

(HONEYWELL is pushed into the room. The noise immediately stops. He is an insignificant young man of 25, dressed fashionably but with no sense of style.)

HONEYWELL *(To the door)* Savages!

BRIGGS A gentleman.

BRIGGS and **WILLOUGHBY** rise. **CALEB** is fascinated by this exotic creature and shadows his movements from a distance. The **CAPTAIN**, pays little attention. **HONEYWELL** looks round him with a mixture of fear and repulsion. He speaks with exaggerated slowness and clarity)

HONEYWELL You are the lunatics?

BRIGGS Friends.

CALEB *(To the CAPTAIN)* He's sommat, ain't he?

(The CAPTAIN goes closer and looks him up and down)

HONEYWELL Me a very good friend also.

(The CAPTAIN grunts contemptuously and returns to his knotting)

BRIGGS *(Speaking in the same way)* Dr Pooley - you know doctor? He say we not lunatic. We his friends.

HONEYWELL *(In his normal voice)* So you're not mad.

WILLOUGHBY I'm happy to see your wits are recovering.

HONEYWELL I never lost them.

WILLOUGHBY No, of course not. But you are distressed?

HONEYWELL Distressed? I've been seized from my home and thrust into a madhouse. What do you think?

BRIGGS Can't you see he's a gentleman? Leave him to someone used to their company. *(To HONEYWELL)* My friend is indelicate, but he means kindly.

Bedlam Boys

Roy Chatfield

HONEYWELL I know his meaning right enough. Am I lunatic, that was it, was it not? Well, I am not, I never have been and pray God I never will be.

WILLOUGHBY You're not?

HONEYWELL You must believe me.

WILLOUGHBY This is a place for the mad. You're not entitled to be here.

BRIGGS (*Dancing attendance*) You mustn't think you're not welcome.

HONEYWELL (*Ignoring BRIGGS*) You do believe me! I take it you have some authority in this place.

WILLOUGHBY You flatter me.

BRIGGS The politeness of a gentleman, Willoughby.

HONEYWELL Get me out of here.

WILLOUGHBY I agree this is not your place, Mr...

HONEYWELL Honeywell. Francis Honeywell. You may call me Honeywell.

(**BRIGGS** is horrified to see **WILLOUGHBY** permitted this familiarity)

WILLOUGHBY You see, they do not give us keys.

HONEYWELL Us?

WILLOUGHBY We wait until God chooses to heal us, then the gates will be thrown open.

HONEYWELL You're a -

WILLOUGHBY A friend.

HONEYWELL (*Stepping back*) You'd best call me Mr Honeywell.

(*He is startled by BRIGGS appearing at his shoulder*)

BRIGGS I like to think of myself as head of our little community. Aurelian Briggs. (*He holds out his hand. HONEYWELL gingerly shakes a single finger*) You'll find all good company here, I'll warrant you that. (*HONEYWELL looks doubtfully round the room*) Speaking of which, a gentleman such as yourself must be something of a scholar. Man is the measure of all things.

HONEYWELL (*Trying to retreat*) I'm sure he is.

WILLOUGHBY Rather than God?

HONEYWELL A bit of both?

BRIGGS That isn't what Cicero said.

HONEYWELL Cicero?

BRIGGS Exactly. But where did he say it, that's the point.

HONEYWELL Rome?

BRIGGS The reference, Mr Honeywell, the reference.

(*As HONEYWELL has retreated, BRIGGS has followed, trapping him against the wall. HONEYWELL looks for a way to wriggle free*)

WILLOUGHBY Briggs is a great enthusiast for scholarship.

HONEYWELL You don't mean he's violent?

WILLOUGHBY Only if you mispronounce Porsenna. (*HONEYWELL, aghast, slides free*) Don't be alarmed. A small joke.

HONEYWELL There are no violent ones here?

WILLOUGHBY I assure you. (*HONEYWELL is not convinced*) Since Briggs forgot his duty, let me introduce myself. George Willoughby. This is Caleb.

(*CALEB has his hand resting on his face to cover his birthmark*)

CALEB Don't you fret any about me, Mr Honeywell, sir. I'm mekanolic.

BRIGGS Melancholic, Caleb. Mel-an-chol-ic.

(**HONEYWELL** looks at **CALEB's** grinning face)

HONEYWELL You?

CALEB I does me best.

(**HONEYWELL** turns to **WILLOUGHBY**. **CALEB** cannot resist stroking the silk of Honeywell's coat)

HONEYWELL But he's as happy as -

WILLOUGHBY We do not judge here, Mr Honeywell.

HONEYWELL Yes, quite. Very wise.

(He slips away nervously only to have **BRIGGS** grip him by the arm and pull him aside)

BRIGGS You must make allowances for Willoughby. He's a clergyman.

HONEYWELL Aren't you?

BRIGGS Yes, but I'm a modern clergyman.

(**HONEYWELL** escapes him only to be caught by **WILLOUGHBY**)

WILLOUGHBY You have not met the Captain.

(The **CAPTAIN** is knotting a bowline)

HONEYWELL He's tying a noose.

WILLOUGHBY We all need our pastimes. (Steering him to the chamber pot) And this is the rose garden.

(**HONEYWELL** has been looking back nervously at the **CAPTAIN** so does not immediately grasp what Willoughby means. Then the implications hit him)

HONEYWELL I piss here?

WILLOUGHBY You look pale, Mr Honeywell. Perhaps you should rest.

HONEYWELL Rest. Yes, that would be good.
(He sits on a chair)

WILLOUGHBY That's the Captain's chair.
(HONEYWELL leaps up. WILLOUGHBY guides him to his chair. BRIGGS pushes his chair forward)

BRIGGS Mine is more comfortable.
(HONEYWELL sits down in Willoughby's chair. CALEB squats down, still staring at HONEYWELL)

BRIGGS I am used to the company gentlemen, you know. Sir Pelham Godfrey. The Harcourts -

WILLOUGHBY *(Taking Caleb's chair)* We are well aware you have patrons and I don't.

BRIGGS Mr Honeywell isn't.

WILLOUGHBY Does the knowledge refresh his spirit?

CALEB The Captain could sing.

WILLOUGHBY No.

HONEYWELL You're kind, Willoughby.

BRIGGS I'm kind too. *(To CALEB)* Aren't I kind?

HONEYWELL *(To WILLOUGHBY)* Almost rational.

WILLOUGHBY Do you think I choose my thoughts?

HONEYWELL I didn't mean to offend -

WILLOUGHBY Of course you didn't. You wouldn't know my mind. How could you? *(He moves the chair close to HONEYWELL. BRIGGS draws up his chair to the other side)* You know the Devil?