

NANCY VAN DE VATE

b. 1930

**WHERE THE
CROSS
IS MADE**

One-act opera
based on the play by
Eugene O'Neill

LIBRETTO

PRELUDE

Curtain rises.

NAT BARTLETT:

Can you see, Doctor?

DOCTOR HIGGINS:

Yes, perfectly, don't worry. The moonlight is so bright.

NAT:

Yes, luckily. He doesn't want any light lately— only from the binnacle there.

DOCTOR:

I suppose this is all meant to be like a ship's cabin?

NAT:

Yes, as I warned you.

DOCTOR:

Warned me? Why warned? I think it's very nat'ral— and int'resting— this whim of his.

NAT: *(meaningfully)*

Int'resting, it may be.

DOCTOR:

And he lives up here you said— never comes down?

NAT:

Not once in the past three years. My sister brings his food up to him. *(pointing to a sideboard)* There's a lantern there, Doctor. Please bring it over, we'll make a light. I'll ask your pardon for bringing you to this room on the roof, but you must see for yourself the mad way he lives. I want you to get all the facts, but only the facts, and for that light is needed. Without light, they become dreams up here, dreams.

Nat looks around, as if in another world. Higgins carries over the lantern.

DOCTOR:

It is a bit spooky. Where is he?

NAT:

Up on the poop. He'll not come for a while.

DOCTOR:

Then he also has the roof rigged like a ship?

NAT:

Yes, like a deck, with a wheel, a compass, a binnacle light, and the companionway there. *(He points.)* Also a bridge to pace up and down on, and keep watch. If the wind wasn't so high you would hear him, back and

forth, back and forth, all the livelong night. Didn't I tell you he's mad? Didn't I tell you he's mad?

DOCTOR: *(thoughtfully, to himself)*

I have heard he was mad ever since I came here. *(turning again to Nat)*

You say he only walks up there at night?

NAT:

Yes. The things he wants to see can't be seen in daylight. Dreams, his dreams.

DOCTOR:

But what is he trying to see? Does anyone know?

NAT: *(impatiently)*

Ev'ryone knows! Ev'ryone knows what Father looks for. The ship, of course.

DOCTOR:

What ship?

NAT:

His ship, the Mary Allen, named for my dead mother.

DOCTOR:

But I don't understand. Is the ship long overdue, or what?

NAT: *(soft but dramatically)*

Lost in a hurricane off the Celebes, with all on board. Three years ago.

DOCTOR:

Ah, but your father still clings to a doubt.

NAT:

There is no doubt to cling to. *(very assertive)* She was sighted bottom up, a total wreck, two weeks after the storm. *(turning to Higgins, dramatically)* He *knows*, Doctor, but he won't believe. He can't and keep living.

DOCTOR: *(speaks quietly but impatiently)*

Come, Mr. Bartlett, just the facts, please. I'll need them to give his case sympathetic treatment in the asylum.

NAT: *(anxiously)*

And you'll take him tonight for sure?

DOCTOR: *(still impatient)*

Yes. Twenty minutes after I leave, I'll be back in the car.

NAT:

The outside door will be left open. You must come right up. My sister and I will be here, with him. *(spoken softly, conspiratorially)* And you

understand— neither of us knows anything about this. The authorities have been complained to – not by us, mind – but by someone. He must never know.

DOCTOR:

Rely on me then not to tell him, but I'll bring along two attendants in case he's violent. And now for the facts, (*increasingly impatient*) the facts in this case, Mister Bartlett!

NAT'S ARIA

NAT: (*moodily*)

There are cases where facts don't tell you how it really was. But here goes, the bare facts. My father was a whaling captain, as was his father before him. The last trip he made was seven years ago. He expected to be gone just two years, but it was four before we saw him again. His ship had been wrecked, wrecked in the Indian Ocean. He and six others managed to reach a small island, a very barren small island, after seven days in an open boat. The rest of the crew were never heard from again. Of the six who reached the island with my father, only three were alive when some Malay canoes picked them up. All four were mad, mad with thirst and starvation. (*looking off into the distance, recalling the past*) That was the last trip he made. It was seven years ago. We thought he would be gone just two years. But it was seven years before we saw him again. Yes, Doctor, they were mad with thirst and starvation when they were rescued by some Malay canoes, but they finally reached Frisco. With my father were Silas Horn and Cates, the bo'sun, and Jimmy Kanaka. Yes, that was the last trip he made, seven years ago. It was in all the papers at the time. And those are the facts. But there are cases where facts don't tell you how it really was.

