AUG 6 1958

Stage Mgr. 50
Neil Hartley
PL 3-8324
Bill Bcekeh

Mary Mon Toy

~~54~~ [redacted]

TR3-1193 AUG 11 1958

a "Minnie Ho"

Shubert
Forrest
Broadhurst

Boston Sunday Sept 7
Phila. Sunday Sept 21
N.Y. Sunday Oct 5

THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG

By

PAUL OSBORN

Act I
Scene 4
ROBT: 1-4-27

Broadhurst
Co 5-9280
(Backstage)
Act II Scene 5

Act I
Scene 5
1-5-46A
KAY:

Copyright 1958
Joshua Logan
"Love To." 1-5-47

[redacted]

[redacted]

Act II
Scene 1
ROBT:
"AT THIS MOMENT." (KNOCK)
Act II Scene 2 2A-2B
MINNIE HO: "Where you go, Typhoo?

one - yut
two - yee
three - psalm
four - say
five - ng
six - look
seven - chut
eight - part
nine - cow
ten - sub

Dates: add word "hoe"
Example: 1st - yut-hoe
18th - sub part hoe

Yes - hight
No - oom-high
Good - hoe
Bad - oom-hoe
Left - jaw
Right - yon
Stop - tay-ng
Go - hay
yesterday - chack yet
today - come yet
tomorrow - ting yet

afternoon - ha chow
this week - knee cow
who or whom? - lie pie
who? - jean coa
where? - jean she?
why - ham guy?
father - foo chew
mother - moe chew
husband - ch-yeung
wife - tai tai (foo)
nigr - king lay

11-19 11 (ten-one) 12 (ten-two) 13 sub-yut
ten - too
restaurant - charn sut
P.O - yau chay-ng cohe
theatre - hay yuen
aero - fay chay
steamer - jaw teen
telegram - teen pau
newspaper - pau jee
Mr. sir or teacher - seen sung
Policeman - ch-ye yau

100 - yut bark
1000 - yut cheen
10000 - yut marne

I was very busy - Ng-aw hoe oom tuck harn
What is your name? - Neigh cue mut yeh ning?
I like him very much - Ng-aw hoe choo-ng yee kay
Ask him/her to come - Cue kay lay?
Can you speak English - Neigh woo-ee caw-ng Ying mung mah?
This person is clever - Knee caw yau choo-ng ning
What is this called - Knee caw cue mutt yeh?
Everything is expensive - Yeung yeung hoe kwai
What's the news - ? - Mutt yeh sun mun?
Do you smoke? - Neigh sake yin mah?
It doesn't matter - Oom kun-yau
I don't know - Ng-aw oom chee
What is it? - (high mut yeh?
Please sit down - Ch-eng chaw
Price - Caw cheen

Good morning - Jue sun
good bye - Chay-ng chay-ng
Can you - Neigh tuck mah?

ACT ONE

Coolie I
Scene 1: A Chinese ferry.

Same
Scene 2: A street in Hong Kong - few hours later

Scene 3: Robert's room - few moments later

Whore I
Scene 4: The bar at the Nam Kok - few moments later

" II
Scene 5: Robert's room - a month later

Scene 5A: Interval

Scene 6: The bar at the Nam Kok

ACT TWO

Whore I
Scene 1: Robert's room - a month later

Scene 1A: A night club vignette

Whore II
Scene 2: Robert's room - two hours later

Scene 2A: Street festival

Scene 3: Robert's room - ten days later

Scene 3A: Interval

Scene 4: Robert's room - that night

Scene 4A: Rainy street

Scene 5: The bar at the Nam Kok - two weeks later

Scene 5A: The Happy Room appears

Scene 6: The Happy Room - two hours later

ACT THREE

Scene 1: Kay's hotel - ten days later

Blanket
Scene 2: A street in Kowloon - half an hour later

Scene 2A: The street - continuation

Scene 3: Robert's room - a little later

ACT ONE

Scene 1

The covered top deck of a Chinese ferry going from Kowloon to Hong Kong.

Slatted benches which are full of people: an old CHINAMAN in high-necked Chinese gown, leaning on an ebony stick; a CHINESE WOMAN with a baby on her back; WOMEN in cotton pyjama suits; MEN in felt slippers; a VENDOR, selling melon seeds; a YOUTH in horn-rimmed glasses, reading; etc., etc.

ROBERT LOMAX, an Englishman in his early thirties, stands by the rail watching everything with obvious delight. He has a sketch pad in his hand and is, covertly, making sketches of various things he sees.

The usual life and movement go on for a moment. ROBERT, having finished a sketch of the woman and the baby, starts making one of the old Chinaman. PEOPLE move in and about.

A CHINESE GIRL enters. She wears knee-length denim jeans; her hair is tied behind her head in a pony-tail. ROBERT looks at her, pleased. He flips a page of his pad and starts making a sketch of her.

The GIRL goes to the VENDOR and gives him some money. He twirls a piece of Chinese newspaper into a cone, shovels in melon seeds and hands it to her. SHE turns away, absently picking into the seeds. She moves to the rail and stands looking off. ROBERT continues to sketch her a moment, then puts his pad into his pocket and moves slowly over and stands beside her.

The GIRL looks at him briefly. ROBERT smiles. The GIRL turns abruptly away. A moment's pause.

ROBERT

I wish I could do that.

GIRL

(Looks at him quickly, surprised)

What?

ROBERT

Crack melon seeds. I just don't seem to be able to manage it.

GIRL

No talk!

(SHE turns away, haughtily)

ROBERT

(Hastily) YOU MEAN I NO TALK - OR YOU NO TALK?

No, of course not. I should have known better. Excuse me, won't you?

(The GIRL does not answer)

I say, you will excuse me, won't you?

(The GIRL makes a move to go)

Oh, don't go! I'm going. I'm hopeless at pick-ups, anyway. I haven't got the nerve.

GIRL

You got plenty nerve.

ROBERT

No, I really haven't. When you get to know me better you'll realize I'm quite shy.

GIRL

What you mean, "when I get to know you better?"

ROBERT

That was a stupid remark, wasn't it? But I've never been to Hong Kong before. I'm so excited I hardly know what I'm saying. Just look at the wonderful people on this ferry!

GIRL

(Unconsciously glancing at them)

What's wonderful?

ROBERT

Everything! Their faces -- their attitudes! But then, I suppose you're used to it, aren't you?

GIRL

I said, "No talk!"

ROBERT

Oh, that's right. Excuse me.

(Suddenly HE clutches her arm and points off)

Good Lord, look at that!

GIRL
(Startled, looking off)
What?

ROBERT
That fleet of junks just coming into the harbor -- the color in those sails!

GIRL
(Looking at him, puzzled)
You crazy!

ROBERT
Yes, that's right. A little. It's just that it's all so -! I heard that Hong Kong was a sight you wouldn't see anywhere else in the world, but I never dreamed -! Tell me, is it true that if you take a minute's stroll from the center of town you won't see a single European?

(The GIRL looks at him, sharply)

Oh, don't look so shocked! I'm not running away from anything. I just want to begin a new life. I think everyone's entitled to two lives, don't you? Especially if they've made a botch of the first one.

GIRL
(Unconsciously)
"Botch?"

ROBERT
"Mess - bungle - bad job." I'll tell you all about it sometime.

GIRL
Is no "sometime". I say no talk and I mean no talk. You want me to call officer?

ROBERT
Which one is the officer?

GIRL
Is officer right over there.

ROBERT
Well, all right, if you feel you have to! But first tell me one thing. Is that the Peak I've heard so much about?
(He points off)

GIRL
Yes, Peak.

ROBERT
It's beautiful, isn't it?

GIRL

(Surprised)
How you know?

ROBERT

I was stationed in Burma during the war - and I've been in the North of China. I'd say you came from Shanghai. Right?

(THE GIRL starts to speak. ROBERT goes on, hurriedly)

All right, I know. "No talk!" Better call your officer.

(Pause)

(The OFFICER is just passing)

OFFICER

(Stopping)
Yes, sir? You want officer?

(ROBERT is startled. Then HE turns to see what the GIRL will do. SHE turns away, slightly)

ROBERT

Would you have a match?

OFFICER

Please.

(HE lights Robert's cigarette)

ROBERT

Thank you.

(The GIRL doesn't speak)

I wonder if you could tell me something. I understand it's rather difficult to find a place to stay in Hong Kong now.

OFFICER

Hong Kong very crowded -

ROBERT

So I understand. This is my first trip - I don't know anyone there - except this young lady, of course -

(The GIRL starts to speak, then stops. ROBERT goes on)

- and I was wondering which would be the best section for me to look in. I haven't much money -

OFFICER

European people stay at big hotels.

ROBERT

I know. One of the letters I have is to a man who lives at the Gloucester -

OFFICER

Best hotel Hong Kong.

ROBERT
I'm sure it is. That's why I'm not going there. Much too expensive for me. I hear that in the Wanchai district -

GIRL
(Impulsively)
Oh, no! You not like Wanchai. Wanchai the slums of Hong Kong.

ROBERT
Good. It would be cheap.

GIRL
Noisy - many people - no Europeans live in Wanchai - very poor -

ROBERT
I like poor people. I'm one of them.

OFFICER
Young lady, right. Wanchai give you bad impression of China. And when rains come - very dangerous. You go some little place where Europeans live.

ROBERT
All right, Officer. Thank you very much.

OFFICER
Very happy, sir.
(HE salutes Robert, then the Girl, and goes. Pause. ROBERT steals a look at the Girl. HE grins. A slight pause. Suddenly SHE smiles)

GIRL
You not a sailor?

ROBERT
Me? A sailor? Good Lord, no!

GIRL
All right, we talk if you want.

ROBERT
Good. I was afraid you might not want....But what have you got against sailors?

GIRL
Not me - my father. He say sailors catch too many girls.

ROBERT
So he won't let you talk to them?

GIRL
No. He says, "If you talk to sailor, I beat you."

ROBERT
He's probably very wise.

GIRL
Yes - wise.
(SHE offers him some seeds)
You want one?

ROBERT
Yes, but I honestly can't open them. You'll have to teach me.

GIRL
Try first.
(ROBERT tries, fails. The GIRL giggles, delightedly)
Like this.
(SHE nips a seed edgewise, peeling back the shell, and hands it to him)

ROBERT
But that's exactly what I did! Yours must have been an easy one.

GIRL
No. All same.

ROBERT
Then I give up. What's your name?

GIRL
Mee-ling.

ROBERT
Mee-ling. That's charming. And you do live in Hong Kong?

GIRL
(Nodding)
North Shore.

ROBERT
Oh, I've heard about that! That's the very expensive section!

GIRL
Yes. Expensive.

ROBERT
You like living there?

GIRL
(Shrugging)
I like. Only I like Repulse Bay better. Nicer house.

ROBERT
You mean you have two houses?

GIRL
Four.

ROBERT
Four! All in Hong Kong?

GIRL
(Nods)
My father very rich, you know.

ROBERT
He must be. And where are the other two houses?

GIRL
(Counting on her fingers)
Number three, Conduit Road. Number four, Peak.
(SHE points off)
Number five -

ROBERT
Five!

GIRL
Yes, I forgot - number five, Happy Valley. Only ten rooms.

ROBERT
Just a little one.

GIRL
Yes.

ROBERT
And what about cars? How many cars has your father got?

GIRL
Cars?
(SHE thinks, then giggles)
Oh, I forget how many cars.

ROBERT
I suppose you have a car of your own.

GIRL
No, I'm too scared to drive. But I don't mind tramcars - I like riding tramcars.
(SHE looks at him, sidewise)
And you? HAVE NAME?

ROBERT
Robert Lomax.

GIRL

Robert! You Yankee?

ROBERT

Close. I'm a Canadian.

GIRL

Me Chinese.

ROBERT

Really? How do you do?

GIRL

You going to work Government? Bank?

ROBERT

No, I'm trying to paint.

GIRL

Paint? Oh! Artist!

ROBT: ARTIST —
GIRL: WHAT'S THE MATTER?

OH NOTHING. IT'S JUST THAT

ROBERT

~~Shit!~~ That's not a nice word in my family.

GIRL

Not nice?

ROBERT

"Artist" means - "shiftless - lazy - no good."

GIRL

No - I don't understand.

ROBERT

"Waster - sponger - woman-chaser."

GIRL

Ha! "Woman-chaser." Yes, that's you.

ROBERT

(Irritated)
It is not! Don't you go saying that, too.,

GIRL

(Nodding)
Yes - that's right - "woman-chaser." "Pick-up man!"
"Butterfly!"

ROBERT

Butterfly?

GIRL

Yes - flit one girl to another - never settle -
(SHE giggles, delightedly, seeing
that she is getting under his skin)

omit

GIRL (Cont'd)
~~Everybody see that about you right away - quick - just like that!~~

ROBERT
You know something, Mee-ling, the one time I nearly hit my own father was when he said that.

GIRL
(Wide-eyed)
You hit own father?

ROBERT
No, I didn't. I just turned and said, "I'm sorry, you feel that way about it, sir. I won't be bothering you again," and I walked out with great dignity and haven't been back since.

GIRL
Are you good painter?

ROBERT
(~~Quietly.~~)
How do you ever know? I'd like to be. I'd certainly like to be.

GIRL
(In the same tone)
Maybe you will be.
(He looks at her. She adds quickly)
If you don't try catch too many girls.

ROBERT
See here, we seem to be getting on awfully well. Can't we have dinner one night?

GIRL
No, thank you.

ROBERT
Lunch?

GIRL
No!
(She shakes her head, firmly)

ROBERT
But now that we know each other so well, we really ought to meet again.

GIRL
I get married soon.

ROBERT
Oh, I didn't know.

GIRL
Very soon.

ROBERT
Arranged by your parents, I presume.

GIRL
Yes. Very rich man. His photograph very handsome looking.

ROBERT
You haven't even seen him yet?

GIRL
Of course not. You think that strange?

NOT STRANGE, HORRIBLE PERHAPS. ROBERT
I know it's a Chinese custom but --

GIRL
Even with no marriage I could not meet you. Chinese girls not permitted the same--
(She hesitates)

ROBERT
Liberties?

GIRL
The same liberties as English girls. I heard of one English girl who lives on Peak - had four boy friends in four years - then married fifth one. But Chinese girl must be pure when she marries. If she isn't - nothing left for her but the streets.

ROBERT
But it doesn't mean you're necessarily impure if you have a boy friend.

GIRL
Very dangerous.

ROBERT
Then you've never had a boy friend?

GIRL
No. I have never made love yet.

ROBERT
(Startled)
I didn't mean to--

GIRL
What you call that in English?

ROBERT
Call what exactly?

GIRL
If you have not made love - not with anybody?

ROBERT
Well - er - if you mean what I think you do--

GIRL
That's what I mean - yes - what you think I do.

ROBERT
Well - we call it "being a virgin."

GIRL
"Virgin"? Like that?

ROBERT
Yes.

GIRL
Yes, virgin - that's me.
(She points to herself, seriously. ROBERT laughs)

ROBERT
Mee-ling, now that we've got that point cleared up, won't you have dinner with me? I mean, if I promise not to try to spoil your record?

GIRL
No.

ROBERT
I'd love to paint you.

GIRL
No.
(Suddenly the engine starts into reverse. PEOPLE start getting ready to get off. Noise of the gangplank, etc.)
We say goodbye now.
(She starts off, mingling with the people)

ROBERT
(Runs and catches her)
But - wait - where are you going?

GIRL
Hennessy Road.

ROBERT
To catch a tram?

GIRL

There is car to meet me.

ROBERT

May I come with you to the car?

GIRL

The driver might tell my father.

ROBERT

And your father would beat you!

GIRL

Yes - (perhaps.)

ROBERT

(Urgently)

But I want to see you again - this is stupid - please change your mind and have dinner with me - I'm all alone in Hong Kong - I don't know where to go - there are so many things you could tell me -

GIRL

You get along all right, Robert. You got plenty nerve. I go now. Good Bye!

(She holds out her hand for a formal goodbye, then turns and hurries off among the crowd. ROBERT stands looking after her, then he turns back to get his things. He looks at the sketch of her in his hand. He grins. He takes his pencil and writes across it, then reads what he has written)

ROBERT

"Yes, virgin - that's me."

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 2

A STREET IN THE OLDEST PART OF WANCHAI.

It is teeming with life: CHINESE CHILDREN are playing hopskotch and at the same time eating rice out of bowls; shirtless, barefoot COOLIES file by carrying loads; street stalls; VENDORS. Noisy and crowded.

Narrow, open-front shops, between which dark staircases lead up to tenement rooms. One of the stores is a post-office. Another building among the shops, with blue neon tubes in Chinese letters.

Life goes on for a moment. A ROYAL NAVY MATELOT comes in, his arm around a CHINESE GIRL. THEY are laughing.

A CHINESE MAN comes to the door of the post-office and stands looking out.

A rickshaw goes by.

An AMERICAN SAILOR, his arm linked in the arm of a CHINESE GIRL, go by.

ROBERT enters slowly, looking around him. He is tired but fascinated by all he sees. He stops for a moment to watch the children playing.

A CHINESE GIRL comes in and stands in a doorway. As ROBERT passes her SHE smiles at him. HE smiles back, bows politely, and goes on.

A CHINESE MAN comes out of the building with the neon lights and stands in the doorway. ROBERT notices him and goes to him.

ROBERT

Do you speak English?

MAN

EVERYBODY HONG-KONG SPEAK ENGLISH.

ROBERT

(He points to a sign)
That says "hotel", doesn't it?

MAN

Nam Kok Hotel.

ROBERT

Are you the owner?

MAN

Owner, manager, clerk -

ROBERT

You're the ones I want to see then. Have you any rooms?

(The MAN looks at him thoughtfully, and nods)

MAN

Yes, we have rooms.

ROBERT

How much are they by the month?

MAN

By the month?

ROBERT

Well, it would be a month at least.

(The MAN looks at him oddily, as he figures on his abacus)

MAN

That would be two hundred and seventy Hong Kong dollars.

(As ROBERT figures what that would be in pounds, the MAN watches him)

ROBERT

(Discouraged)
~~That's more than I had planned.~~ Two hundred and seventy. Let's see - our dollars are worth about six of yours - so that would be about fifty ~~dollars.~~ BUCKS. THAT'S MORE THAN I HAD PLANNED.

MAN

Very sorry, Sir.

ROBERT

I guess I'll just have to keep on looking. I had no idea Hong Kong would be so expensive.

MAN

Hong Kong very expensive since ~~the revolution~~ COMMUNIST OCCUPATION CHINA. All refugees ~~from China~~ came here.

ROBERT

Yes. Well, I've got to find some place to sleep tonight. Thank you very much.

MAN

Not at all, sir.

(ROBERT, weary, steps out onto the street again. HE starts back the way he had come. Suddenly he stops dead in his tracks and stares. TWO COOLIES enter, carrying a pole on their shoulders from which swings a little seat. On this seat sits a GIRL who resembles MEE-LING except that instead of jeans, SHE is in a cheongsam and her hair, instead of in a pony tail, is loose on her shoulders)

ROBERT

(Starting forward)

Mee-ling!

(The GIRL turns and looks at him. No glimmer of recognition crosses her face. The COOLIES have automatically stopped)

Mee-ling! How wonderful! What are you doing here in Wanchai? ~~I thought you were going home.~~

(The GIRL stares at him coldly and starts to berate the coolies in harsh Chinese. THEY start on. ROBERT takes a step after them - then stops, watching, perplexed)

(THEY stop at the door of the Nam Kok. ROBERT watches as MEE-LING gets out and pays the COOLIES, who go off. ROBERT takes a step forward - then stops. MEE-LING starts into the hotel - says something briefly to the man Robert had talked to - then goes in. ROBERT stands a moment, then shakes his head)

~~(ROBERT, to himself:)~~

~~I must be dreaming. It couldn't be! She wouldn't be down here.~~

ROBERT (Cont'd)
(HE starts off, stops, turns)
Still it -
(Suddenly he makes up his mind. HE walks back to the hotel and goes to the MAN who is still standing there)
That girl that just went in here.

MAN
Yes, sir?

ROBERT
Is her name Mee-ling?

MAN
No, sir.

ROBERT
Are you sure?

MAN
Yes, sir.

ROBERT
Does she live here?

MAN
No, sir. Just go to bar. Have drink.

ROBERT
(He thinks a moment. HE looks up at the balcony that extends along the front of the hotel)
I don't suppose that room there with the balcony would happen to be free?

MAN
Yes, free.

ROBERT
There must be quite a view from there.

MAN
Yes, sir. Very popular room.

ROBERT
I think I'd like to see it.

AH TONG
(Bows)
You have a girl coming, sir?

ROBERT
Girl? No.

