

Embers

A piece for radio

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Sea scarcely audible.
HENRY'S boots on shingle. He baits.
Sea a little louder.

HENRY: On. *[Sea. Voice louder.]* On! *[He moves on. Boots on shingle. As he goes.]* Stop. *[Boots on shingle. As he goes, louder.]* Stop! *[He baits. Sea a little louder.]* Down. *[Sea. Voice louder.]* Down! *[Slither of shingle as he sits. Sea, still faint, audible throughout what follows whenever pause indicated.]* Who is beside me now? *[Pause.]* An old man, blind and foolish. *[Pause.]* My father, back from the dead, to be with me. *[Pause.]* As if he hadn't died. *[Pause.]* No, simply back from the dead, to be with me, in this strange place. *[Pause.]* Can he hear me? *[Pause.]* Yes, he must hear me. *[Pause.]* To answer me? *[Pause.]* No, he doesn't answer me. *[Pause.]* Just be with me. *[Pause.]* That sound you hear is the sea. *[Pause. Louder.]* I say that sound you hear is the sea, we are sitting on the strand. *[Pause.]* I mention it because the sound is so strange, so unlike the sound of the sea, that if you didn't see what it was you wouldn't know what it was. *[Pause.]* Hooves! *[Pause.]* Hooves! *[Sound of hooves walking on hard road. Louder.]* Hooves! *[Sound of hooves walking on hard road. They die rapidly away. Pause.]* Again! *[Hooves as before. Pause. Excitedly.]* Train it to mark time! Shoe it with steel and tie it up in the yard, have it stamp all day! *[Pause.]* A ten-ton mammoth back from the dead, shoe it with steel and have it tramp the world down! Listen to it! *[Pause.]* Listen to the light now, you always loved light, not long past noon and all the shore in shadow and the sea out as far as the island. *[Pause.]* You would never live this side of the bay, you wanted the sun on the water for that evening bathe you took once too often. But when I got your money I moved across, as perhaps you may know. *[Pause.]* We never

found your body, you know, that held up probate an unconsciousable time, they said there was nothing to prove you hadn't run away from us all and alive and well under a false name in the Argentine for example, that grieved mother greatly. [Pause.] I'm like you in that, can't stay away from it, but I never go in, no, I think the last time I went in was with you. [Pause.] Just be near it. [Pause.] Today it's calm, but I often hear it above in the house and walking the roads and start talking, oh just loud enough to drown it, nobody notices. [Pause.] But I'd be talking now no matter where I was, I once went to Switzerland and to get away from the cursed thing and never stopped all the time I was there. [Pause.] I usen't to need anyone, just to myself, stories, there was a great one about an old fellow called Bolton, I never finished it, I never finished any of them, I never finished anything, everything always went on for ever. [Pause.] Bolton [Pause. Louder.] Bolton! [Pause.] There before the fire. [Pause.] Before the fire with all the shutters . . . no, hangings, hangings, all the hangings drawn and the light, no light, only the light of the fire, sitting there in the . . . no, standing, standing there on the hearth-rug in the dark before the fire with his arms on the chimney-piece and his head on his arms, standing there waiting in the dark before the fire in his old red dressing-gown and no sound in the house of any kind, only the sound of the fire. [Pause.] Standing there in his old red dressing-gown might go on fire any minute like when he was a child, no, that was his pyjamas, standing there waiting in the dark, no light, only the light of the fire, and no sound of any kind, only the fire, an old man in great trouble. [Pause.] Ring then at the door and over he goes to the window and looks out between the hangings, fine old chap, very big and strong, bright winter's night, snow everywhere, bitter cold, white world, cedar boughs bending under load and then as the arm goes up to ring again recognizes . . . Holloway . . . [Long pause.] . . . yes, Holloway, recognizes Holloway, goes down and opens. [Pause.] Outside all still, not a sound, dog's chain maybe or a bough groaning if you stood there listening long

