

**THE HARVEY GIRLS:**  
**THEY CIVILIZED THE WEST**

*Julie Jensen*

**Scene One:**

*In the dark we hear the sound of a busy restaurant. People talking, dishes clattering. Then the sound of a whistle followed by the sound of the crowd dispersing.*

*When the noise dies out, the lights come up on an upscale restaurant of the late 1890s, specifically a Harvey House in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The place is in total disarray. A hundred people have just been fed here.*

*Three waitresses in uniforms: WHISTLE, a young native woman; MARY, an obedient woman in her 20s; and EFFIE, a young woman prone to giggling, are all cleaning up. MECHAM, an officious woman in her 40s supervises.*

*Off in the corner is STELLA, a young runaway with a book. When no one is looking, she darts to an empty table, takes food, then returns to her table, eating hungrily.*

*Also left after the exiting horde is GLITTERMAN, a young clean-faced miner, studious-looking, wearing glasses, intently eating.*

*A young religious zealot, GODLEE, is on his way into the restaurant.*

*Note: Underlined dialogue indicates direct address to the audience.*

GODLEE

Hear me now. Hear me now, brothers and sisters. Repent before it is too late. The end of the world is nigh. It comes tonight.

MECHAM

Out of here, Mr. Godlee. We cannot have you preaching in the Harvey House.

GODLEE Have you repented,  
dear sister?

MECHAM I have not, Mr. Godlee. Now get on  
out of here.

GODLEE The end of the world is nigh. It  
comes tonight.

MECHAM We know that, Mr.  
Godlee. Now out.

GODLEE Let me speak to your girls. They must  
be saved.

MECHAM (*Overly articulated.*) Ooouutt!  
Nnnooowww!

GODLEE That armed woman is out and about. Could spell the end  
of us all.

MECHAM  
Hush now, Godlee, and go chase someone else.

*GODLEE leaves, chasing someone else down the street.*

GODLEE (*Calling. Off.*)  
Repent, dear sister. The end of the world is nigh, it comes tonight.

EFFIE  
This here's what's left. We just fed a hundred people in less than thirty minutes.  
Which we do four times a day. Two trains eastbound. Two trains westbound.  
Ever-day. It's like a wave comes in, washes over us all. Then the wave goes out  
and leaves what you see before you. "The wretched refuge of the teeming shore."  
Course, we had Teddy Roosevelt in here last week. He's raising up a Army to go  
to Cuba so's they can remember the *Maine*. We get lots of famous people come in  
here off the trains. That's why we got these here jobs, take care of the famous  
EFFIE (*cont.*)

people with style. (Moving to the cash register.) But this here's just a ordinary day, nobody famous. I mean, I picked this day cuz it would be so ordinary. And then it turned out to be not ordinary a-tall. Because last night the west bound Eight-Thirty-Eight was robbed by a band of outlaws. And they was a woman with 'em got her horse shot out from under her. So she's left behind and she's lurking here in town. But we ain't s'posed to talk about her. Might alarm the customers.

MARY I'll take care of the receipts today, Effie.

EFFIE It's my turn, Mary. Check the Duty Roster.

MARY But I thought I might help you out.

EFFIE This here's Mary. She don't got no faults.

MARY

I am better with numbers, as you know. No fault of your own, but I have a better education.

EFFIE

I think I can manage, Mary. I can always count on my fingers and toes. And that adds up to 25.

MARY

One of us should be assigned the permanent job of handling the receipts, that's what I think.

EFFIE

But Miss Meham thinks it's important that each and every one of us in our turn deal with the receipts, ain't that right, Miss Meham?

MEHAM

Knowing how to do sums and how to make change are most valuable assets for the modern young woman.

MARY I take your point, Miss  
Mecham.

EFFIE

I tell you, if Miss Mary was any more perfect, she would ascend unaltered into heaven.

*SWAMP enters from the outside. He is a fast-talking shyster.*

SWAMP Sweet Effie from Kansas. How's the fellow? He get here yet?

EFFIE

*(Giggles.)* Not yet, Mr. Swamp. But he will be coming. *(Giggles.)* He could be on the very next train.

SWAMP

Of course he could. Blind faith is the most important attribute of the human species.

EFFIE

Now, this here's Swamp. Mostly he likes to sell stuff to dudes off the trains, people with suits and shiny shoes.

*SWAMP surveys the room and moves up to GLITTERMAN's table.*

SWAMP Would you mind a little company, Mr. Glitterman?

GLITTERMAN The name is 'Lukas,' Wendell.

*SWAMP sits. Watches GLITTERMAN eat.*

SWAMP What you make of the armed woman in town?

GLITTERMAN

Not a damn thing.

SWAMP

She's sighted this morning. Behind the Plaza Hotel. Had a rifle, two pistols, and a hat.

GLITTERMAN

A hat?

SWAMP For purposes of disguise. I think it could be Big Nose Kate.

GLITTERMAN

Who's Big Nose Kate?

SWAMP Doc

Holliday's woman.

GLITTERMAN Doc

Holliday's dead.

SWAMP

That don't mean his woman is.

*GLITTERMAN shrugs and continues to eat. SWAMP watches him. Pause.*  
So what's new in the mining business, Mr. Glitterman?

GLITTERMAN

Identifying the major strata of the earth's crust, and then seeking that stratum which predictably contain valuable deposits.

SWAMP

And which stratum is that?

GLITTERMAN The subcrustation stratum, laid down in the Early Precambrian era.

SWAMP You

don't say....

GLITTERMAN

The organic material which was a part of the andaluvial fans at the edge of the ancient seas, deposited next to the subcutaneous igneous, those contain the primary elements.

SWAMP Subcutaneous  
igneous?

GLITTERMAN

Slowly advancing and receding inland seas and shorelines, ancient meandering subterranean estuaries, huge forested river planes, and wandering andaluvial bog waters.

EFFIE

(To WHISTLE.) Don't you just love the way he talks? "Wandering andaluvial bog waters." That there is pure poetry with a capital P-P.

*The ARMED WOMAN flits by.*

*MARY screams and clamps her legs together. Each time she is frightened or nervous, she has to pee.*

MARY (Pointing.) I just saw her. The armed woman. I just saw her.

EFFIE Quiet, Mary. You're supposed to set an example.

MARY But I saw her. With a gun and a hat. Went right by that window.

*PILLAGE, a one-armed black man, slowly walks in. He is quiet, deliberate and threatening with a habit of fixing people with a stare.*

WHISTLE Welcome to Harvey House. Would you like to see a menu?

PILLAGE A  
menu...yes.

*WHISTLE hands him a menu.*

WHISTLE What could I bring you?

PILLAGE What's your...favorite here?

WHISTLE (*Turning his menu right side up.*) Number Six, that's my favorite.

PILLAGE I'll have...Number Six. Does that come...with bacon?

WHISTLE Anything comes with anything. You want bacon with ice chips, we give it to you.

PILLAGE Number Six...and bacon.

WHISTLE Yes, sir.  
(*Moving away.*)

EFFIE

This here's Whistle. She's a Indian, a real Indian. Used to work in the kitchen on the salad table. Now she's out here cuz we was short.

WHISTLE

That's how they like to introduce me. Indian, real Indian. That there's Effie, White, real White.

PILLAGE Excuse me, Miss...I'll have something else.

WHISTLE  
What's that?

PILLAGE I'll have...your name.

WHISTLE I can't give you that. It's against the rules.

PILLAGE What...rules?

WHISTLE Harvey  
House rules.

*WHISTLE moves away.*

MECHAM The clean up is slow today, girls. (*Clapping.*) Let's step it up!

MARY  
You're so right, Miss Mecham. The staff has been gossiping about the armed woman.

MECHAM  
There is to be no discussion of the armed woman. She will go about her business, and you will go about yours.

EFFIE But her business is killing people.

MECHAM  
Step up with courage, girls. You are Harvey girls. You respond with composure and confidence. Think on Teddy Roosevelt when you're...challenged.

MARY I couldn't agree with you more, Miss Mecham. I'll tell the others.

MECHAM  
I want to see brisk work, and then you'll receive your reward this evening. The building of the lovely blossom bouquet.

MARY Thank you, Miss Mecham, we appreciate all you do for us.

MECHAM



Now then, girls, there is a new woman in town--besides the armed woman--Miss Lydia Longtree. The actress from New York. She is to be an example unto you all. Unmarried, professional, and passionate.

MARY Just like you, Miss Mecham.

MECHAM

Yes, girls, I too am a passionate woman. Passionate about my work. That is why I am so good at it.

EFFIE This here's our first lesson of the day, coming right up.

MECHAM

If we approach all we do with passion, we will look back at the end of our lives and say, "I accomplished something."

EFFIE

So, Miss Mecham, what if what we accomplish is getting married and having a pack of children?

MECHAM

Anyone can accomplish that, Miss Effington. It does not take brains to get married and have children. We are professionals, we are Harvey Girls, we have loftier goals.

MARY

I do so agree with you, Miss Mecham. But I have noticed that people resent you when you have lofty goals.

EFFIE It ain't your lofty goals they resent you for, Miss Mary, it's your lofty attitude.

MECHAM

Remember this, girls: The woman who has children. She has nothing to call her own. She is downtrodden and bereft. The woman who does best in this world has no children. Remember that.

*The ARMED WOMAN flits by again.*

*STELLA sees her, jumps up and watches, returns to her seat, says nothing.*

SWAMP Listen here, I got a proposition for you, Mr. Glitterman.

GLITTERMAN  
Oh hell, Wendell.

SWAMP  
No, now listen to me. You are a man of science. A man who understands the properties of the earth. A man who believes in his power to determine his own future. I am also such a man.

GLITTERMAN  
Good for you.

SWAMP  
And I believe in the future of this area. There will be towns dotting the whole length of the Santa Fe Railroad, like little stars in the night sky, like jewels on the crown of the Queen of England. It's going to be a beautiful thing.

