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Keeper of the Flame

By Donald Ogden Stewart

I bet a bright boy like you
could get me through this old gate...
...if you wanted to. Hmm?
Jeb?
Jeb, what are you doing?
Mr. Rickards,
I forgot to give you this yesterday.
I told you newspaper fellows yesterday.
Nobody gets inside.
That's Mrs. Forrest's orders.
Halt!
Left face!
Eyes left!
Heads front!
I'm sorry, gentlemen, no rooms.
No rooms, no baths.
No rooms, no...
- Stick close by, will you?
- Oh, yes, sir.
Still raining out, Bob?
- A slight drizzle.
- Oh, dear.
- Hello, Jane.
- Hello.
Steve. What in the wor...?
Steven O'Malley.
Oh, gee, let me...
Come over here
and let me take a look at you.
Oh, I can't believe it, Stevie.
Oh, imagine eating your heart
out for a guy for two years.
You see him, you don't even recognize him.
- Careful, I might take you seriously.
- Oh.
- Want coffee?
- No, thanks.
Get me a cup of coffee.
Plenty of cream and sugar.
Where I've been, you don't get cream
and sugar, you don't get coffee.
It's your eyes, that's what it is.
You've seen an awful lot over there,
haven't you, Stevie?

Is it that bad?
Were you in a concentration camp
or with the Berlin Press Bureau?
I'm still wondering, Jane.
Oh. Well, did it hurt much?
Jane, Jane, Jane. Did what hurt?
- When Hitler kicked you out?
- Oh, ha, ha. Hit...
Ha, ha.
- Thanks, good.
- Good old Janie, my, it's nice to see you.
- Oh, Stevie.
- How am I gonna get a room in this joint?
- Didn't you wire?
Tsk. Oh, Steven, honestly.
Come on, follow Grandma.
Uh, Mr. Arbuthnot,
guess what's happened?
The hot water doesn't run.
No, no, even worse than that.
My husband just arrived.
Uh, change the register to read
Mr. And Mrs. O'Malley, please.
Ha, ha. Come, darling.
Oh. Freddie, isn't it wonderful
to have Steve back?
Well, it's wonderful to have you back,
but not this wonderful.
- You're kidding about that Mrs. O'Malley?
- Of course, dear.
- Did you know he was coming?
- Mm-mm.
Nobody knows I'm back but the boss.
Got it.
I'll take your room, you move in with Steve.
Oh, fine. The five other men in my room
will welcome you.
Oh, great. Of course, Steven
we could get married...
...or use the room in shifts.
My best hours are from 3 to 10.
- Those are mine too.
- Oh.
- We better push along.

- Yeah, let's go.
Now, guard those with your life, sonny.
- Ah, O'Malley. How are you?
- Fine, Mr. Ambassador.
I thought they'd have chopped
your head off by now. I'm glad they didn't.
Oh, just a considerate guy.
He knows
when two people wanna be alone.
Oh, don't be silly.
He doesn't even know I'm alive.
Better come down from there, son.
You'll slip.
Come on, son. Come on down.
Come on.
Steady there. Now, you mustn't let it
get you like that.
If it hadn't been for me,
he'd be alive today.
Hey!
No news.
I've got it.
Thanks. Thanks very much.
Oh, boy, I'll say it was.
O'Malley. When did you get back?
Hello, stranger.
- Hello, Pat. You get a good one?
- Oh, not so hot, Steve.
No, never mind. I'll sit this one out.
Sit this one out?
What are you? A trained seal?
- I haven't got any whiskers.
Ha, ha.
I haven't got a deadline either.
- Oh, he's a journalist, not a newspaperman.
- I'm a prima donna.
- I'm sorry we got separated, Jane.
- Mm. How do you spell Frisbee? With a Y?
Oh. Thanks.
What's the matter, Stevie?
No more worlds to conquer?
- No more hot water to scramble out of.
- Oh.
Well, you might fall in love.

No. No, I think I'll dodge that.
I've had luck so far.
Oh. Tough guy, aren't you?
"The accident happened at 8:00
or thereabouts.
The coroner placed the washout

between 6:

Heh. Don't mind Freddie.
Ever since he helped the police,
he's taken to crime.
Doesn't believe
in honestly broken necks.
The bridge had been weakened
by the storm.
- Maybe.
You're not on the level, Freddie.
Could be anything.
Even suicide.
What's the difference?
He's gone, that's the real tragedy, isn't it?
In Europe, I watched
most of the decent things of life change.
But I could look across the Atlantic and see
Forrest standing here, firm as a rock...
...standing for things
that were decent and honest.
That's why I'm here,
to write the story of his life...
...so that we'd always have it to lean on
in the dark days ahead.
Thought it was gonna be easy
until I saw what he meant to these people.
I'm not so sure now.
It's tough on his wife.
She's got something to live up to.
- That's why I wanna see her.
What?
Get within 10 miles of
Mrs. Forrest, I'll give you the Pulitzer prize.
I'll do even more than that for you,
I'll marry Freddie.
Oh, no kidding, Steven.
That woman thought Robert Forrest

was to be locked up...
...in a safety-deposit vault.
The queen of Jericho.
Say, she's built the highest, thickest walls
of Jericho around that place.
- And you're no Joshua.
- Yeah, ha, ha.
Huh. A visitor.
Anything I can do for you?
Yes.
Mind your own business
as far as Mrs. Forrest is concerned.
I heard what you said.
Take a tip from me and keep off her track.
Try to have respect
for what she's going through.
Or it'll be my privilege
to knock your head off.
He's a big man.
I don't wanna have any trouble with him.
Gentlemen.
Gentlemen, excuse me. Pardon me.
Gentlemen, I have a few words
I'd like to say to the press.
Fine.
- Lf you'll go into the parlor...
About time we're getting news.
- You've been very kind, very patient.
Looks like a lead.
- You're the fabulous Steven O'Malley.
- My name is O'Malley.
I'm Clive Kerndon, Mr. Forrest's
private secretary for the past years.
Mr. Forrest was a great admirer
of your writing.
- He used to quote you a lot.
- Really?
Well, that's very nice.
Uh, I wonder if I could talk to Mrs. Forrest
after a day or two.
You're not going back?
I'd like to see her first.
How do you do?
Press conference will be in the parlor.

Well, it's been a very great pleasure,
Mr. O'Malley. If you'll just come this way.
All you do is blow your trumpet, Joshua,
and the walls of Jericho fall right down.

May I have a glass of water please?

Heh. These reporters are annoying,
aren't they?

Mr. Midford is Mrs. Forrest's cousin.

Oh. Oh, indeed.

Poor Mrs. Forrest.

I've wanted just to hold her hand...

...but, of course, I wouldn't have
the lack of taste to bother her.

Or you.

- Drunk?

- Not at all.

He was drinking ginger ale.

Oh, poor fellow.

He seems so overcome

by the family tragedy...

...that he didn't even go to the funeral.

I wonder why not.

Gentlemen, if it had been my say-so, I'd
have thrown open the gates of the estate...

...the moment the accident happened,
but...

But I was acting

under Mrs. Forrest's orders.

I've prepared a few brief biographical notes
that may help you.

Possibly in a week or so,

Mrs. Forrest might relent a bit.

