

TENDER ARE THE VINES
An Original Three-Act Play

By

Pauline K. Schmookler

A THESIS

Submitted to the College of Communication Arts of Michigan
State University of Agriculture and Applied Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech

1956

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/4/56
G

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Roger Busfield, Chairman of the thesis committee, for his helpful guidance through many drafts; and to the members of the committee, Dr. David Potter, Dr. David Ralph, and Dr. John Walker for their fine suggestions.

I also wish to thank fellow members of the Lansing Writer's Group for their most helpful comments on a reading of an early draft.

And, more familiarly, my gratitude goes to my husband, Dr. Jacob Schmookler, whose encouragement, help, and understanding provided an impetus, not only for this work, but for my entire academic pursuit.

TENDER ARE THE VINES
An Original Three-Act Play

By

Pauline K. Schmookler

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the College of Communication Arts of Michigan
State University of Agriculture and Applied Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech

1956

Approved

Kenneth M. Dunsford
Major Professor

The diagram illustrates a two-dimensional lattice structure. It consists of a grid of points. Arrows indicate interactions between nearest and next-nearest neighbors. The lattice is labeled with 'a' for the nearest neighbor distance and 'b' for the next-nearest neighbor distance.

ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to write an original full-length play which would be worthy of presentation in a theatre and would demonstrate the author's understanding of standard playwriting techniques. This thesis is a presentation of the completed manuscript of the play, Tender Are the Vines, as it would be delivered to a director for production.

Plot synopsis: The house is a shabby one in a poor neighborhood of a large city. But inside, behind the curtain of what used to be an ice-cream parlor, are books, music and Mollie Granoff. Into Mollie's house have come many people seeking the love and understanding they so desperately need. Helping others is something that Mollie has done all her life. She has raised and guided a large family of semi-orphaned brothers and sisters and, even though they are now married and no longer live at home, they are still emotionally dependent upon her. She has encouraged their dependence until "Doc" comes into her life.

For the first time Mollie is in love. But the demands of Mollie's family continue, and Mollie is unable, indeed unwilling, to reject them. Nor can she ignore the pathetic and lonely Benny, her next-door neighbor, or Miss Patterson, a nurse at the hospital across the street.

When Mollie finds "Doc" is in trouble, she directs the same zeal toward "Doc's" problem that she has for so many others. A struggle

ensues between "Doc" who wants to be left alone and Mollie who feels she must help him. "How," she asks, "can you measure in a teaspoon what you do for people?"

A family crisis forces "Doc" to realize that he can no longer attempt to isolate himself nor insist that Mollie rebuff the demands of her family and friends. Mollie, on the other hand, discovers that some measure of restraint is equally important. Their love is deepened and enriched by this shared knowledge.

TENDER ARE THE VINES

Cast

(In order of appearance)

Benny
Selma
Sander
Mollie
Doc
Miss Patterson
John Frisbie
Flo

The entire action takes place in Mollie's home.
The time is the present.

Scenes

Act I : Scene 1 - Evening
 Scene 2 - Next afternoon

Act II : Later, that afternoon

Act III: About fifteen minutes later

Act I

Scene 1

The scene is in MOLLIE'S home. The room, a combination living and dining-room, is just off the store, an ice-cream parlor, which has been closed for months. The room is furnished rather shabbily, but there are a few touches of color here and there which indicate a loving eye has tried to master the environment. It is obvious from the large round table and chairs grouped around it, that the room has served both as a living and dining room to a large family. On one wall is an old piano, closed now for many years. A bookcase, overcrowded with both well-worn books and with the cheaper paper back books is in the rear. The only conspicuously new piece of furniture is the rather handsome console radio-record player.

To the left of center, in the rear, is the stairway going upstairs. The stairway divides, on stage, to allow for a landing. The rear, upstage wall, contains a window which faces out on the narrow alley. The same wall is obviously freshly papered. Upstage right is the outside door which opens up on the alley. This is the door the family and friends used when they wanted to avoid coming through the store and is the only outside door now in use. Downstage right is the opening which leads into the store. It is covered with a drape. Downstage left is the entrance into the kitchen.

When the curtain opens BENNY is on stage alone. He is of medium height, stockily built, with heavy facial features; and about thirty-five years old. His hair is carefully parted in the middle. He is busy hanging up one of the last strips of wall-paper. He steps back to survey the results, shaking his head approvingly. The door bell rings. BENNY straightens up, hesitates for a moment, then goes to the door. SELMA comes in. She is the baby of the Granoff family, in her twenties, slender, very smartly dressed; her hair is coiffured in the latest style.



SELMA

Oh!

(She obviously hadn't expected to see BENNY)

Hi, Benny.

(She comes in.)

BENNY

Hi!

SELMA

(Looks around)

Mollie in the kitchen?

BENNY

(Shakes his head)

Unh-unh. She's out.

SELMA

Out? That's funny. She called and said she wanted me to come right over.

BENNY

She said she'll be right back.

SELMA

(Notices the wall-paper)

Oh, I get it. This is the surprise.

(Looks at it critically)

Can't say I care for the change.

BENNY

(Hurt)

Your sister likes it.

SELMA

It's nice, Benny...really...it just makes the place look different, that's all.

BENNY

So?

SELMA

(Attempts to change the subject to placate injured BENNY)

When did Mollie leave?

BENNY

(Abruptly—still hurt)

She said for y' ta wait.

SELMA

(There is a pause. She starts to reply but changes her mind and moves to divert him. She sits down.)

Uh...Benny...How's Ruthie? I haven't seen her in a long time.

BENNY

Y' mean y' ain't heard?

SELMA

No.

BENNY

That dumb kid sister o'mine gets an idea in her head all of a sudden an' gets married.

SELMA

People do get married, Benny.

BENNY

Yeah...

(There is an awkward pause)

You been married a couple years yourself.

SELMA

Three.

BENNY

(Shakes his head)

All you kids gettin' married...Makes a guy feel kinda old.

(Another awkward pause, interrupted by the door opening and SANDER enters. He is about 36 years old, short and beginning to bald a little. When he speaks he has a curious way of hesitating as though he wishes to assure himself that what he says will not offend anyone.)

SANDER

Hi, Selma.

SELMA

Hi, Sander.

SANDER

(Sees BENNY)

Hey...Benny.

(Pokes BENNY in the ribs)

BENNY

Long time no see.

(Bear hugs SANDER)

1. The first step in the process of the scientific method is to make an observation or ask a question.

2. The second step is to do background research to learn what is already known about the topic.

3. The third step is to form a hypothesis, which is a prediction or an educated guess about the outcome of the experiment.

4. The fourth step is to design and conduct an experiment to test the hypothesis.

5. The fifth step is to analyze the data and draw a conclusion based on the results of the experiment.

6. The sixth step is to communicate the results of the experiment to others.

7. The seventh step is to repeat the experiment to verify the results and to see if the hypothesis is supported or refuted.

8. The eighth step is to use the results of the experiment to make a prediction about the outcome of a future experiment.

9. The ninth step is to use the results of the experiment to make a prediction about the outcome of a future experiment.

10. The tenth step is to use the results of the experiment to make a prediction about the outcome of a future experiment.

SANDER
How's the boy?

BENNY
Livin'. Livin', boy.

SANDER
(To SELMA)
What's the big secret? Mollie wouldn't tell me what she wanted over the phone.

SELMA
Mollie's out...but it's the wall-paper Benny just put up.

SANDER
Say...that's nice, Benny.

BENNY
Thanks.

SANDER
(To SELMA)
But she wouldn't call us over here just to look at wall-paper.
(Turns to BENNY)
Come on, Benny. Give. What's Mollie up to?

BENNY
Y'got me, Sander. All I know is she just goes to the phone an' calls you...right after the real estate guy left.

SELMA
Real estate?

SANDER
It must be about the store! She finally got a buyer for the store!

SELMA
That hole?
(Goes to the store opening and pulls back the curtain)
Oooh...it's dark in there.

BENNY
That ain't a hole. It's good property!

SELMA
(lowering the curtain)
Maybe. But when this part's closed off Mollie'll be a lot happier. She's hated the store since Papa died.

SANDER
But...if it's the same buyer...he wanted the whole place.

SELMA

Oh? Mollie turned him down once.

BENNY

Sell it! Listen, this house'll outlast all the modern ones. I told Mollie I'd fix up the basement for her. An' I won't charge her a cent. The way this house'll last...she can live here forever...

(Phone rings. BENNY looks to the other two.)

SELMA

Go ahead, Benny. You answer it. It might be my dear sister Flo...and I don't care to talk to her.

BENNY

Say, I gotta message for her.

(Phone rings again)

Okay! I'm comin'!

(Picks up phone. In a self-consciously best voice)

Hello? Granoff residence. Benny Prince, speakin'.

(Pause)

Benny, from next door.

(Pause)

Oh...! No, she ain't here.

(Pause)

Be back soon.

(Pause)

Yeah...yeah...I'll tell 'er.

(He hangs up.)

It was that orderly...Doc Fischer.

SELMA

(Excitedly)

What did he want?

BENNY

Nothin'. Just t' talk t' Mollie.

(To SANDER)

He thought I was one-na her brothers.

(Slyly)

I shoulda said I was another boy friend.

SANDER

(Laughing)

Benny. You still have romantic notions.

BENNY

(Slightly belligerent)

So what?

(Gives a little laugh)

Naw. I'm serious...I shoulda said..."Who's this callin' my girl?"

I know, like they say in the movies. It always makes the other guy jealous...and that's good!

BENNY (CONT'D)

(To SELMA)

D'ya...D'ya think it's serious?

SELMA

(Simply, sincerely)

Serious? I hope so, Benny. I hope so.

BENNY

Yeah...

(There is a slight pause)

It's nice though...an' it's right she should get married. I only hope nothin' happens.

SELMA

What? What happens?

BENNY

I mean all your sisters and brothers. Flo, George, Annie, Rudy...the whole bunch! Burns me up th' way everytime Mollie wants t' do somethin'...somebody's always needin' her.

SANDER

Mollie doesn't mind.

SELMA

Mollie never had time for love before.

BENNY

Naw, Selma...Mollie had lottsa fellahs that liked her.

SELMA

(Thinks this discussion of MOLLIE should end.)

I need some coffee. Want some Sander...Benny?

SANDER

Fine.

BENNY

Not f'me, thanks.

(Gets down on his knees to cut off a strip of wall-paper.

SELMA goes to the kitchen.)

SANDER

What's new with you, Benny? Any nice girl in the picture?

BENNY

(Rises)

A nice girl...where?

SANDER

I mean...is there any nice girl you're seeing?

BENNY

Nah! Who needs 'em!

(He cleans his cutting knife viciously.)

SANDER

I'll never forget when we were double dating you always wanted to propose to a girl the first night you met her.

BENNY

(Flaring up)

All right. So I didn't get married like you did. So? Whatta y'want?

SANDER

Nothing...

(Apologetically)

I was just wondering...

BENNY

(Slightly mollified)

Yeah...

(Short pause)

They're all squares t'day. Real squares! Besides, I got plenty o' dates. Look, I got it good. Better'n you, boy.

SELMA

(Coming in)

Does anybody have a match? That old stove's pilot light always wins!

SANDER

Here.

(Hands her a match. Then, impatiently)

What's keeping Mollie? I've got to get home.

SELMA

She wants to see you.

SANDER

And...?

SELMA

You're quick enough to hang around Mollie when you want something.

SANDER

(Embarrassed in front of BENNY. But he gives a little chuckle.)

For the baby of the family you're sure bossy. Isn't she, Benny?

BENNY

Yeah...It's a good thing she useta wear a red snow suit. When she an' Ruthie'd come taggin' after us we could spot 'em by Selma's red suit. Kinda showed up in the snow, didn't it?

SELMA

(Laughing)

All right...all right...I'll just go out and wrestle with that stove again...

(But before SELMA goes out, MOLLIE enters from the outside door. She is a mature woman, dark and very vivacious. Her dark eyes light up with pleasure at the sight of her brother and sister.)

MOLLIE

Ah...a gathering of the clan.

BENNY

I'm still here.

MOLLIE

(Takes off her hat)

You're included.

(Kisses SANDER)

How's Barbara?...the children?

SANDER

Fine. Everybody's fine.

MOLLIE

(Comes to SELMA and kisses her)

Anything new?

SELMA

Not since we talked yesterday. But...you're the one with the surprise, remember?

MOLLIE

(Laughs)

Yes.

(To BENNY)

You finished, Benny?

BENNY

Yeah...

MOLLIE

Did Flo call?

BENNY

No...she didn't. But your fellah did!

MOLLIE

(Her eyes light up.)

Oh?

BENNY

He said t' tell y' he'd be a little late.

MOLLIE

Thanks.

SELMA

What's the surprise, Mollie?

MOLLIE

(Hesitates. To BENNY)

Uh...shall I pay you now?

BENNY

(Catches the hint)

Naw. Tomorrow'll be okay. Your credit's good.

MOLLIE

(As BENNY starts reluctantly for the door)

Thank you, Benny.

BENNY

I...I'll see ya.

MOLLIE

No. Stay, Benny. You might as well hear this too. I wanted to wait for Flo...but... I've got a buyer for the house!

SELMA

(Shocked)

The house!

BENNY

You're sellin' the house?

SANDER

You mean the store, don't you?

MOLLIE

No. The whole thing. The works.

SELMA

But...you refused to sell only a few months ago...

MOLLIE

I decided yesterday. The agent had a hot prospect.

(With an attempt at lightness)

He came...he saw...he liked. So...it's done. That is almost. I wanted to get your okay on it.

SANDER

(Stiffly)

You don't need our okay. It's your property. Papa left it to you.

... ..

...

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

MOLLIE

Yes...I know he did. But...

(She walks over to the store opening, looks at the curtain,
then turns to face them.)

It really belongs to all of us, doesn't it? I intend to divide the money.

SELMA

We don't want the money!

MOLLIE

(Confidently)

We'll settle that when the deal is final.

SELMA

Why, Mollie? Why are you selling?

MOLLIE

(Looks slowly around at their shocked faces)

It's like tearing down an old institution, isn't it. The house and the Rock of Gibraltar.

(Gives a little laugh)

Oh, come. Don't look like the bottom fell out of the world. We don't need it anymore. It's served its function. After all...you're all married. Papa...Papa's dead...

(She goes to the window in the rear.)

It's a big house for one person. And I'm hardly home, working at the hospital.

SANDER

(Like a child)

But Mollie, we still come here.

MOLLIE

But you don't live here. And you can come someplace else just as easily. Besides, you're off soon to Cincinnati.

SANDER

I...I don't know. I...haven't heard yet.

MOLLIE

(Immediately interested)

Didn't you call them? You said you would!

SANDER

No...I thought I'd wait. Besides...if they really want me they'll call me.

(He dismisses the matter)

Look, about the house...

MOLLIE

(Impatiently)

That can wait. You should call them, Sander. Right away. They don't even know if you're interested.

SANDER

I sent them my credentials...

MOLLIE

And the firm was interested. So...?

SANDER

I...I wanted time to be sure... To talk to you again about it.

MOLLIE

(Positively)

Wire them. Or better still...call.

SANDER

You...think it's okay?

MOLLIE

It's the best opportunity you've had!

(Looks around at SELMA)

Well...you see. Another one off. That leaves just you and Flo. The rest...Rudy...Anne...George...all scattered.

(Wryly)

It costs me a fortune in train fares.

BENNY

Anne came here t' have her baby.

MOLLIE

(Dryly)

Let's hope her family is now complete!

SELMA

(Whose thoughts are elsewhere)

I...I don't know, Mollie.

MOLLIE

Don't tell me she's...

SELMA

What? Oh...I'm talking about the house. After all, it's all paid for. You'll have to pay a fabulous rent for an apartment.

MOLLIE

Not in this neighborhood.

SANDER

Any neighborhood.

(Gets up heavily)

I've got to go. Barbara's expecting guests.

(Phone rings)

SELMA

Shall I get it, Mollie?

MOLLIE

(Pats her hair in place)

No, thanks. I'll get it.

