



**Arthur Reel**

Based on the novel by Stephen Crane

**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

**MAGGIE, A GIRL OF THE STREETS**

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**DEY AINT NO HERO  
COMIN TEH SAVE US.**

**—PETE**

## **MAGGIE, A GIRL OF THE STREETS**

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### **MAGGIE A GIRL OF THE STREETS**

**DRAMA.** Adapted from Stephen Crane's novel, *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1896) this play depicts with shocking realism the poverty and desperation of Maggie, a young woman who must work in a sweat shop and endure abuse at the hands of her alcoholic mother. Yearning to escape from the slums, Maggie soon takes up with Pete, an outgoing bartender. Pete takes Maggie to the theatre and to dance halls, where she is dazzled by all the glitz. Soon Pete's interest in Maggie wanes, and he is seen cavorting around town with his old flame, Nellie. As rumors abound that Maggie has been "ruined" by Pete, Maggie's brother and mother cast her out of the house and onto the streets. Desperate and with no place to turn, Maggie is forced into prostitution to survive.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 45 minutes.

### **ABOUT THE STORY**

As a reporter, Stephen Crane often covered stories in New York's Lower East Side. The squalid tenements and shocking poverty left a lasting impression on Crane. With *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, Crane sought to render realistic portrayals of the people he encountered there. Crane completed *Maggie* in 1893 but could not find a publisher for the novel, since its subject matter was deemed to be inappropriate for readers. Crane self-published the novel in 1893. Then in 1896 with the success of *The Red Badge of Courage*, a revised version of *Maggie* was finally published.

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## **CHARACTERS**

**(8 m, 4 w, 1 flexible, extras)**

**MAGGIE JOHNSON:** 22, attractive but dressed very plainly.

**JIMMY:** 21, Maggie's brother; lean, with casual, careless attire.

**MARY:** 50s but looks more like 60, Maggie's mother; heavy-set woman with gray disheveled hair, lurid face, and partially intoxicated disposition.

**PETE:** 24, day bartender; pug-nosed with a short bristling mustache.

**PAT:** 24, Jimmy's friend.

**NELLIE:** 24, Pete's ex-girlfriend.

**WILLY:** 18, Nellie's date.

**SALOON CUSTOMER:** Non-speaking

**WAITER:** Flexible.

**SINGER:** Female.

**MAN 1, 2, 3:** 40-50s, johns.

**EXTRAS:** As saloon customers, band members.

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## SETTING

Manhattan, Lower East Side, 1890.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

**Scene 1:** Saloon, Lower East Side. There is a bar, barstools, tables, chairs, and a pair of swinging saloon doors.

**Scene 2:** Johnson apartment, three days later. There is a window, a kitchen table and chairs.

**Scene 3:** Saloon. A shining bar of counterfeit massiveness. Behind it a great mahogany-imitation sideboard extending to ceiling. Mirrors in face of sideboard. A nickel-plated cash register is at the head of the bar.

**Scene 4:** Noisy saloon, uptown. There are tables, chairs, and a stage.

**Scene 5:** Johnson apartment.

**Scene 6:** Saloon, Lower East Side, two weeks later.

**Scene 7:** Foggy street near the East River, night. The street is dark except for one street lamp.

**Scene 8:** Johnson apartment.

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## **PROPS**

Beer mugs	Coffee cup
Bar rag	Dress
Glass of milk	Champagne glass
Empty beer bottles	Money
Dirty dishes	Bread
Half-full gin bottle	

## **SOUND EFFECTS**

Pounding on wall	Band music
Police whistle	Sad Irish song
Saloon music	Fog
Applause	Boat horn in distance

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### SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Saloon, Lower East Side of Manhattan, 1890. Pete, a bartender, is standing behind the bar. Opposite the bartender is Jimmy Johnson, who is standing and drinking beer from a tall mug.)

JIMMY: Las' night I come in t'ree in deh mornin' an' d' old lady was bustin' it up.

PETE: (*Wiping the bar.*) Yeah...

JIMMY: An' she waps me, like d' old man use to.

PETE: Yeah...

JIMMY: Allus wappin' dey bote was. Ever since I can r'member. Dat's how d' baby die. One morning' when me an' Maggie is asleep, dey has dis big fight an' fall over on— (*Sips beer.*)

PETE: Yeh.

JIMMY: Like yeh says, Pete. Yehs gotta take everyt'ing in yer strides.

PETE: (*World-wise philosopher.*) Does here where I woiks an' does dere where I plays. Dat's d' rule of life, I says.

JIMMY: Wish't I can take life as yeh do, Pete. Yehs allus keepin' teh d' job...

PETE: Aw rats, Jimmy, dis s'loon ain't no hay ride needer. Nuttin'but dumb jays.

JIMMY: Me, I can't even get no job...

PETER: Yehs drinkin' too much...like d' old lady.

JIMMY: It's rum alley what makes me do it. (*Drinks.*) On'y one ain't drinkin' is Maggie.

PETE: She got some shape, dat sister yours.

(*Jimmy goes to the window.*)

JIMMY: She oughter be comin' up deh street soon.

PETE: Keep huh straight, Jim, I keep tellin' yeh dat.

JIMMY: I tell huh once, I tell huh a t'ousand times: If yehs don't git no job, yehs be hittin' deh toif. Like all dem odders doin'.

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PETE: Dat's all a goil c'n do dis part of d' eart'.

JIMMY: She comin' now, Pete. (*Opens swing doors.*) Say, Mag! Dis way! Here! (*Maggie enters. She remains in doorway. Jimmy beckons her to a table SR.*) Say, Mag, dis here's Pete. Pete, dis Mag.

(*Maggie nods at Pete, crosses reluctantly toward table.*)

PETE: I seen yehs 'round.

MAGGIE: I seen you too...

JIMMY: I was tellin' Pete y' know—what I was tellin' yeh b'fore dat job y' got. Yehs eeder go the woik, er y' go the d' toif. (*Laughs.*)

MAGGIE: What you doin' here, Jimmy?

JIMMY: Jus' chewin' d' jaw wid Pete...

MAGGIE: This the place Mamma come to?

JIMMY: (*With disgust.*) Ah, dat old lady been every one of dese s'loons since yeh was born.

PETE: (*To Maggie.*) Wanna beah?

MAGGIE: No, t'anks.

