



THE CRADLE WILL ROCK

BY ORSON WELLES

*rev. Nov. 9, 1984*

1 There exists a real treasury of PHOTOGRAPHS recording the desolation, anguish and the curious beauty of Americans standing up straight in the midst of that long storm we remember as the years of our Great Depression... The MAIN TITLES... and the visual background of most of the OPENING NARRATION will feature a significant selection of these photos.

2 SERIES OF SHOTS: NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

OW

This happened (and it really did happen) in the midst of the Great Depression. Franklin Roosevelt was President and one third of the nation was ill housed, ill clad, and ill nourished. He said that. And he was right. But misery seemed to draw us together. There never was a time when people were so nice to each other. Even a tough town like New York was like a friendly little village. Here comes Mrs. J. Sargeant Cram (who really existed) cruising the streets in her Rolls-Royce...

3 The headlights of the limousine pick out some wretched people trying to sleep on the pavement. A cruel wind is blowing. (The action is as OW describes it.)

When she sees some homeless person crouched on the sidewalks (and they're easy to find) she stops and sends out her footman with a stone-- (the Rolls is full of stones). Close to each person the footman leaves a wad of wet money, and places a stone on it so the wind won't blow it away... We'll learn a little later why the money happens to be wet...

By now the footman (with the chauffeur to help) has finished doling out money to this particular band of derelicts. The car is about to start.

MRS. CRAM

(whose dignity is  
simple and authentic  
even if she does look  
like George Washington  
in drag)

Stop. Do you hear that, Jason?-- a  
peculiar noise?

JASON

No, Mrs. Cram.

MRS. CRAM

I do: it sounds like a horse dancing.  
That wouldn't be likely, would it,  
Jason?

JASON

No, Ma'am, not likely at all.

MRS. CRAM

Listen carefully--

CHAUFFEUR

Yeah... now you mention it. Seems  
to come from that old van.

The old van in question is very old indeed. Somebody long ago has stolen its wheels and it teeters on blocks... The Chauffeur turns the car so it faces the open back end and shines his spotlight on: --

#### INT. THE VAN

A neat, elderly figure prancing about inside the van is rendered motionless by the sudden glare of the light. This is SOLLY PRUETT. Unlike many who sleep on the streets, he is neat as a pin and closely shaven with a tiny moustache which seems to be cut out of a shoe string. After a moment of mutual surprise MRS. CRAM speaks:

MRS. CRAM

(to her footman)

The creature is dressed entirely for  
July. Quick, Robert--

THE FOOTMAN hurries out with an offering. MR. PRUETT, up in the van, is in a commanding position. Very courteously he refuses the money.

MRS. CRAM

Sir--

MR. PRUETT

Yes ma'am?

MRS. CRAM

What do you do for a living-- Or rather, what did you do?

MR. PRUETT

(with some pride)

I was a specialty.

MRS. CRAM

Were you indeed?

MR. PRUETT

Clog dancing, ma'am. I was only practicing just now--

MRS. CRAM

Call me Mrs. Cram.

MR. PRUETT

I'm Mr. Pruett... Solly Pruett.

MRS. CRAM

Clog dancing, Mr. Pruett?

MR. PRUETT

Vaudeville, Mrs. Cram. Clog dancing on the four-a-day-- the Gus Sun Time.

MRS. CRAM

I have a young friend who directs plays for the WPA. Take this card to him at this address.

She gives the card to ROBERT, the footman, who takes it to MR. PRUETT.

MR. PRUETT

He needs a clog dancer?

MRS. CRAM

I cannot say, but he'll sign you on in his theatre. So keep the money, Mr. Pruett-- as an advance against your salary.

MR. PRUETT

Mrs. Cram, I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you're making this up.

MRS. CRAM

Why should I?

MR. PRUETT

It's a lot of money...

MRS. CRAM

It will get you a place to sleep and some warm food--

MR. PRUETT

But it's charity--

MRS. CRAM

That's not a dirty word, Mr. Pruett. Are you religious?

MR. PRUETT

No, ma'am.

MRS. CRAM

Neither am I. But you know what the Bible says. 'Though I understand the mysteries and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. For now we see through a glass darkly, etcetera.'

MR. PRUETT

That's fine for the ones that do the giving. Some of the rest of us have our pride.

MRS. CRAM

Too bad for you.

MR. PRUETT

Yes, ma'am-- isn't it?

DISSOLVE:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

OW (cont)

One of Mr. Roosevelt's ideas was to get people out of the free soup kitchens and put them to work, and to pay them for their work. That was the WPA which included, among other things, our first and only National Theatre.

This is the story of a strange event which took place in nineteen thirty-seven in one of these theatres on Broadway in New York.

To those who may find the character of Orson Welles a rather outrageous improvement on the original, the director of this film would like to make it clear that this is no accident.

6 MARC BLITZSTEIN could be described as fine-tuned rather than highly strung. His is the attentive stillness of some birds: one of the predators-- a gyrfalcon. Serious rather than solemn, he brightens a room when he enters it. His political beliefs are like moral convictions but they are held with the most perfect serenity. In the Church he would be called saintly. A total stranger to extravagance in any form, he is mannerly, widely educated, unaffectedly civilized, a man of natural authority and unstudied charm. If he sounds a little too good to be true, he is, almost, just that. It never occurs to him that his mere presence is a kind of rebuke to the rest of us. This is our author-composer, the young man who wrote

THE CRADLE WILL ROCK.

Tonight he is meeting for the first time the very young man who will direct this opera. It is, in fact, the late afternoon on a matinee day when MARC approaches the WPA theatre called 'Project 891' where ORSON WELLES is playing in his own production of MARLOWE'S 'DOCTOR FAUSTUS'.

6 STAGE ENTRANCE - (MEDIUM FULL-SHOT) DAY 6

MARC opens door, is confronted by MR. PRUETT in a jester's cap and bells. MARC explains himself and is admitted.

7 INT. BACKSTAGE - (SERIES OF SHOTS) 7

All but blinded by several different kinds of hellish smoke, MARC struggles to gain the iron stairway leading to the basement of the theatre (which has been indicated by a frenzied assistant stage manager...) He is impeded by a terrifying parade: THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS... gesturing in various attitudes, mad and obscene, they float by in the spooky air...

8 FRESH ANGLE: MARC'S VP FROM THE WINGS 8

On the stage: FAUSTUS awaits his final hour-- his damnation.

FAUSTUS

See, see where Christ's blood streams  
In the firmament!  
One drop would save my soul.  
O, I'll leap up to my God!  
Who pulls me down?

Music and effects--

(Just at this moment they are quite horrendous.) Then silence.

9 FRESH ANGLE: FAVORING MARC 9

Serious, impressed, he tiptoes down the iron stairway to--

10 INT. THEATRE BASEMENT (UNDER STAGE) - (SERIES OF SHOTS) 10

Filled with the mysterious machinery used for working the illusions above. The effect down here is more magical (cont)

than what's happening onstage... These dark, devilish engines are manned by a crew of half-crazed veterans with faces out of Daumier... Just now they are-- (considering that they're New York stagehands)-- very curiously intent... Above them, on the underside of the stage floor, a pattern of small holes has been drilled through the boards. Through these, tiny shafts of colored lights play through the gloom picking out from among the old men here a watchful eye, there an attentive ear. ... MARC, approaching the first of these ancients to ask where he might locate Mr. Welles-- ?' chokes himself into silence when he hears a slow, whispered counting:

"One... Two... Three-- "

MARC becomes aware that every stagehand is whispering a separate count, and thus managing some separate mystery. Occasionally, pacing footsteps blackout one set of peepholes or another. On different numbers each stagehand moves some part of his machine, at which, evidently, something splendidly strange takes place on the stage above.

A sudden, a quite terrible noise turns MARC in a new direction where he can just make out a frenetic little band whanging away on sheets of iron, giant gongs and clusters of oversized chimes. Clearly, FAUSTUS is being called to his account...

A wild cry from onstage, and an explosion of living flame fills the entire theatre, like some huge satanic firework. And now, through a fresh attack of yet more sulphurous smoke, a tube of asbestos leading down from above is seen to shudder. A rude sound of quick unzipping-- and ORSON (as FAUSTUS) steps forward, holding out his hands.

ORSON .

Marc Blitzstein-- ? .

They shake.

I read the script last night-- got through the score this morning. It's a wonder, Mr. Blitzstein-- just a perfect wonder! Follow me--

He vanishes into the smoke. MARC hurries to catch up.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. STAGE DOOR - (SEEN FROM INSIDE TAXI) LATE DUSK 11

MARC is hustled into the cab. followed by ORSON.

ORSON

(introducing the  
cab driver)

This is Marc Blitzstein, Moishe--  
the famous composer--

11

MOISHE

Never heard of him. Take the cold cream.

As he passes it back we realize this is New York rude, no special offense intended. In fact, MOISHE is one of ORSON'S 'regulars'... The cab fights its way through the late-afternoon traffic, ORSON larding himself with cold cream and rubbing his face briskly with the towel.

ORSON

(his voice somewhat muffled)

Moishe, three months from now-- less-- the whole world will be talking about this man's opera--

MOISHE

And you're the one that's gonna stage it for him? Hey, Blitzstein! There's a red light-- open the door, jump out, run like hell--

MARC

(cheerfully)

In what direction, Mr.... er...

MOISHE

Carnegie, the Metropolitan, Sam Harris-- Minsky's for God's sake-- wherever.

As the taxi squeals to a stop, ORSON lowers the towel and confronts MARC with the beaming face of a twenty-two-year-old boy.

ORSON

Come on, I've got some groceries to earn--

He jumps out of his robe and the taxi in practically a single movement. He looks fine running toward the broadcasting building-- except that his trousers are still rolled up to the knee (to accommodate the FAUSTUS costume).

CUT TO:

12

INT. RECORDING STUDIO

12

All are watching the big clock, ready and waiting for ORSON. At the last possible moment the entrance door flies open, and ORSON, smiling cheerfully at everybody, strides briskly to the mike... Spooky music and effects.

12

ORSON

(fiendish laugh)  
 Who knows what evil lurks in the  
 heart of man... The Shadow knows!  
 (fiendish laugh)

MUSIC UP... STORM... Then down for:

SHADOW ANNOUNCER

The Blue Coal dealers once again  
 present radio's strangest adventurer--

While the ANNOUNCER is speaking, MARC is absorbed by the sight of AGNES MOREHEAD (who plays THE SHADOW'S SECRETARY) on her knees, unrolling ORSON'S rolled-up trousers. ORSON gives her a big kiss, and takes the script,-- obviously the first time he has ever seen it. He will have to pick up the story as he goes along.

SHADOW ANNOUNCER (cont)

... the mystery man who strikes terror  
 in the very hearts of lawbreakers and  
 criminals. Tonight Blue Coal brings  
 you... The Shadow!

MUSIC UP and down.

We get a glimpse of the control booth, where MARC, carrying ORSON'S sketch pad, is being ushered in and given a seat.

12

INT. RECORDING STUDIO

12

ORSON

Crime does not pay... The Shadow knows!

CUT TO:

13

INT. 891 THEATRE - PORTAL LEADING TO 'LADIES POWDER ROOM'

13

JOHN HOUSEMAN, Administrator-in-Chief of this WPA project, stands waiting with stifled impatience for the last of the females from the matinee to get out and leave the place free for other purposes. He carries some folders under his arm and sports the bow-tie he is destined to make famous. Now in his early thirties he conveys an impression of greater age by virtue of a magisterial air, wholly natural and unforced, and already impressive.

MRS. MAYZIE KATZ enters the scene and circles HOUSEMAN on her way into the washroom. She seems to have passed through the wringer a number of times, but is charming in a wild and scattered way. She sounds crazy but knows a hawk from a handsaw.

13

MRS. MAYZIE KATZ  
You're Houseman?

HOUSEMAN  
Yes.

MRS. MAYZIE KATZ  
This is the ladies can?

HOUSEMAN  
(politely)  
Yes, Madam.

MRS. MAYZIE KATZ  
(after studying  
him for a moment)  
I won't ask you what you're doing here,  
lurking at the door. That's your affair.

She goes briskly through the door into:

14

INT. LADIES POWDER ROOM

14

DISCOVERED: AUGUSTA WEISSBERGER, secretary to Project 891,  
hanging up the phone.

MRS. MAYZIE KATZ  
(as she enters)  
Where's Orson Welles?  
(turning on HOUSEMAN  
as he comes in behind  
her)  
You still here? You oughta be ashamed!

HOUSEMAN  
I ought to have an office.  
(to AUGUSTA)  
Where is he?

AUGUSTA  
Orson? He's doing 'The Shadow'--

MRS. MAYZIE KATZ  
(uttering a  
wild cackle)  
'Who knows what evil lurks in the  
hearts of men?'...

AUGUSTA  
And they just called from 'The March  
of Time'--

MRS. MAYZIE KATZ  
(triumphant)  
And you know what that means-- the  
ambulance!

CUT TO:

15      EXT. NEW YORK STREET      (SECOND UNIT)      DAY      15

A COP holds back traffic as an ambulance swerves around a corner and, siren screaming, speeds through a red light and away.

16      INT. AMBULANCE      16

MARC  
(struggling  
cheerfully  
to keep his  
place in the  
vehicle)

Orson-- ?

ORSON

Yes?

MARC

Why the ambulance?

ORSON

I hire them... I made an  
interesting discovery-- There's  
no specific law that you have  
to be going to the hospital to  
ride in one.

The ambulance has come to a screaming halt. ORSON leaps out.  
MARC follows.

17      INT. STUDIO ONE AT CBS      17

A complicated set-up. Five sound effects men, a full orchestra and a lot of actors. MARC is partially hidden behind the base section. WESTBROOK VAN VOORHEES stands at the announcer's mike.

VAN VOOHREES

(his hand to  
his ear)

Early last evening, in his  
Florida estate-- a few short  
weeks before his ninety-eighth  
birthday-- death, as it must  
to all men, came to John D.  
Rockefeller, richest and most  
ruthless of the oil tycoons...  
Villified by many whom he  
bested in the rough and tumble  
of big business, blessed by the  
many who profited from his  
philanthropy-- large... and  
small.

17

The MUSIC segues from the funereal to the cute.

ORSON (ROCKEFELLER)  
(as the ninety-seven-  
year-old ROCKEFELLER)

Sonny... Come on over here, young  
man, and look at this... What  
is it?

"YOUNG BOY" (a grown-up ACTRESS)  
What ya got there in your hand,  
sir?

ORSON (ROCKEFELLER)  
Well?

"YOUNG BOY" (a grown-up ACTRESS)  
It's a dime, mister.

ORSON (ROCKEFELLER)  
A dime-- that's what it is. And  
what's it worth?

"YOUNG BOY" (a grown-up ACTRESS)  
Ten cents.

ORSON (ROCKEFELLER)  
Keep it, save it. Work hard  
and earn some more. Keep pilin'  
up those ten cent pieces, sonny--  
and some day-- you'll be rich!

MUSIC UP...

MARC, observing this from a discreet corner of the studio,  
is not impressed.

CUT TO:

18

INT. WHAT WAS THEN MORE COMMONLY CALLED 'JACK AND CHARLIES'

The celebrated ex-Speakeasy is the hottest eating address  
in town. (We won't identify it by name-- or needn't-- so  
no problem of matching)... ORSON and MARC are making their  
way past the throng at the bar. The CAMERA is low so we  
don't see most of the famous people exchanging greetings  
with ORSON. In some cases just backs of heads, in others  
they're seated so we don't see them at all.

FIRST MAN'S VOICE  
Orson, how are you?

18

ORSON

Hi, Moss-- Noel! didn't know you were back--

FIRST WOMAN'S VOICE

We're coming to see you again Friday night.

