

The Komagata Maru Incident

by Sharon Pollock

The Playwright

Sharon Pollock was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, in 1936. Four years later, she moved with her family to Quebec's Eastern Townships, where she stayed until returning to the Maritimes in 1956 to attend the University of New Brunswick. It was then that she became involved with the theatre.

In 1966, Pollock won the Best Actress Award at the Dominion Drama Festival, and she spent the next five years working as an actress and a director in theatres across Canada.

Pollock's first play, *A Compulsory Option*, won the Alberta Playwriting Competition in 1971, the same year that she married Michael Ball, also an actor, and moved to Calgary. From that point on, Pollock wrote steadily, establishing herself as one of Canada's pre-eminent playwrights. Among her stage plays are an historical drama (which was later adapted for television), a comedy, and children's plays. She has also written many radio and television scripts, taught at the University of Alberta, and served as head of the Playwrights' Colony at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

Today, Pollock continues playwriting, directing, and teaching from her base in Calgary.

The Play

Canada has often been called a cultural mosaic. This implies that the variety of cultural heritages represented in this country are valued and honoured. Yet, for generations, there has been conflict between native-born Canadians and newcomers, and there has been conflict between the descendants of earlier immigrants and the descendants of those who came later.

Many Canadians have written about their immigration experiences and the experiences of others. In *The Komagata Maru Incident*, Sharon Pollock has taken an imaginative look at one such experience. This is the way she has described her play.

"*The Komagata Maru Incident* is a theatrical expression of an historical event seen through the optique of the stage and the mind of the playwright. It is not a documentary account although much of it is documented. To encompass these facts, time and place are often compressed, and certain dramatic licence is employed."

Pollock's play deals with an incident which occurred in 1914. A Japanese steamer, the *Komagata Maru*, arrived from India in Vancouver Harbour, carrying 376 immigrants of East Indian origin. All were British subjects, and so they had British passports and the right to enter Canada. Despite this, they were forbidden to do so by Canadian immigration officials, and for nearly two months, they were forced to stay on board while political, legal, and racial skirmishes took place on land.

To fully understand the context in which this event occurred, it is necessary to know something about the history of Canadian immigration.

Before 1900, most immigrants were British. By 1871, for example, only 8% of the population was of an ethnic origin other than British, French, or Native Canadian (Indian and Inuit). By 1901, this had increased to only 10%.

Of these, most were German Mennonites, who settled on the Prairies. Icelanders, Dutch, Scandinavians, and Hungarians were also settling in the west, and Asians were settling on the West Coast. For example, between 1881 and 1884, some 15 700 Chinese were brought in as contract labourers to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

This first phase, which lasted roughly from 1867 to 1895, could be called the Free-Entry Period. There were few restrictions, and so there was a steady flow of immigrants into the undeveloped lands.

The second phase, which lasted roughly from 1896 to 1914, was quite different. Canada developed an immigration policy under Clifford Sifton, who was Minister of the Interior during the 1890s. He described the "right type" of immigrant this way.

"I think a stalwart peasant in a sheep-skin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children, is good quality."

Thousands of immigrants fitting this description flooded into the country. They came from the Ukraine, Scandinavia, Germany, and Holland, lured by the offer of rich farmland for the asking. By 1911, the population of Canada's four western provinces had soared from a few thousand to more than a million.

But there were problems because not all immigrants were equally welcome. Sifton disapproved of the increasing numbers of Asian immigrants arriving on the West Coast, and by 1903 all Chinese and East Indian immigrants were forced to pay a "head tax" of \$500 in order to gain entry. In 1907, race riots broke out in Vancouver when over 8000 Japanese immigrants arrived in British Columbia. After that, Japanese immigration was limited.

Pollock's play is an imaginative depiction of the surface appearance — and the underlying reality — of what happened during this troubled period. Her point of view is clear. As she says at the end of her introduction to the play, "As a Canadian, I feel that much of our history has been misrepresented and even hidden from us. Until we recognize our past, we cannot change our future."

Sharon Pollock



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The Komagata Maru Incident

Sharon Pollock



The First Production Was Staged
In January 1976
At the Vancouver Playhouse
In Vancouver, British Columbia

With This Cast

T.S.	Allan Stratton
Hopkinson	Richard Fowler
Evy	Heather Brechin
Georg	Leroy Schulz
Sophie	Nicola Cavendish
Woman	Diana Belshaw

Directed by Larry Lillo
Designed by Jack Simon
Stage Manager Paul Reynolds

It is important that the scenes flow together without blackouts and without regard to time and setting. The brothel is the major playing area. Surrounding it is an arc or runway used by T.S. and HOPKINSON for most of their scenes. Although T.S. cannot intrude upon the WOMAN's space, he is free to move anywhere else on the set to observe or speak. As the play progresses, T.S.' scenes move from the arc into the brothel area.

The characters never leave the stage. When not involved in the action, they sit on benches placed on the extreme Stage Right and Stage Left ends of the arc. The WOMAN is on a level above and behind the area used by the other characters. An open grill-like frame in front of her gives both the impression of a cage, and of the superstructure of a ship. T.S. observes the audience entering. The other characters are frozen on stage; the grill-like frame, with the WOMAN behind it, is concealed by a sheet.

The houselights fade out and a faint light comes up on T.S. who moves to a stool set in the centre of the arc. On this stool are his gloves, hat, and cane. He carefully puts on the gloves while surveying the audience.

T.S.: Good . . . good. (He pauses for a moment) Do you like the suit? . . . (he puts on his top hat, gives it a tap with the cane, looks toward the lighting booth and snaps his fingers. A spot comes up on him) Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Right this way, ladies and gentlemen! First chance to view, The Komagata Maru! At this very moment steaming towards picturesque Vancouver Harbour. Yes Siree! The Komagata Maru! A first-class — let the buyer beware — Japanese steamer, 329.2 feet in length, 2,926 gross tonnage, captained by one Yomamoto, remember that name! And Japanese crew, carrying a cargo of coal! And 346 Sikhs, count 'em! Plus 30 East Indians, religious affiliation unknown! Add 'em all together and what do you get? That is correct, sir! Give the man a cigar! 376 is the answer! 376 Asians, to be precise, and all of them bound for Oh Canada. We stand on guard for thee!

(He salutes, holds it for a moment, then lets it drop as he moves into the brothel area.)

This is Vancouver, ladies and gentlemen, the 21st day of May, nineteen hundred and fourteen . . . And may I direct your attention to my hat — I place the hat on the table — I pass my hands over the hat — and what do we have inside the hat? A pair of gloves! I give you Inspector William Hopkinson, Head of Intelligence, Department of Immigration!

(He slaps the gloves into HOPKINSON's hand, looks at him for a second, then continues.)

Ladies and gentlemen, the hand is truly faster than the eye — you see this box — and now you don't — and here it is again — (as he passes it behind his back) — I open it, it's empty — I close the box — (he looks at EVY, then places it in her hands) May I present — (he steps back) Miss Evy: Entrepreneur!

(He bangs his cane, spot out. EVY and HOPKINSON are lit and animated.)

EVY: What is it?

HOPKINSON: It's a present.

EVY: Don't tell me, silly.

HOPKINSON: You asked.

EVY: But I don't want you to tell me.
(he removes his hand from her eyes)

Oh, Bill.

(she opens the box which contains a brooch)

It's beautiful. Here, pin it on me.

(HOPKINSON bends over her to do so. T.S. bangs his cane, they freeze, spot on T.S.)

T.S.: Ladies and gentlemen! Your attention, please! Now the pocket's empty. Not so now.

(takes out billfold and visa)

I have here — one billfold and one German visa for one Georg Braun!

(he throws it on the floor by GEORG)

And here! Behind an ear, a chocolate!

(places it in SOPHIE's hand)

Allow me to introduce, one Georg Braun and Sophie!

(bangs cane, spot out)

SOPHIE (Goes to eat the chocolate, GEORG attempts to embrace her, she pushes him off): Not so fast.

GEORG: Eh?

SOPHIE: No tickle, no washee.

GEORG: I . . . ?

SOPHIE (puts out her hand): Mon - ey.

GEORG: Oh.

(Feels for his billfold and finds it on the floor. T.S. knocks.)

SOPHIE: Somebody get the door!

(plucks the billfold from GEORG's hand)

Thank you.

(GEORG amorously tries to embrace her again as she counts the money. T.S. knocks. SOPHIE pushes GEORG away.)

Wait a minute! Are you deaf? There's someone at the door.

(She moves off SR with the billfold.)

GEORG (After a moment of indecision, his billfold gone, he moves after her):

Ah — Sophie?

T.S. (laughs, spot on him): Ladies and gentlemen. Lest we forget. The Komagata Maru. A Japanese steamer chock full of brown skin Hindus headed for a predominantly pale Vancouver, and entry into whitish Canada. The Komagata Maru in blue Canadian waters!

(Pulls cover to reveal WOMAN who bends over child on deck. T.S. bows. Spot is out.)

WOMAN: Go to sleep. Go to sleep. Shut your eyes, go to sleep.

(It's very hot and she turns from the child, wipes her forehead and looks out with a sigh, then she turns back to the child.)

Still not asleep?

HOPKINSON: There.
(*the brooch is on*)
Everything's forgotten. All right?

EVY: All right.

HOPKINSON: But you have to thank me for the brooch.

