

Moon of the Caribbees

CHARACTERS—

*Seaman of the British Tramp steamer, Glencairn*

YANK  
DRISCOLL  
OLSON  
DAVIS  
COCKY  
SMITTY  
PAUL

LAMPS, *the lamptrimmer*  
CHIPS, *the carpenter*  
OLD TOM, *the donkeyman*

*Firemen on the Glencairn*

BIG FRANK  
DICK  
MAX  
PADDY

*West Indian Negresses*

BELLA  
SUSIE  
VIOLET  
PEARL

THE FIRST MATE

Two other seamen—SCOTTY and IVAN—and several other members of the stokehole—engine room crew.

SCENE—*A forward section of the main deck of the British tramp steamer Glencairn, at anchor off an island in the West Indies. The full moon, half-way up the sky, throws a clear light on the deck. The sea is calm and the ship motionless.*

*On the left two of the derrick booms of the foremast jut out at an angle of forty-five degrees, black against the sky. In the rear the dark outline of the port bulwark is sharply defined against a distant strip of coral beach, white in the moonlight, fringed with coco palms whose tops rise clear of the horizon. On the right is the forecastle with an open doorway in the center leading to the seamen's and firemen's compartments. On either side of the doorway are two closed doors opening on the quarters of the bosun, the ship's carpenter, the messroom steward, and the donkeyman—what might be called the petty officers of the ship. Near each bulwark there is also a short stairway, like a section of fire escape, leading up to the forecastle head (the top of the forecastle)—the edge of which can be seen on the right.*

*In the center of the deck, and occupying most of the space, is the large, raised square of the number one hatch, covered with canvas, battened down for the night.*

*A melancholy negro chant, faint and far-off, drifts, crooning, over the water.*

*Most of the seamen and firemen are reclining or sitting on the hatch. Paul is leaning against the port bulwark, the upper part of his stocky figure outlined against the sky. Smitty and Cocky are sitting on the edge of the forecastle head with their legs dangling over. Nearly all are smoking pipes or cigarettes. The majority are dressed in patched suits of dungaree. Quite a few are in their bare feet and some of them, especially the firemen, have nothing on but a pair of pants and an undershirt. A good many wear caps.*

*There is the low murmur of different conversations going on in the separate groups as the curtain rises. This is followed by a sudden silence in which the singing from the land can be plainly heard.*

DRISCOLL—*(a powerfully built Irishman who is on the edge of the hatch, front—irritably)* Will ye listen to them naygurs? I wonder now, do call that keenin' a song?

SMITTY—*(a young Englishman with a blond mustache. He is sitting on the forecastle head looking out over the water with his chin supported on his hands)* It doesn't make a chap feel very cheerful, does it? *(He sighs.)*

COCKY—*(a wizened runt of a man with a stragglng gray mustache—slapping Smitty on the back)* Cheerio, ole dearl Down't be ser dawhn in the marf, Duke. She loves yer.

SMITTY—*(gloomily)* Shut up, Cockyl *(He turns away from Cocky and falls to dreaming again, staring toward the spot on shore where the singing seems to come from.)*

BIG FRANK—*(a huge fireman sprawled out on the right of the hatch waving a hand toward the land)* They bury somebody—py chiminy Christmas, I tink so from way it sound.

YANK—*(a rather good-looking rough who is sitting beside Driscoll)* What d'yuh mean, bury? They don't plant 'em down here, Dutchy. They eat 'em to save fun'ral expenses. I guess this guy went, down the wrong way an' they got indigestion.

COCKY—*Indigestion!* Hoy us, not 'arf! Down't yer know as them blokes 'as two stomachs like a bleedin' camel?

DAVIS—*(a short, dark man seated on the right of hatch)* An' you seen the two, I s'pect, ain't you?

COCKY—*(scornfully)* Down't be showin' yer igerance be tryin' to make a mock o' me what has seen more o' the world than yeself ever will.

MAX—*(a Swedish fireman—from the rear of hatch)* Spin dat yarn, Cocky.

COCKY—It's Gawd's troof, what I tole yer. I 'eard it from a bloke what was captured pris'n'er by 'em in the Solomon Islands. Shipped wiv 'im one voyage. 'Twas a rare treat to 'ear 'im tell what 'appened to 'im among 'em. *(musingly)* 'E was a funny bird, 'e was—'ailed from Mile End, 'e did.

DRISCOLL—(*with a snort*) Another lyin' Cockney, the loike av yourself!

LAMPS—(*a fat Swede who is sitting on a camp stool in front of his door talking with Chips*) Where you meet up with him, Cocky?