ORSON

That's great. Maggie, Leland, this is Marc Blitzstein.

(he spots someone

ahead; respectfully)

Good evening, Miss Barrymore.

SECOND WOMAN'S VOICE

(the one and only)

Good evening, Mr. Welles.

SECOND MAN'S VOICE

Darling! When can we expect your Julius Caesar?

ORSON

When we get it past the bureaucrats.

MARC, throughout all this, is a figure of quiet and impeccable dignity. It is impossible to tell whether this is his first visit to the snootiest saloon in the Western World-- or not. He looks pleased but serious, and quite untainted by that reversed snobbery which might be expected from so dedicated a Marxist torch-bearer.

19

INT. THE RESTAURANT

19

MARC and ORSON are just seated at a 'good' table when two huge and beautiful trays of seafood (lobster and crab, clams and oysters) are placed before them.

MARC

My! Doesn't that look marvelous...

ORSON

After your revolution, Marc-- what are you going to do with a place like this?

MARC

(smiling, and with perfect sincerity)

A place like this...?

He glances around, blythe as a bird at Maytime.

ORSON

Tear it down?

19

MARC

Nothing of the sort. We'll just  
build more of them. Many more...  
There'll be places like this for  
everyone.

ORSON stares at him... The serene and happy certainty of  
MARC'S response is irresistible.

DISSOLVE TO:

20

EXT. THE THEATRE

NIGHT

20

ORSON and MARC go through the stage door.

An ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER sticks his head in the doorway.

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Ten minutes, Mr. Welles.

21

INT. STAGE OF THE THEATRE DURING THE EVENING'S PERFORMANCE

21

INTERCUT:

MARC IN HIS SEAT

(Thus what is seen on stage is largely his V.P.)

22

THE STAGE (SERIES OF SHOTS)

22

(A synopsisized view of the play)... FAUSTUS, having conjured  
up MEPHISTOPHILIS (Marlowe's spelling!) visits the POPE'S  
COURT IN ROME. In full view of the audience (and without  
camera tricks) he is rendered invisible, and proceeds to  
play havoc with the banquet His Holiness is offering some  
Cardinals... Drinks are splashed in faces, food flies about  
in the air, and finally, the Pope himself is (by an invisible  
foot) kicked high, and scuttles away with his guests and  
servants in great disarray...

In another scene some lecherous old fellow scholars, having  
heard of DOCTOR FAUSTUS' magical powers, ask him to produce  
for them "the admirablest lady that ever lived-- Helen of  
Troy." "Gentlemen," says FAUSTUS, "be silent then, for  
danger is in words."

MUSIC... FAUSTUS opens his arms as though in a gesture of  
ritual, and out of the murk there appears HELEN OF TROY,  
high in the filmy air, as though riding a cloud.

He looks up at her dark form and as he looks, takes wing and  
flies up, through the air to HELEN'S side.

FAUSTUS

O thou art fairer than the evening air  
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars!

Now, as FAUSTUS rises to her, HELEN is aglow with new light  
... We realize that she wears a mask. FAUSTUS, embracing (cont)

22

her, raises the mask... Her head falls back, loosening a great fall of reddish blonde hair. It reaches almost to the ground above which she floats.

FAUSTUS

Her lips suck forth my soul-- see where it flies!  
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.

... The kiss is obviously real, and held for longer than is customary on the stage. The instant before a first titter might be heard, he drops her head-- her body--

There is nothing there! Nothing but her cloak--

FAUSTUS himself falls down from the sky. He hits the floor hard. (It is almost like an accident.)

And now, at the sound of a tolling bell, he raises his head and we see he is no longer the young man, (nor the mature scholar)-- He is suddenly old...

This is the last midnight, the hour when Doctor Faustus must keep his dreadful bargain...

23

FRESH ANGLE:

MARC in his seat in the front row hears the same words which had come to him earlier today when he blundered into that witches' cavern under the stage.

INTERCUT:

24

FULL SHOT: THE STAGE

ORSON.(as FAUSTUS)

Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile!

25

CLOSE-SHOT: MARC IN HIS SEAT

THE VOICE OF FAUSTUS (O.S.)

Ugly Hell, gape not! I'll burn my books--

26

FULL SHOT: THE STAGE

THE IMMENSE CURTAIN OF FLAME RISES FROM THE GROUND AND FAUSTUS VANISHES.

27

CLOSE-SHOT: MARC JOINING THE GENERAL APPLAUSE

28

FULL SHOT: (FRESH ANGLE): THE STAGE

The house curtain is down; the principal actors come out through the centre opening, ORSON and JACK CARTER (all in gold and black fur) last.

CAMERA PANS to MARC, seated in the first row on the side, MOISHE, ORSON'S more-or-less private driver, hurries down the aisle, grabs MARC and before the rest of the audience stops clapping, runs away with him.

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

BACK-STAGE

29

The applause ends... the stage lights cut off, and in their place a big work light descends, casting weird shadows... THE CAMERA picks its way through a jungle of Faustian props and giant puppets to reveal:

MAYZIE KATZ (the eternal intruder) conducting a one-woman behind-the-scenes exploration on tiptoe.

Suddenly:

ORSON'S VOICE

(a hoarse  
whisper)

Mayzie!

MAYZIE

OmyGod!!!

ORSON

(appearing out  
of the darkness)

What's wrong?

MAYZIE

Don't scare me like that!

ORSON

No need to horse around, Mayzie,  
this is urgent.

He abruptly turns his back on her.

Zipper!

MAYZIE

(totally  
bewildered but  
full of goodwill)

'Zipper?

ORSON, who entered the scene with his cold cream and towel, gets hurriedly to work on his face.

ORSON

I'm afraid Virginia may have invited  
you to go with us to Harlem--

MAYZIE

Whaddaya mean 'afraid'?

She pulls down the zipper and ORSON steps out of his robe, leaving it where it fell.

29

29

ORSON

Buckles. And go get Jack.

She falls to her knees and begins detaching the costume buckle from his shoes.

MAYZIE

Jack who? Houseman. That man won't  
listen to me--

(suddenly struck with  
the idea)

Jack Carter? I adore him.

ORSON

No, darling-- you adore me.

MAYZIE

That's true. But just for a moment  
there, it slipped my mind.

ORSON

Try to retain this: Houseman and a  
little group of swells-- Muriel Draper,  
Archie MacLeish and their ilk, have  
probably reached my dressing room  
door-- which I have locked. The hope  
is that for a while they can be  
persuaded to think that I'm inside.  
Go-- encourage this delusion.

After a blink or two she starts obediently away. (This entire  
scene is played in loud whispers.)

MAYZIE

(stopping)

Archibald MacLeish?

ORSON

The People's Poet-- and editor of  
Fortune Magazine.

MAYZIE

And you don't want him up in Harlem?

ORSON

I don't want to go to Harlem.

MAYZIE

(dashed)

And your poor little wife?

ORSON

Don't call her my 'poor little wife'.

29

MAYZIE

She was so looking forward to a treat--

30

ORSON comes to a halt. MAYZIE has been chasing him as he makes his way behind the black velvet cyc and through more and even stranger scenery. (Although both are perfectly sincere, both, being actors are 'onto' each other and have been playing this as though they had an audience.)

30

ORSON

(taking a watch out  
of his pocket)

By this time they'll be breaking down  
the door. Cover for me. Tell Jack  
I'm taking Blitzstein to the country--

He starts away again, MAYZIE still in pursuit.

MAYZIE

Blitzstein would rather go to Harlem  
with the rest of us--

(sweet-talking him  
shamelessly)

Especially with you. Jeez! They call  
you 'The King of Harlem', don't they?

ORSON

Two years ago, sweetie. 'Been a lotta  
kings since.

MAYZIE

Carter, for instance?

To this there is no reply.

He says there's going to be some  
kinda fabulous rent-party--

ORSON

So I hear. Should be a good one.

MAYZIE

And Billie Holiday's at the Apollo--

ORSON

(he has almost reached  
the stage door)

Ella... Willie the Lion's still at  
Small's.

HOUSEMAN'S VOICE (distantly O.S.)

Orson--

O.S.-- SOUND OF KNOCKING... MAYZIE is close at his heels as  
ORSON leaps briskly out the door.

31

EXT. STAGE DOORNIGHT

31

Just as briskly, ORSON leaps into MOISHE'S waiting taxi.

MAYZIE

(to MOISHE)

For a guy to be so warm and loveable--  
he's gotta study, don't you think? He  
must have majored in smart-ass.

ORSON

(wreathed in smiles)

It just comes naturally.

CUT TO:

32

INT. THEATRE - HOUSEMAN, MACLEISH AND OTHERS (A SMALL GATHERING) 32

Grouped at the dressing room door... HOUSEMAN now knocking  
rather fiercely. JACK CARTER, in all his golden glory has  
a dismaying effect as he enters scene.

JACK CARTER

I wouldn't do that--

HOUSEMAN turns to him, falling back very slightly.

He doesn't care too much for JACK but, gritting his teeth,  
manages an amiable introduction.

HOUSEMAN

This, of course, is Mr. Jack Carter,  
our Mephistophilis who, as you know,  
made a bit of Shakespearean history  
up in Harlem--

JACK CARTER

We played downtown as well.

HOUSEMAN

Indeed we did--

JACK CARTER

Probably the longest run that play has  
ever had on Broadway.

A brief, rather tense silence.

There was also a national tour... I  
was ill for a while and Orson took  
over the part. That was history, too:  
the first time a white actor in an  
all-Negro cast played Shakespeare in  
black face.

32

HOUSEMAN

And here we have Mephistophilis in  
gold-face!

Admiring laughter... HOUSEMAN turns back to CARTER.

I'd call that quite a step ahead, Jack--  
wouldn't you?

The cold grey eyes flash no reply to this bit of inter-racial politics. A barber-shop signal from an automobile horn in the street has caught his interest.

JACK CARTER

I think I'll break down the door.

A flutter of mixed reactions greets this. He pays no attention, and with a single kick, reveals an empty dressing room.

HOUSEMAN

(pink-faced with  
indignation at this  
tomfoolery, but still  
coolly authoratative  
as ever)

I should explain something about Orson...

He moves out of the little dressing room, joining the others.

He is Mephistophilis to his own Faust...

This is greeted with an interested murmur.

In Dublin, when he started in the theatre he was just sixteen and claiming to be what he is now--twenty-two. In effect, this was a pact with hell; he sold his youth for grown-up glory. As a result of which we are inflicted with these flashes of that delinquent adolescence he appears to have bartered away.

33

EXT. ORSON'S SPEEDBOAT PULLING AWAY FROM THE DOCK - NIGHT 33

ORSON is at the wheel. MARC (not looking as cheerful as usual) is the passenger.

MARC

Isn't all this against some kind of law?

ORSON

All kinds of laws and damned expensive.

33

Already most of the city lights are at their back, and the atmosphere is quite abruptly rural and romantic.

ORSON (cont)

Commuting like this is one of the two  
vices Virginia says I can't afford.  
The theatre's the other.

MARC

Virginia is your wife?

ORSON

You bet.

MARC

(after a moment's  
thoughtful silence)

Is it because she thinks it keeps you  
from doing more radio-- is that why  
your wife says the theatre's too  
expensive?

ORSON laughs.

ORSON

The speedboat's what she objects to.

MARC

Well... It's a nice surprise.

ORSON

Roaring up the Hudson-- ? We'd probably  
make it a bit quicker if we went by foot.  
That is, if we could walk on water.

MARC

And you can't?

ORSON

It's more tactful to pretend one hasn't  
quite the knack of doing it for any  
distance.

DISSOLVE:

34

EXT. ORSON'S HOUSE AT SNEEDENS LANDING

NIGHT

34

The CAMERA dwells for a moment on the moonlit scene... The house is rather old and ordinary, but not tonight, not under the moon... The Hudson glitters below, and in the foreground is a small rock-framed swimming pool, almost circular and very dark. At the edge of this stand MARC and ORSON, all their clothes piled up behind them.

34

ORSON

(calling in that special  
voice people use when they  
want you to believe they  
have no intention of  
disturbing you)

Are you asleep, darling?

Silence... Then, in the upper floor a light goes on in a window, framing the head of a beautiful young girl. This is VIRGINIA.

VIRGINIA

(calling down)

Who's that you've got with you?

ORSON

(calling up)

A great new composer.

VIRGINIA

Blitzstein?

MARC

How do you do, Mrs. Welles.

VIRGINIA

Virginia, please... I read your opera. Orson sent it out this afternoon. Are you afraid of snakes?

MARC

Yes, Virginia.

VIRGINIA

So is Orson. The water mocassin-- that's the one to look out for. The rattlers are a quiet married couple who live under the porch. They won't bother you a bit. With the mocassin... keep splashing. I'll come down and get some anti-venom ready for us all.

She closes the window... MARC and ORSON, after a silent little pause, jump in.

After a brief bout of rather noisy swimming, they stop, standing together on the shallow end.

MARC

This is quite some life you lead.

ORSON

(suddenly very serious; with  
a strange kind of intensity)

Listen, Marc-- I'm lucky!

You aren't a gambler?

34

MARC

No.--.?

ORSON

My father broke the bank at Monte Carlo, and he taught me about luck. When the dice are hot, stay with the long roll-- go the distance. Go with me, Marc. I'm riding on a red-hot streak of wins. I'm lucky!

A sudden, sharp cry--

Oh, my God-- !

A tense silence.

The water mocassin...

MARC

(breathless)

He bit you?

ORSON

(cheerfully)

He just missed. You see, I'm on that red-hot lucky streak.

MARC gives ORSON a mighty splash right in the face... Then they fall abruptly silent.

Music is breathing out of an open window on the main floor of the house. VIRGINIA at the piano is playing an excerpt from 'THE CRADLE WILL ROCK'...

In the pool the two listening heads are motionless...

DISSOLVE:

During which the MUSIC cross-fades to another excerpt from MARC'S opera..

35

INT. THE LIVING ROOM

35

Pleasantly shabby... full of junk-- books and music, an easel and all kinds of stuff that looks played with... A nice dog... MARC is swaddled in one of ORSON'S bathrobes. ORSON is wearing another. VIRGINIA looks great in pyjamas.

MARC

She plays well.

ORSON

(dropping his voice)

The damn girl's very talented. Right now-- (in the greatest secrecy)-- she's writing a novel.

35

VIRGINIA continues to play for a bit... ORSON has risen and now fades quietly away. MARC looks at her... She's cool and calm, no special reaction.

VIRGINIA

(breaking in)

It has all our friends in it-- Noel, Joe, Alex Woolcott-- everyone thinly disguised.

(wickedly)

Everybody, that is-- except Orson. He isn't in it at all!

MARC

By the way, what's happened to him?

VIRGINIA

Gone... He does it that way-- no goodnights. He also takes a lot of little naps. You know-- like Napoleon.

Silence... MARC stares intently into space.

MARC

Napoleon? Should I take that as some sort of warning?

VIRGINIA

Orson's tall; and he claims that all the dictators in history are short.

MARC

(after a brief pause)

I'm not afraid of him, you know.

VIRGINIA

(looking at him)

I shouldn't think you were afraid of anybody... But something bothers you--

MARC

(with a little laugh)

I guess I feel that something ought to bother me... Maybe it's you.

(pause)

We're going to be friends, aren't we?

They exchange an affectionate glance.

VIRGINIA

I'm sure of it.

35

35

MARC

Then can we be very frank? Is it too soon for that?

VIRGINIA

Go on.

MARC

Virginia-- you do realize that the whole point of 'The Cradle' is what it has to say?

VIRGINIA

(after a beat)

Oh, yes. I realize that, of course.

MARC

But you don't honestly agree.

VIRGINIA

How can I answer that? What do I know-- ?

