

BARBARA. And you haven't worked in the year and a half since it closed?

MAURY. No, Barbara, you're right. I haven't.

BARBARA. (Rises.) My God. You'll have to excuse me. But I'm just appalled. I'm suddenly appalled!

SAM. (Quietly.) Barbara, you don't need to do this.

BARBARA. (Bitterly.) I'm sorry, but I come from a world where you don't even get a vacation till after you've worked a year. (Sarcastically.) Let's be honest, Maury. Wouldn't it be a lot more practical if you just got a good, steady job making pottery?

SHARON. And that's on one glass of wine! She could start a war on a hooker of bourbon.

MAURY. We better go, Sam.

SAM. (Rises, crosses to table.) Maury, you don't have

to—

BARBARA. (At cabinet Right Center.) I'm sorry. I'm tired.

MAURY. Sure. I understand. You have to get up early, don't you?

SHARON. (Rising.) We have to go to bed too, don't we, Maury!

MAURY. All right. All right. You've made your point. (To BARBARA.) Thanks for everything.

SAM. It was swell of you to come over, Maury. And nice meeting you, Sharon.

SHARON. How sweet!

SAM. And the best time to bring your father to a performance would be the beginning of the week. Before he casts his play.

SHARON. I'll try.

SAM. Great!

MAURY. (Hesitant.) Well—I'm afraid we're going to have to skip the possibility of his seeing it this week, Sam.

SAM. Why?

MAURY. Well, I didn't want to spoil a party but—the old Seaman's Tabernacle may be dark this week.

SAM. You mean last night was the—last night?

MAURY. It's not for certain but—I was talking to the guy in the box office. We didn't make next week's rent.

SAM. No!

MAURY. Goddamned old sailors want it in advance. We'll get it up for the following week though. Or the week after that for sure. Don't worry.

SAM. (Coming out of it.) Oh, sure, I know. And don't you worry about it, Maury.

MAURY. We'll bounce back!

SAM. Sure we will.

MAURY. Night, Sam.

SHARON. G'night, Sam. (She gives him a long kiss and when she breaks away she is a bit teary.) Sam. I lost it to a boy named Sam. He's a—

MAURY. (Taking her arm.) Yeah, yeah, we know! He's a pansy now. (Takes her out the door.) Come on, Nymph.

SHARON. Bye!

(They exit out of the lighted area Down Left. SAM turns back into the room and stands silently.)

BARBARA. (Sitting on bed.) So the Actors' Rostrum is a thing of the past.

SAM. (SAM strows but controls himself.) Barbara, why did you have to chase them away like that?

BARBARA. I'm tired, Sam.

SAM. Maury's my friend.

BARBARA. Her too?

SAM. (Crosses to table.) Barbara, are you jealous?

BARBARA. I'm not jealous of anything except the way she can eat whenever she wants to!

SAM. (Takes glasses and wine bottle to cabinet and puts them away.) We didn't come to New York yesterday. You've seen lots of girls like Sharon. They shouldn't bother you. They're just crazy. Why let a crazy girl like that bother you at this stage of the game?

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BARBARA. (*Hesitantly.*) You got a letter from your mother today, Sam.

SAM. Oh!

BARBARA. I was late going to work, and the mail was early. It was addressed to you.

SAM. Where is it?

BARBARA. (*BARBARA takes the letter from her purse under the bed and opens it. Gives him the letter.*) I opened it, Sam. I didn't notice it was just to you. It's just the usual kind of mother letter. (*Almost quoting.*) They had pot roast Sunday. That tall girl your cousin, Edgar, was engaged to—the one with the spaces between her teeth.

SAM. Elizabeth Moon. (*Sits in chair above table.*)

BARBARA. They got married last week. It was a lovely wedding. Oh, yes, your father's been pretty sick. He's getting better but things aren't so good. So there's no check for five dollars this week. But as soon as she can she'll start sending it again each week. (*Pause.*) And she wants you to give me her love. How long has she been sending us the money? From the beginning?

SAM. No! The interviewing job wasn't—

BARBARA. How long, Sam?

SAM. About six months ago Mom sent a check for five dollars. I didn't ask her for it. She's been sending it every week. I still do the interviewing job as early and as late as possible. You know that.

BARBARA. But you didn't stop her from sending the money?

SAM. No, I didn't stop her.

BARBARA. (*Rises.*) What is it, Sam? Is it a disease?

SAM. (*Mad.*) So you didn't mean it when you said you wouldn't marry anybody but an actor?