SANDER

That must be Barbara.

MOLLIE

(Picks up phone)

Hello? Oh...yes, Flo. I called...

SELMA

It's a good thing I didn't answer it.

MOLLIE

(Into phone)

What? You're talking too fast.

SELMA

What does she want?

BENNY

Mollie tried t' get her before about the house.

MOLLIE

(Still into phone)

Flo...I can't now. I'm expecting someone...yes, I'm busy tonight.

Can't you tell me?

(Pause)

Look, I've got something I want to tell you...

(Pause)

What? Flo...calm down.

(Pause)

All right, you can tell me tomorrow...Yes... I'll run over from the hospital at lunch time. I can be here in a couple of minutes. It's just across the street.

(Slight pause)

Yes...about eleven-thirty...All right. Goodbye.

SANDER

What's up?

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

MOLLIE

I don't know. She was very upset. She wanted me to come right over.

SELMA

I'll bet!

MOLLIE

I never did get a chance to tell her about the house.

BENNY

Does she ever give anybody a chance t' say anythin'?

(There is a slight pause. Everyone is slightly uncomfortable at BENNY'S observation about a family matter.)

SANDER

This time for real. I've got to go. Goodbye everybody.

MOLLIE

Goodbye, Sander. You'll call Cincinnati?

SANDER

Yes...Yes, I will.

(At door)

Goodbye. And think about the house business before you decide, Mollie.

MOLLIE

(To SELMA)

You'd like me to think about it too, wouldn't you?

SELMA

Well-l...

(She hesitates)

Nobody should tell you what to do. It's your house.

MOLLIE

(With a little smile)

Is it?

SELMA

(Turns away abruptly)

I was going to make some coffee before you came in. Want some?

MOLLIE

Tea's more soothing, Selma.

(SELMA gives MOLLIE a startled look, then averts her face.

She leaves for the kitchen. MOLLIE turns to BENNY.)

You'll have some with us?

BENNY

Naw...thanks. I shouldna stayed. My grandmother's goin' t' a lodge meetin'. I gotta drive her.

MOLLIE

Again?

BENNY

(Nods)

Twict a month. She's a real bugger on that lodge o' hers. She says it's the only way shëll be sure o' bein' buried proper when she dies.

(Shakes his head)

An' I keep tellin' her I'll take care o' that.

MOLLIE

You're good to her.

BENNY

(Starts to leave, then turns)

Who's gonna buy it?

MOLLIE

The house? Oh...a shoemaker, I think he said.

BENNY

A shoemaker? Here?

(He looks around as if the room was suddenly profaned.)

Selma's right, y'know.

MOLLIE

About what?

BENNY

Apartments are awful high.

MOLLIE

Not around here. I've priced them.

BENNY

(Thinking)

Can you get one on this block, maybe?

MOLLIE

Maybe. It would be more convenient to the hospital.

BENNY

(Turns to leave again and hesitates)

Is it because of your fellah?

MOLLIE

Why...you mean my selling the house?

(Turns away abruptly)

The idea is my own.

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

BENNY

(Wistfully)
But y' got somebody now. That's the important thing. Y'see...
(He stops.)

MOLLIE

Yes, Benny...
(There is a pause. BENNY starts to answer but doesn't quite manage to get anything out.)
Is something the matter?

BENNY

I...I'm...
(He stops, then plunges in.)
Lately I've been thinkin'. With my kid sister gettin' married an' all...
(He stops again.)
Aw, what's the difference!
(He turns away.)

MOLLIE

Something is wrong!

BENNY

(Blurts out)
I'm Sander's age. An' he's got two big kids already!
(He stops.)

MOLLIE

(Encouragingly)
Yes?

BENNY

(Low)
The trouble is me...

MOLLIE

You? What are you talking about?

BENNY

I'm talkin' about me.
(Vehemently)
Me. The kind o' guy I am.

MOLLIE

(Puzzled)
There's nothing wrong with you, Benny. You're a fine man.

BENNY

T' you, maybe. You know me. But...
(He stops, then blurts out)
I can't get t' first base with no girl!

MOLLIE

Oh...

BENNY

I've tried. Honest.

MOLLIE

You just haven't met the right one yet. One of these days...

BENNY

(Bursts out)

So how long's it gonna take? What am I a kid or somethin'? I wanna wife...an' a home. So what happens? Everytime I go out, she turns out to be a nothin'!

(There is a pause.)

MOLLIE

Where do you go...to meet girls?

BENNY

Aw...around.

MOLLIE

Do you ever go to the "Y" dances?

BENNY

Sometimes.

MOLLIE

No nice girls there?

BENNY

(With a shrug)

Sure.

MOLLIE

So?

BENNY

(With a bitter laugh)

I try...A lotta good it does me!

(There is a slight pause. BENNY lowers his head.)

Those kind don't give me a tumble.

MOLLIE

(Puzzled)

You dance...I know...

BENNY

Yeah...I dance...

(Suddenly)

Whatsa matter with me, Mollie?

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

MOLLIE

(Startled)

Nothing. I just don't understand.

(A little indignant at the idea that he's not accepted)

You're a nice guy.

BENNY

I guess I ain't.

MOLLIE

Sure you are... You and Sander have always been a couple of nice guys.

BENNY

Sander's been married ten years already!

MOLLIE

You will be too.

BENNY

The trouble is...

(He takes a deep breath.)

The trouble is still me!

MOLLIE

Nonsense, Benny...

(She breaks off what she was going to say.)

From the way you talked I always thought you enjoyed being single.

That even you preferred it that way.

BENNY

(Bitterly)

Yeah!

MOLLIE

You always boasted so about your dates.

BENNY

(Explosively)

So whattam I gonna say? That the girls don't like me? That the only ones I meet are drips?

(He stops embarrassed.)

I guess I shouldn't of said nothin'... You'll think...

(He trails off.)

MOLLIE

(Reaches out to touch his arm)

Benny...

BENNY

(Looks at her hand)

It's just... I ain't gonna have nobody. Nobody at all... I mean... I got my grandmother...but she's always talkin' about dyin'. Anyway, I can't talk t' her about it.

1000

MOLLIE

You can talk to me.

BENNY

Not if you're movin'... Sellin' the house an'...
(He stops.)

MOLLIE

Yes?

BENNY

You're gettin' serious about that fella Doc. You ain't gonna have time for talkin'.

MOLLIE

I'll always have time for you, Benny.

BENNY

(Looks up at her sharply, then lowers his head.)

Yeah...

(He rises)

Well... I gotta go.

(He turns to leave)

MOLLIE

Benny.

(He stops.)

I've got time right now.

BENNY

You can't do nothin' about it.

MOLLIE

(Thoughtfully)

If I could get you an introduction...It's different when you're introduced to somebody.

BENNY

(Interested)

Y'mean y'know somebody?

MOLLIE

Let's see...a...nice...single...woman.

(Slight pause)

BENNY

(Hopefully)

Nice lookin' too?

MOLLIE

(Laughs)

We'll try to work that in too.

(Suddenly)

Wait a minute. I do know somebody!

BENNY

(Caught in MOLLIE'S enthusiasm)

Yeah?

MOLLIE

She's nice. Really nice. She's the head nurse in the operating room.

BENNY

Not too young! I don't wanna go out with no kid!

MOLLIE

No...she's...She's not that young. I'm sure you'll like her.

BENNY

D'ya... D'ya think she'll like me?

MOLLIE

Of course! Why shouldn't she?

BENNY

(Worried)

Her bein' a head nurse... Sound's pretty ritzy.

MOLLIE

She's not like that. She has to maintain discipline in the hospital of course...but...

(Her eyes twinkle.)

Even there. You wouldn't believe how they run the hospital like an army. Some nurses pull their rank on me since I'm just a nurses' helper. But Miss Patterson never does.

BENNY

Yeah...but...

SELMA (Off-stage)

Mollie! Where's the lump sugar?

MOLLIE

(Calls)

There's a sugar bowl full on the second shelf.

(To BENNY)

I'll talk to her tomorrow. Sound good?

BENNY

I...yeah! Sounds okay.

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

SELMA

(Comes in with tray)
Tea's served.

BENNY

I...I better go.

MOLLIE

I'll let you know.

BENNY

(At door)
I don't think I'll like a shoemaker next door.

MOLLIE

(Laughs)
Think of the convenience.
(BENNY leaves.)

SELMA

(Pours and hands MOLLIE a cup of tea)
Shoemaker?

MOLLIE

Private joke.
(Takes a sip of tea. She looks at SELMA tenderly.)
Feel better?

SELMA

(Starts to protest)
I wasn't....
(Gives a little laugh)
The trouble is you know me too well.

MOLLIE

Selling the house is a shock to you, isn't it?

SELMA

Well...
(With an attempt at lightness)
The old place does have its charm!
(She looks around.)
Are you going to take all this stuff?

MOLLIE

Oh my! I forgot to ask Sander. I want all of you to take whatever you want. Can you use anything?

SELMA

In my apartment? Mark doesn't like things with a history.

MOLLIE

(Teasingly)

Maybe you'd like to take the piano?

SELMA

(With a mock shudder)

No thanks. It would remind me of the hours of practice you made me put in on that darn thing.

MOLLIE

Don't worry, dear. I was planning to offer it to Flo for little Judy.

(She looks around the room.)

I won't take much. Just the books and the console, of course...

(She smiles and reaches over to pat SELMA'S hand.)

Your gift. It's meant so much to me...to both of us.

SELMA

Doc?

MOLLIE

(Nods)

We sit here for hours...just listening to it... Oh!

(She jumps up.)

Look what I picked up today. He'll love it. It's one of the Bach Brandenburg Concertos. He'll just love it.

SELMA

And you, Mollie?

MOLLIE

Bach is his favorite...I like...

SELMA

I didn't mean that. I mean, does he love you?

MOLLIE

(A little taken back by SELMA'S forthrightness)

I... I don't know.

SELMA

Has he said anything yet?

MOLLIE

No-o-o... He's...Oh, I don't know. There have been times when I thought...

(She gives a little laugh.)

I guess marriage isn't part of his plans.

SELMA

What will you do?

MOLLIE

I'll wait...and hope.

SELMA

(Irritably)

What's holding him back? He's a fool not to snap you up.

MOLLIE

I've been around a long time...

(Affectionately)

Not everybody sees me as you do.

(Seriously)

But Doc's not a fool. He's...he's everything in a man I've ever dreamed about.

(With a little laugh)

As busy as I was, there were times that I dreamed.

SELMA

(Suddenly)

Promise me something, Mollie.

MOLLIE

Yes, dear?

SELMA

Promise you'll think of yourself for a change. Promise you'll not let anybody or anything interfere. Nobody. Not Sander...or Flo...or anybody.

MOLLIE

I am thinking of myself. I'm getting out of this mausoleum. Step number one!

SELMA

But, why...?

(The door-bell rings before SELMA can finish.)

Doc?

MOLLIE

I think so.

SELMA

Shall I answer it for you?

MOLLIE

Would you? I'll clear the tea things away.

(She replaces cups on the tray. SELMA goes to the door but it is BENNY on the threshold.)

BENNY

I left my ladder. I got a job early in the morning.

SELMA

(To MOLLIE. Looks at her watch)
I've got to run. Sure you won't both join us?

MOLLIE

I asked him...Doc said...no.

SELMA

I'll call you tomorrow.

(As she turns to leave, DOC is at the door. He is a big man with slightly greying hair. He is still in uniform. BENNY is on his way out with the ladder and nearly collides with DOC.)

BENNY

Excuse me.

(As he sees DOC)

Oh! Good evening.

(He scurries out)

DOC

(Calling after BENNY)

Good night.

SELMA

(To DOC)

Hello...

(Back to MOLLIE)

Good night again.

(She gives MOLLIE a significant look.)

DOC

Don't hurry off on my account.

SELMA

No...I was just leaving. Good night.

MOLLIE

Good night, dear.

(SELMA leaves)

Come in, Doc.

DOC

That was...no, don't tell me... Selma, wasn't it? The youngest?

MOLLIE

You're getting better all the time. You're beginning to tell them apart.

DOC

I sat up one night memorizing. I couldn't remember the name of the sister who had her baby here.

MOLLIE

That was Annie.

DOC

I'll get them all straight someday.

MOLLIE

Selma wants us to join them tonight.

DOC

(Abruptly)

I prefer to stay here.

(In a lighter tone)

I hope you don't mind my coming in my whites. It was so late and I didn't want to take time to change.

MOLLIE

You've been on duty all this time?

DOC

(Nods)

A couple of emergencies came in.

MOLLIE

You're not the only orderly in the hospital.

DOC

Tom was tied up with a cardiac on Men's Medical. Hugh's off tonight and the day boys had gone...so...

(He shrugs. He sinks down in the armchair.)

Ooh...this feels good. I'm so tired. I think I'll be wheeling stretchers in my sleep tonight.

MOLLIE

Here, put your feet up on this stool.

(She stands looking down at him.)

You work too hard.

DOC

It's a job.

MOLLIE

No, it's more than that to you.

DOC

(Briskly)

It's just a job, Mollie. You're always romanticizing.

MOLLIE

(Smiles)

Am I?

1

MOLLIE (CONT'D)

(Crosses room)
I've got a surprise.
(She crosses to record player and puts on the record she had bought. She turns to watch with delight his expression.)

DOC

The second Brandenburg! Nice!
(MOLLIE comes back and sits on the sofa.)
So far away?

(MOLLIE comes over to the stool and sits down. They sit thus for a few minutes, MOLLIE leaning back against DOC'S knee. DOC'S hand comes up slowly and begins to stroke MOLLIE'S hair. He gets up suddenly and crosses the room to the record player and turns off the record, staring down at it. MOLLIE watches in surprise.)
I want to marry you, Mollie. I've...wanted to ask you for a long time.
(MOLLIE does not answer. DOC turns around slowly to look at her.)
Well, Mollie?

MOLLIE

Are you asking me?

DOC

Yes.

MOLLIE

(Incredulously)
Just like that!

DOC

What's wrong.

MOLLIE

(Rises)
If you can't see what's wrong... More of my romanticizing, you'll call it, but...
(Vehemently)
You've been married before. Maybe being in love isn't necessary to you.

DOC

As you say...I've been married before.
(There is a pause.)

MOLLIE

Oh...I see.
(In a low tone)
Convenient. Isn't that what they call a marriage like you're proposing? Convenient? Two older people.

MOLLIE (CONT'D)

(Bitterly)

Why shouldn't they get married? They can pool their resources...

DOC

(Sharply)

Mollie! Don't you know? I...I'm in love with you.

MOLLIE

(Slowly)

You say it as though you didn't want to be.

DOC

(Turns away)

I didn't. I...

(Turns back to her)

I do now. I have for a long time. It didn't help to tell myself I wasn't in love with you.

MOLLIE

(Softly)

Why did you have to fight it, Doc?

(DOC does not answer.)

I love you too. Very much.

(They both look at each other. DOC takes her in his arms and they kiss. MOLLIE is transformed into a young girl as she suddenly becomes shy. Breaking away, she looks up at him, then she is caught in a fervent, passionate embrace to which she responds with the fervor of long denied years.)

I've waited a long time for you, Doc. A long time.

DOC

It's been a long time for me too.

MOLLIE

I'm glad I waited...

DOC

I need you, Mollie. More than I knew.

MOLLIE

(As she sinks on the sofa, teasingly)

Not just for convenience?

DOC

(Looks down earnestly at her)

No....not just for convenience.

(He sits down beside her and puts his arm around her. There is a comfortable pause as they sit there.)

-

...

...

.....

.....

...

...

MOLLIE

(Snuggles against him)

All the same...a house with a man in it...that's mighty convenient.

DOC

(Sits up)

A house? I thought you were selling this place?

MOLLIE

I...well, I don't know. The kids are so against it.

DOC

Kids? You don't mean your brothers and sisters? Why, they're all married with homes of their own!

MOLLIE

I know...

(There is a pause. MOLLIE gets up and puts on the Brandenburg record. She stands there for a moment, then turns and comes back to DOC.)