MARC, without speaking, silences her. After a brief pause, she starts once more, but with another tone.

That's dumb, isn't it?

I'm a grown woman; I don't live inside an egg...

MARC waits for her to go on... Virginia rises.

Okay. The things that 'The Cradle' tells us are wrong-- are wrong. It's just...

MARC

You accept the problems; you don't quite feel ready to face up to the solution.

VIRGINIA

(suddenly a little cross)

Well, there's always more than one solution, isn't there?

(she rises)

Let me show you to your room.

MARC

(after a beat)

I guess that's what bothers me.

35

VIRGINIA

(affectionately  
exasperated)

Oh, Marc-- ! That Orson and I don't  
happen to belong to your particular club?

MARC

(another beat)

I was going to say that maybe neither  
one of you has quite grown up politically...

36

During this last VIRGINIA has been leading the way down the  
narrow hall of her house. At this point she stops at a door  
and opens it.

But that would have been impertinent  
... wouldn't it?

VIRGINIA

Ask me that when I'm a little older...

MARC is a born charmer, but here he's turning it up a little  
too high. He knows he's gone too far, too fast. So does  
VIRGINIA. All the same she gives him a nice enough smile.

This is your room.

MARC

(lingering at the door)

I'm afraid you won't be all that happy  
to have me as a houseguest. I do carry  
on, don't I, like some boring kind of  
missionary--

VIRGINIA

Dear Marc, you're on a cannibal island;  
we'll have you for our breakfast...  
Sleep well.

She gives him a quick little kiss, and goes.

DISSOLVE:

37

THE DOOR OF VIRGINIA'S KITCHENNEXT DAY

Fog rising from the river... a cold and rather gloomy morning.  
VIRGINIA, shivering a bit as she tightens the belt of her  
pretty dressing gown, ties herself into an apron and starts  
to make breakfast. At first she doesn't notice MARC, in the  
living room, crouched under the stairs and muffled in one of  
ORSON'S huge djellabas. She flicks on the radio.

A VOICE

(on the radio)

Oh, my darling little fool-- !  
What is it you're afraid of?

37

37

MARC  
Wasn't that Orson?

VIRGINIA  
(having switched him  
briskly off)  
Who else? He's had that girl in a  
rumble seat every morning for three  
weeks now. Score: zero. How was  
your bed?

MARC  
Perfect. I must have overslept...  
Where is he?

VIRGINIA  
Soap. Up to his ears in it at CBS.

Briefly, she opens the radio switch again.

GIRL'S VOICE (on the radio)  
I feel so... cheap.

VIRGINIA  
That's Mayzie Katz, a friend of mine.

ORSON'S VOICE (on the radio)  
Cheap? Never-- never--

VIRGINIA  
That's his Ronald Coleman voice. Sounds  
more like Herbert Marshall to me.

ORSON'S VOICE (on the radio)  
-- You crazy little fool-- !

Off goes the radio again.

MARC  
Virginia--

VIRGINIA  
Yes, Marc. What would you say to a  
Spanish omelette--  
(then, after a beat)  
What would you say to a Spanish Omelette--  
'Buenos días'?

MARC laughs politely.

Coffee then?  
(pouring it)

37

MARC

You don't really want to talk about  
it anymore, do you?

VIRGINIA

(a bit startled)

What?

MARC

(almost ashamed)

My opera.

A short, uncomfortable silence. Then suddenly:

Right after he'd read it Orson rushed  
it straight out here to you...

VIRGINIA

Yes... with strict instructions-- I  
was to serenade you with seductive  
excerpts the minute he'd got you into  
the rumble-- Excuse me, the pool...

MARC looks at her. Then quickly looks away.

He's been wooing you-- You've already  
admitted it-- Weaving his great web.

MARC

Why does he bother?

VIRGINIA

Why does a politician kiss babies?  
(then, earnestly)  
But he does really love your play-- I  
mean, your opera--

MARC thinks that over.

MARC

'But'.

VIRGINIA

'But'? What buts - I didn't hear any.

MARC

(with a nervous smile)

Maybe just a tiny echo of a 'but'. I  
felt it buzzing in the air.

(thinking hard)

37

37

VIRGINIA

Marc, dear, I was born deep down inside your 'Cradle'. (So was Orson, if you want to know the truth of it. I wanted another kind of life so I married him-- and boy, did I get it! But just because I've managed to climb out of there, and down from there-- I don't really want to shake the whole Goddamn thing out of the tree.

She catches her breath again; blows her nose on a very small handkerchief, and utters a melancholy little laugh.

Please excuse the language...  
I've been keeping bad  
company.

MARC

(after a beat)

The theatre? You like it? You  
get down there very much?

VIRGINIA

I work in his damn theatre; didn't  
you know? I was the comedy bride  
in his comedy fucking farce.

Silence.

MARC

Were you good?

VIRGINIA

I got a lot of laughs.

CUT TO:

ORSON

(yelling)

Augusta-- !

A young lady ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER approaches the footlights.

MILLIE

Yes, Orson?

ORSON

Let's get on with the auditions. Who's next?

MILLIE

(weakly)

Mr. Solly Pruett.

ORSON

(whispering, or rather  
mouthing the words so  
as not to be overheard  
by MR. PRUETT)

I did-- NOT-- put him on the call sheet--

MR. PRUETT

Mr. Welles, sir-- I'm still a volunteer--

MR. PRUETT has moved forward during this to the edge of the stage. Here, searching the audience with his watery, unfocused old eyes, he starts dangerously to sway over the orchestra pit.

VOICES (in the audience)

Pruett! Look out! (etcetera)

ORSON

Mr. Pruett-- please!

MR. PRUETT

(a bit crossly)

Alright, alright! After a whole lifetime  
I guess I know my way around a sta--

Here he does very nearly fall into the orchestra pit. Hands reaching up from below seize his legs firmly, saving him from instant death. The hands belong to MARC, who now clambers up on top of the piano, keeping the teetering old performer strongly in his grasp.

MR. PRUETT

(to MARC)

Who are you?

MARC

I'm Blitzstein: You're Pruett. What  
part are you going to read... or rather,  
sing?

MR. PRUETT

I don't read. I'm a specialty. Do you fellas know my number? It's a song called 'I Miss My Swiss?'

MARC, still clutching the spindly, shaking old legs, turns and casts a wild look of appeal in ORSON'S direction.

MR. PRUETT

(complete with  
'comedy accent')

"I miss my Swiss,  
My Swiss Miss misses me;  
I missed her in de mountains-- "

(This last has been, in a manner of speaking, sung.)

ORSON

Can you fake it, Marc?

MARC

Sure.

He sinks from sight.

YOBO

(a hoarse shout  
from the audience)

Pruett! Step back!

ORSON

Upstage, Mr. Pruett, so we can see you better.

MR. PRUETT

(as he-- in a manner  
of speaking-- dances  
upstage)

Today I do it with the shoes, you understand, but this is a clog dance.

He waits for his intro-- gets it, and starts off.

ORSON

Abe-- !

ABE FEDER

I gotcha! I gotcha-- !

A follow spot, complete with a surprise pink gel, falls on the clog dancer and follows him. (SOLLY is doing splendidly.)

JOHN HOUSEMAN, spruce and cheerful, and looking, as he so often does, as though he has just emerged from a lengthy bathe in a nice hot tub, emerges from his nest in the ladies' powder room. He establishes himself in a commanding position and surveys the scene.

38

HOUSEMAN

(brightly)

Now then...

39

HIS V.P.: THE ORCHESTRA PIT

A swarm of heads clustered around MARC (at the grand piano) and ORSON (sitting next to him on the piano bench, but facing the cast. The muttering breaks off, and all heads look up:

40

THEIR V.P. ON HOUSEMAN AT THE RAIL (INTERCUT)

HOUSEMAN

(after a beat)

I'm sorry if I interrupt--

Various cries from most of the others protesting that he has done nothing of the kind.

HOUSEMAN turns and goes.

41

FRESH ANGLE: THE AUDITORIUM OF THE THEATRE

The various heads of all the rest of the cast line up along the railing like targets in a shooting gallery.

MARC'S VOICE

Houseman-- !

A wild clatter on the keyboard interrupts him, as MARC scrambles to the top of the piano to give emphasis to what he has to say.

HOUSEMAN

Jack... please.

MARC

Alright, 'Jack please'-- if there's anybody on the stage-- I can't see them, and they can't see me.

JEANNIE

(quietly entering  
the scene)

As it happens, this is the only piano we have--

MARC

(sweetly reasonable)

Jack... it's just a piano. Can't a couple of guys move it up? We can all of us help--

38

39

40

41

41

HOUSEMAN

(sweetly  
patient)

Marc, they won't allow us to  
help. The merest offer of  
assistance and they'll pull the  
mains and black us out.

MARC

(angrily)

Oh, come on-- !

HOUSEMAN

(sadly wearily,  
he speaks the  
final words)

Union rules, Marc.

MARC

(suddenly subdued)

Oh.

HOUSEMAN .

And before this evening's  
performance of 'Faustus' begins,  
six or eight stagehands will  
perform-- still on overtime--  
the identical labor in reverse...

JEANNIE, seated now somewhere on the main floor, has raised  
her hand.

JEANNIE

What's wrong with an upright?

TEDDY TOMMASCHEVSKI

Yeah! A little one, like in  
nightclubs?

ORSON'S VOICE

Where will you put it?

Everyone cranes to look.

MARC

(after a stunned  
silence)

Up in the air, out of everyone's  
way? Pull it up with ropes?

ABE FEDER

That sounds so nice, Blitzstein,  
I wish it would work.

HOUSEMAN

(with slight severity)

Who says it won't?

41

ABE FEDER  
(indicating  
ORSON)

Ask the Genius.

ORSON  
(aside to FEDER)  
What can I give you, Abe, for the  
sweet love of Christ, to let up  
up on that tired little retread  
joke?

ABE FEDER  
(to the others,  
with a leer)  
They called him a genius just  
this morning-- in Woman's Wear.

ORSON  
That's a reprehensible lie. It  
was Thursday, in the Brooklyn  
Eagle.

He was playing for a laugh, of course, and gets it. But  
MARC cuts it off dead with a crash on the piano. At this  
all eyes turn to the pit... MARC'S angry head makes its  
appearance in the usual place.

Sorry, Marc. The point is that  
for 'Faustus' there's so much  
elaborate rigging up high--

ABE FEDER  
(breaking in)  
And one little nightclub piano  
would fuck up my whole light  
plot.

HOUSEMAN  
I think I have an idea...

The theatre is hushed; MARC in particular looking  
chastened and attentive.

This very small, nightclub-type  
piano--

JEANNIE, AUGUSTA and MILLIE  
Yes-- ?

HOUSEMAN  
(very deliberately)  
We rent it, of course; and before  
curtain time, we open that (cont)

41

HOUSEMAN (cont)

iron door in the back and very  
gently push it into the alley  
and... park it there.

A respectful silence.

ORSON

I don't want to be the one who  
has to tell you this.

HOUSEMAN

(with his nicest  
smile)

But you will all the same--

ORSON

I have to, Jack: We already checked  
with the cops; it's just like they  
do with cars: they'll tow our  
little piano away-- every  
evening.

Mutinous noises rise at this from the orchestra pit.

HOUSEMAN turns back slowly, commanding the entire room.

HOUSEMAN

Then I'm afraid the whole thing  
boils down to one simple decision--  
which only one man in this theatre  
can make.

All eyes turn to ORSON.

ORSON

Ouch.

Muffled laughter, which HOUSEMAN quells with ease.

HOUSEMAN

Rehearsals for 'The Cradle' cannot  
take place without doing gross  
injury to 'Faustus'? Well, as  
he ceaselessly points out to me,  
both of these two plays are  
uniquely the creation of Mr. Orson  
Welles--

41

He holds a meaningful silence... then punctuates it with a European-type shrug. The theatre is mute. Then suddenly, MARC speaks up, full voice:

MARC

(with astonishing  
intensity)

Jack! I'm afraid you're wrong!

Low mumble-mumble from everybody.

MARC

This really is Orson's theatre,  
isn't it?

HOUSEMAN

Well...

MARC

(cutting him off)

And we've all got to realize that  
both of these two plays are Orson's  
children-- and he's quite right  
to be fighting for them both.

HOUSEMAN

(after a beat)

Ah, but Marc-- Now he must tell  
us which of his children he loves  
most.

After a moment, and with a fine exit line to get him off--  
JACK HOUSEMAN retires from the scene.

ORSON, reddening, watches him go-- then suddenly sprints  
after him.

In a moment the entire theatre is treated to the alarums  
and discursions of a classic HOUSEMAN-WELLES difference of  
opinion. As an actor, trained to project iambic pentameter  
to the utmost reaches of large theatre galleries, ORSON is,  
inevitably, the noisiest, and therefore sounds the more  
aggressive. That HOUSEMAN is busily, but quietly, kindling  
these flames is not apparent from any distance. But the  
members of Project 891 are well aware that if ORSON can  
roar like a lion, JACK HOUSEMAN has a smiling mouth which  
'biteth like the adder.'

It goes on and on...

MAYZIE, at the pit rail, just above MARC, begins-- not very  
loudly at first-- to pound rhythmically on the rail, as  
she chants:

41

MAYZIE

BooO-rinng! BooO-riing-- !

MARC raises his head from where it had been despairingly at rest on the keyboard, and as MAYZIE continues with her chant, he quickly improvises a simple but catchy tune to go with it.

People all over the auditorium and from all sorts of places backstage (to say nothing of the gang in the orchestra pit) join in the rising choir:

BooO-riing!! BOOORE-Iing-- !

It rings and thunders through the building, MARC adding many a resounding flourish on his concert grand.

But suddenly he breaks off-- The singers fall silent... All listen intently.

The battle in the Powder Room is mute.

That these two gladiators have actually done each other in seems most unlikely. And yet...?

And now the question is settled. The two (still rather pink of face) appear together... There should be applause-- (there will be applause)--

But for now THE TWO turn to each other and, in the most formal style imaginable, shake hands. This is done with more than a whiff of self-parody, and MARC, quickly catching the mood, begins a minuet.

This THE TWO dance together, briefly and soberly. And a quick finish brings a storm of applause.

DISSOLVE:

42

INT. MOISHE'S CAB

NIGHT

42

52nd Street... This is the high epoch of the little jazz joints. There are lots of little neon signs and the air is filled with the weird braying of many great little combos... MARC sits fretting in the back. It is raining hard.

MARC

(after a pause)

Am I supposed to just sit here?

MOISHE

Whatever's goin' on up there isn't for us, Blitzstein.

MARC

(instantly curious)

Up where?

MOISHE

The third floor of this building--

It should be noted that MOISHE (like CARTER) is a man of many accents. Just here, for instance, he should have said 'thoid' for third. He didn't.)

MOISHE

Hey-- !

But MARC has already jumped out of the cab.

43

INT. STAIRWAY OF THE OLD BROWN-FRONT

43

MARC mounting it... A sound of sobbing: a woman's voice.

44

INT. THE FRONT ROOM OF THE APARTMENT

44

An enormous figure, tall and very fat, all but blocks out the window where she is standing. This is the actress (presently "at liberty") Marion Warren Manley. She is blonde and wears an immensity of plum colored velveteen in something of the style of a dowager's opera cloak. Seated beneath her and clasping her hand is Mrs. J. Sargeant Cram. Except for the feverish neon of the jazz clubs the room is in darkness.

MRS. CRAM

Marion...

MARION WARREN MANLEY

(through a snuffle)

Yes?

MRS. CRAM

You're certain, Marion?

MARION WARREN MANLEY

Yes, I do think it would be good for me. I think he'd... want me to go.

