

DAVID PINSKY
Isaac Sheftel (1899)

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

ISAAC SHEFTEL, *a lace-maker.*

BAYLYE, *his wife.*

GISHINKE, } *their children.*
ELINKE, }

PINYE, *Isaac's feeble-minded father.*

NOTTE GOLDIN, *Isaac's employer.*

ORKE GOLDIN, *his son.*

OLD MICHEL, }
RED BERRÉ, } *Workingmen in Goldin's factory.*
FUNNY ZELIG, }
LEIVIK, }
SENDER, }
HILYE, }
YOSHKE, }

TEMME, } *Workingwomen in Goldin's factory.*
MALKE, }

TSIPPE, } *Women living with Isaac's family.*
DOBBE, }

HINDE, } *Dobbe's daughters.*
SOZYÉ, }

GELYE, *Tsippe's daughter.*

VICHNE, *A shopkeeper*

The action takes place in a large city of the Jewish pale, Russia, in the early nineties of the nineteenth century.

ACT I

ISAAC SHEFTEL'S cellar-home. Against the right-hand wall, two wooden beds, covered with rags. The sheets over the pillows are fairly black with dirt, and are stained here and there with yellow spots, the evidence of little children. In the center of the room a small four-legged table, without a table-cloth. Three chairs are placed about the table. The red paint, which once bedecked the table and the chairs, has faded to a dirty gray, with here and there a red spot visible. The chair to the left lacks a back. Against the left wall, in the foreground, stands a small chiffonier, on which are placed a small looking glass, three brass candlesticks, and a hat that was once black, but has become brown with age. Further back from the chiffonier, a chair, placed nearer to the center of the room. Nearby, the door to TSIPPE'S room. Next to the door, in the background, the large oven, with its opening facing the right wall. Between the oven and the left wall there is a bed of boards. Here is discovered PINYE. In the middle background is the door which leads to the outer rooms and to DOBBE'S room. When this opens there is visible the door to the street. Between the oven and the door to the outer rooms is a long, narrow kitchen bench. Under the bench a bucket. On the bench a few pots. Above

it, some shelves, which contain a copper pan, a kneading board, and more pots. Aside of the bench, next to the oven, stand fire-forks, a baker's shovel, a broom. To the right of the door, a yellow cupboard, somewhat brighter at the top, for the bottom is covered with dust and dirt. A small piece of glass in the upper door of the cupboard is the only remnant of the panes which were once part of it. The hole is now stuffed from the inside with a large piece of blue paper, whose color is somewhat faded. Over the bed nearest the cupboard hang some clothes, covered with a sheet that is gray with dirt and threadbare in many places. At the side of this bed stands a cradle.—In the cellar there reigns semi-darkness, as in all cellar rooms whose windows are situated below the sidewalk. The windows are dark with dirt. Only from the bright light that becomes greenish after it has filtered through the dirty window panes, can one recognize that outside the life-giving sun is shining. The walls, once white-washed, are black with soot, and discolored from mold and dampness. Here and there looks out a bright spot, like the sad eye of a one-eyed person, and makes the impression all the more melancholy by contrast. The ceiling is likewise black and sooty, and its plaster is crumbling. As to the floor, it is difficult to recognize what it is made of, whether of boards, stone, or Mother Earth itself. The dominant note is not so much one of poverty—which could be covered over—as of slovenliness, negligence, weary despair and hopeless debasement.

ISAAC SHEFTEL is seated at the table, whittling a piece of wood. He is a young man, of about thirty, of

spare build, hollow cheeks and blond beard. He presses his pale, thin lips tightly together, often biting the upper or lower one, including his short mustache as he does so. His eyes are sunk deep beneath thick, shaggy eyebrows. His gaze is thoughtful, keen, penetrating, and burns with an inner fire. He wears a coat that is torn in the sleeves and at the tails; it is buttoned only at the bottom, the other buttons being lacking. His shirt, visible because his coat is unbuttoned at the top, and through the holes in his sleeves, is unclean, and open, revealing a hairy, sunken chest. His gray trousers are patched at the knee with cloth of a much brighter color. The patches look for all the world like windows. At the bottom the trousers are worn and ragged. His shoes are a brownish yellow, with twisted heels and torn soles. His head, uncovered, is a mass of uncombed, thick, dark brown hair.—Upon the table before him is an assortment of wheels, smoothly whittled pieces of wood, a long, wide leg of a machine, through which has been thrust a long, round stick with holes on one side and a wheel on the other. Between the wheel and the stick, an axle, also perforated. There are on the table also a compass, a handsaw, a gimlet, bits of glass, thread, etc.

BAYLYE is seated upon the forward bed, holding in her arms ELINKE, a child of a year and a half, whom she is nursing. BAYLYE is about ISAAC'S age; thin, flat-chested, unclean, with rings of unwashed dirt about her eyes. Her cheap calico dress and coat are in tatters, and covered with patches. On her head a cloth of undiscoverable color. It lies crooked, and

from underneath falls over her forehead a shock of chestnut-colored hair. Her shoes have been unpolished for many days. The child at her breast is wearing a long shirt, much too large, which has been passed on to him by an older child.

PINYE is seated upon the board bed, and stares vacantly into the distance with an insane look. The blackish gray beard around his pallid face is thin; the hair of both his beard and his head is falling out. On his head, an old, greasy, torn hat. A cotton jacket, whose lining is almost all gone, covers his bare body. Over the jacket a worn out coat. When his coat opens, there are visible the thick fringes of the four-fringed scarf worn by all pious Jews, and a part of his drawers. Near the rear bed sits GISHINKE, a little girl of four, playing with her doll, which is made of a stick wound about by a rag. She is uncombed, and, like all the other cellar dwellers, unclean. She is little more than skin and bones, in tatters and barefoot. She is talking to her doll: "I'll dress you. . . . Don't cry. . . . I'll hit you, if you do! . . . Give you eat pretty soon. . . ."

Near the oven, DOBBE, a short, shriveled-up woman of fifty-five, her shaven head covered by a cloth wig. She is busy placing her pots in the oven.

It is about noon. The room is quiet, except for ISAAC'S heavy cutting with the knife, GISHINKE'S muttering to her doll, and the scraping of DOBBE'S pots inside the oven, as she moves them about with the fire-fork. From TSIPPE'S room, at intervals, comes the rhythmic noise of a stocking machine.

ISAAC stops whittling, inspects the piece of wood upon which he has been working, then the wheels that lie on the table before him. He frowns and bites his upper lip.

BAYLYE looks at him inquiringly.—For a time the stocking machine is silent.

PINYE [rises slowly, wraps his cloak about him, stops at TSIPPE'S door and fixes his gaze upon it. Then he walks over to the table, looks at ISAAC'S work, walks back, observes GISHINKE for a while, returns to the oven and stands motionless, his gaze lowered to his bed of boards. Gradually he raises his eyes, stares into the distance, and in a sepulchral voice, slowly turning about, he commences to draw]. All heaven is dead. Earth is dead. God-d is d-dead. E-everything— [Stops suddenly and lowers his head.]

DOBBE [puts the fire-fork back in its place, closes the oven and grumbles]. It refuses to bake. A fine fire they must have made!

BAYLYE [with an indignant motion of her head]. It's never hot enough for her!

DOBBE [as she goes out]. And nobody can get dinner ready here until supper-time!

BAYLYE [casting an angry look at DOBBE as she leaves, spits out scornfully]. The old witch!

PINYE [turning about]. D-dead! D-dead! D-dead! E-everything. D-dead! Ev—

BAYLYE [angrily]. Stop your turning, will you! My head and my heart and all my insides are turning enough as it is.

PINYE [stops short with a gaping mouth, his back to BAYLYE. He turns his head to the left, in BAYLYE'S di-

rection, and listens to her words. When she has finished, he turns his head back, lowers his gaze to the floor, and goes slowly to his place near the oven. He sits down as before].

SILENCE

ISAAC [deeply absorbed in his work, to himself]. Right here is where I strike my difficulty. . . . Now, if I could manage to put, right here. . . .

BAYLYE [venomously]. How many times have I got to listen to that! "Right here . . . right here. . . ." And there's no end to it in sight!

ISAAC [wrinkles his forehead, his right hand at his work, his left fist clenched against his brow, as if in deep thought].

BAYLYE. A fine thing! Takes a vacation for himself and doesn't go to work in the factory already the third day! Wants to invent machines! Such big profits we get from his inventions! Makes Goldin rich, that's all!

ISAAC [eyes BAYLYE from under his left hand, as if he would like to know what on earth she is talking about].

BAYLYE. A fine matter! Three days' loafing! And God knows if he's through yet!

ISAAC. If you'll keep gabbing like that all the time, I'll certainly never get through.

BAYLYE. I know. I'm only a nuisance. I . . .

ISAAC [hastily resumes work].

BAYLYE [casts a look of intense hatred at him, then turns her head to the wall. ELINKE stops sucking at his mother's breast. BAYLYE covers her bosom and lowers the infant to her lap].

PINYE [as soon as it is quiet, he begins to drawl again]. D-dead! D-dead! Empty. . . . No more. . . .

BAYLYE. Sit there and shut up, I tell you! Not a word!

PINYE [stops short, mouth agape, slowly closing it].

SILENCE

ISAAC [works with nervous haste].

BAYLYE [watching him, bitterly, from the corner of her eye].

GISHINKE [from her place near the cupboard]. Ma! What's here in the saucer? I want to eat it.

BAYLYE [angrily, and in fright]. Put that saucer right back where you found it! How many times have I told you not to touch that saucer under the closet! It has rat-poison in it!

GISHINKE. Rat-poison, is it? I want a little. Just a wee little piece.

BAYLYE [jumps to her feet, holding ELINKE in her left arm, and runs over to GISHINKE]. Put that saucer right back, I tell you! [Tears a piece of the poison out of GISHINKE'S hand, throws it back into the plate, thrusts the saucer under the closet with her foot, and spanks GISHINKE over the hands.]

GISHINKE. Ow! Ow!

BAYLYE [pushing her away from the closet]. That's poison. People die from it. I'll kill you if you ever touch that saucer again. Sit down on the bed and be quiet or else go out into the street. [Goes back to her place.] She noses about everywhere. She'll poison herself before you know it.

TSIPPE [enters from the door which leads outside. She is a woman of some fifty years. She carries two baskets, filled with apples and pears. She passes to her room. She wears a smooth wig, which lies crooked upon

her head; a calico dress and jacket, with a belt from which hangs a leather pocket].

GISHINKE [busy with her doll]. I'll go into the street.

BAYLYE. To the devil, for all I care. [GISHINKE takes her doll and goes out.] Don't run around too much, or get into a scrap, or I'll whip the skin off your back! [Her gaze turns from GISHINKE to the cupboard, she kneels down to the floor and shoves the saucer further under the closet.] It's I who ought to swallow the poison. And put an end to my wretched existence. [She sits down again in her place.]

TSIPPE [enters from her room. She has put away her baskets, but the leather pocket still hangs from her belt; she goes to the oven, takes out a pot, looks into it and adds a little water]. Hm! It's still raw! There you are! [Puts the pot back into the oven and returns to her room.]

BAYLYE. There's another hot-head for you! [She puts ELINKE into bed and goes to the oven. The child begins to cry.] Have a look here, will you, Isaac? Just have a look! That old hag went out and changed the pots all around until ours is 'way in the corner and hers is right over the hottest part. Just take a look, will you, Isaac? She'll drop dead before I'll let her get away with that! [Busies herself with the oven.]

ISAAC [pondering over his work]. It's bad. Nothing will come of it all.

BAYLYE [putting back the fire-fork]. Now! Her dinner can get ready with her pot over there, too. [Returns to her place with an air of satisfaction and takes the infant into her arms again. With a voice full of hatred.] And you, bawling all the time! I can't put him off my arms for a minute. [Sits down and seats the

child in her lap, angrily. The child falls asleep at once.]

ISAAC [leaves his work to pace about the room. He bites his lips, pressing them against his teeth with the index finger of his right hand. His left hand he passes across his forehead and through his hair].

BAYLYE [watches him, ironically]. "Right here . . . right here." Ha-ha! — It'll be a matter of ten months, like with your press. Hm. . . . That's if anything at all comes out of all this fussing. . . . "Right here . . . right here. . . ." A fine state of things. Goes and gives himself a vacation!

ISAAC [suddenly stopping]. Perhaps you'll stop talking some time? [Continues pacing about.]

BAYLYE. You'll stuff my mouth, I suppose, so that I can't even say a word, eh? Well, then — go ahead. Stuff it! Here it is, stuff it! [Mocking him.] "Perhaps you'll stop talking some time!" I'm a fool that I should merely talk! I ought to take all these contraptions of yours and smash them to splinters. That would spare me all my talk, once and for all!

ISAAC [grits his teeth, furrows his forehead and continues his nervous walking to and fro].

BAYLYE. Why, anybody I'd tell this to would call me crazy to put up with it! Did you ever see? Takes a holiday for himself and stays out from work for three days! If there were only some chance of making a profit from it all, it wouldn't be so bad. Not on your life, though! He worked on that press of his for ten months, night after night — and what did he get out of it? A measly twenty roubles, and made Goldin rich! And what did you get from that braiding-machine? Wasted gallons of kerosene — that's all.

ISAAC [goes over to the table, takes hold of the wheel and leans his knee against the chair].

BAYLYE [somewhat more calmly]. If you see that you can't make it work, throw it to the devil, and an end to the story. And you go back to work. Not kill three days —

ISAAC [begins to pace about as before].