I put this house up for sale because of you.

DOC

(Surprised)

Me?

MOLLIE

There are so many ghostly voices rattling around here. I wanted to go someplace where I could listen to myself...

DOC

(Smiling)

And to me?

MOLLIE

Especially to you.

DOC

And now?

MOLLIE

(Decisively)

All the more reason I should get an apartment.

DOC

(With a little smile)

For both of us?

MOLLIE

For both of us.

DOC

I want certain things...big windows...big closets...big rooms...

MOLLIE

For a big man.

(Throws herself down beside him)

Oh, Doc, won't it be wonderful?

DOC

(Catches her in his arms)

Wonderful!

(There is another comfortable pause.)

MOLLIE

Beautiful recording, isn't it?

DOC

(Dreamily)

Beautiful.

MOLLIE

This is a wonderful room, you know. It's seen so many happy moments.

(With a little laugh)

You know, we used to have an old gramophone...right there...

(She points to where the console is.)

The kids used to dance...sometimes I would and they'd all stand around and watch and clap...I would bow...

(She smiles, remembering)

And all the birthday parties this room has seen!

(Sits up and looks at him)

Didn't you just love birthday parties?

DOC

I...don't remember having any.

MOLLIE

(Incredulously)

You never did? Not even as a little boy?

DOC

(Shortly)

No.

MOLLIE

Didn't your mother...?

DOC

I was raised by an aunt.

MOLLIE

Oh...

(A pause)

I know so little about you.

(DOC rises and goes over to the record player and stares down at the spinning record. MOLLIE crosses over to him.)

MOLLIE

Did I say something wrong?

DOC

(Doesn't turn)

No.

(He turns off record)

MOLLIE

You never want to talk about yourself.

DOC

(Stiffly)

My childhood wouldn't interest you.

MOLLIE

But it would!

(There is a pause. In a low voice)

I'd be interested in anything that concerns you.

(There is another pause. She makes a conversational effort to draw him out.)

Losing a mother very young can be a terrifying experience...The Granoff children can testify to that.

(DOC sits on the sofa again without answering.)

All you've ever told me about yourself is that your wife died two years ago.

DOC

Yes.

MOLLIE

(Somewhat impatiently)

I suppose you have your reasons.

(She turns away.)

But I don't understand it!

DOC

Just...just trust me.

MOLLIE

(Quickly)

I do! But...why do you always withdraw like this?

DOC

(Tersely)

Don't hurry me, please.

...the ... of ...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

MOLLIE

You think I'm prying, don't you?

(DOC does not answer. MOLLIE speaks gently.)

It's not prying to want to know about the person you love. Can't you see that?

DOC

It's asking questions. I don't like questions.

MOLLIE

Answers can be very healing.

DOC

(Vehemently)

I came here tonight ready to tell you. Tonight, when I wanted to ask you to marry me...I was going to tell you what I couldn't talk about before...Something that's been dammed up for two long years...

(He stops.)

MOLLIE

Yes, Doc?

DOC

(Moves away)

It's no good. I can't talk about it. Give me time.

MOLLIE

I want to help you.

DOC

No, Mollie. There are some things that take time. Things that people have to work out in their own way and in their own time.

MOLLIE

(Coming close to him)

Of course, darling. I'll always love you.

(DOC draws her to him.)

And I'll always try to make you happy. You'll see. I'll do anything to make you happy.

DOC

Just love me, Mollie.

(She is in his arms as the

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT I
Scene 2

The time is the next afternoon. The stage is empty. MOLLIE enters from the kitchen carrying a tray with a bowl of custard on it. She begins to climb the stairs when the door-bell rings. MOLLIE comes back, places the tray on the table and opens the door. DOC enters.

DOC

Ready?

MOLLIE

Almost. How's the Dubrowsky boy?

DOC

(Tersely, but holding himself in control)
It took Dr. Randolph a long time.

MOLLIE

Took? It's finished then? The boy's all right?

DOC

He was brought down a few minutes ago.

MOLLIE

Oh, I'm so glad it's over. His mother was worried, poor thing. Surgery scared her so. I tried to tell her...

DOC

(Unsmiling)
Is that part of your job too? Soothing upset parents? We're supposed to hew the line of demarcation—Know our place and stay there!

MOLLIE

What's the matter, Doc?

DOC

Nothing.

MOLLIE

No. Something is the matter. You...You're not sorry about...about us?

DOC

No! Of course not!

MOLLIE

But something happened to upset you. What...?
(She breaks off, seeing Doc's face looking annoyed.)
I forgot. No questions.

10

MOLLIE (CONT'D)

(With a smile)
I'll try to remember.

DOC

(Looks at her, his face easing)
You're pretty wonderful, do you know?

MOLLIE

I wish I could understand.
(Pause)
But, I'll work on it.

DOC

Good girl.

MOLLIE

(Playfully)
Of course. But you're okay yourself.

DOC

(Smiling now)
I know.

MOLLIE

(Happily)
We're both so...so nice for each other.

DOC

(Earnestly, draws close to her)
Keep thinking that, Mollie.

MOLLIE

I will, Doc. Say...
(She looks toward the upstairs)
Did you want to go looking for an apartment right now?

DOC

Isn't that what we agreed?

MOLLIE

Yes...but...

DOC

You're not changing your mind about selling the house, are you?

MOLLIE

(Hastily)
Oh, no.

(Firmly)
No...We'll go right to my agent. He's only a block from here, and he has listings in his window all the time.

-

-

.

.

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

DOC

I know. We could stop there...and later we could have dinner at Louigi's.

MOLLIE

(Disappointed)

I can't. Dinner, I mean.

FLO

(Appears on landing. She is about forty years of age, with a sallow complexion. She looks older than MOLLIE although she is two years younger. Her face has a perpetual unhappy, dissatisfied look.)

I thought you were bringing up the custard!

MOLLIE

(To FLO)

I forgot!

(Remembering DOC)

Oh...You've met Doc Fischer?

FLO

(Briefly)

We've met. Well, did you get the custard?

MOLLIE

It's there, on the table.

(FLO comes down without a word, picks up the bowl and after a side glance at DOC goes upstairs.)

DOC

That was...

MOLLIE

My sister, Flo.

DOC

(Dismisses her)

What's this about dinner tonight?

MOLLIE

It's because of Flo. She moved in this morning, and I really...

DOC

Moved in? Do you mean another one moved in on you?

MOLLIE

It's just for tonight, I'm sure. She has some foolish notion that she's leaving her husband. You see, she called yesterday...only she wouldn't tell me over the phone. When I ran across at lunch time she was here with Judy—she's Flo's little girl. Judy's sick...and...well, I couldn't say anything.

DOC

(Shaking his head)

Aren't you ever going to be free of your family? Why don't they leave you alone?

MOLLIE

It's just that they're used to thinking of the house as home and me...

DOC

As their mother. You're not, Mollie. And even if you were, they're adults now...all grown up, you know.

MOLLIE

(Coolly)

They are my family.

DOC

Don't get angry, dear. But can't you see how they take advantage of you? I want you, Mollie...for myself...

MOLLIE

(Warm again, smiling)

I'm not angry. I like the way you feel about me.

(She comes up close to him. He puts his arms around her.)

FLO

(From upstairs)

Mollie!

MOLLIE

(Disengages herself)

I'd better see what she wants. Don't worry about Flo, Doc. After all, she had no other place to go.

(Almost to herself)

I'm almost glad she's come.

(Briskly)

At any rate, I'll see to it that she goes back to Howard. He's a very nice person and whatever happened can't be that serious that a good talking to can't fix.

DOC

That's kind of dangerous, isn't it?

MOLLIE

What?

DOC

Getting involved.

—

MOLLIE

No. I've been involved, as you call it, all my life. Even though you tell me that I'm not their mother, I was— for all practical purposes. I had to be when Mama died. And I've been working at it since I was sixteen. That's a long time, Doc...a long time. I guess we're all used to it.

DOC

You'll be too busy being my wife to be busy with them.

MOLLIE

(Affectionately)

That's what I want. More than anything in the world! Don't worry about the family. I'll handle them. The only thing we have to worry about is us.

DOC

And an apartment. Once we find a little place near the hospital, we could get married.

MOLLIE

Married! I still can't believe it.

DOC

And the sooner...the better.

FLO

(From upstairs)

Mollie!

MOLLIE

(Calling)

Coming!

(To DOC)

I'll be right down and we can leave right away.

(MOLLIE goes upstairs and DOC goes over to look at the records. He puts one on, listens a moment, then the door-bell rings. DOC turns off the record and goes to the door. MISS PATTERSON is on the threshold. She is thin, in her early thirties. She has pretty features, but there is something sterile in her pale, colorless face. Her short hair is bobbed, rather ridiculously like a small child's.)

DOC

Come in, Miss Patterson. Mollie's upstairs.

MISS PATTERSON

Oh...you're here?

(She comes in.)

Mollie asked me to stop over.

(She looks at him curiously.)

1

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

MISS PATTERSON (CONT'D)

What happened...? Where did you disappear to?

DOC

(Turns away)

Disappear?

MISS PATTERSON

You were supposed to bring the Dubrowsky boy back to pediatrics.

DOC

I...I went out on the fire escape.

MISS PATTERSON

The fire escape!

DOC

(Evenly)

Yes...I went to get some fresh air.

MISS PATTERSON

You're not ill?

DOC

No.

MISS PATTERSON

Well then...it's not like you at all. I had to call down to the men's ward to have them send an orderly up. They know we're supposed to bring the post-operative patients back. It was highly irregular. I never had to call downstairs before. I don't know what Miss Desmond thought.

DOC

(Exasperatedly)

I'm sorry, Miss Patterson.

(Sees her face)

I really am.

MISS PATTERSON

(Slightly mollified)

Well, I wouldn't speak to you at all about it except that...well, I must enforce discipline. It's been so difficult today...and Dr. Randolph was so angry about several things.

DOC

He was angry!

(He begins to pace the floor.)

MISS PATTERSON

Is anything the matter?

1

2

3

....

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

DOC

You saw it? The operation...What did you think of our Dr. Randolph?

MISS PATTERSON

I don't understand.

DOC

Didn't you see what that butcher did? A first year medical student carving a cadaver would put him to shame! Operative procedure! It was sheer butchery.

MISS PATTERSON

(Again the head nurse)

We're not supposed to criticize our doctors.

DOC

(Savagely)

But did you see the incision? The big clumsy exploration. For a simple hernia? I hope the boy'll be all right!

(MISS PATTERSON does not answer. DOC turns to her exasperatedly)

Even in the suturing he was clumsy. He worked as though he was sewing up a burlap bag. Those sutures won't hold, especially when the kid starts coming out of the anesthetic.

MISS PATTERSON

(Slowly...almost absently, knowing he's right)

You really have no right...

DOC

No...

(Slowly)

I have no right...

MISS PATTERSON

I did notice...

(She stops, remembering she is a nurse.)

You musn't get yourself so upset, Doc. You must remember we expect our staff to remain calm...to be conscientious...but calm.

DOC

Oh yes, calm. Conscientious but calm.

MISS PATTERSON

We can't allow our emotions to run away with us.

DOC

(Strangely quiet)

You...You're quite right.

1

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

MISS PATTERSON

(Curiously)

How do you know so much about operative procedure?

DOC

I...spent four years in the medical corps during the war.

MISS PATTERSON

Oh, I see...

(Suddenly thinks of something)

When you left the floor I thought you'd gone off with that doctor.

DOC

Randolph?

MISS PATTERSON

No...the doctor who was around looking for you.

DOC

For me? Someone on the staff?

MISS PATTERSON

I've never seen him before. He seemed most anxious to see you.

DOC

(Strangely perturbed)

Did he give his name?

MISS PATTERSON

He mentioned it...I can't quite remember.

DOC

Was it...Frisbie? Doctor John Frisbie?

MISS PATTERSON

Yes-s-s...I think so.

(Firmly)

Yes...I believe that's it!

DOC

(Agitatedly)

You're sure?

MISS PATTERSON

Quite sure. I told him you'd probably be here.

DOC

(Excitedly)

You told...Look, I've got to leave now. Would you tell Mollie I'll call her?

(He rushes out. MISS PATTERSON stares after him.)

MOLLIE

(Coming down the steps)
Why...where's Doc?

MISS PATTERSON

He said he'd call.

MOLLIE

(Puzzled)
Call? That's strange...did he say anything else?

MISS PATTERSON

No...I hope I didn't interrupt something.

MOLLIE

(Still puzzled)
No...No, I'm sure you didn't. Sit down, Miss Patterson.

MISS PATTERSON

(Smiling)
Elaine.

MOLLIE

Elaine...
(But her mind is still on DOC)
I don't understand why Doc left.

MISS PATTERSON

I told him there was a doctor looking for him...He must have gone off to see him.

MOLLIE

(Relieved)
Oh.
(Smiles. She is ready for the business at hand.)
Elaine... the reason I asked you to stop here was because I wanted to talk to you alone...away from the students.

MISS PATTERSON

I like coming here for any reason.

MOLLIE

Thanks. I like having you. And...I was talking about you. To a fellow I know. Benny Prince. He said he'd like to meet you.

MISS PATTERSON

(Surprised)
Me?

MOLLIE

You. I said I'd ask if you wanted to meet him. He's a little shy—but very nice.

-

....

.....

.....

...

.....

.....

.....

....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

MISS PATTERSON

(Flustered)

But how? I mean...did he ever see me? Here...or in your father's store, maybe?

MOLLIE

He might have. I don't know. Maybe I mentioned your name...I don't remember.

MISS PATTERSON

(Agitated)

Oh, Mollie, I...I don't know.

MOLLIE

Look, Elaine...

(Smiling)

What have you got to lose? He's lonesome and he's nice. So I told him about you. After all, you and I are friends, so what would be more natural than my thinking of you.

(She has warmed up to her subject and is being charmingly persuasive.)

I didn't think you'd mind.

MISS PATTERSON

(Hastily)

I don't mind. It's just...well...

MOLLIE

(Pats MISS PATTERSON on the arm)

Everything will be all right. You'll see. It's the first plunge that's hard. I'll call Benny and tell him you'll be over tonight. Okay?

MISS PATTERSON

I...yes. I could come over tonight.

MOLLIE

Good! Then it's all settled. Make it about seven.

MISS PATTERSON

(Impulsively comes over to MOLLIE and puts her hand on MOLLIE'S arm)

Thanks, Mollie.

MOLLIE

I'm glad I could...Elaine. Now don't forget. Make yourself pretty.

(MISS PATTERSON starts to leave, then)

MISS PATTERSON

Oh, Mollie, I just thought...I was told this morning that the helper in Central Supply is leaving. I could speak to Miss White about you.

MOLLIE

You mean transfer from the Children's Ward?

MISS PATTERSON

(Nods)

It's better hours. No split shift and the atmosphere is calmer. You'd have much less demand on you.

MOLLIE

(Shakes her head)

I wouldn't like working with sterilizers...and instruments. It's too... Well, this job wouldn't mean anything to me if I couldn't be with the children. Thanks for thinking of me anyhow.

MISS PATTERSON

(Formally)

I thought you might like it.

MOLLIE

It was very thoughtful of you.

MISS PATTERSON

(Appeased)

I thought the hours might be better—especially now.

(She looks at MOLLIE wistfully.)

I'm glad for you.

MOLLIE

Doc? I know. Thanks.

MISS PATTERSON

I meant to congratulate him, but he rushed off in such a hurry...

MOLLIE

Well...

(The door-bell rings. MOLLIE answers it. It is FRISBIE on the threshold. He is about forty-five years old, slight in build, but with an authoritative air.)

FRISBIE

I beg your pardon. I'm sorry to bother you, but I was told that Alex Fischer is here. I believe you call him Doc.

MOLLIE

Doc? Did you call him Alex...Alex Fischer?

FRISBIE

Yes.

MOLLIE

Oh...Come in, won't you?

FRISBIE

(Looking around)

Is he here?

(Sees MISS PATTERSON)

Did he come back to the floor, nurse?