EVY: Thank you, Billy.

HOPKINSON: Don't tease. You know I don't like Billy.

EVY: Thank you, Bill.

HOPKINSON: That's better.

EVY: Now you sit down, and I'll get you a drink.

(*HOPKINSON checks his watch.*)

Oh — not the time again? You just got here.

HOPKINSON: Can't be helped. I'm sorry.

EVY: You always have to go.

HOPKINSON: Don't be mad. I won't be long, it's just — an appointment.

EVY: Bill?

SOPHIE (*still holding the billfold, she crosses round to SL with GEORG following*): You may as well get used to it. That's what it's like around here. Half the time I'm running messages for him.

GEORG: For who?

SOPHIE: Mr. Hopkinson. Evy's friend with immigration.

GEORG: Immigration?

SOPHIE: I'm sick of answering that damn door for him.

GEORG: Sophie, do you think —?

SOPHIE (*at 'door' SL*): There's a man out back for Mr. Hopkinson!

HOPKINSON (*from inside room*): Who is it?

SOPHIE: He says tell Mr. Hopkinson that Bella Singh is here.

EVY: Your rat again.

HOPKINSON (*prepares to leave*): Don't call him that.

EVY: I don't like rats coming round.

HOPKINSON: Let's not start this again.

EVY: He's always coming round and when he does, off you go, pouf.

HOPKINSON: It'll only take a minute.

EVY: My mother always said, don't snitch, and don't play with snitchers. Didn't your mother ever tell you that?

HOPKINSON: Evy, we've settled all this.

SOPHIE: Mr. Hopkinson! Did you hear me!

HOPKINSON: Now don't pout, you'll get wrinkles.

EVY: Oh, get out.

HOPKINSON: I'm going.

(*goes to the door*)

SOPHIE: Come on, Georg.

GEORG: Mr. Hopkinson?

HOPKINSON: Who's this, Sophie?

GEORG: Georg Braun, sir — if I could —

WOMAN: See the birds? Land must be near . . . Mountains, trees, then the island, through the pass. Your uncle will meet us — Look! Soon we will enter the harbour. See where your uncle lives? That is where we'll live.

GEORG: Thank you, sir.

SOPHIE: Georg!

(*He goes to bench, HOPKINSON turns back into room.*)

HOPKINSON: Evy? That fellow with Sophie.

EVY: Georg Braun?

HOPKINSON: I've, ah, asked him in for a drink when I get back.

EVY: Oh?

HOPKINSON: I want to meet him.

EVY: You've already met him.

HOPKINSON: Talk to him, then.

EVY: I thought brown rats were your specialty.

HOPKINSON: Bella Singh's a loyal British subject.

EVY: Well, Georg Braun's no British subject! You're setting up no rats in my house!

HOPKINSON: I'll do just as I please in your house! It's me that keeps you open, and don't you forget it! A nod from me, and you'd be buried under warrants. Oh Evy, Evy . . . what's good for me is good for you, eh? . . . Eh Evy? . . . All I want to do is meet him, get to know him better . . .

(*she makes a murmur of protest*)

I get ahead, Evy, do you know how I do that? I look ahead, I'm always thinking. Now, you read the papers, you stop and think . . . With Kaiser Wilhelm and all, something in here tells me a German can do me some good. Eh? Perhaps not today — or tomorrow — maybe next year, who knows. Now you can understand that, can't you?

EVY: I just don't like —

SOPHIE: Bella Singh's at the end of the yard! He wants to see you!

HOPKINSON: The German's coming in for a drink, Evy.

(*He exits SL.*)

EVY: If — if you say so.

T.S.: Hopkinson! (*Who joins him DSR arc.*)

HOPKINSON: Yes sir.

T.S.: The Komagata Maru's in port with 376 potential immigrants.

HOPKINSON: Yes sir.

T.S.: So? What do you know about them?

HOPKINSON: I've spoken to my man, Bella Singh, sir. He tells me they're Sikhs from India, British subjects, and as such they do have right of entry to Canada, sir.

T.S.: The word is no entry.

HOPKINSON: I realize that, but we may have a problem.

T.S.: A what?

HOPKINSON: Many are veterans of the British Army, sir; they're sure to plead consideration for military service.

T.S.: You can put it this way — we don't mind them dying for us, we just don't want them living with us.

(*he laughs*)

HOPKINSON (*laughs*): Yes sir . . . but if they should go to the courts —

T.S.: They won't get to the courts. He hasn't done his homework. Have you forgotten our two orders-in-council? If an immigrant wishes to enter the country through a western port, he must make a continuous voyage from his own country to here. Have they done so?

HOPKINSON: No sir, they haven't.

T.S.: And that's no surprise. There's not a steamship line in existence with a direct India-to-Canada route and for our second ace-in-the-hole — a tax, \$200.00 per head, to be paid before entry. Do they have it?

HOPKINSON: Bella Singh says they do not, however —

T.S.: Again, not surprising. In the land of his birth, the average Indian's wage is \$9.00 a year. There — you see how we operate, Hopkinson? Never a mention of race, colour, or creed — and yet — we allow British subjects to enter; they are British subjects; we don't allow them to enter.

HOPKINSON: Very clever, sir, however I must inform you —

T.S.: I think you'll go places, Hopkinson. Do a good job on this Komagata Maru, and we'll have a long chat.

HOPKINSON: Thank you, sir. However, I must inform you that Hermann Singh says —

T.S.: Sh — sh.

HOPKINSON (*lowers his voice*): Hermann Singh says that the local Sikhs have raised the money for the head tax.

T.S.: That's not so good.

HOPKINSON: It's possible that a launch —

T.S.: It is possible? Do you pay for information like that?

HOPKINSON: Bella Singh says a launch will deliver the head tax to those on the ship late tonight.

T.S.: The word is no entry, Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON: Yes sir.

SOPHIE (*rushing into room followed by GEORG*): Listen everybody! Here it is! (*reads from paper*) "Immigration Officials Intercept Head Tax in Vancouver Harbour."

(*EVY enters SR, HOPKINS enters from arc.*)

WOMAN: Look! A launch is coming! Maybe it's your uncle.

SOPHIE: There's your name right there! Inspector William Hopkinson.

WOMAN: Be careful! You'll fall!

SOPHIE: Look, Georg! Look, Evy!

WOMAN: The Immigration Boat is stopping the launch.

SOPHIE: There it is again "Hopkinson declares —"

WOMAN: Shhhhh. Don't be afraid.

SOPHIE: You read it, Evy, what's it say?

HOPKINSON: I can tell you what it means. British Columbia wants no Calcutta coolies. We've Chinamen and Japs running our shops, Greeks running our hotels, Jews running our second-hand stores, and we don't want Hindus running our mills.

EVY: For God's sake, Bill, have a drink.

T.S.: Have a drink.

HOPKINSON (*offering the bottle*): Georg?

GEORG: Please. The Sikhs on the ship would pay the head tax with the money from the launch, eh? And what is legal? Can you intercept it like that?

HOPKINSON: Well, we did. Another bottle, Evy. The Calcutra coolie, Georg, belongs in India.

GEORG: Do you know India, sir?

HOPKINSON: Do I know India? He wants to know if I know India, Evy.

EVY: Does he know India!

(*She gives him a bottle, sits at table and begins to play cards.*)

HOPKINSON: I know India, and I know its people. When I was a child, my father was stationed in the Punjab — He had only to shout "Quai Hai" to summon a slave — a servant — no, goddamn it, a slave — to summon a slave, to scrawl his initials on a chit, and there was a felt carpet from Kashmir, brass ornaments from Moradabad, silver for pocket money, cigars, a horse, a dog, anything

he wanted. Show him your brooch, Evy. It belonged to my father. Wonderful craftsmen, the natives.

GEORG: It's lovely.

HOPKINSON: Did you know "loot" was an Indian word?

GEORG: Is it?

SOPHIE (*examining the brooch*): Really beautiful.

HOPKINSON: My father was a big man, blond curly hair, wonderful moustache he had, looked like a prince in his uniform. A prince — surrounded by little beige people.
(*he laughs.*)

SOPHIE: What about your mother?

HOPKINSON: "Quai Hai!" That's all, and they'd scuttle like bugs.

SOPHIE: Did your mother like it there?

HOPKINSON: She never said. You've no idea, Georg, of the size, the immensity, and the millions. (*he smiles*) When I was a boy I used to like to read at night, alone, in a room that had dimensions.

GEORG: Sophie tells me you yourself served in the Punjab.

HOPKINSON: Oh yes. Lahore Police Force. Six years service.

GEORG: And how do you end up in Canada, sir?

HOPKINSON: Promotion was blocked in Lahore.

GEORG: That's hard to believe for a man like yourself.

HOPKINSON: Quite simple, Georg. Cliques. And I learnt something from that. So. I answered an ad, and here I am.

GEORG: Your life has been very exciting —

SOPHIE: Sophie can make your life exciting too, yes, she can. Let Sophie sit on Georg!
(*She lifts her skirts and plunks herself on him, they both fall over on the floor as T.S. bangs his cane. They freeze.*)

T.S.: Ladies and gentlemen! The turbaned tide is flowing! May 23rd, 1914. The first wave of an Asian Invasion sits at anchor in Vancouver Harbour!

