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Cocktails with Mimi

By Mary Chase

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.
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A scene from the Barter Theatre (The State Theatre of Virginia) production of "Cocktails With Mimi." Set designed by Bennet Averyt.

COCKTAILS
WITH MIMI

BY MARY CHASE

DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.
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COCKTAILS WITH MIMI was first presented by Robert Porterfield's Barter Theatre (The State Theatre of Virginia), in Abingdon, Virginia, on July 3, 1973. It was directed by Owen Phillips; the sets were by Bennet Avery; costumes were by Marianne Powell-Parker; and the lighting was by David Mazikowski. The cast was as follows:

Paul Hanson.......................... David Darlow
Mimi Ralston.......................... Ann Buckles
Edith Ralston.......................... Eda Zahl
Lucy White............................ Dorothy Chace
Burt Evans............................ Ed Bordo
Mrs. Carlton De Veirs.................. Dorothy Blackburn
Mrs. Clyde Elliott..................... Georgia Heaslip
Clyde Elliott.......................... Raf Michaels
Judge Leland Calthorpe................ Gwyllium Evans
Eudora Calthorpe...................... Dale Carter Cooper
Lester Calthorpe...................... Josef Warik
Waiter................................. Marl Leonard
CAST OF CHARACTERS

MIMI RALSTON, the hostess
EDITH RALSTON, her daughter
CLYDE ELLIOT, her lawyer
JANE ELLIOT, his wife
MRS. CARLTON DE VRIES (DODY), a guest
LESTER CALTHORPE, Edith's fiancé
LELAND CALTHORPE, bis father
EUDORRA CALTHORPE, bis mother
LUCY WHITE, an actress
BURT EVANS, an actor
PAUL HANSON, a waiter
WAITER

ACT I

Library in the home of MIMI RALSTON in the suburbs of a city in the far west of the United States.
The time is late afternoon of a day in late spring in the present.

ACT II

The same—a few minutes later.

THE SCENE

The room is handsomely furnished in traditional style. An archway at back c. shows a hallway going r. and l. with the lower treads of a staircase at back stage l. French doors at stage r. open onto the garden which is not seen. A fireplace is set in the wall below the French doors. r. of this is a sofa with a table set behind it which serves as a bar. An ottoman sits below sofa. A coffee table before sofa. A door at d. l. leads into the kitchen. A grand piano is placed back stage l. Above the door to the kitchen there is an antique French desk on which a telephone is placed. The room today is filled with vases of cut flowers in niches to l. and r. of archway and on desk.

* * *

COCKTAILS WITH MIMI

ACT ONE

For a second after the curtain rises, the stage is empty.
Music offstage. A Waiter ushers in an older woman in a long, dowdy, beaded dress. She is Mrs. Carlton De Vries (Dody). They enter u. c. l.

WAITER. I'll tell Mrs. Ralston you're here.
DODY. Thank you, It's Mrs. DeVries. (Waiter exits u. c. r. Dody steps d. After a moment enter a woman u. r. in a party dress and carrying a drink. She is in her mid-sixties. This is Jane Elliot.)
JANE. (Crossing to Dody.) Dody! Dody DeVries! I thought I saw your car.
DODY. Jane!
JANE. Dody! Bless you. (They embrace.) How are you? I heard you had the flu.
DODY. I have been brought back from the grave . . . much against my will. I'd like a drink.
JANE. I'll get you one. Let's go outside.
DODY. With that chimpanzee? I can't stand those things. Riding through the garden on a tricycle in a red dress. Spitting peanut shells. Coming at me with all those bare gums exposed. No, thank you. I'll stay here.
JANE. Dody, there's no chimpanzee this year. That was Mimi's party last year.
DODY. What is it this year? Fireworks?
JANE. No. It's nothing. It's just a cocktail party.
DODY. (Crossing d. and sitting c. on sofa, propping herself up with a cushion.) Nothing at Mimi Ralston's is ever—just nothing. That little rascal. But I love her. She's the only one who remembers to invite me out anymore. If it's fireworks, I'll wait in here 'til it's over.
JANE. (Crossing d. r. to mantel.) No fireworks. It's a cocktail party for the Watsons. It's Bud Watson's birthday.
DODY. Bud Watson! That fat slob they've just made president of
the First National Bank? Why give him anything?
JANE. I think there's something fishy about that, too. After what
they did to Mimi New Year's Eve.
DODY. Never tell me anything. I can't keep a secret. What did
they do?
JANE. (Sitting on sofa, r. of Dody.) They drove here in the dead
of night with three bricklayers and bricked up the entrance to her
garage. She couldn't get her car out for days.
DODY. But why? Why do that?
JANE. A joke. A practical joke.
DODY. Oh, I detest those things. They're for morons. And they're
cruel. Mimi should never have them in her house again. She's giving
this big bash for them?
JANE. With an orchestra, caterers . . . no tax deductions. Clyde
is fit to be tied. He has to pay all these bills. And though he tries to
hold her down . . .
DODY. I never got service like that from my lawyer. An orchestra?
Oh, well, she's loaded.
JANE. Not forever, the way she throws it around. If it weren't
for Clyde she'd be on welfare. He thinks that's where she's trying to
get. Get rid of it as quickly as she can . . .
DODY. Can't stand affluence. Her father was nothing. Had noth-
ing. Struck oil overnight. Only one answer. Careful investments,
then join the Communist Party and relax. Like those Hollywood
film stars. (Enter u. r. a man in his mid-sixties, gray-haired. This
is Clyde Elliot.)
CLYDE. (Crossing to L. of sofa.) Jane!
DODY. Clyde!
CLYDE. Dody. You look radiant. How about a kiss?
DODY. Oh, shut up. My face looks like an omelette. Sit down—
hold my hand and remember. (Clyde takes Dody's hand, kisses it,
and sits L. on sofa.)
JANE. Clyde, Dody wants a drink. She doesn't want to go outside
on account of that chimpanzee Mimi had last year.
DODY. I can't stand fireworks.
CLYDE. Fireworks?
JANE. Let's have a drink in here.
CLYDE. Yes. Yes. Right away. (Clyde rises as disreputable-looking
young man in a wrinkled waiter's jacket enters from kitchen D. L.
This is Paul. He is crossing r. with empty tray in one hand. Clyde,
stooping Paul c.) Waiter! Waiter!
PAUL. You talking to me, Dad?
CLYDE. (Token aback.) I beg your pardon.
PAUL. Like the name's Paul . . . see.
CLYDE. (Determined to be affable.) Paul? Fine. Paul, we'd like
to order . . .
PAUL. So what's yours? (Jane and Dody exchange horrified glances. Dody raises her lorgnette. Clyde still determined to be
affable.)
CLYDE. I am Clyde Elliot.
PAUL. Clyde! (laughs deprecatingly.) You're kidding!
CLYDE. (Coldly.) We'd like drinks in here. Please.
PAUL. Okay, Clyde. (laughs. To Dody.) What's your order?
CLYDE. (Turning to Dody.) Dody?
DODY. (Staring at Paul.) What. Oh. Sherry, please. Very dry.
PAUL. Sherry? (laughs, steps r. to Clyde, speaks almost as
though he were telling a dirty joke.) This broad's got to be kidding!
CLYDE. (Firmly.) One sherry, and two bourbon on the rocks.
PAUL. Comin' right up. Sherry. (laughs, starts L.) I'll be a son-
of-a-bitch. (Exits L. into kitchen, shaking his head.)
JANE. Where did he come from?
CLYDE. (Steps r. to L. edge of sofa still looking after Paul.)
How should I know? There's four of them here today. Grand
Gourmet's doing the catering.
JANE. They must be slipping. They're usually so dependable.
CLYDE. They've got labor problems like everybody else these
days.
JANE. Calling Dody a broad—in that wrinkled jacket.
DODY. (Still recovering.) Called me a what?
CLYDE. (Sits L. on sofa, calming Dody.) Nothing dear, nothing.
Skip it, Jane. Don't make a fuss. You'll upset Mimi. She's got
eough to cope with this afternoon.
DODY. Something wrong? With Mimi?
JANE. (Quickly.) Wrong! She's . . .
CLYDE. (To Jane.) Shhh. Nothing. Everything's fine. (He rises,
steps L. to c.) How have you been, Dody? Where have you been
keeping yourself?
DODY. In that big pile of bricks Carl left me. Nobody asks me
out anymore, except Mimi . . . bless her wild, scandalous heart. I love her.

CLYDE. (Sighs.) So do I.

JANE. (Grimly.) And don’t I know.

CLYDE. Love her—like a father. (He sits c. on ottoman.)

JANE. (Nudging Dody.) Whose father? (Both laugh.)

CLYDE. (Frowning.) Jane, you and I have practically raised Mimi. If you’re complaining about the arrangement, you’re bing the hand that lifted the mortgage.

JANE. Clyde, no I mean . . .

DODY. (Laughs.) He’s got you there, dear.

CLYDE. (Rises, starts u. c.) If you girls will excuse me, I’ll tell her you’re here, Dody. She’ll come in . . . if she can get away from this situation.

DODY. What situation? What’s going on? (To Jane.) Has Mimi got romance again?

JANE. Not Mimi. It’s . . .

CLYDE. (Warningly.) Jane! (Smiles at Dody.) I’ll find Mimi. (Clyde starts u. c. as a slim, attractive girl of about 19 enters from u. c. stairway. This is Edith Ralston.) Hello there, sweetie.

EDIE. (Kisses Clyde.) Uncle Clyde. (Throws kiss to Jane crossing down to l. of sofa.) Aunt Jane.

JANE. Dody, you know Mimi’s daughter, Edith. Dear, you remember Mrs. DeVries.

DODY. (Genuinely pleased.) Edith, come here and kiss me. (Edie kisses Dody, Clyde steps d. to l. of ottoman.) You blessed child. You’re all grown up.

EDIE. (Nodding happily.) You’d better believe it. I’m engaged.

DODY. Engaged—to be married!

CLYDE. Now, sweetie, that’s not settled yet.

EDIE. (Thrilledly but firmly.) Oh, yes it is. It is with me.

DODY. (Patting sofa.) You sit right down here and tell me all about it.

EDIE. I’d like to—right, Mrs. DeVries. But I’ve got to split, okay? (To Clyde.) Look would you tell Mother I’ve gone downtown to pick up Lester’s parents. (Turns to Dody, smiles.) Great seeing you again, Mrs. DeVries. Bye, bye. (She exits u. c. l. in a hurry. All watch her go.)

DODY. She’s adorable.

JANE. We love her.

CLYDE. (Looking down the hall u. c.) A fine little girl!

DODY. She’s engaged? Since when? To whom? Mimi didn’t tell me . . .

JANE. Mimi’s fighting it tooth and nail, that’s why. Is it ever a mess—and we’re in the middle.

CLYDE. (Crossing d. to r. of sofa.) Jane! (Paul enters from kitchen d. l. carrying a glass of sherry in one hand and the two bourbons between his thumb and forefinger in the other.)

PAUL. Sherry. (Hands Dody the sherry glass, takes sip from one of the bourbon glasses.) Bourbon. (Hands one glass to Clyde, the other to Jane.) Cocktail napkins here somewhere. (Reaches in r. pocket of jacket, pulls out ice bag.) That’s not it. Hold this. (Gives it to Dody, reaches in l. pocket, pulls out swizzle sticks bound by rubber band.) That’s not it. Hold this. (Hands them to Jane, reaches inside pocket, pulls out napkins bound by rubber band.) Here they are. (Throws napkins to Clyde.) Hand these out. (He starts l. stops.) Okay, drink up. (Exits l. All are dumbfounded. Clyde crosses l. of sofa, amazed.)

DODY. He’s out of Creature Features.

JANE. Has Mimi seen him in action? God knows she’ll let anybody in the front door—but at the back, well, she’s always had such good help.

CLYDE. (Hands out napkins.) She’s not herself, remember. (All wipe the rim of their glass with a napkin.)

JANE. (Lifting glass.) Here’s to her, V for victory. (All drink.) This boy Lester is a pain in the neck.

CLYDE. (Impatiently.) Jane.

JANE. And she’s meeting his parents this afternoon for the first time.

DODY. Who is he? Anyone I know?

CLYDE. I doubt it. He’s from Utah. (Sits on ottoman.) Provo, Utah.

DODY. (Laughs.) My God.

JANE. They got in town Monday, called Mimi, and she invited them to the party.

CLYDE. He’s in the graduate school at the university. Edie met him skiing last winter.

JANE. He’s very even tempered—like a moose—always mad.
CLYDE. Now, Jane. Don’t exaggerate. (To Dody.) Granted the boy does make a poor first impression but he grows on you.
DODY. Like fungus?
CLYDE. He’s serious, I grant you. He’s a conscientious student. Psychology major. Abnormal psychology. Made the honor roll last term.
DODY. Commendable, of course. I hope no one ever tries to set to music.
CLYDE. Edie is not like her mother, remember. She’s a serious girl herself. More like her father, Freddie Ralston.
DODY. That little pipsqueak. Where is he now?
JANE. Living in Madrid.
CLYDE. I hope not. I’ve been sending his checks to Buenos Aires.
DODY. George married again I heard. What about the last one, the cowboy?
CLYDE. That swine. Still hanging around town trying to move back in here.
DODY. As a marriage counselor for her daughter, Mimi’s track record is none too good.
CLYDE. Right. And she’s got to be reasonable about Lester. He’s got shortcomings but Edie loves him.
JANE. Does she? Or does she only want to get away from her mother?
DODY. (To Jane.) With many young girls—that passes for love.
JANE. So how can you tell?
DODY. My mother advised me. If he tells you to jump and you ask “How High?”, he’s the one.
CLYDE. And as for Lester . . . well, we know in this life, charm is not everything.
DODY. (Nods.) True. What did it ever get me? Just a lousy fortune.
JANE. I think Lester is after money.
CLYDE. That’s blind prejudice.
DODY. (To Jane.) Lester? Lester who?
JANE. Calthorpe. Lester Calthorpe.
DODY. Calthorpe. You can’t mean the Calthorpes from Oklahoma City. He’s a judge. They’re a hideous pair.
JANE. Lester is from Utah.
DODY. And she’s worse. Eudorra. She looks like a doorman. Acts like a traffic cop.
JANE. Clyde, Lester’s father is a judge, too. You don’t suppose they moved . . . to Utah?
DODY. If they have, Eudorra will try to move in on the Mormon Church. She’s into everything. Colonial Dames, Garden Club, National League of . . .
JANE. Dody, do they have a large family?
DODY. A litter. Six, I think.
JANE. Clyde. It’s the same. That’s Lester’s family. They moved.
CLYDE. (Impressed.) Lester’s father! Leland Calthorpe, Federal Circuit Court! That could be all right for Edie.
DODY. (Amazed.) Mimi Ralston’s daughter and one of those Calthorpe boys! Leland and Eudorra coming here this afternoon did you say?
JANE. To look Mimi over.
DODY. (Smiling wickedly.) I wouldn’t miss this for the world. This kind of fireworks I like. (Paul enters from kitchen. He is carrying a large tray which holds an ice bucket, a pie tin, and glasses. He crosses r., stumbles over Clyde’s feet.)
PAUL. Sure sorry, Dad.
CLYDE. It’s nothing.
PAUL. (Continues r. between sofa and coffee table; places ice bucket on coffee table, To Dody.) Scuse me. (To Jane.) Scuse me. (He crosses behind sofa, places tray down, hands pie tin to Dody.) Care for a canape, lady?
DODY. (Taking pie tin.) Yes. Thank you. (Looks at canapes) No. Thank you. (Places pie tin on coffee table.)
JANE. (Lifting top from ice bucket.) Potato chips in the ice bucket!
PAUL. (Steps d. r. of sofa, innocently.) Something wrong, lady?
JANE. But why . . .
CLYDE. (Rises, steps r.) Never mind. Mrs. Elliot would like more ice in her drink, please. (Paul pulls ice tray from inside pocket, pulls lever to loosen ice, drops one cube in Jane’s glass. One cube falls to the floor.) Thank you. Dody? (Paul picks up cube from floor, moves as though to drop it in Dody’s glass.)
PAUL. (Places ice tray on coffee table in front of Dody.) Help yourself. (He steps n., sits in chair d. of fireplace, takes comic book from pants' pocket, begins to read.)