AH TONG

And you want room by month.

ROBERT

Why, yes, if I like it.

AH TONG

If you will follow me, sir.

(THEY go in. Life goes on a moment)

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 3

A ROOM IN THE HOTEL.

A clean, adequate room, although not pretty. A wide, hard bed, a cheap dressing table, an enamel spittoon, a telephone, a padded basket for a teapot, etc.

A balcony at back, showing as much of the waterfront as possible.

AH TONG and TOBERT enter the room.

ROBERT

~~Yes, this seems all right.~~ FIFTY BUCKS A DAY, HUH?

AH TONG

Very attractive room, sir.

(ROBERT nods. AH TONG motions to the balcony)

Balcony looks over rooftops of all Wanchai -- the harbor with all the ships -- beautiful.

ROBERT

(Looking out, excited)

Good Lord, look at that! War ships, tramps, walla wallas, junks, sampans -- the whole world!

(He becomes more excited)

~~If I've anything in me at all, I'm bound to find it in this town!~~

(Suddenly he shouts out)

Okay, Hong Kong, I'm here!

(The toot of a passing boat seems to answer him. He laughs and shouts)

Okay!

(He hoots back at the boat. Suddenly the noise of the jukebox comes up from below)

What's that music?

AH TONG

Jukebox, sir, in bar. You like to see bar?

ROBERT

(Eagerly)

Yes! Come on! I want to see everything. And I want to see that girl who came in. Let's go!

AH TONG
(Smiling at his enthusiasm)
Stairs to bar on other side. Come, I show you.

(As the stage starts to turn we see them leave the room)

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 4

THE BAR AT THE NAM KOK.

The windows are curtained, the room is lit like a night club, with rose diffused light. A bar counter in a corner, a large walnut-chromium juke box playing a popular tune.

Several ENGLISH and AMERICAN SAILORS at the tables, some with GIRLS, some with each other, drinking beer. One table at which FOUR GIRLS sit alone together, CHINESE WAITERS carrying trays of beer among the tables. Talk and laughter.

After a moment, the swing door is opened and ROBERT and AH TONG appear.

ROBERT stops short, surveying the scene. His mouth practically falls open as he takes it in. AH TONG watches him.

ROBERT looks over at one table where a SAILOR and a GIRL have their arms around each other. The SAILOR tilts her back so that just her legs show, kissing her. The BARTENDER goes to them quickly and taps the SAILOR gently on the shoulder. The SAILOR looks up, angrily. The BARTENDER, with a weak smile, shakes his finger at him, gently.

BARTENDER
No - no - none of that here, please -

SAILOR
Oh, beat it! We're going upstairs in a minute anyway.

BARTENDER
Upstairs - yes - not here - very sorry -

SAILOR
Oh, come on!

(He takes the GIRL's hand and pulls her up. They go through the swinging door, passing ROBERT, who gazes at them, open-mouthed)

AH TONG
All very respectable down here in bar.

ROBERT
(Suddenly laughs)
Well, I am an idiot! A room for a month! No wonder you looked at me the way you did. I suppose you only rent rooms by the hour here.

AH TONG
No, no, all night sometimes.

ROBERT
You don't say!

AH TONG
This not a brothel! No girls actually live here. All must live outside. Make their own prices with sailors and keep what they earn. Just rent rooms here. It is not a brothel. Brothels illegal in Hong Kong.

(ROBERT has been looking the room over. He laughs again)

ROBERT
Well, one thing you've got to say for me, Ah Tong, I'm not very quick sometimes. I don't see that girl anywhere.

AH TONG
Probably upstairs. Be down soon. You still wish to take the room, sir?

(ROBERT is looking around, fascinated)

ROBERT
Maybe this may be just what I need. It's exciting - that's for sure.
(He is looking at a SAILOR and a GIRL who are kissing. They feel his gaze and look up at him)
Oh - go right ahead! I'm just...looking!
(They smile and go back to their kissing. He grins)
If you don't mind, I think I'll sit down and have a beer and think it over.

AH TONG
Perfectly all right, sir.

(ROBERT goes to a table and sits. He looks around the room. A WAITER comes and hands him a menu)

ROBERT
Thank you.

ROBERT (Cont'd)
(He automatically pulls out a pencil and starts to sketch. Then:)
Oh, I beg your pardon - I'll have a beer. May I keep this?
(He is watching a GIRL who is draped over the bar in an interesting pose)

(TYPHOO goes to the juke box, the split in her skirt rising very high, showing a long piece of thigh. She stands in front of the juke box, making her selection. She puts the coin in.

At a table near her, THREE SAILORS are sitting. One of them notices the split in her skirt. He nudges his companion, winks and points to it. He dips his finger into his beer, leans over and runs his wet finger down TYPHOO's leg. She turns on him, furiously. She lets forth a stream of angry Chinese. The SAILORS laugh)

TYPHOO
What you think I am? You make me sick! Try that trick on your street girls!

(ROBERT is watching and sketching, amused. He puts down his menu a moment to take a cigarette. One of the GIRLS who was sitting alone has risen and come to his table. It is GWENNY LEE. ROBERT doesn't notice her. SHE lights his cigarette)

ROBERT
Oh. Thank you!

GWENNY
Would you like me to join you?

ROBERT
Why - er - yes - of course - please do -

GWENNY
Thank you.
(She sits)

(THE WAITER brings the beer and goes)

May I pour your beer for you?

ROBERT

Thanks.

(She pours the beer)

GWENNY

You make pictures?

ROBERT

Just a sketch.

GWENNY

Very nice. I saw a film about an artist once at the Roxy. He painted in a bar, too. But he was a dwarf.

ROBERT

Yes, that was Toulouse-Lautrec. He was wonderful.

(A GIRL and a SAILOR enter through the swinging door. ROBERT looks up, quickly)

GWENNY

You waiting for someone to join you?

ROBERT

(Quickly)

No - no.

(He looks at her)

See here, this is rather embarrassing. I'm not really in here for -- it's just that I'm tired and --

GWENNY

You mind if I sit with you anyway?

ROBERT

Not at all - only I don't want to keep you - from -

GWENNY

I not have much luck anyway. I not very popular with the sailors.

ROBERT

(Politely)

Oh, really?

GWENNY

No - I have no sex appeal. Not at first.

ROBERT

I can hardly believe that.

GWENNY

True. Some girls, first thing you see - sex appeal - like Suzie.

ROBERT

Which one is Suzie?

GWENNY

Still upstairs.

ROBERT

Oh!

GWENNY

I would like to have you meet her. She is my best friend. So beautiful. But sad now.

ROBERT

Why?

GWENNY

Her boy friend gone. She had one boy friend for five whole days.

ROBERT

She liked him, eh?

GWENNY

Oh, no, she did not like him. He was not very nice.

ROBERT

Why ~~will~~ is she ~~be~~ sad then?

GWENNY

Better to have one boy friend even if he is not nice. Suzie hates butterflies.

ROBERT

(Looks up quickly)
Butterflies? I've heard that expression before. What does it mean, exactly?

GWENNY

Oh, you know - men who like to have a different girl each visit.

ROBERT

And you don't like that, eh?

GWENNY

Well, you think that's very nice?

ROBERT

I never gave it much thought before.

GWENNY

You have regular boy-friend for three - four days - as long as ships is in port. Other girls will not go near him. I had a boy-friend called Chuck -

(Another SAILOR and GIRL come down stairs. ROBERT looks up, quickly)

GWENNY (Cont'd)
His ship stay in Hong Kong six whole days. I had nice letter from him. You like to hear it?

ROBERT
Very much.

GWENNY
(Takes out a much-creased letter from her bag, hands it to ROBERT)
Perhaps you read it to me?

ROBERT
I'd be glad to.
(He reads)
"Dear Gwenny." That's your name - Gwenny?

GWENNY
Yes - Gwenny-Lee.

ROBERT
Mine is Robert Lomax.

GWENNY
How you do, Robert.

ROBERT
(Half rising and bowing)
How do you do, Gwenny.
(He reads)
"Dear Gwenny. Well, don't die of shock, hearing from me at last. I sure hated to leave you. I had to hide in the heads when we left Hong Kong - no kidding - so the other fellows wouldn't see me cry. I never met as swell a girl as you, Gwenny. We're heading back for old U.S. next week. Well, goodbye, Gwenny, you really are a swell girl, so thanks again. Chuck."

(A moment's pause. ROBERT hands the letter back to GWENNY who puts it in her purse)

GWENNY
Don't you think it's a nice letter?

ROBERT
It's a hell of a nice letter, Gwenny. You must have been very kind to him. Gwenny, do you know a girl by the name of Mee-ling?

(Cont'd on 1-4-27)

GWENNY

Mee-ling?
(She thinks)
No. Why you ask?

ROBERT

I just wondered.

(Suddenly MINNIE HO comes in through the swing door. She is evidently weeping. GWENNY sees her and calls)

GWENNY

Minnie-Ho.
(MINNIE-HO sees her and starts over)
Minnie-Ho is crying.
(MINNIE-HO reaches the table and sinks into a chair, sniffling)
What is it, Minnie-Ho?

MINNIE-HO

I forgot to ask for any money!

(ROBERT who has been looking at her, feeling sorry for her misery, suddenly laughs)

GWENNY

(Sympathetically)
Again! Oh, Minnie-Ho.

MINNIE-HO

I'm so ashamed. How can I be so stupid? I just have no head for business.
(To Gwenny)
Please don't tell the other girls.

Minnie Ho GWENNY

Of course I won't. - This is Mr. Robert Lomax -- Minnie-Ho.

(MINNIE-HO looks at him for really the first time. Her attitude changes abruptly. She becomes kittenish and cuddly - her "technique")

MINNIE-HO

How you do, Robert.

ROBERT

(Looking at the change in astonishment)
Hello, Minnie-Ho.

GWENNY
Goodbye, Robert. Maybe sometime I see you again.

ROBERT
I hope so, Gwenny. And it's very possible.

(GWENNY goes over and sits at the table with a YOUNG SAILOR and starts talking to him. MINNIE-HO cuddles up to ROBERT)

MINNIE-HO
You not Gwenny's boy friend?

ROBERT
No.

MINNIE-HO
You want to be my boy friend?
(She takes his arm, cuddles, and blinks up at him. ROBERT laughs)

ROBERT
I'm afraid you'd make me laugh too much.

MINNIE-HO
What else you go to bed for? Not that same terrible business like everybody else?
(Suddenly HE jerks up, stiffly, looking at the swinging door)
What the matter?

(The swinging door has opened and MEE-LING and a SAILOR have entered. SHE sweeps the room with a glance, looks at Robert coolly, in passing, with no expression of recognition in her face, then turns and goes with the SAILOR to a table. ROBERT, half-risen, stares at her. Slowly he sits down)

ROBERT
Who is that girl over there?

MINNIE-HO
That girl? Suzie.

ROBERT
Oh, so that's Suzie. She doesn't go by any other name, does she?

MINNIE-HO
No. Suzie Wong. Why you look so hard?

ROBERT

I met a girl on the ferry that looked so much like your Suzie that --

Maybe it was Suzie!

MINNIE-HO

(Calls)

Suzie! Suzie! Come here! Go over to Suzie

(SUZIE, who is near the table, turns. ROBERT watches her carefully throughout the scene)

SUZIE

Hello, Minnie-Ho.

MINNIE-HO

He say maybe he see you on ferry.

SUZIE

Ferry? ~~(Not been on ferry for long time.)~~ I NEVER WORK FERRY BOAT?

ROBERT

(Staring at her)

~~Really?~~ OH SHE WASN'T WORKING - SHE WAS A RICH GIRL WHO --

(Then:)

~~Won't you sit down?~~

SUZIE

(Hesitating) I NOT RICH GIRL

~~Well --~~ ROBERT OF COURSE NOT, WON'T YOU SIT DOWN.

MINNIE-HO

You sit down - I must work. I GOT TO REALLY CONCENTRATE TONIGHT.

(She leaves. SUZIE sits. ROBERT stares at her, a slight smile on his face)

SUZIE

Why you stare at me so? That girl on ferry look so much like me?

ROBERT

She certainly did.

SUZIE

I never work ferry boat.

ROBERT

Oh, she wasn't working. She was a rich girl who--
(He stops, realizing)

SUZIE

I not rich girl.

ROBERT

No, of course. - See, I made a sketch of her.

SUZIE

(Looking)
What this say?

ROBERT

It says, "Yes, virgin - that's me."

SUZIE

She virgin?

ROBERT

So she said.

SUZIE

I not virgin.

ROBERT

No - I can see--
(He stops)
I mean - well -

SUZIE

She said right out to you - she was a virgin - just like that?

ROBERT

Yes.
(He passes over to her a bowl of melon seeds which is on the table. Automatically SHE takes some)

SUZIE

Nice girl! So modest!
(SHE deftly peels the melon seed and slips it into her mouth. ROBERT watches her, grinning)

ROBERT

How do you crack these things, anyway?

SUZIE

Like this.
(SHE cracks one)

ROBERT
That must have been an easy one.

SUZIE
No - all same. I told you that ~~before.~~ ALREADY ON THE FERRY

ROBERT
Ah-hah!!

SUZIE
(Rising)
I go now!

ROBERT
~~Goodbye~~, Mee-ling! Come Back.

(SHE takes a step or two away. ROBERT watches her. Then SHE turns back, abruptly, sits, and looks directly at Robert)

SUZIE
You know why I told you ~~those~~ lies on ferry boat?

ROBERT
No, but I'd like to.

SUZIE
You ever go to cinema?

ROBERT
When I can afford it.

SUZIE
One day you go to cinema and see film. Hero very rich - has big car - beautiful girl friend. They go into the mountains where everything looks beautiful - snow - they are very happy. You believe this happiness all true?

ROBERT
While I'm watching it. I believe it enough to enjoy it.

SUZIE
Yes. Only you know from newspaper gossip movie star only pretending. Just got divorce from wife - has to pay big money to her - "ali-money" - you know mountain happiness is just a story. You believe - but you don't believe.

ROBERT
Yes, that's right.

SUZIE
So I make up a story about me. You believe - so I believe - for a while.

ROBERT
But everyone makes up stories for themselves - only most of us aren't honest enough to admit it.

SUZIE
(Sharply)
You try to make dirty little waterfront whore feel good, huh?

ROBERT
No - no - I didn't mean -

SUZIE
Oh, yes, you very wise from your big world. "Oh, damn nice girls, some of them, damn nice!"
(She rises)

ROBERT
Suzie, don't go! I didn't mean to sound stuffy. Honestly I didn't! You know what I really believe? I believe you're a rich, pure, beautiful girl whose father has five houses and ~~ever so many~~ HUNDREDS OF cars.

SUZIE
(She smiles)
You know how long I do this job? ~~Five years - since I am fifteen.~~

ROBERT
Well, all I can say is - more women ought to try it - because you look marvelous on it.
(Suddenly)
Suzie, let's have dinner together.

SUZIE
Why?

ROBERT
Because I like you.

SUZIE
No! You like Mee-ling. You like that virgin girl on the boat. I'm Suzie - ~~dirty little waterfront whore.~~ Go upstairs with sailors. WHO

STOP THAT.
ROBERT
Where shall we eat?

SUZIE
No, I got my job to do. You go find Mee-ling - go find a virgin girl.
(She turns and goes across to the bar. ROBERT watches her. She goes to one of the sailors and starts to talk to him. Then she comes back to ROBERT)
You know why I come back here?

ROBERT

Why?

SUZIE

(Pointing to the bar)
I talk to sailor. I hate short-times! I like regular boy friend like I had last week. Same boy every day. That way I have more free time for my baby.

ROBERT

But - you don't mean - you haven't a baby, have you?

SUZIE

(Flaring up)
Of course I have baby! I look like girl who doesn't have baby?

ROBERT

Well - no - I didn't mean -

SUZIE

You think only virgins can have baby?

ROBERT

No - no.

SUZIE

I have most beautiful baby in ~~the~~ world! His father an English policeman - only father disappeared off to Borneo.

ROBERT

How old is your baby?

SUZIE

~~One year old!~~ I just happen to have picture of him with me. You want to see?

ROBERT

I'd love to.

(SUZIE takes a snapshot from her bab. ROBERT looks at it. SUZIE watches him, anxiously)

SUZIE

You think he look little skinny there?

ROBERT

No --

(Cont'd on 1-4-35)

SUZIE
(Looking at the picture)
Not good picture. Minnie-Ho took it. Bad photographer. She should stick to own business.

ROBERT
Oh, I think he's very handsome.

SUZIE
Yes, very handsome. H'mmm - some baby - I could eat him -
(SHE grinds her teeth)
How I love that baby!

ROBERT
Naturally.

SUZIE
Not naturally. Some girls don't like their baby. Give them away. I would never give my baby away. Nothing could make me.

ROBERT
WHO
And your amah looks after him while you're working?

SUZIE
MY AMAH.
Yes. I pay her good money, my amah.
(Abruptly back to her point)
I make good money.

ROBERT
I should think so. You're terribly pretty.

SUZIE
But I hate short times. You said you like me. I think, "Can he mean it? Big man - good class - important." Then I think, "Well, if he likes me, good. If he doesn't like me, nothing to lose." You like me?

ROBERT
Very much -

SUZIE
Then you want me for regular girl friend? I work very cheap. One month - six hundred Hong Kong dollars.
ONLY

(ROBERT laughs)

ROBERT
Six hundred - ! My God, Suzie!

SUZIE
I'd work very hard - come any time you want. Never go with other boy friends.

ROBERT
I know, Suzie - I'm sure it's a terrific bargain - but I couldn't begin to afford it.

SUZIE
I come for five hundred.

ROBERT
Suzie, I've got to explain something to you! Six hundred Hong Kong dollars a month is all I have to live on altogether.

SUZIE
(Amazed)
What?

ROBERT
I'm not a big man at all! I'm a very poor man!

SUZIE
Huh! You don't look like poor man.

ROBERT
I can't help how I look. Maybe that's a hangover of that first life I was telling you about -- my life with father. But that's all over, thank God. For the last two years I've been scarcely more than a common laborer on a rubber plantation - and I've saved up enough -- earned by myself -- so that I can give myself a whole year with nothing to do but paint -- provided I budget myself carefully. Do you know what a budget is, Suzie?

SUZIE
Not sure.

ROBERT
It's when you set aside a certain amount of money for each thing. You say, "I'll spend this much for a room - this much for food--"

SUZIE
And nothing in budget for girl friend?

ROBERT
Nothing in the terms we're talking.

SUZIE
You only have six hundred for room, chow, everything!

ROBERT
Everything.

SUZIE
But how you expect to live?

ROBERT
Oh, I'll manage. I'd better.
(Suddenly SUZIE starts to giggle)
What is it?

SUZIE
You have six hundred dollars a month for everything. I ask you six hundred just to be your girl friend - you couldn't do anything but just make love all time - not even eat.

ROBERT
I'm afraid that's what it comes down to.

SUZIE
You couldn't even afford one short-time.

ROBERT
Now, now wait a minute - I could afford - er - one of those now and then -

SUZIE
And go next day without eating!

ROBERT
And go next day -- Deliriously happily -- go without eating.

(A pause. Then, abruptly)

SUZIE
I like you. I come tonight for nothing.

ROBERT
That's terribly sweet of you, Suzie, but -

SUZIE
(Quickly)
You don't want?

ROBERT
Of course I "want" - but it wouldn't be fair. I can pay for--

SUZIE
You have budget! I come for nothing or not at all!

ROBERT
But, Suzie--

SUZIE
(Furious)
I understand! You not want to make love to little waterfront whore!

ROBERT
Suzie! Stop talking like that!

SUZIE
All right! You don't know how to accept present - I don't give present! You not big man like I thought. You have small heart!

ROBERT
Suzie, do come - please -

SUZIE
Too late. Offer withdrawn -

(SHE turns and goes over to the bar. ROBERT starts out of his chair as though to go after her. AH TONG has come in. ROBERT checks himself as he sees SUZIE is making up to one of the sailors. Angrily, HE goes over to Ah Tong)

AH TONG
Have you decided, sir?

ROBERT
Yes. I'll take it. I'm going up now.

AH TONG
(Giving him the key)
Yes, sir.

ROBERT
(Handing him a card)
Will you send for my luggage, please?

(ROBERT goes up. SUZIE watches him as he goes)

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 5

ROBERT'S ROOM. A MONTH LATER.

The room shows signs of Robert's occupancy. There are paintings everywhere, some half-finished -- of Suzie, Suzie's baby, and of the two together; of several characters we have seen on the streets; of Ah Tong, Minnie-Ho, etc; of Hong Kong at night and in the daytime; of the harbor; landscapes.

There is painting equipment: an easel, etc. On a table near the window is an armature on which is a half-finished nude. An electric grill with teapot, tea cozy, cups and saucers.

