doin' the work! I never heard of such a thin'. You're too easy goin', that's the trouble.

RUTH. Do stop your nagging at me, Ma! I'm sick of hearing you. I'll do as I please about it; and thank you for not interfering. (She wipes her moist forehead—wearily) Phew! It's too hot to argue. Let's talk of something pleasant. (Curiously) Didn't I hear you speaking about Andy a while ago?

MRS. MAYO. We were wondering when he'd get home.

RUTH. (brightening) Rob says any day now he's liable to drop in and surprise us—him and the Captain. It'll certainly look natural to see him around the farm again.

MRS. ATKINS. Let's hope the farm'll look more natural, too, when he's had a hand at it. The way thin's are now!

RUTH. (irritably) Will you stop harping on that, Ma? We all know things aren't as they might be. What's the good of your complaining all the time?

MRS. ATKINS. There, Kate Mayo! Ain't that just what I told you? I can't say a word of advice to my own daughter even, she's that stubborn and self-willed.

RUTH. (putting her hands over her ears—in exasperation) For goodness sakes, Ma!

MRS. MAYO. (dully) Never mind. Andy'll fix everything when he comes.

RUTH. (hopefully) Oh, yes, I know he will. He always did know just the right thing ought to be done. (With weary vexation) It's a shame for him to come home and have to start in with things in such a topsy-turvy.

MRS. MAYO. Andy'll manage.

RUTH. (sighing) I s'pose it isn't Rob's fault things go wrong with him.

MRS. ATKINS. (scornfully) Hump! (She fans herself nervously) Land o' Goshen, but it's bakin' in here! Let's go out in under the trees in back where there's a breath of fresh air. Come, Kate. (MRS. MAYO gets up obediently and starts to wheel the invalid's chair toward the screen door) You better come too, Ruth. It'll do you good. Learn him a lesson and let him get his own dinner. Don't be such a fool.

RUTH. (going and holding the screen door open for them—listlessly) He wouldn't mind. He doesn't eat much. But I can't go anyway. I've got to put baby to bed.

MRS. ATKINS. Let's go, Kate. I'm boilin' in here. (MRS. MAYO wheels her out and off left. RUTH comes back and sits down in her chair).

RUTH. (mechanically) Come and let me take off your shoes and stockings, Mary, that's a good girl. You've got to take your nap now. (The child continues to play as if she hadn't heard, absorbed in her doll. An eager expression comes over RUTH'S tired face. She glances toward the door furtively—then gets up and goes to the desk. Her movements indicate a guilty fear of discovery. She takes a letter from a pigeon-hole and retreats swiftly to her chair with it. She opens the envelope and

reads the letter with great interest, a flush of excitement coming to her cheeks. ROBERT walks up the path and opens the screen door quietly and comes into the room. He, too, has aged. His shoulders are stooped as if under too great a burden. His eyes are dull and lifeless, his face burned by the sun and unshaven for days. Streaks of sweat have smudged the layer of dust on his cheeks. His lips drawn down at the corners, give him a hopeless, resigned expression. The three years have accentuated the weakness of his mouth and chin. He is dressed in overalls, laced boots, and a flannel shirt open at the neck).

ROBERT. (throwing his hat over an the sofa—with a great sigh of exhaustion) Phew! The sun's hot today! (RUTH is startled. At first she makes an instinctive motion as if to hide the letter in her bosom. She immediately thinks better of this and sits with the letter in her hands looking at him with defiant eyes. He bends down and kisses her).

RUTH. (feeling of her cheek—irritably) Why don't you shave? You look awful.

ROBERT. (indifferently) I forgot—and it's too much trouble this weather.

MARY. (throwing aside her doll, runs to him with a happy cry) Dada! Dada!

ROBERT. (swinging her up above his head—lovingly) And how's this little girl of mine this hot day, eh?

MARY. (screeching happily) Dada! Dada!

RUTH. (in annoyance) Don't do that to her! You know it's time for her nap and you'll get her all waked up; then I'll be the one that'll have to sit beside her till she falls asleep.

ROBERT. (sitting down in the chair on the left of table and cuddling MARY on his lap) You needn't bother. I'll put her to bed.

RUTH. (shortly) You've got to get back to your work, I s'pose.

ROBERT. (with a sigh) Yes, I was forgetting. (He glances at the open letter on

RUTH'S lap) Reading Andy's letter again? I should think you'd know it by heart by this time.

RUTH. (coloring as if she'd been accused of something—defiantly) I've got a right to read it, haven't I? He says it's meant for all of us.

ROBERT. (with a trace of irritation) Right? Don't be so silly. There's no question of right. I was only saying that you must know all that's in it after so many readings.

RUTH. Well, I don't. (She puts the letter on the table and gets wearily to her feet) I s'pose you'll be wanting your dinner now.

ROBERT. (listlessly) I don't care. I'm not hungry.

RUTH. And here I been keeping it hot for you!

ROBERT. (irritably) Oh, all right then. Bring it in and I'll try to eat.

RUTH. I've got to get her to bed first. (She goes to lift MARY off his lap) Come, dear. It's after time and you can hardly keep your eyes open now.

MARY. (crying) No, no! (Appealing to her father) Dada! No!

RUTH. (accusingly to ROBERT) There! Now see what you've done! I told you not to——

ROBERT. (shortly) Let her alone, then. She's all right where she is. She'll fall asleep on my lap in a minute if you'll stop bothering her.

RUTH. (hotly) She'll not do any such thing! She's got to learn to mind me! (Shaking her finger at MARY) You naughty child! Will you come with Mama when she tells you for your own good?

MARY. (clinging to her father) No, Dada!

RUTH. (losing her temper) A good spanking's what you need, my young lady—and you'll get one from me if you don't mind better, d'you hear? (MARY starts to whimper frightenedly).

ROBERT. (with sudden anger) Leave her alone! How often have I told you not to

threaten her with whipping? I won't have it. (Soothing the wailing MARY) There! There, little girl! Baby mustn't cry. Dada won't like you if you do. Dada'll hold you and you must promise to go to sleep like a good little girl. Will you when Dada asks you?

MARY. (cuddling up to him) Yes, Dada.

RUTH. (looking at them, her pale face set and drawn) A fine one you are to be telling folks how to do things! (She bites her lips. Husband and wife look into each other's eyes with something akin to hatred in their expressions; then RUTH turns away with a shrug of affected indifference) All right, take care of her then, if you think it's so easy. (She walks away into the kitchen).

ROBERT. (smoothing MARY'S hair—tenderly) We'll show Mama you're a good little girl, won't we?

MARY. (crooning drowsily) Dada, Dada.

ROBERT. Let's see: Does your mother take off your shoes and stockings before your nap?

MARY. (nodding with half-shut eyes) Yes, Dada.

ROBERT. (taking of her shoes and stockings) We'll show Mama we know how to do those things, won't we? There's one old shoe off—and there's the other old shoe—and here's one old stocking—and there's the other old stocking. There we are, all nice and cool and comfy. (He bends down and kisses her) And now will you promise to go right to sleep if Dada takes you to bed? (MARY nods sleepily) That's the good little girl. (He gathers her up in his arms carefully and carries her into the bedroom. His voice can be heard faintly as he lulls the child to sleep. RUTH comes out of the kitchen and gets the plate from the table. She hears the voice from the room and tiptoes to the door to look in. Then she starts for the kitchen but stands for a moment thinking, a look of ill-concealed jealousy on her face. At a noise from inside she hurriedly disappears into the kitchen. A moment later ROBERT re-enters.

He comes forward and picks up the shoes and stockings which he shoves carelessly under the table. Then, seeing no one about, he goes to the sideboard and selects a book. Coming back to his chair, he sits down and immediately becomes absorbed in reading. RUTH returns from the kitchen bringing his plate heaped with food, and a cup of tea. She sets those before him and sits down in her former place. ROBERT continues to read, oblivious to the food on the table).

RUTH. (after watching him irritably for a moment) For heaven’s sakes, put down that old book! Don’t you see your dinner’s getting cold?

ROBERT. (closing his book) Excuse me, Ruth. I didn’t notice. (He picks up his knife and fork and begins to eat gingerly, without appetite).

RUTH. I should think you might have some feeling for me, Rob, and not always be late for meals. If you think it’s fun sweltering in that oven of a kitchen to keep things warm for you, you’re mistaken.

ROBERT. I’m sorry, Ruth, really I am. Something crops up every day to delay me. I mean to be here on time.

RUTH. (with a sigh) Mean-tos don’t count.

ROBERT. (with a conciliating smile) Then punish me, Ruth. Let the food get cold and don’t bother about me.

RUTH. I’d have to wait just the same to wash up after you.

ROBERT. But I can wash up.

RUTH. A nice mess there’d be then!

ROBERT. (with an attempt at lightness) The food is lucky to be able to get cold this weather. (As RUTH doesn’t answer or smile he opens his book and resumes his reading, forcing himself to take a mouthful of food every now and then. RUTH stares at him in annoyance).

RUTH. And besides, you’ve got your own work that’s got to be done.

ROBERT. (absent-mindedly, without taking his eyes from the book) Yes, of course.

RUTH. (spitefully) Work you'll never get done by reading books all the time.

ROBERT. (shutting the book with a snap) Why do you persist in nagging at me for getting pleasure out of reading? Is it because—— (He checks himself abruptly).

RUTH. (coloring) Because I'm too stupid to understand them, I s'pose you were going to say.

ROBERT. (shame-facedly) No—no. (In exasperation) Why do you goad me into saying things I don't mean? Haven't I got my share of troubles trying to work this cursed farm without your adding to them? You know how hard I've tried to keep things going in spite of bad luck——

RUTH. (scornfully) Bad luck!

ROBERT. And my own very apparent unfitness for the job, I was going to add; but you can't deny there's been bad luck to it, too. Why don't you take things into consideration? Why can't we pull together? We used to. I know it's hard on you also. Then why can't we help each other instead of hindering?

RUTH. (sullenly) I do the best I know how.

ROBERT. (gets up and puts his hand on her shoulder) I know you do. But let's both of us try to do better. We can both improve. Say a word of encouragement once in a while when things go wrong, even if it is my fault. You know the odds I've been up against since Pa died. I'm not a farmer. I've never claimed to be one. But there's nothing else I can do under the circumstances, and I've got to pull things through somehow. With your help, I can do it. With you against me—— (He shrugs his shoulders. There is a pause. Then he bends down and kisses her hair—with an attempt at cheerfulness) So you promise that; and I'll promise to be here when the clock strikes—and anything else you tell me to. Is it a bargain?

RUTH. (dully) I s'pose so. (They are interrupted by the sound of a loud knock at the

kitchen door) There's someone at the kitchen door. (She hurries out. A moment later she reappears) It's Ben.

