

*Peter
Bayman
6/20/85
SF-6-6266*

Prologue

Even before the curtain rises we can hear the chanting. At first it is fairly quiet, but the tightness of its unison and the steadiness with which its volume is allowed to build make abundantly clear the words being chanted: "We want Booth! We want Booth! We want Booth!", repeated constantly. The curtain rises. We see the people who are chanting. They compose an audience sitting before a makeshift stage in a theatre somewhere within the coal-mining section of Pennsylvania. Downstage of them, in an area which we assume to be a railway platform, JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH enters, followed by the MANAGER of the theatre in the background and BAXTER, an actor in the company. A CONDUCTOR waits patiently to the side. The MANAGER keeps throwing himself in the path of the belligerently advancing BOOTH. The chanting and the noise from the background continues under.

MANAGER: Mr. Booth! I am speaking to you as one gentleman of the theatre to another, sir--

BOOTH: Out of my way, clown!

CONDUCTOR: All aboard!

MANAGER: I will not get out of your way sir. You seem to have forgotten your responsibility in this matter.

BOOTH: I have forgotten nothing! (to CONDUCTOR) I'd like a ticket to Baltimore.

MANAGER: Mr. Booth, the management does not wish to seem unduly possessive of your unquestionable precious time.

BOOTH: / Ha! (he is paying for the ticket)

MANAGER: / The management does, however, feel perfectly within its rights--please listen to me, Mr. Booth!-- in insisting that you return to the theatre at once and perform as advertised.

BOOTH: I am not advertised. I am anticipated.

MANAGER: Anticipated, then. Won't you please come to the theatre and perform as anticipated?

BOOTH: Naked, sir? Perform naked? That is what it is they are anticipating, sir, they have come to see the great Booth naked!

MANAGER: Oh, surely not, sir.

BOOTH: A-ha, surely so, sir!

PROLOGUE-2

BAXTER: Mr. Booth, it is your Richard they have come to see.

BOOTH: Then they can look for it in Maryland. I'm going home!

CONDUCTOR: All aboard, sir.

BOOTH: Hold the train! Now, you can tell the hungry mob
they will not satiate themselves this evening. Will you
tell them that?

MANAGER: I will tell them nothing of the kind, sir.

BOOTH: Then play the part yourself, I'm going home!

BAXTER: Mr. Booth!

BOOTH: Home, Mr. Baxter! It is a word that has not disappeared
from my vocabulary. Start the train!

CONDUCTOR: All aboard!

(BOOTH has rushed off past the CONDUCTOR. We now hear
the sounds of a train starting off-stage.)

MANAGER: Mr. Booth! I would remind you of your contract, sir!

BOOTH: (off) I'm going home, sir! There is my contract!

MANAGER: Your contract is here, sir!

BOOTH: (laughing, off) We shall see, sir! We shall see!

(But the sound of his voice is drowned out and carried
away by the sound of the departing train.)

MANAGER: (as the train departs) You'll pay for this, Booth!
Drunken, irresponsible--actor! God damn you, Booth!
God damn the public for wanting you! You'll pay for
this...

(But he and BAXTER are alone on the platform.
Behind them the sounds of the restless audience con-
tinue)

BAXTER: Well, sir? Shall we cancel the performance?

MANAGER: We have no choice, Mr. Baxter. I heard he did this kind
of thing, but I'll be God-damned if I believed it.
Keeeee-rist! No wonder it's so easy to sign him on.

BAXTER: We'd better go back and tell them.

MANAGER: They're not going to like it. Maybe he wasn't fooling
when he called them a hungry mob.

BAXTER: They're what keeps him alive, sir.

PROLOGUE-3

MANAGER: I guess they are. Well, come on. Might as well get it over with.

(They walk back to their theater. The clamor increases)

MANAGER: (through the shouting) Ladies and gentlemen, attention, please! Ladies and gentlemen, I regret to inform you--
(the noise suddenly dwindles)
I regret to inform you that--uh--
(Silence)
--that Mr. Booth will not appear tonight.
(A low, ominous murmur begins)
Now, this is due to circumstances beyond our control, ladies and gentlemen. Beyond his own control!
(the murmur is building)
Ladies and gentlemen!

A MAN: Was he drinking again?

ANOTHER: Hey, what about it? Did you let him at the bottle?

SEVERAL OTHERS: We want Booth!

(The noise continues)

MANAGER: Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Booth is unable to appear!

SEVERAL OTHERS: We want Booth! We want Booth!

MANAGER: Mr. Booth is sick!

CROWD: (over-riding him) We want Booth! We want Booth! etc.

(The light is dimming down on the CROWD, which keeps up the chant, and in the darkness we can hear the sound of pandemonium and destruction. The light continues to focus hard and clear on the MANAGER)

MANAGER: I told you Mr. Booth is sick, God damn it! Did you hear me? He's a drunken, sick old man!
(the chaos and darkness intensify around him)
Hell, he's crazy, if you want the truth! Go on, smash the building apart, just smash it! Junius Brutus Booth is a drunken, crazy old man!

(Suddenly the overture begins. Blackout)

Scene 1: The Booth farm at twilight, an evening or two later. Outside, the children-- EDWIN, ASIA, ROSALIE, JOE--are lounging, EDWIN with a banjo. Inside, MARY ANN is having tranquil after-dinner coffee.

ASIA: Edwin, have you ever told me about father and the Old Testament?

EDWIN: Yes, I have, Asia.

ASIA: Well, you haven't told Rosalie and Joe.

ROSALIE: It's getting late, Asia. Mother will be wanting us to take Joe inside.

JOE: No, she won't.

ASIA: No, she won't, Rosalie. She'll be wanting us to stay outside and hear Edwin tell about father.

EDWIN: (strums, sings) The good Lord ^{got} ~~wake~~ up early on a ^{MONDAY} Sunday...

ASIA: That's better.

EDWIN: (singing) Looked outside into the void....

ROSALIE: Are you comfortable, Joe?

EDWIN: (singing) Looked around and all He saw was darkness
The same old darkness and the Lord was annoyed

"Think I'll make some planets out of stardust
Lord can do it if anybody can
Shape myself some mountains and an ocean
A serpent and an apple and a woman out of man"
When He finished He still wasn't happy--
"I left out something and that's the truth!"
It's a mighty fine world but it's much too quiet"--
On the eighth day the Lord made Junius Booth!

(The division of the song among the OTHERS from this point on has yet to be worked out:)

Joshua played a town called Jericho
Billed as a one-man band
Blew that ram's horn louder than he oughta
But the walls decided they were gonna stand
People shouted, "Blow a little harder
You got to earn your pay!"
"Like to help you," said poor old Joshua
"But I just can't make it so the walls'll have to stay"

"All of a sudden here comes Junius
"Fear not, children, Booth is around!"
He threw down the ram's horn, sang a verse of Dixie
And the walls of the town came atumbling down

Noah said to his wife and children
"The sky is mighty dark
Better go out and gather up the animals
Two of every kind and put'em in the ark--"
Two racoons, two baboons
A pair of cats, two black bats
Hogs and dogs, loons and larks
Bushy little squirrels and man-eating sharks
They all came running, two of every kind
Shouting "Please Mr. Noah, don't leave me behind!"

They sailed forty days, the boat started leaking
The beasts were all out of hand
Noah mumbled as he pumped out the water,
"Here's one ark ain't never gonna land"
"Stop complaining," said a voice from the water,
"Booth can solve any problem that you face"
He grabbed himself the tail of a tiger
Pulled the ark to safety and saved the human race

Who taught Moses and his children how to part an ocean
Who showed pretty little David how to use a slingshot
Who warned Absalom, "Better get a haircut"
Then told Samosn, "You better not"
Who's the man who rubbed the whale's belly
Made him spit old Jonah from the sea
Who taught Daniel how to tame a lion
Made the Pharoah set the people free?
You won't find him mentioned in the Bible
Judges, Samuel, Ezekiel or Ruth
If they did they'd have to change the title
From the book we call the Bible
To the book of Mr. Booth!

(The song ends. Inside, BOOTH appears:)

BOOTH: Mary Ann?

MARY ANN: What? (peering through the darkness) Junius?

BOOTH: Farmer Booth is back.

MARY ANN: Why, Junius--we didn't expect you!

BOOTH: Are you glad to see me?

MARY ANN: Well, naturally. Oh, Junius, I look awful--

BOOTH: Mary Ann, you look magnificent.

MARY ANN: No, Junius, I was just having my coffee, I look awful!

BOOTH: No, no, I insist! You look magnificent!

MARY ANN: Oh, Junius, how could you do this to me? (embrace)
Well, now, sit down, Junius, I'll pour you some coffee.
Would you like some coffee?

BOOTH: Why do you think I came home, woman? How are the children?

MARY ANN: They're fine, Junius, how do you think? I'll call them.
(Calling) Children! Come up to the house at once!
Here's your coffee.

(CHILDREN begin bestirring themselves from their evening reverie)

BOOTH: Mary Ann, Mary Ann--minister to my wants.

MARY ANN: Where's the rest of your luggage?

BOOTH: It's being sent on.

MARY ANN: Sent on? Where?

BOOTH: To the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia.

MARY ANN: Oh. And how soon are you being sent on to the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia.

BOOTH: I am anticipated there on Sunday.

MARY ANN: I thought the tour was over.

BOOTH: Would that it were. This is good coffee, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN: Of course it is.

BOOTH: That's what comes of being a farmer's wife, now isn't it?

MARY ANN: Yes, Junius, I guess it is.

BOOTH: Now, I know what you're thinking, Mary, but, remember--
it's how we make our living!

MARY ANN: I know that, dear! It's all right!

BOOTH: Yes, you know it. This is good coffee, woman!

MARY ANN: Why, thank you.

BOOTH: WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

MARY ANN: Now, they're coming, Junius! God in Heaven, be calm.
(calling) Children! Here they come.

BOOTH: Mary, do I look all right?

MARY ANN: You look magnificent.

CHILDREN: (entering, variously) Here we are, what is it, etc.

MARY ANN: Children, look who's here.

(Their babble dissolves into quiet astonishment)

ROSALIE: Father?

BOOTH: Hello.

CHILDREN: (variously) Hello, father.

ROSALIE: It's father, Joe.

JOE: (the youngest) I can see him.

BOOTH: Yes, it's me, Joe. Farmer Booth is back. Asia?

ASIA: How are you, father?

BOOTH: Excellent, Asia. Thank you.

ASIA: You're looking well.

BOOTH: And so are you.

ASIA: We've missed you here.

BOOTH: Why, thank you, Asia. I've missed you, too.

ASIA: We've been following you. Tonight you were supposed to be in Cleveland.

MARY ANN: Asia!

BOOTH: Cleveland! What do you mean, girl? What does she mean?
Do I look like I'm in Cleveland, children?
(General nervous laughter)
Rosalie?

ROSALIE: Please forgive the way I look, father. I'm a mess.

BOOTH: I kiss your hand. (He does, magnificently)

ROSALIE: (faintly) Thank you, father.

BOOTH: No, don't thank me! It was the very least that Farmer Booth could do. Well, well, Joe, Asia, Rosalie. (General murmurs from ALL THREE of them) And Johnny. How's my Johnny? (goes to EDWIN)

MARY ANN: Junius--

BOOTH: Still going after the Colossus of Rhodes, boy?

EDWIN: It's Edwin, father.

BOOTH: Edwin. It's Edwin, Mary Ann. It's Edwin--

EDWIN: Yes.

BOOTH: Well. Things have changed around the farm!

(Sudden release of laughter from ALL. EDWIN quietly leaves)

MARY ANN: (galvanized) Rosalie! Asia! There's a pile of dishes just waiting for you in the kitchen, go take care of it. If your father wants to see a pig-sty, he'll go out to the pig-sty. Joe, go help them, and for Heaven's sake, wash your face, child. (they are going) And Edwin--where's Edwin?

BOOTH: He's gone outside, Mary. I'll go.

MARY ANN: Well, take a lantern with you. It's getting dark.

BOOTH: Thank you, Mary. I won't be long. (takes it and goes)

(BOOTH goes outside, where EDWIN is plunking his banjo)

BOOTH: Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes?

BOOTH: Edwin.

EDWIN: Yes.

BOOTH: Seems I'm always seeing you in a half-light, boy. Here. (sets the lantern down beside him)

EDWIN: Is that better?

BOOTH: Yes, much better. Well. You're not Johnny, are you?

EDWIN: No.

BOOTH: Well.

EDWIN: Johnny's out in the forest, if you want him.

BOOTH: Did I say I wanted him?

EDWIN: No. But anyway, he's out in the forest. If he'd known you were going to be here, he wouldn't have gone, I'm sure, but he didn't know, so--he went.

BOOTH: I see.

EDWIN: He goes almost every night. Every evening after supper he takes your sword from off the kitchen wall and off he goes, hooting and yelling--

BOOTH: I know that, boy.

EDWIN: You do?

BOOTH: Yes. He's after the Colossus of Rhodes, and when he finds it he intends to pullit down.

EDWIN: Thats right , he does.

BOOTH: It is an aspiration quite familiar to me. "I must have fame," he's thinking. "I must have fame".

EDWIN: Yes, that's just what he's thinking all right. Every niggth when I'm just about asleep he leans over in the darkness and says, "Edwin, some day I'll be famous. "I've got to be."

BOOTH: And what do you say?

EDWIN: I wish him luck, of course! And then the next night off he goes again, riding off into the moonlight--

BOOTH: But you don't go with him

EDWIN: ~~But you don't go with him~~ No.

BOOTH: Why not?

EDWIN: I don't know. Because there's got to be somebody to go after Johnny in a place like this.

BOOTH : Are you one of us, boy?

EDWIN: What? What do you mean?

BOOTH: You don't talk like a Booth, boy. You don't sound like a Booth.

EDWIN: I'm a Booth!

BOOTH: The timbre of the Booth sound is missing from everything you say.

EDWIN: But I am a Booth! I'm Johnny's brother!

BOOTH: No, don't change! Did I say I wanted a change?

~~EDWIN~~
EDWIN: But I don't undersatnd you! I'M a Booth!

BOOTH: No, you're not, boy! It's remarkable, but you're not! What has Mary Ann achieved while I've been on the road?

EDWIN: I'd like to travel. Does that make me a Booth?

BOOTH: Ah, you wouldn't like to travel.

EDWIN: Yes, I would!

BOOTH: That's just it, boy. You wouldn't like to travel. I say you wouldn't like to travel, and I'm the expert here!

EDWIN: I'd like to travel!

BOOTH: You would.

EDWIN: Yes. Down South? (sings)

Letting my feet run free
Catching a train that's heading South
Going to old Savannah
Sleeping beside the sea
Watching the ships all day
Spreading across the broad horizon
Shadows upon the water
Stretching their arms to me
Taking a trip tonight
Follow my heart to New Orleans
That is a wondrous city
It is a magic place
I will be dressed in style
Walking beside a Southern belle
She will be wearing satin
Satin and snow-white lace
Dance all night in a marble room
Air all heavy with French perfume
Stepping in carpets that are two feet deep
Dance all night and you never sleep....
Letting my feet run free
Longing to pack my bags and travel
Leaving the night behind me
Racing to catch the sun...

BOOTH: That's not the South I know.

EDWIN: It's the South I know.

BOOTH: But you've never been South!

EDWIN: That's why I'd like to travel. (BOOTH is stumped)
California's another place.

BOOTH: California?!

EDWIN: Yes! (sings)

EDWIN: Letting my feet run free
 Catching a train that's heading West
 Going to California
 Bound for the land of Gold
 People are fancy free
 Dipping their hands in mountain water
 Pulling out shiny nuggets
 That is what I've been told
 Gamblers in gold brocade
 Spanish grandees and hard-rock miners
 Cowboys and Chinese sailors
 Crowding in the gay saloons
 Up on the hardwood bar
 Women in fancy skirts are dancing
 Showing their crimson garters
 Singing to the bawdy tunes
 (At this point, the music cuts loose, EDWIN cuts loose,
 and BOOTH forgets himself along with them)

BOOTH and EDWIN: Poker tables and swinging doors
 Whiskey spilling on the sawdust floors
 Fat bartenders with slicked-down hair
 Noise and color are everywhere...
 Letting my feet run free
 Longing to pack my bags and travel
 Leaving the night behind me
 Racing to catch the sun!

BOOTH: (suddenly) What are you talking me into, boy? California!
 Temporary towns, boy. Temporary towns thrown up one day
 by crazy prospectos and blown back down the next day by
 the wind!

EDWIN: Father, everybody's going there!

BOOTH: Yes, I know, they've heard about the gold and everybody's
 going there. Everybody's following the sun to California
 and when they get there they find themselves alone in some
 temporary town, while the sun keeps going on westward and
 forgets them. It's the land of the left behind, boy,
 don't forget it, I would never go to California.

EDWIN: Well, no one's asked you to, have they?

BOOTH: (grandly) What do you mean, they ask me constantly.

EDWIN: Well, father, all I know is that I want to travel. And,
 father, after all--you've got to somewhere, don't you?

BOOTH: Yes, Edwin. I suppose you do.

EDWIN: Of course you do! Or, after all, what's the world for
 anyway? (sings)

EDWIN: Where can I go
 Where can I wander
 Where can I let my feet run free?
 How can I know
 That somewhere yonder
 The sun is setting low and waiting there for me
 If I should yearn
 To see new places
 To walk with strange and different men
 When I return
 Will all those faces
 That I have known so well be strangers to me then?
 What if I should leave this morning
 Just pack up without a warning
 What if I should make up my mind now
 And leave the home I love behind now?
 Where can I go
 Where can I wander
 Where can I let my feet run free?
 How can I know
 That somewhere yonder
 The sun is setting low and waiting there for me?

BOOTH: You really wonder, don't you, Edwin?

EDWIN: Of course I do.

BOOTH: You've made up your mind to it.

EDWIN: Yes.

BOOTH: Will you be coming in now?

EDWIN: No. I want to wait for Johnny.

BOOTH: Well, good night, then.

EDWIN: Good night, father.

(BOOTH goes back inside. Traveling theme under:)

BOOTH: Mary?

MARY ANN: Yes?

BOOTH: I want to take him with me.

MARY ANN: What?

BOOTH: When I go out again, I want to take him with me.

MARY ANN: Edwin?

BOOTH: You've done a glorious job with him, woman. I don't know how you've done it, but you've done a glorious job!

MARY ANN: Why, thank you, Junius--

BOOTH: And don't worry, woman!.

MARY ANN: I'm not worried!.

BOOTH: Yes, you are, but stop it now, because I promise you he'll never be an actor! That's a promise, woman: he'll never be an actor!. I'll help him with his studies on the road, I won't neglect him. So you needn't worry!

MARY ANN: Did I say I was worried, Junius?

BOOTH: No, but I can tell that you are! Don't try to fool me, woman, you're worried!

MARY ANN: I'm not worried!

BOOTH: Then why are you shouting?

MARY ANN: Because you're shouting" (beginning to laugh) And because I haven't shouted since the last time you were home, and I thought I'd forgotten how.

BOOTH: (laughing with her) You're a shrew, woman! Do you know that, you're a shrew" (they are embracing now)

MARY ANN: Why, Junius, that's the first time you've ever called me that.

BOOTH: You are a viperious shrew, and it is my intention to remove our son from the poison of your motherly embrace.

MARY ANN: Well, at least you're not begging for him any more, thank God for small favors.

BOOTH: I love you, Mary.

MARY ANN: That's nice to know.

BOOTH: And so I thought I'd come home again to remind you--

MARY ANN: Oh, now, Junius, that's extravagant of you. You could have wired just as well.

