Gold

by Eugene O'Neill

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Title: Gold

A play in four acts

Author: Eugene O'Neill

Release date: December 17, 2023 [eBook #72442]

Language: English

Original publication: New York: Boni & Liveright, Inc., 1920

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/72442

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GOLD

PLAYS BY EUGENE G. O’NEILL ———— THE MOON OF THE CARIBBEES and Six Other Plays of the Sea BEYOND THE HORIZON THE STRAW GOLD

Gold

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS BY EUGENE G. O’NEILL BONI AND LIVERIGHT PUBLISHERS NEW YORK Gold Copyright, 1920, by Boni & Liveright, Inc. Printed in the United States of America

SCENES OF ACTS

Act One—A barren coral island on the fringe of the Malay archipelago—Noon. Act Two—Interior of a boat shed on the wharf of the Bartlett place on the California coast. An afternoon six months later. Act Three—Exterior of the Bartlett house—dawn of the following morning. Act Four—Bartlett’s “cabin”—his lookout post—at the top of the house. A night one year later.

Time of the play—About the year 1900

ACT I

CHARACTERS

Captain Isaiah Bartlett, of the whaling ship, Triton Silas Horne, boatswain of the Triton Ben Cates of the Triton’s crew Jimmy Kanaka, an Islander of the Triton’s crew Butler, cook of the Triton Abel, the ship’s boy Sarah Allen Bartlett, the captain’s wife Sue, their daughter Nat, their son Daniel Drew, officer of a freight steamer Doctor Berry

ACT ONE

Scene—A small, barren coral island on the southern fringe of the Malay Archipelago. The coral sand, blazing white under the full glare of the sun, lifts in the

right foreground to a long hummuck a few feet above sea-level. A stunted coco palm rises from the center of this elevation, its bunch of scraggly leaves drooping motionlessly, casting a small circular patch of shadow directly beneath on the ground about the trunk. About a hundred yards in the distance the lagoon is seen, its vivid blue contrasting with the white coral beach which borders its circular outline. The far horizon to seaward is marked by a broad band of purplish haze which separates the bright blue of the water from the metallic grey-blue of the sky. The island bakes. The intensity of the sun's rays is flung back skyward in a quivering mist of heat-waves which distorts the outlines of things, giving the visible world an intangible eerie quality, as if it were floating submerged in some colorless molten fluid.

As the curtain rises, Abel is discovered lying asleep, curled up in the patch of shade beneath the coco palm. He is a runty, under-sized boy of fifteen, with a shrivelled old face, tanned to parchment by the sum. He has on a suit of dirty dungarees, man's size, much too large for him, which hang in loose folds from his puny frame. A thatch of brown hair straggles in limp wisps from under the peaked canvas cap he wears. He looks terribly exhausted. His dreams are evidently fraught with terror, for he twitches convulsively and moans with fright. Butler enters hurriedly, panting, from the right, rear. He is a tall man of over middle age, dressed in the faded remainder of what was once a brown suit. The coat, the buttons of which have been torn off, hangs open, revealing his nakedness beneath. A cloth cap covers his bald head, with its halo of dirty thin grey hair. His body is emaciated. His face, with its round, blue eyes, is weathered and cracked by the sun's rays. The wreck of a pair of heavy shoes flop about his bare feet. He looks back cautiously, as if he were afraid of being followed; then satisfied that he is not, he approaches the sleeping boy, and bending down, puts his hand on Abel's forehead. Abel groans and opens his eyes. He stares about furtively, as if seeking someone whose presence he dreads to find.

Abel—[In a husky voice.] Where's Capt'n and the rest, Butts?

Butler—[In a hoarse, cracked whisper.]—On the beach—down there. [He makes an exhausted gesture, right, and then sinks with a groan at the foot of the tree, leaning back against the trunk, trying vainly to hunch his long legs up so as to be completely in the shade.]

Abel—What're they doin'? [With avid eyes.] They ain't found no water yet?

Butler—[Shaking his head, his eyes closing wearily.] No. How would they—when there ain't any—not on this devil's island—dry as a bone, my sonny—sand and sun—that's all.

Abel—[Remonstratingly—his lips trembling a little.] Aw—maybe—you don't know no different.

Butler—No. Might as well look the devil in the face, sonny. There's no water here. Not a damn drop. No—nor a scrap to eat, neither. Only the damn sun. [Weakly—touching the skin of his face with trembling fingers.] God! My face is like the raw inside of a wet hide! If it'd only rain! [After a pause—kindly.] But how are you, eh? Had a good sleep?

Abel—I was dreamin' awful. [With a sudden, shrill agony—his lips twitching.] I need a drink of water—something awful! My mouth's burnin' up. [With tremulous pleading.] Say, ain't you got 'nother drink left?—honest, ain't you?

Butler—[Looking around him cautiously.] Not so loud! [Fixing his eyes sternly on the boy.] This is a dead secret, mind! You'll swear you won't blab—not to him?

Abel—Sure, Butts, sure! Gawd strike me dead!

Butler—[Takes a pint bottle from the hip-pocket of his pants. It is about half full of water.] He don't know I've got this, remember! He—and the rest—they'd kill me like a dog—and you too, sonny—remember that!

Abel—Sure! I ain't goin' to tell 'em, Butts. [Stretching out his hands frenziedly.] Aw, give it to me, Butts! Give me a drink, for Christ's sake!

Butler—No, you don't! I'll hold it for you. Only a few drops. You'd have it all down your throat. And we've got to be careful. It's got to last 'til the ship comes past that'll pick us up. That's the only hope. [Holding the bottle at arm's length from the boy.] Hands down, now—or you don't get a drop! [The boy lets his hands drop to his sides. Butler puts the bottle carefully to his lips, and allows the boy two gulps—then snatches it away.] That's all now. More later. [He takes one gulp himself, and making a tremendous effort of will, jerks the bottle from his lips, and corking it quickly, thrusts it back in his pocket and heaves a shuddering sigh.]

Abel—Aw, more! Just another swaller——

Butler—[Determinedly.] No!

Abel—[Crying weakly.] Yuh dirty mut!

Butler—[Quietly.] There! Don't get riled. It only makes you hotter—and thirstier. [The boy sinks back exhausted and closes his eyes. Butler begins to talk in a more assured voice, as if the sip of water had renewed his courage.] That'll save us yet, that bit of water. A lucky notion of mine to think of it—at the last moment. They were just lowering the boots. I could hear you calling to me to hurry and come. They didn't care if I went down with that stinking whaling ship or not, damn them! What did the dirty cook matter to them? But I thought of filling this bottle. It'd been lying there in the galley for two years almost. I'd had it on my hip, full of whiskey, that night in Oakland when I was shanghied. So I filled it out of a bucket before I ran to the boat. Lucky I did, son—for you and me—not for them—damn 'em!

Abel—[Struggling to a sitting posture, evidently strengthened by his drink.] Gee if the Old Man was wise you got it——

Butler—He won't know—nor Horne, nor Cates, nor Jimmy Kanaka, neither. [As if in self-justification.] Why should I tell 'em, eh? Did I ever get anything better than a kick or a curse from one of them? [Vindictively.] Would they give it to me if they had it? They'd see me in hell first! And besides, it's too late for them. They're mad

as hatters right now, the four of them. They ain't had a drop since three nights back, when the water in the cask gave out and we rowed up against this island in the dark. Think of it, and them out walking and roasting in the sun all day, looking for water where there ain't any. Wouldn't you be crazy? [Suddenly he laughs queerly.] Didn't you hear them shouting and yelling like lunatics just before I came?

Abel—I thought I heard something—on'y maybe I was dreamin'.

Butler—It's them that are doing the dreaming. I was with them. I had to go. [With rising anger.] He kicked me awake—and every time I tried to get away he beat me back. He's strong yet—[With threatening vindictiveness.]—but he can't last long, damn him! [Controlling himself, goes on with his story excitedly.] Well, we went looking for water—on this sand pile. Then Jimmy Kanaka saw a boat sunk half under down inside the reef—a Malay canoe, only bigger. They got down in her the best way they could, up to their waists in water. They thought there might be something to drink on her. I was trying to sneak off, scared to go in on account of sharks. All of a sudden they gave an awful yell. I thought they'd found something to drink and ran back. They was all standing about a box they'd forced open, yelling and cursing and out of their heads completely. When I looked I seen the box was full of all sorts of metal junk—bracelets and bands and necklaces that I guess the Malays wear. Nothing but brass and copper, and bum imitations of diamonds and things—not worth a dam; and there they were, shouting with joy and slapping each other on the back. And that hellion of a skipper shouts at me: "Get out of this! No share here for a stinking cook!" he yells. I didn't say nothing but just picked up some of the stuff to make sure. Then I told him straight. "This ain't gold. It's brass and copper—not worth a damn." God, he got wild! I had to run, or he'd knifed me—then and there. That was when I woke you up.

Abel—And ain't it worth nothin', honest? How'd you know it ain't?

Butler—D'you think I ain't learned to know gold in my time? And polished enough

copper and brass to know them, too? Just as if it was gold it'd do 'em any good! You can't drink gold, can you? [With sudden violence.] It serves 'em right, all that's happened and going to happen. Kicks and smacks in the face if I even winked an eye—two years of it! And me shanghied when I was drunk—taken away from a good job and forced to cook the swill on a rotten whaler. Oh, I'll pay him back for it! His damn ship is wrecked and lost to him—that's the first of it. I'll see him rot and die—and the three with him! But you and me'll be saved! D'you know why I've let you go halves on this water, instead of hogging it all myself? It's because you were the only one on board that didn't treat me like a dog—and they kicked and beat you, too. We were in the same boat. And now we'll get even! Them and their dirty box of junk! [He sinks back, exhausted by this outburst.]

Abel—[Suddenly, in a piteous voice.] Gee, I wisht I was back home again!

Butler—You'll get back. We both will. [He closes his eyes. After a pause—weakly.] When I close my eyes, everything gets to rocking under me, like I was in that open boat again. I won't forget these four days in a hurry. Up and down—— Nothing but sun and water. [They are both silent, leaning with closed eyes against the bole of the tree, panting exhaustedly. A murmur of men's voices comes from the right, rear, and gradually get nearer.]

Abel—[Opening his eyes with a start.] Butts! I hear 'em comin'!

Butler—[Listening, wide-eyed, for a moment.] Yes, it's them. [He gets to his feet weakly.] Come, let's get out of this. [Abel staggers to his feet. They both move to the left. Butler shades his eyes with his hands and looks toward the beach.] Look! They're dragging along that box of junk with 'em, the damn fools! [Warningly.] They're crazy as hell. Don't give 'em no chance to pick on you, d'you hear? They'd stop at nothing when they're this way. [There is a scuffling of heavy footsteps in the sand, and Captain Bartlett appears, followed by Horne, who in turn is followed by Cates and Jimmy Kanaka. Bartlett is a tall, huge-framed figure of a man, dressed in

a blue double-breasted coat, pants of the same material, and rubber sea-boots turned down from the knees. In spite of the ravages of hunger and thirst there is still a suggestion of immense strength in his heavy-muscled body. His head is massive, thickly covered with tangled, iron-grey hair. His face is large, bony, and leather-tanned, with a long aquiline nose and a gash of a mouth shadowed by a bristling grey mustache. His broad jaw sticks out at an angle of implacable stubbornness. Bushy grey brows overhang the obsessed glare of his sombre dark eyes. Silas Horne is a thin, parrot-nosed, angular old man, his lean face marked by a life-time of crass lusts and mean cruelty. He is dressed in grey cotton trousers, and a singlet torn open across his hairy chest. The exposed skin of his arms and shoulders and chest has been blistered and seared by the sun. A cap is on his head. Cates is squat and broad-chested, with thick, stumpy legs and arms. His square, stupid face, with its greedy pig's eyes, is terribly pock-marked. He is gross and bestial, an unintelligent brute. He is dressed in dungaree pants and a dirty white sailor's blouse, and wears a brown cap. Jimmy Kanaka is a tall, sinewy, bronzed young Islander. He wears only a loin cloth and a leather belt with a sheath-knife. The last two are staggering beneath the weight of a heavy inlaid chest. The eyes of the three white men are wild. They pant exhaustedly, their legs trembling with weakness beneath them. Their lips are puffed and cracked, their voices muffled by their swollen tongues. But there is a mad air of happiness, of excitement, about their scorched faces.]

Bartlett—[In a crooning, monotonous voice.] It's heavy, I know, heavy—that chest. Up, bullies! Up with her! [He flings himself in the shade, resting his back against the tree, and points to the sand at his feet.] Put 'er there, bullies—there where I kin see!

Horne—[Echoing his words mechanically.] Put'er there!

Cates—[In thick, stupid tones.] Aye-aye, sir! Down she goes, Jimmy! [They set the chest down.]

Bartlett—Sit down, lads, sit down. Ye've earned your spell of rest. [The three men throw themselves on the sand in attitudes of spent weariness. Bartlett's eyes are fixed gloatingly on the chest. There is a silence suddenly broken by Cates, who leaps to a kneeling position with a choked cry.]

Cates—[His eyes staring at the Captain with fierce insistence.] I want a drink—water! [The others are startled into a rigid, dazzed attention. Horne's lips move painfully in a soundless repetition of the word. There is a pause. Then Bartlett strikes the side of his head with his fist, as if to drive this obsession from his brain. Butler and Abel stand looking at them with frightened eyes.]

Bartlett—[Having regained control over himself, in a determined voice, deep-toned and menacing.] If ye speak that word ever again, Ben Cates—if ye say it once again—ye'll be food for the sharks! Ye hear?

Cates—[Terrified.] Yes, sir. [He collapses limply on the sand again. Horne and the Kanaka relax hopelessly.]

Bartlett—[With heavy scorn.] Are ye a child to take on like a sick woman—cryin' for what ye know we've not got? Can't ye stand up under a little thirst like a man? [Resolutely.] There'll be water enough—if ye'll wait and keep a stiff upper lip on ye. We'll all be picked up today. I'll stake my word on it. This state o' things can't last. [His eyes fall on the chest.] Ye ought to be singin' 'stead o' cryin'—after the find we've made. What's the lack of water amount to—when ye've gold before you? [With mad exultation.] Gold! Enough of it in your share alone to buy ye rum, and wine, and women, too, for the rest o' your life!

Cates—[Straightening up to a sitting posture—his small eyes staring at the box fascinatedly—in a stupid mumble.] Aye—aye—rum and wine!

Bartlett—[Half closing his eyes as if the better to enjoy his vision.] Yes, rum and wine and women for you and Horne and Jimmy. No more hard work on the dirty sea for ye, bullies, but a full pay-day in your pockets to spend each day o' the year. [The

three strain their ears, listening eagerly. Even Butler and Abel advance a step or two toward him, as if they, too, were half hypnotized.] And Cates grumbling because he's thirsty! I'd be the proper one to complain—if complainin' there was to do! Ain't I lost my ship and the work o' two years with her? And what have ye lost, all three, but a few rags o' clothes? [With savage emphasis.] I tell ye, I be glad the Triton went down! [He taps the box with his fingers.] They's more in this than ever was earned by all the whalin' ships afloat. They's gold—heavy and solid—and diamonds and emeralds and rubies!—red and green, they be.

Cates—[Licking his lips.] Aye, I seen 'em there—and emeralds be green, I know, and sell for a ton of gold!

Bartlett—[As if he hadn't heard and was dreaming out loud to himself.] Rum and wine for you three, and rest for me. Aye, I'll rest to home 'til the day I die. Aye, woman, I be comin' home now for good. Aye, Nat and Sue, your father be comin' home for the rest o' his life! No more stinkin' blubber on the deck. I'll give up whalin' like ye've always been askin' me, Sarah. Aye, I'll go to meetin' with ye on a Sunday like ye've always prayed I would. We'll make the damn neighbors open their eyes, curse 'em! Carriages and silks for ye—they'll be nothin' too good—and for Sue and the boy. I've been dreamin' o' this in my sleep for years. I never give a damn 'bout the oil—that's just trade—but I always hoped on some voyage I'd pick up ambergris—a whole lot of it—and that's worth gold!

Horne—[His head bobbing up from his chest—drowsily.] Aye, ambergris! It's costly truck.

Butler—[In a whisper to the boy—cautiously.] There! Wasn't I right? Mad as hatters, all of 'em! Come on away!

Abel—[Staring at the Captain fascinatedly.] No. I wanter see 'em open it.

Butler—Look out! You'll be going batty yourself, first thing you know. [But he also stays.]

Bartlett—[His voice more and more that of a somnambulist.] It's time I settled down to home with ye, Sarah, after twenty years o' whalin'. They's plenty o' big trees on my place, bullies, and shade and green grass, and a cool wind off the sea. [He shakes off the growing drowsiness and glares about him in a rage.] Hell's fire! What crazy truck be I thinkin' of? [But he and the others sink back immediately into stupor. After a pause he begins to relate a tale in a droning voice.] Years ago, when I was whalin' out o' New Bedford—just after I got my first ship, it was—a man come to me—Spanish-looking, he was—and wanted to charter my ship and me go shares. He showed me a map o' some island off the coast of South America somewhere. They was a cross marked on it where treasure had been buried by the old pirates. That was what he said. But I was a fool. I didn't believe him. I didn't see's I could take a chance. He got old Scott's schooner—finally. She sailed and never was heard o' since. But I've never forgot him and his map. And often I've thought if I'd 'a' went that vige—— [He straightens up and shouts with aggressive violence.] But here she be! Run right into it—without no map nor nothin'. Gold and diamonds and all—all them things he said was there—there they be in front o' our eyes! [To the now alert Jimmy.] Open 'er up, Jimmy!