DOCTOR: (*moved by Nat's story*)

But what of the other three who were on the island?

NAT: (*harshly*)

Died of exposure, perhaps. Mad and jumped into the sea, perhaps. That was the story told. But there was another. (*spoken sotto voce*) T'was whisper'd, perhaps they were killed and eaten! But gone, vanished, who knows? What does it matter?

DOCTOR: (*with a shudder*)

I should think it would matter very much.

NAT:

We're dealing with facts, Doctor. (*laughs*) And here are some more for you. My father brought the three of them to this house with him— Horne and Cates and Jimmy Kanaka. We hardly recognized my father. He had

been through hell, and he looked it. His hair was white. But you'll see for yourself— soon. And the others— they were all a bit odd— (*very dramatically, with a touch of insanity*) mad, if you will. (*laughing again – then speaking more normally*) So much for the facts, Doctor. They leave off there, and the dreams, the dreams begin.

A soft knock is heard and the door at the rear is opened Sue Bartlett comes in. She is a tall, slender woman of twenty-five with a pale, sad face. Nat is startled.

SUE BARTLETT:

It's only I, Nat. What are you afraid of?

NAT: (*averting his eyes*)

Nothing, but I thought you were in your room.

SUE: (*looking inquiringly at Higgins*)

I was cooking some food for tomorrow, then I heard you talking up here.

NAT: (*trying to sound reassuring*)

This is Doctor Higgins, I brought him up here to see how things are, and to ask his advice about Father.

SUE: (*agitated, turning to Higgins*)

Are you one of them, (*sharply*) one of them from the asylum? (*to Nat*) Oh, Nat, you haven't— you wouldn't— Oh Nat...

NAT:

(*free*) No! Sue, be quiet! (*more calmly*) I am only telling about Father's dream. Please, sit down and listen.

Sue looks doubtfully from one to the other.

SUE:

Not now, Nat, I must see to the cooking, but I'll come again later.

She goes quietly out the door, looking back anxiously over her shoulder.

NAT:

And now, Doctor, the dream:

Higgins sits down.

NAT:

One day my father sent for me, to tell me the dream, for I was to be the heir, the heir to the secret. Their second day on the island, they discovered a Malay war-prau, the kind pirates used to use. God knows how long she had rotted there. In the prau they found two chests. Guess what, Doctor?

DOCTOR: (*smiling*)

Treasure, of course.

NAT:
What else? Diamonds, emeralds, gold ornaments... why limit the stuff of dreams?

DOCTOR:

And then?

NAT:

Mad! Mad, they began to go mad. *(hushed, but dramatically)* Hunger, thirst, and the rest of it. But my father knew what was happening and insisted they should...

DOCTOR:

Bury the treasure?

NAT: *(laughs ironically)*

Simple, isn't it? And then they made a map (the same old dream, you see) with a charred stick. They were picked up soon after, mad as hatters, by some Malay natives.

He drops his mocking and again adopts a calm, deliberate tone.

But the map isn't a dream.

Nat pulls a crumpled paper out of his pocket and spreads it on the table.

DOCTOR: *(craning his neck eagerly)*

By God, this is interesting. The treasure, I suppose, is where the cross is made, and that is your signature at the bottom?

NAT:

Yes. Yes, as heir to the secret. We all signed it the morning the Mary Allen set sail.

DOCTOR:

The ship that was lost three years ago?

NAT:

Yes. The other three men sailed away on her. My father wanted to go with them, but my mother was dying, dying. I dared not go either.

DOCTOR:

Then you wanted to go? You believed in the treasure?