SILENCE

NOTTE GOLDIN [enters from the street. He is past middle age, wears ear-locks, a wide beard, and thick, closely-cropped mustache. On his head a velvet hat. His trousers, boots and dark jacket are stained with greasy spots. The jacket is buttoned at the top and over it is a long, unbuttoned black coat, with long, wide pockets; a white wing collar. On his collar is the black ribbon from which hangs his watch. The watch is also attached to a heavy, silver chain, which is visible through the open coat. He keeps his hands in his pockets most of the time and as he speaks, calmly or excitedly, he drags and pulls and thrusts his coat-tails about. His face bears an excited expression, his speech is angry, and only rarely does he look straight into the face of the person he is addressing].

ISAAC [when he notices GOLDIN he shudders nervously].

BAYLYE [looks triumphantly at ISAAC as if to say, "I told you so!"]

GOLDIN. Well, well. You're having a nice promise, I see.

BAYLYE [ironically]. That's his way of thinking out his deep problems.

GOLDIN [to ISAAC]. And you've been thinking in this manner for the past three days?

BAYLYE. There on the table you can see the result of all his marvelous brainwork. [She picks up the wheels and the sticks and drops them one by one back upon the table.]

GOLDIN [goes over to the table and surveys the work].

ISAAC [walks over to the table, looks at GOLDIN's hand with the same absorbed thought as before, but with an expression of vexation at GOLDIN's interference].

GOLDIN. And what do you call this?

ISAAC. A machine.

GOLDIN. A machine! Indeed! I can see for myself that it isn't a kneading board. What kind of machine?

BAYLYE. May he know as much about his brains, as he himself can tell of the machine. He stands there, pattering and pattering about and . . .

GOLDIN. Surely you must know what you're making. What sort of a contrivance is it? A tassel-machine?

ISAAC. So you know, then.

GOLDIN. Does it cost you money to talk?

ISAAC [takes the work out of GOLDIN's hands and begins to put certain things together].

GOLDIN [looks on inquiringly].

BAYLYE. That's just how he's been sitting there the whole three days, and it's all you can do to get a word out of him. Early Sunday morning he jumped out of bed; a precious idea had come to him! He didn't wash himself, and even forgot to say his prayers. He went straight to work. He's just as crazy as his old father. When he takes a notion into his head . . .

GOLDIN. But . . . he always used to carry on his experiments at night — how did it enter his head to do it by day, and not to come to work?

BAYLYE. May I know as much of his life, as I know of that! Day and night alike for the past three days,

he sits there, poking away, whittling and contriving, contriving and whittling. You can't tear him away from the spot. There'd be half an excuse if he only had any profit from it all. But we know already the great fortunes he made on his first two inventions.

GOLDIN. Well, I didn't ask him to make them. It's better for me if he's at his bench, working. I'm piled up with orders now, and here his bench must be empty. He doesn't want to work? All right then, settled. So I know, and I get a man in his place. And that reminds me. I came here expressly to tell you that unless you come back to work this very forenoon, I'll give your job to another fellow. I can't lose any time waiting. My customers don't wait for me either.

BAYLYE. There! I knew his machines would bring us to this!

GOLDIN [*surveys the work in ISAAC's hand*]. Well, what'll it be? Really a machine for tassels? [*With impudent curiosity he takes the work from ISAAC's hand.*] Let's see what you're making, anyway.

ISAAC [*with repressed agony*]. You can't understand anything about it. You'll see when it's all finished.

GOLDIN. Then you really expect to finish it sometime?

BAYLYE. Sure. . . . When the Messiah comes. It'll be a long drawn out affair like the press . . .

GOLDIN. Well, you've heard what I said. For my part, let it take as long as two presses. It's no worry of mine.

BAYLYE. I know it's not your worry. Why should it be? The machine will sooner or later belong to you, anyway.

GOLDIN [*turns toward PINYE, hears BAYLYE's words, and makes a gesture as if to answer her; then he puts*

his right hand in his pocket, smacks his lips, and rolls his eyes, as if to say, "Bah! What's the use of talking to a woman?" Then he asks]: Well, how are things with you, PinYE?

PINYE [*looks at GOLDIN, and commences to speak slowly*]. All heaven is dead. Earth is dead. God is dead . . .

GOLDIN. Hush! Hush! Pah! What kind of words are these?

BAYLYE. For us, God really has died.

GOLDIN [*excited*]. Wha—Wha—What kind of words are these? How can a person talk that way?

BAYLYE. What of it? It makes no difference.

GOLDIN. Tfu! Upon my word! How-how-how . . . Oh, well! You see. . . . That's why God punishes you. . . .

BAYLYE [*wipes her eyes with the corner of her jacket*]. This way or that way, it's all one. Our life is done for, anyway.

GOLDIN [*shaking his head and shrugging his shoulders*]. Well! [*Goes to the door.*] I warn you once more, I'll not wait much longer. If you don't come back to your work this forenoon, I'll put another man in your place. . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . Well! [*Kisses the mazuzah * and goes out.*]

SILENCE

BAYLYE. That's what it'll come to. He'll give your job to another man and we'll be left without a piece of bread.

* A little tin-box containing selections from the Scriptures written upon a piece of parchment. It is nailed on the door-post in the houses of all orthodox Jews.

ISAAC. That's it! Keep on complaining! He won't give my place to anybody else.

BAYLYE [*sarcastically*]. Of course he won't! He can't run the factory without you! He needs you badly! How can he possibly do without you?

ISAAC [*raising his gaze to her, suffering, but firm*]. All right then. So he will put another fellow in my place. And now stop plaguing me. I'll soon be through. Be quiet for a moment, at least.

BAYLYE [*wiping her eyes and talking to herself*]. A man goes and withdraws himself from the rest of the world and it doesn't bother him a hair's worth.

SILENCE

PINYE [*begins to walk slowly about the room, stopping a few times. He looks now at the floor, now into the distance, now about him, and then walks on. At length he comes to a stop near the chiffonier, looks it over for a while and turns his back to the oven. He directs his gaze again to the floor and draws*]. Dead. Heaven. Earth. The whole world—

BAYLYE [*weeping to herself*]. If it were only true—and an end to our misery.

PINYE [*continuing*]. And God.

BAYLYE [*makes a gesture of despair*].

PINYE. Everything is dead.

BAYLYE. It's worse with me than with a dead person.

PINYE. Everything. Dead.

BAYLYE. Nobody must bear in hell what I endure here.

PINYE. Dead. Dead.

BAYLYE. If only the Almighty would take me to Him, then I'd really know that there is a God on earth.

PINYE. Dead. E-e-everything.

BAYLYE. Then I should feel as if I were delivered. . . .

ISAAC [*pale, agitated, breathing hard, groaning*]. Oh! Be quiet for a moment at least. Be quiet! [*Places both hands despairingly upon the edge of the table; his eyes express the deepest agony—soon he presses his forehead with both hands, leaning with his elbows on the table.*]

PINYE [*raises his head, cocks his left ear in ISAAC's direction and listens to his outcries with curiosity. Then he lowers his head as if pondering over something, and returns slowly to his place.*]

SILENCE

BAYLYE [*dries her eyes*].

[*From the next room comes the groaning and moaning of the stocking-machine.*]

VICHNE [*enters. She is a woman of about fifty, in a bright calico jacket, from under which is visible another one of darker color. She wears a wide apron, and is covered with stains from flour, kerosene and oil. On her head, a smooth black wig from beneath which here and there falls some of her own hair, already gray. Over her large mouth plays a sweet smile, and her eyes dart about in every direction. She holds her left hand in a leather pocket which hangs under her apron, and she shakes her coins*]. Good morning to you!

BAYLYE [*gloomily*]. Good year to you, Vichnetchka.

VICHNE. I was in to see Dobbe. So I said to myself, "Well, as long as I'm already here, I must step in to have a look at Baylye." What's the news?

BAYLYE. News. Ah!

VICHNE [*sits down on the chair to the left of the table*]. And how goes it with his work?

women all have a practical bent
sexual innuendos

BAYLYE. May I know as little about him as I know about that.

VICHNE [*taking one of ISAAC's hands down from his forehead*]. I say, Mr. Sheftel, won't you even look at me? Don't you look upon women?

ISAAC [*makes an unsuccessful attempt to smile. He tries to free his hand*].

VICHNE [*looks at him closely and releases his hand*].

ISAAC [*arises and paces about the room*].

VICHNE [*changes seats, taking the one ISAAC has just left. Then in a subdued voice to BAYLYE*]. Why is he so downcast?

BAYLYE. Yes, why is he? The lunatic!

VICHNE. To tell the truth, he does seem a bit deranged.

BAYLYE. He's plain crazy, just like his father. When he takes anything into his head he gets so wild over it, so bewildered, that he doesn't know whether he's in this world or the next. When he's in such a state neither fire nor earthquake can make any impression on him.

VICHNE [*observing ISAAC as he paces about*]. You'll wear out your shoes, Isaac.

BAYLYE. A lot he cares.

ISAAC [*engrossed in thought*]. The shoes aren't worth anything anyway.

VICHNE. Even if you're thinking out a new invention, you've got to be a man just the same. [*To BAYLYE*.] Banker Maggidson's son is an inventor, too. He's an engineer—studied at Moscow, and all his professors said that he was simply a wonder!—Ah! He's got a terribly smart head on his shoulders. And the machines that he invents, they say, are . . . why, enough to drive a person mad. And he's strong and stout—and I only

wish all my good friends had such red cheeks. I tell you—all milk and blood! And his inventions are a little better than Isaac's, I'll wager! He gets tens of thousands of roubles for them. . . .

BAYLYE. Where's the wonder, where? The fellow had a college education.

VICHNE. No, I mention all this to show that some people can think up machines without getting bewildered and upset, and can be persons just like any other.

BAYLYE [*sarcastically*]. You hit upon the right one to talk to. [*Nodding toward ISAAC*]. Do you call him a man, too?

VICHNE [*surveying the work on the table*]. Is there at least a good piece of money in it for him?

BAYLYE. A good piece, indeed! A fine piece of money he'll get! He'll carry it to Goldin, and take whatever he's offered.

VICHNE [*to ISAAC*]. If that's the case, Isaac, begging your pardon, you're really not much of a man at that.

ISAAC [*paces about without saying a word*].

VICHNE [*to BAYLYE*]. Not much of a man at all. How can a person be like that? If Goldin offers a low price, let him take his machine to Bashkevitz or Levine.

BAYLYE. There! That's exactly what we've all been telling him. "Take it in to Bashkevitz or Levine," we urged. "Why must you give it to Goldin?" But he—no use. He must have his machines near him. He works in Goldin's place, so his machines must be there, too. He can't part with them.

ISAAC [*stops. Places his right hand on his forehead. Then he hurries over to the table, shoves all the wheels and sticks to the left, sits down and resumes work.*—

VICHNE and BAYLYE follow him with their eyes].

VICHNE. That's the way. Brace up. Be a man. Sit down to your work, finish it, and see to it that you get a proper price for it. What do you care where the machine goes? The money'll come in handy, you may be sure. Then you can pay me the bill that you owe.—Do you know that it amounts to six roubles already?

BAYLYE [*frightened*]. Six roubles?

VICHNE. Yes, yes. Six roubles. What did you think? A week ago Monday, do you remember, it was four roubles and seventeen kopecks. Do you remember?

BAYLYE. And already six roubles, now!

VICHNE. What do you think? And I wanted to say, too, that it's time I saw a couple of roubles. And pretty soon, too. Because it'll soon be seven roubles and eight. . . . Vichne is a good woman, of course, but even Vichne will soon lose patience. I haven't yet robbed a bank. [*To ISAAC*]. Now if I were an inventor of machines, I might invent a money-machine, but as it is . . .

BAYLYE [*observes ISAAC, who is working away intently, apparently oblivious to the conversation*]. You see for yourself. There he sits, and doesn't even know we're here talking.

VICHNE. He hears, you may be sure. [*Slaps ISAAC on the shoulder*]. That's the idea. Work away, make a first-class machine, get a pile of money for it and settle your account with me. [*Arising*]. Well, I'll have to be going now. I've been away from the store for quite a while. I step in for a few moments here, another little while there, and that's how the time flies. Well, a good day to you!

BAYLYE. A good year to you, Vichnetshka!

VICHNE [*shaking ISAAC*]. A good day to you, Isaac.

Answer a lady, can't you, when she bids you good day!

ISAAC. A good day to you, Vichne, a good day.

VICHNE. Well, good day. [*Exit*].

SILENCE

BAYLYE [*drying her eyes*]. Six roubles already.—She'll soon stop giving us on trust. It's mighty kind of her that she's let the bill run up as high as it is.— [*Ready to weep*]. And now you may lose your job, too. [*Bursts into tears*].

SILENCE

ISAAC [*works away nervously*].

BAYLYE [*gradually calms down*].

GISHINKE [*comes running in from the street*]. Ma! I want to eat. [*BAYLYE dries her eyes. GISHINKE pulls her by the skirt*]. I want to eat. Give me something to eat.

BAYLYE [*thrusting her away*]. Away from me!

GISHINKE [*frightened*]. I want to eat.

BAYLYE. All right. Under the closet there's the saucer of poison. Take it, eat it, and let me be rid of you once and for all.

GISHINKE. I don't want poison. I want to eat. Poison is for rats. Give me something. I want a piece of bread. [*Pulls BAYLYE's skirt again*].

BAYLYE. Away from me, do you hear! [*Thrusts her away. GISHINKE falls, and bursts into loud crying*].