44

She turns her head by way of indication, and MARC turns in the same direction. In a flash of lightning he realizes that it is right next to where he has been standing (near the door)-- a coffin. Flashing neons brighten the features of the late Mr. Manley.

MARC shoots away.

MARION WARREN MANLEY

But where is Dashiell Hammet, and Robert Benchley and... all those other people?

MRS. CRAM

They were here... all of them. They've gone because they thought you'd rather be alone--

MARION WARREN MANLEY

(quickly)

Oh, no-- !

MRS. CRAM

(rising)

They'll be along later, I expect, to my house to hear Orson's opera--

MARION WARREN MANLEY

(murmuring)

Bob Benchley was saying something about Tony's-- I heard him.

MRS. CRAM

I'm sure that was for later, dear. I'll let you freshen up.

A stately exit by MRS. CRAM... the widow, left alone with the remains of the beloved, moves to the coffin... Some thoughtful mourner has left a splendid orchid on his breast... The widow studies it for a moment, then plucks it off and pins it on her cloak.

MARION WARREN MANLEY

(to him, and to herself)

You would have wanted me to wear it, wouldn't you?

She teeters away.

CUT TO:

45

INT. MOISHE'S CAB

NIGHT

45

A disconcerted flicker of night-lifers, celebrated and otherwise, are dimly visible as they scuttle from the house of death to Tony's just across the way... MARC returns in some haste to the back seat of the taxi.

45

ORSON'S VOICE (O.S.)

Marc--

ORSON appears at the cab window.

ORSON (cont)

You should have stayed put in the car... This was only a caper of old Crambo, you know. She wanted to show Marion-- (that's Manley the large lady with the dead husband)-- that she has more caring friends than she thought she had. Our little run-through tonight was supposed to divert her from her sorrow; but as it turns out she's gone off with the caring friends to 'Tony's'. That leaves just us.

MARC

It leaves just you. I'm going home to my own apartment and get a good night's sleep.

ORSON

(calling off)

Jack--

JACK CARTER

(joining ORSON at the car window)

Not me, Boss man; you've shown me the corpse. That's enough fun for one evening--

ORSON

Stick with Marc-- please. He's growing restive, and I've got to find the Crambo.

JACK CARTER

Where's Virginia during all this?

ORSON

(as he drifts away)

Yes, where is Virginia?

JACK gets in the cab next to MARC.

JACK CARTER

You're sore about his missing some rehearsals--

MARC

Am I supposed to be happy?

45

JACK CARTER

(a slight flare-up,  
a little tough)

You're supposed to know where he's  
spending his time. And why.

MARC

Where's that?

JACK doesn't answer...

He never goes to bed... Isn't  
he ever going to grow up?

MOISHE

I don't think he wants to...

MARC

Peter Pan?

Silence.

JACK CARTER

He gets down to Washington a lot.  
He's fighting for his theatre...

MARC is astonished.

'Faustus'-- that's a real  
old play, right? More'n three  
centuries.

Slight pause.

The other day some redneck  
Congressman stood up and said  
the man who wrote it is a  
well-known communist... So how  
do you figure they feel about  
your opera? Orson is down  
there trying to cover your ass.

MARC

(bewildered)

Yes-- ?

MOISHE

Then, too, he's signing autographs.  
You know, like a movie star.  
Except he pays for them.

MARC

(irritated)

Pays who?

45

MOISHE  
Fans. A dollar each.

MARC  
(after a moment's  
thought)  
That isn't true.

MOISHE  
No, it isn't.

MARC  
Then why do you say it?

MOISHE  
(in what turns out to  
be his normal, educated  
voice)  
Because I'm supposed to be one of  
these oddball characters that drives  
a cab in what they call a madcap comedy.

MARC  
But you aren't?

MOISHE  
I'm studying Oriental Languages at  
Columbia. I do the oddball character  
for Orson. That way he can pretend  
he's in the movies.

Silence... Then:

MARC  
(wearily)  
Yesterday he dragged me into some  
kind of ex-speakeasy full of chorus  
girls.

JACK  
(to MOISHE)  
Yeah... those guys are nuts about show  
business.

(to MARC)  
There was a cat joined your table--  
remember? Controls a whole lot of that  
action. So all of a sudden let's  
suppose you need a whole bunch of the  
big green. And you gotta have it fast.  
Our young genius picks up the phone,  
and Charley-- he delivers... But  
after that, naturally, Charley owns  
him.

45

MARC

(still tired, still cross)

Charley?

JACK CARTER

You read about him all the time... In  
the newspapers they always call him  
'Lucky'-- Dig?-- Like Luciano.

For good, intelligent reasons MARC looks a little scared.

MARC

Jesus-- !

CUT TO:

46

INT. THE BALLROOM OF MRS. CRAM'S TOWNHOUSE

46

MRS. CRAM has not taken off her hat, but she has rolled up her sleeves. She stands behind a big bucketful of soapy water, and is working cheerfully away on a wash board. The time shows on the face of a grandiose clock on the mantelpiece behind her: three fifty-two in the morning. No wonder the music of 'The Cradle' we are hearing comes not from MARC, long before this snug in his bed, but from VIRGINIA. By this time she knows most of the show by heart, and is doing full justice to it. MRS. CRAM and MR. PRUETT make up her entire audience.

She comes to the end of a scene.

MRS. CRAM

I have a building called 'The Peace  
House'-- has Orson told you about that?

VIRGINIA

Oh, yes, Mrs. Cram-- often.

MRS. CRAM

He used to want me to turn it into a  
theatre, and I commissioned him to  
translate some of the Greek plays that  
have a bearing on the subject?

VIRGINIA

I think he ought to talk to you about  
that.

MRS. CRAM

Instead he's talking to my husband.  
Nobody ever does; and Orson never fails...

During this last MRS. CRAM has wrung out whatever it is she has been washing and has hung it with two clothes pins on a line strung across the ballroom. It is, unmistakably, a ten dollar bill...

46

On each side of it are other pieces of freshly washed paper money. The entire clothes line is a flutter with clean bills...

CUT TO:

47

MR. CRAM'S ROOM

47

This is our second encounter this evening with a horizontal ancient. MR. CRAM is motionless but alive. The large, dim, violet colored eyes still dance with a certain ghostly mischief. His beard is silvery, his brow serene and his vocabulary limited:

MR. CRAM

ChristGoddammit-- !

This is all he ever says.

ORSON

(chatting away, as he  
often does, with the  
old gentleman)

... As for the news-- it isn't too hot. Madrid is still holding out, but in Chicago there was a helluva mess with Republic Steel-- a lotta people hurt, and ten strikers dead. Seven of 'em shot in the back...

MR. CRAM

ChristGoddammit!

Silence... Then:

ORSON

Have I ever mentioned Ned Sheldon?... Edward Sheldon, the playwright?... Can't write plays anymore. Much the same sort of fix that you are-- Can't move an inch; but do you know what he does? He rules the American theatre. All the great and famous people come to him for advice. And live by his advice. He's like some fabulous wise man on a mountain top, an oracle.

Thornton Wilder paid me the compliment of presenting me to that oracle. I don't think there was ever a prouder day in my life. He phones me now after anything halfway decent I get to do on the radio and, of course, I bring him all my plans and problems in the theatre...

MR. CRAM

ChristGoddammit...

47

ORSON

I don't suppose this can be very interesting to you, Mr. Cram. If you want me to I'll stop.

ORSON waits for a sign. The eyes don't blink. The curse is not repeated.

For Marc, that opera you've been hearing is the most important thing on earth. You'd hate its politics-- radical-- nobody in town would touch it except us. Our theatre belongs to the government, but they get their money from Congress and since the last election they could stop us dead. Of course, I could defy them.

MR. CRAM

ChristGoddammit-- !

ORSON

Oh, yes. I might find some way to get the show on in spite of everything-- and that could help to make the actors' careers-- it would certainly save Marc's artistic life. Mr. Sheldon says yes-- I'm on to a great project. But like every great project, he says, there's something wrong with it, and somebody will have to pay. The 'somebody' this time would be our theatre-- the people left in it, who could be punished. It might even turn out that I'm the one who has the most to gain. I could look braver than I am, and be more famous than I deserve to be.

MR. CRAM

Christ--

The young eyes turn so quickly to the old that the curse is silenced.

ORSON

He showed me what I had to solve; but he wouldn't tell me how to solve it. 'You're a politician' he said...

That's all that he would say...

ORSON takes MR. CRAM'S hand in his. Then, after a moment, moves to the door.

Did he mean if I had scruples I'd know what to do with them?

47

slight pause; then;

ORSON (cont)

Good night, Mr. Cram.

He goes out, closing the door after him.

Another pause.

MR. CRAM

I'll be God damned!

CUT TO:

48

INT. THE FOYER OF THE CRAM TOWNHOUSE

EARLY DAWN

48

VIRGINIA and MR. PRUETT are already at the door waiting as ORSON joins them.

ORSON opens the door a bit and sees--

49

EXT. DARK STREET

49

An extremely decrepit wagon with an ancient horse to match is waiting for the traffic light to change.

50

Geysers of steam rise from the streets like djinns, dancing in the icy air...

50

ORSON

Look at that, would you--

VIRGINIA

(blankly)

The horse and cart?

ORSON

An endangered species. . Where does it come from?... To what strange mission is it bound?

VIRGINIA is unimpressed. The light changes and the wagon creaks away.

ORSON

Wouldn't it be wonderful to sneak in at the back of that thing and go riding away in it through the night?

VIRGINIA

Dont' be Silly.

ORSON

Silly? Ah ha!

VIRGINIA

Ah ha, yourself; you'd much rather be home in bed.

50

ORSON

What did Chesterton say about adventure?  
Adventure, he said, is an attitude taken  
toward discomfort.

(turning to PRUETT)

Mr. Pruett--

MR. PRUETT

(sketching a salute)

Sir--

ORSON

Just on a whim, just for the fun of it,  
wouldn't you be willing to be silly?

MR. PRUETT

(uncertainly)

When I was young, Mr. Welles--

ORSON

You know what's the trouble with women?

VIRGINIA

Men.

ORSON

They're like cats-- they don't like us  
to catch 'em being silly--

(turning to the others without  
waiting for an answer)

So they miss a lotta fun--

VIRGINIA regards her husband with a certain dangerous gravity...

MR. PRUETT

(after the briefest of pauses)

Good night all-- !

VIRGINIA

Good night, Mr. Pruett--

MR. PRUETT

Good night, dear lady... and sir.

After sketching a kind of salute the old man opens the door  
and goes tottering away... VIRGINIA and ORSON follow him and  
over their shoulders--

51

EXT. DARK STREET IN FRONT OF THE CRAM MANSION

51

VIRGINIA

(after a pause)

He lives on the West Side; he's going  
to walk through the Park.

ORSON

(worried)

He should have waited for Moishe-- We  
could have taken him.

51

VIRGINIA

He says he needs the exercise...

Silence... Then:

He mustn't ever be down and out again  
... don't you agree?

He must never be... unemployed.

ORSON broods in silence over the inevitable future of Mr. Pruett..

DISSOLVE:

EXT. then:

52

INT. ORSON'S DRESSING ROOM

52

MARC, during his years abroad, has acquired the continental habit of first, half opening a door, and then knocking on it. He is confronted with what, at first, seems a pathetic spectacle: ORSON slumped over his dressing table, his head buried in his arms, sobbing his heart out. In fact, he's been trying to catch a few minutes' sleep.

ORSON

(his voice muffled)

Curtain time is... what?

AUGUSTA'S VOICE (O.S.)

Forty-two minutes.

ORSON reaches blindly for a stick of Leichner's makeup and goes to work in a random sort of way on his face. ENTER (by a side door) AUGUSTA WEISSBERGER with a paper bucket of chopped ice. ORSON suddenly starts to vocalize.

AUGUSTA

(slightly startled)

Ooooh!

ORSON

(mock ham)

It is not for nothing that they called me the thunderclap of the Dublin Rotunda. Gussie darling, what have you done with Patrice?

AUGUSTA

I haven't laid eyes on him. My mother brought you some soup.

ORSON

Tell her God sees everything she does and writes it down in a book, and make me three very double vodka martinis..

Then quickly, as MARC with PATRICE (the second assistant) appear at the door.

ORSON

Two of which are for Mr. Blitzstein, who, as you see, is approaching with Patrice.

(cont)

52

ORSON (cont)

(in another variety of mock  
ham, quoting 'Trilby')

The old crowd once more foregathered.

Jove! It's just like a play!

(raising his voice)

Lots of good stuff for everybody who's  
stuck in both plays-- The Stage Door Deli,  
Patrice--

PATRICE

Lindy's is closer.

AUGUSTA

(on her way out)

Reuben's is better.

53 ORSON follows her as far as the stage.

ORSON

(to MARC, as he passes  
him at the door)

As for you, my beamish composer-- You'll  
look a bit less like a wounded deer if  
you'd remind yourself what day this is.

MARC

(gloomily)

Not much of a day for rehearsals.

ORSON

Matinee! That's twice around the track  
with Marlowe for me--

(remembering)

Hey! And afterwards tonight it's high  
society--

MARC

I'm not even going to ask you what that  
means.

ORSON

One of the oldest families on this island--

MARC

I'm staying home.

ORSON

Home?

MARC

My apartment.

(a short silence)

I'd like to move back to town.

ORSON

(after another silence)

Whatever you say.

MARC

(on the defensive)  
I just can't keep up with you.

ORSON

(rather sadly)  
Neither can I.

MARC broods over this, and before he can answer:

A VOICE (O.S.)

Orson-- :

MAYZIE KATZ appears distantly. At this ORSON instantly disappears (by means of a star-trap).

MAYZIE

(squinting into the darkness)  
I thought that was Orson--

MARC makes no reply.

Well if you see him, say I'm sitting  
in the sun with Virginia in front of  
the scene dock.

She goes. ORSON rises-- at first slowly, then, when he's  
sure the coast is clear-- quickly by means of another trap  
door.

ORSON

(during this)  
'They search me here.  
They search me there.  
Indeed they search me everywhere.  
Is he in heaven?  
That damned illusive Pimpernel!'  
(he vanishes again...  
then reappears)  
Shall we join the ladies?

MARC

That might be quite a good idea.

ORSON

I know... I know what's coming now--  
(With a friend like you, who needs a  
wife?) I'm going to be accused of  
even more neglect-- Virginia. Right?  
Don't lie, Blitzstein!

MARC

Well... since you mention it.  
(compassion rather than  
rebuke) (cont)

53

MARC (cont)

By the time we got home the other morning it was full daylight... Don't you ever sleep?

ORSON

No.

MARC

She was up and waiting for you.

Silence.

I wonder how you would have felt about it if you hadn't found her there?

ORSON

(after a beat)

Waiting-- ?

You mean if she'd walk out on me?

(thinking about it)

... God! where would she go-- back home?

(somerly)

Marc-- the only reason she married me was to get away from home... I'm not too happy about that...

(moving away, he does a little brooding on his own)

I promised her the Great White Way, and glamour-- and, you know-- the whole megillah. And instead, when she got here we were splitting up Horn and Hardart's twenty-five-cent daily blue-plate special, half and half, and filling up with water and the free bread... That's why I knock myself out on the radio. It buys us the house in the country and the pool and stuff... But the truth is even now we're always just a day or so ahead of the Sheriff. My salary on the WPA is thirty-seven dollars or something-- I don't really know because I've never tried to collect it.

A brief silence.

MARC

Why?

ORSON

You have to stand in line.

Before MARC can make any comment on this, he continues:

ORSON

We got married practically at the request of our puritanical flea-bag  
(cont)

53

ORSON

of a hotel; and you know what she said to the Minister? Practically on the steps of that cheesy little altar?