JIMMY: Give huh some water. Dat's all yehs gonna drink inna s'loon.

MAGGIE: After a day in that factory, I sure need somet'ing cold.

(*Pete comes to the table with a glass of milk.*)

JIMMY: (*Laughing.*) Now looka dat! Looka dat!

MAGGIE: (*Surprised.*) Where'd you get this milk, Pete?

(*Pete sits.*)

PETE: I allus soives it t' deh ladies.

(*Pete smiles at Maggie; she turns away from him, somewhat self-conscious.*)

MAGGIE: You work here a long time, Pete?

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PETE: Sure. Maybe a year, maybe more.

JIMMY: Tell huh 'bout d' place, I mean d' kinda people what comes in an' makes trouble.

PETE: Aw, hully gee, dat's d worse of it.

JIMMY: Go ah. (*Admiration.*) Maggie, lissen t' dis...

PETE: Well, mos' every day some farmer comes in here an' try to run de shop, see?

JIMMY: Tell huh, go ahn...

PETE: But I t'rows dem right out, see? I jolts dem right out in de street before dey knows where dey is.

JIMMY: Like dat mug what come in t' day. Tell, Pete.

PETE: Dere was dis mug, see, what comes in here wid de idear he was goin' t' own d' place, an' he had a still on...

JIMMY: Yeah, he had some still...

PETE: I didn' wanna give him no stuff, see? So I says: "Git outta here an don' make no trouble." Like dat, see? "Git outta here an' make no trouble." Like dat. "Git outta here!" I says. See?

JIMMY: Go ahn, what happen den?

PETE: Yeah. Well, dis blokie, he says, "T' blazes wid it! I ain't lookin' fer no scrap," he says. "I jus' wanna drink an' quick, too, see?" "Aw, go on," I says. Like dat, see? "Don' make no trouble, see."

JIMMY: (*Eagerly.*) Den? What happen den?

PETE: Well...den d' mug, he squares off an' says he is fine as silk wid his dukes. Fine as silk, he says.

JIMMY: Den, huh? Tell huh. Tell huh.

(*Pete rises to illustrate.*)

PETE: I jus' jump d' bar, like dat, see? Jus' like dat. An' I plunk dat blokie. See? In de jaw. Right here, see? In de jaw.

JIMMY: Dassright. In de jaw!

PETE: Right here, in de jaw. (*Sits.*) Dat blokie was a dandy. But he hadn' oughter made trouble, see? He hadn' oughter. (*Maggie is awed by Pete. She is staring openly at him now with great*

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*admiration.*) Ah, dese mughs can't feaze me. Dey knows I can wipe up d' street wid any t'ree of dem.

JIMMY: You r'member when we was kids, huh, Pete?

PETE: When yeh was on d' street...

JIMMY: Getting' beat black an' blue...

PETE: An' me, I'd come, see?

JIMMY: An' lay dem mugs flat...

PETE: Wipe up d' streets...

JIMMY: Plaster d' walls...

*(They both laugh. Maggie sips her milk, enjoying Pete's presence.)*

PETE: I met a chump de odder day way up in deh city. I was doin' d' street an' dis chump, see, he run plump inteh me, an' what's he say, right ta me face? "Yer insolin' ruffin!" Jus' like dat. "Insolin' ruffin!"

MAGGIE: What didja do, Pete?

PETE: "Oh gee!" I says. "Oh, gee!" *(Rises to display.)* "Git off d' eart'!" I says. Den dis bloke, see, he got wild.

JIMMY: Go ahn! Go ahn! What nex', Pete?

PETE: He says somet'ing like I was doom the everlastin' pe'dition. "Gee!" I says. "Yer joshin' me." An' den I slugged 'im, see?

*(Jimmy laughs and rises.)*

JIMMY: See yehs outta d' can.

*(Jimmy exits to the bathroom. Pause.)*

PETE: *(Gently.)* Say, Mag...I'm stuck on yer shape. It's outta sight.

*(Pause.)*

MAGGIE: You sure know how to take care o' yourself, Pete.

*(Pause.)*

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PETE: Where yeh woikin' now, Mag?

MAGGIE: Collar an' cuff fact'ry.

PETE: (*Knowingly.*) Dreary dump, I bet.

MAGGIE: Stuffy it is...

PETE: Bet yeh wish yeh was outta dere.

MAGGIE: I wish I could grow wings, Pete, an' just fly off this eart' ...

PETE: Ah, dis eart' ain't bad.

MAGGIE: This eart' is hell sometime, Pete.

PETE: Stay on yer feet an' woik hard, dat's what I say.

*(Door swings open and Mary Johnson with a groan and a kick. She is intoxicated. Pete rises, ready to defend the fortress.)*

MARY: Where's me, Jimmy! Where— (*She sees Maggie.*) Well, dere's where yeh been! Me daughter! Me own daughter! (*Before Pete can do anything, Mary lunges toward the table and grabs hold of Maggie's glass. Indicating glass.*) What's been in dis! (*Jimmy enters.*) What yehs been drinkin'!

JIMMY: Say, yeh ol' bat, quit dat!

MARY: Keep yer hands off me!

MAGGIE: Ma, it's nothin' but milk!

*(Mary throws the glass against the wall.)*

MARY: Dontcha be drikin' innyt'ing else!

*(Jimmy tries to grab Mary.)*

JIMMY: I tol' yeh t' quit dat!

*(Mary swipes at Jimmy who goes into a table.)*

PETE: I says a hunnert times, see... (*To Mary.*) ...I says keep out, see! Keep outta here.

MARY: Gimme a gin an' shaddup!

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PETE: I tol' yeh no more, see! *(To Jimmy.)* Me boss says don't give huh none.

MARY: Fig on yeh bos. *(Kicks a chair over.)* Gimme a gin!

MAGGIE: No more gin now, Ma—

MARY: T' hell wid yeh! A gin, I says!

PETE: I tol' yeh, yeh'll get no more gin now!

MARY: *(Gives Pete a threatening gesture.)* Whaz zat, huh! Whazzat!

JIMMY: What's wrong wi che?

*(Jimmy takes her arm. She shakes him off.)*

MARY: Leggo yer ma! *(To Pete.)* A gin, I tellya!

*(Pete turns and begins to walk away. Mary pursues. Jimmy grabs her.)*

JIMMY: Shet yer face an' come home, yeh old fool!

