

VICTORIA VICTORIOUS  
the saga of the second feminist crusade in history  
(after Lysistrata)  
by Irving Stanton Elman

## CHARACTERS

Eve

Victoria's Army

Tennie

Buck/Street John/Comstock/Warden//Thomas/Grover Cleveland

Hebern/Customer #2/Cop #2/Beggar/Butler/Heckler #1/Newsboy/  
Lithgow/Turnkey/D.A./Furniture Mover #1/Anthony

Victoria

Canning Woodhull/Customer #3/Cop #3/Jay Gould/Beecher/Howe/Sir  
Francis Cook

Roxanna/Lady #1/Susan B. Anthony

Demosthenes/Judge Throttle/Commodore Vanderbilt/Hummel/Judge  
Fry/Judge Buber/Farmer

Lady #2/Streetwalker/Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Customer #1/Cop #1/Colonel Blood/William Vanderbilt/John Martin

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## WHY MAKE THINGS UP WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO?

Honesty, not modesty, compels the author to admit that this play really needed no playwright but almost literally wrote itself, since the story and characters were practically word-for-word stolen -- or lifted, to put it a bit more euphemistically -- from the pages of history and all that was required was to let them strut their lives on the stage as they once did in reality, all over the New and Old Worlds during the last half of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century. If some elements of this account smack more of fantasy than fact, the participants may have improved a bit on the truth at times in recounting them, but this author, as a professional writer of fiction, is hardly in a position to cast the first stone.

# VICTORIA VICTORIOUS

(There are no sets, only movable props. Scene changes are made by shifting the lighting from one portion of the stage to another. We open on a completely BLACKED-OUT stage. Then from off, a woman's voice proclaims:)

## EVE'S VOICE

Women of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your men!

(A SPOTLIGHT HITS the right edge of the stage as a Salvation Army-type band strikes up the music of "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and a SMALL GROUP OF WOMEN, wearing a sexy knock-off of the Salvation Army uniform, with ribbons round their bonnets reading: "VICTORIA'S ARMY" and carrying signs: "UNITE AND FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS" "FEMALE EQUALITY FROM WOMB TO TOMB!" "THE HANDS THAT ROCK THE CRADLE SHALL ROCK THE WORLD!"; led by an attractive young woman named EVE, come marching across the bare stage, singing:)

## VICTORIA'S ARMY

Onward, women soldiers, marching as to war!  
With Victoria Woodhull marching on before!  
Down with male oppression, lying and deceit  
An end to all submission, no more kissing feet!  
God is marching with us, on to victory  
She will never fail us, until we are free!

(The SPOTLIGHT ACCOMPANIES them across the stage to the right edge, where it stops with them, leaving the rest of the stage in darkness. EVE turns to face the audience:)

## EVE

I am woman! I am Eve! And I call on you, my sisters, to stop sitting there, submissively, like bagels waiting to be stuffed by those male loxes sitting next to you! Rise up and follow the lead set by our great pioneer leader, Victoria Claflin Woodhull, from that historic day just before the Civil War, as a young girl of 14, in the rural hamlet of Mount Gilead, Ohio, where her family's traveling medicine show had stopped to empty the pockets of the local yokels –

(SHE points to the center of the stage and it LIGHTS UP,

as the spotlight simultaneously BLACKS OUT on Eve and Victoria's Army. In the area now lit we see a parked garishly painted medicine-show wagon, drawn by a papier-mache horse. On the canvas sides of the wagon are painted mystic and zodiacal signs, along with a cartoonish depiction of the three Fates, the mythological sisters spinning out human destinies and snipping them off with their shears; all surmounted by the legend: "MAGNETIC LIFE ELIXIR, The Guaranteed Cure for Every Illness, Patented & Bottled by Dr. Reuben Buckman Claflin." And below that: "The God-Gifted Sisters VICTORIA & TENNESSEE CLAFLIN, AMAZING CHILD CLAIRVOYANTS & SPIRITUALISTS." BUCK CLAFLIN, a 53-year-old country hustler, is touching up these signs, aided by his 18-year-old son HEBERN. 10-year-old YOUNG TENNIE is squatting on the ground, playing jacks, when 14-year-old YOUNG VICTORIA comes strolling on hand-in-hand with a tall, handsome, well-dressed 30-year-old man, DR. CANNING WOODHULL)

CANNING

(Thrusting out his hand to Buck)

Mr. Claflin?

BUCK

(Gives him a hard stare)

*Dr. Claflin.*

CANNING

(Smiles)

Ah, we're colleagues then. I'm Dr. Woodhull. Dr. Canning Woodhull, at your service, sir.

(BUCK pauses, then slowly and deliberately wipes the paint off his hand and shakes Canning's)

CANNING

Dr. Claflin, I've just had the honor and great pleasure of making the acquaintance of your lovely and delightful young daughter Victoria here, whom I had the good fortune to meet by chance while strolling through the town.

(The doorway flap of the medicine wagon opens and ROXANNA CLAFLIN, small, homely, with a thick German accent, sticks her head out and peers suspiciously at Canning as he goes on:)

CANNING

And, by George, it was love at first sight! Mutually, I am happy to say. I have come therefore to respectfully request her hand in the bonds of matrimony.

ROXANNA

Vot? Who iss he? Vot does he vant?

BUCK

Victoria's hand -- an' all the rest of 'er. He wants to marry 'er.

(Turns back to Canning)

Well, I dunno, young man, our precious little daughter Victoria is just a child of twelve --

ROXANNA

Fourteen --

BUCK

Fourteen -- I'll be switched! Durned if they don't grow up before you know it. But she still means all the world to us an' it would break our hearts to part with 'er. A strong, healthy, good-lookin' gal that age is a very valuable prop'ity. What are you prepared to offer by way of compensation?

CANNING

Everything I have, sir. Which I am happy to say is not inconsiderable. In addition to a very lucrative medical practice, I'm fortunate enough to have inherited a sizable fortune --

(Draws Buck over to Roxanna in the doorway)

-- but I'm sure your good wife will be interested to hear this too -- in full detail --

(As the THREE confer, YOUNG TENNIE, her eyes shining with excitement, pulls YOUNG VICTORIA off to a side)

YOUNG TENNIE

Golly! He really an' truly wants to *marry* you?

YOUNG VICTORIA

(With superior calm)  
So he says, and since he's rather attractive, I wouldn't mind.

YOUNG TENNIE

But you're only thirteen!

YOUNG VICTORIA

I'll be fourteen soon. Old enough.

YOUNG TENNIE

Old enough for -- you-know-what?

YOUNG VICTORIA

What "you-know-what"?

YOUNG TENNIE

To do – *it*.

YOUNG VICTORIA

If by "*it*," you mean sexual intercourse, Tennie, then say so in plain English.

YOUNG TENNIE

Okay then -- sexual whatcha-ma-course!

YOUNG VICTORIA

Yes, Miss Nosy, of course I'm old enough for "sexual whatcha-ma-course."

YOUNG TENNIE

How do you know?

(Then as the exciting thought strikes her)  
Don't tell me you already *done* it?!

YOUNG VICTORIA

(Hesitates slightly)  
Well, as a matter of fact, I have. Just a few minutes ago, with Dr. Woodhull.

YOUNG TENNIE

(Fairly bursting)  
Oh, Vicky, how exciting! How was it? Did he have a real big thing, like a horse or a bull?

YOUNG VICTORIA

Well, when he took it out, I have to admit it was big enough to scare the pants off of me.

YOUNG TENNIE

Golly! How was he able to stick that great big thing into that itty-bitty hole? Didn't it hurt?

YOUNG VICTORIA

(Nonchalantly)

Oh, just a little at first, and made me bleed some. But then he did it again and it wasn't too bad. By the third time, I didn't mind at all. After that, it went in slick as a whistle and didn't hurt a bit.

YOUNG TENNIE

How many times did you do it?

YOUNG VICTORIA

Just four. He said since it was my first time he didn't want to wear me out. But actually he was beginning to droop and I didn't think he could, so I didn't tell him I could go on doing it indefinitely without any bother at all.

YOUNG TENNIE

You mean you liked it?

YOUNG VICTORIA

Well, I didn't *dislike* it....

(Then with a big irrepressible smile)

To tell you the truth -- I loved it! I can't wait to get married and do it again -- and again! It feels so good! You have no idea! It's just the most fun ever!

YOUNG TENNIE

Really? Oh, Vicky! I can't wait till I'm old enough to do it too!

BUCK

(Coming to them)

Victoria, me and your Ma've decided to accept Dr. --

(Turns to Canning)

-- what'd you say your name was?

CANNING

Woodhull. Canning Woodhull.

BUCK

Dr. Woodhull's deal -- that is, proposal. Yuh'll get hitched as soon as we can fix it up.

YOUNG VICTORIA

(Smiles demurely)

If you say so, Pa.

BUCK

(Turns to Canning)

Climb in, son. We gotta get to Zanesville in time for the county fair We can tie the knot there. Till then, yuh'll just hafta keep your pecker in your pants.

(THEY ALL pile into the wagon, with BUCK at the reins)

Gee-yup, Lightnin'! Giddy-ap! Hayfoot, strawfoot, yee-haw! *Move!*

(The wagon rolls off, with the GIRLS and HEBERN singing exuberantly:)

GIRLS & HEBERN

Oh, Susanna, don't you cry for me!

I'm bound for Zanesville, O-hi-o

With my banjo on my knee!

It rained so hard the day I left

The weather it was dry

The sun shone bright

All through the night

Susanna, don't you cry!

(As the wagon rolls off with its singing cargo, VICTORIA'S ARMY, led as always by EVE, marches on from the other side, singing to the tune of "Onward, Christian Soldiers," followed by a SPOTLIGHT which leaves the rest of the stage dark as THEY cross it)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

Onward, O Victoria, young and starry-eyed!

A world out there awaits you, with arms held open wide!

EVE

(Raising her clenched fist)

Hail, Victoria!

## VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Raising their clenched fists)

Hail! Hail! Hail!

(Sing)

Onward, O Victoria, our bright and shining star  
As you start the fateful journey  
Which will take you long and far!

(As they go off, the SPOTLIGHT GOES OFF with them  
and the center of the stage LIGHTS UP, revealing  
YOUNG VICTORIA and YOUNG TENNIE seated at  
a small table with a crystal ball between them)

## YOUNG TENNIE

(Passing her hands over the glass ball, intoning mystically)

I am Tenestra, the all-seeing. I see the past, the present and the future. Everything is revealed to me, nothing is hidden. What do you wish to know, young woman?

## YOUNG VICTORIA

O Tenestra, seer and knower of all, what lies in my future?

## YOUNG TENNIE

With Canning Woodhull?

## YOUNG VICTORIA

(Shrugs)

With or without him. He's not even good in bed any more, when he's drunk, which is most of the time. So what else do I have to look forward to?

## YOUNG TENNIE

Well, let me look into the crystal ball and see. Hmm...the ball is cloudy...murky...it's hard to make out...but it looks like you will be happy...and unhappy...rich...and poor...healthy...and sick....

## YOUNG VICTORIA

(Laughs)

Oh, Tennie, I think you'll have to find another line of work! I can tell better fortunes than that!

## ROXANNA'S VOICE

Hebern! Tennie! Come here! *Mach shnell!* I neet you bot'!

## YOUNG TENNIE

Okay, Miss Smarty-pants, tell your own fortune then!

(Rises and goes off. YOUNG VICTORIA leans forward and looks hard into the ball, then sits back and closes her eyes, intoning:)

## YOUNG VICTORIA

O all-knowing spirits of the other world! Is there anybody out there who can help me? Please? Hello? Yes? Is that a spirit? I feel your presence, but cannot see you or hear you. If you are truly here, O spirit, talk to me, speak, manifest yourself!

(DEMOSTHENES, the white-haired ancient Greek himself, in tunic, laurel wreath and walking staff, totters in and stops in front of her)

## DEMOSTHENES

Coming, Victoria -- here I am. Sorry to keep you waiting, my girl, but my arthritis is killing me and I'm running late with my calls today. What can I do for you, my dear? My, you *are* a dear -- a real pretty one, for a change, thank the gods. You should see some of the dogs I get!

## YOUNG VICTORIA

(Opens her eyes and regards him in surprise)

Who are you?

## DEMOSTHENES

Demosthenes. Does the name ring a bell? I hate to blow my own horn, but I'm quite a historic figure, you know, who lived in ancient Greece, with Aristophanes and Socrates and Sophocles and Euripides and all those other famous names. Even with modern education as bad as it is, I'm sure you must have heard of me?

## YOUNG VICTORIA

Oh, yes, you're the one who was such a terrible speaker everybody laughed when you opened your mouth, till you started shouting at the ocean with pebbles in your mouth and you turned into a great orator and were -- are -- very wise!

## DEMOSTHENES

Well, after a few thousand years, I suppose I was bound to pick up a thing or two. What's on your mind, little missy?

## YOUNG VICTORIA

Can you tell me my destiny?

## DEMOSTHENES

Of course, that's my job, why I'm here. The Fates -- you know, the three sisters with a spinning wheel and shears you've got painted on your wagon, spinning out everybody's lives on their wheel and when it's time for the poor suckers to die cutting them off with their scissors -- well, those ladies tell me you're a lucky girl, my dear. An exceptionally lucky girl. They sent me to deliver the good news to you.

## YOUNG VICTORIA

Really? What is it?

## DEMOSTHENES

Well, here, just to make sure there's no mistake, let me read it out to you just the way the old gals dictated it, word for word.

(Pulls out a palm computer and punches a few keys)

Nothing like keeping up with state-of-the-art, although this handy little gadget won't be invented for another hundred years. Now let's see, what does it say?

(Reads)

"Bill Clinton, keep your fly zipped -- " No, no, wrong message. That's not for delivery until the next century and the fool will ignore it. Don't you make the same mistake.

(Punches a few more keys)

Ah, here it is. Now listen carefully. The destiny prophesied for you by the Fates is, quote: "Victoria Woodhull, you are marked for special favor by the gods and *goddesses*. You will have fame and fortune, love and honor, and a consort who is a man of distinguished blood!"

## YOUNG VICTORIA

"Distinguished blood"? That doesn't sound much like Canning Woodhull --

## DEMOSTHENES

Forget that bum -- he's the present, I'm speaking of your future. You have yet to meet this hot-shot they refer to. And that's not all, honey child. The rest of it goes, quote:

(Reads from the laptop)

"You must prepare yourself for the greatness which awaits you. Follow your heart and your mind and you will become the first among women, leading the way for all the others of your sex, and you will be elevated to the highest place in the land."

## YOUNG VICTORIA

"The highest place"! Golly! What place is that?

## DEMOSTHENES

They didn't say exactly. It's a sneaky habit we Greeks picked up from the Delphic Oracle to never spell things out too specifically. They leave it to you to figure it out for yourself. I don't know too much about this johnny-come-lately of a country of yours, but whatever the highest position here is, I suppose that's the one they had in mind.

## YOUNG VICTORIA

The highest position is President -- but we don't have women Presidents -- we never have.

## DEMOSTHENES

Well, there's always a first time -- so it might as well be you.

## YOUNG VICTORIA

Goodness gracious whillikers! Don't tell me the first woman President of the United States is gonna be *me*?!

## DEMOSTHENES

Why not? You can't do any worse than the men have, baby doll. So good luck to you and I'm off. Thank the gods this is my last call of the day -- I'm dead on my tootsies and can't wait to get back to my cozy little pad up on Mount Olympus with a great view of the ocean and no rent.

(HE totters off, singing croakily)

"Oh, there's no place like ho-ome  
There's no-ho place like home...!"

## YOUNG VICTORIA

Oh, my goodness gracious golly Moses! I'm going to be the first woman President of the United States! Wait till Tennie hears *that*!

(SHE runs off eagerly, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT  
except for the SPOTLIGHT picking up VICTORIA'S  
ARMY marching on from the other side, singing:)

## VICTORIA'S ARMY

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of Woodhull!  
She will trample out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are  
stored!  
She will loose the fateful lightning of her terrible swift sword!  
Her truth is marching on!  
Glory, glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!  
Her truth is marching on!

[As they march off, the full stage LIGHTS UP on BUCK  
in front of his medicine wagon delivering his pitch to us,  
flanked by his skills: ROXANNA, HEBERN, YOUNG  
VICTORIA and YOUNG TENNIE)

BUCK

(Holding a bottle aloft as he orates)

-- this magic Magnetic Life Elixir is money-back guaranteed to cure every  
ailment and affliction, sickness and suffering known to man, from the common  
cold to the dread disease of cancer, female disorders and discharges, monthly  
irregularity, loss of manly powers, hair, cankers, bleeding, painful passing of  
water, bladder discontrol, weakness of vision, spots before the eyes, insomnia,  
diarrhea, constipation, consumption, hangnail, corns, warts, rheumatism, gout,  
arthritis, heart failure, cirrhosis of the liver, gallstones, kidney stones, ulcers,  
tumors, backache, stomachache, toothache, earache, headache, varicose veins,  
goiter, contagions, contusions, concussions, fractures, swellings, faintness,  
dizziness, palpitations, bee-sting and snake-bite! And all this, my friends, not for  
the regular low price of five dollars for a generous full-quart bottle, or the once-a-  
year-sale price of two dollars and fifty cents, but for the one-day, this-time-only,  
introductory, ridicu-lously low giveaway price of just ONE DOLLAR!

(ROXANNA and THE KIDS set up loud exclamations  
of "Only a dollar!" "Wow, what a bargain!" "Whoeee,  
I want one!" "I want two!" etc.)

Yes, believe it or not, that's what I said: ONLY ONE DOLLAR! So get 'em while  
they last, folks --

(HE breaks off as CANNING comes staggering on, roaring  
drunk, waving an open bottle of Magnetic Life Elixir and  
singing:)

CANNING

Oh, here's to ol' Buck Claflin  
An' his Magnetic Life Elixir  
It's good for every ailment  
An' you don't need a mixer!

BUCK

Jesus H. Christ! Drunk as a skunk again!

(To Roxanna and the kids)

Get him outa sight! Quick!

(THEY swiftly surround Canning and start pulling him toward the wagon)

Pay him no mind, folks -- that's my son-in-law -- he's just foolin' -- great little joker -- what a sense o' humor -- !

YOUNG VICTORIA

(Coaxing him along)

Come on, Canning -- let's get you to bed --

CANNING

An' here's to my sweet Vicky  
I'm so glad that we wed  
She always is so nice to me  
Especially in bed!

ROXANNA

(Contemptuously)

All you can do in bet now iss sleep!

CANNING

(Trying clumsily to embrace Young Victoria)

Don' wanna sleep -- wanna li'l fucky! Jus' come f'm whorehouse where I fucked m' brains out, but 'm still horny --

YOUNG VICTORIA

(Pushing him away furiously)

Oh, you are, are you! Well, you can go right back to your whorehouse -- !

CANNING

Can't -- got no more money. So I come home for free one -- put my big prickly in Vicky's li'l nicky --

(Collapses to the ground, passing out)

ROXANNA

Trunken no-goot bum! A fine husbint you picked out!

YOUNG VICTORIA

I picked out? Who sold me to him?

ROXANNA

He said he already done it to you und maybe put a bun in your oven, so vot else coult ve do?

## YOUNG VICTORIA

Bun in my oven, my foot, it was his promise of big money.  
 (Looks down at Canning)  
 And now I'm stuck with a liar, a drunk and a whore-chaser!

## ROXANNA

Stuck is right. I ain't seen no blut on your drawers an' it's two months past your time.

## YOUNG VICTORIA

Maybe I'm just late.