BARBARA. (*Turns to window by bed.*) Let me think about that. Let me walk out onto the terrace of my penthouse apartment and think about that.

SAM. (*Rises.*) Barbara, I hate this. Don't you see that? I feel terrible every day I come home and know I

haven't come through for you? So I just keep trying. But now all I can do is say I'm sorry.

BARBARA. (*Turns back to him.*) Sam, let's go home.

(*SAM turns away.*)

Not for my sake, but for yours. Don't throw your life away on something that doesn't care whether you live or die.

SAM. Barbara, this is my life.

BARBARA. You've tried. God knows, you've tried.

SAM. Maybe something will happen with the group—

BARBARA. Other people have left and been happy. You're not happy here.

SAM. The Actors' Rostrum. It isn't dead yet. We'll get the money for the rent. Maybe it'll get going to the point where they can pay some salaries.

BARBARA. So you can sit around for the rest of your life over cheap wine and talk about Stanislavsky and the small group of artists who mould the pottery of the entertainment world?

SAM. Why do you turn on me just now? Just when things are at their worst? Is it because that girl was here?

BARBARA. No, Sam.

SAM. Is it some silly girl reason like that?

BARBARA. No!

SAM. Is it because—

BARBARA. It's because it isn't just the two of us any more.

(*SAM just stands looking at her.*)

I didn't know for sure until today. I wanted to tell you tonight—and we could celebrate with Marjorie and Allan. (*Pause.*) It takes money even to keep from having a baby. (*Goes to him.*) Oh, Sam, I want to be alive, too! (*Puts her arms around him.*) Please don't be unhappy, please!

(*BOTH sit on bed.*)

SAM. When?

BARBARA. A long time yet. Oh, be happy, Sweetheart. It's a baby. It's like something holy happening to us.

SAM. How much time have we got? I mean to go along like this?

BARBARA. I could work for a while, I guess. We'll need money to get home.

SAM. Barbara, you've got to give me another month. To try and get in a play.

BARBARA. So it'll be two years and seven months you've tried?

SAM. Please, Barbara. It's all I ask.

BARBARA. Then will you promise?

SAM. Yes.

*(They hold each other tightly.)*

BARBARA. Let's go to bed. We're both tired.

SAM. It isn't ten o'clock.

BARBARA. *(Rising.)* The more sleep you get the less food you need. Just like extra food can take the place of sleep—up to a point. At least that's what I keep telling myself. *(Starts crossing Up Center.)* What?

SAM. I didn't say anything.

BARBARA. *(Off.)* I thought I heard you say something.

SAM. I was praying.

BARBARA. *(Off.)* What were you praying for? Sam, what were you praying for?

SAM. *(Quietly.)* A job.

*(LIGHTS fade out.)*

*(The LIGHTS fade up on another area of the stage. A beat-up receptionist's desk stands in the light of an unflattering lamp. There is a moment's silence and then SHIRLEY DRAKE walks into the lighted area as though coming from an inner office. She is a woman in her middle 30's. She is wearing a hat, eating a sandwich and drinking a glass of milk. She peers*

*into the shadows that edge the lighted area, aware that someone is standing there.)*

SHIRLEY. Yes, who is it?

SAM'S VOICE. Miss Drake?

SHIRLEY. I can't see anyone.

*(SAM moves into the light and sits at the desk.)*

You have to have an appointment.

SAM. *(Moves in to Right of desk.)* I happened to be in the neighborhood.

SHIRLEY. I can't see anyone without an appointment.

SAM. I'm an actor.

SHIRLEY. Well, that's a shock.

SAM. If I could just have a minute—

SHIRLEY. A minute? I just might tell you a minute's worth of truth that would be very painful. This is just the day for it.

SAM. I've got to talk to you. You're—this is my last chance!

SHIRLEY. Let's get one thing straight. I'm nobody's last chance!

SAM. You're an agent. You could help me.

SHIRLEY. You think so? *(Holds up her sandwich.)* Do I look like I'm in Sardi's?

SAM. I was wondering if there were any replacements coming up in any shows—

SHIRLEY. Look—*(Stops, look at him closely.)* Have you been in here before?

SAM. No. I spoke to you once. For a moment. My name is Sam Lawson.

SHIRLEY. Let me tell you something, Sam. In this year of our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty three there are exactly eleven attractions open for business in New York City. Only three of them are making any money. Two of these have casts of less than nine people, and the other's a musical. Can you sing? Can you dance?

SAM. I'm an actor, Miss Drake.

SHIRLEY. *(Rises, crosses around desk, shows him the*