

# The Story of Morris Sheppard

*(The screen is black and the following white letters appear in an impressive script:*

*ONE-HUNDRED YEARS AGO, IN 1913, TEXAS SENATOR MORRIS SHEPPARD FROM TEXARKANA FIRST AGITATED FOR NATIONWIDE PROHIBITION. AT THAT MOMENT THERE HAD NEVER BEFORE BEEN A WESTERN NATION THAT HAD ENFORCED THE PROHIBITION OF ALCOHOL. FOR THE UNITED STATES, THIS FEAT WAS ATTAINED FROM 1920 TO 1933 UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION WHICH SHEPPARD WROTE AND INTRODUCED TO CONGRESS. THIS IS HIS STORY, THE FORGOTTEN DRAMA OF A MAN WHO BELIEVED HE COULD REMAKE THE UNITED STATES, AND WHO WAS PRAISED BY GEORGIA CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM UPSHAW (PAUSE), AS A "COMRADE OF THE IMMORTALS."*

## Scene 1: Bedroom, New Haven Connecticut 1898

Young Morris is alone, praying.

*(Music is heard: The once popular Northeast Texas Hymn, "I will Arise and Go to Jesus" sung by choir goes on through scene 1)*

*(Morris Sheppard appears praying, with good Ingmar-Bergman-type closeups of his face, he is straining. Captions are given: 1898 is the year, and the place: New Haven Connecticut)*

*(Captions appear for the prayer he is uttering. The sound track also carries his voice)*

*O GOD, YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME TO YALE. GRANT ME COURAGE. HELP ME TO BRING YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THIS EARTH!*

Scene 2: Parlor, New Haven, 1898

Young Women and Men are appearing to have a good time.

**Cassandra** (sarcastically): “How is it that our esteemed friend from Northeast Texas, has forsaken coffee, tea, tobacco, and now alcohol?”

**Morris Sheppard [MS]** (Speaks with a definite lilt trying to entertain the ladies in the room, particularly Wyoma, who stares at him)<sup>1</sup>: I remember what the alcohol demon can do!

**MS** (searches around room for eye contact): When I was young at a town near where I was born—it was Mount Pleasant, Texas. . . . I saw a drunken, card-playing farmer. He grabbed an old merchant by the beard, outside a saloon. The merchant screamed. He wrenched himself free. The town at that time (motions with hands) had these thick wooden planks for sidewalks. The merchant dropped down under the sidewalk, and the drunk began shooting at him. The man dodged the bullets under the sidewalk. Shots rang out. The farmer even reloaded in his drunken rage. Finally the man moving under the planks got to a place where there was a hole. The farmer found it. He killed the man like a rat! He had been a friend.

**Hannah:** how base!

**MS** (now triumphantly): John Barleycorn, the great enemy of our Republic . . . made this farmer into an alcoholized degenerate! (looks around for support)

**Wyoma:** (looks meaningfully at him).

**Luella:** Morris, are you preaching again?

**Cassandra:** Now we’ve heard it. Born-again southerner meets lawless Texas. And now we’ve got this . . .(points to MS) zealot to deal with.

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<sup>1</sup> The following scene could be actually acted out as a flashback occurring in Sheppard’s imagination.

**Thomas:** In a place where all they raise is cotton, Southern Baptists and Methodists have invented a new sin. Liquor!

(Laughter)

**MS:** Yes I am a Methodist.

**Thomas:** Quiet everyone, let's listen to the Methodist!

**Wyoma:** (Stares at MS!)

**MS:** What, What have our elders done to make our country great?

**Thomas** (raises his hand): Can I sing a reply?

**Luella:** go ahead

**Thomas** (singing the patriotic song that begins the same way): "My country tis of thee, (jumps up) sweet land of felony, of thee I sing (swerves his head to get eye-contact).

(Laughter)

**Thomas** (smiles, and goes on singing) Land where my father fried, (spreads his arms) young witches and applied, (turns to Cassandra) (Everyone but Wyoma laughs)

**Cassandra:** (imploring him to stop) Please . . . Thomas!

**Thomas** (still singing): whips to the Quaker's hide . . .

(laughter)

**MS** (loudly): But its not oppression! (reclaiming his audience) Our country is great because we sing . . .(Eyes flash back to MS as he is shouting, and he sings the rest of the song piously) "let freedom ring." (No longer singing) Freedom. We're the freedom nation.

(camera depicts Cassandra's and Thomas' faces searching for a retort. Music: the Battle Hymn of the Republic plays just for the next conversational segment of MS)

**MS** (pointing like the orator he already is): We made freedom in the War for Independence. We made freedom with the release of the slaves. But there is another freedom. The man who makes that will become the new Washington, the new Lincoln. I'm talking about freedom . . . (smiles) from the bottle.

**Luella:** I didn't know bottles could be so bossy. My Daddy has a cobalt-blue ink bottle. . .

**Anthony:** (irritated mildly) Luella, quit being such a flibbertygibbet! Now that your father and I have an understanding.

**Luella:** Weren't we just talking about slavery—(flirtatiously to Thomas) what about our being enslaved to men?

**MS** (ignoring Luella): Where do the socialists gather, where do the lawbreakers gather, where do the bosses and moles of our politics gather?

**Thomas** (mimicking a moralist): Around really feelthy things.

**Wyoma:** Around alcohol!

**MS:** Yes, (eying Wyoma with interest) addictive beverages!

**Cassandra:** You are not going to solve anything prohibiting alcohol! Just take the Anarchists. Why even block their way to the growler?

(Thomas and Luella give a modest laugh)

**Cassandra:** The foreigners in New York City would run you out of town (laugh).

**MS** (the camera focuses not only on MS but on the growing attention paid to him by Wyoma): I spied on a German beer saloon once in New York. On the wall (he points) there was a disgusting image of a German beer swizzler who said (impersonating a German-American), "Ihh'd rather haf a beeg stomach for trinking than a beeg muscle for vorking." (gesticulates with his hands evoking a floor).

**Wyoma:** (as if disgusted) ohhhh.

**Luella** (laughs)

**MS:** On the dance floor, amidst the din of some maiden screeching like a guinea hen, the fattest of the German girls, with low necked dresses, were getting plenty of partners. And they would go off, in their shaking style (MS imitates it).

(camera catches Thomas and Cassandra with a look of merriment alternating with amused confusion in their faces)

**MS:** While on the floor the merry, half-inebriated couples sweated, bumped and thumped. It was all very vulgar. (looking right into Cassandra's eyes)

**Hannah:** (crossly) Is Morris going to tell stories all evening, or are we going out for a little promenade and some ice cream?

**Cassandra** (standing up): Hannah we're coming. We just wanted to hear out our little southern friend.

### Scene 3. Eureka Springs, Arkansas 1902

#### Sheppard is with his father who is dying of Bright's Disease

**Judge John Sheppard [JJS]** (bearded with diffracted voice): Morris, I am glad to have this chance with you (he almost falls, MS catches him).

**MS:** Sir!

**JJS:** (gasping and focusing on his son's face) Run for my seat!

**MS:** I will . . . (holding his father up), But not yet. (holding him firmly) Hold on, Father!

**JJS:** And . . . . (feels a pain, tries to refocus) don't get all worked up about whuskey. People enjoy their drinks. (eying his son carefully)

**MS:** I want what you've wanted: to make our country better. And I know that for this, you have given your all . . .

**JJS:** (loses consciousness, fainting into MS's arms)

**MS:** Quick help me take him to a bed, he is worse.

(Amaziah comes and takes JJS)

**MS** (to his father on the bed) Dad . . . (looks worried)?

(camera examines MS's face which seems to come up with an idea, he takes out a pad and pencil)

**MS:** Daddy (pleadingly). . . do you have some words for me?

**JJS** "I'm much . . . better now"

(closeups of MS sitting and eying his father in bed, He puts his hand to his father. MS looks more desperate. He slumps over himself. The song, "I will arise and Go to Jesus" is played again for the rest of this scene as the camera dwells on MS's reactions).

