

The Long Voyage Home

CHARACTERS—

FAT JOE, *proprietor of a dive*

NICK, *a crimp*

MAG, *a barmaid*

OLSON

DRISCOLL *Seamen of the British tramp
steamer, Glencairn*

COCKY

IVAN

KATE

FREDA

TWO ROUGHS

SCENE—*The bar of a low dive on the London water front—a squalid, dingy room dimly lighted by kerosene lamps placed in brackets on the walls. On the left, the bar. In front of it, a door leading to a side room. On the right, tables with chairs around them. In the rear, a door leading to the street.*

A slovenly barmaid with a stupid face sodden with drink is mopping off the bar. Her arm moves back and forth mechanically and her eyes are half shut as if she were dozing on her feet. At the far end of the bar stands Fat Joe, the proprietor, a gross bulk of a man with an enormous stomach. His face is red and bloated, his little piggish eyes being almost concealed by rolls of fat. The thick fingers of his big hands are loaded with cheap rings and a gold watch chain of cable-like proportions stretches across his checked waistcoat.

At one of the tables, front, a round-shouldered young fellow is sitting, smoking a cigarette. His face is pasty, his mouth weak, his eyes shifting and cruel. He is dressed in a shabby suit, which must have once been cheaply flashy, and wears a muffler and cap.

It is about nine o'clock in the evening.

JOE—(yawning) Blimey if bizness ain't 'arf slow tonight. I donnow wot's 'appened. The place is like a bleedin' tomb. Where's all the sailor men, I'd like to know? (raising his

voice) Ho, you Nick! (*Nick turns around listlessly.*) Wot's the name o' that wessel put in at the dock below jest arter noon?

NICK—(*laconically*) Glencairn—from Bewnezerry. (*Buenos Aires*)

JOE—Ain't the crew been paid orf yet?

NICK—Paid orf this afternoon, they tole me. I 'opped on board of 'er an' seen 'em. 'Anded 'em some o' yet cards, I did. They promised faithful they'd 'appen in tonight—them as whose time was done.

JOE—Any two-year men to be paid orf?

NICK—Four—three Britishers an' a square-'ead.

JOE—(*indignantly*) An' yet popped orf an' left 'em? An' me a-payin' yer to 'elp an' bring 'em in 'ere!

NICK—(*grumbly*) Much you pays me! An' I ain't slingin' me'ook abaht the 'ole bleedin' town fur now man. See?

JOE—I ain't speakin' on'y fur meself. Doesn't I always give yer yer share, fair an' square, as man to man?

NICK—(*with a sneer*) Yus—b'cause you 'as to.

JOE—'As to? Listen to 'im! There's many'd be 'appy to 'ave your berth, me man!

NICK—Yus? Wot wiv the peelers li'ble to put me away in the bloody jail fur crimpin', an' all?

JOE—(*indignantly*) We doesn't do no crimpin'.

NICK—(*sarcastically*) Ho, now! Not orf!

JOE—(*a bit embarrassed*) Well, on'y a bit now an' agen when there ain't no reg'lar trade. (*To hide his confusion he turns to the barmaid angrily. She is still mopping off the bar, her chin on her breast, half-asleep.*) 'Ere, me gel, we've 'ad enough o' that. You been a-moppin', an' a-moppin', an' a-moppin' the blarsted bar fur a 'ole 'our. 'Op it aht o' this! You'd fair guv a bloke the shakes a-watchin' yer.

MAG—(*beginning to sniffle*) Ow, you do frighten me when you 'oller at me, Joe. I ain't a bad gel, I ain't. Gawd knows I tries to do me best fur you. (*She bursts into a tempest of sobs.*)

JOE—(*roughly*) Stop yer grizzlin'! An' 'op it alit of 'ere!

NICK—(*chuckling*) She's drunk, Joe. Been 'ittin' the gin, eh, Mag?

MAG—(*ceases crying at once and turns on him furiously*) You little crab, you! Orter wear a muzzle, you ort! A-openin' of your ugly mouth to a 'onest woman what ain't never done you no 'arm. (*commencing to sob again*) H'abusin' me like a dawg cos I'm sick an' orf me oats, an' all.

