Miami, my wife| A comedy in three acts

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MIAMI, MY WIFE
- a Comedy in Three Acts

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MIAMI, MY WIFE
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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
(remaining 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 la-z-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?

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 jigging 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 tsk's 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,
pausings 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.

[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?

[Toilet flushes off-stage.]

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.]
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 --

Who said I don't trust you?

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

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

Then why won't you tell anybody?

C'mon, Jackie.

What?

(leaning toward T.V.; dismissing question)
C'mon. What's the point? Gathering the ole homestead around the family hearth?

I wish you could hear yourself.

Be realistic.

I'd rather be dead.
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.

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?
JACK

Nothing.

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.
(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)
(indicating MTV)

What the hell is this on?

The Cure.

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

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

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

We're not talking about him.

Want me to do these dishes here?

Why, so you can listen?

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

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

She going back in the shower?

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.

( exiting quickly)

Then put the air conditioner on.

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.]

I got it!

JACKIE (o.s.)

EILEEN
It's for her. Let her get it.

[Telephone rings again.]

JACKIE (o.s.)

You got it?

EILEEN
You get it!

(calls back)

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)

Liz!?

(together)

[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.

JACK

Aw fer God sakes...

EILEEN

Fantastic. And Jimmy'll be here too. We'll all be together. Oh, I'm so happy. Jack!

I hear you.    JACK

Isn't that great, Da?    JACKIE

EILEEN
(on phone)
We'll all be together. For Easter.

JACK

You said something to her.

JACKIE

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

(drums on his briefcase)
Isn't that great?

JACK

Hm.

EILEEN

Oh, Liz. I can't wait... Your father? He's right here. He thinks it's a wonderful idea.

JACK

Hm. "The family of man."

[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.

[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 shoulda 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.

Jackie.

EILEEN

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?

Yay!

KEVIN

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.

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."
ELYAGHT, II - 50

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,

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

Who?

JACK

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

EILEEN

What?

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.

EILEEN

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

Give a yell if Jimmy comes out.
LYSAGHT, II - 56

JACKIE

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

(Excited)

EILEEN

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!

What? Who is?

EILEEN

(looking out)

It's Ulysses.

It's 'lysses!

KEVIN

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.

Yeah, well...

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

ULYSSES
No, no. Your boys do a good job.

JACK
Junior said nobody answer the door.

ULYSSES
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.]

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.

Is that right?

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.

How's that?

ULYSSES
I came out ahead. Turned out I been taking so much insurance 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

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.

[KEVIN 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.

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 son's 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.
Avast there, matey.

JACK

I need a shovel.

KEVIN

[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.]
JIMMY (o.s.)

Ma-a-a-a!

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.)

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.

Not the Toyota?

CUSTER JONES

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.

Who?

EILEEN

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.

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?

Who?

Sage.

Oh 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.]

What?

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.
LYSAGHT, II - 75

[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.]

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.]

What's this?

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

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

 stil 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.]
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.
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.

(snap 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.]

KEVIN

I'm gonna make a treasure map, Pop.

[KEVIN 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.]

EILEEN

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?

[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.]

EILEEN

(entering Family Room)

Jack, I'm going.

JACK

I thought you left already.

EILEEN

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

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

JACK

Not half as sorry as I am.

[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 --

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.
LYSAGHT, II - 88

[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.]
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.

[JULYSSES 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?

JULYSSES
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 JULYSSES who turns pages.]

JACK
You got a fine family, Ulysses.

JULYSSES
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.
KEVIN

Pop.

JACK

Sorry.

[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-llect 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.

You get change.

ULYSSES

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.
I think I hear them now.

LIZ

[All look expectantly toward the front door. It opens and CUSTER JONES strolls in. He's wearing a 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.

Let me finish.

JACKIE

There isn't any windfall.

STAN

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?

You were saying --

JACKIE

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.]

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 --
(interrupting)

To the galley, messmate.

(rising)

Pop has a terrible thirst.

I can imagine.

[KEVIN pushes JACK to portable bar.]

Da, are you corrupting my son?