Robert Brindley of the Tribune.

- A bully job you did on those labor hearings.

- Thank you.

No, Mr. Brindley, I'm afraid even you
will have to bow to Mrs. Forrest's...

...shall we say, unfortunate prejudices.

- Of course, the poor woman is not herself.

- I tried to get in a year ago.

Oh, yes, you're Martin Snow
of the Globe Syndicate.

I remember, your obituary of Mr. Forrest
was a masterpiece.

Your description of him
in the Argonne Offensive.

"That tattered scarecrow youth
standing in a sort of ecstasy of faith...
...against all the blazing powers of hell. "

Do I quote correctly?

Your description
of his men's superstitious belief...
...that as long as Robert Forrest remained
on his feet...

...no harm could come to them.

Your handling of the Forrest legend...

...his simple, homely,
Lincoln-like quality...

Well, gentlemen...

...I think I've known him
perhaps more intimately than most of you.

And I can say ecce homo.

That was Robert Forrest.

Now, gentlemen, if you'll excuse me.

You've been very patient.

We must be charitable and try to realize...

...people don't appreciate
the importance of newspaper men...

...as public servants in a democracy.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Mr. Kerndon.

Oh, Mr. Kerndon.

Mr. O'Malley.

Well, you will telephone, won't you?

I'll see what can be done, especially
for you, but frankly, I haven't much hope.

Goodbye.

Blow harder, Joshua.

Her Ladyship may be a little deaf.

So long. See you at the next meeting.

So long.

Have a nice day.

- Who says there's no taxi?

- How long to the station?

Twenty minutes.

- Lf you walk fast.

- Walk?

This is a taxi, isn't it?
- It's busy.
Busy about what?
Business, I guess.
How far is the station?
A nice brisk walk.
It will do you good, boys.
- What are you staying here for?
- Health. Marvelous place, wonderful walks.
I haven't walked since I was 2 years old.
I didn't like it then.
Hey, Joshua.
Jericho is that way.
Going somewhere?
I don't know. Are you?
Maybe.
Are you a snooper?
I don't stand for snoopers.
No.
Kind of a snooper. War snooper.
Oh, well,
you won't find any war around here.
You can come aboard if you want to.
Did you belong
to that Forward America Association...
...of Mr. Forrest's?
- They asked me to join.
I guess it's a good notion.
But I'm no joiner.
When I march,
I like to march my own pace.
And if I have to have a fight,
I like to pick it.
You said you had no wars.
Not in a manner of speaking...
...but there's always good and evil
up against each other.
A man's gotta take sides sooner or later.
You'll know that one of these days,
young fellow.
Good afternoon, Mr. Rickards.
I phoned you this morning.
It's no use.
Somebody was telling me that you served

under Mr. Forrest in the last war.
Mr. Forrest served under me. At first.
Oh, you were his top sergeant?
I was his captain.
Later, I became his gatekeeper.
Get that wound in the Argonne?
Yes, Mr. Forrest got a medal
for bringing me in.
And you've been with him
ever since, huh?
Yes, Mr. Forrest was very kind.
He believed in charity.
Come back in an hour.
What's the matter, son?
Anything I can do?
No.
Might be able to help you.
I cry sometimes myself.
I've seen a lot to cry about.
Where?
Oh, France. Poland.
Very few places
where you don't wanna cry. We're lucky.
That's what Mr. Forrest used to say
on the radio.
And I killed him. I killed him.
I should've warned him
about that mean old bridge.
But Dad wouldn't let me go out
in the storm.
I should've told him anyway...
...because I was Mr. Forrest's man.
Now I'm...
...nobody's.
Oh, no, that isn't. You're your own man.
And nobody would tell you that any quicker
than Mr. Forrest.
After all, dying isn't very important.
It's the way we live that really counts.
Don't you think that's it?
We've got to carry on for Mr. Forrest.
We don't wanna be slaves, do we?
Slaves?
That's what they're fighting for.

Oh, that was the Civil War.
There aren't any slaves now.
Not here maybe, but Europe's full of them.
It might be our turn next.
How?
Well, there are so many ways.
It would take me the rest of the day
to try to explain it to you.
But the general idea is that they try
to get us all confused and scared...
...and sore at each other...
...and then before you know it,
clamp, the handcuffs are on us.
Hmm.
Would they really put chains on me?
Not on your hands they wouldn't,
because you'd have to work for them.
The chains would be on your mind
and on your tongue.
Well...
...what are we gonna do about it?
We're not gonna let them kick us around,
are we?
You and I are free men today
because centuries ago...
...some guy got the idea in his head...
...he was just as good
as the fellow who was bossing him.
And what a fight that started.
- Who won?
- It's not over yet.
We lost a great fighter
when Mr. Forrest died.
But he's still watching us.
And he's still yelling at us to carry on.
That's what I'm trying to do, you see.
I'm trying to write his story...
...so that people will understand
that he's watching us.
And so that they'll still hear his voice.
Oh, let me read it, will you?
Well, I can't. I need some help on it,
and some people won't help me.
- Who?

- Mrs. Forrest, for instance.
- Who says so?
- She won't see me.
I bet she will when you tell her.
She loved Mr. Forrest.
I don't know. I can't get into the grounds.
And she won't answer the telephone.
I know she's there.
- Do you wanna see her now?
- Yes.
Come on.
This is my secret way.
You won't tell anybody, will you?
- I promise.
- Promise this way:
"On my oath
as a true soldier for America...
...in the Robert Forrest Boys Army,
I promise. "
That's our oath.
On my oath as a true soldier
in the Robert Forrest Boys Army, I promise.
For America.
For America.
Come on.
Hello?
I, uh...
Nobody answered the doorbell.
That's a lie. I didn't ring the doorbell.
I couldn't find it. I just walked in.
I'm sorry. I'm very sorry.
Who are you?
I'm Steven O'Malley. I'm a writer.
Steven O'Malley is in Germany.
I came back
just shortly before Mr. Forrest's death.
I'd written Mrs. Forrest several notes,
and I'd like to see her for...
Not necessarily tonight.
I had visioned an older man.
I am Christine Forrest.
I had visioned...
I'm terribly sorry to do this to you,
Mrs. Forrest, but I, uh...

A friend of your husband's told me
you might be glad to see me.
The gatekeeper's boy.
- Poor little Jeb.
- Yes.
Yes, he seems to think
that he killed, uh...
Because he didn't warn him
about the bridge.
Boys loved Mr. Forrest.
I've had letters, sweet letters,
heartbreaking letters.
He was the light of their eyes.
It seems that the light has gone out.
No, no. It burns brighter than ever.
It must always burn. We must see to that.
- We?
- Yes, all of us.
All of us who were guided by that light,
who drew warmth from the flame.
- And you can protect that flame.
- I tried to.
Well, let us help you. You're not alone.
That's what I've come here to tell you.
I tried.
I had wondered
if you spoke as you wrote.
I speak as I feel,
and I feel very deeply about this.
- What do you want from me?
- The life of Robert Forrest.
I can't give it to you.
It's been taken away.
- There are things you could tell me.
- What would you like?
The sound of his laugh?
The touch of his hand?
I'm sorry.
I'll go now.
- Tomorrow perhaps?
- I don't understand you, Mr. O'Malley.
I don't see why I should talk to you.
I've seen you five minutes.
I don't know you, anything about you.