NAT: *(laughs)*

Of course. *(strangely)* I believed until my mother's death. Then he became mad, utterly mad. He built this cabin to wait in, but he suspected my growing doubt, as time went on. So, as final proof, he gave me a thing he had kept hidden from them all— a sample of the treasure, Look!

He takes from his pocket a heavy bracelet thickly studded with stones and throws it on the table near the lantern. The doctor picks it up with eager curiosity— as if in spite of himself.

DOCTOR:

Real jewels?

NAT: *(laughing)*

You want to believe, too. *(laughs again)* No! Just cheap stones and brass. Malay ornaments.

He puts it back in his pocket and shakes his head as if throwing off a burden.

Now you know why he is mad, mad, and why in the end I asked you to take him away, where he will be safe. The mortgage— the price of that ship— is to be foreclosed. We have to move, my sister and I, we can't take him with us. And my sister is to be married soon.

DOCTOR:

This must be very hard on her. You think it's best to take him tonight?

NAT:

Oh yes, Doctor— for my sister's sake— you understand, don't you?

DOCTOR: *(nods somewhat uncertainly)*

All right, then. I'll be back later.

NAT:

Don't fail us, Doctor. Please come right up. He will be here.

Nat closes the door and tiptoes carefully to the companionway. He ascends a few steps and remains for a moment listening for some sound from above. Then he goes over to the table, turning the lantern very low, and sits down, resting his elbow, his chin on his hand, staring somberly before him.

Sue knocks softly and opens the door. She enters and walks over to Nat. He continues to stare at the lamplight, not answering her. She becomes quite agitated.

SUE:

Nat? Nat? Nat! Why was that man here really? You're holding something back. You wouldn't have Father taken away, would you? That would be the last horror!

NAT:

Sue! Listen to me please! What could be worse than things as they are? I'm sure it would be better for him if he couldn't see the ocean. He will

forget his mad idea of waiting, waiting for a lost ship and a treasure, a treasure that never was. I believe this!

SUE:

No you don't, Nat! You know he'd die if he did not have the sea to live with.

NAT: (*bitterly*)

And you know old Smith will foreclose the mortgage; we cannot pay. He came yesterday and talked to me.

SUE:

What did he say, Nat?

NAT: (*in a hard voice*)

He swore he'd foreclose right now unless we let them take Father away.

SUE: (*gasps*)

Oh, but why, Nat? Why?

NAT:

The neighbours are afraid. They pass by on the road at night, coming back to their farms from the town. They see him up there, walking back and forth, waving his arms against the sky.

SUE:

But Father is quiet, always quiet.

NAT:

Still, they're afraid. They talk about a complaint, they say the house may be haunted. Old Smith is afraid for his property. He thinks that Father might set the house on fire. Or something.

SUE:

But you told him how foolish that is, didn't you?

NAT:

What's the use of telling, when they are all afraid?

Sue hides her face in her hands.

NAT: (*whispers hoarsely*)

I've been afraid myself at times.

SUE:

Oh Nat! Of what?

NAT:

Of him and the sea he calls to. Of the damned sea he forced on me as a boy. (*violently*) The sea that robbed me of my arm and made me the broken thing I am. (*a cry of rage*) Agh!

SUE: (*in a hushed tone, pleading*)

But you can't blame Father— for *your* misfortune.

NAT: (*quietly, but with suppressed rage*)

He took me from school and forced me on his ship, didn't he? What would I have been now but an ignorant sailor like him if he had had his way? But I should not blame the sea, the sea which foiled him, which took my arm and threw me ashore, (*bitterly*) another of his wrecks.

SUE:

Oh why can't you forget, Nat? It was all so long ago.

NAT:

Forget? You can talk! When Tom comes back from this voyage, you'll be married, married and out of this life, a captain's wife as our mother was. (*ironically*) I wish you joy.

SUE: (*supplicatingly*)

And you'll come with us Nat, and Father too.

SUE:

...from this voyage, I'll be married, you'll come with us Nat, and Father, too. And then, Nat...

SUE: (*poignantly*)

Oh Nat, we will all live together. We'll move to some little house down by the sea.