BOOTH: No, I couldn't. (embrace)

MARY ANN: Well, I guess you couldn't.

BOOTH: Come on. (Hug)

MARY ANN: Junius! Oh, Junius!

BOOTH: Be quiet, woman. If there children should hear us.

MARY ANN; I hope they do. They're beginning to look at me suspiciously.

BOOTH: Come on, now. (He picks her up and starts to carry her off)

MARY ANN: Oh, Junius! I haven't been off the ground in months!

BOOTH: How does it feel, shrew? How does it feel?

(And they are off, laughing all the way. In the darkness we hear the following voices:)

ASIA: Rosalie!

ROSALIE: (futher off) What?

ASIA: Did you hear that?

ROSALIE: What?

ASIA: Edwin's going out with father!

ROSALIE: What? Joe, did you hear that?

JOE: What?

ROSALIE: Edwin's going out with father!

JOE: Does he know about it?

ASIA: No. Let's tell him! Edwin! Edwin! (rushes outside)

EDWIN: What is it?

ASIA and Rosalie; You're going out with father.

EDWIN: What?

ASIA: Day after tomorrow, when he goes out again--

ROSALIE: You're going with him!

EDWIN: Are you sure?

ASIA: I heard him say it.

ROSALIE: Isn't it exciting, Edwin? My Lord!

EDWIN: Yes, it's exciting! Where do we go, do you know?

JOE: Philadelphia.

EDWIN: Philadelphia!

ASIA. Oh, I can imagine Philadelphia. Thousands of people shouting for father--

EDWIN and ROSALIE: Yes!

JOE: Yeah, Booth!

EDWIN: Bands playing!

JOE: Yeah--Booth! Yeah--Booth!

JOE and ROSALIE: Yeah--Booth! Yeah--Booth!

ASIA: (singing) Adulation
 Tell the population
 Shout it from the roofs and steeples
 Booth is back in town!

EDWIN and ASIA: Break the quiet
 Festival and riot
 Go and tell the sleeping peoples
 Booth is back in town!

ALL FOUR: When he enters
 Sinners and repenters
 Gaily leave the churches saying
 Booth is back in town!

ASIA: Order ceases!

EDWIN: Preachers go to pieces!

ALL FOUR: No one has the time for praying
 BOOTH IS BACK IN TOWN!

(Enter ACTORS. Transition number. Proceed as staged into scene 2)

Scene 2: Backstage at the Walnut Street. Mr. WEMYSS, the manager, appears through the scurrying ACTORS, etc.

WEMYSS: Mr. Booth, sir!

BOOTH: Yes, Mr. Wemyss, it is Mr. Booth. You may spread the word.

WEMYSS: I was most impressed with your work at rehearsal today, sir, I'm sure we all were.

BOOTH: So was I. I wish that I could say I was impressed with your supporting company.

WEMYSS: Well, Mr. Booth, you know the circuit.

BOY: Five minutes, Mr. Booth. (disappears)

WEMYSS: ~~Five~~ minutes. Well, I'd better let you go, sir. The Walnut Street has been awaiting this performance.

BOOTH: I know it has, Mr. Wemyss, I can feel it. The very cobwebs of the Walnut Street are tingling with a tension one does not associate with cobwebs, nor with the Walnut Street, nor indeed with Philadelphia.

WEMYSS: (laughing) Cobwebs, did you say, sir?

BOOTH: Cobwebs. I should like to introduce you to my son. Edwin?

WEMYSS: Uh--five minutes, Mr. Booth--

BOOTH: Edwin, this is Mr. Wemyss. He is on their side. Mr. Wemyss, this is my son, Edwin. You are surprised I have a son, sir? Come along, Edwin, we must to the dressing room.

EDWIN: Nice to have met you, Mr. We--

BOOTH: Come along!

(He bursts into his dressing room, which is cramped, and where we have seen SPEARS, PAGE, and MRS. HILL waiting for him. As he bursts in, they rise and sing:)

SPEARS, PAGE, MRS. HILL: Happy Birthday to you
Happy Birthday to you
Happy Birthday dear Junius
Happy Birthday to you!

BOOTH: My friends--

MRS. HILL: Junius, duck--

BOOTH: (embracing her) Mrs. Hill--

SPEARS: How are you, Junius, boy?

BOOTH: Ha-ha! George Spears! And Mr.--Mr.--

PAGE: Page, Mr. Booth. My pleasure sir.

BOOTH: Page. Page. Edwin!

EDWIN: (appearing in the dressing-room) Here I am, father.

BOOTH: Edwin, we have three and one half minutes. Hang up my coat and ready my doublet and hose.

SPEARS: Junius, you havent said anything about our merrymaking.

BOOTH: Edwin, these are my good friend, Mr. Spears, Mrs. Hill, Mr. Page.

SPEARS: You want to say something about our merry-making, Junius?

BOOTH: Yes, Mr. Spears, I should like to say that I am deeply touched. What is this?

(He sees a birthday cake on the table where he is about to make up.)

MRS. HILL: It's a cake, duck.

SPEARS: Mother Hill baked you a birthday cake.

PAGE: Perhaps Mr. Booth is not aware that this is meant to be a birthday celebration.

BOOTH: My friends, I am aware of that.

BOY: Four minutes, Mr. Booth!

BOOTH: Unhappily, I have four minutes to prepare to do battle with the Philadelphians, and my birthday falls in mid-July. Edwin, my hose. My thanks, however, and my sincerest best wishes for tonight's performance.

(He extends his leg for the hose, which EDWIN kneels down to put on.)

PAGE: Mid-July, Mr. Spears?

MRS. HILL: Mr. Spears told us that tonight was your birthday, Junius? Shall I remove my cake from your dressing-table?

BOOTH: I should appreciate it, Mrs. Hill. I am about to apply my make-up and I do not see King Richard the Third in vanilla frosting. Edwin, my doublet. My thanks, however, and my sincerest best wishes for tonight's performance.

PAGE: Mr. Spears, why did you insist on the celebration now if--

SPEARS: Are we ever together in July?

PAGE: No!

SPEARS: All right!

BOOTH: Perhaps we might postpone it, Mr. Spears--

SPEARS: Any time you want, Junius, boy, you know that--

BOOTH: Until then my thanks and my sincerest best wishes for--

BOY: Three minutes, Mr. Booth!

BOOTH: Boy, go put a helmet on and keep the visor shut!

EDWIN: He'll be ready!

BOOTH: Edwin, where is my doublet?

EDWIN: Here it is!

BOOTH: (stands up) Edwin, you neglected to fasten my hose!

EDWIN: Oh, did I? Oh, wait'll I fix it--

BOOTH: Never mind it now, there isn't time. My doublet.

(EDWIN begins to put his doublet on him.)

PAGE: Mr. Spears, I think we're in the way.

BOOTH: Whoever said that, fetch my wig.

SPEARS: You hear that, Mr. Page? He wants his wig.

PAGE: Well, where does he keep it? I've never looked for anyone's wig before.

SPEARS: How should I know where he keeps his wig? Am I my brother's keeper of his wigs?

PAGE: Well, you can help me look for it, at least.

BOOTH: Edwin, I have arms and the doublet has sleeves, your job is to co-ordinate them.

EDWIN: I'm trying, father! There.

BOOTH: Good. Now give me my robe and look for my good luck charm.

EDWIN: Your good-luck charm?

BOOTH: Yes, my good-luck charm!

EDWIN: (getting the robe) Well, what does it look like?

BOOTH: It is an antique dagger, naturally.

BOY: (from outside the room this time) Two minutes!

BOOTH: (no longer able to contain his panic) Where is my wig?

PAGE: We're looking Mr. Booth!

BOOTH: You're looking?!

SPEARS: Help us look, Mother Hill!

MRS. HILL: (wailing, stuck with the cake) I can't!

SPEARS: I found it! I found it! Everybody relax now, I found it. There you are Junius, boy, just relax now. (puts it on him)

BOOTH: Thank you, Mr. Spears. Edwin, the dagger?

EDWIN: I can't seem to find it, sir.

BOOTH: What?

EDWIN: I can't seem to find it! I've looked and looked--

BOOTH: What? My good-luck charm is missing?
(he strides out of the dressing-room into the backstage area, hose still falling down, wig askew)
My good-luck charm is missing!
(Many ACTORS have gathered and buzz excitedly)

BOY: But, Mr. Booth! One minute, sir!

BOOTH: (to the world at large) I am aware that there's a play incipient! Remove this walking cuckoo-clock from my vicinity!

EDWIN: (frantic, in the dressing-room) Well, will you help me look for it?
(During the following, EDWIN, SPEARS and PAGE ransack the dressing room, as MRS. HILL sits sadly holding her cake)

WEMYSS: (appearing thorough the crowd again) What is this, Mr. Booth? It's almost time.

BOOTH: Are the Philadelphians impatient, Mr. Wemyss?

WEMYSS: Yes, sir, I believe they might be.

BOOTH: I don't hear them yelling.

WEMYSS: Philadelphians don't yell, Mr. Booth.

BOOTH: Yes, well, you tell your Philadelphians to wait for the appointed hour, sir, and I shall give them the God-damndest Richard they have ever seen. In the meantime, fix my hose.
(WEMYSS bends down to do so. Inside, PAGE finds something)

PAGE: Is this it?

EDWIN: (frantic) What is it?

SPEARS: By Jiminy, it's a rabbi's ornament!

EDWIN: Oh, that must be for Shylock.

SPEARS: Look, I know Junius. A good-luck charm is a good-luck charm, we'll give him the rabbi's ornament.

PAGE: Mr. Spears, he wants the dagger!

SPEARS: Look, will you let me handle this? (goes to door of room)
Junius, I found a rabbi's ornament!

BOOTH: I am elated to hear it, Mr. Spears! Just keep on looking, and there's no telling what you may discover!

WEMYSS: Sir, what is it they're looking for?

BOOTH: My good-luck charm, Mr. Wemyss. I will not brave the cobwebs of the Walnut Street without my good-luck charm!

WEMYSS: Your good-luck charm? Mr. Booth, I'd like to understand, sir--

BOOTH: I know you would, Mr. Wemyss, and I am deeply sorry you are so incapable of it. This charm, you see, is the antique dagger that I carry on my Richard to protect him from suggestions of--mortality. I am invincible when I am on the stage, Mr. Wemyss, and I intend to remain so. Thus--

BOY: Mr. Wemyss, It's time!

BOOTH: --thus I will not face the hungry mob without my good-luck charm!

EDWIN: I found it! I found it! I found it!

(He comes bounding out of the dressing-room with it; much curious and excited murmuring)

BOOTH: Did you find the dagger? Let me see it. (EDWIN gives it to him) Friends, this is Edwin Booth! He is my son!

(There is a brief moment of awkward silence. Then WEMYSS, a sharp fellow, begins to applaud. The OTHERS pick it up)

BOOTH: You have your books, boy? Will you study?

EDWIN: I'll study. (He is helping BOOTH on with his robe)

BOOTH: You won't have much time, boy. Tonight I intend to race through it!

EDWIN: Oh, don't race on my account!

BOOTH: On your account, boy, I shall set the global record for King Richard. Wemyss! Why have you not started the performance?

WEMYSS: I didn't know if you were ready yet, sir!

BOOTH: Fool! These managers are all alike, no sense of timing.
(to the other ACTORS) Are we ready, friends?

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Booth?

BOOTH: Charlotte--

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Booth, sir, I've forgotten where I make my
entrance, what will I do?

BOOTH: Just come on, woman, I'll find you.

CHARLOTTE: But where will I find you?

BOOTH: Down center, where in God's name else? Are we ready?
(Chorus of assent from the ACTORS)
Then into the breach, to meet the Philadelphians!

(WEMYSS has signalled for the performance to begin, and
at this moment the orchestra strikes up a blaring march.
BOOTH disappears out on to the stage, to a tidal wave of
aplause and followed by other ACTORS, including SPEARS,
PAGE and MRS. HILL. EDWIN wathces, lost in the magic
of it all, as JENNY JOANNE watches him.)

EDWIN: (after a moment, obviously after what he hears going on
on stage; in the backstage hush)

"Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York--

(JENNY JOANNE joins him)

EDWIN and JENNY JOANNE: --and all the clouds that lowered
upon our house/ In the deep bosom of the ocean buried..."

(EDWIN looks at her)

JENNY JOANNE: My name is Jenny Joanne. After the popular little
song of the same name.

EDWIN: My name is Edwin Booth.

JENNY JOANNE: I know. I couldn't help noticing, the applause
and all....You're his son.

EDWIN: That's right.

JENNY JOANNE: My daddy is an actor, too. I guess we're both--
orphans of the stage!

EDWIN: Oh, not me. I'm not an orphan of anything.

JENNY JOANNE: I am. I hardly ever see my daddy, except when we're on the stage together. And I never see my poor mother. She's dead.

EDWIN: I'm sorry.

JENNY JOANNE: Oh, that's all right! Do you know the popular song I'm named after? It's called "Jenny Jaonne."

EDWIN: I didn't even know there was such a song. Uh--would you like to sing it to me?

JENNY JOANNE: (sings, acapella)

Each spring on the hill where ~~he~~ he's sleeping
A single white lily appears
And Jenny Joanne sits a-weeping
Wat'ring the buds with her true lovers' tears....

EDWIN: That's very nice.

JENNY JOANNE: For Jenny Joanne is a bride and a widow
The sun in her eyes is bedimm'd by a cloud
For Jenny Jaanne is a bride and a widow
She mourns for her lover so cold in his shroud...

(There is a tentative silence)

EDWIN: Do you know if she'll ever re-marry?

JENNY JOANNE: Oh, Edwin! One shouldn't ask such questions of a song. (then:) Yes. She is. Edwin--?

EDWIN: What?

JENNY JOANNE: Are you going to be an actor?

EDWIN: (off his guard) Why do you ask?

JENNY JOANNE: I ask.

EDWIN: Well--I may well be! You never can tell!

JENNY JOANNE: Don't.

EDWIN: What do you mean?

JENNY JOANNE: I'd just hate to see it happen to you, that's all. You, a nice, normal boy. It would make you--different!--just like all the rest of us.

EDWIN: But I'd like to be different! I'd like to be like all the rest of you. My father says that half the people in the world would--sell their souls to be a little different.

JENNY JOANNE: But that's just it, Edwin. They haven't.

(SPEARS, PAGE, MRS. HILL and some of the OTHERS re-appear in the backstage area, having exited from on stage. EDWIN and JENNY JOANNE retire to a corner as SPEARS, PAGE and MRS. HILL plow on into BOOTH's dressing-room:)

SPEARS: Well, it's good to have old Junius back, isn't it, friends?

PAGE: It makes one proud of one's subservience to bow to such a man.

MRS. HILL: Yes. Well, let's see what we can do with my vanilla fiasco.

SPEARS: Now, Mother Hill, it wasn't your fiasco. It was my fiasco.

MRS. HILL: No, no! It was my fiasco! I recognize my little failures when I see them, and tonight was my masterpiece!

PAGE: People--

SPEARS: What's she talking about?

MRS. HILL: I made the cake!

SPEARS: Well, I thought up the whole damn celebration!

PAGE: People, people--

SPEARS: All I want is just a little recognition, Mr. Page. A little recognition where recognition is due.

MRS. HILL: (having sliced it) Here's your cake. (hands it to PAGE)

PAGE: Thank you. Mr. Spears? (gives him a slice)

SPEARS: Thank you. Where's the boy?

MRS. HILL: Yes, where is that little boy of Junius'? I want to offer him a piece of my cake.

PAGE: He's outside with little Jenny Joanne.

MRS. HILL: Oh, he is, is he? Well, we'll see about that!
(she goes outside the dressing-room) Edwin?

SPEARS: You know, Mr. Page. Someday that boy is going to be a good little actor. I mean, for instance, Edwin Booth is one hell of a stage name. Know what I mean?

PAGE: Oh, yes, Mr. Spears. This is good cake.

SPEARS: I'll tell you something else, though. He's gonna need a coach. Now, I'm mentioning no names, Mr. Page, but the boy

SPEARS: (cont'd.) is going to need a coach.

MRS. HILL: (outside the dressing-room) Edwin?

JENNY JOANNE: Here we are, Mrs. Hill.

MRS. HILL: (mock surprise) Oh! I didn't see you there. I hope I'm not--interrupting anything.

EDWIN: (flustered) Oh, no, Mrs. Hill. Not yet.

JENNY JOANNE: Edwin!

MRS. HILL: I see. Would you like a little home-made cake, Edwin? It's mine.

JENNY JOANNE: Home-made? We'd love some! That's very sweet of you, Mrs. Hill.

MRS. HILL: (icily) Sweets for the sweet, honey. Well, come along then, Edwin, I'll give you some!

SPEARS: You're gonna love it, boy. You're gonna love it. Just come on in.

(They are re-entering the dressing-room)

EDWIN: Thank you, Mr. Spears.

SPEARS: Don't mention it, Edwin, and--call me Uncle George. I'm your father's best acquaintance on the circuit, Edwin, what do you think of that? Just call me Uncle George.

EDWIN: Uncle George...

MRS. HILL: Here's your cake, Edwin! And here's a piece for your little girlfriend. (exchange of cake slices)

SPEARS: So it's good to have you with us, Edwin. Are you--ready to keep up the old tradition?

EDWIN: The old tradition.

PAGE: As the worthy scion of a noble stock.

EDWIN: Oh. Well, Jenny Joanne says I shouldn't be an actor.

SPEARS: What? Now, just a little minute here--

MRS. HILL: Little Jenny Joanne should mind little Jenny Joanne's own business!

JENNY JOANNE: It is my business!

SPEARS: Let's see you bow, Edwin.

EDWIN: Bow?

SPEARS: Sure! Why not? Go ahead.

(EDWIN bows. They are impressed)

SPEARS: There, what did I tell you? Someday he's going to be a good little actor.

MRS. HILL: Oh, Edwin, have another piece of cake!

EDWIN: But it's only a bow.

PAGE: Ah, but Edwin--when you have learned to bow you have mastered the essential posture of the actor.

EDWIN: Have I learned to bow?

MRS. HILL: Well, no, dear, not yet, after all!

SPEARS: And that's why you need a coach, Edwin. That's why you need a coach. What do you say?

EDWIN: A coach?

JENNY JOANNE: I think you're all being very hasty.

SPEARS: Sure! To teach you some of the tricks, Edwin!

EDWIN: Really? What tricks?

MRS. HILL: Listen to him!

SPEARS: Tricks to make 'em laugh, boy, tricks to make 'em cry. Tricks to make 'em open up and give a little sigh. Now, what do you say?

EDWIN: And you can teach them to me.

SPEARS: Uncle George'll teach you anything you want to know, Edwin. Anything you want to know.

EDWIN: All right. Can we begin now?

JENNY JOANNE: I still think you're all being very hasty.

MRS. HILL: Eat your cake and shut up, little girl!

JENNY JOANNE: Well, it's not fair! I don't want him to become an actor until he's at least had the chance to think of something else!

EDWIN: Now, Jenny Joanne, I want to try this. Are you going to stand by me or aren't you?

JENNY JOANNE: Why, I'll stand by you, Edwin. Of course I'll stand by you.

EDWIN: Thank you.

SPEARS: All right now, children, are we ready? Uncle George is ready.

EDWIN: I'm ready.

PAGE: It's all a matter of elocution, Edwin. Elocution.

SPEARS: Will you let me handle this?

MRS. HILL: Let Mr. Spears handle it, Mr. Page.

SPEARS: Thank you, mother. Now. Elocution, Edwin. You got to produce (sings) Round, clear tones!

