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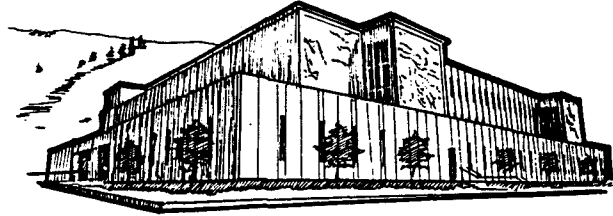
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University of
Montana

MIAMI, MY WIFE
- a Comedy in Three Acts

By


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B.A., Harvard University, 1974

M.F.A., University of Montana, 1991

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts
University of Montana
1991

Approved by



Chairman, Board of Examiners



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MIAMI, MY WIFE

- a Comedy in Three Acts

Characters

JACK NOLAN, 58 years of age
EILEEN NOLAN, his wife, 57 years
JACKIE, their daughter, 18 years
JIMMY, their son, 21 years
KAREN, their daughter, 26 years
LIZ, their daughter, 33 years
STAN, Liz' husband, 35 years
KEVIN, Liz' and Stan's son, 7 years
GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER JONES, a student from Jimmy's college
ULYSSES, lawn service worker
AUNT RITA, a woman in her mid-fifties

Time

The action of the play takes place in South Florida
at the Nolan residence.

THE SET

The set consists of various rooms in the Nolans' South Florida residence.

Downstage left and left center is the most prominent room, the Family Room. At left are sliding glass doors leading to patio and pool, which can be partially seen. Downstage left is the door leading into the Garage. At center stage is a lazy-boy chair. It should be set up against a partition suggesting the Kitchen wall. Upstage left is the Kitchen.

Downstage right is the Living Room. Down right is the main entrance to the house. Upstage right is the Dining Room. At right center upstage is a passageway leading to the interior of house -- bedrooms, bathroom. Both Kitchen and Dining Room converge on this passageway. Thus, one can enter the Family Room by either passing through the Kitchen or Living Room.

ACT I

[The Family Room. 9:30 PM. Darkness. There is the sound of a stick tapping. Lights up.

JACK, with a blanket draped over his shoulders as a cape, is tapping with a broom stick. He is blindfolded.

With his free hand he claws the air.

KEVIN, out of JACK's reach, crouches behind a chair. The boy is in his pajamas, wearing a yachtsman's cap. He grasps a rolled up piece of parchment in one hand. It is the treasure map which JACK, as Blind Pew, seeks. On the coffee table rests JACK's briefcase, an empty bottle of gin, and a glass filled with a mixed drink. The big toe of one of JACK's barefeet is wrapped in thick gauze. Beneath the blanket he wears shortie pajamas.]

JACK

If I had eyes! Shiver me timbers. Where might that map be?

[KEVIN springs forward, touches JACK, and darts back to his hiding place. JACK whirls and almost catches him.]

It's that young cub. I should have put his eyes out when I had him.

KEVIN

"Ho, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum."

[JACK whirls again.
The sound of the automatic door of
the Garage rising and the idling
engine of a car can be heard.
JACK whips off his blindfold.]

JACK

Sh! Did ye hear that, mate? Can ye hear 'em? They've come with
the black spot.

KEVIN

(rising)

It's Grandma, Pop.

JACK

Batten down the hatches. Stow the grog, lad.

[KEVIN picks up gin bottle.]

Will ye taste, messmate? I'll take a dram myself.

[JACK drains the mixed drink.
KEVIN starts toward the Kitchen
with the gin bottle.]

JACK

(in his own voice)

No, Kev. Outside in the garbage.

(sailor's voice again)

Shove it down good now, lad. We don't want the Captain spottin' it.

[KEVIN exits through the sliding glass
doors with liquor bottle. JACK moves
toward the Kitchen to rinse out his
empty glass. The Garage door is heard
going down. The telephone rings.
JACK's attention is divided.
A voice calls from off-stage.]

JACKIE (o.s.)

Da, can you get it?

[JACK hurries to rinse out glass.
Telephone rings again.
Car engine shuts off in Garage.]

JACKIE (o.s.)

Da!

JACK

(calling)

All right! I got it!

(picking up phone)

Hel-lo.

(then; animated public face)

Hey, Liz! How ya doin'?... Yeah, he's right here.

[KEVIN enters through sliding glass doors.]

Hold on. I'll let you talk to him.

(to KEVIN)

It's your mother.

(listens; into phone)

What's that? Oh jeez, I don't think so, hon. I'll let Mama talk to you about it. I was just changing the dressing on the foot when you called.

Let me put Kevin on. Hold on.

(hands KEVIN phone)

KEVIN

You lied, Pop. You weren't fixing your foot.

JACK

(finger to lip; playing the pirate again)

Sh!

JACKIE (o.s.)

(calling)

Who's on the phone?

[JACK moves quickly toward Garage.
He opens the door and leans in.]

KEVIN

(on phone)

Hi, Mom. We're playing "Treasure Island." Pop is funny.
He knows how to act drunk.

JACK

(to EILEEN, off-stage)

C'mon. Liz is on the phone.

[Car door slams shut.]

EILEEN (o.s.)

Jack. For God sakes.

[EILEEN enters. She is dressed in an attractive blouse and skirt. A department store I.D. badge is pinned to her blouse. She carries a tiny, elegant shopping bag that had held her lunch, along with her purse.]

Couldn't you talk to her a minute?

[Perfunctory kiss and EILEEN passes in front of JACK toward Kitchen.]

I just come in from work and I have to talk on the telephone?

JACK

She still wants to know if we're going up for Easter.

EILEEN

Did you tell her?

JACK

I told you I'm not telling them. I don't want them knowing.

EILEEN

(kisses top of KEVIN's head)

Hiya, honey.

KEVIN

(still on phone)

Hi, Grandma.

JACK

I told her to talk to you.

EILEEN

I'm not gonna lie to them, Jack.

JACK

Tell her my foot's acting up.

EILEEN

So you're gonna keep this game up?

JACK

Yes.

JACKIE (o.s.)

(calling)

Dad-die!

EILEEN

What is she yelling about?

JACK

You tired?

EILEEN

(leaving shopping bag in Kitchen)

Exhausted. The Canadians are still here. And we had a white sale.

I'll be lucky if I can get my shoes off.

JACK

C'mon. She's waiting.

EILEEN

(collapsing in laz-y-boy)

She's talking to Kevin.

JACK

He's asking too aren't we going up for his First Communion.

EILEEN

What are you doing with your briefcase? Would you put the foot up.
You're supposed to be resting it.

JACK

I'm looking for the Kit Kats I bought yesterday.

EILEEN

Jack! You're not eating Kit Kats?

JACK

(searching in briefcase)

Tsk. For Kevin.

EILEEN

That's all you need; eating chocolate. You'll be losing the foot altogether.

[JACKIE appears at the upstage entrance.
She wears tank top and gym shorts.
A bath towel is wrapped like a turban
around her head.]

JACKIE

Who's on the phone?

KEVIN

Here's Grandma, Mom. I have to go to the bathroom.

[KEVIN hands the receiver to EILEEN
and runs off upstage. EILEEN has kicked
off her shoes and propped her feet up.
Despite her fatigue, she's always happy
to speak to one of her children.]

EILEEN

(on phone)

Hiya, honey. I just walked in the door.

[JACK has found the candy in his briefcase, amidst the cigarettes, lighter, breath freshener, crayons, coloring book, illustrated "Treasure Island" and other props for playing pirates. Before closing the briefcase, JACK sprays his mouth with breath freshener, concealing himself behind its lid. JACKIE crosses the Living Room and enters the Family Room as JACK is spraying his throat. She eyes him suspiciously. In response, JACK reaches for the remote control and turns the television on.]

JACKIE

Are you gonna tell me who's on the phone, or not?

JACK

Your sister.

JACKIE

Which one?

JACK

Liz.

JACKIE

Good. I want to talk to her.

JACK

What do you want to talk to her about? Hey! I got those for Kevin.

EILEEN

(on phone)

Fine. He's been a little angel. We hardly know he's here.

JACKIE

(eating Kit Kat)

What're you watching now?

JACK

(changes channel with remote control)

We're gonna send all our money to Pat Robertson.

JACKIE

Turn that wacko off.

JACK

Don't you wanna be saved?

JACKIE

(to EILEEN)

Let me talk to Liz 'fore you hang up.

JACK

What are you gonna say to her?

JACKIE

Wouldn't you like to know.

JACK

Remember now, don't be mentioning anything.

[JACKIE gives him a smirk and walks into Kitchen to dispose of her candy wrapper. She returns carrying the garbage bag. JACK leans forward, elbows on knees, remote control in hand.]

EILEEN

(on phone)

He's like your father's shadow. Every night Daddy reads to him. Then Kevin has him ask the questions he has to know for his Communion.

JACK

What are you doin'?

JACKIE

Putting the garbage out. What's it look like I'm doin'?

JACK

(shuffling after her)

I'll do it.

JACKIE

(at sliding glass door)

You're not supposed to be walking on your foot. Sit down.

JACK

Don't put your hand in the can. There's broken glass.

[JACKIE rolls her eyes, flips on the patio lights, and exits. JACK stands at doors, looking anxiously after her. He flips the patio lights off.]

EILEEN

(on phone)

Daddy? He's right here. With his briefcase. He'd catch cold if he didn't have it with him.

[JACK hurries back to his chair.]

Jack, what are you doin"?

JACK

Nothing. Tell her I have to limp.

[JACK begins limping as he returns to his seat.]

EILEEN

Oh, and Liz, wait'll I tell you. I'm so proud of him. He cut out the cigarettes, and he hasn't had a drink since Christmas. And you should see Jackie now. She won't let him do a thing. Right now she's putting the garbage out for him, believe it or not.

[JACKIE enters]

JACKIE

What are you doing, turning the lights off on me?

JACK

Thanks, hon. You didn't reach in the can, did you?

JACKIE

No, I didn't reach in the can.

JACK

Cause I wouldn't want you cutting yourself.

JACKIE

You're lucky Mommy doesn't put out the garbage.

JACK

What? Why?

JACKIE

Would you sit down. Did you change your dressing? I didn't think so. C'mon. And put your foot up.

JACK

I have diabetes, you know, not Down's Syndrome.

JACKIE

You sure? Some of the stuff you're doing lately seems pretty retarded.

[JACKIE opens briefcase and takes out pack of cigarettes. JACK makes a stab for them, and JACKIE drops them back into briefcase. JACK hastily snaps briefcase closed. EILEEN's attention is attracted.]

EILEEN

What are you two saying?

JACKIE

We're not talking to you. Mind your business. And don't hang up. I want to talk to Liz.

EILEEN

Who are you giving orders to? Get in there and do your dirty dishes I see sitting there.

[JACKIE ignores EILEEN. She is changing the dressing on Jack's foot, but her manner is rough lest she appear too loving. Meanwhile, JACK holds remote control and gives television only peripheral attention. It rumbles low in the background.]

JACK

What are you gonna say to Liz?

JACKIE

I haven't decided yet.

JACK

Well whatta you want to talk to her about?

JACKIE

What is this, the Inquisition? Can't I talk to my own sister?

JACK

No.

JACKIE

I'm not gonna tell her you were fired. So relax.

EILEEN

(on phone)

Oh thanks, hon. We were relieved too.

(to JACK, low; rolling her eyes)

She's congratulating you Eastland settled the strike.

(on phone)

That's right. The unions got 32%. Could you believe it? No.

None of management got a nickel. Just the unions. The ones who clean the planes make more now than your father was making --

[JACK reacts. EILEEN covers her slip-up, but JACK still shakes his head in disgust.]

... than even your father makes.

JACKIE

(finishing the dressing)

I still think you should tell them.

JACK

Please. Let's not save the world.

JACKIE

We should talk about it. The whole family. Together.

JACK

(changes channel with remote control)

Wanna watch PBS? We can save the whales.

[JACKIE turns away angrily to exit.
Just then KEVIN comes in with his
religion book. A tail of toilet paper
hangs out of the back of his pajama pants.]

KEVIN

Ready to hear my Communion questions, Pop?

JACKIE

(turns)

Then invite everybody down here for Easter. You can put on as big an act as you like with your stupid foot. Then they'll see for themselves why you can't go to New York for the Christening and Communion. But don't make us sit here alone on Easter just because you want to be a hermit.

[EILEEN is making motions for JACKIE
to lower her voice lest Liz hear.
She covers the receiver with her hand.
Her eyes watch JACK and JACKIE as
she listens to Liz.
JACK suddenly turns up volume of T.V.]

T.V. VOICE

(syrupy; singing)

"I say, 'Miami'
You say, 'your ami'
He says, 'mi amigo'
She says 'mon ami'
But we all say, 'Miami's
the city of diversity'"

[KEVIN joins in, singing the jingle
and bouncing to the music.]

2nd T.V. VOICE

(speaking)

"Miami can be your 'ami' too. Come on down. Join in the celebration of the family of man. Miami, metropolis of the future."

3rd T.V. VOICE

(husky; while jingle refrains in background)

"Sponsored by the Miami Chamber of Commerce and Eastland Air Lines."

JACK

(to JACKIE)

They can all come down and join in the family of man.
With my brothers down at Eastland Air Lines.

JACKIE

You're so cynical now. It's disgusting.

[JACKIE exits angrily. KEVIN, who had been singing and jiggling to the commercial now slides up on JACK's lap. After a beat, he speaks.]

KEVIN

What's a "sin of gull," Pop? Is it a big sin or a little sin?

JACK

It's a little sin. Not a mortal sin. There wasn't sufficient reflection, or full consent of my will.

KEVIN

You can't come to New York for my Communion, Pop?

JACK

It can't be mortal.

KEVIN

What's "mortal," Pop?

JACK

They don't have mortal sins anymore?

(takes KEVIN's religion book; pages through)

KEVIN

(sees Kit Kats)

Oh, thanks, Pop. Kit Kats are my favorite.

JACK

You can't go to hell for eating a hamburger on a Friday anymore.
That I knew.

KEVIN

Hamburgers aren't a sin, Pop.

JACK

(still paging)

Somebody said they eliminated Limbo. Did they eliminate Limbo?
Hope they promoted those unbaptized babies. Didn't just set 'em
loose in space.

EILEEN

(on phone)

... Oh work is fine. We're busy now with the tourists. Next it'll
be the college students, down for spring break... No, he's right here.

(to KEVIN)

Kevin, sweetheart, your mother wants to tell you something.

JACK

Tell your mother how much Grandpa's foot is hurting him.

KEVIN

Can't you come to my First Communion, Pop?

JACK

(reaching for foot)

Aw, jeez!

EILEEN

(startled)

What! What is it?

[JACK makes a motion, indicating that he is putting on an act for KEVIN who has begun speaking to his mother on the phone. EILEEN tsks and sighs with the patience of Job.]

KEVIN

(on phone)

I AM going to bed now, Mom.

EILEEN

What was that all about? With Jackie?

[JACK walks over to the sliding glass doors, flips on the patio lights, and stands staring out.]

JACK

Oh she's still going on about wanting to tell everyone I was fired.

EILEEN

Not everyone, Jack. Just the family. How long you think you can keep it a secret? Liz is saying she wants us to fly Kevin up and then stay over for his Communion. That she's made reservations for us in a hotel. Jack, are you listening to me?

JACK

Hmm.

EILEEN

Would you turn that thing off. Did you hear what I'm saying to you?

JACK

That she wants us to fly up.

EILEEN

That she's already paid for reservations in a hotel. Would you please not walk away from me when I'm trying to tell you something.

KEVIN

(on phone)

I know, Mom. I am.

JACK

So whatta you saying we should do, pay to fly up?

EILEEN

How are we gonna pay?

JACK

That's what I'm saying.

EILEEN

I'm saying: tell them you were let go and we can't fly on passes anymore and they'll understand. They might even offer to come down here then for Easter. Jack, I don't want to sit here by myself for Easter. Just the three of us.

JACK

And Jimmy.

EILEEN

Jimmy has one pass left to get him here. Then what? How is he supposed to get back to school? How you gonna keep it from him?

(pause)

Do you want me to say there was a temporary lay-off?

JACK

No. Nothing about the job.

EILEEN

Then you talk to them all. I'm not telling lies anymore.

JACK

Just don't let her talk to Liz. That's all I'm asking.

EILEEN

What do you want me to do? Put a lock on the telephone?

Maybe you want me to put one on the front door too?

KEVIN

Okay, here's Grandma. Okay, Mom.

EILEEN

(on phone)

Hi. Oh I know. He wants you to see how independent he is.

That's he's studying.

KEVIN

Ready, Pop? Ask me the first one.

[KEVIN hands JACK the religion book. He stands with straight posture, waiting to be questioned.]

JACK

"Why did God make you?"

KEVIN

"God made me to know, love, and serve Him in this world."

JACK

Very good.

KEVIN

Pop, does God have a wife?

JACK

If He did, He wouldn't be God.

[JACKIE walks into the room quickly to retrieve the brush she left behind. She circles the room and exits again, speaking without breaking stride.]

JACKIE

Ma, don't spend the night on the phone. I'm expecting a call.
And let me talk to Liz.

[EILEEN dismisses JACKIE's remarks with a wave of her hand.]

KEVIN

My Mom says you used to be an altar boy, Pop.

JACKIE

He probably drank all the wine.

[JACKIE makes a cross with both index fingers and thrusts them in Jack's direction, as if warding off Dracula. She exits.]

JACK

(for JACKIE's benefit)

I was going to be a priest. But then I married Grandma. Now I'm a saint.

KEVIN

You can come to church with me, you know, Pop.

EILEEN

(on phone)

What! Oh my God, Liz. That's fantastic. Jack! Liz and Stan were invited to the Governor's mansion. For lunch.