ISAAC [*ceases working. He is pale, agitated, and casts an angry look at BAYLYE. He arises, goes to the cupboard, takes out bread, cuts off a slice and gives it to GISHINKE*]. Here, Gishinke, and don't you cry. We'll soon have dinner. Get up, like a good little girl, and

don't you cry. [*He lifts her up and goes back to his place. For a time he buries his face in both his hands. Then he resumes his work.*]

GISHINKE [*in one hand the slice of bread, her other hand on her head, goes over to ISAAC, leans against his knee, and between her sobs eats the bread.*]

BAYLYE [*dries her eyes, her head turned to the wall.*]. She'll cry worse than that yet, when there'll be nothing at all left to eat. Oh, what a life, what a life! [*Breaks out into lamentation.*]

ISAAC [*at first he applies himself nervously to his work, then he drops it with a loud bang, leaning back against the chair, looking vacantly before him into the distance, tired, exhausted, his hands thrust into his trousers pockets.*]

BAYLYE [*restrains her weeping and dries her eyes.*]

GISHINKE [*has ceased crying, and is now quietly eating her bread.*].

SILENCE

GISHINKE. Shall we soon have dinner? [*ISAAC is silent.*] Pa, shall we soon have dinner?

ISAAC [*straightens up*]. Yes, Gishinke, yes. [*Begins to work once more.*]

SILENCE

GISHINKE. Pa, are you making a machine? — Are you making a good machine? — Will the wheels turn? — Will you show it to me? [*Takes hold of the long stick with the holes in it.*] What's this, pa?

ISAAC. Let it stay there. Don't touch anything.

GISHINKE. Is this a machine, too? [*Eats her bread.*]

SILENCE

GISHINKE. And shall we soon have dinner?

ISAAC. Yes, Gishinke, yes. And do keep still.

BAYLYE [*angrily*]. Go away from him! What are you bothering him for?

GISHINKE [*stands for a moment sullenly, and then goes away from ISAAC. She picks up her rag-doll, sits down on the floor near her father, and talks to her doll.*]. We'll soon have dinner. . . . I'll give you some, too. . . . But you must be quiet. . . . [*Soon she arises and goes out.*]

SILENCE

TSIPPE [*appears at her door, stops, and speaks to some one in her room*]. It must be ready by now. I can't wait any longer. [*Goes to the oven, opens it, and is about to thrust in a fire-fork.*] What's this! Who's been here now? [*Casts a venomous glance in BAYLYE's direction.*] What do you say to that! I tell you, it's — [*Busying herself about the oven.*] May the hands of the one who did this be paralyzed, Lord of the Universe! That's a gall that it would be hard to meet anywhere! To go and purposely shove my pot 'way out in front. How am I going to have it ready? I've got to be going right away and here the meat hasn't even begun to cook. [*Puts down the fire-fork.*] I'd just like to know whose work that was!

BAYLYE [*with heat*]. And what do you mean by shoving all the pots aside and putting yours right in the hottest part of the oven? Do you think that the next person's meat mustn't be cooked just as well as your own? Aren't we supposed to have dinner, too?

TSIPPE [*with piercing irony, shaking her head*]. Ah, Baylinke, Baylinke! One must have the heart of a robber. . . .

GELYE [*appears at TSIPPE's door. She is a young lady of some twenty-five years, in an unbuttoned white blouse. An unfinished stocking in her hand*]. What's up? More trouble?

TSIPPE. Do you imagine the dinner's ready yet? Not a bit of it! It hasn't even started to cook. And where do you think our pot was standing all this time? Just come here, and take a look. I open up the oven — and there I find my pot 'way in front. . . .

BAYLYE [*arises and places ELINKE in the cradle. ELINKE commences to cry; BAYLYE rocks him*]. And that's where I'll always put it. Other people are persons, too, and they need to eat as well as you.

DOBBE [*enters*]. What kind of a pot fight do you call this?

TSIPPE. Why, just listen. Here I must be going right away, — and I come to the oven, you understand, and I see my pot standing —

BAYLYE [*runs over to DOBBE*]. She goes and shoves all the other pots aside, and puts her own in the best place. . . . [*Runs back to the cradle and continues to rock.*]

DOBBE [*goes to the oven and opens it*]. Look at this, will you! My pot's right near the oven-door! I suppose mine doesn't need to cook at all!

BAYLYE [*pointing to TSIPPE*]. Ask her. She was just now at the oven.

TSIPPE [*with heat*]. I didn't touch your pot. May I live so . . .

BAYLYE [*leaving the cradle. To DOBBE*]. You should have seen. She shoved all the pots aside. . . . [*Goes back to the cradle.*]

GELYE. And suppose she did put her pot right over the burning coals? What then? She must go away,

and you're always at home. You don't have to bring Isaac dinner to-day. [*Ironically.*] He's at home too busy with his machines.

BAYLYE [*returning excitedly near to the cradle, pushing back her hair, and tying her head covering better about her neck*]. Other people are persons too. They need to eat as well as you! [*To GELYE.*] And his machines are none of your business, I'll have you understand.

DOBBE [*busy with her pot*]. All I know is that my pot hasn't even begun to cook.

GELYE [*sarcastically*]. Just see how indignant she became because somebody said a word about her husband's machines.

BAYLYE. You've got no business talking about my husband's machines.

GELYE. Really! Well! Well! [*From the rear door there enter HINDE and SOZYE with sewing in their hands. HINDE is a girl of twenty-one, Sozye is seventeen. HINDE is attractively combed. Her black waist, with white polka-dots, and her skirt, are already quite worn out, but they become her very well. The high collar of her waist is tight about her neck and is buttoned over her left shoulder. Sozye imitates her elder sister in everything, and is a trifle "fresh."*]

HINDE. Hush! What kind of a wedding do you call this?

BAYLYE [*still busy with her hair*]. She, too, has to talk about his machines!

DOBBE [*to her daughters*]. Any one would think we don't pay rent here. We aren't allowed to put our pots into the oven.

BAYLYE [*pointing to TSIPPE*]. It's all her doings. All hers. She shoved all the pots aside and . . .

TSIPPE. May your hands wither . . .

ORKE GOLDIN [appears at the rear door. A young man of twenty-five or twenty-six. Dressed like a dandy, beard shaven, curled mustache. He wears a large overcoat, bright colored shoes, his yellow derby on a slant, a stiff collar, with a loud tie in which sticks a diamond pin. Rings on the fingers of both hands. He carries a heavy cane, with a staghorn top. He stops on the threshold and calls out]. Ah! Ah! What kind of a fair do you call this? [The cries of the women subside. GELYE disappears into her room, TSIPPE takes out her pot and follows GELYE. DOBBE pushes her daughters toward the door, but they pretend to be occupied with their needlework, and remain in the room. BAYLYE takes from the cradle ELINKE, who has by this time reached his highest notes; she places him on her left arm and spansks him, then takes him in her hands and rocks him there, as she goes about the room.]

ORKE [stepping into the room. Merrily]. Why! You're having a jolly time here!

BAYLYE. May my enemies enjoy such jolly times! When God wants to punish a person, He certainly gives good measure. . . . As if bad neighbors weren't enough, here comes . . .

ORKE [who has meanwhile gone over to ISAAC]. And he sits and works away, and it doesn't bother him a bit. Well, my genius! How's your invention getting along?

ISAAC [with an effort]. I don't know yet.

BAYLYE. The devil alone knows. And a lot more he knows, besides!

SOZYE. If he didn't know, he wouldn't be working at it, would he?

BAYLYE. The lunatic!

ORKE [bends over the table]. Let a fellow see what you're making, there, won't you? Is that for tassels? [Picks up a wheel.] Where does this belong? [Picks up another part and attaches it to the wheel.] Does this go here? Well, Mr. Sphinx, say something. [HINDE laughs and SOZYE follows suit.] Are you reciting the Eighteen Benedictions now, that you have to stand so silent? [HINDE and SOZYE laugh louder.]

BAYLYE. Other people may talk and laugh as loudly as they please, and he doesn't object a bit. But just let me say a word, and he'll attack me like a mad dog.

ORKE [takes a round piece of wood and squeezes it into a hole somewhere in the machine, which ISAAC is holding in his hand].

ISAAC [takes it out of ORKE's hand, lays it down on the table and continues his work].

ORKE [keeps nosing about ISAAC's work].

BAYLYE. Nobody's ever in his way, except me.

DOBBE [at the door, to her daughters]. What are you standing there for? Haven't you a room of your own? Go into your own room and stay there.

HINDE. All right. All right. [Turns to BAYLYE and shows her what she's working on.] See the nice shirt I'm making. . . .

DOBBE [disappears, grumbling]. They won't budge. . . .

ORKE [to ISAAC]. No, no. Wait. . . . Put this over there. . . . No, you're making a bad job of it. Ah! I tell you, put this over there. . . . Never mind, take my advice. I tell you. . . . [Holds ISAAC with his left hand, and with his right hand takes the machine.]

ISAAC [with restrained anger and intense suffering]. Let me alone, won't you? You don't know what I want.

ORKE. You don't know yourself what you want. I know just what to do here.

ISAAC. Orke, please go away from me.

ORKE [hitting ISAAC's head derisively]. You're a dunce. You've got a wooden head. [To the girls.] As true as I am a Jew, I understand the contrivance better than he does. If he'd only let me, I'd finish the thing for him in a jiffy.

HINDE [coquettishly]. You merely think so.

ORKE [impudently]. Do you want me to show you an even better trick?

HINDE. Let's see.

ORKE. Too many people around.

HINDE and SOZYE [blush. Their faces express embarrassment and indignation. HINDE turns to BAYLYE as if to say something to her].

ORKE [looks triumphantly at the girls, with an air of intense self-satisfaction. He notices PINYE, and turns to him, jocosely]. Well, Reb PinYE, what is it that's dead?

PINYE [raises his eyes to ORKE and lowers them immediately. He answers quickly]. All Heaven's dead.

ORKE. And who else?

PINYE. The Earth is dead. God is dead. . . .

ORKE. And were you to His funeral?

PINYE. I was.

HINDE and SOZYE [laugh].

ORKE. Where did they bury Him?

PINYE. In the dead heaven.

ORKE. And they covered Him with earth?

BAYLYE [to ORKE]. Your father ought to be hearing this.

ORKE. My father would be the first one to put a contribution into the charity-box if God died.

BAYLYE. Indeed! [To the girls.] And what are you two giggling about? Is this proper talk to listen to? They even laugh at it!

HINDE [laughs]. I can't help laughing at the old man's answers.

BAYLYE [angrily]. And what is there to laugh at in a lunatic's talk?

DOBBE [enters in a huff]. They've planted themselves here and they refuse to budge. [Goes to the oven.]

BAYLYE. This young sport's trying to be smart, and they laugh at whatever he says.

DOBBE [to her daughter, threateningly]. What are you standing here for? I'll take the fire-fork and . . .

HINDE [sharply]. If you want to do something in the oven, why do it.

ORKE. Your mother beats you with the fire-fork, eh?

DOBBE [taking her pot out from the oven]. Come in, now, and eat. [At the door.] I'll pour your soup right away.

HINDE and SOZYE [follow her with evident unwillingness].

ORKE [calling after them]. Good appetite!

HINDE and SOZYE [at the door. Laughing]. Thank you. [They disappear.]

ORKE [noses about ISAAC's work again]. Well, how long is it going to take you to finish all this?

ISAAC [shrugging his shoulders].

ORKE. What are you shrugging your shoulders about? Eh? My father sent me to warn you, for the last time, that he'll put another man in your place. He's not fooling. He means what he says.

ISAAC [shrugs his shoulders as before].

BAYLYE. Shrugs his shoulders!

ORKE. There's nothing to shrug your shoulders about!

You come back to work to-day or to-morrow. Nobody needs your machines, I'll have you understand. And if they will need them, they'll be invented without your assistance. Better come back to work. [To BAYLYE.] See to it that he returns to work. We'll certainly put a man in his place.

BAYLYE. I've been after him for the past three days.

ORKE [arises, about to go. Ironically]. If he must tinker around with the "machine," let him work at it by night. Let him stay up all night for all I care.

TSIPPE [appears at her door with both baskets. To GELYE, within]. Then go, right away.

GELYE [appears at the door. She is turned away from the audience and is buttoning her waist. She casts a glance at ORKE]. All right. All right. Can't you see I'm dressing?

TSIPPE [goes about the room, grumbling]. Bah! What a meal that was! Everything raw!

ORKE [sits down again. To GELYE]. What did you run away for, Miss?

GELYE. I wanted to run away, so I did.

ORKE. I don't bite young ladies.

GELYE. I'm not afraid of being bitten. I've got teeth of my own. [Disappears into her room.]

ORKE [nudges ISAAC with his elbow]. Say, boy! You've got some sweet neighbors here! I'll have to be a more frequent visitor to your home.

BAYLYE. In that case they'll never want to leave our room.

ORKE [curling his mustache]. Am I really a good-looking chap?

BAYLYE. Much difference it makes to them. . . . A goose, a duck,—as long as it's a fowl. . . .

ORKE [to ISAAC]. Your wife isn't much at giving compliments.

BAYLYE [cuttingly]. I like to tell the truth.

GELYE [enters from her room. She wears a yellow hat, a blue skirt and a bright tippet. Under her arm a small bundle. She walks to rear door].

ORKE [arises]. Well, remember that you must return to work. If you're not there by to-morrow morning, you may be sure your job will go to another fellow, and you needn't trouble to come again. [Hurries after GELYE.]

BAYLYE [stands motionless at the rear door, much surprised that both GELYE and ORKE are about to leave together].

ORKE [opens the door to the street, invites GELYE]. If you please; ladies first. [HINDE and SOZYE appear at their door. ORKE lifts his hat and bows.] Good day!

