

~~HUSBAND'S VOICE. What's the matter—don't you want me to kiss you?~~

~~WIFE'S VOICE. Not like that.~~

~~HUSBAND'S VOICE. Like what?~~

~~WIFE'S VOICE. That silly kiss!~~

~~HUSBAND'S VOICE. Silly kiss?~~

~~WIFE'S VOICE. You look so silly—oh I know what's coming when you look like that—and kiss me like that—don't—go away—~~

End of offstage voices.

MOTHER. He's a decent man, isn't he?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know. How should I know—yet.

MOTHER. He's a Vice-President—of course he's decent.

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't care whether he's decent or not. I won't marry him.

MOTHER. But you just said you wanted to marry—

YOUNG WOMAN. Not him.

MOTHER. Who?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don't know—I don't know—I haven't found him yet!

MOTHER. You talk like you're crazy!

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma—tell me!

MOTHER. Tell you what?

YOUNG WOMAN. Tell me—*(Words suddenly pouring out.)*
Your skin oughtn't to curl—ought it—when he just comes near you—ought it? That's wrong, ain't it? You don't get over that, do you—ever, do you or do you? How is it, Ma—do you?

MOTHER. Do you what?

YOUNG WOMAN. Do you get used to, it—so after a while it doesn't matter? Or don't you? Does it always matter? You ought to be in love, oughtn't you, Ma? You must be in love, mustn't you, Ma? That changes everything, doesn't it—or does it? Maybe if you just like a person it's all right—is it? When he puts a hand on me, my blood turns cold. But your blood oughtn't to run cold, ought it? His hands are—his hands are fat, Ma—don't you see—his hands are fat—and they sort of press—and they're fat—don't you see?—Don't you see?

MOTHER *(stares at her bewildered)*. See what?

YOUNG WOMAN *(rushing on)*. I've always thought I'd find somebody—somebody young—and—and attractive—with wavy hair—wavy hair—I always think of children with curls—little curls all over their head—somebody young—and attractive—that I'd like—that I'd love—But I haven't found anybody like that yet—I haven't found anybody—I've hardly known anybody—you'd never let me go with anybody and—

MOTHER. Are you throwing it up to me that—

YOUNG WOMAN. No—let me finish, Ma! No—let me finish! I just mean I've never found anybody—anybody—nobody's ever asked me—till now—he's the only man that's ever asked me—And I suppose I got to marry somebody—all girls do—

MOTHER. Nonsense.

YOUNG WOMAN. But, I can't go on like this, Ma—I don't know why—but I can't—it's like I'm all tight inside—sometimes I feel like I'm stifling!—You don't know—stifling. *(Walks up and down.)* I can't go on like this much longer—going to work—coming home—going to work—coming home—I can't—Sometimes in the subway I think I'm going to die—sometimes even in the office if something don't happen—I got to do something—I don't know—it's like I'm all tight inside.

MOTHER. You're crazy.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, Ma!

MOTHER. You're crazy!

YOUNG WOMAN. Ma—if you tell me that again I'll kill you! I'll kill you!

MOTHER. If that isn't crazy!

YOUNG WOMAN. I'll kill you—Maybe I am crazy—I don't know. Sometimes I think I am—the thoughts that go on in my mind—sometimes I think I am—I can't help it if I am—I do the best I can—I do the best I can and I'm nearly crazy! *(MOTHER rises and sits.)* Go away! Go away! You don't know anything about anything! And you haven't got any pity—no pity—you just take it for granted that I go to work every day—and come home every night and bring my money every week—you just take it for granted—you'd let me go on forever—and never feel any pity—

Offstage radio—a voice singing a sentimental mother song or popular home song. MOTHER *begins to cry—crosses to chair left—sits.*

Oh Ma—forgive me! Forgive me!

MOTHER. My own child! To be spoken to like that by my own child!

YOUNG WOMAN. I didn't mean it, Ma – I didn't mean it! (*She goes to her mother – crosses to left.*)

MOTHER (*clinging to her hand*). You're all I've got in the world – and you don't want me – you want to kill me.

YOUNG WOMAN. No – no, I don't, Ma! I just said that!

MOTHER. I've worked for you and slaved for you!

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, Ma.

MOTHER. I brought you into the world.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, Ma.

MOTHER. You're flesh of my flesh and –

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, Ma, I know.

MOTHER. And –

YOUNG WOMAN. You rest, now, Ma – you rest –

MOTHER (*struggling*). I got to do the dishes.

YOUNG WOMAN. I'll do the dishes – You listen to the music, Ma – I'll do the dishes.

MA sits. YOUNG WOMAN crosses to behind screen. Takes a pair of rubber gloves and begins to put them on. The MOTHER sees them – they irritate her – there is a return of her characteristic mood.

MOTHER. Those gloves! I've been washing dishes for forty years and I never wore gloves! But my lady's hands! My lady's hands!

YOUNG WOMAN. Sometimes you talk to me like you're jealous, Ma.

MOTHER. Jealous?

YOUNG WOMAN. It's my hands got me a husband.

MOTHER. A husband? So you're going to marry him now!

YOUNG WOMAN. I suppose so.

MOTHER. If you ain't the craziest –

The scene blacks out. In the darkness, the mother song goes into jazz – very faint – as the scene lights into

EPISODE THREE

Honeymoon

Scene: hotel bedroom: bed, chair, mirror. The door at the back now opens on a bathroom; the window, on a dancing casino opposite.

Sounds: a small jazz band (violin, piano, saxophone – very dim, at first, then louder).

Characters

YOUNG WOMAN
HUSBAND
BELLBOY

Offstage: seen but not heard, MEN and WOMEN dancing in couples.

At rise: set dark. BELLBOY, HUSBAND, and YOUNG WOMAN enter. BELLBOY carries luggage. He switches on light by door. Stop music.

HUSBAND: Well, here we are. (*Throws hat on bed; BELLBOY puts luggage down, crosses to window; raises shade three inches. Opens window three inches. Sounds of jazz music louder. Offstage.*)

BELLBOY (*comes to man for tip*). Anything else, Sir? (*Receives tip. Exits.*)

HUSBAND. Well, here we are.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, here we are.

HUSBAND. Aren't you going to take your hat off – stay a while? (*YOUNG WOMAN looks around as though looking for a way out, then takes off her hat, pulls the hair automatically around her ears.*) This is all right, isn't it? Huh? Huh?

YOUNG WOMAN. It's very nice.

HUSBAND. Twelve bucks a day! They know how to soak you in these pleasure resorts. Twelve bucks! (*Music.*) Well – we'll get our money's worth out of it all right. (*Goes toward bathroom.*)