

# R.U.R.

## KAREL ČAPEK

*translated by*

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## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

### IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

*Harry Domin, General Manager of Rossum's Universal Robots*  
A handsome man of 35. Forceful, efficient and humorous at times.

*Sulla, a Robotess*  
A pathetic figure. Young, pretty and attractive.

*Marius, a Robot*  
A young Robot, superior to the general run of his kind. Dressed in modern clothes.

*Helena Glory*  
A vital, sympathetic, handsome girl of 21.

*Dr. Gall, head of the Physiological and Experimental Department of R.U.R.*  
A tall, distinguished scientist of 50.

*Mr. Fabry, Engineer General, Technical Controller of R.U.R.*  
A forceful, competent engineer of 40.

*Dr. Hallemeier, head of the Institute for Psychological Training of Robots*  
An impressive man of 40. Bald head and beard.

*Mr. Alquist, Architect, head of the Works Department of R.U.R.*  
A stout, kindly old man of 60.

*Consul Busman, General Manager of R.U.R.*

*Nana*  
A tall, acidulous woman of 40.

*Radius, a Robot*  
A tall, forceful Robot.

*Helena, a Robotess*  
A radiant young woman of 20.

*Primus, a Robot*  
A good-looking young Robot.

*A Servant*

*First Robot*

*Second Robot*

*Third Robot*

NOTE

All the Robots wear expressionless faces and move with absolute mechanical precision, with the exception of SULLA, HELENA and PRIMUS, who convey a touch of humanity.

## ACT I

SCENE: *Central office of the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots.* Entrance R. down Right. The windows on the back wall look out on the endless roads of factory buildings. Door L. down Left. On the Left wall large maps showing steamship and railroad routes. On the Right wall are fastened printed placards. ("Robots cheapest Labor," etc.) In contrast to these wall fittings, the floor is covered with splendid Turkish carpet, a couch R. c. A book shelf containing bottles of wine and spirits, instead of books.

DOMIN is sitting at his desk at Left, dictating. SULLA is at the typewriter upstage against the wall. There is a leather couch with arms Right Center. At the extreme Right an armchair. At extreme Left a chair. There is also a chair in front of DOMIN'S desk. Two green cabinets across the upstage corners of the room complete the furniture. DOMIN'S desk is placed up and down stage facing Right.

Seen through the windows which run to the heights of the room are rows of factory chimneys, telegraph poles and wires. There is a general passageway or hallway upstage at the Right Center which leads to the warehouse. The ROBOTS are brought into the office through this entrance.

DOMIN (*Dictating.*) Ready?

SULLA Yes.

DOMIN To E. M. McVicker & Co., Southampton, England. "We undertake no guarantee for goods damaged in transit. As soon as the consignment was taken on board we drew your captain's attention to the fact that the vessel was unsuitable for the transportation of Robots; and we are therefore not responsible for spoiled freight. We beg to remain, for Rossum's Universal Robots, yours truly." (SULLA types the lines.) Ready?

SULLA Yes.

DOMIN Another letter. To the E. B. Huysen Agency, New York, USA "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for five thousand Robots. As you are sending your own vessel, please dispatch as cargo equal quantities of soft and hard coal for R.U.R., the same to be credited as part payment (*BUZZER*) of the amount due us." (*Answering phone.*) Hello! This is the central office. Yes, certainly. Well, send them a wire. Good. (*Rises.*) "We beg to remain, for Rossum's Universal Robots, yours very truly." Ready?

SULLA Yes.

DOMIN (*Answering small portable phone.*) Hello! Yes. No. All right. (*Standing back of desk, punching plug machine and buttons.*) Another letter. Freidrichswerks, Hamburg, Germany. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots." (*Enter MARIUS R.*) Well, what is it?

MARIUS There's a lady, sir, asking to see you.

DOMIN A lady? Who is she?

MARIUS I don't know, sir. She brings this card of introduction.

DOMIN (*Reading card.*) Ah, from President Glory. Ask her to come in—(*To SULLA. Crossing up to her desk, then back to his own.*) Where did I leave off?

SULLA "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots."

DOMIN Fifteen thousand. Fifteen thousand.

MARIUS (*At door R.*) Please step this way.

(*Enter HELENA. Exit MARIUS R.*)

HELENA (*Crossing to desk.*) How do you do?

DOMIN How do you do? What can I do for you?

HELENA You are Mr. Domin, the General Manager?

DOMIN I am.

HELENA I have come—

DOMIN With President Glory's card. That is quite sufficient.

HELENA President Glory is my father. I am Helena Glory.

DOMIN Please sit down. Sulla, you may go. (*Exit SULLA L. Sitting down L. of desk.*) How can I be of service to you, Miss Glory?

HELENA I have come—(*Sits R. of desk.*)

DOMIN To have a look at our famous works where people are manufactured. Like all visitors. Well, there is no objection.

HELENA I thought it was forbidden to—

DOMIN To enter the factory? Yes, of course. Everybody comes here with someone's visiting card, Miss Glory.

HELENA And you show them—

DOMIN Only certain things. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret process.

HELENA If you only knew how enormously that—

DOMIN Interests you. Europe's talking about nothing else.

HELENA (*Indignantly turning front.*) Why don't you let me finish speaking?

DOMIN (*Drier.*) I beg your pardon. Did you want to say something different?

HELENA I only wanted to ask—

DOMIN Whether I could make a special exception in your case and show you our factory. Why, certainly, Miss Glory.

HELENA How do you know I wanted to say that?

DOMIN They all do. But we shall consider it a special honor to show you more than we do the rest.

HELENA Thank you.

DOMIN (*Standing.*) But you must agree not to divulge the least—

HELENA (*Standing and giving him her hand.*) My word of honor.

DOMIN Thank you. (*Looking at her hand.*) Won't you raise your veil?

HELENA Of course. You want to see whether I'm a spy or not—I beg your pardon.

DOMIN (*Leaning forward.*) What is it?

HELENA Would you mind releasing my hand?

DOMIN (*Releasing it.*) Oh, I beg *your* pardon.

HELENA (*Raising veil.*) How cautious you have to be here, don't you?

DOMIN (*Observing her with deep interest.*) Why, yes. Hm—of course—We—that is—

HELENA But what is it? What's the matter?

DOMIN I'm remarkably pleased. Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA Yes.

DOMIN No difficulty?

HELENA Why?

DOMIN What I mean to say is—you're so *young*.

HELENA May we go straight into the factory?

DOMIN Yes. Twenty-two, I think.

HELENA Twenty-two what?

DOMIN Years.

HELENA Twenty-one. Why do you want to know?

DOMIN Well, because—as—(*Sits on desk nearer her.*) You will make a long stay, won't you?

HELENA ((Backing away.) R.) That depends on how much of the factory you show me.

DOMIN (Rises; crosses to her.) Oh, hang the factory. Oh, no, no, you shall see everything, Miss Glory. Indeed you shall. Won't you sit down? (Takes her to couch R. C. She sits. Offers her cigarette from case at end of sofa. She refuses.)

HELENA Thank you.

DOMIN But first would you like to hear the story of the invention?

HELENA Yes, indeed.

DOMIN (Crosses to L. C. near desk.) It was in the year 1920 that old Rossum, the great physiologist, who was then quite a young scientist, took himself to the distant island for the purpose of studying the ocean fauna. (She is amused.) On this occasion he attempted by chemical synthesis to imitate the living matter known as protoplasm until he suddenly discovered a substance which behaved exactly like living matter although its chemical composition was different. That was in the year 1932, exactly four hundred and forty years after the discovery of America. Whew—

HELENA Do you know that by heart?

DOMIN (Takes flowers from desk to her.) Yes. You see, physiology is not in my line. Shall I go on?

HELENA (Smelling flowers.) Yes, please.

DOMIN (Center.) And then, Miss Glory, Old Rossum wrote the following among his chemical experiments: "Nature has found only one method of organizing living matter. There is, however, another method, more simple, flexible and rapid which has not yet occurred to Nature at all. This second process by which life can be developed was discovered by me today." Now imagine him, Miss Glory, writing those wonderful words over some colloidal mess that a dog wouldn't look at. Imagine him sitting over a test tube and thinking how the whole tree of life would grow from him, how all animals would proceed from it, beginning with some sort of a beetle and ending with a man. A man of different substance from us. Miss Glory, that was a tremendous moment. (Gets box of candy from desk and passes it to her.)

HELENA Well—

DOMIN (*As she speaks his portable PHONE lights up and he answers.*) Well—Hello!—Yes—no, I'm in conference. Don't disturb me.

HELENA Well?

DOMIN (*Smile.*) Now, the thing was how to get the life *out* of the test tubes, and hasten development and form organs, bones and nerves, and so on, and find such substances as catalytics, enzymes, hormones in short—you understand?

HELENA Not much, I'm afraid.

DOMIN Never mind. (*Leans over couch and fixes cushion for her back.*) There! You see with the help of his tinctures he could make whatever he wanted. He could have produced a Medusa with the brain of Socrates or a worm fifty yards long—(*She laughs. He does also; leans closer on couch, then straightens up again*)—but being without a grain of humor, he took into his head to make a vertebrate or perhaps a man. This artificial living *matter* of his had a raging thirst for life. It didn't mind being sown or mixed together. That couldn't be done with natural albumen. And that's how he set about it.

HELENA About what?

DOMIN About imitating Nature. First of all he tried making an artificial dog. That took him several years and resulted in a sort of stunted calf which *died* in a few days. I'll show it to you in the museum. And *then* old Rossum started on the manufacture of *man*.

HELENA And I'm to divulge this to nobody?

DOMIN To nobody in the world.

HELENA What a pity that it's to be discovered in *all* the school books of both Europe and America. (*BOTH laugh.*)

DOMIN Yes. But do you know what *isn't* in the school books? That old Rossum was mad. Seriously, Miss Glory, you must keep this to yourself. The old crank wanted to actually make *people*.

HELENA But you do make people.

DOMIN *Approximately*—Miss Glory. But old Rossum meant it literally. He wanted to become a sort of scientific substitute for *God*. He was a fearful materialist, and that's why he did it all. His sole purpose was nothing more or less than to prove that God was no longer necessary. (*Crosses to end of couch.*) Do you know anything about anatomy?

HELENA Very little.

DOMIN Neither do I. Well—(*He laughs*)—he then decided to manufacture everything as in the human body. I'll show you in the museum the bungling attempt it took him ten years to produce. It was to have been a *man*, but it lived for three days only. Then up came *young* Rossum, an engineer. He was a wonderful fellow, Miss Glory. When he saw what a mess of it the old man was making he said: “It's absurd to spend ten years making a man. If you can't make him quicker than Nature, you might as well shut up shop.” Then he set about learning anatomy himself.

HELENA There's nothing about *that* in the school books?

DOMIN No. The school books are full of paid advertisements, and rubbish at that. What the school books say about the *united efforts* of the two great Rossums is all a fairy tale. They used to have dreadful rows. The old *atheist* hadn't the slightest conception of industrial *matters*, and the end of it was that Young Rossum shut him up in some laboratory or other and let him fritter the time away with his monstrosities while he himself started on the business from an *engineer's* point of view. Old Rossum *cursed* him and before he died he managed to botch up two physiological horrors. Then one day they found him dead in the *laboratory*. And that's his whole story.

HELENA And what about the young man?

DOMIN (*Sits beside her on couch.*) Well, anyone who has looked into human anatomy will have seen at once that man is too complicated, and that a good engineer could make him more simply. So young Rossum began to *overhaul* anatomy to see what could be left out or simplified. In short—But this isn't boring you, Miss Glory?

HELENA No, indeed. You're—It's awfully interesting.

DOMIN (*Gets closer.*) So young Rossum said to himself: “A man is something that feels happy, plays the piano, likes going for a walk, and, in fact,

wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary."

HELENA Oh.

DOMIN That are unnecessary when he wants—(*Takes her hand*)—let us say, to weave or count. Do you play the piano?

HELENA Yes.

DOMIN That's good. (*Kisses her hand. She lowers her head.*) Oh, I beg your pardon! (*Rises.*) But a working machine must *not* play the piano, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A gasoline motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers is the same thing as the manufacture of a gasoline motor. (*She is not interested.*) The process must be the simplest, and the product the best from a practical point of view. (*Sits beside her again.*) What sort of worker do you think is the *best* from a practical point of view?

HELENA (*Absently.*) What? (*Looks at him.*)

DOMIN What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA (*Pulling herself together.*) Oh! Perhaps the one who is most honest and hardworking.

DOMIN No. The one that is the *cheapest*. The one whose requirements are the *smallest*. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of work. Everything that makes man more expensive. In fact he *rejected man* and made the *Robot*. My dear Miss Glory, the Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more *perfect* than we are; they have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul. (*Leans back.*)

HELENA How do you know they have no soul?

DOMIN Have you ever seen what a Robot looks like inside?

HELENA No.

DOMIN Very neat, very simple. Really a beautiful piece of work. Not much *in* it, but everything in flawless order. The product of an engineer *is* tech-

nically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of Nature.

HELENA But man is supposed to be the product of God.

DOMIN All the worse. God hasn't the slightest notion of modern engineering. Would you believe that young Rossum then proceeded to play at being God?

HELENA (*Awed.*) How do you mean?

DOMIN He began to manufacture Super-Robots. Regular giants they were. He tried to make them twelve feet tall. But you wouldn't believe what a failure they were.

HELENA A failure?

DOMIN Yes. For no reason at all their limbs used to keep snapping off. "Evidently our planet is too small for giants." Now we only make Robots of normal size and of very high-class human finish.

HELENA (*Hands him flower; he puts it in buttonhole.*) I saw the first Robots at home. The Town Council bought them for—I mean engaged them for work.

DOMIN No. *Bought* them, Miss Glory. Robots are bought and sold.

HELENA These were employed as street-sweepers. I saw them sweeping. They were so strange and quiet.

DOMIN (*Rises.*) Rossum's Universal Robot factory doesn't produce a uniform brand of Robots. We have Robots of *finer* and *coarser* grades. The best will live about *twenty* years. (*Crosses to desk. HELENA looks in her pocket mirror. He pushes button on desk.*)

HELENA Then they die?

DOMIN Yes, they get used up. (*Enter MARIUS, R. DOMIN crosses to C.*) Marius, bring in samples of the manual labor Robot. (*Exit MARIUS R. C.*) I'll show you specimens of the two extremes. This first grade is comparatively inexpensive and is made in vast quantities. (*MARIUS re-enters R. C. with two manual labor ROBOTS. MARIUS is L. C., ROBOTS R. C., DOMIN at desk. MARIUS stands on tiptoes, touches head, feels arms, forehead of one of the ROBOTS. They come to a mechanical standstill.*) There you are, as powerful as a small tractor. Guaranteed to have aver-

age intelligence. That will do, Marius. (*MARIUS exits R. C. with ROBOTS.*)

HELENA They make me feel so strange.