## ROXANNA

Und maybe the Kveen of Englant iss a man. You got a baby inside you --  
 (Jerks her head down at Canning)  
 from that piece o' dreck!

## YOUNG TENNIE

Oh, Vicky! A baby! How wonderful! I wish I was havin' one!

## ROXANNA

Gott forbit! You don't open your legs to nobody -- till I say so!  
 (Smacks her)  
 You hear?

(The SCENE BLACKS OUT, as the SPOTLIGHT picks up VICTORIA'S ARMY marching on, singing:)

## VICTORIA'S ARMY

Rockabye, baby, in the treetop  
 When the wind blows the cradle will rock  
 When the bough breaks  
 The cradle will fall  
 And down will come cradle, baby and all!  
 (THEY stop and EVE faces the audience and announces:)

## EVE

Yes, sisters, our darling Victoria was indeed pregnant, but the bad news is that she lost her precious baby, and you know what a great tragedy that is for any woman! And worse, she was never to be blessed with motherhood again. The good news on the other hand is that if she *had* been burdened with a bunch of pesky brats, how could she ever have fulfilled her grand destiny? So you might say her personal loss was the gain of all womankind -- a sacrifice she made for all of us!

(Raising her clenched fist)  
Hail, Victoria, the mother of us all!

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Raising their clenched fists, as they  
march off)  
Hail, Victoria, the mother of us all! Hail! Hail! Hail!

(As soon as they are off, the LIGHTS COME UP on THREE  
MALE CUSTOMERS lined up before a door-frame over  
which is a sign: "CLAFLIN INFIRMARY for the Treatment  
of All Physical & Psychic Problems by the Internationally  
Acclaimed Healer MISS TENNESSEE CLAFLIN Under the  
Guidance & Supervision of Dr. Reuben Buckman Claflin."  
A PAIR OF LADIES cross the scene, pausing scandalized  
as they pass)

LADY #1  
Shocking!

LADY #2  
Brazen!

LADY #1  
Open harlotry!

LADY #2  
You men ought to be ashamed! If you want sex, go home and do it to your wives!

LADY #1  
If they'll let you! *I* wouldn't! You dirty things!

(BUCK appears in the doorway in a long white doctor's  
coat)

BUCK  
All right, gents, who's the next patient?

LADY #1  
You whoremonger!

LADY #2

Selling the body of a child -- your own daughter!

LADY #1

We're going to the police right now and report you!

BUCK

You can save yourself a trip, the Chief is inside and'll be right out, as soon as he gets his pants back on.

(To the First Customer)

Come on in, son. Miss Tennessee is ready to treat you now.

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them, as the SPOTLIGHT picks up EVE at the side of the stage, addressing us:)

EVE

While her poor suffering, exploited and victimized little sister Tennessee was being sold into sexual slavery by her rotten pimp of a father, Victoria Woodhull was following another road to her destiny -- and not an easy one either for a woman saddled with and exploited likewise by another no-good stinker of a man -- but then aren't they all?

(Turns her head back into the wings)

Right, girls?

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Off)

Right! Men stink! Stink! Stink! *Pee-yoo!*

(The SPOTLIGHT BLACKS OUT on Eve as the center stage LIGHTS UP on VICTORIA, standing in front of a pier glass, dressing up in shabby street clothes to go out. CANNING staggers in, drunk, singing:)

CANNING

"I wanna girl jus' like the girl  
That married dear ol' Dad...!"

VICTORIA

(Bitterly, putting on her hat)  
Too bad you never found her.

CANNING

A-men! Hey, cookie, how 'bout a li'l nookie -- jus' like Mom use' to give dear ol' Dad when he needed cheerin' up?

VICTORIA

You'll have to cheer yourself up. I'm going out. I got a job.

CANNING

Wha' for?

VICTORIA

To pay the food and rent. Selling cigars at Sullivan's saloon.

CANNING

(Leers)

You're sure that's all you're sellin'? Maybe you oughta team up with your spread-legged baby sister -- I hear she's doin' so much business peddlin' her pussy she could use some help --

VICTORIA

You're the one needs help, you drunken sot!  
(Starts off)

CANNING

Hey, did you get any money in advance? I ain't got a cent --

VICTORIA

Try practicing medicine for a change – *Doctor!*  
(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on the scene as the SPOT-LIGHT picks up VICTORIA'S ARMY marching on, led by EVE)

EVE

Oh, yes, a woman's lot is not an easy one, always exploited by predatory, power-greedy, sex-hungry men --

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Sings as they march across)

"She is only a bird in a gilded cage  
A beautiful sight to see  
She sells her beauty for gold

To men young and old  
Just a bird in a gilded cage...!"

EVE

(Sings climactically)

"A...gild...ed...cage...!"

(As the SPOTLIGHT FOLLOWS them off, the LIGHTS  
COME UP at center to reveal THREE KEYSTONE  
COPS banging with their nightsticks on the door of  
"Claflin's Infirmary")

FIRST COP

Open up! Police! Open up, in the name of the law!

(The door opens and BUCK stands there in his long white  
doctor's coat)

BUCK

What do you want?

FIRST COP

You're under arrest! You and your daughter Tennessee!

BUCK

What for?

FIRST COP

Operatin' a disorderly house!

BUCK

Disorderly? This is a house o' healin' -- the Chief o' Police is one o' my daughter's  
best customers -- I mean, patients --

FIRST COP

Ex-patient -- he's just been fired. So get your daughter and come along!

BUCK

Great God Almighty! Ain't there no justice? What happened to the Constitution?  
The Declaration o' Independence? The Star-Spangled Banner? Is this what we fit  
the Revolution for? George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Paul Revere and  
your trusty horse, where are you now that we need you?

## FIRST COP

I don't know, but they sure as hell ain't here in bed with your horny daughter!  
Now get her out here -- an' not buck-ass nekkid, as usual!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them, SIMULTANEOUSLY  
COMING UP at the other side of the stage on VICTORIA in  
skin-tight tights and tray of cigars suspended from her neck,  
surveying herself in a theatrical dressing-table mirror)

## VICTORIA

My goodness, this certainly does show a lot of me! Way too much! All breast  
and limb! Practically stark naked!

(Tries futilely to tug the tights up higher over her bosom and  
lower on her legs)

## SULLIVAN'S VOICE

Hey, toots, get your tail out here and start sellin' seegars!

## VICTORIA

Yes, Mr. Sullivan! I'm coming right now!

(SHE turns to go -- as DEMOSTHENES hobbles into the  
scene from the other direction)

## DEMOSTHENES

Hold on, Victoria! Wait! Wait!

## VICTORIA

(Turns to him in surprise)

Demosthenes! What are you doing here?

## DEMOSTHENES

I have an urgent message for you. You must go to Ottawa, Illinois. At once!

## VICTORIA

Ottawa? Illinois? What's in Ottawa, Illinois?

## DEMOSTHENES

Your sister, Tennessee, and she's in great trouble. *Great* trouble! She needs you  
desperately! Hurry!

## VICTORIA

What trouble?

## DEMOSTHENES

As usual, the Fates didn't bother to spell it out. They just said: "Tell Victoria to get off her butt and move!" So *move!*

## VICTORIA

Oh, my God! Tennie!

(SHE whirls and runs off. DEMOSTHENES shakes his head looking after her and hobbles off painfully in the opposite direction)

## DEMOSTHENES

Women! Never give a man any rest. Why couldn't the Fates be men?

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT with his exit and COME UP on JUDGE THROTTLE seated on the judicial bench with TENNIE standing before him)

## BAILIFF'S VOICE

Oyez, oyez, this court is now in session, Judge Thaddeus Thurston Throttle presiding, in the case of the People of the State of Illinois versus Tennessee Celeste Claflin!

## JUDGE THROTTLE

(Bangs his gavel)

Tennessee Celeste Claflin, you are charged with engaging in the practice of prostitution in violation of the statutes of the State of Illinois, publicly selling your body for money in exchange for sexual services. How do you plead?

## TENNIE

Well, for gosh sake, Judge, what did you expect me to do – give it away for free? Personally, I'd just as soon, but a gal's gotta live -- and support her old Ma and Pa and little brothers and sisters. That's family values. The American Way. I didn't ask for charity, like some folks, I worked for it!

## JUDGE THROTTLE

Very commendable, except you shouldn't have worked for it on your back. I find you guilty as charged and sentence you to be incarcerated in the Ottawa County Jail for six months.

(Bangs his gavel)

Next case!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them as the SPOTLIGHT picks up EVE at the side, addressing the audience in indignation:)

EVE

Wouldn't you know it? It's always the woman who pays -- and pays! But as the old saying goes, it takes two to do-si-do. So why is it only the woman who is punished for engaging in consensual sex, while the man always gets off scot-free? Because the law is made by men, for men, and carried out by MEN -- the low-down, shameless, hypocritical skunks!

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Off)

A-men, sister! Up with women! Down with men!

(The SPOTLIGHT BLACKS OUT on Eve and the LIGHTS COME UP on a very respectably dressed now VICTORIA facing the JUDGE in his chambers seated behind his desk)

JUDGE THROTTLE

I'm sorry, Mrs. Woodhull, but I could not possibly consider reversing my verdict. Under the transparent guise of "healing," your sister openly and blatantly engaged in the vile practice of licentious prostitution.

VICTORIA

(Shocked)

Licentious? Prostitution?! Oh, Judge! How could you even countenance such a thought! You've seen her, talked with her -- have you ever met a sweeter, dearer, more innocent and purer child than my little sister?

JUDGE THROTTLE

All I know is that your pure innocent little sister is a common public harlot.

VICTORIA

Harlot?! How can you possibly call my little baby sister a -- well, I can't bring myself to sully my lips again by repeating that word -- but I have something here which speaks louder than words --

(Hands him a paper)

Here, read this!

JUDGE THROTTLE

(Frowning as he reads)

"Be it known to all whom it may concern that I have performed a complete and thorough pelvic examination of the private parts of Miss Tennessee Celeste

Claflin, a Caucasian female eighteen years of age, and did find and do hereby certify her to be one hundred percent virgo intacta -- "

(Looks up incredulously)

"Virgo intacta" -- does that mean she's a *v-v-virgin*?

VICTORIA

One hundred percent. As untouched as the day she was born!

JUDGE THROTTLE

But that's impossible -- she can't be! She admitted in open court she'd been selling her body -- !

VICTORIA

Your Honor, as I said, she's an innocent child -- she didn't understand the accusation. By "selling her body," she was referring to her activities as a professional healer by the laying on of *hands* -- that's the only part of her body which was involved!

JUDGE THROTTLE

And she's really a *v-v-virgin*?

VICTORIA

As pure as the Virgin Mary –

(Crosses herself piously)

-- as certified by the statement there from the highly qualified specialist who examined her in the cell where she is now incarcerated.

JUDGE THROTTLE

(Looks at the paper again)

Signed "Canning Woodhull, M.D."

VICTORIA

An eminent gynecologist from Harvard Medical School, universally recognized as the world's top authority on female anatomy.

JUDGE THROTTLE

Well, then he should know. In that case, I'll order her released from jail at once --

VICTORIA

Thank you, Judge! You're an ornament to the bench and a testament to justice! If only we had more like you!

JUDGE THROTTLE

(Shaking his head in amazement)

As pure as the V-V-Virgin Mary, by God! Selling her body by the laying on of *hands*...!

The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them and the SPOTLIGHT COMES UP on the marching entrance of VICTORIA'S ARMY, singing to the tune of "The Battle-Cry of Freedom":)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

Cheer, cheer, cheer Victoria Woodhull!  
Striking a blow for liberty...!

EVE

Having snatched with a brilliant ruse her male-victimized little sister from the female-suffocating walls of the Ottawa County Jail, Victoria resumed her path to her great destiny, together with her now reunited family, at the headwaters of the mighty Mississippi in the true-blue American city of St. Louis.

(The SPOTLIGHT BLACKS OUT on Eve and Victoria's Army as the LIGHTS COME UP on COLONEL BLOOD, a whip-smart handsome young man with a military bearing, cavalryman's mustache, black riverboat gambler's hat, looking like Rhett Butler's twin brother. He is standing before a door-frame with a folded newspaper in his hand. On the other side of the closed door is a space representing a hotel sitting room, separated by another door-frame from a space representing the bedroom, in which CANNING is lying on the bed reading the Police Gazette, while BUCK and ROXANNA are playing cards at a small table, and VICTORIA and TENNIE, in her underwear, are singing and dancing to the music of "Camptown Lady," played by HEBERN on a harmonium)

COLONEL BLOOD

(Reading aloud from the newspaper in his hand)

"Let the spirit world guide you to fortune, health and happiness through the spiritual services of Mrs. Canning Woodhull; and avail yourself of the miraculous cures of all afflictions and weaknesses of the flesh by the magical touch of the noted healer Miss Tennessee Claflin, Madison Hotel, Suite 219."

(Looks up at the number on the door)

Well, here we are. Two-nineteen.

(RAPS the door-knocker. Because of the noise they are making in the bedroom, they don't hear it. HE RAPS AGAIN LOUDER, this time as the song ends, and THEY alert to the SOUND)

TENNIE

Hey, maybe that's a customer! I'll go see.

(Quickly slips on a semi-transparent silken wrap and hurries through the door to the sitting room)

BUCK

It's about time we got some answers to that notice in the paper afore they throw us out o' here for not payin' the bill.

ROXANNA

Do ve haf to stay in the fenciest hotel in St. Louis? Gott in Himmel -- a whole fifty cents a day for room und meals! Highway robbery! Couldn't ve find someplace cheaper?

BUCK

Not for the kind o' big game we're huntin' fer.

ROXANNA

Ja, big-city cheapskates -- chust like small-town cheapskates!

(TENNIE crosses the sitting room and opens the door, at once liking what she sees.)

TENNIE

*Hel-lo!*

BLOOD

Do I have the honor of addressing Mrs. Woodhull?

TENNIE

No, I'm her sister, Tennessee Claflin --

(Thrusting out her well-exposed bosom invitingly)

-- and if I can be of *any* service to you, sir, it would be my great pleasure!

BLOOD

Thank you, that's an offer I find it difficult to resist, but the advertised nature of Mrs. Woodhull's services appears closer to what I have in mind -- at the moment.

TENNIE

Perhaps later then. Any time, night or day. Come in!

(Steps back and HE enters)

Who shall I tell her is calling?

BLOOD

(Taking out card and handing it to her)

My card.

TENNIE

(Reads)

"Colonel James Harvey Blood." A military man -- my favorite kind! I enjoy a good passage at arms myself! If you'll just wait here a jiff, Colonel, I'll go see if Vicky -- Mrs. Woodhull -- is availee-able.

(Goes back into the bedroom, while BLOOD paces about the room)

BUCK

A customer?

TENNIE

Yeah, for Vicky, lucky gal!

ROXANNA

Man or voman?

TENNIE

A man --

(To Victoria)

-- and a corker, a real good-looker! When you get through with him, I want him!

BUCK

Only if he's got the greenbacks. Does he look like he has?

TENNIE

Well, he don't look broke, but he wouldn't need any greenbacks for me! I'd be willin' to pay *him*!

ROXANNA

Dumkopf! Instead of a brain, Gott gafe you a itch between your legs!

TENNIE

An' it feels so good to scratch it!

(To VICKY, who is checking herself in the mirror)

Go get him, gal!

VICTORIA

What's his name?

TENNIE

Colonel James Harvey Blood.

VICTORIA

(Startled)

"Blood -- ?!"

TENNIE

Yeah, what about it?

(Smiles)

Don't tell me you're scared o' blood....

VICTORIA

Don't you remember what Demosthenes told me? "Your consort will be a man of distinguished blood...!"

CANNING

That's me, sweetheart.

VICTORIA

(Flashes him a disdainful look)

Distinguished moonshine!

(Hurries out to the sitting room)

Wish me luck!

(The OTHERS ALL go to spy through a crack in the door to watch what follows in the sitting room. BLOOD turns to face VICTORIA as she enters. Their eyes meet and lock in an instantly bewitched love-at-first-sight trance, during which VICTORIA'S ARMY appears in the wings to belt out a thunderous burst of Handel's "HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH!" then pops back out of sight again)

BLOOD

(Murmurs, entranced)

"Behold, it is Juliet, outdazzling the sun...!"

VICTORIA

(Murmurs, similarly bewitched)

"O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou -- "

(Then pulls herself together)

Er -- ah -- Colonel Blood? I'm Victoria Woodhull. You wished to see me?

BLOOD

Very much -- and much, much more so, now that I do!

VICTORIA

*La!* You're very gal-lant, Colonel. A true officer and gentleman. Are you on active service?

BLOOD

In forced retirement from the Army of the Confederacy, alas, by the unhappy terms of Appomattox.

VICTORIA

But you harbor hopes of fighting again?

BLOOD

On other battlefields, for other prizes.

VICTORIA

Such as?

BLOOD

*You!*

(HE swiftly takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately)

I loved you the instant I saw you! I must have you! I refuse to live without you! Will you be mine?

VICTORIA

(Breathlessly)

Yes! Yes! I'm yours! All yours! Always...forever...!

(HE kisses her again, even more passionately, the embrace and kiss going on endlessly, until it becomes too much for

CANNING, spying through the crack in the door along with the others)

CANNING

Hey, that's enough! That lowdown hound is about to put it into her -- and she's beggin' him to -- !

(HE bursts through the door and rushes into the sitting room)

Unhand that woman! She's my wife!

BLOOD

She is? What a pity. But there's a ready remedy for that. I'll fight you for her. Shall we say pistols at dawn?

CANNING

Pistols? Are you crazy? Do you think I'd risk my life for an uppity, sour-faced, bitter-tongued wench who's not only a terrible wife, but a lousy lay? The worst! So if you're sucker enough to want her, take her. She's all yours and welcome to her!

(Turns to Victoria grandly)

Farewell, Victoria! I've carried you on my back long enough -- now *he* can! I wash my hands of you! Goodbye forever!

(HE sweeps out, slamming the door)

BLOOD

(Turns to Victoria)

Foul-mouthed fool! You're well rid of him. Divorce him and marry me.

VICTORIA

(Radiantly)

Of course! The quicker the better!

ROXANNA

Ach du lieber! Here ve go again! Out of the frying pan into the furnace!

BUCK

Well, he can't be any worse than what she just lost. Now that you're out o' the military, Captain, what do you do for a livin'?

BLOOD

Colonel. Anything that'll turn a dollar --

(Smiles)

-- a lot of dollars.

BUCK

You sound like just the kinda son-in-law I always wanted. Marry 'im, Vicky!

VICTORIA

(Smiles)

If you say so, Pa!

TENNIE

And when you're through with him, I still want him!

VICTORIA

Not on your life. Never!

(Links her arm firmly in Blood's)

This one's for keeps!

BLOOD

Amen! Till death do us part -- after I divorce my wife!

(As the others react to this, the LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them as the SPOTLIGHT reveals EVE at the side, telling us:)

EVE

And so Victoria found love, true love! The great love of her life! The lover chosen for her by the gods! "A consort of distinguished blood" -- just as the Fates, through their emissary Demosthenes, had foretold! But she was not mean-spirited enough to cast off Canning Woodhull, undeserving scoundrel and lout though he was, because she knew that without her to look after him he could not possibly survive. What a wonderful, compassionate, huge-hearted woman! But then aren't we all? After God created us, She threw away the mold. We're the greatest things She ever made! Aren't we, sisters?

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Off)

The greatest! The best! Eat your hearts out, men! You're the bottom! We're the tops!