ROBERT. (frowning) What's the trouble now, I wonder? (In a loud voice) Come on in here, Ben. (BEN slouches in from the kitchen. He is a hulking, awkward young fellow with a heavy, stupid face and shifty, cunning eyes. He is dressed in overalls, boots, etc., and wears a broad-brimmed hat of coarse straw pushed back on his head) Well, Ben, what's the matter?

BEN. (drawlingly) The mowin' machine's bust.

ROBERT. Why, that can't be. The man fixed it only last week.

BEN. It's bust just the same.

ROBERT. And can't you fix it?

BEN. No. Don't know what's the matter with the goll-darned thing. 'Twon't work, anyhow.

ROBERT. (getting up and going for his hat) Wait a minute and I'll go look it over. There can't be much the matter with it.

BEN. (impudently) Don't make no diff'rence t' me whether there be or not. I'm quittin'.

ROBERT. (anxiously) You don't mean you're throwing up your job here?

BEN. That's what! My month's up today and I want what's owin' t' me.

ROBERT. But why are you quitting now, Ben, when you know I've so much work on hand? I'll have a hard time getting another man at such short notice.

BEN. That's for you to figger. I'm quittin'.

ROBERT. But what's your reason? You haven't any complaint to make about the way you've been treated, have you?

BEN. No. 'Tain't that. (Shaking his finger) Look-a-here. I'm sick o' being made fun at, that's what; an' I got a job up to Timms' place; an' I'm quittin' here.

ROBERT. Being made fun of? I don't understand you. Who's making fun of you?

BEN. They all do. When I drive down with the milk in the mornin' they all laughs and jokes at me—that boy up to Harris' and the new feller up to Slocum's, and Bill Evans down to Meade's, and all the rest on 'em.

ROBERT. That's a queer reason for leaving me flat. Won't they laugh at you just the same when you're working for Timms?

BEN. They wouldn't dare to. Timms is the best farm hereabouts. They was laughin' at me for workin' for you, that's what! "How're things up to the Mayo place?" they hollers every mornin'. "What's Robert doin' now—pasturin' the cattle in the cornlot? Is he seasonin' his hay with rain this year, same as last?" they shouts. "Or is he inventin' some 'lectrical milkin' engine to fool them dry cows o' his into givin' hard cider?" (Very much ruffled) That's like they talks; and I ain't goin' to put up with it no longer. Everyone's always knowed me as a first-class hand hereabouts, and I ain't wantin' 'em to get no different notion. So I'm quittin' you. And I wants what's comin' to me.

ROBERT. (coldly) Oh, if that's the case, you can go to the devil. You'll get your money tomorrow when I get back from town—not before!

BEN. (turning to doorway to kitchen) That suits me. (As he goes out he speaks back over his shoulder) And see that I do get it, or there'll be trouble. (He disappears and the slamming of the kitchen door is heard).

ROBERT. (as RUTH comes from where she has been standing by the doorway and sits down dejectedly in her old place) The stupid damn fool! And now what about the haying? That's an example of what I'm up against. No one can say I'm responsible for that.

RUTH. He wouldn't dare act that way with anyone else! (Spitefully, with a glance at ANDREW'S letter on the table) It's lucky Andy's coming back.

ROBERT. (without resentment) Yes, Andy'll see the right thing to do in a jiffy.

(With an affectionate smile) I wonder if the old chump's changed much? He doesn't seem to from his letters, does he? (Shaking his head) But just the same I doubt if he'll want to settle down to a hum-drum farm life, after all he's been through.

RUTH. (resentfully) Andy's not like you. He likes the farm.

ROBERT. (immersed in his own thoughts—enthusiastically) Gad, the things he's seen and experienced! Think of the places he's been! All the wonderful far places I used to dream about! God, how I envy him! What a trip! (He springs to his feet and instinctively goes to the window and stares out at the horizon).

RUTH. (bitterly) I s'pose you're sorry now you didn't go?

ROBERT. (too occupied with his own thoughts to hear her—vindictively) Oh, those cursed hills out there that I used to think promised me so much! How I've grown to hate the sight of them! They're like the walls of a narrow prison yard shutting me in from all the freedom and wonder of life! (He turns back to the room with a gesture of loathing) Sometimes I think if it wasn't for you, Ruth, and—(his voice softening)—little Mary, I'd chuck everything up and walk down the road with just one desire in my heart—to put the whole rim of the world between me and those hills, and be able to breathe freely once more! (He sinks down into his chair and smiles with bitter self-scorn) There I go dreaming again—- my old fool dreams.

RUTH. (in a low, repressed voice—her eyes smoldering) You're not the only one!

ROBERT. (buried in his own thoughts—bitterly) And Andy, who's had the chance—what has he got out of it? His letters read like the diary of a—of a farmer! "We're in Singapore now. It's a dirty hole of a place and hotter than hell. Two of the crew are down with fever and we're short-handed on the work. I'll be damn glad when we sail again, although tacking back and forth in these blistering seas is a rotten job too!" (Scornfully) That's about the way he summed up his impressions of the East.

RUTH. (her repressed voice trembling) You needn't make fun of Andy.

ROBERT. When I think—but what's the use? You know I wasn't making fun of Andy personally, but his attitude toward things is——

RUTH. (her eyes flashing—bursting into uncontrollable rage) You was too making fun of him! And I ain't going to stand for it! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! (ROBERT stares at her in amazement. She continues furiously) A fine one to talk about anyone else—after the way you've ruined everything with your lazy loafing!—and the stupid way you do things!

ROBERT. (angrily) Stop that kind of talk, do you hear?

RUTH. You findin' fault—with your own brother who's ten times the man you ever was or ever will be! You're jealous, that's what! Jealous because he's made a man of himself, while you're nothing but a—but a—— (She stutters incoherently, overcome by rage).

ROBERT. Ruth! Ruth! You'll be sorry for talking like that.

RUTH. I won't! I won't never be sorry! I'm only saying what I've been thinking for years.

ROBERT. (aghast) Ruth! You can't mean that!

RUTH. What do you think—living with a man like you—having to suffer all the time because you've never been man enough to work and do things like other people. But no! You never own up to that. You think you're so much better than other folks, with your college education, where you never learned a thing, and always reading your stupid books instead of working. I s'pose you think I ought to be proud to be your wife—a poor, ignorant thing like me! (Fiercely) But I'm not. I hate it! I hate the sight of you. Oh, if I'd only known! If I hadn't been such a fool to listen to your cheap, silly, poetry talk that you learned out of books! If I could have seen how you were in your true self—like you are now—I'd have killed myself before I'd have married you! I was sorry for it before we'd been together a month. I knew what you were really like—when it was too late.

ROBERT. (his voice raised loudly) And now—I'm finding out what you're really like—what a—a creature I've been living with. (With a harsh laugh) God! It wasn't that I haven't guessed how mean and small you are—but I've kept on telling myself that I must be wrong—like a fool!—like a damned fool!

RUTH. You were saying you'd go out on the road if it wasn't for me. Well, you can go, and the sooner the better! I don't care! I'll be glad to get rid of you! The farm'll be better off too. There's been a curse on it ever since you took hold. So go! Go and be a tramp like you've always wanted. It's all you're good for. I can get along without you, don't you worry. (Exulting fiercely) Andy's coming back, don't forget that! He'll attend to things like they should be. He'll show what a man can do! I don't need you. Andy's coming!

ROBERT. (they are both standing. ROBERT grabs her by the shoulders and glares into her eyes) What do you mean? (He shakes her violently) What are you thinking of? What's in your evil mind, you—you—— (His voice is a harsh shout).

RUTH. (in a defiant scream) Yes I do mean it! I'd say it if you was to kill me! I do love Andy. I do! I do! I always loved him. (Exultantly) And he loves me! He loves me! I know he does. He always did! And you know he did, too! So go! Go if you want to!

ROBERT. (throwing her away from him. She staggers back against the table—thickly) You—you slut! (He stands glaring at her as she leans back, supporting herself by the table, gasping for breath. A loud frightened whimper sounds from the awakened child in the bedroom. It continues. The man and woman stand looking at one another in horror, the extent of their terrible quarrel suddenly brought home to them. A pause. The noise of a horse and carriage comes from the road before the house. The two, suddenly struck by the same premonition, listen to it breathlessly, as to a sound heard in a dream. It stops. They hear ANDY'S voice from the road shouting a long hail—"Ahoy there!")

RUTH. (with a strangled cry of joy) Andy! Andy! (She rushes and grabs the knob of the screen door, about to fling it open).

ROBERT. (in a voice of command that forces obedience) Stop! (He goes to the door and gently pushes the trembling RUTH away from it. The child's crying rises to a louder pitch) I'll meet Andy. You better go in to Mary, Ruth. (She looks at him defiantly for a moment, but there is something in his eyes that makes her turn and walk slowly into the bedroom).

ANDY'S VOICE. (in a louder shout) Ahoy there, Rob!

ROBERT. (in an answering shout of forced cheeriness) Hello, Andy! (He opens the door and walks out as

(The Curtain Falls)

ACT TWO Scene Two

The top of a hill on the farm. It is about eleven o'clock the next morning. The day is hot and cloudless. In the distance the sea can be seen.

The top of the hill slopes downward slightly toward the left. A big boulder stands in the center toward the rear. Further right, a large oak tree. The faint trace of a path leading upward to it from the left foreground can be detected through the bleached, sun-scorched grass.

ROBERT is discovered sitting on the boulder, his chin resting on his hands, staring out toward the horizon seaward. His face is pale and haggard, his expression one of utter despondency. MARY is sitting on the grass near him in the shade, playing with her doll, singing happily to herself. Presently she casts a curious glance at her father, and, propping her doll up against the tree, comes over and clambers to his side.

MARY. (pulling at his hand—solicitously) Dada sick?

ROBERT. (looking at her with a forced smile) No, dear. Why?

MARY. Play wif Mary.

ROBERT. (gently) No, dear, not today. Dada doesn't feel like playing today.

MARY. (protestingly) Yes, Dada!

ROBERT. No, dear. Dada does feel sick—a little. He's got a bad headache.

MARY. Mary see. (He bends his head. She pats his hair) Bad head.

ROBERT. (kissing her—with a smile) There! It's better now, dear, thank you. (She cuddles up close against him. There is a pause during which each of them looks out seaward) (Finally ROBERT turns to her tenderly) Would you like Dada to go away?—far, far away?

MARY. (tearfully) No! No! No, Dada, no!

ROBERT. Don't you like Uncle Andy—the man that came yesterday—not the old man with the white mustache—the other?

MARY. Mary loves Dada.

ROBERT. (with fierce determination) He won't go away, baby. He was only joking. He couldn't leave his little Mary. (He presses the child in his arms).

MARY. (with an exclamation of pain) Oh! Hurt!

ROBERT. I'm sorry, little girl. (He lifts her down to the grass) Go play with Dolly, that's a good girl; and be careful to keep in the shade. (She reluctantly leaves him and takes up her doll again. A moment later she points down the hill to the left).

MARY. Mans, Dada.