JOE—Orf yer go, me gel! Go hupstairs and 'ave a sleep. I'll wake yer if I wants yer. An' wake the two gels when yer goes hup. It's 'arpas' nine an' time as some one was a-comin' in, tell 'em. D'yer 'ear me?

MAG—(*stumbling around the bar to the door on left—sobbing*) Yus, yus, I 'ears you. Gawd knows wot's goin' to 'appen to me, I'm that sick. Much you cares if I dies, doesn't you? (*She goes out.*)

JOE—(*still brooding over Nick's lack of diligence—after a pause*) Four two-year men paid orf wiv their bloody pockets full o' sovereigns—an' yer lorst 'em. (*He shakes his head sorrowfully.*)

NICK—(*impatiently*) Stow it! They promised faithful they'd come, I tells yet. They'll be walkin' in in 'arf a mo'. There's lots o' time yet. (*in a low voice*) 'Ave yet got the drops? We might wanter use 'em.

JOE—(*taking a small bottle from behind the bar*) Yus; 'ere it is.

NICK—(*with satisfaction*) Righto! (*His shifty eyes peer about the room searchingly. Then he beckons to Joe, who comes over to the table and sits down.*) Reason I arst yet about the drops was 'cause I seen the capt'n of the Amindra this arternoon.

JOE—The Amindra? Wot ship is that?

NICK—Bloody windjammer—skys'l yarder—full rigged—painted white—been layin' at the dock above 'ere fur a month. You knows 'er.

JOE—Ho, yus. I knows now.

NICK—The capt'n says as 'e wants a man special bad—ter-night. They sails at daybreak ter-morrer.

JOE—There's plenty o' 'ands lyin' abaht waitin' fur ships, I should fink.

NICK—Not fur this ship, ole buck. The capt'n an' mate are bloody slave-drivers, an' they're bound down round the 'Orn. They 'arf starved the 'ands on the larst trip 'ere, an' no one'll dare ship on 'er. *(after a pause)* I promised the capt'n faithful I'd get 'im one, and ter-night.

JOE—*(doubtfully)* An' 'ow are yet goin' to git 'im?

NICK—*(with a wink)* I was thinkin' as one of 'em from the Glencairn'd do—them as was paid orf an' is comin' 'ere.

JOE—*(with a grin)* It'd be a good 'aul, that's the troof. *(frowning)* If they comes 'ere.

NICK—They'll come, an' they'll all be rotten drunk, wait an' see. *(There is the noise of loud, boisterous singing from the street.)* Sounds like 'em, now. *(He opens the street door and looks out.)* Gawd blimey if it ain't the four of 'em! *(turning to Joe in triumph)* Naw, what d'ycr say? They're lookin' for the place. I'll go aht an' tell 'em. *(He goes out. Joe gets into position behind the bar, assuming his most oily smile. A moment later the door is opened, admitting Driscoll, Cocky, Ivan and Olson. Driscoll is a tall, powerful Irishman; Cocky, a wizened runt of a man with a straggling gray mustache; Ivan, a hulking oaf of a peasant; Olson, a stocky, middle-aged Swede with round, childish blue eyes. The first three are all very drunk, especially Ivan, who is managing his legs with difficulty. Olson is perfectly sober. All are dressed in their ill-fitting shore clothes and look very uncomfortable. Driscoll has unbuttoned his stiff collar and its ends stick out sideways. He has lost his tie. Nick slinks into the room after them and sits down at a table in rear. The seamen come to the table, front.)*

JOE—*(with affected heartiness)* Ship ahoy, mates! 'Appy to see yer 'ome safe an' sound.

DRISCOLL—*(turns round, swaying a bit, and peers at him across the bar)* So ut's you, is ut? *(He looks about the place with an air of recognition.)* 'An the same damn rat's-hole, sure enough. I remimber foive or six years back 'twas here I was sthripped av me last shillin' whin I was aslape. *(with sudden fury)* God stiffen ye, come none av your dog's thricks on me this trip or I'll—*(He shakes his fist at Joe.)*

JOE—(*hastily interrupting*) Yet must be mistaiken. This is a 'onest place, this is.

