



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

---

**DRAMA**

Paper 1 Set Text

**0411/11/T/EX**


**May/June 2010**

**2 hours 30 minutes**

---

**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the three stimuli and the extract from Harold Brighouse's play *Hobson's Choice* provided in this booklet.  
This clean copy of the material is for you to use in your responses.

\* 0 7 1 5 0 9 6 6 1 6 \*  


---

This document consists of **26** printed pages and **2** blank pages.



**STIMULI**

You are required to produce a short piece of drama on each stimulus in preparation for your examination. Questions will be asked on **each** of the stimuli and will cover both practical and theoretical issues.

- 1 A wrongful imprisonment
- 2 A healthy mind in a healthy body?
- 3 Dancing in the street

## EXTRACT

Taken from *Hobson's Choice* by Harold Brighouse

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Harold Brighouse's play *Hobson's Choice* was first performed in 1916, although the action is set in the period around 1880, and takes place in Salford, an industrial town close to Manchester, England. Some of the dialogue in the play is intended to represent the dialect of the area.

The title of the play is proverbial: to have 'Hobson's choice' is to have no choice at all. This is what happens to the central character in the play, Henry Horatio Hobson, a bootmaker in Salford. The extract is taken from the second half of the play, and consists of the whole of Act Three and Act Four, in which we see the lack of options open to Hobson as a result of the way he has brought up his family.

Prior to the start of the extract, we have been introduced to Hobson, a widower, and his three daughters. Maggie is 30 years old and runs her father's bootmaker's shop whilst he spends his time drinking heavily at The Moonraker's Inn. His other two daughters are Alice, aged 23, and Vickey who is 21 and 'very pretty': all three daughters are unmarried at the start of the play. Hobson is presented as a self-important, overbearing man who tries hard to dominate his daughters – and his workers.

Hobson has two workers. Willie Mossop is described as 'a lanky fellow, about 30, not naturally stupid but stunted mentally by a brutalised childhood', but he is nevertheless excellent at his job. Tubby Wadlow is 'a white-haired little man with thin legs and a paunch'.

The three daughters all see marriage as their only way out of working in Hobson's shop, and the first part of the play sets up the conditions for them all to marry. Alice is being courted by Albert Prosser ('26, the son of a successful lawyer'); Vickey will marry Freddie Beenstock (a smart, respectable tradesman).

So as not to be left single and running the business, Maggie announces to Willie Mossop out of the blue that she has decided to marry him, which causes consternation since Willie is portrayed as a no-hoper, badly paid by Hobson. Maggie knows that the combination of her determination and Willie's ability as a bootmaker will guarantee their success; so they set up a rival business to Hobson.

With Maggie and Willie gone, Hobson's business rapidly deteriorates. Hobson, incapable of running the shop himself, takes solace in drinking.

At the opening of Act Three, Willie Mossop and Maggie Hobson have just got married.

**Characters**

Henry Horatio Hobson	<i>a bootmaker in Salford, England</i>
Maggie Hobson	<i>his eldest daughter, aged 30</i>
Alice Hobson	<i>his middle daughter, aged 23</i>
Vickey Hobson	<i>his youngest daughter, aged 21</i>
William Mossop	<i>bootmaker, who marries Maggie</i>
Albert Prosser	<i>solicitor, who marries Alice</i>
Freddie Beenstock	<i>tradesman, who marries Vickey</i>
Tubby Wadlow	<i>a bootmaker</i>
Jim Heeler	<i>drinking partner of Hobson</i>
Doctor MacFarlane	<i>a doctor</i>

## ACT THREE

*The cellar in Oldfield Road is at once workroom, shop, and living-room. It is entered from the right corner by a door at the top of a flight of some seven stairs. Its three windows are high up at the back – not shop windows, but simply to give light. Each window has on it ‘William Mossop, Practical Bootmaker’, reversed as seen from the inside, and is illuminated dimly from outside by a neighbouring street lamp.*

5

*A door leads to the bedroom. Upstage left is a small screen or partition whose purpose is to conceal the sink. A shoemaker’s bench, leather and tools are against the wall, above the fire-place. Below the door, left, is a small dresser. Table centre. Seating accommodation consists solely of the sofa and the two chairs taken from Hobson’s, now repaired. The sofa is left of the table. Crowded on the sofa are ALBERT, ALICE, VICKEY, FREDDIE.*

10

*As the curtain rises, the four are standing, tea-cups in hand, saying together: ‘The Bride and Bridegroom.’ They drink and sit. General laughter and conversation. On the chair downstage is MAGGIE. From the other chair, centre, behind table, WILLIE rises, nervously, and rushes his little speech like a child who has learnt a lesson. The table has flowers (in a pudding basin) and the remains of a meal at which tea only (no alcohol) has been drunk, and the feast is represented by the sections of a large pork pie and a small wedding cake. As WILLIE rises, ALBERT hammers on the table. ALICE stops him.*

15

20

WILLIE: It’s a very great pleasure to us to see you here tonight. It’s an honour you do us, and I assure you, speaking for my – my wife, as well as for myself, that the – the –

25

MAGGIE: *(in an undertone)*: Generous.

WILLIE: Oh aye. That’s it. That the generous warmth of the sentiments so cordially expressed by Mr Beenstock and so enthusiastically seconded by – no, I’ve gotten that wrong way round – expressed by Mr Prosser and seconded by Mr Beenstock – will never be forgotten by either my life partner or self – and – and I’d like to drink this toast to you in my own house. Our guests, and may they all be married soon themselves.

30

MAGGIE: *(rising and drinking with Will)*: Our guests.

*WILLIE and MAGGIE sit. General laughter and conversation.*

ALBERT: *(solemnly rising)*: In rising to respond –

35

ALICE: *(tugging his coat and pulling him into his seat)*: Sit down. We’ve had enough of speeches. I know men fancy themselves when they’re talking, but you’ve had one turn and you needn’t start again.

ALBERT: But we ought to thank him, Alice.

ALICE: I dare say. But you’ll not speak as well as he did, so we can leave it with a good ending. I admit you took me by surprise, Will.

40

FREDDIE: Very neat speech indeed.

VICKEY: Who taught you, Will?

WILLIE: I’ve been learning a lot lately.

ALICE: I thought that speech never came natural from Will.

45

MAGGIE: I’m educating him.

FREDDIE: Very apt pupil, I must say.

MAGGIE: He’ll do. Another twenty years and I know which of you three men’ll be thought most of at the Bank.

- FREDDIE: That's looking ahead a bit.
- MAGGIE: I'll admit it needs imagination to see it now.
- ALBERT: Well, the start's all right, you know. Snug little rooms. Shop of your own. And so on. I was wondering where you raised the capital for this, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: I? You mustn't call it my shop. It's his. 55
- ALICE: Do you mean to tell me that Willie found the capital?
- MAGGIE: He's the saving sort.
- ALICE: He must be if you've done this out of what father used to pay him.
- MAGGIE: Well, we haven't. Not altogether. We've had help.
- ALBERT: Ah! 60
- VICKEY: It's a mystery to me where you got it from.
- MAGGIE: Same place as those flowers, Albert.
- ALBERT: Expensive flowers, I see. (*He rises and examines them.*)  
I was wondering where they came from.
- VICKEY and FREDDIE *smell flowers.* 65
- MAGGIE: Same place as the money, Albert.
- ALBERT: Ah!
- ALICE: (*rising*): Well, I think we ought to be getting home, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: (*rising, as do the rest*): I shouldn't marvel. I reckon Tubby's a bit tired of looking after the shop by now, and if father's wakened up and come in – 70
- ALICE: That's it. I'm a bit nervous.
- MAGGIE: He'll have an edge on his temper. Come and put your hats on.  
*She is going with ALICE and VICKEY, then stops.*
- MAGGIE: Willie, we'll need this table when they're gone. You'd better be clearing the pots away. 75
- WILLIE: Yes, Maggie.
- FREDDIE: But – you –
- ALBERT: Oh, Lord!  
*They laugh.* 80
- MAGGIE: (*quite calmly*): And you and Fred can just lend him a hand with the washing-up, Albert.
- FREDDIE: Me – wash pots!
- VICKEY: (*really outraged*): Maggie, we're guests.
- MAGGIE: I know. Only Albert laughed at Willie, and washing up'll maybe make him think on that it's not allowed. 85  
*She ushers ALICE and VICKEY out, and follows. WILLIE begins to put pots on tray which he gets from behind screen.*
- ALBERT: (*after he and FRED have looked at each other, then at WILL, then at each other again*): Are you going to wash up pots? 90
- FREDDIE: Are you?
- ALBERT: I look at it like this myself. All being well, you and I are marrying into this family and we know what Maggie is. If we start giving in to her now, she'll be a nuisance to us all our lives.
- FREDDIE: That's right enough, but there's this plan of hers to get us married. Are you prepared to work it for us? 95
- ALBERT: I'm not. Anything but –
- FREDDIE: Then till she's done it we're to keep the sweet side of Maggie.
- ALBERT: But, washing pots!  
*There is a pause. They look at WILL, who has brought the tray from behind the screen and is now clearing up the table.* 100
- FREDDIE: What would you do in our place, Will?
- WILLIE: Please yourselves. I'm getting on with what she told me.
- FREDDIE: You're married to her. We aren't.

