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Cast of Characters

PETER DEGROODT, A Man of Midnight Secrets; Our Narrator.

GUESTS FROM GIBBET ISLAND:

COBUS QUACKENBOS, A Nervous Visitor to the Wild Goose Tavern.

YAN YAST VANDERSCAMP, A Young Rascal Who Walks the Edge.

PLUTO, A Dark Fisherman Who Delivers Souls.

GIOVANNI, A Cunning Pirate.

BLICKSEM, A Ferocious Pirate.

DONDER, A None-Too-Swift Pirate.

NAVY OFFICER, A Soldier in Her Majesty's Service.

REBECCA, A Simple Woman in the Wrong Place at the Wrong Time.

VARIOUS SHADY TRAVELERS

WOLFERT WEBBER or GOLDEN DREAMS:

WOLFERT WEBBER, A Fretting Little Cabbage Farmer.

BESS WEBBER, A Practical Woman Who Knits to Live.

AMY WEBBER, A Blooming Young Daughter of Wolfert and Bess.

DIRK WALDRON, A Strapping Young Suitor.

PEECHY PRAUW VAN HOOK, A Wiry Old Owner of the Wild Goose.

RAMM RAPELYE, A Plump Pompous Pipe-Smoker.

MAMIE VAN KORTLANDT, A Neighbor Woman.

PLUTO, A Younger Version of the Fisherman from Gibbet Island.

TWO RED-CAPS, A Couple of Freebooters On a Mission.

THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER:

TOM WALKER, A Fierce Miserly Man Looking for a Way Out.

LUCY WALKER, A Fierce Miserly Woman with a Strong Arm and Stronger Tongue.

OLD SCRATCH, A Creature Who Collects Souls with an Ax.

MR. BELCHER, A Businessman in Need of Cash.

MR. WORBY, Another Businessman in Need of Cash.

MR. WEBSTER, Still Yet Another Businessman in Need of Cash.

A LITTLE WIDOW, MR. KNICKERBOCKER, and VARIOUS BORROWERS.

Place

In and Around the Village of Communipaw, Near New Amsterdam.

Time

The Early 1700s.

Acknowledgments

Gold in the Bones premiered at The Cleveland PlayHouse in October, 1999 under the direction of William Hoffman. The cast was as follows:

COBUS, WOLFERT,
MR. BELCHER, CUSTOMERJay Kim
VANDERSCAMP, DIRK,
MR. WORBY, WEBSTER.....Billy Galewood
PLUTO, SOLDIER #2,
RAPELEYE, TOM WALKER Seth Stout
GIOVANNI, PEECHY,
RED CAP, OLD SCRATCH Jennifer Mates
BLICKSEM, REBECCA, BESS,
RED CAP, WIDOW..... Kellie McIvor
DONDER, AMY,
LUCY, KNICKERBOCKER.....Cheri Walters

GOLD IN THE BONES

THREE HAUNTED PIRATE TALES

BY WASHINGTON IRVING

adapted by Eric Coble

GUESTS FROM GIBBET ISLAND

(SETTING: A sparsely furnished stage representing various New England locales.)

(AT RISE: Darkness. We hear wind, and the crashing of waves. Then from the blackness, a FIGURE emerges in ragged clothes, with a scarred face and one eye. This is PETER DeGROODT.)

DeGROODT. Do you want to see the body? The body of Captain Kidd—the most feared murderer that ever did set foot on a ship with a knife between his teeth? Mark me, some say he was no man at all, but a creature—part human, part demon, part...something un-namable. Something that claws its way out of the sea once every midnight generation, searching for blood and bones. And gold.

(He holds up a gold coin.)

This was the last piece of gold Captain Kidd ever clenched in his mangled hands. I was there. I saw where they buried it— More riches than you ever dreamed of—just waiting to be taken...for a price. There's always a price when you walk in these footprints. You step into the world of a pirate...and the pirate steps into you. A young lad named Yan Yost Vanderscamp learned that once long ago...in a very ugly way...the night he had guests from Gibbet Island...

(Lights come up on the rest of the stage, currently representing a small respectable tavern. In the distance a set of empty gallows stand silhouetted against a blood-red sky.)

DeGROODT. If any of you ever visit the ancient and renowned village of Communipaw, outside of New Amsterdam, you'll find an old stone building—its doors and window shutters ready to drop from their hinges, and legions of half-starved dogs prowling the premises. But it wasn't always so. Once it was the most orderly and

peaceful of village taverns: The Wild Goose. But that was when Communipaw itself was an orderly and peaceful village...before the arrival of Yan Yost Vanderscamp...

(Lights fade on DEGROODT, and we now see a small nervous MAN in an overcoat sits alone at a table with a pint of ale. This is COBUS QUAKENBOS.)

(COBUS readies to take a sip...and a gunshot BOOMS offstage! He almost spills his entire drink—we hear a huge burst of LAUGHTER offstage, and VANDERSCAMP, a charming young rascal with a lightning mind, tumbles onstage laughing, almost colliding with COBUS.)

VANDERSCAMP. *(Yelling offstage:)* Good shooting, Blicksem!

COBUS. What's wrong? Are we under attack??

VANDERSCAMP. Attack? Aye, an attack of horseshoe crabs, the size of your head! And only old Blicksem can save us!

(BLAM! More laughter.)

COBUS. They're just...shooting crabs? For sport?

VANDERSCAMP. Aye, the size of your head, much like your head, if truth be told—I wouldn't poke yours outside if you value your brains.

COBUS. What kind of tavern is this?

VANDERSCAMP. The Wild Goose, sir! Care for another pint of ale?

COBUS. I'd care to speak to the owner, please! Tell him Cobus Quakenbos is here and demands an explanation!

VANDERSCAMP. Ooo, "demands an explanation!" Yes, sir! I'll fetch the owner right away, sir!

(He exits and immediately re-enters speaking in a weird voice.)

VANDERSCAMP. Who's demanding an explanation here? I'll explain'em out the door!

COBUS. Is this supposed to be a joke? I asked for the owner, and you—you scamp—

VANDERSCAMP. Vanderscamp.

COBUS. What?

VANDERSCAMP. Yan Yost Vanderscamp, at your service. And as for the owner...you're looking at him. I run the entire place!

COBUS. Nonsense. The owner is one Peechy Prauw Van Hook, a quiet and respectable—

VANDERSCAMP. —and dead—

COBUS. —older fellow. What??

VANDERSCAMP. Peechy was my uncle. He's dead. Gone to sleep with his fathers. I'm his only nephew, the tavern belongs to me now—me and Pluto that is...

(BOOM! A crash of thunder and the door flies open to reveal PLUTO, a hulking rough figure with a load of grain on his back. He glares at COBUS.)

VANDERSCAMP. Pluto! Speak of the devil! Get our guest another ale so as to ease his trauma!

(PLUTO snarls and steps forward.)

COBUS. I, ah, I don't believe I've had the...pleasure—

(PLUTO continues staring at COBUS.)

VANDERSCAMP. Pluto.

COBUS. Pluto? Ah, what an, ah, exotic name...

(PLUTO takes a step closer to COBUS.)

VANDERSCAMP. We found him in front of the tavern one morning after a storm, like a sea monster swept out of the ocean, more dead than alive. My uncle took him in and he eventually learned some of our language. Enough to curse and growl for what he wants. Ask him where he came from.

COBUS. Ah, where, ahem, from where do you originate, my good fellow?

(PLUTO slowly reaches over and takes COBUS by the collar, never taking his eyes off him...pulling the trembling man nearer...)

COBUS. Ah, pardon me, what are you—

(PLUTO points to the gallows in the background.)

COBUS. I don't understand—

VANDERSCAMP. Gibbet Island. He's telling you he came from that hunk of rock out in the bay.

COBUS. The island where stands the hangman's gallows!

VANDERSCAMP. Gibbet Island. But, mark, it's never held a single inhabitant—or no live ones. So nobody knows what old Pluto's mystery is. Isn't that right, Pluto?

(PLUTO turns to VANDERSCAMP.)

PLUTO. Setting sail.

(He stalks out.)

VANDERSCAMP. Bon voyage!

COBUS. He's going sailing? In this weather?

VANDERSCAMP. The worse the storm, the better he loves it.

(Lights begin to dim as VANDERSCAMP sits COBUS down at a table, growing quieter and more focused...)

VANDERSCAMP. Sometimes we see him far out in the bay, with his light canoe dancing like a feather on the waves—the whole sea and sky in turmoil...and he disappears. Canoe and all, as if pulled beneath the waves...certainly drowned...and then there he is, coming up again in quite a different part of the bay. The word is he can swim under water, like that wild duck the hell-diver.

COBUS. And you believe this?

VANDERSCAMP. I've seen it with my own eyes.

(More lightning and thunder.)

VANDERSCAMP. On nights just such as this. You keep your eye on the door, Master Cobus, and you listen to the wind... Feel it cold through your clothes...the storm moving up...and you never know who...or what...will break through...that door...

(CRASH!! THREE RAGGED FIGURES burst in laughing, screaming. COBUS nearly jumps out of his skin. VANDERSCAMP slaps his back, almost falling out of his chair himself.)

(The figures, DONDER, GIOVANNI, and BLICKSEM spill into and around the room like the storm itself--yelling and carousing--shouting out a song...)

BLICKSEM, GIOVANNI, & DONDER. “For three merry lads be we, and three merry lads be we...”

DONDER. “I on the land—”

BLICKSEM. “And thou on the sand—”

GIOVANNI. “And Jack on the gallows tree!”

