

Title: female highwayman: monologue for Mark Sullivan

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monologue
nostalgia
food -- restaurants
romance
violence
children
food
crime -- theft
education
physical disabilities -- prosthetic devices
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler

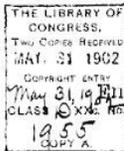
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1.

Monologue for Mark Sullivan

Written by Aaron S. Hoffman - Room 8 - New Zealand Bldg., N. Y. City.

"THE FEMALE HIGHWAYMAN."

Music Cue - "Old Oaken Bucket."

Enter (singing) "How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood."

(Spoken) Ah, those were the times. No man ever forgets his childhood days. I'll never forget mine. My childhood days came to me while I was still a boy. How I remember "The Old Oaken Bucket." What says the poet? Oh, yes, "Father Time fills the old oaken bucket with fond memories." My father used to fill it with beer. And the dear old schoolhouse, and the teacher who made such a lasting impression on my young mind. I think he did it with an axe. I don't remember. I used to go to boarding school in those days. The boarding school was on the top floor of a saw mill. The school was on the second floor and the saw mill was on the first floor. We'd learn our lessons on the second floor and go downstairs for our board. The kitchen and the dining room was right was right in back of the saw mill, and we had a blind cook. She never saw anything but wood. She couldn't tell a loaf of bread. The first day we had chipped beef from a paving block, that is, she served us a bushel of chips from the saw mill and we beefed about it. Then we had some planked shad till we used up all the planks in the mill:- some small stakes. The next day for lunch she gave us each an axe and we had chops. On Sunday we had ice cream and the cook put saw dust in it instead of sugar. Frozen saw dust. The ice cream was full of splinters. One fellow ate so much wood he became a block head. So they changed the cook and hired a French Chef. He was very particular about our actions at the table. I remember some of the rules he framed up for us. Let me see. Oh, yes, here's one. "Never eat soup with a baseball bat". "On sitting at table do not shine your shoes with the napkin before eating." "If you are selected to do the carving never manicare your nails with the carving knife." "When eating oysters on the half shell it is not proper to swallow the shell, and it is no longer the correct thing to crack into on your neighbor's head." We had a gymnasium at our school too. Oh yes, in the basement. And every day the teacher would take the boys and girls into the gymnasium and give them physical sulture. It was a fine thing for the dear children. They used to punch the bag and swing Indian clubs until the darlings got awfully strong. The dears got so strong that they licked the teacher. He had to quit. After that they could never get a teacher strong enough to teach us anything. Finally they brought a little fellow with glasses from Boston to take charge of the school. (biz) Oh, what a cinch he was. Even the girls could lick him. If he asked May O'Brien how to spell "cat" and she spelled it "q-i-z" and he said it was wrong, Mary would punch him in the nose. And I'll never forget the day he made Kitty Shanahan stay after school. She stayed, and as soon as everybody went home and Kitty got teacher alone she knocked his block off. And when she got thro' she hung him up on one of the hooks in the dressing room. After that he used to take a company of militia to school with him whenever he wanted to teach them anything. They used to handcuff the children every morning, so the darlings couldn't beat up the teacher. We used to recite our lessons handcuffed, except Isy Goldstein. He couldn't talk that way. At that time I was real young and my father had a position in a glue factory. He was "stuck" on his job too, so I had to carry his lunch to him every day. Every day I'd trudge along with a sandwich in one hand and a pail of soup in the other. One day I was just beginning to trudge when I met a push of kids out for exercise. Did you ever meet a gang of boys out for exercise with one fist full of sandwich and the other full of soup? As soon as the first boy saw me surrounded with dinner he hollered:- "Say fellahs, pike the pinch." the cinch. Something told me that it was me he referred to as the "cinch", and when a boy refers to you as a "cinch", that's a very bad time to have both hands full of anything but knuckles. So he and his gang got around me, that is, me, the sandwich and the soup. The rest of the assassins followed suit and I started to walk down the street, the bunch using me for a whitely Exerciser. You know that foot movement from the ground up(indicating). Well the last one knocked the cover off the pail and I sat down in the soup

2.

Now anybody will tell you that hot clam chowder doesn't make a very comfortable seat cushion. So I arose with my heart full of anger and my Fauntleroy's full of ketchup and blind with rage I placed my father's dinner on the sidewalk and I smote the first person I saw. The person I smote happened to be a policeman. Did you ever smote a cop? What happened just then is rather dim in my memory - I have visions tho' of a star - a club, a shock - and then a lot more stars and flowers and music, and birds singing, and bells ringing, and brass bands and rainbows, and loop the loops - well the copper punched me and the boys pinched my father's dinner. My father worked for a man by the name of Zero. He was a cold Proposition. He had one son. There were three Zeros in the family. Everybody said the whole family didn't amount to much.

One night it was bitter cold and his wife sent him out to see what the thermometer was. He got outside and two robbers knocked Zero down and jumped on top of him.