I wish you would go.
Funny, I've seen you five minutes,
and I feel I know you very well.
I appreciate what you're trying to do
for Mr. Forrest.
I regret
that I shall not be able to help you.
Good night, Mr. O'Malley.
Good night, Mrs. Forrest.
Did you send for O'Malley?
No, a friend sent him.
But I'm glad he came.
He has a wonderful face,
so honest and frank.
He'd be a valuable friend.
I heard what he asked you.
Then you heard what I answered.
That wasn't very wise, either.
He won't bother to come back,
if that's what you're worried about.
Having opened the door
to a man like Steven O'Malley...
...you can't slam it in his face.
It wouldn't be wise.
- It's been done.
- You must open it again, and invite him in.
- Why?
- The man's no fool.
He'll think you're trying to hide things.
He's dedicated to writing a book,
a memorial to your husband's memory.
If you refuse your appreciation, your help,
he'll start wondering why.
I think Mr. O'Malley understands
that I have no heart for further publicity.
But this is different.
He's not writing a gossip column.
- What do you want me to do?
- Help him. Guide him. Use him.
- The opportunity's past.
- Then you must make another, at once.
You realize that you should?
Perhaps.
- May I have Mr. Forrest's keys?

- What do you want with them?

He left me instructions to destroy sealed envelopes in the event of his death.

- What was in them?

- I've no idea, naturally.

Naturally.

That was in the event of my death too.

He talked to me about those envelopes.

I'll see to them myself.

- Wasn't that the cousin?

- He's a little of everything.

Cousin, gambler, high-stepper, motorbike rider, farmer.

Mostly motorbike rider.

That is why the bank's selling his farm from under him next week.

Banks ain't interested in motorbike riding.

Didn't Forrest take him in hand?

- What, him?

- What's on your mind?

When Forrest was alive, that young fellow wasn't allowed inside those gates.

- Why not?

- I would think...

...it was because Forrest didn't want him in there.

- Your wife was asking for you.

- Thank you.

Well, Joshua,

how were the walls of Jericho?

Not so difficult.

You saw her?

Well, come on, give. What was she like?

- Mm... You know.

- No, frankly, I don't.

- Is she what you expected?

- A little younger.

- Oh. What was she wearing?

- Wearing a sort of a hairdo.

Ha, ha, ha. How nice.

She possibly had something else on?

Hmm?

- What was she wearing, dope?

White, I think. Yes, it was white.
Hmm. Widows sometimes wear black.
This was white. Soft, creamy white.
Dress? Blouse? Suit?

- Uh, nightgown?

- Dress.

A dress. A white dress.

Zipper or buttons?

Why don't you go back to New York?

And leave this fascinating place
right at the height of the season?

Uh-uh.

- Freddie go to bed?

- Yes, we're alone at last.

Heh. That's wonderful.

I guess horn-blowing
is a pretty fair-sized job, eh, Joshua?
You look all shot to pieces.

Good night, sugar.

Good night.

Stevie, anyway,

you've got a room of your own.

I told Mr. Arbuthnot you snored
and I'm getting a divorce.

I must say, he seemed very upset
about it.

Uh, tell me, Mr. Arbuthnot,
do you know Mrs. Forrest personally?

Mrs. Forrest is a wonderful woman.

Yes. Yes, I'm sure.

- Have you ever seen her?

- Yes.

Well, tell me about it.

Was there a strange, eerie music,
like something not of this Earth?

Did she float by on a cloud
or just rise out of the middle of a lake?

- Good evening, Mr. Arbuthnot.

Mrs. Forrest.

I wanna thank you for that beautiful
message you sent with your flowers.

Well, you know how I feel...

How we all feel about...

Is there something I can do for you?

I wonder if you'd find out whether
Mr. Steven O'Malley has come in yet.
I'll call him.
You mind waiting in the parlor?
Not at all. Thanks.
Come in.
What do you want?
Hello.
Hmm?
Oh, really? She's downstairs? Hmm.
Well, tell her to take her boots off.
I'll be right down.
You bore me.
Hello.
What...?
She's...
Oh, I'm so... I'm very sorry.
Yes, I'll be right down.
What is it, Steve? Some bad news?
No, no.
Just somebody downstairs wants to see me.
Oh, how friendly.
- Do I need a shave?
- Well, it depends. If it's a man...
- Well, it's not a man.
- I've got it, it's a woman.
Well, your trousers need pressing. They look
as though you'd fallen into something.
You haven't, have you, Stevie?
You're a clever little snooper, aren't you?
No, that's just it.
If I were clever, I'd stop kidding myself
and marry Freddie.
Hey. Listen...
I hope you'll admit that it's a woman's
privilege to change her mind, Mr. O'Malley.
Sometimes even her duty.
That's what I began to feel
after I sent you away.
You're going to help me?
It seems to be the only way that I can show
my appreciation of what you're trying to do.
You thought it strange, perhaps,
that I refused before.

No, no. I didn't think it was strange.
I thought, uh...
Tell me.
Well, I thought you'd been hurt,
and I, uh...
You're sensitive.
You're too sensitive
to be hurt any more...
...by being made to talk about things
you don't wanna talk about yet.
I was right. You are kind.
You did understand.
Then that's how it was?
Yes, that's how it was.
And afterwards, I began to think...
Well, you're not the sort of man one opens
the door to and then closes it in his face.
You have the right to close the door
on anyone you choose.
You seem to make all the excuses
for me.
I don't think any are necessary.
I'm glad you changed your mind, though.
Well, I've made a beginning. Here are some
pictures which have never been published.
I thought they might interest you.
I took most of them myself
just after we were married.
This is interesting.
That's one of the crowds...
...that used to collect outside the hotels
wherever we went.
I know this place.
It's in Germany, isn't it?
Yes, I went to school there.
I wanted Robert to see it.
Even there he was known,
as well as all over France.
And the crowds loved him.
Crowds always loved him.
Wanted to be near him.
Sometimes they'd reach out to touch him...
...with a curiosity as though
to find out what he was made of.

Here he is on a horse.
He could ride with the best.
I myself used to wonder
what made him so different...
...so much stronger than other men.
Did you ever find out?
Yes, he willed it.
And whatever he willed, he could do...
...whether it was taking a strange horse
over a fence or...
Or taking a hill in the Argonne.
Yes.
Whatever it was, whatever he willed,
he could do.
Um, these are some notes
which I made listening...
...to some impromptu speeches of his,
which have never been published.
Well, these are fine, they're...
They're fine...
...but documents and photographs
are not really what I want.
What I want is, uh...
Yes?
The truth.
The truth, as you know it,
about the man himself.
Well, that's what I'm trying to give you.
And you have, you have.
For a moment, I thought I saw him...
...the crowd surging toward him,
the lovers' pilgrimage to your old school.
But he's not here.
Perhaps if you just talked
and let me listen...
...and later on, let me wander
through the rooms in which he lived...
...I could get to know the man
I want to write about.
Will you come tomorrow afternoon?
I shall be glad to see you.
Thank you.
Good night, Mr. O'Malley.
- Good night.

Of course they're cousins.

Cousins frequently console each other
in grief.