They don't even serve wine in Protestant churches.

(goes to LIZ)

Mom, I want a wheelchair like Pop.

God forbid!

(at bar)

I see you ladies got a head start. I've got some catching up to do.

I can see all the good church did you.

Pop said the priest talked too much --

(offers wine)

Who needs a little more holy water?

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

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.
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 wheelchair 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.]
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[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.

What?

I want to tell you something.

What?

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

O ye of little faith.

(moves toward Kitchen to help)

You hear? I'm serious.

EILEEN
calling

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.
Watch your language.

(playfully)

Ma, Stan's talking dirty.

I'll smash him.

Maybe I'll fix another drink first.

Jack, go easy.

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

Da, you want to put your foot up?

[Jack allows Karen to pamper him. He plays the patient.]

Are we going clockwise or counter-clockwise?

Pass the meat?

Ugh. What's that?

George made a lentil casserole. With kidney beans.

Oh-h...

[ Custe r Jones' casserole gets passed from hand to hand with no one sampling.]

You all right there, George?
(CUSTER JONES)

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.

Oh God. Relatives.

STAN

Who's Aunt Rita?

LIZ

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

Did you ever call her?

JACKIE

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.]
Pass the rolls.  

JACKIE

Jack, you're not eating.  

EILEEN

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

That's not profit sharing.

It could never happen in this country.

It works in Japan.

That's Japan.

(handing JACK drink)
Ma, what's the matter?

(concerned a revelation is at hand)
All right, cut her off. No more wine for the one down the end.

Da, wait a minute. Something's wrong.

What is it, Ma?

(through tears)
Nothing. Go on what you're saying. Does anybody want more turnips?

Ma, what is it?

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

Is that what it is, Ma?

[EILEEN shakes her head and dabs at eyes.]

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

JACK

JIMMY

Jackie has something she wants to tell us.

What, Jackie?

LIZ

JACK

Jackie.

EILEEN

(dabbing eyes)

Jack. Let her.

JACK

I'm gonna lay down in the bedroom.

Daddy, what's the matter?

KAREN

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?

Daddy was fired.

JACKIE
Daddy! No.

Jesus.

LIZ
Oh God, Da.

JACKIE
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.

Daddy, what happened?

KAREN
Nothing.

Nothing?

LIZ

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.

Oh Daddy.

KAREN

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.

What are you talking about?

JACK
Don't be silly.

EILEEN

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

(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.

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.

A taxi?

KAREN

Where?

JACK

Who is it?

EILEEN
Maybe it's Ulysses.

In a taxi?

It's a woman.

Oh my God! It's Rita.

Aunt Rita?

Aw fer God sakes.

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

Just in time for dinner.

I'll get it, Pop.

Hey, it's the Easter bunny!

Jack! Happy Easter.
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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 hmm.

God bless us.

AUNT RITA

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.

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?

AUNT RITA

A ginger ale?

EILEEN

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?

Sure we do.

JIMMY

Stay, Aunt Rita.

JACKIE

C'mon now. You heard them.

JACK

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.
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.

[Silence.]

JACK

We're not usually this quiet.

KAREN

Yeah. I feel kinda funny.

LIZ

What do you mean?

KAREN

I don't know. I can't believe she made the baby that beautiful outfit.

EILEEN

And the size of the basket of fruit for Daddy.

KAREN

It would cost a fortune in a store.

EILEEN

What?
The baby outfit.

KAREN

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.

Rita, Da.

JACKIE

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 --
Stan, we both decided.

LIZ

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.

Liz, you're kidding.

JACKIE

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.
Hey, that's pretty good, champ.

[All gather around KEVIN's collage, voicing their "oohs" and "ahs."]

I see now, hon, how you did all this for me. I appreciate it. I'm sorry --

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.]

(to STAN and LIZ)

C'mon you two love birds. Shake a leg.
(takes KAREN by the hand)

Oh the baby's awake!

(proudly showing C.D. case)

You see what Jackie gave me.

(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.)

Which one is this now?

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?

It's me.

ULYSSES (o.s.)

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' head.
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