

JAN: I'm relieved to hear that.

HAILSHAM: Slate's edgy, granite's bottomed.

SALATHIEL: Kumpfernickel?

HAILSHAM: Firm.

SALATHIEL: Sounds volatile.

HAILSHAM: I don't like the look of it.

SALATHIEL: It's those damned Bolivians again.

GONETTA *slams a flagon of gin, a box of cigars and three glasses on the table. She takes the cigars and hands them round.*

SALATHIEL: Gentlemen. Let us sit and talk of banks.

SALATHIEL sits and leans back in her chair. HAILSHAM and JAN do likewise. GONETTA lights their cigars and they puff on them in a satisfied way. GONETTA speaks to the audience.

GONETTA: Bloody remarkable what a cigar does for 'em. Rolled up mass of stinkin weed, transports em to the golden palace of the Raj.

JAN: We should, we should open up a bank.

HAILSHAM: That's a proposal of vision if I may say, sir.

JAN: Thank you Mr Hailsham. Thanks sir.

HAILSHAM: Shows a deep understanding of the market.

JAN: Well, see, I've bin to Bolivia.

HAILSHAM: You have?

JAN: Oh all over Europe . . .

SALATHIEL: We wanna no-nonsense, big-deposit bank, such as farmers favour.

JAN: A capital city bank.

HAILSHAM: A bank where they'd 'bring their cash in cartloads, and lodge it there to rot.

SALATHIEL: Naturally Mr May will be the President of this bank . . .

JAN: President . . .

SALATHIEL: The figurehead. Havin been out a country for the last nine years, with his capital city wardrobe and European airs, he's exactly the sorta chap who'd

command great authority in Truro, with farmers . . .

JAN: This is music to my ears . . .

HAILSHAM: Do we have sufficient cash to start this bank?

SALATHIEL: I can spare twelve thousand pesetas.

JAN: And I'm worth ten times that.

HAILSHAM: I see I'm in the company of giants.

SALATHIEL: But cash id'n all. We need securities, Mr Hailsham.

HAILSHAM smiles, but says nothing. JAN ventures a proposal.

JAN: I'm prepared to put up Brigant Mine . . .

HAILSHAM laughs.

HAILSHAM: Brigant Mine is hardly a goin concern sir. I wouldn't stand Brigant Mine against a three-legged mule.

JAN: It'll be worth a fortune when I get it goin . . .

HAILSHAM: You intend to start it up again do ya?

JAN: Oh yes indeed, there's enough copper under Brigant to plate the whole Atlantic, now the cautious might say keep it underground til the price get yeasty, but I intend to send the army down there and raise ten thousand tons in one big . . .

GONETTA: Dollop.

JAN: . . . flood the market and decimate the competition! After that the price is mine Mr Hailsham. Ours.

HAILSHAM: Good. Well, I'll come in with you on this bank . . .

SALATHIEL: Thass mighty shrewd of ya . . .

HAILSHAM: On these terms. For a fifty-percent interest in Brigant Mine . . .

JAN: Eh?

HAILSHAM: I'll trade with you equal shares in my foundry down at Par, my smelting works in Fowey, my slate quarries in Delabole, my granite excavations in Withiel, my lime pits in Tregadillet, my lead interests in Tavistock, my engineering plant in

Hayle, my Porphyry in Roche, my Academy of Mining in Redruth, my coal in Porthmeor, my pilchard fleet in Padstow, my seining company in Polperro, my boatyard in Wadebridge, and my viaduct over Looe.

GONETTA: Half built.

HAILSHAM: Soon to be completed.

JAN leaps from his seat.

JAN: My Christ Almighty!

HAILSHAM: That should give you all the securities you need to start a bank.

JAN: An empire! An empire at a stroke!

A rousing ANTHEM is sung to JAN:

ANTHEM

Jan May! Emperor!
President of Banks!
Resurrecter of Defunct Mines!
Figurehead of Our Times!
Let the Gods be thanked!

REFRAIN

And so it was that this young man,
Who could neither read nor write his name,
In a matter not of years but hours,
Scaled the highest peaks of power.

ANTHEM

Jan May! Emperor!
Carved in Stone!
Alderman! Burgher! Man of Rank!
Lord of his Domain!
Let the Gods be Thanked!

ACT TWO

TING TANG MINE. *Underground. Darkness. Candles can be seen moving about. Men's faces are depicted beneath the candles. A kibble, a large metal container on wheels, is pushed towards a pile of rubble. The men light candles from each others' candles and set them about the place. LISHA, TOM and ARTHUR inspect the rubble. RUTTER is in the distance. TREFUSIS sits some way off, eating his crib. LISHA picks up stuff from the rubble and slings it in the kibble. TOM inspects the face, ARTHUR sorts through the rubble. RUTTER approaches.*

RUTTER: This your pitch, Thomas May?

TOM: Yes.

RUTTER: What's it lookin like?

ARTHUR: Rich.

RUTTER: Much stuff?

TOM: See for yourself.

RUTTER moves to the face and inspects it with TOM. ARTHUR picks up a huge lump of rubble and carries it to the kibble.

ARTHUR: Look at that Mr Rutter. Solid ore.

ARTHUR slings the rock in the kibble and goes back for another.

RUTTER: I gotta re-set this pitch.

TOM: Tid'n no richer'n last month.

RUTTER: I know that.

LISHA: Bin runnin like this since Lent.

TREFUSIS (*from a distance*): Before Lent!

RUTTER: I know that.

LISHA: 'Long as you know that.

RUTTER: We can't offer you more'n three farthin a ton this month.

At this, everyone stops what they're doing and looks at RUTTER. TREFUSIS stops eating.

LISHA: Say that again?

RUTTER: Three farthin.

TOM: Outa the question.