(listens)

And to sit in his box at the race track.

JACK

Oh-h. Terrific.

KEVIN

My father knows the Governor. And I'm learning golf too.

EILEEN

His foot? Well, you know your father. He bought these shoes at Thom McAnn's that were "two for the price of one?" With his circulation as bad as it is, he didn't feel them pinching him. So the big toe ended up getting infected. He got the shoes cheap, and now he's paying a doctor.

KEVIN

Want me to lift your foot up on the table, Pop? Does it hurt?

JACK

(letting KEVIN treat him as a patient)

Only when I kick Grandma.

KEVIN

You don't kick Grandma, Pop.

JACK

When she tells all my business I'd like to.

EILEEN

Kevin, honey, he wouldn't dare. Not if he knows what's good for him.

JACK

(reading religion book)

"How can we know, love, and serve God in this world?"

KEVIN

Pop, why did God make mosquitoes?

JACK

That's for a different test.

EILEEN

Wait, I'll ask him. Jack! Liz wants to know are you interested in a diabetic cake? She has a recipe. She says she'll make it when we go up to New York. Here, I'll let you talk to her.

[JACK protests soundlessly.
EILEEN thrusts the receiver at him.
JACK shakes his head, resigning himself.
He limps toward the phone as if preparing
for an acting role. KEVIN sits studying
his religion book, imitating JACK's
manner of sitting.]

JACK

(on phone; with sudden animation)

Hey, hon. How ya doin'?

(walks around as he talks)

Is the golf pro there putting about?

(lets out a groan)

Oh!

EILEEN

(turning; startled)

What? What's the matter?

JACK

(on phone)

Oh nothing, honey. Just the pain in the foot. Ahh. That's better.

EILEEN

Jack, now cut that out. You scared me.

JACK

Yeah. That's why we're thinking maybe we better not make the trip
to New York.

(listens)

No, it was your mother. She wouldn't let me buy a pair of moccasins.

EILEEN

That's right, blame me.

JACK

And you know how she has me always waiting on her, hand and foot.

EILEEN

Yeah. That'll be the day.

JACK

I don't get a chance to sit down.

EILEEN

Jack, it's long distance. Stop fooling around.

JACK

The tourists? Yeah, I've been brushing up on my French and Spanish. Next we'll have the college kids, descending like locusts.

EILEEN

(kisses KEVIN)

Look at my little scholar. He's such a good boy.

KEVIN

(moving head away)

Grandma, I'm studying.

JACK

What, for Easter? Yeah, hon, we'd like to. Ah-h...

[JACK moans. EILEEN reacts, then realizes it's only JACK's performance.]

We'll have to see how the foot's doin'. Ooh. Here, I'll put Mama back on. Love you, hon. I'll be talking to you.

[EILEEN shakes her head in disapproval as JACK hands her the phone.]

EILEEN

(on phone)

Yeah, I know, he's a riot. We laugh all day long. So, anyway, honey, what I was starting to say: with his foot now the way it is, I really don't think we can make it up. As much as we'd like.

JACK

All right, lad, enough religion for one night. Let's shove off for Treasure Island.

KEVIN

You gonna read to me in bed, Pop?

JACK

Grab the book out of my sea chest there, and I'll be right in. Lay to it now, lad.

[KEVIN takes the illustrated "Treasure Island" out of JACK's briefcase along with another Kit Kat candy. He hurries off-stage, pausing to kiss EILEEN "good night" in passing.]

KEVIN

G'night, Gram. G'night, Mom.

EILEEN

(on phone)

Kevin's saying "good night" to you, Liz. G'night, honey.
Your mother says "good night."

KEVIN

(singing as he exits)

"Fifteen men on a dead man's chest...
I say, 'Miami'
You say, 'your ami'
Miami... city of diversity..."

[JACK stands at sliding glass doors, looking out. He flips on the patio lights, then walks into the Garage.]

EILEEN

(on phone)

What? I will not. Emergency call my foot. Operator, you tell THEM to hang up.

(to Liz)

No, it's one of Jackie's friends. They pull this stuff all the time.

[JACK enters wielding a broom.]

Jack, the operator just cut in on us. Call that one and tell her I'm gonna break her neck for her. The nerve.

[JACK nods and opens sliding glass doors.]

Jack, now what in the name of God are you doing?

JACK

(closing doors behind him)

I thought I heard a frog.

EILEEN

Would you please sit down and rest your foot. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the man's gonna drive me to drink. He's like a hen on a hot griddle. Now he's going out by the pool to catch a frog.

(listens)

No, we were up the whole night with frogs, croaking in the pool.

[Pounding noises, interrupted by an occasional "ribbet, ribbet" can be heard out by the pool.]

I better let you go. This is gonna cost you. Besides, I want to talk to my grandson. I haven't seen him all day.

[JACK enters with a long-handled pool skimmer. A dead frog lies prone in the net. JACK appears to have gone through quite a battle. He passes through the Kitchen and exits toward interior of house.]

You got him? Ooh! The size of him. He got the frog. A big ugly thing... So, hon, I don't think we'll be coming up for Easter. I'm sorry.

[Toilet flushes off-stage.]

Jack, don't -- Glory be to God, your father's flushing a frog down the toilet. Now you see what I have to put up with. All right, hon, listen: I'll talk to you tomorrow then.

(listens)

All right. Thanks for calling. Love you. Bye. Oh wait a second! Jackie wants to say something to you.

(calls)

Jackie!

(into phone)

Hold on, honey. All right, I'll be talking to you.

(calls loudly; now we know who JACKIE sounds like)

Jackie! You wanna talk to your sister?

[JACK enters from upstage with pool skimmer.]

Is she there? She pick up?

JACK

I told you I didn't want her talking to Liz.

EILEEN

Lovely. I work all day long and then have to come in and talk on the telephone.

JACK

You wanna watch something?

EILEEN

No, I want to get my clothes off.

[JACK starts to exit to pool.]

Here, Jack, help me up outa here.

[JACK offers a perfunctory arm.]

So we're going to have Easter by ourselves now.

JACK

I got that frog.

EILEEN

She's still pushing for us to fly up. She's gonna see about getting a wheelchair at the airport and call back tomorrow.

JACK

A what? I'm not going anywhere in any wheelchair.

EILEEN

Well you're the one had me lying for you. Going into such detail about the foot. It's no wonder she thinks you're the Elephant Man.

[JACK opens sliding glass doors to escape conversation.]

Where you going? Would you leave the frogs alone. You're gonna stop up the toilet one of these days. Then we'll have a picnic.

[JACK exits. EILEEN glances down at the receiver resting off the hook, and takes out her frustration on JACKIE.]

Jack-ie! You gonna pick up or not?

[EILEEN sighs her frustration away. She retrieves the dress shoes she had kicked off and mumbles to herself.]

What a man, what a man.

[As EILEEN exits upstage, she turns her affection toward her grandson.]

EILEEN

Where's my little darling? I haven't seen the poor child all day.
He'll go home and tell his mother nobody loves him.

[EILEEN exits toward the interior of house, moving with the fatigue of her work day. There is then the sound of JACK pounding out on the patio. A frog's "ribbet" is heard. More pounding.]

[Brief tableau.
The stage is empty. Receiver of telephone still rests off hook.
After a beat, JACKIE enters swiftly and silently. She glances around, then picks up phone and speaks into it.]

JACKIE

Liz, don't hang up. I'm on in the bedroom.

[JACKIE hangs up the receiver. She exits through the Garage. Empty stage. After a beat, JACKIE re-enters, carrying the garbage bag she took outside earlier. She removes JACK's empty gin bottle from it and stashes the bag back in the Kitchen. She then props the liquor bottle on the coffee table, in prominent view. She sits herself down in EILEEN's laz-y-boy and waits, taking on a parental air.]

[JACK enters.]

JACK

Didn't you talk to Liz?

(notices gin bottle)

What are you doin'? Where'd you get that?

JACKIE

You're like a little baby, you know that?

[JACK is scrambling to hide the gin bottle before EILEEN might see it. He stashes it in his briefcase.]

JACKIE

Maybe you don't care if you kill yourself. But what about Mommy?
Don't you care about her?

[JACK reaches for television's remote control to avoid conversation.
He keeps his briefcase close by.]

She can't hear. She's in the bedroom. Isn't that something to be happy about? Having Mommy? Would you stop watching that stupid thing. You act like you're married to it. Maybe you don't trust the rest of us, but at least Mommy --

JACK

Who said I don't trust you?

JACKIE

You. You don't want anyone in the family to know you were fired. Right? 'Cause you don't trust us.

JACK

What are you talking about "trusting" you? Of course I trust you.

JACKIE

Then why won't you tell anybody?

JACK

C'mon, Jackie.

JACKIE

What?

JACK

(leaning toward T.V.; dismissing question)

C'mon. What's the point? Gathering the ole homestead around the family hearth?

JACKIE

I wish you could hear yourself.

JACK

Be realistic.

JACKIE

I'd rather be dead.
(pause)

JACKIE (continued)

So they moved you down to Florida. And ten years later they let you go. So big business is a son of a bitch. So what else is new? You gonna cry in your beer the rest of your life? At least we're not still stuck in New York.

JACK

Well isn't that where you're going to school next year?

JACKIE

What's that got to do with it?

[JACK uses the remote control to change the channel.]

I'm trying to talk to you and you're watching television. Just forget about it.

[JACKIE exits upstage. JACK sits pensive. A television commercial catches his eye.]

JACK

(to television)

They get married. They go to college. They don't call. So up yours A T & T.

[JACK shuts off the set, pointing the remote control like a gun at it. He notices the telephone. He steals over and picks it up to listen if anyone is on. After a beat, EILEEN enters Kitchen, speaking before she is in the same room as JACK. She helps herself to an ice cream pop in the freezer and gathers the day's unopened mail. At the sound of her voice, JACK hangs up the receiver and turns the television on.]

EILEEN

The poor child. He fell off already.

JACK

Kevin's asleep? I was gonna read to him.

EILEEN

I hardly saw the poor boy all day.

JACK

Young Jim saves Long John from swinging this chapter.

EILEEN

Did Jackie pick up?

[EILEEN collapses into the laz-y-boy with ice cream and mail. JACK takes advantage of the excuse to listen in again on the conversation. He carefully picks up the receiver and shushes EILEEN.]

JACK

(into phone)

Oh you're still on? All right.

(hangs up)

Whatta she still talking to Liz about?

EILEEN

Jack, I don't know. Leave me alone.

[EILEEN looks through mail while eating ice cream. JACK plays with the remote control.]

Why didn't you open the mail? You're home all day and you have to wait for me?

JACK

She wouldn't say anything about the job, would she?

EILEEN

Is there anything on tonight? What's the movie on HBO?

JACK

Oh, something about India -- "The Razor's Edge."

EILEEN

What's that about?

JACK

Some seeker of truth, looking for the meaning of life.

EILEEN

I don't know why we bother, to pay for cable. There's never a darn thing on worth watching.

[EILEEN looks through mail; eats ice cream. JACK circles the phone anxiously.]

EILEEN

I could win a thousand dollars. What do you think, Jack, should I send my name in?

JACK

What are you gonna tell Liz tomorrow? When she calls?

EILEEN

I shouldn't tell her anything. I should make you.

[Pause. JACK changes channel.]

Jack, you're gonna have to tell them all sooner or later. So why not now?

JACK

Why? We're all right. The house is paid for.

EILEEN

I'm not thinking about the house, Jack.

JACK

(points at mail to change subject)

I picked up those extra forms you wanted. For the income tax.

EILEEN

Thanks. You're a sport.

JACK

Oh, and Penney's called again.

EILEEN

Ah they're a pain in the neck. Five dollars a month is all they're getting. If they don't like it they can lump it.

(more junk mail)

Here, you want an Early Bird Funeral Plan? You get perpetual care.

JACK

Ulysses comes tomorrow. Cut the grass.

EILEEN

Is he over the heart attack?

JACK

Must be. You wanna pay him? Or shut the blinds?

EILEEN

The grass is a sight. We have to get it cut. You think we oughta give him a little extra for Easter?

JACK

You mean a bonus?

EILEEN

We got an Easter card from our "friends at A T & T."

(looking at postcard)

Oh! Rita's in Cocoa Beach.

JACK

Who?

EILEEN

My cousin Rita. You remember Rita, who was in the convent?

She's in Cocoa Beach.

JACK

When she mailed the postcard. Right now she's probably on the corner with her luggage.

EILEEN

Jack, you like Rita. It would be nice to see her again.

JACK

I don't want anybody coming this year. I already told you. Every goddam spring it's the same thing. Well this year, for once, nobody's visiting us. That's all we need: her coming. Then going back to New York broadcasting to all the relatives I was fired. Then we'll have them all calling, mealy mouth with pity. Well I don't want anybody's pity. I want --

[Pause.]

EILEEN

What, Jack? What do you want?

Nothing.

JACK

EILEEN

Jack, don't be like that. Tell me.

[JACK shrugs, shaking off the request.
He changes television channel.]

[Pause. JACKIE appears at upstage
entrance to Living Room. She stands
drying her hair with a towel as she listens.]

JACK

When's Jimmy flying down?

EILEEN

Thursday, he thinks. His last test is Wednesday.

JACK

What was that I heard you and Jackie talking about when she was crying
in her room the other night? I meant to ask. Why were she crying? Hm?

EILEEN

(after a pause)

She was upset, Jack. She's worried about you.

JACK

Well I don't want her feeling bad, crying. Then she goes and buys me a record.

EILEEN

Because you're always saying how much you like Glenn Miller.
And that you have none of his records.

JACK

Well I don't want her spending her money.

EILEEN

She loves you, Jack. That oughta mean something.

JACK

Hm.

(reaches for remote control)

EILEEN

Jack, don't do this. Shutting us out.

JACKIE

(entering; drying hair)

All right, it's too quiet in here. What are you two talking about?

EILEEN

None of your business, Big Ears.

JACK

The relatives are invading.

JACKIE

Oh God. Who's coming this year?

JACK

No one, we hope. How's Liz doing?

JACKIE

Whatta we have to live in Florida for now anyway? Why don't we move back to New York?

JACK

We oughta move, and not tell anyone.

JACKIE

There's nothing keeping us here now, right? We could all be together in New York.

[JACK gives JACKIE a suspicious look which she avoids with a question.]

Where's Kevin?

EILEEN

Sleeping. Like I'm gonna be, soon as I get myself up outa here.

JACKIE

Oh, the poor little working girl. Here, I think you need a massage.

JACK

So what were you talking to Liz about?

JACKIE

Remember last year? When Aunt Julia and Uncle George came?

EILEEN

How can I forget. There were flakes all over my carpet.

JACKIE

From his psoriasis. Ugh. I had to follow him around with the vacuum.

EILEEN

Ooh, that feels nice.

JACKIE

I filled up two hefty bags with his scabs.

EILEEN

Oh-h, yes... the neck.

JACKIE

You should meditate, Ma. That's what you need.

EILEEN

Meditate? I shoulda joined a convent. Like your Aunt Rita.

JACK

Then we'd get lepers visiting, dropping fingers all over the floor.

EILEEN

Jack, don't be disgusting.

JACKIE

Who's Rita?

EILEEN

You remember Aunt Rita.

JACKIE

Aunt Rita?

EILEEN

My cousin Rita. We got a postcard from her. She's in Cocoa Beach again this year. You remember Aunt Rita.

JACKIE

Ma, if I remembered her I'd tell you, believe me. She's coming to visit?

JACK

Not if we can help it... So, what'd you tell Liz?

EILEEN

You remember Rita. She was in the convent. Then she went to work on Wall Street.

JACK

Now she visits relatives.

JACKIE

Ma, you ate ice cream? I thought you gave it up for Lent?

EILEEN

Aw leave me alone.

JACK

I gave up relatives for Lent.

JACKIE

You didn't go to Mass last Sunday either, you know.

EILEEN

I was working. Leave me alone. I'm tired.

JACK

This one oughta join the convent.

JACKIE

At least I'm not a cynic. With no faith in my family.

JACK

(rises)

I'll leave you alone here with Pat Robertson. I'm going to the bathroom.

EILEEN

With your briefcase?

JACKIE

You don't have to announce it, Da, for crying out loud.

EILEEN

Jack, don't spend the night.

JACKIE

And close the door after you. We don't want to sit looking at you.

JACK

I always close the door.

JACKIE
You do not.

JACK
Well I don't want to insult you. Think I'm hiding something.

[JACK exits with briefcase.
EILEEN motions to JACKIE to come closer.]

EILEEN
(loud voice)
I could win a thousand dollars, Jackie. What do you think,
should I send my name in?

(low voice; indicating television)
C'mere. Turn that thing down.

JACK (o.s.)
Aw fer God sake --

JACKIE
Kevin must have left the seat up.

EILEEN
(calling)
You all right, Jack?

JACK (o.s.)
A little water-logged.

JACKIE
Man overboard!

EILEEN
(loud)
You see what you're teaching your grandson? Leaving the toilet seat up?
(low)
Does he have the door shut?

JACKIE
(looking upstage)
Yeah. We can talk.

EILEEN
(loud; about massage)
Thanks, honey. That felt good.

EILEEN (continued)

(low)

You didn't say anything to Liz?

JACKIE

No, but I was tempted, believe me. Ma, you have to tell them. You're the one always saying "blood is thicker than water."

EILEEN

I know. Believe me, if it was up to me --

JACKIE

'Cause if he keeps this up, I'm gonna tell them. Acting like the poor soul, nobody loves.

EILEEN

I can't budge him, Jackie. I've never seen him this thick. He doesn't want anyone knowing -- pitying him, he says. But I know he's really hurt. This has really hurt him.