CHIPS—(*a lanky Scotchman—derisively*) In New Guinea, I'll lay my oath!

COCKY—(*defiantly*) Yus! It was in New Guinea, time I was shipwrecked there. (*There is a perfect storm of groans and laughter at this speech.*)

YANK—(*getting up*) Yuh know what we said get if yuh sprung any of that lyin' New Guinea dope on us again, don't yuh? Close that trap if yuh don't want a duckin' over the side.

COCKY—Ow, I was on'y tryin' to edicate yer a bit. (*He sinks into dignified silence.*)

YANK—(*nodding toward the shore*) Don't yuh know this is the West Indies, yuh crazy mut? They're ain't no cannibals here. They're only common niggers.

DRISCOLL—(*irritably*) Whativir they are, the divil take their cryin'. It's enough to give a man the jigs listenin' to 'em.

YANK—(*with a grin*) What's the matter, Drisc? Yuh're as sore as a boil about somethin'.

DRISCOLL—I'm dyin' wid impatience to have a dhrink; an' that blarsted bumboat naygur woman took her oath she'd bring back rum enough for the lot av us whin she came back on board tonight.

BIG FRANK—(*overhearing this—in a loud eager voice*) You say the bumboat voman vill bring booze?

DRISCOLL—(*sarcastically*) That's right—tell the Old Man about ut, an' the Mate, too. (*All of the crew have edged nearer to Driscoll and are listening to the conversation with an air of suppressed excitement. Driscoll lowers his voice impressively and addresses them all.*) She said she cud snake ut on board in the bottoms av thim baskets av fruit they're goin' to bring wid 'em to sell to us for'ard.

THE DONKEYMAN—(*an old gray-headed man with a kindly, wrinkled face. He is sitting on a camp stool in front of his door, right front.*) She'll be bringin' some black women with her this time—or times has changed since I put in here last.

DRISCOLL—She said she wud—two or three—more, maybe, I dunno. (*This announcement is received with great enthusiasm by all hands.*)

COCKY—Wot a bloody lark!

OLSON—Py yingo, we have one hell of a time!

DRISCOLL—(*warningly*) Remimber ye must be quiet about ut, ye scuts—wid the dhrink, I mane—ivin if the bosun is ashore. The Old Man ordered her to bring no booze on board or he wudn't buy a thing off av her for the ship.

PADDY—(*a squat, ugly Liverpool Irishman*) To the divil wid him!

BIG FRANK—(*turning on him*) Shud up, you tamn fool, Paddy! You vant make trouble? (*to Driscoll*) You und me, ve keep dem quiet, Drisc.

DRISCOLL—Right ye are, Dutchy. I'll split the skull av the first wan av ye starts to foight. (*Three bells are heard striking.*)

DAVIS—Three bells. When's she comin', Drisc?

DRISCOLL—She'll be here any minute now, surely. (*to Paul, who has returned to his position by the bulwark after hearing Driscoll's news*) D'you see 'em comin', Paul?

PAUL—I don't see anyting like bumboat. (*They all set themselves to wait, lighting pipes, cigarettes, and making themselves comfortable. There is a silence broken only by the mournful singing of the negroes on shore.*)

SMITTY—(*slowly—with a trace of melancholy*) I wish they'd stop that song. It makes you think of—well—things you ought to forget. Rummy go, what?

COCKY—(*slapping him on the back*) Cheero, ole love! We'll be 'avin our rum in arf a mo', Duke. (*He comes down to the deck, leaving Smitty alone on the forecandle head.*)

BIG FRANK—Sing someting, Drisc. Den ve don't hear dot yelling.

DAVIS—Give us a chanty, Drisc.

PADDY—Wan all av us knows.

MAX—We all sing in on chorus.

OLSON—"Rio Grande," Drisc.

BIG FRANK—No, ve don't know dot. Sing "Viskey Johnny."

CHIPS—"Flyin'Cloud."

COCKY—Now! Guv us "Maid o' Amsterdam."

LAMPS—"Santa Anna" iss good one.

DRISCOLL—Shut your mouths, all av you. (*scornfully*) A chanty it ut ye want? I'll bet me whole pay day there's not wan in the crowd 'ceptin' Yank here, an' Ollie, an' meself, an' Lamps an' Cocky, maybe, wud be sailors enough to know the main from mizzen on a windjammer. Ye've heard the names av chanties but divil a note av the tune or a loine av the words do ye know. There's hardly a rale deep-water sailor lift on the seas, more's the pity.

YANK—Give us "Blow The Man Down." We all know some of that. (*A chorus of assenting voices: Yes! — Righto! — Let 'er drive! Start 'er, Drisc! etc.*)

DRISCOLL—Come in then, all av ye. (*He sings*) As I was a—roamin' down Paradise Street—

ALL—Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

DRISCOLL—As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street

ALL—Give us some time to blow the man down!

