

station, goddamn it, and gettin it blown back up.

**LEEDS:** Fine. And now that we've exchanged these little pleasantries, Ward, let's get down to it. I will bet you double or nothing on the five hundred you owe me that—

**WARD:** The five hundred I owe you . . .

**LEEDS:** Yes, Ward, the five hundred you owe me. And you either bet, pay up, or I'm going to murder you. *Leeds stands and casually crosses his arms, one hand going unseen beneath his shirt to the shoulder holster.* So, what'll it be? Will you bet, will you pay up, or will you be murdered?

**WARD, jocularly defiant:** Murdered. *Leeds draws the revolver from beneath his shirt, checks the cylinder to be sure the bullet is in the right chamber, and aims at Ward's face. Ward snorts and turns and strolls toward his toy box. Leeds alters his aim and fires at one of Ward's pictures, hitting one squarely between the eyes. Ward runs into the bedroom, slamming the door: Leeds!*

**LEEDS:** Hmm?

**WARD:** *Are you crazy? Wait! Are you waiting?*

**LEEDS:** Yes. Will you bet, pay up, or shall we see if a second shot can penetrate this cheap but fire-resistant beaverboard?

**WARD:** Pay up! Lemme get my checkbook.

**LEEDS:** Cash.

**WARD:** *Cash?* It's eight o'clock at night. Where am I gonna get five hundred cash?

**LEEDS:** Nowhere. So we'll bet.

**WARD:** You don't believe in betting.

**LEEDS:** I don't believe in absolutes either.

**WARD, opening the bedroom door a crack and peeking out:** Can I come out?

**LEEDS:** What do I care?

**WARD:** Uh, Leeds, how 'bout puttin the gun away?

**LEEDS:** It's empty.

**WARD:** Whudduya mean it's empty?

**LEEDS:** I only had one bullet.

**WARD:** Whudduya mean ya only had one bullet?

**LEEDS:** How many bullets does it take to kill someone?

**WARD, coming out of the bedroom. Compulsively defiant:** Evidently more than one. *Leeds suddenly points the gun at Ward's face again. Ward throws himself in terror against the wall. Leeds pulls the trigger. The gun clicks, empty.*

**LEEDS:** If I had wanted to kill you, Ward, you'd be dead; just as, if I ever *do* want to kill you, you *will* be dead.

**WARD:** I see, Leeds.

**LEEDS, indicating the hole in Ward's picture:** I certainly hope so. *Crossing to his desk.*

**WARD: (spotting the damage)** *Goddamn it, Leeds, I don't have the negative to that one. (his competitiveness coming to the fore, crossing to Leeds)* Okay. Okay, what's the bet—even though I don't owe you five hundred dollars?

**LEEDS, placing gun and holster in its hiding place on bookshelf:** The wager is double or nothing on the five hundred. The structure of the competition is this: We are *both* betting that you can seduce Honor Stevens. However, if within forty-eight hours after you've first been to bed with her, her husband makes an attempt on your life or kills you, you lose. If he makes an attempt on your life or kills you *after* forty-eight hours, you win. Are you game?

## HOGAN'S GOAT

by William Alfred

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### Act IV

Matthew Stanton was one of thousands of poor Irish immigrants who came to Brooklyn, New York, before the turn of the century. He had known the deep hunger and shame of poverty and made a vow to himself: "I'll fight my way to power if it kills me." The play begins in 1890, as Stanton is about to fulfill his consuming ambition. He is running for mayor of Brooklyn on a reform ticket, and has clear evidence of corruption against the incumbent—an old-line politician named Quinn. But Stanton, too, has secrets to hide: he did not marry his wife in a church service and was married before to a woman he never divorced—offenses that would certainly be considered more se-

rious to the Irish Catholic constituency than Quinn's twenty-thousand-dollar theft. During the play Quinn learns the truth about Stanton's past and goes to Stanton's wife with the certificate from the past marriage. Later, when she tries to leave Stanton, he, desperate to salvage the election, tries to stop her by pushing her down a flight of stairs. His intention was to sprain or break her leg, but she dies from the injuries. In the tragic last scene Stanton confronts the awful pain that his ambition inflicted on those who loved him.

The scene that follows is between Quinn and James "Palsy" Murphy, political boss of the City of Brooklyn. Stanton has called a meeting in which he intends to make public his evidence against Quinn unless Quinn immediately resigns his office. Murphy has called Quinn to a private room in Fogerty's Saloon to tell him that the party, in order to save face, must side with Stanton.

**QUINN:**

Does Matthew Stanton think he can oust me  
By hole-in-corner meetings in school halls,  
With craw thumpers and Sunday-pass-the-plates,  
Black Jack the plug and the ga-ga Parish Priest  
Both nodding yes to everything he says  
Like slobbering dummies?—What is it that he said?

**MURPHY:**

Do you want to hear?

**QUINN:**

Would I ask, James, if I didn't?

**MURPHY:**

Listen then. I have . . . full notes on it.  
I took down everything that Stanton said.

**QUINN:**

Read it. Read it. Do you want applause?