MRS. HILL: (vocalizing) Round, clear tones!

PAGE: (vocalizing) Round, clear tones!

(A perfectly hideous triad is going)

SPEARS: WILL YOU LET ME HANDLE THIS?
(It stops)
Now, then, Edwin, want to try it?

EDWIN: Yes. (vocalizes) Round, clear tones...

MRS. HILL: (solemnly) That's the loveliest thing I've ever heard.

JENNY JOANNE: Yes, Edwin. It's lovely.

PAGE: I couldn't hear it.

SPEARS: Well, that's just it, Edwin. See, they couldn't hear you outside the dressing-room with that. Now, you've got the roundness. You've got the clearness!

PAGE: What we'd like to hear is the tone.

EDWIN: All right.

SPEARS: Now, don't get panicky, Edwin, Uncle George is here. Shall we try again?

EDWIN: Yes. Let's try again.

MRS. HILL: Great heavens, but this is fun!

SPEARS: All right....(And into "Round, Clear Tones")

(After the blackout following "Round, Clear Tones" the lights come up on the dressing-room again, revealing EDWIN trying to study. He is unable to concentrate, and keeps looking up from his book, listening to the performance. He sings the phrase:)

EDWIN: Round, clear tones!
(then, softer, to himself) Round, clear tones....

(He tries to study again. Suddenly there is a new burst of applause, punctuated by cheers, indicating the end of the performance. ACTORS begin to pour into the back-stage area from the performance, and at the crest of the wave, BOOTH, who plows through a horde of admirers and into the dressing-room:)

BOOTH: I acted well tonight!

EDWIN: Well, of course you did.

BOOTH: Ha! Well said, boy. Unfasten me.

EDWIN: You spoke in such round, clear tones! (unfastening him)

BOOTH: You watched me?

EDWIN: Yes!

BOOTH: I thought you were supposed to study!

EDWIN: I studied!

BOOTH: How can you have studied if you watched me?

EDWIN: I studied some and then I wztched you.

BOOTH: Wasn't I magnificent? "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" (lunges with sword, narrowly missing EDWIN) Did you see that?

EDWIN: Well. As I said. It was those round, uh, clear tones.

(WEMYSS appears at the door of the dressing-room)

WEMYSS: You were very good tonight, Mr. Booth.

BOOTH: Thank you, Mr. Wemyss. I thought so.

WEMYSS: It was--an exuberant performance.

BOOTH: Exuberant? I was so full of boiling blood that I erupted over Walnut Street like Mount Vesuvius. Isn't that so, Edwin?

EDWIN: It certainly is.

BOOTH: The citizens of Philadelphia now know what it is to reside on the slopes of a volcano.

WEMY SS: They seemed to like it.

BOOTH: (vocalizing) Round, clear tones!

WEMYSS: (half-whispering) Boy!

(He attracts EDWIN's attention, and beckons him outside, as BOOTH starts to remove his make-up)

WEMYSS: Now, listen, boy. You're going to see that he goes straight back to the hotel, aren't you?

EDWIN: Of course, if he wants to--!

WEMYSS: I don't care if he wants to! You just see that he does, understand?

EDWIN: Mr. Wemyss, he's the one who's looking after me!

WEMYSS: I don't care who's looking after who around here, all I care is that he shows up at rehearsal tomorrow morning, fit to rehearse!

EDWIN: Mr. Wemyss, sir, I think he can take care of himself.

WEMYSS: You think so. Well, good luck.

EDWIN: What do you mean?

WEMYSS: Good luck, that's all, good luck!
(goes to door of dressing-room)
Good night, Mr. Booth.

BOOTH: Good night, Mr. Wemyss. Have a good night's sleep, sir, for you shall see me again in the morning.

WEMYSS: I hope so, Mr. Booth.

BOOTH: Good night, Mr. Wemyss.

WEMYSS: (reluctant) Good night, sir. (he goes)

BOOTH: Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes, father?

BOOTH: Come on back in, boy.

EDWIN: (re-appearing in the dressing-room) Here I am.

BOOTH: I thought the evening had devoured you. I am relieved to see that it was only Mr. Wemyss.

EDWIN: Will you be going back to the hotel soon?

BOOTH: The hotel.

EDWIN: Yes.

BOOTH: I cannot go back to the hotel until I have removed the very last speck of make-up...

EDWIN: I can wait.

BOOTH: (removing it) There. I acted well tonight, Edwin.

EDWIN: You acted splendidly.

BOOTH: I erupted over them like Mount Vesuvius...

EDWIN: You were magnificent.

BOOTH: And now...the theatre is almost empty, isn't it?

EDWIN: Yes, I guess it is.

BOOTH: The cobwebs of the Walnut Street have noiselessly consigned another evening's work into oblivion. I'm glad you saw it, boy.

EDWIN: So am I. Let's go back to the hotel, father--

BOOTH: I'm deeply grateful that you saw it. I am at my very best, you see, when I am on the stage. Edwin?

EDWIN: What?

BOOTH: You go back to the hotel. I'll be along.
(Quietly, slowly, we begin to hear the saloon music)

EDWIN: No, no, father. I'll wait.

BOOTH: You're tired, boy!

EDWIN: No, I'm not!

BOOTH: Well, you have every right to be. Now, go on.

EDWIN: You're tired, father!

BOOTH: I am exhausted! But I am not ready to retire.

EDWIN: But rehearsal tomorrow morning!

BOOTH: Yes, rehearsal tomorrow morning, Mr. Wemyss tomorrow morning...You shouldn't have to wait, boy, run along now.

EDWIN: No.

(The music stops)

BOOTH: Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes?

BOOTH: Would you do me a little favor before we go?

EDWIN: Before we go?

BOOTH: Yes.

EDWIN: What is it?

BOOTH: I believe I left a--glove out on the stage tonight.
Run fetch it for me, please?

EDWIN: A glove.

BOOTH: A glove, yes.

EDWIN: All right. I'll be right back!

BOOTH: Take your time.

EDWIN: No, I'll be right back.

(He hurries off into the shadows. BOOTH rises, writes
a note, leaves it in plain sight, and hurries off.)

(EDWIN returns)
I couldn't find it, father. Father?

(He sees the note. The music comes back in again,
this time with more intensity. He hurries back out of
the dressing-room, which begins to move away)

Father? Where are you, father? Father?!

(The music builds)

WHERE ARE YOU?

(Suddenly the music blasts open and EDWIN is surrounded
by running, shouting, drunken SAILORS)

Scene 3: A river-front saloon. As the lights come banging up at it, BOOTH and some exceptionally ~~sooty~~ seaman types are singing and cavorting drunkenly and loudly.

BOOTH and MEN: Sign up for the life of a sailor
The breath-taking stench of the sea
Find love with the whores of Savannah
Sign up--be a sailor like me

We sail on the good ship "Redemption"
From Arctic to tropical clime
We don't need a captain or compass
We float in an ocean of slime

Oh, why was I born, mother tell me
Oh, why did you bring me to be
Oh, why was I born, mother, tell me
If only to rot in the sea

(EDWIN enters. Music stops abruptly)

EDWIN: (seeing him) Father!

MEN: (laughing) "Father!"

BOOTH: Why, Edwin! Why, it's Edwin Booth. This is Edwin Booth, me boys. A distant relative.

ONE OF THE MEN: (stumbling forward) Well, how-de-de, Edwin. I'm always pleased to meet a relative of Cap'n. Booth's.

(EDWIN pushes him aside and he falls. The MEN roar and applaud derisively)

BOOTH: Edwin! I didn't know you had it in you, boy!

EDWIN: Well, I do, father. I've got it in me. Now, what are you doing here?

BOOTH: (suddenly nasty) I thought I left you a note, Edwin.

EDWIN: You did, but--

BOOTH: I thought I left you a note telling you to go back to the hotel.

EDWIN: You did!

BOOTH: Why didn't you go, boy?

EDWIN: Because I wanted to find you!

BOOTH: All right, you've found me. What are you going to do about it?

EDWIN: Father, you come with me! Right now! You come with me!

(BOOTH looks at him a few second. Then he turns back to the MEN and abruptly he and they begin to sing again:)

BOOTH: God made the shark and the herring
Put them down in the drink
God made the mountains of seaweed
That lie on the water and stink--

(The MEN have begun to join in. Now they swell into a loud chorus:)

WITH MEN: But Man is the King of the waters
Powerful, fearsome and cruel
Yet sailors that drown in the ocean
Are food for the fishes they rule!

EDWIN: Right now, father!

BOOTH and MEN: Oh why was I born, mother tell me
Oh, why did you bring me to be?
Oh, why was I born, mother tell me
If only to rot in the sea...

(Laughter)

EDWIN: Father...

MEN: (mock-misery) "Fa-a-ther-r-r..."

BOOTH: Welcome aboard, Edwin.

EDWIN: Father, I warn you, I'll do anything to get you out of here.

BOOTH: You hear that, men?

MEN: We heard it, Cap'n! He'll do anything to get you out of here, etc.

BOOTH: (with sudden fury) You want to go aboard a man o' war, boy?

EDWIN: No! No, I don't!

BOOTH: Then you get out of here!

EDWIN: Don't threaten me father! I won't be threatened!

BOOTH: You won't be threatened. You know, men, it sounds to me like he does want to go aboard a man o' war. Sound that way to you, men?

MEN: Sounds that way to me, Cap'n. etc.

EDWIN: I'm sorry father, but I'm not going to leave. Not until you come with me.

BOOTH: You're talking to Cap'n Booth here, boy! You're not talking to your father.

EDWIN: Father--

BOOTH: Cap'n Booth! (He slams his mug down)

MEN: Cap'n Booth! (EDWIN turns away)

BOOTH: Thank you, men. Now, where were we? Where were we?

ONE OF THE MEN: We sail with a sigh in the morning.

OTHERS: (joining in, dreamily) We're headed for China or Spain.

ALL (inc. BOOTH) The pimps will be waiting to meet us
 We'll soon see our loved ones again!

(They dissolve into raucous laughter. BOOTH, laughing as hard as any, staggers over to EDWIN)

BOOTH: Edwin? Welcome aboard, Edwin!

(Edwin looks up at him. As the MEN sing the next part, building in intensity, EDWIN continues to look at him, furious as BOOTH'S smile evaporates:)

MEN: We sail on the good ship "Redemption"
From Arctic to tropical clime
We don't need a captain or compass
We float in an ocean of slime!

(EDWIN slaps BOOTH. Silence. BOOTH slowly collapses. As he hits the floor, there are ominous movements and murmurings from the MEN)

EDWIN: Well, what else could I do? I had to bring him to his senses! Now, anybody else comes near me and I'll kill them! I'll kill them!

(The MEN howl with laughter. One of the MEN lunges for him, but the OTHERS pull him back)

EDWIN: (through their laughter, collecting his father) I'll kill them with my own bare hands...

(He begins to take his father out of the saloon (downstage?). The MEN begin to laugh, and the orchestra breaks into the refrain of "Why was I Born" and their laughter merges with that of a group of drunken TOWNSPEOPLE, including MR. and MRS. FRANKLIN, who came staggering into the street area and swarm around EDWIN and BOOTH:)

Scene 4: A street, outside the saloon and on the way back to the hotel. The music plays the "Why Was I Born" refrain, with ever-building intensity and variations, as EDWIN drags BOOTH along and PASSERSBYS, murmuring, begin to gather.

EDWIN: Come along, father. Back to the hotel now. Come along...

PASSERBY : Hey, is that Junius Booth?

EDWIN: Go away! No! Go away!

(PASSERSBYS are murmuring curiously)

ANOTHER ONE: Hey, he's waking up!

(Music stops)

EDWIN: (Desperately) It's all right now. Go to sleep. Go to sleep!

(BOOTH IS STIRRING and waking)

ANOTHER ONE: Yes, he's waking up!

ANOTHER: He's going to say something!

BOOTH (pulling himself up) What town are we in?

EDWIN: Philadelphia, father. It's all right.

BOOTH: I do not recognize these faces.

EDWIN: We're on the street, father. It's late...

BOOTH: I DO NOT RECOGNIZE THESE FACES!

A WOMAN: (sweetly) We recognize you, Mr. Booth. You are the finest Lear that we have ever seen.

BOOTH: Who said that?

WOMAN: Why, I did.

BOOTH: (groping toward her) Are you Adelaide?

EDWIN: Father--

WOMAN: (terrified) Who?

BOOTH: (grabbing her) Adelaide! Are you Adelaide?

Woman: I don't know what you mean, sir--

(He kisses her roughly. Everyone looks on in, horrified and helpless)

WOMAN: (breaking away) Help me! Oh God, someone help me!

EDWIN: Father!

(he grabs BOOTH away, who immediately slumps. Now the CROWD begins to murmur again. The HUSBAND of the woman confronts EDWIN:)

HUSBAND: So you're his son.

EDWIN: Yes. I'm his son.

HUSBAND: Do you want to explain this?

EDWIN: I can't.

WOMAN FROM THE CROWD: Who's Adelaide?

EDWIN: I don't know.

CROWD: (variously, derisively) You don't know?!

EDWIN: I don't know!

(laughter)

I DON'T KNOW!

CROWD: (variously) Aw, come on, let's leave them. The old man's drunk, what the hell, etc.

(They begin to drift off. Music back in. EDWIN continues to half-drag his father along as their hotel room comes into view)

Scene 5: The hotel room, dark and shabby, light coming in through the window only. EDWIN and BOOTH come crashing in.

EDWIN: (virtually dumping him on the bed) There! Now go to sleep!

BOOTH: Adelaide...

EDWIN: And stop saying Adelaide, will you?

BOOTH: Adelaide! Forgive me, Adelaide!

EDWIN: Forgive you for what? Father! Who is Adelaide?

(BOOTH collapses. EDWIN shakes him:)

Who is Adelaide?

(Silence. EDWIN goes to the washbowl, starts splashing cold water on his face. Then suddenly something snaps, and in a quick and vicious movement he strikes the bowl and sends it clattering to the floor)

BOOTH: I am not alone.

EDWIN: No, you're not alone.

BOOTH: Who's there?

EDWIN: You know who's there.

BOOTH: I asked you a question.

EDWIN: It's Edwin, that's all. Nothing to worry about, I'm not going to pick your pockets or anything, you can go back to sleep--

BOOTH: Edwin who?

EDWIN: Edwin, your son.

BOOTH: I see.

EDWIN: Go back to sleep.

BOOTH: What? Are you ordering me to sleep, Edwin Yourson?

EDWIN: What did you call me?

BOOTH: Edwin Yourson! You told me that your name was--

EDWIN: Edwin! And that I was your son.

BOOTH: (quickly) My mistake.

EDWIN: Please go to sleep?

BOOTH: No.

EDWIN: Please?

BOOTH: I can't! (he is now pacing around)

EDWIN: Well, here, I'll fix the covers for you. (goes to) Well, no wonder you can't sleep! (rips covers from bed)

BOOTH: What are you doing?

EDWIN: These covers! They're crawling with insects!
(He has them on the floor, and is stamping on them)

BOOTH: Edwin--what are you doing?!

EDWIN: I'm killing them, that's what I'm doing!

BOOTH: Stop it!

EDWIN: What do you mean, stop it? You'll never get to sleep if--

BOOTH: Stop it this instant!

EDWIN: But how will you get to sleep?!

BOOTH: I've never killed a living thing, boy! Never in my life!

EDWIN: All right, the, sleep with them, I don't care. But I'm telling you, you won't get to sleep that way.

BOOTH: (picking up the covers) Why don't you go to sleep, boy? You need your sleep.

EDWIN: I'll sleep here in the chair.

BOOTH: You can't get to sleep in a hard chair.

EDWIN: Well, I'm not going to sleep with a bunch of insects.

BOOTH: Apologies. I never killed a living thing, boy, Never once.

EDWIN: Well, I'm sorry. If I'd known I never would have done it--
(He breaks down into uncontrollable sobs)

BOOTH: My apologies, boy. My deepest apologies.

EDWIN: (furious, through his sobs) What am I doing here?

BOOTH: What is it?

EDWIN: I said, what am I doing here?

BOOTH: You're free to go back boy! Any time you wish!

EDWIN: No. I'm here and I'm going to stay here.

BOOTH: I thought that it might be pleasant for us both if you accompanied me. I never expected you to do what you have done.

EDWIN: Yes, you did!

BOOTH: I beg your pardon, Edwin! I never expected you to follow me!

EDWIN: Well, what was it you expected me to do, then? Will you tell me that?

BOOTH: I expected you to come back here and get some sleep.

EDWIN: Get some sleep?! Not knowing where you were in this whole strange city---

BOOTH: Yes!

EDWIN: You can't even sleep when I'm here with you! How the--hell do you expect me to when you're off running around somewhere in the middle of the night?

BOOTH: Edwin, forgive me.

EDWIN: No.

BOOTH: Well, I can't do any more than ask you, boy, you've got to do the forgiving.

EDWIN: That's right, blame it all on me.

BOOTH: Well, you could have told me, boy.

EDWIN: You could have told me.

BOOTH: How could I have told you, Edwin? How?

EDWIN: I don't know. Let's go to sleep.

BOOTH: I can't.

EDWIN: I can't if you can't.

BOOTH: I'm sorry.

(pause)

EDWIN: I'll tell you why we can't.

BOOTH: Oh?

EDWIN: Yes. People were never meant to stay awake--(gesture)

BOOTH: This room?

EDWIN: Yes.

BOOTH: I know that. But these are the rooms that they reserve for actors on the road, and actors on the road have been chosen to keep the watches of the night.

EDWIN: Let's open the door.

BOOTH: It won't do any good, Edwin.

EDWIN: It'll let in some fresh air, at least. (opens it) There. (He stands in the open doorway for a minute) It's awfully quiet out here.

BOOTH: Did you expect a parade?

EDWIN: No. But isn't there anybody else in this hotel?

BOOTH: They're asleep.

EDWIN: They might as well be dead for all the noise they're making. (There is a moment while they both wish he hadn't said that)

BOOTH: Edwin, will you close the door, please?

EDWIN: No.

BOOTH: Is it making you feel any better?

EDWIN: No.

BOOTH: Then close the door!

EDWIN: I'll open the window! (goes to)

BOOTH: Edwin, it won't do any good, believe me!

EDWIN: Well, let me try it! Anything is better than this! (opens the window) Everything's so quiet!

BOOTH: It's early morning!

EDWIN: (yelling out the window) Hey, come on now, this is Philadelphia!

BOOTH: Close the window!

EDWIN: (hysterical) This is Philadelphia!

BOOTH: I tried to tell you, boy--!

EDWIN: (over-lapping) Everything's so quiet!

BOOTH: (over-lapping) I warned you, boy! You wanted to go traveling--!

EDWIN: EVERYTHING'S SO QUIET!

(This over-lapping builds to a completely incoherent hysteria. EDWIN flings about in the midst of it, sees his banjo, grabs it, begins to sing loudly, stridently:)

Sign up for the life of a sailor
The breath-taking stench of the sea
Find love with the whores of Savannah
Sign up--be a sailor like me!

EDWIN and BOOTH: We sail on the good ship Redemption
From Arctic to tropical clime
We don't need a captain or compass
We float in an ocean of slime!

Oh, why was I born, mother tell me
Oh, why did you bring me to be
Oh, why was I born mother tell me...

(BOOTH breaks off. EDWIN continues lamely, sinking down some place where he can look out the window:)

EDWIN: If only to rot in the sea....

(Silence. Both are in despair. EDWIN looks longingly out the window, and softly begins to sing:)

Daylight is breaking
People are waking
Fresh bread is baking
Now at the farm

Morning is coming
Nature is humming
Banjos are strumming
Now at the farm...