NAT:

When Tom comes back from this voyage you'll be married, married and out of this life, a captain's wife as our mother was. Oh, stop, Sue! Would you saddle your young husband with a madman, madman and a cripple? Would you saddle your young husband with a madman and a cripple, cripple?

No, no, Sue, not with him, not with Father!

SUE:

Oh, Nat, we must go away from here!

NAT: (*angrily*)

Not with him, not with Father!

SUE'S ARIA

SUE:

Oh, Nat, please let's go away from here, you and Father and I. We'll move to some little house down by the sea, so that Father can always look out. And when Tom comes back, comes back from this voyage, I'll be married, married, a captain's wife, as our mother was. We will all live together, Nat, you, Tom, Father and I, in some little house down by the sea, down

by the sea. Yes, I know he has his dreams, Nat, but you do, too, and I, and I, Nat, I too have my dreams, we all have our dreams. Oh, Nat, we must go away from here, you and Father and I.

NAT: *(hoarsely, with great emotion)*

No, Sue! I've got to stay here! *(more subdued, but still very intense)* My book is threefourths done, my book that will set me free. But I know, I feel, as sure as I stand here before you that I must finish it here. I must! I must! My book could not live for me outside this house, this house where it was born. *(staring fixedly at Sue)* So I will stay in spite of hell!

Sue sobs helplessly.

NAT: *(returning to his former subdued manner)*

Old Smith told me I could live here indefinitely without paying— as caretaker— if... *(staring at her)*

SUE: *(a frightened echo)*

If?

NAT:

If I have him sent where he cannot harm himself or others.

SUE: *(with horrified dread)*

No, no, no, Nat! For our dead mother's sake.

NAT: *(hoarsely)*

Why do you look at me like that, Sue?

SUE: *(increasingly distraught)*

For our mother's sake, Nat, for our mother's sake!

NAT:

She is dead, Sue, and at peace. Would you bring back her tired soul, to be bruised and wounded again by him? If the house were sold, there'd be half for your wedding portion. You and Tom...

SUE:

Nat! You've done it! You've sold him! Oh Nat, you're cursed.

With a long moan, she lets herself fall on her outstretched arms.

NAT: *(with a terrified glance at the roof above)*

Sssh! What are you saying? He'll be better off away from the sea.

SUE: *(dully)*

You've sold him...

He takes the map from his pocket.

NAT: *(urgently)*

Listen, Sue! For God's sake, please listen to me. See! The map of the island. *(spreading the map out on the table)* And the treasure, the treasure,

where the cross is made. *(He gulps, and his words pour out incoherently.)* I've carried it about for years. Is that nothing? You don't know what it means. It stands between me and my book. It's stood between me and life, driving me mad, driving me mad, driving me mad! *(monotonously)* He taught me to wait, to wait and hope with him, day after day. He made me doubt my brain and give the lie to my eyes, when hope was dead, when I knew, I knew it was all a dream! *(his eyes starting from his head)* God forgive me, I still believe! And that's mad, mad, do you hear? *(anguished)* He's stolen my brain! My brain! I must free myself, must free myself from his madness, from him and his madness!

SUE: *(looking at him with horror)*

Nat, you talk as if...

NAT:

As if I were mad? *(laughs wildly)* You're right, Sue, but I'll be mad no more! See!

He opens the lantern and sets fire to the map in his hand. They watch the paper burn with fascinated eyes.

See how it burns, see how it burns! See how I free myself and become sane. It must all be destroyed, this poisonous madness! See, it's gone, there's the last speck.

He lets the ash fall to the floor and crushes it with his foot.

Gone! I'm free of it at last! Silas Horne took the only other map to the bottom of the sea, to the bottom of the sea.

SUE:

You sold him, Nat, you sold him.

Nat's face is very pale, but he goes on calmly.

NAT:

Yes, I sold him, if you will. I sold him to save my soul, to save my soul. They're coming from the asylum to get him.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Aah! Ho!

There is a loud muffled cry from above and a stamping of feet. The slide to the companionway is slid back with a bang. Nat and Sue jump to their feet and stand petrified.

Captain Bartlett tramps down the stairs.

NAT: *(with a shudder)*

God! Did he hear?

