

# BETTER THAN THE BEST!

By  
Anthony E. Gallo

Anthony E. Gallo  
Box 15414  
Washington, DC 20003

202 544 6973

Agallo2368@verizon.net

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#### CAST

1. George McDowell, early fifties, steel tycoon, director of Apollo Iron and Steel Company
2. Mary Lane, early forties, Nation's leading journalist
3. Benjamin R. Ward, Jr., early twenties, landscape architect
4. James Hunt, mid-twenties, lawyer
5. Carol Townsend, secretary, late teens
6. Archie Hunt, mid-twenties, plant manager
7. John Hatfield, mid-twenties, union organizer
8. Edward Jones, fifties, President of US Steel.
9. Rosie, mid-forties, astrologer and fortune teller
10. Present Day Police Chief, mid forties
11. Jack F. Smith, early twenties, plant manager. Becomes Jenner's burgess.

## Act 1

SCENE 1 BOARDROOM, APOLLO IRON AND STEEL COMPANY,  
PITTSBURGH, 1892

George McDowell, mid fifties, is examining documents at a long board table. James Swanson Hunt, Jack F. Smith, and Stewart Archibald "Archie" Hunt, all in their mid-twenties enter hurriedly, carrying briefcases.

HUNT

Hello, Mr. McDowell

ARCHIE

Sorry we're late.

SMITH

The train was slow in arriving.

MCDOWELL

Relax, Gentlemen. Have a seat. The rest of the Board has already left. I will have to call the President of the Pennsylvania Railroad and complain about these trains running on time. Coffee and even dinner is awaiting you outside. But first, do you have news?

SMITH

Yes, Sir.

ARCHIE

Yes, Sir.

HUNT

Yes, Sir.

MCDOWELL

Are they planning a strike? Did you speak to them? And have the speculators been at it?

HUNT

Yes to 1!

ARCHIE

Yes to 2!

SMITH

Yes to 3!

MCDOWELL

Don't all begin at once. Leave your briefcases unopened, and tell me everything in everyday English. I expect the worst, so I told J.J. Jenner to go home. My gut feeling was right?.

SMITH

The strikers were implacable.

MCDOWELL

Who were they?

SMITH

The regular ones: Hatfield, Young, Weaver, Stewart, Kunkle, McCutcheon...

MCDOWELL

Stop! I know the rest. And their demands?

SMITH

Twelve cents an hour, safe working conditions....

MCDOWELL

(interrupting) Workman's compensation, eight-hour day?

SMITH

Yes. Six paid holidays a year, time-and-a-half for overtime, health insurance...

MCDOWELL

Stop! When are they planning to strike?

SMITH

Next Monday.

MCDOWELL

All strikers are to be fired. They may re-apply after a year and then be rehired..... with loss of seniority.

SMITH

May not work this time. Too many strikers.

MCDOWELL

How many?

SMITH

A hundred.

MCDOWELL

A third of the work force..

SMITH

And some of the best, this time.

ARCHIE

And the worst also.

SMITH

Why the increase? Only eighty last time.

ARCHIE

The Slovak workers have nearly all joined in.

MCDOWELL

That settles it. No more Eastern Europeans. Off to the coal mines they go, if the coal operators will hire them. The Germans, Irish, and Italians are grateful, but not these folks.

ARCHIE

Some of them are beginning to join in, too.

MCDOWELL

What about the adjacent land for the plant expansion?

HUNT

The speculators bought all the nearby land...this morning.

MCDOWELL

Same fellas?

HUNT

Who else? They took out a large loan yesterday, offered the farmers twice our price, and went to settlement this morning. Now they want five thousand dollars an acre.

MCDOWELL

Forty-nine hundred dollars more than the inflated price we offered the farmers. And what happens to the speculators if we don't buy? (smiles)

HUNT

Bankruptcy!

MCDOWELL

A few suicides might follow. J. J. Jenner and I have our own plan. And damned to the parasite strikers and speculators. (beat) WE MOVE!

ALL

Move!

ARCHIE

How do you move a plant?

MCDOWELL

(beat) We keep this damned Apollo plant open for a few years. But open up a whole new plant. Only a few miles, a whole county away. Damned be Apollo and Armstrong county.

SMITH

Where?

MCDOWELL

The Townsend farm.

HUNT

I am sure my future father-in-law would accept a reasonable offer..

MCDOWELL

Already done. We offered 50 dollars an acre, and he took it.

ARCHIE

It's worth at least fifty-five.

MCDOWELL

Right. We are both good Christians. We then told him we would give him more for a total of sixty dollars. We went to closing in minutes. Within a week, we begin work on the most modern, efficient and largest steel plant in the world.

ALL

THE LARGEST!

MCDOWELL

You heard it! THE largest!

ARCHIE

And the Apollo plant?

MCDOWELL

Will be closed a few years after the new one opens. And of course no strikers will be hired at the new plant. If necessary we will follow the route of our friend, Henry Clay Frick, and call the Pennsylvania National Guard to close them down. The Westmorland County government will be our best friend. Not like these rogues in Armstrong County.

ARCHIE

How many workers?

MCDOWELL

Five thousand.

HUNT

And where do we get the workers?

MCDOWELL

ELLIS ISLAND. And Alabama if we need to. New immigrants are more grateful, work harder, and are too afraid to join unions. The native born will behave better when they are replaced by these immigrants.

ARCHIE

Do you really want all these immigrants?

MCDOWELL

Not in my home, but in my factories. And Hunt, please draft a new piece of legislation to improve our immigration laws.

SMITH

Most people don't want any more immigrants.

MCDOWELL

I'm one myself. Proud to say that we Scotch-Irish are the best!

SMITH

They object to the ones from Southern and Eastern Europe.

MCDOWELL

Tough luck! We need their bodies. Our Pennsylvania Senators and congressmen will do as told. We pay them enough.

Everyone laughs.

MCDOWELL

And the best is yet to come.

SMITH

You have us in suspense.

MCDOWELL

We will build a whole new town with it.

ARCHIE

A company town?

MCDOWELL

I never want to hear that word again. No. A workers' town. A town BETTER THAN THE BEST. The most beautiful worker's town in the world. With parks, schools, fine houses, shopping, many churches, and paved streets. And cheap prices.

ARCHIE

How do we pay for this?

HUNT

Better yet. How do the workers pay for this?

MCDOWELL

Lots will be sold cheaply. One part of town for the workers, another for management. Part of the town for immigrants, (except Poles and Slavs, of course), and we are all one happy town. We are now looking for an architect.

HUNT

May I make a suggestion, Sir? Have you ever heard of Benjamin R. Ward?

MCDOWELL

I can't say that I have.

HUNT

He is the Nation's preeminent architect. He designed Central Park, buildings at Harvard, Yale...

MCDOWELL

Enough! He's our man!

HUNT

And I am sure he would love to have something to show off the World's Fair in Chicago. A worker's paradise built by company for its workers!

MCDOWELL

And guess what I have decided to call the town.

ARCHIE

McDowell, Pennsylvania sounds very nice.

MCDOWELL

I want to name the town for the one man who took a penniless Scotch-Irish immigrant boy, and taught him everything he know about the iron and steel business. Captain Jacob J. Jenner. How does Jenner, Pennsylvania sound. And hopefully we and the new town will live up to his ideals.



ALL  
To Jenner! Hip-hip-hooray!

MCDOWELL  
Goodbye to Apollo!

ALL  
Bye-bye Apollo!

MCDOWELL  
Hello, Jenner!

ALL  
Long live Jenner!

SCENE 2 JENNER, PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF GEORGE MCDOWELL, AT  
THE APOLLO IRON AND STEEL COMPANY, 1897

George McDowell, stands before a huge hanging map of the newly incorporated borough of Jenner. George carefully examines different parts of the map. Four large photographs adorn the wall: Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Jacob J. Jenner, and Henry Clay Frick. A large Bible is on his desk. A sign hangs from the wall saying "VANDERGRIFT: BETTER THAN THE BEST" He puffs on his cigar and takes another drink from his large whiskey glass and then raises it to a toast.

MCDOWELL  
To my town. Jenner: BETTER THAN THE BEST.

Benjamin R. Ward, Jr., early twenties, enters.

WARD  
You deserve that drink. May I join you?

MCDOWELL  
Are you Mr. Lane?

WARD  
No? But that name seems familiar.

MCDOWELL  
Some newspaper man for some Titusville newspaper.

WARD

Mmm. I recall the name from something I read at Harvard.

MCDOWELL

A Harvard man?

WARD

Yes. And you?

MCDOWELL

No college. Not even grade school.

WARD

The American dream?

MCDOWELL

And an orphan at six to boot.

WARD

Up by your bootstraps. I admire that. I'm Fred Ward.

MCDOWELL

Jenner's architect! You are not he.

WARD

But I am.

MCDOWELL

I met with the great designer myself, three times. And you are not he.

WARD

That's right.

MCDOWELL

But the signature said Benjamin R. Ward. Look at the letter.

WARD

You missed the Jr. It's all in the family. I am Benjamin R. Ward, JR. . My father is too ill to be here.

