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Samuel French Acting Edition

Enter Laughing

by Joseph Stein

Adapted from the Novel by Carl Reiner



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ENTER LAUGHING, a comedy by Joseph Stein, based on the novel by Carl Reiner, under the direction of Gene Saks, was presented by Morton Gottlieb at Henry Miller's Theatre, N.Y.C., March 13, 1963.

CHARACTERS

(In Order Of Their Appearance)

MR. FOREMAN	Irving Jacobson
DAVID KOLOWITZ	Alan Arkin
MARVIN	Michael J. Pollard
MISS B.	Meg Myles
PIKE	Charles Randall
DON BAXTER	Pierre Epstein
DON DARWIN	Walt Wanderman
MARLOWE	Alan Mowbray
ANGELA	Vivian Blaine
MOTHER	Sylvia Sidney
FATHER	Marty Greene
WANDA	Barbara Dana
WAITER	Shimen Ruskin
ROGER	Monroe Arnold
LAWYER	Tom Gorman

New York

The Mid-1930's

Late Spring

There will be one intermission.

ENTER LAUGHING

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Time: Summer, the mid-thirties.

Place: New York City.

Scene: A small, one-room, cluttered machine shop; NRA sign on wall.

At Rise: MR. FOREMAN, a middle-aged, harried Jewish man, is seated at D.S. bench, working at a machine. The phone rings. He rises, crosses to S.R. of U.S. bench.

FOREMAN. *(into phone)* Hello? ... Yes, this is Foreman Machines, who you want? ... Mr. Kolowitz. Mr. Kolowitz? You mean David. He ain't here. He's delivering.... Call back when he's here. *(Hangs up, abruptly. Back to D.S. bench and works, talks to self.)* Mr. Kolowitz! Every peanut in America is a mister; President Roosevelt is a mister, Albert Einstein is a mister and my foolish delivery boy is also a mister—America! *(Phone rings. Shouts at phone on second ring.)* What is it? What? *(Rises, picks up phone.)* Hello?

What? I told you he's delivering. I should tell him *who's* calling? Wanda? What kind name is Wanda? Are you a Jewish girl? ... All right. I'll tell him when he comes. (*Hangs up, to self.*) Mixed up with girls already.... (*Sits. Gets tag from drawer of D.S. table.*) A nothing, fourteen dollars and fifty cents a week, mixed up with girls.... (*Tying tag on machine.*) She ain't Jewish! ... Ah, why should I worry; let his father worry.... Everything's a mister! (*Shakes head, disbelievingly.*) America!

(*DAVID enters U.L., a tall, nice-looking boy.*)

DAVID. They paid by check, Mr. Foreman. Eighteen-fifty! (*Puts check on table. Crosses below table to S.R. wall.*)

FOREMAN. (*Takes check, formally, watches him cross, then speaks.*) Thank you, Mr. Kolowitz.

DAVID. (*Taking off jacket, hangs it on hook on S.R. wall.*) What?

FOREMAN. Tell me, David, you mixed up with a girl; she's not Jewish?

DAVID. (*smiling*) What?

FOREMAN. A girl called. She said she's Jewish, but she didn't sound Jewish.

DAVID. You *asked* her?

FOREMAN. (*rising S.R. of stool*) David, you listen to me. Don't get mixed up with girls yet. You're a young boy, a nothing.... I'm going to lunch. (*Takes off apron as he crosses U.S. to hook on C. wall S.R. of shelves. Hangs up apron; gets coat.*)

DAVID. (*Crosses to R. of table.*) What was her name?

FOREMAN. (*picking up check from table*) She told me, but I

forgot—Gertrude, I think.

DAVID. Wanda?

FOREMAN. That's right, Wanda. (*Crosses U.S. to door.*) If anybody calls, write it down. Always write down the name. (*Exits U.L., upstage of second portal.*)

DAVID. (*Waits for a few seconds, till FOREMAN is definitely gone; goes to phone.*) Operator, Tremont eight-oh-six-seven.

(*MARVIN enters. MARVIN is DAVID'S age; he is not too good-looking, and a little timid, unsure of himself. He admires DAVID, just this side of hero worship. He carries his lunch, wrapped in a newspaper.*)

DAVID. Hi, Marv.