[JACK quietly opens the bathroom door and eavesdrops on the conversation.]

JACKIE

But you said we have enough money from what Grandma left us.

EILEEN

That isn't it, Jackie. It isn't the money.

JACKIE

I know that; I'm not stupid. But he's got us, right? What else does he need? He can sit around all day now and read his Civil War books.

EILEEN

It's not that easy, Jackie. For a while now he hasn't liked going up to New York to visit. You know that. He says he doesn't feel like Liz wants him there, and that Karen doesn't trust him with the baby.

JACKIE

Oh that's stupid. Why, 'cause Liz makes him smoke outside?

EILEEN

And he's thinking about you now, going away to college next year.

JACKIE

(tsks)

That's not till September. And I'm gonna be coming home on vacations.

EILEEN

I know. I'm only saying: that's why he threw himself into the job.
And now they let him go. He's hurt, Jackie.

[JACK disappears into Bathroom again.]

JACKIE

Well that's why I told Liz --

[Toilet flushes off-stage.]

EILEEN

Sh! Don't let him hear us talking.

[JACKIE reaches for the remote control
and turns on MTV.]

EILEEN

(calling)

Jack! Light a match after you. I want to go in there next.

(low; to JACKIE)

So what'd you tell Liz?

JACK

(entering with briefcase)

A match? What? I don't smell.

EILEEN & JACKIE

(together)

No-ooo...

JACKIE

Not much you don't.

EILEEN

He doesn't go for a week, then we all have to suffer.

JACK

Well you don't have to tell all my business.

JACKIE

It's no secret, Da, believe me.

(pats him on stomach)

JACK

(indicating MTV)

What the hell is this on?

JACKIE

The Cure.

JACK

Looks more like the disease. I'm going on in. C'mon. You wanna go to bed?

EILEEN

Oh, he's getting romantic in his old age.

JACKIE

No he's not. He just doesn't want us talking about him out here.

EILEEN

We're not talking about him.

JACK

Want me to do these dishes here?

JACKIE

Why, so you can listen?

EILEEN

Jackie, get in there. Don't dare to let your father do your dirty dishes.

JACKIE

I can't. I have to rinse the conditioner out of my hair.

JACK

She going back in the shower?

EILEEN

Jackie! Now that's not right, using our shower, when your father's getting ready for bed. You know he can't stand the place all steamed up when he's trying to sleep.

JACKIE

(exiting quickly)

Then put the air conditioner on.

EILEEN

Oh sure. And buy a new car.

JACK

(moving toward Kitchen)

I'll do them.

EILEEN

Don't, Jack. I don't want you doing her dishes. I don't want you doing anything but resting the foot. Or you really will need a wheelchair. And would you stop feeling like you have to be doing something every minute. For God's sakes, relax already.

[Telephone rings.]

JACK

(calling to JACKIE)

You want me to get it?

[EILEEN rolls her eyes and shakes her head as JACK continues to walk on the foot.]

JACKIE (o.s.)

I got it!

EILEEN

It's for her. Let her get it.

[Telephone rings again.]

JACKIE (o.s.)

(calling)

You got it?

EILEEN

(calls back)

You get it!

JACK

(standing at Kitchen wall phone)

You got it?

JACKIE

(calls)

I got it!

EILEEN

Jack, help me up out of here.

JACKIE
(enters running)
It's Liz.

JACK & EILEEN
(together)
Liz!?

[JACKIE takes receiver off Kitchen wall
and hands it to her mother.]

JACK
What's the matter?

EILEEN
Is something wrong? Why she calling back?
(takes receiver)

JACK
What is it?

EILEEN
(on phone)
Hi. Is anything wrong?

JACKIE
Nothing's wrong, for God sakes.

EILEEN
(on phone)
What? Really?... Jack!

JACK
What?

EILEEN
They're all coming down.

JACK
Who, all?

EILEEN
Of course not. We'd love to have you all.

JACK
Who, all?

Liz and Stan. JACKIE

Oh that's wonderful. EILEEN

(to JACK)

And Karen and the baby. Liz talked to Karen.

Aw fer God sakes... JACK

Fantastic. And Jimmy'll be here too. We'll all be together. EILEEN

Oh, I'm so happy. Jack!

I hear you. JACK

Isn't that great, Da? JACKIE

(on phone) EILEEN

We'll all be together. For Easter.

You said something to her. JACK

What would I say to her? We're all gonna be together, Da. JACKIE

(drums on his briefcase)

Isn't that great?

Hm. JACK

Oh, Liz. I can't wait... Your father? He's right here. EILEEN

He thinks it's a wonderful idea.

Hm. "The family of man." JACK

[Lights down.]

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II

[Friday morning. The hissing of lawn sprinklers can be heard outside. A sleeping figure lies sprawled beneath a sheet on the couch in the Living Room. Near him is propped up a large cardboard cut-out of Ronald McDonald. After a beat, JACK enters upstage from the interior of the house. Dressed in suit and tie, carrying his briefcase, he walks hurriedly. His Eastland Air Lines I.D. is pinned to his breast pocket. As he passes the figure slumped on the couch he does a double-take. He recovers from his surprise and enters the Kitchen. He places briefcase down and pours himself a cup of coffee from the automatic coffee maker. With cup in one hand he picks up briefcase with the other. Then he remembers he needs his car keys. He puts down briefcase and checks pockets. No keys. He pats down all his pockets and comes up empty-handed. Exasperated, he puts down coffee cup and hurries toward interior of house. As he passes sleeping figure, he takes notice of Ronald McDonald for the first time. Then he notices the half-empty gin bottle on coffee table. He holds it up to the light, checking its contents. He hurries back toward Family Room, opens briefcase, stashes gin bottle inside, closes briefcase, and hurries toward interior of house. The sleeper stirs as JACK passes.]

[Brief tableau.]

[The Garage door opens and JACKIE sticks her head on to the stage. She is wearing her hair tied back beneath a kerchief, dressed for house cleaning. She looks around for JACK, then ducks back into Garage. The sleeper, GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER JONES, throws the sheet from off his body. He's revealed to have been sleeping in blue jeans and woolen shirt, despite Florida's heat. A closely cropped beard rims his chin, but his upper lip and neck are clean shaven. EILEEN enters through sliding glass doors from patio. She wears a light weight bathrobe. She carries coffee mug, the morning paper she's been reading, and clipped coupons and shopping list.]

EILEEN

It's already too hot to even drink my coffee outside.

[EILEEN sits in the laz-y-boy. She resumes tearing coupons from newspaper.]

Could you believe it? Here's the chicken on sale now.

After I just bought two fryers.

[KEVIN enters from Garage, wearing bathing suit and life preserver, carrying a rubber duck. He enters slowly, head down, as he struggles to strap on his life jacket. He stands in the middle of the Family Room, intent on his task.]

Kev, how 'bout a little breakfast before you go in the pool?

[The hood of the car in the Garage is heard to slam shut. JACKIE enters, still wearing kerchief for cleaning. She carries a screwdriver in her hand as she moves toward Kitchen.]

JACKIE

I shoul'da taken Shop instead of Civics.

EILEEN

Maybe I'll get another chicken. It's easy to stretch with a crowd.

Jackie, what do you think?

JACKIE

Ma, we had chicken all week, for crying out loud.
I don't suppose YOU know what the distributor cap looks like.

EILEEN

(looks up)

I thought you were cleaning the Garage like I asked you.
Don't you dare fool with the engine of that car.

JACKIE

(spotting briefcase)

Where'd Daddy go?

EILEEN

What are you doing now with his briefcase?

KEVIN

(looks up)

That's Pop's sea chest.

JACKIE

(making a game of it)

Sh!

[JACKIE puts briefcase under EILEEN's chair.]

(to EILEEN)

Hiding it.

EILEEN

Jackie.

JACKIE

What?

EILEEN

I don't like this fooling around. You took his car keys too, didn't you?

JACKIE

Would you rather him make believe for the rest of his life that he
goes to work every day?

EILEEN

It's just while Jimmy's here he's doing this. He doesn't want Jimmy
knowing.

[JACK enters hurriedly.
JACKIE slips out sliding glass doors,
exiting to patio and pool area.
CUSTER JONES sits up on the couch.
Like a smoker reaching for a cigarette
first thing in the morning, CUSTER JONES
reaches for his camera equipment.
He remains barefoot.]

JACK

Eil! C'mon. Give me the list. I want to get out of here before Jimmy
sees me.

EILEEN

I have it right here with the coupons. Take it easy.

JACK

Did you see where I put the car keys?

EILEEN

And there's the money. I didn't put the prune juice down.
Do you want another bottle of the prune juice, Jack? How you been going?

JACK

I want to get goin' out of here, that's what I want.
Now where the hell is my briefcase?

EILEEN

For God sakes, Jack, I'm only asking. You're the one up half the night
with stomach cramps.

JACK

I thought I left it out here.

EILEEN

I didn't get a wink of sleep last night, between you and the frogs.
You bounce around like you're on a trampoline.

KEVIN

(still intent on life preserver)

Pop says that's the only exercise he gets.

JACK

Who the hell we have in there on the couch now?

EILEEN

He goes to school with Jimmy. They were on the plane together.
It didn't get in till after midnight.

JACK

He's not staying, is he?

EILEEN

Sh! He'll hear you.

JACK

Maybe he'll get insulted and leave. What's he, work for McDonald's?

EILEEN

No. I don't know. It has something to do with his thesis. In photography.

JACK

He takes pictures of McDonald's for college?

KEVIN

(sings jingle)

"McDonald's...
Food, Family and Fun..."

JACK

Well I hope this one's not a chow hound. Remember that one last year?
Ate all the cannolis?

EILEEN

I decided to get another chicken.

JACK

You're gonna have us sprouting feathers soon.
Kev, you didn't see my briefcase, did you?

KEVIN

(looking toward EILEEN's chair)

Your sea chest?

EILEEN

(distracting him)

Kevin, honey, you can go in the pool now if you want. Here, let Grandma
help you.

(buckles life jacket)

[JACK is looking around for his briefcase.
He peeks into the Garage.]

JACK

Maybe I took it in the bedroom.

EILEEN

Jack, after you went in to bed last night, Liz called.

KEVIN

My Mom called?

EILEEN

(nods to KEVIN)

She wants to give Karen a ride in the boat. So they're gonna sail
down from Palm Beach tomorrow.

JACK

They're coming a day early?

KEVIN

Yay!

EILEEN

Jack, don't get excited.

JACK

And you couldn't put them off?

EILEEN

What could I say to her? I couldn't tell her no.

KEVIN

My father has a yacht.

JACK

Now I'm gonna have to go to the cripple place this morning.

EILEEN

Jack, you're not still gonna rent a cast for the foot, are you?

JACK

I told you I was.

EILEEN

Is that really necessary?

KEVIN

(opening sliding glass doors)

Pop, wanna come walk the plank?

JACK

(looks at EILEEN)

I think I just did.

(moves toward Living Room)

I feel like Blind Pew just before the stagecoach hit him.

[JACK moves through Living Room. KEVIN exits. EILEEN sits thoughtfully, then continues to review food ads and clip coupons. CUSTER JONES pops up, seemingly out of nowhere, and snaps a photo of JACK as he passes.]

CUSTER JONES

Morning!

JACK

Hey. How are you. Jack Nolan.

(extends hand)

CUSTER JONES

George Armstrong Custer Jones. I hear your family's coming.

That should be interesting. I like shooting families.

JACK

Yeah, we got a crowd coming. What's with the Ronald McDonald?

CUSTER JONES

Well, curiously, he's my constant companion. For my thesis: "McDonald's and the Break-Up of the American Family." I wonder: would you mind standing over by those family photos?

[CUSTER JONES positions Ronald McDonald so that the cardboard cut-out and JACK frame a wall gallery of family portraits.]

CUSTER JONES (continued)

You don't have a briefcase, do you? Well that's all right.
The I.D. badge will do. That's it! Hold it.

(snaps photo)

I wanted to call it, "Junk Bonds: Free Enterprise and the Family" --

JACK

What?

CUSTER JONES

My thesis. But my advisor said that was too broad a topic.
So I picked McDonald's.

(hands JACK a balloon on a string)

After all, that's why families don't sit down to dinner together anymore,
right? I mean, if the family is sacred, Ronald is the anti-Christ.
I love those eyebrows! Hold those eyebrows. Yes.

(snaps photo)

I think every photo's a fight. Don't you? I mean, somebody has to win.

JACK

So what else do you know about corporations?

CUSTER JONES

One out of every 15 Americans has worked for McDonald's. Interesting,
isn't it? I've gotten people eating Big Macs in ghettos, AIDS wards,
divorce courts... Now I want to get Ronald with palm trees. Miami Vice.

JACK

So you're planning on being a photographer?

CUSTER JONES

Well, curiously, I'm not exactly sure. All the money's in commercial
photography. I mean, take Coca Cola: it's like a world religion.
But who wants to shoot Buddhist monks drinking Diet Coke?

JACK

(handing back balloon)

I gotta get to work myself. Grab a coffee in the Kitchen. Help yourself.

CUSTER JONES

(following JACK)

Jimmy tells me you're the Claims Manager at Eastland Air Lines. You know, it's curious, but on the flight last night, one of my tripods seems to have gotten slightly bent. I was wondering if maybe...

[JACK disappears into interior of house. CUSTER JONES wanders off after him, his words trailing off. JACKIE opens the sliding glass doors and glances around for JACK. She enters, carrying socks and running shoes. She sits on couch and begins to put socks on.]

JACKIE

Gimme the shopping list. I'll go to the store.

EILEEN

Jackie, give your father his car keys.

JACKIE

Why?

EILEEN

Because he's getting all excited.

JACKIE

Well he'd feel a lot better if he sat down and talked to us all about it. Jimmy should know.

EILEEN

C'mon, give him the keys. He has to be back in time to take me to work. And go in and clean the Garage like I asked you.

JACKIE

You're going to work on Good Friday?

EILEEN

Yes. We have the "Miami, My Customer" monthly awards this morning.

JACKIE

Oh God. That's so corny: "Miami, My Customer."

EILEEN

Why? I think it's a nice idea. You please the most customers,
the company oughta give you a bonus. It's only fair.

JACKIE

But imitating that stupid commercial.

[CUSTER JONES' voice is heard.
JACKIE crosses through the Kitchen
to avoid JACK and CUSTER JONES.
She exits upstage as they come down-
stage through Living Room.
JACK carries a woman's leather case
of car keys. CUSTER JONES ambles
behind him with one camera in hand,
and another draped around his neck.
As they pass through Living Room,
CUSTER JONES retrieves Ronald McDonald
and carries it under his arm.
EILEEN pulls her bathrobe closed around her.]

CUSTER JONES

... They don't need a pension plan. They mostly hire teenagers.
Remember that fella who shot up the McDonald's in San Diego?
They had refused to hire him. I mean, how would you feel?
One out of every 15 Americans working for McDonald's, and you can't?

JACK

(opening sliding glass doors)

You'll find some palm trees right out back.

CUSTER JONES

(exiting with cameras and Ronald)

Oh thank you. What curious lighting. I wouldn't have suspected --

[JACK closes sliding doors on CUSTER
JONES' voice. EILEEN has removed JACK's
briefcase from its hiding place under
her chair.]

JACK

I wouldn't be surprised Jackie invited him too.

EILEEN

Jack, take my keys, why don't you.

JACK

I did. Oh, you found my briefcase. Where was it?

EILEEN

Kevin must have been playing with it.

JACK

He didn't open it, did he?

(looks inside briefcase)

EILEEN

My mother could feed nine people with one chicken.

JACK

Well, people were smaller back then. Put down a bottle of gin.
General Custer polished off our Easter supply.

[JACK is looking in mirror, straightening his I.D. badge, smoothing back his hair, examining himself with briefcase in hand.]

EILEEN

They drank a whole bottle?

[JACKIE screams off-stage.]

Now what are she yelling about?

JACK

Put down a bottle of gin.

[JACKIE enters in tank top and shorts, wearing sunglasses and carrying a boom box.]

JACKIE

(passing into Kitchen)

That wacko took a picture of me through my window while I was getting dressed.

JACK

(turns from mirror)

God punished you: for how you treat your poor ole father.

JACKIE

(enters Family Room)

I turned around and there was that Ronald McDonald thing staring in my window.

JACK

(taking list)

All right, let me get out of here. I'm already sweating.

[JACKIE looks amazed from briefcase to car keys, and then frowns at EILEEN.]

JACKIE

You found your keys?

JACK

I took your mother's

(moves toward Garage)

JACKIE

(thinking fast)

I'll go to the store for you, if you want.

EILEEN

Jack, don't forget to take your medicine.

[JACK changes direction and moves toward Living Room.]

Jack!

JACK

What!?

[JACKIE hurries into Kitchen.]

EILEEN

Where you going?

JACK

To take my medicine.

EILEEN

The new bottle's in the Kitchen.

JACK

I thought I'd finish the old one first.

EILEEN

Jack, the doctor wouldn't have given you a new prescription if he didn't think you needed it. Now cut out your fooling around. Your blood sugar was way up last night. You want to lose the foot?

JACK

Probably 'cause of your daughter.

[JACK says this for JACKIE's benefit,
who now appears with pills and a glass
of water on a tray.]

What's this?

JACKIE

Your medicine, father dear.

JACK

Now she's probably trying to poison me.

EILEEN

Jackie, I'll kill you, using my good Waterford crystal.
You think your father's company?

JACK

(removing glass from his lips)

Don't mention "company."

JACKIE

Aren't you looking forward to having us all together on Easter, Daddy dear?

JACK

No.

JACKIE

He's so sentimental.

