

Rice, Elmer Leopold, 1892-1967, **STREET SCENE** Electronic Edition by Alexander Street Press, L.L.C., 2014 . © Elmer Leopold Rice, 1928. Also published in *Elmer Rice: Three Plays*, Hill and Wang, New York, NY, 1965

Characters

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Abraham Kaplan	Mae Jones
Greta Fiorentino	Dick McGann
Emma Jones	Vincent Jones
Olga Olsen	Dr. John Wilson
Willie Maurant	
Anna Maurant	
Frank Maurant	A Milkman
George Jones	A Letter Carrier
Steve Sankey	An Iceman
Agnes Cushing	Two College Girls
Carl Olsen	A Music Student
Shirley Kaplan	Marshall James Henry
Filippo Fiorentino	Fred Cullen
Alice Simpson	An Old-Clothes Man
Laura Hildebrand	Intern
Mary Hildebrand	An Ambulance Driver
Charlie Hildebrand	Furniture Movers
Samuel Kaplan	Two Nursemaids
Rose Maurant	Officer Harry Murphy
Harry Easter	Two Apartment Hunters
Daniel Buchanan	Passers-by

SCENE

There is only one setting, which is described in detail in the text.

The action takes place on an evening in June and on the morning and afternoon of the following day.

ACT ONE

The exterior of a "walk-up" apartment house in a mean quarter of New York. It is of ugly brownstone and was built in the nineties. Between the pavement of large gray flagstones and the front of the house is a deep and narrow areaway, guarded by a rusted, ornamental iron railing. At the right, a steep flight of rotting wooden steps leads down to the cellar and to the janitor's apartment, the windows of which are just visible above the street level. Spanning the areaway is a "stoop" of four shallow stone steps flanked on either side by a curved stone balustrade. Beyond the broad fourth step another step leads to the double wooden outer doors of the house; and as these are open, the vestibule and the wide, heavy glass-paneled entrance door beyond are visible. Above the outer doors is a glass fanlight upon which appears the half-obliterated house number. At the left side of the doorway is a sign which reads: "Flat To Let. 6 Rooms. Steam Heat."

On either side of the stoop are the two narrow windows of the ground-floor apartments. In one of the windows, at the left, is a sign bearing the legend: "Prof. Filippo Fiorentino. Music for all occasions. Also instruction." Above are the six narrow windows of the first-floor apartments, and above that the stone sills of the second-floor windows can just be seen.

To the left of the house, part of the adjoining building is visible: the motor entrance to a storage warehouse. Crude boarding across the large driveway and rough planks across the sidewalk and curb indicate that an excavation is in progress. On the boarding is painted in rude lettering: "Keep Out"; and at the curb is a small barrel bearing a sign with the words: "Street Closed." To the wall of the warehouse is affixed a brass plate bearing the name: "Patrick Mulcahy Storage Warehouse Co. Inc."

To the right of the house, scaffolding and a wooden side-walk indicate that the house next door is being demolished.

On the scaffolding is a large wooden sign reading: "Manhattan House-Wrecking Corp." In the close foreground, below the level of the curb, is a mere suggestion of the street. At rise of curtain the house is seen in the white glare of an arc-light, which is just offstage to the right. The windows in the janitor's apartment are lighted, as are also those of the ground-floor apartment at the right and the two windows at the extreme left of the first floor. A dim red light is affixed to the boarding of the excavation at the left. In the lighted ground-floor window, at the right of the doorway, ABRAHAM KAPLAN is seated in a rocking chair, reading a Yiddish newspaper. He is a Russian Jew, well past sixty: clean-shaven, thick gray hair, hooked nose, horn-rimmed spectacles. To the left of the doorway, GRETA FIORENTINO is leaning out of the window. She is forty, a blonde, ruddy-faced, stout German. She wears a wrapper of light, flowered material, and a large pillow supports her left arm and her ample, uncorseted bosom. In her right hand is a folding paper fan, which she waves languidly.

Throughout the act, and, indeed, throughout the play, there is constant noise. The noises of the city rise, fall, intermingle: the distant roar of El trains, automobile sirens, and the whistles of boats on the river; the rattle of trucks and the indeterminate clanking of metals; fire engines, ambulances, musical instruments, a radio, dogs barking, and human voices calling, quarreling, and screaming with laughter. The noises are subdued and in the background, but they never wholly cease.

A moment after the rise of the curtain an elderly man enters at the right and walks into the house, exchanging a nod with MRS. FIORENTINO. A man, munching peanuts, crosses the stage from left to right.

A VOICE *[offstage]* Char-lie!

EMMA JONES *appears at the left. She is middle-aged, tall, and rather bony. She carries a small parcel.*

GRETA FIORENTINO *[she speaks with a faint German accent]* Good evening, Mrs. Jones.

EMMA JONES *[stopping beneath MRS. FIORENTINO'S window]* Good evenin', Mrs. F. Well, I hope it's hot enough for you.

GRETA FIORENTINO Ain't it joost awful? When I was through with the dishes, you could take my clothes and joost wring them out.

EMMA JONES Me too. I ain't got a dry stitch on me.

GRETA FIORENTINO I took off my shoes and my corset and made myself nice and comfortable, and tonight before I go to bed, I take a nice bath.

EMMA JONES The trouble with a bath is, by the time you're all through, you're as hot as when you started.

[As OLGA OLSEN, a thin, anemic Scandinavian with untidy fair hair, comes up the cellar steps and onto the sidewalk.] Good evenin', Mrs. Olsen. Awful hot, ain't it?

OLGA OLSEN *[coming over to the front of the stoop]*. Yust awful. Mrs. Forentiner, my hoosban' say vill you put de garbage on de doomvaider?

GRETA FIORENTINO Oh, sure, sure! I didn't hear him vistle.

[As MRS. JONES starts to cross to the stoop.] Don't go 'vay, Mrs. Jones.

[She disappears from the window.]

OLGA OLSEN *[pushing back some wisps of hair]* I tank is more cooler in de cellar.

EMMA JONES *[sitting on the stoop and fanning herself with her parcel]* Phew! I'm just about ready to pass out.

OLGA OLSEN My baby is crying, crying, all day.

EMMA JONES Yeah, I often say they mind the heat more'n we do. It's the same with dogs. My Queenie has jes' been layin' aroun' all day.

OLGA OLSEN The baby get new teet'. It hurt her.

EMMA JONES Don't tell me! If you was to know what I went t'roo with my Vincent. Half the time he used to have convulsions.

WILLIE MAURRANT, *a disorderly boy of twelve, appears at the left on roller skates. He stops at the left of the stoop and takes hold of the railing with both hands.*

WILLIE MAURRANT [*raising his head and bawling*] Hey, Ma!

EMMA JONES [*disapprovingly*] If you want your mother, why don't you go upstairs, instead o' yellin' like that?

WILLIE MAURRANT [*without paying the slightest attention to her, bawls louder*] Hey, Ma!

ANNA MAURRANT [*appearing at one of the lighted first-floor windows*] What do you want, Willie?
[*She is a fair woman of forty, who looks her age, but is by no means unattractive.*]

WILLIE MAURRANT Gimme a dime, will ya? I wanna git a cone.

ANNA MAURRANT [*to MRS. OLSEN and MRS. JONES*] Good evening.

MRS. OLSEN AND MRS. JONES Good evenin', Mrs. Maurant.

ANNA MAURRANT [*to WILLIE*] How many cones did you have today already?

WILLIE MAURRANT [*belligerently*] I'm hot! All de other guys is havin' cones. Come on, gimme a dime.

ANNA MAURRANT Well, it's the last one. [*She disappears.*]

EMMA JONES You certainly don't talk very nice to your mother.
[*To MRS. OLSEN.*] I'd like to hear one o' mine talkin' that way to me!

ANNA MAURRANT [*appearing at the window*] Remember, this is the last one.

WILLIE MAURRANT Aw right. T'row it down.

MRS. FIORENTINO *reappears and leans out of the window again.*

ANNA MAURRANT Catch it!

She throws out a twist of newspaper. WILLIE scrambles for it, hastily extracts the dime, drops the newspaper on the pavement, and skates off at the left.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*twisting her neck upward*] Good evening, Mrs. Maurant.

ANNA MAURRANT Good evening, Mrs. Fiorentino.
[*Calling after WILLIE.*] And don't come home too late, Willie!
[*But WILLIE is already out of earshot.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO Why don't you come down and be sociable?

ANNA MAURRANT I'm keeping some supper warm for my husband. [*A slight pause.*]
Well, maybe I will for just a minute.
[*She leaves the window. The lights in her apartment go out.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO She has her troubles with dot Willie.

EMMA JONES I guess it don't bother her much.[*Significantly.*] She's got her mind on other things.

OLGA OLSEN [*looking about cautiously and coming over to the left of the stoop between the two women*] He vas comin' again today to see her.

EMMA JONES [*rising excitedly, and leaning over the balustrade*] Who — Sankey?

OLGA OLSEN [*nodding*] Yes.

GRETA FIORENTINO Are you sure, Mrs. Olsen?

OLGA OLSEN I seen him. I vas doostin' de halls.

GRETA FIORENTINO Dot's terrible!

EMMA JONES Wouldn't you think a woman her age, with a grown-up daughter —!

OLGA OLSEN Two times already dis veek I see him here.

EMMA JONES I seen him meself one day last week. He was comin' out o' the house, jest as I was comin' in wit' de dog. "Good mornin', Mrs. Jones," he says to me, as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. "Good mornin'," says I, lookin' him straight in the eye—
[*Breaking off suddenly as the vestibule door opens.*] Be careful, she's comin'.

[*MRS. MAURRANT comes out of the house and stops for a moment on the top step.*]

ANNA MAURRANT Goodness, ain't it hot! I think it's really cooler upstairs.
[*She comes down the steps to the sidewalk.*]

EMMA JONES Yeah, jes' what I was sayin' meself. I feel like a wet dishrag.

ANNA MAURRANT I would have liked to go to the Park concert tonight if Rose had got home in time. I don't get much chance to go to concerts. My husband don't care for music. But Rose is more like me — just crazy about it.

EMMA JONES Ain't she home yet?

ANNA MAURRANT No. I think maybe she had to work over-time.

EMMA JONES Well, all mine ever comes home for is to sleep.

GRETA FIORENTINO The young girls nowadays —!

OLGA OLSEN My sister was writin' me in Schweden is same t'ing —

EMMA JONES It ain't only the young ones either.

[A baby is heard crying in the cellar.]

OLSEN'S VOICE *[from the cellar]* Ol-ga!

A man, in a dinner jacket and straw hat, appears at the left, whistling a jazz tune. He crosses the stage and goes off at the right.

OLGA OLSEN *[hurrying to the right]* I betcha the baby, she's cryin' again.

OLSEN'S VOICE Ol-ga!

OLGA OLSEN Yes, I come right away.
[She goes down the cellar steps.]

EMMA JONES What them foreigners don't know about bringin' up babies would fill a book.

GRETA FIORENTINO *[a little huffily]* Foreigners know joost as much as other people, Mrs. Jones. My mother had eight children and she brought up seven.

EMMA JONES *[tactfully]* Well, I'm not sayin' anythin' about the Joimans. The Joimans is different — more like the Irish. What I'm talkin' about is all them squareheads an' Polacks —*[with a glance in KAPLAN'S direction]* — an' Jews.

DANIEL BUCHANAN *[from a third-story window]* Good evening, ladies.

THE WOMEN *[in unison, looking upward]* Oh, good evening, Mr. Buchanan.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Well, is it hot enough for you?

EMMA JONES I'll say!

DANIEL BUCHANAN I was just saying to my wife, it's not the heat I mind as much as it is the humidity.

EMMA JONES Yeah, that's it! Makes everything stick to you.

ANNA MAURRANT How's your wife feeling in this weather?

DANIEL BUCHANAN She don't compain about the weather. But she's afraid to go out of the house. Thinks maybe she couldn't get back in time, in case — you know.

EMMA JONES *[to the other women]* I was the same way with my Vincent — afraid to take a step. But with Mae, I was up an' out till the very last minute.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*craning her neck upward*] Mr. Buchanan, do you think she would eat some nice minestrone — good Italian vegetable soup?

DANIEL BUCHANAN Why, much obliged, Mrs. F., but I really can't get her to eat a thing.

EMMA JONES [*rising and looking upward*] Tell her she ought to keep up her strength. She's got two to feed, you know.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Excuse me, she's calling.

EMMA JONES [*crossing to the railing at the left of MRS. FIORENTINO*] You'd think it was him that was havin' the baby.

ANNA MAURRANT She's such a puny little thing.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*with a sigh*] Well, that's the way it goes. The little skinny ones have them and the big strong ones don't.

ANNA MAURRANT Don't take it that way, Mrs. Fiorentino. You're a young woman yet.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*shaking her head*] Oh, well!

EMMA JONES My aunt, Mrs. Barclay, was forty-two — [*Breaking off.*] Oh, good evenin', Mr. Murrant!

FRANK MAURRANT *appears at the left with his coat on his arm. He is a tall, powerfully built man of forty-five, with a rugged, grim face.*

GRETA FIORENTINO Good evening, Mr. Murrant.

FRANK MAURRANT 'Evenin'. [*He goes to the stoop and seats him-self, mopping his face.*] Some baby of a day!

ANNA MAURRANT Have you been working all this while, Frank?

FRANK MAURRANT I'll say I've been workin'. Dress rehearsin' since twelve o'clock, with lights — in this weather. An' tomorra I gotta go to Stamford for the tryout.

ANNA MAURRANT Oh, you're going to Stamford tomorrow?

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah, the whole crew's goin'. [*Looking at her.*] What about it?

ANNA MAURRANT Why, nothing. Oh, I've got some cabbage and potatoes on the stove for you.

FRANK MAURRANT I just had a plate o' beans at the Coffee Pot. All I want is a good wash. I been sweatin' like a horse all day. [*He rises and goes up the steps.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO My husband too; he's sweating terrible.

EMMA JONES Mine don't. There's some people that just naturally do, and then there's others that don't.

FRANK MAURRANT [*to Mrs. Maurant*] Is anybody upstairs?

ANNA MAURRANT No. Willie's off playing with the boys. I can't keep him home.

FRANK MAURRANT What about Rose?

ANNA MAURRANT I think maybe she's working overtime.

FRANK MAURRANT I never heard o' nobody workin' nights in a real-estate office.

ANNA MAURRANT I thought maybe on account of the office being closed tomorrow — [*To the others.*] Mr. Jacobson, the head of the firm, died Tuesday, and tomorrow's the funeral, so I thought maybe —

EMMA JONES Yeah. Leave it to the Jews not to lose a workin' day without makin' up for it.

FRANK MAURRANT [*to MRS. MAURRANT*] She shouldn't be stayin' out nights without us knowin' where she is.

ANNA MAURRANT She didn't say a word about not coming home.

FRANK MAURRANT That's what I'm savin', ain't it? It's a mother's place to know what her daughter's doin'.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*soothingly*] Things are different nowa-days, Mr. Maurant, from what they used to be.

FRANK MAURRANT Not in my family, they're not goin' to be no different. Not so long as I got somethin' to say.

A GIRL'S VOICE [*offstage*] Red Rover! Red Rover! Let Freddie come over!

GEORGE JONES, *a short, rather plump, red-faced man, cigar in mouth, comes out of the house as MAURRANT enters the vestibule.*

GEORGE JONES Hello, Mr. Maurant.

FRANK MAURRANT [*curtly*] 'Evenin'.

He enters the house. JONES looks after him in surprise for a moment. MRS. MAURRANT seats herself on the stoop.

GEORGE JONES Good evenin', ladies.

MRS. FIORENTINO AND MRS. MAURRANT Good evening, Mr. Jones.

GEORGE JONES [*seating himself on the left balustrade*] What's the matter with your hubby, Mrs. Maurrant? Guess he's feelin' the heat, huh?

ANNA MAURRANT He's been working till just now and I guess he's a little tired.

EMMA JONES Men are all alike. They're all easy to get along with, so long as everythin's goin' the way they want it to. But once it don't — good night!

GRETA FIORENTINO Yes, dot's true, Mrs. Jones.

GEORGE JONES Yeah, an' what about the women?

ANNA MAURRANT I guess it's just the same with the women. I often think it's a shame that people don't get along better together. People ought to be able to live together in peace and quiet, without making each other miserable.

EMMA JONES The way I look at it, you get married for better or worse, an' if it turns out to be worse, why, all you can do is make the best of it.

ANNA MAURRANT I think the trouble is people don't make allowances. They don't realize that everybody wants a kind word, now and then. After all, we're all human, and we can't just go along by ourselves, all the time, without ever getting a kind word.

While she is speaking STEVE SANKEY appears at the right. He is in his early thirties and is prematurely bald. He is rather flashily dressed in a patently cheap, light gray suit and a straw hat with a plaid band. As he appears MRS. JONES and MRS. FIORENTINO exchange a swift, significant look.

STEVE SANKEY [*stopping at the right of the stoop and removing his hat*] Good evening, folks! Is it hot enough for you?

THE OTHERS Good evening.

ANNA MAURRANT [*self-consciously*] Good evening, Mr. Sankey.

Throughout the scene MRS. MAURRANT and SANKEY try vainly to avoid looking at each other.

STEVE SANKEY I don't know when we've had a day like this. Hottest June fifteenth in forty-one years. It was up to ninety-four at three P.M.

GEORGE JONES Six dead in Chicago. An' no relief in sight, the evenin' paper says.

MAURRANT *appears at the window of his apartment and stands there, looking out.*

GRETA FIORENTINO It's joost awful!

STEVE SANKEY Well, it's good for the milk business. You know the old saying, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

ANNA MAURRANT Yes. You hardly get the milk in the morning before it turns sour.

EMMA JONES I'm just after pourin' half a bottle down the sink.

MAURRANT *leaves the window.*

GRETA FIORENTINO You shouldn't throw it away. You should make — what do you call it? — *schmier-käs'*.

STEVE SANKEY Oh, I know what you mean — pot cheese. My wife makes it too once in a while.

ANNA MAURRANT Is your wife all right again, Mr. Sankey? You were telling me last time, she had a cold.

MRS. JONES and MRS. FIORENTINO *exchange another look.*

STEVE SANKEY Was I? Oh, sure, sure. That was a couple weeks ago. Yes, sure, she's all right again. That didn't amount to anything much.

EMMA JONES You got a family too, ain't you?

STEVE SANKEY Yes. Yes, I have. Two little girls. Well, I got to be going along. [*He goes to the left of the stoop and stops again.*] I told my wife I'd go down to the drugstore and get her some nice cold ginger ale. You want something to cool you off in this kind of weather.

EMMA JONES [*as SANKEY passes her*] If you ask me, all that gassy stuff don't do you a bit of good.

STEVE SANKEY I guess you're right, at that. Still it cools you off. Well, good night, folks. See you all again.

He strolls off at the left with affected nonchalance; but when he is almost out of sight he casts a swift look back at MRS. MAURRANT. A dowdy WOMAN, wheeling a dilapidated baby carriage, appears at the left and crosses the stage.

GEORGE JONES What's his name — Sankey?

EMMA JONES Yeah — Mr. Sankey.

ANNA MAURRANT He's the collector for the milk company.

AGNES CUSHING *comes out of the house. She is a thin, dried-up woman, past fifty.*

AGNES CUSHING [*coming down the steps*] Good evening.

THE OTHERS Good evening, Miss Cushing.

ANNA MAURRANT How is your mother today, Miss Cushing?

AGNES CUSHING [*passing at the left of the stoop*]. Why, she complains of the heat. But I'm afraid it's really her heart. She's seventy-two, you know. I'm just going down to the corner to get her a little ice cream.

As she goes off at the left **OLSEN**, *the janitor, a lanky Swede, struggles up the cellar steps with a large, covered, tin garbage barrel. The others look around in annoyance as he bangs the garbage barrel upon the pavement.*

CARL OLSEN Phew! Hot! [*He mops his face and neck with a dingy handkerchief, then lights his pipe and leans against the railing.*]

EMMA JONES [*significantly, as she crosses to the center of the stoop and sits*] Between you and I, I don't think her mother's got long for this world. Once the heart starts goin' back on you —!

GRETA FIORENTINO It's too bad.

ANNA MAURRANT Poor soul! She'll have nothing at all when her mother dies. She's just spent her whole life looking after her mother.

EMMA JONES It's no more than her duty, is it?

GRETA FIORENTINO You could not expect that she should neglect her mother.

A VOICE [*offstage*] Char-lie!

ANNA MAURRANT It's not a matter of neglecting. Only — it seems as if a person should get more out of life than just looking after somebody else.

EMMA JONES Well, I hope to tell you, after all I've done for mine, I expect 'em to look after me, in my old age.

ANNA MAURRANT I don't know. It seems to me you might just as well not live at all, as the way she does. [*Rising, with affected casualness.*] I don't know what's become of Willie. I think I'd better walk down to the corner and look for him. My husband don't like it if he stays out late.

She goes off at the left. They all watch her, in dead silence, until she is out of earshot. Then the storm breaks.

EMMA JONES [*rising excitedly*] Didja get that? Goin' to look for Willie! Can ya beat it?

GRETA FIORENTINO It's joost terrible!

GEORGE JONES You think she's just goin' out lookin' for this guy Sankey?

EMMA JONES [*scornfully*] Ain't men the limit? What do you think he come walkin' by here for?

[*Mincingly.*] Just strolled by to get the wife a little ginger ale. A fat lot he cares whether his wife has ginger ale!

GRETA FIORENTINO Two little girls he's got too!

GEORGE JONES Yeah, that ain't right — a bird like that, wit' a wife an' two kids of his own.

GRETA FIORENTINO The way he stands there and looks and looks at her!

