

"THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA"

By

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

Television Adaptation by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. OUTSIDE COSTA VERDE HOTEL - DAY

There are sounds of a party of excited female tourists arriving by bus on the road down the hill below the Costa Verde Hotel. Mrs. Maxine Faulk, the proprietor of the hotel, comes around the turn of the verandah. She is a stout, swarthy woman in her middle forties—affable and rapaciously lusty. She is wearing a pair of Levis and a blouse that is half unbuttoned. She is followed by Pedro, a Mexican of about twenty—slim and attractive. He is an employee in the hotel and also her casual lover. Pedro is stuffing his shirt under the belt of his pants and sweating as if he had been working hard in the sun. Mrs. Faulk looks down the hill and is pleased by the sight of someone coming up from the tourist bus below.

MAXINE [calling out]:

Shannon! [A man's voice from below answers: "Hi!"] Hah! [Maxine always laughs with a single harsh, loud bark, opening her mouth like a seal expecting a fish to be thrown to it.] My spies told me that you were back under the border! [To Pedro.]

Anda, hombre, anda!

[Maxine's delight expands and vibrates in her as Shannon labors up the hill to the hotel. He does not appear on the jungle path for a minute or two after the shouting between them starts.]

MAXINE:

Hah! My spies told me you went through Saltillo last week with a busload of women—a whole busload of

females, all females, hah! How many  
you laid so far? Hah!

SHANNON [from below, panting]:  
Great Caesar's ghost . . . stop . . .  
. shouting!

MAXINE:  
No wonder your ass is draggin', hah!

SHANNON:  
Tell the kid to help me up with this  
bag.

MAXINE [shouting directions]:  
Pedro! Anda-la maléta. Pancho, no  
seas flojo! Va y trae el equipaje  
del señor.

[Pancho, another young Mexican, comes around the verandah  
and trots down the jungle path. Pedro has climbed up a  
coconut tree with a machete and is chopping down nuts for  
rum-cocos.]

SHANNON [shouting, below]:

Fred? Hey, Fred!

MAXINE [with a momentary gravity]:  
Fred can't hear you, Shannon. [She  
goes over and picks up a coconut,  
shaking it against her ear to see if  
it has milk in it.]

SHANNON [still below]:

Where is Fred-gone fishing?

[Maxine lops the end off a coconut with the machete, as

Pancho trots up to the verandah with Shannon's bag—a beat-up Gladstone covered with travel stickers from all over the world. Then Shannon appears, in a crumpled white linen suit. He is panting, sweating and wild-eyed. About thirty-five, Shannon is "black Irish." His nervous state is terribly apparent; he is a young man who has cracked up before and is going to crack up again—perhaps repeatedly.]

MAXINE:

Well! Lemme look at you!

SHANNON:

Don't look at me, get dressed!

MAXINE:

Gee, you look like you had it!

SHANNON:

You look like you been having it,  
too. Get dressed!

MAXINE:

Hell, I'm dressed. I never dress in  
September. Don't you know I never  
dress in September?

SHANNON:

Well, just, just—button your shirt  
up.

MAXINE:

How long you been off it, Shannon?

SHANNON:

Off what?

MAXINE:

The wagon . . .

SHANNON:

Hell, I'm dizzy with fever. Hundred  
and three this morning in  
Cuernavaca.

MAXINE:

Watcha got wrong with you?

SHANNON:

Fever . . . fever . . . Where's  
Fred?

MAXINE:

Dead.

SHANNON:

Did you say dead?

MAXINE:

That's what I said. Fred is dead.

SHANNON:

How?

MAXINE:

Less'n two weeks ago, Fred cut his  
hand on a fishhook, it got infected,  
infection got in his blood stream,  
and he was dead inside of fortyeight  
hours. [To Pancho.] Vete!

SHANNON:

Holy smoke. . . .

MAXINE:

I can't quite realize it yet. . . .

SHANNON:

You don't seem—inconsolable about  
it.

MAXINE:

Fred was an old man, baby. Ten years  
older'n me. We hadn't had sex  
together in. . . .

SHANNON:

What's that got to do with it?

MAXINE:

Lie down and have a rum-coco.

SHANNON:

No, no. I want a cold beer. If I  
start drinking rum-cocos now I won't  
stop drinking rum-cocos. So Fred is  
dead? I looked forward to lying in  
this hammock and talking to Fred.

MAXINE:

Well Fred's not talking now,  
Shannon. A diabetic gets a blood  
infection, he goes like that without  
a decent hospital in less'n a week.  
[A bus horn is heard blowing from  
below.] Why don't your busload of  
women come on up here? They're  
blowing the bus horn down there.

SHANNON:

Let 'em blow it, blow it. . . . [He sways a little.] I got a fever. [He goes to the top of the path, divides the flowering bushes and shouts down the hill to the bus.] Hank! Hank! Get them out of the bus and bring 'em up here! Tell 'em the rates are OK. Tell 'em the. . . . [His voice gives out, and he stumbles back to the verandah, where he sinks down onto the low steps, panting.]

Absolutely the worst party I've ever been out with in ten years of conducting tours. For God's sake, help me with 'em because I can't go on. I got to rest here a while. [She gives him a cold beer.] Thanks. Look and see if they're getting out of the bus. [She crosses to the masking foliage and separates it to look down the hill.] Are they getting out of the bus or are they staying in it, the stingy-daughters of-bitches. . . . Schoolteachers at a Baptist Female College in Blowing Rock, Texas. Eleven, eleven of them.

MAXINE:

A football squad of old maids.

SHANNON:

Yeah, and I'm the football. Are they  
out of the bus?

MAXINE:

One's gotten out—she's going into  
the bushes.

SHANNON:

Well, I've got the ignition key to  
the bus in my pocket—this pocket—so  
they can't continue without me  
unless they walk.

MAXINE:

They're still blowin' that horn.

SHANNON:

Fantastic. I can't lose this party.  
Blake Tours has put me on probation  
because I had a bad party last month  
that tried to get me sacked and I am  
now on probation with Blake Tours.  
If I lose this party I'll be sacked  
for sure . . . Ah, my God, are they  
still all in the bus? [He heaves  
himself off the steps and staggers  
back to the path, dividing the  
foliage to look down it, then

shouts.] Hank! Get them out of the  
busssss! Bring them up heeee-re!

HANK'S VOICE [from below]:

They want a go back in tooooooowwwwn.

SHANNON:

They can't go back in toooowwwwn!—

Whew—Five years ago this summer I  
was conducting round-the-world tours  
for Cook's. Exclusive groups of  
retired Wall Street financiers. We  
traveled in fleets of Pierce Arrows  
and Hispano Suizas.—Are they getting  
out of the bus?

MAXINE:

You're going to pieces, are you?

SHANNON:

No! Gone! Gone! [He rises and shouts  
down the hill again.] Hank! Come up  
here! Come on up here a minute! I  
wanta talk to you about this  
situation!—Incredible, fantastic . .

.

[He drops back on the steps, his  
head falling into his hands.]

MAXINE:

They're not getting out of the bus.—  
Shannon . . . you're not in a

nervous condition to cope with this party, Shannon, so let them go and you stay.

SHANNON:

You know my situation: I lose this job, what's next? There's nothing lower than Blake Tours, Maxine honey.—Are they getting out of the bus? Are they getting out of it now?

MAXINE:

Man's comin' up the hill.

SHANNON:

Aw. Hank. You gotta help me with him.

MAXINE:

I'll give him a rum-coco.

[Hank comes grinning onto the verandah.]

HANK:

Shannon, them ladies are not gonna come up here, so you better come on back to the bus.

SHANNON:

Fantastic.—I'm not going down to the bus and I've got the ignition key to the bus in my pocket. It's going to stay in my pocket for the next three days.

HANK:

You can't get away with that,  
Shannon. Hell, they'll walk back to  
town if you don't give up the bus  
key.

SHANNON:

They'd drop like flies from  
sunstrokes on that road. . . .  
Fantastic, absolutely fantastic . .  
. [Panting and sweating, he drops a  
hand on Hank's shoulder.] Hank, I  
want your co-operation. Can I have  
it? Because when you're out with a  
difficult party like this, the tour  
conductor-me-and the guide-you-have  
got to stick together to control the  
situations as they come up against  
us. It's a test of strength between  
two men, in this case, and a busload  
of old wet hens! You know that,  
don't you?

HANK:

Well. . . . [He chuckles.] There's  
this kid that's crying on the back  
seat all the time, and that's what's  
rucked up the deal. Hell, I don't  
know if you did or you didn't, but

they all think that you did 'cause  
the kid keeps crying.

SHANNON:

Hank? Look! I don't care what they  
think. A tour conducted by T.  
Lawrence Shannon is in his charge,  
completely—where to go, when to go,  
every detail of it. Otherwise I  
resign. So go on back down there and  
get them out of that bus before they  
suffocate in it. Haul them out by  
force if necessary and herd them up  
here. Hear me? Don't give me any  
argument about it. Mrs. Faulk,  
honey? Give him a menu, give him one  
of your sample menus to show the  
ladies. She's got a Chinaman cook  
here, you won't believe the menu.  
The cook's from Shanghai, handled  
the kitchen at an exclusive club  
there. I got him here for her, and  
he's a bug, a fanatic about—whew!—  
continental cuisine . . . can even  
make beef Stroganoff and thermidor  
dishes. Mrs. Faulk, honey? Hand him  
one of those—whew!—one of those  
fantastic sample menus. [Maxine

chuckles, as if perpetrating a practical joke, as she hands him a sheet of paper.] Thanks. Now, here. Go on back down there and show them this fantastic menu. Describe the view from the hill, and . . . [Hank accepts the menu with a chuckling shake of the head.] And have a cold Carta Blanca and. . . .

HANK:

You better go down with me.

SHANNON:

I can't leave this verandah for at least forty-eight hours. What in blazes is this? A little animated cartoon by Hieronymus Bosch?

[The German family which is staying at the hotel, the Fahrenkopfs, their daughter and son-in-law, suddenly make a startling, dreamlike entrance upon the scene. They troop around the verandah, then turn down into the jungle path. They are all dressed in the minimal concession to decency and

all are pink and gold like baroque cupids in various sizes—Rubensesque, splendidly physical. The bride, Hilda, walks astride a big inflated rubber horse which has an ecstatic smile and great winking eyes. She shouts "Horsey, horsey, giddap!" as she waddles astride it, followed by her Wagnerian-tenor bridegroom, Wolfgang, and her father, Herr

Fahrenkopf, a tank manufacturer from Frankfurt. He is carrying a portable short-wave radio, which is tuned in to the crackle and guttural voices of a German broadcast reporting the Battle of Britain. Frau Fahrenkopf, bursting with rich, healthy fat and carrying a basket of food for a picnic at the beach, brings up the rear. They begin to sing a Nazi marching song.]

SHANNON:

Aw—Nazis. How come there's so many  
of them down here lately?

MAXINE:

Mexico's the front door to South  
America—and the back door to the  
States, that's why.

SHANNON:

Aw, and you're setting yourself up  
here as a receptionist at both  
doors, now that Fred's dead? [Maxine  
comes over and sits down on him in  
the hammock.] Get off my pelvis  
before you crack it. If you want to  
crack something, crack some ice for  
my forehead. [She removes a chunk of  
ice from her glass and massages his  
forehead with it.]—Ah, God. . . .

MAXINE [chuckling]:

Ha, so you took the young chick and  
the old hens are squawking about it,

Shannon?

SHANNON:

The kid asked for it, no kidding, but she's seventeen-less, a month less'n seventeen. So it's serious, it's very serious, because the kid is not just emotionally precocious, she's a musical prodigy, too.

MAXINE:

What's that got to do with it?

SHANNON:

Here's what it's got to do with it, she's traveling under the wing, the military escort, of this, this-butch vocal teacher who organizes little community sings in the bus. Ah, God! I'm surprised they're not singing now, they must've already suffocated. Or they'd be singing some morale-boosting number like "She's a Jolly Good Fellow" or "Pop Goes the Weasel."—Oh, God. . . .

[Maxine chuckles up and down the scale.] And each night after supper, after the complaints about the supper and the check-up on the checks by the math instructor, and

the vomiting of the supper by several ladies, who have inspected the kitchen—then the kid, the canary, will give a vocal recital. She opens her mouth and out flies Carrie Jacobs Bond or Ethelbert Nevin. I mean after a day of one indescribable torment after another, such as three blowouts, and a leaking radiator in Tierra Caliente. . . . [He sits up slowly in the hammock as these recollections gather force.] And an evening climb up sierras, through torrents of rain, around hairpin turns over gorges and chasms measureless to man, and with a thermos-jug under the driver's seat which the Baptist College ladies think is filled with ice water but which I know is filled with iced tequila—I mean after such a day has finally come to a close, the musical prodigy, Miss Charlotte Goodall, right after supper, before there's a chance to escape, will give a heartbreaking and earsplitting rendition of Carrie

Jacobs Bond's "End of a Perfect Day"—with absolutely no humor. . . .

MAXINE:

Hah!

SHANNON:

Yeah, "Hah!" Last night—no, night before last, the bus burned out its brake linings in Chilpancingo. This town has a hotel . . . this hotel has a piano, which hasn't been tuned since they shot Maximilian. This Texas songbird opens her mouth and out flies "I Love You Truly," and it flies straight at me, with gestures, all right at me, till her chaperone, this Diesel-driven vocal instructor of hers, slams the piano lid down and hauls her out of the mess hall. But as she's hauled out Miss Bird-Girl opens her mouth and out flies, "Larry, Larry, I love you, I love you truly!" That night, when I went to my room, I found that I had a roommate.

MAXINE:

The musical prodigy had moved in with you?

SHANNON:

The spook had moved in with me. In that hot room with one bed, the width of an ironing board and about as hard, the spook was up there on it, sweating, stinking, grinning up at me.

MAXINE:

Aw, the spook. [She chuckles.] So you've got the spook with you again.

SHANNON:

That's right, he's the only passenger that got off the bus with me, honey.

MAXINE:

Is he here now?

SHANNON:

Not far.

MAXINE:

On the verandah?

SHANNON:

He might be on the other side of the verandah. Oh, he's around somewhere, but he's like the Sioux Indians in the Wild West fiction, he doesn't attack before sundown, he's an after-sundown shadow. . . .

[Shannon wriggles out of the hammock as the bus horn gives one last, long protesting blast.]

MAXINE:

I have a little shadow  
That goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him  
Is more than I can see.  
He's very, very like me,  
From his heels up to his head,  
And he always hops before me  
When I hop into my bed.

SHANNON:

That's the truth. He sure hops in  
the bed with me.

MAXINE:

When you're sleeping alone, or . . .  
?

SHANNON:

I haven't slept in three nights.

MAXINE:

Aw, you will tonight, baby.

[The bus horn sounds again. Shannon rises and squints down the hill at the bus.]

SHANNON:

How long's it take to sweat the  
faculty of a Baptist Female College  
out of a bus that's parked in the

sun when it's a hundred degrees in  
the shade?

MAXINE:

They're staggering out of it now.

SHANNON:

Yeah, I've won this round, I reckon.

What're they doing down there, can  
you see?

MAXINE:

They're crowding around your pal  
Hank.

SHANNON:

Tearing him to pieces?

MAXINE:

One of them's slapped him, he's  
ducked back into the bus, and she is  
starting up here.

SHANNON:

Oh, Great Caesar's ghost, it's the  
butch vocal teacher.

MISS FELLOWES [in a strident voice,  
from below]:

Shannon! Shannon!

SHANNON:

For God's sake, help me with her.

MAXINE:

You know I'll help you, baby, but why don't you lay off the young ones and cultivate an interest in normal grown-up women?

MISS FELLOWES [her voice coming nearer]:

Shannon!

SHANNON [shouting down the hill]:

Come on up, Miss Fellowes, everything's fixed. [To Maxine.] Oh, God, here she comes chargin' up the hill like a bull elephant on a rampage!

[Miss Fellowes thrashes through the foliage at the top of the jungle path.]

SHANNON:

Miss Fellowes, never do that! Not at high noon in a tropical country in summer. Never charge up a hill like you were leading a troop of cavalry attacking an almost impregnable. . .

.

MISS FELLOWES [panting and furious]: I don't want advice or instructions, I want the bus key!

SHANNON:

Mrs. Faulk, this is Miss Judith

Fellowes.

MISS FELLOWES:

Is this man making a deal with you?

MAXINE:

I don't know what you—

MISS FELLOWES:

Is this man getting a kickback out  
of you?

MAXINE:

Nobody gets any kickback out of me.

I turn away more people than—

MISS FELLOWES [cutting in]:

This isn't the Ambos Mundos. It says  
in the brochure that in Puerto  
Barrio we stay at the Ambos Mundos  
in the heart of the city.

SHANNON:

Yes, on the plaza—tell her about the  
plaza.

MAXINE:

What about the plaza?

SHANNON:

It's hot, noisy, stinking, swarming  
with flies. Pariah dogs dying in the

—

MISS FELLOWES:

How is this place better?

SHANNON:

The view from this verandah is equal  
and I think better than the view  
from Victoria Peak in Hong Kong, the  
view from the roof-terrace of the  
sultan's palace in-

MISS FELLOWES [cutting in]:

I want the view of a clean bed, a  
bathroom with plumbing that works,  
and food that is eatable and  
digestible and not contaminated by  
filthy-

SHANNON:

Miss Fellowes!

MISS FELLOWES:

Take your hand off my arm.

SHANNON:

Look at this sample menu. The cook  
is a Chinese imported from Shanghai  
by me! Sent here by me, year before  
last, in nineteen thirty-eight. He  
was the chef at the Royal Colonial  
Club in-

MISS FELLOWES [cutting in]:

You got a telephone here?

MAXINE:

Sure, in the office.

MISS FELLOWES:

I want to use it—I'll call collect.

Where's the office?

MAXINE [to Pancho]:

Llevala al telefono!

[With Pancho showing her the way Miss Fellowes stalks off around the verandah to the office. Shannon falls back, sighing desperately, against the verandah wall.]

MAXINE:

Hah!

SHANNON:

Why did you have to . . . ?

MAXINE:

Huh?

SHANNON:

Come out looking like this! For you  
it's funny but for me it's. . . .

MAXINE:

This is how I look. What's wrong  
with how I look?

SHANNON:

I told you to button your shirt. Are  
you so proud of your boobs that you  
won't button your shirt up?—Go in  
the office and see if she's calling  
Blake Tours to get me fired.

MAXINE:

She better not unless she pays for  
the call.

[She goes around the turn of the verandah.]

[Miss Hannah Jelkes appears below the verandah steps and stops short as Shannon turns to the wall, pounding his fist against it with a sobbing sound in his throat.]

HANNAH:

Excuse me.

[Shannon looks down at her, dazed. Hannah is remarkable looking—ethereal, almost ghostly. She suggests a Gothic cathedral image of a medieval saint, but animated. She could be thirty, she could be forty: she is totally feminine and yet androgynous-looking—almost timeless. She is wearing a cotton print dress and has a bag slung on a strap over her shoulder.]

HANNAH:

Is this the Costa Verde Hotel?

SHANNON [suddenly pacified by her  
appearance]:

Yes. Yes, it is.

HANNAH:

Are you . . . you're not, the hotel  
manager, are you?

SHANNON:

No. She'll be right back.

HANNAH:

Thank you. Do you have any idea if  
they have two vacancies here? One  
for myself and one for my

grandfather who's waiting in a taxi  
down there on the road. I didn't  
want to bring him up the hill—till  
I'd made sure they have rooms for us  
first.

SHANNON:

Well, there's plenty of room here  
out-of-season—like now.

HANNAH:

Good! Wonderful! I'll get him out of  
the taxi.

SHANNON:

Need any help?

HANNAH:

No, thank you. We'll make it all  
right.

[She gives him a pleasant nod and goes back off down the  
path through the rain forest. A coconut plops to the  
ground; a parrot screams at a distance. Shannon drops into  
the hammock and stretches out. Then Maxine reappears.]

SHANNON:

How about the call? Did she make a  
phone call?

MAXINE:

She called a judge in Texas—Blowing  
Rock, Texas. Collect.

SHANNON:

She's trying to get me fired and she is also trying to pin on me a rape charge, a charge of statutory rape.

MAXINE:

What's "statutory rape"? I've never known what that was.

SHANNON:

That's when a man is seduced by a girl under twenty. [She chuckles.]

It's not funny, Maxine honey.

MAXINE:

Why do you want the young ones—or think that you do?

SHANNON:

I don't want any, any—regardless of age.

MAXINE:

Then why do you take them, Shannon? [He swallows but does not answer.]—

Huh, Shannon.

SHANNON:

People need human contact, Maxine honey.

MAXINE:

What size shoe do you wear?

SHANNON:

I don't get the point of that  
question.

MAXINE:

These shoes are shot and if I  
remember correctly, you travel with  
only one pair. Fred's estate  
included one good pair of shoes and  
your feet look about his size.

SHANNON:

I loved ole Fred but I don't want to  
fill his shoes, honey.

[She has removed Shannon's beat-up, English-made Oxfords.]

MAXINE:

Your socks are shot. Fred's socks  
would fit you, too, Shannon. [She  
opens his collar.] Aw-aw, I see you  
got on your gold cross. That's a bad  
sign, it means you're thinkin' again  
about goin' back to the Church.

SHANNON:

This is my last tour, Maxine. I  
wrote my old bishop this morning a  
complete confession and a complete  
capitulation.

[She takes a letter from his damp shirt pocket.]

MAXINE:

If this is the letter, baby, you've  
sweated through it, so the old  
bugger couldn't read it even if you  
mailed it to him this time.

[She has started around the verandah, and goes off as Hank  
reappears up the hill-path, mopping his face. Shannon's  
relaxed position in the hammock aggravates Hank sorely.]

HANK:

Will you get your ass out of that  
hammock?

SHANNON:

No, I will not.

HANK:

Shannon, git out of that hammock!  
[He kicks at Shannon's hips in the  
hammock.]

SHANNON:

Hank, if you can't function under  
rough circumstances, you are in the  
wrong racket, man. I gave you  
instructions, the instructions were  
simple. I said get them out of the  
bus and. . . .

[Maxine comes back with a kettle of water, a towel and  
other shaving equipment.]

HANK:

Out of the hammock, Shannon! [He  
kicks Shannon again, harder.]

SHANNON [warningly]:

That's enough, Hank. A little  
familiarity goes a long way, but not  
as far as you're going. [Maxine  
starts lathering his face.] What's  
this, what are you . . . ?

MAXINE:

Haven't you ever had a shave-and haircut  
by a lady barber?

HANK:

The kid has gone into hysterics.

MAXINE:

Hold still, Shannon.

SHANNON:

Hank, hysteria is a natural  
phenomenon, the common denominator  
of the female nature. It's the big  
female weapon, and the test of a man  
is his ability to cope with it, and  
I can't believe you can't. If I  
believed that you couldn't, I would  
not be able—

MAXINE:

Hold still!

SHANNON:

I'm holding still. [To Hank.] No, I  
wouldn't be able to take you out  
with me again. So go on back down  
there and-

HANK:

You want me to go back down there  
and tell them you're getting a shave  
up here in a hammock?

MAXINE:

Tell them that Reverend Larry is  
going back to the Church so they can  
go back to the Female College in  
Texas.

HANK:

I want another beer.