DODY. Clyde. (Clyde sits L. on sofa, next to Dody.)
JANE. How cozy!

CLYDE. (Warningly, in undertone.) Shh! How have you been, Dody?
CLYDE. (Cheerfully.) Never better. Is there a radio on somewhere?
JANE. (To Clyde behind Dody's back.) It's him. He's humming. (Indicates Paul.)
CLYDE. Oh! Oh!
DODY. (Looking around.) There is a radio on.
CLYDE. (With lowered voice, pointing to Paul.) It's . . .
DODY. What? Young man!
CLYDE. (Undertone.) Never mind.
PAUL. (Holding up one finger.) One sec. (Laughs, puts comic book down, rises.) Okay, lady. What's the flap?
CLYDE. (Quickly.) Mrs. DeVries would like some quinine water instead, please.
PAUL. (Taking sherry glass from coffee table and handing comic book to Dody.) Coming right up. You want to read this? It's wonderful. (Exits L., laughing.)
DODY. Look at him. He's a degenerate.
CLYDE. Dody. Shh.
DODY. Sitting here, like a guest. (Lifts pie tin.) Clyde, look what he's using for trays. Pie tins! Lined with . . . toilet paper.
CLYDE. (Looking at pie tin.) Paper towels.
JANE. (Also looking.) Fluted, fringed. He's a moron.
CLYDE. Take it easy, you two. Don't make a fuss.
DODY. (Still studying pie tin.) These canapes. Dabs of peanut butter in the center of soda crackers. Looks like . . . dog do! (Paul enters from kitchen d. L., pushing carpet sweeper and holding large bottle of quinine water. He crosses n. to Clyde.)
PAUL. (Thrusting handle of carpet sweeper in front of Clyde.) Hold this. (Clyde too startled to move. Paul yells.) Hold it! (Clyde too startled to refuse, grabs it. Paul crosses behind sofa, hands bottle of quinine water to Dody.) Quinine. (He steps L. of sofa, moves L. end of coffee table, d., takes sweeper from Clyde, begins sweeping in front of sofa, forcing Clyde to raise his legs.) Boy, did you ever make a mess here.
CLYDE. Let it go for now, please.
PAUL. Sure. (Drops sweeper, starts to exit L.)
CLYDE. (Takes sweeper handle, rises, starts L. toward Paul.) Young man!
PAUL. (Stops, turns n. to Clyde.) You talkin' to me, Bud?
CLYDE. Yes. (Women exchange worried glances.)
PAUL. Well, look. Like the name's still Paul. See.
CLYDE. (Starts to give Paul the handle.) Paul, I believe this belongs in the pantry off the kitchen.
PAUL. Yeah. (Shoves Clyde L. toward kitchen.) Right this way.
CLYDE. Paul! (Throws sweeper on floor, crosses n. to coffee table.) Will you be good enough to get this tray with these canapes out of our sight? (Starts to pick up pie tin. Paul steps n. to him, slaps his hand.)
PAUL. Watch it, Dad. You're not at home!
CLYDE. (Setting tray down.) Young man! I think we've had just about enough of you!
PAUL. (In boxing stance.) Oh, yeah! Care to make something of it.
JANE. (Rises.) Clyde!
CLYDE. You will pack your gear and get yourself off these premises immediately.
JANE. (Trying to grab Clyde's arm.) Clyde. No. You'll get hurt. (To Paul.) Get out. Go on. You'll be sorry.
CLYDE. Jane! Will you calm down. (To Paul.) I am Mrs. Ralston's attorney. (Takes business card from coat pocket, hands it to Paul.) You give this to the catering company you're working for, Grand Gourmet, and tell them they'll have a full explanation of this whole thing if they'll call me at this number in the morning.
PAUL. (Takes spectacles from his jacket pocket, puts them on. Looks closely at card.) 2202 Colorado National Bank Building?
CLYDE. Correct.
PAUL. (Handing card back.) Yeah! How do I know it's not a stall? (Taps Clyde's chest.) How do I know you're not pulling a fast one? Some of you drug pushers are pretty cute. Okay?
JANE. (In abject shock.) Drug pushers! Drug pushers!
PAUL. (Stammering.) Yeah! Yeah! You . . . you drag a couple
go-go girls into a big bash and you... (Indicates Dody and Jane.)

DODY. (Rises.) Go-go girls! You're a degenerate. A dirty wrinkled degenerate!

CLYDE. (Turning to Dody.) Dody, shut up. (Turning to Paul.) I'm going to the head caterer, and if you're not out of here by the time I get back, I'll... (Mimi enters u. c. r. in the best of cheerful spirits.)

MIMI. Felicitations. Welcome to Versailles. (Crossing d. to l. of sofa.) Dody! Don't hide yourself. Come outside. Let me get you a drink. It's a party.

JANE. Mimi! Thank God, you're here. It's a fight.

DODY. He beat up Clyde!

JANE. Called him a dope pusher.

MIMI. (Hiding smile; Steps l. to Clyde.) Oh, no, Clyde, are you all right?

CLYDE. (Trying to be calm.) It's nothing, dear. Don't get upset. (Paul groans. Clyde backs away r.) The girls are exaggerating.

MIMI. Exhausting! He struck you... he... he...

DODY. Look at this. (Picks up pie tin.)

CLYDE. (Standing between sofa and coffee table, points to carpet sweeper.) And that.

PAUL. (Belligerently.) Okay, you finks. (To Mimi.) And you too, lady. You can take the crummy job and the crummy party and just shove it. See? Shove it. (Paul exits l., followed by Clyde.)

CLYDE. By God, you'll not talk that way in this house! (Mimi steps Clyde c.)

MIMI. Clyde, dear. Wait. Wait. (Laughs:) It's a joke... a stunt... a put-on.

CLYDE. (Stepping back.) It's what?

MIMI. (Calling into kitchen.) Paul. Paul.

DODY. What did she say?

MIMI. If you could only see your faces. (Laughs. Paul enters from kitchen d. l. He has neatened his appearance.) This is Paul. Paul Hanson. He does this rude waiter stunt as a put-on at parties. But don't tell anybody else. Promise?

PAUL. (To Jane and Dody, picking up carpet sweeper.) Hope I wasn't too rough on you, ladies. (To Clyde.) Or on you, sir.

CLYDE. (Hitches up pants, still upset.) I'll be damned. You fooled me. I was getting ready to throw out bodily.

PAUL. So? That might have been interesting. (Mimi steps up to piano, puts down glass and tiparillo that she entered with.)

DODY. This year's chimpanzee. Young man, you're not a waiter?

PAUL. No.

DODY. (Stepping l. toward Mimi.) Mimi, what are you up to?

MIMI. (Trying to soothe Dody.) Dear, it's a joke. Paul insults people, bumps into them, spills things on them as a put-on. The Everly's in Westbrook had him for their anniversary. I heard about him and hired him for today. He's going to spill soup on the Watsons. (Laughs.) But, shh!

JANE. (Giggles.) Oh, what fun!

PAUL. Mrs. Ralston, I'd better get back to work. Excuse me. (Exits l.)

DODY. (Adjusting scarf, to Mimi.) I'm sure everybody will love it. I must be off. (Starts u. c., to Jane.) Call me dear. (To Clyde.) Carry on, Clyde, and give my regards to the Calthorpes. (Pause.) Goodbye. (Exits u. c. l.)

MIMI. (Shocked, starts u.) Dody!

JANE. Mimi. She's furious. Offended.


CLYDE. Funny? No. He's properly obnoxious for a fraternity initiation in college or high school, but for adults, no.

MIMI. You stuffed shirt. (Sits on ottoman.) Oh, damn, damn, damn.

CLYDE. (Stepping l. of Mimi.) And you can't have him. You've got to call him off.

MIMI. Call him off? After what the Watsons did to me on New Year's Eve? (Rises, steps u. to coffee table, takes tiparillo from innisidor.) Paul's going to dump clambake bisque. Plop. All over their silly heads.

CLYDE. Oh, my God. At a party with Judge Calthorpe and his wife. You'll embarrass Edie and Lester.

MIMI. (Stepping r. to mantel, lights tiparillo.) Edie and Lester! (She crosses up, waves out u. r. French door, then moves back to mantel.)

CLYDE. It's serious between these kids, Mimi. Take your head out of the sand. She wants to marry this boy. And she can. She's 19, and she's got her own money from the trust.

MIMI. (Quickly.) Not for six years. Not 'til she's 25.
CLYDE. They were in my office last week inquiring about the terms of her trust. Asking if you could advance her the payments.
MIMI. (Crossing l. to secretary.) Never. Never. And I’ve told her that. So she goes to you and . . .
CLYDE. (Gently.) Sweetie, you’ve never taken no for an answer, not even from God. But you may have to take it here, from your little girl.
MIMI. (Stepping r. to Clyde.) It’s not the money, Clyde. Really it’s not. I don’t care about that.
CLYDE. As if I didn’t know that.
MIMI. He’s not right for Edie.
CLYDE. Careful. Careful. When I told you that about Fred Ralston you eloped with him the next week.
MIMI. (Stepping l. to secretary.) I was seventeen.
JANE. Eighteen. And back in ten months with a baby girl to raise.
MIMI. (Lifting picture of Edie from secretary.) Wasn’t she a doll? Those dimples . . . all over. (Puts picture back.) I could wring her neck.
CLYDE. You could lose her if you get your neck bowed.
MIMI. (Suddenly upset, crossing r. to sofa.) Oh, Clyde!
CLYDE. I mean it. (Steps r. toward Mimi.) And above all, don’t put her on a spot with this boy’s parents. If that fool waiter knocked Judge Calthorpe around and called him a drug pusher, it could blow this whole thing sky high for Edie with those people and this boy.
MIMI. (With a gleam in her eye.) Really? You can’t be serious? (To Clyde.) You mean . . . break it up?
CLYDE. I do mean just that. Judge Leland Calthorpe is a distinguished American jurist, but he’s as pliable as a block of cement.
JANE. And Mrs. Calthorpe. Dody says she’s an ogre. A big wgt in the Colonial Dames, the Garden Club. Stiff as a board.
MIMI. (Eyes glittering now.) You don’t say? Well, in that case, I’d better have a talk with Paul.
CLYDE. (Smiling in relief.) That’s my girl. I’ll pay him off. You go back to your party.
MIMI. (Quickly.) No. I’ll talk to him. If you two will run things for me out there meanwhile.
JANE. Of course, and cheer up. You can have this outrageous waiter at another party. (Waiter enters u. c. l. with package.)
CLYDE. If you must. ( Starts u., sees waiter.) What’s this?

WAITER. For you, Mrs. Ralston. From Sears, the man said.
CLYDE. Oh, I’ll take it. ( Takes package from waiter. waiter exits u. c. r.)
MIMI. Sears. It’s my order from the catalogue. Just put it down anywhere. ( Clyde puts package on ottoman, then he and Jane start u. r.) I wonder what I ordered. (Clyde and Jane stop.)
JANE. (Steps b.) Don’t you know?
MIMI. No. I order, then I forget. By the time it comes, it’s like Christmas Eve. Opening all the packages. Surprise. Surprise.
JANE. Of all the crazy things!
CLYDE. She’s been doing that for years. The bills from Sears amount to . . .
MIMI. Don’t tell me. Don’t tell me.
JANE. You’ll never grow up.
CLYDE. Or grow old like the rest of us. (Exits u. r.)
JANE. Mimi. Don’t send him away. (Mimi laughs, starts l. toward kitchen, Jane exits u. r.)
MIMI. (Yelling into kitchen.) Paul. Paul. (She crosses r. to French doors, closes them.)
P. (Enters from kitchen.) Yes.
MIMI. (Steps d. to r. of sofa.) Two of them were furious. One liked you.
P. That figures. (He is now a dignified, articulate, well-spoken young man, reserved and even with a slight air of condescension.)
MIMI. (Smiling.) I think you’re fabulous. Even better than they told me. So much restraint. You’re an artist.
P. (Genuinely pleased.) Thank you, Mrs. Ralston. (Paul crosses r. to coffee table, begins cleaning up.)
P. (Crosses behind sofa.) You get some surprises with this caper. It’s not death that’s the moment of truth. It’s pie in the face.
MIMI. Really? I just assumed everybody loved practical jokes.
P. Two-thirds do. One-third, no. According to the survey. (Crosses d. to coffee table, still clearing.)
MIMI. Whose survey?
P. Mine.
MIMI. Tell me. Are you a regular waiter in a restaurant when you’re not doing this put-on?
P. No. No, I’m not.
MIMI. Oh, well. It's such a funny idea. How did you ever happen to think of it?
P A U L. (Clears from coffee table to behind the sofa, then steps down to L. of sofa.) I didn't. It's an old stunt. (Mimi sits on R. arm of sofa.) Read about it. Some fellow used to do it out in Hollywood in the twenties. Then an American Ambassador named Dawes had an English actor do it at state dinners in London. Once, at a banquet in honor of the Infanta of Spain, he dropped ice cream down some lady's neck.
MIMI. (Enjoying the story.) The Infanta?
P A U L. No, Some duchess. But the Infanta was in on it. Ape for it, I read.
MIMI. I love it. I love it. (Slips off arm of sofa to sit R. on sofa.) Do you do the same stunts at every party, or what do you do?
P A U L. (Sits L. on sofa.) Few standards. Mostly play it by ear. Oh, when there's something special like the soup drop today, I work up to that.
MIMI. So you read about it, and started to . . .
P A U L. Did it for friends, and then word got around.
MIMI. You enjoy it, don't you?
P A U L. Mostly. And I can use the money.
M I N I. Oh. Oh. Yes. Do I give you a check now or later?
P A U L. (Rises, step behind sofa, picks up tray.) Later will be fine. How long do you want me to stick around, Mrs. Ralston?
M I M I. (Sitting up.) Oh, eight-thirty or nine. About the soup on the Watsons . . . I'd like to change that.
P A U L. (Steps L. of sofa.) Cold feet?
M I M I. No. Not the stunt. The target. Not the Watsons. A federal court judge and his wife, from Provo, Utah. Would you dare?
P A U L. (Coolly.) No problem, if you'll point them out to me.
M I M I. They're not here yet. And I've never met them. Their son wants to marry my daughter. And I have met him.
P A U L. (Grins.) Pretty bad?
M I N I. (Rises, steps R. to mantel.) Unbelievable. He is a complete and utter out-and-out, unvarnished, unmitigated . . .
P A U L. (Softly.) Ferb?
M I M I. (Not catching the word.) What?

