

Penelope
Essie
Rheba
Paul
Mr.
Ed
Donald
Martin
Alice
Henderson
Tony
Boris
Gay
Mr.
Mrs.
Three
Olga

You Can't Take It with You was produced at the Booth Theatre, New York City, Monday night, December 14th, 1906, by Sam H. Harris, with the following cast:

PENELOPE SYCAMORE	JOSEPHINE HULL
ESSIE	PAULA TRUEMAN
RHEBA	RUTH ATTAWAY
PAUL SYCAMORE	FRANK WILCOX
DE PINNA	FRANK CONLAN
WALD	GEORGE HELLER
MARTIN VANDERHOF	OSCAR POLK
ALICE	HENRY TRAVERS
ANDERSON	MARGOT STEVENSON
TONY KIRBY	HUGH RENNIE
BORIS KOLENKHOV	JESS BARKER
GAY WELLINGTON	GEORGE TOBIAS
MRS. KIRBY	MITZI HAJOS
MR. KIRBY	WILLIAM J. KELLY
THREE MEN	VIRGINIA HAMMOND
OLGA	GEORGE LEACH
	RALPH HOLMES
	FRANKLIN HELLER
	ANNA LUBOWE

Stage Manager—WILLIAM MCFADDEN

The Scene Is the Home of Martin Vanderhof,
New York

ACT ONE

A Wednesday Evening.

(During this act the curtain is lowered to denote the passing of several hours.)

ACT TWO

A Week Later.

ACT THREE

The Next Day.

ACT ONE

SCENE I

the home of MARTIN VANDERHOF—just around the corner from Columbia University, but don't go looking for it. The room we see is what is customarily described as a living room, but in this house the term is something of an understatement. The every-man-for-himself room would be more like it. For here meals are eaten, plays are written, snakes collected, ballet steps practiced, telephones played, printing presses operated—if there were room enough there would probably be ice skating. In short, the brood presided over by MARTIN VANDERHOF goes on about the business of living in the full sense of the word. This is a house where you do as you like, and no questions asked.

At the moment, GRANDPA VANDERHOF'S daughter, MRS. ENVELOPE SYCAMORE, is doing what she likes more than anything else in the world. She is writing a play—her twentieth. Comfortably ensconced in what is affectionately known as Mother's Corner, she is pounding away on a typewriter perched precariously on a rickety card table. Also on the table is one of those plaster-of-Paris dolls ordinarily used as an ash tray, but which serves ENVELOPE as a candy jar. And, because PENNY likes companionship, there are two kittens on the table, busily lapping at a saucer of milk.

MRS. ENVELOPE SYCAMORE is a round little woman in her early fifties, comfortable looking, gentle, homey.

One would not suspect that under that placid exterior there surges the Divine Urge—but it does, it does. After a moment her fingers lag on the keys; a thoughtful expression comes over her face. Abstractedly she takes a piece of candy out of the skull, pops it into her mouth. As always, it furnishes the needed inspiration—with a furious burst of speed she finishes a page and whips out of the machine. Quite mechanically, she picks up one of the kittens, adds the sheet of paper to the pile underneath, replaces the kitten.

As she goes back to work, ESSIE CARMICHAEL, MRS. MORE'S ELDEST DAUGHTER, comes in from the kitchen, a girl of about twenty-nine, very slight, a curious about the pixie about her. She is wearing ballet slippers; in fact, she wears them throughout the play.

ESSIE (*fanning herself*). My, that kitchen's hot.

PENNY (*finishing a bit of typing*). What, Essie?

ESSIE. I say the kitchen's awful hot. That new candy making—it just won't ever get cool.

PENNY. Do you have to make candy today, Essie? It's not a hot day.

ESSIE. Well, I got all those new orders. Ed went out and got a bunch of new orders.

PENNY. My, if it keeps on I suppose you'll be opening a store.

ESSIE. That's what Ed was saying last night, but I no, I want to be a dancer. (*Bracing herself against the table, she manipulates her legs, ballet fashion*)

PENNY. The only trouble with dancing is, it takes so long. You've been studying such a long time.

ESSIE (*slowly drawing a leg up behind her as she talks*). Only—eight—years. After all, Mother, you've been studying plays for eight years. We started about the time, didn't we?

Penny Yes, but you shouldn't count my first two years, because I was learning to type.

(From the kitchen comes a colored maid named RHEBA—a very black girl somewhere in her thirties. She carries a white tablecloth, and presently starts to spread it over the table)

Rheba (*as she enters*). I think the candy's hardening up now, Miss Essie.

Essie Oh, thanks, Rheba. I'll bring some in, Mother—I want you to try it. (*She goes into the kitchen*)

PENNY returns to her work as **RHEBA** busies herself with the table

RHEBA. Finish the second act, Mrs. Sycamore?

PENNY. Oh, no, Rheba. I've just got Cynthia entering the monastery.

RHEBA. Monastery? How'd she get there? She was at the El Morocco, wasn't she?

PENNY. Well, she gets tired of the El Morocco, and there's the monastery, so she goes there.

RHEBA. Do they let her in?

PENNY. Yes, I made it Visitors' Day, so of course anybody can come.

RHEBA. Oh.

PENNY. So she arrives on Visitors' Day, and—just stays.

RHEBA. All night?

PENNY. Oh, yes. She stays six years.

RHEBA (*as she goes into the kitchen*). Six years? My, I bet she busts that monastery wide open.

PENNY (*half to herself, as she types*). "Six Years Later."

PAUL SYCAMORE comes up from the cellar. *Mid-fifties, but with a kind of youthful air. His quiet charm and old manner are distinctly engaging*

Paul (*turning back as he comes through the door*). Mr.

Pinna! (*A voice from below. "Yah?"*) Mr. De Pinna,

will you bring up one of those new skyrockets, please?

I want to show them to Mrs. Sycamore. (*An answer that monosyllable from the cellar as he turns toward PENNY*) Look, Penny—what do you think of these little fire crackers? Ten strings for a nickel. Listen. (*He puts one down on the center table and lights it. It goes off with a good bang*) Nice, huh?

PENNY. Paul, dear, were you ever in a monastery?
PAUL (*quite calmly*). No, I wasn't. . . . Wait till you see the new rockets. Gold stars, then blue stars, then some bombs, and then a balloon. Mr. De Pinna thought of the balloon.

PENNY. Sounds lovely. Did you do all that today?
PAUL. Sure. We made up—oh, here we are. (*MR. DE PINNA comes up from the cellar. A bald-headed little man with a serious manner, and carrying two good-sized sky rockets*) Look, Penny. Cost us eighteen cents to make and we sell 'em for fifty. How many do you figure we can make before the Fourth, Mr. De Pinna?

DE PINNA. Well, we've got two weeks yet—what day you going to take the stuff up to Mount Vernon?

PAUL. Oh, I don't know—about a week. You know, we're going to need a larger booth this year—got a lot of stuff made up.

DE PINNA (*examining the rocket in his hand*). Look, Mr. Sycamore, the only thing that bothers me is, I'm afraid the powder chamber is just a little bit close to the balloon.

PAUL. Well, we've got the stars and the bombs in between. DE PINNA. But that don't give the balloon time enough. A balloon needs plenty of time.

PAUL. Want to go down in the cellar and try it?

DE PINNA. All right.

PAUL (*as he disappears through the cellar door*). That's the only way you'll really tell.

PENNY (*halting DE PINNA in the cellar doorway*). Mr. De

Pinna, if a girl you loved entered a monastery, would you do?

DE PINNA (*he wasn't expecting that one*). Oh, I know, Mrs. Sycamore—it's been so long. (*He goes*) RHEBA returns from the kitchen, bringing a pile of plates. Miss Alice going to be home to dinner to Mrs. Sycamore?

PENNY (*deep in her thinking*). What? I don't know, RHEBA. Maybe.

RHEBA. Well, I'll set a place for her, but she's only home one night this week. (*She puts down a plate*) Miss Essie's making some mighty good candied day. She's doing something new with cocoanuts. (*She puts down a plate*) Let's see—six, and Mr. De Pinna, and if Kolenkhov comes that makes eight, don't it? (*At a point a muffled sound, reminiscent of the Battle of Marne, comes up from the cellar. It is the skyro series of explosions. PENNY and RHEBA, however, even notice it. RHEBA goes right on*) Yes, I'd better for eight.

PENNY. I think I'll put this play away for a while, RHEBA, and go back to the war play.

RHEBA. Oh, I always liked that one—the war play. (*ESSIE returns from the kitchen, carrying a plate of fro made candy*)

ESSIE. They'll be better when they're harder, mother, try one—I want to know what you think.

PENNY. Oh, they look awfully good. (*She takes one*) What do you call them?

ESSIE. I think I'll call 'em Love Dreams.

PENNY. Oh, that's nice. . . . I'm going back to my play, Essie. What do you think?

ESSIE. Oh, are you, Mother?

PENNY. Yes, I sort of got myself into a monastery and can't get out.

ESSIE. Oh, well, it'll come to you, Mother. Remember how you got out of that brothel. . . . Hello, boys. (The little greeting is idly tossed toward the snake solanum, a glass structure looking something like a goldfish aquarium, but containing, believe it or not, snakes) The snakes look hungry. Did Rheba feed them?
 PENNY (as RHEBA re-enters). I don't know. Rheba, did you feed the snakes yet?

RHEBA. No, Donald's coming and he always brings flies with him.

PENNY. Well, try to feed them before Grandpa gets home. You know how fussy he is about them.

RHEBA. Yes'm.

PENNY (handing her the kittens). And take Groucho and Harpo into the kitchen with you. . . . I think I'll have another Love Dream.

(MR. SYCAMORE emerges from the cellar again)
 PAUL. Mr. De Pinna was right about the balloon. It was too close to the powder.

ESSIE (practicing a dance step). Want a Love Dream, Father? They're on the table.

PAUL. No, thanks. I gotta wash.

PENNY. I'm going back to the war play, Paul.

PAUL. Oh, that's nice. We're putting some red stars on the blue stars, then come the bombs and then the balloon. That ought to do it. (He goes up the stairs)

ESSIE (another dance step). Mr. Kolenkhov says I'm the most promising pupil.

PENNY (absorbed in her own troubles). You know, with forty monks and one girl, something ought to happen.

(ED CARMICHAEL comes down the stairs. A nondescript young man in his mid-thirties. In shirtsleeves at the moment)

ED. Listen! (He hums a snatch of melody as he heads for the far corner of the room—the xylophone corner. Arriving there, he picks up the sticks and continues the

melody on the xylophone. Immediately ESSIE is up on her toes, performing intricate ballet steps to ED's accompaniment)

ESSIE (dancing). I like that, Ed. Yours?

ED (shakes his head). Beethoven.

ESSIE (never coming down off her toes). Lovely. Got a lot of you in it. . . . I made those new candies this afternoon, Ed.

ED (playing away). Yah?

ESSIE. You can take 'em around tonight.

ED. All right. . . . Now, here's the finish. This is me (He works up to an elaborate crescendo, but ESSIE keeps pace with him right to the finish)

ESSIE. That's fine. Remember it when Kolenkhov comes, will you?

PENNY (who has been busy with her papers). Ed, dear, why don't you and Essie have a baby? I was thinking about it just the other day.

ED. I don't know—we could have one if you wanted us to. What about it, Essie? Do you want to have a baby?

ESSIE. Oh, I don't care. I'm willing if Grandpa is.

ED. Let's ask him.

(ESSIE goes into the kitchen as PENNY goes back to her manuscripts)

PENNY (running through the pile). Labor play. . . . religious play. . . . sex play. I know it's here some place.

ED, meanwhile, has transferred his attention from the xylophone to a printing press that stands handily by, and now gives it a preliminary workout)

(MR. DE PINNA comes out of the cellar, bound for the kitchen to wash up)

MR. DE PINNA. I was right about the balloon. It was too close to the powder.

ED. Anything you want printed, Mr. De Pinna? How about some more calling cards?

DE PINNA (*as he passes into the kitchen*). No, thanks. I've still got the first thousand.

ED (*calling after him*). Well, call on somebody, will you? (*He then gives his attention to RHEBA, who is busy with the table again*) What have we got for dinner, Rheba? I'm ready to print the menu.

RHEBA. Cornflakes, watermelon, some of those candies Miss Essie made, and some kind of meat—I forget.

ED. I think I'll set it up in boldface Cheltenham tonight (*He starts to pick out the letters*) If I'm going to take those new candies around I'd better print up some descriptive matter after dinner.

PENNY. Do you think anybody reads those things, Ed—that you put in the candy boxes? . . . Oh, here it is.

(*She pulls a manuscript out of a pile*) "Poison Gas"

(*The door bell sounds*) I guess that's Donald. (*As RHEBA breaks into a broad grin*) Look at Rheba smile.

ED. The boy friend, eh, Rheba?
PENNY (*as RHEBA disappears into the hallway*). Donald and Rheba are awfully cute together. Sort of like Porgy and Bess.

(*RHEBA having opened the door, the gentleman named DONALD now looms up in the doorway—darkly. He is a colored man of no uncertain hue*)

DONALD. Good evening, everybody!

ED. Hi, Donald! How've you been?

DONALD. I'm pretty good, Mr. Ed. How you been, Mr. Sycamore?

PENNY. Very well, thank you. (*She looks at him, approvingly*) Donald, were you ever in a monastery?

DONALD. No-o. I don't go no place much. I'm on relief.

PENNY. Oh, yes, of course.

DONALD (*pulling a bottle out of each side pocket*). How the flies, Rheba. Caught a big mess of them today.

RHEBA (*taking the jars*). You sure did.

DONALD. I see you've been working, Mrs. Sycamore.

PENNY. Yes, indeed, Donald.

DONALD. How's Grandpa?

PENNY. Just fine. He's over at Columbia this afternoon. The Commencement exercises.

DONALD. My, the years certainly do roll 'round.

ED (*with his typesetting*). M—E—A—T— . . . What's he go there for all the time, Penny?

PENNY. I don't know. It's so handy—just around the corner. (*PAUL comes downstairs*)

PAUL. Oh, Donald! Mr. De Pinna and I are going to take the fireworks up to Mount Vernon next week. Do you think you could give us a hand?

DONALD. Yes, sir, only I can't take no money for it this year, because if the Government finds out I'm working they'll get sore.

PAUL. Oh! . . . Ed, I got a wonderful idea in the bath-room just now. I was reading Trotsky. (*He produces a book from under his arm*) It's yours, isn't it?

ED. Yah, I left it there.

PENNY. Who is it?

PAUL. You know, Trotsky. The Russian Revolution.

PENNY. Oh.

PAUL. Anyhow, it struck me it was a great fireworks idea. Remember "The Last Days of Pompeii"?

PENNY. Oh, yes. Palisades Park. (*With a gesture of her arms she loosely describes a couple of arcs, indicative of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius*) That's where we met.

PAUL. Well, I'm going to do the Revolution! A full hour display.

DONALD. Say!

PENNY. Paul, that's wonderful!

ED. The red fire is the flag, huh?

PAUL. Sure! And the Czar, and the Cossacks!

DONALD. And the freeing of the slaves?

PAUL. No, no, Donald—

(*The sound of the front door slamming. A second's pause.*)

and then GRANDPA enters the living room. GRANDPA is about 75, a wiry little man whom the years have treated kindly. His face is youthful, despite the lines that scar it; his eyes are very much alive. He is a man who made his peace with the world long, long ago, and his whole attitude and manner are quietly persuasive of this GRANDPA (surveying the group). Well, sir, you should have been there. That's all I can say—you should have been there.

PENNY. Was it a nice Commencement, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. Wonderful. They get better every year. (He peers into the snake solarium) You don't know how lucky you are you're snakes.

ED. Big class this year, Grandpa? How many were there? GRANDPA. Oh, must have been two acres. *Everybody graduated*. And much funnier speeches than they had last year.

DONALD. You want to listen to a good speech you go up and hear Father Divine.

GRANDPA. I'll wait—they'll have him at Columbia.

PENNY. Donald, will you tell Rheba Grandpa's home now and we won't wait for Miss Alice.

DONALD. Yes'm. . . . (As he goes through the kitchen door) Rheba, Grandpa's home—we can have dinner.

PAUL. Got a new skyrocket today, Grandpa. Wait till you see it. . . . Wonder why they don't have fireworks at Commencements.

GRANDPA. Don't make enough noise. You take a good Commencement orator and he'll drown out a whole carload of fireworks. And say just as much, too.

PENNY. Don't the graduates ever say anything?

GRANDPA. No, they just sit there in cap and nightgown, get their diplomas, and then along about forty years from now they suddenly say, "Where am I?"