EMMA JONES An' what about the looks she was givin' him! [*Seating herself again.*] You'd think he was the Prince of Wales instead of a milk collector. And didja get the crack about not seein' him for two weeks?

GRETA FIORENTINO And joost today he was upstairs, Mrs. Olsen says.

OLSEN approaches the stoop and removes his pipe from his mouth.

CARL OLSEN [*pointing upward*] Someday her hoosban' is killing him. [*He replaces his pipe and goes back to his former position.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO Dot would be terrible!

GEORGE JONES He's li'ble to, at that. You know, he's got a wicked look in his eye, dat baby has.

EMMA JONES Well, it's no more than he deserves, the little rabbit — goin' around breakin' up people's homes. [*Mockingly.*] Good evenin', folks! Jes' like Whozis on the radio.

GEORGE JONES D'ya think Maurant is wise to what's goin' on?

EMMA JONES Well, if he ain't, there must be somethin' the matter with him. But you never can tell about men. They're as blind as bats. An' what I always say is, in a case like that, the husband or the wife is always the last one to find out.

MISS CUSHING, carrying a small paper bag, hurries on at the left in a state of great excitement.

AGNES CUSHING [*breathlessly, as she comes up the left of the stoop*] Say, what do you think! I just saw them together — the two of them!

EMMA JONES [*rising excitedly*] What did I tell you?

GRETA FIORENTINO Where did you see them, Miss Cushing?

AGNES CUSHING Why, right next door, in the entrance to the warehouse. They were standing right close together. And he had his hands up on her shoulders. It's awful, isn't it?

GEORGE JONES Looks to me like this thing is gettin' pretty serious.

EMMA JONES You didn't notice if they was kissin' or any-thin', did you?

AGNES CUSHING Well, to tell you the truth, Mrs. Jones, I was so ashamed for her that I hardly looked at all.

GEORGE JONES [*sotto voce, as the house door opens*] Look out! Maurant's comin'.

A conspirators' silence falls upon them as MAURRANT, pipe in mouth, comes out of the house.

AGNES CUSHING [*tremulously*] Good evening, Mr. Maurant.

FRANK MAURRANT [*on the top step*] 'Evenin'. [*To the others.*] What's become of me wife?

EMMA JONES Why, she said she was goin' around the corner to look for Willie.

FRANK MAURRANT [*grunts*] Oh.

EMMA JONES They need a lot of lookin' after when they're that age.

A momentary silence.

AGNES CUSHING Well, I think I'd better get back to my mother.
[*She goes up the steps.*]

MRS. JONES, MRS. FIORENTINO, AND JONES Good night, Miss Cushing.

AGNES CUSHING Good night.
[*As she passes MAURRANT.*] Good night, Mr. Maurant.

FRANK MAURRANT 'Night.

She looks at him swiftly and goes into the vestibule.

A BOY'S VOICE [offstage] Red Rover! Red Rover! Let Mary come over!

As Miss CUSHING enters the house SHIRLEY KAPLAN appears at the ground-floor window, at the extreme right, with a glass of steaming tea in her hand. She is a dark, unattractive Jewess, past thirty. She wears a light housedress. KAPLAN goes on reading.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN

[to the neighbors outside; she speaks with the faintest trace of accent] Good evening.

THE OTHERS [not very cordially] Good evenin'.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN It's been a terrible day, hasn't it?

JONES AND MRS. JONES Yeah.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [going to the other window] Papa, here's your tea. Haven't you finished your paper yet? It makes it so hot, with the lights on.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [lowering his newspaper] Oll right! Oll right! Put it out! Put it out! There is anahoo notting to read in de papers. Notting but deevorce, skendal, and moiders.

[He speaks with a strong accent, overemphatically, and with much gesticulation. He puts his paper away, removes his glasses, and starts to drink his tea.]

SHIRLEY KAPLAN There doesn't seem to be a breath of air any-where.

No one answers. SHIRLEY goes away from the window and puts out the lights.

EMMA JONES [sotto voce] You wouldn't think anybody would want to read that Hebrew writin', would ya? I don't see how they make head or tail out of it, meself.

GEORGE JONES I guess if you learn it when you're a kid —

EMMA JONES [suddenly] Well, will you look at your hubby, Mrs. F.! He's sure got his hands full!

She looks toward the left, greatly amused. SHIRLEY reappears at the window at the extreme right and seats herself on the sill.

GRETA FIORENTINO [leaning far out] Joost look at him! [Calling.] Lippo, be careful you don't drop any!

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [offstage] 'Allo, Margherita!

They all watch in amusement as FILIPPO FIORENTINO, a fat Italian, with thick black hair and mustache, comes on at the left. He is clutching a violin in his left arm and balancing five ice-cream cones in his right hand.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*shouting*] Who wantsa da ice-cream cone? Nica, fresha ice-cream cone!

GRETA FIORENTINO Lippo, you will drop them!

EMMA JONES [*going up to him*] Here, gimme your violin.
[*She relieves him of the violin, and he shifts two of the cones to his left hand.*]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*as MRS. JONES hands the violin to MRS. FIORENTINO*]
T'ank you, Messes Jones. 'Ere's for you a nica, fresha ice-cream cone.

MRS. FIORENTINO [*puts the violin on a chair behind her.*]

EMMA JONES [*taking a cone*] Why, thank you very much, Mr. F.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*going up to the window*] Meeses Fiorentino, 'ere's for you a nica, fresha ice-cream cone.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*taking the cone*] It makes me too fat.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ah, no! Five, ten poun' more, nobody can tell da deef!
[*He laughs loudly at his own joke and crosses to the stoop.*]

EMMA JONES [*enjoying her cone*] Ain't he a sketch though?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Meester Jones, you eata da cone, ha?

GEORGE JONES Why, yeah, I will at that. Thanks. Thanks.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Meester Maurant?

FRANK MAURRANT Naw; I got me pipe.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO You lika better da pipe den da ice cream?
[*Crossing the stoop.*] Meesa Kaplan, nica, fresha cone, yes?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN No, thanks. I really don't want any.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Meester Kaplan, yes?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*waving his hand*] No, no! Tenks! tenks!

EMMA JONES [*to JONES*] You oughta pay Mr. F. for the cones.

GEORGE JONES [*reluctantly reaching into his pocket*] Why, sure.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*excitedly*] Ah, no, no! I don' taka da mon'. I'm treata da whole crowd. I deedn' know was gona be such a biga crowd or I bringa doz'.
[*Crossing to OLSEN.*] Meester Olsen, you like da cone, ha?

CARL OLSEN Sure. Much oblige'.
[He takes the pipe from his mouth and stolidly licks the cone.]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO *[seating himself on the stoop with a long sigh of relaxation].*
Aaah! *[He tastes the cone and, smacking his lips, looks about for approval.]* Ees tasta good, ha?

GEORGE JONES *[his mouth full]* You betcha!

EMMA JONES It cools you off a little.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Sure. Dassa right. Cool you off. *[He pulls at his clothing and sits on the stoop.]* I'ma wat, wat — like I jus' come outa da bad-tub. Ees 'ota like hal in da Park. Two, t'ree t'ousan' people, everybody sweatin' — ees smal lika menageria.

While he is speaking ALICE SIMPSON, a tall, spare spinster, appears at the right. She goes up the steps, enters the vestibule, and is about to push one of the buttons on the side wall.

EMMA JONES *[sotto voce]* She's from the Charities. *[Coming over to the stoop and calling into the vestibule.]* If you're lookin' for Mrs. Hildebrand, she ain't home yet.

ALICE SIMPSON *[coming to the doorway]* Do you know when she'll be back?

EMMA JONES Well, she oughta be here by now. She jus' went aroun' to the Livingston. That's the pitcher theayter.

ALICE SIMPSON *[outraged]* You mean she's gone to a moving-picture show?

CARL OLSEN *[calmly]* She's comin' now.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO *[rising to his feet and calling vehemently]* Mees Hil'brand! Hurry up! Hurry up! Ees a lady here.

He motions violently to her to hurry. LAURA HILDEBRAND appears at the right with her two children, CHARLIE and MARY. She is a small, rather young woman, with a manner of perpetual bewilderment. Both children are chewing gum, and MARY comes on skipping a rope and chanting: "Apple, peach, pear, plum, banana." CHARLIE carefully avoids all the cracks in the sidewalk.

ALICE SIMPSON *[coming out on the steps]* Well, good evening, Mrs. Hildebrand!

LAURA HILDEBRAND *[flustered]* Good evening, Miss Simpson.

ALICE SIMPSON Where have you been — to a moving-picture show?

LAURA HILDEBRAND Yes, ma'am.

ALICE SIMPSON And where did you get the money?

LAURA HILDEBRAND It was only seventy-five cents.

ALICE SIMPSON Seventy-five cents is a lot when you're being dispossessed and dependent upon charity. I suppose it came out of the money I gave you to buy groceries with?

LAURA HILDEBRAND We always went, Thursday nights, to the pictures when my husband was home.

ALICE SIMPSON Yes, but your husband isn't home. And as far as anybody knows, he has no intention of coming home.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*leaning forward out of his window*] Ees dis your conception of charity?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Papa, why do you interfere?

ALICE SIMPSON [*to KAPLAN*] You'll please be good enough to mind your own business.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN You should go home and read in your Bible de life of Christ.

EMMA JONES [*to MRS. FIORENTINO*] Will you listen to who's talkin' about Christ!

ALICE SIMPSON [*turning her back on KAPLAN and speaking to MRS. HILDEBRAND*] You may as well understand right now that nobody's going to give you any money to spend on moving-picture shows.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ah, wotsa da matter, lady?
[*He thrusts his hand into his pocket and takes out a fistful of coins.*] 'Ere, you taka da mon', you go to da pitcha ever' night.
[*He forces the coins into MRS. HILDEBRAND'S hand.*] An' here's for da bambini.
[*He gives each child a nickel.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO [*to MRS. JONES*] Dot's why we never have money.

LAURA HILDEBRAND [*bewildered*] I really oughtn't to take it.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Sure! Sure! I got plenta mon'.

ALICE SIMPSON [*disgustedly*] We'd better go inside. I can't talk to you here, with all these people.

LAURA HILDEBRAND [*mEEKly*] Yes, ma'am.
[*She follows MISS SIMPSON into the house, her children clinging to her.*]

EMMA JONES Wouldn't she give you a pain?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO I tella you da whola troub'. She's a don' gotta nobody to sleepa wit'.

[The men laugh.]

EMMA JONES *[to MRS. FIORENTINO]* Ain't he the limit!

GRETA FIORENTINO *[greatly pleased]* Tt!

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Somebody go sleepa wit' her, she's alla right. Meester Jones, 'ow 'bout you?

SHIRLEY, *embarrassed, leaves the window.*

GEORGE JONES *[with a sheepish grin]* Naw, I guess not.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Wot'sa matter? You 'fraid you' wife, ha? Meester Maurant, how 'bout you?

MAURRANT *emits a short laugh.*

GRETA FIORENTINO *[delighted]*. Lippo, you're joost awful.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO *[enjoying himself hugely]* Alla ri'. Ahma gonna go myself!
[He laughs boisterously. The others laugh too.]

EMMA JONES *[suddenly]* Here's your wife, now, Mr. Maurant.

A sudden silence falls upon them all as MRS. MAURRANT approaches at the left. A swift glance apprises her of MAURRANT'S presence.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO 'Allo, Meeses Maurant. Why you don' come to da concerto?

ANNA MAURRANT Well, I was waiting for Rose, but she didn't get home.
[To MAURRANT, as she starts to go up the steps.] Is she home yet, Frank?

FRANK MAURRANT No, she ain't. Where you been all this while?

ANNA MAURRANT Why, I've been out looking for Willie.

FRANK MAURRANT I'll give him a good fannin' when I get hold of him.

ANNA MAURRANT Ah, don't whip him, Frank, please don't. All boys are wild like that, when they're that age.

GEORGE JONES Sure! My boy Vincent was the same way. An' look at him today — drivin' his own taxi an' makin' a good livin'.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO *[leaning on the balustrade]* Eees jussa same t'ing wit' me. W'en Ahm twelva year, I run away — I don' never see my parent again.

FRANK MAURRANT That's all right about that. But it ain't gonna be that way in my family.

ANNA MAURRANT [*as MISS SIMPSON comes out of the house*] Look out, Frank. Let the lady pass.

ALICE SIMPSON Excuse me.

They make way for her as she comes down the steps. MRS. MAURRANT seats herself on the stoop.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Meeses Hil'brand, she gotta de tougha luck, ha? Tomorra, dey gonna t'row 'er out in da street, ha?

ALICE SIMPSON [*stopping at the right of the stoop and turning toward him*] Yes, they are. And if she has any place to sleep, it will only be because the Charities find her a place. And you'd be doing her a much more neighborly act if you helped her to realize the value of money, instead of encouraging her to throw it away.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*with a deprecatory shrug*] Ah, lady, no! I give 'er coupla dollar, make 'er feel good, maka me feel good — dat don' 'urt nobody.

SHIRLEY *reappears at the window.*

ALICE SIMPSON Yes, it does. It's bad for her character.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*throwing away his cigarette and laughing aloud*] Ha! You mek me leff!

ALICE SIMPSON [*turning angrily*] Nobody's asking your opinion.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Dot's oll right. I'm taling you vit'out esking. You hoid maybe already dot poem: Organized cherity, measured and iced, In der name of a kushus, stetistical Christ.

ALICE SIMPSON [*fiercely*] All the same, you Jews are the first to run to the Charities.

She strides angrily off at the right, LIPPO, affecting a mincing gait pretends to follow her.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*leaning out of the window*] Come back and I'll tal you somet'ing vill maybe do good your kerecter.

GRETA FIORENTINO Lippo!

EMMA JONES [*highly amused*] Look at him, will ya?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*laughing and waving his hand*] Gooda-by, lady!

[He comes back to the stoop.]

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [to the others] Dey toin out in de street a mudder vit' two children, and dis female comes and preaches to her bourgeois morelity.

EMMA JONES [to MRS. FIORENTINO] He's shootin' off his face again.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Papa, it's time to go to bed!

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [irritably] Lat me alone, Shoiley. [Rising and addressing the others.] Dees cherities are notting but anudder dewise for popperizing de verking klesses. Ven de lendlords steal from de verkers a million dollars, dey give to de Cherities a t'ousand.

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah? Well, who's puttin' her out on the street? What about the lan'lord here? He's a Jew, ain't he?

EMMA JONES I'll say he's a Jew! Isaac Cohen!

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Jews oder not Jews — vot has dis got to do vit' de quastion? I'm not toking releegion, I'm toking economics. So long as de *kepitalist* klesses —

FRANK MAURRANT [interrupting] I'm talkin' about if you don't pay your rent, you gotta move.

ANNA MAURRANT It doesn't seem right, though, to put a poor woman out of her home.

GRETA FIORENTINO And for her husband to run away — dot vos not right either.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO I betcha 'e's got 'nudder woman. He find a nice blonda chicken, 'e run away.

EMMA JONES There ought to be a law against women goin' around stealin' other women's husbands.

GRETA FIORENTINO Yes, dot's right, Mrs. Jones.

FRANK MAURRANT Well, what I'm sayin' is, it ain't the landlord's fault.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Eet's de folt of our economic system. So long as de institution of priwate property exeests, de verkers vill be at de moicy of de property-owning klesses.

FRANK MAURRANT That's a lot o' bushwa! I'm a woikin' man, see? I been payin' dues for twenty-two years in the Stage-hands Union. If we're not gettin' what we want, we call a strike, see? — and then we get it.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Sure! Ees same wit' me. We gotta Musician Union. We getta pay for da rehears', we getta pay for da overtime —

SHIRLEY KAPLAN That's all right when you belong to a strong union. But when a union is weak, like the Teachers' Union, it doesn't do you any good.

EMMA JONES [*to MRS. FIORENTINO*] Can y' imagine that? Teachers belongin' to a union!

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*impatiently*] Oll dese unions eccomplish notting votever. Oll dis does not toch de fundamental problem. So long as de tuls of industry are in de hands of de *kepitalist* klasses, ve vill hev exploitation and sloms and —

FRANK MAURRANT T' hell wit' all dat hooey! I'm makin' a good livin' an' I'm not doin' any kickin'.

CARL OLSEN [*removing his pipe from his mouth*] Ve got prosperity, dis coountry.

GEORGE JONES You said somethin'!

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Sure, for de reech is planty prosperity! Mister Morgan rides in his yacht and upstairs dey toin a voman vit' two children in de street.

FRANK MAURRANT And if you was to elect a Socialist president tomorra, it would be the same thing.

GRETA FIORENTINO Yes, dot's right, Mr. Maurrant.

GEORGE JONES You're right!

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Who's toking about electing presidents? Ve must put de tuls of industry in de hends of de verking klasses, and dis ken be accomplished only by a sushal revolution!

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah? Well, we don't want no revolutions in this country, see?

General chorus of assent.

EMMA JONES I know all about that stuff — teachin' kids there ain't no Gawd an' that their gran'fathers was monkeys.

GEORGE JONES [*rising angrily*] Free love, like they got in Russia, huh?

KAPLAN makes a gesture of impatient disgust and sinks back into his chair.

FRANK MAURRANT There's too goddam many o' you Bolsheviks runnin' aroun' loose. If you don't like the way things is run here, why in hell don't you go back where you came from?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Everybody has a right to his own opinion, Mr. Maurrant.

FRANK MAURRANT Not if they're against law and order, they ain't. We don't want no foreigners comin' in, tellin' us how to run things.

GRETA FIORENTINO It's nothing wrong to be a foreigner. Many good people are foreigners.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Sure! Looka Eetalian. Looka Cristoforo Colombo! 'E'sa firs' man discov' America — 'e's Eetalian, jussa like me.

FRANK MAURRANT I'm not sayin' anythin' about that —

CARL OLSEN [*removing his pipe*] Firs' man is Lief Ericson.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*excitedly, going toward OLSEN*] Wassa dat?

CARL OLSEN Firs' man is Lief Ericson.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO No! No! Colombo! Cristoforo Colomb' — 'e'sa firs' man discov' America — ever'body knowa dat!
[*He looks around appealingly.*]

EMMA JONES Why, sure, everybody knows that.

GEORGE JONES Every kid learns that in school.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Ericson was really the first discoverer —

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*yelling*] No! Colomb'!

SHIRLEY KAPLAN But Columbus was the first to open America to settlement.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*happily, as he goes back to the stoop*] Sure, dassa wot Ahm say — Colomb' is firs'.

CARL OLSEN Firs' man is Lief Ericson.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*tapping his forehead significantly*] Looka wot Eetalian do for America — 'e build bridge, 'e build railroad, 'e build subway, 'e dig sewer. Wit'out Eetalian, ees no America.

GEORGE JONES Like I heard a feller sayin': the Eye-talians built New York, the Irish run it, an' the Jews own it.

[*Laughter.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO [*convulsed*] Oh! Dot's funny!

GEORGE JONES [*pleased with his success*] Yep, the Jews own it all right.

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah, an' they're the ones that's doin' all the kickin'.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN It's no disgrace to be a Jew, Mr. Marrant.

FRANK MAURRANT I'm not sayin' it is. All I'm sayin' is, what we need in this country is a little more respect for law an' order. Look at what's happenin' to people's homes, with all this divorce an' one thing an' another. Young girls goin' around smokin' cigarettes an' their skirts up around their necks. An' a lot o' long-haired guys talkin' about free love an' birth control an' breakin' up decent people's homes. I tell you it's time somethin' was done to put the fear o' God into people!

EMMA JONES Good for you, Mr. Maurrant!

GEORGE JONES You're damn right.

GRETA FIORENTINO Dot's right, Mr. Maurrant!

ANNA MAURRANT Sometimes, I think maybe they're only trying to get something out of life.

FRANK MAURRANT Get somethin', huh? Somethin' they oughtn't to have, is that it?

ANNA MAURRANT No; I was only thinking —

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah, you were only thinkin', huh?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*rising to his feet again*] De family is primerily an economic institution.

EMMA JONES [*to MRS. FIORENTINO*] He's in again.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Ven priwate property is ebolished, de family will no longer hev eny reason to exeest.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Can't you keep quiet, Papa?

FRANK MAURRANT [*belligerently*] Yeah? Is that so? No reason to exist, huh? Well, it's gonna exist, see? Children respectin' their parents an' doin' what they're told, get me? An' husbands an' wives, lovin' an' honorin' each other, like they said they would when they was spliced — an' any dirty sheeny that says different is li'ble to get his head busted open, see?

ANNA MAURRANT [*springing to her feet*] Frank!

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*trying to restrain KAPLAN*] Papa!

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Oil right! I should argue vit' a low-kless gangster.

FRANK MAURRANT [*raging*] Who's a gangster? Why, you goddam —!
[*He makes for the balustrade.*]

ANNA MAURRANT [*seizing his arm*] Frank!

GEORGE JONES [*seizing the other arm*] Hey! Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

FRANK MAURRANT Lemme go!

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*interposing herself*] You should be ashamed to talk like that to an old man! [*She slams down the window.*]

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah?

[*To MRS. MAURRANT and JONES.*] All right, lemme go! I ain't gonna do nothin'.

They release him. SHIRLEY expostulates with KAPLAN and leads him away from the window.

EMMA JONES [*who has run over to the right of the stoop*] Maybe if somebody handed him one, he'd shut up with his talk for a while.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO 'E talka lika dat een Eetaly, Mussolini's gonna geeve 'eem da castor-oil.

EMMA JONES [*laughing*] Yeah? Say, that's a funny idea!
[*Still chuckling, she goes back to the railing at the left of the stoop.*]

GEORGE JONES No kiddin', is that what they do?

GRETA FIORENTINO Yes, dot's true. My husband read it to me in the Italian paper.

