

HELLO OUT THERE

by William Saroyan

A young man has been arrested in a small town in Texas and thrown in jail. He has been accused falsely of raping a married woman who picked him up and then wanted money from him. He is a gambler, traveling from town to town, and he hasn't "had any luck in years." Lonely and frightened in his cell, he calls out, "Hello out there." The jail is apparently empty. He calls out over and over and finally he gets an answer: a soft "Hello." A young girl (he comes to call her Katey—his favorite name) who cooks and cleans in the jail has stayed behind. She took care of him the night before when he was brought in unconscious (he had been hit on the head). She tells him that he was talking in his sleep and says, "You liked me." She adds, "I didn't think you'd like me when you woke up, though." She is shy and awkward and is laughed at by the young men in the town. A touching and ultimately tragic love affair ensues between these two lonely people.

Prior to the following excerpt the young man has told "Katey" that meeting her has changed his luck and that he will marry her and take her away with him.

YOUNG MAN, suddenly: See if you can get that fellow with the keys to come down and let me out.

THE GIRL: Oh, I couldn't.

YOUNG MAN: Why not?

THE GIRL: I'm nobody here—why, all they give me is fifty cents every day I work here—sometimes twelve hours. I'm nobody here.

YOUNG MAN: Get me out of here, Katey. I'm scared.

THE GIRL: I don't know what to do. Maybe I could break the door down.

YOUNG MAN: No, you couldn't do that. Is there a hammer there or anything?

THE GIRL: Only a broom. Maybe they've locked the broom up, too.

YOUNG MAN: Go and see if you can find anything.

THE GIRL: All right. *She goes.*

THE GIRL, returning: There isn't a thing out there. They've locked everything up for the night.

YOUNG MAN: Any cigarettes?

THE GIRL: Everything's locked up—all the drawers of the desk—all the closet doors—everything.

YOUNG MAN: I ought to have a cigarette.

THE GIRL: I could get you a package maybe, somewhere. I guess the drugstore's open. It's about a mile.

YOUNG MAN: A mile? I don't want to be alone that long.

THE GIRL: I could run all the way, and all the way back.

YOUNG MAN: You're the sweetest girl that ever lived.

THE GIRL: What kind do you want?

YOUNG MAN: Oh, any kind—Chesterfields or Camels or Lucky Strikes—any kind at all.

THE GIRL: I'll go get a package. *She turns to go.*

YOUNG MAN: What about the money?

THE GIRL: I've got some money. I've got a quarter I been saving. I'll run all the way. *She is about to go.*

YOUNG MAN: Come here.

THE GIRL, going to him: What?

YOUNG MAN: Give me your hand. *He takes her hand and looks at it, smiling. He lifts it and kisses it. I'm scared to death.*

THE GIRL: I am, too.

YOUNG MAN: I'm scared nobody will ever come out here to this God-forsaken broken-down town and find you. I'm scared you'll get used to it and not mind. I'm scared you'll never get to San Francisco and have 'em all turning to look at you. Listen—go get me a gun.

THE GIRL: I could get my father's gun. I know where he hides it.

YOUNG MAN: Go get it. Never mind the cigarettes. Run all the way.

The Girl turns and runs. The Young Man stands at the center of the cell a long time. The Girl comes running back in.

THE GIRL, *almost crying*: I'm afraid. I'm afraid I won't see you again. If I come back and you're not here, I—It's so lonely in this town. I'll stay *here*. I won't *let* them take you away.

YOUNG MAN: Listen, Katey. Do what I tell you. Go get that gun and come back. Maybe they won't come tonight. Maybe they won't come at all. I'll hide the gun and when they let me out you can take it back and put it where you found it. And then we'll go away. Now, hurry—

THE GIRL: All right. *Pause*. I want to tell you something.

YOUNG MAN: O.K.

THE GIRL, *very softly*: If you're not here when I come back, well, I'll have the gun and I'll know what to do with it.

YOUNG MAN: You know how to handle a gun?

THE GIRL: I know how.

YOUNG MAN: Don't be a fool. *Takes off his shoe, brings out some currency*: Don't be a fool, see? Here's some money. Eighty dollars. Take it and go to San Francisco. Look around and find somebody. Find somebody alive and halfway human, see? Promise me—if I'm not here when you come back, just throw the gun away and go to San Francisco. Look around and find somebody.

THE GIRL: I don't *want* to find anybody.

YOUNG MAN, *swiftly, desperately*: Now, do what I tell you. I'll meet you in San Francisco. I've got a couple of dollars in my other shoe. I'll see you in San Francisco.

THE GIRL, *with wonder*: San Francisco?

YOUNG MAN: That's right—San Francisco. That's where you and me belong.

THE GIRL: I've always wanted to go to someplace like San Francisco—but how could I go alone?

YOUNG MAN: Well, you're not alone anymore, see?

THE GIRL: Tell me a little what it's like.

YOUNG MAN, *very swiftly, almost impatiently at first, but gradually slower and with remembrance, smiling and The Girl moving closer to him as he speaks*: Well, it's on the Pacific to begin with—ocean all around. Cool fog and sea gulls. Ships from all over the world. It's got seven hills. The little streets go up and down, around and all over. Every night the foghorns bawl. But they won't be bawling for you and me.

THE GIRL: Are people different in San Francisco?

YOUNG MAN: People are the same everywhere. They're different only when they love somebody. That's the only thing that makes 'em different. More people in San Francisco love somebody, that's all.

THE GIRL: Nobody anywhere loves anybody as much as I love you.

YOUNG MAN, *whispering*: Hearing you say that, a man could die and still be ahead of the game. Now, hurry. And don't forget, if I'm not here when you come back, I'll meet you in San Francisco. *The Girl stands a moment looking at him, then backs away, turns and runs.*

THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES

by John Guare

ACT I

This is the opening scene of the play. It is five o'clock in the morning, and Bunny Flingus is knocking at the door of her boyfriend, Artie Shaughnessy. Artie is a would-be song writer who works as a zoo attendant. Bunny wants Artie to join her in witnessing the momentous first visit of a Pope to New York. She is equipped with two Brownie cameras and a sense of history. Artie is not in a hurry to leave the warmth of his sleeping bag or his Queens apartment. The ensuing conversation (begun after Artie has unlocked the door and jumped back into his sleeping bag) alternates between Bunny's plans for the Pope to marry them and Artie's attempts at coaxing her to cook something for him. (For scene-study purposes, the entrance of the "sick woman" may be ignored. The Billy referred to is an old friend of Artie's who has become a successful Hollywood filmmaker.)