(ESSIE comes in from the kitchen, bringing a plate of tomatoes for the evening meal)

ESSIE. Hello, Grandpa. Have a nice day?

GRANDPA (watching ESSIE as she puts the tomatoes on the table). Hello-have-a-nice-day. (Suddenly he roars at the top of his voice) Don't I even get kissed?

ESSIE (kissing him). Excuse me, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. I'll take a tomato, too. (ESSIE passes the plate; GRANDPA takes one and sits with it in his hand, solemnly weighing it) You know, I could have used a couple of these this afternoon. . . . Play something, Ed.

(ED at once obliges on the xylophone—something on the dreamy side. Immediately ESSIE is up on her toes again, drifting through the mazes of a toe dance)

ESSIE (after a moment). There was a letter came for you, Grandpa. Did you get it?

GRANDPA. Letter for me? I don't know anybody.

ESSIE. It was for you, though. Had your name on it.

GRANDPA. That's funny. Where is it?

ESSIE. I don't know. Where's Grandpa's letter, mother?

PENNY (who has been deep in her work). What, dear?

ESSIE (dancing dreamily away). Where's that letter that came for Grandpa last week?

PENNY. I don't know. (Then, brightly) I remember seeing the kittens on it.

GRANDPA. Who was it from? Did you notice?

ESSIE. Yes, it was on the outside.

GRANDPA. Well, who was it?

ESSIE (first finishing the graceful flutterings of the Dying Swan). United States Government.

GRANDPA. Really? Wonder what they wanted.

ESSIE. There was one before that, too, from the same people. There was a couple of them.

GRANDPA. Well, if any more come I wish you'd give them to me.

ESSIE. Yes, Grandpa.

(A fresh flurry of dancing; the xylophone grows a little louder)

GRANDPA. I think I'll go out to Westchester tomorrow and do a little snake-hunting.

PAUL (*who has settled down with his book some time before this*). "God is the State; the State is God."

GRANDPA. What's that?

PAUL. "God is the State; the State is God."

GRANDPA. Who says that?

PAUL. Trotsky.

GRANDPA. Well, that's all right—I thought you said it.

ED. It's nice for printing, you know. Good and short. (*He reaches into the type case*) G — O — D — space — I

— S — space — T — H — E

(*The sound of the outer door closing, and ALICE SYCAMORE enters the room. A lovely, fresh young girl of about twenty-two. She is plainly GRANDPA'S grand-daughter, but there is something that sets her apart from the rest of the family. For one thing, she is in daily contact with the world; in addition, she seems to have escaped the tinge of mild insanity that pervades the rest of them. But she is a Sycamore for all that, and her devotion and love for them are plainly apparent. At the moment she is in a small nervous flutter, but she is doing her best to conceal it*)

ALICE (*as she makes the rounds, kissing her grandfather, her father, her mother*). And so the beautiful princess came into the palace, and kissed her mother, and her father, and her grandfather—hi, Grandpa—and what do you think? They turned into the Sycamore family. Surprised?

ESSIE (*examining ALICE'S dress*). Oh, Alice, I like it. It's new, isn't it?

PENNY. Looks nice and summery.

ESSIE. Where'd you get it?

ALICE. Oh, I took a walk during lunch hour. That's GRANDPA. You've been taking a lot of walks lately. That's the second new dress this week.

ALICE. Oh, I just like to brighten up the office once in a while. I'm known as the Kay Francis of Kirby & Co. . . . Well, what's new around here? In the way of plays, snakes, ballet dancing or fireworks. Dad, I'll bet you've been down in that cellar all day.

PAUL. Huh?

PENNY. I'm going back to the war play, Alice.

ESSIE. Ed, play Alice that Beethoven thing you wrote. Listen, Alice.

(*Like a shot ED is at the xylophone again, ESSIE up on her toes*)

(GRANDPA, meanwhile, has unearthed his stamp album from under a pile of oddments in the corner, and is now busy with his magnifying glass)

GRANDPA. Do you know that you can mail a letter all the way from Nicaragua for two pesetos?

PENNY (*meanwhile dramatically reading one of her own deathless lines*). "Kenneth, my virginity is a priceless thing to me."

ALICE (*finding it hard to break through all this*). Listen, people. . . . Listen. (*A break in the music; she gets a scattered sort of attention*) I'm not home to dinner. A young gentleman is calling for me.

ESSIE. Really? Who is it?

PENNY. Well, isn't that nice?

ALICE (*with quiet humor*). I did everything possible to keep him from coming here, but he's calling for me.

PENNY. Why don't you both stay to dinner?

ALICE. No, I want him to take you in easy doses. I've tried to prepare him a little, but don't make it any worse than you can help. Don't read him any plays, mother, and don't let a snake bite him, Grandpa, because I like him. And I wouldn't dance for him, Essie, because we're going to the Monte Carlo ballet tonight.

GRANDPA. Can't do anything. Who is he—President of the United States?

ALICE. No, he's vice-president of Kirby & Co. Mr. Anthony Kirby, Jr.

ESSIE. The Boss's son?

PENNY. Well!

ALICE. The Boss's son. Just like the movies.

ESSIE. That explains the new dresses.

ED. And not being home to dinner for three weeks.

ALICE. Why, you're wonderful!

PENNY (*all aglow*). Are you going to marry him?

ALICE. Oh, of course. Tonight! Meanwhile I have to go up and put on my wedding dress.

ESSIE. Is he good looking?

ALICE (*vainly consulting her watch*). Yes, in a word. Oh, dear! What time is it?

PENNY. I don't know. Anybody know what time it is?

PAUL. Mr. De Pinna might know.

ED. It was about five o'clock a couple of hours ago.

ALICE. Oh, I ought to know better than to ask you people.

... Will you let me know the minute he comes, please?

PENNY. Of course, Alice.

ALICE. Yes, I know, but I mean the *minute* he comes.

PENNY. Why, of course. (*ALICE looks apprehensively from one to the other; then disappears up the stairs*) Well,

what do you think of that?

GRANDPA. She seems to like him, if you ask me.

ESSIE. I should say so. She's got it bad.

PENNY. Wouldn't it be wonderful if she married him? We could have the wedding right in this room.

PAUL. Now, wait a minute, Penny. This is the first time he's ever called for the girl.

PENNY. You only called for me once.

PAUL. Young people are different nowadays.

ESSIE. Oh, I don't know. Look at Ed and me. He came to dinner *once* and just stayed.

PENNY. Anyhow, I think it's wonderful. I'll bet he's crazy about her. It must be he that's been taking her out every

night. (*The door bell rings*) There he is! Never mind Rheba, I'll answer it. (*She is fluttering to the door*) No, remember what Alice said, and be *very* nice to him.

GRANDPA (*rising*). All right—let's take a look at him.

PENNY (*at the front door; milk and honey in her voice*) Well! Welcome to our little home! I'm Alice's mother.

Do come right in! Here we are! (*She reappears in the archway, piloting the stranger*) This is Grandpa, and that's Alice's father, and Alice's sister, and her husband Ed Carmichael. (*The family all give courteous little nods and smiles as they are introduced*) Well! Now give me your hat and make yourself right at home.

THE MAN. I'm afraid you must be making a mistake.

PENNY. How's that?

THE MAN. My card.

PENNY (*reading*). "Wilbur C. Henderson. Internal Revenue Department."

HENDERSON. That's right.

GRANDPA. What can we do for you?

HENDERSON. Does a Mr. Martin Vanderhof live here?

GRANDPA. Yes, sir. That's me.

HENDERSON (*all milk and honey*). Well, Mr. Vanderhof the Government wants to talk to you about a little matter of income tax.

PENNY. Income tax?

HENDERSON. Do you mind if I sit down?

GRANDPA. No, no. Just go right ahead.

HENDERSON (*settling himself*). Thank you.

(*From above stairs the voice of ALICE floats down*)

ALICE. Mother! Is that Mr. Kirby?

PENNY (*going to the stairs*). No, No, it isn't, darling. It's—an internal something or other. (*To MR. HENDERSON*) Pardon me.

HENDERSON (*pulling a sheaf of papers from his pocket*). We've written you several letters about this, Mr. Vanderhof, but have not had any reply.

GRANDPA. Oh, that's what those letters were.

ESSIE. I told you they were from the Government.

(MR. DE PINNA comes up from the cellar, bearing a couple of giant firecrackers. He pauses as he sees a stranger)

DE PINNA. Oh, pardon me.

PAUL. Yes, Mr. De Pinna?

DE PINNA. These things are not going off, Mr. Sycamore. Look. (He prepares to apply a match to one of them, as a startled income tax man nearly has a convulsion fit)

But PAUL is too quick for him)

PAUL. Ah—not here, Mr. De Pinna. Grandpa's busy.

DE PINNA. Oh. (MR. DE PINNA and PAUL hurry into the hall with their firecrackers)

HENDERSON (now that order has been restored). According to our records, Mr. Vanderhof, you have never paid an income tax.

GRANDPA. That's right.

HENDERSON. Why not?

GRANDPA. I don't believe in it.

HENDERSON. Well—you own property, don't you?

GRANDPA. Yes, sir.

HENDERSON. And you receive a yearly income from it?

GRANDPA. I do.

HENDERSON. Of—(He consults his records)—between three and four thousand dollars.

GRANDPA. About that.

HENDERSON. You've been receiving it for years.

GRANDPA. I have. 1901, if you want the exact date.

HENDERSON. Well, the Government is only concerned from 1914 on. That's when the income tax started.

GRANDPA. Well?

HENDERSON. Well—it seems, Mr. Vanderhof, that you owe the Government twenty-two years' back income tax. ED. Wait a minute! You can't go back that far—that's outlawed.

HENDERSON (calmly regarding him). What's your name?

ED. What difference does that make?

HENDERSON. Ever file an income tax return?

ED. No, sir.

HENDERSON. What was your income last year?

ED. Ah—twenty-eight dollars and fifty cents, wasn't it, Essie?

(ESSIE gives quick assent; the income tax man dismisses the whole matter with an impatient wave of the hand and returns to bigger game)

HENDERSON. Now, Mr. Vanderhof, you know there's quite a penalty for not filing an income tax return.

PENNY. Penalty?

GRANDPA. Look, Mr. Henderson, let me ask you something. HENDERSON. Well?

GRANDPA. Suppose I pay you this money—mind you, I don't say I'm going to do it—but just for the sake of argument—what's the Government going to do with it? HENDERSON. How do you mean?

GRANDPA. Well, what do I get for my money? If I go into Macy's and buy something, there it is—I see it. What's the Government give me?

HENDERSON. Why, the Government gives you everything. It protects you.

GRANDPA. What from?

HENDERSON. Well—invasion. Foreigners that might come over here and take everything you've got.

GRANDPA. Oh, I don't think they're going to do that.

HENDERSON. If you didn't pay an income tax, they would. How do you think the Government keeps up the Army and Navy? All those battleships . . .

GRANDPA. Last time we used battleships was in the Spanish-American War, and what did we get out of it? Cuba—and we gave that back. I wouldn't mind paying if it were something sensible.

HENDERSON (beginning to get annoyed). Well, what about

Congress, and the Supreme Court, and the President? We've got to pay them, don't we?

GRANDPA (*ever so calmly*). Not with my money—no, sir. HENDERSON (*furiously*). Now wait a minute! I'm not here to argue with you. All I know is that you haven't paid an income tax and you've got to pay it!

GRANDPA. They've got to show me.

HENDERSON (*yelling*). We don't have to show you! I just told you! All those buildings down in Washington, and Interstate Commerce, and the Constitution!

GRANDPA. The Constitution was paid for long ago. And Interstate Commerce—what is Interstate Commerce, anyhow?

HENDERSON (*with murderous calm*). There are forty-eight states—see? And if there weren't Interstate Commerce, nothing could go from one state to another. See?

GRANDPA. Why not? They got fences!

HENDERSON. No, they haven't got fences! They've got laws! . . . My God, I never came across anything like this before!

GRANDPA. Well, I might pay about seventy-five dollars, but that's all it's worth.

HENDERSON. You'll pay every cent of it, like everybody else! ED (*who has lost interest*). Listen, Essie—listen to this minute.

(*The xylophone again; ESSIE goes into her dance*)

HENDERSON (*going right ahead, battling against the music*). And let me tell you something else! You'll go to jail if you don't pay, do you hear that? There's a law and if you think you're bigger than the law, you've got another think coming! You'll hear from the United States Government, that's all I can say! (*He is backing out of the room*)

GRANDPA (*quietly*). Look out for those snakes.

HENDERSON (*jumping*). Jesus! (*Out in the hall, and not more than a foot or two behind*)

MR. HENDERSON, the firecracker boys are now ready to test that little bomber. It goes off with a terrific explosion, and MR. HENDERSON jumps a full foot. He has no time at all in getting out of there!

PAUL (*coming back into the room*). How did that go to you folks?

GRANDPA (*gaffe judicially*). I liked it.

PENNY. My goodness, he was mad, wasn't he?

GRANDPA. Oh, it wasn't his fault. It's just that the thing is so silly.

PENNY (*suddenly finding herself with a perfectly Panama in her hand*). He forgot his hat.

GRANDPA. What size is it?

PENNY (*peering into its insides*). Seven and an eighth.

GRANDPA. Just right for me.

THE PINNA. Who was that fellow, anyhow?

(*Again the door bell*)

PENNY. This must be Mr. Kirby.

PAUL. Better make sure this time.

PENNY. Yes, I will. (*She disappears*)

ESSIE. I hope he's good-looking.

PENNY (*heard at the door*). How do you do?

A MAN'S VOICE. Good evening.

PENNY (*taking no chances*). Is this Mr. Anthony Kirby, Jr.?

TONY. Yes.

PENNY (*giving her all*). Well, Mr. Kirby, come right in. We've been expecting you. Come right in! (*They come into sight; PENNY expansively addresses the family*) This is really Mr. Kirby! Now, I'm Alice's mother, that's Mr. Sycamore, and Alice's grandfather, and sister Essie, and Essie's husband. (*There are a mumbled greetings*) There! Now you know all about Mr. Kirby. Give me your hat and make yourself right at home.

(TONY KIRBY comes a few steps into the room. He

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(TONY KIRBY comes a few steps into the room. He is a

personable young man, not long out of Yale, and, as we will presently learn, even more recently out of Cambridge. Although he fits all the physical requirements of a Boss's son, his face has something of the idealist in it. All in all, a very nice young man)

TONY. How do you do?

(Again the voice of the vigilant ALICE floats down from upstairs. "Is that Mr. Kirby, Mother?")

PENNY (shouting up the stairs). Yes, Alice. He's lovely! ALICE (aware of storm signals). I'll be right down.

PENNY. Do sit down, Mr. Kirby.

TONY. Thank you. (A glance at the dinner table) I hope I'm not keeping you from dinner?

GRANDPA. No, no. Have a tomato?

TONY. No, thank you.

PENNY (producing the candy-filled skull). How about a piece of candy?

TONY (eyeing the container). Ah—no, thanks.

PENNY. Oh, I forgot to introduce Mr. De Pinna. This is

Mr. De Pinna, Mr. Kirby.

(An exchange of "How do you do's?")

DE PINNA. Wasn't I reading about your father in the newspaper the other day? Didn't he get indicted or something?

TONY (smiling). Hardly that. He just testified before the Securities Commission.

DE PINNA. Oh.

PENNY (sharply). Yes, of course. I'm sure there was nothing crooked about it, Mr. De Pinna. As a matter of fact—(She is now addressing TONY)—Alice has often told us what a lovely man your father is.

TONY. Well, I know father couldn't get along without Alice. She knows more about the business than any of us.

ESSIE. You're awful young, Mr. Kirby, aren't you, to be vice-president of a big place like that.

TONY. Well, you know what that means, vice-president. All I have is a desk with my name on it.

PENNY. Is that all? Don't you get any salary?

TONY (with a laugh). Well, a little. More than I'm worth, I'm afraid.

PENNY. Now you're just being modest.

GRANDPA. Sounds kind of dull to me—Wall Street. Do you like it?

TONY. Well, the hours are short. And I haven't been there very long.

GRANDPA. Just out of college, huh?

TONY. Well, I knocked around for a while first. Just sort of had fun.

GRANDPA. What did you do? Travel?

TONY. For a while. Then I went to Cambridge for a year.

GRANDPA (nodding). England.

TONY. That's right.

GRANDPA. Say, what's an English commencement like? Did you see any?

TONY. Oh, very impressive.

GRANDPA. They are, huh?

TONY. Anyhow, now the fun's over, and—I'm facing the world.

PENNY. You've certainly got a good start, Mr. Kirby. Vice-president, and a rich father.

TONY. Well, that's hardly my fault.