enough, white world, Holloway with his little black bag, not a sound, bitter cold, full moon small and white, crooked trail of Holloway's galoshes, Vega in the Lyre very green. [Pause.] Vega in the Lyre very green. [Pause.] Following conversation then on the step, no, in the room, back in the room, following conversation then back in the room, Holloway: 'My dear Bolton, it is now past midnight, if you would be good enough—', gets no further, Bolton: 'Please! PLEASE!' Dead silence then, not a sound, only the fire, all coal, burning down now, Holloway on the hearthrug trying to toast his arse, Bolton, where's Bolton, no light, only the fire, Bolton at the window his back to the hangings, holding them a little apart with his hand looking out, white world, even the spire, white to the vane, most unusual, silence in the house, not a sound, only the fire, no flames now, embers. [Pause.] Embers. [Pause.] Shifting, lapsing, furtive like, dreadful sound, Holloway behind his back holding up the tails of his old mackintosh, Bolton at the window, grand old figure in his old red dressing-gown, back against the hangings, hand stretched out widening the chink, looking out, white world great trouble, not a sound, only the embers, sound of dying, dying glow, Holloway, Bolton, Bolton, Holloway, old men, great trouble, white world, not a sound. [Pause.] Listen to it! [Pause.] Close your eyes and listen to it, what would you think it was? [Pause. Vehement.] A drip! A drip! [Sound of drip, rapidly amplified, suddenly cut off.] Again! [Drip again. Amplification begins.] No! [Drip cut off. Pause.] Father! [Pause. Agitated.] Stories, me, for someone, to be with me, anyone, a stranger, to talk to, imagine he hears me, years of that, and then, now, for someone who . . . knew me, in the old days, anyone, to be with me, imagine he hears me, what I am, now. [Pause.] No good either. [Pause.] Not there either. [Pause.] Try again. [Pause.] White world, not a sound. [Pause.] Holloway. [Pause.] Holloway says he'll go, damned if he'll sit up all night before a black grate, doesn't

understand, call a man out, an old friend, in the cold and dark, an old friend, urgent need, bring the bag, then not a word, no explanation no heat, no light, Bolton: 'Please! PLEASE! Holloway, no refreshment, no welcome, chilled to the medulla, catch his death, can't understand, strange treatment, old friend, says he'll go, doesn't move, not a sound, fire dying, white beam from window, ghastly scene, wishes to God he hadn't come, no good, fire out, bitter cold, great trouble, white world, not a sound, no good. [Pause.] No good. [Pause.] Can't do it. [Pause.] Listen to it! [Pause.] Father! [Pause.] You wouldn't know me now, you'd be sorry you ever had me, but you were that already, a washout, that's the last I heard from you, a washout. [Pause. Imitating father's voice.] 'Are you coming for a dip?' No, 'Come on, come on, 'No! Glare, stump to door, turn, glare, 'A washout, that's all you are, a washout! [Violent slam of door. Pause.] Again! [Slam. Pause.] Slam life shut like that! [Pause.] Washout. [Pause.] Wish to Christ she had. [Pause.] Never met Ada, did you, or did you, I can't remember, no matter, no one'd know her now. [Pause.] What turned her against me do you think, the child I suppose, horrid little creature, wish to God we'd never had her, I use to walk with her in the fields, Jesus that was awful, she wouldn't let go my hand and I mad to talk, 'Run along now, Addie, and look at the lambs, ' [Imitating Addie's voice.] 'No papa, 'Go on now, go on, ' [Plaintive.] 'No papa, 'Go on with you when you're told and look at the lambs! [Addie's loud wail. Pause.] Ada too, conversation with her, that was something, that's what hell will be like, small chat to the babbling of Lethe about the good old days when we wished we were dead. [Pause.] Price of margarine fifty years ago. [Pause.] And now. [Pause. With solemn indignation.] Price of blueband now! [Pause.] Father! [Pause.] Tired of talking to you. [Pause.] That was always the way, walk all over the mountains with you talking and talking and then suddenly mum and home in misery and not a word to a soul for weeks, sulky little bastard, better off dead. [Long pause.] Ada. [Pause. Louder.] Ada!

