

I can't make it, Mom. I really don't think I'm going to be able to make it.

Mrs. BAKER. Why? Because a girl has walked out on you?

DON. (*Crosses D. to stool, knocks into it, sits stool.*) Two girls. Let's don't forget Linda.

Mrs. BAKER. And it may be ten girls. Girls walk out on sighted men, too, you know.

DON. Is that supposed to make me feel better?

Mrs. BAKER. (*Below D. R. post.*) It's supposed to make you stop feeling sorry for yourself— You've never felt sorry for yourself before. Please don't start now. (*Crosses in to DON.*) You're going to meet a lot of girls. One day you'll meet one who is capable of a permanent relationship . . . Jill isn't. She knows this herself. (*Crosses above DON to v. end of coffee table.*) I think you're better off staying here. I don't want you coming home discouraged and defeated. You've got your music.

DON. Oh, Christ, Mom, once and for all get it into your head—I am not Little Donny Dark!! I am discouraged! I am defeated! It's over!!

Mrs. BAKER. Do you remember the first Donny Dark story?

DON. No.

Mrs. BAKER. You were five years old. (*Crosses L. of DON.*) We were spending the summer on Lake Winnepesaukee. Dad took you into the lake. It was the first time you'd been in any water deeper than a bathtub. You were terrified. They could hear you screaming all over New Hampshire. Dad brought you in and I put you to bed. You trembled for hours. That night I told you a story about a little blind boy who could swim the seven seas and could talk to the dolphins . . .

DON. (*Remembering, bitterly.*) Yeah . . . and the dolphins told him about enemy submarines on their way to destroy the United States Navy and Donny Dark swam home in time to save them. What a lot of crap.

Mrs. BAKER. The next day you learned to swim! (*DON*

looks toward Mrs. BAKER.) I didn't write those stories hoping for a Pulitzer prize in literature. I wrote them because I found a way to help you. Whenever you felt discouraged or defeated, I told you a Donny Dark story . . . and you tried a little harder and you did a little better. (*Crosses above DON to below D. R. post.*) Shall I make one up now—or are you man enough to handle this situation yourself?

DON. A month ago you didn't think I was man enough. You said I wasn't ready to leave home. Why have you changed?

Mrs. BAKER. I don't know that I've changed. You're not the boy who left home a month ago. I came down here today hoping you were. (*Crosses U. C.*) It's hard to adjust to not being needed anymore. But I can do it now. So you get on with your own life. (*Looking around the room for a moment. Crosses to v. end of sofa, picks up pocketbook.*) I'd like to see you have some decent furniture. You need some dishes and some glasses. I'll send some down to you.

DON. Okay.

Mrs. BAKER. And some linens. You could use better ashtrays. This place might not be so bad if you fixed it up a little. (*Hesitantly.*) Can I help you fix it up a little?

DON. Sure.

Mrs. BAKER. I'll call you in the morning and we'll talk about it. (*Crosses toward front door.*)

DON. Mom, I'm glad you came.

Mrs. BAKER. (*Looks at him for a moment, crosses to above him and puts her arms around him.*) I love you, Don.

DON. I know, Mom. I know you do. (*Mrs. BAKER exits. DON crosses to JILL's door and listens for a moment. He pulls himself out of his despair and, crossing L., raps at the door, gaily.*) Hey! How you doin'? (*Crosses to sink.*)

JILL. (*Opens the door, and enters carrying two suitcases. Setting the bags down by D. L. post.*) I think I

made it. Listen, I left those new dish towels there and the light bulbs, if you want them.

DON. I don't need them.

JILL. Well . . . I'll donate them to the apartment. Oh, and here's the key. (*Takes a key from her pocket, crosses below to coffee table and sets it down.*) I'll leave it here on the table. Will you give it to the super? (*Crosses up to apartment door.*) I guess you'd better have him lock this door again.

DON. I'll wait and see who moves in. It might be some one groovy.

JILL. Oh. Yeah. I hope so. Well . . . let's don't have a big good-bye or anything. I'll be seeing you.

DON. (*Grabs the ladder.*) Can't you stay a minute?

JILL. Well . . . once I'm going somewhere, I like to get going. You know what I mean? (*Picks up bags.*)

DON. (*Crosses to D. R. post.*) I'm the same way. I was just going to have a corned beef sandwich on rye. Want one?

JILL. (*Crosses through kitchen to front door.*) Once I'm going somewhere, I like to get going— (*Puts bags down by edge of Plaisform.*) unless someone offers me a corned beef sandwich on rye.

DON. (*Shoves coffee grinder.*) How about a beer?

JILL. Sure. (*Crosses to living table.*) The candles are still lit.

DON. (*As he fixes sandwich and beer.*) I know. (*Glances at refrigerator, crosses to counter with beer, gets glass, puts it on table.*) I'm very religious.

JILL. Where's Mama?

DON. She went home.

JILL. I didn't hear her leave. What was the verdict?

DON. (*Holds glass out to JILL.*) She accepted my declaration of independence.

