

*(Happy flops on stomach, Biff kneels above him.)*

BEN. Why, boys... when I was seventeen I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out... *(He laughs.)* And by God I was rich! *(Walks L. to C. Linda backs up.)*

WILLY. *(To boys.)* You see what I been talking about? The greatest things can happen!

BEN. *(Crosses R. to Willy, glancing at his watch.)* I have an appointment in Ketchikan Tuesday week.

WILLY. *(Stops him.)* No, Ben, please... Tell about Dad. *(To boys.)* I want my boys to hear. I want them to know the kind of stock they spring from. All I remember is a man with a big beard... and I was in Mamma's lap... sitting around a fire... and some kind of high music. *(Music cue no. 7.)*

BEN. His flute. He played the flute...

WILLY. Sure, the flute, that's right!

BEN. *(Boasting.)* Father was a very great, and a very wild-hearted man. *(Biff rises slowly, crosses below Willy to Ben.)* We would start in Boston, and he'd toss the whole family into the wagon, and then he'd drive the team right across the country; through Ohio, and Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and all the western states. And we'd stop in the towns and sell the flutes that he'd made on the way. Great inventor, Father. With one gadget he made more in a week than a man like you could make in a lifetime. *(Crosses L. to L. C. Music fades out.)*

WILLY. *(Showing Biff toward Ben.)* That's just the way I'm bringing them up, Ben... Rugged, well liked, all around...

BEN. Yeah? Well, *(To Biff.)* hit that, boy... hard as you can. *(He pounds his stomach.)*

BIFF. Oh, no, sir...

BEN. *(Takes a boxing stance.)* Come on, get to me! *(Laughs.)*

WILLY. Go to it, Biff; go ahead, show him!

BIFF. Okay! *(He cocks his fists and starts in.)*

LINDA. *(To Willy.)* Why must he fight, dear? *(Puts basket D. up by porch steps near door to kitchen.)*

BEN. *(Sparring with him.)* Good boy! Good boy!

*(Ben crosses L. to her, takes off hat.)*

BEN. *(Gallantly.)* How do you do, my dear.

*(She wipes hands on apron, then shakes hands.)*

LINDA. *(As Willy crosses to Ben.)* Where've you been all these years? Willy's always wondered why you...

WILLY. *(Pulling Ben away from her impatiently, taking him D. R.)* Where is Dad? Didn't you follow him? How did you get started?

BEN. Well, I don't know how much you remember...

WILLY. Well, when you left I was just a baby, of course, only three or four years old...

*(Linda picks up basket, crossing slowly to c.)*

BEN. Three years and eleven months.

WILLY. What a memory, Ben!

BEN. *(Putting hat on.)* I have many enterprises, William, and I have never kept books.

WILLY. I remember I was sitting under the wagon in... was it Nebraska?

BEN. It was South Dakota, and I gave you a bunch of wild flowers...

WILLY. Sure, the flowers. I remember you walking away down some open road...

BEN. *(Laughs.)* I was going to find Father in Alaska.

WILLY. Where is he?

BEN. At that age I had a very faulty view of geography, William. I discovered after a few days that I was heading due south, so instead of Alaska I ended up in Africa. *(Turns L. to Linda.)*

LINDA. *(Back up a step.)* Africal!

WILLY. The Gold Coast!

BEN. Principally diamond mines.

LINDA. *(Back up a step.)* Diamond mines!

BEN. Yes, my dear. But I've only a few minutes...

WILLY. No... Boys! Boys!!

*(Boys: U. R. behind house, calling "Hup, Hup!" Young Biff and Happy appear, running from behind house. Willy is between boys and Ben.)*  
Listen to this. This is your Uncle Ben, a great man!... Tell my boys, Ben!

CHARLEY. Who died?

BEN. Heard anything from Father, have you?

WILLY. (*Unnerved.*) What do you mean, who died?

CHARLEY. What're you talkin' about? (*Throws a card. Starts to take trick.*)

BEN. (*Looking at watch.*) William, it's half past eight!

(*As though to dispel his confusion, Willy angrily stops Charley's hand.*)

WILLY. That's my build!