Jimmy—[Getting up—in his soft voice.] Aye, Captain. [He reaches down to lift the lid.]

Bartlett—[A sudden change of feeling comes over him, and he knocks Jimmy's arm aside savagely.] Hands off, ye dog! I'm takin' care o' this chest, and no man's hand's goin' to touch it but mine!

Jimmy—[Stepping back docilely—in the same unmoved, soft tone.] Aye, Captain. [He squats down to the left of the chest.]

Bartlett—[Seeming suddenly to notice the cook for the first time.] So there you be, eh? [His voice growing thick with rage.] I ain't forgot what ye said down by the shore there! Lucky for ye I didn't catch ye then! "Brass and copper—junk," ye

said—"not gold! Not worth a damn," ye said! Ye blasted son o' a liar! No share for ye! I'll not forget. And keep your distance o' me if ye want your hide! [Looking at Abel.] Ye've been tellin' that boy your lies too, I kin tell by the look o' him. [Sternly.] Come here, boy!

Abel—[Advances with faltering steps.] Y-yes, s-sir?

Bartlett—Open up that chest! Open it up, ye brat! [With a desperate movement of fear Abel reaches down and flings open the lid of the chest. As he does so, Bartlett's huge hand fastens on the collar of his coat, and holds him with face bent over the box. Horne, Cates, and Jimmy Kanaka pull themselves close, their necks craning for a look inside. Butler takes a few steps toward them.]

Butler—[In a low uncertain tone.] Maybe I was wrong, Captain Bartlett, sir.

Bartlett—[Shaking the terror-stricken boy.] What d'ye see there, ye little swab? What d'ye see there?

Abel—Aw—leggo—I'm chokin'!

Bartlett—[Grimly.] Ye'll choke in earnest if ye don't answer me. What d'ye see? Is it gold? Answer me—is it gold?

Abel—[Stutteringly.] Yes—sure—gold—I see it!

Bartlett—[Thrusts him away. The boy staggers and falls to the sand. Bartlett turns to Butler triumphantly.] Ye see, ye liar? Gold! Gold! Even a child can tell it at a look. [With a sombre menace in his tone.] But ye—don't believe—do ye?

Butler—[Frightenedly.] Maybe I was wrong, sir. I—didn't—look very careful.

Bartlett—Come here! [He stands up, his back against the tree.] Come here!

Butler—Yes, sir. [But he looks about him shiftily, as if to run away.]

Bartlett—Jimmy! [The Kanaka leaps to his feet.] Knife him, Jimmy, if he tries to run.

Jimmy—[His hand goes to his knife, his dark eyes lighting up with savagery—in his

soft voice.] Aye, Captain!

Bartlett—[To the trembling cook.] Come here!

Butler—[Goes to him with the courage of desperation.] Yes, sir.

Bartlett—[Pointing to the contents of the chest.] Is it gold—or not?

Butler—If I can feel of one——

Bartlett—Pick one up.

Butler—[Picks up a heavy anklet encrusted with colored glass, looks at it for a minute—then feigning great assurance.] I was wrong, Captain. It's gold all right enough—worth all kinds of money, I bet.

Bartlett—[With mad triumph.] Ha! Ye've come to your senses, have ye? Too late, ye swab! No share for ye! And here's to teach ye for lyin' to me before! [His fist jerks out from his side, and Butler is knocked sprawling on the sand, where he lies groaning for a moment, the anklet still clutched in his hand. The boy gives a gasp of fright and scampers off, left.]

Bartlett—That'll learn ye! [He sits down beside the chest. The others crouch close. Bartlett shoves in both of his hands—in a tone of mad gloating.] Gold! Better'n whaling, ain't she, boys? Better'n ambergris, even if I ever had luck to find any! [Butler staggers to his feet. He examines the anklet with contemptuous scorn and even bites it to make sure. Then he edges stealthily toward the left. A sudden transformation comes over his face and he glowers at the Captain with hatred, his features distorted with fury.]

Jimmy Kanaka—[Pointing to Butler.] He got him, Captain!

Bartlett—[Glancing at the cook with contemptuous scorn.] Sneakin' away with that piece o' the gold, be ye? Ye thievin' swine! Ye know right enough it's gold now, don't ye? Well, ye kin keep it—for your share for speakin' the truth that once.

Horne—[His cupidity protesting.] Don't give it to him, sir! It's so much the less for

us that worked for it when he did nothin'!

Butler—[Overcome by hysterical rage—stammering.] Who asked you for it—eh? Who—wants the dam thing? Not me! No! You damned lunatics! You oughter all be in the asylum? [Holding the anklet out contemptuously.] Gold? Ha-ha! This junk? I just bit it to make sure. Gold? Brass, that's what—and pieces of glass! Junk! Not worth a dam. Here! Take it! You can have it! [He flings it on the sand before them. Bartlett snatches it up protectingly.]

Bartlett—[In a frenzy.] Jimmy! [But Butler runs off left with a terrified cry. Jimmy springs to his feet and stands with his hand on his knife, waiting for a further order.]

Jimmy—[Eagerly.] I go catch—go stick him, Captain?

Bartlett—[Pausing—with a frown.] No. They's time enough for that—if need be. Sit down. [Jimmy sits down again with a childish air of sulking. Bartlett stares at the treasure, continuing to frown, as if Butler's action had made him uneasy, bewildered and confused him. He mutters half to himself.] Queer! Queer! He threw it back as if 'twas a chunk of mud! He knew—and yet he said he didn't want it. Junk, he called it—and he knows it's gold! He said 'twas gold himself a second back. He's queer. Why would he say junk when he knows it's gold? D'ye think—he don't believe?

Horne—He was mad because you knocked him down.

Bartlett—[Shaking his head grimly.] It ain't the first time I've knocked him down; but he never spoke up to me—like that—before. No, it's somethin' else is wrong with him—somethin'.

Horne—No share for him, you told him sir. That's what wrong with him.

Bartlett—[Again shaking his head.] No. His eyes—It's somethin' he's got in his head—somethin' he's hidin'! His share—maybe he thinks he'll get his share anyway, in spite o' us! Maybe he thinks his share wouldn't be all he wants! Maybe he thinks we'll die o' hunger and thirst before we get picked up—and that he'll live—and then—he'll come in for the whole chestful! [Suddenly springing to his

feet in a rage, convinced that he has found the truth.] Hell's fire! That's it, bullies! That's his sneakin' plan! To watch us die—and steal it from us!

Cates—[Rising to his knees and shaking his hand threateningly above his head.] Tell Jimmy to knife him, sir! Tell Jimmy—I ain't got a knife, or I'd do it myself. [He totters weakly to his feet.]

Jimmy—[Eagerly.] You speak, I stick him, Captain. I stick boy, too.

Cates—[Weakening.] I'm weak, but I kin do for him yet. I'm weak—— [His knees sag under him. He pleads piteously.] If I'd only a drink to put some strength in me! If I'd only a sup o' water, I'd do for him! [Turning, as if to stagger down toward the beach.] There must be water. Let's look again. I'll go look—— [But the effort he makes is too much for his strength and he falls to the sand, panting with open mouth.]

Bartlett—[Summoning his strength—sternly.] Put a clapper on that jaw of yours, Cates, or I'll do it for ye!

Cates—[Blubbering.] If we don't find water—he'll watch us die.

Jimmy—[Insinuatingly.] Better me knife cook fella—kill boy, too!

Bartlett—Will killin' 'em give us drink, ye fools? [After a pause, he shakes his head as if to drive off some thought, and mutters.] No more o' that! [Suddenly, in a tone of sharp command.] No more o' that, I say! We're keepin' no right watch for ships. Go aloft on that tree, Jimmy—and damn quick! Take a look and see if ye can sight a sail. [Kanaka shins quickly up the bole of the coco palm to the top and looks out on all sides of him. The others rise painfully to their feet and gaze up at him with awakened hope.]

Jimmy—[Suddenly, in a glad voice.] I see um—see sail, Captain.

Cates—[Waving his arms frenziedly.] Sail—ho!

Jimmy—Look plenty like trade schooner, Captain. She no change course she fetch

plenty close by here. She make full sail, she got plenty fella wind out there, she come quick.

Horne—[Clapping Cates on the back.] Headin' straight for us, Cates, d'you hear?

Bartlett—How far d'ye reckon she be?

Jimmy—She's five, six fella mile, Captain.

Bartlett—Come down. [The Islander slides down. Bartlett exclaims exultantly.] Didn't I tell ye? In the nick o' time. When she makes in close we'll go down to the reef and yell and wave at her. They'll see! The luck's with us today! [His eyes fall on the treasure and he starts.] But now—what's to do with this chest—the gold?

Horne—[Quickly.] You ain't going to tell them on the schooner about it?

Cates—They'd claim to share with us.

Horne—More like they'd steal it and knife us in the bargain. I know the kind on them schooners.

Bartlett—[Scornfully.] D'ye think I'm cracked? No, we'll bury it here.

Cates—[Regretfully.] Leave it behind for anyone to find?

Bartlett—We'll bury it deep, where hell itself won't find it—and we'll make a map o' this island. [He takes a sheet of paper and a stub of pencil from his pocket—pointing to the foot of the tree.] Dig a hole here—you, Horne and Jimmy—and dig it deep. [The two head down and commence to hollow out the sand with their hands. Bartlett draws on the paper.] There's the lagoon—and the reef—and here's this tree—the only one on the island—'twould be hard to miss. [To Cates, who is peering over his shoulder.] And here where the tree is, d'ye see, Cates, I'll make a cross where the gold is hid.

Horne—[Over his shoulder, without ceasing his work.] How d'ye know the lay o' this island—to find it again?

Bartlett—By the last reckonin' o' the Triton's. It's writ on a page I tore from the

log-book. And from there we headed due north in the boat, unless the compass lied—four days—a hundred and fifty miles, I reckon. [Exultantly.] Oh, all hell'd not stop me from findin' this place again when I know the gold's here. Let us once get home and I'll fit out a small schooner the four of us can sail, and we'll come back here to dig it up. It won't be long, I swear to ye!

Horne—[Straightening up.] This deep enough, sir?

Bartlett—It looks to be.

Jimmy—[Who has straightened up and is looking off left—suddenly points excitedly.] He look, Captain! Cook fella, he look here! Boy he look, too! They look plenty too much, Captain! [All four stand staring off at Butler and the boy, whose presence on the island they have forgotten in their mad excitement.]

Cates—[In stupid dismay.] They'll know where it's hid, sir!

Horne—They'll tell 'em on the schooner!

Cates—[Wildly.] We've got to do for 'em, Captain! Gimme your knife, Jimmy—your knife—— [He stumbles toward the Islander, who pushes him aside brusquely, looking questioningly toward the Captain.]

Bartlett—[Who has been standing motionless, as if stunned by this forgotten complication—slowly.] There they be watchin' us, the sneakin' dogs! Sit down, an' they won't see. [They all squat in the sand.] I was forgettin' they was here. [Striking his knee with clenched fist.] We've got to do somethin' damn quick! That schooner'll be up soon where they kin sight her—and they'll wave and yell then—and she'll see 'em!

Horne—And good-bye to the gold for us!

Jimmy—[Eagerly.] You say fella word, Captain, me kill um quick. They no make plenty cry for schooner! They keep damn still plenty too much!

Bartlett—[Looking at the Islander with mad cunning but replying only to Horne.]

Aye, it's good-bye to the gold, Horne. That scum of a cook—he's made a mock o' us—sayin' it wasn't gold when he knew it was—he'll tell 'em—he'll get joy o' tellin' 'em!

Horne—And that scrub of a boy—he's no better. He'll be in with him neck and crop.

Cates—[Hoarsely.] Knife 'em—and be done with it—I say!

Bartlett—Or, if they don't tell the schooner's skipper it'll only be because they're plannin' to come back themselves—before we kin—and dig it up. That cook—there's somethin' queer in his mind—somethin' he was hidin'—pretendin' not to believe. What d'ye think, Horne?

Horne—I think—time's gettin' short—and talkin' won't do no good. [Insinuatingly.] They'd do for us soon enough if they was able.

Bartlett—Aye, murder was plain in his eyes when he looked at me.

Horne—[Lowering his voice to a whisper.] Tell Jimmy—Captain Bartlett—is what I say!

Bartlett—It's agin the law, Silas Horne!

Horne—The law don't reach to this island.

Bartlett—[Monotonously.] It's against the law a captain's sworn to keep wherever he sails. They ain't refused duty—nor mutinied.

Horne—Who'll know they ain't? They're trying to steal what's yours—that's worse'n mutiny. [As a final persuasion.] And Jimmy's a nigger—and under no laws. And he's stronger'n you are. You couldn't stop 'im.

Bartlett—Aye—I couldn't prevent——

Jimmy—[Eagerly.] I fix um, Captain, they no tell! [Bartlett doesn't answer, but stares at the treasure. Horne makes violent motions to Jimmy to go. The Islander stares at his master's face. Then, seeming to read the direct command there, he

grunts with satisfaction, and pulling his knife from it's sheath, he goes stealthily off left. Cates raises himself on his haunches to watch the Islander's movements. Horne and Bartlett sit still in a strained immobility, their eyes on the chest.]

Cates—[In an excited whisper.] I see 'em! They're sittin' with their backs this way! [A slight pause.] There's Jimmy. He's crawlin' on his hands behind 'em. They don't notice—he's right behind—almost atop o' them. [A pause. Cates gives a fiendish grunt.] Ugh! [Butler's muffled cry comes from the left.] Right in the middle of the back! The cook's done! The boy's runnin'! [There is a succession of quick screams from the boy, the padding of feet running toward them, the fall of a body, and the boy's dying groan.]

Horne—[With satisfaction.] It's done, sir!

Bartlett—[Slowly.] I spoke no word, remember that, Silas Horne!

Horne—[Cunningly.] Nor me neither, sir. Jimmy took it on himself. If blame there is—and who'd blame him for it?—it's on him.

Bartlett—[Gloomily.] I spoke no word! [Jimmy returns noiselessly from the left.]

Jimmy—[Grinning with savage pride.] I fix um fella plenty, Captain. They no tell. They no open mouth plenty too much!

Cates—[Maudlinly.] You're a man, Jimmy—a man with guts to him—even if you're a—— [He babbles incoherently.]

Jimmy—[As the Captain does not look at him.] I go climb fella tree, Captain? I make look for schooner?

Bartlett—[Rousing himself with an effort.] Yes—go up. [The Islander climbs the tree.]

Horne—[Getting to his feet—eagerly.] Where away, Jimmy?

Jimmy—She come, Captain, she come plenty quick.

Horne—[Looking in the direction Jimmy indicates.] I kin see her tops'ls from here,

sir. Look!

Bartlett—[Getting to his feet—stares out to sea.] Aye! There she be—and makin' towards us fast. [In a flash his sombre preoccupation is gone, and he is commander once more. He puts the anklet in his hand into his coat pocket—harshly.] Come down out o' that? They's work to do. [Jimmy clambers down.] Did ye leave—them—lyin' in plain sight on the open sand?

Jimmy—Yes. I no touch um, Captain.

Bartlett—Then ye'll touch 'em now. Go, bury 'em, cover 'em up with sand. And mind ye make a good job o' it that none'll see. Jump now!

Jimmy—[Obediently.] I go, Captain. [He hurries off left.]

Bartlett—Down to the reef with ye, Horne! [Giving the prostrate Cates a kick.] Up out o' that, Cates! Go with Horne, and when ye see the schooner hull up, wave to 'em, and yell like mad, d'ye hear?

Horne—Aye, aye, sir!

Bartlett—I'll stay here and bury the gold. It's best to be quick about it! They may turn a spyglass on us when they raise the island from deck! Off with ye! [He gives Cates another kick.]

Cates—[Groaning.] I'm sick! [Incoherently.] Can't—report for duty—this watch. [With a shout.] Water!

Bartlett—[Contemptuously.] Ye dog! Give him a hand, Horne.

Horne—[Putting a hand under his shoulder.] Up, man! We're to signal the schooner. There'll be water on board o' her—barrels of it!

Cates—[Aroused, scrambles to his feet, violently shaking off Horne's hand.] Water aboard o' her! [His staring eyes catch the schooner's sails on the horizon. He breaks into a staggering run and disappears down toward the beach, right rear, waving his arms wildly and shouting.] Ahoy! Ahoy! Water! [Horne walks out quickly after

him.] [Left alone, Bartlett, after a quick glance around, sinks on his knees beside the chest and shoves both hands into it. From the chest comes a metallic clink as he fingers the pieces in his hands gloatingly.] Ye're safe now! There's none to tell left livin'! He's dead—damn him!—that lied about ye. And ye'll rest safe here till I come back for ye! [In a dreaming tone, his eyes fixed before him in an ecstatic vision.] No more whalin' on the dirty seas! Rest to home! Gold! I've been dreamin' o' it all my life! Aye—we'll rest now, Sarah! Your father be a rich man, Nat and Sue! [Shaking himself—savagely.] Ye fool! What drivel be ye talkin'? Loosin' your senses, be ye? Time ye was picked up! Lucky! [He shoves down the lid and places the chest in the hole. He pushes the sand in on top of it, whispering hoarsely.] Lay safe, d'ye hear. For I'll be back for ye! Aye—in spite of hell I'll dig ye up again! [The voices of Horne and Jimmy can be heard from the distance shouting as

[The Curtain Falls]

ACT TWO

Scene—Interior of an old boat-shed on the wharf of the Bartlett place on the California coast. In the rear, a double doorway looking out over the end of the wharf to the bay with the open sea beyond. On the left, two windows, and another door, opening on the dock. Near this door, a cot with blankets and a pillow without a slip. In the center, front, a table with a bottle and glasses on it, and three cane-bottomed chairs. On the right, a fishing dory. Here and there about the shed all sorts of odds and ends pertaining to a ship—old anchors, ropes, tackle, paint-pots, old spars, etc.