ROBERT. (looking that way) It's your Uncle Andy. (A moment later ANDREW comes up from the left, whistling cheerfully. He has changed but little in appearance, except for the fact that his face has been deeply bronzed by his years in the tropics; but there is a decided change in his manner. The old easy-going good-nature seems to have been partly lost in a breezy, business-like briskness of voice and gesture. There is an authoritative note in his speech as though he were accustomed to give orders and have them obeyed as a matter of course. He is

dressed in the simple blue uniform and cap of a merchant ship's officer).

ANDREW. Here you are, eh?

ROBERT. Hello, Andy.

ANDREW. (going over to MARY) And who's this young lady I find you all alone with, eh? Who's this pretty young lady? (He tickles the laughing, squirming MARY, then lifts her up at arm's length over his head) Upsy—daisy! (He sets her down on the ground again) And there you are! (He walks over and sits down on the boulder beside ROBERT who moves to one side to make room for him) Ruth told me I'd probably find you up top-side here; but I'd have guessed it, anyway. (He digs his brother in the ribs affectionately) Still up to your old tricks, you old beggar! I can remember how you used to come up here to mope and dream in the old days.

ROBERT. (with a smile) I come up here now because it's the coolest place on the farm. I've given up dreaming.

ANDREW. (grinning) I don't believe it. You can't have changed that much. (After a pause—with boyish enthusiasm) Say, it sure brings back old times to be up here with you having a chin all by our lonesomes again. I feel great being back home.

ROBERT. It's great for us to have you back.

ANDREW. (after a pause—meaningly) I've been looking over the old place with Ruth. Things don't seem to be——

ROBERT. (his face flushing—interrupts his brother shortly) Never mind the damn farm! Let's talk about something interesting. This is the first chance I've had to have a word with you alone. Tell me about your trip.

ANDREW. Why, I thought I told you everything in my letters.

ROBERT. (smiling) Your letters were—sketchy, to say the least.

ANDREW. Oh, I know I'm no author. You needn't be afraid of hurting my feelings. I'd rather go through a typhoon again than write a letter.

ROBERT. (with eager interest) Then you were through a typhoon?

ANDREW. Yes—in the China sea. Had to run before it under bare poles for two days. I thought we were bound down for Davy Jones, sure. Never dreamed waves could get so big or the wind blow so hard. If it hadn't been for Uncle Dick being such a good skipper we'd have gone to the sharks, all of us. As it was we came out minus a main top-mast and had to beat back to Hong-Kong for repairs. But I must have written you all this.

ROBERT. You never mentioned it.

ANDREW. Well, there was so much dirty work getting things ship-shape again I must have forgotten about it.

ROBERT. (looking at ANDREW—marveling) Forget a typhoon? (with a trace of scorn) You're a strange combination, Andy. And is what you've told me all you remember about it?

ANDREW. Oh, I could give you your bellyful of details if I wanted to turn loose on you. It was all-wool-and-a-yard-wide-Hell, I'll tell you. You ought to have been there. I remember thinking about you at the worst of it, and saying to myself: "This'd cure Rob of them ideas of his about the beautiful sea, if he could see it." And it would have too, you bet! (He nods emphatically).

ROBERT. (dryly) The sea doesn't seem to have impressed you very favorably.

ANDREW. I should say it didn't! I'll never set foot on a ship again if I can help it—except to carry me some place I can't get to by train.

ROBERT. But you studied to become an officer!

ANDREW. Had to do something or I'd gone mad. The days were like years. (He laughs) And as for the East you used to rave about—well, you ought to see it, and smell it! One walk down one of their filthy narrow streets with the tropic sun beating on it would sicken you for life with the "wonder and mystery" you used to dream of.

ROBERT. (shrinking from his brother with a glance of aversion) So all you found in the East was a stench?

ANDREW. A stench! Ten thousand of them!

ROBERT. But you did like some of the places, judging from your letters—Sydney, Buenos Aires——

ANDREW. Yes, Sydney's a good town. (Enthusiastically) But Buenos Aires—there's the place for you. Argentine's a country where a fellow has a chance to make good. You're right I like it. And I'll tell you, Rob, that's right where I'm going just as soon as I've seen you folks a while and can get a ship. I can get a berth as second officer, and I'll jump the ship when I get there. I'll need every cent of the wages Uncle's paid me to get a start at something in B. A.

ROBERT. (staring at his brother—slowly) So you're not going to stay on the farm?

ANDREW. Why sure not! Did you think I was? There wouldn't be any sense. One of us is enough to run this little place.

ROBERT. I suppose it does seem small to you now.

ANDREW. (not noticing the sarcasm in ROBERT'S voice) You've no idea, Rob, what a splendid place Argentine is. I had a letter from a marine insurance chap that I'd made friends with in Hong-Kong to his brother, who's in the grain business in Buenos Aires. He took quite a fancy to me, and what's more important, he offered me a job if I'd come back there. I'd have taken it on the spot, only I couldn't leave Uncle Dick in the lurch, and I'd promised you folks to come home. But I'm going back there, you bet, and then you watch me get on! (He slaps ROBERT on the back) But don't you think it's a big chance, Rob?

ROBERT. It's fine—for you, Andy.

ANDREW. We call this a farm—but you ought to hear about the farms down there—ten square miles where we've got an acre. It's a new country where big

things are opening up—and I want to get in on something big before I die. I'm no fool when it comes to farming, and I know something about grain. I've been reading up a lot on it, too, lately. (He notices ROBERT'S absent-minded expression and laughs) Wake up, you old poetry book worm, you! I know my talking about business makes you want to choke me, doesn't it?

ROBERT. (with an embarrassed smile) No, Andy, I—I just happened to think of something else. (Frowning) There've been lots of times lately that I've wished I had some of your faculty for business.

ANDREW. (soberly) There's something I want to talk about, Rob,—the farm. You don't mind, do you?

ROBERT. No.

ANDREW. I walked over it this morning with Ruth—and she told me about things—— (Evasively) I could see the place had run down; but you mustn't blame yourself. When luck's against anyone——

ROBERT. Don't, Andy! It is my fault. You know it as well as I do. The best I've ever done was to make ends meet.

ANDREW. (after a pause) I've got over a thousand saved, and you can have that.

ROBERT. (firmly) No. You need that for your start in Buenos Aires.

ANDREW. I don't. I can——

ROBERT. (determinedly) No, Andy! Once and for all, no! I won't hear of it!

ANDREW. (protestingly) You obstinate old son of a gun!

ROBERT. Oh, everything'll be on a sound footing after harvest. Don't worry about it.

ANDREW. (doubtfully) Maybe. (After a pause) It's too bad Pa couldn't have lived to see things through. (With feeling) It cut me up a lot—hearing he was dead. He never—softened up, did he—about me, I mean?

ROBERT. He never understood, that's a kinder way of putting it. He does now.

ANDREW. (after a pause) You've forgotten all about what—caused me to go, haven't you, Rob? (ROBERT nods but keeps his face averted) I was a slushier damn fool in those days than you were. But it was an act of Providence I did go. It opened my eyes to how I'd been fooling myself. Why, I'd forgotten all about—that—before I'd been at sea six months.

ROBERT. (turns and looks into ANDREW'S eyes searchingly) You're speaking of—Ruth?

ANDREW. (confused) Yes. I didn't want you to get false notions in your head, or I wouldn't say anything. (Looking ROBERT squarely in the eyes) I'm telling you the truth when I say I'd forgotten long ago. It don't sound well for me, getting over things so easy, but I guess it never really amounted to more than a kid idea I was letting rule me. I'm certain now I never was in love—I was getting fun out of thinking I was—and being a hero to myself. (He heaves a great sigh of relief) There! Gosh, I'm glad that's off my chest. I've been feeling sort of awkward ever since I've been home, thinking of what you two might think. (A trace of appeal in his voice) You've got it all straight now, haven't you, Rob?

ROBERT. (in a low voice) Yes, Andy.

ANDREW. And I'll tell Ruth, too, if I can get up the nerve. She must feel kind of funny having me round—after what used to be—and not knowing how I feel about it.

ROBERT. (slowly) Perhaps—for her sake—you'd better not tell her.

ANDREW. For her sake? Oh, you mean she wouldn't want to be reminded of my foolishness? Still, I think it'd be worse if——

ROBERT. (breaking out—in an agonized voice) Do as you please, Andy; but for God's sake, let's not talk about it! (There is a pause. ANDREW stares at ROBERT in hurt stupefaction. ROBERT continues after a moment in a voice which he vainly

attempts to keep calm) Excuse me, Andy. This rotten headache has my nerves shot to pieces.

ANDREW. (mumbling) It's all right, Rob—long as you're not sore at me.

ROBERT. Where did Uncle Dick disappear to this morning?

ANDREW. He went down to the port to see to things on the Sunda. He said he didn't know exactly when he'd be back. I'll have to go down and tend to the ship when he comes. That's why I dressed up in these togs.

MARY. (pointing down the hill to the left) See! Mama! Mama! (She struggles to her feet. RUTH appears at left. She is dressed in white, shows she has been fixing up. She looks pretty, flushed and full of life).

MARY. (running to her mother) Mama!

RUTH. (kissing her) Hello, dear! (She walks toward the rock and addresses ROBERT coldly) Jake wants to see you about something. He finished working where he was. He's waiting for you at the road.

ROBERT. (getting up—wearily) I'll go down right away. (As he looks at RUTH, noting her changed appearance, his face darkens with pain).

RUTH. And take Mary with you, please. (To MARY) Go with Dada, that's a good girl. Grandma has your dinner most ready for you.

ROBERT. (shortly) Come, Mary!

MARY. (taking his hand and dancing happily beside him) Dada! Dada! (They go down the hill to the left. RUTH looks after them for a moment, frowning—then turns to ANDY with a smile) I'm going to sit down. Come on, Andy. It'll be like old times. (She jumps lightly to the top of the rock and sits down) It's so fine and cool up here after the house.

ANDREW. (half-sitting on the side of the boulder) Yes. It's great.

RUTH. I've taken a holiday in honor of your arrival. (Laughing excitedly) I feel so

free I'd like to have wings and fly over the sea. You're a man. You can't know how awful and stupid it is—cooking and washing dishes all the time.

ANDREW. (making a wry face) I can guess.

RUTH. Besides, your mother just insisted on getting your first dinner to home, she's that happy at having you back. You'd think I was planning to poison you the flurried way she shooed me out of the kitchen.

ANDREW. That's just like Ma, bless her!

RUTH. She's missed you terrible. We all have. And you can't deny the farm has, after what I showed you and told you when we was looking over the place this morning.

ANDREW. (with a frown) Things are run down, that's a fact! It's too darn hard on poor old Rob.

RUTH. (scornfully) It's his own fault. He never takes any interest in things.

ANDREW. (reprovingly) You can't blame him. He wasn't born for it; but I know he's done his best for your sake and the old folks and the little girl.