COCKY—(*derisively*) Ho, yus! An' you're a bleedin' angel, I s'pose?

IVAN—(*vaguely taking off his derby hat and putting it on again plaintively*) I don' li-ike dis place.

DRISCOLL—(*going over to the bar—as genial as he was furious a moment before*) Well, no matther, 'tis all past an' gone an' forgot. I'm not the man to be holdin' harrd feelin's on me first night ashore, an' me dhrunk as a lord. (*He holds out his hand, which Joe takes very gingerly.*) We'll all be havin' a dhrink, I'm thinkin'. Whiskey for the three av us—Irish whiskey!

COCKY—(*mockingly*) An' a glarse o' ginger beer fur our blarsted love-child 'ere. (*He jerks his thumb at Olson.*)

OLSON—(*with a good-natured grin*) I bane a good boy dis night, for one time.

DRISCOLL—(*bellowing, and pointing to Nick as Joe brings the drinks to the table*) An' see what that crimpin' son av a crimp'll be wantin'—an' have your own pleasure. (*He pulls a sovereign out of his pocket and slams it on the bar.*)

NICK—Guv me a pint o' beer, Joe. (*Joe draws the beer and takes it down to the far end of the bar. Nick comes over to get it and Joe gives him a significant wink and nods toward the door on the left. Nick signals back that he understands.*)

COCKY—(*drink in hand—impatiently*) I'm that bloody dry! (*lifting his glass to Driscoll*) Cheero, ole dear, cheero!

DRISCOLL—(*pocketing his change without looking at it*) A toast for ye: Hell roast that divil av a bo'sun! (*He drinks.*)

COCKY—Righto! Gawd strike 'im blind! (*He drains his glass.*)

IVAN—(*half-asleep*) Dot's gude. (*He tosses down his drink in one gulp. Olson sips his ginger ale. Nick takes a swallow of his beer and then comes round the bar and goes out the door on left.*)

COCKY—(*producing a sovereign*) Ho there, you Fatty! Guv us another!

JOE—The saime, mates?

COCKY—Yus.

DRISCOLL—No, ye scut! I'll be havin' a pint av beer. I'm dhry as a loime kiln.

IVAN—(*suddenly getting to his feet in a befuddled manner and nearly upsetting the table*) I don' li-like dis place! I wan' see girls—plenty girls. (*pathetically*) I don't li-like dis place. I wan' dance with girl.

DRISCOLL—(*pushing him back on his chair with a thud*) Shut up, ye Rooshan baboon! A foine Romeo you'd make in your condishun. (*Ivan blubbers some incoherent protest—then suddenly falls asleep.*)

JOE—(*bringing the drinks—looks at Olson*) An' you, matey?

OLSON—(*shaking his head*) Noting dis time, thank you.

COCKY—(*mockingly*) A-saivin' of 'is money, 'e is! Goin' back to 'ome an' mother. Goin' to buy a bloomin' farm an' punch the blarsted dirt, that's wot 'e is! (*spitting disgustedly*) There's a funny bird of a sailor man for yet, Gawd blimey!

OLSON—(*wearing the same good-natured grin*) Yust what I like, Cocky. I wus on farm long time when I wus kid.

DRISCOLL—Lave him alone, ye bloody insect! 'Tis a foine sight to see a man wid some sense in his head instead av a damn fool the loike av us. I only wisht I'd a mother alive to call me own. I'd not be dhrunk in this divil's hole this minute, maybe.

COCKY—(*commencing to weep dolorously*) Ow, down't talk, Drisc! I can't bear to 'ear you. I ain't never 'ad no mother, I ain't—

DRISCOLL—Shut up, ye ape, an' don't be makin' that squealin'. If ye cud see your ugly face, wid the big red nose av ye all screwed up in a knot, ye'd never shed a tear the rist av your loife. (*roaring into song*) We ar-re the byes av We-e-exford who fought wid heartt an' hand! (*speaking*) To hell wid Ulster! (*He drinks and the others follow his example.*) An' I'll strip to any man in the city av London won't dhrink to that toast. (*He glares truculently at Joe, who immediately downs his beer. Nick enters again from the door on the left and comes up to Joe and whispers in his ear. The latter nods with satisfaction.*)

DRISCOLL—(*glowering at them*) What divil's thrick are ye up to now, the two av ye? (*He flourishes a brawny fist.*) Play fair wid us or ye deal wid me!