[JACKIE retreats with glass to Kitchen,
then moves toward interior of house.
As she is about to exit upstage, CUSTER JONES
enters, startling her. He has come into the
house through the bathroom door that opens
on the pool. JACKIE stifles a scream and
dashes off. During the following exchange,
CUSTER JONES meanders through Living Room,
carrying Ronald McDonald under his arm,
gazing all around for photo possibilities;
then he wanders out front door.]

JACK

If Jimmy wakes up, tell him I left late 'cause the foot was acting up.

EILEEN

Here, Jack, the coupons.

(hands him coupons)

You'll be back in time to take me to work?

[JACK bends to kiss EILEEN.
He pecks at her cheek.]

JACK

I'll wait in the car, down a few houses. Tell Jimmy you called a taxi.

EILEEN

Jack, you don't have to stay out the whole day, driving around.

It's Good Friday. You can tell Jimmy they closed the office at noon.

He'll be sleeping all morning anyway. I'm surprised his friend's up already.

JACK

(relaxing)

That's true. Especially after all the schnapps they drank.

EILEEN

You sure they finished the gin?

JACK

You know, it's funny: I had all kinds of dreams last night,
back at LaGuardia. Strauss. Cornish. Dick Eyeland.

EILEEN

God, Strauss. I wonder whatever became of him?

JACK

I don't know. We were all on one of those family picnics, Eastland
used to give. Remember?

EILEEN

My God. Out on the Island. With all the kids. Jimmy walked for the
first time there, remember?

JACK

Anyway, I'm sitting in some apple barrel. I don't know. And they're
all there: the old crew. Then it was like we were on a ship, and
there's a mutiny. And I'm Long John Silver with his parrot and crutch...

Who?
EILEEN

JACK
I don't know. It was crazy. But when I woke up, I was thinking back - eh.

What?
EILEEN

JACK
No, it was just -- I was young. We were all younger.

[Telephone rings.]

EILEEN
Jack, stay home today.

JACKIE (o.s.)
I got it!

JACK
What? What are you talking about? I gotta pick up the cast for the foot.

[JACKIE enters, still wearing sunglasses
and carrying boom box.]

JACKIE
It was for Jimmy.

JACK
Is he taking it in the bedroom?

EILEEN
You didn't wake him, did you? He's sleeping.

JACKIE
It was a girl.
(as JACK moves toward Garage to leave)
Da, Kevin wants you. He's out by the pool.

[JACK hesitates. He wants to leave in
case Jimmy gets up, but he doesn't want
to ignore his grandson either.
He moves toward sliding glass doors.]

JACK
Give a yell if Jimmy comes out.

JACKIE

Ma, Jimmy's calling you. I think he's sick.

EILEEN

(excited)

What?

[EILEEN rises quickly and moves through Living Room as JACK exits through sliding glass doors. JACKIE smiles and turns on the television; the volume loud. She exits through the Garage. Empty stage.]

[Brief tableau.]

[There is the sound of a garage door rising; then the sound of a car starting; then of a car backing out of the Garage.]

[Brief tableau.]

[JACK swings open the sliding glass doors and hurries through Family Room to Living Room. EILEEN enters hurriedly from interior of house and meets JACK in Living Room. Both look out window together.]

JACK

Goddamit to hell.

EILEEN

Is that Jackie? Where she going?

JACK

Who the hell cares where she's going? She's going.

EILEEN

All right, Jack, take it easy. It's all right.

JACK

Whatta you mean, it's all right? It isn't all right. Where's Jimmy?

EILEEN

He took it in the bedroom. He's still in bed.

JACK

She doesn't understand, that one.

EILEEN

Well she thinks you don't understand, Jack.

JACK

(moving away)

Don't gimme that.

EILEEN

She's right, Jack. It isn't fair. Cutting us all off from everybody.

JACK

What are you talking about, cutting you all off. Kevin's here, isn't he?

EILEEN

You can't hold a conversation with a child, Jack.

JACK

It isn't necessary.

EILEEN

Why should the rest of us have to sit here alone on Easter just because you want to be a hermit?

JACK

Look: for forty years I put on an act at work. Well I'm not putting on one here now.

(moves toward Family Room)

EILEEN

Well then what do you call this, sneaking around?

JACK

I ask you to do one thing...

EILEEN

Jack...

JACK

At work they're all mealy mouth: "oh we're so sorry." A lot of bullshit. They're glad to see you on your ass.

EILEEN

(moving toward him)

Jack...

JACK

I don't want any pity. You hear?

(then)

Who the hell's watching "Geraldo?"

(moves toward television)

"Fired fathers of Florida corporations... and how they feel about it."

(shuts off set)

[EILEEN stands watching JACK.
She is as still as he is agitated:
the eye in the storm.]

Now I'm gonna have to find that old crutch in the garage.

Underneath all that crap. They're coming tomorrow, I gotta have something for the foot.

(disappears into Garage)

EILEEN

Jack, be careful in there. Please. Don't bang your foot.

[JACK starts banging things around
in the Garage.]

Jackie's gonna clean in there before they get here.

[There's a crash in the Garage.]

Jack, you all right?

[There is an ominous silence.
EILEEN moves nervously toward Garage.
JACK appears in the doorway.]

JACK

(with doll in hand)

Goddam Monopoly game came down on my head.

(tosses doll behind him)

We have toys and games in there from 20 Christmases ago.

What the hell we saving them for?

EILEEN

So now you're gonna pick a fight with me, 'cause you're mad at her.

JACK

Who's fighting? I'm not fighting. I'm only saying --

[Doorbell rings.]

JACK

Now who is it?

[JACK peers through the curtains of window, stage right, facing the front of the house. He still holds his briefcase. EILEEN starts to gather up her belongings to make her escape in her nightgown from the unexpected caller.]

EILEEN

Who is it?

[KEVIN bursts through the sliding glass doors, dripping wet. He still wears life jacket.]

KEVIN

There's a truck here, Grandma! They're coming ashore, Pop!

EILEEN

What? Who is?

JACK

(looking out)
It's Ulysses.

KEVIN

It's 'lysses!

JACK

Keep it down, Kevin.

EILEEN

He must be over the heart attack. Kevin, don't come in.
You're dripping all over my carpet.

JACK

Looks like he brought the whole family to help.

KEVIN

This isn't a carpet, Grandma. It's Treasure Island. I just swam ashore.

EILEEN

Well swim back and get a towel. C'mon, c'mon.

[KEVIN exits. Doorbell rings again.]

EILEEN

Jack, don't keep the poor man standing. He's just getting over a heart attack.

JACK

Are we home?

EILEEN

Jack, the grass is a sight. We have to get it cut. Answer the door.

JACK

You answer it. I gotta get out of here.

EILEEN

Where you gonna go? Jackie has the car.

[Doorbell rings again.]

Jack, answer it. I have to get myself dressed and out to work. Let me get passed first.

(moves through Living Room)

JACK

Maybe I oughta start cutting the grass.

[EILEEN exits upstage.
KEVIN enters through sliding glass doors. He is wrapped from chest to ankles in a terry-cloth beach towel. He rushes past JACK toward front door.]

KEVIN

I'll answer it, Pop!

[JACK follows his grandson to the front door. He moves hesitantly, briefcase in hand. He assumes his public face: patting down his hair with one hand, adjusting his Eastland Air Lines I.D., raising eyebrows in anticipation. KEVIN swings open the front door and ULYSSES is standing there. He is a gaunt black man of 55. He wears coveralls and a cap. A neckerchief, like a Foreign Legion veil, drapes his neck. Hooked onto his waist is a hedge trimmer and a walkie talkie. He carries a briefcase identical to JACK's. ULYSSES nods respectfully in greeting. He is solicitous, having been raised in the segregated South, but he is no Uncle Tom.]

Although uneducated, he is savvy and very bright.
KEVIN stands in rapt concentration of the man for the entire conversation.]

JACK

Hey, Ulysses! Good to see you back on the job. How you feeling?

ULYSSES

Heart still ticking. I feel pretty good. Thought for a second there you weren't gonna be home again.

JACK

The grim reaper's been cutting my grass, Ulysses.

ULYSSES

Don't look like it. Can't see no sprinkler heads.

JACK

Yeah, well...

ULYSSES

You wasn't happy how my boys was workin' while I was sick?

JACK

No, no. Your boys do a good job.

ULYSSES

Junior said nobody answer the door.

JACK

I think we were out one day.

ULYSSES

That's what I told him. But Junior, he said he thought he saw the curtain moving there.

[ULYSSES points at the window through JACK always peeks out. He's on to JACK.]

But I told him that's just the air conditioner blowin'.

[ULYSSES holds JACK's eye a beat, then opens his briefcase.]

JACK

Yeah, it's a hot one...

ULYSSES

I got your Accounts Receivable right here, Mister Nolan.
Twenty-two, fifty.

JACK

I shoulda went into business for myself, like you, Ulysses.
I'd be a rich man now.

ULYSSES

Or a dead one. I came that close, Mister Nolan.

JACK

Is that right?

ULYSSES

But the wife pulled me through.

JACK

Damn hospital bills are enough to give you a relapse.

ULYSSES

Well, I'm gonna tell you a secret, Mister Nolan. I made money being sick.

JACK

How's that?

ULYSSES

I came out ahead. Turned out I been taking so much in-surance over
the years, they ended up paying me to be sick.

(indicates last month's bill)

That be your Accounts Receivable. Twenty-two, fifty.

[Ronald McDonald appears behind ULYSSES.
Then we see CUSTER JONES holding the cut-out.
The photographer squeezes between the two
men and enters the house.]

CUSTER JONES

Excuse me, could you each possibly hold your briefcases in your
outside hands?

(places Ronald McDonald between them)

I'll put Ronald here.

KEVIN

'lysses has a briefcase just like you, Pop.

JACK

Ulysses, this is General Custer.

ULYSSES

He still makin' a last stand?

CUSTER JONES

That's it. Right there. Thank you.

[CUSTER JONES snaps photo.
KEVIN is blinded by the flash.
He blinks a few times, then stands
rubbing a fist in his eyes.
ULYSSES' walkie talkie begins spitting
static. ULYSSES, with an air of
officialdom, removes the walkie talkie
from his belt. When KEVIN regains his
vision, he stands staring at the phenomenon
of the walkie talkie. CUSTER JONES packs
Ronald McDonald under his arm and wanders
into the Kitchen. He helps himself to
orange juice, first examining the pulp
content. He then disappears into interior
of house.]

ULYSSES

Roger. I can read you, Junior. Proceed. Over.

JUNIOR'S VOICE (o.s.)

Pa?

(uncertain pause)

ULYSSES

Proceed. Over.

JUNIOR'S VOICE

We doin' the hedge, Pa?

(pause)

Over.

ULYSSES

Junior wondering if you want that high hedge on the south side of the
house trimmed?

JACK

On the side? No. Don't touch the hedge. We'll end up having to
look at the neighbors.

ULYSSES

Negative on the hedge. Proceed with lawn. Can you read me? Over and out.

JUNIOR'S VOICE

All right, Pa.

(pause)

Over and out.

ULYSSES

Junior's ma oldest boy.

JACK

(hands back bill)

Your sons are helping now I see.

ULYSSES

My boys do most of the work now. I just sit.

JACK

And count your money, huh?

ULYSSES

When I get it.

(ruffles KEVIN's hair)

Well. Best get them boys working. Sun'll be sweating soon.

[ULYSSES puts the Accounts Receivable back in briefcase. JACK stands lost in thought. He leaves the front door open. Lawn mower outside buzzes.]

KEVIN

'lysses was sweating, Pop.

JACK

(staring off)

Hmm? Yeah, it's hard work, cutting lawns.

KEVIN

But 'lysses doesn't work, Pop. He just watches.

JACK

(not hearing; absent-mindedly staring off)

What's that?

[KEVIN waves toward street.]

KEVIN

It's Jackie! Where she going in the car, Pop?

JACK

Hm?

KEVIN

What's Jackie doing, Pop?

JACK

(looks up)

Reminding me of Junior.

KEVIN

Can I bring 'lysses out a glass of lemonade, Pop?

[JACK is still staring off.
The sound of lawn mower is louder.]

JACK

I think that'd be a nice idea.

[KEVIN scampers in his towel toward Kitchen.
JACK glances down at his briefcase. He
unconsciously puts his hand over his heart,
covering his I.D. badge.
EILEEN screams off-stage. JACK doesn't
seem to notice. CUSTER JONES enters from
interior of house. He crosses toward
sliding glass doors.]

CUSTER JONES

It seems as if your wife might be getting dressed.

[JACK pays no mind. He continues to stand
pensively, gazing out the open door as
lawn mower hums. CUSTER JONES exits
through Garage. KEVIN exits with lemonade
through sliding glass doors. EILEEN sticks
her head on stage from interior of house.
Her hair is combed and curled now.]

EILEEN

Where is he now?

JACK

Sitting under the tree.

EILEEN

Well he just took my picture. I went in the bathroom to get my hair spray and he took me in my slip.

JACK

(still staring out)

He's sitting in the shade.

EILEEN

Well keep him out of here. I'm trying to get dressed.

JACK

C'mere, Eil. Look.

EILEEN

(still with only head on stage)

What? Close the door.

[EILEEN glances around to see if the coast is clear. She enters in her slip. JACK closes the front door. Lawn mower sound lessens.]

EILEEN

Don't worry. Jimmy's still in bed.

JACK

You see he's got the sons doing the work now.

EILEEN

Ulysses? He got so skinny since the heart attack.

JACK

Remember we were wondering if he had medical? Turns out he made money off the insurance. Look at him. Unincorporated man. The true American. Eil, I sold my soul for health insurance.

EILEEN

What, you wanna cut lawns?

[KEVIN rushes in through sliding glass doors, heading for Garage.]

KEVIN

'lysses gonna help me find buried treasure, Pop.

JACK
Avast there, matey.

KEVIN
I need a shovel.

[EILEEN follows JACK into Family Room.]

JACK
All right, mate. Then take Ulysses out a can of grog.

KEVIN
(salutes)
Aye, aye, sir.
(disappears into Garage)

EILEEN
Jack, don't give him beer. He'll be drunk.

JACK
(getting beer from refrigerator)
One can of beer.

EILEEN
He'll be expecting it every time now. You won't get any work out of him.

JIMMY (o.s.)
(calling)
Ma-a!

EILEEN
(stage whisper)
It's Jimmy!

[JACK looks around like a caged animal.
KEVIN enters from Garage with shovel
and crutch.]

KEVIN
I found your crutch, Pop.

JACK
Shiver me timbers. Ye saved Long John from swinging, mate.

[JACK takes the crutch. He tucks briefcase
under his arm, hands KEVIN the beer, and
throws an arm around the boy's shoulder.]

Ma-a-a!

JIMMY (o.s.)

JACK

If he sees me, I'll tell him the foot was acting up, and I didn't go in.

(exiting; leaning on crutch and KEVIN)

Batten down the hatches. Will ye taste, messmate?

KEVIN

I don't drink beer, Pop.

EILEEN

(looking out towards pool)

Oh my God. Here he comes with that camera again. Let me get out of here.

[EILEEN hurries toward interior of house and exits.]

JACK

I'll be out by the shed. Call me when Jackie gets back with the car.

C'mon, Kev.

KEVIN

I'm Young Jim.

JACK

All right, Young Jim. Let 'em come. I've still got a shot in me locker.

(pats briefcase)

Give us a ditty, lad.

[As JACK and KEVIN exit through sliding glass doors, they sing.]

JACK & KEVIN (o.s.)

"Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,
Ho, ho, ho and a bottle of rum.
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,
Ho, ho, ho and a bottle of rum."

[CUSTER JONES enters through Garage. He wanders around the empty stage with Ronald McDonald. He examines family artifacts: photo portraits, athletic trophies, etc. Then he drifts into Living Room and retrieves a new roll of film from his pile of equipment, and

changes a lens. JIMMY enters from interior of house. He appears groggy. He is a good-looking young man, barefoot, barechested, and wearing gym shorts. A cream of some kind is smeared on his face.]

JIMMY

Ma! George, did you see my mother?

CUSTER JONES

Recently, no. But a while back she ran out of the bathroom, screaming. That's curious. Isn't that your sister driving by in the car?

[JIMMY comes downstage right to the window. Both young men gaze out.]

EILEEN (o.s.)

(calling)

I'll be out in a second. I'm getting dressed.

[CUSTER JONES quickly sets up Ronald and snaps a photo of JIMMY yawning.]

JIMMY

C'mon, George. I just got up.

(moving toward Kitchen)

Sage called. Her car broke down.

CUSTER JONES

Not the Toyota?

JIMMY

Yeah. You want coffee?

[JIMMY disappears into Kitchen. There he removes a carton of ice cream from freezer and a spoon from silverware drawer. CUSTER JONES retrieves Ronald and drifts out the front door. JIMMY doesn't realize he's exited. EILEEN enters in skirt and blouse with a department store I.D. pinned to her chest. She holds a matching suit jacket in her hand along with a needle and thread. In stocking feet she walks into the Kitchen.]

JIMMY

(calling to CUSTER JONES)

You want a bagel?

EILEEN

I already had my cereal. Hi, hon.

(kisses JIMMY)

Who was that on the phone?

JIMMY

(moving into Family Room with ice cream carton)

A girl from school.

EILEEN

She hardly gave you a chance to get home. She misses you already?

Sit down a second, honey. I want to talk to you.

[EILEEN sits in laz-y-boy with needle and thread. JIMMY examines his reflection in the sliding glass doors.]

JIMMY

Did I get bigger?

EILEEN

Are you lifting weights?

JIMMY

Can't you tell? I got my hair cut too.

EILEEN

I noticed. I think I like it better a little longer.

JIMMY

Well you can't expect me to go to an interview with one of the Big Eight with long hair.