CHORUS—

Blow the man down, boys, oh, blow the man down!

Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street—  
Give us some time to blow the man down!

DRISCOLL—A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.

ALL—Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

DRISCOLL—A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.

ALL—Give us some time to blow the man down!

CHORUS—

Blow the man down, boys, oh, blow the man down!

Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.

Give us some time to blow the man down!

PAUL—(*just as Driscoll is clearing his throat preparatory to starting the next verse*) Hay, Drisc! Here she come, I tink. Some bumboat comin' dis way. (*They all rush to the side and look toward the land.*)

YANK—There's five or six of them in it—and they paddle like skirts.

DRISCOLL—(*wildly elated*) "Hurroo, ye scuts!! 'Tis thim right enough. (*He does a few jig steps on the deck.*)

OLSON—(*after a pause during which all are watching the approaching boat*) Py yingo, I see six in boat, yes, Sir.

DAVIS—I kin make out the baskets. See 'em there amidships?

BIG FRANK—Vot kind booze dey bring—viskey?

DRISCOLL—Rum, foine West Indy rum wid a kick in ut loike a mule's hoind leg.

LAMPS—Maybe she don't bring any; maybe skipper scare her.

DRISCOLL—Don't be throwin' cold water, Lamps. I'll skin her black hoide off av her if she goes back on her word.

YANK—Here they come. Listen to 'em gigglin'.

(*calling*) Oh, you kiddo! (*The sound of women's voices can be heard talking and laughing.*)

DRISCOLL—(*calling*) Is ut you, Mrs. Old Black Joe?

A WOMAN'S VOICE—'Ullo, Mikel (*There is loud feminine laughter at this retort.*)

DRISCOLL—Shake a leg an' come aboard thin.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE—We're a-comin'.

DRISCOLL—Come on, Yank. You an' me'd best be goin' to give 'em a hand wid their truck. 'Twill put em in good spirits.

COCKY—(*as they start off left*) Ho, you ain't 'arf a fox, Drisc. Down't drink it all afore we sees it.

DRISCOLL—(*over his shoulder*) You'll be havin' yours, me sonny bye, don't fret. (*He and Yank go off left.*)

COCKY—(*licking his lips*) Gawd blimey, I can do wiv a wet.

DAVIS—Me, too!

CHIPS—I'll bet there ain't none of us'll let any go to waste.

BIG FRANK—I could trink a whole barrel mineself, py chimminy Christmas!

COCKY—I 'opes all the gels ain't as bloomin' ugly as 'er. Looked like a bloody organ-grinder's monkey, she did. Gawd, I couldn't put up wiv the likes of 'er!

PADDY—Ye'll be lucky if any of thim looks at ye, ye squint-eyed runt.

COCKY—*(angrily)* Ho, yus? You ain't no bleedin' beauty prize yeself, me man. A 'airy ape, I calls yer.

PADDY—*(walking toward him—truculently)* Whot's thot? Say ut again if ye dare.

COCKY—*(his hand on his sheath knife—snarling)* 'Airy apel That's wot I says! *(Paddy tries to reach him but the others keep them apart.)*

BIG FRANK—*(pushing Paddy back)* Vot's the matter mit you, Paddy. Don't you hear vat Driscoll say—no fighting?

PADDY—*(grumblingly)* I don't take no back talk from that deck-scrubbin' shrimp.

COCKY—Blarsted coal-puncher! *(Driscoll appears wearing a broad grin of satisfaction. The fight is immediately forgotten by the crowd who gather around him with exclamations of eager curiosity: How is it, Drisc? Any luck? Vot she bring, Drisc? Where's the gels? etc.)*

DRISCOLL—*(with an apprehensive glance back at the bride)* Not so loud, for the love av hivin! *(The clamor dies down.)* Yis, she has ut wid her. She'll be here in a minute wid a pint bottle or two for each wan av ye—three shillin's a bottle. So don't be impashunt.

COCKY—*(indignantly)* Three bob! The bloody cow!

SMITTY—*(with an ironic smile)* Grand larceny, by God! *(They all turn and look up at him, surprised to hear him speak.)*

OLSON—Py yingo, we don't pay so much.

BIG FRANK—Tamn black tief!

PADDY—We'll take ut away from her and give her nothin'.

THE CROWD—*(growling)* Dirty thief! Dot's right! Give her nothin'! Not a bloomin' 'apenny! etc.

