

DAISY. No. I like books with Anna in the title too. *Anna Karenina* . . . *Anna Christie*. That was a play by O'Neill.

EUGENE. Eugene O'Neill. Playwrights named Eugene are usually my favorite. . . Listen, can we sit down? I've stepped on your toes three times so far and you haven't said a word. You deserve a rest. (*They sit.*) I can't believe I'm having a conversation like this in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Excerpt for "Daisy" - 1

DAISY. You don't like Biloxi?

EUGENE. Oh, it's not a bad town . . . It's alright . . . it's okay . . . I hate it!

DAISY. I'm not that fond of it myself. Actually I'm from Gulf port. We all are.

EUGENE. Gulf port? No kidding? I know a girl from Gulfport.

DAISY. Really? Who is she? Maybe I know her.

EUGENE. Oh no . . . I doubt it. She's in the clothing business . . . Do you go to school there?

DAISY. (*nods*) Mm hmm. St. Mary's. It's Catholic. An all girls' school. I really have to move on. We're supposed to mingle. If we're with anyone more than ten minutes the Sisters get very nervous.

EUGENE. We haven't used up ten minutes yet. . . Please! I really like talking to you.

DAISY. Well . . . just a few minutes.

EUGENE. Would you like a coke or something?

DAISY. It's way on the other side of the room. You could use up at least a minute and a half getting it.

EUGENE. You're right. Let the next guy get you a coke . . . Listen, I know this is going to sound a little prejudiced, but I didn't think there were any girls in the South like you . . . I mean so easy to talk to.

DAISY. Oh, there are, believe me. Anyway, I'm not really from the South. I was raised in Chicago. My father used to work on a newspaper there. Then he got a job in New Orleans on the *Examiner* as City Editor, but he took six months off first to write a book.

EUGENE. Your father's a writer? That's incredible because that's what I want to be. Listen, not to get off the subject, but would it offend you very much if I told you that I thought you were extremely pretty?

DAISY. No. Why should it? I like it when boys think I'm pretty.

EUGENE. Do lots of boys think you're pretty?

DAISY. I hope so but they don't always say it. They get very shy around me. My dad thinks I intimidate boys my own age. I'm glad you don't seem intimidated.

EUGENE. Well, no. I told you, I'm from New York.

DAISY. . . . What kind of writer do you want to be?

EUGENE. I don't know yet. So far all I've written is a few short stories and my memoirs. I keep a notebook and write down all my thoughts and what I feel about things. I've been doing it since I was a kid.

DAISY. My father kept a journal the last few years too. That's how he got to write this book. I read that that was a very good way to become a writer.

EUGENE. Well, a few people read my memoirs and they were very impressed.

DAISY. . . . Sister Marissa is glaring at me across the room so I'd better see if someone else wants to dance. *(She gets up.)* I had a very nice time talking to you, Eugene Morris Jerome. I'm trying to remember your whole name in case I ever see it in print some day.

EUGENE. You didn't tell me your whole name in case I ever wanted to write a letter to St. Mary's Catholic All Girl School in Gulf port.

DAISY. Hannigan. Daisy Hannigan.

Excerpt for "Daisy" - 2

EUGENE. Daisy Hannigan. Great name. F. Scott Fitzgerald should have thought of that before Buchanan.

DAISY. Well, you have my permission to use it. I wouldn't mind at all being immortalized, *(extends hand)* Goodbye, Eugene.

EUGENE. Goodbye, Daisy . . . God, every time I say that name I feel like I'm speaking literature.

DAISY. You say nice things. As a matter of fact, you didn't say one wrong thing in that entire conversation . . . Goodbye. *(She goes. EUGENE watches after her; then turns to audience.)*

EUGENE. At last, something to live for! . . . Daisy Hannigan! . . . Just try saying that name to yourself and see if you don't fall in love. . . I knew I had to see her again. When she smiled at me, I had tiny little heart attacks. Not enough to kill you, but just enough to keep you from walking straight. Daisy Hannigan! Daisy Hannigan!

*(He dances off alone, Astaire-like.)*

*Lights up on TOOMEY's room. ARNOLD sits on the stool quietly looking at TOOMEY, who sits on the bed. TOOMEY takes a long swig from bourbon bottle. He is clearly smashed.)*

TOOMEY. Have a drink.

ARNOLD. I don't drink.

TOOMEY. You will tonight.

ARNOLD. Why?

TOOMEY. *(pulls a .45 pistol and points it)* Because I say so. *(ARNOLD drinks, sputters.)*

ARNOLD. Fine!

TOOMEY. You hate the army, don't you, Epstein?

ARNOLD. Yes, Sergeant, I do.

