Lift your glasses, ladies and gentlemen. We’ll drink a toast.

GOLDBERG: Lift your glasses, ladies and gentlemen. We’ll drink a toast.

MEG: Lulu isn’t here.

GOLDBERG: It’s past the hour. Now – who’s going to propose the toast? Mrs. Boles, it can only be you.

MEG: Me?

GOLDBERG: Who else?

MEG: But what do I say?

GOLDBERG: Say what you feel. What you honestly feel. (MEG looks uncertain) It’s Stanley’s birthday. Look at him. Look at him and it’ll come. Wait a minute, the light’s too strong. Let’s have proper lighting. McCann, have you got your torch?

MCCANN: (bringing a small torch from his pocket) Here.

GOLDBERG: Switch out the light and put on your torch. (MCCANN goes to the door, switches off the light, comes back, shines the torch on MEG. Outside the window there is still a faint light.) Now on the lady, on the gentleman! You must shine it on the birthday boy. (MCCANN shines the torch in STANLEY’s face.) Now, Mrs. Boles, it’s all yours.

Pause.

MEG: I don’t know what to say.


MEG: Isn’t the light in his eyes?

GOLDBERG: No, no. Go on.

MEG: Well – it’s very nice to be here tonight, in my house, and I want to propose a toast to Stanley, because it’s his birthday, and he’s lived here for a long while now, and he’s my Stanley now. And I think he’s a good boy, although sometimes he’s bad. (An appreciative laugh from GOLDBERG.) And he’s the only Stanley I know, and I know him better than all the world, although he doesn’t think so. (“Hear – hear” from GOLDBERG.) Well, I could cry because I’m so happy, having him here and not gone away, on his birthday, and there isn’t anything I wouldn’t do for him, and all you good people here tonight … (She sobs.)

GOLDBERG: Beautiful! A beautiful speech. Put the light on, McCann. (MCCANN goes to the door. STANLEY remains still.) That was a lovely toast. (The lights goes on. LULU enters from the door, left. GOLDBERG comforts MEG.) Buck up now. Come on, smile at the birdy. That’s better. Ah, who’s here.

MEG: Lulu.


LULU: Hallo.


MCCANN: Yes, that’s right. He must sit down.

GOLDBERG: You don’t mind sitting down a minute? We’re going to drink to you.

MEG: Come on!

LULU: Come on!

STANLEY sits in a chair at the table.

GOLDBERG: Right. Now Stanley’s sat down. (Taking the stage.) Well, I want to say first that I’ve never been so touched to the heart as by the toast we’ve just heard. How often, in this day and age, do you come across real, true warmth? Once in a lifetime. Until a few minutes ago, ladies and gentlemen, I, like all of you, was asking the same question. What’s happened to the love, the bonhomie, the unashamed expression of affection of the day before yesterday, that our mums taught us in the nursery?

MCCANN: Gone with the wind.

GOLDBERG: That’s what I thought, until today. I believe in a good laugh, a day’s fishing, a bit of gardening. I was very proud of my old greenhouse, made out of my own spit and faith. That’s the sort of man I am. Not size but quality. A little Austin, tea in Fullers, a library book from Boots, and I’m satisfied. But just now, I say just now, the lady of the house said her piece and I for one am knocked over by the sentiments she expressed. Lucky is the man who’s at the receiving end, that’s what I say. (Pause.) How can I put it to you? We all wander on our tod through this world. It’s a lonely pillow to kip on. Right!

LULU: (admiringly) Right!
GOLDBERG: Agreed. But tonight, Lulu, McCann, we’ve known a great fortune. We’ve heard a lady extend the sum total of her devotion, in all its pride, plume and peacock, to a member of her own living race. Stanley, my heartfelt congratulations. I wish you, on behalf of us all, a happy birthday. I’m sure you’ve been a prouder man than you are today. Mazoltov! And may we only meet at Simchahs! (LULU and MEG applaud.) Turn out the light, McCann, while we drink the toast.
LULU: That was a wonderful speech.

MCCANN switches out the light, comes back, and shines the torch in STANLEY’s face. The light outside the window is fainter.
MCCANN: Happy birthday.
LULU: Happy birthday.
MEG: Many happy returns of the day, Stan.
GOLDBERG: And well over the fast.