

GRAPES OF WRATH

Act 1

Scene 1

fog

9

An Expanse of weathered wood blown over with dust. A frail barbed-wire fence. Two men, some distance from each other, on either side of the fence. One, seated on a wooden crate, plays a rusty wood saw with a violin bow. A simple waltz melody floats up. The other, looking off into the distance, listens and lets the melody conclude. His eyes gleam in the shadow of his broad-brimmed hat.

①

FIRST NARRATOR. The dawn came, but no day. *(Particles of dust hang in the air as a feeble light spreads up into the sky.)* In the morning the dust hung like fog. Men stood by their fences and looked at the ruined corn, drying fast now, only a little green showing through the film of dust. And the women came out of the houses to stand beside their men – to feel whether this time the men would break. The women studied the men's faces secretly. For the corn could go, as long as something else remained. *(Sunlight through a pattern of leaves reveals Jim Casy sprawled in a pool of dust. He blows into a little Harmonica. The man with the saw and the First Narrator are gone. Casy lowers the Harmonica and picks up the tune in an easy tenor.)*

②

CASY. *(Signing.)*

Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
*(I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.)*

10

(Tom Joad, in cheap new clothes, walks along the sagging barbed-wire fence. He climbs carefully through, takes off his cap and mops his wet face. A bird whistles nearby.)

TOM. Hi. It's hotter'n hell on the road.

CASY. Now ain't you young Tom Joad – ol' Tom's boy?

TOM. Yeah. All the way. Goin' home now.

CASY. You wouldn't remember me, I guess. Baptized you in the irrigation ditch.

TOM. Why, you're the preacher.

S/B
LQ1-5
RQ Boc
SQ1-5

LQ1
Pre show

SQA
end of music

SQB
Pre show
announcer

LQ1.5
H2H

LQ2
House
out

SQC-
w/rail
cue

RQ
lineset 2
out

LQ3
curtain
3/4 out

SQD
w/ LQ3

LQ3.1
narrator
enters

LQ4
narrator
exit

SQE
Tom
enter

SQ
E.5
Tom thru
fence

LQ5
Tom
through
fence

CASY. I was a preacher. Reverend Jim Casy – was a Burning Busher. Used to howl out the name of Jesus to glory. But not no more. Jus' Jim Casy now. Ain't got the call no more. Got a lot of sinful idears – but they seem kinda sensible.

TOM. You're bound to get idears if you go thinkin' about stuff. Sure I remember you. You used to give a good meetin'. I recollect one time you gave a whole sermon walkin' on your hands yellin' your head off. Ma favored you more than anybody. An' Granma says you was just lousy with the spirit. *(Tom digs in his pocket and brings out a pint bottle.)* Have a little snort?

CASY. I ain't preachin' no more much. The sperit ain't in the people much no more; and worse'n that, the sperit ain't in me no more.

TOM. You ain't too damn holy to take a drink are you? *(Tom tosses the bottle to Casy. He drinks.)*

CASY. Nice drinkin' liquor.

TOM. Ought to be. That's fact'ry liquor. Cost a buck. *(Casy takes another swallow.)*

CASY. Yes, sir! Yes, sir! *(Tom moves closer, takes the bottle back and drinks. He squats on his hams.)*

TOM. I ain't seen you in a long time.

CASY. Ain't nobody's seen me. I went off alone, an' I sat and figured. The sperit's strong in me, only it ain't the same. I ain't so sure of a lot of things. *(Casy digs his bony hand into his pocket and brings out a black bitten plug of tobacco. He brushes it off, bites off a corner and settles the quid into his cheek.)* I used to get the people jumpin' an' talkin' in tongues and glory-shoutin' till they just fell down an' passed out. An' some I'd baptize to bring 'em to. An' then – you know what I'd do? I'd take one of them girls out in the grass, an' I'd lay with her. Done it ever' time. Then I'd feel bad, an' I'd pray an' pray, but it didn't do no good. Come next time, then an' me was full of the sperit, I'd do it again.

TOM. There ain't nothing like a good hot meetin' for pushin' 'em over. I done that myself.

CASY. But you wasn't the preacher. A girl was just a girl to you. But to me they was holy vessels.

TOM. You shoulda got a wife. Preacher an' his wife stayed at our place one time. Jehovahites they was. Slep' upstairs. Held meetin's in our barnyard. Us kids would listen. That preacher's missus took a godawful poundin' after ever' night meetin'.

CASY. I'm glad you tol' me. I used to think it was jus' me. Finally it give me such pain I quit an' went off by myself an' give her a damn good thinkin' about.

TOM. You give her a goin' over.

CASY. Well, I was layin' under a tree when I figured her out. Before I knowed it, I was sayin', "The hell with it! There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do."