WOMAN: They won't let us land! I've told you. We've asked a judge to rule on the orders-in-council. Now go! . . . Our food and our water are rationed. How long must we wait?

T.S.: Today's lesson is taken from the Department of Immigration's handbook, Regulation 23, Paragraph 4. I am talking about Checks and Balances of Power. Now, I am the Department of Immigration, I have the power to hold proceedings, make decisions, give orders. I can detain and deport any person or potential immigrant on any grounds whatsoever, unless that person is a Canadian citizen. You are the courts. You have the power to review, reverse, and restrain, quash, and otherwise interfere with my power to hold, to make, and to give, to detain and deport. And you do. Fairly often. It's annoying. So what do I do?

Quite simple. I pass Catch 22, Regulation 23, Paragraph 4, — which states: No judge and no court and no officer thereof shall have any jurisdiction to review, reverse, and restrain, quash or otherwise interfere with, my holding and making and giving, detaining, deporting.

We are gathered here in the sight of God, and in the spirit of the British Empire to rule on the Komagata Maru's contention that Catch 22, Regulation 23, Paragraph 4 is invalid. They maintain that the Department of Immigration has not the authority to deny immigrants access to the courts. If we give them access, then a judge or a court or an officer thereof could overthrow our orders-in-council of which we have two denying them entry — And that, my good friends, would open the floodgates!

(*Bangs his cane; GEORG picks himself up in embarrassment pushing SOPHIE aside.*)

GEORG: My . . . my feelings are this, sir. If you examine the world and its history, you will see that the laws of evolution that have shaped the energy, enterprise, and efficiency of the race northwards have left less richly endowed the peoples inhabiting the southern regions . . .

HOPKINSON: Go on.

GEORG: Yes. This — this process is no passing accident, but part of the cosmic order of things which we have no power to alter. The European races must administer; all that's needed to assure their success is a clearly defined conception of moral necessity. Do you agree, sir?

HOPKINSON: Agreed. It's a pleasure to talk to you, Georg. I feel as if you're a friend, a good friend.

GEORG: I'm honoured.

HOPKINSON: I have very few friends. A man in my position, Head of Intelligence, has very few friends.

GEORG: Please consider me one of them.

HOPKINSON: I'm thought of most often as a dose of salts; not palatable, but essential for the health of the body. I accept this.

GEORG: You are —

HOPKINSON: But! If I may make a small observation? It's truly amazing the number of people who use laxatives regularly, and lie about it. Eh?

(*he laughs*)

You follow me, eh?

(*he laughs and GEORG joins in*)

Yes, I have my job, and I do it. And damn well, if I say so myself.

GEORG: You've a good network of men.

HOPKINSON: Uh uh, more than that. It's a sense of responsibility, that's what it is. I take the risks, and I find my reward in the fulfillment of my task. Now there's your difference between white and coloured — the Gift of Responsibility.

EVY (*looking up from her cards*): What's the difference?

HOPKINSON: You see that's why we're sitting in here, and the Komagata Maru's out there scratching at the door.

EVY: Why?

HOPKINSON: For Christ's sake, Evy, if it weren't for the British, they couldn't construct a canoe, much less charter a steamer.

EVY (*back to her cards*): You should know I suppose. You lived with them.

HOPKINSON: I did not live with them!

EVY: Well, you were there. God knows I've heard it often enough. It's hard to keep straight where you were when and with who.

HOPKINSON: I was brought up in India! I know them, if that's what you mean. Keep your mouth shut when we're talking!

(*He picks up the bottle and starts off.*)

Come on, Georg, I've a chess set, handcarved from ivory. (*He moves off with GEORG following.*) Marvelous chess player, my father.

WOMAN: I saw what you did! Do you think because I have no man you can steal food from my child? If you steal again I will come when you sleep and I'll kill you!

T.S. (DSR, arc): Ah, Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON: I have observed suffering and deprivation on the Komagata Maru.

WOMAN: The child cries! He is thirsty!

T.S.: What else?

HOPKINSON: Our policy of disallowing the supply of the ship is sound. It weakens their morale. It's only a matter of time till their question their leadership . . .

T.S.: Continue.

HOPKINSON: As conditions deteriorate, we could, at some future date, offer supplies as an incentive to leave.

T.S.: Very good. Very good.

HOPKINSON: There — is — a woman and child on the ship.

T.S.: Irrelevant.

WOMAN: It's hard to explain to a child . . . Your father was a soldier, he died fighting for the King, so we come to live with your uncle. But first — we must wait . . .

SOPHIE: My feet hurt.

EVY: Mmm?

SOPHIE: I don't know why. I'd have thought it'd be my back.
(*EVY looks at her and laughs*)

What? . . .

(*SOPHIE laughs.*)

Noo. Back trouble runs in the family.

EVY: Oh.

SOPHIE: In the women, that is. With the men it's always having to, you know, piss when they're older.

(*EVY laughs.*)

Yeah, I guess if I had my rathers, I'd rather have a bad back . . . In the night when the pot was full, Grandpa would piss out the window . . . Unless the wind blew from the east. Then he pissed out the door.

EVY: Why?

SOPHIE: It blew back at the window. The window faced east.

EVY: Oh Sophie.

(*They both laugh.*)

SOPHIE: It's true . . . I used to lie on my back in the field, and mama would scream "Sophie, Sophie!" and I'd lie there and think, "Sophie, get out of here, better yourself!" . . . And mama would scream "Sophie! I know you're hidin'!" . . . and I'd just lie there . . . Mama always said I was lazy. Maybe I am, but you don't see me emptying piss pots. I got out of there.

EVY: Don't stop here, Sophie.

SOPHIE: My back's not breaking from too many kids and carrying milk cans.
(*She looks at her foot*)

EVY (*as she exits*): Find a nice man, and move on.

SOPHIE: Maybe I sprained it.

WOMAN (*Bends over, retching, dry spasms, when she's finished she draws in several deep breaths. She attempts a smile for the child.*): Don't worry . . . smile, it's only the water, don't worry. You are a very brave boy. Your uncle will like you. Come, we'll sit on the side where there's shade.

T.S.: I don't understand.

HOPKINSON: I've promised them food and water.

T.S.: Really?

HOPKINSON: I've given my word.

T.S.: And what did you hope to gain from that?

HOPKINSON: Sir —

T.S.: Surely not plaudits from me.

HOPKINSON: Sir, when I boarded the ship for inspection, they seized me and were ready to take off in our launch and head for the shore, patrol boats or not. They were desperate. They say they'd rather be shot than die of hunger and thirst. I felt it only — humanitarian to grant one week's provision.

T.S.: You've enabled them to hang on. That's what you've done!

HOPKINSON: I saw the mother and child —

T.S.: Now where's that incentive to leave?

HOPKINSON: Their case is still pending.

T.S.: Never initiate action when you haven't the guts to carry it through. It's a sign of weakness, Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON: Yes sir.

T.S.: You disappoint us.

HOPKINSON: Yes sir.

T.S.: We brought you up. We can put you down.

HOPKINSON: Yes sir.

T.S.: We trust that our meaning's sufficiently clear?

HOPKINSON: Yes sir.

EVY (*entering the room SL*): Bill!

SOPHIE: Evy?

EVY: Bill!

SOPHIE: Mr. Hopkinson!

HOPKINSON (*entering SR*): What's the matter?

EVY: Oh, Bill.

SOPHIE: What's happened? I thought you went shopping.

EVY: I just — sat on the tram. A round trip. I never got off.

HOPKINSON: Come on, Evy.

SOPHIE: Are you sick?

EVY: I — was on the tram. I had a seat by the window. When we . . .

HOPKINSON: Come on now.

EVY: When we came round by the creek there was a queue for employment, a long line of men looking for work. They were standing in line, we'd stopped for a fare, and then . . . the line . . . all of a sudden it . . . there was a man in a turban at the end of the line, his eye'd caught my eye as I looked out the window — he looked so — solid — and I smiled . . . and he smiled . . . and as he smiled a man stepped in front of him, and he was back at the end . . . Then, I don't know, it happened so quickly, he touched the man on the shoulder, the man turned . . . and the long line of men, it seemed to turn. The man in the turban started to speak, he got out a few words. I didn't sense anger — and then it exploded. They knocked him down, the man in the turban, they were kicking, and then pushing and shoving to get in a blow — and the tram pulled away . . . it was gone. As if I'd imagined it. It had never been.

HOPKINSON: You were frightened, that's all.

EVY: I should have done something.

HOPKINSON: You should have come home and you did. Come on now, you saw a fight. You've seen fights before.

EVY: No, it wasn't a fight! And I just sat on the goddamn tram and came home.

HOPKINSON (*to SOPHIE*): Get her a drink.

EVY (*Going to look out the window, the audience, where the Komagata Maru sits*): There are . . . people at the end of Burrard, staring out at that ship . . . They look like the men in that line.

HOPKINSON: That's why we're sending the Komagata Maru back, so things like your fight won't happen. We don't want them here.

(*SOPHIE exits after giving him drink.*)

EVY: But why does it happen?

HOPKINSON: All I know, Evy, is my father didn't die in the service for the world to be overrun by a second-rate people.

EVY: You don't make sense. Who's second-rate when you run out of brown people?

HOPKINSON: Drink your drink.

EVY: I don't want a drink!

(*She exits SR.*)

You belong on Burrard.

