

WAKE UP, GLOUCESTER

A Full-Length Play

By

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CAST
(In Order of Appearance)

- CLARE. A young woman in her early twenties.
For the time being, she is working at
The Dancing Duck.
- MICHAEL. Co-owner of the bar, late thirties, is starting
up a local radio station at the bar.
- PAUL Fisherman from the Midwest,
temporarily working out of Gloucester
with a secret or two. Late twenties.
- HENRY. A German “tourist” and man of mystery,
late thirties, early forties.
- BETH. Clare’s close friend, a budding reporter,
mid-twenties.
- JERRY. A young man with hopes for more in life.
He is twenty-one.
- AGGIE. A local character, and “fortune teller,”
somewhat older than the rest.
- HOWARD. Co-owner of the bar. He appears once.

“Customers” other than the characters in the play may be seen on stage or only implied

SYNOPSIS

The play opens early afternoon on Saturday, August 25, 1939 at *The Dancing Duck*, a tavern in Gloucester, Massachusetts and follows the characters’ activities surrounding the start-up of a radio station.

ACT I

SCENE: Just after lunchtime at *The Dancing Duck*. Right and centerstage are occupied by a bar, a few tables, and other stage “dressing” associated with a tavern. On stage left is a small, separate room. The audience can see a table and scattered radio equipment. CLARE is clearing up the bar. MICHAEL enters in a fury, passes her by and dashes to the radio room. Enters searches frantically, finds what he is looking for, comes back out.

CLARE

Everything all right?

MICHAEL

When is anything ever all right?

CLARE

Sorry.

MICHAEL

No. I’m the one who should be sorry. I got no right to snap at you.

CLARE

Is Howard at it again?

MICHAEL

Howard is a maniac!

CLARE

What does he want now?

MICHAEL

He wants to change the whole format of the show.

CLARE

You start broadcasting Monday morning.

MICHAEL

He wants “guests” now.

CLARE

I thought he always wanted guests. You said that was the plan.

MICHAEL

Yes, but I thought we'd work up to it. Now he wants me to ask the German.

CLARE

Henry?

MICHAEL

Himself.

CLARE

I thought Henry was Austrian.

MICHAEL

Howard wants to grill him about the war.

CLARE

What war?

MICHAEL

Exactly! There's no war—except in Howard's head.

CLARE

He was right about the hurricane last year. He knew it would be worse than they were saying.

MICHAEL

That was science. I don't know what this is. Most people just want to stay out of it, and even if there is going to be a war, why is Henry going to know any more than we do?

CLARE

Henry seems to . . . well, he seems to know a lot about everything, and he is "almost" German.

MICHAEL

He knows about wrestling and fine wine! We don't even serve fine wine.

CLARE

Henry thinks we should.

MICHAEL

Nobody comes to a place called *The Dancing Duck* for fine wine.

CLARE

They might if we had some.

The doors to the bar open. PAUL walks in. Sits at the bar.

MICHAEL

Take care of your boyfriend. I've got to go upstairs and placate Howard.

CLARE

He's not my boyfriend—Are you, Paul?

PAUL

Not yet. Can I have a beer?

CLARE draws/pours Paul's beer.

CLARE

Tell Howard I said everything is going to be fine.

MICHAEL

Sure. Like Howard listens to anything anyone says.

CLARE

I'll tell him myself, if he ever comes down.

MICHAEL

He'll come down for the show. . . I'm sure he'll come down for the show.

CLARE

We should plan a party to celebrate. Maybe he'll come to that.

MICHAEL

Depends on whether we have fine wine or not.

He exits to the upstairs.

CLARE

(Delivering PAUL'S beer.)

We got fine beer. You got Twenty-five cents Cowboy?

PAUL

Don't call me Cowboy.

CLARE

Beth calls you Cowboy. You don't mind that.

PAUL

I do mind.

CLARE

But you're too scared of Beth to say.

PAUL

Beth would scare Al Capone. She asks too many questions.

CLARE

She works for a newspaper. It's her job to ask questions. What are you worried about? You're not a gangster, are you? You're just a fisherman. Why aren't you at sea, today?

PAUL

Hurt my hand yesterday. Had to go see the Doc.

CLARE

Is it bad?

PAUL

Not all that bad. Good chance to steal a couple of days off. What's up with the radio show?

CLARE

Howard's being Howard, and Michael's chasing his tail, but the show is fine. . . I hope everything's fine.

PAUL

He sure seemed excited about it the other night.

CLARE

He and Howard have a lot riding on this. Everyone says we're coming out of the depression, but you wouldn't know it from how things are in Gloucester. The radio station could make a big difference. It would look like things really are getting better.

PAUL

How's it all going to work?

CLARE

Most of the programming will come from Boston, but we'll have local spots, and the morning show. Howard wants to have interviews. He'll probably want to talk to you.

PAUL

Me? Why would he want to talk to me? I've never even met the man.

CLARE

I think he's looking to have somebody *exotic* on the show.

PAUL

Exotic? How am I exotic?

CLARE

Well, you're not from Gloucester, are you? Anyone from somewhere else seems a little bit exotic.

PAUL

People from my neck of the woods are not exotic.

CLARE

You know, I don't think you've ever said exactly where those woods you come from are.

PAUL

A place you've never heard of.

CLARE

Not if you've never told me.

PAUL

You know the Wabash River?

CLARE

There's a river? I've only ever heard of the "Wabash Cannonball." There's a song about it. It's a train or something, isn't it?

PAUL

There is a Wabash Railroad, but the "Cannonball" is just a thing the hobos made up.

CLARE

And they wrote a song about it?

PAUL

I don't think the hobos wrote it themselves, but drifters and tramps who ride the rails say there's a last train to the promised-land and we'll all ride it one day. It's called the "Cannonball Express."

CLARE

So, all those people who are riding on it in the song are dead? That's sad.

PAUL

Whoever wrote the song probably didn't know what it really meant.

CLARE

How do you know what it means? Do you ride the rails?

PAUL

I might have jumped a few cars along the way.

CLARE

Why do they call it a cannonball?

PAUL

A cannonball is a powerful thing, and there's no stopping it.

CLARE

(In a dramatic voice.)

Like *death*.

PAUL

It's not a real thing unless you believe in ghosts. Do you?

(The front door opens and AGGIE comes in.)

CLARE

There are a lot of strange things out there that no one can explain. Hey Aggie! You're early.

AGGIE

Where's Michael?

CLARE

He's busy upstairs.

AGGIE

I need to see him.

CLARE

He'll be down in a minute. Can I help you?

AGGIE

I wouldn't mind a drink.

CLARE

What would you like?

AGGIE

Michael still have that Hennessy I brought him last year?

CLARE

Nobody drinks it but you, Aggie.

CLARE pours AGGIE's drink which she downs quickly.

AGGIE

I went out with Bobby Peconis setting traps this morning, and we saw it again. We were out of the harbor a ways, East of Salt Island.

CLARE

I thought you weren't supposed to go that far out.

AGGIE

It's North you're not supposed to go. East is all right. I told you last week what we saw. Yesterday, we saw it again, so today we went back out. We wanted to see if it was still there.

CLARE

Was it?

AGGIE

I need to talk to Michael.

CLARE

I don't know how long he'll be. Are you sure about what you saw?

AGGIE

I saw what I saw. I never really believed all the stories, but seeing is believing, isn't it? And once you've seen it, you can't forget.

Turns her attention to Paul.

You're on that boat from down South, aren't you?

PAUL

It's not exactly the South.

AGGIE

Bobby says your crew won't last out the year.

CLARE

Aggie! Don't be rude.

AGGIE

Just saying what Bobby said. Your crew was out on the water this week. You see anything strange?

PAUL

Not really.

AGGIE

Maybe you're just afraid to say.

PAUL

What did you see?

AGGIE

I've got to be going. Tell Michael, I'll be back.

CLARE

Will you read my cards later?

AGGIE

Why? The future isn't going to change. You need to stop asking questions and come up with a few answers on your own. Just be careful what you wish for. Thanks for the Hennessey.

CLARE

No worries. Bye Aggie.

AGGIE exits.

Sorry about that. Aggie says what she thinks.

PAUL

She's an odd duck. What was all that about reading your cards?

CLARE

Aggie tells fortunes. She's pretty famous for it. Even the mayor of Boston came to see her. She's not really crazy. She's just sad. She used to be a school teacher, but after her husband got killed in France, my Pa says she was never the same, but I like her. She's funny, and I like it when she reads the cards.

PAUL

Maybe she tells you what you want to hear.

CLARE

No. Not Aggie. She tells me what I need to hear. I sorry for what she said about you and your crew.

PAUL

A lot of the men down on the dock don't like newcomers. They'll come around.

CLARE

People can be set in their ways.

PAUL

What is it she saw out on the water?

CLARE

You'll laugh.

PAUL

Try me.

CLARE

You've got your ghost train; In Gloucester we've got a Sea Serpent.

PAUL

Sea Serpent? Like the one in Scotland?

CLARE

That's a lake monster. Ours swims in the sea. He's way more dangerous. You and your crew should keep an eye out.

PAUL

I didn't think New Englanders went in for fairy tales.

CLARE

Shows what you don't know about New England. We've got witches, sea serpents, vampires. Kids in Gloucester grow up hearing stories about ghost ships.

PAUL

Tell me one.

CLARE

Okay. There was a ship called the Haskell. It sailed out of Gloucester harbor years and years and years ago and collided with a boat from Salem. The Salem ship and its crew went down, and no one survived, but they say the dead crewmen haunted the Haskell forever afterwards. The ghosts would come up out of the water and climb on board and try to steer her on to the rocks. The Haskell doesn't sail any more, but they say the ghosts are still out there.

PAUL

Along with the sea monster?

CLARE

You should keep an open mind, Mister. Maybe it's all part of something we just can't understand.

PAUL

Or don't want to.

CLARE

Maybe. Anyway, you still haven't told me where you're from. Don't you want to tell me?

PAUL

I come from a little town on the Wabash River, about the size of a walnut. That's the name: Walnut Bend.

CLARE

How did you ever end up here?

PAUL

A man ends up where the wind takes him.

CLARE

Will it be blowing you away again?

PAUL

Sooner or later; it always does.

Door opens. HENRY and BETH walk in. They sit at a table stage right. CLARE goes to serve them. PAUL picks up a paper that's been lying on the bar and acts like he's not listening to them.

CLARE

Hi! What can I get you?

HENRY

I will have a rye whiskey, a double if you please.

CLARE

Beth?

BETH is scribbling something in a notebook as they speak.

BETH

Nothing for me. The printer's deadline is tomorrow at noon. I told my editor I'd have this done today.

HENRY

I was on my way here for a small refreshment, and I found the young lady on a park bench. She was staring out to sea. I persuaded her to join me.

CLARE goes to the bar to pour Henry's shot and return.

CLARE

Beth's always staring out to sea—even when she's got a deadline.

BETH

I was hoping for inspiration.

CLARE

What are you working on?

BETH

“Human Interest.” Whatever that is.

CLARE

I've been thinking Howard and Michael could use a little “human interest” if the station is going to be successful. It needs “personality” especially on the morning show.

BETH

That's no lie. Not sure I see either Howard or Michael as the next “Don McNeill.”

CLARE

What do you think, Henry?

HENRY

I do not know this “Don McNeill,” I do not know Howard, so I cannot judge, but I would say your Michael has a splendid personality.

BETH

I'm not saying that either one isn't “personable.” Not exactly, but maybe if I came on and shared a little “human interest” it could help.

CLARE

(Sits with them.)

What are you writing about this week?

BETH

The usual stuff—people getting married; people getting born; people getting dead, same old stuff.

CLARE

Who's getting married?

BETH

Kate Collins and Allen Parkes are officially engaged.

CLARE

Finally! It took them long enough. What else?

BETH

The Cape Ann Social Club is busy planning the Autumn Harvest Dance. If that isn't exciting enough for you, The Daffodil Festival Committee is already hard at work getting ready for the spring.

CLARE

In August?

BETH

I guess these things take a lot of planning.

HENRY

I think such stories might go well on the radio if . . . what is the expression? If they are jazzed up?

BETH

I'm not sure how jazzy I can make the Daffodil Committee sound, but even if the audience isn't exactly "dying" to hear any of this, they'll die of boredom if all Howard and Michael do is repeat the morning news and weather over and over again.

CLARE

They're going to do more than news and weather. They're going to have guests on and music. I'm sure they'll like whatever you're working on, even the Daffodil Committee.

BETH

The Paper's on board if Howard lets me have a spot. It only took a little fast talking to convince my editor that if I did something on-air it would sell some papers, especially when I break the news that next week there will be a front-page photo of at least thirty lovely Gloucester women decked out in Dutch hats.