JOE—(*hastily*) No trick, shipmate! May Gawd kill me if that ain't troof!

NICK—(*indicating Ivan, who is snoring*) On'y your mate there was arskin' fur gels an' I thortht as 'ow yer'd like 'em to come dawhn and 'ave a wet wiv yer.

JOE—(*with a smirking wink*) Pretty, 'olesome gels they be, ain't they, Nick?

NICK—Yus.

COCKY—Aar! I knows the gels you 'as, not 'arf! They'd fair blind ycr, they're that 'omely. None of yer bloomin' gels fur me, ole Fatty. Me an' Drisc knows a place, down't we, Drisc?

DRISCOLL—Divil a lie, we do. An' we'll be afther goin' there in a minute. There's music there an' a bit av a dance to liven a man.

JOE—Nick, 'ere, can play yer a time, can't yer, Nick?

NICK—Yus.

JOE—An' yer can 'ave a dance in the side room 'ere.

DRISCOLL—Hurroo! Now you're talkin'. (*The two women, Freda and Kate, enter from the left. Freda is a little, sallow faced blonde. Kate is stout and dark.*)

COCKY—(*in a loud aside to Driscoll*) Gawd blimey, look at 'em! Ain't they 'orrible? (*The women come forward to the table, wearing their best set smiles.*)

FREDA—(*in a raspy voice*) 'Ullo, mates.

KATE—'Ad a good voyage?

DRISCOLL—Rotten; but no matther. Welcome, as the sayin' is, an' sit down, an' what'll ye be takin' for your thirst? (*to Kate*) You'll be sittin' by me, darlin'—what's your name?

KATE—(*with a stupid grin*) Kate. (*She stands by his chair.*)

DRISCOLL—(*putting his arm around her*) A good Irish name, but you're English by the trim av ye, an' be damned to you. But no matther. Ut's fat ye are, Katy dear, an' I never cud endure skinny wimin. (*Freda favors him with a viperish glance and sits down by Olson.*) What'll ye have?

OLSON—No, Drisc. Dis one bane on me. (*He takes out a roll of notes from his inside pocket and lays one on the table. Joe, Nick, and the women look at the money with greedy eyes. Ivan gives a particularly violent snore.*)

FREDA—Waike up your fren'. Gawd, 'ow I 'ates to 'ear snorin'.

DRISCOLL—(*springing to action, smashes Ivan's derby over his ears*) D'you hear the lady talkin' to ye, ye Rooshan swab? (*The only reply to this is a snore. Driscoll pulls the battered remains of the derby off Ivan's head and smashes it back again.*) Arise an' shine, ye dhrunken swine! (*Another snore. The women giggle. Driscoll throws the beer left in his glass into Ivan's face. The Russian comes to in a flash, spluttering. There is a roar of laughter.*)

IVAN—(*indignantly*) I tell you—dot's someting I don' like!

COCKY—Down't waste good beer, Drisc.

IVAN—(*grumblingly*) I tell you—dot is not ri-ight.

DRISCOLL—Ut's your own doin', Ivan. Ye was moanin' for girds an' whin they come you sit gruntin' loike a pig in a sty. Have ye no manners? (*Ivan seems to see the women for the first time and grins foolishly.*)

KATE—(*laughing at him*) Cheero, ole chum, 'ows Russha?

IVAN—(*greatly pleased putting his hand in his pocket*) I buy a drink.

OLSON—No; dis one bane on me. (*to Joe*) Hey, you faller!

JOE—Wot'll it be, Kate?

KATE—Gin.

FREDA—Brandy.

DRISCOLL—An' Irish whiskey for the rist av us—wid the excipshun av our timperance friend, God pity him!

FREDA—(*to Olson*) You ain't drinkin'?

OLSON—(*half-ashamed*) No.

FREDA—(*with a seductive smile*) I down't blame yer. You got sense, you 'ave. I on'y tike a nip o' brandy now an' agen fur my 'ealth. (*Joe brings the drinks and Olson's change. Cocky gets unsteadily to his feet and raises his glass in the air.*)

COCKY—'Ere's a toff toast for yer: The ladies, Gawd—*(he hesitates—then adds in a grudging tone)*—bless 'em.