Hmm? What did you say?

Shh.

I think I hear Mr. Forrest
turning over in his grave.

Good afternoon.

If you're looking for papers,
we don't get them till tonight.

- No, I'm looking for a junior-sized football.

- Oh, yeah.

Let me see.

Oh. Oh, yes, right here.

Dollar and a quarter.

- Thank you.

- Thank you.

Midford Farm.

Yes, Mrs. Forrest's cousin.

I should have taken that down.

Sale's off. Young Midford paid mortgage.

Everybody in town's wondering
where on Earth he got his money.

Cousins frequently pay
each other's mortgages.

- I, uh, like the cut of you, young man.

- Thank you.

Like you better

if you minded your own business.

Robert Forrest's life is my business
from now on.

I would think it was his own.

He's dead.

Dead man can't rightly defend himself.

Oh, I'm not attacking him.

Step into places you don't belong,
you never know what'll come of it.

Look out!

Close.

Hi, doc.

My brakes ain't working very good.

- So I see.

- Lucky you was here.

- I might have run into something.

- Any damage, doctor?

Oh, minor contusions
and slight abrasions.

Nothing serious.

I'm Dr. Fielding.

You're the newspaperman.

That's right, doctor. How's Jeb?

A little fever.

- It's more mental than anything.

- I'll run in and see him.

Looks better than ever.

Yeah? Well, I'm glad you think so, Orion.

What do I owe you for the improvement?

Gratis. Gratis. Glad to oblige.

- Who's sick?

- Young Jeb.

Well, I don't feel so good myself.

Last night I didn't sleep good at all.

Sort of ached all up here
and all down around here...

...and I have sort of a sore throat.

Tongue's coated, ain't it?

- Feverish too. No appetite at all.

- Well, take this in a glass of water tonight.

Now, wait a minute, doc.

I ain't coming to you professionally.

Oh, I know it, Orion.

We happened to meet and you happened
to get talking. There'll be no charge.

Why, thanks, doc.

And say...

...my old lady ain't feeling
so good either.

No? Well, that's too bad.

- Looks pretty hopeless, don't it?

- Yeah.

You're as bad as Mrs. Forrest.

We played three games last night
and I beat her every time.

She play chess too?

Yes, and she's fine when she's got her
mind on it, but she has her bad days too.

Does she come here often?

No, I go to the big house, usually, and we

have sponge cake and hot chocolate.
She came here last night
because I was sick.
She used to come and see my sister
when she was sick too.
She treats everybody swell.
Check.
Ah, you're too good for me.
You win. I give up.
Um, what were you gonna tell me
about your sister and Mrs. Forrest?
Well, I said my sister was sick a long time.
She was Mr. Forrest's secretary...
...and Mrs. Forrest used to come
and bring her fruit and flowers and things.
That's her picture.
Oh.
Very pretty.
Where is she now?
Why, she's in a...
She went away.
Oh, to get married?
No.
Mrs. Forrest gave me my chess set too.
Oh, did she really?
Hello.
May I speak to Mrs. Forrest, please?
This is...
Oh, I wouldn't have recognized your voice,
Mrs. Forrest.
This is Steven O'Malley.
Steve O'Malley?
O'Malley?
Are you a friend of Robert's?
I don't understand.
Is this Mrs. Forrest I'm speaking to?
- Hello, Mrs. Forrest.
- You can't speak on that phone.
It hasn't been working
since the cloudburst.
I just talked to someone
who said she was Mrs. Forrest.
That's old Mrs. Forrest.
Old Mrs. Forrest?

You know, Mr. Forrest's mother.

No, I don't know.

Next time you wanna use phone, ask me.

- Where does Mr. Forrest's mother live?

- Up the other side of the big house.

- On the grounds here?

- Yes, this is a party line.

Oh, the storm didn't put her line
out of order?

No, that was the only one that wasn't.

I could have ran to the big house.

You stop that.

Nobody could have gone out in that storm.

I could've gone to the bridge, warned him.

I could've stopped him from going over.

He'd be alive today if I had!

Stop worrying yourself sick, son.

- It's my fault. I failed him. I failed him.

It's my fault.

You stop that and lie down.

I should have gone without asking you.

Hear that?

What's the good of talking to him?

Please lie down.

Come on, now, Jeb.

You heard what your dad said.

Remember, he's the first in command.

You've got to obey him.

Mr. Forrest and Mrs. Forrest

would expect that of you.

Oh, all right.

Attaboy.

I'll come back and play chess with you
another day. Next time, I'll beat you.

- Bye.

- Bye.

Um, uh...

Thank you, sir.

I'll get your car for you.

I don't remember ever hearing anything
about Robert Forrest's mother.

No, I guess not.

You've seen terrible things.

I've seen terrible men.

Uh... I'm trying to explain to you...
...why I, uh, won't be able to spare you.
I'll have to pry and probe and force my way
into places where I don't belong.
And I'll have to soak myself
in his way of life.
Which is a way of life
that's entirely strange to me.
Even this house. L...
I've never lived as graciously
and beautifully as this.
I've always sort of bummed around
in hall bedrooms...
...and air-raid shelters and places.
I'm a little lost.
I'm lost too.
I've got to find my way.
At first I thought I'd keep everything
just as he left it...
...but I see now that was wrong.
Nothing can stay as we leave it.
All we can hope is that someone who loves
us will put away our playthings tenderly.
And our follies and our failures too.
Yes, and those.
- Christine, I came as soon as I dared...
I was expecting you.
This is my cousin, Geoff Midford.
Steven O'Malley.
We've met.
I promised to knock his head off if I caught
him making a nuisance of himself.
- Do you want me to throw him out?
- Don't be foolish, Geoff.
Mr. O'Malley's here because I asked him.
All right, only it deprives me
of a pleasure.
Here are the recordings
of the convention...
...at which he was almost nominated
for the presidency.
He must have been
very much disappointed.
On the contrary, his attitude was, "If the

people want me, I'll be glad to serve. "

But secretly, he was delighted
to get back to his own business.
And his devoted wife.
And his devoted wife, of course.
Who hated Mr. Forrest?
- Hated Robert Forrest?
- Yeah.
What do you wanna go
and get a divorce for?
Look, I've been married 32 years
and never a cloud.
Never a cloud.
A happy marriage is the most beautiful thing
in the world...
...and besides, you save 2.50
on that extra room.
Good evening, everybody.
Good evening, dear.
Well, you look as happy as though
you'd discovered a body in a trunk.
Better than that.
For instance?
O'Malley, the great reporter.
O'Malley, the blower-downer
of the walls of Jericho.
Oh, come on, Freddie, tell us.
Robert Forrest isn't really dead.
- Oh, he's dead, all right.
Hmm.
But his mother isn't.
Well, go on.
- He had a mother.
- So did Whistler.
Yeah, but we knew about her.
And I knew
about Robert Forrest's mother.
- Have you seen her?
- Not yet.
A deputation
from the Forward America Union...
...Youth Section.
Hello, boys and girls.
I'm from the New York Recorder.

I think there are things
you young people could say...
...that our readers
would like to know about.

- Oh, but...

- We don't feel much like talking tonight.
Mrs. Forrest wouldn't see you, would she?
We don't blame her, but...