VANDERSCAMP. Comrades! Good sirs! We have another guest!

GIOVANNI. Aha! Bring me his head!

BLICKSEM. I get his hands!

DONDER. I won't have his feet! I always get the feet!

BLICKSEM. Where's my ale? I left it here somewhere!

GIOVANNI. You left it in a pool on the floor...

BLICKSEM. Precisely! Where is it? I'm thirsty!

VANDERSCAMP. Gentlemen, gentlemen. Please, I would like to introduce Master Cobus, a friend of my dearly departed uncle.

GIOVANNI. Oh, what a shame.

BLICKSEM. A true tragedy.

DONDER. I may weep openly.

VANDERSCAMP. And these refined fellows are among my dearest friends in the world: Masters Blicksem, Giovanni, and Donder.

COBUS. A...pleasure...now, if you'll pardon me, I truly must be—

VANDERSCAMP. *(Shoving him back down in his seat:)* In this weather? Nonsense! You'll sit the storm out with us here.

GIOVANNI. Keep us company, sir!

BLICKSEM. Drink with us, sir!

DONDER. Tell us how you keep your shoes so shiny...

(Another crack of lightning. COBUS bolts for the door, but GIOVANNI blocks his way.)

GIOVANNI. You wouldn't want to leave before we make a toast to our mate at sea, Pluto, would you?

(DONDER hands a mug to COBUS, then they all raise drinks.)

ALL. To Pluto!

GIOVANNI. May he return to the infernal regions from whence he came!

(They laugh.)

COBUS. *(Trying again for the door:)* And speaking of returning from whence one came, I truly must-

(GIOVANNI pulls a knife on COBUS. They all freeze.)

GIOVANNI. You truly must stay and keep us company. I insist.

(BLICKSEM pulls out a pistol from his coat.)

BLICKSEM. Please sit down.

COBUS. Master Vanderscamp! For the love of heaven, what would your uncle say if he were alive today?

(Pause.)

VANDERSCAMP. Well. If he were alive today...I suppose he'd say... "Help! Help! Let me out of this coffin!"

(They all explode with laughter.)

DONDER. Coffin! He's in a coffin! "Help! Help!"

GIOVANNI. Have a drink with us, Cobus. Get a little dirt under your nails.

VANDERSCAMP. More ale, more ale!

GIOVANNI. Lads, keep our new guest here entertained—I have some business with the proprietor of this fine estate.

VANDERSCAMP. “Proprietor,” I like the sound of that. “Proprietor.”

BLICKSEM. *(To COBUS:)* Here’s to your health, comrade!

(They force COBUS to drink with them as GIOVANNI pulls VANDERSCAMP aside.)

GIOVANNI. Vanderscamp, my good man, there’s word from the sea that a boat loaded with sugar and rum moves down the coast to New Amsterdam tomorrow morning.

VANDERSCAMP. Sounds sweet.

GIOVANNI. There’s also a trunk full of money on that boat, from merchants north of here. My crew’s angling to take possession of the lot of it—

COBUS. *(Trying to stand:)* Master Vanderscamp, please, I implore you, let me go—

BLICKSEM. *(Sitting him down:)* Oh, we’ll let you go, aye, after another rhyme—

DONDER. Do you know this one: “There was a young maid from New Brunswick—”

VANDERSCAMP. I know this one!

(He starts to join in, but GIOVANNI draws him aside again.)

GIOVANNI. I’m not entirely finished with you, Master Vanderscamp. You may have heard as the British Navy is patrolling these waters something fierce about now—

VANDERSCAMP. I’ve heard—

GIOVANNI. So I need to know my mates and I can continue to count you and your tavern loyal to us if the red coats move in.

VANDERSCAMP. Absolutely, Giovanni. My bar is your bar. We’re family.

GIOVANNI. Good. ‘Cause when friends say they’ll do things and then turn back on their word...well, those “friends” are liable to wake up and find themselves dead, eh!

VANDERSCAMP. What are you saying?

GIOVANNI. Good friends are hard to find. And when you find them, you hang onto them until somebody pries the bodies from your iced dead fingers! Hahahahaha!

COBUS. *(Standing:)* I've heard enough. Master Vanderscamp. You, sir, are a disgrace to the memory of your uncle and the good name of Communipaw.

VANDERSCAMP. Oh, come, Cobus, we were simply putting up a little joke—

COBUS. No. This is not a joke. These men are murderers and thieves, and they'll end up hanging from the gallows. You may not be a murderer or thief yet, but continue to surround yourself with the slime that washes out of the sea, and you too will soon reek of it.

DONDER. Are you saying we stink?

COBUS. I'm saying you're greasier than anything I've ever witnessed scraped from off the bottom of an oyster boat.

GIOVANNI. You certainly yap a lot for a corpse, don't you?

VANDERSCAMP. Gentlemen, gentlemen, come, let's not spoil a perfectly pleasant storm with bloodshed—

(GIOVANNI draws his knife once more...)

GIOVANNI. All that thunder will cover up any screams—

COBUS. It shall cover yours as well, I suppose.

GIOVANNI. Forgive me for smirkin', but what are you going to fight with? A lace doily?

COBUS. No. This.

(He pulls a tin whistle from pocket. The pirates look at each other...and burst out laughing.)

DONDER. A whistle??

VANDERSCAMP. Ah, you see, gentlemen, it was a joke, nothing but a good joke by master—

COBUS. *(To GIOVANNI:)* What was it you were calling those of us in the British Navy just now...?

GIOVANNI. “Us?”

COBUS. Ah, yes, “Red coats” I believe. *(And he whips open his overcoat to reveal a pristine red uniform.)* In the name of his royal majesty...you are under arrest.

DONDER. Oh...no...

(COBUS blows the whistle even as GIOVANNI goes for him with the knife. COBUS blocks the attack and sends GIOVANNI sprawling. The door flies open and in charges a second NAVY OFFICER who takes on Blicksem and his gun. COBUS faces off against GIOVANNI and Blicksem, using a chair and small sword... VANDERSCAMP whirls around the chaos, terrified to leave or stay...)

VANDERSCAMP. Oh, oh, no, sirs! Sirs!! Not the furniture! I’m not...oh no...please!! It was all...a joke...

(One more round of furious fighting and the three pirates are subdued—their hands in iron chains behind them. The two Navy Men stand, bruised but victorious.)

COBUS. *(To VANDERSCAMP:)* Then your jokes will be the death of you, sir. *(To NAVY OFFICER #2:)* Take them away.

GIOVANNI. Vanderscamp! Help us! Your old mates! Don’t let them hang us!

BLICKSEM. Vanderscamp, do something!

DONDER. I don’t want to be hung—

(They are dragged off, GIOVANNI last, yelling all the way, VANDERSCAMP can only stare...)

GIOVANNI. Vanderscamp! You’ll get yours too! Once a pirate, always a pirate! We’ll see you in—

(And he’s gone.)

COBUS. Well, Vanderscamp? Are you a pirate?

VANDERSCAMP. No! Never...I had no idea, sir—I love the law, I'd never do anything—pirates! What a shock I can't fathom that I'd harbor pirates in my establishment I don't I never—

COBUS. Vanderscamp.

VANDERSCAMP. Sir!

COBUS. Shut your mouth. I'm not going to arrest you. You still have a life ahead of you. Whether it's lengthy and pleasurable, or brief and miserable is up to you.

VANDERSCAMP. Lengthy and pleasurable, sir, no doubts about that, no sir, I'm changing my heading tonight, sir, this very night—

COBUS. Once they've got their hooks into you, it's hard to tear your flesh free. But if you don't, you'll end up back alongside them.

VANDERSCAMP. And where would that be...sir?

(Lights come up on the silhouettes of the gallows, now with three BODIES dangling from them.)

COBUS. *(Point to the shadows:)* Gibbet Island.

VANDERSCAMP. *(Almost collapses:)* Oh...no...Giovanni! Blick-sem...Donder...

COBUS. You've been given a golden opportunity. Don't waste it.

(And he exits, leaving VANDERSCAMP trembling in the shadows of his dead comrades.)

VANDERSCAMP. It was all...a joke...

(Pause.)

(Then from darkness, PLUTO emerges behind VANDERSCAMP.)

PLUTO. Where are they?

(VANDERSCAMP just points. PLUTO looks with mild interest, almost grins.)

PLUTO. More room for new pirates, hah?

VANDERSCAMP. No. No more pirates. We're going to change. I have to change.

(PLUTO laughs.)

I have to settle down, get both oars in the water... I need new patrons. A new sign out front.

(PLUTO continues laughing and walks off.)

VANDERSCAMP. I promise it—new respectable drinks—Respectable wall hangings, I'll do it, Pluto! New respectable manners...a new respectable...wife!

(Lights come up on REBECCA, a coarse woman sitting on the ground, picking dirt from between her toes. VANDERSCAMP approaches her.)

VANDERSCAMP. Madame! I look but I see no wings, else I'd be assured an angel had fallen on the shores of Communipaw.

REBECCA. A seagull fell over there, 'bout an hour ago. Crunched on the rocks, he did. I think the crabs're eatin' on him now...

VANDERSCAMP. Where did you learn such poetry?

REBECCA. I didn't learn no poetry. Don't be comin' at me with that.

VANDERSCAMP. What's your name?

REBECCA. Rebecca. What's yours.

VANDERSCAMP. Yan Yost Vanderescamp. Your humble servant.

REBECCA. Ooo. I never had no servant before. Fetch me tea and crumpets, won't you?

VANDERSCAMP. I'll fetch you my heart instead.