DRISCOLL—*(grinning)* Ye can take ut or lave ut, me sonny byes. *(He casts a glance in the direction of the bride and then reaches inside his shirt and pulls out a pint bottle.)* 'Tis foine rum, the rale stuff. *(He drinks.)* I slipped this wan out av wan av the baskets whin they wasn't lookin'. *(He hands the bottle to Olson, who is nearest him.)* Here ye are, Ollie. Take a small sup an' pass ut to the nixt. 'Tisn't much but 'twill serve to take the black taste out av your mouths if ye go aisy wid ut. An' there's buckets more av ut comin'. *(The bottle passes*

*from hand to hand, each man taking a sip and smacking his lips with a deep "Aaah" of satisfaction.)*

DAVIS—Where's she now, Drisc?

DRISCOLL—Up havin' a worrd wid the skipper, makin' arrangements about the money, I s'pose.

DAVIS—An' where's the other gels?

DRISCOLL—Wid her. There's foive av thim she took aboard—two swate little slips av things, near as white as you an' me are, for that gray-whiskered auld fool, an' the mates—an' the engineers too, maybe. The rist av thim'll be comin' for'ard whin she comes.

COCKY—'E ain't 'arf a funny ole bird, the skipper. Gawd blimey! 'Member when we sailed from 'ome ow 'e stands on the bridge lookin' like a bloody ole sky pilot? An' 'is missus dawn on the bloomin' dock fit to kill 'erself? An' 'is kids 'owlin' an' wavin' their 'andkerchiefs? (*with great moral indignation*) An' 'ere 'e is makin' up to a bleedin' nigger! There's a captain for yer! Gawd blimey! Bloody crab, I calls 'im!

DRISCOLL—Shut up, ye insect! Sure, it's not you should be talkin', an' you wid a woman an' childer weepin' for ye in iviry divil's port in the wide worrld, if we can believe your own tale av ut.

COCKY—(*still indignant*) I ain't no bloomin' captain, I ain't. I ain't got no missus—reg'lar married, I means. I ain't—

BIG FRANK—(*putting a huge paw over Cocky's mouth*) You ain't going talk so much, you hear? (*Cocky wriggles away from him.*) Say, Drisc, how ve pay dis voman for booze? Ve ain't got no cash.

DRISCOLL—It's aisy enough. Each girl'll have a slip av paper wid her an' whin you buy anythin' u write ut down and the price beside ut and sign your your name. If ye can't write have some one who can do ut for ye. An' rimimber this: Whin ye buy a bottle av dhrink or (*with a wink*) somethin' else forbid, ye must write down tobaccy or fruit or somethin' the loike av that. Whin she laves the skiper'll pay what's owin' on the paper an' take ut out av your pay. Is ut clear to ye now?

ALL—Yes—Clear as day—Aw right, Drisc—Righto—Sure. etc.

DRISCOLL—An' don't forgit what I said about bein' quiet wid the dhrink, or the Mate'll be down on our necks an' spile the fun. (*a chorus of assent*)

DAVIS—(*looking aft*) Ain't this them comin'? (*They all took in that direction. The silly laughter of a woman is heard.*)

DRISCOLL—Look at Yank, wud ye, wid his arm around the middle av wan av thim. That lad's not wastin' any toime. (*The four women enter from the left, giggling and whispering to each other. The first three carry baskets on their heads. The youngest and best-looking comes last. Yank has his arm about her waist and is carrying her basket in his other hand. All four are*

*distinct negro types. They wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothes and have bright bandana handkerchiefs on their heads. They put down their baskets on the hatch and sit down beside them. The men crowd around, grinning.)*

BELLA—*(she is the oldest, stoutest, and homeliest of the four—grinning back at them)* 'Ullo, boys.

THE OTHER GIRLS—'Ullo, boys.

THE MEN—Hello, yourself—Evenin'—Hello—How are you? etc.

BELLA—*(genially)* Hope you had a nice voyage. My name's Bella, this here's Susie, yander's Violet, and her there *(pointing to the girl with Yank)* is Pearl. Now we all knows each other.

PADDY—*(roughly)* Never mind the girls. Where's the dhrink?

BELLA—*(tartly)* You're a hawg, ain't you? Don't talk so loud or you don't git any—you nor no man. Think I wants the ole captain to put me off the ship, do you?

YANK—Yes, nix on hollerin', you! D'yuh wanta queer all of us?

BELLA—*(casting a quick glance over her shoulder)* Here! Some of you big strapping boys sit back of us on the hatch there so's them officers can't see what we're doin'. *(Driscoll and several of the others sit and stand in back of the girls on the hatch. Bella turns to Driscoll.)* Did you tell 'em they gotter sign for what they gits—and how to sign?

