

WE ARE TOMORROW

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BY

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CHARACTERS

PAUL WARRIOR	A student at an ancient university
MEMORY	An everlasting college servant
HOPE	The same
JACK MUSCLE	An athlete
KEITH TREMBLE	A scholar
TERENCE SOUL	A poet
MR. PEWTER	Dean of the College
MISS EVE AGELESS	A heart-throb
MISS SALLY SPECTACLE	A brain-wave

The scene is set in the rooms of Paul Warrior

ACT I

Takes place today

ACT II

Scene I is set in the year 1979 as it might be

Scene II is set in the year 1979 as it will be

PROLOGUE

Enter from stage right towards stage left in front of the curtain, Memory. He is dressed in an ordinary set of clothes, baggy dark trousers, like a college scout. He carries a duster. He is a lovable, rascally character. You can't quite place him. He is muttering and chuckling to himself as he walks.

MEMORY That was good. That was very good. That was very, very, very good. I'll never forget that.

(He catches sight of the audience and casually waves a hand)

H'lo. H'lo there. *(He moves ahead still talking to himself)*

No. That will live with me always, that will.

(He sees the audience still looking at him. He turns to face them, arms on hips, legs wide)

I said H'lo to you once, said it twice as a matter of fact. Didn't you hear me ? What are you staring at me like that for ?

(Waggling a finger at them)

You know, when I was a boy I was taught that it was very rude to stare at strangers. But then of course I'm not a stranger. You and I are old friends, aren't we ? Every one of you knows me. And I know you. I know all about you.

We'll stick together for life. We have to. That's it, isn't it ?

VOICE *(From behind the curtain)* Memory ! Memory !

MEMORY *(Shouting back)* Coming, Sir. Shan't be a minute, Sir. *(Talking to audience)* That's me. Old Memory. That's my name. And that's my nature. They can't do long

without me. Every generation it's the same thing. They all know me :

They call upon me morning, night and noon.

VOICE (*Shouting*) Memory !

MEMORY (*Shouting back*) Very good, Sir. Coming soon.

(*To audience*)

They like to have old Memory on call.

Master of none and servant of 'em all,

Or so they think. They do not feel my power.

I hold their secrets for them hour by hour.

(*Pointing at the audience*)

All of *you* have been pupils at my school.

Old Memory's partly knave, but never fool.

When needed, I am mostly on the spot,

But often with you when you'd rather not.

(*Pointing over his shoulder*)

Sometimes they've tried to drown me with their tears,

And whisky too to drive away my fears.

But drunk or sober, Memory's your friend.

I'll stay with you until the journey's end.

You can't kill Memory. He's there for life.

He'll stick far closer than a jealous wife.

VOICE Memory !

MEMORY On my way, Sir. Every day, Sir. Right away, Sir.

(*Breaks into a little song and dance*)

Memory's a tricky fellow,

Sometimes bitter, sometimes mellow.

Rubbing out with Time-worn fingers

Bruises where the pain still lingers.
Dancing backward through the ages
Arm in arm with apes and sages.
Waltz with laughter hand in hand—
Pace with fear a saraband—
Facing Truth with contradictions
Till my facts become your fictions.

Memory, old Memory,

What a tricky chap I be !

He ! He ! He ! He ! He ! He ! He !

(He is almost off stage)

VOICE Memory ! Where the hell are you, Memory ?

MEMORY Coming, Sir, coming. *(To audience)*

Youth will be served. That's what *they* say.

And so—away !

(He bows and vanishes stage left)

ACT I

As Memory goes hurrying off in front of the curtain, a gathering sound of men's voices comes from behind: "We want Memory." Bang. "We want Memory." Bang. "We want Memory." Bang. Soon the curtain rises and the sounds are seen to come from three young men sitting round a table at which the relics of a feast still linger. The table is set with a white cloth and there are two or three empty places at it. It is an undergraduate's room at an ancient university, not elaborate but comfortable. Back centre, looking out at the spires and stars (for it is late evening) is a window. Stage left, a fireplace. Stage right the door leading to the staircase, the only entrance and exit to the room. The bangs are caused by the three young gentlemen who, as each "We want Memory" finishes, crash their hands on to the table, making the crockery rattle. In the background, hovering with an uncertain but wholly friendly smile, is Hope, a college servant. Keith Tremble, one of the young men, is dressed in a casual pair of grey flannel trousers and a nondescript sports jacket. Terence Soul is in ordinary clothes with college scarf wound round his neck. Jack Muscle, who sets the pace in the shouting and banging, is dressed in a long-tailed hunting coat (red) with white trousers, and a top hat tilted backward on his head. They are not drunk but are well-dined.

As the last "We want Memory" rings out, Jack Muscle springs to his feet and yells towards the doorway at the top of his voice, "Memory! Memory!" It is clear that his is the voice which the audience have heard shouting from behind the curtain while Memory was speaking to them.

JACK Where the hell is Memory ?

TERENCE (*Who has moved to the window and is looking out at the night*)

My God, Jack, what a huge and hideous voice you've got!
It makes even the stars look ugly.

HOPE Memory will be here in just a minute, I'm sure, Mr. Muscle. It's always a busy time for all of us on the last night of term, you know. He's doing his best, I'm sure.

JACK (*Louder than ever*) Memory ! Memory ! Memory !

TERENCE (*His hands over his ears*) My dear fellow, please stop it. It jars me terribly each time you howl. Really it does. It's like a demented hippopotamus.

JACK (*Turning on him*) Then let me tell you that you've jarred me every time I've set eyes on you the last three years. Mister Terence Soul—what a name! And by God you look like it! You've not played one game or taken one bit of exercise since you came to this university. Why, you can't even dress like an ordinary citizen! (*He stands there glaring at Terence*)

TERENCE I must say your own garb doesn't strike me as exactly ordinary, Jack. I've not seen you show so much imagination in the whole of your career here. Did you think it was fancy dress night or something ?

JACK (*Genuinely surprised, looking at his clothes*) What's wrong with them ? (*Takes off hat and looks at it*) It's all right, isn't it ? You know jolly well this is the uniform of my club, the Unmentionables. You have to wear the uniform or nobody would know you belong to the club.

TERENCE I don't know about that, Jack. You can tell some people belong to the Unmentionables even when they're not in uniform. I was blackballed for them myself in my second year. It's one of the few things in my career here that I'm really proud of.

KEITH Oh, shut up, Jack, shut up, Terence! Let's go on shouting, Jack.

JACK It's a new line for you to want to shout, Keith.

KEITH It stops you thinking if you keep shouting.

TERENCE Don't you want to think? It's a habit that's rather nice sometimes, I've found. It grows on you. Of course, some people (*Looking at Jack Muscle whose head is in a mug of beer*) never seem to get the knack of it.

KEITH I don't want to think tonight.

TERENCE Why not?

KEITH Exam results. They put 'em up in the examination school when the bell begins to strike midnight. (*Looking at his watch*) Not long to wait now. It's all right for some of you fellows with money or position. I've got neither. The whole of my life can depend on what they put up on that board at midnight.

HOPE You'll be all right, Mr. Tremble, Sir. I'm sure of it. I've looked after a good many young gentlemen on my staircase in my time. You get to know human nature if you're a college servant. I'm sure you'll be all right.

KEITH (*To Terence and Jack*) You know, old Hope there has been my best friend at the university. I don't know what I'd do without him.

W.T.—B

JACK Oh, Hope's hopeless! Why doesn't he get us more drink if he's such a friend? Memory! Memory! We want Memory!

MEMORY (*Whom you can hear chuntering up the stairs and calling as he runs*) Coming, Sir, on my way, Sir.

JACK There he is at last.

HOPE Then if you'll excuse me, gentlemen, I've got another party on my own staircase. Sorry I couldn't be more helpful, Mr. Muscle.

(*Enter Memory, panting, as Hope carries out a tray of dirty crockery*)

JACK Where on earth have you been? We've been shouting our heads off for you.

MEMORY Have you indeed, Sir? Most unfortunate, Sir. Never heard a thing, Sir.

TERENCE Memory, if that is true you cannot imagine how much I envy you.

KEITH I'll bet you've been gossiping somewhere, Memory.

MEMORY Far too busy to gossip tonight, Mr. Tremble. Parties all over the place. Very noisy night in college. Very noisy indeed. Always the same the last night of the university year.

JACK The point is, Memory, we want some more to drink.

MEMORY Certainly, Mr. Muscle. At once, Sir. Sorry you were kept waiting. Couldn't Hope have got it for you, Sir?

KEITH Hope didn't want to do it.

JACK He said that it would have to be put on Mr. Warrior's bill, and as you were Mr. Warrior's servant it would be better for you to do it.

MEMORY That's just like Hope, Sir. Always some good reason for not doing what needs to be done now.

KEITH Well, at least he came over from his own staircase to help when he heard me hollering for you, Memory.

MEMORY Just to show me up, Sir, I can assure you. Hope is no friend of mine. Very unreliable servant. Very. Always contradicting me. Always thinking things'll somehow be different tomorrow from what they were yesterday. One of those fellows who never learn much from experience. You can't tell him anything, however often you try.

TERENCE I wish instead of giving us a lecture on the subject of Hope you could tell *me* something, Memory.

MEMORY What's that, Mr. Soul, Sir ?

TERENCE Where exactly is Mr. Warrior ?

MEMORY That I can't say, I'm sure, Sir. Hasn't he been in all the evening ?

KEITH No, he hasn't.

TERENCE I must say it's a very extraordinary thing to invite his friends to a farewell party in his rooms, provide food and drink and then not turn up to it.

JACK The food was all right—but he hasn't provided enough drink. Do go and get us more drink, Memory.

MEMORY Very good, Sir. What will you have, Sir ?

JACK Beer.

TERENCE Beer! You make it sound so dull the way you say it, Jack. Think of the hop-vines and the barley, the sunshine and showers, the sweat and the skill, the compounds of life and beauty that go to the making of even one glass of . . .

JACK For God's sake shut up, Terence, with your damn barley fields! I'll cram that bottle of yours down your throat if you don't. Bring beer, Memory. We want beer! We want beer!

(Memory scuttles out grinning)

KEITH It's so unlike Paul.

JACK What is ?

KEITH To invite us all here and then not turn up.

TERENCE *(Quite seriously)* I don't know about that. Paul's quite a sensitive person, you know. He may not feel like company tonight.

JACK We're not company. We're his friends. What do you mean ?

TERENCE This is the last evening of the last day of our university career for all of us. We've been together for three years. We go out into the world tomorrow. We say we'll stick together, see a lot of each other, and so on. But life isn't like that. We probably won't, you know.

KEITH What's that got to do with where Paul Warrior is tonight ?

TERENCE Paul has probably been the best liked man of our year. Do you agree ?

KEITH Certainly.

JACK I'm not sure I'd exactly say that. Paul's a very nice fellow, I'll grant you. But — well, *I've* a lot of friends that neither of you know. Paul isn't in the Unmentionables, and I don't say I'm the best-loved man of our year but I would say very frankly that I and one or two of us are at least as popular as Paul is.

TERENCE (*Shrugging and looking out of the window*) The man really believes it.

“O, wad some Power the giftie gie us
Tae see oorsels as ithers see us.”

JACK What exactly do you mean by that ?

KEITH He just means that you are very popular in your own crowd, Jack. But possibly Paul is friends with people you do not usually see much of—people like myself and Terence, for example.

JACK (*Quite unconscious of offence*) Oh, people like that! I see what you mean. I was thinking of people who go to the top.