McDowell examines him closely .

MCDOWELL

A chip off the old block, then.

WARD

Actually, I'm his stepson. He adopted both my brother and me. In no way does this diminish our love for him. I did most of the Jenner design.

MCDOWELL

What! A college student?

WARD

Under the supervision of Charles Eliot.

MCDOWELL

That other partner?

WARD

He's more than "that other partner" He is equal to my father. And surely you are aware that his father has been president of Harvard since 1869.

MCDOWELL

Indeed! My town was designed by the son of Harvard's president! Wait till the Jenner Land and Improvement Company's Board get's a load of this.

WARD

But not too hastily, Mr. McDowell. I have some news that may change your opinion.

MCDOWELL

And what might that be?

WARD

Mr. Eliot and my father may want our name removed from this project. Mr. Eliot feels the town bears little resemblance to the original plan.

MCDOWELL

Why!

WARD

You cut the lots in half so that only long narrow houses can be built on them. Each house was supposed to be surrounded by a lot of land.

MCDOWELL

We had to break even.

WARD

In fact you doubled your already high profits.

MCDOWELL

It's free enterprise.

WARD

What happened to the workers paradise?

MCDOWELL

Well at worst, it's half a workers paradise. Still there's no other place like it.

WARD

Cutting the lots in half and charging the same price!

MCDOWELL

Workers don't need that much yard space. If they work all day, how much time can they spend on their yards?

WARD

He also feels the design bears no similarity to what the town now looks like.

MCDOWELL

The removal of a few parks, a couple of bushes!

WARD

The location of the Casino Theatre has changed. It now faces the steel mill. The village green is not where it is supposed to be. The trees do not...

MCDOWELL

Blah, blah, blah. So what. A couple of bushes and a damned park! No! Tell him to forget it. My lawyers will beat the living daylights out of his lawyers. And now there is something else I would like for you to do.

WARD

Under these conditions...

MCDOWELL

I want you to design the Sherman Inn.

WARD

What?

MCDOWELL

Look out the window and you can see the vacant lot on Sherman Avenue.

WARD

But, Sir. I'm a landscape architect, not a building architect.

MCDOWELL

So what! Make up a drawing?

WARD

I would not be doing you justice.

MCDOWELL

Just do it!

WARD

I should get the approval of the main office.

MCDOWELL

There is no time.

WARD

I can't even fit this into my schedule. I would need a year before I could get started.

MCDOWELL

Won't do. The fee is 250 dollars, for a simple workable drawing?

WARD

If you INSIST, Sir, I'll do it!!!!

MCDOWELL

When can you complete the drawing?

WARD

If I begin next week, I can finish it in a week.

MCDOWELL

Absolutely not!

WARD

When do you need it?

MCDOWELL

Within the next half-hour.

WARD

No architectural drawings in the history of mankind have ever...

MCDOWELL

I don't care. Just go in the other room. Return it in half an hour.

WARD

You are cheating yourself. If I miss my train to Pittsburgh and will then miss my train to Boston, and will have ...

MCDOWELL

No you won't. I'll be calling the President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Now get started.

A knock is heard at the door.

McDowell (cont'd)

At last. Come in, Mr. Lane.

Mary Minerva "Ida Mae" Lane, early forties, enters.

McDowell (cont'd)

I'm so sorry. I was expecting MR. I. M. Lane.

LANE

My name is Mary Minerva Lane. Mary Mae, to my friends and colleagues.

MCDOWELL

Please accept my apologies. "I.M. Tarbell"? I was expecting a man, Mrs. Lane.

LANE

I'm a woman. Intend to stay that way. And I am Miss Lane.

MCDOWELL

Ah, Miss Lane. Let me present you with...

LANE

(interrupting) Mr. Benjamin R. Ward, Jr.

WARD

An honor indeed, Miss Lane. How do you know my name?

LANE

I met you at your father's office in Boston, when you were a freshman at Harvard. That's what piqued my interest in this place.

WARD

How's that?

LANE

A mill town designed by the Nation's preeminent architectural firm.

MCDOWELL

A MILL TOWN indeed! This is not a MILL TOWN.

LANE

What is it then?

MCDOWELL

It is a town that will be a unique experience with schools, parks, churches, ball fields, shopping...

LANE

(Interrupting) Built around a mill by a steel company. No mill, no town. Sounds like a fancy company town.

MCDOWELL

I BEG YOUR PARDON! Let me clarify, Miss Lane. This new concept of a town is near and dear executives in the steel industry.

LANE

Some say the only thing near and dear to these folks is the almighty dollar.

MCDOWELL

Did you receive the notice from our public relations department.?

LANE

Releases from the steel and oil companies go into the trash can.

MCDOWELL

Are you a spy from the labor unions?

LANE

You're one of the captains in the steel industry and have never seen my writings in McClure's or Iron Age magazines?

MCDOWELL

I'm too busy making steel to do much reading.

WARD

I loved your pieces on Napoleon Bonaparte.

MCDOWELL

Napoleon. The savage! That's what you write about? Let's change the subject. What REALLY brings you HERE? Miss Lane?

LANE

Jenner!

MCDOWELL

Now we're speaking.

LANE

Your idea fascinates me. A workers paradise as an incentive to workers? Do you think it will work?

MCDOWELL

Let me show you around.

LANE

Accepted.

MCDOWELL

And I'll let you know that a British delegation visited this town. They want to adopt the idea in England. Have to get their ideas from a Scot. And now this young man wants to have his name removed from the credits.

WARD

Mr. McDowell!

LANE

Now why would your company want to remove its name?

WARD

Mr. Eliot thinks the plans have been too compromised in the name of economy.

LANE

Mr. Ward. You want to remove the Ward name from this beautiful town of winding streets, green spaces, and the first steel town ever known to be aesthetically designed? You would remove your name from a lasting monument designed to help the working man. Some of your father's monuments to the wealthy have been much less graceful. Of course, you can do what you want. This is my unsolicited opinion.

WARD

I shall speak to Mr. Elliot and my father and ..



MCDOWELL

Off to complete the plans for the Sherman Inn. No more than one half an hour, young man.

WARD

Yes, sir. (exits)

LANE

Plans in half an hour? Impossible! When do you intend to begin building.

MCDOWELL

Excavation will begin on Thursday morning.

LANE

We are expecting two feet of snow, and below freezing temperatures on Wednesday.

MCDOWELL

Mr. Hunger and the gas company will be there at three-thirty am to thaw out the ground. There will be a dance at the Sherman inn on February 28 and you are invited.

LANE

I am busy that night.

MCDOWELL

Don't you want to meet and someday marry a nice man?

LANE

No.

MCDOWELL

Wouldn't you like to marry some nice man?

LANE

I am married to my work.

MCDOWELL

Have you ever fallen in love?

LANE

I fell in love with Paris.

MCDOWELL

Why didn't you marry this guy Paris?

LANE

I mean THE CITY Paris.

MCDOWELL

Well you can't marry a city and have kids. You like Paris?

LANE

My heart belongs there. And you?

MCDOWELL

Was there once. Never again. The people smell, the Eiffel Tower is useless, and they still like that pot-bellied Napoleon. How did a nice woman like you become a journalist?

LANE

Once I thought I could not reconstruct the world because I AM A WOMAN. And then I decided that I could reconstruct the world because I AM A WOMAN. .

MCDOWELL

Ah, a feminist and maybe a suffragette.

LANE

You're half right. (Pointing to the three portraits on the wall). I see you have a portrait of President Lincoln. I am currently writing his biography.

MCDOWELL

Indeed! You write biographies of both Bonaparte and Lincoln. The worst and the best. Lincoln saved our country. I was an American but three years when as a young man of twenty three, enlisted in the American Army to save the union and free the slaves. A good man.

LANE

And the other four felons on your wall?

MCDOWELL

Felons! You call John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick , and Jacob J. Jenner felons!

LANE

Rockefeller has committed the most massive grand larceny in U.S. history.

MCDOWELL

You like that no good Napoleon Bonaparte, and you call John D. Rockefeller a thief!

LANE

A snake oil dealer's son and a predator to boot. He destroyed his competitors, including my father, and gouged the American public.

MCDOWELL

You're wrong, but what does that have to do with this town.

LANE

You named this town after that henchman. (Pointing to Jenner's portrait)

MCDOWELL

Henchman! Captain Jacob J. Jenner merely worked with John D, and only after he was forced into it.

LANE

Captain Jenner was the chief predator in forcing honest small independent oil drillers like my father and other friends from Titusville to sell out. In fact your sweet JJ helped JD defraud his own brothers.

MCDOWELL

All I say is that JJ Jenner is in the steel business, and now one of this country's leading philanthropists. No more on the subject! And now, why do you dislike Carnegie and Frick, two other great philanthropists.

LANE

Have you forgotten the Homestead strike?

MCDOWELL

The strikers got what they deserved.

LANE

I beg to differ.

MCDOWELL

And Rockefeller! The richest man in the world! And its leading philanthropist too! He is a fine Baptist.