**MURPHY:**

No, Ned: attention. Here: "My dear old friends,  
When Father Coyne asked me to speak to you,  
He said it was about Ag Hogan's bills,

A gathering to help raise funds to pay them.  
I never thought the purpose of this meeting  
Would be political"—

**QUINN:**

"I never thought  
The purpose of this meeting"—Father Coyne!  
I roofed his sieve of a church and glazed it too;  
And put a tight new furnace in its cellar.  
There's not a priest you can trust!

**MURPHY:**

Will you listen, Ned!

**QUINN:**

I'm listening. Go on.

**MURPHY:**

"The Party of Reform"—

**QUINN:**

"The Party of Reform"! Ah, yes, reform!  
A Lutheran lawyer with a flytrap mouth  
And a four-bit practice of litigious Swedes  
In a closet rank as rats down by the river!  
A lecherous broker with a swivel eye  
You wouldn't trust with Grandma in a hack!  
A tear-drawers arm in arm with a gaping bollocks!

**MURPHY:**

Will you quit your interrupting!

**QUINN:**

Read on. Read on.

**MURPHY:**

"The Party of Reform has in its hands  
Sworn affidavits on the city books"—

**QUINN:**

Got by collusion and by audits forged  
As the certificates above their parents' beds!—

**MURPHY:**

"The Party of Reform has in its hands  
Sworn affidavits on the city books,

Drawn up from careful audit, and declaring  
A hidden deficit of fifteen thousand"—

QUINN:

Of fifteen thousand! The unfortunates!  
They couldn't even get that business right.  
It's twenty thousand, Palsy, if it's a cent! *Glum pause*  
I'm in the treasury for twenty thousand. *Pause*

MURPHY:

"You say they will expose us to the public,  
Unless we guarantee that Edward Quinn  
Resigns as candidate in the next election"—

QUINN:

See, that's Matt's game. He's out to get my job;  
But he's not the guts to grab it like a man.  
Will you listen to the cagey way he puts it:  
"You say they will expose us to the public!"  
As sneaky as a rat in a hotel kitchen.  
Don't you see the cunning of it, James? The craft?  
It's not my job he wants, but to save the Party!  
And all I did for him. I made him, James.  
I picked him up when he first came to me,  
Twelve years ago, when he was twenty-five  
And lost his job for beating up that grocer.  
He'd no knees in his pants; his coat was slick  
With grease as a butcher's thumb. He was skin and bones.  
I was sitting here in Fogarty's back room.  
With poor Ag Hogan coddling me, when he  
Burst in the door, and asked me for my help.  
"I'll do anything that's honest, Mr. Quinn,"  
Is what he says. He had that crooked grin—  
It reminded me of Patrick that's long dead,  
Patrick, my poor brother—

MURPHY:

Go on, now, Ned!  
Leave out the soft-soap. He'd a crooked grin  
You knew would serve you well among the women—

QUINN:

I should have said, "Go now, and scare the crows,

Raggedy-arse Keho; that's all you're good for!"  
But, no, there was that grin; and Ag said, "Take him."  
She loved him, the poor slob, from the day she saw him,  
Fat good it did her. "You can put him on  
With Judge Muldooney," says she; "take him, Ned,  
God will bless us for it. . . ." *Pause*  
Aggie's dead, James. Dead.

MURPHY:

Yes, Ned. She is.

QUINN:

Did Stanton get to see her? *Pause*  
Did he?

MURPHY:

Yes.

QUINN:

She wouldn't let me in. *Pause*

MURPHY:

I'm sorry, Ned.

QUINN:

And Stanton's high-toned wife?  
What did she say when she found out about them?

MURPHY:

She didn't, Ned. She knows that Ag helped Matt,  
But nothing else.

QUINN:

Ah, nothing else? I see.  
Where was I, Palsy?

MURPHY:

"All I done for him,"  
Fifth book, tenth chapter—

QUINN:

Go to hell, James Murphy.  
You think it's funny, do you? I'll give you fun.  
If it's jail for me, you know, it's jail for you.  
No hundred-dollar suits and fancy feeds  
With tarts in Rector's drinking cold champagne

From glasses bright as ice with hollow stems,  
But tea from yellowed cups and Mulligan  
Foul as the odds and ends they make it from.

**MURPHY:**

Sure, they'll send us puddings.

**QUINN:**

Are you mad, or what?  
I tell you, I'm in danger. I'm in danger.  
Don't shake your head. They're spoiling for the kill.  
It's in their blood.

**MURPHY:**

Whose blood?

**QUINN:**

Whose blood but our own.  
They turn upon the strong, and pull them down,  
And not from virtue, James, but vicious pride.  
They want to hold their heads up in this city,  
Among the members of the Epworth League,  
The Church of Ethical Culture and the Elks,  
That's why they're taking sides with Ole Olson,  
Or whatever the hell his name is, and that whore  
From Wall Street in the clean pince-nez. For thirty years  
I've kept their heads above the water, James,  
By fair means or by foul. Now they've reached the shore  
They'd rather not remember how they got there.  
They want to disown me. They're a faithless lot,  
And Matthew Stanton is the worst of all—  
Read on, why don't you? What's the matter with you?