HOPKINSON (*follows her*): Evy!

T.S.: Mr. Speaker; Prime Minister; Honourable Members!

Today I am opening my heart to you. I am telling you my fears — fears that affect each and every Canadian today . . . I fear for my country, and I fear for my people . . . I am not ashamed, nor should you be, to state that this is white man's country! And I can tell you that our British legacy, our traditions, those things that we hold dear, that we have fought and died for, is placed in jeopardy today by a massive influx of coloured foreigners!

The class of East Indian that has invaded British Columbia is commonly known as Sikh — having been accustomed to the conditions of a tropical clime, he is totally unsuited to this country. He is criminally inclined, unsanitary by habit, and roguish by instinct. The less we speak of his religion, the better. Suffice it to say that unless his ridiculous forms of worship are relinquished, he is an affront to a Christian community. His intelligence is roughly that of our Aborigines. He indeed belongs to a heathen and debased class. Honourable Members, stand up and be counted! Admit the honest fears of your constituents! Will the Sikh work for cheaper wages, and thus take their jobs? Will he bring out his women, children, relatives and friends? Will Canadians step on a tram next week to ride from home to work, and never hear a word of English spoken? And once at work, if they still have a job, who will they eat their lunch with? Men, honest and true like ourselves, whose fathers made this country what it is today — or will they be surrounded by coloured men with foreign food? Canadians have rights! Our fathers died for them! Let any man who is not willing to do the same step down! I've told you here today what's in my heart. For God's sake, show me what's in yours!

HOPKINSON (*entering SL*): Evy!

EVY (*entering SR*): I'm here.

HOPKINSON: Was Bella Singh around?

EVY: Don't ask me.

HOPKINSON: Where's Sophie? Sophie!

SOPHIE (*entering SR*): What?

HOPKINSON: Was Bella Singh around?

SOPHIE: When?

HOPKINSON: Day before yesterday, goddamn it, was he here?

SOPHIE: Maybe. I don't remember.

HOPKINSON: What the hell do you mean, you don't remember?

EVY: Look, Bill, my girls don't keep track of your rats.

HOPKINSON: If they don't, they better start. Customs picked up three men at the border today. Sikhs smuggling guns for the Komagata Maru. And my head's on the block! That's the kind of information I'm paid to deliver! And I knew nothing. Do you hear that? Sweet bugger all! Was Bella Singh around or not?

EVY: You can leave now, Sophie.

HOPKINSON: She'll leave when I tell her. Did you forget a message, Sophie?

EVY: You run your business, I'll run mine, Sophie, get out!

HOPKINSON (*grabs SOPHIE*): By Jesus, I want an answer!

EVY: Me! It was me! Bella Singh came round, he left a note, I threw it out!

HOPKINSON (*releases SOPHIE; she leaves*): . . . Why did you do that?

EVY: I don't pass notes.

HOPKINSON: It's me they come down on. Don't you realize that? If I don't deliver, I'm the one that pays — not Bella Singh. Why did you do it?

EVY: I'm sorry.

HOPKINSON: No you're not.

EVY: No, I'm not.

HOPKINSON: You wanted to make me look bad, is that it?

EVY: No.

HOPKINSON: I look bad enough then they'll dump me. Is that what you want?

EVY: No.

HOPKINSON: And off we go! Something else, somewhere else, eh?

EVY: What's wrong with that? People do it!

HOPKINSON: Not me!

EVY: Don't you like honest work?

HOPKINSON: That's a funny remark from a whore!

EVY: You want to know why I threw out your note? I'll tell you why! I'm a whore and what you do is offensive to me! What you do would gag me! I'm a

whore and when I look at your job, I could vomit!

(*she slaps her*)

WOMAN: Don't look at the crowd on the shore! . . . don't listen, pretend they aren't there . . . the sky is a blue, a beautiful blue . . . look at it! Don't look at them on the shore, they are ugly!

(*She turns her back and begins to sing to the child.*)

HOPKINSON: I never think of the woman and child . . . they never enter my mind . . . Mewa Singh is a mill worker and priest caught crossing the border with guns. Mewa Singh is a trusted man in the Sikh community. Mewa Singh is a man I could use . . . I speak to him in his jail cell. I begin with loyalty, move on to money, end up with threats. Mewa Singh says nothing. He looks me straight in the eye. I don't always like that, with some it's an act of defiance . . . In Mewa Singh's eyes there is an infinite sadness, and surrounding him is a pool of silence, and as I speak and the words fall on my ears as if from a distance . . . I think of an incident when I was a child . . . there was trouble at the bazaar . . . the soldiers had to come in on their horses . . . and the next day I walked through . . . I saw blood, like clots of dark jelly still on the streets . . . but no people . . . an empty bazaar. Do you have any conception of how strange that is? I remember standing very still, scrawny and pasty, very still, afraid to move — in the middle of silence, listening, like a mouse on a pan, listening, for the beat of the wings of the owl . . . very still . . . And then as I stood there, I saw a figure approaching from one of the streets. Some native person. He stopped in the shadow of the huts . . . he extended his arms t'wards me . . . and I . . . turned around . . . and ran home. I was frightened . . . Mewa Singh . . . when I finish my mixed bag of offers Mewa Singh turns his head towards the window. It's narrow and barred. He has dismissed me. His answer is no. Goddamn it! I need a man who they trust! I'm the one who has something to lose!

T.S.: Relax! Don't worry! Congratulations are in order . . . The courts have come through! Catch 22, Regulation 23, Paragraph 4 still stands!

(*Carnival music, the air of a party.* **SOPHIE, GEORG, EVY** join **HOPKINSON** on stage.)

Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Final Immigration ruling on the Komagata Maru! Right this way, folks! Right this way! July 16th, 1914! Last and final chance to view the Komagata Maru! Anchored in picturesque Vancouver Harbour these last six weeks and two days! Yes sireee! A decision is made! Of 376 Asians, 20 individuals have proven to Immigration Officials the legality of their Canadian domicile; 90 suffering from disease are ordered deported — and the rest can just shove off! The Immigration Department reigns supreme! To hell with the judges, the courts, and the officers thereof! Last chance to view! The Komagata Maru! Take it away, Bill!

HOPKINSON (*everyone's been drinking and it shows*): Fare thee well, Komagata Maru! Have a pleasant journey!

GEORG: Fare thee well!

HOPKINSON: Bon voyage! You had your day in court —

SOPHIE: Goodbye you Hindus!

HOPKINSON: Now you and yours can eat crow from here to Calcutta! Crow with seagull, crow with seaweed, or crow with seawater!

SOPHIE (*laughing*): Crow!

HOPKINSON: Fare thee well! Fare thee well!
(*They're all roaring with laughter, except EYV.*)
Fare thee well Komagata Maru!

EYV: Is it moving yet?

HOPKINSON: Not yet, but any minute.

SOPHIE: That's funny.

HOPKINSON: Have a drink, EYV.

SOPHIE: That's very funny. Why would they want to eat crow with seawater?

GEORG: Who knows what Hindus eat?
(*He and SOPHIE are laughing still.*)

SOPHIE: Still, crow and seawater? It would make you sick. It would make me sick.

GEORG: You aren't a Hindu!

SOPHIE: It'd make anybody sick!

GEORG: Silly, silly, Sophie.

HOPKINSON: See, EYV? It's all over.

SOPHIE: You wouldn't eat that unless you had nothing else to eat, that's for sure.

GEORG: Silly, silly.

SOPHIE: Hey, crow and seagull sounds awful too.

HOPKINSON: Forget it, Sophie.

SOPHIE: Eh?

HOPKINSON: It's just an expression.

SOPHIE: So what's it mean?

HOPKINSON: Come on, EYV.

SOPHIE (*louder*): Eh?

HOPKINSON: To submit humbly!

EYV: Surely that rings a bell, I mean, it does for me.

SOPHIE: What?

HOPKINSON: Don't be like that. Say you're sorry. I'm sorry.

SOPHIE: Come on, Georg. (*he embraces her*) Nooo — where's the music — you gotta have music for a party!

HOPKINSON: Sophie's right.

GEORG: What we'll have is a polka!
(*He and SOPHIE wind up the gramophone.*)

HOPKINSON: It's a party! Come on, EYV, let's dance.

SOPHIE: I love to polka! It's hard on the feet, but I love it!
(*They dance to the music.*)

T.S.: . . . Hopkinson!
(*he stops dancing*)

. . . There's someone at the end of the yard. Bella Singh's at the end of the yard!
(*HOPKINSON exits, EYV follows him for a step or two, then stops.*)

WOMAN (*SOPHIE and GEORG dance, carry the bottle and laugh*): We hear them rejoice on the shore . . . They say we are beasts; physical death is no evil for us, it may be a blessing else why pestilence and famine? They say we are the enemies of Christ, the Prince of Peace; they will hate us with a perfect hatred; they will blast us with grape shot and rockets; they will beat us as small as dust before the wind!

(*The music stops, SOPHIE and GEORG collapse.*)

They say our appeal to the courts is dismissed. They say tonight the Komagata Maru will sail for India.

T.S. (*winks*): Guess again!

HOPKINSON: The bastards!

WOMAN: On the ship a meeting is held. I vote in the place of my son who is five. It is right that we're here!

HOPKINSON (*looking out at the ship*): Sit tight in the harbour, will they?