TERENCE (*Turning back from the window*) Paul Warrior has had a marvellous time here. They may well have been the happiest years he ever will know, the happiest of his life.

JACK They've been the happiest of all our lives. I can't look for better years ahead.

TERENCE Poor old Jack. I'm afraid that's true for you.

KEITH (*With violent feeling*) If I can't look for better years ahead than I've had up till now, I'd kill myself.

TERENCE The point is that Paul may be feeling quite a number of things tonight. He may have felt more like walking by

himself under the stars and around these lovely buildings that we've taken so much for granted and may never see again—he may prefer it even to drinking beer with us.

KEITH Then why did he ask us to dine ?

JACK Nonsense. The old boy's just got caught up at some other party. He'll come tumbling in before long.

(A sound of footsteps hurrying up the stairs is heard)

Someone's coming now.

(The door is opened by Hope. Memory comes in with a tray and jugs, glasses as well as one bottle)

HOPE Just came back to help Memory up the stairs with the tray.

MEMORY No need for it at all. Know the stairs backwards.

(Hope leaves. Memory puts the tray on the table)

Just trying to show me up before you, gentlemen.

JACK Thank God for the beer! What's the bottle ?

MEMORY I saw the Dean, Mr. Pewter, coming this way across the quad, Sir. He's a friend of Mr. Warrior's. Mr. Warrior was expecting him after dinner. I thought I'd put a bottle of college port on the tray. It's what he always likes, Sir.

JACK Take a drop yourself, Memory.

MEMORY Don't mind if I do, Sir, before Mr. Pewter comes. Thank you kindly.

(Pours and drinks a glass of beer, smacks his lips, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand)

(A sound of steps on the stairs. Then a knock)

ALL STUDENTS Come in.

(Enter the Dean of the College, Mr. Pewter. He is a walking brain clad in cap and gown, with the white tie that is the traditional academic dress. The students stand)

PEWTER Good evening, gentlemen.

STUDENTS Good evening, Sir.

PEWTER Do sit down. Good evening, Memory. Give me a glass of that port, will you?

(Memory pours the port. Glances round the room)

MEMORY Anything else, gentlemen ?

TERENCE Nothing, Memory. Unless you can find Mr. Warrior for us.

MEMORY I'll tell him you're waiting if I see him, gentlemen.
(Exit)

PEWTER Yes, where *is* Paul Warrior ? He's the man I came to see.

JACK Don't know, I'm afraid, Sir.

KEITH He hasn't been here all the evening, Sir.

TERENCE It's Hamlet without the ghost, Sir.

PEWTER But not Banquo without the feast, I see. You've done yourselves pretty well, I imagine. Tell me, as this is the last night of your university career can I ask you one question ?

ALL Yes, Sir.

PEWTER Why do you three all go on calling me *Sir* ?

JACK What else exactly could we call you—Sir ?

PEWTER What do you call me among yourselves when I'm

not around ? Don't imagine I don't know. It's always a sign to me of gathering confidence in a student. His first year he calls me *Sir*. Second year, Mr. Pewter. Third year a few of you summon up enough courage to call me Pot or just plain Potty to my face. You three have never done it. Why don't you make a start tonight ? After all, I hope you'll be coming back to see us now and again in the future. You can't very well keep on calling me Sir for the rest of your lives.

JACK (*Clapping him heavily on the back*) Good for you, old Potty. I always thought you weren't such a stuffed shirt as you looked.

PEWTER If calling me Pot involves hitting me with such violence on my back each time you do it, Muscle, I'm thankful you did not start until the last evening of your university career.

KEITH Sir, do you know anything about the exam results ?

PEWTER Not a thing, I'm afraid, Tremble, except what you are feeling about them. It falls to my lot to try and teach you. I don't have the hideous responsibility of examining you too, thank heavens! You'll have to wait another half-hour—till midnight—to know your fate.

JACK I know mine already. I couldn't pass any exam any teacher could think of setting. That's right, isn't it, Potty, old boy ? You can't get down to the level of a man like me.

PEWTER Shall we say you have an unexpected brain, Muscle ? Unexpected in the things you do know, a field which very

few men like myself take the time to explore, and also unexpected in the things you don't :

JACK (*Highly delighted at what he thinks is a great compliment*)
Thank you, Potty. Awfully decent of you to say a thing like that. An unexpected brain. Must tell my old man that.

KEITH I just don't know how you can make jokes about a thing like this examination. Everything depends on it for me. I can't keep still tonight. (*He walks up and down*)

TERENCE Why does so much depend on it :

KEITH It's all right for fellows like you, Soul. You write about beauty and stars. You can afford it. I can't. There's no beauty or stars in the place I come from. I suppose the stars are there, but we never have time or strength to look at them. They don't mean a thing to us.

TERENCE My dear fellow, why ever not :

KEITH My father's a clerk. (*He pronounces it English fashion—Clark*) At least that's what I call him now. Before I came here and was educated by Pot and the others we used to call him a plain CLURK. I suppose he knows as much about the running of the business which employs him as the men who own it. He's worked there forty years now. The only difference is that they're rich and he's poor. Always have been. Always will be. My father's been out of the house every morning at seven every day since I can remember, with his little stiff collars, and his little black bag and his umbrella that he dare not lose because he can't afford to buy another. You talk about the stars to him, Soul.

He's never had time to think about them—never once in a lifetime. The only thing he's able to think about is "Will I keep my job?" He can't afford to be ill, can't afford to take a holiday, can't afford to die, poor devil, though he'll have to do it one day.

JACK Damn it, Keith, I didn't know all this. You shouldn't talk about your family that way. It's not decent somehow.

KEITH Decent? Do you realise, Muscle, that that tomfool hat you're wearing cost as much money as my dad has ever earned any week of his life? You'd bash it to bits for a joke, buy another next day and expect your family to pay the bill. Is that decent? Down our way we'd call it wicked. "What a wicked waste." It's one of the earliest things I can remember my mother saying if we didn't wipe our plates clean and spotless with a bit of bread when we'd finished eating, we kids.

TERENCE It may sound odd to you, Keith, but I find beauty in what you're saying.

KEITH If you think that's beautiful, you ought to *try* it some day. My father's like millions. He earns the wages of a labourer and has to keep up the appearance of a city gentleman. We've had the worst of both worlds.

JACK I don't understand why you're suddenly so excited, Keith. You're as clever as old Potty here. You'll pass all right. Why all the excitement?

KEITH A pass isn't enough for me, Muscle. I'm my family's one hope. I got a scholarship here. I've pinched and

scraped my way through university while fellows like you have been having the time of your lives. I've got to get the highest honour that can be got in this examination. I need a good job as soon as I finish here. I need it now. I can't afford to wait for one.

PEWTER What are you going to do, Tremble ?

KEITH I don't know, Sir. Anything that pays. I was hoping Paul Warrior might help me find a job if the exam results are all right. His family have got influence. I'm going to be rich, no matter who tries to stop me. No children of mine will go through what I've been through.

PEWTER Not much good becoming the dean of a college, then. You could, you know. You've got the brains. But there's no money in it.

JACK That's one of the advantages of having—an *unexpected* brain like mine I think you said, Potty ?

PEWTER What are the advantages ?

JACK You never could be the dean of a college with a brain like mine. Being dean of a college—it is one hell of a job. It's like a sort of prison guard, isn't it ?

TERENCE I don't know. There must be great satisfaction in coaxing character, like flowers from stubborn earth, out of the youth of a generation.

PEWTER Not quite the way I'd put it, Soul. But there's truth in what you say.

KEITH Sir, if there's no money in it, why did you go in for teaching?

PEWTER An odd reason. It was the intense dislike I had for my father. You probably won't understand that, Tremble. I could tell from the way you spoke that you love your father or at least you understand and pity him. I neither loved nor understood nor pitied mine.

JACK Oh, I say, Potty—you can't be serious. That's not quite playing the game, is it ?

PEWTER It all depends what game you're playing. My father played a game—and I didn't like it.

TERENCE What was his game ?

JACK It's the first time I ever heard you show any interest in any game, Terence.

PEWTER My father's game was religion.

JACK Pretty strict rules at that, they tell me. Mostly indoor too. Think I'll stick to football.

PEWTER That's the most sensible thing I've ever heard you say, Muscle.

TERENCE You can't go on playing football for ever.

JACK No, but when you're too old to play you can watch it and drink beer with the chaps afterwards. Now there's real beauty for you, Terence. A really tough game, a good hot bath and a barrel of beer and the fire with your friends.

TERENCE Mud and sweat, soap and water, flames and friendship. You know, for once I'm inclined to agree with you, Jack.

PEWTER You know, Tremble, my father always said all the right things. If I'd lived the way he'd talked, I'd have been

a saint. And of course so would he. But neither of us were. He was a fine-looking fellow with a sort of glow on him like a prize beast at a fair. I took more after my mother. Always on the small side. He used to have these meetings in our home. My father would read prayers. A lot of women used to come to them. They all admired Father. They used to say to me "You've got the most wonderful father in the world."

KEITH I don't see anything much wrong with that.

PEWTER No. Except that my father used to get a great kick out of their admiration as the women looked at him with their foolish, shining eyes. And my mother was always loyal—but always unhappy. When I was quite a kid, I found her crying in her bedroom. She never told me why. But my father came into the room as I was asking her. He never forgave me for that.

JACK I don't see you could help it, Potty.

PEWTER His pride was hurt at being found out, Muscle. But you wouldn't know anything about that, would you ?

TERENCE Nobody has found Jack out—yet.

JACK I don't make women cry.

TERENCE Perhaps you make them laugh :

KEITH Oh, shut up, Terence! Go on, Pot. What happened :

PEWTER Anyway, a few days later I fell asleep at one of the meetings. I used to get so bored at that everlasting drone, and I just nodded off. That night my father took me upstairs and beat me—after the guests had gone. He did it to

hurt Mother, more than anything else. Then he asked me to pray with him—to show that I realised it was for my good, as he said, and that there was full forgiveness between us. Of course I prayed. But I hated him as I did it.

JACK I still don't see why all this made you become the dean of a college, Pot, old boy.

PEWTER It may encourage you to know, Muscle, that as a child I was not thought very clever. One day after my report came in from school, my father was reading it. "*Pewter*. Tries hard but does not seem to grasp the essentials of the subject." I can hear him saying it now, mouthing it over and glaring at my mother as he did so. Of course I didn't do well at school because I was worried about home all the time. Then my father patted me on the head and said, "*Pewter* by name and *pewter* by nature, I'm afraid. Solid certainly, useful possibly, but needs real hard work to make it shine." It was at that moment that I decided to shine or bust.

KEITH I understand that perfectly.

JACK I don't get it at all.

TERENCE It's one of the most interesting stories I ever heard. It's real.

PEWTER Oh, it's real enough, I can promise you, Soul. I really began to use my brain from that moment. You've no idea what a relief it was, as the years went on, to find my brain convincing me more and more that all the things my father said he stood for were really nonsense. You see, the

way he lived made me dislike his religion, but I never quite had the courage to disbelieve in it until my brain grew up, and then it told me that my conscience as well as my father was a liar. My father invented my conscience to keep me quiet. It's happened from generation to generation.

TERENCE Don't you believe in any of it now, Pot ?

PEWTER No I don't. But I'm surprised that you of all people should want an answer to that question, Soul. I thought I'd helped you to grow out of all mysticism—dogmas, credo's, God, all that stuff. Human intelligence is the highest standard of judgment I know, and I thought I'd trained you to stick to it.

