

ANALYSIS OF SALVATION ARMY—SOCIALIST BULL

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Abstract:

Mildred expresses to her Aunt that she feels like a "waste product" of her family's steel business. She has reaped the rewards, but has no taste for the vigor and fight that brought them. Mildred's Aunt thinks Mildred's service projects are simply fanciful indulgences, a trendy suit of sincerity and humbleness that will be short-lived. Mildred compares herself to a leopard who complains of his spots. Mildred is trapped in an identity with spots she cannot "scratch off." The first engineer interrupts Mildred and her Aunt to escort Mildred to the stokehole. He asks Mildred if she would like to change out of her bright white dress before descending. Mildred replies that she has fifty dresses just like it and she will simply toss it into the sea when she returns. Mildred is trapped in an identity with spots she cannot "scratch off." The first engineer interrupts Mildred and her Aunt to escort Mildred to the stokehole. He asks Mildred if she would like to change out of her bright white dress before descending.

Key words: *Business, fanciful indulgences, scratch off, descending.*

INTRODUCTION

"Salvation Army—socialist bull." He defiantly states that the firemen are superior to the first class passengers because they are physically stronger and they "belong" to the ship. Paddy emerges from his stupor and cries out, "We belong to this you're saying? We make the ship go; you're saying? God have pity on us!" Paddy persists in a lengthy and passionate speech, detailing his former life on the sea. Paddy explains that in his youth men had reason to be proud to work on ships. The tall clipper ships, powered by sails rather than coal were, "clean" and "free." The ship gave Paddy a fantastic feeling of freedom and speed, rather than entrapment and slavery in the coal steamers. Paddy argues that working aboard the clipper ship required skill and guts. Men could belong to clipper ships, but do not belong to steamers.

Paddy concludes that the men aboard the steam ship shoveling coal are caged in by steel, without the sight of land or sea like "apes in the Zoo!"

Yank gets up to fight Paddy, but controls him. He tells Paddy to calm down, that he is crazy and too old to understand. Excitedly, Yank suddenly cries out that he belongs to the ship and Paddy does not, Paddy is dead and he is alive. Yank declares that he is part of the engines: he moves, he breathes coal dust and he eats it up. Without Yank, without the engines, everything would stop. Like Long, Yank describes the bottom of the ship as hell, but it "takes a man to work in hell." Yank equates himself with steel, the "muscles" and the "punch behind it."

Mildred Douglas and her Aunt lounge on the ship's promenade deck. Basking in the bright sunlight, Mildred remarks at the beauty of the black plumes of smoke wafting into the blue sky. Unfettered and relaxed, Mildred and her Aunt sit painfully disconnected from the workings of the ship, the world of Yank and the other firemen below. Mildred and her Aunt are "artificial characters," solely bred from and pampered by aristocratic and monetary pleasures. Mildred, the daughter of a steel tycoon, is aware of her disconnection from the poorer classes. She attempts to regain some connection to and understanding of the "other half" by studying sociology and doing various service projects.

Material and method

Mildred currently awaits the Second Engineer who will take her on a tour of the stokehole so she can investigate the state the workers on the ship. As she waits, Mildred and her Aunt quibble about Mildred's desire to help the poor. Mildred abhors her Aunt's apathy. Mildred's Aunt kindly tells her niece she is a "ghoul," that Mildred's work with the poor will only make them feel poorer. Mildred's Aunt has no idea why Mildred would desire to work with such people, as she loathes "deformity." Mildred describes her dispassionate Aunt as a "cold pork pudding against a background of linoleum." Mildred not only wishes to understand and help the poor, but she seeks to find purpose in life. Mildred expresses to her Aunt that she feels like a "waste product" of her family's steel business. She has reaped the rewards, but has no taste for the vigor and fight that brought them. Mildred's Aunt thinks Mildred's service projects are simply fanciful indulgences, a trendy suit of sincerity and humbleness that will be short-lived. Mildred compares herself to a leopard who complains of his spots. Mildred replies that she has fifty dresses just like it and she will simply toss it into the sea when she returns. As Mildred follows after the engineer to the lower decks her Aunt calls after her, "poser!" Laughing, without pause, Mildred fires, "Old Hag!"

Scene Three opens in the stokehole where Yank and the Firemen are busy shoveling fire into the ship's furnace. The men shovel in a rhythmic motion, swinging shovels of coal from the pile into the furnace doors. The sound of steel doors slamming, the clank of the shovels against the engine and the raging fire is deafening. The men stop for a short break. Paddy remarks that his back is broken and Yank tells him he is being weak. Yank rallies the other men to keep working and enthusiastically cheers them on. Paddy once again interjects that his back is broken. From the dark region above a whistle sound instructing the men to keep going. Yank furiously shakes his fist at the whistle blower and shouts that he is the one to decide when people move. In a fit he starts to work once again with the other men. Meanwhile, Mildred has entered the stokehole with the Engineer. While Yank keeps shoveling, the other men turn to stare at the ghostly Mildred, in stark white against the coal-blackened room. As the workers have stopped to stare, the whistle blows once again. Yank yells threats up to the whistle-blower and brandishes his shovel. Suddenly he becomes aware that the other men have stopped working and swings around violently to see Mildred. Mildred, pale and about to faint, is helped by the engineers. Before she is carried away she whimpers, "Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast!" Yank roars, "God damn yuh!"

The firemen are gathered in the ship's forecastle. Yank's watch, the men in his work shift, have completed their work and the men gather to rest. All but Yank have showered. The men are unable to fully clean the areas around their eyes, giving them a slightly menacing appearance. In contrast, Yank is still fully covered in coal dust, brooding and hunched over in the position of Rodin's "The Thinker." The men watch Yank carefully, expecting some sort of outburst after his encounter with Mildred. They tease he has forgotten to wash and he remains sullen. They tell Yank the dust will not come off his skin, that it will make him itch and give him spots like a leopard. Insulted, he tells the men to lay off, that he is trying to "tink" and, like always, the men chime, "think!" Yank jumps up and asks them what is wrong with his "tinking?"

Paddy finally decides to speak and suggests that Yank has fallen in love with Mildred. The men repeat Paddy's statement mockingly, shouting "love!" Yank tells the men he has fallen in hate, not love. Paddy informs Yank that only a very wise man could tell the difference between love and hate. Paddy tells Yank that Mildred must love him—after all, why else would she have come into the stokehole? Long jumps up on a bench and cries out that Mildred and the engineers greatly insulted the men. Long asks the firemen what right Mildred and the engineers have to come look at the firemen like animals in a zoo. Long also informs the men that Mildred is the daughter of a millionaire who makes half of the steel in the world and that is why she was able to get into the stokehole.

Conclusion

Long then suggests that the men can go to the law for the insult they suffered. Yank replies, "Hell! Law!" The men, in unison, repeat after him, "Law!" Paddy suggests that they go to the governments. In the same pattern, Yank scorns "Hell! Governments!" Again, the entire crew of firemen repeats after Yank, "Governments!" Long frantically suggests that at least God would look at the men equally. Again Yank and the men repeat, "God!" Yank tells Long to join the Salvation Army.

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