

(The light rises on the jail cell—moonlight casting shadows through the bars at a later angle. No light falls on either cot, but on the space between them. The town clock strikes two. The dim light gradually reveals the forms of the two men, each motionless, seemingly asleep. HENRY stirs, coughs, gets up restlessly, paces a few times, goes to the barred casement. His hand reaches up in the white clarity of the moonlight. He touches the bars. Then, with a musical fancy, he pretends to pluck each bar as if it were a harp-string.)

HENRY *(Imitating the sound of a harp-string.)*

Ting . . . ting . . . ting . . . tang.

(He riffles the bars as if he were doing arpeggios, which he vocalizes idly. Stops suddenly, looks toward his cellmate.)

In the prison of heaven, that's how the angels make music.

(He paces.)

I am told.

(Paces some more.)

Not having been there.

(Paces more.)

And not likely to be invited.

(HENRY sits on his own cot and talks to the sleeping BAILEY.)

You know what the government said to me, Bailey? "Your money or your life." I won't give it my money. And they think they have my life!

(Laughs a little.)

Only my body. I'm a free man. Free to touch my nose if I like.

(He touches his nose.)

Or not.

(He takes his hand down.)

Free to stand. Or not to stand. They can't lock up my thoughts! What I believe goes easily through these walls—as if the stones were air.

(*He gestures front—where the wall, in fact, does not exist.*)

The state is so afraid of us, Bailey, that it locks us up. The state is timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons! We have frightened her out of her wits.

(*The light comes up on LYDIAN.*)

LYDIAN

Henry, you have wits enough to know that, in order to get along, you have to go along!

(*HENRY the volcano erupts again.*)

HENRY (*Shouting, contemptuously.*)

GO ALONG! GO ALONG! GO ALONG!

(*LYDIAN has reached for a little straw berry-basket.*)

LYDIAN

Edward?

(*The little boy comes running to her.*)

Go along with Mr. Thoreau.

EDWARD

Where are we going?

(*HENRY saunters down from the cell onto the thrust. Rakishly he puts on the wide-brimmed straw hat which he wore before. The thrust becomes a sunny meadow.*)

HENRY

Huckleberry-hunting, my boy! Would you like to study composition with Mozart? Painting with Michelangelo? Study huckleberry-hunting with Thoreau, it's the same thing!

(*EDWARD laughs; LYDIAN slips off as the huckleberry-hunters parade through the sun-drenched field.*)

Now, when I was your age—if I was ever your age—my mother used to bake huckleberry pudding. Best in Concord. But all my Mama and my Papa and Uncle Charlie and Aunt Louisa and my brother John got—all they got—was the pudding. I had the glory of discovering the huckleberries! A half-day of wild adventure under the Concord sky.

EDWARD

How do you find huckleberries? I want to discover some!

HENRY (*Imparting a great secret.*)

Huckleberries are very difficult to find. Because most people think that . . . they're over there!

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(*He makes a dramatic gesture.*)

EDWARD

Should I go over there?

HENRY

No, sir! The best huckleberries have a sly way . . . of being . . . exactly . . . where . . . you . . . are . . . standing! Here! (*He bends down quickly, picks an imaginary huckleberry.*) The trick of it is: you have to know where to stand!

EDWARD (*Plucking one.*)

Can I taste one? Right now?

HENRY (*Thinking.*)

Well . . . yes. But for every one you taste, you have to take two home.

EDWARD (*Tasting.*)

Mmmmm . . . They're good! Where's your basket?

HENRY

I use my hat. Since my head is precisely the size of a huckleberry pudding!

(*EDWARD runs about, seeming to gather huckleberries.*)

EDWARD (*Shouts.*)

Here's a whole patch of them!

HENRY

Ahhh, you have talent—no doubt about it.

EDWARD (*Running from bush to bush.*)

Let's race and see who can get the most first.

(*But HENRY is no racer. He has paused to savor a particular berry.*)

HENRY (*Swallowing, benignly.*)

That was a happy huckleberry!

(*Little EDWARD is plunging about, grasping handfuls of huckleberries as fast as he can.*)

EDWARD

Look! I've got more than you have!

HENRY

Everybody does.

(*With deliberate relaxation, HENRY is plucking the berries, tossing them in his hat. His ease and calm is in contrast with the boy's bounding energy. HENRY seems to be choosing the precise berry at each bush—the one which promises the best flavor.*)

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EDWARD

How does a huckleberry get to be a huckleberry instead of a straw-berry?

HENRY

Well, there are a number of books on the subject. But *meeting* a huckleberry makes you more of an expert than any botanist who ever wrote a dull book.

(*Now EDWARD has completely filled his basket, and comes running joyfully to HENRY, to show him.*)

EDWARD

Look! Look, Henry! Mine's all the way to the top. Mama should've given me a bigger basket!

(*Suddenly the running boy trips, falls—and the whole basket of berries—imaginary—spills out over the ground. EDWARD is aghast at the accident. His bright-eyed ecstasy turns to tears.*)

They're all spilled and spoiled!

(*HENRY drops to his knees, puts his arm around the shoulders of the dejected boy, who sobs uncontrollably.*)

HENRY

Don't you know, what you've done? You have planted whole patches of huckleberries, for an entire generation of Edward Emersons!

EDWARD

I have . . . ?

(*Through his subsiding tears.*)

How?