RUTH. (indifferently) Yes, I suppose he has. (Gayly) But thank the Lord, all those days are over now. The "hard luck" Rob's always blaming won't last long when you take hold, Andy. All the farm's ever needed was someone with the knack of looking ahead and preparing for what's going to happen.

ANDREW. Yes, Rob hasn't got that. He's frank to own up to that himself. I'm going to try and hire a good man for him—an experienced farmer—to work the place on a salary and percentage. That'll take it off of Rob's hands, and he needn't be worrying himself to death any more. He looks all worn out, Ruth. He ought to be careful.

RUTH. (absent-mindedly) Yes, I s'pose. (Her mind is filled with premonitions by the first part of his statement) Why do you want to hire a man to oversee things?

Seems as if now that you're back it wouldn't be needful.

ANDREW. Oh, of course I'll attend to everything while I'm here. I mean after I'm gone.

RUTH. (as if she couldn't believe her ears) Gone!

ANDREW. Yes. When I leave for the Argentine again.

RUTH. (aghast) You're going away to sea!

ANDREW. Not to sea, no; I'm through with the sea for good as a job. I'm going down to Buenos Aires to get in the grain business.

RUTH. But—that's far off—isn't it?

ANDREW. (easily) Six thousand miles more or less. It's quite a trip. (With enthusiasm) I've got a peach of a chance down there, Ruth. Ask Rob if I haven't. I've just been telling him all about it.

RUTH. (a flush of anger coming over her face) And didn't he try to stop you from going?

ANDREW. (in surprise) No, of course not. Why?

RUTH. (slowly and vindictively) That's just like him—not to.

ANDREW. (resentfully) Rob's too good a chum to try and stop me when he knows I'm set on a thing. And he could see just as soon's I told him what a good chance it was.

RUTH. (dazedly) And you're bound on going?

ANDREW. Sure thing. Oh, I don't mean right off. I'll have to wait for a ship sailing there for quite a while, likely. Anyway, I want to stay to home and visit with you folks a spell before I go.

RUTH. (dumbly) I s'pose. (With sudden anguish) Oh, Andy, you can't go! You can't. Why we've all thought—we've all been hoping and praying you was coming home to stay, to settle down on the farm and see to things. You mustn't go! Think of

how your Ma'll take on if you go—and how the farm'll be ruined if you leave it to Rob to look after. You can see that.

ANDREW. (frowning) Rob hasn't done so bad. When I get a man to direct things the farm'll be safe enough.

RUTH. (insistently) But your Ma—think of her.

ANDREW. She's used to me being away. She won't object when she knows it's best for her and all of us for me to go. You ask Rob. In a couple of years down there I'll make my pile, see if I don't; and then I'll come back and settle down and turn this farm into the crackiest place in the whole state. In the meantime, I can help you both from down there. (Earnestly) I tell you, Ruth, I'm going to make good right from the minute I land, if working hard and a determination to get on can do it; and I know they can! (Excitedly—in a rather boastful tone) I tell you, I feel ripe for bigger things than settling down here. The trip did that for me, anyway. It showed me the world is a larger proposition than ever I thought it was in the old days. I couldn't be content any more stuck here like a fly in molasses. It all seems trifling, somehow. You ought to be able to understand what I feel.

RUTH. (dully) Yes—I s'pose I ought. (After a pause—a sudden suspicion forming in her mind) What did Rob tell you—about me?

ANDREW. Tell? About you? Why, nothing.

RUTH. (staring at him intensely) Are you telling me the truth, Andy Mayo? Didn't he say—I—— (She stops confusedly).

ANDREW. (surprised) No, he didn't mention you, I can remember. Why? What made you think he did?

RUTH. (wringing her hands) Oh, I wish I could tell if you're lying or not!

ANDREW. (indignantly) What're you talking about? I didn't used to lie to you, did I? And what in the name of God is there to lie for?

RUTH. (still unconvinced) Are you sure—will you swear—it isn't the reason—— (She lowers her eyes and half turns away from him) The same reason that made you go last time that's driving you away again? 'Cause if it is—I was going to say—you mustn't go—on that account. (Her voice sinks to a tremulous, tender whisper as she finishes).

ANDREW. (confused—forces a laugh) Oh, is that what you're driving at? Well, you needn't worry about that no more—— (Soberly) I don't blame you, Ruth, feeling embarrassed having me around again, after the way I played the dumb fool about going away last time.

RUTH. (her hope crushed—with a gasp of pain) Oh, Andy!

ANDREW. (misunderstanding) I know I oughtn't to talk about such foolishness to you. Still I figure it's better to get it out of my system so's we three can be together same's years ago, and not be worried thinking one of us might have the wrong notion.

RUTH. Andy! Please! Don't!

ANDREW. Let me finish now that I've started. It'll help clear things up. I don't want you to think once a fool always a fool, and be upset all the time I'm here on my fool account. I want you to believe I put all that silly nonsense back of me a long time ago—and now—it seems—well—as if you'd always been my sister, that's what, Ruth.

RUTH. (at the end of her endurance—laughing hysterically) For God's sake, Andy—won't you please stop talking! (She again hides her face in her hands, her bowed shoulders trembling).

ANDREW. (ruefully) Seem's if I put my foot in it whenever I open my mouth today. Rob shut me up with almost the same words when I tried speaking to him about it.

RUTH. (fiercely) You told him—what you've told me?

ANDREW. (astounded) Why sure! Why not?

RUTH. (shuddering) Oh, my God!

ANDREW. (alarmed) Why? Shouldn't I have?

RUTH. (hysterically) Oh, I don't care what you do! I don't care! Leave me alone! (ANDREW gets up and walks down the hill to the left, embarrassed, hurt, and greatly puzzled by her behavior).

ANDREW. (after a pause—pointing down the hill) Hello! Here they come back—and the Captain's with them. How'd he come to get back so soon, I wonder? That means I've got to hustle down to the port and get on board. Rob's got the baby with him. (He comes back to the boulder. RUTH keeps her face averted from him) Gosh, I never saw a father so tied up in a kid as Rob is! He just watches every move she makes. And I don't blame him. You both got a right to feel proud of her. She's surely a little winner. (He glances at RUTH to see if this very obvious attempt to get back in her good graces is having any effect) I can see the likeness to Rob standing out all over her, can't you? But there's no denying she's your young one, either. There's something about her eyes——

RUTH. (piteously) Oh, Andy, I've a headache! I don't want to talk! Leave me alone, won't you please?

ANDREW. (stands staring at her for a moment—then walks away saying in a hurt tone): Everybody hereabouts seems to be on edge today. I begin to feel as if I'm not wanted around. (He stands near the path, left, kicking at the grass with the toe of his shoe. A moment later CAPTAIN DICK SCOTT enters, followed by ROBERT carrying MARY. The CAPTAIN seems scarcely to have changed at all from the jovial, booming person he was three years before. He wears a uniform similar to ANDREW'S. He is puffing and breathless from his climb and mops wildly at his perspiring countenance. ROBERT casts a quick glance at ANDREW, noticing the latter's discomfited look, and then turns his eyes on RUTH who, at their approach,

has moved so her back is toward them, her chin resting on her hands as she stares out seaward).

MARY. Mama! Mama! (ROBERT puts her down and she runs to her mother. RUTH turns and grabs her up in her arms with a sudden fierce tenderness, quickly turning away again from the others. During the following scene she keeps MARY in her arms).

SCOTT. (wheezily) Phew! I got great news for you, Andy. Let me get my wind first. Phew! God A'mighty, mountin' this damned hill is worser'n goin' aloft to the skys'l yard in a blow. I got to lay to a while. (He sits down on the grass, mopping his face).

ANDREW. I didn't look for you this soon, Uncle.

SCOTT. I didn't figger it, neither; but I run across a bit o' news down to the Seamen's Home made me 'bout ship and set all sail back here to find you.

ANDREW. (eagerly) What is it, Uncle?

SCOTT. Passin' by the Home I thought I'd drop in an' let 'em know I'd be lackin' a mate next trip count o' your leavin'. Their man in charge o' the shippin' asked after you 'special curious. "Do you think he'd consider a berth as Second on a steamer, Captain?" he asks. I was goin' to say no when I thinks o' you wantin' to get back down south to the Plate agen; so I asks him: "What is she and where's she bound?" "She's the El Paso, a brand new tramp," he says, "and she's bound for Buenos Aires."

ANDREW. (his eyes lighting up—excitedly) Gosh, that is luck! When does she sail?

SCOTT. Tomorrow mornin'. I didn't know if you'd want to ship away agen so quick an' I told him so. "Tell him I'll hold the berth open for him until late this afternoon," he says. So there you be, an' you can make your own choice.

ANDREW. I'd like to take it. There may not be another ship for Buenos Aires with a vacancy in months. (His eyes roving from ROBERT to RUTH and back

again—uncertainly) Still—damn it all—tomorrow morning is soon. I wish she wasn't leaving for a week or so. That'd give me a chance—it seems hard to go right away again when I've just got home. And yet it's a chance in a thousand——(Appealing to ROBERT) What do you think, Rob? What would you do?

ROBERT. (forcing a smile) He who hesitates, you know. (Frowning) It's a piece of good luck thrown in your way—and—I think you owe it to yourself to jump at it. But don't ask me to decide for you.

RUTH. (turning to look at ANDREW—in a tone of fierce resentment) Yes, go, Andy! (She turns quickly away again. There is a moment of embarrassed silence).

ANDREW. (thoughtfully) Yes, I guess I will. It'll be the best thing for all of us in the end, don't you think so, Rob? (ROBERT nods but remains silent).

SCOTT. (getting to his feet) Then, that's settled.

ANDREW. (now that he has definitely made a decision his voice rings with hopeful strength and energy) Yes, I'll take the berth. The sooner I go the sooner I'll be back, that's a certainty; and I won't come back with empty hands next time. You bet I won't!

SCOTT. You ain't got so much time, Andy. To make sure you'd best leave here soon's you kin. I got to get right back aboard. You'd best come with me.

ANDREW. I'll go to the house and repack my bag right away.

ROBERT. (quietly) You'll both be here for dinner, won't you?

ANDREW. (worriedly) I don't know. Will there be time? What time is it now, I wonder?

ROBERT. (reproachfully) Ma's been getting dinner especially for you, Andy.

ANDREW. (flushing—shame-facedly) Hell! And I was forgetting! Of course I'll stay for dinner if I missed every damned ship in the world. (He turns to the CAPTAIN—briskly) Come on, Uncle. Walk down with me to the house and you

can tell me more about this berth on the way. I've got to pack before dinner. (He and the CAPTAIN start down to the left. ANDREW calls back over his shoulder) You're coming soon, aren't you, Rob?

ROBERT. Yes. I'll be right down. (ANDREW and the CAPTAIN leave. RUTH puts MARY on the ground and hides her face in her hands. Her shoulders shake as if she were sobbing. ROBERT stares at her with a grim, somber expression. MARY walks backward toward ROBERT, her wondering eyes fixed on her mother).