ADA: [Low remote voice throughout.] Yes.
 HENRY: Have you been there long?
 ADA: Some little time. [Pause.] Why do you stop, don't mind me. [Pause.] Do you want me to go away? [Pause.] Where is Addie?
 HENRY: With her music master. [Pause.] Are you going to answer me today?
 ADA: You shouldn't be sitting on the cold stones, they're bad for your growths. Raise yourself up till I slip my shawl under you. [Pause.] Is that better?
 HENRY: No comparison, no comparison. [Pause.] Are you going to sit down beside me?
 ADA: Yes. [No sound as she sits.] Like that? [Pause.] Or do you prefer like that? [Pause.] You don't care. [Pause.] Chilly enough I imagine, I hope you put on your jaegers. [Pause.] Did you put on your jaegers, Henry?
 HENRY: What happened was this, I put them on and then I took them off again and then I put them on again and then I took them off again and then I took them on again and then I—
 ADA: Have you them on now?
 HENRY: I don't know. [Pause.] Hooves! Hooves! [Pause. Louder.] Hooves! [Sound of hooves walking on hard road. They die rapidly away.] Again!
 ADA: Did you hear them?
 HENRY: Not well.
 ADA: Galloping?
 HENRY: No. [Pause.] Could a horse mark time?
 ADA: I'm not sure that I know what you mean.
 HENRY: [Irritably.] Could a horse be trained to stand still and mark time with its four legs?
 ADA: Oh. [Pause.] The ones I used to fancy all did. [She laughs. Pause.] Laugh, Henry, it's not every day I crack a joke.
 HENRY: You wish me to laugh?
 ADA: You laughed so charmingly once, I think that's what

first attracted me to you. That and your smile. [Pause.]
 Come on, it will be like old times.
 [Pause. He tries to laugh, fails.]
 HENRY: Perhaps I should begin with the smile. [Pause for smile.]
 Did that attract you? [Pause.] Now I'll try again. [Long
 horrible laugh.] Any of the old charm there?
 ADA: Oh Henry!

[Pause.]
 HENRY: Listen to it! [Pause.] Lips and claws! [Pause.] Get away
 from it! Where it couldn't get at me! The Rampas! What?
 ADA: Calm yourself.

HENRY: And I live on the brink of it! Why? Professional obli-
 gations? [Brief laugh.] Reasons of health? [Brief laugh.]
 Family ties? [Brief laugh.] A woman? [Laugh in which she
 joins.] Some old grave I cannot tear myself away from?
 [Pause.] Listen to it! What is it like?

ADA: It is like an old sound I used to hear. [Pause.] It is like
 another time, in the same place. [Pause.] It was rough,
 the spray came flying over us. [Pause.] Strange it should
 have been rough then [Pause.] And calm now.

HENRY: Let us get up and go.
 ADA: Go? Where? And Addie? She would be very distressed if
 she came and found you had gone without her. [Pause.]
 What do you suppose is keeping her?
 [Smart blow of cylindrical ruler on piano case. Unsteadily,
 ascending and descending, ADDIE plays scale of A Flat
 Major, hands first together, then reversed. Pause.]
 MUSIC MASTER: [Italian accent.] Santa Cecilia!

ADDIE: Will I play my piece now please?
 [Pause. MUSIC MASTER beats two bars of waltz time with
 ruler on piano case. ADDIE plays opening bars of Chopin's
 5th Waltz in A Flat Major, MUSIC MASTER beating time
 lightly with ruler as she plays. In first chord of bass, bar 5,
 she plays E instead of F. Resounding blow of ruler on piano
 case. ADDIE stops playing.]
 MUSIC MASTER: [Violently.] Fai
 ADDIE: [Tearfully.] What?

