

# Agnes - young

## AGNES OF GOD JOHN PIELMEIER

First presented in a staged reading at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference in 1979 at the Actors Theatre of Louisville in 1980. It opened on Broadway at the Music Box Theatre in 1982.

Doctor Martha Livingstone has been appointed by the Court to assess **Agnes**, a young nun accused of killing her new-born baby. **Agnes** is a simple girl who has spent most of her life in the convent with little or no contact with the outside world. She denies all knowledge of a baby. The Mother Superior objects strongly to her being questioned and applies to have the Doctor taken off the case, but eventually **Agnes** agrees to submit to hypnosis in order to build up a picture of what happened to her.

In this earlier scene, Doctor Livingstone asks **Agnes** how babies are born.

Published by Samuel French, US

## Agnes

I don't know what you're talking about! You want to talk about the baby, everybody wants to talk about the baby, but I never saw the baby, so I can't talk about the baby, because I don't believe in the baby! . . . No! I'm tired of talking! I've been talking for weeks! And nobody believes me when I tell them anything! Nobody listens to *me!* . . . Where do *you* think babies come from? . . . Well, I think they come from when an angel lights on their mother's chest and whispers into her ear. That makes good babies start to grow. Bad babies come from when a fallen angel squeezes in down there, and they grow and grow until they come out down there. I don't know where good babies come out. *[Silence]* And you can't tell the difference except that bad babies cry a lot and make their fathers go away and their mothers get very ill and die sometimes. Mummy wasn't very happy when *she* died and I think she went to hell because every time I see her she looks like she just stepped out of a hot shower. And I'm never sure if it's her or the Lady who tells me things. They fight over me all the time. The Lady I saw when I was ten. I was lying on the grass looking at the sun and the sun became a cloud and the cloud became the Lady, and she told me she would talk to me and then her feet began to bleed and I saw there were holes in her hands and in her side and I tried to catch the blood as it fell from the sky but I couldn't see any more because my eyes hurt because there were big black spots in front of them. And she tells me things like - right now she's crying 'Marie! Marie!' but I don't know what that means. And she uses me under my ribs and tries to pull me up but I can't move because Mummy is holding my feet and all I can do is sing in her voice, it's the Lady's voice, God loves you! *[Silence]* God loves you. *[Silence]* . . . I don't want to talk anymore, all right? I just want to go home.

## Nicola – Leicester, teenage

### CITY SUGAR STEPHEN POLIAKOFF

First presented at the Bush Theatre, London, in 1975 and then at the Comedy Theatre, London, in the following year.

The action takes place in the Sound Studio of a commercial radio station in Leicester, where disc-jockey Leonard Brazil is running a competition for his teenaged listeners. The coveted prize is to meet one of the boys from the pop group, The Yellow Jacks, at their concert in Leicester, and then to travel to London with them and stay there for four days at the expense of the studio. One of the 'phone-in' contestants is **Nicola Davies**, who works at the local supermarket.

In this scene **Nicola** has been brought into the studio. She has fought her way through the preliminary stages of the contest and has reached the final. So far she has answered most of the questions correctly and is neck-to-neck with the other finalist, Jane. She is seated in front of the microphone and Leonard asks her to talk for one minute on 'the last pop concert she went to'.