MARY. (her voice vaguely frightened, taking her father's hand) Dada, Mama's cryin', Dada.

ROBERT. (bending down and stroking her hair—in a voice he endeavors to keep from being harsh) No, she isn't, little girl. The sun hurts her eyes, that's all. Aren't you beginning to feel hungry, Mary?

MARY. (decidedly) Yes, Dada.

ROBERT. (meaningly) It must be your dinner time now.

RUTH. (in a muffled voice) I'm coming, Mary. (She wipes her eyes quickly and, without looking at ROBERT, comes and takes MARY'S hand—in a dead voice) Come on and I'll get your dinner for you. (She walks out left, her eyes fixed on the ground, the skipping MARY tugging at her hand. ROBERT waits a moment for them to get ahead and then slowly follows as

(The Curtain Falls)

BEYOND THE HORIZON ACT THREE

Scene One

Same as Act Two, Scene One—The sitting room of the farm house about six o'clock in the morning of a day toward the end of October five years later. It is not yet dawn, but as the action progresses the darkness outside the windows gradually fades to

gray.

The room, seen by the light of the shadeless oil lamp with a smoky chimney which stands on the table, presents an appearance of decay, of dissolution. The curtains at the windows are torn and dirty and one of them is missing. The closed desk is gray with accumulated dust as if it had not been used in years. Blotches of dampness disfigure the wall paper. Threadbare trails, leading to the kitchen and outer doors, show in the faded carpet. The top of the coverless table is stained with the imprints of hot dishes and spilt food. The rung of one rocker has been clumsily mended with a piece of plain board. A brown coating of rust covers the unblacked stove. A pile of wood is stacked up carelessly against the wall by the stove.

The whole atmosphere of the room, contrasted with that of former years, is one of an habitual poverty too hopelessly resigned to be any longer ashamed or even conscious of itself.

At the rise of the curtain RUTH is discovered sitting by the stove, with hands outstretched to the warmth as if the air in the room were damp and cold. A heavy shawl is wrapped about her shoulders, half-concealing her dress of deep mourning. She has aged horribly. Her pale, deeply lined face has the stony lack of expression of one to whom nothing more can ever happen, whose capacity for emotion has been exhausted. When she speaks her voice is without timbre, low and monotonous. The negligent disorder of her dress, the slovenly arrangement of her hair, now streaked with gray, her muddied shoes run down at the heel, give full evidence of the apathy in which she lives.

Her mother is asleep in her wheel chair beside the stove toward the rear, wrapped up in a blanket.

There is a sound from the open bedroom door in the rear as if someone were getting out of bed. RUTH turns in that direction, with a look of dull annoyance. A moment later ROBERT appears in the doorway, leaning weakly against it for support. His

hair is long and unkempt, his face and body emaciated. There are bright patches of crimson over his check bones and his eyes are burning with fever. He is dressed in corduroy pants, a flannel shirt, and wears worn carpet slippers on his bare feet.

RUTH. (dully) S-s-s-h-! Ma's asleep.

ROBERT. (speaking with an effort) I won't wake her. (He walks weakly to a rocker by the side of the table and sinks down in it exhausted).

RUTH. (staring at the stove) You better come near the fire where it's warm.

ROBERT. No. I'm burning up now.

RUTH. That's the fever. You know the doctor told you not to get up and move round.

ROBERT. (irritably) That old fossil! He doesn't know anything. Go to bed and stay there—that's his only prescription.

RUTH. (indifferently) How are you feeling now?

ROBERT. (buoyantly) Better! Much better than I've felt in ages. Really I'm fine now—only very weak. It's the turning point, I guess. From now on I'll pick up so quick I'll surprise you—and no thanks to that old fool of a country quack, either.

RUTH. He's always tended to us.

ROBERT. Always helped us to die, you mean! He "tended" to Pa and Ma and—(his voice breaks)—and to—Mary.

RUTH. (dully) He did the best he knew, I s'pose. (After a pause) Well, Andy's bringing a specialist with him when he comes. That ought to suit you.

ROBERT. (bitterly) Is that why you're waiting up all night?

RUTH. Yes.

ROBERT. For Andy?

RUTH. (without a trace of feeling) Somebody had got to. It's only right for someone

to meet him after he's been gone five years.

ROBERT. (with bitter mockery) Five years! It's a long time.

RUTH. Yes.

ROBERT. (meaningly) To wait!

RUTH. (indifferently) It's past now.

ROBERT. Yes, it's past. (After a pause) Have you got his two telegrams with you? (RUTH nods) Let me see them, will you? My head was so full of fever when they came I couldn't make head or tail to them. (Hastily) But I'm feeling fine now. Let me read them again. (RUTH takes them from the bosom of her dress and hands them to him).

RUTH. Here. The first one's on top.

ROBERT. (opening it) New York. "Just landed from steamer. Have important business to wind up here. Will be home as soon as deal is completed." (He smiles bitterly) Business first was always Andy's motto (He reads) "Hope you are all well. Andy." (He repeats ironically) "Hope you are all well!"

RUTH. (dully) He couldn't know you'd been took sick till I answered that and told him.

ROBERT. (contritely) Of course he couldn't. I'm a fool. I'm touchy about nothing lately. Just what did you say in your reply?

RUTH. (inconsequentially) I had to send it collect.

ROBERT. (irritably) What did you say was the matter with me?

RUTH. I wrote you had lung trouble.

ROBERT. (flying into a petty temper) You are a fool! How often have I explained to you that it's pleurisy is the matter with me. You can't seem to get it in your head that the pleura is outside the lungs, not in them!

RUTH. (callously) I only wrote what Doctor Smith told me.

ROBERT. (angrily) He’s a damned ignoramus!

RUTH. (dully) Makes no difference. I had to tell Andy something, didn’t I?

ROBERT. (after a pause, opening the other telegram) He sent this last evening. Let’s see. (He reads) “Leave for home on midnight train. Just received your wire. Am bringing specialist to see Rob. Will motor to farm from Port.” (He calculates) What time is it now?

RUTH. Round six, must be.

ROBERT. He ought to be here soon. I’m glad he’s bringing a doctor who knows something. A specialist will tell you in a second that there’s nothing the matter with my lungs.

RUTH. (stolidly) You’ve been coughing an awful lot lately.

ROBERT. (irritably) What nonsense! For God’s sake, haven’t you ever had a bad cold yourself? (RUTH stares at the stove in silence. ROBERT fidgets in his chair. There is a pause. Finally ROBERT’S eyes are fixed on the sleeping MRS. ATKINS) Your mother is lucky to be able to sleep so soundly.

RUTH. Ma’s tired. She’s been sitting up with me most of the night.

ROBERT. (mockingly) Is she waiting for Andy, too? (There is a pause. ROBERT sighs) I couldn’t get to sleep to save my soul. I counted ten million sheep if I counted one. No use! I gave up trying finally and just laid there in the dark thinking. (He pauses, then continues in a tone of tender sympathy) I was thinking about you, Ruth—of how hard these last years must have been for you. (Appealingly) I’m sorry, Ruth.

RUTH. (in a dead voice) I don’t know. They’re past now. They were hard on all of us.

ROBERT. Yes; on all of us but Andy. (With a flash of sick jealousy) Andy’s made a big success of himself—the kind he wanted. (Mockingly) And now he’s coming

home to let us admire his greatness. (Frowning—irritably) What am I talking about? My brain must be sick, too. (After a pause) Yes, these years have been terrible for both of us. (His voice is lowered to a trembling whisper) Especially the last eight months since Mary—died. (He forces back a sob with a convulsive shudder—then breaks out in a passionate agony) Our last hope of happiness! I could curse God from the bottom of my soul—if there was a God! (He is racked by a violent fit of coughing and hurriedly puts his handkerchief to his lips).

RUTH. (without looking at him) Mary's better off—being dead.

ROBERT. (gloomily) We'd all be better off for that matter. (With a sudden exasperation) You tell that mother of yours she's got to stop saying that Mary's death was due to a weak constitution inherited from me. (On the verge of tears of weakness) It's got to stop, I tell you!

RUTH. (sharply) S-h-h! You'll wake her; and then she'll nag at me—not you.

ROBERT. (coughs and lies back in his chair weakly—a pause) It's all because your mother's down on me for not begging Andy for help.

RUTH. (resentfully) You might have. He's got plenty.

ROBERT. How can you of all people think of taking money from him?

RUTH. (dully) I don't see the harm. He's your own brother.

ROBERT. (shrugging his shoulders) What's the use of talking to you? Well, I couldn't. (Proudly) And I've managed to keep things going, thank God. You can't deny that without help I've succeeded in—— (He breaks off with a bitter laugh) My God, what am I boasting of? Debts to this one and that, taxes, interest unpaid! I'm a fool! (He lies back in his chair closing his eyes for a moment, then speaks in a low voice) I'll be frank, Ruth. I've been an utter failure, and I've dragged you with me. I couldn't blame you in all justice—for hating me.

RUTH. (without feeling) I don't hate you. It's been my fault too, I s'pose.

ROBERT. No. You couldn't help loving—Andy.

RUTH. (dully) I don't love anyone.

ROBERT. (waving her remark aside) You needn't deny it. It doesn't matter. (After a pause—with a tender smile) Do you know Ruth, what I've been dreaming back there in the dark? (With a short laugh) I was planning our future when I get well. (He looks at her with appealing eyes as if afraid she will sneer at him. Her expression does not change. She stares at the stove. His voice takes on a note of eagerness) After all, why shouldn't we have a future? We're young yet. If we can only shake off the curse of this farm! It's the farm that's ruined our lives, damn it! And now that Andy's coming back—I'm going to sink my foolish pride, Ruth! I'll borrow the money from him to give us a good start in the city. We'll go where people live instead of stagnating, and start all over again. (Confidently) I won't be the failure there that I've been here, Ruth. You won't need to be ashamed of me there. I'll prove to you the reading I've done can be put to some use. (Vaguely) I'll write, or something of that sort. I've always wanted to write. (Pleadingly) You'll want to do that, won't you, Ruth?

RUTH. (dully) There's Ma.

ROBERT. She can come with us.

RUTH. She wouldn't.

ROBERT. (angrily) So that's your answer! (He trembles with violent passion. His voice is so strange that RUTH turns to look at him in alarm) You're lying, Ruth! Your mother's just an excuse. You want to stay here. You think that because Andy's coming back that—— (He chokes and has an attack of coughing).

RUTH. (getting up—in a frightened voice) What's the matter? (She goes to him) I'll go with you, Rob. Stop that coughing for goodness' sake! It's awful bad for you. (She soothes him in dull tones) I'll go with you to the city—soon's you're well again. Honest I will, Rob, I promise! (ROB lies back and closes his eyes. She stands

looking down at him anxiously) Do you feel better now?