HENRY

Who would not buy a newspaper to see that? You have the instincts of a true journalist.

CLARE

One day Beth is going to go work for the *Boston Globe*.

BETH

But not this society stuff. I want to work the crime beat. The *Globe* has never had a woman do that, but there's a first time for everything, isn't there?

HENRY

It is good to have dreams. Dreams are necessary for a good life as long as you work hard to make them come true.

CLARE

We think Beth could become a real life "Torchy Blane."

HENRY

I do not know this “Torchy Blane.”

BETH

She’s not real. She’s a character in the movies.

CLARE

So what? Even if something’s only made up, can’t it become real someday?

HENRY

If the young lady gets her chance on the radio, who knows what will come next? And what do you do, Mistress Clare—besides your work here at the bar? Is this what you want out of life or do you have dreams of more?

CLARE

My dreams are all on hold for now.

BETH

She had to drop out of Salem last year to take care of her Pa, but she’s going back, aren’t you?

CLARE

I hope so, but money’s tight right now. I need to keep working.

HENRY

A person can do many things when they put their mind to it. Tell me, how did a public house go from simply selling beer and liquor to hosting a radio station?

CLARE

The Dancing Duck is not just *any* public house. It’s Howard and Michael’s public house. Howard went to M.I.T. and Michael’s from Marblehead. They have big plans.

BETH

See the door over there. That used to be the storeroom, but Michael moved all the whiskey and rum down cellar, so he could turn it into a studio and sound booth.

HENRY

How is this possible? Can just anyone in America start their own radio station?

BETH

Not just anyone. Howard’s got connections. After the Hurricane last year, everyone had to start over—try new things. Most of the local stations on the North Shore were wiped out.

CLARE

So, it was Howard who got the idea to set one up here at the bar. All you really need is a sound proof space and the right equipment. He talked Michael around and they got a deal with WMEX out of Boston for a remote license, Howard had a transmitter set up on Rocky Neck. Michael put up the sound proofing and now he's getting the microphone and receiver and everything else ready. The show starts Monday morning.

HENRY

Who is this, Howard? Would I have met him here at the bar? I am not so good at remembering names.

CLARE

I doubt you've met him. His last name's Cassidy, and he owns the bar with Michael. He's got an apartment upstairs, but he doesn't come down much to mingle. He doesn't have to.

BETH

Why should he? He's got Michael to run his errands and his family left him a lot of "old" money, so it's all working out. If the station succeeds, and they sell enough ads, he'll be even richer.

CLARE

Howard is "eccentric." Michael says he's going to build his own castle someday with walls to keep everyone out.

BETH

As if Gloucester needed another castle.

HENRY

Another? You already have a castle?

CLARE

Well, technically the Hammond Castle's in Magnolia, but that's really part of Gloucester. They got movie stars who come and stay over. Some have even stopped in at *The Dancing Duck!*

HENRY

This is a very interesting little town.

BETH

Gloucester's not a little town! There are 20,000 people living here and about, maybe more.

HENRY

So, not just a simple fishing village?

CLARE

My Pa says, it's the fishing capitol of New England! You got your Cod fisheries, your haddock, your lobster, your--

BETH

Are you looking for work? Paul's on one of the new boats in town. Maybe his captain would take you on, isn't that right, Cowboy?

PAUL

Looking up, as if he hadn't been listening.
Excuse me?

BETH

Why are you sitting there all by yourself? You should join us.

PAUL

I'm leaving in a minute.

CLARE

Oh, don't go, yet.

BETH

I was telling Henry here that he should talk to your captain about hiring on.

PAUL brings his beer and joins them.

HENRY

(half rising)

Not to worry, young man. I am not looking to become a fisherman. My name is Henry Brenner.

PAUL

(Shaking hands and sitting.)

Paul Bartlett.

HENRY

You are a young man from the Midwest, are you not?

PAUL

How'd you know that?

HENRY

Like me, you do not sound as if you are coming from the New England coast. Chicago is in the Midwest. I have friends who have settled there. They have sent photographs of the Great Exposition. Are you from Chicago? I would love to see Chicago.

PAUL

I've been there a couple of times. It's all right. I saw some ball games. Why are you in Gloucester, Mr. Brenner?

HENRY

Call me Henry, please. I am what some would call a "tourist." I am exploring the New England coastline. It is a marvelous place with amazing artists and all the delicious fish to eat. I am here on vacation.

PAUL

In Gloucester?

HENRY

Why not? As the young lady just said, it is the fishing capitol of New England.

CLARE

There are lots of things to do in Gloucester.

BETH

You just have to look really hard to find them.

CLARE

Michael says you're an athlete, Henry. He called you a "torso twister. What is that?

HENRY

I prefer the term wrestling *artiste*.

BETH

Is that an artist who wrestles or a wrestler who paints pictures?

HENRY

Wrestling is an art in itself. It is an ancient skill of both the mind and the body. There are many fine champions of the sport here in New England.

BETH

I've heard my editor go on and on about some guy called "Gorgeous George"!

PAUL

I've heard the name.

BETH

He's a professional wrestler. My editor says he'll be really famous one of these days. He says Gorgeous George is changing the whole wrestling game. Do you know about him, Henry?

HENRY

I have had the pleasure of meeting him in person. George himself will be the main attraction at a Match in Boston this very night. He has already won many cash prizes and gold medals. Tonight will be no exception, I am sure.

CLARE

They give medals for wrestling?

HENRY

It has been an Olympic event since the beginning of the competitions.

BETH

I've heard these public shows can get a little raucous.

HENRY

Let us say that a certain amount of showmanship has crept into the arena. On occasion, it could be described as over enthusiastic, perhaps? George's proper name is Wagner, and he is an attractive fellow and boon companion. You would enjoy his company. Why don't you young ladies accompany me to the match in Boston tonight?

BETH

That sounds like fun. Let's go, Clare.

CLARE

Boston? I don't know . . . I'd have to ask Michael if I could have the night off.

BETH

He can get Jerry to tend the bar. His boat's in dry dock. What else does he have to do?

CLARE

I'll have to ask Pa.

BETH

You're an adult, Clare. Just lie and tell him you're just going to a movie with me.

HENRY

You are a quiet one Herr Bartlett. Would you care to join us?

PAUL

I might think about it.

BETH

You don't want to come wrestling with us?

CLARE

She doesn't mean that the way it sounds.

HENRY

I have seen some lady wrestlers who were extraordinarily skilled.

BETH

No doubt!

CLARE

You've been to Boston haven't you, Paul? I mean, since you've been here?

PAUL

I've been a few times. We docked there for a day or so after coming up from the Chesapeake Bay.

HENRY

I thought that area was known mostly for the shellfish. I believe it is the blue crab that they are famed for.

PAUL

They got herring and bass, but the fishing's a lot better off Cape Ann. That's why we came up here.

BETH

For a wrestler, you know a lot about where the fish are running.

HENRY

I am a man of varied interests. Will you come with us, Herr Bartlett?

PAUL

I might be able to make it. Let me talk to my captain. I'll let you know.

CLARE

It sounds like it's going to be fun.

PAUL

Maybe I will. I could use a little fun.

HENRY

You would be doing me an enormous service. I will not know how to behave all alone with these two lovely ladies on my arm.

BETH

Yes, Paul. We wouldn't want Henry to feel shy and awkward, would we?

PAUL

I'll have to see.

MICHAEL enters from upstairs.

CLARE

Are you and Howard good now?

MICHAEL

We're all set. What's this? You fellas in early looking for dates?

PAUL

No sir.

MICHAEL

And why not?

PAUL is somewhat taken aback by this response.

PAUL

I didn't mean any

HENRY
(Interjecting)

I depends on whether the ladies accept my offer or not, but I think we may have been successful. Time will tell.

PAUL

I should be shoving off.

CLARE

Will you come with us—if we decide to go, that is?

PAUL

I'll try.

HENRY

He has a captain to see. I doubt that Mr. Paul Bartlett does anything without his captain's blessing.

PAUL

Right.

He leaves. HENRY watches him go.

HENRY

That is an interesting young man. Perhaps if I offer to teach him how to wrestle, he really would teach me how to fish.

BETH

I shouldn't think you'd find being a fisherman all that interesting.

HENRY

Everything is interesting if one dives in deeply enough.

MICHAEL

That's what we're hoping to do on our radio show. It would be great if you'd come on for an interview. Howard wants outside perspective.

HENRY

Who? Me? Surely you are joking.

MICHAEL

You could come talk about wrestling. Clare's been telling me I need to liven things up.

HENRY

What sort of show will this be?

MICHAEL

We're still working out the details.

HENRY

Still? Are you not starting on Monday?

MICHAEL

Yes. We thought we'd have another week, but Boston wants us to start right away. That's why we're scrambling to get it all worked out.

HENRY

Why begin such a challenging venture in these troubled times?

MICHAEL

Gloucester needs something new. They say the depression is over, but people around here are still struggling. At the very least, we can cheer them up. Maybe we can make the world feel better.

HENRY

Why are you the man to take on that task?

MICHAEL

It's not just me. Howard will do most of the talking.

BETH

Howard talks?

MICHAEL

He talks enough.

HENRY

If you are creating a program for the radio, you must have some desire to be famous.

MICHAEL

Not sure a morning show out of Gloucester is going to make Howard or me, famous, but I want to give it a go. I don't know if I can put all my reasons into words.

HENRY

Surely words must be the heart and the soul of such a project.

MICHAEL

I know. I know. Howard and I go back and forth about it. Howard's wants to put Gloucester on the map, but me? Some days, I don't know why I let myself get talked into it.

BETH

Why did you?

MICHAEL

I think my heart decided and not my brain. The first time I ever heard a radio show. I was in college already, and this guy brought in a *Randolph* his parents had bought him. That was one of the first models that everyday people could go out and buy. He set it up in the front room of the house we were sharing.

BETH

How long ago was that?

HENRY

I expect you were still a babe in arms, my dear, and already asking too many questions.

CLARE

Let Michael finish.

MICHAEL

I knew about radio, but I'd never actually seen or heard one. Suddenly, the whole world exploded. Somebody in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania was talking directly to me—someone in New York City was singing a song and I could hear it! Everything I thought I knew about the physical world changed overnight. It wasn't just me. It was the same for all of us. The earth was moving under our feet, and we couldn't do anything but move along with it.

CLARE

Oh, Michael, if you say all that on the radio, everyone in Gloucester is gonna fall in love with you!

HENRY

You have your first true fan!

MICHAEL

I don't know about that, but I have been thinking about how to use my time on the air. I'm serious about you coming on the show.

HENRY

That is a gracious invitation, but I do not know how long my sojourn here will be. (Stands) But you have much to do, and I have taken up enough time with my chatter. With your permission, I will take my leave. Ladies, please think about my invitation.

BETH

We'll give it some thought, won't we, Clare?

CLARE

Did you say it could get raucous? I'm not sure--

HENRY

I will be optimistic and come by at six o'clock to escort you to the train. Good day to you.

(He downs his drink and exits.)

BETH

I'm not sure I trust that guy.

MICHAEL

So don't go to Boston with him.

BETH

We should be safe if the cowboy comes along with us.

CLARE

Stop calling him that! Cowboys don't come from the Midwest.

BETH

Cowboys can come from anywhere. I expect even our European pal there has more than a little cowboy in him.

MICHAEL

You may be right about that.

CLARE

Have you sorted out all the equipment, Michael? Do you need any help?

MICHAEL

I'm getting there. The engineers down in Boston showed me what to do, but it's not as easy as they made it out to be. Jerry's coming in to help with the receiver.

CLARE

Good! He should be doing more with his life.

BETH

Have you decided what to call the show?

MICHAEL

Howard and I have been going back and forth, but I know what I want.

BETH

Are you going to tell us, or do we have to guess?

MICHAEL

Are you ready? Okay, then, (with a "flourish." of some sort.) "Wake Up, Gloucester!"

BETH

What?

MICHAEL

That's the name. For the show—"Wake Up, Gloucester." It's got a nice ring to it, don't you think?

CLARE

"Aunt Daisy" does something like that on her show, only she says "Good Morning." Instead of "Wake Up." You'll be making it special for us here in Gloucester. I like it!

BETH

It's about time this place woke up.

MICHAEL

I don't want it to sound negative. I just want it to be catchy. Do you think people will take to it?

CLARE

I think they'll love it!

MICHAEL, CLARE, AND BETH

Waaaakkke Uuuuhhhp, Gloucester!

End of Scene

SCENE ii: Around 2 p.m. CLARE is at the bar, talking to JERRY. We can see MICHAEL in the radio booth fiddling with equipment.

CLARE

Can you take my shift tonight? The tips are always good on a Saturday.

JERRY

For you maybe.