PENNY (brightly). So now I suppose you're all ready to settle down and—get married.

PAUL. Come now, Penny, I'm sure Mr. Kirby knows his own mind.

PENNY. I wasn't making up his mind for him—was I, Mr. Kirby?

TONY. That's quite all right, Mrs. Sycamore.

PENNY (to the others). You see?

ESSIE. You mustn't rush him, mother.

PENNY. Well, all I meant was he's bound to get married, and suppose the wrong girl gets him?

(*The descending ALICE mercifully comes to TONY's rescue at this moment. Her voice is heard from the stairs*)

ALICE. Well, here I am, a vision in white. (*She comes into the room—and very lovely indeed*) Apparently you've had time to get acquainted.

PENNY. Oh, yes, indeed. We were just having a delightful talk about love and marriage.

ALICE. Oh, dear. (*She turns to TONY*) I'm sorry. I came down as fast as I could.

RHEBA (*bringing a platter of sliced watermelon*). God damn those flies in the kitchen. . . . Oh, Miss Alice, you look beautiful. Where you going?

ALICE (*making the best of it*). I'm going out, Rheba.

RHEBA (*noticing TONY*). Stepping, huh? (*The door bell sounds*)

ESSIE. That must be Kolenkhov.

ALICE (*uneasily*). I think we'd better go, Tony.
TONY. All right.

(*Before they can escape, however, DONALD emerges from the kitchen, bearing a tray*)
DONALD. Grandpa, you take cream on your cornflakes? I forget.

GRANDPA. Half and half, Donald.

(*The voice of BORIS KOLENKHOV booms from the outer door*)

KOLENKHOV. Ah, my little Rhebishka!

RHEBA (*with a scream of laughter*). Yassuh, Mr. Kolenkhov!

KOLENKHOV. I am so hungry I could even eat my little Rhebishka! (*He appears in the archway, his great arms completely encircling the delighted RHEBA. MR. KOLENKHOV is one of RHEBA'S pets, and if you like Russians he might be one of yours. He is enormous, hairy, loud, and very, very Russian. His appearance in the archway still*

further traps ALICE and TONY) Grandpa, what do you think? I have had a letter from Russia! The Second Five Year Plan is a failure! (*He lets out a laugh that shakes the rafters*)

ESSIE. I practiced today, Mr. Kolenkhov!

KOLENKHOV (*with a deep Russian bow*). My Pavlova (*Another bow*) Madame Sycamore! . . . My little Alice! (*He kisses her hand*) Never have I seen you look so magnificent.

ALICE. Thank you, Mr. Kolenkhov. Tony, this is Mr. Kolenkhov, Essie's dancing teacher. Mr. Kirby.
TONY. How do you do?

(*A click of the heels and a bow from KOLENKHOV*)

ALICE (*determined, this time*). And now we really must go. Excuse us, Mr. Kolenkhov—we're going to the Monte Carlo ballet.

KOLENKHOV (*at the top of his tremendous voice*). The Monte Carlo ballet! It stinks!
ALICE (*panicky now*). Yes. . . . Well—good-by, everybody. Good-by.

TONY. Good-by. I'm so glad to have met you all.

(*A chorus of answering "Good-bys" from the family. The young people are gone*)

KOLENKHOV (*still furious*). The Monte Carlo ballet!

PENNY. Isn't Mr. Kirby lovely? . . . Come on, everybody! Dinner's ready!

(*pulling up a chair*). I thought he was a nice fellow, didn't you?

ESSIE. Mm. And so good-looking.

PENNY. And he had such nice manners. Did you notice, Paul? Did you notice his manners?

PAUL. I certainly did. You were getting pretty personal with him.

PENNY. Oh, now, Paul. . . . Anyhow, he's a very nice young man.

DE PINNA (*as he seats himself*). He looks kind of like a cousin of mine.
 KOLENKHOV. Bakst! Diaghileff! Then you had the ball!
 PENNY. I think if they get married here I'll put the altar right where the snakes are. You wouldn't mind, Grandpa, would you?
 ESSIE. Oh, they'll want to get married in a church. His family and everything.

GRANDPA (*tapping on a plate for silence*). Quiet, everybody! Quiet! (*They are immediately silent*)—Grace is about to be pronounced. GRANDPA pauses a moment for his throat and proceeds to say Grace) Well, Sir, we've been getting along pretty good for quite a while now, and we're certainly much obliged. Remember, all we ask is just to go along and be happy in our own sort of way. Of course we want to keep our health, but as far as anything else is concerned, we'll leave it to You Thank You. (*The heads come up as REBEA comes through the door with a steaming platter*) So the Second Five Year Plan is a failure, eh, Kolenkhov?

KOLENKHOV (*booming*). Catastrophic! (*He reaches across the table and spears a piece of bread. The family, too, is busily plunging in*)

The curtain is down

SCENE II

(*Late the same night. The house is in darkness save for a light in the hall. Somewhere in the back regions an accordion is being played. Then quiet. Then the stillness of the night is suddenly broken again by a good loud BANG! from the*

cellar. Somewhere in the nether regions, one of the Sycamores is still at work. Once more all is quiet, then the sound of a key in the outer door. The voices of ALICE and TONY drift through.)

ALICE. I could see them dance every night of the week. I think they're marvelous.

TONY. They are, aren't they? But of course just walking inside any theater gives me a thrill.

ALICE (*as they come into sight in the hallway*). It's been so lovely, Tony. I hate to have it over.

TONY. Oh, is it over? Do I have to go right away?

ALICE. Not if you don't want to.

TONY. I don't.

ALICE. Would you like a cold drink?

TONY. Wonderful.

ALICE (*pausing to switch on the light*). I'll see what's in the ice-box. Want to come along?

TONY. I'd follow you to the ends of the earth.

ALICE. Oh, just the kitchen is enough. (*They go out. A pause, a ripple of gay laughter from the kitchen, then they return. ALICE is carrying a couple of glasses, TONY brings two bottles of ginger ale and an opener*) Lucky you're not hungry, Mr. K. An ice-box full of cornflakes. That gives you a rough idea of the Sycamores.

TONY (*working away with the opener*). Of course, why they make these bottle openers for Singer midgets I never was able to—ah! (*As the bottle opens*) All over my coat.

ALICE. I'll take mine in a glass, if you don't mind.

TONY (*pouring*). There you are. A foaming beaker.

ALICE. Anyhow, it's cold.

TONY (*pouring his own*). Now if you'll please be seated. I'd like to offer a toast.

ALICE (*settling herself*). We are seated.

TONY. Miss Sycamore— (*He raises his glass on high*) —to you.

ALICE. Thank you, Mr. Kirby. (*Lifting her own glass*) To you. (*They both drink*)

TONY. (*happily*). I wouldn't trade one minute of this evening for—all the rice in China.

ALICE. Really?

TONY. Cross my heart.

ALICE (*a little sigh of contentment*). Then shyly). Is there much rice in China?

TONY. Terrific. Didn't you read "The Good Earth"? (*She laughs*. *They are silent for a moment*) I suppose I ought to go.

ALICE. Is it very late?

TONY (*looks at his watch*). Very. (*ALICE gives a little nod*. *Time doesn't matter*) I don't want to go.

ALICE. I don't want you to.

TONY. All right, I won't. (*Silence again*) When do you go your vacation?

ALICE. Last two weeks in August.

TONY. I might take mine then, too.

ALICE. Really?

TONY. What are you going to do?

ALICE. I don't know. I hadn't thought much about it.

TONY. Going away, do you think?

ALICE. I might not. I like the city in the summer time.

TONY. I do too.

ALICE. But you always go up to Maine, don't you?

TONY. Why—yes, but I'm sure I *would* like the city in the summer time. That is, I'd like it if—Oh, you know what I mean, Alice. I'd love it if you were here.

ALICE. Well—it'd be nice if you were here, Tony.

TONY. You know what you're saying, don't you?

ALICE. What?

TONY. That you'd rather spend the summer with me than anybody else.

ALICE. It looks that way, doesn't it?

TONY. Well, if it's true about the summer, how would you feel about—the winter?

ALICE (*seeming to weigh the matter*). Yes. I'd—like that too.

TONY (*tremulous*). Then comes spring—and autumn. If you could—see your way clear about those, Miss Sycamore. . . .

ALICE (*again a little pause*). Yes.

TONY. I guess that's the whole year. We haven't forgotten anything, have we?

ALICE. No.

TONY. Well, then—

(*Another pause; their eyes meet. And at this moment, PENNY is heard from the stairway*)

PENNY. Is that you, Alice? What time is it? (*She comes into the room, wrapped in a bathrobe*) Oh! (*In sudden embarrassment*) Excuse me, Mr. Kirby. I had no idea—that is, I— (*She senses the situation*) —I didn't mean to interrupt anything.

TONY. Not at all, Mrs. Sycamore.

ALICE (*quietly*). No, Mother.

PENNY. I just came down for a manuscript— (*Fumbling at her table*) —then you can go right ahead. Ah, here it is. "Sex Takes a Holiday." Well—good night, Mr. Kirby.

TONY. Good night, Mrs. Sycamore.

PENNY. Oh, I think you can call me Penny, don't you, Alice? At least I hope so.

(*With a little laugh she vanishes up the stairs. Before PENNY'S rippling laugh quite dies, BANG! from the cellar. TONY jumps*)

ALICE (*quietly*). It's all right, Tony. That's Father.

TONY. This time of night?

ALICE (*ominously*). Any time of night. Any time of day. (*She stands silent. In the pause, TONY gazes at her fondly*)

TONY. You're more beautiful, more lovely, more adorable than anyone else in the whole world.

ALICE (*as he starts to embrace her*). Don't, Tony. I can't, TONY. What?

ALICE. I can't, Tony.

TONY. My dear, just because your mother—all mothers are like that, Alice, and Penny's a darling. You see, I'm even calling her Penny.

ALICE. I don't mean that. (*She faces him squarely*) Look, Tony. This is something I should have said a long time ago, but I didn't have the courage. I let myself be swept away because—because I loved you so.

TONY. Darling!

ALICE. No, wait, Tony. I want to make it clear to you. You're of a different world—a whole different kind of people. Oh, I don't mean money or socially—that's too silly. But your family and mine—it just wouldn't work, Tony. It just wouldn't work.

(*Again an interruption. This time it is ED and ESSIE, returning from the neighborhood movie. We hear their voices at the door, deep in an argument. ED: "All right, have it your way. She can't dance. That's why they pay her all that money—because she can't dance." And then ESSIE: "Well, I don't call that dancing, what she does."*)

(*They come into sight*)

ESSIE. Oh, hello. (*There is an exchange of greetings, a note of constraint in ALICE's voice. But ESSIE goes right ahead*) Look! What do you think? Ed and I just saw Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Do you think she can dance, Mr. Kirby?

TONY (*mildly taken aback by this*). Why, yes—I always thought so.

ESSIE. What does she do, anyhow? Now, look—you've Fred Astaire and I'm Ginger Rogers. (*She drapes herself against TONY, à la Ginger Rogers*)

ALICE. Essie, please.

ESSIE. I just want to use him for a minute. . . . Look, Mr. Kirby—(*Her arms go round his neck, her cheek against his*)

ALICE (*Feeling that it's time to take action*). Essie, you're just as good as Ginger Rogers. We all agree.

ESSIE (*triumphantly*). You see, Ed?

ED. Yeh. . . . Come on, Essie—we're butting in here.

ESSIE. Oh, they've been together all evening. . . . Good night, Mr. Kirby.

(*An exchange of good nights—it looks as though the CARMICHAELS are really going upstairs before the whole thing gets too embarrassing. Then ED turns casually to ESSIE in the doorway*)

ED. Essie, did you ask Grandpa about us having a baby?

ESSIE (*as they ascend the stairs*). Yes—he said go right ahead.

ALICE (*when they are gone*). You see? That's what it would be like, always.

TONY. But I didn't mind that. Besides, darling, we're not going to live with our families. It's just you and I.

ALICE. No, it isn't—it's never quite that. I love them, Tony—I love them deeply. Some people could cut away, but I couldn't. I know they do rather strange things—I never know what to expect next—but they're gay, and they're fun, and—I don't know—there's a kind of nobility about them. That may sound silly, but I mean—the way they just don't care about things that other people give their whole lives to. They're—really wonderful, Tony.

TONY. Alice, you talk as though only you could understand them. That's not true. Why, I fell in love with them tonight.

ALICE. But your family, Tony. I'd want *you*, and everything about you, everything about *me*, to be—one. I couldn't start out with a part of me that you didn't share, and part of you that I didn't share. Unless we were all one

—you, and your mother and father—I'd be miserable. And they never can be, Tony—I know it. They couldn't be.

TONY. Alice, every family has got curious little traits. What of it? My father raises orchids at ten thousand dollars a bulb. Is that sensible? My mother believes in spiritualism. That's just as bad as your mother writing plays, isn't it?

ALICE. It goes deeper, Tony. Your mother believes in spiritualism because it's fashionable. And your father raises orchids because he can afford to. My mother writes plays because eight years ago a typewriter was delivered here by mistake.

TONY. Darling, what of it?

ALICE. And look at Grandpa. Thirty-five years ago he just quit business one day. He started up to his office in the elevator and came right down again. He just stopped. He could have been a rich man, but he said it took too much time. So for thirty-five years he's just collected snakes and gone to circuses and commencements. It never occurs to any of them—

(As if to prove her point, they are suddenly interrupted at this moment by the entrance of DONALD from the kitchen. It is a DONALD who has plainly not expected to encounter midnight visitors, for he is simply dressed in a long white nightgown and a somewhat shorter bath robe—a costume that permits a generous expanse of white nightshirt down around the legs, and, below that, a couple of very black shins. His appearance, incidentally, explains where all that music had been coming from, for an accordion is slung over his shoulder.)

DONALD (surprised, but not taken aback). Oh, excuse me. I didn't know you folks was in here.

ALICE (resigned). It's all right, Donald.

DONALD. Rheba kind of fancied some candy, and— (He

gaze is roaming the room) oh, there it is. (He picks up PENNY'S skull, if you know what we mean) You-all don't want it, do you?

ALICE. No, Donald. Go right ahead.

DONALD. Thanks. (He feels that the occasion calls for certain amenities) Have a nice evening?

ALICE. Yes, Donald.

DONALD. Nice dinner?

ALICE (restraining herself). Yes, Donald.

DONALD. The ballet nice?

ALICE (entirely too quietly). Yes, Donald.

DONALD (summing it all up). That's nice. (He goes—and ALICE bursts forth)

ALICE. Now! Now do you see what I mean? Could you explain Donald to your father? Could you explain Grandpa? You couldn't, Tony, you couldn't! I should have known! I did know! I love you, Tony, but I love them too! And it's no use, Tony! It's no use! (She is weeping now in spite of herself)

TONY (quietly). There's only one thing you've said that matters—that makes any sense at all. You love me.

ALICE. But, Tony, I know so well . . .

TONY. My darling, don't you think other people have had the same problem? Everybody's got a family.

ALICE (through her tears). But not like mine.

TONY. That doesn't stop people who love each other. . . . Darling! Darling, won't you trust me, and go on loving me, and forget everything else?

ALICE. How can I?

TONY. Because nothing can keep us apart. You know that. You must know it. Just as I know it. (He takes her in his arms) They want you to be happy, don't they? They must.

ALICE. Of course they do. But they can't change, Tony. I wouldn't want them to change.

TONY. They won't have to change. They're charming, lovable people, just as they are. You're worrying about something that may never come up.

ALICE. Oh, Tony, am I?

TONY. All that matters right now is that we love each other. That's right, isn't it?

ALICE (*whispering*). Yes.

TONY. Well, then!

ALICE (*in his arms*). Tony, Tony!

TONY. Now! I'd like to see a little gayety around here. Young gentleman calling, and getting engaged and everything.

ALICE (*smiling up into his face*). What do I say?

TONY. Well, first you thank the young man for getting engaged to you.

ALICE. Thank you, Mr. Kirby, for getting engaged to me. TONY. And then you tell him what it was about him that first took your girlish heart.

ALICE. The back of your head.

TONY. Huh?

ALICE. Uh-huh. It wasn't your charm, and it wasn't your money—it was the back of your head. I just happened to like it.

TONY. What happened when I turned around?

ALICE. Oh, I got used to it after a while.

TONY. I see . . . Oh, Alice, think of it. We're pretty lucky aren't we?

ALICE. I know that I am. The luckiest girl in the world.

TONY. I'm not exactly unlucky myself.

ALICE. It's wonderful, isn't it?

TONY. Yes . . . Lord, but I'm happy.

ALICE. Are you, Tony?

TONY. Terribly . . . And now—good night, my dear. Uh til tomorrow.