KAY FLETCHER, a young American, is looking at the pictures, thoughtfully. GEORGE O'NEILL, an Englishman in his late sixties, is watching her. There is a pause.

O'NEILL

What do you think?

KAY

(Startled from her thoughts)

Oh!

(SHE turns to O'Neill)

Well, it's not what I think, of course - it's what the gallery would think.

O'NEILL

What would it think?

KAY

I honestly don't know. I've never been so confused.

O'NEILL

About what?

KAY

Well - these landscapes, for instance - I know the gallery wouldn't give them a second look. They're not only conventional but they're sort of - tight and careful and - well - unsure - as if he didn't really seem to know what he's after himself. But these -

KAY (Cont'd)
(SHE points to some of the portraits)
- well, I think they're terribly exciting - really awfully good. I just don't see how the same person could paint these that painted those. What's he like, anyway?

O'NEILL
I can't quite make him out. He had a letter from a ~~friend of mine~~ MAN I KNOW in Toronto. He came up and we had a drink. He's been in Hong Kong about a month - doesn't know any of the colony here. I asked him to a cocktail party and the way he looked at me you'd have thought I'd suggested something indecent. ~~He actually looked scared.~~

KAY
~~Scared of a cocktail party?~~ HE SOUNDS NICE,

O'NEILL
~~I expect he just doesn't want to be interrupted.~~ I EXPECT He just wants to stay down here and work.

KAY
He's certainly done that! All this in one month!

O'NEILL
He's given himself a year to see if he's any good -

KAY
A year?

O'NEILL
(Nodding)
- and if he isn't he's going back to Canada into his father's business, which I sensed would be rather distasteful to him.

KAY
Maybe that accounts for the bad ones. Maybe he's frantic - ~~wants to try everything~~ -
(SHE has been roaming around looking at the pictures)
He found himself a beautiful model.

O'NEILL
Oh, yes, I don't think he'd have much trouble on that score.

KAY
Oh, really? That's interesting. Is he attractive?

O'NEILL
Of course, I don't know your taste in men - but -

(The door opens suddenly and an ENGLISH COCKNEY SAILOR comes in. HE stops abruptly, staring at them. THEY look at him, blankly)

SAILOR

Oh - sorry - I thought - a pal of mine told me - must have got the wrong -

(HE looks at KAY, puzzled)

You're not Minnie-Ho?

KAY

Many what?

SAILOR

Ho.

KAY

Oh, dear! I'm afraid not! I'm terribly sorry.

SAILOR

That's all right - I didn't think they had any - I mean, you don't seem to be the type - I -

(HE sees O'Neill)

Oh! Terribly sorry, old man. Didn't mean to barge in -

O'NEILL

Quite all right, I'm sure.

SAILOR

Yes - sorry - well, carry on -

(HE goes out. A moment's pause. KAY looks at O'NEILL, who is watching her with amusement)

KAY

(Grinning)

What kind of a place is this?

O'NEILL

Evidently it's - what you think it is. Robert must feel he's seeing life in the raw here.

KAY

Um-hmm.

(Suddenly the door is flung open and ROBERT enters. HE has outdoor painting equipment)

ROBERT

Forgive me, O'Neill. It was so hot painting, I decided to take a swim and -

(HE looks at Kay)

I'm so sorry.

KAY

(Smiling at him)

That's all right. We were early.

O'NEILL
This is Miss Kay Fletcher - Mr. Lomax.

ROBERT
How do you do - ? Oh, no!

KAY
What's the matter?

ROBERT
You're not the art expert O'Neill was bringing?

KAY
(SHE is flustered too)
Well, I - ~~Why? What's the matter?~~ MIGHT BE, WHY?

ROBERT
Well, you're younger than I - and prettier - and - well - I sort of expected a different sex, too.

KAY
Oh? I am sorry.

ROBERT
(Quickly)
No - no - I like - that is - well -
(HE is very nervous)
Have you looked at them?

KAY
Yes, we have. I hope you don't mind but -

ROBERT
Mind? I'm delighted. Well, I'll just get rid of this stuff and then we can -
(HE puts his equipment in a corner, talking all the while, nervously)
They're not much good, I'm afraid.
(HE looks at O'Neill)
It was probably stupid of me to call you but -
(HE looks at one of the paintings and says to Kay:)
This one I thought might have something - that is, I rather liked it, but -
(KAY starts to speak. HE goes right on)
Of course, when I look at it this way - through someone else's eyes - I see all the mistakes and -
(Abruptly, HE takes the picture and leans it against the wall so that it cannot be seen)
Oh, to hell with it. Would you like some tea?

KAY

(Laughing)
Well, you certainly talked yourself out of that fast. I thought we came down here to look at your paintings.

ROBERT

You have looked at them.

KAY

And you're not interested in what we think?

ROBERT

I know what you think. I could tell right away. You don't like them.

KAY

Oh! Well, in that case I suppose we might as well go.

ROBERT

No - no - don't go -
(Suddenly)
Did you like any of them?

KAY

Very much.

ROBERT

Really?

(A moment's pause)

KAY

Do you know the Mitford Gallery in ~~New York~~ LONDON, Mr. Lomax?

ROBERT

I'm afraid not.

KAY

It's quite famous. They've brought out a lot of fine painters. My uncle owns it - and runs it -

ROBERT

Oh!

KAY

And although I may be younger than you expected - and not the right sex -

ROBERT

Oh, look here, I didn't -

KAY

- still, I ~~am supposed to know a little~~ DO HAPPEN TO KNOW A HELL OF A LOT about painting -

ROBERT

~~I didn't mean to -~~ I'M SURE YOU DO

KAY

In fact, since I've been out of college the gallery has sent me around the world ~~four times~~. I've looked at more painters than you can count - TWICE.

ROBERT

And I don't stack up to them very well!

KAY

If you'd just listen a second I really would like to tell you what I think. Some of them -

(ROBERT grabs up a couple of the landscapes)

ROBERT

Of course, these landscapes are terrible! -DISGUSTING- They're before Hong Kong. I didn't want you to see them.

(HE puts them to the wall)

But these -

(HE points to the portraits)

KAY

- are good! Awfully good.

(An abrupt pause. ROBERT looks at her, nonplussed)

ROBERT

(To O'Neill)

Is she serious?

O'NEILL

Oh, Kay is a very serious girl about painting.

ROBERT

(Looks at Kay and grins)

Well, I take back everything I said. You're ancient - you're haggard - and just the sex I've been looking for.

(HE jumps up, excited)

What do we do now? Do they just show promise or - ?

KAY

I'd like to get my uncle's feeling about them. Why don't you pick out two or three that you like the best and let me send them to ~~New York~~ LONDON for an opinion?

ROBERT

You mean you like them well enough for - an opinion?

(KAY smiles)

ROBERT (Cont'd)
That's very encouraging. Look, if you won't have tea, how about a drink?

(HE goes toward the telephone, lifts the receiver and puts it back, forgetting what he had in mind. KAY watches him, thoughtfully)

How long would it take the pictures to get there?

(HE sees O'NEILL looking at a picture)

You like that one?

O'NEILL
Yes.

ROBERT
It's yours.

O'NEILL
Oh, no - thanks - I couldn't possibly -

(A slight pause)

KAY
Mr. Lomax, George tells me that you'd given yourself a year to see if you're any good.

ROBERT
That's right.

KAY
What happens at the end of the year?

ROBERT
If I'm no good, I'll quit.

KAY
You think a year will tell?

ROBERT
It damn well better.

KAY
Maybe a bell will ring one morning and you'll say, "This is it. I'm good."

ROBERT
(Looks at her with a faint smile)
Maybe.

KAY
And if it doesn't ring - then what?

(HE thinks a moment, obviously disturbed)

ROBERT
Probably go creeping back to Toronto -- my father runs a REAL estate agency there. He'd pay me a good salary to do what he calls "a man's work".

KAY
I see.

(A moment's pause. He looks at her)

ROBERT
You've formed some sort of opinion about me, haven't you? I can feel it.

KAY
What is it?

ROBERT
You don't think I'm really serious about painting, do you? You think I'm a god-damned dilletante.

KAY
Why no - no. I just don't see how anyone can be serious for a year - a limited period of time.

ROBERT
(A little impatiently)
What would you have me do? Go on painting all my life whether I'm any good or not?

KAY
But you are good. Look! Don't you believe it? What are you afraid of?

ROBERT
You've formed some sort of opinion about me, haven't you? I can feel it.

KAY
What is it?

ROBERT
You don't think I'm really serious about painting, do you?

KAY
I just don't see how anyone can be serious for a year - a limited period of time. If you're serious it seems to me that's a life-time job.

ROBERT
What would you have me do? Go on painting all my life whether I'm any good or not?

KAY
But you are good! Don't you believe it? What are you afraid of?

ROBERT

This is a very disturbing girl.

O'NEILL

Oh, yes.

ROBERT

(Suddenly to KAY, serious)

How does anyone know if he's any good? I know how I feel - but how do I know I feel enough to call myself a painter? Even as a child, every thought I ever had found me with a pencil in my hand trying to make a picture of it - oh, it used to rile my father! "Throw that damn pencil away - don't just sit there - get up and do something!" How do I know he wasn't right? I've seen a lot of these genius fellows who thought they were inspired by God and dabbed around - having a great time being an artist - and never facing up to earning a living. I despise that! And I'm not going to be like that! That's why I say a year! That's all I'm going to indulge myself with!

(He points to the paintings)

You say you like this stuff - I'm not sure I do. I haven't done anything I really like yet. Not that I like enough. It's still - juvenile - undergraduate - I don't know what - but it's not right. And the fault's in me! I'm really just on the surface. I'm not - not a part of anything! I just don't - I - I - ON THE MARGIN

(He goes out on the balcony. KAY looks at O'NEILL and raises her eyebrows)

KAY

Well! I didn't mean to bring all that on!

O'NEILL

You hit a hidden spring.

KAY

I must have! He's wonderful - I just hope he's not heading for a fall.

ROBERT

(Reappearing from the balcony)

I've a spectacular view from the balcony here. Wouldn't you like to see it?

KAY

Love to.

(They ALL go out. The stage is empty for a moment. Then the door opens and SUZIE enters with GWENNY, MINNIE-HO, FIFI and TYPHOO)

SUZIE

Cuff links - real gold - worth, oh - three hundred dollars at least! Hair brush - real silver!

(SHE pulls open a drawer in the dressing table and holds up a pair of shorts)

Underwear - all real nylon! SHIRT - GENUINE MACHINE MADE!

(SHE picks up a letter)

And see this -

MINNIE-HO

What's that?

SUZIE

Letter - tell how good he is - you want me to read it to you?

TYPHOO

Since when you read?

SUZIE

I read every line of this letter! I make Robert read it to me many times.

(SHE pretends to read)

"This is to introduce Mr. Robert Lomax. He is a man of great honor, integrity and intelligence. He comes from an old and respected family. I can recommend him for a position of greatest trust -

TYPHOO

Who is letter to?

SUZIE

To biggest men in Hong Kong - biggest men anywhere.

TYPHOO

BUT Who?

SUZIE

(Reading)

"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN". When you have boy-friend big as Robert is - you show me letter like this!

~~GWENNY~~

~~Is a good letter. Oh!~~

(SHE stops suddenly, looking at one of the paintings)

~~Is Winston?~~

See THIS?

SUZIE

(Proudly)

~~Yes~~, Winston ~~Wong~~. → GIRLS

(To Typhoo)

~~My baby.~~

ROBERT
Oh, hello, giving them the personally conducted tour, Suzie? This is Miss Fletcher and Mr. O'Neil - Suzie, Gwenny, Typhoo, Wednesday Lulu and Minnie Ho.

KAY
Oh, you're Minnie Ho? How do you do?

MINNIE HO
(Pleased)
You know me?

KAY
Well, I've heard your name ~~o~~-
(MINNIE HO looks at the other, ppoudly)
Good Heavens, I don't know when I've been in the same room with so many beautiful girls -

O'NEILL
Yes. Quite.

~~GWENNY~~
~~We go now.~~

KAY
~~No - no - please - we are just leaving -~~

SUZIE
What Robert say your name?

KAY
Fletcher - Kay Fletcher -

SUZIE
So please to meet you.

KAY
Thank you, Miss - er - oh, dear, I'm afraid I'm rather confused -

SUZIE
Suzie.

KAY
Oh, yes. Thank you - Suzie - . Well, goodbye, Mr. Lomax, I think your models are wonderful. I'll expect you at the Glouc▮ester around eleven with the pictures.

SUZIE (Cont'd)
(Points to other pictures)
Yes Winston - Winston - Winston. Robert crazy about Winston. One day sell each picture for five thousand dollars.

(Suddenly SHE pauses, as SHE hears Robert's voice outside. ROBERT, KAY and O'NEILL enter and stop short. The TWO PARTIES look at each other in surprise. SUZIE looks at Kay)

ROBERT
Oh, hello. Giving them the personally conducted tour, Suzie? This is Miss Fletcher and Mr. O'Neill -- Suzie, Minnie-Ho, Gwenny, Typhoo, Wet Kare and Minnie Ho - FiFi WeD LuLu

(THE GIRLS bow, SUZIE very graciously)

GWENNY
We go now.

KAY
No - no - please - we are just leaving -
(SHE is a little nonplussed. SUZIE on the other hand, is extremely poised)
Goodbye, Robert. I'll expect you around eleven with the pictures.

ROBERT
(Taking her hand)
I can't tell you how excited I am.

KAY
Me, too. See you tomorrow.
(To the girls)
Nice to have met you. Goodbye.

(THE GIRLS bow)

O'NEILL
I'll see you tomorrow too, Robert.

ROBERT
Good.

O'NEILL
(Bows to the girls)
Ladies -
(KAY and O'NEILL go out)

ROBERT
Well, everybody, how about some nice tea?
(HE cannot hide a slight grin as he looks at Suzie)

KAY: OH YES YOU'RE THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE PICTURES

Oh yes. Thank you Suzie. Well goodbye Mr. Lorna Doone. Don't forget your models are waiting. I'll expect you at the Coniston around eleven with pictures

Oh yes - Oh you're Minnie Ho? How do you do? Minnie Ho (Pleased) You know me? Well I've heard your name - (Minnie Ho looks at the others proudly) Good heavens, I don't know when I've been in the same room with so many beautiful girls -

Yes - quite

Kay No, please we are just leaving

Suzie What Robert say your name?

Kay: Fletcher - Kay Fletcher

Suzie So please to meet you -

Kay - Thank you mis - er - oh dear I'm afraid I'm rather confused -

Suzie - Suzie

SUZIE

Oh, no -- they're just leaving.

(Very formally to the girls)

So nice to have met you, ladies. I can't tell you how excited I am, ladies. Thanks so much for coming, ladies ...

(She has shooed the bewildered girls out. ROBERT laughs. He seems very pleased with himself)

ROBERT

That wasn't very polite, Suzie.

(SUZIE glares at him)

SUZIE

Who was that?

ROBERT

His name is O'Neill --

SUZIE

You know who I mean -- that virgin --

ROBERT

Now, Suzie, I don't think that's a nice thing to say about anybody.

SUZIE

You make love to that girl!

ROBERT

I've never met her before in my life.

(He stands looking at a painting)

SUZIE

You lie! I thought you were a big man -- important! But I make mistake!

ROBERT

Oh, come now, Suzie. You've no right to act as though you owned me. I'm not even your boy friend.

SUZIE

That's right. You think I'm dirty waterfront whore. All right for model -- not for love.

ROBERT

It isn't that and you know it!

SUZIE

What is it then? Why you not go to bed with me, Robert?

ROBERT
Now cut it out, Suzie! I've told you I can't afford it.

SUZIE
And I told you I don't want money. I go to bed for nothing.

ROBERT
~~I don't want that either!~~ SURE! YOU GO TO BED WITH TWENTY SAILORS — THEN GO TO BED WITH ME FOR NOTHING! WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM?

SUZIE
You love me, Robert? That why you don't go to bed?

ROBERT
Don't be ridiculous!

SUZIE
Yes, I think maybe. You love me and you afraid to love me -- afraid ~~to let go~~ -- afraid you get jealous -- all those sailors and -- ↘ YOU WILL REALLY LOVE ME

ROBERT
Suzie, I've told you if you're going to keep coming up here you've got to stop talking that way.

SUZIE
You don't like me to talk that way?

ROBERT
No, I don't. And as for that girl that was here -- she came to see my paintings. She's going to send some of them to an art gallery in ~~New York~~ LONDON and maybe I'll sell some. Now come and help me choose two or three. How about this one?

ROBERT (Cont'd)
tell you the truth. That girl came to see my paintings! She's going to send some of them to an art gallery in New York - and maybe I'll sell some. Now what do you think of that?

(Pause. SUZIE considers)

SUZIE
I think maybe you not made love to her - yet.

ROBERT
Well, don't blame me for the future, Suzie!
(Grinning)
Now stop it! Come and help me choose two or three paintings to send. How about this one?

SUZIE
Winston go to ~~New York~~ London?

ROBERT
Winston go to ~~New York~~ London.
(The telephone rings. ROBERT answers it. SUZIE stands looking at her baby's picture, lovingly)
Hello. - Yes, she's here - just a minute -
(HE turns to Suzie)
It's Ah Tong.
(HE starts looking over the pictures as SUZIE answers the telephone)

SUZIE
Hello. - Oh! - Well, tell him I come back right away.
(Suddenly SHE has an idea. SHE looks at Robert. SHE smiles)
No! Ah Tong! Tell him to come in here and meet Robert.

ROBERT
(Looks up, annoyed)
Suzie!

(SHE hangs up)

SUZIE
(Airily)
My boy friend! In room down the hall. He wake up - wonder where I am - call Ah Tong -

ROBERT
Suzie, do you have to bring all your boy friends in here to meet me?

SUZIE
You like this one. Very nice. Business man! Only very drunk now - passed right out - not even make love once -

ROBERT

But damn it all - SUZIE —

SUZIE

You like Ben. - Maybe I be his regular girl friend.

ROBERT

(Looking at her quickly)

Did he ask you to be?

SUZIE

Oh, sure - everybody ask me.

ROBERT

How could he ask you if he passed right out?

SUZIE

Before he pass out -

ROBERT

See here, Suzie, if you're doing this to try to make me jealous - YOU'RE NOT BEING VERY SUCCESSFUL.

(A knock at the door)

Oh, God!

SUZIE

My boy friend!

(ROBERT groans and turns away. SUZIE opens the door. BEN JEFFCOAT, a large, broad-shouldered man in early middle age, good-looking, stands swaying slightly in the doorway. HE has obviously just waked up. HE seems bewildered)

SUZIE

(Graciously)

Come in. Come in.

(SHE leads him in. HE stands looking around him, at ROBERT, bewildered and utterly lost)

My boy friend, Ben. This is Mr. Robert Lomax.

(BEN stares at Robert)

ROBERT

(Suddenly very gracious)

How do you do? You're my first civilian. I'm honored.

BEN

Humph!

ROBERT

Won't you sit down. ~~You see, I paint.~~ Suzie and I were just going to look over some of my pictures to send to ~~New York~~ LONDON. We'd be very happy to get your opinion. What do you think of this one?

BEN
(Stands trying to focus on a picture)
Humph!

ROBERT
(Pleased)
You really think so? That's very flattering.
(Aside to Suzie)
He is nice, Suzie.

SUZIE
(Eyeing him suspiciously)
He drunk. He can't even see picture!

ROBERT
Of course he can! You know, I think he'd make you a wonderful boy friend, Suzie.

SUZIE
(Furious)
You go hell!
(SHE starts for the door. ROBERT, alarmed, starts after her)

ROBERT
Suzie!
(SUZIE continues out)
Suzie, don't you dare! Suzie you can't leave me here with - !
Suzie!
(But SUAIE has gone. ROBERT groans)
Oh, God!
(HE turns back into the room and looks at Ben. BEN turns and looks at him. THEY eye each other a moment in silence)
She'll be back -

BEN
Humph! You said that before -

ROBERT
Yes - well - would you like to sit on the balcony?
(BEN sits where he is)
Oh!
(ROBERT sits. A moment's pause)
The harbor in Hong Kong is said to be the most beautiful harbor in the world - personally, I believe Rio's even more spectacular though. Have you ever been in Rio?

BEN
You're bloody curious, aren't you? -
(Suddenly)
Can you tell me what the hell I'm doing here?

ROBERT
Well - you're waiting for Suzie -

BEN

What are you doing in here?

ROBERT

I live here.

BEN

But what are we doing in here together? I didn't come here to see you!

ROBERT

It's hard to explain.

BEN

You can't explain it! It's just not happening. Look, old man, you haven't got a spot of whiskey, have you?