LANE

Some now even call him John the Baptist.

MCDOWELL

He has given millions to churches, the University of Chicago, and other charitable causes.

LANE

Life insurance! John the Baptist is trying to purchase his way to heaven. g.

MCDOWELL

Fine people they are, the Baptists. I say this as a Presbyterian. And you? A Methodist?

LANE

I'm a (beat) biol-o-gist.

MCDOWELL

So you're a non-believer?

LANE

Giving up heaven wasn't easy. Came to me during my sophomore year at Allegheny College where I majored in biology.

MCDOWELL

You're a smart gal but we gotta straighten your head out.

LANE

And you "gotta" stop cavorting with skunks.

MCDOWELL

Skunks! The Pittsburgh newspapers say of Captain Jenner that his entire life is marked by strict integrity and honesty of both principle and practice.

LANE

They know where their bread is buttered!

MCDOWELL

They also say he has been generous to his church and philanthropic causes.

LANE

Has Philanthropist Jenner ever VISITED Jenner?

MCDOWELL

He is a busy man. Even today.

LANE

Busy philanthropizing?

MCDOWELL

Perhaps.

LANE

I'm sure he is currently either in bed or playing golf.

Ward enters the room.

WARD

Here are the initial drawings.

MCDOWELL

Let me see. Perfect. You can do the specs on your train ride to Pittsburgh. And here is your check.

WARD

You made a mistake. The check is for \$500!

MCDOWELL

A bonus for doing it in half the time. Now hurry, or you'll miss your train.

WARD

Miss Lane, I hear you are writing a history of the Standard Oil Company. When will it be finished?

LANE

Years. I am doing very careful research.

WARD

Good luck.

Telephone rings.

MCDOWELL

So you're now investigating Rockefeller? Perhaps you can accompany our Boston visitor to the door.

Lane and Ward exit.

MCDOWELL

Hello....JJ, It's George. ....Ever hear of Mary Lane?....Are you still there? ...What does she want? She's doing a story on the town....I know...I agree. She's hell on wheels.....What can I do?.....MURDER Her?....I can't....Why NOT? ....Because, I'm a good Presbyterian....Then , STOP being a good Presbyterian? ... Short of murder, what do I do with this Miss TARHELL? Sweeten her up?....Sounds good. Here she comes. I'll talk later.

LANE

I am ready for the tour. Shall we begin?

MCDOWELL

(taking her arm) Perhaps I spoke too soon. I think we should have an examination of Rockefeller's domination of the oil market.

LANE

Let's get back to Jenner. A town built for workers. It seems too good to be true. Some say the town was created to destroy labor unions.

MCDOWELL

That's right. Unions will destroy the steel industry and this country. Happy workers who own their own homes in a nice setting and earn good money will not be swallowed up by labor unions.

LANE

So then the reports are true?

MCDOWELL

Absolutely!

LANE

I received two letters that were disconcerting.

MCDOWELL

Like what?

LANE

One said that there is a sign separating Jenner from East Jenner saying, "Polaks and stray dogs not welcome."

MCDOWELL

I would never put up one of those signs.

LANE

The second said "if you don't buy our lots, you don't need to work in our mill"

MCDOWELL

I can't control what every single resident of this town says and does.

LANE

Do any Poles work here?

MCDOWELL

As few as possible. Unlike other foreigners they want to be unionized. There's no ethnic discrimination, however.

LANE

And Jews?

MCDOWELL

The more the merrier. We need merchants. My friend Izzy Rubin will be opening a clothing store, and more are coming. I'll even build them a synagogue if enough come.

LANE

Interesting indeed.

MCDOWELL

Of course, in Belfast being a Jew is not what counts. What's important is whether you're a Protestant Jew or a Catholic Jew. Protestant Jews are much better than Catholic Jews.

LANE

And Negroes?

MCDOWELL

Very welcome. They make excellent strike breakers. Remember, I fought to free them from slavery.

LANE

So all are welcome except Poles.

MCDOWELL

This plant will employ five thousand workers. I will do whatever it takes to destroy labor unions.

LANE

Meaning?

MCDOWELL

We need workers.

LANE

So Ellis Island is your way to break the unions!

MCDOWELL

Opening our doors to the hungry and the needy is American. Let's change the subject. Take a look at this map. Any questions?

LANE

So charming to name streets after Presidents, poets, and statesmen.

MCDOWELL

The credit goes to Mrs. McDowell.

LANE

But you named the main street after Ulysses Grant.

MCDOWELL

Our finest President.

LANE

A drunk at best.

MCDOWELL

The man saved the Nation! I fought under him to save this country.

LANE

You name the town after a thief and the main street after a drunk? Nice beginnings.

MCDOWELL

What should I have named this town. Napoleon-ville!

LANE

Of course not but..

MCDOWELL

After that French pervert, like Voltaire!

LANE

You have a myopic view of things.

MCDOWELL

What does myopic mean?

LANE

Little.

MCDOWELL

Because I won't name my streets after French dictators and perverts. Do you object to Washington, Jefferson, and Madison Avenues?

LANE

Our founding fathers. Of course not!

MCDOWELL

So you like slaveholders?

LANE

McDowell, you're irascible. Of course not.

MCDOWELL

Ha! Mary M. Lane loves slavery. Great headline.



LANE

Nonsense. Onto a more pleasant topic. I noticed many churches have already been built.

MCDOWELL

I want more. That's why we only have two policeman.

LANE

What's one got to do with the other?

MCDOWELL

Everything. The more churches you have, the fewer policeman you need.

LANE

Does this mean that if you build two more churches you won't need any police at all?

MCDOWELL

Smart-aleck

LANE

Well if what you say holds, Rome with all of its churches should be the safest city in the world. I had two handbags stolen there.

MCDOWELL

That's Rome! Not Jenner!

LANE

Is it also true that Churches here are not permitted to have bells?

MCDOWELL

That's right. We have thousands of men working three shifts. I don't want my workers losing any sleep.

LANE

Well, if your workers don't have to go to church won't they become criminals?

MCDOWELL

God wants workers to get their sleep.

LANE

So that means only women and children, as potential criminals need to go to church. This is a strange town indeed.

MCDOWELL

Maybe you should begin going to church again.

LANE

I'm not a criminal.

John Hatfield, mid-twenties, appears at the door.

HATFIELD

Ah, my fellow Scot, George McDowell himself is here.

MCDOWELL

What are you doing in my office, you useless union rabble-rouser?

HATFIELD

I came for a social visit. Some bourbon?

MCDOWELL

Hatfield, you're drunk! There's one thing worse than an Irish drunk, and that's a Scottish drunk.

HATFIELD

Who's the fine lady? Or is she one of your own ladies?

MCDOWELL

MISS Lane. Show some respect.

HATFIELD

Management's flower girl?

MCDOWELL

I'll break every bone in your body!

HATFIELD

You and who else, old man! (Pulls out sign) Look what the Amalgamated Union found at Ellis Island. Read it in six languages. Translated: "Come to Jenner. Many Jobs." You're trying to ruin unions.

MCDOWELL

We're trying to help the Statue of Liberty, that's all. Lend me your poor...

HATFIELD

Even one in Yiddish. Are you now trying to hire Jewish steelworkers!

MCDOWELL

You can be replaced by an Italian.

HATFIELD

You bastard! So you think you're better than me?

MCDOWELL

I do.

HATFIELD

You think I have no worth!

MCDOWELL

That is correct. You have no worth.

Archie Hunt, Smith, and Hunt rush into  
the room

HATFIELD

You worthless son-of-a-bitch.

MCDOWELL

You're fired!

HATFIELD

Kiss my...

MCDOWELL

I said "You're fired."

The three men grab Hatfield and drag  
him from the room.

HATFIELD

And remember this King George! Jenner will someday be an  
all-union town.

MCDOWELL

Not in my day.

Hunt and Smith drag Hatfield off.

ARCHIE

Shall I make out one week's severance pay.

MCDOWELL

No. DOCK one week's pay. He's been drinking on the job.

ARCHIE

We've had reports to that effect.

MCDOWELL

Off to the coal mines he goes, if they'll have him.

ARCHIE

As you say, sir. (exits)

LANE

Maybe you should close down a few churches and hire a few more policemen.

MCDOWELL

Perhaps we need even more churches.

LANE

I think Mr. Hatfield needs some human compassion!! I think he feels inadequate.

MCDOWELL

That's because HE is inadequate. Let's get back to Jenner.

LANE

It's a delightful town. But I would like to see one change.

MCDOWELL

What's that?

LANE

Some say the town needs a new founder.

MCDOWELL

Isn't that like asking Columbus to find someone else to discover America.

LANE

Ya' got me. I'm surprised. You mean you actually landed on Ellis Island?

MCDOWELL

I didn't swim across the Atlantic. (beat) Good luck on your Jenner story for Iron Age Magazine. The publishers are my friends and colleagues.

LANE

But this is for McClures, and they are not your friends and colleagues.

MCDOWELL

Write what you wish. And remember one thing, Miss Lane. One day, long after I'm gone, the Dunmores will have their way and that will be the beginning of the end of the steel industry. And maybe the town.