HENRY

Because that's the way things are: Nature has provided that little boys gathering huckleberries should, now and then, stumble and scatter the berries. Edward, you have been as helpful as a honey-bee!

EDWARD (*Now delighted.*)

Let's pick some more—and *spill 'em!*

(*With a grin, EDWARD wipes his sleeve across his eyes, reversing his previous misery. HENRY pours his handful of huckleberries into Edward's basket. EDWARD looks up into his face.*)

But those are yours . . . !

HENRY (*Solemnly.*)

I surrender title.

EDWARD

What does that mean?

HENRY

Like most of the voodoo of ownership, it means absolutely nothing. (*The boy takes HENRY'S hand.*)

EDWARD

Henry. I wish you were my father . . . !

(*HENRY looks at the boy, wishing he were, too, but not saying it. The lighting fades on them and simultaneously rises on LYDIAN, who is seated, writing a letter. She looks up as HENRY and EDWARD walk into the EMERSON area. EDWARD swings his basket of borrowed huckleberries . . . but carefully!*)

EDWARD (*Running to his mother.*)

These are for you, Mama!

(*And he gives the basket to LYDIAN.*)

LYDIAN

My, what a present! Thank you, Edward.

EDWARD

(*The honesty forcing it out of him.*)

I guess—really—you should thank Henry.

LYDIAN (*Correcting him.*)

Mr. Thoreau, dear.

EDWARD

Henry says I should call him "Henry."

HENRY

There's not too much formality in the huckleberry-hunting business. (*They laugh a little.*)

EDWARD

And, Mama, I've asked Henry to be my father.

(*LYDIAN and HENRY look at each other. HENRY shrugs, a bit embarrassed.*)

LYDIAN

Oh? What about your real father?

EDWARD

He's never here. He's always 'way on the other side of the ocean, or out somewhere making speeches, or up in his room where I can't disturb him. But Henry—
(*A pause.*)

HENRY

—is here.

(*LYDIAN hesitates, then hands the basket back to EDWARD.*)

LYDIAN

Take your huckleberries to the kitchen, will you, dear?
(*The boy starts off, then turns, at the edge of the light.*)

EDWARD (*With a fresh thought.*)

If Henry's my father, that means you've got a husband, Mama. Not in England or someplace else all the time, but right here in our house. Wouldn't that be nicer? For you?

(*LYDIAN and HENRY exchange glances, and the boy goes off.*)

LYDIAN

I—I suppose it isn't wise. For you to keep on working here while Waldo's away.

HENRY

Please don't be afraid of me . . .

LYDIAN

Shouldn't I be?

(*She gets up, resolutely.*)

Oh, you're going to tell me that you have too much respect. For the Sage of Concord.

HENRY

And his wife.

LYDIAN

Respect is based on friendship. And friendship is based on love. And love is so . . . accidental. Isn't it, Henry?

(*HENRY moistens his lips.*)

HENRY

We love without knowing it. A man—or a woman—can't love on schedule. I don't wake up in the morning and say: "I shall start loving

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at nine-twenty, and continue until ten-fifteen." Yes, it is accidental. And it's everywhere—it's the wind, the tide, the waves, the sunshine.

LYDIAN (*Very quietly.*)

Henry. If love is all around you, like huckleberries—why do you pick loneliness?

(*EDWARD bursts in carrying a protesting live chicken.*)

EDWARD

Mama! Henry! Look what happened to the chicken's feet!
(*The boy holds up the chicken.*)

He's wearing gloves!

LYDIAN

No, Edward, that's not poss—it is wearing gloves!

(*She turns, puzzled, to HENRY.*)

HENRY (*A little sheepishly.*)

The other day you said they were scratching in your garden, uprooting your rose plants. So I gave a little elegance to the ladies of the henhouse. They've scratched their last. Your roses are safe.

LYDIAN (*Examining the chicken-gloves.*)

You made these for all the chickens?

HENRY

I'm opposed to social distinctions. Once one chicken is gloved, you can't expect the other ladies to go about bare-clawed.
(*They laugh.*)

EDWARD (*Eagerly.*)

Can I take him out and show him to everybody?

LYDIAN

He's a "she," dear. Yes, I suppose you can.

HENRY

But bring the lady home and latch the gate. If you want an omelette for breakfast.

(*EDWARD scurries off with the chicken.*)

LYDIAN

My roses thank you.

HENRY

Oh, they're very welcome.

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LYDIAN

Get married, Henry. Find a face—and teach yourself to love it.

HENRY

I have.

(LYDIAN looks at him quizzically.)

But I'm a crusty and resolute bachelor. And Nature is my mother-in-law.

LYDIAN

There are so many pretty young girls—

HENRY

I would drive them promptly into old age. I'm not that cruel.

LYDIAN

You need a brain to toss on the pillow next to you. What about Margaret Fuller?

(HENRY repeats the name, as if he were rinsing it out of his mouth.)

HENRY

Margaret . . . Fuller . . . ? Oh, I couldn't marry her.

LYDIAN

Why not?

HENRY

Two reasons. First, I'm not stupid enough to ask her. Second, she'd never be stupid enough to accept.
(Turning.)

You want to be a matchmaker, Lydian? Find me something innocent and natural and uncomplicated. A shrub-oak. A cloud. A leaf lost in the snow.

LYDIAN

But isn't it lonely, Henry?

HENRY

Lonely!

(He laughs.)

