

Essie / Penny / Rheba

ESSIE. (*Enters U.R. as PENNY crosses back with skull and fanning herself takes paper out of typewriter.*) My, that kitchen's hot.

PENNY. (*Finishing a bit of typing.*) What, Essie? (*Rises and crosses to R. a step.*)

ESSIE. (*Crossing to R. of table.*) I say the kitchen's awful hot. That new candy I'm making—it just won't ever get cool.

PENNY. Do you have to make candy today, Essie? It's such a hot day.

ESSIE. Well, I got all those new orders. Ed went out and got a bunch of new orders. (*Leg limbering exercise on chair.*)

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

ESSIE. That's what Ed was saying last night (*She leans body forward.*), but I said No, I want to be a dancer. (*Points to C.*)

PENNY. (*Returning to her desk.*) 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 writing plays for eight years. We started about the same time, didn't we?

PENNY. Yes, but you shouldn't count my first two years, because I was learning to type. (*At her desk.*)

(*From the kitchen comes a colored maid named RHEBA—a very black girl somewhere in her thirties. She carries eight napkins.*)

RHEBA. (*As she enters.*) I think the candy's hardening up now, Miss Essie. (*Puts napkins on U.S. chair of table.*)

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

RHEBA. (*Taking a tablecloth from buffet drawer.*) Finish the second act, Mrs. Sycamore?

PENNY. Uh? What?

RHEBA. (*Returning to table, she throws tablecloth over back of a chair and removes table cover.*) I said, did you finish the second act?

PENNY. (*Crosses to R. a step with script, papers, and pencil.*) Oh, no, Rheba. I've just got Cynthia entering the monastery.

RHEBA. She was at the Kit Kat, wasn't she?

PENNY. (*Crosses to L. of table.*) Well, she gets tired of the Kit Kat Club, and there's this 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. (*As she spreads tablecloth.*)

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

RHEBA. You mean she stays all night?

PENNY. Oh, yes. She stays six years. (*Crosses to her desk and sits.*)

RHEBA. Six years? (*Starting for kitchen.*) My, I bet she busts that monastery wide open. (*She is gone.*)

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

Grandpa / Henderson / Essie / Penny / Ed

HENDERSON. (*Pulling a sheaf of papers from his pocket.*) Now, Mr. Vanderhof, (*A quick look toward hall.*) we've written you several letters about this, but have not had any reply. (PENNY *sits in her desk chair.*)

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

ESSIE. (*Sitting on couch R.*) I told you they were from the Government.

HEND. According to our records, Mr. Vanderhof, you have never paid an income tax.

GRANDPA. That's right.

HEND. Why not?

GRANDPA. I don't believe in it.

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

GRANDPA. Yes, sir.

HEND. And you receive a yearly income from it?

GRANDPA. I do.

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

GRANDPA. About that.

HEND. You've been receiving it for years.

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

HEND. Well, the Government is only concerned from 1914 on. That's when the income tax started. *(Pause.)*

GRANDPA. Well?

HEND. Well—it seems, Mr. Vanderhof, that you owe the Government twenty-four years' back income tax.

ED. *(Coming down as ESSIE joins him.)* Wait a minute! You can't go back that far—that's outlawed.

HEND. *(Calmly regarding him.)* M-m-m! What's your name?

ED. What difference does that make?

HEND. Ever file an income tax return?

ED. *(Turns to ESSIE, ESSIE steps in.)* No, sir.

HEND. Ah! What was your income last year?

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

ESSIE. Yes, sir.

HEND. If you please! *(Dismissing ED and ESSIE. They drift U.S.)*

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.

HEND. Well?

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

HEND. 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?

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

GRANDPA. What from?

HEND. 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.

HEND. 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.

HEND. Sensible? Well, what about Congress, and the Supreme Court, and the President? We've got to pay *them*, don't we?

GRANDPA. Not with my money—no, sir.

HEND. (*Furious. Rises, picks up papers.*) Now wait a minute! I'm not here to argue with you. (*Crossing L.*) 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.

HEND. (*Yelling.*) We *don't* have to show you! I just told you! All those buildings down in Washington, (*To PENNY. She nods.*) and Interstate Commerce, and the Constitution!

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

HEND. (*Business of look at PENNY—at ED—at GRANDPA. With murderous calm, crosses and places his hands on table.*) 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?

HEND. (*To GRANDPA.*) No, they haven't got fences. They've got laws! (*Crossing up to arch L.*) 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.

HEND. You'll pay every cent of it, like everybody else!

Tony / Alice

ALICE. (*Off stage.*) 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 theatre gives *me* a thrill.

ALICE. (*As they come into sight in hallway.*) Well, 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 pauses to switch on lights.*)

ALICE. I'll see what's in the icebox. Want to come along?

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

ALICE. (*At door.*) Oh just the kitchen is enough.

(*They exit through kitchen door. A pause, and the lights go on.*)

TONY. Why, I like it. You've done it very simply, haven't you?

ALICE. Yes, we didn't know whether to do it Empire or Neo-Grecian.

TONY. So you settled for Frigidaire.

ALICE. Yes, it's so easy to live with. (*They return. ALICE crosses to table. She is carrying two glasses. TONY, a bottle of ginger ale and a bottle opener.*) Lucky you're not hungry, Mr. K. An icebox full of corn flakes. That gives you a rough idea of the Sycamores. (*TONY follows down to table.*)

TONY. (*Working away with the opener.*) Of course, why they make these bottle openers for Singer midgets I never did . . . (*As bottle opens.*) All over my coat.

ALICE. (*As she hands him a glass.*) I'll take mine in a glass, if you don't mind.

TONY. (*Pouring.*) There you are. A foaming beaker. (*Pours his own.*)

ALICE. Anyhow, it's cold.

