

you like but still happy. We could go on and on, with Ned, until you've gone off him, why, why did you have to muck it up between you with your infantile agonizings.

BETH: Because there's a problem.

SIMON: What problem?

BETH: I'm going to have a baby.

SIMON, *stares at her for a long moment*: What? Another moment. Whose?

BETH: *That is the problem. Goes out.*

GOLDEN BOY

by Clifford Odets

ACT II, SCENE 2

Joe Bonaparte has a talent for the violin—and for boxing. Violinists stay poor. Boxers can get rich; they can buy respect, fast cars, and beautiful women. Driven by unquenchable ambition, and against his father's wishes, Joe becomes a professional boxer. His speedy ascendance through the boxing ranks is matched by an equally rapid swelling of his self-importance and a decline in his ability to care about anyone else. Ultimately, he kills another boxer in the ring, and then kills himself in an automobile crash.

The following scene takes place on a park bench. It is still early in Joe's career, but he shows extraordinary promise. Joe's manager, Tom Moody, has asked his girl friend, Lorna Moon, to spend time with Joe, to keep him away from his father, and to prevent him from racing cars. Moody doesn't know that Joe and Lorna have already developed strong feelings for each other. Those feelings are finally expressed in this scene.

JOE: Some nights I wake up—my heart's beating a mile a minute! Before I open my eyes I know what it is—the feeling that someone's standing at my bed. Then I open my eyes . . . it's gone—ran away!

LORNA: Maybe it's that old fiddle of yours.

JOE: Lorna, maybe it's you. . . .

LORNA: Don't you ever think of it anymore—music?

JOE: What're you trying to remind me of? A kid with a Buster Brown collar and a violin case tucked under his arm? Does that sound appetizing to you?

LORNA: Not when you say it that way. You said it different once. . . .

JOE: What's on your mind, Lorna?

LORNA: What's on yours?

JOE, *simply*: You. . . . You're real for me—the way music was real.

LORNA: You've got your car, your career—what do you want with me?

JOE: I develop the ability to knock down anyone my weight. But what point have I made? Don't you think I know that? I went off to the wars 'cause someone called me a name—because I wanted to be two other guys. Now it's happening. . . . I'm not sure I like it.

LORNA: Moody's against that car of yours.

JOE: I'm against Moody, so we're even.

LORNA: Why don't you like him?

JOE: He's a manager! He treats me like a possession! I'm just a little silver mine for him—he bangs me around with a shovel!

LORNA: He's helped you—

JOE: No, Tokio's helped me. Why don't you give him up? It's terrible to have just a Tuesday-night girl. Why don't you belong to me every night in the week? Why don't you teach me love? . . . Or am I being a fool?

LORNA: You're not a fool, Joe.

JOE: I want you to be my family, my life—Why don't you do it, Lorna, why?

LORNA: He loves me.

JOE: I love you!

LORNA, *treading delicately*: Well. . . . Anyway, the early bird got the worm. Anyway, I can't give him anguish. I . . . I know

what it's like. You shouldn't kick Moody around. He's poor compared to you. You're alive, you've got yourself—I can't feel sorry for you!

JOE: But you don't love him!

LORNA: I'm not much interested in myself. But the thing I like best about you . . . you still feel like a flop. It's mysterious, Joe. It makes me put my hand out. *She gives him her hand and he grasps it.*

JOE: I feel very close to you, Lorna.

LORNA: I know. . . .

JOE: And you feel close to me. But you're afraid—

LORNA: Of what?

JOE: To take a chance! Lorna darling, you won't let me wake you up! I feel it all the time—you're half dead, and you don't know it!

LORNA, *half smiling*: Maybe I do. . . .

JOE: Don't smile—don't be hard-boiled!

LORNA, *sincerely*: I'm not.

JOE: Don't you trust me?

LORNA, *evasively*: Why start what we can't finish?

JOE, *fiercely*: Oh, Lorna, deep as my voice will reach—*listen!* Why can't you leave him? Why?

LORNA: Don't pull my dress off—I hear you.

JOE: Why?

LORNA: Because he needs me and you don't—

JOE: That's not true!

LORNA: Because he's a desperate guy who always starts out with two strikes against him. Because he's a kid at forty-two and you're a man at twenty-two.

JOE: You're sorry for him?

LORNA: What's wrong with that?

JOE: But what do *you* get?

LORNA: I told you before I don't care.

JOE: I don't believe it!

LORNA: I can't help that!

JOE: What did he ever do for you?

LORNA, *with sudden verve*: Would you like to know? He loved me in a world of enemies, of stags and bulls! . . . and I loved him for that. He picked me up in Friskin's hotel on 39th Street. I was nine weeks behind in rent. I hadn't hit the gutter yet, but I

was near. He washed my face and combed my hair. He stiffened the space between my shoulder blades. Misery reached out to misery—

JOE: And now you're dead.

LORNA, *lashing out*: I don't know what the hell you're talking about!