It is late afternoon of a day six months later. Sunlight filters feebly through the stained, cobwebby window panes.

As the curtain rises, Bartlett and Silas Horne are discovered. Horne is in working clothes of paint-stained dungaree. If his sufferings on the island have left any marks on his dry wizened face, they are undiscoverable. In Bartlett, however, the evidence

is marked. His hair has turned white. There are deep hollows under his cheek-bones. His jaw and tight-lipped mouth, express defiant determination, as if he were fighting back some weakness inside himself, a weakness found in his eyes, which have something in them of fear, of a wishing to avoid other eyes. He is dressed much the same as when on the island. He sits by the table, center, his abstracted gaze bent on the floor before him.

Horne—[Who is evidently waiting for the Captain to my something—after a pause, glancing at him uneasily.] I'd best be gettin' back aboard the schooner, sir. [Receiving no answer he starts for the door on the left.]

Bartlett—[Rousing himself with an effort.] Wait. [After a pause.] The full tide's at dawn tomorrow, ye said?

Horne—Yes, sir.

Bartlett—They know we'll be sailin' then, don't they—Cates and Jimmy?

Horne—Yes, sir. They're all ready. Oh, Cates and Jimmy'll be glad o' the word—and me, too, sir. [With a greedy grin.] It's all we've been talkin' of since ye brought us down here—diggin' up the gold!

Bartlett—[Passionately.] Aye, the gold! We'll have it before long, now, I reckon. That schooner—the way we've fitted her up—she'd take a man safe to the Pole and back! We'll drop anchor here with the chest on board in six months, unless——[Hesitates.]

Horne—[Uneasily.] What, sir?

Bartlett—[Brusquely.] The weather, ye fool! Can ye take count before o' storms an' calms?

Horne—We'll trust to luck for that. [Glancing at the Captain curiously.] And speakin' o' luck, sir—the schooner ain't been christened yet.

Bartlett—[Betraying a sudden, fierce determination.] She will be!

Horne—There'd be no luck for a ship sailin' out without a name.

Bartlett—She'll have a name, I tell ye! A name that'll take all curse away and leave her clean. She'll be named the Sarah Allen, and Sarah'll christen her herself.

Horne—It oughter been done, by rights, when we launched her a month back.

Bartlett—[Sternly.] I know that as well as ye. [After a pause.] She wasn't willin' to do it then. Women has queer notions—when they're sick, like. [Defiantly—as if he were addressing someone outside of the room.] But Sarah'll be willin' now! She'll be willin' in spite o'—— [Catching himself and abruptly lowering his voice.] The schooner'll be christened tomorrow at dawn afore she sails.

Horne—Yes, sir. [He again turns to go, as if he were anxious to get away.]

Bartlett—Wait! There's somethin' else I want to ask ye. Nat, he's been hangin' round the schooner all his spare time o' late. I seen him talkin' to you and Cates and Jimmy. [With rising anger.] I hope ye've remembered what I ordered ye, all three. Not a word o' it to him! I said I'd keep him out o' this, for his own good, mind! And if I thought any of ye—— [His fist is raised threateningly, and he glares savagely at Horne.]

Horne—[Retreating a step—hastily.] No fear o' that, sir! We've been keerful. But it's hard. He's a sharp one, Nat is. And when we tells him the schooner's fitted out for tradin' in the islands, he just laughs. He's gettin' the wind on somethin'—without any o' us sayin' a word.

Bartlett—[In relieved tones.] Let him s'spect all he's a mind to—as long as he don't know. It ain't that I'm afeerd to tell him o' the gold, Silas Horne. He'll share that, anyway. [Slowly.] It's them—other things—I'd keep him clear of.

Horne—[Immediately guessing what he means—reassuringly.] We was all out o' our heads with thirst and sun when them things happened, sir.

Bartlett—Mad? Aye! But I ain't forgot—them two. [Harshly.] I'd rather be you nor

me, Silas Horne. You be too rotten bad to care. And I'd rather be Cates or Jimmy. Cates be too dull to remember, and Jimmy be proud as a boy o' what he done. [He represses a shudder—then goes on slowly.] Do they ever come back to you—when you're asleep, I mean?

Horne—[Pretending mystification.] Who's that, sir?

Bartlett—[With sombre emphasis.] That cook and that boy. They come to me. I'm gettin' to be afeered o' goin' to sleep—not 'feered o' them, I don't mean. [With sudden defiant bravado.] Not all the ghosts out o' hell kin keep me from a thing I've set my mind on. [Collecting himself.] But I've waked up talkin' out loud—to them—and I'm afeerd there might be someone hear me. That's why I've been sleepin' down here to the boat-house all alone.

Horne—[Uneasily—with an attempt to be reassuring.] You ain't all cured o' that sun and thirst on the island yet, sir.

Bartlett—[Evidently reassured—roughly.] O' course! D'ye think I'd really believe in things in nightmares? [With an attempt at conviviality.] Sit down a bit, Horne, and take a grog. [Horne does so. Bartlett pours out a half-tumbler full of rum for himself and shoves the bottle over to Horne.]

Horne—Luck to our vige, sir.

Bartlett—Aye, luck! [They drink. Bartlett leans over and taps Horne on the arm.] Aye, it takes time to get cured o' thirst and sun! Lucky that tradin' schooner picked us up the time she did.

Horne—If she hadn't—we'd been as dead men—as them two.

Bartlett—[Somberly—after a pause.] I spoke no word, Silas Horne, d'ye remember?

Horne—Nor me. Jimmy did it alone. [Craftily.] We'd all three swear Bible oaths to that in any court. And even if ye'd given the word, there ain't no good thinkin' more o' it, sir. Didn't they deserve all they got—that thief o' a cook and that boy? Wasn't

they plottin' on the sly to steal the gold?

Bartlett—[His eyes gleaming.] Aye!

Horne—And when you said he'd get no share of it, didn't he lie to your face that it wasn't gold—thinkin' we'd leave it be and he'd git it all for himself?

Bartlett—[With sudden rage.] Aye, brass and junk, he said, the lyin' scum! That's what he keeps sayin' when I see him in sleep! He didn't believe—makin' a mock o' me—an' then he owned up himself 'twas gold! He knew! He lied a-purpose! He was a cunnin' rat—a thief ashore afore they shipped him with us, I reckon.

Horne—[Eagerly.] Most like, sir.

Bartlett—[Rising to his feet—with confident defiance.] They deserved no better nor they got. Let 'em rot! [Pouring out another drink for himself and Horne.] We'll drink, an' then ye get back to the ship. Tell Cates and Jimmy we sail at dawn—sure! [He drinks.]

Horne—Luck, sir! [He drinks. There is a knock at the door on the left followed by Mrs. Bartlett's voice calling feebly, "Isaiah! Isaiah!" Bartlett starts but makes no answer. He seems suddenly sunk in gloom again. Horne turns to him questioningly.] It's Mrs. Bartlett, sir. Shall I open the door?

Bartlett—No. I ain't aimin' to see her—yet awhile. [Then with sudden reasonless rage.] Let her in, damn ye! [Horne goes and unhooks the door. Mrs. Bartlett enters. She is a slight, slender little woman of fifty. Sickness, or the inroads of a premature old age, have bowed her shoulders, whitened her hair, and forced her to walk feebly with the aid of a cane. A resolute spirit still flashes from her eyes, however, and there is a look of fixed determination on her face. She stands gazing at her husband. There is something accusing in her stare.]

Bartlett—[Avoiding her eyes—brusquely.] Well? What is it ye want o' me, Sarah?

Mrs. B.—I want to speak with you alone, Isaiah.

Horne—I'll be gettin' back aboard, sir. [Starts to go.]

Bartlett—[In a tone almost of fear.] Wait. I'm goin' with ye. [Turning to his wife—with a certain rough tenderness.] Ye oughtn't to walk down the hill here, Sarah. The doctor told ye to rest in the house and save your strength.

Mrs. B.—I want to speak to you alone, Isaiah. You never come to home no more, hardly, so I had to come to ye. [Accusingly.] You know it ain't walkin' is sappin' my strength, Isaiah.

Bartlett—[Very uneasily.] I've got to work on the schooner, Sarah. That's why I've no time to home.

Mrs. B.—She'll be sailin' soon?

Bartlett—[Suddenly turning on her defiantly.] Tomorrow at dawn!

Mrs. B.—[With her eyes fired accusingly on his.] And you be goin' with her?

Bartlett—[In the same defiant tone.] Yes, I be! Who else'd captain her?

Mrs. B.—On a craft without a name.

Bartlett—She'll have that name.

Mrs. B.—No.

Bartlett—She'll have that name, I tell ye.

Mrs. B.—No.

Bartlett—[Thoroughly aroused, his will tries to break hers, but finds her unbending. He mutters menacingly.] Ye'll see! We'll talk o' that later, you and me. [With sudden apprehension.] But not now. They's plenty o' time yet for that. Come on, Horne, we'll get aboard. [Without a further glance at his wife he strides past her and disappears through the doorway, followed by Horne. Mrs. Bartlett sinks down in the chair by the table. She appears suddenly weak and crushed. Then from outside comes a girl's laughing voice. Mrs. Bartlett does not seem to hear, nor to notice Sue and Drew when they enter. Sue is a slender, pretty girl of about twenty, with large

blue eyes, reddish-brown hair, and a healthy, sun-tanned, out-of-door complexion. In spite of the slightness of her figure there is a suggestion of great vitality and nervous strength about her. Drew is a well-set-up, tall young fellow of thirty. Not in any way handsome, his boyish face, tanned to a deep brown, possesses an engaging character of healthy, cheerful forcefullness that has its compelling charm. There would be no chance of mistaking him for anything but the ship's officer he is. It is written on his face, his walk, his voice, his whole bearing.]

Sue—[As they enter.] He'll either be here or on the schooner, Danny. [Then she sees her mother, with startled amazement.] Ma! Good heavens, what are you doing here? [Throwing her arms around her neck and kissing her.] Don't you know you shouldn't——

Mrs. B.—[With a start—turning to her daughter with a forced smile.] There, Sue, now! Don't go scoldin' me. [Then seeing Drew—in a tone of forced gaiety.] And if there ain't Danny Drew—back home to port at last! You can kiss an old woman, Danny—without makin' her jealous, I reckon.

Drew—[Kissing her—with a smile.] I don't know about that, Ma Bartlett. [Heartily.] It certainly seems good to see you again—and be back again myself.

Mrs. B.—We've been expectin' you right along this past month. Then we read in the paper t'other day where your ship'd reached San Francisco, and we knew you'd be down any day. Sue's been on pins and needles ever since.

Sue—[Protestingly.] Ma!

Drew—We were delayed in Valparaiso, waiting for cargo. [With a grin.] It's a long time to be away from Sue—four months.

Sue—[Laughing.] It seems more like four years!

Drew—You remember, Ma, I left just after the big excitement here—when Captain Bartlett turned up after we'd all heard the Triton was wrecked and given him up for lost. That was sure a wonderful surprise when he walked into the house that day.

Mrs. B.—[Her face clouding—in a tone of deep sorrow.] Yes. [Drew is surprised and glances at Sue questioningly. She sighs. Mrs. Bartlett gets to her feet with difficulty, assisted by Drew. She forces a smile.] I've taken on a third leg since you was here, Danny!

Sue—We'll help you back to the house. You can't climb that steep hill alone.

Mrs. B.—Shucks! I'm sick o' the house. I need sun and fresh air, and today's so nice I couldn't stay indoors. I'll take your arm to hold on to, Danny. No, I ain't goin' up to the house yet awhile, so don't you try to bully me into it, Sue. I'm goin' to set in the shade o' this shed out on the wharf and watch your Pa workin' on the schooner. Ain't much time left to see her, Sue. They're sailin' tomorrow at dawn, your Pa says.

Sue—Tomorrow? Then—you're going to christen her?

Mrs. B.—[With grim determination.] No, I ain't, Sue! [Catching Drew's glance fixed on her with puzzled curiosity, she immediately attempts to resume her joking tone.] Shucks! Here's Danny wonderin' what silliness we're talkin' of. It's just this, Danny. Captain Bartlett, he's got a crazy notion in his head that just because his ship was wrecked last vige he'll give up whalin' for life. He's fitted out this little schooner for tradin' in the Islands. More money in that, he says. But I don't agree with no such lunatic notions, and I'm just that stubborn I'm not goin' to set my approval on his craziness by christenin' his ship with my name, like he wants me to. He'd ought to stick to whalin,' like he's done all his life. Don't you think so, Danny?

Drew—[Embarrassed.] Why, sure—he's rated one of the smartest whaling skippers here on the coast—and I should think——

Mrs. B.—Just what I tell him—only he's that stubborn. I'd best get out quick while it's still sunny and warm. It's damp in here for an old body. [Drew helps her to the door on the left, opens it, and the two go out, followed by Sue, who carries a chair.

After a pause, Sue and Drew return. Sue carefully shuts the door after them. Her face is troubled.]

Drew—[Looks at her for a minute, then comes and puts his arm around her and kisses her.] What's the trouble, Sue?

Sue—[Trying to force a smile.] Nothing, Danny.

Drew—Oh, yes there is! No use putting me off that way. Why, I've felt it hanging about in the air ever since I first looked at your mother.

Sue—Yes, she's failed terribly since you saw her last.

Drew—Oh, I don't mean just sickness—only—did you notice how she had to—force herself—to joke about things? She used to be so cheerful natural. [Scratching his head in honest puzzlement.] But—that ain't what I mean, either. What is it, Sue? Maybe I can help somehow. You look worried, too. Pshaw! You can tell me, can't you?

Sue—Why, yes, Danny—of course—if I could tell—only I'm just as puzzled as you over what it comes from.

Drew—[Persuasively.] Well, you sit down and tell me what's happened since I've been away. Then maybe we can put our heads together and figure out what's wrong, and turn to get things ship-shape again. [Sue sits down but does not speak. Drew remarks as if to get her started.] That schooner's a smart little craft for sailing, I should say. I didn't notice no one about working, though.

Sue—No. They're probably below in the cabin, drinking. That's all they've been doing lately. The schooner's been ready to sail for two weeks—but Pa has kept waiting—I don't know what for. Yes, I do know, too—I think I guess. He's been waiting for Ma to give in and christen the ship with her name. But she won't give in. You heard her.

Drew—Well, I suppose she does take it to heart that he'd give up the business he's

been in all his life to go in for something new—at his age.

Sue—He mortgaged the house to get money to buy and fit out this schooner. You know he lost most everything when the Triton was wrecked. He'd only had her two years, and she cost him a pile of money. Then, too, he's lost a lot all his life—since he and Ma moved out here from the East—investing in all sorts of silly mining ventures—gold mines that always turned out to be only holes in the ground. As far back as I can remember he's never seemed to care about the whaling business—the oil. Ambergris was what he was after. Finding one chunk of that meant more to him than a full cargo of oil.

Drew—[With a grin.] "Old Ambergris." That's what they call him along the coast—behind his back, of course. I reckon he was sort of prospecting the Pacific Ocean looking for an ambergris mine. [Apologetically.] Sounds as if I was making fun of him, but you remember how you'n' me 'n' Nat used to laugh about it together.

Sue—It's past a laughing matter now, Danny.

Drew—And what do you reckon the real trouble is?

Sue—Something between him and Ma—something that only the two of them know. It all seemed to start one morning after you'd left—about a week after he'd come home with those three awful men. During that first week he acted all right—just like he used to—only he'd get talking kind of wild now and then about being glad the Triton was lost, and promising we'd all be millionaires once he started making trips on the schooner. Ma didn't seem to mind his going in for trading then. Then, the night of the day he bought the schooner, something must have happened between them. Neither of them came down to breakfast. I went up to Ma, and found her so sick we sent for the doctor. He said she'd suffered a great shock of some kind, although she wouldn't tell him a word. I found Pa down in this shed. He'd moved that cot down here, and said he'd have to sleep here after that because he wanted to

be near the schooner. It's been that way ever since. He's slept down here and never come up to the house except at mealtimes. He's never been alone with Ma one second since then, I don't believe. And she—she's been trying to corner him, to get him alone. I've noticed it, although she does her best to hide it from Nat and me. And she's been failing, growing weaker and sicker looking every day. [Breaking down.] Oh, Danny, these last months have been terrible! I'm so glad you're back again.

Drew—[Soothing her.] There! It'll all come out right.

Sue—I'm sure that's why she's crept down here today. She's bound she'll see him alone before he sails.

Drew—Well, maybe it's for the best. Maybe when they've had it out, things'll clear up.

Sue—Yes, perhaps. But I can't help feeling—it'll only make it worse.

Drew—[Frowning.] Seems to me it must be all your Pa's fault, Sue—whatever it is. Have you tried to talk to him?

Sue—Yes—a good many times; but all he's ever said was: "There's things you wouldn't take interest in, Sue. You'll know when it's time to know."—and then he'd break off by asking me what I'd like most to have in the world if he had piles of money. And then, one time, he seemed to be terribly afraid of something, and he said to me: "You hustle up and marry Danny, Sue. You marry him and get out of this."

Drew—[With an affectionate grin.] That does sound crazy—any man wanting to get rid of you that way. [A note of entreaty in his voice.] But I surely wish you'd take his advice, Sue! [He kisses her.]

Sue—[With intense longing.] Oh, I wish I could, Danny.