MIMI. (Joying with it.) Ferb. Ferb! It sounds so—obscene. But who could prove it?
P A U L. My thinking, precisely.
MIMI. Ferb. I like it.
P A U L. Feel free to use it.
MIMI. (Crossing L. to secretary, excited.) Yes. Lester Wilson Calthorpe is a dirty, stinking ferb. And Edie is a stupid, naive, adorable gullible little jerk. (Turns to Paul.) I want to break it up.
P A U L. (Mockingly.) No!
M I M I. (Steps R. to C.) But it's got to look like an accident!
P A U L. (Stepping L. toward Mimi.) Mrs. Ralston, please. I'm a professional.
MIMI. We'll have to do it in here. (Indicates U. R.) Clyde's out there.
P A U L. This sofa. (He crosses behind sofa, picks up two glasses.) Clam biskue. (Makes small circle, as he approaches sofa from U., be trips himself, turning glasses upside down as though there were two people seated c. and R. on the sofa.) Should work very nicely.
No problem.
MIMI. (Impressed and enjoying the idea.) Yes. Yes. Come on, tell me. What do you do?
P A U L. (Steps to R. of sofa after putting glasses back on bar behind sofa.) I press onward. And upward.
MIMI. For all I know, you could be a con man.
P A U L. (Mimicking Bogart.) You're right, I could.
MIMI. (Imitating Paul.) Not that I'd mind in the least. (Impassively.) Oh, you must never leave here. I can't bear the thought of ever giving another party without you.
P A U L. Our agreement was five to nine, Mrs. Ralston.
MIMI. Don't be so condescending with me. (Sits L. on sofa, takes tiparillo from humidor.) I've played some good practical jokes myself in my time.
P A U L. (Amused.) Really, Mrs. Ralston.
MIMI. Really. (Paul sits R. on sofa. Mimi lights tiparillo.) My roommate and I, in boarding school, got dressed up in nuns' costumes and went to the Ritz Bar in Paris and got stinking.
P A U L. (Smiling, leans back.) Not bad. For an amateur.
MIMI. Not bad! It was perfect.
P A U L. Home free? Didn't get caught?
MIMI. Home free. So top that.
PAUL. Easy. When I was fourteen, I had the lining of my jacket removed and lined it with plastic.
MIMI. Oh. Why?
PAUL. Why? You can't go into the local ice cream parlor at the rush hour, order a double chocolate malt to go, and pour it into your pocket without a plastic lining. I'd pour it slowly into my pocket and walk out through the gaping crowd. Sometimes, a few of them followed me up the street.
MIMI. (Laughs.) Perfect. Absolutely perfect. You were only fourteen.
PAUL. Would have been, in a few months.
MIMI. You win. Hands down. Tell me some more. What else. What else?
PAUL. (Indifferently.) Oh, this and that. Some triumphs, some failures. The usual. Got caught for a caper in college. Expelled a few weeks before graduation, by an irascible, old dean of men.
MIMI. Expelled? What did you do?
PAUL. Oh, toyed with thought of arson, murder—ferish ideas. Thought—no, no there's got to be a better way. I took care of him. I fixed him.
MIMI. The old dean? (Paul nods.) What did you do?
PAUL. (Laughs.) Stole his rubbers from his office closet, painted them over with white paint to look like feet. Five toes on each one—no, wait a minute, six toes on the left foot. Then covered that over with lamp black and put them back in his closet. (Smiles.) Yes, they told me it was quite a sight next term, at the first snowfall, to see old Dean Phillips walking across campus, in his muffer, gloves . . . and bare feet. Heard the chancellor called on him that night at his home, for a quiet little talk about retirement.
PAUL. Not original with me, that one. (Smiles.) Yes, I think kindly of the old dean now. It's not absence that makes the heart grow fonder. It's a hotfoot in the right shoe.
MIMI. (Not really.) Oh, why, why couldn't Edie have found someone like you? You're married, I suppose?
PAUL. (Shakes head.) No. I'm alone. (Sighs.) But I have my work. (Grins.)
MIMI. You can't ever leave here. You've just got to move in. (She rises, indicates L.) You can have the green suite, upstairs. You can . . .

PAUL. (Rises, steps r. of sofa.) Thank you. But no. Five to nine, Mrs. Ralston. (Crosses behind sofa.)
MIMI. (Steps L.) Oh, come on now. Tell me. What do you do? I don't mean to pry, but I can't stand the idea of someone with your talent working at a gas pump.
PAUL. (Starts L. with tray.) When I could be making something of myself? No thanks. No appeal for me. (Stops L. of Mimi, turns to ber, frowns.) And I have never cared for practical jokes. I think they're cruel!
MIMI. (Enjoying his put-on, nods solemnly.) Oh, yes. Yes.
PAUL. (Still frowning.) It's not that I don't like to laugh. Understand?
MIMI. Oh, no. No.
PAUL. No. I like to laugh as much as the next fellow. But when it hurts somebody . . . (Grins.) That's when I really laugh. (Exits L. into kitchen with laugh.)
MIMI. (Calling after him.) You're a fiend, an absolute fiend.
PAUL. (Offstage.) Takes one to know one.
MIMI. (Laughing.) Touché! (Starts r., see package.) I better get out there and round up the Calthorpes. (Picks up package.) I'll put this in the pantry. (Paul enters from kitchen, crosses r. to Mimi, takes up package.)
PAUL. I'll do that for you. Where does it go?
MIMI. Anywhere in the pantry. (Paul starts L.) No. Wait. (Paul stops.) Open it.
PAUL. Now?
MIMI. Just one package. (Paul puts package back on ottoman, begins to open it.) I order and forget. When it comes, it's heaven. Try it some time . . .
PAUL. (Drily.) Thanks. For the tip. Seems to be . . .
MIMI. (Turns back to him.) Don't tell me. Surprise me. Put it in my hand.
PAUL. It's heavy. (Places it in Mimi's bands.)
MIMI. Oh, it's a bird. A penguin! Put him there. (Indicates coffee table.)
PAUL. Wait a minute. (Removes tape holding plunger on base of bird, starts music box mechanism. Plays "How Dry I Am").
MIMI. He sings.
PAUL. He's great. He's neat.
MIMI. (Picks it up, removes top, revealing pouring spout.) Oh,
look, his head comes off. (Replaces top.) He’s beautiful! Beautiful! Take him, as a gift.
PAUL. (Embarrassed.) Mrs. Ralston...
MIMI. Please. I want you to have him. (Extends it to him. Telephone rings. Paul crosses l. to phone, picks up receiver. Mimi places penguin on coffee table.)
PAUL. (Uses Oriental accent.) Lalston residence. Ah, so! (Mimi smiles.) Velly nice. I took along. (Holds ear piece to chest.) For you. A man.
MIMI. Oh. (Crosses l., takes phone from Paul who steps r. to c.) Yes. Not right now. What? Of course. Me, too. (Hangs up slowly, to Paul.) Love? Who needs it? (Steps r. to Paul.) I’ve had it. I’ll settle for laughs.
PAUL. Amen. (Picks up box from ottoman, exits l.)
MIMI. Amen. (Crosses up to piano, starts to play, singing.) Don’t sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me... Oh, give me land, lots of land, underneath the starry skies... (Steps playing piano, rises, but continues singing.) Don’t fence me in. (Steps r., sees Paul’s wallet on bar behind sofa; picks it up.) Paul, your wallet. (Looks at it.) P.V. (Looks up.) P.V.? He said his name was Hanson. (Starts l.) Paul. (Exits r. into kitchen. As soon as Mimi has disappeared from sight l., Edie appears u. c. l., crosses r., looks out through French doors. Mimi is heard off l., singing. At the sound of her voice, Edie runs off u. c. l. Mimi reenters from l., singing “Don’t sit under the apple tree...” She crosses r. and exits through the French doors. Edie reappears immediately u. c. l. She was very intense and worried on her first appearance but is less so now. Steps r. of arch.)
EDIE. Mrs. Calthorpe. (Enter short woman in frumpy outfit. This is Lu White.)
LU. (Stepping in from u. c. l., stopping.) Charming! Utterly charming! (Done in grand, artificial manner.)
EDIE. Judge Calthorpe. (Enter a short man, good-natured looking, in a dark suit. This is Burt Evans. Lu steps r. when he enters.)
BURT. Smashing! Puts one in mind of our place on the river. Eh, wot, old girl?
EDIE. Cool it. Mother’s in the garden. Serving the cocktails by the pool. Hang loose. Okay. (Both Lu and Burt are looking around, somewhat awed by the splendor.)
LU. Honey, this place is gorgeous, just gorgeous.

BURT. (Grinning.) Some pad. (To Edie.) Well, kid, you’re not on relief.
EDIE. What? Oh, no. Mother’s loaded. (Steps l. toward Burt who has moved d. by piano.) You know—social parasite. (To both.) Look, she’ll flip if I’m not in a dress. Sit down, won’t you. Be right down. Sorry. (Starts up.)
LU. You run along, honey. We’ll wait.
BURT. (Grinning, stepping toward Edie.) And don’t you worry, kid. We’ll pull it off for you.
EDIE. (Speaks intensely.) Oh, I know. I know. I know, Mr. Evans. Like I saw you—right?
BURT. Right. And wait’ll you see Lu in action. I promised you the best, and she’s it.
LU. I’ll sure try, honey.
EDIE. Oh, I’m sure, Mrs. White. Right back, Okay? (Exits u. c. stairway.)
LU. (Looking r. through French doors.) Burt! Get a load of that heart-shaped swimming pool out there.
BURT. (Still looking the room over.) You’d think two people could be happy in a place like this.
LU. (Nods.) Even a mother and daughter. (Both move d.) Burt, there’s something about this parlor charade I don’t quite get—this kid pulling this on her mother. Is she some kind of a kook?
BURT. All these kids are kooks anymore. (Moves d. l., smiles.) You and me working together again after all these years. How long has it been???
LU. (Crossing d. then l. to Burt.) That summer theatre outside Detroit, wasn’t it... 1938?
BURT. (Crossing r.) More like 1935. Went to work selling the Book of Knowledge in ’38.
LU. I been with J.C. Penney in underwear since 1940. Those old days... remember?
BURT. (Moves r. to fireplace.) Do I? English drawing room comedies in sets built to look like this. His lordship twisting his mustache, always standing with his back to the fireplace. (Stands back to fireplace, changes voice.) “So they’re all dead. Bit of a run go. Let’s have our tea.”
LU. (Steps r., sits on ottoman.) And the Duchess always sitting at a forty-five degree angle. (Does so, closes eyes, changes voice.) “My deah, life is never wah-wah-wah. Life is always slurp-slurp-
slurp." Remember when we were the sweethearts kept apart by the parents?

BURL. (Steps left, between sofa and coffee table.) Daphne and Lord Reggie. I was Reggie. (Sits on sofa.) Young English peer, bankrupt but noble.

LUI. (Rises, steps right, between sofa and coffee table.) I was the daughter of a rich sausage manufacturer. That spot in the second act when I was running out of the door, and you grabbed me by the arm. (Lu sits. Burt takes her arm. Both rise. Lu pulls back shyly, like a frightened young girl.)

BURL. How long do you think you can keep running away—from me?

LU. (Shyly, turning head.) Reggie... you mean...?

BURT. Yes. Yes. Haven't you guessed it, you silly little goose? I love you. (They face each other, move their noses together, then look to the house, check to check.)

LUI. And you could hear a pin drop all the way up to the second balcony.

BURL. (Dreamily.) Another world. I liked it. Liked those old plays. No four letter words. Everybody wore clothes.

LU. Yes. Sex was sex even then. But falling in love was like getting religion. And still is. (They move apart. Lu sits left on sofa. Burt steps right by fireplace.)

BURL. The scene I liked best was when I got to dismiss the butler. Makin' fifty dollars a week, livin' on hot dogs. But at 10:20 every night, I got to say: "That will be all, Meadows." Remember Fenwick, the old character man, backing out of the door? "Very good, sir." (Burt backs L.) Felt like I owned the whole God-dammed world. (Steps d. by mantel again.) We finally made it, Lu. No painted flats—the real thing. (Sits r. on sofa.) And, for fifteen minutes, a hundred bucks.

LU. Apiece, you told me.

BURL. (Nods.) Apiece. (Paul enters from kitchen d. L. He is carrying a tray with four drinks. Wearing white jacket and rimless gold glasses on his nose. Walks with a slouch. He is crossing r., sees Burt and Lu, goes to them r. of sofa.)

PAUL. Care for a drink?

BURL. (Happily.) Splendid! What have you got there?

PAUL. (Very polite.) Scotch or Bourbon.

BURL. I'll have a Bourbon. You, my dear?

LUI. (Grand manner.) Scotch, if I may.

PAUL. (Hands glass to Burt.) Bourbon. (Hands glass to Lu.) Scotch. (They take glass as though to toast each other.) That will be four-eighty, please. (Extends hand.)

BURL. What's that?

LUI. At a cocktail party?

BURL. (As Paul takes glasses back and places them on his tray.) We're guests...we're.

PAUL. Okay. Okay. (Looks at them.) Cheap couple of bastards. (Starts off r.) Where do you think you are? (Exits u. r. Lu rises, both look after him.)

LUI. A check for a drink in a private home? Burt, when you phoned, you said the kid's mother was giving a cocktail party.

BURL. (Puzzled.) That's what she told me. I get it. Maybe it's one of those charity affairs where you pay for everything for charity.

LUI. Charity! From me? I had to borrow this dress from my landlady. (Wanders l. thinking.) Burt, something's beginning to feel pretty sour to me. Is this kid on the level with us, or is she some kind of weirdo? How well do you know her?

BURL. (Rises.) I only seen her twice. Today and the other night when she come backstage.

LUI. (Steps r.) You told me you were selling the Book of Knowledge.

BURL. (Steps left toward Lu.) Hold it, Lu. Hold it. I am. Do a part now and then with a little Community Group in Fairview. Been playing in She Stoops to Conquer. The kid saw it, came backstage. Said she didn't want her boy friend's parents to meet her mother. Might blow the romance.

LUI. Come off it. Since when do these kids care what their parents think. (Steps l.) That's the old-time summer stock stuff. And they don't even get married—til they have to. Don't tell me. I've got a daughter. Tell you what I think? I think you and me are a pair of sitting ducks here.

BURL. (Crosses L. to Lu.) What are you getting at?

LUI. Could be she didn't tell you it was a charity affair because she didn't know. Maybe it's not even her house. (Steps r. to c., d. of Burt.) Maybe she's around here somewhere robbing the place, and we're the fall guys. I'm getting out. (Lu moves quickly r., followed by Burt who stops her.)
BURT. Lu. Lu. Take it easy.

LU. You do what you want. I'm heading for the bus. (Edie enters u. c. stairsway. She now is wearing a dress.)

EDIE. (Smiling.) Sorry I was so long. Remember. It's hello, goodbye, you got to catch a plane. Okay? (She starts r.)

BURT. Just a minute, kid. Lu feels . . .

EDIE. (Stops, turns u. to Burt.) Something wrong?

BURT. (Stepping r. to Edie.) If this is a charity affair . . .

EDIE. Oh, no. It's a cocktail party for Mr. and Mrs. Watson, friends of Mother's. Shall we go out? Okay? (Starts r.)

LU. Just a minute, Edith. It is Edith? (Edie steps l. between Burt and Lu. All are u. c.)

EDIE. That's it. But . . .

LU. Mind if we get a few things cleared up first?

