

inches into the chest. An innocent little nineteen-year-old kid.

FOUR [*to THREE*]. I agree with you that the boy is guilty but I think we should try to avoid emotionally colored arguments.

THREE. All right. They proved it a dozen different ways. Do you want me to list them?

EIGHT. No.

TEN [*rising, putting his feet on seat of chair and sitting on back of it, then, to EIGHT*]. Well, do you believe that stupid story he told?

FOUR [*to TEN*]. Now, now.

TEN. Do you believe the kid's story?

EIGHT. I don't know whether I believe it or not. Maybe I don't.

SEVEN. So what'd you vote not guilty for?

EIGHT. There were eleven votes for guilty—it's not so easy for me to raise my hand and send a boy off to die without talking about it first.

SEVEN. Who says it's easy for me?

FOUR. Or me?

EIGHT. No one.

FOREMAN. He's still just as guilty, whether it's an easy vote or a hard vote.

SEVEN [*belligerently*]. Is there something wrong because I voted fast?

EIGHT. Not necessarily.

SEVEN. I think the guy's guilty. You couldn't change my mind if you talked for a hundred years.

EIGHT. I don't want to change your mind.

THREE. Just what are you thinking of?

EIGHT. I want to talk for a while. Look—this boy's been kicked around all his life. You know—living in a slum—his mother dead since he was nine. That's not a very good head start. He's a tough, angry kid. You know why slum kids get that way? Because we knock 'em over the head once a day, every day. I think maybe we owe him a few words. That's

all.

start

all. [*Looks around table. He is met by cold looks. NINE nods slowly while FOUR begins to comb his hair.*]

FOUR. All right, it's hard, sure—it was hard for me. Everything I've got I fought for. I worked my way through college. That was a long time ago, and perhaps you do forget. I fought, yes, but I never killed.

THREE. I know what it's like. I never killed nobody.

TWELVE. I've been kicked around, too. Wait until you've worked in an ad agency and the big boy that buys the advertising walks in. We all know.

ELEVEN [*who speaks with an accent*]. In my country, in Europe, kicking was a science, but let's try to find something better than that.

TEN [*to EIGHT*]. I don't mind telling you this, mister. We don't owe the kid a thing. He got a fair trial, didn't he? You know what that trial cost? He's lucky he got it. Look, we're all grown-ups here. You're not going to tell us that we're supposed to believe him, knowing what he is. I've lived among 'em all my life. You can't believe a word they say. You know that.

NINE [*to TEN, very slowly*]. I don't know that. What a terrible thing for a man to believe! Since when is dishonesty a group characteristic? You have no monopoly on the truth!

THREE [*interrupting*]. All right. It's not Sunday. We don't need a sermon.

NINE [*not heeding*]. What this man says is very dangerous.

[*EIGHT puts his hand on NINE's arm and stops him. NINE draws a deep breath and relaxes.*]

FOUR. I don't see any need for arguing like this. I think we ought to be able to behave like gentlemen.

SEVEN. Right!

TWELVE [*smiling up at FOUR*]. Oh, all right, if you insist.

FOUR [*to TWELVE*]. Thank you.

TWELVE. Sure.

FOUR. If we're going to discuss this case, why, let's discuss the facts.

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## ACT TWO

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AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is only a second or two later. The JURORS are in the same positions as they were at the end of Act One.*]

THREE [*after brief pause*]. All right! Who did it? What idiot changed his vote?

EIGHT. Is that the way to talk about a man's life? [*Sits at his place again.*]

THREE. Whose life are you talking about? The life of the dead man or the life of a murderer?

SEVEN. I want to know. Who?

THREE. So do I.

ELEVEN. Excuse me. This was a secret ballot.

THREE. No one looked while we did it, but now I want to know.

ELEVEN. A secret ballot; we agreed on that point, no? If the gentleman wants it to remain a secret—

THREE [*standing up angrily*]. What do you mean? There are no secrets in here! I know who it was. [*Turns to FIVE.*] What's the matter with you? You come in here and you vote guilty and then this—[*Nods toward EIGHT.*]—slick preacher starts to tear your heart out with stories about a poor little kid who just couldn't help becoming a murderer. So you change your vote. If that isn't the most sickening— [*FIVE edges away in his chair.*]

FOREMAN. Now hold it. [*SEVEN sits again slowly.*]

FOUR [*to THREE*]. I agree with you that the man is guilty, but let's be fair.

THREE. Hold it? Be fair? That's just what I'm saying. We're trying to put a guilty man into the chair where he belongs—and all of a sudden we're paying attention to fairy tales.