TOM. You figured her out.

CASY. I says, "What's this call, this sperit?" An' I says, "It's love. I love people so much I'm fit to bust, sometimes." An' I says, "Don't you love Jesus?" Well, I thought an' thought an' finally I says, "No, I don't know nobody name' Jesus." I been talkin a hell of a lot. Anyway, I'll tell you one more thing I thought out: an' from a preacher it's the most unreligious thing, and I can't be a preacher no more because I thought it an' I believe it.

TOM. What's that?

CASY. If it hits you wrong, don't take no offense at it, will you?

TOM. I don't take no offense 'cept a bust in the nose. What did you figger?

CASY. I figgered about the Holy Sperit and the Jesus road. I figgered, "Why do we got to hang it all on God or Jesus? Maybe," I figgered, "maybe it's all men an' all women we love; maybe that's the Holy Sperit—the human sperit—the whole shebang. Maybe all men got one big soul and ever'body's a part of." Now I sat there thinkin' it, an' all of a sudden—I knew it. I knew it so deep down that it was true, and I still know it.

TOM. You can't hold no church with idears like that. People would drive you out of the country with idears like that. Jumpin' an' yellin'. That's what folks like. Makes 'em feel swell. When Granma got to talkin' in tongues you couldn't tie her down.

CASY. I baptized you right when I was in the glory rooftree.

TOM. She could knock over a full-growed deacon with her fist.

CASY. Had little hunks of Jesus jumpin' outa my mouth that day.

TOM. Guess I'll mosey along.

CASY. It's a funny thing. I was thinkin' about ol' Tom Joad when you come along. Thinkin' I'd call on him. How is Tom?

TOM. I don't know how he is. I ain't been home in four years.

CASY. Been out travelin' around?

TOM. (*Suspiciously.*) Didn't you hear about me? I was in the papers.

CASY. No—I never. What?

TOM. I been in McAlester them four years.

CASY. Ain't wantin' to talk about it, huh? I won't ask you no more questions, if you done something bad—

TOM. I'd do what I done—again. I killed a guy. In a fight. We was drunk at a dance. He got a knife in me, an' I killed him with a shovel that was layin' there. Knocked his head plump to squash.

CASY. You ain't ashamed of nothin' then?

TOM. No, I ain't. I got seven years, account of he had a knife in me. Got out in four—parole. *(He shades his eyes.)* I hate to hit the sun, but it ain't so bad now.

CASY. I ain't see ol' Tom in a bug's age.

TOM. Come along.

CASY. I was gonna look in on him anyways. I brang Jesus to your folks for a long time.

13 TOM. Pa'll be glad to see you. He always said you got too long a pecker for a preacher.
(The two hesitate for a moment and then move off. The sky begins to darken. A man with a guitar crosses the stage. He sings a fragment of a Dust Bowl folk song.)

MEGAN.

Oh, sinner man, where you're gonna run to?
Oh, sinner man, where you're gonna run to?
Oh, sinner man, where you're gonna run to all on that day?

Run to the Lord, "Lord, won't You hide me?"
Run to the Lord, "Lord, won't You hide me?"
Run, run, "Lord, won't You hide me all on that day?"

Lord said, "Sinner man, you should've been a praying"
Lord said, "Sinner man, should've been a praying"
Lord said, "Sinner man, should've been a praying all on that day"

Oh, sinner man, where you're gonna run to?
Oh, sinner man, where you're gonna run to?
Oh, sinner man, where you're gonna run to all on that day?

exit

(Darkness engulfs him and the wind howls. Faint moonlight catches a broken porch column. The column and a few crates define the space that was the Joad house. Tom and

Case emerge in the distance and walk along the fence. A dog barks. Tom sees the fragment of house and stops.)

TOM. Somepin's happened. They ain't nobody here. *(They climb under the fence and move into the dusty yard.)* Jesus! Hell musta popped here. There ain't nothin' left.

CASY. Le's look in the house. She's all pushed outa shape. Somethin' knocked the hell out of her.

TOM. They're gone – or Ma's dead. If Ma was anywhere's about, that gate'd be shut an' hooked. That's one thing she always done – seen that gate was shut. Ever since the pig got in over to Jacobs' an' 'et the baby.

CASY. If I was still a preacher I'd say the arm of the Lord had struck. But now I don't know what happened. (Tom lights a match and slips cautiously into the house. He stoops down, finds and lights the stub of a candle, and then picks up a woman's high button shoe.)

TOM. I remember this. This was Ma's. It's all wore out now. Ma liked them shoes. Had 'em for years. No – they're gone – or dead. *(Muley Graves suddenly appears in the shadows.)*

MULEY. Tommy?

TOM. Muley!