TERENCE Frankly, Pot, you haven't done much for me with your lectures.

KEITH You fool. Pot's philosophy lectures are the best things of their kind being given in the world today.

TERENCE Yes. But the thing I am really interested in is beauty. The lectures did not help me to find it.

JACK For God's sake, Terence, shut up with your beauty and your la-de-da.

TERENCE *It is* la-de-da, I suppose. It seems so to you, anyway, Jack. The fact is that I've put on the airs I have here to try and satisfy what is a real longing in my heart. You've satisfied yourself with kicking a football and clubbing with the Unmentionables, Jack. You hope to satisfy yourself with money, Keith. Good luck to you. I hope you make it. You've satisfied yourself by your brain and proving

how wrong about you your father was, Pot. All I can say is that none of these things will ever satisfy me.

PEWTER What will :

TERENCE To find real, permanent beauty and live in its atmosphere until I die. The trouble with your lectures for me, Pot, is that I understood more and more how up to date is indulgence and how old-fashioned is discipline. How clever are the bad and how foolish are the good. How gay is vice and how dull is virtue. I believed it all. I still do believe it. But I've never understood *why*. And deep inside myself, I've not found real beauty in that philosophy.

JACK All this talk's far beyond me. I think character's the thing. You don't build character at lectures. You build it at games.

PEWTER I think you're right to concentrate on character, Muscle. It's a real refuge for the less brilliant of every generation. Any fool can be good, you know—but it takes a wise man to be clever.

KEITH Character makes me sick. Absolutely sick. All the directors of my father's firm praise his character. "Honest Bob Tremble," they call him. But they don't pay him more for it. And he's too afraid to ask for more.

TERENCE That's the bewildering thing about character—everybody praises the character of a virtuous man, particularly after he's dead, but they have no intention of imitating it so long as they go on living.

(A sound of someone running up the stairs)

JACK Thank Heaven! Here comes old Paul at last. (*The door opens and in comes Memory*) Oh, it's only you, Memory.

MEMORY Thought you'd like to know, gentlemen. Two young ladies coming up. Be here any minute now. The porter's just signing them in. Say Mr. Warrior invited them to go down and see the exam results at midnight.

JACK Ladies? What kind of ladies?

PEWTER It's quite against college regulations. But I suppose on the last night of the year, regulations just have to be broken—ch, Memory?

KEITH (*To Terence Soul who is looking out of the window*) Who are they?

TERENCE It's Eve Ageless and Sally Spectacle. I can see them in the lodge.

PEWTER Eve Ageless—there's beauty for you, Soul.

JACK (*Who is straightening his tie and smartening himself up at the mirror*) She's certainly a smasher.

PEWTER More than can be said for Miss Spectacle, I fear.

KEITH I like Sally. She talks very little.

MEMORY Shall I tidy the table, Sir? Only take a moment.

JACK No time for that. Let's tidy it in the traditional manner of the Unmentionables.

TERENCE How?

JACK (*To Keith Tremble*) You hold this corner. (*Gives him a corner of the cloth*) (*To Terence Soul*) You hold this one. Hold tight. Now. (*With a plunge from one end of the table to the other he wraps all the crockery inside the cloth in a jangling* W.T.—C

bundle and snatches the ends of the cloth from Terence Soul and Keith Tremble)

MEMORY Someone will have to pay for all that crockery, make no mistake.

PEWTER You really are an Unmentionable, Muscle.

JACK Certainly, Pot. I was elected two years ago.

PEWTER I didn't exactly mean that.

KEITH What will you do with it ?

JACK This of course.

(He rushes to the window, holds the bundle in his hands in the outer darkness and suddenly lets go. After a second or two there is a loud crash as it lands in the quad, followed by feminine squeals and protests from Eve Ageless and Sally Spectacle who are at the foot of the stairs outside the building preparing to enter)

TERENCE It really does mystify me, Jack, why incessant noise seems to be part of the character you have built yourself on the playing fields.

PEWTER The stiff upper lip usually carries a loose lower jaw with it, Soul, haven't you noticed that ?

MEMORY *(Leaning out of the window)*

You nearly hit them two young ladies, Mr. Muscle.

(Shouts) Hope ! Hope !

HOPE *(From below)* Yes.

MEMORY Start to clear up the mess underneath Mr. Warrior's window, will you ?

HOPE All right.

(*Memory comes back from the window as the two young ladies tap on the door and enter. Eve Ageless is the ageless Eve. She is straightforward in her approach to life and people. She is friendly with Sally Spectacle because Sally could never in any sense be a rival to her in her field of action. Sally is—and looks—clever*)

EVE It's the first time in my life anyone has bombarded me as I came to call.

SALLY It was Jack. I saw him leaning out of the window. I'm very surprised that after years of practice at hitting balls and catching balls and throwing balls, he made such a bad shot.

JACK Really, I assure you, quite an accident. It just fell out of my hand, so to speak. No idea of hitting you really.

PEWTER I'm sure the young ladies would like something to drink, Memory. What can you get them ?

MEMORY Anything at all, Sir, anything at all. Vodka, whisky, aquavit, wine, rum, gin, beer, coca-cola or just plain Adam's ale from the tap.

EVE (*Flashing a dazzling smile to Pewter*)

I'll have a glass of Mr. Pewter's port, thank you.

SALLY Make me a cup of tea, please, Memory.

MEMORY Tea ? Tea—excuse me, Miss, I think Hope had better do that. He's more of a hand at it than I am. (*Leaning out of the window*) Have you finished up down there, Hope ?

HOPE Just finishing up.

MEMORY Then make a pot of tea for the young ladies, will you, there's a good chap.

HOPE All right, Memory.

MEMORY Hope will bring your tea in a few moments, Miss.

JACK And bring some more beer for the rest of us.

MEMORY (*Going*) Yes, Sir.

JACK (*Shouting down the stairs after him*) And bring Mr. Warrior too.

MEMORY Yes, Sir. I'll try, Sir.

EVE Isn't Paul here ?

KEITH He hasn't been here all the evening.

EVE How odd. Do we all sit around and wait for him ?

(*She sits arranging herself in an attractive fashion and flashing her smile like a slow lighthouse beam around everyone in turn*)

TERENCE As a matter of fact, we've been talking about the past and the future.

EVE It sounds fascinating.

SALLY All men like to boast about their past. From what they say, I'd only hope the future's going to be different.

JACK Look here, Sally, what do *you* know about men ?

SALLY Enough to make me like women better.

PEWTER Do you feel the same, Miss Ageless ?

EVE Not at all. I like men very much.

(*Her smile again travels the waterfront*)

I'm not so interested in the past, though men have constantly added interest to my life so far. But my future is

very much concerned with men—at least with one man.

TERENCE Who is it, Eve ? If it's me you'll make me vain. If it's not, you'll make me jealous.

JACK (*Straightening his tie*) Prepare to be jealous. Tell them, Eve.

SALLY Tell them *what*, you oaf ?

JACK What's an oaf ?

PEWTER A man with an unexpected brain, Muscle.

JACK (*Mollified*)

Oh. Well, tell them that I've asked you to marry me, Eve.

KEITH Did she accept ?

JACK Well, not yet. Not exactly.

TERENCE Think of spending a lifetime with that loudmouth.

JACK Better than living with a blasted egghead like you.

EVE Now, boys, it's neither of you. So don't get excited.

KEITH Let's guess who it is.

EVE Very well. Will you have the first guess, Mr. Pewter ?

PEWTER Paul Warrior, of course.

EVE How on earth ? Sally, did you tell him ?

SALLY I haven't said a word to anybody.

PEWTER If you spend several years teaching in a university you get a sort of sixth sense about the man that the prettiest girl of the year will select as her mate.

TERENCE It sounds ghastly.

JACK I thought it was the men who had to do the selecting.

PEWTER That is just another example of your unexpected brain, Muscle.

KEITH Has Paul asked you :

EVE No. As a matter of fact he's the only one of you here who hasn't—except Mr. Pewter.

PEWTER Me ? Good God ! I mean God forbid ! I mean—oh you know what I mean !

SALLY I'm not sure that I do. It doesn't sound very gallant, Mr. Pewter.

JACK It sounded damned rude to me.

TERENCE If it sounds rude to *you*, Jack, it must be really barbaric.

PEWTER (*Recovering himself by now*)

All I meant was that, had I any belief in a god, which I haven't, I am quite sure he would forbid any thought of the alliance of a radiant, gay extrovert like Miss Ageless, with a middle-aged mental monotony like myself.

JACK Oh, yes, I see exactly what you mean.

EVE I see what he means. But he doesn't really mean it. Actually, I'd bore you to death, wouldn't I, Mr. Pewter ?

PEWTER Boring is not just the word that comes to mind, Miss Ageless. Shall we say that your character and interests are a little outside the range of my normal field ?

KEITH If I could have strung words together the way you do, I believe she'd have accepted me when I proposed. Wouldn't you, Eve ?

EVE You can't afford to get married, Keith. It would inter-

fere with your career. You told me that before you even asked me.

KEITH I'll make much more money than the rest of them put together before I'm through.

TERENCE I can afford it. Why won't you change your mind and take me, Eve ?

EVE Sorry, Terence. Sweet of you, of course. But I'm not going to play second fiddle to the beauty of flowers, fish, fowl or anything else that takes your fancy. Beauty lovers are not for me. There are too many beauties for them to admire. They switch around too quickly. No thanks!

JACK I'm the one for you, Eve.

SALLY She wouldn't stick you for a week.

JACK Whatever else you say about me, Miss Spectacle, I'm not boring. I'm the life and soul of every Unmentionable party.

SALLY I don't doubt that.

EVE Oh, stop teasing him, Sally. It's all so pointless anyway. I've quite made up my mind I'm going to marry Paul as soon as possible. He's well-off. He's good looking. He's popular. He's right up my alley.

PEWTER I'm inexperienced in these matters—and probably out of date too. But there's one thing you didn't mention, Miss Ageless. Do you happen to love him ?

EVE I love the sort of life he can give me.

PEWTER H'm. Not quite the same thing. But it might last longer.

TERENCE I hate the way you both talk.

KEITH Why ?

TERENCE It's so dammed calculating. It's like an adding machine. It denies the force of tears and hope, love and hate, laughter and faith and folly that is every one of us, that is life itself.

PEWTER Rather a confusing force, Jack. Makes a number of mistakes. Causes a lot of trouble. You'll do better to stick to mathematics. It's an exact science. An adding machine tends to be far more accurate and far less disappointing. Of course, there's one factor we've all forgotten, which may change Miss Ageless's plan.

EVE Change my plan ?

KEITH What's that ?

SALLY Eve doesn't change her plans, believe me, Mr. Pewter.

PEWTER Supposing Paul Warrior doesn't have the adding machine mentality. Supposing he doesn't ask Miss Ageless to marry him because he doesn't think he loves her.

JACK Not love her ? She's the toast of the town.

(Raising his beer mug at her)

EVE *(Who for a moment had been really worried)*

Oh, that ? Paul will ask me all right.

TERENCE If he doesn't ?

EVE I'll just ask him myself.

(As she says this, Paul Warrior has entered the room and stands quietly listening in the doorway. They have not seen him. Now he steps forward and says)

PAUL Hullo, Eve. Hullo, everybody. What exactly is it you are going to ask me, Eve, if I don't ask you first ?