MARY: An' who are youse! Yer not me son! *(Twirls her fingers in his face.)* I ain't givin' a snap of me fingers fer youse!

*(Maggie tries to restrain her.)*

MAGGIE: Oh, Ma, come home. Come home.

MARY: Take yer hands off me! I'll stamp all yer faces t'rough de floor!

*(Pete returns.)*

PETE: Now, now, we had enough o' dis. Sid down now an' make no trouble, hear dat!

MARY: *(Fists in air.)* Come ahn, deh hull gang of yehs!

PETE: Don't make no distoibance—

MARY: Distioibance be blowed! Go fall on yehself!

PETE: I'll git di' p'lice—

MARY: Git d' p'lice! I'll stamp all d' faces t'rough d' floor!  
*(Maggie is crying. Pete makes futile efforts at getting Mary to the door. Jimmy assists him.)* Not one cent of me money will yehs

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ever get! I spent me money here fer t'ree years an' now yehs tell me yeh'll sell me no more stuff! *(She spits.)*

*(Jimmy moves her through door.)*

JIMMY: Come ahn, yeh old bat! Git home! Git on home!

MARY: *(With final lunge.)* Go fall on yehself! Go ahn, fall on yehself! Yeh devil! Yeh dirty—

*(Mary is dragged offstage by Jimmy. She continues to scream until her voice fades out altogether. There is a long dull silence then Pete begins to straighten up the bar. Maggie is too embarrassed to even glance at him.)*

PETE: Lucky dey was no people here. *(He picks up broken glass.)*  
She is a cursed jay, Mag.

MAGGIE: I don' know what t' do with her.

PETE: She come in when dere's people, see, an' den it sure is hell.  
Hell.

MAGGIE: It's the same every Friday night. By six she's had enough t' fill her fer the weekend.

*(Maggie sits. Pete brings her another glass of milk. They both stare at each other. The doors swing open and a Man enters. He crosses to bar.)*

PETE: *(To Man.)* Be wid yehs, Johnny. *(The man nods and turns back to the bar.)* Dis all blows over, Mag. See? *(Maggie shakes her head tiredly.)* Dis all blows over, I tell yeh. *(Maggie lowers her head. Pete touches her on the shoulder.)* Tell yeh, Mag, yehs put on yer bes' duds t'morra night an' I'll take yeh t' de show, see?

MAGGIE: *(Looks up.)* You mean it, Pete?

PETE: Sure. We'll go an' have ourselves a time what's outta sight.

*(Maggie rises.)*

MAGGIE: T'morra? What time, Pete?

PETE: Eight, see?

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*(Mary brightens up. She starts toward the door, repeating the word "eight." Lights begin to fade. Pete rises as stage goes black.)*

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**SCENE 2**

*(AT RISE: The Johnson apartment, three days later. The kitchen is in general disarray. Empty beer bottles on a table. Chairs scattered, dirty dishes everywhere. Jimmy is seated, trying to drink some coffee. Mary enters, half-filled bottle of gin in her hand. She is intoxicated.)*

MARY: Where she been, dat Maggie? T'ree days an' nights comin' in late. Yeh seen yer sister, y' have?

JIMMY: Ah, hold it down, yeh old bat.

*(Unsteady and swaying, Mary goes to the window and looks out.)*

MARY: I never had me life—I never had me life easy. Dat's what! Never easy! *(Drinks.)*

JIMMY: I tol' yeh—

MARY: Shet yer face—

JIMMY: I tol' yeh—

MARY: Shet yer face—

JIMMY: Ah, quit dat, yeh old bat! *(She comes over and swings at him. Jimmy ducks. Mary reels past him.)* Yeh old bat!

MARY: Yer no better, dat's what! Yer bote no good! I bringed yehs up like good Cat'lics! Yehs gone teh d' devil, bote a yehs! *(Drinks hard.)*

JIMMY: I'm sick of dis. *(Gets up to leave.)*

MARY: Youse stay put, Jimmy Johnson!

JIMMY: I'm sick—

MARY: I tol' yeh, stay put!

*(She swats him.)*

JIMMY: Aw, dis is disgustin'.

*(Sound of neighbors pounding on the wall.)*

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MARY: *(In direction of pounding.)* Shet yer face, Sadie MacMallister! Yehs allus been ridin' me! Yehs allus been ridin' me! But look teh yer own! *(Pounding continues.)* Look teh yer own! Yeh allus been poundin' dem walls since me ol' man was alive!

*(Mary pounds back. Pounding from other side gets worse.)*

JIMMY: Aw, dis really disgustin'.

MARY: Allus sittin' in jedgemen'! An' me wid babies the care fer! An' now yeh goss'pin' behind me back! Y' ol' terrier!

*(Mary pounds on the wall again. Jimmy makes an attempt to restrain her.)*

JIMMY: Youse'll have di p'lice here.

MARY: Leddem! Leddem! Dey knows me—dey knows what hardship I got! An' now wid dat daughter o' mine! Where she been, hah? Loafin' 'round d' streets, dat's where! *(Pounding continues. The door opens and Maggie enters.)* Ah, yehs back! Yehs come back fer a change! Where yeh been?

MAGGIE: Where you t'ink, Ma? I just come back from work.

MARY: Been loafin' 'round d' streets! Yer getting' t' be a reg'lar devil!

*(Jimmy stares at Maggie. She goes into the adjoining room.)*

JIMMY: Yeh hoid Ma—where yeh been?

MARY: I'll tell yeh where she been!

JIMMY: Where yeh been!

*(Maggie returns with another dress. She begins to change.)*

MARY: Aw, yer no good, dat's what! Yeh've gone t' d' devil, Mag Johnson! Yer a disgrace t' yer people.

MAGGIE: I'm goin' out—I'm just goin' out, Ma.

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JIMMY: Dey is sayin' t'ings about yeh, Mag.

MAGGIE: What t'ings they sayin'?

JIMMY: Dey saying' like dey seen yehs late in d' night, see? It was deh funnies' t'ing, dey sayin' –

MAGGIE: What funnies' t'ing?

JIMMY: Dey seen yehs by d' door wid yer jude feller an' yeh was astin' him if he love yeh, an' den yeh was cryin' as if yer heart would break.

MAGGIE: That's one lie, Jimmy.

JIMMY: Well, dey is sayin'.

MAGGIE: Well, they is always sayin'.