ANNA MAURRANT Why must people always be hurting and injuring each other? Why can't they live together in peace?

FRANK MAURRANT [*mockingly*] Live in peace! You're always talkin' about livin' in peace!

ANNA MAURRANT Well, it's true, Frank. Why can't people just as well be kind to each other?

FRANK MAURRANT Then let 'im go live with his own kind.

GEORGE JONES [*coming down the steps*] Yeah, that's what I say.
[*As MRS. JONES laughs aloud.*] What's eatin' you?

EMMA JONES I was just thinkin' about the castor-oil.
[*MAURRANT seats himself on the right balustrade.*]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Sure, 'esa funny fell', Mussolini. [*Doubling up in mock pain.*] 'E geeve 'em da pain in da belly, dey no can talk. [*Suddenly.*] Look! 'Eresa da boy. 'Esa walk along da street an' reada da book. Datsa da whola troub': reada too much book.

While LIPPO is speaking SAMUEL KAPLAN appears at the left. He is twenty-one, slender, with dark, unruly hair and a sensitive, mobile face. He is hatless, and his coat is slung over one shoulder. He walks along slowly, absorbed in a book. As he approaches

the stoop SHIRLEY, *in a kimono, appears at the closed window, opens it, and is about to go away again when she sees SAM.*

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*calling*] Sam!

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*looking up*] Hello, Shirley.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Are you coming in?

SAMUEL KAPLAN No, not yet. It's too hot to go to bed.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Well, I'm tired. And Papa's going to bed too. So don't make a noise when you come in.

SAMUEL KAPLAN I won't.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Good night.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Good night.
[SHIRLEY *goes away from the window.*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*to the others, as he seats himself on the curb to the right of the stoop*] Good evening!

SEVERAL 'Evening.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*approaching SAM*] 'Ow you lika da concerto? I see you sittin' in da fronta seat.

SAMUEL KAPLAN I didn't like it. Why don't they play some real music instead of all those Italian organ-grinder's tunes?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*excitedly*] Wotsa da matter? You don't lika da Verdi?

SAMUEL KAPLAN No, I don't. It's not music!

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Wot you call music — da Tschaikov', ha?
[*He hums derisively a few bars from the first movement of the "Symphonie Pathétique."*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN Yes, Tschaikovsky — and Beethoven. Music that comes from the soul.

ANNA MAURRANT The one I like is —
[*She hums the opening bars of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song."*]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Datsa da "Spreeng Song" from da Mendelson.

ANNA MAURRANT Yes! I love that.
[*She goes on humming softly.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO And the walzer von Johann Strauss.

[*She hums the "Wienerwald Waltz."*]

EMMA JONES Well, gimme a good jazz band, every time.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*protesting*] Ah, no! Ees not music, da jazz. Ees breaka your ear.
[*He imitates the discordant blaring of a saxophone.*]

GEORGE JONES [*bored*] Well, I guess I'll be on me way.

EMMA JONES Where are you goin'?

GEORGE JONES Just around to Callahan's to shoot a little pool. Are you comin' along, Mr. Maurrant?

FRANK MAURRANT I'm gonna wait awhile.

A man with a clubfoot appears at the right and crosses the stage.

EMMA JONES [*as JONES goes toward the right*] Don't be comin' home lit, at all hours o' the mornin'.

GEORGE JONES [*over his shoulder*] Aw, lay off dat stuff! I'll be back in a half an hour.
[*He exits at right.*]

A VOICE [*offstage*] Char-lie!

EMMA JONES Him an' his pool! Tomorra he won't be fit to go to work again.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*who has been awaiting a chance to interrupt*] When you hear Beethoven, it expresses the struggles and emotions of the human soul.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*waving him aside*] Ah, ees no good, da Beethoven. Ees alla time sad. Ees wanna maka you cry. I don' wanna cry, I wanna laugh. Eetalian music ees maka you 'appy. Ees maka you feel good.
[*He sings several bars of "Donna è mobile."*]

ANNA MAURRANT [*applauding*] Yes, I like that too.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ah, ees bew-tiful! Ees maka you feela fine. Ees maka you wanna dance. [*He executes several dance steps.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO [*rising*] Vait, Lippo, I vill give you music.
[*She goes away from the window. The lights go on in the Fiorentino apartment.*]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*calling after her*] Playa Puccini, Margherita!
[*He hums an air from Madame Butterfly. Then, as MRS. FIORENTINO begins to play the waltz from La Bohème on the piano.*] Ah! *La Bohème*! Bew-tiful! Who'sa gonna dance wit' me? Meeses Maurrant, 'ow 'bout you?

ANNA MAURRANT [*with an embarrassed laugh*] Well, I don't know.
[*She looks timidly at MAURRANT, who gives no sign.*]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ah, come on! Dansa wit' me! [*He takes her by the hand.*]

ANNA MAURRANT Well, all right, I will.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Sure, we hava nica dance. [*They begin to dance on the sidewalk.*]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*to MAURRANT*] Your wife ees dansa swell.

ANNA MAURRANT [*laughing*] Oh, go on, Mr. Fiorentino! But I always loved to dance!

They dance on. SANKEY appears at the left, carrying a paper bag from which the neck of a ginger ale bottle protrudes. MAURRANT sees him and rises.

EMMA JONES [*following MAURRANT'S stare and seeing SANKEY*] Look out! You're blockin' traffic!

STEVE SANKEY [*stopping at the left of the stoop*] I see you're having a little dance. [*MRS. MAURRANT sees him and stops dancing. LIPPO leans against the right balustrade, panting. The music goes on.*] Say, go right ahead. Don't let me stop you.

ANNA MAURRANT Oh, that's all right. I guess we've danced about enough. [*She goes up the steps, ill at ease.*]

STEVE SANKEY It's a pretty hot night for dancing.

ANNA MAURRANT Yes, it is.

STEVE SANKEY [*going toward the right*] Well, I got to be going along. Good night, folks.

THE OTHERS [*except MAURRANT*] Good night.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*as he seats himself at the left of the stoop*] Stoppa da music, Margherita!

The music stops. SANKEY goes off at the right. MRS. MAURRANT goes quickly up the steps.

FRANK MAURRANT [*stopping her*] Who's that bird?

ANNA MAURRANT Why, that's Mr. Sankey. He's the milk collector.

FRANK MAURRANT Oh, he is, is he? Well, what's he hangin' around here for?

ANNA MAURRANT Well, he lives just down the block some-where.

EMMA JONES He's just been down to the drugstore, gettin' some ginger ale for his wife.

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah? Well, what I want to know is, why ain't Rose home yet?

ANNA MAURRANT I told you, Frank —

FRANK MAURRANT I know all about what you told me. What I'm sayin' is, you oughta be lookin' after your kids instead of doin' so much dancin'.

ANNA MAURRANT Why, it's the first time I've danced in I don't know when.

FRANK MAURRANT That's all right about that. But I want 'em home instead o' battin' around the streets, hear me?

While he is speaking WILLIE appears, sobbing, at the left, his clothes torn and his face scratched. He is carrying his skates.

ANNA MAURRANT [*coming down the steps*] Why, Willie, what's the matter? [*Reproachfully, as WILLIE comes up to her, sniffing.*] Have you been fighting again?

WILLIE MAURRANT [*with a burst of indignation*] Well, dat big bum ain't gonna say dat to me. I'll knock da stuffin's out o' him, dat's what I'll do!

FRANK MAURRANT [*tensely, as he comes down the steps*] Who's been sayin' things to you?

WILLIE MAURRANT Dat big bum Joe Connolly, dat's who! [*Blubbing.*] I'll knock his goddam eye out next time!

ANNA MAURRANT Willie!

FRANK MAURRANT [*seizing WILLIE'S arm*] Shut up your swearin', do you hear? — or I'll give you somethin' to bawl for. What did he say to you, huh? What did he say to you?

WILLIE MAURRANT [*struggling*] Ow! Leggo my arm!

ANNA MAURRANT What difference does it make what a little street loafer like that says?

FRANK MAURRANT Nobody's askin' you! [*To WILLIE.*] What did he say? [*He and MRS. MAURRANT exchange a swift involuntary look; then MAURRANT releases the boy.*] G'wan up to bed now, an' don't let me hear no more out o' you. [*Raising his hand.*] G'wan now. Beat it! [*WILLIE ducks past MAURRANT and hurries up the steps and into the vestibule.*]

ANNA MAURRANT Wait, Willie, I'll go with you. [*She goes up the steps, then stops and turns.*] Are you coming up, Frank?

FRANK MAURRANT No, I ain't. I'm goin' around to Callahan's for a drink, an' if Rose ain't home when I get back, there's gonna be trouble. [*Without another glance or word he goes off at the right. MRS. MAURRANT looks after him for a moment with a troubled expression.*]

ANNA MAURRANT *[entering the vestibule]* Well, good night, all.

THE OTHERS Good night.

SAM rises. As MRS. MAURRANT and WILLIE enter the house, MRS. FIORENTINO reappears at the window.

GRETA FIORENTINO Lippo! *[She sees that something is wrong.]*

EMMA JONES Say, you missed it all!

SAM, about to go up the steps, stops at the right of the stoop.

GRETA FIORENTINO *[eagerly]* Vat?

EMMA JONES *[volubly]* Well, they was dancin', see? An' who should come along but Sankey?

GRETA FIORENTINO Tt!

A light appears in the Maurrant apartment.

EMMA JONES Well, there was the three o' them — Mr. Maurrant lookin' at Sankey as if he was ready to kill him, an' Mrs. Maurrant as white as a sheet, an' Sankey as innocent as the babe unborn.

GRETA FIORENTINO Did he say something?

EMMA JONES No, not till after Sankey was gone. Then he wanted to know who he was an' what he was doin' here. "He's the milk collector," she says.

GRETA FIORENTINO It's joost awful.

EMMA JONES Oh, an' then Willie comes home.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Da boy tella 'eem 'is mamma ees a whore an' Weelie leeck 'im.

EMMA JONES Well, an' what else is she?

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[unable longer to restrain himself]* Stop it! Stop it! Can't you let her alone? Have you no hearts? Why do you tear her to pieces, like a pack of wolves? It's cruel, cruel!

[He chokes back a sob, then dashes abruptly into the house.]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO *[rising to his feet and yelling after him]* Wotsa matter you?

EMMA JONES Well, listen to him, will you! He must be goin' off his nut too.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO 'Esa reada too mucha book. Ees bad for you.

GRETA FIORENTINO I think he is loving the girl.

EMMA JONES Yeah? Well, that's all the Maurrants need is to have their daughter get hooked up wit' a Jew. It's a fine house to be livin' in, ain't it, between the Maurrants upstairs an' that bunch o' crazy Jews down here.

A girl appears at the left, glancing apprehensively over her shoulder at a man who is walking down the street behind her. They cross the stage and go off at the right.

EMMA JONES [as MRS. OLSEN comes up the cellar steps and over to the stoop] Well, good night.

GRETA FIORENTINO Good night, Mrs. Jones.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Goo' night, Meeses Jones.

EMMA JONES Wait a minute, Mrs. Olsen. I'll go with you.

MRS. JONES and MRS. OLSEN enter the house. OLSEN yawns mightily, knocks the ashes from his pipe, and goes down the cellar steps. WILLIE MAURRANT leans out of the window and spits into the areaway. Then he leaves the window and turns out the light. A POLICEMAN appears at the right and strolls across the stage.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [who has gone up the steps] Margherita, eef I ever ketcha you sleepin' wit' da meelkaman, Ahm gonna breaka your neck.

GRETA FIORENTINO [yawning] Stop your foolishness, Lippo, and come to bed!

LIPPO laughs and enters the house. MRS. FIORENTINO takes the pillow off the window sill, closes the window, and starts to pull down the shade. ROSE MAURRANT and HARRY EASTER appear at the left. ROSE is a pretty girl of twenty, cheaply but rather tastefully dressed. EASTER is about thirty-five, good-looking, and obviously prosperous.

GRETA FIORENTINO Good evening, Miss Maurrant.

ROSE MAURRANT [as they pass the window] Oh, good evening, Mrs. Fiorentino. [ROSE and EASTER cross to the stoop. MRS. FIORENTINO looks at them a moment, then pulls down the shade and turns out the lights. ROSE stops at the foot of the steps.] Well, this is where I live, Mr. Easter. [She extends her hand.] I've had a lovely time.

HARRY EASTER [taking her hand] Why, you're not going to leave me like this, are you? I've hardly had a chance to talk to you.

ROSE MAURRANT [laughing] We've been doing nothing but talking since six o'clock.

[She tries gently to extricate her hand.]

HARRY EASTER *[still holding it]*. No, we haven't. We've been eating and dancing. And now, just when I want to talk to you — *[He puts his other arm around her.]* Rose —

ROSE MAURRANT *[rather nervously]* Please don't, Mr. Easter. Please let go. I think there's somebody coming.

She frees herself as the house door opens and MRS. OLSEN appears in the vestibule. They stand in silence as MRS. OLSEN puts the door off the latch, tries it to see that it is locked, dims the light in the vestibule, and comes out on the stoop.

OLGA OLSEN *[as she comes down the steps]* Goot evening, Miss Maurrant. *[She darts a swift look at EASTER and crosses to the cellar steps.]*

ROSE MAURRANT Good evening, Mrs. Olsen. How's the baby?

OLGA OLSEN She vas cryin' all the time. I tank she vas gettin' new teet'.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, the poor little thing! What a shame!

OLGA OLSEN *[as she goes down the steps]* Yes, ma'am. Goot night, Miss Maurrant.

ROSE MAURRANT Good night, Mrs. Olsen. *[To EASTER.]* She's got the cutest little baby you ever saw.

HARRY EASTER *[rather peevishly]* Yeah? That's great. *[Taking ROSE'S hand again.]* Rose, listen —

ROSE MAURRANT I've really got to go upstairs now, Mr. Easter. It's awfully late.

HARRY EASTER Well, can't I come up with you — for a minute?

ROSE MAURRANT *[positively]* No, of course not!

HARRY EASTER Why not?

ROSE MAURRANT Why, we'd wake everybody up. Anyhow, my father wouldn't like it.

HARRY EASTER Aren't you old enough to do what you like?

ROSE MAURRANT It's not that. Only I think when you're living with people, there's no use doing things you know they don't like. *[Embarrassed.]* Anyhow, there's only the front room and my little brother sleeps there. So good night, Mr. Easter.

HARRY EASTER *[taking both her hands]* Rose — I'm crazy about you.

ROSE MAURRANT Please let me go now.

HARRY EASTER Kiss me good night.

ROSE MAURRANT No.

HARRY EASTER Why not, hm?

ROSE MAURRANT I don't want to.

HARRY EASTER Just one kiss.

ROSE MAURRANT No.

HARRY EASTER Yes!

[He takes her in his arms and kisses her. ROSE frees herself and goes to the right of the stoop.]

ROSE MAURRANT *[her bosom heaving]* It wasn't nice of you to do that.

HARRY EASTER *[going over to her]* Why not? Didn't you like it? Hm?

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, it's not that.

HARRY EASTER Then what is it, hm?

ROSE MAURRANT *[turning and facing him]* You know very well what it is. You've got a wife, haven't you?

HARRY EASTER What of it? I tell you, I'm clean off my nut about you.

ROSE MAURRANT *[nervously, as the house door opens]* Look out! Somebody's coming.

EASTER goes to the other side of the stoop and they fall into a self-conscious silence as MRS. JONES comes out of the house, leading an ill-conditioned dog.

EMMA JONES *[as she comes down the steps]* Oh, good evenin'.
[She stares at EASTER, then goes toward the right.]

ROSE MAURRANT Good evening, Mrs. Jones. It's been a terrible day, hasn't it?

EMMA JONES Yeah. Awful. *[Stopping.]* I think your father's been kinda worried about you.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, has he?

EMMA JONES Yeah. Well, I gotta give Queenie her exercise. Good night.
[She stares at EASTER again, then goes off at right.]

ROSE MAURRANT Good night, Mrs. Jones. *[To EASTER.]* I'll soon have all the neighbors talking about me.

HARRY EASTER [*going over to her again*] What can they say, hm? That they saw you saying good night to somebody on the front doorstep?

ROSE MAURRANT They can say worse than that — and what's more, they will, too.

HARRY EASTER Well, why not snap out of it all?

ROSE MAURRANT Out of what?

HARRY EASTER [*indicating the house*] This! The whole business. Living in a dirty old tenement like this; working all day in a real-estate office, for a measly twenty-five a week. You're not going to try to tell me you like living this way, are you?

ROSE MAURRANT No, I can't say that I like it especially. But maybe it won't always be this way. Anyhow, I guess I'm not so much better than anybody else.

HARRY EASTER [*taking her hand*] Do you know what's the matter with you? You're not wise to yourself. Why, you've got just about everything, you have. You've got looks and personality and a bean on your shoulders — there's nothing you haven't got. You've got it, I tell you.

ROSE MAURRANT You shouldn't keep looking at me, all the time, at the office. The other girls are beginning to pass hints about it.

HARRY EASTER [*releasing her hand, genuinely perturbed*] Is that a fact? You see, that shows you! I never even knew I was looking at you. I guess I just can't keep my eyes off you. Well, we've got to do something about it.

ROSE MAURRANT [*nervously snapping the clasp of her handbag*] I guess the only thing for me to do is to look for another job.

HARRY EASTER Yes, that's what I've been thinking too. [*As she is about to demur.*] Wait a minute, honey! I've been doing a little thinking and I've got it all doped out. The first thing you do is throw up your job, see?

ROSE MAURRANT But —

HARRY EASTER Then you find yourself a nice, cozy little apartment somewhere. [*As she is about to interrupt again.*] Just a minute, now! Then you get yourself a job on the stage.

ROSE MAURRANT How could I get a job on the stage?

HARRY EASTER Why, as easy as walking around the block. I've got three or four friends in show business. Ever hear of Harry Porkins?

ROSE MAURRANT No.

HARRY EASTER Well, he's the boy that put on "Mademoiselle Marie" last year. He's an

old pal of mine, and all I'd have to say to him is — [*Putting his arm around her shoulder.*]
— "Harry, here's a little girl I'm interested in," and he'd sign you up in a minute.

ROSE MAURRANT I don't think I'd be any good on the stage.

HARRY EASTER Why, what are you talking about, sweetheart? There's a dozen girls, right now, with their names up in electric lights, that haven't got half your stuff. All you got to do is go about it in the right way — put up a little front, see? Why, half the game is nothing but bluff. Get yourself a classy little apartment, and fill it up with trick furniture, see? Then you doll yourself up in a flock of Paris clothes and you throw a couple or three parties and you're all set. [*Taking her arm.*] Wouldn't you *like* to be on Broadway?

ROSE MAURRANT I don't believe I ever could be.

HARRY EASTER Isn't it worth trying? What have you got here, hm? This is no kind of a racket for a girl like you. [*Taking her hand.*] You do like me a little, don't you?

ROSE MAURRANT I don't know if I do or not.

HARRY EASTER Why, sure you do. And once you get to know me better, you'd like me even more. I'm no Valentino, but I'm not a bad scout. Why, think of all the good times we could have together — you with a little apartment and all. And maybe we could get us a little car —

ROSE MAURRANT And what about your wife?

HARRY EASTER [*letting go her hand*] The way I figure it is, she doesn't have to know anything about it. She stays up there in Bronxville, and there are lots of times when business keeps me in New York. Then, in the summer, she goes to the mountains. Matter of fact, she's going next week and won't be back until September.

ROSE MAURRANT [*shaking her head and going toward the stoop*] I don't think it's the way I'd want things to be.

HARRY EASTER Why, there's nothing really wrong about it.

ROSE MAURRANT Maybe there isn't. But it's just the way I feel about it, I guess.

HARRY EASTER Why, you'd get over that in no time. There's lots of girls —

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, I know there are. But you've been telling me all along I'm different.

HARRY EASTER Sure, you're different. You're in a class by your-self. Why, sweetheart — [*He tries to take her in his arms.*]

ROSE MAURRANT [*pushing him away*] No. And you mustn't call me sweetheart.

HARRY EASTER Why not?

ROSE MAURRANT Because I'm not your sweetheart.

HARRY EASTER I want you to be — [*A sudden yell of pain is heard from upstairs. They both look up, greatly startled.*] My God, what's that — a murder?

ROSE MAURRANT It must be poor Mrs. Buchanan. She's expecting a baby.

HARRY EASTER Why does she yell like that? God, I thought somebody was being killed.

ROSE MAURRANT The poor thing! [*With sudden impatience she starts up the steps.*] I've got to go now. Good night.

HARRY EASTER [*taking her hand*] But, Rose —

ROSE MAURRANT [*freeing her hand quickly*] No, I've got to go. [*Suddenly.*] Look, there's my father. There'll only be an argument if he sees you.

HARRY EASTER All right, I'll go.
[*He goes toward the left as MAURRANT appears at the right.*]

ROSE MAURRANT [*going up to the top step*] Good night.

HARRY EASTER Good night.
[*EASTER goes off at the left. ROSE begins searching in her handbag for her latchkey.*]

ROSE MAURRANT [*as MAURRANT approaches*] Hello, Pop.

FRANK MAURRANT [*stopping at the foot of the steps*] Who was that you was talkin' to?

ROSE MAURRANT That's Mr. Easter. He's the manager of the office.

FRANK MAURRANT What's he doin' here? You been out wit' him?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, he took me out to dinner.

FRANK MAURRANT Oh, he did, huh?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, I had to stay late to get out some letters. You see, Pop, the office is closed tomorrow, on account of Mr. Jacobson's funeral —

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah, I know all about that. This is a hell of a time to be gettin' home from dinner.

ROSE MAURRANT Well, we danced afterward.

