

ARTY. Why would she keep money under ice cream?
We use those cartons up every week.

JAY. Not the boysenberry. Boysenberry sits there for months. Nobody's ever going to look under boysenberry.

ARTY. I can't believe we're stealing money from our own grandmother.

(THEY put out the FLASHLIGHT and turn to go to sleep ... A moment passes ... then the front door opens. We see a MAN in a hat enter, closing the door, then slowly, quietly cross towards the window. HE carries a small black bag.)

JAY. Who's that? *(Turning flashlight on MAN.)*

MAN. Get that light outa my face and go back to sleep, kid.

JAY. There's nothing here to steal, mister. I swear.

MAN. Is that you, Jay?

JAY. Yeah. Who are you?

MAN. It's Uncle Louie.

JAY. Uncle Louie? No kidding? ... Arty! It's Uncle Louie.

ARTY. Uncle Louie? ... Really? Hi, Uncle Louie.

LOUIE. Is that Arty?

ARTY. Yeah. It's Arty ... Hi, Uncle Louie.

LOUIE. Wait a second. *(LOUIE turns on the lamp. LOUIE KURNITZ is about 36 years old. HE wears a double-breasted suit, with a hanky in the breast pocket, black pointy shoes, a dark blue shirt and a loud tie. HE also wears a fedora hat and carries a small, black satchel, not unlike a doctor's bag.)* Whaddya know? Look at you! Couple a big guys now, ain't you? ... You don't come

around for a while and you grow up on me ... Come here. Come on. I want a hug. You heard me. Move it.

(The BOYS look at each other, not thinking LOUIE was the hugging type. THEY quickly climb out of bed and go to him. HE puts his arms around both their shoulders and pulls them in to him. HE looks at JAY.)

LOUIE. Picture of your mother. Pretty woman, your mother ... *(To ARTY.)* And you. You look like a little bull terrier. Is that what you are, a bull terrier? *(HE musses Arty's hair.)*

ARTY. Yeah, I guess so.

LOUIE. *(Fakes a punch at Jay's mid-section.)* Hey, watch it! What are you now, a middleweight or what? Who's been beefin' you up?

JAY. Aunt Bella. She's a good cook.

LOUIE. *(Taking off his hat.)* And a couple a midnight trips down to the ice cream freezer, heh? Diggin' into the boysenberry with your flashlight? ... That's breakin' and enterin', kid. Two to five years.

JAY. You saw me?

LOUIE. *(Crosses to Grandma's door and listens.)* I been down there since Ma closed the store.

JAY. Sitting in the dark?

LOUIE. Yeah. Waitin' for her to go to sleep. I wasn't in no mood for long conversations.

JAY. *(Looks at ARTY, then at LOUIE.)* I just took a finger-full, that's all. I love boysenberry.

LOUIE. Big mistake, kid. Mom reads fingerprints. She'll nail you in the morning.

JAY. Are you serious?

LOUIE. Get outa here. What are you? A couple a pushovers? Like your old man ... You think your pop and I didn't do that when we were kids? That was the beauty part. Never took nothin' durin' the day. A ton a ice cream, a store full a candy, anything we wanted. Never took nothin' ... But as soon as Ma let her braids down and turned out the lights, we were down there lappin' up the cream and meowin' like cats ... Ain't that the way? It's only fun when there's a chance a gettin' caught. Nothin' sweeter than danger, boys, am I right?

JAY. I guess so.

LOUIE. Damn right.

ARTY. I didn't know Pop was like that.

LOUIE. Yeah, well, he was no good at it anyway. Ma knew what was goin' on. She could tell if there was salt missin' from a pretzel ... But she wouldn't say nothin'. She'd come up from the store with the milk, siddown for breakfast, knowin' that two scoops of everything was missin', and she'd just stare at you ... right into your eyeballs, pupil to pupil ... never blinkin' ... Her eyes looked like two District Attorneys ... and Eddie couldn't take the pressure. He'd always crack. Tears would start rollin' down his cheeks like a wet confession ... and whack, he'd get that big German hand right across the head ... But not me. I'd stare her right back until her eyelids started to weigh ten pounds each ... And she'd turn away from me, down for the count ... And you know what? She loved it ... because I knew how to take care of myself ... Yeah, me and Ma loved to put on the gloves and go the distance. *(HE takes off jacket, puts it on back of the chair.)*

JAY. Nobody told us you were coming over tonight.

LOUIE. Nobody knew. It was even a surprise for me. I gotta stay here a couple days, maybe a week. They're paintin' my apartment.

ARTY. You didn't know they were going to paint your apartment?

LOUIE. They just found the right color paint tonight. Hard to find with the war on. *(HE takes off his jacket, revealing a holster with a pistol in it.)* So, you kids been keepin' your nose outa trouble?

(The BOYS look at the gun, mesmerized.)

JAY. Huh?

LOUIE. How's Pop? Ma tells me he's in the junk business. Is that right, Arty?

ARTY. *(Looking at the gun.)* Huh?

LOUIE. Sellin' scrap iron or somethin', ain't that it?

BOTH BOYS. Huh?

LOUIE. Whatsamatter? *(Looks at the gun.)* This? *(HE smiles.)* Hey, don't worry about it. *(Takes it out of holster.)* I'm holdin' it for a friend. This policeman I know went on vacation, he didn't want to lose it. They have to pay for it when they lose it ... *(HE puts it in his pants, under the belt, just over the fly.)* Also, the ladies like it. You dance with 'em close, gives 'em a thrill. *(HE winks at them.)*

JAY. Is it ... is it loaded?

LOUIE. Gee, I hope not. If it went off, I'd have to become a ballerina. *(HE winks at BOYS. HE hangs the gun and holster on a chair, comes back and resumes getting undressed.)* Does your pop ever send you some loose change once in a while?