ROBERT

~~Oughtn't you to go a bit steady?~~ SHOULDN'T YOU TAKE IT A LITTLE EASY?

BEN

For Christ's sake, don't start pulling that Old Betsy stuff on me!

ROBERT

(Going to the phone)

Old Betsy stuff?

BEN

Forget it. This is the most peculiar situation I ever found myself in.

ROBERT

Yes, it is rather odd.

(Into the telephone)

Ah Tong, will you send up a double whiskey and a San Mig? And if Suzie's in the bar tell her to get the hell up here. Thanks.

(HE goes back to Ben and sits, looking at a picture on the way.)

BEN

What I can't figure out is where you come in.

ROBERT

I'm just a friend of the family.

BEN

What does that mean? I must be a lot drunker than I thought. Well, what do we do now?

ROBERT

What would you like to do?

BEN
I've lived in Hong Kong for years and this is the first time I've ever been in a brothel. In fact, let's face it, I've been a model husband to old Betsy.

ROBERT
(Looking at a painting)
I take it Betsy is your wife.

BEN
With a vengeance, old boy! I'll say she's my wife! "I'm your wife," she says, "and you like that sailing dinghy of yours better than you like your own wife.

ROBERT
(Politely)
You like to sail?

BEN
Do I like to sail! I was a sailor during the war -- you know, I've never really enjoyed life since the war was over? Only on weekends when I went out in my dinghy.

ROBERT
Doesn't your wife like to sail?

BEN
Hates it. Makes her sick.

ROBERT
Oh, that's unfortunate.

BEN
Makes her even sicker to have me like it though. Only let me sail Saturday afternoons--have to spend all day Sunday with her.
(He groans)
All day Sunday with Old Betsy and that beautiful little dinghy sitting out there all alone by herself. But you think even that satisfied Old Betsy? No, sir. She got sore even when I went out Saturday afternoons. So finally I -- I --
(He gulps)
I sold her.

ROBERT
Betsy?

BEN
No -- no --
(He laughs)
Who'd buy Betsy. No market there, old boy. No, I sold my beautiful little dinghy.

ROBERT
Oh --

BEN
But you think even that satisfied her?

ROBERT

No!

BEN

By God, that's right! How'd you know?

ROBERT

I just guessed.

(A knock at the door. ROBERT goes to it, eagerly. As BEN talks on, AH TONG enters with the drinks. To ROBERT's questioning look, AH TONG shakes his head. ROBERT points to Ben. AH TONG shrugs, puts down the drinks. ROBERT serves them)

BEN

She wouldn't even LET ME go to the club for a drink. Fact is, Old Betsy wants total possession - and she damn well isn't going to have it. So this morning I walked out - went to the club - got drunk - found out about this place - came here - but I was so drunk that - Look, old boy, you don't think that girl - what's her name?

ROBERT

Suzie.

BEN

I'm worried she may think - well, nothing happened, you know - but it was because I was drunk - no other reason -

ROBERT

I'm sure she knows that.

BEN

(Gloomily)
I don't know - Of course, I've never mucked around with a prostitute before -

ROBERT

(Sharply)
Prostitute?

BEN

Yes. That Suzie - she's a prostitute, isn't she?

ROBERT

(Reluctantly)
Well, she's - well - yes - I expect you could call her that -

BEN

What do you mean, "you expect - ?"

ROBERT

(Angrily)
All right, she's a prostitute!

BEN

What you getting sore about? She your particular property?

ROBERT

No, she's not. -- Look, old man, don't you think it might be a good idea if you went home now?

BEN

But that little girl - don't want her to think -

ROBERT

I'll explain things to her.

BEN

(Gloomily)
Well, expect I might as well. I don't see much future for me tonight anyway -
(HE starts to get up)
But I hate to have that little girl think -
(Suddenly HE sinks back into his chair again)
I don't know. Perhaps there is something the matter with me.

ROBERT

(Reaching for him)
There's not - really there's not.

BEN

Haven't had a chance to really know for a long time. Old Betsy and I -- . Now, look, I don't want you to get the wrong impression of Old Betsy.

ROBERT

(Hastily)
Oh, I haven't - I have the greatest respect for her.

BEN

She's a damned attractive girl. Life of the party!

ROBERT

I believe it - I believe it. Now, up we go!
(HE starts to help BEN up. HE comes part way)

BEN

Before we were married she was always talking about sex - very sophisticated remarks - gave the impression she'd jump into bed at the drop of a hat.

ROBERT

Did she really?

(ROBERT has Ben standing on his feet)

BEN

She certainly did. But that was before we were married.

(HE sits down. ROBERT turns away)

ROBERT

(Groaning, aside)

Oh, my God!

BEN

Fact is, Old Betsy had never even been with a man before - and she had the idea it was just a wifely duty - something she had to put up with -

ROBERT

(Embarrassed)

Umm.

BEN

She hated it so that I - well, I stopped bothering her. Only thing that has worried me about it is that it hasn't worried me. See what I mean?

(ROBERT hesitates, puzzled)

I can see you don't.

ROBERT

Yes, I do - yes - I do.

BEN

Oh! - That's one reason I decided to have a girl tonight - to prove something to myself.

(Suddenly)

Look here, old man, I want to ask you something. You're A REAL GUY — young - you know all these girls - you live right here in the thick of it all -

ROBERT

(Hastily)

Don't give me too much credit, Ben! I just live here!

BEN

(Wisely)

Oh, sure, sure. Now tell me, how would you go about getting a girl like this Suzie to - well - I'd like to see her again - maybe several times - but I'm afraid if I go home I'll sober up and I won't have the nerve to -- . How about your asking her for me - then I'll call you and -

(ROBERT rises, angrily)

ROBERT

What the hell do you think I am!

BEN

You live here!

ROBERT

(Decides not to get mad)
Look! I've got a lot of work to do. I'm sorry to seem inhospitable but you've got to get the hell out of here.

(Suddenly the door opens and SUZIE enters, cheerful and gay. ROBERT glares at her)

SUZIE

(To Robert)
I been to see my baby.

~~ROBERT~~

~~You went all the way up to - ?~~

SUZIE

You know what my amah tell me?

~~ROBERT~~

~~No, and I don't give a damn.~~

SUZIE

Today an SAW Englishman came to the house to look at the drains and he ~~looked at~~ my baby and said, "That baby is very good looking, a beautiful baby."

ROBERT

Congratulations.

SUZIE

How you feeling now, Ben?

BEN

See here, Suzie, I'm afraid I'm not much good for tonight - but what are you doing at twelve o'clock tomorrow?

SUZIE

Night?

BEN

No, morning.

SUZIE

You only paid for tonight.

BEN

I'll pay - don't worry -

SUZIE

All right. You come and find me in bar.

BEN

Good. I'll meet you at noon.

(SUZIE nods, indifferently. ROBERT has been noisily shifting pictures about)

Suzie - I want to say - I'm not a bad sort of a fellow -

SUZIE

No, you're not bad man - but too much worry up here.

(SHE taps her head)

Too much shame.

BEN

Suzie -

(HE hesitates)

Well, I might as well say it before I get sober. You wouldn't want to make it a regular date?

SUZIE

You mean you be my regular boy friend?

(SHE looks at Robert quickly. ROBERT is holding onto a picture so hard he is almost trembling)

BEN

That's right - how about it? I'd meet you every noon and we'd have lunch - and then - I'd pay very well. Of course, I wouldn't want you to go out with anybody else while --

SUZIE

(Looking at Robert)

What you take me for? Street girl? If I your regular girl friend I not even look at another man, would I, Robert?

BEN

Oh, I didn't mean to suggest--

SUZIE

If I your regular girl friend I faithful to you from <u>this minute on.</u>

(Looking almost challengingly at Robert)

BEN

Say, that's great! Will you do it? Is it a bargain?

(Pause. ROBERT doesn't look up, just stands there tense. Then:)

ROBERT

Why are you hesitating, Suzie? Ben can obviously afford you. This is your great opportunity.

(A slight pause)

SUZIE

(Airily, to Ben)
All right. Regular girl friend from now on.
(THEY shake hands)

BEN

Say, that's great! I can't begin to thank you.

SUZIE

I see you tomorrow.

BEN

(All pepped up)
Say, this is--! I never thought I'd have the nerve to--!
(HE turns to Robert)
Good night, old man. Nice to have met you. And thanks for helping me out.
(HE goes, humming. A pause. ROBERT stands, quietly, looking out of the window. SUZIE looks at him)

ROBT: I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.
BEN: WELL, THANKS ANYWAY

SUZIE

Now you want to choose pictures?

ROBERT

Why don't you go home!

SUZIE

I do that -- but I help you first.

ROBERT

I don't need any help!

SUZIE

Why you angry?

ROBERT

(Suddenly HE turns on her)
Just don't use my room for your pick-ups any more, if that's all right with you! You've got the bar - you've got the waterfront - you've got the whole God-damned city of Hong Kong!

(Pause. SUZIE looks at him)

SUZIE

I gave you chance to stop me being ~~Ben's~~ HIS FROM girl friend.

ROBERT

I've no right to stop you.

SUZIE

Then you no right to be angry. Only boy friend who go to bed have right to be angry.
(A moment's pause)

SUZIE (Cont.)
I go home now. Have regular boy friend -- I must make arrangements. Have more time with my baby now.

ROBERT
That's right, Suzie, go on home.

BEN OR
SUZIE
You know, Robert -- no reason for you to be jealous of sailors. I go to bed with ~~father~~ for job. No love, no feeling. Just like holding somebody for dance. Nothing happen inside. Nothing happen in heart. Go to bed with you -- everything happen. I love. I feel beautiful. I think, "My man". You think, "My girl." We belong.

(ROBERT stands looking at her tensely, holding on to a chair)

ROBERT
I know. That's just it. You're too close now, Suzie. Too beautiful. If I go to bed with you -- I'm sunk. Go home, Suzie. For Christ's sake, go home.

SUZIE
(Turns and goes to the door, then looks back at him)
I understand about love, Robert. You don't understand. Goodnight, Robert.

(SHE goes. The door closes. ROBERT stands there, his fists clenched. The juke box comes in louder from the bar below. A girl's laugh rings out from a nearby room. There is a knock at the door. ROBERT starts toward it, eagerly. Checks himself. Picks up a painting and looks at it, and calls, casually)

ROBERT
Come in.

(AH TONG enters)

Oh.

AH TONG
I take away dirty glasses.

ROBERT
Yes, all right, Ah Tong.

(AH TONG does so)

AH TONG
Suzie say she have regular boy friend now.

ROBERT
That's right.

AH TONG
Suzie like that. Everybody happy for her.

ROBERT
Yes.

(AH TONG looks at him. He senses Robert's loneliness)

AH TONG
Mr. Lomax?

ROBERT
Yes, Ah Tong?

AH TONG
Hong Kong very beautiful city -- gay -- happy -- everybody have good time --

ROBERT
I know --

AH TONG
Bar downstairs very crowded tonight -- everybody dance -- laugh -- rooms upstairs all full -- everybody happy --

ROBERT
Good.

AH TONG
(Hesitantly)
Don't you want I send you up a girl, Mr. Lomax? They all like you. ~~Come very quick.~~ And I -- I put it on your bill -- I manage that -- no good to be lonesome in Hong Kong.

ROBERT
(Thinks a moment. Decided)
No, it isn't, is it? You're right, Ah Tong. You know what you can do for me?

AH TONG
(Eagerly)
Yes, Mr. Lomax?

ROBERT
Ask Gwenny if she'd like to come up.

AH TONG
(Very happy)
Yes, Mr. Lomax. I tell her just as soon as she comes down.

(ROBERT pauses abruptly as the significance of this dawns on him. AH TONG starts out, happily. As he nears the door --)

ROBERT

No.

AH TONG

What, Mr. Lomax?

ROBERT

I say no -- never mind -- thanks, Ah Tong -- not tonight, I guess --

AH TONG

(Disappointed)
Just as you say, Mr. Lomax.

(AH TONG goes. ROBERT wanders around the room. The juke box is heard. Again a girl's laugh from a nearby room. ROBERT wanders around the room, lonesome and at odds with the world)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene 1

ROBERT'S ROOM. A MONTH LATER. LATE AFTERNOON.

Several new paintings are standing about.

ROBERT is reading a letter over the telephone. He is excited. He is dressed in old paint-stained clothes -- his painting "uniform". A half-finished portrait of KAY is on the easel.

ROBERT

(Reading)
"The vigor of your pictures more than make up for some of the weakness of composition and technique--"
(He breaks off)
And that's true, you know, Kay. Nothing I've done so far is-- What? Oh!
(He reads)
"We would be happy to have you send us anything new you may have done in this past month. At the moment, we are --"
(He breaks off as there is a knock at the door)
Yes? Who is it?
(Into the phone)
Just a second, Kay.

(The door opens and MINNIE-HO looks in and around)

MINNIE HO

Suzie not here?

ROBERT

No, she isn't, Minnie-Ho.

MINNIE HO

Just heard she has a new dress.
Excuse me.

ROBERT

That's all right.
(She goes. He continues reading into the phone)
"At the moment, we are--"
(He breaks off)
What? Oh, it was Minnie-Ho. She thought Suzie might be here.

ROBERT (Cont'd)

(He reads)
"At the moment, we are--"
(He breaks off)
I said it was Minnie-Ho. She just popped in to see if Suzie was here. What do you mean, wasn't she? -- No, she doesn't practically live here, Kay. Ben doesn't allow her to go into the bar any more so --. Of course, I know you're kidding. -- All right.
(He reads)
"At the moment, we are enclosing a check for the pastel you call 'Street Vendor'."
(He listens, grinning)
That's right. Eighty dollars. It's not much but--. Yes, certainly I'm excited. Now wait, there's a little more.
(Reading)
"You have a really unusual talent and I know we can expect great things from you. Sincerely, Henry C. Weinbaum." Now, who's he exactly?
(As he listens there is a light rap at the door. He starts to answer, suddenly thinks better of it and holds his hand over the phone and says, softly:)
Yes?
(GWENNY opens the door and looks in. ROBERT whispers)
Suzie's not here, Gwenny.

GWENNY

Thank you. Excuse me.

(ROBERT nods and GWENNY goes)

ROBERT

(Into the phone)
And he's really tough, eh? So much the better.
(He becomes more personal)
You know who I've got to thank for it, don't you, Kay?
(He listens)
That's not true. You've been wonderful. If it hadn't been for you --
(The door opens and SUZIE enters. ROBERT's attitude on the phone becomes more formal. He glances up at Suzie and nods. SUZIE comes in matter-of-factly, as though she lived there. She sits and picks up a large book of pictures and begins looking through it, elaborately indifferent to ROBERT)
(On the phone)
Well, there's no use talking about it now. How about dinner tonight, Kay? Celebrate?
(He looks at his watch)
Six-thirty? How about going the whole hog and trying the Kit Kat Club? Pretty fancy, eh? Half an hour? -- I'll get dressed and pick you up. -- All right. -- I am, too. -- Goodbye, darling!

ROBERT (Cont'd)
(He hangs up. He is self-conscious. He starts toward the dressing table for a clean shirt)
Hello, Suzie.

(SUZIE says nothing, just continues to look through the book)
Minnie-Ho and Gwenny are looking for you.

(SUZIE says nothing. ROBERT gets a shirt)

How's the baby?

SUZIE
(Gesturing toward the phone)
That virgin still virgin?

ROBERT
I don't think that's any of your business, do you, Suzie?

SUZIE
She ask you to marry her yet?

ROBERT
(Grinning)
Oh, all the time.

SUZIE
She make you a good wife. Plenty money - art gallery - everything.

ROBERT
That's right.

SUZIE
Nice to have rich girl friend. She spend plenty money on you.

ROBERT
(Angry)
She spends nothing on me! What do you think I am? We go Dutch on everything!

SUZIE
Dutch?

ROBERT
I pay for myself and she pays for herself! And we don't go to expensive places! We take picnic lunches - we - oh, to hell with it!
(He turns away)

SUZIE

Good thing we never fell in love, eh, Robert? I make you take me most expensive places in Hong Kong. I make you make love to me in biggest stuck-up hotels! Would have been terrible if we had fallen in love! You never get any work done. We just make love all time, eh, Robert?

(She is standing close to him, looking up at him. He looks at her a moment, then turns away, abruptly)

ROBERT

You'd better go now, Suzie. I want to change my clothes.

SUZIE

How it feel to be in love, Robert? Wonderful?

(ROBERT turns to her, seriously)

ROBERT

Suzie, I want to say something to you. I - hate to say it - but I have to. I like you very much - and I can't tell you how I appreciate all the times you've sat here and let me paint you - you've been wonderful about it - but - well - I have got a lot of other work to do, too - I've got to keep my mind on it. I have to have you come up here once in a while but -

(Suddenly exasperated)

- but God damn it, you're up here all the time! How the hell do you think I can work when you're here all the time?

SUZIE

You not want me to come up here any more?

ROBERT

Now look, Suzie, you're a dear sweet friend but -

SUZIE

I understand - you don't want me! Finish!

ROBERT

I do want you, Suzie. But - well - you disturb me.

SUZIE

I disturb you just sitting here looking at picture book?

ROBERT

Yes, you do!

SUZIE

That virgin disturb you when she sits here and looks at picture book?

ROBERT

Look, Suzie - ~~damn it~~ - you have your boy friend and I have - er - my girl friend. Let's just leave it at that, shall we?

(Suddenly SUZIE smiles, dreamily)

SUZIE
My boy friend! You know, Robert, I like my boy friend very much.

ROBERT
Good! Then that settles everything.

SUZIE
And I'm very faithful to my boy friend.

ROBERT
I'm sure you are.

SUZIE
Yes, I like him very much. He has a big heart.

ROBERT
All right, Suzie -

SUZIE
He has a big heart not just because he gives me a thousand Hong Kong dollars a month -

ROBERT
(Irritated)
Oh, stop bragging! You've told me how much he gives you.

SUZIE
- but he loves me, too. Last night I stayed awake just to think about Ben.

ROBERT
All right. Now will you PLEASE get ~~the hell~~ out of here? I have to change my clothes.

SUZIE
Go ahead - ~~you same to me~~ - pants on - pants off - ~~just dear sweet friend - go ahead - change clothes.~~ CHANGE CLOTHES ALL SAME TO ME — PANTS,

ROBERT
(Glaring at her)
All right, I will! (TAKES OFF PANTS)

SUZIE
But if my boy friend take off his pants - wooshl And every day at twelve o'clock I go see Ben and -- HE TAKE OFF —

ROBERT
Suzie, I'm warning you! If you don't get out of here I'm going to throw you out.
(Suddenly angry again)
~~God damn it,~~ what makes you think I'm interested in your love-life?

SUZIE
Love-life! Yes! Finally I have wonderful love-life! Ben not there this noon and I worry - worry - worry!
(Then, angry)
And I hate that wife! I hate that woman very much so I must have wonderful love-life.

ROBERT
You've never even seen her, have you?

SUZIE
Why do I have to see her? I just hate her! -- You know, Robert, one day Ben divorce that wife and marry me.

(A sudden pause. ROBERT looks at her, quickly, his anger melting. He turns to her, gently)

ROBERT
I shouldn't count on that too much, Suzie.

SUZIE
Yes, I think so. Often he says, "Suzie, one day I will take you to London and show you country where I was brought up.

ROBERT
But that doesn't necessarily mean that he --

SUZIE
Sometime he stretch out on bed and tell me all about himself - when he was little boy - first little girl he was in love with - he say to me, "Suzie, I can talk to you - I feel so at home with you - I just like to do everything with you. Oh, Suzie, we're going to have a wonderful life together." Even rent boat and take me sailing - make love to me on boat. He says I wonderful sailor. Oh, yes, he want to marry me.

ROBERT
But, Suzie, you know it isn't very easy to get a divorce, and --

SUZIE
Oh, easy for Ben. Ben knows all the big people in Hong Kong. He only has to say, "My wife no good; I want divorce." Then he marry me. He loves my baby, too. My baby grow up fine in London. Go to Oxford. Become great movie star.

ROBERT
(He takes her hands)
Suzie, has Ben ever actually said anything like this to you - or are you only talking about it because you - well - because you believe it while you're saying it? You know - believe and not believe.

SUZIE
No, not like that. He's crazy mad in love with me, that man!

ROBERT
All right, Suzie, have it your own way.

SUZIE
Best boy friend I ever had. Take good care of me.

ROBERT
All right.
(A pause. He continues dressing)

SUZIE
That Kit Kat Club. Very expensive. You going to take picnic lunch there?

