

SIDE #1

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

HILDA Fluck enters from the house carrying a basket of laundry. HILDA is about fifty to fifty-five years old. She moves down to the clothesline, and as she does she speaks to her neighbour in the yard behind hers. We don't see the neighbour. The audience is the neighbour. HILDA hangs laundry from the line as she speaks.

HILDA: Oh good morning, Mrs. Lidstrom. I see you had the same idea as I had this morning. Getting an early jump on the wash. Yes. Well, look at us, would you? Don't we lead the glamorous lives? We're like Grace Kelly and Rita Hayworth, I swear. Fortunately the loads are much lighter for me these days now that the children are out of the house. You knew that my Gary moved out finally, right? . . . Yes, two weeks ago. He got a job in the city. He's working in the food industry and living right downtown. And Janey and her husband Duncan are all settled over in Farmington. They have a lovely little split-level over there on a quiet cul-de-sac . . . Cul-de-sac. It's French. Sounds pretty, doesn't it? It means dead end . . . Oh yes indeed they do grow up fast. Sadly, they don't move out of the house as fast as they grow. Oh I thought my Gary would never leave. Thirty-three years old,

Mrs. Lidstrom, and he just wouldn't go. He said he needed time to recover from his war experience. Well, God bless him for rolling up his sleeves and pitching in to crush the Nazi horde, but eleven years to recover? It only took them five years to rebuild Berlin. And then there's Janey. Mercy me. I practically had to break her fingers to get them loose from my apron strings. I mean, you've raised a family, Mrs. Lidstrom. You know what it's like. There comes a time when you just want to be free of the responsibility. These years—what they call the golden years—these should be for Mr. Fluck and myself. Lord knows we've earned them . . . I seem anxious? Well, I am a little anxious, Mrs. Lidstrom, yes. Mr. Fluck is off to make a sizable purchase this morning and it's got me concerned . . . Oh, yes it's very dear. I just hope it doesn't send us tumbling headlong into the poorhouse . . . Well, thank you, but hopefully we won't need good luck. Luck is a last resort, isn't it? Luck is what you hope for before you start to pray.

She looks to Heaven.

God, I'm coming to you now because my luck has run out. And then God gets mad at you because you didn't come to him first and he kills a relative. Not a close relative. A second cousin. Just to serve as a warning shot . . . All right, Mrs. Lidstrom. I'll see you later. Have a nice day now.

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