EILEEN

You got a job interview? That's wonderful. Which company?

Congratulations, honey. When?

JIMMY

Tuesday. But I could never work in Miami. You practically have to speak Spanish.

EILEEN

You don't think so?

[JIMMY spoons ice cream out of container
into his mouth; flips through magazine.]

JIMMY

No way. I wanna stay in Boston. She's coming down for a job interview too.

EILEEN

Who?

JIMMY

Sage. Who called. She wants to be a Connie Chung.

EILEEN

That's nice. I just wanted to say --

JIMMY

Her car broke down on the turnpike. A Toyota too.

EILEEN

That's too bad. I wanted to talk to you while your father isn't here.

JIMMY

He at work?

EILEEN

Well that's what I wanted to say. Not to ask him to bring you pads
and pencils from work, like he usually does. Because --

JIMMY

Oh I won't. Don't worry. They still bugging him about the long
distance calls?

EILEEN

Well, it's a little more than that --

JIMMY

You think she could stay here tonight while they fix her car?

EILEEN

Who?

JIMMY

Sage.

EILEEN

Oh Jimmy.

JIMMY

What?

EILEEN

You're not listening to what I'm telling you.

JIMMY

I heard you. Not to ask for pens and pads. I won't.

EILEEN

Liz and Stan are coming tomorrow in their boat --

JIMMY

I know.

EILEEN

With Karen and the baby --

JIMMY

Sage can sleep in the Garage.

EILEEN

Jimmy, your father didn't want a crowd coming this Easter.

That's all I'm saying.

JIMMY

She's not staying for Easter, Ma. For crying out loud.

(rises)

You make everything a federal case.

EILEEN

I'm trying to explain something to you.

JIMMY

First, Daddy forgets to send me the extra plane passes. Then work/study loses my check. Look at my hair. I didn't even have money to buy mousse this month. I just won't ask anybody for anything anymore. All right?

EILEEN

Is that how you talk when you come home? Maybe you oughta go back to bed.

JIMMY

Maybe I oughta go back to school.

EILEEN

Thank you. You bring somebody home without asking and then you expect us all to --

JIMMY

He was on the plane with me. I already told you. Anyway, I couldn't go back to school now even if I wanted. Daddy still hasn't mailed me more passes.

EILEEN

Jimmy, your father was fired.

[Silence.]

JIMMY

What?

EILEEN

After the strike, they couldn't touch the unions, so they let a hundred managers go.

JIMMY

He was fired? Why didn't you say something?

EILEEN

I tried once when you called -- Anyway, your father didn't want me talking. He still doesn't.

JIMMY

The bastards.

EILEEN

Besides, what's the sense in talking: making everybody else feel bad.

JIMMY

They move you down to Florida and then they --

EILEEN

He doesn't even want to talk to me. One night I put my arm around him, and he pushed me away.

JIMMY

Does this mean we can't get the plane passes anymore?

EILEEN

We won't be able to go up to New York anymore and see any of you, no. And we still don't know yet about the medical. What they'll give him.

JIMMY

I still have my last tuition bill to pay.

EILEEN

We have enough put away. Besides, remember Liz offered to help you out.

JIMMY

I'm not gonna ask Liz.

EILEEN

Why not? Why wouldn't you ask your sister? What's so terrible about letting her help you, if you need it, and she has it? You're just like your father. He won't let anybody help him either. And you know what? I think it's selfish. He won't let anybody near him, anybody love him. One night I put my arm around him -- "Jack," I said, "it isn't worth it, if it's gonna make you sick. Take early retirement..." -- and he pushed me away.

(cries)

JIMMY

I'm sorry, Ma.

EILEEN

I know.

JIMMY

I'll take Sage to a hotel.

EILEEN

No, no, that's not it. Let her come. We can't let the poor girl sleep on the beach. You said it's only for tonight.

JIMMY

She can sleep in the Garage.

(pause)

Where's Daddy now?

EILEEN

Out in back. He wants you to think he went to work.

[Pause.]

JIMMY

I'm gonna be working soon, Ma.

[CUSTER JONES appears at the sliding glass doors with Ronald McDonald under his arm. He presses his face up against the glass, cupping one hand around his eyes as he peers inside.]

EILEEN

Jimmy, tell him to get away from here with that camera.

[JIMMY waves his arms at CUSTER JONES.]

JIMMY

George!

EILEEN

I swear to God. He walks around like he's looking for a dead body.

[CUSTER JONES wanders away and EILEEN rises with the jacket she's barely managed to stitch.]

Thank God I'm working. Or I think I'd go out of my mind here all day.

JIMMY

(rising)

I better get going too.

EILEEN

Are you gonna walk? Jackie took the car.

JIMMY

I'll call a taxi.

EILEEN

She better be back in time to take me to work, that's all I have to say.

[As EILEEN reaches the upstage exit, CUSTER JONES suddenly appears, carrying Ronald McDonald. He startles her.]

CUSTER JONES

Curious how you can come in through the bathrooms in these Florida houses.

EILEEN

Jimmy, maybe George wants to ride over with you.

(exits)

JIMMY

(to CUSTER JONES)

I'm getting dressed to pick Sage up.

[JIMMY exits. CUSTER JONES wanders into Living Room. He sets up his tripod. Next he walks into Family Room to retrieve something. Just then KEVIN enters through sliding glass doors, singing. He carries a pouch -- like a duffel bag -- slung over his shoulder.]

KEVIN

"Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,
Ho, ho, ho -- "

[KEVIN breaks off singing upon spotting CUSTER JONES. He stares at the photographer; then reaches into his pouch. He takes out a scrap of paper, takes CUSTER JONES' hand, and places the paper in his palm.]

CUSTER JONES

What's this?

[KEVIN walks into the Kitchen
CUSTER JONES examines scrap of paper.]

CUSTER JONES

A black spot? What's a black spot signify?

[KEVIN makes no reply from Kitchen where he resumes singing pirate ditty. CUSTER JONES shrugs, crumbles up paper, and retrieves what he came into the room for. He returns to tripod in Living Room. Meanwhile, KEVIN has opened the refrigerator. He fills a tall glass with ice and grabs a six pack plastic ring from which dangle two cans of beer. He exits through sliding glass doors with drinking paraphanelia, singing once again.]

[JIMMY enters Living Room from upstage. He is wearing shorts, short-sleeved shirt, designer sunglasses, and baseball cap. He carries a pair of white tennis shoes.]

JIMMY

George, does this go? I don't want the sun to damage my hair.

[CUSTER JONES snaps a photo of JIMMY.]

JIMMY

C'mon, George. I look terrible.

[JIMMY passes through Kitchen to Family Room.]

CUSTER JONES

(noticing out Living Room window)

Mmm. That's curious. She's stopping this time.

[JIMMY sits down to put on tennis shoes and no socks. He puts his sunglasses on top of his head and glances out sliding glass doors toward patio and pool. Meanwhile, CUSTER JONES re-positions Ronald McDonald near the front door. Anyone entering the house would have to pass him. CUSTER JONES retreats behind the tripod and waits. He and JIMMY speak from room to room.]

JIMMY

(still glancing outside)

George, did you see my father?

CUSTER JONES

(behind tripod)

He's drinking out back with the black guy.

[Front door opens and JACKIE enters. Her boom box can be heard blasting from the car. She enters cautiously, as if afraid of encountering JACK. CUSTER JONES snaps her photo as she passes Ronald. This time she is more annoyed than startled, but pays the photographer little mind, hardly breaking her stride. She finds JIMMY in the Family Room. CUSTER JONES straightens Ronald's posture.]

JACKIE

Where's Daddy? Did you see him yet?

JIMMY

No. Did you take my sun block?

JACKIE

Why not?

JIMMY

I need it for my nose. He's out back.

JACKIE

Did Mommy tell you?

JIMMY

Yeah. I can't believe it.

JACKIE

So aren't you gonna talk to him?

JIMMY

Yeah, but first I have to pick somebody up. Does this go?

JACKIE

It's a little bit early for a date, isn't it?

JIMMY

I had to call a cab, but now you can give me a ride.

JACKIE

You called a taxi? You're unbelievable, you know that?

JIMMY

I wouldn't of had to call a cab if you weren't driving around the block.
Now c'mon.

JACKIE

(pointing beyond patio)

Why don't you go stay in one of those houses? They look just like this one.

JIMMY

What are you mumbling about?

JACKIE

They have pools and lawns and pink flamingos.
Next time you come home, go to one of those houses.

JIMMY

Whatta you been out in the sun too long?

[CUSTER JONES appears in doorway of
Family Room with his camera.

JACKIE ignores him.]

JACKIE

Why should this house be any different? Did you ever ask yourself?
How come they leave you alone here, and nobody's afraid you're gonna
steal the VCR?...

CUSTER JONES

Those new alarm systems.

(wanders back to Living Room)

JACKIE

... Why don't you walk in one of those houses and see what happens?
Yell "Ma-a" at the top of your lungs; see how far you get.

JIMMY

All right, Pat Robertson, am I getting a ride or not?

JACKIE

And tell that jerk to get out of here with his camera.
He looks like a serial killer.

JIMMY

C'mon. Hurry up. Sage is waiting.

JACKIE

First come around back and talk to Daddy.

JIMMY

All right, but make it quick.

[They start out front door.]

Is my hair sticking up?

[CUSTER JONES snaps their picture as they pass. JACKIE throws on a bright light just as the camera flashes, ruining the exposure. JIMMY and JACKIE exit. CUSTER JONES fusses with equipment. EILEEN comes to hear what all the commotion is about. She starts to enter from upstage, sees CUSTER JONES, and scrambles off. After a beat, CUSTER JONES gathers up Ronald McDonald and moves into Family Room. The sliding glass doors swing back soundlessly and JACK sticks his head into the house. He glances around; spots CUSTER JONES.]

JACK

Psst! Did I hear a car?

[ULYSSES and KEVIN appear behind JACK on the patio. ULYSSES carries a beer and his briefcase. His cap is on backwards. KEVIN carries a shovel. He wears Ulysses' neckerchief tied around his head like a pirate's scarf. JACK still wears his coat and tie and I.D. badge. However, his tie is loose at the collar now. He leans on his crutch and carries his briefcase. The three are grouped like a band of buccaneers. CUSTER JONES sees a photo possibility and scrambles to place Ronald near the sliding glass doors, adjacent to the trio.]

CUSTER JONES

Well Jimmy called a taxi. But then coincidentally your daughter came in the car, and she decided to --

JACK

She took my wife to work? The coast is clear, mates. All ashore who's going ashore.

[Now JACK allows the glass in his hand to be seen. He ushers ULYSSES and KEVIN inside.]

Come on in, Ulysses.

ULYSSES

(hanging back at threshold)

I'm fine here.

JACK

Don't worry about your feet. Heck.

KEVIN

Here, 'lysses.

[JACK sneaks a peek into the Living Room, then glances into Garage to be certain no one is home. Meanwhile, KEVIN pulls a beach chair up to the outside of sliding glass door. Just beyond the threshold ULYSSES sits down outside, adjacent to the Ronald McDonald cut-out.]

JACK

More ice, Young Jim.

KEVIN

Aye, aye, sir.

[KEVIN salutes and moves into Kitchen.
 JACK pulls up a chair next to ULYSSES
 on the inside threshold of doors. Both
 men rest their briefcases on the floor in
 front of them. They release the snaps and
 lift the lids with equal dignity of purpose.
 ULYSSES removes computer print-out of accounting
 notations while JACK removes the bottle of gin
 he took from coffee table earlier in the Act.]

JACK

So you actually made money being sick, huh?

ULYSSES

Yup.

JACK

I gotta hand it to you, Ulysses.

(drinks)

So tell me: how'd you get your boys working for you?

How is it they don't go off on their own?

ULYSSES

I fed 'em twenty years.

[JACK takes ice from KEVIN.]

JACK

You're a philosopher, Ulysses. Stick around. I might learn something.

Another beer?

ULYSSES

Thanks, I will.

JACK

So your sons really do all the work now, huh?

ULYSSES

(sipping beer)

I do the sittin'.

JACK

You do the sitting'.

ULYSSES

And collect the money. I got your Accounts Receivable right here,
 Mister Nolan.

JACK

A practical philosopher.

[The front door opens and JIMMY enters wearing his designer sunglasses.]

JIMMY

He must have come in the back.

[JACK hides the glass of gin and takes the computer print-out from ULYSSES in order to look busy. JACKIE enters Living Room behind JIMMY but hangs back to eavesdrop. JIMMY comes around to Family Room.]

JIMMY

Hi, Da! It's good to see you.

JACK

(rising; with crutch)

Hey! Ulysses, this is my boy, Jim.

ULYSSES

(not rising)

How d'ye do.

JIMMY

It's good to be home.

JACK

Yeah, well, we have half a day on Good Friday, and the foot was acting up, so I, uh...

[JIMMY embraces JACK.]

JIMMY

Da, I know.

[Pause.]

[CUSTER JONES crouches with camera.]

CUSTER JONES

Could you hold that one second? That's it.

(snaps photo)

JACK

(uncomfortable)

So I figure I'll take some vacation time...

[Crutch falls. JIMMY releases JACK and bends to pick up crutch for him.]

JIMMY

I'm gonna be working soon, Da.

(hands crutch to JACK)

JACK

Jim graduates from college in June, Ulysses.

JIMMY

Da, I know. But don't worry. I should be working full time by July.

JACK

Where, Boston? You hear that, Ulysses? They all want to live up north. None of them can stand Florida.

(returns computer print-out to ULYSSES)

ULYSSES

Too many foreigners.

JIMMY

I like Florida, Da.

JACK

They say it's for old folks.

ULYSSES

Too many of the other kind.

JIMMY

Da, I didn't say that.

JACK

How 'bout a little splash of gin in your beer there, Ulysses?

[Taxi honks horn outside.]

ULYSSES

I'm through with the hard likker. Doctor's orders.

JACK

Damn diet, huh? You're getting like me, Ulysses.

CUSTER JONES

Excuse me. There's a taxi out front. Checker cab.

[JACK glances to see if JIMMY is gone. The student has retreated to the Living Room. There JACKIE shakes her head in disgust as he passes.]

Nice going, Cicero.

JACKIE

Aw shut up.

JIMMY

You're limo's waiting.

JACKIE

[KEVIN has come out of the Garage with construction paper and crayons. He sprawls on the floor near JACK and ULYSSES, still wearing the pirate neckerchief. JIMMY exits.]

I'm gonna make a treasure map, Pop.

KEVIN

[JACK ruffles KEVIN's hair. He is still cavalier, but there is a sense of agitation about him now. EILEEN enters from interior of house. She spots JACKIE in Living Room.]

It's about time you got back. I'm probably gonna be late now for the award meeting. C'mon. Did you start the car?

EILEEN

[JACK is surprised to hear EILEEN's voice. He wonders who she is speaking to. He puts his glass of gin on the floor near KEVIN's hand, and gets up on crutch to see.]

(entering Family Room)
Jack, I'm going.

EILEEN

I thought you left already.

JACK

Listen: I'm sorry about Jimmy; about him bringing -- Oh. Hello, Ulysses.

EILEEN

[ULYSSES stands up in greeting and nods. He still holds computer print-out.]

Not half as sorry as I am.

JACK

[EILEEN is uncomfortable discussing private matters in front of ULYSSES.]

She assumes a public face and smiles
at the lawn worker.]

EILEEN

I'm glad to see you're feeling better.

ULYSSES

Motor still running, Miss Nolan. Thank you.

JACK

I ask one lousy thing. In forty years. Instead, I'm fired all over again.

EILEEN

(smiling at ULYSSES)

Jack, what could I do? I'm sorry he's bringing the girl over --

JACK

What girl? Who?

EILEEN

The girl Jimmy's bringing to stay. What could I say?

(to ULYSSES; pleased)

Our children are coming for Easter.

JACK

To stay here? What girl?

[The telephone rings.
JACKIE is happy to have something to do.
She hurries to answer it.]

JACKIE

I got it!

EILEEN

Her car broke down and --

JACKIE

It's Aunt Rita.

JACK

Aw fer God sakes.

EILEEN

Tell her I'm at work.

JACKIE

She's in a hotel on the beach. She wants to know if she can stop by.

JACK

What I tell you? Didn't I tell you they'd be coming?

EILEEN

(smiling to ULYSSES)

It's my cousin Rita. She works for a very good firm. On Wall Street.

JACKIE

Ma, what do you want me to tell her? She's waiting.

JACK

Tell her we're all dead. Here, gimme the phone.

EILEEN

Jack, don't you dare. Jackie, tell her I'm at work; that I'll call her later.

JACK

I'm the one shoulda went in the convent.

EILEEN

I'm gonna be late. Give me a kiss.

JACK

That's what Judas said.

EILEEN

Jack, have you been drinking?

JACK

No, but I'm considering using drugs.

EILEEN

You have so been drinking. Jackie, gimme the keys. I'm driving myself.

Excuse me, Ulysses.

(snatches keys)

I'm not gonna depend upon anybody then either.

KEVIN

What's the matter, Grandma?

EILEEN

Nothing, honey. I love you. Be a good boy till Grandma gets home.

(kisses KEVIN)

JACK

(following EILEEN; using crutch)

I'm the one who's mad. Don't turn it around. I'm the one who's mad.

EILEEN

I'll go to the store myself.

JACKIE

I'll drive you to work, Ma.

EILEEN

Don't do me any favors. Just get in there and clean that Garage like I asked you.

JACK

Maybe I'll check in the hospital, like Ulysses. Least I'll be sure of a little privacy.

[JACKIE follows EILEEN out front door. JACK hobbles after them on his crutch, saying the last words to their backs. He returns to ULYSSES who is watching KEVIN draw his map.]