CHARLEY. I put the ace...

WILLY. (*Rises.*) If you don't know how to play the game I'm not gonna throw my money away on you!

CHARLEY. It was my ace, for God's sake! (*Gathers cards together.*)

WILLY. (*Crossing u. above table.*) I'm through, I'm through!

BEN. When did Mother die? (*Crosses D.*)

WILLY. (*Crosses above to door; to Ben.*) Long ago... (*To Charley.*) Since the beginning you never knew how to play cards.

CHARLEY. (*Picks up cards and goes toward door.*) All right! Next time I'll bring a deck with five aces.

WILLY. I don't play that kind of game!

CHARLEY. (*Turning to him.*) You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

WILLY. Yeah?

CHARLEY. Yeah!

(*Charley goes out U. L. kitchen door. Music fades out.*)

WILLY. Ignoramus!

(*Willy leaves kitchen after Charley goes out, slams kitchen door. Goes to Ben, R. C. on apron below kitchen. Puts hands on Ben's arms, shakes him.*)

Ben! I've been waiting for you for so long! What's the answer? How did you do it?

BEN. Oh, there's a story in that.

(*Linda enters from U. L. behind house, carrying wash basket. Crosses D. onto apron.*)

LINDA. Is this Ben? (*Puts basket down.*)

WILLY. Didn't Linda tell you? Couple of weeks ago we got a letter from his wife in Africa. He died.

CHARLEY. That's so.

BEN. (*Chuckling.*) So this is Brooklyn, eh? (*Moves up and l. to c. R. of kitchen, looking around. Stamps out cigarette.*)

CHARLEY. Maybe you're in for some of his money?

WILLY. Naa, he had seven sons. There's just one opportunity I had with that man... (*Throws a card.*)

BEN. I must make a train, William; there are several properties I'm looking at in Alaska.

(*Charley takes a trick.*)

WILLY. Sure, sure!... If I'd've gone with him to Alaska that time... everything would've been totally different. (*Takes a trick.*)

CHARLEY. Go on, you'd froze to death up there.

WILLY. What're you talking about...?

BEN. Opportunity is tremendous in Alaska, William. Surprised you're not up there. (*Crosses D.*)

WILLY. Sure, tremendous.

CHARLEY. (*Throws a card.*) Heh?

WILLY. There was the only man I ever met who knew the answers.

CHARLEY. Who?

BEN. How are you all?

(*Willy takes three-card trick.*)

WILLY. (*Taking a pot, smiling.*) Fine, fine.

CHARLEY. (*Indicating cards.*) Pretty sharp tonight.

BEN. Is Mother living with you?

WILLY. No, she died a long time ago.

CHARLEY. Who?

BEN. (*Crossing U. to c. of R. kitchen position.*) That's too bad. Fine specimen of a lady, Mother.

WILLY. (*To Charley.*) Heh?

BEN. I'd hoped to see the old girl.

CHARLEY. You take it too hard. To hell with it. When a deposit bottle is broken you don't get your nickel back.

WILLY. That's easy enough for you to say.

CHARLEY. That ain't easy for me to say. *(They pick up cards.)*

WILLY. *(Takes three-card trick.)* Did you see the ceiling I put up in the living room?

CHARLEY. Yeah, that's a piece of work. *(Throws one card.)* To put up a ceiling is a mystery to me. How do you do it?

WILLY. What's the difference? *(Takes a trick.)*

CHARLEY. Well, talk about it.

WILLY. *(Irritated.)* You gonna put up a ceiling?

CHARLEY. How could I put up a ceiling? *(Throws last card, deals: four to Willy, four to himself.)*

WILLY. *(Shouting.)* Then what the hell are you bothering me for?

CHARLEY. You're insulted again.

WILLY. A man who can't handle tools is not a man. You're disgusting.

CHARLEY. *(Hurt.)* Don't call me disgusting, Willy. *(Slams pack down after completing deal.)*

WILLY. I'm getting awfully tired, Ben. *(Ben's Music cue no. 6 is heard.)*

CHARLEY. *(Picks up cards.)* Good, keep playing; you'll sleep better... Did you call me Ben?