Drew—I've quite considerable saved now, Sue, and it won't be so long before I get

my own ship, I'm hoping, now that I've got my master's certificate. I was hoping at the end of this voyage——

Sue—So was I, Danny—but it can't be this time. With Ma so weak, and no one to take care of her but me—— [Shaking her head—in a tone of decision.] I couldn't leave home now, Danny. It wouldn't be right. I couldn't feel really happy—until this thing—whatever it is—is settled between Pa and Ma and they're just as they used to be again. [Pleadingly.] You understand, don't you, Danny?

Drew—[Soberly.] Why—surely I do, Sue. [He pats her hand.] Only, it's hard waiting. [He sighs.]

Sue—I know. It's just as hard for me.

Drew—I thought maybe I could help; but this isn't anything anyone outside your family could mix in. [Sue shakes her head. He goes on gloomily after a pause.] What's the matter with Nat? Seems as if he ought to be able to step in and talk turkey to your Pa.

Sue—[Slowly.] You'll find Nat changed, too, Danny—changed terribly. He's caught the disease—whatever it is. You know how interested in his work he's been ever since they put him in the designing department down in the shipyard?

Drew—Yes.

Sue—[With emphasis.] Well, all that's changed. He hates it now, or at least he says he does. And when he comes home, he spends all his time prowling around the dock here, talking with those three awful men. And what do you think he told me only the other day? That he was bound he'd throw up his job and make this voyage on the schooner. He even asked me to ask Pa to let him go.

Drew—Your Pa doesn't want him to, eh?

Sue—Why, of course not! Leave a fine position he worked so hard to get just for this crazy notion! Pa'd never let him. He's even ordered him to keep off the

schooner and not to talk to those men.

Drew—Funny Nat'd like to go to sea. He's always seemed to want to fight shy of it.

Sue—The terrible part is, he's got Ma worried to death—as if she wasn't upset enough already. She's so afraid he'll go—that Pa'll let him at the last moment. She's always pleading with Nat not to think of it—so that he keeps out of her way, too. Poor Ma! She's only got me to talk to.

Drew—Maybe I can help after all. I can talk to Nat.

Sue—[Shaking her head.] He's not the same Nat, Danny.

Drew—[Trying to be consoling.] Pshaw, Sue! I think you just get to imagining things. [As he finishes speaking, the door in the rear opens and Nat appears. He is a tall, loose-framed boy of eighteen, who bears a striking resemblance to his father. His face, like his father's, is large and bony, with deep-set black eyes, an aquiline nose, and a wide, thin-lipped mouth. There is no suggestion in Nat, however, of the older man's physical health and great strength. He appears an indoor product, undeveloped in muscle, with a sallow complexion and stooped shoulders. His thick hair is a deep black. His voice recalls his father's, hollow and penetrating. He is dressed in a grey flannel shirt and corduroy trousers. Drew calls out to him, heartly.] Hello, Nat! Speak of the Devil! Sue and I were just talking about you. [He goes toward Nat, his hand outstretched.]

Nat—[Comes toward them, meets Drew, and shakes his hand with evident pleasure.] Hello, Danny! You're a sight for sore eyes! [His manner undergoes a sudden change. He casts a quick, suspicious glance from Drew to his sister.] You were talking about me? What about?

Sue—[Quickly—with a warning glance at Drew.] About your work down at the shipyard.

Nat—[Disgustedly.] Oh, that. [In a tone of reasonless irritation.] For God's sake, Sue, let me alone about my work. Don't I have to live with the damn thing all day,

without your shoving it in my face the minute I get home? I want to forget it—get away!

Drew—Go to sea, eh?

Nat—[Suspiciously.] Maybe. Why? What do you mean?

Drew—[Warned by a glance from Sue, says carelessly.] Well, that's where you'd be apt to go, isn't it?

Nat—[Suspiciously.] That isn't what you were thinking, Danny. [Turning to his sister—angrily.] What have you been telling Danny?

Sue—I was talking about the schooner—telling him that she sails tomorrow.

Nat—[Dumfounded.] Tomorrow? [Overcome by sudden, nervous excitement.] It can't be. How do you know? Who told you?

Sue—Ma. Pa told her.

Nat—Then she's been talking to him—telling him not to take me, I'll bet. [Angrily.] Oh, I wish Ma'd mind her own business!

Sue—Nat!

Nat—Well, Sue, how would you like it? I'm not a little boy any more. I know what I want to do. I want to go with them. I want to go more than I've ever wanted anything else in my life before. He—he doesn't want me. He's afraid I—But I think I can force him to—— [He glances at Drew's amazed face and stops abruptly—sullenly.] Where is Pa?

Sue—He's aboard the schooner.

Nat—[Disappointedly.] Then it's no good trying to see him now. I'll have to wait.

Drew—Sound's funny to hear you talking about going to sea. Why, you always used——

Nat—[Wearily.] I know. This is different.

Drew—You want to see the Islands, I suppose?

Nat—[Suspiciously.] Maybe. Why not?

Drew—What group is your Pa heading for first?

Nat—[More suspiciously.] You'll have to ask him. Why do you want to know? [Abruptly.] You better be getting up to the house, Sue—if we're to have any supper. Danny must be hungry. [He turns his back on them. They exchange meaning glances.]

Sue—[With a sigh.] It must be getting late. Come on, Danny. You can see Pa later on. [They go toward the door in the rear.] Aren't you coming, Nat?

Nat—No. I'll wait. [Impatiently.] Go ahead. I'll be up before long.

Drew—See you later, then, Nat.

Nat—Yes. [They go out, rear. Nat paces up and down in a great state of excitement. The door on the left is opened and Bartlett enters. His eyes are wild, as if he had been drinking heavily, but he shows no other effects. Father and son stand looking at one another for a second. Nat takes a step backward as if in fear, then straightens up defiantly.]

Bartlett—[Slowly.] Is this the way ye mind my orders, boy? I've told ye time an' again not to be sneakin' and spyin' around this wharf.

Nat—I'm not sneaking and spying. I wanted to talk to you, Pa.

Bartlett—[Sits down by the table.] Well, here I be.

Nat—Sue said the schooner sails tomorrow.

Bartlett—Aye!

Nat—[Resolutely.] I want to go with you, Pa.

Bartlett—[Briefly—as if dismissing the matter.] Ye can't. I've told ye that before. Let this be the last time ye ask it.

Nat—But why? Why can't I go?

Bartlett—Ye've your own work to do—good work. Attend to that and leave me to mine.

Nat—But you always wanted me to go on voyages to learn whaling with you.

Bartlett—This be different.

Nat—[With excited indignation.] Yes, this is different! Don't I know it? Do you think you can hide that from me? It is different, and that's why I want to go.

Bartlett—Ye can't, I say.

Nat—[Pleadingly.] But why not, Pa? I'm not a boy. I can do a man's work on a ship, or anywhere else.

Bartlett—[Roughly.] Let's have done with talk! Your place is here, with Sue and your Ma, and here you'll stay.

Nat—[Angrily.] That isn't any reason. But I know your real one. You're afraid——

Bartlett—[Half rising to his feet.] Ye say that to me? [Recovering himself with an effort and settling down again.] Keep a clapper on your jaw, boy. That's talk I'll not put up with. [With a touch of uneasiness—forcing a scornful laugh.] Afeerd! Afeerd o' what? Did ye ever know me to be afeerd?

Nat—Afraid of what I know, of what I might find out if I went with you.

Bartlett—[With the same forced, uneasy scorn.] And what d'ye think ye'd find out, Nat?

Nat—First of all that it's not a trading venture you're going on. Oh, I'm not a fool! That story is all right to fool the neighbors and girls like Sue. But I know better.

Bartlett—What d'ye know?

Nat—You're going for something else.

Bartlett—What would that be?

Nat—I don’t know—exactly. Something—on that island.

Bartlett—What?

Nat—I don’t know. But I could guess a lot of things. [With sudden excitement.] Ambergris! That’s it! Is that it? It must be. That’s what you’ve been hunting for years.

Bartlett—Aye—and never found! [He gets to his feet with a forced burst of laughter.] Ambergris! Ye fool of a boy! Ye got that notion out o’ some fool book ye’ve been reading, didn’t ye? And I thought ye’d growed to be a man! [More and more wild in his forced scorn.] Ye’ll be tellin’ me next it’s buried treasure I be sailin’ after—pirates’ gold buried on that island—all in a chest—and a map to guide me with a cross marked on it where the gold is hid! And then they be ghosts guardin’ it, ben’t they—spirits o’ murdered men? They always be, in the books. [He laughs scornfully.]

Nat—[Gazing at him with fascinated eyes.] No, not that last. That’s silly—but I did think you might have found—

Bartlett—[Laughing again.] Treasure? Gold? [With forced sternness.] Nat, I be ashamed of ye. Ye’ve had schoolin’, and ye’ve been doin’ a man’s work in the world, and doin’ it well, and I’d hoped ye’d take my place here to home when I be away, and look after your Ma and Sue. But ye’ve owned up to bein’ little better nor a boy in short britches, dreamin’ o’ pirates’ gold that never was ’cept in books.

Nat—But you—you’re to blame. When you first came home you did nothing but talk mysteriously of how rich we’d all be when the schooner got back.

Bartlett—[Roughly.] But what’s that to do with silly dreams? It’s in the line o’ trade I meant.

Nat—But why be so mysterious about trade? There’s something you’re hiding. You can’t say no because I feel it.

Bartlett—[Insinuatingly—with a crafty glance at his son.] Supposin' in one of them Eastern trading ports I'd run across a bit o' business with a chance for a fortune in it for a man that wasn't afeerd of the law, and could keep his mouth shut?

Nat—[Disappointed.] You mean illegal trading?

Bartlett—I mean what I mean, Nat—and I'd be a fool to tell an overgrown boy, or two women—or any man in the world, for the matter o' that—what I do mean.

Nat—[Turning toward the door in the rear—disgustedly.] If it's only that, I don't want to hear it. [He walks toward the door—stops and turns again to his father.] No, I don't believe it. That's not like you. You're not telling the truth, Pa.

Bartlett—[Rising to his feet—with a savage sternness in which there is a wild note of entreaty.] I've listened to your fool's talk enough. Get up to the house where ye belong! I'll stand no more o' your meddling in business o' mine. I've been patient with ye, but there's an end to that! Take heed o' what I'm sayin', if ye know what's good for ye! I'd rather see ye dead tonight than sail on that schooner at dawn. I'd kill ye with my own hands first! [With a sort of sombre pride.] I'll stand alone in this business and finish it out alone if I go to hell for it. Ye hear me?

Nat—[Alarmed by this outburst—submissively.] Yes, Pa.

Bartlett—Then see that ye heed. [After a pause—as Nat lingers.] They'll be waitin' for ye at the house.

Nat—All right. I'll go. [He turns to the doorway on the left, but before he gets to it, the door is pushed open and Mrs. Bartlett enters. Nat stops, startled.] Ma!

Mrs. Bartlett—[With a forced smile.] Run along, Nat. It's all right. I want to speak with your Pa.

Bartlett—[Uneasily.] Ye'd best go up with Nat, Sarah. I've work to do.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Fixing her eyes on her husband.] I want to talk with you alone, Isaiah.

Bartlett—[Grimly—as if he were accepting a challenge.] As ye like, then.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Dismissing Nat with a feeble attempt at a smile.] Tell Sue I'll be comin' up directly, Nat.

Nat—[Hesitates for a moment, looking from one to the other uneasily.] All right, Ma. [He goes out.]

Bartlett—[Waits for Nat to get out of hearing.] Won't ye set, Sarah? [She comes forward and sits by the table. He sits by the other side.]

Mrs. Bartlett—[Shuddering as she sees the bottle on the table.] Will drinkin' this poison make you forget, Isaiah?

Bartlett—[Gruffly.] I've naught to forget—leastways naught that's in your mind. But they's things about the stubborn will o' woman I'd like to forget. [They look at each other across the table. There is a pause. Finally he cannot stand her accusing glance. He looks away, gets to his feet, walks about, then sits down again, his face set determinedly—with a grim smile.] Well, here we be, Sarah—alone together for the first time since—

Mrs. Bartlett—[Quickly.] Since that night, Isaiah.

Bartlett—[As if he hadn't heard.] Since I come back to you, almost. Did ye ever stop to think o' how strange it be we'd ever come to this? I never dreamed a day'd come when ye'd force me to sleep away from ye, alone in a shed like a mangy dog!

Mrs. Bartlett—[Gently.] I didn't drive you away, Isaiah. You came o' your own will.

Bartlett—Because o' your naggin' tongue, woman—and the wrong ye thought o' me.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Shaking her head, slowly.]

It wasn't me you ran from, Isaiah. You ran away from your own self—the conscience God put in you that you think you can fool with lies.

Bartlett—[Starting to his feet—angrily.] Lies?

Mrs. Bartlett—It's the truth, Isaiah, only you be too weak to face it.

Bartlett—[With defiant bravado.] Ye'll find I be strong enough to face anything, true or lie! [Then protestingly.] What call have ye to think evil o' me, Sarah? It's mad o' ye to hold me to account for things I said in my sleep—for the damned nightmares that set me talkin' wild when I'd just come home and my head was still cracked with the thirst and the sun I'd borne on that island. Is that right, woman, to be blamin' me for mad dreams?

Mrs. Bartlett—You confessed the rest of what you said was true—of the gold you'd found and buried there.

Bartlett—[With a sudden fierce exultation.] Aye—that be true as Bible, Sarah. When I've sailed back in the schooner, ye'll see for yourself. There be a big chest o' it, yellow and heavy, and fixed up with diamonds, emeralds and sech, that be worth more, even, nor the gold. We'll be rich, Sarah—rich like I've always dreamed we'd be! There'll be silks and carriages for ye—all the woman's truck in the world ye've a mind to want—and all that Nat and Sue'll want, too.

Mrs. Bartlett—[With a shudder.] Are you tryin' to bribe me, Isaiah—with a treasure that's been cursed by God?

Bartlett—[As if he hadn't heard.] D'ye remember long ago, back East, just after we was married, and I was skipper o' my first whalin' ship, how that foreigner come to me with the map o' the pirates' gold and asked me to charter the ship? D'ye remember o' how I'd talk to ye o' findin' ambergris, a pile o' it on one vige that'd make us rich? Ye used to take interest then, and all th' voyage with me ye'd be hopin' I'd find it, too.

Mrs. Bartlett—That was my sin o' greed that I'm bein' punished for now.

Bartlett—[Again as if he hadn't heard.] And now when it's come to us at last—bigger nor I ever dreamed on—ye drive me away from ye and say it's cursed.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Inexorably.] Cursed with the blood o' the man and boy ye murdered!

Bartlett—[In a mad rage.] Ye lie, woman! I spoke no word!

Mrs. Bartlett—That's what you kept repeatin' in your sleep, night after night that first week you was home, till I knew the truth, and could bear no more. "I spoke no word!" you kept sayin', as if 'twas your own soul had you at the bar of judgment. And "That cook, he didn't believe 'twas gold," you'd say, and curse him.

Bartlett—[Wildly.] He was lyin', the thief! Lyin' so's he and the boy could steal th' gold. I made him own up he was lyin'. What if it's all true, what ye heard? Hadn't we the right to do away with two thieves? And we was all mad with thirst and sun. Can ye hold madmen to account for the things they do?

Mrs. Bartlett—You wasn't so crazed but you remember.

Bartlett—I remember I spoke no word, Sarah—as God's my judge!

Mrs. Bartlett—But you could have prevented it with a word, couldn't you, Isaiah? That heathen savage lives in the fear of you. He'd not have done it if——

Bartlett—[Gloomily.] That's woman's talk. There be three o' us can swear in any court I spoke no word.

Mrs. Bartlett—What are courts? Can you swear it to yourself? You can't, and it's that's drivin' you mad, Isaiah. Oh, I'd never have believed it of you for all you said in sleep, if it wasn't for the way you looked and acted out of sleep. I watched you that first week, Isaiah, till the fear of it had me down sick. I had to watch you, you was so strange and fearful to me. At first I kept sayin', 'twas only you wasn't rid o' the thirst and the sun yet. But then, all to once, God gave me sight, and I saw 'twas guilt written on your face, on the queer stricken way you acted, and guilt in your eyes. [She stares into them.] I see it now, as I always see it when you look at me. [She covers her face with her hands with a sob.]

Bartlett—[His face haggard and drawn—hopelessly, as if he were too beaten to oppose her further—in a hoarse whisper.] What would ye have me do, Sarah?

Mrs. Bartlett—[Taking her hands from her face—her eyes lighting up with religious fervor.] Confess your sin, Isaiah! Confess to God and men, and make your peace and take your punishment. Forget that gold that's cursed and the voyage you be settin' out on, and make your peace. [Passionately.] I ask you to do this for my sake and the children's, and your own most of all! I'll get down on my knees, Isaiah, and pray you to do it, as I've prayed to God to send you his grace! Confess and wash your soul of the stain o' blood that's on it. I ask you that, Isaiah—and God asks you—to make your peace with Him.

Bartlett—[His face tortured by the inward struggle—as if the word strangled him.] Confess and let someone steal the gold! [This thought destroys her influence over him in a second. His obsession regains possession of him instantly, filling him with rebellious strength. He laughs harshly.] Ye'd make an old woman o' me, would ye, Sarah?—an old, Sunday go-to-meetin' woman snivvelin' and prayin' to God for pardon! Pardon for what? Because two sneakin' thieves are dead and done for? I spoke no word, I tell ye—but if I had, I'd not repent it. What I've done I've done, and I've never asked pardon o' God or men for ought I've done, and never will. Confess, and give up the gold I've dreamed of all my life that I've found at last! By thunder, ye must think I'm crazed!