MISS PATTERSON

No. He was here though...

MOLLIE

He left when he heard you were looking for him.

MISS PATTERSON

I told him...

FRISBIE

(Quickly)

You told him I was looking for him?

MISS PATTERSON

Yes.

MOLLIE

He must be trying to reach you.

FRISBIE

(Wryly)

No. He wouldn't do that. He's avoided me before.

MOLLIE

Avoided...? May I ask what you want him for?

FRISBIE

It's... It's urgent that I see him at once.

(There is a pause.)

MOLLIE

I wouldn't know where he is now. He said he'd call here.

FRISBIE

I see...

(To MISS PATTERSON)

Is he off duty now?

MISS PATTERSON

Yes...Until tomorrow at seven.

FRISBIE

(To MOLLIE)

Where would he be likely to go?

MOLLIE

I...I don't know. He'll call here, I'm sure. Are you certain it's Doc you want?

FRISBIE

Oh, yes.

MOLLIE

Is something wrong? Doctor...?

FRISBIE

Frisbie. John Frisbie.

MOLLIE

Is something wrong, Doctor Frisbie?

FRISBIE

Wrong?

MOLLIE

I mean...Doc...Is something the matter? You said "most urgent."

FRISBIE

Let's just say that it's very important that I see him.

MOLLIE

Would you like to wait for him here?

FRISBIE

No, thank you. I'll go back to the hospital. Perhaps he's in his room. Goodbye.

(He turns to leave.)

MOLLIE

Doctor...

(FRISBIE turns.)

Is it serious? I mean, can't you tell us what the trouble is?

FRISBIE

I didn't say there was any trouble. Goodbye.

(FRISBIE leaves.)

MOLLIE

He didn't say! But then he didn't say there wasn't.

MISS PATTERSON

Oh, no...Mollie...

MOLLIE

(Suddenly)

I'd better find Doc...but...wait a minute...

... ..

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

-

...

MISS PATTERSON

What?

MOLLIE

He said Doc had avoided him before...What could he mean by that?

(MISS PATTERSON looks at her blankly.)

Miss Patterson...He knows Doc...he knew Doc before he came here.

(She starts for the door.)

MISS PATTERSON

Where are you going?

MOLLIE

To the hospital. I have to talk to Doctor Frisbie...

(MOLLIE hurries out.)

FAST CURTAIN

ACT II
Scene 1

(The time is later, the same afternoon, near dinner time. MOLLIE is alone on stage, in the rear, getting out some towels. SELMA comes in from the outside. She does not see MOLLIE. She looks around for a moment, then crosses the stage toward the kitchen.)

MOLLIE

Looking for me?

SELMA

Hi! I didn't see you.

MOLLIE

(Bringing towels forward and placing them on the table)

Honestly! All the years I've had to cart towels upstairs because that tiny linen closet won't hold more than a few at a time!

(Shakes her head)

You certainly can't call this house modern.

SELMA

(Abruptly)

Is it true what you told me over the phone?

MOLLIE

About Flo?

(SELMA nods.)

Yes. She's here. She's upstairs with Judy. Judy's got a pretty bad cold. That's why Flo left the baby with his grandmother.

SELMA

(Exasperatedly)

Why did you do it? Why did you let her come? Honestly, Mollie... you promised!

MOLLIE

Don't get upset, Selma. I know I promised. But she came. She was here when I got home for lunch this afternoon. So, what could I do?

SELMA

You could have told her to go to....

MOLLIE

Selma!

SELMA

All right! You could have told her to go home.

MOLLIE

Don't start anything with her now, Selma, please. She is your older sister.

SELMA

So?

MOLLIE

So, you should show her more respect.

SELMA

What has she ever done to earn it?

MOLLIE

She worked hard--paying the bills--to bring you kids up. It was a long time before Papa made ends meet. Don't forget that!

SELMA

As if she ever let anybody forget it! But why have you got yourself mixed up with her now? The house is being sold and you're supposed to be looking for an apartment...

MOLLIE

(Unperturbed)

I am looking for an apartment. Doc is coming by to pick me up.

SELMA

(Not surprised)

He's going with you...that's a good sign.

MOLLIE

And what's more...

(She pauses.)

You'll never guess...

SELMA

(Flippantly)

Flo broke a leg!

MOLLIE

Honestly, Selma...

(But she is too happy to reprove her further.)

It's...it's something you've been wanting.

SELMA

(Eagerly)

The deal on the house fell through! I mean...

(She breaks off, embarrassed at her eagerness.)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

MOLLIE

No, that's the same. But...

(She pauses, then significantly)

I'm not.

SELMA

Did he...did Doc...?

MOLLIE

Propose?

(She nods.)

Last night.

SELMA

(With a squeal of delight)

Mollie!

(She rushes over and embraces MOLLIE in a tight hug.)

I'm so happy for you!

MOLLIE

Ooooh...the bride will have crushed ribs.

SELMA

Crushed...whole...what's the difference? You're going to be married!
When?

MOLLIE

Soon, I hope. We didn't set a date.

SELMA

(Babbling)

Congratulations...or do you say that to the man? Anyhow, you know
what I mean.

(She hugs MOLLIE again. Then, seriously)

For some reason...I could cry.

MOLLIE

Sweet...

(Kisses her)

Thanks.

SELMA

(Again deliriously happy)

If I had practiced the piano, I'd play a beautiful wedding march.

Well...why not try?

(She rushes over to the piano and attempts a few notes.

The attempt ends in a dissonant chord.)

Oh, nuts! Well, the spirit was willing.

MOLLIE

(Has moved to the window)

I wish this were facing the street so I could watch the hospital door.
I wonder what's keeping him?

SELMA

Stayed on duty again, I guess.

MOLLIE

No...he didn't. He was here and left...There was this doctor...a Doctor Frisbie...looking for him. I don't know why. I followed Doctor Frisbie back to the hospital...

SELMA

Followed him? What for?

MOLLIE

It worried me. I wanted to find out what it was all about.

SELMA

Did you?

MOLLIE

No. He was very evasive. We looked for Doc but he wasn't anywhere around. I told Doctor Frisbie to stop back here later...

(She looks troubled)

I don't know why I told him that. Suppose he...

(She breaks off and walks away.)

SELMA

Suppose he what, Mollie? Something's wrong, isn't it.

MOLLIE

(Bursts out)

What do I know about Doc after all? He's in some kind of trouble he won't talk about. And suppose...

(She turns to SELMA.)

Dr. Frisbie referred to Doc as "Alex."

SELMA

So? "Doc" is a nick-name isn't it?

MOLLIE

I once asked him. He said it was a name like any other. But he wouldn't tell me. He acts so strangely when I ask him anything about his life before he came here. Don't you see? This Dr. Frisbie must have known Doc before. Maybe he has something to do with the reason Doc's upset.

SELMA

Don't you start getting upset. After all...

FLO

(Comes down the stairs)

Who's upset about what?

SELMA

(Under her breath)
Oh...Oh...

FLO

I asked you, who's upset about what?

MOLLIE

It's nothing, Flo.

SELMA

No. Nothing...
(Suddenly, significantly)
And then again, maybe everything.

MOLLIE

Selma, please!

FLO

(To MOLLIE)
Stop running interference.
(To SELMA)
What do you mean?

SELMA

Maybe Mollie has plenty to upset her.

FLO

Me, for instance? Is that what you mean?

SELMA

You, for instance.

FLO

Listen, you little snip...

MOLLIE

(Hastily)
Please, Flo...Selma...Don't start. Please. Here, Flo, here are the towels. I was just going to bring them up.

FLO

(After giving SELMA a withering look)
I need a basin, Mollie.

MOLLIE

Did Judy's fever go up? An alcohol sponge would be a good idea. Here, I'll get the basin.
(She moves toward the kitchen.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

SELMA

(Stops her, with a look at FLO)
You've worked hard all day, Mollie. I'll get it.

MOLLIE

It's under the sink or in the cabinet where I keep the soap powder.

SELMA

I'll find it.
(She leaves by the kitchen door.)

FLO

My, she's helpful. A regular little girl-scout!

MOLLIE

(Ignores it)
Do you have enough towels, Flo?

FLO

Plenty. Now...What's this business about my upsetting you?

SANDER

(Enters from the street)
Hi, Mollie. Oh...hello, Flo.
(FLO nods. SANDER is obviously excited. To MOLLIE)
Well...why don't you ask me?

MOLLIE

(Excitedly)
They called you. The offer came!

SANDER

(Nods)
It's fifteen hundred a year more! And Mr. Williams—he's the fellow I've been corresponding with—said I could start anytime I could leave here. Of course, I'll have to give the people here time to find a replacement, but... What do you think about it, Mollie?

MOLLIE

I think it's wonderful! It's a good opportunity for you. You looked them up as I suggested?

(SELMA has come out of the kitchen with the basin and stands listening.)

SANDER

Dun and Bradstreet! A-1 rating!
(He pauses a moment, a look of concern passes over his face.)
The only thing is...suppose...

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system of equations (1) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
2. In the second part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
3. In the third part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
4. In the fourth part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
5. In the fifth part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
6. In the sixth part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
7. In the seventh part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
8. In the eighth part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
9. In the ninth part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.
10. In the tenth part of the paper, the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) is studied for small values of ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) converge to the solutions of the system (2) as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.

FLO

(Deceivingly earnest)

Mollie thinks it's wonderful. What more can you want?

SANDER

Nothing. I....I just wonder if... Well, suppose it doesn't work out.

MOLLIE

It will, Sander. After all, isn't this what you've been looking for? From what you told me about that boss of yours, this new job is a step up. And in the right direction for the future.

FLO

(With veiled sarcasm)

You listen to Mollie, Sander.

SANDER

(Earnestly)

I will. But this is a serious step. You just don't make a change like this lightly.

FLO

Of course. That's why you should have Mollie make your decision.

SANDER

Mollie doesn't decide for me.

SELMA

(Thrusting the basin forward at FLO)

Here's your basin. You said you needed it.

FLO

(Ignores SELMA'S outstretched hand)

Yes...? Mollie doesn't decide for you...

SANDER

(Warmly)

Mollie has been very helpful with this new job business. In fact, it was her suggestion that I look around for something else. Yes, her suggestions were very useful.

FLO

Better than they taught you in college?

SELMA

What is it you want, Flo?

FLO

(Sharply)

I'm talking to my brother.

FLO (CONT'D)

(Suddenly, mild again)

No, we were just saying that it's a good thing you've got Mollie here to tell you when to button your pants. You do ask her...or does Barbara tell you?

MOLLIE

Flo...!

FLO

What...Flo...! I'm just commenting how he runs to you for every little thing.

SANDER

(Protesting)

An important job change isn't a little thing!

SELMA

(To FLO)

And what do you think you're doing?

FLO

(Turning on her)

What?

SELMA

Running home to Mollie every time you and Howard have a little argument! Is it any different?

FLO

(Flaring up)

What are you talking about? Do you know what you're talking about? I don't ask Mollie for anything. I don't want her advice. I can make up my own mind, and I don't need Mollie telling me what to do. What's more, if that's what's been eating you, I can tell you right now... I didn't come here for Mollie's help!

SELMA

Then why did you come here?

FLO

This is Papa's house and... It's none of your damned business!

(She grabs the basin which SELMA had placed on the table, and hurries upstairs.)

MOLLIE

(To SANDER)

Don't mind her, Sander. She...she's just not very happy right now.

SELMA

I'd hate to see her when she's really unhappy.

—

SANDER

You understand, Mollie. I really had decided to take the job before I came here.

MOLLIE

I know, dear. It's just good to get someone else's reaction to your decision.

SANDER

(Eagerly)

That's it, exactly. That's what I told Barbara.

(He pauses.)

So you think it's a good thing.

MOLLIE

I do. And don't worry about it. You'll do just fine.

SANDER

Thanks. I'll call you if there are any new developments.

(Turns to leave, then stops)

Oh... What did you decide about the house?

MOLLIE

The sale contract is to be signed tomorrow.

SANDER

Oh...Well, so long.

(He leaves.)

SELMA

(Stares after him)

Poor Sander.

(Shakes her head)

Do you think he'll take the job?

MOLLIE

Of course he will. He just doesn't like to rush into things, that's all. But he's got a good head on his shoulders.

(A slight pause)

I'll miss him. Cincinnati is so far away.

SELMA

Not really so far. And it's one less to annoy you.

MOLLIE

Don't say that, Selma. You think that because the family comes here occasionally... Nobody annoys me.

SELMA

Not even Flo?

MOLLIE

(Walks toward the store entrance)

You can't imagine how lonely this house is after having had so many of you home. Papa in his store...customers coming in and out...

(She looks into the store and for a moment, she is transported back.)

You had such a feeling of being useful....

(Outside bell rings)

It must be Doc.

(She goes to door and BENNY is standing in the doorway.

He comes in and his very movements betray that he is very flustered.)

BENNY

Kin I talk t' ya, Mollie?

MOLLIE

Sure, Benny. Sit down.

BENNY

No, thanks.

(He sees SELMA for the first time.)

Oh...hi, Selma.

(SELMA waves her hand to him.)

I don't wanna bother ya if you're busy, Mollie.

MOLLIE

You're not bothering me.

BENNY

It's just...well, it's just that...

(He looks uncomfortably over to SELMA.)

SELMA

(Gets the hint)

I'll start supper, Mollie. The potatoes in the same bin?

MOLLIE

The same bin.

(SELMA leaves to the kitchen. MOLLIE turns to BENNY.)

Sit down, Benny.

(He sits.)

Can I get you some tea?

BENNY

(Embarrassed)

I'm not a guest. What I came t' say...That is, what I came over here t' ask ya...

(He stops.)

1

MOLLIE

(Prompting)
Yes, Benny?

BENNY

(Blurts out)
What I wanna ask ya is... Mollie, I'm worried. About this here date, I mean.

MOLLIE

But it's all set, Benny. I told you. Miss Patterson will be here at seven o'clock and I'll introduce you. Then...you're strictly on your own.

BENNY

(Fidgets. Then)
That's what's worryin' me. What'll I do? I mean...How d'ya act with her? Her bein' a nurse and all. How d'ya talk t' her?

MOLLIE

She's a woman like I am. You talk to me.

BENNY

Aw...Y'know what I mean, Mollie. It ain't the same.

MOLLIE

What do you talk about with other girls?

BENNY

Who talks? Those t'matoes...
(He stops, embarrassed.)
I just don't know how t' act with a nice girl.

MOLLIE

Just be yourself, Benny. Just as you are.
(Assuringly)
You'll do just fine, I know.

BENNY

D'ya think so?

MOLLIE

I know so.

BENNY

(Still not convinced)
I mean, I don't hafta put on any extra manners or nothin'? Her bein' so refined.

MOLLIE

You'll know what to do. I'm sure of it. Just remember. She's lonely and wants to meet you. You're lonely and want to meet her. So? What else do you need?

BENNY

(Rising)

Yeah... Thanks, Mollie. You're real...

(He gropes for a word suitable to describe her.)

...swell!

(He goes to the door.)

MOLLIE

I'll phone you when she comes in.

BENNY

Yeah.

(Goes out slowly; his whole body reveals him deep in thought. He is almost out of the door when he pokes his head back in.)

D'ya think the movies is okay? T' take her to, I mean.

MOLLIE

It's fine.

(BENNY leaves. MOLLIE looks after him thoughtfully, then goes about straightening the room. She looks toward the kitchen, and calls)

Need any help, Selma?

SELMA

(Off-stage)

Got it all started.

(At the kitchen door)

Can I invite myself to dinner?

MOLLIE

Do you even have to ask? But what about your husband?

SELMA

Mark's out of town.

(Goes to cupboard in back)

Table cloths in the same drawer?

MOLLIE

Nothing's changed.

(She goes to window to peer out. SELMA takes a cloth and spreads it over the table.)

SELMA

This feels good. Nothing's changed. It's as though I never got married and never left home.

(She looks toward the upstairs.)