*(Uncle Ben enters, a stolid man, in his sixties, with a moustache and an authoritative air. He is utterly certain of his destiny, and there is the aura of far places about him. He enters carrying umbrella and valise and smoking cigarette in holder, and looks around at the place like a stranger. Ben puts valise by trellis, R., crosses D. looking at balcony, at imaginary clock, then at his watch.)*

WILLY. That's funny. For a second there you reminded me of my brother Ben.

BEN. I only have a few minutes.

*(Ben strolls D. R., inspecting the place. Charley and Willy continue playing.)*

CHARLEY. You never heard from him again, heh? Since that time?

WILLY. They build up your bones. Chemistry.

CHARLEY. Yeah, but there's no bones in a heartburn.

*(Charley deals cards. Four cards to Willy, four to himself, four face up on table.)*

WILLY. What are you talkin' about? Do you know the first thing about it?

CHARLEY. Don't get insulted.

WILLY. Don't talk about something you don't know anything about. *(They are ready to play. Pause.)*

CHARLEY. What're you doin' home?

WILLY. A little trouble with the car. *(Throws one card.)*

CHARLEY. Oh. *(Pause.)* I'd like to take a trip to California. *(Takes a trick.)*

WILLY. Don't say. *(Throws one card.)*

CHARLEY. *(Bends forward, fussing with cards on table.)* You want a job? *(Looks up at him.)*

WILLY. I got a job, I told you that. *(Looks suspiciously at Charley. Slight pause.)* What the hell are you offering me a job for?

CHARLEY. Don't get insulted.

WILLY. Don't insult me.

CHARLEY. I don't see no sense in it. *(Throws one card.)* You don't have to go on this way.

WILLY. *(Strong.)* I got a good job. *(Slight pause.)* What do you keep comin' in here for?

CHARLEY. You want me to go? *(Throws cards down—starts up.)*

*(Willy leans across table, grabs Charley's arm. Pause.)*

WILLY. *(Withering.)* Charley, I can't understand it. He's going back to Texas again. What the hell is that?

CHARLEY. Let him go.

WILLY. I got nothin' to give him, Charley, I'm clean, I'm clean.

CHARLEY. He won't starve. None a them starve. Forget about him.

WILLY. Then what have I got to remember?

*(Charley appears in door from U. L.)*

Christ's sake, I couldn't get past Yonkers today! Where are you guys, where are you? The woods are burning! I can't drive a car!

*(Charley is a large man, slow of speech, laconic, immovable. In all he says, despite what he says, there is pity, and now, trepidation. He has a robe over pajamas, slippers on his feet.)*

CHARLEY. Everything all right?

HAPPY. Yeah, Charley, everything's...

WILLY. What's the matter?

CHARLEY. *(Crosses in a step, closes kitchen door.)* I heard some noise, I thought something happened. Can't we do something about the walls? You sneeze in here and in my house hats blow off.

HAPPY. *(Rises.)* Let's go to bed, Dad, come on...

*(Charley signals Happy to go.)*

WILLY. *(Rises, crosses below to R.)* You go ahead, I'm not tired at the moment.

*(Charley indicates to Happy that he'll take care of Willy.)*

HAPPY. *(To Willy.)* Take it easy, huh?

WILLY. *(Grunts.)* Yeah!

*(Happy exits upstairs.)*

What're you doin' up?

CHARLEY. *(Crossing to chair L. of table.)* Couldn't sleep good. I had a heartburn.

WILLY. Well, you don't know how to eat.

CHARLEY. I eat with my mouth.

WILLY. No, you're ignorant. You gotta know about vitamins and things like that.

CHARLEY. *(Sits chair L. of table.)* Come on, let's shoot? Tire you out a little.

WILLY. *(Hesitates.)* All right, you got cards? *(Sits R. of table.)*

CHARLEY. *(Taking cards from his pocket.)* Yeah, I got them. Some place. What is it with those vitamins? *(Trying to take Willy's mind off his trouble.)*