GLITTERMAN  
I'm sure it is, Wendell.

SWAMP Here's the idea, Mr. Glitterman. We buy up the land all along this rail line.

GLITTERMAN  
We?

SWAMP  
Yes, we! I'm inviting you in on this. We buy up the land along the rail line. And then when the towns sprout up, we agree, *reluctantly*, to sell the new people the land they need. A proposition as scientific as it is practical. What do you say, Mr. Glitterman?

GLITTERMAN Why don't you get yourself a job, Wendell?

*11.*

SWAMP I have a job, Lukas.

GLITTERMAN  
No you don't.

SWAMP I am a salesman and a visionary.

GLITTERMAN Selling stuff you don't own. And seeing things that ain't there.

SWAMP I'm glimpsing the future. That's what I do.

GLITTERMAN  
And that's another thing, Wendell. Don't talk like that. You sound like a laying hen.

SWAMP  
I tell you what I'll do, Mr. Glitterman. I'll draw up the papers and then, when you make your strike, you and me will go into a joint partnership. The Swamp Glitterman Land Company. What do you say to that, Mr. Glitterman?

*GLITTERMAN burps, rises, tosses a coin on the table, then moves to the cash register.*

*(Calling after him.)* Pleasure talking to you, Mr. Glitterman. And I'll have my assistant draw up them papers.

*GLITTERMAN is out the door.*

*SWAMP looks around, slides the coin off the table, pockets it.*

*WHISTLE enters and sets the food down in front of PILLAGE.*

PILLAGE Thank...you.

WHISTLE Is there anything else?

PILLAGE

*(He stares at her. Pause.)* Could you...butter my roll? *(She does. Pause.)* Wanna know...something? *(Pause.)* I am gonna...marry you.

*WHISTLE moves to EFFIE at the cash register.*

WHISTLE

You gotta take care of that table with the one-armed man. He's giving me trouble.

EFFIE

He could have something to do with the armed woman. Ever-thing comes out his mouth is scary.

WHISTLE Just take care of him.

EFFIE

Whistle, she is a magnet for men. They all want to get they-self some piece of that girl. In the meantime, Swamp's trying to get a coin from the scary guy. And that's when the mud hits the window.

*SWAMP rises and moves over to PILLAGE.*

SWAMP I do believe you're new around here.

PILLAGE

*(Jumping up.)* Sir.

SWAMP The name's Swamp. Mind if I join you? *(Taking a seat.)* And you are?

PILLAGE Pillage. The name's...Pillage. *(Sitting back down tentatively.)*

SWAMP And where did you come from, Mr. Pillage?

PILLAGE *(Pause.)* The...South. I come from...the South.

SWAMP And you lost that arm in the war?

PILLAGE The war between the states...yes...sir.

SWAMP  
Which battle?

*Pause. No answer. PILLAGE stares at SWAMP.*

Well, I myself was a part of the war, Battle of Gettysburg. Just a boy at the time, I carried messages for General McClellan, the bravest, most battle-tested Union--

PILLAGE I seen you...before.

SWAMP  
Perhaps you have. I am a man who gets around--

PILLAGE  
Down in a ravine. You was wearing a...Confederate uniform. The horses...was dying. Everything was bleeding....

SWAMP I don't think so--

PILLAGE I do....I do think so.

SWAMP Well, listen here, you planning to stay?

PILLAGE I might...stay on.

SWAMP And what's your line of work?

PILLAGE (*Staring at him. Pause.*) Farmer...I am a farmer.

SWAMP

Well, well, you are a lucky man, Mr. Pillage. I just happen to own a nice piece of cattle land about ten miles west of here. And I have, in fact, been looking for an enterprising young man like yourself to take it over. It's too much for me, what with all my projects. What do you say, Mr. Pillage? Would you like to take a look?

PILLAGE I seen  
you...before.

EFFIE

This is when I come on the scene. And that there was a mistake.

*EFFIE approaches.*

Would you like something to eat, Mr. Swamp? *(Giggles.)*

SWAMP

This here is our sweet Kansas maiden, Mr. Pillage. She's got a fellow, due in on the next train. Everyday he's been due in on the next train for weeks now. Ain't that the case, Miss Effie?

EFFIE *(Giggles.)* So you want something, Mr. Swamp?  
*(Giggles.)*

PILLAGE Why  
she...laughing?

SWAMP Oh, that's just the way she is. Ain't it,  
Miss Effie?

EFFIE *(Giggles.)* I  
guess it is.

PILLAGE She  
is...laughing at me.

SWAMP No. No, that's just how  
she acts.

EFFIE (*Giggles.*) So what you want, Mr. Swamp?

SWAMP Number Four. I'll have a Number Four.

EFFIE

(*Giggles.*) We ain't got no Number Fours, Mr. Swamp. We run all out of Number Fours. (*Giggles.*) When the last train come, they ate all our Number Fours. (*Giggles.*)

PILLAGE

No one...laughs at me! (*Suddenly leaping up.*)

SWAMP (*Reaching out to steady him.*) Calm down, man.

PILLAGE Do not...touch me. And do not...take another step.

SWAMP Hey, hey, hey. (*Putting a hand on him.*)

*PILLAGE lashes out at him. Chairs tip over.*

*BACHMANN, a German chef, rushes out from the kitchen.*

BACHMANN You behave like gentlemen in zis restaurant, or you vill leave. Bose of you.

PILLAGE No one...laughs at me.

BACHMANN No vone here laughs at no vone else.

PILLAGE And you do not...call me a liar.

BACHMANN I call you crazy. Now get out of zis place.

PILLAGE (*Squaring away. Quietly intense*) And you do not...tell me...what to do.

BACHMANN  
(*Controlled.*) Yes, I tell you. I tell you, get out!

*PILLAGE stares at him. Long pause. Finally he turns and leaves.*

SWAMP  
(*Calling to PILLAGE.*) Here, let me come with you. I want to talk to you about that piece of cattle land....

*SWAMP scoots out the door.*

*STELLA runs up, takes the plate left by PILLAGE and returns to her seat.*

EFFIE  
Now you'd think maybe I could just go back to my receipts and shut up. But no, that ain't in my nature. Mr. Bachmann, sir. (*Giggles.*) He didn't pay. (*Giggles.*)

BACHMANN Miss Effington, I vill speak vis you.

EFFIE Yes sir, (*Giggles.*) Mr. Bachmann.  
(*Giggles.*)

BACHMANN  
You offend zah customer, and you annoy me. You do somezing about zhat laughing, or I vill replace you.

EFFIE Replace me?  
(*Giggles.*)

BACHMANN Nussing is funny,  
Miss Effington.



EFFIE No, sir. *(She can't help herself. She giggles again.)*

BACHMANN I said,  
nussing is funny.

EFFIE *(Giggles.)* No. Well, maybe the armed woman's a little bit funny.

BACHMANN Zhe armed  
voman is not funny.

EFFIE  
No.

BACHMANN Zhe armed voman is  
serious business.

EFFIE Yes.

BACHMANN And zis is a  
serious business.

EFFIE Yes, sir, Mr. Bachmann, sir. *(Standing at attention, then explodes in a giggle.)*

BACHMANN If I hear zat idiotic sound again, your employment is terminated. Is zis clear?

EFFIE  
Yes, sir, Mr. Bachmann. Sir.

*She returns to the cash register.*

You see, I laugh like that when things is too serious. Like the armed woman, that one-armed man, or Mr. Bachmann. Ain't nothing I can stop. But I can't afford to lose this job. I am the only girl in my whole town with a job. Except now I am in the toilet with Bachmann. And it's like I gotta change the direction my hair grows.

MARY Would you like me to take over the receipts for you, Effie?

EFFIE I don't think so,  
Mary.

MARY I thought you might be too upset to do them  
properly.

EFFIE  
I'm feeling fine, Miss Mary.

BACHMANN  
Miss Mecham, I vill speak vis you!

MECHAM  
Yes, Mr. Bachmann, sir? May I, first of all, commend you on your handling of the  
Effington matter.

BACHMANN Zat vas a private matter,  
Miss Mecham.

MECHAM  
I listened only because I would be your student, Mr. Bachmann. Learn from the  
master, so to speak.

BACHMANN Off zah subject, Miss Mecham. Miss Effington is to laugh no  
more, is zat clear?

MECHAM  
All directives from you are clear, Mr. Bachmann. One of the many reasons we are  
so happy to have you directing our team.

BACHMANN Zah new girl did not come on zee  
Eight-Zirty-Eight?

MECHAM No, Mr.  
Bachmann, sir.

BACHMANN Four days  
she did not come.

MECHAM No, Mr.  
Bachmann, sir.

BACHMANN Ve are short,  
Miss Mecham.

MECHAM  
Yes. We are short, Mr. Bachmann.

BACHMANN Hire  
somevone local zen.

MECHAM  
Someone local?

*STELLA leaps up and stands, volunteering for duty. No one notices.*

BACHMANN You heard me,  
Miss Mecham.

MECHAM  
I think that is the wisest option, Mr. Bachmann, sir. An exemplary decision.

*STELLA walks around them, trying to make herself noticed, to no avail.*

EFFIE  
They ain't supposed to hire no one local. We're so much fancier because we come from the east.

BACHMANN And vhere is zah new boy,  
Miss Mecham?

MECHAM He is cleaning the toilets, Mr.  
Bachmann.

BACHMANN  
Vhat is his name?

MECHAM His name is Raul, sir.  
Raul Aportella.

BACHMANN Raul? What kind  
of name is zat?

MECHAM  
South-of-the-border name, Mr. Bachmann.

BACHMANN He  
speaks English?

MECHAM Oh yes, Mr.  
Bachmann.

BACHMANN But he  
speaks viz a accent.

MECHAM Something of an accent, yes, Mr.  
Bachmann, sir.

BACHMANN Get him out here,  
Miss Mecham.