HINDE and SOZYE [laugh]. Good day, gracious sir! [GELYE and ORKE leave.]

BAYLYE [turns away from the door in anger and disgust. She spits out and swallows a curse. HINDE and SOZYE step into the room. BAYLYE does not deign to look upon them].

HINDE. Is that old Goldin's son?

BAYLYE [does not even reply nor look at HINDE].

HINDE. Such a dude! Not a bit like his father!

BAYLYE. Fine men, both of them! Damn them!

HINDE. Beard shaved off, curly mustache. . . . [Makes a gesture over her upper lip as if she were curling mustache.] His derby cocked to one side. [Makes a gesture as if placing her hat to one side.]

SOZYE. A regular swell!

HINDE. Rings on his fingers. Did you see all the rings he wears?

BAYLYE [angry and impatient]. I've got other worries on my head besides counting the rings he wears.

HINDE [as if BAYLYE had not addressed her]. And the dainty pair of shoes. . . .

BAYLYE [with an outcry]. And that's all you've got to worry about, is it?

DOBBE [at her door, to her daughters]. What's that? Here again? Haven't you anything to do?

BAYLYE. They've started to talk about how Goldin's darling son was dressed. They've got nothing else to worry about.

DOBBE [thrusting her daughters out]. Out. Off to your work. Or else I'll take a fire-fork and . . .

BAYLYE. As soon as they see a pair of pants they go wild. [Turns about and looks angrily at ISAAC.]

SILENCE

ISAAC [looks despairingly at the machine in his hands. Sighs]. It doesn't work, no matter what I do.

BAYLYE [stops suddenly between the table and the bed, and exclaims explosively]. What do you say now? He won't put another man in your place, eh?

ISAAC [in despair. Looks at his work with lifeless eyes].

BAYLYE [more sharply]. I tell you, Isaac, my patience has its limits. . . .

ISAAC [more despairingly than ever]. It simply won't work, no matter what I do.

BAYLYE [more heatedly]. I tell you, I'll take your whole contraption and smash it to splinters. I'll dump it into the fire. . . . I'll . . .

ISAAC [bitterly]. H'm. [Shakes his head despairingly.]

BAYLYE. I'll show you that I've got a little say in the matter, too. I won't let you do whatever you please and leave us to starve of hunger. [Her voice rises to a high pitch.] Do you hear what I'm saying to you or not? I tell you, I'll . . .

ISAAC [pale, trembling all over, his teeth clenched, he dashes all his work to the floor. He sinks down into the chair leaning heavily against its back, stretches out his feet, thrusts his hands into his pockets, and stares blankly at the edge of the table].

BAYLYE [her words freeze on her lips. She looks at ISAAC in fright].

PINYE [looks for a moment at the wheels and sticks that have rolled over to him, and bends slowly toward them].

CURTAIN

The act of shame or horror —

Isaac is humiliated by everyone: Note, Orke

Goldin, Vikhe's cop. by his own wife

Lunch break = same time as Act I

ACT II

GOLDIN'S factory. A large wide room. To the left, two looms. Behind the second loom a high fire-place. In the right wall, two windows whose panes are of ground glass. Before the further of these windows is a third loom. Before the front window, a table with two chairs. Between the table and the loom stand ISAAC'S press and machine. At the rear, a door, which leads to the yard on the right and the office on the left. Between the fire-place and the door a small table and a chair. In the middle of the room, front, a table with four chairs placed about it. To the right of the door, in the corner, there lean large hides, a couple of old scabbards, large rolls of cardboard. Across the rear wall extend shelves, on which are piled all sorts of cardboard, little chests, pieces of cloth of every color, and old epaulettes. The floor is littered with scraps of paper, cardboard, cloth, needles, gold threads, spangles, strips of galloon, etc. On the center table there are four cloth plates on which lie white, yellow and silver threads and spangles, and epaulettes, in various stages of completion. On the rear table, braid ready to be made into epaulettes.

It is noon. Near the center table, his back to the door, sits ZELIG, finishing his meal. He is about twenty-five; long, dark, uncombed hair; his beard is trimmed short; small mustache. He wears over his trousers

Russian
a gray, hand-sewed shirt, tied around with a red ribbon with tufts. Before him are a plate, knife, spoon and fork. On the sill of the forward window, which is half open, sits SENDER. He is looking out into the yard, and whistling a tune. He is of ZELIG'S age; his hair is chestnut-color, curly and parted in the middle; no beard, and thick, red curled mustache; wears a smock, collar and small tie, vest and coat. Between the two looms at the left, lies old MICHEL. He is almost gray, with a mixture of yellowish hair. Wears no coat. Over his shirt, which is open at the breast, is visible the four-fringed scarf worn by all orthodox Jewish men. At the rear table sits YOSHKÉ, a youngster of some fourteen or fifteen years, his head resting on his left hand, his right holding a pencil with which he plays on the table. His shoes are several sizes too large for him.—From the office comes the frequent ringing of a bell, which is attached to the door that leads in from the outside to the office.

ZELIG [his meal completed, he leans against the back of his chair, picks his teeth with a match, exhales his breath noisily, and turns to YOSHKÉ with the air of a distinguished guest]. Waiter! A bottle of port!—Right away, now. I have no time. I say, waiter!

YOSHKÉ. At once, sir! [From under the fireplace he takes an old kerosene bottle and brings it to him, leisurely, with a loud scraping of his large shoes.] Here you are. Excuse the slight odor of kerosene.

ZELIG [with an expression of dissatisfaction]. My dear sir, what liberty is this you're taking? If you have no port, bring me some Bordeaux, or Chateau La-pfuique.

YOSHKÉ [scarcely moving, he drags out from under the fireplace an oil-stained beer-bottle, broken at the neck]. This will delight you extremely, sir.

ZELIG [utters a confused cry, ending with] You impertinent ass!

MICHEL [waking from his nap]. Ha! Zelig's at his jokes again!

ZELIG [puts the bottle back and, returning to his place, assumes the same position as before].

SILENCE

SENDER [whistles as if he were signaling to somebody through the window].

ZELIG. The idea! Not to have my wine after my meal! Well, I don't come to this restaurant again! [Thrusts his plate away from him.] Waiter! The bill!

MICHEL. Devil take that clown! He doesn't let me sleep.

ZELIG [curls his mustache. His expression is as serious as ever].

SENDER [calls to some one outside the window, in a subdued voice, at the same time making signs with his hand]. Where were you, anyway? Just finished eating? You must have had seven courses!

ZELIG [jumping up]. What? That stout one? [Leaps over to the window where SENDER is sitting. Looks out and begins to make all manner of bows.] Good day! How goes it? [To SENDER.] It seems to me she gains weight every day.

SENDER [to the girl in the opposite building]. Weren't you over to Drovitz's dancing-school last night? No? Were you? Did you do much dancing?

ZELIG [to SENDER]. Ask her where Bashe is. [In a subdued voice.] Where's Bashe? Ba-a-ashe!—That tall girl! In the next room? Tell her to come to the window. [In the same breath, but much lower.] Devil take you!—[Louder.] She's busy, you say? Busy, now?

SENDER. Just a second. I'll make a date with her for the park this evening. [Loudly, through the window.] Are you doing anything to-night?

ZELIG. Make it for Saturday in the woods.

SENDER [through the window]. Then let's meet in the park. In that long lane. The long one!

ZELIG [helping him]. In the lo-o-o-ong one— [Under his breath.] Ears as large as a donkey's, yet she can't hear. [Aloud.] Saturday, in the woods.

SENDER [shouting]. No, Saturday at Drovitz's.

ZELIG [hitting him]. To the deuce with you! The woods is a better place. [Shouting through the window.] The woods is better. Isn't it? No? You prefer Drovitz's? [Pointing with his finger.] Bashe coming along too? Yes? That's fine. Let's have a dance on it. [Begins the "Blue Danube," blowing through his lips like a cornet, and dances. His arms are raised, swaying in the air, his body lowered and his knees bent. He dances thus for a while, until he has danced over to old MICHEL and falls on top of him.]

MICHEL [kicks him, pushing him away].

ZELIG. Pardon me. Pardon me. . . . Hey there! Ow! Ow! No kicking, now! No kicking!

MICHEL. I'll split your head for you, you clown!

ZELIG [arising, and dusting himself]. What do you think of him? He kicks! [Runs over to the window, where SENDER has been making signs to the girl across the way, and shouts across the yard]. Ow! An old horse just kicked me!

Parody of a novel - how they solve the food problem

MICHEL [mumbling]. Plague take him!

ZELIG [to SENDER]. And meanwhile you've already made a date with her. [He, too, begins to make signs across the yard with his fingers, as if engaging in deaf-and-dumb language. From the yard comes a chorus of laughter and girlish voices. Soon there enter BERRE, HILYE, LEIVIK, MALKE, and TEMME.]

ZELIG [drops his deaf-and-dumb conversation and turns to those who have just come in. He addresses them in the voice of their employer, GOLDIN]. What—what do you call this? Coming in so late! Once you people leave the place, you get lost altogether!

MICHEL [straightening up]. He doesn't close his mouth for a second.

BERRE [a man of forty-five, long yellow beard, a large broad nose, red from drinking; a broad, knotty face. He wears a long black torn coat, that has turned green with age. He removes his hat, puts on an old, velvet skull-cap, which he takes out of his inside pocket, and gets busy near the loom at the right].

HILYE [somewhat over twenty. He needs a shave; his mustache is short and black; his black hair is cut quite close to his head. He wears a smock, and collar, but no tie. Sits down upon YOSHIKE's table and begins to roll a cigarette].

LEIVIK [in the middle twenties, clean shaven, and neatly dressed in a grayish suit, smock, collar and neck-tie. Goes over to the window near SENDER and looks out into the yard].

MALKE [an elderly girl, coquettishly dressed in a tight-fitting bodice. She removes the plate from the table and puts it on a shelf].

TEMME [a young girl, with a dreamy expression. Stops before ZELIG with a broad smile].

ZELIG [still imitating the boss]. They become new people from the moment they stop working. That crowd goes off and they forget to come back. And this lazy lout [pointing to MICHEL] lies down to snooze and you can't wake him up with a hammer. From this day forward, I forbid all going out for dinners, and all sleeping.

MALKE. Maybe you'll raise our wages, too, boss?

ZELIG. What! What! What else will you ask? Raise your wages! Indeed!

LEIVIK and SENDER [return from the window with loud laughter].

ZELIG [very inquisitive. He forgets the rôle he has assumed]. What was that? What were you people doing there? [Runs over to the window, but sees nothing, so he turns back to SENDER and LEIVIK, who are still laughing.] Did that cranky old forelady come to the window?—What's the joke? Out with it! [Assuming GOLDIN's voice and manner again.] And you fellows could stand at the window all day, flirting with the girls! A fine bunch of workers I have! Not worth the dirt they step on!

LEIVIK [stops laughing]. You see, the old lady came by. So he . . .

MALKE and TEMME [at the window]. Isaac is coming! Isaac is coming! [All the workers rush to the window. MICHEL gets up from the floor. There are cries of "Welcome, Isaac!" . . . "Greetings!" "Have you got the machine with you?" . . .]

SENDER. I don't see him carrying any machines.

HILYE. He doesn't look any too cheerful. [The workers turn to the door, expectantly.]

ZELIG. Let's receive him with a loud hurrah and a march of triumph!

ISAAC [enters, pale, sad, dejected. He is greeted with a lusty "Hurrah!"].

ZELIG [blows a march through his closed lips, waving his hands like a music-director].

YOSHIKE and TEMME [hum the tune also].

ISAAC [steps aside from the crowd, sadder and more dejected than ever, and walks over to the loom in the left foreground. He is plainly suppressing a bitter outburst].

BERRE. What's the trouble, Isaac?—Where's your new machine?

ISAAC [silent].

HILYE. I guess it's all up with the machine.

ISAAC [throwing off his hat, angrily and bitterly]. Shout "Hurrah!" Shout!

LEIVIK. Isn't the machine done yet?

HILYE. Isn't it done yet, or will it never be done?

ZELIG. Or did your sweet better-half drive you out of the house?

SENDER. Or are you pregnant with an idea for a brand new invention?

ISAAC [busying himself about the loom. Angrily]. What are you pestering me for? What worry is it of yours?

MICHEL. Really, what worry of ours is it? Really. Really.

ZELIG. Hush! You mustn't talk to our famous engineer. Hush! Quiet. . . . [Walks on tiptoe, raising his feet high in the air. An alarm clock sounds the return to work. The men and women run to their places. ZELIG, HILYE, MALKE, and TEMME go to the center table: ZELIG at the left, MALKE at the right, TEMME at the back, and HILYE at the front; SENDER and LEIVIK go to the table near the window: LEIVIK at the back, SENDER at the front; YOSHIKE goes to the table furthest back. MICHEL and BERRE remain near ISAAC. They, too, look dejected, and are silent.]

ISAAC [sits down to his work].

MICHEL [looks at him sadly]. Did it all come to nothing?—Was it too hard to put together?—Will it take long? [Seeing that he receives no reply, he sighs and casts his eyes to the floor, crestfallen.]

BERRE [sighs. Then both he and MICHEL proceed to their looms. MICHEL near ISAAC, BERRE to the loom at the right].

ORKE [appears at the door. Noticing ISAAC, he strikes an attitude, as if to say, "Ha! He is here!" He is about to step into the room, but suddenly recalls something and returns to the office].

ZELIG [with a mock sigh]. Ah! The invention refused to be invented!

MALKE. And meanwhile he lost two and a half days of work.

HILYE. Well, let him not be so ambitious to become an inventor.