MARVIN. Hi. (*Crossing to L. of table, gets chair from U.L., moves it to L. of table. Sits and eats.*)

DAVID. I'm calling Wanda. (*into phone*) Hello, Wanda? Did you call me? ... He told me.... Yeah, Marvin just came down. He's having his lunch.... Saturday night? Gee, I'd love to, Wanda, only my mother and father are visiting some relatives in Flatbush, and I've got to mind my stupid kid sister. Who's giving the dance? ... Well, listen, Wanda, maybe after the dance, you and me could get together and have a little tete-a-tete. (*imitating Ronald Coleman*) "It will be a far, far better thing that you and I will do on Saturday night than has ever been done before." ... Yes, Ronald Colman, that's right! ... Goodbye. (*Hangs up and moves chair from U.R. to S.R. of table.*)

MARVIN. Boy, the way you do those imitations. You're

great, you know that, Dave?

(*DAVID then goes into a Louis Armstrong routine in midst of which MARVIN says: "Louis Armstrong." At end of it he takes rag from bench and dabs face.*)

MARVIN. Great!

DAVID. I know. (*He sits R. of table.*)

MARVIN. And the way you talk to girls. Boy, I wish I had a steady girl, like you.

DAVID. You do?

MARVIN. I sure do. A steady girl, boy.

DAVID. I'll tell you, Marv, even though I got a steady girl, I think about other girls.

MARVIN. You do?

DAVID. Yeah, a lot. Do you think about girls a lot?

MARVIN. Me? I don't know what you mean by a lot. Sometimes I think about other things.

DAVID. Like what?

MARVIN. (*Considers.*) Oh, you know, other things — food.

DAVID. (*Rises. Crosses L. below table, above it, then to S.R. of it.*) I think about girls a lot. I admit it. Like if I'm walking down the street, I see a girl swinging along—you know the way they do when they're walking, the way they walk.

MARVIN. Yeah —

DAVID. (*crossing U.S. and D.S.*) Sometimes I go two, three blocks out of my way, just to watch the way they walk.

MARVIN. Me, too.

DAVID. (*U.S.C. of table*) I think about it a lot. Like there's this bookkeeper at the LaTesh Hat Company. Her name

is Miss B., she's the most zaftig thing you ever saw, Marve, I mean it —

MARVIN. Her name is Miss B.?

DAVID. (*at R. of S.R. chair*) That's what they call her. Anyway, she'd drive you crazy if her name was Irving.

MARVIN. I thought you're crazy about Wanda.

DAVID. I am. I'm crazy about Wanda. And I'm crazy about Miss B. And I'm crazy about strange girls on the street. Sometimes I think I'm a sex maniac.

MARVIN. Yeah, me too.

DAVID. (*crossing R. to U.R., then D.S.*) Only one thing, I talk a lot, but I don't do anything. (*Sits, chair R. of table.*) I'm a big talker.

MARVIN. Me, too.

DAVID. (*Rises, above table.*) Another thing. What am I doing in this crummy job? I mean, okay, just for a while, but Mr. Foreman thinks I want to learn the business — what do I want to be a machinest on ladies hats for? (*Picks up two files from table.*)

MARVIN. Then don't.

DAVID. Okay, then why don't I tell him? He keeps saying, "You'll work hard, be a good machinist," and I say, "Sure, Mr. Foreman...."

MARVIN. Do you want an apple?

DAVID. No. (*drumming on shelves with files*) And my parents, they want me to be a druggist. (*Drums.*) They want me to register in night school for September, to be a druggist. (*Drums.*) I don't want to be a druggist.

MARVIN. Then why don't you tell them?

DAVID. (*drumming*) I did tell them. I kind of told them. So they say, "What do you want to be? You can't be a

nothing. Everyone calls me a nothing. (*Throws files in tray on table. Sits S.R. of table.*)

MARVIN. You know, I wouldn't mind being a druggist.

DAVID. You? You'd poison the whole neighborhood. (*Rises to U.S.C. of table.*) The thing is, I want to be something. Something so people will say, "There goes Dave Kolowitz, the something."

MARVIN. What's the matter with, "There goes the druggist?"

DAVID. (*Crosses R.*) Naah.

MARVIN. (*ofering apple*) You sure you don't want an apple?

DAVID. (*Crosses to above table.*) What's with you and the apple? What's it got, worms or something? (*Crosses L. above table, to L. of table.*) You know, if I had any guts, I'd pack up and go to Panama or someplace.

MARVIN. Why don't you?