I am no more lonely, Lydian, than the North Star, or the South Wind, or the first spider in a new house.

(Then gently.)

What about your loneliness? Is it enough to go to bed each night with

nothing but a letter from England? Telling about your husband's overwhelming passion . . . for Carlyle?

(She looks down. HENRY reaches out, touching her sleeve.)

Isn't it a pity that you are so "safe" with me?

(In the cell, BAILEY seems in the midst of a conversation.)

BAILEY

I'm skeered of a trial. I ain't got no lawyer. 'Course the food ain't too bad here.

(HENRY has crossed back into the cell and the lights have faded on LYDIAN.)

Would you be my lawyer?

HENRY (Stops short.)

I'm no lawyer!

BAILEY

Couldn't you be one—for me? You talk like a lawyer. And you're smart as most.

HENRY

Bailey, I would give you my coat, or my shoes, or my last peck of beans; I would chop wood for you, or push a wheelbarrow for you. But I would not stoop to being a lawyer for anyone! I think Lucifer was a lawyer: that's why the Devil still gives advice to Presidents.

BAILEY

Who'm I gonna get?

HENRY

If I were God, Bailey—instead of just a speck of Him—I wouldn't let you die away in the dark.

(BAILEY is panicky. He gets up from the cot.)

BAILEY

Tell me what to do!

HENRY (Rubbing his chin.)

Well, you might try getting yourself born in a more just and generous age. That's not a very practical suggestion.

(Another thought.)

I suppose you could try prayer.

BAILEY

I'm not very good at it.

HENRY

Neither am I.

BAILEY

But could you say one for me?

HENRY

Is the Lord so almighty absentminded that He needs a tap on the shoulder—to remind Him that Adam had children?

BAILEY

A prayer couldn't hurt none.

HENRY

All right. Let's send God a telegram.

(*He clasps his hands in semi-solennity.*)

"Blessed Are the Young,

For they do not read the President's speeches.

Blessed Are They who never read a newspaper,

For they shall see Nature and, through her, God.

And Blessed is Bailey, for he's a good fellow

and deserves better treatment than you've been giving him—even though he is a man of letters.

Amen."

BAILEY

Amen. Do you think it got through?

HENRY

I wouldn't know. I don't usually pray with words. I prefer a flute.

(*As BAILEY sinks back onto his cot, the lights dip in the cell.* HENRY

moves forward into the amber sunlight of the forestage, and the back-

ground takes on again the leaf-woven texture of the Walden woods.

HENRY *reaches for a flute and begins to play something strange and*

peaceful—an unconventional forest idyll. The shadowy figure of a

man climbs out of the pit as HENRY plays. Crouching, the man creeps

through the brush, unseen by HENRY. The man is WILLIAMS, a black

in dirty, tattered clothes. He is husky but terrified. Still HENRY does not

notice him, although he thinks he may have been detected—so he darts

behind another imaginary bush. With a sigh, HENRY puts aside his

flute and bends down to reach for something on the ground. WILLIAMS thinks he is going for a gun. He leaps onto the back of the astonished HENRY, clamping a huge hand over HENRY's mouth.)

WILLIAMS

You ain't takin' no gun on me!

(*Calmly HENRY rotates the handle of the implement he was reaching for. It is a hoe. WILLIAMS relaxes a little, takes his hand off HENRY's mouth.*)

HENRY

You thought this was a rifle? A rifle's no good for hoeing beans.

(*He is gentle.*)

Mind if I go ahead?

(*WILLIAMS is afraid, uncertain.*)

There isn't a gun within three-quarters of a mile of here.

(*HENRY is unhanded and begins to hoe. The black watches.*)

What can I do for you?

WILLIAMS

I need vittles. Gimme some vittles!

HENRY

Well, sit down, neighbor. It'll take about three weeks for these beans to come up.

WILLIAMS

By then I'll be sleepin' wi' them beans! I gotta git to Cañada.

HENRY

To where?

WILLIAMS

Cañada. Cañada! North as I kin git! They say the Norther ya git, the free-er ya git!

HENRY (*As he hoes.*)

There's a quarter loaf of bread inside the hut. Help yourself.

(*WILLIAMS starts to move in the direction HENRY has indicated—then hesitates, turns back.*)

WILLIAMS

You trustin' me to go inside your place? Without you watchin'?

HENRY

Why not?

(WILLIAMS pauses—then darts into the shadows while HENRY placidly hoes his beans. Then he calls toward the off-stage hut.)

If you want to stay till supper, I'll catch us a fish. What's your name?
(Almost immediately WILLIAMS reappears with a chunk of bread which he chews on ravenously.)

WILLIAMS (His mouth full.)

Williams.

HENRY

I'm Henry Thoreau.

(He reaches out his hand. WILLIAMS marvels—then reaches out tentatively for HENRY's handshake, first wiping his hand on his pant-leg.)

Williams your first name or your last name?

WILLIAMS

It's all my name.

(Suddenly.)

But I ain't no slave. I ain't goin' back to bein' no slave. No man gonna take me back.

(With fire.)

I borned myself two weeks ago.

HENRY

Good for you, Mr. Williams.

WILLIAMS

I belonged to Mr. Williams. I was Mr. Williams' Williams. No more.

(HENRY studies him. WILLIAMS is wary.)

You gonna turn me in?

HENRY

I've got no more stomach for slavery than you do. Here you're as free as I am.

(WILLIAMS begins to breathe more easily. He looks around.)

