

## Plot Synopses



### Walter Armbruster

Walter is Boylston Mill's 26 year old mill manager. He lives in upscale Eureka Heights with his social climbing wife Elizabeth and their baby daughter Dorothy.

#### Day 1

Walter is bombarded with requests: Elizabeth wants a piano to entertain society and his friend Hiram Boylston, also his boss, wants Walter to buy a Victrola he can listen to on visits, since August Boylston, his mill owner father won't allow one in the house. Elizabeth also wants to sit with the Boylston's at the lavish mill party they're throwing, and Walter must ask. Meanwhile, Walter will need to meet his quotas at work to earn the money to achieve these **Goals** –his success will vary according to the decisions Walter makes in the coming days: whether to buy the Victrola, opt for one of two pianos (or a harmonica, which will infuriate Elizabeth,) or visit a pawnbroker if strapped for cash. The figures in his expense book vary accordingly, as will various secondary plot points as one decision affects others over the next four days.

In the meantime, Walter is beginning to worry about workers at the mill who are unhappy with conditions that include long hours and cuts in already low pay. He learns of this in the newspapers he purchases from Joey the newspaper boy, from Reverend Leverett, and/or Amadeo the socialist vegetable peddler, Jedediah, the mill's crusty chief salesman, the night watchman and company man Franz and from workers he overhears. As he gathers their comments as pieces of **Evidence** into his **Satchel**, he will be prompted by the game to answer "yes" or "no" to one of three **Big Questions** that come up intermittently throughout the action: "Does the mill treat workers fairly?," "Is the mill in financial trouble?" or "Is a strike likely to succeed?" As Walter answers these questions, they determine the path and the destination of his particular story arc.

At the mill, Stanley the overseer explains the operation of the expensive new machines Walter must manage. After a morning's work (the "Mill Manager's mini-game") Walter visits the barber shop with Hiram and is accosted by Sam Brownstone with a note Walter signed promising to invest in Sam's housing venture. Over the next few days Sam may offer Walter a dividend check, ask him to enlist Hiram as spokesman, hound him for more money and threaten to tell Elizabeth unless Walter pays his share. Walter's responses to Sam trigger various outcomes along the way (such as receiving a dividend, or doubling his share and going into debt.) He will acquire more **Evidence** from Jedediah, who tells him the mill is losing business to cheaper mills in the south. Hiram will ask him to check out a mysterious torn leaflet that he suspects may bring mill trouble.

#### Day 2

Elizabeth says she will post an ad for a new maid, and join the Reverend Leverett on his rounds. Walter will ask her to gauge workers' moods while there. Amadeo may give him a clue about the flier and at work the pace increases as the machines speed up. Walter offers to take the pay ledger to the bank for his secretary, Mabel, but first watches Kinetoscopes with Hiram at the

Opera House. When he meets the banker, he discovers the mill is in debt and that he's lost the ledger. He finds his way to Tannery Road, where his wife and the Reverend are at a worker's house and learns about a possible strike. At home, he and Elizabeth discover that the flier is a call to arms for labor. Walter has to decide whether to tell Hiram about this discovery - at the mill party, he fears Hiram will overreact. When Walter decides to tell Hiram will play out over the next two days, Walter will consult with Elizabeth and the Reverend, but one way or another Hiram finds out.

### **Day 3**

Elizabeth asks Walter to buy a bicycle for her nephew's birthday. He also learns that Antonio Biancardi, the labor organizer is in town. Throughout the day Walter will consult with others about what kind of approach they think the mill should take toward the workers, if they strike, meet their demands or get tough. Jedediah suggests doing both: meeting the workers' demands, waiting til things cool down and then rescinding on the promises. At work Walter confesses to Hiram's father that's he's lost the ledger, but the issue blows over. In the mill's loom room, a worker is injured. Hiram asks Walter to negotiate with the workers on behalf of the mill. Walter's decisions about the piano and Victrola play out.

### **Day 4**

Walter and Elizabeth discuss finances and strategies for negotiating with the organizers. In town, Walter and Hiram secretly attend a labor meeting at the livery stable and hear Biancardi's stemwinding speech. At the mill, Hiram, Jedediah and the Reverend weigh in on options and negotiating tactics. In the mill yard, there's face off between Walter and Biancardi, who demands more bathroom breaks, slower machine speeds and a 15% pay raise. Later, in his office, Walter confers with his group, then presents Biancardi with his counteroffer or decision.

Each player can choose one of three paths for Walter, on behalf of the mill's management:

- Walter agrees to raise pay, making a counteroffer to the workers of a 5% pay increase. This is done in good faith—it will not be rescinded.
- Walter agrees to raise pay, making a counteroffer to the workers of a 5% pay increase, but has no intention of keeping his promise – he will rescinding the raise as soon as the organizers move on.
- Walter refuses to offer any raises at all, rejecting the workers' demands outright.