EYV: Drink up, everyone.

HOPKINSON: The foolish bastards. They must think it's a cricket game with the officers. Fair play. Your wicket. Pass the crumpets.

GEORG: So what can they do?

HOPKINSON: Bugger all. A move can't be made nor a word whispered, on the street, in the temple, on the waterfront, without my knowing it.

EYV: He has his men! His men produce! Eh, Bill?

HOPKINSON: If they don't, they'll find themselves in steerage on the next ship out!

EYV (*she's drunk*): You know something?

HOPKINSON: I'll seal the Komagata Maru off tighter than paint on a wall.

EYV: You sound worried.

HOPKINSON: I'll see it wrapped round with rot and rust and manned by skeletons before one bastard disembarks!

EYV: Come on, everyone! It's a party!

HOPKINSON: That's right! Glasses up, glasses up! Here's to the Komagata Maru — stuck in picturesque Vancouver Harbour! It gives me great pleasure to extend to you the hospitality of the Canadian people! Enjoy your anchorage! Sip our rain and eat our air! And when you've had your fill — India lies westward!

T.S.: Ladies and gentlemen! It walks! It talks! It reproduces! It provides cheap labour for your factories, and a market for your goods! All this, plus a handy scapegoat! Who's responsible for unemployment? The coloured immigrant! Who

brings about a drop in take-home pay? The coloured immigrant! Who is it creates slum housing, racial tension, high interest rates, and violence in our streets? The coloured immigrant! Can we afford to be without it? I say No! It makes good sense to keep a few around — when the dogs begin to bay, throw them a coloured immigrant! It may sound simple, but it works. Remember though — the operative word's "a few" — For reference, see the Red, the White, the Blue and Green Paper on Immigration, whatever year you fancy!

EVY (*she's still drinking*): This place is a pigsty.

SOPHIE: That's old news, Evy.

EVY: . . . This place is a pigsty.

SOPHIE: At least it's a profitable pigsty — isn't it?

EVY: Money isn't everything.

(*She laughs, no one else reacts.*)
. . . eh?

SOPHIE: Don't be silly.

EVY: Did you know that if a pig falls in a trough, the other pigs would eat him. (*she's playing cards*)

. . . gobble, gobble, gobble. . . I think pigs are all right. . . I've known some not bad pigs. . . it's the goddamn pigstys that turn them nasty. . .

GEORG (*who sits reading a German paper*): . . . I would not want to be Kaiser Wilhelm today. . .

EVY: Why? Isn't he feeling well?

(*She laughs, no one else reacts.*)

. . . Oh well. . . that's too bad. . . maybe tomorrow? . . .

SOPHIE: It's so hot. At home you always get a breeze off the water.

EVY: In Manitoba you don't.

GEORG (*as he turns a page*): If war should break out. . . well. . .

EVY (*brightly*): People will die, eh?

(*She looks at HOPKINSON who stands staring out at the ship.*)

. . . Bill? . . . Bill, a watched pot never boils.

T.S. (*very quietly, his stance mirrors HOPKINSON's*): What we need is a reason to board her. To mount a police action, paramilitary, whatever. To arrest those aboard.

EVY: Leave the window alone, Bill.

T.S.: We could board them, arrest them, escort them to the open sea, and once there, release them, pointed towards India.

EVY: Come talk to me.

T.S.: Now if the captain and crew charged the Sikhs with mutiny, we'd be away, eh?

EVY: Bill?

T.S.: The captain refuses to press charges? Really? You know, I can't help but

feel you don't give full vent to your powers of persuasion. One begins to wonder whose side you're on, someone should check out your file. A good man would find a reason to board her.

HOPKINSON: . . . Yes. . .

SOPHIE: It's the heat. It's so hot. (*Getting up and exiting.*)

HOPKINSON: It's July. . . It's supposed to be hot. . .

T.S. (*howls on his haunches, boy scout position, two fingers of each hand at temples*): Akela says "Be Prepared". (*howls*) Akela says "Do your Duty for God and the King, and Obey the Law of the Pack".

(*howls, then stops abruptly and rises*)
Akela says I have three merit badges for the boy who comes up with a first-rate reason to board the Komagata Maru!

EVY: What're you writing?

HOPKINSON: Nothing.

EVY: Are you writing in German, what is it?

HOPKINSON: It's nothing. . . now. . . clear off, I'm busy. (*EVY wanders off SL.*)

WOMAN: This is not where we live. . . we shall not see your uncle. . . but we can't cross an ocean without water or food. . . You must not be afraid, for hundreds of years the Khyber Pass has run with our blood, we're not afraid to spill more of it here! . . . Do you hear me ashore! We have suffered, but we have endured! We are tempered like steel! . . . We are ready!

HOPKINSON: Georg?

GEORG: Mnn?

(*from his paper*)

HOPKINSON: I was wondering.

GEORG: Yes?

HOPKINSON: I have a small problem. . . perhaps you could advise me. . .

GEORG: Certainly. What is your problem?

HOPKINSON: It's the Komagata Maru.

GEORG (*laughs*): You call this a small problem?

HOPKINSON (*doesn't like the laugh*): Compared to, say, Kaiser Wilhelm, of course. Compared to that of an enemy alien in this country if war should break out, yes, I think a small problem, don't you?
(*GEORG gets the point.*)

T.S.: It's not what you call subtle, but it works.

HOPKINSON: I wish to make the Komagata Maru an offer — to give them supplies, to make some vague promise of promises, to recompense them for their cargo of coal, to entice them to sail. I wish the whole transaction kept quiet.

GEORG: And what is your problem?

HOPKINSON: If my offer got out, it might look like some kind of acknowledgement of their rights, and in this affair, they have none.

(*GEORG goes to speak.*)

As for Bella Singh and the rest, well, to be blunt, I don't trust them — trustworthy as they are, have been in the past, will be in the future, I do not totally trust them in this endeavour. A very slight qualm of mistrust.

GEORG: I see.

HOPKINSON: What do you advise, my good friend, Georg?

GEORG (*As EVY enters unobserved, she's come in for a bottle but stops to listen.*): You're looking for someone to carry your offer out to the ship?

HOPKINSON: That's correct.

(*drawing out envelope*)

This particular offer — a man I can trust — a man for whom I possibly could do a small favour sometime in the future in return for this favour . . .

GEORG: And with some small financial reward, I suppose?

HOPKINSON: Correct. I will provide a boat, and one of our patrols will study the night sky as you slip through the — oh — excuse the use of the pronoun.

GEORG: Quite all right. Quite — all right — in fact, is there any reason why I myself, Georg, cannot act on your behalf in this matter?

HOPKINSON: Ah.

GEORG: Shall we drink to it?

(*moving to do so*)

HOPKINSON: First the details —
(*they catch sight of EVY.*)

EVY: Hello.

GEORG: Hello, Evy.

HOPKINSON (*lowers his voice slightly as EVY hovers in background.*): First the details, then the drink — Note, the envelope is sealed, and must remain so.
(*As he passes it to GEORG, EVY takes it.*)

EVY: What's this?

GEORG (*looking to HOPKINSON*): Ah?

EVY: A letter home?

GEORG: Yes. May I have it?

EVY: A letter to Germany — but it has no address.

HOPKINSON: Give him his letter.

EVY: A letter to Germany — what if someone should open it. What's in it?

HOPKINSON: Evy —

EVY: Georg, where's your head? We're practically at war. The only thing worse than a letter to Germany is a letter from Germany. Governments are paranoid. Ask Bill.

GEORG: Eh?

HOPKINSON: She drinks too much.

EVY: I just had an ideal. What if —

HOPKINSON (*makes a grab for her arm and misses*): Give it to me!

EVY: I'm not finished! What if a letter containing — who knows what — was carried by a German national out to the Komagata Maru —

HOPKINSON: Shut your mouth.

EVY: — and intercepted by the Department of Immigration — what if, eh?

GEORG: What if?

(*he shrugs*)

EVY: A plot between the Germans and the Sikhs!

GEORG: A plot between . . . ?

(*He laughs with a tinge of nervousness and a look to HOPKINSON.*)

Give me the letter.

EVY: He wants a good solid reason to board the Komagata Maru and by Jesus I'm looking at it!

HOPKINSON: You're going to end up in a sailor's bar, Evy.

EVY: I won't let you do this!

HOPKINSON: Two bits a crack in a dark alley.

EVY: Georg —

(*she gives it to him*)

Open it.

GEORG: This is an offer to —

HOPKINSON: That's enough.

EVY: It's a trick. Open it!

HOPKINSON: Return it — or deliver it sealed.

EVY: They'll deport you! Do you think he cares?

GEORG: You don't understand —

HOPKINSON: No trust, no deal.

EVY: Don't you know who he works for?

GEORG: Evy, he works for the government.

EVY: Oh yes! . . . Oh yes . . . and I can tell you a story about governments . . . a bedtime story —

T.S. & EVY: Once upon a time —

(*The characters freeze as T.S. moves among them. T.S. only continues.*)

— There was a little boy who came to Manitoba with his mummy and daddy and sisters and brothers and many others very much like him. Their skin was a pale ivory, their eyes a light blue, and their hair dark — without being too dark — and curly — but not too curly! They were running from persecution and injustice . . .

and Canada said: You wish to own farm land communally? No bother at all! You will not swear allegiance to the crown and the flag? Weeeelllll, what is it, after all, but . . . headgear and a piece of cloth? You do not wish to fight wars? That too can be arranged; exceptions can be made!