MUSIC MASTER: [Violently.] Eff! Eff!
 ADDIE: [Tearfully.] Where?
 MUSIC MASTER: [Violently.] Qua! [He thumps note.] Fai!
 [Pause. ADDIE begins again, MUSIC MASTER beating
 time lightly with ruler. When she comes to bar 5 she makes
 same mistake. Tremendous blow of ruler on piano case.
 ADDIE stops playing, begins to wail.]
 MUSIC MASTER: [Frenziedly.] Eff! Eff! Eff! [He hammers note.] Eff!
 [He hammers note.] Eff!
 [Hammered note, 'Eff!' and ADDIE's wail amplified to
 paroxysm, then suddenly cut off. Pause.]
 ADA: You are silent today.
 HENRY: It was not enough to drag her into the world, now she
 must play the piano.
 ADA: She must learn. She shall learn. That—and riding.
 [Hooves walking.]
 RIDING MASTER: Now Miss! Elbows in Miss! Hands down Miss!
 [Hooves trotting.] Now Miss! Back straight Miss! Knees in
 Miss! [Hooves cantering.] Now Miss! Tummy in Miss! Chin
 up Miss! [Hooves galloping.] Now Miss! Eyes front Miss!
 [ADDIE begins to wail.] Now Miss! Now Miss!
 [Galloping hooves, 'Now Miss!' and ADDIE's wail amplified
 to paroxysm, then suddenly cut off. Pause.]
 ADA: What are you thinking of? [Pause.] I was never taught,
 until it was too late. All my life I regretted it.
 HENRY: What was your strong point, I forget.
 ADA: Oh . . . geometry I suppose, plane and solid. [Pause.] First
 plane, then solid. [Shingle as he gets up.] Why do you get
 up?
 HENRY: I thought I might try and get as far as the water's edge.
 [Pause. With a sigh.] And back. [Pause.] Stretch my old
 bones.
 [Pause.]
 ADA: Well, why don't you? [Pause.] Don't stand there thinking
 about it. [Pause.] Don't stand there staring. [Pause. He goes
 towards sea. Boots on shingle, say ten steps. He bats at
 water's edge. Pause. Sea a little louder. Distant.] Don't wet
 your good boots.
 [Pause.]

HENRY: Yes.
ALDA: You should see a doctor about your talking, it's worse, what must it be like for Addie? [Pause.] Do you know what she said to me once, when she was still quite small, she said, 'Mummy, why does Daddy keep on talking all the time?' She heard you in the lavatory. I didn't know what to answer.
HENRY: Daddy! Addie! [Pause.] I told you to tell her I was praying. [Pause.] Roaring prayers at God and his saints.
ALDA: It's very bad for the child. [Pause.] It's silly to say it keeps you from hearing it, it doesn't keep you from hearing it and even if it does you shouldn't be hearing it, there must be something wrong with your brain.
[Pause.]
HENRY: That! I shouldn't be hearing that!
ALDA: I don't think you are hearing it. And if you are what's wrong with it, it's a lovely peaceful gentle soothing sound, why do you hate it? [Pause.] And if you hate it why don't you keep away from it? Why are you always coming down here? [Pause.] There's something wrong with your brain, you ought to see Holloway, he's alive still, isn't he? [Pause.]
HENRY: [Wildly.] Thuds, I want thuds! Like this! [He fumbles in the shingle, catches up two big stones and starts dashing them together.] Stone! [Clash.] Stone! [Clash.] Stone! and clash amplified, cut off. Pause. He throws one stone away. Sound of its fall.] That's life! [He throws the other stone

ADA: What hole? The earth is full of holes.
HENRY: Where we did it at last for the first time.
ADA: Ah yes, I think I remember. [Pause.] The place has not changed.
HENRY: Oh yes it has, I can see it. [Confidentially.] There is a levelling going on! [Pause.] What age is she now?
ADA: I have lost count of time.
HENRY: Twelve? Thirteen? Fourteen?
ADA: I really could not tell you, Henry.
HENRY: It took us a long time to have her. [Pause.] Years we kept hammering away at it. [Pause.] But we did it in the end. [Pause. Sigh.] We had her in the end. [Pause.] Listen to it! [Pause.] It's not so bad when you get out on it. [Pause.] Perhaps I should have gone into the merchant navy. ADA: It's only on the surface, you know. Underneath all is as quiet as the grave. Not a sound. All day, all night, not a sound.

HENRY: I was trying to be with my father.

ADA: Oh. [Pause.] No difficulty about that.

HENRY: I mean I was trying to get him to be with me. [Pause.]