MECHAM (*Calling.*) Raul! Paging  
Raul Aportella.

*RAUL comes running out, a young Mexican kid.*

RAUL Jess, Mr.  
Bachmann, sir.

BACHMANN Zis  
floor is not svept.

RAUL No sir, Mr.  
Bachmann, no.

BACHMANN

After every train, zah floor must be svept. And after zah Eight-Zirty-Eight, zah floor must be mopped.

RAUL Jess sir, Mr. Bachmann, jess. (*Standing stiffly at attention.*)

BACHMANN

Now, Raul. Now.

*RAUL grabs a broom and begins sweeping.*

No, no, no. You put zah chairs up on zah tables **zen** you sveep.

*RAUL puts one chair on the table, sweeps there, then returns the chair.*

No, no, no. All chairs up. Zen sveep.

*RAUL puts all the chairs from one table up and then sweeps.* No, no, no. Vhat did I say?

RAUL “No, no, no. All chairs up. Zen sveep.”

BACHMANN

And zat is vhat I mean. All chairs up. Zen sveep.

*RAUL begins piling up the chairs.*

No, no, no. Like zis.

*He demonstrates with military precision.*

Zah back of zah chair goes all zah vay up to zah table. Like zis. Zen zey vill not fall off. Do it like zat.

*RAUL, in an exaggerated military style, steps to the side, picking up the chair, turning it over, placing it on the table. Then he begins to sweep.* No, go all zah vay around one table, zen move to zah next.

RAUL All the way around.

BACHMANN Yes. Do everysing right. Zat is zah American vay.

RAUL “Zah American vay.” Jess.

BACHMANN

What is your name?

RAUL My

name Raul.

BACHMANN

You have been here how long, Raul?

RAUL

Where?

BACHMANN

In America.

RAUL My family live here three  
hundred jears.

BACHMANN

No....

RAUL Jess, my family once own half of New  
Mexico.

BACHMANN Raul, speak trusfully in America. Now how long at  
Harvey House?

RAUL

One days.

BACHMANN One day?

No. How long?

RAUL

One hours.

BACHMANN

Zat is right. One hour. Answer everysing trusfully and precisely. Zat is zah  
American vay.

RAUL “Zat is zah  
American vay.”

BACHMANN

Yes. Resume your vork.

*RAUL does.*

*BACHMANN leaves.*

*THE ARMED WOMAN slips by the window again. No one sees her.*

*MECHAM enters.*

*STELLA steps in front of her.*

EFFIE

*(To WHISTLE.)* Now this here’s Stella. We let her eat here sometimes. She ain’t got no parents.

STELLA

Hey!

MECHAM Hey? That is the way you greet someone? Hey?

STELLA Hello.

MECHAM That’s more like it. Now, what is it you want?

STELLA Nothing. I don’t want nothing.

MECHAM You do not want ‘anything’.

STELLA No. Except maybe a job.

MECHAM Do you know what you’re asking?

STELLA

Yes, ma'am. I been studying your girls.

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MECHAM

And you think you could be a Harvey Girl?

STELLA It ain't exactly higher mathematics.

MECHAM

Stand up straight. You look like an exhausted miner.

*STELLA adjusts her posture.*

Feet together, please. You're not a gorilla.

*STELLA adjusts her stance.*

And you must be an educated young woman to work in this establishment. We have no need for stray dogs.

STELLA I am educated. I have read more books than you. Test me, go ahead.

MECHAM You can read, then?  
And do sums?

STELLA I can also visit the out house and wipe my own behind.

MECHAM

You know, young lady, I made a career of working with young women like you. There is nothing you can say or do that will surprise me. What's more, I consider young women like you my own personal challenge.

STELLA Then why don't you accept the challenge and give me one of your jobs?

MECHAM

If you became a Harvey Girl, I would know where you were every minute of every day.

STELLA

Sounds like you ain't got enough outside interests.

MECHAM

You enjoy defying authority, don't you, young lady?

STELLA The name's Stella, not  
'young lady'.

MECHAM

You must move gracefully, add a column of figures, and answer all questions put to you in a polite and pleasing way. Would you like to take the test?

STELLA What's  
the pay?

MECHAM Seventeen dollars and fifty cents a month. Plus room  
and board.

STELLA

Seventeen fifty a month. Tell you what, I'll think about it. I have some important things to do next week.

*MECHAM watches as STELLA bolts out the door.*

MECHAM

You see there, Miss Whistle, that girl is on a collision course with destiny. And yet she refuses to change.

*WHISTLE takes her dishes away.*

I must go to town now, girls. To get some flowers for tonight's event. The building of the lovely blossom bouquet.

MARY But Miss Mecham, what about the armed woman?

MECHAM

What about her?

MARY

You could accidentally step into her line of fire.

MECHAM

Last week when Teddy Roosevelt asked me to join the nursing corps of the Congress of Rough Riders, he knew I was a woman of few fears. And he was right. Come with me, Mary, you may carry my parcels.

MARY But, Miss  
Mecham....

MECHAM

When you feel fear, Mary, you simply say these words: ‘Teddy Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt.’

*MECHAM leaves, followed by a frightened MARY.*

EFFIE

Watch the place, will you, Whistle, I got to go over to the station and check on the telegraphs.

WHISTLE You ain’t got a telegram. You never got a telegram yet.

EFFIE

Oh yes, I do. That’s one of the main ways me and Cleat keep in touch. Ever once in a while, Cleat will just up and send me a telegraph. It’s sweeter ‘an honey. You’d just love Cleat, if you seen him. He’s a bit boring, you know. Kinda like you. No hills or valleys like me. I mean, I got mountaintops, major gullies. Cleat, mostly he likes to drink whiskey and shoot crows off the trash pile across the road. That’s what he likes. Don’t tell nobody, but we’re s’posed to be getting married, soon as he shows up. ‘Cept you can’t be married and be a Harvey Girl, so’s we gotta keep it a secret. You think I can keep it a secret?

WHISTLE

Not a chance.

EFFIE Starting now, I gotta start practicing on keeping secrets.

MECHAM

*EFFIE leaves.*

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*WHISTLE is left alone.*

*PILLAGE enters quietly.*

WHISTLE Listen here, you ain't supposed to be in here.

PILLAGE I got to...tell you something.

WHISTLE Tell me something? No you don't.

PILLAGE Sit...down.

WHISTLE It's against the rules.

PILLAGE I said...sit down.

*WHISTLE sits carefully.*

WHISTLE No crazy stuff now.

PILLAGE (*Pause. Staring at her.*) Sometimes I see things...no one else sees.

WHISTLE Maybe you need help. They got help for people up the Montezuma Hotel.

PILLAGE Shhh. Things that happened...in the war.

WHISTLE

Lydia Longtree, the actress. She's getting treated up there--

PILLAGE

Shhh....I was in the bottom of a ravine. It was...dark down there. The trees so thick...you couldn't move. And water at the bottom. Very still...full of moss and copperheads. The horses down there, too. Ones that was shot. Yankees cut their throats...and headed them down the ravine to die. All of us down there bleeding to death. Me and the horses. In the bottom...of the ravine. *(Pause.)* What...you got to say?

WHISTLE You got anything to do with that armed woman running through town?

PILLAGE I need...a job.

WHISTLE Half the country needs a job right now.

PILLAGE *(Pause.)* You could let me...do your job.

WHISTLE That's against the rules.

PILLAGE

*(Intensely.)* There's always...a rule. *(He suddenly leaps up, knocks over his chair and throws some things from the table.)*

WHISTLE

*(She forces him back in a chair.)* Now you listen to me. I want you out of here. Right now. You do not have the manners for a place like this.

PILLAGE Because of the war. That's the reason.

WHISTLE

I don't care the reason. You leave right now.

PILLAGE I got to say one thing more. Then I'll leave.

WHISTLE One thing. That's it.

PILLAGE I will...marry you.

*He slips out the door.*

WHISTLE

I tell you, there is nothing crazier than the people that come through that door. And I got some experience with crazy. Raised by Mormon polygamists down on the Mexican border. That is major white man crazy.

*She gets two fountain drinks, sits, puts her feet on a chair. Pause.*  
(Calling.) Raul Aportella, paging Raul Aportella.

*RAUL comes running out.*  
Come and have a Coca Cola with me.

RAUL  
Coca Cola?

WHISTLE It's on the house. Go ahead, sit down.

RAUL Sit down?

WHISTLE Go ahead. We have permission.

RAUL  
Permission?

WHISTLE  
From me.

*RAUL sits tentatively.*

WHISTLE (*cont.*)

Now we own the place.

*They toast with their Cokes.*

RAUL If I owned this place, it would be smaller.

WHISTLE If I owned this place, there would be more workers.

RAUL If I owned this place, it would have no bosses.

WHISTLE If I owned this place, it would have no white people.

RAUL

But this job is better than other jobs I had. My father owned a peach orchard. We had to pick peaches night and day for two weeks. Never sleeping. We'd fall out of the trees sometimes, because we would go to sleep on a tree branch while we were working.

WHISTLE I'm leaving here soon. The white people are too much for me.

RAUL

White people are loco. I am waiting for them to leave. They are like guests who forgot to go home.

WHISTLE Like the armed woman moved into your house.

RAUL

Like the armed woman lives under your bed.

*They both laugh.*



You have a funny name, Whistle.

WHISTLE White people gave me this name. They couldn't pronounce my Navajo name.

RAUL They call me  
'Roll.'

WHISTLE Like something you  
eat, I know.

RAUL Like being named  
'Tortilla.'

*EFFIE enters.*

EFFIE All right, listen up, both of you. I got  
news.

*WHISTLE quickly takes away their glasses.  
RAUL runs off.*

WHISTLE  
What news?

EFFIE  
Guess.

WHISTLE You got  
a telegram.

EFFIE  
No. I didn't get no telegraph today. But I need to check again tomorrow. I think I  
might get one tomorrow. But guess who I seen?