DRISCOLL—I did—what's your name again—oh, yis—Bella, darlin'.

BELLA—Then it's all right; but you boys has gotter go inside the fo'castle when you gits your bottle. No drinkin' out here on deck. I ain't takin' chances. *(An impatient murmur of assent goes up from the crowd.)* Ain't that right, Mike?

DRISCOLL—Right as rain, darlin'. *(Big Frank leans over and says something to him in a low voice. Driscoll laughs and slaps his thigh.)* Listen, Bella, I've somethin' to ask ye for my little friend here who's bashful. Ut has to do wid the ladies so I'd best be whisperin' ut to ye meself to kape them from blushin'. *(He leans over and asks her a question.)*

BELLA—*(firmly)* Four shillin's.

DRISCOLL—*(laughing)* D'you hear that, all av ye? Four shillin's ut is.

PADDY—*(angrily)* To hell wid this talkin'. I want a dhrink.

BELLA—Is everything all right, Mike?

DRISCOLL—*(after a look back at the bridge)* Sure. Let her droive!

BELLA—All right, girls. *(The girls reach down in their baskets in under the fruit which is on top and pulls out a pint bottle. Four of the men crowd and take the bottles.)* Fetch a light, Lamps, that's a good boy. *(Lamps goes to his room and returns with a candle. This is passed from*

*one girl to another as the men sign the sheets of paper for their bottles.) Don't you boys forget to mark down cigarettes or tobacco or fruit, remember! Three shillin's is the price. Take it into the fo'castle. For Gawd's sake, don't stand out here drinkin' in the moonlight. (The four go into the forecastle. Four more take their places. Paddy plants himself in front of Pearl who is sitting by Yank with his arm still around her.)*

PADDY—*(gruffly)* Gimme thot! *(She holds out a bottle which he snatches from her hand. He turns to go away.)*

YANK—*(sharply)* Here, you! Where d'yuh get that stuff? You ain't signed for that yet.

PADDY—*(sullenly)* I can't write me name.

YANK—Then I'll write it for yuh. *(He takes the paper from Pearl and writes.)* There ain't goin' to be no welchin' on little Bright Eyes here—not when I'm around, see? Ain't I right, kiddo?

PEARL—*(with a grin)* Yes, suh.

BELLA—*(seeing all four are served)* Take it into the fo'castle, boys. *(Paddy defiantly raises his bottle and gulps down a drink in the full moonlight. Bella sees him.)* Look at 'im! Look at the dirty swine! *(Paddy slouches into the forecastle.)* Wants to git me in trouble. That settles it! We all got to, git inside, boys, where we won't git caught. Come on, girls. *(The girls pick up their baskets and follow Bella. Yank and Pearl are the last to reach the doorway. She lingers behind him, her eyes fixed on Smitty, who is still sitting on the forecastle head, his chin on his hands, staring off into vacancy.)*

PEARL—*(waving a hand to attract his attention)* Come ahn in, pretty boy. Ah likes you.

SMITTY—*(coldly)* Yes; I want to buy a bottle, please. *(He goes down the steps and follows her into the forecastle. No one remains on deck but the Donkeyman, who sits smoking his pipe in front of his door. There is the subdued babble of voices from the crowd inside but the mournful cadence of the song from the shore can again be faintly heard. Smitty reappears and closes the door to the forecastle after him. He shudders and shakes his shoulders as if flinging off something which disgusted him. Then he lifts the bottle which is in his hand to his lips and gulps down a long drink. The Donkeyman watches him impassively. Smitty sits down on the hatch facing him. Now that the closed door has shut off nearly all the noise the singing from shore comes clearly over the moonlit water.)*

SMITTY—*(listening to it for a moment)* Damn that song of theirs. *(He takes another big drink.)* What do you say, Donk?

THE DONKEYMAN—*(quietly)* Seems nice an' sleepy-like.

SMITTY—*(with a hard laugh)* Sleepy! If I listened to it long—sober—I'd never go to sleep.

THE DONKEYMAN—'Tain't sich bad music, is it? Sounds kinder pretty to me—low an' mournful—same as listenin' to the organ outside o' church of a Sunday.

SMITTY—(*with a touch of impatience*) I didn't mean it was bad music. It isn't. It's the beastly memories the damn thing brings up—for some reason. (*He takes another pull at the bottle.*)

THE DONKEYMAN—Ever hear it before?

SMITTY—No; never in my life. It's just a something about the rotten thing which makes me think of—well—oh, the devil! (*He forces a laugh.*)

THE DONKEYMAN—(*spitting placidly*) Queer things, memories. I ain't ever been bothered much by 'em.