**MS:** (feels again. eyes cascadingly wet) Daddy no! It isn't true! It isn't true.

#### Scene 4: Pittsburg, Texas 1902

#### Playing Croquet at the Sheppard Homestead

**Mother:** (Wife of JJS, Alice Sheppard): O Morris, Morris, I want you to lead as your father did. But politics? Mr. Bankhead (smiling gracefully at him), excuse me, but as the wife of a former Texas Congressman, I know what politics is: drunken promises . . . calumny, . . . illicit compromise . . . (hits the ball).

**MS:** Mother I will not be in politics. . . but in morals.

**Olga:** Morals?

**Mother:** What about tariff questions, gold and silver?

**MS:** My focus will be on liquor . . . not lucre. (hits the ball)

**John Bankhead:** Morris, as your father's advisor, let me tell you how to win. (points his finger, and stares to get everyone's attention) Write letters of appreciation. Depict the death of your father. Say you were with him. (Line up the ball with the mallet) And stay out of sight. Let us take care of the election . . . (hits his ball). Frankly, you look . . . too young to win.

**Amaziah Smith:** (introducing himself to Bankhead) As a man of the cloth who will support my friend Morris in this election, I believe the candidate has a great idea (looks to MS).

**MS:** (again trying to convert a social scene into a lecture) Mr. Bankhead, I want you to continue your valuable work. I will not appear among the people who concern you, but I can appear to others. . . I know ministers like Rev. Smith here (points approvingly to Amaziah) who want an outlet for their faithful; I know good women who can persuade good husbands. A new issue will inspire new voters.

**Bankhead:** Adding those who would prohibit carnal pleasures to your father's constituency might work. But I insist you follow my advice with regard to your father's people, By the way, whose turn is it?

**Olga:** (lost in thought, then realizing she has been forgetful) O, Its mine. (She pounds the ball quickly and inadequately)

**MS:** I accede to Mr. Bankhead's terms.

**Clifton:** (trying to introduce some laughter) As for myself, I have always preferred the saying of that famous cleric—that whoever spurns wine, wife and song—remains a fool his whole life long (laughs)!

**MS:** Brother, your problem is that you don't really care about people!

**Mothers:** Boys stop! Clifton, this is not the time . . .

**Olga:** (looking at Morris) Brother. . . and please excuse me gentlemen for being so bold, but this sounds like something a Pharisee might do. Did not the Apostle Paul write the letter of Galatians to preserve Christian liberty?

**Mother:** Olga, stop your knit picking. You know that drunkards go to hell.

**Olga:** But why did Paul urge Timothy to take wine for his stomach, why does Proverbs urge the use of strong drink for those in pain, why does Isaiah foresee something like champagne in heaven?

**Amaziah:** Olga, these words are only symbols. They imply the use of medicine. (viciously) The Bible in no way promotes a drink that would destroy the temple of the Holy Spirit.

**Olga:** What about communion?

**Amaziah.** In my church, (hits someone else's ball) and I know Morris agrees, I do not allow a narcotic poison to represent the blood of Christ. . . . (sends someone's ball) The more engaging Christianity of our present era must interpret divine writ more figuratively. This is necessary if we are to save the family. And (smiling) bring in a new millennium.

*Scene 5 by the Stoop of the Sheppard Household*

*Pittsburg, Texas 1902*

**MS** (comes to the stoop of the house. Mother and Olga run to the door)

**Mother:** Did my son get the news at the telegraph office?

**MS:** Mother, I am your new congressman!

(They come out the door to hug him. Clifton shakes his hand).



Scene 6: Washington D.C. The Capitol, 1902

Speaker of the House, Joe Cannon, Office

**Cassandra:** Well Mr. Cannon, I think your critics think that you lack the education to stop Mr. Roosevelt.

**Joe Cannon:** People think I have a meager education (looks away). They think I spell Bird, B-U-R-D. But if B-U-R-D doesn't spell bird (looking sinister), than what the Hell does it spell (gives a wry, wicked smile)?

(**Cassandra** gives an extended, corrupt laugh)

**Someone calls in from another room:** Someone to see you Mr. Cannon . . . the son of the late John Sheppard. The new congressman of the fourth Texas District, Morris Sheppard.

(**MS** comes in discreetly, with a serious expression. Cassandra stays in the room, a menacing accomplice to Cannon for the new congressman).

**Cannon:** "Nice to meet you boy. Have a seat."

**MS** (Shaking the hands of the two older men): "I am honored to meet you, Mr. Speaker."

**Cannon:** "I've been reading a little bit about your lection in the Chicago Times. You seem like some sort of sheep dog that got in with the geese.

(**Cassandra** giggles but not yet too malevolently)

**MS:** (seriously, and politely) "I don't know what you mean sir."

**Cannon:** (ignores the question) Neow . . . you are the wonnn . . . who's taken this opportunity of havin a house seat, to campaign against the saloon. Right?

**MS:** Yes sir.

**Cannon:** In fact your gonna make this country so dry, your gonna have to prime a man to make him spit (another wry wicked smile). Right?

**MS:** (Gives a more uncertain nod)

**Cannon:** Where did you get your apprenticeship?

**MS:** “University of Texas. And Yale College, where I received my law degree.”

**Cassandra:** (going along) “That’s mighty prestigious.”

**Cannon** (mischievously): Hmm, well that will make your crusade doubly effective. Were you with your Pa when he died?

**MS:** Yes I was sir. He fell over in my arms. It was Bright’s disease, he was in terrible pain. Spasms in his back, puffiness, blood-letting . . .

**Cannon:** “Young Morris, your father was a democrat who opposed me on the tariff, and the money question, but was a help to us in the Spanish War.

**Cassandra** (nodding, conceding): He WAS sensible.

**MS:** My father was a great man, a farmer who made it to the top.

**Cannon:** (very patronizingly) And you’re gonna go even further, ain’t you? Mr. Morris, (now laying some sarcasm on thicker, and screwing his head as if intently interested to hear the answer) where did you get your remarkable idear?

**MS:** I converted while at the University of Texas, but I thought it all out when I went to Yale sir. (now trying to gain the audience of the two he has before him) Someone has got to lock horns with terror and error. Ardent Spirits are creating a race of idiots. How can a society that condemns the criminal, and isolates the insane, tolerate the traffic that makes for these abominations?

**Cannon** (Officially as if seriously to Cassandra): Sounds like he should be on the Ways and Means Committee.

**Cassandra** (faking being serious): Or perhaps the Judiciary.

**MS** (looking at the faces of both men, somewhat confused and hopeful): This is exactly what I hoped for. (gathering strength) I knew you leaders of Congress would be friends of the mothers and children everywhere!

**Cannon:** Well son, the only problem with this is— ah. . . some of our best friends are brewers. . . . most members of Congress imbibe from time to time. In fact, we sometimes say. . . Lager moves the House, and Bourbon, the Senate. (couches his eyes) Your bill wouldn't do nothin to hurt our friends, or stop our little customs now would it?

**Cassandra** (glares at Sheppard).

**MS:** Sir, you have me all wrong. My aim is to eliminate alcohol forever. What is this drink, after all, but a (contorts his face as if he is beholding evil). . . liquid excretion of rotting matter?

**Cannon** (to Cassandra): Well in that case, I think I got an even better committee for you . . . (Deadpans to MS) “The Committee for Chickenshit!”