ALICE. Good night.

TONY. Isn't it wonderful we work in the same office? Otherwise I'd be hanging around *here* all day.

ALICE. Won't it be funny in the office tomorrow—seeing each other and just going on as though nothing had happened?

TONY. Thank God I'm vice-president. I can dictate to you all day. "Dear Miss Sycamore: I love you, I love you, I love you."

ALICE. Oh, darling! You're such a fool.

TONY (*an arm about her as he starts toward the hallway*). Why don't you meet me in the drugstore in the morning—before you go up to the office? I'll have millions of things to say to you by then.

ALICE. All right.

TONY. And then lunch, and then dinner tomorrow night.

ALICE. Oh, Tony! What will people say?

TONY. It's got to come out some time. In fact, if you know a good house-top, I'd like to do a little shouting.

(*She laughs—a happy little ripple. They are out of sight in the hallway by this time; their voices become inaudible*)

(PAUL, at this point, decides to call it a day down in the cellar. He comes through the door, followed by MR. DE PINNA. He is carrying a small metal container, filled with powder)

PAUL. Yes, sir, Mr. De Pinna, we did a good day's work, DE PINNA. That's what. Five hundred Black Panthers, three hundred Willow Trees, and eight dozen Junior Kiddie Bombers.

(ALICE comes back from the hallway, still under the spell of her love)

PAUL. Why, hello, Alice. You just come in?

ALICE (*softly*). No. No, I've been home quite a while.

PAUL. Have a nice evening? Say, I'd like you to take a look at this new red fire we've got.

ALICE (*almost singing it*). I had a beautiful evening, Father.

PAUL. Will you turn out the lights, Mr. De Pinna? I want Alice to get the full effect.

ALICE (*who hasn't heard a word*). What, Father?

PAUL. Take a look at this new red fire. It's beautiful. (MR. DE PINNA switches the lights out; PAUL touches a match to the powder. The red fire blazes, shedding a soft glow over the room.) There! What do you think of it? Isn't it beautiful?

ALICE (*radiant; her face aglow, her voice soft*). Yes, Father. Everything is beautiful. It's the most beautiful red fire in the world! (*She rushes to him and throws her arms about him, almost unable to bear her own happiness*)

Curtain

ACT TWO

(A week later, and the family has just risen from the dinner table. Two or three of them have drifted out of the room, but GRANDPA and PAUL still sit over their coffee cups)

(There is, however, a newcomer in the room. Her name is GAY WELLINGTON, and, as we will presently guess, she is an actress, a nymphomaniac, and a terrible souse. At the moment she sits with a gin bottle in one hand and a glass in the other, and is having a damned good time. Hovering over her, script in hand, is a slightly worried PENNY. ED is watching the proceedings from somewhere in the vicinage of the printing press, and DONALD, let us surely clearing the table, has paused to see if MISS WELLINGTON can really swallow that one more drink of gin that she is about to tackle. She does, and another besides)

(PENNY finally decides to make a try)

PENNY. I'm ready to read the play now, Miss Wellington, if you are.

GAY WELLINGTON. Just a minute, dearie—just a minute (*The gin again*)

PENNY. The only thing is—I hope you won't mind my mentioning this, but—you don't drink when you're acting, do you, Miss Wellington? I'm just asking, of course. GAY. I'm glad you brought it up. Once a play opens, I never touch a drop. Minute I enter a stage door, this bottle gets put away till intermission.

GRANDPA (who plainly has his doubts). Have you been on the stage a long time, Miss Wellington?

GAY. All my life. I've played everything. Ever see "Peg o' My Heart"?

GRANDPA. Yes, indeed.

GAY (with that fine logic for which the inebriated brain is celebrated). I saw it too. Great show. (She staggers backwards a bit, but recovers herself just in time) My!

Hot night, ain't it?

DONALD (ever helpful). Want me to open a window, Miss Wellington?

GAY. No, the hell with the weather. (She takes a second look at the dusky DONALD) Say, he's cute.

(RHEBA, who has entered just in time to overhear this, gives GAY a look that tells her in no uncertain terms to keep out of Harlem on dark nights. Then she stalks back into the kitchen, DONALD close on her heels)

DONALD (trying to explain it all). She's just acting, Rheba. She don't mean anything.

PENNY. Well, any time you're ready, we can go up to my room and start. I thought I'd read the play up in my room.

GAY. All right, dearie, just a minute. (She starts to pour one more drink, then suddenly her gaze becomes transfixed. She shakes her head as though to dislodge the image, then looks again, receives verification, and starts to pour the gin back into the bottle) When I see snakes it's time to lay down. (She makes for a couch in the corner, and passes right out—cold)

PENNY. Oh, but those are real, Miss Wellington. They're Grandpa's. . . . Oh, dear! I hope she's not going to— (Shaking her) Miss Wellington! Miss Wellington!

ED. She's out like a light.

PAUL. Better let her sleep it off.

DONALD (carrying the news into the kitchen). Rheba, Miss Wellington just passed out.

(From the nether recesses we hear RHEBA'S reaction—an emphatic "Good!")

PENNY. Do you think she'll be all right?

GRANDPA. Yes, but I wouldn't cast her in the religious play.

PENNY. Well, I suppose I'll just have to wait. I wonder if I shouldn't cover her up.

GRANDPA. Next time you meet an actress on the top of a bus, Penny, I think I'd send her the play, instead of bringing her home to read it.

ESSIE (as ED starts in with the printing press). Ed, I wish you'd stop printing and take those Love Dreams around. They're out in the kitchen.

ED. I will. I just want to finish up these circulars.

ESSIE. Well, do that later, can't you? You've got to get back in time to play for me when Kolenkhov comes.

GRANDPA. Kolenkhov coming tonight?

ESSIE. Yes, tomorrow night's his night, but I had to change it on account of Alice.

GRANDPA. Oh! . . . Big doings around here tomorrow night, huh?

PENNY. Isn't it exciting? You know, I'm so nervous—you'd think it was me he was engaged to, instead of Alice.

ESSIE. What do you think they'll be like—his mother and father? . . . Ed, what are you doing now?

ED. Penny, did you see the new mask I made last night? (He reveals a new side of his character by suddenly holding a homemade mask before his face) Guess who it is.

PENNY. Don't tell me now, Ed. Wait a minute . . . Cleopatra.

ED (furious). It's Mrs. Roosevelt. (He goes into the kitchen)

(PAUL, meanwhile, has gone to a table in the corner of the room, from which he now brings a steel-like boat model, two or three feet high, puts it down on the floor, and proceeds to sit down beside it. From a large cardboard

box, which he has also brought with him, he proceeds to take out additional pieces of steel and fit them into the model)

PAUL. You know, the nice thing about these Erector Sets, you can make so many different things with them. Last week it was the Empire State Building.

GRANDPA. What is it this week?

PAUL. The Queen Mary.

PENNY (looking it over). Hasn't got the right hat on. (ED comes in from the kitchen, bringing a pile of about a dozen candy boxes, neatly wrapped, and tied together for purposes of delivery)

ED (as MR. DE PINNA comes in from the hall). Look. Mr.

De Pinna, would you open the door and see if there's a man standing in front of the house?

ESSIE. Why, what for?

ED. Well, the last two days, when I've been out delivering, I think a man's been following me.

ESSIE. Ed, you're crazy.

ED. No, I'm not. He follows me, and he stands and watches the house.

DE PINNA. Really? (Striding out) I'll take a look and see.

GRANDPA. I don't see what anybody would follow you for, Ed.

PENNY. Well, there's a lot of kidnapping going on, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. Yes, but not of Ed.

ED (as MR. DE PINNA returns from the hall). Well? Did you see him?

DE PINNA. There's nobody out there at all.

ED. You're sure?

DE PINNA. Positive. I just saw him walk away.

ED. You see? I told you.

ESSIE. Oh, it might have been anybody, walking along the street. Ed, will you hurry and get back?

ED (picking up his boxes). Oh, all right.

DE PINNA. Want to go down now, Mr. Sycamore, and finish packing up the fireworks?

PAUL (putting the Queen Mary back on the table). Yet, we've got to take the stuff up to Mt. Vernon in the morning.

(They go into the cellar. Simultaneously the voice of ALICE, happily singing, is heard as she descends the stairs)

ALICE. Mother, may I borrow some paper? I'm making out a list for Rheba tomorrow night.

PENNY. Yes, dear. Here's some.

ALICE (as she sighs MISS WELLINGTON). Why, what happened to your actress friend? Is she giving a performance?

PENNY. No, she's not acting, Alice. She's really drunk. Alice. Essie, you're going to give Rheba the kitchen all day tomorrow, aren't you? Because she'll need it.

ESSIE. Of course, Alice. I'm going to start some Love Dreams now, so I'll be 'way ahead. (She goes into the kitchen)

ALICE. Thanks, dear . . . Look, Mother, I'm coming home at three o'clock tomorrow. Will you have everything down in the cellar by that time? The typewriter, and the snakes, and the xylophone, and the printing press . . .

GRANDPA. And Miss Wellington.

ALICE. And Miss Wellington. That'll give me time to arrange the table, and fix the flowers.

GRANDPA. The Kirbys are certainly going to get the wrong impression of this house.

ALICE. You'll do all that, won't you, Mother?

PENNY. Of course, dear.

ALICE. And I think we'd better have cocktails ready by seven-fifteen, in case they happen to come a little early.

. . . I wonder if I ought to let Rheba cook the dinner. What do you think, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. Now, Alice, I wouldn't worry. From what I've

seen of the boy I'm sure the Kirbys are very nice people, and if everything isn't so elaborate tomorrow night, it's all right too.

ALICE. Darling, I'm not trying to impress them, or pretend we're anything that we aren't. I just want everything to—to go off well.

GRANDPA. No reason why it shouldn't, Alice.

PENNY. We're all going to do everything we can to make it a nice party.

ALICE. Oh, my darlings, I love you. You're the most wonderful family in the world, and I'm the happiest girl in the world. I didn't know anyone could be so happy. He's so wonderful, Grandpa. Why, just seeing him—you don't know what it does to me.

GRANDPA. Just seeing him. Just seeing him for lunch, and dinner, and until four o'clock in the morning, and at nine o'clock *next* morning you're at the office again and there he is. You just see him, huh?

ALICE. I don't care! I'm in love! (*She swings open the kitchen door*) Rhebal Rhebal (*She goes into the kitchen*)

GRANDPA. Nice, isn't it? Nice to see her so happy.

PENNY. I remember when I was engaged to Paul—how happy I was. And you know, I still feel that way.

GRANDPA. I know . . . Nice the way Ed and Essie get along too, isn't it?

PENNY. And Donald and Rheba, even though they're not married. . . . Do you suppose Mr. De Pinna will ever marry anyone, Grandpa?

GRANDPA (*a gesture toward the couch*). Well, there's Miss Wellington.

PENNY. Oh, dear, I wish she'd wake up. If we're going to read the play tonight—

(MR. DE PINNA comes up from the cellar, bringing along a rather large-sized unframed painting)

DE PINNA. Mrs. Sycamore, look what I found! (*He turns*

the canvas around, revealing a portrait of a somewhat lumpy discus thrower, in Roman costume—or was it Greek?) Remember?

PENNY. Why, of course. It's my painting of you as The Discus Thrower. Look, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. I remember it. Say, you've gotten a little bald, haven't you, Mr. De Pinna?

DE PINNA (*running a hand over his completely hairless head*). Is it very noticeable?

PENNY. Well, it was a long time ago—just before I stopped painting. Let me see—that's eight years.

DE PINNA. Too bad you never finished it, Mrs. Sycamore.

PENNY. I always meant to finish it, Mr. De Pinna, but I just started to write a play one day and that was that. I never painted again.

GRANDPA. Just as well, too. I was going to have to strip next.

DE PINNA (*meditatively*). Who would have thought, that day I came to deliver the ice, that I was going to stay here for eight years?

GRANDPA. The milkman was here for five, just ahead of you.

DE PINNA. Why did he leave, anyhow? I forget.

GRANDPA. He didn't leave. He died.

PENNY. He was such a nice man. Remember the funeral, Grandpa? We never knew his name and it was kind of hard to get a certificate.

GRANDPA. What was the name we finally made up for him? PENNY. Martin Vanderhof. We gave him *your* name.

GRANDPA. Oh, yes, I remember.

PENNY. It was a lovely thought, because otherwise he never would have got all those flowers.

GRANDPA. Certainly was. And it didn't hurt me any. Not bothered with mail any more, and I haven't had a telephone call from that day to this. (*He catches an unwary fly and drops it casually into the snake solarium*)

PENNY. Yes, it was really a wonderful idea.
 DE PINNA (*with the picture*). I wish you'd finish this some-time, Mrs. Sycamore. I'd kind of like to have it.
 PENNY. You know what, Mr. De Pinna? I think I'll do some work on it. Right tonight.

DE PINNA. Say! Will you?

(*The door bell rings*)

PENNY (*peering at the prostrate GAY*). I don't think she's going to wake up anyhow. . . . Look, Mr. De Pinna! You go down in the cellar and bring up the easel and get into your costume. Is it still down there?

DE PINNA (*excited*). I think so! (*He darts into the cellar*)
 PENNY. Now, where did I put my palette and brushes? (*She dashes up the stairs as the voice of KOLENKHOF is heard at the door, booming, of course*)

KOLENKHOF. Rhebishka! My little Rhebishka!

RHEB. (*delighted, as usual*). Yassuh, Mr. Kolenkhov!

PENNY (*as she goes up the stairs*). Hello, Mr. Kolenkhov. Essie's in the kitchen.

KOLENKHOF. Madame Sycamore, I greet you! (*His great arm again encircling RHEBA, he drags her protestingly into the room*) Tell me, Grandpa—what should I do about Rhebishka! I keep telling her she would make a great toe dancer, but she laughs only!

RHEBA (*breaking away*). No, suh! I couldn't get up on my toes, Mr. Kolenkhov! I got corns! (*She goes into the kitchen*)

KOLENKHOF (*calling after her*). Rhebishka, you could wear diamonds! (*Suddenly he sights the portrait of MR. DE PINNA*) What is that?

GRANDPA (*who has taken up his stamp album again*). It's a picture of Mr. De Pinna. Penny painted it.

KOLENKHOF (*summing it up*). It stinks.

GRANDPA. I know. (*He indicates the figure on the couch*)

How do you like that?

KOLENKHOF (*peering over*). What is that?

GRANDPA. She's an actress. Friend of Penny's.

KOLENKHOF. She is drunk—no?

GRANDPA. She is drunk—yes. . . . How are you, Kolenkhov?

KOLENKHOF. Magnificent! Life is chasing around inside of me, like a squirrel.

GRANDPA. 'Tis, huh? . . . What's new in Russia? Any more letters from your friend in Moscow?

KOLENKHOF. I have just heard from him. I saved for you the stamp. (*He hands it over*)

GRANDPA (*receiving it with delight*). Thanks, Kolenkhov. KOLENKHOF. They have sent him to Siberia.

GRANDPA. That so? How's he like it?

KOLENKHOF. He has escaped. He has escaped and gone back to Moscow. He will get them yet, if they do not get him. The Soviet Government! I could take the whole Soviet Government and—grrah! (*He crushes Stalin and all in one great paw, just as ESSIE comes in from the kitchen*)

ESSIE. I'm sorry I'm late, Mr. Kolenkhov. I'll get into my dancing clothes right away.

KOLENKHOF. Tonight you will really work, Pavlowa. (*As Essie goes up the stairs*) Tonight we will take something new.

GRANDPA. Essie making any progress, Kolenkhov?

KOLENKHOF (*first making elaborately sure that ESSIE is gone*). Confidentially, she stinks.

GRANDPA. Well, as long as she's having fun. . . .

(*DONALD ambles in from the kitchen, chuckling*)

DONALD. You sure do tickle Rheba, Mr. Kolenkhov. She's laughing her head off out there.

KOLENKHOF. She is a great woman. . . . Donald, what do you think of the Soviet Government?

DONALD. The what, Mr. Kolenkhov?

KOLENKHOF. I withdraw the question. What do you think of this Government?

DONALD. Oh, I like it fine. I'm on relief, you know.

KOLENKHOF. Oh, yes. And you like it?

DONALD. Yassuh, it's fine. Only thing is you got to go round to the place every week and collect it, and sometimes you got to stand in line pretty near half an hour. Government ought to be run better than that—don't you think, Grandpa?

GRANDPA (*as he fishes an envelope out of his pocket*). Government ought to stop sending me letters. Want me to be at the United States Marshal's office Tuesday morning at ten o'clock.