LANE

Time will tell.

MCDOWELL

But I'll be looking down from heaven.

LANE

Back to the issue. I want to see the rest of this beautiful city and its winding streets.

MCDOWELL

Please take my arm. Miss Lane.

LANE

Mr. McDowell. I admit, I ain't perfect.

MCDOWELL

You know, Miss Lane, I admit I ain't perfect either.

Dark. VOICES OFF STAGE

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Hey Smith! Jamie! Look at what Mary Lane says about Jenner.

LANE (O.S.)

"McClure's Magazine. Winter Issue, 1897. Jenner, Pennsylvania. A town of homes and gardens may well become the world's most beautiful industrial city in the world. George McDowell has proved that good homes make good workmen.

ARCHIE (O.S.)

And the rest of the story gets even better. You never know what to expect.

HUNT (O.S.)

This note to the old man might explain some things:

LANE (O.S.)

"Mr. McDowell: The namesake is flawed. The town is not. I love Jenner. Perhaps you ARE a good Presbyterian. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. You have ventured much, you have gained much. Society has won.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. You're tough. I have learned not to judge a book by its cover.. Sincerely, MISS Mary MAE Lane."

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Seems like a change of heart.

HUNT (O.S.)

Or, maybe she just knows where her bread is buttered, after all.

SCENE 3 JENNER, RAILROAD STATION, TEN YEARS LATER

Edward Jones( fifties), McDowell, Hunt, ARCHIE,Smith are waiting at the Jenner Train Depot. A short distance away, Hunt and Carol Townsend(twenties), carrying a floral bouquet, are holding hands.

MCDOWELL

What, oh what, am I doing here! We have work to do.

JONES

Now, now. George. We await the most powerful journalist in America. We should adopt the attitude that what is good for US. Steel is good for its management, and what is good for its management is good for US. Steel. As President of US. Steel, I too, have a busy schedule.

MCDOWELL

If you want to wait for TARHELL, you can. But why drag me into it?

JONES

Because she loves YOUR city. And now comes back for a return visit. And please don't call her Tarhell. Hopefully she will be as kind in this write-up as she was in the last one. After all Miss Lane did... in the vernacular..kick John D. Rockefeller where it hurts. It's only a matter of time before the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey is dissolved. Do you want her to do likewise to us?

MCDOWELL

She did kick us. The History of the Standard Oil Company has many unkind references to Captain JJ Jenner, may his soul rest in peace. Surely he is in heaven.

JONES

Perhaps. (beat) But all she said was that as one of JD Rockefeller's partners, he was indicted by a grand jury for price fixing, helped drive independent oil drillers out of the oil business, and a few other unsavory practices.

MCDOWELL

He was found not guilty! JJ Jenner. She speaks of a saint, a Protestant saint.

JONES

Well, a Protestant certainly. My mother also said you can attract more bees with sugar than you can with vinegar. It's only a matter of time before the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey is dissolved. Do you want her to do likewise to us?

MCDOWELL

You're doing an about face.

JONES

Mother also taught me that if you can't fight 'em join 'em. Also there's the matter of my biography. She would make a worthy biographer.

MCDOWELL

Biographer! They named the city of Jones, Indiana after you, what more do you want? Perhaps a state named after you? Like Jones, USA.

JONES

You know, McDowell, the board of US Steel has many members who would like to ring your neck. I am not one of those people. Often we disagree, and sometimes you are right, sometimes you are not. You have an independent streak which brings out the worst in people. Now, I will admit that I thought you had gone bonkers when you decided to build a paradise for workers, but now I see you were right. Being the darling of the St. Louis World Fair and all the worldwide acclaim has done US Steel no harm. So let us not undo what you worked so hard to accomplish.

The train arrives

MCDOWELL

At last.

The train stops, but no passengers exit.

MCDOWELL

A no show! Time to get back to the office.

ARCHIE

I wonder if she's already here. There's a Minerva Bell and a Fred Holmes registered at the Sherman Inn, separate rooms of course. And they've been going through town, and the townspeople say that this Bell woman has been asking all types of snoopy questions.

MCDOWELL

TARHELL is here! I knew it!

Lane and Ward suddenly appear.

JONES

Miss Lane, you come at last! And what a pleasant surprise. You arrive a day early.

LANE

Am I being welcomed by none less than the President of the US Steel Corporation?

JONES

The pleasure is totally mine...ours. Right George?

LANE

We meet again.

MCDOWELL

We meet again.

LANE

And you remember, Mr. Ward.

JONES

Mr. Ward, thank you for designing our town.

WARD

I loved sleeping at the Inn I designed a decade ago.

JONES

How delightful. The idea was totally mine. You must have spent a long time in drawing up the plans.

WARD

Weeks and months!

JONES

You see the town a decade later. Are you happy with the results, young man?



WARD

Let me think about that.

JONES

I know that we cut the lots in half and took a few other liberties.

WARD

The deed is done.

MCDOWELL

And to think you almost removed the Ward and Eliot names. How is this son of Harvard's President?

WARD

Oh, you don't know about the tragedy! He suddenly died of spinal meningitis in 1899. His father, in addition to remaining Harvard's president, does what must be the most dreadful thing for a man to do: write his dead son's biography.

MCDOWELL

That is sad indeed. And you Miss Tarhell..I mean Miss Lane.

LANE

I heard you right the first time.

JONES

And Miss Lane, I must commend you on your outstanding work on the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. Price fixing is a dreadful thing.

LANE

I agree.

JONES

That is why we at US. Steel are so upset about the allegations that...

LANE

But now I am here to visit Jenner.

TOWNSEND

Miss Lane, these flowers are from the people of Jenner.

LANE

Now who is this lovely young lady?

HUNT

This is Carol Townsend. About to be Mrs. James Hunt.

LANE

How lovely. Like the Townsend farm?

TOWNSEND

My grandfather.

LANE

I always say that the family is at the core of American life. And only the American woman can keep the family together.

TOWNSEND

You shall have to visit our home often.

JONES

I must now be off. May we give you a lift to Pittsburgh? You can stay at the DUQUESNE Club as my guest.

LANE

No, I will stay at the Sherman Inn. Mr. Ward may accept your invitation. I will spend another day here.

JONES

As you wish. Mr. Ward will be my guest. And can you drop by my office sometime? Our company needs your services to prepare some biographical material.

LANE

Gladly. In the meantime I shall meet with Mr. McDowell and Burgess Smith.

Ward , Jones and all others exit.

MCDOWELL

Ten years is a long time. What has your snooping uncovered?

LANE

Much.

MCDOWELL

Like the job on JJ.

LANE

The portrayal was fair and balanced. Even Mr. Rockefeller agrees.

MCDOWELL

Fair and balanced!

LANE

I only reported court findings and facts.

MCDOWELL

Shall we change the subject? What will your report on Jenner say this time?

LANE

Surely, Mr. McDowell...

MCDOWELL

Look up on the hill. Do you see the Casino Theatre? The Municipal Center

LANE

Looks fine.

SMITH

That's all you have to say?

LANE

I like it.

MCDOWELL

That's all?

LANE

I've seen pictures before.

SMITH

And does it look like the Acropolis?

LANE

Like a Scotch-Irish Acropolis.

MCDOWELL

Even better. MY Scotch Acropolis?

Bells begin ringing

LANE

The bells are ringing. They will awaken your workers. You'd better go and arrest the offending priest

MCDOWELL

Catholics always do it their own way. Now we're at the Municipal center. It's all there. The jail, the library, the Police Chief's office, the Casino Theatre, Council Chambers, all in one package.

LANE

With bells to remind their members, at least the Catholics will have fewer criminals.

MCDOWELL

Back to my Scotch-Irish Municipal center.

LANE

Unique indeed! So you mean someone can get out of jail, then go to the library? Then visit city council, and then do some shopping.

MCDOWELL

A convenient town, as they say.

Hatfield appears.

SMITH

Mr. Hatfield? What are you doing in this fine town?

HATFIELD

I live here now.

MCDOWELL

Who let you in?

HATFIELD

My lovely bride and her father. Ellen and John Painter.

MCDOWELL

My finest steam roller. How would he allow his daughter to marry you!

HATFIELD

He welcomed me with open arms shall we say. He insisted on it...if you know what I mean. Mary and I decided to start a family earlier than we thought. And she doesn't want to leave her mother. You know what these Jenner girls are like.

MCDOWELL

Remember that this is a non-union town.

HATFIELD

That might change. You see, I work for the CIO...out of New Kensington.

MCDOWELL

We've beat the unions twice.

HATFIELD

These poor underpaid folks from Jenner know all that. Is this Miss Mary Lane again? THE Muckraker. After ten years absence! Let me welcome you to this fine town. Union guys all love you. You exposed Rockefeller...and Captain Jenner.

MCDOWELL

Be on your way!

HATFIELD

Remember Miss Lane. Your work is not done til you do the same to these steel guys.

SMITH

On your way!

HATFIELD

Just a joke, ole boy. What type of Scotch fellas are you?