- ALBERT: What do you need the table for in such a hurry?  
 WILLIE: Nay, I'm not in any hurry myself.  
 FREDDIE: Maggie wants it for something.  
 WILLIE: It'll be for my lessons, I reckon. She's schooling me.  
 FREDDIE: And don't you want to learn, then?  
 WILLIE: 'Tisn't that. I – just don't want to be rude to you – turning you out so early. I don't see you need to go away so soon. 110
- ALBERT: Why not?  
 WILLIE: I'm fond of a bit of company.  
 ALBERT: Do you want company on your wedding night?  
 WILLIE: I don't favour your going so soon. 115  
 FREDDIE: He's afraid to be alone with her. That's what it is. He's shy of his wife.  
*They laugh.*
- WILLIE: That's a fact. I've not been married before, you see. I've not been left alone with her, either. Up to now she's been coming round to where I lodged at Tubby Wadlow's to give me my lessons. It's different now, and I admit I'm feeling awkward. I'd be deeply obliged if you would stay on a bit to help to – to thaw the ice for me. 120
- FREDDIE: You've been engaged to her, haven't you?  
 WILLIE: Aye, but it weren't for long. And you see, Maggie's not the sort you get familiar with. 125
- FREDDIE: You had quite long enough to thaw the ice. It's not our job to do your melting for you.
- ALBERT: No. Fred, these pots need washing. We will wash them.  
 ALBERT *carries tray behind screen. Sound of running water. He is seen flourishing towels. FREDDIE is following when WILLIE calls him back and takes tray to table.* 130
- WILLIE: Fred, would you like it yourself with – with a woman like Maggie?  
 FREDDIE: That's not the point. It wasn't me she married.  
 WILLIE: It's that being alone with her that worries me, and I did think you'd stand by a fellow man to make things not so strange at first. 135
- ALBERT: That's not the way we look at it. Hurry up with those cups, Fred.  
 MAGGIE *enters with VICKEY and ALICE, both in outdoor clothes.*
- MAGGIE: Have you broken anything yet, Albert?  
 ALBERT: (*indignantly*): Broken? No. (*Takes cup from tray and wipes it.*)  
 MAGGIE: Too slow to, I expect. 140  
 FREDDIE: I must say you don't show much gratitude.  
 ALBERT: Aren't you all surprised to find us doing this?  
 MAGGIE: Surprised? I told you to do it.  
 FREDDIE: Yes, but –  
 MAGGIE: (*taking towel from him*): You can stop now. I'll finish when you're gone. *Knock at door upstairs.* 145
- ALICE: Who's that?  
 MAGGIE: Someone who can't read, I reckon. You hung that card on door, Will?  
 WILLIE: Aye, it's there. And you wrote it, Maggie.  
 MAGGIE: I knew better than to trust to you. 'Business suspended for the day' it says, and they that can't read it can go on knocking. 150
- HOBSON: (*offstage, upstairs, after another knock*): Are you in, Maggie?  
 VICKEY: (*terrified*): It's father!  
 ALBERT: Oh, Lord!  
 MAGGIE: What's the matter? Are you afraid of him? 155  
 FREDDIE: Well, I think, all things considered, and seeing –  
 MAGGIE: All right. We'll consider 'em. You can go into the bedroom, the lot of you ... No, not you, Willie. The rest. I'll shout when I want you.  
 ALICE: When he's gone.

- MAGGIE: It'll be before he's gone.
- VICKEY: But we don't want –
- MAGGIE: Is this your house or mine?
- VICKEY: It's your cellar.
- MAGGIE: And I'm in charge of it.
- The four go into bedroom. VICKEY starts to argue. ALBERT opens the door. VICKEY and ALICE go out followed by FREDDIE and ALBERT. VICKEY is pushed inside. WILL is going to stairs.* 165
- You sit you still, and don't forget you're master here. I'll open door.
- WILLIE sits in chair above table. MAGGIE goes upstairs and opens the door. Enter HOBSON to top stair.* 170
- HOBSON: *(With some slight apology)*: Well, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: *(uninvitingly)*: Well, father.
- HOBSON: *(without confidence)*: I'll come in.
- MAGGIE: *(standing in his way)*: Well, I don't know. I'll have to ask the master about that. 175
- HOBSON: Eh? The master?
- MAGGIE: You and him didn't part on the best of terms, you know. Will, it's my father. Is he to come in?
- WILLIE: *(loudly and boldly)*: Aye, let him come.
- HOBSON comes downstairs. MAGGIE closes door behind him and follows. HOBSON stares round at the cellar.* 180
- HOBSON: You don't sound cordial about your invitation, young man.
- WILLIE: Nay, but I am. *(Shaking hands for a long time.)* I'm right glad to see you, Mr Hobson. It makes the wedding-day complete-like, you being her father and I – I hope you'll see your way to staying a good long while. 185
- HOBSON: Well –
- MAGGIE: That's enough, Will. You don't need to overdo it. You can sit down for five minutes, father. That sofa'll bear your weight. It's been tested.
- WILLIE: *(taking up teapot)*: There's nothing but tea to drink and I reckon what's in the pot is stewed, so I'll – 190
- MAGGIE: *(taking pot off him as he moves to fire-place with it)*: You'll do nothing of the sort. Father likes his liquids strong.
- WILLIE: A piece of pork pie now, Mr Hobson?
- HOBSON: *(groaning)*: Pork pie! 195
- MAGGIE: *(sharply)*: You'll be sociable now you're here, I hope. *(She pours tea at table, top end.)*
- HOBSON: It wasn't sociability that brought me, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: What was it, then?
- HOBSON: Maggie, I'm in disgrace. A sore and sad misfortune's fallen on me. 200
- MAGGIE: *(cutting)*: Happen a piece of wedding cake'll do you good.
- HOBSON: *(shuddering)*: It's sweet.
- MAGGIE: That's natural in cake.
- MAGGIE sits in chair above table.*
- HOBSON: I've gotten such a head. 205
- MAGGIE: Aye. But wedding cake's a question of heart. There'd be no bride cakes made at all if we thought first about our heads. I'm quite aware it's foolishness, but I've a wish to see my father sitting at my table eating my wedding cake on my wedding-day.
- HOBSON: It's a very serious thing I came about, Maggie. 210
- MAGGIE: It's not more serious than knowing that you wish us well.

- HOBSON: Well, Maggie, you know my way. When a thing's done it's done. You had your way and done what you wanted. I'm none too proud of the choice you made and I'll not lie and say I am, but I've shaken your husband's hand, and that's a sign for you. The milk's spilt and I'll not cry.
- MAGGIE: (*holding plate*): Then there's your cake, and you can eat it.
- HOBSON: I've given you my word there's no ill feeling. (*Pushes cake away.*)
- MAGGIE: So now eat the cake. (*Pushes it back.*)
- HOBSON: You're a hard woman. (*He eats.*) You've no consideration for the weakness of old age. 220
- MAGGIE: Finished?
- HOBSON: Pass me that tea.  
*She passes: he drinks.*
- HOBSON: That's easier. 225
- MAGGIE: Now tell me what it is you came about.
- HOBSON: I'm in sore trouble, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: (*rising and going towards the door*): Then I'll leave you with my husband to talk it over.
- HOBSON: Eh? 230
- MAGGIE: You'll not be wanting me. Women are only in your way.
- HOBSON: (*rising*): Maggie, you're not going to desert me in the hour of my need, are you?
- MAGGIE: Surely to goodness you don't want a woman to help you after all you've said! Will'll do his best, I make no doubt. (*She goes towards the door.*) Give me a call when you've finished, Will. 235
- HOBSON: (*following her*): Maggie! It's private.
- MAGGIE: Why, yes. I'm going and you can discuss it man to man with no fools of women about.
- HOBSON: I tell you I've come to see you, not him. It's private from him. 240
- MAGGIE: Private from Will? Nay, it isn't. Will's in the family and you've nothing to say to me that can't be said to him.
- HOBSON: I've to tell you this with him there?
- MAGGIE: Will and me's one.
- WILLIE: Sit down, Mr Hobson. 245
- MAGGIE: You call him father now.
- WILLIE: (*astonished*): Do I?
- HOBSON: Does he?
- MAGGIE: He does. Sit down, Will.  
*WILLIE sits right of table. MAGGIE stands at the head of the table. HOBSON sits on sofa.*
- MAGGIE: Now, if you're ready, father, we are. What's the matter?
- HOBSON: That – (*producing the blue paper*) – that's the matter.  
*MAGGIE accepts and passes it to WILL and goes behind his chair. He is reading upside down. She bends over chair and turns it right way up.* 255
- MAGGIE: What is it, Will?
- HOBSON: (*banging on table*): Ruin, Maggie, that's what it is! Ruin and bankruptcy. Am I vicar's warden at St Philip's or am I not? Am I Hobson of Hobson's Boot Shop on Chapel Street, Salford? Am I a respectable ratepayer and the father of a family or – 260
- MAGGIE: (*who has been reading over WILL's shoulder*): It's an action for damages for trespass, I see.
- HOBSON: It's a stab in the back; it's an unfair, un-English, cowardly way of taking a mean advantage of a casual accident. 265
- MAGGIE: Did you trespass?