If she weren't here, it would be like it was after everybody got married and left the house. Just the two of us...and Papa, of course. It was wonderful after Anna got married. Just the two of us left. Wasn't it nice?

(MOLLIE doesn't answer. SELMA looks up.)

Mollie?

MOLLIE

I'm sorry, dear, what did you say?

SELMA

You're worried, aren't you? You always stood over by that window whenever any of the kids hadn't come home yet. It's Doc, isn't it?

(MOLLIE nods. SELMA comes up to her.)

You can only see Benny's house out there.

MOLLIE

(Comes back into the room)

I know.

(SELMA goes to the chest in the back and takes out silver and sets three places at the table.)

Set an extra place. If Doc comes in before supper he may stay and eat with us.

SELMA

With Flo for an appetizer?

MOLLIE

(With a smile)

He can take care of himself.

(Door-bell rings)

SELMA

Shall I leave you two alone?

MOLLIE

(Going to door)

No. I want him to know you.

(MOLLIE opens the door. FRISBIE is there.)

FRISBIE

Sorry to bother you, but has Alex...has Doc come here yet?

MOLLIE

No, not yet. But won't you come in?

(FRISBIE comes in)

Sit down, Dr. Frisbie.

FRISBIE

No, thanks. I have to find Alex. I've looked everywhere I could think of.

MOLLIE

He's not at the hospital?

FRISBIE

No.

(Pause)

You don't mind my coming here?

MOLLIE

No...no. That's quite all right. I'm glad you came.

(Suddenly remembers SELMA'S presence)

Excuse me. Selma, this is Dr. Frisbie. Dr. Frisbie...my sister, Mrs. Werner.

SELMA

(Bringing glasses to the table)

Hello.

FRISBIE

(Uncomfortably)

How do you do.

(To MOLLIE)

I seem to have interrupted something.

(Notices the set table)

Your dinner?

MOLLIE

No. It's a little too early.

(She laughs.)

We just get ready early from habit.

FLO

(From upstairs)

Mollie! Where are the extra blankets?

MOLLIE

(To FRISBIE)

Excuse me.

(Goes to foot of stairs and calls up)

They're in the little chest in my room.

FLO

(Off-stage)

What?

FRISBIE

(Uncomfortably)

You're busy...I'll...

MOLLIE

Oh...no...

(Motions to SELMA)

Selma, would you please...?

SELMA

(Who has been waiting curiously to find out what

FRISBIE wants)

Oh...sure...I'll get them.

(She hurries upstairs.)

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

FRISBIE

(Turning to leave)
Perhaps I can try his room again.

MOLLIE

(Hurriedly)
Don't go, please. Sit down, won't you?
(FRISBIE hesitates, then sits.)
Would you like a cup of tea...or coffee?

FRISBIE

No, thank you.
(There is a slight pause. MOLLIE sits, then plunges in.)

MOLLIE

What's this all about, Dr. Frisbie?

FRISBIE

I beg your pardon, Miss...

MOLLIE

Granoff, Mollie Granoff.

FRISBIE

(Acknowledges the introduction)
Miss Granoff.
(Curtly)
I am not at liberty to discuss it.

MOLLIE

You said it was important.

FRISBIE

Very important.
(There is another pause.)

MOLLIE

Is Doc in trouble?

FRISBIE

(Firmly)
I'm sorry, but I can't discuss it.
(Rises)
I'll come back when...

MOLLIE

Oh, please. If Doc's in any trouble, I've got to know.
(FRISBIE looks at her curiously.)
You see, we're going to be married.

1

Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the *Agrobacterium* suspension on the transformation efficiency of *Agrobacterium* strains. The number of transformed cells was determined by the number of colonies obtained on the selective medium. The results are the mean of three independent experiments. Error bars represent the standard deviation.

FRISBIE

(Surprised)

Oh...I didn't know.

(He sits down again.)

Miss Granoff... How much has he told you about himself?

MOLLIE

I know very little about Doc.

FRISBIE

He never told you then about...about what he did before he came here?

MOLLIE

No.

(Hastily)

I don't think it's because he didn't want to. Everything's so bottled up inside of him. Somehow I think he must have been...

FRISBIE

Yes?

MOLLIE

Hurt by something--or someone.

FRISBIE

He was. And he does need help...badly.

(Looks at her intently for a moment)

That's why I'm here.

(Wryly)

I've had quite a time trying to find Alex. I finally traced him from the last pharmaceutical house he worked for. They had sent some references here. I came right on out.

(He rises.)

I haven't much time. I've got to make him see that he belongs back in the clinic.

MOLLIE

Clinic?

(There is a long pause when Dr. Frisbie does not answer.)

What clinic, Dr. Frisbie?

(SELMA comes down from upstairs. FRISBIE on point of replying doesn't say anything. SELMA looks from one to the other. There is a momentary look of understanding as SELMA meets MOLLIE'S glance. SELMA goes into the kitchen. MOLLIE asks slowly)

You said something about a clinic, Dr. Frisbie. Yours?

FRISBIE

No. Not mine.

(Suddenly)

Miss Granoff, Alex is a doctor. A very good one.

—

MOLLIE

(Slowly)

A doctor! A real doctor?

FRISBIE

A real doctor.

(Warmly)

They don't make them any better. I want him to come back...to do the work he should be doing!

MOLLIE

Then...why...?

FRISBIE

(Goes on as if she had not spoken)

To see that man work! There's something magnetic about him. Not just as a clinician, but as a man. He can walk up to a child—a very sick child—who refuses to take any nourishment...and just talk to him. The children sense it somehow, the love he has for them. They just feel he cares...and they do what he wants them to. He's...

MOLLIE

(Enthusiastically)

I know. I've seen him work. I've known for a long time there was something special about him. Not about his being a doctor, of course... the kind of attention he gives the patients.

(Thoughtfully)

It's almost as if he can't help himself.

FRISBIE

The board wants him back. And I want him to come back. But he.....

(He stops.)

MOLLIE

Yes?

FRISBIE

(Formally)

I can't tell you. I'm sorry. It's for Alex to do that.

MOLLIE

You must tell me. I don't understand. Everything is so confused. Why would he leave the clinic and become an orderly here? Why?

FRISBIE

(Ill at ease)

Please, Miss Granoff, I've said too much already.

MOLLIE

(Agitated)

You've told me how good he is. I didn't have to be told. What I didn't see with my own eyes, I felt.

(Pause)

... !

... !

....

... !

...

.....

...

...

...

...

...

MOLLIE (CONT'D)

Why did he leave the clinic, Dr. Frisbie?

(There is a pause as FRISBIE doesn't answer.)

Can't you see I want to help him and I can't unless I know what's wrong?

FRISBIE

You love him very much, don't you?

MOLLIE

Very much.

FRISBIE

Alex means a great deal to me too. If it hadn't been for Claire

(At CLAIRES name MOLLIE looks up sharply)

and Alex that year we finished our internship...

(He pauses.)

Alex gave me my job at the clinic. If I can help it, I'm not going to let him ruin his life.

(He rises.)

I'd better go try the hospital again. Perhaps he's returned to his room.

MOLLIE

You knew Claire...You knew his...wife...for a long time?

FRISBIE

(Briefly)

Yes.

MOLLIE

(Senses that FRISBIE will say no more. But she is still very perturbed.)

Just tell me this: Is Doc in trouble?

FRISBIE

(Kindly)

Now, don't worry about that. But he's got to go back. That's all I can tell you, Miss Granoff. Now, if you'll excuse me.

(He turns to go.)

MOLLIE

(Hastens after him)

When Doc comes...How can I reach you?

FRISBIE

(He stops and thinks for a moment.)

Have me paged at the hospital. I can be here in a few minutes.

(He turns to leave again.)

1

MOLLIE

Dr. Frisbie?

(He turns.)

I'll do anything to help. Anything.

(He goes out while MOLLIE stares after him, then she goes to kitchen door and calls.)

Selma!

SELMA

(Enters)

Oh, he's left?

MOLLIE

Yes.

(Abruptly)

Is dinner ready?

SELMA

Just about...

(Slight pause. Bursts out)

Well, what did he say?

MOLLIE

(Deep in thought. She does not answer. Goes to the foot of stairs)

Flo! Dinner's ready.

(To SELMA)

Frisbie wants Doc to go back with him.

SELMA

Back?

MOLLIE

Doc's a doctor.

SELMA

A doctor!

(Phone rings)

MOLLIE

(Rushes over to the phone)

Hello? Oh...hello, Howard. No...she's...she's out at the moment. Oh, I'm sure she will. Yes...the minute she comes in. Yes...yes, Howard, I certainly will try. Goodbye.

(To SELMA)

I hate having to say that!

SELMA

Poor guy...

(She isn't thinking of Howard though.)

But...why should Doc be here as an orderly...?

(MOLLIE is about to reply when FLO appears.)

—

FLO
Well, I guess I'm ready for dinner.

MOLLIE
I'll have it on in a minute.

SELMA
I've got it all set.
(She goes to the kitchen.)

MOLLIE
(To FLO, almost absently)
Did you give Judy some juice?

FLO
(Tartly)
I heard you when you suggested it before.

MOLLIE
(Whose thoughts were elsewhere)
What?

FLO
I'll give Judy her juice and her baths and her enemas and take her temperature when I think she needs them.
(SELMA comes in with the dinner. MOLLIE rises and takes some of the platters from her. They all sit down.)

MOLLIE
Potatoes, Flo...?

FLO
No.
(There is a long pause as they eat silently.)

SELMA
My, this is cosy here.

FLO
What do you want?

SELMA
(Innocently)
Me? Nothing. It just reminds me of the good old days. Real cosy...

FLO
You don't think I'm here because I like it, do you?

SELMA
(Abruptly)
I'll get the coffee.
(She leaves for the kitchen.)

The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The second part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The third part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The tenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$.

MOLLIE

If you're so unhappy here, Flo...

FLO

Why don't I go back home, is that what you mean?

MOLLIE

I don't mind your being here.

FLO

I'll bet you don't. You'd like us all under the old roof, wouldn't you Mollie?

MOLLIE

(Evenly)

I said I don't mind you here...if you're civil. You've been tearing and lashing at everybody since you got here.

FLO

(Belligerently)

So?

MOLLIE

(Looks at her, then decides on another tack)

Howard called.

FLO

Oh?

MOLLIE

I don't like to lie to him.

(Softening)

What happened, Flo? Is it the same reason as before?

(FLO does not answer. SELMA comes in with the coffee pot. MOLLIE goes on persuasively.)

All right. So he's not ambitious, and he doesn't make much money. That's no crime. He's a generous man and he's been a good father. Can you ask for anything more?

FLO

Sure, I could. Lots more.

(Suddenly)

Oh, what's the use!

MOLLIE

(To SELMA who is pouring the coffee)

Just a half cup, dear.

(To FLO)

Do you want to tell me about it?

FLO

Why? So's you could give me some of your precious advice?

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

SELMA

Maybe you could use some.

FLO

When I want any information from you, I'll ask you for it.

(Looks at SELMA with dislike)

You're so smug. Caught yourself a rich husband...You think you're so smart.

SELMA

So that's it!

FLO

(Turns back to MOLLIE)

I want to talk to you without your little echo over here.

MOLLIE

(Coolly)

Selma's welcome here any time.

FLO

(Is on the verge of retorting, but hesitates. Then)
What I had in mind was that I would go back to work. I saw Mr. Lewis and he'll gladly let me manage the store again. You can quit that crummy job of yours and stay home with the kids. You'd like that and I'll like going back to work.

(SELMA starts to say something, but MOLLIE cuts her short.)

MOLLIE

That isn't possible, Flo. I'm not going to be in this house.

FLO

Sure, I know. It's too big for you alone. But if the kids and I are here...

MOLLIE

I... I'm selling the house.

FLO

Selling the house! Since when?

MOLLIE

Yesterday. I tried to reach you...

FLO

For my permission? I see you didn't need it.

SELMA

It's Mollie's house. Papa left it to her, remember?

FLO

Yes...I remember. Papa left it to her.

... and the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...
... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

MOLLIE

I'm going to divide the money. You'll get your share, Flo.

FLO

Keep the money!

(There is a pause.)

MOLLIE

Do you want any of the furniture? I thought you might want the piano for Judy.

FLO

(With a sneer)

So now it's Judy you're educating.

MOLLIE

(Quietly)

Nothing I do is ever right, is it?

SELMA

Not for her.

FLO

(Witheringly)

Your apostle here...

(To MOLLIE)

Well...what'll you do now?

MOLLIE

I...I'm going to be married.

FLO

(Shocked)

Married!

SELMA

It does happen to other people too.

FLO

(Ignores her. To MOLLIE)

To whom? When? When did all this happen? What's going on around here!

MOLLIE

It's Doc. Doc Fischer. You've seen him here several times...the fellow who was here today. He asked me to marry him last night.

FLO

Him? The orderly?

(MOLLIE and SELMA exchange glances.)

MOLLIE

Yes.

FLO

(Bursts out)

Oh, for God's sake! What do you want him for?

(Derisively)

Brother, you must be desperate.

MOLLIE

(Quietly)

I'm not desperate. I happen to be in love with him.

FLO

At your age?

SELMA

You were no spring chicken when you got married.

FLO

You shut up!

(To MOLLIE)

We're talking about love...

MOLLIE

Even at my age...I'm in love with him.

FLO

(Crudely)

Don't give me that. That guy just sits around not saying a word to anybody. Once, he never even opened his mouth the whole time I was here.

SELMA

That's why.

FLO

(Ominously)

Selma, I'm warning you. I've had all I'm going to take from you.

SELMA

Have you really? Well, isn't that interesting!

(Gives a little laugh)

You've taught me a lot in all the years you've carped at us. Well, I'm a big girl now. And if I'm as good as the master...you can consider yourself a good teacher.

MOLLIE

Stop it! Both of you!

(Wearily)

I'll go up and see how Judy is.

FLO

She's all right! I'll go when I finish my coffee.

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

... and the ...

MOLLIE

But she might need something.

FLO

So...? She'll wait.

SELMA

I'll go, Mollie. Sit and finish your coffee.

FLO

(As SELMA leaves for upstairs, FLO stares after her.)
You ought to be very proud of your product.

MOLLIE

Don't start again, Flo. I don't want to argue with you.

FLO

I'm not arguing.

(There is a slight pause. FLO looks at MOLLIE
uncertainly.)

Are you really going to sell the house?

MOLLIE

Yes.

(There is a pause.)

FLO

What about my proposition? We could find another place to live.

MOLLIE

No, Flo, I'm sorry. I told you.

FLO

I heard you. I heard you.

(Pause)

Then you are serious about this marriage business?

(There is another pause.)

Where does that leave me?

MOLLIE

(Promptly)

Go back to Howard.

FLO

(With a sharp laugh)

You always had it didn't you, Mollie? The last word. An uncanny
ability to get around everybody and yet get them to do what you
thought was right...and you're still doing it!

MOLLIE

I'm not trying to get around you. You asked me and I told you. It's
as simple as that.

1

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

FLO

(Quietly)

You're really fantastic, you know? You really are. You even did it to Papa. All those years...how you managed him!

MOLLIE

(Sharply)

I didn't manage anybody. There was a houseful of growing, fighting kids. Somebody had to keep order.

FLO

And you did, is that it?

MOLLIE

I tried.

FLO

(The bitterness growing)

With Papa's help. You got around him so he backed you up on everything. Everything Mollie said was upheld...

MOLLIE

You exaggerate. Don't forget, I was at home...all the time.

FLO

I don't forget, not for a minute, I don't forget. The way Papa would sit here and the kids would ask him—even about the smallest things—"Ask Mollie," he'd say.

(Bitterly)

And they'd run and ask Mollie, even though you were at the other end of the house. And I was sitting right here! Ask Mollie!

(MOLLIE doesn't answer. She gets up and starts to clear the table.)

Oh, I'm getting Mollie's silent treatment. What is it this time, Camille, or Juliet?

MOLLIE

(Looking at FLO intensely)

What do you want, Flo?

