

ACT III

SCENE: *At the MORTON place, the same room in which SILAS MORTON told his friend FELIX FEJEVARY of his plan for the hill. The room has not altogether changed since that day in 1879. The table around which they dreamed for the race is in its old place. One of the old chairs is there, the other two are modern chairs. In a corner is the rocker in which GRANDMOTHER MORTON sat. This is early afternoon, a week after the events of Act II.*

MADLINE is sitting at the table, in her hand a torn wrinkled piece of brown paper — peering at writing almost too fine to read. After a moment her hand goes out to a beautiful dish on the table — an old dish of colored Hungarian glass. She is about to take something from this, but instead lets her hand rest an instant on the dish itself. Then turns and through the open door looks out at the hill, sitting where her GRANDFATHER MORTON sat when he looked out at the hill.

Her father, IRA MORTON, appears outside, walking past the window, left. He enters carrying a grain sack, partly filled. He seems hardly aware of MADLINE, but taking a chair near the door, turned from her, opens the sack and takes out a couple of ears of corn. As he is bent over them, examining in a shrewd, greedy way, MADLINE looks at that lean, tormented, rather desperate profile, the look of one confirming a thing she fears. Then takes up her piece of paper.

MADLINE

Do you remember Fred Jordan, father?

IRA

(not wanting to take his mind from the corn) No. *(his voice has that timbre of one not related to others)*

MADLINE

He's in prison now.

IRA

(after taking out another ear) This is the best corn I ever had. *(he says it gloatingly to himself)*

MADLINE

He got this letter out to me — written on this scrap of paper. They don't give him paper.

(peering) Written so fine I can hardly read it. He's in what they call "the hole." *(with difficulty reading it)* It's two and a half feet at one end, three feet at the other, and six feet long. He'd been there ten days when he wrote this. He gets two slices of bread a day; water; that's all he gets.

This because he [bawled] the deputy warden out for chaining another prisoner up by the wrists.

IRA

Well, he'd better a-minded his own business. And you better mind yours. I've got no money to spend in the courts. *(with excitement)* Not for *anything* — you hear me? — would I mortgage this farm my father handed down to me.

MADLINE

(hurt) Well, father, I'm not asking you to.

IRA

Then go and see your Uncle Felix. Make it up with him.

MADLINE

I'll not go to Uncle Felix.

IRA

Who will help you then? *(he waits)* You come before this United States Commissioner with no one behind you, he'll hold you for the grand jury. You know what that means? It means you're on your way to a cell. Nice thing for a Morton. What's the matter with your uncle? Ain't he always been good to you? I'd like to know what things would 'a been for you without Felix and Isabel and all their friends. You want to think a little. You like good times too well to throw all that away.

MADLINE

I do like good times. So does Fred Jordan. *(smooths the wrinkled paper)* *(she tries to look out, but cannot; sits very still, seeing what it is pain to see. Rises, goes to that corner closet, the same one from which SILAS MORTON took the deed to the hill. She gets a yard stick, looks in a box and finds a piece of chalk. On the floor she marks off FRED JORDAN'S cell. Slowly, at the end left unchalked, as for a door, she goes in. Her hand goes up, as against a wall; looks at her other hand, sees it is out too far, brings it in, giving herself the width of the cell. Walks its length, halts, looks up.)* And one window — too high up to see out.

(In the moment she stands there, she is in that cell; she is all the people who are in those cells. EMIL JOHNSON appears from outside; he is the young man brought up on a farm, a crudely Americanized Swede.)

MADLINE

(stepping out of the cell door, and around it) Hello, Emil.

EMIL

How are you, Madeline? How do, Mr. Morton. (IRA barely nods and does not turn. In an excited manner he begins gathering up the corn he has taken from the sack. EMIL turns back to MADELINE.) Well, I'm just from the courthouse. You come before the Commissioner at four.

IRA

What have you got to do with it?

MADELINE

Oh, Emil has a courthouse job now, father. He's part of the law.

IRA

Well, he's not going to take you to the law! Anybody else — not Emil Johnson!