Mrs. Bartlett—[Seeming to shrivel up on her chair as she sees she has lost—weakly.] You be lost, Isaiah—no one can stop you.

Bartlett—[Triumphantly.] Aye, none'll stop me. I'll go my course alone. I'm glad ye see that, Sarah.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Feebly trying to get to her feet.] I'll go to home.

Bartlett—Ye'll stay, Sarah. Ye've had your say, and I've listened to ye; now I'll have mine and ye listen to me. [Mrs. Bartlett sinks back in her chair exhaustedly.

Bartlett continues slowly.] The schooner sails at dawn on the full tide. I ask ye again and for the last time, will ye christen her with your name afore she sails?

Mrs. Bartlett—[Firmly.] No.

Bartlett—[Menacingly.] Take heed, Sarah, o' what ye're sayin'! I'm your husband ye've sworn to obey. By right I kin order ye, not ask.

Mrs. Bartlett—I've never refused in anything that's right—but this be wicked wrong.

Bartlett—It's only your stubborn woman's spite makes ye refuse. Ye've christened every ship I've ever been skipper on, and it's brought me luck o' a kind, though not the luck I wanted. And we'll christen this one with your own name to bring me the luck I've always been seekin'.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Resolutely.] I won't, Isaiah.

Bartlett—Ye will, Sarah, for I'll make ye. Ye force me to it.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Again trying to get up.] Is this the way you talk to me who've been a good wife to you for more than thirty years?

Bartlett—[Commandingly.] Wait! [Threateningly.] If ye don't christen her afore she sails, I'll take Nat on the vige along with me. [Mrs. Bartlett sinks back in her chair, stunned.] He wants to go, ye know it. He's asked me a hundred times. He s'spects—'bout the gold—but he don't know for sartin. But I'll tell him the truth o' it, and he'll come with me, unless—

Mrs. Bartlett—[Looking at him with terror-stricken eyes—imploringly.] You won't do that, Isaiah? You won't take Nat away from me and drag him into sin? I know he'll go if you give him the word, in spite of what I say. [Pitifully.] You be only frightenin' me! You can't be so wicked cruel as that.

Bartlett—I'll do it, I take my oath—unless—

Mrs. Bartlett—[With hysterical anger.] Then I'll tell him myself—of the murders

you did, and—

Bartlett—[Grimly.] And I'll say 'twas done in fair fight to keep them from stealin' the gold! I'll tell him your's is a woman's notion, and he'll believe me, not you. He's his father's son, and he's set to go. Ye know it, Sarah. [She falls back in the chair hopelessly staring at him with horrified eyes. He turns away and adds after a pause.] So ye'll christen the Sarah Allen in the mornin' afore she sails, won't ye, Sarah?

Mrs. Bartlett—[In a terrified tone.] Yes—if it's needful to save Nat—and God'll forgive me when He sees my reason. But you—Oh, Isaiah! [She shudders and then breaks down, sobbing.]

Bartlett—[After a pause, turns to her humbly as if asking her forgiveness.] Ye mustn't think hard o' me that I want your name. It's because it's a good woman's name, and I know it'll bring luck to our vige. I'd find it hard to sail without it—the way things be.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Getting to her feet—in a state of feverish fear of him.] I'm goin' to home.

Bartlett—[Going to her.] I'll help ye to the top o' the hill, Sarah.

Mrs. Bartlett—[Shrinking from him in terror.] No. Don't you touch me! Don't you touch me! [She hobbles quickly out of the door in the rear, looking back frightenedly over her shoulder to see if he is following as

[The Curtain Falls]

ACT THREE

Scene—Dawn of the following morning—exterior of the Bartlett home, showing the main entrance, facing left, toward the harbor. On either side of the door, two large windows, their heavy green shutters tightly closed. In front of the door, a small

porch, the roof supported by four white column. A flight of three steps goes up to this porch from the ground. Two paths lead to the steps through the straggly patches of grass, one around the corner of the house to the rear, the other straight to the left to the edge of the cliff where there is a small projecting iron platform, fenced in by a rail. The top of a steel ladder can be seen. This ladder leads up the side or the cliff from the shore below to the platform. The edge of the cliff extends from the left corner front, half-diagonally back to the right, rear-center.

In the grey half-light of the dawn, Horne, Cates, and Jimmy Kanaka are discovered. Horne is standing on the steel platform looking down at the shore below. Cates is sprawled on the ground nearby. Jimmy squats on his haunches, his eyes staring out to sea as if he were trying to pierce the distance to the warm islands of his birth. Cates wears dungarees, Jimmy dungaree pants and a black jersey; Horne, the same as in Act Two.

Cates—[With sluggish indifference.] Ain’t she finished with it yet?

Horne—[Irritably.] No, damn her! I kin see ’em all together on the wharf at the bow o’ the schooner. That old crow o’ a woman o’ his! Why the hell don’t she christen her and be done with it and let us make sail?

Cates—[After a pause.] Funny, ain’t it—his orderin’ us to come up here and wait till it’s all done.

Horne—[Angrily.] That’s her doin’, too. She thinks we ain’t good enough to be where she is. [After a pause.] But there’s nothin’ funny to me that he does no more. He’s still out o’ his head, d’ye know that, Cates?

Cates—[Stupidly.] I ain’t noticed nothin’ diff’rent ’bout him.

Horne—[Scornfully.] He axed me if I ever seen them two in my sleep—that cook and the boy o’ the Triton. Said he did often.

Cates—[Immediately protesting uneasily as if he had been accused.] They was with us in the boat b’fore we fetched the island, that’s all ’bout ’em I remember. I was

crazy, after.

Horne—[Looking at him with contempt.] So was we all crazy, for the matter o' that. I'll not call ye a liar, Cates, but—a hell o' a man ye be! You wasn't so out o' your head that ye forgot the gold, was ye?

Cates—[His eyes glistening.] That's diff'rent. Any man'd remember that, even if he was crazy.

Horne—[With a greedy grin.] Aye. That's the one thing I see in my sleep. [Gloatingly.] We'll dig it up soon now. In three months we'd ought to be there—an' then we'll be rich, by Christ! [There is the faint sound of cries from the beach below. Horne starts and turns to look down again.] They must 'a' finished it. [Cates and Jimmy come to the edge to look down.]

Jimmy—[Suddenly—with an eager childish curiosity.] That falla wife Captain she make strong falla spell on ship, we sail fast, plenty good wind?

Horne—[Contemptuously.] Aye, that's as near as ye'll come to it. She's makin' a spell. Ye stay here, Jimmy, and tell us when the Old Man is comin'. [Jimmy remains looking down. Horne motions Cates to follow him, front—then in a low voice, disgustedly.] Did ye hear that damn fool nigger?

Cates—[Grumblingly.] Why the hell is the Old Man givin' him a full share? One piece o' it'd be enough for a nigger like him.

Horne—[Craftily.] There's a way to get rid o' him—if it comes to that. He knifed them two, ye remember.

Cates—Aye.

Horne—The two o' us can take oath to that in any court.

Cates—Aye.

Horne—[After a calculating look into his companion's greedy eyes—meaningly.] We're two sane men, Cates—and the other two to share is a lunatic and a nigger.

The skipper's showed me where there's a copy o' his map o' the island locked up in the cabin—in case anything happens to him I'm to bring back the gold to his woman, he says. [He laughs harshly.] Bring it back! Catch me! The fool! I'll be open with ye, Cates. If I could navigate and find the island myself I wouldn't wait for a cracked man to take me there. No, be damned if I would! Me and you'd chance it alone someway or other.

Cates—[Greedily.] The two o' us—share and share alike! [Then shaking his head warningly.] But he's a hard man to git the best on.

Horne—[Grimly.] And I be a hard man, too. And he's not right in his head. We'll keep our eyes peeled for a chance. Something may turn up—and maybe—

Jimmy—[Turning to them.] Captain, he come. [Cates and Horne separate hastily. Bartlett climbs into sight up the ladder to the platform. He is breathing heavily but his expression is one of triumphant exultation.]

Bartlett—[Motions with his arms.] Down with ye and git aboard. The schooner's got a name now—a name that'll bring us luck. We'll sail on this tide.

Horne—Aye—aye, sir.

Bartlett—I got to wait here till they climb up the path. I'll be aboard afore long. See that ye have her ready to cast off by then.

Horne—Aye—aye, sir. [He and Cates disappear down the ladder. Jimmy lingers, looking sidewise at his Captain.]

Bartlett—[Noticing him—gruffly but almost kindly.] What are ye waitin' for?

Jimmy—[Volubly.] That old falla wife belong you, Captain, she make strong falla spell for wind blow plenty? She catch strong devil charm for schooner, Captain?

Bartlett—[Scowling.] What's that, ye brown devil? [Then suddenly laughing harshly.] Yes—a strong spell to bring us luck. [Roughly.] Git aboard, ye dog! Don't let her find ye here with me. [Jimmy disappears hurriedly down the ladder. Bartlett

remains at the edge looking down after him. There is a sound of voices from the right and presently Mrs. Bartlett, Sue, Drew and Nat enter, coming around the house from the rear. Nat and Drew walk at either side of Mrs. Bartlett, who is in a state of complete collapse, so that they are practically carrying her. Sue follows, her handkerchief to her eyes. Nat keeps his eyes on the ground, his expression fixed and gloomy. Drew casts a glance of angry indignation at the Captain, who, after one indifferent look at them, has turned back to watch the operations on the schooner below.]

Bartlett—[As they reach the steps of the house—intent on the work below—makes a megaphone of his hands and shouts in stentorian tones.] Look lively there, Horne!

Sue—[Protestingly.] Pa!

Bartlett—[Wheels about. When he meets his daughter's eyes he controls his angry impatience and speaks gently.] What d'ye want, Sue?

Sue—[Pointing to her mother who is being assisted through the door—her voice trembling.] You mustn't shout. She's very sick.

Bartlett—[Dully, as if he didn't understand.] Sick?

Sue—[Turning to the door.] Wait. I'll be right back. [She enters the house. As soon as she is gone all of Bartlett's excitement returns. He paces up and down with nervous impatience. Nat comes out of the house.]

Nat—[In a tone of anxiety.] Ma seems bad. We can't do anything. I'm going for the doctor. [As his father doesn't seem to hear him—tapping him on the shoulder, his voice breaking.] Why did you make her do it, Pa? It was too much for her strength. Wouldn't anyone else or any other name have done just as well?

Bartlett—[Impatiently.] No. It had to be.

Nat—When she spoke the words—and fell back in a faint—I thought she was dead.

Bartlett—[Vaguely.] Weakness. She'll be all right again after a rest. [He draws

Nat's attention to the schooner.] Smart lines on that schooner, boy. She'll sail hell bent in a breeze. I knowed what I was about when I bought her.

Nat—[Staring down fascinatedly.] How long will the voyage take?

Bartlett—[Preoccupied.] How long?

Nat—[Insinuatingly.] To get to the island.

Bartlett—Three months at most—with fair luck. [Exultantly.] And I'll have luck now!

Nat—Then in six months you may be back—with it?

Bartlett—Aye, with—[Stopping abruptly, turns and stares into his son's eyes—angrily.] With what? What boy's foolishness be ye talkin'?

Nat—[Pleading fiercely.] I want to go, Pa! There's no good in my staying here any more. I can't think of anything but—Oh, why don't you be fair and let me sail with you!

Bartlett—[Sternly, to conceal his uneasiness.] Keep clear o' this, boy, I've warned ye!

Sue—[Appearing in doorway—indignantly.] Nat! Haven't you gone for the doctor yet?

Nat—[Shame-facedly.] I forgot.

Sue—Forgot!

Nat—[Starting off.] I'm going, Sue. [Then over his shoulder.] You won't sail before I come back, Pa? [Bartlett does not answer. Nat stands miserably hesitating.]

Sue—Nat! For heaven's sake! [Nat hurries off around the corner of the house, rear. Sue comes to her father who is watching her with a queer, humble, hunted expression.]

Bartlett—Well, Sue?

Sue—[Her voice trembling.] Oh, Pa, how can you do such terrible things. How could you drag Ma out of bed at dawn to christen your old boat—when you knew how sick she's been!

Bartlett—[Avoiding her eyes.] It's only weakness. She'll get well o' it soon.

Sue—Pa! How can you say things like that—as if you didn't care! [Accusingly.] The way you've acted ever since you've been home almost, anyone would think—you hated her!

Bartlett—[Wincing.] No!

Sue—Oh, Pa, what is it that has come between you? Can't you tell me? Can't I help to set things right again?

Bartlett—[Mumblingly.] Nothin'—nothin' ye kin help—nor me. Keep clear o' it, Sue. Danny—ye think o' him, that's enough for ye.

Sue—But things can't go on like this. Don't you see how it's killing Ma?

Bartlett—She'll forget her stubborn notions, now I be sailin' away.

Sue—But you're not—not going for a while now, are you?

Bartlett—Ain't I been sayin' I'd sail at dawn today? They're makin' her ready to cast off. I'm waitin' for Horne to hail.

Sue—[Looking at him for a moment with shocked amazement.] But—you can't mean—right now!

Bartlett—[Keeping his face averted.] Aye—or we'll miss this tide.

Sue—[Putting her hands on his shoulders and trying to look into his face.] Pa! You can't mean that! [His face is set with his obsessed determination. She lets her hands fall with a shudder.] You can't be as cruel as that! Why, I thought, of course, you'd put off—[Wildly.] You have, haven't you, Pa? You did tell those men you couldn't sail when you saw how sick Ma was, didn't you—when she fainted down on the wharf?

Bartlett—[Implacably.] I said I was sailin' by this tide—and sail I will, by thunder!

Sue—Pa! [Then pleadingly.] When the doctor comes and you hear what he says—

Bartlett—[Roughly.] I ain't stoppin' on his word nor any man's. I know what's best to do. [Intensely.] That schooner's been fit to sail these two weeks past. I been waitin' on her stubborn will [he gestures toward the house], eatin' my heart out day and night. Then I swore I'd sail today. I tell ye, Sue, I got a feelin' in my bones if I don't put out now I never will. Aye, I feel it deep down inside me. [In a tone of superstitious awe.] And when she christened the schooner—jest to the minute, mind ye!—a fair breeze sprung up and come down out o' the land to blow her out to sea—like a sign o' good luck.

Sue—[Aroused to angry indignation.] What kind of a man have you become—to think of such things now! Oh, I can't believe you're the same man who used to be my father!

Bartlett—Sue!

Sue—To talk cold-bloodedly of sailing away on a long voyage when Ma's inside—dying for all you seem to know or care! Oh, I hate you when you're like this! You're not the father I love! You've changed into someone else—hateful and cruel—and I hate him, I hate him! [She breaks down, sobbing hysterically.]

Bartlett—[Who has listened to her with a face suddenly stricken by fear and torturing remorse.] Sue! Ye don't know what ye be sayin', do ye?

Sue—I do! You're not the same to me any more—or to any of us. I'm afraid of you. And when you coldly propose to go away—now—I hate you, yes I do! And I hate those three awful men who make you act this way. I hate the schooner! I wish she and they were at the bottom of the sea!

Bartlett—[Frenziedly—putting his hand over her mouth to stop her words.] Stop, girl! Don't ye dare—

Sue—[Shrinking away from him—frightenedly.] Pa!

Bartlett—[Bewilderedly, pleading for forgiveness.] Don't heed that, Sue—I didn't mean—ye git me so riled—I'd not hurt ye for all the gold in the world. But don't ye talk wrong o' things ye can't know on.

Sue—Oh, Pa, what kind of things must they be—when you're ashamed to tell them!

Bartlett—I ain't ashamed. It ain't that. On'y they be things a girl's no call to meddle in. They be men's business and I be man enough to carry 'em out alone. Ye'll know all they be to know—and your Ma and Nat, too—when I come back from this vige. And the sooner I sail, the quicker I'll be back to ye. Oh, ye'll be glad enough then—when ye see with your own eyes! Ye'll bless me then 'stead o' turning agin me! [Hesitating for a second—then somberly.] On'y now—till it's all over and done—ye'd best keep clear o' it.

Sue—[Passionately.] I don't care—I don't want to know anything about it. What I do know is that you can't sail now. Oh, Pa, don't you see you can't? Haven't you any heart at all? Can't you see how bad Ma is?

Bartlett—It's the sight o' me sickens her. She'll git better with me away from her.

Sue—No. She needs you. She doesn't want you to go. She called your name just a while ago—the only word she's spoken since she christened the ship. Come in to her, Pa! Tell her you won't go!

Bartlett—[Desperately.] I got to git away from her, I tell ye, Sue! She's been houndin' me ever since I got back—houndin' me with her stubborn tongue till she's druv me mad, a'most! Ye've been on'y givin' thought to her, not me. They's my side to it, too!

Sue—I'll talk to her, Pa. She can't realize she's hurting you or she wouldn't—And then everything will be just the same as it used to be again.

Bartlett—[Shaking his head.] They be too much between. The only chance for that

be my plan—to sail away and come back with—what I be seekin'. Then she'll give over her stubborn naggin'—if she's human woman. It's for her sake as much as my own I'm goin'—for her and you and Nat. [With a sudden return of his old resolution.] I've made up my mind, I tell ye, and in the end ye'll know I be right. [A hail in Horne's voice comes thinly up from the shore below. Bartlett starts, his eyes gleaming.] Ye hear? It's Horne hailin' me to come. They be ready to cast off. I'll git aboard. [He starts for the ladder.]

Sue—Pa! After all I've said—without one word of good-bye to Ma! [Hysterically.] Oh, what can I do, what can I say to stop you! She hasn't spoken but that one call for you. She hardly seems to breathe. If it weren't for her eyes I'd believe she was dead—but her eyes look for you. She'll die if you go, Pa!