MARY: Yehs gone t' d' devil, Mag!

MAGGIE: I just gone to the t'eatre once.

MARY: Jus' once, hah! Jus' one! An' den where yeh gone!

MAGGIE: To the museum once.

MARY: Mooseem, hah! Mooseem!

MAGGIE: I swear t' you.

MARY: Don't swear, Mag Johnson! Don't yeh swear now!

JIMMY: Yeh takin' teh swearin' now?

MAGGIE: Aw, quit that, bote of you.

MARY: Swearin' she's takin' to! An' what else!

JIMMY: What else, yeah!

MARY: Go ahn, curse yeh, an' good riddance!

*(Maggie gazes at her mother awhile, unable to say anything. Then she resumes her dressing.)*

MAGGIE: I'll be goin' out...

MARY: Goin' out, hah! Go ahn—curse yeh! *(Maggie departs quickly. Mary shouts after her. The wall pounding resumes. Mary pounds back.)* Shet yer face, Sadie MacMallister! Come out in deh hall if yeh wants! Come ahn, yeh overgrown terrier, if yeh wants a real scrap!

JIMMY: *(To himself.)* Me frien'. He done huh, me frien!

MARY: Come ahn, deh hull gang of yehs! Come ahn!

JIMMY: I'll t'ump 'im, dat's what.

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MARY: Come ahn!

JIMMY: I'll t'ump 'im till he can't stan'!

MARY: Dell hull gang of yehs – come ahn!

JIMMY: I'll t'ump 'im till he can't stan'!

MARY: Deh hull gang – come ahn!

JIMMY: He t'inks he can scrap!

MARY: Deh hull gang!

JIMMY: But he'll fin' out diff'ent! I'll t'ump 'im till he can't stan'!

*(Lights fade to black amidst tossing fists, angry shouts and powerful wall pounding.)*

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**SCENE 3**

*(AT RISE: Saloon. Pete, wearing a white jacket, stands behind the bar. He is in the process of serving the only customer in the saloon, when the doors of the entrance swing open with a crash and Jimmy and Pat enter. Jimmy leans on the bar.)*

JIMMY: Whud yeh have, Pat?

PAT: Gin.

JIMMY: *(To Pete.)* Two gin. *(As Pete moves away. To Pat.)* He's a dandy masher, ain't he?

PAT: Somethin', ain't he?

JIMMY: He's great, he is.

PAT: Enough to make a feller toin headsprings in 'is sleep.

JIMMY: Ain't he hot stuff, heh?

PAT: Git on to 'is shape.

JIMMY: *(Shouts.)* Hey!

PETE: *(Shouts back.)* Well, what's eatin' yehs?

JIMMY: *(Disdain.)* Gin!

PAT: Yeah, gin!

*(Pete moves closer.)*

PETE: I says, what's eatin' yehs?

JIMMY: Maybe y' ought-a-know.

PETE: Know what?

PAT: *(To Jimmy, points at Pete.)* Say, what's dat t'ing behind de bar?

PETE: *(To Pat.)* Yeh pointin' on me, feller?

PAT: Maybe I am, heh.

PETE: *(To Jimmy, points at Pat.)* Say, what's dis, Jim?

JIMMY: 'Is name's Pat.

PAT: Awright, now we been interduce.

PETE: Yeah, we been interduce. Now drink yer stuff an' don't make no trouble.

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*(Pat laughs.)*

PAT: He jus' look like some chump t' me, Jim, dat's all.

*(Jimmy lets out with a loud laugh. Pete is confused. He stands back and regards both.)*

JIMMY: Yeah, maybe 'e is some chump, see?

PAT: An' maybe he don't know it needer.

*(They both laugh loudly. The Customer sitting at the bar begins to back away toward the door.)*

JIMMY: Yeah, 'e is some chump awright, what bodders 'is bes' frien fer a beeh—

PAT: An' betch 'is bes' frien' is got a sister—

JIMMY: Which he rooms!

PETE: Aw, come off it—

*(Jimmy stands away from the bar.)*

JIMMY: Dat's right. Rooms!

PETE: Nobody been roomed.

JIMMY: Den how come dat ol' leddy what plays deh music box in d' alley near deh house says? Huh?

PETE: What's she say, deh ol' leddy?

JIMMY: Wanna hear right f'om huh mout' deh woids?

PAT: Yeah, whyntcha tell 'im deh woids.

JIMMY: She seen my sister wid huh jude feller come in late, see?

Oh, very late—an' she was crying' an' askin' dis jude, see—askin' if he love huh. An' dis jude says nuttin' an' she look like she ask orften. An' she kep' cryin' as if huh heart would break. She ask orften, an' huh heart breakin'.

PETE: Yeh wrong! Yeh wrong! We been havin' a outta-sight time.

JIMMY: Yeh took huh to a mooseem, dat's what, hah?

PAT: Yeah, betcha, heh?

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PETE: Dat's what... *(Jimmy and Pat laugh loudly and move to the front side of the bar.)* Don't pick me fer no jay, see? Drink yer stuff now an' get out an' don't make no trouble.

JIMMY: We goes when we git ready! See?

PETE: Well, jus' don't make no trouble.

PAT: Well, what if we does? See?

*(Pete comes forward.)*

PETE: Well, den we'll see who's d' bes' man, you or me.

*(The lone Customer moves closer to the door.)*

JIMMY: When yeh tackles me, yeh tackles one of d' bes' men in d' city. See? I'm a scrapper, I am.

PAT: He's a scrapper. Yeah.

*(Pete turns away.)*

PETE: Aw, go fall on yerself.

PAT: Oh me, what is dat talkin'?

*(They laugh again. Pete turns back to them.)*

PETE: Youse fellers or lookin' fer a scrap an' it's like yeh'll fin' one if yeh keeps on shootin' off yer mout's.

PAT: *(To Jimmy.)* What is dat t'ing sayin' dem woids.

JIMMY: Don't ast me none, Pat.

*(They laugh again. The Customer backs through the door.)*

PETE: I know yehs! See! I kin lick better men den yehs ever saw in yer lifes. Don' pick me up fer no stiff. *(They continue to mock and laugh at him.)* Yeh might be jolted out d' street before yeh knows where yeh is.

*(Pat and Jimmy step closer and laugh in Pete's face.)*

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JIMMY: Ah, go ahn!