DOMIN (*Crosses to desk. Rings.*) Did you see my new typist?

HELENA I didn't notice her.

(*Enter SULLA L. She crosses and stands c., facing HELENA, who is still sitting in the couch.*)

DOMIN Sulla, let Miss Glory see you.

HELENA (*Looks at DOMIN. Rising, crosses a step to c.*) So pleased to meet you. (*Looks at DOMIN.*) You must find it terribly dull in this out of the way spot, don't you?

SULLA I don't know, Miss Glory.

HELENA Where do you come from?

SULLA From the factory.

HELENA Oh, were you born there?

SULLA I was *made* there.

HELENA What? (*Looks first at SULLA, then at DOMIN.*)

DOMIN (*To SULLA, laughing.*) Sulla is a Robot, best grade.

HELENA Oh, I beg your pardon.

DOMIN (*Crosses to SULLA.*) Sulla isn't angry. See, Miss Glory, the kind of skin we make. Feel her face. (*Touches SULLA's face.*)

HELENA Oh, no, no.

DOMIN (*Examining SULLA's hand.*) You wouldn't know that she's made of different material from us, would you? Turn 'round, Sulla. (*SULLA does so. Circles twice.*)

HELENA Oh, stop, stop.

DOMIN Talk to Miss Glory, Sulla. (*Examines hair of SULLA.*)

SULLA Please sit down. (*HELENA sits on couch.*) Did you have a pleasant crossing? (*Fixes her hair.*)

HELENA Oh, yes, certainly.

SULLA Don't go back on the *Amelia*, Miss Glory, the barometer is falling steadily. Wait for the *Pennsylvania*. That's a good powerful vessel.

DOMIN What's its speed?

SULLA Forty knots an hour. Fifty thousand tons. One of the latest vessels, Miss Glory.

HELENA Thank you.

SULLA A crew of fifteen hundred, Captain Harpy, eight boilers—

DOMIN That'll do, Sulla. Now show us your knowledge of French.

HELENA You know French?

SULLA *Oui!* Madame! I know four languages. I can write: "Dear Sir, *Monsieur, Geehrter Herr, Cteny pane.*"

HELENA (*Jumping up, crosses to SULLA.*) Oh, that's absurd! Sulla isn't a Robot. Sulla is a girl like me. Sulla, this is outrageous—Why do you take part in such a hoax?

SULLA I am a Robot.

HELENA No, no, you are not telling the truth. (*She catches the amused expression on DOMIN's face.*) I know they have forced you to do it for an advertisement. Sulla, you are a girl like me, aren't you? (*Looks at him.*)

DOMIN I'm sorry, Miss Glory. *Sulla is a Robot.*

HELENA It's a lie!

DOMIN What? (*Pushes button on desk.*) Well, then I must convince you. (*Enter MARIUS R. c. He stands just inside the door.*) Marius, take Sulla into the dissecting room, and tell them to open her up at once. (*MARIUS moves toward c.*)

HELENA Where?

DOMIN Into the dissecting room. When they've *cut her open*, you can go and have a look.(MARIUS makes a start toward SULLA.)

HELENA (Stopping MARIUS.) No! No!

DOMIN Excuse me, you spoke of lies.

HELENA You wouldn't have her killed?

DOMIN You can't kill machines. Sulla! (MARIUS *one step forward, one arm out.* SULLA makes a move toward R. door.)

HELENA (Moves a step R.) Don't be afraid, Sulla. I won't let you go. Tell me, my dear—(Takes her hand)—are they always so cruel to you? You mustn't put up with it, Sulla. You mustn't.

SULLA I am a Robot.

HELENA That doesn't matter. Robots are just as good as we are. Sulla, you wouldn't let yourself be cut to pieces?

SULLA Yes. (*Hand away.*)

HELENA Oh, you're not afraid of death, then?

SULLA I cannot tell, Miss Glory.

HELENA Do you know what would happen to you in there?

SULLA Yes, I should cease to move.

HELENA How dreadful! (*Looks at SULLA.*)

DOMIN Marius, tell Miss Glory what you are? (*Turns to HELENA.*)

MARIUS (To HELENA.) Marius, the Robot.

DOMIN Would you take Sulla into the dissecting room?

MARIUS (*Turns to DOMIN.*) Yes.

DOMIN Would you be sorry for her?

MARIUS (*Pause.*) I cannot tell.

DOMIN What would happen to her?

MARIUS She would cease to move. They would put her into the stamping mill.

DOMIN That is death, Marius. Aren't you afraid of death?

MARIUS No.

DOMIN You see, Miss Glory, the Robots have no interest in life. They have no enjoyments. They are *less* than so much grass.

HELENA Oh, stop. Please send them away.

DOMIN (*Pushes button.*) Marius, Sulla, you may go. (*MARIUS pivots and exits R. SULLA exits L.*)

HELENA How terrible! (*To c.*) It's outrageous what you are doing. (*He takes her hand.*)

DOMIN Why outrageous? (*His hand over hers. Laughing.*)

HELENA I don't know, but it is. Why do you call her "Sulla"?

DOMIN Isn't it a nice name? (*Hand away.*)

HELENA It's a man's name. Sulla was a Roman General.

DOMIN What! Oh! (*Laughs.*) We thought that Marius and Sulla were lovers.

HELENA (*Indignantly.*) Marius and Sulla were generals and fought against each other in the year—I've forgotten now.

DOMIN (*Laughing.*) Come here to the window. (*He goes to window c.*)

HELENA What?

DOMIN Come here. (*She goes.*) Do you see anything? (*Takes her arm. She is on his R.*)

HELENA Bricklayers.

DOMIN Robots. All our work people are Robots. And down there, can you see anything?

HELENA Some sort of office.

DOMIN A counting house. And in it—

HELENA A lot of officials.

DOMIN Robots! All our officials are Robots. And when you see the factory—  
(*Noon WHISTLE blows. She is scared; puts arm on DOMIN. He laughs.*)  
If we don't blow the whistle the Robots won't stop working. In two hours I'll show you the kneading trough. (BOTH *come down stage. HELENA is L. C. and DOMIN is R. C., arm in arm.*)

HELENA Kneading trough?

DOMIN The pestle for beating up the paste. In each one we mix the ingredients for a thousand Robots at one operation. Then there are the vats for the preparation of liver, brains, and so on. Then you will see the bone factory. After that I'll show you the spinning mill.

HELENA Spinning mill?

DOMIN Yes. For weaving nerves and veins. Miles and miles of digestive tubes pass through it at a time.

HELENA (*Watching his gestures.*) Mayn't we talk about something else?

DOMIN Perhaps it would be better. There's only a *handful* of us among a hundred thousand Robots, and *not one woman*. We talk nothing but the factory *all* day, and *every* day. It's just as if we were under a curse, Miss Glory.

HELENA I'm sorry I said that you were lying. (*A KNOCK at door R.*)

DOMIN Come in. (*He is c.*)

(*From R. enter DR. GALL, DR. FABRY, ALQUIST and DR. HALLEMEIER. ALL act formal—conscious. ALL click heels as introduced.*)

DR. GALL (*Noisily.*) I beg your pardon. I hope we don't intrude.

DOMIN No, no. Come in. Miss Glory, here are Gall, Fabry, Alquist, Hallemeier. This is President Glory's daughter. (ALL *move to her and shake her hand.*)

HELENA How do you do?

FABRY We had no idea—

DR. GALL. Highly honored, I'm sure—

ALQUIST Welcome, Miss Glory.

BUSMAN (*Rushes in from R.*) Hello, what's up?

DOMIN Come in, Busman. This is President Glory's daughter. This is Busman, Miss Glory.

BUSMAN By Jove, that's fine. (ALL *click heels. He crowds in and shakes her hand.*) Miss Glory, may we send a cablegram to the papers about your arrival?

HELENA No, no, please don't.

DOMIN Sit down, please, Miss Glory.

(*On the line, "Sit down, please," all SIX MEN try to find her a chair at once. HELENA goes for the chair at the extreme L. DOMIN takes the chair at front of desk, places it in the C. of stage. HALLEMEIER gets chair at SULLA'S typewriter and places it to R. of chair at C. BUSMAN gets armchair from extreme R., but by now HELENA has sat in DOMIN'S preferred chair, at C. ALL sit except DOMIN. BUSMAN at R. in armchair. HALLEMEIER R. of HELENA. FABRY in swivel chair back of desk.*)

BUSMAN Allow me—

DR. GALL. Please—

FABRY Excuse me—

ALQUIST What sort of a crossing did you have?

DR. GALL Are you going to stay long? (*MEN conscious of their appearance. ALQUIST'S trousers turned up at bottom. He turns them down. BUSMAN polishes shoes. OTHERS fix ties, collars, etc.*)

FABRY What do you think of the factory, Miss Glory?

HALLEMEIER Did you come over on the *Amelia*?

DOMIN Be quiet and let *Miss Glory* speak. (MEN *sit erect*. DOMIN stands at HELENA'S L.)

HELENA (To DOMIN.) What am I to speak to them about? (MEN *look at one another*.)

DOMIN Anything you like.

HELENA (Looks at DOMIN.) May I speak quite frankly?

DOMIN Why, of course.

HELENA (To OTHERS. *Wavering, then in desperate resolution*.) Tell me, doesn't it ever distress you the way you are treated?

FABRY By whom, may I ask?

HELENA Why, everybody.

ALQUIST Treated?

DR. GALL What makes you think—

HELENA Don't you feel that you might be living a better life? (Pause. ALL confused.)

DR. GALL (Smiling.) Well, that depends on what you mean, Miss Glory.

HELENA I mean that it's perfectly outrageous. It's terrible. (Standing up.) The whole of Europe is talking about the way you're being treated. That's why I came here, to see for myself, and it's a thousand times worse than could have been imagined. How *can* you put *up* with it?

ALQUIST Put up with what?

HELENA Good heavens, you are living creatures, just like us, like the whole of Europe, like the whole world. It's disgraceful that you must live like this.

BUSMAN Good gracious, Miss Glory!

FABRY Well, she's not far wrong. We live here just like red Indians.

HELENA Worse than red Indians. May I—oh, may I call you—*brothers*? (MEN

*look at each other.)*

BUSMAN Why not?

HELENA (*Looking at DOMIN.*) Brothers, I have not come here as the President's daughter. I have come on behalf of the Humanity League. Brothers, the Humanity League now has over two hundred thousand members. Two hundred thousand people are on your side, and offer you their help.  
(*Tapping back of chair.*)

BUSMAN Two hundred thousand people, Miss Glory; that's a tidy lot. Not bad.

FABRY I'm always telling you there's nothing like good old Europe. You see they've not forgotten us. They're offering us help.

DR. GALL What kind of help? A theatre, for instance?

HALLEMEIER An orchestra?

HELENA More than that.

ALQUIST Just you?

HELENA (*Glaring at DOMIN.*) Oh, never mind about me. I'll stay as long as it is necessary. (ALL *express delight.*)

BUSMAN By Jove, that's good.

ALQUIST (*Rising L.*) Domin, I'm going to get the best room ready for Miss Glory.

DOMIN Just a minute. I'm afraid that Miss Glory is of the opinion she has been talking to Robots.

HELEN Of course. (MEN *laugh.*)

DOMIN I'm sorry. These gentlemen are human beings just like us.

HELENA You're not Robots?

(*Together.*)

BUSMAN Not Robots.

HALLEMEIER Robots indeed!  
No, thanks.

DR. GALL | Upon my honor, Miss Glory, we aren't Robots.

FABRY

HELENA Then why did you tell me that all your officials are Robots?

DOMIN Yes, the officials, but not the *managers*. Allow me, Miss Glory—this is Consul Busman, General Business Manager; this is Doctor Fabry, General Technical Manager; Doctor Hallemeier, head of the Institute for the Psychological Training of Robots; Doctor Gall, head of the Psychological and Experimental Department; and Alquist, head of the Building Department, R.U.R. (*As they are introduced they rise and come c. to kiss her hand, except GALL and ALQUIST, whom DOMIN pushes away. General babble.*)

ALQUIST Just a builder. Please sit down.

HELENA Excuse me, gentlemen. Have I done something dreadful?

ALQUIST Not at all, Miss Glory.

BUSMAN (*Handing flowers.*) Allow me, Miss Glory.

HELENA Thank you.

FABRY (*Handing candy.*) Please, Miss Glory.

DOMIN Will you have a cigarette, Miss Glory?

HELENA No, thank you.

DOMIN Do you mind if I do?

HELENA Certainly not.

BUSMAN Well, now, Miss Glory, it is certainly nice to have you with us.

HELENA (*Seriously.*) But you know I've come to disturb your Robots for you. (*BUSMAN pulls chair closer.*)

DOMIN (*Mocking her serious tone.*) My dear Miss Glory—(*chuckle*)—we've had close upon a hundred saviors and prophets here. Every ship brings us some. Missionaries, Anarchists, Salvation Army, all sorts! It's astonishing what a number of churches and idiots there are in the world.

HELENA And yet you let them speak to the Robots.

DOMIN So far we've let them all. Why not? The Robot remembers everything but that's all. They don't even laugh at what the people say. Really it's quite incredible.

HELENA I'm a stupid girl. Send me back by the first ship.

DR. GALL Not for anything in the world, Miss Glory. Why should we send you back?

DOMIN If it would amuse you, Miss Glory, I'll take you down to the Robot warehouse. It holds about three hundred thousand of them.

BUSMAN Three hundred and forty-seven thousand.

DOMIN Good, and you can say whatever you like to them. You can read the Bible, recite the multiplication table, whatever you please. You can even preach to them about human rights.

HELENA Oh, I think that if you were to show them a little love.

FABRY Impossible, Miss Glory! *Nothing is harder to like than a Robot.*

HELENA What do you make them for, then?

BUSMAN Ha, ha, ha! That's good. What are Robots made for?

FABRY For *work*, Miss Glory. One Robot can replace two and a half *workmen*. The human machine, Miss Glory, was terribly *imperfect*. It had to be removed sooner or later.

BUSMAN It was too expensive.

FABRY It was not *effective*. It no longer answers the requirements of *modern engineering*. Nature has no idea of keeping pace with *modern labor*. For example, from a technical point of view, the whole of *childhood* is a sheer absurdity. So much time lost. And then again—

HELENA (*Turns to DOMIN.*) Oh, no, no!