WILLIAMS

How come you live like a black man? In a slave shack?

HENRY (Laughs.)

Maybe to prove that less is more. You see, I'm really very wealthy; I just don't have any money, that's all.

WILLIAMS (Still suspicious.)

Where's your wife? An' chillun?

HENRY

Well, my bride is this bean patch, Mr. Williams. And I've adopted several woodchucks. And a few rather unappreciative squirrels.

WILLIAMS

Nobody "Mistered" me before—not ever.

HENRY

You better get used to it. If you're going to be a free man. You'll have to have a first name, too—oh, you don't *have* to. But it's handy.

WILLIAMS (Tentatively.)

Henry, maybe . . . ? Could I call myself "Mr. Henry's Williams" . . . ?

HENRY

No!

WILLIAMS (Startled.)

Why you shoutin' at me?

HENRY

You don't belong to anybody, sir. Except yourself. Least of all to me. Watch out—or you'll run right into what you're running away from.

WILLIAMS (Tasting it.)

Henry . . . Williams . . .

HENRY

If you don't like the fit of that, there's a David in my name; you can have it, I don't use it much.

WILLIAMS

I like Henry Williams! That sound good! That's a free man's name!

(He cups his hands and shouts.)

HENRY WILLIAMS!

HENRY

But there's slavery in the North, too. Every man shackled to a ten-hour-a-day job is a *work*-slave. Every man who has to worry about next month's rent is a *money*-slave. Don't let that happen to you, Mr. Williams. Keep free!

WILLIAMS

I do feel free—here—now! With you. Never before. I hain't scared now.

HENRY

Why should you be?

WILLIAMS (*Abruptly.*)

You let me stay here? I'll work. Take my chances with the law. I'm good at hidin'! Nobody know I'm here!

HENRY

I welcome you here. But . . . you've got to find your *own* Walden, Henry Williams! Where they don't have sickening laws which keep black men in suppression. Here in Massachusetts, the color of your face is a flag. You can't hide blackness in blindness. If you want any light in your life, you'll have to find a place to live where men think of themselves as *men*—not as *white* men.

(*Putting his hand on WILLIAMS' shoulder.*)

Go to "Canyada"!

(*The light fades on the black man and the white man in the foreground. In the EMERSONS' area, the light picks up WALDO in the midst of an argument. His stance is twisted—almost a contortion—as if he were trying to stand simultaneously on opposite sides of a question—which he is.*)

WALDO

I have cast my vote! I've done it. I put it in the ballot-box. What more do you expect me to do?

(*HENRY moves into the scene.*)

HENRY (*Aflame with indignation.*)

Cast your whole vote. Not just a strip of paper! Your whole *influence!*

WALDO (*Turning.*)

We have to go along with the majority—!

HENRY (*Exasperated.*)

"Go along!"

WALDO (*Reasonably.*)

Henry, one must consider the economic and sociological ramifications. When white people and black try to live together, it's infinitely complicated.

HENRY (*Pounding his fist in the palm of his hand.*)

Then simplify! Simplify!

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WALDO (*Shaking his head.*)

You complicate things all the more by *rushing* them. You're a naturalist, Henry. You understand the slow evolving of the seasons. It's the same with human relationships. You can't rush a sunrise.

HENRY (*With tethered anger.*)

When a man leaps from a moving freight train—and tries to scramble through the woods to cross the border into Cañada—

WALDO

Where?

HENRY (*Impatiently.*)

Into Canada! A free-er country even though they still have the Crown. But they *don't* have a Fugitive Slave Law. When a man, at the border of freedom, is stopped by the rifle of a Boston policeman, he doesn't have time for Dr. Emerson's leisurely sermon on "the slow evolving of the seasons."

WALDO

Henry, I am just as shocked at the death of this man as you are. What was his name?

HENRY (*Quietly.*)

Henry Williams. A new man. With a new name. Hardly used!

WALDO

I am just as concerned—

HENRY

Are you? To you, Henry Williams is an abstraction. You may be able to use him sometime as a digression in a Lyceum lecture.

WALDO

How can you be so unpleasant to me when I'm trying to agree with you?

(*The fever between the men is rising.*)

HENRY

I expect more from you than from anybody else; that's why I'm more disappointed in you.

WALDO

Well, *what* do you expect of me?

HENRY

Speak out!

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WALDO
I speak.

HENRY

It's not enough. Shout!

WALDO

I am not a shouter.

HENRY

Not with your voice-box! With your brain! Waldo, I can't reach anybody. I can't catch the attention of people. Nobody listens to me. (*Passionately.*)

But my God, you are EMERSON!

(*There are almost tears in HENRY'S eyes as he experiences a mixture of admiration and contempt for his idol.*)

Darling of the Lyceum, Lord of the Lecture Circuit! Every word you say from the platform is treasured, like an heirloom. Stand up, Waldo, and say what you believe!

WALDO (*Distantly.*)

Sometimes I think I invented you, Henry. Or at least prophesied you. Because you *live* what I talk about. I couldn't exist the way you do, Henry; I like my warm toast and tea and soft-boiled egg brought to me on a tray in bed each morning. Whenever I even *think* of Walden, I get a cold. But I admire you, Henry, I really do. You're my walking ethic!

(HENRY *stares at WALDO, marveling at how he can drift off the point.*) Those are the exact words I used to describe you to Carlyle. Did you know that I told Carlyle about you?