PAT: What's talkin' to us, Jim?

JIMMY: Somet'in'. I dunno, Pat.

PAT: Maybe it's some bummer.

JIMMY: Er some alley cat.

PETE: I tell yeh one las' time — one las' time...

JIMMY: Ah, go ahn!

PAT: Yeah, go ahn! Go ahn!

PETE: (*Fury mounting.*) When I comes out one more time from behind dis bar, I t'rows yehs bote in the d' street.

PAT: Yeh're, heh?

JIMMY: Try if yer gonin' to.

*(They laugh again. With a sudden motion, Pete lunges at Jimmy and throws a lightning-like blow to his face. Jimmy ducks his head with the quickness of a cat. Jimmy and Pat answer with blows of their own. They all roll to the floor, arms and legs entwined. Their oaths are loud. From outside the bar, the Customer shouts "Police!" The sound of a police whistle is heard. The fight continues as lights fade to black.)*

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**SCENE 4**

*(AT RISE: Noisy saloon, uptown. Pete and Maggie are seated at a table drinking beer. There is a stage and a band is playing music. The music is loud.)*

MAGGIE: Wish you coulda took me to some other place.

PETE: Ah, we seen a few t'night.

MAGGIE: I mean the t'eatre an' all them dance girls. I enjoyed that, Pete, sittin' there, I mean, with all them fine ladies an' them gentlement in silk high hats, an' the orkistra playin' that waltz. What's it called?

*(She closes her eyes and begins to hum the tune. A Waiter walks by with a tray of drinks. Pete snaps his fingers at the Waiter.)*

PETE: *(To Waiter.)* Two beahs! D' lady here wants a big un! Bring d' lady a big glass. What use is dat pony?

WAITER: Don't be fresh now...

PETE: Aw, git off d' eart'!

WAITER: Don't be fresh, I says.

PETE: Git off, I tell yeh! *(The Waiter moves away.)* Ah, dem, jays! *(Calls out.)* Go fall on yehself!

MAGGIE: Wish we could get outta this place an' go where they has a stage...

PETE: Deh has a stage—right dere. An' soon yehs gonna see dat new goil dey got, see? She gonna come out wid a pink dress way up onna here an' do dat li'l number what sends huh gall'pin' roun' like some pony...

MAGGIE: You been here before, Pete?

PETE: *(With superiority.)* Lotsa times.

MAGGIE: You been to so many places. You seen so many t'ings.

PETE: Yeh.

MAGGIE: Wish I could get out an' see the worl', like you, Pete. Alls I see is that factory, stayin' on my feet 12 hours with this

**MAGGIE, A GIRL OF THE STREETS**

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boss what's always hollerin' I ain't doin' enough fer the five dollas he payin'...

PETE: Dis wold is fulla dumb jays.

MAGGIE: I keep t'inkin' of you, Pete, an' what you'd be sayin' to him.

PETE: I'd break his jaw.

MAGGIE: I keep sayin' I know Pete would take care o' him. I gotta confession to ya.

*(Pause. Waiter brings drinks.)*

PETE: *(To Waiter.)* Ah, dem's ponies. Didja hear me? I ast for a big glass...

*(Waiter shrugs.)*

WAITER: That's the biggest. If you don't like it, m' friend...

PETE: Aw, git off d'earth'.

*(Waiter smiles and departs.)*

MAGGIE: I was tellin' yehs, Pete, I gotta confession...

PETE: *(As new song begins.)* Yeah, go on, Mag, I'm wid yehs.

MAGGIE: Well... *(Hesitating. She tries to drink beer, but stops.)* It's about my mother, an' Jimmy...see?

*(Music grows louder.)*

PETE: Go on, Mag...

MAGGIE: I mean, it's with you too, Pete. I mean, since I met you two weeks ago...

PETE: Hully Gee, Mag, it been dat long? Time sure goes.

MAGGIE: Well...since I met yeh, Pete...I mean, all what we done t'gether...I don't feel like I done nothin' bad, see?

PETE: Ah, yeh done nuttin' bad, Mag...

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MAGGIE: 'Cause it's with you, Pete. I says to myself, if it bein' good t'go with one feller... *(Pause.)* You know what I mean, Pete?

*(Music swells to crescendo. There is loud applause.)*

PETE: Dere she is! De one I tol' yeh 'bout. *(Maggie turns to look. Applause swells.)* Looka da, heh! Looka huh woil' around'! *(The music continues to play. There is laughter and shouts. Pete sits, watching with amusement. Maggie is anxious, looking at Pete, at the stage show, then at Pete again.)* *(Calling loudly to Waiter..)* Two more beahs! *(Waiter appears.)* An done o' dese ponies!

*(Waiter collects mugs.)*

WAITER: I tol' yeh, we don't draw 'em any bigger. *(He exits.)*

PETE: Go fall of d' eart'! *(Makes a gesture.)*

MAGGIE: That factory, Pete, it sure drives me bats. I keep t'inkin' of you, stayin' away all them nights with you...

PETE: Dis is great, Mag—

MAGGIE: An' them shows we seen. That place with them two sisters singin' t'gether, an' that show with all them dancers...

PETE: Look huh woil'! Dis is some big jolly, see?

*(The band music reaches a crescendo. It stops. Applause breaks out. Pete rises and applauds loudly. Waiter enters with two beers.)*

MAGGIE: Pete, I gotta tell yeh—

PETE: Ssh! Not now, not now. Dey gonna bring out dis odda one what sings. *(Applause.)* She got some jolly —

*(Music and more applause.)*

MAGGIE: I gotta tell yeh, Pete, when we went to that museum an' you kissed me...I mean, it was the foist time an' then later you takes me t' yer place... *(Applause fades. A female Singer enters the*

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*stage and renders a sad Irish song.)* I mean, well...with that factory  
I woik in, see –

PETE: Ssssh.

MAGGIE: I feel like...I'm dryin' up in that hot room, fulla smells  
you can pass out from –

PETE: Ssh, I tol' yeh.

MAGGIE: I keep lookin' at them old women grindin' out at their  
sewin' machines –

PETE: Wait till she finish deh song.

MAGGIE: An keep wonderin' how long I got till I gets old an'  
scrawny...

*(Pete turns away.)*

PETE: Aw, rats!