Bartlett—No!

Sue—You might just as well kill her now in cold blood as murder her that way!

Bartlett—[Shaken—raising his hands as if to put them over his ears to shut out her words—hoarsely.] No! Ye lie! She'll live till I git back and all'll be as it was again!

Drew—[Appearing in the doorway, his face working with grief and anger—harshly.] Captain Bartlett! [Then lowering his voice as he sees Sue.] Mrs. Bartlett is asking to see you, Captain, before you go.

Sue—There! Didn't I tell you, Pa!

Bartlett—[Struggling with himself—dully.] She's wantin' to bound me again, that be all.

Sue—[Seeing him weakening—grasps his hand persuasively.] Pa! Come with me. She won't hound you. How silly you are! Come! [Hesitatingly, head bowed, he follows her toward the door.]

Bartlett—[As he comes to Drew he stops and looks into the young man's angry, accusing face. He mutters half mockingly.] So ye, too, be agin me, Danny?

Drew—[Unable to restrain his indignation.] What man that's a real man wouldn't be against you, sir?

Sue—[Frightenedly.] Danny! Pa!

Bartlett—[In a sudden rage draws back his fist threateningly. Drew stares into his eyes unflinchingly—Bartlett controls himself with an effort and lets his arm fall to his side—scornfully.] Big words from a boy, Danny. I'll forget them this time—on account o' Sue. [He turns to her.] I'm goin' in to her to please ye, Sue—but if ye think any words that she kin say'll change my mind, ye make a mistake—for I be sailin' out as I planned I would in spite o' all hell! [He walks resolutely into the house. Sue follows him after exchanging a hopeless glance with Danny.]

Drew—[To himself—with a shudder.] He's mad, damn him! [He paces up and down. Horne appears on the ladder from below, followed by Cates.]

Horne—[Coming forward and addressing Drew.] Is the skipper about?

Drew—[Curtly.] He's in the house. You can't speak to him now.

Horne—She's ready to cast off. I hailed him from below but I 'spect he didn't hear. [As Drew makes no comment—impatiently.] If he don't shake a leg, we'll miss the tide. There's a bit o' fair breeze, too.

Drew—[Glancing at him resentfully.] Don't count on his sailing today. It's just as likely he'll change his mind.

Horne—[Angrily.] Change his mind again? After us waitin' and wastin' time for weeks! [To Cates in a loud tone so Drew can hear.] What did I tell ye, Cates? He's crazy as hell.

Drew—[Sharply.] What's that?

Horne—I was tellin' Cates the skipper's not right in his head [Angrily.] What man in his senses'd do the way he does?

Drew—[Letting his resentment escape him.] That's no lie, damn it!

Horne—[Surprised.] Aye, ye've seen it, too, have ye? [After a pause.] Now I axe ye, as a sailor, how'd ye like to be puttin' out on a vige with a cracked man for skipper? [Sue comes out of the door, stops with a shudder of disgust as she sees the two sailors, and stands listening. They do not notice her presence.]

Drew—It seems to me a crazy voyage all round. What kind of trading is it you're to do?

Horne—[Suspiciously.] Ye'll have to ask the skipper that.

Drew—[With a scornful shrug.] I was forgetting it's such a dead secret. That the craziest part, eh? [With sudden interest as if a new idea had come to him.] But you know all about it, don't you—what the Captain plans to do on this voyage—and all that?

Horne—[Dryly.] Aye, as well as himself—but I'm tellin' no man.

Drew—And I'm not asking. What do you suppose I care about any sneaking trade deal in the Islands he may have up his sleeve? What I want to find out is: Do you know enough about this business to make this one voyage alone and attend to everything—in case the Captain can't go?

Horne—[Exchanging a quick glance with Cates—trying to hide his eagerness.] Aye, I could do as well as any man alive. I've been sailin' this sea for twenty year or more and I know the Island trade inside and out. He could trust me for it—and I'd make more money for him than he's likely to make with his head out o' gear. [Then scowling.] On'y trouble is, who'd Captain her if he ain't goin'?

Drew—[Disappointedly.] Then you don't know navigation enough for that?

Horne—I've never riz above bo'sun. [Then after a pause in which he appears to be calculating something—curiously.] Why d'ye ask me them questions? [Insinuatingly—almost in a whisper.] It can't be done 'less we got an officer like you aboard.

Drew—[Angrily.] Eh? What're you driving at? D'you think I—

Sue—[Who has been listening with aroused interest.] Danny! [She comes down to him. Horne and Cates bob their heads respectfully and move back near the platform. Horne watches Sue and Drew out of the corner of his eye.] Danny, I've been listening to what you were saying, but I don't understand. What are you thinking of?

Drew [Excitedly.] I was thinking—Listen, Sue! Seems to me from what I saw your Pa's out of his right mind, and, being that way, he's sure bound to go unless someone or something steps in to stop him. D'you think your Ma——?

Sue—[Shaking her head—sadly.] No, I'm afraid anything she says will only make things worse.

Drew—Then you've no hope—? No more have I. Something's got to be done to keep him home in spite of himself. Even leaving your Ma out of it, he's not in any fit state to take a ship to sea; and I was thinking if we could fix it some way so that fellow Horne could take her out on this voyage—

Sue—But, Danny, Pa'd never give in to that.

Drew—I wasn't thinking he would. It'd have to be done on the sly. We—you'd have to give the word—and keep him in the house somehow—and then when he did come out it'd be too late. The schooner'd be gone.

Sue—[Disturbed, but showing that this plan has caught her mind.] But—would it be fair?—he'd never forgive—

Drew—When he's back in his right mind again, he would. [Earnestly.] I'm not fond of lying and tricks myself, Sue, but this is a case where you can't pick and choose. You can't let him sail, and wreck his ship and himself in the bargain, likely. Then, there's your Ma——

Sue—No, no, we can't let him. [With a glance at Horne and Cates.] But I don't trust those men.

Drew—No more do I; but it would be better to chance them than—[Suddenly interrupting himself—with a shrug of his shoulders.] But there's no good talking of that. I was forgetting. None of them can navigate. They couldn't take her out.

Sue—But didn't I hear him say—if they had an officer on board—like you—

Drew—Yes, but where'll you find one at a second's notice?

Sue—[Meaningly.] And you told me, didn't you, that you'd just got your master's papers. Then you're a captain by rights.

Drew—[Looking at her with stunned astonishment.] Sue! D'you mean—

Sue—[A light coming over her face.] Oh, Danny, we could trust you! He'd trust you! And after he'd calmed down I know he wouldn't mind so much. Oh, Danny, it'll break my heart to have you go, to send you away just after you've come back. But I don't see any other way. I wouldn't ask—if it wasn't for Ma being, this way—and him—Oh, Danny, can't you see your way to do it—for my sake?

Drew—[Bewilderedly.] Why, Sue, I—I never thought—[Then as he sees the look of disappointment which comes over her face at his hesitancy—resolutely.] Why sure, Sue, I'll do it—if you want me to. I'll do it if it can be done. But we've got to hustle. You stand in the door, Sue. You've got to keep him in the house some way if he aims to come out. And I'll talk to them. [Sue goes to the doorway. Drew goes over to Horne and Cates.]

Sue—[After listening.] He's still in with Ma. It's all right.

Drew—[To Horne, with forced joviality.] How would you like me for skipper on this one voyage?

Horne—[Craftily.] Ye got your skipper's papers all reg'lar?

Drew—Yes, that part of it's all right and square. Listen here. Miss Sue's decided her father isn't in a fit state to Captain this trip. It'd mean danger for him and the schooner—and for you.

Horne—That's no lie.

Cates—[To Horne protestingly.] But if we git ketched the Old Man'll take it out o' our hides, not his'n.

Horne—[Savagely.] Shut up, ye fool! [To Drew, craftily.] Cates is right, jest the same. Ye are as good as his married son and she's his daughter. He'd not blame you if things went wrong. He'd take it out on us.

Drew—[Impatiently.] I'll shoulder all that risk, man!

Sue—[Earnestly.] No harm will come to any of you, I promise you. This is all my plan, and I'll tell my father I'm alone to blame.

Horne—[In the tone of one clinching a bargain.] Then we'll chance it. [Warningly.] But it's got to be done smart, sir. Ye'd best look lively.

Drew—I've got to get my dunnage. I'll be right back and we'll tumble aboard. [He goes to the door.] Hold him, Sue, on some excuse if he's coming. Only a second now and it'll all be safe. [He goes into the house. She follows him in.]

Cates—[With stupid anger.] This is a hell o' a mess we're gettin' in, if ye axe me.

Horne—And I tell ye it's a great stroke o' luck. It couldn't o' come out better.

Cates—He'll be aboard to spy on us.

Horne—Let him! What does he know? He thinks we're goin' tradin', and there's no one to tell him diff'rent but me.

Cates—He'll know better afore long. He'll s'pect—

Horne—'Bout the gold? He ain't that kind. He's a soft young swab o' a lady steamer's mate. Leave me to fool him. And when the time comes to git rid o' him, I'll find a means some way or other. But can't ye see, ye fool, it's luck to have him with us till we git clear o' civilized ports? He kin navigate and he's got skipper's papers that'll come in handy if there's any trouble. And if anythin' goes wrong at the start and we're brung back, him and the girl'll take the blame.

Cates—[Stupidly.] S'long as he don't git no share o' the gold——

Horne—[Contemptuously.] Share, ye dumbhead! I'd see him in hell first—and send him there myself. [Drew comes out of the house carrying his bag which he hands to Cates. Sue follows him.]

Drew—Look lively now! Let's hustle aboard and get her under way.

Horne—Aye—aye, sir. [He and Cates clamber hurriedly down the ladder.]

Sue—[Throwing her arms around his neck and kissing him.] Good-bye, Danny. It's so fine of you to do this for us! I'll never forget——

Drew—[Tenderly.] Ssssh! It's nothing, Sue.

Sue—[Tearfully.] Oh, Danny, I hope I'm doing right! I'll miss you so dreadfully! But you'll come back just as soon as you can—

Drew—Of course!

Sue—Danny! Danny! I love you so!

Drew—And I guess you know I love you, don't you? [Kisses her.] And we'll be married when I come back this time sure?

Sue—Yes—yes—Danny—sure!

Drew—I've got to run. Good-bye, Sue.

Sue—Good-bye, dear. [They kiss for the last time and he disappears down the ladder. She stands at the top, sobbing, following him with her eyes. Nat comes around the house from the rear and goes to the front door.]

Nat—[Seeing his sister.] Sue! He hasn't gone yet, has he? [She doesn't hear him. He hesitates in the doorway for a moment, listening for the sound of his father's voice from inside. Then, very careful to make no noise, he tiptoes carefully into the house. Sue waves her hand to Drew who has evidently now got aboard the ship. Then she covers her face with her hands, sobbing. Nat comes out of the house again and goes to his sister. As she sees him approaching, she dries her eyes hastily, trying to

smile.]

Sue—Did you get the doctor, Nat?

Nat—Yes, he's coming right away, he promised. [Looking at her face.] What—have you been crying?

Sue—No. [She walks away from the edge of the cliff, drawing him with her.]

Nat—Yes, you have. Look at your eyes.

Sue—Oh, Nat, everything's so awful! [She breaks down again.]

Nat—[Trying to comfort her in an absentminded way.] There, don't get worked up. Ma'll be all right as soon as the doctor comes. [Then curiously.] Pa's inside with her. They were arguing—have they made it up, d'you think?

Sue—Oh, Nat, I don't know. I don't think so.

Nat—The strain's been too much for him—waiting and hiding his secret from all of us. What do you suppose it is, Sue—ambergris?

Sue—[Wildly.] I don't know and I don't care! [Noticing the strange preoccupied look in his eyes—trying to bring him back to earth—scornfully.] Ambergris! Are you going crazy? Don't you remember you've always been the first one to laugh at that silly idea?

Nat—Well, there's something—— [Starts for the platform. Sue does her best to interpose to hold him back.] Are they all ready on the schooner. He'll have to hurry if she's going to sail on this tide. [With sudden passion.] Oh, I've got to go! I can't stay here! [Pleadingly.] Don't you think, Sue, if you were to ask him for me he'd—You're the only one he seems to act sane with or care about any more.

Sue—No! I won't! I can't!

Nat—[Angrily.] Haven't you any sense? Wouldn't it be better for everyone if I went in his place?

Sue—No. You know that's a lie. Ma would lose her mind if you went.

Nat—And I'll lose mine if I stay! [Half aware of Sue's intention to keep him from looking down at the schooner—irritably.] What are you holding my arm for, Sue? I want to see what they're doing. [He pushes her aside and goes to the platform—excitedly.] Hello, they've got the fores'l and mains'l set. They're setting the stays'l. [In amazement.] Why—they're casting off! She's moving away from the wharf! [More and more excitedly.] I see four of them on board! Who—who is that, Sue?

Sue—It's Danny.

Nat—[Furiously.] Danny! What right has he—when I can't! Sue, call Pa! They're sailing, I tell you, you little fool!

Sue—[Trying to calm him—her voice trembling.] Nat! Don't be such a donkey! Danny's only going a little way—just trying the boat to see how she sails while they're waiting for Pa.

Nat—[Uncertainly.] Oh. [Then bitterly.] I was never allowed to do even that—his own son! Look, Sue, that must be Danny at the stern waving.

Sue—[Brokenly.] Yes. [She waves her handkerchief over her head—then breaks down, sobbing again. There is the noise of Bartlett's voice from inside and a moment later he appears in the doorway. He seems terribly shattered, at the end of his tether. He hesitates uncertainly, looking about him wildly as if he didn't know what to do or where to go.]

Sue—[After one look at his face, runs to him and flings her arms about his neck.] Pa! [She weeps on his shoulder.]

Bartlett—Sue, ye did wrong beggin' me to see her. I knowed it'd do no good. Ye promised she'd not hound me——"Confess," she says—when they be naught to tell that couldn't be swore to in any court. "Don't go on this vige," she says, "there be the curse o' God on it." [With a note of baffled anguish.] She kin say that after givin' the ship her own name! [With wild, haggard defiance.] But curse or no curse,

I be goin'! [He moves toward the platform, Sue clinging to his arm.]

Sue—[Frightenedly.] Pa! Go back in the house, won't you?

Bartlett—I be sorry to go agin your will, Sue, but it's got to be. Ye'll know the reason some day—and be glad o' it. And now good-bye to ye. [With a sudden strange tenderness he bends and kisses his daughter. Then as she seems about to protest further, his expression becomes stern and inflexible.] No more o' talk, Sue! I be bound out. [He takes her hand off his arm and strides to the platform. One look down at the harbor and he stands transfixed—in a hoarse whisper.] What damned trick be this? [He points to the schooner and turns to Nat bewilderedly.] Ain't that my schooner, boy—the Sarah Allen—reachin' toward the p'int?

Nat—[Surprised.] Yes, certainly. Didn't you know? Danny's trying her to see how she sails while they're waiting for you.

Bartlett—[With a tremendous sigh of relief.]

Aye. [Then angrily.] He takes a lot o' rope to himself without askin' leave o' me. Don't he know they's no time to waste on boy's foolin'? [Then with admiration.] She sails smart, don't she, boy? I knowed she'd show a pair o' heels.

Nat—[With enthusiasm.] Yes, she's a daisy! Say, Danny's taking her pretty far out, isn't he?

Bartlett—[Anxiously.] He'd ought to come about now if he's to tack back inside the p'int. [Furiously.] Come about, damn ye! The swab! That's what comes o' steamer trainin'. I'd sooner trust Sue to sail her nor him. [Waves his arm and shouts.] Come about!

Nat—[Bitterly.] He seems to be heading straight for the open sea. He's taking quite a sail, it seems to me.

Bartlett—[As if he couldn't believe his eyes.] He's passed the p'int—and now—headin' her out to sea—so'east by east. By God, that be the course I charted

for her! [Sue bursts out sobbing. He wheels on her, his mouth fallen open, his face full of a stupid despair.] They be somethin' wrong here. What be it, Sue? What be it, Nat? [His voice has begun to quiver with passion.] That schooner—she's sailin' without me—— [He suddenly springs at Nat and grabs him by the throat—with hoarse fury, shaking him.] What be it, ye whelp? It's your doin'—because I wouldn't let ye go. Answer me!

Sue—[Rushing to them with a scream.] Pa! [She tugs frantically at his hands. Bartlett lets them fall to his side, stepping back from Nat who sinks weakly to the ground, gasping for breath. Bartlett stands looking at him wildly.]

Sue—Nat didn't know, Pa. It's all my fault. I had to do it. There was no other way——

Bartlett—[Raging.] What d'ye mean, girl? What is it ye've done? Tell me, I say! Tell me or I'll——

Sue—[Unflinchingly.] You had to be stopped from going someway. You wouldn't listen to reason. So I asked Danny if he wouldn't make the trip in your place. He's just got his captain's papers—and oh, Pa, you can trust him, you know that! That man Horne said he knows about everything you wanted done, and he promised to tell Danny, and Danny'll come back——

Bartlett—[Chokingly.] So—that be it—— [Shaking his clenched fist at the sky as if visualizing the fate he feels in all of this.] Curse ye! Curse ye! [He subsides weakly, his strength spent, his hand falls limply at his side.]

Mrs. Bartlett—[Appears in the doorway. Her face is pale with anguish. She gives a cry of joy when she sees her son.] Nat! [Then with a start of horror at her eyes fall on her husband.] Isaiah! [He doesn't seem to hear.] Then—you ain't sailed yet?

