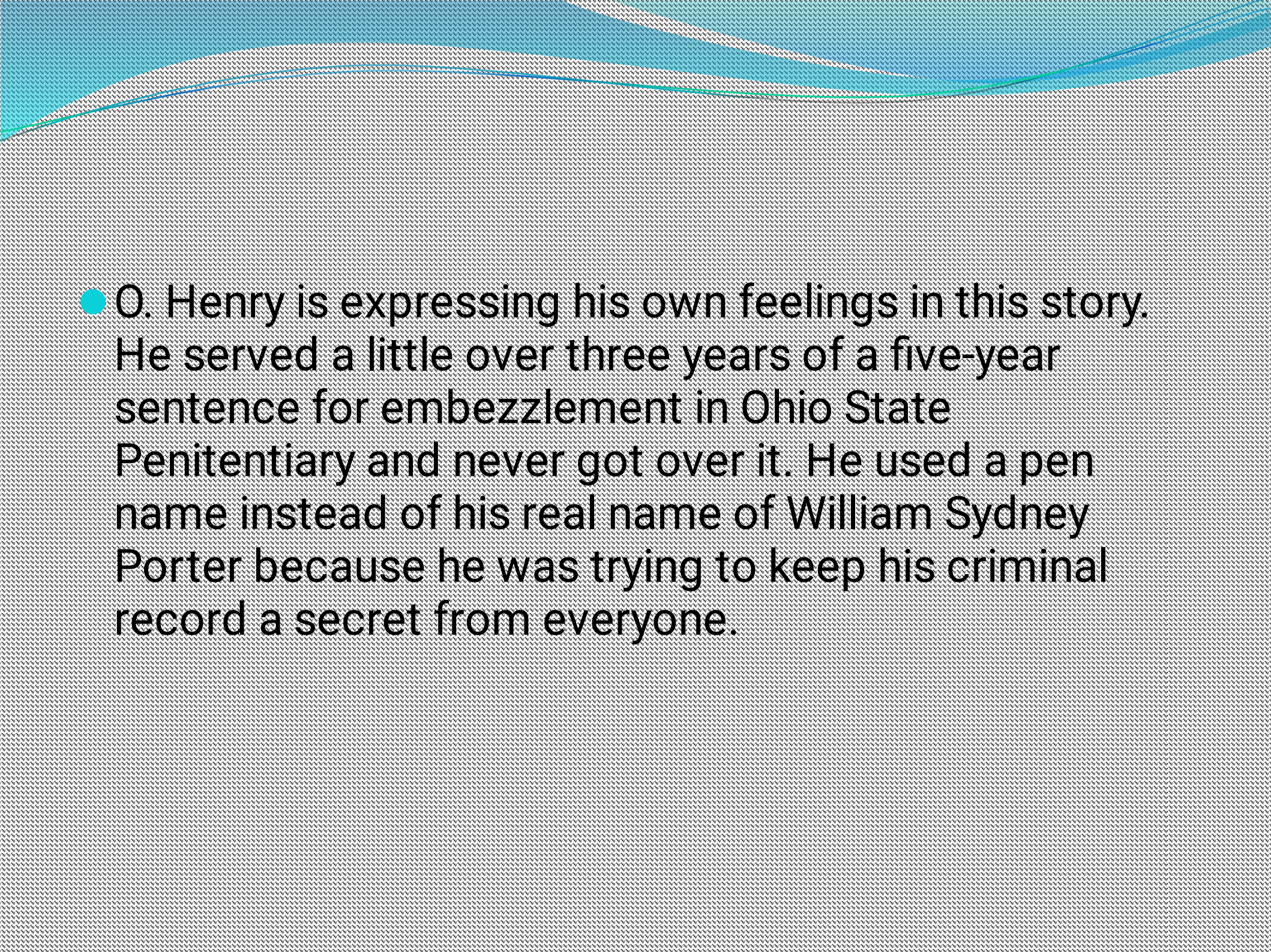
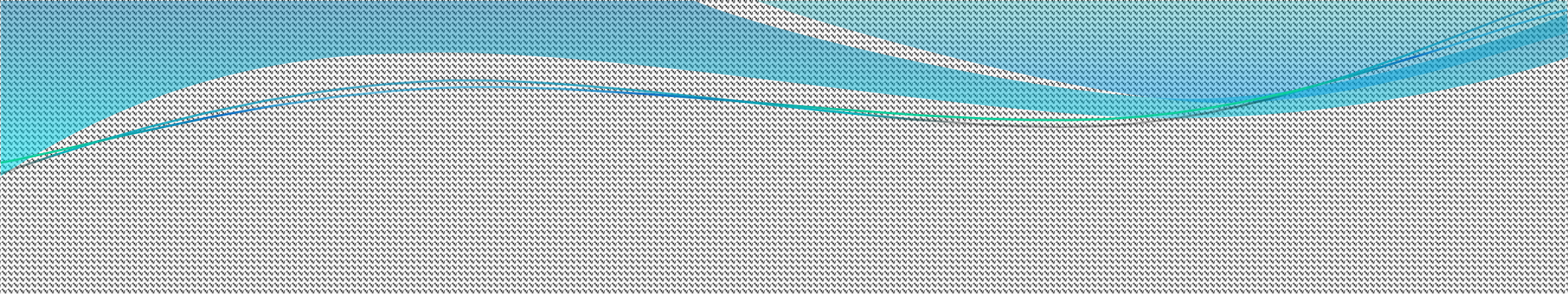
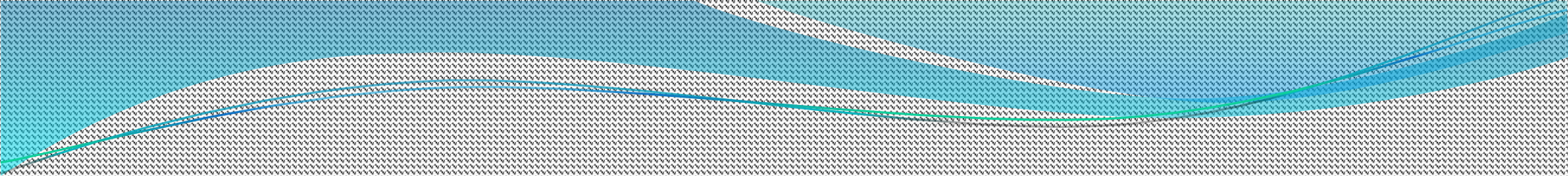