You seem a little cruder than usual today, Ada. [Pause.] I

was asking him if he had ever met you, I couldn't remember.

ADA: Well?

HENRY: He doesn't answer any more.

ADA: I suppose you have worn him out. [Pause.] You wore him

out living and now you are wearing him out dead. [Pause.]

The time comes when one cannot speak to you any more.

[Pause.] The time will come when no one will speak to you

at all, not even complete strangers. [Pause.] You will be

quite alone with your voice, there will be no other voice in

the world but yours. [Pause.] Do you hear me?

[Pause.]

HENRY: I can't remember if he met you.

ADA: You know he met me.

HENRY: No, Ada, I don't know, I'm sorry, I have forgotten

almost everything connected with you.

ADA: You weren't there. Just your mother and sister. I had called

to fetch you, as arranged. We were to go bathing together.

[Pause.]

HENRY: [Irritably.] Drive on, drive on! Why do people always

stop in the middle of what they are saying?

ADA: None of them knew where you were. Your bed had not

been slept in. They were all shouting at one another. Your

sister said she would throw herself off the cliff. Your father

got up and went out, slamming the door. I left soon after-

wards and passed him on the road. He did not see me. He

was sitting on a rock looking out to sea. I never forgot his

posture. And yet it was a common one. You used to have

it sometimes. Perhaps just the stillness, as if he had been

turned to stone. I could never make it out.

[Pause.]

HENRY: Keep on, keep on! [Implovingly.] Keep it going, Ada,

every syllable is a second gained.

ADA: That's all, I'm afraid. [Pause.] Go on now with your father

or your stories or whatever you were doing, don't mind me

any more.

HENRY: I can't! [Pause.] I can't do it any more!

ADA: You were doing it a moment ago, before you spoke to me.

HENRY: [Angrily.] I can't do it any more now! [Pause.] Christ!

[Pause.]

ADA: Yes, you know what I mean, there are attitudes remain in

one's mind for reasons that are clear, the carriage of a head

for example, bowed when one would have thought it should

be lifted, and vice versa, or a hand suspended in mid-air, as

if unowned. That kind of thing. But with your father sitting

on the rock that day nothing of the kind, no detail you

could put your finger on and say, How very peculiar! No, I

could never make it out. Perhaps, as I said, just the great

stillness of the whole body, as if all the breath had left it.

[Pause.] Is this rubbish a help to you, Henry? [Pause.] I can

try and go on a little if you wish. [Pause.] No? [Pause.]

Then I think I'll be getting back.

HENRY: Not yet! You needn't speak. Just listen. Not even. Be

with me. [Pause.] Ada! [Pause. Louder.] Ada! [Pause.]

Christ! [Pause.] Hooves! [Pause. Louder.] Hooves!

[Pause.] Christ! [Long pause.] Left soon afterwards, passed

you on the road, didn't see her, looking out to . . . [Pause.]

Can't have been looking out to sea. [Pause.] Unless you had

gone round the other side. [Pause.] Had you gone round

the cliff side? [Pause.] Rather! [Pause.] Must have I

suppose. [Pause.] Staps watching you a moment, then on

down path to tram, up on open top and sits down in front.

[Pause.] Sits down in front. [Pause.] Suddenly feels uneasy

and gets down again, conductor: 'Charged your mind, Miss?'

goes back up path, no sign of you. [Pause.] Very unhappy

and uneasy, hangs round a bit, not a soul about, cold wind

coming in off sea, goes back down path and takes tram

home. [Pause.] Takes tram home. [Pause.] Christ! [Pause.]