MAGGIE: *(Half to herself.)* An' all them mem'ries come back in my  
head...Poppa comin' outta rum alley, drikin', unpaid wages,  
beatin' Momma...then killin' the baby one night...

*(The song that is being sung is melodic and sad. It touches Mag. She begins to cry and lowers her head. Pete does not notice. The song ends and everyone applauds, Pete loudest of all. He then notices that Maggie is crying.)*

PETE: Aw, gee! Whud y' cryin' fer?

MAGGIE: Mem'ries, I gues...

PETE: Well, don't be t'inkin', I tol' yeh...

MAGGIE: Maybe it was the song, Pete...las' night it was diff' rent.

PETE: Las' night we was at d' t'eatre.

MAGGIE: I liked sittin' up in the gall'ry with all them people  
feelin' the same way we was, like sharin'...

PETE: *(With superiority.)* Aw rats, it was a play, see? Dat's all.

MAGGIE: But it was trut' of life, see, an' that boss was jus' like the  
one I workin' fer, no pity, granite.

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PETE: Granite-heart, yeah. Deh woild is fulla dem jays what oughter be packed off d' eart. *(He sips his beer with great superiority.)*

MAGGIE: Well, he sure was packed off with everybody hiss'n' 'im in the gall'ry, an' then the hero comin' just in time to save them poor people, like us.

PETE: Aw, dat's jus' in deh play, I tol' yehs...

MAGGIE: But they was just like us, Pete, poor an' havin' to slave for that granite-heart...

PETE: But dey ain't no hero comin' teh save us.

*(Pause.)*

MAGGIE: But anyway, I come outta that show feelin' raised up in spirit, Pete, like they was hope fer us.

PETE: D' wicked got what was comin' dem, y' mean?

MAGGIE: *(Eagerly.)* An' they was a chance in this worl' fer somebody like me.

*(Pause. Pete doesn't know how to respond for a moment. Meanwhile the music starts up again. It is lively, gay, this time.)*

PETE: Aw, Mag, wait till next summer an' I'll take yehs to a picnic.

*(Maggie shakes her head.)*

MAGGIE: Next summer is a long time off, Pete.

PETE: Aw, nix. Yehs young. An' yer bloomin' good-looker.

MAGGIE: I fell how I'm gettin' older an' crawny like them women in the sewin' room.

*(Pete points at customers seated at another table.)*

PETE: Dem old men is lookin' at yeh...

MAGGIE: Maybe they is seein' me—

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*(Pause. She drops her head quickly. Pete calls out.)*

PETE: Hey, git a russle on yehs! What yehs lookin' at!

MAGGIE: *(Embarrassed.)* That's alright, Pete...

PETE: Dem old jays had deh look on yeh. *(Calls.)* Go ahn! Git a russle on yehs! *(Rises.)*

*(Maggie takes Pete's hand.)*

MAGGIE: That's alright, I tol' you.

PETE: Git ahn! Git ahn, I says! *(Sits.)* Yer a bloomin' good-looker awright, Mag.

MAGGIE: I'm getting' the look all over, Pete...

*(Pete drinks.)*

PETE: Yeah, I tol' yeh, huh.

MAGGIE: I mean even me own house... Momma, an' Jmmie too.

PETE: Yeh gotta rough it wid dem two jays, Mag.

MAGGIE: I don't know what t' do with them, Pete. Day in, day out, they is sayin' the worst on me.

PETE: Aw, what's de use! Dey is bote slants.

MAGGIE: I can't go home now. They is talkin' all over the street...

PETE: Yeah? Whud dey sayin', huh?

MAGGIE: Plenny they is sayin' — plenny!

PETE: Drink yeh beah.

MAGGIE: *(Nearly in tears.)* Plenny. I jus' can't go home now.

PETE: Well, let dem git off d' eart', bote dem.

MAGGIE: I don' know what t' do with them...

PETE: *(Patting her hand.)* Yehs got t' leave dem far behind. Dey's bote cursed jays. *(Maggie puts her head down and begins to sob.)* Aw, go ahn, Mag. Yehs got t' stick awhile. Yehs got teh be able t' stan' up t' dem two jays. Stan' up, like I been doin', see? Stan' up. *(Maggie raises her head and looks at Pete. The music stops and*

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*everyone applauds. Pete looks around. Looking to his right.) Ah, go ahn! Git a russle on yehs! (Left.) Hey, waita!*

WAITER: What is it, me friend?

PETE: *(Sarcastically.)* Anudder two ponies!

*(Waiter collects mugs.)*

WAITER: If yeh don' like it—

PETE: Ah, fall of d' eart'!

*(Waiter leaves. Music begins again.)*

MAGGIE: You hadn't oughta, Pete—

PETE: Ah, dis woild is fulla cursed jays, see? All dem Jews an' Goimans. Add dem wops an' chinks teh dat too. Stan' up, I says. Stan' up an' spit in dere faces!

MAGGIE: That don't solve nothin'...

PETE: Bloomin' cursed jays. Dey oughter fly away outta sight!

MAGGIE: That sure don't solve nothin'...

*(Waiter brings the beers. As he turns to leave, Nellie appears. She is dressed in brilliant colors. Near her stands Willy, a boy of about eighteen.)*

PETE: Hully gee! *(Nellie extends her hand.)* If it ain't Nell!

NELLIE: Why, hello, Pete, me boy. How yeh been?

PETE: Awright, Nel. Awright. Sit down, will yeh, an' have yer frien' over too. *(To Willy.)* What'd yeh say d' name was?

WILLY: I din' say de name.

*(Nellie sits opposite Maggie.)*

NELLIE: Willy, dis here's Pete.

PETE: *(To Nellie.)* Dis here's Mag Johnson.

NELLIE: Hi, Mag. Dis here's Willy.

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*(Willy nods. It is obvious he is somewhat intoxicated. His head keeps nodding and he keeps jolting back into an upright position. He sits next to Maggie.)*

PETE: *(To Nellie.)* I t'ought yeh was gone away fer good.

NELLIE: *(With careless laugh.)* Well, I was — t'ree mont's ago. Now I'm back teh stay.

PETE: How did dat Buff'lo business woik out?

NELLIE: *(Another laugh.)* Well, he didn't have as many stamps as he tried to make out. So I shook 'im, dat's all.

PETE: Well, I'm glad teh see yehs back in deh city.

NELLIE: How's all dem friends of ours?

PETE: Which uns?