EVE (*Recovering swiftly and giving Paul a sizzling smile*)

Paul, it's wonderful to see you. You gave me quite a start, coming in so quietly. Naturally I want to ask you the same question as all the rest of us—where on earth have you been all the evening ?

JACK Yes, by God, Paul old boy! What *have* you been up to? We've been waiting ages.

TERENCE Let's all guess. I bet you've been wandering round the quads and gardens enjoying the dusk of your youth.

SALLY You've been with some frightful female.

KEITH My mother always told me no females are frightful. She said women are the flowers of the earth. Don't disillusion me, Sally. No, I'll bet Paul was doing something really sensible. Packing bags or looking up trains or something.

PEWTER Possibly saying good-bye to other friends ?

JACK Out on the tiles, I'll bet. One last bender, eh Paul ?

EVE Don't be so crude, Jack. Paul doesn't drink like that.

JACK Oh, doesn't he ? That's all you know. Paul's no Puritan.
(*They all stand looking at Paul, who stands quietly looking at them and saying nothing. Finally Eve says*)

EVE Come on, Paul. Put us out of our misery.

JACK Yes, tell us, old boy.

PAUL I'm sorry I wasn't here. I hope Memory and Hope have looked after you all properly.

PEWTER We've had port and beer and tea and a mixture of complaint and philosophy from Hope and Memory. But don't avoid the question, Paul. Where have you been ? What have you been doing ?

PAUL (*Coming down stage and looking out across the audience*)
I've been getting a job.

KEITH You lucky devil. Is it a good one ?

TERENCE What sort of a job ?

EVE I thought you had lots of money, Paul. I didn't think you needed *work*.

PAUL I *do* need work.

JACK My dear fellow. I'd no idea. My old man's got plenty of the necessary. I can squeeze an extra bit out of him. Really, I'd like to help.

PAUL You're a good fellow, Jack. But I don't need money.

KEITH Do need work ? Don't need money ? I don't get it.

SALLY Do you suppose the only reason people work is for money ?

JACK Yes, of course. What else would anybody work for ?

PEWTER My poor Muscle ! For many reasons. To destroy an enemy or to help a friend. To prove something about yourself or about someone else. For the sake of boredom or of duty. A million reasons.

TERENCE Work can be very ugly or very beautiful. It all depends which way you look at it.

KEITH Work's hell. Anyone who has really worked knows that. But it's money for men like me.

EVE You men chatter so. Give Paul a chance. What job have you got, Paul ?

(There is another silence)

PEWTER Well, Paul ?

(Paul Warrior from now to the end of the scene speaks with complete conviction and certainty. He bids to convince and win them all. Turning to face them he says)

PAUL By God, I will tell you! I don't quite know how. I didn't mean to say a word. But I will.

TERENCE It sounds fascinating.

PAUL What day is this ?

JACK Thursday.

(Or whatever day of the week the play happens to be showing)

PAUL The date I mean.

KEITH *(Gives the exact date and year on which the play happens to be showing)*

PAUL Well, this date and day is a landmark in my life. It's the day when for the first time I saw really clearly what lies ahead.

(Enter Memory followed by Hope, both hurrying)

MEMORY Pardon me, Sir. The big bell will ring in just a few minutes now, Sir. You'll all want to be down at the examination hall to see the results when the bell rings, Sir.

JACK Oh, shut up Memory! Mr. Warrior's just told us he can foresee the future.

MEMORY Very odd, Mr. Muscle. More comfortable for some than for others, I'll be bound.

EVE I do wish you'd all give Paul a chance to talk. I'm interested.

PAUL It's not foreseeing the future like a racing tipster or an astrologer or anything like that. But during these last years at the university, I've often wondered what the future holds for us.

KEITH Haven't we all ? But *you've* nothing to worry about, Paul.

PAUL Haven't I ? I wonder. I've spent three years of my life in this place with all of you. We've had wonderful days together. At least I've loved them. Every bit of them. We've learned a certain amount, some more than others. We've fallen in and out of love. We've drunk and laughed and shouted and sung. And we've talked. My God, how we've talked! But we haven't done one thing that I can see which will really affect anybody's future except our own. We've been as selfish as hell.

MEMORY (*Bustling forward with beer*)

Have some beer, Mr. Warrior ? You'll feel far better.

(*As Paul shakes his head, and Jack Muscle reaches out for some*)

Don't worry, ladies. Don't take it too seriously, gentlemen. They often go like this the last night of the year. Seen it scores of times. All nerves and nonsense, if you ask me.

TERENCE Nobody did ask you. Go ahead, Paul.

PAUL We talk and talk and talk about tomorrow. Tonight I've seen the truth. We are tomorrow.

JACK It's beyond me. I don't get it.

KEITH There's nothing new in that.

EVE We are tomorrow. Oh, Paul, that's wonderful! I understand.

SALLY If only some hydrogen bomb or cobalt bomb or some other bomb doesn't see that tomorrow never comes.

PEWTER It's true, you know. We'll probably see the world blow up before we get to your tomorrow.

PAUL No. We can answer the H-bomb, but never with just a lot of hot air. All we seem to do is to blame America or Russia or the politicians or the scientists, or someone.

JACK It's a bit outside our line isn't it, old boy? There's nothing to be done about a thing like that, surely?

PAUL There is. I saw what can be done and must be done. I saw it tonight.

PEWTER Have you spent your evening researching in the laboratory, Paul? You sound as if you had discovered something the scientists overlooked.

PAUL That's exactly it. I have.

KEITH For God's sake tell us, then! What is it?

PAUL The hydrogen bomb has hypnotised us. We think it's the strongest force in the world. Well, it isn't.

EVE What's stronger?

PAUL The hydrogen bomb can destroy cities, maybe wipe out nations. It can't kill eight hundred million people with one blast. Nobody says it can.

JACK So what?

PAUL An idea can unite eight hundred million people in the world with one another. An idea has actually done it. An idea like that, an idea that can affect eight hundred million people, is stronger than any bomb the world has seen.

MEMORY (*To Pewter*)

That's what's got into him, Sir. That explains it. Lots of young gentlemen get bitten with that sort of revolutionary thinking—some of the best of them. It'll probably pass.

HOPE (*To Warrior*) Are we to understand that you are out for bloody revolution, Mr. Warrior ?

PAUL No! No! No! Hope, you silly old idiot. Though there are worse things than being out for revolution. I was only saying that a big idea is more powerful than a big bomb. But bloody revolution's nothing like big enough. It's too small because it's built on things that are too small, like hate and fear and bitterness, all dressed up as idealism. We need an idea big enough to unite not just eight hundred million people, but the whole world. To change men and nations—to unite classes, parties, continents, to make mankind one living, laughing, illuminated family.

PEWTER Have you been drinking, Warrior ?

PAUL No.

PEWTER You talk like a drunk man.

JACK I don't talk like that when *I'm* drunk.

KEITH What would you build this idea on, Paul ?

PAUL Oh, big things like love, honesty, unselfishness—purity too, if you like.

JACK Shut up, Paul. That's something I *can* get. I don't like it at all. Remember, ladies present, old boy.

PEWTER It's all theory. It doesn't work.

PAUL It does. I saw it work tonight. And I felt it work too. I was with people tonight who say there is a force powerful enough to change the world, and to change the people in the world—people like you and me. I'm going to spend the rest of my life on that job—remaking the world.

EVE Remaking the world ? What's that mean exactly ? I'm not sure I like it.

PAUL It meant for me starting with myself—putting things right.

JACK It sounds so complicated.

PAUL It's not complicated at all. Perhaps I wish it were. It's dead simple and darned difficult. I've got things to put right with every one of you—right here in this room.

SALLY Whatever do you mean ?

(Slowly taking them each in turn)

PAUL Sally, I've laughed at you behind your back. I've done it often. I'm sorry.

TERENCE Look here, Paul, isn't this going too far ? You'll only hurt people.

SALLY Hurt ? He couldn't hurt me if he tried.

KEITH You've certainly got guts, Paul.

JACK I think it's caddish to laugh at a woman behind her back.

PAUL Yes, it is caddish. That's why I hope Sally will forgive me.

(*Sally makes no response*) And I hope you'll forgive me, too, Jack.

JACK (*Uneasily*) Oh, nothing to forgive as far as I'm concerned, old man. Lots of people laugh at me, even to my face.

PAUL It wasn't laughter. It was theft.

MEMORY *Theft*, Mr. Warrior, Sir ?

PAUL Yes, theft, Memory. You're not the only one to pick up unconsidered trifles around here.

MEMORY (*To Pewter*) This is one too much, Sir. I won't be accused like that, not even by a gentleman like Mr. Warrior.

PEWTER Keep calm, Memory. Perquisites are a traditional part of your recognised wages. Everyone knows about it. Why pretend ?

PAUL It's those cuff links you lent, Jack. I borrowed 'em. I liked 'em. And I meant to keep 'em.

JACK Oh, I say, old boy! Sorry I made such a fuss. Thought it was one of the servants. One of those traditional perquisites, Memory. Oh, Lord! You can have the damned things if you want 'em, Paul.

PEWTER (*Very ironically*) Virtue used to be its own reward. Now you get a pair of cuff links thrown in. I congratulate you on your new-found honesty, Warrior. It appears to pay.

PAUL I hope so, Mr. Pewter. You see I've been dishonest with you too.

PEWTER Don't say you've got any cuff links of mine. I never wear them. Buttons are cheaper.

PAUL You praised my last examination result. Well, I fooled you. I cheated.

JACK (*Excitedly*) How on earth did you do it ? By God, I wish I could cheat without being caught! Never had enough brains to do it.

PEWTER At least your honesty seems to be catching, Warrior.

KEITH You fool, Paul. Blast you to hell! I'd never have helped you with those papers if I'd known you'd tell Pot here.

PEWTER So you were in it too, Tremble ? I think it's lucky for you both I'm not one of the examiners whose results will be up (*Looking at his watch*) in five minutes precisely.

KEITH My God, I'll say it's lucky!

PAUL I didn't want to involve you, Keith. I'm grateful for the way you helped me with the papers. But I resented it at the same time. You see, I've always been jealous of you.

KEITH You, jealous of *me* ?

PAUL Yes. Jealous of your brilliance. You'll make a success. I'll only inherit a business. At least, I don't even know if I will inherit it now. I don't think I'll be able to run it, as my father always hoped I would.

TERENCE Paul, this night has seen one of the most beautiful actions I have ever seen. I'll never forget it. None of us will. Thank you.

PAUL Don't thank me yet. I've got something to say to you.

W.T.—D

TERENCE Don't say it. Give me the credit for not choosing to hear it. I can understand your wanting to express yourself in writing as I do, Paul. But don't let jealousy spoil things between us. I know how you admire my writing. But we can't all be writers.

PAUL It's not that, old fellow. The fact is, I've always flattered your writing because I wanted your friendship. I played up to you for what I could get out of you. I'm sorry to tell you, but in fact I think your writing is a mess.

JACK (*Clapping him on the back*) Good for you! Never understood a word of the stuff myself.

EVE Haven't you forgotten *me*, Paul ?

PAUL No.

EVE You don't seem to be putting things right with me.

PAUL It's harder.

SALLY (*Bitterly*) Have you laughed at her, too ?

JACK Have you stolen something from her ?

TERENCE Have you lied to her in flattery ?

PEWTER Surely you haven't cheated her ?

EVE How *dare* you say a thing like that, Mr. Pewter ?