CLARE

You're nice. Everyone likes you.

JERRY

They like me because I don't skimp on the measures.

CLARE

Are you saying I skimp on the measures?

JERRY

Just saying you're very "precise." Why do you need the night off? Are you going out with that Paul guy? I don't know what you see in him.

CLARE

You don't even know him.

JERRY

He doesn't belong. None of the guys on his boat belong. They don't talk to anyone. When they're not at sea, they just hang out together or else take off for Boston.

CLARE

Paul doesn't go to Boston. He comes in here almost every night.

JERRY

Only on the nights when you're here.

CLARE

Why? I'm always too busy working to be much company, and even if things are slow, he talks to Beth more than he talks to me.

JERRY

Yeah, but it's different when he talks to you.

CLARE

I like his accent.

JERRY

Where's he from anyway? All we got is foreigners here these days.

CLARE

He's not a foreigner. He's from the Midwest.

JERRY

So, why is he on a fishing boat sailing out of Gloucester?

CLARE

Because that's where the fish are—how should I know? There are other things to talk about besides where the cod are running. We talk about the movies, mostly. Or he tells us about all the places where he's been.

JERRY

What kind of places?

CLARE

All kinds. He's been to Hong Kong.

JERRY

That's nuts. No one's been to Hong Kong.

CLARE

He has. He saw them hang a fifteen-year-old boy there for stealing bread. Now he says he's against capital punishment altogether. I think that's noble.

JERRY

He saw some guy get hung? What kind of thing is that to be talking about? I bet he made that up.

CLARE

Why would he make up something like that?

JERRY

People make shit up all the time.

CLARE

God, you can be crude! You've been to school, Jerry. You know better.

JERRY

One year at trade school, and it didn't do me much good, did it?

CLARE

You'll get back to it. Times are hard.

JERRY

Yeah. Everything's hard.

CLARE

You need to have some fun sometimes. We all do. That's why Beth and I want to go down to Boston tonight with Henry, and I really need you to cover for me.

JERRY

You're going to Boston? With the German guy?

CLARE

He's Austrian.

JERRY

I thought they were all Germans now that Hitler took over. What's in Boston?

CLARE

He asked us to go see a wrestling match with him.

JERRY

What? Where? You don't know what kind of people you'll meet at something like that.

CLARE

We're hoping we get to meet Gorgeous George. Henry knows him.

JERRY

Who?

CLARE

He's a professional wrestler. Beth says he's famous. She might interview him for the paper.

JERRY

You're never going to be happy staying here in Gloucester, are you?

CLARE

Going to a show in Boston doesn't mean that I'm packing up to leave home, but I do want more than this out of life. I'm saving to go back to school. Maybe when Beth gets her job at the *Globe*. I can transfer my credits to Northeastern, and we can room together.

JERRY

Pipe dreams!

CLARE

Better than no dreams at all. You need a few, yourself.

JERRY

I got dreams. I just don't go on about them all the time.

CLARE

You should. You should shout them up to the sky--that's how dreams come true. My Ma used to say that, but then she died. We don't have all that much time in this world. I don't want to stay frozen somewhere forever. I don't want that for any of us.

JERRY

Not everyone's like you, Clare. Some of us are gonna stay frozen whether we like it or not.

CLARE

You need to get rid of that chip on your shoulder. I didn't say it would be easy. You have brains, Jerry. Look how you fixed Michael's receiver and antennae just now. You could do so much more.

JERRY

You sound like my Ma. She doesn't like it that I've gone to work on the docks, but how else are we going to pay the bills?

CLARE

Life's got to be more than just paying the bills.

JERRY

Yeah. Maybe. Even if I do end up having to fish for a living, I wouldn't mind having my own boat someday.

CLARE

So, work hard and save money.

JERRY

Right.

CLARE

Or don't! It's got nothing to do with me.

JERRY

Don't I know it!

CLARE

Don't be mad on me. Will you take my shift? Please?

JERRY

All right. What time?

CLARE

Thank you so much! Can you be back here by five so I can go home and get changed? The crowd won't be coming in until after eight, and I'll have everything ready for you. You're such a good person, Jerry. I know things are going to work out for you. Aggie should be here soon. You should have her tell your fortune, and see what lies ahead.

JERRY

That woman is crazy. You do know that, don't you?

CLARE

She's eccentric. I like eccentric.

JERRY

She and Bobby Peconis have been watching out for German airplanes.

CLARE

I thought they were chasing sea monsters. The Germans can't fly here. They can't fly anywhere, can they? I thought that was part of the treaty.

JERRY

Germans don't care about treaties. They don't care about anything. Look what they did last year, burning all the synagogues.

CLARE

That was horrible.

JERRY

Kristallnacht, they called it. It scared my Gran bad. She's still got family over there.

CLARE

I think it scared everyone.

JERRY

With Hitler in charge, all bets are off. They've already broken most of the conditions from the last war. That Portuguese guy at the bake shop says he's heard they've been building up their aircraft for years. They call it the Luftwaffe.

CLARE

So maybe Aggie's not so crazy watching out for airplanes.

JERRY

Maybe she's not. Look at how Hitler just waltzed in and took over Austria and Czechoslovakia. What's your pal Henry got to say about that?

CLARE

He's not my pal. I barely know the man.

JERRY

But you're going to Boston with him.

CLARE

Beth and I are both going with him. Paul might come too.

JERRY

Of course he is. You should ask him how a fisherman from the Midwest ends up in Gloucester? There are no oceans in the Midwest.

CLARE

There are some pretty *great* lakes I hear.

JERRY

A lake is not an ocean.

(The front door opens and AGGIE comes in.)

Here we go.

CLARE

Hush! (Calls out) Hi Aggie! You're back!

AGGIE

Where's Michael?

CLARE

He's still setting up the studio.

JERRY

I need to be going.

CLARE

Promise you'll be back at five?

JERRY

Sure.

CLARE

Thank you. It means a lot.

AGGIE

Did you fellas go out on your boat today?

JERRY

No. Al needed to overhaul the engine, so we've got a few days off.

AGGIE

You missed it then.

JERRY

Missed what? German airplanes or a sea monster?

AGGIE

You laugh now. You won't be laughing long. When did you say Michael's getting here?

CLARE

He's already here. He's in the studio sorting out equipment for Monday.

JERRY

(Heading for the door.)

If I see your boyfriend on the docks, I'll tell him you're waiting for him.

CLARE

Which one, Jerry? I have so many.

JERRY

See ya!

(He slams out.)

AGGIE

I don't like that boy's attitude, but his mother came from Lynn. What do you expect?

CLARE

(Pouring her a second shot.)

Jerry's okay. What's up Aggie? What exactly did you see out there this time?

AGGIE

I'm not ready to say yet. I'll wait for Michael.

CLARE

Suit yourself.

AGGIE

I shouldn't have said that about Jerry's Ma. She's a decent woman.

CLARE

Even if she is from Lynn? Did you bring your cards, Aggie?

AGGIE

You don't need me reading the cards.

CLARE

Just a quick read, please?

AGGIE

I thought you and that stuck up friend of yours didn't believe in the cards.

CLARE

I don't. Not really, but it's fun.

AGGIE

It'll cost you another drop of Hennessey.

CLARE Pours another "drop" as Aggie sorts out her cards.

CLARE

It's your Hennessey, anyway.

AGGIE

I gave it to Michael.

CLARE

And he saves it for you. What got you started reading the cards, Aggie?

AGGIE

My Gran read them. I wasn't supposed to watch, but I did. I'd keep asking her what each card meant. She made me a little book. I forgot about it, but then after my Jimmy was killed, I found it again and started looking at it and remembering the things she used to say. It made me feel better to think that there was a future out there somewhere.

CLARE

You make a lot of people happy even when you tell them things they don't want to hear.

AGGIE

I like to think so.

CLARE

Father Dan says it's a sin.

AGGIE

According to Father Dan, everything's a sin. I'll just have to take my chances with Heaven when the time comes.

Hands CLARE the cards.

Here, shuffle them good.

CLARE

(Shuffling the cards.)

Tell me what you saw in the bay.

AGGIE

I'll see what Michael says first. Here, you've done that enough.

She takes the cards and spreads them on the table.

Draw twelve and one more for luck.

CLARE draws the cards. She knows the drill. As AGGIE says the following, she arranges the cards.)

Now make three stacks of four with one left over, Then, you can ask three questions or make three wishes, but don't say them out loud. (Slight Pause as CLARE considers.) Are you done asking?

CLARE

Yes!

AGGIE

(Turns over the first set of four.)

Let's see. We've got the ten of clubs. Five of diamonds, Queen of spades, and the seven of clubs. Hmmm.

CLARE

Is that bad?

AGGIE

The cards are never bad. They just open the world up to you. They're all about possibility. This ten suggests you might take a trip, and it might turn out very well. It's right next to the five which means it could turn out very well indeed, but that pesky Queen could spoil it all.

CLARE

Who is she?

AGGIE

Not necessarily a "she." Could be some big event taking place. The spades are all air signs. Like a big wind storm, they stir things up, and that seven means you might be better off staying right where you are.

MICHAEL enters from the studio.

MICHAEL

Clare, I need you to go up and see Howard. You're in early, Aggie.

AGGIE

I need to tell you something.

MICHAEL

Shoot! I'm all ears.

AGGIE

It needs to be in private.

CLARE

That's all right. I'm headed upstairs. What do you want me to tell Howard?

MICHAEL

I need you ask him if he can come down here for a minute.

CLARE

You know he won't come down during the day. He doesn't even like anyone to knock on his door.

MICHAEL

He might come out if you ask him nicely. Just tell him I need him to look at the manual again. Here, take it up to him. Tell him to look at page 34.

CLARE

I'll try.

(She exits through door to upstairs.)

MICHAEL

So, what's up?

AGGIE

It's about what I told you last week? We saw it again.

MICHAEL

Oh, for God's sake Aggie! You've got to stop this nonsense.

AGGIE

It's not just me that's seeing it. Bobby saw it too. That's three times in less than three weeks. We need to warn people. You need to put the word out on the radio.

MICHAEL

All it means is that you're nuts, Aggie, that's what it means. I'm not bringing any of this up on the show.

AGGIE

And Bobby too? You're saying Bobby Peconis is nuts. He won't like that.

MICHAEL

I'm saying that whatever you saw it's not what you think it is.

AGGIE

I had my telescope, the one your father gave my Jimmy thirty years ago, and I saw what I saw. People need to know.

MICHAEL

Let's talk about the stones in Dog Town, Aggie. Let's talk about the fisheries. Let's talk about real Gloucester history. You know more about it than anybody. You were a school teacher once. You need to write a book.

AGGIE

What I'm talking about is history. Four hundred years of history, Michael. Four hundred years!

MICHAEL

It's a friggin' log in the water. Aggie. It's a whale. It's a school of dolphins.

AGGIE

I had more faith in you Michael. Your father would be ashamed.

MICHAEL

My father's dead Aggie, and he wouldn't be shaming me on the word of a madwoman if he weren't.

AGGIE

You need to talk this over with Howard. It's a portent of bad times to come.

MICHAEL

Maybe it is, but we won't be broadcasting it on the first Morning show coming out of Gloucester in a year. Those bastards down in Boston think we're all nuts as it is.

AGGIE

You'll be sorry, Michael O'Rourke. You will

(She storms out. As Clare comes back down.)

CLARE

What's wrong with Aggie?

MICHAEL

She's been at the Hennessey again, hasn't she?

CLARE

You keep replacing the one she bought you. Oh, look! She's left my cards and all. I won't know what I'm supposed to do about going down to Boston.

MICHAEL

I am surrounded by lunatics!

CLARE

It's only fun, Michael.

MICHAEL

Did you give the manual to Howard?

CLARE

He wouldn't answer the door. I called through what you wanted and left the manual propped against the wall open to the page you said.

MICHAEL

I don't know why I bother! No one cares but me.

CLARE

Howard cares! It's his show too. It was his idea. We all care Michael. We do.

The door opens and BETH comes in.

BETH

What's up with Aggie? She's sitting on the bench by Rafferty's talking to a pigeon.

CLARE

She's mad with Michael.

MICHAEL

I've got to go see Howard. I'll be back as soon as I can.

He goes upstairs in a huff.

BETH

Do you think they're giving up on the show? Is he going to postpone the broadcast?

CLARE

No. Howard will calm him down. He's more nervous than he likes to admit, and he didn't need Aggie aggravating him.

BETH

What's all this?

CLARE

Aggie was telling my fortune.

BETH

Let me guess. You might have a secret admirer, and it might go well, or it might not. You might be going on a trip, and that might go well, or it might not. I hope you didn't give her any money.

CLARE

Aggie never charges me, and she's not finished. I'm sure it will all turn out fine.