- HOBSON: Maggie, I say it solemnly, it is all your fault. I had an accident. I don't deny it. I'd been in the 'Moonraker's' and I'd stayed too long. And why? Why did I stay too long? To try to forget that I'd a thankless child, to erase from memory the recollection of your conduct. That was the cause of it. And the result, the blasting, withering result? I fell into that cellar. I slept in that cellar and I awoke to this catastrophe. Lawyers . . . law-costs . . . publicity . . . ruin.
- MAGGIE: I'm still asking you. Was it an accident? Or did you trespass?
- HOBSON: It's an accident. As plain as Salford Town Hall it's an accident, but they that live by law have twisted ways of putting things that make white show as black. I'm in their grip at last. I've kept away from lawyers all my life, I've hated lawyers, and they've got their chance to make me bleed for it. I've dodged them, and they've caught me in the end. They'll squeeze me dry for it. 275
- WILLIE: My word, and that is a squeeze.
- HOBSON *stares at him*. 280
- MAGGIE: I can see it's serious. I shouldn't wonder if you didn't lose some trade from this.
- HOBSON: Wonder! It's as certain as Christmas. My good-class customers are not going to buy their boots from a man who's stood up in open court and had to acknowledge he was overcome at 12 o'clock in the morning. They'll not remember it was private grief that caused it all. They'll only think the worse of me because I couldn't control my daughter better than to let her go and be the cause of sorrow to me in my age. That's what you've done. Brought this on me, you two, between you. 285
- WILLIE: Do you think it will get into the paper, Maggie?
- MAGGIE: Yes, for sure. You'll see your name in the *Salford Reporter*, father.
- HOBSON: *Salford Reporter!* Yes, and more. When there is ruin and disaster, and outrageous fortune overwhelms a man of my importance to the world, it isn't only the *Salford Reporter* that takes note of it. This awful luck that's come to me will be reported in the *Manchester Guardian* for the whole of Lancashire to read. 290
- WILLIE: Eh, by gum, think of that! To have your name appearing in the *Guardian!* Why, it's very near worth while to be ruined for the pleasure of reading about yourself in a printed paper. 300
- HOBSON: (*sits on sofa*): It's there for others to read besides me, my lad.
- WILLIE: Aye, you're right. I didn't think of that. This'll give a lot of satisfaction to many I could name. Other people's troubles is mostly what folks read the paper for, and I reckon it's twice the pleasure to them when it's trouble of a man they know themselves. (*He is perfectly simple and has no malicious intention.*) 305
- HOBSON: To hear you talk it sounds like a pleasure to you.
- WILLIE: (*sincerely*): Nay, it's not. You've ate my wedding cake and you've shook my hand. We're friends, I hope, and I were only meditating like a friend. I always think it's best to look on the worst side of things first, then whatever chances can't be worse than you looked for. There's St Philip's now. I don't suppose you'll go on being vicar's warden after this business, and it brought you a powerful lot of customers from the church, did that. 315
- HOBSON: (*turning to her*): I'm getting a lot of comfort from your husband, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: It's about what you deserve.
- HOBSON: Have you got any more consolation for me, Will?
- WILLIE: (*aggrieved*): I've only spoken what came into my mind. 320
- HOBSON: Well, have you spoken it all?

- WILLIE: I can keep my mouth shut if you'd rather.
- HOBSON: Don't strain yourself, Will Mossop. When a man's mind is full of thoughts like yours, they're better out than in. You let them come, lad. They'll leave a cleaner place behind.
- WILLIE: I'm not much good at talking, and I always seem to say wrong things when I do talk. I'm sorry if my well-meant words don't suit your taste, but I thought you came here for advice.
- HOBSON: I didn't come to you, you jumped-up – (*Rising.*)
- MAGGIE: That'll do, father. (*Pushes him down.*) My husband's trying to help you. 330
- HOBSON: (*glares impatiently for a time, then meekly says*): Yes, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: Now about this accident of yours.
- HOBSON: Yes, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: It's the publicity that you're afraid of most. 335
- HOBSON: It's being dragged into a court of law at all, me that's voted right all through my life and been a sound supporter of the Queen and Constitution.
- MAGGIE: Then we must try to keep it out of court.
- HOBSON: If there are lawyers in Heaven, Maggie, which I doubt, they may keep cases out of courts there. On earth a lawyer's job's to squeeze a man and squeeze him where his squirming's seen the most – in court.
- MAGGIE: I've heard of cases being settled out of court, in private.
- HOBSON: In private? Yes, I dare say, and all the worse for that. It's done amongst themselves in lawyers' offices behind closed doors so no-one can see they're squeezing twice as hard in private as they'd dare to do in public. There's some restraint demanded by a public place, but privately! It'll cost a fortune to settle this in private, Maggie. 345
- MAGGIE: I make no doubt it's going to cost you something, but you'd rather do it privately than publicly? 350
- HOBSON: If only it were not a lawyer's office.
- MAGGIE: You can settle it with the lawyer out of his office. You can settle with him here.  
*She goes and opens door.*
- MAGGIE: Albert! 355  
*Enter ALBERT, who leaves door open.*
- MAGGIE: This is Mr Prosser, of Prosser, Pilkington, and Prosser.
- HOBSON: (*amazed*): He is!
- MAGGIE: Yes.
- HOBSON: (*incredulously, rising*): You're a lawyer? 360
- ALBERT: Yes, I'm a lawyer.
- HOBSON: (*with disgust almost too deep for words*): At your age!
- MAGGIE: (*going up to door*): Come out, all of you.  
*There is reluctance inside, then VICKEY, ALICE and FREDDIE enter and stand in a row.* 365
- HOBSON: Alice! Vickey!
- MAGGIE: Family gathering. This is Mr Beenstock, of Beenstock & Co.
- FREDDIE: How do you do?
- HOBSON: What! Here!  
*The situation is plainly beyond his bemused brain's capacity.* 370
- MAGGIE: When you've got a thing to settle, you need all the parties to be present.
- HOBSON: But there are so many of them. Where have they all come from?
- MAGGIE: My bedroom.
- HOBSON: Your—? Maggie, I wish you'd explain before my brain gives way. 375
- MAGGIE: It's quite simple. I got them here because I expected you.

- HOBSON: You expected me?
- MAGGIE: Yes. You're in trouble.
- HOBSON: (*shaking his head, then as if finding an outlet, pouncing on ALICE*): What's it got to do with Alice and Vickey? What are they doing here? What's happening to the shop?
- ALICE: Tubby Wadlow's looking after it.
- HOBSON: And is it Tubby's job to look after the shop?
- VICKEY: He'd got no other job. The shop's so slack since Maggie left.
- HOBSON: (*swelling with rage*): And do you run that shop? Do you give orders there? Do you decide when you can put your hats on and walk out of it? 385
- MAGGIE: They come out because it's my wedding-day, father. It's reason enough, and Will and me'll do the same for them. We'll close the shop and welcome on their wedding-days. 390
- HOBSON: Their wedding-days! That's a long time off. It'll be many a year before there's another wedding in this family, I give you my word. (*Turns to MAGGIE.*) One daughter defying me is quite enough.
- ALBERT: Hadn't we better get to business, sir?
- HOBSON: (*turning on him*): Young man, don't abuse a noble word. You're a lawyer. By your own admission you're a lawyer. Honest men live by business and lawyers live by law. 395
- ALBERT: In this matter, sir, I am following the instructions of my client, Mr Beenstock, and the remark you have just let fall, before witnesses, appears to me to bear a libellous reflection on the action of my client. 400
- HOBSON: What! So it's libel now. Isn't trespass and ... and spying on trade secrets enough for you, you blood-sucking –
- ALBERT: One moment, Mr Hobson. You can call me what you like –
- HOBSON: And I shall. You –
- ALBERT: But I wish to remind you, in your own interests, that abuse of a lawyer is remembered in the costs. Now, my client tells me he is prepared to settle this matter out of court. Personally, I don't advise him to, because we should probably get higher damages in court. But Mr Beenstock has no desire to be vindictive. He remembers your position, your reputation for respectability, and – 405
- HOBSON: How much?
- ALBERT: Er – I beg your pardon?
- HOBSON: I'm not so fond of the sound of your voice as you are. What's the figure?
- ALBERT: The sum we propose, which will include my ordinary costs, but not any additional costs incurred by your use of defamatory language to me, is one thousand pounds. 410
- HOBSON: What!
- MAGGIE: It isn't.
- HOBSON: One thousand pounds for tumbling down a cellar! Why, I might have broken my leg. 420
- ALBERT: That is in the nature of an admission, Mr Hobson. Our flour bags saved your legs from fracture and I am therefore inclined to add to the sum I have stated a reasonable estimate of the doctor's bill we have saved you by protecting your legs with our bags. 425
- MAGGIE: Eh, Albert Prosser, I can see you're going to get on in the world, but you needn't be greedy here. That one thousand's too much.
- ALBERT: We thought –
- MAGGIE: Then you can think again.
- FREDDIE: But – 430
- MAGGIE: If there are any more signs of greediness from you two, there'll be a