EDIE. Oh, okay. What's the flap?

BURT. We said we'd help you out, kid . . .

LU. And I'm glad to make the money, but there's something else. I've got a girl of my own, not too many years older than you. Why do you want us to fool your mother?

EDIE. Okay. Look, I'll tell you. (Takes each by the arm, brings them d.) Mother loathes Lester Cal thorpe. Mother's hell. Okay?

LU. (Frowning.) Aren't you being a little unfair to your mother, maybe?

EDIE. Look, you don't get it. It's . . . (Sits on ottoman.)

LU. Oh. I get it. My girl got married too. I wasn't too crazy about the boy she picked either.

EDIE. But wait. Look. Did she . . . did you . . . ?

LU. (Steps w. between sofa and coffee table.) It turned out fine. Well, she married him. They live in La Jolla. Four kids. So your mother's not the only one. (Sits l. on sofa.) Give her a break.

EDIE. (Nodding.) I will. Sure. When I'm married in La Jolla. I mean Provo.

BURT. (Standing between Lu and Edie.) La Jolla. Provo. What have you? I've got kids too. And grandkids. (Takes snapshots from wallet.) Take a look at these you two. (Hands one to Edie and one to Lu.)

EDIE. (Hardly looking.) Fabulous.

LU. (Studying closely.) Darling. (Burt takes snapshots back, looks at them himself, then returns them to his wallet.)

EDIE. (Begins speaking as soon as she gives snapshot to Burt.) Here's the thing. Mother's spoiled. Indulged all her life. Rich, curly hair. An only child, an orphan at fifteen. Mimi Wedemeyer. Pictures of her all over the place, newspapers, magazines. From the time she was so high. Raised in this fabulous place my grandfather built. (Indicates around her.) A castle. I mean it. Okay? Like a little princess. Footman behind every chair.

LU. Just the same, she's your mother and I know how she feels about this, and I didn't even have half a footman behind my chair.

BURT. (Crossing to r. of sofa after placing snapshots in wallet.) Congratulations.

EDIE. (Rises, crosses r., between sofa and coffee table to r. of sofa.) No. No. Wait. Look. You're average, both of you. Right. So you didn't like the boy your daughter picked?

LU. We battled about it for months. If we'd hired a gym and sold tickets, we'd made a fortune.

EDIE. (To Lu.) So. Right. Okay. Your daughter's a perfectly normal, healthy girl, maybe. If she isn't, let's just say she is.

LU. (Tartly.) Of course she is.

EDIE. Fine. Right. Okay. Well, my mother would only do that—fight with her in a gym—if she was maybe paralyzed, like in a wheel chair. Get it?

LU. Not quite.

BURT. (Shaking his head.) You've lost me.

EDIE. All right. (Sits r. on sofa.) Les had eczema once. One time. Okay. See? But for months, even now, Mother—every time she catches my eye in a public place—she'll go . . . (Scratches back of hand slowly with fingers of other hand.) Anywhere. Elevators, restaurants, department stores, parties . . . (Sound of argument off r. as Paul backs in from l. r. carrying tray and shaking his fist.)

PAUL. Same to you. You crummy creep! (Gives Burt, Lu, Edie a dirty look, exits d. L. into kitchen.)

BURT. (After pause.) That guy's crazy.

LU. He's sick.

EDIE. What?

BURT. He was in here before. (Returns to Edie.) Your mother—
so maybe she likes to bait you a little, but she doesn't. *(Scratches band.)* When he's around, I'll bet.

EDIE. *(Eagerly.)* No. Right. She's dishonest basically. Waits 'til Les is across the room, his back turned, and then she'll look at me and go ... *(Scratches band.)*

LU. Well. Just the same, she's your mother, and if you ever needed anything ... BURT. Bet your sweet life, kid. And you'd do the same for her, if the chips were down.

EDIE. Les says she's not a middle class social parasite. He says she's a true hysterical. Can't endure any situation she can't control. Wilful. Spoiled. But he'd like to help her. He wants to help people. *(Smiles softly.)* He's so great. He's taking a course in abnormal psychology at the university, and he offered to bring his lecture notes and go over them with her. Would Mother do it? Oh, no. 

LU. *(Grimly.)* He sounds like something rather special himself.

EDIE. *(Nods, smiles.)* Oh, he is. *(Sudden change.)* Oh, God, Les would be livid with me if he knew about you.

LU. He won't be here today—our boy?

EDIE. Oh, no. He's driving his parents to the airport. *(Thinking out loud.)* Okay. *(Rises, crosses d. l. slowly.)* Judge and Mrs. Calthorpe get off the plane Monday. I take one look at them and I know, I just know—they'd never make it with Mother. No way. But they phone her and say they'd like to call, and she invites them to this cocktail party today. *(Turns r. to Burt and Lu.)* Can I tell him: "Hey, look. My mother's far out but your parents are the end." I can't because I know. I just know I better not. He likes them. Can you believe it? He actually, positively likes them. I panicked. Then I saw you, Mr. Evans, playing in that show at the Globe.

BURT. She Stoops to Conquer.

EDIE. Right. She Stoops to Conquer—people pretending to be other people. *(Sits on ottoman.)* And I get this fabulous idea. So I told Les and his parents Mother got the flu and called off the party. He bought it. And he understands Mother. He's so great. He's helped me understand her ... Like her generosity. Fantastic. Like my stepfathers—I've had three, no two. Anyway, she made settlements on all her husbands. Les says it's guilt feelings and anxiety. He says she's basically insecure. Like those schools she went to in Europe—people with long backgrounds, money for generations.

She hated that. And I know she couldn't take the Calthorpes. They'd flatten her. They'd cut her up. Oh, wow.

LU. *(Gently.)* And you'd care? You love your mother?

EDIE. No. I'm alienated, but I don't want to see her hurt. Like she only trusts two people in the whole world. Me and Uncle Clyde. Clyde Elliott. He's her lawyer ... *(Chin on palms, looking into space.)* I'll tell Les about you sometime. After we're married. Mother'll have a yen for some new man by then anyway. *(Looks somber. Burt and Lu exchange look.)*

BURT. *(Crossing to Edie.)* Up. Up. On your feet, kid. *(Edie rises, helped by Burt.)* We'll go through with it—for you, like we said.

EDIE. *(Happily.)* Oh, thank you, Mr. Evans, Mrs. White. You're both super. Just super. Hello, goodbye, and split. You gotta catch a plane. Got it? *(Starts u.)*

BURT. Got it!

LU. How do I look?

EDIE. Well, I think you look nice, Mrs. White. Mother's hung up on trying to look young and pretty. But I dig the way you look. Real. *(Starts u.)*

LU. Thanks, a lot. *(Starts u., suddenly grabs her middle.)* Oh, my God, Burt! *(Edie and Burt step to Lu.)*

BURT. Lu, what is it?

LU. My falsies have slipped—all the way down to my stomach. *(Clutching her middle.)* I look like I've got a growth.

BURT. Can't you cover it—with a line?

LU. Like, how do you do, Mrs. Ralston, never mind the tumor.

BURT. Can I help?

LU. *(Turning her back to him.)* If you could slip your hand down my back and fasten that hook.

BURT. *(Doing so.)* Almost had it.

EDIE. Let me help. *(Burt moves away. Edie fumbles for a moment.)* It's not unhooked, it's ripped—all the way down.

LU. If I had a pin. Or a needle and thread.

EDIE. *(Starts u.)* In here—the powder room. I'll help you. *(All crossing l. as Mimi's voice is heard off r.)* I hear Mother—you help her ... *(To Burt, rushing them off.)*

BURT. Sure. *(Mimi enters u. r., crosses to c., Edie crosses u. to her.)*

MIMI. *(Smiling.)* Baby! There you are.

EDIE. Hi, Mother. Hey, you look terrific.
MIMI. You look pretty sweet yourself. Did the Calthorpes come?
EDIE. Oh, yes. In the powder room.
MIMI. (Steps d. l.) All of them?
EDIE. Les couldn't make it. Finals—up to here. (Steps l.) Mrs. Calthorpe . . . her . . . her bra strap broke. Judge Calthorpe's helping her.
MIMI. That's a relief. I'm glad they didn't go in there to write their all over the walls.
EDIE. (Steps r.) Oh, Mother!
MIMI. (Steps r.) I think we'll have a drink in here—away from that mob. (Starts crossing r.) I'll tell the waiter.
EDIE. Mother, wait . . . (Mimi exits u. r. Edie crosses d. l., knocks on door to powder room. Burt and Lu enter.) Shh. We can't. We gotta split.
BURT. Kid's scared.
EDIE. She won't buy it. Not Mother. Look, I'll pay you anyway, but I can't.
LU. (As all start u.) She's right, Burt. And I've thought so all along.
EDIE. (As all stop.) I must have been crazy to think of it. (Pause.) Let's go. (As they start to move u., enter Clyde Elliot from u. r.)
CLYDE. (Beaming, excited.) Judge Calthorpe. (All freeze.) It's Clyde Elliot. Mrs. Ralston's attorney. Remember me?
EDIE. (Terrified, stammering.) Uncle Clyde, it's not . . . it's . . .
CLYDE. (To Edie.) Hello there, sweetie. (To Lu.) Mrs. Calthorpe. Clyde Elliot. (Burt crosses d. r. by mantel.)
LU. (Adjusting dress, speaks grandly.) Mr. Elliot, Good afternoon.
BURT. (Loudly.) How are you, Elliot? (Lu steps just d. of piano; Edie remains u. c.)
CLYDE. (Crossing r. between sofa and coffee table to Burt.) Remember me trying a rape case before you in El Paso years ago?
BURT. (Shaking head.) No. No, I don't Elliot, as a matter of fact.
LU. Leland has so many rape cases.
CLYDE. Rate . . . (Laughs.) Not rape. (Turns back to Burt. Lu crosses d. to secretary, sits, followed by Edie who remains standing just u. of her. Edie in terror.) Public utilities case. You ruled against me. You were pretty rough on me, Judge.
BURT. That so. Sorry. Can't recall.
CLYDE. I'd remembered you as a much bigger man. You looked big to me, sitting up there on that bench. Case meant a lot to me. I was petrified. Absolutely petrified.
BURT. (Gruffly.) Oh, come now, Elliot, come now.
LU. (Lightly laugh.) Fiddlesticks. (Touring heads.)
BURT. (To Lu.) Buck up. (To Clyde, slapping him on the back.) Buck up, old boy.
CLYDE. (Slightly puzzled.) As it turned out, it was the best thing that happened to me—a turning point. You were right, but you were a stickler for a fine point there.
LU. (Rises, steps r.) Leland is always a stickler—for a fine point. BURT. Thank you, my dear. Have to be. Have to be.
CLYDE. I thought you gave that other lawyer a much softer time. (Frowns.) What was his name now? (Ponders.) Let's see—a fellow from Fresno.
LU. (Crossing r.l., sits l., on sofa.) Fresno. Leland has always adored Fresno.
CLYDE. Well. Yes. I would have sworn you were a much bigger man—at least six . . .
BURT. (Blandly.) That will be all, Elliot. (Gestures with his hand for Clyde to leave. Paul enters from u. r., dragging garden hose, stops when he ences c., points it at Burt, Lu and Clyde.)
PAUL. Okay, Joe. Turn it on. (All duck. Nothing happens. Paul exits d. l. with sad face leaving hose partially onstage.)
CLYDE. What's that? (Reaction to Burt's line, starts l. between sofa and coffee table, bumps into Lu.) Oh, sorry. Didn't mean to. Beg your pardon. (Eyes never leaving hose which continues to move although Paul has already exited.) Excuse me. Speak to you a minute, sweetie—out here. (Exits, following hose. Edie gives Burt and Lu a look of desperation, then follows Clyde off l.)
BURT. (Crossing l. to c., Lu rising.) We'd better get out of here fast. You blew it. That rape case boo-boo of yours.
LU. Me? What about you? Dismissing him like a butler. He's the family lawyer.
BURT. (Steps aside.) He's a horse's ass. Ruled against him! Shoulda sent him up for life. Oh, what the hell! Come on. Let's go. (Both start u. Edie enters from d. l. She is radiant.)
EDIE. Wait! Wait! (Burt and Lu stop, turn d. to her.) Fabulous, Fabulous. Both of you. He bought it. Mother'll buy it, too.
BURT. The hell you say. When he told you to step out there, Lu and I figured . . .
EDIE. Oh, that. He wanted to tell me about the stunt waiter. Mother always has some kind of stunts at her parties. Today she hired some man to put on a waiter's coat, stumble around, insult people. For a gag.
LU. (Starts D. r.) The old bumbling waiter act.
BURT. Old Vince Barnett act.
EDIE. Who?
BURT. Fellow used to do it in Hollywood. The rage out there in the twenties. Lu. (Burt crosses D. to L. of sofa. Lu crosses D. r. of sofa.) He's the one tried to stick us for the drinks.
EDIE. (Crossing D. to L. of ottoman.) Clyde says steer you away from him.
BURT. (Smiles.) What do you know? Us with this put-on, running into that old gag. He won't worry me. Wish I'd known. I can fix his wagon.
LU. Easy. (Sits r. on sofa.)
EDIE. Now remember! Hello, goodbye—all sweet, sweet, sweet. Got it?
BURT. Cool it, kid. Cool it. (Edie sits on ottoman.) We'll make it. (Starts to sit L., on sofa, stops, looks out.) Wonder if he gets more for that than we get for this? (Sits L. on sofa as curtain falls.)

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

A few minutes later. At rise of curtain, Burt is R. by mantle. Lu is seated L. on sofa. Edie is L., seated on chair by secretary. After a moment, Mimi enters from u. c. stairway. She steps just inside arch, unseen by the others, and pauses for a moment. She has changed dress. Now wears backless sophisticated slinky black gown.