SMITTY—(*looking at him fixedly for a moment—with quiet scorn*) No, you wouldn't be.

THE DONKEYMAN—Not that I ain't had my share o' things goin' wrong; but I puts 'em out o' me mind, like, an' fergets 'em.

SMITTY—But suppose you couldn't put them out of your mind? Suppose they haunted you when you were awake and when you were asleep—what then?

THE DONKEYMAN—(*quietly*) I'd git drunk, sames you're doin'.

SMITTY—(*with a harsh laugh*) Good advice. (*He takes another drink. He is beginning to show the effects of the liquor. His face is flushed and he talks rather wildly.*)

We're poor little lambs who have lost our way, eh, Donk? Damned from here to eternity, what? God have mercy on such as we! True, isn't it, Donk?

THE DONKEYMAN—Maybe; I dunno. (*after a slight pause*) Whatever set you goin' to sea? You ain't made for it.

SMITTY—(*laughing wildly*) My old friend in the bottle here, Donk.

THE DONKEYMAN—I done my share o' drinkin' in my time. (*regretfully*) Them was good times, those days. Can't hold up under drink no more. Doctor told me I'd got to stop or die. (*He spits contentedly.*) So I stops.

SMITTY—(*with a foolish smile*) Then I'll drink one for you. Here's your health, old top! (*He drinks.*)

THE DONKEYMAN—(*after a pause*) S'pose there's a gel mixed up in it someplace, ain't there?

SMITTY—(*stiffly*) What makes you think so?

THE DONKEYMAN—Always is when a man lets music bother 'im. (*after a few puffs at his pipe*) An' she said she threw you over 'cause you was drunk; an' you said you was drunk 'cause she threw you over. (*He spits leisurely.*) Queer thing, love, ain't it?

SMITTY—(*rising to his feet with drunken dignity*) I'll trouble you not to pry into my affairs, Donkeyman.

THE DONKEYMAN—(*unmoved*) That's everybody's affair, what I said. I been through it many's the time. (*genially*) I always hit 'em a whack on the ear an' went out and got drunker 'n ever. When I come home again

they always had somethin' special nice cooked fur me to eat. (*puffing at his pipe*) That's the on'y way to fix 'em when they gits on their high horse. I don't s'pose you ever tried that?

SMITTY—(*pompously*) Gentlemen don't hit women.

THE DONKEYMAN—(*placidly*) No; that's why they has memories when they hears music. (*Smitty does not deign to reply to this but sinks into a scornful silence. Davis and the girl Violet come out of the forecastle and close the door behind them. He is staggering a bit and she is laughing shrilly.*)

DAVIS—(*turning to the left*) This way, Rose, or Pansy, or Jessamine, or black Tulip, or Violet, or whatever the hell flower your name is. No one'll see us back here. (*They go off left.*)

THE DONKEYMAN—There's love at first sight for you—an' plenty more o' the same in the fo'c's'tle. No mem'ries jined with that.

SMITTY—(*really repelled*) Shut up, Donk. You're disgusting. (*He takes a long drink.*)

THE DONKEYMAN—(*philosophically*) All depends on how you was brung up, I s'pose. (*Pearl comes out of the forecastle. There is a roar of voices from inside. She shuts the door behind her, sees Smitty on the hatch, and comes over and sits beside him and puts her arm over his shoulder.*)

THE DONKEYMAN—(*chuckling*) There's love for you, Duke.

PEARL—(*patting Smitty's face with her hand*) 'Ullo; pretty boy. (*Smitty pushes her hand away coldly.*) What you doin' out here all alone by yourself?

SMITTY—(*with a twisted grin*) Thinking and— (*he indicates the bottle in his hand*) —drinking to stop thinking. (*He drinks and laughs maudlinly. The bottle is three-quarters empty.*)

PEARL—You oughtn't drink so much, pretty boy. Don' you know dat? You have big, big headache come mawnin'.

SMITTY—(*dryly*) Indeed?

PEARL—Tha's true. Ah knows what Ah say. (*cooingly*) Why you run 'way from me, pretty boy? Ah likes you. Ah don' like them other fellahs. They act too rough. You ain't rough. You're a genelman. Ah knows. Ah can tell a genelman fahs Ah can see 'im.

SMITTY—Thank you for the compliment; but you're wrong, you see. I'm merely—a ranker. (*He adds bitterly*) And a rotter.

PEARL—(*patting his arm*) No, you ain't. Ah knows better. You're a genelman. (*insinuatingly*) Ah wouldn't have nothin' to do with them other men, but (*she smiles at him enticingly*) you is diff'rent. (*He pushes her away from him disgustedly. She pouts.*) Don' you like me, pretty boy?