SUE:

Sssh!

He enters the room. He bears a striking resemblance to his son. His mass of hair is pure white, and bushy gray brows overhang the obsessed glare of his fierce dark eyes. He wears a heavy, double-breasted blue coat, blue pants, and rubber boots turned down from the knee. He strides toward his son in a state of mad exultation and points an accusing finger at him.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Bin thinkin' me mad, did ye? Thinkin' it for the past three years, ye bin, ever since them fools on the Slocum tattled their damn lie o' the Mary Allen bein' a wreck.

NAT: *(chokingly)*

No, Father, no, I...

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Don' lie, ye whelp! You that I'd made my heir now aimin' *(with suppressed fury)* to put me in the jail for mad folk!

SUE:

No, Father, no!

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(waving his hand for her to be silent)*

Not you, girl. You are your mother.

NAT:

Father— do you think I—

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(fiercely, to Nat)*

A lie in your eyes! My curse on you!

SUE:

Father, don't!

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Leave me be, girl! He believed, didn't he? And now has turned traitor, sayin' it's all a lie, mockin' at me and at himself, too, for bein' a fool to believe in dreams, as he calls them now.

NAT:

You're wrong, Father, I do believe.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(triumphantly)*

Aye, now ye do! Who wouldn't believe their own eyes?

NAT:

Eyes?

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Have ye not seen her then? Did you not hear me hail?

NAT:

Hail what? Seen what?

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(grimly)*

Aye, now is your punishment Judas. The Mary Allen is back, is back from the Southern Seas, *(shouting)* ye blind fool! She's come back as I said she must!

SUE: *(soothingly)*

Father, be quiet. It's nothing.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(not heeding Sue, his eyes fixed hypnotically on his son's)*

She turned the point a halfhour back, loaded with gold as I swore she would be, makin' port, boy, as I swore she must. Too late for traitors, boy, too late, too late!

NAT: *(almost whispering, a haunted, fascinated look in his eyes, which are fixed immovably on his father's)*

The Mary Allen! But how do you know?

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Not know my own ship? *(shouting)* 'Tis you're mad!

NAT:

But at night? Some other schooner—

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

No other, I say! The Mary Allen, clear in the moonlight. Don't you remember the signal I gave to Silas Horne if he made this port of a night?

NAT: *(thoughtfully)*

A red and a green light at the mainmasthead.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(triumphantly)*

Then look out if ye dare!

The Captain goes to a porthole and looks out.

Ye can see it plain from here. Will ye believe your eyes? Look— and then call me mad!

Nat peers through the porthole and starts back, a dumbfounded expression on his face.

NAT:

A red and a green at the mainmast head. Yes, clear as day.

SUE: *(with a worried look at Nat)*

Let me see.

Sue goes to the porthole.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(to Nat, with fierce satisfaction)*

Ye can see now clear enough. *(Nat stares at him, spellbound)* And from above I saw Horne and Cates and Jimmy Kanaka plain on the deck in the moonlight lookin' up at me. Come!

He strides to the companionway, followed by Nat. The two of them ascend. Sue turns from the porthole, looking frightened and bewildered. She shakes her head sadly.

SUE:

Oh Father, oh Nat...

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(from above)*

Mary Allen, ahoy!

NAT: *(like an echo)*

Mary Allen, ahoy!

Sue covers her face with her hands, shuddering.

Nat comes down the companionway, eyes wild and exulting

SUE: *(brokenly)*

He's bad tonight, Nat. You're right to humor him. It's the best way.

NAT: *(savagely)*

Humor him? What in hell do you mean?

SUE: *(urgently)*

There's nothing there, Nat. There is no ship in the harbor.

NAT:

You're a fool, or blind! *(hoarsely)* The Mary Allen is there in plain sight. Those fools lied about her being wrecked.

SUE:

But Nat, there's nothing. *She goes over again to the porthole. Not a ship (coaxingly)* See.

NAT:

I saw it. I tell you. From above it's quite clear.

He stalks away angrily. Sue follows him, frightened and pleading.