SMITH

Honest and straight.

HATFIELD

Me too. I now reckon I'll become more civic minded, now that I live in the worker's paradise.

MCDOWELL

A good sign, indeed.

HATFIELD

Maybe I'll someday run for city council. Burgess Smith here needs help. I love this town. Even if it's named after a thief, like Miss Lane says. (laughs)

LANE

No thief. Mr. Rockefeller, with the able assistance of water boat Captain Jenner, developed the American oil industry. Their ways may have been questionable, but they committed no crime.

HATFIELD

You said they were indicted.

LANE

But not convicted!

HATFIELD

Where there's smoke, there's fire, like my mother in Belfast says. Now I must be on my way. My baby's to be born tomorrow.

MCDOWELL

Now be on your way. And behave yourself.

HATFIELD

Have a fine day, and long live the... Union! (exits)

MCDOWELL

(with lips) Bastard!

LANE

Don't say it.

MCDOWELL

And now, Miss Lane, you spoke of the Scotch Acropolis. Here you have something Greek.

LANE

A church?

MCDOWELL

The first Greek Orthodox church in the Commonwealth. Quite nice, right?

LANE

But it faces a glove factory and the US Steel plant.

MCDOWELL

What's wrong with that? People living and worshipping where they work.

LANE

But a glove factory?

MCDOWELL

Getting snooty?

LANE

Please, Mr. McDowell! And now I noticed two cemeteries when I entered the town.

SMITH

One Catholic. They want their own cemetery. Don't want to be tainted by other folks.

LANE

And the other?

SMITH

Protestants, non-believers, throw-away Catholics.

LANE

Throw-away Catholics?

MCDOWELL

Those that haven't bellied up to the priest when they were alive.

LANE

The townspeople say you, the burgess, and the other ministers met with Father Wirtner.

SMITH

A cordial meeting.

LANE

Any hypocrisy?

MCDOWELL

How could it be a cordial meeting if there wasn't any hypocrisy. They go hand in hand. But I did offer them 15,000 dollars for the construction of their St. Gertrude's Church. And they promised not to ring their bells.

LANE

This has got to be the only town in the world where churches are not supposed to ring their bells.

MCDOWELL

Why did you have to snoop around the town?

LANE

That's my job.

MCDOWELL

You think I would lie?

LANE

Of course not. But I have to get other perspectives.

MCDOWELL

Ask me whatever you want.

LANE

Why is the 14 foot fence still up?

SMITH

We tore it down. But the townspeople put it back up.

LANE

And look at this: (Pulls out sign from her bag) "Polacks and stray dogs not welcome"

SMITH

A shame that those signs are still up.

LANE

Can you hire more police to tear them down?

MCDOWELL

We are not living in a police state.

LANE

This is the only town I have ever visited with a fourteen foot fence and offensive signs like this one.

MCDOWELL

Perhaps you're not searching enough.

Church bells ringing three times

LANE

Did Father Wirtner break the treaty. Will you penalize the church by deducting \$15,000:

MCDOWELL

Down to \$12000!

Bell rings three more times

McDowell (cont'd)

\$9,000!

Bell rings three more times.

MCDOWELL

\$6,000.

LANE

They stopped. A nine thousand dollar penalty for ringing church bells? Newspapers across the country will love this. I can see the headlines: "Steel tycoon penalizes church for ringing bells.

MCDOWELL

I speak with tongue- in- cheek. You do not know Scottish people.



LANE

Maybe a little less hypocrisy next time.

MCDOWELL

That would mean less cordiality too.

SMITH

M-m-m. I just remembered something. I heard Hatfield just converted to Catholicism with his marriage and all that.

MCDOWELL

Good riddance? He's going to hell anyhow. Better that he go to hell as a Catholic than a Presbyterian.

SMITH

He's in charge of the bells at St. Gertrude's.

MCDOWELL

BASTARD!

SCENE 4 JENNER, IN FRONT OF THE CASINO THEATRE, 1915

Lane, McDowell, Hunt, Townsend, and Smith stand before a Marquee which reads "VANDERGRIFT, HAPPY TWENTIETH." An object covered with canvas stands nearby.

TOWNSEND

We are dying to see what is beneath the canvas..

MCDOWELL

Curiosity killed the cat. We must wait for Ward to arrive from Pittsburgh.

TOWNSEND

The train must be running late. Jenner is twenty years old tomorrow.

ARCHIE

And people are grumbling because they can not see their silent films at the Casino Theatre for two days.

SMITH

But they have the esteemed internationally known journalist MISS Mary Lane to help us celebrate!

LANE

I have come to love this town and its people.

SMITH

How many dinner invitations have you received?

LANE

About a dozen. Could only accept two.

HUNT

Surely you will dine with Carol and me this evening. I'll send my car for you.

LANE

Why of course. I savor seeing the two children.

TOWNSEND

Is it true that John D. Rockefeller not only held a door open for you, but actually ordered a cab for you in New York City?

LANE

Mr. Rockefeller is a very kind man!!

TOWNSEND

And how often have President and Mrs. Wilson invited you to the White House?

LANE

Not worth mentioning.

TOWNSEND

Six times for official state dinners, and twice for interviews, is what the Pittsburgh newspapers reported.

MCDOWELL

The suffragettes must be suffering when they read that.

LANE

Is that Mr. Ward I see in the distance?

SMITH

With Edward Jones?

LANE

What a surprise to see Dear Edward and Mr. Ward.

MCDOWELL

Dear Edward? Are you writing his biography?

LANE

Just some preliminary work on the US Steel Company and as it's president.

ARCHIE

I had no idea Jones was coming. He was invited but never responded.

MCDOWELL

Ward, welcome. Seems like you hired an expensive chauffeur.

JONES

Mary, so pleasant to see you here.

MCDOWELL

What brings the President of US Steel to our town? Twice in less than ten years.

JONES

Our joint venture-- Jenner. I personally picked up Mr. Ward at the Pittsburgh railroad station and we have travelled here by automobile. My new Ford.

MCDOWELL

Then you shall see the latest work by Mr. Ward.

WARD

Shall we lift the curtain?

MCDOWELL

No need to lose time. Please draw the curtain, Carol.

She draws the curtain revealing a large drawing of a mausoleum which resembles the Casino Theatre.

WARD

It's a mausoleum!

ARCHIE

Resembling the Casino Theatre.

WARD

And not bad.

JONES

Whose is it?

MCDOWELL

Mine.

ALL

Yours?

LANE

Are you planning an imminent departure of some kind?

MCDOWELL

We all have a departure of some kind. We just never know when.

JONES

I thought surely you would have wanted a simple headstone.

MCDOWELL

I want my mausoleum to reflect me, and the design which Ward here made.

JONES

(Smiling devilishly) How about a steel mill?

MCDOWELL

That's not my lasting legacy. It's the municipal center that faces the plant.

JONES

Well, you are to be commended.

MCDOWELL

Mr. Ward. What do you think of the town you designed twenty years ago?

WARD

It's lovely.

MCDOWELL

What do you really think?

WARD

Well the town is filled with smoke and fog.

MCDOWELL

It's actually good for you.

WARD

I believe it can be harmful to the environment.

MCDOWELL

What's that?

WARD

The air we breath, the destruction of the atmosphere.

MCDOWELL

So, how are we to become the most powerful nation on earth?

WARD

That's a separate issue. You asked about the town.

MCDOWELL

Well you don't like the air and the smoke. Anything else?

WARD

The municipal center faces the mill. This still bothers me.

MCDOWELL

That's the town's bread and butter. WE are now the world's largest steel producing plant

WARD

True. But I had to point out what I thought was negative. On the overall, your town has been a success. Grant Avenue is a delight.

MCDOWELL

Miss Lane once called the Municipal Center the Scotch-Irish Acropolis. Do you agree?

WARD

Not quite. I think that the Casino Theatre with all of its soot actually looks more like the Kiski Acropolis. This way you combine the Greek architecture with the historic origins of the town.

MCDOWELL

Mmm. I never thought of that.

Suddenly a chorus of demonstrators is heard.

DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

We want unions. We want unions.

MCDOWELL

Hatfield's people.

COUNTER- DEMONSTRATORS  
(O.S.)

We love Jenner.

LANE

McDowell's people.

DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)  
Kiss our butt.

COUNTER-DEMONSTRATORS  
Leave Jenner.

DEMONSTRATORS  
Higher wages! Better working conditions.

COUNTER- DEMONSTRATORS  
Communists!

MCDOWELL  
Arrest the Union demonstrators for disturbing the peace.

SMITH  
Immediately.

MCDOWELL  
One thing you were right about, Miss Lane.

LANE  
Yes.

MCDOWELL  
More churches don't necessarily mean fewer police.

Hatfield enters.

HATFIELD  
Now. Now. You're not going to arrest these peaceful demonstrators on the town's twentieth birthday.

MCDOWELL  
They are worthless troublemakers who will destroy this town, this company and this country.

HATFIELD  
And US Steel profits.

MCDOWELL  
Get out of my town!

HATFIELD  
Your town! This is the United States of America!