FRANK MAURRANT Oh, you danced, huh? With a little pettin' on the side, is that it?

ROSE MAURRANT [*rather angrily, as she seats herself on the left balustrade*] I don't see why you can never talk to me in a nice way.

FRANK MAURRANT So you're startin' to go on pettin' parties, are you?

ROSE MAURRANT Who said I was on a petting party?

FRANK MAURRANT I suppose he didn't kiss you or nothin', huh?

ROSE MAURRANT No, he didn't! And if he did —

FRANK MAURRANT It's your own business, is that it? [*Going up the steps.*] Well, I'm gonna make it my business, see? Is this bird married?
[*ROSE does not answer.*] I t'ought so! They're all alike, them guys — all after the one thing. Well, get this straight. No married men ain't gonna come nosin' around my family, get me?

ROSE MAURRANT [*rising agitatedly as the house door opens*] Be quiet, Pop! There's somebody coming.

FRANK MAURRANT I don't care!

BUCHANAN hurries out of the house. He is a small and pasty young man — a typical "white-collar slave." He has hastily put on his coat and trousers over his pajamas, and his bare feet are in slippers.

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*as he comes down the steps*] I think the baby's coming!

ROSE MAURRANT [*solicitously*] Can I do anything, Mr. Buchanan?

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*as he hurries toward the left*]. No, I'm just going to phone for the doctor.

ROSE MAURRANT [*coming down the steps*]. Let me do it, and you go back to your wife.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Well, if you wouldn't mind. It's Doctor John Wilson.
[*Handing her a slip of paper.*] Here's his number. And the other number is her sister, Mrs. Thomas. And here's two nickels. Tell them both to come right away. She's got terrible pains. [*Another scream from upstairs.*] Listen to her! I better go back.
[*He dashes up the steps and into the house.*]

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, the poor woman! Pop, tell Ma to go up to her. Hurry!

FRANK MAURRANT Aw, all right.

He follows BUCHANAN into the house. ROSE hurries off at the left just as MAE JONES and DICK McGANN appear. MAE is a vulgar shopgirl of twenty-one; DICK, a vacuous youth of about the same age. MAE is wearing DICK'S straw hat and they are both quite drunk.

MAE JONES [*to ROSE*] Hello, Rose. What's your hurry?

ROSE MAURRANT [*without stopping*] It's Mrs. Buchanan. I've got to phone to the doctor. [*She hurries off.*]

DICK MCGANN [*as they approach the stoop*] Say, who's your little friend?

MAE JONES Oh, that's Rose Maurrant. She lives in the house.

DICK MCGANN She's kinda cute, ain't she?

MAE JONES [*seating herself on the stoop*] Say, accordin' to you, anythin' in a skirt is kinda cute — providin' the skirt is short enough.

DICK MCGANN Yeah, but they ain't any of 'em as cute as you, Mae.

MAE JONES [*yawning and scratching her leg*] Yeah?

DICK MCGANN Honest, I mean it. How 'bout a little kiss?
[*He puts his arms about her and plants a long kiss upon her lips. She submits with an air of intense boredom. Removing his lips.*] Say, you might show a little en-thoosiasm.

MAE JONES [*rouging her lips*] Say, you seem to think I oughta hang out a flag every time some bozo decides to wipe off his mouth on me.

DICK MCGANN De trouble wit' you is you need another little snifter.
[*He reaches for his flask.*]

MAE JONES Nope! I can't swaller any more o' that rotten gin o' yours.

DICK MCGANN Why, it ain't so worse. I don't mind it no more since I had that brass linin' put in me stomach. Well, happy days!
[*He takes a long drink.*]

MAE JONES [*rising indignantly*] Hey, for God's sake, what are you doin' — emptyin' the flask?

DICK MCGANN [*removing the flask from his lips*] I t'ought you didn't want none.

MAE JONES Can't you take a joke?
[*She snatches the flask from him and drains it, kicking out at DICK to prevent his taking it from her.*]

DICK MCGANN [*snatching the empty flask*] Say, you wanna watch your step, baby, or you're li'ble to go right up in a puff o' smoke.

MAE JONES [*whistling*] Phew! Boy! I feel like a t'ree alarm fire! Say, what de hell do dey make dat stuff out of?

DICK MCGANN T'ree parts dynamite an' one part Army mule. Dey use it for blastin' out West.

MAE JONES [*bursting raucously into a jazz tune*] Da-da-da-da-dee! Da-da-da-da-dee!
[*She executes some dance steps.*]

DICK MCGANN Say, shut up, will ya? You'll be wakin' the whole neighborhood.

MAE JONES [*boisterously*] What the hell do I care? Da-da-da-da-dee! Da-da-da-da-dee!
[*Suddenly amorous, as she turns an unsteady pirouette.*] Kiss me, kid!

DICK MCGANN I'll say!
[*They lock in a long embrace. SAM, coat-less, his shirt collar open, appears at the window, watches the pair for a moment, and then turns away, obviously disgusted. They do not see him. DICK takes MAE'S arm.*] Come on!

MAE JONES Wait a minute! where y' goin'?

DICK MCGANN Come on, I'm tellin' ya! Fred Hennessy gimme de key to his apartment.
Dere won't be nobody dere.

MAE JONES [*protesting feebly*] I oughta go home. [*Her hand to her head.*] Oh, baby!
Say, nail down dat sidewalk, will ya?

DICK MCGANN Come on!

ROSE *appears at the left.*

MAE JONES Sweet papa! [*She kisses DICK noisily, then bursts into song again.*] Da-da-da-da-dee! Da-da-da-da-dee! [*As they pass ROSE.*] Hello, Rose. How's de milkman?

DICK MCGANN [*raising his hat with drunken politeness*] Goo' night, sweetheart.

They go off at the left, MAE'S snatches of song dying away in the distance. ROSE stands still for a moment, choking back her mortification.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Miss Maurant, did you get them?

ROSE MAURRANT [*looking up*] Why, yes, I did. The doctor will be here right away. And Mrs. Thomas said it would take her about an hour.

VINCENT JONES *appears at the right and stops near the stoop. He is a typical New York taxicab driver, in a cap. ROSE does not see him.*

DANIEL BUCHANAN She's got terrible pains. Your mother's up here with her.
[*MRS. BUCHANAN is heard calling faintly.*] I think she's calling me.

ROSE *goes toward the stoop and sees VINCENT.*

VINCENT JONES Hello, Rosie.

ROSE MAURRANT Good evening.
[She tries to pass, but he blocks her way.]

VINCENT JONES What's your hurry?

ROSE MAURRANT It's late.

VINCENT JONES You don' wanna go to bed yet. Come on, I'll take you for a ride in me hack. *[He puts his arm around her.]*

ROSE MAURRANT Please let me pass.

SAM appears at the window. They do not see him.

VINCENT JONES *[enjoying ROSE'S struggle to escape].* You got a lot o' stren'th, ain't you? Say, do you know, you're gettin' fat? *[He passes one hand over her body.]*

ROSE MAURRANT Let me go, you big tough.

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[simultaneously]* Take your hands off her!

He climbs quickly out of the window and onto the stoop. VINCENT, surprised, releases ROSE and steps to the sidewalk. ROSE goes up the steps. SAM, trembling with excitement and fear, stands on the top step. VINCENT glowers up at him.

VINCENT JONES Well, look who's here! *[Mockingly.]* Haster gesehn de fish in de Bowery? *[Menacingly.]* What de hell do you want?

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[chokingly]* You keep your hands off her!

VINCENT JONES Yeah? *[Sawing the air with his hands.]* Oi, Jakie!
[He suddenly lunges forward, seizes SAM'S arm, pulls him violently by the right hand down the steps and swings him about, so that they stand face to face, to the left of the stoop. ROSE comes down between them.] Now whaddya got t' say?

ROSE MAURRANT Let him alone!

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[inarticulately]* If you touch her again —

VINCENT JONES *[mockingly]* If I touch her again —! *[Savagely.]* Aw, shut up, you little kike bastard!
[He brushes ROSE aside and, putting his open hand against SAM'S face, sends him sprawling to the pavement.]

ROSE MAURRANT *[her fists clenched]* You big coward.

VINCENT JONES *[standing over SAM]* Get up, why don't you?

ROSE MAURRANT [*crossing to SAM*] If you hit him again I'll call my father.

VINCENT JONES [*as MRS. JONES and the dog appear at the right*] Gee, don't frighten me like dat. I got a weak heart. [*He is sobered, nevertheless. SAM picks himself up. MRS. JONES approaches.*] Hello, Ma.

EMMA JONES [*with maternal pride*] Hello, Vincent. What's goin' on here?

VINCENT JONES Oh, jus' a little friendly argument. Ikey Finkelstein don't like me to say good evenin' to his girl friend.

ROSE MAURRANT You'd better keep your hands to yourself hereafter.

VINCENT JONES Is dat so? Who said so, huh?

EMMA JONES Come on, Vincent. Come on upstairs. I saved some stew for you.

VINCENT JONES All right, I'm comin'. [*To ROSE.*] Good night, dearie. [*He makes a feint at SAM, who starts back in terror. VINCENT laughs.*]

EMMA JONES Aw, let 'im alone, Vincent.

VINCENT JONES [*as he goes up the steps*] Who's touchin' him? A little cockroach like dat ain't wit' my time. [*To ROSE.*] Some sheik you picked out for yourself! [*He enters the vestibule and opens the door with his latchkey.*]

EMMA JONES [*going up the steps*] You seem to have plenty of admirers, Miss Maurrant. [*Pausing on the top step.*] But I guess you come by it natural.

ROSE does not reply. MRS. JONES follows VINCENT into the house. ROSE averts her head to keep back the tears. SAM stands facing the house, his whole body quivering with emotion. Suddenly he raises his arms, his fists clenched.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*hysterically, as he rushes to the foot of the stoop*] The dirty bum! I'll kill him!

ROSE MAURRANT [*turning and going to him*] It's all right, Sam. Never mind.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*sobbing*] I'll kill him! I'll kill him!
He throws himself on the stoop and, burying his head in his arms, sobs hysterically. ROSE sits beside him and puts her arm around him.

ROSE MAURRANT It's all right, Sam. Everything's all right. Why should you pay any attention to a big tough like that?
[*SAM does not answer. ROSE caresses his hair and he grows calmer.*] He's nothing but a loafer, you know that. What do you care what he says?

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*without raising his head*] I'm a coward.

ROSE MAURRANT Why, no, you're not, Sam.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Yes, I am. I'm a coward.

ROSE MAURRANT Why, he's not worth your little finger, Sam. You wait and see. Ten years from now, he'll still be driving a taxi and you — why, you'll be so far above him, you won't even remember he's alive.

SAMUEL KAPLAN I'll never be anything.

ROSE MAURRANT Why, don't talk like that, Sam. A boy with your brains and ability. Graduating from college with honors and all that! Why, if I were half as smart as you, I'd be just so proud of myself!

SAMUEL KAPLAN What's the good of having brains if nobody ever looks at you — if nobody knows you exist?

ROSE MAURRANT [*gently*] I know you exist, Sam.

SAMUEL KAPLAN It wouldn't take much to make you forget me.

ROSE MAURRANT I'm not so sure about that. Why do you say that, Sam?

SAMUEL KAPLAN Because I know. It's different with you. You have beauty — people look at you — you have a place in the world —

ROSE MAURRANT I don't know. It's not always so easy, being a girl — I often wish I were a man. It seems to me that when you're a man, it's so much easier to sort of — be yourself, to kind of be the way you feel. But when you're a girl, it's different. It doesn't seem to matter what you are, or what you're thinking or feeling — all that men seem to care about is just the one thing. And when you're sort of trying to find out just where you're at, it makes it hard. Do you see what I mean?
[*Hesitantly.*] Sam, there's something I want to ask you —
[*She stops.*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*turning to her*] What is it, Rose?

ROSE MAURRANT I wouldn't dream of asking anybody but you. [*With a great effort.*] Sam, do you think it's true — what they're saying about my mother?
[*SAM averts his head, without answering. Wretchedly.*] I guess it is, isn't it?

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*agitatedly*] They were talking here, before — I couldn't stand it any more! [*He clasps his head and, springing to his feet, goes to the right of the stoop.*] Oh, God, why do we go on living in this sewer?

ROSE MAURRANT [*appealingly*] What can I do, Sam?
[*SAM makes a helpless gesture.*] You see, my father means well enough, and all that, but he's always been sort of strict and — I don't know — sort of making you freeze up, when you really wanted to be nice and loving. That's the whole trouble, I guess; my mother never had anybody to really love her. She's sort of gay and happy-like — you

know, she likes having a good time and all that. But my father is different. Only — the way things are now — everybody talking and making remarks, all the neighbors spying and whispering — it sort of makes me feel —
[*She shudders.*] I don't know —!

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*coming over to her again*] I wish I could help you, Rose.

ROSE MAURRANT You do help me, Sam — just by being nice and sympathetic and talking things over with me. There's so few people you can really talk to, do you know what I mean? Sometimes, I get the feeling that I'm all alone in the world and that ———
[*A scream of pain from MRS. BUCHANAN. ROSE springs to her feet.*] Oh, just listen to her!

SAMUEL KAPLAN Oh, God!

ROSE MAURRANT The poor thing! She must be having terrible pains.

SAMUEL KAPLAN That's all there is in life — nothing but pain. From before we're born, until we die! Everywhere you look, oppression and cruelty! If it doesn't come from Nature, it comes from humanity — humanity trampling on itself and tearing at its own throat. The whole world is nothing but a bloodstained arena, filled with misery and suffering. It's too high a price to pay for life — life isn't worth it!
[*He seats himself despairingly on the stoop.*]

ROSE MAURRANT [*putting her hand on his shoulder*] Oh, I don't know, Sam. I feel blue and discouraged, sometimes, too. And I get a sort of feeling of, oh, what's the use. Like last night. I hardly slept all night, on account of the heat and on account of thinking about — well, all sorts of things. And this morning, when I got up, I felt so miserable. Well, all of a sudden, I decided I'd walk to the office. And when I got to the Park, everything looked so green and fresh, that I got a kind of feeling of, well, maybe it's not so bad, after all. And then, what do you think? — all of a sudden, I saw a big lilac bush, with some flowers still on it. It made me think about the poem you said for me — remember? — the one about the lilacs.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*quoting*] When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night, I mourn'd and yet shall mourn, with ever-returning Spring. [*He repeats the last line.*] I mourn'd and yet shall mourn, with ever-returning Spring! Yes!

ROSE MAURRANT No, not that part. I mean the part about the farm-house. Say it for me, Sam. [*She sits at his feet.*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN In the door-yard, fronting an old farmhouse, near the white-washed palings, Stands the lilac bush, tall-growing, with heart-shaped leaves of rich green, With many a pointed blossom, rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love, With every leaf a miracle — and from this bush in the dooryard, With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green, A sprig with its flower I break.

ROSE MAURRANT [*eagerly*] Yes, that's it! That's just what I felt like doing — breaking

off a little bunch of the flowers. But then I thought, maybe a policeman or somebody would see me, and then I'd get into trouble; so I didn't.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Miss Maurant! Miss Maurant!

SAM and ROSE *spring to their feet and look up.*

ROSE MAURRANT Yes?

DANIEL BUCHANAN Do you mind phoning to the doctor again? She's getting worse.

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, sure I will.
[*She starts to go.*] Wait! Maybe this is the doctor now.

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*excitedly as DR. WILSON, a seedy, middle-aged man in a crumpled Panama, appears at the left*] Yes, that's him. Mrs. Maurant! Tell her the doctor's here! Doctor, I guess you're none too soon.

DOCTOR JOHN WILSON Plenty of time. Just don't get excited.
[*He throws away his cigarette and enters the vestibule. The mechanical clicking of the door latch is heard as he goes into the house.*]

ROSE MAURRANT I hope she won't have to suffer much longer.

FRANK MAURRANT [*appearing at the window in his undershirt*] Rose!

ROSE MAURRANT [*rather startled*] Yes, Pop, I'll be right up.

FRANK MAURRANT Well, don't be makin' me call you again, d'ya hear?

ROSE MAURRANT I'm coming right away.
[*MAURRANT leaves the window.*] I'd better go up now, Sam.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Do you have to go to bed, when you're told, like a child?

ROSE MAURRANT I know, Sam, but there's so much wrangling goes on, all the time, as it is, what's the use of having any more? Good night, Sam. There was something I wanted to talk to you about, but it will have to be another time.
[*She holds out her hand. SAM takes it and holds it in his.*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*trembling and rising to his feet*] Rose, will you kiss me?

ROSE MAURRANT [*simply*] Why, of course I will, Sam.
[*She offers him her lips. He clasps her in a fervent embrace, to which she submits but does not respond. Freeing herself gently.*] Don't be discouraged about things, Sam. You wait and see — you're going to do big things, some day. I've got lots of confidence in you.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*turning away his head*] I wonder if you really have, Rose?

ROSE MAURRANT Why, of course I have! And don't forget it! Good night. I hope it won't be too hot to sleep.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Good night, Rose.

He watches her, as she opens the door with her latchkey and goes into the house. Then he goes to the stoop and, seating himself, falls into a reverie. A POLICEMAN appears at the right and strolls across, but SAM is oblivious to him. In the distance a homecomer sings drunkenly. A light appears, in the Maurrant hall bedroom, and a moment later ROSE comes to the window and leans out.

ROSE MAURRANT [*calling softly*] Hoo-hoo! Sam! [SAM looks up, then rises.] Good night, Sam. [*She wafes him a kiss.*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*with deep feeling*] Good night, Rose dear.

She smiles at him. Then she pulls down the shade. SAM looks up for a moment, then resumes his seat. A scream from MRS. BUCHANAN makes him shudder. A deep rhythmic snoring emanates from the Fiorentino apartment. A steam-boat whistle is heard. The snoring in the Fiorentino apartment continues. SAM raises his clenched hands to heaven. A distant clock begins to strike twelve. SAM'S arms and head drop forward.

The curtain falls slowly.

ACT TWO

Daybreak, the next morning. It is still quite dark and comparatively quiet. The rhythmic snoring in the Fiorentino apartment is still heard, and now and then a distant El train or speeding automobile. A moment after the rise of the curtain JONES appears, at the right, on his way home from the speakeasy. He reels slightly but negotiates the steps and entrance door without too much difficulty. It grows lighter — and noisier. The street light goes out. The OLSEN baby begins to cry. An alarm clock rings. A dog barks. A canary begins to sing. Voices are heard in the distance. They die out and other voices are heard. The house door opens and DR. WILSON comes out, passing JONES at the top of the stoop. DR. WILSON stands on the steps and yawns the yawn of an overtired man. Then he lights a cigarette and goes toward the left.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Doctor!

DOCTOR JOHN WILSON [*stopping and looking up*] Well?

DANIEL BUCHANAN What if she does wake up?

DOCTOR JOHN WILSON [*sharply*] She won't, I've told you! She's too exhausted. The best thing you can do is lie down and get some sleep yourself.

As he goes off at the left, MAE and DICK appear. They walk slowly and listlessly and far apart.

DICK MCGANN [*as they reach the stoop*] Well, goo' night.

MAE JONES [*with a yawn, as she finds her latchkey*] Goo' night. [*Going up the steps and looking toward the Fiorentino apartment.*] Aw, shut up, you wop!

DICK MCGANN [*his dignity wounded*] How 'bout kissin' me good night?

MAE JONES [*venomously, from the top step*] For God's sake, ain't you had enough kissin' for one night!
[*She enters the vestibule and puts the key in the lock. The ringing of an alarm clock is heard.*]

DICK MCGANN [*raising his voice*] Well, say, if that's the way you feel about it —

MAE JONES Aw, go to hell!
[*She enters the house. The alarm clock has stopped ringing.*]

DICK MCGANN You dirty little tart!

He stands, muttering to himself for a moment, then goes off at the right, passing the POLICEMAN, who looks at him suspiciously. The sounds of a Swedish quarrel are heard from the janitor's apartment. The baby is still crying. As the POLICEMAN goes left, a MILKMAN appears, whistling and carrying a rack of full milk bottles.

POLICEMAN Hello, Louie.

The snoring in the Fiorentino apartment stops.

MILKMAN Hello, Harry. Goin' to be another scorcher.

POLICEMAN You said it.

[He exits at left.]

The MILKMAN crosses to the cellar steps. Mae appears at the hall-bedroom window of the Jones apartment and removes her dress over her head. The MILKMAN, about to go down the steps, sees her and stops to watch. MAE, about to slip out of her step-in, sees him, throws him an angry look, and pulls down the shade. The MILKMAN grins and goes down the cellar steps. CHARLIE HILDEBRAND comes out of the house. He is chewing gum and as he comes out to the top of the stoop he scatters the wrappings of the stick of gum on the stoop. Then he jumps down the four steps of the stoop, in one jump, and goes off at the left, pulling the chewing gum out in a long ribbon, and carefully avoiding all the cracks in the pavement. A young WORKMAN, carrying a kit of tools and a tin lunch box, appears at the left, extinguishes the red light on the excavation, and, opening the door, goes in. A TRAMP comes on at the right and shuffles across. He sees a cigar butt on the pavement, picks it up, and pockets it as he exits at the left. ROSE, in her nightgown, appears at the window, yawns slightly, and disappears. It is daylight now. The baby stops crying. MRS. OLSEN comes up the cellar steps. She goes up the stoop, turns out the light in the vestibule, and takes the door off the latch. The MILKMAN comes up the cellar steps, his rack laden with empty bottles, and goes off, whistling, at the left. SAM, coatless, a book in his hand, appears at the window. He looks out for a moment, then climbs out on the stoop, looks up at ROSE'S window, then seats himself and begins to read. WILLIE comes out of the house.

