

T h e
T h i r d
W a l k i n g
G e n t l e m a n



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CHARACTERS

Harry Hawk, British actor (Asa Trenchard in “Our American Cousin”)
E.A. Emerson, actor (Lord Dundreary in “Our American Cousin”)
May Hart, actress (Georgina in “Our American Cousin”)
Helen Muzzy, actress (Mrs. Mountchessington in “Our American Cousin”)
Caledonia, Helen and May’s maid
Edmund “Ned” Spangler, Ford’s Theatre scene-shifter, stage carpenter
John “Peanuts” Burroughs, young man
Jim Peck, bartender at the Greenback Saloon
John Wilkes Booth, actor

The play takes place in Washington City on the afternoon of April 15, 1865, and the morning of April 16, in several Ford’s Theatre dressing rooms, the Greenback Saloon next door to the theatre, and backstage at the Theatre.

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Act One

Quintet

Scene One: bar: Peck, Peanuts, Harry Hawk
Scene Two: dressing room: May, Caledonia, HH, Peanuts
Scene Three: bar: Peck, Peanuts, Spangler, Harry Hawk
Scene Four: dressing room: May Hart, HH, Emerson, Caledonia
Scene Five: bar: Peck, Peanuts, May, HH, Emerson, JWB, Spangler

Act Two

Scene One: dressing room: Helen Muzzy, HH, Emerson, Peanuts, Caledonia, May
Scene Two: bar: JWB, Peck, Peanuts, Spangler, HH
Scene Three: backstage: HH, Helen, May, Emerson, Caledonia
Scene Four: the next morning — bar: Stenographer, Peanuts, Peck

Quintet

(Actors stand in front of a drawn curtain, with a US flag hanging on it)

Peanuts:

(facing Caledonia, stage left)
*Well, I'll go hide the body in some hole
Till that the duke give order for his burial;
And when I have my meed, I will away,
For this will out, and then I must not stay*

Caledonia:

(facing Peanuts, stage left)
*Why do you weep so oft, and beat your breast,
And cry 'O Clarence, my unhappy son.'?
Our fatherless distress was left unmoaned:
Your widow- dolor likewise be unwept!*

Harry Hawk:

(facing May, stage right, thumbing through a script anxiously) Pshaw, we've all played Shakespeare! Can't quite see what all the fuss is about – no money in it, money's in comedy – and who'd want to hang around the theatre forever? At some point, a man has to settle down – May? May?

May:

(facing Booth, stage right)
*Richard, thy wife, that wretched Anne thy wife,
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations:
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!*

JWB:

(stage center, facing out)
*And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.*

(he takes down the US flag and dances on it while he sings)
*Hurrah! Hurrah!
For Southern rights, hurrah!
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star.*

Act One, Scene One

[Afternoon in the Greenback Saloon, next door to Ford's Theatre. Behind the bar is a greasy silver backed mirror, there is an iron stove in the middle of the room. Several large crates stand by the door of the bar. As the scene opens, Jim Peck, the bartender, is saying goodbye to an unseen driver. He walks slowly behind the bar, puzzling over the shipping document. Peanuts, a teenaged boy, is sitting on a stool at the bar. His legs just barely touch the floor, and he swings them back and forth idly. He slyly watches first Peck with his invoice, and then looks long and hard at the boxes at the door. Somewhere a church bell rings once.]

Peanuts: "Tut, tut my lord!"

Peck: Eh?

Peanuts: "Tut, tut my lord!"

Peck: (looking behind himself at the mirror) What's that?

Peanuts: I'm saying my lines.

Peck: What lines?

Peanuts: I'm in a play.

[Pause.]

The more I say 'em, the more I know 'em.

Peck: (picking up Peanuts' glass) You should keep your whistle wet.

Peanuts: (stopping Peck's hand) But I'm down to my last penny!

Peck: (scooping a coin off the bar) I'll take it..

Peanuts: (pulling his script pages from his pocket) Might as well. I'll never learn these pages.

Peck: (not listening) Sure you will.

Peanuts: It's all a muzzle.

Peck: Don't you mean muddle? (puts down shipping document, picks up his newspaper.)

Peanuts: What's a muddle to a muzzle like me? On my father's farm in Columbia, we didn't have a muddle or a muzzle.

Peck: But surely you had a gun.

Peanuts: Why, certainly we did!