HENRY (*Frustrated, turning away.*)

I don't care what you told Carlyle.

WALDO

I said to Carlyle: "Of all the men in Concord, Henry Thoreau is the best of the lot!" That's what I told him.

(*Enjoying quoting himself.*)

"A poet as full of buds of promise as a young apple tree." That's what I said.

HENRY

Waldo, don't talk *about* me—talk *to* me. Listen to me.

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WALDO (*His thoughts still in England.*)

Whu—? How was that?

HENRY (*Evenly.*)

Can you lie in bed every morning? Have your breakfast brought to you—your soft-boiled egg, your toast and tea? Can you lift your right hand to your mouth while your left hand—which is also you—your government—is killing men in Mexico? How can you swallow, Waldo? How can you taste? How can you breathe? You cast your ballot with your right hand—but has your left hand killed Henry Williams, running to be free!

WALDO

Because I don't rant like Jeremiah, do you think I'm not outraged? I do what *can* be done!

HENRY

That's not enough. Do the impossible. That's what you tell people in your lectures. But you don't really believe any of it, do you? You trundle up and down New England, stepping to the lectern with that beneficent smile, accepting the handshake of mayors and the polite applause of little old ladies. You go on singing your spineless benedictions.

WALDO

What I say is not spineless!

(LYDIAN *enters, drawn by their raised voices.*)

HENRY

Well, occasionally you've sounded a battle-cry. But you—you yourself—refuse to hear it.

WALDO (*Squirming.*)

You are a very difficult man!

HENRY

Good. The world is too full of *easy* men.

WALDO

Do you want me to go out and advocate violence and rebellion?

HENRY

I ask you to *stop* violence. As for rebellion, do you think this country was hatched from a soft-boiled egg???

(*Gesturing.*)

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Look around Concord; what do you see? We have become everything we protested against!

WALDO

And what are you doing about it, young man? You pull the woods up over your head. You resign from the human race. Could your woodchucks, with all their wisdom, have saved Henry Williams? Are your fish going to build roads, teach school, put out fires?

(For a moment, HENRY is caught without a ready reply.)

Oh, it's very simple for a hermit to sit off at a distance and proclaim exactly how things should be. But what if everybody did that? Where would we be?

HENRY

Where are we, Waldo?

WALDO

We are at war. I am aware of it.

HENRY

Are you aware of the reasons—slave-holders grasping for more slave territory? More slavery and less freedom, is that what you want?

WALDO

Henry, we must work within the framework of our laws. The end to this war—the condition of the blacks—this is the business of the President. And the Congress.

HENRY

Do you really believe that? Then I guess I'm wrong. I thought you had the same disgust that I have for what the military is doing. But if it doesn't trouble you, then I must've made a mistake.

(With acid sarcasm.)

You're right to keep still. I'll go back to the woods—and leave you at peace with your war.

(WALDO is in genuine pain. He glances at his wife.)

WALDO (After a pause.)

All right, my young conscience. What shall I do?

HENRY

Declare yourself!

(Another pause.)

WALDO

I will. Absolutely. The next time the occasion arises——

HENRY (Fiercely.)

NOW! A year ago was too late! I'll get you an audience. This afternoon. At Concord Square!

(HENRY strides out of the light. WALDO, troubled, looks at LYDIAN in silence. The light falls away on the EMERSONS. A bell-rope drops from the flies as the light comes up on the thrust. HENRY springs up, grasps the rope, and swings on it. A bell from above peals, a reverberating command. People begin to assemble, curious and excited.)

FARMER (Running on.)

Fire someplace?

WOMAN

What's the news? Is the war over?

SAM

What you doin' up there, Henry? What's goin' on?

(There is a growing babble of voices as the crowd gathers. HENRY lets go of the rope as the swinging bell dies away.)

HENRY

Dr. Emerson's coming. To speak. He's promised to make a statement! Now. Right here. Can't wait!

MOTHER (Rushing on.)

Oh, David Henry! Are you riling everybody up again?

HENRY

Emerson is going to rile up the whole country. And you're going to hear it first!

FARMER

Is he going to say something or give a sermon?

(HENRY laughs, jubilantly.)

HENRY

Both! God willing!

(Others are gathering.)

SAM

Dr. Emerson gonna speak now?

HENRY

I just left him! He's on his way.

(There is a babble of anticipation. One man—probably a local newspaperman—draws out a pad and pencil, prepared to write.)

VOICE

And no lecture charge, neither!
(There is a pause as they wait. They're getting a little restless.)

WOMAN

Well, where is he?
(Several start to go. The reporter puts away his pad.)

HENRY (Confidently.)

Don't worry! He's coming. He'll be here!

(LYDIAN enters slowly, her head down. The crowd falls back to let her through. She comes up to HENRY. Silently she looks into his face. She clears her throat.)

LYDIAN

Dr. Emerson has asked me to tell you—

HENRY (Gray.)

Yes?

LYDIAN

—that he wants more time to meditate on these matters.

(HENRY does not move, merely stares at her.)

So that he can write a careful essay setting forth his position.

HENRY

And he gave his wife the happy job of coming here to tell us? Like a walking-written-excuse to a schoolmaster, saying: "So sorry, Johnny cannot come today, he's in bed with the croup"?

(LYDIAN shares HENRY'S feeling, but her loyalty to her husband is unshakable.)