WILLIE MAURRANT *[chanting as he comes down the steps]* Fat, Fat, the water rat, fifty bullets in his hat.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Hello, Willie. Is Rose up yet?

WILLIE MAURRANT *[without stopping or looking at him]* Yeah. I don't know. I guess so.

He turns a somersault and goes off at left, continuing his chanting. SAM glances up at ROSE'S window again, then resumes his book. MRS. JONES and her dog come out of the house.

EMMA JONES *[haughtily, as she comes down the steps]* Mornin'.

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[scarcely looking up from his book]* Good morning.

MRS. JONES and the dog go off at the right. A middle-aged WORKMAN, carrying a large coil of wire, appears at the left and goes to the door of the excavation. MRS. OLSEN comes out of the house and exits into the basement.

THE WORKMAN *[calling]* You down there, Eddie?

A VOICE *[from the depths]* Yeah!

THE WORKMAN All right!

He climbs down into the excavation. ROSE comes to window and pulls up the shade. WILLIE and CHARLIE can be heard, offstage left, engaged in an earnest conversation.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND *[offstage]* He could not!

WILLIE MAURRANT *[offstage]* He could so!

They appear at left. Each has under his arm a paper bag from which a loaf of bread protrudes.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND I'll betcha he couldn't.

WILLIE MAURRANT I'll betcha he could.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND I'll betcha a million dollars he couldn't.

WILLIE MAURRANT I'll betcha five million dollars he could. Hold that!
[He hands CHARLIE his loaf of bread and turns a cartwheel.] Bet you can't do it.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND Bet I can.
[He puts both loaves of bread on the pavement, attempts a cartwheel and fails.]

WILLIE MAURRANT *[laughing raucously]* Haw-haw! Told you you couldn't!

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND Can you do this? *[He turns a back somersault.]*

WILLIE MAURRANT Sure — easy!
[He turns a back somersault. They pick up their loaves again. WILLIE'S drops out of the bag, but he dusts it with his hand and replaces it.] How many steps can you jump up?

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND Three. *[He jumps up three steps.]*

WILLIE MAURRANT I can do four.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND Let's see you.

WILLIE, the bread under his arm, jumps up the four steps, undisturbed by SAM'S presence. He drops the bread and is about to replace it in the bag but gets a better idea. He inflates the bag and explodes it with a blow of his fist. CHARLIE looks on in admiration and envy.

ROSE MAURRANT *[appearing at the window]* Willie, we're waiting for the bread.

WILLIE MAURRANT *[holding it up]* All right! Cantcha see I got it?
[He enters the house, followed by CHARLIE.]

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[rising]* Hello, Rose.

ROSE MAURRANT Hello, Sam.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Come down.

ROSE MAURRANT I haven't had breakfast yet. *[Calling into the room.]* Yes! He's on his way up.

AGNES CUSHING *[coming out of the house]* Good morning.
[She looks inquiringly from SAM to ROSE.]

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[impatiently]* Good morning.

A middle-aged NUN appears at the right, accompanied by a scrawny CHILD of about fourteen. They walk across the stage.

ROSE MAURRANT Good morning, Miss Cushing.
[MISS CUSHING goes off at the left, glancing back at ROSE and SAM.] I'm going to Mr. Jacobson's funeral. *[Calling into the room.]* Yes, I'm coming.
[To SAM.] Breakfast's ready. I'll be down as soon as the dishes are done.

She disappears. SAM looks up at the window for a moment, then begins to read again. MRS. FIORENTINO appears at the window, at the extreme left, with a double armful of bedding, which she deposits upon the window sill. Then she goes away again.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN *[appearing at the window]* Sam, breakfast is ready.

SAMUEL KAPLAN I don't want any breakfast.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN What do you mean, you don't want any break-fast? What kind of a business is that, not to eat breakfast?

SAMUEL KAPLAN Do I have to eat breakfast if I don't want to?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN You've got your head so full of that Rose Maurant upstairs that you don't want to eat or sleep or anything, any more.

SAMUEL KAPLAN If I don't feel like eating, why should I eat?
[Bursting out.] You're always telling me: "Eat!" "Don't eat!" "Get up!" "Go to bed!" I know what I want to do, without being told.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN I don't see, just when you're graduating from college, why you want to get mixed up with a little batzimer like that!

SAMUEL KAPLAN It's always the same thing over again with you. You never can get over your race prejudice. I've told you a hundred times that the Jews are no better than anybody else.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN I'm not talking about that! Look at the kind of family she comes from. What's her father? Nothing but an illiterate roughneck. And her mother ——

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*indignantly*] Are you starting too?

KAPLAN'S VOICE Shoi-ley!

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Wait a minute, Papa's calling. [*Into the room.*] All right, Papa! [*To SAM.*] Come in, Sam, or Papa will be making long speeches again.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*impatiently*] All right! All right! I'll come.

A young SHOPGIRL, smiling to herself, appears at the right and walks across the stage. SAM rises and goes into the house. SHIRLEY leaves the window. BUCHANAN, emerging from the house, collarless and unshaven, encounters SAM in the vestibule.

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*eagerly*] Good morning!

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*abruptly*] Good morning.

He enters the house. BUCHANAN looks back at him, then comes down the steps. MRS. FIORENTINO raises the drawn shade and opens the window.

GRETA FIORENTINO Good morning, Mr. Buchanan.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Oh, good morning, Mrs. Fiorentino. [*Going over to the left balustrade.*] I guess you know that the baby came last night, don't you?

GRETA FIORENTINO No! I did not hear a vord about it.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Why, I thought she'd wake up the whole neighborhood, the way she was yelling. Three-thirty this morning the baby came. I been up the whole night.

An old LETTER CARRIER, coatless, appears at the right.

GRETA FIORENTINO A boy, is it?

DANIEL BUCHANAN No, it's a little girl. I guess we'll call her Mary, after my mother.

LETTER CARRIER [*going up the steps*] Mornin'.

GRETA FIORENTINO Good morning. Any letters for me?

LETTER CARRIER [*from the top of the steps*] No, not a thing.

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*turning toward him*] I was just telling Mrs. Fiorentino, I had a little addition to my family last night.

LETTER CARRIER Your first, is it?

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*hastening to explain*] Well, we've only been married a little over a year.

LETTER CARRIER Well, I've had seven, an' I'm still luggin' a mailbag at sixty-two. [*He goes into the vestibule and puts the mail into the letter boxes.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO How is your wife?

DANIEL BUCHANAN Well, she had a pretty hard time of it. Her sister's up there with her. And Mrs. Maurrant was up, nearly all night. I don't know what we'd have done without her.

LETTER CARRIER [*coming down the steps*] It don't pay to let 'em have their own way too much. That's where I made my mistake.

As the LETTER CARRIER goes off at the left, LIPPO appears at the window behind his wife and tickles her.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*startled*] Lippo!

DANIEL BUCHANAN Morning. I was just telling your wife ——

GRETA FIORENTINO Lippo, what do you think? Mr. Buchanan has a little girl!

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ah, dotsa fine! Margherita, why you don' have da baby, ha?

GRETA FIORENTINO [*abruptly*] I must go and make the coffee.

She goes away from the window. OLSEN comes halfway up the steps and leans against the railing, smoking his pipe.

A VOICE [*offstage left*] Oh-h! Corn! Sweet corn!

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ees funny t'ing. You gotta da leetla skeeny wife an' she's hava da baby. My Margherita, she's beeg an' fat an' she no can hava da baby.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Well, that's the way o' the world, I guess.
As he goes off at the left, MIKE, an ICEMAN, appears, trundling a three-wheeled cart filled with ice.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Buon giorno, Mike.

MIKE Buon giorno, signore. Come sta?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Benissimo. Fa molto caldo ancora, oggi.

MIKE Sì, sì, signore. Bisognerà abbastanza ghiaccio. Twen'y fi' cent, ha?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO No, no, e troppo.

MIKE Twen'y cent? Eesa melta fas'.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Alla right. Gimme twen'y cent.

MIKE Sì, sì, signore. Sure.

As he wheels the cart to the cellar entrance and begins to chop a block of ice a MAN in shirtsleeves strides in from the left and stops at the curb, as though seeing someone in a house across the street.

THE MAN [*angrily*] Well, what about it? We've been waiting a half an hour!

A VOICE I'll be right over!

THE MAN Yeah? Well, make it snappy!

He strides off at the left, muttering angrily. ROSE comes out of the house and stands in the doorway, looking for SAM. Then she comes out on the stoop and peers into the Kaplan apartment. As she turns away she sees LIPPO.

ROSE MAURRANT [*crossing to the left of the stoop*] Good morning.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Gooda mornin', Meesa Maurrant.

MIKE goes down into the cellar with a chunk of ice.

ROSE MAURRANT It's awful hot again, isn't it?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO You don' like?

ROSE MAURRANT I don't sleep very well when it's so hot.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO No? Ahm sleepa fine. Een Eetaly, where Ahm born, is much more 'ot like 'ere. Een summer, ees too 'ot for workin'. Ees too 'ot only for sleepin'. W'en Ahm leetla boy, Ahm sleepa, sleepa, whola day. I don't wear no clo's — nawthin' only leetle short pair pants: I lay down on groun' under da lemon tree, Ahm sleepa whola day.

ROSE MAURRANT Under a lemon tree! That must have been nice.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ees smella sweet, lemon tree. Where Ahm born ees t'ousan' lemon tree. Lemon an' olive an' arancia.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, that must be lovely!

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ah, ees bew-tiful! Ees most bewtiful place in whole worl'. You hear about Sorrent', ha?

ROSE MAURRANT No, I don't think I ever did.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*incredulously*] You never hear about Sorrent'?

ROSE MAURRANT No. I don't know much about geography. Is it a big place?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ees not vera beeg — but ever'body know Sorrent'. Sorrento gentile! La bella Sorrento! You hear about Napoli — Baia di Napoli?

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, yes, the Bay of Naples! Is it near there?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Sure, ees on Bay of Napoli. Ees bew-tiful! Ees alla blue. Sky blue, water blue, sun ees shine alla time.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, how lovely!

MIKE comes up the cellar steps, chops another block of ice, and goes down the cellar steps with it.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO An' ees Vesuvio too. You hear about Vesuvio? — ees beeg volcano.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, yes, sure. I saw a picture once, called *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and it showed Mount Vesuvius, with smoke coming out of the top.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Da's right. An' night time, ees fire come out, maka da sky red.

ROSE MAURRANT Didn't it frighten you?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ah no, ees nawthin' to be afraid. Ees jus' volcano.

ROSE MAURRANT I'd love to go to Italy. It must be awfully pretty. But I don't suppose I ever will.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO W'y sure! Some day you gonna marry reech fella; 'e's taka you Eetaly — ever'where.

ROSE MAURRANT I guess there's not much chance of that. Rich fellows aren't going

around looking for girls like me to marry. Anyhow, I don't think money is everything, do you?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Ees good to hava money. Da's w'y Ahm come to America. Een Eetaly, ees bewtiful, but ees no money. 'Ere ees not bewtiful, but ees plenty money. Ees better to 'ave money.

An elderly MAN, in the gray uniform of a special officer, comes out of the house, filling his pipe from a tobacco box.

THE MAN Good mornin'.

ROSE MAURRANT Good morning, Mr. Callahan.
[*The man drops the empty tobacco tin on the sidewalk and goes off slowly at the left.*] I don't think I'd be happy, just marrying a man with money, if I didn't care for him too.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*laughing*] Wotsa matter, ha? You lova da leetla kike, ha?

ROSE MAURRANT Why, no, I don't. I don't love anybody — at least I don't think I do. But it's not on account of his being a Jew.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO No, ees no good — Jew. 'E's only t'ink about money, money — alla time money.

ROSE MAURRANT But Sam isn't like that a bit. He's only interested in poetry and things like that.

MIKE comes up out of the cellar and trundles off his cart at the right.

GRETA FIORENTINO [*calling*] Lippo! Breakfast!

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*calling*] Alla right, Margherita! [*To ROSE.*] You marry fella wit' lot o' money. Ees much better.

He goes away from the window as MISS CUSHING appears at the left, carrying a paper bag.

ROSE MAURRANT How's your mother today, Miss Cushing?

AGNES CUSHING She's not feeling so good today.

ROSE MAURRANT It's too bad she's not feeling well.

AGNES CUSHING I'm afraid it's her heart. At her age, you know —!

As she enters the house, two COLLEGE GIRLS of nineteen appear at the right.

FIRST GIRL [*as they appear*] I don't understand it.

SECOND GIRL Convex is this way; and concave is this way.

FIRST GIRL That I know.

SECOND GIRL When you're nearsighted, they give you convex glasses, and when you're farsighted they give you concave.

FIRST GIRL That I didn't know.

SECOND GIRL Of course you know it. Didn't we have it in psychology?

FIRST GIRL [*as they disappear at the left*] I don't remember.

WILLIE comes out of the house, on his way to school. He is hatless and carries his books under his arm.

ROSE MAURRANT [*intercepting him at the top of the stoop*] Why, Willie, the way you look! Your collar's all open.

WILLIE MAURRANT I know it! De button came off.

ROSE MAURRANT Why didn't you ask Ma to sew it on for you?

WILLIE MAURRANT She ain't dere. She's up at Buchanan's.

ROSE MAURRANT Well, wait till I see if I have a pin.
[*She searches in her handbag.*]

WILLIE MAURRANT [*starting down the steps*] Aw, it's all right de way it is.

ROSE MAURRANT [*following him to the sidewalk*] No, it isn't. You can't go to school like that. [*Producing a safety pin.*] Now, hold still, while I fix it.

WILLIE MAURRANT [*squirming*] Aw, fer de love o' Mike —!

ROSE MAURRANT You'll get stuck if you don't hold still. There, that looks better now. And you didn't comb your hair either.

WILLIE MAURRANT [*trying to escape*] Say, lemme alone, cantcha?

ROSE MAURRANT [*taking a comb out of her handbag and combing his hair*] You can't go to school looking like a little street loafer.

WILLIE MAURRANT Aw, you gimme a pain in de —

ROSE MAURRANT You're getting big enough to comb your own hair, without being told. There! Now you look very nice.

WILLIE MAURRANT So's your old man!

[He runs toward the left, kicking the empty tobacco tin ahead of him, then stops, turns, and deliberately rumples his hair.]

ROSE MAURRANT *[indignantly, as WILLIE runs off]* Why, Willie!

[MRS. JONES and the dog appear at the right. OLSEN knocks the ashes out of his pipe and goes down into the cellar. MRS. MAURRANT comes out of the house.] Hello, Ma.

EMMA JONES *[at the steps]* Good mornin'.

ROSE AND MRS. MAURRANT Good morning, Mrs. Jones.

EMMA JONES How's little Mrs. Buchanan gettin' on?

ANNA MAURRANT Well, she's sleeping now, poor thing. She was so worn out, she just went off into a sound sleep. I really didn't think, last night, she'd have the strength to pull through it.

EMMA JONES Well, it's somethin' we all got to go through. I been through enough with mine, I hope to tell you. Not that they didn't turn out all right.

ANNA MAURRANT I wouldn't give up having mine for anything in the world.

EMMA JONES Well, after all, what more does any woman want than watchin' her kids grow up an' a husband to look out for her?

ANNA MAURRANT Yes, that's true.

EMMA JONES Yes, and the world would be a whole lot better off, if there was more that lived up to it. *[Starting up the steps.]* Well, I gotta get my Mae up out o' bed. Gawd knows what time she got in this mornin'.

[She enters the vestibule, then stops and turns.] If you don't mind my bein' so bold, Mrs. Maurrant — an' I don't mind sayin' it in front of your daughter either — I'd think twice before I'd let any child o' mine bring a Jew into the family.

ROSE MAURRANT *[with a show of temper]* I don't see what it has to do with you, Mrs. Jones.

EMMA JONES There's no need to get huffy about it. I'm only advisin' you for your own good. I'm sure it don't make no difference to me what you do. Come on, Queenie. *[She goes into the house.]*

ROSE MAURRANT Well, of all the nerve I ever heard in my life! She and those wonderful children of hers!

ANNA MAURRANT *[coming halfway down the steps]* The best way is not to pay any attention to her. There's lots of people like that in the world — they never seem to be happy unless they're making trouble for some-body. Did Willie go to school?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, he did. It's awful the way he goes around, looking like a little tough. And the language he uses too.

ANNA MAURRANT I know. I just don't seem able to manage him any more.

ROSE MAURRANT I sometimes wonder if it wouldn't be better for us all if we moved out to the suburbs somewhere — you know, some place in Jersey or Staten Island.

ANNA MAURRANT I don't think Pop would do it. [*As MAURRANT comes out of the house, carrying a much battered satchel.*] Are you leaving now, Frank?

FRANK MAURRANT [*from the top of the stoop*] Looks like it, don't it. Where you been all this while?

ANNA MAURRANT Why, you know where I've been, Frank — up to Mrs. Buchanan's.

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah? An' where you goin' now?

ANNA MAURRANT Just around to Kraus's to get a chicken. I thought I'd make her some chicken soup, to give her strength.

FRANK MAURRANT Say, how about lookin' after your own home an' lettin' the Buchanans look after theirs.

ANNA MAURRANT All I'm trying to do is to be a little neighborly. It's the least anybody can do, with the poor thing hardly able to lift her hand.

FRANK MAURRANT That's all right about that! [*Coming down the steps.*] A woman's got a right to stay in her own home, lookin' after her husband an' children.

ANNA MAURRANT [*going toward him*] What else have I been doing all these years, I'd like to know?

FRANK MAURRANT Well, just see that you don't forget it, that's all — or there's li'ble to be trouble.

ANNA MAURRANT [*putting her hand on his arm*] All right, Frank. Don't say any more, please. When will you be back — tomorrow?

FRANK MAURRANT I don't know when I'll be back. Whenever I'm t'roo wit' me work — that's when. What are you so anxious to know for, huh?

ANNA MAURRANT Why, I just asked, that's all.

FRANK MAURRANT Oh, you just asked, huh? Just in case some-body wanted to come aroun' callin', is that it?

ANNA MAURRANT No, it isn't. It isn't anything of the kind. You got no right to talk to me like that, in front of my own daughter. You got no right. No, you haven't!
[*She turns away and hurries off, abruptly, at the left.*]

ROSE MAURRANT Ma! [*She starts to run after her mother.*]

FRANK MAURRANT [*imperiously*] Come back here, you!

[*ROSE hesitates.*] Come back, hear me?

[*ROSE turns and comes slowly back.*] You stay right here.

[*He puts down his satchel and takes a flask from his pocket.*]

ROSE MAURRANT Why do you talk to her like that?

FRANK MAURRANT Nobody's askin' you.

ROSE MAURRANT If you were only a little nicer to her, maybe everything would be different.

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah? Where's she got any kick comin'? Ain't I always been a good husband to her? Ain't I always looked after her? [*He takes a drink.*]

ROSE MAURRANT It's not that, Pop. It's some-body to be sort of nice to her that she wants — sort of nice and gentle, the way she is to you. That's all it is.

FRANK MAURRANT [*turning to her*] So she's got you headed the same way, has she? Goin' out nights with married men, huh?

ROSE MAURRANT You don't need to worry about me, Pop. I can take care of myself all right.

FRANK MAURRANT No daughter o' mine ain't gonna go that way. I seen too many o' those kind around the theayter.

ROSE MAURRANT Things are different nowadays, Pop. I guess maybe you don't realize that. Girls aren't the way they used to be — sort of soft and helpless. A girl nowadays knows how to look out for herself. But not her, Pop; she needs some-body to look after her.

FRANK MAURRANT Aw, can all that talk! You been listenin' to them Bolshevikis, that's the trouble. But I'm gonna keep you straight, by God, or I'll know the reason why.

ROSE MAURRANT I guess I've got a right to think about things for myself.

FRANK MAURRANT Yeah? Well, don't let me ketch that other bozo comin' around here either — that's all I got to say.

ROSE MAURRANT [*hesitantly going up to him*] Pop, listen — couldn't we get a little house somewhere — Queens or somewhere like that?

FRANK MAURRANT What's the idea?

ROSE MAURRANT Well, I don't know. I sort of thought it would be nice for all of us. And maybe if Ma had a nice little home and some real nice neighbors — do you see what I mean?

FRANK MAURRANT This place suits me all right.

ROSE MAURRANT You can get some real nice little houses that don't cost such an awful lot. And I wouldn't mind helping to pay for it. And once we had it all fixed up —

FRANK MAURRANT Forget it! I don' know when I'll be back.
[*As he starts to go right.*] An' remember what I tol' you, hear?

EMMA JONES [*appearing at her window with a tin dustpan*] Good mornin', Mr. Maurrant. You off on a little trip?

FRANK MAURRANT [*curtly*] Yeah.

He goes off. MRS. JONES empties the dustpan out of the window and goes away. KAPLAN comes out of the house, a bundle of newspapers under his arm. He walks slowly and painfully with the aid of a heavy stick.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*at the foot of the steps*] Vy do you look so sed, hm?

ROSE MAURRANT [*turning and sitting on the right balustrade*] Oh, good morning, Mr. Kaplan.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN A young girl, like you, should not look so sed.

ROSE MAURRANT I'm not sad, especially, only —

ABRAHAM KAPLAN You got troubles, hm?

ROSE MAURRANT I don't know. It's just sort of everything.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Velt-schmerz you got, hm? Vit' my boy Sem is de same t'ing. Dees vay you feel only ven you are yong. Ven you gat old like me, you tink only: "Moch longer I von't be here."