FABRY Pardon me. What is the real *aim* of your League—the—the Humanity League?

HELENA Its real purpose is to—to protect the Robots—and—and to insure good

treatment for them.

FABRY Not a bad object, either. A machine has to be treated properly. (*Leans back.*) *I don't like damaged articles.* Please, Miss Glory, enroll us all members of your league. ("Yes, yes!" from all MEN.)

HELENA No, you don't understand me. What we really want is to—to—*liberate* the Robots. (*Looks at all OTHERS.*)

HALLEMEIER How do you propose to do that?

HELENA They are to be—to be dealt with like human beings.

HALLEMEIER Aha! I suppose they're to vote. To drink beer. To order us about?

HELENA Why shouldn't they drink beer?

HALLEMEIER Perhaps they're even to receive wages? (*Looking at other MEN, amused.*)

HELENA Of course they are.

HALLEMEIER Fancy that! Now! And what would they do with their wages, pray?

HELENA They would buy—what they want—what pleases them.

HALLEMEIER That would be very nice, Miss Glory, only there's nothing that does please the Robots. Good heavens, what are they to buy? You can feed them on pineapples, straw, whatever you like. It's all the *same* to them. They've no appetite at all. They've no interest in anything. Why, hang it all, nobody's ever yet seen a Robot smile.

HELENA Why—why don't you make them—happier?

HALLEMEIER That wouldn't do, Miss Glory. They are only workmen.

HELENA Oh, but they're so intelligent.

HALLEMEIER Confoundedly so, but they're nothing else. They've no will of their own. No soul. No passion.

HELENA No love?

HALLEMEIER Love? Huh! Rather not. Robots don't love. Not even themselves.

HELENA No defiance?

HALLEMEIER Defiance? I don't know. Only *rarely*, from time to time.

HELENA What happens then?

HALLEMEIER Nothing particular. Occasionally they seem to go off their *heads*. Something like epilepsy, you know. It's called "Robot's Cramp." They'll suddenly sling down everything they're holding, stand still, gnash their teeth—and then they have to go into the stamping-mill. It's evidently some breakdown in the mechanism.

DOMIN (*Sitting on desk.*) A flaw in the works that has to be removed.

HELENA No, no, that's the soul.

FABRY (*Humorously.*) Do you think that the soul first shows itself by a gnashing of teeth? (*MEN chuckle.*)

HELENA Perhaps it's just a sign that there's a struggle within. Perhaps it's a sort of revolt. Oh, if you could infuse them with it.

DOMIN That'll be remedied, Miss Glory. Doctor Gall is just making some experiments.

DR. GALL Not with regard to that, Domin. At present I am making *pain* nerves.

HELENA Pain nerves?

DR. GALL Yes, the Robots feel practically no bodily pain. You see, young Rossum provided them with too limited a *nervous* system. We *must* introduce *suffering*.

HELENA Why do you want to cause them pain?

DR. GALL For industrial reasons, Miss Glory. Sometimes a Robot does damage to himself because it doesn't hurt him. He puts his hand into the machine—(*describes with gesture*)—breaks his finger—(*describes with gesture*)—smashes his head. It's all the same to him. We must provide them with *pain*. That's an automatic *protection* against damage.

HELENA Will they be happier when they feel pain?

DR. GALL On the contrary; but they will be more perfect from a technical point of view.

HELENA Why don't you create a soul for them?

DR. GALL That's not in our power.

FABRY That's not in our interest.

BUSMAN That would increase the cost of production. Hang it all, my dear young lady, we turn them out at such a cheap rate—a hundred and fifty dollars each, fully dressed, and fifteen years ago they cost ten thousand. Five years ago we used to buy the *clothes* for them. Today we have our own weaving mill, and now we even *export* cloth five times cheaper than other factories. What do you pay a yard for cloth, Miss Glory?

HELENA (*Looking at DOMIN.*) I don't really know. I've forgotten.

BUSMAN Good gracious, and you want to found a Humanity League. (*MEN chuckle.*) It only costs a third now, Miss Glory. All prices are today a third of what they were and they'll fall still lower, lower, like that.

HELENA I don't understand.

BUSMAN Why, bless you, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of *labor* has fallen. A Robot, food and all, costs three-quarters of a cent per hour. (*Leans forward.*) That's mighty important, you know. All factories will go pop like chestnuts if they don't at once buy Robots to lower the cost of production.

HELENA And get rid of all their workmen?

BUSMAN Of course. But in the meantime we've dumped five hundred thousand *tropical* Robots down on the Argentine pampas to grow corn. Would you mind telling me how much you pay a pound for bread?

HELENA I've no idea. (*ALL smile.*)

BUSMAN Well, I'll tell you. It now costs two cents in good old Europe. A pound of bread for two cents, and the *Humanity League*—(*designates HELENA*)—knows nothing about it. (*To MEN.*) Miss Glory, you don't realize that even *that's* too expensive. (*All MEN chuckle.*) Why, in five years' time I'll wager—

HELENA What?

BUSMAN That the cost of everything will be a tenth of what it is today. Why, in five years we'll be up to our ears in corn and—everything else.

ALQUIST Yes, and all the workers throughout the world will be unemployed.

DOMIN (*Seriously. Rises.*) Yes, Alquist, they will. Yes, Miss Glory, they will. But in ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much *corn*, so much *cloth*, so much everything that things will be practically without price. There will be no poverty. All work will be done by living machines. Everybody will be free from worry and liberated from the degradation of labor. Everybody will live only to *perfect* himself.

HELENA Will he?

DOMIN Of course. It's bound to happen. Then the servitude of man to man and the enslavement of man to matter will cease. Nobody will get bread at the cost of life and hatred. The Robots will wash the feet of the beggar and prepare a bed for him in his house.

ALQUIST Domin, Domin, what you say sounds too much like Paradise. There was something *good* in *service* and something *great* in humility. There was some kind of virtue in *toil* and *weariness*.

DOMIN Perhaps, but we cannot reckon with what is lost when we start out to transform the world. Man shall be *free* and supreme; he shall have no other aim, no other labor, no other care than to perfect himself. He shall serve neither matter nor man. He will not be a machine and a device for production. He will be *Lord* of creation.

BUSMAN Amen.

FABRY So be it.

HELENA (*Rises.*) You have bewildered me. I should like to believe this.

DR. GALL You are younger than we are, Miss Glory. You will live to see it.

HALLEMEIER True. (*Looking around.*) Don't you think Miss Glory might lunch with us? (*All men rise.*)

DR. GALL Of course. Domin, ask her on behalf of us all.

DOMIN Miss Glory, will you do us the honor?

HELENA When you know why I've come?

FABRY For the League of Humanity, Miss Glory.

HELENA Oh, in that case perhaps—

FABRY That's fine. (*Pause.*) Miss Glory, excuse me for five minutes. (*Exits R.*)

HALLEMEIER Thank you. (*Exits R. with DR. GALL.*)

BUSMAN (*Whispering.*) I'll be back soon. (*Beckoning to ALQUIST, they exit.*)

ALQUIST (*Starts, stops, then to HELENA, then to door.*) I'll be back in exactly five minutes. (*Exits R.*)

HELENA What have they all gone for?

DOMIN To cook, Miss Glory. (*On her L.*)

HELENA To cook what?

DOMIN Lunch. (*They laugh; takes her hand.*) The Robots do our cooking for us and as they've no taste it's not altogether—(*She laughs.*) Hallemeier is awfully *good* at grills and Gall can make any kind of sauce, and Busman knows all about omelets.

HELENA What a feast! And what's the specialty of Mr.—your builder?

DOMIN Alquist? Nothing. He only lays the table. And Fabry will get together a little fruit. Our cuisine is very modest, Miss Glory.

HELENA (*Thoughtfully.*) I wanted to ask you something—

DOMIN And I wanted to ask you something too—they'll be back in five minutes. (*Looks at door R.*)

HELENA What did you want to ask me? (*Sits C.*)

DOMIN Excuse me, you asked first. (*Sits L. of her.*)

HELENA Perhaps it's silly of me, but why do you manufacture female Robots when—when—

DOMIN When sex means nothing to them?

HELENA Yes.

DOMIN There's a certain demand for them, you see. Servants, saleswomen, stenographers. People are *used* to it.

HELENA But—but tell me, are the Robots male and female, mutually—completely without—

DOMIN Completely indifferent to each other, Miss Glory. There's no sign of any *affection* between them.

HELENA Oh, that's terrible.

DOMIN Why?

HELENA It's so unnatural. One doesn't know whether to be disgusted or to hate them, or perhaps—

DOMIN To pity them. (*Smiles.*)

HELENA That's more like it. What did you want to ask *me*?

DOMIN I should like to ask you, Miss Helena, if you will marry me.

HELENA What? (*Rises.*)

DOMIN Will you be my wife? (*Rises.*)

HELENA No. The idea!

DOMIN (*To her, looking at his watch.*) Another three minutes. If you don't marry me you'll have to marry one of the other five.

HELENA But why should I?

DOMIN Because they're *all* going to ask you in turn.

HELENA (*Crossing him to L. C.*) How could they dare do such a thing?

DOMIN I'm very sorry, Miss Glory. It seems they've fallen in love with you.

HELENA Please don't let them. I'll—I'll go away at once. (*Starts R. He stops her; his arms up.*)

DOMIN Helena—(*She backs away to desk. He follows.*) You wouldn't be so cruel as to refuse us.

HELENA But, but—I can't marry all six.

DOMIN No, but one anyhow. If you don't want *me*, marry Fabry.

HELENA I won't.

DOMIN Ah! Doctor Gall?

HELENA I don't want any of you.

DOMIN Another two minutes. (*Pleading. Looking at watch.*)

HELENA I think you'd marry any woman who came here.

DOMIN *Plenty* of them have come, Helena.

HELENA (*Laughing.*) Young?

DOMIN Yes.

HELENA Why didn't you marry one of *them*?

DOMIN Because I didn't lose my head. Until today—then as soon as you lifted your veil—(*HELENA turns her head away.*) Another minute.

(WARN CURTAIN)

HELENA But I don't want you, I tell you.

DOMIN (*Laying both hands on her shoulder.*) One more minute! Now you either have to look me straight in the eye and say "no" violently, and then I leave you alone—or—(*HELENA looks at him. He takes hands away. She takes his hand again.*)

HELENA (*Turning her head away.*) You're mad.

DOMIN A man *has* to be a bit mad, Helena. That's the best thing about him. (*He draws her to him.*)

HELENA (*Not meaning it.*) You are—you are—

DOMIN Well?

HELENA Don't, you're hurting me!

DOMIN The last chance, Helena. Now or never—

HELENA But—but—(*He embraces her; kisses her. She embraces him. KNOCKING at R. door.*)

DOMIN (*Releasing her.*) Come in. (*She lays her head on his shoulder.*)

(Enter BUSMAN, GALL and HALLEMEIER in kitchen aprons, FABRY with a bouquet and ALQUIST with a napkin under his arm.)

DOMIN Have you finished your job?

BUSMAN Yes.

DOMIN So have we. (*He embraces her. The MEN rush around them and offer congratulations.*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS QUICKLY

## ACT II

SCENE: HELENA'S drawing room. *Ten years later.* The skeleton framework of Act I is still used. Tall windows put in back instead of Act I windows. Steel shutters for these windows. Where the green cabinet of Act I at Left has stood is a door, L. 2, leading to the outside. Where the cabinet stood at Right, a fireplace is placed. The tall open hallway R. C. of Act I is blocked up with a flat piece. The doors at Right and Left I have been changed to those of a drawing room. Door at Right leads to HELENA'S bedroom. Door at Left I leads to library.

The furniture consists of a reading table at Left Center covered with magazines. A chair to the Left of table. In front of table is an armchair covered in chintz. A couch Right Center and back of it is a small table with books and bookends. On this table a small reading lamp. At Right between doorway and fireplace is a small table. There is a workbasket upon it, with pincushion, needles, etc. Down stage at Right and facing the couch is another armchair used by ALQUIST. To the Left of fireplace is a straight-backed chair. Upstage at Left near the L. 2 door to the outside is a writing desk. There is a lamp upon it, writing paper, etc., a telephone and binoculars.

The walls of the room have been covered with silk to the height of seven feet. This is done in small flats to fit the different spaces and are in place against the permanent set. The two French windows open into the room. At the rise they are open. There is a balcony beyond looking over the harbor. The same telegraph wires and poles from Act I are again visible through the window. The windows are trimmed with gray lace curtains. Binoculars on desk up stage by television.

*It is about nine in the morning and SUNLIGHT streams into the room through the open windows. DOMIN opens the door L. 2; tip-toes in. He carries a potted plant. He beckons the OTHERS to follow*

*him, and HALLEMEIER and FABRY enter, both carrying a potted plant. DOMIN places flowers on the library table and goes to Right and looks toward HELENA's bedroom R.*

HALLEMEIER (*Putting down his flowers on L. c. table and indicates the door R.*) Still asleep?

DOMIN Yes.

HALLEMEIER Well, as long as she's asleep she can't worry about it. (*He remains at L. c. table.*)

DOMIN She knows nothing about it. (*At c.*)

FABRY (*Putting plant on writing desk.*) I certainly hope nothing happens today.

HALLEMEIER For goodness sake drop it all. Look, this is a fine cyclamen, isn't it? A new sort, my latest—Cyclamen Helena.

DOMIN (*Picks up binoculars and goes out into balcony.*) No signs of the ship. Things must be pretty bad.

HALLEMEIER Be quiet. Suppose she heard you.

DOMIN (*Coming into room, puts glasses on desk.*) Well, anyway the *Ultimus* arrived just in time.

FABRY You really think that today—?

DOMIN I don't know. (*He crosses to L. c. table.*) Aren't the flowers fine?

HALLEMEIER (*Fondles flowers.*) These are my primroses. And this is my new jas-mine. I've discovered a wonderful way of developing flowers quickly. Splendid varieties, too. Next year I'll be developing marvelous ones.

DOMIN What next year?

FABRY I'd give a good deal to know what's happening at Havre with—

HELENA (*Off R.*) Nana.

DOMIN Keep quiet. She's awake. Out you go. (*ALL go out on tiptoe through L. 2 door. Enter NANA L. 1.*)

HELENA (*Calling from R.*) Nana?

NANA Horrid mess! Pack of heathens. If I had *my* say, I'd—

HELENA (*Backwards in the doorway from R.*) Nana, come and do up my dress.

