

It's hard and it's cold and I want to be warm and soft with my children ... Let me have my babies, Momma. Because I have to love somebody. I have to love someone who'll love me back before I die ... Give me that, Momma, and I promise you, you'll never worry about being alone ... Because you'll have us ... Me and my husband and my babies ... Louie, tell her how wonderful that would be ... Gert, wouldn't that make her happy? ... Momma? ... Please say yes ... I need you to say yes ... Please?

(It is deathly silent. No one has moved. Finally, GRANDMA gets up slowly, walks to her room, goes in and quietly closes the door.)

BELLA. *(Looks at the OTHERS.)* Hold me ... Somebody please hold me.

*(GERT gets up and puts her arms around BELLA and rocks her gently.
We go to BLACK.)*

ACT II

Scene 3

ARTY. *(VO.)* Dear Pop ... Things are really bad here. Really, *really* bad. I wish you were home. Even just for a weekend. Last night I cried for you ... and for Mom ... but Jay was afraid Grandma would hear, so he stuck a sock in

my mouth. I miss you and love you. Your son, Arty ...
Not Artur.

*(Sunday, the following week. About midday.
ARTY is seated at table, writing in his notebook. JAY
stands looking out the window.)*

JAY. Where do you think Aunt Bella could be? Missing
for two nights, somewhere out there in the city. I'm
worried.

ARTY. Maybe Uncle Louie took her with him.

JAY. If he didn't take me, you think he's going to take
Aunt Bella and her forty-year-old usher from the Home? ...

*(The door to Grandma's room opens and AUNT GERT
comes out.)*

GERT. I'm going now. I think Momma feels better
since—*(A breath.)*—Aunt Bella called me.

JAY. No idea where she is?

GERT. Yes. *(Moves away from Grandma's door.)* ...
She's at my house.

JAY. *Your* house?

GERT. Shhh. She doesn't want Momma to know.

ARTY. You mean she's been there all the time?

(GERT nods "yes.")

JAY. Is she ever coming back?

GERT. She's meeting with that man today ... We'll
know soon.

ARTY. Do you think they'll get married?

GERT. Who knows? ... She's been crying for—(*Sucks in.*)—two days now. I'm sorry. It's hard for me to talk.

JAY. Isn't there anything the doctors can do about that, Aunt Gert?

GERT. I don't have it that much. It's mostly—(*Sucks in.*)—when I come here.

JAY. Oh.

GERT. You boys take care of Grandma now. If Bella doesn't come back you're all she has.

JAY. I know.

GERT. If you run into trouble, do you have my number?

JAY. I don't think so.

GERT. It's Westchester seven—(*Sucks in.*)—four-six-six-nine.

ARTY. What?

GERT. Westchester seven—(*Sucks in.*)—four-six—

JAY. I have it! I have it!

GERT. Goodbye, darlings. Take care. I love you. (*SHE goes, closing the front door.*)

ARTY. It could be worse. Suppose we were left with *her* instead?

JAY. That's not funny.

ARTY. Yes, it is.

JAY. All right. It's funny. But I feel sorry for her. I feel sorry for this whole family ... Even Grandma ... Don't you?

(*ARTY looks at JAY, says nothing.*)

JAY. Well, I do. And you should, too.