LEIVIK. That's easy to say. It's not a matter of mere wanting to be. It's a thing that's part of a person's very soul. I remember, when I was a youngster, I had a deep desire to become a painter. . . .

SENDER. You mean a sign-painter, perhaps?

LEIVIK. Every scrap of paper I'd pick up, I'd cover with pictures: People, soldiers, a horse . . .

HILYE. Yourself, in other words.

LEIVIK. At home and in the Hebrew school I used to be whipped without mercy, because all I did was draw pictures. And when they apprenticed me to a lace-maker, I cried my eyes out. . . .

SENDER [with mock-tears]. Boo-hoo!

Only the two older men sympathize

LEIVIK. And to this very day, when I look at a good painting, I become so moody, and feel that there's something in me that is powerfully attracted to the picture.

ZELIG. Ah! In me, too!

HILYE. Ah!

LEIVIK. And at other times, when I sit thinking, I get such a powerful impulse to draw. . . .

ZELIG. And how I'd like to be an actor!

HILYE. A clown in the circus, maybe?

ZELIG. No, a real actor. And come out on the stage and declaim. . . . [He places his left hand over his heart, raises his right hand high in the air, throws back his head and declaims.] "How dear thou art, my precious heart!"

SENDER. Ah!

ZELIG [continuing]. "Thou angel . . ."

TEMME. I, too, would really like to go on the stage.

MALKE [sarcastically]. Well! What do you think of our new leading lady!

HILYE [to TEMME and ZELIG]. I'll tell you what! Why don't you two go on the stage in partnership and make — a troupe.

ZELIG [suddenly falls to his knees before TEMME].

TEMME [frightened]. Oh!

ZELIG [stretching out his hand]: Come to my arms, crown of my head. [General laughter.]

MICHEL and BERRE [look upon the merriment with shaking of their heads. Footsteps are heard behind the office door].

ZELIG [jumps to his feet. The workers suddenly apply themselves very industriously to their work].

MICHEL. There's a crowd for you!

BERRE. One is worse than the other.

MICHEL. Not worth the earth they step on. *

BERRE. Tramps . . . loafers . . .

ORKE [enters, and walks straight over to ISAAC]. Well, how goes it with your invention?

ZELIG. It refused to be invented.

ORKE. What? Nothing really came of it? Have you got it here?

YOSHKE. The famous engineer is too busy to be disturbed now.

BERRE. You shut up, you!

ZELIG [attempts to pull ISAAC's chair from under him].

ISAAC [furious]. You clown, you. Keep your hands to yourself!

ORKE. I told him right away, the moment I looked at the thing, that he was simply wasting his time at it. I saw at once that his effort was all misspent. And when I tried to give him a point or two . . .

LEIVIK. Who? You wanted to show him how to do it?

ORKE. Upon my word, if he had only let me, I would have finished the thing for him in a jiffy.

ZELIG [crowing]. Cock-a-doodle-doo!

YOSHKE [sneezes mockingly]. Kerchoo!

LEIVIK [to ORKE]. How long is it since you've become such a smarty?

SENDER. You can't deny that he's an expert glutton.

ISAAC [turning to the men and women]. Much he knows . . .

HILYE. That's it. Say something.

ORKE [sits down on the corner of the table near ZELIG]. But I tell you, he's got some swell-looking girls for neighbors! . . . [He is at a loss for words to express his delight, and scratches his head with his right hand.]

SENDER. There! Now you said something worth hearing!

MICHEL and BERRE [cast significant glances at one another and sigh. The office bell rings. ORKE runs into the office].

ZELIG [calling after him]. Drat that bell! Has to ring just when things are beginning to get interesting!

LEIVIK. My! What a connoisseur he's become all of a sudden!

MALKE. The simpleton! He can't add one and one!

BERRE. I'd enjoy giving a drubbing to a swell-head like that!

MICHEL. His old man is just the same. Knows it all.

MALKE. Only with his mouth.

LEIVIK. Did he really want to show you how to do it, Isaac?

MALKE. You can't talk to him to-day,— our silent inventor.

ZELIG. Not a word.

LEIVIK. I can imagine how he must have bothered him over there this morning.

BERRE. He's an awful bore, when he gets going.

HILYE. He doesn't bore me.

TEMME. I should say not.

HILYE. What are you blushing about?

TEMME. If you two get fresh with me once more, you'll hear from me.

ZELIG [putting his arms around TEMME's waist]. What? You dare to hurt my little Temme? [Caresses her cheek.] Tell me, dear little Temme, what did the naughty people do to you?

TEMME [thrusting him away]. Let me go, you clown. [Enter ORKE.]

MALKE [to ORKE]. Quick now. Tell us some more about those neighbors of Isaac's.

HILYE. What do you want, anyway? [To ORKE.] She, too!

ORKE [lighting a cigarette, and puffing it so that it will get well started, goes over to the center table and sits down on its edge, near ZELIG]. I tell you, boys, there's something to see there. He lives in a regular Garden of Eden. [To ISAAC.] What's the name of that girl I left with?

ZELIG. Quick work! He's been out with one of them already!

ORKE. I should say! But what's her name, Isaac? — What's the matter with you, ninn, are you angry? Can't you answer a civil question? [Gives ISAAC a strong slap over the knee.] Answer me, I say!

ISAAC [his body twitches with pain; he speaks with ill-disguised anger]. Let me alone. You could have asked her if you . . .

ORKE. This fellow's too insolent.

ISAAC. And don't get so familiar with me, either, and keep your hands off my knee.

ORKE. Altogether too insolent.

BERRE and MICHEL [motion to ORKE to keep quiet].

MALKE. I know his neighbors very well. The two sisters Hinde and Sozye — you know them too, Temme — are rather good-looking. But that other one, Gelye, I can't stand at all. A big mouth . . .

ORKE. A lot she knows about looks. [To MALKE.] Do you call yourself good-looking?

MALKE. Gelye has a face dotted with freckles. Isn't that so, Temme?

TEMME. Why, certainly. Just covered with them.

* What the boss would have said

ZELIG. He overlooked the freckles.

ORKE. Bah! A lot they both know what they're talking about! You can take my word for it that . . .

MALKE. Now I'll admit that Hinde and Sozye are really good-looking girls.

ORKE. I say we ought to be more frequent visitors to Isaac's place.

ZELIG [to ISAAC]. Why don't you give a ball? . . .

ORKE. In honor of the machine you didn't make.

MICHEL [angrily]. What? What? What? It's not right to tease him so. [Shrugs his shoulders.]

ZELIG. And invite all of us.

BERRE. You clown, stop your antics.

ORKE. What's it your business? Do your work! What do you care?

BERRE and MICHEL [make gestures of despair].

ISAAC [with suppressed feeling]. I ask no one to take my part.— [The office bell rings. ORKE runs into the office.]

SILENCE

BERRE [sarcastically]. There's a son for you!

MICHEL [the same]. A crackerjack!

MALKE [laughing]. And Gelye is to his taste! With that big mouth of hers, and her freckles. A lean, lanky . . . Now the two sisters are really . . .

ZELIG. I'll bet he likes all three of 'em.

SENDER. You took the words out of my mouth.

HILYE. Let's leave it to Isaac. Eh, Isaac? What do you say? You'll talk to us, won't you? Eh? How? It's a very important question.

MICHEL. Enough of your tomfoolery and your teasing. Enough! He too! Orke's chum! [Silence. Soon ZELIG, SENDER, MALKE, TEMME and YOSHKÉ com-

mence to sing at their work, all humming different tunes.]

SENDER. Isaac, here comes your wife.

MALKE [goes to the window]. Yes. Here she comes. And she's carrying . . .

ZELIG [sticks MALKE with the point of a needle and jumps back to his seat].

MALKE. Ow! [Looks around.] Who stuck me then, eh?—I can tell it was Zelig. [Begins to hit him.]

ZELIG [defending himself]. Who? Who? I didn't do it!

BAYLYE [comes in. She is carrying a pot tied about with a sheet that is wet from the contents. To her "Good day," the men and women reply variously, "Good year," "Good day," "Bon jour."]

ISAAC and HILYE [silent].

BAYLYE [going over to ISAAC]. Here, I brought you dinner. Eat, now. Do you hear?— [Bitterly.] Take it, and eat.— [More bitterly.] Enough of your obstinacy.

ISAAC [quietly]. I don't want to eat.

BAYLYE [despairingly]. What do you mean, you don't want to eat? Where are you going to get strength to work?

TEMME. Did he really leave the house without eating his dinner?

BAYLYE. Yes. Without dinner! And do you think he ate anything before dinner-time? He got up at day-break and went right to work, on that unlucky machine of his, and hasn't had a thing in his mouth since. [To ISAAC, with tears.] Here, eat something!

BERRE. Don't be childish, Isaac. Eat. What do you call this, anyway? It's foolish.

BAYLYE [weeping]. It's been like this for the past three days: He hasn't slept, he hasn't eaten; every

moment was given to that unlucky machine of his. [To ISAAC.] Will you eat or not?

ISAAC [as before]. I don't want to eat.

BAYLYE [to the workers]. There! Say yourself: how is a woman to endure all this? [Wailing.] I can't stand it! I can't stand it!

MALKE. What do you care if he doesn't eat? Pff! A lot I'd care!

BAYLYE. How can a person refuse to eat all day?

BERRE [lays aside his work, goes over to ISAAC and takes him by the hand]. Don't be foolish, Isaac. Drop your work, wash up and eat.

ISAAC. Please don't bother me. I can't eat.

BERRE. What do you mean,—“can't eat”? What kind of words are those? Send for a schnapps—take a little brandy and that'll give you an appetite. Here, Yoshke, bring him a schnapps.

BAYLYE [restraining her tears]. Yes, send for a schnapps.

ISAAC. I haven't any money and I don't care for any schnapps.

BERRE. It doesn't need much money. I suppose some one of us can advance it. Have you any change about you, Reb Michel?

MICHEL [shrugging his shoulders]. Not a kopeck.

ZELIG [turns his pockets inside out and whistles, touching HILYE with his foot]. You've got some, haven't you?

HILYE. How do you know? Have you been in my pockets?

LEIVIK. I can lend you the price, Isaac. [Takes out a rouble.] I can lend you the whole rouble.

BAYLYE [takes the rouble from him; to ISAAC]. Shall I send after a schnapps for you?

BERRE. There's no need of asking. Here, Yoshke, run over and get half a pint.

YOSHKÉ [lazily takes the money]. Smirnóvka?

BERRE. Let it be Smirnóvka. But make it quick. [Pushes YOSHKÉ out, and speaks in a pleased manner.] There, that's more like it. You'll have a drink,—it'll cheer you up and then you'll eat. [Sits down to his work, and speaks with much self-satisfaction.] A drink is the best remedy. It's the first thing I think of. For this, for that, for headache, for heartache,—a schnapps, and the trouble disappears. [Turns to ISAAC.] And don't be a fool. Swallow the whole business at one gulp. You'll eat all the heartier for it.

BAYLYE. He hasn't eaten a thing for almost three days. I don't know what he's lived on.

MALKE. On the machine.

BAYLYE. Yes. The unlucky machine. That's the only explanation.

ZELIG. And what came of it all? Didn't he finish it?

BAYLYE. Finish it? He worked and worked—the whole three days it was impossible to tear him away from the work table, and suddenly he seizes it, smashes it on the floor, and . . .

LEIVIK [amazed]. H'm!

BAYLYE. I began to tremble all over,—hands and feet. I shivered like a leaf. And he sat down with staring eyes. . . .

MALKE. An insane man.

LEIVIK. No-o. That's not insanity. It's . . . it's . . .

BAYLYE. What is it then? [Laughing ironically.] No. That's not insanity!

ISAAC [to BAYLYE]. Do me a favor and go home.

BAYLYE [looks at him angrily and frightened]. No. That's not insanity!

BERRE. You really ought to go home. That would make things much better. [*Motions her to leave. MICHEL does the same.*]

BAYLYE [*insulted, prepares to go*]. I'm the only one that's ever in his way. [*Angrily.*] Eat, you lunatic!

BERRE. He'll eat. Go home. Don't worry. He'll have a drink and he'll eat.

BAYLYE [*to ISAAC*]. And remember to bring the pot home.

BERRE. All right. He'll bring it.

BAYLYE [*at the door*]. Lunatic! [*Exit.*]

MICHEL. A woman is only a woman after all.

MALKE. I've known Baylye for eight years,—before she was married. My! Wasn't she the lively piece! And now, what a change! She looks something awful!

BERRE. And how did Isaac look eight years ago! To be sure, he always was a queer chap, but outside of that . . .

YOSHKE [*enters with the brandy*].

BERRE [*drops his work, goes to YOSHKE, takes the flask from him, together with the change from the rouble, and turns to ISAAC*]. Here. Just swallow some of this brandy and then eat a bite and you'll feel like a new man,—the Isaac you used to be. [*Takes down a glass from the shelf.*] Maybe you've forgotten the old-time Isaac. Let me recall him, then. Do you remember, just outside the city in Korobanovka? [*Pours out a glassful, looking enviously at the flowing brandy.*] Do you remember how you used to . . . Here . . . take . . . Well? Here, take it. . . . [*Puts down the flask, takes ISAAC's hat and puts it on his head.*] Well, go to it. Say the blessing and drink it down. [*Takes the flask again.*] Take it, Isaac. Don't be a child. Here, Isaac.

MICHEL. Bah! Isaac! Don't be obstinate. Drink it down and eat your dinner. Why are you acting so foolishly, eh?

BERRE [*bringing the glass to ISAAC's lips*]. Drink, I tell you! Chump!