*Pause*

**MURPHY:**

"I would not stand in this school hall before you  
If Edward Quinn had not, in his full power,  
Made of me what I am. I cannot think,  
Since you have shared his generosity  
As long as I, that you are asking me  
To help you pull him down"—

**QUINN:**

Good Jesus, James!

**MURPHY:**

"The way to cope with the Party of Reform's  
To raise the funds to make Quinn's deficit up.  
I pledge three thousand dollars, and I ask  
Each and every one of you who can  
To give as much as possible. Ned Quinn  
Must not live out his final days in jail  
Because he was too kindly to be wise"—

**QUINN:**

I want no handouts from the likes of him.  
Will he pity me?

**MURPHY:**

What's that?

**QUINN:**

You heard me, James.  
Will he pity me? Does he think I need his pity!  
I made him, and I can unmake him too,  
And make another in his place. I'm old,  
I'm far too old to live on charity.  
From a greenhorn that I picked up in a barroom  
To run my sweetheart's errands. Don't you see, James?  
He took Ag from me first; that's how he started.  
He ran her roadhouse for her. "He was handsome!  
He'd skin like milk, and eyes like stars in winter!"  
And he was young and shrewd! She taught him manners:  
What clothes to wear, what cutlery to begin with,  
What twaddle he must speak when introduced  
To the state bigwigs down from Albany.  
He told her that he loved her. She ditched me.  
I'm twenty years her senior. Then that day,  
That famous Labor Day three years ago.  
We'd a drink or two, you know, for old times' sake,  
And we passed out, and that bitch Josie Finn  
Found out about us, and brought Matt in on us,  
Our arms around each other like two children.  
And he spat on poor Ag's carpet, called her a whore,  
Me a degenerate. Three years ago.  
The very year he married this Kathleen,

The Lord knows who, James, from the Christ knows  
 where,  
 In some cosy hocus-pocus there in London,  
 To show Ag he could do without her. He never spoke  
 To Ag at all until he found her done for,  
 Dying lung by lung. He'd never speak to me at all  
 If I were not in trouble  
 Don't you see the triumph of it, Palsy Murphy!  
 He takes his vengeance in a show of mercy.  
 He weeps as he destroys! He's a crocodile—

**MURPHY:**

Ned, I . . .

**QUINN:**

Ned what?

**MURPHY:**

I hope you won't be hurt.  
 We on the Party board agree with Matt.  
 We feel the time has come for some new blood—

**QUINN:**

"We on the Party board agree with Matt!"  
 Now it comes out at last! It all comes out!  
 You and your pack of lies, your trumped-up story,  
 Pretending to be reading what he said  
 When you can't read a thing that hasn't pictures.  
 Did you think me such a boob I wouldn't know  
 What you and Walsh were up to here last night?  
 It made the rounds of the Ward by half past nine! *Pause*  
 Bismarck the diplomat! You goddamned fool,  
 Pouring that vat of soft-soap over me!  
 "Because he was too kindly to be wise!"  
 They'll soon be making you the editor  
 Of *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*.

**MURPHY:**

Now, Ned—

**QUINN:**

"Now, Ned." "Now, Ned." Shut up, or I'll drink your blood.  
 The only thing rang true in what you said  
 Was Stanton's offer to be noble to me. *Pause*

**MURPHY:**

I wanted to break it easy. Matt made no offer.  
 The Party it is will cover you on the books.  
 But on one condition, Ned: you must resign.

**QUINN:**

I must resign. We'll see who backs out first.  
 I didn't stay the mayor of this city  
 For thirty years by taking orders, James.  
 You tell the Party board I'll rot in prison  
 Before I'll let Matt Stanton take my place.  
 You tell the Party board I'll meet the debits  
 The Party of Reform found in the books.  
 You tell the Party board they'd best not cross me.  
 Don't look as if you think this all is blather.  
 There's not a one of you I can't get at,  
 You least of all. Remember that, James Murphy.  
 How long, do you think, that knowing what I know  
 About your money, James, and how you got it,  
 The Jesuit Fathers at St. Francis Xavier's,  
 With all their bon-ton notions of clean hands,  
 Would let your boys play soldier in their yard?  
 Don't glare like that at me. You tell the board  
 What I have said. I meant it, every word.

**MURPHY:**

The Party will disown you!

**QUINN:**

Let them try!  
 I'll grease the palm of every squarehead deadbeat  
 From Greenwood Cemetery to the Narrows  
 Who'll stagger to the polls for three months' rent,  
 I'll buy the blackface vote off all the fences  
 Down Fulton Street from Hudson Avenue.  
 I'll vote from every plot in Holy Cross  
 With an Irish headstone on it. I'll win this fight—

**MURPHY:**

I'll telegraph to Albany. I warn you!

**QUINN:**

Damn Albany! Get out of here. Get out!  
*Exit Murphy stage left.*