MADELINE

(astonished — and gently, to make up for his rudeness) Why — father, why not Emil?

IRA

If *this* is what he lived for! If this is why —

(He twists the ear of corn until some of the kernels drop off. MADELINE and EMIL look at one another in bewilderment.)

EMIL

It's too bad anybody has to take Madeline in. I should think your uncle could fix it up. (to help IRA) That's fine corn, Mr. Morton. I'd like to get some of this for seed.

IRA

(rising and turning on him) You get my corn? I raise this corn for you? (not to them — his mind now going where it is shut off from any other mind) If I could make the wind stand still!

MADELINE

(going to him) Why — father. I don't understand at all.

IRA

(a curse with a sob in it) God damn the wind!

(Sits down, his back to them.)

EMIL

(after a silence) Well, I'll go. *(But he continues to look at IRA, who is holding the sack of corn shut, as if someone may take it.)* Too bad — *(stopped by a sign from MADELINE, not to speak of it)* Well, I was saying, I'll stop for you on my way back. *(confidentially)* Couldn't you telephone your uncle? He could do something. You heard what the Hindus got, I suppose.

MADELINE

No. I haven't seen anyone today.

EMIL

They're held for the grand jury. No bail for *them*. Then after we've given them a nice little taste of prison life in America, they're going to be sent back home — to see what India can treat them to.

MADELINE

Why are you so pleased about this, Emil?

EMIL

It's nothin' to me — I'm just telling you. Guess you don't know much about the Espionage Act or you'd go and make a little friendly call on your uncle. If your uncle was to tell the right parties that you're just a girl, and didn't realize what you were saying —

MADELINE

I did realize what I was saying, and every word you've just said makes me know I meant what I said.

EMIL

Well — gee, you don't know what it means.

MADELINE

It means not being a coward.

EMIL

Oh, well — Lord, you can't say everything you think.

MADELINE

Once in a while you have to say what you think — or hate yourself.

EMIL

(with a grin) Then hate yourself.

MADELINE

(smiling too) No thank you; it spoils my fun.

EMIL

Well, look-a-here, Madeline, aren't you spoiling your fun now? Ain't I seen you from our place, strikin' out over the country? How'd you like to be where you couldn't even see out?

MADELINE

(a step nearer the cell) There oughtn't to be such places.

EMIL

You can't change the way things are. I don't think you'd like the place, Madeline. There's not much tennis played there. Jesus — what's Hindus?

MADELINE

You aren't really asking Jesus, are you, Emil? *(smiles)* You mightn't like his answer.

EMIL

(from the door) Take a tip. Telephone your uncle.

(He goes.)

IRA

(not looking at her) There might be a fine, and they'd come down on me and take my land.

MADELINE

Oh, no, father, I think not. Anyway, Grandfather Morton left me something. Have you forgotten that?

IRA

No. No, I know he left you something. *(the words seem to bother him)*

MADELINE

I get it today. *(wistfully)* This is my birthday, father. I'm twenty-one.

IRA

(in pain) Was that twenty-one years ago?

(It is not to his daughter this has turned him.)

MADELINE

It's the first birthday I can remember that I haven't had a party. *(stoutly)* Oh, well, I don't need a party. I'm grown up now.

(She reaches out for the old Hungarian dish on the table; holding it, she looks to her father, whose back is still turned. Her face tender, she is about to speak when he speaks.)

IRA

Going off and leaving me alone. And — *what for?* (*turning, looking around the room as for those long gone*) There used to be so many in this house. My grandmother. Fine days like this — (*points to the rocker*) she'd sit there — tell me stories of the Indians. Father. It wasn't ever lonely where father was. My Madeline lived with me in this house. Then one day she — (*bitter silence*) Then Fred. Now you. With Emil Johnson! (*insanely, and almost with relief at leaving things more sane*) Don't let him touch my corn. If he touches one kernel of this corn! (*with the suspicion of the tormented mind*) I wonder where he went? (*getting up*)

MADELINE

Oh — father!