ULYSSES

Where's your map gonna lead to?

KEVIN

To God.

ULYSSES

(laughs)

Ain't nobody knows where God's at.

KEVIN

When I finish this they will.

[ULYSSES ruffles KEVIN's hair; laughs.]

ULYSSES

I'll have to have a look myself then.

[JACK re-enters Family Room.]

You got yourself a nice family, Mistah Nolan.

JACK

Hm.

[JACK reaches for his drink, which he had set near KEVIN's hand. He sits back down in his chair.]

JACK

You know, Ulysses, every spring... I get pissed off. College students, baseball fans, snowbirds: the fair weather flock. You know what I mean? They come and they go. Like my kids. Red taillights flashing in your face. I told my boy Jim: stay out of the corporate quicksand. And look what he does. "You're fired." Spring is no beginning down here, Ulysses. It's the end. They get tan and go someplace else. A shift in personnel. You know what I mean? This is a hot house, Ulysses. And I've been fired.

ULYSSES

(drinks)

It be a lot hotter out there with Junior.

JACK

We know they gotta leave. Live their own lives. We see it coming. But when it does -- Come September, my Jackie'll be going away to college.

ULYSSES

She be back.

JACK

She can't fly back. I'm outa free passes, Ulysses. I'm outa work.

ULYSSES

You worked plenty enuf already. You gotta learn to take it easy, Mistah Nolan. Put your feet up. Watch the grass grow.

[ULYSSES smacks JACK on the back. KEVIN stops drawing to put hassock under JACK's bad foot. JACK ruffles his hair in gratitude.]

JACK

I guess I can't expect grown kids to sit around watching teevee with me the rest of their lives. I'm feeling sorry for myself. Crying in my beer. You know what I mean? Here, you had a heart attack. Triple by-pass. Fuck! And I'm complaining.

[KEVIN glances up at the obscenity.]

ULYSSES

When the doctors cut me open, my family was camped out in the hospital room, with picnic baskets, ice chests... Somebody had to eat all that jello and weak coffee. They brought me real food. Nurse said she was gonna charge 'em all rent, they didn't go home. I got pictures.

[ULYSSES opens his briefcase and retrieves photo album.]

JACK

You're right, Ulysses. I got money in the bank. I got the family coming for Easter. What the fuck else do I need?

KEVIN

Pop. You cursed again.

JACK

I'm sorry, Kev. I got Young Jim here, Ulysses. My messmate. And you know what? I could sit here watching him color till they chase me down with a hearse. You know what I mean?

ULYSSES

I know what you mean. I carry pictures myself. In black, not white. This here's ma Wilette, and her twin baby girls.

KEVIN

Can I see?

[KEVIN gets up and stands near the men. He leans over ULYSSES who turns pages.]

JACK

You got a fine family, Ulysses.

ULYSSES

They let me sit now.
And I'll tell the truth: I don't mind.

JACK

I could sit myself.
(pulls off necktie)
This noose has been choking me forty years. I oughta burn the fuckin' thing.

Pop.
KEVIN

Sorry.
JACK

[JACK rises, holding necktie.
He moves toward Ronald McDonald.]

ULYSSES
That be Walter in front of the Kingdom Hall.

JACK
They don't squeeze you by the balls anymore, Ulysses.

[JACK glances at KEVIN to see his reaction
to his use of the word "balls," but KEVIN
is preoccupied with photo album.]

They grab you by the Adam's apple.

[JACK pulls the necktie tight around
Ronald McDonald's neck. He then removes
his Eastland Air Lines I.D. badge and
pins it on the cardboard cut-out. Meanwhile,
ULYSSES's walkie talkie starts spitting
static. With an official air, ULYSSES removes
it from his belt. JACK takes off his suit
jacket and drapes it around the cardboard figure.]

ULYSSES
Ah read you, Junior. Pro-ceed. Over.

JUNIOR
Pa?... Roger.

JACK
Let me talk to Junior.
(takes walkie talkie)

You listen to your father there now, Junior. He needs his rest.
Don't be cutting corners. Cut the grass.

[JACK elbows ULYSSES over his joke.
ULYSSES pours two fingers of gin in
glass JACK holds in hand.]

Junior?... It's your turn to work. You hear? Your Pa's finished.
Over and out. Fini.

[JACK clicks off the walkie talkie. He and ULYSSES clink glass against beer can. They both laugh.]

[JACKIE hurries in through the front door, looking over her shoulder. She heads for the Garage door but stops short when she sees the three buccaneers. Her father is in the process of removing his shoes and socks and rolling his pants legs up.]

JACKIE

What the heck's going on in here?

[CUSTER JONES enters through the front door, obviously having been following JACKIE.]

JACK

We're having a Miami meeting. Like your mother.

[JACKIE hears CUSTER JONES coming and ducks into the Garage. CUSTER JONES enters with cameras. He sees the dressed-up Ronald McDonald, finds it highly amusing, and takes a picture. Then he sees KEVIN and ULYSSES paging through the photo album. He takes JACK's seat, and leans over KEVIN, looking on. Meanwhile, JACK picks up the walkie talkie. JACKIE is banging around in the Garage; then she enters, heading for the Kitchen. She retrieves a hefty bag and returns to Garage, eyeing the proceedings as she passes. During this, JACK speaks into the walkie talkie, walking around like a foreman, looking out the various windows at Junior's work.]

Junior... When you finish there... trim that grass along the screen, would you? With the trimmer... Atta boy. You did a good job sweeping up out in front, Junior... Good work.

CUSTER JONES

(looking over KEVIN's shoulder)

Hmm. That's a curious shot.

ULYSSES

That be me in the recovery room. Out cold. Sewed me up like a zipper.

JACK

Looking good, Junior. No grass in the pool either. Good job.

(clicks off walkie talkie)

Your boys don't leave a whole heckuva lot of work for you to do, Ulysses. You know what I mean?

ULYSSES

Just co-lllect the money. Ah got your Accounts Receivable right here, Mistah Nolan.

JACK

(smiles)

I'll bet you do. Kev, hand Pop that money on the kitchen table there, would you?

[KEVIN retrieves money.]

Family be all together on Easter, Ulysses?

ULYSSES

We be in church all day Easter morning.

[ULYSSES puts photo album in briefcase. CUSTER JONES gets up and wanders over to Garage. JACKIE stacks boxes of board games outside Garage door in Family Room. CUSTER JONES leans into the Garage. JACKIE exits carrying a full hefty bag and closes the door on CUSTER JONES, leaving him in the Garage. She crosses Family Room, observing the proceedings.]

KEVIN

(handing JACK money)

Pop don't go to church, 'lysses.

ULYSSES

Neither did Jesus.

JACK

Here you go, Ulysses. Happy Easter.

ULYSSES

You get change.

JACK

No, no. That's your bonus. For Easter.

[JACKIE reacts with surprise.]

ULYSSES

You say, for Easter? Well all right then. I accept. Thank yuh.
Ah 'preciate the thought.

[ULYSSES closes up briefcase, finishes
beer, and rises.]

KEVIN

We'll row you out to your ship, 'lysses. Ahoy!

[KEVIN gathers up his map and shovel.
JACK ties a dish towel, like a pirate
kerchief, around his own head. The three
men start to move toward sliding glass doors.
CUSTER JONES strolls out of the Garage.]

JACKIE

Ulysses, we're throwing these out. Would you like some of these games
for your grandchildren?

ULYSSES

Oh we got that in the new edition.

JACKIE

There's all kinds of toys here too, if you'd like --

ULYSSES

We gives our old things to Goodwill.

[JACK, seeing the faux pas, moves
to diplomatically intervene.]

JACK

I don't think Ulysses needs anything, Jackie. He's doing just fine. Aren't you,
Ulysses? Hey! Why not stop by Easter, for a drink? Bring the family.

KEVIN

My Mom's gonna be here.

JACKIE

Am I hearing right?

[KEVIN leads the way of the trio through
the sliding glass doors. He sings.
JACK steers ULYSSES through, slapping
him on the back.]

ULYSSES

I'll mention it to the wife. The whole family you say?

CUSTER JONES

That should make for some interesting shots.

JACK

Sure. Hell. The more the merrier. I been telling the wife: we oughta have a crowd over on Easter. The whole family. Fill the house up. Hell. That's what Easter's all about. You know what I mean?

[CUSTER JONES retrieves the dressed-up Ronald McDonald, lifting it above his head like an effigy, as he follows the three men off.

JACKIE stands looking dumbfounded, gazing off after her father.

KEVIN is heard singing, with JACK joining in.]

KEVIN & JACK (o.s.)

"Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,
Ho, ho, ho and a bottle of rum..."

KEVIN (o.s.)

Don't fall, Pop.

ULYSSES (o.s.)

You better let me help you.

[There is a loud crash or splash.]

JACKIE

Oh my God. He fell. Da!

[JACKIE rushes off through the sliding glass doors.]

[Lights fade.]

END OF ACT II

ACT III

[Easter Sunday. Afternoon.
 In the Dining Room the table is set for six. Adjacent to it is a card table set for three. Downstage is a portable bar. In the Family Room the Ronald McDonald cardboard cut-out is still dressed in JACK's jacket, tie, and I.D. badge. It wears rabbit ears now. A sign above it reads: "Eastland Bunny." JACK's briefcase and crutch are also propped up against the figure.]

[When the lights rise, EILEEN, LIZ, and KAREN are in Living Room, talking and sipping from glasses of wine. All are dressed up for the holiday. EILEEN wears an apron over her dress. KAREN is taking moving pictures with a video camera. Her primary object of interest is the wickerwork bassinet that holds her new baby. LIZ is all poise and composure. KAREN is an exuberant new mother.]

[In the Family Room STAN stands changing the television channels with remote control. He is a hyper person who doesn't sit still for too long. JIMMY intercepts JACKIE downstage, as she exits the Garage. STAN wears lime green golf pants, golf shirt, and sport jacket; JACKIE, an attractive dress; and JIMMY, slacks with a sweater draped around his shoulders.]

[The aroma of roast chicken pervades the theatre.]

JIMMY

So when do you want me to say I'll look for a job down here?

JACKIE

Wait. I'll let you know. Right now I want to tell Stan:
soften him up first. Keep Liz busy.

STAN

(with remote control)

The Spring Training games blacked out down here?

JACKIE

Can I talk to you a minute outside, Stan?

STAN

(twisting his Rolex band)

What's up?

JACKIE

C'mon. I'll tell you. Make believe I'm showing you the pool,
so Liz doesn't get suspicious.

[STAN and JACKIE exit through sliding glass
doors. JIMMY wanders into Living Room.
He now begins to play the stage manager
to JACKIE's directing.]

LIZ (feigning offense)

It's a good thing I don't get insulted easy. I come to visit my father
for Easter and he disappears. With my son. And now I lost my husband.
Where's Stan? I thought he was taking pictures?

KAREN

(panning with video camera)

Smile, Liz.

JIMMY

Jackie's showing Stan her plants out by the pool.

[KAREN sets camera on tripod and
fixes the bow on her baby's head.]

EILEEN

They went to the eleven o'clock Mass four hours ago.
The dinner's gonna be all dried up.

LIZ

I think I hear them now.

[All look expectantly toward the front door. It opens and CUSTER JONES strolls in. He's wearing an Hawaiian shirt and blue jeans. A Polaroid camera hangs from around his neck, while another hangs from his shoulder. He carries a McDonald's white take-out bag and milk shake.]

CUSTER JONES

Curious. McDonald's is open on Easter.

EILEEN

George is taking Polaroids of us all today. We'll be able to see ourselves.

CUSTER JONES

Oddly enough, I somehow forgot to load film in my Nikon on Friday.

Then it occurred to me: fast food and snap shots. Polaroids.

How appropriate.

(moves into Family Room)

STAN

(outside; to JACKIE)

Excuse me?

JACKIE

I'm only saying it because my father --

STAN

Excuse me? What windfall?

JACKIE

I mean the money, all the money --

STAN

What windfall? I work hard for my money.

JACKIE

Let me finish.

STAN

There isn't any windfall.

JACKIE

I didn't mean it like that, Stan. I'm just saying that Eastland --

[CUSTER JONES snaps a Polaroid of STAN and JACKIE through the glass doors. JIMMY hurries after him into Family Room to protect JACKIE's and STAN's privacy. He arrives just as CUSTER JONES snaps picture and disappears into Garage.]

KAREN

I still don't understand who he is.

LIZ

You should have told him to go to a hotel when he first got here.

KAREN

You say he's not a friend of Jimmy's? Oh! Her bow fell off.

EILEEN

That's all right, Karen. Leave her.

KAREN

No. I wanted Daddy to see it. I'm gonna change her back to the yellow dress.

EILEEN

Karen, you're going to give the poor child a rash, pulling on and off so many clothes.

KAREN

(exiting with baby)

I think the yellow looks better for Easter. I'll save this for the christening. When you and Daddy come up to New York you can see her in it.

LIZ

She thinks the baby's a Barbie Doll.

EILEEN

And she's still insisting your father and I fly up to New York for the christening.

LIZ

Ma, how bad is his foot, really?

STAN

(to JACKIE)

Liz is my social conscience. She's the one in charge of that stuff.

JIMMY

(at sliding glass doors)

Can I get anybody a drink?

STAN

(smoking)

An Olde Fashioned, thanks... So anyway... What was I saying?

JACKIE

You were saying --

STAN

(smoking)

Right. Okay. But the point is: I don't get mixed up in Liz' family. She's very private, your sister. It's HER family. So whatever we do, it's up to her.

KAREN

(enters with baby)

Here she is!

EILEEN

Ah, how adorable. My little darling.

LIZ

Oh I like that dress.

EILEEN

I love it.

KAREN

Doesn't she look like me when I was a baby?

[KAREN returns the baby to the bassinet and reaches for the video camera. Front door swings open. KEVIN is pushing JACK in a wheelchair. He hangs the wheelchair into the doorjamb.]

JACK

All right, take it easy.

KEVIN

You're too heavy, Pop.

[KEVIN manages to get JACK over threshold
and then collapses into a chair.]

KAREN

My God, he's in a wheelchair!

LIZ

Da, I didn't realize the foot was so bad.

[CUSTER JONES enters front door behind
JACK and KEVIN, still with Polaroid.]

EILEEN

Well, he had an accident on Friday. He fell.

JACK

While bearing my cross.

EILEEN

The doctor says he has to stay off the foot altogether now. Where were you
all day? You're holding up the dinner. And look at the poor child, he's sweating.

KEVIN

(breathing hard)

We went to 'lysses' church.

LIZ

You went where?

JACK

I thought I'd get a second opinion.

[CUSTER JONES tears off a snap shot
and hands it to JACK.]

KEVIN

We passed six different churches, Mom.

JACK

(looking at Polaroid snap)

Is this us?

EILEEN

Jack, I don't believe you. The child's making his First Holy Communion
next week and you take him to a Protestant church.

KEVIN

Mom, I asked Pop if there's so many churches, which one does God go to,
and he said --

JACK
(interrupting)
To the galley, messmate.

KEVIN
(rising)
Pop has a terrible thirst.

EILEEN
I can imagine.
[KEVIN pushes JACK to portable bar.]

LIZ
Da, are you corrupting my son?

JACK
They don't even serve wine in Protestant churches.

KEVIN
(goes to LIZ)
Mom, I want a wheelchair like Pop.

EILEEN
God forbid!

JACK
(at bar)
I see you ladies got a head start. I've got some catching up to do.

EILEEN
I can see all the good church did you.

KEVIN
Pop said the priest talked too much --

JACK
(offers wine)
Who needs a little more holy water?

KEVIN
... that he could make the blind man deaf.

JACK
If Christ had died today, we'd all be wearing little electric chairs
around our necks.

LIZ

Da.

EILEEN

Jack. Don't be sacrilegious.

KAREN

Da, you don't even notice your granddaughter.

JACK

(waves)

Sure, I do. Didn't you see how much she liked the Eastland bunny I made her?

KEVIN

Mom, did you tape the Easter Parade for me? I'm gonna go watch.

[KEVIN runs into Family Room. He watches television. CUSTER JONES appears on patio where STAN and JACKIE are still talking. He takes their photo and then hands them the Polaroid snap. KAREN places five photo albums on JACK's lap in wheelchair. He's still at bar.]

KAREN

Here are some of those pictures of the baby you wanted to see, Da.

LIZ

Da, I thought the doctor said you couldn't drink. What happened?

JACK

(putting on eyeglasses for photo albums)

I changed doctors.

EILEEN

The doctor said he could have a drink for the holidays.

LIZ

Seriously, Da, how bad is the foot?

JACK

I'm not supposed to travel.

EILEEN

Anything more than that, and the infection could spread.

KAREN

I think you look good, Da. Don't you think Daddy looks good enough to come up for the christening, Ma?

EILEEN

He has to be very careful.

KAREN

They have wheelchairs at the airports now.

JACK

Oh. That's good to know.

KAREN

(indicating album)

That's Tiffany's first bath in the sink.

LIZ

I was reading how bad diabetes is for the circulation...

JACK

And the eyes. You see, I have to wear glasses now.

LIZ

... that you can lose a toe or a foot.

EILEEN

Or go blind.

LIZ

Or have your leg amputated.

KAREN

Can't we talk about something a little more cheerful?

JACK

Yeah. They make me sound like a leper.

KAREN

That's her first ride in the car.

JACK

So you see why I better not do any traveling, honey.

KAREN

But, Da, you have the free passes. You don't want to miss the christening and Kevin's Communion both.

EILEEN

Where you going, Jack?

JACK

(wheeling into Family Room)

Take a couple of aspirins.

KAREN

You have a headache, Da?

JACK

Just anticipating.

EILEEN

Look at me: filling up on hors d'oeuvres. Then I won't eat my dinner.

