

ACT TWO

"A" is propped up in bed. (Actually, a dummy with an exact life mask of the actress playing A; same costume as A's in Act One. We must believe it to be A; a breathing mask over nose and mouth helps this.)

Some silence. B and C enter, opposite from their exits at the end of Act One and dressed differently from the way they were. C seats herself. B goes to the bed, looks at "A."

- B. (General.) No change.
- C. (Wistful.) No?
- B. That's the way it goes.
- C. (Shudders.) Yes?
- B. (Grim.) Something to look forward to. (No response from C. Continued.) No?
- C. (Hard.) I don't want to talk about it; I don't want to think about it. Let me alone.
- B. (Sharp.) It's worth thinking about — even at your age.
- C. Let me alone!
- B. (Wandering about; touching things.) It's got to be some way ... stroke, cancer or, as the lady said, "heading in to the mountain with a jet." No? (No response. Continued.) Or ... walking off a curb into a sixty-mile-an-hour wall ...
- C. Stop it!
- B. Or ... even worse; think about this ... home alone in the evening, servants off, him out, at the Club, sitting home alone, the window jimmied, they get in, little cat feet and all, find you, sitting there in the upstairs sitting room ...
- C. I said: stop it!
- B. (Smiles.) ... find me sitting there in the upstairs sitting room, going over invitations, or whatever ... bills; come up behind me, slit my throat, me thinking, Oh, my God, my throat's being slit, if that, if there's time for that.
- C. (Animal growl of protest.) Arghhhhhhhh!
- B. (Tranquil.) I'm almost done. Or I hear them ... you hear

them, turn around, see them — how many? Two? Three? — fall apart, start screaming, so they have to slit your throat, my throat, though they may not have planned it that way. All that blood on the Chinese rug. My, my.

- C. (Pause; curious.) Chinese rug?
- B. (Very natural.) Yes, beige, with rose embroidery all around the edges. We get it at auction.
- C. I wouldn't know.
- B. (Momentary surprise.) No; of course not; you wouldn't. You will, though — the rug, I mean. Clearly nobody slits your throat, or mine, for that matter. (Considers it.) Might be better.
- C. (Rue and helplessness.) You have things to tell me, I suppose.
- B. Oh, I certainly do. But, then again, I don't know everything either, do I? (Gestures towards "A".)
- C. (She looks, too.) I'll do a will; I'll do some paper won't let me go on if I get like that.
- B. There aren't any ... weren't any then, I tried. You can't get your way in this world. (A enters during this next, from left. A is dressed in a lovely, lavender dress; string gone.)
- C. There must be one. You have your way in everything and then you can't at the last! There must be!
- A. There must be what? (She is thoroughly rational during this Act. B and C are not surprised to see her.)
- C. A living will.
- A. (Observing "A".) I was going to, but then I forgot, or it's slipped my mind, or something. He kept saying, Make one! He has one for himself, he says. I meant to; nothing much to do about it now. Any change?
- B. No, we're ... just as we were; no change.
- A. I wonder how long this'll go on. I hope it's quick. What's her name took six years; not a move, not a blink, hooked up, breathed for, pissed for.
- B. Do I know her?
- A. No; after your time, so to speak.
- B. A-ha.
- A. A lot of money — a lot. The kids — hah! Fifty the young-