ROBERT. Yes. (RUTH goes back to her chair. After a pause he opens his eyes and sits up in his chair. His face is flushed and happy) Then you will go, Ruth?

RUTH. Yes.

ROBERT. (excitedly) We'll make a new start, Ruth—just you and I. Life owes us some happiness after what we've been through. (Vehemently) It must! Otherwise our suffering would be meaningless—and that is unthinkable.

RUTH. (worried by his excitement) Yes, yes, of course, Rob, but you mustn't——

ROBERT. Oh, don't be afraid. I feel completely well, really I do—now that I can hope again. Oh if you knew how glorious it feels to have something to look forward to! Can't you feel the thrill of it, too—the vision of a new life opening up after all the horrible years?

RUTH. Yes, yes, but do be——

ROBERT. Nonsense! I won't be careful. I'm getting back all my strength. (He gets lightly to his feet) See! I feel light as a feather. (He walks to her chair and bends down to kiss her smilingly) One kiss—the first in years, isn't it?—to greet the dawn of a new life together.

RUTH. (submitting to his kiss—worriedly) Sit down, Rob, for goodness' sake!

ROBERT. (with tender obstinacy—stroking her hair) I won't sit down. You're silly to worry. (He rests one hand on the back of her chair) Listen. All our suffering has been a test through which we had to pass to prove ourselves worthy of a finer realization. (Exultingly) And we did pass through it! It hasn't broken us! And now the dream is to come true! Don't you see?

RUTH. (looking at him with frightened eyes as if she thought he had gone mad) Yes, Rob, I see; but won't you go back to bed now and rest?

ROBERT. No. I'm going to see the sun rise. It's an augury of good fortune. (He

goes quickly to the window in the rear left, and pushing the curtains aside, stands looking out. RUTH springs to her feet and comes quickly to the table, left, where she remains watching ROBERT in a tense, expectant attitude. As he peers out his body seems gradually to sag, to grow limp and tired. His voice is mournful as he speaks) No sun yet. It isn't time. All I can see is the black rim of the damned hills outlined against a creeping grayness. (He turns around; letting the curtains fall back, stretching a hand out to the wall to support himself. His false strength of a moment has evaporated, leaving his face drawn and hollow-eyed. He makes a pitiful attempt to smile) That's not a very happy augury, is it? But the sun'll come—soon. (He sways weakly).

RUTH. (hurrying to his side and supporting him) Please go to bed, won't you, Rob? You don't want to be all wore out when the specialist comes, do you?

ROBERT. (quickly) No. That's right. He mustn't think I'm sicker than I am. And I feel as if I could sleep now—(Cheerfully)—a good, sound, restful sleep.

RUTH. (helping him to the bedroom door) That's what you need most. (They go inside. A moment later she reappears calling back) I'll shut this door so's you'll be quiet. (She closes the door and goes quickly to her mother and shakes her by the shoulder) Ma! Ma! Wake up!

MRS. ATKINS. (coming out of her sleep with a start) Glory be! What's the matter with you?

RUTH. It was Rob. He's just been talking to me out here. I put him back to bed. (Now that she is sure her mother is awake her fear passes and she relapses into dull indifference. She sits down in her chair and stares at the stove—dully) He acted—funny; and his eyes looked so—so wild like.

MRS. ATKINS. (with asperity) And is that all you woke me out of a sound sleep for, and scared me near out of my wits?

RUTH. I was afraid. He talked so crazy. I couldn't quiet him. I didn't want to be

alone with him that way. Lord knows what he might do.

MRS. ATKINS. (scornfully) Humph! A help I'd be to you and me not able to move a step! Why didn't you run and get Jake?

RUTH. (dully) Jake isn't here. He quit last night. He hasn't been paid in three months.

MRS. ATKINS. (indignantly) I can't blame him. What decent person'd want to work on a place like this? (With sudden exasperation) Oh, I wish you'd never married that man!

RUTH. (wearily) You oughtn't to talk about him now when he's sick in his bed.

MRS. ATKINS. (working herself into a fit of rage) You know very well, Ruth Mayo, if it wasn't for me helpin' you on the sly out of my savin's, you'd both been in the poor house—and all 'count of his pigheaded pride in not lettin' Andy know the state thin's were in. A nice thin' for me to have to support him out of what I'd saved for my last days—and me an invalid with no one to look to!

RUTH. Andy'll pay you back, Ma. I can tell him so's Rob'll never know.

MRS. ATKINS. (with a snort) What'd Rob think you and him was livin' on, I'd like to know?

RUTH. (dully) He didn't think about it, I s'pose. (After a slight pause) He said he'd made up his mind to ask Andy for help when he comes. (As a clock in the kitchen strikes six) Six o'clock. Andy ought to get here directly.

MRS. ATKINS. D'you think this special doctor'll do Rob any good?

RUTH. (hopelessly) I don't know. (The two women remain silent for a time staring dejectedly at the stove).

MRS. ATKINS. (shivering irritably) For goodness' sake put some wood on that fire. I'm most freezin'!

RUTH. (pointing to the door in the rear) Don't talk so loud. Let him sleep if he can.

(She gets wearily from the chair and puts a few pieces of wood in the stove) This is the last of the wood. I don't know who'll cut more now that Jake's left. (She sighs and walks to the window in the rear, left, pulls the curtains aside, and looks out) It's getting gray out. (She comes back to the stove) Looks like it'd be a nice day. (She stretches out her hands to warm them) Must've been a heavy frost last night. We're paying for the spell of warm weather we've been having. (The throbbing whine of a motor sounds from the distance outside).

MRS. ATKINS. (sharply) S-h-h! Listen! Ain't that an auto I hear?

RUTH. (without interest) Yes. It's Andy, I s'pose.

MRS. ATKINS. (with nervous irritation) Don't sit there like a silly goose. Look at the state of this room! What'll this strange doctor think of us? Look at that lamp chimney all smoke! Gracious sakes, Ruth——

RUTH. (indifferently) I've got a lamp all cleaned up in the kitchen.

MRS. ATKINS. (peremptorily) Wheel me in there this minute. I don't want him to see me looking a sight. I'll lay down in the room the other side. You don't need me now and I'm dead for sleep. (RUTH wheels her mother off right. The noise of the motor grows louder and finally ceases as the car stops on the road before the farmhouse. RUTH returns from the kitchen with a lighted lamp in her hand which she sets on the table beside the other. The sound of footsteps on the path is heard—then a sharp rap on the door. RUTH goes and opens it. ANDREW enters, followed by DOCTOR FAWCETT carrying a small black bag. ANDREW has changed greatly. His face seems to have grown highstrung, hardened by the look of decisiveness which comes from being constantly under a strain where judgments on the spur of the moment are compelled to be accurate. His eyes are keener and more alert. There is even a suggestion of ruthless cunning about them. At present, however, his expression is one of tense anxiety. DOCTOR FAWCETT is a short, dark, middle-aged man with a Vandyke beard. He wears glasses).

RUTH. Hello, Andy! I've been waiting——

ANDREW. (kissing her hastily) I got here as soon as I could. (He throws of his cap and heavy overcoat on the table, introducing RUTH and the DOCTOR as he does so. He is dressed in an expensive business suit and appears stouter) My sister-in-law, Mrs. Mayo—Doctor Fawcett. (They bow to each other silently. ANDREW casts a quick glance about the room) Where's Rob?

RUTH. (pointing) In there.

ANDREW. I'll take your coat and hat, Doctor. (As he helps the DOCTOR with his things) Is he very bad, Ruth?

RUTH. (dully) He's been getting weaker.

ANDREW. Damn! This way, Doctor. Bring the lamp, Ruth. (He goes into the bedroom, followed by the DOCTOR and RUTH carrying the clean lamp. RUTH reappears almost immediately closing the door behind her, and goes slowly to the outside door, which she opens, and stands in the doorway looking out. The sound of ANDREW'S and ROBERT'S voices comes from the bedroom. A moment later ANDREW re-enters, closing the door softly. He comes forward and sinks down in the rocker on the right of table, leaning his head on his hand. His face is drawn in a shocked expression of great grief. He sighs heavily, staring mournfully in front of him. RUTH turns and stands watching him. Then she shuts the door and returns to her chair by the stove, turning it so she can face him).

ANDREW. (glancing up quickly—in a harsh voice) How long has this been going on?

RUTH. You mean—how long has he been sick?

ANDREW. (shortly) Of course! What else?

RUTH. It was last summer he had a bad spell first, but he's been ailin' ever since Mary died—eight months ago.

ANDREW. (harshly) Why didn't you let me know—cable me? Do you want him to die, all of you? I'm damned if it doesn't look that way! (His voice breaking) Poor old chap! To be sick in this out-of-the-way hole without anyone to attend to him but a country quack! It's a damned shame!

RUTH. (dully) I wanted to send you word once, but he only got mad when I told him. He was too proud to ask anything, he said.

ANDREW. Proud? To ask me? (He jumps to his feet and paces nervously back and forth) I can't understand the way you've acted. Didn't you see how sick he was getting? Couldn't you realize—why, I nearly dropped in my tracks when I saw him! He looks—(He shudders)—terrible! (With fierce scorn) I suppose you're so used to the idea of his being delicate that you took his sickness as a matter of course. God, if I'd only known!

RUTH. (without emotion) A letter takes so long to get where you were—and we couldn't afford to telegraph. We owed everyone already, and I couldn't ask Ma. She'd been giving me money out of her savings till she hadn't much left. Don't say anything to Rob about it. I never told him. He'd only be mad at me if he knew. But I had to, because—God knows how we'd have got on if I hadn't.

ANDREW. You mean to say—— (His eyes seem to take in the poverty-stricken appearance of the room for the first time) You sent that telegram to me collect. Was it because—— (RUTH nods silently. ANDREW pounds on the table with his fist) Good God! And all this time I've been—why I've had everything! (He sits down in his chair and pulls it close to RUTH'S—impulsively) But—I can't get it through my head. Why? Why? What has happened? How did it ever come about? Tell me!

RUTH. (dully) There's nothing much to tell. Things kept getting worse, that's all—and Rob didn't seem to care. He never took any interest since way back when your Ma died. After that he got men to take charge, and they nearly all cheated him—he couldn't tell—and left one after another. Then after Mary died he didn't

pay no heed to anything any more—just stayed indoors and took to reading books again. So I had to ask Ma if she wouldn't help us some.

ANDREW. (surprised and horrified) Why, damn it, this is frightful! Rob must be mad not to have let me know. Too proud to ask help of me! What's the matter with him in God's name? (A sudden, horrible suspicion entering his mind) Ruth! Tell me the truth. His mind hasn't gone back on him, has it?

RUTH. (dully) I don't know. Mary's dying broke him up terrible—but he's used to her being gone by this, I s'pose.

ANDREW. (looking at her queerly) Do you mean to say you're used to it?

RUTH. (in a dead tone) There's a time comes—when you don't mind any more—anything.