KOLENKHOF (*peering at the letter*). Ah! Income tax! They have got you, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. Mm. I'm supposed to give 'em a lot of money so as to keep Donald on relief.

DONALD. You don't say, Grandpa? You going to pay it now?

GRANDPA. That's what they want.

DONALD. You mean I can come right here and get it instead of standing in that line?

GRANDPA. No, Donald. You will have to waste a full half hour of your time every week.

DONALD. Well, I don't like it. It breaks up my week. (*He goes into the kitchen*)

KOLENKHOF. He should have been in Russia when the Revolution came. Then he would have stood in line—they have done to Russia. Think of it! The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina, a cousin of the Czar, she is a waitress in Childs' restaurant! I ordered baked beans from her only yesterday. It broke my heart. A crazy world, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. Oh, the world's not so crazy, Kolenkhov. It's the people in it. Life's pretty simple if you just relax.

KOLENKHOF. How can you relax in times like these?

GRANDPA. Well, if they'd relaxed there wouldn't be times like these. That's just my point. Life is simple and kind

of beautiful if you let it come to you. But the trouble is, people forget that. I know I did. I was right in the thick of it—fighting, and scratching, and clawing. Regular jungle. One day it just kind of struck me. I wasn't having any fun.

KOLENKHOF. So you did what?

GRANDPA. Just relaxed. Thirty-five years ago, that was. And I've been a happy man ever since.

(*From somewhere or other GRANDPA has brought one of those colored targets that one buys at Schwartz's. He now hangs it up on the cellar door, picks up a handful of feathered darts, and carefully throws one at the target*)

(*At the same time ALICE passes through the room, en route from kitchen to the upstairs region*)

ALICE. Good evening, Mr. Kolenkhov.

KOLENKHOF (*bowing low over her hand*). Ah, Miss Alice! I have not seen you to present my congratulations. May you be very happy and have many children. That is my prayer for you.

ALICE. Thank you, Mr. Kolenkhov. That's quite a thought. (*Singing gayly, she goes up the stairs*)

KOLENKHOF (*looking after her*). Ah, love! That is all that is left in the world, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. Yes, but there's plenty of that.

KOLENKHOF. And soon Stalin will take that away, too. I tell you, Grandpa—

(*He stops as PENNY comes down the stairs—a living example of what the well-dressed artist should wear. She has on an artist's smock over her dress, a flowing black tie, and a large black velvet tam-o'-shanter, worn at a rakish angle. She carries a palette and an assortment of paints and brushes*)

PENNY. Seems so nice to get into my art things again. They still look all right, don't they, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. Yes, indeed.

KOLENKHOV. You are a breath of Paris, Madame Sycamore.
PENNY. Oh, thank you, Mr. Kolenkhov.

DONALD (*coming in from the kitchen*). I didn't know you was working for the WPA.

PENNY. Oh, no, Donald. You see, I used to paint all the time, and then one day—

(*The outer door slams and ED comes in*)

ED (*in considerable excitement*). It happened again! There was a fellow following me every place I went!

PENNY. Nonsense, Ed. It's your imagination.

ED. No, it isn't. It happens every time I go out to deliver candy.

GRANDPA. Maybe he wants a piece of candy.

ED. It's all right for you to laugh, Grandpa, but he keeps following me.

KOLENKHOV (*somberly*). You do not know what following is. In Russia everybody is followed. I was followed right out of Russia.

PENNY. Of course. You see, Ed—the whole thing is just imagination. (MR. DE PINNA comes up from the cellar, ready for posing. He wears the traditional Roman costume, and he certainly cuts a figure. He is carrying PENNY'S easel, a discus, and a small platform for posing purposes) Ah, here we are! . . . Right here, Mr. De Pinna.

DONALD (*suddenly getting it*). Oh, is that picture supposed to be Mr. De Pinna?

PENNY (*sharply*). Of course it is, Donald. What's it look like—me?

DONALD (*studying the portrait*). Yes, it does—a little bit.

PENNY. Nonsense! What would I be doing with a discus?

KOLENKHOV. Ed, for tonight's lesson we use the first movement of Scheherazade.

ED. Okay.

DE PINNA (*about to mount the platform*). I hope I haven't forgotten how to pose. (*He takes up the discus and*

strikes the classic pose of the Discus Thrower. Somehow, it is not quite convincing)

DONALD. What's he going to do with that thing? Throw it?

PENNY. No, no, Donald. He's just posing. . . . Mr. De Pinna, has something happened to your figure during these eight years?

DE PINNA (*pulling in his stomach*). No, I don't think it's any different.

(*With a sudden snort, GAY WELLINGTON comes to*)

PENNY (*immediately alert*). Yes, Miss Wellington?

(*For answer, GAY peers first at PENNY, then at MR. DE PINNA. Then, with a strange snort, she just passes right out again*)

PENNY. Oh, dear.

(*ESSIE comes tripping down the stairs—very much the ballet dancer. She is in full costume—ballet skirt, tight white satin bodice, a garland of roses in her hair*)

ESSIE. Sorry, Mr. Kolenkhov, I couldn't find my slippers.

KOLENKHOV (*having previously removed his coat, he now takes off his shirt, displaying an enormous hairy chest beneath his undershirt*). We have a hot night for it, my Pavlova, but art is only achieved through perspiration. PENNY. Why, that's wonderful, Mr. Kolenkhov. Did you hear that, Grandpa—art is only achieved through perspiration.

GRANDPA. Yes, but it helps if you've got a little talent with it. (*He returns to his dart throwing*) Only made two bull's-eyes last night. Got to do better than that. (*He hurls a dart at the board, then his eye travels to MISS WELLINGTON, whose posterior offers an even easier target*) Mind if I use Miss Wellington, Penny?

PENNY. What, Grandpa?

GRANDPA (*shakes his head*). Never mind. . . . Too easy.

(*GRANDPA throws another dart at the target*)

KOLENKHOV. You are ready? We begin! (*With a gesture he orders the music started; under KOLENKHOV'S critical eye*

ESSIE *begins the mazes of the dance*) Fouettée, temps, élevée. (ESSIE *obliges with her own idea of fouettée, temps, élevée*) Pirouette! . . . Come, come! You can do that! It's eight years now. Pirouette! . . . At last! . . . Entrechat! . . . Entrechat! (ESSIE *leaps into the air, her feet twirling*) No, Grandpa, you cannot relax with Stalin in Russia. The Czar relaxed, and what happened to him?

GRANDPA. He was too late.

ESSIE (*still leaping away*). Mr. Kolenkhov! Mr. Kolenkhov! KOLENKHOV. If he had not relaxed the Grand Duchess Olga Katrina would not be selling baked beans today.

ESSIE (*imploringly*). Mr. Kolenkhov!

KOLENKHOV. I am sorry. (*The door bell rings*) We go back to the pirouette.

PENNY. Could you pull in your stomach, Mr. De Pinna? . . . That's right.

KOLENKHOV. A little freer. A little freer with the hands. The whole body must work. Ed, help us with the music. The music must be free, too.

(*By way of guiding ED, KOLENKHOV hums the music at the pace that it should go. He is even pirouetting a bit himself*)

(*From the front door comes the murmur of voices, not quite audible over the music. Then the stunned figure of RHEBA comes into the archway, her eyes popping*)

RHEBA. Mrs. Sycamore. . . Mrs. Sycamore. (*With a gesture that has a grim foreboding in it, she motions toward the still incisable reason for her panic*)

(*There is a second's pause, and then the reason is revealed in all its horror. The KIRBYS, in full evening dress, stand in the archway. All three of them. MR. AND MRS. KIRBY, and TONY*)

(*PENNY utters a stifled gasp; the others are too stunned even to do that. Their surprise at seeing the KIRBYS,*

however, is no greater than that of the KIRBYS at the sight that is spread before them)

(GRANDPA, alone of them all, rises to the situation. With a kind of old world grace, he puts away his darts and makes the guests welcome)

GRANDPA. How do you do?

KIRBY (*uncertainly*). How do you do?

(*Not that it helps any, but MR. DE PINNA is squirming into his bathrobe, KOLENKHOV is thrusting his shirt into his trousers, and ED is hastily getting into his coat*)

TONY. Are we too early?

GRANDPA. No, no. It's perfectly all right—we're glad to see you.

PENNY (*getting rid of the smock and tam*). Why—yes. Only—we thought it was to be tomorrow night.

MRS. KIRBY. Tomorrow night!

KIRBY. What!

GRANDPA. Now, it's perfectly all right. Please sit right down and make yourselves at home. (*His eyes still on the KIRBYS, he gives DONALD a good push toward the kitchen, by way of a hint. DONALD goes, promptly, with a quick little stunned whistle that sums up HIS feelings*)

KIRBY. Tony, how could you possibly—

TONY. I—I don't know. I thought—

MRS. KIRBY. Really, Tony! This is most embarrassing.

GRANDPA. Not at all. Why, we weren't doing a thing.

PENNY. Just spending the evening at home.

GRANDPA. That's all. . . Now, don't let it bother you.

This is Alice's mother, Mrs. Sycamore. . . Alice's sister, Mrs. Carmichael. . . Mr. Carmichael. . . Mr.

Kolenkhov. . . (*At this point MR. DE PINNA takes an anticipatory step forward, and GRANDPA is practically*

compelled to perform the introduction) And—Mr. De

Pinna. Mr. De Pinna, would you tell Mr. Sycamore to

come right up? Tell him that Mr. and Mrs. Kirby are

here.

PENNY (*her voice a heavy whisper*). And be sure to put his pants on.

DE PINNA (*whispering right back*). All right. . . . Excuse me. (*He vanishes—discuss and all*)

GRANDPA. Won't you sit down?

PENNY (*first frantically trying to cover the prostrate GAY WELLINGTON*). I'll tell Alice that you're— (*She is at the foot of the stairs*)—Alice! Alice, dear! (*The voice of Alice from above, "What is it?"*) Alice, will you come down, dear? We've got a surprise for you. (*She comes back into the room, summoning all her charm*) Well!

GRANDPA. Mrs. Kirby, may I take your wrap?

MRS. KIRBY. Well—thank you. If you're perfectly sure that we're not— (*Suddenly she sees the snakes and lets out a scream*)

GRANDPA. Oh, don't be alarmed, Mrs. Kirby. They're perfectly harmless.

MRS. KIRBY (*edging away from the solarium*). Thank you. (*She sinks into a chair, weakly*)

GRANDPA. Ed, take 'em into the kitchen.

(*ED at once obeys*)

PENNY. Of course we're so used to them around the house—

MRS. KIRBY. I'm sorry to trouble you, but snakes happen to be the one thing—

KIRBY. I feel very uncomfortable about this. Tony, how could you have done such a thing?

TONY. I'm sorry, Dad. I thought it was tonight.

KIRBY. It was very careless of you. *Very!*

GRANDPA. Now, now, Mr. Kirby—we're delighted.

PENNY. Oh, now, anybody can get mixed up, Mr. Kirby.

GRANDPA. Penny, how about some dinner for these folks? They've come for dinner, you know.

MRS. KIRBY. Oh, please don't bother. We're really not hungry at all.

PENNY. But it's not a bother. Ed!— (*Her voice drops to a loud whisper*) Ed, tell Donald to run down to the A. and

P. and get half a dozen bottles of beer, and—ah—some canned salmon— (*her voice comes up again*)—do you like canned salmon, Mr. Kirby?

KIRBY. Please don't trouble, Mrs. Sycamore. I have a little indigestion, anyway.

PENNY. Oh, I'm sorry. . . . How about you, Mrs. Kirby? Do you like canned salmon?

MRS. KIRBY (*you just know that she hates it*). Oh, I'm very fond of it.

PENNY. You can have frankfurters if you'd rather.

MRS. KIRBY (*regally*). Either one will do.

PENNY (*to ED again*). Well, make it frankfurters, and some canned corn, and Campbell's Soup.

ED (*going out the kitchen door*). Okay!

PENNY (*calling after him*). And tell him to hurry! (*PENNY again addresses the KIRBYS*) The A. and P. is just at the corner, and frankfurters don't take any time to boil.

GRANDPA (*as PAUL comes through the cellar door*). And this is Alice's father, Mr. Sycamore. Mr. and Mrs. Kirby. THE KIRBYS. How do you do?

PAUL. I hope you'll forgive my appearance.

PENNY. This is Mr. Sycamore's busiest time of the year.

Just before the Fourth of July—

(*And then ALICE comes down. She is a step into the room before she realizes what has happened; then she fairly freezes in her tracks*)

ALICE. Oh!

TONY. Darling, will you ever forgive me? I'm the most dullest person in the world. I thought it was tonight.

ALICE (*staggered*). Why, Tony, I thought you— (*To the KIRBYS*)—I'm so sorry—I can't imagine—why, I wasn't—have you all met each other?

KIRBY. Yes, indeed.

MRS. KIRBY. How do you do, Alice?

ALICE (*not even yet in control of herself*). How do you do, Mrs. Kirby? I'm afraid I'm not very—presentable.

TONY. Darling, you look lovely.

KIRBY. Of course she does. Don't let this upset you, my dear—we've all just met each other a night sooner, that's all.

MRS. KIRBY. Of course.

ALICE. But I was planning such a nice party tomorrow night . . .

KIRBY (*being the good fellow*). Well, we'll come again tomorrow night.

TONY. There you are, Alice. Am I forgiven?

ALICE. I guess so. It's just that I—we'd better see about getting you some dinner.

PENNY. Oh, that's all done, Alice. That's all been attended to.

(DONALD, *hat in hand, comes through the kitchen door; hurries across the room and out the front way. The KIRBYS graciously pretend not to see*)

ALICE. But mother—what are you—what did you send out for? Because Mr. Kirby suffers from indigestion—he can only eat certain things.

KIRBY. Now, it's quite all right.

TONY. Of course it is, darling.

PENNY. I asked him what he wanted, Alice.

ALICE (*doubtfully*). Yes, but—

KIRBY. Now, now, it's not as serious as all that. Just because I have a little indigestion.

KOLENKHOF (*helping things along*). Perhaps it is not indigestion at all, Mr. Kirby. Perhaps you have stomach ulcers.

ALICE. Don't be absurd, Mr. Kolenkhov!

GRANDPA. You mustn't mind Mr. Kolenkhov, Mr. Kirby. He's a Russian, and Russians are inclined to look on the dark side.

KOLENKHOF. All right, I am a Russian. But a friend of mine a Russian, *died* from stomach ulcers.

KIRBY. Really, I—

ALICE (*desperately*). Please, Mr. Kolenkhov! Mr. Kirby has indigestion and that's all.

KOLENKHOF (*with a Russian shrug of the shoulders*). All right. Let him wait.

GRANDPA (*leaping into the breach*). Tell me, Mr. Kirby, how do you find business conditions? Are we pretty well out of the depression?

KIRBY. What? . . . Yes, yes, I think so. Of course, it all depends.

GRANDPA. But you figure that things are going to keep on improving?

KIRBY. Broadly speaking, yes. As a matter of fact, industry is now operating at sixty-four per cent. of full capacity, as against eighty-two per cent. in 1925. Of course in 1929, a peak year—

(*Peak year or no peak year, GAY WELLINGTON chooses this moment to come to life. With a series of assorted snorts, she throws the cover back and pulls herself to a sitting position, blinking uncertainly at the assemblage. Then she rises, and weaves unsteadily across the room. The imposing figure of MR. KIRBY intriques her*)

GAY (*playfully rumping MR. KIRBY'S hair as she passes him*). Hello, Cutie. (*And with that she lunges on her way—up the stairs*)

(*The KIRBYS, of course, are considerably astounded by this exhibition; the SYCAMORES have watched it with varying degrees of frozen horror. ALICE, in particular, is speechless; it is GRANDPA who comes to her rescue*)

GRANDPA. That may seem a little strange to you, but she's not quite accountable for her actions. A friend of Mrs. Sycamore's. She came to dinner and was overcome by the heat.

PENNY. Yes, some people feel it, you know, more than others. Perhaps I'd better see if she's all right. Excuse me, please. (*She goes hastily up the stairs*)

ALICE. It is awfully hot. (*A fractional pause*) You usually

escape all this hot weather, don't you, Mrs. Kirby? Up in Maine?

MRS. KIRBY (*on the frigid side*). As a rule, I had to come down this week, however, for the Flower Show.

TONY. Mother wouldn't miss that for the world. That blue ribbon is the high spot of her year.

ESSIE. I won a ribbon at a Flower Show once. For raising onions. Remember?

ALICE (*quickly*). That was a Garden Show, Essie.

ESSIE. Oh, yes.

(PENNY comes bustling down the stairs again)

PENNY. I'm so sorry, but I think she'll be all right now.

... Has Donald come back yet?

ALICE. No, he hasn't.