'My dear Bolton . . . ' [Pause.] 'If it's an injection you want,

Bolton, let down your trousers and I'll give you one, I have

a panhysterectomy at nine, meaning of course the anaes-

thetic. [Pause.] Fire out, bitter cold, white world, great

trouble, not a sound. [Pause.] Bolton starts playing with

the curtain, no, hanging, difficult to describe, draws it back

no, kind of gathers it towards him and the moon comes

flooding in, then lets it fall back, heavy velvet affair, and pitch black in the room, then towards him again, white, black, white, black, Holloway: 'Stop that for the love of God, Bolton, do you want to finish me?' [Pause.] Black, white, black, white, maddening thing. [Pause.] Then he suddenly strikes a match, Bolton does, lights a candle, catches it up above his head, walks over and looks Holloway full in the eye. [Pause.] Not a word, just the look, the old blue eye, very glassy, lids worn thin, lashes gone, whole thing swimming, and the candle shaking over his head. [Pause.] Tears? [Pause. Long laugh.] Good God no! Holloway: 'If you want a shot say so and let me get to hell out of here.' [Pause.] 'We've had this before, Bolton, don't ask me to go through it again.' [Pause.] Bolton: 'Please!' [Pause.] 'Please!' [Pause.] 'Please, Holloway!' [Pause.] Candle shaking and guttering all over the place, lower now, old arm tired takes it in the other hand and holds it high again, that's it, that was always it, night, and the embers cold, and the glim shaking in your old fist, saying, please! please! [Pause.] Begging. [Pause.] Of the poor. [Pause.] Ada! [Pause.] Rather! [Pause.] Christ! [Pause.] Holds it high again, naughty world, fixes Holloway eyes drowned, won't ask again, just the look, Holloway covers his face, not a sound, white world, bitter cold, ghastly scene, old men, great trouble, no good. [Pause.] No good. [Pause.] Christ! [Pause. Shingle as he gets up. He goes towards sea. Boots on shingle. He halts. Pause. Sea a little louder.] On. [Pause. He moves on. Boots on shingle. He halts at water's edge. Pause. Sea a little louder.] Little book. [Pause.] This evening... [Pause.] Nothing this evening. [Pause.] Tomorrow... tomorrow... plumber at nine, then nothing. [Pause. Puzzled.] Plumber at nine? Ah yes, the waste. [Pause.] Words. [Pause.] Saturday... nothing, Sunday... Sunday... nothing all day. [Pause.] Nothing, all day nothing. [Pause.] All day all night nothing. [Pause.] Not a sound.

Rough for Radio I

Written in French in late 1961. First published in English as
'Sketch for Radio Play' in *Stereo Headphones*, no. 7 (Spring
1976).

HE: [*Gloomily.*] Madam.
SHE: Are you all right? [*Pause.*] You asked me to come.
HE: I ask no one to come here.
SHE: You suffered me to come.
HE: I meet my debts.

[*Pause.*]

SHE: I have come to listen.

HE: When you please.

[*Pause.*]

SHE: May I squat on this hassock? [*Pause.*] Thank you.

[*Pause.*] May we have a little heart?

HE: No, madam.

[*Pause.*]

SHE: Is it true the music goes on all the time?

HE: Yes.

SHE: Without cease?

HE: Without cease.

SHE: It's unthinkable! [*Pause.*] And the words too? All the

time too?

HE: All the time.

SHE: Without cease?

HE: Yes.

SHE: It's unimaginable. [*Pause.*] So you are here all the time?

HE: Without cease.

[*Pause.*]

SHE: How troubled you look! [*Pause.*] May one see them?

HE: No, madam.

SHE: I may not go and see them?

HE: No, madam.

[*Pause.*]

SHE: May we have a little light?

HE: No, madam.

[*Pause.*]

SHE: How cold you are! [Pause.] Are these the two knobs?
HE: Yes.

SHE: Just push? [Pause.] Is it live? [Pause.] I ask you is it live.
HE: No, you must twist. [Pause.] To the right.

MUSIC: [Faint.]
[Silence.]
SHE: [Astounded.] But there are more than one!

HE: Yes.

SHE: How many?

HE: To the right, madam, to the right.

MUSIC: [Faint.]
[Click.]
VOICE: [Faint.]
SHE: [With voice.] Louder!

VOICE: [No louder.]
[Silence.]
SHE: [Astounded.] But he is alone!

HE: Yes.

SHE: All alone?

HE: When one is alone one is all alone.

HE: What is it like together?

HE: To the right, madam.

MUSIC: [Faint, brief.]
VOICE: [Together.]
[Silence.]
SHE: They are not together?
HE: No.

