

GRANDMA. (*Holds up cane.*) No! I'll just say someting ... I think about dis inside. Because anger hass been in me for a long time ... Vy should I do dis? ... Vot do I owe your father? ... Ven did he ever come around here after he married your mother? I never saw him ... Because she turned him against me. His own mother ... She didn't like me, I didn't like her. I'm not afraid to tell da truth either ... I don't vish anybody's death. Maybe she vas a goot mother to you, may she rest in peace, to me she vas nothing ... And your father vas afraid of her. Dot's vy he stopped coming here. You're big boys now, how many times haff I seen you since you were born? Four, five times? ... Dose are not grandchildren. Dose are strangers ... And now he comes to me for help? ... He cried in my bedroom. Not like a man, like a child he cried. He vas always dot vay ... I buried a husband and two children and I didn't cry. I didn't haff time. Bella vas born vit scarlet fever and she didn't talk until she vas five years old, and I didn't cry ... Your father's sister, Gertrude, can't talk vitout choking und I didn't cry ... Und maybe one day, they'll find Louie dead in da strect und I von't cry ... Dot's how I vas raised. To be strong. Ven dey beat us vit sticks in Germany ven ve vere children, I didn't cry ... You don't survive in dis world vitout being like steel. Your father vants you to grow up, first let *him* grow up ... Ven he learns to be a father, like I learned to be a mother, den he'll be a man. Den he von't need my help ... You think I'm cruel? You tink I'm a terrible person? Dot a grandmother should say tings like dis? I can see it in your faces vot you tink ... Goot, it'll make you hard. It'll make you strong. Den you'll be able, to take care of yourselves vitout *anybody's* help ... So dot's my decision. Maybe one day you'll tank

me for it. (*SHE gets up.*) Give da boys an ice cream cone, Bella. Den come inside and finish my legs.

(*SHE starts for the bedroom. THEY ALL stand, stunned. BELLA, who has remained seated, seems impervious to this.*)

EDDIE. (*Without anger.*) ... You're right, Momma. I am the weak one. I am the crybaby ... Always was. When you wouldn't pick me up and hug me as a child, I cried ... When my brother and sister died, I cried ... And I still haven't stopped crying since Evelyn died ... But you're wrong about one thing. She never turned me against you. She turned me towards *her* ... To loving, to caring, to holding someone when they needed holding ... I'm sorry about not bringing the boys out here more. Maybe the reason I didn't was because I was afraid they'd learn something here that I tried to forget ... Maybe they just learned it today ... I'm sorry I bothered you on your Sunday. I'm sorry I imposed on your rest. I'm sorry about what they did to you as a child in Berlin. I'm sure it was terrible. But this is Yonkers, Momma. I'm not angry at you for turning me and the boys down. I'm angry at myself for not knowing better ... Take care of yourself, Momma ... Never mind the ice cream cones, Bella. I used up all my obligations for this year. (*HE crosses to the door.*) Come on, boys. We're going.

(*JAY and ARTY are too dumbstruck to move, to have been in the middle of all this.*)

EDDIE. ... I said let's go.