- We did want her to have our flowers.

- And our formal expression of sympathy.

- He's an artist.

- Show it to the lady, Tim.

It's all done by hand.

Well, let's see.

Well, this looks like something
from the Morgan Library.

Uh, your movement sprung up overnight.
I've heard the experts trying to dope out
who did such a fine job of organizing.
They're wrong.
There's been no organizing.

- It just happened.

- Like it was needed.

Yes. When Robert Forrest spoke
in Denver two years ago...
...he mentioned he'd like young people
to write him their views.

- So some of us did.

- Yes.

His secretary wrote back thanking us
and suggesting we get together.
And you did.

- Sure, we formed a kind of a club.
Down in Alabama, we got our chapter
together the same way...
...when he said over the radio he liked
hearing from boys and girls still in school.
And we started our chain in Oregon, too,
from us writing and him writing back.

Oh. And you came
from all parts of the country to...
To place a wreath of laurel on his grave...
...which we're aiming to do tomorrow.
He cared about the world,

the whole world.
And now he's gone.
And nobody cares.
You'd think she'd care enough,
just because he did...
...to have let us give her some flowers.
And our formal expression of sympathy.
Oh, I don't blame you, of course...
...but if you could see their faces,
I'm sure you'd know what I mean.
Yes, I do know what you mean,
but I can't possibly see them tomorrow.
No, no, it's impossible.
I wish you'd explain to them
how sorry I am.
Thank you. Good night.
Oh, Geoff,
I haven't the heart to see those children.
If I could only rest.
Sleep, sleep and not dream.
My poor dear,
I'm asking too much of you.
No.
No, we'll do as we planned.
Get the car.
Is Mrs. Forrest home?
I've been asked to tell you...
John, who's there?
It's you, Mr. O'Malley. Do come in.
I've been trying to prepare
the ground for you.
I have here the notes
regarding the branches...
...of Mr. Forrest's
Forward America movement.
There's a branch in every town and village
throughout the country...
...devoted tirelessly
to the true American spirit.
It represents... How shall I say?
- A passionate desire for all those
who represent true Americanism.
Mrs. Forrest has asked me
to show clippings of his speeches.

They're magnificent, Mr. O'Malley.
You'll enjoy them,
but, of course, you'll miss his voice.
I have here various speeches
before Chambers of Commerce.
Mr. O'Malley, this will interest you,
letters from boys and girls all over America.
It might be better
if I talk to Mrs. Forrest first.
I'm afraid that's impossible.
- These letters are extraordinary...
- Why is it impossible?
Really, the element of time must enter
into your calculations, I should think.
- What does that mean?
- Last night, Mrs. Forrest left on a little trip.
- For how long?
- It was quite sudden. Several days, I expect.
Oh, this will interest you. Do sit down.
It's a record of their marriage.
Which was a very happy one, huh?
The answer to that, in political parlance,
would be a rousing affirmative.
Political parlance, huh?
- You dabble around much in politics?
- Oh. Politics?
Oh, no, no, my talents don't run
along those lines, I'm afraid.
Well, I think I'll leave you to get to work.
I think you'll find everything you want here.
What about Robert Forrest's mother?
About her?
Why, she has her own establishment
on the grounds.
Yes, I know. I talked to her.
You talked to her?
Yeah, just for a minute on the phone.
I imagine she might be quite helpful.
Oh, I'm afraid that's impossible. You see,
Mrs. Forrest is very old and an invalid.
- Doctor, I've got the medicine for Jeb.
- Come around to the other gate.
How is he?
- He had a bad night. He's better now.

Let me see.
What seems to be his trouble, doctor?
The longer I live,
the more I suspect man having a soul...
...that's at the bottom
of most of his bellyaches.
He seems pretty little
to have soul trouble.
Bugs have no sporting instinct.
They go for the little fellows.
So it's a bug.
Well, a fever, anyway.
Hero fever, I call it.
Very modern. Ever since we've been
getting out of touch with God...
...we've been pushovers for it.
And the young get it the worst of all.
Indicating Robert Forrest?
Yes. Yes, he was the hero.
And Jeb is a high-strung,
sensitive little fellow, like his sister.
Was she a patient of yours?
Up to a point.
What was wrong with her, doctor?
Well...
If you know what a nervous breakdown is...
I don't.... She had it.
Robert Forrest had her sent
to a sanitarium.
I suppose he felt partly responsible.
- You mean she was in love with him?
- No, no.
You don't fall in love with a god,
you just worship.
Wear yourself out.
Oh, not Forrest's fault.
There was only one woman in his life,
Christine Forrest.
But that's what he did to other women.
And everyone else.
Well, some of us held out.
Now, if you want to do me a great favor...
...you'll close your eyes...
...and count sheep jumping a fence

at least up to a hundred.
I know, you just want me to go to sleep.
But I'd do anything you asked.
One, two, three, four...
...five, six, seven...
...eight, nine, 10, 11...
I brought the medicine for Jeb.
Thank you.
I've disappointed you, haven't I?
Well, you haven't been much help yet.
Are you angry with me?
I was mad, yes.
But after I saw you, I...
You thought I'd promised to help you,
then gone away and left you in the lurch.
I didn't run away, Mr. O'Malley.
Whatever happens, life won't stop for you.
There are things that must be done.
Oh, that's all right.
I had no reason to resent anything.
My questions could wait.
Are there many of them?
Quite a number.
Couldn't you...?
Couldn't you ask Mr. Kerndon?
I could, but there are some
I wouldn't like to ask him.
I'm afraid you're rather exacting.
I think I hear my car.
After all, it was your idea
that I come up here.
Naturally, I expected to ask questions.
- Naturally.
- For instance, about Mr. Forrest's mother.
She can tell you nothing.
Uh, Mrs. Forrest is very old.
She's been an invalid for years.
- Nobody sees her.
- That's what the secretary told me.
But I talked to her.
Just for a second on the phone.
Really?
If you'd care to come up to the house...
...I'll try to tell you anything

you want to know.
We're leaving now, Jason.
Jeb's agreed to sleep...
...but if he should get restless,
his medicine's on the table.
That's fine.
He's been like Janet all over again.
It scared me.
They're putting the telephone lines
underground.
Maybe they won't blame me
next time the lines go out...
Nobody blames you, Jason.
Jeb does.
In spite of the fact that I got an answer up
at the old lady's house.
They should've warned Mr. Forrest.
They were closer.
It does no good to think about that now.
No, I suppose not.
He saved my life.
I'd never thanked him for that...
...but I didn't wish him dead either.
All right, you can go on now.
- You were startled at what Jason said.
- Kind of.
Something left over from shell shock.
He was really devoted to Mr. Forrest.
No, thank you.
What is that stone building?
Is that, uh...? Is that an old fort?
Yes, built about 1745.
Built without windows
against the Indians, huh?
That's what Robert loved about it,
nobody to look in on him...
...when he wanted to be alone.
He called it his arsenal of ideas.
- Mind if I look in sometime?
- Not at all.
I must try to find where Robert left the key.
He always kept it locked.
How do you do?
- Oh. Will you look after Mr. O'Malley?