WHISTLE  
Cheat himself.

EFFIE

No. Guess again.

WHISTLE Teddy  
Roosevelt.

EFFIE

No. The armed woman.

WHISTLE The armed woman? How'd you know  
it was her?

EFFIE

She had two guns, a rifle and a hat. She was hiding out by the luggage carts. I  
talked to her.

WHISTLE Effie,  
you are crazy.

EFFIE

She's real nice. Used to be a school teacher. Then a whore. Then a armed bandit.  
I told her she oughta get herself on over here and apply for a job. She ought to  
consider becoming a Harvey Girl. She says she might do it! *(They both laugh.)*

*MECHAM enters from the outside.*

*MARY follows loaded with parcels.*

MECHAM

Raul! Paging Raul Aportella.

*RAUL comes running in.*

It's time for the next train, time to blow the whistle, Raul.

RAUL

Jess.

MECHAM

When the little hand is on the three. *(She sticks out her elbow.)* And when the big hand is on the twelve. *(She raises her other hand over her head.)* Can you say that after me?

RAUL/MECHAM

*(With accompanying gestures.)* When the little hand is on the three. And the big hand is on the twelve.

MECHAM

Now blow, Raul!

*RAUL blows lightly.* No,

Raul. Blow louder.

*RAUL blows louder.*

No, Raul. With energy and commitment. Blow like an American, Raul. *RAUL blows loudly.*

Very good, Raul. I think you'll succeed at the Harvey House.

RAUL

Jess.

MECHAM

*(Calling.)* Stations everyone. Stations!

*The staff assembles.*

*RAUL blows the whistle three times.*

*EFFIE and WHISTLE scurry in, fixing their hair, smoothing their aprons.*

Staff assembled for the Three-Thirty-Seven. Blow again, Raul!

*RAUL does.*

*They all stand at attention.*

*MECHAM inspects each of them.*

Straighten your bow, Miss Effington. Feet together, Miss Whistle. Top button, Raul. You look quite fine, Mary.

*She stands in front of them all.*

Now then, girls, there was no sign of the armed woman in town, was there, Mary?

MARY No, Miss

Mecham.

MECHAM

And you are not to speak of the armed woman to any of the customers. A new train, a new set of strangers. One hundred sixteen meals to be served in the next thirty-five minutes. Hungry strangers for whom each of you is the familiar face of home.

*The ARMED WOMAN flits by the front window again, looking in this time.  
MECHAM sees her. The others do not.*

MECHAM (*cont.*)

(*Automatically.*) Do your best, girls. For God, for country and for Harvey Houses up and down the line. Dismissed.

*The lights bump out as the staff scatters and a cacophony of noise rises.  
Rushing people, clanging dishes, urgent voices.*

*Blackout.*

**Scene Two:**

*Music segue into the scene. Lights warm gradually. It is afternoon. Tables have been stripped and are ready for resetting.*

*STELLA is sitting in front of the restaurant on the ground reading a book.*

*GODLEE approaches.*

EFFIE

Second train of the day. Come and gone. Godlee meets most ever-one of them. I don't know why. Don't never make no conversions. Gives him something to do, I guess, until the end of the world.

GODLEE Excuse me, young lady, but are you washed in the blood?

STELLA Do I look that bad?

GODLEE Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?

STELLA What you talking about?

GODLEE God's work. God's will.

STELLA Listen here, don't you be putting none of that God blood on me.

GODLEE  
May I ask you a question, just one?

STELLA If it ain't about God.

GODLEE Where do you live, sister?

STELLA Wherever I wake up,  
'brother.'

GODLEE

You're an orphan, aren't you? I recognize you as a fellow traveler. I was abandoned on the steps of the Church of the Divine Breath of Jesus. That's who brought me up. Who brought you up?

STELLA The Atchison, Topeka, and the  
Santa Fe.

GODLEE The railroad brought you up? That is a sad and  
pitiful story.

STELLA Ain't  
so bad.

GODLEE Never fear, my sister, God loves you. (*Touching  
her head.*)

STELLA And don't be touching my hair neither. (*She  
swats him.*)

GODLEE Beware, my sister, the world will  
end tonight.

STELLA You ain't nothing but a horsefly. (*She swats  
him again.*)

GODLEE

And it's fire next time. The world will end in fire.

STELLA

**Your** world will end in fire. Someone's gonna aim a gun at your head. And fire.

*GODLEE enters the restaurant and approaches MECHAM.*

GODLEE May I ask you a question, madam?

MECHAM You may not and you may not do your preaching in the Harvey House.

GODLEE I only want to know if you're washed.

MECHAM Out, Mr. Godlee. You heard me.

GODLEE Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?

MECHAM  
Out. I said out.

GODLEE It's coming tonight. The end of the world, tonight.

*MECHAM forces GODLEE out the door.  
SHUDDER is about to enter. GODLEE  
grabs her.*

GODLEE Excuse me. Are you saved, dear sister, are you saved?

SHUDDER Take your hands off me, or I'll kill you.

GODLEE  
(*Letting her go.*) All I want to know is the answer to one question.

SHUDDER The answer to all questions is NO!

*SHUDDER enters, eyes the place, moves to the corner, and sits.*

MARY (*To EFFIE.*) That woman looks armed. We should ask her to leave.

EFFIE Mary, you got all the bravery of a cock roach.

MARY I think she's suspicious. I think she could be armed.

EFFIE

She ain't armed. Watch this.

*EFFIE moves to her table.*

Welcome to Harvey House. Would you like to see a menu?

SHUDDER You know any people in Oklahoma?

EFFIE Nope, don't think so.

SHUDDER Cuz I don't deal with no one from Oklahoma.

EFFIE Whatever you say.

SHUDDER Who's that yelling out there?

EFFIE

We call him Godlee. His real name's Purvis. He's always preaching.

SHUDDER He come from Oklahoma?



EFFIE I don't think so. He lives here.

SHUDDER Don't never tell him nothing about me.

EFFIE Whatever you say.

SHUDDER Don't say Oklahoma to him.

EFFIE All right.

SHUDDER And don't say nothing like, "That girl over there. You know her?" Don't say that.

EFFIE All right. So ya want something to eat?

SHUDDER I don't need no help.

EFFIE No.

SHUDDER I run a herd of sheep by myself. I don't need no help.

EFFIE Herding sheep. That's hard work. No one to talk to all day long, day after day. I couldn't never do that.

SHUDDER You learn how to get along without talking.

EFFIE What's you do  
instead?

SHUDDER They's always a voice  
you can hear.

EFFIE A  
voice?

SHUDDER Comes from the coyotes  
and wolves.

EFFIE  
What they say?

SHUDDER They don't say.  
They sing.

EFFIE  
Oh.

SHUDDER I heard you got water with ice here.  
Is that true?

EFFIE Ice comes in on the train twice  
a day.

SHUDDER Water with ice. I'll have that. And I'll have a  
Number Nine.

EFFIE Number Nine. Number Nine. Comin' right up. (*Taking the  
menu.*)

*EFFIE leaves.*

*MECHAM enters.*

MECHAM

43.

*(Calling him.)* Raul! Paging Raul Aportella.

*RAUL comes running out. Stands at attention.*

Before each train, you must place the condiments on each table. They're here on this tray. Take them out one at a time and place them in the center.

*RAUL stands, waiting at attention.*

Can you do that now, Raul?

*RAUL jumps and runs to the large table.*

No, Raul. You need not run everywhere you go.

*RAUL stops dead still.*

Can you walk, Raul?

*RAUL walks stiffly with his arms board-like at his side.*

No, Raul. You need not keep your arms so stiffly at your sides. They should move gracefully to and fro, like this. *(Demonstrating.)* Now, you try it.

*RAUL walks. His arms synchronized with his legs.*

No, Raul. Your right arm moves gracefully forward when your left leg moves forward. And vice versa. Like this. *(Demonstrating.)* Now, can you do that?

*RAUL tries. His arms in a swimming action.*

No, no, Raul. You are not digging at the beach. Or swimming to Cuba. Arms move gracefully like this. You must glide. Glide across the floor. *(Illustrating.)* Now can you do that?

*RAUL takes exaggerated, large steps undulating across the floor.*

No, Raul. Smaller steps and smoothly. As if a glass of water were on your head. And you never spill a drop. *(Demonstrating.)* There now, can you do that? *RAUL slides his feet across the floor, arms doing something similar.*

There. That's better, Raul, in a matter of a few days, I think you'll have it.

*RAUL does his sliding walk back to her.*

Good. Very good. Now can you put the condiments on each table?

*RAUL jumps and runs to the table. MECHAM exits with a sigh.*

SHUDDER Raul. Don't let her do that to you.

RAUL  
I know.

SHUDDER Tell her you will kill her if she does that to you again.

RAUL  
Kill her?

SHUDDER Yes. Say, 'I will kill you.' She won't do that no more.

*RAUL nods and moves to his work.  
WHISTLE joins him, helping.*

WHISTLE You think you're working in the right place, Raul?

RAUL  
I work here three jears. Then I am a Bell Boy at the Montezuma Hotel. Uniform and hat. All red.

WHISTLE But first you have to work here for three years?

RAUL *(Grinning.)* This is day one!

*EFFIE comes out with the order.*

EFFIE *(Setting down the plate.)* Here's your Number Nine. With water and ice.

SHUDDER Did you tell anyone I was here?

EFFIE Nope, not a soul.

SHUDDER

Not the help in the back, not no one.

EFFIE Not  
no one.

SHUDDER See to it you don't. Not now or in  
the future.

EFFIE  
Right.

*SHUDDER rips into her sandwich. She finishes it in two or three bites.*  
You musta been hungry. My boyfriend. Cleat. I have a boyfriend name of  
Cleat. He can eat like that. Whew, like breathing air.

SHUDDER Don't tell  
Cleat I was here.

EFFIE Well, that ain't much of a danger. He don't even live  
here.