(He goes out, turning left. MADELINE goes to the window and looks after him. A moment later, hearing someone at the door, she turns and finds her AUNT ISABEL, who has appeared from right. Goes swiftly to her, hands out.)

MADELINE

Oh, *auntie* — I'm glad you came! It's my birthday, and I'm — lonely.

AUNT ISABEL

You dear little girl! (*giving her a hug, which MADELINE returns, lovingly*) Don't I know it's your birthday? Just see what's here. (*hands her the package she is carrying*)

MADELINE

(with a gasp — suspecting from its shape) Oh! (*her face aglow, MADELINE loosens the paper and pulls out a tennis racket.*) (*excited, and moved*) Oh, aunt Isabel! that was dear of you.

AUNT ISABEL

(gathering up the paper, lightly reproachful) Be a little careful of it, Madeline. It's meant for tennis balls. *(They laugh together.)*

MADELINE

(making a return with it) It's a peach. *(changing)* Wonder where I'll play now.

AUNT ISABEL

Why, you'll play on the courts at Morton College.

MADELINE

It's pretty much balled up, isn't it?

AUNT ISABEL

Yes; we'll have to get it straightened out. *(gently)* It was really dreadful of you, Madeline, to rush out a second time. It isn't as if they were people who were anything to you.

MADELINE

But, auntie, they are something to me.

AUNT ISABEL

Oh, dear, that's what Horace said. That you must have a case on one of them.

MADELINE

That's what Horace would say. He's a —

AUNT ISABEL

(stopping it with her hand) He's a headstrong boy, but a very loving one.

MADELINE

Yes. You are good to each other. *(Her eyes are drawn to the cell.)*

AUNT ISABEL

Of course we are. All of us who are the same kind of people must stand together because the thing that makes us the same kind is threatened.

MADLINE

Don't you think we're rather threatening it ourselves, auntie?

AUNT ISABEL

Why, no, we're fighting for it. Well, Horace does go at it as if it were a football game, but his heart's in the right place.

MADLINE

Somehow, I don't seem to see my heart in that place.

AUNT ISABEL

It's too bad you and Horace quarrel. But you and I don't quarrel, Madeline.

MADLINE

(again drawn to the cell) No. (she is troubled)

AUNT ISABEL

Funny child! Do you want us to?

(MADLINE turns, laughing a little, takes the dish from the table, holds it out to her aunt.)

MADLINE

Have some fudge, auntie.

AUNT ISABEL

(taking the dish) Do you use them? — the old Hungarian dishes? (laughingly) I'm not allowed to.

MADELINE

Oh, I don't know, I had to do something to celebrate my birthday.

AUNT ISABEL

(under her breath) Dearie!

MADELINE

I happened to see this, way up on a top shelf, and I remembered that it was my mother's. It was nice to get it down and use it — almost as if mother was giving me a birthday present. It was her mother's, I suppose.

AUNT ISABEL

Yes. They brought only a very few things with them [from Hungary], and left — oh, so many beautiful ones behind. *(gayly turning it)* Well, now, as to the birthday. What do you suppose Sarah is doing this instant? Putting red frosting on white frosting. *(writing it with her finger)* Madeline. Big birthday cake. Party tonight.

MADELINE

But, auntie, I don't see how I can be there.

AUNT ISABEL

Listen, dear. Now, we've got to use our wits and all pull together. I've never seen your uncle as worried, and — truly, Madeline, as sad. Oh, my dear, it's these human things that count! What would life be without the love we have for each other?

Don't turn away from me Madeline. Don't — don't be strange. I wonder if you realize how your uncle has worked for all of us? Be a little generous to him. He's had this great burden of bringing something from another day on into this day. It will hurt him if you undo that work of his life. Another thing: people are a little absurd out of their own places. We need to be held in

our relationships — against our background — or we are — I don't know — grotesque. Come now, Madeline, isn't it a little absurd for you to leave home over India's form of government?

MADELINE

It's not India. It's America.