FLO

(Elaborately indifferent)

Nothing...absolutely nothing. I'm just remembering a few things. About how right Mama was when she said you were so talented. Now I see the result of all the dramatics and all the dancing. I sit here and watch with what grace you remove the dishes—with that proper pained expression on your face. It shows training! Too bad I didn't have any. Then we could play this scene to perfection.

MOLLIE

(Puzzled)

After all these years it bothers you that I went out for dramatics at the Settlement House?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

FLO

But the point is, Mollie dear, you were sent. You had the talent.
"Look, Mama, watch me dance." And everybody would come running because
Mollie had learned a new dance step or some lines from a play.

MOLLIE

(Sits down again)

I don't know why you're bringing all this up now. But let me remind
you of a few things. You had the same chances I did, before Mama died.
I even took you with me a few times.

FLO

You took me with you? To bask in your bright light, you mean!

MOLLIE

(Annoyed)

Look, all I wanted....

FLO

(Her bitterness spilling out)

You wanted! How did you—any of you—know what I wanted? Did anybody
ever ask me? All homely little Flo was good for was to go out to work
at fourteen. Nobody ever asked me! We can't all act in plays or dance,
but I wanted all right! Things nobody ever dreamed of. But I was a
good little girl! I never said much, so nobody asked me. And I wasn't
asked when I was told to go to work at fourteen.

MOLLIE

(Quietly)

When Mama died, nobody was asked anything. We did what there was to
do—that's all. And I became a mother at sixteen to a houseful of
growing kids.

FLO

(Almost to herself)

Just because you're quiet and never say much, nobody ever asks you.
Then when you do talk, nobody listens. Nobody!

(Rises and walks over toward the store)

But you learn. Even Papa had to admit I was a good business woman.

(With satisfaction)

I was that!

MOLLIE

(Slowly)

I knew you were bitter...but, I didn't know you felt quite like this.

FLO

Would you have been concerned, big sister?

MOLLIE

Of course. I was concerned about each one of you. I never dreamed you
felt like this.

10

FLO

You didn't! Isn't that sad for you. One escaped you. It gives me some kind of record, doesn't it? The one lone specimen of the Granoffs who escaped Mollie's treatment!

MOLLIE

(Puts her arm on FLO)

You've been so hurt. I wouldn't have hurt you for anything, Flo.

FLO

(Flinging her off)

Don't you feel sorry for me! Don't you dare! It doesn't bother me anymore, so don't you give me your saccharine sympathy.

(With a superior smile)

I've lived more than you have even if you're two years older. I'm married, big sister. Correction—I've been married and I have two kids to show for it. And what have you got? A bunch of grown-up kids, not even your own still tied to your apron strings. Hang on tight, Mollie. Because that's all you've got. Oh, yes...the orderly. You've got the orderly.

(She laughs. She starts toward the stairs.)

Dear Mollie...so helpful....always ready to do your damned bit.

(Angrily)

Your rotten, interfering bit!

(She disappears around the bend of the stairs.)

MOLLIE

Flo! Wait.... What did I do wrong?

(But FLO has gone. MOLLIE, to herself)

What did I do wrong?

(She shakes her head. Almost absently she begins to clear the table. She is very bewildered over FLO'S outburst. And every once in a while, she shakes her head as though trying to sort out the arguments to see them clearly. The door-bell rings. MOLLIE goes to the door and MISS PATTERSON stands on the threshold. Her short hair has been brushed and slightly dampened and a little curl, rather like an inverted question mark, has been enticed on each side of her head. She enters hesitatingly.)

MISS PATTERSON

(Looking around)

Good evening, Mollie. He...Mr. Prince is not here yet?

MOLLIE

No. I said I'd call him when you got here. He lives just next door.

(She goes to the phone.)

MISS PATTERSON

Wait, Mollie! I...I'm not sure.

(MOLLIE looks puzzled. MISS PATTERSON takes a deep breath that ends in a sigh.)

MISS PATTERSON (CONT'D)

I wasn't going to come.

(Hurriedly)

I appreciate what you're doing but...

(She pauses.)

I haven't been out with anyone for a long time. The girls on my floor....They saw me setting my hair. There was a lot of....comment.

(She smiles uncertainly.)

Everyone there pays close attention to everybody else's social life.

MOLLIE

You mean you've changed your mind?

MISS PATTERSON

(Taking a deep breath)

I mean, it's all right now.

MOLLIE

Good!

(She starts to cross to the phone, when the door-bell rings. But before MOLLIE can get to the door BENNY has burst into the room. He stands there bursting with excitement. He is all spruced up with his hair hanging, despite his scrupulous brushing, in a cowlick. At the sight of MISS PATTERSON, he is suddenly abashed at his display of eagerness.)

BENNY

(To MOLLIE)

I shoulda waited for ya t' answer the bell.

MOLLIE

You don't have to stand on formalities in this house, Benny.

(Introducing)

Miss Patterson...

MISS PATTERSON

(Smiling)

Elaine.

MOLLIE

Elaine, this is Benny Prince. Benny, Miss Elaine Patterson.

MISS PATTERSON

How do you do?

BENNY

Pleased t' meet ya.

MOLLIE

Now, if you'll both excuse me. I have dishes to do.

(She gets the tray of dishes from the dining table
and goes toward the kitchen, then turns.)

Make yourselves at home.

(She leaves. There is a long pause as MISS PATTERSON
and BENNY covertly inspect each other. They have
not moved.)

BENNY AND MISS PATTERSON

(Simultaneously)

Well.....

How.....

MISS PATTERSON

Oh, I beg your pardon.

BENNY

That's all right.

(He waves in her direction, with a slight attempt
at a bow.)

Ladies first, I always say.

MISS PATTERSON

Well...

(There is a pause.)

BENNY

It's...it's nice t'meetcha.

MISS PATTERSON

Yes.

(There is another pause.)

BENNY

It's a nice night, ain't it? I always say...

(He stops, not sure what it is that he always says.)

MISS PATTERSON

(Encouragingly)

Yes? You were saying...Mr....Prince?

BENNY

Oh...that don't matter. Call me Benny, though. I ain't used t' no
Mr. Prince business. It's kinda stuck-up.

MISS PATTERSON

(Smiles a little)

All right, Benny.

BENNY

Say! You ain't half bad lookin' when you smile.

(Suddenly abashed)

I mean...You're okay lookin'! Don't get me wrong or nothin'! It's just that...well...when y' smile...

(He searches for the right word.)

You're...okay!

MISS PATTERSON

Thank you.

(There is another awkward pause. BENNY reaches in his pockets for a cigarette and lights it. The act gives him a mellowed reassurance. He is ready to pursue the subject.)

BENNY

(Expansively)

It's like I always say...gimme a girl with a nice smile any time!

MISS PATTERSON

Thank you.

(She has not moved.)

BENNY

(Now he is ready for action. He has everything under control.)

Well, whatta we standin' for? Whatta ya wanna do t'night?

MISS PATTERSON

Oh...I don't know. Anything you suggest.

BENNY

We could go t' the Wharton Street park and...

(He stops and looks at her, then shakes his head.)

No....I guess not...

(There is another slight pause. BENNY looks around for an ash-tray and not finding one, carefully cups his hand under his growing ash and conveys it carefully down to his trouser cuff. MISS PATTERSON watches with widening eyes.)

Tell y' what! Le's go t' the movies. There's a swell picture over t' the Cameo. Have y' ever been there?

MISS PATTERSON

No.

BENNY

It's a real classy place. It's worth the price just t' see the lobby alone. Mirrors and pictures. Y' wouldn't believe it! That's all the walls is made of. And not advertisin' pictures or nothin'. There's real paintin's on the wall. Almost as nice as wall-paper.

(BENNY flicks the ash in his trouser cuff again.
MISS PATTERSON watches with growing distaste.)

MISS PATTERSON

(Politely)
That will be fine.
(She looks around, sees an ash-tray and silently
hands it to him.)

BENNY

Oh...thanks.
(Puts out his cigarette)
It's like I always say...I don't take no date to no cheap place.
(Calling to MOLLIE)
Mollie, we're going!

MOLLIE

(Off-stage)
What?

MISS PATTERSON

Good night, Mollie.

MOLLIE

(Off-stage)
Good night.

BENNY

(To MISS PATTERSON as they leave)
Maybe later we kin go t' the Wharton Street park. Whatta ya say?
(But we don't hear what MISS PATTERSON says for they
are out of the door. MOLLIE comes on.)

MOLLIE

Have a good...oh! They've already gone.
(She looks blankly at the closed front door. Then,
she walks over to the window and stands staring out
of it. Suddenly, she walks to the landing and calls.)

Selma!

(She walks back to the window and peers out again.
SELMA comes to the top of the landing. It is
apparent that she has been reading for she has an
open book in her hand.)

SELMA

Did you call, Mollie?

MOLLIE

How's Judy?

SELMA

She was hot when I was in with her.

...
...
...

...
...
...

...
...
...
...
...

...

...

...

...
...
...
...
...

...
...
...
...
...

...
...
...
...
...

...

...

...

MOLLIE

I'm going out.

SELMA

(Curiously)

You're going out? Can I go for you? Is it something you need?

MOLLIE

No thanks, dear. I'm going to run over to the hospital and see where Doc is. Something's wrong. This isn't like him not to at least call me.

SELMA

Anything I can do?

MOLLIE

Yes. Just stay near Flo in case she needs something for Judy.

SELMA

Well...I'll be in my old room. If she wants me she can yell.

MOLLIE

Go, dear. Go back and see if she wants something.

SELMA

Okay.

(She turns to leave, then turns back.)

Mollie, don't worry.

(SELMA leaves and MOLLIE goes to the window once more. Then she straightens her hair and starts to the front door when the door-bell rings. Its suddenness startles her. She opens the door. DOC is on the threshold.)

MOLLIE

Doc...Oh, Doc. I'm so glad you're here!

(She rushes into his arms to embrace him. He kisses her then holds her off searching her face intensely.)

Where have you been? I've been so worried.

DOC

I should have called. But something happened.

MOLLIE

(Quickly)

To you?

DOC

(Briefly)

No. I'm sorry about this afternoon, Mollie...about the apartment. I've been out—walking...and I lost all sense of time.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and the role of the accounting department in ensuring the integrity of the financial statements. It also highlights the need for transparency and accountability in the reporting process.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. It also discusses the challenges associated with data collection and the importance of using a variety of methods to ensure the reliability of the results.

3. The third part of the document describes the results of the study, including the findings from the surveys, interviews, and focus groups. It also discusses the implications of the findings for the organization and the need for further research in this area.

4. The fourth part of the document provides a conclusion and a list of recommendations for the organization. It also includes a bibliography of the sources used in the study.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of the appendices, which include the survey questions, the interview schedule, and the focus group guide.

6. The sixth part of the document is a list of the references, which include the books, articles, and websites used in the study.

7. The seventh part of the document is a list of the figures and tables, which include the survey results, the interview schedule, and the focus group guide.

8. The eighth part of the document is a list of the footnotes, which provide additional information about the study and the data.

9. The ninth part of the document is a list of the acknowledgments, which thank the individuals and organizations that assisted in the study.

10. The tenth part of the document is a list of the contact information for the author, including the address, phone number, and email address.

MOLLIE

You've been out until now?

(He nods.)

You must be starved. I'll get something for you.

DOC

I'm not hungry, thanks.

MOLLIE

But a cup of tea? You'd like that.

(She stands over near the console.)

Music?

DOC

(Smiling a little)

Uh huh.....

(He closes his eyes as the music fills the room.)

And a cup of tea would be fine.

MOLLIE

(Hurries toward the kitchen)

Sit down and I'll be right back.

(She goes into the kitchen and DOC sits in the large arm chair and draws his feet up on the stool. MOLLIE calls from the kitchen.)

Maybe you'd like a little wine instead?

DOC

Just the ticket.

MOLLIE

(Off-stage)

I'll need your help. The bottle's on the top shelf.

DOC

(Lumbering to his feet)

Coming, Mollie.

(He goes to the kitchen door.)

I knew I'd be good for something around here.

(He enters the kitchen.)

MOLLIE

There...on the top shelf.

(MOLLIE re-appears at the door and calls back over her shoulder.)

The glasses are in the cupboard. Would you pour some for us? I'll be right back.

(She hurries over to the telephone and then, with a backward glance toward the kitchen door, dials a number. She speaks very low, but audibly over the music.)

Hello? Reed Memorial? Main desk please.

(MOLLIE waits, looking back now and then to the kitchen.)

1

MOLLIE (CONT'D)

Hello? I'd like to have Doctor Frisbie paged. Frisbie...Yes...No, I can't wait. Just give him a message please. Tell him to come across the street. Yes...he'll understand.

(DOC stands in the doorway with the two filled wine glasses in his hands, while MOLLIE still has the receiver in her hand.)

Yes...

(MOLLIE sees DOC.)

Oh...thank you.

(She hangs up, looking guiltily over at DOC, wondering what he heard.)

DOC

Who'd you call, Mollie?

MOLLIE

The...hospital.

DOC

Was it about one of your children in the ward?

(But DOC does not wait for an answer. He has other things on his mind. He hands her the wine glass.)

Here. Drink this. You'll need it.

(He goes over to the console and turns off the record.)

You could have saved yourself the trouble. It was the Dubrowsky boy, you were calling about, wasn't it? He's the reason I went walking. I couldn't see or talk to anyone.

MOLLIE

Why? What happened to him?

DOC

(Savagely)

He's dead.

MOLLIE

(Shocked)

Dead! I can't believe it.

DOC

Didn't they tell you?

(MOLLIE just looks at him in disbelief)

No. They're not very proud of this one.

(Suddenly bursts out)

Won't they ever learn? How can they have a butcher like that on their staff?

MOLLIE

But the operation...It was a relatively simple one, wasn't it?

DOC

Simple enough for even a second-rate surgeon. But Randolph's bungling doesn't fit any category.

MOLLIE

Then how...?

DOC

Hemorrhage. Internal hemorrhage.

(Fiercely)

No reason for it.

(He turns away.)

None at all.

MOLLIE

It's upset you. This is why you didn't come.

DOC

Yes...one of the reasons.

MOLLIE

(Slowly)

Was the other reason Dr. Frisbie?

DOC

(Whirling around)

Who?

MOLLIE

Dr. Frisbie.

DOC

Oh... He came here.

MOLLIE

Yes, he came here and I've talked to him.

DOC

You've talked... What did he tell you?

MOLLIE

(Carefully)

He said...you were a doctor...a surgeon...one of the best.

(Her assumed casualness leaves her. She comes close to DOC.)

But he didn't tell me why you're hiding here. Why, Doc...? Why are you working here as an orderly?

DOC

(Angrily)

He had no right to tell you anything.

MOLLIE

He's your friend.

DOC

(Turning away)

Why doesn't he leave me alone?

MOLLIE

He wants to help you.

DOC

I don't need his help!

(Suddenly)

How long was he here?

MOLLIE

The first time...for just a few minutes. I followed him to the hospital, then...

DOC

You followed...

(Slowly)

You shouldn't have done that.

MOLLIE

I don't understand your secrecy.

DOC

I told you I'd tell you in my own time. You'd no right to follow him.

MOLLIE

(Flaring up angrily)

If we're going to talk about rights, maybe we ought to consider whether you have any right to be angry at Dr. Randolph. You're angry and upset because an incompetent surgeon caused a child's death. But you....

DOC

(Interrupting, brutally)

You want so badly to know, don't you. Well, I'll tell you. I'm worse than incompetent. Dr. Randolph is incapable. He can't do better if he tried. He killed somebody because he simply doesn't know how to do better. But to be a good surgeon and...to kill.

(He turns away.)

Now you know the whole messy story. Now you know.

(There is a shocked pause.)

MOLLIE

I know nothing.

DOC

There is nothing more to know. I held a life in my hands and I let it die.

MOLLIE

(Whispers)

I don't believe it. I won't believe it.

DOC

(Looks at her compassionately)

It's true, Mollie.

(DOC and MOLLIE stand looking at each other. The door-bell rings, but neither of them even hear the bell. The door-bell rings again. MOLLIE moves slowly to the door. FRISBIE is at the door.)