MAXINE:

Help yourself, piggly-wiggly, the  
cooler's in my office right around  
there. [She points around the corner  
of the verandah.]

SHANNON [as HANK goes off]:

It's horrible how you got to bluff  
and keep bluffing even when  
hollering "Help!" is all  
you're up to, Maxine. You cut me!

MAXINE:

You didn't hold still.

SHANNON:

Just trim the beard a little.

MAXINE:

I know. Baby, tonight we'll go  
night-swimming, whether it storms or  
not.

SHANNON:

Ah, God. . . .

MAXINE:

The Mexican kids are wonderful  
night-swimmers. . . . Hah, when I  
found 'em they were taking the twohundred-  
foot dives off the Quebrada,  
but the Quebrada Hotel kicked 'em  
out for being overattentive to the  
lady guests there. That's how I got  
hold of them.

SHANNON:

Maxine, you're bigger than life and  
twice as unnatural, honey.

MAXINE:

No one's bigger than life-size,  
Shannon, or even ever that big,  
except maybe Fred. [She shouts  
"Fred?" and gets a faint answering

echo from an adjoining hill.] Little Sir Echo is all that answers for him now, Shannon, but. . . . [She pats some bay rum on his face.] Dear old Fred was always a mystery to me. He was so patient and tolerant with me that it was insulting to me. A man and a woman have got to challenge each other, y'know what I mean. I mean I hired those diving-boys from the Quebrada six months before Fred died, and did he care? Did he give a damn when I started night-swimming with them? No. He'd go nightfishing, all night, and when I got up the next day, he'd be preparing to go out fishing again, but he just caught the fish and threw them back in the sea.

[Hank returns and sits drinking his beer on the steps.]

SHANNON:

The mystery of old Fred was simple. He was just cool and decent, that's all the mystery of him. . . . Get your pair of night-swimmers to grab my ladies' luggage out of the bus before the vocal teacher gets off the phone and stops them.

MAXINE [shouting]:

Pedro! Pancho! Muchachos! Trae las maletas al anejo! Pronto! [The Mexican boys start down the path. Maxine sits in the hammock beside Shannon.] You I'll put in Fred's old room, next to me.

SHANNON:

You want me in his socks and his shoes and in his room next to you? [He stares at her with a shocked surmise of her intentions toward him, then flops back down in the hammock with an incredulous laugh.] Oh no, honey. I've just been hanging on till I could get in this hammock on this verandah over the rain forest and the still-water beach, that's all that can put me through

this last tour in a condition to go  
back to my . . . original . . .  
vocation.

MAXINE:

Hah, you still have some rational  
moments when you face the fact that  
churchgoers don't go to church to  
hear atheistical sermons.

SHANNON:

Goddamit, I never preached an  
atheistical sermon in a church in my  
life, and. . . .

[Miss Fellowes has charged out of the office and rounds the  
verandah to bear down on Shannon and Maxine, who jumps up  
out of the hammock.]

MISS FELLOWES:

I've completed my call, which I made  
collect to Texas.

[Maxine shrugs, going by her around the verandah. Miss  
Fellowes runs across the verandah.]

SHANNON [sitting up in the hammock]:

Excuse me, Miss Fellowes, for not  
getting out of this hammock, but I .  
. . Miss Fellowes? Please sit down a  
minute, I want to confess something  
to you.

MISS FELLOWES:

That ought to be int'restin'! What?

SHANNON:

Just that—well, like everyone else,  
at some point or other in life, my  
life has cracked up on me.

MISS FELLOWES:

How does that compensate us?

SHANNON:

I don't think I know what you mean  
by compensate, Miss Fellowes. [He  
props himself up and gazes at her  
with the gentlest bewilderment,  
calculated to melt a heart of  
stone.] I mean I've just confessed  
to you that I'm at the end of my  
rope, and you say, "How does that  
compensate us?" Please, Miss  
Fellowes. Don't make me feel that  
any adult human being puts personal  
compensation before the dreadful,  
bare fact of a man at the end of his  
rope who still has to try to go on,  
to continue, as if he'd never been  
better or stronger in his whole  
existence. No, don't do that, it  
would. . . .

MISS FELLOWES:

It would what?

SHANNON:

Shake if not shatter everything left  
of my faith in essential . . . human  
. . . goodness!

MAXINE [returning, with a pair of  
socks]:

Hah!

MISS FELLOWES:

Can you sit there, I mean lie there—  
yeah, I mean lie there . . . ! and  
talk to me about—

MAXINE:

Hah!

MISS FELLOWES:

“Essential human goodness”? Why,  
just plain human decency is beyond  
your imagination, Shannon, so lie  
there, lie there and lie there,  
we’re going!

SHANNON [rising from the hammock]:  
Miss Fellowes, I thought that I was  
conducting this party, not you.

MISS FELLOWES:

You? You just now admitted you’re  
incompetent, as well as. . . .

MAXINE:

Hah.

SHANNON:

Maxine, will you—

MISS FELLOWES [cutting in with

cold, righteous fury]:

Shannon, we girls have worked and  
slaved all year at Baptist Female  
College for this Mexican tour, and  
the tour is a cheat!

SHANNON [to himself]:

Fantastic!

MISS FELLOWES:

Yes, cheat! You haven't stuck to the  
schedule and you haven't stuck to  
the itinerary advertised in the  
brochure which Blake Tours put out.  
Now either Blake Tours is cheating  
us or you are cheating Blake Tours,  
and I'm putting wheels in motion—I  
don't care what it costs me—I'm. . .

.

SHANNON:

Oh, Miss Fellowes, isn't it just as  
plain to you as it is to me that  
your hysterical insults, which are  
not at all easy for any born and  
bred gentleman to accept, are not .  
. . . motivated, provoked by . . .

anything as trivial as the, the . . .  
. the motivations that you're,  
you're . . . ascribing them to? Now  
can't we talk about the real, true  
cause of. . . .

MISS FELLOWES:

Cause of what?

[Charlotte Goodall appears at the top of the hill.]

SHANNON:

-Cause of your rage Miss Fellowes,  
your-

MISS FELLOWES:

Charlotte! Stay down the hill in the  
bus!

CHARLOTTE:

Judy, they're-

MISS FELLOWES:

Obey me! Down!

[Charlotte retreats from view like a well-trained dog. Miss Fellowes charges back to Shannon who has gotten out of the hammock. He places a conciliatory hand on her arm.]

MISS FELLOWES:

Take your hand off my arm!

MAXINE:

Hah!

SHANNON:

Fantastic. Miss Fellowes, please! No  
more shouting? Please? Now I really

must ask you to let this party of ladies come up here and judge the accommodations for themselves and compare them with what they saw passing through town. Miss Fellowes, there is such a thing as charm and beauty in some places, as much as there's nothing but dull, ugly imitation of highway motels in Texas and—

[Miss Fellowes charges over to the path to see if Charlotte has obeyed her. Shannon follows, still propitiatory. Maxine says "Hah," but she gives him an affectionate little pat as he goes by her. He pushes her hand away as he continues his appeal to Miss Fellowes.]

MISS FELLOWES:

I've taken a look at those rooms and they'd make a room at the "Y" look like a suite at the Ritz.

SHANNON:

Miss Fellowes, I am employed by Blake Tours and so I'm not in a position to tell you quite frankly what mistakes they've made in their advertising brochure. They just don't know Mexico. I do. I know it as well as I know five out of all

six continents on the—

MISS FELLOWES:

Continent! Mexico? You never even  
studied geography if you—

SHANNON:

My degree from Sewanee is Doctor of  
Divinity, but for the past ten years  
geography's been my specialty, Miss  
Fellowes, honey! Name any tourist  
agency I haven't worked for! You  
couldn't! I'm only, now, with Blake  
Tours because I—

MISS FELLOWES:

Because you what? Couldn't keep your  
hands off innocent, underage girls  
in your—

SHANNON:

Now, Miss Fellowes. . . . [He  
touches her arm again.]

MISS FELLOWES:

Take your hand off my arm!

SHANNON:

For days I've known you were furious  
and unhappy, but—

MISS FELLOWES:

Oh! You think it's just me that's  
unhappy! Hauled in that stifling bus

over the byways, off the highways,  
shook up and bumped up so you could  
get your rake-off, is that what you-

SHANNON:

What I know is, all I know is, that  
you are the leader of the  
insurrection!

MISS FELLOWES:

All of the girls in this party have  
dysentery!

SHANNON:

That you can't hold me to blame for.

MISS FELLOWES:

I do hold you to blame for it.

SHANNON:

Before we entered Mexico, at New  
Laredo, Texas, I called you ladies  
together in the depot on the Texas  
side of the border and I passed out  
mimeographed sheets of instructions  
on what to eat and what not to eat,  
what to drink, what not to drink in  
the-

MISS FELLOWES:

It's not what we ate but where we  
ate that gave us dysentery!

SHANNON [shaking his head like a  
metronome]:

It is not dysentery.

MISS FELLOWES:

The result of eating in places that  
would be condemned by the Board of  
Health in-

SHANNON:

Now wait a minute-

MISS FELLOWES:

For disregarding all rules of  
sanitation.

SHANNON:

It is not dysentery, it is not  
amoebic, it's nothing at all but-

MAXINE:

Montezuma's Revenge! That's what we  
call it.

SHANNON:

I even passed out pills. I passed  
out bottles of Enteroviaform because  
I knew that some of you ladies would  
rather be victims of Montezuma's  
Revenge than spend cinco centavos on  
bottled water in stations.

MISS FELLOWES:

You sold those pills at a profit of

fifty cents per bottle.

MAXINE:

Hah-hah! [She knocks off the end of  
a coconut with the machete,  
preparing a rum-coco.]

SHANNON:

Now fun is fun, Miss Fellowes, but  
an accusation like that—

MISS FELLOWES:

I priced them in pharmacies, because  
I suspected that—

SHANNON:

Miss Fellowes, I am a gentleman, and  
as a gentleman I can't be insulted  
like this. I mean I can't accept  
insults of that kind even from a  
member of a tour that I am  
conducting. And, Miss Fellowes, I  
think you might also remember, you  
might try to remember, that you're  
speaking to an ordained minister of  
the Church.

MISS FELLOWES:

De-frocked! But still trying to pass  
himself off as a minister!

MAXINE:

How about a rum-coco? We give a

complimentary rum-coco to all our  
guests here. [Her offer is  
apparently unheard. She shrugs and  
drinks the rum-coco herself.]

SHANNON:

-Miss Fellowes? In every party there  
is always one individual that's  
discontented, that is not satisfied  
with all I do to make the tour more  
. . . unique—to make it different  
from the ordinary, to give it a  
personal thing, the Shannon touch.

MISS FELLOWES:

The gyp touch, the touch of a  
defrocked minister.

SHANNON:

Miss Fellowes, don't, don't, don't .  
. . . do what . . . you're doing! [He  
is on the verge of hysteria, he  
makes some incoherent sounds,  
gesticulates with clenched fists,  
then stumbles wildly across the  
verandah and leans panting for  
breath against a post.] Don't!

Break! Human! Pride!

VOICE FROM DOWN THE HILL [a very  
Texan accent]:

Judy? They're taking our luggage!

MISS FELLOWES [shouting down the  
hill]:

Girls! Girls! Don't let those boys  
touch your luggage. Don't let them  
bring your luggage in this dump!

GIRL'S VOICE [from below]:

Judy! We can't stop them!

MAXINE:

Those kids don't understand English.

MISS FELLOWES [wild with rage]:  
Will you please tell those boys to  
take that luggage back down to the  
bus? [She calls to the party below  
again.] Girls! Hold onto your  
luggage, don't let them take it  
away! We're going to drive back to  
A-cap-ul-co! You hear?

GIRL'S VOICE:

Judy, they want a swim, first!

MISS FELLOWES:

I'll be right back. [She rushes off,  
shouting at the Mexican boys.] You!  
Boys! Muchachos! You carry that  
luggage back down!

[The voices continue, fading. Shannon moves brokenly across  
the verandah. Maxine shakes her head.]

MAXINE:

Shannon, give 'em the bus key and  
let 'em go.

SHANNON:

And me do what?

MAXINE:

Stay here.

SHANNON:

In Fred's old bedroom—yeah, in  
Fred's old bedroom.

MAXINE:

You could do worse.

SHANNON:

Could I? Well, then, I'll do worse,  
I'll . . . do worse.

MAXINE:

Aw now, baby.

SHANNON:

If I could do worse, I'll do worse.  
. . . [He grips the section of  
railing by the verandah steps and  
stares with wide, lost eyes. His  
chest heaves like a spent runner's  
and he is bathed in sweat.]

MAXINE:

Give me that ignition key. I'll take  
it down to the driver while you  
bathe and rest and have a rum-coco,  
baby.

[Shannon simply shakes his head slightly. Harsh bird cries  
sound in the rain forest. Voices are heard on the path.]

HANNAH:

Nonno, you've lost your sunglasses.

NONNO:

No. Took them off. No sun.

[Hannah appears at the top of the path, pushing her  
grandfather, Nonno, in a wheelchair. He is a very old man  
but has a powerful voice for his age and always seems to be  
shouting something of importance. Nonno is a poet and a  
showman. There is a good kind of pride and he has it,  
carrying it like a banner wherever he goes. He is  
immaculately dressed—a linen suit, white as his thick  
poet's hair; a black string tie; and he is holding a black  
cane with a gold crook.]

NONNO:

Which way is the sea?

HANNAH:

Right down below the hill, Nonno.

[He turns in the wheelchair and  
raises a hand to shield his eyes.]  
We can't see it from here. [The old  
man is deaf, and she shouts to make  
him hear.]

NONNO:

I can feel it and smell it. [A murmur of wind sweeps through the rain forest.] It's the cradle of life. [He is shouting, too.] Life began in the sea.

MAXINE:

These two with your party?

SHANNON:

No.

MAXINE:

They look like a pair of loonies.

SHANNON:

Shut up.

[Shannon looks at Hannah and Nonno steadily, with a relief of tension almost like that of someone going under hypnosis. The old man still squints down the path, blindly, but Hannah is facing the verandah with a proud person's hope of acceptance when it is desperately needed.]

HANNAH:

How do you do.

MAXINE:

Hello.

HANNAH:

Have you ever tried pushing a gentleman in a wheelchair uphill through a rain forest?

MAXINE:

Nope, and I wouldn't even try it

downhill.

HANNAH:

Well, now that we've made it, I don't regret the effort. What a view for a painter! [She looks about her, panting, digging into her shoulderbag

for a handkerchief, aware that her face is flushed and sweating.] They told me in town that this was the ideal place for a painter, and they weren't—whew—exaggerating!

SHANNON:

You've got a scratch on your forehead.

HANNAH:

Oh, is that what I felt.

SHANNON:

Better put iodine on it.

HANNAH:

Yes, I'll attend to that—whew—later, thank you.

MAXINE:

Anything I can do for you?

HANNAH:

I'm looking for the manager of the hotel.

MAXINE:

Me—speaking.

HANNAH:

Oh, you're the manager, good! How do  
you do, I'm Hannah Jelkes, Mrs. . . .

.

MAXINE:

Faulk, Maxine Faulk. What can I do  
for you folks? [Her tone indicates  
no desire to do anything for them.]

HANNAH [turning quickly to her  
grandfather]:

Nonno, the manager is a lady from  
the States.

[Nonno lifts a branch of wild orchids from his lap,  
ceremonially, with the instinctive gallantry of his kind.]

NONNO: [shouting]:

Give the lady these—botanical  
curiosities!—you picked on the way  
up.

HANNAH:

I believe they're wild orchids,  
isn't that what they are?

SHANNON:

Laelia tibicina.

HANNAH:

Oh!

NONNO:

But tell her, Hannah, tell her to  
keep them in the icebox till after  
dark, they draw bees in the sun! [He  
rubs a sting on his chin with a  
rueful chuckle.]

MAXINE:

Are you all looking for rooms here?

HANNAH:

Yes, we are, but we've come without  
reservations.

MAXINE:

Well, honey, the Costa Verde is  
closed in September—except for a few  
special guests, so. . . .

SHANNON:

They're special guests, for God's  
sake.

MAXINE:

I thought you said they didn't come  
with your party.

HANNAH:

Please let us be special guests.

MAXINE:

Watch out!

[Nonno has started struggling out of the wheelchair. Shannon rushes over to keep him from falling. Hannah has started toward him, too, then seeing that Shannon has caught him, she turns back to Maxine.]

HANNAH:

In twenty-five years of travel this  
is the first time we've ever arrived  
at a place without advance  
reservations.

MAXINE:

Honey, that old man ought to be in a  
hospital.

HANNAH:

Oh, no, no, he just sprained his  
ankle a little in Taxco this  
morning. He just needs a good  
night's rest, he'll be on his feet  
tomorrow. His recuperative powers  
are absolutely amazing for someone  
who is ninety-seven years young.

SHANNON:

Easy, Grampa. Hang on. [He is  
supporting the old man up to the  
verandah.] Two steps. One! Two! Now  
you've made it, Grampa.

[Nonno keeps chuckling breathlessly as Shannon gets him  
onto the verandah and into a wicker rocker.]

HANNAH [breaking in quickly]:

I can't tell you how much I appreciate your taking us in here now. It's—providential.

MAXINE:

Well, I can't send that old man back down the hill right now—but like I told you the Costa Verde's practically closed in September. I just take in a few folks as a special accommodation and we operate on a special basis this month.

NONNO [cutting in abruptly and loudly]:

Hannah, tell the lady that my perambulator is temporary. I will soon be ready to crawl and then to toddle and before long I will be leaping around here like an—old—mountain—goat, ha-ha-ha-ha. . . .

HANNAH:

Yes, I explained that, Grandfather.

NONNO:

I don't like being on wheels.

HANNAH:

Yes, my grandfather feels that the decline of the Western world began

with the invention of the wheel.  
[She laughs heartily, but Maxine's  
look is unresponsive.]

NONNO:

And tell the manager . . . the, uh,  
lady . . . that I know some hotels  
don't want to take dogs, cats or  
monkeys and some don't even solicit  
the patronage of infants in thei  
r late nineties who arrive in  
perambulators with flowers instead  
of rattles . . . [He chuckles with a  
sort of fearful, slightly mad  
quality. Hannah perhaps has the  
impulse to clap a hand over his  
mouth at this moment but must stand  
there smiling and smiling and  
smiling.] . . . and a brandy flask  
instead of a teething ring, but tell  
her that these, uh, concessions to  
man's seventh age are only  
temporary, and. . . .

HANNAH:

Nonno, I told her the wheelchair's  
because of a sprained ankle, Nonno!

SHANNON [to himself]:

Fantastic.

NONNO:

And after my siesta, I'll wheel it  
back down the hill, I'll kick it  
back down the hill, right into the  
sea, and tell her. . . .

HANNAH:

Yes? What, Nonno? [She has stopped  
smiling now. Her tone and her look  
are frankly desperate.] What shall I  
tell her now, Nonno?

NONNO:

Tell her that if she'll forgive my  
disgraceful longevity and this . . .  
temporary decrepitude . . . I will  
present her with the last signed . .  
. compitty [he means "copy"] of my  
first volume of verse, published in  
. . . when, Hannah?

HANNAH [hopelessly]:

The day that President Ulysses S.  
Grant was inaugurated, Nonno.

NONNO:

Morning Trumpet! Where is it—you  
have it, give it to her right now.

HANNAH:

Later, a little later! [Then she  
turns to Maxine and Shannon.] My

grandfather is the poet Jonathan Coffin. He is ninety-seven years young and will be ninety-eight years young the fifth of next month, October.

MAXINE:

Old folks are remarkable, yep. The office phone's ringing—excuse me, I'll be right back. [She goes around the verandah.]

NONNO:

Did I talk too much?

HANNAH [quietly, to Shannon]:

I'm afraid that he did. I don't think she's going to take us.

SHANNON:

She'll take you. Don't worry about it.

HANNAH:

Nobody would take us in town, and if we don't get in here, I would have to wheel him back down through the rain forest, and then what, then where? There would just be the road, and no direction to move in, except out to sea—and I doubt that we could make it divide before us.

SHANNON:

That won't be necessary. I have a little influence with the patrona.

HANNAH:

Oh, then, do use it, please. Her eyes said no in big blue capital letters.

[Shannon pours some water from a pitcher on the verandah and hands it to the old man.]

NONNO:

What is this—libation?

SHANNON:

Some ice water, Grampa.

HANNAH:

Oh, that's kind of you. Thank you. I'd better give him a couple of salt tablets to wash down with it.

[Briskly she removes a bottle from her shoulder-bag.] Won't you have some? I see you're perspiring, too. You have to be careful not to become dehydrated in the hot seasons under the Tropic of Cancer.

SHANNON [pouring another glass of water]:

Are you a little financially

dehydrated, too?

HANNAH:

That's right. Bone dry, and I think the patrona suspects it. It's a logical assumption, since I pushed him up here myself, and the patrona has the look of a very logical woman. I am sure she knows that we couldn't afford to hire the taxi driver to help us up here.

MAXINE [calling from the back]:

Pancho?

HANNAH:

A woman's practicality when she's managing something is harder than a man's for another woman to cope with, so if you have influence with her, please do use it. Please try to convince her that my grandfather will be on his feet tomorrow, if not tonight, and with any luck whatsoever, the money situation will be solved just as quickly. Oh, here she comes back, do help us!

[Involuntarily Hannah seizes hold of Shannon's wrist as Maxine stalks back onto the verandah, still shouting for Pancho. The Mexican boy reappears, sucking a juicy peeled mango—its juice running down his chin onto his throat.]

MAXINE:

Pancho, run down to the beach and tell Herr Fahrenkopf that the German Embassy's waiting on the phone for him. [Pancho stares at her blankly until she repeats the order in Spanish.] Dile a Herr Fahrenkopf que la embajada alemana lo llama al telefono. Corre, corre! [Pancho starts indolently down the path, still sucking noisily on the mango.] I said run! Corre, corre! [He goes into a leisurely loping pace and disappears through the foliage.]

HANNAH:

What graceful people they are!

MAXINE:

Yeah, they're graceful like cats, and just as dependable, too.

HANNAH:

Shall we, uh, . . . register now?

MAXINE:

You all can register later but I'll have to collect six dollars from you first if you want to put your names in the pot for supper. That's how I've got to operate here out of season.

HANNAH:

Six? Dollars?

MAXINE:

Yeah, three each. In season we operate on the continental plan but out of season like this we change to the modified American plan.

HANNAH:

Oh, what is the, uh . . . modification of it? [She gives Shannon a quick glance of appeal as she stalls for time, but his attention has turned inward as the bus horn blows down the hill.]

MAXINE:

Just two meals are included instead of all three.

HANNAH [moving closer to Shannon and raising her voice]:

Breakfast and dinner?

MAXINE:

A continental breakfast and a cold  
lunch.

SHANNON [aside]:

Yeah, very cold-cracked ice—if you  
crack it yourself.

HANNAH [reflectively]:

Not dinner.

MAXINE:

No! Not dinner.

HANNAH:

Oh, I see, uh, but . . . we, uh,  
operate on a special basis  
ourselves. I'd better explain it to

MAXINE:

How do you mean "operate"—on what  
"basis"?