The daddies worked to earn money for seed and supplies, and the mummies harnessed themselves to the plough and pulled it, breaking the hard brown earth of Manitoba and the soft white flesh of their backs till the red blood ran down, and the little boy walked beside the plough picking bouquets of tiny blue flowers. By and by, the mummies and daddies had homes and barns and food for the winter and seed for the spring and horses for the plough. Then others came and saw what they had. And Canada said — Now about this allegiance! And which of you owns this particular piece of land? Be precise and sign here! And my goodness, friends, isn't all this worth killing and maiming for? What kind of people are you?

The mummies and daddies and sisters and brothers set out on a pilgrimage. They walked to Yorkton and along the tracks towards Winnipeg.

(He bangs his cane, they unfreeze with GEORG turning to HOPKINSON.)

GEORG: About this letter!
(extending it)

EVY: Listen to me! I watched them walk past —
(T.S. bangs his cane, they freeze.)

T.S.: It was snowing. They had little to eat, and then nothing to eat, for the Mounties cut off their supplies — and it snowed. People dropped by the tracks and a special train came along and returned everyone to Northern Manitoba. And those who would not sign and swear allegiance were driven from their land with only what they could carry!
(bangs his cane)

HOPKINSON *(snatches the letter):* I'll make other arrangements!
(T.S. bangs the cane, they freeze.)

T.S.: Then people whose skins were so fair as to be opalescent, whose eyes were so light they shone in the dark, whose hair sparkled like dust motes in the sun, with each strand hanging in a manner that can only be described as poker straight — these people stormed the land office for homesteads and barns and harvests still in the fields.

EVY: My brother stood in line for three days, he got a section — next to my father's.

T.S.: And they all lived happily ever after! . . . There now. Good night, sleep tight, don't let the bedbugs bite. . . Shhhhhhhhh!
(the tiptoes away)

EVY: It can happen to any of us.

HOPKINSON: Go to bed.

EVY: Look at him. He'd cut off his hand before he'd make the Komagata Maru an offer.

(she laughs)

He's got a thing about race, about colour, haven't you noticed?

HOPKINSON: You're boring and stupid, Evy.

EVY: Why do you suppose that is?

GEORG: I —

EVY: He goes to the temple.

GEORG: Eh?

EVY: Gets himself all dolled up, goes to the temple in disguise — he thinks he looks like a Sikh. I bet the Sikhs think he looks like an ass.

HOPKINSON: Good night, Georg.

GEORG: About —

HOPKINSON: Good night.
(GEORG gives a little bow and leaves.)

EVY: I've been thinking. Funny thing, your background —

HOPKINSON: That's enough.

EVY: Birthplace, things like that, where were you born, Bill?

HOPKINSON: Get the hell upstairs.

EVY: Where?

HOPKINSON: England.

EVY: Where in England, be specific.

HOPKINSON: Yorkshire!

EVY: Yorkshire! Yorkshire! Now that's a new one, Yorkshire, eh? . . . That's not what I think.

HOPKINSON: Evy!

EVY: Quick, Georg, *(who isn't there, but she pretends he is)* without looking, what colour's his eyes, wanna bet? I'd say brown.

(Sometime during this scene HOPKINSON begins to subtly stalk her, she as subtly avoids him.)

HOPKINSON: You filthy bitch!

EVY: Blue, did you say? Well then I bet his mother's eyes were brown.

HOPKINSON: My mother's dead.

EVY: Born in Punjab, served by Yorkshire.

HOPKINSON: Born in Yorkshire!

EVY: So are they blue or brown?

HOPKINSON: Blue!

EVY: Your mother's eyes, now what were they?

HOPKINSON: My mother's eyes were blue, you bitch! I'll kill you.

EVY: First you'll have to catch me.
(HOPKINSON chases her, she avoids him.)

... You're stupid, Bill, you're stupid... it's not me that's stupid, it's you. Stupid, stupid, Billy! They all use you, Bill, yes, they do... You think that you use Georg, you think that you use Bella Singh, you think that you use me, but you're the one that's being used... they're using you and Billy Boy's too dumb to know and stupid dumb Billy will keep on being used cause Billy Dumbo's stupid! Stupid dumb Billy's stupid dumb Billy.

(He catches her, she speaks softly.)

... And Billy's mother's brown.

(He slaps her, she speaks louder.)

... And Billy's mother's brown!

(He slaps her, she speaks louder.)

... And Billy's mother's brown!

HOPKINSON *(He throws her down, kneels and shakes her):* Don't say that. Don't say that! I'll kill you if you say that to me!

(he slows down his attack on her)

Evy, don't say that. Please don't say that... *(he stops)* I... I love you, Evy, don't say that to me...
(She reaches out and draws his head to her.)

EVY: Oh... oh... poor, poor, Billy.

T.S.: Hopkinson!

(HOPKINSON moves very slowly, he speaks without expression, it's an effort for him to get up.)

... What're you waiting for... where's your report?

HOPKINSON: Sir.

T.S.: You've come up with what?

HOPKINSON: Sir.

T.S.: A reason to board her, remember?

HOPKINSON: Sir.

T.S.: Kindly observe *(clears his throat)* Captain Yomamoto! Captain Yomamoto! Is there a Captain Yomamoto in the house? Ah, my dear Captain, there you are. If you wouldn't mind taking a seat?

(he indicates a chair for the Captain who is exceedingly short)

... How many times have we had this conversation? How many times must we have this conversation?

... Yes, yes, I know what you said before: "strictly speaking" your passengers have not mutinied hence you are reluctant to lay a charge... Truly a commendable stance — however. Let us forget "strictly speaking" for a moment. How about trying "laxly speaking", "loosely speaking", "informally speaking" — could you find it in your heart to lay a charge "loosely speaking" against the passengers of the Komagata Maru?... Nothing has changed, huh?... Not so quick, Captain, one more minute please... While casually flipping through my classified copy of condensed Canadian law "What to Do in a Pinch" I found the most interesting — oh, I'm sure you'd be interested — you see it says right here, as I interpret this small item here... Yes, right here in very small print — You can't see it? But my dear Captain, I assure you I can. It states: If given formal notice to sail, then sail you must, toute suite — it's a bilingual law — or be subject to a fine of \$500.00. That's per person aboard. "With-the-Power-Vested-in-Me-

by-His-Majesty's-Government-I-Hereby-Give-You-Formal-Notice-to-Sail"! Now, let me see, 500 times 356, that's put down the zero, carry the three — what was that you just said? You wish to press charges? Mutiny, sedition, treason, and — blackmail? Be serious, my dear fellow, the first is sufficient... Mutiny!

M — that's Militia for instilling fear,

U — Union Jack which God knows we hold dear,

T — for a tugboat, one you can't sink,

I — for informant, a nice word for fink,

N — for our Navy of fine volunteers,

Y — for Yomamoto, who finally signed Here!

Hopkinson! Here are your papers. Now, my good man, do your duty.

GEORG *(helping HOPKINSON on with his jacket):* I'm sorry about the letter. I pay no attention to her. She's a stupid woman.

HOPKINSON: Yomamoto has signed, pressed charges of mutiny. The militia is lining the dock, they are armed, they wait in reserve... We will engage the Komagata Maru at sea!

GEORG: In the harbour, you mean.

HOPKINSON: In the harbour.

(he's addressing a crowd)

We will mount an attack from the Sea Lion, the largest ocean-going tug in the port! Police Chief MacLennan shall lead 120 policemen and 40 special Immigration Officers —

GEORG: May I volunteer my services, sir?

HOPKINSON: In a paramilitary attack on the ship.

GEORG: Will I come under fire, sir?

HOPKINSON: On board the Komagata Maru are veteran soldiers.

GEORG: Are they armed?

HOPKINSON: Reliable sources inform me that weapons abound on the ship. They have made clubs from floating driftwood, possibly spears from bamboo poles.

T.S.: He's forgotten the cargo of coal.

HOPKINSON: Force will be met with force. Rifles will be issued before we embark...

T.S. (prompting): I expect every —

HOPKINSON: I expect every man to do his duty. No doubt we will meet with a stubborn opposition, but remember, we are a formidable force!

T.S.: In an orderly manner.

WOMAN: They are coming.

T.S.: Board the Sea Lion.

WOMAN (softly): Jai Khalsa...

GEORG: It was fair-sized for a tug, but not large enough for a company of men such as we were.

WOMAN: Stand back from the rail.

GEORG: Four reporters came along for the ride. "Hoppy," they cried, "How about a smile for the press!" Mr. Hopkinson smiled.

WOMAN: Get below.

GEORG: It looked like a very big ship and the closer we got —

WOMAN: They have guns.

GEORG: The more quiet we were . . . silence . . . The Sea Lion rode low in the water . . . as we looked up we saw them . . . lining the rails were great turbaned figures . . . We stared up at them . . . they stared down at us . . . then . . .

T.S. (*low*): Throw out the grappling hooks.

WOMAN (*screams*): Jai Khalsai!

GEORG: All hell broke loose!

WOMAN: Jai Khalsai!

GEORG: From three hundred odd throats came a yell!

WOMAN: Jai Khalsai!