MIMI. You! (Crossing D. to L. of sofa.) You did come. I was so afraid you'd forgotten me. (Edie is standing paralyzed.) I'm Mimi Ralston. (Lu rises, they shake hands.) And you are—Eudorra, isn't it—Eudorra Calthorpe?
LU. (Grandly.) Mrs. Ralston. Such a pleasure.
MIMI. You're beautiful. (Looks L. at Edie.) Edie didn't tell me you were beautiful.
EDIE. I . . . I . . . so I goofed. Okay. (Burt crosses L. to Mimi, shake hands.)
MIMI. And this is Leland. I've never met a Federal Court Judge before. I've been so frightened.
MIMI. (Smiling sincerely.) Judge Calthorpe. Aren't you nice?
BURT. Nice? God's truth. (Remember bis act.) Eh, wot. Old girl?
LU. (Stepping L. toward Mimi.) Oh, my dear. You're ravishing, Mrs. Ralston. (Sincerely admiring her.)
MIMI. Mrs. Ralston? Oh, please. I'm Mimi. I'm sitting down. (Lu and Burt look at each other, join hands, sit on sofa.) But where is Lester? (Looks around.)
EDIE. Oh, he couldn't make it. Finals—up to here. Okay?
MIMI. Oh, too bad. (To Burt and Lu, facing L.) Lester is your son? (Lu and Burt stiffen.)
EDIE. (Steps r. to Mimi.) Mother! Why would you say that?
MIMI. (Sincerely.) Edie, I mean—perhaps by a previous marriage. (Glaring at Edie.) People do get married more than once these days.
EDIE. (Glaring back.) I know, Mother. I know. I know. Right? Why wouldn’t I? Right?
MIMI. Baby, don’t get so excited. (Pushes Edie.) Sit down. Relax. (Edie sits on chair by secretary. Mimi crosses r., puts hand on Lu’s shoulder.) All I meant was—you don’t seem anything at all like Lester.
LU. (Forgothing her act, touched.) Mimi, I understand, my dear. I have a daughter.
EDIE. (Quickly.) Three. You’ve got three.
MIMI. Three? I didn’t know. (Steps l. to c.)
EDIE. You did. I told you. Three girls and three boys in Lester’s family.
MIMI. (Light laugh.) Yes, dear, slipped my mind. (Scratches hand.) Sorry.
BURT. (Rises, steps r. by mantel.) You sorry? We’re the one to be sorry. Pack of damned scalawags eh, wot, old girl?
LU. My dear, you wouldn’t dream—ghastly! Ghastly!
MIMI. (Looks at Edie.) Oh, yes I would. (Paul enters from d. l. carrying tray w. drinks, etc. Burt and Lu register his entrance, exchange a glance. Edie stares at him curiously.)
PAUL. I’ll serve the drinks, ma’am. (Mimi has forgotten Paul in her annoyance at Edie and her instant rapport with Burt and Lu.)
MIMI. Oh, yes. (Stepping u. of sofa, indicating bar there.) Eudorah? Leland? You’ll have a drink?
BURT. Ah, splendid. Splendid. On the house? (Steps u.)
MIMI. I beg your pardon.
BURT. Yes. Yes, I’d like one. Bourbon.
MIMI. Paul. (Indicates that he’s to serve drinks. Paul crosses r. to u. of sofa.)
EDIE. (Rises.) Judge, you can’t. You’re catching your plane. Right?
BURT. (Steps d. by mantel, grinning.) They’ll hold it for me. Special privilege we get—on the court. (Edie sits.)
MIMI. (Sincerely.) Really? (Looks at audience.) I didn’t know that.
LU. Oh, my dear, you don’t dream the shenanigans. Scotch on the rocks for me.
MIMI. (Grandly.) Scotch on the rocks for Mrs. Calthorpe.
PAUL. (To Mimi.) Yours, lady?
MIMI. Oh, ginger ale.

PAUL. (To Edie.) Yours, miss?
EDIE. (Mocking Mimi.) Oh, ginger ale.
MIMI. (To Lu.) Do tell me everything about Provo. Not everything. (Laughs. Paul steps d. r. of sofa to Burt holding two glasses and two large bottles of ginger ale under his arms. There is bubble gum stuck to one of the glasses.)
PAUL. (Takes sip from one glass.) Bourbon. (Hands it to Burt.) Ooops, sorry. (Removes bubble gum from rim, steps l. to Lu, hands her the other glass.) Scotch. (Crosses l. to Mimi, hands her one bottle of ginger ale.) Ginger Ale. (Crosses l. to Edie, hands her the other ginger ale.) Ginger Ale. (Crosses r. to u. of sofa.) Okay, drink up. (Mimi and Edie remove caps from the bottles, all drink.)
MIMI. (Low tone to Lu.) Oh, I am sorry. The help situation you know, I understand. Eudorah, you’re deeply involved in the Garden Club. (Lu is surprised, Edie nods her head.)
BURT. Is she! Digging outside all night. Like a bloody badger. (Mimi laughs.)
EDIE. (Rises, steps r. to c.) Mrs. Calthorpe. Judge. (In commanding voice.) Shall we go out in the garden? Okay?
MIMI. Edie, what’s the trouble? You’re jumping up and down. Leland and Eudorah want to relax—with me—for a few minutes.
PAUL. (Stepping d. r. of sofa, offers pie tin to Lu.) Care for a canape?
LU. (Takes one.) Yes. Thank you.
PAUL. (Offers tin to Burt.) Canape?
BURT. (Eyes beaming, he takes one.) Peanut butter! You knew I was coming.
LU. (Smacking lips.) Um... um... leave them right here. (Indicates coffee table, directly in front of her. Paul and Mimi exchange puzzled look. Paul sits r. on sofa, pulls out comic book, begins to read it.)
MIMI. (To Lu, indicating Paul.) Oh, dear, I am sorry.
LU. (Smiling.) Forget it. (She looks at Paul. Paul laughs. She looks at Mimi.) He’s happy. (Mimi smiles nervously, exchanges worried looks with Paul.)
MIMI. Leland, you look so uncomfortable over there standing by the fireplace. Do come, and sit down here on the sofa. (Paul looks over the top of his book, watching for Burt to move.)
BURT. Like to stand. Sit all day on the bench.
MIMI. Oh, yes. Do come and sit on the sofa, just for now.
Won't you? (Paul slides L., pats seat.)
BURT. Well, if you insist. (Burt sits R. on sofa, leans back. Paul
leans back with him.) Burt moves forward. Paul moves with him.
Burt leans back, again Paul moves with him. As Paul starts to
move forward with Burt once again, Burt extends his L. arm,
holding Paul back while he moves forward.) Here I am. (Mimi
laughs.)
PAUL. Anything else in here, lady? (Burt removes arm.)
MIMI. (Suddenly, as if impulsively.) I know. A cup of cold clam
bisque. It's so good with the drinks.
BURT. That would touch the spot.
LU. Love it. Simply adore it.
PAUL. (Rises, crosses L.) Comin' right up. (To Lu.) Scuse me.
(To Mimi.) Scuse me. (To no one in particular.) Scuse me.
(Exits L.)
MIMI. (Rises, steps R. f ottoman.) I am so sorry, Leland, Eu-
dorra. I've got a good caterer, but you can't tell these days what'll
turn up.
BURT. Something wrong, Mimi?
MIMI. (Steps R.) His fingers on your glass, Leland—Eudorra.
(Lifts ginger ale bottle.) And this.
BURT. Inexperienced probably. Young. They've all go to learn.
(Takes canape, eats it.)
LU. Green kid. First job. (Takes canape, eats it.)
MIMI. (Indicating pie tin.) Those disgusting canapes!
LU. They're delicious.
EDIE. Oh, Mother. That's superficial. That's not basic.
MIMI. (Steps L. of ottoman.) But I'm so humiliated. Your first
visit here. You'll never set foot in the place again. (Sincerely.)
Eudorra, Leland, Edie. I'm so sorry.
EDIE. It's okay, Mother. (Sincerely.) It's really okay. Hang loose.
LU. (Laughs.) Mimi, I'm having a wonderful time. I'll treasure
this all year in Provo.
MIMI. Really! (Paul enters D. L. with cup of bisque in each
hand.) In Provo?
PAUL. (Crossing R. of sofa.) Clam bisque. (Starts to dump
bisque on Burt and Lu.)
MIMI. (Suddenly.) No, Paul, no. (Lu rises, steps R. Burt rises,
steps R.) They're too nice. Leland, Eudorra. I'm so ashamed. For-
give me. Paul, I can't. (Steps L.) I can't.
EDIE. (Rises, steps L. to Mimi.) Mother, what is it? (Paul re-
mains standing at sofa.)
MIMI. (To Lu, Burt, Edie.) I'm a beast. And a devil. Dody De-
Vries is out of her mind. (To Edie.) Poor baby!
EDIE. (Imploreingly.) Mother. Mother. Please, what is it?
MIMI. (Steps R. to c.) Leland. Eudorra. I'd heard you were
stuffed shirts, pompous, awful. (Burt and Lu exchange glances.)
I got Paul here. Paul Hanson, to play a clumsy waiter. To spill
clam bisque all over you. (Lu has crossed R., is standing with
Burt by fireplace.)
BURT. Clam bisque!
EDIE. (Backing away, in shock, shaking her head.) Mother!
Whew! (Steps L., sits by secretary.)
MIMI. But I liked you right off. You're real and warm and kind.
I've been all wrong about Lester, too, Clyde says. I didn't want
these two to get married. (To Edie.) Go ahead, Edie. I won't stop
you. I'll advance you the trust payments.
EDIE. (Ecstatic, rises, crosses to Mimi.) Mother! Mother! You
mean it? You mean it? (Embraces Mimi.)
MIMI. (To the others.) See that. She hasn't looked at me like
that in months. (To Edie.) Forgive me.
EDIE. Yes, Yes. I understand you, Mother.
MIMI. You sweet baby. (To Burt and Lu.) She'd never do a
stunt to anyone herself, and yet she understands.
EDIE. (Looking at Burt and Lu first, then stepping away L.)
Don't say that. Don't say it, Mother. (Sits L. by secretary. Paul
takes tray, crosses D. L., exits.)
MIMI. (Stepping R. between Burt and Lu.) Leland. Eudorra. Am
I forgiven?
BURT. Like this. (Kisses L. cheek.)
LU. Mimi, I do understand. (Kisses R. cheek.)
MIMI. I'm so happy. (Starts L.) Now, I'll open champagne to
celebrate. You get it, baby.
BURT. Sorry, Mimi. No time. Gotta catch a plane.
MIMI. What time is your plane? (Burt, Lu and Edie all reply at
the same time.)
BURT. Six-forty.
LU. Seven-fifteen.
EDIE. Five forty-five.
MIMI. You'll never make that one. Eudora, come upstairs with me. (Takes Lu by the arm, starts u.) I've got a little fox jacket—perfect with your hair.
LU. (Steps at u. c. arch.) I think they'll hold the plane, Judge. (Mimi and Lu exit up stairway.)
BURT. (Starts l. toward Edie.) What now, kid? (Paul enters from d. l., crosses r. to u. of sofa, clearing.)
EDIE. (Indicating Paul.) Watch it. Shh!
BURT. (Stepping r. to r. end of sofa.) Yes. That Vince Barnett. He was a riot. Had them in stitches. Too bad you never saw him.
PAUL. (Crossing l.) Excuse me, judge. (Exit d. l.)
EDIE. Judge? Judge? (Crosses u. to Burt.) Oh, God! Oh, she must never know. Promise me. Promise me. It would kill her!
BURT. It would be pretty tough on her. And she's all right. She's a peach.
EDIE. And I'll fix it with Lester, too. I'll have to tell him. It's all right now. He's taken them to the airport. And I'm so lucky. And so grateful. If she'd had Paul with the Calthorpes—oh, I can't even imagine how ghastly it would have been. (Mimi enters from u. c. stairway; steps at bottom step.)
MIMI. Come and see her in the jacket, Leland. She's perfect. Come, Leland, Edie. (All exit u. c. stairway. Paul enters from d. l., starts r., then d. to secretary. Picks up phone, dials.)
PAUL. It's Paul. Tell the Grand Visier I'll be able to make it, after all, for nine o'clock. Change of plans. I'm out here in Oakdale. (Grins.) Yes. Yes. In a mausoleum. Americans. Oil money. Widow and daughter. Put-on for some people out of town. Mother's pretty bright. Girl's great looking, but tied up with some furb. (Hangs up, crosses u. c., looks r. and l. down hallway, then steps l. and sits at piano, begins to play Tchaikovsky's Fifth. He plays it well. Looks somber. Enter Mimi down stairs. She steps just d. of arch.)
MIMI. You! Play something else. (Paul steps.) It's a dirge. It's dreary. I'm happy.
PAUL. (Brightly.) All rightee. (Leaves through sheet music lying on top of piano. Groans.) Oh, no. Don't Fence Me In. Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree With Anyone Else But Me. Your taste in music is pretty bad, Mrs. Ralston.
MIMI. (Unaffected, crosses l. to just d. of piano, looking at Paul.) I love all those old songs. I was raised on them.
PAUL. (Starts to play Apple Tree; when he reaches "Me," He bangs a sour chord on piano.) Oh, no. I can't. Sorry.
MIMI. (Remembering what she had come down for.) Oh, Lester! I feel so guilty about Lester. (Crosses d. to use phone.) I've got to call him and have him come out for the champagne. (Paul rises, crosses d. as though to clear the coffee table. Mimi dials.) You do it. Make it funny. (Turns to Paul, phone in hand.)
PAUL. No. Please.
MIMI. Oh, please!
PAUL. I . . . all right. (Crosse s l., takes phone from Mimi, who steps r. Oriental accent.) Lester? Ah, so. Mrs. Lalston, you know her? (To Mimi, yells.) Okay, lady, he knows. (Mimi sits on ottoman, into phone.) She tells me tell you come klick. You forget books. Okay. She like you now. How many books you got, Lester? Oh . . . (Holds phone away from ear) Mrs. Lalston hang up on me kooky lady. (Hangs up phone. Steps r., oriental bow with hands clasped in front of him.) I go now—okay?
MIMI. (Surprised.) Go? You're here for the party.
PAUL. Sorry. Couldn't cut it now. Could we skip it?
MIMI. (Amazed.) You mean call it off? (Paul nods.) Is something wrong? Are you ill?
PAUL. Professional pride. I gave a bad show just now. I missed it somehow. Lost my touch.
MIMI. (Rises, standing to r. of Paul.) No. No, you didn't. They're just real, honest, unpretentious good people. You can't do a put-on with people like that.
PAUL. Like you can't con an honest man? No. There was something off. I felt it. It was me. I was wrong all the way.
MIMI. No. No. You were perfect.
PAUL. Thanks, but I'll be gathering up my gear. (He doesn't move.)
MIMI. I'll make out your check.
PAUL. No. Please, no. No check.
MIMI. I insist, and I'll be calling you again about the 22nd.
PAUL. (Shakes head.) I'm giving this up—for the time. Lost my touch.
PAUL. No, please.
MIMI. I'll be right down. (Starts up, then stops.) Know something? I'm stuck with Lester, but I still wish it was you.
PAUL. (Mocking.) Thanks, Mimi. You've been a helluva swell pal. (Using normal voice.) You've got a great-looking daughter. She didn't even notice me.
MIMI. If only she'd met you first.
PAUL. No different then. I can't seem to—talk to girls.
MIMI. You? Come off it. I know. I've been around the block—twice.
MIMI. I know what you mean. I'm never at ease unless I'm picking up the check. When I was four years old, in the sand pile, with a bag of candy, I decided. People love you—if you feed them.
PAUL. (Wry smile.) Four? You were a dumb kid, Mimi.
MIMI. I'll be right down. (Exits u. c.)
PAUL. (To himself, after Mimi has left.) Goodnight, kooky lady. (Crosses r. to bar behind sofa. Edie enters from u. c. stairway.)
EDIE. (Entering.) You. (Steps r.) Was that you in here playing Tchaikovsky?
PAUL. Who's he?
PAUL. (Hesitantly.) No, I . . .
EDIE. You're real good. You're really great. (Paul crosses r., sits at piano. Plays Chopin.) You're better at that than funny waiters. (Piano stops.) Do you know you could have messed up my life?
(Steps L., sits d. of piano.)
PAUL. Stop or I'll burst into loud noisy sobs. (Starts heads and flowers song on piano.)
EDIE. You're two of a kind. You and mother . . . are you planning to be my new step-father? (Paul stops abruptly.)
PAUL. Me? Your . . . ? Why, that's the craziest idea I ever heard. (Rises, crosses d. to coffee table. Reacting like a schoolboy.) Your stepfather—hah!
EDIE. (Rises, steps r.) No hah. I've seen them come and go. (Paul crosses L. with tray to secretary.) I know the signs. She's ape for you. I can tell. But I won't be here.
PAUL. In that case, I might think about it. (Paul crossing r., stops, turns to Edie.) Your mother sparkles. You're adopted, of course. (Crosses r. between sofa and coffee table, clearing.)
EDIE. (Folllows Paul r.) And you're horrible. When I think what you might have done to me and Les.
PAUL. Pretty shameless. In here gossiping with the help.
EDIE. (Puts humidifier on tray. Paul removes it.) If Les had been here, he would have thrown you out.
PAUL. I'll be gone when he gets here. But it's almost worth waiting for. Where is that fella? What's keeping him?
EDIE. (Sits on ottoman.) He's not coming.
PAUL. Oh. He didn't say he wouldn't come—when I invited him. EDIE. Invited him? You didn't! You're kidding. Right?
PAUL. Invite him . . . me? Oh no. Japanese butler ask him. Your mother wanted him called to smoke the peace pipe with his folks. Something wrong? (Exits L. into kitchen.)
EDIE. (Rises, runs r. to phone, dials.) Hello. Is Lester Clotho here? Gone! With his parents to the airport? Where! Oh, my God!
PAUL. (Entering from D. L., crossing to L. of sofa.) Something wrong?
EDIE. Les and Judge and Mrs. Calthorpe on their way here—now,
PAUL. Judge and Mrs. . . . who are the other two?
EDIE. (Crossing r. to c.) Actors I hired—to act nice.
PAUL. (His spirits reviving.) Not bad. Not bad at all. (Steps r. between sofa and coffee table.) I knew there was something. They weren't supposed to react to anything I did.
EDIE. The real Calthorpes and your phony act! (Paul sits r. on sofa.) Oh, God! I've got to get Mr. Evans and Mrs. White out of here. Or mother. Or keep them from coming. (Crosses r. to sofa, sits next to Paul.) Oh, help me please—help me.
PAUL. Cool it. Tell you what. You and the phonies keep your mother in the garden. I'll make some excuse to the Calthorpes. Nothing elaborate, just a simple 'get the hell out of here.'
EDIE. Oh, no. Please. (Enter Mimi, Bert, and Lu from u. c. stairway. Lu is wearing the fox jacket.)
MIMI. Isn't Eudorah stunning in that jacket.
EDIE. (Rises, shouts.) Get out. Get out.
MIMI. Edith, you're white as a sheet. What is it?
EDIE. (Crossing L.) I'm sick. I'm sick. (Exits L.)
MIMI. (Runs after her, calling.) Dear—dear—wait.
BURT. What's happened?
PAUL. The real Calthorpes are coming.
BURT. Oh. Oh. Come on Lu, we gotta get out of here.
PAUL. No, you two keep Mimi outside. I'll make some excuse to the others.
BURT. Oh, no. We're gettin' out. Come on, Lu. (Burt, Lu, and Paul start u. c. only to be stopped by the waiter who is ushering in Judge and Mrs. Calthorpe. The waiter exits u. c. l. Lu steps d. of piano. Burt moves quickly d. by mantel. Paul is r. of u. c. arch. Both Judge and Mrs. Calthorpe are wearing raincoats.)
JUDGE. (After looking around, addresses Paul.) Leland Calthorpe. (Indicates Eudorra.) My wife. (Extends band.) And you are...
PAUL. (Extending band.) Paul. I work here. Waiter. (Judge withdraws band. Embarrassed silence. Indicates Lu.) Mrs. Ralston.
JUDGE. (Crosses l. to Lu, shakes bands.) Mrs. Ralston. (Indicates Eudorra.) My wife.
LU. Really? Well.
PAUL. (After embarrassed silence. Indicates Burt.) Dr. Anstruther.
JUDGE. (Crosses d. r. to Burt, shakes bands.) Dr. Anstruther. Leland Calthorpe. (Indicates Eudorra.) My wife.
EUDORRA. (Steps down, begins removing raincoat.) Mrs. Ralston. Dr. Anstruther. (To Paul.) If you could tell us some place to chuck these raincoats. It's warm in here and I must watch my sinuses.
PAUL. (Steps l.) I'll watch them, lady. Dr. Anstruther will take your coats.
EUDORRA. What's that?
BURT. What? Oh, yes. Glad to. Glad to. (Takes coat from Judge, crosses up, takes coat from Eudorra.)
EUDORRA. Thank you, Doctor.
JUDGE. (Puzzled.) We don't want to impose on you, Doctor. (Stares at Paul.)
PAUL. I believe you left your stethoscope by the swimming pool, Doctor Anstruther.
BURT. (Starts r. with Paul.) That so? That's nice.
PAUL. Excuse us, Mrs. Ralston.
BURT. Excuse me, folks. (To Lu.) Have a nice day. (Burt and Paul exit u. r., Lu crosses r., stops u. of sofa.)
LU. (In grand manner, turning to Judge and Eudorra.) You! You did come. I was so afraid you wouldn't.
JUDGE. (Who has remained d. r.) You were? That's odd. Edith told us you'd cancelled the cocktail party invitation because of illness. That was Eudorra's understanding. Eudorra?
EUDORRA. (Nodding.) It was. It was my understanding.
JUDGE. Then your man phoned Lester as we were leaving for the airport. So we felt we'd better come by. I'm glad to see you looking so well. Going out? (Indicates fox jacket.)
LU. (Stepping l. to c.) What? Oh, no. Just chilled. (To Eudorra.) You. You're beautiful. Edith didn't tell me you were beautiful. EUDORRA. Oh, please. (Steps r.) Don't exaggerate, I am not beautiful and never was. And I know it. I am a Musgrove. None of the Musgroves are beautiful.
JUDGE. (Crossing l. to Lu.) Stamina. They have stamina. (Eudorra holds head up, thrusts chest out slightly.) But, of course, you've heard of General Musgrove and the battle of...
LU. Oh, yes! Yes.
JUDGE. Oh, you have.
LU. I am sorry. Sit down, please. (Indicates sofa. Eudorra crosses r. between sofa and coffee table to r. end of sofa. Judge crosses l. and is about to sit in chair d. of piano.)
EUDORRA. I'll sit there. (Indicates l. on sofa.) Leland, you sit here. (Judge crosses r., smiling blandly at Lu, sits l. on sofa. Eudorra sits r. on sofa.)
LU. I'll order you a drink. (Starts l.)
JUDGE. Please. This is not a social visit—entirely. (Lu stops, turns to them.)
LU. (Steps r. to c.) No? What do you call it?
EUDORRA. Leland! It's a social visit also. But with a slight problem.
JUDGE. Slight! Slight! You didn't consider it slight a few moments ago.
EUDORRA. (Calming him.) I only mean Mimi must understand it could be a social visit—eventually, perhaps.
JUDGE. Mrs. Ralston, please sit down. (Lu steps r., sits on ottoman.) You'd better brace yourself. (Judge rises.) Your daughter—is pregnant.
LU. (Rises.) Again?
JUDGE. (Sits.) Again?
LU. (Wanders i.) No. No. I didn't mean that. What am I saying?
JUDGE. Yes. What?
LU. Oh, you mean Edith?
JUDGE. Who else?
LU. (With relief.) I have another daughter in La Jolla.
EUDORRA. You have another daughter?
LU. She's got four now. (Lu sits d. l. on chair by secretary.)
EUDORRA. We hadn't been told about her. (Judge, Eudorra rise.)
JUDGE. We had not.
LU. (Rises, steps r.) You must be joking—about Edith.
JUDGE. (Sternly.) No. Unfortunately, we are not. Lester told us, just now, after the phone call tonight. He made a clean breast of the whole situation. He was told you wanted him to come here.
EUDORRA. The whole thing—lock, stock, and barrel. (Judge and Eudorra sit.)
JUDGE. And while we know it's hard on you, Mrs. Ralston, we must decide what's to be done.
LU. (Rises, steps r.) Done? It's already done. They'll have to get married, just like everybody else.
JUDGE. It's not quite that simple.
EUDORRA. By no means.
JUDGE. Lester has problems of his own.
LU. You mean his eczema?
JUDGE. Eczema?
EUDORRA. That's no problem. A nuisance, perhaps, and it's lots, lots better. He's been . . .
JUDGE. (Shushing Eudorra.) Do I get the impression, Mrs. Ralston, that you are taking this lightly?
EUDORRA. He's allergic to certain foods, like me, but . . .
JUDGE. (Angrily.) Allergic? He's stupid.
EUDORRA. But he does care for your daughter. At least, that's what he told us.
JUDGE. I liked your daughter.
EUDORRA. I did, too. But she was selfish. She knew he was working for his degree.
JUDGE. She seems to be a straightforward girl— (To Eudorra.) so far. (To Lu.) Foolish she may be. Calculating, no.
LU. (Sincerely.) Oh, the poor kid.