LIZ

Should we eat? I'll help you put it out.

KAREN

We'll help you, Ma.

EILEEN

I have everything on warm.

KAREN

Da, put your foot up. Or you'll never be able to go up to New York.

LIZ

Where's Stan? He was supposed to take pictures.

JIMMY

(still stage managing)

He's watching the Easter Parade with Kevin.

[STAN and JACKIE come through sliding glass doors.]

KEVIN

Pop, your commercial's on!

[With the remote control, KEVIN turns up the volume on the television. He sings along with commercial. JACK is taking aspirin out of his briefcase near Ronald McDonald and washing them down with his drink.]

KEVIN & T.V. VOICE

(singing)

"I say, 'Miami'
You say, 'your ami'
He says, 'mi amigo'
She says 'mon ami'
But we all say, 'Miami's
the city of diversity'"

[KEVIN spins JACK around in the wheel-
chair as he sings. However, JACK is just
noticing JACKIE and STAN entering through
sliding glass doors. His body spins in
wheelchair but his eyes stay riveted on
this mysterious pairing.
CUSTER JONES enters behind them and
hands a Polaroid snap to JACKIE.]

STAN

Hey, Grandpa! Where were you, visiting the Vatican?

JACK

(eyes on JACKIE)

Out looking for an honest man.

STAN

(swinging motion)

Great morning for golf. I had to restrain myself.

KEVIN

My father lets me drive the golf cart, Pop.

JIMMY

(quietly to JACKIE)

How'd it go?

[JACKIE puts index finger to her lips
and avoids JACK's stare.]

STAN

I better get the picture-taking over with, so I can relax the rest of the day.

KEVIN

Can I help, Dad?

[STAN and KEVIN move into Living Room.
There CUSTER JONES is helping himself to
a glass of wine. He holds glass up to the
light, tastes wine, assesses taste, shrugs,
and takes up his camera in the other hand.]

[LIZ, KAREN, and EILEEN are bustling in the Kitchen. JIMMY assists them in putting food on Dining Room table.

Meanwhile, JACK rises quietly from his wheelchair, retrieves remote control, and turns up the volume of the Easter Parade. He wants to drown out his conversation with JACKIE. He resumes sitting in his wheelchair, and waits. At an opportune moment, he wheels to face JACKIE.]

Jackie, c'mere a minute.

JACK

What?

JACKIE

I want to tell you something.

JACK

What?

JACKIE

Listen now: just 'cause I'm happy everyone's here, doesn't mean I changed my mind about telling them anything.

JACK

O ye of little faith.

JACKIE

(moves toward Kitchen to help)

You hear? I'm serious.

JACK

(calling)

EILEEN

Jack, turn that thing down. C'mon. The dinner's out. George, would you mind sitting at the little people's table?

JACKIE

Ma, don't even think about asking me to sit at the little people's table.

[JACKIE moves a chair and her place setting from card table to Dining Room table. CUSTER JONES ponders the little people's table. He sits down with cameras, squeezing under the low table top.]

LIZ

Ma, everything looks delicious.

EILEEN

I hope we have enough. Grandma could feed ten people with one chicken.

[JACK wheels himself over to bar to make a drink. Every now and again the somberness of his role as the invalid is undercut by the ludicrousness of his getting up out of the wheelchair to do something.]

STAN

(embracing LIZ)

Jackie, you see this? This is windfall. Do I deserve a wife like your sister? A son like Kevin? That's windfall.

LIZ

What have you two been talking about?

STAN

Windfall.

(kisses LIZ)

JIMMY

(sampling more than assisting)

Not in front of the child now.

KEVIN

They always do it, Uncle Jimmy.

JACKIE

What are you staring at, Da? You starting to believe in windfall?

EILEEN

It was a very moist turkey.

KAREN

Well Liz said, "use a lot of milk till it's moist."

So Jackie held the legs open and I kept shoving it in --

STAN

(licentiously)

What are you talking about over there?

KAREN

I'm talking about the turkey last Christmas.

LIZ

Stan, don't be obscene.
(last kiss)

KAREN

So I kept shoving it in and didn't know: all the stuffing was coming out the neck.

EILEEN

All right. Everybody get their drinks.

STAN

Cameras everyone!

[CUSTER JONES struggles with difficulty out of tiny chair. He and STAN begin to snap away with their cameras, while KAREN pans with video camera. Baby is now in bassinet beside KAREN's place at table.]

JACKIE

(whispers to JIMMY)

I'm gonna sit next to Mommy, to keep her under control.

JACK

No secrets now. It isn't polite.

LIZ

Ma, you have the table set beautiful.

KAREN

Doesn't she? I know.

EILEEN

It's like when we were back in Brooklyn. We're all together.

[CUSTER JONES hands JACK one of the Polaroids he's just taken.
JACK looks at it.]

JACK

Well we look like we're having a good time.

LIZ

Da, we brought you a bottle of champagne. In case you want to have libations with Mommy later.

STAN
Watch your language.

JACKIE
(playfully)
Ma, Stan's talking dirty.

EILEEN
I'll smash him.

JACK
Maybe I'll fix another drink first.

EILEEN
Jack, go easy.

JIMMY
Hurry up and sit down, everybody. Before Jackie eats everything.

KAREN
Da, you want to put your foot up?

[JACK allows KAREN to pamper him.
He plays the patient.]

STAN
Are we going clockwise or counter-clockwise?

JIMMY
Pass the meat?

JACKIE
Ugh. What's that?

EILEEN
George made a lentil casserole. With kidney beans.

ALL
(unenthusiastically)
Oh-h...

[CUSTER JONES' casserole gets passed
from hand to hand with no one sampling.]

JIMMY
You all right there, George?

CUSTER JONES

(turns in chair)

Well, curiously --

(bangs knees on low table top)

LIZ

Did anyone see the turnips?

JIMMY

They're going that way. Where's the butter?

KAREN

The butter's following the peas.

STAN

Don't reverse, don't reverse!

EILEEN

Liz, did I tell you? Aunt Rita's in town.

JIMMY

Oh God. Relatives.

STAN

Who's Aunt Rita?

LIZ

My mother's first cousin. She used to be a nun.

JACKIE

Did you ever call her?

EILEEN

I didn't. I'm terrible. And she's so good. She sees the good in everybody.

JACK

She must have X-ray vision.

KAREN

(between fussing with baby at her side)

What's this?

JIMMY

I think they're the lentils.

[The lentils continue to circle the table.]

JACKIE
Pass the rolls.

EILEEN
Jack, you're not eating.

JACK
(lifts fork to mouth)
Yeah.

EILEEN
Take some more meat. Did everybody get brussel sprouts?

KAREN
Is Aunt Rita coming by?

LIZ
So, Jackie, who are you going out with now?

JIMMY
Maybe Ulysses'll stop by.

LIZ
Your boyfriend's name is Ulysses?

STAN
The butter's backing up, the butter's backing up.

EILEEN
George, would you like apple sauce or gravy?

CUSTER JONES
(turns in chair)
Apple --
(bangs knees on low table top)

JACKIE
The meat down there?

KAREN
It's coming around. What's this?

JIMMY
Those are the lentils again.

[Lentils get passed.]

EILEEN

Pass that over to George, please. Kev, hon, you all right?

KEVIN

I don't want any of the little cabbages, Gram.

JACK

(passing)

There go the lentils on their third lap.

KAREN

The meat is delicious, Ma.

LIZ

Everything is.

[A chorus of agreeing noises.]

STAN

Outstanding, Grandma. Who's your butcher?

EILEEN

I'll smash him. "Who's my butcher."

JIMMY

You ready, mastermind? Cheers.

JACKIE

(picking up own glass)

Wish me luck.

JIMMY

Good luck.

[They clink glasses.]

EILEEN

Hey, watch my Waterford.

JACK

What are you two plotting?

LIZ

Da, we were so happy to hear Eastland called off the strike.

KAREN

(tending to baby)

Yeah, Da. We were worried about you.

LIZ

The unions are worse now than management ever was.

EILEEN

The unions are killing us.

STAN

Liz. Listen to yourself.

LIZ

It's true, Stan. Even Kennedy had to clean up the Teamsters.

JACK

Who wants another drink?

(rises)

I'm treating.

KAREN

I'll get it, Da.

LIZ

Look at the steel industry.

EILEEN

The unions are the ones killing us.

STAN

(to LIZ)

You're saying get rid of the unions?

CUSTER JONES

(turns in chair)

Interestingly enough, unions have developed a rather dubious reputation --

(bangs knees on low table top)

LIZ

Why not? And start incentives: profit sharing?

STAN

Profit sharing? In this country?

JACKIE

That's what Mommy's store does.

JIMMY

Like on Wall Street. Stan's firm gives big Christmas bonuses.

LIZ

That's not profit sharing.

JACK

It could never happen in this country.

LIZ

It works in Japan.

JACK

That's Japan.

KAREN

(handing JACK drink)

Ma, what's the matter?

JACK

(concerned a revelation is at hand)

All right, cut her off. No more wine for the one down the end.

LIZ

Da, wait a minute. Something's wrong.

KAREN

What is it, Ma?

EILEEN

(through tears)

Nothing. Go on what you're saying. Does anybody want more turnips?

KAREN

Ma, what is it?

JACK

She's worried about my foot. Aren't you, Eil?

LIZ

Is that what it is, Ma?

[EILEEN shakes her head and dabs at eyes.]

JIMMY

I think this is a good time to talk about something.

JACK
What?

JIMMY
Jackie has something she wants to tell us.

LIZ
What, Jackie?

JACK
Jackie.

EILEEN
(dabbing eyes)
Jack. Let her.

JACK
I'm gonna lay down in the bedroom.

KAREN
Daddy, what's the matter?

JIMMY
Hurry up, Jackie.

[JACKIE stands to speak just as JACK stands, melodramatically leaning on arms of wheelchair.]

JACKIE
Well, first I want everybody to agree that we're all gonna listen to each other. And not all talk at the same time, interrupting. Everybody gets a chance to talk. And nobody else can interrupt or make fun of what somebody else says.

STAN
Sounds like Japanese management.

JACK
Young Jim, get my crutch, lad.

LIZ
Kev, wait a second. Jackie, what's this all about?
(puts arm around KEVIN)

JACKIE
We're going to discuss something like they do at Mommy's store.

JACK

Messmate, don't leave Long John in the lurch.

[LIZ has a gentle restraining arm around KEVIN.]

LIZ

Wait a minute, Da. What's going on, Jackie?

JACKIE

Daddy was fired.

KAREN

Daddy! No.

STAN

Jesus.

LIZ

Oh God, Da.

JACKIE

Okay. Wait a second. Not everybody talking at once. Sh! C'mon. That's why we're trying this thing. First, the facts. From Daddy.

JACK

Actually, I'd rather Jackie hadn't brought it up. And she knows that.

KAREN

Daddy, what happened?

JACK

Nothing.

LIZ

Nothing?

JACK

Well there's really nothing to talk about. Eastland settled the strike. They gave the unions a thirty-two percent pay hike. Then they couldn't afford the non-union salaries. So they let a hundred managers go.

KAREN

Oh Daddy.

EILEEN

Well tell them what they were doing to you before --

JACKIE

Ma! No interrupting.

EILEEN

I'm only telling him not to forget to say how they were cutting his salary --

JACKIE

Ma! Go ahead, Da.

JACK

It's all right, Eil. No. That's all. There's nothing else to say.

[EILEEN starts to say something and JACKIE clamps her hand over her mother's mouth. EILEEN's silence causes a vacuum which prompts JACK to speak.]

JACK

Well it has caused a few problems. One: we can't get the plane passes anymore. So we won't be able to come up and see you as much.

KAREN

Oh Daddy.

EILEEN

(through tears)

They did the same thing to my brother James, the phone company, when he was getting ready to retire. They try to force you out, the stinkers. First, they cut your salary --

JACKIE

Ma, no going off on tangents. Stick to Daddy's situation.

EILEEN

That's what I'm doing. They cut his pay, then they told him he had to be in an hour ahead of the secretaries every day. So in the end he was working more hours for less money --

JACKIE

Ma.

EILEEN

We thought of him taking the early retirement when they offered it. But then we waited, and it was too late. What? Stop poking me. Well what do you want me to say?

JACKIE

What the problem is now.

EILEEN

I'm telling you. If you'd listen. We can't go up to New York anymore. We might lose the health insurance. Jimmy can't even fly back to school --

[EILEEN takes out tissue.
JACKIE covers her mother's mouth.]

JACKIE

Okay. No airplane passes, no health insurance. Okay. I'll go first. I decided to go to a community college down here. That'll make things cheaper.

JACK

What are you talking about?

EILEEN

Don't be silly.

JACKIE

Sh! No interrupting. So we can still live down here if we want. Jimmy? Come on. Go ahead. Like we planned.

JIMMY

Well I've been thinking... and I have an interview with a firm down here this week. I mean, I'm not crazy about living in Miami... but what the heck. I guess we're all in this together.

JACKIE

Karen?

KAREN

(rocking baby in arms)

Daddy, why didn't you say something sooner? All this time, and you never said a word.

(then)

Things are kind of tight right now, for Bill and me, with the baby and all... I mean, that's why he couldn't make the trip. This was our Easter present. But I know -- I mean, I'm pretty sure we can help out. I'll have to talk to Bill, but, we'll think of something.

JACK

Hey, we're not looking for you kids to help out. This is why I didn't want to let on. You got your own lives --

JACKIE

Da, it's not your turn. Okay? Stan?

[EILEEN dabs at eyes.]

STAN

Me? Unh unh. Liz is my spokesman. Uh, excuse me. Spokeswoman.

(looks at LIZ)

Go ahead.

LIZ

I don't think this is a very good time, Stan.

STAN

What are you talking about? It's the perfect time.

LIZ

No, Stan. Not in front of the whole family.

STAN

What's the problem?

[Pause.

LIZ shakes her head; adamant.]

Okay, look. Liz is being modest. Liz decided --

LIZ

We both decided.

STAN

No. You did. I'm not taking any credit.

[CUSTER JONES, attempting to rise from his chair to see something outside, bangs his knees on the low table top, interrupting.]

CUSTER JONES

Curious. There's a taxi outside.

KAREN

A taxi?

JACK

Where?

EILEEN

Who is it?

[Various members of the family,
including JACK, rise to have a look.]

JIMMY

Maybe it's Ulysses.

JACKIE

In a taxi?

STAN

It's a woman.

EILEEN

Oh my God! It's Rita.

LIZ

Aunt Rita?

JACK

Aw fer God sakes.

EILEEN

Karen, are my eyes red? Jack, let Jimmy answer it.

[Doorbell rings.]

JACK

(moving toward door)

Just in time for dinner.

KEVIN

I'll get it, Pop.

[JACK stands with the cast still on his foot,
but makes no effort now to play the part of
the patient. Like an actor off-stage, but
still in costume, he answers the door.
KEVIN is at his side.]

[AUNT RITA, a woman in her mid-fifties,
stands in the doorway. She wears a plain
outfit and carries a large basket of fruit,
a cake box, and two packages.]

JACK

Hey, it's the Easter bunny!

AUNT RITA

Jack! Happy Easter.

JACK

It's Reah!

AUNT RITA

(kisses JACK's cheek)

How are you feeling, Jack? You look terrific. Really.
But what happened to your foot?

JACK

Jackie stepped on it.

AUNT RITA

Oh I'm sorry. Don't tell me this is Liz' boy? Kevin?

KEVIN

Mm hmmm.

AUNT RITA

God bless us.

JACK

(begins limping)

Come on in, Reah.

AUNT RITA

(still in doorway)

No, no. I only stopped in for a minute. I'm not staying.
I just wanted to drop a few things by and see Karen's new baby.

EILEEN

(approaching)

Rita! Happy Easter.

(kisses her)

What do you mean: "only stopped in a minute?" Don't be silly.
Come in. I'm so glad you dropped by.

AUNT RITA

No, Eil. I won't stay. I didn't call.

EILEEN

You can come in the door at least.

AUNT RITA

No, Eil, really. I know how it is. Hi, Karen! How are you?
Oh, Eileen. It's beautiful. I can't believe this is your house.

EILEEN

You've never seen the house, have you, all these years?
Well then, come in already. For goodness sake.

AUNT RITA

Well all right. I want to see my new niece.

KAREN

She's over here, Aunt Rita.

AUNT RITA

Eil? Jack's foot: is it all right?

EILEEN

Fine, Rita. He just puts it in his mouth too much.

AUNT RITA

Listen to you two, always joking. Oh, Karen, she's adorable.
Look at the little face on her. An angel face. Karen, I'm so happy for you.

EILEEN

She's the image of Bill.

AUNT RITA

Oh I don't know. I think I see a lot of Karen in her too.

KAREN

(reaching for album)

Would you like to see some pictures?

AUNT RITA

Here's a little something for her, honey.

(hands one box to KAREN)

KAREN

Oh, Aunt Rita, stop. You shouldn't have.

AUNT RITA

And this is for that big boy over there. Hi, Liz!

(hands other box to KEVIN)

LIZ

Hello, Rita.

(to KEVIN)

What do you say?

Thank you.

KEVIN

AUNT RITA
(gives cake box)

Eil, this is for your dessert.

EILEEN

Oh Rita.

AUNT RITA

You better put it in the ice box.

KEVIN

Mom, look! A briefcase.

LIZ

Rita, that's just what he wanted.

AUNT RITA

Well good. See, Jackie, you were right.

KEVIN

My own sea chest.

LIZ

I can't believe it.

AUNT RITA

Now where'd Jack go?

JACK
(at bar)

Reah, what can I fix you?

EILEEN

A ginger ale?