ROSE MAURRANT Why should things be the way they are, Mr. Kaplan? Why must people always be fighting and having troubles, instead of just sort of being happy together.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN My dear yong leddy, ef I could enser dis quastion, I would be de greatest benefactor thet de verld hes ever known. Dees is som't'ing vich all de philosophers hev been unable to enser. De ones thet believe in God, say de davil is responsible; and de ones thet don't believe in God, say 'uman nature is responsible. It is my opinion thet most unheppiness can be traced to economic cosses and thet —

CHARLIE and MARY HILDEBRAND *have come out of the house, carrying their schoolbooks.*

MARY HILDEBRAND Hello.

ROSE MAURRANT Hello, Mary. Hello, Charlie.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND Hello.

MARY HILDEBRAND [*chattily, as they reach the sidewalk*] We're going to be dispossessed today.

ROSE MAURRANT What a shame!

MARY HILDEBRAND Yes, ma'am. My father went away and so we couldn't pay the rent.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND [*tugging at her arm*] Aw, come on, Mary.

ROSE MAURRANT Have you another place to live, Mary?

MARY HILDEBRAND No, ma'am. But Miss Simpson, from the Charities, says she'll find us a place. She says we must learn to be less extravagant.

CHARLIE HILDEBRAND Come ahead, will you?

MARY HILDEBRAND I'm going to school now. Good-by.

ROSE MAURRANT Good-by.
[*The children exit left.*]

ABRAHAM KAPLAN More troubles!

ROSE MAURRANT I know. Isn't it awful to think of them being turned out in the street like that?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN In a civilized verld, soch t'ings could not heppen.

ROSE MAURRANT You mean if there were different laws?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN Not laws! Ve got already too many laws. Ve must hev ection, not laws. De verking-klesses must t'row off de yoke of *kepitalism*, and ebolish vage slevery.

ROSE MAURRANT But wouldn't people still be unkind to each other and fight and quarrel among themselves?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN My dear young leddy, so long as ve keep men in slevery, dey vill behave like sleeves. But wance ve establish a verld based upon 'uman needs and not upon 'uman greed —

ROSE MAURRANT You mean people will begin being nice to each other and making allowances and all?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN All dees vill come. Vot ve hev now is a vicious soicle. On de one hend, ve hev a rotten economic system —

ROSE MAURRANT Excuse me, here's my mother.

She goes toward the left as MRS. MAURRANT approaches, a paper package in her hand. KAPLAN goes off at the right.

ANNA MAURRANT [as ROSE comes up to her] Did he go?
[They stop on the pavement, at the left of the stoop.]

ROSE MAURRANT Yes.

ANNA MAURRANT I got a little chicken, to make Mrs. Buchanan some soup.

ROSE MAURRANT He had a flask with him, Ma. I hope he doesn't start drinking.

ANNA MAURRANT What did he say — anything?

ROSE MAURRANT No, only the way he always talks. I tried to talk to him about buying a house somewheres, but he wouldn't listen.

ANNA MAURRANT No, I knew he wouldn't.

ROSE MAURRANT It doesn't seem to be any use trying to get him to listen to anything.

ANNA MAURRANT It's always been that way. I've always tried to be a good wife to him, Rose. But it never seemed to make any difference to him.

ROSE MAURRANT I know, Ma.

ANNA MAURRANT And I've tried to be a good mother too.

ROSE MAURRANT I know, Ma. I know just the way you feel about it.

ANNA MAURRANT [appealingly] Do you, Rose?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, Ma, I do. Honest I do.

ANNA MAURRANT I've always tried to make a nice home for him and to do what's right. But it doesn't seem to be any use.

ROSE MAURRANT I know, Ma. [Hesitantly.] But it's on account of — [She stops.]

ANNA MAURRANT Are you going to start too? Are you going to start like all the others?
[She turns away and bursts into tears.]

ROSE MAURRANT [fondling her] Don't, Ma. Please don't.

ANNA MAURRANT I thought you'd be the one that would feel different.

ROSE MAURRANT I do, Ma — really I do.

ANNA MAURRANT What's the good of being alive if you can't get a little something out of life? You might just as well be dead.

ROSE MAURRANT Look out, Ma. Some-Body's coming.

A smartly dressed girl, with one side of her face covered with cotton and adhesive tape, appears at the left and crosses the stage. At the same time JONES comes out of the house. ROSE and MRS. MAURRANT stand in awkward silence as he comes down the stoop and approaches them.

GEORGE JONES Well, is it hot enough for you today?

ROSE MAURRANT It's awful, isn't it?

GEORGE JONES [*as he goes toward the left*] You said it. Still, along about January, we'll all be wishin' we had a little o' this weather.

He exits. MRS. MAURRANT goes toward the stoop.

ROSE MAURRANT Ma, listen. If I say something, will you listen to me?

ANNA MAURRANT Yes, sure I will, Rose. I'll listen to anything you say, only —

ROSE MAURRANT Well, what I was thinking was, if he didn't come around here so much, maybe. Do you see what I mean, Ma?

ANNA MAURRANT [*constrainedly*] Yes, Rose.

ROSE MAURRANT [*putting her arm around her*] It's on account of all that's going around — everybody in the whole house. You see what I mean, don't you, Ma?

ANNA MAURRANT Every person in the world has to have some-body to talk to. You can't live without some-body to talk to. I'm not saying that I can't talk to you, Rose, but you're only a young girl and it's not the same thing.

ROSE MAURRANT It's only on account of Pop. I'm scared of what he's likely to do, if he starts drinking.

ANNA MAURRANT Well, I'll see, Rose. Sometimes I think I'd be better off if I was dead.

ROSE MAURRANT If there was only something I could do.

ANNA MAURRANT There isn't anything anybody could do. It's just the way things are, that's all.

[*BUCHANAN appears at the left. They turn and face him as he approaches.*] Oh, Mr. Buchanan, I got a little chicken, so that I could make her some good, nourishing soup.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Well, say, you got to let me pay you for it.

ANNA MAURRANT Oh, never mind about that. We'll have the chicken for supper tonight. Did you have her medicine made up?

DANIEL BUCHANAN Yes, I got it right here. I called up the office and they told me not to come down today.

ANNA MAURRANT Well, that's very nice. It'll be a comfort to her to have you around.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Yes, that's what I thought too. Well, I'd better be getting upstairs. [*He goes up the steps.*]

ANNA MAURRANT I'll be up later, with the soup.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Well, thanks. [*Stopping at the top of the stoop and turning to her.*] You've been a mighty good neighbor, Mrs. Maurrant. [*He enters the house.*]

ANNA MAURRANT He's an awful nice young feller — so nice and gentle. And he's always trying to be so helpful. It makes you feel sort of sorry for him. [*SHIRLEY comes out of the house, carrying a large wicker bag, which contains her lunch and schoolbooks. She takes a postcard out of the mailbox. Going up the steps.*] Well, I'd better go and start this chicken. Are you coming home for lunch, Rose?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes. I'll be back, as soon as the funeral's over.

ANNA MAURRANT Oh, all right. [*As she sees SHIRLEY.*] Good morning.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*coming out of the vestibule, reading the post-card*] Good morning.

ROSE MAURRANT Good morning. [*MRS. MAURRANT goes into the house. The shade of MAE'S window flies up, and she is seen, for an instant, dressed only in her step-in. She yawns noisily and turns away from the window. Seating herself on the stoop.*] It's another awful day, isn't it?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Yes, and when you have to keep forty children quiet —! Well, thank goodness, in two weeks, school closes. Otherwise, I think I'd go crazy.

ROSE MAURRANT Well, you get a nice, long vacation anyhow.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Not much vacation for me. I'm taking summer courses at Teachers College. [*She looks at ROSE a moment, hesitates, and then comes down the steps.*] Miss Maurrant, if you don't mind, I want to talk to you about my brother Sam.

ROSE MAURRANT Why, certainly, Miss Kaplan.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN I guess you know he's only finishing college, this month —

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, of course I do.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Then he has to go three years to law school and pass the bar examination before he can be a full-fledged lawyer.

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, it takes a long time.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN A long time and lots of money. And before a young lawyer begins to make his own living, that takes a long time too. It will be ten years, maybe, before he's making enough to support himself and a family.
[*Looking away.*] Then, it's time enough for him to think about marriage.

ROSE MAURRANT You don't mean me and Sam, Miss Kaplan?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Yes, that's just what I mean.

ROSE MAURRANT Why, we're just good friends, that's all.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN I know how it is with a boy like Sam, Miss Maurrant. He thinks he's a man already; but he's nothing but a boy. If you're such a good friend, you shouldn't take his mind away from his work.

ROSE MAURRANT But I haven't meant to, Miss Kaplan — honest I haven't.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN I've had to work hard enough to get him as far as he is. And I have my father to take care of too. The few dollars he makes, writing for the radical papers, don't even pay the rent. Believe me, every dollar I make goes.

ROSE MAURRANT I know. Sam's often told me how much he owes to you.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN He doesn't owe me anything. I don't care about the money. Only he should be thinking about his work and not about other things.

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, he should be thinking about his work. But don't you think there are other things in the world, too, besides just work?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Don't you think I know that? I know that just as well as you do. Maybe, you think I'm only an old-maid schoolteacher, without any feelings.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, I don't — really I don't!

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*turning her head away*] Maybe I'm not a movie vamp, with dimples — but I could have had my chances too. Only, I wanted to give Sam an education.

ROSE MAURRANT I haven't tried to vamp Sam, honestly I haven't. We just seemed sort of naturally to like each other.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Why must you pick out Sam? You could get other fellows. Anyhow, it's much better to marry with your own kind. When you marry outside your own people, nothing good ever comes of it. You can't mix oil and water.

ROSE MAURRANT I don't know. I think if people really care about each other —

SHIRLEY KAPLAN He's nothing but a baby. He sees a pretty face and, right away, he forgets about everything else.

ROSE MAURRANT [*with a flash of temper*] I know I haven't as much brains as Sam, or as you either, if that's what you mean.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*contritely, going toward her*] I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I haven't got anything against you. Only, he's all I've got in the world. What else have I got to live for?

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*appearing at the extreme right window with a cup of coffee and a piece of coffee cake*] Hello, Rose.

ROSE MAURRANT Hello, Sam.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*in a low tone*] Please don't tell him what I said.
[SAM goes to the other window.]

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, no, I won't.
[SHIRLEY hurries off at the left. Rising and turning toward SAM.] Sam —

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*holding out the coffee cake*] Want some coffee cake?

ROSE MAURRANT No. [*Going up the steps.*] Sam, there's something I want to ask you, before I forget. Is there any special way you have to act in a synagogue?

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*eating throughout*] In a synagogue?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes. The funeral I'm going to is in a synagogue, and I thought there might be some special thing you have to do. Like in church, you know, a girl is always supposed to keep her hat on.

SAMUEL KAPLAN I don't know. I've never in my life been in a synagogue.

ROSE MAURRANT Didn't you ever go to Sunday school, or anything like that?

SAMUEL KAPLAN No.

ROSE MAURRANT That's funny. I thought everybody went, once in a while. How about when your mother died?

SAMUEL KAPLAN She was cremated. My parents were always rationalists.

ROSE MAURRANT Didn't they believe in God or anything?

SAMUEL KAPLAN What do you mean by God?

ROSE MAURRANT [*puzzled*] Well — you know what I mean. What anybody means — God. Some-Body that sort of loves us and looks after us, when we're in trouble.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*sitting on the window sill*] That's nothing but superstition — the lies that people tell themselves, because reality is too terrible for them to face.

ROSE MAURRANT But, Sam, don't you think it's better to believe in something that makes you a little happy, than not to believe in anything and be miserable all the time?

SAMUEL KAPLAN There's no such thing as happiness. That's an illusion, like all the rest.

ROSE MAURRANT Then what's the use of living?

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*brushing the last crumbs off his hands*] Yes, what is the use?

ROSE MAURRANT Why, you oughtn't to talk like that, Sam — a person with all the talent and brains that you've got. I know things aren't just the way you want them to be. But they aren't for anybody. They aren't for me either.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Then why don't we get out of it, together?

ROSE MAURRANT I don't see just how we could do that, Sam.

SAMUEL KAPLAN It would be easy enough — ten cents' worth of carbolic acid.

ROSE MAURRANT Why, Sam, you don't mean kill ourselves!

SAMUEL KAPLAN Is your life so precious to you that you want to cling to it?

ROSE MAURRANT Well, yes. I guess it is.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Why? Why? What is there in life to compensate for the pain of living?

ROSE MAURRANT There's a lot. Just being alive — breathing and walking around. Just looking at the faces of people you like and hearing them laugh. And seeing the pretty things in the store windows. And roughhousing with your kid brother. And — oh, I don't know — listening to a good band, and dancing. Oh, I'd hate to die!
[*Earnestly.*] Sam, promise you won't talk about killing yourself any more.

SAMUEL KAPLAN What difference would it make to you if I did?

ROSE MAURRANT Don't talk like that, Sam! You're the best friend I've ever had.
[*She puts her hand on his.*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN I can't think of anything but you.

ROSE MAURRANT There's something I want to ask your advice about, Sam. It's about what I started to tell you about, last night. A man I know wants to put me on the stage.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*releasing her hand and drawing back*] What man?

ROSE MAURRANT A man that works in the office. He knows a manager and he says he'll help me get started. You see, what I thought was, that if I could only get out of here and have a decent place to live and make a lot of money, maybe everything would be different, not only for me, but for Ma and Pop and Willie.

SAMUEL KAPLAN But don't you know what he wants, this man?

ROSE MAURRANT Nobody gives you anything for nothing, Sam. If you don't pay for things in one way, you do in another.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Rose, for God's sake, you mustn't!

VINCENT JONES *comes out of the house.*

ROSE MAURRANT

[*seeing VINCENT in the vestibule*]. Look out, Sam, here's that tough from upstairs.
[*She goes over to the left of the stoop.*]

VINCENT JONES [*in the doorway*] Hello, Rosie. Been here all night, talkin' to the little yit? [ROSE *does not answer. Turning to SAM.*] Hello, motzers! Shake!
[*He leans over the balustrade and seizes SAM'S hand in a crushing grip.*]

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*writhing with pain*] Let me go!

ROSE MAURRANT Let him alone!

VINCENT *gives SAM'S hand another vicious squeeze and then releases him. SAM cowers back in the window, nursing his hand.*

VINCENT JONES [*waving his hand about in mock pain*] Jesus, what a grip dat little kike's got! I'd hate to get into a mix-up wit' him.
[*To ROSE.*] Got a date for tonight, kid?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, I have.

VINCENT JONES Yeah? Gee, ain't dat too bad. I'll give you two dollars if you let me snap your garter.

ROSE MAURRANT Shut up, you!

[VINCENT *laughs. SAM makes an inarticulate sound.*]

VINCENT JONES [*threateningly*] Whadja say? I t'ought I hoid you say sumpin.
[*He makes a threatening gesture. SAM shrinks back. With a loud laugh as he goes down the steps.*] Fightin' Kaplan, de pride o' Jerusalem!
[*He looks at them both, then laughs again.*] Fer cryin' out loud!
[*He exits left.*]

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, if there was only some way of getting out of here!
[SAM *puts the back of his hand to his forehead and turns away.*] I sometimes think I'd just like to run away.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*without turning*] Yes!

ROSE MAURRANT Anywhere — it wouldn't matter where — just to get out of this.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*turning*] Why shouldn't we do it?

ROSE MAURRANT [*rather startled, coming over to the right balus-trade*] Would you go with me, Sam?

SAMUEL KAPLAN Yes — anywhere.

ROSE MAURRANT I've heard that people are much nicer and friendlier, when you get outside of New York. There's not so much of a mad rush, other places. And being alone, you could sort of work things out for yourself.
[*Suddenly.*] Only, what would you do, Sam?

SAMUEL KAPLAN I could get a job too.

ROSE MAURRANT And give up your law work?

SAMUEL KAPLAN I'd give up everything, to be with you.

ROSE MAURRANT No. I wouldn't let you do that, Sam. It's different with me —

EASTER *appears at the right.*

HARRY EASTER [*stopping at the right of the stoop*] Good morning, Miss Maurant.

Startled, ROSE *turns and sees him for the first time.*

ROSE MAURRANT [*none too pleased*] Oh, good morning, Mr. Easter. What brings you in this neighborhood?

HARRY EASTER [*not very plausibly*] Well, I just happened to have a little business right around the corner. So, I thought as long as you were going to the funeral, we might just as well go together.

ROSE MAURRANT Well, I hardly expected to see you around here.
[*An awkward pause.*] Oh, I'd like you to meet my friend, Mr. Kaplan.

HARRY EASTER How do you do, Mr. Kaplan? Glad to know you.
[SAM *murmurs something inaudible. An awkward silence.*]

ROSE MAURRANT [*to SAM*] Mr. Easter is the manager of the office.

[SAM *does not reply*. Another silence. To EASTER.] It's awful hot again, isn't it?

HARRY EASTER Worse than yesterday. [*Approaching the stoop.*] Tell you what I was thinking. I was thinking, that after the funeral, we might take a run down to the beach, somewhere, and cool off a little.

ROSE MAURRANT I can't today. I've got a lot of things I want to do.

HARRY EASTER Oh, you can do 'em some other day.

ROSE MAURRANT No, really, I can't. [*Looking at her watch.*] Well, I guess it's time we got started.

[*She comes down the steps.*]

HARRY EASTER Yes, it is. We'll pick up a cab at the corner.

MRS. MAURRANT *appears at her window, looks out, and sees ROSE and EASTER.*

ROSE MAURRANT Why, I thought I'd walk. It's not far.

HARRY EASTER Too hot, today, for any walking.

ROSE MAURRANT [*starting to go toward the left*] Not if you keep in the shade.

HARRY EASTER Much more comfortable taking a cab.

ROSE MAURRANT I'd rather walk.

HARRY EASTER Well, whatever you say. Good morning, Mr. Kaplan. Glad to have met you.

[SAM *murmurs an inaudible reply.*]

ROSE MAURRANT Good-by, Sam, I'll see you later.

[SAM *does not answer*. ROSE and EASTER *go toward the left in silence*. SAM *watches them intently, trembling with jealousy*. MRS. MAURRANT, *surprised and disturbed*, *watches ROSE and EASTER*. To EASTER, *as they disappear.*] It's a lucky thing my father wasn't around.

SAM *suddenly turns and goes into the room*. MRS. MAURRANT *remains at the window, looking out, with obvious expectancy*.

A DISTANT VOICE [*offstage left*] Straw-berries! Straw-berries!

A MUSIC STUDENT, *an anemic girl of eighteen, with a music roll under her arm, appears at the left. She enters the house and pushes one of the buttons in the vestibule, then goes to the entrance door and waits. A moment later MRS. FIORENTINO appears hastily at the window and whisks away the bedclothes. After another moment the latch clicks and the girl enters the house.*

THE VOICE [*a little nearer*] Oh-h! Straw-berries! Straw-berries!

SANKEY *appears at the right. He carries a pencil behind his ear, wears a round cap with a metal nameplate and a stiff visor, and carries a large black-covered bill holder. He and MRS. MAURRANT see each other and both become tense with excitement. MRS. MAURRANT beckons to him, and he comes over to the railing under her window.*

ANNA MAURRANT [*in a low, tense voice*] Come up.

STEVE SANKEY [*looking about, nervously*] Now?

ANNA MAURRANT Yes. I got to talk to you.

STEVE SANKEY Is it all right?

ANNA MAURRANT Yes. He's gone to Stamford.

STEVE SANKEY How about later?

ANNA MAURRANT No. Rose'll be home in a hour. She's not working today.

STEVE SANKEY All right.

He looks about again, then goes quickly toward the steps. SAM appears at the entrance door. He is about to step out when he sees SANKEY. He stops and looks at him. SANKEY sees SAM, hesitates a moment, then goes quickly into the house. Meanwhile MRS. MAURRANT has closed both windows and pulled down the shades. SAM takes a periodical out of the mailbox, then comes out of the house and down the steps. He looks up at the Maurant windows, sees the drawn shades, and looks around in perturbed perplexity, not knowing what to do. At last, he sits down on the steps of the stoop, tears the wrapper off the periodical — The Nation — and begins to read. The girl in Lippo's apartment begins playing the piano. This continues throughout the scene. Two untidy and rather coarse-looking men appear at the left and approach the stoop: JAMES HENRY, a city marshal, and FRED CULLEN, his assistant. They stop in front of the house. SAM pays no attention to them.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY [*crossing to the left of the stoop and taking a paper from his pocket*] Dis is it. [*To SAM.*] Hildebrand live here?

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*startled*] What?

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY I'm askin' you if Hildebrand lives here.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Yes. Fourth floor.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Better give de janitor a buzz, Fred.
[*FRED goes up the steps and rings the janitor's bell, then leans over the left balustrade.*]

FRED CULLEN [*bawling*] Hey, janitor.

CARL OLSEN [*below*] Vell?

FRED CULLEN Come on out a minute. [OLSEN *appears below.*] We got a warrant for Hildebrand.

CARL OLSEN Fourt' floor — Hildebrand.

FRED CULLEN Yeah, I know. We got a warrant for her.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY I'm City Marshal Henry. We got a dispossess warrant.

CARL OLSEN [*coming up the steps*] Oh, sure. You gonna put 'em out?

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Yeah, dat's it. Has she got anybody to take de foinicher away?

CARL OLSEN [*with a shrug*] I don' know.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Well, we'll have t' dump it on de sidewalk den. Go ahead, Fred.

They enter the house. OLSEN leans his elbows on the coping and smokes his pipe. SAM sits on the steps, deep in troubled thought. A GROCERY BOY with a full basket appears at the right and goes down the cellar steps. MAE JONES comes out of the house. She stands on the top step, yawns noisily, and goes off at left. She and SAM do not pay the slightest attention to each other.

A VOICE [*a little nearer*] Straw-berries! Straw-berries!