REBECCA. No, tea and crumpets will be fine. I can get a oozing old heart anywhere, but a good crumpet—

VANDERSCAMP. Will you marry me?

(Pause.)

REBECCA. Now, see, I don't think you heard me right, I just said—

VANDERSCAMP. I don't care what you said. I want to marry you.

REBECCA. Well, I'm a little busy this afternoon. Gettin' me nails done and all—

VANDERSCAMP. I need a respectable wife. Now. No one else in town will have me. Not even that shrew of a woman who married Tom Walker. Will you?

REBECCA. Ooo, glowin' recommendation like that, I'll give it some serious thought—

VANDERSCAMP. I know my reputation proceeds me, but I've changed.

REBECCA. What reputation would that be?

VANDERSCAMP. I manage The Wild Goose.

REBECCA. Never heard of it.

VANDERSCAMP. You're joking.

REBECCA. I just arrived from New Amsterdam yesterday! You can't expect me to have frequented all the vilest watering holes in a single day—

VANDERSCAMP. The Wild Goose isn't vile. It's a quiet modest inn for quiet modest travelers. No more freebooters. I just require someone to oversee it and me. Please, Rebecca. I'd love to become better acquainted once we're married. Please.

(Pause.)

REBECCA. I guess my nails could wait.

VANDERSCAMP. Nails can always wait.

REBECCA. Respectable, huh?

VANDERSCAMP. Very.

REBECCA. I ain't never done nothin' respectable before.

VANDERSCAMP. You've been given a golden opportunity. Don't waste it.

REBECCA. All right. Let's see your quiet and modest inn.

(He beams and leads her off...then circles around to the bar and begins scrubbing it off.)

VANDERSCAMP. New wife, new wall hangings, new clientele...
(Calling out to an unseen PATRON:) Hello there, squire! *(Scrubbing:)*
New drinks...

(PLUTO steps out of the darkness holding a fishing net. He stares at VANDERSCAMP, almost grinning.)

VANDERSCAMP. What are you staring at? I'm respectable, you mark me? Yan Yost Vanderscamp is respectable!

(PLUTO steps back into the darkness as a SHADY TRAVELER enters and leans on the bar.)

TRAVELER. Yan Yost Vanderscamp?

VANDERSCAMP. Respectable. What can I get for you?

TRAVELER. Darkness.

VANDERSCAMP. I beg your pardon?

TRAVELER. I have need of some small quantity of darkness.

VANDERSCAMP. I have just the thing. *(Holding up a bottle:)*
Sleepy-Time Rum. Drink enough of this and...

TRAVELER. *(Turning to leave:)* I must have the wrong Wild Goose. I came looking for a party.

VANDERSCAMP. Party?

TRAVELER. As in the olden days. A party where men could slip in and out of the darkness with certain merchandise and do some bit of carousing...but that inn is clearly gone.

VANDERSCAMP. Nonsense! We still know how to have our fun, sir, let me assure you!

TRAVELER. Backwash. The Vanderscamp I knew had a fire in him. You're as lit as a wet twig.

VANDERSCAMP. Wet twig?? Sir, there's more fire in me than in all those that were hanged on Gibbet Island!

TRAVELER. Is that so? I heard you were "respectable" now.

VANDERSCAMP. I...am. Fiery respectable. A very combustible respect. That's what I have.

TRAVELER. You're a trained pony is what you are. I have no need of ponies for my adventure.

(He is almost out the door.)

VANDERSCAMP. Wait. *(Quietly:)* What's your adventure?

TRAVELER. Some friends of mine are sailing toward the cove right now, sure as I stand here. They have trunks and bags of...various supplies the authorities would dangle us all for. I need someone to row me out to their ship, and then a place to store the merchandise. And my men.

VANDERSCAMP. For one night?

TRAVELER. If we was all havin' a good time, what's to keep the party from quietly—very quietly, now—goin' on...indefinitely?

VANDERSCAMP. There hasn't been a good party here in months—

TRAVELER. But if you're afraid—

VANDERSCAMP. I'm afraid of nothing.

TRAVELER. Then what do you say, Vanderscamp, are you on board or in the drink?

(Pause...then REBECCA calls from offstage.)

REBECCA. *(O.S.:)* Yostie, make sure the rug's clean before you come to bed, right?

VANDERSCAMP. Yes, dear!

(PLUTO again steps forward from the darkness, wiping his hands and staring at VANDERSCAMP. The young man looks back at him...)

TRAVELER. Trained pony. Good night.

VANDERSCAMP. Wait! I suppose it couldn't hurt just to take a peek at your cargo. Move one box—

TRAVELER. I'm waitin' outside.

VANDERSCAMP. Pluto, come on. We have a party to host.

(He charges out after the TRAVELER. PLUTO grins and heads out into the night.)

(Lights change. REBECCA enters mixing dough while wiping her nose. VANDERSCAMP enters furtively, carrying a small trunk. He's a little drunk.)

REBECCA. Ooo, if it isn't his royal highness returning at last to his faithful spouse. Wait, grant me a moment to get down and bow—

VANDERSCAMP. *(Kisses her:)* Rebecca, my dear-

REBECCA. Phew. You been drinkin' again?

VANDERSCAMP. A bottle there and here...here and here...there and—

REBECCA. That's five by my count. People been asking after you—wonderin' what you do all hours of the night—

(A SHADY FIGURE enters, carrying something under a coat, and nods at VANDERSCAMP who winks at him. The Figure darts off to a different room.)

REBECCA. And who these gentlemen are who come and go all quiet like—

VANDERSCAMP. It's an...ongoing party. Now, I just need to deposit this trunk—

REBECCA. Not in my tavern you don't.

VANDERSCAMP. Pardon me? Your tavern??

(Another FIGURE darts by, making a quick hand signal to VANDERSCAMP, who nods, the trunk getting increasingly heavy in his arms.)

REBECCA. These traders full of winks and nods and how-do-you-call-it...hieroglyphic signs, and when I ask'em what's about, all they can do is grin and say "Everything's snug." ...

VANDERSCAMP. Well, everything is snug, so if you'll pardon me—

REBECCA. But I don't like it, Yan! Makes me nervous.

VANDERSCAMP. I'm just having a little fun, Rebecca. You remember fun, don't you?

REBECCA. Fun is one thing, but messin' with pirates—

VANDERSCAMP. *(Almost tumbling over his trunk:)* Shh!!

REBECCA. Why? That's what they are, aren't they? Pirates, pirates, pirates, and smugglers!

VANDERSCAMP. They're business associates!

REBECCA. Business my aft. I'm scared and I want it to stop.

VANDERSCAMP. But they're my friends!

REBECCA. And I'm your wife. Who are you standin' with?

(Pause. The two look hard at each other... Then VANDERSCAMP explodes in laughter, almost dropping the trunk on his feet.)

REBECCA. Fine. Laugh it off with your mates. Laugh yourselves to death. *(And she walks out.)*

VANDERSCAMP. You know what your problem is? You can't take a joke! You've forgotten how to laugh! Ha! Hahahaha! It's all a...a joke. Now where'd I put my trunk?

(The front door creaks open to reveal PLUTO standing silhouetted. A low rumble of thunder echoes in the distance.)

VANDERSCAMP. Pluto! You half scared the life out of me.

PLUTO. The ship is waiting.

VANDERSCAMP. Ah. Well. There's a storm coming—

PLUTO. The ship is waiting.

VANDERSCAMP. The boat we were to sail out and rendezvous with, right. Well they can see there's a storm brewing—

PLUTO. The ship is waiting.

VANDERSCAMP. Will you stop saying that? I'm just uncertain...what a proper businessman as myself should do—

(PLUTO continues staring at him...waiting...)

VANDERSCAMP. I can't simply... Rebecca says—

PLUTO. The ship is waiting.

(Pause.)

VANDERSCAMP. All our mates will be there, won't they?

(PLUTO holds out a bottle.)

VANDERSCAMP. Fine jokes... Oh, hang me if I'll be left out of the fun this night.

(He takes a swig and stumbles out with PLUTO.)

(Lights shift. We hear the sound of flowing water. VANDERSCAMP sits in the front of a row boat, PLUTO sitting behind him, rowing. They travel in silence—occasional sound of distant thunder... VANDERSCAMP takes swigs of wine, trying to cheer himself.)

VANDERSCAMP. Think we'll beat the storm there and back?

(PLUTO rows on. Another drink.)

VANDERSCAMP. This is the life—fresh air, the sea, good company, eh? Good to...to be alive, eh? *(A slight creaking sound.)* What...is that—

(PLUTO grins. VANDERSCAMP looks up as lights come up on the silhouettes hanging from the gallows on Gibbet Island.)

VANDERSCAMP. What are you doing, you mongrel! You're pulling too close to Gibbet Island!

(The creaking of the wooden gallows is louder, wind blowing through the bodies.)

PLUTO. I thought you'd be glad to see your old friends.

VANDERSCAMP. Donder...Giovanni...Blicksem... They hardly look human... The birds and wind and sea spray...eating away at their flesh—

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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WOLFERT WEBBER (or GOLDEN DREAMS)

(DeGROODT steps forward once again.)

DeGROODT. Of course, you don't have to invite murderous freebooters into your home to be drawn into theirs. All it takes is a lure. Many years before Vanderscamp met his fate in the Wild Goose, there lived another haunted soul in Communipaw. A man named Wolfert Webber. *(Holding up the gold coin:)* How many men have been blinded into thinking they see a life of ease and riches, even as they happily climb into their own coffins? Especially when you believe that the life of ease and riches...is waiting directly...beneath...your feet.