PENNY. Well, he'll be right back, and it won't take any time at all. I'm afraid you must be starved.

KIRBY. Oh, no. Quite all right. (*Pacing the room, he suddenly comes upon PAUL'S Erector Set*) Hello! What's this? I didn't know there were little children in the house.

PAUL. Oh, no. That's mine.

KIRBY. Really? Well, I suppose every man has his hobby. Or do you use this as a model of some kind?

PAUL. No, I just play with it.

KIRBY. I see.

TONY. Maybe you'd be better off if *you* had a hobby like that, Dad. Instead of raising orchids.

KIRBY (*indulgently*). Yes, I wouldn't be surprised.

ALICE (*leaping on this as a safe topic*). Oh, do tell us about your orchids, Mr. Kirby. (*She addresses the others*) You know, they take six years before they blossom. Think of that!

KIRBY (*warming to his subject*). Oh, some of them take longer than that. I've got one coming along now that I've waited ten years for.

PENNY (*making a joke*). Believe it or not, I was waiting for an orchid.

KIRBY. Ah—yes. Of course during that time they require the most scrupulous care. I remember a bulb that I was very fond of—

(DONALD suddenly bulges through the archway, his arms full. The tops of beer bottles and two or three large cucumbers peep over the edge of the huge paper bag)

PENNY. Ah, here we are! Did you get everything, Donald?

DONALD. Yes'm. Only the frankfurters didn't look very good, so I got pickled pigs' feet.

(MR. KIRBY blanches at the very idea)

ALICE (*taking command*) Never mind, Donald—just bring everything into the kitchen. (*She turns at the kitchen door*) Mr. Kirby, please tell them *all* about the orchids—I know they'd love to hear it. And—excuse me. (*She goes*)

GRANDPA. Kind of an expensive hobby, isn't it, Mr. Kirby—raising orchids?

KIRBY. Yes, it is, but I feel that if a hobby gives one sufficient pleasure, it's never expensive.

GRANDPA. That's very true.

KIRBY. You see, I need something to relieve the daily nerve strain. After a week in Wall Street I'd go crazy if I didn't have something like that. Lot of men I know have yachts—just for that very reason.

GRANDPA (*mildly*). Why don't they give up Wall Street?

KIRBY. How's that?

GRANDPA. I was just joking.

MRS. KIRBY. I think it's necessary for everyone to have a hobby. Of course it's more to me than a hobby, but my great solace is—spiritualism.

PENNY. Now, Mrs. Kirby, don't tell me you fell for that. Why, everybody knows it's a fake.

MRS. KIRBY (*freezing*). To me, Mrs. Sycamore, spiritualism is—I would rather not discuss it, Mrs. Sycamore.

PAUL. Remember, Penny, you've got one or two hobbies of your own.

PENNY. Yes, but not silly ones.

GRANDPA (*with a little cough*). I don't think it matters what the hobby is—the important thing is to have one. KOLENKHOV. To be ideal, a hobby should improve the body as well as the mind. The Romans were a great people! Why! What was their hobby? Wrestling. In wrestling you have to think quick with the mind and act quick with the body.

KIRBY. Yes, but I'm afraid wrestling is not very practical for most of us. (*He gives a deprecating little laugh*) I wouldn't make a very good showing as a wrestler.

KOLENKHOV. You could be a great wrestler. You are built for it. Look!

(*With a startlingly quick movement KOLENKHOV grabs MR. KIRBY'S arms, knocks his legs from under him with a quick movement of a foot, and presto! MR. KIRBY is flat on his whatsis. Not only that, but instantaneously KOLENKHOV is on top of him*)

(*Just at this moment ALICE re-enters the room—naturally, she stands petrified. Several people, of course, rush immediately to the rescue, TONY and PAUL arriving at the scene of battle first. Amidst the general confusion they help MR. KIRBY to his feet*)

ALICE. Mr. Kirby! Are you—hurt?

TONY. Are you all right, Father?

KIRBY (*pulling himself together*). I—I—uh—(*He blinks, uncertainly*)—where are my glasses?

ALICE. Here they are, Mr. Kirby. . . . Oh, Mr. Kirby, they're broken.

KOLENKHOV (*full of apology*). Oh, I am sorry. But when you wrestle again, Mr. Kirby, you will of course not wear glasses.

KIRBY (*coldly furious*). I do not intend to wrestle again, Mr. Kolenkhov. (*He draws himself up, stiffly, and in*

return gets a sharp pain in the back. He gives a little gasp)

TONY. Better sit down, father.

ALICE. Mr. Kolenkhov, how could you do such a thing? Why didn't somebody stop him?

MRS. KIRBY. I think, if you don't mind, perhaps we had better be going.

TONY. Mother!

ALICE (*close to tears*). Oh, Mrs. Kirby—please! Please don't go! Mr. Kirby—please! I—I've ordered some scrambled eggs for you, and—plain salad—Oh, please don't go!

KOLENKHOV. I am sorry if I did something wrong. And I apologize.

ALICE. I can't tell you how sorry I am, Mr. Kirby. If I'd been here—

KIRBY (*from a great height*). That's quite all right.

TONY. Of course it is. It's all right, Alice. We're not going. (*The kirbys reluctantly sit down again*)

(*A moment's silence—no one knows quite what to say*)
PENNY (*brightly*). Well! That was exciting for a minute, wasn't it?

GRANDPA (*quickly*). You were talking about your orchids, Mr. Kirby. Do you raise many different varieties?

KIRBY (*still unbending*). I'm afraid I've quite forgotten about my orchids.

(*More silence, and everyone very uncomfortable*)

ALICE. I'm—awfully sorry, Mr. Kirby.

KOLENKHOV (*exploding*). What did I do that was so terrible? I threw him on the floor! Did it kill him?

ALICE. Please, Mr. Kolenkhov.

(*An annoyed gesture from KOLENKHOV; another general pause*)

PENNY. I'm sure dinner won't be any time at all now.

(*A pained smile from MRS. KIRBY*)

ESSIE. Would you like some candy while you're waiting? I've got some freshly made.

KIRBY. My doctor does not permit me to eat candy. Thank you.

ESSIE. But these are nothing, Mr. Kirby. Just cocoanut and marshmallow fudge.

ALICE. Don't, Essie.

(RHEBA appears in the kitchen doorway, beckoning *slowly* to ALICE)

RHEBA (in a loud whisper). Miss Alice! Miss Alice! (ALICE quickly flies to RHEBA'S side) The eggs fell down the sink.

ALICE (desperately). Make some more! Quick!

RHEBA. I ain't got any.

ALICE. Send Donald out for some!

RHEBA (disappearing). All right.

ALICE (calling after her). Tell him to run! (She turns back to the KIRBYS) I'm so sorry. There'll be a little delay, but everything will be ready in just a minute.

(At this moment DONALD fairly shoots out of the kitchen door and across the living room, beating the Olympic record for all time)

(PENNY tries to ease the situation with a gay little laugh. It doesn't quite come off, however)

TONY. I've certainly put you people to a lot of trouble, with my stupidity.

GRANDPA. Not at all, Tony.

PENNY. Look! Why don't we all play a game of some sort while we're waiting?

TONY. Oh, that'd be fine.

ALICE. Mother, I don't think Mr. and Mrs. Kirby—

KOLENKHOF. I have an idea. I know a wonderful trick with a glass of water. (He reaches for a full glass that stands on the table)

ALICE (quickly). No, Mr. Kolenkhov.

GRANDPA (shaking his head). No-o.

PENNY. But I'm sure Mr. and Mrs. Kirby would love this game. It's perfectly harmless.

ALICE. Please, Mother.

HUBB. I'm not very good at games, Mrs. Sycamore.

PENNY. Oh, but *any* fool could play this game, Mr. Kirby. (She is bustling around, getting paper and pencil) All you do is write your name on a piece of paper—

ALICE. But Mother, Mr. Kirby doesn't want—

PENNY. Oh, he'll love it! (Going right on) Here you are, Mr. Kirby. Write your name on this piece of paper. And Mrs. Kirby, you do the same on this one.

ALICE. Mother, what is this game?

PENNY. I used to play it at school. It's called Forget-Me-Not. Now, I'm going to call out five words—just anything at all—and as I say each word, you're to put down the first thing that comes into your mind. Is that clear? For instance, if I say "grass," you might put down "green"—just whatever you think of, see? Or if I call out "chair," you might put down "table." It shows the reactions people have to different things. You see how simple it is, Mr. Kirby?

TONY. Come on, father! Be a sport!

KIRBY (stiffly). Very well. I shall be happy to play it.

PENNY. You see, Alice? He *does* want to play.

ALICE (uneasily). Well—

PENNY. Now, then? Are we ready?

KOLENKHOF. Ready!

PENNY. Now, remember—you must play fair. Put down the first thing that comes into your mind.

KIRBY (pencil poised). I understand.

PENNY. Everybody ready? . . . The first word is "potatoes." (She repeats it) "Potatoes." . . . Ready for the next one? . . . "Bathroom." (ALICE shifts rather *uneasily*, but seeing that no one else seems to mind, she relaxes again) Got that?

KOLENKHOF. Go ahead.

PENNY. All ready? . . . "Lust."

ALICE. Mother, this is not exactly what you—

PENNY. Nonsense, Alice—that word's all right.

ALICE. Mother, it's *not* all right.

MRS. KIRBY (*unexpectedly*). Oh, I don't know. It seems to me that's a perfectly fair word.

PENNY (*to ALICE*). You see? Now, you mustn't interrupt the game.

KIRBY. May I have that last word again, please?

PENNY. "Lust," Mr. Kirby.

KIRBY (*writing*). I've got it.

GRANDPA. This is quite a game.

PENNY. Sssh, Grandpa. . . . All ready? . . . "Honey moon." (*ESSIE snickers a little, which is all it takes to start PENNY off. Then she suddenly remembers herself*)

Now, Essie! . . . All right. The last word is "sex."

ALICE (*under her breath*). Mother!

PENNY. Everybody got "sex"? . . . All right—now give me all the papers.

GRANDPA. What happens now?

PENNY. Oh, this is the best part. Now I read out your reactions.

KIRBY. I see. It's really quite an interesting game.

PENNY. I knew you'd like it. I'll read your paper first, Mr.

Kirby. (*To the others*) I'm going to read Mr. Kirby's paper first. Listen, everybody! This is Mr. Kirby's. . . .

"Potatoes—steak." That's very good. See how they go together? Steak and potatoes?

KIRBY (*modestly, but obviously pleased with himself*). I just happened to think of it.

PENNY. It's *very* good. . . . "Bathroom—toothpaste." Uh

huh. "Lust—unlawful." Isn't that nice? "Honeymoon—

trip." Yes. And "sex—male." Yes, of course . . . That's

really a wonderful paper, Mr. Kirby.

KIRBY (*taking a curtain call*). Thank you . . . It's more

than just a game, you know. It's sort of an experiment in psychology, isn't it?

PENNY. Yes, it is—it shows just how your *mind* works. Now we'll see how *Mrs. Kirby's* mind works. . . . Ready?

. . . This is *Mrs. Kirby*. . . . "Potatoes—starch." I know just what you mean, *Mrs. Kirby*. . . . "Bathroom—Mr. Kirby."

KIRBY. What's that?

PENNY. "Bathroom—Mr. Kirby."

KIRBY (*turning to his wife*). I don't quite follow that, my dear.

MRS. KIRBY. I don't know—I just thought of you in connection with it. After all, you *are* in there a good deal, Anthony. Bathing, and shaving—well, you *do* take a long time.

KIRBY. Indeed? I hadn't realized that I was being selfish in the matter. . . . Go on, *Mrs. Sycamore*.

ALICE (*worried*). I think it's a very silly game and we ought to stop it.

KIRBY. No, no. Please go on, *Mrs. Sycamore*.

PENNY. Where was I . . . Oh, yes. . . . "Lust—human."

KIRBY. Human? (*Thin-lipped*) Really!

MRS. KIRBY. I just meant, Anthony, that lust is after all a—human emotion.

KIRBY. I don't agree with you, *Miriam*. Lust is not a human emotion. It is depraved.

MRS. KIRBY. Very well, Anthony. I'm wrong.

ALICE. Really, it's the most pointless game. Suppose we play Twenty Questions?

KIRBY. No, I find this game rather interesting. Will you go on, *Mrs. Sycamore*? What was the next word?

PENNY (*reluctantly*). Honeymoon.

KIRBY. Oh, yes. And what was *Mrs. Kirby's* answer.

PENNY. Ah—"Honeymoon—dull."

KIRBY (*murderously calm*). Did you say—dull?

MRS. KIRBY. What I meant, Anthony, was that Hot Springs was not very gay that season. All those old people sitting on the porch all afternoon, and—nothing to do all night.

KIRBY. That was not your reaction at the time, as I recall it. TONY. Father, this is only a game.

KIRBY. A very illuminating game. Go on, Mrs. Sycamore. PENNY (*brightly, having taken a look ahead*). This one's all right, Mr. Kirby. "Sex—Wall Street."

KIRBY. Wall Street? What do you mean by that, Miriam? MRS. KIRBY (*nervously*). I don't know what I meant, Anthony. Nothing.

KIRBY. But you must have meant something, Miriam, or you wouldn't have put it down.

MRS. KIRBY. It was just the first thing that came into my head, that's all.

KIRBY. But what does it mean? Sex—Wall Street.

MRS. KIRBY (*annoyed*). Oh, I don't know what it means, Anthony. It's just that you're always talking about Wall Street, even when—(*She catches herself*) I don't know what I meant . . . Would you mind terribly, Alice, if we didn't stay for dinner? I'm afraid this game has given me a headache.

ALICE (*quietly*). I understand, Mrs. Kirby.

KIRBY (*clearing his throat*). Yes, possibly we'd better postpone the dinner, if you don't mind.

PENNY. But you're coming tomorrow night, aren't you?

MRS. KIRBY (*quickly*). I'm afraid we have an engagement tomorrow night.

KIRBY. Perhaps we'd better postpone the whole affair a little while. This hot weather, and—ah—

TONY (*smoldering*). I think we're being very ungracious, Father. Of course we'll stay to dinner—tonight.

MRS. KIRBY (*unyielding*). I have a very bad headache, Tony.

KIRBY. Come, come, Tony, I'm sure everyone understands.

TONY (*flaring*). Well, I don't. I think we ought to stay to dinner.

ALICE (*very low*). No, Tony.

TONY. What?

ALICE. We were fools, Tony, ever to think it would work. It won't. Mr. Kirby, I won't be at the office tomorrow. I—won't be there at all any more.

TONY. Alice, what are you talking about?

KIRBY (*to ALICE*). I'm sorry, my dear—very sorry . . . Are you ready, Miriam?

MRS. KIRBY (*with enormous dignity*). Yes, Anthony.

KIRBY. It's been very nice to have met you all . . . Are you coming, Anthony?

TONY. No, Father. I'm not.

KIRBY. I see . . . Your mother and I will be waiting for you at home . . . Good night. (*With MRS. KIRBY on his arm, he sweeps toward the outer door*)

(*Before the KIRBYS can take more than a step toward the door, however, a new figure looms up in the archway. It is a quiet and competent-looking individual with a steely eye, and two more just like him loom up behind him*)

THE MAN (*very quietly*). Stay right where you are, everybody. (*There is a little scream from MRS. KIRBY, an exclamation from PENNY*) Don't move.

PENNY. Oh, good heavens!

KIRBY. How dare you? Why, what does this mean?

GRANDPA. What is all this?

KIRBY. I demand an explanation!

THE MAN. Keep your mouth shut, you! (*He advances slowly into the room, looking the group over. Then he turns to one of his men*) Which one is it?

ANOTHER MAN (*goes over and puts a hand on ED'S shoulder*). This is him.

ESSIE. Ed!

ED (*terrified*). Why, what do you mean?

ALICE. Grandpa, what is it?

KIRBY. This is an outrage!

THE MAN. Shut up! (*He turns to ED*) What's your name?

ED. Edward—Carmichael. I haven't done anything.

THE MAN. You haven't, huh?

GRANDPA (*not at all scared*). This seems rather high handed to me. What's it all about?

THE MAN. Department of Justice.

PENNY. Oh, my goodness! J-men!

ESSIE. Ed, what have you done?

ED. I haven't done anything.

GRANDPA. What's the boy done, Officer?

ALICE. What is it? What's it all about?

THE MAN (*taking his time, and surveying the room*). That door lead to the cellar?

PENNY. Yes, it does.

PAUL. Yes.

THE MAN (*ordering a man to investigate*). Mac . . . (*MAC goes into the cellar*) . . . Jim!

JIM. Yes, sir.