KATE—*(with a silly giggle.)* Oo-er! That wasn't what you was goin' to say, you bad Cocky, you! *(They all drink.)*

DRISCOLL—*(to Nick)* Where's the tune ye was promisin' to give us?

NICK—Come ahn in the side 'ere an' you'll 'ear it.

DRISCOLL—*(getting up)* Come on, all av ye. We'll have a tune an' a dance if I'm not too dhrunk to dance, God help me. *(Cocky and Ivan stagger to their feet. Ivan can hardly stand. He is leering at Kate and snickering to himself in a maudlin fashion. The three, led by Nick, go out the door on the left. Kate follows them. Olson and Freda remain seated.)*

COCKY—*(calling over his shoulder)* Come on an' dance, Ollie.

OLSON—Yes, I come. *(He starts to get up. From the side room comes the sound of an accordion and a boisterous whoop from Driscoll, followed by a heavy stamping of feet.)*

FREDA—Ow, down't go in there. Stay 'ere an' 'ave a talk wiv me. They're all drunk an' you ain't drinkin'. *(with a smile up into his face)* I'll think yer don't like me if yer goes in there.

OLSON—*(confused)* You wus wrong, Miss Freda. I don't—I mean I do like you.

FREDA—*(smiling puts her hand over his on the table)* An' I likes you. Yer a genelman. You don't get drunk an' hinsult poor gels wot 'as a 'ard an' uneppy life.

OLSON—*(pleased but still more confused—wriggling his feet)* I bane drunk many time, Miss Freda.

FREDA—Then why ain't yer drinkin' now? *(She exchanges a quick, questioning glance with Joe, who nods back at her—then she continues persuasively)* Tell me somethin' abaht yeself.

OLSON—*(with a grin)* There ain't noting to say, Miss Freda. I bane poor devil sailor man, dat's all.

FREDA—Where was you born—Norway? *(Olson shakes his head.)* Denmark?

OLSON—No. You guess once more.

FREDA—Then it must be Sweden.

OLSON—Yes. I was born in Stockholm.

FREDA—(*pretending great delight*) Ow, ain't that funny! I was born there, too—in Stockholm.

OLSON—(*astonished*) You was born in Sweden?

FREDA—Yes; you wouldn't think it, but it's Gawd's troof. (*She claps her hands delightedly.*)

OLSON—(*beaming all over*) You speak Swedish?

FREDA—(*trying to smile sadly*) Now. Y'see my ole man an' woman come 'ere to England when I was only a baby an' they was speakin' English b'fore I was old enough to learn. Sow I never knew Swedish. (*sadly*) Wisht I 'ad! (*with a smile*) We'd lave a bloomin' lark of it if I 'ad, wouldn't we?

OLSON—It sound nice to hear the old talk yust once in a time.

FREDA—Righto! No place like yer 'ome, I says. Are yer goin' up to—to Stockholm b'fore yer ships away agen?

OLSON—Yes. I go home from here to Stockholm. (*proudly*) As passenger!

FREDA—An' you'll git another ship up there arter you've 'ad a vacation?

OLSON—No. I don't never ship on sea no more. I got all sea I want for my life—too much hard work for little money. Yust work, work, work on ship. I don't want more.

FREDA—Ow, I see. That's why you give up drinkin'.

OLSON—Yes. (*with a grin*) If I drink I yust get drunk and spend all money.

FREDA—But if you ain't gointer be a sailor no more, what'll yer do? You been a sailor all yer life, ain't yer?

OLSON—No. I work on farm till I am eighteen. I like it, too—it's nice—work on farm.

FREDA—But ain't Stockholm a city same's London? Ain't no farms there, is there?

OLSON—We live—my brother and mother live—my father iss dead—on farm yust a little way from Stockholm. I have plenty money, now. I go back with two years' pay and buy more land yet; work on farm. (*grinning*) No more sea, no more bum grub, no more storms—yust nice work.

FREDA—Ow, ain't that luv'ly! I s'pose you'll be gittin' married, too?