(Lights fade on DeGROODT as they come up on WOLFERT WEBBER, a round pleasant little man sadly working his garden. His wife BESS' voice calls from offstage.)

BESS. *(O.S.:)* Wolfert? Husband, where art thou?

WOLFERT. In the garden, dear. Where else.

(BESS, a practical hearty woman, enters. She is now--as she always is—engaged in her sewing.)

BESS. Come inside, dear. It's growing dark.

WOLFERT. See this, Bess, see this!

BESS. The cabbages look lovely, dear. And the sunflowers Amy planted are coming along—

WOLFERT. Someone has taken off a whole batch of my cabbages! Some of those street urchins, I should imagine, climbing the wall and stealing a whole armful—

BESS. Oh, that is a blow isn't it—

WOLFERT. And what sayest thou about that pig last week! I leave the gate ajar for two minutes—two minutes!—and some marauding swine descends on our garden—laying waste to everything in his path!

BESS. But the replanting—

WOLFERT. Ha! The way this city has forged in around my little farm—hemmed in on all sides by streets and buildings, buildings

and streets! They intercept the light and air! Thou canst not grow a carrot in our backyard! My father had armies of cabbages out here, now I have a few rank soldiers...the name of Webber Cabbages meant something then!

BESS. Wolfert!

WOLFERT. What.

BESS. Thou art babbling. What's wrong?

WOLFERT. I'm telling what's wrong! The urchins and pigs—

BESS. —are annoyances that have been with us for years. Why art thou so upset now?

(Pause. He looks at her helplessly.)

WOLFERT. Money, Bess. There. I've said it.

BESS. Is that all?

WOLFERT. The city of Communipaw is flowering, Bess, and we, in case thou hast not noticed, are not. The expense of living here has doubled, tripled!

BESS. So we double or triple the number of cabbages we produce.

WOLFERT. Where? Dost thou see any extra space?

BESS. We'll increase our prices.

WOLFERT. Too many competing farms. I'd lose customers.

BESS. Begin a new business.

WOLFERT. Doing what? Cabbages are all I know! My father raised cabbages, his father raised cabbages, his father's father—

BESS. Shh, shh. Wolfert. Thou art turning red. Thou hast a thriving garden, a wife and daughter who love thee— *(Holding up her knitting:)* Enough stockings to get us through the year. And some beautiful marigolds that Amy planted last month. Life is fine. Come in and sit by the fire.

(She begins leading him inside, all the while still knitting.)

WOLFERT. Marigolds. What we need is real gold. Everyone around me grows richer, I grow poorer—

BESS. Shh. Here's thy pipe, thy chair, a nice warm flame—be comfortable. We'll all be fine.

(WOLFERT settles into his comfy chair, smoking his pipe, brow still furrowed as his daughter AMY runs in--a lovely 17-year-old in full bloom.)

AMY. Mother, I'm home! Has Dirk come calling yet?

BESS. No, dear. Don't disturb your father, he's—

AMY. Oh, father! How are my sunflowers growing?

WOLFERT. Thy sunflowers?? Ask me not about that infernal garden—

BESS. Amy, dear, come along.

(A KNOCKING on the door.)

AMY. Mother! It's Dirk! I'll answer—no, thou answer—should I answer? Perhaps I should wait upstairs—or should I be the first he sees at the door? He's stopped knocking! He's gone home! He only visited 21 times this month and I've already broken his heart! How cruel am I! Oh, I'll never forgive myself—

(BESS opens the door to reveal DIRK WALDRON, a strapping young lad in simple clothes with a grin on his face and a hand behind his back.)

AMY. —Mr. Waldron. How do you do this evening?

BESS. Wolfert, Dirk Waldron is here. Again.

WOLFERT. *(Not looking up:)* Mm, Waldron, yes.

AMY. Won't you please come in?

DIRK. Thank you. *(He holds up a handful of sunflowers:)* I brought you these—

(BESS, still knitting, quickly grabs the flowers before WOLFERT can see them.)

BESS. Thank you. I'll place them in water.

(She turns and throws them in the trash. DIRK and AMY can't take their eyes off each other.)

BESS. Would you like to sit down, Dirk? Dirk.

DIRK. Oh. Thank you.

(They all sit around the fireplace, AMY and BESS knitting and smiling, DIRK and AMY staring at each other. WOLFERT totally oblivious.)

BESS. Wolfert, it looks as though your pipe is empty, let me refill it—

DIRK. No, no, let me.

(He hops up and does, smiling at AMY.)

BESS. Say “thank you,” Wolfert.

WOLFERT. Mm.

(A tea kettle whistles.)

AMY. The kettle! I'll get it.

DIRK. No, no, let me.

(He quickly pours tea for them all. They all sit pleasantly for a few moments...)

DIRK. Well, I truly should be leaving.

AMY. So soon?

DIRK. I have to work at dawn.

BESS. Well, goodnight. Thank you for coming by. Again.

(AMY and DIRK stand staring at each other in the doorway.)

BESS. Well, yes, there's something I forgot to do in the kitchen. Excuse me. *(She leaves quickly.)*

AMY. Good night.

DIRK. Good night.

AMY. Good night.

DIRK. Good night.

BESS. (*O.S.:*) Good night!

(*AMY offers her cheek and DIRK quickly kisses her--a loud smack that startles the pre-occupied WOLFERT.*)

DIRK. Good night.

(*And he's gone. AMY watches after him as WOLFERT stumbles to the door.*)

WOLFERT. What...who was that??

AMY. Dirk Waldron, father.

WOLFERT. Did he...wert thou and he... Thou and I need to talk.

AMY. Isn't he wonderful, father?

WOLFERT. Wonderful, yes, but he's not—he has no money or land, does he?

AMY. No, but he supports his poor widowed mother—

WOLFERT. Poor...that's the last thing we need—a poor widow mother to support—where am I supposed to put her? In the pantry?

AMY. What art thou talking about?

WOLFERT. Marriage! Art thou not desirous to be wed to...Dirk...Waldron?

AMY. Oh. Well, I suppose that, well, I truly couldn't—

(*BESS enters with the kettle.*)

WOLFERT. No money, no land, no marriage—thou shalt not wed this boy!

(*AMY stares at him...then nods and walks out.*)

BESS. Wolfert...

WOLFERT. The matter ends there. If thou had heard that kiss—

BESS. I did. He's a loud one.

WOLFERT. I'm going for a walk. I need to clear my head of buildings and young gentlemen and pigs and—

(He stalks out. BESS sighs and exits, knitting, as WOLFERT continues around the stage muttering to himself as he pulls on his coat. The wind picks up around him.)

WOLFERT. Love! We can't afford love! A cabbage farmer can't afford anything— *(He stops. In front of him is the sign for The Wild Goose.)*—except conversation at the Wild Goose. Yes.

(He enters the tavern and lights come up on its inhabitants: RAMM RAPELYE, a large rich man puffing his pipe imperiously, and PEECHY PRAUW VAN HOOK, the wiry, old owner of the place. A wind blows around WOLFERT as he steps in.)

RAMM. Fudge!

PEECHY. Fudge if you please, but they dug up another chest of gold buried by Kidd himself in Corney Van Zandt's orchard!

RAMM. Fudge!

WOLFERT. Good e'en, Peechy.

PEECHY. Evening, Mister Webber. Did you happen to see that rascal nephew of mine, Vanderscamp, out there? He and that Pluto character will be the death of this place yet, and that's no lie—

WOLFERT. You were saying something about finding gold buried here in the city?

RAMM. Fudge! I've lived every year of my esteemed life in this community, and I've yet to see one coin buried by Kidd or his crew or anyone else!

WOLFERT. Captain Kidd?

PEECHY. You know of another? The bloody buccaneer planted most all of his golden doubloons in the soil around here long before the city spread its bricks over the land-

RAMM. Fudge!

PEECHY. —and now the gold's just lying muffled, waiting for someone to dig it up and let it sing.

WOLFERT. Around here?

PEECHY. Maybe beneath the very floorboards you now stand on.

WOLFERT. You don't say!

RAMM. Even if any of this fairy tale is true—and it isn't, it's fudge!—Communipaw is a very large city. Where would one dig?

WOLFERT. Yes, where?

PEECHY. Where indeed? What can I get you Mr. Webber?

WOLFERT. A map?

(PEECHY and RAMM laugh, which sends RAMM into a coughing fit. PEECHY tries to help him.)

RAMM. That Wolfert Webber! Always good for a chuckle, you cabbage farmer!

WOLFERT. Chuckle. Yes. If you'll excuse me.

(And he exits quickly. Lights go down on the tavern as WOLFERT enters his home, pulling on his nightshirt.)

WOLFERT. Oh, unlucky Wolfert! Others can go to bed and dream themselves into whole mines of wealth, they have only to seize a spade in the morning and turn up doubloons like potatoes! But I must dream of hardships and rise to poverty—digging my fields year in and year out to raise nothing but cabbage!

(He sighs and starts for bed, only to stop...as the lights shift... Odd music plays. He turns back to his moonlit garden, picking up a shovel. No sooner does the shovel touch the soil than we hear the clinking of gold coins. WOLFERT falls to his knees scooping up the imaginary riches.)

WOLFERT. A golden ingot. Diamond crosses—bags of money, pieces of eight, all here—all here!

BESS. *(O.S.:)* Wolfert?

(The music stops, lights shift, and WOLFERT looks up to see BESS standing in her nightgown, knitting.)

BESS. What art thou doing out this time of night? Thou wilt catch thy death.