**Cassandra:** (a burst of laughter)

**MS** (looks on dumbfounded)

**Cannon:** (turning on MS almost violently, ordering) “Dang it, I don't want none of your tomfoolery around here. You are not goin to turn my Congress into Sunday School! You stick to this licker bill, and I'll personally direct my friends to come up with another Texas Democrat who might do your people some good. Now git out of my office. Show some gumption. Come back, when you can bring something to the table.”

*Scene 7. 1905: Before Constituents in Northeast Texas Field*

**Amaziah Smith:** (whispering advice) Now remember Morris, we have to come clean on the absence of results over alcohol, but show you still care about prohibition to please your church friends. Show too, you can speak with verve about local issues.

**MS** (before a crowd): Friends it is an honor to run for the newly created Texas First Congressional District. I want to tell you, that our plans to improve our portion of the country are taking shape.

We plan to tame the orgiastic Red River. This drunken stream (gesticulating) on our northern border needs dredging. We want a sober river, a straighter course, and the encouragement of commerce!

(Applause)

We want to eradicate from the state of Texas, wild, inebriated animals who imbibe the lifeblood of our state. I have introduced a bill to erase the boll weevil, wolves, rattlesnakes, and all water moccasins from the great state of Texas.

(Applause)

And finally, we want sturdier, inspiring buildings to attract settlers. I have initiated a commission to tag and order the replacement of tipsy commercial establishments, and drooping public edifices.

(Applause)

*Scene 8:*

*Sheppard's Office in Washington D.C. 1907*

**Amaziah Smith:** Morris, I think going hunting with President Roosevelt, is our greatest triumph yet! It will help us to outflank Speaker Cannon. (Eager) What are you going to say, when you catch the President's ear?

**MS:** Well, don't forget, Cannon is going as well. But I have a great inroad. I will bring up Roosevelt's own crusade against alcohol as police Commissioner of New York City in the mid-1890s!

*Scene 9: 1907*

*On the Hunt: A wilderness area in the vicinity of Washington D.C.*

(Cannon, MS and Teddy Roosevelt with rifles, walking through a forest)

(the President with his moustache and exaggerated show of teeth, motions the party to stop, as he takes aim)

(Roosevelt's gun) Bang!

**Cannon:** Congratulations Mr. President, that is the third Buck today.

**Teddy Roosevelt:** Bully, that is something isn't it.

**Cannon:** Bucks are always hungry after a storm, and they take a pretty straight path from bedding to feeding. You have picked a great day and a great place to come Mr. President.

**Teddy Roosevelt:** "Mr. Sheppard, have you ever hunted?"

**MS:** My daddeh (Daddy)<sup>2</sup> was always pretty busy, and we had friends enough to supply our venison. I've always been interested in another kind of prey.

**Teddy Roosevelt:** (looking through his gun) And what's that Mr. Sheppard?

**MS:** the saloon.

(Roosevelt resets his lips. Moves on with Sheppard in tow)

**Teddy Roosevelt:** Mr. Morris, I want you to know that I appreciate your support on the regulatory bills of my Square Deal.

**MS:** And like you too Mr. President, during your time as New York's Police Commissioner, I see something ultimate behind all our national problems, a base disease that if cured would become the remedy for all other problems.

**Cannon:** (intruding) My, my, how we bother the President with business!

**MS:** Mr. President, let's make the democracy more sober! Let's make it more wise. Let's solve the social question with a prohibition amendment against alcohol.

**Teddy Roosevelt:** Well I'm sure that Mr. Cannon could set you on a committee to work on that prospect.

**Cannon** (shakes his head, discouraging this line of reasoning)

**MS:** Mr. President, I need your help. For five years, Mr. Cannon has tried to shut me down, and render my efforts ineffective.

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<sup>2</sup> Sheppard emphasizes his Texas background, and also tries to project a close association, as he wants with TR.

**Cannon:** (with an impatient urgency) Now Mr. Sheppard you have been on a minority party in the Congress for five years. The President appreciates your votes, but we don't want to divert people from our business.

**Teddy Roosevelt:** Mr. Sheppard, you confound my thinking somewhat. As Police Commissioner, I tried to enforce Sabbath restrictions on alcohol because it was the law. I am not a T-totaler exactly. And if you want to talk about a futile struggle, try to take on the New York bosses, and Tamany Hall on the liquor question. You will find your agents, fighting gangs of bereaved barflies. I will set my face like flint and predict without reservation. If you ever pass a law against alcohol, you will be sending good men to their graves.

*Scene 10:*

*Washington D. C. Office of Morris Sheppard after Hunt 1907.*

**Amaziah Smith:** Bad news, Morris, a note here indicates that Republican and Democratic interests are funding your opponent this November. I think Speaker Cannon is trying to eliminate you, and now with a popular President turning you down, (shows despair) I think we have . . . . dead-ended!

**MS:** O but there is someone even more powerful than the President, and I am meeting with her this afternoon.

**Amaziah:** "her?" (as in, how could a woman be powerful).

**MS:** Yes, I am meeting this afternoon with Anna Gordon, the national representative of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the largest organization of ladies in the world.

(Interlude closes on the screen and opens—indicating the passage of time.

(**Anna Gordon** appears)

(screen closes indicating the passage of time)

**Amaziah:** How was your session with the leading women's advocacy group for prohibition?

**MS:** It went VERY well (and Sheppard appears to dream as he reflects on this encounter with a smile of conquest on his lips).

### *Scene 11*

#### *Morris Sheppard's Dream that Takes Place in*

*His Washington D.C. Office in 1907. There is a divan that she is seated on and a chair in front, that he is seated on.*

(This time it is not Anna Gordon, but Wyoma who comes, dressed in Gordon's same dress as a younger, much more beautiful or flirtatious version)

**MS:** (flirtatiously) "have I ever told you, that I think you have done more for the advancement of righteousness than anyone?"

**Wyoma:** O Morris, Morris, from the first primordial fall, man's bestial nature has been at war with his God. We have tried to do our part to blunt lascivious desire.

**MS:** Wyoma (trying to gain her confidence), You know, I believe that the apple Eve gave to Adam was fermented.

**Wyoma:** I do too.

**MS:** Since that momentous tragedy, we have had Roman orgies, drunken crusaders, and tipsy Popes. We had the monstrous debacle—the discoveries of Irish whiskey and German brandy, both in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But now we are in sight of the day when we can ban these cups of wrath forever!

**Wyoma:** You mean the poison that kills every tissue?

**MS:** (moving his face closer to Wyoma and softer) The toxin that kills every organism.

**Wyoma:** the drink that condemns babies yet unborn?

**MS:** (moving beside her on the divan) the drink that produces degeneracy of mind and body.

**Wyoma:** “The drink that paralyzes the healing white corpuscles of the blood?”

**MS:** The drink that produces a reeling and besotted mass of human wreckage.”

(She stares at him. The camera captures a sense of desire flickering in her eyes. The camera shows his face, abounding with romantic intention)

(he moves closer, and puts his arm around Wyoma)

**MS:** You know, men are frequently powerless to resist this vice!

**Wyoma** (about to cry, though with mirth left) And what can we women really do? We have tried everything (she moves closer as if she would allow a kiss).

**MS:** What you need is a law, and I want to be your man.

**Wyoma:** (flirtaciously touching her finger to his lips) Now how are you going to start a law in the House with Speaker Cannon controlling everything?

**MS:** “I am going to get elected to the Senate.”

**Wyoma:** “You’d take that risk, for little ole me?”

**MS:** “I would die for you and for your cause. Though I may one day marry a respectable lady, it is you (gets even closer) who I will always (still closer and softer) love the most.”