Peck: Rifles?

Peanuts: Several.

Peck: Well, a rifle has a muzzle.

Peanuts: It did?

Peck: It does. (He goes back to drying some glasses.)

Peanuts: (gets up unsteadily from his stool, stands beside it reading slowly and badly from his paper):

*Tut, tut, my lord, we will not stand to prate.
Talkers are no good doers: be assur'd
We go to use our hands and not our tongues.*

[Pause.]

What do you suppose "prate" means?

Peck: Don't have any idea.

Peanuts: Do you have a dictionary?

Peck: I run a bar, not a library. Look, what is all this you're saying anyway?

Peanuts: It's lines from a play.

Peck: A play?

Peanuts: Richard Aye Aye Aye, although they called it Richard the Third.

Peck: Ah.

[Pause.]

Peanuts: Mr. Booth is teaching it to me

Peck: That so?

Peanuts: He says I've got real talent.

Peck: Does he? Your private teacher, is he?

Peanuts: That he is.

Peck: (gesturing toward Peanut's pages) And what's that?

Peanuts: Mr. Booth had me copy out some lines from his own copy. I'm to learn 'em, and then he'd hear me say them back the next time we meet.

Peck: What's the play about, then?

Peanuts: It's about Richard Aye Aye Aye—

Peck: That much I know.

Peanuts: —who's the brother of the king, and he kills everybody in his way and gets the crown himself.

Peck: (he begins pulling bottles from the shelf and watering them down) And Mr. Booth is showing you how it's done?

Peanuts: He is. La-lee-lo-lu! La-lee-lo-lu!

[pause. Peck looks at Peanuts strangely]

Those are me exercises. Make my tongue stronger.

Peck: Your tongue's too strong. (he puts down the bottle) Where's your little friend, the other little soldier boy?

Peanuts: George Read? Don't know where he is. He don't have the money to buy a cup much anymore. Since the Army quit him.

Peck: It's surely hurt my business. All them soldiers running about – last week, they'd spend their last with me and beg for a bit of credit. This week, it's all begging.

Peanuts: The war's over.

Peck: Well and good, but business is business. (They both look up as the sound of a marching band is heard softly at the window.)

Peanuts: It's Dixie again.

Peck: It's always Dixie now. (brandishing the newspaper) *The Daily Morning Chronicle* has the story. President Lincoln says it's the North's song again, now.

Peanuts: (wonderingly) They played it all night. Made me wonder if I was asleep or awake.

Peck: With all that commotion, I wonder if you slept at all.

Peanuts: The fireworks was wonderful, wasn't it? Like a battle where nobody got hurt.

Peck: Here's hoping that's the only kind of battles we have from now on.

[Pause.]

Peanuts: (dreamily) I was in the cellar. My father and mother was in the parlor. Everybody yelling: Long Live The Union! The Treasury Building had an eagle on top, that they made the shape of with burning gas. The fireworks, they smelled like the shelling of Fort Arlington, the sulfur and the smoke, but no worries this time the Rebs were crashing down the river banks to steal our horses. I had my pages down there with me but there wasn't no light. I was trying to remember my lines, but all I had was the "Tut, tut!" So, "Tut, tut!" and "Tut, tut!" I went. Then I was dreaming about Mr. Booth. I seen him on the stage, and ladies in the grand circle of the theatre and he was calling for me to come out and say my lines. "Tut, tut!" I shouted. "Tut, tut!" And everybody laughed, because I couldn't say the rest of it.

[Pause.]

Peck: I thought you said your father had a farm in Columbia.

Peanuts: He does – he did, anyway.

Peck: Why – but you live here in Washington City now?

Peanuts: The farm was seized and taken away by the Union Army.

Peck: Why in the world?

Peanuts: They said he was aiding the enemy.

Peck: Which enemy?

[Pause.]

Peanuts: (slowly) That always confused me too. He let three boys stay in our woods one night. They was trying to get across the Potomac to Virginia. They were about to be drafted and they couldn't afford substitutes. But they weren't our enemies! One of the boys was my friend.

Peck: And your father still let you join the Union Army?

Peanuts: He didn't want trouble. They'd already taken the farm. He moved us here, and started working in a mill. Me mother takes in piecework.

Peck: Right.

Peanuts: It's a struggle.