SMITTY—(*a bit ashamed*) I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to be rude, you know, really. (*His politeness is drunkenly exaggerated.*) I'm a bit off color.

PEARL—(*brightening up*) Den you do like me—little ways?

SMITTY—(*carelessly*) Yes, yes, why shouldn't I? (*He suddenly laughs wildly and puts his arm around her waist and presses her to him.*) Why not? (*He pulls his arm back quickly with a shudder of disgust, and takes a drink. Pearl looks at him curiously, puzzled by his strange actions. The, door from the forecastle is kicked open and Yank comes out. The uproar of shouting, laughing and singing voices has increased in violence. Yank staggers over toward Smitty and Pearl.*)

YANK—(*blinking at them*) What the hell—oh, it's you, Smitty the Duke. I was goin' to turn one loose on the jaw of any guy'd cop my dame, but seein' it's you—(*sentimentally*) Pals is pals and any pal of mine c'n have anythin' I got, see? (*holding out his hand*) Shake, Duke. (*Smitty takes his hand and he pumps it up and down.*) You'n me's frens. Ain't I right?

SMITTY—Right it is, Yank. But you're wrong about this girl. She isn't with me. She was just going back to the fo'c's'tle to you. (*Pearl looks at him with hatred gathering in her eyes.*)

YANK—Tha' right?

SMITTY—On my word!

YANK—(*grabbing her arm*) Come on then, you, Pearl! Le's have a drink with the bunch. (*He pulls her to the entrance, where she shakes off his hand long enough to turn on Smitty furiously.*)

PEARL—You swine! You can go to hell! (*She goes in the forecastle, slamming the door.*)

THE DONKEYMAN—(*spitting calmly*) There's love for you. They're all the same—white, brown, yeller 'n' black. A whack on the ear's the only thing'll learn 'em. (*Smitty makes no reply but laughs harshly and takes another drink; then sits staring before him, the almost empty bottle tightly clutched in one hand. There is an increase in volume of the muffled clamor from the forecastle and a moment later the door is thrown open and the whole mob, led by Driscoll, pours out on deck. All of them are very drunk and several of them carry bottles in their hands. Bella is the only one of the women who is absolutely sober. She tries in vain to keep the men quiet. Pearl drinks from Yank's bottle every moment or so, laughing shrilly, and leaning against Yank, whose arm is about her waist. Paul comes out last carrying an accordion. He staggers over and stands on top of the hatch, his instrument under his arm.*)

DRISCOLL—Play us a dance, ye square-head swab! —a rale, Godforsaken son av a turkey trot wid guts to ut.

YANK—Straight from the old Barbary Coast in Frisco!

PAUL—I don' know. I try. (*He commences tuning up.*)

YANK—Ataboy! Let 'er rip! (*Davis and Violet come back and join the crowd. The Donkeyman looks on them all with a detached, indulgent air. Smitty stares before him and does not seem to know there is any one on deck but himself.*)

BIG FRANK—Dance? I don't dance. I trink! (*He suits the action to the word and roars with meaningless laughter.*)

DRISCOLL—Git out av the way thin, ye big hulk, an' give us some room. (*Big Frank sits down on the hatch, right. All of the others who are not going to dance either follow his example or lean against the port bulwark.*)

BELLA—(*on the verge of tears at her inability to get them in the forecastle or make them be quiet now they are out*) For Gawd's sake, boys, don't shout so loud! Want to git me in trouble?

DRISCOLL—(*grabbing her*) Dance wid me, me cannibal quane. (*Some one drops a bottle on deck and it smashes.*)

BELLA—(*hysterically*) There they goes! There they goes! Captain'll hear that! Oh, my Lawd!

DRISCOLL—Be damned to him! Here's the music! Off ye go! (*Paul starts playing "You Great Big Beautiful Doll" with a note left out every now and then. The four couples commence dancing—a jerk-shouldered version of the old Turkey Trot as it was done in the sailor-town dives, made more grotesque by the fact that all the couples are drunk and keep lurching into each other every moment. Two of the men start dancing together, intentionally bumping into the others. Yank and Pearl come around in front of Smitty and, as they pass him, Pearl slaps him across the side of the face with all her might, and laughs viciously. He jumps to his feet with his fists clenched but sees who hit him and sits down again smiling bitterly. Yank laughs boisterously.*)

YANK—Wow! Some wallop! One on you, Duke.