OLSON—(*very much confused*) I don't know. I like to, if I find nice girl, maybe.

FREDA—Ain't yet got some gel back in Stockholm? I bet yer 'as.

OLSON—No. I got nice girl once before I go on sea. But I go on ship, and I don't come back, and she marry other faller. (*He grins sheepishly.*)

FREDA—Well, it's nice for yer to be goin' 'ome, anyway.

OLSON—Yes. I tank so. (*There is a crash from the room on left and the music abruptly stops. A moment later Cocky and Driscoll appear, supporting the inert form of Ivan between them. He is in the last stage of intoxication, unable to move a muscle. Nick follows them and sits down at the table in rear.*)

DRISCOLL—(*as they zigzag up to the bar*) Ut's dead he is, I'm thinkin', for he's as limp as a blarsted corpse.

COCKY—(*puffing*) Gawd, 'e ain't 'arf 'eavy!

DRISCOLL—(*slapping Ivan's face with his free hand*) Wake up, ye divil, ye. Ut's no use. Gabriel's trumpet itself cudn't rouse him. (*to Joe*) Give us a dhrink for I'm perishing wid the thirst. 'Tis harrd worrk, this.

JOE—Whiskey?

DRISCOLL—Irish whiskey, ye swab. (*He puts down a coin on the bar. Joe serves Cocky and Driscoll. They drink and then swerve over to Olson's table.*)

OLSON—Sit down and rest for time, Disc.

DRISCOLL—No, Ollie, we'll be takin' this lad home to his bed. Ut's late for wan so young to be out in the night. An' I'd not trust him in this hole as dhrunk as he is, an' him wid a full pay day on him. (*shaking his fist at Joe*) Oho, I know your games, me sonny bye!

JOE—(*with an air of grievance*) There yer goes again—hinsultin' a 'onest man!

COCKY—Ho, listen to 'im! Guv 'im a shove in the marf, Drisc.

OLSON—(*anxious to avoid a fight getting up*) I help you take Ivan to boarding house.

FREDA—(*protestingly*) Ow, you ain't gointer leave me, are yer? An' we 'avin' sech a nice talk, an' all.

DRISCOLL—(*with a wink*) Ye hear what the lady says, Ollie. Ye'd best stay here, me timperance lady's man. An' we need no help. 'Tis only a bit av a way and we're two strong men if we are dhrunk. Ut's no hard shift to take the remains home. But ye can open the door for us, Ollie. (*Olson goes to the door and opens it.*) Come on, Cocky, an' don't be fallin' aslape yourself. (*They lurch toward the door. As they go out Driscoll shouts back over his shoulder*) We'll be comin' back in a short time, surely. So wait here for us, Ollie.

OLSON—All right. I wait here, Drisc. (*He stands in the doorway uncertainly. Joe makes violent signs to Freda to bring him back. She goes over and puts her arm around Olson's shoulder. Joe motions to Nick to come to the bar. They whisper together excitedly.*)

FREDA—(*coaxingly*) You ain't gointer leave me, are yet, dearie? (*then irritably*) Fur Gawd's sake, slier that door! I'm fair freezin' to death wiv the fog. (*Olson comes to himself with a start and shuts the door.*)

OLSON—(*humbly*) Excuse me, Miss Freda.

FREDA—(*leading him back to the table—coughing*) Buy me a drink o' brandy, will yet? I'm sow cold.

OLSON—All you want, Miss Freda, all you want. (*to Joe, who is still whispering instructions to Nick*) Hey, Yoe! Brandy for Miss Freda. (*He lays a coin on the table.*)

JOE—Righto! (*He pours out her drink and brings it to the table.*) 'Avin' somethink yeself, shipmate?

OLSON—No. I don't tank so. (*He points to his glass with a grin.*) Dis iss only belly-wash, no? (*He laughs.*)

JOE—(*hopefully*) 'Awe a man's drink.

OLSON—I would like to—but no. If I drink one I want drink one tousand. (*He laughs again.*)

FREDA—(*responding to a vicious nudge from Joe's elbow*) Ow, tike somethin'. I ain't gointer drink all be meself.