ZELIG [*to ISAAC*]. Better take it quickly or he'll drink it himself!

ISAAC [*he tries to turn his head away. Suddenly he seizes the glass and empties it at a single gulp*].

BERRE [*follows the disappearing brandy with envious eyes. He smacks his lips, and makes a wry face, as if he had felt the coolness and the bitter taste of the brandy*]. Now you're acting sensibly. That's the way I like to see you. [*Takes the empty glass from ISAAC.*] And now another one. [*Pours another glass, sniffing it as he does so.*] No waiting, either.

ISAAC [*restraining BERRE's hand. Sinister*]. Give me the flask. [*Takes the flask out of BERRE's hand, puts it to his lips and swallows the entire contents at one gulp.*]

BERRE [*who has given the flask unwillingly, follows every movement of ISAAC's, stretching his neck forward as he does so. After ISAAC has emptied the flask, he takes it from him and offers him the glass*]. And now take the little bit that's left in the glass, and make it a full measure. You refuse? Then now for your dinner. [*Puts down the glass and the flask, and shoves forward the pot and the bread.*] Now, eat your dinner.

ISAAC [*leans with both arms against the loom, and hides his face in his hands*].

BERRE. Eat, Isaac. Eat. And don't waste any time about it. It's cold already.

ISAAC [*places his head on his left arm*].

BERRE. What have you lain down for? I tell you, take your dinner. [*Tries to raise his head.*]

ISAAC [*thrusts him aside with his right hand*].

BERRE [*insulted*]. Very well, then. Lie there. I tell you to eat. If you don't want to, all right. Do as you please. [*Takes the flask and looks regretfully at it. Then he casts envious eyes upon the glass.*]

HILYE. Well, Berre! Here's your health!

BERRE. Don't eat, then. I won't bother with you any longer. [*Goes back to his place.*]

LEIVIK. Why don't you eat, Isaac? You must have something solid in your stomach.

BERRE [*indignant*]. I never saw such an obstinate mule in all my days.

ZELIG. I'll bet he'll fall asleep altogether.

MICHEL. Let him sleep, then. That's the best thing for him.

BERRE. Ah-h! I know whenever I take a swallow of brandy. . . . I . . . I . . . I become a new man entirely. And maybe Isaac wasn't a drinker in his day! Hm! I don't know what's come over him.

LEIVIK [*to ZELIG*]. Is he really sleeping, Zelig?

ZELIG. I think so. [*Shakes ISAAC.*] Are you asleep, Isaac?

LEIVIK. You clown!

HILYE [*singing*]. "Sleep, little birdie, close your sweet eyes. . . ."

MICHEL. There's a crowd for you!

TEMME. His dinner will get cold. [*Arising.*] I'll take it down to Ida's and put it into her oven.

ISAAC [*sits up and takes out his handkerchief*].

TEMME [*frightened*]. Look. He's been crying! [*LEIVIK, BERRE, ZELIG and MALKE jump up from their places with an exclamation: "Crying!" They come over to ISAAC and look upon him with deep concern.*]

MICHEL [*shakes his head and speaks in a tone of bitter disgust*]. Crying!

HILYE and SENDER [*look with curiosity towards ISAAC, but remain in their places, continuing their work*].

YOSHKE [*comes from his table and looks with curiosity at ISAAC*].

BERRE. You're no kind of man at all, Isaac. Pooh! Upon my word. If I knew that, I certainly wouldn't have urged you to drink. Really, you're no kind of man at all. *

HILYE. Let him go home and sleep it off.

BERRE. That's a good idea. Go home and sleep it off. What are you crying about? Pooh! Upon my word it's a shame and a disgrace. Take my advice and go home. So you won't work to-day, either. Imagine you're still at your invention. Go on home. Here. . . . Here's the rest of the rouble. Take it. See? I'm putting it into your pocket. Are there any holes in your pocket? [*Feels ISAAC's pocket.*] No holes. Now go home.

ISAAC [*sinks forward on his arms again. His whole body is convulsed with his quiet weeping*].

LEIVIK. Really, Isaac, you're . . .

BERRE. It's the first time in my life that I see anything like this.

HILYE [*to SENDER*]. Look, will you! Temme is crying, too!

TEMME [*drying her eyes*]. Hilye, you've got a heart of stone.

LEIVIK [*coming over to ISAAC*]. Isaac. It's a shame. . . . Really. . . .

ISAAC. Let me alone. . . . Let me be. . . . I must . . . I must . . .

BERRE [*coming over to ISAAC*]. What must you,

* deny his feelings — as if the drink were at fault

what? You mustn't anything. Did you ever hear the like? He *must* cry!

ISAAC [*angrily*]. Let me alone!

BERRE [*with a deprecatory gesture*]. You see. *It's like dealing with a madman.* [*The workers return to their places.*]

LEIVIK [*sadly*]. H'm!

BERRE. It's the first time in my life that . . .

MALKE. Bah! I don't like to see a man cry.

ZELIG [*moved*]. The poor fellow!

TEMME [*takes the pot and goes out*].

SILENCE

ISAAC [*gradually stops weeping and finally is silent. The workers glance often in his direction*].

GOLDIN [*enters. Walks over to ISAAC and makes a gesture of astonishment*]. What's he lying there for, I'd like to know!

MALKE. He's just been crying.

GOLDIN. Crying? What do you mean, he's been crying? Because his machine was a failure? [*Walking ISAAC.*] Say, Isaac. What were you crying about? Wake up! [*Notices the brandy flask.*] Who's been drinking here? Was it Isaac?

MALKE. He hasn't eaten anything all day long, so they told him to take some brandy for an appetizer.

GOLDIN. In plain words, then, he got drunk. Bah! First you couldn't get him to move from his house, because he was fussing around a machine of his. And now, when he finally does come back to work, he gets as soused as a pig and falls asleep.

ISAAC [*moves nervously, raises his head and lets it fall immediately*].

GOLDIN. If you're drunk, go home and sleep it off there. I don't need any drunkards around here.—Where's Temme?

ISAAC [*slowly arising*]. Are you angry because I didn't bring you a third machine?

GOLDIN. You pig, you! You and your machines can go to the devil together! Where's Temme, I say?

MALKE. Isaac's wife was here and brought him his dinner. And Temme took the pot to Ida's, so that it shouldn't get cold.

GOLDIN. And hasn't she anything else to do besides warming his pots?

ISAAC. And if I'd have brought you the machine you wouldn't be so angry now. [*Enter TEMME.*]

GOLDIN. Where've you been? Eh? It's your business to sit and work,—not take care of his pots! I don't pay you or anybody else to be his servant.

ISAAC [*scarcely able to restrain his anger*]. I didn't ask her.

TEMME. It didn't take more than a minute. His dinner would have got cold.

GOLDIN. Not even a second. Let him eat it cold or not eat it at all. It's none of your concern. You're supposed to sit and work.

ISAAC. Is that how deeply interested you were in my machine?

GOLDIN [*furious*]. To the devil with you and your machines—I've told you once already. Now,—do you understand? For all I care you may . . .

ORKE [*comes running in*]. What's all the hollering about?

GOLDIN. He comes here, gets dead drunk . . .

ISAAC [*banging his fist against the loom*]. Stop that talk about "drunk," I tell you! Do you understand me or not?

GOLDIN [*his mouth agape with astonishment. All work comes to a standstill*].

ORKE. My! My! The fellow's really angry!

ISAAC. Don't talk to me about getting drunk. Talk to your own son.

GOLDIN. You brazen-faced fool! You insolent pig!

MICHEL and BERRE [*surround GOLDIN*].

LEIVIK and ZELIG [*hold ISAAC back*].

MICHEL. Stop it, Notte,—can't you see what a fuss you're starting?

LEIVIK. Calm yourself, calm yourself, Isaac.

ORKE [*to ISAAC*]. You needn't drag me into this.

BERRE. Orke . . . ah! . . . Have some common sense. . .

LEIVIK [*to ISAAC*]. Calm yourself. Calm yourself.

GOLDIN [*to ISAAC*]. You're through working here.

ISAAC. You bet I am. But before I go, you'll please give me back my press and my braiding-machine.

ORKE [*putting his hands to his ears. Mockingly*]. What? Give you back what? I didn't hear that. Repeat that, please.

GOLDIN. Your press and your machine? You were well paid for them.

ISAAC [*makes a threatening motion. LEIVIK and ZELIG hold him back*].

ZELIG. Calm. Be calm.

GOLDIN. The nerve of the man to want back his machines! His, he calls them. I paid you for them, and they're mine, not yours.

ORKE. *His* press and *his* machine! Such wonderful inventions, such marvelous brain-products! You can see what you're good for. Fussed and fussed around for three days. . . .

ISAAC. "Marvelous brain-products"—Can you do better?

ORKE. Pff! But where's your new machine?

ISAAC. I'm asking you. Can you do better?

ORKE. And I'm asking you: where's your new machine?

GOLDIN. What are you wasting words with him for? Here, Yoshke. Run over and call Shmerel. Tell him the job's open for him, and that he can come to work right away. And enough of this talk.

YOSHKE [*reluctantly prepares to go*].

ISAAC [*arises, snatches his coat and walks slowly towards the door, accompanied by LEIVIK and ZELIG, who are calming him. Suddenly he rushes upon the press, lifts it in the air, throws himself upon the machine and smashes it under his feet so that its parts fly in all directions*]. Now I can leave! . . . Now I can leave. . . . [*LEIVIK and ZELIG and BERRE try to restrain him from breaking the machines.*]

GOLDIN. Call the police! Police! Orke, run for a policeman!

ORKE. Hilye, run for a policeman!

ISAAC [*still stepping upon parts of the machines and smashing them*]. Now I can leave! [*Tears himself out of the men's hands and walks through the door as calmly as possible.*]

GOLDIN and ORKE [*rush after him. They are held back*].

GOLDIN. Call a policeman, I say! Call the police!

ISAAC [*from the yard*]. Take this! [*A stone comes crashing through the window, smashes all the panes and hits ORKE in the side. A cry of "Oh!" arises from all the bystanders*].

ORKE. He's killed me!

GOLDIN. Call the police! Police!

CURTAIN

ACT III

ISAAC'S cellar-dwelling. It is late night, of the same day as the two previous acts. On the table burns a lamp, whose glass chimney is thickly covered with soot. The room is half dark. Only shadows, black silhouettes, are visible.

GISHINKE [*sits in the forward bed, crying*]. Ma! Ma!

PINYE [*standing close to her, muttering*]. Dead. Dead.

GISHINKE [*crossly*]. She didn't die! Ma isn't dead! You're dead!

PINYE. Everything is dead. Dead.

GISHINKE [*crying louder*]. No. She isn't dead!

PINYE. Dead. Dead. Heaven. Earth. And God. And God. Buried in the dead heaven. Covered with the dead earth. And everything is cold and dark. And cold. And dark. . . .

GISHINKE. Ma-a-a-ma! Where is mamma?

PINYE. Dead. All are dead.

GISHINKE [*at the top of her lungs*]. No! She isn't dead! She isn't dead! Mamma isn't dead! [GELYE enters from her room. Soon after her comes HINDE from her room. Both wear nightgowns and are wrapped in large shawls.]

GELYE [*to PINYE*]. What are you standing there for scaring the life out of her? Go over to your place.

[*To GISHINKE*]. Don't cry, Gishinke. Your mother will soon be back.

PINYE [*walks back slowly to his place and sits down. From time to time he utters strange, tearful sobs*].

HINDE. What's the kid bawling about?

GISHINKE. Where's my mamma?

GELYE. The old lunatic came over to her. . . .

GISHINKE. She didn't die, did she?

GELYE [*continuing*]. . . . And . . .

HINDE [*to GISHINKE*]. Your mamma'll soon be here.

GELYE. The poor child's crying her eyes out.

HINDE. Something must have happened to Isaac. Goldin must have had him arrested. But why doesn't Baylye come back?

GISHINKE [*crying*]. Mamma isn't coming.

GELYE. Go to sleep, Gishinke. Your mamma'll be right back. We'll sit down near you. All right?

GISHINKE. I want my mamma.

GELYE [*wrapping the bedclothes about GISHINKE and sitting down beside her*]. There. Quiet. That's a good girl. We'll sit right near you. See? Hinde has sat down, too. And your mamma'll be here right away.

HINDE. Sleep, Gishinke, sleep.

GISHINKE [*a trifle reassured*]. Mamma hasn't died.

GELYE. What put that into your head? Of course your mother hasn't died.

GISHINKE. Hasn't died?

GELYE. No, no. You silly little girl. Your mamma hasn't died. Go to sleep.

HINDE. The old fellow makes everybody sick with his eternal chatter about dead heavens and dead earths.

GISHINKE. And my papa hasn't died, either?

GELYE. Sleep. Sleep, Gishinke. Nobody has died.

HINDE. Who can tell what's happened to Isaac?

Haven't you heard what took place in the factory today? He had a fit of crying.

GELYE. They got him drunk first.

GISHINKE. When'll mamma come?

GELYE. Soon. Soon. Fall asleep, now.

HINDE. . . . And he smashed his press and the braiding-machine.

SOZYE [*enters in petticoat and jacket, her hands folded across her bosom. She feels very cold*]. Well? What's the news? [*Walks over to the bed*]. Oh! This is Gelye! I thought you were talking to Baylye here. Hasn't Baylye come back yet?

GELYE. Neither Baylye nor Isaac.

SOZYE. That's very strange.

GISHINKE [*to SOZYE*]. Mamma hasn't died.

HINDE. My! What a time they had there!

GISHINKE [*to SOZYE*]. And papa hasn't died, either.