SUE:

Nat! You mustn't let this, this— oh, Nat, *She puts a soothing hand on his forehead* you're all excited and trembling.

NAT: *(pushing her away roughly)*

You blind fool!

Captain Bartlett comes down the steps of the companionway. His face is transfigured with the ecstasy of a dream come true.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(exultant)*

You see! I told you my ship would come home again. They've lowered a boat— the three of them— Horne and Cates and Jimmy Kanaka. They're rowin' ashore. Listen!

NAT: *(excitedly)*

I hear!

SUE:

Oh, Nat, it's only the wind and sea you hear.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Now! They've landed. *(portentous)* They're back on earth again, as I said they would be. They'll be comin' up the path now.

Captain Bartlett stands in an attitude of rigid attention. Nat strains forward in his chair. The sound of the wind and the sea suddenly ceases and there is a heavy silence in the room. A dense green glow floods slowly in rhythmic waves like a liquid into the room — as of great depths of the sea faintly penetrated by light.

NAT: *(catching at his sister's hand and speaking chokingly)*

See how the light changes! Green and gold! *(he shivers)* Deep under the sea. I've been drowned, drowned for years! *(hysterically)* Save me! Save me!

He sobs brokenly.

SUE: *(soothingly, with infinite sadness)*

It's only the moonlight, Nat. Nothing has changed. Be quiet, dear, it's nothing.

The green light grows deeper and deeper.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT: *(in a crooning, monotonous voice)*

They move slowly, slowly. They are heavy, I know. Heavy, the two chests. Hark! They're below at the door. Do you hear?

NAT:

Yes, I hear. I left the door open.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

For them?

NAT:

Yes, for them.

SUE: *(shuddering)*

Shhh!

The sound of a door being heavily slammed is heard from far down in the house.

NAT: *(excitedly, to his sister)*

There! You hear?

SUE:

It's a shutter in the wind.

NAT:

There is no wind.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Up they come! Up! Bullies! They're heavy, heavy!

The padding of bare feet sounds from the floor below, then comes up the stairs.

NAT:

You hear them now?

SUE:

Only the rats running about. It's nothing, nothing, it's nothing, Nat.

Captain Bartlett rushes to the door and throws it open.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Come in lads, come in! And welcome home!

The forms of Silas Horne, Cates and Jimmy Kanaka rise noiselessly into the room from the stairs. The last two carry heavy inlaid chests. Horne is a parrot-nosed, angular old man dressed in gray cotton trousers and a singlet torn open across his hairy chest. Jimmy is a tall, sinewy bronzed young Kanaka. He wears only a breechcloth. Cates is squat and stout and is dressed in dungaree pants and a shredded white sailor's blouse, stained with iron-rust. All are barefoot. Water drips from their soaked and rotten clothes. Their hair is matted, intertwined with slimy strands of seaweed. As they glide silently into the room, their eyes stare frightfully wide at nothing. Their flesh in the green light has the suggestion of decomposition. Their bodies sway limply, nervelessly, rhythmically, as if to the pulse of long swells of the deep sea.

NAT: *(taking a step towards them)*

See! *(frenzied)* Welcome home boys!

SUE: *(grabbing Nat's arm)*

There's no one there, Nat, sit down! Father, sit down!

Captain Bartlett grins at the three and puts his fingers to his lips.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

Not here, boys – not before him. *(pointing to Nat)* He has no right now, the treasure is ours only. We'll go away with it together. Come.

He goes to the companionway, the three follow.

CAPTAIN BARTLETT:

(almost crooning, with a look of quiet madness in his eyes)

The Mary Allen is home again, you brought her back to me. She has come back, men, you brought her safely to port. Silas Horne, Cates and Jimmy Kanaka, my loyal crew. The treasure, the treasure, you have brought the treasure. The treasure we found on that far-off island, that lonely far-off island.

Horne puts a swaying hand on Bartlett's shoulder, interrupting his reverie, and with the other holds out a piece of paper to him. Bartlett takes it, and laughs exultantly. Bartlett ascends the companionway; the other figures sway up after him.

NAT: *(frenzied)*

Wait!

Nat struggles toward the companionway. Sue tries to hold him back.