DAVID. (*at S.L.; shouts*) Because I have to mind my stupid kid sister Saturday night, that's why.

MARVIN. (*Rises, steps L. to DAVID with apple.*) Okay, you don't have to bite my head off.

DAVID. (*pause*) Give me the apple.

MARVIN. I bit it already.

DAVID. What are you giving me an apple for and then eating it yourself?

MARVIN. It ain't my fault you don't know what you want to be.

DAVID. Did I say I don't know what I want to be? I know what I want to be.

MARVIN. Yeah — a something!

DAVID. (*Crosses R. below table, to R. of table.*) No. I'll tell you what I want to be. I want to be an actor.

MARVIN. An actor?

DAVID. (*Crosses D.S.R. of table.*) Sure. Why not? An actor! (*Faces audience, poses.*)

MARVIN. You know something? You'd be great!

DAVID. I know. But you can't just be an actor. You can't just go around and tell people — "Hello, I'm an actor!"

MARVIN. (*crossing R. to DAVID*) Hey, I saw this ad in today's paper. I saw it yesterday, too. I saw it both days.

DAVID. An ad? For what?

MARVIN. For actors.

DAVID. For actors?

MARVIN. For actors.

DAVID. You're crazy! (*Goes U.S., takes newspaper from shelf on C. wall.*)

MARVIN. (*Crosses L. of table, to above it, taking paper from DAVID, finds ad.*) It's here, right here in the paper. I saw it yesterday; I saw it today.... Here. When I saw it I even thought about you.

DAVID. (*Reads; U.S. of S.R. chair.*) "Marlowe Theatre and School for Dramatic Arts ... Scholarships for Promising Young Actors..."

MARVIN. (*at S.L. of DAVID*) Just do your Ronald Coleman or your Humphrey Bogart.

DAVID. "Learn to act before audiences."

MARVIN. No kidding, you're a cinch.

(*DAVID crosses S.R. MARVIN follows.*)

DAVID. They'll see applicants at six o'clock.

MARVIN. What do you say, will you go?

DAVID. Sure. Why not?

MARVIN. Bet you a dime you don't.

DAVID. It's a bet.

(They shake hands.)

MARVIN. *(Gets apple from table.)* Here. I only took one bite.

DAVID. Thanks. Wait a second. I can't make it, though. I don't get out of here till six o'clock —

MARVIN. Listen, you don't want to be a machinist or a druggist all your life?

DAVID. Besides, I got to be home tonight. What will I tell my mother?

MARVIN. Okay, okay, you lose; give me the dime.

FOREMAN. *(Enters, crossing to U.S. of D.S. table.)* You here again? *(Takes off coat and hangs it on hook, S.L. of shelves.)*

(DAVID crosses U.R.)

MARVIN. I was just leaving, Mr. Foreman. *(Crosses L. below table; picks up lunch. Throws apple in waste basket under shelf on C. wall.)*

FOREMAN. Pick up your dirt, and go back to your shop. *(Hangs up hat.)*

MARVIN. Sure, Mr. Foreman. *(Picks up bag, etc., throws in basket under U.S. table. Takes chair from L. of table to D.S. of door.)*

FOREMAN. Anybody call?

DAVID. (*Takes chair R. of table to U.R.*) No, Mr. Foreman.

FOREMAN. (*Crosses to sit U.C. above table.*) I want you to deliver this machine to LaTesh Hats.

(*MARVIN is at door.*)

DAVID. LaTesh Hats? (*Makes delighted face at MARVIN. Goes for jacket on S.R. wall.*)

FOREMAN. Right away.

DAVID. Sure, Mr. Foreman — (*Looks at MARVIN. Crosses L. to FOREMAN.*) Oh, and Mr. Foreman, I'm going to have to leave about an hour early tonight. (*Puts jacket on.*)

(*MARVIN listens.*)

FOREMAN. Why?

DAVID. I have to pick up something for my father. At six o'clock.

FOREMAN. What do you have to pick up for your father?

DAVID. My mother — (*Hesitates.*) She's visiting my aunt.

FOREMAN. All right, all right —

MARVIN. Here's the dime I owe you, Dave. (*Throws imaginary dime to DAVID.*)

(*DAVID catches it, and puts it in his pocket.*)

FOREMAN. (*rising, crossing L. to MARVIN*) You still here?