Published by Samuel French, London

## Nicola

The last – the last pop concert I went to . . . it was here in Leicester – *(she swallows)* – and Ross and the group were playing, and I queued to get in for a long time . . . I don't know, not . . . We queued for a day and a night, I think – it was a bit wet – you see, and the stone, the pavement, was very hard and cold, much harder than you think – because we slept there you see – it was all right and – and then a man came up, it was late you know then, dark and everything, and he'd come to sell us hot dogs and things, he came out there and he set up along the side of the queue, it was a very long queue, and then soon another – another came up out of the dark, and then there was another one, till there were lots and lots all along the line, really close. *(She looks up)* . . . Oh! I thought it was enough . . . Oh – and – *(lost for words, she is extremely nervous)* – and then we went inside – and the concert – and it was them of course, and it was, you know – well it was all squashed – and some people rushed up and fought to get close – and there was a bit of biting, and that sort of thing, when they called out to us; they seemed a long way off – a very long way away, in their yellow and everything. They weren't very loud – but they made you feel – I felt something come up, you know, a little sort of . . . *(A second of slightly clenched feeling)* I got, you know, a bit worked up inside – they were moving very slowly on the stage like they'd been slowed down, made me feel strange – then they held things up, waved it at us, smiling and everything, they waved yellow scarves, Ross had a bit of yellow string he waved. I think it was, a bit of yellow rope, and I half wanted to kick the girl in front of me or something because I couldn't see; all the way through I had to look at her great back, pressed right up against it. I remember I half wanted to get at it. Move it. And I nearly dropped a ring. *(Pulling at her finger)* I'd been pulling at, put it on specially. *(Very nervously)* If you drop anything it's gone for ever, you know – can't bend down if you're standing – and if you drop yourself – then you'd be gone. When you rush out at the end, you can see all the millions of things that have been dropped shining all over the floor, nobody gets a chance to pick them up. And then it was finished – you know, the concert, and I came outside. It was cold, I was feeling a bit funny. Just walked along out there and I thought maybe I was bleeding. I looked but I wasn't. Some people like to be after a concert, but I wasn't.

## Margaret Knox - 18

### FANNY'S FIRST PLAY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

First performed at the Little Theatre in the Adelphi in 1911. It is a play within a play.

Fanny, a sheltered young girl brought up in Italy, has been sent to Cambridge to complete her education. Now she has written a play and for her birthday asks her father to arrange a private showing to an invited audience including four drama critics, but concealing the fact that she is the author. The play questions middle-class morality, suggesting that 'the young had better have their souls awakened by disgrace, capture by the police, and a month's hard labour, than drift from their cradles to their graves doing what other people do for no other reason than that other people do it, and know nothing of good and evil'. Her father is shocked. By the end of the performance, one of the critics has guessed quite correctly that the heroine, 'Margaret', is in fact based on Fanny herself.

In the play *Margaret Knox*, the daughter of a respectable shopkeeper and his deeply religious wife, fails to return home after attending a prayer meeting with her Aunt. A fortnight later she walks in accompanied by a young French marine officer. She announces that she has been in Holloway Gaol where she was sent for assaulting a policeman and knocking out two of his teeth. Her parents are upset - she has brought disgrace on the family.

In this scene she is alone with her mother, who is trying to reason with her. *Margaret* makes light of the incident: she had enjoyed the experience. Mrs Knox says she hates to see her daughter so hardened.

This edition published in 1921 by Constable and Company Ltd, London  
Re-issued by Penguin in 1987

## Margaret

I'm not hardened, mother. But I can't talk nonsense about it. You see, it's all real to me. I've suffered it. I've been shoved and bullied. I've had my arms twisted. I've been made to scream with pain in other ways. I've been flung into a filthy cell with a lot of other poor wretches as if I were a sack of coals being emptied into a cellar. And the only difference between me and the others was that I hit back. Yes I did. And I did worse. I wasn't ladylike. I cursed. I called names. I heard words that I didn't even know that I knew, coming out of my mouth just as if somebody else had spoken them. The policeman repeated them in court. The magistrate said he could hardly believe it. The policeman held out his hand with his two teeth in it that I knocked out. I said it was all right; that I had heard myself using those words quite distinctly; and that I had taken the good conduct prize for three years running at school. The poor old gentleman put me back for the missionary to find out who I was, and to ascertain the state of my mind. I wouldn't tell, of course, for your sakes at home here; and I wouldn't say I was sorry, or apologise to the policeman, or compensate him or anything of that sort. I wasn't sorry. The one thing that gave me any satisfaction was getting in that smack on his mouth; and I said so. So the missionary reported that I seemed hardened and that no doubt I would tell who I was after a day in prison. Then I was sentenced. So now you see I'm not a bit the sort of girl you thought me. I'm not a bit the sort of girl I thought myself. And I don't know what sort of person you really are, or what sort of person father really is. I wonder what he would say or do if he had an angry brute of a policeman twisting his arm with one hand and rushing him along by the nape of his neck with the other. He couldn't whirl his leg like a windmill and knock a policeman down by a glorious kick on the helmet. Oh, if they'd all fought as we two fought we'd have beaten them.