(The SPOTLIGHT BLACKS OUT on Eve and the LIGHTS COME UP on a section of railroad coach seats on which are sprawled the sleeping forms of VICTORIA and BLOOD, TENNIE and HEBERN, and BUCK and ROXANNA. The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS, the LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE

CHUFFS and the wheels go CLICKETY-CLACK as DEMOSTHENES comes limping in on his staff)

DEMOSTHENES

Why do I always get stuck with these middle-of-the-night calls? I thought when I died I'd finally rest in peace. Fat chance!

(Stops beside the sleeping Victoria)

Wake up, Sleeping Beauty, I have something to tell you, and while it's true I have all eternity, I can think of better places to spend it than this noisy, smelly, bone-rattling contraption.

(VICTORIA sleeps on)

Victoria! Wake up! You summoned me -- here I am. You can't expect better service than that!

VICTORIA

(Opens her eyes)

Why, Demosthenes, it's you -- how nice of you to come -- I was praying you would and tell me what to do now --

DEMOSTHENES

Well, the word from the Fate ladies is that what you're to do now, my beamish lass, is get your ass -- get yourself off this wretched conveyance at the next stop and go to New York City instead.

VICTORIA

New York City? Why there?

DEMOSTHENES

How should I know? I'm just the Western Union boy who delivers the messages -- without even getting a tip.

(Leers at her)

Unless you have something interesting in mind, while your boyfriend's asleep.... Otherwise, don't waste time with questions, just go to New York!

VICTORIA

But what am I supposed to do after I get there? Did they tell you that?

DEMOSTHENES

Yes. You're to go to --

(Pulls out his pocket computer and punches a few keys)

17 Great Jones Street in the section called Greenwich Village.

VICTORIA

What's there?

DEMOSTHENES

A place to live, I'm told, for you and yours.

VICTORIA

And then what?

DEMOSTHENES

Who knows? After you get there, I'm sure you'll find out. Just leave it to the Fates.

(Shrugs)

As if you had any choice. As the ancient Romans always used to sing in a little ditty that was popular in the brothels of the Via Veneto:

(Sings)

"Que sera, sera  
Whatever will be, will be  
It's not up to you or me  
Que sera, sera...!"

VICTORIA

At 17 Great Jones Street...in Greenwich Village...right?

DEMOSTHENES

You've got it. Well, so long, kiddo. Have a nice day!

(HE waves and lurches off as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them and the SPOTLIGHT picks up VICTORIA'S ARMY marching on, singing:)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

"East Side, West Side, all around the town  
We all sang Ring-around-Rosie, London Bridge is falling down!  
Boys and girls together, me and Mamie O'Rourke  
We tripped the light fantastic  
On the sidewalks of New York...!"

(The SPOTLIGHT FOLLOWS them across the stage and off, as the LIGHTS COME UP on VICTORIA and BLOOD standing side by side, arms around each other, looking out a window-frame. On a pedestal nearby sits a marble bust of -- who else? -- Demosthenes)

VICTORIA

(Mumurs)

Well, here we are, in the great city of New York. Do you suppose this is a step on my climb to "the highest place in the land"?

BLOOD

I'll bet my life on it.

VICTORIA

Are you saying that just to humor me -- because you love me?

BLOOD

Because I love you -- and believe it.

VICTORIA

Because according to Demosthenes the Fates said so?

BLOOD

Because *you* say so. I believe in you, Victoria. I believe you're capable of accomplishing anything you want -- as long as you want it enough --

VICTORIA

I do! I do! I want to do great things -- the greatest! Don't you? Or as you told Pa, is all you want just a lot of dollars?

BLOOD

I wanted to be a great soldier -- but that opportunity is gone -- I fear, forever. But the opportunity for greatness is still there for you -- and because I love you with all my heart and soul, I want you to achieve it, and mean to do everything I can to help you get it.

VICTORIA

Oh, Jim! You do love me!

BLOOD

Can you ever doubt it?

VICTORIA

Never! And don't you ever doubt my love for you. But --although I do feel greatness in me -- how do I express it? I can't just *be* great. I must *do* something great. But what? Exactly? If I am to rise to the highest place, I must first prove myself worthy of it. How?

BLOOD

By looking into your mind and heart, my darling, and acting on what you find there. Greatness begins with a thought, an idea, a principle which is carried out.

VICTORIA

Thoughts... ideas... principles....

BLOOD

I know you have them. Select one, which is most important to you. The *most* important.

VICTORIA

The most important...?

(A STREETWALKER passes outside the window, pausing as a JOHN comes along)

STREETWALKER

Hello, dearie! Would you like to have a good time?

JOHN

Go fuck yourself, you scabby whore.

STREETWALKER

(Good-naturedly)

No scabs. And I'd rather have *you* do it to me, big boy.

JOHN

How much?

STREETWALKER

(Taking his arm and leading him off)

You're in luck, sweetheart -- for a handsome devil like you I'll cut the price in half!

VICTORIA

*That* outrages me! That wherever you look in this city, the whole country, the world, women have to sell themselves! And not just their bodies, on the streets and in marriage, but *all* of themselves, because they have no rights. None! We call ourselves a nation of free people, but no woman is free -- we've just freed the slaves, but not women. When will it be our turn?

BLOOD

Don't you consider yourself free?

VICTORIA

Only because I would die before I'd surrender my freedom to anyone -- even you, the man I love!

BLOOD

And this man who loves you would never ask you to. I feel, like you, that every woman is the equal of every man -- and entitled to equal rights.

VICTORIA

(Her face lights up, inspired)

That's *it!* You've just stated it -- the great principle in which we both believe and shall give our lives to! And by which we'll achieve greatness for ourselves too!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them and COME UP on another section of the stage and an imposing building doorway with a sign over it: "WALL STREET STOCK EXCHANGE" and a BEGGAR standing beside it, holding out his hat and chanting:)

BEGGAR

"Christmas is a-comin' and the geese are gettin' fat  
Won't you please put a penny in a poor man's hat  
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny'll do  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you...!"

(TENNIE and BUCK walk into the scene, gawking at the sign. The BEGGAR looks them over appraisingly, then shrugs)

Country bumpkins!  
(Goes off)

TENNIE

"Wall Street Stock Exchange"...so this is where all the money is!

BUCK

That's right. What ain't here, ain't worth countin'.

TENNIE

And every man that goes through that door is a millionaire?

BUCK

They wouldn't be allowed in if they wasn't. So just keep yer eye peeled and take your choice, pick out one you like.

TENNIE

I like 'em all. You know I ain't never met a man I didn't like.

BUCK

But it's better to like the ones with money. Like your Ma keeps sayin', if you must spread your legs, you gotta learn to be practical.

(JAY GOULD, a handsome richly dressed young man, enters the scene briskly, heading toward the Stock Exchange entrance)

TENNIE

Oo, look, there's a pretty one -- I like *him!*

BUCK

Me too. That's Jay Gould, the Prince o' Erie --

TENNIE

Prince?

BUCK

They call him that 'cause he owns the Erie Railroad -- smile at 'im!  
(TENNIE flashes a big smile. GOULD smiles back and tips his hat, continuing on into the Stock Exchange without pausing)

BUCK

Gol-durn, you muffed it! Next time give 'em a flash o' yer ankle. They say he's a leg man.

TENNIE

I want to be loved for myself, not my leg.

BUCK

Don't worry, he'll love all o' you.

TENNIE

I think poor men are more appreciative.

BUCK

Only they got nothin' to show their appreciation with.

(COMMODORE VANDERBILT, top-hatted, comes hobbling  
in on a gold-handled cane)

TENNIE

Who's that poor old man?

BUCK

Poor, my foot. That's the richest man in the world. Smile at 'im!

TENNIE

What's his name?

BUCK

Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt -- an' he owns *all* the railroads, 'cept the Erie --  
an' everything else too. Smile at 'im an' give 'im a flash o' leg, damn it! All the  
way up to your gazebo!

(TENNIE smiles and pulls up her stocking well above her red-  
gartered knee, but VANDERBILT goes on into the building  
without giving them a glance)

Shit! Blind old bastid! He coulda tripped over yuh stark nekkid and never seed  
yuh.

TENNIE

(Smiles)

He might be too blind to see me, but if he fell on me, he sure woulda felt me!

BUCK

(Looks her over and gets an idea)

Hey, now! Sure! That's the way...!

TENNIE

You mean I should lay down on the sidewalk so's he'll trip over me when he  
comes out?

BUCK

Not on the sidewalk. I know a durn sight better place.

TENNIE

Where?

BUCK

His bed. All we gotta do is get you into it. An' I got an idea just how....

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them as the SPOTLIGHT picks up EVE sticking her head out of the wings)

EVE

If there's anything lower than a man who will sell his own daughter for gold, it's the man who buys her. But though they may buy our bodies, they can never buy our souls! Right, sisters?

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Off)

Right! Take our bodies, *please*, but not our souls! No, no, not our souls!

EVE

Tennessee Claflin may no longer have been a virgin in body, but in her soul she was still *virgo intacta*. As are we all! Let's hear it for virgins – at heart!

VICTORIA'S ARMY

Yay, virgins! Ripe, ready, cherry virgins! At heart! Yay! Yay! Yay!

(The SPOTLIGHT BLACKS OUT on Eve and the LIGHTS COME UP on the same kind of separated foyer and bed-chamber setup as in the St. Louis hotel scene, only now we are in the Vanderbilt mansion, with BUCK and TENNIE ringing the front DOORBELL, and the night-capped VANDERBILT lying in a four-poster in the bedchamber, reading a newspaper, as his BUTLER opens the front door, confronting Buck and Tennie snootily)

BUCK

Good afternoon, my good man. Dr. Reuben Buckman Claflin and daughter, Miss Tennessee Claflin, callin' on Commodore Vanderbilt.

(VANDERBILT puts down his paper to listen)

BUTLER

Commodore Vanderbilt is not receiving any callers. He is indisposed and confined to bed.

BUCK

Good.

BUTLER

I beg your pardon?

BUCK

We are just the people he needs to see. I am a doctor of physio-dermic medicine an' my daughter here is my assistant. She gives very special full-body, full-penetration derma treatments – every square inch of skin to skin, flesh to flesh – an' I have seed her perform miracles with them -- practically raise the dead!

BUTLER

I'm sorry, but the Commodore has his own physician and –

VANDERBILT

(Calls out loudly)

-- and a hell of a lot of good he's doing me! That full-body treatment sounds a hell of a lot better!' Send 'em in!

(The BUTLER shrugs resignedly and admits BUCK and TENNIE, leading them to the bedchamber, and leaves as THEY enter)

BUCK

Doctor Claflin, sir, and my daughter an' assistant, Miss Tennessee Claflin, at your service, Commodore.

VANDERBILT

(Looking Tennie up and down)

She the one who gives the special flesh treatments? Just how does she do it?

BUCK

Through magnetic healin' by layin' on of hands, an' whatever other organs are needed, to the afflicted parts.

VANDERBILT

(With a gleam in his eye)

Laying on of hands and other organs, eh? Well, I can see she's got good-lookin' hands. The rest of her look as good?

BUCK

You'll be able to judge for yourself, Commodore, because in order to keep nothin' between her magnetic healin' powers an' you, to give you the full treatment, she has to take off all her clothes.

VANDERBILT

She does, eh? Then what are we waiting for? Let's get on with it!

BUCK

Yes, sir, Commodore! And since you an' Tennie won't need me while she's givin' you the works -- I mean, her special treatment -- I'll just wait outside till you're through.

(Scurries out, closing the door and standing with his ear to it)

VANDERBILT

Well, my dear, in my crucial condition I have no time to lose, so come over here and let's go to it.

(SHE goes over to his bedside with a smile)

First, to get me up for it, I'll need you to lay your hand on this poor, lifeless, afflicted part right here --

(Takes her hand and leads it under the blanket, closing his eyes blissfully)

Ah, that feels good...wonderful...your father didn't lie, you truly have a magical touch! I can feel life beginning to stir in the part already....

(Runs his tongue over his lips)

My mouth is dry...kiss me....

TENNIE

Here, I got somethin' even better for dry mouth. Just suck on this!

(Opens her bodice, pulls out a breast and sticks the nipple in his mouth. HE sucks on it greedily, like a starving child.

SHE smiles down on him maternally)

Yeah, honey, like the Good Book says: "O let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely! This is my beloved, O daughters of Jerusalem!"

VANDERBILT

"Yea, thy two breasts are like two young roes which feed among the lilies. How much better is thy love than wine!"

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them as the SPOTLIGHT picks up EVE sticking her head out of the wings to snap bitterly:)

EVE

From the Song of Solomon -- written by a *man!* Naturally! No woman would ever write such trash! Filthy, obscene trash! Sheer, lascivious pornography! Now while that disgusting nonsense was going on, let me show you what decent, respectable, right-thinking women were doing --

(The SPOTLIGHT BLACKS OUT on her as the LIGHTS COME UP on TWO LADIES wearing the suffragette costume of ankle-length bloomers beneath a knee-length skirt, setting up an outdoor speaker's stand with American flag and large placard: "SUFFRAGETTES OF AMERICA." They are SUSAN B. ANTHONY and ELIZABETH CADY STANTON. A MALE HECKLER comes strolling onto the scene)

MALE HECKLER

"Suffragettes," huh? What you ladies sufferin' from? Diarrhea o' the mouth?  
(Guffaws at his own joke; as ANOTHER MALE HECKLER enters the scene and pauses)

S.B. ANTHONY

"He jests at scars that never felt a wound!"  
(Mounts the stand)

If I may have your attention, I have an important message for all Americans, male and female --

(VICTORIA and BLOOD stroll on, arm-in-arm)

BLOOD

Well, we may not have equal rights for women yet, but at least we have free speech.

VICTORIA

Those two women look familiar. Haven't I seen their pictures in the papers?

BLOOD

Yes, the speaker is Susan B. Anthony; the other is Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

S.B. ANTHONY

First, let me begin by making it clear that we women want to take nothing away from men which they now have --

MALE HECKLER #1

-- except the thing that *makes* 'em men, haw-haw!

(MALE HECKLER #2 laughs and applauds)

S.B. ANTHONY

-- and the only thing we ask for women is what men already enjoy--

MALE HECKLER #2

Women ain't built for it! Haw-haw! Unless they can grow one!

STANTON

(Angrily)

Miss Anthony is too much of a lady to respond to such vulgarity, but I will point out that if that "gentleman's" mother had not been built to bring him into this world, it might be a much better place!

BLOOD

Touche! Hear, hear!

S.B. ANTHONY

And may I point out that our President, Ulysses S. Grant, who fought so valiantly and successfully for the emancipation of black slaves and the subsequent granting of the vote to black males, declares unequivocally now that he will fight to the death against the granting of the vote to any female --

MALE HECKLER #1

Three cheers for him! He's got my vote!

BLOOD

(Calls out)

But not mine! We need a President who knows a woman is entitled to the same rights as himself --

VICTORIA

-- including the right to be President!

BLOOD

I agree! A woman like you, Victoria!

MALE HECKLER #1

Her? A lady President? Haw! Don't make me laugh!

## VICTORIA

You can start laughing now, mister -- because I shall be the first woman President in the White House!

## MALE HECKLER #2

The first woman president in the loony-house!

## MALE HECKLER #1

And I'm the Queen o' the May! Whoops!

(THEY break up laughing, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them and the SPOTLIGHT picks up VICTORIA'S ARMY marching on, waving American flags and singing:)

## VICTORIA'S ARMY

Victoria forever! Hurrah, girls, hurrah!  
 Down with all male tyrants  
 And up with Victoria!  
 Oh, we'll rally round our sister  
 Yes, we'll rally round our girl  
 Shouting the battle-cry of Woodhull!

(As they march off, the LIGHTS COME UP on COMMODORE VANDERBILT in a big upholstered armchair facing VICTORIA and TENNIE side-by-side on a sofa)

## VANDERBILT

You may have something there. The way those numskulls in Washington are making a mess of things, maybe that's what this country needs -- a woman President. It's an original idea anyway -- and I'm all for those. So good luck!

## VICTORIA

Thanks, Commodore, but I'll need more than that -- I'll need money -- and lots of it. Will you contribute to my campaign?

## VANDERBILT

Now that's something else. Wishing you luck doesn't cost me a cent, but I don't shell out hard cash without a good reason.

TENNIE

(Coquettishly)

I'll give you a good reason -- because she's my sister, Commie, and don't you want to be nice to my sister -- like I'm nice to you?

VANDERBILT

Is she proposing to be nice to me too?

(Looks Victoria over)

In that case, I might be inclined to consider it....

VICTORIA

No, Commodore, that's not what I was suggesting or offering at all.

VANDERBILT

Why not? You consider yourself better than your sister?

VICTORIA

Perhaps not as good. Because what Tennessee gives, she always gives freely, with no thought of receiving any return --

VANDERBILT

(To Tennie)

If I had known that, I could've saved myself a lot of money --

TENNIE

(Sticks her tongue out at him teasingly)

Keep your old money! I only take your presents because I can't stop you from givin' 'em --

VANDERBILT

(Grins)

-- because I like the way you show gratitude for 'em.

(Turns back to Victoria)

I'm a business man, not a philanthropist. What would I get for my money?

VICTORIA

Equal rights for women.

VANDERBILT

What's that to me? I'm a man.

VICTORIA

Don't you care about women?

VANDERBILT

Not a bit, except in my bed. That's the only place I can see any use for 'em. Outside of that, there was only one woman I ever really cared about. Loved and respected. And listened to. She was the guiding star of my life.

(Bleakly)

And she's gone....

VICTORIA

Who was she?

VANDERBILT

Phoebe Ruyker Vanderbilt...my mother.

VICTORIA

She's passed away?

VANDERBILT

(Nods)

May she rest in peace, God love her. I miss her. Especially when things are most difficult -- like now. While she was alive, I never made a decision without consulting her. And she was always right -- always.

(Sighs)

And now...when I need her more than ever....

VICTORIA

(Softly)

Then why don't you ask for her help again?

VANDERBILT

(In surprise)

Ask her? How?

VICTORIA

Those who love us never leave us -- in spirit. Would you like to communicate with her spirit?

VANDERBILT

Yes!

VICTORIA

Then you shall!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT. In the darkness, we hear:)

VICTORIA'S VOICE

Mrs. Vanderbilt? Phoebe Ruyker Vanderbilt...your beloved son Cornelius here needs you...he needs your help, your counsel...won't you come to his aid once more now, as you always have before?

DEMOSTHENES' VOICE

You're being paged, Mrs. Vanderbilt. I think you'd better respond or you'll get no peace. Believe me, I know that one, I speak from experience.

(The LIGHTS COME UP DIMLY on VICTORIA, TENNIE and VANDERBILT sitting around a small round table, clasping each other's hands)

VICTORIA

Mrs. Vanderbilt? Mrs. Vanderbilt? Please come, Mrs. Vanderbilt! Please? Please?

DEMOSTHENES' VOICE

You see what I mean, Mrs. V? She's the most persistent one on my list -- she never gives up. So you might as well go ahead and get it over with.

VICTORIA

Mrs. Vanderbilt? I know you're here. I cannot see you, but I feel your presence. Please speak to your son, to let him know you're here --

PHOEBE'S VOICE

(Eerie, faraway)

Is that you, Cornelius dear?

VANDERBILT

Yes, Mother!

PHOEBE'S VOICE

Oh, Cornelius, it's so good to talk to you, after such a long time. I've missed you so much, my boy. Oh, so much!

VANDERBILT

And I've missed *you*, Mother! You have no idea! How are things up there?