- counter-action for personal damages due to your criminal carelessness in leaving your cellar flap open.
- HOBSON: Maggie, you've saved me. I'll bring that action. I'll show them up.
- MAGGIE: You're not damaged, and one lawyer's quite enough. But he'll be more reasonable now. I know perfectly well what father can afford to pay, and it's not a thousand pounds nor anything like a thousand pounds.
- HOBSON: Not so much of your can't afford, Maggie. You'll make me out a pauper.
- MAGGIE: You can afford five hundred pounds and you're going to pay five hundred pounds. 440
- HOBSON: Oh, but ... there's a difference between affording and paying.
- MAGGIE: You can go to the courts and be reported in the papers if you like.
- HOBSON: It's the principle I care about. I'm being beaten by a lawyer.
- VICKEY: Father, dear, how can you be beaten when they wanted a thousand pounds and you're only going to give five hundred pounds? 445
- HOBSON: I hadn't thought of that.
- VICKEY: It's they who are beaten.
- HOBSON: I'd take a good few beatings myself at the price, Vickey. Still, I want this keeping out of court. 450
- ALBERT: Then we can take it as settled?
- HOBSON: Do you want to see the money before you believe me? Is that your nasty lawyer's way?
- ALBERT: Not at all, Mr Hobson. Your word is as good as your bond.
- VICKEY: It's settled! It's settled! Hurrah! Hurrah! 455
- HOBSON: Well, I don't see what you have to cheer about, Vickey. I'm not to be dragged to public scorn, but you know this is a tidy bit of money to be going out of the family.
- MAGGIE: It's not going out of the family, father.
- HOBSON: I don't see how you make it out. 460
- MAGGIE: Their wedding-day is not so far off as you thought, now there's a half of five hundred pounds apiece for them to make a start on.  
ALBERT *and* ALICE, FREDDIE *and* VICKEY *stand arm in arm.*
- HOBSON: You mean to tell me –
- MAGGIE: You won't forget you've passed your word, will you, father? 465
- HOBSON: (*rising*): I've been swindled. It's a plant. It –
- MAGGIE: It takes two daughters off your hands at once, and clears your shop of all the fools of women that used to clog up the place.
- ALICE: It will be much easier for you without us in your way, father.
- HOBSON: Aye, and you can keep out of my way and all. Do you hear that, all of you? 470
- VICKEY: Father ...!
- HOBSON: (*picking up his hat*): I'll run that shop with men and – and I'll show Salford how it should be run. Don't you imagine there'll be room for you when you come home crying and tired of your fine husbands. I'm rid of you, and it's a lasting riddance, mind. I'll pay this money, that you've robbed me of, and that's the end of it. All of you. You, especially, Maggie. I'm not blind yet, and I can see who 'tis I've got to thank for this. (*He goes to foot of stairs.*) 475
- MAGGIE: Don't be vicious, father. 480
- HOBSON: Will Mossop, I'm sorry for you. (*Over banisters.*) Take you for all in all, you're the best of the bunch. You're a backward lad, but you know your trade and it's an honest one.  
HOBSON *is going up the stairs.*
- ALICE: So does my Albert know his trade. 485
- HOBSON: (*half-way up stairs*): I'll grant you that. He knows his trade. He's good

- at robbery. (ALICE *shows great indignation*). And I've to have it on my conscience that my daughter's wed a lawyer and an employer of lawyers.
- VICKEY: It didn't worry your conscience to keep us serving in the shop at no wages.
- HOBSON: I kept you, didn't I? It's someone else's job to feed you in future. Aye, you may grin, you two, but girls don't live on air. Your penny buns'll cost you tuppence now – and more. Wait till the families begin to come. Don't come to me for keep, that's all. (*Going.*) 495
- ALICE: Father!
- HOBSON: (*turning*): Aye, you may father me. But that's a piece of work I've finished with. I've done with fathering, and they're beginning it. They'll know what marrying a woman means before so long. They're putting chains upon themselves and I have thrown the shackles off. I've suffered thirty years and more and I'm a free man from today. Lord, what a thing you're taking on! You poor, poor wretches. You're red-nosed robbers, but you're going to pay for it. 500  
*He opens door and exits.*
- MAGGIE: You'd better arrange to get married quick. Alice and Vickey will have a sweet time with him. 505
- FREDDIE: Can they go home at all?
- MAGGIE: Why not?
- FREDDIE: After what he said?
- MAGGIE: He'll not remember half of it. He's for the 'Moonraker's' now – if there's time. What is the time? 510
- ALBERT: Time we were going, Maggie; you'll be glad to see the back of us. (*He shows MAGGIE his watch.*)
- WILLIE: No. No. I wouldn't dream of asking you to go.
- MAGGIE: (*moving up to get hats*): Then I would. It's high time we turned you out. There are your hats. 515  
*She gets ALBERT's and FRED's hats from rack.*
- MAGGIE: Good night.  
ALBERT and FREDDIE *go upstairs.*
- MAGGIE: Good night, Vickey. 520
- VICKEY: (*with a quick kiss*): Good night, Maggie.  
VICKEY *goes upstairs. She and FREDDIE go out.*
- MAGGIE: Good night, Alice.
- ALICE: Good night, Maggie. (*The same quick kiss.*) And thank you.
- MAGGIE: Oh, that! (*She goes with her to stairs.*) I'll see you again soon, only don't come round here too much, because Will and me's going to be busy and you'll maybe find enough to do yourselves with getting wed. 525
- ALICE: I dare say. (*Upstairs.*)  
*The general exit is continuous, punctuated with laughter and merry 'Good nights!'* 530
- MAGGIE: Send us word when the day is.
- ALBERT: We'll be glad to see you at the wedding.
- MAGGIE: We'll come to that. You'll be too grand for us afterwards.
- ALBERT: Oh, no, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: Well, maybe we'll be catching up with you before so long. We're only starting here. Good night. 535
- ALBERT }  
ALICE } : Good night, Maggie.  
*They go out, closing door. MAGGIE turns to WILL, putting her hands on his shoulders. He starts.*
- MAGGIE: Now you've heard what I've said of you tonight. In twenty years you're going to be thought more of than either of your brothers is now. 540

- WILLIE: I heard you say it, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: And we're to make it good. I'm not a boaster, Will. And it's to be in less than twenty years, and all.
- WILLIE: Well, I dunno. They've a long start on us.
- MAGGIE: And you've got me. Your slate's in the bedroom. Bring it out. I'll have this table clear by the time you come back.  
*She bustles off the last remains of the meal, putting the flowers on the mantel and takes off cloth, placing it over the back of a chair. WILL goes to bedroom and returns with a slate and slate pencil. The slate is covered with writing. He puts it on table.* 550
- MAGGIE: Off with your Sunday coat now. You don't want to make a mess of that.  
*He takes coat off and gets rag from behind screen and brings it back to table.* 555
- What are you doing with that mopping rag?
- WILLIE: I was going to wash out what's on the slate.
- MAGGIE: Let me see it first. That's what you did last night at Tubby's after I came here?
- WILLIE: Yes, Maggie. 560
- MAGGIE: (*reading*): 'There is always room at the top.' (*Washing it out.*) Your writing's improving, Will. I'll set you a short copy for tonight, because it's getting late and we've a lot to do in the morning. (*Writing.*) 'Great things grow from small.' Now, then, you can sit down here and copy that. 565  
*He takes her place at the table. MAGGIE watches a moment, then goes to fire-place and fingers the flowers.*
- I'll put these flowers of Mrs Hepworth's on the fire, Will. We'll not want litter in the place come working time tomorrow.  
*She takes up basin, stops, looks at WILL, who is bent over his slate, and takes a flower out, throwing the rest on the fire and going to bedroom with one.* 570
- WILLIE: (*looking up*): You're saving one.
- MAGGIE: (*caught in an act of sentiment and apologetically*): I thought I'd press it in my Bible for a keepsake, Will. I'm not beyond liking to be reminded of this day. 575  
*She looks at screen and yawns.*
- MAGGIE: Lord, I'm tired. I reckon I'll leave those pots till morning. It's a slackish way of starting, but I don't get married every day.
- WILLIE: (*industrious at his slate*): No. 580
- MAGGIE: I'm for my bed. You finish that copy before you come.
- WILLIE: Yes, Maggie.  
*Exit MAGGIE to bedroom, with the flower. She closes door, WILL copies, repeats letters and words as he writes them slowly, finishes, then rises and rakes out fire. He looks shyly at bedroom door, sits and takes his boots off. He rises, boots in hand, moves towards door, hesitates, and turns back, puts boots down at door, then returns to table and takes off his collar. Then hesitates again, finally makes up his mind, puts out light, and lies down on sofa with occasional glances at the bedroom door. At first he faces the fire. He is uncomfortable.* 585  
*He turns over and faces the door. In a minute MAGGIE opens the bedroom door. She has a candle and is in a plain calico night-dress. She comes to WILL, shines the light on him, takes him by the ear, and returns with him to bedroom.* 590