HANNAH:

Here's our card. I think you may  
have heard of us. [She presents the  
card to Maxine.] We've had a good  
many write-ups. My grandfather is  
the oldest living and practicing  
poet. And he gives recitations. I .  
. . . paint . . . water colors and I'm  
a "quick sketch artist." We travel  
together. We pay our way as we go by

my grandfather's recitations and the  
sale of my water colors and quick  
character sketches in charcoal or  
pastel.

SHANNON [to himself]:

I have fever.

HANNAH:

I usually pass among the tables at  
lunch and dinner in a hotel. I wear  
an artist's smock—picturesquely  
dabbed with paint—wide Byronic  
collar and flowing silk tie. I don't  
push myself on people. I just  
display my work and smile at them  
sweetly and if they invite me to do  
so sit down to make a quick  
character sketch in pastel or  
charcoal. If not? Smile sweetly and  
go on.

SHANNON:

What does Grandpa do?

HANNAH:

We pass among the tables together  
slowly. I introduce him as the  
world's oldest living and practicing  
poet. If invited, he gives a  
recitation of a poem. Unfortunately

all of his poems were written a long  
time ago. But do you know, he has  
started a new poem? For the first  
time in twenty years he's started  
another poem!

SHANNON:

Hasn't finished it yet?

HANNAH:

He still has inspiration, but his  
power of concentration has weakened  
a little, of course.

MAXINE:

Right now he's not concentrating.

SHANNON:

Grandpa's catchin' forty winks.  
Grampa? Let's hit the sack.

MAXINE:

Now wait a minute. I'm going to call  
a taxi for these folks to take them  
back to town.

HANNAH:

Please don't do that. We tried every  
hotel in town and they wouldn't take  
us. I'm afraid I have to place  
myself at your . . . mercy.

[With infinite gentleness Shannon has roused the old man and is leading him into one of the cubicles back of the verandah.

Distant cries of bathers are heard from the beach. The afternoon light is fading very fast now as the sun has dropped behind an island hilltop out to sea.]

MAXINE:

Looks like you're in for one night.

Just one.

HANNAH:

Thank you.

MAXINE:

The old man's in number 4. You take  
3. Where's your luggage—no luggage?

HANNAH:

I hid it behind some palmettos at  
the foot of the path.

SHANNON [shouting to Pancho]:

Bring up her luggage. Tu, flojo . .  
. las maletas . . . baja las palmas.  
Vamos! [The Mexican boys rush down  
the path.] Maxine honey, would you  
cash a postdated check for me?

MAXINE [shrewdly]:

Yeah—mañana, maybe.

SHANNON:

Thanks—generosity is the cornerstone  
of your nature.

[Maxine utters her one-note bark of a laugh as she marches around the corner of the verandah.]

HANNAH:

I'm dreadfully afraid my grandfather had a slight stroke in those high passes through the sierras. [She says this with the coolness of someone saying that it may rain before nightfall. An instant later, a long, long sigh of wind sweeps the hillside. The bathers are heard shouting below.]

SHANNON:

Very old people get these little "cerebral accidents," as they call them. They're not regular strokes, they're just little cerebral . . . incidents. The symptoms clear up so quickly that sometimes the old people don't even know they've had them.

[They exchange this quiet talk without looking at each other.]

The Mexican boys crash back through the bushes at the top of the path, bearing some pieces of ancient luggage fantastically plastered with hotel and travel stickers indicating a vast range of wandering. The boys deposit the luggage near the steps.]

SHANNON:

How many times have you been around  
the world?

HANNAH:

Almost as many times as the world's  
been around the sun, and I feel as  
if I had gone the whole way on foot.

SHANNON [picking up her luggage]:

What's your cell number?

HANNAH [smiling faintly]:

I believe she said it was cell  
number 3.

SHANNON:

She probably gave you the one with  
the leaky roof. [He carries the bags  
into the cubicle. Maxine is visible  
to the off screen audience only as she appears  
outside the door to her office on  
the wing of the verandah.] But you  
won't find out till it rains and  
then it'll be too late to do much  
about it but swim out of it. [Hannah  
laughs wanly. Her fatigue is now  
very plain. Shannon comes back out  
with her luggage.] Yep, she gave you  
the one with the leaky roof so you  
take mine and. . . .

HANNAH:

Oh, no, no, Mr. Shannon, I'll find a  
dry spot if it rains.

MAXINE [from around the corner of  
the verandah]:

Shannon!

[A bit of pantomime occurs between Hannah and Shannon. He wants to put her luggage in cubicle number 5. She catches hold of his arm, indicating by gesture toward the back that it is necessary to avoid displeasing the proprietor. Maxine shouts his name louder. Shannon surrenders to Hannah's pleading and puts her luggage back in the leaky cubicle number 3.]

HANNAH:

Thank you so much, Mr. Shannon. [She  
disappears behind the mosquito  
netting. Maxine advances to the  
verandah angle as Shannon starts  
toward his own cubicle.]

MAXINE [mimicking Hannah's voice]:  
"Thank you so much, Mr. Shannon."

SHANNON:

Don't be bitchy. Some people say  
thank you sincerely. [He goes past  
her and down the steps from the end  
of the verandah.] I'm going down for  
a swim now.

MAXINE:

The water's blood temperature this  
time of day.

SHANNON:

Yeah, well, I have a fever so it'll  
seem cooler to me. [He crosses  
rapidly to the jungle path leading  
to the beach.]

MAXINE [following him]:

Wait for me, I'll. . . .

[She means she will go down with him, but he ignores her call and disappears into the foliage. Maxine shrugs angrily and goes back onto the verandah. She faces out, gripping the railing tightly and glaring into the blaze of the sun as if it were a personal enemy. Then the ocean breathes a long cooling breath up the hill, as Nonno's voice is heard from his cubicle]

NONNO:

How calmly does the orange branch  
Observe the sky begin to blanch,  
Without a cry, without a prayer,  
With no expression of despair. . .

.

[And from a beach cantina in the distance a marimba band is heard playing a popular song of that summer of 1940, "Palabras de Mujer"—which means "Words of Women."]

FADE OUT

2. EXT. OUTSIDE COSTA VERDE HOTEL - NEAR SUNSET SEVERAL  
HOURS LATER

FADE IN

Several hours later: near sunset.

The scene is bathed in a deep golden, almost coppery light; the heavy tropical foliage gleams with wetness from a recent rain.

Maxine comes around the turn of the verandah. To the formalities of evening she has made the concession of changing from Levis to clean white cotton pants, and from a blue work shirt to a pink one. She is about to set up the folding cardtables for the evening meal which is served on the verandah. All the while she is talking, she is setting up tables, etc.

MAXINE:

Miss Jelkes?

[Hannah lifts the mosquito net over the door of cubicle number 3.]

HANNAH:

Yes, Mrs. Faulk?

MAXINE:

Can I speak to you while I set up  
these tables for supper?

HANNAH:

Of course, you may. I wanted to  
speak to you, too. [She comes out.

She is now wearing her artist's  
smock.]

MAXINE:

Good.

HANNAH:

I just wanted to ask you if there's a tub-bath Grandfather could use. A shower is fine for me—I prefer a shower to a tub—but for my grandfather there is some danger of falling down in a shower and at his age, although he says he is made out of India rubber, a broken hipbone would be a very serious matter, so

I. . . .

MAXINE:

What I wanted to say is I called up the Casa de Huéspedes about you and your Grampa, and I can get you in there.

HANNAH:

Oh, but we don't want to move!

MAXINE:

The Costa Verde isn't the right place for you. Y'see, we cater to folks that like to rough it a little, and—well, frankly, we cater to younger people.

[Hannah has started unfolding a cardtable.]

HANNAH:

Oh yes . . . uh . . . well . . . the, uh, Casa de Huéspedes, that

means a, uh, sort of a rooming  
house, Mrs. Faulk?

MAXINE:

Boardinghouse. They feed you,  
they'll even feed you on credit.

HANNAH:

Where is it located?

MAXINE:

It has a central location. You could  
get a doctor there quick if the old  
man took sick on you. You got to  
think about that.

HANNAH:

Yes, I—[She nods gravely, more to  
herself than Maxine.]—I have thought  
about that, but. . . .

MAXINE:

What are you doing?

HANNAH:

Making myself useful.

MAXINE:

Don't do that. I don't accept help  
from guests here.

[Hannah hesitates, but goes on setting the tables.]

HANNAH:

Oh, please, let me. Knife and fork  
on one side, spoon on the . . . ?

[Her voice dies out.]

MAXINE:

Just put the plates on the napkins  
so they don't blow away.

HANNAH:

Yes, it is getting breezy on the  
verandah. [She continues setting the  
table.]

MAXINE:

Hurricane winds are already hitting  
up coast.

HANNAH:

We've been through several typhoons  
in the Orient. Sometimes outside  
disturbances like that are an almost  
welcome distraction from inside  
disturbances, aren't they? [This is  
said almost to herself. She finishes  
putting the plates on the paper  
napkins.] When do you want us to  
leave here, Mrs. Faulk?

MAXINE:

The boys'll move you in my station  
wagon tomorrow—no charge for the

service.

HANNAH:

That is very kind of you. [Maxine starts away.] Mrs. Faulk?

MAXINE [turning back to her with obvious reluctance]:

Huh?

HANNAH:

Do you know jade?

MAXINE:

Jade?

HANNAH:

Yes.

MAXINE:

Why?

HANNAH:

I have a small but interesting collection of jade pieces. I asked if you know jade because in jade it's the craftsmanship, the carving of the jade, that's most important about it. [She has removed a jade ornament from her blouse.] This one, for instance—a miracle of carving. Tiny as it is, it has two figures carved on it—the legendary Prince Ahk and Princess Angh, and a heron

flying above them. The artist that carved it probably received for this miraculously delicate workmanship, well, I would say perhaps the price of a month's supply of rice for his family, but the merchant who employed him sold it, I would guess, for at least three hundred pounds sterling to an English lady who got tired of it and gave it to me, perhaps because I painted her not as she was at that time but as I could see she must have looked in her youth. Can you see the carving?

MAXINE:

Yeah, honey, but I'm not operating a hock shop here, I'm trying to run a hotel.

HANNAH:

I know, but couldn't you just accept it as security for a few days' stay here?

MAXINE:

You're completely broke, are you?

HANNAH:

Yes, we are—completely.

MAXINE:

You say that like you're proud of  
it.

HANNAH:

I'm not proud of it or ashamed of it  
either. It just happens to be what's  
happened to us, which has never  
happened before in all our travels.

MAXINE [grudgingly]:

You're telling the truth, I reckon,  
but I told you the truth, too, when  
I told you, when you came here, that  
I had just lost my husband and he'd  
left me in such a financial hole  
that if living didn't mean more to  
me than money, I'd might as well  
have been dropped in the ocean with  
him.

HANNAH:

Ocean?

MAXINE [peacefully philosophical  
about it]:

I carried out his burial  
instructions exactly. Yep, my  
husband, Fred Faulk, was the  
greatest game fisherman on the West  
Coast of Mexico—he'd racked up  
unbeatable records in sailfish,  
tarpon, kingfish, barracuda—and on  
his deathbed, last week, he  
requested to be dropped in the sea,  
yeah, right out there in that bay,  
not even sewed up in canvas, just in  
his fisherman outfit. So now old  
Freddie the Fisherman is feeding the  
fish—fishes' revenge on old Freddie.

How about that, I ask you?

HANNAH [regarding Maxine sharply]:

I doubt that he regrets it.

MAXINE:

I do. It gives me the shivers.

[She is distracted by the German party singing a marching  
song on the path up from the beach. Shannon appears at the  
top of the path, a wet beachrobe clinging to him. Maxine's  
whole concentration shifts abruptly to him. She freezes and  
blazes with it like an exposed power line. For a moment the

"hot light" is concentrated on her tense, furious figure. Hannah provides a visual counterpoint. She clenches her eyes shut for a moment, and when they open, it is on a look of stoical despair of the refuge she has unsuccessfully fought for. Then Shannon approaches the verandah and the scene is his.]

SHANNON:

Here they come up, your conquerors  
of the world, Maxine honey, singing  
"Horst Wessel." [He chuckles  
fiercely, and starts toward the  
verandah steps.]

MAXINE:

Shannon, wash that sand off you  
before you come on the verandah.

[The Germans are heard singing the "Horst Wessel" marching song. Soon they appear, trooping up from the beach like an animated canvas by Rubens. They are all nearly nude, pinked and bronzed by the sun. The women have decked themselves with garlands of pale green seaweed, glistening wet, and the Munich-opera bridegroom is blowing on a great conch shell.

His father-in-law, the tank manufacturer, has his portable radio, which is still transmitting a short-wave broadcast about the Battle of Britain, now at its climax.]

HILDA [capering, astride her rubber  
horse]:

Horse, horse, horse!

HERR FAHRENKOPF [ecstatically]:

London is burning, the heart of  
London's on fire! [Wolfgang turns a  
handspring onto the verandah and  
walks on his hands a few paces, then  
tumbles over with a great whoop.  
Maxine laughs delightedly with the  
Germans.] Beer, beer, beer!

FRAU FAHRENKOPF:

Tonight champagne!

[The euphoric horseplay and shouting continue as they  
gambol around the turn of the verandah. Shannon has come  
onto the porch. Maxine's laughter dies out a little sadly,  
with envy.]

SHANNON:

You're turning this place into the  
Mexican Berchtesgaden, Maxine honey?

MAXINE:

I told you to wash that sand off.  
[Shouts for beer from the Germans  
draw her around the verandah  
corner.]

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon, do you happen to know  
the Casa de Huéspedes, or anything  
about it, I mean? [Shannon stares at  
her somewhat blankly.] We are, uh,  
thinking of . . . moving there  
tomorrow. Do you, uh, recommend it?

SHANNON:

I recommend it along with the Black  
Hole of Calcutta and the Siberian  
salt mines.

HANNAH [nodding reflectively]:

I suspected as much. Mr. Shannon, in  
your touring party, do you think  
there might be anyone interested in  
my water colors? Or in my character  
sketches?

SHANNON:

I doubt it. I doubt that they're  
corny enough to please my ladies.  
Oh-oh! Great Caesar's ghost. . . .  
[This exclamation is prompted by the  
shrill, approaching call of his  
name. Charlotte appears from the  
rear, coming from the hotel annex,  
and rushes like a teen-age Medea  
toward the verandah. Shannon ducks  
into his cubicle, slamming the door  
so quickly that a corner of the  
mosquito netting is caught and  
sticks out, flirtatiously. Charlotte  
rushes onto the verandah.]

CHARLOTTE:

Larry!

HANNAH:

Are you looking for someone, dear?

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, the man conducting our tour,  
Larry Shannon.

HANNAH:

Oh, Mr. Shannon. I think he went  
down to the beach.

CHARLOTTE:

I just now saw him coming up from  
the beach. [She is tense and  
trembling, and her eyes keep darting  
up and down the verandah.]

HANNAH:

Oh. Well. . . . But. . . .

CHARLOTTE:

Larry? Larry! [Her shouts startle  
the rain-forest birds into a  
clamorous moment.]

HANNAH:

Would you like to leave a message  
for him, dear?

CHARLOTTE:

No. I'm staying right here till he  
comes out of wherever he's hiding.

HANNAH:

Why don't you just sit down, dear.

I'm an artist, a painter. I was just  
sorting out my water colors and  
sketches in this portfolio, and look  
what I've come across. [She selects  
a sketch and holds it up.]

SHANNON [from inside his cubicle]:

Oh, God!

CHARLOTTE [darting to the cubicle]:

Larry, let me in there!

[She beats on the door of the cubicle as Herr Fahrenkopf comes around the verandah with his portable radio. He is bug-eyed with excitement over the news broadcast in German.]

HANNAH:

Guten abend.

[Herr Fahrenkopf jerks his head with a toothy grin, raising a hand for silence. Hannah nods agreeably and approaches him with her portfolio of drawings. He maintains the grin as she displays one picture after another. Hannah is uncertain whether the grin is for the pictures or the news broadcast.]

He stares at the pictures, jerking his head from time to time. It is rather like the pantomime of showing lantern slides.]

CHARLOTTE [suddenly crying out  
again]: Larry, open this door and  
let me in! I know you're in there,

Larry!

HERR FAHRENKOPF:

Silence, please, for one moment!  
This is a recording of Der Führer  
addressing the Reichstag just . . .

[He glances at his wrist watch.] . . .

eight hours ago, today,  
transmitted by Deutsches

Nachrichtenbüro to Mexico City.

Please! Quiet, bitte!

[A human voice like a mad dog's bark emerges from the static momentarily. Charlotte goes on pounding on Shannon's door.]

Hannah suggests in pantomime that they go to the back verandah, but Herr Fahrenkopf despairs of hearing the broadcast. As he rises to leave, the light catches his polished glasses so that he appears for a moment to have electric light bulbs in his forehead. Then he ducks his head in a genial little bow and goes out beyond the verandah, where he performs some muscle-flexing movements of a formalized nature, like the preliminary stances of Japanese Suma wrestlers.]

HANNAH:

May I show you my work on the other  
verandah?

[Hannah had started to follow Herr Fahrenkopf with her portfolio, but the sketches fall out, and she stops to gather them from the floor with the sad, preoccupied air of a lonely child picking flowers.]

[Shannon's head slowly, furtively, appears through the window of his cubicle. He draws quickly back as Charlotte darts that way, stepping on Hannah's spilt sketches. Hannah utters a soft cry of protest, which is drowned by Charlotte's renewed clamor.]

CHARLOTTE:

Larry, Larry, Judy's looking for me.  
Let me come in, Larry, before she  
finds me here!

SHANNON:

You can't come in. Stop shouting and  
I'll come out.

CHARLOTTE:

All right, come out

SHANNON:

Stand back from the door so I can.

[She moves a little aside and he emerges from his cubicle like a man entering a place of execution. He leans against the wall, mopping the sweat off his face with a handkerchief.]

SHANNON:

How does Miss Fellowes know what  
happened that night? Did you tell  
her?

CHARLOTTE:

I didn't tell her, she guessed.

SHANNON:

Guessing isn't knowing. If she is  
just guessing, that means she  
doesn't know—I mean if you're not  
lying, if you didn't tell her.

[Hannah has finished picking up her drawings and moves quietly over to the far side of the verandah.]

CHARLOTTE:

Don't talk to me like that.

SHANNON:

Don't complicate my life now,  
please, for God's sake, don't  
complicate my life now.

CHARLOTTE:

Why have you changed like this?

SHANNON:

I have a fever. Don't complicate my  
. . . fever.

CHARLOTTE:

You act like you hated me now.

SHANNON:

You're going to get me kicked out of  
Blake Tours, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE:

Judy is, not me.

SHANNON:

Why did you sing "I Love You Truly"  
at me?

CHARLOTTE:

Because I do love you truly!

SHANNON:

Honey girl, don't you know that  
nothing worse could happen to a girl  
in your, your . . . unstable  
condition . . . than to get  
emotionally mixed up with a man in  
my unstable condition, huh?

CHARLOTTE:

No, no, no, I-

SHANNON [cutting through]:

Two unstable conditions can set a whole world on fire, can blow it up, past repair, and that is just as true between two people as it's true between. . . .

CHARLOTTE:

All I know is you've got to marry me, Larry, after what happened between us in Mexico City!

SHANNON:

A man in my condition can't marry, it isn't decent or legal. He's lucky if he can even hold onto his job. [He keeps catching hold of her hands and plucking them off his shoulders.] I'm almost out of my mind, can't you see that, honey?

CHARLOTTE:

I don't believe you don't love me.

SHANNON:

Honey, it's almost impossible for anybody to believe they're not loved by someone they believe they love, but, honey, I love nobody. I'm like

that, it isn't my fault. When I brought you home that night I told you good night in the hall, just kissed you on the cheek like the little girl that you are, but the instant I opened my door, you rushed into my room and I couldn't get you out of it, not even when I, oh God, tried to scare you out of it by, oh God, don't you remember?

[Miss Fellowes' voice is heard from back of the hotel calling, "Charlotte!"]

CHARLOTTE:

Yes, I remember that after making love to me, you hit me, Larry, you struck me in the face, and you twisted my arm to make me kneel on the floor and pray with you for forgiveness.

SHANNON:

I do that, I do that always when I, when . . . I don't have a dime left in my nervous emotional bank account -I can't write a check on it, now.

CHARLOTTE:

Larry, let me help you!

MISS FELLOWES [approaching]:

Charlotte, Charlotte, Charlie!

CHARLOTTE:

Help me and let me help you!

SHANNON:

The helpless can't help the  
helpless!

CHARLOTTE:

Let me in, Judy's coming!

SHANNON:

Let me go. Go away!

[He thrusts her violently back and rushes into his cubicle, slamming and bolting the door—though the gauze netting is left sticking out. As Miss Fellowes charges onto the verandah, Charlotte runs into the next cubicle, and Hannah moves over from where she has been watching and meets her in the center.]

MISS FELLOWES:

Shannon, Shannon! Where are you?

HANNAH:

I think Mr. Shannon has gone down to  
the beach.

MISS FELLOWES:

Was Charlotte Goodall with him? A  
young blonde girl in our party—was  
she with him?

HANNAH:

No, nobody was with him, he was  
completely alone.

MISS FELLOWES:

I heard a door slam.

HANNAH:

That was mine.

MISS FELLOWES [pointing to the door  
with the gauze sticking out]:

Is this yours?

HANNAH:

Yes, mine. I rushed out to catch the  
sunset.

[At this moment Miss Fellowes hears Charlotte sobbing in  
Hannah's cubicle. She throws the door open.]

MISS FELLOWES:

Charlotte! Come out of there,  
Charlie! [She has seized Charlotte  
by the wrist.] What's your word  
worth-nothing? You promised you'd  
stay away from him! [Charlotte frees  
her arm, sobbing bitterly. Miss  
Fellowes seizes her again, tighter,  
and starts dragging her away.] I  
have talked to your father about  
this man by long distance and he's  
getting out a warrant for his  
arrest, if he dare try coming back  
to the States after this!

CHARLOTTE:

I don't care.

MISS FELLOWES:

I do! I'm responsible for you.

CHARLOTTE:

I don't want to go back to Texas!

MISS FELLOWES:

Yes, you do! And you will!

[She takes Charlotte firmly by the arm and drags her away behind the hotel. Hannah comes out of her cubicle, where she had gone when Miss Fellowes pulled Charlotte out of it.]

SHANNON [from his cubicle]:

Ah, God. . . .

[Hannah crosses to his cubicle and knocks by the door.]

HANNAH:

The coast is clear now, Mr. Shannon.

[Shannon does not answer or appear. She sets down her portfolio to pick up Nonno's white linen suit, which she had pressed and hung on the verandah. She crosses to his cubicle with it, and calls in.]

HANNAH:

Nonno? It's almost time for supper!

There's going to be a lovely, stormy  
sunset in a few minutes.

NONNO [from within]:

Coming!

HANNAH:

So is Christmas, Nonno.

NONNO:

So is the Fourth of July!

HANNAH:

We're past the Fourth of July.  
Hallowe'en comes next and then  
Thanksgiving. I hope you'll come  
forth sooner. [She lifts the gauze  
net over his cubicle door.] Here's  
your suit, I've pressed it. [She  
enters the cubicle.]

NONNO:

It's mighty dark in here, Hannah.

HANNAH:

I'll turn the light on for you.