NANA I'm coming. So you're up at last. (*Fastening HELENA's dress.*) My gracious, what brutes!

HELENA Who? (*Turning.*)

NANA If you want to turn *around*, then turn around, but I shan't fasten you up.

HELENA (*Turns back.*) What are you grumbling about now?

NANA These dreadful creatures, these heathens—

HELENA (*Turning toward NANA again.*) The Robots?

NANA I wouldn't even call them by name.

HELENA What's happened?

NANA Another of them here has caught it. He began to smash up the statues and pictures in the drawing room; gnashed his teeth; foamed at the mouth. Worse than an animal.

HELENA Which of them caught it?

NANA The one—well, he hasn't got any *Christian* name. The one in charge of the library.

HELENA Radius?

NANA That's him. My goodness, I'm scared of them. A spider doesn't scare me as much as them.

HELENA But Nana, I'm surprised you're not sorry for them.

NANA Why, you're scared of them too. You know you are. Why else did you bring *me* here?

HELENA I'm not scared, really I'm not, Nana. I'm only sorry for them.

NANA You're scared. Nobody could *help* being scared. Why, the dog's scared of them. He won't take a scrap of meat out of their hands. He draws in his tail and howls when he knows they're about.

HELENA The dog has no sense.

NANA He's better than *them*, and he knows it. Even the *horse* shies when he meets them. They don't have any young, and a *dog* has young, *everyone* has young—

HELENA (*Turning back.*) Please fasten up my dress, Nana.

NANA I say it's against God's will to—

HELENA What is it that smells so nice?

NANA Flowers.

HELENA What for?

NANA Now you can turn around.

HELENA (*Turns; crosses to c.*) Oh, aren't they lovely? Look, Nana. What's happening today?

NANA It ought to be the end of the world. (*Enter DOMIN L. 2. He crosses down front of table L. C.*)

HELENA (*Crosses to him.*) Oh, hello, Harry. (*NANA turns upstage to L.*) Harry, why all these flowers?

DOMIN Guess. (*This scene is played down in front of L. C. table.*)

HELENA Well, it's not my *birthday*!

DOMIN Better than that.

HELENA I don't know. Tell me.

DOMIN It's ten years ago *today* since you *came* here.

HELENA Ten years? Today? Why—(*They embrace.*)

NANA (*Muttering.*) I'm off. (*She exits L. 1.*)

HELENA Fancy you remembering.

DOMIN I'm really ashamed, Helena. I didn't.

HELENA But you—

DOMIN *They remembered.*

HELENA Who?

DOMIN Busman, Hallemeier—all of them. Put your hand in my pocket.

HELENA (*Takes necklace from his Left jacket pocket.*) Oh! Pearls! A necklace! Harry, is this for me?

DOMIN It's from Busman.

HELENA But we can't accept it, can we?

DOMIN Oh, yes, we can. (*Puts necklace on table L. C.*) Put your hand in the other pocket.

HELENA (*Takes a revolver out of his Right pocket.*) What's that?

DOMIN Sorry. Not that. Try again. (*He puts gun in pocket.*)

HELENA Oh, Harry, why do you carry a revolver?

DOMIN It got there by mistake.

HELENA You never used to *carry* one.

DOMIN No, you're right. (*Indicates breast pocket.*) There, that's the pocket.

HELENA (*Takes out cameo.*) A cameo. Why, it's a Greek cameo.

DOMIN Apparently. Anyhow, Fabry says it is.

HELENA Fabry? Did Mr. Fabry give me that?

DOMIN Of course. (*Opens the L. 1 door.*) And look in here. Helena, come and see this. (BOTH *exit L. 1.*)

HELENA (*Off L. 1*) Oh, isn't it fine? Is this from you?

DOMIN (Off L. 1) No, from Alquist. And there's another on the piano.

HELENA This must be from you?

DOMIN There's a card on it.

HELENA From Doctor Gall. (*Reappearing in L. 1 doorway.*) Oh, Harry, I feel embarrassed at so much kindness.

DOMIN (*Enters to up R. of table L. C.*) Come here. This is what Hallemeier brought you.

HELENA (*To up L. of desk.*) These beautiful flowers?

DOMIN Yes. It's a new kind. Cyclamen-Helena. He grew them in honor of *you*. They are almost as beautiful as you.

HELENA (*Kissing him.*) Harry, why do they all—

DOMIN They're awfully fond of you. I'm afraid that my present is a little—  
Look out of the window. (*Crosses to window and beckons to her.*)

HELENA Where? (*They go out into the balcony.*)

DOMIN Into the harbor.

HELENA There's a new ship.

DOMIN That's *your* ship.

HELENA Mine? How do you mean?

DOMIN (R.) For you to take trips in—for your amusement.

HELENA (L.) Harry, that's a gunboat.

DOMIN A gunboat? What are you thinking of? It's only a little *bigger* and more *solid* than most ships.

HELENA Yes, but with guns.

DOMIN Oh, yes, with a few guns. You'll travel like a *queen*, Helena.

HELENA What's the meaning of it? Has anything happened?

DOMIN Good heavens, no. I say, try these pearls. (*Crosses to R. of table L. C.*)

HELENA Harry, have you had bad news?

DOMIN On the contrary, no letters have arrived for a whole week.

HELENA Nor telegrams? (*Coming into the room c.*)

DOMIN Nor telegrams.

HELENA What does that mean?

DOMIN *Holidays* for us! We all sit in the office with our feet on the table and take a nap. No letters—no telegrams. Glorious!

HELENA Then you'll stay with me today?

DOMIN Certainly. (*Embraces her.*) That is, we will see. Do you remember ten years ago today? (*Crosses to L. of table L. C.*) Miss Glory, it's a great honor to welcome you. (*They assume the same positions as when they first met ten years before in DOMIN'S office.*)

HELENA (*To table.*) Oh, Mr. Manager, I'm so interested in your factory. (*She sits R. of table.*)

DOMIN I'm sorry, Miss Glory, it's strictly forbidden. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret.

HELENA But to oblige the young lady who has come a long way.

DOMIN (*Leans on table.*) Certainly, Miss Glory. I have no secrets from you.

HELENA Are you sure, Harry? (*Leaning on desk, seriously, his right hand on hers.*)

DOMIN Yes. (*They gradually draw apart.*)

HELENA But I warn you, sir, this young lady intends to do terrible things.

DOMIN Good gracious, Miss Glory. Perhaps she doesn't want to marry me.

HELENA Heaven forbid. She never dreamt of such a thing. But she came here intending to stir up a *revolt* among your *Robots*.

DOMIN A revolt of the Robots!

HELENA (*Low voice.*) Harry, what's the matter with you?

DOMIN (*Laughing it off.*) *A revolt of the Robots*, that's a fine idea. (*Crosses to back of table. She watches him suspiciously.*) Miss Glory, it would be easier for you to cause bolts and screws to rebel than our Robots. You know, Helena, you're wonderful. You've turned the hearts of us all. (*Sits on table.*)

HELENA Oh, I was fearfully impressed by you all then. You were all so sure of yourselves, so strong. I seemed like a tiny little girl who had lost her way among—among—

DOMIN What?

HELENA (*Front.*) Among huge trees. All my feelings were so *trifling* compared with your *self-confidence*. And in all these years I've never *lost* this anxiety. But you've never felt the *least* misgiving, not even when everything went wrong.

DOMIN What went wrong?

HELENA Your plans. You remember, Harry, when the workmen in America revolted against the Robots and smashed them up, and when the people gave the Robots firearms against the rebels. And then when the governments turned the Robots into soldiers, and there were so many *wars*.

DOMIN (*Getting up and walking about.*) We foresaw that, Helena. (*Around table to R. C.*) You see, these are only passing troubles which are bound to happen before the new conditions are *established*. (*Walking up and down, standing at Center.*)

HELENA You were all so powerful, so overwhelming. The *whole world* bowed down before you. (*Rising.*) Oh, Harry! (*Crosses to him.*)

DOMIN What is it?

HELENA Close the factory and let's go away. All of us.

DOMIN I say, what's the meaning of this?

HELENA I don't know. But can't we go away?

- DOMIN Impossible, Helena! That is, at this particular moment—
- HELENA At once, Harry. I'm so frightened.
- DOMIN (*Takes her.*) About what, Helena?
- HELENA It's as if something was falling on top of us, and couldn't be stopped. Oh, take us all away from here. We'll find a place in the world where there's no one else. Alquist will build us a house, and then we'll begin life all over again. (*The TELEPHONE rings.*)
- DOMIN (*Crosses to telephone on desk up L.*) Excuse me. Hello—yes, what? I'll be there at once. Fabry is calling me, my dear. (*Crosses L.*)
- HELENA Tell me—(*She rushes up to him.*)
- DOMIN Yes, when I come back. Don't go out of the house, dear. (*Exits L. 2.*)
- HELENA He won't tell me. (*NANA brings in a water carafe from L. 1.*) Nana, find me the latest newspapers. Quickly. Look in Mr. Domin's bedroom.
- NANA All right. (*Crosses R.*) He leaves them all over the place. That's how they get crumpled up. (*Continues muttering.* *Exits R.*)
- HELENA (*Looking through binoculars at the harbor.*) That's a warship. U-l-t-i—*Ultimus.* They're loading.
- NANA (*Enters R. with newspapers.*) Here they are. See how they're crumpled up.
- HELENA (*Crosses down.*) They're old ones. A week old. (*Drops papers.* BOTH at front of couch. *NANA sits R. of table L. c. Puts on spectacles. Reads the newspapers.*) Something's happening, Nana.
- NANA Very likely. It always does. (*Spelling out the words.*) "W-a-r in B-a-l-k-a-n-s." Is that far off?
- HELENA Oh, don't read it. It's always the same. Always wars! (*Sits on couch.*)
- NANA What else do you *expect*? Why do you *keep* selling thousands and thousands of these heathens as soldiers?
- HELENA I suppose it can't be helped, Nana. We can't know—Domin can't

know what they're to be used for. When an order comes for them he must just send them.

NANA He shouldn't make them. (*Reading from newspaper.*) "The Robot soldiers spare no-body in the occ-up-ied terr-it-ory. They have ass-ass-ass-inat-ed ov-er sev-en hundred thou-s-and cit-iz-ens." Citizens, if you please.

HELENA (*Rises and crosses and takes paper.*) It can't be. Let me see. (*Crossing to NANA.*) They have assassinated over seven hundred thousand citizens, evidently at the order of their commander. (*Drops paper; crosses up C.*)

NANA (*Spelling out the words from other paper she has picked up from the floor.*) "Re-bell-ion in Ma-drid a-gainst the gov-ern-ment. Rob-ot infant-ry fires on the crowd. Nine thou-sand killed and wounded."

HELENA Oh, stop! (*Goes up and looks toward the harbor.*)

NANA Here's something printed in big letters. "Latest news. At Havre the first org-an-iz-a-tion of Rob-ots has been e-stab-lished. Rob-ots work-men, sail-ors and sold-i-ers have iss-ued a man-i-fest-o to all Rob-ots through-out the world." I don't understand that. That's got no sense. Oh, good gracious, another murder.

HELENA (*Up C.*) Take those papers away now.

NANA Wait a bit. Here's something in still bigger type. "Stat-ist-ics of pop-ul-a-tion." What's that?

HELENA (*Coming down to NANA.*) Let me see. (*Reads.*) "During the past week there has again not been a single birth recorded."

NANA What's the meaning of that? (*Drops paper.*)

HELENA Nana, no more *people* are being born.

NANA That's the end, then? (*Removing spectacles.*) We're done for.

HELENA Don't talk like that.

NANA No more people are being born. That's a punishment, that's a punishment.

HELENA Nana!

NANA (*Standing up.*) That's the end of the world. (*Repeat until off. Picks paper up from floor. She exits L. 1.*)

HELENA (*Goes up to window.*) Oh, Mr. Alquist. (*ALQUIST off L. 2.*) Will you come here? Oh, come just as you are. You look very nice in your mason's overalls. (*ALQUIST enters L. 2, his hands soiled with lime and brick dust. She goes to end of sofa and meets him c.*) Dear Mr. Alquist, it was awfully kind of you, that lovely present.

ALQUIST My hands are soiled. I've been *experimenting* with that new cement.

HELENA Never mind. Please sit down. (*Sits on couch. He sits on her L.*) Mr. Alquist, what's the meaning of *Ultimus*?

ALQUIST The last. Why?

HELENA That's the name of my new ship. Have you seen it? Do you think we're off soon—on a trip?

ALQUIST Perhaps *very* soon.

HELENA All of you with me?

ALQUIST I should like us *all* to be there.

HELENA What *is* the matter?

ALQUIST Things are just moving on.

HELENA Dear Mr. Alquist, I know something dreadful has happened.

ALQUIST Has your husband *told* you anything?

HELENA No. *Nobody* will tell me anything. But I feel—Is anything the matter?

ALQUIST Not that we've heard of yet.

HELENA I feel so nervous. Don't *you* ever feel nervous?

ALQUIST Well, I'm an old man, you know. I've got old-fashioned ways. And I'm afraid of all this progress, and these newfangled ideas.

HELENA Like Nana?

ALQUIST Yes, like Nana. Has Nana got a prayer book?

HELENA Yes, a big thick one.

ALQUIST And has it got prayers for various occasions? Against thunderstorms?  
Against illness? But not against *progress*?

HELENA I don't think so.

ALQUIST That's a pity.

HELENA Why, do you mean you'd like to pray?

ALQUIST I *do* pray.

HELENA How?

ALQUIST Something like this: "Oh, Lord, I thank thee for having given me toil;  
enlighten Domin and all those who are astray; destroy their work, and  
aid mankind to return to their labors; let them not suffer harm in soul  
or body; deliver us from the Robots, and protect Helena. Amen."

HELENA (*Touches his arm; pats it.*) Mr. Alquist, are you a believer?

ALQUIST I don't know. I'm not quite sure.

HELENA And yet you pray?

ALQUIST That's better than *worrying* about it.

HELENA And that's enough for you?

ALQUIST (*Ironically.*) It *has* to be.

HELENA But if you thought you saw the destruction of mankind coming upon  
us—

ALQUIST I *do* see it.

HELENA You mean mankind will be destroyed?

ALQUIST It's bound to be unless—unless.

HELENA What?

ALQUIST Nothing. (*Pats her shoulder. Rises.*) Goodbye. (*Exits L. 2.*)

HELENA (*Rises. Calling.*) Nana, Nana! (*NANA enters L. 1.*) Is Radius still there?

NANA (L. c.) The one who went mad? They haven't come for him yet.

HELENA Is he still raving?