## PHOEBE'S VOICE

Oh, just grand, delightful! Everything is so lovely and everybody is so nice. We just can't wait for you to join us! Father sends you his love and hopes you're being a good boy. Are you?

## VANDERBILT

Yes, Mommy, but I've got problems. Big problems. Maybe you can help me -- the way you always did.

## PHOEBE'S VOICE

Well, I can try, dear. What's troubling you?

## VANDERBILT

It's that damn Erie gang -- excuse me, Mommy, I didn't mean to swear --

## PHOEBE'S VOICE

I'll forgive you, dear -- this time -- but don't let it happen again. That's not how I raised you. Now what about the Erie gang?

## VANDERBILT

Well, that dam -- darned -- Jay Gould, Jim Fisk and Dan'l Drew -- they're undercutting my rates so's to drive me out of business and take my railroads away from me. If this keeps up, I won't have an inch of track left. What shall I do?

## PHOEBE'S VOICE

Undercut *their* rates, dear. Every time they come down, *you* go down even lower.

## VANDERBILT

But I'll lose money!

## PHOEBE'S VOICE

So will they. And as you have more money than they do, they'll go bust before you do.

## VANDERBILT

Of course, Mother! Why didn't *I* think of that? That's just what I'll do!

## PHOEBE'S VOICE

And then after they go bankrupt, you can snap up all of their railroads and other holdings for a song and become even richer than you are now.

VANDERBILT

But I'm already the richest man in the world.

PHOEBE'S VOICE

There's always room for improvement, dear. Remember what I always taught you: Never settle for less than *everything*.

VANDERBILT

You're so right, Mother -- as always! Oh, thank you, thank you!

PHOEBE'S VOICE

Not at all, dearest. That's what mothers are for, you know. Well, I must go now, it's time for my bridge game. Just call on me again, if you need me, any time.

VANDERBILT

I will! I will! Good luck with your bridge game!

PHOEBE'S VOICE

Don't worry. I'm a killer!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT and the SPOTLIGHT picks up EVE sticking her head out of the wings to state triumphantly:)

EVE

Which proves that a man's best friend is not his *dog*, but his *mother*! Let's hear it for moms!

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(Off)

Yay, moms! Mom's the word! Moms! Moms! Moms!

(The SPOTLIGHT BLACKS OUT and another SPOTLIGHT picks up a NEWSBOY entering from the opposite wing with a bundle of newspapers and shouting as he crosses the stage:)

NEWSBOY

Read all about it! Victoria Woodhull for President! The first woman in history to run for President o' the United States! Endorsed by Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, who states: "Victoria Woodhull is absolutely and unequivocally the best man -- or woman -- for the job and has my full backing, financially, morally,

spiritually, and otherwise! Personally, I owe everything I am and have in this world to the inspired guidance of a woman -- my angel mother -- and what's good for me is good for the country!"

(As the SPOTLIGHT GOES OFF with him, the FULL STAGE LIGHTS COME UP on VICTORIA and BLOOD, standing facing SUSAN B. ANTHONY and ELIZABETH CADY STANTON seated behind a table backed by a sign reading: "NATIONAL WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION")

VICTORIA

I don't understand. If the women's movement will not support a woman for President, who will?

STANTON

We are not opposed, in principle, to supporting a woman for President, Mrs. Woodhull --

S.B. ANTHONY

It's a matter of being certain it's the right woman --

VICTORIA

And I'm not?

STANTON

We don't know that, Mrs. Woodhull. In fact, we don't know anything about you.

VICTORIA

What do you want to know? I am what you see -- a woman. A woman who believes in what you do -- equal rights for women -- all women -- and I will give anything, do anything, to achieve that. Isn't that enough?

S.B. ANTHONY

I'm afraid not -- quite. Before accepting you -- or anyone -- as our champion, we have a right to know, fully, just who she is. For example, you call yourself "Mrs. Woodhull," yet you just introduced this gentleman, Colonel Blood, as your husband. Are you then not "Mrs. Blood"?

VICTORIA

No. There are some petty technicalities holding up our divorces from our legal spouses, but as we are living together as man and wife, I consider him to be my husband in fact, if not in law.

S.B. ANTHONY

(With extremely pained disapproval)

You mean you are living sinfully in an illicit, illegal, adulterous relationship?  
That is a matter of concern -- great concern!

VICTORIA

To whom?

S.B. ANTHONY

Every decent woman -- and man -- in America whose support you are seeking.

VICTORIA

Then I will let them know that I want for them what I want -- and take -- for myself: the freedom to love where and when and as I choose, without being chained by law to someone I no longer love--

STANTON

(Even more shocked and disapproving)

You plan to run for President advocating free love?

VICTORIA

Of course. Do you prefer love which is not free, but bought and sold?

S.B. ANTHONY

(Coldly)

There is a difference between marriage and prostitution!

VICTORIA

Not in a society where women are coerced into choosing either one or the other.

(The TWO LADIES look at each other, then back at Victoria  
and Blood)

S.B. ANTHONY

You have given us much to think about, Mrs. Woodhull. We shall have to consider it further.

STANTON

Much further. Much, much further indeed!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT and a PINK BABY SPOT  
picks up EVE sticking her head out of a wing)

EVE

And while those righteous ladies are pondering, let us consider what some others call "love" – though “animal coupling” would be more disgustingly accurate!

VANDERBILT'S VOICE

(Sings quaveringly)

"Will you love me in December as you do in May?"

TENNIE'S VOICE

You know I will!

VANDERBILT'S VOICE

*Oh! Oh! Oh! Ma..ma...!*

EVE

To use the sacred name of his mother – *while fornicating* – sheer desecration!

(The SPOT BLACKS OUT as the LIGHTS COME UP on TENNIE and the COMMODORE in his four-poster, as they finish making love with a bang and HE rolls off her and lies breathing hard, winded)

TENNIE

(Beams at him happily)

Feelin' better now, Commie dear?

VANDERBILT

Much better! Doctor told me to ride, for the exercise, and this is the way to do it.

(Reaches over to pat her)

Best little mare I ever rode. Matter of fact, I've been thinking...how'd you like to be Mrs. Vanderbilt?

TENNIE

(Surprised)

Are you askin' me to marry you?

VANDERBILT

Well, I've got so much invested in you, I don't want to risk losing my investment if you should walk off and leave me.

TENNIE

What makes you think I'd walk off and leave you?

VANDERBILT

Well, you might find yourself a handsomer and younger man, like Jay Gould, who's also got barrels of money.

TENNIE

You think all I care about you is your dumb barrels o' money?

VANDERBILT

Isn't it?

TENNIE

Shoot, no! And just to prove it -- no, thank you, I won't marry you.

VANDERBILT

(Incredulously)  
You won't?

TENNIE

No way.

VANDERBILT

You can't mean it. You realize how much I'm worth? You'll be the richest woman in America! The world!

TENNIE

I already am. I got everythin' I want --  
(Turns to put her arms around him)  
-- includin' you, you sweet ol' billy-goat -- with or without your danged money!

VANDERBILT

Well, I'll be switched! You're serious now? You really won't marry me?

TENNIE

No. Never. Cross my heart an' hope to die!

VANDERBILT

And you're not gonna leave me for Jay Gould or some rapsCALLION like that?

TENNIE

Never. I swear! Can't you get it through your thick head that I really care for you an' not your dumb ol' money?

VANDERBILT

Well, I'll be damned!

(Thinks)

But I'm not gonna live forever, you know, and what'll happen to you after I'm gone?

TENNIE

(Smiles, tightening her hold on him)

You ain't goin' nowheres. I won't let you.

VANDERBILT

Well, if I do go, I want to leave you well fixed.

TENNIE

I'm well fixed now.

VANDERBILT

You save any of what I give you?

TENNIE

I give it all to Pa, to pay my share o' family expenses.

VANDERBILT

That's what I thought. I've got to find a way of keeping it out of that old rascal's hands -- set up something that --

(Gets an idea)

How'd you'd like to go into business?

TENNIE

Me? Business? What do I know about business? Talk to Pa --

VANDERBILT

Forget about Pa. Who else in your family has a head for business, without being a crook? Of course -- your sister Victoria! She's the one -- we'll cut her in for half the profits, she can use it to run for President -- she'll need every cent -- and I'll see that there's plenty!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them and COME UP on another area of the stage where an office building doorway stands with a sign over it: "WOODHULL, CLAFLIN & CO., Bankers & Brokers, Col. Jas. Blood, Mgr.")

Behind the doorway, BLOOD is working at a desk as VICTORIA and TENNIE enter the scene, followed by LITHGOW, a reporter with a notebook)

LITHGOW

Mrs. Woodhull, Miss Claflin -- Lithgow of the Times. I'd like to ask you about your business connection with Commodore Vanderbilt --

VICTORIA

Our connection with Commodore Vanderbilt is purely friendship. He has been kind enough to advise us on the establishment of this enterprise --

LITHGOW

Is it true that he owns it and you two are merely his front --

TENNIE

(Giggles)

Have you ever seed the Commodore? Do we look like his front?

VICTORIA

(Coolly)

We are fronting for him neither in business or politics, as stated by your paper -- nor is my candidacy for President the joke they are treating it as --

LITHGOW

I'm not here about your candidacy, but this banking house of yours -- if it is yours --

VICTORIA

(Sharply)

It is -- and you can print that!

(Takes Tennie's arm and THEY sweep through the doorway.

LITHGOW turns away with a shrug and goes off, as BLOOD looks up with a welcoming smile at Victoria and Tennie)

BLOOD

Good morning, ladies. I have the pleasure to inform you we've started doing business -- and business is fine! We just carried out the New York Central transactions according to the Commodore's instructions, earning him a half-million-dollar profit and seventy thousand dollars in commission for ourselves.

TENNIE

Hey, not bad! What are we gonna do with all them spondoolux?

BLOOD

Start a newspaper.

TENNIE

What?

VICTORIA

Why?

BLOOD

To take your campaign for President to the people. How else can you reach them? The established press, if they mention your candidacy at all, do so only as a piece of humor. If you want the voters to take you seriously, you'll have to communicate with them through a medium which will treat you seriously -- your own.

VICTORIA

You're right. We'll use my half of the profits from this business to finance it --

TENNIE

-- and my half too. We're partners, ain't we?

(Smiles)

Besides, I think it would be fun to have a paper that prints everything I have to say -- with pitchers -- I'll knock 'em on their keesters!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT, as the SPOTLIGHT picks up the NEWSBOY entering:)

NEWSBOY

Read all about it in the new "Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly"! Read Victoria Woodhull callin' for equal rights for women and free love for *everybody!* Real hot stuff! And that's not all -- on the very front page, a full-size, *nude, naked* pitcher of Tennessee Claflin *in the skin*. every beautiful, mouth-waterin', lovely, luscious, delicious square inch of 'er! Enough to drive men wild and women to suicide! Yes, sir! Here y'are, folks, come an' get 'em while they last! They're goin' like hotcakes, so you better hurry! *Hurry. Hurry...!*

(HE goes off, as the LIGHTS COME UP on VANDERBILT in his four-poster, staring at the copy of "Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly" which TENNIE, standing fully dressed, is proudly

holding up for his inspection. A large nude portrait of Tennie in "classical Greek pose" hangs prominently on the wall)

TENNIE

There! Ain't that pitcher o' me real hotsy-totsy?

VANDERBILT

Sheer, absolute, unadulterated pornography! Indecent and obscene! You ought to be ashamed, exposing yourself naked to the world like that!

TENNIE

(Nodding toward her nude portrait on the wall)

What about *that*?

VANDERBILT

That's *art*! And seen only by *me*! Now take off your clothes and come to bed --

TENNIE

But I'm goin' to church --

VANDERBILT

Church? To pray forgiveness for your sins? Forget it -- I'll forgive you --

TENNIE

I'm goin' to hear that preacher, Henry Ward Beecher. He's all the rage and he's gonna talk about this --

(Holds up the paper)

Me an' Vicky wanna hear what he has to say --

VANDERBILT

That self-righteous hypocrite? He's got the whole country bamboozled -- especially the women. If they only knew the truth about that skirt-chasin' home-wrecker, whose idea of Christian love is to fornicate every female in his congregation .

TENNIE

No wonder he's so popular! If that's Christian love, I'm all for it!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT and a PURPLE BABY SPOT picks up EVE in the wings with her hands clasped prayerfully as she sings soulfully:)

EVE

"Oh, He walks with me and He talks with me  
And He tells me I am his own  
And the love we share is beyond compare  
Like no other ever known...!"

(The SPOT BLACKS OUT as the LIGHTS COME UP  
on the REVEREND HENRY WARD BEECHER, a hand-  
some man with a voice like thunder, preaching from a  
pulpit facing the audience. Behind him hangs a large  
suffering Christ on a cross)

BEECHER

...That Jezebel with the gall to sit here in this House of God calls for equal rights.  
Equal rights? When women already have far more -- the sacred mission of  
motherhood and the custodianship of hearth and home. But "free love"? No, no,  
by all that is holy, a thousand times no! *Never!* It is true that God is love, yes.  
But "free love" is the very Devil!

TENNIE

(Calls out from the audience)

You oughta know! You're reamin' every woman in this congregation! An' all of  
'em married -- includin' you!

(Shocked exclamations go up from the audience: "How dare  
she!" "Who is she?" "Throw the lying hussy out!")

VICTORIA

(Sitting beside Tennie, calls out)

Lying? It is *Reverend Beecher* who is the liar and hypocrite! He believes in free  
love for himself, but would deny it to others --

BEECHER

(Roars)

*There* speaks the voice of the Whore of Babylon -- Victoria Claflin Woodhull  
herself -- and that other scarlet woman by her side, her sister, who boasts of her  
harlotries and shamelessly displays her nakedness in the public prints! And I say  
to them now: *Leave this House of God -- it is not your place! And neither is the  
White House -- !*

TENNIE

Yours is the cathouse! You an' your busy ol' rooty-tooter!

(Pandemonium breaks out: "Throw them both out!" and "Call the police!" as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

"...O say does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wa-ave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave...!"

SUSAN B. ANTHONY

(Banging gavel)

As President of the National Woman's Suffrage Association and chairwoman of this convention of the Equal Rights Party, I now call this session to order.

(The LIGHTS COME UP on S.B. ANTHONY seated on a platform facing the audience, a large banner behind her:

EQUAL RIGHTS PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CONVENTION)

Our first order of business tonight is to nominate a candidate of our party for the office of President of the United States. I therefore now open the meeting to nominations --

BLOOD

(Stands up in the audience)

Madam Chairwoman, my name is James Blood and it is my great honor and pleasure to place in nomination the name of Victoria Claflin Woodhull, making this the historic occasion on which for the first time in the history of our great nation, a woman --

S.B. ANTHONY

(Banging gavel sharply)

You're out of order!

BLOOD

Why?

S.B. ANTHONY

You're not a duly accredited delegate to this convention., Mr. – or Colonel Blood -- or whatever you call yourself. Sit down!

BLOOD

But under the rules --

S.B. ANTHONY

*I* make the rules and I rule you out of order. Sit down!

BLOOD

But that's unconstitutional – a violation of --

S.B. ANTHONY

(Drowning him out with her gavel)

Shut up and sit down!

VICTORIA

(Jumps up)

Madam Chairwoman, I protest -- !

S.B. ANTHONY

(Still gaveling away like crazy)

You're out of order too! Sit down!

VICTORIA

(Furiously)

I will *not* sit down!

BLOOD

And neither will I!

TENNIE

(Jumping up beside them)

Me neither! It's a free country -- !

VICTORIA

I demand the right to be heard by this convention!

S.B. ANTHONY

You *have* no such right! This is *our* convention!

VICTORIA

A convention supposedly open to all women!

S.B. ANTHONY

*Wrong!* This is a convention of the Equal Rights, not Free Love Party, and we will not allow you to turn it into one!

VICTORIA

The two go together!

CANNING

(Drunk as usual)

Damn right! Ever'body has the equal right to fuck any damn body they please!  
Let's hear it for equal fucks!

VICTORIA

Get him out of here -- somebody!

BUCK

(Jumps up)

*I will!* Come on, you rummy!

(Grabs CANNING and hustles him out, to mixed applause  
and indignation from the crowd)

S.B. ANTHONY

(Banging her gavel furiously)

Quiet! Please! Mrs. Woodhull, you've disrupted this meeting enough! I order  
you to leave!

VICTORIA

I will not leave!

S.B. ANTHONY

You are not in charge here! This is our hall! We paid for it!

VICTORIA

You *rented* it. I own it!

S.B. ANTHONY

You do? Since when?

VICTORIA

Since I bought it this morning!

BLOOD

(Holds up document)

And here is the proof -- grant of title, duly attested, signed, sealed and recorded  
by the County Clerk of New York!

S.B. ANTHONY

Well! In that case, we'll leave. I declare this meeting adjourned -- till we can arrange another place tomorrow.

(Rises)

Let's go, everyone!

VICTORIA

And *I* declare this meeting still in session! Please remain in your seats, everybody, and we'll go on with the business of this convention --

S.B. ANTHONY

Don't listen to her! Follow me!

(No one moves)

Very well! We'll see!

(SHE exits huffily as VICTORIA takes her place on the platform)

VICTORIA

I'll come right to the point of why we're here. You all know where I stand. If after I am elected President, Congress should still refuse women all the legitimate rights of citizenship, I will propose a Constitutional amendment guaranteeing those rights. And if that be thwarted, I shall call a convention to frame a new Constitution and a new government --

MALE HECKLER

You callin' for a revolution? That's treason!

VICTORIA

If it be treason to call for equality in America -- then yes, we mean treason, we are plotting a revolution! We will overthrow this bogus democracy and plant a government of righteousness in its stead!

(Cheers and protests rise from the audience)

FEMALE SUPPORTER

Yes, give us liberty or give us death! She's a female Patrick Henry!

MALE HECKLER #2

She's a female Benedict Arnold!

FEMALE HECKLER

She's worse -- she's a free lover!

## MALE HECKLER #3

She's a whore! And wants to turn all women into whores like herself!

## VICTORIA

I am not a whore and after I am elected, there will be no reason for any woman to be one! We demand and shall fight for equal rights for both men and women! And it is on that platform -- and that platform alone -- that I request your support of my candidacy for the office of President of the United States!

## BLOOD

I propose the nomination by unanimous acclamation of Victoria Claflin Woodhull for President!

(A roar of approval goes up from the audience, drowning out a few boos)

## VICTORIA

Thank you! Thank you! I'm proud and honored to accept! And now -- on to the White House!

(More cheers and the music of "Hail to the Chief!" strikes up rousingly, as the scene BLACKS OUT and the LIGHTS COME UP on BUCK in front of the medicine wagon, pitching his elixir to a crowd containing ROXANNA and HEBERN)

## BUCK

-- this magic Magnetic Life Elixir is money-back guaranteed to cure every ailment and affliction, sickness and suffering known to man, from the common cold to the dread disease of cancer, female disorders and discharges, monthly irregularity, loss of manly powers --

(HEBERN, in the crowd, starts frothing at the mouth and going into convulsions)

## ROXANNA

Help! Help! Somet'ing is the matter mit mein boy! He is sick! He is dying!

(HEBERN falls to the ground and lies still)

Johnny! Speak to me! Oh, mein Gott! He is dead! Dead! Mein boy is dead!

## BUCK

(Running through the crowd to him, holding bottle aloft)

Make way! Let me get to him! Here, son! Drink this!

(Pours the elixir down Hebern's throat. HEBERN chokes, gasps, then rises up)

HEBERN

Where am I? What happened?

ROXANNA

He is alive! He is alive! You haf brought him back from the dead! It is a miracle, like Lazarus rising from the dead! You haf saved him!