DRISCOLL—(*hurling his cap at Paul*) Faster, ye toad! (*Paul makes frantic efforts to speed up and the music suffers in the process.*)

BELLA—(*puffing*) 'Let me go. I'm wore out with you steppin' on my toes, you clumsy Mick. (*She struggles but Driscoll holds her tight.*)

DRISCOLL—God blarst you for havin' such big feet, thin. Aisy, aisy, Mrs. Old 'Black Joe! 'Tis dancin'll take the blubber off ye. (*He whirls her around the deck by main force. Cocky, with Susie, is dancing near the hatch, right, when Paddy, who is sitting on the edge with Big Frank, sticks his foot out and the wavering couple stumble over it and fall flat on the deck. A roar of laughter goes up. Cocky rises to his feet, his face livid with rage, and springs at Paddy, who promptly knocks him down. Driscoll hits Paddy and Big Frank hits Driscoll. In a flash a wholesale fight has broken out and the deck is a surging crowd of drink-maddened men*

*hitting out at each other indiscriminately, although the general idea seems to be a battle between seamen and firemen. The women shriek and take refuge on top of the hatch, where they huddle in a frightened group. Finally there is the flash of a knife held high in the moonlight and a loud yell of pain.)*

DAVIS—*(somewhere in the crowd)* Here's the Mate comin'! Let's git out o' this! *(There is a general rush for the forecandle. In a moment there is no one left on deck but the little group of women on the hatch; Smitty, still dazedly rubbing his cheek; The Donkeyman quietly smoking on his stool; and Yank and Driscoll, their faces battered up considerably, their undershirts in shreds, bending over the still form of Paddy, which lies stretched out on the deck between them. In the silence the mournful, chant from the shore creeps slowly out to the ship.)*

DRISCOLL—*(quickly—in a low voice)* Who knifed him?

YANK—*(stupidly)* I didn't see it. How do I know? Cocky, I'll bet. *(The First Mate enters from the left. He is a tall, strongly-built man dressed in a blue uniform.)*

THE MATE—*(angrily)* What's all this noise about? *(He sees the man lying on the deck.)* Hello! What's this? *(He bends down on one knee beside Paddy.)*

DRISCOLL—*(stammering)* All av us—was in a bit av a harmless foight, sir—an'—I dunno— *(The Mate rolls Paddy over and sees a knife wound on his shoulder.)*

THE MATE—Knifed, by God. *(He takes an electric flash from his pocket and examines the cut.)* Lucky it's only a flesh wound. He must have hit his head on deck when he fell. That's what knocked him out. This is only a scratch. Take him aft and I'll bandage him up.

DRISCOLL—Yis, sor. *(They take Paddy by the shoulders and feet and carry him off left. The Mate looks up and sees the women on the hatch for the first time.)*

THE MATE—*(surprised)* Hello! *(He walks to them.)* Go to the cabin and get your money and clear off. If I had my way, you'd never—*(His foot hits a bottle. He stoops down and picks it up and smells of it.)* Rum, by God! So that's the trouble! I thought their breaths smelled damn queer. *(to the women, harshly)* You needn't go to the skipper for any money. You won't get any. That'll teach you to smuggle rum on a ship and start a riot.

BELLA—But, Mister—

THE MATE—*(sternly)* You know the agreement—rum—no money.

BELLA—*(indignantly)* Honest to Gawd, Mister, I never brung no—

THE MATE—*(fiercely)* You're a liar! And none of your lip or I'll make a complaint ashore tomorrow and have you locked up.

BELLA—*(subdued)* Please, Mister—

THE MATE—Clear out of this, now! Not another word out of you! Tumble over the side damn quick! The two others are waiting for you. Hop, now! *(They walk quickly—almost run—off to the left. The Mate follows them, nodding to the Donkeyman, and ignoring the oblivious Smitty.)*

*(There is absolute silence on the ship for a few moments. The melancholy song of the negroes drifts crooning over the water. Smitty listens to it intently for a time; then sighs heavily, a sigh that is half a sob.)*

SMITTY—God! *(He drinks the last drop in the bottle and throws it behind him on the hatch.)*

THE DONKEYMAN—*(spitting tranquilly)* More memories? *(Smitty does not answer him. The ship's bell tolls four bells. The Donkeyman knocks out his pipe.)* I think I'll turn in. *(He opens the door to his cabin, but turns to look at Smitty—kindly.)* You can't hear it in the fo'c's'le—the music, I mean—an' there'll likely be more drink in there, too. Good night. *(He goes in and shuts the door.)*

SMITTY—Good night, Donk. *(He gets wearily to his feet and walks with bowed shoulders, a bit, to the forecastle entrance and goes in. There is silence for a second or so, broken only by the haunted, saddened voice of that brooding music, and far-off, like the mood of the moonlight made audible.)*

*(The Curtain Falls)*