ANDREW. (looks at her fixedly for a moment—with great pity) I'm sorry, Ruth—if I seemed to blame you. I didn't realize—— The sight of Rob lying in bed there, so gone to pieces—it made me furious at everyone. Forgive me, Ruth.

RUTH. There's nothing to forgive. It doesn't matter.

ANDREW. (springing to his feet again and pacing up and down) Thank God I came back before it was too late. This doctor will know exactly what to do. That's the first thing to think of. When Rob's on his feet again we can get the farm working on a sound basis once more. I'll see to that—before I leave.

RUTH. You're going away again?

ANDREW. I've got to.

RUTH. You wrote Rob you was coming back to stay this time.

ANDREW. I expected to—until I got to New York. Then I learned certain facts that make it necessary. (With a short laugh) To be candid, Ruth, I'm not the rich man you've probably been led to believe by my letters—not now. I was when I wrote them. I made money hand over fist as long as I stuck to legitimate trading; but I

wasn't content with that. I wanted it to come easier, so like all the rest of the idiots, I tried speculation. Oh, I won all right! Several times I've been almost a millionaire—on paper—and then come down to earth again with a bump. Finally the strain was too much. I got disgusted with myself and made up my mind to get out and come home and forget it and really live again. (He gives a harsh laugh) And now comes the funny part. The day before the steamer sailed I saw what I thought was a chance to become a millionaire again. (He snaps his fingers) That easy! I plunged. Then, before things broke, I left—I was so confident I couldn't be wrong. But when I landed in New York—I wired you I had business to wind up, didn't I? Well, it was the business that wound me up! (He smiles grimly, pacing up and down, his hands in his pockets).

RUTH. (dully) You found—you'd lost everything?

ANDREW. (sitting down again) Practically. (He takes a cigar from his pocket, bites the end off, and lights it) Oh, I don't mean I'm dead broke. I've saved ten thousand from the wreckage, maybe twenty. But that's a poor showing for five years' hard work. That's why I'll have to go back. (Confidently) I can make it up in a year or so down there—and I don't need but a shoestring to start with. (A weary expression comes over his face and he sighs heavily) I wish I didn't have to. I'm sick of it all.

RUTH. It's too bad—things seem to go wrong so.

ANDREW. (shaking off his depression—briskly) They might be much worse. There's enough left to fix the farm O. K. before I go. I won't leave 'til Rob's on his feet again. In the meantime I'll make things fly around here. (With satisfaction) I need a rest, and the kind of rest I need is hard work in the open—just like I used to do in the old days. (Stopping abruptly and lowering his voice cautiously) Not a word to Rob about my losing money! Remember that, Ruth! You can see why. If he's grown so touchy he'd never accept a cent if he thought I was hard up; see?

RUTH. Yes, Andy. (After a pause, during which ANDREW puffs at his cigar

abstractedly, his mind evidently busy with plans for the future, the bedroom door is opened and DOCTOR FAWCETT enters, carrying a bag. He closes the door quietly behind him and comes forward, a grave expression on his face. ANDREW springs out of his chair).

ANDREW. Ah, Doctor! (He pushes a chair between his own and RUTH'S) Won't you have a chair?

FAWCETT. (glancing at his watch) I must catch the nine o'clock back to the city. It's imperative. I have only a moment. (Sitting down and clearing his throat—in a perfunctory, impersonal voice) The case of your brother, Mr. Mayo, is—— (He stops and glances at RUTH and says meaningly to ANDREW) Perhaps it would be better if you and I——

RUTH. (with dogged resentment) I know what you mean, Doctor. (Dully) Don't be afraid I can't stand it. I'm used to bearing trouble by this; and I can guess what you've found out. (She hesitates for a moment—then continues in a monotonous voice) Rob's going to die.

ANDREW. (angrily) Ruth!

FAWCETT. (raising his hand as if to command silence) I am afraid my diagnosis of your brother's condition forces me to the same conclusion as Mrs. Mayo's.

ANDREW. (groaning) But, Doctor, surely——

FAWCETT. (calmly) Your brother hasn't long to live—perhaps a few days, perhaps only a few hours. It's a marvel that he's alive at this moment. My examination revealed that both of his lungs are terribly affected.

ANDREW. (brokenly) Good God! (RUTH keeps her eyes fixed on her lap in a trance-like stare).

FAWCETT. I am sorry I have to tell you this. If there was anything that could be done——

ANDREW. There isn't anything?

FAWCETT. (shaking his head) It's too late. Six months ago there might have——

ANDREW. (in anguish) But if we were to take him to the mountains—or to Arizona—or——

FAWCETT. That might have prolonged his life six months ago. (ANDREW groans) But now—— (He shrugs his shoulders significantly).

ANDREW. (appalled by a sudden thought) Good heavens, you haven't told him this, have you, Doctor?

FAWCETT. No. I lied to him. I said a change of climate—— (He looks at his watch again nervously) I must leave you. (He gets up).

ANDREW. (getting to his feet—insistently) But there must still be some chance——

FAWCETT. (as if he were reassuring a child) There is always that last chance—the miracle. (He puts on his hat and coat—bowing to RUTH) Good-by, Mrs. Mayo.

RUTH. (without raising her eyes—dully) Good-by.

ANDREW. (mechanically) I'll walk to the car with you, Doctor. (They go out of the door. RUTH sits motionlessly. The motor is heard starting and the noise gradually recedes into the distance. ANDREW re-enters and sits down in his chair, holding his head in his hands) Ruth! (She lifts her eyes to his) Hadn't we better go in and see him? God! I'm afraid to! I know he'll read it in my face. (The bedroom door is noiselessly opened and ROBERT appears in the doorway. His cheeks are flushed with fever, and his eyes appear unusually large and brilliant. ANDREW continues with a groan) It can't be, Ruth. It can't be as hopeless as he said. There's always a fighting chance. We'll take Rob to Arizona. He's got to get well. There must be a chance!

ROBERT. (in a gentle tone) Why must there, Andy? (RUTH turns and stares at him

with terrified eyes).

ANDREW. (whirling around) Rob! (Scoldingly) What are you doing out of bed? (He gets up and goes to him) Get right back now and obey the Doc, or you're going to get a licking from me!

ROBERT. (ignoring these remarks) Help me over to the chair, please, Andy.

ANDREW. Like hell I will! You're going right back to bed, that's where you're going, and stay there! (He takes hold of ROBERT'S arm).

ROBERT. (mockingly) Stay there 'til I die, eh, Andy? (Coldly) Don't behave like a child. I'm sick of lying down. I'll be more rested sitting up. (As ANDREW hesitates—violently) I swear I'll get out of bed every time you put me there. You'll have to sit on my chest, and that wouldn't help my health any. Come on, Andy. Don't play the fool. I want to talk to you, and I'm going to. (With a grim smile) A dying man has some rights, hasn't he?

ANDREW. (with a shudder) Don't talk that way, for God's sake! I'll only let you sit down if you'll promise that. Remember. (He helps ROBERT to the chair between his own and RUTH'S) Easy now! There you are! Wait, and I'll get a pillow for you. (He goes into the bedroom. ROBERT looks at RUTH who shrinks away from him in terror. ROBERT smiles bitterly. ANDREW comes back with the pillow which he places behind ROBERT'S back) How's that?

ROBERT. (with an affectionate smile) Fine! Thank you! (As ANDREW sits down) Listen, Andy. You've asked me not to talk—and I won't after I've made my position clear. (Slowly) In the first place I know I'm dying. (RUTH bows her head and covers her face with her hands. She remains like this all during the scene between the two brothers).

ANDREW. Rob! That isn't so!

ROBERT. (wearily) It is so! Don't lie to me. After Ruth put me to bed before you came, I saw it clearly for the first time. (Bitterly) I'd been making plans for our

future—Ruth's and mine—so it came hard at first—the realization. Then when the doctor examined me, I knew—although he tried to lie about it. And then to make sure I listened at the door to what he told you. So don't mock me with fairy tales about Arizona, or any such rot as that. Because I'm dying is no reason you should treat me as an imbecile or a coward. Now that I'm sure what's happening I can say Kismet to it with all my heart. It was only the silly uncertainty that hurt. (There is a pause. ANDREW looks around in impotent anguish, not knowing what to say. ROBERT regards him with an affectionate smile).

ANDREW. (finally blurts out) It isn't foolish. You have got a chance. If you heard all the Doctor said that ought to prove it to you.

ROBERT. Oh, you mean when he spoke of the miracle? (Dryly) I don't believe in miracles—in my case. Besides, I know more than any doctor on earth could know—because I feel what's coming. (Dismissing the subject) But we've agreed not to talk of it. Tell me about yourself, Andy. That's what I'm interested in. Your letters were too brief and far apart to be illuminating.

ANDREW. I meant to write oftener.

ROBERT. (with a faint trace of irony) I judge from them you've accomplished all you set out to do five years ago?

ANDREW. That isn't much to boast of.

ROBERT. (surprised) Have you really, honestly reached that conclusion?

ANDREW. Well, it doesn't seem to amount to much now.

ROBERT. But you're rich, aren't you?

ANDREW. (with a quick glance at RUTH) Yes, I s'pose so.

ROBERT. I'm glad. You can do to the farm all I've undone. But what did you do down there? Tell me. You went in the grain business with that friend of yours?

ANDREW. Yes. After two years I had a share in it. I sold out last year. (He is

answering ROBERT'S questions with great reluctance).

ROBERT. And then?

ANDREW. I went in on my own.

ROBERT. Still in grain?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. What's the matter? You look as if I were accusing you of something.

ANDREW. I'm proud enough of the first four years. It's after that I'm not boasting of. I took to speculating.

ROBERT. In wheat?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. And you made money—gambling?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. (thoughtfully) I've been wondering what the great change was in you. (After a pause) You—a farmer—to gamble in a wheat pit with scraps of paper. There's a spiritual significance in that picture, Andy. (He smiles bitterly) I'm a failure, and Ruth's another—but we can both justly lay some of the blame for our stumbling on God. But you're the deepest-dyed failure of the three, Andy. You've spent eight years running away from yourself. Do you see what I mean? You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership. And now—— (He stops as if seeking vainly for words) My brain is muddled. But part of what I mean is that your gambling with the thing you used to love to create proves how far astray—— So you'll be punished. You'll have to suffer to win back—— (His voice grows weaker and he sighs wearily) It's no use. I can't say it. (He lies back and closes his eyes, breathing pantingly).

ANDREW. (slowly) I think I know what you're driving at, Rob—and it's true, I guess. (ROBERT smiles gratefully and stretches out his hand, which ANDREW

takes in his).

ROBERT. I want you to promise me to do one thing, Andy, after——

ANDREW. I'll promise anything, as God is my Judge!

ROBERT. Remember, Andy, Ruth has suffered double her share. (His voice faltering with weakness) Only through contact with suffering, Andy, will you—awaken. Listen. You must marry Ruth—afterwards.