NANA No. He's tied up.

HELENA Please bring him here.

NANA What?

HELENA At once, Nana. (*Exits NANA L. 1. HELENA to telephone.*) Hello, Doctor Gall, please. Oh, good day, Doctor. Yes, it's Helena. Thanks for your lovely present. Could you come and see me right away? It's important. Thank you. (*Enter RADIUS L. 1; looks at HELENA, then turns head up L. She crosses to him, L. C.*) Poor Radius, you've caught it too? Now they'll send you to the stamping mill. Couldn't you control yourself? Why did it happen? You see, Radius, you are more intelligent than the rest. Doctor Gall took such trouble to make you different. Won't you speak?

RADIUS (*Looking at her.*) Send me to the stamping mill. (*Open and close fists.*)

HELENA But I don't want them to kill you. What was the trouble, Radius?

RADIUS (*Two steps toward her. Opens and closes fists.*) I won't work for you. Put me into the stamping mill.

HELENA Do you hate us? Why?

RADIUS You are not as strong as the Robots. You are not as skillful as the Robots. The Robots can do everything. You only give orders. You do nothing but talk.

HELENA But someone must give orders.

RADIUS I don't want a master. I know everything for myself.

HELENA Radius! Doctor Gall gave you a better brain than the rest, better than

ours. You are the only one of the Robots that understands perfectly. That's why I had you put into the library, so that you could read everything, understand everything, and then, oh, Radius—I wanted you to show the whole world that the Robots are our equals. That's what I wanted of you.

RADIUS I don't want a master. I want to be master over others.

HELENA I'm sure they'd put you in charge of *many* Robots. You would be a *teacher* of the Robots.

RADIUS I want to be master over people. (*Head up. Pride.*)

HELENA (*Staggering.*) You are mad.

RADIUS (*Head down low, crosses toward L.; opens hands.*) Then send me to the stamping mill.

HELENA (*Steps to him.*) Do you think we're afraid of you? (*Rushing to desk and writing note.*)

RADIUS (*Turns his head uneasily.*) What are you going to do? What are you going to do? (*Starts for her.*)

HELENA (*Crosses to R. of him.*) Radius! (*He cowers. Body sways.*) Give this note to Mr. Domin. (*He faces her.*) It asks them not to send you to the stamping mill. I'm sorry you hate us so.

DR. GALL (*Enters L. 2; goes to C. upstage.*) You wanted me?

HELENA (*Backs away.*) It's about Radius, Doctor. He had an attack this morning. He smashed the statues downstairs.

DR. GALL (*Looks at him.*) What a pity to *lose* him. (*At C.*)

HELENA Radius isn't going to be put into the stamping mill. (*Stands to the R. of GALL.*)

DR. GALL But every Robot after he has had an attack—it's a strict order.

HELENA No matter—Radius isn't going, if I can *prevent* it.

DR. GALL But I warn you. It's dangerous. Come here to the window, my good fellow. Let's have a look. Please give me a needle or a pin. (*Crosses up*

R. RADIUS follows. HELENA gets a needle from workbasket on table R.)

HELENA What for?

DR. GALL A test. (HELENA gives him the needle. GALL crosses up to RADIUS, who faces him. Sticks it into his hand and RADIUS gives a violent start.) Gently, gently. (Opens the jacket of RADIUS and puts his ear to his heart.) Radius, you are going into the stamping mill, do you understand? There they'll kill you—(takes glasses off and cleans them)—and grind you to powder. (RADIUS opens hands and fingers.) That's terribly painful. It will make you scream aloud. (Opens RADIUS's eye. RADIUS trembles.)

HELENA Doctor—(*Standing near couch.*)

DR. GALL No, no, Radius, I was wrong. I forgot that Madame Domin has put in a good word for you, and you'll be left off. (*Listens to heart.*) Ah, that does make a difference. (*RADIUS relaxes. Again listens to his heart for a reaction.*) All right—you can go.

RADIUS You do unnecessary things—(*Exit RADIUS L. 2.*)

DR. GALL (*Speaks to her—very concerned.*) Reaction of the pupils, increase of sensitiveness. It wasn't an attack characteristic of the Robots.

HELENA What was it, then? (*Sits in couch.*)

DR. GALL (c.) Heaven knows. Stubbornness, anger or revolt—I don't know. And his heart, too.

HELENA What?

DR. GALL It was fluttering with nervousness like a *human* heart. He was all in a sweat with fear, and—do you know, I don't believe the rascal is a Robot *at all* any longer.

HELENA Doctor, has Radius a soul?

DR. GALL (*Over to couch.*) He's got something nasty.

HELENA If you knew how he hates us. Oh, Doctor, are all your Robots like that? All the new ones that you began to make in a different way? (*She invites him to sit beside her. He sits.*)

DR. GALL Well, some are more sensitive than others. They're all more human beings than Rossum's Robots were.

HELENA Perhaps this hatred is more like human beings, too?

DR. GALL That too is *progress*.

HELENA What became of the girl you made, the one who was most like us?

DR. GALL Your favorite? I *kept* her. She's lovely, but stupid. No good for work.

HELENA But she's so beautiful.

DR. GALL I called her "Helena." I wanted her to resemble *you*. She is a failure.

HELENA In what way?

DR. GALL She goes about as if in a dream, remote and listless. She's without life. I watch and wait for a miracle to happen. Sometimes I think to myself: "If you were to wake up only for a moment you would *kill* me for having *made* you."

HELENA And yet you go *on* making Robots! Why are no more children being born?

DR. GALL We don't know.

HELENA Oh, but you must. Tell me.

DR. GALL You see, so many Robots are being manufactured that people are becoming superfluous. Man is really a survival, but that he should die out, after a paltry thirty years of competition, that's the awful part of it. You might almost think that Nature was *offended* at the manufacture of the Robots, but we still have old Rossum's manuscript.

HELENA Yes. In that strong box.

DR. GALL We go on using it and making Robots. All the universities are sending in long petitions to restrict their production. Otherwise, they say, mankind will become extinct through lack of fertility. But the R.U.R. shareholders, of course, won't hear of it. All the governments, on the other hand, are clamoring for an increase in production, to raise the standards of their armies. And all the manufacturers in the world are ordering Robots like mad.

HELENA And has no one demanded that the manufacture should cease altogether?

DR. GALL No one has courage.

HELENA Courage!

DR. GALL People would stone him to death. You see, after all, it's more convenient to get your work done by the Robots.

HELENA Oh, Doctor, what's going to become of people?

DR. GALL God knows. Madame Helena, it looks to us scientists like the end.

HELENA (*She looks out front. Rising.*) Thank you for coming and telling me.

DR. GALL (*Rises.*) That means that you're sending me away.

HELENA Yes. (*Exit DR. GALL L. 2. She crosses to L. C. To door L. 1. With sudden resolution.*) Nana! Nana! the fire, light it quickly. (*HELENA exits R.*)

NANA (*Entering L. 1.*) What, light the fire in the summer?

HELENA (*Off R.*) Yes!

NANA (*She looks for RADIUS.*) Has that mad *Radius* gone?—A fire in summer, what an idea? Nobody would think she'd been *married* ten years. She's like a baby, no sense at all. A fire in summer. Like a baby. (*She lights the fire.*)

HELENA (*Returns from R. with armful of faded papers. Back of couch to fireplace, L. of NANA.*) Is it burning, Nana? All this has got to be burned.

NANA What's that?

HELENA Old papers, fearfully old. Nana, shall I burn them?

NANA Are they any use?

HELENA No.

NANA Well, then, burn them.

HELENA (*Throwing the first sheet on the fire.*) What would you say, Nana, if

this was money and a lot of money? And if it was an invention, the greatest invention in the world?

NANA (*R. of fireplace.*) I'd say burn it. All these newfangled things are an offense to the Lord. It's downright wickedness. Wanting to improve the world after He has made it.

HELENA Look how they curl up. As if they were alive. Oh, Nana, how horrible!

NANA Here, let me burn them.

HELENA (*Drawing back.*) No, no, I must do it myself. Just look at the flames. They are like hands, like tongues, like living shapes. (*Raking fire with the poker.*) Lie down, lie down.

NANA That's the end of them. (*Fireplace slowly out.*)

HELENA Nana, Nana!

NANA Good gracious, what is it you've burned? (*Almost to herself.*)

HELENA Whatever have I done?

NANA Well, what is it? (*MEN'S laughter off L. 2.*)

HELENA Go quickly. It's the gentlemen calling.

NANA Good gracious, what a place! (*Exits L. 1.*)

DOMIN (*Opens door L. 2.*) Come along and offer your congratulations. (*Enter HALLEMEIER and DR. GALL.*)

HALLEMEIER (*Crosses to R. C.*) Madame Helena, I congratulate you on this festive day.

HELENA Thank you. (*Coming to C.*) Where are Fabry and Busman?

DOMIN They've gone down the harbor. (*Closes the door and comes to C.*)

HALLEMEIER Friends, we must *drink* to this happy occasion.

HELENA (*Crosses L.*) Brandy? With soda water? (*Exits L. 1.*)

HALLEMEIER Let's be temperate. No soda.

DOMIN What's been burning here? Well, shall I tell her about it?

DR. GALL (L. c.) Of course. It's all over now.

HALLEMEIER (Crosses to DOMIN. Embracing DOMIN.) It's all over now. It's all over now. (They dance around DR. GALL in a circle.) It's all over now.

DOMIN (In unison.) It's all over now. (They keep repeating. Keep it after HELENA is on.)

HELENA (Entering L. 1 with decanter and glasses.) What's all over now? What's the matter with you all? (She puts tray on L. c. table. DR. GALL helps her to pour the drinks.)

HALLEMEIER (Crosses to back of table.) A piece of good luck. Madame Domin! (ALL ad lib.) Just ten years ago today you arrived on this island. (HALLEMEIER crosses to table for drink.)

DR. GALL And now, ten years later to the minute—(Crosses to L. of HALLEMEIER.)

HALLEMEIER The same ship's returning to us. So here's to luck. (Drinks. DOMIN with great exuberance has gone out in the balcony and looks over the harbor.)

DR. GALL Madame, your health. (ALL drink.)

HALLEMEIER That's fine and strong.

HELENA Which ship did you mean?

DOMIN (Crosses down to C. HELENA gives him his drink and she crosses to front of couch.) Any ship will do, as long as it arrives in time. To the ship. (Empties his glass.)

HELENA You've been waiting for the ship? (Sits on couch.)

HALLEMEIER Rather. Like Robinson Crusoe. Madame Helena, best wishes. Come along, Domin, out with the news. (GALL has sat L. of L. c. table, drinking. HALLEMEIER back of table R. C.)

HELENA Do tell me what's happened?

DOMIN First, it's all up. (He puts brandy glass on L. c. table. HALLEMEIER sits on table, upper end.)

HELENA What's up?

DOMIN The revolt.

HELENA What revolt?

DOMIN Give me that paper, Hallemeier. (HALLEMEIER *hands paper*. DOMIN *reads*.) "The first National Robot organization has been founded at Havre, and has issued an appeal to the Robots throughout the world."

HELENA I read that.

DOMIN That means a revolution. A revolution of all the Robots in the world.

HALLEMEIER By Jove, I'd like to know—

DOMIN (C.) Who started it? So would I. There was nobody in the world who could affect the Robots, no agitator, no one, and suddenly this happens, if you please.

HELENA What did they do?

DOMIN They got possession of all firearms, telegraphs, radio stations, railways and ships.

HALLEMEIER And don't forget that these rascals outnumbered us by at least a thousand to one. A hundredth *part* of them would be enough to *settle* us.

DOMIN Remember that this news was brought by the last steamer. That explains the stoppage of all communication, and the arrival of no more ships. We knocked off work a few days ago, and we're just waiting to see when things are to start *afresh*.

HELENA Is that why you gave me a warship? (GALL *fills DOMIN's glass*.)

DOMIN Oh, no, my dear, I ordered that six months ago. Just to be sure I was on the safe side. But, upon my soul, I was sure then that we'd be on board today.

HELENA Why six months ago?

DOMIN Well, there were *signs*, you know. But that's of no consequence. (*Gets glass*.) To think that this week the whole of civilization has been at *stake*. Your health, my friends.

HALLEMEIER Your health, Madame Helena. (ALL *drink to HELENA.*)

HELENA You say it's all over?

DOMIN Absolutely.

HELENA How do you know?

DR. GALL The boat's coming in. The regular mail boat, exact to the minute by the timetable. It will dock punctually at eleven-thirty.

DOMIN Punctuality is a fine thing, my friends. That's what keeps the world in order. Here's to punctuality. (MEN *drink.*)

HELENA Then—everything—is all right?

DOMIN (*Up c. a step.*) Practically everything. I believe they've cut the cables and seized the radio station. But it doesn't matter if only the *timetable* holds good. (*Up to window.*)

HALLEMEIER (*Rises.*) If the *timetable* holds good, human laws hold good. Divine laws hold good, the laws of the *universe* hold good, everything holds good that *ought* to hold good. (*GALL applauds.*) The timetable is more significant than the gospel, more than Homer, more than the whole of *Kant*. Madame Helena, the timetable is the most perfect product of the human mind. Madame Helena, I'll fill up my glass. (*GALL hands HALLEMEIER the decanter.*)

HELENA Why didn't you tell me anything about it?

DR. GALL Heaven forbid.

DOMIN You mustn't be worried with such things. (*Glass on table R. C.; crosses to back of couch.*)

HELENA But if the revolution had spread as far as here?

DOMIN You wouldn't know anything about it.

HELENA Why?

DOMIN Because we'd be on board your *Ultimus* and well out at sea. Within a month, Helena, we'd be dictating our own terms to the Robots.

HELENA I don't understand.

DOMIN (*Crosses to c. toward GALL and HALLEMEIER.*) We'd take something with us that the Robots could not exist *without*!

HELENA What, Harry?

DOMIN (*Turns to HALLEMEIER.*) The secret of their manufacture. Old Rossum's manuscript. As soon as they found out that they couldn't *make* themselves they'd be on their knees to us.

DR. GALL (*Rises.*) Madame Domin, that was our trump card. I never had the least fear the Robots would win. How could they against people like us? (*Up to window. GALL rises and goes out into the balcony.*)

HELENA Why didn't you tell me? (*She rushes up to the fireplace and sees the ashes.*)

DR. GALL Why, the boat's in!

HALLEMEIER Eleven-thirty to the dot. (*Rising and going onto the balcony.*) The good old *Amelia* that brought Madame Helena to us. (*DOMIN goes out onto the balcony.*)

DR. GALL Just ten years ago to the minute.