Peck: Let me see that paper again. (takes it from Peanuts)

*Tut, tut, my lord, we will not stand to prate.
Talkers are no good doers: be assur'd
We go to use our hands and not our tongues.*

(rubbing his chin). It's a mystery to me, but at least you can try to say it with "my lord" now.

Peanuts: Tut, tut, my lord—

Peck: We will not stand to prate.

Peanuts: There we're talking! It's a long ways easier when you have someone to say it with.

Peck: But what's it all about? Who is the "they" that we're supposed to be being?

Peanuts: Well, Mr. Booth says that Richard Aye Aye Aye is talking to these two gents he's hired. They've got to go and stab this other fellow.

Peck: Who's that fellow, then?

Peanuts: The one who's next in line to be king.

Peck: They want to be stabbing the next-to-king?

Peanuts: That's right.

Peck: *Talkers are no good doers* – did Mr. Booth tell you about that one, too?

Peanuts: Mr. Booth says I've got to learn to say the lines without thinking. The thinking you do is all your temper. He said these lines that the murderers say – but he calls them murtherers which is what they called them in Merrie Old England – are just the usual words, but I've got to be cruel, and bloodthirsty.

Peck: Like a pirate?

Peanuts: Well, yeah. But a pirate without the eye-patch.

Peck: Without the parrot?

Peanuts: Yeah. And without a ship, or sea, or sword.

Peck: They got their knives, though? You said was a stabbing they were going to do?

Peanuts: Yes sir.

Peck: Let's hear you say it, like a pirate, but not like a pirate. (he hands the paper back)

Peanuts: (even more uncertainly, with half-hearted gestures)

*Tut, tut, my lord, we will not stand to prate.
Talkers are no good doers: be assur'd
We go to use our hands and not our tongues.*

[Long pause.]

Peck: Well, you don't much sound like a pirate.

Peanuts: But do I sound cruel?

Peck: What you mean, "cruel?"

Peanuts: I dunno.

Peck: (disappointed) Well, you don't then. And not bloodthirsty, not by a yard. (suddenly) Let's see another couple of pennies on the counter or you can go back to going on your way. I can't be entertaining little poor boys, have you filling up the place.

Peanuts: (surveying the empty saloon) Am I sitting on someone's stool who I can't see?

Peck: They'll be here, soon enough. They'll be piling in from next door after the morning rehearsal. And it's Good Friday, a half day for the government workers. I've got the hot table to start, and things to do. So run along and tut-tut someplace else.

[Pause.]

(Peck turns and looks at the boxes) I've got to think of what to do with these damned boxes.

Peanuts: (too quickly) Do you want me to move them to the back? (he jumps down off stool)

Peck: (vaguely) No, leave them be for now.

Peanuts: (insistently) Let me handle them.

Peck: Those are an errant delivery. I wanted the drayman to take them back, but he insisted they were to stay. (Peanuts slips off his stool and slides over to the boxes to inspect them.) Gave me a dollar. So I'll wait for Mr. Ferguson to see them. (notices Peanuts surreptitiously touching the sides of the boxes) Leave them be, boy!

Peanuts: What's in 'em?

Peck: Bottles of something.

[Pause.]

For now, you'd best be shoving off.

Peanuts: Why are you pushing me along? Ain't I company?

Peck: You're a boy. You've got no money. What did you do in the army, anyway?

Peanuts: I did plenty.

Peck: Did you hold the reins of his horse while your officer pissed?

Peanuts: I never did!

Peck: Get breakfast for the conscripts?

Peanuts: Well, I did walk.

Peck: You walked?

Peanuts: I walked. Across nine states in all. At night, I dreamed about walking. If the road was level, sometimes I slept walking, too. We ate hard tack and sometimes, when the preachers came through the camp, we got soft bread, and they preached about Duty and the Negro, which was hard to understand, but we went to the preacher meetings anyways because it was something to do.

Peck: (grudgingly) Aye, I suppose you did all that.

[Pause.]

Well, the President got it done. First he freed the slaves, then he won the war.

Peanuts: General Grant won the war.

Peck: Well, Lincoln freed the slaves.

Peanuts: In my unit, there was much grumbling after that. After the Emancipation Proclamation. We didn't mind fighting against a rebellion, but we minded fighting for a Negro.

Peck: You weren't fighting. You were holding horses and doing chores.

Peanuts: I had a knife!

Peck: But I'll bet you never used it.

Peanuts: Once I did.

