

LINDA. You louse. You...

BIFF. Right! Now you hit it right on the nose! *(He gets up, throws flowers in wastebasket at R. of refrigerator.)* The scum of the earth, and you're looking at him!

LINDA. Get out of here!

BIFF. I gotta talk to the boss, Mom. Where is he?

LINDA. You're not going near him. Get out of this house!

BIFF. *(With absolute assurance, determination.)* No. We're gonna have an abrupt conversation, him and me...

LINDA. You're not talking to him...

*(Hammering is heard from outside the house, off R. Biff turns toward noise. Linda is suddenly pleading.)* Will you please leave him alone?

BIFF. What's he doing out there?

LINDA. *(Broken-hearted.)* He's planting the garden!

BIFF. Now?!... Oh, my God!

*(Biff moves outside L. on to porch, Linda following as Willy from U. R. walks down C. carrying a flashlight, a hoe, and a handful of packets of seeds. Willy raps top of hoe sharply to hold it firm. Biff crosses out U. L., then Willy moves from R. end of pit L. to C., measuring off distance with his foot. He holds flashlight to look at seed packets, reading off instructions.)*

WILLY. Carrots...quarter-inch apart; rows...one-foot rows. *(He measures it off.)* One foot. *(Puts down package and measures off.)*

Beets. *(Puts down another package and measures again.)* Lettuce...

*(Linda stands in door facing L. Willy puts down package.)* One foot...

*(Willy breaks off as Ben appears U. R., smoking cigarette, carrying umbrella, moves slowly down R.)*

What a proposition, ts, ts!...terrific, terrific! 'Cause she's suffered, Ben, the woman has suffered. You understand me? A man can't go out the way he came in, Ben, a man has got to add up to something. You can't, you can't...

*(Ben moves toward him as though to interrupt.)*

You gotta consider, now...don't answer so quick...remember, it's a guaranteed twenty-thousand-dollar proposition. *(Crosses R. to Ben.)*

*(Puts seeds in L. pants pocket.)* Now look, Ben, I want you to go through the ins and outs of this thing with me. I've got nobody to talk to, Ben, and the woman has suffered, you hear me? *(Puts flashlight in R. pants pocket.)*

BEN. *(Arm around Willy's shoulder, now still, considering.)* What's the proposition?

WILLY. It's twenty thousand dollars on the barrelhead; guaranteed, gilt-edged, you understand?

BEN. You don't want to make a fool of yourself. They might not honor the policy.

WILLY. How can they dare refuse? Didn't I work like a coolie to meet every premium on the nose? And now they don't pay off? Impossible!

BEN. It's called a cowardly thing, William.

WILLY. Why? Does it take more guts to stand here the rest of my life ringing up a zero?

BEN. *(Yielding.)* That's a point, William. *(He moves U.S., thinking, turns.)* And twenty thousand...that is something one can feel with the hand, it is there.

*(Willy kneels, puts hoe down, faces front, planting. Ben slowly crosses D.)*

WILLY. *(Now assured, with rising power.)* Oh, Ben, that's the whole beauty of it! I see it like a diamond, shining in the dark, hard and rough that I can pick up and touch in my hand. Not like...like an appointment! This would not be another damned-fool appointment, Ben, and it changes all the aspects; because he thinks I'm nothing, see, and so he spites me, but the funeral... *(Rises, straightens up now; with vengeance.)* Ben, that funeral will be massive! They'll come from Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire...all the old-timers with the strange license plates—that boy will be thunderstruck, Ben, because he never realized—I am known! Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey—I am known, Ben, and he'll see it with his eyes once and for all; he'll see what I am, Ben! *(Crosses R. to edge of pit.)* He's in for a shock, that boy!

BEN. *(Coming to R. edge of garden.)* He'll call you a coward...

WILLY. (*Sudden fear.*) No, that would be terrible!

BEN. Yes. And a damned fool...

WILLY. No, no, he mustn't. I won't have that! (*He is broken and desperate.*)

BEN. He'll hate you, William.

(*Music cue no. 15.*)

WILLY. Oh, Ben, how do we get back to all the great times? Used to be so full of light, and comradeship, the sleigh-riding in winter, and the ruddiness on his cheeks; and always some kind of good news coming up, always something nice coming up ahead; and never even let me carry the valises in the house, and simonizing, simonizing that little red car! Why, why can't I give him something and not have him hate me?

BEN. (*Crosses U. to trellis by entrance U. R.*) Let me think about it. (*He glances at his watch. Willy crosses U. a few steps.*) I still have a little time. Remarkable proposition, but you've got to be sure you're not making a fool of yourself.

(*He has drifted off upstage and is out of sight. Biff comes down from L. Music fades out.*)

BIFF. Pop...

(*Suddenly conscious of Biff, Willy turns and looks at him, then crosses D., begins picking up packages of seeds in confusion.*)

WILLY. (*Moving from C. to R. end of pit.*) Where the hell is that seed? (*Indignantly.*) You can't see nothing out here, they boxed in the whole goddam neighborhood! (*Puts seeds in pocket.*)

(*Biff crosses D. to L. of Willy. Linda stands on porch.*)

BIFF. I'm saying goodbye to you, Pop. (*Willy looks at him, silent, unable to move.*) I'm not coming back any more.

WILLY. You're not going to see Oliver tomorrow?

BIFF. I've got no appointment, Dad.

WILLY. He put his arm around you and you've got no appointment?

BIFF. Pop, get this now, will you? Every time I've left it's been a fight that sent me out of here. Today I realized something about myself and I tried to explain it to you and I... I think I'm just not

smart enough to make any sense out of it for you. To hell with whose fault it is or anything like that! (*He takes Willy's arm.*) Let's just wrap it up, heh? Come on in, we'll tell Mom. (*Gently tries to pull Willy to L.*)

WILLY. (*With guilt.*) No, I don't want to see her.

BIFF. Come on...

(*He pulls again, but Willy pulls away from him. Crosses L. below past Biff, picks up hoe.*)

WILLY. (*With a high nervousness.*) No—no, I don't want to see her. (*Biff crosses above Willy, trying to stop him. Tries to look into Willy's face, as if to find the answer there.*)

BIFF. Why don't you want to see her?

WILLY. (*Crosses above past Biff; more harshly now.*) Don't bother me, will you?

BIFF. (*At R. of Willy, holding him by the arms. Shakes Willy. Linda crosses D. to L. of Willy.*) What do you mean, you don't want to see her!? You don't want them calling you yellow, do you? This isn't your fault, it's me, I'm a bum. Now come inside.

(*Willy pulls against him, silent. Linda, behind Willy, puts hands on his arms.*)

LINDA. Did you plant, dear?

(*Willy pulls away and enters kitchen. She tries to follow him, but Biff stops her in front of porch. Willy crosses, puts hoe by door to bedroom, seeds and flashlight on shelf. Happy comes downstairs in his shirt sleeves.*)

BIFF. All right, we had it out. I'm going and I'm not writing any more.

(*Linda is going to Willy, who has crossed to D. R. of kitchen. Biff enters kitchen, closes door.*)

LINDA. I think that's the best way, dear. 'Cause there's no use drawing it out, you'll just never get along.

(*She wipes Willy's hand with her handkerchief. Willy doesn't respond. Happy crosses to refrigerator.*)

BIFF. People ask where I am and what I'm doing, you don't know,