BETH

Do you want me to turn these over? Maybe we can figure it out.

CLARE

No. Aggie will be back.

BETH

Nice to know there are a few things we can always count on.

CLARE

Did you get your story done?

BETH

It's as done as it's ever going to be. I just wish there was something more exciting going on around here—at least something my editor will let me write about. I want to do a story on those guys who went down to New York for that Nazi rally. They say it was huge. Those same guys meet every Tuesday. God knows what they get up to, but I'm not supposed to name any names or talk about it at all.

CLARE

Is your editor one of them?

BETH

No, I don't think so, but some of them advertise their businesses in the paper. Some of them work right here on the docks. God forbid we offend a fisherman or a Nazi.

CLARE

They're not really Nazis, are they?

BETH

The way this world looks right now, they might as well be.

CLARE

Do you think Henry's a Nazi? He's almost German.

BETH

Yeah. He could be a spy. Or maybe, he just had sense enough to have gotten out while he could.

CLARE

Do you think it's okay to go with him to Boston?

BETH

Well, we'll have the Cowboy along. I doubt he's a Nazi.

CLARE

We shouldn't joke about it.

BETH

My whole life feels like a bad joke that's gone on too long. Nothing changes. Maybe if I could expose a bunch of fascists, it would get me out of here. Maybe I should be the one spying on old Henry. Do you think I'm nuts?

CLARE

I think you're too hard on yourself. I think you underestimate who you are.

BETH

I think maybe you should be the one telling fortunes around here.

MICHAEL enters from upstairs. He holds the manual.

CLARE

Did Howard help you figure out the problem?

MICHAEL

There was no problem. Howard showed me what I was missing. I got to get Jerry back in here.

CLARE

He's going to take my shift tonight.

MICHAEL

So you can go on a date with another guy?

CLARE

It's not a date, and we're not sure Paul can even come.

BETH

Oh, he'll come, all right.

MICHAEL

What I want to know is who's dating who?

BETH

That remains to be seen.

CLARE

I like to think we're just four good friends having a night out.

MICHAEL

Well, I hope you "good" friends make it back with a "good" story for the show.

(Door opens, and AGGIE storms back in.)

Oh God.

AGGIE

Michael. It's not just me! I talked to a couple of sailors from *The Dubliner*, and they think they might have seen something too.

MICHAEL

Forget it, Aggie. I'm not starting off my first week with some wild tale about a Sea Serpent!

BETH

And this is the woman we trust to tell our future with a pack of cards.

AGGIE

It's late August. He always comes in late August! There's always been something out there. Something we can't name.

MICHAEL

There's no damn Sea Serpent! Jesus! I have to go work on things in the studio. I don't want to be disturbed!

MICHAEL heads into the studio, we see him alternately studying the manual and taking notes or staring thoughtfully into space.

BETH

Between sea serpents and fascists and strangers from away, I think I might have to do a different kind of story about the docks this week.

CLARE

I thought you were only supposed to be doing the society page?

BETH

Depends on your definition of society. I think there's more to the cowboy and his crew than he's telling us. No crew just 'shows' up in Gloucester. Besides, maybe they've seen the Sea Serpent. Maybe if I go down there and nose around, I can kill two birds with one stone.

AGGIE

You'll be on the right track if you talk to that boy and his crew about it. We were too far away to see clearly but something went right alongside their boat. Bobby and me saw it surface and then go back under. The crew had to have seen it too.

CLARE

I think that if Paul had seen a sea serpent, he would have said something.

BETH

Maybe he doesn't want people to know what's going down on his boat. Maybe this sea serpent has something to do with it.

CLARE

Stop it, Beth! That sounds crazy. Whatever you do, be careful.

BETH

I've got to make my name so *The Globe* will take notice and hire me. If I can either prove there's a Sea Serpent or expose some kind of Nazi hoax, they'd have to notice me then.

AGGIE

There's no hoax! The ones who know what they know have always known it. You'll see.

BETH

I'm not saying you didn't see something out there, Aggie. I just think there's more going on than we know. Michael's right to be telling everyone it's time to wake up.

AGGIE

There's always more going on than any of us can ever know or are even supposed to know.

BETH

I'm going down the docks and see what I can pick up.

CLARE

You need to get ready for Boston.

BETH

I am always ready for Boston!

CLARE

Pa says girls should not be walking down on the docks by themselves.

BETH

He probably wouldn't approve of us going to Boston, either, but that's not going to stop us. Don't worry, I'll be careful on the docks, and if anything, exciting happens and I see any of your boyfriends, I'll send word back with them.

CLARE

I do not have any boyfriends!

BETH

Maybe we should do a lonely-hearts column in the paper, so you can find one.

(She exits.)

AGGIE

That girl is a McCaskill. The McCaskills were all trouble makers.

CLARE

Will you read the rest of my cards?

AGGIE

I don't feel the spirit in me right now. Why don't you just turn the last card over and tell me what you think it means.

CLARE

You're the fortune teller.

AGGIE

Turn it over.

CLARE

All right! It's the four of hearts.

AGGIE

What does that say to you?

CLARE

I don't know. Hearts are supposed to be good cards, aren't they?

AGGIE

Hearts are of the water. They can mean tears; they can be a journey out on the sea of life.

CLARE

I'd like that.

AGGIE

Tears?

CLARE

No. I'd like to go on a journey. You said before I might be going somewhere. I'd like something different. I want to get out of this place.

AGGIE

Then go. We make our own fortunes in this world, child. Whatever the cards say, sometimes we have to follow our hearts, and you've got four of them there.

CLARE

I do, don't I?

AGGIE

Now, I'm going to bang on that closet door and make Michael take my Serpent seriously.

CLARE

You must be seeing something out there.

AGGIE

Oh, it was a Sea Serpent, all right. I saw what I saw.

End of Scene

SCENE iii: A little before 6 p.m. *The Duck* is not too busy.

AT RISE: JERRY is tending bar. PAUL enters and sits at the bar.

PAUL

Where's Clare?

JERRY

I thought she was going to Boston with you.

PAUL

Is that what she said?

JERRY

Do you want a beer?

PAUL

Yeah; make it a Schlitz, please.

JERRY sets out the bottle for him and collects his quarter.

JERRY

Who named that boat of yours?

PAUL

Why? Something wrong with the name?

JERRY

The Trimmy B? What's a Trimmy B?

PAUL

It's a nick name.

JERRY

For what? Doesn't a nick-name stand for something? I guess you can trim a sail. Is that it? Why the B?

PAUL

Why not?

JERRY

It's a dumb name for a fishing boat.

PAUL

Are you saying I'm dumb? (JERRY pulls back a bit.) Don't worry, kid. It's all right. I've been called worse.

JERRY

Clare says you'd been a lot of places. She said you saw somebody get hung in Hong Kong. Did you?

PAUL

Why would Clare lie?

JERRY

I am not saying she did. Maybe you were the one lying.

PAUL

I don't lie unless there's a good reason, and I don't want to talk about it. I don't know why I even told her.

JERRY

That's Clare. She gets you talking, and then you can't stop. If you have been all those places, what the heck are you doing in Gloucester?

PAUL

I've been wondering that myself.

JERRY

What do you know about this Henry who's taking you to Boston. I don't like him.

PAUL

Why not?

JERRY

He's after Clare.

PAUL

He's too old for her.

JERRY

So are you.

PAUL

Maybe you're just too young.

JERRY

Not by much. She was only two years ahead of me in school. Anyway, she wouldn't—well, her Pa might not want her dating me.

PAUL

Why not? You seem like a good enough guy.

JERRY

Sometimes being a good guy isn't enough around here. My father was Jewish.

PAUL

So what?

JERRY

Some people aren't crazy about Jews. Some people don't even try to hide it.

PAUL

Some people are assholes.

JERRY

I'm only half Jewish. My ma wasn't, so that means I'm not really one myself—or so I've been told. I've only ever gone to Synagogue a few times.

PAUL

Your Dad didn't take you?

JERRY

He died of the influenza. Made it all the way through the war and then some flu bug comes along and does him in.

PAUL

Took a lot of good folks.

JERRY

I was a baby when he died, so I don't remember him at all, but my grandmother keeps the Sabbath, and I think about going someday, but I wouldn't know what to do. She says there's a rite of conversion I'd have to go through, but I don't know about all that. Maybe I'm just chicken.

PAUL

You don't look chicken to me, and I doubt you're being Jewish would bother Clare one bit.

JERRY

It's not Clare or her Pa either. He's a good guy, but he might worry about what other people would say. Everybody goes on about what's happening in Europe, but it isn't all that much better here.

PAUL

You can't let that stop you from being who you are and standing up for what you believe in.

JERRY

I'm not sure I even know what I believe in.

PAUL

There's time. You'll figure it out.

JERRY

Maybe. You still never told me how you came up with the name Trimmy B. Or is that something you don't want to talk about either?

PAUL

It was my brother's name. He died in a car wreck a couple of years ago. I was at sea, and he was already in the ground before I even knew he was gone.

JERRY

Sorry.

PAUL

It's all done now, but I think he'd have liked having a boat named after him.

JERRY

How'd he get a name like Trimmy?

PAUL

That was the old man's doing. Mom gave us high class names from the Bible or some fancy book she'd read, and then he called us all stupid names he'd made up. Those were the ones that stuck—at least when we were kids.

JERRY

What was yours?

PAUL

That, pal, is something you ain't ever gonna know.

JERRY

Don't let Clare hear you say "ain't."

PAUL

You like her, don't you?

JERRY

So do you.

PAUL

I'm not staying around.

JERRY

Neither is she. Her and Beth are gonna fly this coop one day and leave us all crying in our beer.

PAUL

Things change. People change.

JERRY

I don't.

PAUL

Well then, you don't have the sense God gave a pissant.

JERRY

What?

PAUL

Something my old man used to say just before he took off his belt.

(HENRY enters, pauses, and looks around before moving toward them)

JERRY

Your Boston buddy is here.

PAUL

I wouldn't go so far as to call him my "buddy." Is he coming our way?

JERRY

Yeah.

PAUL

I figured he would. Smile, Jerry. It's all right.

HENRY

Hello, my Midwestern fisherman friend! Have you decided about Boston? I have secured us transport on the early train. I would invite this other young man to join us, but he seems to be working, and, besides, there are only two young ladies in our party. He would be the lame duck out.

JERRY

I'm working, and I don't go to Boston. There's nothing to see in Boston. Excuse me, I got to go clear a table.

JERRY retreats from the bar.

HENRY

What do you say Paul, will you be joining us?

PAUL

I'm considering it.

HENRY

Please do. I hope to know you better. You are not like the others here.

PAUL

I'm not from Gloucester.

HENRY

No, you are not. My question is what brought you here.

PAUL

I might ask the same of you.

HENRY

I am a traveler young man, as are you. I travel and I watch the world. It is a strange and sometimes frightening place. I like to know what I am up against.

PAUL

That sounds reasonable—if you're a man who has reason to be scared.

HENRY

I think there is ample reason to be "scared" as you say. But not tonight. Will you come with us to Boston?

PAUL

Yeah. I'm coming.

HENRY

Good then. It is settled. The train leaves at six thirty. The match will not begin in earnest until nine or so. I've heard there's a fine Oyster House where we can dine. Now, I have to run a small errand. I will be back—how do you say? In a shake of the lamb's tail? Take care!

(He pats PAUL's arm, and departs. JERRY returns.)

JERRY

What an asshole!

PAUL

I think it's more complicated than that.

JERRY

What do you mean?

PAUL

There's something off about him.

JERRY

Do you think he's some kind of spy or something?

PAUL

The question is, what would he be spying on? And why?

JERRY

I don't know. People say there's going to be a war.

PAUL

Probably.

JERRY

Aren't you worried about it?

PAUL

I'm worried about a lot of things, Jerry, but worry doesn't do us a whole hell of a lot of good, does it?

JERRY

I guess not, but I can't help it.

(BETH enters and comes straight to the bar.)

BETH

I ran into Henry on the way in. He said you decided to brave Boston?

PAUL

I have. Aren't you coming with us?

BETH

What do you think I'm all dressed up for?

PAUL

Were we supposed to dress up?

BETH

We are going to Boston, Hon. People dress up when they go to Boston. Tell him Jerry.

JERRY

None of my business what people are wearing or where they go. I'm going down cellar and get another case of beer. If anyone comes in, tell them I'll be right back up.

(He exits.)

PAUL

I put on a clean shirt, but I don't have a suit or anything like that.

BETH

You look fine.

PAUL

I thought Clare would be here by now.

BETH

I met some of your crew this afternoon.

PAUL

Why? Where?

BETH

They were down at the docks. Isn't that where they're supposed to be? Unless they're like you and sneaking off to Boston.