BUCK

(Waving the bottle)

The elixir saved him! Claflin's Magnetic Life Elixir! Now on sale for a limited time only at the very special giveaway price of only TEN DOLLARS! Hurry up an' get yours before they're all gone --

(The CROWD rushes him, waving their money: "Here, I'll have one!" "Make that two!" "Hey, I was first -- !"  
The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on the scene and COME UP on VICTORIA, holding a huge bouquet of flowers, with a flag-carrying BLOOD beside her, standing on the rear platform of a train festooned with American flags and bunting and a large banner: "VICTORIA WOODHULL FOR PRESIDENT," waving to us fans in the audience seeing her off, singing to the tune of "The Battle-Cry of Freedom":)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

Hark, hark, hark, Victoria's marching!  
Cheer up, sisters, here she comes!  
And beneath the starry flag  
We shall breathe the air at last  
Of equality in our beloved land!

(To the huffing and puffing of the engine, the train starts to pull out slowly, VICTORIA and BLOOD waving, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them and COME UP on the Vanderbilt foyer and bedchamber. VANDERBILT is lying dead in his four-poster, his son WILLIAM standing alongside, contemplating him; as TENNIE appears outside and rings the doorbell. As she is about to ring again, the BUTLER comes in and opens the door)

BUTLER

Good afternoon, Miss Claflin.

TENNIE

Good afternoon to you, old top --

(Stops in surprise as HE blocks her from entering)

BUTLER

(Unhappily)

I'm sorry, Miss Claflin, very sorry indeed, but I'm afraid I cannot permit you to enter.

TENNIE

Why not?

BUTLER

Those are my orders.

TENNIE

From who?

At their voices, WILLIAM has left the bedchamber and come to the foyer)

WILLIAM

From me.

TENNIE

Who are you?

WILLIAM

William Henry Vanderbilt.

TENNIE

William -- ? Oh, Commie's son Billy, he told me about you. How'd you get in here? He said he wouldn't have you in the house.

WILLIAM

I'm afraid my father is no longer in a position to enforce that. This house is now mine.

TENNIE

What do you mean?

WILLIAM

He passed away an hour ago.

TENNIE

(Stricken)

Passed -- ? He's dead? Oh, my God! My God!

(Weeps)

Commie! Oh, Commie! My sweet ol' Commie...!

(Tries to push inside)

Where is he? I wanna see him -- say goodbye -- tell him how much I loved him -- kiss him one more time --

WILLIAM

(Firmly barring her and pushing her out)

No! Go away, woman -- there is nothing you can do for my father -- any more!

(Shuts the door in her face. As SHE stands there stunned,  
the LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of Woodhull!

She is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are  
stored

She hath loosed the fateful lightning of her terrible swift sword  
Her truth is marching on...!

(The LIGHTS COME UP on the Wall Street office of  
Woodhull & Claflin, with a notice plastered over the front  
entrance: "CLOSED DUE TO BANKRUPTCY." Inside,  
BUCK and ROXANNA are playing cards at the desk, while  
HEBERN is rolling dice on the floor. VICTORIA and  
BLOOD appear outside, heading to the front door)

VICTORIA

Campaigning is fun, but, oh, so wearying! It's good to be home and able to catch  
one's breath for a bit --

(Breaks off as THEY reach the door and see the bankruptcy  
sign)

"Bankruptcy -- !" What does that mean?

BLOOD

(Grimly)  
Let's find out.

(THEY push through the door)

BUCK

Well! Welcome home, kiddies! How's the campaign goin'?

ROXANNA

Ja, how does it look? You t'ink you'll vin an' ve'll all move into the White House?

VICTORIA

What does that sign out there mean?

BUCK

What it says -- we're bankrupt, busted, outa business. After the Commodore died, there was no business.

VICTORIA

What about the rest of our customers?

BUCK

What customers? He was the only one we had.

(Outside, CANNING rolls into the scene)

CANNING

Hark, hark, hark, Victoria's marchin'!  
Peddlin' her crazy line o' shit!  
O we'll tar the little bitch  
An' we'll throw her in the ditch  
Shouting "To hell with Vicky Woodhull!"

(HE goes in through the door)

Vicky! Welcome home, sweetie! How 'bout a li'l free love to celebrate?

VICTORIA

(Bitterly)  
Celebrate our bankruptcy you mean! A fine homecoming for the next President of the United States!

(TENNIE appears outside, stopping at the sign over the door)

TENNIE

"Bankruptcy"? Oh, cripes! What's *that* all about?  
 (SHE pushes in through the door)  
 What's goin' on?

VICTORIA

We're broke.

BLOOD

Flat broke.  
 (To Buck)  
 What happened to all the money?

BUCK

Don't ask me. I wasn't runnin' the business. You was.

BLOOD

Leaving you in charge while we were away. What did you do with it?

BUCK

See here, are you accusin' me o' stealin' it? 'Cause if you are --

ROXANNA

(Jumps up, shaking her finger at Blood)  
 -- *you're* the crook -- an' vorse! You got us into this trouble here -- bringin' us to New York an' fillin' Vicky's head mit "free love" an' runnin' for President! She was a goot, sensible girl till she met *you* --

CANNING

Damn ri'! Bes' li'l wife I ever had -- fucked like a rabbit -- till you stole 'er away f'm me --

BUCK

-- like you stole that money an' are now tryin' to put it on me!

ROXANNA

Crook! T'ief! Go away now an' leaf us alone!  
 (Turns to Victoria)

Forget this craziness about runnin' for President -- you can't do nothink midout money -- ve can't stay here midout money -- so let's go back where ve belong --

VICTORIA

You can go anywhere you want. Jim and I are staying.

TENNIE

An' so'm I.

BUCK

What're you gonna live on? 'Less you can find you another rich sucker like ol' Commodore Vanderbilt --

TENNIE

I don't need a man to support me. I can support myself.

BUCK

How?

TENNIE

(Turns to Victoria)

We still have our newspaper -- we can make money from that.

BLOOD

We haven't so far. We can't run pictures of you naked in every issue. And without that, we can't sell enough copies to break even.

TENNIE

We can if we print the right kinda stories to go with 'em.

VICTORIA

Like what?

TENNIE

Like one about the most popular man in the country, good ol' Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, that fine, upstandin', pride an' pillar o' the community -- and sneaky polecat who's pokin' every female that belongs to his church!

BUCK

(Lighting up greedily)

Hey, if you can really prove that, we can squeeze him for every cent he's got -- or can raise!

BLOOD

That's blackmail -- you can go to jail for that.

(Turns to Tennessee)

But you're right, printing it would sell a lot of papers -- if we ad the evidence to back it up --

TENNIE

(Pulling a little black book out of her bag)

What do you call this? If it ain't evidence, I'll eat it --

VICTORIA

(Takes it and glances through it)

My goodness, this would blow him sky-high! Where did you get it?

TENNIE

From Teddy -- that is, Reverend Theodore Tilton, Beecher's assistant pastor, who caught Beecher rammin' his wife in the belfry. He wanted to kill 'em both, but she promised to break off with Beecher. Instead she's still goin' at it with him hot an' heavy. An' that ain't all, at the same time, Beecher's rootin' a slew of other ladies in his congregation, whose names are in there -- with the times and places where they do it--

CANNING

Hey, what a stallion! I mus' ask him how he keeps it up!

BLOOD

Why'd Tilton give this information to you?

TENNIE

He wants us to print it so's to get back at Beecher and destroy him, he says, for destroyin' his marriage.

BLOOD

Why didn't he give it to the New York Times or Herald or any other paper with a bigger circulation than ours?

TENNIE

He tried, but they wouldn't touch it. Beecher's a powerful cockalorum, with powerful friends -- like the owners o' the Times and Herald and other papers.

BLOOD

(Thoughtfully)

Then maybe we shouldn't touch it either -- now is no time for Victoria to make enemies -- especially powerful ones.

VICTORIA

I disagree -- it may be *just* the time. "By their enemies shall ye know them." Let the voters know who my -- and their -- enemies are: people like Beecher and his powerful friends. We'll print the story and let the chips fall where they may!

TENNIE

Hey, hey!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

NEWSBOY

Extry! Extry! Get yer special edition o' Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly an' read all about the scandalous love life o' Rev Henry Ward Beecher an' his harem o' congregation concubines! The famous preacher an' brother o' Harriet Beecher Stowe, author o' "Uncle Tom's Cabin," exposed as an insatiable sex fiend! "He seduced my wife an' broke up my happy home!" claims Assistant Rev Tilton. "He uses the church as a bordello, with assignations in the choir! Orgies in the belfry! Perversions and unnatural sex acts in the basement! Turnin' God's house into a whorehouse!"

BUCK

(Gleefully)

Beecher'll piss his pants when he reads that! I coulda squeezed a million dollars out of 'im!

TENNIE

Maybe we can sell a million copies --

BUCK

(Disdainfully)

At ten cents a copy. Chicken feed!

BLOOD

We'll raise the price to twenty-five cents --

VICTORIA

Fifty --

NEWSBOY

A dollar a copy! Come an' get 'em while they last -- !

BLOOD

For the next printing we'll charge *two* dollars a copy --

NEWSBOY

Five dollars a copy! Come an' get 'em, they're goin' fast -- !

CUSTOMER

Here, boy -- five dollars --

NEWSBOY

Too late, mister -- I just sold out. That man there got the last one --

CUSTOMER

Sir, I'll give you ten dollars for your copy --

CUSTOMER #2

Not for *twenty* -- my wife belongs to that church and thinks the sun shines out o' Beecher's ass. Wait'll I shove *this* under her nose!

(The LIGHTS COME UP on BEECHER seated at a table with a crucifix hanging on the wall behind him. He is studying a newspaper with gloomy despair, when ANTHONY COMSTOCK appears in the doorway with a folded newspaper under his arm)

COMSTOCK

Dr. Beecher, forgive me for intruding, but I was told I would find you here in your study. Permit me to introduce myself, I'm Anthony Comstock.

BEECHER

(Jumps up, holding out his hand with forced geniality)

Mr. Comstock! What a great pleasure to meet you at last, sir. Even more than most, I have been following with gratified interest your great crusade against vice -- a noble mission!

COMSTOCK

It is that mission, Dr. Beecher, which brings me here.

(unfolds the paper, displaying the front page of Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly)

This shocking publication.

BEECHER

Surely you place no credence in that scurrilous libel?

COMSTOCK

Certainly not. On the contrary, sir, I have come here to place myself and my Committee for the Suppression of Vice at your service, to give you every aid in prosecuting and punishing those evil people who published this piece of unspeakable filth -- and lies!

BEECHER

Thank you, sir! Thank you! It's good to be assured, once again, that the truth shines with a light no lie can put out!

COMSTOCK

And to be sure that it does, sir, you must prosecute at once and brand those lies as what they are -- slanderous libel, for which they must pay!

BEECHER

Well -- I -- ah -- have been considering suing for libel, of course. But I'm not so certain it would be wise to. The very act of responding to them would only give them wider attention. Better to ignore them, till they die and are forgotten --

COMSTOCK

If you ignore them, they will never die! Your very silence would be construed as an inability to refute them -- a confession of guilt. For the sake of your good name, sir -- and the good names of those innocent ladies accused with you -- you must sue and prove them to be the foul lies they are!

BEECHER

Well -- ah -- you may be right, Mr. Comstock. But there is more than my good name at stake here -- and that of those good, innocent ladies. I am the pastor of this church. Any mud which is slung at its pastor must inescapably cling to it as well. And a sordid, sensational lawsuit would cause a great deal of mud to be slung about -- causing perhaps fatal damage to this church. I cannot allow that to happen, Mr. Comstock. Whatever the price that I personally, and those unfortunate ladies along with me, must pay -- the survival of this church is more important.

COMSTOCK

(Incredulously)

Then you won't sue? That's your decision?

BEECHER

No, I shall not sue. That's my decision -- arrived at after much prayer for Divine guidance, believe me.

COMSTOCK

But they mustn't be allowed to get away with it.

BEECHER

Then they must be left to God's justice, not mine.

COMSTOCK

"God helps those who -- "

(Comes to a sudden decision)

All right, Dr. Beecher, if you won't do it, *I* will.

BEECHER

(Surprised)

Sue them for libel? How can you?

COMSTOCK

I can't. But as the Good Book tells us, there's more than one way to skin a polecat. Good day, Dr. Beecher!

(Goes, leaving BEECHER looking after him with a worried frown, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide  
The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me...!"

(The LIGHTS COME UP on the Wall Street office, with a new sign over the entrance: "WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY – EDITORIAL OFFICES." VICTORIA, TENNIE and BLOOD are inside, celebrating, as BLOOD pops a champagne cork and fills their glasses)

BLOOD

To the greatest success in newspaper history!

VICTORIA

Hear, hear!

TENNIE

I wish I coulda been there when Beecher read it. I bet he wet his drawers, like Pa said!

BLOOD

(Thoughtfully)

I hope that's all he does....

VICTORIA

What else can he do? He can't sue for libel. He knows we can prove every word.

BLOOD

He'll look for other ways of getting back at us.

TENNIE

Screw 'im!

(Smiles)

Of course, to do that, you'd have to get on line behind all them other ladies hungry for it. As a matter of fact, with his looks, if he wasn't such a turd, I wouldn't mind havin' a go with him myself!

VICTORIA

(Snorts)

I'd rather have a go with old Ulysses S. Grant!

BLOOD

Speaking of which, I wonder how blasting Beecher will affect your chances in the election?

VICTORIA

We have nothing to worry about. Demosthenes assured me.

TENNIE

An' he should know. He got it straight from the horse's mouth.

BLOOD

(Smiles)

Mare's. The Fates are ladies.

VICTORIA

(Starry-eyed)

Oh, Jim, when I think of all the wonderful changes -- for men as well as women -- which will take place in this country after I'm elected, I just can't wait!

BLOOD

(Fondly)

You've already made changes -- important changes -- no matter what happens.  
You're a wonderful person, Victoria -- a great person -- and I love you --

VICTORIA

And I love you, Jim --

TENNIE

(Smiles)

Shall I leave the room so's you can go on from there? Or would you two rather  
leave an' do it someplace else?

VICTORIA

(Laughs)

Neither! We can wait --

(While they have been speaking, COMSTOCK has appeared  
outside with TWO KEYSTONE COPS, striding up to the  
entrance and now bursting in)

COMSTOCK

(Flashing a document)

Pursuant to this order of the Supreme Court of the State Of New York, you're  
under arrest!

(To the Cops)

Take these people into custody!

BLOOD

What for?

COMSTOCK

Publishing obscenity! Indecency! Pornography! Pure poisonous unadulterated  
filth!

TENNIE

Is that all? I thought it was somethin' serious --

COMSTOCK

You'll soon find out how serious it is, you loose woman, steeped in vice! You  
shall pay for your sins against God and man! You piece of filth, filth, *filth*...!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

"His object all sublime  
He shall reveal in time --  
To make the punishment fit the crime  
The punishment fit the crime...!"

(The LIGHTS COME UP on VICTORIA, TENNIE and  
BLOOD, flanked by the TWO COPS, standing before  
JUDGE FRY on his bench)

JUDGE FRY

(Eyeing them distastefully)  
James Blood, Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, you are charged with  
publishing and circulating an obscene and indecent publication --

TENNIE

But it was the truth -- !

JUDGE FRY

(Bangs gavel)  
Quiet! Truth is not the issue here. The issue is the charge of obscenity and  
indecenty --

VICTORIA

But how can the truth be obscene or indecent?

JUDGE FRY

(Bangs gavel again furiously)  
Quiet! Or I'll hold you both in contempt of this court!

TENNIE

An' you wouldn't be lyin'!

JUDGE FRY

What did you say?

VICTORIA

She said she feels like crying.

TENNIE

I did not! I said --

BLOOD

(Cuts in quickly)

Your Honor, we plead not guilty.

JUDGE FRY

Nobody asked you. Wait till you go to trial.

BLOOD

What is *this*?

JUDGE FRY

A preliminary hearing. And I have heard enough already to order you to be held for trial.

TENNIE

Held? You mean in jail?

JUDGE

(With grim sarcasm)

Well, I'm sure you'd feel more at home in a bordello, but I'm afraid you'll have to put up with the Ludlow Street Jail.

BLOOD

What about releasing us on bail?

VICTORIA

That's our Constitutional right.

JUDGE FRY

And it's my Constitutional right to set it as high as I please. So I will set it at fifty thousand dollars -- apiece.

TENNIE

*Fifty thou -- !*

VICTORIA

(To Blood)

That's a hundred-and-fifty thousand for the three of us. Can we raise that much?

BLOOD

Of course. We've taken in more than that from sales of the paper. I sent your father out to collect from the news dealers what they owe us -- he should be back with the money any minute --

TENNIE

You sent *Pa* for the money? Oh-oh!

JUDGE FRY

Well? Can you raise the bail?

VICTORIA

As soon as my father arrives -- momentarily --

HEBERN

(Rushing in breathlessly)

I found Pa --

VICTORIA

Did he get the money?

HEBERN

Yeah, he got it all right -- enough to fill two big suitcases --

VICTORIA

Where are they?

HEBERN

The last I seen he was headin' like a bat outa hell with 'em fer the train station --

TENNIE

I knew it! Pa an' money is like me an' sex!

VICTORIA

Oh, God! We'll never see that money again!

BLOOD

Or Pa -- till it's all gone and he comes back looking for more.

JUDGE FRY

Then I take it you can't raise bail. Good!

(To the Cops)

Lock 'em up! Good and tight!

TENNIE

(As COP #1 grabs her)

Watch where you put your hands, buster! I'm partickler 'bout who touches me there!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(To the tune of "They Call Me Buttercup")

They call her Tennessee, shy little Tennessee  
Men always give her the eye  
But hands off dear Tennessee, don't touch sweet Tennessee  
Before surrendering her virtue, she'd die!

(The LIGHTS COME UP on the WARDEN and TWO COPS ushering VICTORIA, TENNIE and BLOOD into a cell block)

WARDEN

Welcome to our modest little hostel! It's not much, as we're not often honored by having a Presidential candidate as our guest, but this is, after all, a jail, I'm afraid, requiring us to keep you under lock and key and all that. But that aside -- well, just name your every little whim and desire and we'll do what we can to fill them to your complete satisfaction. Now is there anything you'd like to begin with?

BLOOD

To get hold of a lawyer, as soon as possible.

WARDEN

Of course! You have one?

BLOOD

No, but I've heard Hummel and Howe are the best.

WARDEN

Indeed they are -- the very best! Not the cheapest -- but the best! Pay their price and they'll get anyone off -- cutthroats, poisoners, stranglers, thieves, pickpockets, abortionists, arsonists, bigamists, child molesters, perverts, pimps, white slavers, whoremongers, madams --

VICTORIA

(Dryly)

Well, thank you very much for including us in such distinguished company.

## WARDEN

(Hastily)

Oh, no! I'm not putting you in any of those categories at all!! Heavens, no! But my point is, no matter what you've done, or haven't done, they'll get you off! And that's the main thing, isn't it?

## BLOOD

*It is.* So will you get word to those gentlemen promptly we want to see them right away?

## WARDEN

Immediately! And now let me show you to your accommodations. You two ladies will be together here in what we call our "star cell" -- not the Waldorf-Astoria perhaps, but for a modest little jail, not bad! Colonel Blood, I regret the puritanical house rules don't permit mixed sex occupancy, so I'll have to put you in a cell of your own. A bit more austere perhaps, but we're just not equipped to accommodate more than one star -- at a time!