MCDOWELL  
Arrest this man.

SMITH

I can't.

HATFIELD

The union's lawyers will be here in no time.

SMITH

He's right.

Suddenly McDowell collapses. Hatfield exits.

TOWNSEND

Get Dr. Boale. Here, drink this water.

HUNT

Immediately

MCDOWELL

I'll be fine

JONES

He's had these attacks before. He'll recover.

MCDOWELL

This glass of water will make me be as good as new.

LANE

George, your health is the most important thing.

MCDOWELL

You gotta get 'em. Mary Mae.

LANE

Get who.

MCDOWELL

The Unions. (Getting Up) I'm fine now. Just a little shortness of breath.

LANE

Off to the doctor first.

MCDOWELL

I'm as good as new. And I plan to live at least another twenty years. Let's celebrate.

The bells begin ringing again.

## Act 2

SCENE 1 JENNER, CUSTER AVENUE, 1925

Hunt lawn. Store Signs reading Manganello's Fruits, Rubin's, Peggy Ann Shop, Sweetlane, Ross Drug Store, Altmire's, can be seen. Mary, Carol, and James are seated on swings. Flapper music is heard in the background

LANE

Are both children now in college?

CAROL

Henry at Allegheny, Ann at Washington and Jefferson. .

LANE

Can it really be thirty years since the founding of the town?

CAROL

And surely George McDowell is looking down from somewhere in that great beyond and must be pleased by what he sees. A high school, a town of twenty thousand, and 5000 employees at the US Steel plant. Of course the smoke, the rise of the labor unions should not please him.

LANE

I regretfully missed Mr. McDowell's funeral. President Wilson insisted that I chair one of his committees that day.

CAROL

We went to New York for the funeral. Over a thousand people attended.

LANE

I paid my respects at Valhalla Cemetery, and the Mausoleum of the Casino Theatre is truly impressive.

CAROL

Archie, James, and the Burgess accompanied the body from Atlantic City to New York. His last words were that his living legacy would be the town he created. And what you have done for the town is remarkable.

LANE

The town I once visited as subject material for an article is now a place near and dear to me. All the families I have come to know on a personal basis. I have always said that families take first priority, and that is what our American lifestyle is all about.



CAROL

Well it's so nice of you to testify at tonight's Council hearing.

HUNT

It's outrageous that ten years after his death we still do not have a monument of any kind to the memory of George McDowell.

LANE

Hopefully tonight will change that.

HUNT

You know that Hatfield is now city council chair?

LANE

Surely he will respect the dead.

HUNT

He does. But with one exception. George McDowell.

CAROL

Let us think more pleasant thoughts. Shall we take a walk up Grant Avenue to see the newest stores?

HUNT

And I must go back to the office.

LANE

I would love to swing for a while and just watch the traffic go by.

CAROL

I must also see some cereal. My cousin, little Jimmy Stewart is spending the weekend with us. Have you visited their hardware store in Indiana?

LANE

I have.

CAROL

He's off to Princeton next year to study architecture. But he confided that he might want to become an actor. His father would collapse if he knew. Enjoy the swing.

Carol and Hunt exit. The music gets louder and cars go by the street. Horns are honking. Lane begins fanning herself. Suddenly George McDowell appears.

MCDOWELL

Why is Mary Lane visiting hardware stores in Indiana, Pennsylvania?

LANE

I gave a speech at Indiana Normal School.. (Realizing who he is) A ghost! I must be dreaming.

MCDOWELL

Don't use that word. It sounds too ghoulish.

LANE

But you died ten years ago.

MCDOWELL

No one is better aware of that than I.

LANE

Then who are you?

MCDOWELL

George McDowell. Either real or in your mind. Now quiet down. You are the only person who can see me. And if your lips move too much, people might think you're crazy, talking to yourself.

LANE

Why have you come back!

MCDOWELL

I came to see you. Does the town work?

LANE

Of course it does.

MCDOWELL

But is it different from any other mill town?

LANE

You once told me never to use that term.

MCDOWELL

I was hoping you would say it IS different from any other mill town.

LANE

It is but where are you?

MCDOWELL

I'm here.

LANE

I know that, but tell me what it's like.

MCDOWELL

My lips are sealed.

LANE

Please?

MCDOWELL

I can discuss your world. I am forbidden to discuss my world.

LANE

Please?

MCDOWELL

My lips are sealed.

LANE

Are you in heaven?

MCDOWELL

You now believe in heaven? Interesting.

LANE

Please tell me.

MCDOWELL

My lips are sealed. But I'll give you a hint.

LANE

Please.

MCDOWELL

Become a good Presbyterian.

LANE

That means...

MCDOWELL

Don't try to second guess.

LANE

And President Wilson?

MCDOWELL

Snoopy Mary! My lips are sealed!

LANE

Please?...

MCDOWELL

Ask once more and you will never see me again!

LANE

ANSWER ME. Are you there or in my mind!

MCDOWELL

You don't know? Ha. You're a disappointment to me, Mary Mae.

LANE

What! Why!

MCDOWELL

Why haven't you exposed those corrupt unions.

LANE

They are no more corrupt than some of your executives.

MCDOWELL

You sold yourself.

LANE

Me! Never!

MCDOWELL

You slew John D. Rockefeller and you set up Edward Jones for adoration by writing that dumb biography.

LANE

Stop it!

MCDOWELL

You ravaged Captain Jenner and idolized that worthless Episcopalian.

LANE

I'm plugging my ears.

MCDOWELL

And the newspapers had a field day on you! "St. Edward of the Clouds" they said. And so you are letting the unions free too.

LANE

You are attacking my professionalism.

MCDOWELL

A woman who opposed women's right to vote, now helps labor and useless steel executives at the same time.

LANE

Drop dead!

MCDOWELL

I am dead!

LANE

Then drop dead again!

MCDOWELL

Have you visited my mausoleum?

LANE

I have and that's why I am here tonight. To put up a lasting memorial to you.

MCDOWELL

No need. The town is my memorial. Just use all your power to destroy the union. Forget about my statue.

LANE

Never.

MCDOWELL

Don't bet on succeeding.

Jenner Council Chambers. Dark.

DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

Yes. Yes. Yes.

COUNTER DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

No! No! No!

SMITH

Now comes the question of a memorial to George W. McDowell, which some of you on this council have long awaited. Mr. Hatfield will give his report.

HATFIELD

Mr. Police Chief and members of Council. The committee has worked hard on this project and we have voted 4 to 3 to postpone any action at this time.

ARCHIE

This is the fourth time action has been postponed.

HATFIELD

We can act too precipitously.

ARCHIE

Is a statue to the town's founder out of our reach?

HATFIELD

We have no funds.

ARCHIE

Our treasury is filled.

HATFIELD

We have schools to build, fire departments to assist, and so on.

HUNT

Private funds can be raised.

HATFIELD

That is out of the question. We have no space to put such a statue. Also, union members are opposed to a statue.

HUNT

How about naming a street after him.

HATFIELD

What street?

HUNT

Why not Holland Street?

HATFIELD

Holland street. Holland is my favorite country.

ARCHIE

Most of the residents are Italian.

HATFIELD

All the more reason not to change the name of the street. The Dutch love the Italians and the Italians love the Dutch.

ARCHIE

I wasn't aware of that. In fact, I've spoken to some of the residents and none objected to a name change.

HATFIELD

Holland Street has some liars living there. You must have spoken to some of the liars.

HUNT

Mr. Chairman, I must point out that Holland Street was not named after the country but the writer. Are you familiar with his work/

HATFIELD

I knew that. He's one of my favorite novelists. All the more reason not to rename the street.

HUNT

Oh, you've read his works.

HATFIELD

Yes.

HUNT

Which ones?

HATFIELD

I can't recall. What is this? A trial.

HUNT

Are you willing to abandon any lasting memorial to the man who built this town?

HATFIELD

No. I do have a solution. How about naming the alley behind Holland Avenue after him?

SMITH

An alley! That runs by the town dump!

HATFIELD

We can call it McDowell's Court. If I can get my committee to go along with it.

SMITH

Absolutely not.

HATFIELD

Then I have another idea. Perhaps we can name the city dump after him.

SMITH

The Dump!

HATFIELD

A dump is very important to Jenner. How would you like to have a town without a place to put its garbage?

SMITH

I see the motion is going nowhere. Perhaps we can hear a few words from our distinguished visitor whom some call the Nation's most preeminent journalist. Mary Lane has taken an interest in this town since its inception.

HATFIELD

Let us hear from Miss Lane herself.

MCDOWELL (O.S.)

Mary Mae, don't say anything.

LANE

Hush.

Everyone begins laughing.

HATFIELD

Are you telling me to shut up!

LANE

No, I was just clearing my throat. Please accept my apology

HATFIELD

You better watch that, dear Mary Mae. Some folks saw you talking to yourself today.

LANE

People are always saying that about me.

ARCHIE

Let us hear Miss Lane.