Sue—[Going to her—gently.] No, Ma, he isn't going to sail. He's going to stay home with you. But the schooner's gone. See. [She points and her mother's eyes turn seaward.]

Bartlett—[Aloud to himself—in a tone of groping superstitious awe and bewildered fear.] They be somethin' queer—somethin' wrong—they be a curse in this somewhere——

Mrs. Bartlett—[Turning accusing eyes on him—with a sort of fanatical triumph.] I'm glad to hear you confess that, Isaiah. Yes, there be a curse—God's curse on the wicked sinfulness o' men—and I thank God He's saved you from the evil of that voyage, and I'll pray Him to visit His punishment and His curse on them three men on that craft you forced me to give my name—— [She has raised her hand as if calling down retribution on the schooner she can dimly see.]

Sue—[Terrified.] Ma!

Bartlett—[Starting toward his wife with an insane yell of fury.] Stop it, I tell ye! [He towers over her with upraised fist as if to crush her.]

Sue—Pa!

Nat—[Starting to his feet from where he has been sitting on the ground—hoarsely.] Pa! For God's sake!

Mrs. Bartlett—[Gives a weak, frightened gasp.] Would you murder me too, Isaiah? [She closes her eyes and collapses in Sue's arms.]

Sue—[Tremblingly.] Nat! Help me! Quick! We must carry her to bed. [They take their mother in their arms, carrying her inside the house.]

Bartlett—[While they are doing this, rushes in his mad frenzy to the platform over the edge of the cliff. He puts his hands to his mouth, megaphone-fashion, and yells with despairing rage.] Ahoy! Ahoy! Sarah Allen! Put back! Put back! [as

[The Curtain Falls]

ACT FOUR

Scene—About nine o'clock of a moonlight night one year later—Captain Bartlett's

"cabin," a room erected on the top of his house as a lookout post. The interior is fitted up like the cabin of a sailing vessel. On the left, forward, a porthole. Farther back, the stairs of the companionway. Still farther, two more portholes. In the rear, left, a marble-topped sideboard. In the rear, center, a door opening on stairs which lead to the lower house. A cot with a blanket is placed against the wall to the right of door. In the right wall, five portholes. Directly under them, a wooden bench. In front of the bench, a long table with two chairs placed, one in front, one to the left of it. A cheap, dark-colored rug is on the floor. In the ceiling, midway from front to rear, a skylight extending from opposite the door to above the left edge of the table. In the right extremity of the skylight is placed a floating ship's compass. The light from the binnacle sheds down over this and seeps into the room, casting a vague globular shadow of the compass on the floor. Moonlight creeps in through the portholes on the right. A lighted lantern is on the table.

As the curtain rises, Sue and Doctor Berry are discovered sitting by the table. The doctor is a man of sixty or so, hale and hearty-looking, his white hair and mustache setting off his ruddy completion. His blue eyes have a gentle expression, his smile is kindly and sympathetic. His whole manner toward Sue is that of the old family doctor and friend, not the least of whose duties is to play father-confessor to his patients. She is dressed in deep mourning. She looks much older. Her face is pale and plainly marked by the ravages of suffering and grief. But there is an excited elation in her face at present, her eyes are alight with some unexpected joy.

Sue—[Excitedly.] And here is Danny's letter, Doctor—to prove it's all true. [She takes a letter from the bosom of her dress and holds it out to him.]

Doctor—[Takes it with a smile, patting her hand.] I can't say how glad I am, Susan. Coming after we'd all given him up for lost—it's like a miracle. Eh, well, I can hardly believe——

Sue—[Smiling happily.] Read what he says. Then you won't doubt.

Doctor—[Hesitating—playfully.] I don't know that it's right for me—love letters at my age!

Sue—Go ahead. I want you to read it. [He reaches in his pocket for his spectacles. Sue continues gratefully.] As if I could have any secrets from you after all you've done for us since Ma died. You've been the only friend—— [She stops, her lips trembling.]

Doctor—Tut-tut. [He adjusts his spectacles and peers at her over them.] Who wouldn't be of all the service he could to a brave girl like you—and I who've known you since you were so high! Eh, well, my dear girl, this past year—with your mother's death—the state your father's in—and then the news of the schooner being reported lost—one damn thing on top of another! You've borne the whole brunt of it on your shoulders and stood up like a major. I'll tell Danny when he comes he ought to get down on his knees and thank God for getting such a wife!

Sue—[Flushing.] You're too good. I don't deserve it. It was just a case where someone had to carry things on.

Doctor—Not many could have stood it—living in this house with him the way he is—even if he was their father.

Sue—[Glancing up at the skylight—apprehensively.] Ssshh! He might hear you.

Doctor—[Listening intently.] Not him. There he goes pacing up and down up there in the night, looking out to sea for that ship that will never come back! And your brother Nat is getting just as bad. [Shaking himself.] Brrr! This house of mad dreams! It's the crowning wonder to me you haven't lost your balance too—spending nearly all of your time in this crazy cabin—afraid to go out—afraid of what he might do——

Sue—Don't you think Pa'll come to realize the schooner is lost as time goes by and she doesn't come back?

Doctor—If he was going to realize that, the report of the facts five months ago

would have convinced him. There it was, plain as the nose on your face. British freighter reports finding derelict schooner. Steams near enough to read the name on the stern—Sarah Allen, Harborport. Well, who could get around that evidence except a man with an obsession? No, your father won't let himself look the facts in the face. If he did, probably the shock of it would kill him. That darn dream of his has become his life. No, Susan, as time goes on he'll believe in it harder and harder. After observing him for the past year—and I speak for his own sake, too, as his good friend for twenty years or more—my final advice is the same: Send him to an asylum.

Sue—[With a shudder.] No, Doctor.

Doctor—[Shaking his head.] You'll have to come to it in time. He's getting worse. No one can tell—he might get violent——

Sue—How can you say that? You know how gentle and sane he is with me—just like he used to be in the old days.

Doctor—You're his last connecting link with things as they are—but that can't last. On the other hand, I think that if we got him away from the sea, from this house, especially from this crazy cabin and the ship's deck he had built up there—[He nods upward.]—that perhaps——

Sue—[With conviction.] No. It would kill him to leave it.

Doctor—Eh, well, my dear, one thing you've got to realize: Your father and Nat must be separated somehow. Nat's going to pieces. He's lost his job, he moons about this house, he takes no interest in anything but this craziness. I'll bet he doesn't believe that schooner is lost any more than your father does.

Sue—You mean he still hopes it may not be true. That's only natural. He's in San Francisco now tracing down the report again. He saw in the papers where the British freighter that found the derelict was in port again and he went to talk with the people on board. I'm hoping he'll come back fully convinced, with the whole thing out of

his mind.

Doctor—[Shaking his head—gravely.] I've watched him and talked with him—— Why, even your father seems to realize, in his twisted way, that he has a bad effect on Nat.

Sue—Yes, as I've told you before, he hasn't spoken to Nat alone since the schooner sailed a year ago. And Nat sneaks about trying to spy on him—and I have to be always on the watch to keep them apart—— It's terrible.

Doctor—You've got to persuade Nat to go away, Susan.

Sue—He won't heed me—but I was thinking that now Danny is coming back, I'd get him——

Doctor—There's another thing. You can't continue to play slave to these two after you're married.

Sue—[Miserably.] We'll have to wait a while longer——

Doctor—[Roughly.] Rats! You can't sacrifice any more of your life and Danny's to mad dreams.

Sue—[Helplessly.] I don't know—— [Then brightening.] That'll all be decided when the time comes. Just now it's enough to know Danny's alive and coming back. Read his letter, Doctor. You've been holding it in your hand all this time.

Doctor—Yes, yes, let's see. [He takes the letter from the envelope.]

Sue—Poor Danny! He's been through terrible things.

Doctor—Hmm! Rangoon.

Sue—Yes, he's still in the hospital there. You'll see.

Doctor—[Reads the letter—grunts with astonishment—angrily.] By Gad! The damn scoundrels!

Sue—[Shuddering.] Yes, wasn't it hideous—those awful men stabbing him and leaving him for dead in that out of the way native settlement! The natives nursed

him back to life, have you got that far yet? And then he was laid up for four months there waiting for a vessel to touch and take him back to civilization. And then, think of it, getting the fever on top of all that and nearly dying in the hospital in Rangoon!

Doctor—A terrible time of it! He's lucky to be alive. Hmm. I see he foresaw the wreck of the schooner. Those brutes couldn't navigate. [Folding the letter and putting it back.] He doesn't seem to have found out what the purpose of that mad trip was. Horne hid it from him to the last, he says. Well, it's queer—damn queer. But I'm glad to know those wretches have gone to their final accounting.

Sue—[With a shudder.] I was always afraid of them. They looked like—murderers. [At a noise from below they both start. Steps can be heard climbing the stairs. Sue jumps to her feet frightenedly.] Why—do you hear—who can that be? [There is a soft rap on the door. The Doctor jumps to his feet. Sue turns to him with a half-hysterical laugh.] Shall I open? I don't know why—but I'm afraid.

Doctor—Tut-tut! I'll see who it is. [He opens the door and Nat is discovered on the stairs outside.] Why hello, boy. You gave us a scare. Susan thought it was a ghost knocking.

Nat—[Comes into the room. He has aged, grown thin, his face gaunt and drawn from continual mental strain, his eyes moody and preoccupied. He glances up at the skylight apprehensively, then turns to Sue.] I didn't find you downstairs so I——[Then to the Doctor.] Yes, you do grow to look for ghosts in this house, don't you? [Again glancing upward.] He's up there as usual, I suppose—looking for a ship that'll never, never come now!

Doctor—[With a grunt of approval.] I'm glad to hear you acknowledge that.

Sue—[Who is just recovering from her fright.] But, Nat, I didn't expect you——Did you find out——?

Nat—Yes, I talked with several of the men who were on board at the time. They said they steamed in so close to the schooner it was easy to read the name with the naked

eye. All agreed—Sarah Allen, Harborport. They even remembered how her tafrail was painted. There's no chance for mistake. The Sarah Allen is gone. [With great emphasis.] And I'm glad—damn glad! I feel as if a weight of lead had been taken off my brain. I feel free again, and I can go back to work—but not here. I've got to go away—start new altogether.

Sue—[Happily, coming and putting her arms around him.] It's so good to hear you talk like your old self again.

Doctor—[Earnestly.] Yes, Nat, by Gad, that's sound sense. Get out of this.

Nat—[Giving him a queer look.] I suppose you thought I was doomed, eh?—like him. [He makes a motion upward—then with an uncertain laugh.] A doctor's always looking for trouble where there isn't any. [In a tone of finality.] Well, it's all over, anyway.

Sue—[Snatching the letter from the table.] Oh, I was forgetting, Nat. Read this. I got it yesterday.

Nat—[Turns it over in his hands suspiciously.] Who from?

Sue—Open it and see.

Nat—[Does so and turns over the pages to read the signature—he gives a start—hoarsely.] Danny! It can't be! But it's his writing sure enough! [He exclaims with a sudden wild exultation.] Then they must have been lying to me!

Sue—No, the Sarah Allen was wrecked all right, but that was afterwards. He wasn't on board then. Read it. You'll see. [Nat sinks back on a chair, evidently depressed by this information. He starts to read the letter with unconcealed indifference, then becomes engrossed, excited, the paper trembling in his hands. The Doctor shakes his head at Sue indicating his disapproval of her giving him the letter. Nat finishes and springs to his feet—angrily.]

Nat—The stupid fool! He let Horne pull the wool over his eyes in fine shape. He

deserved all he got for being so dumb!

Sue—[Indignantly.] Nat!

Nat—[Unheedingly.] Oh, if I could only have gone in his place! I knew the kind Horne was. He couldn't have played that trick on me. I'd have forced the secret out of him if I had to—— [He raises his clenched fist in a gesture of threat like his father's—then lets it fall and sits down again—disgustedly.] But what's the use? And what's the use of this? [Tosses the letter contemptuously on the table.] He might just as well not have written. We're no wiser than we were before.

Sue—[Snatching up the letter—deeply hurt.] Aren't you even glad to hear Danny's alive?

Nat—[Turning to her at once—with remorseful confusion.] Yes—yes—of course, Sue—I don't have to say that, do I? What I mean is, he never found out from Horne—and we're no wiser.

Doctor—[Briskly—with a significant glance at Sue.] Well, Susan—Nat—I've got to run along—[Meaningly.] I'll be over again tomorrow, Susan.

Sue—Yes, do come. [Goes with him to the door.] Can you see your way?

Doctor—Yes. Good night.

Sue—Good night. [She closes the door and comes back to Nat. The Doctor's footsteps die out.]

Nat—[Savagely.] That damned old fool! What is he doing, sneaking around here all the time? I've grown to hate the sight of him.

Sue—Nat! You can't mean that. Think of how kind he's been.

Nat—Yes—kindness with a purpose.

Sue—Don't be silly. What purpose could he have except wanting to help us?

Nat—To find out things, of course, you simpleton. To pump Pa when he's not responsible for what he's saying.

Sue—[Indignantly.] Nat!

Nat—Much good it's done him! I know Pa. Sane or not, he won't tell that to anyone—not even you or me, Sue. [With sudden fury.] I'm going away—but before I go I'm going to make him tell me! He won't refuse this time when he knows I'm leaving for good. He'll be glad then. He's been so afraid I'd find out, so scared to speak to me even—locking himself up here. But I'll make him tell—yes, I will!

Sue—Careful, Nat. He'll hear you if you shout like that.

Nat—But we have a right to know—his own children. What if he dies without ever speaking?

Sue—[Uneasily.] Be sensible, Nat. There's nothing to tell except in your imagination. [Taking his arm—persuasively.] Come on downstairs. I'll get you something to eat. You must be starved, aren't you?

Nat—No—I don't know—I suppose I ought to be. [He gets to his feet and glances around with a shudder.] What a place for him to build to wait in—like the cabin of a ship sunk deep under the sea—like the Sarah Allen's cabin as it is now, probably. [With a shiver.] There's a chill comes over you. No wonder he's mad. [He listens.] Hear him. A year ago today she sailed. I wonder if he knows that. Back and forth, always staring out to sea for the Sarah Allen. Ha-ha! God! It would be funny if it didn't make your flesh creep. [Brusquely.] Come on. Let's leave him and go down where there's light and warmth. [They go down the stairs, closing the door behind them. There is a pause. Then the door of the companionway above is heard being opened and shut. A gust of wind sweeps down into the room. Bartlett stamps down the stairs. The madness which has taken almost complete possession of him in the past year is clearly stamped on his face, particularly in his eyes which seem to stare through and beyond objects with a hunted, haunted expression. His movements suggest an automaton obeying invisible wires. They are quick, jerky, spasmodic. He appears to be laboring under a state of extraordinary excitement. He stands for a

second at the foot of the stairs, peering about him suspiciously. Then he goes to the table and sits down on the edge of a chair, his chin supported on his hands.]

Bartlett—[Takes a folded piece of paper from his pocket and spreads it out on the table in the light of the lantern—pointing with his finger—mumblingly.] Where the cross be—ye'll not forget that, Silas Horne. Ye had a copy o' this—no chance for a mistake, bullies—the gold's there, restin' safe—back to me and we'll share it fair and square. A year ago today—ye remember the orders I wrote ye, Horne. [Threateningly.] Ye'll not be gone more nor a year or I'll—and if ye make port to home here at night, hang a red and a green light at the mainm'st head so I'll see ye comin.' A red and a green—— [He springs up suddenly and goes to a porthole to look out at the sea—disappointedly.] No light be there—but they'll come. The year be up today and ye've got to come or I'll—— [He sinks back on the chair, his head in his hands. Suddenly he starts and stares straight in front of him as if he saw something in the air—with angry defiance.] Aye, there ye be again—the two o' ye! Makin' a mock o' me! Brass and junk, ye say, not worth a damn! Ye don't believe, do ye? I'll show ye! [He springs to his feet and makes a motion as if grabbing someone by the throat and shaking them—savagely.] Ye lie! Is it gold or no? Answer me! [With a mocking laugh.] Aye, ye own up to it now, right enough. Too late, ye swabs! No share for ye! [He sinks back on the chair again—after a pause, dully.] Jimmy's gone. Let them rot. But I spoke no word, Silas Horne, remember! [Then in a tone of fear.] Be ye dyin', Sarah? No, ye must live—live to see your ship come home with the gold—and I'll buy ye all in the world ye set your heart on. No, not ambergris, Sarah—gold and diamonds and sech! We're rich at last! [Then with great anguish.] What woman's stubborn talk be this? Confess, ye say? But I spoke no word, I swear to ye! Why will ye hound me and think evil o' what I done? Men's business, I tell ye. They would have killed us and stolen the gold, can't ye see? [Wildly.] Enough o' talk, Sarah! I'll sail out in spite o' ye! [He gets to his feet and paces up and down the room. The door in the rear is opened and Nat re-enters. He

glances at his father, then looks down the stairs behind him cautiously to see if he is followed. He comes in and closes the door behind him carefully.]

Nat—[In a low voice.] Pa! [Then as his father does not appear to notice his presence—louder.] Pa!

Bartlett—[Stops short and stares at his son as if he were gradually awakening from a dream—slowly.] Be that ye, Nat?

Nat—[Coming forward.] Yes. I want to talk with you.

Bartlett—[Struggling to bring his thoughts under control.] Talk? Ye want to talk—to me? Men's business—no room for a boy in it—keep clear o' this.

Nat—[Defiantly.] That's what you've always said. But I won't be put off any longer. I won't, do you hear?

Bartlett—[Angrily.] I've ordered ye not to set foot in this cabin o' mine. Git below where ye belong. Where's Sue? I told her to keep ye away.