(They kiss passionately)

### Scene 12

#### Confrontation in the Halls of the Capitol, Washington, D.C. 1909

**Amaziah:** Look, that’s him. He’s all alone.

**MS** (shakes hands but Cannon offers only a limp hand): Well good day Mr. Cannon.



**Cannon:** What's so good about it?

**MS:** Well, have you read how Georgia and Tennessee have gone dry since we last talked?

**Cannon:** Those are only laws to keep the Neg-rahs down, and you know it.

**MS:** Mr. Cannon, Why are you abetting the degradation of the American people?

**Cannon:** Boy, you haven't gotten any bills past since I've been speaker, and (hateful) you never will.

**MS:** I'm moving on to the Senate, and I'm going to win.

**Cannon** (rapidly) : You have nothing in Texas but a tiny Northeast corner.

**MS:** I have the endorsements of the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU. And by the way Mr. Cannon, I have sent some of my friends in the WCTU the news that the 15<sup>th</sup> District in Illinois really doesn't need you anymore.

**Cannon:** O, so you have the petticoats in politics. You are madddd!

**MS:** Wait and see Mr. Cannon. . .

### Scene 13

#### 1909 Morris Sheppard's Courtship of Lucile Sanderson

Texarkana. First in the home of the Sheppards, then the home of the Sandersons

**Mother:** You have our blessing, Morris. Lucile Sanderson is a lovely woman, educated out east like you, a demure Christian, and full of social grace.

**Olga** (wanting to comb her brother's hair, dipping it in water): Morris, let me touch up your hair, a little, it seems . . .

**Morris:** I will not go with any part of me wet, sister. One thing I will not do is give Lucile the notion that I am like Clifton.

**Mother:** Clifton is a living example of how rum can demonize a young man. I pray (cries) for him.

**Morris:** I think we can find a way to sober up that swine. In any case, thank God he's not in Texarkana now to start any rumors that could bedevil my courtship.

(sequence rolls over to Sheppard knocking on door. Choir in background sings: "Believe me if all of those endearing young charms")

(Sheppard walks in)

**Lucille** (towering above MS on second floor balustrade. Camera gets a closeup of her face. She is both eager, and socially sure of herself).

**MS:** Lucile!

**Lucile:** Morris.

(She parades down the stairs. They sit on the divan.)

**MS:** So is Arthur out of your life now?

**Lucile:** That is a strange question to ask. You know that a Man whose lips touch alcohol, will never touch mine.

**MS:** You give me the purest delight Lucile. And my heart palpitates toward you with the most virtuous affection. Where is your family?

**Lucile:** they thought they could leave us alone.

**MS:** for a tête-a-tête? (Pronounced: TATE eh TATE—means "fact to face.")

**Lucile:** And what is so bad about that?

**MS:** mmm. (pauses to get it right) I'd like to avoid the temptation toward inner corruption as much as possible (smiles, then stiffens). I want to keep my will attuned like an alarm clock.

**Lucile:** Well it should really be attuned now. You've been away from me again, for four months. Or has another woman entered your life?

**MS:** I swear Lucile that my mind did not direct a single erotic reverie toward another woman the whole time I was in Washington. I do love all young women and mothers in the abstract. I have assiduously courted the WCTU, but this is necessary for the final triumph of our cause.

**Lucile:** Our cause? What about us in particular?

**MS:** Lucile, I took the liberty of getting approval from your parents through the mail. I have an estate now of \$400,000 dollars, with considerable property in Texarkana and Austin. I consider you the most wonderful woman on earth (pauses).

Lucile, be my ornament!

**Lucile:** Morris Sheppard, you are the most fixated young man I have ever met. (grabs his hands) You desire the social betterment of all. I do believe you need a lady in your life and that to help you, is to help the greatest of all causes. I agree to be that woman.

(they both stand for a tender handclasp. Cameras pan their emotions which are a touch more virtuous than romantic)

#### Scene 14

#### Culmination of WCTU Parade in Washington D.C.

(Women Wearing White with a banner for the WCTU)

(Leading officials of the prohibition movement stand in a circle singing Onward Christian Soldiers, or---choir sings the same in the background, while camera pans each participant, captions appearing on the screen to designate each one's title)

**Anna Gordon** (addressing the party): As President of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, I am pleased to report that our prohibition march today was the largest political parade in our capital in the history of the United States!

(Sustained Applause)

And we have come today to present our petition of 300,000 names, to the next president of the United States, Senator Morris Sheppard, from Texas!

(Applause)

(she hands him a huge stack of papers)

**Anna Gordon:** “And now, I have the distinct . . . (searches for a word) . . . honor to introduce, Mr. Wayne Wheeler of the Anti-Saloon League.

**Wayne Wheeler:** (unexcitedly) Representing the Anti-Saloon League, I would like to laud the ladies for their work in making this great parade today. We, of course, have had our differences with the WCTU, but we stand together in the cause of national prohibition. And today too, we wish to honor our foremost champion in government, to whom we entrust the success of a new amendment to the Constitution, the newly elected Senator of Texas—Morris Sheppard!

(Sustained Applause)

**MS:** Thank you everyone. Thank you.

We know what the problem is. In the great cities, alcoholized slaves are numerous enough to hold the balance of power in voting. Today, thousands of white women are held in a subjection that damns their bodies and their souls in order that the liquor trade may thrive. This year, the loss to the nation’s wealth because of alcohol-related accidents and crimes is no less than 14 billion dollars.

But today we have a petition that I will present to Congress to end all that. With the powerful moral sway of the largest woman’s organization in the world, the WCTU, and with the political acumen of the Anti-Saloon League,

we shall see three-quarters of the states adopt the prohibition of alcohol. We will in this great victory see our nation regenerate itself. We shall see man rising in final triumph over the serpent--that was subtler than all the beasts of the field--again to be crowned with the confidence and approbation of Almighty God!

(vigorous applause)

Scene 15: Washington D.C.

The Coalition has Dinner together

**Wyoma:** Can I give you some coffee, Mr Wheeler?

**Wayne Wheeler** (a busy smile): Thanks.

**Wyoma:** Mr. Volstead?

**Andrew Volstead** (Norwegian accent from Minnesota)” Fillll-er up”  
(motioning to keep going)

**Anna Gordon:** “O My, Mr. Volstead, you do love coffee.

**Andrew Volstead** (smiling): I would haf even more if I had enjoyed some of my favorite chokeberry vine tonight.

**Anna Gordon:** Mr. Andrew Volstead, what did you say? What an abomination!

**Wayne Wheeler:** Now you and your WCTU gossiping machine . . . Just quiet down. What is important is that Mr. Volstead is willing to help us.

Anna Gordon and Morris Sheppard (give a look of being particularly stunned)

**Wyoma:** (still with the coffee) Morris?

**MS:** No thank you. I quit coffee back in 96.

**Wheeler:** I am surprised Senator, that you have not even had mineral water tonight.

**Morris:** It has too much fizz. I prefer plain (holds up his glass), cool water. (looks at it) The basis of life, with its transparent . . . pure . . . clean . . . texture.

**Anna Gordon:** Now gentleman, what do we have to look forward to in the struggle ahead?

**Wheeler:** Our approach is practical. We are going to start opening fire on the enemy. We will move from congressman to congressman, and Senator to Senator, warning them of vigorous advertisement campaigns against them in their states.

**Anna Gordon:** What about our opposition?

**Andrew Volstead:** In the House, where we were worried, the opposition is not as powerful as before. Speaker Joe Cannon has been overturned, and even defeated in his own district. I know that makes Mr. Sheppard happy! He was a terrible adversary of Mr. Sheppard.

(Everyone applauds Sheppard)

**MS:** But there are still plenty of important enemies. Let us not forget, as Shakespeare once said, "Tis best to weigh the enemy more mighty than he seems."

**Anna Gordon:** (flirtatiously) That is so true, Mr. Sheppard. Indeed who will finance this major drive with the kind of dollars we will need?