(The music begins to gather strength. So does EDWIN, So, quietly, in another part of the room, does BOOTH)

Bullfrogs are croaking
Chimmies are smoking
Children are joking
Now at the farm

Feel the wind blowing
See the corn growing
Hear the cows lowing
Now at the farm...

Everything waked for the long night is over
Meadows and fields smell of green grass and clover
Dew drops on leaves catch the sunlight and glisten
Sparkling like jewels in the valleys they christen...

Sunlight is sifting
Night fog is lifting
Now clouds are drifting
Now at the farm

See the day breaking
Smell the bread baking
Hear the folks waking
Now at the farm.

(He finishes. They are quiet for a minute)

BOOTH: Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes?

BOOTH: You're free to go back there, as I said. Anytime you wish.

EDWIN: Am I?

BOOTH: If you want to.

EDWIN: I don't want to.

BOOTH: I fail to see why not.

EDWIN: Well, I've never seen the sun come up on Philadelphia before, for one thing.

BOOTH: Edwin, listen to me. Remember that a while ago I said I'd never killed a living thing.

EDWIN: Yes?

BOOTH: You had a sister, Elizabeth, and she died at birth--while I was on the road.

EDWIN: Well?

BOOTH: You're free to leave, boy. Anytime you wish.

EDWIN: Father--

BOOTH: Yes?

EDWIN: Some of us have made it.

(The traveling theme comes in, plays gently under:)

BOOTH: Ah, Edwin, Edwin--I hope I didn't injure you this evening.

EDWIN: In the saloon?

BOOTH: Yes.

EDWIN: Na-a-a-aw. You didn't have a chance.

BOOTH: You knocked me cold.

EDWIN: That's right.

BOOTH: The gentle Booths of Maryland.

EDWIN: That's right.

(They laugh)

Well. Rehearsal's in four hours.

BOOTH: Four hours. I must rest before my next encounter with Mr. Wemyss.

EDWIN: Will you be having any trouble?

BOOTH: No. We can relax now. It's morning.

EDWIN: So it is. I'm hungry!

BOOTH: Hungry? Cannonballs in greasepaint, what an animal.

EDWIN: Well, after all, it's morning, father.

BOOTH: Some of us sleep in the morning.

EDWIN: Some of us eat our breakfast.

BOOTH: It's that insidious mother of yours, boy, she'll be corrupting you yet.

EDWIN: Well, I must already be corrupted, because I could eat the chair.

BOOTH: A tempting thought, but not now. (throws him a coin) Here, gorge yourself.

EDWIN: (catching it) Thank you. (starts for the door)

BOOTH: Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes?

BOOTH: Are we going to be proud of you, boy?

EDWIN: Proud?

BOOTH: Proud.

EDWIN: Proud. (with quiveringly unsuccessful nonchalance) I think so.

BOOTH: You do.

EDWIN: Yes.

BOOTH: That's good, boy. That's very good. Good night, now.
(rolls over to go to sleep)

EDWIN: Good night, father. (he goes out the door and appears down-
stage of hotel room. He sings:) Round, clear tones...

Scene 6: (Bubbly, banjo-rhythm music starts up. PEOPLE begin to appear, crossing back and forth, amplifying the early-morning hum set up by the music. We are perhaps in front of a curtain now-- at any rate, the hotel room no longer figures--and as the music builds, EDWIN crosses through the PEOPLE until we are on the deck of a steamboat:)

EDWIN: Round, clear tones! (Enter SPEARS and PAGE) Mr. Spears! Mr. Page!

PAGE: Edwin?

SPEARS: I've prepared a little introduction for you, boy--
(gives a piece of paper to EDWIN)

PAGE: You're not serious about this, Mr. Spears.

SPEARS: I'm always serious when it comes to Junius' boy.

PORTER: (appearing) St. Louis ~~indeed~~! next! 'Ten minutes to St. Louis!

SPEARS: Thank you, my good man, and here's a dime for your trouble.
(Throws him one.)

EDWIN: (reading it) You wrote this?

SPEARS: Yes, I did, sir, with the help of Mr. Page--

PAGE: Well, don't blame it on me.

SPEARS: It introduces you and the presentation both.

MRS. HILL: (having entered) Am I mentioned?

SPEARS: All of Junius' friends are mentioned, mother; after all it's in his honor.

MRS. HILL: Just remember. It's got to be a surprise.

SPEARS: It'll be a surprise!

MRS. HILL: There will be no effect unless it's a surprise.

EDWIN: He wants to be proud of me. He said so.

SPEARS: He'll be proud of you, boy, just stick with Uncle George.

PAGE: He means he wants you to read the little jingle, Edwin.

SPEARS: Oh, I know! It may not be Shakespeare, but at least it rhymes. Ready?

EDWIN: All ready.

SPEARS: All right, take it away! (into number: see I-vi-2)

EDWIN: Well, how-de-do
 Good evening Folks
 I'm Edwin Booth
 With songs and jokes
 And funny quips
 So part your lips
 And gimme a smile
 Just stay for a while

Here's Mr. Spears (SPEARS begins to shuffle)
 For twenty years
 He's filled the farmers'
 Hearts with glee
 From Keeocuck to Kanakee
 And Mr. Page (PAGE begins to bow effusely as SPEARS continues
 That witty sage to shuffle)
 Who first appeared upon the stage
 When he was two
 A tender age
 And stole every scene
 He's played for the Queen

Here's Cindy Lou (MRS. HILL)
 Who'll sing for you
 The sweetest songs you've ever heard
 This pretty Dixie hummingbird
 The Southland's sweetest nightingale
 Has never yet been known to fail
 To put a heavy heart at ease
 With songs she learned on mother's knees
 And whe it comes to dancing feet
 The Cotton Brothers can't be beat (SPEARS and PAGE)
 We're ready to go
 So on with the show!

(And the orchestra bursts into "the American Fireman" theme which
 continues under the following:)

PAGE: (reading) And now George Spears has the honor of presenting a--
 presentation--in honor of the occasion of the formal histrionical
 debut of the son of his dearest acquaintance Edwin Booth. Edwin Booth
 being the son of the dearest acquaintance, who is named Junius Booth.
 Mr. Spears, this is unreadable!

SPEARS: (grabbing it) All right, I'll handle this. Uh--it is George Spears'
 privilege and honor now to present Mr. Booth--uh, Master Booth--
 in a scene from that great American drama of passion and well-spent
 youth, The American Fireman!
 (He applauds noisily and retreats, as EDWIN and MRS. HILL, seated
 at a table before an imaginary supper, begin to enact the scene:)

MRS. HILL: O, Frederic!--you might have mentioned, Mr. Spears, that I am
 appearing as Mrs. Jerome, mother to Fred Jerome, the American
 fireman--O Frederic! I have a strange foreboding, as if
 something dreadful was about to happen.

EDWIN: Now, mother, don't talk in such a melancholy way, when I feel so
 happy. (Distant fire bell is heard)
 Hark! What's that? Fire! I'm off, mother!

MRS HILL: No, no--not without your supper!

EDWIN: Supper?--and do you think I'd stop for that? No! For while I remain to eat some poor family may lose their all which, were I present, I might aid in saving; the meal would choke me were I to feast while others suffer. No, no, never! (sings)

Hark! I am off!
For I hear the distant call of duty
Bidding the firemen to face the fearsome flame

Would I could stay here
Beside my precious gray-haired beauty
But if I tarry then coward is my name

MRS HILL: Go then you must
(aside) Though a mother's heart is breaking
Firemen cannot linger
While babes and buildings burn

God speed you on
(aside) Oh, I fear he feels me shaking!
I shall keep on watching
Till I see your safe return

EDWIN: Hark! I am off!

MRS. HILL: For he hears the call of duty

BOTH: Bidding the fireman to face the fearsome flame

MRS HILL: Would you could stay

EDWIN: Beside my precious gray-haired beauty

Both: But if ^{you}_I tarry, then coward is ^{your}_{my} name!

(He rushes off)

MRS HILL: (in an attitude of prayer) Brave boy! Heaven give you strength to save the unfortunate!

(There is a fanfare, and SPEARS and PAGE, as fellow firemen, carry EDWIN victoriously back in)

SPEARS and PAGE: Hail, Fred Jerome!
He's the fireman extraordinary
Bright shining star of the pump-and-hose brigade!

MRS HILL: Welcome my son
My brave boy who would not tarry
Someone was listening in Heaven when I prayed.

(Now, SPEARS, PAGE, and MRS HILL sing this in counterpt., ending with a bang in which EDWIN joins. Just as they finish, the steamboat whistle is heard.)

PORTER: (appearing) St. Louis!

(The orchestra blares forth again, as this announcement sends them into a panic and they grab their make-up kits, or bags, etc., and run out. Blackout. The orchestra plays the march we associate with BOOTH'S performances, we hear wild off-stage applause and shouts of "We want Booth! We want Booth!" then we hear another steamboat whistle, the orchestra bursts into a few more spirited bars of "The American Fireman," and we are back on the steamboat again)

Scene 7: The steamboat again, EDWIN and Booth discovered.
EDWIN is holding book for BOOTH, who is declaiming
as the lights come up:

BOOTH: "Arms, arms, swords, fire!
Corruption in the place!
False justice, why hast thou let her 'scape?"

PORTER: (appearing) New Orleans next! New Orleans!

EDWIN: (assuming each role as he says it:)
Edgar: Bless thy five wits!
Kent: O pity, sir, where is the patience now
That you so oft have boasted to retain?
Edgar: (aside) My tears begin to take his part so much
They'll mar my counterfeiting.
(He turns back to BOOTH, who is preoccupied)
Father? It's your line.

BOOTH: New Orleans...

EDWIN: (adapting himself) How soon?

BOOTH: Not soon enough. Wait until you see New Orleans!
(He sings a bawd, little verse about it)
There's a second verse to that, but very few of us know it.
I always look foward to New Orleans, Edwin, because
it's the last step of the journey home. That's what
the whole stinking circuit is for, you know! It's
dirty and it's sordid and it's roundabout, but it's
never failed to lead me back to Maryland.

EDWIN: Father --

BOOTH: Yes, boy, what is it?

EDWIN: Tell me the second verse.

BOOTH: I beg your pardon.

EDWIN: The second verse. I want to hear it.

BOOTH: Oh, no!

EDWIN: P;ease!

BOOTH: No, you may be ready for the first verse, but you've
a long way to go before you're ready for the second.

EDWIN: Well, is there a third?

BOOTH: Not even I am ready for the third.

EDWIN: Father, you're treating me as though I were just a boy!

BOOTH: Well, thundering Judas, what do you think you are?
You are just a boy, and I wouldn't have you different
for the world!

EDWON: Well, I would! I'm sick of being just a boy!

(He is just saying this, when four FARM BOYS come dashing noisily on, engaged in some frantic communal activity. They take positions to the side of the deck, and continue their game. EDWIN watches them, the wind being taken out of his sails)

EDWIN: Oh...

BOOTH: Do you want to go talk to them, Edwin?

EDWIN: (with unsuccessful nonchalance) Talk to them?

BOOTH: Yes! Go on!

EDWIN: (loftily) Father, I have nothing I can say to them and they have nothing they can say to me.

BOOTH: Begging your pardon, sir! Go talk to them.

EDWIN: No. Please.

BOOTH: But, Edwin --

EDWIN: Father, did you know we used to sing a little song about you back home?

BOOTH: Song?

EDWIN: Yes! I'll sing it for you.

BOOTH: Does it in any way resemble the verse I just sang you?

EDWIN: No, of course not.

BOOTH: I am relieved.

EDWIN: It goes -- (strums on his banjo)
 The good Lord woke up early on a Sunday
 Looked outside into the void
 Looked around and all He say was darkness
 The same old darkness and the Lord was annoyed...

BOOTH: Well, that's an appropriately religious tone.

EDWIN: ~~XXXX~~ You wait. (strums on)
 "Think I'll make some planets out of stardust
 Lord can do it if anybody can
 Make myself some mountains and an ocean
 A serpent and an apple and a woman out of man."

BOOTH: (entering the spirit, revivalistically) Lord!

EDWIN: When He finished He still wasn't happy--
 "I left out something and that's the truth!
 It's a mighty fine world but it's much too quiet!"

BOOTH: (simultaneously) Hallelulhah!

EDWIN: On the eighth day the Lord made Junius Booth!

BOOTH: (taken aback) What?

EDWIN: It goes on. (strums) Joshua played--

BOOTH: Enough! I'm sure it does.

EDWIN: Do you like it?

BOOTH: Well, I don't know which you're blaspheming worse -- the Scriptures or my career!

EDWIN: Oh, your career, by a margin.

BOOTH: And I don't know.....(he stops)

EDWIN: What is it, father?

BOOTH: Well, I don't know how, thinking that, you could have seen it through these past few months. I don't see how you've managed.

EDWIN: (not knowing quite what to say) Oh...I've managed...

BOOTH: Yes, I should say you have. Of course, I never indulged in Biblical speculation myself, particularly about my father.

EDWIN: Tell me about your father.

BOOTH: He was a lawyer! Did you know that?

EDWIN: No, I didn't.

BOOTH: It surprises you. Well, as a matter of fact, I was almost a lawyer.

EDWIN: (a little amused) You were?

BOOTH: I was. One dusty summer of youth I entered his offices as clerk.

EDWIN: (relishing the thought with humor) But it didn't satisfy you, did it?

BOOTH: No, it didn't.

EDWIN: You wanted to break out.

BOOTH: Yes, I did.

EDWIN: I could have told you!

BOOTH: Would that you had! Unhappily however you were not there to tell me. Because of this calamity I went ahead with it, and soon I was allowing myself to think that because his offices were so confining, the rest of the world must be nothing but free! I joined a group of strolling players -- against my father's wishes, but I joined them -- and we set out to tour the width and breadth of England and the Low Countries.

EDWIN: And that's how it started.

BOOTH: That's how it started. And do you know, Edwin? ** I was right! = The rest of the world is nothing but free. Nothing whatsoever but free.

EDWIN: I'll remember that.

BOOTH: Yes, you remember it. (affectionately) You remember it!

EDWIN: I will!

BOOTH: Because that's why I thank the Lord you'll never be an actor.

EDWIN: What?

BOOTH: You've escaped the taint of the Booth name, boy! I'd say it called for a drink if I didn't know better!

PORTER: (appearing suddenly) New Orleans! Ten minutes to New Orleans!

BOOTH: We heard you the first time, sir! Have you told my friends?

PORTER: Your friends, Mr. Boo--

BOOTH: Mr. Spears! Mr. Page! Mrs. Hill! Have you told them?

PORTER: I don't know them, sir.

BOOTH: Well, I'd better tell them myself. The Lord knows what condition they're in by this time. Wait for me here, Edwin.

EDWIN: (miserably) I'll wait.

BOOTH: Is something the matter, boy?

EDWIN: No!

BOOTH: Well, you wait here, I won't be long at all. (to the PORTER) Come along, sir, you may help me find them. (He is exiting.)

PORTER: (one last time) New Orleans!

BOOTH: (off) They heard you!

(PORTER follows him off. EDWIN sits there looking across the deck at the FARM BOYS - BEN, HOSH, SAM, ETHAN - who are deeply involved in a game of racing bugs across their little area of deck. EDWIN looks at them a minute and then gets up and crosses over to them.)

EDWIN: Hello.

(BOYS' conversation stops abruptly)

What are you doing?

BEN : Racing bugs.

JOSH: You want to fight about it?

BEN: Be quiet.

EDWIN: I used to race bugs.

BEN: Well, good for you.

EDWIN: It's been a while, though.

BEN: Has it?

EDWIN: Yes.

BEN: Oh.

(A crashing silence, during which the other BOYS FOCUS ON SOMETHING MOVING ACROSS THE DECK. Then:)

SAM: Hey, ben.

BEN: Yeah?

SAM: Your bug just ran over the side.

BEN: What? You mean in the water?

SAM: That's what's over the side, Ben.

BEN: All right. Who did it.

ETHAN: Nobody did it, Ben. Your bug run over the side under its own steam.

EDWIN: Well, why didn't you stop it?

JOSH: Who asked you?

BEN: Well, why didn't you?

SAM: How you gonna stop a bug, Ben?

BEN: Step on it!

ETHAN: Wouldn't that kind of put a handicap on you?

BEN: (frustrated) Awww...(to EDWIN) See what you done!

EDWIN: What did I do?

BEN: Come over here and talk to me and let my bug go runnin' over the side.

EDWIN: I didn't let your bug go running over the side!

BEN: Who did, then?

EDWIN: Well, it's like they said, your bug went running over the side when you weren't looking!

BEN: And why wasn't I looking?

EDWIN: You were talking to me!

BEN: All right!

EDWIN: Look, I'll get you a new one.

BEN: You will.

ETHAN: Where are you going to get it?

EDWIN: Don't worry.

BEN: Yeah, but where?

EDWIN: I've got influence!

ETHAN: What kind of influence?

JOSH: Do you know the porter?

EDWIN: My father knows the porter.

BEN: Who's your father?

EDWIN: Mr. Booth.

BEN: Mr. Booth!

EDWIN: (nonchalant) Yes.

BEN: Hey, his father's Mr. Booth.

ETHAN: That's good.

JOSH: (to ETHAN) Who's Mr. Booth?

ETHAN: (sagely) Oh, that's real good.

BEN: (with infinite condescension) Mr. Booth. The actor.

EDWIN: He does Shakespeare.

JOSH: What?! What are you talking about?

BEN: Shakespeare, you chickenhead. He wrote the Bible.

JOSH: I'm sorry! Say, how does it feel to be a gypsy ?

EDWIN: What?

ETHAN: Yeah, tell us about your harem.

EDWIN: What harem? I don't know what you're talking --

ETHAN: My father told me that's how actors --

BEN: Look out, Ethan.

EDWIN: I don't know what youre talking about!

ETHAN: Aw, come on.

EDWIN: I swear! What do you think I am, anyway?

ETHAN: Well, I thought you were somebody special.

SAM: ~~MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM~~
 (patiently) You want to get back to the game, Ben?

BEN: Yeah, let's get back to the game.

EDWIN: (quickly) I've got a banjo.
 (BOYS look at each other)

BEN: You do?

EDWIN: Yes.

ETHAN: Can you play it?

EDWIN: Yes.
 (He gives a few pyrotechnical strums on it. The BOYS
 are impressed)

BEN: Hey, know any songs?

EDWIN: Sure. I even know a couple of farming songs.

JOSH: (drily) I bet you do.

EDWIN: I do! (strums, sings)

Everybody knows
 When you pick a bale a' cotton
 It's half a bale a' cotton
 And half a bale a' sweat
 Everything's forgotten
 By them that wears the cotton
 But them that does the sweatin' don't forget...

(rhythm continues under)

JOSH: That the only farming song you know?

EDWIN: What if it is?

JOSH: Say, you know some cheerful ones, don't you?

BEN: Hush.

JOSH: What do you mean, hush?

BEN: I like it, that's what I mean, hush.

ETHAN: Come on, come on, no fighting on the deck.

BEN: Who's fighting? (sings)

Everybody knows
 When you how a row a' taters--

Edwin and Ben: It's half a row a' taters
 And half a row a' ~~p~~win
 Them that eats the tater
 Forgets a minute later
 But them that does the hoein' ain't the same...

ALL, except JOSH (who does a gesture of "I give up"):

Everybody knows
 When you cut a mile a(timber
 It's half a mile a(timber
 And half a mile a' blood
 Been working in the timber
 Since I can remember
 Workin' in the timber and the mud

(The OTHER BOYS begin to chant "Hurry Up, Lord")

BEN: (to JOSH) Come on, Josh!