THE COP AND THE ANTHEM

O. Henry

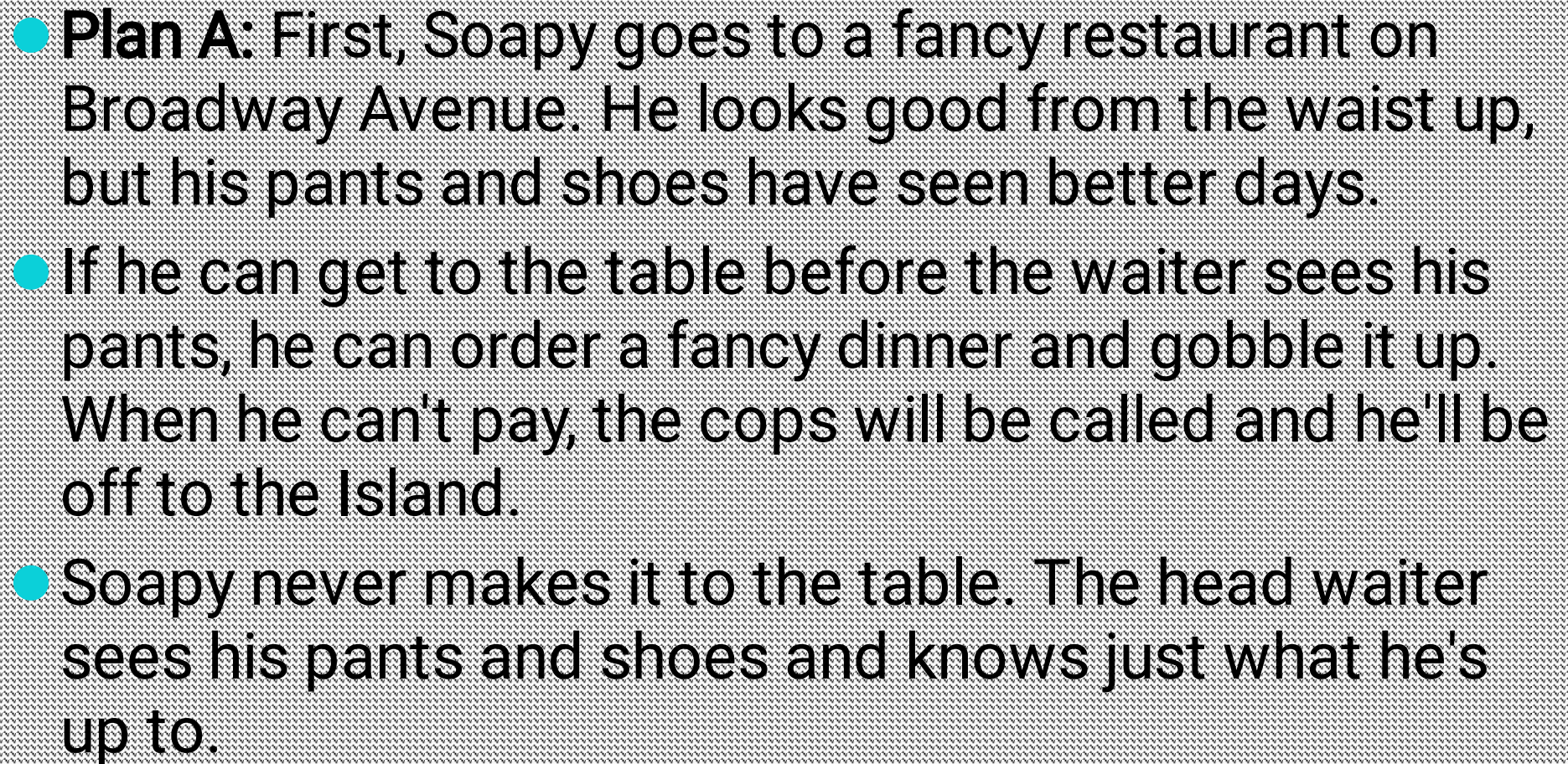
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- O. Henry is expressing his own feelings in this story. He served a little over three years of a five-year sentence for embezzlement in Ohio State Penitentiary and never got over it. He used a pen name instead of his real name of William Sydney Porter because he was trying to keep his criminal record a secret from everyone.