**Wheeler:** You would be surprised who is funding the Anti-Saloon League. Asa Candler of the Coca Cola Company is a great contributor. Cadillac, Packard and B.F. Goodrich represent the interests of the motoring industry to have sober drivers. Theatre owners want to empty the saloons and bring them into their establishments.

**Anna Gordon:** (angry, and accusing) To witness lewd displays of women, and . . . breezy, snappy boys? This isn't the way we wanted the reform to work.

**Wheeler:** What of it, if it serves our purpose? (gives her a face)

**Anna Gordon:** (perturbed) And what are we going to do in Congress to make this a law?

**MS:** We want to bring the factions together Anna. First we need a simple amendment to the Constitution, outlawing the sale and manufacturing of alcohol. I will write this. Wayne here will hammer out the enabling act that we will present to Congress once the amendment is passed, and this will put some teeth into the amendment, and define our terms. Mr. Andrew Volstead here, our Norwegian-born Congressman from Minnesota will sponsor the bill. This will be important to distract foreign opposition.

**Volstead:** Remember Mr. Sheppard, it must be air-tight, we don't want a lot of clauses that someone could find unconstitutional.

**Wheeler:** Andrew, clauses will be necessary in the amendment so we can get the act we want, passed.

**Volstead:** We'll don't make them too thick. We will not outlaw, for instance, the actual drinking of alcohol, only the sale and manufacture. Please look out for our good Mid-westeners like myself, who enjoy a little homemade wine.

**Anna Gordon** (staring at Volstead with consternation): This is disgusting!

(people break into their own discussions, as if the general discussion has ended with the incivility of the WCTU leader)

**MS:** (whispers to Anna Gordon almost flirtatiously, and so Volstead can't hear): Anna, we can go after the sale and manufacture first. Subsequent legislation will go after the consumption, I will see to that.

### Scene 16

The screen could be split into 4 parts or closeups of each shown sequentially: Sheppard, Wheeler, Gordon, and a new figure with his umbrella, William Upshaw, give speeches, greeting people and appearing to talk up prohibition.

*A Narrator or simply the words then need to appear.*

*DUE TO THE EFFORTS OF LEADERS LIKE TEXAS SENATOR, MORRIS SHEPPARD, THE ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE, AND THE WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION, THE STATES RATIFIED THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION ON 16 JANUARY 1919. THE VOLSTEAD ACT FOLLOWED ON 28 OCTOBER 1919.*

*Scene 17: Washington D.C. Open Air Revival. 1919.*

Caption states the following:

BILLY SUNDAY, AMERICA'S PREMIERE EVANGELICAL LEADER,  
CELEBRATING THE ADVENT OF PROHIBITION, 1919

Billy Sunday (throwing arms and feet into his oration): "The reign of tears is over. The slums will soon be only a memory. We will turn our prisons into factories and our jails into storehouses, and corn cribs. Men will walk upright now, women will smile, and the children will laugh. Hell will be forever rent!

*Scene 18: Sunday School of Fort Worth Baptist Church*

*1919: World's Largest Sunday School. There is a table with a Silver Set on it*

**Rev. Frank Norris:** Its no surprise today, that we have to hold this presentation in our outside amphitheater, for not only is this the largest Sunday School in the world, but we have today our largest attendance ever, of over 6,000 I am told, to honor a very special fellow Texan from Texarkana. As Pastor of First Baptist, Fort Worth, I would now like to turn over the podium to the U. S. Congressman from Georgia's 5<sup>th</sup> District: the honorable William David Upshaw!



**William Upshaw** (holds umbrella and opens it over him): I love being dry!

(laughter and applause)

**William Upshaw:** Do you know, that in the past two years, when this prohibition battle has been waged, that 100s of Texans have named their baby after the man whose life we are celebrating today?

(camera studies the face of Morris Sheppard who looks very solemn, but whose eyes sparkle)

**Upshaw:** Do you know that the Texas State Senate has slated this same man to become the next President of the United States?

(Camera again catches MS with Cheering and Applause going on)

**Upshaw:** Here is our hero of national prohibition, our victor, our champion, Senator Morris Sheppard!

(Outburst of cheering)

**Upshaw:** Senator Sheppard, you are a comrade to the immortals! In the slow but conquering march of an upward-reaching humanity, it has been yours, in the good providence of God, to take that inspiring position as leader in the front lines of the trenches. This places you, Morris Sheppard, in that shiny galaxy of world builders!

(Cheers)

**Upshaw:** “You sir, have embraced the truth in unselfish love. You have, without apology, put the supreme emphasis upon things that are supreme. . . You are from herein crowned, Senator Sheppard, not only by the millions of friends who love you, but by the children of your former opponents who will one day rise up to call you blessed!”

(Pandemonium)

**Olga** (to Clifford in the audience) Is this Bible class going to worship God, or are they going to worship our brother?

(camera takes in Morris Sheppard accepting a silver set from Norris and Upshaw with congratulations being given, and cheers continue to ring out)

Scene 19

In Bed with Wife Lucile in Texarkana 1919

(MS on one side of the bed, Lucile, on the other)

(MS rolls toward Lucile)

**MS:** Say, are you still awake?

**Lucile:** Yes I am. (coldly) It was nice of you to make it home tonight.

(cough in the background)

**MS:** Ah Northeast Texas . . . it may lack a single sight that could inspire a single tourist, but it will always be home to me.

**Lucile:** I thought you might stick around with that impostor, Norris, in Fort Worth and collaborate on one of his upcoming sermons.

**MS:** Are our little girls OK?

**Lucile:** I'm surprised you care.

**MS:** Well I'm surprised you didn't go to Fort Worth with the rest of my family to see one of the most remarkable events in my life.

**Lucile:** Both Janice and Susan have a cold. I am not going to risk them getting something worse.

**MS** (holding the hand of Lucile): Say, Darling, I love what you have done for me.

**Lucile:** Not tonight, under any circumstances.

**MS:** Why are you still awake?

**Lucile:** Morris, have you ever stopped to realize that your amendment has put 200,000 saloon owners in this nation out of work? What about the threats you have been receiving; and if you care, what about the threats, we have been receiving?

**MS:** You?

**Lucile:** Yes, us.

**MS (quickly):** Does Amaziah know about this?

**Lucile:** O Yes, he said something about notifying the police. But I don't see anyone.

**MS** Lucile, this is Northeast Texas, we have the best of neighbors! Put your fears to rest.

(BOOM! A Terrific blast is heard. Camcorder shakes as if house is shaking)

Morris and Lucile (both awake with expletives such as O My God (!)) Morris runs out of the room)

**Lucile** (melting, yelling as if in pain): How are the children?

**MS** (shrieking in fright and only after a pause) All three are fine!

(Morris returns to the room)

**MS:** But the Bomb has destroyed the inside of our parlor!

### Scene 20

### Newspaperboy 1919

**Newspaper Boy:** Extra, Extra, read all about it. The father of prohibition attacked. Bomb rips apart front end of Morris Sheppard's House in Texarkana!

Scene 21

Washington DC 1920: Office of Morris Sheppard

**MS** (warily reading a newspaper): OK Amaziah, who is next?

**Amaziah** (from out of the office): A Theodore Kirchhoff who is visiting from Clarksville, is here to see you.

**MS:** Very well send him in.

(Morris strides to greet the visitor, and shakes hands with him: Kirckhoff is sheepish)

**MS:** (Very personably) So good to meet you Mr. Kirchhoff! Sit down.

(they sit)

**Kirchhoff:** I wish I could say, I was happy to see you.

**MS:** What's the problem?

**Kirchhoff:** Since prohibition, my saloon and brewery have been closed, and I have not found another line of work. The Germans in Clarksville detest your law, and so the war has taken the heart out of us, some of us are still living in pain besides.