JOSH: (vindictively almost, over the chanting:)

The preacher says the Good Lord'll take away the cotton
 Take away the sweat

EDWIN and BEN: They say he's gonna do it
Pray he's gonna do it
But he ain't done it yet

JOSH: (topping them -- this is turning into a contest)

The preacher says the Good Lord'll
Take away the taters
Take away the pain

EDWIN and BEN: Still I hoe them taters
Row by row a' taters
Hoe 'em in the sunshine
Hoe 'em in the rain!

(Chanting out. EDWIN, BEN, and JOSH sail on:)

EDWIN, BEN, and JOSH: Everybody knows
When you live a life a' bendin'
It's half a life a' bendin'
And half a life a' hurt
Them that does the bendin'
Just waitin' for the endin'
What's the use a' livin' in the dirt?

(BOYS begin chanting "Hurry Up, Lord" again. Over it:)

EDWIN: Take away the timber
Take away the hurt

EDWIN AND BEN: Take away the bendin'
Take away the dirt
Take away the cotton
Take away the rain

EDWIN, BEN, and JOSH: Take away the taters
Take away the pain!

PORTER: New Orleans!

(PASSENGERS begin to appear on the deck)

SAM: Hey, Ben, we're there.

BEN: Yeah, Sam.

EDWIN: I better find my father. Will you wait here?

ETHAN: We got to get the crates ready, Ben.

BEN: Yeah, we got to get the crates.

EDWIN: You'll be going, then.

JOSH: (embarrassed at having joined in) Looks that way.

EDWIN: How long are you going to be in New Orleans?

ETHAN: One day.

BEN: See, we're bringing food to the market.

JOSH: Come on, we better be going.

EDWIN: Wait! And then you're going back home.

BEN:- That's right.

EDWIN: (giving him the banjo) Well, take this.

BEN: What?! --

EDWIN: Go on, take it.

BEN: But it's yours!

EDWIN: I want you to have it!

BEN: Why me?

EDWIN: Here, will you take it?

BEN: Sure, Thanks.

ETHAN: Uh -- we better be going, Ben.

JOSH: Yeah, Ben, come on.

SAM: Yeah, come on.

BEN: (not moving) I'm coming.

OTHER BOYS: (leaving) See you!

EDWIN: (to them, as they go) See you.

BEN: Well, thanks.

EDWIN: (curtly) You're welcome.

BEN: You sure you don't want it?

EDWIN: Take it! I want you to have it so that someday when you read about me you can look at it and say, "Edwin Booth gave me this." That's my name, by the way; Edwin. Remember it because you'll be reading all about me someday.

BEN: (wistfully) Yeah...

PORTER: Pulling into New Orleans!

(More PASSENGERS, including some of the ACTORS, are appearing on the deck; the excited bustle builds)

BEN: (suddenly) Blame it all, Edwin, I wish I could live like you!

(Edwin looks at him a minute)

EDWIN: No, you don't. G'bye, Ben. (moves away, calls:) Father!

SEVERAL VOICES FROM THE CROWD: Edwin!

(Edwin turns to them, and they materialize from the group in the form of SPEARS, PAGE, and MRS. HILL. Meanwhile, BEN is leaving and we begin to hear the crowd on the dock chanting "We want Booth! We want Booth!" beginning faintly and building underneath the following:)

EDWIN: Hello, Mr. Spears, I--

SPEARS: All set for New Orleans, Edwin? You know, I've heard welcomes in my day, but I've never heard a welcome like this.

MRS. HILL: Oh, yes, you have, Mr. Spears.

PAGE: Now, Mrs. Hill--

EDWIN: Mr. Spears, I want to tell him. I want to tell father about the whole presentation, right now, and let him know I'm going to be an actor. Where is he?

SPEARS: Now, just a minute here, Edwin --

PAGE: Mr. Spears, I don't think it's any of our affair.

EDWIN: (seeing him) Father?

)BOOTH appears through the CROWN, whose attention is diverted to him)

BOOTH: Edwin, this is New Orleans! Can you smell the difference?

(Appreciative laughter from the PASSENGERS)

MRS. HILL: (sotto-voce) Mr. Spears, you can't let him do this. We planned this as a surprise for Junius.

SPEARS: My hands are tied, mother. You know that, my hands are tied.

EDWIN: Father, I've got something to tell you.

BOOTH: Well, tell me her name, boy! Don't hesitate, tell me her name!

Mrs. Hill: (running to him) Don't listen to a word he tells you, Junius! The child has swamp fever, and he's not accountable for a syllable he utters!

BOOTH: Why,=Edwin-- (feels his forehead, takes his pulse)

PAGE: (tight-lipped) I really don't think it's any of our affair.

MRS. HILL: (exploding) Nothing's ever any of our affair, according to you, Mr. Page! Well, I wanted just once to have something that was my affair! I wanted them to say, "Edwin's debut is a surprise for Junius, and it's none of our affair! It's none of ours because it's Emily Hill's affair! Its Emily's! It's Emily's, and nobody else's"....Oh! (She begins to moan, too furious for tears, in frustrated rage)

BOOTH: (having released him after the words "Edwin's debut")
Edwin?

EDWIN: That's right, father.

(The shouting of "We want Booth!" has built considerably. Now the percussive "Seeing the Elephant" rhythm, last heard under the Prologue, begins to be heard again, under the following:)

SPEARS: Well, there it goes, mother. He knows now, and that's a fact.

MRS. HILL: Oh, what difference does it make, Mr. Spears?

PORTER: We've docked! All passengers down the gangplank!

PAGE: Come on, people. People are watching...

MRS. HILL: Mr. Page, people are always watching...

(He is helping her off. The other PASSENGERS Are leaving, too. Meanwhile, the light has been dimming on everything except BOOTH and Edwin, BOOTH having been staring hard at EDWIN. The shouting more or less dissolves now, and the percussive underscoring is heard more clearly, continuing under the following:)

EDWIN: I never meant to do this to them. I never knew it meant so much to them.

BOOTH: Do you want to be like them Edwin?

EDWIN: Oh, I won't be like them!

BOOTH: How do you know?

EDWIN: I'll be a good actor!

BOOTH: How do you know?

EDWIN: Because I can be! I have it in me!

BOOTH: They thought the same about themselves, Edwin, once upon a time.

EDWIN: But I do! I know I do!

BOOTH: All right, then. We shall see.

(The lights bang up again all over the stage, and we are in a gay New Orleans street. Simultaneously, the percussive underscoring gives way to the sound of a FRENCHWOMAN, spotlighted to one side of the stage, singing a Frenchy little song. Much hustle and bustle)

Scene 8: The street gaiety is becoming saloon gaiety, a New Orleans saloon. The FRENCHWOMAN concludes her song, and moves into the saloon, among the GENTLEMEN and FLOOZIES. So do BOOTH and EDWIN. MYRT appears.

EDWIN: Father, where are we going?

BOOTH: We're going to see about you.

MYRT: Junius!

BOOTH: Myrt! Myrtle, my good woman, I should like you to meet my son.
Myrtle-Edwin, Edwin-Myrt.
(He moves on into the saloon)
Quiet, everyone. Quiet...

EDWIN: What's he doing ?

MYRT: You going to be an actor like your daddy, little boy?

EDWIN: I'm not a little boy.

MYRT: Okay.

EDWIN: Okay.

BOOTH: (meanwhile) QUIET, EVERYONE! QUIET!

(The room is quieting down)

EDWIN: Father, what are you doing?

BOOTH: You say that you can be an actor, Edwin.

EDWIN: Yes, but--

BOOTH: Can you control a mob?

EDWIN: Of course I can!

BOOTH: Very well, then, control it.

A GENTLEMAN: Hey, what is this?

(This is picked up. The saloon begins to grow noisy again)

BOOTH: Edwin?

EDWIN: (terrified, but trying) QUIET!

(The room quiets down again, but uneasily)

EDWIN: (pulling himself together, unsteadily:)

Well, how-de-do
Good evening, folks
I'm Edwin Booth
With songs and jokes
And funny quips
So part your lips
And gimme a smile---
Just stay for a while---

(But by this time the GENTLEMEN and FLOOZIES have gone wild with derision, completely drowning him out)

EDWIN: (furious, through the noise) Father, I won't do this! You're just going to have to believe me!

BOOTH: I'm no better than the mob, Edwin! I won't believe you till you show me!

EDWIN: (feverishly) All right, then--QUIET!
(noise continues)
QUIET!

(It begins to dwindle down again. EDWIN stands there, letting it do so, and finally it dwindles into silence. Then:)

MYRT: All right now, little boy. On with the show.

(EDWIN glares at her across the silent room. Then he goes into a little shuffle step, and then, with strained assurance, sings:)

EDWIN: (quietly at first) Mr. Mason and Mr. Dixon
They drew that line up and then they cried
"You can have all your Yankee cooking
But we'll keep serving the Southern Fried"

Grandma Higgins was ninety-seven
And making chicken the day she died
Now she's playing a golden banjo
And serving angels that Southern Fried

When they told him the boat was sinking
Old Captain Hooker, he just replied
"Save the women and save the children
And save me some of that Southern Fried!"

(He now goes into a little dance, while beer mugs begin to bang rhythmically on the tables in caustic appreciation. Emboldened, he swings on:)

Andy Jackson was down in Dixie
To put a tan on the Redcoat hide
Told his army, "If you can beat 'em
I'll serve you all up some Southern Fried"

EDWIN: When my Pappy proposed to Mammy
 He said—

ONE OF THE MEN: (joining EDWIN) "I want you to be my bride!
 You ain't pretty, and you ain't wealthy
 But how you serve up—

SEVERAL MORE: (Joining them) That Southern Fried!

EDWIN: Mason and Dixon and the Southern Fried

THE CROWD: (several more joining on each one:)
 Grandma Higgins and the Southern Fried
 Captain Hooker and the Southern Fried
 Andy Jackson and the Southern Fried
 Pappy and Mammy and the Southern Fried---

EDWIN: High-bred Yankees and the Southern Fried!
 Foreign people and high-bred Yankees
 Will ask you, "What is the Southern pride?"

EDWIN and ONE OF THE MEN: Strength and courage!

EDWIN and TWO OF THE MEN: (in sweet harmony) Truth and valor!----

ALL: But most of all it's the Southern Fried!

(This finishes off in much mug-banging and drunken yelling.
EDWIN stands in the middle of it, quietly triumphant)

EDWIN: There you are, father.

BOOTH: Edwin. I shall not appear this evening at the theatre.

EDWIN: You won't?

BOOTH: No.

EDWIN: But you've got to. They've come to see the--Booth name...
 (moment of half-realization)
 It's your Henry the fifth, father!

BOOTH: You know my Henry the Fifth. Good luck, Edwin.

(There is a blast from the orchestra, and suddenly EDWIN is
the only thing we see on the stage)

Scene 9: Backstage at the American Theatre, New Orleans. EDWIN is at first all we see, as the "How-de-do" rhythm starts in as underscoring.

EDWIN: Mr. Spears? Mr. Page? Where are you?

PAGE: (appearing) Here we are, Edwin. Where is your father?

EDWIN: Never mind that. Find the manager.

PAGE: Never mind?!--

EDWIN: Find the manager.

PAGE: If you insist, Edwin. Monsieur, monsieur the manager!
(moving off)

EDWIN: Gautier! His name is Gautier!

PAGE: (going off) M. Gautier

SPEARS: (appearing) Edwin, fella! Say, where's Junius, Edwin, already in the dressing room? (moving off in that direction)
Hey, Junius, you're early! We've got ten minutes, fella!

CALL BOY: (off) Six Minutes, Mr. Booth.

EDWIN (in a panic) Mr. Gautier!

(GAUTIER sweeps on, followed by PAGE, ACTORS, including MRS. Hill. They begin to gather around)

GAUTIER: You! Boy! I am informed by Monsieur Page here that your father has not yet appeared.

EDWIN: That's right Sir, and I'm going to take his place.
(Underscoring stops-murmuring from the ACTORS)

GAUTIER: What?

EDWIN: I'm going to take his place.

MRS. HILL: Edwin, you can't do this! You're just a child.

EDWIN: How long have I got?

GAUTIER: Well, all I can say is "How thoughtful of monsieur to send a substitute when it's too late to cancel the performance!" Eh?

EDWIN: How long have I got?

GAUTIER: Of course, we are oblivious that the substitute is eleven and a half years old!

EDWIN: I'm sixteen, Mr. Gautier. Now, how long have I got?

GAUTIER: You have exactly four minutes.

EDWIN: I'll be ready. (He goes off in the direction of the dressing room)

GAUTIER: You have four minutes; I have a headache.

PAGE: I don't like it.

SPEARS: (rushing in) Gautier, you can't let him do this! I'm telling you as his coach and as the bosom acquaintance of his father, you just can't let him do this.

GAUTIER: It seems to be his father's idea, Monsieur.

SPEARS: I don't believe it!, You hear that? I don't believe it!
(He goes over angrily with a couple of ACTORS)

GAUTIER: I wonder if he thinks I believe it.

PAGE: Are we going to tell the audience, monsieur?

GAUTIER: No, we'll let them figure it out for themselves! We'll give a prize to whoever guesses it first!

MRS. HILL: Gautier, they'll guess it in a minute! I don't think this is fair at all!

GAUTIER: You don't think it's fair! I am the one who must clean up the tomatoes!

(Laughter from the ACTORS. To the side the lights come up on EDWIN, pretty well into costume, and Jenny Joanne, who is helping him with his cape)

Jenny Joanne: Don't pay attention to them, Edwin.

EDWIN: I'm not.

Jenny Joanne: Yes, ^{you} ~~you~~ are, you're shaking.

Edwin: I just don't see how they can talk about a son of Mr. Booth's that way!

(CHARLOTTE in full regalia sweeps on to where the ACTORS and GAUTIER are congregated)

CHARLOTTE: What's going on here?

EDWIN: (still with JENNY) Oh, no, is she in it?

JENNY JOANNE: Hold still, Edwin.

CHARLOTTE: Gautier, what's going on here?

GAUTIER: Oh, nothing! Nothing of importance!

CHARLOTTE: You're very funny, Gautier, what's the trouble?

GAUTIER: Just that M. Booth will not appear tonight! That's all!

CHARLOTTE: Oh! And you felt I should be told before I donned my costume! Bless you, Gautier.

GAUTIER: Oh, you can stay in your costume, madame. We will perform tonight.

CHARLOTTE: Well, who with, Gautier and his talking banjo?

GAUTIER: You're very funny too, madame.

CHARLOTTE: Well, who with?

GAUTIER: With Monsieur's son.

CHARLOTTE: Edwin?

GAUTIER: That's right!

CHARLOTTE: Hell, my leading men get tinier and tinier!

(More derisive laughter from the ACTORS. On hearing this EDWIN turns and kisses JENNY JOANNE desperately)

JENNY JOANNE: (as he releases her) You're not tiny.

EDWIN: Thank you.

CALL BOY: Mr. Gautier, it's time!

(The ACTORS PANIC, BEGIN TO CLEAR, and go to their places)

GAUTIER: You may find me beneath my customary seat! (Goes off)

EDWIN: Jenny Joanne, you never wanted me to do this, did you?

JENNY JOANNE: No, I didn't, Edwin, but---

EDWIN: No one wanted me to do this!

CALL BOY: (off) Mr. Booth, the prologue is beginning!

EDWIN: No one except me...

JENNY JOANNE: Well, Edwin, as my daddy says--"There's no point stopping now."

EDWIN: Wish me good luck.

JENNY JOANNE: Good luck. (She kisses him and runs off)

EDWIN: Thank you.

(EDWIN steps out into the blackness with only light on him. Apparently waiting for his entrance, he begins to recite:)

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more....
(then:) Father? Father?...

(Suddenly music and blackout, out of which immediate y there comes an enormous cheer. Lights up again of EDWIN surrounded by a horde of admiring ACTORS who are on their way out. Prominent among them is SPEARS)

SPEARS: Oh, I knew you could do it Edwin, Fella! Uncle George is proud of you! What do you say we go and celebrate, friends?

(Chorus of enthusiastic assent from the ACTORS)

EDWIN: I'll be right there.

SPEARS: WE'll be waiting! He's coming, friends, he's coming!

(SPEARS goes off shouting this. EDWIN is alone)

EDWIN: Father?

(The lights steal up behind him, revealing the shadowy empty stage of the theatre. BOOTH is there)

BOOTH: Here I am, Edwin.

EDWIN: Oh! (He goes up to him) I acted well tonight.

BOOTH: I saw you.

EDWIN: Do you want to come and help me celebrate?

BOOTH: You're going to have to forgive me, boy.

EDWIN: Forgive you? For this?

BOOTH: The only reason that I put you through all this tonight was to convince you that the last thing in the world you'd ever want to do was be an actor.

EDWIN: The last thing?

SPEARS AND MRS HILL: (off) Edwin! Hurry up!

EDWIN: I'm coming! (to BOOTH) Well--I guess it Didn't work, did it?

BOOTH: No, I guess it didn't.

EDWIN: Come on, father. Help me celebrate.

BOOTH: I promised Mary Ann that this would never happen to you, Edwin. And I thought that that was one promise I would never break.

EDWIN: Father she'll understand! Wait ~~XXX~~ until we tell her about

tonight, I'm sure she'll understand! (about the ACTORS outside)
Listen to them!

BOOTH: This is what you want, isn't it, Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes!

BOOTH: Why?

EDWIN: Because I want to be like you, father! That's why!

SPEARS, PAGE, MRS. HILL: (off) Edwin!

EDWIN: I'm coming!
(Quietly, the orchestra begins the rhythm of "Booth is Back")
Come on, father...

BOOTH: You want to be like me.

EDWIN: Yes.

BOOTH: After all these months, you want to be like me. Well, I always knew you were an idealist, boy, but I thought you'd have given it up before this!

EDWIN: Why should I?

BOOTH: It's going to get you into trouble, Edwin! It's going to get you very deeply into trouble!

EDWIN: Well, if it's your kind of trouble, that's exactly what I want!

BOOTH: No, you don't!

EDWIN: But just look--look what it's made you!

BOOTH: Precisely! Look what it's made me! THE MAGNIFICENT JUNIUS BRUTUS***BOOTH!.....
(The underscoring stops)
Edwin, I've got to let you go. I've got to let you all go.

EDWIN: Let us go?--

BOOTH: Yes. I've got to set you free before you lose yourself completely. I've got to set all of you free--you and Mary Ann and all the rest of you--I've got to set you free of me and let you live!

EDWIN: Father, don't even talk about it. Don't even--

ACTORS: (off) Edwin!

EDWIN: Wait a minute! Now, father, do you understand me?--

BOOTH: All I understand is that I've got to let you go. Somehow I---somehow I....Adelaide...

EDWIN: FATHER!

BOOTH: Yes...Adelaide...

(At this point the ACTORS, about to wait no longer, come bursting in, shouting in a celebratory fashion)

EDWIN: No, father! No--please!

ACTORS: (amidst shouting and laughing and sweeping EDWIN into their celebration--they begin to sing:)

Adulation
Tell the population
Shout it from the roofs and steeples
Booth is back in town!--

BOOTH: (beginning to waver) Edwin--take me home...

EDWIN: I'll take you, father! Don't worry now, I'll take you home! Everything'll be all right, father!

BOOTH: Take me home!

(Meanwhile the singing continues. Parading=and general jubilation, with EDWIN helplessly caught up in it. And BOOTH is subsiding more and more into a panic:)

EDWIN! TAKE ME HOME!