MRS. OLSEN comes up the cellar steps with a heavy pail of water. OLSEN leans forward to make room for her. She staggers over to the stoop almost dropping the pail, and goes up the steps into the vestibule. OLSEN yawns and goes down into the cellar. MRS. JONES appears at the window, her hair wet and stringy, a towel pinned about her shoulders, and leans out to dry her hair.

OLD-CLOTHES MAN [*appearing at left*] I kesh ko! I kesh ko!

[He wears a battered derby and carries a folded newspaper under his arm. MRS. OLSEN, on her knees, begins washing up the vestibule. FRED comes out of the house, carrying a worn chair and a large gilt-framed picture, which he deposits on the sidewalk, against the railing, to the left of the stoop. As if to someone across the street.] Kesh ko? [*To SAM*] Any ol' klose, mister?

[SAM pays no attention to him. FRED re-enters the house. To MRS. JONES.] Any ol' klose, leddy?

EMMA JONES Naw, nawthin'.

OLD-CLOTHES MAN Hets? Shoes? Ol' stockings?

EMMA JONES Nawthin', I tell you.

[As the OLD-CLOTHES MAN goes off at the right, MAURRANT appears, still carrying his satchel.] Why, hello, Mr. Maurrant.

[MAURRANT looks up without replying and comes over to the stoop.] I thought you was off to Stamford.

FRANK MAURRANT I changed me —

He stops, to the right of the stoop, and looks up at the drawn shades of his apartment. SAM rises, slowly and rigidly, his eyes glued in fascination upon MAURRANT. MAURRANT'S movements take on a lithe and catlike quality. Then, slowly and deliberately, he goes toward the steps, his back arched, like a tiger ready to spring.

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[suddenly blocking the steps]* No! No! For God's sake —!

FRANK MAURRANT *[raging]* Out o' me way, you goddam little rat!

He flings SAM violently aside, almost knocking him down. MRS. OLSEN, terrified, rises and shrinks into a corner as MAURRANT, with swift stealthiness, enters the house. MRS. JONES leans out to see what is wrong. SAM rushes down the steps and stands under the MAURRANT windows. The MARSHAL comes out of the house, carrying a wash boiler filled with pots.

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[hysterically]* Mrs. Maurrant! Mrs. Maurrant!

EMMA JONES What's the matter?

[The MARSHAL puts the wash boiler on the balustrade and looks on in amazement.]

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[to MRS. JONES]* Quick! Run and tell her! Quick!

EMMA JONES What is it? *[Suddenly.]* Oh, Gawd, is he in there?

[She leaves the window hastily.]

SAMUEL KAPLAN Yes! Mrs. Maurrant! Mrs. Maurrant!

A scream of terror is heard from the MAURRANT apartment.

MRS. MAURRANT'S VOICE Frank! Frank!

Two shots are heard, in quick succession, and then a heavy fall. MRS. OLSEN runs out of the vestibule and down into the cellar. SANKEY'S voice is heard, inarticulate with fear. Then one of the shades shoots up, and SANKEY appears at the window, coatless, his face deformed by terror. He tries to open the window but succeeds only in shattering the pane with his elbow. MAURRANT appears behind him and pulls him away from the window. Then another shot is heard.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY For Chris' sake, what's happenin'? Get an ambulance, you!

He pushes SAM toward the left, then hurries off at the right. As SAM runs off a crowd begins to form. OLSEN comes up from the cellar, followed by the GROCERY BOY. The two WORKMEN come up out of the excavation. Two or three of the WORKMEN from the demolished building run on at the right.

A WORKMAN What's happening?

THE MAN What is it? A murder?

Still others join the crowd: a HUCKSTER, a JANITOR from a neighboring house, a MULATTO GIRL, six or eight WOMEN of the neighborhood, some in street dresses, others in housedresses or dingy wrappers. Lippo's PUPIL appears at the window, badly frightened. The crowd surges about uncertainly, not knowing what has happened and buzzing with questions which nobody can answer. While the crowd is still forming FRED, the MARSHAL'S assistant, appears at the broken window.

FRED CULLEN [excitedly] Grab dat boid! He's comin' down!

A WORKMAN What boid?

THE MAN Here he is, now!

The crowd murmurs with excitement and surges about the stoop as the house door opens and MAURRANT appears. His coat is open and his shirt is torn almost to shreds. His face, hands, and clothing are covered with blood. He stands in the doorway for a moment, surveying the crowd, his eyes glaring.

FRED CULLEN Grab him! Don't let him get away!

As the crowd makes a concerted movement toward MAURRANT he whips out an automatic revolver and levels it. The crowd shrinks back. Some of the women scream.

FRANK MAURRANT Git back! Git back, all o' you!

The crowd falls back toward the left, to make way for him. With his back to the balustrade he comes quickly down the steps and, still leveling his revolver at the crowd, retreats backward to the cellar steps. A man, approaching at the right, comes stealthily up behind him, but MAURRANT senses his presence in time, wheels quickly, menaces the man with his revolver, then rushes down the cellar steps. While all this is happening the other shade in the Maurant apartment flies up and MISS CUSHING opens the window and leans out.

AGNES CUSHING Hurry up! Get an ambulance!

[No one pays any attention to her as they are all watching MAURRANT. As MAURRANT runs down the cellar steps the crowd surges forward to the railing on both sides of the stoop and leans over. A scream from MRS. OLSEN is heard from the basement. FRED goes away from the window.] Get an ambulance, some-body!

[Unable to attract anyone's attention, she leaves the window.]

CARL OLSEN Olga! *[He hurries down the cellar steps.]*

THE MAN *[calling]* Here's a cop! *[The crowd looks to the right.]* Hey! Hurry up!

A POLICEMAN *runs on from the right.*

POLICEMAN Where is he?

VOICES IN THE CROWD He's down the cellar! He ran down the cellar! He went down the steps!

POLICEMAN Get out of the way!

[The POLICEMAN and two men in the crowd go down the cellar steps.]

VOICES IN THE CROWD Watch yourself! Look out, he's got a gun! He's a big guy with his shirt torn!

[The rest of the crowd peers over the railing.]

AGNES CUSHING *[leaning out of ROSE'S window]* Hey, don't you hear me? Get an ambulance!

ANOTHER MAN *[looking up]* What's de matter? You want de ambulance?

AGNES CUSHING Yes! Right away!

ANOTHER MAN *[to the GROCERY BOY]* Run aroun' de corner to de horspital, Johnny, an' tell 'em to send de ambulance!

GROCERY BOY Sure!

AGNES CUSHING Run!

The GROCERY BOY runs off swiftly at the left. MISS CUSHING leaves the window. Meanwhile, as the POLICEMAN and the two men have gone down the cellar steps, the MARSHAL has run on from the right, panting.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY *[as the GROCERY BOY runs off]* Did dey git 'im?

THE MAN He beat it down de cellar.

A WORKMAN De cop's gone after him.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Why de hell didn' you stop 'im?

FRED *comes out of the house.*

A WORKMAN He had a gun.

FRED CULLEN Did some-body go for de ambulance?

THE MAN Yeah. De kid went.

A WOMAN It's only aroun' de corner.

ANOTHER MAN Dey'll be here, right away.

The crowd moves over toward FRED.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY [*pushing his way through the crowd and up the steps*] What de hell happened, Fred?

FRED CULLEN [*as the crowd moves toward the stoop*] It's a moider. Dis boid's wife an' some other guy. Jesus, you oughta see de blood.

[*Another POLICEMAN runs up at the left, closely followed by SAM.*] Upstairs, officer! Dere's two of 'em got shot.

SECOND POLICEMAN [*elbowing his way through the crowd*] Look out o' de way, youse! [*He goes up the stoop and crosses to the door.*] Where's de guy dat did it?

VOICES IN THE CROWD Down de cellar! He beat it down de steps!

FRED CULLEN Dere's another cop after 'im. You better look after dem upstairs. Foist floor.

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*agonized*] Are they dead?
[*No one pays any attention to him.*]

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY [*stopping the POLICEMAN and exhibiting his badge*] I'm City Marshal Henry. Kin I do anythin'?

SECOND POLICEMAN Don't let anybody in or out! Hear?

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Yeah, sure!

The SECOND POLICEMAN goes quickly into the house.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Are they dead?
[*No one notices him. The MARSHAL takes up his position in the doorway.*]

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*appearing at the Marrant window*] Where's the ambulance?

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY It'll be here, right away. Dere's a cop on his way up.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Mr. Buchanan! Mr. Buchanan! Are they dead?

But BUCHANAN has already disappeared. The two men who followed the FIRST POLICEMAN into the cellar now come up the steps. The crowd moves over to the railing, at the right.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Did you get him, boys?

THE MAN He must be hidin' somewheres. De cop's lookin' for 'im.

ANOTHER MAN Some-Body better call de resolves.

SAM runs up the steps and tries to enter the house.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY [*seizing him roughly*] You can't get in now! Get back dere! [*He pushes SAM back into the crowd at the foot of the steps.*]

SECOND POLICEMAN [*appearing at the Marrant window*] Hey, call up headquarters an' tell 'em to send the resolves. Make it quick! [*He goes away from the window.*]

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY You go, Fred.

FRED CULLEN Sure!

THE MAN Dere's a phone in de warehouse.

An ambulance bell is heard at the left as FRED goes quickly toward the left. Another spectator hurries on and joins the crowd.

VOICES IN THE CROWD Dere it is! Dere's de ambulance now! Here dey come! [*The crowd moves over toward the left.*]

THE MAN Dey won't be able to git past.

SECOND POLICEMAN [*reappearing at the window*] Is dat de ambulance?

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Yeah.

BUCHANAN and MRS. JONES crowd to the window behind the SECOND POLICEMAN, and, at the other window, LIPPO, MISS CUSHING, and MRS. HILDEBRAND appear. A HOSPITAL INTERN and an AMBULANCE DRIVER come on at the left.

SECOND POLICEMAN Hurry up, Doc! She's still breathin'.

INTERN [*forcing his way through the crowd*] All right! Better bring the stretcher, Harry.

AMBULANCE DRIVER Yes, sir.

He hurries off at the left. The INTERN goes quickly into the house. The crowd attempts to follow, several of its members going up the steps.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY [*pushing them back*] Keep back, now! Back off de stoop, everybody!

The crowd forms a compact mass around the foot of the steps. The persons at the Marrant windows have disappeared. FRED hurries on at the left.

FRED CULLEN [*pushing his way through the crowd and up the steps*] I got 'em. Dey'll be right up. Anudder cop jes' wen' in t'roo de warehouse cellar.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Dey'll git 'im all right. [*Looking at his watch.*] Better git busy wit' dat foinicher, Fred. We got two udder jobs today.

FRED CULLEN Yeah, sure, Jimmy.

He enters the house. The AMBULANCE DRIVER appears at the left, carrying a canvas stretcher.

AMBULANCE DRIVER Get out o' the way!

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Git back, can't youse? What de hell's de matter wit' youse?
[*He comes down the steps and violently pushes the crowd back. The AMBULANCE DRIVER enters the house.*]

SECOND POLICEMAN [*at the window*] Are dey bringin' dat stretcher?

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY On de way up! [*To the crowd.*] Keep back!

The POLICEMAN leaves the window. Lippo's PUPIL, her music roll under her arm, appears timidly in the doorway.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY [*grabbing her arm roughly*] Where you goin'?

MUSIC STUDENT [*nervously*] I'm going home.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Home? Where do you live?

MUSIC STUDENT Ninety-first Street.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY What are you doin' here?

MUSIC STUDENT I just came for a music lesson, that's all.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Yeah? Well, you can't go now.

MUSIC STUDENT [*beginning to whimper*] I want to go home.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY You can't go now. Nobody can't leave de house now.

SECOND POLICEMAN [*coming out of the house*] Who's dis kid?

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Says she come here to take a music lesson an' she wants to go home.

SECOND POLICEMAN [*to the girl*] Do you know anythin' about this killin'?

MUSIC STUDENT No, I don't. I just heard some shooting, that's all. My mother will be worried if I don't come home.

SECOND POLICEMAN Well, you can't go now. Get inside dere, out o' de way. Dey'll be bringin' her down in a minute.

[*He pushes the girl inside the house and comes down the steps.*] Come on, git back from dem steps! Back now, all o' youse!

[*He and the MARSHAL push the crowd back to the right of the stoop, leaving the steps and the sidewalk in front of them clear. Then he goes up the steps again.*]

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY What did he do? Shoot two of 'em?

SECOND POLICEMAN I'll say he did! His wife an' her sweetie. A guy named Sankey. He was dead when I got up dere.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY I seen him tryin' to climb out t'roo de winder. An' dis guy grabs 'im an' pulls 'im back.

INTERN [*from the Marrant window*] Officer! Come on up!

He leaves the window as the SECOND POLICEMAN exits into the house. Suddenly SAM utters an exclamation of anguish and, pushing his way out of the crowd, hurries over to the left.

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Hey, you! Where you goin'?
[*SAM ignores him and hurries on.*]

A WOMAN Look! There's the Marrant girl!

ANOTHER WOMAN Who?

A WOMAN It's her daughter.

[The crowd murmurs excitedly as ROSE comes on quickly at the left.]

ROSE MAURRANT What's the matter, Sam? What's the ambulance for? Did anybody get hurt?

SAMUEL KAPLAN Go away, Rose. Go away.

ROSE MAURRANT Who is it, Sam? What's the matter? Is it my mother? It's not my mother, is it? *[Clinging to him.]* Sam, is it?

SAMUEL KAPLAN There's been an accident. Go away, Rose.
[He tries to force her away.]

ROSE MAURRANT Tell me what's happened! Tell me!

AGNES CUSHING *[appearing at the window]* They're bringing her down!

ROSE MAURRANT *[with a cry]* It is my mother!

AGNES CUSHING *[seeing her]* Oh, my God, there's Rose!

MRS. FIORENTINO, MRS. JONES, MRS. HILDEBRAND,
LIPPO, and BUCHANAN crowd to the Maurrant windows.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Rose! Go away!

*She pays no attention to him but stands watching the door, transfixed.
The INTERN comes briskly out of the house.*

INTERN *[to the MARSHAL]* Hold the door open, will you? *[He comes down the steps.]*

MARSHALL JAMES HENRY Sure, Doc! *[He hurries into the vestibule.]*

INTERN *[to the crowd]* Keep back now!

ROSE MAURRANT *[seizing the INTERN'S arm]* Doctor! Is she dead?

INTERN Who are you? Her daughter?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, sir. I'm her daughter.

INTERN She's pretty badly hurt. Step aside now!

They step aside as the AMBULANCE DRIVER and the SECOND POLICEMAN come out of the house, carrying MRS. MAURRANT on the stretcher. There is a low murmur from the crowd.

AMBULANCE DRIVER Easy now.

SECOND POLICEMAN All right.
[They come down the steps and go toward the left.]

ROSE MAURRANT *[running forward and gripping the side of the stretcher]* Mother!
Mother!

ANNA MAURRANT *[opening her eyes feebly]* Rose!
[She tries to lift her hand, but it falls back.]

INTERN *[pulling ROSE back]* You mustn't talk to her now.

SAM takes her around the shoulders. They and the INTERN follow the stretcher off at the left. The crowd swarms after them. FRED comes out of the house, carrying one end of an iron bedstead.
Curtain.

ACT THREE

Midafternoon of the same day. At the left of the stoop is a large roll of bedding. Before the rise of the curtain, and continuing faintly thereafter, a woman can be heard singing scales. OLSEN, pipe in mouth, is leaning against the railing. Two men, furniture movers, appear at the left.

THE MAN [*picking up the bedding*] All right. Dat's all, Charlie!

The men exit left. A POLICEMAN comes out of the house, carrying the bloodstained dress of MRS. MAURRANT and SANKEY'S coat, cap, and bill holder. He comes down the steps and exits at the right. At the left two young NURSEMAIDS in smart uniforms appear, each wheeling a de luxe baby carriage.

FIRST NURSEMAID [*seeing the house number*] This must be the place, right here — three forty-six.
[*They stop under the Maurrant windows.*]

SECOND NURSEMAID Yes, I guess it is.

FIRST NURSEMAID Yes, this is it, all right.
[*Looking up.*] Must be right up there, on the first floor, see?

SECOND NURSEMAID Yes, sure. [*Excitedly.*] Say, look! You can see where the glass is out of the window. That's where this feller What's-his-name tried to climb out.

FIRST NURSEMAID Oh, yes, I see it! Say, what do you know about that!

SECOND NURSEMAID [*taking a pink tabloid newspaper from under the hood of the baby buggy*] Wait! There's a picture of it somewhere. [*Turning the pages.*] Here it is. [*They excitedly examine it together, as she reads.*] "Composograph showing Sankey, scantily clad, in a last vain attempt to escape the vengeance of the jealousy-crazed husband, whose home he had destroyed." And there's Maurrant pulling him back. And Mrs. Maurrant trying to get the pistol away from him, see? Look at the blood running down her face, will you?

FIRST NURSEMAID It's worse than awful! Can you *imagine* what those two must have felt like, when he walked in on them like that?

SECOND NURSEMAID Well, he just happened to be one of the ones that finds out! Believe me, there's lots and lots of husbands that don't know the half of what goes on uptown, while they're downtown making a living.

FIRST NURSEMAID Say, you're not telling me, are you? If I was to spill all I know, there'd be many a happy home busted up. I wonder if they caught him?

SECOND NURSEMAID [*as her baby begins a thin wailing*] Oh, God, he's in again!
[*To the unseen baby.*] Shut up a little while, can't you? [*She shakes the carriage.*]

POLICEMAN [*appearing at the Maurrant windows, a tabloid in his hand*] Keep movin', ladies. No loiterin' aroun' here.

FIRST NURSEMAID [*eagerly*] Say, have they caught him yet?

POLICEMAN Why, ain't you hoid? He was last seen flyin' over Nova Scotia, on his way to Paris.

FIRST NURSEMAID Who are you trying to string anyhow?

SECOND NURSEMAID [*coquettishly*] Say, will you let us come up and look around?

POLICEMAN Why, sure, sure! Bring de babies too. De commissioner is soivin' tea up here at four-thoity.

SECOND NURSEMAID You're awful smart, aren't you?

POLICEMAN Yeah, dat's why dey put me on de entertainment committee. I'm Handsome Harry Moiphy, de boy comedian o' Brooklyn.

FIRST NURSEMAID [*looking at her watch*] Oh, say, I ought to be getting back. [*Turning her carriage.*] Clarice darling would throw a duck fit if she knew I brought her precious Dumplings to a neighborhood like this.

SECOND NURSEMAID [*turning her carriage*] There's not so much to see anyhow. It's nothing but a cheap, common dump. [*They go toward the left.*]

POLICEMAN Over de river, goils. See you in de funny paper.

SECOND NURSEMAID Don't you get so fresh.

POLICEMAN Drop in again when you're in de neighbor-hood. An' tell Mrs. Vanderbilt Harry was askin' for her.

As the NURSEMAIDS go off at the left, EASTER hurries on at the right, several folded newspapers under his arm.

HARRY EASTER [*to the Policeman, going to the left of the stoop*] Is Miss Marrant up there, Officer?

POLICEMAN No. There ain't nobody up here but me.

HARRY EASTER You don't happen to know where she is, do you?

POLICEMAN No, I don't. Are you a reporter?

HARRY EASTER Who, me? I'm just a friend of hers. I've got to see her.

POLICEMAN Well, I ain't seen her since she went off to the horspital this mornin'. She ain't been back since. [*He starts to leave the window.*]

HARRY EASTER Oh, Officer!

POLICEMAN Yeah?

HARRY EASTER Have they caught him yet?

POLICEMAN Naw, not yet. But we'll get 'im all right!

He leaves the window. EASTER remains at the left of the stoop, uncertain whether to go or not. MRS. JONES appears at the right, carrying several newspapers.

EMMA JONES [to OLSEN] Have they caught him yet?

CARL OLSEN [shaking his head] No.

EMMA JONES I been down at Police Headquarters all this while —
[Breaking off, as she notices EASTER.] Say, what's he want here?
[OLSEN shrugs his shoulders.]

HARRY EASTER [approaching them] Pardon me, but maybe you can tell me where I can find Miss Maurrant?
[OLSEN shakes his head.]

EMMA JONES Why, no, I can't. I jus' this minute got back from Police Headquarters. Maybe she's aroun' at the horspital.

HARRY EASTER No, I just came from there.

EMMA JONES Well, I really couldn't say where she is. Was there somethin' special you wanted to see her about?

HARRY EASTER I'm a friend of hers —

EMMA JONES Yeah, I noticed you talkin' to her, last night, when I took the dog out. [Staring at him.] Well, I guess she'll need all the friends she's got now. Imagine a thing like that happenin' right here in this house, at ten o'clock in the mornin'! Everythin' goin' on just as usual, and then, all of a sudden, before you know it, there's two people murdered.

CARL OLSEN I tal everybody someday he kill her.

EMMA JONES Well, I ain't sayin' it's right to kill anybody, but if anybody had a reason, he certainly had. You oughta heard some o' the questions they was askin' me down at the Police. I could feel myself gettin' redder an' redder. "Say," I says, "how do you expect me to know things like that?"
[Suddenly, as she looks left.] Here's Rose now!

HARRY EASTER Where?

[He turns quickly and hurries to the left as ROSE appears, carrying four or five packages.]

EMMA JONES *[to OLSEN]* He seems to take a pretty friendly interest in her.
[OLSEN nods.]

ROSE MAURRANT *[anxiously, as she comes up to EASTER at the left of the stoop]*
Have they caught him yet?

HARRY EASTER Why, no, they haven't. I just asked the officer upstairs.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, I hope he got away! If they get him, there's no telling what they'll do to him. And what would be the good of that? He never would have done it if he'd been in his right mind.