**MS:** Sir, I would prefer you not use the word "German" to describe your fellow citizens. I recognize no such category. Germans, as you might recall were the enemies of us Americans in the recent war.

**Kirchhoff:** As an American citizen, if I am indeed that, because I do not know yet whether I have freedom of speech, I beseech you. Repeal your law.

**MS:** My law? Prohibition is in the American Constitution.

**Kirchhoff:** If you do not take action, my brother, the former editor of the Clarksville Zeitung (pronounced: TSIGHT tung), and others in our Harugari fraternity believe we can turn Clarksville against you.

**MS** (almost laughing): Clarksville was never my strong suit. As a Congressman, my support came from Texarkana, Paris, Sulphur Springs, Mount Pleasant and I had friends in Pittsburg. But Mr. Kirchhoff, I am now a Senator. Clarksville is not even something I worry about.

**Kirchhoff:** You make me so upset. You Southern Evangelicals, with your temperance laws . . . you reveal zat you are an immoral people, so given over to poozing that you can only save yourself by forcible laws (starts to leave).

**MS:** Now wait!

(Kirchhoff storming out)

**Kirchhoff** (one last line at the door, and almost crying): Novhere else in the globe are zer more drunks than here in the land of 100,000 temperance apostles!

(Amaziah comes in):

**Amaziah Smith:** What did he want?

**MS** (to Amaziah): I don't know (shaking his head). That guy was a nut!

## Scene 22

### 1920 Newspaper Boy

**Newspaper Boy:** Extra, Extra, read all about it. One-hundred-and-thirty-gallon still found on the estate of Morris Sheppard! So-called Father of Prohibition manufacturing moonshine on his own farm! Agents find seven barrels of mash, and 400 gallons of whiskey. Read all about it!

Scene 23

Extended Family Home in Texarkana 1920. Around Dinner Table

**Olga** (to Clifton): Please brother, get that drink out of here. Morris' train should have arrived 15 minutes ago. He could be here any second.

(Olga reaches to take it, but Clifton keeps her hands off the drink)

(Just then, Sheppard comes in the door with a scowl on his face. Amaziah follows. Mother is now very old and sits at the table with Olga and Clifford)

**MS:** Sister, Brother.<sup>3</sup> Explain to me what has been happening on my land!

**Amaziah Smith** (snarling): Do you not realize the gravity of this disturbance?

**Mother** (appears blind, and will keep eyes closed throughout this scene, and coos as if suffering too from dementia): Morris?

(Everyone ignores mother)

Olga (standing up, and defending Clifford who appears to have some wine in front of him, and remains seated looking into his drink):

**Olga:** Morris, don't be upset. The newsman from the *Mount Pleasant Hustler*, got things way out of proportion, and he was craven enough to send his own article about the still to the *New York Times*!

**Mother** (slumps) ohhhh, Morris.

**MS** (shouting): I know that. I read about it in Washington.

**MS** (eyes blazing) How did this still get on our land?

**Olga:** We have fired the overseer who did this. It was on our Naples family holdings in Morris County. He was obviously trying to make some political trouble for you.

**Amaziah:** Where is the still now?

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<sup>3</sup> We were divided on this. MS could also say: "Olga, Clifton . . . ."

**Olga:** It was seized by agents and . . . is now on display (bites her lip) at the First (almost crying) National Bank of Mount Pleasant.

**MS:** Display?

**Olga:** (looking away) Yes, its . . . attracting (eyes upward as if praying). . . some attention.

**MS** (gruffly): Who hired this Overseer:

**Clifton** (looking up sheepishly, and drunk) "I deed"

**MS** (snarling): You?

(pauses to gape at his brother)

**MS:** Wait a minute, what is this drink you have here (smells it)? Yuck!

(MS passes it to Amaziah)

**Amaziah** (to MS): Its wine, (to Clifton) where did you get this?

**Clifton:** Thar's nothing in the (stumbles over following word) Consteetution, that ses we kant have a little wino.

**MS** (trying to act rational): If I were a Hercules of the Air, I would throw you farther than Haley's Comet!

**Mother** (muffled): Boys, Boys . . . .

**Clifton:** Why don't you jes try tossin me cross the room big boy.

**Mother** (still seated, pleadingly in a cooh) Boys . . . .

**MS:** You are on the brink of causing the most noble undertaking in the world to be undermined.

**Clifton:** (fired) And you are one the bringgk, of making me mad.

(Clifton stands up, swings and hits MS in the face)

**MS:** Why you!

(the two entangle in a fight. Mother and Olga screech. Amaziah dives for Clifton, and Clifton punches him across the face, knocking him out in a corner of the room. MS comes back and wrestles Clifton to the ground. They roll around uttering threats.

**Mother:** Boys!

Scene 24

1923: Rise of Sol Bloom

Washington DC. Office of Joe Cannon

**Sol Bloom:** Hi Old Joe, thought I'd pay my respects!

(Shakes hands with Joe Cannon who is now pretty old)

**Cannon** (more mellow) So what brings "Sol Bloom the Music Man," the new Congressman from Manhattan, into the office of an old hayseed like me?

**Bloom:** Well I feel very honored to meet the Congressman who has served his country so faithfully since 1903.

**Cannon:** Well don't forget, I got voted out 1911 to 1915. And I don't know if you know or not but this is goin to be my last year in Washington.

**Bloom:** Well, OK, if you are really wondering why the Congressman from New York City is visiting Barnyard Joe, its maybe because we do have some things in common.

**Cannon:** Yer not a Raypublican are you?

**Bloom:** No, but I am a wet, and I share your misgivings with a certain Senator who needs to eat a little humble pie, . . . Sheppard from Texas.

**Cannon:** You know you are smart. (Pauses) Wheeler, Volstead, Upshaw, the WCTU—they don't count for nothin anymore. They were fads. Sheppard, the man from the Texas cotton patch, is the true father of prohibition, and if you can darken his image, we'll be a whole lot closer to bringin back our lager.



**Bloom:** He's vulnerable. (chuckling) That still on his farm (wondering). It kind of blew over . . . I see him as the biggest hypocrite of the age! My constituents have had enough of his "baloney!" (A trendy word in 1920s)

**Cannon:** Oh, he's not a hypocrite. He believes the stuff. Sheppard continues to give speeches on the wonders of prohibition. I don't think for a second that the still on his farm was something he had anything to do with. The man's a regular egghead; he dont know a dang thing about farmin!

Scene 25

1924

Texarkana Home of Morris Sheppard Tea-Time

**Olga:** I must admit Lucile. I am surprised you are serving me tea. I wouldn't think that my brother, Morris, would have allowed it.

**Lucile** (looks thoughtful)

**Olga:** Who knows what tea could do, if you really examine it, I mean, I could start acting foolish.

**Lucile:** The man is never around. If I go to Washington, he is constantly in his library or at the office.

**Lucile** (thoughtfully): In trying to save the alcoholic, he has become the workaholic.

**Olga:** Did you mention my concern to him, that it would be nice to forgive Clifton.

**Lucile:** You don't understand Olga. He is constantly busy. He wants to control everything. If I talk to him about his daughters, and he gives me this vague look like I am talking about humanity.

Scene 26 Morris Sheppard Before the Senate, January 1929.

on the Tenth Year Anniversary of Prohibition.

**MS:** This is now the tenth annual speech I have given in praise of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Though there are many social buttercups, and gutter pups who decry the loss of heathen activities, I say today that millions of paychecks now are going every Saturday night to mother and children, rather than the saloon.

(a half-hearted applause)

**MS:** It is estimated by a leading economist, Roger Babson, that productivity in the United States has risen 30 percent because of prohibition. We are today at the height of prohibition glory. One fifth of the world's assets are now held by American pockets, and American bank vaults, and enclosed by American fences.