GELYE. Sleep. Sleep. If you don't go to sleep, we'll go away and leave you all alone.

GISHINKE. No. Don't go 'way.

GELYE. Then go to sleep. [*Runs her hand through GISHINKE'S hair and hums a lullaby*.]

HINDE. It must have been terrible there. He took a big stone and smashed a couple of window panes. . . .

SOZYE. Are you talking about Isaac?

GELYE. That's why I reckon that Goldin has certainly had him locked up.

HINDE. It's quite likely. They must have caught him in the streets.

SOZYE [*shivering*]. Brrr! How that son of his came running here with a policeman, and searched our room. . . .

GELYE. Ours too.

HINDE. I shivered all over, like a leaf.

GELYE. I wanted to throw something in his face. . . .

HINDE. The fop!

GELYE. The loafer!

HINDE. The cheap sport! Clean shaven, curled mustache, his hat on one side, rings on his fingers. . . .

SOZYE [*shivering*]. And the way he dresses!

GELYE. This morning, when we left the house together, he simply insisted that I tell him where I was going, and that I let him carry my bundle . . . and he asked what I do, and where I usually go walking . . .

HINDE. Do you think he's handsome? I don't take him for a good-looking fellow, at all. His eyes are so . . .

GELYE. . . . And he asked where I go walking, and with whom. And he made such queer motions, and bows. . . . [*Mocking ORKE*]. This way, and that way. . . .

SOZYE [*to HINDE*]. Do you know whom he looks like?

HINDE [*after a moment's thought*]. Whom?

SOZYE. Like Kopelyovitz.

HINDE. What? Not in the least. Kopelyovitz is taller, and has blond hair. . . .

SOZYE. Yes, but . . . His lips . . . his nose . . .

HINDE. You're 'way off. You don't know what you're talking about.

SOZYE. . . . He escorted me up to Vichman's door. . . . I was bringing something to Vichman's, you know . . . and he took me right up to Vichman's door; I simply couldn't get rid of him.

HINDE. And with all his other virtues, he's such a coarse fellow too.

SOZYE. Yes. And he mentions such improper things.

GELYE. He said nothing improper to me. He'd have caught it from me if he ever dared. But he kept paying such exaggerated compliments. [*Mocking ORKE*.]

This way, and that way. "You're such a clever young lady, and so . . ." [There is a knocking at the outer door. She jumps to her feet.]

HINDE. It's Baylye, I guess.

SOZYE [shivering with the cold, she goes to open the door]. Brrr. . . . Brrr. . . .

HINDE. I'm terrible anxious to know what's happening to Isaac.

SOZYE [crying out]. Oh!

ZELIG [in the entry]. Don't be scared. I called to see whether Isaac has come home yet.

SOZYE [comes back into the room].

ZELIG [following her. He wears a black coat].

GELYE and HINDE [hurriedly put their hair and clothes in order. The three girls, attempting to hide their partial undress, come close together].

ZELIG. Is he here already?

HINDE. No. Not yet.

GELYE. And Baylye isn't here yet, either.

ZELIG. She must still be looking for him. I went to several of his friends, looked through quite a few streets — but he's not to be heard or seen.

GELYE. If he hasn't been arrested, I'm afraid he's done something desperate to himself.

SOZYE. Goldin's son was here with a policeman.

ZELIG. I know. Maybe we didn't do our best to hold him back!

HINDE. Came dashing in here. [Imitating ORKE.]

"Where is he? Produce Isaac at once! I'll . . ."

SOZYE. And then he searched the whole place for him.

ZELIG. Orke wanted to show off. [Imitating ORKE's voice.] "Where is he? I want him!"

SOZYE [to the others]. Yes! That's just how he hol-lered!

ZELIG. I know him inside out. [Imitating ORKE's motions.] "Where is he? Produce Isaac at once! I must have him! . . ." [All laugh.]

SOZYE [to the others]. That's Orke to a dot!

ZELIG. He was here early this morning, too, wasn't he?

GELYE [with an ironic gesture, and pressing her lips together]. We had the honor.

ZELIG. And he went walking with one of you.

GELYE [same as before, and with mock pride]. With myself.

SOZYE [to the others]. Goodness! But how news does spread!

ZELIG. And he's already been talking about being a more frequent visitor hereabouts.

HINDE. As if we haven't enough troubles already.

GELYE [ironically]. We need him badly.

ZELIG. But isn't he a handsome chap?

GELYE. A regular picture!

HINDE. Ugh! Such queer eyes.

ZELIG. And yet he's so popular with the girls.

GELYE [shaking her head and pressing her lips together]. H'mm! You don't say!

HINDE. He?!

SOZYE [looks at the other girls and laughs in surprise].

GELYE. He insisted on accompanying me through the streets, and I just couldn't get rid of him.

ZELIG [shaking his head]. Oh! Orke, Orke! Bad luck to you!

SOZYE. I could swear that somebody's at the door. [The door is pushed open from outside.]

ZELIG. Yes. Somebody's there. [They take a few steps towards the door.]

BERRE [enters. He wears an expression of dejection and worry, as if he felt guilty of what had happened.]

ZELIG. Why! It's Berre!

BERRE. Zelig! [Looks about him.] Is Isaac here already?

ZELIG. Neither Isaac nor his wife.

BERRE. She must be running all around the town. And he isn't here? He must be somewhere, sleeping off his spree.

ZELIG. Unless Goldin has had him arrested.

BERRE. About two hours ago, around nine o'clock, he was at Rivve Shaynin's tavern.

ZELIG. How did you learn that?

BERRE. I was looking for him high and low, so I went to Rivve Shaynin's tavern, too.

HINDE. That's at the other end of the town, if I'm not mistaken.

ZELIG [Hitting BERRE over the shoulder]. I guess Berre knows where all the taverns are.

BERRE. Clown! I went in to see whether Isaac was there. — And he had really been there, stayed a couple of hours, didn't say a word to anybody, and drank down one glass after another. They say he sat there in such a rage that everybody took him for a madman. He left the place dead drunk. Where he went, nobody knows.

ZELIG. I'll bet he's lying in some ditch.

HINDE [coquettishly]. Ugh!

SOZYE [with a shudder]. Brrr!

ZELIG. Are you folks cold?

SOZYE. Just a strange feeling. . . . Brrr!

ZELIG. A young girl ought never to be cold.

HINDE. She's always freezing.

SOZYE. I don't know. I feel so queer. . . . Brrr!

BERRE [who has been standing absorbed in thought,

his gaze upon the floor]. I really don't know where else I can hunt for him. I went to several other taverns. . . .

ZELIG. That's understood.

BERRE [scornfully]. Tfu! You clown! [The outer door is opened.]

BAYLYE [comes running in]. What!. He is already here? [She sees at once that ISAAC is not there.] Not here yet? [Bursting into tears.] I'm sure he's done something desperate to himself. O, God in Heaven, what a misfortune has . . .

HINDE. At nine o'clock he was seen at Rivve Shaynin's tavern.

BERRE. Yes. Nine o'clock. And he left the place dead drunk. Where he went to, I don't know. I've been hunting for him all night.

ZELIG. I, too. But the city's an awful big place.

BAYLYE [her voice choked with tears]. I searched everywhere. And I made a terrible scene at the Goldins' home. I threw myself on the floor and begged them to give me back Isaac, to tell me where he was. Mrs. Goldin swore by her life that they hadn't had him arrested. [Moaning, wringing her hands.] Oh, I know he has committed something desperate. How can I bear it all?

GELYE. No. Not that. He must be lying somewhere, drunk.

HINDE. In some gutter.

SOZYE. Brrr!

BAYLYE [lamenting]. Unhappy woman that I am! That I should have lived to see this day!

BERRE. They told me there that he was dead drunk — that he could barely stand on his feet.

BAYLYE [as before]. Oh! Woe is me! . . . And he borrowed a rouble, too.

BERRE. And it was I who put the change in his pocket. If I had foreseen such an outcome . . .

ZELIG. You'd have put it into your own pocket.

BERRE [*angrily*]. For shame. Clown! Nothing but his jokes for any occasion at all. [ZELIG, SOZYE, and HINDE *laugh*.]

BAYLYE [*hysterical, running about the room*]. Oh! May flames consume Rivve Shaynin and her tavern together. May all trace of her be wiped out in a single night. When she sees that a Jew wants to get drunk, she shouldn't sell him any liquor.

GELYE. Much the tavern-keeper cares who wants to get drunk.

HINDE. Little difference it makes,—whether it's a Jew or a Gentile.

ZELIG. As long as he has the price or something to pawn—Eh, Berre?

BERRE [*angrily*]. There's no being serious with you! [ZELIG, HINDE and SOZYE *laugh*.]

BAYLYE [*as before*]. Where shall I look for him now? Where can I even begin to hunt for him? Where can I even begin to hunt for him? [*Wailing*.] I can't stand it any longer. Suicide is the only way out. Good God in Heaven! [*The outer door is opened. All move toward the door. Enter LEIVIK and SENDER.*]

LEIVIK. Well? Is he already here?

BAYLYE. Not at all! May he so dwell among the living. . . .

LEIVIK. Petrush, the watchman, told me that this afternoon, around two or three o'clock, he saw a young man in the woods. He says the fellow ran about wildly, beat the tree trunks with his fists, tore the bark from them, bit them, and struck his head against them. According to his description, I think it was Isaac.

BAYLYE [*bringing her hands to her head*]. He's surely gone mad. Oh! Oh!

LEIVIK. So I called Sender, and we both went to the woods, to the place where the watchman said he saw him. But we found nobody.

SENDER. I claimed beforehand that our going was useless. A fine chance you've got to find a person in the woods,—especially at night.

LEIVIK. Just the same I'd have kept on searching. By the light of the moon. . . .

SENDER. Then why didn't you remain there?

HINDE. At nine o'clock this evening he was at Rivve Shaynin's tavern.

BERRE. Well. That's right near the woods.

BAYLYE [*weeping*]. Then he must certainly have gone back into the woods. How can we look for him? How shall we find him?

ZELIG. You'll find him dead drunk. Berre says that he was barely able to stand on his feet.

BERRE. I didn't see him. That's merely what I was told.

BAYLYE. Where can we look for him? Where can we find him?

HINDE. Maybe he really went back into the woods.

BAYLYE. He got drunk and did violence to himself. [*Wailing*.] What's to be done? What can we even begin to do? Let's be off to the woods.

SENDER. Ha! You talk like a child. Think of her wanting to hunt for a person in the woods, at night. And here we are, just coming from the woods ourselves.

LEIVIK. We could all go.

ZELIG [*to the girls*]. Do you want to come to the woods?

HINDE and SOZYE [*look at GELYE, to see what she thinks of the proposal*].

GELYE. It's a useless task. The trouble will be in vain.

BERRE. That's so. Where can we go, for instance?

SENDER. And here we've just come from there, too.

ZELIG [*nudges SENDER significantly, and nods his head in the direction of the girls*].

SENDER [*with a wry face*]. Ow!

BAYLYE [*wrings her hands*]. What's to be done? What can we begin to do? What can we begin to do?

BERRE. He'll sleep it off somewhere, I tell you, and then come home.

GELYE. And who knows whether it was really Isaac that the watchman saw in the woods?

LEIVIK. It was, according to Petrush's description. Middle height. Blond beard. Derby.

SENDER. There's a description for you! Is he the only man that's of middle height and that wears a derby?

BAYLYE [*running about*]. What's to be done? Where can we look? Where can we find him? [*Sits down upon the further bed and weeps*.]

SILENCE

SENDER [*whispers something to LEIVIK, indicating the girls. LEIVIK listens, distraught*].

ZELIG [*to the girls*]. An awful night, isn't it?

GELYE [*sighing*]. Yes. A night of horrors.

HINDE. Ah! Such a night.

SOZYE [*shivering*]. Brrr!

ZELIG [*to LEIVIK and SENDER*]. Did you ever know a young lady as cold as this one?

SENDER. It's really an awful pity.—

[*Pause. BAYLYE's weeping is heard. BERRE stands scratching his beard. SENDER and ZELIG stand opposite the girls. They would like to open a conversation with them, and the girls are expecting it. Meanwhile the girls seek the best poses they can assume, and cast sympathetic glances towards BAYLYE. LEIVIK, too, looks at the girls, but something is on his mind.*]

ZELIG [*to the girls*]. I was telling Isaac to-day to give a ball here and to invite us.

BAYLYE. You see the kind of a ball he's given. [*Weeps louder*.]

HINDE. What do you mean? Why should he give a ball? [ZELIG *laughs and looks at SENDER. GELYE shakes her head disapprovingly, and turns away*.]

SENDER [*to ZELIG and LEIVIK, nodding towards GELYE*]. She understands why, I'll wager.

GELYE [*as before*]. Little enough to understand.

LEIVIK. I'm wondering and wondering where we can look for him.

BERRE. There's nothing left to do now. We'll have to wait till to-morrow morning. That's all there is to it. And now it's time to go home. [BAYLYE *continues to weep. Pause*.] Well, I'm going home. Good night to you all. What's the use of my idling here? Good night, all. [*Exit*.]

ZELIG [*to SENDER*]. Shall we be going, too?

SENDER. What else can we do?

ZELIG. And you, Leivik?

LEIVIK. We'd better go. We can't do anything else now.

ZELIG [*to the girls*]. Well, as hard as it is for me to tear myself away . . .

BERRE [*his voice is heard from the street*]. Isaac!