GEORG: Followed by bricks from the boiler settings, scrap iron and coal!

WOMAN: Hide!

GEORG: Mostly coal!

WOMAN: Hide below!

GEORG: Coal rains around us!

WOMAN: Jai Khalsai!

GEORG: Hopkinson's hit again and again!

WOMAN: Jai Khalsai!

GEORG: They can see the gold braid on his hat!

HOPKINSON: I look for the woman and child.

GEORG: Get down! For God's sake get down!

WOMAN: Jai Khalsai!

HOPKINSON: I stand as straight as I can.

GEORG: Take off your hat and get down!

(*He raises his gun to fire.*)

HOPKINS: There's no order to fire! Don't fire!

(*he turns to prevent GEORG's firing*)

WOMAN (*throwing the missile of coal which knocks HOPKINSON down*): Jai Khalsai!

(*A pause with HOPKINSON lying on the floor. EVY enters slowly with SOPHIE and they help HOPKINSON to the sofa and press a cloth to his head.*)

GEORG: It was a total and humiliating defeat. What else can you expect? It was ridiculous. We go out with rifles and then never use them. The whole thing was poorly conceived. However, compared to the execution of the scheme, the conception was an act of genius!

SOPHIE: What do you mean?

GEORG: It was a stupid thing to do.

EVY: Hold the cloth to your head, Bill. It's cold. It'll help.

HOPKINSON: I'm all right. I just want something to wash with.

SOPHIE (*laughs*): I don't wonder. He looks like a chimney sweep, doesn't he, Georg?

GEORG: There you sit, a servant in His Majesty's government, battered and bruised by a bunch of Hindus.

HOPKINSON: Get me some water!

SOPHIE: If you yell you can get it yourself.

GEORG: Tell me the point of carrying rifles if nobody uses them? . . . And there he stood with his hat. The smart thing to do was remove it. No, there he stood. Everytime he was hit, they all cheered. The air rang with cheers!

SOPHIE: I just thought of something . . . (*laughs*) . . . Mr. Hopkinson, I guess it was you that ate crow, eh?

(*Nudges GEORG who chuckles after a slight effort to restrain himself.*)
It was him that ate crow!

HOPKINSON: Get out! Get out and leave me alone!
(*SOPHIE and GEORG exit SL.*)

SOPHIE: It was him that ate crow.
(*they're still chuckling.*)

GEORG: Sophie.

WOMAN (*she's at a meeting on the ship*): We have gained nothing but time! We've driven them off for a while, what now we must press for is food! I say it is better we starve on their doorstep than out on the sea!

HOPKINSON: . . . Do you remember when I gave you your brooch?

EVY: Yes.

HOPKINSON: Do you like it?

EVY: Yes I do.

T.S.: Order! Order!

(*HOPKINSON begins to adjust his clothing.*)

EVY: Bill — this time don't go.

T.S.: Order!

EVY: Say to hell with it.

T.S.: Are we assembled?

EVY: Don't go, Bill.
(*as he joins T.S.*)

T.S.: The meeting will come to order . . . Well now, that was a bit of a balls-up yesterday, wasn't it? . . .

(*HOPKINSON goes to speak.*)

However, we aren't here to assign guilt, we can do that later. What's the next step, that's the question. Any suggestions, Hopkinson?

(*HOPKINSON shakes his head slowly.*)

. . . I thought not. Well, luckily we have in our midst a man with courage and foresight. He has had refurbished, refitted, and manned, a second-class cruiser at Esquimalt, the Rainbow, length 300 feet, 3,600 gross tonnage with two six inch guns and six four inch guns. A small hand please for Harry Stevens, our federal M.P. . . . I think we can do better than that.

(*HOPKINSON claps.*)

Ah yes . . . Mr. Stevens has worked diligently since the arrival of the Komagata Maru in our waters. Diligence, perseverance, and patriotism always pay off. Let the Rainbow push through the Narrows; let her anchor near enough to the Komagata Maru for the sun to glint on her guns. Let our next message be — we won't necessarily fire on you — but we will fire on you if necessary!

(*he turns to leave*)

HOPKINSON: Sir! . . . My informants in the Sikh community inform me —

T.S.: Informants inform you? (*laughs*) You're being redundant, my boy.

HOPKINSON: My people in the Sikh community tell me that threats have been made. Death threats.

T.S.: You've stirred up a hornet's nest, haven't you? You've opened up Pandora's Box. You've created a maelstrom.

HOPKINSON: I was following orders.

T.S.: Let me tell you something — there's someone at the end of the yard . . .

HOPKINSON: Bella Singh?

T.S.: Not Bella Singh . . . Someone who's not Bella Singh waits at the end of the yard . . .

EVY: Who is it out there?

HOPKINSON: One of my men I imagine.

EVY: Why don't you go out?

HOPKINSON: Later, perhaps . . . Let him wait.

WOMAN (*laughing*): Do you know something? My son's lips have swollen and burst from the thirst — they are covered with grease from the engines. My legs are like sticks — if I smelt a real meal I would vomit — and you think a few guns will make our knees knock? (*she stops laughing*) Sale Haramazaade! Give us supplies and we'll leave!

HOPKINSON: See the cruiser . . . it has guns trained on the Komagata Maru.

EVY: Will they fire on it?

HOPKINSON: That — is not my concern.

EVY: Don't you feel anything for them?

HOPKINSON: You wouldn't understand.

EVY: Yes I would. I would try.

HOPKINSON: One has to make decisions. Commitments. To one side or another.

EVY: What side are you on?

HOPKINSON: The winning side.

EVY: Are you winning?

HOPKINSON: This time the Komagata Maru will sail.

EVY: Do you think then you'll have won?

HOPKINSON: I'm . . . tired. Let's go to bed.

(*he starts off*)

EVY: Not right now.

HOPKINSON (*stops, turns to look at her*): Lie beside me. That's all.

EVY: I don't want to.

HOPKINSON: I don't have to ask! I can order!

(*EVY looks at him, then picks up her cards, begins to lay them out. After a moment HOPKINSON leaves.*)

T.S. (*carnival music*): Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Absolutely the last and final chance to view the Komagata Maru! Anchored in picturesque Vancouver Harbour for two, count 'em, two glorious months! Note the cruiser standing by to the right, see the sun on its guns, what a fantastic sight! Ladies and gentlemen, can you truly afford to bypass this splendid spectacle? Run, my good friends, you mustn't walk, you must run! Cotton candy, taffy apples, popcorn and balloons! All this and a possible plus, the opportunity to view your very own navy in action with no threat to you!

(*music stops*)

SOPHIE: It's all so exciting . . . now tell me what all the little boats are doing?

GEORG: Some of them are harassing the Sikhs, some of them are supplying the ship — the government is giving them provisions.

SOPHIE: And what about the cargo of coal — if there's any left.

GEORG: I hear the government may recompense them. My friends tell me they have promised them everything and will give them nothing. That's called diplomacy, eh Bill?

SOPHIE: Oh look everybody! Look! There's black smoke coming out of the smokestack . . . look, The Rainbow's moving . . . it's moving in . . . what's it going to do . . . I bet it's going to shoot, I hope it's going to shoot, it's . . . Look, Evy! Come look! It's . . . It's . . . it's moving — The Komagata Maru's moving — and the Rainbow's going right along side . . . We won! We won! Didn't we, Georg? Didn't we, Mr. Hopkinson? Aren't you even going to look? It's over and we won!

(*A bang of the cane and they freeze.*)

T.S.: Over? . . . A note, Mr. Hopkinson, from the man at the end of the yard. . . "When the affairs were past any other remedy, I thought it righteous to draw my sword."
(*HOPKINSON looks at the note.*)

WOMAN (*hard, not sentimental*): We go back. My husband is dead. He died in their war. His father is dead. He died when they cut back the famine relief. I am a British subject, and my people's taxes have gone to their King. I am not a possession, a thing. I am myself and I will fight for myself and my son and my people. I am strong.

GEORG: The whole thing has been most educational. I should thank you. I have made many valuable friends and good contacts. I owe it to you, Bill. . . Can I get you a drink? Sophie, get him a drink.

HOPKINSON (*stepping out to T.S.*): I have good men in the Indian community . . . good men . . . they produce . . . Bella Singh, Baboo Singh, Herman Singh, Gunga Ram —

T.S.: Mewa Singh?

HOPKINSON: Not — Mewa Singh.

T.S.: For God's sake, get on.

HOPKINSON: Their lives are in danger . . . the community feels that they're traitors, surely they're loyal British subjects, like myself.

T.S.: Hurry up.

HOPKINSON: My own life has been threatened . . . I ask for —

T.S.: Extral Extral! Read all about it. War Declared! Recession Receded! Factories Hum the National Anthem! Send your sons overseas! See all of Europe at federal expense! Check your programme for casting — the enemy's the Kraut! The Sikh's on our side! Extral Extral! Read all about it!

GEORG (*picks up paper*): This can't help but work nicely for me.

HOPKINSON: What?

GEORG: I say the war shall increase my use to your department.

SOPHIE: Isn't he smart, Evy? Georg is going places — and so is Sophie.

EVY (*looks up from her cards*): Christ, Sophie, it's a war.

GEORG: It's also a good business deal.
(*EVY spits on the floor.*)

You should teach her some manners.

SOPHIE: You're jealous.

EVY: Oh Sophie.