SHUDDER Don't tell him, no matter  
where he lives.

EFFIE  
He could be coming, though. Maybe on the next train. He's gonna get a job with  
the railroad. Then we're gonna get married and travel all over, the two of us free  
as a couple of birds. *(Pause.)* Yeah. 'Cept he ain't come yet. And I been meeting  
every train for three months. What do you think?

SHUDDER  
About what?

EFFIE You think he's gonna  
come?

SHUDDER  
Yeah.

EFFIE You do? You think he's gonna come?

SHUDDER I don't think there's any way you can escape him.

EFFIE I don't want to escape him.

SHUDDER Well, that's your problem. But he is out there. And he is coming.

EFFIE You said that like you really know.

SHUDDER  
I do know.

EFFIE  
Well, I tell you. This is the nicest thing ever happen to me since I left him. Most others, they just say, "You crazy, Effie. He ain't coming."

SHUDDER No, he's coming. They always come. That's what they do. I got to leave now.

EFFIE All right. But thanks for dropping by. Thanks for sharing your opinion.

SHUDDER  
Yeah.

EFFIE You give me a whole new attitude about my life.

SHUDDER  
*(Handing her some coins.)* Don't be telling no one I was here.

EFFIE

*(Handing them back.)* No. That's only our own little secret. Sort of like the visitation of an angel. Can't talk about it, 'less they think you crazy.

SHUDDER

Yep. Like that.

EFFIE Thank you, then.

SHUDDER

You're welcome.

*SHUDDER moves away.*

EFFIE

Thank you, my guardian angel....

*SHUDDER exits and disappears.*

That there is what I like about life. Things going on in the same ole way, then up comes life and slaps you in the face. Smack, you got new faith and new ideas all over again.

*MECHAM enters. Checks the length of a table cloth against her leg.*

MECHAM Now then, girls, while you are laying the silver, today's clean up colloquy.

EFFIE 'Colloquy.' Sounds like a disease of potatoes.

MECHAM

Today's subject is peace and war. As women, we favor peace. We are very suspicious of war. Men love war. Men love war entirely too much. We must be suspicious of anything men love too much. By the way, Miss Whistle, the tablecloths come right to the knee on all four sides. All four sides.

*MARY adjusts the offending tablecloth.*

Thank you, Mary. And one bit of advice for the future, girls. Do not learn how to cook. You'll just have to do it. And it is a waste of your talent and intellect.

EFFIE But what will our families?

MECHAM Let them eat cake

EFFIE  
Hunh?

MECHAM Let them learn to cook, Missing Effington.

EFFIE But what if the woman *likes* to cook?

MECHAM  
Nonsense. No one likes to cook. It's just a duty women perform without complaint because their natures are too generous. Continue on, girls. Lighter on your feet, Miss Whistle. That's why we have felt on the bottom of our sensible shoes. So we may always tread softly.

*MECHAM exits into the kitchen.*

MARY  
(*Looking out the window.*) Excuse me, but who is that woman on her way over here?

EFFIE That's the armed woman.

MARY  
It is not.

EFFIE



Is so. I met her this morning. She's Big Nose Kate.

MARY Why is she coming over here?

EFFIE I invited her.

MARY That woman does not belong in a place like this. This is an establishment for cultivated people.

EFFIE Well, then, you're gonna have to tell her so. Cuz she is on her way in.

MARY  
(Calling.) Miss Mecham!  
*MECHAM enters.*

I think this may be...(whispering)...the armed woman.

MECHAM Nonsense, Mary, valor in the face of fear. Teddy Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt.

MARY  
But she's wearing make-up, which as you have told us, goes hand-in-hand with...  
(whispering)...disease.

*ARMED WOMAN enters, overly made up, wearing a hat. She is pretty, seductive, energetic, and short tempered.*

ARMED WOMAN  
Well, well, well, it's a convention of penguins! (Moving to MECHAM.) And you must be Miss Eudora Mecham, of whom I've heard so much.

MECHAM  
And you are?

ARMED WOMAN

Cecelia Kate...originally from New York City.

MECHAM From New York City, well, well, well. What could I do for you, Miss Kate?

ARMED WOMAN I'm new in town...arrived this morning.

MARY (*Under her breath.*) Under violent circumstances.

ARMED WOMAN ...And I'm eager to make the acquaintance of other professional women.

MECHAM

I see.

ARMED WOMAN And your name has come up in that context. Several times.

MARY (*Whispering.*) I think she's armed. Look at the way her skirt bulges.

MECHAM And what profession do you practice, may I ask?

ARMED WOMAN

I was once a teacher of children, but when hard times hit, I was forced from the pedestal of propriety. I have become a traveling...woman.

MECHAM A

traveling...woman.

MARY (*Whispering. To EFFIE.*) What is a traveling...woman?

ARMED WOMAN

But now that I have found this lovely community nestled away in the heart of the west, I have decided to travel no more. To seek instead for professional employment and dedicate my talents to the betterment of others.

MECHAM You seek employment, therefore, with the Harvey House?

ARMED WOMAN

Yes, ma'am, I do.

MECHAM

And just what gifts do you possess which might enhance this elegant and proper establishment?

ARMED WOMAN I

am...friendly.

MECHAM

Friendly.

ARMED WOMAN

Very...friendly. I would not have survived at all in the traveling business, had I not been extremely friendly.

MARY (*Blurting out.*) Your kind of 'friendship' is not even legal.

ARMED WOMAN

(*Turning on MARY.*) Friendship is a treasure, wherever it is found, young lady, all over the globe!

MARY

(*Cowering.*) Don't shoot! Just don't shoot. Teddy Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt.

*ARMED WOMAN stares at her, then returns to MECHAM.*

ARMED WOMAN

Excuse me, where were we?

MECHAM For what job are you applying, then?

ARMED WOMAN For the job of a Harvey Girl. That is, unless your job is available.

MECHAM

I am head waitress, Miss Kate, and supervisor of the women's residence. My job is not available.

ARMED WOMAN Merely a joke, Miss Mecham.

MECHAM You realize, do you not, that a Harvey Girl is between the ages of 18 and 30?

ARMED WOMAN At my next birthday I will turn twenty...two.

MECHAM

And you understand as well that all Harvey Girls are required to maintain a residence in the top floor of the hotel across the street?

ARMED WOMAN I do understand, Miss Mecham.

MECHAM

And you understand further that the life of a Harvey Girl is strictly monitored. She may not stay out after 9:00 p.m., for example.

ARMED WOMAN I do understand all that.

53.

MECHAM And the work is difficult. Thirteen hours a day, six days a week.

ARMED WOMAN

Miss Mecham, I am used to *hard* work.

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And why do you still have a desire to work here?

ARMED WOMAN Because, Miss Mecham, I have a dream.

MECHAM  
A dream?

ARMED WOMAN I have a dream to become a woman just like you.

MECHAM  
Like me?

ARMED WOMAN  
Like you. Because I recognize in you a fellow professional. A woman who has been tempted to abandon her profession just to become someone's wife. To lay down her working tools and pick up the cooking spoon. To such proposals, however, she has said no, for that way lies weakness, and she is a dedicated professional. Does that not ring a bell, Miss Mecham?

MECHAM Why yes, it does, Miss Kate.

ARMED WOMAN We have a great deal in common, Miss Mecham.

MECHAM Well then, perhaps we can find a place for you here.

MARY (*Blurting out.*) Certainly not as a Harvey Girl!

ARMED WOMAN  
Thank you, Miss Mecham. That's what I thought you would say. For I too have goals and aspirations. I long to improve the lot of human beings, all up and down the line.

MECHAM

MECHAM

Such a welcome spirit, Miss Kate. You may start this evening. In the meantime, come with me, I will help you select your uniform.

ARMED WOMAN Thank you, my dear,  
dear, Miss Mecham.

*ARMED WOMAN kisses her hand, curtsies.*

MARY Miss Mecham, may I speak with you for a moment?

MECHAM

Not now, Mary. I must assist the newest member of our family. Come, Miss Kate.

*MECHAM and ARMED WOMAN seize hands and exit into the kitchen.*

WHISTLE That was her? The woman you met hiding by the luggage carts?

EFFIE That there's the one. Big Nose Kate has just joined our ranks.

MARY She is not an appropriate member of our family. She could kill us.

EFFIE She won't kill us, Mary. She'll just kill you.

*They all exit into the kitchen.*

*BACHMANN storms out.*

BACHMANN (*Yelling.*) Miss Mecham! I vill speak viss you.

*MECHAM hurries in.*

Yes, Mr. Bachmann, sir.

BACHMANN  
Miss Mecham!

MECHAM You may call  
me Eudora.

BACHMANN  
Miss Mecham.

MECHAM Well, if  
you insist...

BACHMANN You hired someone to be  
a Harvey Girl.

MECHAM Yes, Mr. Bachmann. Her name is  
Miss Kate.

BACHMANN Without  
my permission...

MECHAM You said we  
were short--

BACHMANN ...You hired  
someone named Kate.

MECHAM Her name is  
Cecelia Kate.

BACHMANN You have hired Big Nose Kate,  
Miss Mecham.

MECHAM  
Nonsense, Mr. Bachmann.



MECHAM

BACHMANN Big Nose Kate as  
a Harvey Girl.

MECHAM

She is a woman who can benefit from her association with me.

BACHMANN

Big Nose Kate.

MECHAM We are in desperate need. You  
said as much.

BACHMANN

Big Nose Kate.

MECHAM

You do not understand how meaningful work, proper training, and the influence of  
the strong role model such as myself can turn around a life like hers.

BACHMANN We are not in the business of reclaiming lost souls,  
Miss Mecham.

MECHAM

Are we not *always* in the business of reclaiming lost souls? Is it not our Christian  
responsibility?

BACHMANN I want that  
woman out of here.

MECHAM

Mr. Bachmann, your judgment is unerring, your leadership unswerving, and yet I  
urge you to reconsider this verdict.