[Shannon comes out of his cubicle, like the survivor of a plane crash, bringing out with him several pieces of his clerical garb. The black heavy silk bib is loosely fastened about his panting, sweating chest. He hangs over it a heavy gold cross with an amethyst center and attempts to fasten on a starched round collar. Now Hannah comes back out of Nonno's cubicle, adjusting the flowing silk tie which goes with her "artist" costume. For a moment they both face front, adjusting their two outfits. They are like two actors in a play which is about to fold on the road, preparing gravely for a performance which may be the last one.]

HANNAH [glancing at Shannon]:

Are you planning to conduct church  
services of some kind here tonight,

Mr. Shannon?

SHANNON:

Goddamit, please help me with this!

[He means the round collar.]

HANNAH: [crossing behind him]:  
If you're not going to conduct a  
church service, why get into that  
uncomfortable outfit?

SHANNON:  
Because I've been accused of being  
defrocked and of lying about it,  
that's why. I want to show the  
ladies that I'm still a clocked-  
frocked!-minister of the. . . .

HANNAH:  
Isn't that lovely gold cross enough  
to convince the ladies?

SHANNON:  
No, they know I redeemed it from a  
Mexico City pawnshop, and they  
suspect that that's where I got it  
in the first place.

HANNAH:  
Hold still just a minute. [She is  
behind him, trying to fasten the  
collar.] There now, let's hope it  
stays on. The buttonhole is so  
frayed I'm afraid that it won't hold  
the button. [Her fear is instantly  
confirmed: the button pops out.]

SHANNON:

Where'd it go?

HANNAH:

Here, right under. . . .

[She picks it up. Shannon rips the collar off, crumples it and hurls it off the verandah. Then he falls into the hammock, panting and twisting. Hannah quietly opens her sketch pad and begins to sketch him. He doesn't at first notice what she is doing.]

HANNAH [as she sketches]:

How long have you been inactive in  
the, uh, Church, Mr. Shannon?

SHANNON:

What's that got to do with the price  
of rice in China?

HANNAH [gently]:

Nothing.

SHANNON:

What's it got to do with the price  
of coffee beans in Brazil?

HANNAH:

I retract the question. With  
apologies.

SHANNON:

To answer your question politely, I  
have been inactive in the Church for  
all but one year since I was

ordained a minister of the Church.

HANNAH [sketching rapidly and moving forward a bit to see his face better]:

Well, that's quite a sabbatical, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

Yeah, that's . . . quite a . . . sabbatical.

[Nonno's voice is heard from his cubicle repeating a line of poetry several times.]

SHANNON:

Is your grandfather talking to himself in there?

HANNAH:

No, he composes out loud. He has to commit his lines to memory because he can't see to write them or read them.

SHANNON:

Sounds like he's stuck on one line.

HANNAH:

Yes. I'm afraid his memory is failing. Memory failure is his greatest dread. [She says this almost coolly, as if it didn't matter.]

SHANNON:

Are you drawing me?

HANNAH:

Trying to. You're a very difficult subject. When the Mexican painter Siqueiros did his portrait of the American poet Hart Crane he had to paint him with closed eyes because he couldn't paint his eyes open—there was too much suffering in them and he couldn't paint it.

SHANNON:

Sorry, but I'm not going to close my eyes for you. I'm hypnotizing myself—at least trying to—by looking at the light on the orange tree . . . leaves.

HANNAH:

That's all right. I can paint your eyes open.

SHANNON:

I had one parish one year and then I wasn't defrocked but I was . . . locked out of my church.

HANNAH:

Oh . . . Why did they lock you out of it?

SHANNON:

Fornication and heresy . .  
. . in the same week.

HANNAH [sketching rapidly]:

What were the circumstances of the .  
. . uh . . . first offense?

SHANNON:

Yeah, the fornication came first,  
preceded the heresy by several days.  
A very young Sunday-school teacher  
asked to see me privately in my  
study. A pretty little thing—no  
chance in the world—only child, and  
both of her parents were spinsters,  
almost identical spinsters wearing  
clothes of the opposite sexes.  
Fooling some of the people some of  
the time but not me—none of the  
time. . . . [He is pacing the  
verandah with gathering agitation,  
and the all-inclusive mockery that  
his guilt produces.] Well, she  
declared herself to me—wildly.

HANNAH:

A declaration of love?

SHANNON:

Don't make fun of me, honey!

HANNAH:

I wasn't.

SHANNON:

The natural, or unnatural, attraction of one . . . lunatic for . . . another . . . that's all it was. I was the god-damnedest prig in those days that even you could imagine. I said, let's kneel down together and pray and we did, we knelt down, but all of a sudden the kneeling position turned to a reclining position on the rug of my study and . . . When we got up? I struck her. Yes, I did, I struck her in the face and called her a damned little tramp. So she ran home. I heard the next day she'd cut herself with her father's straightblade razor. Yeah, the paternal spinster shaved.

HANNAH:

Fatally?

SHANNON:

Just broke the skin surface enough to bleed a little, but it made a scandal.

HANNAH:

Yes, I can imagine that it . . .  
provoked some comment.

SHANNON:

That it did, it did that. [He pauses  
a moment in his fierce pacing as if  
the recollection still appalled  
him.] So the next Sunday when I  
climbed into the pulpit and looked  
down over all of those smug,  
disapproving, accusing faces  
uplifted, I had an impulse to shake  
them—so I shook them. I had a  
prepared sermon—mEEK, apologetic—I  
threw it away, tossed it into the  
chancel. Look here, I said, I  
shouted, I'm tired of conducting  
services in praise and worship of a  
senile delinquent—yeah, that's what  
I said, I shouted! All your Western  
theologies, the whole mythology of  
them, are based on the concept of  
God as a senile delinquent and, by  
God, I will not and cannot continue  
to conduct services in praise and  
worship of this, this . . . this. .

. . .

HANNAH [quietly]:

Senile delinquent?

SHANNON:

Yeah, this angry, petulant old man.  
I mean he's represented like a badtempered  
childish old, old, sick,  
peevish man—I mean like the sort of  
old man in a nursing home that's  
putting together a jigsaw puzzle and  
can't put it together and gets  
furious at it and kicks over the  
table. Yes, I tell you they do that,  
all our theologies do it—accuse God  
of being a cruel, senile delinquent,  
blaming the world and brutally  
punishing all he created for his own  
faults in construction, and then,  
ha-ha, yeah—a thunderstorm broke  
that Sunday. . . .

HANNAH:

You mean outside the church?

SHANNON:

Yep, it was wilder than I was! And  
out they slithered, they slithered  
out of their pews to their shiny  
black cockroach sedans, ha-ha, and I  
shouted after them, hell, I even

followed them halfway out of the church, shouting after them as they.

. . . [He stops with a gasp for breath.]

HANNAH:

Slithered out?

SHANNON:

I shouted after them, go on, go home and close your house windows, all your windows and doors, against the truth about God!

HANNAH:

Oh, my heavens. Which is just what they did—poor things.

SHANNON:

Miss Jelkes honey, Pleasant Valley, Virginia, was an exclusive suburb of a large city and these poor things were not poor—materially speaking.

HANNAH [smiling a bit]:

What was the, uh, upshot of it?

SHANNON:

Upshot of it? Well, I wasn't defrocked. I was just locked out of the church in Pleasant Valley, Virginia, and put in a nice little private asylum to recuperate from a

complete nervous breakdown as they preferred to regard it, and then, and then I . . . I entered my present line-tours of God's world conducted by a minister of God with a cross and a round collar to prove it. Collecting evidence!

HANNAH:

Evidence of what, Mr. Shannon?

SHANNON [a touch shyly now]:

My personal idea of God, not as a senile delinquent, but as a . . . .

HANNAH:

Incomplete sentence.

SHANNON:

It's going to storm tonight—a terrific electric storm. Then you will see the Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon's conception of God Almighty paying a visit to the world he created. I want to go back to the Church and preach the gospel of God as Lightning and Thunder . . . and also stray dogs vivisected and . . . and . . . and . . . [He points out suddenly toward the sea.] That's him! There he is now! [He is

pointing out at a blaze, a majestic  
apocalypse of gold light, shafting  
the sky as the sun drops into the  
Pacific.] His oblivious majesty—and  
here I am on this . . . dilapidated  
verandah of a cheap hotel, out of  
season, in a country caught and  
destroyed in its flesh and corrupted  
in its spirit by its gold-hungry  
conquistadors that bore the flag of  
the Inquisition along with the Cross  
of Christ. Yes . . . and. . . .

[There is a pause.]

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon . . . ?

SHANNON:

Yes . . . ?

HANNAH [smiling a little]:

I have a strong feeling you will go  
back to the Church with this  
evidence you've been collecting, but  
when you do and it's a black Sunday  
morning, look out over the  
congregation, over the smug,  
complacent faces for a few old, very  
old faces, looking up at you, as you  
begin your sermon, with eyes like a

piercing cry for something to still  
look up to, something to still  
believe in. And then I think you'll  
not shout what you say you shouted  
that black Sunday in Pleasant  
Valley, Virginia. I think you will  
throw away the violent, furious  
sermon, you'll toss it into the  
chancel, and talk about . . . no,  
maybe talk about . . . nothing . . .  
just. . . .

SHANNON:

What?

HANNAH:

Lead them beside still waters  
because you know how badly they need  
the still waters, Mr. Shannon.

[There is a moment of silence between them.]

SHANNON:

Lemme see that thing. [He seizes the  
sketch pad from her and is visibly  
impressed by what he sees. There is  
another moment which is prolonged to  
Hannah's embarrassment.]

HANNAH:

Where did you say the patrona put  
your party of ladies?

SHANNON:

She had her . . . Mexican concubines  
put their luggage in the annex.

HANNAH:

Where is the annex?

SHANNON:

Right down the hill back of here,  
but all of my ladies except the  
teen-age Medea and the older Medea  
have gone out in a glass-bottomed  
boat to observe the . . . submarine  
marvels.

HANNAH:

Well, when they come back to the  
annex they're going to observe my  
water colors with some marvelous  
submarine prices marked on the  
mattings.

SHANNON:

By God, you're a hustler, aren't  
you, you're a fantastic cool  
hustler.

HANNAH:

Yes, like you, Mr. Shannon. [She  
gently removes her sketch pad from  
his grasp.] Oh, Mr. Shannon, if  
Nonno, Grandfather, comes out of his

cell number 4 before I get back,  
will you please look out for him for  
me? I won't be longer than three  
shakes of a lively sheep's tail.  
[She snatches up her portfolio and  
goes briskly off the verandah.]

SHANNON:

Fantastic, absolutely fantastic.

[There is a windy sound in the rain forest and a flicker of  
gold light like a silent scattering of gold coins on the  
verandah; then the sound of shouting voices. The Mexican  
boys appear with a wildly agitated creature—a captive  
iguana tied up in a shirt. They crouch down by the cactus  
clumps that are growing below the verandah and hitch the  
iguana to a post with a piece of rope. Maxine is attracted  
by the commotion and appears on the verandah above them.]

PEDRO:

Tenemos fiesta!\*

PANCHO:

Comeremos bien.

PEDRO:

Damela, damela! Yo la ataré.

PANCHO:

Yo la cojí—yo la ataré!

PEDRO:

Lo que vas a hacer es dejarla  
escapar.

MAXINE:

Ammarla fuerte! Ole, ole! No la  
dejes escapar. Dejala moverse! [To  
Shannon.] They caught an iguana.

SHANNON:

I've noticed they did that, Maxine.

[She is holding her drink deliberately close to him. The  
Germans have heard the commotion and crowd onto the  
verandah.

Frau Fahrenkopf rushes over to Maxine.]

FRAU FAHRENKOPF:

What is this? What's going on? A  
snake? Did they catch a snake?

MAXINE:

No. Lizard.

FRAU FAHRENKOPF [with exaggerated  
revulsion]:

Ouuu . . . lizard! [She strikes a  
grotesque attitude of terror as if  
she were threatened by Jack the  
Ripper.]

SHANNON [to Maxine]:

You like iguana meat, don't you?

FRAU FAHRENKOPF:

Eat? Eat? A big lizard?

MAXINE:

Yep, they're mighty good eating—  
taste like white meat of chicken.

[Frau Fahrenkopf rushes back to her family. They talk excitedly in German about the iguana.]

SHANNON:

If you mean Mexican chicken, that's  
no recommendation. Mexican chickens  
are scavengers and they taste like  
what they scavenge.

MAXINE:

Naw, I mean Texas chicken.

SHANNON [dreamily]:

Texas . . . chicken. . . .

[He paces restlessly down the verandah. Maxine divides her attention between his tall, lean figure, that seems incapable of stillness, and the wriggling bodies of the Mexican boys lying on their stomachs half under the verandah—as if she were mentally comparing two opposite attractions to her simple, sensual nature. Shannon turns at the end of the verandah and sees her eyes fixed on him.]

SHANNON:

What is the sex of this iguana,  
Maxine?

MAXINE:

Hah, who cares about the sex of an  
iguana . . . [He passes close by  
her.] . . . except another . . .  
iguana?

SHANNON:

Haven't you heard the limerick about  
iguanas? [He removes her drink from  
her hand and it seems as if he might

drink it, but he only sniffs it,  
with an expression of repugnance.

She chuckles.]

There was a young gaucho named  
Bruno

Who said about love, This I do  
know:

Women are fine, and sheep are  
divine,

But iguanas are—Numero Uno!

[On "Numero Uno" Shannon empties Maxine's drink over the railing, deliberately onto the humped, wriggling posterior of Pedro, who springs up with angry protests.]

PEDRO:

Me cágo . . . hijo de la . . .

SHANNON:

Qué? Qué?

MAXINE:

Véte!

[Shannon laughs viciously. The iguana escapes and both boys rush shouting after it. One of them dives on it and recaptures it at the edge of the jungle.]

PANCHO:

La iguana se escapé.\*

MAXINE:

Cojela, cojela! La cojiste? Si no la  
cojes, te morderá el culo. La  
cojiste?

PEDRO:

La cojí.

[The boys wiggle back under the verandah with the iguana.]

MAXINE [returning to Shannon]:

I thought you were gonna break down  
and take a drink, Reverend.

SHANNON:

Just the odor of liquor makes me  
feel nauseated.

MAXINE:

You couldn't smell it if you got it  
in you. [She touches his sweating  
forehead. He brushes her hand off  
like an insect.] Hah! [She crosses  
over to the liquor cart, and he  
looks after her with a sadistic  
grin.]

SHANNON:

Maxine honey, whoever told you that  
you look good in tight pants was not  
a sincere friend of yours.

[He turns away. At the same instant, a crash and a hoarse,  
started outcry are heard from Nonno's cubicle.]

MAXINE:

I knew it, I knew it! The old man's  
took a fall!

[Shannon rushes into the cubicle, followed by Maxine.]

[The light has been gradually, steadily dimming during the incident of the iguana's escape. There is, in effect, a division of scenes here, though it is accomplished without a blackout or curtain. As Shannon and Maxine enter Nonno's cubicle, Herr Fahrenkopf appears on the now twilit verandah.]

He turns on an outsize light fixture that is suspended from overhead, a full pearly-moon of a light globe that gives an unearthly luster to the scene. The great pearly globe is decorated by night insects, large but gossamer moths that have immolated themselves on its surface: the light through their wings gives them an opalescent color, a touch of fantasy.]

[Now Shannon leads the old poet out of his cubicle, onto the facing verandah. The old man is impeccably dressed in snowwhite linen with a black string tie. His leonine mane of hair gleams like silver as he passes under the globe.]

NONNO:

No bones broke, I'm made out of  
India rubber!

SHANNON:

A traveler-born falls down many  
times in his travels.

NONNO:

Hannah? [His vision and other senses  
have so far deteriorated that he  
thinks he is being led out by  
Hannah.] I'm pretty sure I'm going  
to finish it here.

SHANNON [shouting, gently]:

I've got the same feeling, Grampa.

[Maxine follows them out of the cubicle.]

NONNO:

I've never been surer of anything in  
my life.

SHANNON [gently and wryly]:

I've never been surer of anything in  
mine either.

[Herr Fahrenkopf has been listening with an expression of entrancement to his portable radio, held close to his ear, the sound unrealistically low. Now he turns it off and makes an excited speech.]

HERR FAHRENKOPF:

The London fires have spread all the  
way from the heart of London to the  
Channel coast! Goering, Field  
Marshall Goering, calls it "the new  
phase of conquest!" Super-firebombs!

Each night!

[Nonno catches only the excited tone of this announcement and interprets it as a request for a recitation. He strikes the floor with his cane, throws back his silver-maned head and begins the delivery in a grand, declamatory style.]

NONNO:

Youth must be want on, youth must  
be quick,  
Dance to the candle while lasteth  
the wick,  
Youth must be foolish and. . . .

[Nonno falters on the line, a look of confusion and fear on his face. The Germans are amused. Wolfgang goes up to Nonno and shouts into his face.]

WOLFGANG:

Sir? What is your age? How old?

[Hannah, who has just returned to the verandah, rushes up to her grandfather and answers for him.]

HANNAH:

He is ninety-seven years young!

HERR FAHRENKOPF:

How old?

HANNAH:

Ninety-seven—almost a century young!

[Herr Fahrenkopf repeats this information to his beaming wife and Hilda in German.]

NONNO [cutting in on the Germans]:

Youth must be foolish and mirthful

and blind,

Gaze not before and glance not

behind,

Mark not. . . .

[He falters again.]

HANNAH [prompting him, holding tightly onto his arm]:

Mark not the shadow that darkens  
the way—

[They recite the next lines  
together.]

Regret not the glitter of any lost  
day,

But laugh with no reason except the  
red wine,

For youth must be youthful and  
foolish and blind!

[The Germans are loudly amused. Wolfgang applauds directly in the old poet's face. Nonno makes a little unsteady bow, leaning forward precariously on his cane. Shannon takes a firm hold of his arm as Hannah turns to the Germans, opening her portfolio of sketches and addressing Wolfgang.]

HANNAH:

Am I right in thinking you are on  
your honeymoon? [There is no  
response, and she repeats the  
question in German while Frau  
Fahrenkopf laughs and nods  
vehemently.] Habe ich recht dass Sie  
auf Ihrer Hochzeitsreise sind? Was  
für eine hübsche junge Braut! Ich  
mache Pastell-Skizzen . . . darf  
ich, würden Sie mir erlauben . . . ?  
Würden Sie, bitte . . . bitte. . . .

[Herr Fahrenkopf bursts into a Nazi marching song and leads his party to the champagne bucket on the table at the left. Shannon has steered Nonno to the other table.]

NONNO [exhilarated]:

Hannah! What was the take?

HANNAH [embarrassed]:

Grandfather, sit down, please stop  
shouting!

NONNO:

Hah? Did they cross your palm with  
silver or paper, Hannah?

HANNAH [almost desperately]:

Nonno! No more shouting! Sit down at  
the table. It's time to eat!

SHANNON:

Chow time, Grampa.

NONNO [confused but still  
shouting]:

How much did they come across with?

HANNAH:

Nonno! Please!

NONNO:

Did they, did you . . . sell 'em a .  
. . water color?

HANNAH:

No sale, Grandfather!

MAXINE:

Hah!

[Hannah turns to Shannon, her usual composure shattered, or  
nearly so.]

HANNAH:

He won't sit down or stop shouting.

NONNO [blinking and beaming with  
the grotesque suggestion of an old  
coquette]:

Hah? How rich did we strike it,

Hannah?

SHANNON:

You sit down, Miss Jelkes. [He says it with gentle authority, to which she yields. He takes hold of the old man's forearm and places in his hand a crumpled Mexican bill.] Sir? Sir? [He is shouting.] Five! Dollars! I'm putting it in your pocket.

HANNAH:

We can't accept . . . gratuities,  
Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

Hell, I gave him five pesos.

NONNO:

Mighty good for one poem!

SHANNON:

Sir? Sir? The pecuniary rewards of a poem are grossly inferior to its merits, always!

[He is being fiercely, almost mockingly tender with the old man—a thing we are when the pathos of the old, the ancient, the dying is such a wound to our own (savagely beleaguered) nerves and sensibilities that this outside demand on us is beyond our collateral, our emotional reserve. This is as true of Hannah as it is of Shannon, of course. They have both overdrawn their reserves at this point of the encounter between them.]

NONNO:

Hah? Yes. . . . [He is worn out now,  
but still shouting.] We're going to  
clean up in this place!

SHANNON:

You bet you're going to clean up  
here!

[Maxine utters her one-note bark of a laugh. Shannon throws  
a hard roll at her. She wanders amiably back toward the  
German table.]

NONNO [tottering, panting, hanging  
onto Shannon's arm, thinking it is  
Hannah's]:

Is the, the . . . dining room . . .  
crowded? [He looks blindly about  
with wild surmise.]

SHANNON:

Yep, it's filled to capacity!  
There's a big crowd at the door!  
[His voice doesn't penetrate the old  
man's deafness.]

NONNO:

If there's a cocktail lounge,  
Hannah, we ought to . . . work that  
. . . first. Strike while the iron  
is hot, ho, ho, while it's hot. . .  
. [This is like a delirium—only as  
strong a woman as Hannah could

remain outwardly impassive.]

HANNAH:

He thinks you're me, Mr. Shannon.  
Help him into a chair. Please stay  
with him a minute, I. . .

[She moves away from the table and breathes as if she has just been dragged up half-drowned from the sea. Shannon eases the old man into a chair. Almost at once Nonno's feverish vitality collapses and he starts drifting back toward half sleep.]

SHANNON [crossing to HANNAH]:

What're you breathing like that for?

HANNAH:

Some people take a drink, some take  
a pill. I just take a few deep  
breaths.

SHANNON:

You're making too much out of this.  
It's a natural thing in a man as old  
as Grampa.

HANNAH:

I know, I know. He's had more than  
one of these little "cerebral  
accidents" as you call them, and all  
in the last few months. He was  
amazing till lately. I had to show  
his passport to prove that he was  
the oldest living and practicing  
poet on earth. We did well, we made

expenses and more! But . . . when I  
saw he was failing, I tried to  
persuade him to go back to  
Nantucket, but he conducts our  
tours. He said, "No, Mexico!" So  
here we are on this windy hilltop  
like a pair of scarecrows. . . . The  
bus from Mexico City broke down at  
an altitude of 15,000 feet above sea  
level. That's when I think the  
latest cerebral incident happened.  
It isn't so much the loss of hearing  
and sight but the . . . dimming out  
of the mind that I can't bear,  
because until lately, just lately,  
his mind was amazingly clear. But  
yesterday? In Taxco? I spent nearly  
all we had left on the wheelchair  
for him and still he insisted that  
we go on with the trip till we got  
to the sea, the . . . cradle of life  
as he calls it. . . . [She suddenly  
notices Nonno, sunk in his chair as  
if lifeless. She draws a sharp  
breath, and goes quietly to him.]  
SHANNON [to the Mexican boys]:  
Servicio! Aqui! [The force of his

order proves effective: they serve  
the fish course.]

HANNAH:

What a kind man you are. I don't  
know how to thank you, Mr. Shannon.  
I'm going to wake him up now. Nonno!  
[She claps her hands quietly at his  
ear. The old man rouses with a  
confused, breathless chuckle.]  
Nonno, linen napkins. [She removes a  
napkin from the pocket of her  
smock.] I always carry one with me,  
you see, in case we run into paper  
napkins as sometimes happens, you  
see. . . .