Nat—She can't prevent me this time. I've made up my mind. Listen, Pa. I'm going away tomorrow.

Bartlett—[Uncertainly.] Goin' away?

Nat—Yes, and I'm never coming back. I'm going to start a new life. That's why I want a final talk with you—before I go.

Bartlett—[Dully.] I've naught to say to ye.

Nat—You will have. Listen. I've absolute proof the Sarah Allen is lost.

Bartlett—[Fiercely.] Ye lie!

Nat—[Curiously.] Why do you say that? You know it's true. It's just that you won't believe.

Bartlett—[Wanderingly—the word heading his mind into another channel.] Believe? Aye, he wouldn't believe. Brass and junk, he said, not worth a damn—but in the end I made him own up 'twas gold.

Nat—[Repeating the word fascinatedly.] Gold?

Bartlett—A year ago today she sailed. Ye lie! Ye don't believe either, do ye?—like him. But I'll show ye! I'll make ye own up as I made him! [With mad exultation.] She's comin' home tonight as I ordered Horne she must! I kin feel her makin' for home, I tell ye! A red an' a green at the mainm'sthead if ye make port o' night, I ordered Horne. Ye'll see! [He goes to look out of a porthole. Nat, as if under a spell, goes to another.]

Nat—[Turning away disappointedly—making an effort to throw off his thoughts—without conviction.] Nonsense. There's nothing there—no lights—and I don't believe there ever will be.

Bartlett—[His wild eyes fixed on his son's with an intense effort of will as if he were trying to break down his resistance.] Ye'll see, I tell ye—a red and a green! It ain't time yet, boy, but when it be they'll be plain in the night afore your eyes. [He goes and sits down by the table. Nat follows him and sits down in the other chair. He sees the map and stares at it fascinatedly.]

Nat—What is this—the map of the island? [He reaches out his hand for it.]

Bartlett—[Snatching it up—with a momentary return to reason—frightenedly.] Not for ye, boy. Keep clear o' this for your own good. [Then with a crazed triumph.] Aye! Ye'd believe this soon enough, wouldn't ye?

Nat—[Intensely.] I've always believed there was something—and a moment ago you mentioned gold. [Triumphant in his turn.] So you needn't try to hide the secret any longer. I know now. It's gold—gold you found on that island—gold you fitted out the Sarah Allen to sail back for—gold you buried where I saw that cross marked on the map! [Passionately.] Why have you been afraid to confide in me, your own son? Why didn't you let me sail back in your place? Were you afraid I'd give the secret away? Did you think I wouldn't believe——?

Bartlett—[With a mad chuckle.] Aye, ye believe now, right enough.

Nat—I always believed, I tell you. [Pleadingly.] And now that I know so much why can't you tell me the rest? I must know! I have a right to be heir to the secret. Why don't you confess——

Bartlett—[Interrupting—his brain catching at the word.] Confess? Confess, did ye say, Sarah? To Nat, did ye mean? Aye, Sarah, I'll tell him all and leave it to him to say if I did wrong. [His gleaming eyes fixed on his son's.] I'll tell ye, boy, from start to finish o' it. I been eatin' my heart to tell someone—someone who'd believe—someone that'd say I did no wrong. Listen, boy, ye know o' our four days in an open boat after the Triton went down. I told ye o' that when I come home. But what I didn't tell ye was they was six o' us in that boat, not four.

Nat—Six? There were you and Horne and Cates and Jimmy——

Bartlett—The cook o' the Triton and the ship's boy. We'd been on the island two days—an island barren as hell, mind—without food or drink. We was roasted by the sun and nigh mad with thirst. Then, on the second day, I seed a Malay canoe—a proper war canoe such as the pirates use—sunk down inside the reef. I sent Jimmy down to go over her thinkin' they might be some cask o' water in her the sea'd not got to. [With impressive emphasis.] He found no water, boy, but he did find—d'ye know what, boy?

Nat—[Exultantly.] The gold, of course!

Bartlett—[Laughing harshly.] Ha-ha! Ye do believe right enough, don't ye! Aye, the gold—in a chest. We hauled her up ashore and forced the lid open. [Gloatingly.] And there it was afore our eyes in the sun—gold bracelets and rings and ornaments o' all sorts fixed up fancy with diamonds and emeralds and rubies and sech—red and green—shinin' in the sun! [He stops impressively.]

Nat—[Fascinatedly.] Diamonds and—— But how did they get there?

Bartlett—Looted treasure o' some Chinese junk, likely. What matter how it come about? There it was afore our eyes. And then, mind ye, that thief o' a cook came

runnin' up from where he'd been shirkin' to look at what we'd found. "No share for ye, ye swab," I yelled at him; and then he says: "It ain't gold—brass and junk," he says and run off for fear o' me. Aye, he run off to the boy and told him to jine with his sneakin' plan to steal the gold from us!

Nat—[Savagely.] But why didn't you stop him? Why didn't you——?

Bartlett—I be comin' to that, boy, and ye'll see if I did wrong. We carried the chest to the shade o' a palm and there was that thief o' a cook an' the boy waitin'. I collared 'em both and made 'em look at the gold. "Look and tell me if it's gold or no," I says. [Triumphantly.] They was afeerd to lie. Even that thief o' a cook owned up 'twas gold. Then when I turned 'em loose, because he knowed he'd git no share, he shouted again: "Brass and junk. Not worth a damn."

Nat—[Furiously.] But why did you allow—— Why didn't you——

Bartlett—[With mad satisfaction.] Aye, ye be seein' the way o' it, boy. It was just then we sighted the schooner that picked us up after. We made a map and was burryin' the gold when we noticed them two thieves sneakin' about to see where we'd hide it. I saw 'em plain, the scum! That thief o' a cook was thinkin' he'd tell the folks on the schooner and go shares with them—and leave us on the island to rot; or he was thinkin' he and the boy'd be able to come back and dig it up afore I could. We had to do somethin' quick to spile their plan afore the schooner come. [In a tone of savage satisfaction.] And so—though I spoke no word to him—Jimmy knifed 'em both and covered 'em up with sand. But I spoke no word, d'ye hear? Their deaths be on Jimmy's head alone.

Nat—[Passionately.] And what if you had? They deserved what they got.

Bartlett—Then ye think I did no wrong?

Nat—No! Any man—I'd have done the same myself.

Bartlett—[Gripping his son's hand tensely.] Ye be true son o' mine, Nat. I ought to told ye before. [Exultantly.] Ye hear, Sarah? Nat says I done no wrong.

Nat—The map! Can I see it?

Bartlett—Aye. [He hands it to Nat who spreads it out on the table and pores over it.]

Nat—[Excitedly.] Why, with this I—we—can go back—even if the Sarah Allen is lost.

Bartlett—She ain't lost, boy—not her. Don't heed them lies ye been hearin'. She's due now. I'll go up and look. [He goes up the companionway stairs. Nat does not seem to notice his going, absorbed in the map. Then there is a loud muffled hail in Bartlett's voice.] "Sarah Allen, ahoy!" [Nat starts, transfixed—then rushes to one of the portholes to look. He turns back, passing his hand over his eyes, frowning bewilderedly. The door above is flung open and slammed shut and Bartlett stamps down the stairs.]

Bartlett—[Fixing Nat hypnotically with his eyes—triumphantly.] What did I tell ye? D'ye believe now she'll come back? D'ye credit your own eyes?

Nat—[Vaguely.] Eyes? I looked. I didn't see——

Bartlett—Ye lie! The Sarah Allen, ye blind fool, come back from the Southern Seas as I swore she must! Loaded with gold as I swore she would be!—makin' port!—droppin' her anchor just when I hailed her.

Nat—[Feebly, his will crumbling.] But—how do you know?—some other schooner——

Bartlett—Not know my own ship—and the signal I'd ordered Horne to make!

Nat—[Mechanically.] I know—a red and a green at the mainm'sthead.

Bartlett—Then look out if ye dare! [He goes to a porthole.] Ye kin see it plain from here. [Commandingly.] Will ye believe your eyes? Look! [Nat comes to him slowly—looks through the porthole—and starts back, a possessed expression coming over his face.]

Nat—[Slowly.] A red and a green—clear as day!

Bartlett—[His face is now transfigured by the ecstasy of a dream come true.] They've lowered a boat—the three—Horne an' Cates and Jimmy Kanaka. They're rowin' ashore. Listen. I hear the oars in the locks. Listen!

Nat—[Staring into his father's eyes—after a pause during which he appears to be straining his hearing to the breaking point—excitedly.] I hear!

Bartlett—Listen! They've landed. They'll be comin' up the path now. [In a crooning, monotonous tone.] They move slowly—slowly. It be heavy, I know—that chest. [After a pause.] Hark! They're below at the door in front.

Nat—I hear!

Bartlett—Ye'll see it now in a moment, boy—the gold. Up with it, bullies! Up ye come! Up, bullies! It's heavy, heavy!

Nat—[Madly.] I hear them! They're on the floor below! They're coming! I'll open the door. [He springs to the door and flings it open, shouting.] Welcome home, boys! [Sue is discovered outside just climbing up the stairs from below. She steps inside, then stops, looking with amazement and horror from father to brother. Nat pushes her roughly aside to look behind her down the stairs.]

Sue—Nat!

Nat—[Turning to his father.] I'll go down to the wharf. They must be there or——[The rest of his words are lost as he hurries down the stairs. Bartlett steps back, shrinking away from his daughter, and sinks on a chair by the table with a groan, his hands over his eyes.]

Sue—[Comes to him and shakes him by the shoulder—alarmed.] Pa! What has happened? What is the matter with Nat? What have you told him? [With bitter despair.] Oh, can't you see you're driving him mad, too?

Bartlett—[Letting his hands fall and staring at her haggardly—falteringly, as if reason were slowly filtering back into his brain.] Sue—ye said—drivin' him mad,

too! Then ye think I be——? [He staggers to his feet. Sue breaks down, sobbing. Bartlett falters on.] But I seen her—the Sarah Allen—the signal lights——

Sue—Oh, Pa, there's nothing there! You know it! She was lost months ago.

Bartlett—Lost? [He stumbles over to a porthole and looks out. His body sags as if he were going to fall. He turns away and cries hopelessly in a tone of heart-rending grief.] Lost! Aye, they be no Sarah Allen there—no lights—nothin'!

Sue—[Pleading fiercely.] Pa, you've got to save Nat! He won't heed anyone else. Can't you tell him the truth—the whole truth whatever it is—now when I'm here and you're yourself again—and set him free from this crazy dream!

Bartlett—[With wild grief.] Confess, ye mean? Sue, ye be houndin' me like your Ma did to her dyin' hour! Confess—that I spoke the word to Jimmy—in my mind! Confess—brass and junk—not worth a damn! [In frenzied protest.] No! Ye lie!

Sue—Oh, Pa, I don't know what you mean. Tell Nat the truth! Save him!

Bartlett—The truth? It's a lie! [As Sue tries to bar his way to the companionway—sternly.] Out o' my way, girl! [He pulls himself feebly up the stairs. The door is heard slamming above. Sue sits down in a chair in a hopeless, exhausted attitude. After a pause Nat re-enters. He is panting heavily from his exertions. His pale face is set in an expression of despair.]

Nat—[Looking about the room wildly.] Where is he? Sue! [He comes forward and falls on his knees beside her chair, hiding his face in her lap like a frightened child. He sobs hoarsely.] Sue! What does it all mean? I looked. There was nothing there—no schooner—nothing.

Sue—[Soothing him as if he were a little boy.] Of course there wasn't. Did you expect there would be, you foolish boy? Come, you know better than that. Why, Nat, you told the doctor and I that you were absolutely convinced the Sarah Allen was lost.

Nat—[Dully.] Yes, I know—but I don't believe—like him——

Sue—Sshhhh! You know the state Pa is in. He doesn't realize what he's saying half the time. You ought to have better sense than to pay any attention——

Nat—[Excitedly.] But he told me all he's been hiding from us—all about the gold!

Sue—[Looking at him with alarm—mystified.] Gold? [Then forcing a smile.] Don't be silly, Nat. It doesn't exist except in his poor, deranged mind.

Nat—[Fiercely.] That's a lie, Sue! I saw the map, I tell you—the map of the island with a cross marked on it where they buried the gold.

Sue—He showed a map to you—a real map? [Gently.] Are you sure you're not just imagining that, too?

Nat—I had it in my hands, you fool, you! There—on the table. [He springs to his feet, sees the map on the table, and snatches it up with an exclamation of joy—showing it to Sue.] See! Now will you believe me! [She examines the map perplexedly. Nat paces up and down—excitedly.] I tell you it's all true. You can't deny it now. It's lucky for us I forced him to confess. He might have died keeping the secret and then we'd have lost—I'll tell you what I'm going to do now, Sue. I'm going to raise the money somewhere, somehow, and fit out another schooner and this time I'll sail on her myself. No trusting to Danny or anyone else! Yes, Sue, we'll come into our own yet, even if the Sarah Allen is lost—— [He stops—then in accents of bewildered fear.] But—she can't be lost—I saw the lights, Sue—red and green—as plain as I see you now—— [He goes to one of the portholes again.]

Sue—[Who has been watching him worriedly, puts the map back on the table, gets up and, assuming a brisk, matter-of-fact tone, she goes over and takes him by the arm.] Come downstairs, Nat. Don't think any more about it tonight. It's late and you're worn out. You need rest and a good sleep.

Nat—[Following her toward the door—confusedly.] But Sue—I saw them—— [From above in the night comes the muffled hail in Bartlett's voice.] Sarah Allen,

ahoy! [Nat stops, tortured, his hands instinctively raised up to cover his ears. Sue gives a startled cry. The door above is slammed and Bartlett comes down the stairs, his face revealing that the delusion has again full possession of his mind.]

Bartlett—[Pointing his finger at his son and fixing him with his eyes—in ringing, triumphant tones.] The Sarah Allen, boy—in the harbor below—a red and a green plain afore my eyes! What did I tell ye, boy? Come back from the Southern Seas as I swore she must! Loaded with gold as I swore she would be! [Nat again seems to crumble—to give way to the stronger will. He takes a step toward his father, his eyes lighting up. Sue looks at his face—then rushes to her father.]

Sue—[Putting her hands to her father's head and forcing him to look down into her face—intensely.] Pa! Stop, do you hear me! It's all mad! You're driving Nat mad, too! [As she sees her father hesitate, the wild light dying out of his eyes, she summons all her power to a fierce pleading.] For my sake, Pa! For Ma's sake! Think of how she would feel if she were alive and saw you acting this way with Nat! Tell him! Tell him now—before me—tell him it's all a lie!

Bartlett—[Trying in an agony of conflict to get hold of his reason—incoherently.] Yes, Sue—I hear ye—confess—aye, Sarah, your dyin' words—keep Nat clear o' this—but—red and green—I seen 'em plain—— [Then suddenly after a tremendous struggle, lifting his tortured face to Nat's—in tones of despair.] Nothin' there, boy! Don't ye believe! No red and green! She'll never come! Derelict and lost, boy, the Sarah Allen. [After another struggle with himself.] And I lied to ye, boy. I gave the word—in my mind—to kill them two. I murdered 'em in cold blood.

Sue—[Shrinking from him in horror.] Pa! You don't know what you're saying.

Bartlett—The truth, girl. Ye said—confess——

Nat—[Bewilderedly.] But—it was right. They were trying to steal——

Bartlett—[Overcome by the old obsession for a moment—savagely.] Aye, that's it! The thievin' scum! They was tryin'—— [He stays short, throwing his head back, his

whole body tense and quivering with the effort he makes to force this sustaining lie out of his brain—then, broken but self-conquering, he looks again at Nat—gently.] No, Nat. That be the lie I been tellin' myself ever since. That cook—he said 'twas brass—— But I'd been lookin' for ambergris—gold—the whole o' my life—and when we found that chest—I had to believe, I tell ye! I'd been dreamin' o' it all my days! But he said brass and junk, and told the boy—and I give the word to murder 'em both and cover 'em up with sand.

Nat—[Very pale—despairingly.] But he lied, didn't he? It is gold—real gold—isn't it?

Bartlett—[Slowly takes the studded anklet from his pocket and holds it out to Nat. The latter brings it to the light of the lantern. Bartlett sits on a chair, covering his face with his hands—in a tone of terrible suffering.] Ye'll tell me, boy—if it's gold or no. I've had it by me all this time—but I've been afeerd to show——

Nat—[In a tone of wild scorn.] Why, it's brass, of course! The cheapest kind of junk—not worth a damn! [He flings it savagely into a corner of the room. Bartlett groans and seems to shrink up and turn into a figure of pitiable feebleness.]

Sue—[Pityingly.] Don't, Nat. [She puts her arms around her father's shoulders protectingly.]

Nat—[In a stifled voice.] What a damned fool I've been! [He flings himself down on the cot, his shoulders heaving.]

Bartlett—[Uncovers his grey face on which there is now settling an expression of strange peace—stroking his daughter's hand.] Sue—don't think hard o' me. [He takes the map.] An end to this! [He slowly tears it into small pieces, seeming to grow weaker and weaker as he does so. Finally as he lets the fragments filter through his fingers, his whole frame suddenly relaxes. He sighs, his eyes shut, and sags back in his chair, his head bent forward limply on his chest.]

Sue—[Alarmed.] Pa! [She sinks to her knees beside him and looks up into his face.]

Pa! Speak to me! It's Sue! [Then turning toward her brother—terrifiedly.] Nat! Run—get the doctor—— [Nat starts to a sitting position. Sue tries with trembling hands to feel of her father's pulse, his heart—then begins to sob hysterically.] Oh, Nat—he's dead, I think—he's dead!

[The Curtain Falls]

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