

Mrs. Jones:

Be careful! She's comin'!

(Mrs. Maurant enters from the house.)

Mrs. Maurant:

Goodness, ain't it hot!

Mrs. Jones:

I feel like a wet dish-rag.

Mrs. Maurant:

I would have liked to go to the Park concert tonight, if Rose had got home in time. My husband don't care for music. But Rose is more like me— just crazy about it.

Mrs. Jones:

Ain't she home yet?

Mrs. Maurant:

No, I think maybe she had to work overtime.

Mrs. Jones:

Well, all mine ever comes home for is to sleep.

Mrs. Fiorentino:

The young girls nowadays—!

Mrs. Olsen:

My sister was writin' me in Schweden is same ting.

Mrs. Jones:

It ain't only the young ones either.

(The Olsen baby is heard crying in the cellar)

Olsen: (From the cellar)

Ol-gal!

(A man in a dinner jacket crosses from left to right)

Mrs. Olsen:

I betcha' the baby she's cryin' again.

(She exits to the cellar)

Mrs. Jones:

What them foreigners don't know about bringin' up babies—

Mrs. Fiorentino:

Foreigners know joost as much as other people, Mrs. Jones.

Mrs. Jones:

Oh, I'm not talkin' about the Joimans. You Joimans is different— more like the Irish. What I mean is all them squareheads an' Polacks an'—

(Sam enters from the house with books under his arm)

Sam:

Good evening.

Mrs. Fiorentino:

Goot evening.

Mrs. Jones:

Evenin'.

Mrs. Maurant:

Hello, Sam.

Sam:

Hello, Mrs. Maurant (Hesitantly) Is Rose upstairs?

Mrs. Maurant:

Why no, she's not home from work yet.

Sam: (Disappointed)

Oh! It's just that I thought she might want to walk around to the library with me.

Mrs. Maurant:

Goodness, Sam, are you off to the library again?

Sam:

Well, I've finished these, so I've got to get myself something to read.

Mrs. Maurant:

I used to love reading, too, but lately— well, I just seem to have got out of the habit.

Sam: (Earnestly)

I wouldn't know how to get along without reading. It means more to me, than food or sleep or anything. I've read at least one book every day, since I was ten.

(Breaking off, self-consciously)

Well, if you'll excuse me, I've got to go, or the library will be closing. (He starts left and exits)

Mrs. Maurant:

I'll tell Rose you were asking for her.

Sam:

Thank you. (exits)

Mrs. Maurant: (To the others)

He's such a nice boy— so quiet and gentle.

Mrs. Jones:

Well, he certainly can't have much on his mind, if he's got time for all that readin'!

Mrs. Maurant:

Oh, I think it's wonderful to have something like that, to put your heart and soul into. Rose says he's just about the brightest boy she ever met and that she's sure some day he'll

(Buchanan enters with bag of oranges, from stage right)

Buchanan:

Good evening, ladies.

The Women:

Oh, good evening, Mr. Buchanan.

Buchanan:

Well, I hope it's hot enough for you?

Mrs. Maurant:

How's your wife feeling in this weather?

Buchanan:

She don't complain about the weather. But she's afraid to go out of the house. Thinks maybe she wouldn't get back in time, in case— you know.

Mrs. Jones:

I was the same way, with my Vincent. But with Mae, I was up and out till the very last minute.

Mrs. Fiorentino:

Mr. Buchanan, do you think she would like some nice minestrone, good Italian vegetable soup?

Buchanan:

Much obliged, Mrs. Fiorentino, but she can't seem to keep anything on her stomach. That's why I ran out to get her an orange. I'm sort of jittery, I guess. I'll sure be glad when we get this over with.

Mrs. Jones:

Honest, the way the men carry on, you'd think it was them that was havin' the baby.

Buchanan:

Well, in a way, I think it's harder
for the man
(The women react)
. . . . no, I mean it