JILL. (*Takes glass from DON.*) You're kidding!

DON. (*Crosses to refrigerator, gets sandwich.*) I gotta hand it to her—she put up a great battle.

JILL. (*Crosses to end of sofa.*) Maybe she should've won. I mean . . . maybe you would be better off at home.

DON. (*Crosses to refrigerator, crosses to counter, sand-  
wich on plate.*) That's a swi'chi!

JILL. I've been thinking about it.

DON. Come on, girl. It took me a whole day and three pin's of blood to convince my mother. I don't want to have to start on you.

JILL. (*Crosses to coffee table and director's chair to end of sofa.*) I like to have things done for me.

DON. Then give up Ralph and the play and move in with my mother. I'm out of mustard. (*Moves to door, slightly embarrassed, and takes plate into post-O.L.*)

JILL. (*Sits to end of sofa, not finishing sandwich.*) I don't care. What do you think of Ralph?

DON. (*Leaving up surprised.*) Where are you?

JILL. I'm on the sofa.

DON. Oh. I couldn't figure where your voice was coming from.

JILL. You always could before.

DON. (*Backs to hallway, looks at plate, JILL takes it and puts it on table.*) I . . . I wasn't concentrating (*Crosses to kitchen counter.*) He seemed very nice.

JILL. Who?

DON. Ralph.

JILL. You didn't like him, did you?

DON. I said he seemed very nice.

JILL. I could tell you didn't like him. You were a little uptight when he was here.

DON. (*Crosses to sofa to post.*) I'm always a little uptight when there's more than one person in the room. I have to figure out who's speaking and if he's speaking to me.

JILL. I guess you didn't like him because he was rude.

DON. (*Grabs sandwich.*) Was he rude?

JILL. Well, you know, putting down Scarsdale like that to your mother.

DON. That was an accident. He didn't know she was from Scarsdale. I'm sorry you think he's rude.

JILL. I don't think he's rude.

DON. Well, you said it. I didn't. Or is there someone else here?

JILL. (~~Rises, waves above disconcertedly.~~) I know he comes off as a little conceited.

DON. Tell me, Jill, do you like Ralph?

JILL. (~~With self-conscious laugh.~~) What kind of a question is that? I'm moving in with him, aren't I? Why would I move in with a guy I didn't like?

DON. That was my next question.

JILL. (~~Conciliatoryly.~~) I'd better be going.

DON. (~~Quickly, waves off hastily, goes over to sofa.~~) Come to think of it, I guess I don't like Ralph.

JILL. (~~Graves and of sofa.~~) I knew it all along. But why?

DON. (~~Sits end of sofa.~~) Like you said—he's rude and conceited.

JILL. (~~Graves between coffee table and diner's chair.~~) But I've been trying to tell you he's not like that. I knew that's what you thought, but he's not at all conceited.

DON. And thanks a lot for making me feel his face.

JILL. I thought you might like him better if you knew what he looked like. He's got a good face.

DON. To look at, maybe, but it doesn't come across to the touch.

JILL. (~~Crosses away in a step.~~) I'm sorry about that. I hoped we could all be friends. (~~Crosses to bags.~~) Well, I'd better . . .

DON. (~~Quickly.~~) You know something? I'm going to tell you something. YOU don't like Ralph.

JILL. Oh, God! I just packed two suitcases which are sitting right over there so I can move in with him!

DON. I don't care if you have thirteen trunks! You don't like him.

JILL. (~~Graves through window to back table.~~) Boy,

you really are too much! You think just because you're blind you can see everything!!

DON. That's right—that sixth sense we've got tells me you don't like Ralph Austin! How about that? Spooky, isn't it?

JILL. (~~Graves through window to back table.~~) No, it's just stupid. I have two bags which are packed and sitting right there . . .

DON. Tell me—with Ralph, is it like the Fourth of July and like Christmas?

JILL. Not exactly . . . but he has a kind of strength. With him it's more like—Labor Day.

DON. Do you think he's a beautiful person, too?

JILL. In many ways, yes.

DON. Has he got charisma?

JILL. Definitely!

DON. Then I'm selling mine.

JILL. (~~Graves through window to back table.~~) You'd better hurry. It's been known to fade away.

DON. Do you love him?

JILL. Why should I answer that? No matter what I say, you've already made up your own mind.

DON. (~~Graves.~~) Go ahead, answer it! Do you love him?

JILL. Yes! In my way.

DON. This morning you told me you could never love anyone.

JILL. (~~Crosses through window to back table.~~) That was this morning. Am I allowed to change my mind or has my first statement already been passed into law by Congress?!

DON. (~~Graves.~~) Look, I'm not the worldiest human being on the block, but I know that when you're rushing into the arms of the man you love, you don't stop for a corned beef sandwich on rye.

JILL. (~~Graves through window to back table.~~) Which shows how little you know me. Some people wear their hearts on their sleeves. . . . I wear my appetite.

DON. (~~Crosses to post, bumps into stool on the way.~~) Was it something my mother said?