- Yes. Did you have a pleasant trip?
- Very.
- I'd like my dressing case from the car.
- How's the biography?
I've written three words in as many days.
It'll go quicker now
that Mrs. Forrest is back, I'm sure.
- Oh, will you excuse me a moment?
- Yes.
Why didn't you leave the key?
I could've taken care of everything.
- I'll tell you when I've decided what to do.
- You'll tell me?
Thank you.
That was his finest speech. In the
recording, you miss his great personality...
...his picturesque figure emphasizing
dramatically the simplest statement...
...driving his thoughts
into the minds of people.
None could withstand him.
You're not bad yourself.
You really should take up politics
as a career.
You're joking.
My job's nearly finished here.
If you happen to know
of any secretarial positions...
Why, Gregg, Wier and Perkins
ought to have something for a man like you.
What do they do?
They're an advertising firm.
They manufacture rousing affirmatives.
If you wanted to create a nice feeling
in the minds of the public about someone...
...say, Mrs. Forrest for example...
...Gregg, Wier and Perkins would plant
little articles in the newspaper...
...about what a helpful wife she was,
and so forth.
Before long, the public would give her
a rousing affirmative.
That's rather clever, isn't it?
Mm. A little sad too.

It's a pity
how easily people can be fooled.
Uh, what is that stone building
over there?
It's the arsenal, hasn't been used
for anything but a storehouse.
Um, maybe Mrs. Forrest decided
to take a little rest.
I think I'll take a stroll.
Long distance? New York. Circle 50598.
Yes.
Mr. Kerndon, sir.
No, no, no, not yet.
There's no need to worry, sir.
She's in there now.
Yes, sir.
I know my duty.
I know what must be done.
Nothing will prevent my doing it.
Did you get restless, Mr. O'Malley?
I seem always to be apologizing
for wasting your time.
But as we drove by, I remembered...
I remembered something
that I should have destroyed.
- Before the biographer could see it?
- Before anyone could see it.
They were personal letters written to me
by Robert...
...in the early days of our marriage.
Whenever he was away,
he never failed to write.
You may be robbing the world
of some great love letters.
They weren't written to the world,
they were written to me.
Now, you keep this bandage soaked
with liniment, Piggot.
Yes, sir.
There, that ought to help you, Diana.
- You think she'll be all right?
- I won't be able to say for a day or two.
We have to be versatile in the country.
Last week, I put a splint on a rabbit.

- What's wrong with the mare?
- She pulled a tendon.
- Bad?
- Well, likely, she'll have to be fired.
What do you mean by galloping that mare
after she cast a shoe?
Worse, she was galloping with a shoe
half off. That's when the trouble came in.
How far did you gallop her
before she went lame?
I don't remember.
The storm frightened Diana
and she bolted.
Was that the night of?
Yes, the night Robert was killed.
It was a bad day all around.
I wish you'd phoned
from Mr. Forrest's mother's house...
...for the station wagon.
- I tried to, but the line was out of order.
Were you at the mother's house when...?
Just before the accident?
Yes, I came from there.
Yeah, it was a sad trick of fate
that Diana bolted.
If she hadn't, I could have come
by the shortcut and seen the bridge...
...then I should have warned Robert.
Professionally speaking, I'm more worried
about you than I am the mare.
Why don't you take our young friend
for a ride? Do you both good.
- He knows quite a bit about horses.
- I'd like to go.
I'll get you some things.
Have Kay and Boots saddled after lunch.
Yes, ma'am.
- Thank you for helping us.
- Bye, doctor.
- So long, my boy.
- No use running away from things.
- No?
Robert's death is always on your mind,
as it is on mine.

We might as well talk about it.
It seems awful to think that if it hadn't
been for Diana, you might have seen...
That the bridge was dangerous?
Or that someone had helped
make it dangerous.
Why should you think that?
Why should anyone think it?
Because there are always little fellows
who are willing to tear a great man down...
...in one way or another.
You're hinting at someone.
If it's Geoffrey, it's terrible.
I didn't mention his name.
But you knew that he and Robert
hated each other.
I knew that Midford had had his troubles.
You made an accusation.
No, I didn't.
I simply said that it's not unbelievable...
...to suppose that someone who hated
or feared or envied your husband...
...might have given that cloudburst
a helping hand, that's all.
You asked me to be honest with you,
to tell you what I believe and what I think.
I tell you I don't like it.
I've come across barriers. If I tear them
down, I don't know what might happen.
To whom?
To you.
What do you want of me?
Your trust.
I did trust you.
Even in this short time,
I'd come to think of you as a friend.
His friend.
I thought we were working together
so that he could go on living...
...long after you and I were forgotten.
That's what you offered me.
What's gone wrong?
That's what I'm asking you.
Isn't that his mother's house?

Yes.

The storm won't hold off much longer.

I'd like you to take me up there.

I'd like to meet her.

I'm going this way.

I wish to see Mrs. Forrest.

- You wish to see Mrs. Forrest?

- Yes.

She's resting.

Uh, you've come to the wrong house.

You know, Mrs. Robert Forrest lives
three or four miles from here.

Yes, I just came from there.

- Mrs. Forrest sent for you?

- Well, in a way, yes.

Well, there's some mistake, sir.

I'll speak to the housekeeper.

Come in quickly

or they'll tell you I'm resting.

Close the door, please. There's a draft.

I hope you'll excuse

my not remembering your name.

Steven O'Malley.

- Mrs. Forrest, you shouldn't be...

- That's enough, Mrs. Taylor.

Mr. O'Malley has come to call on me.

- But, Mrs. Forrest, you shouldn't...

- I'll ring when I want you.

- But, Mrs. Forrest...

- You understand me?

Yes, Mrs. Forrest.

Poor Mrs. Taylor.

She doesn't remember sometimes
that she's only a servant.

- Please, Mr. O'Malley.

- Thank you.

Oh. Oh, thank you.

You're... You're one of Robert's friends?

I'm one of his greatest admirers.

How nice.

- Robert's dead, you know.

- Yes. Yes, I know.

We've had quite a bit of rain lately,
haven't we?

Yes.

I understand there was quite a cloudburst
the night of the...

Uh, the other night.

The other night?

Oh, yes. Yes, you mean the night

Robert was murdered?

Are you one

of Robert's business associates?

Uh, no, no. I'm a writer.

A writer?

How interesting.

Do you write plays?

Well, I have written a couple, yes.

They weren't very successful.

You must write a play about my son.

I want someone to write a play
about my son...

...and tell the truth about his death.

I'll help you.

Well, thank you. That's very nice of you.

I'll go now, Mrs. Forrest.

Sorry I disturbed you.

Oh, no. No, please don't go. I like you.

Where's Robert?

Come in, my dear.

We'll leave now, Mrs. Forrest. Come on.

This was your idea.

Stay and satisfy yourself.

Mr. O'Malley is a writer.

I don't suppose he told you
that he writes for newspapers.

We're going to write a play together.

Aren't we, Mr. O'Malley?

Did he tell you that?

Robert always said
you were a very good actress.

Perhaps we could get her to act
in our play.

We can talk about that later, Mrs. Forrest.

Come on.

Oh, no. No, don't go.

I so seldom get to see anyone.