HARRY EASTER I only heard about it a little while ago. So I went right around to the hospital. But they said you'd left.

ROSE MAURRANT *[going to the steps]* She never opened her eyes again. They did everything they could for her, but it didn't help.

HARRY EASTER Here, let me take your bundles.

ROSE MAURRANT No, it's all right. I think I'll just sit down for a minute.
[She sits on the stoop and puts the packages beside her.]

HARRY EASTER Can't I get you something? A drink or some-thing?

ROSE MAURRANT No, I'm all right. It's so hot.
[She puts her hand to her head.] And all those people asking me a lot of questions.

EMMA JONES *[approaching the stoop]* Are you feelin' dizzy or anythin'?

ROSE MAURRANT No, I'll be all right in a minute.

EMMA JONES Well, I was gonna say, if you want to go up to my flat an' lay down for a minute —

ROSE MAURRANT No, thanks; I don't want to lie down. I've got to go upstairs to get some things.

HARRY EASTER Why, say, you don't want to go up there!

ROSE MAURRANT I've got to; there's some things I need.

HARRY EASTER Well, let me get them for you. Or this lady here.

EMMA JONES Yeah, sure. The place is a sight up there. You're li'ble to go into a faint or somethin'.

ROSE MAURRANT I guess nothing can be any worse than what's happened already.

[*Indicating the bundles.*] I got to change my dress. I bought a white dress for her. And white silk stockings. I want her to look pretty.

EMMA JONES Yeah, white is the nicest.

ROSE MAURRANT She looks so quiet and natural. You'd think she was asleep.

EMMA JONES It was the same way with my mother. You'd of thought she was gonna get up the next minute.

[*Starting to go up the steps.*] Well, I gotta go up an' get me some lunch. Between everythin' happenin' an' goin' down to Police Headquarters an' all, I ain't had a bite to eat since breakfast.

[*Stopping on the top step and looking from ROSE to EASTER.*] Well, you certainly never know, when you get up in the mornin', what the day is gonna bring.

[*She enters the house.*]

ROSE MAURRANT [*rising*] Well, I'd better be going up too. There's a lot of things to attend to.

HARRY EASTER You better let me come up with you.

ROSE MAURRANT Why, thanks, Mr. Easter. But I'd rather go alone, if you don't mind.

HARRY EASTER But, listen here — you can't go through all this alone — a kid like you. That's why I came around. I knew you'd be needing a helping hand.

ROSE MAURRANT That's awfully nice of you, Mr. Easter. But I don't need any help, honest I don't. [*She opens one of the packages.*]

HARRY EASTER Why, you can't handle everything yourself! What about a place to live and all that?

ROSE MAURRANT [*taking a rosette of black crape out of the package*]. Well, I don't exactly know yet. I'll have to find some place where Willie and I can live. I'd like it to be some place where he wouldn't be running around the streets all the time. You see, there's nobody but me to look out for him now.

[*OLSEN crosses to the cellar. MRS. JONES appears at her window and furtively peeps out at ROSE and EASTER. As ROSE sees that OLSEN is about to descend the cellar steps.*] Oh, Mr. Olsen!

CARL OLSEN [*stopping*] Yes, ma'am.

ROSE MAURRANT Would you mind lending me a hammer and some tacks? I want to put up this crape.

CARL OLSEN Yes, ma'am; I bring 'em right away.
[*He goes down into the cellar. MRS. JONES leaves the window.*]

HARRY EASTER [*insistently*] But why won't you let me help you out?

ROSE MAURRANT It's terribly nice of you, Mr. Easter. But I'll be able to manage alone,

really I will. It isn't as if I wasn't young and strong and able to take care of myself. But as it is, I'd sort of rather not be under obligations.

HARRY EASTER Why, you wouldn't be under any obligations. I just mean it in a friendly way, that's all.

ROSE MAURRANT You've been very nice to me and all that, Mr. Easter. But — well, I've been sort of thinking things over — you know, about what we talked about last night and all. And I honestly don't think I'd care about going on the stage.

HARRY EASTER Say, you've got me all wrong, Rose! Just forget all about that, will you? I just want to help you out, that's all.
[*Taking a step toward her.*] I think you're one swell kid, and I want to do something for you. I'm not trying to put anything over on you.

SHIRLEY appears at the left, carrying her schoolbag, from which a newspaper protrudes.

ROSE MAURRANT Well, that's nice and friendly of you, Mr. Easter. And if I ever do need any help —

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*catching sight of ROSE*] Rose! You poor thing!
[*She runs up to ROSE and throws her arms around her.*] It's terrible — terrible!

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, it is. But I sort of had a feeling, all along, that something terrible was going to happen.

OLSEN comes up the steps with a hammer and a box of tacks.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN How could he do such a thing! I couldn't believe it when I read it.

ROSE MAURRANT He was out of his mind when he did it. Oh, I only hope he got away!
[*As OLSEN approaches.*] Oh, thanks, Mr. Olsen.

CARL OLSEN I do it.

ROSE MAURRANT [*giving him the crape*] Oh, would you, please? Right up there, I think. [*She indicates the left of the door-way.*]

CARL OLSEN [*going up the steps*] Sure.

ROSE MAURRANT [*going to EASTER and extending her hand*] Thanks for coming around, Mr. Easter. I don't know when I'll be able to get back to the office.

HARRY EASTER Why, that's all right about that. Only, in the meantime, I wish ——

ROSE MAURRANT If I need any help, I'll let you know.
[*With a tone of finality in her voice.*] Good-by.

HARRY EASTER All right; but don't forget. [*He hesitates, then decides to go.*] Well, good-by.
[*He exits at left.*]

ROSE MAURRANT I've got to go up and get some things that Willie and I need. Sam went to call for him at school and take him around to my aunt's. You see I didn't want him coming back here. He's only a little kid, after all.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Oh, it's such a terrible thing! I can't believe it yet.

CARL OLSEN [*holding up the crape*] Dis vay?

ROSE MAURRANT Yes, like that.
[*Hesitantly, as she picks up her bundles.*] Miss Kaplan, it's sort of silly of me, I guess. But I'm kind of afraid to go up there alone. I wonder if you'd mind coming up with me.

OLSEN *tacks up the crape.*

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Anything I can do for you, poor child!
[*She and ROSE go up the steps.*]

ROSE MAURRANT Thanks ever so much. [*To OLSEN.*] Thanks, Mr. Olsen. It's awfully nice of you.

She and SHIRLEY enter the house. OLSEN exits down the cellar steps. KAPLAN appears at his window and, seating himself, begins to read a newspaper. An undersized man and a tall, athletic woman appear at the right. They are dressed for tennis and carry tennis rackets.

THE MAN [*as they cross*] He *would* say that.

THE WOMAN So I just looked at him for a moment, without saying anything. And then I said, "My dear boy," I said. "What do you expect anyhow, in this day and age?" I said, "Why even Frankl has to do a black bathroom occasionally," I said.

THE MAN [*as they disappear at the left*] Exactly! And what did he say to that?
BUCHANAN *comes out of the house and, seeing KAPLAN at the window, stops at the right balustrade.*]

DANIEL BUCHANAN Well, there's been *some* excitement around here today.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*looking up from his paper*] Dees is a terrible t'ing vich hes heppened.

DANIEL BUCHANAN I'll say it is! You know, the way I look at it, he didn't have a right to kill the both of them like that. Of course I'm not saying what she did was right either.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN How ken ve call ourselves civilized, ven ve see thet sax jealousy hes de power to avaken in us de primitive pessions of de sevege?

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*rather bewildered by this*] Yes, that's true too. Of course, you can't expect a man to stand by and see his home broken up. But murdering them, like that, is going a little too far. Well, I got to go and phone the doctor. This thing's given my wife a kind of a *relapse*. She thought a lot of Mrs. Marrant.
[*He goes down the steps and off at the left as LIPPO appears at the right.*]

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*stopping in front of KAPLAN'S window*] Dey don' ketcha Marrant, ha?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN I hev'n't hoid anyt'ing foider.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO He'sa gonna gat da 'lectrica-chair, ha?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN De blood lust of our enlightened population must be setisfied! De Chreestian state vill kerry out to de last letter de Mosaic law.

FILIPPO FIORENTINO Eef Ahm ketcha my wife sleepin' wit' 'nudder man, Ahm gonna keela 'er too.

SAM hurries on at the left.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN So you t'ink thet merriage should give to de hosband de power of life and det' and thet —

SAMUEL KAPLAN [*going up the steps*] Papa, is there any news of Marrant?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN I hev heard notting.

SAMUEL KAPLAN The police are going to make me testify against him. What can I do, Papa?

ABRAHAM KAPLAN You ken do notting.

SAMUEL KAPLAN How can I send a man to the electric chair? How can I? I tried to stop him, Papa. I tried to warn her —
[*He stops short as several shots are heard offstage at the left.*] What's that?

FILIPPO FIORENTINO [*excitedly*] Dey finda 'im!

He runs off at the left, followed by SAM. KAPLAN leans out of the window. At the same moment MRS. JONES leans out of her window and, a moment later, MRS. FIORENTINO out of hers. In the Marrant apartment the POLICEMAN leans out and ROSE and SHIRLEY appear in the hall-bedroom window. ROSE is wearing a mourning dress. OLSEN comes up the cellar steps and runs off at the left. MRS.

OLSEN *comes up the steps. Several men and women appear at the right and run off at the left.*

ROSE MAURRANT [*agitatedly*] Is that him?

POLICEMAN Must be!

Voices are heard shouting in the distance, and then another shot. The POLICEMAN leaves the window.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, God! They wouldn't shoot him, would they?
[*She leaves the window.*]

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*following her*] Rose!

Two or three more persons appear at the right and run off at the left. The POLICEMAN runs out of the house as BUCHANAN appears at the left.

DANIEL BUCHANAN [*excitedly*] They got him!

The POLICEMAN runs off at the left. SHIRLEY reappears at the Maurant window.

EMMA JONES [*calling*] Have they got him?

DANIEL BUCHANAN Yes! He was hiding in the furnace, down at three twenty-two.
[*As ROSE comes out of the house.*] They found him, Miss Maurant!

ROSE MAURRANT [*her hand to her heart*] Oh! Is he hurt?

DANIEL BUCHANAN I don't know. He fired at the cops and they fired back at him. I was just passing the house when it happened.

EMMA JONES [*leaning far out*] Here they come!
[*She leaves the window. The low murmur of the approaching crowd can be heard offstage left.*]

ROSE MAURRANT Where? [*She comes down the stoop and looks off, at the left.*] Oh!
[*She covers her eyes and turns away.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO You better come inside.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Come up, Rose.

DANIEL BUCHANAN Yes, you better. [*He takes her by the arm.*]

ROSE MAURRANT [*resisting*] No. No. Please let me alone. I want to see him.
[*She leans against the railing. Meanwhile the murmur and tramp of the approaching crowd has grown nearer and nearer.*]

GRETA FIORENTINO Look at him, vill you!

MISS CUSHING comes out of the house and stands on the stoop, followed a moment later by MRS. JONES. MAURRANT appears at the left, between two POLICEMEN. Behind him a third POLICEMAN holds back a swarming crowd, which includes SAM and LIPPO. MAURRANT'S clothes are torn, and his right arm is in a crude sling. Sweat, blood, and grime have made him almost unrecognizable. The POLICEMEN too show evidences of a struggle.

ROSE MAURRANT [*running forward*] Pop! Are you hurt?

FRANK MAURRANT [*seeing her for the first time*] Rose!

POLICEMAN [*to whom MAURRANT is manacled*] Keep back, Miss!

FRANK MAURRANT It's me daughter! Fer Chris' sake, boys, lemme talk to me daughter! Maybe I'll never be seein' her again!

SECOND POLICEMAN Give 'im a woid wit' her.
[*He is the officer who was on duty in the Maurrant apartment.*]

POLICEMAN [*after a moment's hesitation*] Well, all right. [*Savagely to MAURRANT.*] But don't try to pull nothin', hear?

There is a forward movement in the crowd.

SECOND POLICEMAN [*to the crowd*] Keep back, youse!

FRANK MAURRANT Rose! You're wearin' a black dress, Rose!

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, Pop, why did you do it? Why did you?

FRANK MAURRANT I must o' been out o' me head, Rose. Did she say anythin'?

ROSE MAURRANT She never opened her eyes again.

FRANK MAURRANT I'd been drinkin', Rose — see what I mean? — an' all the talk that was goin' around. I just went clean off me nut, that's all.

ROSE MAURRANT What'll they do to you, Pop?

FRANK MAURRANT It's the chair for me, I guess. But I don't care — let 'em give me the chair. I deserve it all right. But it's her I'm thinkin' of, Rose — the way she looked at me. I oughtn't to done it, Rose.

ROSE MAURRANT She was always so good and sweet.

FRANK MAURRANT Don't I know it? I ain't no murderer — you ought to be the one to know that, Rose. I just went out o' me head, that's all it was.

POLICEMAN All right, that's all now. Come on!

FRANK MAURRANT Gimme a minute, can't you? She's me daughter. Gimme a chance, can't you? What's gonna happen to you, Rose?

ROSE MAURRANT I'll be all right, Pop. You don't need to worry about me.

FRANK MAURRANT I ain't been a very good father, have I?

ROSE MAURRANT Don't worry about that, Pop.

FRANK MAURRANT It ain't that I ain't meant to be. It's just the way things happened to turn out, that's all. Keep your eye on Willie, Rose. Don't let Willie grow up to be a murderer, like his Pop.

ROSE MAURRANT I'm going to do all I can for him, Pop.

FRANK MAURRANT You're a good girl, Rose. You was always a good girl.

ROSE MAURRANT *[breaking down]* Oh, Pop! *[She throws her arms around his neck and buries her head against him. MAURRANT sobs hoarsely.]*

SECOND POLICEMAN *[gently]* Come on, now, Miss. *[He and SAM take ROSE away from MAURRANT.]*

POLICEMAN All right. Come on, Charlie.

They go toward the right, the crowd swarming behind them. Straggling along at the very end of the crowd is an unkempt woman wheeling a ramshackle baby carriage. MRS. JONES and MISS CUSHING fall in with the crowd. ROSE gradually recovers her self-control and stands at the stoop with SAM beside her. The others watch the receding crowd for a moment. Then KAPLAN and MRS. FIORENTINO leave their windows. The SECOND POLICEMAN enters the house, followed by LIPPO. MRS. OLSEN goes to the cellar. SHIRLEY looks down at ROSE and SAM for a moment, then abruptly leaves the window.

SAMUEL KAPLAN *[taking ROSE by the arm]* Rose, you better come inside.

ROSE MAURRANT No, I'm all right again, Sam — honestly I am. *[Trying to regain her self-composure.]* What about Willie, Sam?

SAMUEL KAPLAN I told him an accident had happened.

ROSE MAURRANT It's better to break it to him that way. But I'll have to tell him, I guess. He'd only find it out himself, tomorrow, with the papers all full of it. I saw Mrs. Sankey down at Police Headquarters. It's terrible for her, with her two little children.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*appearing at the Maurrant window, a covered pot in her hand*]
Rose!

ROSE MAURRANT [*looking up*] Yes, Miss Kaplan?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN There's a chicken here that I found on the gas stove.

ROSE MAURRANT A chicken?

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Yes. The policeman says he smelled it cooking this morning, so he turned out the gas.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, I remember now. My mother said she was going to make some soup for poor Mrs. Buchanan upstairs.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN It won't keep long, in this weather.

ROSE MAURRANT No. I really think Mrs. Buchanan ought to have the good of it.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN All right. I'll take it up to her.

ROSE MAURRANT Thanks ever so much, Miss Kaplan.
[*SHIRLEY leaves the window.*] It's only a few hours ago that she was standing right here, telling me about the chicken. And then she went upstairs, and the next I saw of her, they were carrying her out.
[*Abruptly, as she starts to go up the steps.*] Well, I've got to go up and get my things.

SAMUEL KAPLAN I must talk to you! What are you going to do, Rose?

ROSE MAURRANT Well, I haven't really had any time to do much thinking. But I really think the best thing I could do would be to get out of New York. You know, like we were saying, this morning — how things might be different if you only had a chance to breathe and spread out a little. Only when I said it, I never dreamed it would be this way.

SAMUEL KAPLAN If you go, I'll go with you.

ROSE MAURRANT But, Sam dear —

SAMUEL KAPLAN I don't care anything about my career. It's you — you — I care about. Do you think I can stay here, stifling to death in this slum, and never seeing you? Do you think my life means anything to me without you?

ROSE MAURRANT But, Sam, we've got to be practical about it. How would we manage?

SAMUEL KAPLAN I don't care what I do. I'll be a day laborer; I'll dig sewers — anything.
[*Taking her passionately in his arms.*] Rose, don't leave me!

ROSE MAURRANT I like you so much, Sam. I like you better than anybody I know.

SAMUEL KAPLAN I love you, Rose. Let me go with you!

ROSE MAURRANT It would be so nice to be with you. You're different from anybody I know. But I'm just wondering how it would work out.

SAMUEL KAPLAN If we have each other, that's the vital thing, isn't it? What else matters but that?

ROSE MAURRANT Lots of things, Sam. There's lots of things to be considered. Suppose something was to happen — well, suppose I was to have a baby, say. That sometimes happens even when you don't want it to. What would we do then? We'd be tied down then, for life, just like all the other people around here. They all start out loving each other and thinking that everything is going to be fine — and before you know it, they find out they haven't got anything and they wish they could do it all over again — only it's too late.

SAMUEL KAPLAN It's to escape all that, that we must be together. It's only because we love each other, and belong to each other, that we can find the strength to escape.

ROSE MAURRANT [*shaking her head*] No, Sam.

SAMUEL KAPLAN Why do you say no?

ROSE MAURRANT It's what you said just now — about people belonging to each other. I don't think people ought to belong to anybody but themselves. I was thinking, that if my mother had really belonged to herself, and that if my father had really belonged to himself, it never would have happened. It was only because they were always depending on somebody else, for what they ought to have had inside themselves. Do you see what I mean, Sam? That's why I don't want to belong to anybody, and why I don't want anybody to belong to me.

SAMUEL KAPLAN You want to go through life alone? — never loving anyone, never having anyone love you?

ROSE MAURRANT Why, of course not, Sam! I want love more than anything else in the world. But loving and belonging aren't the same thing.

[*Putting her arms around him.*] Sam dear, listen. If we say good-by now, it doesn't mean that it has to be forever. Maybe someday, when we're older and wiser, things will be different. Don't look as if it was the end of the world, Sam!

SAMUEL KAPLAN It is the end of my world.

ROSE MAURRANT It isn't, Sam! If you'd only believe in yourself a little more, things wouldn't look nearly so bad. Because once you're sure of yourself, the things that happen to you aren't so important. The way I look at it, it's not what you do that matters so much; it's what you are. [*Warmly.*] I'm so fond of you, Sam. And I've got such a lot of confidence in you. [*Impulsively.*] Give me a nice kiss!

[*SAM takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately. A gawky GIRL of seventeen, one of LIPPO'S pupils, appears at the left and looks at them, scandalized. Then she goes into the vestibule and rings the bell. The door clicks and she enters the house*

as SHIRLEY comes out, carrying a wicker suitcase. SHIRLEY looks at SAM and ROSE. To SHIRLEY.] I was just telling Sam that I think I'll soon be going away from New York.

SAM looks at her for a moment in agony, then goes abruptly into the house.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN I put your things in this suitcase.

She comes down to the pavement. The GIRL in the Fiorentino apartment begins tuning her violin.

ROSE MAURRANT [*taking the suitcase*] You've been awfully nice to me. Don't worry about Sam, Miss Kaplan. Everything will be all right with him.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN I hope so.

From the Fiorentino apartment come the strains of Dvorák's "Humoresque," jerkily played on a violin.

ROSE MAURRANT Oh, I just know it will! [*Extending her hand.*] Good-by, Miss Kaplan.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Good-by, Rose. [*Impulsively.*] You're a sweet girl! [*She hugs and kisses her.*]

ROSE MAURRANT I hope I'll see you again.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN [*crying*] I hope so, Rose.

ROSE takes up the suitcase and goes off at the left. SHIRLEY stands watching her.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN [*reappearing at his window*] Shoiley, vot's de metter again vit Sem? He's crying on de bed.

SHIRLEY KAPLAN Let him alone, Papa, can't you?

She turns and enters the house. KAPLAN sighs and, seating himself at the window, opens a newspaper. A shabby, middle-aged couple appear at the right and approach the stoop.

THE MAN [*reading the To Let sign*] Here's a place. Six rooms. Want to take a look at it?

A group of children, offstage left, begin singing "The Farmer in the Dell." This continues until after the curtain is down.

THE WOMAN All right. No harm lookin'. Ring for the janitor.

[The MAN goes up the stoop and rings the janitor's bell.] Somebody must o' just died.

THE MAN Yeah, maybe that's why they're movin' out.

[Wiping his face with a handkerchief.] Phoo! Seems to be gettin' hotter every minute.

MRS. FIORENTINO *seats herself at her window, a sewing basket in her lap.* MRS. JONES and MISS CUSHING *appear at the right, busily engaged in conversation.*

AGNES CUSHING The poor little thing!

EMMA JONES *[as they go up the steps]* Well, you never can tell with them quiet ones. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if she turned out the same way as her mother. She's got a gentleman friend that I guess ain't hangin' around for nothin'. I seen him, late last night, and this afternoon, when I come home from the police ——

[She is still talking, as they enter the house.]

MRS. OLSEN *comes up the cellar steps. A sailor appears at the left with two girls, an arm around the waist of each. They stroll slowly across.*

Curtain.