(modified applause)

**MS:** A final word about those who have waged war against our Constitution. We have eliminated the bartender. The bootlegger will be next. Our opponents warn us that the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment will be repealed. Let me tell them, that there is as much chance of repealing the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment as there is of a hummingbird flying to Mars with the Washington Monument at its tail!

Scene 27

October 30, 1929

Newspaper Boy

**Newspaper Boy:** Extra, Extra, Read all about it. Stock Market crashes second time. Investors lose billions!

Scene 28

1933 Newspaper Boy

**Newspaper Boy:** Extra, Extra, read all about it. Economists say no economic recovery in sight. Nation hits rock bottom for three consecutive years.

Scene 29

Sol Bloom on Telephone 1933

**Sol Bloom** (with telephone to his ear): Say Carl this is Sol (pron. Saul).

(silence on the other end)

**Sol Bloom:** That's right, your congressman. (silence) Look, I wondered if you could spin your story a bit about Congress' decision to back an amendment that would destroy prohibition.

(supposed chatter on the other end)

**Sol Bloom:** Yes I realize this is the *New York Times*.

(chatter)

**Sol Bloom:** but everyone needs a good joke once in a while, and if we are going to win, we have got to go on the attack.

(chatter)

**Sol Bloom:** Look, I'm not going to tell you anything that isn't true. Remember what a help I've been since I came to Washington. Now Carl, here's my joke. For your byline—or one of them, on our proposed amendment, I want you to say this: "Hummingbird, and Washington Monument Sighted—Making their way to Mars!" (laughs) Isn't that funny?

Scene 30

Morris Sheppard's Eight and One-Half- Hour Filibuster on the

Floor of the Senate, Washington D.C.

14 February 1933

(Camera first shows him gesticulating to the music of onward Christian Soldiers. The scene narrows and expands several times, and each time he is looking weaker. Finally, we hear what he is saying:

**MS:** “Have you ever heard (stagger) of anyone eating too much pie, and then . . . murdering his family? Or does anyone overdose on potatoes, and drive his automobile headlong into children playing hopscotch on the street? My friends, (showing weariness) alcohol is a useless, pernicious, poisonous intoxicant . . . that . . . erodes body and soul . . . (blinks his eyes) it wearies the brain first, and then (sounding almost drunk himself) begins its work . . . of . . . paralysis . . . . .

**Sol Bloom** (to Cassandra, now a Senator): This man is crazy. He is going delirious, and hopefully he will just drop dead any minute. But the really good news is—the Majority leader, Joseph Robinson has insured me no one will second the filibuster. After Sheppard croaks, Congress will surely send the amendment out to the states.

(Music: Fugue on the Kyrie, by Francis Couperin. MS is shown flagging down. Finally pausing, eyes downcast, he almost falls down, but dives to a nearby series of chairs, exhausted.)

### Scene 31

#### Texarkana, July of 1933: Sheppard Family Home, Around Dinner Table

(Morris Sheppard and Amariah Smith are wearing riding hats. Senator, Tom Connally, is present to see them depart. They are having breakfast).

**MS** (to Connally): It is indeed a pleasure that you, my fellow Senator from Texas, has come to wish me adieu on my departure.

**Lucile** (to Connally): I have tried to explain to Morris, this is madness. He is going to ride in that ford truck outside 5,000 miles and cover 50 Texas towns

to keep Texas from voting down prohibition. Even if he succeeds, the cause will probably lose nationally.

**Tom Connally:** Now Lucile, let's not lose heart. The father of prohibition is showing his sincerity!

**Janet:** Yes but we never see you, Daddy. Here's our one chance for a regular summer vacation, and you are squandering it on a motor ride that will take the life out of you.

**MS** (looking at Lucile and Janet): Whoa, Darlins. You know that the repeal of prohibition will poison the soul of America.

**Amaziah** (more stridently): "Beverage Alcohol is a menace to human rights"

(Janet looks confused, Lucile indignant, Connally smiles, straddling the fence)

(A pause as the camera focuses on their faces)

**Amaziah:** And why don't you go with us Senator?

**Tom Connally:** I'm coverin for Morris on the other end of things—gettin relief for our Texas cotton farmers. The new Roosevelt team owes us a lot, for the southern support we've delivered.

**MS:** It hurts me personally, inside, when I think that prohibition could be overturned.

**Tom Connally:** Did you hear about what that Jewish Congressman, was saying about you?

**MS:** Who?

**Tom Connally:** Why Sol Bloom, the Music Man, who got into pollytics in the richest district of the country, smab dab in Manhattan. He said you were the "Little Shepperd" who had tried to bring in "thy Kingdom Come." He says "you are losing all your sheep."

**Janet:** Even Georgia and Tennessee, it seems, are goin to back the new amendment.

**MS:** Tawm (ignoring Janet, and addressing his fellow Senator in his own preferred colloquialism as in “Tom”), I know him. Don’t tell me his career wasn’t backed by bootleggers.

**MS** (standing to his wife) “Well darlings, duty calls.

(Sheppard pecks at his wife and daughter)

**MS:** And I trust, Tawm, that you will stay here, until your train to Waco, and enjoy some hospitality from Lucile, and Janet.

**Tom Connally:** O I was hopin in a leetle bit, she might have some of her marvelous pecan pie around.

**MS and Amaziah:** Bye (waving), we’ll see you in a month. (They depart).

**Janet** (brusquely): Mom, we’re having a card party this afternoon at Marie’s. I have to get ready (leaves without permission).

**Connally** (looking deeply into Lucile’s eyes) Your husband sure is a go-getter.

**Lucile:** (looking deeply into Connally’s eyes). Tawm, I enjoy being with a man who has power, and who wants to do good things (twinkles her eyes). But Morris . . . (she seems to be deciding on what to say) is a man who . . . (she starts to cry, and shows tears) never stops.

**Tom Connally:** (takes her hand, and gives a dewy stare into her eyes)

### Scene 32

#### Washington DC Party 1935

(Cassandra and Hannah, Thomas and Luella dance the Charleston. There is a table with sandwiches and drinks like wine glasses. Jazz music is playing)

**Amaziah Smith** (pointing to the dancers to MS): Since the repeal of prohibition, just look what has happened to public functions in the capital. Add some rum to the punch, and its like African tribesmen going on a spree.

(as Amaziah and MS enter, they are met by Sol Bloom)

**Sol Bloom:** Ah, the esteemed Texas Senator. I thought I should give you a special present to help celebrate your own state's repeal of prohibition, and support for our 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment (hands MS a cocktail)!

**MS** (takes the drink, sniffs it as if it is malodorous). Well thank you Mr. Bloom. And I have a present for you too, to celebrate the clout New York City has shown in obtaining New Deal programs for itself.

**MS** (sets the drink down, searches for the right sandwich, lifts it and gives it to Bloom) I thought you would enjoy a HAM sandwich.

**Amaziah** (laughs at his boss's quick wittedness). Ha ha!

**Sol Bloom:** Touché! I guess a good Southern Methodist is not going to touch my cocktail, any more than a good Jewish boy like myself will touch a ham sandwich. But I am dyin to know—(sarcastically) what do you think about the return of booze (smiling)?

**Cassandra** (who has stopped his dance as with the others to notice what will become of the cocktail, moves in, swaggeringly) Yeah what does it feel like to have given your life to a losing cause?

**MS:** Liberty must be defined in a humane manner. And our liberty-loving country will never be truly free until prohibition returns.

**Cassandra:** Why you hypocrite! Do you know that in 1927 alone, 760 people died in New York City because of the consumption of repurposed industrial alcohol?<sup>4</sup> Organized crime took its seat on the board of corporate America and gangsters killed thousands—were you pleased with this?

**MS** (nonchalantly): No

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<sup>4</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 221.