PAUL

I'm not sneaking. I told them where I was going.

BETH

I'm going to do a story about your bunch. I've known a lot of outside crews to dock here over the years, but your guys are different.

PAUL

We're just fishermen.

BETH

Well, yeah; that's how it looks.

PAUL

That's how it is!

BETH

Maybe.

PAUL

What do you mean, "Maybe"?

BETH

Let's see. Two of you are from San Diego.

PAUL

How do you know that?

BETH

They're a pretty chatty lot once you get them talking. Besides the San Diego boys, there's one from Mississippi, two from New Jersey.

PAUL

Fishermen come from all over.

BETH

You've got a guy on board from Montana. I know I call you a cowboy, but—

PAUL

Why *do* you call me a Cowboy?

BETH

That goes without saying, but your friend really is one.

PAUL

I don't know why you're thinking it's strange that we come from other places. Ship captains hire from all over.

BETH

I grew up in Gloucester, Massachusetts. I've been around fishing boats and fishing crews all my life. My father was a fisherman. There's something off about you and them. Your Captain's not even on board. He's in Portsmouth—or that's what Montana told me.

PAUL

He's the captain. He goes where he wants. Probably got business there.

BETH

The deck is immaculate. There's not one thing out of place. You're in port, on a day off, and they're swabbing the decks?

PAUL

So?

BETH

Looked like they were just killing time to me. Why aren't you all out fishing?

PAUL

I hurt my hand, and the captain's--

BETH

Away on business? Are you kidding me? Something's up with you guys. When I asked them about you, they didn't know who I was talking about at first, and then they said, "Oh, you mean "Gunner"! Why do they call you Gunner? Are you out there shooting fish?

PAUL

You better go write for the *Globe*. I expect you'll do just fine there.

BETH

Oh, I will, Cowboy. One of these days. I will!

(Enter AGGIE. She heads for the bar.)

AGGIE

What are you two doing here?

BETH

We're holding down the fort for Jerry, and he's holding down the fort for Clare.

AGGIE

Why isn't this one at sea? I thought he was a fisherman.

BETH

His crew's too busy swabbing the deck, he's out of ammunition, and his captain's AWOL.

PAUL

He's not AWOL, and stop talking about me in the third person! I'm right here!

AGGIE

Why would he need ammunition?

PAUL

I don't need ammunition! Sorry, Ma'am. I shouldn't have raised my voice. I don't mean any disrespect.

AGGIE

I'm not bothered.

PAUL

You're the lady who tells fortunes, aren't you?

AGGIE

I've been known to, especially when a young man calls me Ma'am. But if you want yours told, I'd want something in return.

PAUL

That would be fair. How much?

AGGIE

Just back me up. You saw what I saw out on the sea. I know you did.

(CLARE enters breathless. She, too, is dressed up.)

CLARE

I'm not late, am I? I needed to make sure Pa was all set for the night.

BETH

Did you tell him where you were going?

CLARE

I did what you said. I just told him I was going out with you.

BETH

Dressed like that?

CLARE

He was waiting for Jack Benny to come on; I could have been wearing a gunny sack for all he cared.

PAUL

You wouldn't look half bad in a gunny sack.

BETH

That may be the worst come-on line, I've ever heard. Shouldn't Henry be here by now?

As if on cue, Henry enters.

HENRY

I am not too late, am I, ladies? You both look lovely. Here you go, Mister Midwest.

He hands a tie to PAUL.

I thought that perhaps you would not have a tie in your sea chest.

PAUL

I need a tie to go to a wrestling match?

HENRY

This is a special exhibition bout, and we will need to join in the celebration afterwards.

CLARE

As long as we can make the last train home.

HENRY

I will get you home, Fraulein. Do not fear.

(MICHAEL enters.)

MICHAEL

Where's Jerry? Who's minding the bar? You kids need to be leaving if you're going to catch the train.

HENRY

You are right as usual! Let us go, my friends.

AGGIE has been turning cards over.

AGGIE

Be careful down there. If I'm reading these cards right, it doesn't look like a good night for taking risks.

HENRY

I must disagree with your predictions, Madame. It is always a good night for meeting adventure.

MICHAEL

Just bring those girls home safe, Fellas.

PAUL

We will! I guarantee it!

BETH

And a Cowboy's word is golden!

HENRY

I'm not sure this young man is a Cowboy! A Cowboy roams the range. This young man roams the sea—but maybe there is no difference. Come! We must hurry.

They depart just as JERRY struggles in with a case of beer.

JERRY

Are they gone already? I don't like either of those guys.

MICHAEL

They'll be fine.

AGGIE

I don't know about the fisherman, but that German is an odd duck. He spends a lot of time at that Finn's Bakery over on Chestnut. They say the Finns are thick as thieves with the Germans.

MICHAEL

So what?

AGGIE

It's all in the cards, Michael. Times are dark and they're going to get darker. We've got to be ready. (Deals herself another card.) The Jack of Clubs! A young man with dreams, good hearted, but fiery. There's a secret or two there.

MICHAEL

Good God, you're not going to stop are you?

AGGIE

Look at this! The ten of spades. Bad news and worry all around.

MICHAEL

Oh Jesus. You want a drink while you're looking for harbingers of death? Jerry, pour this woman a Hennessey. I might have to have one with her.

JERRY

What's a Hennessey?

End of Scene.

ACT II

SCENE i: Sunday morning. The Bar seems deserted.

AT RISE: MICHAEL enters from up right of the Bar. He is headed toward the “studio” when there is a banging on the front door. We can see JERRY outside. MICHAEL waves him away.

MICHAEL

It’s Sunday! We’re closed.

JERRY keeps knocking. MICHAEL relents and lets him in.

Quiet! You’ll wake Howard. What part of “We’re closed” don’t you get?

JERRY

Have you heard anything from Clare?

MICHAEL

Clare doesn’t come in on Sundays. The bar’s closed, remember?

JERRY

Her Pa’s going nuts. He’s worried she hasn’t come home.

MICHAEL

Was he worried before or after you pounded on his door and woke him up?

JERRY

Where could she be? Beth’s not home either.

MICHAEL

Then they’re both together and having a fine time, and you should mind your own business.

JERRY

They weren’t on the late train last night or the early morning rider.

MICHAEL

And how would you know?

JERRY

I went down to meet them. I was worried about Clare.

MICHAEL

And what gives you the right to be worried about Clare?

JERRY

She's my friend, isn't she, and it looks like somebody should be worried.

MICHAEL

She won't be thanking you for getting her Pa all up in her face about it.

JERRY

He didn't care. He slammed the door on me. I bet that foreign bastard has taken advantage.

MICHAEL

I doubt that very much. Beth was with her and so was Paul.

JERRY

How do we know we can trust him? God knows what they all got up to in Boston.

MICHAEL

I hate to break it to you, Jerry, but Boston's not the cesspool of sin, you think it is.

JERRY

The trouble is Clare trusts everyone.

MICHAEL

You're the one lurking around, spying on her.

JERRY

I wasn't lurking.

MICHAEL

Then it's a good thing she didn't get off that train and catch you at it.

(There is a banging on the door. We can see AGGIE at the window. She keeps banging as MICHAEL goes to open it. AGGIE storms in past him)

We're closed! Read the sign! It's Sunday morning! Doesn't anybody go to church anymore? I'm going to have the town constable on my ass!

AGGIE

No one's asking to be served. Wait until you hear about what's going on down by the docks!

JERRY

Has there been an accident? Has something happened to Clare?

MICHAEL

What are you talking about?

AGGIE

The Coast Guard's searching the Cowboy's boat.

JERRY

I knew it!

MICHAEL

You don't know shit. How do you know they're searching the boat?

AGGIE

Well, why else are they pulled up alongside her? I tell you those boys saw the Serpent too. They must of taken photographs. I expect the Coast Guard wants to know what they saw. They'll be coming after Bobby and me next. Do you think I should go warn him?

MICHAEL

They're just checking fishing permits. Did you see exactly what they were doing?

AGGIE

No. Not exactly. I was too far off, and I had left my telescope on Bobby's boat. I ran to get it, but by the time I got back, they'd pulled away.

The door opens and BETH casually walks in.

BETH

What's up with the open door? You can't serve on a Sunday.

MICHAEL

I'm not serving anyone!

JERRY

Where's Clare? How'd you get home?

BETH

Clare's gone by her house to get some sleep. We're exhausted. Clare's Pa said you'd been there in a panic, so I figured you'd be chasing around, having fits and causing trouble. I came here to let Michael know what was going on.

MICHAEL

What happened? Did you miss your train?

BETH

It was such a good time, we weren't ready to come home. We went to a nightclub and then Henry treated us to a night at the Parker House.

JERRY

What?

BETH

Don't worry, Jerry. We had a room all our own.

JERRY

Where is he now?

BETH

I don't know. He disappeared for a while last night, and then came back by our table to tell us we were all checked in at the hotel. He said he had business in Boston—

JERRY

I bet he did!

BETH

--and wouldn't be coming home with us, but he'd see us at breakfast. Then, he didn't show up, but he left a message at the desk. Our rooms and meals were all paid for.

JERRY

Did you see who he went off with last night?

BETH

Not really. I was too busy toasting Gorgeous George and his victory in the ring. Clare said she saw him drinking with some men she didn't know, but I wasn't worrying about old Henry. I was just thinking that when I go to work for *The Globe*, I'll be living it up like that all the time.

AGGIE

How did you get back?

BETH

That's all down to the Cowboy. For a guy who hadn't been into Boston much, he knew a lot of people there. He ran into some friends in the Coast Guard at the nightclub. He stayed on with them, but he helped us get a taxi to the hotel.

MICHAEL

So, how'd you get home?

BETH

Paul showed up and surprised us this morning. We went down the docks and his pals brought us all home in style on one of their cutters!

AGGIE

What? That was you on the Coast Guard boat? I saw it in the harbor, and I was thinking there must be trouble.

BETH

You should have come over. I would have introduced you.

AGGIE

Who has friends in the Coast Guard that can run him home like a taxi? Are they allowed to do that?

JERRY

I thought all the Coast Guard did was patrol the light houses. Did he say how he knew them?

BETH

(Moving to the door.)

No. Unlike some people, I don't question my friends on their every move. I only came in to tell Michael that Clare and I got home safe.

MICHAEL

You and Clare should stop back by this evening. I want to have a little party the night before our first show, and you can tell us all about your night on the town.

BETH

It was crazy ! People were taking photographs of us with Gorgeous George. You might want to mention our names on the news. We're almost famous.

Exits.

JERRY

What does she mean they're "almost famous"?

MICHAEL

We'll find out in good time. Now, go home the two of you. You come back for the party too. Bring your cards, Aggie. I might let you tell me my fortune for once.

AGGIE

I'm wondering if some futures might be more than even my cards can sort out.

(End of Scene)

SCENE ii: Sunday at seven. MICHAEL is behind the bar.

AT RISE: CLARE and BETH are entering.

CLARE

Are we too early? Can we help?

BETH

What do you need us to do?

MICHAEL

Not much. I got hot dogs in the cooler. I'll put them on the griller when everyone gets here.

BETH

Who's coming?

MICHAEL

Just "family." You girls, Aggie, and Jerry. I sent word to the Cowboy's boat, and Henry's rooms. I want to hear their side of last night to make sure you girls aren't telling too many tall tales.

BETH

I would never lie to you, Michael.

CLARE

Exaggerate a little, maybe?

BETH

But lie? Never!

CLARE

It was amazing! The wrestling matches were so intense.

BETH

How would you know? You had your eyes closed most of the time.

CLARE

Those men were half naked!

MICHAEL

Only half?

CLARE

Do you think that was Gorgeous George's real hair? It didn't look like a wig. I kept looking at it at the nightclub, but he was sitting at the other end of the table.

BETH

The way he was jumping around? A wig would have come off? He probably spends more time and money on his hair than I do.

CLARE

I bet his wife helps him.

MICHAEL

This is what you come back with from a wrestling match?

CLARE

You should interview us on the air.

MICHAEL

The good citizens of Gloucester might not understand your interest in wig-wearing, half naked men named Gorgeous.

BETH

The wrestling matches were fun, but afterwards, was even better! We went to *The Cocoanut Grove*! It was packed.

CLARE

Henry bought me this drink made with tomato juice and celery sticks. He called it a "Bloody Mary." It was awful!

BETH

She poured it in a plant when Henry wasn't looking.

CLARE

I thought people only did that in the movies, but I didn't know what else to do. I didn't want to be impolite. I don't think it would have killed the plant, do you? I hope it didn't kill the plant.

MICHAEL

I doubt that's the first Bloody Mary anyone ever poured in it. That's one reason I don't have fancy mixed drinks on the menu or keep plants around the bar.