AUNT ISABEL

(with a laugh) I knew I wouldn't be a success at world affairs — better leave that to Professor Holden. *(a quick keen look from MADELINE)* He wants to stop in for a visit with you while I take Mrs. Holden for a ride.

MADELINE

It's dreadful about families!

AUNT ISABEL

Dreadful? You mean the — responsibility it brings? Oh, well — that's what life is. Doing for one another. Sacrificing for one another. [pause] Where is your father?

MADELINE

There's no use seeing him today.

AUNT ISABEL

He's —?

MADELINE

Strange — shut in — afraid something's going to be taken from him.

AUNT ISABEL

Poor Ira. So much has been taken from him. And now you. Don't hurt him again, Madeline. Life has made him into something — something he can't escape.

MADELINE

(with what seems sullenness) Well, I don't want to be made into that thing.

AUNT ISABEL

Of course not. But you want to help him, don't you? Now, dear — about your birthday party —

MADLINE

The United States Commissioner is giving me my party.

AUNT ISABEL

Well, he'll have to put his party off. Your uncle has been thinking it all out. We're to go to his office and you'll have a talk with him and with Judge Watkins. He's off the state supreme bench now — practicing again, and as a favor to your uncle he will be your lawyer. You don't know how relieved we are, for Judge Watkins can do — anything he wants to do, practically. Then you and I will call up some of the crowd to come in and dance tonight.

MADLINE

And what's the price of all this, auntie?

AUNT ISABEL

The — Oh, you mean — Why simply say you felt sorry for the Hindu students because they seemed rather alone; that you hadn't realized — what they were, hadn't thought out what you were saying —

MADLINE

And that I'm sorry and will never do it again.

AUNT ISABEL

I don't know that you need say that. It would be gracious, I think, to indicate it.

MADLINE

I'm sorry you — had the cake made. I *(turning away)* — can't eat it.

AUNT ISABEL

Why — Madeline.

(Seeing how she has hurt her, MADELINE goes out to her aunt.)

MADELINE

Auntie, dear! I'm sorry — if I hurt your feelings.

AUNT ISABEL

(quick to hold out a loving hand, laughing a little) They've been good birthday cakes, haven't they, Madeline?

MADELINE

(she now trying not to cry) I don't know — what I'd have done without them. What I will do without them.

AUNT ISABEL

Don't try to. Just let me go on helping you. *(She draws MADELINE to her.)* Ah, dearie, I held you when you were a little baby without your mother. All those years count for something,

Madeline. *(listening)* I think I hear them. And here are we, weeping like two idiots.

(MADELINE brushes away tears, AUNT ISABEL arranges her veil, regaining her usual poise.) There's so much to be done in the world, Madeline. *(in a manner of agreement with*

MADELINE) Perhaps we can do some things together. Don't think I'm hopeless!

(HOLDEN comes in. He seems older.)

HOLDEN

And how are you, Madeline? *(holding out his hand)*

MADELINE

I'm — all right.

HOLDEN

I never saw this country as lovely as it is to-day.

AUNT ISABEL

Then we'll go on — perhaps as far as Laughing Creek. If you two decide on a tramp — take that road and we'll pick you up. (*smiling warmly, she goes out*)

HOLDEN

How good she is.

MADLINE

Yes. That's just the trouble.

HOLDEN

(*with difficulty getting past this*) How about a little tramp? There'll never be another such day.

MADLINE

I used to tramp with Fred Jordan. This is where he is now. (*stepping inside the cell*) He doesn't even see out.

HOLDEN

It's all wrong that he should be where he is. But for you to stay indoors won't help him, Madeline.

MADLINE

Today — I can't go out.

HOLDEN

When this sense of wrongs done first comes down upon one, it does crush.

MADLINE

And later you get used to it and don't care.

HOLDEN

You care. You try not to destroy yourself needlessly.

(He turns from her look.)

MADLINE

Play safe.

HOLDEN

If it's playing safe it's that one you love more than yourself be safe. It would be a luxury to — destroy one's self.