(Laughs)

So now -- if you'll allow me -- in you go, snug as two bugs in a rug!

(Locks VICTORIA and TENNIE into their cell)

A bientot, ladies! Just makes yourselves at home. Come along, Colonel!

(He and the TWO COPS lead BLOOD off, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

## CANNING SINGING DRUNKENLY

Mine eyes have seen the glory of Victoria in jail  
 They have locked her up so good an' tight,  
 'Cause she can't raise the bail  
 I tol' my frien' the Warden to just throw away the key  
 'Cause jail's where the bitch belongs...!

(The LIGHTS COME UP on VICTORIA and TENNIE in their jail cell, dining on a sumptuous repast spread on a white tablecloth-covered table. The cell is nicely decorated now with lace curtains over the window bars, but not alas the barred cell door. The WARDEN stands solicitously by the table, pouring them wine from a crystal decanter)

## WARDEN

This wine is from my own cellar, ladies. A light insouciant little Meursault Bordeaux, vintage 1861 Chateau de la Rechy, from the south slope of the north

vineyard. It has just a saucy fillip of impudent je ne sais quoi which I am sure will amuse you. How do you find the pheasant under glass?

TENNIE

(That great little kidder)  
By liftin' the glass --

VICTORIA

Excellent! Delmonico's couldn't do better!

WARDEN

(Smiles smugly)  
Quite right. They couldn't. It *is* from Delmonico's!

(A TURNKEY appears outside the cell door and knocks politely on the bars)

WARDEN

Yes, Winifred?

TURNKEY

Two gentlemen are here, sir, to see Mrs. Woodhull and Miss Claflin. Messrs. Hummel and Howe.

WARDEN

Ah, Hummel and Howe! The legal persons you summoned, ladies, attend your pleasure. I'll entertain them in my office until you've dined --

VICTORIA

No, send them in now please, Mr. Trilby. The sooner we see them, the sooner they can get us out of here -- no aspersion intended on your hospitality, sir --

WARDEN

None taken, Mrs. Woodhull, I assure you! It is the curse of my profession that my guests, no matter how gemutlich they find the ambience here, cannot wait to take their leave of me -- and I understand! Winifred, send the two gentlemen of law in at once.

TURNKEY

Yes, sir, Mr. Trilby --  
(Adds under his breath, with a wink)  
-- *dear!*

WARDEN

(Under his breath)

*See you in my room – dear!*

(To Victoria and Tennie)

I'll take my leave now, ladies, so you may confer in privacy with your attorneys.  
Is there anything further you desire?

VICTORIA

Not right now, thank you, Mr. Trilby.

TENNIE

(With a big promissory smile)

An' if there's anything we can do for *you*, Mr. Trilby, I'm ready any time -- at your pleasure, for your pleasure –

VICTORIA

(Under her breath)

Down, girl – you're barking under the wrong tree!

WARDEN

Thank you, ladies, you're much too kind! Au revoir!  
(Exits)

TENNIE

I just wanted to see if I could steal him away from Winifred – an' I never done it with a sissy-boy – maybe I could straighten him out --.

VICTORIA

Now, Tennie, let's not be prejudiced. In the free society we'll be creating, everyone will be able to live and love in his or her own fashion without prejudice --

(SHE breaks off as the TURNKEY returns with HUMMEL and HOWE, two bearded gentlemen in frock coats. The TURNKEY unlocks and opens the cell door for them, and leaves. HOWE, the dandified impetuous one, strides in first, seizing and kissing their hands with great style; while HUMMEL follows with more deliberate restraint)

HOWE

(He went to Harvard Law School)

Mrs. Woodhull! Miss Claflin! I am your humble servant, ladies, William Frederick Howe!

HUMMEL

(He went to Brooklyn Law Schhol))  
I'm Abe Hummel. How d'ya do.

VICTORIA

Will you gentlemen draw up chairs to the table and join us in our repast? There's enough here for us all.

TENNIE

And great chow too -- from Delmonico's, no less!

HUMMEL

Delmonico's? In that case, don't mind if I do.  
(Pulls up a chair)

HOWE

(Doing likewise)  
Yes, the Warden sets a good table here.

HUMMEL

(Digging into the pheasant and wine)  
Not like the Jefferson Market Jail. I wouldn't touch the grub they serve there. Phee-ew! Pig swill....

HOWE

(Helping himself generously)  
Well, they get a finer class of prisoners here.  
(Samples the wine)  
Mmm, what a delightful little Bordeaux! Meursault, I believe, Chateau de la Rechy, 1861 vintage, from the south slope of the north vineyard, if I'm not mistaken, with just a fillip of impudent je ne sais quoi which is quite amusing!

VICTORIA

Yes. Well, shall we get down to business, gentlemen? How quickly can you get us out of here?

HUMMEL

(Through a mouth full of food)  
Depends on how quick you can raise the bail.

VICTORIA

Well, our father is the custodian of our finances and he happens to be out of town right now.

HOWE

(Chewing away happily)

Mmm, merveilleux! Delizioso! Best pheasant under glass I've had since Fouquet's in Paris! When is the old gentleman in charge of the family fortune returning?

VICTORIA

I don't know -- that is, he's on the road and we haven't been able to pin down his whereabouts -- yet --

TENNIE

He moves fast!

HOWE

Then without bail, you'll just have to remain in residence here until you come up for trial --

VICTORIA

Can't you get those absurd charges against us dismissed before then?

HOWE

I'm afraid not. Judge Fry happens to be a strong supporter of Anthony Comstock's Committee for the Suppression of Vice, so if the two of 'em have their way, you'll *never* get out. However, it's not too uncomfortable here --

(Takes another swig of wine)

Absolutely delightful! I do hope the Warden's put in a substantial stock of this --

(To Hummel)

We must dine here more often.

HUMMEL

(Nods, chewing away)

And the price is right too.

(Turns to Victoria and Tennie)

Speaking of prices -- you know our services don't come cheap?

VICTORIA

I'd like to know exactly what those services will be, before committing ourselves to them.

HUMMEL

I can tell you in one word. We'll get you off -- *guaranteed*.

TENNIE

Guaranteed?

HUMMEL

No walk, no pay. But there's no fear of that. Our record speaks for itself. So far we've defended thirty-two guilty as hell murderers -- one by axe, four by knife, six by strangling, nine by gun, and twelve by poison; plus fifty-six bank robbers, forty-eight embezzlers, sixty-one arsonists, seventy-four pimps, ninety-three madams, four hundred and eighty-eight prostitutes, one hundred and sixteen crooked politicians, ninety-nine child-molesters, two hundred and eighty-three cases of incest -- and every single one of 'em is out on the street today, enjoyin' life, free as birds!

VICTORIA

(Dryly)

Unfortunately, we're not accused of any of those misdemeanors, but of something considered even more heinous: publishing obscene and indecent matter --

HUMMEL

No matter what you did, we'll prove you didn't -- like all our clients, God bless 'em.

HOWE

As for our fees, we can leave that open and arrange it with your good father on his return.

(Smiles)

After all, why should you ladies trouble your pretty little heads about a sordid thing like money? Just leave that to us men!

TENNIE

We'd love to. You two are real sweet -- and cute!

VICTORIA

And in the meantime, you will exert your utmost to get us and Colonel Blood out of here as soon as possible?

HUMMEL

What's your rush? Believe me, you don't know how lucky you are. Better food you couldn't get in any jail --

VICTORIA

Maybe so, but I am running for President -- and the election's coming up in just a few days --

HUMMEL

(Mouth stuffed with food)

Yeah, good luck. We'll vote for you. We vote for all our clients.

HOWE

Let's drink to that.

(Holds up empty decanter)

We seem to have finished the wine. I wonder if we could get another bottle?  
Garcon! We'll have another of the same! No, make that two! We'll celebrate  
your victory in advance!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

(To the tune of "On, Wisconsin!")

On, Victoria! On, Victoria!

On to victory!

You may be in jail today

But you'll make his-to-ry!

(The LIGHTS COME UP on the jail cell with VICTORIA  
and TENNIE as the TURNKEY unlocks the door and  
ROXANNA, in hat and street clothes, bustles in)

TENNIE

Mama! Where've you been?

ROXANNA

Ask me where I *ain't* been, lookin' for your vanderin' fodder -- you t'ink I vas away  
travelin' for my healt'? Vot a chase dat man led me!

VICTORIA

Did you find him?

ROXANNA

Ja -- sellin' fur coats in middle of a heat vave in Florida. He vasn't doing too goot  
so I brung him back.

TENNIE

With our money?

ROXANNA

Vot money? He sveys he gafe it to Jim Bloot before he left.

VICTORIA

That's not true!

TENNIE

Hebern saw him take off with it. How much does he have left?

ROXANNA

Not a pfenig. Why do you t'ink he came back? Ve ain't got a pot to pee in or place to lay our heads now. He figgers if Vicky gets elected President, ve can all go live in the White House. Does t'ree meals a day come mit the job?

TENNIE

Yeah, but I bet it's not a patch on the food in this jail an' the Warden's a good friend o' ours. Tell Pa y'all can move in here with us.

ROXANNA

I t'ink the White House would be better. The very vord "chail" makes your fodder uncomf' table.

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

NEWSBOY

Extry! Extry! Right off the telegraph wire! Ulysses S. Grant re-elected President by a landslide! Beats the pants offa the opposition -- includin' Vicky Woodhull!

CUSTOMER #1

O! Ulyss' really stuck it to her!

CUSTOMER #2

I wouldn't mind stickin' it to that filly myself!

CUSTOMER #1

You'd have to go to jail to do it!

CUSTOMER #2

Beats the jail I got at home!

CUSTOMER #1

You got a point! Haw-haw!

(A military band strikes up a slow mournful rendition of "Hail to the Chief!" as the LIGHTS COME UP on VIC-

TORIA and TENNIE in their cell, staring in dismay at the front page of a newspaper)

VICTORIA

How did that happen? I lost!

TENNIE

Well, you can't win 'em all....

VICTORIA

But I was supposed to win! Demosthenes gave me his word!

TENNIE

It just goes to show you can't trust a man -- not even a dead one.

VICTORIA

But it wasn't just *his* word -- he said he got it from the Fates -- women -- and they wouldn't lie, would they?

TENNIE

Well, maybe you just misunderstood their message. As I remember, they never actually said "Victoria, honey, you will be President of the United States," in those very words, did they?

VICTORIA

No, the exact words were "the highest place in the land." But what else could that mean? Who's higher than the President?

TENNIE

The President's wife. Or mistress.

VICTORIA

I wouldn't care to be either, thank you. I want to be *President*. I *must* be President! That's my destiny! Unless that deceitful old Greek misled me -- lied to me -  
 - (Calls out)

Demosthenes! Where are you? Come here and explain yourself -- you old fake, you fraud, you two-faced, lying, double-dealing deceiver!

(Waits, but Demosthenes, wisely, does not appear)

Demosthenes! You coward! Show yourself! Or are you too ashamed? You *should* be!

TENNIE

Are you sure he really showed himself all them other times? How come *I* never saw him?

VICTORIA

Because the Fates sent him to *me* -- supposedly --

(Calls again)

Desmosthenes! Please come! I just want an explanation --

DEMOSTHENES

(Hobbling in painfully)

All right already! I'm coming! Coming! Everybody wants me! I can't be all over the globe at the same time, you know! Give me a break! Now, Victoria, I know just how you feel and I don't blame you. Things sure got screwed up --

VICTORIA

They sure did! How? Why? You said, clearly, I was to become President of the United States --

DEMOSTHENES

What "clearly"? All I did was pass on what those three sisters told me. And I never met a woman yet who could express herself clearly in plain, simple Greek, or any other language. And to make it worse, with all the spinning and weaving of everybody's destinies they do, they're always getting mixed up and slip up -- and I take the rap.

VICTORIA

How did it happen?

DEMOSTHENES

Well, they've got so many things going on at the same time, they lost track and didn't realize the election was coming up, until it was all over. However, they promise, faithfully, it won't happen again. Next time, you'll make it for sure.

VICTORIA

Next time? When? The next election?

TENNIE

Hey, if that's Demosthenes you're talkin' to, tell him to show himself to me. What's he look like? Is he sexy?

## DEMOSTHENES

(Grins)

Tell her if I was three thousand years younger, I'd show her "sexy"! The spirit is still willing, but the flesh is weak -- that is, if I had any flesh --

(The cellular phone in his pocket RINGS. HE pulls it out and answers)

Demosthenes speaking....

(To Victoria)

Wouldn't you know it? It's the Fates again.

(Back into the phone)

Yes, ma'am. Where?... Holy smoke, that's halfway round the world! I'm dead on my feet, when do I get some rest? I'm only human, you know -- or was.... Okay, yes, ma'am, I'm on my way.

(Hangs up)

Those ladies are running me ragged. Gotta run. In the meantime, cheer up. What you were promised, will yet come to pass. Definitely. The Fates always keep their word -- eventually. But right now, their instructions are, quote: "Tell Victoria Woodhull the next step toward the great and glorious destiny fore-ordained for her lies in London, England, so she must get herself there -- "

## VICTORIA

London, England? What'll I do *there*?

## DEMOSTHENES

Search me, but that's where the three sisters say you must go --

(His cellular phone RINGS again. HE puts it to his ear)

All right, I'm going, I'm going! Doesn't anybody have any respect for age? I'm not a boy any more! What do they want from me?

(Hobbles off as fast as he can go)

So long, kids, gotta go!

## VICTORIA

Demosthenes! Wait! I need to know more -- about London --

## DEMOSTHENES

You'll find out after you get there, I'm sure! Toodle-oo! Bon voyage! Oy vay, what a life, I wouldn't wish it on a dog...!

(He is gone)

## TENNIE

Is he still here?

VICTORIA

He just left -- after telling me to go to London.

TENNIE

London, England? Hey, I wouldn't mind. I'd like to try an Englishman for a change. I had an Australian once who done me like a kangaroo. Kept tryin' to climb into my pouch. What kinda animals do they have in England? I hear they're great fox-hunters, You s'pose they yell "Tally-ho!" when they come? I'd like to find out. But first we gotta get outa this jail --

WARDEN

(Enters, eyeing their newspaper)

I see Winifred brought you the election results. A crying shame! It sure would have been a tremendous feather in the cap of this jail to have the President of the United States as one of its inmates -- and the first *lady* President at that!

VICTORIA

Sorry to let you down, Warden.

WARDEN

Oh, well, we can't have a winner every time. Maybe you'll have better luck with your trial. I just came to tell you the date's finally been set for next Monday.

(Whimsically)

Of course if you win that one, I'll lose -- the pleasure of your company! But I wish you luck all the same.

VICTORIA

Thank you, Mr. Trilby.

TENNIE

And even if we win, it don't have to be goodbye forever, Warden. As a very dear Spanish gentleman friend always useta say to me: "Mi casa es su casa!"

WARDEN

I'm afraid I don't speak Spanish. What does that mean?

TENNIE

"My bed -- I mean, my house -- is your house!" You'll always be welcome at our casa, won't he, Vicky?

VICTORIA

Oh, absolutely. And bring Winifred.

WARDEN

Really? We'll be there with bells on!

TENNIE

And rings on your toes!

(VICTORIA gives her a look, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

"His object all sublime  
He shall reveal in time --  
To make the punishment fit the crime  
The punishment fit the crime...!"

(The LIGHTS COME UP on an unoccupied judge's bench, before which are two tables: for the prosecution and defense. VICTORIA, TENNIE and BLOOD are seated at the defense table with HOWE; and the D.A. with TWO ASSISTANTS at the other. HUMMEL enters and goes to the defense table)

HUMMEL

You got nothing to worry about -- it's all fixed now, I just took care of it.

VICTORIA

Took care of what?

HUMMEL

That hanging judge, Fry. I got him replaced with a nice, friendly one, who wouldn't convict Jack the Ripper -- Judge Buber. They call him Booby Buber, on account of he always lets off ladies with big boobies, if you'll pardon my French -

(Winks at Tennie)  
-- and he just goes gaga over pretty ankles!

TENNIE

(Smiles)  
Well, anything to make that nie judge happy. If boobies an' ankles is what he likes, boobies an' ankles is what he'll get!  
(Thrusts out her chest and hikes up her skirt six inches)

VICTORIA

(Shakes her head wryly)  
To think that justice should rest on a woman's mammaries and limbs!

HUMMEL

You know a better place for it to rest?

HOWE

Let me utter one word of caution. Judge Buber can *usually* be counted on to do the right thing -- but he has become a bit senile and apt to be confused at times as to which side justice is -- ah -- buttered on....

TENNIE

Leave it to me. I'll show 'im which side the butter is on!

COURT CLERK

All rise for Judge Benton Bentley Buber!

(JUDGE BUBER, a benignly befuddled old gentleman with Alzheimer's, enters and mounts the bench)

JUDGE BUBER

(Bangs his gavel)

This court is now in session!

(Looks around a bit dazedly)

Or is it? Is this where I'm supposed to be? What courtroom is this? This *is* the courthouse, isn't it? Or am I lost again? Oh, well, let's get on with it -- whatever it is. Who goes first?

D.A.

I do, Your Honor. Timothy Trumper, representing the People of the State of New York. By publishing and circulating obscene and indecent matter, not only have these egregious and degenerate defendants been guilty of an outrageous offense against decency and the law, but they have also been guilty of a most abominable and unjust false charge against one of the purest and best citizens of this nation, through a grossly malicious and salacious libel upon the good name of this revered reverend gentleman, whose upright character it is the duty of this jury to vindicate --

HOWE

(Jumps up)

Objection! The charges in this case are *obscenity*, not *libel*! If the reverend gentleman my befuddled opponent refers to feels he has been libeled, he is

free to bring those charges to court himself. Let him seek his own vindication elsewhere -- if he dare!

(Cheers and jeers rise from the audience, waking the JUDGE)

JUDGE BUBER

Order! Order! Whatever the defense just said is sustained. The persecution will cease and desist from inciting disturbance in this courtroom with noisy inflammatory exhortations that keep waking me up. If I can't sleep in my own courtroom, where can I?

TENNIE

(Calls out)

You tell 'em, Judge! You need your beauty sleep -- just like me!

(Laughter from the audience, causing the JUDGE to bang away with his gavel again)

JUDGE BUBER

The lovely young lady's point is well taken. In fact, *all* of her shapely points are well taken. I wouldn't mind taking hold of them myself!

TENNIE

Any time, Judge! Any place!

JUDGE BUBER

Offer accepted. I can't wait! So let's move on with this nonsense and get it over with fast. What big mouth is next?

COMSTOCK

I am. Anthony Comstock, appearing for the Committee for the Suppression of Vice. Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we are gathered here to serve not only the law, but the Lord, whose holy commandment to keep a clean mind in a clean body is mocked, derided and torn down by these vile polluters of both mind and body in sinful words and conduct wicked and foul! I quote Deuteronomy Chapter 7: "Thou shalt not bring an abomination into thy house, lest

thou become a cursed thing thyself!" And the First Book of Kings, Chapter 21, tells us of harlots and whores, like these --

(Points dramatically at Victoria and Tennie)

"The *dogs* shall eat these Jezebels -- !"

TENNIE

(Barks mockingly)

Bow-wow! Arf-arf! Yum-yum!

(The audience explodes into laughter, setting the JUDGE to gaveling, while ogling Tennie's thrust out chest and ankles)

JUDGE BUBER

Bravo, my dear! Bravo! I don't do half-bad imitations myself. Listen to this --  
(Howls)

OW-OOOOOOOOOO!!! That's a wolf!

(Bares his teeth lecherously)

The better to eat you with, my dear!!