CLARE

We had so much fun, but we didn't mean to worry anyone.

MICHAEL

I wasn't worried, but poor Jerry was losing his mind.

CLARE

That's just . . . Jerry. He can't help it.

BETH

Eventually, you're going to have to be clear with that boy, Clare. Break his heart with one clean chop.

CLARE

He should go back to college or technical school. Even if he stays on the boats, it would make life better for him.

BETH

And get him out of your hair.

CLARE

I'm going back to school as soon as I can, or maybe I'll just go away somewhere instead. Aggie said I was going on a journey. I wish they let women work on the docks. I'd catch a ride around the world.

MICHAEL

What will I do for a bar maid?

BETH

Hire Aggie.

MICHAEL

And send everyone screaming for the door.

PAUL opens the front door and peeks in.

PAUL

I heard there was a party going on.

MICHAEL

You heard right. Come in.

BETH

I'd think you'd had enough partying with your Coast Guard pals last night.

PAUL

(Coming all the way in.)

We weren't partying. It was serious stuff. They were telling me about all the smugglers outside the 12-mile limit.

BETH

You were pretty chummy with all those sailors too. I thought you didn't go to Boston much.

PAUL

I've been around a lot of ports—made a few friends along the way.

BETH

Why didn't you introduce us?

PAUL

I figured those poor slobes would be out of their league when it came down to it. How could they compete with Gorgeous George or Herr Henry?

BETH

You never even asked us to dance.

PAUL

I would of had to get in line.

BETH

So, you were keeping tabs on us, huh?

CLARE

Stop pestering him! This is supposed to be all about the new station. Tell us more, Michael. How will you start? What time? Will there be music? Did you decide on a theme song? You haven't told us anything!

MICHAEL

Enough questions! I'll get to all that. Anyone ready for a hot dog?

BETH

The cowboy here might not be used to such fancy fare. After all, the president served them to the King and Queen. Maybe they're not for the Hoi Polloi anymore.

CLARE

I read somewhere that the Queen ate hers with a fork.

BETH

How déclassé!

CLARE

If Beth's going to be talking French, I better start on the canapés.

MICHAEL

Already done. Howard did them earlier. You can help me bring them out.

BETH

Is Howard coming down?

MICHAEL gives her the stink eye and exits followed by CLARE.

PAUL

Does Howard really exist?

BETH

I've even seen him. He used to come down more, but he's not one much for hanging out with the common folk.

PAUL

Avoiding the "Hoi Polloi"?

BETH

Yeah. Kind of like Henry last night. Did you see where he went off to? He was there being all grand and sophisticated, and then he disappeared.

PAUL

Maybe he had friends of his own he needed to meet.

BETH

Do you think he's some kind of spy? I do.

PAUL

You need to get that over active imagination of yours under control.

BETH

There's a war about to break out in Europe if you haven't noticed. Why do you think the King and Queen were here eating hotdogs? England goes hundreds of years without ever coming to the "Colonies," and suddenly they're eating hotdogs with the president? Something's going on, and England needs us. It won't be like last time. We won't get off so easy.

PAUL

A lot of good men died last time. A lot of good women too. You call that getting off easy?

BETH

You'll have to go in the army.

PAUL

Me?

BETH

There'll be a draft. You know there will.

PAUL

Isn't this your friend's big night? We should leave war talk until tomorrow.

BETH

Tomorrow might be too late.

Knocking at the door followed by JERRY & AGGIE coming in. They carry baskets.

AGGIE

Where's Michael? We got crabs to cook.

BETH

Crabs and hot dogs. Who needs a war to end civilization?

End of Scene.

SCENE iii: The Bar.

AT RISE: Everyone except HENRY is there. The remains of a “feast” is scattered. There is evidence of alcohol consumption. MICHAEL is seated somewhere central. He is explaining the show.

MICHAEL

First off in the morning, it will just be me or Howard all alone on air, saying “Wake Up” Gloucester.

JERRY

Do you think that people know you’re going on the air?

MICHAEL

They’ve been announcing it from Boston over WMEX.

BETH

It was in the paper all this week. Anyone with a radio in Gloucester will be listening in.

MICHAEL

Howard told all his pals at the Yacht Club.

JERRY

I never think of Howard as having “pals.”

AGGIE

He should warn them about the sea serpent, so they know to keep their fancy boats ashore.

MICHAEL

There will be no mention of sea serpents!

CLARE

What will there be?

MICHAEL

The latest news feeds from the Washing Bureau and the Associated Press. Weather reports. I’ll be getting telephone predictions in from the Weather Bureau down in Boston.

AGGIE

Boston weather is not Cape Ann weather. Never has been.

MICHAEL

Don't worry. This show is going to be all about Cape Ann—even the weather. There's going to be a special segment strictly for Gloucester, and Jerry here will be helping me out.

BETH

Jerry's going to be on the air, and I'm not?

JERRY

I'm not gonna to be on the air! I could never be on the air.

MICHAEL

We'll see about that. I've hired Jerry to check in every morning with the old men down on the dock. Fishermen know the weather as well as anybody. Their lives depend on it.

PAUL

Red Skies at night; Sailor's delight.

BETH

Really? You're going to go with old wives' tales?

MICHAEL

Old fishermen's tales, thank you very much. I'm thinking of having a whole segment just checking in on the weather with these guys and doing a little history while we're at it.

CLARE

I bet my Pa has a few stories he could tell.

MICHAEL

It's how we'll keep the past alive.

BETH

I can't believe you're gonna have Jerry doing the reporting and not me.

JERRY

Those old men are my friends. Heck, they've been the only fathers I've ever known. They'll tell me stuff they would never tell you.

AGGIE

Most of those old men have seen the Sea Serpent. I know they have. They're all afraid to tell because the world will say they're crazy.

MICHAEL

Whereas you've already proven them right.

AGGIE
(To PAUL.)

Tell him! Tell them all.

PAUL

I don't know what you want me to say.

AGGIE

I know you and your crew saw the same thing I've been seeing. Tell them!

PAUL

There's nothing to tell.

AGGIE

Are you saying I'm a liar?

CLARE

Please, Aggie, this is Michael's night.

PAUL

Now, ma'am. I may have seen something out there that shouldn't ought to be there, but I don't think it's a big old water snake.

AGGIE

What is it then? Tell me that!

JERRY

I know.

AGGIE

How the hell do you know anything?

JERRY

You're not the only one seeing stuff. The men talk around me. I've heard them. If you'd shut up every now and then, you'd hear them too.

AGGIE

What kind of talk?

JERRY

Some of the men are saying there's U-boats in the water out there.

CLARE

What?!

MICHAEL

U-boats? Seriously?

JERRY

They're not supposed to be there, but they are.

AGGIE

What the hell is a U-boat?

BETH

It's a submarine. Are you saying there are submarines off our coast? Whose? Ours? It can't be the Germans. That's not allowed, is it?

JERRY

I'm just saying what I've heard. Paul knows what I'm talking about.

CLARE

Do you, Paul? Have you seen them?

PAUL

I--

The front doors open and HENRY appears. He carries two bottles of Champagne.

HENRY

Hello, my friends. I understand there is a celebration for Michael here tonight. I would not have missed it for the world!

CLARE

Henry! Where did you go, last night?

HENRY

It was necessary that I connect with some old friends, and now I celebrate with new ones.

HENRY starts popping and pouring champagne.

BETH

We were just talking about--

PAUL

Michael's been telling us about his show. Jerry's going to be the weatherman.

JERRY

I'm not going to be on the air. I'm just . . . We're still figuring out what I'm doing.

BETH

Maybe you can figure out what we're all doing while you're at it.

PAUL

Miss Aggie, Ma'am. Maybe you should read the cards for Michael. Give him a heads up.

AGGIE

Maybe I ought to be telling yours instead. You said you were interested.

PAUL

Sure. I wouldn't mind.

AGGIE

You want to do it now?

PAUL

Yeah. Now's good.

While the rest are chatting with HENRY at the bar. AGGIE settles at one of the tables downstage and hands PAUL the deck of cards. CLARE and BETH are torn between listening to HENRY and trying to see what's going on at the table.

AGGIE

Just shuffle them enough to know there's nothing wrong with the deck.

PAUL

(Takes the cards and begins to shuffle.)

What do you mean, wrong?

AGGIE

Some fortune tellers have been known to stack the deck. You always got to be careful.

PAUL

We're not playing poker.

AGGIE

Aren't we?

PAUL

Poker's a game of chance.

AGGIE

So's the future. Ducky, or haven't you heard? You sure put the quash on all that submarine talk once the foreigner showed up. Why?

PAUL

How long should I shuffle?

AGGIE

You're a close one, aren't you? That's enough shuffling. Now pick thirteen cards and be thinking about what questions you want to ask.

PAUL will be doing this as they speak.

PAUL

I thought thirteen is unlucky.

AGGIE

I'd say people are unlucky, not numbers.

PAUL

What kind of Questions?

AGGIE

Call them wishes if you want. Things you want to know. Things you need answered. Things you want to be true. Now, take the thirteen cards you drawn and make three stacks of four and one more for the final tell.

PAUL

Am I doing this right?

AGGIE

You're doing just fine. Good. Now think about three specific questions but don't say them out loud.

PAUL

And then what?

AGGIE

Then you hand me one of the stacks.

PAUL takes a breath, closes his eyes for a moment, then pushes one of the stacks across to her.

PAUL

All right. Let's see what comes up.

AGGIE will be turning over one card at a time.

AGGIE

Ace of Diamonds!

PAUL

That's good, isn't it?

As they speak the next few lines, BETH and CLARE will make their way over to the table bringing one of the Champagne bottles. They pour a glass for Aggie. Paul waves it off. The others will gradually follow.

AGGIE

It can be. Depends on the circumstances. Could be money coming your way. Could be good news. Could be a big change in your life.

PAUL

Nothing wrong with that.

AGGIE

Depends on what comes after. Let's see. Five of hearts. That's a jealousy card. Could be someone's jealous of all your good fortune. Could be some ill wind is blowing your way.

PAUL

Can I put it back?

AGGIE

Doesn't work that way. Hearts are usually good, but they can be broken. Ah. What did I just say. Here's the five of Spades.

PAUL

Is that bad?

BETH
(Joining in.)

Spades are always bad, aren't they?

AGGIE
Stay out of this, Missy. Spades are not bad in and of themselves. Sometimes they're just a temporary obstacle that ends up being a blessing in disguise.

PAUL
Turn over the last one.

AGGIE
You sure you want these girls peeking over your shoulder? Maybe this isn't the night for looking too closely at the life to come.

PAUL
Turn it over!

AGGIE
Nine of Hearts, all your dreams come true! That could trump the ill wind coming and maybe the obstacle we just heard about isn't as strong as you might think it is. Maybe you're wishing for the wrong thing.

PAUL
It wouldn't be the first time.

CLARE
This should wait for later. We're thinking of putting some music on. Michael went upstairs to get the Victrola, so we can dance.

AGGIE
It will take Michael a while to set up. You want me to go on, boy?

PAUL
Might as well.

PAUL pushes the next stack her way.

AGGIE
Eight of diamonds. New job ahead, or at least a change.

PAUL

It says that? Really?

CLARE

Why? Are you expecting a change?

BETH

Are you leaving Gloucester? I heard those Coast Guard guys ask you about that on the boat this morning.

PAUL

Keep reading, ma'am.

AGGIE

The King of Clubs! This could be someone you know. Usually, the King can be trusted. He can be kindhearted, but clubs are fire signs. This is a man with fire. Kind hearted, even generous maybe, but I wouldn't cross him.

BETH

Maybe that's your captain who's always somewhere else.

CLARE

Stop interrupting, Beth. You're the one always saying the cards are nonsense!

BETH

Even nonsense can be scary.

AGGIE

If you girls would kindly shut your mouths, I have a fortune to read.

CLARE

Sorry.

AGGIE

The next card doesn't show things getting much better. The eight of spades. That's temptation and danger. Approach any new problem with caution, but we get the two of diamonds right after. That softens some of the danger.

PAUL

How?

AGGIE

Could be you're only facing a change in partnership, maybe a little gossip and disapproval on its heels.

BETH

You do know she's making all this up.

PAUL

I asked her to tell the cards, and that's what she's doing.

AGGIE

And what a man does with it is up to him.

MICHAEL has brought down the Victrola and is setting it up. HENRY comes over.

HENRY

May I join you? There is a painting by Lucas Van Leyden of The Austrian Princess Margarethe having her fortune told. Scholars debate whether the painting shows the cards foretelling her rise to power, or in some way causing it. Whatever the case, the poor woman was to face much misery and death.

CLARE

What kind of misery?