[Pause.]

Ah, you're right, I didn't, really. That's why I want to be an actor. I want to do some things on stage, like fight with swords and knives, like Mr. Booth does.

[Pause.]

But it shouldn't have been the Negro we was fighting for. I minded fighting for a Negro.

Peck: For what good reason?

Peanuts: What did I have, that a Negro didn't have?

Peck: You were free.

Peanuts: Free to be poor and walk across nine states—a Negro can have my freedom for all the good it did me.

Peck: Well, now the Negro does have it.

Peanuts: Let him keep it. I'll be a Negro and go sleep in a hay-pile someplace.

[Pause.]

Peck: Let me see those papers again. (Peanuts hands him the script)

*Talkers are no good doers: be assur'd
We go to use our hands and not our tongues.*

That makes some sense. If you sit there talking you can no do a thing. I've seen it myself. But why in the name of the Savior would you have someone – talking – who would say so damning a thing about talking?

[Pause.]

Peanuts: Huh?

Peck: (exasperated) Ah, listen to me, running my mouth at a child.

[Harry Hawk bursts into the saloon. He is a handsome, somewhat careworn actor in his late twenties, but looks older, with an air of gravity and maturity. He is unshaven and a bit wild-eyed. He has his hat on and his gloves in his hand.]

Peck: Good afternoon, Mr. Hawk.

HH: Afternoon, Peck. Have you seen May about recently?

Peck: I haven't, sir. Expect the crowd from theatre later, though – after rehearsal.

HH: Yes, yes, they're still at it. Mrs. Keene is running a crew rehearsal, now, though – only the lights and cues, etc. And now I can't find May anywhere. (notices Peanuts) How about you, boy? Seen Miss May about anywhere?

Peanuts: No, sir. (pause) I did see Mr. Booth though.

HH: Eh? What's that?

Peanuts: I saw Mr. Booth on the steps of the theatre around noon, reading a letter.

HH: Oh Yes, your famous Mr. Booth. Everybody remembers seeing him.

Peanuts: Did you know he's teaching me to act?

HH: Is that so?

Peanuts: Aye. I'm learning Richard Aye Aye Aye.

HH: Richard Aye – you mean Richard the Third. Shakespeare.

Peanuts: That's the one.

HH: Good luck to you then.

Peck: I've heard them say he's the handsomest man in America. (brandishing his newspaper) That's practically the first thing they say about him when there's a story in the paper.

Peanuts: Letters – he gets letters by the pound at the theatre. (admiringly) Letters from the ladies.

HH: (mincingly, but with an edge) I'm sure he does. But you haven't seen May?

Peck: Nay, she's not been by today.

HH: Well, if you see her, tell her I'm looking for her.

Peck: Any message?

HH: (grimly) No message.

[Black]

Act One, Scene Two

[Ford's Theatre, Backstage, Helen Muzzy and May Hart's dressing room. Afternoon. Helen Muzzy sits at a dressing table. She is a dowdy actress with rather striking eyes, either 40 or 50 years old, depending upon the interviewer. She comes off as dignified if confused, until crossed, and then shows her working class roots. Helen and May's maid, Caledonia, a young black woman, works behind her. She is cautious and careful with her new-found freedom, but handy, articulate and hard-working.]

Caledonia: Ma'am, I'm going to need to go out for an hour this afternoon.

Helen Muzzy: All right. But don't call me ma'am!

Caledonia: Yes, missa. (she begins heating up the curling iron)

Helen: I don't like the sound of ma'am. It's too American.

Caledonia: You said it makes you sound fat, ma'am.

Helen: Missa!

Caledonia: You said it made you sound fat, missa.

Helen: Indeed. An actress does not mind being known as plump. But fat's a different girl altogether.

Caledonia: Ma'am—Missa— why when Mr. Ford tell you he gwine fatten you up good, did you just laugh?

Helen: Mr. Ford is another case altogether, Caledonia. Honestly, if you slaves are going to be truly free, you'll need to get a better grip on metaphor. And men.

Caledonia: Yes, missa.

Helen: Very good. And stop mumbling.

Caledonia: Yes, missa. (wickedly) Would you like a chocolate, missa?

Helen: That would be delightful. (Caledonia proffers the box of candies to her, and Helen imperiously studies them and selects one).

Caledonia: That sure look like a – plump one, missa.