LANE

Jenner is a unique town indeed. There is no other city in the country quite like it. Thirty years after its creation, it is a thriving city built around one man's ideal of a workers paradise. A town of homes and gardens, the result of one man's deliberate attempt to make a better town than there s in the world for physical health and comfort. How many other such cities have been designed by Benjamin R. Ward? Each time I return, I see the lovely streets, gardens, parks, play areas, trees, streets named for poets and statesman, and trees. The city is a living ideal to a man of dreams. That man is George McDowell. One small memorial like a street or statue would be an appropriate way to honor his contribution.

HATFIELD

Dear Miss Lane. You forget one thing. He made a bundle of money when he sold the lots.



LANE

Mr. Hatfield, that too is an American ideal.

HATFIELD

And he cut the lots in half. So much for Ward's ideal.

LANE

No one is perfect.

HATFIELD

And he tried to destroy labor unions.

LANE

He could have chosen many other routes to do this. Please have your committee reconsider, Mr. Hatfield.

HATFIELD

Who can turn down the one and only Mary Lane? I am now a college graduate. I just read your Rockefeller book. JJ Jenner seems like an unsavory person.

LANE

I am not asking you to honor Captain Jenner. Only George McDowell.

HATFIELD

OK. My committee will reconsider and come up with a report in a couple of years.

SMITH

George McDowell. Rest in peace.

HATFIELD

And remember, he already has a fire company named after him. They could have called it something else, like the William Penn Fire Company but they chose to name it after George.

SMITH

Let the dead rest in peace.

HATFIELD

I will be glad to. Just don't bring his name up again.

MCDOWELL (O.S.)

Bastard!

SCENE 2 JENNER, HUNT FIELD, 1935

Archie and Mary are standing on Hunt Field. Mary's eyes are closed.

ARCHIE

Turn on the lights.

The lights come on.

ARCHIE (cont'd)

You can open your eyes now.

LANE

Wow! Your dream come true. Hunt FIELD.

ARCHIE

My next dream is to have a professional baseball team here.

LANE

The Jenner Steelers?

ARCHIE

Might cause a problem with the Pittsburgh football team.

LANE

How about the Jenner Pioneers?

ARCHIE

A thought. And you have to come back for one of the Jenner High School Lancer football games.

LANE

My schedule has quieted as I approach 80.

ARCHIE

You've never looked so good Miss Lane. Shall we play ball?

Pulls out softball and bat.

LANE

I!

McDowell appears.

MCDOWELL

Thought I had forgotten you. Do it, Mary Mae.

ARCHIE

I can always say Mary Lane played ball on Hunt Field.

HATFIELD (O.S.)

Miss Lane is always playing ball. But with the wrong people.

Hatfield appears on stage.

ARCHIE

What brings you here at this time of night?

HATFIELD

The lights from Hunt Field came straight through my window.  
I was wondering what type of creature would be here at night.

ARCHIE

Come and play ball with us.

HATFIELD

You're using city electricity.

ARCHIE

With the Burgess' approval. And my own ball field?

HATFIELD

There's a depression?

ARCHIE

If you play ball, will that make the Depression worse?

HATFIELD

Not much to celebrate about. One out of every four residents  
of the Worker's Utopia is being foreclosed upon.

LANE

Sad indeed. But that rate is much lower than for the rest of  
the country.

HATFIELD

That doesn't help. People are starving. Where is McDowell's  
dream now.

LANE

Very much alive. The town is now 40 years old.

HATFIELD

And unionized.

ARCHIE

George McDowell is turning over in his grave.

MCDOWELL

He is not.

HATFIELD

Wherever in hell he's burning. Five thousand men are now out of work. Some people are starving.

LANE

(To McDowell) Well are you?

ARCHIE

(To Lane) Am I what?

MCDOWELL

(To Lane) My lips are sealed.

ARCHIE

Well join us in a little practice. Hatfield.

HATFIELD

What the heck!

ARCHIE

Take this bat, Mary. I'll pitch. You catch, Hatfield.

LANE

I have never hit a ball in my life before. And here I go at age 78. ..

They get in position. Mary raises the bat, and McDowell puts his arms around her and holds the bat with her.

ARCHIE

First pitch.

She hits the ball into left field.

MCDOWELL

That a girl, Mary Mae. Now destroy those dam unions!

ARCHIE

What's your secret.

HATFIELD

That's at least a single.

ARCHIE

Here's the second pitch.

She and McDowell hit the ball into right field.

HATFIELD

That's at least a double.

ARCHIE

Here's the third pitch.

She and McDowell hits the ball into  
center field.

LANE

Now it's your turn Mr. Hatfield.

ARCHIE

Come on Hatfield.

HATFIELD

What the heck.

ARCHIE

Here's the first pitch. ....Strike One.

HATFIELD

Try again.

ARCHIE

Strike two.

HATFIELD

Try again.

The ball goes over the fence for a home  
run.

ARCHIE

A home run, old man.

HATFIELD

That proves that it's not over till it's over.

ARCHIE

There are many more innings to this game.

A fire siren is heard and a fire truck  
whizzes by with the name GEORGE  
McDowell FIRE ENGINE COMPANY emblazed  
on the side.

LANE

Oh, dear, a fire.

ARCHIE

Na. That means the fire is over. But the name is a reminder of the George McDowell's contribution to this town.

HATFIELD

Don't say that too loudly, Archie ole boy. You might be tarred and feathered.

ARCHIE

I don't think so.

HATFIELD

Gotta go. (exits)

ARCHIE

What's your verdict on our fortieth anniversary?

LANE

The town is delightful even though the smoke, smog, noise, and the stream of workers is like that of any other town in Pennsylvania. But Ward's design will not change. And he hopes to be here for the town's fiftieth. But I have one problem.

ARCHIE

What is that?

LANE

Hunt Field.

ARCHIE

You don't like it!

LANE

I do. But it is a segregating line. Hunt Field is a natural barrier between the desirable part of Jenner and Jenner Heights and the Park Plan. And then East Jenner is divided from Jenner.

ARCHIE

Sure it is. But what's wrong with segregation?

LANE

We are one country. This town is divided by class and ethnicity,

ARCHIE

What's wrong with that?

LANE

We are one country.

ARCHIE

With many parts. That's what gives the town its charm. Good solid segregation. I haven't seen anybody cry about it.

LANE

It seems unjust.

ARCHIE

Our schools are not segregated. And spaghetti, mashed potatoes, and holopki don't mix well.

LANE

If that's the way you look at it.

ARCHIE

Don't you spend most of your year in your Central Park Apartment in New York City?

LANE

I do.

ARCHIE

And that isn't segregated?

LANE

But..

ARCHIE

Now let's head back home.

LANE

I would like to walk back to the Hunt house alone. Just a relaxing walk.

ARCHIE

Do you feel safe?

LANE

If you are not safe in Jenner, where are you safe?

ARCHIE

Good night. And I will drive you to Pittsburgh in the morning.. Adieu. (exits)

MCDOWELL

You stayed back for me, didn't you?

LANE

The truth be known. Yes. I have a question I've been dying to know?

MCDOWELL

Yeah?

LANE

Is President Wilson in Heaven?

MCDOWELL

My lips...

LANE

Are sealed.

MCDOWELL

Some people feel that Democrats should never go to heaven. How about Hoover, Coolidge and Harding? Seems as if they all rolled out the red carpet for you.

LANE

If your darned LIPS ARE SEALED, what good would it do me? Are you happy with your town?

MCDOWELL

Nope! It's a union town.

LANE

Things could be worse.

MCDOWELL

Nope. Now Jenner is in the Union's palm. A fate worse than --, and I won't say the word. Maybe the union will just go away.

LANE

Perhaps the Depression too.

MCDOWELL

Maybe. Come back for the fiftieth and find out.

LANE

I doubt that I will make it.

MCDOWELL

I think you will. Good night, Mary Mae.



## SCENE 3 JENNER, GRANT AVENUE, 1945

Banners reading RETURN HOME BOYS, BUY WAR BONDS, Ward'S DREAM COME TRUE, and Jenner AT 50 are flying from telephone poles. Grant Avenue is flooded with people as Mary Lane, Benjamin R. Ward, Jr., Carol and James Hunt, Archie Hunt and Burgess Smith are on a platform listening to the Star Spangled Banner. Suddenly George McDowell appears.

SMITH

Happy Fiftieth!

CROWD

Happy Fiftieth!

SMITH

We celebrate our fiftieth anniversary today. In a time of War. We pray first that all of our servicemen come home safely.

CROWD

Amen. (applause)

SMITH

We are one nation, undivided, under God.

CROWD

Amen. (applause)

SMITH

Young men of every ethnicity, Polish, Italian, Greek, Slavic, Irish, German and Lebanese Americans have given up their lives up in this war. Many were sons of very recently arrived immigrants. Their parents had barely unpacked. But they reflected a love we all have for this great country.

CROWD

Yes. (applause)

SMITH

And now the St. Gertrude's bells will ring 21 times in memory of all those residents of Jenner who lost their lives fighting our enemies. .