(As the singing reaches its conclusion and the curtain falls)

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Scene 1: Early morning, a few days later, on a Mississippi riverboat. EDWIN sits up, numbed, holding BOOTH, who is asleep. A BOATMAN sings.

BOATMAN: The river sings a song
To those who drift along
Telling of towns it has touched in the dawn

The river's song is heard
By every lonely bird
Watching from willows until it is gone

The river's runnin' deep
And travelers lost in sleep
Dream of the love and the warmth they have known

The river's runnin' slow
Its song is sad and low
Weeping for strangers in search of a home

Here I must sit in the night air and shiver
Mixing my tears with the mud of the river
Lost in the hope it will someday deliver me
Home to the ones I am longing to see...

(There is an orchestral bridge. EDWIN bestirs himself and when the bridge is over sings:)

EDWIN: The river's runnin' slow
Its song is sad and low
Weeping for strangers like me.

(Concluding this, the orchestra picks up the brisk beginning rhythms of the Homecoming Song, and we see ASIA, ROSALIE, JOE and MARY ANN appear as the farm comes into place)

Scene 2: The farm. EDWIN sees the family waiting to greet them and helps BOOTH from the riverboat. Joyous reunion, as MARY ANN helps BOOTH inside, the music maintaining the bubbly homecoming rhythm throughout. Then, at the urging of ASIA, ROSALIE and JOE, EDWIN, relieved and happy to be on solid ground again, launches into a song building out of the jaunty orchestral rhythm and describing in a carefree manner the wild living on the road. The carefree manner becomes a joyous manner, the kids get more and more excited, frequently joining in, and the whole thing finishes off with a bang. Abruptly thereafter, MARY ANN comes out and tells them their father is very ill. Then, alone with EDWIN, she asks him why. The lights dim out.

Scene 3: The farm again, about three days later. EDWIN and ~~Mary~~ MARY ANN are still standing in the yard, and ASIA is ~~x~~ inside, discovered singing her ballad as the lights come up again. The mood is one of tension and expectancy.

ASIA: One morning in autumn I opened my shutter
 And spied a young soldier a white horse upon
 He stopped for a moment, no word did he utter
 His eyes kissed me gently and then he rode on. . . .

Oh, where is my lover?
 Where can he be?
 Close by the shade of the green lime tree. . . .

(She finished her song. After a moment:)

MARY ANN: Well, that must have done your father's heart good.
 He likes Asia to sing to him, and especially now it must
 be soothing.

EDWIN: I thought he was still asleep.

MARY ANN: He's half-awake, half-asleep, the same as the last
 three days. I never will know why he likes those strange
 old ballads Asia sings. I swear, it's as if we'd never left
 England sometimes, as if we'd never settled here in Harford
 County. But he taught her to sing them and I guess she
 thinks they're hers now, so he can expect to hear them
 every time he's home.

EDWIN: Asia doesn't change, does she?

MARY ANN: Either she doesn't or I don't, Edwin. (laughs)
 Do you know why we named her Asia?

EDWIN: Tell me.

MARY ANN: Well, just after we were married your father told me
 that some day we must have a child named Asia. I said, why
 not South America, Junius? Why not Outer Mongolia? I'm
 a silly woman, Edwin, but as my dear mother always said,
 you've got to take the bitter with the sweet in this life,
 Mary Ann, so I've made Junius put up with my silliness.
 Well, anyway, I said, why Asia? And your father said that
 it had always been his fondest wish to have a little girl
 named Asia because Asia was the place where God's first
 children walked and therefore the only place on Earth where
 anybody's ever lived in peace. Well, I didn't have an answer
 for that, so when Asia came along we named her Asia. And
 listen to her now. Edwin, she's supposed to be the peaceful
 one, your father said so! But she's so distant and so faraway...

EDWIN: Maybe that's what he meant by peace.

MARY ANN: Yes, maybe it is.

EDWIN: Mother?

MARY ANN: You have something to tell me, don't you, Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes, I do.

MARY ANN: Well, you needn't be afraid of me! My Lord, Edwin, if you're this afraid of me I don't know how your father must have terrified you!

EDWIN: He didn't terrify me!

MARY ANN: Are you sure?

EDWIN: Yes. Mother—I've decided that I'm going to be an actor.

MARY ANN: An actor?

EDWIN: Yes.

MARY ANN: Well...I guess he didn't terrify you, did he?

EDWIN: I guess not.

MARY ANN: Well, be a good one. Hear? Will you promise me to be a good one?

EDWIN: I'll be a good one. He's already sent me on, you know.

MARY ANN: He has?

EDWIN: Yes. As Henry the fifth, one night in New Orleans.

MARY ANN: How did you do?

EDWIN: How do you think I did?

MARY ANN: Did you do well?

EDWIN: Mother, we wouldn't be having all this trouble if I hadn't!

MARY ANN: You mean he wouldn't have been so silent for these past few days.

EDWIN: That's right.

MARY ANN: No, he probably wouldn't.

EDWIN: Mother, I wish you could have been there. If you could just have heard the applause—

MARY ANN: Did they love you?

EDWIN: Yes! They loved me.

MARY ANN: Well, that's not surprising, Edwin, nobody could help loving you.

EDWIN: No, you don't understand! They loved my acting!

MARY ANN: All right, they loved your acting! I believe you. I wish I could have been there.

EDWIN: Do you know Henry V?

MARY ANN: Is that the king?

EDWIN: Yes, King of England.

MARY ANN: Oh, yes, the one who marries the French girl, I know him.

EDWIN: Yes, and leads his soldiers into battle— "You, good yeoman!"—

MARY ANN: Go on.

EDWIN: "And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not;
For there is none of you so mean and base
That hath not noble justre in your eyes!"

MARY ANN: Oh!—

EDWIN: "I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot;
Follow your spirit; and upon this charge
Cry 'God for Harry! England and Saint George!"

MARY ANN: Why, that's just delightful! (she applauds)

EDWIN: Well, it won the battle.

MARY ANN: I love acting...

EDWIN: (surprised) You do?

MARY ANN: You know, the first time I ever saw your father he was acting.

EDWIN : Was he? Which part?

MARY ANN: It was King Lear.

EDWIN: Oh, yes! I know his King Lear. (in a loud, cracked voice) "Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption!"

MARY ANN: That's the one! Yes, Edwin, start with the younger parts.

EDWIN: I know. I'm sixteen, you don't need to tell me. I've

heard nothing else for—

MARY ANN: Oh, go on, now. Dear me, that's the last piece of motherly advice I'll ever give. But, anyway, I saw him play King Lear, and Good Lord but I was struck with it. I was so struck with it I went on back to see him after it was over.

EDWIN: You did?

MARY ANN: All alone?

MARY ANN: Yes! I went on back to see him, and, Edwin— I didn't believe it. The theatre was almost empty—

EDWIN: Yes?

MARY ANN: —and yet he looked as if he hadn't moved since he'd gone back into that little room. There he was, there your father was—he'd given all the fire that was in him to that old, deserted king and now that it was over there was no one left that he could give the embers to...

EDWIN: And what did you do?

MARY ANN: I watched him for a while—I don't know how long—and finally I asked him, "Are you really that poor old man?"

EDWIN: You did?

MARY ANN: Yes! The silliest thing—

EDWIN: And what did he say?

MARY ANN: Edwin, he looked at me, and it's the only time I've ever seen your father cry. The tears were pouring down those powdered cheeks of his, and finally he said, "I don't know!"

EDWIN: "I don't know?!"

MARY ANN: That's what he said! And we were married! And after all my mother told me about courtship, I said "Are you really that poor old man?" he said "I don't know!," and we were married! Oh, Junius!
(Suddenly she starts inside)
Junius? Do you remember that?

ASIA: (coming out to meet her) I think he's asleep, mother.

MARY ANN: Oh. Asia...

ASIA: I think he's asleep.

MARY ANN: Yes, dear. Thank you for waiting up, you can go to bed now.

AISA: Good night, mother.

MARY ANN: Good night.
(ASIA leaves)
And we were married...

EDWIN: (still outside) Then why does he say he wants to let us go?

MARY ANN: What?

EDWIN: (louder) Why does he promise you we'll none of us be actors?

MARY ANN: How should I know, Edwin? We were married, and that's when the promised began.

EDWIN: Why shouldn't we be actors?

MARY ANN: Edwin, you can be a tinkler's apprentice as far as I'm concerned, just so you're happy! You should know that!

EDWIN: Well, then, you shouldn't let him keep on promising you—

MARY ANN: Good Lord, Edwin, do you think I could stop him?

EDWIN: But, mother, you should see what it's doing to him!—

MARY ANN: Edwin, I don't want to hear about it! For seventeen years I've lived with these unspoken promises of his! I've watched them eating him away, I've watched his eyes cloud over with the pain of hoping—hoping for the day I never once expected of him!

EDWIN: Mother—

MARY ANN: Edwin, every time he comes back home, he tells me "Farmer Booth is back!" "Farmer Booth is back!" I never asked him to be Farmer Booth! I never asked anything of him or any of his children but his eyes keep clouding over with those promises until he just can't see me any more! He can't see me, Edwin! And it's getting so I can't see him, either...

EDWIN: (embarrassed) It's all right, mother, really it is. Stop crying, now.

MARY ANN: I'm not crying.

EDWIN: Mother, it's all right to cry.

MARY ANN: I'm not crying! I never cry, Edwin, I've never cried in all my life.

EDWIN: It's all right, mother! Even I cry sometimes!

MARY ANN: Oh, I know, everybody cries! Junius cries! I'm the only one around who doesn't cry, and what do I do?
(begins to laugh in spite of herself)

I just sit around and wait for Junius to come home and tell me "Farmer Booth is back!"

EDWIN: Well, it's a good thing somebody does.

MARY ANN: Thank you, dear.

EDWIN: I mean it. It's a good thing somebody does, I don't know where we'd be—

MARY ANN: Thank you.

(Music in, as if the early evening singing of a couple of servants somewhere around the farm were beginning to be heard) You know, I think I'll fix some coffee, Edwin. Junius should be waking up soon, and I think it's time you had some, because it's the very best in Harford County—

EDWIN: Would you fix me some?

MARY ANN: I said I would. I will!

(And she gets into a song, positive and emotional, about the joys of doing things around the house, the idea always being that half the joy is doing them for Junius. The song ends, and:)

EDWIN: Will you fix me the coffee?

MARY ANN: Right this minute.

EDWIN: Thank you.

MARY ANN: And, Edwin—I'm convinced that everything will be all right. When he wakes up!—

EDWIN: Yes. I'm sure it will.

MARY ANN: I'll get the coffee.

(She goes out. Now EDWIN is restless, and, as Asia's theme comes up in the orchestra, he wanders out on to the porch, just as ADELAIDE and RICHARD come quietly into the yard. They see EDWIN. He sees them. The music stops.)

EDWIN: Hello.

ADELAIDE: Hello.

EDWIN: May I help you?

ADELAIDE: Yes. I'd like to speak with Mr. Booth.

EDWIN: I'm sorry, he's sleeping.

ADELAIDE: Could you wake him up?

EDWIN: No, I'm afraid I can't.

ADELAIDE: Why not?

EDWIN: He's not well.

ADELAIDE: Oh, he's unwell. How sad.

EDWIN: Yes. Yes, it is.

RICHARD: We'd like to see him anyway, if we might. It's rather urgent.

EDWIN: Could you come back tomorrow?

ADELAIDE: No.

EDWIN: The next day.

ADELAIDE: No.

RICHARD: We've come a very long way.

EDWIN: Oh. Well, perhaps I can help you.

ADELAIDE: I hope so.

EDWIN: My name is Edwin.

ADELAIDE: Edwin Booth.

EDWIN: Yes.

ADELAIDE: (savoring the name) Edwin --- Booth.

EDWIN: You've heard of me?

ADELAIDE: Oh, yes.

EDWIN: In New Orleans, I imagine--

ADELAIDE: From New Orleans.

EDWIN: Edwin Booth, now--

ADELAIDE: Edwin Booth it was!

EDWIN: Well, that's me.

ADELAIDE: Well. I've come to the right place, haven't I?

EDWIN: I guess you have. What can I do for you?

ADELAIDE: This is my son, Richard.

EDWIN: How do you do?

RICHARD: How do you do?

ADELAIDE: And my name is Adelaide. Now, if you were to show us indoors, perhaps we might sit and wait for Mr. Booth.....
(she sees EDWIN looking at her) What's the matter?

EDWIN: Adelaide?

ADELAIDE: Yes. Why?

EDWIN: I think I've **heard** my father speak of you.

ADELAIDE: Oh, really? What did he say?

EDWIN: Oh, nothing!

ADELAIDE: I see. Well, Dickie, our reputation proceeds us.

RICHARD: Do you know anything about the nature of our visit?

EDWIN: No. What should I know?

RICHARD: Mother?--

ADELAIDE: (who has been meanwhile fishing in her purse) Have you brothers and sisters, Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes.

ADELAIDE: All of them younger than you?

EDWIN: All but one, yes.

ADELAIDE: All but one. Well, I've presents for them. Could I see them?

EDWIN: What are the presents?

ADELAIDE: Candy sticks I bought in Baltimore. (She has produced them from her purse.) One for each of you. Now, call them!

EDWIN: Give them to me, I'll see that they get them.

ADELAIDE: Edwin, there's nothing to be afraid of. They're wrapped, and they were wrapped when I bought them, now there's not a thing I could have done to them.

EDWIN: I believe you.

ADELAIDE: Then why don't you call them so that I can see them?

ADELAIDE: ma'am--who are you?

ADELAIDE: (replaces the candy sticks in her purse) I thought you knew, Edwin.

EDWIN: I never said I knew.

ADELAIDE: I thought you did.

RICHARD: You said that Mr. Booth had spoken of here.

EDWIN: He only mentioned her name, nothing more. I told you that.

ADELAIDE: When was this?

EDWIN: When was this I told you?

ADELAIDE: When was this you heard him speak my name?

EDWIN: I--I don't remember.

ADELAIDE: Yes, you do.

EDWIN: Excuse me, but I don't remember.

ADELAIDE: Edwin, I'm quite sure my name is not included in the ordinary conversation of your supper-table. The circumstances under which he spoke my name can only have been--memorable. I think you're lying to me.

RICHARD: Mother--

ADELAIDE: Now, I've crossed an ocean to speak with Mr. Booth. I've even tried to bring some dandy for his children. I think I deserve better treatment than this.

EDWIN: Ma'am, I'm not lying to you.

ADELAIDE: No, probably you're not, come to think of it! For all I know, my name is always on his lips and you're so used to seeing him in the state that puts it there, that you don't even listen any more!

EDWIN: What state are you talking about?

ADELAIDE: A state of drunkenness, Edwin, you know what I'm talking about.

EDWIN: What?--

ADELAIDE: Oh, Edwin, child, you're Junius' son, don't play the innocent!

RICHARD: Mother, let's just go inside by ourselves--

EDWIN: No! Now, my father is no drunkard, and you get that out of your head right now! And if you want the truth about the time I heard him mentioning your name, it was one night he was so sick and terrified he couldn't even stand up!--

RICHARD: Look you have no right to talk to her that way!

EDWIN: (right over him) ~~He~~ He couldn't stand up! He tried to kiss some whore on the sidewalk because he thought she was you! Whoever you are.....And then her gentleman friend tried to pick a fight with him! This scum-of-the-earth tried to pick a fight with my father in a gutter in the middle of the night, and all because of you! Because he was so tired and frightened and disgusted that the only woman he could think of was you!

RICHARD: Mother--

ADELAIDE: That's quite enough, Edwin.

EDWIN: So don't you think that you can stand in our front yard and call my father a drunkard. I'll have you arrested for trespassing. I'll have you put in jail.

RICHARD: You call us trespassers.

EDWIN: Yes. Now, will you leave?

RICHARD: Mother, there's no point waiting any longer.

ADELAIDE: Yes, there is, Dickie.

EDWIN: Waiting longer for what? I asked you to leave.

RICHARD: I'll show you. (He goes for his briefcase.)

ADELAIDE: Dickie!

EDWIN: (Genuinely uneasy for the first time) What is this?

RICHARD: Mother, it's late.

ADELAIDE: I know it's late. Be so kind as not to mention it again, Edwin?

EDWIN: Yes?

ADELAIDE: Well...I'm not doing very well tonight, am I?

EDWIN: No, you're not.

ADELAIDE: You see, I didn't realize you felt so deeply about Mr. Booth.

EDWIN: Well, I do.

ADELAIDE: Why, Edwin, you sound frightened. That isn't like you.

EDWIN: All I've ever asked of you is that you tell me who you are.

ADELAIDE: You said it yourself, child, I'm a trespasser. Now, why don't we leave it at that--for the time being. How old are you?

EDWIN: Twenty.

ADELAIDE: No, you're not.

EDWIN: Sixteen.

ADELAIDE: That's better. Sixteen. And yet there you were --out in some frontier gutter in the middle of the night with your father--

EDWIN: I was on the road with him.

ADELAIDE: Were you, on the road? Why, Edwin; --you're going to be an actor, aren't you?

EDWIN: Yes.

ADELAIDE: Well. Well, well, well. You know I always said to Junius that one day a son of his would be an actor. Oh, he told me I was wrong, of course--he denied it passionately!--but as it turns out I was right. The laugh is on Junius.

EDWIN: Does it surprise you?

ADELAIDE: That the laugh is on Junius? Yes, that always surprises me.

EDWIN: No, that I'm going to be an actor.

ADELAIDE: Oh. Well, but of course it does! Why shouldn't it surprise me?

EDWIN: But I thought you said you'd heard of me in New Orleans .

ADELAIDE: Did I say that?

RICHARD: You said you'd heard of him from New Orleans, Mother.

EDWIN: From New Orleans?

ADELAIDE: (defensively) Yes, I said that.

EDWIN: When?

ADELAIDE: (she is breaking away to the porch about now) When was it, Dickie?

RICHARD: Fortnight, almost exactly.

EDWIN: Fortnight. Two weeks. Two weeks ago you got a letter from New Orleans--

ADELAIDE: (having reached it) I like this porch, Edwin. At least I think I like it. It's rather dark up here.

EDWIN: I'd rather you came back tomorrow, ma'am. Tomorrow or the next day, when my father can talk to you alone.

ADELAIDE: Why, Edwin--

EDWIN: Please. My father was the one who sent for you, he's the one you'll have to speak to.

ADELAIDE: Edwin, are you sending us away?

EDWIN: Yes.

ADELAIDE: But that's rude! Hasn't anyone taught you manners, child? I think that's unforgiveable, don't you, Dickie?

RICHARD: Yes, I do. I'm going to get out the papers now, mother, I won't stand here and be humiliated.

EDWIN: What papers?

ADELAIDE: No, Dickie. Don't you do that to me.

EDWIN: (to her) Tell me what papers!

ADELAIDE: Yes--I like this porch. I like the whole piece of property, it's a good piece. I just don't see how your father ever managed it.

EDWIN: I'll tell you how he managed it! He took this entire house and rolled it four whole miles across the countryside until he found the place he wanted for us--

ADELAIDE: He did?

EDWIN: Yes--practically unaided! His whole life he built up here completely out of nothing!

ADELAIDE: Out of nothing--when he brought his bride to Maryland?

EDWIN: No, after that. This was for his wife and children both! He didn't do this until after Asia was born--

ADELAIDE: Asia?

EDWIN: Yes.

ADELAIDE: You have a sister name Asia? Dickie, did you heard that? Junius finally had his little girl named Asia!

EDWIN: Now, I want to see those papers!

ADELAIDE: I think that we should offer up a little celebration, Dickie! A celebration to the gods! Junius finally had his little girl named Asia!