WOLFERT. I thought...or I dreamed... Oh dear. To bed. To bed.

(He ushers BESS offstage, about to follow her... When he again hears the eerie music. He turns and kneels in the garden.)

WOLFERT. Pirate's gold...gold in the garden...gold in...

(Then a rooster crows. WOLFERT bolts upright as lights shift again.)

WOLFERT. Again! The golden dream a second time! A dream, twice repeated, has never been known to lie...and if that's so...then our future is made!

(AMY sadly enters.)

AMY. Good morning, father. Wouldst thou like sugar or gold in thy tea?

WOLFERT. Pardon?

AMY. Sugar or milk in thy tea this morning?

WOLFERT. Ah, sugar. Please.

BESS. *(Offering a plate of pancakes:)* Help thyselfes to doubloons, everybody.

WOLFERT. Doubloons?

BESS. What?

WOLFERT. Didst thou just say doubloons?

BESS. I mentioned no doubloons. Eat thy flapjacks.

WOLFERT. Flapjacks. Yes. *(He wanders over and stares at the fireplace:)* Two times. The dream repeated two times.

AMY. Which dream?

WOLFERT. Our cares will soon be through. But the neighbors must not know. Darkness. I'll work in darkness. *(He hurries out.)*

BESS. Work on what? Wolfert? Wolfert?

(She and AMY exit.)

(Lights shift. Crickets chirp and WOLFERT enters with a shovel and pickax, holding up a lantern, still in his nightshirt and cap, looking around nervously...)

WOLFERT. Of course, the golden dream was none too precise about *where* to dig... So I suppose I'll simply start...here.

(And he heaves his pickax over his head... and brings it down in slow motion--as it hits the ground the opening chords of Rachmaninov's Prelude in C-sharp Minor grind out and the lights come up on BESS and AMY in nightclothes.)

(WOLFERT continues working through all of the following, gradually destroying all of his garden to the echoing sound of dirt being shoveled.)

AMY. Mother! He's out there again!

BESS. The fourth time in as many nights.

AMY. Is he sleepwalking?

BESS. He's more awake in the night than during the day.

AMY. But what is he looking for??

BESS. Heaven only knows.

AMY. We must stop him—he'll destroy the entire garden—he's destroying everything!

BESS. *(Holding her:)* And he's still the head of this household.

AMY. But if the head is diseased—

BESS. He's doing what he thinks is best for us. We may not understand it...or even desire it...in fact it may appear utterly and irrevocably mad and diseased to us...but he is still the head of this household.

(AMY runs across the stage to DIRK as BESS continues knitting, watching WOLFERT, who continues digging in slow motion--huge dramatic strokes—the lamplight casting eerie shadows over his round body... The music pounding on...)

(AMY runs across the stage to meet DIRK.)

DIRK. Every night?

AMY. It's been over a month. He spends the days in a trance, walking the house, letting his entire crop fall into neglect and every night he slips from my mother's bed to wreak more violence on the cabbages.

DIRK. People are beginning to talk—

AMY. He's the only one who can't hear it. They pity him. And us.

DIRK. Can you blame them?

AMY. The summer's passing—if we just wait long enough—

DIRK. Wait much longer and there won't be a crop left to save.

WOLFERT. *(Under his breath, like a mantra:)* Gold—

(Lights come up on the other side of the stage as BESS talks to MAMIE VAN KORTLANDT, an old neighbor, both knitting furiously.)

MAMIE. Wait much longer and he won't have a soul left to save.

BESS. That's what all the old women say, but how can I approach him?

WOLFERT. ...gold...

MAMIE. A dose of Damiana and Purple Coneflower should do the trick.

DIRK. A swift kick in the pants might do the trick.

WOLFERT. ...gold...

BESS. That's not what the other old women suggest.

AMY. That's not what the pastor suggested.

WOLFERT. ...gold...

MAMIE. It's a puzzlement.

DIRK. It's a pickle.

AMY. It's been going on for weeks!

BESS. He's been at it now for months.

MAMIE. We all pity you, dear.

AMY. We don't want pity.

BESS. We want help.

WOLFERT. Gold.

(DIRK and the Neighbor step away as AMY turns to confront her father who continues digging.)

AMY. Father!

WOLFERT. My dear!

AMY. You just destroyed my prize marigold!

(WOLFERT pauses...then smiles and touches her chin.)

WOLFERT. Thou shalt have gold of another sort. Thou shalt have a string of crooked ducats for thy wedding necklace, my child, when the governor himself comes calling to get thee for his son!

(He winks and continues destroying the garden. AMY runs out, fighting to hold back tears, as BESS approaches from the other direction with a coat.)

BESS. Husband.

WOLFERT. My dear.

BESS. It's growing chilled. I thought thou mayst want a coat.

WOLFERT. Ah, my labor keeps me warm enough, thank you.

(He continues digging.)

BESS. Wolfert—

WOLFERT. My dear.

BESS. Stop!

(She grabs the shovel. The music stops. He looks hard at her.)

BESS. Stop looking at the soil and look up! It's autumn, Wolfert—the wind is whispering, birds are calling, that winter is at hand!

WOLFERT. Why...so it is. Hah.

BESS. And where is the crop to supply us through the cold?

WOLFERT. We won't need cabbages once I find...once...

BESS. Wolfert. Look at me. *(He does:)* What were you digging for?

WOLFERT. To make us all rich. That's all I ever wanted.

BESS. Well, I say to you that not only are we no richer, but every shovel full of rich soil you tear away brings us nearer the brink of ruin!

WOLFERT. I hadn't—

BESS. You hadn't what? Thought of your family? Your daughter?

WOLFERT. She's all I thought of! All the sweat and labor and thoughts were for all of us!

BESS. People won't even look at us anymore, Wolfert. When they thought you were mad, they at least pitied us. But now that they think we're poor, they avoid us! They think poverty is contagious, like the plague.

WOLFERT. They thought me mad?

BESS. I think you mad! So does Amy! So does every blessed soul in the city!

WOLFERT. I tried to provide for my family and this is madness?

BESS. See this battlefield around you, Wolfert. That's madness.

(She storms off leaving WOLFERT alone in the cold autumn air.)

WOLFERT. What have I done? We'll starve! What was I— No!

(He throws down the shovel and storms into the Wild Goose. PEECHY stands once more behind the bar administering to RAMM REPELEYE.)

PEECHY. And I'm telling you that our own Pluto had a run-in with Captain Kidd's treasure up the river by Hell Gate—

WOLFERT. Treasure??

PEECHY. Wolfert Webber!

RAMM. Webber! Well, I truly must be leaving—

PEECHY. Oh, don't—

RAMM. Documents to document, wills to will, treaties to treat,
Farewell!

(He tries to slide past WOLFERT without touching him, and exits.)

WOLFERT. What were you saying?

PEECHY. Be out with you, scaring off my customers—

WOLFERT. Not until you tell me about the treasure and Pluto—

PEECHY. I'll not—

WOLFERT. Tell me!!

(The lights grow dim.)

PEECHY. I was just saying one summer eve some years ago, Pluto was fishing on the river, just about in the neighborhood of Hell Gate—

(A crack of lightning and lights come up on PLUTO, wearing a wicked grin as he lashes his little skiff to a rock outcropping. WOLFERT turns to look at him, watching PLUTO live the events as they're told. PLUTO pauses--noticing something far off.)

PEECHY. —when he spies a light in the distance—but fast approaching.

PLUTO. Lantern on the bow of a boat.

PEECHY. And it was heading right for him.

(PLUTO pushes his boat out of view, and slips around behind the outcropping of rock as TWO MEN call from offstage.)

RED CAP #1. *(O.S.:)* Here! Here's the place! Here's the iron ring!

PEECHY. They tied their boat some small distance from Pluto's skiff and proceeded to unload something.

PLUTO. Something heavy—

(TWO DESPERATE LOOKING MEN IN RED WOOLEN CAPS, armed with long knives and pistols move onto the stage lugging a large bag between them.)

RED CAP #1. Did you bring the spades?

RED CAP #2. Nay, I thought I'd leave them on the skiff to paddle back with— Of course I brought the spades! What sort of beetle-head do you take me for??

RED CAP #1. The kind who'd leave the spades on the skiff to paddle back with! We do this right, or Kidd will personally plant us in this very hole right along with the goods and we'll both find ourselves swallowin' dirt and maggots—

RED CAP #2. I can do it right. Can you?

RED CAP #1. I'll dig deeper'n you any day of the month—

RED CAP #2. Nobody's gonna discover this lot as long as I'm in charge!

RED CAP #1. You're in charge? YOU'RE in charge??

RED CAP #2. You want this shovel in the soil or in your skull?

RED CAP #1. We're not even in the right place yet, you larval neck!

RED CAP #2. So get us there!

RED CAP #1. I'm trying!

(The men move on through the bushes, PLUTO creeping along to watch them, possibly moving around PEECHY and WOLFERT as the story continues.)

PEECHY. And now Pluto knew all too well what he was watching—

PLUTO. *(Whispered:)* Murderers-

PEECHY. Murderers about to bury their victim.

(PLUTO moves a branch accidentally.)

RED CAP #1. What's that?

RED CAP #2. Someone in the bushes!

(They drop their bundle, drawing their weapons. One holds up a lantern in PLUTO's direction. PLUTO freezes...not breathing... Long silent moments pass...)

RED CAP #1. 'Tis no one! You'd fire off your pistol and alarm the whole county—

RED CAP #2. Me? Who's waving their blunderbuss to every corner of the swamp??

RED CAP #1. Dig!

RED CAP #2. I'M DIGGING!