HENRY

She lived a life of trials and losses, but for a woman of her time she had unimaginable influence and glory. Life is always a trade-off. Looking over here I couldn't help but remember that painting, and then I thought that if I were a great artist, I would capture this wise woman reading this young man's cards while the rest watched on, and years from now some stranger might see you all and wonder.

PAUL

Really? What would they be wondering?

HENRY

Whether you were simply innocent children playing at life before a wall of fire came down.

CLARE

What?

HENRY

Or happy travelers on your way to adventure. Who knows? Only Frau Aggie and the cards can tell us.

AGGIE

I can tell your fortune next if you like.

HENRY

I prefer to face the future as it comes.

PAUL

The cards are telling me that there's a change coming.

HENRY

Are we saying transformation, or simply a southerly wind?

PAUL

I reckon time will tell.

MICHAEL

(Calls out.)

I got this music box set up. Come on over and pick out a record to play.

BETH

Michael to the rescue!

BETH & CLARE hurry to sort through the records. HENRY turns to follow them.

PAUL

Maybe we should stop all this for a while, ma'am and join the party.

AGGIE

It doesn't matter in the end. We can leave the cards where they lay. The future's not going anywhere without us.

HENRY

I will have the honor of dancing with you, Frau Fortuna?

PAUL

I thought I might get the first dance.

AGGIE

(Standing and moving toward the bar.)

Sorry, lads. I don't cavort with sailors—or foreigners. I think I'll see if there's a drop of Hennessey left at the bar.

PAUL

We'll pick up with this later.

HENRY

And perhaps I too will beg your expertise after all.

AGGIE

Depends on how much Hennessey Michael's got left.

BETH

(Calling out from the bar.)

Hey Cowboy! Listen to what I've got for you.

The audience can either hear the opening notes of Gene Autry singing "Back in the Saddle Again" if rights can be secured or some version of "The Wabash Cannonball" which is in the public domain. The sound and lights will fade.

End of Scene

SCENE iv: The party's almost over. MICHAEL is clearing up. JERRY is helping. AGGIE and PAUL return to the cards on the table. CLARE and BETH come stand behind them. HENRY joins them, but hangs back a bit.

AGGIE

You want to pick up where we left off?

PAUL

We might as well.

AGGIE

There's one more stack and a wish card.

PAUL

Let's get to it.

AGGIE

(To BETH & CLARE.)

If you two can't be quiet, go help Michael clear up—don't interrupt us.

BETH

I wouldn't dream of it.

HENRY

What do you dream of Fraulein Beth?

BETH

Nothing I care to share with you, Herr Henry. Go on Aggie. I'll be quiet.

AGGIE

Good!

This time AGGIE turns over all four cards at once in rapid succession.

Oh. Oh!

PAUL

That doesn't sound good.

AGGIE

Club, spade, spade, club--almost always bad news.

PAUL

How bad?

AGGIE

Depends on how you want to look at it.

PAUL

I see the Ace of Spades. Isn't that a death card?

AGGIE

Not always. Death isn't the only difficult ending. It's the four of clubs just before it, I'm more worried about. Beware of liars. Don't accept anything anyone tells you.

PAUL

That comes pretty natural to me.

HENRY

In your line of work?

JERRY

Coming over. He has obviously been listening.

Fishermen are smarter than you think. We're not all trusting fools.

HENRY

I am not sure fishing is really this young man's line of work. He might be the one who's telling lies.

CLARE

What are you talking about?

HENRY

Just commenting on the cards as they fall.

PAUL

Get on with it, please.

AGGIE

The ace is followed by the two of spades. That means a break up of some kind. I don't mean romantic, either. You've got change coming in your life. The cards have all been pointing that way.

PAUL

Isn't change always in the cards? Isn't that how life works?

AGGIE

But second chances aren't. Lucky for you, this batch ends with the three of clubs. Could be love. Could be money, but you've got a second chance coming your way, young man. You need to be careful what you do with it.

BETH

What about that last card? The wish card?

HENRY

Yes. We want to hear this final word.

AGGIE

You okay with that Paul? I could send these clowns away.

PAUL

Read.

AGGIE

(Turning over the final card.)

The four of hearts.

CLARE

That was my card, too!

AGGIE

So, there's travel and change ahead for you too. I hope you've got your bags packed.

PAUL

Always, ma'am. Always.

CLARE

What does that mean? Are you really going away?

PAUL

Not tonight.

HENRY

If not tonight than soon, I would imagine.

PAUL

I bet your bags are packed too, Herr Heinrich. I expect your family is going to want you home soon.

HENRY

My family is gone, young man. I am alone on my journey, and it is not over yet. If you will excuse me. I must take farewell of my host.

CLARE

But you'll be around for the show tomorrow?

HENRY

I am by nature an early riser, but I have an appointment in the morning I must not miss. I will come by if I can.

HENRY heads to the bar. AGGIE is packing up her cards and preparing to leave.

BETH

I wonder if that man ever sleeps.

AGGIE

I've told Bobby I'll not be setting out pots tomorrow.

BETH

You don't want to be late for Michael.

AGGIE

It starts at eight? I'll be here.

She too goes to the bar, pats MICHAEL'S arm then exits, followed soon after by HENRY.

CLARE

Are you really going away?

PAUL

I don't know. It depends on what my Captain decides.

BETH

Henry just likes stirring the pot.

CLARE

But you are going to have to leave?

PAUL

Maybe. We might have overstayed our welcome here.

CLARE

What does that mean?

PAUL

I can't say. It's complicated.

BETH

Are there really submarines out there?

PAUL

Jerry seems to think there are.

CLARE

He said you've seen them, too.

PAUL

A couple might have come up, and we might have sold them some fish.

BETH

What? Who are they? Are they Germans? That's illegal, isn't it. The Treaty of Versailles said they couldn't do stuff like that.

PAUL

That treaty's just a piece of paper these days. (standing) I'll try to come by in the morning for Michael's show. How will that work?

CLARE

Be here by seven. He'll be broadcasting from the booth, but we'll have our own radio out here.

PAUL

I'll come if I can.

*He waves to MICHAEL and heads out the door. JERRY walks out with him.
Michael comes over to the table.*

MICHAEL

That looked like trouble.

CLARE

Do you think there's going to be another war, Michael?

MICHAEL

In Europe? Probably, but there's a good chance we can stay out of it—at least for a while. We'll have to wait and see.

BETH

Will you be able to talk about it on the show? People will want to know what's going on.

MICHAEL

That will depend on what they tell us and how much we're allowed to tell.

CLARE

Do you know more than you're saying? What does Howard say?

MICHAEL

Howard says to keep our heads down and go about business as usual.

BETH

Easy for him to say. He's not in the thick of it.

MICHAEL

Come on girls, help me clear up the rest of this mess and pick out a song to start off our program with tomorrow. I'm thinking "Over the Rainbow." What do you say?

BETH

Too slow. Too sappy. I'm thinking "Come on Get Happy." Of course, maybe we don't want to remind people that Satan is out there somewhere waiting for us.

CLARE

I don't know about Satan, but I wish there really was a sea serpent out there.

BETH

Why?

CLARE

I'd like to think that amazing and magic things could happen, and not just wars and unhappiness.

BETH

You're worried the Cowboy's running out on you.

MICHAEL

Maybe, she just wants a way out on her own.

CLARE

You think the sea serpent would let me hitch a ride?

End of Scene

SCENE: v: Early Monday Morning. CLARE is at one of the tables dusting off a large Cathedral Radio Model. PAUL enters.

Is it all right if I come on in?

PAUL

You're early.

CLARE

I might not be able to stay for the whole broadcast.

PAUL

That's too bad.

CLARE

I'm sorry, but I have to check back in with my captain.

PAUL

Jerry hasn't gotten back with the weather report yet. Looks like a nice day for fishing.

CLARE

I need to talk to you about . . . things.

PAUL

I always like talking about "things."

CLARE

Don't be mad.

PAUL

Why would I be mad?

CLARE

Nothing says a woman is mad more than if she asks you why she should be.

PAUL

I guess you must know a lot about women. Do you like this radio? I don't think I've ever seen one like it except in the movies. Howard ordered it special so we could hear the first show on it.

CLARE

They're only going to be in the next room.

PAUL

CLARE

We want to hear it on the radio, like it's supposed to be.

PAUL

I can see that.

CLARE

You can't see it. You can only hear it. Beth says that one day the radios will all have pictures too, but that's probably just for the rich.

PAUL

I wanted to talk to you alone. We're—I'm going to be leaving soon.

CLARE

You told us that last night.

PAUL

It's not because I want to. It's because I have to. If I tell you something secret, will you promise not to tell anyone—at least not until I'm gone?

CLARE

I couldn't tell Beth?

PAUL

Not until I'm gone. Promise? I could get in a lot of trouble.

CLARE

What kind of trouble?

PAUL

I--

MICHAEL enters from upstairs. He is in a suit and tie.

I guess it can wait.

MICHAEL

You like the radio? They delivered it late last night. Howard says it's the best they have. I just wonder whether it will work being so close to the studio. Jerry says it will, but-- Jesus, it's almost time. How do I look?

CLARE

You've got almost a half hour, and why does it matter how you look? You're going to be on the radio.

MICHAEL

Howard says a man is only as confident as his lapels are sharp.

CLARE

Well, yours are super sharp. Where's Howard? Is he really coming down?

MICHAEL

He says he will. Who the hell knows?

PAUL

You look good.

MICHAEL

I feel good.

CLARE

Great.

(Beat.)

MICHAEL

I'm a nervous wreck.

Enter BETH, AGGIE & JERRY.

BETH

Have you had anything to eat? We've got fresh buns.

JERRY

My Gran made apple cake.

BETH

Why are you here, Cowboy? We were down by the docks, and your crew looks like it's getting ready to ship out.

PAUL

They're not going anywhere without me, and the captain said I could be here for Michael's first show. The whole crew is going to be listening.

BETH

Are you nervous, Michael?

MICHAEL

Not a bit.

PAUL

He's cool as a cucumber.

JERRY

I been with old Will Spinney since before Dawn. He says, there's going to be some squalls late afternoon, but they won't last. Here, I wrote down everything he said. He told me it's going to be hot all the rest of the week.

AGGIE

It's August. I could have told you that.

MICHAEL

Thanks, Jerry. Maybe I'll invite old Will to come on some morning.

JERRY

I don't think he'd agree to that. He says radio waves are gonna kill us all someday.

MICHAEL

I might as well have Aggie on, telling us about her sea serpent.

AGGIE

I resent comparing my sea serpent to Will Spinney's invisible death rays.

PAUL

Death Rays?

BETH

I knew we should never have taken her to see Buck Rogers.

HENRY Enters, carrying champagne and orange juice.

HENRY

Buck Rogers? Do I hear the name Buck Rogers? Is he not the young hero from the funny papers who has jumped forward in time?

BETH

The 25th century. Things aren't much better than they are now.

HENRY

So sad for the time traveling hero; however, I will improve this little moment we are in with some excellent champagne.

BETH

Where are you finding all this champagne in Gloucester?

HENRY

I have my sources.

PAUL

I bet you do.

JERRY

It's seven o'clock in the morning!

HENRY

A perfect time for some Florida sunshine! I must introduce you all to the joys of the Mimosa cocktail to celebrate Herr Michael's Radio Debut. I don't think you will want to toss this one in a plant, Fraulein Clare.

CLARE

You saw me?

HENRY

I see many things. Michael, will you have a glass?

MICHAEL

I'll wait until after the show, thank you. Right now, I'm going to go make sure everything's set up. I'll be back out before we start.

He exits into the side room/booth.

CLARE

We shouldn't drink Champagne this early.

BETH

Speak for yourself.

HENRY

A young lady after mien own heart.

BETH

I wouldn't go that far.

PAUL

None for me. I'm due back on my boat.

HENRY

I am sure you are, young man. We wouldn't want to have you compromised in any way, would we?

PAUL

I don't see much compromising going on anywhere these days.

HENRY

Which is a great pity, don't you think. Perhaps I should have my cards read after all.

AGGIE

Are you sure you're ready for that?

HENRY

What if I draw just one card? Do you think that would show me something I do not already know?

AGGIE

Why don't we try it and see.

Hands him the cards. He shuffles.

Now ask a question before you draw.

HENRY

Will we all find happiness?

AGGIE

To yourself!

HENRY

Why not out loud? Despite what others might think, I am not a man with many secrets—a few, yes, but who doesn't have secrets? Herr Michael's dear friend Howard spends his life in secret. Who is he and why does he avoid our company?

CLARE

Howard's shy.

HENRY

Of course. That's why he's developed a radio show. What about you, Frau Aggie? What causes you to defy God and nature as you read the cards and watch for sea monsters. What lies in the real world that frightens you away?

AGGIE

None of your damn business.