### **Epilogue**

At this point, gameplay ends. The game then weighs Walter's final decision against his personal financial situation and sends each player to a specially tailored **Epilogue** that tells the rest of the story. Will Walter and Elizabeth have to move out of the Heights? What happens to the mill? Will Walter's investment with Brownstone pay off?

A description of the various Walter Epilogues can be found online at <http://www.pastpresent.org>.



## Anna Caruso

Anna Caruso is a 20 year old Italian immigrant who works at the Boylston Mill and lives with her widowed mother and 3 young brothers in the slums of Tannery Road. She and her friend and fellow millworker Sophie do their best to rise above their struggles but cannot escape a growing awareness of the labor unrest that is brewing around them.

### Day 1

Anna is at home with her mother and triplet brothers. Her mother is anxious that she not be late for work and earn enough money to pay the rent because Mama makes far too little doing laundry. She asks Anna to get her friend Sophie's recipe for Kugel, and to buy the ingredients for dinner.

Downtown, Anna meets Sophie. Whether Anna asks about the recipe will determine what her family will have for dinner, what groceries she'll buy or not buy, whether she'll get eggs or they'll just eat crackers. Sophie tells her about a mysterious new man in town, and they set off to a possible number of locations to find out who he is, including the livery stable, where they may learn that the man has been renting out the basement. They may also speak to the socialist vegetable seller Amadeo, who suggests they read the newspapers, which offer two different points of view on labor issues. He may also tell them that the mysterious man is in town to help the workers. Outside the factory, the girls meet Franz, the devoted company man and night watchman, Officer Moran and Stanley the overseer; in different ways they will try to excuse the mill's pay cuts and talk about the mill's problems. At the looms, Anna does her job during the "mill worker's game."

Outside Anna and Sophie are exhausted from the mill work. They hear about a big mill party (for the bosses,) and Sophie, bored, dares Anna to go into the Barber Shop. Either they are tossed out or they speak to the mill's sales manager Jedediah. Anna and Sophie may meet Officer Moran, who offers free eggs in return for information or talk to Amadeo who tells about how the mill went back on its word during the last mill strike. Anna may shop for dinner, and run into her landlord who will threaten eviction. At home, Mama will respond according to Anna's success at bringing home the rent and dinner.

### Day 2

Anna and Sophie buy papers with labor stories and news about the party. Anna sees Elizabeth's ad for a new maid and decides to apply. Officer Moran tries to get her to spy in exchange for eggs. At work the machines are running even faster. Anna talks to Joey and realizes that the mystery man is a labor organizer. A pawnbroker tells Anna she could get cash for her mother's silver.

Amadeo asks Anna for a favor: she needs to pick up a package at the Opera House, which she does. Officer Moran sees her and is suspicious. Anna goes to Eureka Heights and may have

conversations with Hiram and a housemaid. She has an interview with a haughty Elizabeth Armbruster who will not hire her, either because she learns Anna works for Walter or is not properly trained. On her way home she overhears a banker talking about the mill's debt. At home with Mama, Anna examines the mystery package, a ledger that shows the great pay disparity between workers and bosses. Anna has to decide who she'll give the ledger to: Amadeo (to incite the workers), Officer Moran (in exchange for eggs) or Franz (who will return it to the mill.)

### **Day 3**

Anna's mother gives her new errands for the triplets: a birthday cake and three presents, a bat, a ball and a bicycle. In town, she tells Sophie that the mystery man is Antonio Biancardi, a labor organizer. In the square she encounters Amadeo, Moran and Franz who try to get information from her. Anna considers selling her mother's silver. Work is even harder on the third day. If Anna has given Franz the notebook, her pay is no longer cut. Anna finds a crumpled telegram addressed to "Biancardi the organizer" saying that labor thugs are coming to incite violence against the mill. She has to decide whether to pass this information along. Anna shops for the presents, but discovers the bicycle is too expensive, so she may select a glove instead.

Amadeo's vegetable cart has been overturned by Officer Moran looking for the ledger. Anna returns home to deliver the presents. She's given the chance to go back out and shop if she didn't succeed.

### **Day 4**

Outside the opera house, Lefkowitz the proprietor, along with Amadeo and Sophie, assure Anna it would be hard to replace the striking workers. At work, the machines are even faster. Sophie is injured at the looms. Anna pleases for Stanley to call a doctor but Stanley refuses, threatening to fire her if she doesn't return to work. If Anna decides to return to her loom, Stanley commends her for having made the right decision. If she walks out, she finds herself leading a parade of workers to the livery stable basement, where they listen to Biancardi's fiery rhetoric urging the workers to strike.

At this point, each player can decide on Anna's behalf what she should do:

- Vote to strike the mill;
- Vote to keep working.

### **Epilogue**

At this point, gameplay ends. The game then weighs Anna's final decision against her personal financial situation and sends each player to a specially tailored **Epilogue** that tells the rest of the story. Will Anna and her family be evicted? What happens to the mill? What happens to Sophie and Amadeo and her other friends in Eureka Falls?

A description of the various Anna Epilogues can be found online at <http://www.pastpresent.org>.