TONY. (*As ALICE sits R. of the table.*) Now if you'll please be seated, I'd like to offer a toast.

ALICE. 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. (*She drinks and puts glass down.*)

TONY. You know something?

ALICE. What?

TONY. (*Puts his glass down and sighs 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. He sighs and looks at his watch.*) Well, 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. (*Sits L. of table. Silence again.*) When do you get 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. That's right. (*Rises.*) Oh—but I'm sure I *would* like the

city in the summer time, 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. (*Rises and crosses to R.*)

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. (*Back to TONY.*) Was I?

TONY. (*Crossing few steps R.*) Well, if it's true about the summer, how would you feel about—the winter?

ALICE. (*Seeming to weigh the matter. Turns to TONY.*) Yes, I'd—like that too.

TONY. (*Tremulous.*) Then there's spring and autumn. If you could—see your way clear about those, Miss Sycamore? (*Crossing to ALICE.*)

ALICE. (*Again a little pause.*) I might.

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. TONY starts to embrace ALICE. And at this moment, PENNY is heard from stairway. TONY crosses to back of GRANDPA'S chair.*)

Ed / De Pinna / Grandpa / Essie

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

DE PINNA. Why, what for?

ED. Well, the last two days, when I've been out delivering candy, 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 DE PINNA returns from hall U.L.*) 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 look on the buffet \

Kolenkhav / Grand Duchess / Grandpa / Penny

KOL. 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?

KOL. (*Comes D.S.*) You have heard me talk about my friend, the Grand Duchess Olga Katrina.

PENNY. Yes?

KOL. She is a great woman, the Grand Duchess. (*To group.*) Her cousin was the Czar of Russia, and today she is a waitress in Childs' Restaurant, Times Square.

PENNY. Yes, I know. If there's anything at all that we can do, Mr. Kolenkhov . . .

KOL. I tell you. The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina has not had a good meal since before the Revolution.

GRANDPA. She must be hungry.

KOL. 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. (*Rises.*) Mr. Kolenkhov, if you mean you'd like the Grand Duchess to come to dinner, why, we'd be honored.

ESSIE. (*Rises.*) Oh, yes!

KOL. (*With a bow.*) In the name of the Grand Duchess, I thank you. (*Starts for door.*)

PENNY. I can hardly wait to meet her. Where is she now?

KOL. She is outside in the street, waiting. I bring her in. (*And he goes out U.L. DE PINNA rushes to the cellar door for his coat off stage.*)

PENNY. (*Feverishly.*) Ed, straighten your tie. Essie, your dress. How do I look? All right?

(KOLENKHOF appears in hallway and stands at rigid attention.)

GRANDPA. You know, if this keeps on I want to live to be a hundred and fifty.

KOL. (*His voice booming.*) The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina! (*And GRAND DUCHESS OLGA KATRINA, wheat cakes and maple syrup out of her life for the day, 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.*) Your 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 curtsy 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.

KOL. Mr. Carmichael, Mr. Sycamore, and Mr. De Pinna.

(*PAUL and ED content themselves with courteous little bows, but not so the social-minded DE PINNA. He curtsies to the floor—and stays there for a moment.*)

GRANDPA. All right now, Mr. De Pinna.

(*DE PINNA gets to his feet again. ESSIE crosses down to chair L. of table.*)

PENNY. Will you be seated, Your Highness?

GRAND DUCHESS. (*Sits L. of table.*) Thank you. You are most kind.

(*GRANDPA sits.*)

PENNY. (*ESSIE sits above table.*) We are honored to receive you, Your Highness. (*Backing away.*)

GRAND DUCHESS. I am most happy to be here. How soon is dinner? (*To PENNY.*)

PENNY. (*A little startled.*) Oh, it'll be quite soon, Your Highness—very soon.

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.

KOL. I will make sure you are on time, Your Highness.

GRAND DUCHESS. Thank you, Kolenkhov.

DE PINNA. You know, Highness, I think you *waited on me* in Childs' once. The Seventy-second Street place?

GRAND DUCHESS. No, no. That was my sister.

KOL. The Grand Duchess Natasha.

GRAND DUCHESS. I work in Times Square.

DE PINNA. Oh!

GRANDPA. Quite a lot of your folks living over here now, aren't there?

GRAND DUCHESS. (*To GRANDPA.*) Oh, yes—many. (*Front.*) My uncle, the Grand Duke Sergei—he is an *elevator man* at Macy's. A very nice man. (*To GRANDPA.*) Then there is my cousin, Prince Alexis. He will not speak to the rest of us because he works at Hattie Carnegie. He is in ladies' underwear.

KOL. When he was selling hot dogs at Coney Island he was willing to talk to you.

GRAND DUCHESS. Ah, Kolenkhov, our time is coming. My sister, Natasha, is studying to be a manicurist, Uncle Sergei they have promised to make floorwalker, and next month I get transferred to the *Fifth Avenue Childs'*. From there it is only a step to *Schrafft's*, and (*To GRANDPA.*) *then* we will see what Prince Alexis says!

GRANDPA. (*Nodding.*) I think you've got him.

GRAND DUCHESS. You are telling *me*? (*She laughs in a triumphant Russian laugh, in which KOLENKHOF joins.*)

PENNY. Your Highness—did you know the Czar? Personally, I mean.

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?

KOL. Pravda, Pravda. That is true.

GRAND DUCHESS. (*Philosophically.*) 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. Every once in a while he would send a money order. But then he said, (*To GRANDPA.*) I just cannot go on. I am not doing so well myself. I do not blame him.

PENNY. No, of course not. . . . Would you excuse me for just a moment? (*She goes to foot of stairs and stands peering up anxiously, hoping for news of ALICE.*)