MADLINE

That sounds like Uncle Felix. *(Seeing she has hurt him, she goes over and sits across from him at the table.)* His left mind doesn't know what his right mind is doing. He has to think of himself as a person of sentiment — idealism, and — quite a job, at times. The war must have been a godsend to people who were in danger of getting on to themselves. But I should think you could[n't?] fool yourself all the time.

HOLDEN

You don't.

(He is rubbing his hand on the table.)

MADLINE

Grandfather Morton made this table. I suppose he and Grandfather Fejevary used to sit here and talk. *(Slowly HOLDEN turns and looks out at the hill.)* Yes. How beautiful the hill must have been — before there was a college there. *(He looks away from the hill.)* I'd like to have been a pioneer! Some ways they had it fierce, but think of the fun they had! A whole big land to open up! A big new life to begin! Just a little way back — anything might have been. What happened?

HOLDEN

(speaking with difficulty) It got — set too soon.

MADLINE

(all of her mind open, trying to know) And why did it? Prosperous, I suppose. That seems to set things — set them in fear. Silas Morton wasn't afraid of Felix Fejevary. Now — the Hindu revolutionists —! *(pause)* Moving. We seem here, now, in America, to have forgotten we're moving. Think it's just *us* — just now. Of course, that would make us afraid, and — ridiculous.

(Her father comes in.)

IRA

Your Aunt Isabel — did she go away — and leave you?

MADLINE

She's coming back.

IRA

And then you're going with her?

MADLINE

I — don't know.

IRA

(to HOLDEN) What are you here for?

MADLINE

Aunt Isabel brought Professor Holden, father.

IRA

Oh. Then you — you tell her what to do. You make her do it. *(He goes into the room at left.)*

MADELINE

(sadly, after a silence) Father's like something touched by an early frost.

HOLDEN

Yes. *(seeing his opening and forcing himself to take it)* But do you know, Madeline, there are other ways of that happening. I've seen it happen to people of fine and daring mind. They do a thing that puts them apart — it may be the big, brave thing — but the apartness does something to them. I fear for you. You do this thing and you'll find yourself apart from your own people. You're many-sided, Madeline. I hate to see you, so young, close a door on so much life. I myself am making compromises to stay within. I don't like it, but there are — reasons for doing it. I hate to see you lose the — fullness of life.

MADELINE

(a slight start, as she realizes the pause. As one recalled from far) I'm sorry. I was listening — but all the time — something else was happening. Grandfather Morton, big and — oh, terrible. He was here. And he went to that walled up hole in the ground — *(rising and pointing down at the chalked cell)* — where they keep Fred Jordan — and Silas Morton tore open that cell — his voice tore it open — as he cried, "God damn you, this is America!" *(sitting down, as if rallying from a tremendous experience)* I'm sorry —

HOLDEN

(after a moment) I can't go on.

MADELINE

You were thinking of leaving the college, and then — decided to stay? *(he nods)* And you feel there's more — fullness of life for you inside the college than outside?

HOLDEN

(something in him forcing him to say it) I'm staying for financial reasons.

MADLINE

(kind, but not going to let the truth get away) You don't think that —having to stay within — makes you think these things of the — blight of being without?

HOLDEN

I think there is danger to you in — so young, becoming alien to society.

MADLINE

As great as the danger of staying within — and becoming like the thing I'm within?

HOLDEN

You wouldn't become like it.

MADLINE

That's what it does to the rest of you. I don't see it — this fullness of life business. There must be something pretty rotten about Morton College if you have to sell your soul to stay in it!

HOLDEN

You don't "sell your soul." You persuade yourself to wait.

MADLINE

(unable to look at him, as if feeling shame) You have had a talk with Uncle Felix since that day in the library.

HOLDEN

Yes; and with my wife's physician. If you sell your soul — it's to love you sell it.

MADLINE

(low) That's strange. It's love that — brings life along, and then it's love — holds life back.

HOLDEN

(all the time with this effort against hopelessness) I'd like to see you give yourself a little more chance for detachment. You need a better intellectual equipment if you're going to fight the world.