(The SPECTATORS applaud; HE bows modestly)

I can do other imitations too, but I suppose we should get on with this silly trial or whatever it is. Who's up next?

HOWE

William Frederick Howe, for the defense, Your Honor, Yale College. B.A., and Skull and Bones, and graduate J.D., magna cum laude, from the Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Mass. Your Honor, in order not to waste unnecessarily any more of this Court's valuable time, I shall confine myself to just one simple plea to high Heaven.

(In high oratorical stance and tone)

O Freedom! Liberty! Equality! Where are thy defenders at such a time as this when such outrages against unblemished innocence can be perpetrated without even the slightest pretense of legality? Verily the days of free and fair democratic institutions are drawing to a close! The days of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Paul Revere and his trusty steed galloping through the night to arouse the defenders of freedom! Must it be once again as the poet says: "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne?"

MALE VOICE FROM AUDIENCE

Hell, no! Turn them sweet gals loose! Hang that home-wreckin' lecher, Henry Goddam Ward Beecher, instead!

(Cheers from the audience, gaveling from the JUDGE)

JUDGE BUBER

I agree! But to make this a fair trial, before we hang Mr. Henry Goddam Whatever-his-name-is from the nearest lamp-post, is there anybody else who wants to put their two cents in? Last chance!

HUMMEL

Well, I'm sure Your Honor would like to hear that lovely young lady with the well-taken shapely points assure you of her absolute, unquestionable innocence with her own to-die-for kissable lips –

(Like a prizefight announcer)

-- Miss Tennennessssseeeeeee Claf...linnnnnn!!!

(TENNIE rises to roaring applause, smiling prettily, and mounts the witness stand, pausing before the step to raise her skirt to reveal a good bit of lovely limb; the JUDGE craning his neck for an appreciative gander at that thing of beauty and a joy forever; TENNIE smiling back at him as she settles herself in the chair. The COURT CLERK approaches her with a Bible)

CLERK

Place your hand on the Bible.

(SHE does)

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

TENNIE

Of course. I always do. Unlike some people named Henry Ward Beecher, I never lie!

(A laugh from the audience)

JUDGE BUBER

(Smiles at her benevolently)

I can well believe that! How could a lie ever issue from such lovely, to-die-for, kissable lips? Proceed, Mr. -- Whoever You Are --

HUMMEL

Abe Hummel, Brooklyn Law School, night classes. Miss Clafin, do you understand the charges laid against you by the persecution -- I mean prosecution?

TENNIE

No, sir. "*Laid*" is a word not in my vocabulary -- I'm a lady!

(A MALE in the audience applauds and the JUDGE bangs his gavel)

HUMMEL

I'm sure you are -- and I'm sure the judge and every member of the jury knows it too. After all, I understand you're a medically certified virgo intacta -- which in lay

language, if you'll excuse my use of that word – means “intact virgin.” But what I meant by my question was: knowing what you have been charged with, what's your answer to those charges?

TENNIE

Well, if what we published about Mr. Henry Ward Beecher was dirty, we only *printed* it -- he *done* it!

(Cheers and applause from the audience; more gaveling by the JUDGE)

JUDGE BUBER

Silence! Order! This court will not subject this sweet little thing to any further harassment. She has suffered enough. After listening to the disgusting lies and slanders of the persecution, I have a good mind to find them guilty and hang them all from the nearest lamp-post! As for the unjustly accused defendants, I would like to embrace them -- most especially one of them --

(Beams at TENNIE, who beams back)

-- as absolutely delightful, adorable, beautiful people, and I pronounce them completely and totally innocent as newborn babes! So now I say, as Moses said to Pharaoh: "Let my people go!" My beloved friends, you are free! Like the ancient Israelites, vaya con Dios, go with God! Or Moses! Or Jesus! Or Mohammed! Or whoever!

(Bangs gavel)

Case dismissed!

(The audience roars with cheers and applause. The JUDGE turns to Tennie)

My dear sweet child, may I see you in my chambers now to -- ah – go over certain points?

TENNIE

(Flashing hm a big smile)

Why, certainly, Judgie! You cuddly old thing! All my points are completely at your disposal!

(SHE rises and goes off arm-in-arm with the JUDGE, as BUCK and ROXANNA rush up to congratulate VICTORIA and BLOOD. HUMMEL and HOWE tap BUCK on the shoulder and take him aside)

HOWE

Dr. Claflin?

BUCK

Yeah?

HUMMEL

(Handing him paper)

Our bill.

BUCK

(Glances at it, does a take, then smiles)

Looks reasonable, gentlemen. Darn reasonable! But you done such a bang-up job for my gals, I'd like to do you even better. I just come back from Africky an' I could get you in on a business deal there with my good friend Cecil Rhodes that'd be worth a lot more money to you than this little bit o' penny-ante -- in fact, a fortune!

(HE leads them off)

Lemme tell you about it -- in private -- I don't want nobody else to hear a word o' this. Now you know this big diamond field in Kimberly Cecil just opened up --

(CANNING comes rolling in, roaring drunk, as usual)

CANNING

*Blood! Blood!* I want Blood! Where's 'at sonofabitchin' wife-stealer Blood?!

(BLOOD steps forward from Victoria's side)

BLOOD

Here I am, Canning. What do you want?

CANNING

I want what's comin' to me! You an' her owe me -- a lot -- an' I ain't seen one fuckin' red cent since you took 'er away from me!

BLOOD

And what's more, you won't. We don't owe you a thing --

CANNING

The hell you don't! She's still my wife an' legal prop'ty -- an' if you're gonna go on shaggin' 'er without payin' me fer the priv'lege, I want 'er back!

BLOOD

Well, you can't have her --

## CANNING

(Pulling out a pistol)  
 Then neither will you! Nobody'll have 'er --  
 (Aims the gun at Victoria)  
 Farewell, Victoria, I loved you not wisely, but, oh, too well!

## BLOOD

(Rushing toward him)  
 Put that down, you fool -- !

(CANNING fires. BLOOD goes down. VICTORIA runs to him)

## VICTORIA

*Jim! Jim!* Oh, my God! He's *dead!*  
 (Looks up wildly at Canning)  
 He's dead! You killed him! You'll pay for this! Arrest this man for murder!

## CANNING

Over my dead body!  
 (Points the gun at his temple, fires and goes down)

## VICTORIA

Oh, my God! Now they're *both* dead!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT. An organ plays "Rock of Ages," while:)

## PREACHER'S VOICE

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower. In the midst of life we are in death. From the earth we came, to the earth we return. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; if the Devil doesn't get you, the worms must. Almighty God, unto Thee do we now commend the souls of the departed James Blood and Canning Woodhull, and we commit their bodies to the ground here in sure and certain hope of Resurrection unto eternal life. Praise the Lord! Amen!

(The LIGHTS COME UP on VICTORIA, TENNIE and ROXANNA, dressed in mourning, and BUCK and HEBERN, wearing black armbands, standing beside two gravestones)

BUCK

(Putting on his hat)

Well, that's that. They're under the ground an' there's nothin' more we can do for 'em. Let's go.

(To Victoria and Tennie)

Sure you gals won't change your minds and come with us? It'd be like the old times -- all of us on the old medicine wagon, Vicky tellin' fortunes with her crystal ball an' Tennie doin' her healin' an' me sellin' Claflin's good ol' Magnetic Life Elixir --

VICTORIA

(Shakes her head firmly)

No, Pa, my destiny calls me to London and that's where I must go.

TENNIE

An I'm goin' with you. But how we gonna get there -- without no money?

VICTORIA

God -- or the Fates -- will provide.

TENNIE

An' if they don't, I'll find us a man who will!

ROXANNA

(Sighs unhappily)

Ve use to be vun big heppy family -- all togedder -- und now no more!

TENNIE

We still are, Mama, even if we're not all in the same place at the same time..

HEBERN

(Hopefully)

Maybe we'll come back here some day an' be together again....

ROXANNA

I'm never comin' back to this big dirty dump of a city! Decent people like us belong in the country --

BUCK

I know where *I* belong -- where the money is!

(Turns)

Come on, let's go.

TENNIE

How'd you make out with them lawyers, Pa -- did you pay 'em what we owed 'em?

BUCK

Outa the sheer goodness o' my heart, I let 'em in on a African mine loaded with diamonds instead -- and now them ungrateful shysters have a warrant out for my arrest --

(Quickens his step)

All the more reason we gotta get outa town -- fast!

(The OTHERS follow him off, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

"Mid pleasures and palaces, though we may roam  
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home...!"

(The LIGHTS COME UP on the now bare Claflin home in Greenwich Village, as TWO FURNITURE MOVERS are carrying out a brass bed. VICTORIA and TENNIE enter and stop in astonishment at the sight)

TENNIE

Hey, what happened to our furniture? We're bein' robbed! In broad daylight!

(Turns and yells)

*Police! Help! Robbers!*

VICTORIA

(Striding forward angrily to the Movers)

Stop that! What do you think you're doing? Where's our furniture?

FIRST MOVER

It's Hummel an' Howe's furniture now.

VICTORIA

Hummel and Howe!

TENNIE

Hummel an' Howe?

VICTORIA

What do you mean it's theirs now?

(HUMMEL and HOWE enter)

FIRST MOVER

There they are -- ask *them*.

HOWE

(Tipping his top hat politely)

Good day, ladies. Sorry to hear of your bereavement -- your double bereavement. May their souls rest in peace!

HUMMEL

Amen.

VICTORIA

What's going on here?

TENNIE

Stealin' our furniture!

HOWE

How can we be stealing our own property?

VICTORIA

*Your* property -- ?

HUMMEL

(Handing her a document)

Court order assigning all of your assets to us, to satisfy debt for legal services.

TENNIE

Services, my ankle!

HUMMEL

Well, your ankle -- and other parts of your anatomy -- helped, it's true -- at my suggestion, as your lawyer.

(Smirks)

That's legal services.

(A FURNITURE MOVER returns and picks up off the floor the last remaining item – a chamber pot)

TENNIE

You dirty crooks! Strippin' us bare!  
 (Pointing to the MOVER carrying out the pot)  
 Leavin' us without a pot!

HOWE

My dear ladies, the last thing we would wish to do is strip you bare –

HUMMEL

(Winks with a leer)  
 Speak for yourself, Willie. *I* wouldn't mind!

HOWE

-- or leave you without a pot. Indeed, we came here for the express purpose of putting a stop to it at once and having everything put back in its proper place.

VICTORIA

Good.  
 (Calls after the departing Mover)  
 You there! Bring everything back into the house where it belongs!

HOWE

Not so fast! There is a small matter we have to discuss first.

VICTORIA

What matter?

HOWE

As you may know, the late Commodore Vanderbilt, in his will, left his entire vast fortune to his son and only child, William Henry Vanderbilt --

TENNIE

Yeah, shitty Billy -- some child!

HOWE

-- cutting out completely all of his many nephews, nieces, cousins, uncles, aunts, servants, friends, acquaintances and others, who have retained us to contest the will, so that they may be awarded their just and fair share of his estate.

TENNIE

But if he didn't want 'em to have it, what's fair about givin' it to people he didn't want to give it to? It was *his* money, wasn't it? And if he wanted to leave it all to his shit-ass son, that was *his* business, wasn't it?

HOWE

If he knew what he was doing. The will was made just before he died and our contention is that he was mentally incompetent at the time --

TENNIE

You mean that he was cookoo? He had bats in his belfry? Nutty as a fruitcake?

HUMMEL

Exactly. If I was a brain specialist, I couldn't put it better.

HOWE

And since you were close to him at the time -- very close --

TENNIE

(Softly, remembering)

Yeah, the ol' darlin' wanted to marry me....

HUMMEL

*Proving* he was nuts! If you just testify to that -- we win our case!

TENNIE

(Indignantly)

Are you askin' me to go to court an' say my sweet Commie was crazy?

HOWE

Well, perhaps the word "crazy" is too strong -- just enough out of his mind so he didn't know what he was doing when he signed that will --

TENNIE

Bullcrap! Commie always knew what he was doin' -- even when he was sound asleep!

HOWE

Well, we realize you were very fond of him --

TENNIE

I *loved* the ol' coot.

HOWE

-- and so you would be understandably reluctant to portray him in an unflattering light. But since he's gone, nothing you would say can possibly hurt him -- whereas our clients are suffering a very real and substantial loss because of that unfair will, made when he was not responsible. I'm sure if he were alive today and in full possession of his faculties, he would want to be the first to rectify that error. So in a way, you would be acting for him by testifying to that effect --

HUMMEL

-- and get your furniture back.

VICTORIA

So that's the deal. Tennessee commits perjury and slanders a dead man, your clients get millions of dollars as a result -- and all we get is to keep our own furniture.

HUMMEL

Plus.

VICTORIA

Plus what?

HUMMEL

Twenty-five thousand smackers. Not too bad for a couple of ladies who are flat-on-their-ass dead-broke.

TENNIE

(Outraged)

Our asses ain't flat an' we may be broke, but we ain't dead! So you can take your twenty-five thousand smackers an' stick 'em -- !

HUMMEL

All right, all right -- twenty-five thousand bucks *apiece*. That's *fifty* thousand.

TENNIE

You can take your *fifty* thousand an' stick it -- !

HUMMEL

Seventy-five thousand --

TENNIE

You can take your seventy-five an' --

HUMMEL

Let's quit fartin' around. How much do you want? Name it.

TENNIE

You're the one who's fartin' -- there's not enough money in the world to make me stand up and say anything bad about my sweet, lovin' Commie! I coulda had *all* his money now, if I'd married 'im!

HUMMEL

So why didn't you?

TENNIE

Because I loved *him*, not his money!

HUMMEL

(Shakes his head)

You were *both* nuts...!

HOWE

Are we to take it then that you unequivocally reject our offer? There is *nothing* which would induce you to change your mind and testify that the Commodore was incompetent when he made that will?

TENNIE

The only thing I'll testify is he was the smartest man in the world and *always* knew exactly what he was doin'!

HUMMEL

Well, in that case, we sure as hell won't call *you* as a witness! Come on, Willie, we're wasting our time.

(HUMMEL and HOWE start off)

VICTORIA

What about our furniture?

HUMMEL

It's our furniture now.

HOWE

Good day, ladies!

(THEY turn to go, as WILLIAM HENRY VANDERBILT enters)

HOWE

Good day, Mr. Vanderbilt! Fancy meeting you here.

WILLIAM

Fancy meeting *you*.

HUMMEL

We'll meet you again -- in court, to bust that goddam will, and strip you as bare as this flat!

(THEY go. WILLIAM turns to Victoria and Tennie, taking off his hat)

WILLIAM

Mrs. Woodhull, I believe? Miss Claflin, we met once before, as you may recall --

TENNIE

(Smiles sweetly)

Oh, *do* I, Billy boy! I never forget bein' tossed out on my can --

WILLIAM

I have come to apologize -- and make amends --

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT on them and COME UP on the medicine wagon, whose canvas side now heralds "FORTUNA THE GYPSY PHRENOLOGIST & PHENOMENAL FORTUNE-TELLER," with BUCK standing pitching in front of it, ROXANNA beside him in Gypsy get-up, and HEBERN among the CROWD of spectators)

BUCK

...With her sensitive, trained, Gypsy fingers, Fortuna reads every little lump, bump, knob and crevice of your skull, readin' not only every hidden facet of your character an' potential, but your future as well. But don't just take my word for it -- she stands here before you now, ready, willin' an' eager to give you a free open demonstration of her uncanny, amazin' powers an' genius! I want a volunteer now, who will come forward an' let Fortuna read his or her skull. Come on now, don't

be bashful -- it won't hurt -- an' what you will learn about yourself an' your future will truly astound an' delight you! Just step up an' avail yourself of this great free offer --

HEBERN

Okay, mister, I'm game! What've I got to lose?  
(Pushes forward through the crowd)

BUCK

That's the spirit! A fine young example of American manhood, if I ever seen one! Now, young feller, you stand here in front o' Fortuna so she can get a hold o' your skull -- an' a fine-lookin' skull it is -- but what will she find in it? O Fortuna, tell us!

ROXANNA

(Placing her hands on Hebern's head)

Ja. Vot a interestink het you haf here, younk man! Vot a skull, full o' real interestink secrets about your past, present und future, vchich only I can reveal --

BUCK

Go to it, Fortuna, don't keep us an' this fine young feller in suspense -- reveal it -- tell it all!

HEBERN

Yeah, what's in my future? Good or bad?

ROXANNA

Money. I zee lotsa money. Whatever you touch, it vill turn to gold!

BUCK

Hey, ain't that great! What a lucky young man! What else do you see, Roxanna -  
- I mean, Fortuna?

ROXANNA

*Love!* I also zee love -- you vill be very successful mit the opposite sex --

FARMER IN THE CROWD

(Roars, pushing forward with shotgun in one hand and very pregnant teenage DAUGHTER in the other)

*Too* darn successful! An' now he'll make an honest woman o' my daughter or I'll  
--

FARMER'S DAUGHTER

Oh, Hebern!

HEBERN

Oh, God!

(Breaks away and runs off, as the LIGHTS BLACK OUT and  
COME UP where we left WILLIAM VANDERBILT facing  
VICTORIA and TENNIE)

VICTORIA

Exactly what is it you want Tennessee to do? Testify that Commodore Vanderbilt  
*was* mentally competent when he left all his money to you?

WILLIAM

I don't want her to testify at all. Hummel and Howe would cut her up in cross-  
examination like a couple of sharks, twisting around to their own purposes  
anything she might say.

VICTORIA

But what if they subpoena her as a witness? She would *have* to testify --

WILLIAM

Not if they can't find her. I want her to leave the country -- or better yet, the two  
of you -- and not come back till it's all over.

TENNIE

And *you* would get to keep all the money.

WILLIAM

It's what my father wanted. Let's get down to brass tacks. How much did  
Hummel and Howe offer you?

VICTORIA

I believe the last number thrown about was a ridiculous seventy-five thousand --.

WILLIAM

I'll double that to one hundred-and-fifty.

VICTORIA

I don't know why we're even discussing something so out of the question, Mr. Vanderbilt, but if we *were* to consider it, that figure is only an insignificant fraction of the millions of dollars -- or should I say billions -- which my sister's action would enable you to inherit --

WILLIAM

Let's not shilly-shally then. I'll make it two hundred-and-fifty thousand -- a quarter of a million --

VICTORIA

Still only a mere fraction -- whereas a *whole* million is a nice round figure --

WILLIAM

*Too* round. I'll go to *half-a-million*, and that's my final offer. Take it or leave it.

VICTORIA

(Loftily)

We really don't care to engage in vulgar haggling. We'll take it.

TENNIE

Hey, what's goin' on?

VICTORIA

Since we're bound for London, Mr. Vanderbilt is thoughtfully contributing to our traveling expenses with a nice going-away present of half-a-million dollars.

(To William)

Not that we don't trust you, of course, Mr. V, but as we're leaving very soon we'll take your check now.

WILLIAM

Not that I don't trust you either, Mrs. W --

(Hands her an envelope)

-- but the Lafayette is sailing for England tomorrow. Here are the tickets for a double suite. The purser will have the check and turn it over to you after the ship is well at sea.--

(Smiles thinly)

--too far out to swim back....

TENNIE

You'd be su'prised what a good swimmer I am, Billy boy. so if you don't want me to come back an' testify, that check for half-a-million bucks better not bounce!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

VICTORIA'S ARMY

"Sailing, sailing, over the bounding main  
 For many a stormy wind shall blow  
 E'er we come home again...!  
 Rule, Britannia!  
 Britannia, rule the waves!  
 Britons never-never-never  
 Shall be slaves...!"