Helen: Are the curlers hot yet?

Caledonia: (checking) Not yet, missa.

Helen: Where are you going this afternoon?

[Pause.]

Caledonia: I have to go – look after something for my family

Helen: (carelessly) Oh. Has Miss Hart been in?

Caledonia: No, missa.

Helen: I want to run the lines in our scene.

[pause. Caledonia looks at Helen expectantly and dourly.]

Helen: Why are you looking at me like that?

Caledonia: I'm waiting for you to ask me to go find her.

Helen: Would you mind terribly?

Caledonia: You look like a half-done cake. I saw her talking to Mr. Hawk not long ago. 'Spect she'll be along. They was in the orchestra pit. Mr. Hawk, he want Miss May to set down on his lap.

Helen: (a little eagerly) What else were they doing?

[Pause.]

Caledonia: Miss Hart said to Mr. Hawk that when they was married, she'd live in his lap. Mr. Hawk said, Would Miss Hart stop making eyes at Mr. Booth, every time he walks through the lobby to check his mailbox, when they was married? Then Miss Hart huffed away. Mr. Hawk, he lit a ceegar.

[Pause.]

(painfully) I'm going this afternoon to see my brother—he in the army.

Helen: (absently) Is he?

Caledonia: He not exactly – all there in the head. One day he wandered off.

Helen: Really?

Caledonia: He had malaria and they never treated him right.

Helen: I'm sure they brought him back.

Caledonia: They did, Missa, but it was during the battle at Antietam.

[Pause.]

They don't look too kindly on wandering off during a battle.

Helen: No, I suppose they don't.

[Pause.]

Caledonia: This curling iron done broke.

Helen: Come along, Caledonia – I need to talk to Miss Keene and you can get her curling iron.

[They exit. After a moment, HH enters alone, furtively.]

HH: May darling, where are you?

[Pause.]

May?

[Pause.]

(to no one) She must be around someplace.

[pause. HH walks to her dressing table and sits down.]

Ah, my darling. (he picks up an engraving of May and looks at it tenderly.) You have no idea how you've captivated me, have you? That's the difference between 20 and 30, I suppose, the one so dewy-eyed, the other so dry.

[Helen Muzzy re- enters unnoticed behind HH. She is about to speak to him as he continues. She clasps her hands to her bosom and begins swooning silently behind him.]

There's men and then there's men, darling – there's so many men! But now I've come to take you home. I'll keep you warm, like a hothouse flower, and you will bloom for me.

[Pause.]

Helen: Oh yes, oh yes, I will!

HH: (shocked) What the devil!

Helen: I beg your pardon, Mr. Hawk—I need one of May’s corsets. We wear the same size, you know—

HH: Of course I didn’t know that.

Helen: Well, you and May are betrothed. Don’t you share everything?

HH: We don’t share corset sizes!

Helen: But surely you know each other’s minds? It’s so rewarding, Mr. Hawk – to see true love like yours.

HH: Eh?

Helen: I’ve told May many a time, what a catch that Mr. Hawk would make! I’ve never seen a finer looking mustache! And you can’t deny that he has talent.

HH: (inflated, but trying to stay gruff) I can’t particularly disagree with you.

Helen: It’s the truth!

HH: But you shouldn’t sneak up on a gentleman like that.

Helen: (moving closer to him) May goes on about how shy you were when she first met you, and yet—with an air of grandeur!

HH: (incredulously) May said that about *me*?

Helen: At first you were querulous.

HH: I was?

Helen: Then you began to relax, to smile.

HH: (scowling) I try never to smile.

Helen: And she no longer feared you.

HH: I was feared?

Helen: Your reputation! “The handsomest man in America!”

[Pause.]

HH: (explosively) Great God! Not Booth again?

Helen: What, Mr. Hawk?

HH: You’re talking about John Booth, not me. He’s been in the newspaper for weeks, with that blasted headline “The Handsomest Man in America”.

[Pause.]

Helen: Oh. Yes. I get confused sometimes.

HH: (sardonically) But thanks.

Helen: (flustered) Oh dear, oh dear. And May told me not one hour ago how easily enraged you are on the subject of Mr. Booth.

HH: (enraged) Me? Enraged?

Helen: Oh yes.

HH: I’ll show her enraged.

Helen: (as if to a child) Mr. Hawk, it’s as if you were in a penny-ante melodrama playing in the South. Next you’ll challenge Mr. Booth to a duel.