CURTAIN

## ACT FOUR

*The scene represents HOBSON's living-room. From inside the room the door that leads to the shop is on the left, the opposite wall having the fire-place and another door to the house.*

*It is eight o'clock on a morning a year later.*

*In front of the fire-place is an arm-chair. Chairs to match are at the table. There are coloured prints of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort on the walls on each side of the door at the back and a plain one of Lord Beaconsfield over the fire-place. The decoration is quaintly ugly. It is an overcrowded, 'cosy' room. HOBSON is quite contented with it, and doesn't realize that it is at present very dirty.*

600

*TUBBY WADLOW is cooking bacon at the fire. He is simultaneously laying breakfast for one on the table. At both proceedings he is a puzzled and incompetent amateur. Presently the left door opens, and JIM HEELER appears.*

605

*Enter HOBSON, unshaven, without collar.*

JIM: *(with cheerful sympathy):* Well, Henry! 610

HOBSON: *(with acute melancholy and self-pity):* Oh, Jim! Oh, Jim! Oh, Jim!

TUBBY: Will you sit on the arm-chair by the fire or at the table?

HOBSON: The table? Breakfast? Bacon? Bacon, and I'm like this.

*JIM assists him to arm-chair.*

JIM: When a man's like this he wants a woman about the house, Henry. 615

HOBSON: *(sitting):* I'll want then.

TUBBY: Shall I go for Miss Maggie, sir? – Mrs Mossop, I mean.

JIM: I think your daughters should be here.

HOBSON: They should. Only they're not. They're married, and I'm deserted by them all and I'll die deserted, then perhaps they'll be sorry for the way they've treated me. Tubby, have you got no work to do in the shop? 620

TUBBY: I might find some if I looked hard.

HOBSON: Then go and look. And take that bacon with you. I don't like the smell.

TUBBY: *(getting bacon):* Are you sure you wouldn't like Miss Maggie here? I'll go for her and – *(He holds the bacon very close to HOBSON's face.)* 625

HOBSON: Oh, go for her. Go for the Devil. What does it matter who you go for? I'm a dying man.

*TUBBY takes bacon and goes out.*

JIM: What's all this talk about dying, Henry?

HOBSON: Oh, Jim! Oh, Jim! I've sent for the doctor. We'll know soon how near the end is. 630

JIM: Well, this is very sudden. You've never been ill in your life.

HOBSON: It's been saved up, and all come now at once.

JIM: What are your symptoms, Henry?

HOBSON: I'm all one symptom, head to foot. I'm frightened of myself, Jim. That's worse. You *would* call me a clean man, Jim? 635

JIM: Clean? Of course I would. Clean in body and mind.

HOBSON: I'm dirty now. I haven't washed this morning. Couldn't face the water. The only use I saw for water was to drown myself. The same with shaving. I've thrown my razor through the window. Had to or I'd have cut my throat. 640

JIM: Oh, come, come.

HOBSON: It's awful. I'll never trust myself again. I'm going to grow a beard – if I live.

- JIM: You'll cheat the undertaker, Henry, but I fancy a doctor could improve you. What do you reckon is the cause of it now? 65
- HOBSON: 'Moonraker's'.
- JIM: You don't think –
- HOBSON: I don't think. I know. I've seen it happen to others, but I never thought that it would come to me. 650
- JIM: Nor me, neither. You're not a heavy drinker, Henry. I grant you're regular, but you don't exceed. It's a hard thing if a man can't take a drop of ale without it getting back at him like this. Why, it might be my turn next.
- TUBBY *enters, showing in* DOCTOR MACFARLANE, *a domineering Scotsman of fifty.* 655
- TUBBY: Here's Doctor MacFarlane.  
*Exit* TUBBY.
- DOCTOR: Good morning, gentlemen. Where's my patient?  
*(He puts hat on table.)* 660
- JIM: *(speaking without indicating HOBSON):* Here. *(He does not rise.)*
- DOCTOR: Here? Up?
- HOBSON: Looks like it.
- DOCTOR: And for a patient who's downstairs I'm made to rise from my bed at this hour? 665
- JIM: It's not so early as all that.
- DOCTOR: But I've been up all night, sir. Young woman with her first. Are you Mr Hobson?
- JIM: *(quickly):* Certainly not. I'm not ill.
- DOCTOR: Hum. Not much to choose between you. You've both got your fate written on your faces. 670
- JIM: Do you mean that I –?
- DOCTOR: I mean he has and you will.
- HOBSON: Doctor, will you attend to me?
- DOCTOR: Yes. Now, sir. *(He sits by him and holds his wrist.)* 675
- HOBSON: I've never been in a bad way before this morning. Never wanted a doctor in my life.
- DOCTOR: You've needed. But you've not sent.
- HOBSON: But this morning –
- DOCTOR: I know – well. 680
- HOBSON: What! You know!
- DOCTOR: Any fool would know.
- HOBSON: Eh?
- DOCTOR: Any fool but one fool and that's yourself.
- HOBSON: You're damned polite. 685
- DOCTOR: If you want flattery, I dare say you can get it from your friend. I'm giving you my medical opinion.
- HOBSON: I want your opinion on my complaint, not on my character.
- DOCTOR: Your complaint and your character are the same.
- HOBSON: Then you'll kindly separate them and you'll tell me – 690
- DOCTOR: *(rising and taking up hat):* I'll tell you nothing, sir. I don't diagnose as my patients wish, but as my intellect and sagacity direct. Good morning to you.
- JIM: But you have not diagnosed.
- DOCTOR: Sir, if I am to interview a patient in the presence of a third party, the least the third party can do is keep his mouth shut. 695
- JIM: After that, there's only one thing for it. He shifts or I do.
- HOBSON: You'd better go, Jim.
- JIM: There are other doctors, Henry.



- HOBSON: I'll keep this one, I've got to teach him a lesson. Scotchmen can't come over Salford lads this way.
- JIM: If that's it, I'll leave you.
- HOBSON: That's it. I can bully as well as a foreigner.  
*JIM goes out.*
- DOCTOR: That's better, Mr Hobson. (*He puts hat down.*) 705
- HOBSON: If I'm better, you've not had much to do with it.
- DOCTOR: I think my calculated rudeness –
- HOBSON: If you calculate your fees at the same rate as your rudeness, they'll be high.
- DOCTOR: I calculate by time, Mr Hobson, so we'd better get to business. Will you unbutton your shirt? 710
- HOBSON: (*doing it*): No hanky-panky now.
- DOCTOR: (*ignoring his remark and examining*): Aye. It just confirms ma first opinion. Y've had a breakdown this morning?
- HOBSON: You might say so. 715
- DOCTOR: Melancholic? Depressed?
- HOBSON: (*buttoning shirt*): Question was whether the razor would beat me, or I'd beat razor. I won, that time. The razor's in the yard. But I'll never dare to try shaving myself again.
- DOCTOR: And do you seriously require me to tell you the cause, Mr Hobson? 720
- HOBSON: I'm paying thee cash to tell me.
- DOCTOR: Chronic alcoholism, if you know what that means.
- HOBSON: Aye.
- DOCTOR: A serious case.
- HOBSON: I know it's serious. What do you think you're here for? It isn't to tell me something I know already. It's to cure me. 725
- DOCTOR: Very well. I will write you a prescription. (*Produces notebook. Sits at table and writes with a pencil.*)
- HOBSON: Stop that!
- DOCTOR: I beg your pardon. 730
- HOBSON: I won't take it. None of your druggist's muck for me. I'm particular about what I put into my stomach.
- DOCTOR: Mr Hobson, if you don't mend your manners, I'll certify you for a lunatic asylum. Are you aware that you've drunk yourself within six months of the grave? You'd a warning this morning that any sane man would listen to and you're going to listen to it, sir. 735
- HOBSON: By taking your prescription?
- DOCTOR: Precisely. You will take this mixture, Mr Hobson, and you will practise total abstinence for the future.
- HOBSON: You ask me to give up my reasonable refreshment! 740
- DOCTOR: I forbid alcohol absolutely.
- HOBSON: Much use your forbidding is. I've had my liquor for as long as I remember, and I'll have it to the end. If I'm to be beaten by beer I'll die fighting, and I'm not practising unnatural teetotalism for the sake of lengthening out my unalcoholic days. Life's got to be worth living before I'll live it. 745
- DOCTOR: (*rising and taking hat again*): If that's the way you talk, my services are of no use to you.
- HOBSON: They're not. I'll pay you on the nail for this. (*Rising and sorting money from pocket.*) 750
- DOCTOR: I congratulate you on the impulse, Mr Hobson.
- HOBSON: Nay, it's a fair deal, doctor. I've had value. You've been a tonic to me. When I got up I never thought to see the 'Moonraker's' again, but I'm ready for my early morning draught this minute. (*Holds out money.*)