## Mabel Chiltern – young

### AN IDEAL HUSBAND OSCAR WILDE

This society comedy was first performed in 1895 at the Haymarket Theatre and is set in fashionable London.

The 'Ideal Husband' of the title is Sir Robert Chiltern, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who – having in his youth sold private information about a transaction contemplated by the Government of the day – is now being threatened with exposure by the unscrupulous Mrs Cheveley. He is saved from disgrace by the intervention of his friend, Lord Goring.

**Mabel Chiltern** is Sir Robert's high-spirited young sister, who throughout the play is being relentlessly pursued by her brother's secretary, Tommy Trafford, but finally accepts a proposal of marriage from Lord Goring.

In this scene, **Mabel** is complaining to her sister-in-law, Lady Chiltern, about Tommy's latest proposal. Lady Chiltern protests that Tommy is the best secretary her brother ever had. He has a brilliant future before him.

Published by New Mermaids

## Mabel Chiltern

Gertrude, I wish you would speak to Tommy Trafford . . . Well, Tommy has proposed to me again. Tommy really does nothing but propose to me. He proposed to me last night in the music-room, when I was quite unprotected, as there was an elaborate trio going on. I didn't dare to make the smallest repartee, I need hardly tell you. If I had, it would have stopped the music at once. Musical people are so absurdly unreasonable. They always want one to be perfectly dumb at the very moment when one is longing to be absolutely deaf. Then he proposed to me in broad daylight this morning, in front of that dreadful statue of Achilles. Really, the things that go on in front of that work of art are quite appalling. The police should interfere. At luncheon I saw by the glare in his eye that he was going to propose again, and I just managed to check him in time by assuring him that I was a bimetallist. Fortunately I don't know what bimetallism means. And I don't believe anybody else does either. But the observation crushed Tommy for ten minutes. He looked quite shocked. And then Tommy is so annoying in the way he proposes. If he proposed at the top of his voice, I should not mind so much. That might produce some effect on the public. But he does it in a horrid confidential way. When Tommy wants to be romantic he talks to one just like a doctor. I am very fond of Tommy, but his methods of proposing are quite out of date. I wish, Gertrude, you would speak to him, and tell him that once a week is quite often enough to propose to anyone, and that it should always be done in a manner that attracts some attention . . . I must go round now and rehearse at Lady Basildon's. You remember we are having *tableaux*, don't you? The Triumph of something, I don't know what! I hope it will be triumph of me. Only triumph I am really interested in at present. *(Kisses Lady Chiltern and goes out; then comes running back)* Oh, Gertrude, do you know who is coming to see you? That dreadful Mrs Cheveley, in a most lovely gown. Did you ask her? . . . I assure you she is coming upstairs, as large as life and not nearly so natural.

## Girleen – Irish/Galway, 17

### THE LONESOME WEST MARTIN MCDONAGH

Presented at the Royal Court Theatre in 1997 as part of the Leenane Trilogy and set in Leenane, Galway.

Two brothers, Coleman and Valene, live side by side in an old farmhouse. They are forever quarrelling, even becoming violent as the poteen – supplied to them by **Girleen's** father – takes hold of them. A young priest, Father Welsh, unable to cope with the slaughtering and suicide among his parishioners, also finds solace in drink. He tries to settle the differences between the two brothers but it's a hopeless task. And they in turn try to cheer him up by pointing out the good he has done in the parish. Even **Girleen** does her best to joke him out of his 'crisis of faith'. After all, he does train the 'under-twelves' – a notoriously rough girls' football team.

In this scene Father Welsh is sitting on a bench on a lakeside jetty at night. He has just come back from conducting the funeral service for Tom Hanlon who drowned himself in the lake. He has a pint in his hand. **Girleen** enters. She sits down beside him. She congratulates him on his sermon and he tells her he is leaving the parish.