NELLIE: Pat an' Jill.

PETE: Dey's awright.

NELLIE: Max...?

PETE: Aw, dat Jew.

NELLIE: Sorry, what happened dere.

PETE: Well, yeh oughtr' —

*(Pete casts a quick glance at Maggie.)*

NELLIE: Well, you know Max — he allus had de stamps.

PETE: Dey allus do anyhow.

WILLY: *(Loudly.)* Le's have a drink! What'll yeh take, Nell? What'll yeh take, Miss what's-yer-name?

MAGGIE: I have, t'ank you.

WILLY: *(To Pete.)* What'll yeh have, Mr. — ? You, I mean.

PETE: No, t'anks. An' deh name is Pete.

WILLY: Let's all have a drink on me!

NELLIE: *(Annoyed.)* Do keep still, Willy. You talk like a clock. *(To Pete, without missing a beat.)* We'll have many a good time again, you'n me.

PETE: Sure, Nel.

NELLIE: Say, let's go over to Billie's an' have a time right now.

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*(Pete glances at Maggie.)*

PETE: Well, yeh see, it's dis way – I got dis frien', Mag, here...

NELLIE: Oh, g'way, Petey. We'll see nex' time you ask me fer a time wid you...

PETE: Well, look, Nel, come wid me a minute an' I'll tell yer all about it an' why. *(Pete rises. Nellie rises too, a glint in her eye.)*

Jus' fer a minute, Mag.

MAGGIE: *(Confused.)* I'll wait here, Pete.

WILLY: *(Loudly.)* Say, shake de Bowery jay, will ya?

NELLIE: Willy, you are so funny.

*(Pete ignores the remark.)*

PETE: Come on out a minute while I tells yeh. On d' level now. Scuse, be right back, Mag.

*(Maggie nods. Willy scowls, but says nothing. Pete and Nellie leave. Pause. Voices and singing continues.)*

WILLY: Dis ain't a square deal, y'know. She goin' t' leave me an' go wid dat duffer. She goin' t' leave me an' go wid date Bowery duffer...

*(He continues to repeat the phrase several times. Maggie remains as if in a state of shock.)*

MAGGIE: What'd he mean...?

WILLY: Dat duffer...

MAGGIE: Where'd dey go...?

WILLY: Dat Bowery...

MAGGIE: Dey jus'...left...

WILLY: *(Loudly.)* I knew dis was d' way it would be!

MAGGIE: *(Lowly.)* Pete...?

WILLY: She was pullin' me leg...

MAGGIE: Where...?

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WILLY: Dat's d' whole 'mount of it!

MAGGIE: Where...?

WILLY: It's a bloomin' shame d' way dat girl does. An' me spendin' two whole dollars in drinks tonight!

MAGGIE: Oh, Pete...

WILLY: An' she goes off wid dat plug-ugly, who looks as if he been hit in de face wid a coin die! I call it rocky trea'ment for a feller like me! Hey, you, waiter, bring me a cocktail! An' make it strong! *(Maggie remains in a daze. She stares in the direction of the door, looking for Pete. Each stare brings her into a deeper emotional reaction. She begins to breathe heavily, as if she is in a panic.)* Dey gone, dat's what. Dey gone. Dey is jush gone, deh bote o' dem! *(Lights begin to fade slowly.)* Dey bote gone, dasswha'! *(Pause, looks at Mag.)* Shay, li'l girl, we mightish well make bes' of it. Youse ain't sech bad li'l girl. Can't come up to Nell though. Look bad longsider. But y'self, ain't bad. Not bad. Not half bad.

*(Maggie rises.)*

MAGGIE: I'm going...home.

WILLY: Eh, what? Did I hear y' shay home? *(Rises. Stage almost dark.)* Home did y' shay? *(Pounds on table.)* Home! Eh? Home?

*(Maggie departs as stage goes black.)*

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**SCENE 5**

*(AT RISE: The Johnson apartment. Mary is standing CS, raving. Jimmy is standing near the window.)*

MARY: Where's Maggie? Dat's all dey is talkin', alla dem nosey neighbors!

JIMMY: I shoulda t'ump 'im good, I shoulda...

MARY: Wid all d' bring' up she had, how could she? Wid all d' talkin' I did to huh, all dat good talkin'...

JIMMY: T'ump 'im real good I shoulda...

MARY: An' all dem t'ings I tol' huh. All d' right t'ings a girl should know...

JIMMY: T'ump 'im till he can't stand, dat's what. Till he...can't stand...

MARY: When a girl is bringed up de way I bringed up Maggie, how can she go the devil...?

JIMMY: Bu' dat jay, Pat, dat dumb jay, what can't scrap none, he done me in, he did. Done me in...

*(Mary drinks a beer.)*

MARY: She had a bad heart, dat girl. Anybody what had eyse could see dat dere was somet'ing wrong wid huh. Alla deh neighbors knows about it too...

*(Jimmy whirls around.)*

JIMMY: *(Fiercely.)* Well, looka here, dis t'ing queers us! See? We're queered. An' maybe it'd do better if I fine huh an' fetched huh home an' —

MARY: *(Outraged.)* What! Let 'er come an' sleep unner deh same roof wid huh mudder agin? Shame on yehs, Jimmy Johnson! Shame fer sayin' such a t'ing teh yer own mudder!

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JIMMY: I on'y says it'd be better if we keep dis t'ing dark. It queers us, see?

*(Mary laughs loudly.)*

MARY: Sure! I will, won't I! Sure, okay, sure! She can come back an' sleep unner d' same roof wid huh mudder!

JIMMY: I didn't say we'd make huh in teh a little tin angel. No, nutting like dat...

MARY: Den what?! Den what, huh?

JIMMY: Deh way it is now, she can queer us, see? She got deh whole crowd waggin'...

MARY: Yeah, she'll get tired of deh life atter awhile an' den she'll want t' be a comin' home, deh beast! Sure, I'll let huh in den! Sure, oh, sure!

JIMMY: I didn' mean one of dis prod'gal bus'ness...

MARY: It wasn't no prod'gal daughter, yeh fool! It was a son.

JIMMY: I know dat.

MARY: Dat's how much yeh know yer Bible.

JIMMY: I know me Bible.

MARY: Dat's how much yeh learn from yer mudder.

*(Jimmy hangs his head.)*

JIMMY: I'm sorry, Ma.