MADLINE

Detachment. *(pause)* This is one thing they do at this place. *(She moves to the open door.)* Chain them up to the bars — just like this. *(In the doorway where her two grandfathers once pledged faith with the dreams of a million years, she raises clasped hands as high as they will go.)* Eight hours a day — day after day. Just hold your arms up like this one hour then sit down and think about — *(As if tortured by all who have been so tortured, her body begins to give with sobs, arms drop, the last word is a sob.)* detachment.

HOLDEN *is standing helplessly by when her father comes in.*

IRA

(wildly) Don't cry. Not in this house! Your aunt and uncle will fix it up — and you won't do it again.

MADLINE

Oh, what does *that* matter — what they do to *me*?

IRA

What [are] you crying about then?

MADLINE

It's — the *world*. It's —

IRA

The *world*? *(to HOLDEN)* Tell her that's nothing to cry about. What's the matter with you.

Mad'line? What good has ever come to this house through carin' about the world? What good's that college? Better we had that hill. Why is there no one in this house today but me and you? Where's your mother? Where's your brother? The *world*.

HOLDEN

I think your father would like to talk to you. I'll go outside — walk a little, and come back for you with your aunt. You must let us see you through this, Madeline. (*As he passes her in the doorway his hand rests an instant on her bent head.*)

IRA

(*turning away*) I don't want to talk to you. What good comes of talking? (*In moving, he has stepped near the sack of corn. Takes hold of it*)

MADELINE

Father, you must talk to me. What did my mother die for? No one has ever told me about her — except that she was beautiful — rare. Wouldn't she want me to know her? It's my birthday and I need my mother.

IRA

(*as if afraid he is going to do it*) How can you touch — what you've not touched in nineteen years?

MADELINE

Try. Didn't you use to talk to her? Well, I'm her daughter. Talk to me. What has she to do with Emil Johnson?

IRA

(*the pent up thing loosed*) She died so he could live. He lives because she's dead. (*in anguish*) And what is *he* alongside her? Yes. Something from far away. Something from long ago. Rare.

How'd you know that? Finding in me — what I didn't know was there. Then that ignorant Swede — Emil Johnson's mother — came running through the cornfield like a crazy woman — “Miss Morton! Come help me! My children are choking!” Diphtheria they had — but out of this house she ran — my Madeline, leaving you — her own baby — running fast as she could through the cornfield after that immigrant woman. She stumbled — fell to her knees. That was the last I saw of her. She choked to death in that Swede's house. They lived.

MADELINE

(going to him) Oh — father. *(voice rich)* But how lovely of her.

IRA

Lovely? Wasn't she worth more than them?

MADELINE

(proudly) Yes. She was worth so much that she never stopped to think how much she was worth.

IRA

Ah, if you'd known her you couldn't take it like that. My father used to sit there at the table and talk about the world — my father and her father. They thought 'twas all for something — that what you were went on into something more than you. But it's just talk. Look at your brother! Gone — *(snaps his fingers)* like that. I told him not to go to war. He didn't have to go. But no, — he must — make the world safe for democracy!

MADELINE

No — oh, no. It was fine of him to give his life to what he believed should be.

IRA

(fear takes him) Madeline! *(She stoops over him, her arm around him.)* Don't you leave me — all alone in this house. It won't be long. After a little I'll be dead — or crazy. But not here alone where so many was once.

MADELINE

Oh — father. I don't know what to do.

IRA

Nothing stays at home. Not even the corn. If only the wind wouldn't blow! All these years I've worked to make it better — the most that it could be. My father used to talk about the Indians — how our land was their land, and how we must be more than them. Well, what's that come to? But I've made the corn more! I'd like to have the Indians see my corn! And how'd I get it? Ah, by thinkin' — always tryin', changin', carin'. Plant this corn by that corn, and the pollen — the golden dust it blows from corn to corn like a — *(the word hurts)* gift. What'd I work all my life for? Is that to go to Emil Johnson? No! The wind shall stand still! I'll make it. Let me alone and I — I'll think it out.

(A mind burned to one idea, with greedy haste he shuts himself in the room at left.