NONNO:

Wonderful place here. . . . I hope  
it is à la carte, Hannah, I want a  
very light supper so I won't get  
sleepy. I'm going to work after  
supper. I'm going to finish it here.

HANNAH:

Nonno? We've made a friend here.  
Nonno, this is the Reverend Mr.  
Shannon.

NONNO [struggling out of his  
confusion]: Reverend?

HANNAH [shouting to him]:

Mr. Shannon's an Episcopal  
clergyman, Nonno.

NONNO:

A man of God?

HANNAH:

A man of God, on vacation.

NONNO:

Hannah, tell him I'm too old to  
baptize and too young to bury but on  
the market for marriage to a rich  
widow, fat, fair and forty.

[Nonno is delighted by all of his own little jokes. One can  
see him exchanging these pleasantries with the rocking-  
chair

brigades of summer hotels at the turn of the century—and  
with

professors' wives at little colleges in New England. But  
now

it has become somewhat grotesque in a touching way, this  
desire to please, this playful manner, these venerable  
jokes.

Shannon goes along with it. The old man touches something  
in

him which is outside of his concern with himself. This part  
of the scene, which is played in a "scherzo" mood, has an

accompanying windy obligato on the hilltop—all through it  
we hear the wind from the sea gradually rising, sweeping up  
the hill through the rain forest, and there are fitful  
glimmers of lightning in the sky.]

NONNO:

But very few ladies ever go past  
forty if you believe 'em, ho, ho!  
Ask him to . . . give the blessing.  
Mexican food needs blessing.

SHANNON:

Sir, you give the blessing. I'll be  
right with you. [He has broken one  
of his shoelaces.]

NONNO:

Tell him I will oblige him on one  
condition.

SHANNON:

What condition, sir?

NONNO:

That you'll keep my daughter company  
when I retire after dinner. I go to  
bed with the chickens and get up  
with the roosters, ho, ho! So you're  
a man of God. A benedict or a  
bachelor?

SHANNON:

Bachelor, sir. No sane and civilized  
woman would have me, Mr. Coffin.

NONNO:

What did he say, Hannah?

HANNAH [embarrassed]:

Nonno, give the blessing.

NONNO [not hearing this]:

I call her my daughter, but she's my  
daughter's daughter. We've been in  
charge of each other since she lost  
both her parents in the very first  
automobile crash on the island of  
Nantucket.

HANNAH:

Nonno, give the blessing.

NONNO:

She isn't a modern flapper, she  
isn't modern and she—doesn't flap,  
but she was brought up to be a  
wonderful wife and mother. But . . .  
I'm a selfish old man so I've kept  
her all to myself.

HANNAH [shouting into his ear]:

Nonno, Nonno, the blessing!

NONNO [rising with an effort]:

Yes, the blessing. Bless this food  
to our use, and ourselves to Thy  
service. Amen. [He totters back into  
his chair.]

SHANNON:

Amen.

[Nonno's mind starts drifting, his head drooping forward.  
He murmurs to himself.]

SHANNON:

How good is the old man's poetry?

HANNAH:

My grandfather was a fairly wellknown  
minor poet before the First  
World War and for a little while  
after.

SHANNON:

In the minor league, huh?

HANNAH:

Yes, a minor league poet with a  
major league spirit. I'm proud to be  
his granddaughter. . . . [She draws  
a pack of cigarettes from her  
pocket, then replaces it immediately  
without taking a cigarette.]

NONNO [very confused]:

Hannah, it's too hot for . . . hot  
cereals this . . . morning. . . .  
[He shakes his head several times  
with a rueful chuckle.]

HANNAH:

He's not quite back, you see, he  
thinks it's morning. [She says this  
as if making an embarrassing  
admission, with a quick, frightened

smile at Shannon.]

SHANNON:

Fantastic—fantastic.

HANNAH:

That word “fantastic” seems to be  
your favorite word, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON [looking out gloomily from  
the verandah]:

Yeah, well, you know we—live on two  
levels, Miss Jelkes, the realistic  
level and the fantastic level, and  
which is the real one, really. . . .

HANNAH:

I would say both, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

But when you live on the fantastic  
level as I have lately but have got  
to operate on the realistic level,  
that’s when you’re spooked, that’s  
the spook. . . . [This is said as if  
it were a private reflection.] I  
thought I’d shake the spook here but  
conditions have changed here. I  
didn’t know the patrona had turned  
to a widow, a sort of bright widow  
spider. [He chuckles almost like

Nonno.]

[Maxine has pushed one of those gay little brass-and-glass liquor carts around the corner of the verandah. It is laden with an ice bucket, coconuts and a variety of liquors. She hums gaily to herself as she pushes the cart close to the table.]

MAXINE:

Cocktails, anybody?

HANNAH:

No, thank you, Mrs. Faulk, I don't think we care for any.

SHANNON:

People don't drink cocktails between the fish and the entrée, Maxine honey.

MAXINE:

Grampa needs a toddy to wake him up. Old folks need a toddy to pick 'em up. [She shouts into the old man's ear.] Grampa! How about a toddy?

[Her hips are thrust out at Shannon.]

SHANNON:

Maxine, your ass—excuse me, Miss Jelkes—your hips, Maxine, are too fat for this verandah.

MAXINE:

Hah! Mexicans like 'em, if I can

judge by the pokes and pinches I get  
in the buses to town. And so do the  
Germans. Ev'ry time I go near Herr  
Fahrenkopf he gives me a pinch or a  
goose.

SHANNON:

Then go near him again for another  
goose.

MAXINE:

Hah! I'm mixing Grampa a Manhattan  
with two cherries in it so he'll  
live through dinner.

SHANNON:

Go on back to your Nazis, I'll mix  
the Manhattan for him. [He goes to  
the liquor cart.]

MAXINE [to Hannah]:

How about you, honey, a little soda  
with lime juice?

HANNAH:

Nothing for me, thank you.

SHANNON:

Don't make nervous people more  
nervous, Maxine.

MAXINE:

You better let me mix that toddy for  
Grampa, you're making a mess of it,  
Shannon.

[With a snort of fury, he thrusts the liquor cart like a battering ram at her belly. Some of the bottles fall off it; she thrusts it right back at him.]

HANNAH:

Mrs. Faulk, Mr. Shannon, this is  
childish, please stop it!

[The Germans are attracted by the disturbance. They cluster around, laughing delightedly. Shannon and Maxine seize opposite ends of the rolling liquor cart and thrust it toward each other, both grinning fiercely as gladiators in mortal combat. The Germans shriek with laughter and chatter in German.]

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon, stop it! [She appeals  
to the Germans.] Bitte! Nehmen Sie  
die Spirituosen weg. Bitte, nehmen  
Sie sie weg.

[Shannon has wrested the cart from Maxine and pushed it at the Germans. They scream delightedly. The cart crashes into the wall of the verandah. Shannon leaps down the steps and runs into the foliage. Birds scream in the rain forest. Then sudden quiet returns to the verandah as the Germans go back to their own table.]

MAXINE:

Crazy, black Irish Protestant son of  
a . . . Protestant!

HANNAH:

Mrs. Faulk, he's putting up a  
struggle not to drink.

MAXINE:

Don't interfere. You're an  
interfering woman.

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon is dangerously . . .  
disturbed.

MAXINE:

I know how to handle him, honey—you  
just met him today. Here's Grampa's  
Manhattan cocktail with two cherries  
in it.

HANNAH:

Please don't call him Grampa.

MAXINE:

Shannon calls him Grampa.

HANNAH [taking the drink]:

He doesn't make it sound  
condescending, but you do. My  
grandfather is a gentleman in the  
true sense of the word, he is a  
gentle man.

MAXINE:

What are you?

HANNAH:

I am his granddaughter.

MAXINE:

Is that all you are?

HANNAH:

I think it's enough to be.

MAXINE:

Yeah, but you're also a deadbeat, using that dying old man for a front to get in places without the cash to pay even one day in advance. Why, you're dragging him around with you like Mexican beggars carry around a sick baby to put the touch on the tourists.

HANNAH:

I told you I had no money.

MAXINE:

Yes, and I told you that I was a widow—recent. In such a financial hole they might as well have buried me with my husband.

[Shannon reappears from the jungle foliage but remains unnoticed by Hannah and Maxine.]

HANNAH [with forced calm]:

Tomorrow morning, at daybreak, I will go in town. I will set up my easel in the plaza and peddle my

water colors and sketch tourists. I  
am not a weak person, my failure  
here isn't typical of me.

MAXINE:

I'm not a weak person either.

HANNAH:

No. By no means, no. Your strength  
is awe-inspiring.

MAXINE:

You're goddam right about that, but  
how do you think you'll get to  
Acapulco without the cabfare or even  
the busfare there?

HANNAH:

I will go on shanks' mare, Mrs.  
Faulk— Islanders are good walkers.  
And if you doubt my word for it, if  
you really think I came here as a  
deadbeat, then I will put my  
grandfather back in his wheelchair  
and push him back down this hill to  
the road and all the way back into  
town.

MAXINE:

Ten miles, with a storm coming up?

HANNAH:

Yes, I would—I will. [She is

dominating Maxine in this exchange.  
Both stand beside the table. Nonno's  
head is drooping back into sleep.]

MAXINE:

I wouldn't let you.

HANNAH:

But you've made it clear that you  
don't want us to stay here for one  
night even.

MAXINE:

The storm would blow that old man  
out of his wheelchair like a dead  
leaf.

HANNAH:

He would prefer that to staying  
where he's not welcome, and I would  
prefer it for him, and for myself,  
Mrs. Faulk. [She turns to the  
Mexican boys.] Where is his  
wheelchair? Where is my  
grandfather's wheelchair?

[This exchange has roused the old man. He struggles up from  
his chair, confused, strikes the floor with his cane and  
starts declaiming a poem.]

NONNO:

Love's an old remembered song  
A drunken fiddler plays,

Stumbling crazily along  
Crooked alleyways.  
When his heart is mad with music  
He will play the—

HANNAH:

Nonno, not now, Nonno! He thought  
someone asked for a poem. [She gets  
him back into the chair. Hannah and  
Maxine are still unaware of  
Shannon.]

MAXINE:

Calm down, honey.

HANNAH:

I'm perfectly calm, Mrs. Faulk.

MAXINE:

I'm not. That's the trouble.

HANNAH:

I understand that, Mrs. Faulk. You  
lost your husband just lately. I  
think you probably miss him more  
than you know.

MAXINE:

No, the trouble is Shannon.

HANNAH:

You mean his nervous state and his .

. . ?

MAXINE:

No, I just mean Shannon. I want you  
to lay off him, honey. You're not  
for Shannon and Shannon isn't for  
you.

HANNAH:

Mrs. Faulk, I'm a New England  
spinster who is pushing forty.

MAXINE:

I got the vibrations between you—I'm  
very good at catching vibrations  
between people—and there sure was a  
vibration between you and Shannon  
the moment you got here. That, just  
that, believe me, nothing but that  
has made this . . . misunderstanding  
between us. So if you just don't  
mess with Shannon, you and your  
Grampa can stay on here as long as  
you want to, honey.

HANNAH:

Oh, Mrs. Faulk, do I look like a  
vamp?

MAXINE:

They come in all types. I've had all  
types of them here.

[Shannon comes over to the table.]

SHANNON:

Maxine, I told you don't make  
nervous people more nervous, but you  
wouldn't listen.

MAXINE:

What you need is a drink.

SHANNON:

Let me decide about that.

HANNAH:

Won't you sit down with us, Mr.  
Shannon, and eat something? Please.

You'll feel better.

SHANNON:

I'm not hungry right now.

HANNAH:

Well, just sit down with us, won't  
you?

[Shannon sits down with Hannah.]

MAXINE [warningly to Hannah]:

O.K. O.K. . . .

NONNO [rousing a bit and mumbling]:

Wonderful . . . wonderful place  
here.

[Maxine retires from the table and wheels the liquor cart  
over to the German party.]

SHANNON:

Would you have gone through with it?

HANNAH:

Haven't you ever played poker, Mr.  
Shannon?

SHANNON:

You mean you were bluffing?

HANNAH:

Let's say I was drawing to an inside  
straight. [The wind rises and sweeps  
up the hill like a great waking sigh  
from the ocean.] It is going to  
storm. I hope your ladies aren't  
still out in that, that . . . glassbottomed  
boat, observing the, uh,  
submarine . . . marvels.

SHANNON:

That's because you don't know these  
ladies. However, they're back from  
the boat trip. They're down at the  
cantina, dancing together to the  
jukebox and hatching new plots to  
get me kicked out of Blake Tours.

HANNAH:

What would you do if you. . . .

SHANNON:

Got the sack? Go back to the Church  
or take the long swim to China.  
[Hannah removes a crumpled pack of  
cigarettes from her pocket. She

discovers only two left in the pack and decides to save them for later. She returns the pack to her pocket.] May I have one of your cigarettes, Miss Jelkes? [She offers him the pack. He takes it from her and crumples it and throws it off the verandah.] Never smoke those, they're made out of tobacco from cigarette stubs that beggars pick up off sidewalks and out of gutters in Mexico City. [He produces a tin of English cigarettes.] Have these—Benson and Hedges, imported, in an airtight tin, my luxury in my life.

HANNAH:

Why—thank you, I will, since you have thrown mine away.

SHANNON:

I'm going to tell you something about yourself. You are a lady, a real one and a great one.

HANNAH:

What have I done to merit that compliment from you?

SHANNON:

It isn't a compliment, it's just a

report on what I've noticed about you at a time when it's hard for me to notice anything outside myself.

You took out those Mexican cigarettes, you found you just had two left, you can't afford to buy a new pack of even that cheap brand, so you put them away for later.

Right?

HANNAH:

Mercilessly accurate, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

But when I asked you for one, you offered it to me without a sign of reluctance.

HANNAH:

Aren't you making a big point out of a small matter?

SHANNON:

Just the opposite, honey, I'm making a small point out of a very large matter. [Shannon has put a cigarette in his lips but has no matches. Hannah has some and she lights his cigarette for him.] How'd you learn how to light a match in the wind?

HANNAH:

Oh, I've learned lots of useful  
little things like that. I wish I'd  
learned some big ones.

SHANNON:

Such as what?

HANNAH:

How to help you, Mr. Shannon. . . .

SHANNON:

Now I know why I came here!

HANNAH:

To meet someone who can light a  
match in the wind?

SHANNON [looking down at the table,  
his voice choking]:

To meet someone who wants to help  
me, Miss Jelkes. . . . [He makes a  
quick, embarrassed turn in the  
chair, as if to avoid her seeing  
that he has tears in his eyes. She  
regards him steadily and tenderly,  
as she would her grandfather.]

HANNAH:

Has it been so long since anyone has  
wanted to help you, or have you  
just. . . .

SHANNON:

Have I—what?

HANNAH:

Just been so much involved with a  
struggle in yourself that you  
haven't noticed when people have  
wanted to help you, the little they  
can? I know people torture each  
other many times like devils, but  
sometimes they do see and know each  
other, you know, and then, if  
they're decent, they do want to help  
each other all that they can. Now  
will you please help me? Take care  
of Nonno while I remove my water  
colors from the annex verandah  
because the storm is coming up by  
leaps and bounds now.

[He gives a quick, jerky nod, dropping his face briefly into the cup of his hands. She murmurs "Thank you" and springs up, starting along the verandah. Halfway across, as the storm closes in upon the hilltop with a thunderclap and a sound of rain coming, Hannah turns to look back at the table. Shannon has risen and gone around the table to Nonno.]

SHANNON:

Grampa? Nonno? Let's get up before  
the rain hits us, Grampa.

NONNO:

What? What?

[Shannon gets the old man out of his chair and shepherds him to the back of the verandah as Hannah rushes toward the annex. The Mexican boys hastily clear the table, fold it up and lean it against the wall. Shannon and Nonno turn and face toward the storm, like brave men facing a firing squad.

Maxine is excitedly giving orders to the boys.]

MAXINE:

Pronto, pronto, muchachos! Pronto,  
pronto! Llevaros todas las cosas!  
Pronto, pronto! Recoje los platos!

Apurate con el mantel!\*

PEDRO:

Nos estamos dando prisa!

PANCHO:

Que el chubasco lave los platos!

[The German party look on the storm as a Wagnerian climax.

They rise from their table as the boys come to clear it, and start singing exultantly. The storm, with its white convulsions of light, is like a giant white bird attacking the hilltop of the Costa Verde. Hannah reappears with her water colors clutched against her chest.]

SHANNON:

Got them?

HANNAH:

Yes, just in time. Here is your God,

Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON [quietly]:

Yes, I see him, I hear him, I know  
him. And if he doesn't know that I  
know him, let him strike me dead  
with a bolt of his lightning.

[He moves away from the wall to the edge of the verandah as a fine silver sheet of rain descends off the sloping roof, catching the light and dimming the figures behind it. Now everything is silver, delicately lustrous. Shannon extends his hands under the rainfall, turning them in it as if to cool them. Then he cups them to catch the water in his palms and bathes his forehead with it. The rainfall increases. The sound of the marimba band at the beach cantina is brought up the hill by the wind. Shannon lowers his hands from his burning forehead and stretches them out through the rain's silver sheet as if he were reaching for something outside and beyond himself. Then nothing is visible but these reaching out hands. A pure white flash of lightning reveals Hannah and Nonno against the wall, behind Shannon, and the electric globe suspended from the roof goes out, the power extinguished by the storm. A clear shaft of light stays on Shannon's reaching-out hands.]

FADE OUT

3 EXT. OUTSIDE COSTA VERDE HOTEL-NIGHT

FADE IN

The verandah, several hours later. Cubicles number 3, 4, and 5 are dimly lighted within. We see Hannah in number 3, and Nonno in number 4. Shannon, who has taken off his shirt, is seated at a table on the verandah, writing a letter to his bishop. All but this table have been folded and stacked against the wall and Maxine is putting the hammock back up which had been taken down for dinner. The electric power is still off and the cubicles are lighted by oil lamps. The sky has cleared completely, the moon is making for full and it bathes the scene in an almost garish silver which is intensified by the wetness from the recent rainstorm.

Everything is drenched—there are pools of silver here and

there on the floor of the verandah. At one side a smudge-pot is burning to repel the mosquitoes, which are particularly vicious after a tropical downpour when the wind is exhausted.

Shannon is working feverishly on the letter to the bishop, now and then slapping at a mosquito on his bare torso. He is shiny with perspiration, still breathing like a spent runner, muttering to himself as he writes and sometimes suddenly drawing a loud deep breath and simultaneously throwing back his head to stare up wildly at the night sky. Hannah is seated on a straight-back chair behind the mosquito netting in her cubicle—very straight herself, holding a small book in her hands but looking steadily over it at Shannon, like a guardian angel. Her hair has been let down. Nonno can be seen in his cubicle rocking back and forth on the edge of the narrow bed as he goes over and over the lines of his first new poem in “twenty-some years”—which he knows is his last one.

Now and then the sound of distant music drifts up from the beach cantina.

MAXINE:

Workin' on your sermon for next  
Sunday, Rev'rend?

SHANNON:

I'm writing a very important letter,  
Maxine. [He means don't disturb me.]

MAXINE:

Who to, Shannon?

SHANNON:

The Dean of the Divinity School at  
Sewanee. [Maxine repeats “Sewanee”  
to herself, tolerantly.] Yes, and  
I'd appreciate it very much, Maxine  
honey, if you'd get Pedro or Pancho  
to drive into town with it tonight

so it will go out first thing in the  
morning.

MAXINE:

The kids took off in the station  
wagon already—for some cold beers  
and hot whores at the cantina.

SHANNON:

"Fred's dead"—he's lucky. . . .

MAXINE:

Don't misunderstand me about Fred,  
baby. I miss him, but we'd not only  
stopped sleeping together, we'd  
stopped talking together except in  
grunts—no quarrels, no  
misunderstandings, but if we  
exchanged two grunts in the course  
of a day, it was a long conversation  
we'd had that day between us.

SHANNON:

Fred knew when I was spooked—  
wouldn't have to tell him. He'd just  
look at me and say, "Well, Shannon,  
you're spooked."

MAXINE:

Yeah, well, Fred and me'd reached  
the point of just grunting.

SHANNON:

Maybe he thought you'd turned into a  
pig, Maxine.

MAXINE:

Hah! You know damn well that Fred  
respected me, Shannon, like I did  
Fred. We just, well, you know . . .  
age difference. . . .

SHANNON:

Well, you've got Pedro and Pancho.

MAXINE:

Employees. They don't respect me  
enough. When you let employees get  
too free with you, personally, they  
stop respecting you, Shannon. And  
it's, well, it's . . . humiliating—  
not to be . . . respected.

SHANNON:

Then take more bus trips to town for  
the Mexican pokes and the pinches,  
or get Herr Fahrenkopf to "respect"  
you, honey.

MAXINE:

Hah! You kill me. I been thinking  
lately of selling out here and going  
back to the States, to Texas, and  
operating a tourist camp outside  
some live town like Houston or

Dallas, on a highway, and renting out cabins to business executives wanting a comfortable little intimate little place to give a little after-hours dictation to their cute little secretaries that can't type or write shorthand. Complimentary rum-cocos-bathrooms with bidets. I'll introduce the bidet to the States.

SHANNON:

Does everything have to wind up on that level with you, Maxine?

MAXINE:

Yes and no, baby. I know the difference between loving someone and just sleeping with someone—even I know about that. [He starts to rise.] We've both reached a point where we've got to settle for something that works for us in our lives—even if it isn't on the highest kind of level.

SHANNON:

I don't want to rot.

MAXINE:

You wouldn't. I wouldn't let you! I

know your psychological history. I remember one of your conversations on this verandah with Fred. You was explaining to him how your problems first started. You told him that Mama, your Mama, used to send you to bed before you was ready to sleep—so you practiced the little boy's vice, you amused yourself with yourself. And once she caught you at it and whaled your backside with the back side of a hairbrush because she said she had to punish you for it because it made God mad as much as it did Mama, and she had to punish you for it so God wouldn't punish you for it harder than she would.

SHANNON:

I was talking to Fred.

MAXINE:

Yeah, but I heard it, all of it. You said you loved God and Mama and so you quit it to please them, but it was your secret pleasure and you harbored a secret resentment against Mama and God for making you give it up. And so you got back at God by

preaching atheistical sermons and  
you got back at Mama by starting to  
lay young girls.

SHANNON:

I have never delivered an  
atheistical sermon, and never would  
or could when I go back to the  
Church.

MAXINE:

You're not going back to no Church.

Did you mention the charge of  
statutory rape to the divinity dean?

SHANNON [thrusting his chair back  
so vehemently that it topples over]:

Why don't you let up on me? You  
haven't let up on me since I got  
here this morning! Let up on me!

Will you please let up on me?

MAXINE [smiling serenely into his  
rage.]:

Aw baby. . . .

SHANNON:

What do you mean by "aw baby"? What  
do you want out of me, Maxine honey?

MAXINE:

Just to do this. [She runs her  
fingers through his hair. He thrusts

her hand away.]

SHANNON:

Ah, God. [Words fail him. He shakes his head with a slight, helpless laugh and goes down the steps from the verandah.]