Isaac! *[All rush to the door and run outside. The room is left empty, except for the sleeping GISHINKE and old PINYE.]*

PINYE *[stands still at the door, and speaks in a moaning tone]*. Desolate! Desolate! *[Moans.]*

ISAAC *[enters, led by BERRE and LEIVIK. He is still drunk and cannot stand]*.

ZELIG *[following them, jumping and clapping his hands]*. He's here! He's here! He's here! He's here! *[BAYLYE comes back.]*

BERRE *[cheered by ISAAC's return, he speaks freely and happily, as if his guilt in ISAAC's spree had been redeemed]*. I go up the cellar-steps and I see somebody standing there,—leaning against the wall. One of his hands here, the other there,—and he is staring at the moon,—like this. I take another look: it's Isaac!

ISAAC *[in a drunken, dejected voice]*. What are you so happy about?

BERRE. Happy about? Why, man, we've been looking for you all night. And there he was, standing like this, staring at the . . .

BAYLYE. Where've you been wandering, drunk as you are?

ISAAC. I'm no longer there.

BERRE. I take a look. . . . Who can be standing there, I ask myself. . . .

BAYLYE *[to ISAAC]*. I'll grab hold of something and split your head open. I'll pour out all the bitterness of my heart on to your head,—your whole body and soul. . . . *[They try to quiet her.]*

BERRE. But, no, ha-ha. . . . I go up nearer to him—Lord of the Universe, who can it be standing like that, at night, I ask myself. So I go up nearer to him. . . .

BAYLYE. I'll teach him to borrow roubles, and spend them getting drunk! *[BERRE angrily motions her to keep quiet. BAYLYE sits down upon the further bed, weeps and mumbles to herself, every now and then breaking into a curse.]*

LEIVIK *[to ISAAC]*. Were you in the woods?

ISAAC *[drops suddenly upon the chair near the bureau and bursts into tears]*.

ZELIG *[to the girls]*. He cried to-day in the factory, too.

BAYLYE. Let him cry for his brains, and his wasted days and years. His machine is dearer to him than his wife and children.

TSIPPE *[appears at her door, only half awake]*. What's the matter?

GELYE *[hastens to her]*. Nothing. Nothing.

TSIPPE. Has he come already? Is that he crying? What's he crying about?

GELYE *[pushing her back into the room]*. Nothing, I told you. Nothing. You'll know all about it to-morrow. Go to sleep.

TSIPPE. And why are you still up? It must be late.

GELYE. Go, I'll soon come.

TSIPPE. What's this crowd here for? A regular wedding.

GELYE *[fast losing her patience]*. What are you standing there for, scratching yourself? *[Pushes her back into the room, and closes the door.]*

TSIPPE *[behind the door]*. What are you pushing me about for? Hey?

GELYE *[returns to her place. SENDER and ZELIG smile at her]*.

ISAAC *[raising his hands above his head]*. How unhappy I feel! How unhappy! How unhappy! . . .

BAYLYE. He feels unhappy! May unhappiness blight his whole life! Goes and gets drunk. . . .

ISAAC. Leivik, I feel unhappy! Un-hap-py! *[Rubs his chest.]*

LEIVIK. Why, Isaac! You're acting just like a child!

BERRE. In all my life I've never seen such a person!

ISAAC. Leivik, I am wretched.

LEIVIK. What do you mean, wretched? Don't be foolish.

SENDER. Don't be a chump, and go to bed.

SOZYE *[shivering]*. That's really the best thing to do.

ISAAC. I feel wretched, Leivik.— Even you don't understand me.

LEIVIK. I understand you very well.

BAYLYE *[sarcastically]*. He's so deep, you've got to study to understand him!

ISAAC. I feel wretched, Leivik.— I was in the woods. I was there . . .

LEIVIK. Petrush, the watchman told me that he had seen you there. We've been hunting for you all night long.

BAYLYE. He wasn't worth the trouble. The drunkard!

BERRE *[motioning her to keep silent]*. Well, I'm going home now. Time to go to bed. Who's coming along? Nobody? Then I'll go myself. Good night. I advise all of you to go home and leave him alone to sleep it off! That's the best thing. Well. Good night. *[Exit.]*

LEIVIK. I guess I'll be going, too. Undress, Isaac, and lie down to sleep.

ISAAC *[seizing LEIVIK's hand]*. I feel wretched. I feel wretched. *[LEIVIK looks at the others, and shrugs his shoulders.]*

ZELIG *[to the girls]*. I don't feel a bit sleepy. In fact, I'd enjoy a nice walk now. It's such a beautiful night. Who'll come along?

GELYE. Not I. I'd prefer to go to sleep. Good night, everybody. *[Runs into her room.]*

ZELIG and SENDER *[bowing]*. Good night, mademoiselle!

ZELIG. And remember to dream of me. *[To HINDE and SOZYE.]* Well, what do you say? *[SOZYE looks to HINDE for a reply.]*

HINDE *[to SOZYE]*. Do you want to go?

SOZYE. Trifle too late, isn't it?

HINDE. Well, then we'll go to sleep, too. Good night.

SENDER. We, also.

ZELIG. Are you going to stay, Leivik?

LEIVIK *[shows his hand, which ISAAC still clutches, and shrugs his shoulders]*.

[SENDER and ZELIG, HINDE and SOZYE, go to the outer door, where they stand chatting and laughing, out of view.]

BAYLYE *[arises, going over to the forward bed and bringing the cradle near to it. She turns down the wick of the lamp, takes off her shoes, places the sleeping GISHINKE nearer to the wall, gets into bed and covers herself]*.

LEIVIK. Lie down to sleep, Isaac. Go to bed.

ISAAC. My heart is heavy. My heart is heavy.

BAYLYE. Sober up and it'll feel light again.

ISAAC. I was in the woods. I went there right from the factory. You know I didn't really want to go there. But I went, I had to go, Something made me go,—made me rush onward, onward, onward.

BAYLYE. Say yourself: isn't he talking like a madman?

LEIVIK. You shouldn't have drunk the brandy that Berre gave you.

BAYLYE. To borrow money and get drunk on it!

ISAAC. I wouldn't have drunk it. But he brought it close to my nostrils, and the smell of it went to my head, and through all my being, and I had to drink.

BAYLYE. Had to drink! He had to drink! The law forced him to!

LEIVIK. You should have gone home, and to bed.

ISAAC. Something made me rush onward. I dashed through the streets. And I came to the woods. The streets felt so narrow to me. In the streets there was no room to think. Only when I reached the free fields did I myself feel free, and unrestricted. And a heaviness came over my heart. Ah, how heavy, how heavy, how heavy!

BAYLYE [*angrily*]. Go to sleep, and let me sleep, too.

ISAAC. Then only was I able to think, to understand. And I felt it all,—I felt it all!— [*From the outer door comes the sound of laughter.*]

BAYLYE. And those ninnies there are giggling, the . . .

DOBBE [*from her room*]. What's going on there, anyway? Hey? [*The outer door is quickly closed.*]

HINDE [*from the outer room*]. Isaac's come back. . . .

DOBBE [*as before*]. But who just went out? [*Silence.*]

ISAAC. I felt that I was an orphan, after having destroyed my press and my machine.

LEIVIK. Now, aren't you the fool? You'll certainly be able to . . .

ISAAC. And in my heart there was a gnawing misery, because I was so helpless, so helpless, so helpless. Do you understand? I have the will, the vision, but not the ability. I want to do something, you understand, and I

can't. And yet, I can! Do you understand,—I know that I can. And . . . And . . . And . . . You said to-day in the factory that sometimes when you see a fine painting, you become so sad, and some one seems to be inside of you, tugging away at your heart, tugging.

LEIVIK. Just the same you see it doesn't unnerve me. It keeps tugging away until it stops. You've got to be a man. . . .

BAYLYE [*turning around so that she faces the wall*]. A fine man he is!

ISAAC. I'm a different sort of a person. I raised my hands in the open fields and began to shriek, shriek, shrie-e-ek!

BAYLYE. Shriek your head off! What are you shrieking now for? Let us sleep! He'll wake the children yet.

ISAAC. There was something that I wanted to shriek out of me. Before my eyes stood the press and the braiding-machine, ruined, smashed to bits, wrecked. . . . *My press, my machine.*

LEIVIK. Say yourself, Isaac. Aren't you the fool?

ISAAC. But all that is nothing aside of the fact that I can't accomplish the things I feel in me,—I can't, I can't, I can't!

BAYLYE. Please, Leivik, go home. Then he'll go to bed, too.

ISAAC. When I came to the woods I began to beat the trees, to bite them, to tear them, strike my head against them, my hands, my feet. And my heart didn't feel even one hair lighter. I threw myself down on the earth, writhed and tossed about. . . .

LEIVIK. Heavens!

ISAAC. I tore up the grass, bit the earth. And suddenly there rolled out of my pocket a couple of coins.

. . . [*His speech shows signs of his extreme exhaustion.*] And when I saw the money, I was seized with a desire to drink, drink, drink.

LEIVIK. Really, I thought more of you than that.

BAYLYE [*snores, and says something in her sleep*].

PINYE [*arises, and commences to walk about the room*].

LEIVIK. Well, I'll be going now. And you go to sleep. And be a little bit more of a man. You mustn't lose courage at the very first!

ISAAC. The drinking didn't relieve me. It still gnawed and gnawed inside of me. And I roamed through the streets, everywh— and it kept on gnawing, gnawing. Do you understand? There I was, unable to stand on my feet, yet my head was clear.

LEIVIK. Have a good sleep and you'll wake up a different man in the morning.

ISAAC. You can sleep off such thoughts. But I— [*Shakes his head.*] No. I'll not sleep mine off. Tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after next, I'll be consumed and crazed by the thought that I can't accomplish what I feel in me,—that I can't, I can't. Chains fetter my hands, heavy weights oppress my mind. . . .

LEIVIK. That's why I'm telling you I thought you had more sense. You know how badly I wanted to become an artist. But I say to myself, "Well, it wasn't to be. That's all. If you can't go over, you've got to go under!"

ISAAC. I'm different, I tell you. I'm a different sort of person. No brandy can bring me relief, neither can sleep.

LEIVIK. That remains to be seen. Just have a good sleep.

ISAAC [*arises, uncertain on his feet*]. You see? I can barely stand, you see? Yet inside of me there's that gnawing at my heart, and my mind cannot forget. It's a trifle dizzy, but it cannot forget. [*Takes a few steps toward LEIVIK, wavers, and falls with his head towards the cupboard.*]

BAYLYE [*aroused by the noise*]. What's the matter? What's the matter?

LEIVIK. Isaac fell. I'll pick him up and put him to bed.

BAYLYE [*falling asleep again*]. For my part he may sleep forever.

ISAAC. Don't pick me up, Leivik. I feel all right this way. Let me lie. I don't need any bed.

LEIVIK [*raising him*]. But you can't lie like this all night long.

ISAAC. I'll lie right here. Don't pick me up, Leivik. Let the cold earth cool my feverish head. I feel better here.

LEIVIK. You're crazy. Well, good-night. Who'll close the door?

ISAAC. You may leave it open. No thieves will come here.

LEIVIK. Don't you think I'd better put you into bed?

ISAAC. No. I prefer this place. It cools my head.

LEIVIK. Well, good-night.

[*Exit.*]

ISAAC. Good-night, Leivik.

HINDE [*from the outer room*]. How is he? Asleep already?

LEIVIK [*from the outer room*]. Not at all! He's lying on the floor. [*LEIVIK and HINDE appear at the outer door.*]

HINDE. Fie! Get up, Isaac!

LEIVIK. Isaac, hadn't I better. . . . [ISAAC is silent. LEIVIK makes a gesture of despair and leaves.]

HINDE. Dead drunk. [Disappears after LEIVIK. Both remain talking for a while in the outer room. HINDE's laughter is heard, followed by "Good-night!" from LEIVIK. The street door is heard being closed. Silence. HINDE appears once more at the outer door, looks at ISAAC, utters several expressions of disgust and disappears.— The room becomes even darker; the glass lamp-chimney has gathered soot. Only a small circle of light about the table is visible, barely revealing the form of PINYE, who walks about slowly.]

PINYE [soon coming to a stop over ISAAC]. Dead. Dead.

ISAAC [sobbing]. Yes, Death. Death.

PINYE. [resumes his pacing]. Dead. Everything. Dark. Cold. Dark and cold. And buried. And decayed. And devoured by worms. And dark. And cold. Cold. Cold. [Stops and utters strange sounds, sharp, sibilant, like those of a moaning dog.]

ISAAC [he has sat up and buried his head in his hands. Suddenly he turns around and stretches himself out on his stomach, with his face to the cupboard].

BAYLYE [turning over and talking in her sleep]. How terribly unhappy I am. Terribly, terribly . . .

PINYE [ceases moaning and resumes walking about]. Dark. Dark. Dark. [Moans as before.]

ISAAC [sits up suddenly with a horrible outcry]. Baylye, I've swallowed the rat-poison! Baylye! Quick! I've swallowed the poison! I didn't want to do it, Baylye, I don't want to die! Baylye, quick!

BAYLYE [jumping out of bed, terrified]. What has happened? Good God! What has happened?

ISAAC. Baylye, I didn't mean to do it! I didn't mean to! I don't want to. I don't want to . . .

BAYLYE. What don't you want? Good God, what has happened?

ISAAC [sitting up, his feet stretched out and his head sinking over, his hands in his hair]. I've swallowed the rat-poison. I didn't want to die. I don't want to die. [BAYLYE goes into hysterics. PINYE stands over ISAAC, inquisitively. The children wake up and commence to cry.— There is a sound of opening doors and pattering of bare feet.]

ISAAC [shrieking]. I don't want to die! I don't want to—!

CURTAIN