ROBERT
Well, no, tonight I have eighty dollars that -
(He turns to her suddenly, excited)
Oh, Suzie, I forgot to tell you! I sold a picture! The letter just came a few minutes ago!
(He waves it at her)

SUZIE
(Wild with excitement)
Robert! Robert!
(She throws her arms around his neck)
Why you not tell me?

ROBERT
I forgot for a minute. I --

SUZIE
Oh, Robert! Now you are a big man - rich - famous -
(She starts to dash around the room, picking up an ash tray to throw it)
Hey, hey, Robert is a famous man! Robert is rich --!

ROBERT
(Rescuing the ash tray, laughing)
Now don't get carried away, Suzie. I only sold one little pastel --

SUZIE
How much you get? Five thousand bucks?
(She takes the letter from him and pretends to read it)

ROBERT
Not quite that much -- ROBERT 80 dollars. Suzie

SUZIE
Then three thousand! CAN I have this?
(She holds up the letter)

ROBERT

Yes, of course.

(She starts out)

Where are you going?

SUZIE

I go tell girls in bar Robert is a great man.

ROBERT

Don't lay it on too thick, will you, Suzie?

SUZIE

(At the door she turns)

How it feel to be a great man, hey, Robert? How it feel?

ROBERT

Wonderful, Suzie -- WONDERFUL —

(SUZIE waves the letter and goes. ROBERT stands looking after her a moment, thoughtfully. Then he turns back into the room, finishing his dressing. He puts on his tie. His back is to the door. There is a knock. He does not turn)

Yes? Come in.

(The door opens and BEN enters. He seems nervous and distrait)

BEN

Lomax?

(ROBERT turns, surprised to see BEN)

ROBERT

Well, hello, there!

BEN

Wondered if I could see you a minute --

ROBERT

Of course. Come in. Suzie just left.

BEN

I know. I saw her go. As a matter of fact, it was you I wanted to see. Was in the neighborhood and just thought I'd drop in to say hello.

ROBERT

Oh, really? Well, how are you? You're looking fit.

BEN

Oh, me!

(He laughs, nervously)

Couldn't be better! I feel ten years younger than that night I was up here.

ROBERT

I must say you look it!

BEN

Thanks.

(He wanders around the room, looking at the paintings. ROBERT watches him, wondering what is coming)

How are things with you, old man? Getting a lot of work done?

ROBERT

Some.

BEN

Suzie tells me you're at it all the time.

(He points to a painting)

That Suzie?

ROBERT

It's meant to be.

BEN

Um-hum.

(He goes to a bottle of whiskey)

Could I have a spot of this?

ROBERT

Yes, of course. Not the best, I'm afraid.

(BEN takes a drink - then another. ROBERT watches him, curiously)

BEN

How is Suzie, by the way?

ROBERT

You see her every day, don't you?

BEN

Yes, of course - but, well, I see her in a sort of different capacity than you do. I mean, she's happy, isn't she? Likes our arrangement all right?

ROBERT

(Watching him, wondering)

She likes it very much.

BEN

(With a sigh)

Yes, that's what I thought.

(A moment's pause. BEN seems to be thinking. ROBERT watches him)

BEN (Cont'd)
She's a marvelous girl, Suzie. TAUGHT ME SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT.
(He laughs a little self-consciously) BOBT; WHAT'S THAT?
You see, the fact is, old boy, I was brought up to believe that sex was shameful and dirty - a hole in the corner business that decent chaps had as little to do with as possible.

ROBERT
(Quietly)
~~I was too, Ben.~~ I expect most of us were, BEN.

BEN IT'S
But that's rubbish because ~~there's~~ something bloody marvelous -- something that instead of being ashamed about, we should all go down on our knees twice a day and thank God for. Nothing shameful and dirty about Suzie, I can tell you that.

ROBERT
(A little embarrassed)
We're always glad to hear from satisfied customers.

BEN
(Taking another drink, expanding)
Yes, when you come right down to it, these psychology chaps are right. Sex is behind everything. Affects one's whole outlook. Why are some people such bastards -- so bitter and disagreeable?

~~ROBERT~~
~~Well...they were born that way.~~

IT'S BECAUSE BEN
~~Not a bit of it, old boy!~~ They're all twisted and dried up inside ~~because~~ they don't face up to facts. In my opinion, half the world's trouble is what I like to call frustration!

ROBERT
Well, you've come a long way, Ben, for a man who thought there was something wrong with him in that department.

BEN
Nothing wrong with me at all, old boy! Perfectly healthy animal! Just psychology! Yes, I owe Suzie a lot, no doubt about it. She changed my whole life. Changed Old Betsy's life, too.

ROBERT
You mean Suzie changed your wife's life?

BEN
Oh, no doubt about it! Old Betsy has become a new woman -- gay -- witty -- charming -- positively glowing!

ROBERT
And Suzie's responsible for it?

BEN
Completely.

ROBERT
That's very interesting. Of course, I can see why you might be glowing ~~because of Suzie~~ -- but I don't quite see what your wife has to glow about.

BEN
Well -- if I told you I'm afraid it might shock you.

ROBERT
~~Oh, I don't know.~~ One gets pretty shock-proof, living down here.

BEN
Well, you see -- the fact is -- that after I met Suzie -- well -- Old Betsy and I - we - er - well - it's damn awkward saying it to a stranger but - to put it bluntly - Betsy and I have-resumed fullmaritalrelationsagain!

ROBERT
You mean while you're - er - seeing Suzie?

BEN
(With a shy smile)
Because I'm - er - seeing Suzie.

ROBERT
If you're trying to tell me what I think you are -

BEN
That's right. You see, I'm only with Suzie during the week -

ROBERT
Un-huh.

BEN
So Saturdays and Sundays - well, you know, nothing really to do! So one Saturday I was ~~just~~ sitting there at home - just sort of waiting until Monday when I could be with Suzie - and I looked across the room and there was Old Betsy. And, you know, suddenly she began to look pretty as hell.

ROBERT
I see.

BEN
I said to her, "Betsy, you've got a lovely profile. I think I first fell in love with you because of your profile." Well, poor old Betsy, she damn near fell off her chair. And since then --

ROBERT

- since then she's been positively glowing.

BEN

That's right.

ROBERT

And you?

BEN

Well, I feel the same way. Let's face it! What was our marriage worth before? Nothing! But now - it's <u>terrific</u>! I'm crazy about her.

ROBERT

And Suzie?

BEN

Oh, I'm crazy about Suzie, too.

ROBERT

(Worried)
You've got yourself quite a set-up, haven't you, Ben?

BEN

(Gloomy)
I did have! I did have! Life was full - bloody exciting up until --
(Suddenly)
Look, old man, I might as well come right out with it. I got in quite a bit of a jam last night. That's why I came to see you.
(He stops)

ROBERT

(Quietly)
Yes?

BEN

Well --
(Suddenly he groans)
Oh, my God, Lomax, it's awful! Betsy and I went out on a party last night - all got a little high - and Betsy - Betsy found out about Suzie and me!
(He groans again)
You don't know what I've been through. All last night -- all today -- oh, God!

ROBERT

How did she find out?

BEN

(Gulping)
I - I told her.

ROBERT

You told her!

BEN

(Nodding)
Had a little too much - Betsy and I had a bit of a row - she began to feel too damned sure of herself - started bragging what a man she'd made of me and I wanted to take her down a peg - and all of a sudden it was out - all of it! Oh, God!

ROBERT

(Holding himself in)
And?

BEN

See this?
(He takes out a paper)

ROBERT

What is it?

BEN

It's a list! A list of all the things I've got to do if Betsy agrees to stay with me! And if I don't carry out every single one of them - it's all over! Betsy takes a plane to London and starts divorce proceedings.

ROBERT

(On the verge of explosion)
And the first thing on the list, ~~I expect~~, is for you to ditch Suzie.

BEN

(Nodding)
Before nightfall.

ROBERT

Before nightfall! Just like that?

BEN

And Betsy means it! You don't know her! ~~She is~~ a real bitch! BETSY CAN BE WHEN SHE WANTS TO BE.

ROBERT

~~To hell with that!~~ What do you plan to do about Suzie? Buy her off?

BEN

That's the point! I can't, old boy. That's on the list, too -- ~~and it's underlined~~ -- not one more cent to Suzie --

ROBERT

Just shoo her back into the bar, you mean! "Beat it, Suzie. Get back in that bar pronto - tonight - and get busy. What?

ROBERT (Cont'd)
You hate that bar? That's where I found you. Go on - collect yourself a boatload of sailors and earn your own money! No more from me - I've had it -" That what you mean?

(ROBERT has worked himself into nearly a rage)

BEN

(Groaning)
Oh, Christ, when you put it that way -

ROBERT

How would you have me put it?

BEN

I wouldn't do anything to hurt Suzie for the world.

ROBERT

And this will hurt, you know. It will hurt Suzie plenty. Not just because she needs the money for her baby - but because it's the nicest life she's ever known - In fact, she thinks some day you might divorce your wife and marry her.

BEN

Marry her?

ROBERT

I suppose you never hinted anything like that to her?

BEN

Never! It never entered my mind.

ROBERT

(Shortly)
I suppose not! Well, what are you telling me all this for, anyway? Go ahead - kick her out - scratch her off your ~~God-damned~~ list - why come to me?

BEN

Well - see here, Lomax - Suzie thinks a lot of you - she talks about you enough - and I thought it might make everything easier if - well, if you WERE TO - -

ROBERT

(Grimly)
If I were to what?

BEN

Well, she likes you and I thought if you --

ROBERT

You'd better get out of here, Ben -

BEN

What's the matter? You sore?

ROBERT

I'm not sore! I'm sick!

(Suddenly furious again)

You've got one hell of a nerve coming in here and asking me to do your dirty work for you!

BEN

But you like Suzie and I thought -

ROBERT

You thought you'd shove it off on me! Sure, why not? You don't take the trouble to fire a coolie that's working for you, do you? You just say to someone else - "Get rid of him. Tell that bum I don't want him hanging around here any more."

BEN

But that's not the same -

ROBERT

Of course, it's the same. Why should a man of your position bother himself to get rid of a cheap little whore like Suzie?

BEN

(Suddenly getting angry)

Now, see here, Lomax - you're going a bit far!

ROBERT

Hell, she hasn't any feelings - she hasn't any pride - she's not a human being - Christ, she's not even white -

(Suddenly nearly hitting BEN) (CONTROLS HIMSELF)

~~Well, goddamn it, you made your own little pile of dirt and you can damn well clean it up yourself! And I just hope that when you tell her, Suzie rubs your nose in it so hard that you smell the way you talk! You'd better beat it now, Jeffcoat! Get out!~~ I THINK YOU'D BETTER GO NOW, JEFFCOAT.

(ROBERT turns away, trembling with anger, trying to get control of himself)

(Suddenly there is a chattering like a bunch of magpies outside - running footsteps are heard - the door is suddenly thrown open and SUZIE, MINNIE-HO, GWENNY, WEDNESDAY LULU, TYPHOO and FIFI burst in. They are all smiles and bobbing up and down. They all speak at once. "Congratulations, Robert." "Rober is a big man now!" "You paint me next time, Robert?" "Robert, we so happy!" "Suzie say you get three thousand dollars!" Etc.)

(SUZIE, who has been watching, proud and happy, suddenly sees BEN)

SUZIE

Ben! What you do here? What's the matter?

(She turns to the babbling girls)

All right, get out! You congratulate him enough! Don't give him big head! Go on - get out --

(She hustles them all out and turns to ROBERT)

What's the matter, Robert? Why Ben here?

(She looks at him. Suddenly, seeing his face, she goes to him, quickly)

Why you look like that, Robert? You sick?

ROBERT

No, I'm all right, Suzie.

SUZIE

You have bad news? You get bad news about your paintings?

ROBERT

No - no, Suzie --

SUZIE

Then why you look so sick?

(Pause. ROBERT takes her hands. He looks over at BEN)

ROBERT

Why am I sick, Jeffcoat?

(BEN just stands there and can say nothing. ROBERT takes a deep breath)

Suzie -- his wife -- she's found out -- everything.

SUZIE

Found out about me?

(She looks at BEN. He says nothing. She looks back at ROBERT)

ROBERT

Yes, Suzie.

SUZIE

Oh!

(A moment's pause. They watch her)

ROBERT

She's going to leave him unless --

(He pauses. SUZIE nods, slowly. She looks at BEN)

SUZIE

(Quietly)

We finished - yes, Ben?

(Again BEN cannot answer)

ROBERT

Yes, Suzie.

SUZIE

(To BEN)
But why Robert have to tell me? Why not you tell me?
(Turns back to ROBERT)
Don't feel so bad, Robert. I be all right. I lie when I say Ben want to marry me. He never say that.
(She shrugs)
Okay. All over -- finish.

BEN

Suzie, I don't know what I'm going to do without you --

(ROBERT turns away)

SUZIE

(Watching ROBERT)
You be all right, Ben.

BEN

You're a splendid girl, Suzie --

SUZIE

YES — NO
Splendid --

BEN

If you ever need me for anything --

SUZIE

All over -- finish.

BEN

Suzie, don't think I'm --

SUZIE

No. You're not a bad man. You have a big heart. I like you very much.

BEN

Thank you, Suzie.
(He looks over at ROBERT, who is turned away. He starts to speak - thinks better of it. SUZIE nods. BEN goes. A slight pause. ROBERT watches her)

SUZIE

My fortune-teller ~~tell me~~ SAY Ben and I go to London in two years. Fortune-teller must have made a mistake.
(She rises, abruptly)
All right, I think I go to cinema now. I hear the film at the Roxy is very good.

SUZIE (Cont'd)
(She looks at ROBERT, quickly)
Ben still loves me, you know. He loves me very much.

ROBERT
I'm sure he does.

SUZIE
We only finish because of that ~~wife~~! HORRIBLE OL' BETSY -
(Scornfully)
That wife! Find out everything! Some woman! I hate her.
(Slowly SUZIE looks at him)
You feel better, Robert? You not feel sick any more?

(ROBERT looks at her, shakes his head. He is almost smiling)
Was hard thing to do - telling me - wasn't it?

(ROBERT nods)

You really very strong man, Robert - big shoulders - big arms - big and tough inside -
(She turns)
All right, I go to cinema. Then I go back to work.

ROBERT
(Suddenly shouting)
Work! No!

SUZIE
What else? I got to work.

ROBERT
No! No, I say!
(Suddenly ROBERT takes her, forcefully)
Suzie, let's go dancing!

SUZIE
(Suddenly belligerent)
Don't feel sorry for me, Robert! I tough, too! Just as tough as you!

ROBERT
We're going dancing! I'm not sorry! I've made some money on my own and I'm going to spend every cent of it, ~~on you~~!

(Slight pause. SUZIE looks at him)

SUZIE
You have engagement Kit Kat Club.

ROBERT
I'll break it!

(ROBERT CALLS AH TONG) "PLEASE CALL THE GLOUCESTER + LEAVE WORD WITH MISS FLETCHER I'M UNABLE TO KEEP OUR ENGAGEMENT THIS EVENING"

ROBERT (Cont'd)

(Suddenly)

Oh, Christ, Suzie, what's the use of pretending! I want to be with you! I want to be with you every minute of the night and day! You know that, don't you, Suzie! ~~Goddamn it~~, you know that, don't you?

(Pause. SUZIE walks away from him, quietly)

SUZIE

Sure, Robert, I know it. I always know it.

ROBERT

Suzie!

(He goes to her - starts to put his arms around her. She holds up her hand)

SUZIE

Not now, Robert. Not yet, Robert.

ROBERT

I'm absolutely crazy mad in love with you!

SUZIE

Sure, Robert, I know. I always been in love with you, too.

(A moment's pause)

Okay, we go dancing. I go - change my clothes.

(She starts out. ROBERT watches her tensely. She turns)

You take me to the biggest stuck-up place you can find. We dance like hell!

(She goes out. ROBERT, delirious, starts to finish dressing)

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

Scene 1-A

COUPLES in silhouette are seen dancing as though in an elaborate night club.

2-2-21

ACT TWO

Scene 2

ROBERT's room.

Two hours later.

It is dark except for the moonlight that comes in through the balcony doors. Street sounds. The sound of the jukebox is heard from below.

After a moment, the door opens. The lights are turned on. ROBERT and SUZIE enter. SUZIE is very quiet. She wears a simple, lovely evening gown.

They come in quietly, not talking. ROBERT seems excited. He helps her off with her coat. She sits. ROBERT takes off his coat. Silence. After a moment:

Suzie
YOU KNOW HOW LONG I DO THIS JOB?

ROBERT
TELL ME, SUZIE-

SUZIE

When I was four years old my father was lost in junk on way to Manila. My mother died next year in big epidemic. I went to live in my uncle's household. That was in Shanghai.

(She pauses. ROBERT sits looking at her)

He was no good, that uncle. He was drunkard and good-for-nothing. One day he took me into his room and said, "You are grown up now - I did not notice until today." And he ~~threw me~~ MADE ME LIE on the bed ~~and he~~ -

ROBERT

Suzie - Suzie - you don't have to tell me this.

I DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING.

SUZIE

I was thirteen. My uncle was not drunk when he did it.

(She pauses slightly)

I had to go to his room many times. I was frightened for a long time. Then one day he say, "My first daughter, Yu-lan, has found work in a shop in Hong Kong. Earning four hundred dollars a month. She can get you a job there too - and you will send me one hundred dollars a month for all I have done for you." So I come Hong Kong - find Yu-lan. You know what kind of a shop she was working in, Robert?

ROBERT

I can imagine.

SUZIE

Yu-lan say to me, "I hated making love at first - but now I like it." I say, "I will never like making love." But that night I think hard. I Chinese girl, you see -- because of what my uncle did to me I could never get married. So which was better, hard work in shop for little money - or make love for so much money? I thought, "I'll just shut my eyes and think of something else."

(She stops)

You know rest of story, Robert.

ROBERT

Yes, Suzie - I know.

(He kisses her)

SUZIE

Robert?

ROBERT

Yes, Suzie?

SUZIE

Suppose I am ordinary girl you take out for evening - ordinary English girl - and suppose you like her and want to sleep with her. Will she do it first time you take her out?

ROBERT

I don't know, Suzie. I expect not - I expect she'd refuse.

SUZIE

I want to be like ordinary girl for you. I want to refuse. Don't laugh.

ROBERT

(Laughs)

SUZIE

I will sleep with you tomorrow, Robert. I only want to refuse once, so that I can remember I refused. Do you understand?

ROBERT

I love you so, Suzie. I've loved you for so long.

SUZIE

Yes - but I must refuse, Robert. I like you very much but I am a good girl. And so I am sorry, but I can't sleep with you tonight. I must go home now.

ROBERT

Suzie - you're not really going?

SUZIE

Yes, I must. Goodnight, Robert. Thank you.

SUZIE (Cont'd)

(At the door she turns, eagerly)

But I will accept tomorrow, Robert. I sleep with you tomorrow.

(She goes out. ROBERT stands looking at the door a moment. Slowly he goes to the balcony doors and opens them and stands looking out.

The door opens and SUZIE comes in. ROBERT turns, quietly)

ROBERT

Suzie!

SUZIE

It is tomorrow now.

(Slowly ROBERT goes to her. She stands quietly, waiting for him. He takes her head in his hands and they look into each other's eyes. They kiss. ROBERT gently takes off her wrap. SUZIE is trembling)

Robert -- turn off the light.

ROBERT

Yes, of course.

(He turns out the light. As he does so, SUZIE, moves in front of the balcony doors, silhouetted against the sky. ROBERT goes to her. Suddenly, she begins to sob, one deep sob after another)

Suzie -- Suzie -- what is it?

SUZIE

I'm scared!

ROBERT

Suzie, don't cry!

SUZIE

I'm scared! I'm so scared!

ROBERT

Suzie -- Suzie --

SUZIE

I feel I never had a man before -- you are my first man.

ROBERT

Yes, Suzie -- you are my first girl.

SUZIE

Am I? Oh, Robert, am I?

ROBERT

You're my first girl - and I'm your first man - and the world has only just begun.

(They go into each other's arms)

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

Scene 2A

THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE NAM KOK.

AH TONG is standing in the doorway. MINNIE HO and TYPHOO come out of the door.

MINNIE HO

Where you going, Typhoo?

TYPHOO

Home. You go home, too?

MINNIE HO

Buy vegetables first. My mother coming dinner tonight. Terrible waste of night time. No?

TYPHOO

Hey, look!

(O'NEILL in a rickshaw enters the street and starts toward the hotel)

MINNIE HO

Oh! That nice man we meet in Robert's room. What he doing down here?

TYPHOO

Maybe he looking for you.

(THEY giggle as O'NEILL comes near them)

MINNIE HO

Hello, Mr. O'Neill!

O'NEILL

(Startled)
Oh...er...how do you do?