SHE: They cannot see each other?

HE: No.

SHE: They cannot see each other?

HE: No.

SHE: Hear each other?

HE: No.

SHE: It's inconceivable!

[Pause.]

HE: To the right, madam.

VOICE: [Click.]

VOICE: [Faint.]
SHE: [With voice.] Louder!

VOICE: [No louder.]
[Silence.]
SHE: And—[Faint stress.]—you like that?

HE: It is a need.

SHE: A need? That a need?

HE: It has become a need. [Pause.] To the right, madam.

MUSIC: [Faint.]
SHE: [With music.] Louder!
MUSIC: [No louder.]
[Silence.]
SHE: That too? [Pause.] That a need too?

HE: It has become a need, madam.

SHE: Are they in the same... situation?

[Pause.]

HE: I don't understand.

SHE: Are they... subject to the same... conditions?

HE: Yes, madam.

SHE: For instance? [Pause.] For instance?

HE: One cannot describe them, madam.

SHE: Well, I'm obliged to you.

HE: Allow me, this way.

SHE: [A little off.] Is that a Turkoman?

HE: [Ditto.] Allow me.

SHE: [A little further off.] How troubled you look! [Pause.]

HE: Well, I'll leave you. [Pause.] To your needs.

HE: [Ditto.] Good-bye, madam. [Pause.] To the right, madam,

that's the garbage—[Faint stress.]—the house garbage.

[Pause.] Good-bye, madam.

[Long pause. Sound of curtains violently drawn, first one, then the other, clatter of the heavy wings along the rods.

Pause. Faint ping—as sometimes happens—of telephone receiver raised from cradle. Faint sound of dialling. Pause.]

Hello... Miss... is the doctor... ah... yes... he to call

what? ... in an hour? ... not before? ... wait ... [Low.]
... there's more ... they're together ... TOGETHER ... one ...
yes ... I don't know ... like ... [Hesitation.] ... one ...
the breathing ... I don't know ... [Vehement.] ... no!
never! ... meet? ... how could they meet? ... what?
what are all alike? ... last what? ... gasps? ... wait ...
don't go yet ... wait! ... [Pause. Sound of receiver put
down violently. Low.] Swine!
[Pause. Click.]
MUSIC: [Falling.]
MUSIC: [Together, failing.]
VOICE: [Telephone rings. Receiver immediately raised.]
HE: [With music and voice.] Miss ... what? ... [Music and
voice silent.] ... a confinement? ... [Long pause.] ... two
confinements? ... [Long pause.] ... one what? ... what?
breach? ... what? ... [Long pause.] ... tomorrow noon?
[Long pause. Faint ping as receiver put gently down. Long
pause. Click.]
MUSIC: [Brief, failing.]
MUSIC: [Together, ending, breaking off together, resuming
voice:]
VOICE: [Silence. Long pause.]
HE: [Whisper.] Tomorrow ... noon ...

me ... Macgillycuddy ... right ... he'll
know ... and Miss ... Miss! ... urgent ... yes! ... [Sbrill.]
... most urgent!
[Pause. Receiver put down with same faint ping. Pause.
Click.]
MUSIC: [Faint.]
HE: [With music.] Good God!
MUSIC: [Faint.]
VOICE: [Faint.]
HE: [With voice, sbrill.] Come on! Come on!
VOICE: [Faint.]
HE: [With voice, sbrill.] It's crazy! Like one!
MUSIC: [Together.]
VOICE: [Telephone rings. Receiver raised immediately, not more
than a second's ring.]
HE: [With music and voice.] Yes ... wait ... [Music and voice
silent. Very agitated.] Yes ... yes ... no matter ... what
the trouble is? ... they're ending ... ENDING ... this
morning ... what? ... no! ... no question! ... ENDING
I tell you ... nothing what? ... to be done? ... I know
there's nothing to be done ... what? ... no! ... it's me ... ME
... what? I tell you they're ending ... ENDING ... I can't
stay like that after ... who? ... but she's left me ... ah for
God's sake ... haven't they all left me? ... did you not
know that? ... all left me ... sure? ... of course I'm sure ...