HENRY

Exactly. And our Cowboy friend says he's a simple fisherman, but is he? I doubt very much that fish are the only game in the sea that he is after. I expect he has a very different kind of game in his sights.

BETH

What kind of game are you playing, Henry, or Is everything just a game to you?

HENRY

I never play games. Even when I wrestle. it is all in dead earnest. But what about you, Beth? Fraulein Clare? Do you have secrets? Of course, you do! Keeping secrets is part of life; Where I am from, it is a matter of survival. I expect that is why young Jerry here, would rather I not know that he is a Jew.

CLARE

Stop talking about things that are none of your business!

JERRY

It's all right, Clare. I don't care if he knows I'm Jewish. My father was a ten times better man than he is.

HENRY

Of that, there is little doubt.

PAUL

Why don't you shut your mouth now, Herr Heinrich, so I don't have to shut it for you?

HENRY

Be at peace, my friend. I mean no harm. I only speak what I believe. Secrets keep no one safe. Remember that, all of you.

AGGIE

Let's get this over with. Pick your card!

He picks a card. She turns it over.

Nine of Spades. So much for Happiness.

HENRY

Why is that? What does this card mean?

AGGIE

On its own like that, it means bad luck, illness maybe, a disaster, some personal low point—do you want me to go on?

HENRY

Thank you; I have heard enough.

BETH

My mother always said life was just one damn thing after another.

HENRY

My dear Mama said that we humans begin stupid, and end up dead. I see little reason to contradict her.

CLARE

Shut up! All of you. This is a terrible way to start Michael's first day.

MICHAEL comes out of the booth.

MICHAEL

Why? What's wrong.

CLARE

Nothing, Michael. We're all just excited for you.

MICHAEL

Jerry, did you tell everyone your news?

CLARE

What news? Tell us!

JERRY

I'm coming to work for Michael full time.

MICHAEL

And then he's going back to school.

JERRY

Or in the Army. I'm thinking of signing up.

PAUL

The Navy's always looking for good men.

JERRY

My father was in the Army, and they dress better.

HENRY

So much for secrets. So much for the nine of spades. Perhaps I am the only one facing doom, and that I knew already.

BETH

Why is that?

HENRY

I have been called home.

CLARE

Do you have a home? I thought your family was gone.

HENRY

Austria is my home. The Germans may rule now, but Austria will endure.

BETH

There is going to be another war, isn't there?

HENRY

Perhaps you should consider becoming a foreign correspondent and leave crime reporting to lesser talents.

PAUL

If you're going home, you must have gotten what you came for.

HENRY

I was here for pleasure, my friends, and that I have found in abundance—if not in Frau Aggie's cards.

AGGIE

I can only read what's there.

MICHAEL

I was looking forward to having you on my show. Will you be coming back someday?

HENRY

That will depend on many things over which I have no control. Paul, will your vessel be leaving dock soon?

PAUL

That depends on what Jerry tells us about the weather. Why? Do you need a ride?

HENRY

Not today. Between Frau Aggie's prediction and the monsters that lie in the deep, I should perhaps secure safer transport. One thing I will tell you, my friends. Nothing is ever as it appears or as we think it will be. We simply play the cards we are dealt.

JERRY

That's easy for you to say. You've stacked the deck. You think you're going to rule the world!

HENRY

I am not interested in ruling this world or any other. That is a fool's game.

BETH

Then there's a lot of fools out there. History says as much.

HENRY

History? Most of us know nothing about history. We know last week, last month; we know what has happened in one short lifetime. That is not history. That is gossip. Things go very wrong for a while. We think that's it! We are at the end of everything, and, yet, somehow the world goes on. We think we are safe, and then it goes wrong again. Each time we tell ourselves the same stories. Then one day we are dead and someone else takes over.

CLARE

Why? Why can't we fix it?

HENRY

That is a question as old as humanity. We came down out of the trees. We hunted and gathered and killed whatever or whoever wandered into our territory. We built walls and fences to show the land was ours. We killed anyone who tried to climb over. Wars and rumors of wars. That is human history. Hate for one group then for another. It doesn't end. Sometimes we buy them out; other times we burn their lives to the ground. We create gods and philosophies to justify our actions. But the bottom line is we want it all, and we are never satisfied. Five thousand years is nothing. It will all be dust one day, and no one left to tell the story. In a strange, sad way that comforts me.

Silence.

MICHAEL

Jesus, Henry.

HENRY

Jesus has very little to do with any of it.

MICHAEL

Probably just as well you're not coming on the show. At least not the first week.

HENRY

And now, I will take my leave of you. Gunner Paul, if you see any of my countrymen out on the high seas, tell them Heinrich said, hello and that they should find a good safe port, jump ship, and stay put. I doubt the seas will be safe for any of us much longer.

PAUL

If that's what you believe, how do you sleep at night?

HENRY

Like an infant in his mother's arms. I may wake up screaming, but it's easy enough to go quiet again. Do not trust anyone who tells you any differently. There are those among your own countrymen who admire what the Germans are doing. They would just as soon let them do it, so they will not have to take the time or trouble themselves. Be careful my friends and trust no one, least of all an amiable wrestler with little to lose.

BETH

You have nothing to lose because you don't really look, do you?

HENRY

I cannot afford to look. If I look, then I might buy, and then I will have that much more to carry, and when a man has too much to carry, he cannot run when the time comes. He either throws what he loves away, or he dies with it.

CLARE

There are things worth dying for!

HENRY

And that is why you are a young woman of character, and I am a torso twister who must be on his way. Be careful, my friends, hold fast to each other and hope the other side makes more mistakes than you do. Perhaps we'll meet again, and you will forgive me.

JERRY

I won't.

HENRY

No. I don't expect you will, but find a way to live outside the hatred. Hating does not make a man right. It only makes him angry.

JERRY

Maybe it's good to be angry.

HENRY

And maybe it keeps us from ever fixing what is wrong, and I believe you are a young man who wants to make things right, whatever uniform you wear.

MICHAEL

You should go now, Henry. I think you've said your piece and I have to go on the air and say mine.

HENRY

Use the airwaves wisely, Michael. You will make a difference, and perhaps I will see you all some other time.

PAUL

In some other place.

HENRY

Auf Wiedersehen, my friends. Not all of us want to be your enemies. As Madam Fortuna might say, it is the luck of the draw.

He exits. They are all silent for a moment. Suddenly, the door to the upstairs opens. A man in a very sharp looking suit enters; He walks past the others without a word and enters the radio booth and sits at the controls. Stunned silence.

CLARE

Oh my god! I really didn't expect him to come down.

PAUL

Was that?

BETH

The man himself.

AGGIE

I didn't see that in the cards.

MICHAEL

I did not doubt him for a moment.

JERRY

Michael! It's almost time. You have to get in there. Howard doesn't know how to work the console.

CLARE straightens MICHAEL'S tie.

CLARE

It's going to be great. I know it will!

MICHAEL

Where are my notes? Okay. We can do this.

He strides to the booth and goes in. We can see him organizing papers, adjusting HOWARD'S mike and his own.

CLARE

What was Henry talking about, Paul? Why did he call you Gunner, and what was all that about you not being a real seaman or about seeing his countrymen on the sea?

PAUL

He knows what I was trying to tell you before. I'm a Sailor.

AGGIE

Of course, you're a sailor. What else would you be? You work on a fishing boat.

*During this conversation AGGIE starts to fiddle with the radio dials.
There may be intermittent hums or static.*

PAUL

Except my crew and I are all in the Navy, Miss Aggie.

CLARE

What Navy? The U.S. Navy? You're in the Navy? Is that what you wanted to tell me?

BETH

So, why aren't you in uniform? Why are you even here? Why aren't you out—doing . . . whatever the Navy does.

PAUL

There is more going on off our coast than anyone knows for sure. We're tracking it. Jerry's right. There really are German U-boats out there. I've seen them. A couple of them have come right up out of the water and bought fish from us. We're not the only ones. They buy fish from a lot of the boats. They're tracking the shipping routes.

CLARE

Why?

PAUL

When Europe goes to war, they need to know where and how to cut off the supply lines.

JERRY

When Europe goes to war? You think there's going to be another war, don't you.

PAUL

My Captain does, and my Captain knows a lot. He knows those subs are tracking our boats too. I don't mean fishing boats. I mean the boats the Navy's got patrolling the North Sea. They want to know how big our Naval force is.

JERRY

How big is it?

PAUL

Maybe a little bigger than it's supposed to be, but there aren't "supposed" to be any German U-boats either, but we know that they've had the Dutch building them for years.

CLARE

Did you volunteer for this?

PAUL

My captain did. I've known him for a long time. When he asked me if I'd do it, I said, sure. Most of us served with him before. He's a good man, and it sounded crazy and fun and better than swabbing decks on some cruiser.

BETH

So, we should forget about Henry. You're the real spy, right?

PAUL

If anything happens to us, the Navy won't even recognize who we were. Our names have disappeared from the rolls.

CLARE

That's awful. Could something happen to you? Is it dangerous?

PAUL

That's how my hand got hurt. A sub came up without any warning, and I had to hurry to get below deck and close off the radio room. I caught my hand in the door. I couldn't open it until someone came and told me they were gone.

CLARE

That's terrible!

JERRY

Why are you telling us all this?

PAUL

I shouldn't have, but since we're leaving, I figure it won't hurt. You're a pretty trustworthy lot, and I didn't want to leave without . . .

BETH

Why are you leaving?

PAUL

Because they're on to us. You heard Henry just now. He knows.

CLARE

Where will you go?

PAUL

Back to base in Boston, then out on another assignment. Another fishing boat, maybe. We were sailing out of Virginia Beach before this. Maybe I'll be assigned to regular service again. I don't know.

CLARE
So, this is goodbye?

PAUL
Yeah, but I'm hoping it's not for good.

CLARE
What else can it be?

PAUL
I could write you and let you know where I end up. You could come visit.

CLARE
You're just now telling us you're in the Navy and there's going to be a war. What am I supposed to do--visit you on the front lines?

PAUL
The war won't start for a while—at least not for us. You could come see me wherever I am. You say you'd like to see the world.

BETH
She was talking about seeing the Eifel Tower, not a world full of people about to start killing each other.

MICHAEL steps out of the booth and motions for them to be quiet before going back in.

CLARE
We need to be quiet! They're going to start. I'm more nervous than he is. Do you think Howard is really going to talk? Out loud? On the Air?

JERRY
I hope I got everything set up all right for them.

AGGIE
You want to check this thing? I think I've got the call numbers right.

JERRY
(Going to help her.)
I wish I had stood up to Henry more, but I wasn't really sure what I was standing up for.

BETH
Humanity?

PAUL
Decency?

JERRY

I just hope he's gone for good.

BETH

For once, Jerry, we are in total agreement. I'm not entirely sure what that rant of his was all about, but if I can remember it right, it's going to make a hell of a letter of resignation when I leave here for the big time.

CLARE

Do you think Henry really is a spy?

PAUL

I don't know, but he's a sonofabitch for sure.

CLARE

Paul!

PAUL

Just saying what I think.

CLARE

I suppose I should get used to it.

PAUL

Does that mean—

CLARE

We both got the four of hearts. Who knows?

The red "On-Air" sign lights up.

AGGIE

Quiet!

(From the Booth and over the sound system)

MICHAEL

Wake Up, Gloucester! This is Michael O'Rourke of WEGX coming to you from Gloucester, Massachusetts, bringing you the latest news from here at home and around the world along with the most up to date weather forecasting you'll hear anywhere in New England. On this, our first day of broadcasting, I am sorry to report that dark and disturbing news comes to us from our cousins across the sea. Germany has announced its withdrawal from the non-aggression pact it signed with Poland, and rumors of war are spreading. France and England are debating whether or not to declare Martial Law. We'll have the latest on what's happening overseas a little later in the show, but first, there are dramatic events taking place a little closer to home.

PAUL

Oh hell!

CLARE smacks him.

MICHAEL

My co-host Howard Cassidy has some amazing news from right here in our hometown. Take it away, Howard.

HOWARD

Thank you, Michael. I've lived in Gloucester all my life. I love a good sea yarn as much as the next fellow, but this is one for the ages. For the first time in years, the Gloucester Sea Serpent has been sighted off the coast of Cape Ann!

BETH

Are you kidding me?

HOWARD

Or has it?

AGGIE

Hush!

HOWARD

During the following the voice will fade, and the lights will go down.

Renown local historian, Aggie Baldwin and lobsterman Bobby Peconis both swear (they saw the monster with their own eyes. They were setting out lobster pots as usual when Mrs. Baldwin raised her binoculars to scout for unauthorized German aircraft in the skies and to her amazement, she saw a long dark form rise out of the water . . .)

THE END.