"Reverend--" she said, "because of our youth we're being forced to do this in New Jersey, and it's all rather irregular, isn't it? What I want to know is--will there be any trouble if we want to get divorced?"

MARC makes no comment. ORSON starts toward the stage door. (VIRGINIA'S question has been on his mind since she first asked it.)

Jesus, Marc-- you think I don't realize how tough it is to be a girl?...

He has reached the door.

And it's not so Goddamn easy to be me.

He opens the door, and stops there, turning to MARC.

She was just a child, you know, when we were married-- a school girl.

MARC

(smiling at his friend)

And what were you?

ORSON

I was the first train out of town.

CUT TO:

54

EXT. STAGE DOOR AND BACK OF SCENE DOCK

LATE AFTERNOON

54

Big wooden packing cases for Faustus' props and costumes are piled in front of the scene dock doors. Here VIRGINIA, MAYZIE and MR. PRUETT have spread out some newspapers to sit on and are enjoying the wintery New York sun. VIRGINIA is working on a sweater for ORSON... There is a steady roar of traffic.

Muted voices are heard... then MARC and ORSON come out of the stage door. They stop on the shady side of the packing boxes and can't be seen by the knitters in the sun.

ORSON

(as he opens the door)

My world is just too random for her-- too damn full of surprise. Don't forget that where she comes from the big excitement is the menfolk getting gussied up in pink riding coats to go fox hunting, for Christ's sake, where there aren't even any foxes!...

54 VIRGINIA has frozen--

Not so much because of what she has heard, but because of what she sees:

55 REVERSE ANGLE: VIRGINIA'S V.P. - NEW YORK STREET 55

A DILAPIDATED OLD CART with a spavined Roscinante in the traces has just been halted by a red traffic light. It is not at all the same wagon we have seen the other night, but it almost could be.

56 FRESH ANGLE: THE (CLOSED) ENTRANCE TO THE THEATRE'S SCENE DOCK 56

VIRGINIA puts down her knitting and jumps into the street. Not pausing for an instant, she starts briskly toward the horse and cart. (ORSON drifts back inside the theatre and misses this.)

MAYZIE

Virginia-- !

MARC

(following ORSON, has given him just time enough to catch sight of VIRGINIA)

Orson-- !

MARC hurries back into the theatre and can be heard calling once again...

No reply. Obviously, ORSON has nipped quickly away, so MARC reappears at the stage door just in time to see:--

57 HIS V.P. 57

VIRGINIA approaching the wagon.

CLOSER ANGLE:

VIRGINIA

(to the DRIVER, an ancient blackamoor)

Excuse me--

THE DRIVER

Yes'um.

VIRGINIA

Would you mind giving me a lift? I'll be happy to pay--

A VOICE

(from inside the cart)

Begob, if it isn't an angel down from the sweet blue heaven itself! Give her a hand up, Rastus--

58

INT. THE WAGON

Mounted on the driver's bench VIRGINIA can now see that the voice belongs to a sexy young man, stretched out on the straw in the body of the cart.

VIRGINIA

Thank you.

The traffic light has changed: the cart starts up.

THE YOUNG MAN

You should be gettin' the curious benefit of the ice.

VIRGINIA

The what?

THE YOUNG MAN

Ice, me darlin'-- lovely and cool, down under the layers of straw.

He holds out his arms invitingly.

VIRGINIA

It's very pleasant up here, thank you--  
(breaking off)

I simply don't believe this man's name is Rastus!

(All the same, she's enjoying herself.)

CUT TO:

59

FRESH ANGLE: THE STREET OUTSIDE THE STAGE DOOR

DAY

59

As MARC watches, ORSON is dashing after the retreating wagon.

60

INT. WAGON

60

A slightly winded ORSON opens one of the gunny sack flaps on the side of the wagon (he is running along trying to keep up with it).

VIRGINIA

Dear, Mr. Kildare is an ice sculptor--

She indicates the startlingly beautiful young man (whose wardrobe suggests the peasant heroes of the Abbey Theatre) stretched out on the straw in the back-- something of an early Brando in manner.

This is my husband, Mr. Kildare.

ORSON

(breathless)

Where are you going?

60

THE YOUNG MAN

Sure, and isn't it to one of them grand balls they're afhter throwin' in the name o'charity-- for Mrs. August Belmont.

ORSON

She's dead.

THE YOUNG MAN

Begob, what a shock that'll be for the Four Hundred-- And for Mister Belmont.

ORSON

He's dead, too... Virginia-- I don't think this man is any kind of sculptor at all.

She smiles at him.

THE YOUNG MAN

Well, sor, in the crool meejum of ice, sor--

ORSON

(cutting him off)

I'm onto you! I know who you are!... And what!

The wagon speeds up leaving Orson behind--

61

EXT. STREET

The following has something of the air of a sililoquy, but MARC is approaching.

ORSON

(partially catching his breath)

... All the creatures of the earth are male and female-- Except us. There are three Goddamn sexes-- men, women-- and actors!

MARC

(who has moved halfway toward ORSON in the street)

Is there really an actor inside that thing-- with Virginia?

ORSON

Well, I know damn well he isn't an Irishman!

VERY QUICK (VERY BRIEF) FADE OUT.

6

QUICK FADE IN:

62

THE STAGE - (SOMEWHAT LATER THE SAME AFTERNOON)

A very strange atmosphere indeed... VIRGINIA finds her husband standing thoughtfully on the Pope's banquet table... She waits in the shadows, watching, as the enormous pig (the centerpiece of the Papal dinner, rises slowly to its feet-- it trotters, its hind trotters)-- and stands, apple in mouth, confronting ORSON... The pink nakedness of this absurd animal, and its very close proximity to the curiously absent-minded-- the moonstruck magi-- endows the scene with a strong hint of that muted obscenity which reigned over the 'real magic' of the dark ages... A pause... ORSON has his arms around the pig (which stands almost as tall as he is). And suddenly we realize that the gesture is not intentionally erotic. It's a parody of the ballroom. These two are going to dance together... And they do-- waltzing together high into the murky air... Then, in a movement almost too quick to follow, ORSON is astride the great beast, and completely motionless in mid-air. He looks down at his wife with the arrogant indifference of a stone condotierre in some forgotten piazza.

ORSON

I wasn't going to mention it, but  
there's a piece of straw on the back  
of your coat.

Before she can answer he begins to swing with his pig in great, graceful swoops around her, like a devilish carousel.

Been on a hayride, have you? And  
where to? East of the Sun and West  
of the Moon?

There has been music-- (recorded music) though we weren't quite aware of it. Now there is a sudden, ringing silence. ORSON and his mount have halted again, waiting in front of VIRGINIA-- frozen in space.

'Kevan Kildare' he calls himself-- in  
summer stock.

VIRGINIA

Checking up on me?

He descends... he dismounts, leaving the pig gagging idiotically on its papier mache apple.

ORSON

Not really a bad actor. That much is  
true.

VIRGINIA

He's also a sculptor-- a sculptor in ice.

62

ORSON

Edwin Booth said that an actor is a sculptor in snow.

VIRGINIA

You mean like snowmen?

ORSON

Or snow women... impermanent.

In a very gentle movement, feather-light, almost discreet, ORSON rises, all on his own-- rises and moves through the air... He stops-- his face in profile.

'Come, Helen, come-- give me my soul again.'

He is waiting (as in a dream) for the embrace of Helen of Troy.

VIRGINIA

(unimpressed)

You remember last night-- when you looked at that old wagon? You were carrying on about adventure--

ABE

(a loud cry from somewhere  
up in the flies)

Ready, for Chrissake?

ORSON

(yelling back)

Yes, Goddammit!

HOUSEMAN

(his voice, calling)

Orson-- !

ORSON

(coolly, as FAUSTUS)

'O, thou art fairer than the evening air,  
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.'

During this last HELEN has slowly materialized out of nowhere, and has floated down toward ORSON.

63

REVERSE ANGLE: THE AUDITORIUM OF THE THEATRE

(HOUSEMAN B.G.).

MAIZIE

Oh, my God! How does he do it?

Wonderstruck, she moves down the center aisle toward the stage, HOUSEMAN behind her.

64

THE STAGE

As he speaks, ORSON has reached the stage level.

64

HOUSEMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Orson-- :

ORSON

Look closely-- She's angle-proof.

HE SNAPS HIS FINGERS: SHE VANISHES.

65

REVERSE ANGLE: HOUSEMAN

HOUSEMAN

I've got to talk to you.

66

THE STAGE

ORSON

(sarcastic, but hurt  
as well)You haven't bothered to notice what's  
been happening here?

67

REVERSE ANGLE: HOUSEMAN

HOUSEMAN

This is important.

68

THE STAGEORSON, in a sudden rage, plunges down the steps leading into  
the auditorium, CAMERA following him as he goes.

ORSON

I thought it was important to get Marc  
the rehearsal space he needs for his  
piano. This new effect replaces twelve  
square feet of special rigging. It also  
happens to be rather beautiful.

HOUSEMAN

I also have a bill for new money to be  
spent on an old production. Faustus  
has only nine more days to run.

ORSON

'The Cradle' has to be rehearsed; Marc  
needs his piano. And now he  
has it.

68A

As he starts down into the auditorium, it can be seen that ORSON  
is carrying a sort of folding screen of oddly shaped mirrors.  
He holds it up a bit threateningly as he approaches HOUSEMAN,  
who turns coolly enough and moves away.

69

REVERSE ANGLE: A WIDE SHOT: THE STAGEHELEN OF TROY floats to the floor level, and removing the mask,  
turns out to be TEDDY. The beautiful lighting clicks  
off, the ugly work-light taking its place.

70

THE CENTER AISLE AT THE BACK OF THE AUDITORIUM

HOUSEMAN returning to his office in the ladies' powder room:  
ORSON following.

ORSON

And Jack, it's all done with these small  
pieces of glass-- An elegant solution;  
and you-- you don't even deign to look...

71

THE STAGE

VIRGINIA and MAYZIE glum-faced, watching this...

ANOTHER FAST FADE OUT.

Then:

FADE IN:

72

EXT. THE WELLES' HOUSE IN SNEEDENS LANDING -NIGHT

Paper lanterns are strung out among the trees for VIRGINIA'S party... MARC is at the piano leading his people through one of the brighter scenes of 'The Cradle'. MR. PRUETT is in evidence, and we cannot help but notice on the buffet table, the two rough likenesses in ice of FAUSTUS and MEPHISTOPHILIS. The big French windows are open so this is easy to see and hear... A lamb is being barbecued in the foreground. Here a group of non-actors is gathered, somewhat older men and women with the confident air of the celebrated. ALEXANDER WOOLCOTT is (as usual) by way of being Guest Number One. Also present are ROSE and BENNY HECHT, HELEN HAYES, CHARLES MAC ARTHUR and CALDER, the mobile sculptor.

GUEST NUMBER ONE (Woolcott, of course  
(these foreground people  
are in silhouette and  
their dialogue is  
pre-recorded in L.A.)

The show sounds quite amusing, but  
since our Boy Wonder seems to be  
sulking like whatshisname in his  
tent, I think I'll climb into my  
hansom-cab and go buckety-buckety  
back to Babylon for that supper with  
Harpo.

GUEST NUMBER TWO

Where is Orson, by the way-- ?

MAYZIE

(nudging her way into  
the group)

We think of him more as a guest of honor.

The others stare at her blankly... (Who is this woman?)...  
VIRGINIA enters the scene. (She stays a bit upstage in the  
light.)

72

72

VIRGINIA

Along with Jack Carter-- who's always late. As for my husband-- he's simply collapsed from exhaustion--

MAYZIE

(breaking in again)

And all those pills he's been taking to stay awake--

VIRGINIA

(all serene)

Let's just say he's drunk, Mayzie-- it'll sound better.

MAYZIE

No, let's say he's a dope fiend, it's more picturesque.

GUEST NUMBER THREE

(after a tiny pause)

We like your new composer, darling; but where's he been? Nobody's even heard of him.

VIRGINIA

There was a longish stretch in Paris. He was one of Nadjia Boulangere's star pupils. And then... well, he got married.

GUEST NUMBER ONE

And where does he keep her?

VIRGINIA

She died... not long ago--

MAYZIE

But not before she'd crammed him through a very heavy course in how to be a Marxist. So for Blitzstein, losing her sanctified the whole red ball of wax-- a case of double-dyed idealism, if you see what I mean--

VIRGINIA

(the good hostess--  
to the others)

Like to hear another number?

Affirmative murmurs... The group has been sauntering toward the house and are now joining the cluster of actors and civilian guests by the piano.

VIRGINIA

(delighted at his  
success)

Marc, do Honolulu for us-- please.

72

TALLULAH

(shouting from  
some distance)

Where's Orson, darling?

VIRGINIA

Up in our bedroom finishing some work.  
He'll be down any minute--

As MARC launches into the new scene--

CUT TO:

73

INT. THE BEDROOM

The 'Boy Wonder' in pyjamas (which are just slightly too small for him) is peering out the window... He has caught sight of the SEXY YOUNG MAN FROM THE ICE WAGON. (Obviously VIRGINIA has been brazen enough to invite him to the party!) The sexy one is doing himself well at the barbecue as ORSON watches-- (the actor in him playing Othello)... But there's also a good deal of husbandly anguish... MARC'S piano and the VOICES OF THE ACTORS come loud and clear through the window:

ALDEN (Editor Daily): Have you been to Honolulu?

HIRAM (Junior): Are the women nice down there?

ALDEN: Demure and so high-born,  
Just pure September morn.HIRAM: I don't care if they're high-born  
Just as long as they're high-breasted.

WILL (Mr. Mister): Junior, please don't get arrested!

HIRAM: La la la-la-la la.  
La la la-la-la la.

ALDEN: Have you been to Honolulu?

HIRAM: Sail away to that fair land--

ALDEN: Dusky maidens in the starlight...

A sudden whizz of a sound, with much displacement of expensive gravel, signals the arrival of some tardy guest.

75

INT. BEDROOM

MAYZIE storms in.

MAYZIE

(to ORSON)

What are you doing?

ORSON

Doing? I'm not doing--

75

MAYZIE

There's supposed to be a party downstairs. It's been postponed a lot, but it's still in honor of the closing of 'Faustus', and you were Faustus--

JACK CARTER enters as though he were a high-ranking police official conducting a raid.

JACK CARTER

Well, I'm Mephistophilis, and I'm here to say goodbye.

JACK wears a beautiful camel's hair coat and whatever else is visible is every bit as magnificent.

JACK CARTER

(looking at ORSON)  
What's he doin' in bed?

ORSON

(who hasn't turned at this)  
Resting...

Pause.

I'm desperately tired.

JACK

(disgusted)  
'Desperately'-- ?!

JACK places a handsome lizard-skin boot on the small of ORSON'S back and-- pushing rather than kicking-- sends him flying off the bed.

Well, me-- I'm just 'desperately' fed up. Get your pants on, Maestro, before I feed you to the snakes.

ORSON

Why?

JACK CARTER

Why?

ORSON

Yes, why?  
(Jeezus, I've got lousy lines in this scene)

JACK CARTER

This is our party. We got ice statues on the table, but if you're gonna (cont)

75

JACK CARTER (cont)  
go on pretending to be looney, the  
folks'll start thinkin' that old  
rumor was true.

ORSON  
(awakening for a moment  
from his stupor)  
What rumor?... You and me? Whoever  
believed that?

MAYZIE giggles.

JACK CARTER  
About me and your wife.

MAYZIE stops giggling. ORSON, surprised, stares at JACK.

JACK CARTER (cont)  
(to MAYZIE)  
He's so dumb he has to use both hands  
to find his ass.  
(change of tone)  
I wish it had been true.

Slight pause.

But now the word's out about your  
Jewish pal--

ORSON  
Marc and me?... Or Marc and Virginia?