MINNIE HO

Minnie Ho.

TYPHOO

Typhoo.

O'NEILL

Of course - Minnie Ho! Of course.

MINNIE HO

How Miss Fletcher?

O'NEILL

Very well. We've often talked of you.

MINNIE HO

Really!

O'NEILL

Is Mr. Lomax in his room, do you know?

MINNIE HO

Oh, no! He out painting every day.

O'NEILL

Really?

MINNIE HO

Yes. He sell pictures so fast he have to paint all day long.

O'NEILL

Is that so? Who buys them?

MINNIE HO

Miss Fletcher.

O'NEILL

Miss Fletcher! Oh.

MINNIE HO

Don't you know? You Miss Fletcher's friend.

O'NEILL

Well, she doesn't tell me everything.

MINNIE HO

That's funny - oh, Typhoo?

TYPHOO

Sure is!

(ROBERT has entered. HE is carrying his painting equipment. MINNIE HO and TYPHOO see him)

MINNIE HO

Hey, Robert!

ROBERT

Hey, Minnie Ho! Hey, Typhoo! Hey! Hey!

MINNIE HO

Have good day?

ROBERT

Great! You should have seen me! Brushes in my mouth - paint coming out of my ears - finished two today!

(he freezes a moment and looks over to where O'NEILL is)

Oh! Mr. O'Neill!

O'NEILL

Hello, Robert.

ROBERT

Well, so long girls

(HE watches them go. THEY leave, looking at each other meaningfully)

MINNIE HO

So long, Robert!

(To O'Neill)

Bye bye! Give Miss Fletcher deepest regards from Minnie Ho.

O'NEILL

I'll do that.

(HE turns to Robert)

Well, Robert, I've been trying to get you on the phone, but--

ROBERT

Yes - I'm out painting most of the time.

O'NEILL

So I understand. Could we go up to your room?

ROBERT

Well - it's terribly messy up there, sir. I--

O'NEILL

Perhaps the bar?

ROBERT

Well - these girls are terrible gossips and if you have anything private to say--

O'NEILL

What's happened, Robert?

ROBERT

What do you mean, sir?

O'NEILL

What's happened between you and Kay?

ROBERT

Well, nothing's happened, sir. That is --

O'NEILL

Robert, Kay is very dear to me.

ROBERT

I know that, sir.

O'NEILL

I've known her family for so long - that I feel I have the right to-

ROBERT

Oh, I'm not questioning your right, sir.
(HE looks at O'Neill)
I <u>have</u> been lousy to Kay, haven't I?

O'NEILL

I think so. You two were thick as thieves there for such a long time - and then suddenly -

ROBERT

I know. I've been meaning to call her but-- Does she know you were coming down here.

O'NEILL

God forbid! No! She would be very angry!

ROBERT

Well, you see, I've been painting my head off and it's been going so well that I've hated to have anything--

O'NEILL

Robert - yesterday Kay had a letter from the Mitford Gallery -

ROBERT

Oh?

O'NEILL

Her uncle said they hadn't received any paintings since that first shipment. So they wrote Kay to see what had happened to you.

ROBERT

I see.

O'NEILL

It was quite a shock to her.

(Pause. ROBERT looks around to see if anyone is looking, and in a lower voice:)

ROBERT

I've taken a job, Mr. O'Neill.

O'NEILL

Oh?

ROBERT
Over on a tea plantation in Kowloon - a friend of mine from Malaya. It's just temporary. I intend to get back to my painting as soon as I can - but certain circumstances make it imperative for me to earn some money, right at the moment.

O'NEILL
I see.

ROBERT
Please don't tell anyone about it, sir. No one knows around here - and I know that Kay wouldn't approve but--

O'NEILL
If it's money, Robert, I can't tell you how happy I would be to - strictly as an investment, of course -

ROBERT
(Quickly)
No, no, thanks. I couldn't. That's just the way I'm built, I guess.

O'NEILL
Yes - well, I'm sorry to hear this, Robert.

ROBERT
It's only temporary.

O'NEILL
If you don't mind, I'll tell Kay that I ran into you accidentally - that you're painting but don't feel you are ready to show it yet - and that you will call her soon.
(A moment's pause)

ROBERT
All right. I <u>will</u> call Kay - and soon.

O'NEILL
She's an exceptional girl, Robert. There are not many like her around.

ROBERT
I know that, sir. I appreciate her as much as you do - but -

O'NEILL
Well, that's all Robert.
(HE gets into the rickshaw)
Oh, give my regards to that beautiful little girl you painted so many pictures of. What was her name - Suzie?

ROBERT
YES.
I'll do that, sir.

(O'NEILL gives an order in Chinese to the coolie. The rickshaw starts to move off. ROBERT stands for a moment looking after him, then goes into the hotel. MINNIE HO and TYPHOO appear)

MINNIE HO

He's gone. Come on.

(THEY go back out the way they came in)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene 2A

The street in front of the Nam Kok, same as Act One, Scene 2. Ten days later. Bright sunshine. Morning.

Life goes on as before; AH TONG is standing in the doorway of the hotel.

MINNIE HO and TYPHOO come out of the door.

TYPHOO

You go ~~right~~ home?

MINNIE HO

Buy vegetables first. My mother come dinner tonight.

TYPHOO

~~Good morning, Ah Tong.~~

AH TONG

Good morning - good morning -

MINNIE HO

Hey, there Robert painting ~~already~~!
(She waves, off)
Hey, Robert.

ROBERT'S VOICE

Hey, Minnie Ho. Hey, Typhoo.

MINNIE HO

Suzie home?

ROBERT'S VOICE

She's gone to see the baby.

MINNIE HO

(To TYPHOO)
Paint - paint - paint all time! How come? ~~Suzie has real boy-friend - ten whole days - how come he have so much time to paint? What's the matter with Suzie?~~ I have boy-friend ten days he not have much time paint --

(She laughs and goes over to the VENDOR and starts to buy some vegetables, in Chinese. SUZIE enters. She has her arms full of packages)

TYPHOO

Hey, Suzie -

MINNIE HO

~~What you up so early for?~~ Why you leave Robert alone all day?

not all day

SUZIE

(Overly-animated)

~~Oh,~~ I go see baby - pay amah - shop for dinner --

TYPHOO

Robert ~~painting already~~ - making a lot of H painting

SUZIE

~~Oh, that man!~~ All the time! Soon he sell all his painting and we be ~~very~~ rich --

(She laughs and goes into the hotel. MINNIE HO looks after her, thoughtfully)

MINNIE HO

Suzie laugh too much - I think something wrong with Suzie --

(She goes back to buying her vegetables)

Keitochinnah

Ngo mm KETAKTSŌ ?

ACT TWO

Scene 3

ROBERT'S ROOM.

TEN DAYS LATER - BRIGHT SUNSHINE.

The room has a different appearance. SUZIE has evidently neatened it, softened it, made it more domestic and yet gay. The bareness is gone. New curtains, etc. A small electric grill in one corner. Several new paintings stand about.

The stage is empty for a moment. Then SUZIE enters, quietly. She is carrying several packages. She glances out toward the balcony, then goes quietly and puts down her packages.

We see that something is worrying her deeply. She stands quietly for a moment, thinking. She glances at the balcony. Suddenly she comes to a decision. She takes up her hand-bag quietly, opens it, takes out a bill. She looks around the room.

ROBERT's coat is hanging on a hook. She goes to it quietly and slips the bill into a pocket. As she does so, she makes a slight noise in crossing the room.

ROBERT

(Off, calling)
Suzie? That you?

(She starts away from the coat, guiltily, pulls herself together, and shouts back, gaily)

SUZIE

Yes - me --

ROBERT
Come here, Suzie, I want to show you something -

SUZIE
Just a minute. I take care dinner first.
(She opens and puts away some of the packages)

ROBERT
(Off)
See the baby?

SUZIE
Yes.

ROBERT
How is he?

SUZIE
That baby! He has so much expression on his face!

ROBERT
Yes, he's a remarkable specimen, that baby!

SUZIE
I bet he graduate from University when he's thirteen - fourteen years old -
(She looks into the distance, thoughtfully)

ROBERT
I'd say eight.

SUZIE
(Smiling)
Okay - eight -

(Suddenly ROBERT jumps into the room. His clothes are covered with paint, his face and arms speckled with it. ROBERT is very excited, high)

SUZIE
Robert! What have you been doing to yourself? You got paint all over you!

ROBERT
(Swinging her around in his arms)
Of course I have, Suzie! I've got paint in my very soul today!

SUZIE
Stop it!

ROBERT

You should have seen me working this morning! A bunch of junks went down the harbor - the colors - My God, I've never seen anything like it! I was determined to catch all I could of them before they went by - I've been working like a one-armed paper hanger --

(He illustrates)

-- brushes in my mouth - paint coming out of my ears -- it's one of those mornings when the sun really shines!

SUZIE

You feel good today!

ROBERT

I feel great!

(He jumps up again, excited)

My God, Suzie, this is my town! It does something to me. -- I can't begin to tell you! It makes me feel as if I had something to live for - maybe it's not just the town -- maybe it's the whole east -- maybe it's just because everything back there where I come from is - gray - colorless - dead! Oh, God, yes, it's dead! And when I'm there I'm dead, too! Oh, Suzie, I don't want to ever go back! I breathe here! I breathe and I look at things through my own eyes.

SUZIE

Then you must never go back, Robert! Never! Even after the year you give yourself is over --

ROBERT

No, I mustn't, Suzie, must I?

(He takes a deep breath)

(SUZIE sits watching him, loving him)

(Cont. on 2-3-30)

ROBERT (Cont'd)
You know what we ought to do, Suzie? We ought to take some trips. Ankor Wat - I've always wanted to go there! The jungles - temples - and Jaipur - the Pink City - elephants - you'd look great on an elephant - "Nude on elephant."

(SUZIE laughs)

And Bali - Bali - I could paint you in the middle of the monkey dance.

(In his excitement he takes the paint cloth he has been holding in his hand and wipes the sweat from his face. It leaves a huge red stain)

SUZIE
Oh, Robert! Don't use that!

ROBERT
What?

SUZIE
You got paint all over your face.

ROBERT
Oh, have I?

(He reaches in his pocket for a handkerchief. Doesn't find one. Starts toward his coat)

But wouldn't you love to do all that, Suzie?

SUZIE

(Quietly)
Yes. Would be wonderful!

ROBERT
Of course, we'd always come back here -

(He reaches into his coat for his handkerchief. Takes out a handkerchief and also the bill that SUZIE has put there. He doesn't notice the bill at first as he rubs his face with the handkerchief)

We'd use this as home base and --

(He is suddenly conscious of the bill in his hand. He looks at it)

Where'd this come from?

(A moment's pause. SUZIE waits, breathless. ROBERT is puzzled)

I thought I'd used up my budget for the week. I must have --

(A moment's pause. He thinks. Slowly he looks up at SUZIE. She turns away, guiltily. He says, accusingly)

Suzie!

SUZIE

(Defensively)
You said you need more canvasses -

ROBERT

Suzie, I've told you over and over --

SUZIE

But you need them -

ROBERT

I don't need them bad enough to take your money!
(He crosses and gives her back the bill. She takes it)
It's sweet of you, Suzie - but don't try to do that again - please -.

(Suddenly SUZIE drops her head into her hands, crying softly)

Suzie - Suzie, darling, what's the matter?

(She shakes her head)

Suzie, tell me!

(Slowly SUZIE looks up)

SUZIE

Robert, I love you very much.

ROBERT

I know that, Suzie.

SUZIE

I would love to go all these places with you. Would love to go anywhere with you, but --
(She hesitates)
Robert, you not be angry if I ask you something?

ROBERT

Of course not.

SUZIE

Where we get money to do all that?

(ROBERT turns away, instinctively. Then he says lightly, casually)

ROBERT

Money? Oh, we'll get the money.

SUZIE

Where?

ROBERT

Oh, somewhere.

SUZIE

Yes - maybe some day - when you become big famous painter. But until then --?

ROBERT

Don't worry, Suzie.
(Pause)

SUZIE

(Slowly)
This morning I pay my amah.

ROBERT

Yes?

SUZIE

No money coming in so I have take money from tin box I use to save for my baby. Already I take much from it. Instead of adding each week to tin of money - I steal from it. Steal from my baby.

(He stares at her, feeling something is coming. She looks at him gently, simply)

Robert, I have to go back to work. Holiday over.

ROBERT

(Aghast)
Suzie!

SUZIE

I did not mean to tell you until tonight but --

ROBERT

Suzie! Suzie, what are you saying?

SUZIE

I hate to hurt you - what else can I do?

ROBERT

(Frightened)
Now, Suzie, listen! Listen, Suzie! We've got to talk this out -

SUZIE

No good talking - already you spend more of your budget than you planned - I have --

ROBERT

Now listen, Suzie! We'll think of something! We'll borrow some money somewhere --

SUZIE
We borrow money maybe holiday last one more week - then finish again, like now!

ROBERT
Maybe I'll sell a painting --

SUZIE
One painting? How long that last?

ROBERT
(Getting more frantic)
I'll wire my father for some money.

SUZIE
Your father! He say he never send you anything but your fare to come home.

ROBERT
Suzie, now listen! We've got to think --

SUZIE
I think! Oh, Robert, Robert, I think all day, all night what to do. But there is nothing to do!

ROBERT
Well, I've been thinking too, Suzie. Really I have. I'm going to get a job!

SUZIE
No!

ROBERT
I was talking to O'Neill. They could make me an assistant teller at the bank and --

SUZIE
-- and you think you paint after all day at bank?

ROBERT
Of course I could!

SUZIE
Best hours of day gone? Rushing to finish before dark set in? No, Robert, never! I know you, Robert. That same thing as going back home - drive you crazy - drive me crazy too!
(Pause. ROBERT turns away in despair. SUZIE looks at him, sadly)
Now what if I take job. Department store, maybe - waitress - what I make? Maybe between us we just manage to get along. Just manage! Save nothing! No money for tin box. And I watch my baby grow up coolie boy! Watch him carry lunch for people! Get hard shoulder from carry-pole! No good!

(ROBERT has turned away, his head in his hands, miserable. SUZIE looks at him, sadly. Slowly, she comes to a decision. She rises. She takes her handbag - puts on her jacket - starts for the door. ROBERT looks up)

ROBERT

Suzie, where are you going?

SUZIE

One thing I learn - if something have to be done - do it! Right away! I come back tonight, Robert.

ROBERT

(Starting up)

Suzie, you can't! Oh, my God, Suzie, wait! We'll think of something - Suzie - Suzie --

SUZIE

I be back tonight.

(They look at each other a moment. ROBERT seems to be in a daze)

Would you rather I not come back at all, Robert?

ROBERT

Suzie -- Suzie --

(SUZIE goes out, quickly. ROBERT stands looking after her, bewildered)

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

Scene 3A

MUSIC RISES. LIGHTS CHANGE.

ACT TWO

Scene 4

ROBERT'S ROOM - NIGHT.

ROBERT sits in a chair, staring straight before him. He doesn't move. He seems to be in a trance.

After a moment, SUZIE enters. ROBERT doesn't look up. SUZIE glances at him quickly, then away. She tries to be natural, but we feel the tension underneath.

SUZIE
That bar was too noisy. I got tired.

(ROBERT says nothing. SUZIE takes off her brocade jacket and slips it onto a hanger. She hooks the hanger over the rail in the wardrobe.

Slowly ROBERT's head turns and he follows her with his eyes, not speaking. SUZIE avoids his eyes, pretends to examine her hand)

I got a splinter this morning, only I can't find it. Can you see a splinter?

(She holds out her hand. ROBERT doesn't look at it, just at her. She turns away)

What does the word "gossamer" mean? I heard the word "gossamer" today and I don't know what it means.

(Pause. Suddenly she turns to him)

All right, you don't want me!

ROBERT
How does it feel, Suzie? Good? Or do you feel degraded a little?

SUZIE
Degrade? I don't know what that means either.

ROBERT
It means corrupt - to bring shame upon - to bring contempt --

SUZIE
I go now.
(She goes quickly to the wardrobe and takes down her jacket and puts it on. Suddenly she whirls on him)
I love you. I love you as much as I love my baby - maybe more. Only you're a big, grown-up man and my baby is just small. So I must think of my baby first!

ROBERT
How many sailors did you go with?

SUZIE
Eight - nine - twenty - what difference?

ROBERT
Were they good, Suzie? Were they good?

SUZIE
I go.
(She starts to hurry to the door. ROBERT jumps up and grabs her)

ROBERT
Oh, no, you don't. You came back here, didn't you? What's the attraction? Don't tell me I'm better than a sailor?
(He kisses her, she struggles)
What's the matter, Suzie? You can do it! Just pretend I'm a customer!

(She breaks away from him and runs into the room. He follows)

SUZIE
Robert, stop!

(ROBERT grabs her and tries to get her onto the bed)

ROBERT
Don't worry, Suzie. I'll pay you. I'll put you in my budget.

SUZIE
(Struggling)
Stop it! Stop! No man has ever done this to me before!

ROBERT
Really? That's funny, Suzie. That's hilarious!

SUZIE
Stop it! Stop it!

SUZIE (Cont'd)

(She hits him with her fists)

Oh, Robert, let me go! You degrade yourself, Robert.

(ROBERT suddenly cries out with a groan)

ROBERT

Oh, Suzie, I love you so - I love you so - I love you so -

SUZIE

(In tears)

Oh, Robert - Robert -

(She runs out. ROBERT stands reeling as though he were drunk. He staggers about the room, blindly. Suddenly a strong blast of wind blows the window curtains out madly - shutters bang - papers scatter - the wind howls)

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

Scene 4A

As the stage turns, revealing the bar.

One archway lights up, showing rain pouring in the street. Two of the GIRLS enter through the rain in slickers, with head covers.

ACT TWO

Scene 5

BAR AT THE NAM KOK - TWO WEEKS LATER.

A few SAILORS at tables and a few GIRLS. Business is slow; there is a desultory air about the place. Two or three COUPLES dancing.

At one table sit GWENNY and a YOUNG AMERICAN SAILOR, "CHUCK".

At another table, MINNIE-HO and TYPHOO.

TYPHOO

(Calling to FIFI and another GIRL who are entering)

No sailors on street?

FIFI

(Shaking her head)

Street worse than ever.

TYPHOO

This place getting like tomb.

FIFI

Might as well go home - this rain keep up we starve!

MINNIE-HO

This rain keep up me sex-starve!

FIFI

Oh, you got nerve taking sailor's money, anyway. You should pay sailor.

(They laugh)

(TWO SAILORS come in from outside. They are sopping wet, one of them quite drunk. The GIRLS sit up and make preparations to go to them. The SAILORS go to the bar)

SAILOR

(To AH TONG)

Whiskey! How long can these rains last, anyway?

AH TONG
When the wet begins it can last long time.

SAILOR
"Wet", he calls it! That street out there is a river! Look what I found floating down it!
(He holds up a bed-post)

AH TONG
Last week houses washed away - bad - bad -

(The GIRLS come to them and start to greet them)

(ROBERT enters from outside. He, also, is very wet. He takes off his raincoat and goes to his table and sits - spreading a map out before him. He also has two or three little books he refers to. He begins to study them.

GWENNY sees him. She nudges CHUCK. They get up and go to ROBERT)

GWENNY
Robert?
(ROBERT looks up, abstracted with his figuring)

ROBERT
(Absently)
Oh, hello, Gwenny.

GWENNY
(Shyly)
Robert - I would like to have you meet Chuck.

ROBERT
(Glancing up)
Chuck?

GWENNY
You remember? The boy-friend I had nice letter from? Letter I showed you first day you come here?

ROBERT
Oh, yes! Of course! How do you do, Chuck?

CHUCK
Glad to meet you, sir. Gwenny's told me all about you.

ROBERT
(A pretense of trying to be interested)
Well, so you're back in Hong Kong, eh?

GWENNY

(Proudly)
For three whole days! He come to see me first thing!

ROBERT

Well, that's fine! - Gwenny's a wonderful girl, Chuck!

CHUCK

Don't I know it! You can say that again, sir. I'm sure glad to see her again!

ROBERT

I'll bet you are! Well --
(He glances down at his map)

GWENNY

(Quickly)
We go now. You busy.

ROBERT

It was nice to meet you, Chuck. I'll see you later.

CHUCK

Thanks - nice to meet you, sir.

ROBERT

And keep writing those nice letters to Gwenny - okay?

CHUCK

Yes, sir.

(They start off. ROBERT immediately becomes absorbed in his map. GWENNY looks at ROBERT and hesitates. She motions CHUCK back to their table. He goes)

GWENNY

You have no luck, Robert?

(ROBERT just shakes his head and goes on studying the map and books)

You looking thin, Robert. Maybe you better stop.