MOLLIE

Come in, Doctor Frisbie.

(He enters. DOC has started at hearing his name and now stands stiffly, his back to them.)

FRISBIE

(Sees DOC. To MOLLIE)

Thank you, Miss Granoff.

(He walks over to DOC.)

Hello, Alex.

(DOC does not answer.)

I'm glad I finally caught up with you. I've been looking for you all day.

DOC

(Turns, slowly)

What do you want this time, John?

FRISBIE

Nothing. For myself...nothing. But for you...I want you to go back.

DOC

(Looks at FRISBIE for a moment, then looks away)

I'm acting boorish, but I've had a rough day.

(Stretches out his hand)

How are you John?

FRISBIE

I'm fine. You...?

MOLLIE

Doctor Frisbie....

(But neither of the men has heard MOLLIE)

DOC

(To FRISBIE, as he shrugs his shoulders)

As you see.

FRISBIE

You're thinner.

—

MOLLIE

(Bursts out. To DOC)

Please! Are you just going to stand there exchanging pleasantries?

(To FRISBIE)

Just before you came in Doc told me that he...

DOC

Mollie! Leave it be!

MOLLIE

(Goes on as if he had not spoken)

That he was responsible for somebody's death.

FRISBIE

(Calmly)

Yes. I know Alex thinks so. But nobody else does now. It was one of those things that happens to every surgeon.

DOC

Does it, John?

FRISBIE

You've lost patients before.

DOC

Not like that!

FRISBIE

You're a fine surgeon, Alex. We want you back.

DOC

I don't know why.

FRISBIE

Everybody else knows why.

DOC

I appreciate your interest, John. I can't say I understand your persistence.

(Gives a little laugh)

Following me around...

FRISBIE

And you neatly eluding me. Why did you avoid me? Why did you leave every job as soon as I found out where you were?

(DOC does not answer.)

Is it because you knew your attitude is...unreasonable?

DOC

No! Leave me alone!

FRISBIE

Do you remember that patient, Alex...the disturbed case on the third floor? Do you remember how he crawled out on the ledge and threatened to jump if anyone came near him? You didn't leave him alone, Alex. You crawled after him and used every persuasive method in your power. You didn't give up until he had put his hand in yours and came back with you. Why did you try to save him?

DOC

He didn't know what he was doing. I do.

FRISBIE

(Quietly)

Do you, Alex?

DOC

Yes!

(In a low tone)

Do you really think I can practice medicine again? Can I bring that patient back to life?

MOLLIE

What happened?

DOC

I told you. I killed somebody.

FRISBIE

(To MOLLIE)

He didn't kill anybody. A patient died during surgery. Every surgeon has to expect a certain mortality rate.

DOC

Mortality rate! A nice statistical phrase! This was different, John. And you know it.

FRISBIE

I know nothing. You beat your breast publicly over the woman's death. All that publicity because you insisted you had killed her!

DOC

(Vehemently)

What would you call it when I walked into the operating room, knowing I was still unfit to operate.

FRISBIE

You're blaming yourself for nothing. In your upset frame of mind...that woman's death right after Claire died...

DOC

You don't see, do you? I was a surgeon. I'm supposed to have a clinical detachment.

(Shouts)

I'm not a doctor if I can't be detached.

MOLLIE

You're also a human being with human emotions.

DOC

A surgeon must feel no emotion. Not in the operating room. And maybe not anywhere.

FRISBIE

Oh, for God's sakes. Suppose you did bungle the job. Suppose for arguments sake we concede you made a mistake. You say you were overwrought. You aren't now. You should be able to do as good a job as you ever did. You're still a good surgeon!

DOC

(Slowly, in a low voice)

I couldn't trust myself again. If you haven't confidence in your ability you shouldn't take a human life in your hands.

(Looks at his hands)

I felt them shake. I kept thinking that I had to be careful. I thought...I even thought it was Claire. I had to be careful.

(Bitterly)

I was. Too careful. The operation was a text-book success. But the patient died! It was...as though...Claire...died again.

MOLLIE

(Comes to him)

You were under a strain. It's different now. You could go back.

DOC

Please...I don't want to talk any more.

MOLLIE

No. You must talk. Don't you see, dear...

DOC

I do see. Too clearly. I've had a long time to think.

MOLLIE

And what about today? What about someone like Randolph?

(To FRISBIE)

After I called you, Doc told me of the death of a little boy...

DOC

You called...?

(He looks slowly from one to the other and feels suddenly he is being backed into a corner.)

—

DOC (CONT'D)

Then the business with the wine...the phone call... And he came because you called him!

FRISBIE

Don't blame Miss Granoff, Alex. It doesn't matter how I knew you were here, the important thing is that I got to talk to you...

DOC

I don't need you to talk to me. I know what I'm doing!

FRISBIE

I must make you see you're wrong...and I haven't much time. I've got to be back tomorrow morning.

DOC

I didn't ask you to come.

FRISBIE

Come back with me.

DOC

NO! I said no!

MOLLIE

Doc...

DOC

(Whirls on her)

Or you either. I don't need you, either. Let me alone....both of you...

(He bursts out of the house as MOLLIE and FRISBIE
stare after him.)

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT III

(The time is fifteen minutes later. When the curtain rises, the stage is empty. From upstairs, MOLLIE and SELMA descend. MOLLIE is obviously very upset.)

SELMA

You did everything you could, Mollie. There's no point in berating yourself.

MOLLIE

But I should have said something...! I can't even think what... Anything, to change his mind!

SELMA

I guess Doc just doesn't want any help. Some people are like that.

MOLLIE

(Shakes her head)

They become like that if nobody cares. Poor Doc!

SELMA

What about this doctor...

MOLLIE

Frisbie?

(SELMA nods.)

He's leaving tomorrow. He can't stay longer.

(She takes a card from her pocket and looks at it sadly.)

You can't say he didn't try! He's still hoping I can do something. I'm to call Hotel...

(She looks down at the card again.)

...Carlton, if I can get Doc to go back with him.

SELMA

If anybody can do it, you can.

MOLLIE

(Shakes her head)

I don't know how. God knows I'd do anything!

SELMA

(With assurance)

You'll think of something. You always do.

MOLLIE

There's so little time!

(Suddenly)

What if Doc leaves tonight? He's left other jobs before when Dr. Frisbie found out where he was.

SELMA

He wouldn't go without seeing you.

MOLLIE

No-o....

(Her face becomes soft.)

No, he wouldn't.

(Suddenly, looks toward the stairs)

Was that Flo calling?

SELMA

I didn't hear anything.

MOLLIE

I guess I'm just jumpy. Doc...a sick child...Did you see how sick Judy looked?

SELMA

(Nods)

I looked in a few minutes before you came upstairs. I didn't stay though. I wasn't invited.

FLO

(Coming downstairs. To MOLLIE)

Did you put more juice in the refrigerator?

MOLLIE

I think there's still plenty left. The pitcher's on the table.

(As FLO starts crossing toward the kitchen)

Flo!

(FLO turns.)

Judy looks very sick to me. You should call a doctor.

FLO

You at it again?

MOLLIE

No. No arguments. I'm just telling you. She's running a high fever.

FLO

Did you take her temperature?

MOLLIE

I didn't have to. I see enough sick kids every day to know a high fever when I see one.

FLO

All right, so you're the expert. But you don't see Judy every day. I'm the best judge of how she looks! And if I think she should have a doctor, I'll call one.

(She leaves to the kitchen.)

SELMA

Some day I'm going to tell that bitch...

MOLLIE

(Absently)

Don't talk like that, Selma.

(But MOLLIE is deep in thought. Something has occurred to her.)

SELMA

She's so damn unreasonable.

(Sees MOLLIE deep in thought)

What's the matter, Mollie?

MOLLIE

(Slowly)

Nothing...and yet...how could I have missed it!

(Excitedly)

Don't you see? I have the solution! It's been right here all the time.

(She runs to the phone and starts to dial.)

SELMA

What is it, Mollie?

MOLLIE

(Is about to answer, but someone has answered her ring)

Hello! Is Doc there? Oh...yes, George, this is Mollie.

(Slight pause)

Will you see?

(To SELMA)

He's calling him.

SELMA

What's this all about?

MOLLIE

(In phone)

Doc? Oh...well, will you look for him? Yes...right away. I need him immediately. Tell him he must come. It's urgent...

(Pause)

Yes...very urgent...

(Pause)

I can't tell you, George. But it's very important, and he must come immediately.

(Slight pause)

And George--be sure you say it just like that. Thanks.

SELMA

What are you doing?

...

1

...
...
...

...
...

...
...
...
...

...

...
...
...

...

...

...
...
...
...

...
...
...

...

MOLLIE

I don't know why I didn't think of it sooner! Judy is sick, and Doc is a doctor, right?

SELMA

Yes, but he isn't...

MOLLIE

I'll persuade him. Don't you see? A sick child...It's all here. Once he sees a patient as a doctor, it'll make all the difference.

SELMA

But....

MOLLIE

All he has to know is that we have faith in him. He's lost that trust in himself. After that, it's just a short step to talking him in to going back.

SELMA

(Embraces MOLLIE)

Oh, Mollie...you're wonderful!

MOLLIE

(Thoughtfully)

It won't be too easy. But once he sees Judy...I think he'll be easier to talk to.

FLO

(Coming in with the pitcher)

There wasn't any juice left in the refrigerator. I had a time finding another can! Those grocery shelves of yours are a mess!

(She goes to stairs.)

MOLLIE

(Blurting out)

I've called a doctor to see Judy!

FLO

(Whirling about)

You what?

MOLLIE

I called....

(She breaks off.)

A doctor is coming to see Judy.

(There is a slight pause.)

FLO

(Slowly)

Who gave you the right? What the hell do you think you're doing around here?

... ..

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

SELMA

She's not hurting anybody.

MOLLIE

You don't mind a doctor looking at Judy?

FLO

I wouldn't mind if you stopped interfering. I told you before...I'll get a doctor if and when she needs one.

MOLLIE

But, Flo...

(The phone rings. MOLLIE, nearest to the phone, picks it up.)

Hello? Oh...Yes, she's here. Just a minute, Howard.

(Holds phone toward FLO)

He wants to talk to you.

FLO

(Sullenly)

I don't want to talk to him.

MOLLIE

(Quietly)

Shall I tell him that?

FLO

Tell him whatever you like. Tell him I'm asleep—out—anything you like.

MOLLIE

(Suddenly)

No...No, you tell him.

FLO

What do you mean? All of a sudden you can't talk to him?

MOLLIE

(Hands her the phone again. She does not take her eyes off FLO.)

Here. You were so anxious for me not to interfere...

FLO

(Gives a short laugh)

Oh, that!

(Knowingly)

You're paying me back.

(Unpleasantly)

Okay, bring your doctor, if that's what you want.

... and the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...
 ... the ... of the ...

MOLLIE

No, Flo, you're twisting my motives around. I want the doctor, but this is something else.

FLO

Oh?

MOLLIE

(Quietly)

I'm through lying for you.

FLO

How will it hurt you if you say I'm not here?

MOLLIE

Here's the phone, Flo.

FLO

What's the matter with you? I'm giving you a golden opportunity. It's what you want isn't it?

MOLLIE

(Looks at her, but does not answer. Into phone)

I'm sorry, Howard.

(She hangs up heavily.)

FLO

(Angrily bewildered. She hadn't expected MOLLIE to do that.)

What did you do that for? What'll he think?

MOLLIE

(Slowly, but her anger is growing)

Do you care? Do you really care what anybody thinks?

FLO

(Defiantly)

No, not what you think. But Howard....

MOLLIE

...Is your husband. You're giving him the famous Flo lesson, is that it?

FLO

It's none of your damned business what I'm doing.

MOLLIE

You've made it my business! Like you've made it my business all your life.

SELMA

And you've made Mollie your whipping boy while you play hide-go-seek with Howard!

FLO

You stay out of this....!

SELMA

You mean I'm interfering? First Mollie, then me...

MOLLIE

(Interrupting. To FLO)

Why do you leave Howard periodically....and come here?

FLO

I told you, it's none of your damned business.

MOLLIE

It's this house, isn't it?

FLO

What the hell are you talking about?

MOLLIE

I'm talking about you...and me...and this house. And the interfering I'm supposed to be doing. And the fact that you put me in the position to interfere! I'm talking about the fact that you don't really intend to leave Howard...and you never have.

FLO

I've left him all right!

MOLLIE

(Quietly)

No. No, you haven't. You just run home when things get a little rough. And I'm right here...the scapegoat you've always used. I'm mighty useful to you!

(FLO looks up sharply.)

It's always suited your purpose to blame me for everything that goes wrong.

(FLO does not answer.)

SELMA

And you messed things around here plenty because of your bitching. Half of Mollie's job has been to clean up your messes...

MOLLIE

(She has made no move to stop SELMA. To FLO)

I'm convenient for that, aren't I. You always knew that, didn't you?

(FLO stands sullenly, looking from one to the other, not answering.)

Well, why don't you answer?

(There is a long pause as FLO does not answer. She cannot answer for she has nothing to say. She looks away finally, and goes to the phone.)

1....

... ..

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

11

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

FLO

(Dials a number while MOLLIE and SELMA watch. She sounds rather subdued and a little frightened.)

Howard? Yeah...it's me. I...I'm coming home in the morning. No...I can't tonight. Judy's sick. No...nothing serious. Just a little fever. Yeah...I told you...The baby? He's at your mother's.

(Pause)

Well, what did you think she'd say?

(Some of her old assurance is returning. She is back in the driver's seat.)

Oh, for God's sake...stop slobbering. I told you I'd come home. Nothing would keep me here. I wouldn't stay tonight, if the kid wasn't sick. Okay...goodbye.

(She hangs up and turns to MOLLIE.)

I'd rather go back to him any day, than stay here with you.

(She goes to the stairs without looking at MOLLIE, then turns and gives MOLLIE a long, unforgiving look. As she leaves, MOLLIE makes a move forward as if to stop her, but her upraised hand drops to her side.)

SELMA

Sometimes I hate her!

MOLLIE

Don't, Selma!

SELMA

(With satisfaction)

I'm glad you finally told her.

MOLLIE

(Unhappily)

Did you see how she looked at me?

SELMA

Oh, forget it! Everything you told her was true. And she knows it!

MOLLIE

(Crosses toward the easy chair)

I wish...I wish it could have been different. I've tried.

(She sits.)

All these years how I've tried to reach her!

SELMA

Why don't you lean back and relax, dear. Here, I'll put the footstool up for you.

(Looks down at MOLLIE who has thrown her head back wearily)

Some tea?

MOLLIE

(Does not open her eyes)

No, thanks.

SELMA

(Smilingly, urges)
I hear tea is very soothing.

MOLLIE

(Smiles, remembering she had said that)
Okay!

(SELMA goes to the kitchen. MOLLIE is leaning back comfortably. DOC bursts in. He looks anxiously around but does not see MOLLIE at first. Then he sees her in the chair. He comes close and peers down at her. A tender, soft expression crosses his face.)

DOC

(Softly)
Mollie?
(MOLLIE does not answer. She has dozed off. DOC kneels down beside the chair and kisses her.)

MOLLIE

(Stirring, opens her eyes)
Oh, Doc...Doc...You didn't go yet.

DOC

(Tenderly)
No. I just came in. Are you all right?
(MOLLIE puts her arms up and draws him down to her. They kiss, a long kiss. Suddenly DOC leans away.)
You're not sick, Mollie...

MOLLIE

No, of course not.

DOC

George said it was very urgent that I come. And when I saw you lying here, I thought...

MOLLIE

No, it's not for me. It's Judy. Flo's little girl...
(She stops, afraid she has been too direct.)
You know that I trust you, dear...

DOC

Yes, but...

MOLLIE

And that I now know...
(She stops.)
It doesn't make any difference to me.

DOC

(Stiffening)

Yes?

MOLLIE

And that it doesn't change anything for me...I mean, I love you and trust you.

DOC

(Rises)

What are you getting at?