RED CAP #1. SHH!

RED CAP #2. I'M "SHH"ING!

(They set down their goods and begin quietly digging.)

PLUTO. *(Whispered:)* They're digging a grave—

PEECHY. Digging a grave.

(PLUTO grins and moves quickly, quietly, nearer the scene of the crime.)

Now Pluto has this great relish for the horrible. He's a constant attendant at executions. So these midnight fellows were too much temptation for him...

(PLUTO climbs up a steep rock overlooking the RED CAPS, his face showing in the lantern-lit darkness. The RED CAPS finish their business...)

RED CAP #1. There. I defy the devil himself to find it out.

PLUTO. The murderers!

(Both RED CAPS look up instantly to see PLUTO's sweating face above them.)

RED CAP #1. We're discovered!

RED CAP #2. Down with him!

(The pistol is drawn and both men go after PLUTO— He barely slides away, rolling and dodging--repeatedly almost sliced--trapped on both sides only to slide away--the RED CAPS are fast and furious--but still PLUTO manages to scramble up the rock beside the river--his body silhouetted against the sky for a moment...)

(RED CAP #2 aims his pistol...)

(BOOM. The gunshot drops PLUTO where he stands--with a yell, his body disappears from view. We hear a loud splash...then silence.)

(Lights shift as the Red Caps disappear into the night.)

WOLFERT. What happened?

(PLUTO emerges from the rock, looking around, terrified but thrilled.)

PEECHY. Old Pluto had the lucky thought to yell, fall to the ground, and throw a nearby rock into the river.

(PLUTO silently slides into his boat and sets sail as lights fade on him.)

PEECHY. The current was rapid just then, and soon Hell Gate was for him but a distant memory.

WOLFERT. Did Pluto never find out what was buried by the red caps?

PEECHY. What's the use of looking for a dead body when there's no chance of hanging the murderers?

WOLFERT. We don't know it was a dead body.

PEECHY. To be sure! Does it not haunt the neighborhood to this very day?

WOLFERT. Haunts!

PEECHY. Have you never heard of Father Red Cap who haunts the old burnt farm-house near Hell Gate? Old Tom Walker lives near there—when he's glanced in the windows...he sees an old man in a red cap staring back at him from the darkness. But when Tom looks again, he's gone.

WOLFERT. But could they not have been burying gold?

PEECHY. Gold? Then it's true what they say about you.

WOLFERT. What?

PEECHY. You're crazy with golden dreams. Seeing no inch of dirt but you think you smell gold under it.

WOLFERT. Couldn't there be?? There must be! Get me a drink—tell me more about Pluto and Captain Kidd—

PEECHY. What'll you be paying with?

WOLFERT. *(Feeling his pockets:)* I, ah, I seem to be less than solvent just at present—

PEECHY. You'll be less than alive when you and your family end up in the poor house. Get out of here before you scare off more respectable customers.

WOLFERT. You'll regret this when I've found the treasure of Captain Kidd!

PEECHY. Out!

(He shoves WOLFERT out into the bright daylight.)

WOLFERT. *(Squinting:)* ...treasure of...treasure...

(Lights come up on PLUTO squatting to clean the meat off a fish bone.)

WOLFERT. Pluto I presume?

(PLUTO grunts and continues eating.)

WOLFERT. What's that, ah, that smell?

PLUTO. Fish.

(He holds out the bones to smell.)

WOLFERT. Ah. My name is Wolfert Webber—

PLUTO. Cabbage man.

WOLFERT. Yes, that's the problem, my family—we're in a bit of a financial pinch just at present, and-

PLUTO. You want fish, I'll give you fish.

WOLFERT. I want gold! I want you to take me to where the red-caps buried Captain Kidd's treasure.

PLUTO. *(Pauses:)* That was a long time ago.

WOLFERT. But you still know the way.

PLUTO. To a murdered man. That's all you find there.

WOLFERT. If it were a body, wouldn't they simply have thrown it overboard into the sea? Why bury it? Surely it's gold, jewels—

PLUTO. A murdered man. And his ghost what I don't need to meet.

WOLFERT. Ghost! Why are people so easily frightened—

PLUTO. Don't touch things you don't know, farmer. Go back to your cabbages. *(He starts to leave.)*

WOLFERT. I'll give you 100 shillings.

(PLUTO stops and turns to him.)

WOLFERT. All I have at present is twenty, my last twenty. But I'll give you eighty when we find the gold.

PLUTO. Twenty shillings?

WOLFERT. If we go tonight.

PLUTO. We go now. Plenty of daylight left.

WOLFERT. No, after sundown. We'd be beset by followers and thieves if they see us leaving now.

PLUTO. *(Grinning:)* Midnight?

WOLFERT. Perfect.

PLUTO. Perfect to meet Father Red-Cap.

WOLFERT. I'll find you here. And when we return, we will be rich, rich men.

(PLUTO nods and leaves. WOLFERT giggles and hurries home as lights shift.)

BESS. *(Meeting him:)* Wolfert, where have you been now?

WOLFERT. No more worries, my dear, no more cares—tomorrow morning we feast on doubloons and silver.

BESS. No, husband—

WOLFERT. *(Fishing in a little box:)* I simply need these few shillings here—

BESS. Wolfert, those are our last coins—

WOLFERT. Think of it as a down-payment—

(AMY enters.)

AMY. Father, your face is fevered, you haven't slept in weeks, you're burning up—

BESS. Wolfert, please, I've had a premonition—death is standing outside our garden tonight—don't go to meet him. Please.

WOLFERT. Thou shalt thank me when I return. *(He starts out.)*

AMY. Father!!

WOLFERT. My dear?

AMY. You've already lost your livelihood...and now you'd lose your life?

WOLFERT. We aren't losing a life tonight—we are gaining it. *(Kisses her:)* Farewell!

(AMY holds her mother as the sound of wind escalate. WOLFERT steps over into darkness holding a shovel and lantern, the lamplight casting gruesome shadows over he and PLUTO, who enters beside him.)

WOLFERT. Hell's Gate?

(PLUTO nods, already heading into the underbrush.)

WOLFERT. Wait... wait for me...

(The two move carefully over the stage... PLUTO working off intuition, WOLFERT eagerly, clumsily bringing up the lantern behind... Then PLUTO stops at the outcropping of rock. He points up.)

PLUTO. Here.

WOLFERT. Then we...we're standing on Kidd's treasure!

PLUTO. We're standing on a body.

WOLFERT. *(Not hearing this:)* I'm trembling. Mark my hands, I'm sweating, being so near—after all this suffering—

(He pauses...then nods and raises his shovel.)

I want to savor this moment—the last time I'll set my shovel into the earth. I'll never lift a finger again!

(And he shoves the spade into the soil. PLUTO goes to it with his pickax--the lantern shaking in the fury...then...)

Hark!

(PLUTO stops.)

Did you hear a trampling in the dry leaves—no. Must simply be the murmuring of Hell Gate, eh?

(They return with redoubled vigor to their chore...then...CHUNK. PLUTO's ax hits something solid.)

PLUTO. The bag...

(He strikes again. SHUNK.)

WOLFERT. Full of gold, I'll warrant it!

(Then from the darkness, a deep whispering laugh echoes around them. They freeze...and look up... There, standing on the rock above them, silhouetted in the moonlight and barely visible in the dying lamplight...is A FIGURE IN A RED CAP with a large knife, his face like a scarred shadow. The whispered laughter floods over the stage.)

(WOLFERT SCREAMS and smashes into the lamp, knocking out what little light there was. PLUTO bolts for it as the figure leaps down on them--WOLFERT tries to escape--shrieks and howls--WOLFERT claws his way over the bushes and rocks, seemingly running into a nightmare battalion of shadows surrounding, grasping for him--chaos...)

(He scrambles up the fateful rock outcropping...a shadow grabs him by the neck! He screams, tries to break free...)

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER

(DeGROODT steps forward, grinning.)

DeGROODT. So what would you sacrifice to lay claim to more money than you ever dreamt of? Mark me, even as Wolfert Webber made his fortune, he still left behind that treasure—if indeed that’s what was—untouched in the mud of that swamp. There it waited for many years, waiting until it could twist countless other lives, starting with those of a man named Tom Walker...and a certain creature I think we all know well enough...the Devil himself.

(Lights come up on LUCY WALKER, a fierce woman with a loud tongue and strong arm. She’s in her rough-hewn house searching out a place to hide two fresh eggs. She shoves them into an old box under the stove just as TOM WALKER enters. He’s a fierce, miserly man, glaring at LUCY who glares back.)

TOM. I’m home.

LUCY. I noticed.

TOM. What are you doing?

LUCY. What do you care?

TOM. Just don’t be tryin’ to hide nothin’ from me, woman.

LUCY. Why would I need to hide anything? You’re so blind you wouldn’t see a new horse if he was squattin’ in your oatmeal.

TOM. We have oatmeal?

LUCY. You’re also an idiot.

TOM. And what’s wrong with our old horse? Fine specimen of equestrian valor.

LUCY. What? You haven’t been hanging about with them “educated” sods at the Wild Goose, have you?

TOM. Shows how much you know. The Wild Goose has been deserted for months. Ever since them ghosts killed all them poor sods that night—

LUCY. Well, if you weren't so lazy, maybe you could've been one of the vultures looting the place, instead of squattin' around here all day.

TOM. Do I squat? I was out hauling bricks for old man Webber's mansion today!

LUCY. Did he pay you?

TOM. Not yet. Cheap sod. *(Glancing out the window:)* What's that horse of yours doing out there anyway?

