

(Howard picks up cigar from ashtray, gets lighter from pocket.)

WILLY. That really is...

HOWARD. Wait a minute! The next is my wife. (*Lights cigar. They wait.*)

HOWARD'S VOICE. "Go on, say something." (*Pause.*) "Well, you gonna talk?"

VOICE OF WIFE. "I can't think of anything."

HOWARD'S VOICE. "Well, talk—it's turning."

HOWARD. (*Snaps it off.*) That was my wife.

WILLY. That is a wonderful machine...

HOWARD. (*With a challenging tone.*) I tell ya, Willy—I'm gonna take my camera, and my handsaw, and all my hobbies and out they go. This is the most fascinating relaxation I ever found.

WILLY. I think I'll get one myself.

HOWARD. Sure, they're only a hundred and a half. You can't do without it. Supposing you wanna hear Jack Benny, see? But you can't be home at that hour. So you tell the maid to turn the radio on when Jack Benny comes on, and this automatically goes on with the radio! (*Continues without interruption.*)

WILLY. And when you come home you...?

HOWARD. You can come home twelve o'clock, one o'clock, any time you like, and you get yourself a Coke and sit yourself down, throw the switch and there's Jack Benny's program in the middle of the night!

WILLY. I'm definitely going to get one. Because lots of time I'm on the road, and I think to myself, what I must be missing on the radio!

HOWARD. Don't you have a radio in the car?

WILLY. Well, yeah, but whoever thinks of turning it on?

HOWARD. Say, aren't you supposed to be in Boston?

WILLY. (*Gets chair off L., puts it L. end of table.*) That's what I want to talk to you about, Howard. You got a minute?

HOWARD. (*Crosses to above table.*) What happened? What're you doing here?

WILLY. Well...

HOWARD. (*Not concerned with Willy's well-being.*) You didn't crack up again, did you?

WILLY. Oh, no, no...

HOWARD. Geez, you had me worried there for a minute. What's the trouble?

WILLY. (*Sits on chair, puts hat under it.*) Well...tell you the truth, Howard... I've come to the decision that I'd rather not travel any more.

HOWARD. Not travel! Well, what'll you do?

WILLY. (*Definite.*) Remember, Christmas time—when you had the party here? You said you'd try to think of some spot for me here in town.

HOWARD. (*Incredulous.*) With us?

WILLY. Well, sure.

HOWARD. (*Businesslike—drops head.*) Oh, yeah, yeah... I remember. Well... I couldn't think of anything for you, Willy.

WILLY. I tell ya, Howard...the kids are all grown up, y'know... I don't need much any more. If I could take home...well, sixty-five dollars a week, I could swing it.

HOWARD. (*Crosses R. few steps.*) Yeah, but, Willy, see I...

WILLY. I tell ya why, Howard...speaking frankly and between the two of us, y'know?—I'm just a little tired. (*Starting to resent having to grovel.*)

HOWARD. (*Crosses to R. of table.*) Oh, I could understand that, Willy. (*Businesslike.*) But you're a road man, Willy, and we do a road business. (*Willy rises.*) We've only got a half dozen salesmen on the floor here.

WILLY. (*Crosses to above table.*) God knows, Howard, I never asked a favor of any man. But I was with the firm when your father used to carry you in here on his arms...

HOWARD. (*Embarrassed and irritated.*) I know that, Willy, but...

WILLY. Your father came to me the day you were born and asked me what I thought of the name of Howard, may he rest in peace! (*Crosses to L. end of table.*)

HOWARD. I appreciate that, Willy, if I had a spot I'd slam you

right in, but I just don't have a single solitary spot. (*Turns, crosses few steps R. Pause.*)

WILLY. (*With increasing anger; swallowing his pride.*) Howard, all I need to set my table is fifty dollars a week.

HOWARD. But where am I going to put you, kid?

WILLY. Look, it isn't a question of whether I can sell merchandise, is it?

HOWARD. No, but it's a business, kid, and everybody's gotta pull his own weight.

WILLY. (*Desperately.*) Just let me tell you a story, Howard...

HOWARD. (*Crosses to table.*) 'Cause you gotta admit, business is business.

WILLY. (*Sits chair L. of table.*) Business is definitely business, but just listen for a minute. You don't understand this. When I was a boy...eighteen, nineteen, I was already on the road. And there was a question in my mind as to whether selling had a future for me. Because in those days I had a yearning to go to Alaska. See, there were three gold strikes in one month in Alaska, and I felt like going out; just for the ride, you might say.

HOWARD. (*Barely interested.*) Is that so? (*Sits on table R. of recorder.*)

WILLY. (*The effect of this speech is to put Howard in his place.*) 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 his room, y'understand, put on his green velvet slippers—I'll never forget—and pick 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. (*Rises.*) 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. (*Angry; 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...or rather I was in the office here...it was right over this desk...and he put his hand on my shoulder...

HOWARD. Willy, I gotta see some people. Pull yourself together... (*Goes off L.*)

WILLY. (*Facing R.*) Pull myself together! What the hell did I say to him! My God, I was yelling at him! How *could* I!...?

(*On Howard's exit the light on his chair grows very bright and strange. [Music cue no. 10B.] Now Willy breaks off, turns staring at it. Light occupies the chair, animating it. He approaches this chair, standing*