LYDIAN

Waldo wants to collect his thoughts.

HENRY (Outraged.)

What is this, the winter of our content? By the time he "collects his thoughts," they'll be dead as dandelions under the snow.

(The crowd is restless and begins to disintegrate.)

FARMER

Well, we come running to the fire, but nobody lit it. That's Henry for ya.

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(As the crowd wanders off, HENRY stares at LYDIAN. Slowly, he turns away from her and starts to go, too.)

LYDIAN (Stopping him.)

Henry—my husband loves you—as much as any man can love another man . . .

(HENRY stops, but his back is still to LYDIAN.)

HENRY (Shaking his head.)

My God, he was my god! No more! If he is the Deity, I am a doubter!

LYDIAN

Why do you enjoy hurting him?

HENRY (Wheeling on her.)

He hurts me!

(They are both talking at once, their speeches overlapping.)

LYDIAN

He cares what you think, and so he gets excited and overstates himself—

HENRY

Patronizing, that's what he is. I won't sit at the foot of his pulpit!

LYDIAN

When he talks to you—

HENRY

He never talks to me! Was he talking to me just now?

(Bitterly.)

He was in England, pontificating with Carlyle!

LYDIAN

You widen the distance—

HENRY

It's a waste of breath, talking to your husband. Trying to have a sane discussion with him. I lose my time, almost my identity—

LYDIAN

I hear you both. You wrangle and tussle like boys in a cricket match. Fitting and pushing and kicking each other—not for the sake of the idea, just playing to win!

HENRY (Coldly.)

Your husband, Mrs. Emerson, has the misfortune of being a gentleman. And famous. And he is drowning in his own success.

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LYDIAN

My husband's best friend doesn't even know who my husband is! You've drawn some ideal in your mind, some imaginary Waldo—the way you want him to be. Please, Henry, give him the same liberty he gives you—to be what you are.

(HENRY looks down, doesn't answer. Everyone has gone now. LYDIAN would like to say, "I'm sorry, Henry, I wish I could comfort you"—but she doesn't. Quickly, LYDIAN moves off. HENRY looks around at the empty square which was recently so full of people.)

HENRY (Shouts.)

Citizens of Concord—!

(But he is talking to the wind. Frustrated, he casts about for some way to reach the ears of a deaf public. He sees the dangling bell-rope, leaps up to ring it—and though he swings on it with the weight of his whole body, there is no sound whatsoever! THE BELL DOES NOT RING! Stunned, he pulls more frantically. Nothing.)

How do we make a sound? How do we break the silence?

(The light falls away on the discouraged and disheartened HENRY. The bell-rope vanishes in the flies. He throws himself on his cot in the cell. The sky goes red. HENRY writhes on the cot. There is a cannon blast—and the sky seems ripped apart by psychedelic splatterings of shrapnel.)

A snare drum snarls a military cadence. A DRUMMER BOY marches on, turns smartly front. The face is EDWARD EMERSON'S. A SERGEANT comes on, in the Federal uniform of the 1840's. It is SAM STAPLES.)

SERGEANT (SAM.) (As if drilling troops.)

Forward to Mexico . . . March!

Hate-two-three-four!

Hate-two-three-four!

Hate-two-three-four!

(The SERGEANT prods BAILEY awake with a rifle butt. BAILEY staggers to attention. The SERGEANT puts a military cap on BAILEY and flings a musket into his hands. With the eternal imprecision of the civilian soldier, BAILEY marches around the thrust to the insistent beat of the snare drum. The FARMER, uninformed, becomes part of the marching company. BALL appears, in a GENERAL'S epaulets and gold braid. He mounts the box, as if it were a military reviewing stand.)

GENERAL (BALL.) (In the drum-cadence.)

Learn to kill!

Learn to kill!

Learn to kill

so you won't be killed!

(This entire sequence has the blurred and overlapping quality of a nightmare, Goya-esque. It is a Walpurgisnacht, a bad trip, a surrealistic mixing of hallucinations. Time, space, sound are wrenched awry.)

BAILEY (Out of the rhythm.)

I ain't gonna shoot at them; they done nothin' to me!

(All turn on BAILEY.)

VARIOUS VOICES

Coward!

Slacker!

Traitor!

Deserter!

GENERAL (BALL)

Heathen!

SERGEANT (SAM)

Vagrant!

(There is a great explosion of gunfire, and all drop to their bellies for cover. Shouts and confusion.)

GENERAL (BALL.) (Pointing to HENRY on his cot.)

Why doesn't that man have a gun?

SERGEANT (SAM.) (Shaking HENRY'S shoulder.)

Wake up, Henry. I got somethin' here for ya. Wake up!

HENRY

I don't want it!

(But the SERGEANT forces a musket into his hands. Dazed, as if walking through syrup, HENRY comes to his feet. He holds the musket at arm's length distastefully.)

GENERAL (BALL)

The purpose of this action is to stop the enemy from protecting themselves from the enemy.

HENRY (Helplessly defiant.)

I won't go—!

MOTHER

That's a good boy, David Henry. Always do the right thing. Even if it's wrong.

(The snare drum has continued, building snappishly. But HENRY moves arhythmically, his march out-of-sync with all the rest.)

SERGEANT AND SOLDIERS

(Whispered.)

Hate-two-three-four!

Hate-two-three-four!

(The PRESIDENT appears in a morning coat and striped pants. It is WALDO.)