(LUCY looks out the window, giving TOM just enough time to take a small sack of coins from his shirt and drop it into the stove.)

LUCY. That miserable sack of bones ain't my horse.

TOM. Right. And don't you forget it.

LUCY. *(Subtly checking around the furniture:)* Did I just hear a couple of coins clink together?

TOM. Did I just say he didn't pay me yet? You accuse me of lying to my own beloved wife?

LUCY. I don't know who this beloved wife is, but I'm accusin' you of lyin' to me.

TOM. *(Snooping around the room:)* Did that stringy hen lay her eggs today?

LUCY. No. I wish you'd quit askin'.

TOM. Then what do you call...these??

(He triumphantly pulls the eggs from the box.)

LUCY. I call'em mine! Put'em down!

TOM. I call'em dinner! Start cooking!

LUCY. They're mine! I found'em—give'em to me!

TOM. Maybe I'll eat both of them. I need to keep my strength up—

LUCY. *(Grabbing the lid of the stove as a weapon:)* You'll need your strength all right, if you don't— *(Looking in the stove:)* Hell-o.

TOM. Get away from there—

LUCY. *(Pulling the coin sack from the stove:)* This ought to just about pay for those eggs.

TOM. That's mine! Webber gave'em to me! Not you— Give'em back!!

(They circle the rickety table.)

LUCY. No, no, you can keep the eggs. Enjoy'em.

TOM. I was savin' that for a surprise! For us! Now let's divvy it up—

LUCY. Like you was gonna divvy up the eggs?

TOM. You'll be divvying it up on doctor bills, if you don't—

LUCY. You'll have to catch me! *(She charges off.)*

TOM. You...you...ARRRRRRR! *(In his fury he crushes the eggs:)* Arrrrgghh! *(Wiping his hands on his pants:)* Uggggghhh!!

(He stomps out as lights shift and dim to the swamp area where the Red Cap's bundle was buried.)

TOM. She'll be back. Then she'll get hers. They'll all get theirs. *(He stubs his toe on something in the mud:)* What in- *(He digs with his hands...and holds up a skull with a small ax blade buried in it. A DARK WHISPER echoes over the stage.)*

VOICE. Let the skull alone.

(TOM looks up to see a large FIGURE sitting on the stump of a tree. The figure is dressed in rude garb, begrimed with soot, with black hair standing out from his head and carrying an ax on his shoulder. His red eyes glitter.)

FIGURE. *(A rasping whisper:)* What are you doing on my grounds?

TOM. No more yours than mine. They belong to Deacon Peabody now, don't they?

FIGURE. To the devil with Deacon Peabody. Look yonder and see how Deacon Peabody is faring.

(A dim light comes up on a tree almost cut in two. In the bark is carved the name DEACON PEABODY.)

TOM. The first high wind is likely to blow that thing down. Egad, but all the trees are carved with the names of some great men of the colony. And all more or less chopped ready to fall.

FIGURE. You see, I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter.

TOM. And what right have you to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?

FIGURE. *(Standing tall:)* The right of prior claim. This woodland belonged to me long before any of your white- or red-faced race put foot on this soil.

TOM. ...and pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?

FIGURE. I am the Wild Hunstman in some countries. The Dark Miner in others. In this neighborhood, I am known as the Dark Woodsman. I am the great prompter of slave-dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches.

TOM. The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not...you are commonly called Old Scratch.

OLD SCRATCH. The same, at your service.

TOM. Huh.

OLD SCRATCH. Are you not afraid?

TOM. I lived so long with my wife that why would I fear you?

OLD SCRATCH. *(Laughs:)* Yes, you do have your troubles, don't you?

TOM. Troubles? The Indian Wars were "trouble." My life is in another realm altogether.

OLD SCRATCH. What would you say if I told you I could ease your life into a smooth bed of silk?

TOM. My understandin' is that your job is quite the opposite?

OLD SCRATCH. Look down.

TOM. Mud and leaves.

OLD SCRATCH. Below them lies one of the greatest treasures ever buried by Captain Kidd.

TOM. I've heard that.

OLD SCRATCH. Believe it. All of this ground is under my command and none will find the treasure unless they gain favor with me first.

TOM. And how would one gain your favor?

OLD SCRATCH. Oh, perhaps a simple trade.

TOM. I got nothin'. Not even eggs anymore.

OLD SCRATCH. Truly?

TOM. Nothin' but the shirt on my back and the soul I was born with—

(OLD SCRATCH smiles.)

TOM. Oh no. No, no, no. I might be stupid, but I'm not...stupid.

OLD SCRATCH. You're right. It's a bad bargain. For me.

TOM. For you??

OLD SCRATCH. I've seen what's in you. It's not worth the wealth I was offering.

TOM. ...and how much wealth would that be?

OLD SCRATCH. More than your eyes can behold in one viewing.

TOM. I got pretty good eyesight.

OLD SCRATCH. I like you, Tom Walker. Go home. Ponder my offer. If the financial soundness of it all begins to prove sensible to you...then come back. *(He starts to leave.)*

TOM. Wait. What proof have I that all you've told me is true?

(OLD SCRATCH pauses...then steps up to TOM, inches from his face.)

OLD SCRATCH. Here is my signature.

(He presses his finger on TOM's forehead. TOM screams and falls back, clutching his face. OLD SCRATCH turns and walks away, seeming to descend into the dark earth. TOM sits up with a black fingerprint burned into his forehead. He tries to rub it off, but in vein.)

(Lights shift as he gets up and staggers home. He looks around. No LUCY. He grabs up a small mirror and examines his scar...then grabs a washcloth and tries to scrub it away. No luck. LUCY steps in behind him.)

LUCY. Taking a bath? What's the occasion?

TOM. Don't sneak up on a body like that.

LUCY. What, Tom Walker afraid?

TOM. What have you done with the money?

LUCY. Got some food. *(Holding out a little cloth bag:)* I already ate my share. What's left is yours.

TOM. I'm not hungry.

LUCY. What happened to your forehead? Trip again?

TOM. None of your concern. I'm going to bed.

LUCY. You ain't gettin' diseased on me, are you?

TOM. I got things to think about. A man needs room to think.

LUCY. Man also needs a brain, so you might as well stop tryin' and eat.

TOM. No brain? Egads, I could walk out that door this moment and get us all the riches you ever dreamed of. Is that the work of no brain?

LUCY. I've heard it before. Speech is some distance from action.

TOM. Not tonight. *(Pause.)*

LUCY. You're serious. What's about?

TOM. I went walking by Hell Gate, the swamp there...and I met the man who's going to kill old Deacon Peabody.

LUCY. No man will kill that busybody. 'Twill be the devil himself who takes him.

TOM. Exactly.

LUCY. ...you're joking.

(TOM shakes his head "no", pointing to the burn on his forehead.)

LUCY. Oh my.

TOM. Oh my indeed. He offered me a deal.

LUCY. Oh my.

TOM. The whole of Captain Kidd's treasure in trade for my soul.

LUCY. *(Looking under the table:)* So how much have we got?

TOM. I didn't take it, woman! I'm still deciding—he's after my soul!

LUCY. And your concern is—?

TOM. Besides eternal damnation?

LUCY. Tom Walker, I knew you was stupid, but this is the bottom of the well. We're talking about a greater fortune than even that of old Wolfert Webber! New carriages, mansions, private boats, gourmet feasts for every meal, all the friends in the colony, and all for one measly soul!

TOM. My soul!

LUCY. You get back out there and tell him you accept.

TOM. I'll do no such thing.

LUCY. Oh! You're doin' this to spite me!

TOM. What if I am? I'm not going to be damned to please you.

LUCY. Coward. *(She heads for the door.)*

TOM. Where are you goin'?

LUCY. I'm goin' to get the fortune my husband's afraid to touch. *(And she's gone.)*

TOM. Lucy! You aren't—you can't—the devil with her.

(Lights shift as he sits down with the scraps of food. He can't eat. Looks outside for LUCY...heads for the door...stops himself. Sits back down...And in walks LUCY, a different reserved air about her.)

TOM. Well? You were gone long enough.

LUCY. *(Quietly:)* Was I?

TOM. So what happened?

LUCY. Nothing.

TOM. Nothing? Was he not there?

LUCY. He, ah...he was there.

TOM. I notice you don't have the treasure.

LUCY. I don't.

TOM. Well?? What did he say? You didn't ruin the deal for us, did you?

LUCY. He just...he was chopping the root of some tall tree and wouldn't come to terms. He wants me to come back...with a proper offering.

TOM. What?

LUCY. I'm going to bed. Goodnight.

TOM. What does he want from you?

LUCY. Good night.

(She kisses TOM on the forehead and leaves.)

TOM. Well, this does not bode well. Who's goin' to feed the hens and the horse? Fine state of affairs when I have to do the chores on my own farm!

(He grabs up a feedbag and storms out. LUCY enters and quietly collects her blue-and-white checked apron, then goes through the cupboards, loading her apron with a silver tea-pot, spoons, and anything portable with any value. She surveys the room...draws herself up...and leaves. Lights shift and TOM re-enters.)

TOM. Lucy? *(Noticing the bare cupboards:)* Oh no. Not the tea pot...spoons...she took everything that weren't nailed down! That...Lucy!! I want my spoons!!

(He storms out into the swamp. Lights dim as he wanders through the gnarled trees...)

He won't want her measly old soul anyway. He made the bargain with me, not her, me. Greedy, clutching old woman—

(A lonely bird crows in the distance.) Lucy?