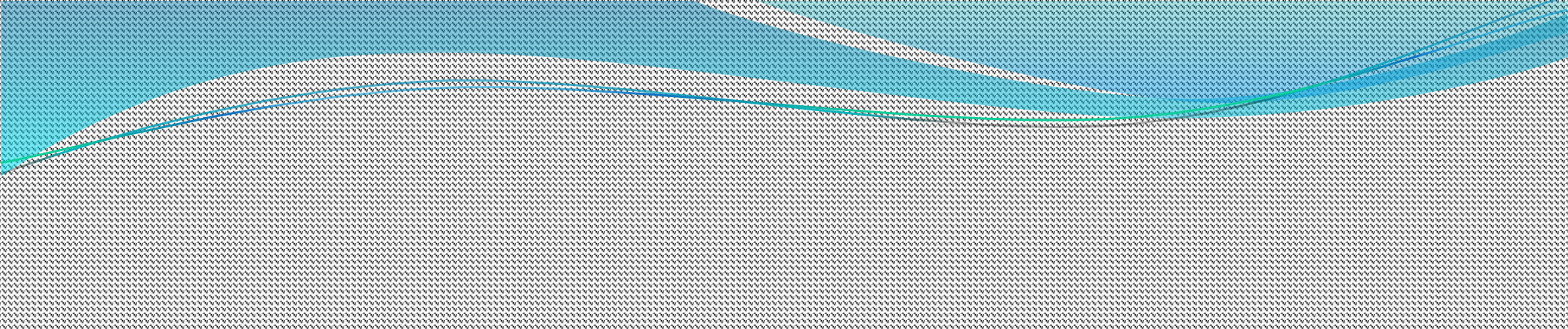
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- . O. Henry had a terrible drinking habit. At the time of his death he was said to be consuming two quarts of whiskey a day. He died at the age of forty-seven of cirrhosis of the liver. His heavy drinking is probably attributable to his feelings of shame, guilt, remorse, and depression. His sympathy for the underdog, so apparent in many of his stories, was due to his feeling like an underdog himself.