GENERAL (BALL)

Mr. President, the military advises that we conquer the entire territory. Level them all to rubble! Are you prepared to go along?

ALL VOICES

(A kind of demonic glee.)

Go along!

Go along!

Go along!

Go along!

(HENRY rushes up to the PRESIDENT. He tries to talk excitedly, urgently. But although his mouth is working, no sound comes out.)

PRESIDENT (WALDO) *(Lofily, to the GENERAL.)*

Is this man saying something? I can't hear him.

(HENRY tries to stop the other marchers, one by one; but no one pays any attention.)

GENERAL (BALL)

What are your instructions, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT (WALDO)

I wish more time to collect my thoughts. So I am going to appoint a committee to appoint a committee to appoint a committee.

(Cheers.)

Get to the bottom of this, so the top will know what to do!

(A swarthy MEXICAN SOLDIER [WILLIAMS] comes on with a Mexican flag.)

SERGEANT (STAPLES)

There he is, boys, there's the enemy!

(All muskets swing toward the MEXICAN; he is like a trapped animal.)

HENRY *(Shouts.)*

Run, Henry Williams! Run for it!

(The MEXICAN SOLDIER [WILLIAMS] leaps into the midst of the Federal troops, darts a zig-sag path among them, brandishing his banner. Rifles crack at him, shots ring wildly, the smoke continues to rise. Then WILLIAMS jumps off the thrust and disappears.)

VOICE

Dirty Nigger-Spic! He got away!

HENRY *(Jubilant.)*

He's safe!

(All of the Federal troops turn toward HENRY accusingly. At the same time, they realize that the drum beat has stopped. The little DRUMMER BOY [EDWARD] has fallen wounded across his drum. HENRY runs to the stricken boy, lifting him like the Pietà. Then he looks toward the statuesque PRESIDENT [WALDO].)

HENRY

Mr. President! He only wanted to pick huckleberries!

(The PRESIDENT is still benign, impervious to the confusion and the smoke.)

PRESIDENT (WALDO)

I propose to write a careful essay, setting forth my position.

(The rumbling of cannon and the crack of muskets continue. HENRY flings the musket away, then casts about, pleading to the air with his empty hands.)

HENRY

Please! Somebody say something! Somebody speak out!

UNSEEN VOICE

Mr. Speaker. Gentlemen of the Congress!

(Everything on stage freezes, in whatever tortured position it is, as in stopped action. HENRY listens with animal intentness.)

"This unnecessary war was unconstitutionally commenced by the President, who may be telling us the Truth—but he is not telling the Whole Truth. He has swept the war on and on, in showers of blood. His mind, taxed beyond its powers, is running out like some tortured creature on a burning surface!"
(With passion.)

Stop the war, Mr. President! For the love of God, stop this war!
(*The figures of the battlefield begin to move again in weird, grotesque slow motion, as if mired and helpless in quicksand. But on HENRY'S face there is a look of vast relief: someone has spoken!*)

HENRY

I do not know you, Mr. Congressman. I doubt if the people of Illinois will re-lect you, because you refused to "go along." But I shall remember who you are, Congressman Lincoln.

(*Defeating artillery fire peaks in volume. There are great flashes of light, the arcing of mortar shells, the staccato splattering of bullets. The Federal troops form into a ragged line of attacking infantrymen. They point their muskets front and move slowly forward, advancing on the audience as if it were the enemy. HENRY wanders, aghast at the bloodshed.*)

On a bellowed command from the SERGEANT [SAM STAPLES] all the troops drop to one knee, and raise their rifles to fire. Then we see, for the first time, in the second rank of troops a familiar face: it is HENRY'S brother JOHN, in full Federal uniform. When HENRY sees JOHN, he pushes his way through the troops to run to him.)

HENRY

John! John!

(*And just as he reaches JOHN, there is a fusillade of shots, a ricocheting bullet. JOHN is hit. He flings his arms to the sky in pain, and falls. The troops crash about in all directions, scattering to clear the area, leaving HENRY with the dying JOHN on the battlefield in the stagnant smoke. Utterly shattered, HENRY cradles JOHN'S head in his arms.*)

Don't die! Not again, God—don't let him die!
(*The whole stage fades into darkness.*)

(*Six chimes from the bell tower. Across the sky there is the faint gray line of dawn. BAILEY is on his cot, HENRY lies in twisted, restless sleep as SAM STAPLES—no longer a sergeant—enters with mugs and tin plates, which he puts on the box. From now on, all are in their customary clothing. STAPLES shakes HENRY'S shoulder.*)

SAM

Wake up, Henry. I got something here for ya. Wake up.

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(*HENRY thrashes, still half-dreaming.*)

HENRY

I don't want it!

SAM

Well, the porridge ain't very good. But the cocoa's hot.

HENRY (*Coming painfully awake.*)

Oh. Morning, Sam. Is it morning?

SAM

Yeah. Here's yer pint of chocolate. Ya heard the news?

HENRY

What news?

SAM

It's finished.

HENRY

The war?

SAM

That wire they been stretchin' clean to Texas. And it works. Now a fella in New York can send words down there 'lectric—fast as he can talk.

HENRY

(*As he sips his chocolate thoughtfully.*)

But Sam, what if nobody in New York has anything to say to anybody in Texas?

SAM

I just thought you'd be happy to know. Another thing—uh—
(*Clearing his throat.*)

—uh—you can leave, Henry. Any time you're a mind to.