JUDGE. It's my belief she cares about the boy. But he is the youngest of six children, and that presents a problem—for him.
LU. (Sits by secretary, rises.) What, in God's name, can he do about that, I ask you?
JUDGE. (Rising.) I'm coming to that. His older brother is getting his masters from UCLA. And his sister is studying for a PhD at KU.
EUDORRA. (Rises.) Musgrove is getting a BS at MIT.
JUDGE. And Leland, Jr. is taking his AB at LSU.
EUDORRA. (Irritated.) Leland, why do you always say that? Leland, Jr. is getting a BS from LCYM. It's Heather who already has her AB from LSU. (Lu sits by secretary.)
JUDGE. (To Eudorra.) Yes. Yes. Well. (To Lu.) Be that as it may . . .
EUDORRA. (Angrily.) As it is. As it is. (Judge turns to her. To Lu.) Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. (To Judge.) You always get it wrong.
JUDGE. (Angrily.) It's not important, (Turns to Lu with bland smile.) Now are we going to get on with the matter in hand. (To Eudorra.) Objection sustained, eh?
EUDORRA. (Sits, bitter.) Objection sustained.
JUDGE. (Turns to Lu.) Little . . . ha, ha . . . little family joke of ours, Mrs. Ralston. (Lu laughs lightly.) The boy's problem is financial. A judge's salary is not large. We are prepared to help these young people the best we can and we assume you will want to help them, too. That's what we came to discuss before taking our plane. (Sits.)
EUDORRA. Lester felt it was better he wait elsewhere until we had spoken to you about this.
JUDGE. Well, Mrs. Ralston?
LU. What? (Rises, starts ut. c.) I'll want to speak to Edith about this. After all, I have only your word.
JUDGE. Meaning what?
LU. Look. You might be mistaken. It could be a rumor!
EUDORRA. (Rises.) Why would Lester say such a thing if it were not true?
LU. Boys will do anything.
EUDORRA. Are you insinuating Lester would lie?
JUDGE. (Rises.) Eudorra, please, she's upset.
LU. (Starts ut., stops ut. of sofa.) So, if you'll excuse me, I'll go
JUDGE. (Lifting phone.) I promised I'd call him and tell him what she said. (Starts to dial.) CAMOMILE 7-3602. (Edorra crosses u. r., looks out French doors.) Is Lester Calthorpe there? Thank you. (Edorra crosses d. l. to Judge.) Bobo? Relax. We've told Edith's mother and she was quite calm. She's gone up to talk to Edith now. (Puts hand on mouthpiece, to Edorra.) Expected her to throw us out and call the police.

EUDORRA. He's being hysterical. (Starts u. c., then exits u. c. r.) Did Dr. Anstruther say where he was going? I'd like to talk to him. (Calls.) Dr. Anstruther.

JUDGE. (Into phone.) Your mother says you're being hysterical. I think you better come here and face the music . . . if we can, you can. You'll not stay there skulking in that gas station like a whirred dog. I want you out here. (Slams phone down, looks around.) Edorra? (Starts u. c.) Edorra. (Exit u. c. l.) Yoo, Hoo.

BURT. (Entering u. r., looking around.) Lu? Lu?

EUDORRA. (From off right, Burt reacts.) Dr. Anstruther? (Burt starts to exit u. c. l.)

JUDGE. Edorra! (From off l.)

EUDORRA. (Entering u. r., crosses to c.) Dr. Anstruther? (Crosses u. r., exits u. c. r.) Dr. Anstruther?

MIMI. (Entering from d. l., crosses u. r.) Edie? Edie? (Exits u. r. Judge enters from u. c. l., sees Mimi exiting, straightens tie, starts whistle, follows her off u. r. As soon as Mimi and Judge have exited u. r., enter Edie from d. l., running u. c., where she is met by Lu who enters from u. c. stairway.)

LU. Edith!

EDIE. Where are they?

LU. I saw them going in the garden. (Edie starts r., stops. Off-stage r. voice of Mimi.)

EDIE. Here comes mother. Shh! (Exits u. c. l.)

MIMI. (Enters u. r. Crosses l. to Lu.) Edorra, have you seen Edie?

LU. No, Mimi, I haven't.

MIMI. She ran outside. I couldn't catch her. Something's wrong! She turned a ghastly color.

LU. (Pointing r.) There she is. I see her. She's out there.

MIMI. (Starts r.) Edie! (Over her shoulder.) You looked lovely in that jacket. Edie! (Exits u. r.)
LU. (As Edie reenters from u. c. r.) Honey, why didn’t you tell her? My girl told me—after I slapped it out of her. Then we made plans. It will be all right—after the first explosion. You can’t run away from it.

EDIE. You. I could tell you. But not mother. She’d . . . (Enter Burt followed by Paul, u. r.) I just can’t.

BURT. (Crossing l. to Lu.) Lu. Come on. Lu. That Calthorpe woman’s pursuing me.

LU. Burt, this kid’s pregnant. (Paul reacts.)

BURT. Oh, honey. (Takes Edie by arm, moves d.; Lu follows. Paul crosses d. l.) Honey! Come and sit down. (All sit on sofa, Burt r., Edie c., Lu l.; Paul exits d. l.)

LU. I understand it all now. I’ve met them. She’s between a rock and a hard place. Her mother and those people! But they’ll just have to sit down together and thrash it all out.

EDIE. I can’t. I can’t. I can’t face it. I’ve got to split. Look. Can I go downtown with you?

LU. Sure. Burt’s got his car.

EDIE. Look! Your money. Get it tomorrow. Okay?

BURT. (Disappointed.) Oh! Sure. If you’re strapped, kid.

EDIE. I’ll get it from Clyde.

BURT. Clyde?

EDIE. Mother’s lawyer.

LU. The one you bounced, Judge.

BURT. Oh, that one. Yes, you get it. Not me.

EDIE. One more thing. (To Burt.) Could I borrow some cash from you ‘til tomorrow?

BURT. Wella—wella . . .

LU. Wella, wella nothing. You can come to my place, honey.

EDIE. Great! Oh, you’re great. Mrs. White. Why can’t mother be sweet and understanding like you?

LU. I could tell you but I won’t.

LES. (Off l.) Edie!

EDIE. (Rises.) Les! Already?

LES. (Enters u. c. l., steps d. to Edie.) Edie. What did Mimi say? (Lu. Burt rise, step r. by mantel.)

EDIE. Come on. (Starts u.) We’ve got to get out of here.

LES. (Stopping her.) So she blew? I was afraid of that.

EDIE. No. No. She doesn’t know. I . . . I . . . can’t tell her. I can’t face it.

LES. You’ve got to be wrong. Doesn’t know? Dad called me. He told her.

EDIE. Promise you won’t be mad. Your father didn’t tell mother. He told her. (Points to Lu.)

LU. They both told me.

LES. (Looks at Lu. Steps r.) You? Why? (To Edie.) Who’s she? (Burt, Lu start to answer.)