[Pause.]

HH: Eh?

Helen: You’ll go to the foyer and have a cigar with the doorman. I can just see you nervously balling up your glove.

HH: (looking at his gloveless hands) I’m not wearing gloves.

Helen: You throw the glove in Mr. Booth’s face. He’ll meet you, tomorrow dawn, in the field by the canal!

HH: (musing) Hmm.

Helen: And then you’d check your pistols.

HH: I don’t have pistols.

Helen: I'm seeing you with pistols! (clasping her hands and swaying) All night you lie awake. You pace back and forth, ten paces. May is pounding on the door, begging you to reconsider! A black crow lands on your window. You call to it.

HH: Call to a crow?

Helen: You point to the moon, you speak of love. The bird flies off. Elsewhere, Mr. Booth sleeps soundly, as all villains do. His slave oils his weapon and tenderly loads – the bullet—all it will take! You die. May throws herself on your body and gnashes her teeth.

HH: (snapping out of it) What was that?

Helen: May grieves!

HH: I don't win?

Helen: Of course not, Mr. Hawk. The righteous lover always dies.

HH: But righteousness should prevail.

Helen: Not in a melodrama. And Mr. Booth is an outstanding marksman.

HH: (weakly) Is he?

Helen: It's well known.

HH: (defeated) Another notch in the belt of Mr. Booth.

[pause. Caledonia enters again with fresh flowers and another curling iron.]

Caledonia: Hello, Mr. Hawk.

HH: Have you seen May about?

[Helen and Caledonia exchange humorous looks. Helen shakes her head innocently, her eyes wide.]

Helen: But you'll always have a lap here! (she pats her lap and giggles. Caledonia controls a laugh.)

HH: Damn that girl!

[Pause.]

All's well until she hears that damned Booth is in town. Then she gets all bothered. Before you know it, he's gone again, and she's my old girl again and doesn't know why I'm so prickly!

Helen: And lately he's been awfully strange.

HH: She knows he's vain. He makes my skin crawl.

Caledonia: Last time I seen her's when you seen her, Mr. Hawk – in the orchestra when you lit your cigar.

HH: You saw all that?

Caledonia: I seen enough.

[pause. HH laughs]

HH: He bedevils me to no end. I saw his father act— and his brother! He's not half of what they were—and are.

Helen: But he's the one with the face. And, Harry, he's not all that bad. I've seen him—he's a passable Richard III, for instance.

HH: Passable! Would that you had seen his father do it— or his brother!

Helen: (stiffly) I acted with Edwin in Cincinnati – he's a boor.

HH: What was the play?

Helen: It was *Our American Cousin*, Harry – he had your role!

HH: Am I better than he was?

[Pause.]

Helen: I don't recall.

HH: Damn!

Helen: (dreamily) I once played Lady Anne in Richard III to his brother's Richard.

[pause. Caledonia takes the curling iron out of the little stove on the floor]

Caledonia: This one is ready now, missa.

Helen: Then let's begin.

[Caledonia begins curling Helen's hair. Helen idly flips through a broadsheet as Caledonia works. Caledonia hums in a low and comforting tone.]

Helen: Look in my bag for a violet sachet – to keep me from inhaling pollen.

Caledonia: You want your face powder on.

Helen: Yes, yes. (After retrieving the sachet, Caledonia begins powdering)

HH: Springtime in Washington City!

Helen: And your bride has spring fever.

HH: (worriedly) She's younger than me. Tell me, Caledonia, do you have children?

[Caledonia looks at Helen]

Helen: Answer the man. Why are you looking at me?

Caledonia: You said you didn't want me talking about my personal business in the theatre any time, ma'am.

Helen: (embarrassed) Missa!

[Pause.]

Well, of course you can talk to Mr. Hawk, Caledonia. I only said that because there are still many white people who think you're still a slave.

[Pause.]

Caledonia: (slowly) I do have children, Mr. Hawk.

HH: Where do you live?

Caledonia: In Georgetown, sir.

[Pause.]

My mother was born here, Mister Hawk. Her grandfather helped build the Capitol Building. And his father took care of the horses at the Executive Mansion.

Helen: Where was your mother's mother born?

[Pause.]

Caledonia: I don't know that. She don't know that. She was bought at the slave market on the Mall. She showed me her chains when I was just a little girl.