Christine doesn't want me

to see anyone, do you?
Perhaps we could come back
and see you some other time, Mrs. Forrest.
Are you married, young man?
Robert oughtn't to have married either.
I warned him.
"She'll pull you down," I said.
Tell my son I want to see him.
Robert's gone away on a long trip.
Why didn't you let him say goodbye to me?
He always said goodbye to me.
He'd kiss me and say,
"I'm going to find new worlds, Mother. "
I knew what that meant.
He was like another great man...
...Alexander, he called him.
You're his sort.
You wouldn't let silly women's notions
get in your way.
Most women spoil your life,
pull you down.
That's what I always told my son.
Mr. O'Malley is a stranger.
He doesn't understand.
He ought to know the truth...
...what my son had to fight,
even in his own home.
I like you, young man.
You're not the sniveling,
whining, puppy type...
...like that Midford
that used to cling to Christine's skirts.
Robert hated him too.
Yes, Robert.
I want Robert. I want my son.
Please try to understand.
He's gone away for a long time.
That's Robert.
Setting out for new worlds to conquer.
Mrs. Forrest,
let me help you to your chair.
I was a cook, and I had a son.
Now I've got a bigger house
than the people I used to cook for.

That's what my son did for me.
Big people have big houses...
...and little people work for them.
Yes, Robert, I'm listening.
I was listening the other afternoon,
but she had the telephone.
Why didn't she warn you, Robert?
That's not true.
Somebody warned her.
Even through the thunder,
I heard them say:
"Tell Mr. Forrest the bridge is down. "
But she didn't tell him.
- She didn't tell him.
- I left before the storm broke.
You or Mrs. Taylor must have taken
the message. Anyhow, it was too late.
Was it too late...
...if you'd driven back
the way you always went, over the bridge?
I couldn't. My horse bolted.
Men like Robert aren't killed by accident.
They're stabbed in the back.
Where are you, Robert?
I want... I want my...
I want my son.
See what you've done?
I want my son.
I want my... I want my son. My son.
Will it please your readers to know
that Robert's mother hated his wife?
You can add an insane mother
to your story. Satisfied?
No. In our profession, we cherish
a rather absurd ambition.
- We like to tell the truth.
- No price is too high for a story.
I owe that to people
who read the stuff I write.
But if what you told them
broke their hearts?
I can't be the judge of that. I know my job.
I know I've made a mess of it here...
...not getting what I came after.

I'm not so sure now that I want to get it.

So I'm quitting.

Somebody who doesn't give a hang
about the truth or you will take over.

But there's no one whom I could tolerate.

- Yet all the time, you've tried to mislead me.

- I've tried to give you what you wanted.

I'm sorry, I'm afraid I can't believe that.

That means I can't believe anything
anymore, my senses or my judgment.

At least we don't need to hurt each other
any more than we've done already.

If you don't mind, I'll ride home alone.

Hi, O'Malley.

How did you get in here?

Influence.

Looking for something?

No, just a hunch.

That's wonderful, Freddie.

- What is it?

- It's the bridge.

What bridge? Where?

Oh. Oh, this bridge, huh?

The question is, was it due
for a crack-up, or not?

Bah.

Don't be silly, Freddie.

You're wasting your time.

This is not your speed.

You're not saying that because I might be
getting close to where the body is buried?

The body is buried just where it should be,
in a hero's grave.

Why don't you let it rest in peace?

Are you speaking for yourself?

Yes, or for anyone else

who might be just looking for a good story.

That sounds pretty dull.

Maybe there's a story in a simple,
honest, clean, home-loving millionairess.

What about the hero's wife?

Well, why don't you leave her
in peace too...

...if her memories will?

Mrs. Forrest?

- Yes.

I'd like a word with you, please.

- What is it?

- I don't like it.

The look on Mr. O'Malley's face.

- Time for action.

- I've taken action.

- What?

- Don't raise your voice. I'm managing this.

It's too important to be managed
by a woman.

If it had been managed by a woman,
this wouldn't have happened.

You're quite right.

I have one request I'd like to make.

I'd like the keys
to Mr. Forrest's filing cabinets.

No.

There may be some things
you should've destroyed that remain.

Mrs. Forrest.

- You know I only wish to help.

Just a minute.

- You must let nothing prevent us...

...from preserving the memory
of the great man who's gone.

Who was and is the bright flame
in so many lives.

Come in, Mr. O'Malley.

I'll call you if I need you, Mr. Kerndon.

Does Kerndon know?

Know what?

That you killed your husband?

You found it under the bridge.

The night of the tragedy
you came the shortcut.

You saw the bridge was out.

That's where Diana cast the shoe.

You could've warned him, but you didn't.

You killed him.

How else can I say it?

No other way.

I say it myself.

I say it over and over again at night.

I lie in bed and say it.

- But you don't know.

- What don't I know?

I warned him.

- You mean he committed suicide?

- No.

- You warned him that the bridge was out?

- It wasn't out, quite.

- Quite, but enough.

- I suppose so.

- And you warned him about it?

- I said, "Robert, don't go.

It means disaster. "

- Meaning the bridge?

- No.

- Well, what? What? Where was he going?

- East.

- Kerndon have anything to do with it?

- No.

- He's not in on it?

- No.

- Just you and Geoffrey Midford.

- Geoffrey?

- Don't lie about it. You and Midford.

- No, no.

- You bought up the farm for him?

- Yes.

- Your husband threw him out, didn't he?

- Yes.

And when he left you alone here with
Midford, that was the disaster, wasn't it?

Geoffrey knows nothing about it.

You did it alone.

What a sweet story.

The real story of a great American hero.

Whatever has happened
doesn't reflect on him.

- He's still a hero.

- That's right.

And I must still write the story
and tell the truth.

Why?

Just tell me why.

I warned you. What do you think he'll do?

- He'll do what is right.

- Tell the world.

- That will only reflect on me.

- The police will be here.

They'll pry, probe. They'll want to know.

Give me the keys

so I can destroy everything.

No.

Then you should go and do it yourself.

Now.

Jeb.

Jeb.

Oh, Jeb.

Well, hello, Mr. O'Malley.

- Put those bags down.

- What's the matter?

- Put the bags down.

- Oh, Geoff. Geoff.

- Do you mind getting out of here?

- Yes, I do.

Take it easy, Janet.

This is the important gentleman

Christine's been telling you so much about.

- Not Steven O'Malley.

- Yes, the one and only.

- Well, what's he got against you?

- Plenty.

However, let's forget about it.

I don't wanna fight anybody today.

I'm much too happy.

This is Jeb's sister, Janet...

...who'll probably keep me in better order

after we're married.

After you're married?

You...

- Congratulations.

Hello there.

Janet.

Let me look at you.

Well, you're as bright

as a new silver dollar.

Thanks, Geoff.

Thanks for bringing her back to us.

They've loved each other
ever since they were kids.
They were to be married.
Then Janet got a job
as Mr. Forrest's secretary.
After that she seemed to forget
Midford was around anymore.
Hero worship, same as Jeb.
So Midford started crooking his elbow
too often...

...and Janet cracked up altogether.
Do you blame me for hating Forrest?
- Mrs. Forrest got her into a sanitarium...
- Is that where Mrs. Forrest's been...
...the last three days?