MARVIN. No. I just left. *(He exits.)*

FOREMAN. I wish he worked for me so I could fire him!
LaTesh Hats. And don't forget the receipt.

DAVID. Okay, Mr. Foreman. *(Exits with machine, crossing
above table.)*

ACT ONE

Scene 2

Scene: The office of LaTesh Hat Company. It contains a desk, a filing cabinet, hat boxes. MISS B., a luscious blonde in her early twenties, is seated at desk. She is interrupted by a VOICE from D.S.L.

VOICE. Miss B.

MISS B. Yes?

VOICE. Will you bring me the Bon Marche order?

MISS B. Okay, Mr. Firestein. *(Rises, opens filing cabinet drawer, bends over with her back to the audience.)*

DAVID. *(Enters from S.R., stops at C. He crosses L. and speaks.)*

MISS B. —

MISS B. *(straightening up.)* Well, hello, David.

DAVID. Hello, Miss B.

MISS B. *(Crosses to S.L. of desk.)* I see you brought our machine back.

DAVID. *(Crosses to R. of desk. Puts machine on desk.)* That was my practical reason for coming. But I must confess that I would welcome any reason for coming into your presence.

MISS B. My, what a handsome speech.

DAVID. I suppose you mean by that, that only my speech is handsome.

MISS B. Well, as long as your fishing for a compliment, I'll bite. I think you're quite a handsome boy, too.

DAVID. Thank you. But look who's talking. As long as we're getting slightly more personal, Miss B., do you mind if I try to guess what the B. stands for?

MISS B. (*leaning across desk to him*) No.

DAVID. Betty?

MISS B. No.

DAVID. Beatrice?

MISS B. No. DAVID. Bernie?

(MISS B. shakes her head, chuckling.)

DAVID. I give up. What?

MISS B. Laura.

DAVID. Laura? With a B?

MISS B. The B. is Miss Burke. Laura Burke.

DAVID. Laura — Laura — Laura Burke! One look at you and my heart doth jerk.

MISS B. (*amused and pleased with him*) You know, David, you sound very different today. You certainly don't talk like a delivery boy from Foreman's Machine Shop.

DAVID. (*crossing R. a few steps*) That's just a temporary occupation, Miss B. — Laura.

MISS B. (*She crosses to R. of desk.*) Oh? And what are your plans for the future?

DAVID. My plans are to become an actor.

MISS B. An Actor?

DAVID. Yeah. Why not? An actor.

MISS B. That's very exciting, David. But how do you know you can act? Have you ever acted before?

DAVID. Well, not professionally. Semi-professionally, you might say. (*a la Ronald Colman*) Ah, Laura, Laura — it is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done.

MISS B. (*impressed*) That sounds just like Douglas Fairbanks, Junior.

DAVID. No, it's Ronald Colman. Gee, I can do both of them!

MISS B. Well, that certainly is exciting.

DAVID. In fact, I'm going for an acting part today.

MISS B. Are you really? I'd love to hear all about it.

DAVID. I'd love to tell you about it. May I suggest, how about lunch tomorrow?

MISS B. (*crossing below him to R. of him*) Lunch tomorrow? I don't know ...

DAVID. Oh — are you by any chance going steady?

MISS B. Not what you'd call steady. I have a gentleman friend. But we haven't exchanged rings or anything as final as that.

DAVID. (*Crosses R. to her.*) In that case, if he's a true gentleman and a true friend, he wouldn't be offended if you shared a cornbeef sandwich with another friend.

MISS B. Of course not.

DAVID. (*seductively*) And even a pickle!

MISS B. (*Laughs.*) You're certainly a cute boy.

VOICE. Miss B.! Will you come in here, please?

MISS B. (*Crosses L. to chair L. of desk.*) Right away, Mr. Firestein. (*to DAVID*) Very well. I'll meet you at twelve, tomorrow.

DAVID. (*happily backing off R. theatrically*) I'm delighted, Laura...

ROGER. (*entering*) Miss B., will you file this..... (*notices*

DAVID) Hey, don't you know by now, deliveries in the back...

MISS B. You shouldn't talk to him like that, Roger. Some day, you'll have to pay to see him.

ROGER. Why?

MISS B. He's going to be an actor.

ROGER. (*contemptuous*) An actor?

DAVID. (*theatrically*) Thank you, Miss B. (*Starts to exit.*)

ROGER. Hey! Until you're an actor deliveries in the back!

DIMOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 3

Scene: Stage of Marlowe Theatre Two young men standing around, waiting, as DAVID enters.... He joins them.... PIKE enters, carrying clipboard....

PIKE. Any more here? Just you three? (*Looks at clipboard.*) All right. What's your name?

DON BAXTER. (*stepping forward*) Don Baxter.

PIKE. You?

DON DARWIN. (*stepping forward*) Don Darwin.

PIKE. Okay. You?

DAVID. (*stepping forward*) Don ... er ... R.

PIKE. Don R. what?

DAVID. Ron — uh .. no ... Don Colman.

PIKE. Which is it?

DAVID. Both. Don Ron Colman ... Don R. Colman!

PIKE. Okay. Wait in the wings, Dons.

DAVID. Where, sir?

PIKE. In the wings. Out there!

(MARLOWE enters, counting money.)

PIKE. Mr. Marlowe.

MARLOWE. (*waving him off*) Eight-seventy...eight-eighty...eight-eighty-one...eight-eighty-two.... Is this it, Pike?

PIKE. That's it.

MARLOWE. (*handling coins*) These are the entire receipts from last night's performance?

PIKE. That's it.

MARLOWE. I counted more than thirty people in the audience.

PIKE. A lot of them just put a dime in the plate, or nothing. Some just came in to get out of the rain.

MARLOWE. (*Opening a bottle of liquor, he puts a straw in it and sips through the following:*) That I've descended to this! Put a dime in the plate and see Harrison Marlowe! ... Eight dollars and eighty-two cents! Two cents? Some monster actually paid two cents for a three-act play.... Less than a penny an act! And the world wonders why I drink! Anyone show up?

PIKE. Three of them; listen to this: Don Baxter, Don Darwin, and Don Colman.

MARLOWE. Oh God! (*He again sips from bottle; puts bottle, with straw, into inside breast-pocket.*) Oh, Don!

(PIKE turns.)

MARLOWE. Where is my darling daughter?

PIKE. I don't know. She said she'd be...

ANGELA. (*entering*) Daddy! There are three new boys waiting out there.

MARLOWE. I know. Any of them look like anything?

ANGELA. Why?

MARLOWE. One of them will be your new leading man.

ANGELA. New leading ... what happened to Barry Holloway?

MARLOWE. I fired him.

ANGELA. How could you do that? ... He was wonderful.... He was my height.... Why?

MARLOWE. Because he quit. The idiot wanted to be paid.

ANGELA. Oh! Well, if you don't mind, *I'll* pick my own leading man this time..

MARLOWE. May I remind you that this is my theatre and I pick the actors.

ANGELA. You pick them, but *I* Have to perform with them. You don't care what they look like —. All you care about is how much money you can squeeze out of them.

MARLOWE. All right, all right! (*to PIKE*) Let's take a look at the creatures.

PIKE. (*calling*) All right, gentlemen....

(*They enter*)

PIKE. This is Mr. Marlowe....

MARLOWE. (*He examines them. To himself:*) To be or not to be is going to be a helluva question. (*to PIKE*) Tell them to wait out there.

PIKE. Will you wait out there?

DAVID. In the wings?

PIKE. Yes, in the wings.

(*They start off.*)

ANGELA. (*stopping them*) Just a moment, please. If I may, daddy...

(*The boys stop. ANGELA walks up and down, examining boys.*)

ANGELA. (*going down the line*) Have you had much experience?

DON BAXTER. Doing what?

ANGELA. Thank you. (*to DAN DARWIN*) How old are you?

DON DARWIN. (*bewildered*) I'm going to be 27.

ANGELA. Oh, yes — I'm sure you will be! (*to DAVID*) Hello.

DAVID. (*shyly*) Hello.

MARLOWE. Are you quite through?

ANGELA. I think so. Yes.

MARLOWE. Pike, tell them again.

PIKE. Wait out there.

(*They start to exit.*)

ANGELA. Daddy, let's have the cute one.

MARLOWE. Which one is the cute one?

ANGELA. The one who was looking at me.... The one in the red jacket.

MARLOWE. (*to PIKE*) Bring back James Monroe. (*He takes a sip from his inside breast-pocket.*)

PIKE. (*calling*) Don Colman! (*pause — no answer*) Don Colman!

DAVID. (*off stage*) Oh.... Me!! (*He comes back on-stage.*)

MARLOWE. (*to DAVID as he enters*) Have you ever acted before, boy?