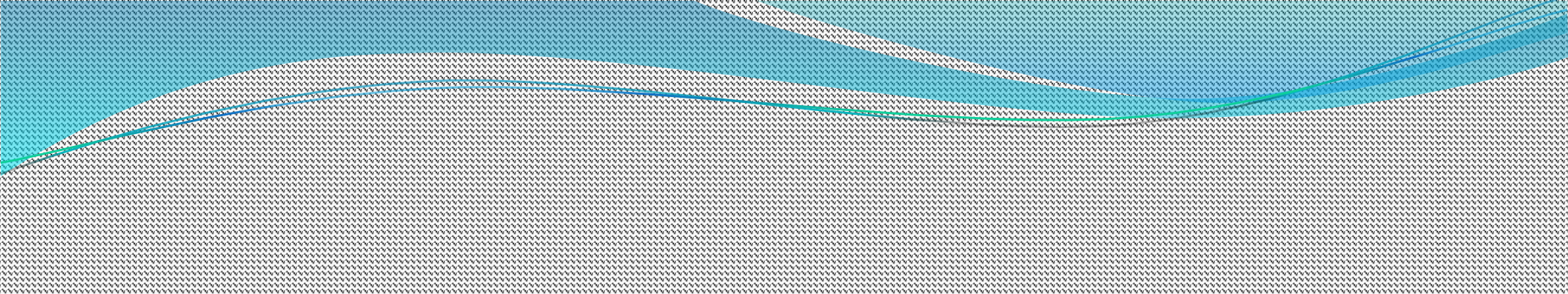
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- O'Henry's famous story is set in the early 1900s, in and around New York City.
 - Meet Soapy (That's right. Just Soapy.), the hero of our story. Soapy is sitting on a bench in Madison Square Park when a dead leaf falls on him.

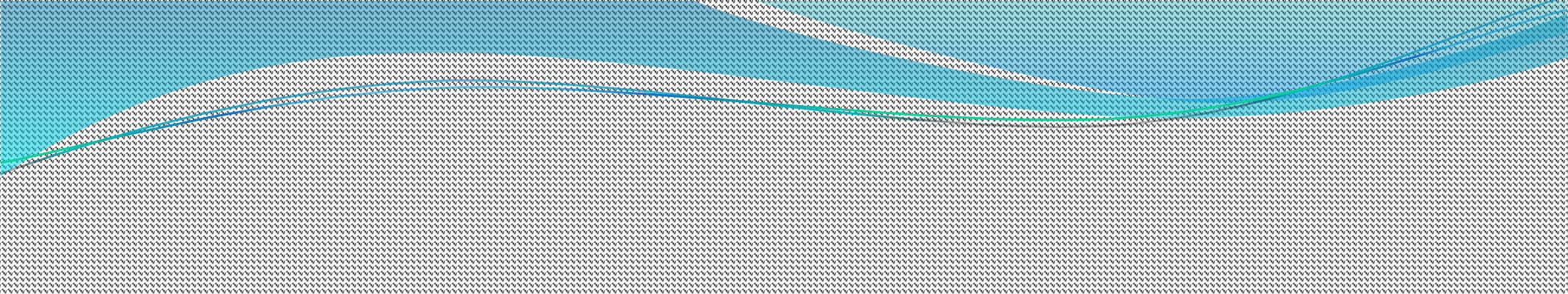
Winter is coming and winter means cold. Some people go south for the winter, but Soapy isn't that big on traveling.