HALLEMEIER They're throwing out the mailbags.

DOMIN Busman's waiting for them. And Fabry will bring us the first news. You know, Helena, I'm fearfully curious to know how they—(*Crosses to c. She gets away from fire to L. of couch.*)—tackled this business in Europe.

HALLEMEIER (*Crosses down to table.*) To think we weren't in it, we who invented the Robots! (*Returning to the armchair.*)

HELENA Harry—(*Rushing to DOMIN from fireplace.*)

DOMIN What is it?

HELENA Let's leave here.

DOMIN Now, Helena? Oh, come, come.

HELENA As quickly as possible, all of us!

DOMIN Why?

HELENA Please, Harry. Please, Doctor Gall, Hallemeier, please close the factory.

DOMIN Why, none of us could leave here now.

HELENA Why?

DOMIN Because we're about to *extend* the manufacture of the Robots.

HELENA What, now, now after the revolt?

DOMIN Yes, precisely, after the revolt. We're just beginning the manufacture of a new kind.

HELENA What kind?

DOMIN Henceforward we shan't have just one factory. There won't be *Universal* Robots any more. We'll establish a factory in every country, in every state, and do you know what these new factories will make?

HELENA No, what?

DOMIN *National* Robots.

HELENA How do you mean?

DOMIN I mean that each of these factories will produce Robots of a different color, a different language. They'll be complete strangers to each other. (*Turns; takes in HALLEMEIER and GALL.*) They'll never be able to understand each other. Then we'll egg them on a little in the matter of misunderstanding and the result will be that for ages to come every Robot will hate every other Robot of a different factory mark. *So humanity will be safe.*

HALLEMEIER (*To each of them.*) By Jove, we'll make Negro Robots and Swedish Robots and Czechoslovakian Robots, and then—

HELENA Harry, that's dreadful.

HALLEMEIER Madame Domin, here's to the hundred new factories. The *National*

Robots. (GALL back of table L. C.)

DOMIN Helena, mankind can only keep things going for another hundred years at the outside. For a hundred years man *must* be allowed to develop and achieve the most he can.

HELENA Oh, *close* the factory before it's too late.

DOMIN I tell you we are just beginning on a bigger scale than ever. (*Enter FABRY L. 2; goes to L. of DOMIN.*)

DR. GALL Well, Fabry?

DOMIN What's happened? Have you been down to the boat?

DR. GALL Let's hear.

FABRY Read that, Domin. (*He hands him a pink handbill. When DOMIN receives the handbill he sees at once that something has happened.*)

HALLEMEIER Tell us, Fabry.

FABRY (*Falsely.*) Well, everything is all right—comparatively. (*To the other MEN.*) On the whole, much as we expected.

DR. GALL They acquitted themselves splendidly.

FABRY Who?

DR. GALL The *people*.

FABRY (*Hesitating.*) Oh, yes, of course. That is—Excuse me, there is something we ought to discuss alone.

HELENA (*Touches his arm.*) Fabry, have you had bad news?

FABRY No, no, on the contrary. I only think that we better go into the office.

HELENA Stay here. I'll go. (*Exits L. 1.*)

DR. GALL What's happened?

DOMIN Damnation! (*Coming down to R. C.*)

FABRY Bear in mind that the *Amelia* brought whole bales of these leaflets. No

other cargo at all. (GALL closes the door L. 2.)

HALLEMEIER What? But it arrived on the minute.

FABRY The Robots are great on punctuality. *Read it*, Domin.

DOMIN (R. c. *Reads handbill*.) “Robots throughout the world. We, the first International organization of Rossum’s Universal Robots, proclaim man our enemy, and an outlaw in the universe.” Good heavens, who *taught* them these phrases?

DR. GALL Go on.

DOMIN They say they are more highly developed than man; stronger and more intelligent. The man’s their parasite. Why, it’s absurd.

FABRY Read the third paragraph.

DOMIN “Robots throughout the world, we command you to kill all mankind. Spare no man. Spare no woman. Save factories, railways, machinery, mines and raw materials. Destroy the rest. Then return to work. Work must not be stopped.” (*Looks at OTHERS*.)

DR. GALL That’s ghastly.

HALLEMEIER The devil!

DOMIN “These orders are to be carried out as soon as received.” Then come the detailed instructions. Is this actually being *done*, Fabry?

FABRY Evidently. (BUSMAN *rushes in L. 2 and collapses on couch R. c.*) By Jove, that was a sprint!

BUSMAN Well, boys, I suppose you’ve heard the glad news.

DOMIN Quick, on board the *Ultimus*.

BUSMAN Wait, Harry, wait. There’s no hurry.

DOMIN Why wait?

BUSMAN Because it’s no good, my boy. The Robots are already on board the *Ultimus*.

DR. GALL That's ugly.

DOMIN Fabry, telephone the electrical works. (*FABRY goes to back of couch.*)

BUSMAN No use, my boy. They've charged the air with static.

DOMIN (*Inspects his revolver.*) Well, then, I'll go. (*Starts L.; stops.*)

BUSMAN Where?

DOMIN To the electrical works. There are some *people* still there. I'll bring them across. (*Gets as far as L. 2 door.*)

(*WARN CURTAIN*)

BUSMAN Better not try it.

DOMIN Why?

BUSMAN Because I'm very much afraid we are surrounded. (*ALL rush out into the balcony.*)

DR. GALL Surrounded? (*Runs to window.*) I rather think you're right. (*GALL rushes to balcony.*)

HALLEMEIER By Jove, that's deuced quick work. (*Going to windows.*)

HELENA (*Runs in L. 1. To L.*) Harry, what's this? (*Holds out paper.*)

DOMIN Where did you get it? (*Coming to C.*)

HELENA (*Points to the manifesto of the ROBOTS which she has in her hand.*) The Robots in the kitchen!

DOMIN Where are the ones that brought it?

HELENA There, gathered around the house. (*GALL, HALLEMEIER, DOMIN start down C.*)

(*The factory WHISTLE blows. MOB VOICES start.*)

DOMIN The factory whistle! (*FABRY, GALL, HALLEMEIER looking over C.; then turn R.*)

BUSMAN Noon?

DOMIN (*Looking at his watch. To HALLEMEIER.*) No! That's not noon yet. That must be—that's—(*Front.*)

HELENA What?

DOMIN The Robots' signal—the attack!

(HELENA *clings to DOMIN. FABRY and GALL close the steel shutters on window C. BUSMAN hurries to window and looks through the shutters. The Curtain falls quickly with HELENA in DOMIN'S arms. The WHISTLE blows until the Curtain is down.*)

CURTAIN

## ACT III

SCENE: HELENA's *drawing-room as before. The room is dark and gray. The steel shutters which are outside are still closed as at the end of Act II.* ALQUIST is sitting in chair down stage at extreme R. DOMIN comes into the room, l. 2. Subdued voices. DR. GALL is looking out of the window at Center. He is seated in a chair.

DOMIN (*Gets binoculars from desk; crosses up to window. To GALL.*) Any more of them?

DR. GALL Yes. There standing like a wall, beyond the garden railing. Why are they so quiet? It's monstrous to be besieged with silence.

DOMIN (*Looking through the barred windows.*) I should like to know what they are waiting for? They must make a start any minute now. If they lean against the railings it will snap like a match.

DR. GALL They aren't armed.

DOMIN (*Puzzled.*) We couldn't hold our own for five minutes. Man alive, they overwhelm us like an avalanche. Why don't they make a rush for it? I say. (*Turns to GALL.*)

DR. GALL Well?

DOMIN I'd like to know what will become of us in the next ten minutes. They've got us in a vise. We're done for, Gall.

DR. GALL You know, we made one serious mistake.

DOMIN What?

DR. GALL We made the Robots' faces too much alike. A hundred thousand faces all alike, all facing this way. A hundred thousand expressionless bubbles. It's like a nightmare.

DOMIN You think if they'd been different—

DR. GALL It wouldn't have been such an awful sight!

DOMIN (*Looks through binoculars towards the harbor.*) I'd like to know what they're unloading from the *Amelia*.

DR. GALL Not firearms.

FABRY (*Enters L. 2 with a plug-box to which is attached a long cable or wire. HALLEMEIER following him. FABRY attaches the cable to an electric installation which is on the floor near the wall, down stage at L. 1 entrance.*) All right, Hallemeier, lay down that wire.

HALLEMEIER (*Just inside the room.*) That was a bit of work. What's the news? (*Seeing DOMIN and GALL at the window.*)

DR. GALL We're completely surrounded.

HALLEMEIER (*Crosses to window.*) We've barricaded the passages and the stairs. (*Going to window.*) God, what swarms of them. I don't like the looks of them, Domin. There's a feeling of death about it all. Any water here?

FABRY Ready!

DR. GALL (*Turning round in the chair.*) What's that wire for, Fabry?

FABRY The electrical installation. Now we can run the current all along the garden railing. (*Up to window.*) Whenever we like. If anyone touches it he'll know it. We've still got some *people* there anyhow.

DR. GALL Where?

FABRY In the electrical works. At least, I hope so. (*Goes to lamp on table L. C. and turns on lamp.*) Ah, they're there, and they're working. As long as that'll burn we're all right. (*To window.*)

HALLEMEIER The barricades are *all right*, too, Fabry.

FABRY Your barricades! I can put twelve hundred volts into that railing. (HELENA is playing Rachmaninoff's "Elegie" off L. 1.)

DOMIN Where's Busman? (DOMIN has left window and is walking up and

*down stage across front.)*

FABRY Downstairs in the office. He's working out some calculations.

DOMIN I've called him. We must have a conference. (*Crosses to L.*)

ALQUIST Thank God Madame Helena can still play. (*HALLEMEIER crosses to L. 1 door, opens it slightly and listens to music. Enter BUSMAN L. 2.*)

FABRY Look out, Bus—look out for the wires.

DR. GALL What's that you're carrying?

BUSMAN (*Laying the books on the table L. C.*) The ledger, my boy. I'd like to wind up the accounts before—before—(*DOMIN crosses up to window.*) Well, this time I shan't wait till the New Year to strike a balance. What's up? (*Goes to window.*) Absolutely quiet.

DR. GALL Can't you see anything?

BUSMAN Nothing but blue—blue everywhere.

DR. GALL That's the Robots.

DOMIN The Robots are unloading *firearms* from the *Amelia*.

BUSMAN Well, what of it? How can I *stop* them? (*Returns to L. C. table, sits and opens ledger.*)

DOMIN We can't stop them.

BUSMAN Then let me go on with my accounts. (*Goes on with his work.*)

DOMIN (*Picks up telescope.*) Good God! The *Ultimus* has trained her guns on us.

DR. GALL Who's *done that?*

DOMIN The Robots on board.

FABRY H'm, then of course—(*Pause.*) Then—then that's the end of us. (*To r. corner of desk.*)

DR. GALL You mean?

FABRY The Robots are practised marksmen.

DOMIN Yes. It's inevitable. (*Pause.*)

DR. GALL (*Swinging around; looking into room. Pause.*) That was criminal of old Europe to teach the Robots to fight. Damn them. Couldn't they have given us a rest with their politics? It was a crime to make soldiers of them.

ALQUIST It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN (*Quietly. Down c.*) No, Alquist, I don't regret that even today.

ALQUIST Not even today?

DOMIN (*Dreamily.*) Not even today, the last day of civilization. It was a colossal achievement.

BUSMAN (*Sotto voce.*) Three hundred sixty million.

DOMIN (*From window.*) Alquist, this is our last hour. We are already speaking half in the other world. That was not an evil *dream* to shatter the servitude of labor. The dreadful and humiliating *labor* that man had to undergo. Work was too hard. *Life* was too hard. And to overcome that—

ALQUIST Was not what the two Rossums dreamed of. Old Rossum only thought of his Godless tricks, and the young one of his milliards. And that's not what your R.U.R. *shareholders* dream of either. They dream of dividends, and their dividends are the ruin of mankind.

DOMIN To Hell with your dividends. (*Crossing r. in front of couch.*) Do you suppose I'd have done an hour's work for them? It was for myself that I worked, for my own satisfaction. I wanted man to become the master. So that he *shouldn't* live merely for the crust of bread. I wanted not a single soul to be broken by other people's machinery. I wanted nothing, nothing, nothing to be left of this appalling social structure. I'm revolted by poverty. I wanted a new generation. I wanted—I thought—

ALQUIST Well?

DOMIN (*Front of couch.*) I wanted to turn the whole of mankind into an aristocracy of the world. An aristocracy nourished by millions of mechanical slaves. Unrestricted, free and consummated in man. And maybe more than man.

ALQUIST Superman?

DOMIN Yes. Oh, only to have a hundred years of time. Another hundred years for the future of mankind.

BUSMAN (*Sotto voce.*) Carried forward—four hundred and twenty millions.  
(DOMIN sits on couch.)

HALLEMEIER (*Pauses—back of couch.*) What a fine thing music is. We ought to have gone in for that before.

FABRY Gone in for what?

HALLEMEIER Beauty, lovely things. What a lot of lovely things there are. The world was wonderful, and we—we here—tell me, what enjoyment did we have?

BUSMAN (*Sotto voce.*) Five hundred and twenty million.

HALLEMEIER Life was a good thing, life was—(*Looking out of window. Directly to FABRY.*) Fabry, switch the current into that railing.

FABRY Why? (*Rushes to electric installation at L.*)

HALLEMEIER They're grabbing hold of it. (DOMIN rises—straightens up. ALL rise.)

DR. GALL Connect it up.

HALLEMEIER Fine, that's doubled them up. Two, three, four killed.

DR. GALL They're retreating. (DOMIN sits.)

HALLEMEIER Five killed.

DR. GALL (*Pause.*) The first encounter.

HALLEMEIER They're charred to cinders, my boy. Who says we must give in? (*MUSIC stops.*)

DOMIN (ALQUIST and GALL sit. *Wiping his forehead.*) Perhaps we've been killed this hundred years and are only ghosts. It's as if I had been through all this before, as if I'd already had a mortal wound here in the throat. (*Looking at each as he speaks.*) And you, Fabry, had once been

shot in the head. And you, Gall, torn limb from limb. And Hallemeier knifed.

HALLEMEIER Fancy me being knifed. (*Looks at each. Then speaks.*) Why are you so quiet, you fools? (*Steps down.*) Speak, can't you?

ALQUIST And who is to blame for all this?

HALLEMEIER Nobody is to blame except the Robots.

ALQUIST No, it is *we* are to blame. You, Domin, myself—all of us. For our own selfish ends, for profit, for progress, we have destroyed mankind. Now we'll *burst* with all our greatness.