THE MAN. Take a look upstairs and see what you find.

JIM. Okay. (*JIM goes upstairs*)

ED (*panicky*). I haven't done anything!

THE MAN. Come here, you! (*He takes some slips of paper out of his pocket*) Ever see these before?

ED (*gulping*). They're my—circulars.

THE MAN. You print this stuff, huh?

ED. Yes, sir.

THE MAN. And you put 'em into boxes of candy to get 'em into people's homes.

ESSIE. The Love Dreams!

ED. But I didn't mean anything!

THE MAN. You didn't, huh? (*He reads the circulars*) "Dynamite the Capitol!" "Dynamite the White House!" "Dynamite the Supreme Court!" "God is the State; the State is God!"

ED. But I didn't mean that. I just like to print. Don't I, Grandpa?

(DONALD returns with the eggs at this point, and stands quietly watching the proceedings)

GRANDPA. Now, Officer, the government's in no danger from Ed. Printing is just his hobby, that's all. He prints anything.

THE MAN. He does, eh?

PENNY. I never heard of such nonsense.

KIRBY. I refuse to stay here and—

(MR. DE PINNA, at this point, is shoved through the cellar door by MAC, protesting as he comes)

DE PINNA. Hey, let me get my pipe, will you? Let me get my pipe!

MAC. Shut up, you! . . . We were right, Chief. They've got enough gunpowder down there to blow up the whole city.

PAUL. But we only use that—

THE MAN. Keep still! . . . Everybody in this house is under arrest.

KIRBY. What's that?

MRS. KIRBY. Oh, good heavens!

GRANDPA. Now look here, Officer—this is all nonsense.

DE PINNA. You'd better let me get my pipe. I left it—

THE MAN. Shut up, all of you!

KOLENKHOV. It seems to me, Officer—

THE MAN. Shut up!

(*From the stairs comes the sound of drunken singing—*

"There was a young lady," etc. GAY WELLINGTON,

wrapped in PENNY's negligee, is being carried down the

stairway by a somewhat bewildered G-MAN)

THE G-MAN. Keep still, you! Stop that! Stop it!

THE LEADER (*after GAY has been persuaded to quiet down*).

Who's that?

GRANDPA (*pretty tired of the whole business*). That—is

my mother.

(*And then, suddenly, we hear from the cellar. MR. DE PINNA seems to have been right about his pipe, to judge from the sounds below. It is a whole year's supply of fireworks—bombs, big crackers, little crackers, skyrocket-ets, pin wheels, everything. The house is fairly rocked by the explosion*)

(*In the room, of course, pandemonium reigns. MRS. KIRBY screams; the G-MAN drops GAY right where he stands and dashes for the cellar, closely followed by MR. DE PINNA and PAUL; PENNY dashes for her manuscripts and ED rushes to save his xylophone. KOLENKHOF waves his arms wildly and dashes in all directions at once; everyone is rushing this way and that*)

(*All except one. The exception, of course, is GRANDPA, who takes all things as they come. GRANDPA just says "Well, well, well!"—and sits down. If a lot of people weren't in the way, in fact, you feel he'd like to throw a few darts*)

Curtain

ACT THREE

The following day.

HUEBA *is in the midst of setting the table for dinner, pausing occasionally in her labors to listen to the Edwin C. Hill of the moment—DONALD. With intense interest and concentration, he is reading aloud from a newspaper*)

DONALD. ". . . for appearance in the West Side Court this morning. After spending the night in jail, the defendants, thirteen in all, were brought before Judge Callahan and given suspended sentences for manufacturing fireworks without a permit."

HUEBA. Yah. Kept me in the same cell with a strip teaser from a burlesque show.

DONALD. I was in the cell with Mr. Kirby. My, he was mad!

HUEBA. Mrs. Kirby and the strip teaser—they were fighting all night.

DONALD. Whole lot about Mr. Kirby here. (*Reading again*) "Anthony W. Kirby, head of Kirby & Co., 62 Wall Street, who was among those apprehended, declared he was in no way interested in the manufacture of fireworks, but refused to state why he was on the premises at the time of the raid. Mr. Kirby is a member of the Union Club, the Racquet Club, the Harvard Club, and the National Geographic Society." My, he certainly is a joiner!

HUEBA. All those rich men are Elks or something.

DONALD (*looking up from his paper*). I suppose, after all this, Mr. Tony ain't ever going to marry Miss Alice, huh?

RHEBA. No, suh, and it's too bad, too. Miss Alice sure loves that boy.

DONALD. Ever notice how white folks always getting themselves in trouble?

RHEBA. Yassuh, I'm glad I'm colored. (*She sighs, heavily*) I don't know what I'm going to do with all that food out in the kitchen. Ain't going to be no party tonight, that's sure.

DONALD. Ain't we going to eat it anyhow?

RHEBA. Well, I'm cooking it, but I don't think anybody going to have an appetite.

DONALD. I'm hungry.

RHEBA. Well, *they* ain't. They're all so broke up about Miss Alice.

DONALD. What's she want to go 'way for? Where's she going?

RHEBA. I don't know—mountains some place. And she's going, all right, no matter what they say. I know Miss Alice when she gets that look in her eye.

DONALD. Too bad, ain't it?

RHEBA. Sure is.

(MR. DE PINNA comes up from the cellar, bearing the earmarks of the previous day's catastrophe. There is a small bandage around his head and over one eye, and another around his right hand. He also limps slightly)

DE PINNA. Not even a balloon left. (*He exhibits a handful of exploded firecrackers*) Look.

RHEBA. How's your hand, Mr. De Pinna? Better?

DE PINNA. Yes, it's better. (*A step toward the kitchen*) Is there some more olive oil out there?

RHEBA (*nods*). It's in the salad bowl.

DE PINNA. Thanks. (*He goes out the kitchen door as PENNY comes down the stairs. It is a new and rather subdued PENNY*)

PENNY (*with a sigh*). Well, she's going. Nothing anybody said could change her.

RHEBA. She ain't going to stay away long, is she, Mrs. Sycamore?

PENNY. I don't know, Rheba. She won't say.

RHEBA. My, going to be lonesome around here without her. (*She goes into the kitchen*)

DONALD. How you feel, Mrs. Sycamore?

PENNY. Oh, I'm all right, Donald. Just kind of upset. (*She is at her desk*) Perhaps if I do some work maybe I'll feel better.

DONALD. Well, I won't bother you then, Mrs. Sycamore. (*He goes into the kitchen*)

(PENNY puts a sheet of paper into the typewriter; stares at it blankly for a moment; types in desultory fashion, gives it up. She leans back and sits staring straight ahead)

(PAUL comes slowly down the stairs; stands surveying the room a moment; sighs. He goes over to the Erector Set; absently pulls out the flag. Then, with another sigh, he drops into a chair)

PAUL. She's going, Penny.

PENNY. Yes. (*She is quiet for a moment; then she starts to weep, softly*)

PAUL (*going to her*). Now, now, Penny.

PENNY. I can't help it, Paul. Somehow I feel it's our fault. PAUL. It's mine more than yours, Penny. All these years

I've just been—going along, enjoying myself, when maybe I should have been thinking more about Alice. PENNY. Don't say that, Paul. You've been a wonderful father. And husband, too.

PAUL. No, I haven't. Maybe if I'd gone ahead and been an architect—I don't know—something Alice could have been proud of. I felt that all last night, looking at Mr. Kirby.

PENNY. But we've been so happy, Paul.

PAUL. I know, but maybe that's not enough. I used to think it was, but—I'm kind of all mixed up now.

PENNY (*after a pause*). What time is she going?
 PAUL. Pretty soon. Train leaves at half past seven.
 PENNY. Oh, if only she'd see Tony. I'm sure he could persuade her.

PAUL. But she won't, Penny. He's been trying all day.

PENNY. Where is he now?
 PAUL. I don't know—I suppose walking around the block again. Anyhow, she won't talk to him.

PENNY. Maybe Tony can catch her as she's leaving.

PAUL. It won't help, Penny.

PENNY. No, I don't suppose so. . . . I feel so sorry for Tony, too. (*GRANDPA comes down the stairs—unsmiling, but not too depressed by the situation. Anxiously*) Well, GRANDPA. Now, Penny, let the girl alone.

PENNY. But, Grandpa—
 GRANDPA. Suppose she goes to the Adirondacks? She'll be back. You can take just so much Adirondacks, and then you come home.

PENNY. Oh, but it's all so terrible, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. In a way, but it has its bright side, too.

PAUL. How do you mean?

GRANDPA. Well, Mr. Kirby getting into the patrol wagon for one thing, and the expression on his face when he and Donald had to take a bath together. I'll never forget that if I live to be a hundred, and I warn you people I intend to. If I can have things like that going on.

PENNY. Oh, it was even worse with Mrs. Kirby. When the matron stripped her. There was a burlesque dancer there and she kept singing a strip song while Mrs. Kirby undressed.

GRANDPA. I'll bet you Bar Harbor is going to seem pretty dull to the Kirbys for the rest of the summer.

(*With a determined step, ALICE comes swiftly down the stairs. Over her arm she carries a couple of dresses. Looking neither to right nor left, she heads for the kitchen*)

GRANDPA. Need any help, Alice?

ALICE (*in a strained voice*). No, thanks, Grandpa. Ed is helping with the bags. I'm just going to press these.

PENNY. Alice, dear—

GRANDPA. Now, Penny.
 (*ED has appeared in the hallway with a couple of hatboxes, ESSIE behind him*)

ED. I'll bring the big bag down as soon as you're ready, Alice.

ESSIE. Do you want to take some candy along for the train, Alice?

ALICE. No, thanks, Essie.

PENNY. Really, Alice, you could be just as alone here as you could in the mountains. You could stay right in your room all the time.

ALICE (*quietly*). No, Mother, I want to be by myself—away from everybody. I love you all—you know that. But I just have to go away for a while. I'll be all right.

. . . . Father, did you phone for a cab?

PAUL. No, I didn't know you wanted one.

PENNY. Oh, I told Mr. De Pinna to tell you, Paul. Didn't he tell you?

ED. Oh, he told me, but I forgot.

ALICE (*the final straw*). Oh, I wish I lived in a family that didn't always forget everything. That—that behaved the way other people's families do. I'm sick of corn flakes, and—Donald, and—(*Unconsciously, in her impatience, she has picked up one of GRANDPA'S darts; is surprised to find it suddenly in her hand*)—everything! (*She dashes the dart to the floor*) Why can't we be like other people? Roast beef, and two green vegetables, and—doilies on the table, and—a place you could bring your friends to—without— (*Unable to control herself further, she bursts out of the room, into the kitchen*)
 ESSIE. I'll—see if I can do anything. (*She goes into the kitchen*)

(The others look at each other for a moment, helplessly. PENNY, with a sigh, drops into her chair again. PAUL also sits. GRANDPA mechanically picks up the dart from the floor; smooths out the feathers. ED, with a futile gesture, runs his fingers idly over the xylophone keys. He stops quickly as every head turns to look at him.) (The sound of the door opening, and TONY appears in the archway. A worried and disheveled TONY)

PENNY (quickly). Tony, talk to her! She's in the kitchen. TONY. Thanks. (He goes immediately into the kitchen. The family, galvanized, listen intently. Almost immediately, ALICE emerges from the kitchen again, followed by TONY. She crosses the living room and starts quickly up the stairs) Alice, won't you listen to me? Please! ALICE (not stopping). Tony, it's no use. TONY (following her). Alice, you're not being fair. At least let me talk to you.

(They are both gone—up the stairs)

PENNY. Perhaps if I went upstairs with them . . .

GRANDPA. Now, Penny. Let them alone.

(ESSIE comes out of the kitchen)

ESSIE. Where'd they go? (ED with a gesture, indicates the upstairs region) She walked right out the minute he came in.

(MR. DE PINNA also emerges from the kitchen)

MR. DE PINNA. Knocked the olive oil right out of my hand. I'm going to smell kind of fishy.

GRANDPA. How're you feeling, Mr. De Pinna? Hand still hurting you?

DE PINNA. No, it's better.

PAUL. Everything burnt up, huh? Downstairs?

DE PINNA (nodding, sadly). Everything. And my Roman costume, too.

GRANDPA (to PENNY). I told you there was a bright side to everything. All except my twenty-two years back

income tax. (He pulls an envelope out of his pocket) I get another letter every day.

DE PINNA. Say, what are you going to do about that, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. Well, I had a kind of idea yesterday. It may not work, but I'm trying it, anyhow.

DE PINNA (eagerly). What is it?

(Suddenly KOLENKHOF appears in the doorway) KOLENKHOF (even he is subdued). Good evening, everybody!

PENNY. Why, Mr. Kolenkhov!

GRANDPA. Hello, Kolenkhov.

KOLENKHOF. Forgive me. The door was open.

GRANDPA. Come on in.

KOLENKHOF. You will excuse my coming today. I realize you are—upset.

PENNY. That's all right, Mr. Kolenkhov.

ESSIE. I don't think I can take a lesson, Mr. Kolenkhov. I don't feel up to it.

KOLENKHOF (uncertainly). Well, I—ah—

PENNY. Oh, but do stay to dinner, Mr. Kolenkhov. We've got all that food out there, and somebody's got to eat it. KOLENKHOF. I will be happy to, Madame Sycamore.

PENNY. Fine.

KOLENKHOF. Thank you. . . . Now, I wonder if I know you well enough to ask of you a great favor.

PENNY. Why, of course, Mr. Kolenkhov. What is it?

KOLENKHOF. You have heard me talk about my friend the Grand Duchess Olga Katrina.

PENNY. Yes?

KOLENKHOF. She is a great woman, the Grand Duchess. Her cousin was the Czar of Russia, and today she is waitress in Childs' Restaurant. Columbus Circle.

PENNY. Yes, I know. If there's anything at all that we can do, Mr. Kolenkhov . . .

KOLENKHOF. I tell you. The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina has not had a good meal since before the Revolution.

GRANDPA. She must be hungry.

KOLENKHOF. And today the Grand Duchess not only has her day off—Thursday—but it is also the anniversary of Peter the Great. A remarkable man!

PENNY. Mr. Kolenkhov, if you mean you'd like the Grand Duchess to come to dinner, why, we'd be honored.

ESSIE. Oh, yes!

KOLENKHOF (*with a bow*). In the name of the Grand Duchess, I thank you.

PENNY. I can hardly wait to meet her. When will she be here?

KOLENKHOF. She is outside in the street, waiting. I bring her in. (*And he goes out*)

GRANDPA. You know, if this keeps on I want to live to be a hundred and fifty.

PENNY (*feverishly*). Ed, straighten your tie. Essie, look at your dress. How do I look? All right?

(KOLENKHOF appears in the hallway and stands at rigid attention)

KOLENKHOF (*his voice booming*). The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina! (*And the GRAND DUCHESS OLGA KATRINA, wheel cakes and maple syrup out of her life for a few hours, sweeps into the room. She wears a dinner gown that has seen better days, and the whole is surmounted by an extremely tacky-looking evening wrap, trimmed with bits of ancient and moth-eaten fur. But once a Grand Duchess, always a Grand Duchess. She rises above everything—Childs', evening wrap, and all*) You Highness, permit me to present Madame Sycamore— (*PENNY, having seen a movie or two in her time, knows just what to do. She curtsies right to the floor, and catches hold of a chair just in time*) Madame Carmichael— (*ESSIE does a curtsey that begins where all others leave off. Starting on her toes, she merges the*

Dying Swan with an extremely elaborate genuflection) Grandpa—

GRANDPA (*with a little bow*). Madame.

KOLENKHOF. Mr. Sycamore, Mr. Carmichael, and Mr. De Pinna.

(PAUL and ED content themselves with courteous little bows, but not so the social-minded MR. DE PINNA. He bows to the floor—and stays there for a moment)

GRANDPA. All right now, Mr. De Pinna.

(MR. DE PINNA gets to his feet again)

PENNY. Will you be seated, Your Highness?

THE GRAND DUCHESS. Thank you. You are most kind.

PENNY. We are honored to receive you, Your Highness.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. I am most happy to be here. What time is dinner?

PENNY (*a little startled*). Oh, it'll be quite soon, Your Highness—very soon.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. I do not mean to be rude, but I must be back at the restaurant by eight o'clock. I am substituting for another waitress.

KOLENKHOF. I will make sure you are on time, Your Highness.

DE PINNA. You know, Highness, I think you waited on me in Childs' once. The Seventy-Second Street place?

THE GRAND DUCHESS. No, no. That was my sister.

KOLENKHOF. The Grand Duchess Natasha.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. I work in Columbus Circle.

GRANDPA. Quite a lot of your family living over here now, aren't there?