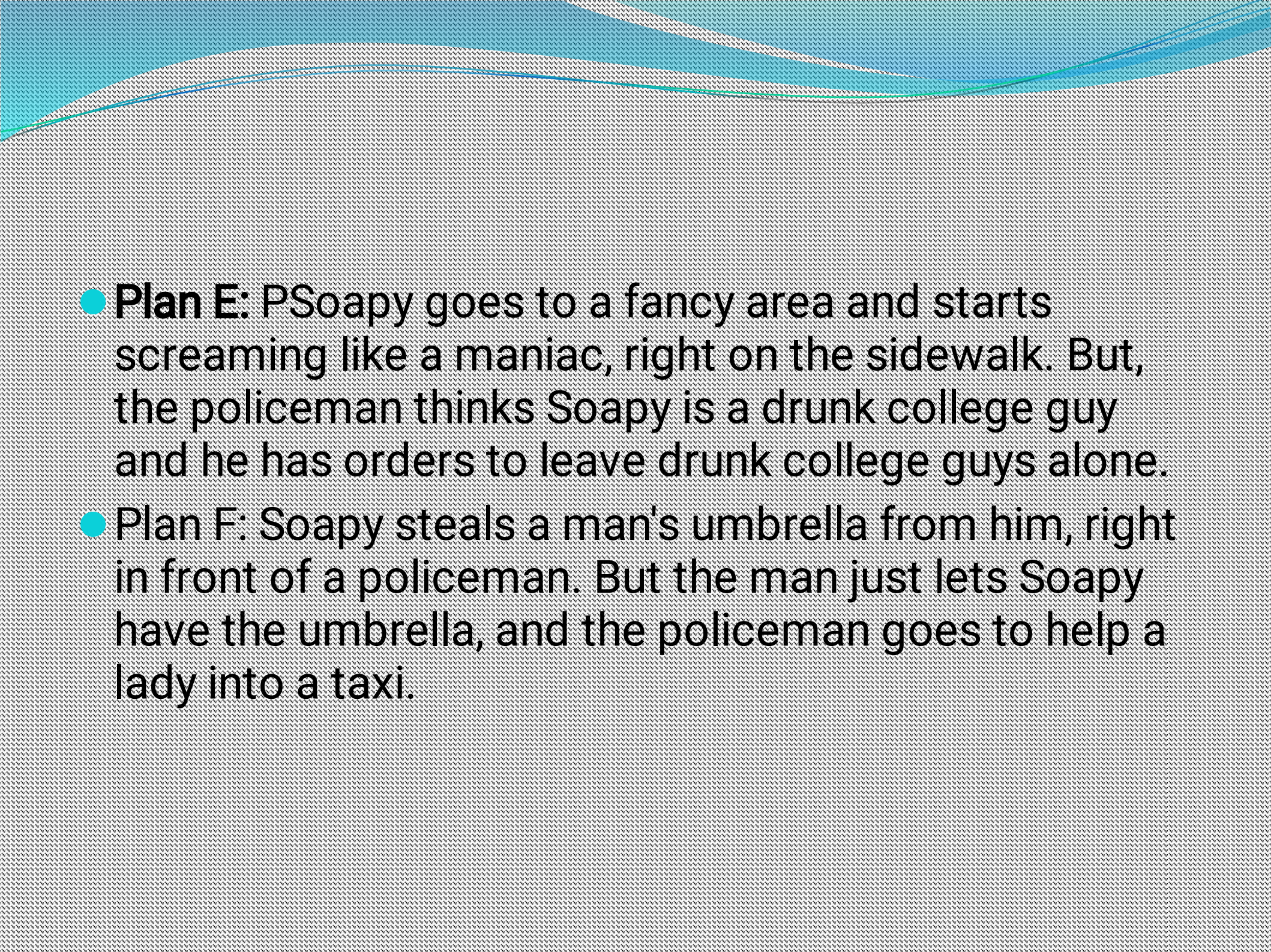
- All he wants is to spend three months at Blackwell's Island, just like he's done for several winters.

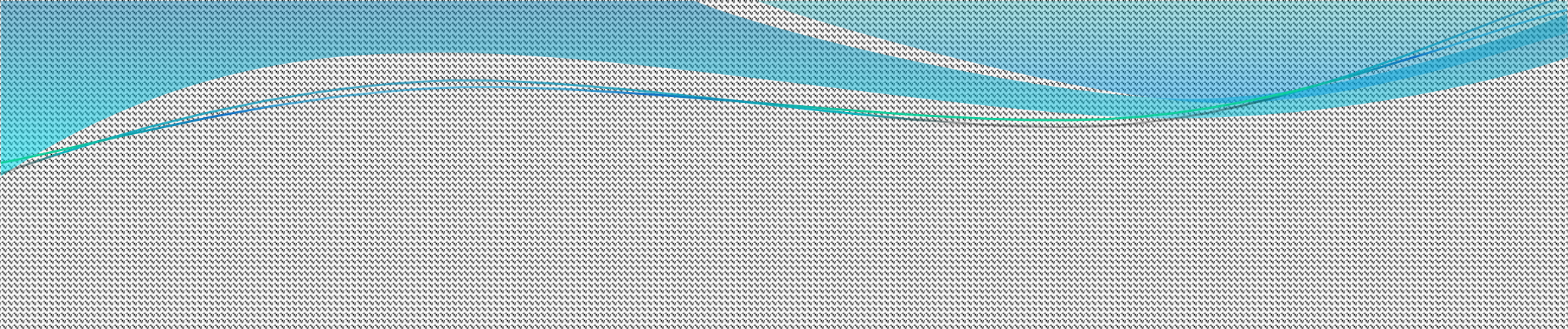
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- **Plan A:** First, Soapy goes to a fancy restaurant on Broadway Avenue. He looks good from the waist up, but his pants and shoes have seen better days.
 - If he can get to the table before the waiter sees his pants, he can order a fancy dinner and gobble it up. When he can't pay, the cops will be called and he'll be off to the Island.
 - Soapy never makes it to the table. The head waiter sees his pants and shoes and knows just what he's up to.