ROBERT

(Grimly)
I'll stop when I find her, Gwenny!

GWENNY

Suppose you never find her?

ROBERT

(Almost angry)
I'll find her!

GWENNY

Hong Kong very big.

ROBERT

(With a bitter laugh)

Big! It's a vat trap! I ought to know - I've combed it from top to bottom.

(He hits the table)

Damn it, she must be somewhere! Her baby - her amah - you can't just vanish!

GWENNY

Yes - easy to vanish in Hong Kong.

ROBERT

(Angrily)

Don't keep saying that! I'm going to find her if I spend every day the rest of my life looking for her! - Oh, Gwenny, I've got to find her!

(The DRUNKEN SAILOR who came in earlier has come up and has been peering over ROBERT's shoulder, fascinated, as ROBERT has been drawing circles on the map)

SAILOR

What you got there, mate?

(ROBERT gives him a quick, annoyed glance and looks back at his map)

ROBERT

(Shortly)

Map.

SAILOR

What all the little blue circles for?

ROBERT

Oh, just different sections of Hong Kong.

SAILOR

You like drawing little blue circles on maps?

ROBERT

Crazy about it!

(He turns away. The SAILOR continues to look over his shoulder)

SAILOR

Why haven't you got any little blue circles down here?

(He points)

ROBERT

See here, I'm terribly sorry - but if you don't mind --

SAILOR
Just tell me why you haven't got any little blue circles down here?

ROBERT
Because there's no bars down there - I'm making a survey of the bars in Hong Kong. Now if you'll excuse me --

SAILOR
No bars down there! You're a hell of a surveyor!

ROBERT
(With quick interest)
What do you mean? Where? Show me!

SAILOR
(Pointing on map)
Way off down there - all along on that canal - back in the alleys - whole bunch of little bars - and pretty good stuff in them, too.

ROBERT
Here?

SAILOR
That's right. And there's no little blue circle around them. That's not fair. They ought to have a little blue circle around them, too.

(ROBERT rises, quickly)

ROBERT
Let's you and me go down there.

SAILOR
What? In all this rain?

ROBERT
Come on. I'll pay for everything. What do you say?
(He starts to take the SAILOR out)

SAILOR
But I don't want to go way down there! That place is hard to find - and all this rain -

ROBERT
Sure you do - sure you do. We'll have a good time - we'll get stinking -- this place is dead. Come on, you and I are buddies, huh? Let's go.

SAILOR
Not sure I can even find it again -

ROBERT
Sure you can - sure you can - we'll find it! Come on.
(He leads the grumbling SAILOR out)

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

Scene 5A

As THE HAPPY ROOM turns into view, a FAT OLD CHINAMAN, A CHINESE GIRL and a YOUNG CHINESE LAD come out from the back, talking in Chinese. THE OLD MAN pays them some money. They bow and go out into the rain. THE OLD MAN stays for a moment at the bar.

ACT TWO

Scene 6

THE HAPPY ROOM.

A small, rather dismal room. Little dance floor, alcove tables. Subdued lighting. At one table a MAN and a GIRL, talking low. TWO GIRLS at another table, waiting. Pause.

ROBERT and FRED appear in the doorway.

ROBERT
Come on, Fred. Not many more. You can make it.

FRED
Not one more, old boy. I've had it.
(He leaves. ROBERT comes in. He takes off his drenched coat. He goes to one of the tables and sits. He seems very tired. One of the GIRLS comes over)

GIRL
Hello.
(ROBERT doesn't answer for a moment. Then he looks up)

ROBERT
All right - sit down.

(The BARTENDER brings a bottle of whiskey, a glass, and a drink for the GIRL. She sits)

GIRL
Where it all come from, this rain? That's what I ask.

ROBERT
It comes from heaven. Heaven rains over us.
(He gives a short, bitter laugh)

GIRL
(Eyeing him)
You drunk?

ROBERT
I should be. I don't suppose - by any chance there's a girl here by the name of Suzie?

GIRL

Suzie?

ROBERT

Of course there is. There's a Suzie everywhere. But never the right one.

GIRL

Only one Suzie here. She out back playing Mah-Jong with the other girls. You want me to get her? She not working.

ROBERT

No - never mind - it won't be the one - let's have a drink and -- oh, all right, you might as well if you'd be so kind.

GIRL

I get her.

ROBERT

Thank you.

(The GIRL goes, through a velvet curtain at back. ROBERT waits. Pause. The OLD MAN leaves)

(After a moment, the curtain parts and SUZIE stands in the doorway. ROBERT starts up, hardly believing his eyes, and stands staring at her. Slowly SUZIE comes to him)

SUZIE

How you find me?

ROBERT

Suzie! My God, Suzie, it's you!

SUZIE

How you find Happy Room?

ROBERT

I don't know! My God, I don't know.
(He seems to snap out of the shock of seeing her)
Sit down, Suzie - please.

(She stands. He gets hold of himself)

Please sit down, Suzie.
(They sit)
Suzie, I've missed you so. Have you missed me?

SUZIE

My amah been sick - I have to take care of my baby - not much time to miss anyone.

ROBERT

Oh. Oh, really?

SUZIE

My amah all right now, though.

ROBERT

Good. How is the baby?

SUZIE

Oh, he is beautiful now - great big fat pink cheeks like - like this!

(She blows out her cheeks, laughs a little)

ROBERT

That's fine, Suzie -- and where do you live now?

SUZIE

Oh, not far from here - not nice building - but very nice view - up on hill.

ROBERT

(Suddenly leaning to her)

Suzie, you've got to come back - you've no idea what it's been like --

(He takes her hand)

-- please come back, Suzie. I love you so much I can't begin to tell you!

SUZIE

I never come back, Robert. Never!

ROBERT

But why? Why?

SUZIE

You go now, Robert. Please.

ROBERT

Suzie, listen! Listen, Suzie! Do you love me?

SUZIE

Please go now!

ROBERT

Suzie, will you marry me?

(Pause. SUZIE looks at him)

SUZIE

What's the matter with you? The rain gone to your head or something?

ROBERT

I mean it! I never meant anything more in my life!

SUZIE

And what happen when you say, "This is my wife," -- and someone say, "Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Lomax! I hear you had two thousand sailors before you were married."

ROBERT

You know I don't care about that! You've got to marry me, Suzie. You've got to! I - I can't go on without you! There's nothing left - I can't work - I can't think -- My God, Suzie, if you don't come back I don't know what's going to -- I'm really scared, Suzie -- Suzie -- Suzie, don't you understand? You've got to come back! I - you've got to come back!

(He has become almost hysterical. SUZIE looks at him, holding herself under control. Slight pause)

SUZIE

Suppose I come back - suppose I marry you - I still keep my job? Yes?

ROBERT

(Non-plussed)

Huh? Huh?

SUZIE

You want your wife to go upstairs with sailors?

ROBERT

(Desperately)

But, Suzie, if we were married -

SUZIE

Oh, sure! If we were married that changes everything! Like in fairy story! And happy ever after! You go on become great painter - I give up my job and become good wife! -- And my baby? Does God of Marriage say, "Good job - everything fine now! I have got them married! So now I give them all money they need! I give them food free! And that baby - oh, yes - I take care of him too! I make him grow up into fine, healthy man - I send him to Oxford - make him great movie star! Oh, nothing too good for that baby now I have got them married!" Well, Robert, I think not! I think God of Marriage sit back and laugh and laugh and laugh how he has fooled us! That's what I think!

(Pause. ROBERT sits silent, crushed. SUZIE rises)

We finish now, Robert! We not see each other any more, ever. It is no good. Finish.

(She turns and goes out through the curtains. ROBERT sits, stunned. After a moment, he stands up, automatically leaves some money on the table and goes out into the rain. For a moment there is no sound but the falling rain)

CURTAIN

MINNIE HO

ACT THREE

Scene 1

STREET IN FRONT OF THE NAM KOK. It is raining.

MINNIE HO and LILY are standing in the rain with their umbrellas. YOUNG CHINESE MAN standing at the other side.

LILY

Where it all come from, this rain. That's what I ask.

MINNIE HO

~~I hate this rain.~~ DON'T ASK ME.

LILY

(Sailors not come to bar pretty soon - we starve.)

MINNIE HO

(~~Sailors so afraid of water?~~) CAN YOU TELL ME WHY)

(DRUNKEN SAILOR enters)

Hey, there's one!

CHINESE MAN

What you got there, Sailor?

SAILOR

Bedpost! Found it floating down the middle of the street.

LILY

Which one get him?

(THEY play their game)

SAILOR

Say, how long can a rain like this last, anyway.

CHINESE MAN

When the wet begins, can last long time.

SAILOR

Wet, he calls it! Been raining steady for three weeks and he calls it - wet!

(HE passes the girls)

LILY

Hello, Sailor.

SAILOR

Hello, girls! Look at my bedpost!

MINNIE HO

(Want to see some more bedposts? Got plenty upstairs!)

SAILOR

No thanks! - Wet, he calls it!

(HE goes off as KAY and O'NEILL enter)

MINNIE HO

Hey, there Miss Fletcher and Mr. O'Neill. Hello, Miss Fletcher!

KAY

Why, it's our old friend Minnie Ho! How nice to see you.

MINNIE HO

Thank you.

KAY

Is Robert home?

MINNIE HO

Robert always home - very happy now - painting - painting - painting -

KAY

George, why don't you buy Minnie Ho a drink? I won't be long.

O'NEILL

I could think of nothing that would give me more pleasure. Would you and your friend care to join me?

MINNIE

Don't think friend care to! I join you.
(Takes his arm)

LILY

(I join you, too.) FRIEND care to very much

(SHE takes the other arm. ~~KAY~~
~~laughs.~~ ~~THEY~~ go into the hotel)

ACT THREE

Scene 1

A WRITING ROOM IN AFASHIONABLE HOTEL.

After a moment, ROBERT is ushered in by an ATTENDANT. He is dressed better than before. He takes off his wet raincoat and hands it to the ATTENDANT.

ROBERT

Check this, will you, please.

(THE ATTENDANT takes it and goes. ROBERT sits waiting, nervously. After a moment, KAY enters. ROBERT rises, quickly. They look at each other a moment. They are both nervous)

Hello, Kay.

KAY

Hello.

ROBERT

I've a hell of a nerve to call you after all this time.

KAY

(Closing the door)

You've a right to call anyone anytime. ~~If I hadn't wanted to see you I could have said so.~~

ROBERT

I know, but --

KAY

Besides, I've had plenty of time to get over it. How have you been?

ROBERT

All right, I guess.

KAY

(Nervous)

Okay, let's sit down. Shall I order a drink?

ROBERT

No, thanks.

KAY

Sure? Still pouring out, there, isn't it?

ROBERT
(Making conversation)
Getting worse.

KAY
It happens every year, they say. And it's terribly destructive. Please sit down, Robert.

ROBERT
Thanks.
(They sit. A slight nervous pause. ROBERT tries to start)
Kay -- I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT — —

KAY
You don't have to make a speech, Robert. I can pretty well guess what happened. It was Suzie, wasn't it?

ROBERT
Yes, it was Suzie.

KAY
(Lightly)
You shacked up with her - I think that's the Ex impression, isn't it?

ROBERT
(Stiffly)
It's an expression that doesn't exactly fit in this case.

KAY
I'm sorry. You fell in love with her, is that better?

ROBERT
Much better. But it's all over now.

KAY
Oh?

ROBERT
We were only together ten days - she disappeared - I found her in some little bar and - well, it's over. I'm going home in the morning.

KAY
(Involuntarily)
Oh, no!

ROBERT
Yes. Sold my painting equipment and everything. ~~Going into the estate business.~~ IF YOU EVER NEED ANY CANADIAN REAL ESTATE

KAY
So you've quit! "Creeping back to Father," I think you once put it.

ROBERT

No - just acting like an adult for a change - just coming to my senses -

KAY

I see -

(She rises, abruptly)

Okay! That's that!

(She holds out her hand)

Goodbye, Robert - good luck - bon voyage - et cetera -

ROBERT

You're disgusted with me, aren't you, Kay?

KAY

(Passionately)

Disgusted - sick - fed-up - heart-broken - !

ROBERT

(Angrily)

God-damn it, Kay, you don't understand!

KAY

Oh, don't I?

ROBERT

No! I know what you're thinking. I said I'd give myself a year to see if I was any good. All right, so I found out sooner! I've saved a little time!

KAY

Don't tell me that! You're going home because you've lost Suzie -

ROBERT

(Furious)

No! No, I tell you! Suzie has nothing to do with it!

KAY

The hell she hasn't!

ROBERT

She hasn't! She hasn't! Even if I had Suzie I'd still go back!

KAY

Why?

ROBERT

Because I've found out about myself! Because I'm no damn good! What's the use of pretending I am? What's the use of pretending I'm something that I'm not! Where the hell did I ever get the nerve to think I could be a painter? An artist? My God, the impertinence of it! The colossal arrogance!

(He has become very excited. He paces back and forth)

KAY

Why, what do you think an artist is, anyway? Someone so much different from anybody else?

ROBERT

(Shouting)

Yes, my God, yes! That's exactly what I do think! I think an artist is someone who feels something - who's so involved in life that he lives a thousand lives in one!

KAY

And you're not involved?

ROBERT

No! No, I'm not! That's just it - you've put your finger right on it!

(~~He tries to quiet down - be reasonable.~~)

Look, Kay, I didn't mean to get into this! Let me just explain one thing before I go. -- All my life I've felt that perhaps I saw into things a little more deeply - felt things a little more deeply - than the people I was brought up with! And perhaps I did! But not enough more! Oh, my God, when I compare myself with what I'd hoped to be! And the brutal fact is I've really known it all along! You spotted it that first day in my room! You asked me what I was afraid of -- why I had such doubts! Christ, I knew! I knew I was deluding myself - I thought perhaps if I tried hard enough I could -- But trying's not enough!

OH I CAN DRAW — I CAN PAINT — BUT

(He turns on her, intensely)

I've never really been a part of anything! Never been wholeheartedly engulfed in the beauty and the wonder and the tragedy of anything! ~~I~~I'm not an artist - I'm just on the banks - watching the river flow by - I've never got into it and really swum or let myself be carried away -

(More intensely)

You know something, Kay - I just thought of it the other day - I've never cried! Even as a child - except in anger. They used to say how brave I was - it wasn't bravery - it was just that nothing ever touched me deeply enough -

(He suddenly seems to be far away)

- nothing ever - how can I communicate feeling that I've never had myself - how can I be what I'm not?

KAY

(Suddenly)

Robert, do something for me?

ROBERT

(Wearily)

What, Kay?

KAY

Don't go home! Give yourself another chance! For God's sake, Robert, I think you're sick!

ROBERT

Perhaps I am.

KAY

Robert, you know I'm in love with you, don't you?

(ROBERT looks up. She hurries on)

If you go home now - you're through. If you can't settle for the best - does that mean you have to settle for the worst? Why don't you settle for me - for awhile - and see how it goes? Who knows -- something might happen --

(She turns away, tears of embarrassment)

ROBERT

Kay - darling --

KAY

I'm sorry -- I'm suddenly so embarrassed - I don't know what got into me --

ROBERT

I'll settle, Kay and I'll settle quick -

(He takes her hand. They look at each other. The ATTENDANT comes in. KAY looks up)

KAY

Yes, Charles?

CHARLES

Telephone for Mr. Lomax, Miss Fletcher.

ROBERT

(Surprised)

For me? But nobody knows I'm here -. Oh, yes, I told Ah Tong.

(He has gone to the phone)

Excuse me.

(He picks up the phone)

Hello. Louder. -- Hello, I can't hear! --

(He listens; becomes excited)

Speak a little louder. You sound miles away -

(He listens)

Where are you? - Speak louder. - There seems to be such a lot of talking going on. Where are you? - What street?

(Pause. Suddenly he realizes something is wrong. His smile fades. He says, sharply)

What's happened?

(He listens)

Oh, my God! How? When?

(He jiggles the telephone)

Hello - Hello -

(He jiggles the phone once more, then slowly hangs up. He turns to KAY, who has been watching him questioningly)

KAY

What is it?

ROBERT

Suzie - she's - her baby's dead.

KAY

(Dismayed)

Robert!

ROBERT

She's waiting on the street.

KAY

How did it happen?

ROBERT

I don't know. She said there were a lot of people waiting to use the phone - she had to hang up. I - you -

KAY

Robert, go on - go on -

ROBERT

Yes --

(He turns quickly and hurries out)

BLACKOUT

ACT THREE

Scene 2

A STREET IN KOWLOON.

Rain. The street is filled with puddles of water. One side of the stage is covered with rubble. A rope is stretched across it. There are several demolished houses. Visible against the sky are tiers of gaping rooms, some with beds and cupboards still in place, others with furniture hanging precariously over the torn-off edges of floors.

A crowd of silent CHINESE stand watching, their heads and parasols in black silhouette against the moving lights of the CHINESE and ENGLISH POLICE OFFICERS who move about with flashlights, directing the excavation.

A line of COOLIES cross the stage bearing stretchers, covered with tarpaulins - they carry away rubble in wicker baskets.

Now and then someone stops and lifts one of the tarpaulins and looks beneath. Then the stretcher passes on - or the looker breaks into a high, hysterical laugh.

SUZIE is standing, watching... She is very still. In a pool of pale light from a street lamp, she looks unreal.

CHINESE OFFICER
(Crouching over a half-concealed body)
This one's alive.

ENGLISH OFFICER
(Examining another half-seen body)
Half a minute and I'll be with you. - This one's had it.

(SUZIE stops a COOLIE with a stretcher. She lifts the tarpaulin and looks - then shakes her head and the COOLIES pass on. SUZIE resumes her station, waiting. The ENGLISH OFFICER goes to the CHINESE OFFICER)

ENGLISH OFFICER

Here. We've got to shift this piece of wood.

(They start to work on it. ROBERT enters, quietly. He looks around, at the wreckage, the dead bodies. He sees SUZIE. He stops, frozen, and stands staring at her. SUZIE does not see him)

You with the saw - come here - get busy -

(Still ROBERT stands staring - as though he were seeing something unbelievable)

This end first - start about here -

(Slowly, staring at her, ROBERT comes to SUZIE. She looks up. Their eyes meet. They look at each other a moment)

SUZIE

(In a monotone)

The house fell down. It just fell in the rain. They're hunting for my baby now.

(ROBERT says nothing. There is a haunted expression on his face. She falters as she sees ROBERT staring at her)

What's the matter, Robert? Why you stare at me so?

(An ENGLISH OFFICER passes)

You got any babies out yet?

OFFICER

Under that tarpaulin.

(He goes on. SUZIE goes to the tarpaulin. ROBERT walks with her silently, watching her. SUZIE kneels beside the tarpaulin, lifts it and looks)

(BEN comes to ROBERT)

BEN

Lomax. Ah Tong called me. Where is she?

(Slowly ROBERT looks at him as though he were a stranger. BEN sees SUZIE)

BEN (Cont'd)

Jesus. Is she all right?

(ROBERT doesn't answer. Suddenly a CHINESE GIRL who is looking at the babies with SUZIE starts to laugh and giggle)

Just nerves, you know, that laughing. Her child lying there dead but she's laughing. I used to think they were all damn callous, these Chinese - but it's just their habit to laugh.
(Giving ROBERT a quick look)
You all right, old boy? You look all in.

(Slowly ROBERT looks at him)

ROBERT

(Quietly)
I'm all right.

(SUZIE has risen and put her arms around the hysterical CHINESE GIRL, comforting her. ROBERT never takes his eyes from her. He seems haunted - like a sleepwalker. SUZIE sees BEN)

SUZIE

Ben?

BEN

Oh, poor Suzie! Come on, let's get away from here.

SUZIE

I wait for my baby.

(An OFFICER passes. He speaks to ROBERT)

OFFICER

Old Property, you know, supposed to be cleared in 1939 -

(ROBERT looks at him as though he hadn't heard)

ROBERT

What?

OFFICER

I say - this all should have been cleared - but the war came along and - then so many refugees - more than doubled the population --

(ROBERT turns away and looks at SUZIE - he seems not to have heard. The OFFICER looks at him, puzzled, and goes on)

BEN

Suzie, your tin of money with all your savings -- wasn't it in the house?

SUZIE

Yes, under floor - but I don't need money. Money was just for baby.

BEN

I'm going to help you, Suzie. I'm going to help you, no matter what. You can count on me.

(A LOUDSPEAKER is heard from a police car. It speaks in Cantonese, Mandarin and English)

LOUDSPEAKER

(Chinese and English)

No more survivors are expected to be found for some time. Unclaimed bodies - or bodies whose relatives do not wish to make private arrangements will be buried at public expense. Although evacuations will continue we advice everyone to go home now. Go home now.