BACHMANN

Out of the question.

Very well. I do hereby promise that if Miss Kate crosses over the line of propriety, if she should stray from the straight and narrow that has come to define the Harvey House empire, I will myself resign, and as the Lord Jesus teaches us, take on the sins of this woman myself.

BACHMANN Miss Mecham, you have lost your mind.

MECHAM

I do not think so, Mr. Bachmann. Miss Kate has gifts of extraordinary grace and intelligence.

BACHMANN I intend to hold you to your promise.

MECHAM

I hope you will, Mr. Bachmann. And now perhaps you would like to join me for a cup of tea.

BACHMANN I must get back to zah salads.

MECHAM The challenges never end, do they, sir?

BACHMANN No, Miss Mecham, zey do not.

MECHAM

And yet we would have it no other way, would we, Mr. Bachmann? For we are the artists and the public is our clay.

BACHMANN You are daffy, Miss Mecham.

*BACHMANN exits.*

*After a beat, MECHAM exits.*

MECHAM

*SWAMP approaches the door.*

*LONGTREE, a retired actress, is on his arm.*

EFFIE Ah, but we have customers. One of them is even famous.

SWAMP Let me hold the door for you. Let me spread my cloak upon the ground.

LONGTREE

Forsooth, you lend a hand, I take your arm.

*(Chuckling.)* I do entreat you, sir, offer me no more.

SWAMP Perhaps a table here in the afternoon sun.

*(Seating her.)*

EFFIE

*(To WHISTLE.)* You take care of them, Whistle. You ain't met many famous people.

LONGTREE *(Looking around.)* Forsooth, I've not been in this establishment before.

SWAMP

It is a convivial place, the light is good, the service punctual. And of course, the menu is as fine as any establishment in town. Perhaps you'd have a spot of tea or a bit of lunch.

LONGTREE Tea is quite sufficient to my needs, dear sir.

*WHISTLE moves to their table.*

SWAMP

We'll have a pot of tea to begin, although we do reserve the right to add just endlessly to that order.

WHISTLE Whatever you say,  
Mr. Swamp.

SWAMP

That's an Indian girl. A real Indian.

*WHISTLE stops, does a take to the audience.*

It's a salutary thing they're given work here. Helps to tame their savage ways.

WHISTLE

I get the first job they ever gave an Indian. And they think they're all as generous as Jesus.

SWAMP

Well, well, well, it's such a pleasure to meet you in person, Miss Longtree. I feel as if I already know you. For I have seen unnumbered performances of yours upon the New York stage.

LONGTREE Have you, indeed? And what of my work did you see?

SWAMP Oh, the one with the gentleman. What was his name?

LONGTREE Edwin  
Booth, perchance?

SWAMP That's the one,  
Edward Booth.

LONGTREE Then you  
saw my Portia.

SWAMP *My Portia.* That's the one I saw.  
Magnificent work.

LONGTREE

"The quality of mercy...."

SWAMP

*The Quality of Mercy*. I saw that one, too. I've never seen a more powerful performance.

LONGTREE

"The quality of mercy is not strained, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven. It is twice blest."

SWAMP

Yes, yes, you're right. It was *Twice Blessed*. That's another one I saw. Perhaps the most profound of all your work.

LONGTREE

I am so gratified to know you've seen My work upon the stage. It is my life, My love, my all-consuming passion.

SWAMP And nothing could be clearer. That's exactly what we see in your performances.

LONGTREE

The length and breadth of human agony, The height and depth of human ecstasy. That is my work, my meaning, and my glee.

SWAMP

Indeed it is.

LONGTREE It is my exaltation and my bliss.

SWAMP Yes, yes, of course.

LONGTREE

My enchantment, my rapture, and my thrill.

SWAMP

Undoubtedly so. *(Pause.)* Pardon me, Miss Longtree, but may I ask. Are you speaking verse?

LONGTREE

Why yes, I am, dear sir.  
It is both my burden and my curse.  
And as of late it's only gotten worse.

*WHISTLE delivers the tea.*

SWAMP

Thank you, dear.

*WHISTLE arranges the service and leaves.*

And now, Miss Longtree, you're probably wondering why I scheduled this appointment with you.

LONGTREE

I presume you longed to meet the woman Lurking  
underneath the famed facade.

SWAMP

Well, yes, of course. But I wanted also to speak with you about an exciting business proposition.

LONGTREE With  
me, dear sir?

SWAMP With you,  
dear madam.

LONGTREE

And yet I do admit straight forwardly, That  
a business woman I am not.

SWAMP

You are potentially the greatest business woman in the country. For you have what a business woman needs.

LONGTREE And praythee, what is that, dear Mr. Swamp?

SWAMP

A product, dear Miss Longtree. A product. You have great talent. That is a product. The same as corset stays or a bottle of physic.

LONGTREE

Your comparisons do lack decorum, sir. And yet I am compelled by curiosity To ask you to explain this proposition.

SWAMP

I am in the process of raising funds to rebuild the lovely Duncan Opera House, located as you know not more than a block from here. And I invite you, therefore, to open that theatre with a dramatic presentiment.

LONGTREE

A dramatic presentiment, Mr. Swamp, What a congenial and intriguing thought! What type of presentiment do you hope to offer?

SWAMP A Shakespearean presentiment. Your favorite Shakespearean, what is it?

LONGTREE

Oh, no question there. But the wife of he Who plots to wear the sacred crown of Scotland, Lady Macbeth.

SWAMP Lady Macbeth. An excellent choice.

LONGTREE

Lady Macbeth! She fills me with such seething!

SWAMP

Can't you read the marquee from where you sit? 'Miss Lydia Longtree starring in Edwin Shakespearean's *Lady Macbeth*.'

LONGTREE But Lady Macbeth is not the title role.

SWAMP

She will be in our production. And we will add music. And songs. Songs of your own devising, songs of your own choosing.

LONGTREE Lady Macbeth, the musical entertainment?

SWAMP Exactly. And dancing. Lady Macbeth will dance!

LONGTREE

Long have I thought that she should twirl and whirl.  
The sleepwalking scene, that masterpiece insane,  
Expressed through the body's undulations.  
Yes!

"Come you spirits, come. Unsex me here! And fill me full of direst cruelty."

*The waitresses applaud.*

SWAMP Wouldn't it be lovely to hear the crowds again? The roar of their approval?

LONGTREE

Oh, yes, Mr. Swamp, it would!  
One destined by the fates to tread the boards  
Is also victim of that selfsame fate.  
She longs to hear again and yet again



The warmth and loving approbation  
From teeming crowds of generous, loyal fans.

SWAMP

Wonderful! And now that we have settled that, may I ask you something else?  
What might you be willing to invest?

LONGTREE

In what?

SWAMP In this venture. To become a stock holder in this  
enterprise.

LONGTREE

Excuse me, Mr. Swamp, that's quite enough! You  
have misled me and deceived me.  
I will have nothing more to do with you  
Or with a proposition for which I Am to  
provide a monetary stake.

SWAMP

You would not be the only investor. There are hundreds of others. Hundreds of  
hungry souls eager to see this opera house rebuilt. Who have committed their  
hard-earned money to this proposition.

LONGTREE

Then it is they you should have brought to tea.  
Good day, Mr. Swamp. I have no further Words  
for you, not now nor ever again.  
You do offend the air that we must breathe, Pollute  
the space that we must occupy.

*LONGTREE rises indignantly.*

SWAMP

Just a moment, Miss Longtree, let me open the door for you.

LONGTREE

Your assistance is not necessary.  
Nothing more from a base, immoral beast,  
No, not now, nor forever more. Cir cease.

*LONGTREE flings open the door and exit. SWAMP  
stands there befuddled.*

WHISTLE You owe a dollar thirty-five,  
Mr. Swamp.

SWAMP

Yes, yes indeed. A dollar. A dollar thirty-five. It seems I've come away without  
my change. I'll bring it to you later, dear. Just...a little bit later.

*SWAMP slips out the door*

WHISTLE Does my heart good when a puffed up man  
gets his due.

*MECHAM enters.*

MECHAM

Attention everyone! The newest member of our family. Miss Cecelia Kate in full  
Harvey House attire.

*ARMED WOMAN enters in her uniform.*

MARY It is a desecration of the  
uniform.

ARMED WOMAN (*Circling the room.*) Glory,  
glory. I feel like a nun.

EFFIE I always wanted to be a nun. But I think they make you be a  
Catholic first.

ARMED WOMAN I was a nun twice before or maybe three times.

MARY

You were a nun?

ARMED WOMAN It was some customer's fancy.

MARY

Customer's what?

ARMED WOMAN I satisfied men. In a previous life.

MARY And you admit such things?

ARMED WOMAN

Yes, of course. Don't you? The truthful admission of one's past enables the possibility and the power of the future.

MECHAM I could not agree with you more, Miss Kate.

ARMED WOMAN *(Twirling.)* Oh, I love the way this feels.

MECHAM Please note, girls, the way Miss Kate moves. A picture of grace and elegance.

ARMED WOMAN Why, thank you, Miss Mecham. *(She twirls once more and sits.)*

MARY Oh, we are not supposed to wrinkle our skirts.

ARMED WOMAN

Well, I have a cure for that. *(She rises, lifts her skirt, and plops back down.)* Is that better?

MARY

Well, we're not supposed to sit down at all. "Sitting is a addictive behavior. The more one does it, the more one wants to do it."

ARMED WOMAN *(Moving on her.)* Excuse me, but what is your name?

MARY

Mine? Oh. Mary Margaret Murphy. I come from a family of nine girls. Don't shoot.

ARMED WOMAN

Well, Mary Margaret Murphy, your family of nine girls must be destitute in these hard times.

MARY We are poor but we are honest. I send them all my earnings.

ARMED WOMAN All your earnings, what a good girl are you.

MARY Yes, ma'am.

ARMED WOMAN Well, you must teach me everything you know.