EDIE. Okay, Les. I lied about mother calling off the party. I know she’d never make it with your folks. So I hired actors to be Judge and Mrs. Calthorpe. Mr. Evans. Mrs. White. (Les looks at them.)

LES. (Incredulous.) Oh, no! (To Edie.) Why would you do a stupid thing like that?

EDIE. Look. You don’t get it. I had to do it. And I was right. You can’t think what mother did. She hired a phony waiter to dump soup on your parents.

LES. You’re putting me on. Not even your mother would pull a dumb gag like that.

EDIE. You’re so smart. You know everything. You just wait. (Crosses l.) Paul. Oh, Paul! (Paul enters with waiter jacket on, pulling his spectacles out and putting them on.) Didn’t mother hire you to spill soup on the Calthorpes? This is Lester, Paul Hanson.

PAUL. (Steps n. to Les.) Ah, so, Velly cute.

LES. Hey! I know him. I’ve seen him. Sure. (To Edie.) He’s an assistant instructor in French at the University. Hanson? (Steps n., speaks deprecatingly.) Oh, no. His name’s Vernay, or something. I heard he pulled stunts at parties. Supposed to be some kind of God-damned aristocrat or something—baron, count—something.

PAUL. (Steps r. to Les, puts hand on his forehead.) A frontal lobotomy. Very good job. (To Burt.)

LES. I’d like to smash your God-damned face, you . . .

PAUL. Try it.

BURT. (Steps l. between sofa and coffee table.) Why all the sweat? (To Les.) It’s an old gag. Vince Barnett used to do it in Hollywood. That’s where he got it.

LU. Vince Barnett got it from another one. Old Rubber Legs. Leon Errol. He did it at a house party for the president of Amalgamated Radiators.
LES. Practical jokers disgust me. They’re not funny. They’re cruel.
PAUL. (Sings.) You’re breaking my heart.
LES. (Stepping L. to Edie.) You! Never figured you for this. Are you going to be like your mother?
EDIE. Lester Calthorpe, you take that back.
PAUL. Pretty rough, fellas. Pretty raw, that one.
BURT. (Steps L. to Paul.) You better butt out. (Turns to Lu.) And us, too, Lu. And you better tell your mother the whole story and get this massacre off the ground.
PAUL. (Starts R.) Mrs. Ralston knows everything. I just told her. LES. You! And . . .
PAUL. (Moving in a circle d. then L. toward Edie.) Your mother is quite a girl. She’ll advance you the payments, nevertheless, ’til your trust fund comes through.
LES. (Turns to Edie.) Hey! Great!
EDIE. (Stepping away from Les d. L.) I could cry.
LES. (Stepping d. to Edie.) Edie, what’s wrong?
EDIE. Les, I’m so ashamed.
LES. Ashamed? Oh! Hiring these characters? (Indicates Paul, Burt, Lu who exchange glance with Paul.) It was stupid, but I’m over the mad.
EDIE. You? I mean about mother. Doubting her. Mother has her faults—right? But is she ever big? When the chips are down, is she ever there.
LU. (Cresses d., to Edie, d. of coffee table.) Remember what I told you, dear. Girls are often mistaken about their mothers.
EDIE. (Steps r. closer to Lu.) I know. I’m beginning to know—now. (Turns to Les.) Come on. We’ve got to go up to her.
LES. (Starts U., Paul stops him.) Okay!
PAUL. (Quickly.) No. Let her be. It was the only thing she asked—for herself.
EDIE. Like I want to tell her—I love her.
LES. Me, too. She’s great, after all.
PAUL. (To Les.) Umm. White man speak with forked tongue. (To Edie.) She made quite a point of it. (Steps r. toward Lu, Edie steps d. to Les.) Wants you to keep on as her with the Calthorpes. Wants to be alone on a bench by the lilacs.
LU. I understand that. You see, dear—there are moments in our lives when we can hear a door closing, when one chapter is ending, forever. She’s hearing that door close, poor thing.
LES. Yeah! (All turn to Les.) Say. (Les steps r. to d. of ottoman.) Know what you mean. Felt like that myself once—at camp. (To Edie.) I told you.
EDIE. (Nodding.) Yes. Yes. On Mount Baldy that night.
PAUL. (Stepping r. to Les.) Tell us. (Gently.) Please.
LES. (To Lu.) It was just this feeling. I was fourteen. I knew I’d never be going back there, and . . . (Sits on ottoman.)
EDIE. (To Lu intently.) He sat by himself ’til sunrise.
LES. (Looking out, dreamily.) Let it all flow over me—the whole shmeer—camp songs, counselors, trees, rocks, and I thought I hated it.
PAUL. (Putting his hand on Les’s head.) I’m a sentimental ass, but I think that’s beautiful.
EDIE. Right! He told me about it before.
LES. (Reaching up, takes Paul’s hand, thinking it’s Edie’s, realizes his mistake, rises quickly.) Smart ass! (Eudorra enters u., R.) Mother! (Eudorra, out of breath, steps d. to sofa. Followed by Judge.)
EUDORRA. I’m not speaking to you. Remember. Hello, Edith. (Edie smiles bleakly.)
LES. Dad!
EUDORRA. Dr. Anstruther! (Steps d., R. by sofa.) Well, what are we to expect here? (Steps U., sits c. on sofa, Judge steps d., R. of sofa.)
EDIE. Mrs. Calthorpe, mother’s a doll. She’s advancing me my trust fund payments so Les and I can get married.
LES. Came through—all the way!
JUDGE. Fine. Fine! (Lu sits L. on sofa.)
EUDORRA. Yes. But I think you both might have had the good taste to let Mimi speak for herself.
LU. I don’t mind. (Adds.) Why should I?
EDIE. Mother’s real great.
EUDORRA. (Caly to Edie.) Fortunate—under the circumstances, isn’t it?
PAUL. (Steps R.) Shall I serve the drinks now, Mrs. Ralston?
LU. What? Oh, no. I don’t think so. (To Judge and Eudorra.) My guests are catching a plane, Paul.
JUDGE. (Stepping L., sits r. on sofa.) We've got time. Never needed one more. Bourbon, please. (Paul crosses behind sofa, mixes drinks, Edie whispers in Les's ear.)

EUDORRA. Nor I. Mine is vodka on the rocks,

PAUL. (To Edie and Les.) Yours?

EDIE. Nothing. (Exits L., r. with Les.)

EUDORRA. (To Lu.) Mimi—which of your husbands—I mean—your daughter in La Jolla . . .

LU. Diane?

EUDORRA. And while I may sound—gauche—

LU. Oh, no! McVittie. Diane McVittie. She's with Safeway, a checker. (Eudorra somewhat thrown, looks away to Judge.)

PAUL. (Steps D., r. of sofa, hands drinks to Judge, Eudorra.) Vodka. Bourbon.

CALTHORPES. Thank you.

PAUL. (To Lu.) Do I serve the clam bisque now, Mrs. Ralston?

LU. (Quietly.) No. (Realizing his intent, half rises.) Oh, NO!

EUDORRA. Clam bisque. Leland is fond of it. So am I.

PAUL. Very good. (Crosses L., l. of sofa to C.) Shirley! Shirley! (Mimi enters from D. r. in black maid's uniform, short white apron.) Clam bisque—on the double!

MIMI. (Turns directly D.) Right on! (Exits D. L.)

LU. (In state of shock, Burt crosses up behind sofa, pours himself a drink.) Give me a bourbon. Double. (Paul steps n. behind sofa, pours a drink for Lu.)

BURT. (Stepping D. by mantel again.) I've already poured mine.

EUDORRA. Doctor . . .

JUDGE. One minute. (Holds up glass, to Lu.) To our children. EUDORRA. (Raising glass.) And grandchildren! (All drink.) Dr. Anstruther. I've been wondering. There are Anstruthers around Ogden. If, perhaps, you'd taken your M.D. from Utah U? (Paul remains standing u. and just to L. of sofa.)


JUDGE. Harvard?

BURT. No. No . . . come again!

JUDGE. (Slight frown.) You went to Yale then? Princeton? (Burt shakes his head to each.) I assumed since you said the east—

BURT. The far east.

EUDORRA. Doctor, I've been wondering why—why, even after a strong gargle every morning, I still have this fuzzy sensation in the larynx.

JUDGE. I can tell you that, Smog!

EUDORRA. (Firmly.) I would like to hear a medical opinion—if you don't mind, Leland.

BURT. (Pompous, gruff tone.) Well, now! That's hard to say—without an examination.

EUDORRA. I keep getting this funny thing in here. (Touches throat. To Paul.) May I have some ice in this, please. (Paul steps r., behind sofa, drops ice in Eudorra's glass.)

JUDGE. (Slightly annoyed at Eudorra.) Eudorra, no medical man worth his salt is going to launch into a diagnosis in the living room. You're putting him on a spot. Am I right, Dr. Anstruther?

BURT. Bit cheeky—in a manner of speaking.

JUDGE. There. I told you.

EUDORRA. (To Judge.) I had no intention of putting him on a spot. (To Burt.) Doctor, I hope I wasn't being cheeky.

BURT. Bit. Not too much. Perfectly all right.

EUDORRA. I merely wondered if I should change my gargle. I've been using a tincture of . . .

BURT. Don't advise that any more. High cholesterol content.

EUDORRA. Cholesterol content in mouth wash?

JUDGE. I told you, didn't I? You'll have to get it the way everybody else gets it— (To Burt.) pay for it. (Laughs.)

EUDORRA. Please! Doctor, if I get this in here, do you suppose it's . . . (Clyde Elliot enters from U. R., crosses L. to C. L.; Paul collapses behind sofa, Burt sits D. of mantel, hiding his face, Lu looks r.)

CLYDE. Mimi! Mimi!

JUDGE. (Rising.) Elliot! Clyde Elliot!

CLYDE. (Turning to Judge.) Yes?

JUDGE. Don't remember me, do you? Leland Calthorpe! You tried a rate case before me years ago. Remember that? (Clyde is staring at him.)

EUDORRA. He doesn't obviously, Leland. I'm Eudorra Calthorpe, Mr. Elliot. You know Dr. Anstruther?

CLYDE. (Steps D.; laughs maliciously.) No. But I'd like to. Doctor, (Beckons Burt with finger.) could I speak to you, out here, privately.
BURT. (Rises.) Certainly. Glad to. (Clyde exits L. L., thinking Burt is following. Burt crosses L., then u., sits on chair u. of piano.)

EUDORRA. (Low tone, to Judge.) You see! I'm not the only one.

JUDGE. (Puzzled, rises, steps r. by mantel.) Why would Elliot snub me like that? Hear he's done well. Got too big for his britches along with it. (Mimi enters carry a tray with two glasses of clam bisque, crosses r.)

PAUL. (Indicates behind sofa, sternly.) Set it there, Shirley. (Mimi places tray behind sofa on bar, remains there.)

EUDORRA. (To Lu.) Mimi! Mimi! (Lu watches Mimi, fascinated.)

LU. Oh, yes. Yes, dear Mrs. Calthorpe.

EUDORRA. We have a mutual friend, Mrs. Carleton DeVries. You know her?

LU. Who? (Looks at Mimi.)

EUDORRA. Dody DeVries. (Mimi nods head.)

LU. Dear, dear Dody. How is she?

JUDGE. Unreliable—apparently.

EUDORRA. Leland! Leland is a little cross with Dody just now, I'm afraid.

JUDGE. Aren't you? The description she gave us of Mimi in Philadelphia that time.

EUDORRA. Leland, please.

JUDGE. (Steps l.) Please nothing. Told you Mimi was a perfect horror. (Judge starts to sit r. on sofa, Mimi bangs a couple bottles together.)

PAUL. (Sternly.) Watch it, Shirley. (Mimi crosses L., Paul motions to Lu to rise.) Sorry ma'am. (Lu rises, steps L.) The breadth's been at the bottle. (Steps behind sofa, picks up two cups of clam bisque. Enter Edie and Lester from u. R.; Paul starts small circle of movement.)

LES. (Entering quickly.) Dad! Mother! You've got to make the plane. (Paul moves quickly in front of Les, trips himself, dumps two cups of bisque on Judge and Eudorrah from u. of sofa.)

PAUL. Now see what you've done! (To Lu.)

JUDGE. (Rises, steps r. by mantel, pulls out handkerchief, begins wiping bisque off. To Lu.) God damned idiot! (Lu sits c. on ottoman.)

LES. (To Paul.) You bastard!

EDIE. (Crosses D., L. of sofa, with napkins she grabbed from bar, starts wiping Eudorrah, and sofa.) Mrs. Calthorpe!

EUDORRA. (Wiping her face.) I'm quite all right. (To Paul.) Bring me another cup of bisque. (Clyde enters D. L., crosses r. to Judge.)

MIMI. (Shocked, impressed, sits by secretary.) Oh, no. Oh, no.

CLYDE. (Begins wiping Judge with handkerchief.) Judge Calthorpe. Are you all right?

JUDGE. (Grows.) Accident. Forget it. Forget it. Go away!

CLYDE. (Crosses L., sees Mimi, stops.) Mimi! What are you doing in that rig?

LELAND AND EUDORRA. (Exchanging glances.) MIMI! (Eudorrah rises.)

EUDORRA. (To Edie, sternly:) Edith—your mother—a waitress?

(To Lu.) Then you . . .

LU. (Indignant.) Give the kid a break. She hired us to protect her mother—from you.

LES. (Stepping D.) No! The stunt waiter—

BURT. (Steps D.) Mrs. Calthorpe, I can tell you now—that salt water—gargle.

EUDORRA. Dr. Anstruther!

LES. Dr. Anstruther, my ass!

EUDORRA. Lester! (Shocked.)

JUDGE. Eudorrah! (Crosses L. to Mimi, followed by Eudorrah. They cross in silence, all watch them.) I must apologize to Mrs. DeVries. She is a succinct reporter. Madam, since you enjoy a masquerade, let us continue. If any Mrs. Ralston comes to Provo at any time, (Turns R. to Lu.) let it be you—whoever you are. Good night. Mother! (Crosses u., followed by Eudorrah.)

EUDORRA. (Crossing u.) Lester! (Judge, Eudorrah exit u. c. L.)

LES. (Following them.) Mother! Dad! (Turns D.) Edie!

CLYDE. (Following them.) Judge Calthorpe! (Les, Clyde exit u. c. L.)

PAUL. (Steps D., R. of sofa then L.) Two—and home free! The judge is an old foge. But Eudorrah—'Bring me another cup of bisque.' That old girl's got a helluva lot of stinking style!

MIMI. (Still seated L. by secretary, stunned.) Yes. Yes. Yes.