(Sound of a flock of birds passing overhead.) Carrion crows—

(He looks up and over to the top of a tree...hanging from a branch is LUCY's blue-and-white checked apron, still seemingly stuffed with her possessions.)

TOM. Her apron! Let me have my property and I'll get by without the woman. *(Scrambles up the tree and pulls down the bundle:)* Huh. It's moist. Stupid woman leaves our valuables to rust in the swamp air— *(Opening the bundle:)* Let's see, what have we...here? This ain't...it's— *(He reaches in and pulls out a hand of red glop:)* —a heart and liver!!

(He recoils and drops the bundle, covering his mouth as the full horror of it sinks in.)

TOM. Oh, Lucy...oh, Lucy...

(OLD SCRATCH steps out of the shadows behind TOM, his ax poised on his shoulder... takes another step...raises his ax...)

TOM. Poor woman—

OLD SCRATCH. Poor woman?

(TOM jumps and moves away from the dark figure.)

OLD SCRATCH. She tried to deal with me the way she dealt with you. And she got the worst of it.

TOM. (*Looking at the mud around him:*) But...your cloven foot prints go round and round the tree—

OLD SCRATCH. True.

TOM. (*Holding up a clump of black hair:*) Your hair? Ripped out by the handful.

OLD SCRATCH. True.

TOM. Egad! You must have had a tough time of it also!

OLD SCRATCH. Let us just say you owe me.

TOM. So I don't have my property. But I don't have Lucy. So it's not a complete loss.

OLD SCRATCH. Farewell.

TOM. Wait! What about our bargain?

OLD SCRATCH. We have no bargain. You never agreed. I'm withdrawing my offer.

TOM. You can't! I want the treasure.

OLD SCRATCH. The treasure does not want you. Farewell.

TOM. But I have nothing left! My only valuables are gone, my wife is gone, my horse is on its last legs—

OLD SCRATCH. Tom Walker, I have mightier trees than you to cleave in two this day. Farewell.

TOM. I'll use the treasure in your service!

OLD SCRATCH. How?

TOM. I don't yet know. But if you set me up, I'll see to it that more souls start down your pathway.

OLD SCRATCH. Now you speak like a man I can do business with.

TOM. So give me the treasure.

OLD SCRATCH. Patience, Tom Walker. Let us finish negotiations. I may have a suitable manner in which you may use my funds.

TOM. Anything.

OLD SCRATCH. Fit out a slave ship.

TOM. Oh.

OLD SCRATCH. You hesitate.

TOM. I have a bad conscience. I know that. But not that bad. Even you can't tempt me to turn slave trader.

OLD SCRATCH. It's a delightful profession—

TOM. No. I said no, and I mean no.

OLD SCRATCH. Ah. *(Pause.)* What about...a usurer?

TOM. A money lender?

OLD SCRATCH. I'm particularly anxious for an increase in usurers at present. They're my sort of people.

TOM. That I could do.

OLD SCRATCH. Then you shall open a broker's shop in Communipaw next month.

TOM. I'll do it tomorrow if you like.

OLD SCRATCH. You shall lend money at two percent a month—

TOM. Egad, I'll charge four!

OLD SCRATCH. You'll make men depend on you...then cut them off. Extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive merchants to bankruptcy—

TOM. I'll drive them to the devil!

OLD SCRATCH. You are the lender of my money!

TOM. Done!

OLD SCRATCH. Done!

(And they shake hands. A thunder clap echoes over the stage.)

(Lights come up on a well-furnished desk in TOM WALKER's new office. He steps into the scene, pulling on his new coat and generally spiffing himself up. He looks around...smiles.)

TOM. *(Calling out:)* Mr. Ashby, send in the first group of applicants!

(He sits behind his desk as MR. BELCHER and MR. WORBY enter sheepishly.)

TOM. Mr. Worby and Mr. Belcher I'm guessing. Come in, come in, you are my very first customers!

MR. BELCHER. We won't be the last, I'll warrant.

MR. WORBY. There's a whole row of people lining up down the block to borrow some of your money.

MR. BELCHER. Times are hard, Mr. Walker.

MR. WORBY. Folks surely are glad you're here to help.

TOM. Well, if the good citizens of this city see fit to trust me with their fates, then the least I can do is help them make their fortunes the same way I made mine.

MR. WORBY. You're too good for this world, Mr. Walker.

TOM. Let's hope I'm not too bad for the next one, eh? Now what can I do for you?

MR. BELCHER. It's my business, sir, I just need some money to restock supplies for my store, but my credit's bad and the traders will only take cash—

TOM. *(Holding out a contract:)* Done. I'll make you a loan at 4% a week—

MR. BELCHER. A week?? That's a bit steep—

TOM. —or you could let your business collapse and destroy your family name. Think it over. What about you, Mr. Worby?

MR. WORBY. You know the Wild Goose?

TOM. Tavern haunted by Gibbet Island ghosts. Continue.

MR. WORBY. Well, it's up for sale by the colony—

TOM. And you'd buy it? You're madder than I am!

MR. WORBY. It'll make a fortune for the man who owns it, but I have no money for a down payment—

TOM. *(Holding out a contract:)* You'll have your money. Sign here. Mr. Belcher?

MR. BELCHER. When will you want the money and interest back?

TOM. Not until you can comfortably pay it. You have my word as a gentleman.

(They hesitate...then both men sign the contracts and TOM produces two bags of money. He smiles a huge smile.)

Enjoy.

MR. WORBY. Thank you, Mr. Walker.

MR. BELCHER. Bless you, sir, bless you!

TOM. Bless me, ha, yes. Good day!

(Looking out the door as the two men leave.)

Mr. Ashby! There must be forty, fifty people out there. All waiting patiently to sell their souls to me! Send in the next dozen!

(A steady stream of BORROWERS now enter one at a time, each approaching humbly, as TOM holds out contracts to sign and bags of money to take.)

Sign here. *(Calling out:)* Oh, and Ashby, tell the carpenter to rush along and finish the kitchen on my mansion so the servants can move in. But tell him to use cheaper wood. *(To a CUSTOMER:)* Sign here. *(Calling out:)* And tell the carriage makers that the carriage is beautiful but not to grease the wheels so much. That costs money, I'll warrant— Sign here— And Ashby, send word to my horsemen to stop feeding those horses so much. They can survive on less— Sign here— Ah, the months just speed by, don't they— Sign here— Like moths to a flame. Ah! Mr. Belcher!

(MR. BELCHER steps back in nervously.)

MR. BELCHER. How are you, Mister Walker?

TOM. Not well. The time has come for me to collect my loan to you. Plus all that interest.

MR. BELCHER. But I don't have it all yet, I still need—

TOM. What you need is to pay me back when I ask for it, as per our contract, or you'll find yourself in prison, my good man.

MR. BELCHER. To pay you in full now I'll have to sell everything—my business, my home—

TOM. I'm sorry, Mr. Belcher, but times are hard on all of us. I need my money by tomorrow morning. Good day.

(MR. BELCHER walks sadly away.)

You see, Mr. Ashby, this is the means to secure the good things of this world— *(Pause, then quietly:)* But what about the next? Old Scratch could come callin' this minute and cut me off as easy as I just did Belcher. Things are just gettin' pleasurable here, I don't want to be smellin' brimstone so soon... Oh, what have you done, Tom Walker, you fool! ...or not. I'm not a fool. Ha. If anyone can cheat the devil out of this bargain, it's me. Ha! All those years of practice with my wife shan't go to waste! Yes! Mr. Ashby! Get me a bible! A big one! For my counting desk. That should slow him down...unless he catches me away from my desk... Ashby! Another bible! A small one for my coat pocket! Ha!

(A little WIDOW has entered quietly.)

TOM. What do you want?

WIDOW. Please, sir, my husband died last month, killed at sea, we're penniless, and the church has been helping the children and I, but—

TOM. Sign here. *(Handing her money as she signs:)* Church. I must needs start attending church.

WIDOW. I beg your pardon?

TOM. Nothing. Get out. *(She does as he falls to his knees praying:)* "Our Father, who art in Heaven..."

(Another CUSTOMER comes in.)

TOM. Sign here. *(The customer does and leaves.)* “...hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come...”

(To the next CUSTOMER, as TOM collects a large Bible which he thuds down on his desk.)

TOM. Ah, Knickerbocker! I need my money back by Friday.

KNICKERBOCKER. But...

TOM. No “buts.” Friday. Good day.

(KNICKERBOCKER leaves dejectedly as TOM picks up a small Bible, kisses it, and puts it in his coat pocket.)

TOM. “...Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven...” *(To the next CUSTOMER:)* Sign here. “And give us each day our daily bread...” — Get out— Ha! I feel more secure already! “Our Father, who art in Heaven...” — Ashby, send notes to the twelve businesses I loaned to last year that I want to be repaid in full with interest by Thursday! *(To the next CUSTOMER:)* Sorry, Mr. Webster, you missed a payment, I’m evicting you.

WEBSTER. But I’m only late a day I was on my way here won’t happen again I’m so sorry it was only a day—

TOM. Excuse me, I need to return to my prayers. Get out. “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us—”

WEBSTER. Are you well, sir?

TOM. Well?? Never felt weller! He could turn the whole world upside down and I’d be...upside-down. On the last day the world will be turned upside-down—

WEBSTER. Mr. Walker?

TOM. *(Takes out the little Bible from his coat and kisses it, then slips it back in his pocket:)* Says so right here...Ashby! Get my horse new shoes, have him saddled and bridled, ready to ride—then bury him upside down in the earth! Ha!

WEBSTER. Sir!

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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