PAUL Eve, we've had good times together. I've loved them. But I've not loved you. And I've deliberately pretended that I did. Perhaps it's given you a false impression. Perhaps it hasn't. But it's been soft and selfish and just plain mean. I'm terribly sorry.

EVE (*After a moment of silence springs to her feet*)

My dear Paul, I'm afraid I haven't the slightest idea what

you are talking about. I came to your room this evening for an end of the year party. It was extremely enjoyable—until you came in. It's interesting, of course, to learn that you're a cheat and a thief and a fraud. But why you think all this should interest me, I simply can't imagine. As for what you say to me myself, it means nothing. I don't understand it. I'll be thankful, too, if you don't repeat it to others. It might give them ideas about me that are not right—so with all your talk about ideas, just keep quiet about your ideas on me, will you? I'll be going now. Good-night all. Come, Sally.

(Eve goes)

SALLY You swine! My God, I hate you! You can laugh at me as much as you like—but you shan't hurt her. If you do, I'll kill you.

(Sally rushes out. There is a long pause)

PAUL Well, do any of the rest of you want to go?

TERENCE I don't. Thank you for what you said to me, Paul. The trouble is, I know it is true. My writing is a mess. Thank Heaven someone had the sense to tell me! I'd like to know what Hope and Memory think about all this.

HOPE It's the finest thing I've heard any young gentleman do for years. It made my heart grow big inside me.

PEWTER I question that very much. It's a scientific absurdity. You'll find your heart is much the same size tomorrow as it was yesterday. I like you, Warrior. But I like you better when you're less noble. A cheat is real. An honest cheat

is embarrassing. And I hate to be embarrassed. I prefer being fooled to being disillusioned.

(As Memory pours him more port) What do you say, Memory ?

MEMORY It'll all blow over, Mr. Pewter. If Hope says something is fine, you can be sure it will be soon forgotten. I've seen this sort of thing scores of times before. Scores and scores of times. Mr. Warrior's all wrought up. He'll feel better in the morning. There's nothing to it at all. He means it all right, but it's a dream that will fade.

HOPE Don't talk like that to Mr. Warrior.

MEMORY You keep your nose out of this, Hope.

PAUL Thank you, Hope, and thank you, Memory. You both mean well but you're wrong, Memory. Hope's right. I've decided. Tonight is a turning point for me. No matter what any of you say or feel, no matter what any of you do or don't do, my mind's made up. I'm never turning back. I'm going to give everything to the greatest revolution of all time. My time, my money, my life—everything. The rebuilding of men and nations. The remaking of the world. It's the biggest idea in history. It's the task and challenge of our generation. That's my decision. What's yours ?
(They all look at each other. And as they look a bell begins to toll midnight)

KEITH The bell. The exam results.

(He rushes out of the room)

TERENCE . . . The bell. That summons us to Heaven or to hell. Come on. Let's go and see the results, and decide the other things afterwards.

(He goes)

JACK Not much point my going to look, eh Pot? But I'll stick with you, Paul. Come on.

(They go out together)

PAUL *(Looking back)* Do come, Pot.

PEWTER There they go—another generation on the way. Just the same, eh Memory? No better and probably not much worse. But I do hope Mr. Warrior snaps out of this. It was really awkward and unpleasant, and I must say you two did not help.

MEMORY Hope always brings out the worst in me, Sir. He never agrees with what I say. Never.

HOPE I don't want to be awkward, Mr. Pewter. But really I think Mr. Warrior did something that can make a big difference to us all.

MEMORY I've been at work here as long as you, Hope. Your problem is you learn nothing from the past.

HOPE You think everyone's like yourself. You always think the worst. You act as if you know everything.

MEMORY You talk as if you know nothing.

PEWTER In my experience of this college, which is not so long as either of yours, if you expect the worst you are seldom disappointed. Personally, I feel tonight's exhibition was lamentable. Each time Warrior said anything I had to call up the resources of my brain to control the emotional unreason of my inside. It's that unreasoning emotion that causes the real trouble in the world. Just the same, to-

night had its amusing moments. It was funny to see how they all reacted.

MEMORY (*Laughing sycophantically*) Oh yes, indeed, Sir. Very droll at times. Especially when he said how he had cheated you, Sir.

PEWTER (*Coldly*) What odd words you use, Memory. Well, all I can say is this : you may find this evening droll—I think that was the word you used : But I do not find this constant bickering between you and Hope droll at all. It's got to stop. I mean that. It's bad for the college. Bad for us all. Do you understand ?

(*A noise of shouting comes from the quad*)

I have to go down and see the results with them. They expect it of me. Good-night, Hope. Good-night, Memory. (*He goes. They are left glaring at each other*)

MEMORY Blast you, Hope! You're always interfering. You might have got us the sack.

HOPE I've done nothing and said nothing that I would unsay or undo if I had the chance.

MEMORY That's exactly it. You're always so sure you're so right, you whitewasher of truth.

HOPE You're always so sure everyone else is so wrong. I'd sooner whitewash truth than blacken the future for these young gentlemen with lies from the past.

MEMORY They're not lies.

HOPE They are.

(*Another shout from the quad. They look at each other, then*

walk upstage, throw open the windows and stand gazing out at the stars, the spires, and another generation hurrying away into the light and darkness)

MEMORY You do delude them, Hope, you know. Your vague goodwill keeps them happy but changes nothing.

HOPE You're the one who deluded them, Memory. You teach 'em that nothing can happen which hasn't already happened. But look at Mr. Warrior tonight.

MEMORY Look at him in twenty-five years time. It'll all be much the same.

HOPE I wonder.

(Up from the quad come shouts, "There's old Hope", "There's old Memory", "Good-bye Hope", "Good-bye Memory")

HOPE and MEMORY *(Back to audience and waving out of the window as the curtain falls very slowly)*

Good-bye! Good-bye! Good-bye!

CURTAIN

ENTRACTE BEFORE ACT II

ENTRACTE

Enter from stage right in front of the curtain Memory, looking back over his shoulder. He halts just before he gets to stage centre. As he comes in he carries a mug of beer and is talking, partly to himself, partly to the audience

MEMORY Nag, nag, nag, nag, nag. Cockcrow, sundown, moonrise. It never stops. That fellow, Hope, will be the death of me, unless old Memory can be the death of him first. Always contradicting me. Always so damned cheerful, when there's nothing to be cheerful about. He's such a fool. And he looks at you as if he pities you—which is more than any self-respecting man can bear. Abuse to your face, yes—it's normal. Whispers behind your back—yes, it's natural. Pity, without a word being said. No! No! No! It's unbearable. It's indecent. It's against all the rules. *(Takes a swig of beer)*

(As he has been saying these last sentences, looking out to the audience and occasionally back to stage right where he came, Hope quietly comes from out of the centre of the curtain and stands watching him. He talks a bit too good and looks a shade too wise)

HOPE Poor old Memory.

MEMORY *(Leaping, and then without looking directly at Hope but staring out across the audience)*

Is that you again, Hope ?

HOPE Yes, it's me.

MEMORY (*Wheeling on him*)

Then stop your snivelling ways.

Creeping upon old Memory from behind.

As furtive as a mole.

You're not a man, you're just a curl of smoke,

A fog, a mist, a vapour—that steals in

When we are unprepared, blocks out the light,

Chokes up the channels of the human mind

And numbs its natural function.

HOPE

Poor old boy!

Is it the beer again ?

MEMORY

To hell with you!

Because your stomach feeds on milk and slops

You think the rest of us should do the same.

Drunkard I'm not—but you are worse than drunk.

You steal away the wits of other men,

Intoxicate to folly with your hopes

Which vainly lull to feebleness. Those hopes,

So soon by facts denied, shackle man's will,

Chain him before events, numb him to nothing.

You make men drunk.

(*Takes another swig of beer*)

I sober them with truth.

HOPE You've got it bad today. There's little wrong

That I can see, with Hope. And as for truth,

Hope tells more truth than Fear, or Hate,

(*Memory drinks again*)

or Beer.

MEMORY What do you know of truth ? You spend your life
Gilding the facts for men—tickle their toes with feathers,
Invade their nostrils with the scent of gain,
Charm ears and heartstrings with familiar airs
But never fill one belly with sound food,
One hand with work, one head with aught save fancy.

HOPE There, there, old boy ! Do you feel better now ?

MEMORY I feel like hell so long as you're around.

And that's a fact. Why don't you let me be ?

HOPE I'm thinking of those men. What will they choose ?

Young Warrior put it to them straight.

MEMORY

Put what ?

A lot of sugar from a treacle tongue.

It's sweet and sour, a sauce

To prick their palates, while their plates stay void.

They'll choose the same as each lot always does.

The safe, the soft, the selfish—so they'll tread

The historic road to violence and death.

And you won't stop 'em, Hope.

(Swigs again)

HOPE

I'd like to try.

They could remake the world.

MEMORY

The world's the same

Today as all the yesterdays and so

It will remain tomorrow.

HOPE

We shall see.

They could remake the world. I'd like to find

Their children in a quarter century

Inherit peace and freedom.

MEMORY

Freedom ? Peace ?

Words that all through the ages have been used—

HOPE But deeds might implement the emptiness of words

If Warrior truly decides.

MEMORY

I've had enough of this.

Look here. I'll take you on.

Twenty-five years from now. We'll see the world

Their children will inherit. Come with me;

I'll show you where in truth their journey leads.

Do you agree ?

HOPE

I'll come. In make-believe

Let's see the world they'll make.

Lead on then, Hope.

(Hope goes off stage left)

MEMORY I'll show him something that will stop his mouth.

Hope will be dead before their children march

The path of manhood. So I'll have my day.

Roll forward Time, sweep all the dreams away.

Perish the vain imaginings of Youth.

Forward the stern realities of Truth.

Remake the world they could—but never will.

Each generation wallows in the swill

Left by the last—and loves it. Forward then !

Let's see the future forged by foolish men.

(Off—drinking to the audience as he goes)

ACT II

SCENE I

All the characters in this scene, with the exception of the state Officer, appeared in Act I. Mr. Pewter is twenty-five years older. Memory is just the same in appearance and stays so through the game. The students are the sons and daughters of those in Act I. They look slightly different. They are trimmer, neater and more disciplined. But they are unmistakably the same. The room is more bare, and with slogans, including a big sign "SOLIDARITY" in red letters on the wall. As the curtain rises, Memory is going through papers, reading them with hurried interest, and sorting them.

Pewter comes in.

PEWTER Oh, it's you, is it ? Solidarity.

MEMORY Solidarity.

PEWTER What on earth are you doing ?

MEMORY Just tidying his things. Someone will have to do it.

The room will be needed for another student by tonight.

PEWTER What will you do with his things?

MEMORY I thought the simplest thing would be to let the other students divide them up with each other, in the spirit of Solidarity. He won't be needing them any more now.

PEWTER I suppose there's no possibility that he'll return :
(*Memory purses his lips and shakes his head*)

MEMORY The State Officers were here before dawn. They don't come that early unless it's really serious. The last time they did it was when that fellow who used to be called Hope was taken off. We've certainly never seen him again.

PEWTER Yes. I've always wondered about him. I liked him. He wasn't mixed up in politics at all. Do you know why they took him away ? (*Memory makes no answer, but busies himself with his work*) Oh, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked that question. But I sometimes thought you must know more about it than you ever said.

MEMORY Silence is often the best service a man like me can give the people. I suppose he made the same mistake as this one did last night (*Pointing around the room*)—just opened his mouth too wide.

PEWTER What did he say ?