JACK CARTER  
The combination of your choice, Bubah.

ORSON props himself up so he can look through the window.

ORSON  
It's that bastard down there-- ? She  
invited him--

JACK CARTER turns an inquiring look at MAYZIE. She shrugs.

MAYZIE  
(a parakeet screech)  
The no-good actor who's also a no-talent  
sculptor?

ORSON quickly closes the window.

JACK CARTER  
You mean the cat that made the ice  
statue of me? Hey! he's pretty good.

75

During this MAYZIE has rushed over to where ORSON is kneeling at the window.

MAYZIE

All Ginny did was hitch a ride with him, shit-head-- !

ORSON

(to MAYZIE, a bit as though  
it were his dying words)

Please -- don't call her 'Ginny'.

JACK CARTER

(his accent deteriorating  
with every word-- a deliberate  
tactic)

I ain't callin' her, or you--  
period.

MAYZIE

A very short ride--

JACK CARTER

See this black face? It's no longer  
available to lend that touch of savage  
Africa in offay society.

ORSON

(momentarily sober and  
serious)

What does that mean?

JACK CARTER

What does it sound like?

MAYZIE

(to ORSON, at the top of her lungs)

And she stopped for me-- check it out--  
right on the corner of Twenty-ninth and  
Seventh Avenue-- !

ORSON

(after a beat)

It sounded like you were quitting me.

JACK CARTER

You bet yo' sweet cheeks, Bubah-- before  
I get fired.

ORSON

You're not quitting our theatre-- ?

JACK CARTER

All theatres. But yours is takin' on  
water fast, Cap'n; I'm just Rat Number One.

75

ORSON pays no attention, he is concentrating on JACK.

JACK CARTER

In our old joint up in Harlem, the  
commies are holdin' one of their  
sit-downs. And how much future do  
you reckon there is for a nigger  
Shakespearean on Broadway?

ORSON

(to JACK, angrily)

Don't talk like that--

MAYZIE

(throwing a pillow at him)

Two fifteen that afternoon-- I was  
lookin' at my fuckin' wristwatch.

Putting the pillow on the window sill, ORSON buries his head  
in it.

ORSON

I'm tired, damn it! and overworked and  
under great mental strain...

And everyone's so abusive...

MAYZIE

Two-fifteen is when the fuckin' ice  
wagon hauls up where I'm standing.  
Check it out, 'Bubuh'-- Your wife  
gets out and joins me and we go off  
to the newsreel--

(quick change of tone)

Do you realize what's happening in  
Congress?

ORSON has turned sharply to MAYZIE, suddenly most attentive.

Look at him, will ya-- ?

She's reacting to the change in ORSON-- pointing at him  
and appealing to JACK.

He doesn't give a shit for Congress.  
All "Bubah" wants to know is what  
happened in the sixteen minutes his  
wife was in that wagon finding out  
about sculpting ice, and hiring the  
stuff for this party!

She slams out of the room.

A pause... JACK, now in a comfortable chair, lights a cigar.  
ORSON, still kneels at the window, staring out.

75

ORSON

I never had the slightest suspicion...

JACK CARTER

Just how old were you when you got married?

ORSON

Nineteen-- since you ask.

JACK CARTER

Too soon for a bubble-head like you.

ORSON

So was she... nineteen.

JACK CARTER

Women are born older than we are.

ORSON

(thoughtfully)

Not that I've been as strictly faithful as I might have been--

JACK CARTER

(rising)

Okay, Maestro, goodbye-- I'll be following your career.

(Can it be true that he's losing a friend?) ORSON gets to his feet.

ORSON

That really does sound like goodbye.

JACK CARTER

Do you give a shit?

ORSON

You know I do.

Their eyes meet..

Jack... how're you going to live?

JACK CARTER

High off the hog. Numbers.

ORSON

Level with me.

JACK CARTER

We're makin' a deal with the greaseballs.

(after a moment)

I'm gonna get rich, which means the trouble I get into I can afford.

75

A moment's silence between the two friends... Then JACK moves to the door.

JACK CARTER (cont)

You used to like it fine in Harlem.  
Come up for a visit now and then--  
while it's still fun... It won't be  
much longer.

He goes...

ORSON is alone... From below come bursts of laughter and sometimes even applause...

The music has stopped. He listens intently, not making anything out... After a time-- and with an eye cocked on his mirror-- he begins to speak:

ORSON

I don't think we've been introduced.  
(studies him for a beat)  
My name is Welles. Your name is Kevan  
Kildare, you are an unemployed actor,  
and I regret to say, quite a good one.  
You are here by invitation?... That  
would be Virginia...

Mirror, mirror on the wall--

ORSON raises his voice, in a sudden note of aggression:

What do I see? I see the best man in  
my profession under forty! That's what  
I am. That's what I see.

A nervous silence... Then:

They set up rigid standards for me  
before I could talk. Who the hell  
could live up to them?... And why do  
I keep telling myself that because I  
like people they like me?...

(short pause)

I try to console myself with unrequited  
friendships--

In the background, VIRGINIA has entered the scene... MARC, downstairs, has started some romantic piano music. ORSON catches sight of his wife in the looking glass.

ORSON (cont)

(to her)

I hear laughter and applause down there.  
Who's it for?

VIRGINIA

We've been playing The Game.

75

MAYZIE sticks her head in the door.

MAYZIE

Game? Which game?

VIRGINIA

Animals-- 'The Beastly Bestiary'--

It has to be people we all know, and  
you must describe them as mythical  
beasts.

MAYZIE

For instance?

VIRGINIA

Well... just for instance-- who do  
we know who is like unto a newly  
born giraffe, with the sexy behind  
of a zebra?

MAYZIE

(with sudden delight)

I do have a sexy behind!

ORSON has by now pretty much pulled himself together.

ORSON

(to MAYZIE)

And what a good cue that is for your  
exit.

MAYZIE

(recognizing a command  
when she hears it)

I'll be waiting below.

MAYZIE vanishes-- then instantly reappears.

MAYZIE

And now let's do Houseman--

VIRGINIA

(cutting her off  
rather sharply)

No. No, sorry.

MAYZIE

(being naughty)

Know what Virginia says-- ?

VIRGINIA

Shut your trap, Mayzie.

75

MAYZIE

(like a bad little girl)

Virginia says--

ORSON

(interrupting)

Virginia has some crazy thing about Jack. She's wrong. It's just that lately he's a bisse! peeved because I haven't let him watch rehearsals--

He takes MAYZIE firmly by the arm and leads her to the door.

I'm somebody he happens to need-- And vice versa. In show business we call it friendship.

He closes the door on her.

A silence.

ORSON (cont)

(looking in the mirror again)

Now do me.

VIRGINIA

We always do you.

ORSON

Naturally.

VIRGINIA

The proud Arab steed again?... 'He stamps the earth-- his hot breath clouds the sky...'

She has ORSON'S fascinated attention.

MAYZIE

(at the door)

I've got it-- ! Attila the Hun!

ORSON

(to MAYZIE)

Out!...

VIRGINIA closes the door on her with her foot...  
Standing behind ORSON, she catches his eye in the glass.

VIRGINIA

(quietly, with a new  
note in her voice)

Oh, yes... A one-eyed old circus bear  
dancing in the spring time to show us  
he's still young.

75

He looks at her. She meets his gaze.

VIRGINIA (cont)

But he was never young... that's his trouble, you see-- he knows that we know that he was never young.

ORSON takes her hand. He speaks with a certain gravity and no sentiment.

ORSON

(very seriously)

And you-- you are my little unicorn.

In a thousand years there has only been one of you-- at one time.

VIRGINIA turns her head slightly to one side, studying him. The phone starts to ring-- loudly.

VIRGINIA

(a twinkle in her eye)

You speak like a lasagna.

ORSON

(picking up the phone)

Now what the hell does that mean?

VIRGINIA

All sorts of layers... and the juicy stuff in between.

ORSON

(into phone)

Yes, Jack...

A pause while he listens.

Okay, we'll talk in the morning.

(then quickly)

Oh-- sorry you couldn't come to the party... Night.

He hangs up slowly.

ORSON (cont)

(to VIRGINIA)

Houseman.

VIRGINIA

Bad news?

ORSON

(grimly)

He's been talking to Washington. They're really closing in.

75

VIRGINIA

Why don't you? Hopkins is supposed  
to be your friend--

ORSON

He is... It's that little gang of  
Neanderthals in Congress...

With his arm around her he starts to lead her out the door.

We'll talk about it later. Poor  
Marc's worried enough as it is...

They leave...

ORSON'S VOICE IN THE HALL

You think it's alright if I come  
down in my nightshirt?

MARC is still playing.

ORSON AND VIRGINIA'S VOICES

(singing as they go)

Have you been to Honolulu...

Dissolve:

THE DRESS REHEARSAL:

76

INT. THEATRE: THE STAGE - WITH SCENERY AND LIGHTING

76

A small audience scattered all over the auditorium (people connected in some way with the theatre project)... Full cast and choir on-stage... full orchestra in the pit with LEHMAN ENGLE conducting...

The point has been reached for the scenery change into the HONOLULU NUMBER. Halfway through, ORSON, rising from his regular rehearsal seat in the ninth row, calls a halt. He moves down to LEHMAN; MARC, from the front row, joining a little discussion in which four bars are cut from the transition. LEHMAN turns back to the orchestra, ready for the downbeat--

HOUSEMAN

Orson--

ORSON freezes. This being a dress rehearsal with nerves frazzling all over, he manages, this time, to suppress his indignation at what he takes to be another unnecessary interruption... HOUSEMAN, very grim-faced, hands him a telegram. ORSON reads it quickly, putting it away just in time before MARC rejoins him.

HOUSEMAN

It's nothing, Marc--

76

ORSON

(taking his cue  
from HOUSEMAN)

Yes, just another  
bureaucratic botheration.  
Not to worry...

He moves quickly up the center aisle joining VIRGINIA in  
the back of the house.

ORSON (cont)

(under his breath)

This time it's an outright  
command-- We don't open  
period.

VIRGINIA

What will you do?

HOUSEMAN has moved to ORSON'S side. They look at each  
other, speechless... Suddenly, ORSON turns back toward  
the stage, raising his voice.

ORSON

Taking five, Lehman?

LEHMAN

(uncertainly)

No...

ORSON

Then let's get on with it.

They do. With the full orchestra and choir it sounds  
beautiful; and as the illuminated platforms move and  
the neon moon rises over Honolulu, it looks  
extraordinary.

CUT TO:

77

EXT. THEATRE

DAY

77

A CLOSE-SHOT of CHAINS AND PADLOCKS being put into place  
by Officers of the Federal Government.

78

INT. THEATRE LOBBY

DAY

78

HOUSEMAN, JEANNIE, AUGUSTA, ABE and TED watching from  
inside... MAYZIE enters scene.

78

MAYZIE  
Hey, guys-- ! The stage  
door is still open--

HOUSTMAN

(irritated as  
usual by this  
noisy, nosey  
civilian)

They aren't locking us in,  
you know. They're just  
locking out the  
public.

CUT TO:

79

INT. ORSON'S DRESSING ROOM

DAY

79

Raising his head, ORSON sees MARC in the looking glass.

MARC

Is it really true?

ORSON

Sure'n hell looks like it.

Then, after a stunned silence.

MARC

(cross)

Is that some kind of music  
out there?

ORSON

Will Geer and Howard Da Silva  
warming up. They've volunteered  
to entertain. The idea is to  
keep the audience from going  
home.

MARC

(after a moment,  
thoughtfully)

If they'll listen to Will,  
they'd listen to our show...  
What's to stop us from doing it  
right out there in the street?

ORSON

The cops. They'd break us  
up in a minute--

79

MARC

Because of what we have to say.

ORSON

Nothing political, Marc. Will and his guitar can be moved along. We'd be an obstruction...

Their eyes meet.

You'd be willing to give up your chorus, and all that scenery and the whole production?

MARC

Of course.

ORSON

Suppose we find some kind of a hall, or warehouse, or a church?

MARC

Or a theatre--

ORSON

(coming alive)

A theatre!-- A real New York theatre!

CUT TO:

80

INT. THE POWDER ROOM

DAY

80

A small crowd is already filling the ladies toilet. (More and more people will keep coming in throughout the following sequence). AUGUSTA is on the phone. The theatre's second phone is ringing.

AUGUSTA

(into phone)

Project 891; just one moment please-- (cont)

80

AUGUSTA (cont)  
(into the second phone)  
Project 891, will you hold on just a moment--  
(appealing to the others)  
What do I say to these people?

HOUSEMAN  
(entering with TEDDY)  
Who's calling?

AUGUSTA  
Who's calling?-- Everybody. What do I  
tell them when they want to know what  
kind of opening there'll be tonight  
in a padlocked theatre?

ORSON  
Remember Carl Leammele, the movie  
tycoon? He had a pest in his outer  
office who wouldn't go away. The  
problem, by lunch time, seemed  
insoluble. "He won't move," said  
the secretary. "What do I say?"  
"Give him an evasive answer," said  
Leammele, "Tell him to go fuck himself."  
(he turns to a little man  
seated nearby, an obvious  
stranger in a bowler hat)  
Sir, I hope you'll overlook that rough  
word. I avoid that sort of language  
unless it's positively imbedded in an  
anecdote--

(to HOUSEMAN)  
A friend of yours, Houseman?

HOUSEMAN  
No. He seems to have just wandered in.

THE LITTLE MAN  
Correction, sir. You sent for me.

HOUSEMAN  
Don't tell me you're Pratt?!

PRATT  
Pratt's the name, theatre brokerage  
is the profession. Arnold Pratt.

ORSON  
Well, sit right down, Arnold. You  
call me Orson, and speak frankly:  
is there-- anywhere in this town--  
a theatre available for tonight?

80

90

PRATT

(taking out his notebook)

May I have the use of a telephone?

HOUSEMAN

(who has already started  
dialing a number on the  
second phone)

Go right ahead, Mr. Pratt.

PRATT

Arnold.

HOUSEMAN

Arnold.

(his attention diverted by  
a reply on his phone)

Hello-- ?

ORSON

(to PRATT)

That's Houseman. You call him Jack.

TEDDY

I just want to ask one question--

ORSON

(to PRATT)

You call him Teddy.

HOUSEMAN

(his phone still at his ear)

Stop being silly.

(to TEDDY)

What is it?

TEDDY

I just want to ask if it's occurred to  
anybody to do some checking with Actor's  
Equity?

HOUSEMAN

It's occurred to me. It's what I'm  
trying to do now--

(into phone)

Actor's Equity? John Houseman here;  
may I speak with Mr. Gilmore...

A tense silence. Then:

Oh?...

PRATT has dialed and reached his number.

80

PRATT

(into phone)

Francine? This is Arnie. Tell me,  
dear-- what's dark tonight?

HOUSEMAN

(into phone)

... in ten minutes? I'll call back.  
(hangs up)

PRATT

(the phone still at his ear)

Well, gentlemen, which would you rather  
have-- the Lyric or the Gaiety?

ORSON

Both of them. They're beautiful--

MR. PRUETT

I'll take the Lyric.

MARC

Which one has a piano?

PRATT

(into phone)

What a shame.

(he hangs up; turns to the  
others)

The Lyric's out, there's a benefit.

ABE

(who has just entered)

We'll take the Gaiety..

PRATT

Closed for repairs.

MARC

(to HOUSEMAN)

Let's start with the piano--

PRATT

All the same, I think I've got an idea...

MR. PRUETT

He's got an idea--

HOUSEMAN meanwhile has begun to dial another number... A  
slight pause for this.

ABE

(to PRATT, with some ferocity)

Well-- ?

PRATT

Fifty-Ninth Street-- how do you like that address?

JEANNIE

We love it, Arnold. What's the theatre?