**Sol Bloom:** Some bastards in the government purposely poisoned industrial alcohol to stop the denaturing, but it was used anyways; quite a few people in Harlem died. That makes fellows who supported this practice, something like murderers! (very stridently) Do you know what I'm talking about?

**MS:** What your alcohol needs is another torpedo from the good ship Constitution.

**Sol Bloom:** And it will never happen again, Senator!

**MS:** You will never understand. Prohibition is worthy to die for . . . Its object is to sweep from the path of every life an influence that would debauch and degrade it! Its kind of like this socalled function. Amaziah, let's leave.

(Amaziah, and MS depart. Sol and Cassandra look on, defiant)

**Sol Bloom** (softly to Cassandra): Certainty is only ice. Someday it will thaw. (somewhat louder for others to hear) He'll live to regret his work someday.

**Sol Bloom** (noticing that all eyes are still on him turns around) Say everyone, I would like to promote a toast. To the Death of Prohibition!

**People at the Party** (enthusiastically): Here, here!

### Scene 33

#### MS before Mirror, and bed

(**MS** Looks at himself in the mirror. . . [the audio of Bloom's toast to the death of prohibition is replayed ] He is exhausted, anxious, exasperated. He sprawls out on a bed, and dreams . . .)

### Scene 34

#### 1940. Confronting

#### Wyoma in a Dream



**MS:** Wyoma, it is you! Oh to be with you again!

**Wyoma:** Ah my dear Morris (they hold hands two ways in front, which almost but not quite becomes a hug)

**MS:** Wyoma, you know I have never lost faith in you or in our relationship.

**Wyoma:** And you are still, I see, (breaking from the hand-holding and admiring his body up and down) that strong man, who attracted me when I first laid eyes (making eye contact) on you twenty-seven years ago

**MS:** (semi-bragging) I've been in Washington DC, even longer than that, being elected by my fellow Texans now for thirty-seven straight years, a record even in Texas.

**Wyoma** (flirtaciously) You are such a dynamic man.

(Pause, and they come closer—indicating something explosive could happen)

**Wyoma** (smiling broadly with a glint in her eye, retaking his hands) Could you do me a favor?

**MS:** Anything, my love! You know I would die for you.

**Wyoma:** (pause) Break your ties with the Democrats. Run as the presidential candidate for the Prohibition Party this November!

**MS:** (As a Goliath stunned by a stone—becomes glassy eyed and sits down)

**MS:** Wyoma, I . . . can't . . . do that.

**Wyoma:** Why not?

**MS:** the prohibition party has no power, Wyoma, the Democrats do. I am better where I am.

**Wyoma:** (sarcastically) Great, so you can campaign for the unreformed New York City Wet, Al Smith in 1928, and then for the New Deal, the expansion of the government, and even, bucking against all your colleagues from Texas, Roosevelt's court packing scheme! (now crying) You can go on supporting a president who has four alcoholics as sons.

**MS:** The expansion of the government is not a bad thing. (walks to the side) I foresee the day when a stronger government will be able to enforce prohibition, make it a federal crime to speed in an automobile . . .outlaw tobacco, coffee, and products larded with fat like butter.

**Wyoma:** (now separating herself more and becoming more caustic) You fool. (backing away more) You lost a historic opportunity. You came at that moment when government could have changed the people for the better.

**Wyoma** (begins to weep): But now you are letting the unreformed people make one demand after another on the government.

**MS** (angrily, shouting): I am not!

**Wyoma:** The government is going to turn into a vending machine, and go bankrupt. What do you think of that, Mr. Big Spending Democrat?

**MS** (screaming into a shout that takes him back to his bed where he wakes up with a start. He is scared and perspiring)

Scene 35

Morris Sheppard before a Mirror

Washington DC. 1941

**MS** (camera studies MS's face. He looks dubious, and even covers his face as the Toccata in D Minor by J.S. Bach goes on in the background) (He is haggard, and downcast)

Scene 36

Washington DC Deli

1941

(Music from Samuel Barber's Sonata for Strings will play throughout the rest of the film, at first very silently, building to a climax when he dies, and then

quieting) Olga and Clifton are sitting down. MS, who is starting to shake joins them)

**Olga:** Brother its so good of you to take off for a little lunch with your siblings, even while working as Chair to the Committee on Military Affairs.

**MS** (sitting down): Olga, Clifton

**Olga:** Have a nice cool glass of water. We ordered it for you!

**MS:** (Goes to lift the water. But his hand trembles so violently, that he spills half of the glass.

(Olga and Clifton look on in astonishment)

**MS:** Its great to have you in the capital. How do you like the sights?

**Olga:** I remember when father took me here 40 years ago. Morris your city has really become . . . . a gleaming white showcase of America!

**MS:** O it wasn't me.

**Clifton:** But someone has really learned to sandblast the old marble.

**MS** (wearily): Yes Clifton . . . . and I think . . . I've had a little renovation myself.

**Olga** (sticking her neck out): You look very tired.

**MS:** (reaching his hand out to shake, and it is accepted by Clifton) I'm sorry what I said about you twenty-years ago. (keeping his hands locked with his brother) I'm sorry that I haven't the time to write or to see you during that time. I may have lived in Washington for 40 years, but I'm still enough, I guess, of a Bible-toting Texan to ask for your forgiveness.

**Clifton** (almost as if tears are about to come and with Olga beaming): O I forgive you Morris. Forgive me too!

**MS:** (hugging his brother in tears) O Clifton, I do, I do.

### Scene 37

*Sheppard's Death, Washington, D.C. 9 April 1941*

(Captions indicate this is his death. Sheppard is working ferociously but ineffectively at his desk. Suddenly he experiences a massive pain in his head—he died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage—and he falls on a bed holding his head. He mutters . . . in distress as in a revelation)

**MS:** I will die forgotten . . . a true son . . . of Northeast Texas.

*Scene 38*

*Lucile Sheppard and Tom Connally, Washington DC. Parlor: 5 June 1941*

(Both are kissing, and then they break away)

**Connally:** Lucile, I love you, and want you to be my wife.

**Lucile:** (smiling) Tawm, you are wonderful. My answer is yes.

**Connally:** We'll have to wait at least half-a-year to get married you know, just so people don't get ideas.

**Lucile:** That was my thinking as well.

**Connally:** And of course . . . I want you to be buried someday with Morris, just as I will need to be buried with my Louise:

**Lucile** (shakes her head as if resigned, vaguely as a 'yes'):

**Connally** (testing the waters): Lucile . . . perhaps . . . and I don't want to be dictating here, but perhaps you'd also like to do something for your late husband's legacy. We could have a statue of him built in Texarkana, maybe a college named after him. . . a hospital . . .

**Lucile:** (ambiguously, and deadpanning) Actually I think just a dam would be enough.<sup>5</sup>

**Tom** (smiling sheepishly) what do you mean?

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<sup>5</sup> There is a dam for Morris Sheppard today at Possum Kingdom Lake, Texas.

**Lucile:** I don't want a statue for my late husband, nor a college. I want to dredge out of my head all thoughts of my first marriage. Tom, I wanted to be an idealist when I married him, but I was so young. Morris was so wrapped in his own projects, particularly prohibition. He wanted to control everyone, he wanted to control me--and the kids . . . . Do you know what General MacArthur has said about the cause of his death?

**Connally:** No

**Lucile:** Overwork. . . . As chair of the Committee on Military Affairs. MacArthur said that Morris has become the first American Casualty of this second great war.

**Connally:** Well, he was faithful, wasn't he?

**Lucile:** He was faithful to his cause, so faithful that he seemed to think it was sinful just to be a father or a husband. . . . Frankly . . . (whispers) I don't give a damn if his name is forgotten.

(credits are given as the Adagio by Barber concludes)

