

MRS. MULLIN. Come to talk business.

JIGGER. Business!

(He spits.)

MRS. MULLIN. I see you're still hangin' around yer jailbird friend.

BILLY. What's it to you who I hang around with?

JIGGER. If there's one thing I can't abide, it's the common type of woman.

START

(He saunters upstage left and stands looking out to sea.)

BILLY. What are you doin' here? You got a new barker ain't you?

MRS. MULLIN. *(Looking him over.)* Whyn't you stay home and sleep at night? You look awful!

BILLY. He's as good as me, ain't he?

MRS. MULLIN. Push yer hair back off yer forehead...

BILLY. *(Pushing her hand away and turning away from her.)* Let my hair be.

MRS. MULLIN. If I told you to let it hang down over yer eyes you'd push it back. I hear you been beatin' her. If you're sick of her, why don't you leave her? No use beatin' the poor, skinny little...

BILLY. Leave her, eh? You'd like that, wouldn't you?

MRS. MULLIN. Don't flatter yourself!

(Her pride stung, she paces to center stage.)

If I had any sense I wouldn' of come here. The things you got to do when you're in business...! I'd sell the damn carousel if I could.

BILLY. Ain't it crowded without me?

MRS. MULLIN. Those fool girls keep askin' for you. They miss you, see? Are you goin' to be sensible and come back?

BILLY. And leave Julie?

MRS. MULLIN. You beat her, don't you?

BILLY. (*Exasperated.*) No, I don't beat her. What's all this damn-fool talk about beatin'? I hit her once, and now the whole town is... The next one I hear... I'll smash...

MRS. MULLIN. (*Backing away from him.*) All right! All right! I take it back. I don't want to get mixed up in it.

BILLY. Beatin' her! As if I'd beat her!

MRS. MULLIN. What's the odds one way er another? Look at the thing straight. You been married two months and you're sick of it. Out there's the carousel. Show booths, young girls, all the beer you want, a good livin' – and you're throwin' it all away. Know what? I got a new organ.

BILLY. I know.

MRS. MULLIN. How do you know?

BILLY. (*His voice softer.*) You can hear it from here. I listen to it every night.

MRS. MULLIN. Good one, ain't it?

BILLY. Jim dandy. Got a nice tone.

MRS. MULLIN. Y'ought to come up close and hear it. Makes you think the carousel is goin' faster. You belong out there and you know it. You ain't cut out fer a respectable married man. You're an artist type. You belong among artists. Tell you what – you come back and I'll give you a ruby ring my husband left me.

BILLY. I dunno – I might go back. I could still go on livin' here with Julie.

MRS. MULLIN. Holy Moses!



BILLY. What's wrong?

MRS. MULLIN. Can y' imagine how the girls'd love that? A barker who runs home to his wife every night! Why, people'd laugh theirselves sick.

BILLY. I know what *you* want.

MRS. MULLIN. Don't be so stuck on yerself.

BILLY. I ain't happy here, and *that's* the truth.

MRS. MULLIN. 'Course you ain't.

END

(She strokes his hair back off his forehead, and this time he lets her. JULIE enters from house, carrying a tray with a cup of coffee and a plate of cakes on it. MRS. MULLIN pulls her hand away. There is a slight pause.)

BILLY. Do you want anythin'?

JULIE. I brought you your coffee.

MRS. MULLIN. *(To BILLY in a low voice.)* Whyn't you have a talk with her? She'll understand. Maybe she'll be glad to get rid of you.

BILLY. *(Without conviction.)* Maybe.

JULIE. Billy – before I ferget. I got somethin' to tell you.

BILLY. All right.

JULIE. I been wantin' to tell you – in fact, I was goin' to yesterday.

BILLY. Well, go ahead.

JULIE. I can't – we got to be alone.

BILLY. Don't you see I'm busy? Here, I'm talkin' business and...

JULIE. It'll only take a minute.

BILLY. Get out o' here, or...