DAVID. Where, sir?

MARLOWE. In a play, boy.

DAVID. Well, not in a play exactly.

MARLOWE. In what then, exactly?

DAVID. Well, at this thing I sang 'The Isle of Capri', and I did my impersonations of Edward G. Robinson and Ronald Colman...

MARLOWE. At what *thing* did you do... these *things*?

DAVID. On Senior Day... (*pause*) ...in James Monroe High School... (*Indicates back of jacket.*)

(*MARLOWE stares at him.*)

DAVID. (*continuing*) ...That's in the Bronx.

MARLOWE. Wonderful! (*He takes a sip through straw from hidden bottle.*) Well, let's see one of the other —

ANGELA. (*walking up to them*) Perhaps we should hear Mister Monroe read.

DAVID. (*interjecting*) Colman!

ANGELA. He may have a natural talent.

MARLOWE. (*staring at her*) You think so!

ANGELA. Daddy, we'll never know unless we...

MARLOWE. (*breaking in; to PIKE*) Let him have the script.

(*PIKE hands the script to DAVID.*)

MARLOWE. Read the part of Jeff Heming. Mr. Pike will cue you.

DAVID. He'll do what, sir?

MARLOWE. He'll cue you. You know what that means?

DAVID. Er...; you mean he'll cue me wherever I have to be cued.

MARLOWE. Yes, now — take it from Jeff's entrance. They're serving tea, and Harriet says, 'That must be Jeff now.' Read!

DAVID. (*reading*) 'Enter laughing! — I trust I haven't kept you waiting too long, but —'

MARLOWE. (*interrupting*) Read that again, will you?

DAVID. (*with more emphasis*) 'Enter laughing! I trust —'

MARLOWE. (*crossing to DAVID*) Mister Colman.... There is a parenthesis around 'Enter laughing' ... (*He points to the script.*) It is a stage direction.

DAVID. Oh — I'm supposed to laugh when I enter.

MARLOWE. (*drily*) Exactly! Enter laughing means you laugh when you enter! (*He takes another sip and retreats a few steps.*) Proceed.

DAVID. (*raising his hand*) May I ask a question?

MARLOWE. What is it?

DAVID. What is he laughing about?

MARLOWE. (*Sighs; walks up to DAVID.*) It is in the nature of the character. Jeff Heming is a devil-may-care young man. He breaks into a solemn family gathering for the reading of a will....

DAVID. Who died?

MARLOWE. His uncle.

DAVID. And he's laughing? Why?!

MARLOWE. (*glaring*) Because I say so!

ANGELA. You see, he's amused at the false solemnity of the others. They're only interested in the old man's money, but he...

MARLOWE. (*shouting*) The devil with it! Just let me hear

you laugh and go into the speech!

ANGELA. (*softly*) Just let him hear you laugh and go into the speech. (*She moves off.*)

DAVID. (*emitting a hollow laugh*) Hah, hah...

MARLOWE. No, no — it's an amused laugh.

DAVID. (*chuckling or gurgling foolishly*) Heh, heh, heh, heh...

MARLOWE. Amused, boy, amused.

DAVID. (*trying various laughs: weak, hearty, hysterical — and finally one ending with a question...*) Hah, hah, hah, hah??

MARLOWE. (*drily*) Splendid! Now read.

DAVID. (*reading*) I trust I haven't kept you waiting too long, but I know that in your grife ... time has no meaning.

MARLOWE. That's grief, boy ... in your grief, time has no meaning.

DAVID. (*imitating MARLOWE*) In your grief time has no meaning.

(*MARLOWE sobs quietly, as he takes another sip.*)

PIKE. (*reading cue*) Why are you so late, Jeff?

DAVID. (*weakly*) Heh, heh, heh...

MARLOWE. What was that?

DAVID. (*pointing to script*) It says, 'chuckles', in parenthesis.

MARLOWE. Oh? Very good. Continue.

PIKE. (*reading*) 'You can only blame yourself, Jeff.'

DAVID. (*About to read, hesitates; to MARLOWE:*) ... Should I do it the way it says? It says angry, in parenthesis.

MARLOWE. Please.

DAVID. *(to PIKE)* Will you say your part again?

PIKE. 'You can only blame yourself, Jeff.'

DAVID. *(He whirls at MARLOWE, shakes fist at him and shouts.)* That's not true, Horace and you know it!!