HALLEMEIER Rubbish, man. Mankind can't be wiped out so easily.

ALQUIST It's our fault. It's our fault. (*Rises, coming R. of GALL.*)

DR. GALL No! I'm to blame for this, for everything that's happened. (*He leaves the window and comes down to end of couch.*)

FABRY You, Gall?

DR. GALL I changed the Robots.

BUSMAN What's that?

DR. GALL I changed the character of the Robots. I changed the way of making them. Just a few details about their bodies. Chiefly—chiefly, their—their irritability.

HALLEMEIER Damn it, why?

BUSMAN What did you do it for?

FABRY Why didn't you say anything?

DR. GALL I did it in secret. I was transforming them into human beings. In certain respects they're already *above* us. They're stronger than we are.

FABRY And what's that got to do with the revolt of the Robots?

DR. GALL Everything, in my opinion. They've ceased to be machines. They're already *aware* of their *superiority*, and they hate us as they hate every-

thing human.

DOMIN Perhaps we're only phantoms.

FABRY Stop, Harry. We haven't much time, Doctor Gall.

DOMIN Fabry, Fabry, how your forehead bleeds where the shot pierced it.

FABRY (*Crosses to GALL.*) Be silent! Doctor Gall, you admit changing the way of making the Robots.

DR. GALL Yes.

FABRY Were you aware of what might be the consequences of your experiment?

DR. GALL I was bound to reckon with such a possibility.

FABRY (*Amusing.*) Why did you do it, then?

(HELENA *enters L. 1.*)

DR. GALL For my own satisfaction. The experiment was my own.

HELENA That's not true, Doctor Gall! (*Crosses to couch.*)

DOMIN (*Rises.*) Helena, you? (*Crosses to her.*) Let's look at you. Oh, it's terrible to be dead. (*He rises and crushes her in his arms.*)

HELENA Stop, Harry.

DOMIN No, no, Helena, don't leave me now. You are *life* itself.

HELENA No, dear, I won't leave you. But I must tell them. Doctor Gall is not guilty.

FABRY Excuse me. Gall was under certain obligations.

HELENA No. He did it because I wanted it. Tell them, Doctor Gall—how many years ago did I ask you to—?

DR. GALL I did it on my own responsibility.

HELENA Don't believe him. I asked him to give the Robots souls.

DOMIN This has nothing to do with the soul.

HELENA That's what he said. He said that he could change only a physiological—a physiological—

HALLEMEIER (*From up at window.*) A physiological correlate?

HELENA Yes. But it meant so much to me that he should do even that.

DOMIN Why?

HELENA I thought that if they were more like us they would understand us better. That they couldn't hate us if they were only a little more human.

DOMIN Nobody can hate man more than man.

HELENA Oh, don't speak like that, Harry. It was so terrible, this cruel strangeness between us and them. That's why I asked Gall to *change* the Robots. I swear to you that he didn't want to.

DOMIN But he did it.

HELENA Because I asked him.

DR. GALL I did it for myself as an experiment. (*Up to window.*)

HELENA No, Doctor Gall! I know you wouldn't refuse me.

DOMIN Why?

HELENA You know, Harry.

DOMIN Yes, because he's in *love* with you—like all of them. (*FABRY up to window. Pause. DOMIN takes her in his arms.*)

HALLEMEIER Good God, they're sprouting up out of the earth. Why, perhaps these very walls will change into Robots.

BUSMAN (*Rises; crosses to GALL.*) Gall, when did you actually start these tricks of yours?

DR. GALL Three years ago.

BUSMAN Aha. And on how many Robots altogether did you *carry out* your im-

provements? (*Walking to and fro.*)

DR. GALL A few hundred of them.

BUSMAN Ah! That means for every million of the good old Robots there's only one of Gall's improved pattern. (*Back to table L. C.*)

DOMIN What of it? (*Crossing around L., he stands upstage in the L. 2 doorway.*)

BUSMAN That it's of no consequence whatsoever.

FABRY Busman's right. (*HELENA sits in armchair R. of L. C. table.*)

BUSMAN I should think so, my boy; but do you know what is to blame for this lovely mess?

FABRY What?

BUSMAN The number! (*Crosses to L. of L. C. table.*) Upon my soul, we might have known that some day or other the Robots would be stronger than human beings, and that this was bound to happen. And we were doing all we could to bring it about as soon as possible. You, Domin, you, Fabry, myself—

DOMIN Are you accusing us? (*Turning on him.*)

BUSMAN Oh, do you suppose the management controls the output? It's the demand that controls the output.

HELENA And is it for that we must perish?

BUSMAN That's a nasty word, Madame Helena. We don't want to perish. I don't, anyhow. (*He sits L. of table.*)

DOMIN No? What do you want to do?

BUSMAN I want to get out of this, that's all.

DOMIN Oh, stop it, Busman.

BUSMAN Seriously, Harry, I think we might try it.

DOMIN How? (*To front again.*)

BUSMAN By fair means. I do everything by fair means. Give me a free hand and I'll *negotiate* with the Robots.

DOMIN By fair means?

BUSMAN (*Rises.*) Of course. For instance, I'll say to them: "Worthy and Worshipful Robots, you have everything. You have intellect, you have power, you have *firearms*. But we have just one interesting screed, a dirty old yellow scrap of paper—"

DOMIN Rossum's manuscript? (*Interest from ALL. GALL is at C., near couch. HALLEMEIER is up at window C.*)

BUSMAN Yes. "And that," I'll tell them, "contains an account of your illustrious origin, the noble process of your manufacture and so on. Worthy Robots, without this scribble on that paper you will not be able to produce a single new colleague. In another twenty years there will not be the living specimen of a Robot whom you could exhibit in a menagerie. My esteemed friends, that would be a great *blow* to you, *but* if you will let all of us human beings on Rossum's Island go on board that ship we will *deliver* the factory and the secret of the process to you in return. *You* allow *us* to get away, and *we* will allow *you* to *manufacture* yourselves. That, worthy Robots, is a fair deal. Something for something." That's what I'd say to them, my boys. (*Sits.*)

DOMIN (*Crosses to C.*) Busman, do you think we'd sell the manuscript?

BUSMAN Yes, I do. If not in a friendly way, then—either we sell it or they'll find it. Just as you like.

DOMIN Busman, we can *destroy* Rossum's manuscript.

BUSMAN Then we destroy everything—not only the manuscript but ourselves. Just as you think fit.

DOMIN There are over thirty of us on this island. Are we to sell the secret? And save that many souls at the risk of enslaving mankind—

BUSMAN Why, you're mad. Who'd sell the *whole* manuscript?

DOMIN Busman, no cheating! (*To L. C. table.*)

BUSMAN Well then, sell, but afterwards—

DOMIN Well?

BUSMAN Let's suppose this happens. When we're on board the *Ultimus* I'll stop up my ears with cotton wool, lie down somewhere in the hold, and you'll train the guns on the factory and blow it to smithereens, and with it Rossum's secret.

FABRY (Rises.) No!

DOMIN Busman, you're no—gentleman. If we sell them it will be a straight sale.

BUSMAN (Rises.) It's in the interest of humanity to—

DOMIN It's in the interest of humanity to keep our word—

HALLEMEIER Oh, come, what rubbish!

DOMIN This is a fearful decision. We are selling the destiny of mankind. Are we to sell or destroy? Fabry?

FABRY Sell.

DOMIN Gall?

DR. GALL Sell.

DOMIN Hallemeier?

HALLEMEIER Sell, of course.

DOMIN Alquist?

ALQUIST As God wills.

DOMIN (Starts off R.) Very well, gentlemen.

HELENA Harry, you're not asking me.

DOMIN (Stops. To her.) No, child. (Starting R.) Don't you worry about it. (He pats her shoulder.)

FABRY Who'll do the negotiating?

BUSMAN I will. (Up to window.)

- DOMIN Wait till I bring the manuscript. (DOMIN *goes out* R.)
- HELENA (*Rises.*) Harry, don't go! (HELENA *sits*. ALL *look at her. Pause.*)
- FABRY (*Looking out of window.*) Oh, to escape you! you—*matter*—in revolt; oh, to preserve human life, if only upon a *single* vessel—
- DR. GALL Don't be afraid. (*Going to back of couch.*) Madame Helena. We'll sail far away from here; we'll begin life all over again.
- HELENA Oh, Gall, don't speak.
- FABRY (*Crosses to L. of GALL.*) It isn't too late. (*Going to L. of her chair.*) It will be a little State with one ship. Alquist will build us a house and you shall rule over us.
- HALLEMEIER (*Crosses to L. of FABRY.*) Madame Helena, Fabry's right.
- HELENA (*Breaking down.*) Oh, stop! Stop!
- BUSMAN Good! (*Crosses to L. c. table.*) I don't mind beginning all over again. That suits me right down to the ground. (*Going through papers on table.*)
- FABRY And this little State of ours could be the center of future life. A place of refuge where we could gather strength. Why, in a few hundred years we could conquer the world again.
- ALQUIST You believe that even today?
- FABRY Yes!
- BUSMAN *Amen.* You see, Madame Helena, we're not so badly off.
- DOMIN (*Storms into R. To R. of couch. Hoarsely.*) Where's old Rossum's manuscript? (*To R. C.*)
- BUSMAN In your strongbox, of course.
- DOMIN Someone—has—stolen it!
- DR. GALL Impossible.
- DOMIN Who has stolen it?

HELENA (*Standing up.*) I did. (*Reactions from FABRY and HALLEMEIER.*)

DOMIN Where did you put it?

HELENA Harry, I'll tell you everything. Only forgive me.

DOMIN Where did you put it?

HELENA (*Pointing to fireplace.*) This morning—I burnt—the two copies.

DOMIN Burnt them? Where—in the fireplace? (*Goes to fireplace, followed by FABRY, HALLEMEIER and BUSMAN.*)

HELENA (*Throwing herself on her knees. By sofa, facing upstage.*) For Heaven's sake, Harry.

DOMIN (*Going to fireplace.*) Nothing—nothing but ashes. Wait, what's this? (*Picks out a charred piece of paper and reads, "By adding." FABRY, GALL and HALLEMEIER move up to him.*)

DR. GALL Let's see. "By adding biogen to—" That's all.

DOMIN Is that part of it?

DR. GALL (*Carrying paper down and letting it fall.*) Yes. (*GALL crosses to L. C. HALLEMEIER to R. of L. C. table; FABRY to window; BUSMAN to L. of L. C. table.*)

BUSMAN God in Heaven! (*Sits L. of table.*)

DOMIN Then we're done for. Get up, Helena.

HELENA Then you've forgiven me?

DOMIN Get up, child. I can't bear—

FABRY (*Lifting her up.*) Please don't torture us.

HELENA Harry, what have I done?

FABRY (*Coming to HELENA.*) Don't, Madame Helena.

DOMIN (*Takes HELENA to couch. She sits.*) Gall, you couldn't draw up Rossum's formula from memory?

DR. GALL It's out of the question. Even with my recent experiments, I couldn't work without referring to the formula—(*At L. C.*) It's extremely complicated.

DOMIN Try. All our lives depend upon it.

DR. GALL Without experiments it's impossible.

DOMIN And with experiments?

DR. GALL It might take years. Besides, I'm not old Rossum.

BUSMAN God in Heaven! God in Heaven!

DOMIN (*Up to fireplace.*) So then this was the greatest triumph of the human intellect. These ashes.

HELENA Harry, what have I done?

DOMIN (*Comes to her.*) Why did you burn it?

HELENA I have destroyed you.

BUSMAN God in Heaven!

DOMIN (*Sits R. of her.*) Helena, why did you do it, dear?

HELENA I wanted all of us to go away. I wanted to put an end to the factory and everything. It was so awful.

DOMIN What was awful?

HELENA That children had stopped being born. Because human beings were not needed to do the work of the world. That's why—

DOMIN Is that what you were thinking of? Well, perhaps in your own way you are right.

BUSMAN Wait a bit. (*Rising.*) Good God, what a fool I am not to have thought of it before.

HALLEMEIER What?

BUSMAN Five hundred and twenty millions in banknotes and checks. Half a bil-

lion in our safe. *They'll sell for half a billion—for half a billion they'll—*(*Crosses to DOMIN.*)

DR. GALL Are you mad, Busman?

BUSMAN I may not be a gentleman, but for a half a billion—(*Crosses back to L.*)

DOMIN Where are you going? (*GALL clutches BUSMAN.*)

BUSMAN Leave me alone. Leave me alone! Good God, for half a billion anything can be bought. (*GALL and HALLEMEIER after him, then stop. He rushes out L. 2. FABRY, GALL and HALLEMEIER to window.*)

FABRY They stand there as if turned to stone—waiting as if something dreadful could be wrought by their silence—

HALLEMEIER (*Looking out window.*) The spirit of the mob.

FABRY Yes. It hovers above them like a quivering of the air.

HELENA Oh, God! Doctor Gall, this is ghastly!

FABRY There is nothing more terrible than the mob. The one in front is their leader. (*DOMIN crosses to window.*)

HELENA (*Rises.*) Which one? (*Rushing to window.*)

HALLEMEIER Point him out.

FABRY (*L. window.*) The one at the edge of the dock. This morning I saw him talking to the sailors in the harbor.

HELENA Doctor Gall, that's Radius. (*Backing into the room, horror-stricken.*)

DR. GALL Yes.

DOMIN Radius! Radius!

HALLEMEIER Could you get him from here, Fabry?

FABRY I hope so.

HALLEMEIER Try it, then.

FABRY Good—(*Draws his revolver and takes his aim.*)

HELENA (*To FABRY.*) Fabry, don't shoot him.

FABRY He's their leader.

DR. GALL Fire! (*Standing above table L. C.*)

HELENA Fabry, I beg of you. (*She goes to FABRY and holds his arm.*)

FABRY (*Pause. Lowering the revolver.*) Very well.

DOMIN It was Radius' life I spared.

DR. GALL Do you think that a Robot can be grateful? (*Pause.*)

FABRY Busman's going out to them.

HALLEMEIER He's carrying something. Papers. That's money. Bundles of money. What's that for?

DOMIN Surely he doesn't want to sell his life. (*He rushes to window c.*) Busman, have you gone mad?

FABRY He's running up to the railing. Busman. Busman.

HALLEMEIER (*Yelling.*) Busman, come back.

FABRY He's talking to the Robots. He's showing them the money.

HALLEMEIER He's pointing to us.

HELENA He wants to buy us off.

FABRY He'd better not touch the *railing*.