MEMORY Well, it was like this. The students were discussing the merits of the new constitution since the Revolution of Solidarity succeeded. They were particularly interested in the re-writing of history to conform with the theory of the class struggle.

(*As Memory is talking the lights grow dim until he fades away with Pewter, and suddenly the students as of Act I are seen surrounding Warrior*)

EVE It's got to be re-written.

JACK The whole story of history is limited to serve materialistic and class concepts.

SOUL It's the only honest thing to do.

KEITH I'd like to spend my life re-writing it.

WARRIOR If that's what you mean to do, I'll tell you a bit of history you never heard before.

ALL THE OTHERS "What is it?" "Tell us." etc.

WARRIOR Twenty-five years ago my father used to have this very room. He was disillusioned with the slop and slide of the student life of his generation. He had nothing to look forward to except running a family business. Then he met a force that challenged him to change. They faced him with absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. They said he could play his part in remaking the world.

SOUL What did he do?

WARRIOR He decided to give his life to remaking the world. He accepted God's plan for himself and for all nations.

KEITH Oh, that stuff!

SOUL Pious dope.

SALLY Part of the decadence of democracy.

WARRIOR That's what old Pewter said to my father all those years ago. He tried to pour cold water on the whole thing. But my father decided to give everything—and I'm prouder of that than anything else in the whole of history.

EVE What on earth are you saying? You don't believe all that stuff.

SOUL The myth of God was abolished years ago. Surely you understand that.

WARRIOR My father was right. I believe in God too. And I'll tell you one thing more about history that you should remember when you are re-writing it.

KEITH What's that ?

WARRIOR It proves that in the long run a Godless society will perish.

(The midnight bell begins to strike)

KEITH That's dangerous.

WARRIOR My father was right.

EVE It's dangerous.

SALLY It's dangerous.

WARRIOR I tell you my father was right.

SOUL It's dangerous.

(As the students tell Warrior it is dangerous the lights begin to fade on them and Memory and Pewter come back to view. The students slip out as soon as the light fades from them. The stage presently is all once more visible to the audience)

MEMORY So the State Officers came early this morning and took him away.

PEWTER I blame myself for all this.

MEMORY *(Quickly)* Why do you say that ?

PEWTER It was a mistake to give him the room his father had all those years ago. It must have stirred up all this stuff inside him.

MEMORY If you remember, I did say at the time I thought it smacked of bourgeois sentimentality.

PEWTER You mind your own business. (*Walks away*) How did the other students take it ?

MEMORY Oh, I was really proud of them. They were splendidly disciplined. They were all against him. (*Pauses*) Of course, you can never be sure what some of them are really thinking.

PEWTER Do you suspect any of the others ?

MEMORY No. Not exactly.

PEWTER I wish you could find out how they are taking his arrest.

MEMORY I'll be glad to try. They're coming up here when I call them to get their share of his things. I thought I'd better have a good look round first to be sure he hadn't left any subversive literature, anything casting doubt on the truth of the revolution.

PEWTER That was wise. Did you find anything ?
(*Memory shakes his head*)

PEWTER I'll go and telephone the authorities and tell them we have room for another student tonight. I'll send the others up here. You may get something out of them. We'll have to know where we stand.

MEMORY Very good. (*Pewter goes. Memory takes a final and hurried look through the papers. As he is doing so, footsteps are heard on the stairs. Enter the students. They each say "Solidarity" as they come in and Memory answers "Solidarity"*)

MEMORY I've been sorting his things. He didn't have much. Do any of you want anything in particular ?

JACK MUSCLE Give me the lectures on the "Decline of Democracy in the West."

EVE AGELESS I'll have this (*She holds up another book*)

MEMORY Probably the best thing is for you to look around and choose what you like the best. We've got another student moving in tonight, so we'll have to clear everything out. The sooner, the better.

(*They move around the room picking things for themselves, and continue to do this on and off for the rest of the scene*)

SOUL Last night was certainly a remarkable performance.

KEITH It was dangerous.

SOUL Did you think so ?

JACK It was certainly dangerous for him.

SOUL Yes. But not for anybody else. The thing which surprised me was not that he should say things like that but that he should believe them.

SALLY He must have been round the bend, if you ask me.

JACK I agree. Nobody sane could really prefer the drift and defeat of democracy to the drive and discipline of the revolution of Solidarity.

KEITH It's the hypocrisy of the old days that sickens me.

JACK You mean the way they always talked about a new and better order of society but kept up all the motives and habits that made the old sort inevitable.

KEITH Yes. It's far better to be told what to do and made to do it, than to be told what to do by people who don't do it themselves.

SALLY What exactly do you mean ?

KEITH They used to talk to the youth about purity. I've read some of the old speeches and sermons. It was all dressed up with religious phrases and church and suchlike.

EVE Yes. But a lot of them used to behave like pigs most of the time. They were a promiscuous people.

JACK Rakovek in his *Analysis of the Downfall of Christian Civilisation* says the divorce rate in the Western world was one of the many symptoms of crisis they all disregarded.

TERENCE They didn't disregard it. They just had no answer for it.

KEITH Yes. That's it. They knew it was bourgeois and what they called wrong. But they liked impurity. So they just rationalised it as moral and went on doing it.

SALLY I read somewhere that many of the women used to paint themselves with coloured fats and powders.

KEITH Go on. You're joking.

SALLY No, honestly! They used to paint their fingers and toes too.

EVE What in the world for ?

SALLY The men found it attractive, apparently. Or at least the women thought they did.

JACK They must have looked like freaks.

SOUL Probably they never realised it.

EVE He'd never have believed what he said last night if he had been a woman.

KEITH How do you make that out ?

EVE In the old days women used to hunt for the right husband. It was part of their way of life.

SALLY Yes. Then if he wasn't as good as you hoped, you tried for a better one.

JACK What a lousy mess it must have been.

EVE And so insecure too. Nowadays you're told who to live with and know why you're doing it. You serve the people by producing the citizens of tomorrow.

SALLY You feel of use instead of just being used. There's a difference.

EVE And you know that if you stay loyal to the people, the people will look after you. It gives you confidence.

KEITH It's the same way with work. In the old days men used to scramble and fight for what they called the best

jobs, and take to drink and have ulcers if they couldn't get 'em and hold 'em.

SOUL It was the big difference in incomes that was the real trouble.

JACK I'd far sooner be told what your best service to the people can be, ordered to do it and given the training necessary.

KEITH Yes. And when a farmhand gets the same pay as a foreign minister he feels his service is of equal importance.

SOUL Somewhere in those days they were terribly selfish. People seemed to think the nation belonged to them, instead of getting the point that we belong to the nation.

KEITH Yes. They all got frustrated struggling for bigger and better personal success instead of losing themselves in the fight for the triumph of the people.

JACK They liked to read all kinds of pernicious stuff. Filthy books and pictures. Even the kids were allowed to buy them.

EVE Why didn't they stop that ?

SALLY It was all this sentimental concept of liberty. They thought it meant giving everyone the right to say, do, think and act exactly as they pleased.

JACK They can't have thought much at all.

SOUL No. They stopped thinking, but they didn't stop talking. In the name of liberty they fed the people death.

They were free to do anything so long as they changed nothing.

EVE I suppose all this religion of theirs was just hypocrisy? Nobody really believed in it, did they?

JACK It was just a drug to keep the nerves quiet.

SOUL That's not exactly true. Some of them believed in it—not all who pretended to, of course, but some—and it had a certain effect. Sometimes there was a burst of new enthusiasm. Individuals paid their debts, even got honest about taxes. They stopped getting drunk, were faithful for a time to their partners. Everyone applauded that sort of thing. It was a nice cosy, comfortable, personal affair. But there was no direction to it. It was snowflakes but not an avalanche. As soon as any direction came in, any ideological thrust that really cut across the motives of men and nations and was out to redirect the trends of human society and history, every selfish interest and every defeated individual in every nation opposed it. They wanted their God on their own terms, or not at all.

EVE I suppose they never had to purge somebody for speaking like he did last night?

SALLY No. But lots of their students used to be killed, just the same.

SOUL How on earth?

SALLY They used to commit suicide. Scores of them. They were so insecure and so morally defeated. The only help

they ever brought to social problems was more piosity. It really was a ghastly business.

KEITH Ghastly is the word. I don't think he could have really understood what he was saying last night. All the same, I'm troubled about one thing.

JACK What's that ?

KEITH Who put the State Officers on to him so quickly ? We were talking here together until after midnight. Isn't that right, Memory ?

MEMORY It was after one o'clock before I finished tidying.

SOUL What time did the State Officers pick him up this morning ?

MEMORY They were knocking at the college gates just after five o'clock.

JACK That's quick work. Who tipped them off ?

KEITH Exactly.

(They all look at each other)

SOUL Any one of us might have given the information.

KEITH Yes. But somehow I don't think any of us did.

EVE It's our duty to inform against anybody who talks the way he did—even our own families.

SALLY Certainly. Just the same it would be interesting to know who actually did it.

SOUL It must have been one of us. We were the only people there.

MEMORY If you don't mind my saying so, there's one other person it could have been.

JACK Who ?

MEMORY You were excited last night. You were all talking very loud. The floors and walls of this old building are thin. Anybody who lived in the next room—or down below—could have heard every word that was said.

KEITH Old Pewter !

SOUL That must be it.

JACK I'd never have thought he'd have had it in him.

SALLY What do you mean by that ?

JACK Only that he doesn't always seem to me as keen on Solidarity as some of us.

EVE Some of the older people never had much revolutionary training.

KEITH I'm glad we've got a dean with a real love for the people.

SOUL Yes. And some of us ought to tell him so.

(The door opens. Enter Pewter. He says "Solidarity" and they all reply "Solidarity." Pewter goes across and says to Memory)

PEWTER Have you finished here yet ?

MEMORY. Almost ready.

PEWTER The authorities say the new student will be here this afternoon.

(They none of them say anything)

Well, if you've nothing better to do than look at me, you'd better move on. Lectures begin in half an hour.

(As the students gather the books etc. they have chosen)

SOUL First we wanted to say we are grateful.

KEITH It was not an easy thing to do.

EVE But it was right.

JACK We honour your service to the people.

SALLY We are proud to be in your charge.

PEWTER What on earth are you talking about ?

SOUL Oh, we realise you don't want everyone to know about it.

EVE Far better nobody knows but us.

JACK But we put two and two together.

KEITH Yes—and then when Memory explained how thin the floor was, we guessed you must have heard every word that was said last night.

SALLY And informed the authorities.

PEWTER I wasn't in my rooms at all last night. I slept with friends. I didn't get back until nine o'clock this morning.
(As the realisation sinks in that Pewter could not have informed the authorities, they all look at each other)

SOUL Do you mean that you were *not* the man who gave information to the authorities which led to the arrest of Warrior this morning ?

PEWTER Did you think it was me ?

SOUL We know it must be either one of us—or you. For we are the only people who heard the things he said.

PEWTER Do you really believe I've sunk so low that I'd inform against a boy—for that's all he is—and send him to his death ?

EVE It would only be anybody's duty.

PEWTER Yes. Betrayal has become a duty, God help us all.

MEMORY Pull yourself together. Be careful. It's not betrayal to inform against enemies of the state.

PEWTER I've betrayed many things in my time. I've betrayed my faith. I've denied the deepest things inside of me. But now it's come to this—my own pupils believe I'd send one of them to his death.

MEMORY Stop talking like this It's dangerous.

PEWTER It *is* dangerous. Dangerous for you as well as for me. Don't you see what I mean ?