HH: Your mother had her chains?

Caledonia: When the master cut them off her, he let her keep them.

HH: (ironically) How generous.

Helen: And your own father?

Caledonia: (tremulously) My father done taken away at night when I was a little girl. I hear dey horses. My mother made us go under the back porch. When I wake up, my mother crying right on top of me. He was taken to Virginia to work in tobacco. (brightening) But my husband, he said we can get some land out West now and farm on it. They going to give land to the freedmen.

[Helen and HH exchange looks]

Helen: You will let me know when you plan to go, won't you?

[Pause.]

Caledonia: Well, missa, I suppose that now you know.

Helen: Oh.

Caledonia: It didn't come out quite like I wanted it too.

Helen: (stiffly) No.

Caledonia: You been good to me, Miss. But we got to try to find a way.

Helen: I'll need to find another maid.

[Pause.]

Let's get back to the powder, Caledonia. I want to look like perfection tonight. The President and General Grant are coming to see us.

Caledonia: General Grant?

HH: I suppose we'll have to fit his entire security detail in that box with him, then.

Helen: Mr. Ford's fixing up the first dress box. We should tell Emerson about it, so he doesn't do anything foolish.

HH: Too foolish, you mean.

Helen: His Lord Dundreary is quite a smash. Do you know, someone has printed a pamphlet of his best lines!

HH: His Dundrearyisms? How dreary.

Helen: I was at the Soldier's Hospital just last week, and one of the poor dear boys was reading it.

HH: Ah yes, the wounded.

[Pause.]

Helen: (softly) Today, I went to the Old Capital Prison to visit some of the poor Confederate wounded. They're pouring in there now. Desperate cases.

HH: (gruffly) That's good of you to do, Helen. Very—Christian.

Helen: (not hearing) Do you know how little medicine they had? They'd cut off a leg using only a little rum as anesthesia. And the boys with malaria—all it would have taken was one pocket of quinine in many cases! But they didn't have it. So the boys lingered in a fever for months.

HH: That's awful.

Helen: When you keep malaria for that long, your skin becomes orange—the young boys became deranged from it.

[Pause.]

HH: What's that dreaded speech in the second Act I keep flubbing?

Helen: Ah yes – the man-trap! (dramatically, Britishly – as Mrs. Mountchessington.) I am aware, Mr. Trenchard, you are not used to the manners of good society, and that, alone, will excuse the impertinence of which you have been guilty.

HH: (clownishly American, as Asa Trenchard) Don't know the manners of good society, eh? Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, old gal-- you sockdologizing old man-trap. Wal, now, when I think what I've thrown away in hard cash to-day I'm apt to call myself some awful hard names, 400,000 dollars is a big pile for a man to light his cigar with. If that gal had only given me herself in exchange, it wouldn't have been a bad bargain. But I dare no more ask that gal to be my wife, than I dare ask Queen Victoria to dance a Cape Cod reel.

[Pause.]

It's odd, but I remember seeing Mr. Booth come in earlier this week as we rehearsed this very scene together.

HH: What!

Helen: We were posing for the publicity stills.

HH: Why can everyone else see him but I never can?

Helen: He was in the back of the theatre. Then I saw him up in one of the boxes. (eagerly to HH) But I'm sure it's nothing to do with you.

HH: Have you ever been in love, Miss Muzzy?

Helen: (tossing her head) I don't know if I should confide in you.

HH: You know all of *my* most intimate details, apparently.

[Pause.]

There's no point in rehearsing anymore, without May to do Mary's lines.

Helen: Caledonia can do them. She knows the whole play.

HH: (to Caledonia) Is that true?

Caledonia: I can do passably.

Helen: She knows every bit of it.

HH: She should be an understudy!

Helen: (stiffly) I don't know if we want to take it that far. But she does know it backwards and forwards. Test her.

HH: Do Helen's opening speech in the first scene of Act II.

Caledonia: (perfectly, as Helen as Mrs. Mountchessington, in a deep British accent)
No, my dear Augusta, you must be very careful. I don't by any means want you to give up De Boots, his expectations are excellent, but, pray be attentive to this American savage, as I rather think he will prove the better match of the two, if what I hear of Mark Trenchard's property be correct.

[Pause.]

HH: My God.

Helen: I told you.

[Pause.]

HH: Do me.

Caledonia: Which scene, Mr. Hawk, sir?

