

# NORA & LAURIE

LAURIE. It's my room as much as yours. I don't have to leave if I don't want to.  
NORA. Do you have to stare at me? Can't I have any privacy?

LAURIE. I'm staring into space. I can't help it if your body interferes. (*There is a pause.*) I bet you're worried?

NORA. How would you feel if your entire life depended on what your Uncle Jack decided? . . . Oh, God, I wish Daddy were alive.

LAURIE. He would have said, "No." He was really strict.

NORA. Not with me. I mean he was strict but he was fair. If he said, "No," he always gave you a good reason. He always talked things out . . . I wish I could call him somewhere now and ask him what to do. One three minute call to heaven is all I ask.

LAURIE. Ask Mom. She talks to him every night.  
NORA. Who told you that?

LAURIE. She did. Every night before she goes to bed. She puts his picture on her pillow and talks to him. Then she pulls the blanket half way up the picture and goes to sleep.

NORA. She does not.

LAURIE. She does too. Last year when I had the big fever, I slept in bed with the both of them. In the middle of the night, my face fell on his picture and cut my nose.

NORA. She never told me that . . . That's weird.  
LAURIE. I can't remember him much anymore. I used to remember him real good but now he disappears a little bit every day.

NORA. Oh, God, he was so handsome. Always dressed so dapper, his shoes always shined. I always thought he should have been a movie star . . . like Gary

now because I'll be dead when you're reading it. . . . If I had my choice between a tryout with the Yankees—and actually seeing her bare breasts for two and a half seconds, I would have some serious thinking to do . . . (*KATE comes out of the kitchen.*)

KATE. I need bread.

EUGENE. (*turns quickly*) What?

KATE. I don't have enough bread. Run across the street to Greenblatt's and get a fresh rye bread.

EUGENE. Again? I went to the store this morning.

KATE. So you'll go again this afternoon.

EUGENE. I'm always going to the store. When I grow up, that's all I'll be trained to do, go to the store.

KATE. You don't want to go? . . . Never mind, I'll go.

EUGENE. *Don't do that!* Don't make me feel guilty. I'll go.

KATE. And get a quarter pound of butter.

EUGENE. I bought a quarter pound of butter this morning. Why don't you buy a half pound at a time?

KATE. And suppose the house burned down this afternoon? Why do I need an extra quarter pound of butter? (*She goes back into kitchen. EUGENE turns out to audience.*)

EUGENE. If my mother taught Logic in High School, this would be some weird country.

(*He runs out of the house to Greenblatt's. Our attention goes to the two girls upstairs in their room. NORA is crying. LAURIE sits on twin bed opposite her, watching.*)

LAURIE. So? . . . What are you going to do?

NORA. I don't know. Leave me alone. Don't just sit there watching me.

START

Cooper . . . only very short. Mostly I remember his pockets.

Laurie. His pockets?

Nora. When I was six or seven he always brought me home a little surprise. Like a Hershey or a top. He'd tell me to go get it in his coat pocket. So I'd run to the closet and put my hand in and it felt as big as a tent. I wanted to crawl in there and go to sleep. And there were all these terrific things in there, like Juicy Fruit gum or Spearment Life Savers and bits of cellophane and crumbled pieces of tobacco and movie stubs and nickels and pennies and rubber bands and paper clips and his grey suede gloves that he wore in the winter time.

Laurie. With the stitched lines down the fingers. I remember.

Nora. Then I found his coat in Mom's closet and I put my hand in the pocket. And everything was gone. It was emptied and dry cleaned and it felt cold . . . And that's when I knew he was really dead. (*thinks a moment*) Oh God, I wish we had our own place to live. I hate being a boarder. Listen, let's make a pact . . . The first one who makes enough money promises not to spend any on herself, but saves it all to get a house for you and me and Mom. That means every penny we get from now on, we save for the house . . . We can't buy anything. No lipstick or magazines or nail polish or bubble gum. *Nothing* . . . Is it a pact?

Laurie. (*thinks*) . . . What about movies?

Nora. Movies too.

Laurie. Starting when?

Nora. Starting today. Starting right now.

Laurie. . . . Can we start Sunday? I wanted to see *The Thin Man*.

Nora. Who's in it?

Laurie. William Powell and Myrna Loy.

Nora. Okay. Starting Sunday . . . I'll go with you Saturday.

(*They shake hands, sealing their "pact," then both lie down in their respective beds and stare up at the ceiling, contemplating their "future home."*)  
**EUGENE** returns with a paper bag containing milk and butter under his arm. He stops, pretends to be a quarterback awaiting the pass from center. The bread is his football.)

**EUGENE**. . . Sid Luckman of Columbia waits for the snap from center, the snow is coming down in a near blizzard, he gets it, he fades back, he passes . . . (*He acts all this out.*)—AND LUCKMAN'S GOT IT! LUCKMAN CATCHES HIS OWN PASS! HE'S ON THE 50, THE 40, THE 30, THE 20 . . . IT'S A TOUCHDOWN! Columbia wins! They defeat the mighty Crimson of Harvard, 13-12. Listen to that crowd! (*He roars like a crowd.*) . . . **KATE** comes out of the kitchen. *She yells out.*)

**KATE**. **EUGENE!** STOP THAT YELLING! I HAVE A CAKE IN THE OVEN! (*She goes back into kitchen.*)

(**STANLEY JEROME** appears. **STAN** is eighteen and a half. He wears slacks, a shirt and tie, a zip-up jacket and a cap.)

**STAN** (*half whisper*) Hey! Eugie!

**EUGENE**. Hi, Stan! (*to audience*) My brother, Stan. He's okay. You'll like him. (*to STAN*) What are you doing home so early?