Published by Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

## Girleen

Father. What are ya up to? . . . That was a nice sermon at Thomas's today, Father . . . I was at the back a ways. *(Pause)* Almost made me go crying, them words did . . . I'd be saying you've had a few now, Father? . . . I wasn't starting on ya . . . I wasn't starting at all on ya. I do tease you sometimes but that's all I do do . . . I do only tease you now and again, and only to camouflage the mad passion I have deep within me for ya . . . *(Welsh gives her a dirty look. She smiles)* No, I'm only joking now, Father . . . Ah be taking a joke will ya, Father? It's only cos you're so high-horse and up yourself that you make such an easy target . . . It's tonight you're going? . . . But that's awful quick. No one'll have a chance to wish you good-bye, Father . . . Will you write to me from where you're going and be giving me your new address, Father . . . Just so's we can say hello now and then, now . . . It's more than Thomas has killed himself here down the years, d'you know, Father? Three other fellas walked in here, me mam was telling me . . . You're not scared because you're pissed to the gills. I'm not scared because . . . I don't know why. One, because you're here, and two, because . . . I don't know. I don't be scared of cemeteries at night either. The opposite of that, I do like cemeteries at night . . . *(Embarrassed throughout)* It's because . . . even if you're sad or something, or lonely or something, you're still better off than them lost in the ground or in the lake, because . . . at least you've got the *chance* of being happy, and even if it's a real little chance, it's more than them dead ones have. And it's not that you're saying, 'Hah, I'm better than ye,' no, because in the long run it might end up that you have a worse life than ever they had and you'd've been better off as dead as them, there and then. But at least when you're still here there's the *possibility* of happiness, and it's like them dead ones know that, and they're happy for you to have it. They say 'Good luck to ya.' *(Quietly)* Is the way I see it anyways . . . I'll be carrying on the road home for meself now, Father. Will you be staying or will you be walking with me? . . . See you so, Father . . . If you let me know where you get to I'll write with how the under-twelves get on tomorrow. It may be in the *Tribune* anyways. Under 'Girl decapitated in football match'.

# Frankie

– American, 12

## MEMBER OF THE WEDDING

CARSON MCCULLERS

First produced in New York in 1950 at the Empire Theatre and set in a small southern town in America in August 1945. **Frankie** is a dreamy, restless girl – one moment full of energy and the next, retreating into her fantasy world. She adores her brother Jarvis and his fiancée Janice, who are soon to be married, and has made up her mind that after the wedding she will stay with them and they will all three travel the world together. She confides her dreams to Berenice, the black cook, who warns her that two is company and three is a crowd, especially at weddings.

In this scene **Frankie** wanders out into the yard. Berenice has gone out for the evening with friends, and **Frankie** feels excluded. She calls across to her little cousin John Henry to come over and spend the night with her. John Henry wants to go out and play with the other children, but **Frankie** only wants to talk about the wedding. She is restless and disturbed.

A New Directions Paperback

## Frankie

I told Berenice that I was leavin' town for good and she did not believe me. Sometimes I honestly think she is the biggest fool that ever drew breath. You try to impress something on a big fool like that, and it's just like talking to a block of cement. I kept on telling and telling and telling her. I told her I had to leave this town for good because it is inevitable. Inevitable . . . Don't bother me, John Henry. I'm thinking . . . About the wedding. About my brother and the bride. Everything's been so sudden today. I never believed before about the fact that the earth turns at the rate of about a thousand miles a day. I didn't understand why it was that if you jumped up in the air you wouldn't land in Selma or Fairview or somewhere else instead of the same back yard. But now it seems to me I feel the world going around very fast. *(Frankie begins turning around in circles with arms outstretched. John Henry copies her. They both turn)* I feel it turning and it makes me dizzy . . . *(Suddenly stopping her turning)* I just now thought of something . . . I know where I'm going . . . I tell you I know where I'm going. It's like I've known it all my life. Tomorrow I will tell everybody . . . *(Dreamily)* After the wedding I'm going with them to Winter Hill. I'm going off with them after the wedding . . . Shush, just now I realised something. The trouble with me is that for a long time I have been just an 'I' person. All other people can say 'we'. When Berenice says 'we' she means her lodge and church and coloured people. Soldiers can say 'we' and mean the army. All people belong to a 'we' except me . . . Not to belong to a 'we' makes you too lonesome. Until this afternoon I didn't have a 'we', but now after seeing Janice and Jarvis I suddenly realise something . . . I know that the bride and my brother are the 'we' of me. So I'm going with them, and joining with the wedding. This coming Sunday when my brother and the bride leave this town, I'm going with the two of them to Winter Hill. And after that to whatever place that they will ever go. *(There is a pause)* I love the two of them so much and we belong to be together. I love the two of them so much because they are the *we* of me.