JOE: Yes, you do. . . .

LORNA, *withdrawing*: Ho hum. . . . *There is silence. The soft park music plays in the distance. The traffic lights change. Lorna is trying to appear impassive. Joe begins to whistle softly. Finally Lorna picks up his last note and continues, he stops. He picks up her note, and after he whistles a few phrases she picks him up again. This whistling duet continues for almost a minute. Then the traffic lights change again. Lorna, beginning in a low voice:* You make me feel too human, Joe. All I want is peace and quiet, not love. I'm a tired old lady, Joe, and I don't mind being what you call "half dead." In fact it's what I like. *Her voice mounting higher:* The twice I was in love I took an awful beating and I don't want it again! *Now half crying:* I want you to stop it! Don't devil me, Joe. I beg you, don't devil me . . . let me alone. . . . *She cries softly. Joe reaches out and takes her hand, he gives her a handkerchief, which she uses. Lorna, finally:* That's the third time I cried in my life. . . .

JOE: Now I know you love me.

LORNA, *bitterly*: Well . . .

JOE: I'll tell Moody.

LORNA: Not yet. Maybe he'd kill you if he knew.

JOE: Maybe.

LORNA: Then Fuseli'd kill him. . . . I guess I'd be left to kill myself. I'll tell him. . . .

JOE: When?

LORNA: Not tonight.

JOE: Swiftly, do it swiftly—

LORNA: Not tonight.

JOE: Everything's easy if you do it swiftly.

LORNA: He went up there tonight with six hundred bucks to bribe her into divorce.

JOE: Oh . . .

LORNA, *sadly*: He's a good guy, neat all over—sweet. I'll tell him tomorrow. I'd like a drink.

JOE: Let's drive over the Washington Bridge.

LORNA, *standing*: No, I'd like a drink.

JOE, *standing and facing her*: Lorna, when I talk to you . . . something moves in my heart. Gee, it's the beginning of a wonderful life! A man and his girl! A warm living girl who shares your room. . . .

LORNA: Take me home with you.

JOE: Yes.

LORNA: But how do I know you love me?

JOE: Lorna . . .

LORNA: How do I know it's true? You'll get to be the champ. They'll all want you, all the girls! But I don't care! I've been undersea a long time! When they'd put their hands on me I used to say, "This isn't it! This isn't what I mean!" It's been a mysterious world for me! But, Joe, I think you're it! I don't know why, I think you're it! Take me home with you.

JOE: Lorna!

LORNA: Poor Tom . . .

JOE: Poor Lorna! *The rest is embrace and kiss and clutching each other.*

THE GREAT WHITE HOPE

by Howard Sackler

ACT III, SCENE 3

The play is based on the life of the boxer Jack Johnson (Jack Jefferson in the play), the first black heavyweight champion. It takes place prior to and during the First World War. The story traces Jack's rise to the championship; his love affair with Ellie Bachman, a white woman; the various attempts by the boxing promoters, the government, and the public to destroy him; and finally, his capitulation to his enemies.

Jack's flamboyant, irreverent lifestyle, and the fact that he, a

black man, handily defeats each new "white hope," offends and enrages the powerbrokers in both boxing and government. A conspiracy is formed, false charges are brought against him, and Jack is forced to flee the country as a fugitive from the law. Frustrated at every attempt to earn a living, and threatened with a long imprisonment, Jack finally agrees to throw a championship fight for the promise of money and freedom.

The scene that follows is between Jack and Ellie. During the play we have seen them driven farther apart—by the poverty, by the need to constantly relocate, by her increasing weariness and Jack's increasing bitterness. They are now in Juárez, Mexico. Jack still has hope that he will receive a legitimate offer to fight. Ellie, all strength and hope gone, wants Jack to accept the bribe. The scene takes place in a barn, crudely set up as a training room for Jack.

ELLIE: Let them go ahead, Jack.

JACK: Take dem specs off. Ah cain hardly see ya.

ELLIE, *doing so*: I didn't think you wanted to.

JACK: You readin mah mine now?

ELLIE: Jack—

JACK: Ah toleya keep outa dis, din Ah?

ELLIE: I can't. Please, let them, you have to.

JACK: Finely battin fo do home team, huh?

ELLIE: Cable them tonight, please—

JACK: *Finely come roun to it—*

ELLIE: Jack, don't bitch me now—

JACK: Ah toleya—

ELLIE, *rises, goes center to bag*: No, I don't care! Forget what you told me! Say yes and get it over with for God's sake! You're letting them do this to you, it's worse—

JACK: Worse fo you, mebbe—

ELLIE: Jack, it's slow poison here, there's nothing else to wait for, just more of it. You've had enough, please, you're being paralyzed—

JACK: Wid you mebbe—

ELLIE, *hits bag, then goes to left end of table*. All right, yes, with me too, with everything but hammering that stupid bag there! You're not your own man any more—