MULEY. When'd you get out, Tommy?

TOM. Two days ago. Took a little time to hitchhike home. An' look here what I find. Where's my folks, Muley?

MULEY. They're all at your Uncle John's. The whole brood. Getting' money so they can shove on west. Uncle John got *his* notice too.

TOM. You know this here preacher, don't you Muley? Rev. Casy.

MULEY. Why, sure, sure. Didn't look over. Remember him well.

TOM. What happened here?

MULEY. Well, your folks was gonna stick her out when the bank come to tractorin' off the place.. Bumped the hell outa the house, an' give her a shake like a dog shakes a rat.

CASY. Why they kickin' folks off the lan'?

MULEY. Bank can't afford to keep no tenants. Them sons-a-bitches at their desks, they just chopped folks in two for the margin of profit. Them dirty sons-a-bitches. I tell ya, men, I'm stayin'. They ain't getting' rid a me.

TOM. Sure. I wonder Pa went so easy. I wonder Grampa didn't kill nobody. *(Casy begins gathering splinters of wood and dry twigs. He builds and lights a fire.)* Nobody never tol' Grampa where to put his feet. An' Ma ain't nobody you can push aroun' neither. I seen her beat the hell out of a tin peddler with a live chicken one time 'cause he give her a argument. She has the chicken in one han', an' the ax in the other, about to cut its head off. She aimed to go for that peddler with the ax, but she forgot which hand was which, an' she takes after him with the chicken. Couldn't even eat that chicken when she got done. They wasn't nothin' but a pair a legs in her han'. *(Casy puts a match into the pile of twigs.)* Grampa throwed a hip outa joint laughin'. *(The fire lights.)* How'd my folks go so easy?

SB
LQ 10

fire
lights
LQ 10

MULEY. T'werent easy, Tommy. Took somepin' outa your Pa. Kinda got to 'im.

CASY. Fell gets use' to a place, it's hard to go.

MULEY. Well, sir, it's a funny thing. Somepin' went an' happen to me when they tol' me I had to get off the place. Fust I was gonna go in an' kill a whole flock a people. But there wasn't nobody you could lay for. Who's the Shawnee Lan' and Cattle Company? It ain't nobody. It's a company. Got a fella crazy. Then all my folks went away out west. An' I got wanderin' aroun'. I'm jus' wanderin' aroun' like a damn graveyard ghos'. I been goin' aroun' the places where stuff happened. Like there's a...*(The three men move close around the fire.)* ...a place down by the barn where Pa got gored to death by a bull. An' his blood is right in that groun', right now. Mus' be. Nobody never washed it out. An' I put my han' on that groun' where my own pa's blood is part of it. *(He swallows.)* You fellas think I'm touched?

SB
LQ 11

LQ 11
around
fire

15

CASY. No. You're lonely – but you ain't touched.

SB
SQ G
LQ 12
13

TOM. If your folks went to the west, you should have went too. You shouldn't have broke up the fambly.

MULEY. I couldn'. Somepin' just wouldn't let me. I – I ain't talked to nobody for a long time.

CASY. You should talk. Sometimes a sad man can talk the sadness right out through his mouth. *(The sound of a car pulling up and stopping in the distance. A dog barks. Casy puts out the fire.)*

SQ
G

TOM. What the?...

LQ 12
kick out
fire

MULEY. That's prob'ly the supe'ntendent of this stretch a cotton. Somebody maybe seen our fire.

TOM. We ain't done no harm. *(Muley and Casy rush into the house.)*

LQ 13
lantern
out

MULEY. Get down. We're trespassin'. We can't stay.

TOM. WE'll jus' set here. We ain't doin' nothin' /

CASY. Git in here, Tom. You're on parole. *(Casy blows out the candle. Tom follows them into the house.)*

MULEY. They been tryin' to catch me for two months. Now duck.

TOM. Won't they come in here with a flashlight an' look aroun' for us? I wisht I had a stick.

MULEY. Na, they won't. Willy done that one night an' I clipped 'im from behind with a fence stake. Knocked him colder'n a wedge. *(Willy appears in the distance with a flashlight.)*

WILLY. Muley? Muley?

MULEY. He got somebody with 'im tonight.

WILLY. Ain't here. *(Willy moves off. Tom stands suddenly. His eyes blaze.)*

④ TOM. I never though I'd be hidin' out on my old man's place. *(Tom, Casy, and Muley are engulfed in darkness. A guitar sounds and light reveals five car salesmen leering over their bow-ties.)*

16

ALL.

Pontiacs, Chevies, Buicks, Packards
Get 'em old and cheap today
Cadillacs, Plymouths, Fords and Hudsons,
Take your pick and be on your way

MEGAN.