(There is a little shift in the CROWD. Suddenly SUZIE goes forward and looks at the bodies on a stretcher)

SUZIE

My amah -

(Looking at body)

Poor amah! All over so quick -

(She motions the COOLIES on)

BEN

Suzie, you're going to make yourself sick.

SUZIE

I wait for my baby. Must be near amah!

(Suddenly SUZIE starts forward again. She stops at a stretcher. She looks, makes a little sound. Slowly she straightens up and takes a deep breath. ROBERT has gone to stand near her. They look at each other)

My baby.

(ROBERT nods)

POLICE OFFICER

That's your baby?

SUZIE

Yes.

POLICE OFFICER

How about burial? You want to look after it yourself?

SUZIE

No. Finish.

BEN

I'll bury your baby, Suzie.

SUZIE

No use. Finish.

BEN

(To the OFFICER)

You take care of it. Come, Suzie.

(The OFFICER nods and the stretcher goes out. SUZIE and BEN start out. They get to the edge of the stage. ROBERT stands, frozen, his lips slightly parted. SUZIE turns)

SUZIE

Robert?

(Slowly he looks at her - and starts across to join them)

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

Scene 2A

The work of clearing continues.

ACT THREE

Scene 3

ROBERT'S ROOM. A LITTLE LATER.

KAY is waiting. After a moment, there is a noise at the door. She rises, quickly, and stands facing it.

ROBERT enters. He is carrying a paper bridge the size of a toy. He stops a second, staring at her, wondering what she is doing there.

KAY

I had to come - I called but you weren't here. I --

(She stops as SUZIE and BEN enter behind ROBERT. Their arms are all full of paper cutouts. They are surprised to see KAY)

Oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't realize anyone -- I'll go --

SUZIE

No - stay - You Robert's friend. We be finished soon. Then I go.

(They all stand for a moment of awkward silence. SUZIE looks at the paper cutouts in their arms)

We buy presents for my baby.

KAY

Presents -?

SUZIE

(Nods)

He will need many things now. In that new place.

KAY

Of course.

SUZIE

(She holds out one of the presents)

Bridge so he can cross over into next world.

(She puts it on tray on table - and takes more cutouts from ROBERT - holds them up to KAY)

Three suits. Different sizes - he will grow up, you know -

SUZIE (Cont'd)

(SUZIE puts them on tray and takes three large bundles of paper money from BEN. She shows them to KAY)

Million dollar notes. So he can be rich.

(She looks at KAY. KAY turns away)

You don't believe?

(ROBERT moves over to KAY quickly)

ROBERT

Of course she does, Suzie. Look at this, Kay. A beautiful teakwood junk. Even if the boy doesn't care to go to sea himself he can always rent out the junk and earn a living that way.

BEN

(Bringing a paper house)

Show her the house, Suzie.

SUZIE

Tell about house, Robert.

ROBERT

This will be his own house. He can keep it in a proper state of repair and it won't fall down in the rain.

(SUZIE excitedly hands him more paper toys)

And these are books. They will teach him to read and write.

SUZIE

So he doesn't grow up just coolie boy.

(SUZIE picks up the tray which now holds all the presents)

You have match?

BEN

I have a lighter.

(He puts it on the tray)

SUZIE

(Standing with the tray)

Never before have I believed Chinese custom of burning paper presents - but when I see my baby all smashed up - I believe. Help me, Ben?

(BEN helps her take the presents to the balcony. ROBERT and KAY watch, fascinated. We see SUZIE bending over them. A light comes up as though from a fire. ROBERT sits oblivious of Kay, watching SUZIE)

ROBERT

She's burning them.

(BEN comes back, looking behind him, deeply moved)

BEN

(Hoarsely)

Lomax, tell Suzie I'll be waiting for her to call me.

(He hurries out. KAY looks at ROBERT)

KAY

Shall I go too, Robert?

ROBERT

(Not hearing her)

Suzie was always good at that - believing and not believing. The first time I saw her on the ferry - she was believing she was a virgin.

(He pauses)

When I got there tonight she was standing in a pool of light from the street lamp - She seemed like something I remembered.

(He pauses. KAY watches him)

When I was a child, someone gave me a Bible -- it had a rather sickly colored plate in it -- the picture of a miracle happening on a street in Jerusalem. In the foreground was the typical picture of Jesus - His hand lifted up - like this - and two ragged lepers squatting at his feet -- their bodies all eaten away with disease - and in front of them was a third beggar - You could tell that a moment ago he had also been diseased and filthy, but now miraculously he stood straight and whole and clean. I remember the color of that picture - it was that same unearthly light that Suzie was standing in down there on the street.

(He pauses)

Curious I should think of that. Suzie always wanted to love as a virgin - always wanted her innocence restored -- and, tonight, as she stood there, she looked so pure - I wondered if somehow she hadn't just been miraculously cleansed of her uncle's rape - of all the contamination of her trade --

(He pauses)

Believe and not believe.

(Suddenly the light of the burning paper flares up. It burns brightly higher and higher. KAY and ROBERT watch it. It flares a moment, then dies down. Slowly SUZIE comes into the room)

SUZIE

Robert?

ROBERT

Yes, Suzie?

SUZIE

You liked my baby. I'm afraid for him - there is one more present he needs --

(She hesitates)

ROBERT

What, Suzie?

SUZIE

- a letter from you. Would you write a letter, Robert?

(Pause. Slowly ROBERT rises)

ROBERT

Of course.

(He sits at a table, takes a pen)

What shall I say, Suzie?

SUZIE

Say something strong. Like it say in your letter - "I have known this baby - "

(ROBERT writes)

~~ROBERT~~

~~Yes?~~

SUZIE

"He is fine boy. Please give him job - good job - behind big desk. I recommend him highly.

(ROBERT writes)

And sign it - "Robert Lomax."

(ROBERT signs)

ROBERT

"Robert Lomax."

(He folds the paper and takes an envelope and puts it in and hands it to SUZIE)

SUZIE

Write address, please?

ROBERT

Address?

SUZIE

Yes, "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN."

SUZIE (Cont'd)
(Slowly ROBERT writes the address. He gives the letter to SUZIE)

Thank you.

(She takes the letter and goes back to the balcony. ROBERT sits staring after her. KAY watches ROBERT.

SUZIE lights the letter and as it flares up, ROBERT's shoulders begin to shake. He is crying.

Slowly KAY rises, stands looking at him a moment, then quietly goes out of the door, closing it softly behind her.

As the letter is still burning, SUZIE comes quietly into the room - goes to ROBERT and puts her hand on his shoulder. He turns and puts his head against her breast. SUZIE's hand gently caresses his hair)

~~CURTAIN~~

ROBERT
STAY WITH ME, SUZIE.

SUZIE
I STAY TILL YOU SAY "GO AWAY, SUZIE".

ROBERT
THAT LONG!

SUZIE
SSSH. HE HAS LETTER NOW.

BOSTON

TOURAINE

Colve

Avery (wkly

X Avery & Wash Sts.

X Cushman Club Sug. Noble

Phila

Bellevue Strat

Broad & Walnut

Ben Franklin

9th & Chestnut

GWENNY

GWENNY: You waiting for someone to join you?

ROBERT: No - no, See here, this is rather embarrassing. I'm not really in here for - I was just rather tired - I've been hunting for a room all day and -

GWENNY: You mind if I sit with you anyway?

ROBERT: Not at all - only I don't want to keep you from-

GWENNY: I not have much luck anyway. I not very popular with the sailors.

ROBERT: (politely) Oh, really?

GWENNY: No - I have no sex appeal. Not at first.

ROBERT: I can hardly believe that.

GWENNY: True. Some girls, first thing you see - sex appeal - like Suzie.

ROBERT: Shich one is Suzie?

GWENNY: Still up stairs.

ROBERT: Oh!

GWENNY: I would like to have you meet her. She is my best friend. So beautiful. But sad now.

ROBERT: Why?

GWENNY: Her boy friend gone. She had one boy friend for five whole days.

ROBERT: She liked him, eh?

GWENNY: Oh no, she did not like him. He was not very nice.

ROBERT: Why will she be sad then?

GWENNY: Better to have one boy friend even if he is not nice. Suzie hates butterflies.

ROBERT: Butterflies? I've heard that expression before. What does it mean, exactly?

GWENNY: Oh, you know - men who like to have a different girl each visit -

ROBERT: And you don't like that, eh?

GWENNY: Well, you think that's very nice?

ROBERT: I never gave it much thought before.

GWENNY: Most of the girls will not go upstairs with man if he has been up with other girl.

ROBERT: Really?

GWENNY: Of course. You have regular boy friend for three - four days - as long as ships is in port. Other girls will not go near him. I had a boy friend called Chuck -

(Sailor and Girl enter. ROBERT looks up quickly)

You sure you not waiting for someone??

ROBERT: No, really. Tell me about Chuck.

GWENNY: He was an American. His ship stay in Hong Kong six whole days. I was very fond of him. I had nice letter from him. You like to hear it?

ROBERT: Very much. (She takes out letter and hands it to him)

GWENNY: Perhaps you read it to me?

ROBERT: I'd be glad to.
(He reads)

"Dear Gwenny", That's your name - Gwenny?

GWENNY: Yes - Gwenny-Lee.

ROBERT: Mine is Robert Lomax.

GWENNY: How you do, Robert.

ROBERT: (Half rising and bowing) How do you do, Gwenny.

(He reads) "Dear Gwenny,
Well, don't die of shock, hearing from me at last. I sure hated to leave you. I had to hide in the heads when we left Hong Kong - no kidding - so the other fellows wouldn't see me cry. I never met as swell a girl as you, Gwenny.
We're heading back for old U.S. next week. Well, goodbye, Gwenny, you really are a swell girl, so thanks again.
Chuck"

GWENNY: Don't you think it's a nice letter?

ROBERT: It's a hell of a nice letter, Gwenny. You must have been very kind to him.

GWENNY: Of course, some of the girls have many letters. Suzie has had five. That's why Suzie sad now, boy friend gone. Has to come back to bar. She said to me, "Gwenny, you don't know how I hate short times. I wish there was a law against them."

MINNIE HO and TYPHOO

Of course - of course.

(A SAILOR comes in, laughing, with a bedpost)

SAILOR

Hey - look at the bedpost I found!

LILY

Who get him?

(SHE and MINNIE HO play their game. MINNIE HO wins and goes to the Sailor)

MINNIE HO

Hello, sailor!

SAILOR

Some houses just fell down over there - but all I could get was a bedpost!

MINNIE HO

You want to see some more bedposts? A lot of them in here!

(SHE gives him her arm and THEY start into the hotel)

BLACKOUT

MINNIE HO

You not Gwenny's boy friend?

ROBERT

No.

MINNIE HO

You want to be my boy friend?

ROBERT

I don't think I could. You see, I'm afraid you'd make me laugh too much.

(MEE-LING has come downstairs with a sailor. ROBERT watches her)

ROBERT

Who is that girl over there?

MINNIE HO

That girl? Suzie.

ROBERT

Oh, so that's Suzie. She doesn't ever go by the name of Mee-ling, does she?

MINNIE HO

No. Suzie Wong. Why you look so hard?

ROBERT

I met a girl on the ferry that looked so much like your Suzie that--

MINNIE HO

MINNIE HO

Maybe it was.
(Calls)
Suzie! Suzie, come here!
(SHE gets SUZIE and brings her over)
He say maybe he see you on ferry.

SUZIE

Ferry? I never work ferry boat.

ROBERT

Oh, she wasn't working. She was a rich girl--

SUZIE

I not rich girl.

ROBERT

No, of course. Sit down a minute, will you?

MINNIE HO

Sit down, Suzie. I must get back to work - I got to really concentrate tonight.
(MINNIE HO leaves. SUZIE sits)

SUZIE

Why you stare at me so? That girl on ferry look so much like me?

ROBERT

She certainly did. See, I made a sketch of her.

SUZIE

(Looking at the sketch)
She does look like me! What this say?

ROBERT

It says, "Yes - virgin - that's me."

SUZIE

She virgin?

ROBERT

So she said.

SUZIE

I not virgin.

ROBERT

No - I can see that. I mean--

SUZIE

She say right out to you she was a virgin - just like that?

ROBERT

Yes.

ACT TWO

Scene 2

THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE NAM KOK.
A time later. Bright sunshine.

Life goes on as before: AH TONG is standing in the doorway. MINNIE HO, TYPHOO and [redacted] come out of the door.

LILY

MINNIE HO

Where are you going, [redacted] LILY?

[redacted] LILY

Home. You go home, too?

MINNIE HO

Buy vegetables first. My mother coming dinner tonight.

[redacted] LILY

Hey, there Robert painting on balcony.

[redacted] TYPHOO

Hey, Robert?

There Hey ROBERT'S VOICE

Hey, ~~Minnie Ho - Typhoo -~~ [redacted] LILY!

Hey

MINNIE HO

Suzie home?

ROBERT'S VOICE

Not yet. She's gone to see her baby.

(GWENNY AND CHUCK have entered from the opposite side)

GWENNY

Robert!

ROBERT'S VOICE

Hey, Gwenny!

GWENNY

This is Chuck! Remember? My boy friend I had letter from?

ROBERT'S VOICE

Of course I remember! How are you, Chuck?

CHUCK

Pleased to meet you, sir. Gwenny has told me about you.

ROBERT'S VOICE
Glad you're back. I'll see you around.

(GWENNY takes CHUCK's arm happily and they go into the hotel)

MINNIE HO
Hey, this turning into regular honeymoon hotel! Gwenny - Chuck --- Robert - Suzie!

AH TONG
(Beaming)
Yes, honeymoon hotel -- very nice, ~~very nice~~ - Suzie got longest long-time boy friend in history of Nam Kok.

MINNIE HO
Maybe I get me long-time boy friend.

LILY
You! You get one-day boy friend you go crazy!

(SUZIE enters)

TYPHOO
Hey, Suzie--

MINNIE HO
(Scolding)
Why you leave Robert alone? all day.

SUZIE
I go see [redacted] baby - pay amah - shop for dinner -

MINNIE HO
No good leave boy friend alone! What's the matter with you?

LILY
You want me to go up there when you away?

SUZIE
You try!

LILY
I just joking!

SUZIE
Some joke! Ha - ha - ha!
(SUZIE goes into the hotel)

LILY
Suzie got no sense of humor.

MINNIE HO
Suzie ~~She~~ got something better than sense of humor!
(THEY giggle and go on)

CURTAIN

MINNIE HO

ACT TWO

Scene 2

ROBERT'S ROOM.

ROBERT is reading a letter over the telephone. HE is very excited. A half-finished portrait of KAY is on the easel.

ROBERT
"The vigor of your pictures more than makes up for some of the weakness of composition and technique--"
(HE breaks off)
And he's right, Kay!
(Reading again)
"We would be happy to have you send us anything new you may have done in this past month. At the moment we are--
(A knock at the door)
Yes? Who is it?
(Into the phone)
Just a second, Kay.

(MINNIE HO opens the door and looks in)

MINNIE HO
Suzie not here?

ROBERT
No, she isn't, Minnie Ho.

MINNIE HO
Just heard she had a new dress. You talking to Miss Fletcher?

ROBERT
Yes.

MINNIE HO
Give her deepest regards from Minnie Ho.
(SHE goes)

ROBERT
(Reading again)
"At the moment, we are--"
(HE breaks off)
What? Oh, it was your friend Minnie Ho. She sent her regards.
(HE reads)
"At the moment, we are--"
(HE breaks off)
Oh, she just popped in to see if Suzie was here. What do you mean, wasn't she? -- No, she doesn't practically live

ACT TWO

Scene 1

THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE HAN KOK. It is raining. MINNIE HO comes down the steps as LILY comes up the steps on the opposite side.

LILY

Hello, Minnie Ho. I hate this rain.

MINNIE HO

Sailors so afraid of water - never come out.

LILY

First time I'm street girl - but this rain keep up me starve.

MINNIE HO

This rain keep up me sex-starve!

(A DRUNKEN SAILOR enters, followed by a BYSTANDER)

LILY

Hey, there's one.

BYSTANDER

Hey, Sailor, what you got there?

SAILOR

It's a bedpost. Don't take my bedpost away from me.

LILY

Which one get him?

(THEY start a game to see which one will get the sailor)

SAILOR

I found it floating down the middle of the street. I had hold of a bathtub for a while, but it sank!

(A loud crash)

What's happening here, anyway - earthquake?

BYSTANDER

Just rain. When the wet begins, can last long time. Do much damage.

SAILOR

Wet he calls it. Been rainin' over a month and this guy calls it wet.

LILY

(As the sailor approaches)

Hi, there!

SAILOR

Hello girls - no thanks.
(And he goes off)

MERRIE ED

(looking up)
Hey, look up there! Robert still waiting for Suzie.

BLACKOUT

SAILOR
Hello, girls - no, thanks.
(As HE goes off, ROBERT enters)

MINNIE HO
Robert - you still out in all this rain?

ROBERT
That's right.

LILY
When you going to stop looking for her?

ROBERT
I stopped an hour ago. Ah Tong is upstairs packing my bags. I've got my ticket home.
(Shows the map)
Look at that.

MINNIE HO
What those marks all over map?

ROBERT
That shows where I've been -- all over there, all down here. I've been in every bar in Hong Kong - in Kowloon - everywhere in the whole Hong Kong area.

LILY
And no Suzie?

ROBERT
Oh, lots of Suzies -- but never the right one.
(HE goes)

LILY
Poor Robert...in all this rain.

MINNIE HO
Poor Robert, hell -- poor me!

LILY
Hey, look -- rain stopping! Let's go back to bar.
(THEY go)

CURTAIN

MINNIE HO 3-1-1

ACT THREE

Scene 1

THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE NAM KOK.

It is still raining. Three weeks later.

Two or three figures scurry by, holding umbrellas. Then the street is empty again.

Suddenly, the rain begins to end. The stage gets brighter. The rain stops entirely. The stage gets even brighter.

And soon the stage is full of life again. Chattering, happy groups come in, some with folded umbrellas under their arms.

MINNIE HO, TYPHOO, LILY and AH TONG COME OUT OF THE HOTEL.

MINNIE HO
Hey, rain really stop at last.

LILY
Now maybe sailors start coming back. Sailors so afraid of water.

AH TONG
Sure - wet finished - life begin anew - look at sun come out.

LILY
Hey, look. Robert come out, too. He going to paint on balcony.

TYPHOO
Hey, Robert!

ROBERTIS VOICE
Hey, there! Hey - hey!

MINNIE HO
Suzie home?

ROBERT'S VOICE
Not yet. She went to see her baby.

(GWENNY and CHUCK, with folded umbrellas, enter from the opposite side)

GWENNY

Hey, Robert!

ROBERT'S VOICE

Hey, Gwenny.

GWENNY

This is Chuck. Remember? My boy friend I had letter from?

ROBERT'S VOICE

Of course I remember. How are you, Chuck?

CHUCK

Fine. Pleased to meet you, sir. Gwenny has told me all about you.

ROBERT'S VOICE

Glad you're back. I'll see you around.

CHUCK

Okay!

(GWENNY takes Chuck's arm happily and they go toward the hotel)

GIRLS

Hey, Chuck! Hey, there, Chuck!

(GWENNY defends him and they go into the hotel)

MINNIE HO

This turning into regular honeymoon hotel! Gwenny - Chuck -- Robert - Suzie!

AH TONG

Yes, honeymoon hotel - very nice - Suzie got longest long-time boy friend in history of Nam Kok Hotel

MINNIE HO

Maybe I get me long-time boy friend.

LILY

Maybe you can if you pay him enough.

(SUZIE enters)

TYPHOO

Hello, Suzie.

MINNIE HO

(Scolding)

Why you leave Robert alone all day?

SUZIE
Not all day! I go see my baby - pay amah - shop for dinner.

MINNIE HO
No good leave boy friend alone. What's the matter with you?

LILY
You want me to go up there when you away?

SUZIE
You try!

LILY
(Backing up)
I just joking.

SUZIE
Some joke - ha ha!
(SHE goes into the hotel)

LILY
Suzie got no s ense of humor.

MINNIE HO
Suzie got something lot better than sense of humor!

LILY
I think s he worried about something.

(CHINESE MAN and WOMAN enter and start talking excitedly to a WOMAN in Mandarin. TYPHOO joins them in the excited conversation)

MINNIE HO
What that all about? I hate when people ~~xxxxx~~ talk that damn Mandarin dialect.
(Calling)
What that all about, Typhoo?

TYPHOO
They say big washout over near canal!

MINNIE HO
You mean canal where Suzie live?

TY PHOO
Yes.

LILY
But Suzie just come from house. Everything must be all right.