MARY: Yeh ain't no better den huh. Yeh goin' right t' d' devil.  
*(Drinks hard. Pause. Jimmy sits down in silence. Mary continues to drink.)* Yeah, I'll take huh in, won't I? She can cry huh two eyes out on dem stones of deh street before I'll dirty d' place wid huh.

JIMMY: Curse huh!

MARY: She abused huh own mudder. Huh own mudder! What loved huh – she'll never get anudder chance! *(She takes a big swig of beer.)* Never! Never!

JIMMY: Curse huh! Curse huh! Curse huh!

MARY: Easy now, Jimmy, me boy.

JIMMY: I'll damn huh tah hell! Dat's what I'll do!

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MARY: Yeh'll tell dem all how she done huh mudder.

JIMMY: *(In tears.)* Dey still be talkin' —

MARY: I bring huh up like a daughter oughta be brought up, an' dis is how she soived me.

JIMMY: She went the deh devil deh foist chance she got!

MARY: May heaven f' give dat girl!

JIMMY: It queers us, dontcha see! It queers us!

*(Maggie enters. She halts in the doorway, unable to walk any further. Both Jimmy and Mary stare at her.)*

MARY: *(Flaring.)* Look at huh, Jimmy! Look at huh!

JIMMY: I'm damned...

MARY: Dere's yer sister, boy! Look at huh! *(Mary does not speak these words; she screams them with scoffing laughter. Maggie remains paralyzed.)* Ha, ha, ha! Dere she stands! Ain't she purty! Ain't she just purty! Ain't she sweet, deh beast! Look at huh! Ha, ha! Look at huh! Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

MAGGIE: Jimmy...

JIMMY: *(Disdain.)* Dey all talkin'. Dey all waggin' 'bout yeh.

MARY: *(Chin to chin with Maggie.)* Oh, she's just des same as she ever was, ain't she! She's huh mudder's purty darlin' yit! Look at huh, Jimmy! Ha, ha, come here an' look at huh!

*(Pounding begins on the other side of the wall.)*

MAGGIE: Jimmy...I...

MARY: Look at huh!

JIMMY: Well, now, ain't she a t'ing.

MARY: Ain't she a beaut!

*(Maggie starts to sob.)*

MAGGIE: I been in the streets, Jimmy.

MARY: Ain't she a dandy!

JIMMY: Ain't she jus' a t'ing.

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**37**

MAGGIE: I been walkin' 'round...just walkin' 'round the streets...

MARY: Ha, ha, come here an' look at huh, Jimmy!

JIMMY: (*Bursts out.*) Yeh queers us, dontcha know! Yeh give us deh dark side!

MAGGIE: I just keep walkin' 'round, Jimmy. I don' know where to turn...

MARY: Jus' youse come an' look at huh, Jimmy!

JIMMY: Yeh give us deh dark side, dontcha see?

(*Maggie grips his arm.*)

MAGGIE: Oh, Jimmy, I been lookin' all over fer you.

(*Jimmy draws away.*)

JIMMY: Ah, don't bodder me!

MAGGIE: But, Jimmy, you tol' me—

(*Mary is between the both of them.*)

MARY: Dere's yer sister, boy! Dere she is! (*Spits at Maggie.*)

MAGGIE: (*To Jimmy.*) You tol' me— (*Jimmy draws further away. Mary laughs shrilly in Maggie's face. Pounding on the wall continues. Sobbing.*) I left my job! I left my very job! I got no more money—

JIMMY: Ah, go the blazes!

(*Mary jeers.*)

MAGGIE: I got no more—

(*Mary comes close to Maggie and slaps her across the face.*)

MARY: Dat's what y' desoives!

MAGGIE: (*Shouts.*) That's what I deserves! Yeah, that's what I deserves!

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*(Mary comes at her.)*

MARY: Youse want more, d' yeh?

MAGGIE: *(Blurts out.)* That's how you killed the baby!

*(Mary charges at her.)*

MARY: Tell me I killed huh, ha! Youse c'n talk—

MAGGIE: Allus fightin'! Allus drinkin'!

MARY: We didn' go t' d' devil! We was deecin'!

MAGGIE: Decent! *(Laughs.)*

MARY: Leas' we wasn't in d' streets! Didja ever see yer mudder  
in d' streets! I was bringed up deecin'!

MAGGIE: An' what's your drinkin'?

MARY: Drinkin'! *(To Jimmy.)* Didja hear yer sister! She can talk!

Oh, yeah, she's somet'ing awright! She's some dandy awright!

MAGGIE: Oh, Ma, I just want somet'ing more than drinkin', more  
than dryin' up in that shop an' comin' home nights to...to...this.

MARY: Shet yer face an' don't be talkin' teh yer mudder dis way.

*(Mary makes another threatening gesture and Maggie backs up toward  
the door.)*

MAGGIE: What d' you want, Jimmy? Just t' be hangin' 'round  
not workin, not doin' not'ing?

MARY: Jus' lissen t' huh! Jus' lissen t' yer sister!

JIMMY: Youse been wid dat jude. Dey's flappin'—alla dem, Sadie  
an' dem odders—up an' down dis hull block, up an' down dis  
alley. An' dat lady wid d' flowers she been tellin' everybody  
how yehs kissin'. Dat queers us! *(Shrieks.)* Dat queers us!

MAGGIE: I just want—

*(Mary slaps Maggie.)*

MARY: Yeh want, ha!

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MAGGIE: *(Sobbing.)* I just...want...

MARY: Didja hear huh, Jimmy! Yer sister!

*(Mary slaps Maggie and then she tries to go after Maggie again. Jimmy intercedes.)*

JIMMY: *(To Maggie.)* Youse can go! Go ahn!

MARY: *(Shrieking.)* Go ahn! Git out! Git out! *(Pounding on wall starts again. Jimmy and Mary begin to push Maggie out the door.)*

Go ahn where y' belongs!

JIMMY: Aw, git out! Git out!

MARY: Go ahn where y' belongs, wid dem odders in deh street.

MAGGIE: Oh, what I got but the street...?

MARY: Go ahn wid dem odders!

MAGGIE: The street's all that's left...

JIMMY: Git out! Yehs queers us!

MARY: Go ahn!

*(They continue to push Maggie. The pounding on the walls continues as lights fade to black.)*

**[End of Freeview]**