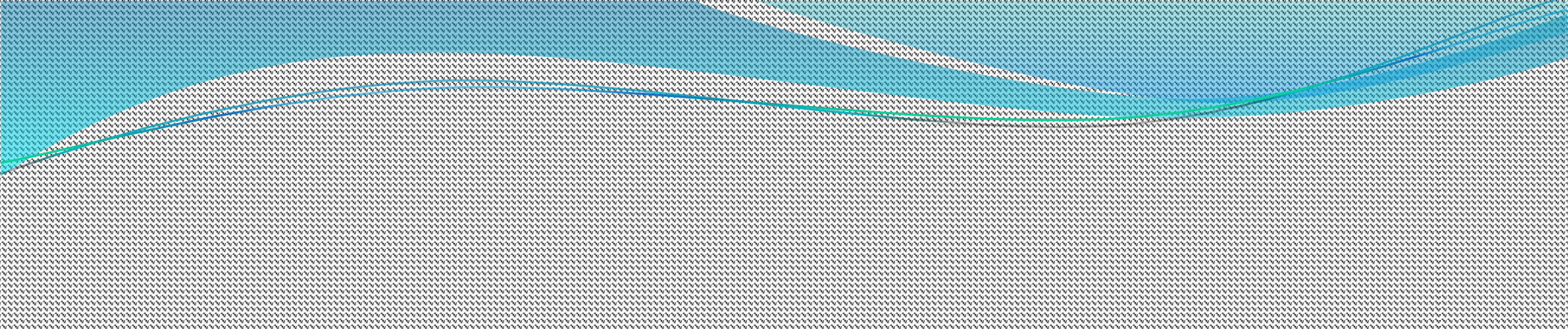
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- **Plan B:** On Sixth Avenue Soapy breaks a display window with a rock.
 - A policeman instantly appears. He asks Soapy who broke the window. Soapy suggests it was he himself who broke it, but the policeman doesn't believe him. Who would break a window and then stick around to wait for the police?

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- **Plan C:** Soapy finds another restaurant—this one not so picky about who they let in. He has a nice dinner and dessert. Then he tells the waiter he doesn't have any money.
 - The waiter is mad, but he doesn't want to call the cops. Instead, two other waiters toss Soapy out onto the sidewalk, right on his ear. (Ouch!)
 - A policeman is watching and he laughs at Soapy.

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- **Plan D:** Soapy sees a pretty lady and decides to pretend he's a "masher" (20). (A masher is a guy who hits on ladies he doesn't know, in an intense way. You know, the kind of guy *nobody* likes.)
 - A policeman is watching as Soapy hits on the lady. She sees the policeman watching, and she tells Soapy she'll go home with him if he buys her some beers.
 - The policeman sees her take Soapy's arm and stops watching. Soapy runs away from the lady.

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- **Plan E:** PSoapy goes to a fancy area and starts screaming like a maniac, right on the sidewalk. But, the policeman thinks Soapy is a drunk college guy and he has orders to leave drunk college guys alone.
 - **Plan F:** Soapy steals a man's umbrella from him, right in front of a policeman. But the man just lets Soapy have the umbrella, and the policeman goes to help a lady into a taxi.

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- Soapy is pretty tired now and he heads back to his park bench in Madison Square.
 - But, before Soapy gets home he comes to an old church. He can see a light glowing through the purple glass of the window.
 - Someone is playing an "anthem" on the organ. Soapy is hypnotized by the beautiful music.
 - Soapy remembers the days when he had things like "mothers and roses and ambitions and friends" and church.
 - All this makes Soapy experience "a sudden and wonderful change in his soul".
 - He feels bad about what his life has come to and wants to change. He's still young and he can follow the old dreams he used to have. He even knows where he can get a job.

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- All of the sudden Soapy feels a hand on his arm; to be exact, a policeman's hand.
 - Soapy is arrested and sentenced to three months on the Island.