MADELINE has been standing there as if mist is parting and letting her see. And as the vision grows power grows in her. She is thus flooded with richer life when her AUNT and Professor HOLDEN come back. Feeling something new, for a moment they do not speak.)

AUNT ISABEL

Ready, dear? It's time for us to go now.

MADELINE

(with the quiet of plentitude) I'm going in with Emil Johnson.

AUNT ISABEL

Why — Madeline. *(falteringly)* We thought you'd go with us.

MADELINE

No. I want the wind to have something to carry.

AUNT ISABEL

(after a look at Professor HOLDEN, who is looking intensely at MADELINE) I don't understand.

MADELINE

The world is all a — moving field. *(her hands move, voice too is as of a moving field)* Nothing is to itself. If America thinks so — America is like father. I don't feel alone any more. The wind has come through — wind rich from lives now gone. Grandfather Fejevary, gift from a field far off. Silas Morton. No, not alone any more. And afraid? I'm not even afraid of being absurd!

AUNT ISABEL

But Madeline — you're leaving your father?

MADELINE

(after thinking it out) I'm not leaving — what's greater in him than he knows.

AUNT ISABEL

You're leaving Morton College?

MADELINE

That runt on a high hill? Yes, I'm leaving grandfather's college — then maybe I can one day lie under the same sod with him, and not be ashamed. Though I must tell you (*a little laugh*) I want to be a long time — where the wind blows.

AUNT ISABEL

(*who is trying not to cry*) I'm afraid it won't blow in prison, dear.

MADELINE

I don't know. Might be the only place it would blow. (EMIL *passes the window, hesitates at the door.*) I'll be ready in just a moment, Emil.

(*He waits outside.*)

AUNT ISABEL

Madeline, I didn't tell you — I hoped it wouldn't be necessary, but your uncle said — if you refused to do it his way, he could do nothing for you, not even — bail.

MADELINE

I wouldn't expect him to.

AUNT ISABEL

He feels so deeply about these things — America — loyalty, he said if you didn't come with us it would be final, Madeline. Even — (*breaks*) between you and me.

MADELINE

I'm sorry, auntie. You know how I love you. (*And her voice tells it.*) But father has been telling me about the corn. What you are — doesn't stay with you. Then — (*not with assurance, but feeling her way*) be the most you can be, so life will be more because you were. (*freed by the truth she has found*) Oh — do that! Professor Holden, his beautiful trained mind; Aunt Isabel —

her beautiful love, love that could save the world if only you'd — throw it to the winds.

HOLDEN

(unable to bear more) (going to MADELINE, holding out his hand and speaking from his sterile life to her fullness of life) Good-bye, Madeline. Good luck.

MADELINE

(hesitates) Luck to you.

(Shaking his head, stooped, he hurries out.)

MADELINE

(after a moment when neither can speak) Good-bye — auntie dearest. Thank you — for the birthday present — the cake — everything.

(AUNT ISABEL can only hold tight to MADELINE's hands. At last, with a smile that speaks for love, a little nod, she goes. EMIL comes in)

MADELINE

I'll be with you in an instant, Emil. I want to — say good-bye to my father.

(But she waits before that door, a door hard to go through. Alone, EMIL looks around the room. Sees the bag of corn, takes out a couple of ears and is looking at them as MADELINE returns. She remains by the door, shaken with sobs, turns, as if pulled back to the pain she has left.)

EMIL

Gee. This is great corn.

MADELINE

(turning now to him) It is, isn't it, Emil?

EMIL

None like it.

MADELINE

And you say — your corn is getting better?

EMIL

Oh, yes — I raise better corn every year now.

MADELINE

(low) That's nice. I'll be right out, Emil.

(He puts the corn back, goes out. From the closet MADELINE takes her hat and wrap. Putting them on, she goes to the tennis racket on the table, takes it up, holds it a moment, then takes it to the closet, puts it carefully away, closes the door behind it. A moment she stands there in the room, as if listening to something. Then she leaves that house.)

CURTAIN