PRATT

It's a big house, but it's cheap.

HOUSEMAN

(turning from his phone)

How cheap?

PRATT

The Seville Theatre, gentlemen. The best deal in town for that number of seats--

HOUSEMAN

(into phone)

Thank you very much.

(enraged, he slams down the receiver)

I found a place that rents pianos, but they're closing for the day!

PRATT

One thousand two hundred and fifty kiesters, gentlemen, can loll back in that theatre, gentlemen, in comfort and luxury.

TEDDY

How much-- ?

MARC

There must be other places...

A short silence.

ABE

Come on, Keister, how much?

PRATT

(on his dignity)

The name is Pratt.

ORSON

(maniacally cheerful)

I call him Arnold. He calls me Orson--

HOUSEMAN

You're all getting hysterical--

MARC  
Is there a piano?

PRATT  
This is the Seville Theatre we're  
talking about?

ORSON  
Yes, Arnold.

PRATT  
No piano.

PRUETT  
A truck.

ORSON  
A truck! How right you are, Mr. Pruett.  
Somebody go find one.

JEANNIE  
A truck or a theatre?

ORSON  
Darling, we've got the theatre--

HOUSEMAN  
(grimly, as he dials)  
Depending on the price--

TEDDY  
Let's keep it cool, guys-- the truck  
first, then the piano--

ORSON  
Jeannie, the first minute you get it--  
the piano, I mean-- phone us here--

JEANNIE  
Me-- ? Just go out and find a truck?

ORSON  
She'll need some money, Houseman.

JEANNIE  
All I've got is six bucks.

HOUSEMAN  
(much preoccupied with  
his phone call)  
Good. Whatever you spend we'll  
reimburse you.

He waves her out with a happy smile. She leaves with great  
reluctance.

80

PRATT

A hundred bucks.

Slight pause.

HOUSEMAN

What?

PRATT

Well, Jack, you keep demanding the price-- it's a hundred dollars a performance.

HOUSEMAN

We'll take it, of course--

Cheers and congratulations all around.

How much have you got, Orson?

ORSON

I never have more than expense money and Gussie's in charge of it. How much, Gussie?

AUGUSTA

Well, there were all those sandwiches for everybody...

HOUSEMAN

We may not be able to get the whole sum together in cash... But here-- here's my check--

PRATT

Sorry.

HOUSEMAN

No checks?

PRATT

No checks.

CUT TO:

81

EXT. NEW YORK STREET

TWILIGHT

81

The tiny figure of JEANNIE can be seen valiantly standing in front of a huge but rickety truck which is ploughing down on her. Luckily the truck squeaks to a stop, and JEANNIE commences negotiations.

TRUCK DRIVER

For me and the truck, lady? Three bucks an hour.

81

JEANNIE  
You gotta deal. Pull up ahead while  
I phone.

CUT TO:

82

THE POWDER ROOM

82

MR. PRUETT  
(the phone to his ear,  
to the others)  
It's Jeannie. She's found a truck.  
But where does it go?

HOUSEMAN  
Tell her to keep driving in circles,  
moving closer--

MR. PRUETT  
From where?

TEDDY  
From wherever she is.

PRATT  
(the phone at his ear, turns  
to the group)  
The Mirabelle-- a little gem of a  
theatre-- Five hundred seats downstairs,  
two hundred balcony-- and clean,  
gentlemen-- you could eat off the  
floor--  
(interrupts himself, listens  
to a voice on phone)  
Unavailable. The owner's somewhere  
in Miami Beach...

CUT TO:

83

EXT. THE ROOF OF THE THEATRE

EARLY EVENING

83

The weather is pleasant. A GROUP OF ACTORS have made their  
way up by means of the fire escape. The guitar can be heard.

BIG JIM  
(a beloved figure in  
popular Front circles)  
That's Will Geer down there, he's  
going to entertain the public till the  
doors are unlocked--

MOSES  
That figgers to be quite a concert.

VIRGINIA

Let's just hope we finally get something besides those famous fighting songs from the Spanish Civil War.

SHIRLEY

(a bit sharply)

Why-- ?

MAYZIE

Too Left Wing for Ginny.

The others exchange looks.

VIRGINIA

(very angry and upset)

Too Left Wing for now!

HIRAM

Well... who's for martyrdom, and who's for meat and potatoes?

VIRGINIA

I suppose you think I don't know about that.

HIRAM

About what, dear?

VIRGINIA

Well... with us it was half a cauliflower. We broke into an empty house, Orson and I-- a mansion-- an ice box of a mansion. Rolled ourselves up in a rug and that's how we lived. Three days and nights on that lousy, uncooked cauliflower--

MOSES

You were broke, Mamma.

VIRGINIA

You're damn right we were broke.

MOSES

Broke is one thing, down and out is another.

VIRGINIA

Okay, okay! I'm the spoiled rich brat who doesn't know the right way to shiver when she's cold. But I know how to worry. And I do worry--

MAYZIE

Of course you do, sweetie, nobody can worry better than you.

CUT TO:

84     INT. MOM AND POP CIGAR STORE - LOWER EAST SIDE - TWILIGHT     84

JEANNIE on the phone, the head TRUCK DRIVER listening. She hangs up.

TRUCK DRIVER

So what's he say?

JEANNIE

Keep on driving.

TRUCK DRIVER

Look, lady, I got a wife and kids--

CUT TO:

85     INT. POWDER ROOM     85

A lot more people have arrived on the scene-- all waiting to learn what's going to happen. (HOUSEMAN, a realist, has just about given up.)

PRATT

(to the group)

Victory! The last house on Broadway--  
That is, for one night at a time--

MR. PRUETT

Sign 'em up.

PRATT

The Dillingham on 49th. They'll take  
a check--

Enthusiastic applause.

CUT TO:

86     EXT. STREET     EARLY EVENING     86

JEANNIE starts out of the truck.

TRUCK DRIVER

You gonna call back again, kiddo, it  
costs you four more bucks.

JEANNIE

You might even get five.

She says this in attempted lightness, but the TRUCK DRIVER and his COMPANION don't smile.

CUT TO:

87     INT. THE POWDER ROOM     87

MR. PRUETT

(picking up the phone)

Yes-- ? (cont)

87

MR. PRUETT (cont)

(to the others)

It's Jeannie. Any news?

TEDDY

We found a place where she can get a piano.

(grabbing the phone)

Jeannie? I'll give you the address--

FRESH ANGLE: ANOTHER GROUP

AUGUSTA

Shouldn't we be checking with the unions?

HOUSEMAN

I'll try Equity one more time--

(he starts to dial)

MARC

And Petrillo--

OLIVE

Who?

HOUSEMAN

(the phone at his ear)

The boss of the Musician's Union. Now

I'm calling Equity--

(into phone)

Mr. Gilmore-- ?

FRESH ANGLE: MARC

MARC

Unions are what 'The Cradle's' all about--

HOUSEMAN

(into phone)

When he does come in, please tell him

I'll call back.

MARC

(excited)

I should do the talking-- I'm the musician.

TEDDY

(into phone)

Okay, Jeannie-- ? Good... Get it loaded on your truck.

CUT TO:

88 INT. GROCERY STORE - THE TELEPHONE 83

JEANNIE'S reaction to this last command... She has lowered the receiver. Now she raises it to object. But TEDDY has already hung up.

CUT BACK TO:

89 INT. THE POWDER ROOM 89

PRATT

I've just checked. I'm afraid the Dillingham is dead.

ABE

(a great roar)

Why-- ?

PRATT

They tore it down.

HOUSEMAN has started dialing.

TEDDY

I'm still worried about Equity--

HOUSEMAN

And I'm still calling them--

OLIVE

Are we allowed to switch managements?

HOUSEMAN

That's the big question..

CUT TO:

90 EXT. CHEAP LOWER EAST SIDE MUSICAL RENTAL HOUSE - EVENING 90

JEANNIE'S TRUCK DRIVER and ASSISTANT, aided by two very ancient gentlemen from the rental establishment, carry out an upright piano.

91 INT. RENTAL HOUSE

EVENING 91

JEANNIE

(into phone)

You still don't have a theatre? So where do we go with the piano?...

CUT TO:

92 INT. POWDER ROOM 92

Some REPORTERS have joined the scene and are gathered around ORSON.

92

ORSON

We'll be announcing the name of the  
new theatre in good time--

The REPORTERS aren't convinced.

As for what we'll use for costumes  
and sets, or for lighting and musical  
accompaniment--

MARC

(cutting in)

They've closed us down.

CLOSE SHOT: MARC

He hangs up the phone, his face ashen.

ABE

Who says so?

MARC

The Musicians' Union. I couldn't  
persuade them.

ABE

Screw the Musicians' Union!

(appealing to the others)

I've heard it with just Marc at the  
piano. Even that way it's one helluva  
show. Can the union stop him from  
playing his own music?

MARC

They'd throw a picket line around the  
theatre.

MR. PRUETT

Do they do that with Paderoosky?

MARC

No, but--

(he breaks off: suddenly  
struck with an idea)

A concert!

He leaps to his feet. Raising his voice:

There's no thirty-two union men backing  
up a concert-- Listen-- we're a concert  
-- a concert! Do you know what that  
means? We can use as few musicians as  
we want to! They can be up on the  
stage.

HOUSEMAN

But the actors can't. (cont)

92

HOUSEMAN (cont)

(having captured general  
attention with this bombshell)

I've finished talking to Equity. Nobody  
can appear on any other stage without  
the permission of the original  
management.

ORSON

And our 'original management' is the  
United States government.

CUT TO:

93

EXT. ROOF OF THE THEATRE -EARLY EVENING

93

SHIRLEY

(a voice of Marxist reason)

Ginny dear-- you've just got to learn  
to think idealogically--

VIRGINIA

(flaring up)

And you've got to learn to call me  
Virginia--

Another brief pause... (From below in the street WILL GEER  
can be heard still singing.)

BIG JIM

(SHIRLEY'S friend)

Alright, Virginia-- what we've got  
here is a vital issue of censorship:  
'The Cradle'--

GEATTYS

(breaking in)

Censorship! We could be doing the Life  
of Jesus, and that same little gang of  
fascists in Congress would still be  
putting us out of business.

VIRGINIA

Haven't we been asking for it?  
Thumbing our noses at them--

BIG JIM

(with his air of  
intellectual patience)

And what should we be doing?

VIRGINIA

We're under fire, aren't we? We should  
be keeping our heads down--

Groans and moans...

93

The GROUP starts to break up, to move down off the roof by way of the fire escape.

SHIRLEY

(indignantly)

So what happened to that beautiful friendship between you and Blitzstein?

VIRGINIA

I love him. And I want his show to open in a proper way, when the Federal Theatre's established as a permanent national institution--

MOSES

(as he goes)

Whataya gonna do about Congress?  
That's where the money comes from.

VIRGINIA

So down will come cradle, baby and all...?

VIRGINIA is almost alone at the top of the fire escape.

Well, Orson is my baby. And this is his theatre...

It's the love of his life. And I don't want him to lose it.

CUT TO:

94

INT. POWDER ROOM

ORSON is on the phone. He's still surrounded by REPORTERS.

FIRST REPORTER

(shouting)

It's twenty to seven, Mr. Welles--

ORSON

Yes, and we've got ticket-holders already out there in the street. They believe us--  
(into phone)

Jeannie, darling-- you'll just have to work your way closer to us and check in again.

FRESH ANGLE:

TEDDY

Hey! What about the Seville-- ?

PRATT

Seville?

94

94

MARC

Yes, remember? That was the one you said was so perfect--

ABE

Let's get them on the phone--

PRATT picks up the phone and dials.

PRATT

You claimed there was some obstacle.

HOUSEMAN

You did. You said they wouldn't take a check. Suppose we write one for a three-week guarantee? What kind of a gamble will that be tomorrow morning when the banks open?

CUT TO:

95

EXT. NEW YORK STREET

EVENING

95

The truck with the piano in it is parked at the curb. JEANNIE, after what she intends as a reassuring word to the two men, goes into a drugstore to phone once again. As soon as her back is turned, the TRUCK DRIVER says something to his ASSISTANT, and they start to move decisively...

96

INT. POWDER ROOM

EVENING

96

PRATT

(hanging up)

They accept.

ORSON

(raising his voice)

As you know, we're going to have to get along without an orchestra, stage sets or lighting. And just now an order's come down which seems to say we're going to have to get along without actors-- !

Gasps... low groans... murmur. Reaction.

Don't we have a constitutional right to stand up and sing wherever we'd like to?

96

The reaction gets hotter.

ORSON (cont)  
so it's your decision-- you're  
silent-- or you sing.

Big applause.

AUGUSTA

(turning to  
HOUSEMAN, her  
phone at her  
ear)

It's Jeannie--

HOUSEMAN

Tell her it's the Seville.  
Give her the address--

CUT TO:

97

EXT. THE THEATRE (891 - STAGE DOOR)

EVENING

97

WILL and HOWARD have broken off entertaining the audience.  
ORSON and VIRGINIA, followed by LEHMAN, TEDDY, and ABE, come  
from inside the theatre.

Standing on the raised level which opens on the scene dock  
(by the stage door entrance) ORSON raises his hands for  
silence.

ORSON

Thanks for your patience.  
And now we're going to ask  
you to participate in  
something that I don't  
think has happened in two  
thousand and more years  
since people have been  
going to the theatre.

Low murmur of interest.

What we propose (with your  
consent) is to move an entire  
play with its audience, on  
its opening night from this  
theatre to another theatre--  
twenty blocks away.

Surprised and bewildered reaction.

If you're prepared to make  
that journey-- let's call it  
a pilgrimage-- (cont)

97

ORSON (cont)

You're going to the Seville Theatre between 58th and 59th on Seventh Avenue.

But those who think this whole business is as silly as it sounds can have their money cheerfully refunded at the box office. The rest can help to make a little history.

ABE, TEDDY and LEHMAN are already in the cab. ORSON jumps in. The cab starts away.

97

EXT. THE THEATREEARLY EVENING

The AUDIENCE watches the cab rattle away... People exchange looks (this is the moment of decision)... A few start in the opposite direction: toward the box office. Then most of them slow up and stop...

98

EXT. NEW YORK STREETEARLY EVENING

JEANNIE, hurrying out of the drugstore, finds that the piano has vanished. The piano waits forlornly on the street corner.

99

EXT. NEW YORK STREETEVENING

The AUDIENCE, marching, four abreast and in high spirits, toward the Seville Theatre.

100

FRESH ANGLE: ORSON'S SPEEDING CAB

ORSON

Hold it!

He has caught sight of JEANNIE'S piano marooned on a side street..

Back up--

They do, and ORSON jumps out calling to JEANNIE as she comes out into the street.

That's beautiful, Jeannie.  
It's the Seville-- just  
around the corner. Wait,  
I'll arrange for transportation--

JEANNIE turns to the open archway of the fire department just behind her.

100

JEANNIE

Don't bother-- I've got  
it under control. Come on,  
boys--

A number of New York firemen emerge and start grappling  
cheerfully with the piano.

CUT TO:

101

EXT. NEW YORK STREETNIGHT

The marching crowd...

102

EXT. SEVILLE THEATRE -NIGHT

ABE, TEDDY, LEHMAN and ORSON are already at the main doorway  
which is finally opened by a WATCHMAN in response to their  
pounding. Too impatient to answer his questions, they force  
their way past him.

103

INT. SEVILLE THEATRE

Everything inside the building shows signs of accumulated  
neglect. ABE and ORSON turn on a couple of lights as they  
go. ABE makes his way to the stage. MARC comes down the  
centre aisle joining ORSON.

ORSON

(quietly)

I'm sorry, Marc... This isn't  
what I promised you.