SUE:

Nat! Don't, Nat! Father, come back!

NAT:

Father! Father, Father!

Nat flings Sue away from him and rushes up the companionway. He pounds against the slide, which seems to have been shut down on him.

SUE:

Nat! Nat! Nat!

Sue runs wildly to the door at the rear.

SUE: *(hysterically)*

Help! Help, oh help!

As she opens the door, Doctor Higgins appears, hurrying up the stairs.

DOCTOR:

Just a moment, Miss. What's the matter?

SUE: *(gasping)*

My father, up there!

DOCTOR:

I can't see— where's my flash? Ah, there!

He flashes it on Sue's terror-stricken face, then quickly around the room. The green glow slowly disappears, and clear moonlight floods through the portholes. The wind and sea are heard again. Nat pounds sporadically on the companionway slide. Higgins springs to the companionway. Nat pounds more loudly.

DOCTOR:

Here, Bartlett. Let me try.

NAT: *(coming down, looking dully at the doctor)*

They've locked it. I can't get up.

DOCTOR: *(looking up; in an astonished voice)*

What's the matter, Bartlett? It's all open.

He starts to ascend.

NAT: *(warningly)*

Look out, man. Look out for them!

DOCTOR: *(suddenly, in alarm)*

Them? Them? Who? There's no-one here. Quick! Come up! Lend a hand here! He's fainted.

Nat goes up slowly. Sue goes over and lights the lantern, then brings it back to the foot of the companionway. There is a scuffling noise from above. Nat and the Doctor reappear, carrying Captain Bartlett's body.

DOCTOR:

Easy now. Put him down gently.

They lay him on the couch. Sue sets the lantern down nearby. Higgins bends and listens for a heartbeat. Then he rises, shaking his head.

DOCTOR:

I'm sorry. I am so very sorry.

SUE: *(dully)*

Is he dead?

DOCTOR:

Yes. Heart failure, I suppose.

SUE: *(as in a daze)*

Oh Father, my poor misguided Father. My poor mistaken Father. *(sobs brokenly)* My poor misguided Father.

DOCTOR:

I'm sorry. I am so very sorry. I am so very sorry.

NAT:

Wait! There was something— Horne handed him something. Did you see?

SUE:

Nat! be still, be still. He's dead. *(to Higgins, with pitiful appeal)* Please go, go now.

DOCTOR:

There's nothing I can do?

Sue shakes her head.

SUE:

Go, please.

Higgins bows slightly and goes out. Nat moves slowly to his father's body, as if attracted by some irresistible fascination.

NAT:

Didn't you see? Didn't you see? Sue! Didn't you see? Horne handed him something, something. Didn't you see? Horne handed him something.

Sue is sobbing.

SUE:

Nat! Nat! Don't touch him. Nat! Don't touch him. Come away, come away, come away.

Nat doesn't heed her. His gaze is fixed on his father's right hand, which hangs down over the side of the couch. He pounces on it and forcing the clenched fingers open with a great effort, secures a crumpled ball of paper. He flourishes the paper above his head with shouts of triumph.

NAT:

Look! Look! The map of the island!

He bends down and spreads it out in the light of the lantern. Eyes gleaming, he looks at Sue.

NAT:

It isn't lost, it isn't lost, look! It isn't lost for me after all! There's still a chance, a chance, a chance for me! *(almost screaming)* My chance! My chance! *(with mad, solemn decision)* When the house is sold, is sold, I'll go, I'll go and I'll find it. When the house is sold, I'll go and find it. Oh, Sue, oh, Sue, there's still a chance, my chance, my chance, my chance.

SUE: *(covering her face with her hands)*

Nat, oh Nat, oh Nat, come away, oh God, Nat, come away.

She sobs desperately at first, then gradually becomes mute.

NAT: *(ecstatic; triumphant but very lyrical)*

The treasure is buried, the treasure is buried, where the cross is made, where the cross is made. Oh, Sue, look here, it's written in his handwriting, it's written in his handwriting. The treasure is buried, buried, where the cross is made. The treasure is buried where the cross is made.

The Curtain falls.