HENRY

Leave?

SAM

During the night yer tax got paid up.

HENRY

Who did it?

SAM

Hain't material fer me to say.

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HENRY

Waldo! Did Dr. Emerson pay it?

SAM

No sir.

HENRY

My mother.

SAM

No.

HENRY

Did you?

SAM

I offered, Henry. You flat refused.

HENRY

Mrs. Emerson. Did she come and pay it?

SAM

Now stop pokin' around tryin' to get me to tell. I promised your Aunt Louisa I wouldn't open my—

HENRY (*Disgusted.*)

Aunt Louisa!

(*BAILEY is beginning to stir.*)

I am cursed with the charity of my mother's sister!

(*Shouting offstage to her.*)

Aunt Louisa, why couldn't you leave your nose and your false teeth out of my life! I hereby EXCOMMUNICATE YOU FROM THE MILKY WAY!

(*SAM swings the jail door open, hands HENRY a paper.*)

SAM

Been nice havin' ya with us, Henry. Here's the receipt.

(*HENRY ignores the paper.*)

HENRY

I don't want it. You can't accuse me of paying my tax!

SAM

It's been paid!

HENRY

Not by me. I'm still guilty.

(*HENRY sits on the cot, doggedly.*)

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SAM

Henry, a man's got no right to stay in jail if they's no charge ag'in him. I can't even bring you lunch.

BAILEY (*A bit wistfully.*)

You goin' already?

SAM

He's goin'!

HENRY

No!

SAM

Law put you in here. The law says when you're out.

BAILEY

Gonna be God-a-mighty quiet around here . . .

(*HENRY stares intensely at BAILEY.*)

What's wrong?

HENRY (*Softly.*)

Everything's wrong—when a man only thinks about himself.

(*Wheeling sharply on SAM.*)

Sam! You know what *quid pro quo* means?

SAM (*Pained.*)

That one of them Harvard words?

HENRY

It means if you see to it that Bailey gets his trial—not in another three months, or another three weeks, but *now*, right away—why, then maybe I'll favor your law by walking out onto the sidewalk. Not before.

SAM

It ain't in my power. I don't make decisions like that.

(*HENRY gets back into his cot, pulls the blanket over him.*)

HENRY

Goodnight, Sam.

SAM (*Suffering.*)

It's morning, Henry.

HENRY

Not for me. Not until you let Bailey out.

SAM

I'll do everything I kin. I'll talk to the Judge and the Selectmen.

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HENRY

Tell them unless Mr. Bailey's trial is right away, they'll have another eating, non-paying guest in their jail—permanently!

(SAM goes out, almost wishing he were a soldier in Mexico. BAILEY is moved. Nobody in his life has ever stood up for him like this.)

BAILEY

Thankee. I ain't ever gonna fergit this night here. And—when I'm out—I'm gonna come visit you, if you don't mind—at your pond place. (The sound of the flute re-enters, but there is no leafy projection—only the mounning flames of dawn. Pause: HENRY is making a difficult decision. He comes down, staring far off, toward Walden.)

HENRY

I may not be there at the "pond place," Bailey. Seems to me I've got several more lives to live. And I don't know if I can spare any more time for *that* one.

BAILEY

Sounds to me like it's just about perfick.

HENRY

That's the trouble. If I live there much longer, I might live there forever. And you have to think twice before you accept heaven on terms like that.

(Abruptly.)

You ever take a boat trip, Bailey?

BAILEY

Riverboat only.

HENRY

When you buy a cabin ticket for an ocean passage, they give you the liberty of the whole ship. It's a privilege that should be used. Man shouldn't stay the whole voyage just in one place, below decks, no matter how dry and cozy it is. And warm.

(Simply.)

I think I'll have to roam the whole ship. Go before the mast! Stand out there on the foredeck.

(The flute melody falls away.)

Bailey, I tried to escape. But escape is like sleep. And when sleep is permanent, it's death.

(A pause. He moves closer to the imagined downstage window, so the morning sun fills his face.)

I must leave Walden.

(The words are painful to him. BAILEY goes toward HENRY as if to comfort him, raising a hand toward his shoulder; but BAILEY is helpless.)

It's not necessary to be there in order to be there.

(BAILEY moves to the window, prompted by the growing light on HENRY's face. He looks out, awed.)

BAILEY

Bright morning. Gonna be a fine July day out there.

HENRY

Sometimes the light gets so bright it puts your eyes out. And then it's just darkness all over again.

(He looks up. The sky is really brilliant with the sunlight now.)

But there is more day to dawn. The sun is only a morning star.

(He shakes hands with BAILEY, starts out, remembers something: his shoe. He gets it from under the bed, salutes BAILEY with it.

In the doorway, HENRY stops, looks up sharply.

From a distance, he hears an eccentric, non-military drummer.

He moves into Concord Square ablaze with morning light. Suddenly the drumbeat comes from a different direction, growing in volume. It is like thunder all around him.

His eyes follow the arc of the sky. He seems to grow in stature, lifted and strengthened by a greater challenge.

He waves to BAILEY, who waves back warmly from the cell window. With determination, HENRY leaps from the stage and strides up the aisle of the theatre to the sound of his own different drummer.

No curtain falls. The lights do not fade, but grow brighter. During the curtain calls, and as the audience leaves the theatre, HENRY's distinctive and irregular drum-cadence builds and resounds.)