MARLOWE. *(Startled... pause, then calmly:)* Would you mind waiting outside, please?

(DAVID takes fist out of MARLOWE'S face; exits, pleased with himself.)

MARLOWE. Angela, your cute one stinks!

ANGELA. You frightened him, Daddy. You frighten everyone.

MARLOWE. *(looking back)* I didn't frighten him enough. He's smiling at me.

ANGELA. He has a darling personality.

MARLOWE. Where? Where is it? Angela, we cannot allow him into a theatre. We are asking the audience to throw coins into a paper plate. We must have some integrity.

ANGELA. I know, but at least he looks interesting. Like a starving poet It's a simple part. All he has to do is say the words. Cut out everything in parenthesis.

MARLOWE. You really want him?

ANGELA. Yes! You're not going to stick me with one of the others, even if they pay more.

MARLOWE. *(resigned, to PIKE:)* Bring back the cute one. And sign up the other two.... They can move scenery or something. Ask them for eight dollars a week.

PIKE. I don't think they'll go for that much.

MARLOWE. All right, give them a scholarship. Five

dollars, four, get as much as you can.

PIKE. Maybe if you let them act...

MARLOWE. (*horrified*) Act? (*He considers this.*) Well, you can put them in the scene where they read the will.... They can be the dead man's lawyers.

(*PIKE exits towards wings.*)

ANGELA. Don't look so bitter, Daddy — we've had worse.

MARLOWE. Never, never!

(*DAVID enters.*)

MARLOWE. (*to DAVID*) Young man, I feel that you have some innate talent in you, somewhere ... and if you really apply yourself, you might make an actor, an unusual one.

DAVID. (*delighted*) You think so, sir?

MARLOWE. Well — we're going to put you on a scholarship here. Instead of the usual tuition, it will be five dollars a week —

DAVID. (*elated*) Five dollars! That's great; I sure could use it.

MARLOWE. Use it? What do you mean?

DAVID. I mean, I can use the extra money.

MARLOWE. No, no, dear boy. We don't pay you, you pay us.

DAVID. Oh. But I thought you said — a scholarship —

MARLOWE. Yes, I did. Ordinarily, you see, the tuition is ten dollars a week. With a scholarship, it's only five.

DAVID. (*hesitating*) Five dollars?

MARLOWE. (*impatiently*) Well, three dollars, then? If you have a burning desire to be in the theatre, surely you can manage three lousy dollars. If you have the impulse of an artist, you would steal it, if necessary.

DAVID. Yes, sir. I guess so, sir.

MARLOWE. (*Hands him script that PIKE has just given to him.*) Good.... And we feel the only to learn to act is to act. So starting this Friday night, you're to play the Jeff Hemming role in my production. Here's the script; your part is marked.

DAVID. This Friday night?

MARLOWE. I want you to see the performance tonight, so you can become familiar with the role.

DAVID. Tonight?

MARLOWE. And if you have any questions, come back after the show and see me, or Mr. Pike here. Or my daughter. This is my daughter.

DAVID. She is?

MARLOWE. (*dryly*) Yes, she is.

ANGELA. I'll be glad to help you, Don. If you want me, I'll be in my dressing room.

DAVID. Tonight?

ANGELA. Yes, after the show.

DAVID. In your dressing room?

ANGELA. Yes. The play starts at eight-thirty.

DAVID. Eight-thirty. Should I eat first?

ANGELA. (*startled*) Should you..... If you want to.

MARLOWE. (*approaching them*) Work hard, young man. Work very hard.

DAVID. (*with enthusiasm*) Yes, sir! Mr. Marlowe, I want to

thank you for this opportunity and I promise to do everything I can to be really excellent.

MARLOWE. (*driily*) Fine. Goodby.

DAVID. (*to MARLOWE, PIKE, ANGELA:*) Goodbye. Goodbye. Goodbye, Miss Marlowe.

ANGELA. Au revoir, Don.

DAVID. Yes, ma'am. (*Exits.*)

ANGELA. Well, Daddy, what do you think of him?

MARLOWE. (*looking after him, thoughtfully*) I'm not sure ... but I think I hate that boy.

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 4

Scene: A phone booth. Phone is on a bracket attached U.S.L. of first portal. DAVID enters and takes phone off hook.