RUTH. (with a cry) Rob! (ROBERT lies back, his eyes closed, gasping heavily for breath).

ANDREW. (making signs to her to humor him—gently) You're tired out, Rob. You better lie down and rest a while, don't you think? We can talk later on.

ROBERT. (with a mocking smile) Later on! You always were an optimist, Andy! (He sighs with exhaustion) Yes, I'll go and rest a while. (As ANDREW comes to help him) It must be near sunrise, isn't it?

ANDREW. It's after six.

ROBERT. (As ANDREW helps him into the bedroom) Shut the door, Andy. I want to be alone. (ANDREW reappears and shuts the door softly. He comes and sits down on his chair again, supporting his head on his hands. His face is drawn with the intensity of his dry-eyed anguish).

RUTH. (glancing at him—fearfully) He's out of his mind now, isn't he?

ANDREW. He may be a little delirious. The fever would do that. (With impotent rage) God, what a shame! And there's nothing we can do but sit and—wait! (He springs from his chair and walks to the stove).

RUTH. (dully) He was talking—wild—like he used to—only this time it sounded—unnatural, don't you think?

ANDREW. I don't know. The things he said to me had truth in them—even if he did talk them way up in the air, like he always sees things. Still—— (He glances down

at RUTH keenly) Why do you suppose he wanted us to promise we'd——(Confusedly) You know what he said.

RUTH. (dully) His mind was wandering, I s'pose.

ANDREW. (with conviction) No—there was something back of it.

RUTH. He wanted to make sure I'd be all right—after he'd gone, I expect.

ANDREW. No, it wasn't that. He knows very well I'd naturally look after you without—anything like that.

RUTH. He might be thinking of—something happened five years back, the time you came home from the trip.

ANDREW. What happened? What do you mean?

RUTH. (dully) We had a fight.

ANDREW. A fight? What has that to do with me?

RUTH. It was about you—in a way.

ANDREW. (amazed) About me?

RUTH. Yes, mostly. You see I'd found out I'd made a mistake about Rob soon after we were married—when it was too late.

ANDREW. Mistake? (Slowly) You mean—you found out you didn't love Rob?

RUTH. Yes.

ANDREW. Good God!

RUTH. And then I thought that when Mary came it'd be different, and I'd love him; but it didn't happen that way. And I couldn't bear with his blundering and book-reading—and I grew to hate him, almost.

ANDREW. Ruth!

RUTH. I couldn't help it. No woman could. It had to be because I loved someone else, I'd found out. (She sighs wearily) It can't do no harm to tell you now—when

it’s all past and gone—and dead. You were the one I really loved—only I didn’t come to the knowledge of it ’til too late.

ANDREW. (stunned) Ruth! Do you know what you’re saying?

RUTH. It was true—then. (With sudden fierceness) How could I help it? No woman could.

ANDREW. Then—you loved me—that time I came home?

RUTH. (doggedly) I’d known your real reason for leaving home the first time—everybody knew it—and for three years I’d been thinking——

ANDREW. That I loved you?

RUTH. Yes. Then that day on the hill you laughed about what a fool you’d been for loving me once—and I knew it was all over.

ANDREW. Good God, but I never thought—— (He stops, shuddering at his remembrance) And did Rob——

RUTH. That was what I’d started to tell. We’d had a fight just before you came and I got crazy mad—and I told him all I’ve told you.

ANDREW. (gaping at her speechlessly for a moment) You told Rob—you loved me?

RUTH. Yes.

ANDREW. (shrinking away from her in horror) You—you—you mad fool, you! How could you do such a thing?

RUTH. I couldn’t help it. I’d got to the end of bearing things—without talking.

ANDREW. Then Rob must have known every moment I stayed here! And yet he never said or showed—God, how he must have suffered! Didn’t you know how much he loved you?

RUTH. (dully) Yes. I knew he liked me.

ANDREW. Liked you! What kind of a woman are you? Couldn't you have kept silent? Did you have to torture him? No wonder he's dying! And you've lived together for five years with this between you?

RUTH. We've lived in the same house.

ANDREW. Does he still think——

RUTH. I don't know. We've never spoke a word about it since that day. Maybe, from the way he went on, he s'poses I care for you yet.

ANDREW. But you don't. It's outrageous. It's stupid! You don't love me!

RUTH. (slowly) I wouldn't know how to feel love, even if I tried, any more.

ANDREW. (brutally) And I don't love you, that's sure! (He sinks into his chair, his head between his hands) It's damnable such a thing should be between Rob and me. Why, I love Rob better'n anybody in the world and always did. There isn't a thing on God's green earth I wouldn't have done to keep trouble away from him. And I have to be the very one—it's damnable! How am I going to face him again? What can I say to him now? (He groans with anguished rage. After a pause) He asked me to promise—what am I going to do?

RUTH. You can promise—so's it'll ease his mind—and not mean anything.

ANDREW. What? Lie to him now—when he's dying? (Determinedly) No! It's you who'll have to do the lying, since it must be done. You've got a chance now to undo some of all the suffering you've brought on Rob. Go in to him! Tell him you never loved me—it was all a mistake. Tell him you only said so because you were mad and didn't know what you were saying! Tell him something, anything, that'll bring him peace!

RUTH. (dully) He wouldn't believe me.

ANDREW. (furiously) You've got to make him believe you, do you hear? You've got to—now—hurry—you never know when it may be too late. (As she

hesitates—imploringly) For God’s sake, Ruth! Don’t you see you owe it to him? You’ll never forgive yourself if you don’t.

RUTH. (dully) I’ll go. (She gets wearily to her feet and walks slowly toward the bedroom) But it won’t do any good. (ANDREW’S eyes are fixed on her anxiously. She opens the door and steps inside the room. She remains standing there for a minute. Then she calls in a frightened voice) Rob! Where are you? (Then she hurries back, trembling with fright) Andy! Andy! He’s gone!

ANDREW. (misunderstanding her—his face pale with dread) He’s not——

RUTH. (interrupting him—hysterically) He’s gone! The bed’s empty. The window’s wide open. He must have crawled out into the yard!

ANDREW. (springing to his feet. He rushes into the bedroom and returns immediately with an expression of alarmed amazement on his face) Come! He can’t have gone far! (Grabbing his hat he takes RUTH’S arm and shoves her toward the door) Come on! (Opening the door) Let’s hope to God—— (The door closes behind them, cutting off his words as

(The Curtain Falls)

ACT THREE Scene Two

Same as Act One, Scene One—A section of country highway. The sky to the east is already alight with bright color and a thin, quivering line of flame is spreading slowly along the horizon rim of the dark hills. The roadside, however, is still steeped in the grayness of the dawn, shadowy and vague. The field in the foreground has a wild uncultivated appearance as if it had been allowed to remain fallow the preceding summer. Parts of the snake-fence in the rear have been broken down. The apple tree is leafless and seems dead.

ROBERT staggers weakly in from the left. He stumbles into the ditch and lies there for a moment; then crawls with a great effort to the top of the bank where he can see

the sun rise, and collapses weakly. RUTH and ANDREW come hurriedly along the road from the left.

ANDREW. (stopping and looking about him) There he is! I knew it! I knew we'd find him here.

ROBERT. (trying to raise himself to a sitting position as they hasten to his side—with a wan smile) I thought I'd given you the slip.

ANDREW. (with kindly bullying) Well you didn't, you old scoundrel, and we're going to take you right back where you belong—in bed. (He makes a motion to lift ROBERT).

ROBERT. Don't, Andy. Don't, I tell you!

ANDREW. You're in pain?

ROBERT. (simply) No. I'm dying. (He falls back weakly. RUTH sinks down beside him with a sob and pillows his head on her lap. ANDREW stands looking down at him helplessly. ROBERT moves his head restlessly on RUTH'S lap) I couldn't stand it back there in the room. It seemed as if all my life—I'd been cooped in a room. So I thought I'd try to end as I might have—if I'd had the courage—alone—in a ditch by the open road—watching the sun rise.

ANDREW. Rob! Don't talk. You're wasting your strength. Rest a while and then we'll carry you——

ROBERT. Still hoping, Andy? Don't. I know. (There is a pause during which he breathes heavily, straining his eyes toward the horizon) The sun comes so slowly. (With an ironical smile) The doctor told me to go to the far-off places—and I'd be cured. He was right. That was always the cure for me. It's too late—for this life—but—— (He has a fit of coughing which racks his body).

ANDREW. (with a hoarse sob) Rob! (He clenches his fist in an impotent rage against Fate) God! God! (RUTH sobs brokenly and wipes ROBERT'S lips with her

handkerchief).

ROBERT. (in a voice which is suddenly ringing with the happiness of hope) You mustn't feel sorry for me. Don't you see I'm happy at last—free—free!—freed from the farm—free to wander on and on—eternally! (He raises himself on his elbow, his face radiant, and points to the horizon) Look! Isn't it beautiful beyond the hills? I can hear the old voices calling me to come—— (Exultantly) And this time I'm going! It isn't the end. It's a free beginning—the start of my voyage! I've won to my trip—the right of release—beyond the horizon! Oh, you ought to be glad—glad—for my sake! (He collapses weakly) Andy! (ANDREW bends down to him) Remember Ruth——

ANDREW. I'll take care of her, I swear to you, Rob!

ROBERT. Ruth has suffered—remember, Andy—only through sacrifice—the secret beyond there—— (He suddenly raises himself with his last remaining strength and points to the horizon where the edge of the sun's disc is rising from the rim of the hills) The sun! (He remains with his eyes fixed on it for a moment. A rattling noise throbs from his throat. He mumbles) Remember! (And falls back and is still. RUTH gives a cry of horror and springs to her feet, shuddering, her hands over her eyes. ANDREW bends on one knee beside the body, placing a hand over ROBERT'S heart, then he kisses his brother reverentially on the forehead and stands up).

ANDREW. (facing RUTH, the body between them—in a dead voice) He's dead. (With a sudden burst of fury) God damn you, you never told him!

RUTH. (piteously) He was so happy without my lying to him.

ANDREW. (pointing to the body—trembling with the violence of his rage) This is your doing, you damn woman, you coward, you murderess!

RUTH. (sobbing) Don't, Andy! I couldn't help it—and he knew how I'd suffered, too. He told you—to remember.

ANDREW. (stares at her for a moment, his rage ebbing away, an expression of deep

pity gradually coming over his face. Then he glances down at his brother and speaks brokenly in a compassionate voice) Forgive me, Ruth—for his sake—and I'll remember—— (RUTH lets her hands fall from her face and looks at him uncomprehendingly. He lifts his eyes to hers and forces out falteringly) I—you—we've both made a mess of things! We must try to help each other—and—in time—we'll come to know what's right—— (Desperately) And perhaps we—— (But RUTH, if she is aware of his words, gives no sign. She remains silent, gazing at him dully with the sad humility of exhaustion, her mind already sinking back into that spent calm beyond the further troubling of any hope).

(The Curtain Falls)

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