MEMORY Can't say that I do.

PEWTER Is it true that, apart from yourself, only these students were here when that boy talked as he did last night ?

MEMORY Yes.

PEWTER Then one of them must have given the information to the State Officers. One of them is a spy. (*Suddenly yelling at them*) I say, one of you is a spy. Spy, spy, spy.

MEMORY Don't shout as if there were something wrong with it. Spies are the architects of solidarity.

STUDENTS Solidarity. (*Every time the word is mentioned they all repeat it in chorus*)

PEWTER Aren't you flesh ? Aren't you blood ? Don't you realise one of you sent that young man to his death ?
(*Students silent*)

MEMORY Do be careful. They were doing their duty, whoever it was that gave the information. You're blaming the wrong people for the wrong thing.

PEWTER (*Turning on him furiously*) Yes. By God ! That's right. I'm the one to blame. Listen to them. (*Waving his arm at the students who sit staring expressionlessly into space*) Look at the world we've made. And it's men like me who made it.

MEMORY Be careful. They are the future of the revolution and you had the training of them. You should be proud.

PEWTER (*Turning on him*) Proud—I feel nothing but humiliation. I've got blood on these hands of mine. Think of the day when that boy's father, young Warrior, in this very room, challenged us to change. It could have been a turning point for a nation. And I was cynical. And you were cynical too, Memory.

MEMORY Pull yourself together. Remember your position. You must be out of your mind. You're the Dean of the Faculty of Service and Solidarity in the leading university of this country.

PEWTER Dean of the Faculty of Service and Solidarity—It sounds so high and mighty. But I'm just Pewter, Potty, old Pot—the man who betrayed a generation because he never found an answer to his own bitterness. The man who tried to answer piosity in one generation with impurity in his own. The man who made a god out of his brain, argued the living God to death, and robbed young men of a faith that could have really satisfied. The man who created a god that turns men spies. A god who shoots his way forward to solidarity.

STUDENTS Solidarity.

PEWTER For God's sake, say something except that awful word.

MEMORY (*From behind*) It's for me to say something now.

PEWTER (*Wheeling on him*) Do you know who the spy is?

MEMORY Yes, I do.

(*He goes to the window, opens it and blows a whistle. From below there is the sound of feet on the stairs. Another knock and enter the State Officer*)

(*To Pewter*) I ordered a State Officer here this morning. I felt in my bones we might need him.

PEWTER You must be joking. You can't give orders to a State Officer.

MEMORY I can. Watch me do it. (*Turns to State Officer*) Arrest that man. (*Pointing at Pewter*) To be charged with counter-revolutionary conspiracy and subversion of the

youth in this college. Also with threats of violence against loyal servants of the state.

(State Officer instantly pulls out a revolver and holds it at the back of Pewter's neck throughout the rest of this scene)

PEWTER Who are you ?

MEMORY I'm the State Security Officer in this University. Surely you must realise the Central Council have to have at least one trained revolutionary here, someone who knows all that goes on. Someone they can really trust.

PEWTER So it was you all the time.

MEMORY Yes.

PEWTER Old Memory, the loyal, lovable college servant becomes a state spy.

MEMORY Take him away.

(The State Officer digs his revolver into Pewter's neck and shoves him towards the door)

PEWTER I'm only getting what I deserve.

MEMORY I warned you again and again.

PEWTER I don't mean what you mean. I'm going to pay today for a life of betrayal. *(He is about out of the door when Memory suddenly calls "Stop." Guard and Pewter stop. Memory says "Bring the prisoner back here." Guard marches Pewter back to Memory, who says to the guard, "Stand back a moment." Guard steps back, leaving Memory and Pewter together down-stage)*

MEMORY (*Suddenly becomes the college servant again as in Act I*) Mr. Pewter, sir, I hope you'll understand. You'll see I have no choice. I hope you won't hold it against me, sir. A working man has to move with the times. I haven't got the guts of Mr. Warrior, nor the brains of a man like you, Mr. Pewter. I have to do the best I can for myself with what comes to hand. I don't like my duties but I have to do them. I hope you won't hold it against me, Mr. Pewter, sir. I hope you won't blame me too much.

PEWTER I don't blame you, Memory. I'm just thankful it was you and not one of the students with Warrior's blood on their hands. You're just like I am, only more successful at it. It's Number I first and to hell with the others.

MEMORY I'm sure I'm most grateful, sir. I hoped you'd see it my way.

PEWTER Tell me one thing.

MEMORY What is it, sir ?

PEWTER Did you kill Hope ?

MEMORY I executed him under orders for the sake of the revolution.

PEWTER I knew it. I always knew it. Never had the guts to say so. You swine. You beast. You murderer.

MEMORY Take away the prisoner.

(*Pewter is forced out of the door by the State Officer. You hear the footsteps down the stairs, the slam of the outer door,*

the footsteps across the quad fading away. Memory is watching from the window. Then he returns rubbing his hands and sits at Pewter's desk facing the students, who throughout the scene have sat in immobile silence except for their cries)

That's settled him. He was bourgeois all through. Not fit for the new future. Hard in the head but soft in the heart. Useless for revolutionary philosophy and action. Too many non-essentials in his make-up, unable to grasp the simplicity of the new age.

(Looks at his watch) Well, I must give you some basic training until a new dean comes along. But let's understand one thing. We shall heighten the discipline of revolution all the time from now on. There will be no deviation. Solidarity !

STUDENTS Solidarity.

MEMORY Solidarity.

STUDENTS Solidarity.

THE CURTAIN FALLS AS THIS GOES ON

ACT II SCENE II

ACT II

SCENE II

The principal characters all appear again (with the exception of the State Officer and his guards). Hope and Memory look the same as always. Mr. Pewter is the same age as Act II, Scene I, twenty-five years older than Act I, but he looks a new man. The students are the children of those in Act I, but with a vital radiance that they have not had before. The room, when you see it, is a student's room again—a happy room—gay, with flowers, colours, light. None of the drabness and uniformity of Act II, Scene I is present in the place or the people. On the wall, stage left, is a notice “YEAR OF RENAISSANCE 23.” We lead into the scene as Memory stands in front of the curtain, which has descended on the mass of solid students, yelling “solidarity!” and laughing to order each time God is mentioned.

MEMORY (*Rubbing his hands uneasily together and taking the audience into his confidence*)

There. That's done it. Not altogether a pleasant business. But duty is duty and what must be must be. You can't serve a nation and preserve your notions at the same time. Just can't be done. Mind you, old Pewter wasn't quite right to say it's Number One first and to hell with the others. Think of the risks I took. Makes my heart flutter as I remember them. It's a dangerous thing to be a State Spy in a spy state. It's lie or die half the time—and lie and die the other half. I don't mind lying—but dying's different. I don't take to that at all. Anyway I got rid of old Hope. I

settled his hash for him. That makes everything worthwhile. He got on my nerves terribly. I was real glad to see the back of him.

(As he has been speaking, Hope has come slowly on to the stage in front of the curtain. He is waving to someone out of sight and moving backwards towards Memory. As Memory catches sight of him and begins to speak, Hope stops dead in his tracks, and does not turn and face Memory until Memory has finished his next speech)

O, unspeakable back! O, unmentionable back! O, a back in a million, unmistakable, unforgettable beastly back!

HOPE *(Turning)* What's wrong with my back ?

MEMORY Nothing, except perhaps it is *your* back.

And by old nature's process,

By muscles, bones, tendons and bulging fat

Linked to your front, so all of it is you—

You that I bragged I'd never see again.

I thought you dead.

(Hope turns his back on Memory and once more waves off-stage whence he has come)

MEMORY *(After a peer)* What are you waving at ?

HOPE Waving at all the things you've just dreamed up.

For *they* are dead and gone—the dreary world

Of spies and lies and silent, solid fear

To keep men at their worst. All make-believe,

All prophecies that never come to pass

But, conjured from confusion and from fear,

Vanish when Hope appears. We're back again

Where Warrior made his choice. And others too
Will stand and fight with him.

MEMORY Just wait and see.
You meddlesome old fool! 'Twill come to pass
As I have shown, a world set free from God.
Men have not, do not, will not dare to change.
They laugh and wanton as their world dissolves
Into the maelstrom of our atom age,
Not in the vigour that defies a fate,
But foolishly unreasoned. So they drift——

HOPE Decision ends their drift. They will decide.
New men shall build new nations. We shall see
Renaissance rising to eternity
And Warrior's call, echoed from youth to youth,
Shall shatter ancient memories with truth—
The truths of healing in the hands of God.
Nations shall tread a pathway never trod.

MEMORY You're lying, Hope. What do you know of truth ?

HOPE Come. Forward with me. You shall see the Youth
A quarter century on—the world rebuilt.

MEMORY Lead on, old ass. On your head be the guilt
Of fooling men with fancy.

HOPE You're the fool
To say our past the future yet must rule.
I'll show the world to you as it shall be
When men obey the voice of destiny.
(*Hope beckons Memory off the stage*)

After Hope and Memory have gone, the curtain rises on an empty stage. Presently enter Paul Warrior, who looks around and then calls out of the window—)

PAUL It's all clear, chaps. Come up. He's not here.

(There is a sound of running footsteps on the stairs, and enter Muscle, Tremble, Soul. They are carrying each a small parcel)

JACK I saw him scurrying along the quad

His arms all full of trays and mops and brooms.

KEITH He'll be here any minute.

TERENCE

Where's the cake ?

PAUL The girls are baking it. They said to me

They'd have it iced and spiced and candled too

To greet Hope on his birthday.

JACK *(Looking out of the window)* Here they come.

PAUL Let's get the table ready, set the cake

And all the gifts upon it. This will be

A springtime of surprise for old man Hope.

(Enter Eve and Sally carrying between them a large cake)

EVE *(As they set the cake down on the table)*

You call him old man Hope. How old is he ?

SALLY Yes. We were up for nearly half the night

Mixing the cake. Cramming its girth with fruit

And crowning it with ice—but never knew

What number candles should be set upon it.

TERENCE The truth is—no one knows.

Hope's like an everlasting clock to men.

He just keeps ticking off the hours and years.

His face records the passages of time
For others, not himself—it stays the same.
Friendly and peaceable.

JACK Our fathers say
He looked and lived and lingered just the same
A quarter century gone.

KEITH Grandfathers too,
Remember Hope. He seemed the same to them.

EVE Let's hope he lives for ever.

PAUL (*Who has been looking out of the window*) Here he comes.
Light up the candles. (*The girls do so*) Stand around the
cake.

(*They do so*)

I don't believe old Hope has got a clue
Of what it's all about. He only knows
We've asked him to come here. He's sure forgot
Today's his birthday.

(*A knock at the door*)

ALL Come in.

(*Enter Hope, benevolent but nervous. He looks from one to the other*)

HOPE Good morning all. (*As nobody says anything*)
Is something to be done ? I'm here to serve you, gladly.

PAUL (*Sternly*) Tell me, Hope,
Have you forgotten what day it is today ?

HOPE (*Guiltily scratching his head*)
Forgotten, Sir ? Oh, surely, surely not!

Today, Sir ? (*With a rush of eager remembrance*)

Why today, Sir, is the day

We take your dirty linen to the wash.

I'll do it in a moment. (*Makes as if to go*)

PAUL That's not it.

HOPE Not it, Sir ? Why, Sir—washing day's the same

And has been ever since your father's time.

You must be joking.

PAUL This is serious, Hope.