- DOCTOR: (*putting hat down, moving to HOBSON and talking earnestly*): M... 75  
will ye no be warned? Ye pig-headed animal, alcohol is poison to ye,  
deadly, virulent with a system in the state yours is.
- HOBSON: You're getting warm about it. Will you take your fee?  
(*Holding out money.*)
- DOCTOR: Yes. When I've earned it. Put it in your pocket, Mr Hobson. I hae na 760  
finished with ye yet.
- HOBSON: I thought you had.
- DOCTOR: Do you know that you're defying me? You'll die fighting, will you? Aye, it's  
a gay, high-sounding sentiment, ma mannie, but you'll no do it, do you  
hear? You'll not slip from me now. I've got ma grip on you. You'll die sober, 765  
and you'll live the longest time you can before you die. Have you a wife,  
Mr Hobson?  
HOBSON *points upward.*  
In bed?
- HOBSON: Higher than that. 770
- DOCTOR: It's a pity. A man like you should keep a wife handy.
- HOBSON: I'm not so partial to women.
- DOCTOR: Women are a necessity, sir. Have ye no female relative that can  
manage you? 775
- HOBSON: Manage?
- DOCTOR: Keep her thumb firm on you?
- HOBSON: I've got three daughters, Doctor MacFarlane, and they tried to keep  
their thumbs on me.
- DOCTOR: Well? Where are they?
- HOBSON: Married – and queerly married. 780
- DOCTOR: You drove them to it.
- HOBSON: They all grew uppish. Maggie worst of all.
- DOCTOR: Maggie? Then I'll tell ye what ye'll do, Mr Hobson.  
You will get Maggie back. At any price. At all costs to your pride, as your  
medical man I order you to get Maggie back. I don't know Maggie, but 785  
I prescribe her, and – damn you, sir, are you going to defy me again!
- HOBSON: I tell you I won't have it.
- DOCTOR: You'll have to have it. You're a dunderheaded lump of obstinacy, but  
I've taken a fancy to you and I decline to let you kill yerself.
- HOBSON: I've escaped from the slavery of women once, and – 790
- DOCTOR: And a pretty mess you've made of your liberty. Now this Maggie you  
mention – if you'll tell me where she's to be found, I'll just step round  
and have a chat with her maself, for I've gone beyond the sparing of a  
bit of trouble over you.
- HOBSON: You'll waste your time. 795
- DOCTOR: I'll cure you, Mr Hobson.
- HOBSON: She won't come back.
- DOCTOR: Oh. Now that's a possibility. If she's a sensible body I concur with your  
opinion she'll no come back, but women are a soft-hearted race and  
she'll maybe take pity on you after all. 800
- HOBSON: I want no pity.
- DOCTOR: If she's the woman that I take her for you'll get no pity. You'll get  
discipline.  
HOBSON *rises and tries to speak.*
- DOCTOR: Don't interrupt me, sir. I'm talking. 805
- HOBSON: I've noticed it. (*Sits.*)
- DOCTOR: You asked me for a cure, and Maggie's the name of the cure you need.  
Maggie, sir, do you hear? Maggie!  
*Enter MAGGIE in outdoor clothes.*

- MAGGIE: What about me?
- DOCTOR: (*staggered, then*): Are you Maggie?
- MAGGIE: I'm Maggie.
- DOCTOR: You'll do.
- HOBSON: (*getting his breath*): What are you doing under my roof?
- MAGGIE: I've come because I was fetched. 815
- HOBSON: Who fetched you?
- MAGGIE: Tubby Wadlow.
- HOBSON: (*rising*): Tubby can quit my shop this minute.
- DOCTOR: (*putting him back*): Sit down, Mr Hobson.
- MAGGIE: He said you're dangerously ill. 820
- DOCTOR: He is. I'm Doctor MacFarlane. Will you come and live here again?
- MAGGIE: I'm married.
- DOCTOR: I know that, Mrs –
- MAGGIE: Mossop.
- DOCTOR: Your father's drinking himself to death, Mrs Mossop. 825
- HOBSON: Look here, Doctor, what's passed between you and me isn't for everybody's ears.
- DOCTOR: I judge your daughter's not the sort to want the truth wrapped round with a feather-bed for fear it hits her hard.
- MAGGIE: (*nodding appreciatively*): Go on. I'd like to hear it all. 830
- HOBSON: Just nasty-minded curiosity.
- DOCTOR: I don't agree with you, Mr Hobson. If Mrs Mossop is to sacrifice her own home to come to you, she's every right to know the reason why.
- HOBSON: Sacrifice! If you saw her home you'd find another word than that. Two cellars in Oldfield Road. 835
- MAGGIE: I'm waiting, Doctor.
- DOCTOR: I've a constitutional objection to seeing patients slip through ma fingers when it's avoidable, Mrs Mossop, and I'll do ma best for your father, but ma medicine won't do him any good without your medicine to back me up. He needs a tight hand on him all the time. 840
- MAGGIE: I've not same chance I had before I married.
- DOCTOR: Ye'll have no chance at all unless you come and live here. I won't talk about the duty of a daughter because I doubt he's acted badly by you, but on the broad grounds of humanity, it's saving life if you'll come –
- MAGGIE: I might. 845
- DOCTOR: Nay, but will ye?
- MAGGIE: You've told me what you think. The rest's my business.
- HOBSON: That's right, Maggie. (*To DOCTOR.*) That's what you get for interfering with folks' private affairs. So now you can go, with your tail between your legs, Doctor MacFarlane. 850
- DOCTOR: On the contrary, I am going, Mr Hobson, with the profound conviction that I leave you in excellent hands. One prescription is on the table, Mrs Mossop. The other two are total abstinence and – you.
- MAGGIE: (*nodding amiably*): Good morning.
- DOCTOR: Good morning. 855  
*Exit DOCTOR. MAGGIE picks up prescription and follows to door.*
- MAGGIE: Tubby!
- She stands by door, TUBBY just enters inside it.*
- MAGGIE: Go round to Oldfield Road and ask my husband to come here and get this made up at Hallow's on your way back. 860
- TUBBY: Yes, Miss – Mrs Mossop.
- MAGGIE: Tell Mr Mossop that I want him quick.  
TUBBY *nods and goes.*

- HOBSON: Maggie, you know I can't be an abstainer. A man of my habits. At  
time of life.
- MAGGIE: You can if I come here to make you.
- HOBSON: Are you coming?
- MAGGIE: I don't know yet. I haven't asked my husband.
- HOBSON: You ask Will Mossop! Maggie, I'd better thoughts of you. Making an  
excuse like that to me. If you want to come you'll come no matter what 870  
Will Mossop says, and well you know it.
- MAGGIE: I don't want to come, father. I expect no holiday existence here with  
you to keep in health. But if Will tells me it's my duty I shall come.
- HOBSON: You know as well as I do asking Will's a matter of form.
- MAGGIE: Matter of form! My husband a matter of form! He's the – 875
- HOBSON: I dare say, but he is not the man that wears the trousers at your  
house.
- MAGGIE: My husband's my husband, father, whatever else he is. And my home's  
my home and all, and what you said of it now to Doctor MacFarlane's 880  
a thing you'll pay for. It's no gift to a married woman to come back to  
the home she's left.
- HOBSON: Look here, Maggie, you're talking straight and I'll talk straight and all.  
When I'm set I'm set. You're coming here. I didn't want you when that  
doctor said it, but, by gum, I want you now. It's been my daughters' 885  
hobby crossing me. Now you'll come and look after me.
- MAGGIE: All of us?
- HOBSON: No. Not all of you. You're eldest.
- MAGGIE: There's another man with claims on me.
- HOBSON: I'll give him claims. Aren't I your father?  
ALICE enters. She is rather elaborately dressed for so early in the day, 890  
and languidly haughty.
- MAGGIE: And I'm not your only daughter.
- ALICE: You been here long, Maggie?
- MAGGIE: A while.
- ALICE: Ah, well, a fashionable solicitor's wife doesn't rise so early as the wife 895  
of a working cobbler. You'd be up when Tubby came.
- MAGGIE: A couple of hours earlier.
- ALICE: You're looking all right, father. You've quite a colour.
- HOBSON: I'm very ill.
- MAGGIE: He's not so well, Alice. The doctor says one of us must come and live 900  
here to look after him.
- ALICE: I live in the Crescent myself.
- MAGGIE: I've heard it was that way on. Somebody's home will have to go.
- ALICE: I don't think I can be expected to come back to this after what I've  
been used to lately. 905
- HOBSON: Alice!
- ALICE: Well, I say it ought to be Maggie, father. She's the eldest.
- HOBSON: And I say you're –  
*What she is we don't learn, as VICKEY enters and goes effusively to*  
HOBSON. 910
- VICKEY: Father, you're ill! (*Embracing him.*)
- HOBSON: Vickey! My baby! At last I find a daughter who cares for me.
- VICKEY: Of course I care. Don't the others? (*Releasing herself from his grasp.*)
- HOBSON: You will live with me, Vickey, won't you?
- VICKEY: What? (*She stands away from him.*) 915
- MAGGIE: One of us is needed to look after him.
- VICKEY: Oh, but it can't be me. In my circumstances, Maggie!
- MAGGIE: What circumstances?