MAXINE:

The Chinaman in the kitchen says, "No sweat." . . . "No sweat." He says that's all his philosophy. All the Chinese philosophy in three words, "Mei yoo guanchi"—which is Chinese for "No sweat." . . . With your record and a charge of statutory rape hanging over you in Texas, how could you go to a church except to the Holy Rollers with some lively young female rollers and a bushel of hay on the church floor?

SHANNON:

I'll drive into town in the bus to post this letter tonight. [He has started toward the path. There are sounds below. He divides the masking foliage with his hands and looks down the hill.]

MAXINE [descending the steps from

the verandah]:

Watch out for the spook, he's out  
there.

SHANNON:

My ladies are up to something.  
They're all down there on the road,  
around the bus.

MAXINE:

They're running out on you, Shannon.

[She comes up beside him. He draws back and she looks down the hill. The light in number 3 cubicle comes on and Hannah rises from the little table that she had cleared for letter writing.

She removes her Kabuki robe from a hook and puts it on as an actor puts on a costume in his dressing room.

Nonno's cubicle is also lighted dimly. He sits on the edge of his cot, rocking slightly back and forth, uttering an indistinguishable mumble of lines from his poem.]

MAXINE:

Yeah. There's a little fat man down  
there that looks like Jake Latta to  
me. Yep, that's Jake, that's Latta.

I reckon Blake Tours has sent him  
here to take over your party,  
Shannon. [Shannon looks out over the  
jungle and lights a cigarette with  
jerky fingers.] Well, let him do it.

No sweat! He's coming up here now.

Want me to handle it for you?

SHANNON:

I'll handle it for myself. You keep  
out of it, please.

[He speaks with a desperate composure. Hannah stands just behind the curtain of her cubicle, motionless as a painted figure, during the scene that follows. Jake Latta comes puffing up the verandah steps, beaming genially.]

LATTA:

Hi there, Larry.

SHANNON:

Hello, Jake. [He folds his letter into an envelope.] Mrs. Faulk honey,  
this goes air special.

MAXINE:

First you'd better address it.

SHANNON:

Oh!

[Shannon laughs and snatches the letter back, fumbling in his pocket for an address book, his fingers shaking uncontrollably. Latta winks at Maxine. She smiles tolerantly.]

LATTA:

How's our boy doin', Maxine?

MAXINE:

He'd feel better if I could get him  
to take a drink.

LATTA:

Can't you get a drink down him?

MAXINE:

Nope, not even a rum-coco.

LATTA:

Let's have a rum-coco, Larry.

SHANNON:

You have a rum-coco, Jake. I have a party of ladies to take care of. And I've discovered that situations come up in this business that call for cold, sober judgment. How about you?

Haven't you ever made that discovery, Jake? What're you doing here? Are you here with a party?

LATTA:

I'm here to pick up your party,  
Larry boy.

SHANNON:

That's interesting! On whose  
authority, Jake?

LATTA:

Blake Tours wired me in Cuernavaca to pick up your party here and put them together with mine cause you'd had this little nervous upset of yours and. . . .

SHANNON:

Show me the wire! Huh?

LATTA:

The bus driver says you took the  
ignition key to the bus.

SHANNON:

That's right. I have the ignition  
key to the bus and I have this party  
and neither the bus or the party  
will pull out of here till I say so.

LATTA:

Larry, you're a sick boy. Don't give  
me trouble.

SHANNON:

What jail did they bail you out of,  
you fat zero?

LATTA:

Let's have the bus key, Larry.

SHANNON:

Where did they dig you up? You've  
got no party in Cuernavaca, you  
haven't been out with a party since  
'thirty-seven.

LATTA:

Just give me the bus key, Larry.

SHANNON:

In a pig's-snout!—like yours!

LATTA:

Where is the reverend's bedroom,  
Mrs. Faulk?

SHANNON:

The bus key is in my pocket. [He slaps his pants pocket fiercely.] Here, right here, in my pocket! Want it? Try and get it, Fatso!

LATTA:

What language for a reverend to use, Mrs. Faulk. . . .

SHANNON [holding up the key]: See it? [He thrusts it back into his pocket.] Now go back wherever you crawled from. My party of ladies is staying here three more days because several of them are in no condition to travel and neither—neither am I.

LATTA:

They're getting in the bus now.

SHANNON:

How are you going to start it?

LATTA:

Larry, don't make me call the bus driver up here to hold you down while I get that key away from you. You want to see the wire from Blake Tours? Here. [He produces the wire.]

Read it.

SHANNON:

You sent that wire to yourself.

LATTA:

From Houston?

SHANNON:

You had it sent you from Houston.  
What's that prove? Why, Blake Tours  
was nothing, nothing!—till they got  
me. You think they'd let me go?—Ho,  
ho! Latta, it's caught up with you,  
Latta, all the whores and tequila  
have hit your brain now, Latta.  
[Latta shouts down the hill for the  
bus driver.] Don't you realize what  
I mean to Blake Tours? Haven't you  
seen the brochure in which they  
mention, they brag, that special  
parties are conducted by the  
Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon, D.D.,  
noted world traveler, lecturer, son  
of a minister and grandson of a  
bishop, and the direct descendant of  
two colonial governors? [Miss  
Fellowes appears at the verandah  
steps.] Miss Fellowes has read the  
brochure, she's memorized the  
brochure. She knows what it says  
about me.

MISS FELLOWES [to Latta]:

Have you got the bus key?

LATTA:

Bus driver's going to get it away  
from him, lady. [He lights a cigar  
with dirty, shaky fingers.]

SHANNON:

Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! [His laughter shakes  
him back against the verandah wall.]

LATTA:

He's gone. [He touches his  
forehead.]

SHANNON:

Why, those ladies . . . have had . .  
. some of them, most of them if not  
all of them . . . for the first time  
in their lives the advantage of  
contact, social contact, with a  
gentleman born and bred, whom under  
no other circumstances they could  
have possibly met . . . let alone be  
given the chance to insult and  
accuse and. . . .

MISS FELLOWES:

Shannon! The girls are in the bus  
and we want to go now, so give up  
that key. Now!

[Hank, the bus driver, appears at the top of the path, whistling casually: he is not noticed at first.]

SHANNON:

If I didn't have a decent sense of responsibility to these parties I take out, I would gladly turn over your party—because I don't like your party—to this degenerate here, this Jake Latta of the gutter-rat Lattas. Yes, I would—I would surrender the bus key in my pocket, even to Latta, but I am not that irresponsible, no, I'm not, to the parties that I take out, regardless of the party's treatment of me. I still feel responsible for them till I get them back wherever I picked them up.

[Hank comes onto the verandah.] Hi,

Hank. Are you friend or foe?

HANK:

Larry, I got to get that ignition key now so we can get moving down there.

SHANNON:

Oh! Then foe! I'm disappointed,

Hank. I thought you were friend, not foe. [Hank puts a wrestler's armlock on Shannon and Latta removes the bus key from his pocket. Hannah raises a hand to her eyes.] O.K., O.K., you've got the bus key. By force. I feel exonerated now of all responsibility. Take the bus and the ladies in it and go. Hey, Jake, did you know they had Lesbians in Texas—without the dikes the plains of Texas would be engulfed by the Gulf. [He nods his head violently toward Miss Fellowes, who springs forward and slaps him.] Thank you, Miss Fellowes. Latta, hold on a minute. I will not be stranded here. I've had unusual expenses on this trip. Right now I don't have my fare back to Houston or even to Mexico City. Now if there's any truth in your statement that Blake Tours have really authorized you to take over my party, then I am sure they have . . . [He draws a breath, almost gasping.] . . . I'm sure they must have given you something in the . . .

. the nature of . . . severance pay?  
Or at least enough to get me back to  
the States?

LATTA:

I got no money for you.

SHANNON:

I hate to question your word, but. .

. .

LATTA:

We'll drive you back to Mexico City.

You can sit up front with the  
driver.

SHANNON:

You would do that, Latta. I'd find  
it humiliating. Now! Give me my  
severance pay!

LATTA:

Blake Tours is having to refund  
those ladies half the price of the  
tour. That's your severance pay. And  
Miss Fellowes tells me you got  
plenty of money out of this young  
girl you seduced in. . . .

SHANNON:

Miss Fellowes, did you really make  
such a . . . ?

MISS FELLOWES:

When Charlotte returned that night,  
she'd cashed two traveler's checks.

SHANNON:

After I had spent all my own cash.

MISS FELLOWES:

On what? Whores in the filthy places  
you took her through?

SHANNON:

Miss Charlotte cashed two ten-dollar  
traveler's checks because I had  
spent all the cash I had on me. And  
I've never had to, I've certainly  
never desired to, have relations  
with whores.

MISS FELLOWES:

You took her through ghastly places,  
such as. . . .

SHANNON:

I showed her what she wanted me to  
show her. Ask her! I showed her San  
Juan de Letran, I showed her Tenampa  
and some other places not listed in  
the Blake Tours brochure. I showed  
her more than the floating gardens  
at Xochimilco, Maximilian's Palace,  
and the mad Empress Carlotta's  
little homesick chapel, Our Lady of

Guadalupe, the monument to Juarez,  
the relics of the Aztec  
civilization, the sword of Cortez,  
the headdress of Montezuma. I showed  
her what she told me she wanted to  
see. Where is she? Where is Miss . .  
. oh, down there with the ladies.  
[He leans over the rail and shouts  
down.] Charlotte! Charlotte! [Miss  
Fellowes seizes his arm and thrusts  
him away from the verandah rail.]

MISS FELLOWES:

Don't you dare!

SHANNON:

Dare what?

MISS FELLOWES:

Call her, speak to her, go near her,  
you, you . . . filthy!

[Maxine reappears at the corner of the verandah, with the ceremonial rapidity of a cuckoo bursting from a clock to announce the hour. She just stands there with an incongruous grin, her big eyes unblinking, as if they were painted on her round beaming face. Hannah holds a gold-lacquered Japanese fan motionless but open in one hand; the other hand touches the netting at the cubicle door as if she were checking an impulse to rush to Shannon's defense. Her attitude has the style of a Kabuki dancer's pose. Shannon's manner becomes courtly again.]

SHANNON:

Oh, all right, I won't. I only wanted her to confirm my story that I took her out that night at her request, not at my . . . suggestion. All that I did was offer my services to her when she told me she'd like to see things not listed in the brochure, not usually witnessed by ordinary tourists such as. . . .

MISS FELLOWES:

Your hotel bedroom? Later? That too?  
She came back flea-bitten!

SHANNON:

Oh, now, don't exaggerate, please.  
Nobody ever got any fleas off  
Shannon.

MISS FELLOWES:

Her clothes had to be fumigated!

SHANNON:

I understand your annoyance, but you are going too far when you try to make out that I gave Charlotte fleas. I don't deny that. . . .

MISS FELLOWES:

Wait till they get my report!

SHANNON:

I don't deny that it's possible to  
get fleabites on a tour of  
inspection  
of what lies under the public  
surface of cities, off the grand  
boulevards, away from the night  
clubs, even away from Diego Rivera's  
murals, but. . . .

MISS FELLOWES:

Oh, preach that in a pulpit,  
Reverend Shannon de-frocked!

SHANNON [ominously]:

You've said that once too often. [He  
seizes her arm.] This time before  
witnesses. Miss Jelkes? Miss Jelkes!

[Hannah opens the curtain of her cubicle.]

HANNAH:

Yes, Mr. Shannon, what is it?

SHANNON:

You heard what this. . . .

MISS FELLOWES:

Shannon! Take your hand off my arm!

SHANNON:

Miss Jelkes, just tell me, did you  
hear what she . . . [His voice stops  
oddly with a choked sobbing sound.]

He runs at the wall and pounds it  
with his fists.]

MISS FELLOWES:

I spent this entire afternoon and  
over twenty dollars checking up on  
this impostor, with long-distance  
phone calls.

HANNAH:

Not impostor—you mustn't say things  
like that.

MISS FELLOWES:

You were locked out of your church!—  
for atheism and seducing of girls!

SHANNON [turning about]:

In front of God and witnesses, you  
are lying, lying!

LATTA:

Miss Fellowes, I want you to know  
that Blake Tours was deceived about  
this character's background and  
Blake Tours will see that he is  
blacklisted from now on at every  
travel agency in the States.

SHANNON:

How about Africa, Asia, Australia?  
The whole world, Latta, God's world,  
has been the range of my travels. I

haven't stuck to the schedules of  
the brochures and I've always  
allowed the ones that were willing  
to see, to see!—the underworlds of  
all places, and if they had hearts  
to be touched, feelings to feel  
with, I gave them a priceless chance  
to feel and be touched. And none  
will ever forget it, none of them,  
ever, never! [The passion of his  
speech imposes a little stillness.]

LATTA:

Go on, lie back in your hammock,  
that's all you're good for, Shannon.  
[He goes to the top of the path and  
shouts down the hill.] O.K., let's  
get cracking. Get that luggage  
strapped on top of the bus, we're  
moving! [He starts down the hill  
with Miss Fellowes.]

NONNO [incongruously, from his  
cubicle]:

How calmly does the orange branch  
Observe the sky begin to blanch. .

. .

[Shannon sucks in his breath with an abrupt, fierce sound.  
He rushes off the verandah and down the path toward the  
road.]

Hannah calls after him, with a restraining gesture. Maxine appears on the verandah. Then a great commotion commences below the hill, with shrieks of outrage and squeals of shocked laughter.]

MAXINE [rushing to the path]:

Shannon! Shannon! Get back up here,  
get back up here. Pedro, Pancho,  
traerme a Shannon. Que está haciendo  
allí? Oh, my God! Stop him, for  
God's sake, somebody stop him!

[Shannon returns, panting and spent. He is followed by Maxine.]

MAXINE:

Shannon, go in your room and stay  
there until that party's gone.

SHANNON:

Don't give me orders.

MAXINE:

You do what I tell you to do or I'll  
have you removed—you know where.

SHANNON:

Don't push me, don't pull at me,  
Maxine.

MAXINE:

All right, do as I say.

SHANNON:

Shannon obeys only Shannon.

MAXINE:

You'll sing a different tune if they

put you where they put you in  
'thirty-six. Remember 'thirty-six,  
Shannon?

SHANNON:

O.K., Maxine, just . . . let me  
breathe alone, please. I won't go  
but I will lie in the . . . hammock.

MAXINE:

Go into Fred's room where I can  
watch you.

SHANNON:

Later, Maxine, not yet.

MAXINE:

Why do you always come here to crack  
up, Shannon?

SHANNON:

It's the hammock, Maxine, the  
hammock by the rain forest.

MAXINE:

Shannon, go in your room and stay  
there until I get back. Oh, my God,  
the money. They haven't paid the  
mother-grabbin' bill. I got to go  
back down there and collect their  
goddam bill before they. . . .

Pancho, vijilalo, entiendes? [She rushes back down the hill, shouting "Hey! Just a minute down there!"]

SHANNON:

What did I do? [He shakes his head, stunned.] I don't know what I did.

[Hannah opens the screen of her cubicle but doesn't come out.

She is softly lighted so that she looks, again, like a medieval sculpture of a saint. Her pale gold hair catches the soft light. She has let it down and still holds the silverbacked brush with which she was brushing it.]

SHANNON:

God almighty, I . . . what did I do?

I don't know what I did. [He turns to the Mexican boys who have come back up the path.] Que hicie? Que hicie?

[There is breathless, spasmodic laughter from the boys as Pancho informs him that he pissed on the ladies' luggage.]

PANCHO:

Tú measte en las maletas de las señoras!

[Shannon tries to laugh with the boys, while they bend double with amusement. Shannon's laughter dies out in little choked spasms. Down the hill, Maxine's voice is raised in angry altercation with Jake Latta. Miss Fellowes' voice is lifted and then there is a general rhubarb to which is added the roar of the bus motor.]

SHANNON:

There go my ladies, ha, ha! There go  
my . . . [He turns about to meet  
Hannah's grave, compassionate gaze.  
He tries to laugh again. She shakes  
her head with a slight restraining  
gesture and drops the curtain so  
that her softly luminous figure is  
seen as through a mist.] . . .  
ladies, the last of my—ha, ha!—  
ladies.

[He bends far over the verandah rail, then straightens  
violently and with an animal outcry begins to pull at the  
chain suspending the gold cross about his neck. Pancho  
watches indifferently as the chain cuts the back of  
Shannon's neck. Hannah rushes out to him.]

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon, stop that! You're  
cutting yourself doing that. That  
isn't necessary, so stop it! [to  
Pancho:] Agarrale las manos! [Pancho  
makes a halfhearted effort to  
comply, but Shannon kicks at him and  
goes on with the furious selflaceration.]  
Shannon, let me do it,  
let me take it off you. Can I take  
it off you?

[He drops his arms. She  
struggles with the clasp of the  
chain but her fingers are too shaky  
to work it.]

SHANNON:

No, no, it won't come off, I'll have  
to break it off me.

HANNAH:

No, no, wait—I've got it. [She has  
now removed it.]

SHANNON:

Thanks. Keep it. Goodbye! [He starts  
toward the path down to the beach.]

HANNAH:

Where are you going? What are you  
going to do?

SHANNON:

I'm going swimming. I'm going to  
swim out to China!

HANNAH:

No, no, not tonight, Shannon!

Tomorrow . . . tomorrow, Shannon!

[But he divides the trumpet-flowered bushes and passes  
through them. Hannah rushes after him, screaming for "Mrs.  
Faulk." Maxine can be heard shouting for the Mexican boys.]

MAXINE:

Muchachos, cojerlo! Atarlo! Esté loco. Traerlo aqui. Catch him, he's crazy. Bring him back and tie him up!

[In a few moments Shannon is hauled back through the bushes and onto the verandah by Maxine and the boys. They rope him into the hammock. His struggle is probably not much of a real struggle—histrionics mostly. But Hannah stands wringing her hands by the steps as Shannon, gasping for breath, is tied up.]

HANNAH:

The ropes are too tight on his chest!

MAXINE:

No, they're not. He's acting, acting. He likes it! I know this black Irish bastard like nobody ever knowed him, so you keep out of it, honey. He cracks up like this so regular that you can set a calendar by it. Every eighteen months he does it, and twice he's done it here and I've had to pay for his medical care. Now I'm going to call in town to get a doctor to come out here and give him a knockout injection, and if he's not better tomorrow he's going into the Casa de Locos again like he did the last time he cracked

up on me!

[There is a moment of silence.]

SHANNON:

Miss Jelkes?

HANNAH:

Yes.

SHANNON:

Where are you?

HANNAH:

I'm right here behind you. Can I do  
anything for you?

SHANNON:

Sit here where I can see you. Don't  
stop talking. I have to fight this  
panic.

[There is a pause. She moves a chair beside his hammock. The Germans troop up from the beach. They are delighted by the drama that Shannon has provided. In their scanty swimsuits they parade onto the verandah and gather about Shannon's captive figure as if they were looking at a funny animal in a zoo. Their talk is in German except when they speak directly to Shannon or Hannah. Their heavily handsome figures gleam with oily wetness and they keep chuckling lubriciously.]

HANNAH:

Please! Will you be so kind as to  
leave him alone?

[They pretend not to understand her. Frau Fahrenkopf bends over Shannon in his hammock and speaks to him loudly and slowly in English.]

FRAU FAHRENKOPF:

Is this true you make pee-pee all  
over the suitcases of the ladies  
from Texas? Hah? Hah? You run down  
there to the bus and right in front  
of the ladies you pees all over the  
luggage of the ladies from Texas?

[Hannah's indignant protest is drowned in the Rabelaisian  
laughter of the Germans.]

HERR FAHRENKOPF:

Thees is vunderbar, vunderbar! Hah?  
Thees is a epic gesture! Hah? Thees  
is the way to demonstrate to ladies  
that you are a American gentleman!

Hah?

[He turns to the others and makes a ribald comment. The two  
women shriek with amusement, Hilda falling back into the  
arms of Wolfgang, who catches her with his hands over her  
almost nude breasts.]

HANNAH [calling out]:

Mrs. Faulk! Mrs. Faulk! [She rushes  
to the verandah angle as Maxine  
appears there.] Will you please ask  
these people to leave him alone.  
They're tormenting him like an  
animal in a trap.

[The Germans are already trooping around the verandah,  
laughing and capering gaily.]

SHANNON [suddenly, in a great shout]: Regression to infantilism, ha, ha, regression to infantilism . . . The infantile protest, ha, ha, ha, the infantile expression of rage at Mama and rage at God and rage at the goddam crib, and rage at the everything, rage at the . . . everything. . . . Regression to infantilism. . . .

[Now all have left but Hannah and Shannon.]

SHANNON:

Untie me.

HANNAH:

Not yet.

SHANNON:

I can't stand being tied up.

HANNAH:

You'll have to stand it a while.

SHANNON:

It makes me panicky.

HANNAH:

I know.

SHANNON:

A man can die of panic.

HANNAH:

Not if he enjoys it as much as you,

Mr. Shannon.

[She goes into her cubicle directly behind his hammock. The cubicle is lighted and we see her removing a small teapot and a tin of tea from her suitcase on the cot, then a little alcohol burner. She comes back out with these articles.]

SHANNON:

What did you mean by that insulting  
remark?

HANNAH:

What remark, Mr. Shannon?

SHANNON:

That I enjoy it.

HANNAH:

Oh . . . that.

SHANNON:

Yes. That.

HANNAH:

That wasn't meant as an insult, just  
an observation. I don't judge  
people, I draw them. That's all I  
do, just draw them, but in order to  
draw them I have to observe them,  
don't I?

SHANNON:

And you've observed, you think you've observed, that I like being tied in this hammock, trussed up in it like a hog being hauled off to the slaughter house, Miss Jelkes.

HANNAH:

Who wouldn't like to suffer and atone for the sins of himself and the world if it could be done in a hammock with ropes instead of nails, on a hill that's so much lovelier than Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, Mr. Shannon? There's something almost voluptuous in the way that you twist and groan in that hammock—no nails, no blood, no death. Isn't that a comparatively comfortable, almost voluptuous kind of crucifixion to suffer for the guilt of the world, Mr. Shannon?

[She strikes a match to light the alcohol burner. A pure blue jet of flame springs up to cast a flickering, rather unearthly glow on their section of the verandah. The glow is delicately refracted by the subtle, jaded colors of her robe—a robe given to her by a Kabuki actor who posed for her in Japan.]

SHANNON:

Why have you turned against me all  
of a sudden, when I need you the  
most?

HANNAH:

I haven't turned against you at all,  
Mr. Shannon. I'm just attempting to  
give you a character sketch of  
yourself, in words instead of pastel  
crayons or charcoal.

SHANNON:

You're certainly suddenly very sure  
of some New England spinsterish  
attitudes that I didn't know you had  
in you. I thought that you were an  
emancipated Puritan, Miss Jelkes.

HANNAH:

Who is . . . ever . . . completely?

SHANNON:

I thought you were sexless but  
you've suddenly turned into a woman.  
Know how I know that? Because you,  
not me—not me—are taking pleasure in  
my tied-up condition. All women,  
whether they face it or not, want to  
see a man in a tied-up situation.  
They work at it all their lives, to

get a man in a tied-up situation. Their lives are fulfilled, they're satisfied at last, when they get a man, or as many men as they can, in the tied-up situation. [Hannah leaves the alcohol burner and teapot and moves to the railing where she grips a verandah post and draws a few deep breaths.] You don't like this observation of you? The shoe's too tight for comfort when it's on your own foot, Miss Jelkes? Some deep breaths again—feeling panic? HANNAH [recovering and returning to the burner]:

I'd like to untie you right now, but let me wait till you've passed through your present disturbance. You're still indulging yourself in your . . . your Passion Play performance. I can't help observing this self-indulgence in you.