EDIE. Mother, look at you. I've had it with you. Up to here. (Starts u.) I'm going with them. Lester! Lester! (Exits u. c. L.)
MIMI: (Rises quickly, starts u. after her, Clyde enters u. c. l., steps her.) Edie! Edie! No! (Lu rises, steps r.) Clyde. She's going with them. Don't let her go. (Clyde holds her. Paul crosses l.) CLYDE: Don't, Mimi.
BURT: No. No.
LLI: Not now, Mimi. (Steps u. to Mimi, puts arm around her.) No use hanging around the stage door after the show has closed. MIMI: (Stricken.) Like that? No goodbye. No—just like that—when she knows I won't let her down—ever.
BURT: (Steps to Mimi.) Sweetie. Let me tell you. We make one or two good friends in this life, and, once in a while, they're relatives.
PAUL: (Pretending to be impressed.) Hey! That's bitter. But that's good. That must have been a good play you got that from. BURT: (Stung, steps toward Paul.) You should have seen Vince Barnett.
CLYDE: (Steps d. toward Paul.) You! Still here? Mimi!
MIMI: (Ignoring everything else, crosses d. sits on ottoman.) Clyde! How could she leave like that? No goodbye to me, no—no . . . (Bows bead.)
CLYDE: (Steps d. of ottoman.) Mimi, you've got a party going on out there. Get out of that rig. If (Turns to Burt, Lu, Paul.) you people will give me your names and addresses, I'll mail checks to you tomorrow, for whatever is coming to you.
PAUL: My arrangement was with Mrs. Ralston, counsellor, and it's been taken care of. (Exchanges look with Mimi.)
BURT: (Burt and Lu move d. and l. and r. to Mimi.) Enjoyed meeting you, Mrs. Ralston.
MIMI: Enjoyed meeting you. Mimi, please. Don't go. Stay for the party, both of you. Why not? (Takes Burt's hand.)
BURT: Gee, thanks. I'll freshen up a bit.
LLI: Mimi, I think you're great. You've got starch. In your spot, I'd be on the floor!
MIMI: Go upstairs and put your things in my room. And keep the jacket.
BURT: It was a good show you put on. Didn't turn out the way you'd hoped, but what does? (Burt, Lu exit u. c.)
CLYDE: (Steps r. to Mimi.) You. Honey, are you all right?
MIMI: (Rises, steps r.) Me? I'm fine. Fine. Don't worry about me. I'm giving a party, and to hell with them—all of them.

CLYDE: Good girl. That's my girl. (Kisses Mimi, exits u. r. After Clyde exits, Mimi kicks the ottoman, breaks into wild, angry sobs, throws herself onto the sofa, kicks her feet up and down, weeping wildly. Paul enters d. l. wearing his suit jacket, carrying an attaché case. Sees Mimi but is not seen. Puts case down by the piano, sits and begins playing “Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree With Anyone Else But Me.” After a moment Mimi raises her head and looks at him; he smiles.)
MIMI: (Deeply moved.) You blessed, blessed person. Yesterday I had never laid eyes on you. Today, I feel closer to you than anyone else in the whole world. Closer than Clyde, closer than Edie. Closer than anyone. (Paul has finished playing, rises from piano, crosses d., sits l. arm of sofa.)
PAUL: (With Bogart voice.) Know what you mean, Shirley. (Normal voice.) Ours is a closer tie.
MIMI: Like who is my father, my mother, my brother? He who doeth the will of my Father in Heaven.
PAUL: And he is the biggest practical joker of all.
MIMI: (Nods.) I know. I always did, somehow. Oh, why couldn't I have had a son like you, or a son-in-law, or met you when I was young enough myself, and not too worldly wise to know that nothing like that could ever work between us now.
PAUL: (Slipping off arm to seat of sofa.) No?
MIMI: (After pause.) No. (Paul returns to l. arm of sofa.) We need squares. But you could tell me who you are. Your name's not Hanson. What is it?
PAUL: Vernay. Paul Vernay. I teach French in the language department at the University.
MIMI: Vernay. There's a town by that name in the south of France. There's a de before Vernay then?
PAUL: We dropped that in the Atlantic. It didn't travel.
MIMI: Vernay. We went there once, when I was a girl.
PAUL: I was born in Europe. Came here as a child.
MIMI: (Smiling, her spirits revived.) Just another immigrant. All you immigrants say that. I've got to make you a wonderful, wonderful gift.
PAUL: You did. You gave me the bird. Remember? (Indicates penguin on coffee table. Sits l. on sofa.) I've got a night class, but I'll cut it. You're going to be all right? Maybe I better hang around.
MIMI. When I was thirteen, I made up my mind to commit suicide. Wrote my father a farewell letter. Reasons, instructions, everything. He didn't even answer it. At the bottom of the last page I'd pasted a small picture of a mallard duck, swimming through rushes on a lake. You've seen them when the sun hits that sheen they have?

PAUL. (Nods; looks front, smiles.) Um-hum.

MIMI. (Rises, crosses L.) He knew I'd be all right—always. No matter what.

PAUL. (Rises, steps L.) See you again—?

MIMI. Sometime. (Steps R. to Paul.) With luck, we'll be caught in traffic by the same stop light. (Smiles at him softly.) You'll have a gorgeous girl beside you. I'll be a beat up old hag, driving a cab.

PAUL. Can't you skip that tired old line—older woman sends boy away for his own good?

MIMI. Oh, Paul . . . (Telephone rings; three times before Paul crosses L., picks up receiver.)

PAUL. Ralston Residence. (Hand over mouthpiece.) For you—a man. Want to take it? I'll say you're not here.

MIMI. (Sighs.) Yes, Paul. I've been expecting it. (Crosses L., takes phone from Paul who steps R.) Hello. Just a minute. (Places phone against her chest, points R. to bird, Paul crosses R., picks up bird, crosses L. to Mimi.)

PAUL. (Takes Mimi's hand, kisses it.) Mille Tendresses. (Releases her hand, steps U., picks up attaché case, starts to cross R., steps, turns, looks at Mimi, who has been watching him. She throws him a kiss. Exits U. R.)

MIMI. (Lifts receiver again.) Yes. Who do you want? (Edie enters U. C. L. unseen by Mimi.) Edith? Edith's gone, who is this? (Sees Edie. Puts phone down.) Edie! (Edie has crossed down to C.)

EDIE. Oh. Hi, mother.

MIMI. (Moving towards her.) It's Lester on the phone. Says to tell you he's over his mad.

EDIE. (Sits on ottoman.) Great. Who cares? I'd never make it with Les or his family. They're squares. Right?

MIMI. (Touching her shoulder.) But Honey.

EDIE. Driving up the driveway, turning into traffic, and all at once I knew it, passing the Howard Johnson's, I said "Stop the car!" and got out.

MIMI. But honey, you're pregnant.

EDIE. I am not. That was a story we planned so you'd let us get married. You know. And help us 'til my trust fund.

MIMI. Lester figured that one? (Edie nods.) I knew there was some reason I always loathed that ferb! (Crosses L. to phone, lifts receiver.) Goodbye, ferb!

EDIE. Ferb?

MIMI. That's a word I got from Paul.

EDIE. Oh, Paul. (Elightly.) Stepfather number three?

MIMI. (Standing behind Edie. Smiling softly, looking front.) No. Paul will be number one with someone, sometime. (Sighs.) Some sweet little, square little jerk who'll nag him, whine, complain about his jokes—and love every minute of it—and him, too . . . (Clyde enters U. R. in a hurry.)

CLYDE. (Crossly.) Mimi, everyone's asking you; get out of that rig and get out there. (Realizes Edie is back.) Edie! (Jane enters U. R., excited, eyes bubbling, carries an empty glass.)

JANE. (Eagerly.) Mimi! Mimi! (Sees her.) Is that you? WHAT on earth?

CLYDE. (Severely.) Leave her alone, she's been through enough. You've had too much.

JANE. (Raising her voice.) The Watsons have arrived and I can't find that waiter to spill the soup on them.

MIMI. He's gone! Oh, damn! Damn! Damn!

JANE. (Looking R. through French doors.) I see him. (Starts R.) There he goes. By the tennis court. I'll get him.

CLYDE. (Grabs Jane, swings her around in a circle. U. of sofa.) You'll stay here.

EDIE. (Rises from ottoman, excited, crosses up to Mimi.) I'll get him. Mother. (Kisses Mimi.) I'll get him. (Exits U. R., running.)

MIMI. (Moving U.) She will. She'll get him. You'll see. (Jane and Clyde stare at her.)

CLYDE. (Shocked.) You don't mean . . . Edie . . . and that gorilla?

MIMI. (Sitting at piano. Clyde, Jane move off U. R. Plays and sings.) "When the moon hits your eyes—like a big pizza pie—that's amore." (Continues playing as curtain drops.)

THE END
PROPERTY PLOT

Act I

Preset Onstage:

A. Telephone table:
   1. telephone u. r.
   2. picture of Edie u. l.
   3. humidor with cigars d. r.
   4. matches in box d. r.
   5. ashtray with water d. r.

B. Piano:
   1. miscellaneous sheet music u. c.
   2. bowl of flowers c.
   3. fringed cloth covering piano top

C. Bar:
   1. one bottle of scotch d. l.
   2. one bottle of bourbon d. r.
   3. one bottle of vodka d. r.
   4. knife d. l.
   5. jar of peanut butter d. l.
   6. five paper towels under peanut butter
   7. Paul's wallet

D. Coffee table:
   1. two ashtrays with water u. l. and u. r.
   2. humidor with cigars l.
   3. matches in box l.
   4. cigarettes in container r.

E. Mantle:
   1. two vases of flowers l. and r.
   2. humidor with cigars l.
   3. ashtray c.
   4. matches in box c.

F. u. r. table—statue holding fruit u. r.

C. Couch—two pillows l. and r.

Act II

Intermission set up Onstage:

A. 1. two glasses bourbon on rocks d. l.
   2. one glass vodka on rocks d. l.
   3. two bottles ginger ale d. r.
4. empty glass n.
5. ice tongs n.
6. four pieces plastic ice n.

Off Left:
1. empty serving tray (small)
2. chewing gum (pack)
3. eyeglasses (thick)
4. ice bag
5. swizzle sticks (10 in rubber bands)
6. napkins (5 in rubber band)
7. 3 drinks:
   1 sherry
   2 bourbon and soda
8. bottle of quinine water
9. carpet sweeper
10. ice tray with ice
11. large silver tray with:
    1. comic book
    2. ice bucket with potato chips
    3. canapes*
12. small serving tray with:
    1. 2 bourbon on rocks
    2. 2 scotch on rocks
13. wallet with two pictures
14. wrapped package with musical penguin
15. large silver tray with:
    1. comic book
    2. ice bucket with potato chips
    3. canapes*
    4. 2 drinks:
       1 scotch on rocks
       1 bourbon on rocks
16. Paul's jacket (costume)
17. purse with piece of paper inside
18. small tray with two punch cups of clam bisque**
19. attache case

Off Right:
1. ¾ filled drink glasses (1)

* pie tin (fluted) lined with fringed paper towel containing 5 saltines with peanut butter; 1 without PB
** clam bisque: toilet tissue dissolved in water to make a thick but soupy liquid

2. ¾ filled drink glasses (2)
3. calling card
4. cigar
5. matches to light cigar
6. garden hose
7. empty serving tray (small)
8. empty glass

1. 16 "old fashioned" glasses
2. 1 sherry glass
3. 1 fluted pie tin
4. 1 package paper napkins or paper towels
5. box of saltines
6. jar of peanut butter
7. knife
8. 4 pieces plastic ice
9. ice tray with ice
10. instant tea (for drinks)
11. 2 opaque punch cups
12. roll of toilet tissue
13. package of potato chips
14. ice bucket
15. 4 small serving trays (can be pizza trays)
16. 1 large silver tray
17. package of rubber bands
18. ice bag
19. swizzle sticks (10)
20. bottle of quinine water
21. 2 bottles of ginger ale
22. bourbon bottle
23. scotch bottle
24. vodka bottle
25. ice tongs
26. 4 ashtrays
27. 3 humidors (for cigars)
28. 1 container for cigarettes
29. 4 boxes of matches
30. 2 throw pillows
31. 5 vases of flowers
32. picture of child in frame
33. 5 pieces of sheet music:
   (1—"Don't Fence Me In")
   (1—"Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree . . .")
34. fringed piano cloth
35. statue holding fruit
36. 2 men's wallets
37. 2 snapshots of children
38. eyeglasses (thick)
39. chewing gum (pack)
40. comic book
41. puzzle with piece of paper
42. calling card
43. pack of cigarettes
44. 3 packs of cigars
45. garden hose
46. attaché case
47. musical penguin with removable head revealing pouring spout
   (decanter for liquor that plays "How Dry I Am")
48. box for bird wrapped in brown paper
49. carpet sweeper

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT PIANO PLAYING

At several points in the play one of the actors is required to play brief
musical excerpts at the piano. In the Abingdon (Va.) production of the
play this was dealt with by having another piano backstage, and a
pianist to play it on cue.

Another alternative would be to have the music on records or tapes, to
be played, on cue, as the onstage actor "faked" playing.

COSTUME PLOT

Women (in order of appearance)

MRS. CARLTON DE VRIES (Dody)
She is a dowager type of about 73 years. She wears a beige lace or
flowered chiffon summer afternoon dress with a mid calf length. It
is a dress she has owned for more than twenty years. Her shoes have
sensible block heels and are in beige, white or brown, oxford type,
tied. She may wear a large old fashioned garden party hat of straw,
turned up in back and fastened with a pink silk rose. In place of the
hat she may wear a piece of veiling and a flower over her hair. She
wears elbow length white gloves. Around her neck she has a lorgnette.
She may wear a chiffon scarf like a stole. Her hand bag is petit
point with a gold chain.

JANE
She is a conservative woman of 62 years. Her dress is a sleeveless
pastel silk summer "cocktail party" dress with rhinestone buttons,
knee length. Her slippers are white kid.

EDIE
She is nineteen. On her first entrance she wears blue jeans, a white
turtle neck and carries a shoulder bag. On her second entrance she
wears a young girl type summer formal of cotton made sleeveless
and with a low neck. Her shoes are brown scuffs at first and then
white kid.

MIMI
She is about 41. On her first entrance she wears an elaborate ivory
silk pants suit with a touch of beading on the tunic and at the neck
and sleeves. Her slippers are silver kid. In her entrance in act two
she is wearing an "out of place" black, backless halter dress to shock
the Calthorpes. She may wear a black snood. In act three she wears
a short black maid's uniform with white collar and cuffs, short white
apron and white piece on head, black shoes and stockings.

LU
She is a frumpy looking woman of about fifty two. Her dress is too
much. It is a sleeveless dress and short jacket edged at the neck and
sleeves with beading or sequins. Her slippers are silk with either
rhinestones buckles or heels. She wears a "cocktail party hat" with
a touch of rhinestones or sequins or a flower.

EUDORA CALTHORPE
She arrives in a Brooks Brothers raincoat. When she removes it she
is in a tailored blue or red plaid shirtwaist type dress.
COSTUME PLOT

(Women)

MARY
A girl of 18 with a long hair, light eyes, and a tentative smile. She often wears a long dress and a high hat.

MRS. SMITH
An older woman, 50 years old, with a stern face and strong hands. She wears a dress and a scarf.

WILLIAM
A young man, 25 years old, with a beard and mustache. He wears a suit and a tie.

WAFFLE
A boy, 12 years old, with big eyes and a gummy smile. He wears a T-shirt and shorts.

SUSAN
A girl, 15 years old, with a long hair and a shy smile. She wears a skirt and a shirt.

JACK
A man, 30 years old, with a serious face and a strong body. He wears a suit and a tie.

LUCY
A woman, 28 years old, with a short hair and a bright smile. She wears a dress and a scarf.

JASON
A boy, 10 years old, with a round face and a big heart. He wears a T-shirt and shorts.

CHUCK
A man, 25 years old, with a beard and mustache. He wears a suit and a tie.

MRS. SMITH
An older woman, 50 years old, with a stern face and strong hands. She wears a dress and a scarf.

MARY
A girl of 18 with a long hair, light eyes, and a tentative smile. She often wears a long dress and a high hat.

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