103

MARC

(looking around, almost  
in wonderment)If it'll work here... it'll work  
anywhere.

ORSON seems to be breathing in the dust of the old playhouse as though it were the bouquet of a vintage wine-- profoundly delicious and at the same time exciting, like some celestial drug.

ORSON

You know-- just maybe...

FRESH ANGLE:

For an instant, ABE FEDER, running through a bank of ancient switches, produces a great flare of light, an intensity matching ORSON'S mood...

A blinding burst of flame and the bank of switches blows out.

CUT TO:

104 A FIRE ENGINE SCREECHING PAST THE MARCHING PLAYGOERS - NIGHT 104

It pulls up in front of:

105 EXT. THE SEVILLE THEATRE NIGHT 105

A fire engine pulls up... JEANNIE, MR. PRUETT and just about everybody else remotely connected with 'The Cradle' is riding it with the firemen. Everyone immediately starts trundling out JEANNIE'S piano (which is, of course, the reason for the fire engine...

106 INT. SEVILLE THEATRE LOBBY 106

The door of the entrance has glass panes so that some of the light out on the street falls on HOUSEMAN who, with TEDDY at his side, is making his plans-- as Homer puts it: 'That way and this dividing the swift mind.'

HOUSEMAN

That audience was only a few blocks behind us. Somebody should be taking their tickets--

TEDDY

Why bother? The whole place in there is falling to pieces. The switchboard blew out-- but Abe's managed to rig up a coupla spots--

CUT TO:

107

INT. THE SEVILLE THEATRE

ORSON, surrounded by the 'Cradle' cast, has just completed some last-minute instructions... The actors move to the front of the house. VIRGINIA and HIRAM SHERMAN join ORSON as he moves to the side aisle.

HIRAM

Suppose it doesn't work? Suppose it's a mess?

ORSON

The possibility hasn't even occurred to me.

(turning to AUGUSTA)

Tell Jack, if it's all right with him, I think we can open the doors now.

(then, back to HIRAM)

Do you believe in cycles?

HIRAM

I haven't given it much thought.

ORSON

Seven-year cycles...

Seven years ago I stumbled into this profession. The truth is I'm not a fourteen carat theatre professional. I'm an adventurer. So if it's time for me to stumble out, I think I could manage that quite easily.

HIRAM

You know what that is?

ORSON

No?

HIRAM

(quietly)

Bullshit.

He leaves the scene.

ORSON

(to VIRGINIA)

Well-- ?

She doesn't speak.

Is this the seventh year-- or do we wait for the next one around?

VIRGINIA

(smiling)

You've still got quite a lot of time.

107

ORSON

(a bit sombre)

It takes a lot of time.

FRESH ANGLE:

MARC

... This is a big house, if they're going  
to hear me in the back we'll have to  
rip open this piano--

108

EXT. NEW YORK STREET

NIGHT 108

The CROWD appears to have increased in size... the sound of  
their feet on the pavement louder than ever...

109

INT. SEVILLE THEATRE

109

ABE struggling with an ancient spotlight... Success! The  
light goes on.

110

THE STAGE: MARC AND TEDDY

110

Ripping away the panels from the front of the piano. The  
house curtain starts to lower....

111

EXT. SEVILLE THEATRE

NIGHT 111

The front lines of the marching AUDIENCE begin to converge on  
the theatre...

112

INT. SEVILLE THEATRE (LOOKING TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE)

112

A sudden excited murmur as THE AUDIENCE starts moving through  
the front doors into the theatre lobby... A flicker of  
flashbulbs... The house lights go on...

113

SERIES OF SHOTS:

113

The audience entering, excited... Flashbulbs popping.

- 114 BACK-STAGE: 11  
Peering at the audience through the peephole in the curtain.
- 115 THE AUDITORIUM: 11  
An impatient, rhythmic clapping starts up...
- 116 CLOSE SHOT: ORSON AND VIRGINIA 11  
MAYZIE enters scene.

MAYZIE

(into ORSON'S ear)

Look out-- Houseman's going to  
make a speech.

ORSON

It's quite proper that he  
should.

MAYZIE

(after an exchange  
of looks with  
VIRGINIA)

You want people to think he  
directed this thing?

ORSON

Let's take our seats.

FRESH ANGLE:

On the stage left side three front-row seats have been kept reserved by means of the ladies' scarves and handbags. Crouching and moving swiftly, ORSON takes the seat on the aisle. VIRGINIA and MAYZIE follow.

- 117 REVERSE ANGLE: THE STAGE 11  
HOUSEMAN emerges from the proscenium entrance. In the audience the excited chatter falls silent.
- 118 FRESH ANGLE: BACK-STAGE 11  
Or rather the stage behind the house curtain. MARC sits frozen at his piano. Suddenly he finds ORSON kneeling close to him.

ORSON

Marc--

MARC

Yes?

ORSON

This is where I get off... You realize that?

MARC

(fairly catatonic)

Just when I need you most.

ORSON

Marc, baby-- from here on in you don't need me at all.

MARC says nothing, but it's evident he's unconvinced.

Listen! That thing--

(indicates the curtain)

is going up in a few seconds.

Right now just tell yourself how much they love you...

(after a beat)

Jesus! All they're getting is you on this lousy little piano, and more than a thousand of 'em walked twenty blocks for it.

(another beat)

Answer this one question-- honestly, from the bottom of your heart:-- Do you really and truly believe that I know more about this... stuff... than you do?

They hold each other's gaze... not an eyelash moves.

MARC

No... No I don't.

#### A CLOSE-UP OF MARC

Transfiguration is too heavy a word, but that's the idea... He thinks about it and grows tall...

From the other side of the curtain comes a clatter of applause. MARC knows that sort of clapping won't be heard for him.

118

HOUSEMAN'S VOICE  
My name is John Houseman--

119

CUT TO:

119

THE STAGE:

119

HOUSEMAN

-- the managing director of the Federal Theatre Project 891. 'The Cradle Will Rock' by Mr. Blitzstein is an original and distinguished contribution to the American musical theatre. After some two months of preparation, we were abruptly commanded not to open. It was a command we found we could not obey. Mr. Blitzstein's work was ready for an audience tonight. And that is why we are here.

Loud applause... Exit HOUSEMAN.

120

BACKSTAGE - THE SEVILLE THEATRE

120

HOUSEMAN, moving between the proscenium and the house curtain, looks about for TEDDY.

HOUSEMAN

(in a half whisper)

Curtain-- ! Teddy-- bring up the  
curtain--

TEDDY

(coming into scene at  
HOUSEMAN'S shoulder)

Sorry. Not according to Orson.

121

THE AUDITORIUM - ANGLED TOWARD THE STAGE

121

ORSON has risen from his front-row seat on the aisle. He stands motionless, leaning against the front of the stage... It takes a while for this to register with the excited audience... Chatter sinks to a moment's low, busy murmur... Then silence...

After the silence has focussed and belongs firmly to him, ORSON holds it for what almost seems a bit too long. When he does speak it's conversationally-- apparently without raising his voice.

## ORSON

Marc Blitzstein's opera was written for a large orchestra. The musicians are forbidden to play. Our singers, our actors are forbidden to perform tonight in their own theatre. They are forbidden to stand on any stage, including this one.  
(with a faint, slightly conspiratorial smile)

But I understand that most of them came along with you, our audience, on your famous... long march.

Laughter.

And if those members of the audience who happen to have rehearsed this show should feel an irresistible urge to stand up where they are, and join the performance -- I don't believe there's any law forbidding that in our free country.

(seriously)

I hope the rest of you appreciate what a risk they will be taking. They earn their living in the Federal Theatre, and they could find themselves tomorrow morning without a job.

Marc's show was meant to have a lot of scenery. But that's all behind us-- twenty blocks behind us, and under lock and key. No playwright, no composer since the world began has ever been so lonely.

He's up there, and we're down here-- about a thousand of us. But we don't have to just stare at him--

We can keep him company.

He turns, facing the stage...

ABE, in the balcony, floods his spotlight so that it fills the house curtain. The bedraggled old thing is suddenly glamorous:-- ORSON, still facing the stage, backs up the aisle-- Then, when he is out of sight under the balcony, at the back, he calls:

Curtain!

Slowly, a shade jerkily, it rises.

For that time in the theatre what is revealed is the perfect, the Brechtian tableau:

The author-composer (visibly wronged by the establishment) a short, intense, vulnerable figure with short sleeves and suspenders, seated before a small, battered piano on an empty stage.

121

MARC

The action takes place in Steeltown,  
U.S.A. on the night of a union  
organizing drive.

pause.

A street corner, night. Enter Moll.

pause.

Moll sings.

(after a moment he sings)

I'm checking home now, call it a night.  
Goin' up to my room...

Do we hear a second voice?

THE VOICE

... Turn on the light.

122

AUDITORIUM

122

ABE'S spotlight swoops from MARC to the front seats. The dim  
voice growing stronger now:

OLIVE'S VOICE: Jesus, turn off that light!  
I ain't in Steeltown long...

CAMERA FOLLOWS the spot as it focusses on OLIVE in the lower  
left box, pale and frightened-looking.

OLIVE: I work two days a week;  
The other five my efforts aren't required.

122

THE AUDITORIUM

122

The audience is intrigued and delighted with this departure  
from normal theatrical procedure.

OLIVE (Moll): For two days out of seven.  
Two dollar bills I'm given;  
So I'm just searchin' along the street.  
For on those five days it's nice to eat...  
Jesus, Jesus, who said let's eat.

A burst of applause.

MARC

Enter Gent.

MARC is ready to speak the lines for this new character, but  
hesitates while there is even a slight chance that the actor  
will do it himself... He does (rising in the middle of the  
auditorium).

STANTON (Gent): Hello, Baby.

122 ABE'S spotlight searches and finds him.

STANTON (GENT): (cont)... Busy, baby?

OLIVE (Moll): Not so very.

STANTON (Gent): I'd like to give you a hundred bucks.  
But I only got 30 cents...

A flare of flashbulbs: newspaper photographers recording a theatrical event.

FRESH ANGLE:

OLIVE (Moll): It was Tuesday last week, yeh, Tuesday.  
I had breakfast at Andy's--  
Coffee-and; for lunch  
I had coffee-and again;  
For dinner I could only afford  
Coffee. Then I looked on the floor,  
And I see a nickel shinin' there. Gee!  
(steps on it)  
Coffee-and, Andy!  
Then I looked closer--  
That wasn't no nickel.  
No coffee-and, Andy, just coffee, Andy--  
cute, huh?  
Mister, you don't know what it felt like,  
Thinkin' that was a nickel under my foot.  
(singing to the melody  
MARC is now playing)  
Maybe you wonder what it is,  
Makes people good or bad;  
Why some guy, an ace without a doubt,  
Turns out to be a bastard.  
And the other way about.  
I'll tell you what I feel:  
It's just the nickel under the heel...  
  
Oh, you can live like Hearts-and-Flowers,  
And every day is a wonderland tour.  
Oh, you can dream and scheme  
And happily put and take, take and put...  
But first be sure  
The nickel's under your foot.

Big applause.

CUT TO:

123      EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE SEVILLE THEATRE      NIGHT 123  
 VIRGINIA comes out by one of the fire exits and finds ORSON leaning against a mailbox, smoking a cigar. She moves close to him, and stands there for a while before she speaks.

VIRGINIA  
 ... They don't need you in there?

ORSON  
 . Not anymore.

VIRGINIA  
 But it's a smash.

He doesn't answer. Slight pause.

We'll go back in before it's over?...  
 You really ought to.

ORSON looks blank.

You don't want Houseman up there  
 bowing all by himself.

They both laugh.

A stronger volume of sound from inside the theatre catches their attention.

124      INT. THE SEVILLE THEATRE      124  
 (A short part of a scene.)

THEN CUT BACK TO:

125      EXT. OUTSIDE THE SEVILLE THEATRE      125  
 VIRGINIA and ORSON start a short stroll up the street.

VIRGINIA (cont)  
 First, you know, we could try the  
 movies... just for a while.  
 Don't you remember what Sam told us?

ORSON  
 Sam who?

VIRGINIA  
 Sam Goldwyn. 'For Orson,' he said,  
 'I could write a blanket check.'

CUT BACK TO:

126      INT. THE SEVILLE THEATRE      126  
 Another part of the play...

126

SERIES OF SCENES:

126

REACTIONS from our PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS as the performance triumphantly proceeds...

All the actors are standing up in their different places in the auditorium... A beating of drums seems to be coming from MARC'S magic piano... The show is winding up to its finale.

HOWARD: Listen! The boilermakers are with us!  
That's the boilermakers' kids--

The Cradle Will Rock is being sung by the chorus-- far away at first, then full volume.

HOWARD: The roughers! The rollers! Steel!  
Your steel!  
They've done it!

MARTY (the cop): They're marchin' down there! They got  
no permit to march!

HARRY'S VOICE: Arrest them!

MARTY: Arrest them? There's thousands of 'em!

WILL: My God! What do they want with me?

CUT BACK TO:

127

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE SEVILLE THEATRE

NIGHT

127

VIRGINIA and ORSON, still on their slow stroll, are now on their way back to the fire exit. ('The Cradle' can be heard within)--

VIRGINIA

So how about it?....

ORSON

About what?

VIRGINIA

You really think it's time to make  
your big change in careers? After  
tonight you've got this town in the  
palm of your hand..

ORSON

Good time to quit...

VIRGINIA

Aren't you just a little tempted by  
Hollywood?

ORSON

Hollywood is a place where you  
must never sit down because when  
you stand up you're sixty-five  
years old. (cont)

127

127

ORSON (cont)  
(smiling)

No, you'll simply have to make  
up your mind about that divorce.

They stop and turn to each other.

VIRGINIA  
That or Washington...? Will I  
have to kiss a lot of strange  
babies?

ORSON  
That's me. You just have to be  
gracious.

VIRGINIA  
(after a beat)  
I don't like that joke about divorce.

ORSON  
You started it. And it isn't really  
a joke...

(beat)  
A movie actor-- a divorced movie  
actor-- as president-- ? Not a  
chance.

He opens the fire door--

128

INT. THE SEVILLE THEATRE

128

The song starts. The audience has heard it earlier in the  
show and they join in, singing and clapping in time with  
the actors and the chorus.

HOWARD (leading it): That's thunder, that's lightning.  
And it's going to surround you!  
No wonder these stormbirds  
Seem to circle around you--  
Well, you can climb down,  
And you can't sit still!  
That's a storm that's going to last until  
The final wind blows--  
And when the wind blows--  
The cradle will rock!

The singing and the music break abruptly and there is silence.  
Then (just before there's any chance of applause):

MARC: The cradle will rock!

The packed theatre (with all its standees: the late arrivals  
from the other Broadway shows who somehow got word of this  
extraordinary event) have taken MARC'S 'opera' to its

128

collective heart. Now, as it comes triumphantly to its conclusion, that huge Niagara roar goes up-- that mighty, loving explosion which can be heard but once or twice in a theatre lifetime.

Strangers hug each other, rejoicing in a shared experience which has made them one... MRS. CRAM, from the balcony, contributes a joyous blizzard of leaflets: "Peace", "peace", "peace", "peace"... Tears stream down happy faces...

DISSOLVE:

129

MARC-- having just been glimpsed rising delightedly from his little piano in the old Seville Theatre to be dressed in instant glory-- is seen now from on high, and from some distance, bent over much the same sort of piano... For the great artist there may be roses and applause, but mostly there's the steady, ceaseless labor of the honest workman...

129

END TITLE

'The Cradle Will Rock' has played many hundreds of times in much the same manner as its opening night.

Leonard Bernstein was the first, among others, to take the composer's place at the small upright piano.

Marc Blitzstein is sorely missed.

This film is dedicated to him with much affection.