SHANNON:

What rotten indulgence?

HANNAH:

Well, your busload of ladies from the female college in Texas. I don't

like those ladies any more than you do, but after all, they did save up all year to make this Mexican tour, to stay in stuffy hotels and eat the food they're used to. They want to be at home away from home, but you .

. . you indulged yourself, Mr. Shannon. You did conduct the tour as if it was just for you, for your own pleasure.

SHANNON:

Hell, what pleasure—going through hell all the way?

HANNAH:

Yes, but comforted, now and then, weren't you, by the little musical prodigy under the wing of the college vocal instructor?

SHANNON:

Funny, ha-ha funny! Nantucket spinsters have their wry humor, don't they?

HANNAH:

Yes, they do. They have to.

SHANNON [becoming progressively quieter under the cool influence of her voice behind him]:

I can't see what you're up to, Miss  
Jelkes honey, but I'd almost swear  
you're making a pot of tea over  
there.

HANNAH:

That is just what I'm doing.

SHANNON:

Does this strike you as the right  
time for a tea party?

HANNAH:

This isn't plain tea, this is poppyseed  
tea.

SHANNON:

Are you a slave to the poppy?

HANNAH:

It's a mild, sedative drink that  
helps you get through nights that  
are hard for you to get through and  
I'm making it for my grandfather and  
myself as well as for you, Mr.  
Shannon. Because, for all three of  
us, this won't be an easy night to  
get through. Can't you hear him in  
his cell number 4, mumbling over and  
over and over the lines of his new  
poem? It's like a blind man climbing  
a staircase that goes to nowhere,

that just falls off into space, and  
I hate to say what it is. . . . [She  
draws a few deep breaths behind  
him.]

SHANNON:

Put some hemlock in his poppy-seed  
tea tonight so he won't wake up  
tomorrow for the removal to the Casa  
de Huéspedes. Do that act of mercy.

Put in the hemlock and I will  
consecrate it, turn it to God's  
blood. Hell, if you'll get me out of  
this hammock I'll serve it to him  
myself, I'll be your accomplice in  
this act of mercy. I'll say, "Take  
and drink this, the blood of our—"

HANNAH:

Stop it! Stop being childishly  
cruel! I can't stand for a person  
that I respect to talk and behave  
like a small, cruel boy, Mr.

Shannon.

SHANNON:

What've you found to respect in me,  
Miss . . . Thin-Standing-Up-Female-  
Buddha?

HANNAH:

I respect a person that has had to  
fight and howl for his decency and  
his—

SHANNON:

What decency?

HANNAH:

Yes, for his decency and his bit of  
goodness, much more than I respect  
the lucky ones that just had theirs  
handed out to them at birth and  
never afterward snatched away from  
them by . . . unbearable . . .  
torments, I. . . .

SHANNON:

You respect me?

HANNAH:

I do.

SHANNON:

But you just said that I'm taking  
pleasure in a . . . voluptuous  
crucifixion without nails. A . . .  
what? . . . painless atonement for  
the—

HANNAH [cutting in]:

Yes, but I think—

SHANNON:

Untie me!

HANNAH:

Soon, soon. Be patient.

SHANNON:

Now!

HANNAH:

Not quite yet, Mr. Shannon. Not till I'm reasonably sure that you won't swim out to China, because, you see, I think you think of the . . . "the long swim to China" as another painless atonement. I mean I don't think you think you'd be intercepted by sharks and barracudas before you got far past the barrier reef. And I'm afraid you would be. It's as simple as that, if that is simple.

SHANNON:

What's simple?

HANNAH:

Nothing, except for simpletons, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

Do you believe in people being tied up?

HANNAH:

Only when they might take the long swim to China.

SHANNON:

All right, Miss Thin-Standing-Up-Female-Buddha, just light a Benson and Hedges cigarette for me and put it in my mouth and take it out when you hear me choking on it—if that doesn't seem to you like another bit of voluptuous self-crucifixion.

HANNAH [looking about the verandah]:

I will, but . . . where did I put them?

SHANNON:

I have a pack of my own in my pocket.

HANNAH:

Which pocket?

SHANNON:

I don't know which pocket, you'll have to frisk me for it. [She pats his jacket pocket.]

HANNAH:

They're not in your coat pocket.

SHANNON:

Then look for them in my pants' pockets.

[She hesitates to put her hand in his pants' pockets, for a moment. Hannah has always had a sort of fastidiousness, a reluctance, toward intimate physical contact. But after the momentary fastidious hesitation, she puts her hands in his pants' pocket and draws out the cigarette pack.]

SHANNON:

Now light it for me and put it in my  
mouth.

[She complies with these directions. Almost at once he chokes and the cigarette is expelled.]

HANNAH:

You've dropped it on you—where is  
it?

SHANNON [twisting and lunging about  
in the hammock]:

It's under me, under me, burning.  
Untie me, for God's sake, will you—  
it's burning me through my pants!

HANNAH:

Raise your hips so I can—

SHANNON:

I can't, the ropes are too tight.  
Untie me, untieeeee meeeeee!

HANNAH:

I've found it, I've got it!

[But Shannon's shout has brought Maxine out of her office. She rushes onto the verandah and sits on Shannon's legs.]

MAXINE:

Now hear this, you crazy black Irish  
mick, you! You Protestant black  
Irish looney, I've called up Lopez,  
Doc Lopez. Remember him—the man in  
the dirty white jacket that come  
here the last time you cracked up  
here? And hauled you off to the Casa  
de Locos? Where they threw you into  
that cell with nothing in it but a  
bucket and straw and a water pipe?  
That you crawled up the water pipe?  
And dropped head-down on the floor  
and got a concussion? Yeah, and I  
told him you were back here to crack  
up again and if you didn't quiet  
down here tonight you should be  
hauled out in the morning.

SHANNON [cutting in, with the  
honking sound of a panicky goose]:

Off, off, off, off, off!

HANNAH:

Oh, Mrs. Faulk, Mr. Shannon won't  
quiet down till he's left alone in  
the hammock.

MAXINE:

Then why don't you leave him alone?

HANNAH:

I'm not sitting on him and he . . .  
has to be cared for by someone.

MAXINE:

And the someone is you?

HANNAH:

A long time ago, Mrs. Faulk, I had  
experience with someone in Mr.  
Shannon's condition, so I know how  
necessary it is to let them be quiet  
for a while.

MAXINE:

He wasn't quiet, he was shouting.

HANNAH:

He will quiet down again. I'm  
preparing a sedative tea for him,  
Mrs. Faulk.

MAXINE:

Yeah, I see. Put it out. Nobody  
cooks here but the Chinaman in the  
kitchen.

HANNAH:

This is just a little alcohol  
burner, a spirit lamp, Mrs. Faulk.

MAXINE:

I know what it is. It goes out!

[She blows out the flame under the burner.]

SHANNON:

Maxine honey? [He speaks quietly now.] Stop persecuting this lady. You can't intimidate her. A bitch is no match for a lady except in a brass bed, honey, and sometimes not even there.

[The Germans are heard shouting for beer—a case of it to take down to the beach.]

WOLFGANG:

Eine Kiste Carta Blanca.

FRAU FAHRENKOPF:

Wir haben genug gehabt . . .  
vielleicht nicht.

HERR FAHRENKOPF:

Nein! Niemals genug.

HILDA:

Mutter du bist dick . . . aber wir  
sind es nicht.

SHANNON:

Maxine, you're neglecting your duties as a beerhall waitress. [His tone is deceptively gentle.] They want a case of Carta Blanca to carry down to the beach, so give it to 'em . . . and tonight, when the moon's gone down, if you'll let me out of

this hammock, I'll try to imagine  
you as a . . . as a nymph in her  
teens.

MAXINE:

A fat lot of good you'd be in your  
present condition.

SHANNON:

Don't be a sexual snob at your age,  
honey.

MAXINE:

Hah! [But the unflattering offer has  
pleased her realistically modest  
soul, so she goes back to the  
Germans.]

SHANNON:

Now let me try a bit of your poppyseed  
tea, Miss Jelkes.

HANNAH:

I ran out of sugar, but I had some  
ginger, some sugared ginger. [She  
pours a cup of tea and sips it.] Oh,  
it's not well brewed yet, but try to  
drink some now and the—[She lights  
the burner again.]—the second cup  
will be better.

[She crouches by the hammock and presses the cup to his lips. He raises his head to sip it, but he gags and chokes.]

SHANNON:

Caesar's ghost!—it could be chased  
by the witches' brew from Macbeth.

HANNAH:

Yes, I know, it's still bitter.

[The Germans appear on the wing of the verandah and go trooping down to the beach, for a beer festival and a moonlight swim. Even in the relative dark they have a luminous color, an almost phosphorescent pink and gold color of skin. They carry with them a case of Carta Blanca beer and the fantastically painted rubber horse. On their faces are smiles of euphoria as they move like a dream-image, starting to sing a marching song as they go.]

SHANNON:

Fiends out of hell with the . . .  
voices of . . . angels.

HANNAH:

Yes, they call it "the logic of  
contradictions," Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON [lunging suddenly forward  
and undoing the loosened ropes]:

Out! Free! Unassisted!

HANNAH:

Yes, I never doubted that you could  
get loose, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

Thanks for your help, anyhow.

HANNAH:

Where are you going? [He has crossed  
to the liquor cart.]

SHANNON:

Not far. To the liquor cart to make  
myself a rum-coco.

HANNAH:

Oh. . . .

SHANNON [at the liquor cart]:

Coconut? Check. Machete? Check. Rum?  
Double check! Ice? The ice-bucket's  
empty. O.K., it's a night for warm  
drinks. Miss Jelkes? Would you care  
to have your complimentary rum-coco?

HANNAH:

No thank you, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

You don't mind me having mine?

HANNAH:

Not at all, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

You don't disapprove of this  
weakness, this self-indulgence?

HANNAH:

Liquor isn't your problem, Mr.  
Shannon.

SHANNON:

What is my problem, Mr. Jelkes?

HANNAH:

The oldest one in the world—the need  
to believe in something or in  
someone—almost anyone—almost  
anything . . . something.

SHANNON:

Your voice sounds hopeless about it.

HANNAH:

No, I'm not hopeless about it. In  
fact, I've discovered something to  
believe in.

SHANNON:

Something like . . . God?

HANNAH:

No.

SHANNON:

What?

HANNAH:

Broken gates between people so they  
can reach each other, even if it's  
just for one night only.

SHANNON:

One night stands, huh?

HANNAH:

One night . . . communication  
between them on a verandah outside  
their . . . separate cubicles, Mr.  
Shannon.

SHANNON:

You don't mean physically, do you?

HANNAH:

No.

SHANNON:

I didn't think so. Then what?

HANNAH:

A little understanding exchanged  
between them, a wanting to help each  
other through nights like this.

SHANNON:

Who was the someone you told the  
widow you'd helped long ago to get  
through a crack-up like this one I'm  
going through?

HANNAH:

Oh . . . that. Myself.

SHANNON:

You?

HANNAH:

Yes. I can help you because I've  
been through what you are going

through now. I had something like  
your spook—I just had a different  
name for him. I called him the blue  
devil, and . . . oh . . . we had  
quite a battle, quite a contest  
between us.

SHANNON:

Which you obviously won.

HANNAH:

I couldn't afford to lose.

SHANNON:

How'd you beat your blue devil?

HANNAH:

I showed him that I could endure him  
and I made him respect my endurance.

SHANNON:

How?

HANNAH:

Just by, just by . . . enduring.  
Endurance is something that spooks  
and blue devils respect. And they  
respect all the tricks that panicky  
people use to outlast and outwit  
their panic.

SHANNON:

Like poppy-seed tea?

HANNAH:

Poppy-seed tea or rum-cocos or just  
a few deep breaths. Anything,  
everything, that we take to give  
them the slip, and so to keep on  
going.

SHANNON:

To where?

HANNAH:

To somewhere like this, perhaps.  
This verandah over the rain forest  
and the still-water beach, after  
long, difficult travels. And I don't  
mean just travels about the world,  
the earth's surface. I mean . . .  
subterranean travels, the . . . the  
journeys that the spooked and  
bedeviled people are forced to take  
through the . . . the unlighted  
sides of their natures.

SHANNON:

Don't tell me you have a dark side  
to your nature. [He says this  
sardonically.]

HANNAH:

I'm sure I don't have to tell a man  
as experienced and knowledgeable as  
you, Mr. Shannon, that everything  
has its shadowy side?

[She glances up at him and observes that she doesn't have his attention. He is gazing tensely at something off the verandah. It is the kind of abstraction, not vague but fiercely concentrated, that occurs in madness. She turns to look where he's looking. She closes her eyes for a moment and draws a deep breath, then goes on speaking in a voice like a hypnotist's, as if the words didn't matter, since he is not listening to her so much as to the tone and the cadence of her voice.]

HANNAH:

Everything in the whole solar system  
has a shadowy side to it except the  
sun itself—the sun is the single  
exception. You're not listening, are  
you?

SHANNON [as if replying to her]:

The spook is in the rain forest. [He  
suddenly hurls his coconut shell  
with great violence off the  
verandah, creating a commotion among  
the jungle birds.] Good shot—it  
caught him right on the kisser and  
his teeth flew out like popcorn from  
a popper.

HANNAH:

Has he gone off—to the dentist?

SHANNON:

He's retreated a little way away for a little while, but when I buzz for my breakfast tomorrow, he'll bring it in to me with a grin that'll curdle the milk in the coffee and he'll stink like a . . . a gringo drunk in a Mexican jail who's slept all night in his vomit.

HANNAH:

If you wake up before I'm out, I'll bring your coffee in to you . . . if you call me.

SHANNON [His attention returns to her]:

No, you'll be gone, God help me.

HANNAH:

Maybe and maybe not. I might think of something tomorrow to placate the widow.

SHANNON:

The widow's implacable, honey.

HANNAH:

I think I'll think of something because I have to. I can't let Nonno be moved to the Casa de Huéspedes, Mr. Shannon. Not any more than I

could let you take the long swim out  
to China. You know that. Not if I  
can prevent it, and when I have to  
be resourceful, I can be very  
resourceful.

SHANNON:

How'd you get over your crack-up?

HANNAH:

I never cracked up, I couldn't  
afford to. Of course, I nearly did  
once. I was young once, Mr. Shannon,  
but I was one of those people who  
can be young without really having  
their youth, and not to have your  
youth when you are young is  
naturally very disturbing. But I was  
lucky. My work, this occupational  
therapy that I gave myself—painting  
and doing quick character sketches—  
made me look out of myself, not in,  
and gradually, at the far end of the  
tunnel that I was struggling out of  
I began to see this faint, very  
faint gray light—the light of the  
world outside me—and I kept climbing  
toward it. I had to.

SHANNON:

Did it stay a gray light?

HANNAH:

No, no, it turned white.

SHANNON:

Only white, never gold?

HANNAH:

No, it stayed only white, but white is a very good light to see at the end of a long black tunnel you thought would be never-ending, that only God or Death could put a stop to, especially when you . . . since I was . . . far from sure about God.

SHANNON:

You're still unsure about him?

HANNAH:

Not as unsure as I was. You see, in my profession I have to look hard and close at human faces in order to catch something in them before they get restless and call out, "Waiter, the check, we're leaving." Of course sometimes, a few times, I just see blobs of wet dough that pass for human faces, with bits of jelly for eyes. Then I cue in Nonno to give a

recitation, because I can't draw such faces. But those aren't the usual faces, I don't think they're even real. Most times I do see something, and I can catch it—I can, like I caught something in your face when I sketched you this afternoon with your eyes open. Are you still listening to me? [He crouches beside her chair, looking up at her intently.] In Shanghai, Shannon, there is a place that's called the House for the Dying—the old and penniless dying, whose younger, penniless living children and grandchildren take them there for them to get through with their dying on pallets, on straw mats. The first time I went there it shocked me, I ran away from it. But I came back later and I saw that their children and grandchildren and the custodians of the place had put little comforts beside their death-pallets, little flowers and opium candies and religious emblems. That made me able to stay to draw their dying faces.

Sometimes only their eyes were still  
alive, but, Mr. Shannon, those eyes  
of the penniless dying with those  
last little comforts beside them, I  
tell you, Mr. Shannon, those eyes  
looked up with their last dim life  
left in them as clear as the stars  
in the Southern Cross, Mr. Shannon.  
And now . . . now I am going to say  
something to you that will sound  
like something that only the  
spinster granddaughter of a minor  
romantic poet is likely to say. . .  
. Nothing I've ever seen has seemed  
as beautiful to me, not even the  
view from this verandah between the  
sky and the still-water beach, and  
lately . . . lately my grandfather's  
eyes have looked up at me like that.

. . . [She rises abruptly and  
crosses to the front of the  
verandah.] Tell me, what is that  
sound I keep hearing down there?

SHANNON:

There's a marimba band at the  
cantina on the beach.

HANNAH:

I don't mean that, I mean that  
scraping, scuffling sound that I  
keep hearing under the verandah.

SHANNON:

Oh, that. The Mexican boys that work  
here have caught an iguana and tied  
it up under the verandah, hitched it  
to a post, and naturally of course  
it's trying to scramble away. But  
it's got to the end of its rope, and  
get any further it cannot. Ha-ha-  
that's it. [He quotes from Nonno's  
poem: "And still the orange," etc.]  
Do you have any life of your own-  
besides your water colors and  
sketches and your travels with  
Grampa?

HANNAH:

We make a home for each other, my  
grandfather and I. Do you know what  
I mean by a home? I don't mean a  
regular home. I mean I don't mean  
what other people mean when they  
speak of a home, because I don't  
regard a home as a . . . well, as a  
place, a building . . . a house . .  
. of wood, bricks, stone. I think of

a home as being a thing that two people have between them in which each can . . . well, nest—rest—live in, emotionally speaking. Does that make any sense to you, Mr. Shannon?

SHANNON:

Yeah, complete. But. . . .

HANNAH:

Another incomplete sentence.

SHANNON:

We better leave it that way. I might've said something to hurt you.

HANNAH:

I'm not thin skinned, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

No, well, then, I'll say it. . . .  
[He moves to the liquor cart.] When a bird builds a nest to rest in and live in, it doesn't build it in a . . . a falling-down tree.

HANNAH:

I'm not a bird, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

I was making an analogy, Miss Jelkes.

HANNAH:

I thought you were making yourself

another rum-coco, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

Both. When a bird builds a nest, it builds it with an eye for the . . . the relative permanence of the location, and also for the purpose of mating and propagating its species.

HANNAH:

I still say that I'm not a bird, Mr. Shannon, I'm a human being and when a member of that fantastic species builds a nest in the heart of another, the question of permanence isn't the first or even the last thing that's considered . . . necessarily? . . . always? Nonno and I have been continually reminded of the impermanence of things lately. We go back to a hotel where we've been many times before and it isn't there any more. It's been demolished and there's one of those glassy, brassy new ones. Or if the old one's still there, the manager or the maître d' who always welcomed us back so cordially before has been

replaced by someone new who looks at  
us with suspicion.

SHANNON:

Yeah, but you still had each other.

HANNAH:

Yes. We did.

SHANNON:

But when the old gentleman goes?

HANNAH:

Yes?

SHANNON:

What will you do? Stop?

HANNAH:

Stop or go on . . . probably go on.

SHANNON:

Alone? Checking into hotels alone,  
eating alone at tables for one in a  
corner, the tables waiters call  
aces.

HANNAH:

Thank you for your sympathy, Mr.  
Shannon, but in my profession I'm  
obliged to make quick contacts with  
strangers who turn to friends very  
quickly.

SHANNON:

Customers aren't friends.

HANNAH:

They turn to friends, if they're  
friendly.

SHANNON:

Yeah, but how will it seem to be  
traveling alone after so many years  
of traveling with. . . .

HANNAH:

I will know how it feels when I feel  
it—and don't say alone as if nobody  
had ever gone on alone. For  
instance, you.

SHANNON:

I've always traveled with  
trainloads, planeloads and busloads  
of tourists.

HANNAH:

That doesn't mean you're still not  
really alone.

SHANNON:

I never fail to make an intimate  
connection with someone in my  
parties.

HANNAH:

Yes, the youngest young lady, and I  
was on the verandah this afternoon  
when the latest of these young

ladies gave a demonstration of how lonely the intimate connection has always been for you. The episode in the cold, inhuman hotel room, Mr. Shannon, for which you despise the lady almost as much as you despise yourself. Afterward you are so polite to the lady that I'm sure it must chill her to the bone, the scrupulous little attentions that you pay her in return for your little enjoyment of her. The gentleman-of-Virginia act that you put on for her, your noblesse oblige treatment of her . . . Oh no, Mr. Shannon, don't kid yourself that you ever travel with someone. You have always traveled alone except for your spook, as you call it. He's your traveling companion. Nothing, nobody else has traveled with you.

SHANNON:

Thank you for your sympathy, Miss Jelkes.

HANNAH:

You're welcome, Mr. Shannon. And now I think I had better warm up the

poppy-seed tea for Nonno. Only a good night's sleep could make it possible for him to go on from here tomorrow.

SHANNON:

Yes, well, if the conversation is over—I think I'll go down for a swim now.

HANNAH:

To China?

SHANNON:

No, not to China, just to the little island out here with the sleepy bar on it . . . called the Cantina Serena.

HANNAH:

Why?

SHANNON:

Because I'm not a nice drunk and I was about to ask you a not nice question.

HANNAH:

Ask it. There's no set limit on questions here tonight.

SHANNON:

And no set limit on answers?

HANNAH:

None I can think of between you and  
me, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

That I will take you up on.

HANNAH:

Do.

SHANNON:

It's a bargain.

HANNAH:

Only do lie back down in the hammock  
and drink a full cup of the poppyseed  
tea this time. It's warmer now  
and the sugared ginger will make it  
easier to get down.

SHANNON:

All right. The question is this:  
have you never had in your life any  
kind of a lovelife? [Hannah stiffens  
for a moment.] I thought you said  
there was no limit set on questions.

HANNAH:

We'll make a bargain—I will answer  
your question after you've had a  
full cup of the poppy-seed tea so  
you'll be able to get the good  
night's sleep you need, too. It's  
fairly warm now and the sugared

ginger's made it much more—[She sips  
the cup.]—palatable.

SHANNON:

You think I'm going to drift into  
dreamland so you can welch on the  
bargain? [He accepts the cup from  
her.]

HANNAH:

I'm not a welcher on bargains. Drink  
it all. All. All!

SHANNON [with a disgusted grimace  
as he drains the cup]:

Great Caesar's ghost. [He tosses the  
cup off the verandah and falls into  
the hammock, chuckling.] The  
Oriental idea of a Mickey Finn, huh?  
Sit down where I can see you, Miss  
Jelkes honey. [She sits down in a  
straight-back chair, some distance  
from the hammock.] Where I can see  
you! I don't have an X-ray eye in  
the back of my head, Miss Jelkes.  
[She moves the chair alongside the  
hammock.] Further, further, up  
further. [She complies.] There now.  
Answer the question now, Miss Jelkes  
honey.