MARY About being good?

ARMED WOMAN About working at this Harvey House.

MARY

You must listen to Miss Mecham, absorb her wisdom, that's the most important thing. And you must respect the uniform.

ARMED WOMAN Oh, I do. I do respect the uniform. I respect it so much I'm going out in it.

MARY

Oh, we are not allowed to go out in our uniforms...without permission.

ARMED WOMAN Miss Mecham and I will be going out together. With your permission.

MARY

Yes.

ARMED WOMAN Because our destiny awaits. As does yours, Mary Margaret Murphy.

MARY Don't shoot. Please don't shoot.

ARMED WOMAN (*Laughing and walking away.*) Come, Miss Mecham. Do you have the linens?

MECHAM I

do, Miss Kate.

ARMED WOMAN Come away then. Our destiny awaits.

MECHAM

Our destiny awaits. Providence takes us by the hand! Carry on girls. We will return post haste.

MARY Excuse me, Miss Mecham.

MECHAM

Yes, Mary.

MARY (*At a loss.*) Well...I'll sign out for you. For you both....In case you forgot.

MECHAM

You do that, Mary. Come, Miss Kate.

ARMED WOMAN

Come, Miss Mecham.

*ARMED WOMAN and MECHAM seize hands and exit out the front door.*

MARY I'm afraid of her. I'm afraid for Miss Mecham.

EFFIE You ought to be afraid for yourself. Miss Kate don't like you very much.

MARY You think so?

EFFIE I know so.

MARY (*Frozen with fear.*) Teddy Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt.

*Blackout.*

Scene Three:

*The scene is the same. It is evening, the restaurant is in empty, littered with the remains from a hundred diners. EFFIE, WHISTLE, and MARY, with some sense of exhaustion, are cleaning up.*

EFFIE

Last train of the day just left. One more cleanup to go. It's right about now that the life of a Harvey Girl feels a lot like being a draft mule.

MARY Let's all step up the pace, girls. I see some of you lagging behind.

EFFIE "I see some of you lagging behind." Mary, you ain't the boss of us.

MARY

Miss Mecham will be back any moment. And she wants to see this room ready for the ceremony of the lovely blossom bouquet.

EFFIE

So as you can spend a full hour telling us how you resemble an aster. We can't hardly wait!

MARY Your attitude could use improvement, Effie.

EFFIE

I'll be working on that, Mary. Right now. Except, I think I just seen Miss Kate.

*MARY screams and whirls around.*

Yep, that was her. Two pistols, a rifle, and a hat.

MARY

Miss Mecham could be in grave danger. And you are making jokes.

*STELLA sneaks in.*

STELLA Hey, ya got any jobs now?

MARY I'm sorry, we are closed.

STELLA I ain't asking about food. I'm asking about jobs.

MARY We have no jobs.

STELLA Ya lost one of your girls.

MARY What are you talking about?

STELLA Big Nose Kate. Ya lost her.

MARY We did not lose anyone.

STELLA Where is she then?

MARY She is with Miss Mecham. They are, they are...making preparations for a ceremony we're having tonight.

STELLA I already seen her earlier today. I seen her out in the band shell across from the Plaza Hotel. I seen her in there, rolled up, hiding under a bench. Still had on her Harvey Girl dress.

MARY You cannot be a Harvey Girl when you speak untruthfully.

STELLA Big Nose Kate, she got herself a job. And look what she done with it.

*STELLA grabs a piece of cake and slips out the front door.*



EFFIE Let's all discuss what coulda happened to Miss Mecham.

MARY No. You just want to scare me.

EFFIE

I think she's in a well. She's just hanging in there, by her hands. No one can see her, no one can hear her.

MARY Hush up, Effie.

EFFIE

Or maybe she's out in the middle of the desert, staked to the ground, burning alive in the heat.

MARY Your imagination is vicious and violent.

EFFIE What do you think happened to her, Whistle?

WHISTLE

I think she got left at the Jemez Pueblo and had to walk back to town. Making sure she was 'light on her feet' the whole way.

MARY

That comment is rude and impolite, Miss Whistle. I will be in the kitchen making final preparations.

*MARY moves off, driven to tears.*

*PILLAGE comes in the front door.*

WHISTLE You are not supposed to be in here. Not tonight, not tomorrow, not ever again.

PILLAGE

Someone...robbed a bank.

WHISTLE Robbed a bank,  
are you sure?

PILLAGE About a block from here...on that  
other street.

WHISTLE Listen here, you didn't have anything to do with  
it, did you?

PILLAGE I got  
me...a job.

WHISTLE A  
real job?

PILLAGE I wanted you...to know. I  
will...be rich.

WHISTLE Sure  
you will.

PILLAGE I am a miner now. I work for...Mr.  
Glitterman.

WHISTLE  
Good for you.

PILLAGE  
When I am rich...I will come back for you.

WHISTLE I do not take to  
crazy men.

PILLAGE You the most...loveliest woman I ever seen. And I...will marry you.

WHISTLE

You got to act like the people around here, or you ain't gonna be able to stay. I mean, they are crazy. But they are a different crazy from you.

BACHMANN *(Off.) (Calling.)* Miss Mecham!  
I vill speak vis you!

PILLAGE Wait for me. *(Pause. Fixing her with a stare.)* It will not...be long.

BACHMANN *(Off.)*  
*(Calling.)* Miss Mecham! Paging Miss Mecham!

*PILLAGE slips out the door. BACHMANN scoots in.*

BACHMANN *(Calling.)* Miss Mecham! I vill speak viss you.

*MARY runs in.*

MARY Miss Mecham is not right here...right at the moment, Mr. Bachmann. Sir

BACHMANN  
Where is she?

MARY Miss Mecham has...gone to town, Mr. Bachmann. Sir

BACHMANN  
Gone to town? It's nearly dark.

MARY

She had to.... We were in need of some...some necessities....for the, for the building of the lovely blossom bouquet.

BACHMANN No vone leaves ziss place until I speak viss Miss Mecham. Is zhat clear?

MARY Yes sir, Mr. Bachmann, sir.

BACHMANN (*Calling.*)  
Raul Aportella!

*RAUL runs out, stands at attention.*

RAUL Jess sir, Mr. Bachmann, sir.

BACHMANN Zis floor is not mopped.

RAUL No sir, Mr. Bachmann, no.

BACHMANN Zah floor must be mopped each day after zah last train. Is zat clear?

RAUL Jess sir, Mr. Bachmann, jess.

*RAUL runs to get a mop and bucket.*

BACHMANN  
And I vant to see zis mopping in zah number eight shape. Not in zah back a forse shape, in zah number eight shape.

RAUL  
Jess sir, Mr. Bachmann, sir. (*Pause.*) What is 'zah number eight shape'?

*BACHMANN grabs the mop. Demonstrating.*

BACHMANN

Back and forse shape like zis. Bad. Number eight shape like zis. Good.

*BACHMANN hands the mop to RAUL.*

*RAUL mops with an artificial, obedient smile on his face.*

RAUL 'Number eight shape like zis.  
Good.'

BACHMANN Zhat is right, Raul. You make a good  
American vone day.

RAUL Thank you, Mr.  
Bachmann. Sir.

*BACHMANN exits.*

*RAUL stops mopping.*

*WHISTLE goes to the fountain and makes two Cokes and sits.*

WHISTLE How you doing,  
my friend?

RAUL It is bery loud day  
today.

WHISTLE Tomorrow will be quiet, just you  
wait and see.

*SHUDDER sneaks quietly in the door.*

EFFIE Well, well, if it ain't my guardian  
angel.

SHUDDER

I need some food.

EFFIE I'm sorry, but we're closed.

SHUDDER Just put some food in this satchel. Anything at all. I have money. I'll pay you.

EFFIE You in some kinda trouble?

SHUDDER They found the body of my husband.

EFFIE  
Body?

SHUDDER In Oklahoma. They got a wanted poster out on me. Don't tell no one I was here.

EFFIE I won't. I won't tell.

SHUDDER He treated me like one of his beef cattle, notched my ear.

EFFIE And what'd you do in return?

SHUDDER I notched his throat. I need some food.

EFFIE They ain't much left out there. And you can't tell no one where you got it.

SHUDDER  
I don't talk.

*EFFIE takes the satchel and runs into the kitchen.*

WHISTLE This place is as crazy as a bucket of bees.

RAUL  
Jess.

WHISTLE Can you keep a secret, Raul?

RAUL  
Jess.

WHISTLE I will leave tonight.

RAUL  
Leave  
leave?

WHISTLE Leave, leave. Leave. After the ceremony.

RAUL How you do that? That leaving?

WHISTLE  
Hop the freight train to Santa Fe. Get a horse there and ride on out to the reservation.

RAUL You are a very brave Harvey Girl, Miss Whistle.

WHISTLE  
I'm tired of these white people. They eat too much. They eat everything in sight. They eat until they are sick. They will eat and eat until the earth is gone.

RAUL

You should probably not be a waitress, then.

WHISTLE

No.

RAUL

I been listening to Miss Mecham. About visiting other parts of the world. I think I might try it.

WHISTLE You could visit my part of the world.

RAUL I might do that. For a while.

WHISTLE You could do that. For a while. Then move on.

RAUL Then move on. Maybe to San Francisco.

WHISTLE Well, if you went to San Francisco, I might have to go with you.

RAUL You could do that. You could come to San Francisco with me.

*EFFIE returns, handing SHUDDER the satchel.*

EFFIE Here you go. It's all I could find.

SHUDDER

What do I owe?

EFFIE Nothing. We're closed.



SHUDDER

I have to go now. They will be after me.

EFFIE

Where you going?

SHUDDER I ain't telling you or no one else. Far as you know, I died today.

EFFIE But I believe in you. You're my guardian angel. I want to know where you are.

SHUDDER Far as you know, I died today.