(*He beckons the others to draw back and the candle cake is disclosed*)

HOPE My, what a cake ! Why, Mr. Warrior, Sir,

Is it your birthday ? Don't say I forgot

A day like that ?

PAUL You silly idiot, Hope.

It's not *my* day—it's yours. And your cake too.

JACK We're grateful, Hope. We want to celebrate

All that you've given and give since first began

The renaissance for nations in this room—

KEITH We know the tale. Our parents told it us—

EVE How Warrior's father showed the way to change—

TERENCE But many first were scared to take his lead—

SALLY Till you stood by him, Hope. You saw things clear—

PAUL And man by man, mounting from year to year

The nations were remade—the world set free

From hate and fear and selfish greed. So we

A world rebuilt inherit. It's your cake,

Your birthday and your honour, Hope old boy,
So sit and blow the candles.

(Hope sits and dazedly says)

HOPE Of course, Sir, if you say it must be so—

What must be must be, Sir. But truth to tell

I've lost count of the years and of the days

Birth, death or otherwise. My birthday ? Mine ?

(He blows the candles)

JACK Good old Hope. Where would we be without you ?

SOUL A man in a million.

EVE A man in ten million. Hope's the pick of the bunch.

HOPE Oh, Miss Ageless, you shouldn't say things like that to me, really you shouldn't.

SALLY It's all right to spoil you on your birthday, Hope.
And you really do deserve it.

(Enter Pewter)

PEWTER Many happy returns of the day, Hope. I'm glad they're giving you what you deserve. You seem to be enjoying it.

HOPE Now Sir, *you're* the man who really began it all in this very room twenty-five years ago. If it hadn't been for the way *you* backed young Warrior's father *(He points at Warrior)* when first he told us what he was going to do, it might all have come to nothing.

PEWTER No, Hope, no, no, no, no ! That's where you're weak, old friend.

You overload the truth with flattery

For all men everywhere. But since today
My heart flies backwards like a humming bird
Straight where its flight was launched—I'd like to hear
What truths you've learned since all those years ago
Here in this room the renaissance began.
Tell what your fathers taught you.

JACK I found the strength, not built on sweat and skill
With bats and balls and oars and muscled ease—
The strength that is the strength of ten strong men
Because a heart is pure.

Eve I learned the truth
That loving is to give and not to get—
The blessedness of those who, pure in heart,
Can see the Lord and be a source of light,
Not a mere selfish flame.

SALLY I learned to live
Content with what I have, content to serve.
Not jealous of the wit or wealth or charm
Of others, envy-free and eased from strain
With peace inside my heart.

TERENCE Beauty I found,
Not beauty in the shape of things or words,
Not beauty to express the emptiness
Of self that is a man, and men like me.
But beauty in the holiness of God,
The fullness of obedience in the task
To live for others' greatness.

KEITH I have found
That God can fill hands, stomachs, hearts as well
With food and faith. That when He guides a man
Or nation, there's an end of every need—
Enough for all men everywhere on earth
As races learn to share.

PAUL What about Pot ?

JACK Old Pot's so full of brain it overbrims
His earholes. He's no need to learn a thing.
That's right, Pot, isn't it ?

PEWTER So deadly wrong.
I learned that human wisdom built on pride
Brings nations to the dust. I learned that God,
Who gave a man his mind, can teach him too
To use it, so its guided powers may bring
Rebirth in men and nations for the world.

PAUL Rebirth on birthdays—that's a new design.
But tell us, Hope, old boy. We need your help. We've
come to choose a present. We want to give you something.
Something really good. Something you'll always remember.
What shall it be ?

TERENCE Come on, Hope. Choose a gift.

PEWTER There must be something that you really want.

HOPE There's something. But its nature is the kind
Which means, regretfully, it can't be done.

PEWTER Well, tell us, Hope. We'll get it if we can.
We're all in this. The University

Wants to take part in giving you this gift
To the last man.

HOPE (*Very sarcastically and bitterly*)

One man I know who won't.

A man who's like a splinter in my thumb.
A blister on my heel. A scab, a sore
Who pricks and throbs and suppurates all day.
He'll no more buy a birthday gift for me
Than cheese will turn to chutney.

EVE, SALLY, ALL Who is it? Who? Who? Who?

HOPE Old Memory himself.

He's been here ages—just as long as I.
And nark, nark, nark, all day. No peace at all.
Always complaining for the good old days.
Always a-mumble that this cannot last,
This newness in the nation.
As prickly as a hedgehog, and he groans
And grumbles like some quickly-tempered bear
Robbed of his winter sleep.

Yes, that's the gift.

Give me a Memory changed and this will be
A birthday I'll remember.

(*All stay silent looking at him. Some smile*)

Never mind.

I said the gift I wanted could not be.
But thanks—thanks, one and all, for offering
To give old Hope a present.

HOPE (*Still angry*) That's the end.
If that's the way he thinks, and you think too,
I'll go about my business.
(*He makes for the door*)

PEWTER Wait a bit.

KEITH Hope, tell us, do you truly want to see
Old Memory change ?
(*Hope nods vigorously*)

JACK I'm not the one to speak
But you're about the only man alive
Who'd help him take the plunge.

EVE That's right, you know.
He talks of you as "Hopeless Hope"—"the man,
The only man, who never has been wrong."

SALLY He says, "If only Hope made one mistake
I'd eat my boots and waistcoat."

TERENCE Yes. He feels
More lonely than we know—the one last man of the old-
natured type left in the college.
(*Hope looks slowly round the room. Then furiously he cries*)

HOPE I won't. I can't. No. Never! Never! Never!
It's more than you should ask me, more than I
Am ready to provide. To think that I
Should truckle to that scamp. I'll none of it.
(*The room falls silent. All look at Hope. And in the silence,
footsteps can presently be heard coming up the stairs—slower,
more shuffling footsteps than of yore. There is a knock. All cry*)

"Come in" and there enters Memory, carrying a large jug of iced drink and many glasses. He shuffles to the table and puts it down)

ALL Hello, Memory. Thanks a lot, Memory. Don't go away, Memory. Stay and have a drink, Memory. Do stay, *etc., etc.*

MEMORY I don't mind if I do. (*He drinks*) A health to all.

PAUL You know what day it is? We're giving Hope a party.

MEMORY (*To Hope who has his back half turned in the background, raising his glass*)

Many wishes to you, Hope.

PEWTER What sort of wishes, Memory?

MEMORY All the kind
That better lie unspoken. (*Looks around*) Hard to think
That birthday parties nowadays are mild.
Why, in your fathers' times there'd be a few
Lying around the floor before the night
Reeled headlong into morning.

JACK Were you glad
To scrub and clean and polish up the place
When all the crowd lay sleeping?

MEMORY Those were the days. After a night like that
With a few drinks inside me, I would feel
King of the college, master of the world.
Of course, there was a hiccup now and then.
A hangover or two. A bill to pay.

But then, I felt at home with folk around

(Glancing at Hope)

Who neither preached nor pitied. Nowadays

I do the best I can—but life's less fun.

I suppose I'm growing old. *(Picks up the tray)*

Well, if that's all

I'll leave you. *(Halfway to the door)*

Give a shout if anyone

Wants service.

(He is about to go when Hope comes forward and says)

HOPE Wait a bit.

MEMORY I don't serve you

Not even on your birthday.

(Makes as if to go again)

HOPE It's not that.

It's something that I should have said before.

We're old friends, Memory.

MEMORY Old as the hills

And friendly as the wolves who dwell therein.

It's no good, Hope—we get along all right.

At least as best we can. But don't pretend

We're friends—your highflown ways and sidelong smiles

Stick in my craw.

HOPE You make it difficult.

MEMORY Oh, always me!

HOPE No, it's not always you.

I've treated you like dirt and I deserve

Each mortal thing you've said and done and thought
Against me through the years.

MEMORY (*Dropping his tray with a crash*)

My ears are mad.

I thought I heard Hope say that he deserved
The things I'd said about him.

PAUL

Yes, he did.

MEMORY Hope, what's the matter ? Are you deadly ill ?

HOPE No. But I have been. I am better now.

(*He goes towards Memory*)

Oh, Memory, forgive my cold, proud heart !

The chilly edge of my superior ways.

For years before the renaissance began

I envied you. You were so quick, so sure.

The students turned to you, but not to me.

You knew so much and I felt such a fool.

I just was jealous of you.

MEMORY

Well, I'm damned !

HOPE I've tried to win the favour of the world

By telling men their wishes would come true.

Behind your back I've whispered in their ear

That all the lessons they could learn from you,

The experience of the past, the tests of truth

Which you could give them were of no avail.

I spoke behind your back. And I enjoyed

To be a part of this new range of life

Inside the college and the world itself

And keep you in the cold—Will you forgive ?

MEMORY I'm damned! I'm damned! I'm damnably damned!
By God, the fellow means it!

PEWTER Good old Hope.
That's just about the best thing I have heard
Since Warrior's father in this very room
Threw down the challenge all those years ago.

MEMORY Look here. I told you once, I told you all.
If Hope here ever made one single blotch
Or blunder, bloomer, blemish or bad mark
Upon his blameless page, I'd eat my boots
And eat my waistcoat too. Well, so I will.

HOPE No need to eat your clothes. Will you forgive ?

MEMORY (*Embarrassed*)
 Old Memory's not much hand—Forgive ? Forget ?
 Forgetting's not his line. Forgiving, yes.
 With all my heart and gladly.
 (*They shake hands. All the students cheer*)

Tell me though,
What in the world has made you act like this ?
I never thought you'd say the things to me
You said just now.

HOPE Well, standing over there
When you were speaking of the olden days,
The hiccups and the highballs, and of how
You felt at home then in the company
Of those who neither pitied you nor preached.

MEMORY That's true enough.

EVE Why, Memory, it always is your boast
You never can forget.

MEMORY I can forget
What's awkward to remember. That's one art
The world and I have mastered.

HOPE Make a trial.
The power of silence and the inner voice
Have set the world aright and they can do
Miracles of the heart for me—and you.

MEMORY No, no. No miracles for Memory.

ALL THE COMPANY "Come on, old boy." "Make it a real
birthday celebration." "Give it a trial." "No harm in
trying," etc.

(Memory finally sits, down stage centre, facing the audience. He has pencil and paper. He begins to get guidance, with all the company sitting around him. Now and again he wriggles. Now he grimaces and grins as some fresh thought strikes him. He glances sidelong and shades the paper with his hand as he writes one or two points down. Then suddenly)

MEMORY Oh no! Not that.

PAUL Not what?

MEMORY Nothing. It doesn't matter.

(The rest laugh. And Memory after a bit begins to laugh too. Then he rises and with Hope at his side stands down stage centre, as it were reading his guidance)

I'm with you all for life—and way beyond,
I'll fight with you as one.

(*All cheer*) I've been a fool.
The slave of appetite, of fear the tool—
Stubborn in pride, to say the new world's strange
When all the time I did not want to change.
But Memory himself is meant to be
A signpost to the future we shall see,
Not marked with hate, and blood and bloated greed
To exploit the other crowd, and of their need
To overload our bounty. Memory now
Will fill men's hearts with cheer, their minds endow
With promise of a healing power in men
To learn the art of unity again.

(*To the audience*)
I'll need your help. Let's build a Memory new,
Something far better than those children knew.

(*Pointing to the students*)
So from henceforward every modern child,
Hope unrestrained and Memory undefiled
Shall cherish as a heritage, as we
Decide together for eternity.

C U R T A I N