MOLLIE

If I were very sick, I'd want you to take care of me. Over all the other doctors, I'd want you.

DOC

(Moving away)

We've been all through that. I told you. I'm no longer a doctor.

(He turns. Then anxiously)

You're sure you're not...? What's wrong, Mollie?

MOLLIE

Judy's sick, Doc. She needs a doctor to look at her. Her temperature is very high.

DOC

(Slowly)

Did you call a doctor?

MOLLIE

(Carefully)

Well...no. Flo...that is....

DOC

Is this why you sent for me?

(SELMA comes in from the kitchen with the tea. She sees DOC'S stiff back, and sensing the growing tension, leaves again for the kitchen.)

MOLLIE

I sent for you to take care of Judy.

DOC

(Impatiently)

Get a doctor!

MOLLIE

(Speaking fast)

No, Doc. Not just a doctor. I want you to see Judy. Please, Doc, go upstairs and see Judy.

DOC

(Looks at MOLLIE incredulously)
You do believe it, don't you? That people are quite simple beings. That all you have to do is to move them around like chess pieces and they sit in the nice, neat square you put them in.

MOLLIE

No, Doc...

DOC

You can't manipulate people like that, Mollie. They can't move and jump and hop and become doctors because you tell them to.

MOLLIE

(Pleadingly)
Please, Doc...We need you.

DOC

(Slowly)
I don't think you need anybody. You don't need me. You never have. You've managed people for so long that you are quite self-sufficient.

MOLLIE

(Stunned)
You're wrong!

DOC

Am I? The wine bit you played before...Calling Frisbie here. Now this! Quite the little manager, aren't you?

MOLLIE

(Close to tears)
Is that what you call it when you love somebody? When you want to help them because you love them? Is that wrong?

DOC

Love is understanding. It's knowing and accepting people for what they are. It isn't pushing them in a direction you think they ought to go. Your kind of love strangles and cripples. Don't you see that?

MOLLIE

(The tears are there, but because she is deeply hurt, she is defiant.)
No, I don't see it. You don't understand. You think love is something you can isolate? Something that is neatly self-contained? It doesn't work that way...

(In a low voice)
I don't make people over. I don't want to. You don't know how I wanted to be left alone. Sometimes when my family comes to me with their troubles, I want to tell them to settle it themselves.

DOC

But you don't.

(There is a slight pause.)

MOLLIE

(Simply)

I try.

DOC

Not hard enough.

MOLLIE

Don't you see....They need me!

DOC

And you enjoy it. Every minute of it. The demands they make of you are of your own doing. You never want them to stop coming to you.

MOLLIE

You never had a family. You don't know...

DOC

No...But I know how important it is for people to be independent.

MOLLIE

Your kind of independence? Standing off alone and ruining your life and your career?

DOC

(Nodding)

Even my kind of independence. Right or wrong it's mine. My own mistakes...but of my own choosing.

MOLLIE

We don't always choose, Doc. Things happen...and when they do, we need somebody. Nobody can be all alone. Yet so many people are. They need somebody to care...You can't close your eyes and ears to people crying for somebody to care. For somebody to help them.

DOC

I didn't cry for help. I don't want any. No, Mollie, you can't twist this around to make it sound right. You've sold yourself an idea that you're everybody's keeper...

MOLLIE

(Accusingly)

You're afraid of feeling...

(She stops, looking up at him.)

Maybe you're even afraid of love. You don't trust any emotion because you think that because you made a mistake once when you were upset...

(She takes a deep breath.)

Better to make a mistake in caring too much than not at all!

DOC

(Momentarily shaken)

I...I don't know.

MOLLIE

(Her voice suddenly tender)

You've confused yourself. You've been fighting against caring for people since you came here. But you couldn't, could you?

DOC

(Slowly)

No...but I didn't want to get involved.

MOLLIE

Not even with me?

DOC

Not even with you...

(There is a long pause.)

MOLLIE

(Moves to the window)

I...I guess you've said enough.

DOC

I'm sorry if I hurt you...but...

(MOLLIE does not answer. DOC comes up to her.)

Mollie?

(MOLLIE stares out of the window, but still does not answer.)

Well...I guess I'll go.

(He turns to go to the door. He hesitates, looks back at MOLLIE who has not moved.)

Goodbye.

(MOLLIE does not turn. DOC stands uncertainly at the door. Then he puts his hand on the door knob. There is a scream from off stage. SELMA rushes out of the kitchen.)

SELMA

What happened?

FLO

(Rushing on from upstairs)

It's Judy. She's having convulsions!

(DOC has remained at the door. MOLLIE runs to stairs.)

MOLLIE

Selma! Come with me!

(MOLLIE starts up the stairs with SELMA following.)

FLO

Mollie, wait! Which doctor should I get? Ours is on the other side of town.

(MOLLIE pauses. SELMA goes on upstairs.)

MOLLIE

Get...Let's see...Get Dr. Randolph. He lives closest. Just a couple of blocks away. Call Lombard 2-5793.

(She is almost upstairs.)

FLO

Mollie?

(She is dialing.)

Lombard what?

MOLLIE

(Turning back)

2...5...7...9...3.

DOC

(Coming forward)

No! That's the man who...Don't get him! He's....No, don't get him.

MOLLIE

(Had started when DOC first spoke)

I thought you...

FLO

(On phone)

Hello? Is Doctor Randolph there? Oh...No...This is an emergency.

(She hangs up.)

MOLLIE

(To FLO)

Here! You go up to Judy. I'll call the hospital.

(FLO runs upstairs, while MOLLIE begins to dial.)

DOC

(Tersely)

Hang up, Mollie!

(MOLLIE looks up in surprise. DOC runs up the stairs.

She stands frozen, holding the phone. Finally, she limply replaces it and starts up the stairs. On the landing she stands for a moment deciding whether or not her presence is wanted or even needed. She turns, descends the stairs and crosses over down stage. She is bewildered at the turn of events and sits there deeply in thought. The outside bell rings, but MOLLIE does not hear it. It rings again, and after a slight pause, BENNY pokes his head in the door.)

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

BENNY

Mollie? You still up? I seen your light still on, so I rang th' bell.

MOLLIE

Excuse me, Benny, I didn't hear you.

(There is a pause. BENNY stands awkwardly not saying anything.)

Is something the matter?

BENNY

(Shifts his feet uncomfortably)

Well...Miss...This Elaine an' me....We had our date...

MOLLIE

(Wearily)

I'd ask you to sit down, Benny. But....

(Sees his face and gives a little smile)

Would you come over tomorrow? Then we could have a nice long talk.

BENNY

(Disappointed)

Oh, sure...sure...

(He shuffles to the door. MOLLIE watches him. There is something rejected about him which reflects itself in his entire body.)

MOLLIE

Benny?

(BENNY turns eagerly.)

Maybe we can talk now.

(BENNY comes back and stands uncomfortably.)

Sit down, Benny.

(He sits.)

Now...

(There is another pause. Finally)

BENNY

(Blurts out)

I had a lousy time...

MOLLIE

(Concerned)

Oh, I'm sorry. What happened?

BENNY

This here...Elaine...

(He stops.)

MOLLIE

(Encouragingly)

Yes?

.....

BENNY

(Explosively)
She's a drip. A regular drip!

MOLLIE

Miss Patterson?

BENNY

Yeah...her. She didn't have t' act so stuck up with me. Other people know somethin' too. Other people are people too.

MOLLIE

(Realizes his hurt)
What happened?

BENNY

She made me feel like a regular nothin'! Like I'm a slob or somethin'!

(Appealing)

You know me, Mollie. I'm not a bum. I work hard an' I save my money. An' I take care o' my grandmother. So what right has anybody got t'make me feel like nothin'!

MOLLIE

(Puzzled)

That doesn't sound like Miss Patterson. She's so kind.

BENNY

T'you maybe. You don't scare her. You ain't a man.

MOLLIE

(Turns to look at him)

.....?

BENNY

I kissed 'er. One lousy, stinkin' kiss. An' she froze like a turnip. Right from the beginnin' it was no good. She starts right in at th' movies. She don't wanna go in. The picture ain't good. She don't like the paintin's on the walls. Honest, Mollie, you shoul'da seen them. They're somethin' t' see! But are they somethin' for Miss Hoity-Toity? She's frozen standin' there lookin'....like everything is nothin'!

MOLLIE

(Shaken)

Oh, Benny!

BENNY

Naw, it wouldn't of been so bad except...I kissed 'er. I thought, maybewell... She gets mad an' tells me I'm no gentleman. She'll buy me an ash tray. That somebody ought t' learn me manners.

(He rises and paces back and forth in agitation.)

BENNY (CONT'D)

Kin y' beat it? Me. My grandmother learned me manners from the time I was a little kid. Whatta she think I am? Does she think I was raised in some garbage can?

MOLLIE

(Rises. She has tears in her eyes and when she speaks, it is brokenly.)

Oh, Benny. It's my fault...the two of you...I should never have brought you together. You're too different and I thought...

(She turns away.)

I'm so sorry, Benny.

BENNY

It ain't your fault. Don't go blamin' yourself.

MOLLIE

(To herself)

Moving chess pieces!

BENNY

What?

MOLLIE

I was wrong to bring you two together.

BENNY

Look, Mollie. I didn't come in here t' make you feel bad. You're my best friend. You're always so good t' everybody. An' after all, I kinda asked ya t' find somebody. You're okay. Y' care what happens t' a person.

(MOLLIE has her back to him. He touches her gently on the shoulder.)

Are y' listenin'? With you I feel like a real person...a somebody... like things I say means somethin'. I'm a real person with you.

MOLLIE

(Turns around and looks up at him)

Of course you are!

(Impulsively she reaches up and hugs him close to her, as if by the act alone she would remove the hurt she had inflicted. As she does so, BENNY'S arms come slowly up to embrace her, but they hover uncertainly about MOLLIE. He is surprised at his newly discovered emotion. He does not dare to betray himself and his arms fall to his side. But MOLLIE has raised her head and has seen BENNY'S upraised arms and his struggle. She moves back looking incredulously at him. There is a long pause, as they look at each other. Then in a whisper)

I'm sorry, Benny.

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

BENNY

(Moving away)

I...I gotta go.

(He goes to the door and turns.)

You're a good...friend, Mollie. I'm...glad I have y' for a friend.

(He turns abruptly.)

Good night.

(BENNY leaves.)

MOLLIE

(Stands for a moment looking after him, still stunned)

I'm sorry, Benny.

(DOC comes down on the landing, and stands looking at MOLLIE who has her back to him. He seems shaken, uncertain; his air of assurance is gone.)

DOC

Mollie?

(She turns.)

Judy's better.

MOLLIE

(Simply, almost absently)

Yes.

DOC

(Incredulously)

You...You're so sure.

MOLLIE

I...told you...before.

(There is a pause. DOC is still on the landing; MOLLIE has not moved since BENNY left. They both look at each other, yearning toward each other, but neither can make the first move. Finally, DOC comes down the stairs.)

DOC

(Moving toward MOLLIE)

Tell me again.

MOLLIE

I had faith in you.

DOC

(Gives a short laugh)

And that's all it takes.

MOLLIE

No. The rest was up to you.

DOC

You really think people can achieve something if given half a chance.

MOLLIE

That's what I've always thought.

DOC

And you provided them with that initial push.

MOLLIE

(She is about to say something, then pauses. She turns and walks away.

Benny was just here.

DOC

Oh?

MOLLIE

He was hurt tonight. Badly.

(To herself)

More than I even knew!

(There is a pause.)

That initial push you speak of...Two fine people miserable...because of me....

(She turns toward DOC and speaks earnestly.)

All the things you said before...

(DOC starts to speak, but MOLLIE stops him.)

No...let me say it...Everything you said...I've been thinking. Maybe I've hurt the others too. I don't know. Sander...Selma...

(She gives a little bitter laugh.)

Even Flo...The others...and you... Yet how can you measure in a teaspoon what you do for people? How do you measure love? When do you say, "This is enough."

(She struggles for a moment with threatening tears.)

I...I wouldn't have hurt you...any of you...for anything.

DOC

(Gently, taking her in his arms)

I know.

(He kisses her gently at first, then passionately, longingly.)

FLO

(On the landing)

Doc...

(He turns.)

Oh...Doctor...Judy's out of the tub now. Selma's putting her to bed. What shall I do now?

(DOC does not answer immediately. He looks at MOLLIE, a long penetrating look. But MOLLIE has dropped her eyes. When DOC turns back to FLO, there is an authoritative tone in his voice.)

DOC

Get plenty of blankets...Keep her warm...and make sure she doesn't chill. She must be kept quiet. Give her fluids. I think that's all for now.

FLO

I want to take her home tomorrow. Can she leave?

DOC

(Shaking his head)

I don't think so. She needs to stay quiet until her temperature is gone. But...

(He looks back at MOLLIE.)

I'll stop in tomorrow and we'll see.

FLO

Thanks...doctor.

(She leaves.)

DOC

(To MOLLIE)

I'm not going back.

MOLLIE

Oh!

DOC

Not yet. I've got to be sure first.

(There is a pause.)

Doctors are needed right here, aren't they?

MOLLIE

(In a whisper)

Yes...?

DOC

I feel I can try now...

(Pause)

It wasn't because I took care of Judy.

MOLLIE

Oh?

DOC

It's that wonderful blind faith of yours. It spills over, and it makes mistakes but...it's not afraid to care.

(He comes close to her.)

Will you help me?

MOLLIE

(Humbly)

You want me?

DOC

Very much.

MOLLIE

Even after what happened tonight?

Western blot analysis showing p38 phosphorylation in H1299 cells. The blot displays two bands for each condition: a lower band representing phosphorylated p38 and an upper band representing total p38. The phosphorylated p38 band is significantly more intense in the 'Control' lane compared to the 'LPS' lane, indicating that LPS treatment reduces p38 phosphorylation.

DOC

Even then...

MOLLIE

(Determinedly)

I shouldn't have made you come.

DOC

But you did.

(He looks at her quizzically.)

That half a chance I mentioned.

MOLLIE

(Promising)

I'll be careful. I'll be very careful.

DOC

(Smiling)

Yes...but not too careful...

(He looks around.)

This will make a good doctor's house.

MOLLIE

Not this house, Doc. I can't...I can't stay here.

DOC

It doesn't matter. You'll find another house.

MOLLIE

We'll find another house.

(He takes her in his arms. MOLLIE suddenly remembers.)

Oh...Dr. Frisbie left this card...

(She fumbles in her pocket.)

You're supposed to call...

(She suddenly covers her mouth aware that she had
again initiated an action.)

Oh, I'm sorry.

DOC

(Laughing, takes the card)

Mollie...Oh, Mollie...

(He takes her in his arms again as

THE CURTAIN FALLS

BIOGRAPHY

Pauline K. Schmookler was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and attended the public schools there.

Her theatre training was mainly received at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia where as a child she entered the children's dramatic classes. Collateral training in ballet, modern dance, music and voice were also received at the School. Later, she entered the School's Little Theatre group and participated in many areas of play production, mainly acting. Some radio acting was done at station W H A T in Philadelphia. At fifteen, Mrs. Schmookler began to direct one of the children's groups at the School, progressing to the teen-age dramatic group. In Philadelphia she also directed some adult groups.

Mrs. Schmookler taught creative dramatics at the Art Center in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Later, she was employed by the Neighborhood Center in Philadelphia to direct the teen-age group and supervise the center's dramatic program.

Since coming to Michigan in 1949, she has taught acting in the Lansing Evening Schools in the Adult Education Program.

Early attempts at writing for the theatre consisted of adapting several folk tales for the children's dramatic group. Further experience and training in writing were received at Michigan State University where Mrs. Schmookler received her A.B. degree in 1955. As an undergraduate, she wrote a number of short stories. In playwriting, she wrote two one-act plays. One, The Golden Grave-Stone, was produced at Michigan State in 1944.

Tender Are The Vines is her first full-length play.

ROOM USE ONLY

Date Due

Doc 5 58

Demco-293

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293006279651