OLSON—Den give me a little yinger beer—small one. (*Joe goes back of the bar, making a sign to Nick to go to their*

table. Nick does so and stands so that the sailor cannot see what Joe is doing.)

NICK—*(to make talk)* Where's yer mates popped orf ter? *(Joe pours the contents of the little bottle into Olson's glass of ginger beer.)*

OLSON—Dey take Ivan, dat drunk faller, to bed. They come back. *(Joe brings Olson's drink to the table and sets it before him.)*

JOE—*(to Nick—angrily)* 'Op it, will yer? There ain't no time to be dawdlin'. See? 'Urry!

NICK—Down't worry, ole bird, I'm orf. *(He hurries out the door. Joe returns to his place behind the bar.)*

OLSON—*(after a pause—worriedly)* I tank I should go after dem. Cocky iss very drunk, too, and Drisc—

FREDA—Aar! The big Irish is all right. Don't yer 'ear 'im say as 'ow they'd surely come back 'ere, an' fur you to wait fur 'em?

OLSON—Yes; but if dey don't come soon I tank I go see if dey are in boarding house all right.

FREDA—Where is the boardin' 'ouse?

OLSON—Yust little way back from street here.

FREDA—You stayin' there, too?

OLSON—Yes—until steamer sail for Stockholm—in two day.

FREDA—*(She is alternately looking at Joe and feverishly trying to keep Olson talking so he will forget about going away after the others.)* Yet mother won't be arf glad to see yer agen, will she? *(Olson smiles.)* Does she know yer comin'?

OLSON—No. I tought I would just give her surprise. I write to her from Bonos Eres but I don't tell her I come home.

FREDA—Must be old, ain't she, yer ole lady?

OLSON—She iss eighty-two. *(He smiles reminiscently.)* You know, Miss Freda, I don't see my mother or my brother in—let me tank—*(he counts laboriously on his fingers)* must be more than ten year. I write once in while and she write many time; and my brother he write me, too. My mother say in all letter I should come home right away. My brother he write same ting, too. He want me to help him on farm. I write

back always I come soon; and I mean all time to go back home at end of voyage. But I come ashore, I take one drink, I take many drinks, I get drunk, I spend all money, I have to ship away for other voyage. So dis time I say to myself: Don't drink one drink, Ollie, or, sure, you don't get home. And I want go home dis time. I feel homesick for farm and to see my people again. (*He smiles.*) Yust like little boy, I feel home sick. Dat's why I don't drink noting to-night but dis—belly-wash! (*He roars with childish laughter, then suddenly becomes serious.*) You know, Miss Freda, my mother get very old, and I want see her. She might die and I would never—

FREDA—(*moved a lot in spite of herself*) Ow, don't talk like that! I jest 'ates to 'ear any one speakin' abaht dyin'. (*The door to the street is opened and Nick enters, followed by two rough looking, shabbily-dressed men, wearing mufflers, with caps pulled down over their eyes. They sit at the table nearest to the door. Joe brings them three beers, and there is a whispered consultation, with many glances in the direction of Olson.*)

OLSON—(*starting to get up—worriedly*) I tank I go round to boarding house. I tank someting go wrong with Drisc and Cocky.

FREDA—Ow, down't go. They kin take care of theyselves. They ain't babies. Wait 'arf a mo'. You ain't 'ad yer drink yet.

JOE—(*coming hastily over to the table, indicates the men in the rear with a jerk of his thumb*) One of them blokes wants yer to 'ave a wet wiv 'im.

FREDA—Righto! (*to Olson*) Let's drink this. (*She raises her glass. He does the same.*) 'Ere's a toast fur yer: Success to yer bloomin' farm an' may yer live long an' 'appy on it. Skoal! (*She tosses down her brandy. He swallows half his glass of ginger beer and makes a wry face.*)

OLSON—Skoal! (*He puts down his glass.*)

FREDA—(*with feigned indignation*) Down't yer like my toast?

OLSON—(*grinning*) Yes. It iss very kind, Miss Freda.

FREDA—Then drink it all like I done.

OLSON—Well—(*He gulps down the rest.*) Dere! (*He laughs.*)

FREDA—Done like a sport!