HANNAH:

Would you mind repeating the  
question.

SHANNON [slowly, with emphasis]:

Have you never had in all of your  
life and your travels any  
experience, any encounter, with what  
Larry-the-crackpot Shannon thinks of  
as a lovelife?

HANNAH:

There are . . . worse things than  
chastity, Mr. Shannon.

SHANNON:

Yeah, lunacy and death are both a  
little worse, maybe! But chastity  
isn't a thing that a beautiful woman  
or an attractive man falls into like  
a booby trap or an overgrown gopher  
hole, is it? [There is a pause.] I  
still think you are welching on the  
bargain and I. . . . [He starts out  
of the hammock]

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon, this night is just as  
hard for me to get through as it is  
for you to get through. But it's you  
that are welching on the bargain,

you're not staying in the hammock.  
Lie back down in the hammock. Now.

Yes. Yes, I have had two  
experiences, well, encounters, with.

. . .

SHANNON:

Two, did you say?

HANNAH:

Yes, I said two. And I wasn't  
exaggerating and don't you say  
"fantastic" before I've told you  
both stories. When I was sixteen,  
your favorite age, Mr. Shannon, each  
Saturday afternoon my grandfather  
Nonno would give me thirty cents, my  
allowance, my pay for my secretarial  
and housekeeping duties. Twenty-five  
cents for admission to the Saturday  
matinee at the Nantucket movie  
theatre and five cents extra for a  
bag of popcorn, Mr. Shannon. I'd sit  
at the almost empty back of the  
movie theatre so that the popcorn  
munching wouldn't disturb the other  
movie patrons. Well . . . one  
afternoon a young man sat down  
beside me and pushed his . . . knee

against mine and . . . I moved over  
two seats but he moved over beside  
me and continued this . . .  
pressure! I jumped up and screamed,  
Mr. Shannon. He was arrested for  
molesting a minor.

SHANNON:

Is he still in the Nantucket jail?

HANNAH:

No. I got him out. I told the police  
that it was a Clara Bow picture—it  
was a Clara Bow picture—and I was  
just overexcited.

SHANNON:

Fantastic.

HANNAH:

Yes, very! The second experience is  
much more recent, only two years  
ago, when Nonno and I were operating  
at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore,  
and doing very well there, making  
expenses and more. One evening in  
the Palm Court of the Raffles we met  
this middle-aged, sort of  
nondescript Australian salesman. You  
know—plump, bald-spotted, with a bad  
attempt at speaking with an upperclass

accent and terribly  
overfriendly. He was alone and  
looked lonely. Grandfather said him  
a poem and I did a quick character  
sketch that was shamelessly  
flattering of him. He paid me more  
than my usual asking price and gave  
my grandfather five Malayan dollars,  
yes, and he even purchased one of my  
water colors. Then it was Nonno's  
bedtime. The Aussie salesman asked  
me out in a sampan with him. Well,  
he'd been so generous . . . I  
accepted. I did, I accepted.  
Grandfather went up to bed and I  
went out in the sampan with this  
ladies' underwear salesman. I  
noticed that he became more and  
more. . . .

SHANNON:

What?

HANNAH:

Well . . . agitated . . . as the  
afterglow of the sunset faded out on  
the water. [She laughs with a  
delicate sadness.] Well, finally,  
eventually, he leaned toward me . .

. we were vis-à-vis in the sampan .  
. . and he looked intensely,  
passionately into my eyes. [She  
laughs again.] And he said to me:  
"Miss Jelkes? Will you do me a  
favor? Will you do something for  
me?" "What?" said I. "Well," said  
he, "if I turn my back, if I look  
the other way, will you take off  
some piece of your clothes and let  
me hold it, just hold it?"

SHANNON:

Fantastic!

HANNAH:

Then he said, "It will just take a  
few seconds." "Just a few seconds  
for what?" I asked him. [She gives  
the same laugh again.] He didn't say  
for what, but. . . .

SHANNON:

His satisfaction?

HANNAH:

Yes.

SHANNON:

What did you do—in a situation like  
that?

HANNAH:

I . . . gratified his request, I did! And he kept his promise. He did keep his back turned till I said ready and threw him . . . the part of my clothes.

SHANNON: What did he do with it?

HANNAH:

He didn't move, except to seize the article he'd requested. I looked the other way while his satisfaction took place.

SHANNON:

Watch out for commercial travelers in the Far East. Is that the moral, Miss Jelkes honey?

HANNAH:

Oh, no, the moral is Oriental. Accept whatever situation you cannot improve.

SHANNON:

"When it's inevitable, lean back and enjoy it—is that it?"

HANNAH:

He'd bought a water color. The incident was embarrassing, not violent. I left and returned unmolested. Oh, and the funniest

part of all is that when we got back to the Raffles Hotel, he took the piece of apparel out of his pocket like a bashful boy producing an apple for his schoolteacher and tried to slip it into my hand in the elevator. I wouldn't accept it. I whispered, "Oh, please keep it, Mr. Willoughby!" He'd paid the asking price for my water color and somehow the little experience had been rather touching, I mean it was so lonely, out there in the sampan with violet streaks in the sky and this little middle-aged Australian making sounds like he was dying of asthma! And the planet Venus coming serenely out of a fair-weather cloud, over the Strait of Malacca. . . .

SHANNON:

And that experience . . . you call that a. . . .

HANNAH:

A love experience? Yes. I do call it one.

[He regards her with incredulity, peering into her face so closely that she is embarrassed and becomes defensive.]

SHANNON:

That, that . . . sad, dirty little  
episode, you call it a . . . ?

HANNAH [cutting in sharply]:

Sad it certainly was—for the odd  
little man—but why do you call it  
“dirty”?

SHANNON:

How did you feel when you went into  
your bedroom?

HANNAH:

Confused, I . . . a little confused,  
I suppose. . . . I’d known about  
loneliness—but not that degree or .  
. . depth of it.

SHANNON:

You mean it didn’t disgust you?

HANNAH:

Nothing human disgusts me unless  
it’s unkind, violent. And I told you  
how gentle he was—apologetic, shy,  
and really very, well, delicate  
about it. However, I do grant you it  
was on the rather fantastic level.

SHANNON:

You’re. . . .

HANNAH:

I am what? "Fantastic"?

[While they have been talking, Nonno's voice has been heard now and then, mumbling, from his cubicle. Suddenly it becomes loud and clear.]

NONNO:

And finally the broken stem,  
The plummeting to earth and then. .

. .

[His voice subsides to its mumble. Shannon, standing behind Hannah, places his hand on her throat.]

HANNAH:

What is that for? Are you about to  
strangle me, Mr. Shannon?

SHANNON:

You can't stand to be touched?

HANNAH:

Save it for the widow. It isn't for  
me.

SHANNON:

Yes, you're right. [He removes his  
hand.] I could do it with Mrs.  
Faulk, the inconsolable widow, but I  
couldn't with you.

HANNAH [dryly and lightly]:

Spinster's loss, widow's gain, Mr.  
Shannon.

SHANNON:

Or widow's loss, spinster's gain.  
Anyhow it sounds like some old  
parlor game in a Virginia or  
Nantucket Island parlor. But . . . I  
wonder something. . . .

HANNAH:

What do you wonder?

SHANNON:

If we couldn't . . . travel  
together, I mean just travel  
together?

HANNAH:

Could we? In your opinion?

SHANNON:

Why not, I don't see why not.

HANNAH:

I think the impracticality of the  
idea will appear much clearer to you  
in the morning, Mr. Shannon. [She  
folds her dimly gold-lacquered fan  
and rises from her chair.] Morning  
can always be counted on to bring us  
back to a more realistic level. . .  
. Good night, Mr. Shannon. I have to  
pack before I'm too tired to.

SHANNON:

Don't leave me out here alone yet.

HANNAH:

I have to pack now so I can get up  
at daybreak and try my luck in the  
plaza.

SHANNON:

You won't sell a water color or  
sketch in that blazing hot plaza  
tomorrow. Miss Jelkes honey, I don't  
think you're operating on the  
realistic level.

HANNAH:

Would I be if I thought we could  
travel together?

SHANNON:

I still don't see why we couldn't.

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon, you're not well enough  
to travel anywhere with anybody  
right now. Does that sound cruel of  
me?

SHANNON:

You mean that I'm stuck here for  
good? Winding up with the . . .  
inconsolable widow?

HANNAH:

We all wind up with something or

with someone, and if it's someone  
instead of just something, we're  
lucky, perhaps . . . unusually  
lucky. [She starts to enter her  
cubicle, then turns to him again in  
the doorway.] Oh, and tomorrow. . .  
. [She touches her forehead as if a  
little confused as well as  
exhausted.]

SHANNON:

What about tomorrow?

HANNAH [with difficulty]:

I think it might be better,  
tomorrow, if we avoid showing any  
particular interest in each other,  
because Mrs. Faulk is a morbidly  
jealous woman.

SHANNON:

Is she?

HANNAH:

Yes, she seems to have misunderstood  
our . . . sympathetic interest in  
each other. So I think we'd better  
avoid any more long talks on the  
verandah. I mean till she's  
thoroughly reassured it might be  
better if we just say good morning

or good night to each other.

SHANNON:

We don't even have to say that.

HANNAH:

I will, but you don't have to  
answer.

SHANNON [savagely]:

How about wall-tappings between us  
by way of communication? You know,  
like convicts in separate cells  
communicate with each other by  
tapping on the walls of the cells?  
One tap: I'm here. Two taps: are you  
there? Three taps: yes, I am. Four  
taps: that's good, we're together.  
Christ! . . . Here, take this. [He  
snatches the gold cross from his  
pocket.] Take my gold cross and hock  
it, it's 22-carat gold.

HANNAH:

What do you, what are you . . . ?

SHANNON:

There's a fine amethyst in it, it'll  
pay your travel expenses back to the  
States.

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon, you're making no sense

at all now.

SHANNON:

Neither are you, Miss Jelkes,  
talking about tomorrow, and. . . .

HANNAH:

All I was saying was. . . .

SHANNON:

You won't be here tomorrow! Had you  
forgotten you won't be here  
tomorrow?

HANNAH [with a slight, shocked  
laugh]:

Yes, I had, I'd forgotten!

SHANNON:

The widow wants you out and out  
you'll go, even if you sell your  
water colors like hotcakes to the  
pariah dogs in the plaza. [He stares  
at her, shaking his head  
hopelessly.]

HANNAH:

I suppose you're right, Mr. Shannon.  
I must be too tired to think or I've  
contracted your fever. . . . It had  
actually slipped my mind for a  
moment that—

NONNO [abruptly, from his cubicle]:

Hannah!

HANNAH [rushing to his door]:

Yes, what is it, Nonno? [He doesn't hear her and repeats her name louder.] Here I am, I'm here.

NONNO:

Don't come in yet, but stay where I can call you.

HANNAH:

Yes, I'll hear you, Nonno. [She turns toward Shannon, drawing a deep breath.]

SHANNON:

Listen, if you don't take this gold cross that I never want on me again, I'm going to pitch it off the verandah at the spook in the rain forest. [He raises an arm to throw it, but she catches his arm to restrain him.]

HANNAH:

All right, Mr. Shannon, I'll take it, I'll hold it for you.

SHANNON:

Hock it, honey, you've got to.

HANNAH:

Well, if I do, I'll mail the pawn ticket to you so you can redeem it, because you'll want it again, when you've gotten over your fever. [She moves blindly down the verandah and starts to enter the wrong cubicle.]

SHANNON:

That isn't your cell, you went past it. [His voice is gentle again.]

HANNAH:

I did, I'm sorry. I've never been this tired in all my life. [She turns to face him again. He stares into her face. She looks blindly out, past him.] Never! [There is a slight pause.] What did you say is making that constant, dry, scuffling sound beneath the verandah?

SHANNON:

I told you.

HANNAH:

I didn't hear you.

SHANNON:

I'll get my flashlight, I'll show you. [He lurches rapidly into his cubicle and back out with a

flashlight.] It's an iguana. I'll  
show you. . . . See? The iguana? At  
the end of its rope? Trying to go on  
past the end of its goddam rope?  
Like you! Like me! Like Grampa with  
his last poem!

[In the pause which follows singing is heard from the  
beach.]

HANNAH:

What is a-what-iguana?

SHANNON:

It's a kind of lizard—a big one, a  
giant one. The Mexican kids caught  
it and tied it up.

HANNAH:

Why did they tie it up?

SHANNON:

Because that's what they do. They  
tie them up and fatten them up and  
then eat them up, when they're ready  
for eating. They're a delicacy.  
Taste like white meat of chicken. At  
least the Mexicans think so. And  
also the kids, the Mexican kids,  
have a lot of fun with them, poking  
out their eyes with sticks and  
burning their tails with matches.

You know? Fun? Like that?

HANNAH:

Mr. Shannon, please go down and cut  
it loose!

SHANNON:

I can't do that.

HANNAH:

Why can't you?

SHANNON:

Mrs. Faulk wants to eat it. I've got  
to please Mrs. Faulk, I am at her  
mercy. I am at her disposal.

HANNAH:

I don't understand. I mean I don't  
understand how anyone could eat a  
big lizard.

SHANNON:

Don't be so critical. If you got  
hungry enough you'd eat it too.  
You'd be surprised what people will  
eat if hungry. There's a lot of  
hungry people still in the world.  
Many have died of starvation, but a  
lot are still living and hungry,  
believe you me, if you will take my  
word for it. Why, when I was  
conducting a party of-ladies?-yes,

ladies . . . through a country that shall be nameless but in this world, we were passing by rubberneck bus along a tropical coast when we saw a great mound of . . . well, the smell was unpleasant. One of my ladies said, "Oh, Larry, what is that?" My name being Lawrence, the most familiar ladies sometimes call me Larry. I didn't use the four letter word for what the great mound was. I didn't think it was necessary to say it. Then she noticed, and I noticed too, a pair of very old natives of this nameless country, practically naked except for a few filthy rags, creeping and crawling about this mound of . . . and . . . occasionally stopping to pick something out of it, and pop it into their mouths. What? Bits of undigested . . . food particles, Miss Jelkes. [There is silence for a moment. She makes a gagging sound in her throat and rushes the length of the verandah to the wooden steps and disappears for a while. Shannon

continues, to himself and the moon.]  
Now why did I tell her that? Because  
it's true? That's no reason to tell  
her, because it's true. Yeah.  
Because it's true was a good reason  
not to tell her. Except . . . I  
think I first faced it in that  
nameless country. The gradual,  
rapid, natural, unnatural-  
predestined, accidental-cracking up  
and going to pieces of young Mr. T.  
Lawrence Shannon, yes, still young  
Mr. T. Lawrence Shannon, by which  
rapid-slow process . . . his final  
tour of ladies through tropical  
countries. . . . Why did I say  
"tropical"? Hell! Yes! It's always  
been tropical countries I took  
ladies through. Does that, does that  
-huh?-signify something, I wonder?  
Maybe. Fast decay is a thing of hot  
climates, steamy, hot, wet climates,  
and I run back to them like a . . . .  
Incomplete sentence. . . . Always  
seducing a lady or two, or three or  
four or five ladies in the party,  
but really ravaging her first by

pointing out to her the-what?-  
horrors? Yes, horrors!-of the  
tropical country being conducted a  
tour through. My . . . brain's going  
out now, like a failing-power. . . .  
So I stay here, I reckon, and live  
off la patrona for the rest of my  
life. Well, she's old enough to  
predecease me. She could check out  
of here first, and I imagine that  
after a couple of years of having to  
satisfy her I might be prepared for  
the shock of her passing on. . . .  
Cruelty . . . pity. What is it? . . .  
. Don't know, all I know is. . . .  
HANNAH: [from below the verandah]:

You're talking to yourself.

SHANNON:

No. To you. I knew you could hear me  
out there, but not being able to see  
you I could say it easier, you know  
. . . ?

NONNO:

A chronicle no longer gold,  
A bargaining with mist and mould. .  
. .

HANNAH [coming back onto the

verandah]:

I took a closer look at the iguana  
down there.

SHANNON:

You did? How did you like it?  
Charming? Attractive?

HANNAH:

No, it's not an attractive creature.  
Nevertheless I think it should be  
cut loose.

SHANNON:

Iguanas have been known to bite  
their tails off when they're tied up  
by their tails.

HANNAH:

This one is tied by its throat. It  
can't bite its own head off to  
escape from the end of the rope, Mr.  
Shannon. Can you look at me and tell  
me truthfully that you don't know  
it's able to feel pain and panic?

SHANNON:

You mean it's one of God's  
creatures?

HANNAH:

If you want to put it that way, yes,  
it is. Mr. Shannon, will you please

cut it loose, set it free? Because  
if you don't, I will.

SHANNON:

Can you look at me and tell me  
truthfully that this reptilian  
creature, tied up down there,  
doesn't mostly disturb you because  
of its parallel situation to your  
Grampa's dying-out effort to finish  
one last poem, Miss Jelkes?

HANNAH:

Yes, I. . . .

SHANNON:

Never mind completing that sentence.  
We'll play God tonight like kids  
play house with old broken crates  
and boxes. All right? Now Shannon is  
going to go down there with his  
machete and cut the damn lizard  
loose so it can run back to its  
bushes because God won't do it and  
we are going to play God here.

HANNAH:

I knew you'd do that. And I thank  
you.

[Shannon goes down the two steps from the verandah with the machete. He crouches beside the cactus that hides the iguana and cuts the rope with a quick, hard stroke of the machete.

He turns to look after its flight, as the low, excited mumble in cubicle 3 grows louder. Then Nonno's voice turns to a sudden shout.]

NONNO:

Hannah! Hannah! [She rushes to him, as he wheels himself out of his cubicle onto the verandah.]

HANNAH:

Grandfather! What is it?

NONNO:

I! believe! it! is! finished! Quick, before I forget it—pencil, paper!

Quick! please! Ready?

HANNAH:

Yes. All ready, Grandfather.

NONNO [in a loud, exalted voice]:

How calmly does the orange branch

Observe the sky begin to blanch

Without a cry, without a prayer,

With no betrayal of despair.

Sometime while night obscures the

tree

The zenith of its life will be

Gone past forever, and from thence

A second history will commence.

A chronicle no longer gold  
A bargaining with mist and mould,  
And finally the broken stem  
The plummeting to earth; and then  
An intercourse not well designed  
For beings of a golden kind  
Whose native green must arch above  
The earth's obscene, corrupting  
love.

And still the ripe fruit and the  
branch  
Observe the sky begin to blanch  
Without a cry, without a prayer,  
With no betrayal of despair.  
O Courage, could you not as well  
Select a second place to dwell,  
Not only in that golden tree  
But in the frightened heart of me?

Have you got it?

HANNAH:

Yes!

NONNO:

All of it?

HANNAH:

Every word of it.

NONNO:

It is finished?

HANNAH:

Yes.

NONNO:

Oh! God! Finally finished?

HANNAH:

Yes, finally finished. [She is crying. The singing voices flow up from the beach.]

NONNO:

After waiting so long!

HANNAH:

Yes, we waited so long.

NONNO:

And it's good! It is good?

HANNAH:

It's-it's. . . .

NONNO:

What?

HANNAH:

Beautiful, Grandfather! [She springs up, a fist to her mouth.] Oh, Grandfather, I am so happy for you. Thank you for writing such a lovely poem! It was worth the long wait. Can you sleep now, Grandfather?

NONNO:

You'll have it typewritten tomorrow?

HANNAH:

Yes. I'll have it typed up and send  
it off to Harper's.

NONNO:

Hah? I didn't hear that, Hannah.

HANNAH [shouting]:

I'll have it typed up tomorrow, and  
mail it to Harper's tomorrow!  
They've been waiting for it a long  
time, too! You know!

NONNO:

Yes, I'd like to pray now.

HANNAH:

Good night. Sleep now, Grandfather.  
You've finished your loveliest poem.

NONNO [faintly, drifting off]:

Yes, thanks and praise . . .

[Maxine comes around the front of the verandah, followed by Pedro playing a harmonica softly. She is prepared for a night swim, a vividly striped towel thrown over her shoulders. It is apparent that the night's progress has mellowed her spirit: her face wears a faint smile which is suggestive of those cool, impersonal, all-comprehending smiles on the carved heads of Egyptian or Oriental deities. Bearing a rumcoco, she approaches the hammock, discovers it empty, the ropes on the floor, and calls softly to Pedro.]

MAXINE:

Shannon ha escapade! [Pedro goes on  
playing dreamily. She throws back  
her head and shouts.] SHANNON! [The  
call is echoed by the hill beyond.]

Pedro advances a few steps and  
points under the verandah.]

PEDRO:

Miré. Allé 'hasta Shannon.

[Shannon comes into view from below the verandah, the severed rope and machete dangling from his hands.]

MAXINE:

What are you doing down there,  
Shannon?

SHANNON:

I cut loose one of God's creatures  
at the end of the rope.

[Hannah, who has stood motionless with closed eyes behind the wicker chair, goes quietly toward the cubicles and out of the moon's glare.]

MAXINE [tolerantly]:

What'd you do that for, Shannon.

SHANNON:

So that one of God's creatures could  
scramble home safe and free. . . . A  
little act of grace, Maxine.

MAXINE [smiling a bit more  
definitely]:

C'mon up here, Shannon. I want to  
talk to you.

SHANNON [starting to climb onto the  
verandah, as Maxine rattles the ice  
in the coconut shell]:

What d'ya want to talk about, Widow

Faulk?

MAXINE:

Let's go down and swim in that  
liquid moonlight.

SHANNON:

Where did you pick up that poetic  
expression?

[Maxine glances back at Pedro and dismisses him with,  
"Vamos." He leaves with a shrug, the harmonica fading out.]

MAXINE:

Shannon, I want you to stay with me.

SHANNON [taking the rum-coco from  
her]:

You want a drinking companion?

MAXINE:

No, I just want you to stay here,  
because I'm alone here now and I  
need somebody to help me manage the  
place.

[Hannah strikes a match for a cigarette.]

SHANNON [looking toward her]:

I want to remember that face. I  
won't see it again.

MAXINE:

Let's go down to the beach.

SHANNON:

I can make it down the hill, but not

back up.

MAXINE:

I'll get you back up the hill. [They  
have started off now, toward the  
path down through the rain forest.]  
I've got five more years, maybe ten,  
to make this place attractive to the  
male clientele, the middle-aged ones  
at least. And you can take care of  
the women that are with them. That's  
what you can do, you know that,  
Shannon.

[He chuckles happily. They are now on the path, Maxine half  
leading half supporting him. Their voices fade as Hannah  
goes into Nonno's cubicle and comes back with a shawl, her  
cigarette left inside. She pauses between the door and the  
wicker chair and speaks to herself and the sky.]

HANNAH:

Oh, God, can't we stop now? Finally?  
Please let us. It's so quiet here,  
now.

[She starts to put the shawl about Nonno, but at the same  
moment his head drops to the side. With a soft intake of  
breath, she extends a hand before his mouth to see if he is  
still breathing. He isn't. In a panicky moment, she looks  
right and left for someone to call to. There's no one. Then  
she bends to press her head to the crown of Nonno's]

FADE OUT

[CREDITS ON THE BLACK SCREEN STARTS WITH ''DIRECTED BY...'']

(MUSIC: "Palabras de Mujer" (EXTENDED VERSION))