RICHARD: Mother, listen now. You promised me in England when I booked us passage that we wouldn't get involved this deeply. Now, there's no reason for it, mother. This is a legal matter, and if we treat it like a legal matter, then we won't get hurt. Now, I'm going to show Edwin those papers--

EDWIN: I want to see them.

ADELAIDE: Dickie is a lawyer, Edwin. Can you imagine that?

EDWIN: Why shouldn't I?

ADELAIDE: But a lawyer! All the things he could have been and he's a lawyer!

RICHARD: It's a good thing for you that I am, mother.'

ADELAIDE: But, Edwin, can you imagine it?--

EDWIN: Of course I can! Why shouldn't I?

ADELAIDE: A son of Junius! -- and a lawyer...

(She stops and falter. RICHARD begins to put the papers back in his briefcase)

EDWIN: No...

RICHARD: Thank you, mother. You've saved me a good deal of painful explanation.

ADELAIDE: But if only your father had listened to me, Edwin. I told him that one day a son of his would be an actor.

EDWIN: Gen away from me.

ADELAIDE: Edwin, are you sending us away? I thought I told you that those weren't the manners I wpected from a son of Junius'?

EDWIN: Get away.

ADELAIDE: I wish you wouldn't say that. I wish you wouldn't adopt that tone. That's not the tone that you'd adopt with your mother.

EDWIN: You're not my mother.

ADELAIDE: No, I'm not, dear, but perhaps I should have been. Now, I'd like to speak to your father.

RICHARD: Mother, we'd better go back to Baltimore. You're very tired and you're in no condition to speak to him now.

ADELAIDE: I'd like to speak to your father, Edwin.

EDWIN: I wouldn't let you see him if my life depended on it.

ADELAIDE: But--you can't speak to me that way! I'm not accustomed to being spoken to that way! I'm his wife!

EDWIN: I don't believe you!

ADELAIDE: But he sent for me, from New Orleans! I have the letter here, its from New Orleans two weeks ago --

(She produces it)

EDWIN: I don't believe you!

ADELAIDE: But he did -- he...

(She fumbles to re-open it, but stops and looks around)

What a lovely porch he built for you, Edwin. Gracious, what a lovely farm. You know I wasn't expecting it. Your father and I never lived on anything like this, but then we lived completely on the wing...

EDWIN: What do you mean?

ADELAIDE: That's why he never divorced me, Edwin! Any other of the men I knew would have divorced me, but not your father... He was on the road when he entered my life, and on the road when he left it...and I think that that was why I loved him.

EDWIN: Where did you meet him?

ADELAIDE: In Brussels. Why, Edwin -- I was a daughter of the Delannovs. He must have mentioned the Delannovs.

EDWIN: No.

ADELAIDE: But I'm sure of it, he must have. You must not have heard him, that's all. I was a daughter of the Delannovs of Brussels, and that is how it was I first laid eyes on Junius Brutus Booth.

(Very quietly, a tired and faded waltz rhythm is heard in the orchestra. EDWIN watches with unwilling but increasing fascination as she gradually begins to respond to it and to create almost a world of her own)

This was after his attempt to be a lawyer. It was

When he was still the most beautiful young actor on the circuit. He was touring through the Low Countries with those beautiful young friends of his and when they came to Brussels he was quartered at the home of Meadame Delannov. I was a daughter of the Delannovs. I was twenty-two, and Madame Delannov was worried because no one had yet looked at me the way a daughter of the Delannovs should be looked at by the time she reaches the ripe old age of twenty-two. So that was all he had to do, Edwin! Your father happened on the scene and -- looked at me!

(The music is gradually gathering fullness, growing less and less tired and faded, as if slowly emerging from the past)

Madame Delannov was horrified! She told me it was one thing to display these actors to our guests but quite another to be sleeping with them. (laughs) And she was right. But I told Madame Delannov she was in no position to complain, someone was looking at me, and I ran away with Junius Brutus Booth, dancing all the way through Belgium and finally to England --

(the music slows for a moment)

--where we stopped dancing long enough one day to be married.

(she laughs, the music picks up again, and she glides into song)

I shall dance with you

Til the waltz is through
And the last sweet note is gone
I shall hold you near
Til the larks appear
And the night has turned to dawn

While the moon is high
In the velvet sky
I shall cling to you--and then
When the sky is clear
I shall leave you, dear
And we'll never waltz again

Music surrounds us
Color confounds us
Leaving the floor we take to flight
Live for the minute
Magic is in it
I am your lover--just tonight

Y ou are a stranger
 There is no danger
 Soon I must go and fade from sight
 But til I leave you
 I shan't deceive you
 I shall be faithful -- just tonight

I cannot take the chance with you
 And kiss you when I dance with you
 For I might find romance with you
 My heart must be ever my own
 While stars shine you may stay with me
 To hold me and to sway with me
 But you shan't see the day with me
 The morning will find me al one...

I shall dance with you
 Til the waltz is through
 And the last sweet note is gone
 I shall hold you near
 Til the larks appear
 And the night turns into dawn

While the moon is high
 In the velvet sky
 I shall cling to you--and then
 When the sky is clear
 I shall leave you, dear
 And we'll never waltz again...

(Now the orchestra begins to play the minor-key trio of the waltz again, a little more slowly and quietly, and ADELAIDE turns to EDWIN. Lost and completely defenseless to her memories, she goes to him as the music plays and quietly but desparately embraces him. Then, as the music begins to pull out of the trio into the major melody again, she pulls away from him and flings herself into it once more:)

Music surround us
 Color confounds us
 Leaving the floor we take to flight
 Live for the minute
 Magic is in it
 I am your lover--just tonight

Y ou are a stranger
 There is no danger
 Soon I must go and fade from sight
 But til I leave you
 I shan't deceive you
 I shall be faithful--just tonight!

(The waltz finishes off in grand style)

EDWIN: What are you going to do?

ADELAIDE: Do you believe me now, Edwin

EDWIN: Yes.

ADELAIDE: Because it's true.

EDWIN: Are you going to press your claim?

ADELAIDE: It's very late, Edwin. I think that we'll go back to Baltimore.

EDWIN: Well, why don't you take him?! He's yours for the taking.!

ADELAIDE: I have one claim to your father, Edwin. I waited thirty year with it, and now I crossed the ocean with it. And this one claim I have to him is -- legal. Which is rather ridiculous when you stop to consider your father. Are we ready, Dickie?

RICHARD: Anytime you want to go, mother.

EDWIN: I suppose I should ~~thank~~ you for this.

ADELAIDE: No,. Just never tell him that we came. Dickie ?

(she is ready to go)

RICHARD: Yes.

ADELAIDE (going out): Good-bye, Edwin.

EDWIN: Good-bye.

(She leaves with RICHARD. EDWIN, hurt and furious, turns to see MARY ANN standing on the porch.)

From Adelaide's exit. EDWIN sees MARY ANN on the porch.

EDWIN: Mother...

MARY ANN: Hush, Edwin. Hush, now.

EDWIN: Oh Mother!..Why did you have to hear that?

MARY ANN: Just be quiet, dear.

EDWIN: Mother, we don't even belong to him.

MARY ANN: Now, she didn't say that.

EDWIN: Yes, she did. We don't even belong to him any more.

MARY ANN: Edwin, don't be silly...

EDWIN: I'm going to wake him up.

MARY ANN: No, you're not. Please...

EDWIN: I want to wake him up and tell him what I think of him.

MARY ANN: Edwin, please...let him rest...

EDWIN: I will not let him rest. For six months I've been trying to let him rest and make things easy for him, and now look what he does. Look what he does to all of us!

MARY ANN: Edwin, I don't want him troubled!

EDWIN: I want him to suffer!

MARY ANN: Then you want me to suffer. Do you want me to suffer?

EDWIN: NO!

MARY ANN: The don't call your father. Besides--I'd rather you didn't wake him because I'm not quite ready to see him yet.

EDWIN: Mother, of course you are.

MARY ANN: Edwin, what will I say to him? I can't think of one word.

EDWIN: Just tell him you're going to leave, it's as simple as that.

MARY ANN: No, it's not. To begin with, I'm not going to leave him so there's no point saying that. But I don't know what I can say. My Lord, Edwin, it's always been hard enough to talk to him, and always before there were certain--understandings that we had made so it didn't really matter whether we talked or not. But now--well, the fact is, I've never been anyone's-mistress before, and -- (SHE BEGINS TO LAUGH)-- Oh dear, that's funny. I'm just afraid I think that's

XX

very funny. Oh, if my mother could see me now! ~~You know, she always told me, "Mary Ann, you've got to take the bitter with the sweet in this life," well/~~ I'm not sure she never counted on anything like this. ~~W~~You've got to take the bitter with the sweet, Mary!" Ha, poor mother, thank the Lord for her sake she's dead and buried!

EDWIN: Mother, why don't you leave him?

MARY ANN: Edwin, where would I go? No, all I need is something to be able to say to his face when I see him, that's all I'm asking--and I'll be all right.

EDWIN: But it's causing you nothing but pain!

MARY ANN: Pain! I've had seven children, Edwin, and two of them died, my Lord, I can stand a little pain! You see-- there's got to come a time when you stop callin' it pain. There's got to come a time.... Oh look at the evening. Will you look at this lovely evening.?

EDWIN: Oh, mother, don't do that.

MARY ANN: Look at the evening Edwin, take a deep breath and smell it. You know, I don't think it was in Asia where God's first children walked. I think it was right here in Maryland ~~kk~~, right here in Hartford County. I think that God created Man just fifteen miles outside of Baltimore. Oh listen to me, I'm not only silly, but I'm sacrilegous. Oh mother, mother--if you're looking at me now you'll just have to turn away--forgive me, but you'll have to turn away, because nothing I do from now on is going to make you very happy...(MUSIC IN) Not a thing I do. (AND SHE SINGS THE LAST PART OF HER SONG, EMPHATICALLY AS SHE FINISHES, BCOTH ENTERS)

Edwin: Father--

BCOTH: What is it? Edwin? Was she here?

EDWIN: Yes.

BCOTH: And now she's gone already?

EDWIN: Yes.

BCOTH: Do you believe me now?

EDWIN: What is there to believe?

BCOTH: There's nothing to believe, boy. You want no part of Mr. Booth and it's a good thing now you know it.

EDWIN: I know it.

BCOTH: Mary?--

EDWIN: Stay away from her, father.

EDWIN: Stay away from her, father.

~~XXXX~~ MARY ANN: Edwin, be quiet.

BOOTH: Mary?

MARY ANN: (averted from him) Yes, Junius?

BOOTH: No more promises you need to believe now, Mary. No more promises. Mary? (She doesn't answer) Will you say something, Mary?

EDWIN: What do you expect her to say?

BOOTH: Will you say something?

(MARY ANN TURNS TO HIM)

MARY ANN: I love you, Junius.

(They embrace)

EDWIN: Father? Whe you go out again, I'm going with you.

MARY ANN: There, Junius, do you hear that? He's going with you.

BOOTH: I want to stay home with you, Mary. I want to stay home and take care of you.

MARY ANN: No, you don't, Junius. Now, I said I loved you, and I meant it, Seventeen years and I'm used to loving you. And loving you doesn't mean having you home, because you couldn't stay home if your life depended on it. Now, you go on, Junius. Good Lord, they must be shouting for you somewhere! All I ask is that you keep expecting to find me here when you get back. Because I'll be here. I've gotten used to it. Will you expect me?

BOOTH: I'll expect you.

MARY ANN: Good, now good night.

BOOTH: Good night, Mary.

MARY ANN: Good night, Edwin, you be careful now. You hear me?

EDWIN: Good night, mother.

MARY ANN: Don't stay out too late, either one of you.
(And she hurries into the house)

BOOTH: I won't. I tried to let her go.

(PERCUSSIVE ~~XXXX~~ "Seeing the Elephant" r~~y~~thm under soft)

EDWIN: How soon are we leaving, father?

BOOTH: Edwin, you don't have to go.

EDWIN: Father, I know I don't have to. And if you think that I'm going with you just to follow you through every waterfront saloon that you can go to, you're mistaken. I'm coming because I want to use your name. I've got to think of myself now, and the Booth name should be able to do a lot for me. After all, it isn't what it is, it's what it stands for, isn't that right, father? So I'm going with you, and I can't think of any way that you can stop me.

BOOTH: I'm not stopping you. Come along, I'll do what I can for you. Do you want to see the elephant?

EDWIN: What?

BOOTH: That's what they're doing, Edwin, that's what all the prospectors are doing! They're selling everything they own back East and traveling west in search of gold!

(The percussive "Seeing the Elephant" rhythm is getting louder)
And when they lose their shirts, they call it seeing the elephant! Well, I see no reason why we actors can't see elephants as clearly as the next man! What do you say, Edwin? You want to come?

EDWIN: (Excited) Father, you mean?--

BOOTH: That's what I mean boy! Let's go to California!

(And as the percussive rhythm swells up into song a violently lighted curtain falls behind them. Actors, actresses, miners rush out and swirl around them, and they are in California.)

II-iv-1

SCENE 4: California. First we are in front of a curtain where a spirited rendition of "Seeing the Elephant" is going on, surrounding EDWIN and BOOTH and involving ACTORS and MINERS. At the peak of this, the curtain rises, everybody clears and we are in a deserted warehouse in Sacramento, this room being made up almost entirely of flats, old posters, trunks, etc. that the actors are storing. Prominently displayed for this scene is a poster on which the words "Booth and Son" are discernible. After the singing ends, ~~XX~~ the shouting and shooting off-stage continue, diminishing sharply with the percussive orchestral rhythm as the dialogue begins. Going into the scene we see BOOTH setting up a scene, as EDWIN followed by PAGE and SPEARS prepare to make a sweeping entrance. MRS HILL and JENNY JOANNE are prompting.

BOOTH: Act Five, Scene Three, Edwin, Richard The Third. Enter Richmond Sir William and Oxford.

EDWIN: (having advanced) The weary sun hath made a golden set
And, by the bright track of his fiery car,
Gives token of a joyous day---

MRS. HILL and JENNY JOANNE: o Goodly day!

EDWIN: Gives a signal of a goodly day tomorrow.
Sir William Brandon----

(He indicates PAGE, who half-completes a bow, when
BOOTH interrupts:)

BOOTH: Edwin!

EDWIN: What is it, father?

BOOTH: Show me.

EDWIN: Show you what?

BOOTH: Show me that the weary sun gives promise of a goodly day tomorrow!

EDWIN: Forgive me, father, I'm not quite sure what you mean.

BOOTH: Show me! Thundering Judas, boy, you are the Earl of Richmond addressing his subordinates. Tomorrow you expect them to defeat the king in battle! Inspire them, God damn it!

SPEARS: He means a gesture, Edwin. You know--(he stretches)
"The weary sun hath made a golden set" (and yawns)

EDWIN: All right.
(He goes into it again, illustrating almost every noun with a gesture, and affecting an attitude of almost complete weariness)

"The weary sun hath made a golden set
 And by the bright track of his fiery car
 Gives signal of a good--joy--goodd-What is it?"

MRS. HILL and JENNY JOANNE: (enjoying it throughly) Goodly!

EDWIN: Goodly day tomorrow. Sir Willaim Brandon---
 (PAGE is again ready to bow, and again half-completes it
 when EDWIN interrupts:)
 Is that better?

PAGE: Doesn't anyone want to see me bow?

SPEARS: We've seen you bow, Page, we know you can do it.

BOOTH: Edwin.

EDWIN: Yes?

BOOTH: Do you consider Richmond a good leader?

EDWIN: Of course I do.

BOOTH: Then do you think it probable he would address his troops
 upon the evd of battle as if a croaking doom awaited them?

EDWIN: I wasn't doing that,father. If you'd have listened---

BOOTH: I listened! And all I heard was that poor old sun had
 tragically and ominously set behind the hills.

EDWIN: But father, it says the "Weary sun!"

BOOTH: We know the sun is weary, Edwin. What we want to k/n~~o~~w
 is that its set was golden.

("Ooohs and Aaahs"from the ACTORS)

SPEARS: The man's a genius, friends. That's all there/~~s~~ is to it,
 the man's a genius.

JENNY JOANNE: Aren't you thrilled, Edwin? (no answer) Edwin?

PAGE: Let's get on with the scene, Edwin! I have yet to show you
 my Sir William Brandon.

EDWIN: You go on, I don't think I'll be rehearsing any more tonight.

MRS. HILL: What? Junius, is he sick?

BOOTH: I don't think he's feelingwell, madam.

SPEARS: Hey, what is this now, you quitting on us? That's not
 like the Edwin Booth I know.

EDWIN: Well, Mr. Spears, I'm not the Edwin Booth you know, so stop

EDWIN: (con't) expecting me to sound like it.

BOOTH: Edwin!

EDWIN: Excuse me!

SPEARS: That's all right, Junius, that's all right.....

BOOTH: Edwin, I'd be glad to see you do it again, if you'd care to try--

EDWIN: No thank you, father, I'm going out.

BOOTH: Very well--

(Edwin starts to go, but suddenly the violence outside flar@s up. A few shots are heard, followed by raucous laughter, and we hear some of the miners singing "seeing the Elephant".)

Goddamn those prospectors! It's not safe in the street tonight! Why have they locked us out of the theatre? I want an explanation!

SPEARS: Now, Junius, let's be fair. Would you keep a theatre open on a night like this?

BOOTH: Mr. Spears, I do not like being packed off to rehearse in a deserted warehouse!

JENNY JOANNE: It's this depression, that's what it is. Everyone's lost everything that they came out with and they're panicky!

MRS. HILL: Well, I see no excuse for a depression! Two weeks ago this was a boom town, a perfectly civilized boom town!--

SPEARS: Mother, that was two weeks ago, now let's be fair!

MRS. HILL: Mr. Spears, I'm perfectly willing to be fair to California if California will be fair to me!

PAGE: People! Just be thankful that we're not prospectors. IT's at times like these I realize how grateful I am to be in one of the stabler professions!

(Another barrage of gunshots. MRS. HILL screams. This time the shots are followed by comparative quiet. EDWIN who has been removed from the others during all the noise, now turns to his father)

EDWIN: Father? I have something to tell you.

BOOTH: Yes? What is it, boy?

EDWIN: You know Mr. Waller?--the man who's organizing the tour up through the mining camps?

BOOTH: Yes. What about him?

EDWIN: Well, he's asked me to go with him, and I think I'm going to.

BOOTH: Edwin, I don't think you should.

EDWIN: Well I'm sorry you don't. But you see, it's has been offered to me and I don't think I can afford to pass it up.

MRS. HILL: Junius, you musn't let him.

BOOTH: Edwin, listen to reason! It's nearly December, boy. By the time you get through three engagements you'd be snowbound! You let Mr. Waller get this expedition up without you---

EDWIN: He won't get it up without me, father. He wants a young actor with a name.

BOOTH: Ah! So our appearances as "Booth and Son" have worked their charms already.

EDWIN: Yes. We can forget about them now.

BOOTH: Do you think you're ready?

EDWIN: I hipe so. I'll be leaving in a couple of days.

BOOTH: Well, good luck!

MRS. HILL: But we can't let him do this! Mr. Page!

PAGE: Edwin, I don't think this is wise at all. Neither Mrs. Hill or Mr. Spears or I would ever have considered it---

EDWIN: I know that, Mr. Page---

SPEARS: Come on, Page, let me handle this---

PAGE: Did you hear me, Edwin? We none of us at your age would have ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ thought of going on such an expedition---

EDWIN: No, you wouldn't have! And look what's happened to you!

BOOTH: Edwin, be careful---

EDWIN: Careful of what?

