

Audition Side #3

WILLY: *(The effect of this speech is to put Howard in his play).* Oh, yeah, my father lived many years in Alaska...he was an *adventurous* man...We've got quite a little streak of self-reliance in our family. I thought I'd go out with my older brother and try to locate him, and maybe settle in the North with the old man. And I was almost decided to go, when I met a *salesman* in the Parker House. His name was Dave Singleman. And he was eighty-four years old, and he'd drummed merchandise in thirty-one states. And old Dave...he'd go up to this room, y'understand, put on his green velvet slippers—I'll never forget—and pack up his phone and call the buyers and without ever leaving his room, at the age of eighty-four, he made his living. And when I saw that, I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want. 'Cause what could be more satisfying than to be able to go, at the age of eighty-four, into twenty or thirty different cities, and pick up a phone, and be remembered and loved and helped, by so many different people? Do you know; when he died—and by the way he died the *death of a salesman*, in his green velvet slippers in the smoker of the New York, New Haven and Hartford, going into Boston—but when he died, hundreds of salesmen and buyers were at his funeral. Things were sad on a lotta trains for months after that. See what I mean? In those days there was personality in it, Howard; there was respect, and comradeship, and gratitude in it. Today, it's all cut and dried, and there's no chance for bringing friendship to bear...or personality. They don't know me any more.

HOWARD: *(Andry; rises, moves away R)* That's just the thing, Willy...

WILLY: *(Pleading; crosses to above R. of table)* If I had *forty* dollars a week...That's all I'd need. Forty dollars, Howard.

HOWARD: *(Definite).* Kid, I can't take blood from a stone, I...

WILLY: *(Cuts in; desperation is on him now).* Howard, the year Al Smith was nominated your father came to me and...

HOWARD: *(Starts off L. -impatiently.)* I've got to see some people, kid...

WILLY: *(Stops him).* I'm talking about your *father!* There were promises made in this office! You mustn't tell me you've got people to see—*(Shouting)*. I put thirty-four years into this firm, Howard, and now I can't pay my insurance? You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away—a man is not a piece of fruit! *(pause)*. Now pay attention. Your father—in 1928—I had a big year. I averaged a hundred and seventy dollars a week in commissions.

HOWARD: *(snorts, turns away).* Now, Willy, you never averaged...

WILLY: *(Bangs his hand on desk).* I averaged a hundred and seventy dollars a week in the year of 1928! And your father came to me...and he put his hand on my shoulder...