## Sally Stokes - 17

### THE PASSING-OUT PARADE ANNE VALERY

First presented at the Greenwich Theatre in 1979 and set in an ATS Barrack Room in Pontefract, Yorkshire, in early 1944.

A new group of ATS girls have arrived at the barracks. Over the next few weeks it is Sergeant Pickering's job to turn these raw recruits into 'a first class war machine' for the Passing-Out Parade. **Private Sally Stokes** is one of these recruits. The eldest of a large Catholic family, she was physically abused by her father and sent to a Children's Home. She takes her religion seriously and is upset by any irreverent references to 'God' and 'Christ'. The mention of sex also upsets her.

In this scene the girls are drinking cider and singing bawdy songs. **Stokes** has just been sick. It is her 'first time boozing'. **Private Crab** leads her to a chair and sits her down. She hands her a bottle of cider, telling her to take a swig: 'Hair of the dog - it helps.'

**Stokes** starts to read aloud the letter she has received from Reverend Mother at the Home. Then, because she is slightly drunk, she begins to talk about her Mum and we get a glimpse of her life before she was sent away.

Published by Samuel French, London

*Note:* The letter from Reverend Mother is an addition from the next scene, as **Stokes's** following speech is a little too short for most auditions.

## Stokes

*[Sits at the table and reads her letter]* 'Dear Child, Your mother has asked me to write this letter for her. She wishes to thank you for the ten shillings and to tell you she lit a candle to our Blessed Lady. You'll be sorry to hear that The Home was hit, though the good Lord saw fit to spare us. Minnie Simpson - who I believe was a special friend of yours - is now working at your old job as scullery maid. She sends the enclosed handkerchief, which she embroidered in the rest period. We all pray for you daily, that you may remain in the path of obedience in which you were raised. May God keep you. Reverend Mother. PS Father O'Brian wishes to remind you of the penance you were given.' *[She strokes the handkerchief, in tears]* . . . Me mum's a Catholic . . . *[Talking because she is drunk]* She's a proper Catholic. Don't never drink nor smoke nor swear. And she takes us to Mass - in clean socks! 'Cepting Dad of course. Says he's drinking for rest, he does. *[She hiccups]* Of a Saturday night he'd come home - you know . . . *[She looks at Crab]* Mum in with us, 'case he were too gone to notice. We'd lie there for hours sometimes - ever so still - even baby, waiting for his sound on the stair. And when he got by our door, we'd go all - little. *[She makes a gesture, crouching]* Even our mum . . . *[At Crab, scared]* Bang! *[She puts her hand to her ear]* Bang'd go the door 'gainst the dresser, mirror swinging - so we'd sees ourselves - all arms and bits - and Dad falling in shouting, 'Let's be 'aving you.' I looks through my fingers once, and he were so - so *big!* And then - sudden like - he'd - yank Mum out. Drag her all way 'cross the lino, and her clinging on to things and crying out to the Blessed Virgin to spare her. She never did. *[Closes her eyes and lies back]*.

## Eliza Doolittle - 18/20

### PYGMALION GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

A romantic comedy first produced in German in Vienna in 1913 and then in London the following year. It was the source of a successful American musical, *My Fair Lady*, in 1956 – seen most recently at the Royal National Theatre in 2001.

Professor Henry Higgins, a professor of phonetics, boasts to his friend Colonel Pickering, that he could pass a cockney flower girl off as a duchess by teaching her to speak properly. The girl, **Eliza Doolittle**, calls at Higgins' house and asks him to give her lessons. He takes her on as his pupil and she finally emerges not only as a 'lady' but also as a beautiful and sensitive woman.