THE GRAND DUCHESS. Oh, yes—many. My uncle, the Grand Duke Sergei—he is an elevator man at Macy's. A very nice man. Then there is my cousin, Prince Alexis. He will not speak to the rest of us because he works at Hattie Carnegie's. He has cards printed—Prince Alexis of Hattie Carnegie. Bah!

KOLENKHOV. When he was selling Eskimo Pies at Luna Park he was willing to talk to you.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. Ah, Kolenkhov, our time is coming. My sister Natasha is studying to be a manicure, Uncle Sergei they have promised to make floor-walker, and next month I get transferred to the Fifth Avenue Childs'. From there it is only a step to Schrafft's, and then we will see what Prince Alexis says!

GRANDPA (*nodding*). I think you've got him.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. You are telling me? (*She laughs a triumphant Russian laugh, in which KOLENKHOV joins*) PENNY. Your Highness—did you know the Czar? Personally, I mean.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. Of course—he was my cousin. It was terrible, what happened, but perhaps it was for the best. Where could he get a job now?

KOLENKHOV. That is true.

THE GRAND DUCHESS (*philosophically*). Yes. And poor relations are poor relations. It is the same in every family. My cousin, the King of Sweden—he was very nice to us for about ten years, but then he said, I just cannot go on. I am not doing so well, either. . . . I do not blame him.

PENNY. No, of course not. . . . Would you excuse me for just a moment? (*She goes to the foot of the stairs and stands peering up anxiously, hoping for news of ALICE*) DE PINNA (*the historian at heart*). Tell me, Grand Duchess, is it true what they say about Rasputin?

THE GRAND DUCHESS. Everyone wants to know about Rasputin. . . . Yes, my dear sir, it is true. In spades.

DE PINNA. You don't say?

KOLENKHOV. Your Highness, we have to watch the time. THE GRAND DUCHESS. Yes, I must not be late. The manager does not like me. He is a Communist.

PENNY. We'll hurry things up. Essie, why don't you go out in the kitchen and give Rheba a hand?

THE GRAND DUCHESS (*rising*). I will help, too. I am a very good cook.

PENNY. Oh, but Your Highness! Not on your day off!

THE GRAND DUCHESS. I do not mind. Where is your kitchen? ESSIE. Right through here, but you're the guest of honor, Your Highness.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. But I love to cook! Come, Kolenkhov! If they have got sour cream and pot cheese I will make you some blintzes!

KOLENKHOV. Ah! Blintzes! . . . Come, Pavlowa! We show you something! (*With ESSIE, he goes into the kitchen*) DE PINNA. Say! The Duchess is all right, isn't she? Hey, Duchess! Can I help? (*And into the kitchen*)

PENNY. Really, she's a very nice woman, you know. Considering she's a Grand Duchess.

GRANDPA. Wonderful what people go through, isn't it? And still keep kind of gay, too.

PENNY. Mm. She made me forget about everything for a minute. (*She returns to the stairs and stands listening*) PAUL. I'd better call that cab, I suppose.

PENNY. No, wait, Paul. I think I hear them. Maybe Tony has— (*She stops as ALICE's step is heard on the stair. She enters—dressed for traveling. TONY looms up behind her*)

ALICE. Ed, will you go up and bring my bag down?

TONY (*quickly*). Don't you do it, Ed!

(*ED hesitates, uncertain*)

ALICE. Ed, please!

TONY (*a moment's pause; then he gives up*). All right, Ed. Bring it down. (*ED goes up the stairs as TONY disconsolately stalks across the room. Then he faces the Sycamores*) Do you know that you've got the stubbornest daughter in all forty-eight states? (*The door bell rings*)

ALICE. That must be the cab. (*She goes to the door*)

GRANDPA. If it is, it's certainly wonderful service.

(*To the considerable surprise of everyone, the voice of*

MR. KIRBY *is heard at the front door*)

KIRBY. Is Tony here, Alice?

ALICE. Yes. Yes, he is.

(MR. KIRBY *comes in*)

KIRBY (*uncomfortably*). Ah—good afternoon. Forgive my intruding . . . Tony, I want you to come home with me. Your mother is very upset.

TONY (*he looks at ALICE*). Very well, Father . . . Good-bye, Alice.

ALICE (*very low*). Good-bye, Tony.

KIRBY (*trying to ease the situation*). I need hardly say that this is as painful to Mrs. Kirby and myself as it is to you people. I—I'm sorry, but I'm sure you understand.

GRANDPA. Well, yes—and in a way, no. Now, I'm not the kind of person tries to run other people's lives, but the fact is, Mr. Kirby, I don't think these two young people have got as much sense as—ah—you and I have.

ALICE (*tense*). Grandpa, will you please not do this?

GRANDPA (*disarmingly*). I'm just talking to Mr. Kirby. A cat can look at a king, can't he?

(ALICE, *with no further words, takes up the telephone and dials a number. There is finality in her every movement*)

PENNY. You—you want me to do that for you, Alice?

ALICE. No, thanks, Mother.

PAUL. You've got quite a while before the train goes, Alice.

ALICE (*into the phone*). Will you send a cab to 761 Claremont, right away, please? . . . That's right, thank you. (*She hangs up*)

KIRBY. And now if you'll excuse us . . . are you ready, Tony?

GRANDPA. Mr. Kirby, I suppose after last night you think this family is crazy, don't you?

KIRBY. No, I would not say that, although I am not accustomed to going out to dinner and spending the night in jail.

GRANDPA. Well, you've got to remember, Mr. Kirby, you came on the wrong night. Now tonight, I'll bet you, nothing'll happen at all. (*There is a great burst of Russian laughter from the kitchen—the mingled voices of*

KOLENKHOF and the GRAND DUCHESS. GRANDPA *looks off in the direction of the laughter, then decides to play safe*) Maybe.

KIRBY. Mr. Vanderhof, it was not merely last night that convinced Mrs. Kirby and myself that this engagement would be unwise.

TONY. Father, I can handle my own affairs. (*He turns to ALICE*) Alice, for the last time, will you marry me?

ALICE. No, Tony. I know exactly what your father means, and he's right.

TONY. No, he's not, Alice.

GRANDPA. Alice, you're in love with this boy, and you're not marrying him because we're the kind of people we are.

ALICE. Grandpa—

GRANDPA. I know. You think the two families wouldn't get along. Well, maybe they wouldn't—but who says they're right and we're wrong?

ALICE. I didn't say that, Grandpa. I only feel—

GRANDPA. Well, what I feel is that Tony's too nice a boy to wake up twenty years from now with nothing in his life but stocks and bonds.

KIRBY. How's that?

GRANDPA (*turning to MR. KIRBY*). Yes. Mixed up and unhappy, the way you are.

KIRBY (*outraged*). I beg your pardon, Mr. Vanderhof, I am a very happy man.

GRANDPA. Are you?

KIRBY. Certainly I am.

GRANDPA. I don't think so. What do you think you get your indigestion from? Happiness? No, sir. You get it because

most of your time is spent in doing things you don't want to do.

KIRBY. I don't do anything I don't want to do.

GRANDPA. Yes, you do. You said last night that at the end of a week in Wall Street you're pretty near crazy. Why do you keep on doing it?

KIRBY. Why do I keep on—why, that's my *business*. A man can't give up his business.

GRANDPA. Why not? You've got all the money you need. You can't take it with you.

KIRBY. That's a very easy thing to say, Mr. Vanderhof. But I have spent my entire life building up my business. GRANDPA. And what's it got you? Same kind of mail every morning, same kind of deals, same kind of meetings, same dinners at night, same indigestion. Where does the fun come in? Don't you think there ought to be something *more*, Mr. Kirby? You must have wanted more than that when you started out. We haven't got too much time, you know—any of us.

KIRBY. What do you expect me to do? Live the way you do? Do nothing?

GRANDPA. Well, I have a lot of fun. Time enough for every thing—read, talk, visit the zoo now and then, practice my darts, even have time to notice when spring comes around. Don't see anybody I don't want to, don't have six hours of things I *have* to do every day before I get one hour to do what I like in—and I haven't taken bicarbonate of soda in thirty-five years. What's the matter with that?

KIRBY. The matter with that? But suppose we *all* did it? A fine world we'd have, everybody going to zoos. Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Vanderhof. Who would do the work?

GRANDPA. There's always people that like to work—you can't *stop* them. Inventions, and they fly the ocean. There're always people to go down to Wall Street, too—because they *like* it. But from what I've seen of you

I don't think you're one of them. I think you're missing something.

KIRBY. I am not aware of missing anything.

GRANDPA. I wasn't either, till I quit. I used to get down to that office nine o'clock sharp, no matter how I felt. Lay awake nights for fear I wouldn't get that contract. Used to worry about the world, too. Got *all* worked up about whether Cleveland or Blaine was going to be elected President—seemed awful important at the time, but who cares now? What I'm trying to say, Mr. Kirby, is that I've had thirty-five years that nobody can take away from me, no matter what they do to the world. See?

KIRBY. Yes, I do see. And it's a very dangerous philosophy, Mr. Vanderhof. It's—it's un-American. And it's exactly why I'm opposed to this marriage. I don't want Tony to come under its influence.

TONY (*a gleam in his eye*). What's the matter with it, Father?

KIRBY. Matter with it? Why, it's—it's downright Communism, that's what it is.

TONY. You didn't always think so.

KIRBY. I most certainly did. What are you talking about?

TONY. I'll tell you what I'm talking about. You didn't always think so, because there was a time when you wanted to be a trapeze artist.

KIRBY. Why—why, don't be an idiot, Tony.

TONY. Oh, yes, you did. I came across those letters you wrote to Grandfather. Do you remember those?

KIRBY. NO! . . . How dared you read those letters? How dared you?

PENNY. Why, isn't that wonderful? Did you wear tights, Mr. Kirby?

KIRBY. Certainly not! The whole thing is absurd. I was fourteen years old at the time.

TONY. Yes, but at *eighteen* you wanted to be a saxophone player, didn't you?

KIRBY. Tony!

TONY. And at twenty-one you ran away from home because Grandfather wanted you to go into the business. It's all down there in black and white. You didn't *always* think so.

GRANDPA. Well, well, well!

KIRBY. I may have had silly notions in my youth, but thank God my father knocked them out of me. I went into the business and forgot about them.

TONY. Not altogether, Father. There's still a saxophone in the back of your clothes closet.

GRANDPA. There is?

KIRBY (*quietly*). That's enough, Tony. We'll discuss this later.

TONY. No, I want to talk about it *now*. I think Mr. Vanderhof is right—dead right. I'm never going back to that office. I've always hated it, and I'm not going on with it. And I'll tell you something else. I didn't make a mistake last night. I knew it was the wrong night. I brought you here on purpose.

ALICE. Tony!

PENNY. Well, for heaven's—

TONY. Because I wanted you to wake up. I wanted you to see a real family—as they really *were*. A family that loved and understood each other. You don't understand *me*. You've never had time. Well, I'm not going to make *your* mistake. I'm clearing out.

KIRBY. Clearing out? What do you mean?

TONY. I mean I'm not going to be pushed into the business just because I'm your son. I'm getting out while there's still time.

KIRBY (*stunned*). Tony, what are you going to do?
TONY. I don't know. Maybe I'll be a bricklayer, but at least I'll be doing something I want to do.

(*Whereupon the door bell rings*)

PENNY. That must be the cab.

GRANDPA. Ask him to wait a minute, Ed.

ALICE. Grandpa!

GRANDPA. Do you mind, Alice? . . . You know, Mr. Kirby, Tony is going through just what you and I did when we were his age. I think, if you listen hard enough, you can hear yourself saying the same things to *your* father twenty-five years ago. We all did it. And we were right. How many of us would be willing to settle when we're young for what we eventually get? All those plans we make . . . what happens to them? It's only a handful of the lucky ones that can look back and say that they even came close. (GRANDPA has hit home. MR. KIRBY turns slowly and looks at his son, as though seeing him for the first time. GRANDPA continues) So . . . before they clean out that closet, Mr. Kirby, I think I'd get in a few good hours on that saxophone.

(A slight pause, then THE GRAND DUCHESS, an apron over her evening dress, comes in from the kitchen)

THE GRAND DUCHESS. I beg your pardon, but before I make the blintzes, how many will there be for dinner?

PENNY. Why, I don't know—ah—

GRANDPA. Your Highness, may I present Mr. Anthony Kirby, and Mr. Kirby, Junior? The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina.

KIRBY. How's that?

THE GRAND DUCHESS. How do you do? Before I make the blintzes, how many will there be to dinner?

GRANDPA. Oh, I'd make quite a stack of them, Your Highness. Can't ever tell.

THE GRAND DUCHESS. Good! The Czar always said to me, Olga, do not be stingy with the blintzes. (*She returns to the kitchen, leaving a somewhat stunned MR. KIRBY behind her*)

KIRBY. Ah—who, did you say that was, Mr. Vanderhof?

GRANDPA (*very offhand*). The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina, of Russia. She's cooking the dinner.

KIRBY. Oh!

GRANDPA. And speaking of dinner, Mr. Kirby, why don't you and Tony both stay?

PENNY. Oh, please do, Mr. Kirby. We've got all that stuff we were going to have last night. I mean tonight.

GRANDPA. Looks like a pretty good dinner, Mr. Kirby, and I'll kind of give us a chance to get acquainted. Why not stay?

KIRBY. Why—I'd like to very much. (*He turns to TONY with some trepidation*) What do you say, Tony? Shall we stay to dinner?

TONY. Yes, father. I think that would be fine. If—(*His eyes go to ALICE*)—if Alice will send away that cab.

GRANDPA. How about it, Alice? Going to be a nice crowd? Don't you think you ought to stay for dinner?

ALICE. Mr. Kirby—Tony—oh, Tony! (*And she is in his arms*)

TONY. Darling!

ALICE. Grandpa, you're wonderful!

GRANDPA. I've been telling you that for years. (*He kisses her*)

(*ESSIE enters from the kitchen, laden with dishes*)
ESSIE. Grandpa, here's a letter for you. It was in the ice box.

GRANDPA (*looks at the envelope*). The Government again? TONY (*happily*). Won't you step into the office, Miss Sycamore? I'd like to do a little dictating.

GRANDPA (*with his letter*). Well, well, well!

PENNY. What is it, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. The United States Government apologizes. I don't owe 'em a nickel. It seems I died eight years ago.

ESSIE. Why, what do they mean, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. Remember Charlie, the milkman? Buried under my name?

PENNY. Yes.

GRANDPA. Well, I just told them they made a mistake and I was Martin Vanderhof, Jr. So they're very sorry and I may even get a refund.

ALICE. Why, Grandpa, you're an old crook.

GRANDPA. Sure!

KIRBY (*interested*). Pardon me, how did you say you escaped the income tax, Mr. Vanderhof?

KOLENKHOF (*bursting through the kitchen door, bringing a chair with him*). Tonight, my friends, you are going to eat. . . . (*He stops short as he catches sight of*

KIRBY

KIRBY (*heartily*). Hello, there!

KOLENKHOF (*stunned*). How do you do?

KIRBY. Fine! Fine! Never was better.

KOLENKHOF (*to GRANDPA*). What has happened?

GRANDPA. He's relaxing. (*ED strikes the keys of the xylophone*) That's right. Play something, Ed.

(*He starts to play. ESSIE is immediately up on her toes*)

THE GRAND DUCHESS (*entering from the kitchen*). Everything will be ready in a minute. You can sit down.

PENNY. Come on, everybody. Dinner! (*They start to pull up chairs*) Come on, Mr. Kirby!

KIRBY (*still interested in the xylophone*). Yes, yes, I'm coming.

PENNY. Essie, stop dancing and come to dinner.

KOLENKHOF. You will like Russian food, Mr. Kirby.

PENNY. But you must be careful of your indigestion.

KIRBY. Nonsense! I haven't any indigestion.

TONY. Well, Miss Sycamore, how was your trip to the Adirondacks?

ALICE. Shut your face, Mr. Kirby!

KOLENKHOF. In Russia, when they sit down to dinner . . .

GRANDPA (*tapping on his plate*). Quiet! Everybody! Quiet!

(*Immediately the talk ceases. All heads are lowered as GRANDPA starts to say Grace*) Well, Sir, here we are

again. We want to say thanks once more for everything You've done for us. Things seem to be going along fine. Alice is going to marry Tony, and it looks as if they're going to be very happy. Of course the fireworks blew up, but that was Mr. De Pimna's fault, not Yours. We've all got our health and as far as anything else is concerned, we'll leave it to You. Thank You.
(The heads come up again. RHEBA and DONALD come through the kitchen door with stacks and stacks of blintzes. Even the Czar would have thought there were enough)

Curtain