(The LIGHTS COME UP on "HYDE PARK SPEAKERS CORNER" as the sign on the wrought iron picket fence tells us. VICTORIA and TENNIE enter, in elegant summer dresses, gay parasols and huge feathered hats, carrying a small fold-up wooden platform, American and British flags and a hand-lettered placard reading "ANGLO-AMERICAN WOMEN'S LIBERATION LEAGUE")

VICTORIA

This looks like a good spot. Let's set up our stand here.

TENNIE

There's nobody around. Ain't the idea to draw a crowd?

VICTORIA

Never fear, we *will*. As soon as I start speaking.

TENNIE

(Smiles, sticking out her chest and pulling up her skirt)  
 An' if that don't do it, I got my own way of drawin' 'em.

VICTORIA

And getting us arrested. The only thing they allow here in Hyde Park is free speech, not free shows. Now lend me a hand. Place the sign as high as you can, so it'll be seen.

TENNIE

Yes, Miss Bossy.  
 (Nailing it, SHE bangs her finger with the hammer)  
 Ouch!

(As SHE sucks her sore finger, DEMOSTHENES hobbles onto the scene)

DEMOSTHENES

Oh, you poor thing! Let me kiss that sweet little finger and make it better!  
(Kisses it, but TENNIE is unaware of it, since he is invisible to her)

TENNIE

Is it raining? My finger's wet --.

VICTORIA

Demosthenes! It's about time you showed up -- I was beginning to think you'd forgotten me --

DEMOSTHENES

Never. How could I? Well, I'm glad to see you got started on your own toward your new revised destiny without waiting to be told --

VICTORIA

New? Revised? You mean it's changed -- I'm not to become President of the United States, as solemnly promised?

DEMOSTHENES

Solemnly promised by who? "President of the United States" was *your* interpretation, kiddo. The exact words I passed on to you were that "you shall occupy the highest place in the land." It didn't say *which* land, did it?

VICTORIA

Don't tell me they meant some deserted little island in the middle of the ocean!

DEMOSTHENES

Small and an island, yes, but far from deserted, but crowded -- too crowded for comfort, as a matter of fact.

VICTORIA

What are you talking about?

TENNIE

(To Victoria)

What are *you* talkin' about?

DEMOSTHENES

How do you feel about becoming, not President, but Prime Minister?

VICTORIA

Prime Minister? Of what?

DEMOSTHENES

Of the land which its greatest poet, William Somebody-or-other, called, in the exaggerated language that poets use: "this precious stone set in the silver sea, this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England...!"

VICTORIA

I'm to be Prime Minister of *England*?

DEMOSTHENES

Yes, my dear. How does that little goodie grab you?

VICTORIA

But I'm not English -- wouldn't I at least have to be a citizen of the country?

DEMOSTHENES

Of course, but just leave that to the Fates. Their solution to that will be along here in a moment. As for becoming Prime Minister, all you have to do is concentrate on what you're doing here now -- this "Anglo-American Women's Liberation League" -- but better change that to "*British* Women's Liberation League" -- or no, liberation's a bad word and you don't want to exclude men -- so make that "British Equal Rights for All Party." Yes. that should do it -- and make you the first woman Prime Minister of England! And no maybes this time: guaranteed!

TENNIE

What's that old Greek ghost sayin' now?

VICTORIA

That instead of President of the United States, I'm to be Prime Minister of England -- the first female Prime Minister!

TENNIE

Wowee! How neat! Ask him if I can be the *second*!?

## DEMOSTHENES

Tell your very delectable sister that I would love to oblige her, in more ways than one, if I could, but the woman already slated for that spot, sometime in the next century, is a battle-axe of a lady named Margaret Catcher or Latcher or Thatcher or something like that.

(Looks off)

Oh-oh, gotta dash now -- here come the two chaps sent by the Fates to make you both English citizens!

## VICTORIA

They will? How?

## DEMOSTHENES

By marrying you, of course -- what better way?

(Hobbles off, singing)

"Oh, it's delightful to be married!

To be-be-be-be, be-be-be-be married...!"

(As he goes, SIR FRANCIS COOK and JOHN MARTIN, affluent and aristocratic-looking young English gentlemen, come strolling in, pausing at the speaker's stand and the very attractive ladies setting it up)

## MARTIN

I say, this looks interesting. Shall we stop and hear what these very attractive ladies have to say? Tell me, ladies, are you Anglo or American?

## TENNIE

(Smiles invitingly)

American -- but we're open to change!

## VICTORIA

Or perhaps we can change you gentlemen's minds -- how do you feel about liberation -- or rather, equal rights -- for women?

## SIR FRANCIS

Equal rights? But why would you want *that*? Considerin' what you already have?

(Leers at Tennie)

And in abundant quantity, if I may say!

MARTIN

Restrain yourself, old chap. Ladies, may we introduce ourselves? I am John Martin, Member of Parliament, and my friend here is Sir Francis Cook –

TENNIE

A "sir" -- hey! We don't have none o' them where we come from! We're sure tickled to meet you gents! I'm Tennessee Claflin -- an' this here's my sister, Victoria Woodhull.

SIR FRANCIS

Sisters, eh? No wonder I'd be hard put to choose which is the more beautiful actually! Eh, John?

MARTIN

(Smiling, dazzled, at Victoria)

Quite! Actually more ravishing than I ever expected to see at the Speakers Corner in Hyde Park!

VICTORIA

You're a Member of Parliament, Mr. Martin, I believe you said?

MARTIN

Yes, from my home district of Biddington-on-Thames.

VICTORIA

And what is the condition of women in Biddington-on-Thames --and elsewhere in England? Are they happy with their lot as second-class citizens, with none of the rights of their menfolk?

SIR FRANCIS

*I've* never heard any complaints, by Jove --

MARTIN

I have -- and I've been giving it some thought -- and I really haven't been able to come up with one single good reason why you ladies shouldn't have the vote -- or run for any office in the land -- even Prime Minister, when it comes to that.

VICTORIA

(Beams on him)

Oh, Mr. Martin, you and I have so much to talk about -- and do -- together!

## MARTIN

(Smiles back)

I would love to. I can't wait to begin!

(The LIGHTS BLACK OUT, as a church organ swells up with Mendelssohn's "Here Comes the Bride," blending into:)

## MINISTER'S VOICE

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here together in the sight of God and man to join in the bonds of holy matrimony these two couples: John Biddington Martin and Victoria Claflin Woodhull, and Francis George Edward Cook and Tennessee Celeste Claflin; to love, honor and cherish, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, for better or worse, till death them do part. Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. I now pronounce you husbands and wives!

(Lohengrin's "There Goes the Bride" peals out triumphantly as the SPOTLIGHT COMES UP on EVE and VICTORIA'S ARMY marching across, singing:)

## EVE &amp; ARMY

"It's delightful to be married!  
To be-be-be-be, be-be-be-be married!  
It's oh so nice, it's paradise!  
Oh, heav-heav-heavenly...!"

(As VICTORIA'S ARMY goes off, EVE stops and turns to the audience:)

## EVE

Heavenly in this case, yes, while it lasted. But, alas, my dear friends, I know you will be devastated to learn that shortly after returning from their joint honeymoons in Paris, Rome, Venice and Moscow, the two happy couples went fox-hunting and John took a header into a ditch, killing him instantly, with Sir Francis following right after and suffering the same tragic fate, leaving two bereft but very rich widows. And in Tennie's case soon, a rather merry one. Becoming merrier with each passing year. As Shakespeare said of a certain Egyptian charmer: "Age could not wither, nor custom stale her." As you're about to see and hear for yourself.

## TENNIE

(Sings off, from the hit song "O Tell Me, Pretty Maiden," from the Gay Nineties musical comedy hit "The Floradora Girl")

"Oh, I must love someone!  
Yes, I must love someone madly

And it might as well...  
Be you!"

EVE

(Smiles)

That's our Tennie!

(SHE ducks off out of sight as the full stage LIGHTS UP to reveal TENNIE, now a well-preserved but still sexy 71-year-old, richly dressed in World War I style, with all but the nipples of her busts busting out of her low-cut front as she stands in front of a much younger nude portrait of herself with breasts proudly outflung)

TENNIE

(Sticking out her chest for comparison)

Fiddle-dee-dee! After seventy-one years, I still got as much tit as I ever had, by durn! And still standin' up, wavin' hello-come-on-over-an'-help-yourself-there's-plenty-for-everybody to any likely chappie as takes my eye -- an' the rest o' me!

(We hear a discreet DOOR-TAP, then THOMAS, a very proper English butler, enters)

Yes, Thomas, what is it?

THOMAS

It's Anthony, my lady. He's been called to go off to fight the Kaiser and respectfully wishes to take his leave.

TENNIE

Anthony? Which one is he?

THOMAS

The gardener's son, who's been assisting him.

TENNIE

You mean that little boy?

THOMAS

Not any more, my lady. He's just turned eighteen.

TENNIE

Really? I never noticed. Send him in.

(THOMAS goes off as TENNIE turns back to the portrait and tugs down her bodice to expose even more bare bosom. Then turns, patting her hair, as ANTHONY enters, a gawky, husky lad in ill-fitting British Tommy uniform, clutching his cap in awkward embarrassment)

ANTHONY

If you please, mum -- my lady -- I'm off. To the war, that is....

TENNIE

(Looking him over in pleased surprise)

Why, Anthony, you've really growed up! So nice an' big...!

ANTHONY

(Shyly)

Yes, mum -- my lady -- I -- I reckon I have....

TENNIE

An' now just when I can really make use of you, you're gonna go off an' leave me.

(Sighs)

That darn war! We all have to make sacrifices -- includin' me.

(Her gaze wanders down to his satisfactorily well-stuffed crotch)

An' I s'pose a well-built young fella like you must have a gal....

ANTHONY

Gal?

TENNIE

(Jerks her head toward the nude portrait)

A female -- like that.

ANTHONY

(His eyes widening at it)

Oh no, my lady. I ain't never had nothin' to do with anybody like that....

TENNIE

Don't tell me you ain't never had a woman yet?

ANTHONY

(Swallows hard)

N-no, my lady....

TENNIE

You mean you're goin' off to war an' maybe get yourself kilt -- still a virgin? No, siree! Not if I can help it! You come with me, young man, an' we'll take care o' that vital matter right now!

(SHE takes his hand and marches him off, as we hear a car braking to a stop outside)

THOMAS'S VOICE

Good afternoon, Mrs. Martin. Her ladyship is in the drawing room.

VICTORIA'S VOICE

I hope for once in her life her ladyship my sister is ready to leave. We've got a long drive ahead of us to the Equal Rights meeting at Epsom.

(THOMAS ushers in VICTORIA, now 75 years old but still a queenly beauty)

THOMAS

May I say I wish you well in the coming election, Mrs. Martin? You assuredly have my vote. I hope you beat that ungentlemanly fellow Lloyd George and become our Prime Minister.

VICTORIA

Thank you, Thomas, I really appreciate that.

(Looks around the empty room)

I thought you said she was in here?

THOMAS

Er -- ah -- she must have gone up to her bedchamber --

VICTORIA

(Starting to Left)

I'll go up and get her --

THOMAS

(Quickly)

No! That is -- she may not be there -- let me go and find her and inform her you're here --

(HE breaks off at the sudden unearthly HOWLING OF AIR RAID SIRENS outside)

VICTORIA

Here we go again -- another air raid! It's very rude of the Kaiser to send his blimps over a peaceful English countryside to bomb and kill innocent people. Don't those bloodthirsty Germans have anything better to do?

THOMAS

Apparently not, ma'am.

(Looking nervously to outside)

Although her ladyship generally refuses to, the staff generally take shelter in the cellar. Will you join us?

VICTORIA

No, I'll wait here for my fearless sister, but you go ahead.

THOMAS

Thank you, I will!

(HE scurries off as we hear a BOMB EXPLODE nearby, while the AIR RAID SIRENS SCREAM ON)

VICTORIA

(Shrugs ironically, looking outside)

*Men!* They can't make war *or* peace without a lot of bombastic noise. Women would at least kill each other more quietly --

(SHE is interrupted by TENNIE's eager excited voice coming from overhead:)

TENNIE'S VOICE

Oh, my! What a beauty! It stands up like a flagpole -- you should hang the Union Jack on it! But I've got a better idea 'bout what to do with it -- much, much better! Here, darlin', I'll show you, give that sweet thing to me -- let me lick it a bit first so it'll go into pussycat slick as a whistle. Oh, yummy, yummy -- just like a lollipop! I could suck on this all day -- whoa now, don't shoot off that firecracker, save it for pussy! That's this little cave with whiskers down here that's just waitin' for that cockadoodle-doo to slide right in -- there, lover boy, put it in there -- no, wrong hole -- here, I'll help you -- ah! -- it's *in!* -- snug as a bug in a rug -- couldn't fit better! Don't that feel good? Feels grand to *me!* Scrumptious! Now, darlin', push it all the way in an' then pull out, but not all the way -- in an' out -- in, out -- in, out -- that's the way, you got it. Now go a little faster an' harder -- don't be afraid o' hurtin' me, I ain't made o' glass -- faster, harder! Oh, yes, sweetheart! Yes! Yes! Oh, you're a wonder! The greatest! The best by-gosh an' by-golly durn fucker I ever fucked in my whole life!

(Sings out lustily the old Pony Express ballad)  
 “Tony boy! Tony boy! Won’t you be my pony boy?  
 Don’t say no  
 Off we’ll go  
 Off to Buffalo!  
 Marry me, carry me  
 Far across the sea!  
 Giddyap, giddyap, giddyap, WHOA!  
 My pony boy...!”

(Screams ecstatically)

*Oh, God! Sweet Jesus, open the doors to heaven, here I come! I’m comin’ I’m comin’! Oh! Oh! OH! OOOH! OOOOOOOHHHH!!!*

(She is drowned out by another BOMB EXPLODING CLOSE BY, causing the LIGHTS TO BLACK OUT, FOLLOWED by the HEAVY CRASH of something landing on the stage. The LIGHTS COME ON again, revealing a canopy bed which has come down through the bombed-out ceiling with TENNIE and ANTHONY still in it, still copulating like crazy, oblivious to VICTORIA staring at them in stunned amazement, while TENNIE screams orgasmically:)

*OOOOOOOOOOHHHHH!!!!*

VICTORIA

Tennessee! Stop that! You shameless old slut! Stop that! Both of you! At once!

TENNIE

(Dazedly, as ANTHONY stops)  
 What? Oh, hello, Vicky -- you been here long?

VICTORIA

Aren't you ashamed? Rutting with that child!

TENNIE

(Smiles blissfully)  
 He sure ain't a child no more! Are you, Tony boy?

ANTHONY

(Happily)  
 I reckon not -- my lady -- how can I ever thank you enough --

VICTORIA

By getting your carcass out of my lady's bed and into some clothes -- Tony boy!

ANTHONY

Yes, mum!

(Hastily scoops his clothes off the floor and runs off, holding them modestly over his groin)

VICTORIA

You cradle-snatcher! When are you going to stop?

TENNIE

(Smiles)

When I'm in my grave. And with luck, not even then!

(Sighs pleurably)

Fan me with a feather, I really needed that. The best stuffin' I've had since I become a widow!

VICTORIA

(Acidly)

Widows, especially at your age, are not supposed to get "stuffed"!

TENNIE

You mean you haven't been poked once since John passed over?

VICTORIA

Certainly not. I consider lust for its own sake demeaning, debasing and disgusting. Sheer debauchery! What are you -- an animal?

TENNIE

(Happily)

Yes!

VICTORIA

A randy old nanny-goat! Now get up and get dressed or we'll be late for the political rally at Epsom.

TENNIE

Yes, Miss Bossy.

(Picks up her clothes from the floor and starts dressing)

Epsom -- ain't that where they run horse races too? Maybe I can pick me up a cute jockey. They're little fellas, but I hear tell they ain't little all over. I'd like to find out for myself --

VICTORIA

You're incorrigible and insatiable!

TENNIE

(Laughs, showing off her lush, undressed body)

No, just unselfish -- when I got all this to offer the poor darlin's, why should I deprive 'em? Not while I've still got it --

(SHE is interrupted by another close BOMB EXPLOSION)

VICTORIA

You won't have it much longer if those bombs get any closer. Shouldn't we take shelter?

TENNIE

What for? If one of 'em's got our names on it, it'll find us wherever we are, so why die like two rats in a hole? Anyway, I'm not ready to die -- not while the supply o' men holds out!

(As they continue, EXPLODING BOMBS all around punctuate their conversation)

VICTORIA

And I'm not ready to die either -- not when I'm about to become Prime Minister of England.

TENNIE

Hey, ain't that somethin'? You think you're really gonna make it?

VICTORIA

I'm bound to -- as sure as I'm alive --

(SHE breaks off and BOTH look up with apprehension at the fast-approaching SHRIEK OF A FALLING BOMB coming down directly on top of them. THEY open their mouths to cry out in

terror, but are drowned out by the TREMENDOUS CRASH OF THE BOMB AS IT HITS and the LIGHTS BLACK OUT)

DEMOSTHENES' VOICE

Surprised, Victoria? Here I am. A bit late as usual, but as we used to say in Ancient Greece, it ain't over till the Fate ladies sing --

(The LIGHTS COME UP on a pile of smoking rubble, as DEMOSTHENES walks up to it)

VICTORIA'S VOICE

(Coming from the smoking rubble)

Demosthenes! What happened? I've turned into a pile of ashes. My God, I'm *dead!* My life is over! *Gone!* Without my achieving what you promised!

DEMOSTHENES

Don't get excited, Victoria. Who says you need to be alive to achieve it? You were promised, quote: "the highest place in the land," and you shall have even better than *that*.. The very highest place in all the *world!*

VICTORIA'S VOICE

You mean you're going to scatter my ashes on top of Mount Everest?

DEMOSTHENES

Better than that. Take a look at *this*, my girl, and see for yourself. Ready? Hold on to your hat, here we go. Rickety-rax, ko-ax, ko-ax! Abra-cadabra, alla-cazam! Sic transit gloria *Victoria!*

(Waves his hand with a flourish and the LIGHTS COME UP on a sky-high pedestal, atop which is mounted a tall wrapped object, towering over a CROWD below of 19th century-costumed dignitaries and citizens, chief of whom is PRESIDENT GROVER CLEVELAND, holding the end of a cord running up to the wrapping of the object on the pedestal)

CLEVELAND

As President of the United States of America, it is now my great honor and privilege to present to the people of America and the world the highest -- the *very highest!!* -- embodiment of the ideals of freedom and equality for which humanity has ever striven, best personified by the life and example of the *greatest* lady -- after my angel mother, of course -- that ever drew breath: VICTORIA CLAFLIN

WONDERFUL! -- I mean WOODHULL! And now here she is. My fellow-Americans, people of the world, I am proud to give you -- MISS LIBERTY HERSELF!!!

(HE yanks the cord, unveiling VICTORIA, with the torch, book, robe and crown of the Statue of Liberty)

#### VICTORIA

(In tones of ringing triumph)

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled women

Yearning to breathe free....

I lift my lamp beside the Golden Door...!

(The CROWD roars, frantically waving flags and breaking into "Glory, glory, hallelujah...!" VICTORIA smiles down on them happily, swaying her torch rhythmically in time with the music, cheers and marching of the wild celebration of her finally achieving her glorious destiny. France has Joan of Arc, England has Queen Elizabeth I, and America now Victoria Woodhull. So wave on, girl, you made it!)

#### CURTAIN

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