HH: Anything.

[Pause.]

Caledonia: (in broad comic imitation of HH, Southern boy style, hooks her fingers in imaginary belt loops) Don't know the manners of good society, eh? Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, old gal-- you sockdologizing old man-trap. Wal, now, when I think what I've thrown away in hard cash to-day I'm apt to call myself some awful hard names, 400,000 dollars is a big pile for a man to light his cigar with. If that gal had only given me herself in exchange, it wouldn't have been a bad bargain. But I dare no more ask that gal to be my wife, than I dare ask Queen Victoria to dance a Cape Cod reel.

[Pause.]

HH: I am cut to the quick.

[Peanuts enters, carrying a bag, and with a saddle under one arm]

Peanuts: Hello, Miss Muzzy, Mr. Hawk. (he looks at Caledonia and blushes) I – Mr. Peck asked me to bring these bottles of seltzer for you and Miss May.

Helen: (distractedly) That's fine, Peanuts. Can you set them out on the dressing table? (Peanuts begins unpacking the bag and setting out the bottles) You should ask Mr. Booth to teach you some of Richard III, Caledonia.

Caledonia: That book he carries around in his back pocket? He's already learning me a part of it.

[Pause.]

Peanuts: From Richard Aye Aye Aye? Me too! Which part?

Caledonia: (abashed) Lady Anne's daughter.

Peanuts: How many lines you got?

Caledonia: Just a handful. Mr. Booth say, he gonna do that play in London, and maybe, if I'm good enough, he gonna let me come over on a ship and play the part.

[Pause.]

He say colored people don't have to walk behind white people there.

HH: Wonderful. Booth's taking over the theatre and hiring the servants, too. (he exits grouchy)

Helen: Let's hear your lines, then!

[Pause.]

Caledonia: (perfectly)

*Why do you weep so oft, and beat your breast,
And cry 'O Clarence, my unhappy son.'?
Our fatherless distress was left unmoaned:
Your widow- dolor likewise be unwept!*

[Helen stares at Caledonia warily. Pause]

Helen: (icily) That's enough, Caledonia – remember your place.

Caledonia: (sullen) Yes, missa.

[pause. Helen exits with a flourish. Caledonia prepares to leave the dressing room, with a pile of costumes in her arms.]

Peanuts: So what do you do in here?

Caledonia: (flustered) I'm—I'm looking for Miss Hart for to give her fresh linens.

Peanuts: You're the laundry-girl?

Caledonia: Are you an actor, too?

[Pause.]

Peanuts: Why, in fact I am.

Caledonia: I don't know your face.

Peanuts: (proudly) I'm an apprentice to Mr. Booth.

Caledonia: (pointing at the saddle and giggling) Are you going to play the part of the pony?

Peanuts: (dismissively) Ah, that. Well, I also take care of Mr. Booth's horses.

Caledonia: (going about her business, stacking and putting away items) Isn't that a dirty job?

Peanuts: Why, I should say it isn't!

Caledonia: But horses are so big and muddy.

Peanuts: You might disagree, but it's a beautiful animal – and a horse is much more than what it looks like.

Caledonia: Everybody knows what a horse looks like.

Peanuts: (ignoring her) It is what it does. It's as strong as six strong men, it's as fast as a dozen fast dogs, it's as patient as my own mother but not so noisy.

Caledonia: (pleased to hear it all, but nervous) You sound like you know a lot about it.

Peanuts: I do.

Caledonia: Do you have a horse of your own?

Peanuts: (crestfallen) I don't. And that's the problem. Unless I have my own horse, I'm always serving others.

Caledonia: Like Mr. Booth.

Peanuts: Right. Mr. Booth is a fine horseman— but he wouldn't know how to take care of one. He has the lucre to pay somebody else to do it.

Caledonia: Like you.

Peanuts: Somebody *exactly* like me. And it's not the tiniest bit of money, either. So I'm not complaining about my wages. But for the future – I see myself upon a horse, not the boy next to it.

Caledonia: I've never ridden one.

Peanuts: (grandly) It is a big job—you that pass us by on the street, holding down those fierce beasts, you have no idea that's it's young men like myself – that are all that stand between you and the power of an ancient wild animal.

[Pause.]

Caledonia: But isn't it just a horse, after all?

Peanuts: (weakly) In many ways... I suppose you're right.

[Black.]