- ALICE: Don't you know?
- MAGGIE: No.  
VICKEY *whispers to MAGGIE.*
- HOBSON: What's the matter? What are you all whispering about?
- MAGGIE: Father, don't you think you ought to put a collar on before Will comes?
- HOBSON: Put a collar on for Will Mossop? There's something wrong with your sense of proportion, my girl. 925
- VICKEY: You're always pretending to folk about your husband, Maggie, but you needn't keep it up with us. We know Will here.
- MAGGIE: Father, either I can go home or you can go and put a collar on for Will. I'll have him treated with respect.
- ALICE: I expect you'd put a collar on in any case, father. 930
- HOBSON: (*rising*): Of course I should. I'm going to put a collar on. But understand me, Maggie, it's not for the sake of Will Mossop. It's because my neck is cold.  
*Exit HOBSON.*
- MAGGIE: Now, then, which of us is it to be? 935
- VICKEY: It's no use looking at me like that, Maggie. I've told you I'm expecting.
- MAGGIE: I don't see that that rules you out. It might happen to any of us.
- ALICE: Maggie!
- MAGGIE: What's the matter? Children do happen to married women, and we're all married. 940
- ALICE: Well, I'm not going to break my home up and that's flat.
- VICKEY: My child comes first with me.
- MAGGIE: I see. You've got a house of furniture, and you've got a child coming, so father can drink himself to death for you.
- ALICE: That's not fair speaking. I'd come if there were no one else. You know very well it's your duty, Maggie. 945
- VICKEY: Duty? I should think it'd be a pleasure to live here after a year or two in cellars.
- MAGGIE: I've had thirty years of the pleasure of living with father, thanks.
- ALICE: Do you mean to say you won't come? 950
- MAGGIE: It isn't for me to say at all. It's for my husband.
- VICKEY: Oh, do stop talking about your husband. If Alice and I don't need to ask our husbands, I'm sure you never need ask yours. Will Mossop hasn't the spirit of a louse and we know it as well as you do.
- MAGGIE: Maybe Will's come on since you saw him, Vickey. It's getting a while ago. There he is now in the shop. I'll go and put it to him. 955  
*Exit MAGGIE.*
- VICKEY: Stop her! (*Going to door.*)
- ALICE: (*detaining her*): Let her do it in her own way. I'm not coming back here. 960
- VICKEY: Nor me.
- ALICE: There's only Maggie for it.
- VICKEY: Yes. But we've got to be careful, Alice. She mustn't have things too much her way.
- ALICE: It's our way as well, isn't it? 965
- VICKEY: Not coming is our way. But when she's with him alone and we're not – (*Stopping.*)
- ALICE: Yes.
- VICKEY: Can't you see what I'm thinking, Alice? It is so difficult to say. Suppose poor father gets worse and they are here, Maggie and Will, and you and I – out of sight and out of mind. Can't you see what I mean? 970
- ALICE: He might leave them his money?
- VICKEY: That would be most unfair to us.

- ALICE: Father must make his will at once. Albert shall draw it up.
- VICKEY: That's it, Alice. And don't let's leave Maggie too long with Will. She's only telling him what to say, and then she'll pretend he thought of it himself. (*She opens door.*) Why, Will, what are you doing up the ladder?
- WILLIE: (*offstage*): I'm looking over the stock.
- VICKEY: (*indignantly*): It's father's stock, not yours. 980
- WILLIE: That's so. But if I'm to come into a thing I like to know what I'm coming into.
- ALICE: That's never Willie Mossop.
- VICKEY: (*still by door*): Are you coming into this?  
WILL enters. MAGGIE follows him. He is not aggressive, but he is prosperous and has self-confidence. Against ALICE and VICKEY he is consciously on his mettle. 985
- WILLIE: That's the proposal, isn't it?
- VICKEY: I didn't know it was.
- WILLIE: Now, then, Maggie, go and bring your father down and be sharp. I'm busy at my shop, even if he's not at his. 990  
MAGGIE takes WILL's hat off and puts it on settee, then exits.  
It's been a good business in its day, too, has Hobson's.
- ALICE: What on earth do you mean? It's a good business still.
- WILLIE: You try to sell it, and you'd learn. Stock and goodwill'd fetch about two hundred. 995
- VICKEY: Don't talk so foolish, Will. Two hundred for a business like father's!
- WILLIE: Two hundred as it is. Not as it was in our time, Vickey.
- ALICE: Do you mean to tell me father isn't rich?
- WILLIE: If you'd not married into the law you'd know what they think of your father today in trading circles. Vickey ought to know. Her husband's in trade! 1000
- VICKEY: (*indignantly*): My Fred in trade!
- WILLIE: Isn't he?
- VICKEY: He's in wholesale. That's business, not trade. And the value of father's shop is no affair of yours, Will Mossop. 1005
- WILLIE: Now I thought maybe it was. If Maggie and me are coming here –
- VICKEY: You're coming to look after father?
- WILLIE: Maggie can do that with one hand tied behind her back. I'll look after the business. 1010
- ALICE: You'll do what's arranged for you.
- WILLIE: I'll do the arranging, Alice. If we come here, we come here on my terms.
- VICKEY: They'll be fair terms.
- WILLIE: I'll see they're fair to me and Maggie. 1015
- ALICE: Will Mossop, do you know who you're talking to?
- WILLIE: Aye. My wife's young sisters. Times have changed a bit since you used to order me about this shop, haven't they, Alice?
- ALICE: Yes, I'm Mrs Albert Prosser now.
- WILLIE: So you are, to outsiders. And you'd be surprised the number of people that call me Mr Mossop now. We do get on in the world, don't we? 1020
- VICKEY: Some folks get on too fast.
- WILLIE: It's a matter of opinion. I know Maggie and me gave both of you a big leg up when we arranged your marriage settlements, but I dunno that we're grudging you the sudden lift you got. 1025  
Enter HOBSON and MAGGIE.
- WILLIE: Good morning, father. I'm sorry to hear you're not so well.
- HOBSON: I'm a changed man, Will. (*He comes down and sits on arm-chair.*)

- WILLIE: There used to be room for improvement.
- HOBSON: What! (*He starts up.*)
- MAGGIE: Sit down, father.
- WILLIE: Aye. Don't let us be too long about this. You've kept me waiting now a good while and my time's valuable. I'm busy at my shop.
- HOBSON: Is your shop more important than my life?
- WILLIE: That's a bit like asking if a pound of tea weighs heavier than a pound of lead. I'm worried about your life because it worries Maggie, but I'm none worried that bad I'll see my business suffer for the sake of you. 1035
- HOBSON: This isn't what I've a right to expect from you, Will.
- WILLIE: You've no *right* to expect I care whether you sink or swim.
- MAGGIE: Will. 1040
- WILLIE: What's to do? You told me to take a high hand, didn't you?
- ALICE: And we're to stay here and watch Maggie and Will abusing father when he's ill.
- WILLIE: No need for you to stay.
- HOBSON: That's a true word, Will Mossop. 1045
- VICKEY: Father! You take his side against your flesh and blood.
- HOBSON: That doesn't come too well from you, my girl. Neither of you would leave your homes to come to care for me. You're not for me, so you're against me.
- ALICE: We're not against you, father. We want to stay and see that Will deals fairly by you. 1050
- HOBSON: Oh, I'm not capable of looking after myself, aren't I? I've to be protected by you girls lest I'm over-reached, and over-reached by whom? By Willie Mossop! I may be ailing, but I've fight enough left in me for a dozen such as him, and if you're thinking that the manhood's gone from me, you can go and think it somewhere else than in my house. 1055
- VICKEY: But father – dear father –
- HOBSON: I'm not so dear to you if you'd think twice about coming here to do for me, let alone refusing it the way you did. A proper daughter would have jumped – aye, skipped like a calf by the cedars of Lebanon – at the thought of being helpful to her father. 1060
- ALICE: Did Maggie skip?
- HOBSON: She's a bit ancient for skipping exercise, is Maggie; but she's coming round to reconciliation with the thought of living here, and that is more than you are doing, Alice, isn't it? Eh? Are you willing to come? 1065
- ALICE: (*sullenly*): No.
- HOBSON: Or you, Vickey?
- VICKEY: It's my child, father. I –
- HOBSON: Never mind what it is. Are you coming or not?
- VICKEY: No. 1070
- HOBSON: Then you that aren't willing can leave me to talk with them that are.
- ALICE: Do you mean that we're to go?
- HOBSON: I understand you've homes to go to.
- ALICE: Oh, father!
- HOBSON: Open the door for them, Will. 1075
- WILL *rises, crosses, and opens door.* ALICE and VICKEY *stare in silent anger.* Then ALICE *sweeps to her gloves on the table.*
- ALICE: Vickey!
- VICKEY: Well, I don't know!
- MAGGIE: (*from her chair by the fire-place*): We'll be glad to see you here at tea-time on a Sunday afternoon if you'll condescend to come sometimes. 1080
- VICKEY: Beggars on horseback.