ONE OF THE ROUGHS—(*with a laugh*) Amindra, ahoy!

NICK—(*warningly*) Sssshh!

OLSON—(*turns around in his chair*) Amindra? Iss she in port? I sail on her once long time ago—three mast, full rig, skys'l yarder? Iss dat ship you mean?

THE ROUGH—(*grinning*) Yus; right you are.

OLSON—(*angrily*) I know dat damn ship—worst ship dat sail to sea. Rotten grub and dey make you work all time—and the Captain and Mate wus Bluenose devils. No sailor who know anyting ever ship on her. Where iss she bound from here?

THE ROUGH—Round Cape 'Orn—sails at daybreak.

OLSON—Py yingo, I pity poor fallers make dat trip round Cape Stiff dis time year. I bet you some of dem never see port once again. (*He passes his hand over his eyes in a dazed way. His voice grows weaker.*) I'y golly, I feel dizzy. All the room go round and round like I wus drunk. (*He gets weakly to his feet.*) Good night, Miss Freda. I bane feeling sick. Tell Drisc—I go home. (*He takes a step forward and suddenly collapses over a chair, rolls to the floor, and lies there unconscious.*)

JOE—(*from behind the bar*) Quick, nawh! (*Nick darts forward with Joe following. Freda is already beside the unconscious man and has taken the roll of money from his inside pocket. She strips off a note furtively and shoves it into her bosom, trying to conceal her action, but Joe sees her. She hands the roll to Joe, who pockets it. Nick goes through all the other pockets and lays a handful of change on the table.*)

JOE—(*impatiently*) 'Urry, 'urry, can't yet? The other blokes'll be 'ere in 'arf a mo'. (*The two roughs come forward.*) 'Ere, you two, tike 'im in under the arms like 'e was drunk. (*They do so.*) Tike 'im to the Amindra—yer knows that, don't yer?—two docks above. Nick'll show yer. An' you, Nick, down't yer leave the bleedin' ship till the capt'n guvs yer this bloke's advance—full month's pay—five quid, d'yer 'ear?

NICK—I knows me bizness, ole bird. (*They support Olson to the door.*)

THE ROUGH—(*as they are going out*) This silly bloke'll 'ave the s'prise of 'is life when 'e wakes up on board of 'er. (*They laugh. The door closes behind them. Freda moves quickly for the door on the left but Joe gets in her way and stops her.*)

JOE—(*threateningly*) Guv us what yer took!

FREDA—took? I guv yer all 'e 'ad.

JOE—Yer a liar! I seen yer a-playin' yer sneakin' tricks, but yer can't fool Joe. I'm too old a 'and. (*furiously*) Guv it to me, yer bloody cow! (*He grabs her by the arm.*)

FREDA—Lemme alone! I ain't got no—

JOE—(*hits her viciously on the side of the jaw. She crumples up on the floor.*) That'll learn yet! (*He stoops down and fumbles in her bosom and pulls out the banknote, which he stuffs into his pocket with a grunt of satisfaction. Kate opens the door on the left and looks in—then rushes to Freda and lifts her head up in her arms.*)

KATE—(*gently*) Pore dearie! (*looking at Joe angrily*) Been 'ittin' 'er agen, 'ave yer, yet cowardly swine!

JOE—Yus; an' I'll 'it you, too, if yer don't keep yer marf shut. Tike 'er aht of 'ere! (*Kate carries Freda into the next room. Joe goes behind the bar. A moment later the outer door is opened and Driscoll and Cocky come in.*)

DRISCOLL—Come on, Ollie. (*He suddenly sees that Olson is not there, and turns to Joe.*) Where is ut he's gone to?

JOE—(*with a meaning wink*) 'E an' Freda went aht t'gether 'bout five minutes past. 'E's fair gone on 'er, 'e is.

DRISCOLL—(*with a grin*) Oho, so that's ut, is ut? Who'd think Ollie'd be sich a divil wid the wimin? 'Tis lucky he's sober or she'd have him stripped to his last ha'penny. (*turning to Cocky, who is blinking sleepily*) What'll ye have, ye little scut? (*to Joe*) Give me whiskey, Irish whiskey!

(*The Curtain Falls*)