The bells ring 21 times

Smith (cont'd)

And now we will hear from two speakers of national significance who have known a lot about Jenner. First is Mary Lane, who wrote about our town, and the second is Fred Ward who designed the town. Miss Lane, first.

Mary Lane rises. Her hands are shaking.

LANE

Ladies and Gentleman. I first visited Jenner nearly fifty years ago. Then I wrote about the beautiful streets, sloping hills, distinguished homes, delightful shops, and the historical significance of a town built as a workers' utopia. But the most important thing about this town are the people, a people I have come to love. Let me sum it up as did George McDowell: We have something here that is better than the best. Thank you so much. Now, Mr. Ward.

WARD

About fifty years ago, George McDowell, Miss Lane, and I met not far from this spot as this new town of Jenner became a reality. A model and picturesque workingman's town created along advanced ideas. Beautiful residences and streets. A working force of 5000 men and women. The town has lived up to the ideals and goals of George W. McDowell. God bless you.

Crowd applauds wildly.

LANE

(whispering) Aren't you proud.

MCDOWELL

Yes.

SMITH

(whispering) Poor Mary Lane is talking to herself.

ARCHIE

She's been doing it for years.

HUNT

But only in Jenner, they say.

CAROL

Men don't gossip, do they?

HUNT

Maybe it's just her unknown disease.

WARD

We drove in. I would now like to see the Sherman Inn.

HUNT

I regret to inform you that it has been torn down.

WARD

Torn down!

HUNT

To make way for some needed wartime housing.

WARD

Shucks. I spent months and years designing that inn.

Everyone laughs.

SMITH

Now let us mingle with the crowd.

LANE

And where is Mr. Hatfield today? Surely ....

SMITH

It's very sad. His favorite Grandson was killed in France. He is a changed, perhaps destroyed man.

LANE

Oh Dear. Shall I pay my respects?

ARCHIE

Perhaps not. His health is not good.

HUNT

He is a broken and humbled man. He just contributed several inspiring books to the Jenner Library in his grandson's memory.

SMITH

And an anonymous donation was made to the Jenner Library in honor of George McDowell. And there are rumors....

LANE

Yes?

SMITH

Its the best kept secret in town. The books were donated by Jack Hatfield. A now shall we mix in with the crowd?

LANE

I think I shall take a small walk alone.

HUNT

Alone. Mary! Your health...

LANE

I want to walk alone. I am fine. These old age shakes are really nothing to worry about. Even though they're trying to give them a name, Parkinson's or something. I will be fine. I will return shortly. (She walks up the street)

CAROL

Jamie, follow her from a distance. Her niece will be very upset.

LANE

(turning to McDowell) Are you pleased with these last ten years.

MCDOWELL

Very proud. But not so proud of you.

LANE

There you go upsetting me again! What is it this time?

MCDOWELL

You have a fetish for fat Italians. Kissing Benito's butt.

LANE

I interviewed him six years ago, we were not even at war.

MCDOWELL

He kissed your hand?

LANE

He did.

MCDOWELL

You'll never change, Mary Mae. First Napoleon, now Mussolini. And you sandwiched Abe Lincoln in between. Ha.

LANE

I'd like to kill you.

MCDOWELL

You can't. I died thirty years ago.

LANE

Are you real or in my mind?

MCDOWELL

My lips are sealed.

LANE

That again!

MCDOWELL

You have travelled throughout the world, you have shaken the hands of kings and queens, every 'American president since Teddy Roosevelt has shaken your hand, you kicked Rockefeller you know where, you have written three biographies, and the list is endless.

LANE

That's right. So what?

MCDOWELL

So why did you take such an interest in Jenner?

LANE

At first it was work. Remember, I once said that Jenner was the most important industrial town in America. And then the people..

MCDOWELL

But you never lived here.

LANE

You didn't either! I recall that you and Clare moved to New York City shortly before the turn of the century.

MCDOWELL

My work was in New York. And there was no way I could live above the store so to speak. But it's still my town. Visit my mausoleum.

LANE

And what happens when the industrial age is over?

MCDOWELL

The Industrial Age will never end.

LANE

God won't curse this country like that. The industrial age will end.

MCDOWELL

Unions may send the industrial age to China. But can I believe that THE Mary Lane wants to destroy American jobs!

LANE

Of course not.

MCDOWELL

Then why?

LANE

The same reason I once, perhaps mistakenly opposed women's right to vote. I believe in the family. And the woman's role is pivotal in the family. And hopefully we can go back to an agrarian society. I'm like that slaveholder named Thomas Jefferson.

MCDOWELL

Go back to the Townsend farm? That would mean destroying the town.

LANE

Not quite. But what happens if the mill closes?

MCDOWELL

That will never happen!

LANE

Ah, you have insights into the future.

MCDOWELL

I do not. But there is a woman who does.

LANE

Rosie, the Columbia Avenue fortune teller?

MCDOWELL

How did you know?

LANE

There are no secrets in Jenner. How did you know?

MCDOWELL

My lips are sealed. And you believe in fortune tellers?

LANE

That's always been one of my weaknesses. Could you give me some directions.

MCDOWELL

You're standing in front of her house. And now I must go. You're better than the best, Mary Mae. Goodbye. I'll be seeing you. (exits)

Mary knocks on the door. Rosie,  
forties, answers from behind the door.

ROSIE

Yes?

LANE

Is this Rosie's home?

ROSIE

Yes. Who are you? Another one of them Holy Rollers?

LANE

Far from it. .

ROSIE

I see you through the peep hole. You look like an old Holy  
Roller.

LANE

I am old but I am not a Holy Roller. I am neither holy nor a  
roller.

ROSIE

That's funny. Come in, sweetie pie.

LANE

Are you a fortune teller?

ROSIE

Are you working for the police?

LANE

No, indeed.

ROSIE

Wait a minute. I sense something fishy. (Walks around Mary)  
Have you been around a Presbyterian?

LANE

Not that I know of.

ROSIE

I sense something. Tell me the truth.

LANE

I always tell the truth.

ROSIE

I believe you. You look like a nice old lady.

LANE

I understand you are a very good fortune teller.

ROSIE

I'm the best, honey.

LANE

Are you a Jenner Native.

ROSIE

No, I'm from Ford city. A much higher class town, I'll have you know.

LANE

Can you do a reading for me?

ROSIE

Yes, honey, I charge ten dollars.

LANE

I pay only \$5 in Titusville.

ROSIE

That's Titusville. This is Jenner.

LANE

All right.

ROSIE

What's your name, sweetie?

LANE

Mary Lane

ROSIE

(Laughing) It sounds like a cow.

LANE

I am not a cow. Do I smell cats?

ROSIE

You bet, sixteen of them.

LANE

Your husband must also like cats.



ROSIE

No husbands. All three said it was choosing them or the cats. The cats are still here. What do you want to know? Honey.

LANE

What is going to happen to the steel business.

ROSIE

Strange question. (Pulls out crystal ball) Abracadabra. Abracadabra.

LANE

This seems suspicious.

ROSIE

Want your money back?

LANE

No thank you, proceed.

ROSIE

Abracadabra abracadabra. I look into the future . And I see men and women making steel.

LANE

Women?

ROSIE

Yes. And I see steel being made by foreigners. They look like Germans and Japanese.

LANE

I think you may be confusing our war enemies with future steel producers.

ROSIE

I don't make too many mistakes.

LANE

And the Jenner steel plant.

ROSIE

It's closed.

LANE

Closed?

ROSIE

And there's a white sheet over it.

LANE

Surprising indeed.

ROSIE

Is there anything else you want to know?

LANE

No thank you.

ROSIE

Wanna know how much longer you've got?

LANE

No. Thank you. Now I must go.

ROSIE

You're so nice, sweetie. Here's two dollars back for you. That's a Jenner thing.

LANE

No, keep the two dollars, sweetie pie. I appreciate your service. One question for you. Have you ever heard of George McDowell?

ROSIE

No. Who is he?

LANE

He once lived in this town.

ROSIE

Did he work in the mill.

LANE

You might say that.

ROSIE

No...Wait a minute. There's a fire truck named McDowell. Was he a fireman?

LANE

No.

ROSIE

And the next time you come I'll have some coffee for you. And you know, I'd like to name my next cat after you. Cat Lane. Sounds nice.

LANE

I'm honored.

ROSIE

You're such a sweetie pie.

LANE

You are a sweetie pie too. Now I must go...Honey.

Mary exits and Jim Hunt is waiting for her.

HUNT

We've been looking all over town for you. Where have you been?

LANE

I visited an old friend.

HUNT

Someone said you visited that fortune teller. Did you?

LANE

Of course not.

HUNT

Your niece called. She is picking you up tomorrow after lunch.

LANE

Good. I want to go to church tomorrow.

HUNT

You?

LANE

Yes indeed. And I think I will go to the Methodist Church.

HUNT

Just a short distance away.

LANE

No on second thought, I think I will go to the Presbyterian Church.

HUNT

Even better. That is the church we belong to.

LANE

I shall like seeing the Tiffany windows.

HUNT

Presbyterian? Must be George McDowell's ghost?

LANE

My lips are sealed.

END OF PLAY