In this scene Higgins has invited **Liza** to his mother's at-home day. Henry promises Mrs Higgins that she has strict orders as to her behaviour and has been told to stick to two subjects, the weather and everybody's health. Mrs Eynsford Hill and her daughter are the first to arrive, followed by Colonel Pickering and Freddie Eynsford Hill. When **Liza** makes her entrance she is exquisitely dressed and speaks with pedantic correctness. Mrs Higgins opens the conversation by commenting on the weather, to which Mrs Eynsford Hill replies that she hopes it won't turn cold as there's so much influenza about.

Published by Penguin Books, London

## Liza

The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation . . . What is wrong with that, young man? I bet I got it right . . . *(darkly)* My aunt died of influenza: so they said. *(In the same tragic tone)* But it's my belief they done the old woman in . . . Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead: but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat til she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon . . . *(piling up the indictment)* What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in . . . Them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat . . . Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it . . . It never did him no harm what I could see but then he did not keep it up regular. *(Cheerfully)* On the burst, as you might say, from time to time. And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him fourpence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. There's lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. *(Now quite at her ease)* You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. *(To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter)* Here! what are you sniggering at? . . . If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? *(To Higgins)* Have I said anything I oughtn't?



BLANCHE: Oh.

MITCH: She worries because I'm not settled.

BLANCHE: Oh.

MITCH: She wants me to be settled down before she – [*His voice is hoarse and he clears his throat twice, shuffling nervously around with his hands in and out of his pockets.*]

BLANCHE: You love her very much, don't you?

MITCH: Yes.

BLANCHE: I think you have a great capacity for devotion. You will be lonely when she passes on, won't you? [*MITCH clears his throat and nods.*] I understand what that is.

MITCH: To be lonely?

BLANCHE: I loved someone, too, and the person I loved I lost.

MITCH: Dead? [*She crosses to the window and sits on the sill, looking out. She pours herself another drink.*] A man?

BLANCHE: He was a boy, just a boy, when I was a very young girl. When I was sixteen, I made the discovery – love. All at once and much, much too completely. It was like you suddenly turned a blinding light on something that had always been half in shadow, that's how it struck the world for me. But I was unlucky. Deluded. There was something different about the boy, a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn't like a man's, although he wasn't the least bit effeminate-looking – still – that thing was there . . . He came to me for help. I didn't know that. I didn't find out anything till after our marriage when we'd run away and come back and all I knew was I'd failed him in some mysterious way and wasn't able to give the help he needed but couldn't speak of! He was in the quicksands and clutching at me – but I wasn't holding him out, I was slipping in with him! I didn't know that. I didn't know anything except I loved him unendurably but without being able to help him or help myself. Then I found out. In the worst of all possible ways. By coming suddenly into a room that I thought was empty – which wasn't empty, but had two people in it . . .

[*A locomotive is heard approaching outside. She claps her hands to*

*her ears and crouches over. The headlight of the locomotive glares into the room as it thunders past. As the noise recedes she straightens slowly and continues speaking.]*

Afterwards we pretended that nothing had been discovered. Yes, the three of us drove out to Moon Lake Casino, very drunk and laughing all the way.

[*Polka music sounds, in a minor key faint with distance.*]

We danced the 'Varsouviana'! Suddenly in the middle of the dance the boy I had married broke away from me and ran out of the casino. A few moments later – a shot!

[*The polka stops abruptly.*

*BLANCHE rises stiffly. Then the polka resumes in a major key.]*

I ran out – all did – all ran and gathered about the terrible thing at the edge of the lake! I couldn't get near for the crowding. Then somebody caught my arm. 'Don't go any closer! Come back! You don't want to see!' See? See what! Then I heard voices say – Allan! Allan! The Grey boy! He'd stuck the revolver into his mouth, and fired – so that the back of his head had been – blown away!

[*She sways and covers her face.*]

It was because – on the dance-floor – unable to stop myself – I'd suddenly said – 'I know! I know! You disgust me . . .' And then the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since has there been any light that's stronger than this – kitchen – candle . . .

[*MITCH gets up awkwardly and moves towards her a little. The polka music increases. MITCH stands beside her.*]

MITCH [*drawing her slowly into his arms*]: You need somebody. And I need somebody, too. Could it be – you and me, Blanche?

[*She stares at him vacantly for a moment. Then with a soft cry huddles in his embrace. She makes a sobbing effort to speak but the*