AUNT RITA

Here's a little fresh fruit for YOUR dessert, Jack.

JACK
(taking large basket)

Oh-h, very good. Thanks, Reah.
(limping/hopping)

I feel like Peter Cottontail. How 'bout a little holy water?

EILEEN
 (if looks could kill)

Jack.

AUNT RITA

No thank you, Jack. You know Aunt Rita. Still twenty years behind the times. But you drink up.

KAREN

Ma, would you look at this. I can't believe it. It's hand-made.

AUNT RITA

Oh it's just something I threw together. On the subway going to work. I get a headache reading, with all the rocking --

KAREN

I don't know what to say, Aunt Rita. It's beautiful.

AUNT RITA

May she wear it in good health, and God bless her. Oh, Eileen! It's really like a house in a magazine. If only Aggie -- God rest her soul -- if only your mother could have seen it.

EILEEN

I know. I kept saying the same thing to Jack. Didn't I, Jack? And do you know, lately, I think I'm beginning to look more and more like my mother.

(laughs)

Short and fat. You know you're getting old when all the cops look like kids.

AUNT RITA

Isn't it the truth? Look at me. I could haunt a house.

EILEEN

Oh stop. You look wonderful. I love your hair. But I can't get over it: you've never seen the house?

JACK

(gallantly shaking cigarette from pack)

Cigarette, Reah?

AUNT RITA

Oh no thank you, Jack.

EILEEN

(trying to make a joke)

Jack, when did you ever see Rita smoke a cigarette?

AUNT RITA

He's trying to make a fast woman out of me, Eil.

Jack, I was so happy to hear Eastland settled the strike.

I was worried for you.

[KAREN is still examining the baby outfit. She thinks out loud, with amazement not malice.]

KAREN

No one in the family even gave me something hand-made.

AUNT RITA

Well aren't I in the family? I'm kidding. You deserve it, honey.

All of you. All the blessings you have. It makes me happy just to see you together like this. That's all I wanted: to see you.

And now I'm going to run.

EILEEN

What do you mean you're "gonna run?" Sit down, Rita.

AUNT RITA

No. I didn't let you know I was coming, Eil. Besides, it's a day for families. Young people don't want some relic of an old aunt hanging around on a holiday. Do you, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Sure we do.

JACKIE

Stay, Aunt Rita.

JACK

C'mon now. You heard them.

LIZ

We put the coffee on before we sat down. It's all ready.

[AUNT RITA allows JACK to escort her to the table.]

AUNT RITA

All right. But just for a minute. Thank you, Jack. We always did say Eileen got the best catch. Oh and look at the lovely plants out by the pool. I was admiring your landscaping out front.

EILEEN

Oh that's Ulysses. We have it done.

AUNT RITA

(reaching for CUSTER JONES' hand)

Nice to meet you, Ulysses. You must have a green thumb.

EILEEN

No, this is George Custer Jones, Rita. He goes to college with Jimmy.

AUNT RITA

Happy Easter, George.

[CUSTER JONES snaps a Polaroid.]

JACK

He'll show you what you look like.

LIZ

Rita, you take cream?

AUNT RITA

Yes, Liz, thank you. I think she looks younger every time I see her.

LIZ

My husband keeps me youthful.

AUNT RITA

Where IS Stan?

LIZ

I think there's a baseball game on.

AUNT RITA

Already? Well good. Let the men enjoy the ballgames. They can't hold a decent conversation anyway. Right?

[All laugh.]

Eileen, what a beautiful table you set.

EILEEN

Can I fix you a little plate? There isn't much left, I'm afraid.

JACK

There's plenty of lentils.

AUNT RITA

Oh no thank you. I already had my dinner. There's a lovely Howard Johnson's near the beach.

EILEEN

We usually have plenty left over. But I guess everybody was hungry.

AUNT RITA

Well good. Anyway, you know what they say: it doesn't matter what's on a table, but who's at it.

JACKIE

The cake is delicious, Aunt Rita.

AUNT RITA

Isn't she sweet? Good. I'm glad you like it, sweetheart. Eil? Jack? I don't know how you did it. Raising these kids the way you did. Every single one of them's a credit to you.

EILEEN

Thanks, Rita. It's good of you to say. But as Jack always says: if you don't take credit for the good, you won't get blamed for the bad.

AUNT RITA

Well I don't know that there is any bad. I doubt it. And it's all a credit to the two of you. Don't let anybody tell you any different. Oh I'm so happy I came. To see you all together like this. On Easter.

EILEEN

Did you visit the cemetery this morning, Rita?

AUNT RITA

Oh you know me. Sentimental ole thing, coming to Florida every spring just to visit a cemetery. While everybody smart is at the beach.

EILEEN

You were the best daughter a mother could have, Rita.

AUNT RITA

Mama always said: "Bury me where I drop, and don't lay me out for people to say, 'she never looked so good.'" Thank you, Eil. Come on now. Listen to me. Talking like it's a funeral. On Easter Sunday. Eat that cake up.

JACK

So how long you down for?

AUNT RITA

Just for the week.

JIMMY

These pineapple chunks are delicious.

AUNT RITA

Now, now, Jimmy. Those are your father's.

(winks at EILEEN and JACK)

JACK

Put a little sugar on them.

AUNT RITA

Would you look at the cherub face on that Jackie.
Eil, her eyes are clear water. She's prettier than she looks.

JACKIE

Thank you.

EILEEN

She's Daddy's little girl.

AUNT RITA

Isn't he lucky. God love him.

EILEEN

Somebody oughta.

AUNT RITA

Oh Eileen, come on now. I'll never forget your wedding day.
How the two of you looked at each other. Mama always said --

[Car horn honks outside.]

Oop. There he is.

JIMMY

Who?

AUNT RITA

(rising)

The taxi driver. I asked him to drive around the block once or twice.

EILEEN

Rita. You're not leaving yet?

JACK

Sit down, Reah. I'll drive you back later.

[A chorus in agreement encourages her to stay. STAN enters from Family Room.]

AUNT RITA

Now don't beg me to stay or you'll be sorry.

Because I will. Hello there, Stan.

LIZ

You remember my Aunt Rita.

STAN

That's right. At the wedding. Nice to see you again, Ma'am.

EILEEN

Please, Rita, stay.

AUNT RITA

No, Eil, thanks. Maybe later in the week. If you'll have me.

EILEEN

Of course we'll have you. Don't be silly. We'll have you over for dinner.

AUNT RITA

Well, we'll see.

EILEEN

I'm off Wednesday. How's that? I'll call you. I promise.

[The taxi honks again. AUNT RITA circles the table, kissing everyone's cheek. She takes EILEEN's hand.]

AUNT RITA

I can't tell you how happy you all made me today. Just to see you together like this. Jack, you listen to Eileen now, and take good care of yourself. Liz, Stan, so nice to see you. Jimmy, congratulations. We all know you're going to graduate with honors in June. Jackie, honey, Happy Easter!

STAN

Why don't we take a family portrait?

EILEEN

Oh what a good idea.

KAREN

With Aunt Rita.

JACKIE

C'mon, everybody. Get around the table.

AUNT RITA

Would you like me to take it?

KAREN

No, we want you in it.

JACK

General Custer'll take it. Won't you, George?

CUSTER JONES

Well, actually, I had already been considering --

[Taxi honks again.]

JACKIE

Hurry up, hurry up.

AUNT RITA

Well some things in Florida ARE like New York. The taxi drivers.

[All laugh and pose. JACK throws one arm around RITA and the other around EILEEN.]

CUSTER JONES

That's it. Say: "cheeseburger." Hold it. One more!

[All erupt in a chorus of "cheese," "George," etc. as CUSTER JONES snaps one photo and then switches to the second Polaroid camera.]

AUNT RITA

And now I better run.

KAREN

Aunt Rita, I don't know how to thank you. It's so beautiful.

AUNT RITA

Raise the little darling as an angel, dear. That's all the thanks I need.

AUNT RITA

(moving toward door)

Don't be worried about Jack, Eil. God is good.

It'll all turn out for the best.

EILEEN

With the help of God. Thank you, Rita. For everything. I'm SO glad you came.

[AUNT RITA and EILEEN kiss.
AUNT RITA turns to wave out the door to the cabbie.]

AUNT RITA

I'm glad too.

(one last look)

Oh, if only Aggie -- if only your mother could have seen this house,

Eileen. She would have made Mama crazy with her bragging.

Remember how they'd try and out-boast each other?

EILEEN

How could I forget.

[Both smile at the memory.]

AUNT RITA

Well now they're both in heaven. Both with something to brag about.

(then)

Happy Easter, everybody!

[A chorus of goodbyes and AUNT RITA is gone. People return to the table. JACK returns to the bar, mixes another drink, and walks over to the table. A slower paced conversation

ensues, with prolonged pauses.
It is in marked contrast with the
earlier alacrity. Meanwhile, KEVIN
has his briefcase open on the coffee
table, with his treasure map spread
out wide beside it.]

I like her.

JACK

Isn't she lovely? I'm sorry now we didn't invite her.

EILEEN

I thought she looked good.

LIZ

Didn't she?

EILEEN

Remember she had that cut-off hair?

LIZ

Now it's curled nice.

EILEEN

Yes.

LIZ

[Silence.]

We're not usually this quiet.

JACK

Yeah. I feel kinda funny.

KAREN

What do you mean?

LIZ

I don't know. I can't believe she made the baby that beautiful outfit.

KAREN

And the size of the basket of fruit for Daddy.

EILEEN

It would cost a fortune in a store.

KAREN

What?

EILEEN

KAREN

The baby outfit.

EILEEN

Oh, you couldn't buy something like that in a store.

[Everybody seems pensive.
CUSTER JONES, after shaking dry the
Polaroid family portrait, hands the
snap shot to JACK.]

JACK

Is this us?

[Pause.]

CUSTER JONES

Actually, it's not half bad for a Polaroid.

[KEVIN comes to JACK's elbow and looks on.]

JACK

(studying photograph)

Yeah. Here we are. Together. I shoulda realized... Lookit the way Kevin's
looking up at Liz, and Karen looking down at the baby. Jackie's smiling at me.

[JACK looks up. He passes the photo.
As the picture passes from hand to hand
around the table, KEVIN follows it,
looking on, while JACK speaks.
After the last person has looked at the
Polaroid, KEVIN takes the snap shot over
to his map spread out on the coffee table.]

Reah saw all that.

JACKIE

Rita, Da.

JACK

(smiles)

No interrupting.

JACKIE

Sorry.

JACK

(takes EILEEN's hand)

I want to thank you kids. For all offering to help out.
Mama and I appreciate it.

EILEEN

Yes. We do.

JACK

Aunt Rita knew. I shoulda known. I don't know why I needed reminding. There she is, living by herself. Coming down to a cemetery every Easter to visit her mother. Rita knew. She knows you kids. Your mother and I are lucky.

[EILEEN dabs at her eyes.]

So for my penance, for doubting you -- for my penance I'll do the dishes.

JACKIE

Oh my God! A miracle.

EILEEN

This I have to see.

JIMMY

That'll be a first.

JACK

And in honor of Kevin's First Communion, we'll all eat Rita's cake.

(breaks large piece off in his hand)

In remembrance of we.

(mock blessing)

In the name of the father, and of the mother, and of the holy kids.

Amen.

EILEEN

Jack, don't be sacrilegious. On Easter Sunday.

KAREN

(receiving piece of cake)

I feel like I'm in church.

JIMMY

God forbid.

STAN

Jack, what Liz was starting to say before --

(accepts piece of cake)

Thanks. You and Eileen don't have anything to worry about.

Two years ago, Liz decided --

LIZ

Stan, we both decided.

STAN

Okay. We both decided. Two years ago we set up a trust fund for the two of you. For your retirement. So you could start drawing on it now, if you wanted. Just live off the interest. There's plenty there.

JACKIE

Liz, you're kidding.

JIMMY

Holy sh -- It sounds like the lottery.

EILEEN

Liz, I don't know what to say.

LIZ

You could use some of the interest now to pay for your operation, Da. For your foot, if you want.

JACK

(shaking head)

No, no...

LIZ

What, Da?

JACK

No.

LIZ

What do you mean, "no?"

JACK

No. You can't -- It's not -- I don't --

LIZ

We did though.

[EILEEN, JACKIE and JIMMY cannot restrain themselves any longer and break up laughing. JACKIE gets up and hurries off toward interior of house.]

LIZ

What's so funny over there?

EILEEN

Your father doesn't need any operation, Liz. The foot isn't as bad as he's been making out.

KAREN

What do you mean, Ma?

EILEEN

Daddy didn't want you kids to know we lost the flying privileges or you'd know he'd been fired, so he played up the foot.

KAREN

Oh for crying out loud.

[JACKIE enters in a rush.
Music comes from her bedroom.
It is Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade." JACKIE rests the C.D. case in front of JACK on the table, and grabs his hand. KEVIN approaches table, holding his map spread opened wide.]

JACK

Liz, I don't know what to say.

LIZ

Thanks for taking such good care of Kevin.

(kisses him)

JACKIE

C'mon, Da. Get the lead out.

(pulls off his cast)

It's another miracle! Blind man walks.

EILEEN

Jackie gave Daddy "Glenn Miller's Greatest Hits."

KEVIN

Look, Pop: "X" marks the spot.

JIMMY

Hey, look at this. Kevin put the Polaroid portrait of us all on his treasure map. "X" marks the spot.

STAN

Hey, that's pretty good, champ.

[All gather around KEVIN's collage,
voicing their "oohs" and "ahs."]

JACK

I see now, hon, how you did all this for me. I appreciate it. I'm sorry --

JACKIE

Sh! No talking. Dancing only. With Mother there. C'mon everybody!
Let's dance.

[STAN, LIZ, and EILEEN are looking over
KEVIN's shoulder at his map.
CUSTER JONES is snapping photos of it.]

JIMMY

(to STAN and LIZ)

C'mon you two love birds. Shake a leg.

(takes KAREN by the hand)

KAREN

Oh the baby's awake!

JACK

(proudly showing C.D. case)

You see what Jackie gave me.

KAREN

(lifting baby from bassinet)

C'mon, honey. Mommy's gonna dance with you.

[KAREN, JIMMY and the baby dance as a trio.
JACK takes out his eyeglasses to examine
C.D. case.]

JACK

Which one is this now?

EILEEN

I told you your eyes are gonna go if you keep up this drinking.

You mean to tell me you don't recognize our song?

(takes C.D. case from him)

JACK

Yeah. I thought it was. I was just gonna say --

EILEEN

Now don't be telling lies on Easter. C'mon. Get up and dance with me.

JACK

(low)

Stop, Eil. I really can't walk on it.

JACKIE

C'mon, Kev. Come dance with Aunt Jackie.

[JACKIE leads KEVIN around the room as if dragging a rag doll. CUSTER JONES has retrieved the newly decorated Ronald McDonald "Eastland Bunny" and sets him up near the dancers. He snaps with both Polaroids and 35 millimeter.]

JACK

Get one of the working woman here, General Custer.

[JACKIE, leading KEVIN around in a dance, accidentally knocks over the Ronald McDonald cardboard cut-out and tramples over it. All continue dancing to music.]

JACK

This calls for a toast.
(reaches for glass)

STAN

Hear, hear.

[Those dancers within reach of their glasses raise them above their dancing partners' heads.]

JACK

To the producer of the family... To the maker of our old homestead...
To my amie, my wife.

[KEVIN starts to sing the jingle of the television commercial.]

JACKIE

It's mon amie, Da.

JACK

Whatever.

EILEEN

He gets the Canadians mixed up with the Cubans.

[JACK and EILEEN pose with heads together as CUSTER JONES focuses on them. Flash goes off.]

STAN

There's a pick-up truck outside.

EILEEN

What? A truck?

KAREN

Who is it?

[Dancing couples lean to look out window. KEVIN wheels JACK toward front door.]

LIZ

It's a truck full of black people.

JACKIE & JIMMY

It's Ulysses!

EILEEN

Oh my God! He's got the whole family with him.

[Doorbell rings.]

JACK

(at door)
Who goes there?

ULYSSES (o.s.)

It's me.

JACK

Who's "me?"

ULYSSES (o.s.)

Ulysses.

JACK

I am?

KEVIN
(with map and briefcase)

Castaways, Captain.

JACK

Castaways, Young Jim? Then bring 'em aboard!

[KEVIN swings open the front door and JACK is there to greet ULYSSES, who stands in a cream colored suit and hat.]

JACK

Ulysses! Happy Easter.

ULYSSES

Same to you, Mistah Nolan. I see you takin' it easy. Relaxing.

JACK

My kids are all here, Ulysses.

ULYSSES

Ah can see that. I got the family outside myself.
Other truck should be coming real quick. Scuse me one second.

(touches hat; exits)

JACK

(turns to dancers, raising glass)

Give me your hungry, your homeless, your huddled masses --

EILEEN

Jack, they're coming in.

[Glasses are raised above dancing partners' heads.
JACK raises glass; KEVIN turns wheelchair that way.]

JACK

To the succorer of the distressed --

[JACK raises his glass higher.
ULYSSES appears in doorway, hat in hand.]

ULYSSES

Mistah Nolan?

[JACK turns toward the door when he hears his name. KEVIN spins him in that direction as JACK toasts front door.]

JACK

To Miami!

[ULYSSES enters house and extends a hand behind him, as if in introduction of the family members about to follow him inside.]

And this here is my family.

JACK

General Custer, a picture! Everybody ready? Smile!

[All say "cheese," "cheesy," etc. CUSTER JONES' flash illumines the stage in a frozen tableau of posed dancing couples and ULYSSES, with his arm extended, about to introduce his family coming on stage.]

[Blackout.]

[Music still.]

[Music fades to finish.]

END OF ACT III