Yes, at the sanitarium with Geoffrey.
- Now they're to be married.
- Tell him I'm gonna use his car for a minute.
- Mr. O'Malley, I thought you'd gone.
- Where's Mrs. Forrest? Where is she?
I just walked with her to the arsenal.
It's just there through the trees.

- Whom are you shielding?
- I'm not.
- Lf I were, I shouldn't betray them.
- You're brave, and tough too, aren't you?
You were ready to let me go away
believing you guilty.

- I want you to go.
- I'm gonna get the truth...
...if I have to tear this place down...
...and if I have to tear him down with it.
- No, you shan't!

Somebody else will do it if I don't.
You're in a jam.

I want to help you. I can help you.
What you've done is terrible,
but you're not.

Yes, I am.

Even if you are,
it's too late for me to stop now.
If it had been just you and Midford,
I could've understood.
That would've been love.

I understand love now.
I can understand what it does to a man,
to a woman.
I don't even care
why you wanted to get rid of Forrest.
I only care
that you won't let me help you.
No.
But you are in trouble, aren't you?
Yes, I'm in trouble.
You need me, don't you?
Yes, I need you.
Well, then what is it?
Tell me, what is it?
But you. You're in trouble too.
Don't worry about me.
Someone you believed in,
you aren't going to anymore.
I can believe in you so much
that you can't help yourself.
You must be what I believe you are.
I've been wanting to talk to you
since that first night you came.
I can't fight you off any longer.
I married a legend.
A legend about a hero.
I didn't know it at first. L...
I worshipped Robert.
Perhaps to worship anyone
is to destroy them.
Everyone worshipped him.
No, no. The, uh...
The image of him.
The image that had been carefully built up
in people's minds.
Deliberately built up, I now believe.
Built up with a terrible purpose.
When I discovered what that purpose was,
I had to destroy the image.
No, I...
I had to destroy the man...
...to save the image.
Yes, that was it.
What terrible purpose?

Oh, I didn't know it was terrible once.

You...

- You heard his mother this afternoon.

- His mother's insane.

But Robert wasn't.

He grew to despise the people
that worshipped him, all of us.

Me too.

He felt that we were all beneath him.

I didn't know what had happened. I suppose
that I was a bit like that myself once.

I believed in a few people,
leaders, rulers.

But when Robert began to change, I...

I saw the face of fascism
in my own home.

Hatred, arrogance, cruelty.

I saw what German women were facing.

I saw the enemy.

Robert Forrest.

The morning of the accident,

I stole his keys, came here and opened this.

This is what I found.

The key

to Robert Forrest's fascist organization.

They didn't call it fascism. Painted it red,
white and blue, and called it Americanism.

In here are the funds to see it through.

Fantastic amounts subscribed

by a few private individuals...

...to whom money didn't mean anything

but wanted political power.

Knew they could never get it

by democratic means.

There's a list of their names.

This was the essence of their plan.

Here are some articles ready for release...

...to stir up all the little hatreds
of the whole nation against each other.

This was an article to be published
in an anti-Semitic paper attacking the Jews.

This was to be used in Farmers Gazette
to stir them up against city dwellers.

Here's one attacking the Catholics,

anti-Negro, anti-labor, anti-trade union...
...subtle appeal to the Ku Klux Klan.
Here's a list of newspaper editors
who either sought to occupy public office...
...or sought to dictate
who should occupy public office...
...and when they failed, felt that the public
was a great, stupid beast.
Here's a list of men
who served their country in the last war...
...and were failures in business,
and longed for power of rank...
...and the prestige of a uniform.
In there are the names and addresses
of the men...
...who were designated
to be America's first storm troopers.
But what was really shocking to me
was the complete cynicism of the plan.
Each of these groups was simply to be
used until its usefulness was exhausted.
Hates were to be played against hates.
If one group threatened to get too powerful,
it would be killed off by another group.
And in the end, all these poor little people
who never knew...
...to what purpose they were lending
themselves would be in the same chains...
...cowed and enslaved...
...with Robert Forrest and his handful
of power-thirsty henchmen...
...cracking the whip.
Robert Forrest.
What happened to him?
He changed.
When I first married him, he was as much
a part of this country as Lincoln himself.
And I love our country.
Always when I came back from Europe...
...I felt what it meant
to live in the land of the free.
When I married Robert,
I felt that I was stepping into its history.
He was brave and noble and immortal,

and I was so proud.
But he changed, I tell you.
Not all at once, but gradually.
Couldn't have been because he was bitter
or disappointed.
His life had been only triumph.
The tears could still come into his eyes
and the catch in his wonderful voice...
...when he spoke to the people.
Perhaps he loved the people.
Perhaps he loved them...
...but didn't trust them
to think for themselves.
Or perhaps he was insatiable...
...and wanted even more power
to add to his glory. I don't know.
But he envied the dictators
and thought that all governments...
...of the people and by the people
were soon to perish from the Earth.
Robert Forrest.
And as he changed,
my love changed too.
I remember the first day I looked at his face
and trembled with fear...
...at the change that I saw in that face.
Hatred, arrogance, cruelty.
The face of a man who no longer believed
in God, but only in himself.
And he held me in his arms...
...and I knew that it was no longer a wife
that he wanted but sons.
And his eyes told me
that I was a poor creature...
...who couldn't give him sons.
Then my fear changed to pity.
I thought that he was going like his mother,
that it was madness.
The things he'd think of,
the ideas he'd play with...
...his frank contempt of democracy,
his incredible ambition.
But he wasn't mad.
He wasn't mad.

I was more in danger
from my own thoughts than he.
The morning of the accident,
I stole his keys...
...came here and opened the cabinet.
Then I knew that Robert Forrest was lost,
that he was a traitor to his country.
I didn't know what to do.
I went out riding to be alone, to think.
I rode all afternoon.
The cloudburst came,
I took refuge in the mother's house.
I got the telephone message.
I knew the bridge was out. I saw it.
I came back that way
after the cloudburst.
Suddenly, it was clear to me.
I knew something had to be done.
Their moment had come.
Saboteurs were awaiting instructions...
...and he was on his way to give them.
I stood looking at the bridge.
I said to myself quite calmly:
"He'll come this way and be killed
unless I hurry and warn him. "
But I didn't warn him
because it came to me...
...that clean death in the rain...
...was the best thing that could happen
to Robert Forrest.
Standing by the bridge, I prayed:
"Let him be killed that he may not mock
those who have trusted him...
...and destroy them
as he has destroyed me. "
Half an hour later
they brought his body home.
Now he's in your hands.
Christine,
I want you to do something for me.
- You want me to give myself up.
- No, no, no.
I want you to help me
tell the world the truth about him.

You mean, destroy people's belief
in their hero? Why?
He wasn't their hero, he was their enemy,
and they must know it.
They must know what their enemies
over there can do to heroes over here.
But it will destroy them.
Christine, people are not children.
Sometimes they act like children
when you get them scared or confused.
But down in their hearts
they know they're not afraid.
They want the truth and they can take it.
You can't lie to them. I can't lie to them.
Do what...
Do what you think is right.
I trust you.
I'll do my best to help you.
The key's on the other side.
- It doesn't work.
- The wire's been cut.
- Who did it?
- Kerndon.
- Is this the only way out?
- Yes.
Steve!
Write the story, Steve.
Tell the truth.
The lights. Turn them off.