Just then his wife called out "Well what is it out there?" and he answered "Just two above Zero". And speaking of robbers. I have just been reading in the papers that in the City of Chicago women have taken to the hold up business and are knocking men down and robbing them on the public highways. Think of that. Knocking them down and holding them up at the same time. But just think of women doing anything like that. We've had the Gibson girl, the Ibsen girl, the Hobson girl, and now we have the hold up girl. Can you imagine a woman coming up to you with a rolling pin in her hand and saying "Mr. will you please give me your money or your life?" Then suppose the girls in the other cities take it up. Here's the way a Milwaukee hold up lady would approach you:- (music cue - pianissimo "Wacht am Rhine") "Come mal her do spitzbub oder ich schlag dich his deine hanch verplatzt; Ich mus das gelt haben das ich mega Schlitte getrinken zu hoch der Kaiser." A New York hold up maiden would say it like this (music cue - "The Bowery" - pianissimo) "Say cull, you get busy and cough up de shekels or I'll bury a condensed version of dis into your map - see?" The Philadelphia hold up girl (music cue - "I'm Tired") (yawn) "Oh dear, this business keeps me up awfully late". "Money or your life please." "What's that?" "Nothing but confederate money?" "Oh, that's alright in this town." Then can you imagine a Boston hold up girl coming up to you and saying:- "Highly respected affinity, it is obligatory for me to levy upon your individuality the surrender of the various articles of value discernible about your personage, or it will be incumbent upon my personality to insist upon the disassociation of your astral body from the precincts of the material plane." But why - why should the women go into the hold up business? Dont' they take all our money away from us anyhow? Now I'll leave it to any girl in the audience who has some mark paying her way in to-night. On the level now girls. If a girl makes up her mind to separate a young man from his wages, does a beautiful stylish young lady need a gun and a billy to do it? Not on your portrait. All a wise girl needs is nerve and appetite. That is of course before marriage. After marriage she needs chloroform. But still girls if any of you intend to go into the "male robbing business" take this from me - don't do it. Because the best way to rob a man is to marry him. It's much easier and you can't get pinched for it. If you're going to be a thief be honest about it. Rob him of his liberty. I don't blame the homely old maids for going into the robbing business because they can put on masks and rob some woman of her husband. That's the only way some of them can get a man is by stealing him. I even hear that Maid Marian was arrested for Robin Hood. but that isn't like real love. Nay, nay, in truth love to-day is not what it used to be ages ago. (dramatically) Now in the olden days a gallant knight would climb up to his lady's balcony in the silvery moonlight where his lady love would be waiting for her cavalier to reward him with a kiss. That's the kind of con talk we get in the story books anyhow. I had a sweetheart once. She was very romantic. She read nothing but Elia Wheeler Wilcox and Laura Lee Jibbey. Oh, she was very romantic. And she insisted that I do as the knights did in the days of old. Climb up to her balcony at midnight and make love to her byt the light of the moon. I had to do it or lose the girl, so I borrowed a ladder from the janitor and at 12 o'clock sneaked down the alley with my ladder to do the Romeo act. Three policemen took me for a porch climber and took a shot at me. It happened that there was no moon out or Romeo would have died before the curtain went up. Well there was no moon out that night and I got in the wrong house. I put my ladder up against the wall and climbed up to a bathroom. I didn't know it until I

3.

put one foot over the window sill and fell into a bathtub full of water. Before I knew it I took somebody's bath. I don't know whose it was, but I took it. There was a cork leg standing in the corner. I think "it" owned the bath. I think that cork leg was just about to take the same bath I took. I was the understudy for a cork leg. Just then the proprietor of the cork leg came into the bath room in her pajamas. She had a loaded hot water bag in her hand. She saw me and handed me the hot water minus the bag. Were you ever wounded by a hot bag? I had on a very light summer suit - bran' new. I said "Madam, I expect to receive damages from you." She said, "You do, well you'll get them alright." Then she seized her cork leg and - bing - I got the damages alright, alright. Two damages, one dam in each eye. That's what love will drive some men into. Into a bath tub. Ah, but what's the difference, as long as we are doing it for a woman. And seriously speaking boys, isn't woman a divine creation? The poorer a man is the closer she clings, and the closer she clings the poorer he is. But you can't live without them, and you can't live with them. I had a sweetheart once, a dainty little trifle about 250 pounds. She had a bank account as big as she was. Her father had an account in the bank, but I loved her for her own "account." We were engaged. I couldn't get an engagement ring large enough to go around her finger, so we had to use a bracelet. In the summer evenings we used to sit out in the hammock together. Can you appreciate the possibilities of a situation like that. Sitting in a hammock alongside 250 pounds and engaged to it. In about two minutes I was at the bottom of it all. Talking about making love under difficulties. I was making love under 250 pounds of it, and a friend of mine saw me there with the fat girl on top. Did you ever get caught making love? All those that didn't keep your seats. Don't you feel foolish? Don't you want to soak him? It feels just like trying to pass counterfeit money. And there was my friend with a grin on his face and the big fat girl balanced upon my lap. I couldn't push her off. She was too heavy. Then she sighed. Say, did you ever hear 250 pounds of girl sigh?, when she's in love. It sounds like a steamboat whistle. Then I sighed, and then she whistled again. Then she said: "If you should cast me off you'll break my heart." I says, "If I don't cast you off you'll break my back." The next day my friend said "Aha, I saw you mashing a girl last night." I said, "Oh, no, you're mistaken, it was the girl, she was mashing me." So the next day I had to call on my doctor. I got on the elevator. That elevator boy was the most generous fellow I ever saw. He gave everybody a "lift".