Grab it quick, it's solid as a rock
Look here Mister, I ain't got all day

WENDY.

Another Jacks comin' at two o'clock
Seventy bucks he's willin' to pay

MATT.

Insides broke and the engine flooded
Better than traveling the road by feet
Mirror's dirty and the brakes are rusted

GARRETT.

We've got prices that cannot be beat.

KEEMA.

This beauty for forty on the platform
Sorry to say it's just been sold

SARAH.

S/B
LQ 19
SQ G.5
RQ 20

LQ
14

RQ
lineset
20 in

SQ
G.5

S/B
LQ
15

LQ
15

But this one here's a steal at fifty
KEEMA + SARAH.

Got 75? You'll ride in gold.

MARK.

Go ahead and kick her tires
Build real solid and her price is fair.

SARAH.

The other dealers ain't nothing but liars

MARK + SARAH.

Buy from them and you're walkin' there

WENDY/MEGAN/MATT.

Lay your eyes on this here Hudson
She may look tired, but she ain't done yet

MARK/SARAH/KEEMA/GARRETT.

She'll do 50 nice and easy
This here truck you won't regret

ALL.

Thousands of miles are still left in her
Let's get ya rollin' in this here car
I swear by God, if Moses had drove her
He'd a rest his head in California (Ca-lee-for-nee-uhh)
I swear by God / if Moses had drove her
He'd a rest his head / in California (Ca-lee-for-nee-uhh)

(As the afternoon light creeps over the dust, the area around the truck is revealed, littered with piled furniture, crates and most of the Joad family's belongings. Uncle John's house is in the background, a weathered wooden wall with an old screen door. Pa stands in the truck bed nailing on the top rails of the truck sides. His grizzled face is low over his work. He sets a nail and his hammer thunders it in. Tom emerges. Casy hangs back in the distance.)

TOM. Pa.

PA. What do you want? *(His hammer is suspended in the air. He turns and looks at Tom. The hammer drops slowly to his side.)* It's Tommy. It's Tommy come home. Tommy. You ain't busted out? You ain't got to hide?

TOM. Naw. I'm paroled. I'm free. I got my papers. *(Pa lays his hammer down and drops gently to the ground.)*

PA. Tommy. We are goin' to California. But we was gonna write you a letter an' tell you. But you're back. You can go with us. You can go! *(There is a crash inside the house.)*

S/B
RQ 7
LQ 16

RQ
lineset
7out

LQ
16
ing 1/2
out

S/B
LQ
17

LQ
17
ensemble
exit

MA'S VOICE. Ruthie, cut that out.

PA. Your ma got a bad feelin' she ain't never gonna see you no more. Almost she don't want to go to California, fear she'll never see you no more. *(Another crash.)* Le's surprise 'em. Le's go in like you never been away. Le's jus' see what your ma says. *(Pa grabs his son by the shoulders. He sees Casy.)*

TOM. You remember the preacher, Pa. He come along with me.

PA. He been in prison too?

TOM. No, I met him on the road. He's been away. *(Pa and Casy shake hands.)*

PA. You're welcome here, sir.

CASY. Glad to be here. It's a thing to see when a boy comes home. It's a thing to see.

PA. Home.

CASY. To his folks. *(Ma Joad emerges through the screen door with a bucket.)*

MA. Pa, run out to the barn now an' git Granma and Grampa.

PA. Ma, there's a couple fellas jus' come along the road, an' they wonder if we could spare a bite.

MA. Let 'em come. We got a' plenty. Tell 'em they got to wash their han's I'm just' takin' up the sidedmeat now. Lucky I made plenty a bread this aft...*(She sees Tom, puts the bucket down and moves towards him soundlessly in her bare feet. Her face is full of wonder.)* Thank God. Oh, thank God! *(She stops.)* Tommy, you ain't wanted? You didn't bust loose?

TOM. No, Ma. Parole. I got the papers... *(He pats his breast pocket.)* here. *(Her small hand feels his arm, and then her fingers graze his cheek. Tom pulls his under lip between his teeth and bites.)*

18

MA. I was scared we was goin' away without you – and we'd never see each other again.

PA. Fooled ya, huh, Ma? We aimed to fool ya, an' we done it. Jus' stood there like a hammered sheep. Wisht Grampa's been here to see it. Grampa woulda whacked 'imself so hard he'd a throwed his hip out.

TOM. Where is Grampa? I ain't see the ol' devil.

MA. Oh, him an' Granma are havin' their nap, they sleeps in the barn. Pa, run out an' tell 'em Tommy's home. Grampa's a favorite of him.

PA. A course. I should of did it before. *(Pa crosses the yard, swinging his hands high.)*

S/B
LQ
19

LQ
19
ma exit
house