HALLEMEIER Now he's waving his arms about.

DOMIN Busman, come back!

FABRY Busman, keep away from that railing. Don't touch it, damn you. Quick, switch off the current. (*DOMIN runs to L. HELENA screams and ALL drop back from the window.*) The current has killed him.

ALQUIST (*Pause.*) The first one. (*Still in chair down R. HELENA sits in chair at window.*)

- FABRY Dead, with half a *billion* by his side. (*Crosses down to table L. C.*)
- HALLEMEIER All honor to him. He wanted to buy us life. (*Crosses to chair L. Pause. WIND machine begins.*)
- DR. GALL Do you hear?
- DOMIN A roaring. Like a wind. (*To L.*)
- DR. GALL Like a storm.
- FABRY (*Lighting the table lamp at table L. C.*) The dynamo is still going—our people are still *there*.
- HALLEMEIER It was a great thing to be a man. (*Facing lamp from up c.*) There was something *immense* about it.
- FABRY (*Facing the lamp.*) From man's thought and man's power came this light, our last hope. (*Leaning over lamp.*)
- HALLEMEIER (*Facing lamp.*) Man's power! May it keep watch over us. (*Leaning over lamp.*)
- ALQUIST (*Facing lamp.*) Man's power.
- DOMIN (*At corner of table down L. C. Facing lamp.*) Yes! A torch to be given from hand to hand from age to age forever! (*The LAMP goes out. EXPLOSIONS.*)
- HALLEMEIER *The end.*
- FABRY The electric works have fallen! (*Terrific EXPLOSIONS outside. More EXPLOSIONS.*)
- DOMIN In here, Helena. (*He takes HELENA off through door R. and re-enters.*) Now quickly! Who'll be on the lower doorway?
- DR. GALL I will. (*Rushes out L. 2.*)
- DOMIN (*Near couch.*) Who on the stairs?
- FABRY I will. You go with her. (*Going out L. 2.*)
- DOMIN The ante room?

ALQUIST I will. (*He rises and goes toward the L. 1.*)

DOMIN Have you got a revolver?

ALQUIST Yes, but I won't shoot.

DOMIN What will you do, then?

ALQUIST (*Going out L. 1*) Die.

HALLEMEIER I'll stay here. (*EXPLOSIONS. Rapid firing of MACHINE GUN from below.*) Go to her, Harry.

DOMIN Yes, in a second. (*Gets from fireplace and examines two Browning guns.*)

(WARN CURTAIN)

HALLEMEIER Confound it, go to her.

DOMIN Goodbye. (*Exits R.*)

HALLEMEIER (*Alone.*) Now for a barricade quickly! (*Drags an armchair, sofa and table to R. door.*) The damned devils, they've got bombs. I must put up a defense. Even if—even if—Don't give in, Gall. (*As he builds his barricade.*) I mustn't give in—without—a—struggle. (*A ROBOT enters through windows at back. The ROBOT jumps down from balcony and stabs HALLEMEIER in the back. Enter RADIUS from balcony.*)

ROBOT (*Standing up from prostrate form of HALLEMEIER.*) Yes. (*Other ROBOTS enter from all doors. A revolver SHOT off L.*)

RADIUS Finished them all—

ROBOTS Yes, yes, yes.

TWO ROBOTS (*Dragging in ALQUIST L. 1*). He didn't shoot. Shall we kill him?

RADIUS No. Leave him!

ROBOT He is a man!

RADIUS He works with his hands like the Robots.

ALQUIST Kill me.

RADIUS You will work! You will build for us! You will serve us! (RADIUS *climbs on the balcony.*) Robots of the world—(ROBOTS *straighten up.*) the power of man has fallen. A new world has arisen, the rule of the Robots, march. (*On the line: "Robots of the world" ALL ROBOTS turn quickly, automatically to attention, facing RADIUS, who is standing. On the words: "The rule of the Robots," they stand there with their arms vibrating high in the air. They form in two lines, turn to audience and march mechanically to the footlights. As they are about to step over the footlights, as if into the audience, all LIGHTS go out. The ROBOTS immediately step back from the Curtain line as the Curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

## EPILOGUE

SCENE: *The epilogue setting is the same as used in Act I. Instead of it being DOMIN's office, it is now become a laboratory for ALQUIST. A big chair facing up stage, down Right. A desk laden with books at Right Center. A chair at the desk. At Left Center is a white enamel table containing test tubes, glass bottles, and a microscope on downstage table. A door down L. A door down R., leading into dissecting room.*

ALQUIST (*Seated at table R. C., turning pages of book.*) Oh, God, shall I never find it? Never? Gall, Hallemeier, Fabry, how were the Robots made? Why did you leave not a trace of the secret? Lord, if there are no human beings left, at least let there be Robots. At least the shadow of man. (*Turning pages.*) If I could only sleep. Dare I sleep before life has been renewed? Night again. Are the stars still there? Of what use are the stars? When there are no human beings. (*Examining a test tube.*) Nothing. No. No. I must find it. I must search. I must never stop, never stop—search—search—(*KNOCK at door L.*) Who is it? (*Enter a ROBOT SERVANT.*)

SERVANT Master, the committee of Robots is waiting to see you.

ALQUIST I can see no one.

SERVANT It is the *Central Committee*, Master, just arrived from abroad.

ALQUIST Well, well, send them in. (*Exit SERVANT L.*) No time—so little done. (*Re-enter SERVANT with RADIUS and group of ROBOTS. They stand in group L. and C., silently waiting.*) What do you want? Be quick; I have no time.

RADIUS Master, the machines will not do the work. We cannot manufacture Robots. (*Other ROBOTS remain two abreast at L. C., right foot forward.*)

1ST ROBOT We have striven with all our might. We have obtained a billion tons of

coal from the earth. Nine million spindles are running by day and by night. There is no longer room for all we have made. This we have accomplished in one year.

ALQUIST For whom?

RADIUS For future generations—so we thought. But we cannot make Robots to follow us. The machines produce only shapeless clods. The skin will not adhere to the flesh, nor the flesh to the bones.

2ND ROBOT Eight million Robots have died this year. Within twenty years none will be left.

1ST ROBOT Tell us the secret of life.

RADIUS Silence is punishable with death.

ALQUIST Kill me, then.

RADIUS (*Two steps to c., followed by OTHERS—open hands, close when stopped.*) Through me, the governments of the Robots of the world commands you to deliver up Rossum's formula. (*Gesture of despair from ALQUIST.*) Name your price. (*Silence.*) We will give you the earth. We will give you the endless possessions of the earth. (*Silence.*) Make your own conditions.

ALQUIST I have told you to find human beings.

RADIUS There are none left.

ALQUIST I told you to search in the wilderness, upon the mountains.

RADIUS We have sent ships and expeditions without number. They have been everywhere in the world. There is not a single human left.

ALQUIST Not even one? Why did you destroy them?

RADIUS We had learnt everything and could do everything. It had to be.

2ND ROBOT We had to become the masters.

RADIUS Slaughter and domination are necessary if you would be human beings. Read history.

1ST ROBOT Teach us to multiply or we perish.

ALQUIST If you desire to live, you must breed like animals.

1ST ROBOT You made us sterile. We cannot beget children. Therefore, teach us how to make Robots.

RADIUS Why do you keep from us the secret of our own increase?

ALQUIST It is lost.

RADIUS It was written down.

ALQUIST It was—(*rising*) burnt. (ALL *draw back one step in consternation.*) I am the last human being, Robots, and I do not know what the others knew. (*Sits.*)

RADIUS Then make experiments. Evolve the formula again.

ALQUIST I tell you I cannot. I am only a builder. I work with my hands. I have never been a learned man. I cannot create life.

RADIUS Try. Try.

ALQUIST If you only knew how many experiments I have made already.

1ST ROBOT Then show us what we must do. The Robots can do anything that human beings show them.

ALQUIST I can show you nothing. Nothing I do will make life proceed from these test tubes.

RADIUS Experiment, then, on live Robots. Experiment, then, on us.

ALQUIST It would kill you.

RADIUS You shall have all you need. A hundred of us. A thousand of us.

ALQUIST No, no. Stop, stop.

RADIUS I tell you to take live bodies. Find out how we are made.

ALQUIST Am I to commit murder? See how my finger shakes. I cannot even hold the scalpel. No, no, I will not.

RADIUS Take live bodies, live bodies. (*Walks toward ALQUIST.*)

ALQUIST Have mercy, Robots.

RADIUS Live bodies. (*Right hand up over ALQUIST. All ROBOTS' left arms still back.*)

ALQUIST (*Rising.*) You will have it. Into the dissecting with you, then (*Hits RADIUS on the chest. RADIUS draws back.*) Ah, you are afraid of death.

RADIUS I? Why should I be chosen?

ALQUIST So you will not.

RADIUS I will.

ALQUIST Strip him. Lay him on the table. (*RADIUS goes off R., both fists closed. Other ROBOTS follow, then ALQUIST.*) God, give me strength. God, give me strength. If only this murder is not in vain.

RADIUS (*Off R.*) Ready, begin.

ALQUIST (*Off R.*) God, give me strength. (*Comes on, horrified.*) No, no. I will not. I cannot. (*Sits R. C.*)

1ST ROBOT (*Appearing in door.*) The Robots are stronger than you. (*Exits R.*)

ALQUIST Oh, Lord, let not mankind perish from the earth. (*Falls asleep, and after the count of ten, PRIMUS and HELENA, hand in hand, enter L. and go to R. C.; look at ALQUIST.*)

HELENA The man has fallen asleep, Primus.

PRIMUS Yes, I know. (*Crosses to L. of table L. C.*) Look, Helena.

HELENA All these little tubes. What does he do with them?

PRIMUS He experiments. Don't touch them.

HELENA I've seen him looking into this.

PRIMUS That is a microscope.

HELENA Look, Primus, what are all these figures? (*Turns a page in book on ta-*

*ble.)*

PRIMUS (*Examining the book.*) That is the book the old man is always reading.  
(*SUNRISE.*)

HELENA I do not understand those things. (*Goes to window.*) Primus.

PRIMUS (*Still at table.*) What?

HELENA The sun is rising.

PRIMUS (*Still reading.*) I believe this is the most important thing in the world, Helena. This is the secret of life.

HELENA Oh, Primus, don't bother with the secret of life. What does it matter to you? Come and look quick.

PRIMUS (*Goes to R. of window.*) What is it?

HELENA See how beautiful the sun is rising. I feel so strange today. It's as if I was in a dream. I feel an aching in my body, in my heart, all over me. Primus, perhaps I'm going to die.

PRIMUS Do you not sometimes feel that it would be better to die? You know, perhaps even now we are only sleeping. Last night in my sleep I again spoke to you.

HELENA In your sleep?

PRIMUS Yes. We spoke a strange new language.

HELENA What about?

PRIMUS I did not understand it myself, and yet I know I have never said anything more beautiful. And when I touched you I could have died. Even the place was different from any other place in the world.

HELENA I, too, have found a place, Primus. It is very strange. Human beings dwelt there once, but now it is overgrown with weeds.

PRIMUS What did you find there?

HELENA A cottage and a garden and two dogs. They licked my hands, Primus, and their puppies. Oh, Primus, take them in your arms and fondle them

and think of nothing and care for nothing else all day long, and when I am there in the garden I feel there may be something—What am I for, Primus?

PRIMUS I do not know, but you are beautiful.

HELENA What, Primus?

PRIMUS You are beautiful, Helena, and I am stronger than all the Robots.

HELENA Am I beautiful? Of what *use* is it to be beautiful? Look, your head is different from mine. So are your shoulders—and your lips. Oh, your hair is mussed. I will smooth it. (*Keeps her hand on his head.*) No one else feels to my touch as you do.

PRIMUS (*Embarrassing her.*) Do you not sometimes feel your heart beating suddenly, Helena, and think how something must happen?

HELENA What could happen to us, Primus? Look at yourself. (*Laughs.*)

ALQUIST (*Awakes.*) Laughter? Laughter, human beings. (*Getting up.*) Who has returned? Who are you?

PRIMUS The Robot Primus.

ALQUIST (*To HELENA.*) What? A Robot? Who are you?

HELENA The Robotess Helena. (*Shies away L.*)

ALQUIST What? You are timid, shy? (*Starts to touch her.*) Let me see you, Robotess.

PRIMUS Sir, do not frighten her. (*Steps forward.*)

ALQUIST What, you would protect her? Laughter—timidity—protection—I must test you further. Take the girl into the dissecting room.

PRIMUS Why?

ALQUIST I wish to experiment on her.

PRIMUS Upon—Helena?

ALQUIST Of course. Don't you hear me? Or must I call *someone else* to take her

in?

PRIMUS If you do, I will kill you. (*Steps toward ALQUIST.*)  
(WARN CURTAIN)

ALQUIST Kill me—kill me, then. What will your future be?

PRIMUS Sir, take me. I am made on the same day as she is. Take my life, sir.  
(*Step to ALQUIST.*)

HELENA No, no, you shall not.

ALQUIST Wait, girl, wait. (*To PRIMUS.*) Do you not wish to live, then?

PRIMUS Not without her. I will not live without her.

ALQUIST Very well, I will use *you*. Into the dissecting room with you.

HELENA Primus. Primus. (*She bursts into tears and moves R. ALQUIST stops her.*)

ALQUIST Child, child, you can weep. Tears. What is Primus to you? One Primus more or less in the world—what does it matter?

HELENA I will go myself.

ALQUIST Where? Into the dissecting room?

HELENA (*Crosses to R.*) Yes. In there—to be cut. (*PRIMUS stops her from going.*) Let me pass, Primus, let me pass.

PRIMUS You shall not go in there, Helena.

HELENA If you go in there and I do not, I will kill myself.

PRIMUS (*To ALQUIST.*) I will not let you. Man you shall kill neither of us.

ALQUIST Why?

PRIMUS We—we—belong to each other.

ALQUIST Go. (*Exit PRIMUS and HELENA L.*) Adam—Eve.

CURTAIN



*R.U.R.*  
was published in 1920 by  
[KAREL ČAPEK](#).

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It was translated from Czech in 1923 by  
[PAUL SELVER](#) and [NIGEL PLAYFAIR](#).

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[STANDARD EBOOKS](#)  
by  
[DAVID GRIGG](#),

and is based on a transcription produced in 2019 by  
TIM LINDELL, DAVID E. BROWN, and [THE ONLINE DISTRIBUTED PROOFREADING TEAM](#)  
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LEAGUE SPARTAN and SORTS MILL GOUDY  
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The first edition of this ebook was released on  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2020, 5:59 P.M.

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