The lady next to me said to the elevator man: "Will you please give me the second floor?" He said "Certainly, here you are," and he opened the door and gave it to her. A man in the back of the car said "Give me the third floor", and the elevator boy gave it to him. Then a great big fellow that looked like a lawyer hollered out "Give me twelve". He wanted twelve and there were only fourteen floors in the building. Then the elevator man turned to me and said "What floor do you want?" I said "I aint particular, give me any floor you got left." When I came down I got in an argumnet with him. "I says "What's the quickest way for me to get to the basement?" He said "Go outside and start a fight." Well I did, and I got down there quick too. I don't know how I got down, but I got. I found myself in a restaurant. It was one of those cafe tierras. You know, one of those places where you eat what you want, and pay what you like.

There are no waiters down there and you charge yourself whatever you want to pay. The manager told me that he relied on the honesty of his patrons. He said "my business is based on confidence." And it was the worst game of confidence I ever saw. The first day I lost my appetite and the next day I lost my honor. You know you have to wait on yourself in one of those cafe tierras. You go to one counter and get your soup, then you go to another counter and get your meat, another one for your pie and so on. It was about a block and a half from meat to pie.

Roast beef with mashed potatoes was six blocks. Tenderloin steak with mushrooms and coffee was a mile and a half. Roast turkey with oyster dressing was three miles. You couldn't walk roast turkey in one day. It took two days to get that. One fellow down there was collecting his dinner on a bicycle. Another man was going around getting his dinner with a wheel barrow. He was right in the push. I ordered some roast beef. While I was waiting for the roast beef the man on the bicycle ran into me. I said to the manager, "why don't you stop that man's scorching?" He said "It aint him that's scorching, it's your roast beef." So instead of the roast beef I took some roast pig. By that time I had collected a load so

4.

I found a seat. Then I found I had to go and get my coffee. So I put my roast pig on the chair so nobody would take it while I went for the coffee. When I got back the man with the wheelbarrow had backed into my seat and was sitting on my roast pig. I said, "I beg your pardon sir, but you're on the hog." He says, "Ah, you're off." I says, "Will you please get off?" He says, "Put me wise, put me wise, are you looking for something?" I said, "Yes sir, my dinner." We had some hot words and the manager rushed up. He says, "See here, what's at the bottom of all this?" I says, "My pig." Well, the manager separated us and took me over to the pastry counter. The manager's name was Straight. Mr. Straight took me over to the pie counter and then he left me quick. I turned to ask him something but I couldn't see him. There was a sassy girl behind the counter and she was cross eyed. I said, "Young lady, can you see Straight?" She said, "Certainly not, can't you see I'm cross eyed?" "What's your order?" Well I looked and just behind the cross eyed girl I saw some nice looking doughnuts. On the counter right in front of her were some peach turnovers. She said, "Well, what'll you have?" I said, "Well, it's a cross between the turnovers and the doughnuts." She said, "See here, don't you try to kid me." I said, "Excuse me, but have you any lady fingers?" She said, "Why certainly." I said, "Will you please hand me a few?" And she did, she handed me a few. Four fingers and a thumb. I said, "You misunderstood me, I'll take a peach turnover." Just then the man on the bicycle ran into me again, and I took a turnover and it was a peach. Then the man with the wheelbarrow ran over me. Just then I saw a friend of mine by the name of Wright and he took me over and we sat down to eat our lunch. I was hungry and ate a big dinner. All Wright had was a cup of coffee. We went up to the cashier. Wright paid for his cup of coffee. That was five cents. I says, "What do I pay?" She says, "Whatever you think right." I said, "Wright, how much do you think?" But Wright had left. I says, "How much do you want?" She says, "You know I don't want any more than right. Well, I didn't give her any more than Wright."

4 Rare Book

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I have been thinking of you a great deal lately
 and wondering how you are getting on. I hope
 you are well and happy. I have been very busy
 lately with my work, but I always find time
 to think of my friends. I would love to see
 you and hear from you. Please write to me
 when you have a chance. I am always
 with you in spirit. Love, your friend,
 [Name]

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