JILL. (~~Runs to R.~~) Was what something your mother said?

DON. The reason you're leaving. The reason you didn't show up for dinner. I know you didn't forget. Was it something my mother said?

JILL. You don't even listen to your mother. Why should I?

DON. Then why are you leaving? And don't give me that crap about loving Ralph.

JILL. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) I'm leaving because I want to leave. I'm free and I go when I want to go.

DON. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) I thought it might have something to do with me.

JILL. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) It has nothing whatsoever to do with you.

DON. Okay. You're scared to death of becoming involved, aren't you?

JILL. I don't want to get involved. I told you that.

DON. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) That's right—you told me. No commitments . . . no responsibility.

JILL. I have to be able to get out if I get tired of the . . .

DON. Tired of me?

JILL. Anybody!

DON. What if I got tired of you?

JILL. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) Of me??

DON. Doesn't anyone ever get tired of you?

JILL. I don't hang around long enough to find out.

DON. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) With Ralph, you could get out any time you feel like it . . . but it might be harder to walk out on a blind guy, right?

JILL. The blindness has nothing to do with it. Nothing!

DON. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) You know goddam well it has! You wouldn't feel a thing walking out on Ralph or Sebastian

or Irving, but if you walked out on Little Donny Dark, you might hate yourself and you wouldn't like that, would you? I hate me—or love me—but don't leave because I'm blind and don't stay because I'm blind!

JILL. Who are Sebastian and Irving?

DON. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) Nobody. I made them up.

JILL. Sometimes I don't understand you. (*Crosses above director's chair.*) We don't think alike and I know I'd only hurt you sooner or later. I don't want to hurt you.

DON. Why not? You do it to everybody else. Why do I rate special treatment?

JILL. I don't want to be another Linda Fletcher. She hurt you, didn't she?

DON. She helped me, too. She was there when I needed her. . . .

JILL. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) I can't promise that. I don't know where I'll be when you need me.

DON. (*Turns away from her.*) You need me a helluva lot more than I need you!

JILL. I don't need anybody. I never did and I never will. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) I have to go now.

DON. I'm glad you said *have* to and not *want* to.

JILL. Boy, I finally said something right. I'll be seeing you. . . .

DON. (~~Runs to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) Yeah—I'll be seeing you. I'll think about you for years and wonder if you ever made a commitment . . . if you ever got involved.

JILL. I hope not.

DON. Don't worry. It won't happen . . . (~~Crosses to D., bumps into stool and seizes it.~~) because you're emotionally retarded. Did you know that? That's why you couldn't face marriage. It's why you can't face anything permanent . . . anything real. You're leaving now because you're afraid you might fall in love with me . . . and you're too adolescent for that responsibility . . . and you're going to stay that way. Oh God, I feel sorry for you . . . because you're crippled. I'd rather be blind. (*Jill exits, closing the door behind her. He turns, crosses*

to the table and starts to clear D. setting. A fork drops to the floor. DON tries to figure out where the sound came from, then takes the plate and puts it in the sink. Suddenly, he crosses to his tape recorder and turns it on. We hear the last part of his song as he crosses to kitchen, stumbling into a stool. He goes to the dining table and blows out the candles. His hand touches the flowers. With quiet anger, he crushes the flowers in a tight fist, then grabs cloth and pulls it off the table, knocking other things to the floor along with it. He crosses L. toward the living room. He bumps into the D. stool. He tosses it up stage out of his way. He stumbles against the D. S. edge of the sofa and falls to the floor. He lies on the floor by coffee table with tears filling his eyes and no interest in getting up. The front door opens. JILL enters carrying her bags. She sets her bags down and looks around the room for DON. When she sees him, a look of pain comes to her face. DON sits up, quickly, aware of someone in the room.) Who is it? Who's there?

JILL. (*Breaking the tension. Crosses C.*) The news is good. It's not your mother.

DON. What are you doing here?

JILL. (*Crosses to him, sits beside him, takes his hand and kisses it.*) What are you doing on the floor?

DON. I was about to have a picnic.

JILL. What a great idea!

(DON starts to laugh with JILL. He reaches out for her. She goes into his arms and they cling together, laughing.)

#### CURTAIN

#### PROP LIST

##### ACT ONE:

##### PRE-SET:

##### Bed:

Mattress  
Pillow—U. end of mattress  
Guitar—D. of ladder

##### Hat Rack:

Don's jacket

##### Coffee Table:

Phone—D.  
Time magazine  
Matches  
Marvel cigarettes  
Ashtray—U.

##### Sofa:

2 throw pillows—1 each end  
Tape recorder—U. end

##### Shelf over sink:

"Breaking" cups—U.  
Roll of paper towels—under  
plate.

##### Counter:

Small paper plate—next to wall  
Cutlery tray  
Teaspoons  
Tablespoon  
Large knife  
Knives  
Forks  
Ashtray  
Matches

##### Cabinet over counter:

Dishes  
Cups  
Glasses  
Coffee  
Sugar