TOOMEY. Well, I don't blame you. The army hates you just as much. When they picked you, they picked the bottom of the dung heap. You are *dung*,

EUGENE. Well, the thing is, I don't have a girl. I've got to learn on my own. Epstein says I have to get more involved in life. I think I'm in the perfect place for an involvement.

CARNEY. Okay. Maybe I'll see you later. *(He puts on his cap.)* Listen. Don't expect too much the first time. What I mean is, if it doesn't go all that terrific, don't give up on it for good.

EUGENE. I'm not a quitter. I'm dedicating my life to getting it right.

CARNEY. You putting this in your memoirs?

EUGENE. Sure. I put everything in my memoirs.

CARNEY. That's smart. Because people don't like books unless there's sex in it . . . Good luck, kid. *(He takes a photo of EUGENE with his hand on the door.)*

EUGENE. *(to audience)* . . . And thus, the young man they called Eugene, bade farewell to his youth, turned and entered the Temple of Fire.

*(Scenery changes to ROWENA's room. EUGENE hidden behind a screen, ROWENA sitting at her vanity, smoking, trying to be patient.)*

ROWENA. *(calls out)* How you doing, honey?

Excerpt for "Rowena" - 1

EUGENE. *(behind screen)* Okay.

ROWENA. You having any trouble in there?

EUGENE. No. No trouble.

ROWENA. What the hell you doing for ten minutes? C'mon, kid. I haven't got all day. *(EUGENE appears. He is wearing his khaki shorts, shoes and socks. A cigarette dangles from his lips. ROWENA looks at him.)* Listen. You can keep your shorts on if you want but I have a rule against wearing army shoes in bed.

EUGENE. *(looks down)* Oh. I'm sorry. I just forgot to take them off. *(He sits on the bed and very slowly starts to unlace them. To audience:)* I started to sweat like crazy. I prayed my Aqua Velva was working. *(ROWENA sprays around her with perfume from atomizer:)*

ROWENA. You don't mind a little perfume, do you, honey? The boy before you had on a gallon of Aqua Velva.

EUGENE. *(looks at audience then at her)* No, I don't mind. You can spray some on me. *(She smiles and sprays him playfully:)* Gee, it smells good.

ROWENA. If you'd like a bottle for your girl friend, I sell them. Five dollars apiece.

EUGENE. You sell perfume too?

ROWENA. I sell hard to get items. Silk stockings. Black panties . . . You interested?

EUGENE. *(earnestly)*. . . Do you carry men's clothing?

ROWENA. *(laughs)* That's cute. You're cute, honey. . . You want me to take your shoes off?

EUGENE. I can do it. Honest. I can do it. *(He gets his first shoe off)*

ROWENA. Is this your first time?

Excerpt for "Rowena" - 2

EUGENE. My first time? *(He laughs.)* Are you kidding? That's funny . . . Noo . . . It's my second time . . . The first time they were closed.

ROWENA. You don't smoke cigarettes either, do you? *(She takes cigarette out of EUGENE's mouth.)*

EUGENE. How'd you know?

ROWENA. You looked like your face was on fire . . . If you want to look older, why don't you try a mustache?

EUGENE. I did but it wouldn't grow in on the left side . . . What's your name?

ROWENA. Rowena . . . What's yours?

EUGENE. My name? *(to audience)* I suddenly panicked. Supposing this girl kept a diary.

ROWENA. Well?

EUGENE. *(quickly)* Jack . . . Er . . . Jack Mulgroovey.

ROWENA. Yeah? I knew a Tom Mulgreevy once.

EUGENE. No. Mine is Mulgroovey. Oo not ee.

ROWENA. Where you from, Jack?

EUGENE. *(slight accent)* Texarkana.

ROWENA. Is that right?

EUGENE. Yes, ma'am.

ROWENA. Is that Texas or Arkansas?

EUGENE. Arkansas, I think.

ROWENA. You *think*?

EUGENE. I left there when I was two. Then we moved to Georgia.

ROWENA. Really? You a cracker?

EUGENE. What's a cracker?

ROWENA. Someone from Georgia.

EUGENE. Oh, yeah. I'm a cracker. The whole family's crackers . . . Were you born in Biloxi?

ROWENA. No. Gulfport. I still live there with my husband.

EUGENE. Your husband?? . . . You're married?? . . . My God! If he finds me here he'll kill me.

ROWENA. No he won't.

EUGENE. Does he know that you're a—you're a—

ROWENA. Sure he does. That's how we met. He's in the navy. He was one of my best customers. He still is.

EUGENE. You mean you *charge* your own husband??

ROWENA. I mean he's my best lover . . . You gonna do it from there, cowboy? 'Cause I'll have to make some adjustments.

EUGENE. I'm ready. *(to ROWENA)* Here I come. *(She holds open blanket. He gets into the bed and clings to the side.)*