*SHUDDER slips out.*

*EFFIE watches her and waves from the window.*

*MARY enters with a vase of flowers.*

*GODLEE rushes in.*

GODLEE You ready to repent, my sister?

MARY Out of here, Godlee.

GODLEE

The bank was robbed today. You hear that? By two people dressed like ghosts. What you think that means? It means the end of the world. That's what it means. You believe me, sister?

MARY I don't believe a thing you say. Now get on out of here.

GODLEE

Go ahead and disbelieve. Tomorrow you will say, I remember that man, that man who told the truth.

MARY

No one believes a thing you say.

GODLEE

Two people dressed in table cloths robbed a bank. Underneath were the uniforms of the Harvey Girls. What do you think that means?

MARY It means you're full of gossip like everyone else in this town.

GODLEE It means it's a sign. It's a sign of the end of the world.

*GODLEE slips out.*

MARY

*(Visibly flustered. Calling.)* Attention. Attention staff. Assemble please. For the building of the beautiful blossom bouquet.

*As if in response to her, MECHAM and the ARMED WOMAN swoop in.* Oh, Miss Mecham. Miss Mecham, I thought you were dead.

MECHAM

I am not dead, Mary. I am far from dead. I am revitalized. *(Calling.)* Harvey Girls, paging all Harvey Girls. Please assemble in the main dining room immediately.

*Everyone assembles and sits.*

*MECHAM solemnly takes her place.*

Welcome, girls, to the annual building of the blossom bouquet. Tonight's ceremony is, however, to be changed from previous years, for I have distressing news. I have been dismissed from Harvey House.

*MARY seizes with shock and grief.*

As has Miss Kate. We have both been dismissed by a shortsighted, frightened man. A pattern all too prevalent in leaders of today. In future, if I have to work for a man, I want to work for a strong man. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt is such a man, a strong man. But more on that later. As for tonight, I wish not to dwell on tragedy and injustice, rather to keep our eyes on the loftiness of spirit that defines this

event. And so toward that end, I now acknowledge, a most remarkable woman, Miss Cecelia Kate, who's been an inspiration to me. I think you will soon see why

ARMED WOMAN

Thank you, Miss Mecham. As you know, girls, Miss Mecham and I have just returned from a special mission. A mission of justice and righteousness. Here in my satchel are the results of that mission.

MARY (*To WHISTLE, whispering.*) Do you think she has guns in there?

ARMED WOMAN (*Moving on her.*) No, Mary Margaret Murphy, I do not have guns in here.

MARY Oh. Well, I was just wondering. Because guns are not allowed in Harvey Houses.

ARMED WOMAN No, Mary Margaret Murphy, they are not.

MARY

Neither are pieces of dead bodies. Small animals, rats or marmots, shot through the head.

ARMED WOMAN Your imagination, Mary Margaret Murphy, is entirely out of control.

MECHAM

Miss Kate is putting into practice the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that is why I consented to accompany her on this mission this afternoon. This mission of destiny.

ARMED WOMAN Because I believe that what we do in this life must benefit others.

*ARMED WOMAN hands each of the girls a packet. The girls hold them gingerly.*

MECHAM

Go ahead, girls, you may open them.

MARY I think I will open  
mine later.

*They all open their packets, which are filled with money.*

MECHAM

Miss Kate and I are giving each of you one hundred dollars. Yes, one hundred dollars. You are to use this money for your own independence and the achievement of your own aspirations. You are not to tell anyone that you have it. And it is not to be shared with anyone else. Is that clear?

ALL

Yes, Miss Mecham.

MECHAM

In addition, you are not to spend even one dollar of this money for ten years. Is that also clear?

ALL Yes, Miss  
Mecham.

ARMED WOMAN

Enjoy your lives, girls.

ALL Thank you, Miss  
Kate.

ARMED WOMAN You  
are welcome, girls.

MARY Yes, thank you,  
Miss Kate.

ARMED WOMAN

Just watch your back, Mary Margaret Murphy. You are very annoying.

MECHAM

And now, girls, Miss Kate and I must leave you. We have accepted the offer of Teddy Roosevelt to join the Nursing Corps of the Congress of Rough Riders of the World.

EFFIE But Miss Mecham, you don't believe in war.

MECHAM

I believe in adventure, travel and death by drowning. To stay on here beyond my welcome would be a death by drowning. Now if you'll excuse us. We meet up with our company in El Paso, Texas, from there to Cuba and after that on to the rest of the world.

MARY

But what will become of us, Miss Mecham, of the Harvey Houses up and down the line?

MECHAM

You will go on, Mary, as will the Harvey Houses up and down the line. They will go on forever, as long as they enjoy the services of dedicated girls like you. For you are a band of sisters. Civilizers of the west. And so you shall be known.

ARMED WOMAN Let's hear it for the Harvey Girls.

MECHAM For Harvey Girls up and down the line.

*A cheer goes up.*

MARY

*(Breaking into sobs.)* Please, Miss Mecham, may we sing together one more time? With you in charge, leading us as you always have and always will?

MECHAM

Thank you, Mary, but there will be no song tonight.

MARY

What about a colloquy? Just one more farewell colloquy. Speaking your wisdom from the heart.

MECHAM No, Mary. Miss Kate and I have a date. A date with destiny. Come Miss Kate!

*MECHAM and ARMED WOMAN seize hands.*

ARMED WOMAN

Come Miss Mecham!

*MECHAM and ARMED WOMAN exit.*

*MARY cries out in agony.*

EFFIE

And so that there's the way the day ended. That plain ole ordinary day, the day that changed everything. Later on that night, Whistle left us, and Raul with her.

BACHMANN Excuse me, where is Miss Whistle?

MARY She has disappeared, Mr. Bachmann. With Raul.

BACHMANN You see vhat happens when ve hire zah foreign people.

EFFIE But they were both good workers, Mr. Bachmann.

BACHMANN Ahh, but where are zhey now? No, zah foreign people, zhey cannot be trusted.

EFFIE

It broke poor Mr. Pillage's heart when Whistle disappeared. He still comes into the restaurant, every now and again, and sits at the same table where he met her.

EFFIE (cont.)

Very quiet, not a word. He'd just sits there, thinking about seeing her for the first time.

PILLAGE

“Welcome to the Harvey House, would you like to see a menu?” A menu...yes.  
(Smiling to himself. Pause.)

EFFIE

But the strangest thing of all, him and Glitterman actually hit pay dirt.

GLITTERMAN

The strike was located in the andaluvial basin, next to the primordial sea shore. Near the bog water of the ancient estuary. Where I knew it would be.

EFFIE

He's still talking in pure poetry. Which still impresses me, I gotta say. After their strike, him and Pillage built theirselves a big house on top of the mountain above the mine. And they live there quietly. Pillage still has strange bouts with horse dreams, as we call them. But Glitterman has a way of keeping him calm.

GLITTERMAN

You go nuts on me, Pillage, and I'm putting you back on that same damn train you got off of. Send you back to the swamp waters you come from.

EFFIE

And that seems to do it. He breathes funny for a little while, then he'll be all right again for several weeks. In the day that followed, Mr. Bachmann named Mary Head Waitress and Supervisor of the Women's Residence.

MARY

Now, girls, I intend to continue the practices and traditions of Miss Eudora Mecham, who inspired us all and who remains with us each and every hour of each and every day. Forever and ever, amen.

*EFFIE explodes in laughter.*

EFFIE As for the others, well, Stella became a Harvey Girl, just like she wanted.

STELLA

I got hired, all right. But then that Mary person took over. I just could not put up with her. (To MARY.) Listen here, you can't tell me what to do.

MARY I most certainly can tell you what to do. I can and I will.

STELLA

No, you can't and you won't! And so I took off my stiff apron and dropped it on the floor, wiped my feet on it and walked out the door. Then I hopped a train bound for California. Hadn't never been there before.

EFFIE

Miss Longtree never caught the cure. And after a few weeks she headed on back east to New York City.

LONGTREE

Eyes, look your last. Lungs, breathe your last.

I return unto the city of my birth.

There to sleep. To dream. Perchance to die. Shuffling off this mortal coil with a sigh.

EFFIE

Swamp, him and me, well, we're both eternal, I guess. He's still in here, twice, three times a day, selling stuff to dudes in suits and shiny shoes. So far as I'm concerned? Well, you might wanna know about Cleat. He come in off a train one day. Just like I'd been expecting him to do for three months or more. But he



didn't look nothing like hisself. Turns out he was married to some flat-faced foreigner, couldn't speak a word of English. Says he wanted to marry me, too. Have two of us for wives. I threw ice water at him and told him to get on out of town. I guess that's what he done. I ain't never seen him since. And that there's the story, what happened to all of us. All except for Godlee. He got a new vision, when the end of the world forgot to arrive.

GODLEE

The end of the world as we know it is coming to an end, brothers and sisters. The end of this place, the end of the Harvey Houses up and down the line, the end of the Santa Fe Railroad, the end of the west. This place will one day be empty, boarded up. Tumbleweeds and the sound of wind. Nothing else. That's what's coming. I can see it. I can see it all now. Do you believe me, sister? Do you believe?

EFFIE

Sure, we believe you, Godlee. But can't have no preaching in the Harvey House.

*GODLEE leaves.*

Oh, you ought to know what became of Miss Mecham and Miss Kate. They went off with Teddy Roosevelt and had some grand adventures. Miss Mecham won herself a distinguished medal, but Miss Kate got tempted back into a life of crime and after pulling a bank job in Cuba, set sail for South America, Bolivia, I think, and wasn't never heard from again. They say Miss Mecham mourns her still.

MECHAM Great love is possible only after great loss. That's what I used to tell my girls.

EFFIE

And that there's the story of a day, one of them days that starts out ordinary and ends up changing everything. You got any other questions about how things turned out, you can ask me when you see me. I'm here most days, thirteen hour shift at the Harvey House, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

SHUDDER Don't tell nobody  
you seen me.

**90.**

*Blackout.*

*END OF PLAY*

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