SOPHIE: It's true — you're jealous of me — Georg's up and doing — he gets around — we have a good time. Look at him — he doesn't do anything since the Komagata Maru. And you're just as bad. This place is just like a morgue. Who wants to live in a morgue? I'll leave if I want to — I can, you know — I'll leave anytime I want.

HOPKINSON: No you won't.

SOPHIE: Yes I will. Won't I, Georg? Whenever Georg wants.

HOPKINSON: Georg wants what I give him! When I say move, you bloody well move, when I say jump, you say how high. In this stinking world there's two kinds, there's the ruler and the ruled — and when I see the likes of you, I know where I stand!

(*he begins to weaken*)

Some people talk, and some people listen, but by God, I act, and if . . . it weren't for people like me . . . people like you . . . would still be down in the slime . . . I have my . . . I have my . . .

T.S.: Bill?

HOPKINSON: I have . . .

T.S.: Mewa Singh waits at the end of the yard.

HOPKINSON: Yes.

(*EVY moves to him.*)

WOMAN: We dock at Budge Budge fourteen miles from Calcutta. We are to be herded aboard trains and returned to the Punjab although many of us have not been there for years. We resist. Police, reinforced by soldiers, open fire. Men who shared their rancid flour and brackish water with my son are dead. (*a threat*) We will remember them.

T.S.: Order! Order! The court will come to order! Will the Inspector take the stand! Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as it befits this case, so help you God?

HOPKINSON: I do.

T.S.: Might I ask if you were acquainted with one Hermann Singh?

HOPKINSON: I was.

T.S.: What was his character?

HOPKINSON: He was a quiet, unassuming man, intensely loyal to his King.

T.S.: What was the nature of your relationship?

HOPKINSON: He rendered assistance to the government on the Komagata Maru Incident.

T.S.: Five and one half weeks after the departure of the Komagata Maru, one Pirt Warnes was walking along a little used trail on the Kisilano Indian Reserve. It was quite a pleasant trail — he noticed what at first glance appeared to be a bundle of rags behind a log close to the path. He examined it. It was the badly decomposed body of an East Indian. The turban was wrapped round the ankles. Beside the body lay a leather satchel, an empty brandy flask, and an open straight razor. When he touched the head, it came off in his hand. It was Hermann Singh. Let me ask you, Inspector, from your intimate knowledge of the Asian mind, would you say the facts as related are consistent with — suicide?

HOPKINSON: No, I would not.

T.S.: Ah — hah . . . and if indeed it were murder, can you suggest a possible motive?

HOPKINSON: By informing, Hermann Singh had incurred the hatred of his people.

T.S.: You may step down.

EVY: Why don't we go away? . . . Why can't we? . . . Bill? . . . Bill, talk to me! . . . I can leave . . . I can leave . . . And I will.
(*she exits off stage*)

T.S.: Six weeks after the departure of the Komagata Maru, Arjun Singh shot through the back of the head from behind!

HOPKINSON: Arjun Singh is dead.

GEORG (*on the sofa, feet up, reading the paper*): He'll have to get a new stable of fellows, eh?

SOPHIE (*playing cards at the table*): Where would he find them, eh?

GEORG (*laughs*): Good point . . . where is he going to find them?

T.S.: Sept. 5, 1914 . . . early evening . . . Bella Singh goes to the temple. Inside the temple, people are singing. They're singing hymns for Arjun Singh, Hermann Singh . . . Bella Singh takes off his shoes . . . Bela Singh enters the temple . . . Bella Singh moves to the back . . . Bella Singh sits in a corner . . . Bella Singh takes out a gun — he fires ten shots, scores nine out of ten, seven wounded, two dead. He never speaks till arrested.

GEORG: Do you know what he says, Sophie? He says that he acted in self-defence, he says Bill will verify that . . . will you testify, Bill?

HOPKINSON: Yes.

T.S.: October 21st, 1914 . . . My God, what a day! Look at that sky — and the leaves all russet and gold — the mountains like sentinels, just a light breeze, the city set like a precious gem on the Pacific — breathe in . . . breathe out . . . breathe in . . . breathe out . . .

HOPKINSON: I leave the house early. I walk to the court house . . . It's Fall . . . I feel like a toy man walking through a toy town. Everything's working. My arms and my legs move so well together there is . . . a mechanical precision to everything . . . I notice the houses seem neater than usual, a certain precision . . . at the same time, it's slower, things are slower, but very precise . . . there are no clouds in the sky, and it's blue, a deep blue . . . there's a slight breeze . . . the veins in the leaves protrude as if swollen . . . toy mountains frame my toy town . . . I'm just a bit late because of the walk. I enter the basement from Howe Street . . . As I wait for the lift to take me up to the court, I place very carefully one hand on the wall, feeling the wall, and feeling my hand on the wall, in this tiny toy court . . . I open the door of the lift, I step inside, then I close it. I think of the peace of the coffin. I think of the safety of the cage. I open the door. I step out. I walk down the corridor. I see no one I know . . .

T.S.: Mewa Singh waits in the witness room.

HOPKINSON: I stop at the witness room.

T.S.: Mewa Singh steps out of the witness room. In each hand he carries a gun.

HOPKINSON: When I see him, I feel myself bursting. My toy town is destroyed in an instant. He is large, he encompasses my world, I feel myself racing towards eternity — They say I grapple with him. I do not. I open my arms, I say:

Now

Dazzles the sparkle of his sword

Who is utterly dreadful and is contained not

By the elements. And when he performeth

His death-dance, how dolefully his bells toll and knell.

He, the four-armed one, of a lustrous hair bun,

He wieldeth the mace and the club,

And crushes the swollen head, even of death.

His auspicious tongue of blazing fire

Licketh all that is unholy.

When shrieks his horrid conch

The whole universe reverberates with its raucous notes

How tintinnabulating are thy ankle bells,

And when thou movest, thou stampest the earth like a quake,

And thy immense gongs strike deep resonant notes.

T.S.: Mewa Singh fires three times. A bullet pierces Hopkinson's heart.

(*He touches HOPKINSON with the cane. HOPKINSON's head falls forward.*)

WOMAN: Mewa Singh will be hanged by the neck till he's dead. Mewa Singh says on the gallows: "I am a gentle person, but gentle people must act when injustice engulfs them. Let God judge my actions for he sees the right and the wrong. I offer my neck to the rope as a child opens his arms to his mother."

(*T.S. does a soft shoe shuffle to centre stage, he stops, looks out, raises his arms, pauses for a beat, and makes a large but simple bow.*)

(*Blackout*)

THE END

Consider the Play

1. T.S. opens the play with a long passage which gives the audience necessary background information. How does the narrator prevent the audience from becoming bored?
2. Early in the play, Pollock sets side by side the scene between Evy and Hopkinson, the scene between Georg and Sophie, and the scene with the woman and her child. What is the effect?
3. When the woman talks to her child, she constantly describes the beauty of the country and the security and warmth of the family. How does this contrast with Hopkinson's activities and discussions? Discuss.
4. Hopkinson describes Bella Singh as a 'loyal British subject'. What does this tell us about Hopkinson's idea of patriotism?
5. "... we don't mind them dying for us, we just don't want them living with us." Discuss.
6. "... and for our second ace-in-the-hole — a tax, \$200.00 per head to be paid before entry. Do they have it?" Discuss.
7. When Sophie asks Hopkinson about his mother, he changes the subject. Why?
8. Hopkinson tells Georg that he left India because "promotion was blocked in Lahore". What was his real reason?
9. Bureaucracy may be defined as administration of a government by officials who have been appointed rather than elected. It may also be defined as administration according to strict rules which prevent effective action. When T.S. discusses the Immigration Department's handbook, which definition of the bureaucratic process is he using? If you were in his position, what would you do? Why?
10. Why is Hopkinson so touchy when Evy mentioned that he "lived with" the people in India?
11. In what way is Hopkinson more sensitive than T.S.?
12. "All I know, Evy, is my father didn't die in the service of the world to be over-run by a second-rate people." Comment.
13. What is your opinion of the comments in T.S.'s speech to the Prime Minister and Parliament? Discuss.
14. Hopkinson and the woman are characters with completely different personalities. Discuss five ways in which these two characters have different outlooks and situations.
15. How does T.S. reason that it would be appropriate to keep "a few" non-white immigrants?
16. How does Hopkinson plan to "use" Georg in the *Komagata Maru* affair? Back up your opinion with evidence from the play.
17. After his armed force loses the first "battle" with those on board the ship, Hopkinson's position with Georg, Evy, and Sophie is weakened. What comments show that the three no longer hold Hopkinson in awe?
18. *The Komagata Maru Incident* deals with the theme of human equality. Are all human beings equal in every way? Should everyone be equal? What could or should be done to ensure equality? Explain and defend your views.

19. Research and prepare a report on the immigration experiences of and the contributions to Canadian life by the ethnic or religious group of your choice. Suggestions for ethnic groups are Canadians of Italian, Ukrainian, Chinese, Japanese, West Indian, or East Indian origin. Suggestions for religious groups are Mennonites, Hutterites, Buddhists, and Sikhs.
 20. Research and prepare a brief summary of Canada's immigration policy today. Then develop an opinion on what you think Canada's immigration policy should be in future. Give reasons for your opinion and be prepared to defend your views in a class debate.
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