- VICKEY *and* ALICE *leave*.
- WILLIE: (*closing door*): Nay, come, there's no ill-will. (*He returns to table and sits.*)
- HOBSON: Now, my lad, I'll tell you what I'll do.
- WILLIE: Aye, we can come to grips better now there are no fine ladies about.
- HOBSON: They've got stiff necks with pride, and the difference between you two and them's a thing I ought to mark and that I'm going to mark. There's times for holding back and times for letting loose, and being generous. Now, you're coming here, to this house, both of you, and you can have the back bedroom for your own and the use of this room split along with me. Maggie'll keep house, and if she's time to spare she can lend a hand in shop. I'm finding Will a job. You can come back to your old bench in the cellar, Will, and I'll pay you the old wage of eighteen shillings a week and you and me'll go equal shares in the cost of the housekeeping, and if that's not handsome, I dunno what is. I'm finding you a house rent free and paying half the keep of your wife. 1090
- WILLIE: Come home, Maggie. (*He rises.*) 1100
- MAGGIE: I think I'll have to. (*She rises.*)
- HOBSON: Whatever's the hurry for?
- WILLIE: It may be news to you, but I've a business round in Oldfield Road and I'm neglecting it with wasting my time here.
- HOBSON: Wasting time? Maggie, what's the matter with Will? I've made him a proposal. 1105  
*WILL is by door.*
- MAGGIE: He's a shop of his own to see to, father.
- HOBSON: (*incredulous*): A man who's offered a job at Hobson's doesn't want to worry with a shop of his own in a wretched cellar in Oldfield Road. 1110
- WILLIE: Shall I tell him, Maggie, or shall we go?
- HOBSON: Go! I don't want to keep a man who – (*Rises.*)
- MAGGIE: If he goes, I go with him, father. You'd better speak out, Will.
- WILLIE: All right, I will. We've been a year in that wretched cellar and do you know what we've done? We've paid off Mrs Hepworth what she lent us for our start and made a bit o' cash on top o' that. We've got your high-class trade away from you. That shop's a cellar, and as you say, it's wretched, but they come to us in it, and they don't come to you. Your trade's gone down till all you sell is clogs. You've got no trade, and me and Maggie's got it all and now you're on your bended knees to her to come and live with you, and all you think to offer me is my old job at eighteen shillings a week. Me that's the owner of a business that is starving yours to death. 1115
- HOBSON: But – but – you're Will Mossop, you're my old shoe hand.
- WILLIE: Aye. I were, but I've moved on a bit since then. Your daughter married me and set about my education. And – and now I'll tell you what I'll do and it'll be the handsome thing and all from me to you. I'll close my shop – 1125
- HOBSON: Oh! That doesn't sound like doing so well.
- WILLIE: I'm doing well, but I'll do better here. I'll transfer to this address and what I'll do that's generous is this: I'll take you into partnership and give you your half-share on the condition you're sleeping partner and you don't try interference on with me. 1130
- HOBSON: A partner! You – here –
- WILLIE: William Mossop, late Hobson, is the name this shop'll have. 1135
- MAGGIE: Wait a bit, Will. I don't agree to that.
- HOBSON: Oh, so you have piped up at last. I began to think you'd both lost your senses together.



- MAGGIE: It had better not be 'late Hobson'.
- WILLIE: Well, I meant it should.
- HOBSON: Just wait a bit. I want to know if I'm taking this in aright. I'm to be given a half-share in my own business on condition I take no part in running it. Is that what you said?
- WILLIE: That's it.
- HOBSON: Well, I've heard of impudence before, but – 1145
- MAGGIE: It's all right, father.
- HOBSON: But did you hear what he said?
- MAGGIE: Yes. That's settled. Quite settled, father. It's only the name we're arguing about. (*To WILL.*) I won't have 'late Hobson's', Will.
- HOBSON: I'm not dead, yet, my lad, and I'll show you I'm not. 1150
- MAGGIE: I think Hobson and Mossop is best.
- HOBSON: His name on my sign-board!
- WILLIE: The best I'll do is this: Mossop and Hobson.
- MAGGIE: No.
- WILLIE: Mossop and Hobson or it's Oldfield Road for us, Maggie. 1155
- MAGGIE: Very well. Mossop and Hobson.
- HOBSON: But –
- WILLIE: (*opening door and looking through*): I'll make some alterations in this shop, and all. I will so. (*He goes through door and returns at once with a battered cane chair.*) 1160
- HOBSON: Alterations in my shop!
- WILLIE: In mine. Look at that chair. How can you expect the high-class customers to come and sit on a chair like that? Why, we'd only a cellar, but they did sit on good cloth for their trying on.
- HOBSON: That's pampering folk. 1165
- WILLIE: Good cloth for a cellar, and leather for this shop. Folk like to be pampered. Pampering pays. (*He takes the chair out and returns immediately.*) There'll be a carpet on that floor, too.
- HOBSON: Carpet! Leather! Young man, do you think this shop is in Saint Ann's Square, Manchester? 1170
- WILLIE: Not yet. But it is going to be.
- HOBSON: What does he mean? (*Appealing to heaven.*)
- WILLIE: It's no farther from Chapel Street to Saint Ann's Square than it is from Oldfield Road to Chapel Street. I've done one jump in a year and if I wait a bit I'll do the other. Maggie, I reckon your father could do with a bit of fresh air after this. I dare say it's come sudden to him. Suppose you walk with him to Albert Prosser's office and get Albert to draw up the deed of partnership. 1175
- HOBSON: (*looking pathetically first at MAGGIE, then at WILLIE, rising obediently*): I'll go and get my hat. 1180  
*Exit HOBSON*
- WILLIE: He's crushed, Maggie. I'm afraid I bore on him too hard.
- MAGGIE: You needn't be.
- WILLIE: I said such things to him, and they sounded as if I meant them, too.
- MAGGIE: Didn't you? 1185
- WILLIE: Did I? Yes ... I suppose I did. That's just the worst ... from me to him. You told me to be strong and use the power that's come to me through you, but he's the old master, and –
- MAGGIE: And you're the new.
- WILLIE: Master of Hobson's! It's an outrageous big idea. Did I sound confident, Maggie? 1190
- MAGGIE: You did all right.

- WILLIE: Eh, but I weren't by half so certain as I sounded. Words came from my mouth that made me jump at my own boldness, and when it came to facing you about the name, I tell you I fair trembled in my shoes. I was carried away like, or I'd not have dared to cross you, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: Don't spoil it, Will. (*Moves to him.*) You're the man I've made you and I'm proud.
- WILLIE: Thy pride is not in same street, lass, with the pride I have in you. And that reminds me. I've a job to see to. 1200
- MAGGIE: What job?
- WILLIE: Oh – about the improvements.
- MAGGIE: You'll do nothing without consulting me.
- WILLIE: I'll do this, lass. (*Goes to and takes her hand.*)
- MAGGIE: What are you doing? You leave my wedding ring alone. 1205  
(*Wrenches hand free.*)
- WILLIE: You've worn a brass one long enough.
- MAGGIE: I'll wear that ring for ever, Will.
- WILLIE: I was for getting you a proper one, Maggie.
- MAGGIE: I'm not preventing you. I'll wear your gold for show, but that brass stays where you put it, Will, and if we get too rich and proud we'll just sit down together quiet and take a long look at it, so as we'll not forget the truth about ourselves. ... Eh, lad! (*She touches him affectionately.*) 1210
- WILLIE: Eh, lass! (*He kisses her.*)  
*Enter HOBSON with his hat on.* 1215
- MAGGIE: Ready, father. Come along to Albert's.
- HOBSON: (*meekly*): Yes. Maggie.
- MAGGIE and HOBSON cross below WILL and go out. WILL comes downstage with amazement, triumph and incredulity written on his face, and attempts to express the inexpressible by saying – 1220
- WILLIE: Well, by gum! (*He turns to follow the others.*)

CURTAIN



---

*Copyright Acknowledgements:*

© Harold Brighthouse; *Hobson's Choice*; Oxford University Press; 1992.

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

University of Cambridge International Examinations is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of University of