(And now, subdued at first, another spasm of shouting and shooting begins to build. MRS. HILL nad JENNY JOANNE scream as PAGE and SPEARS stand stung by EDWIN'S remark. Edwin

reacts to the build of the noise outside:)

EDWIN: Why should I be careful? I'm sick of being careful, father, I've seen what it does to people! You call this the land of the left behind, well I'm not going to be left behind! I'm going out with Mr. Waller, and it's going to be my tour! It's going to be my tour.

(The shooting has dwindled down. Everyone stands looking at EDWIN)

It's going to be all mine and...

(He feels the hopelessness of trying to say anything to them and goes over to sit down by himself)

BOOTH: (to the ACTORS:) My Apologies.

SPEARS: Aw, what the hell, Junius, the boy was joking.

BOOTH: Of course, sir.

PAGE: I think perhaps we should be saying good night.

BOOTH: Thank you, Mr. Page. Good night, friends.

PAGE: Come along, Jenny Joanne.

JENNY JOANNE: (she is timidly approaching EDWIN) Edwin?

MRS. HILL: Junius, I don't like the sound of it.

BOOTH: Nor do I, Mrs. Hill.

MRS. HILL: You've got to be firm with him, Junius. Will you promise to be firm?

BOOTH: I shall be reminiscent of the Emperor Augustus.

MRS. HILL: Oh, I wish I could stay to see it! But no, mother Hill, you musn't meddle. Jenny, come away now!

PAGE: Jenny?

JENNY JOANNE: (about EDWIN) He won't even answer me.

PAGE: Mr. Booth will take care of it. Come along now.
(Reluctantly, she crosses to him)

MRS. HILL: Are you coming Mr. Spears?

SPEARS: Sure, the boy was joking, and even if he wasn't he was right. I'll admit it. I haven't cut the mustard on the stage like some of them but what the hell? Hell, Edwin, like the little fella with no feet once said, "I'm not kicking."

(He waits for a response. EDWIN just looks at him)

MRS. HILL (with sudden compassion for him) Oh, Mr. Spears.
Come on, duck, it's time to go to sleep.

SPEARS: He's a good boy, Junius.

BOOTH: I know it, sir.

SPEARS: Yes, he's a good boy. It's been a pleasure to---to
help him along---(he falters) I'm coming, mother.

(They start to go off)

ACTORS: Good night!

BOOTH: Good night, friends.

(They are off. BOOTH is alone with EDWIN)

BOOTH: Edwin?

Edwin: Yes?

BOOTH: Well, This is the first time the two of us have been together like this since we left the farm.

EDWIN: So it is.

BOOTH: Do you like California?

Edwin: Well, I'll say this for it. It's the one place I've been that's everything they say it is.

BOOTH: It's the land of the left behind, boy.

EDWIN: I mean it's noisy.

BOOTH: I imagine it's even worse than this up in the mining towns.

Edwin: Yes, I imagine it is.

BOOTH: Edwin--

EDWIN: Father, I'm going on that tour. Now, I've made up my mind to it, don't try to stop me.

BOOTH: Edwin, I know better than to try to stop you from doing anything. Oh, I admit, I've tried. I've tried to keep you out of every waterfront saloon on the East Coast. I've tried to get you to get to sleep at night, instead of waiting for me to burn myself out in the light of early morning. But you've never obeyed me!

EDWIN: And I'm proud of it! I'm proud of that.

BOOTH: Of course you're proud of it. Who wouldn't be? But now you say you're feeling left behind.

EDWIN: I said I don't intend to feel that way!

BOOTH: Is the ground beginning to slip away from underneath your feet, Edwin?

Edwin: Well, what if it is?

BOOTH: Edwin, it's been moving out from under me for so long that I can't even recollect a time when it was still. It must have been, once, but I can't remember. And I've tried! I've kept the only woman that I ever loved a prisoner and I've killed another one who loved me, trying, but still I can't remember. Now, try to believe me just this once, Edwin, just this once-- And don't let it carry you away.

EDWIN: Killed?

BOOTH: Yes.

EDWIN: Adelaide?

BOOTH: Yes.

EDWIN: Adelaide died?--

BOOTH She didn't die. She stopped living. Ah, Edwin, when I sent for Adelaide I thought she'd deign to grace our lives for just an instant, just long enough to show me in the light, before she resumed whatever waltz was ~~to~~ occupying her time in England. But I was wrong. Her son Richard writes that "all legal cāims are terminated."

(He reads that from a piece of letter-paper he has drawn from his pocket. EDWIN takes the paper, and reads with growing concern:)

EDWIN: "We did not book passage back to Englad, because she saw no reason to return there. We purchased a hotel room in Baltimore and immediately upon setteling into it, her vitality, for many years remarkable in a woman of her age, began to disappear. She would sit for hours by the window, disregarding~~m~~ my sugesstions that we take the air, all the time declaring that to lock upon the life of Baltimdre was a source of much amusement but that to breath its air would be-- unnatural to her. I respected her wishes, of course, and presently she bade me pull down the window shade, although she had no intentinn of moving from the chair. She sat in that chair motionless, as far as I could tell, for several days, and then I raised the window shade one afternoon to find her dead. All legal claims are hereby terminatēd. Your obedient servant, Richard Booth."

(He hands BOOTH back the letter)

That's why I'm going to be an actor!

BOOTH: Why?

EDWIN: Because --because you can't see an audience! You don't have to look them in the face, the way she had to look at me or mother had to look at ~~them~~ you! They can see you plain and clear but you don't have to look at them! All you have to look at is the beautiful--blackness!

(Suddenly all hell breaks loose outside. Shouting, yelling, drunken MINERS and ACTRESSES singing "Seeing the Elephant."
EDWIN clasps his hands to his ears.)

BOOTH: Edwin!

EDWIN: All you have to look at for as long as you live is that beautiful, beautiful blackness!

BOOTH: Edwin, listen to me.

EDWIN: Why the hell should I listen to you, father?

BOOTH: Edwin, I used to love that blackness, too. But, Edwin, listen to me now, you go to many theatres, in many towns, and there comes a time when all that blackness

comes a time when all the blacknesses grow--indistinguishable.

EDWIN: Father, I don't care. (The percussive "Seeing the Elephant" rhythm starts under)

BOOTH: You can't tell one blackness from another, and so you might as well be blind. So what do you do then? You start listening for the noises that fill up the blacknesses, but pretty soon there comes a time when all the noises sound alike! You listen frantically, but they won't tell you anything, not any more, and so you might as well be deaf!

EDWIN: You know, I might just like that--

BOOTH: Then, of course, there's your nose, your indispensable nose! You take a deep breath, and you know where you are in this profession. But even there, boy, even there--sometimes out in the wilderness you come into a town and even when you take a breath to smell it nothing--recognizable--comes out to answer you. Sometimes you breathe and--nothing happens, and then the ground begins to race along so fast your old, tired legs can hardly manage it, and all you want to do is just lie down and let it carry you.

EDWIN: While they clap for you all over--

BOOTH: Yes! while these audiences you never have to look at cheer you and applaud you for your struggles to get up!

EDWIN: Well, at least they applaud. That's all I asked for--

BOOTH: Yes, they applaud! They applaud you for your struggles to get up, but fall back down again, boy, and they still applaud! They don't care!

EDWIN: What do you mean, they don't care? They pay to see you, don't they? They sit on hard wooden benches--

BOOTH: Oh, Edwin, it's just to see your tired old soul exposed to them, that's all they're sitting on those wooden benches for!

EDWIN: No!

ACTRESSES AND MINERS: Hey, there's Mr. Booth in there! Mr. Booth!

(The ACTRESSES and MINERS are all outside, making a fierce racket, singing "Seeing the Elephant" at the top of their lungs. Occasionally one can see their figures darting around behind and among the bricabrac)

BOOTH: Yes! So get ready to rip open all your insides for them, boy, that's what they're howling for! They have come to see the great Booth naked!

(Hell continues to break loose all around. EDWIN:cowers)

EDWIN: Oh...I want to go home...I want to go home....

BOOTH: That's it, boy. Do you want to go to Maryland?

EDWIN: Yes! I'd give anything just to go back to our--to our--
What is it? --to our home away from home in Maryland. Yes,
that's it. To our home away from home in Maryland. Well, come
to think of it if that's our home away from home I might
as well be anywhere...I **might** as well be here!...Here in our
home away from home away from home!
(Suddenly he slams down one of the posters)

BOOTH: Edwin!

EDWIN: Get away from me, father! (Picking up a couple of other
things and slamming them down) Yes! Yes!
(Now he begins to range through the whole room, overturning
trunks, picking up posters and throwing them down, wreaking
havoc)
Here in our home away from home away from home away from home
away from home away from home away from home away from home--
away from--
(Several shots are fired)
Oh, father! Oh...oh...father...
(He sinks down and curls upon the floor) (The noise subsides)

BOOTH: (Going to him) Here I am, Edwin. Now calm down, just calm
down, because I'm going to tell you something.
(The noise has subsided almost entirely now. The people out-
side seem to have drifted off)
Everything's unreal to you now, Edwin. I know just how you
feel, everything is totally unreal, but be patient. Be patient
and stay calm because one day something real may just come along
--something living, and real, and alive to your touch, something
that should have drowned in the flood if it had any sense to it, may
just come floating helplessly along the surface of the water.
And if it does, boy, even if you can't see it, or hear it, or
even smell it--seize it. Reach out and seize on it and hold
it as tightly--but as carefully--as you can...

EDWIN: (Laughing wearily, slightly, pulling himself up on something)
Carefully?

BOOTH: Yes, Edwin. Very carefully.

EDWIN: The way you seized on me?

BOOTH: (Stung, quietly) No.

EDWIN: Then how do you mean, father? How am I supposed to know?

BOOTH: Don't say that, Edwin.

EDWIN: So I'll be leaving with Mr. Waller, father. In a couple of
days, snow or no snow. And I won't be playing Richmond,
either. I'll be playing Richard, or--or Hamlet. DoN't you
think I'd make a good Hamlet, father?

(BOOTH looks at him in horror a long moment, then sinks to his
knees.)

BOOTH: Edwin!

(suddenly a shot cracks and the light goes out)

EDWIN: My God, they've shot the light out. California! Get up off your knees, father, I'm going across the street.

BOOTH: EDWIN, NO! DON'T GO, PLEASE!

EDWIN: Father, go to bed! You've been up way too long! Now, good night. (We hear him making his way through the dark)

BOOTH: EDWIN! (But EDWIN:is gone) HELP! SOMEBODY -- HELP!

PAGE: Mr. Booth?

BOOTH: Who's that? Is that a hallucination or is it somebody?

PAGE: Well, I flatter myself that I am not a hallucination, sir. That leaves one alternative.

BOOTH: Mr. Page.

PAGE: The very same.

BOOTH: Bless you, Mr. Page.

PAGE: Not at all, sir. Should you be down here alone, Mr. Booth?

BOOTH: No matter, sir, you are heaven-sent.

PAGE: Why? What's been happening down here?

BOOTH: We have planted our flag on a sun whose fires are slowly being extinguished, Mr. Page. Or I should say quickly, shouldn't I?

(There is a crash in the room)

PAGE: Yes, you should.

BOOTH: Now, listen carefully, Mr. Page. I'm going back East.

PAGE: Back East, sir? When?

BOOTH: Now. I want you to send my luggage back downriver to San Francisco, as soon as you can. Do you understand?

PAGE: Yes, sir. Now, will Edwin be going with you?

BOOTH: Edwin doesn't even know that I am going.

PAGE: Well, he's right across the street, sir, if you want to tell him. I saw him from my window, not a moment ago.--

BOOTH: But I don't want to tell him, Mr. Page.

PAGE: Why, Mr. Booth--

BOOTH: I want you to tell him.

PAGE: Me? But why me?

BOOTH: You're an actor, Mr. Page, are you not?

PAGE: Yes!

BOOTH: Have you enjoyed it?

PAGE: Yes!

BOOTH: Why?

PAGE: Why?

BOOTH: Tell me!

PAGE: Why, Mr. Booth! --why, because I have had the distinct--
advantage, you might say, of being able to appear before
several hundred people almost every night that I can think of,
and to convince them that I was someone. A remarkable sensation, sir.

BOOTH: Someone else, do you mean?

PAGE: Why, no, Mr. Booth. Someone.

BOOTH: That's splendid, Mr. Page. You shall look after Edwin in my
absence.

PAGE: I, sir?

BOOTH: Yes. You and Mr. Spears and Mr. Hill? Will you do that
for me?

PAGE: Naturally, Mr. Booth, we should be privileged. I only
regret that--

BOOTH: What?

PAGE: Well, I am thinking mainly of Edwin's point of view. Think of
how lonely it will be for him up here in California without you.

BOOTH: Yes, Mr. Page, but think how much lonelier he would be if
he felt I needed him.

PAGE: I beg your pardon, sir?

(We begin to hear the noise of EDWIN and the CROWD of ACTORS
and MINERS from across the stage.)

BOOTH: They're coming back. I should be going now.

PAGE; So soon, sir?

BOOTH: Yes! Mr. Page!

PAGE: Yes!

BOOTH: Give him this!

PAGE: What is it, sir?

BOOTH: My royal medallion.

PAGE: You royal medallion? Oh, no, sir!

BOOTH: Give it to him, Mr. Page! I commission you!

(The noise builds, and we see several shadowy FIGURES burst into the room.)

PAGE: But, Mr. Booth, it's your medallion! Mr. Booth!

(As he is calling, MORE of the CROWD rush in and suddenly one of them lights the light)

MAN WHO LIGHTS IT: Here we are, Edwin! All lit up for you!

PAGE: Mr. Booth! Mr. Booth!

(But BOOTH Is gone. EDWIN enters)

EDWIN: Thank you, Idaho. (sees PAGE) Mr. Page! What are you doing down here?

PAGE: I have something to tell you, Edwin.

EDWIN: Go ahead.

PAGE: Your father has departed for the East.

(A low chord starts in the orchestra)

EDWIN: (through the noise) What? I didn't hear you?

PAGE: He's gone, Edwin!

EDWIN: Do you mean my father?

PAGE: Yes!

EDWIN: Well, well! Couldn't take it any more, could he? Hey, my father's gone!

(laughter from some of the CROWD. Suddenly EDWIN sees the crown)
What's that?

PAGE: It's his medallion, Edwin. He asked me--

EDWIN: Give it to me.

PAGE: I was going to, Edwin. I just wanted to explain that--

EDWIN: GIVE IT TO ME! (He snatches it from PAGE)

PAGE: (sickened) Edwin....see here, you have no right--

EDWIN: HEY! HEY, LOOK, EVERYBODY, I GOT THE MEDALLION!

(there is a big cheer)(Now he begins to stamp his foot, and slam out, in measured strokes, the phrases from the bridge or introduction to "Seeing the Elephant." As he reaches the main theme, the music swells up, the CROWD swells up, and a wild production number ensues, building its frenzy as behind it the saloon disappears. It ends at a shrill peak and a blackout, after which, through the Stillness, we hear EDWIN'S voice declaiming HAMLET. Cold light comes stealing back upon an empty stage representing:)

Scene 5: A moonlit street in the deserted, snowbound mining town of Nevada City, California.

EDWIN: (off, at the top of his lungs)

"To be or not to be
That is the question
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind
To suffer the slings and arrows of
 outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them..."

(Meanwhile SPEARS has entered with a lantern.
He looks off in the direction from which we hear
EDWIN's voice and calls:)

SPEARS: Edwin!

EDWIN: (off) Mr. Spears! Is that you?

SPEARS: Yes, lad, it's me!

EDWIN: (stumbling in) Mr. Spears, I've perfected it. I've perfected my Hamlet.

SPEARS: Where have you been, lad? We've been worried about you!

EDWIN: I've been up in themountains. All alone, Mr. Spears!
Nothing up there but the whiteness of the snow and the
blackness of the night--and me...

SPEARS: You're dizzy, fella! Now, I've got something to tell
you.

EDWIN: What?

SPEARS: Well, the roads aren't open, but we got some mail.
Some of the boys brought it through on a sled just
this morning.

EDWIN: Anything for me?

SPEARS: Well, yes, there was. Now, you see, that's what I
want to tell you--

EDWIN: What? What is it, Mr. Spears?

SPEARS: It's a message.

EDWIN: Bad news?

SPEARS: Yes, and--uh--

EDWIN: My father. (SPEARS is silent) Mr. Spears, sir--
is my father dead?

SPEARS: That's it, Edwin.

EDWIN: Where?

SPEARS: Well, I guess it was on the Mississippi, Edwin. Not
far upriver from New Orleans--

EDWIN: Well, what happened? Was he drinking? I don't under-
stand.

SPEARS: Yes, Edwin, I guess he was drinking. Funny thing
about his medallion--

EDWIN: (sharply) What?

SPEARS: Well, scon as he began to tippie, they were looking
for it, thinking that the sight of it would steady him,
I guess, and they couldn't find it! Well, I guess
they were getting pretty feverish when all of a sudden
old Junius says, "Friends, what are you looking for?"
"Well, your medallion," one of the fellas says. Well--
"Fools!" says Junius. "You can search my trunk and
chimnies all you want now, my medallion's safe where
it belongs." Well, it was the last sober words they
ever heard from him, Edwin, and some wonder whether
those were sober--boy?--

EDWIN: Oh, father--

SPEARS: There now, fella, breathe deep now--

EDWIN: Oh, father, father--

SPEARS: Breathe deep--

EDWIN: Why didn't you tell me you were going to die?

SPEARS: Now, he couldn't have known that, Edwin!

EDWIN: Yes, he could. My father could.

SPEARS: Come to think of it, I guess you're right. Don't tell
the preacher I said so, though. (He laughs anxiously)

EDWIN: (joining his laughter) I won't. Oh, George!

SPEARS: What is it, Edwin, is there something I can bring you?

EDWIN: No! I just want to lie down for a minute--(he does so)

SPEARS: But, Edwin, that's the snow!

EDWIN: I know! I just want to lie down and roll over in the snow. Oh, George, look. Look at the stars. Half those stars have taken such a long, long time to get the light we're looking at right now right here where we can look at it that they aren't even burning any more. They stopped burning millions of years ago. Maybe that's the way it was with father, George. Maybe he stopped burning millions of years ago, and all we ever saw was just the light that was left over. It's possible...

(The slow statement of "Lettin' My Feet Run Free" in:)

No. It's not possible. It's silly, isn't it, George?

SPEARS: No, Edwin, it's not silly! What the hell?

EDWIN: But he was your best friend, George!

SPEARS: Oh, well, now. We had a nodding acquaintance, sure--

EDWIN: No, you were his best friend! I know!

SPEARS: I was? How do you know?

EDWIN: Why--he told me.

SPEARS: He told you? Often, or just once?

EDWIN: (suddenly close to tears) Often. (He buries his head)

SPEARS: Why, the old dog...He wasn't fooling me...

(Meanwhile PAGE, MRS. HILL and JENNY JOANNE enter.
Music out)

PAGE: Have you told him, Mr. Spears?

SPEARS: Yes, I've told him. And I can tell you he's taking it beautifully, friends, just--beautifully.

JENNY JOANNE: Edwin?

MRS. HILL: I've made his bed up for him. I thought that might ease his suffering.

PAGE: Well, now, we must look after him. After all, we are his fellow actors.

JENNY JOANNE: But what can we do?

(They are non-plussed a moment. Then:)

MRS. HILL: We want Booth. We want Booth. We want Booth.

(She is joined softly, nervously by the others. EDWIN looks up, then as the music comes in strong again he stands and gives a magnificent bow. Curtain)