DAVID. Hello, Operator, Jerome 8275. *(He waits.)* Hello, Papa? Listen, Papa, I won't be home for supper. No, I'm all right. I'm going to a kind of night school. For acting. Acting ... like in the movies.... No, don't put Mama on.... I'll tell you when I ... Hello, Mama.... I'll eat at a restaurant, Mama.... Eggs. Okay, meat.... No, don't wait up for me, Mama, I'll be home late.... Goodbye, Mama.... Okay, Ma, sure ... all right ... okay ... all right ... *(Hangs up. Gets coin from pocket; lifts receiver. Puts in coin.)* Operator, I got the wrong number. I wanted Tremont 8067....*(Coin drops.)* Thank you. I trust I haven't kept you waiting too long, but — *(pause)* Hello, Wanda? It's Dave. Listen to this, I went for a job in a play, and they hired me.... Yes, as an actor. There were about twelve other fellows, but they hired me.... No, I'm not kidding. Listen, I have to eat supper and get back.... I don't know, eggs or something.... Okay, meat.... So long, Wanda. *(Hangs up. Takes coin from phone; lifts receiver. Puts in coin.)* Hello, Operator, I got the wrong number.... I wanted Fordham 7648. Thanks.... *(Coin*

drops.) I trust I haven't kept you waiting too long, but in my grief... *(then)* Hi, Marvin? David. I did it. No kidding, they picked me from the whole bunch. About twenty guys.... And listen, Marv ... I got a date tonight with the leading lady. Gorgeous. We're going to go over some love scenes, know what I mean? ... *(Laughs.)* You said it. *(Laughs, then seriously.)* By the way, Marv, did that laugh sound okay? Just now, when I just laughed — did that sound like a person laughing? Never mind — I'll tell you about it tomorrow. Goodbye. *(He exits.)*

End of Scene 4

ACT ONE

Scene 5

Scene: Ext. of dressing room.... DAVID and PIKE.

PIKE. You'll have to get a tuxedo for the play.

DAVID. I don't have one.

PIKE. You can get a second-hand one for about ten dollars.

DAVID. Ten dollars I don't....

PIKE. This is Miss Marlowe's dressing room. *(He knocks on door.)*

ANGELA. *(from off-stage)* Entrez...

PIKE. Go in.

(Int. dressing room... ANGELA in slip... David enters, stares...)

DAVID. I I'm sorry.... *(Starts to exit.)*

ANGELA. Come in, darling....

DAVID. *(hesitating)* But but you're....

ANGELA. Come in....

(DAVID turns aside from her.)

ANGELA. I'm sure this isn't the first time you've been in

a room where a girl was dressing, n'est ce pas?

DAVID. No, ma'am...

ANGELA. I thought not.

DAVID. I have a kid sister.

ANGELA. That's sweet. How did you like the play?

DAVID. Oh, I... I thought it was great. And you were great. Wow...

ANGELA. Thank you, darling. Would you hand me those stockings?

DAVID. *(staring at her legs)* Huh...?

ANGELA. Over there...

DAVID. Oh... sure. *(He hands them to her.)*

ANGELA. *(nodding toward table as she puts on stocking)* Now open two of those beers, and tell me all about yourself.

DAVID. *(staring at her as she puts on stocking)* Huh...? Oh, sure. *(He crosses to table and opens two bottles of beer, during:)* Well, I was born in the Bronx... I went to school there and I still live there and my parents want me to be a druggist, but... *(He is staring at her thigh as she smooths top of stocking; he stops speaking.)*

ANGELA. But you don't want to be a druggist.

DAVID. *(hypnotized)* Why not...? Oh, no sir, ma'am...

ANGELA. *(holding hand out)* May I? —

DAVID. Huh...? Oh... Here. *(Hands her both bottles of beer.)*

ANGELA. One of them is for you. *(Gives one back to him.)*

DAVID. *(taking it gingerly)* Oh... Uh, thank you...

ANGELA. Cheers! *(She clinks bottles and drinks.)*

(He takes a sip uneasily, and shudders.)

ANGELA. So you want to be an actor. Why do you want to be an actor? (*Puts bottle down and puts on her other stocking, adjusting it, etc.*)

DAVID. (*Staring at her; talks in short spurts.*) I ... It's exciting ... it's ... everybody watches you ... You're doing something and everybody watches you ...

ANGELA. That's a very good reason! Now, what can I do for you?

DAVID. (*tightly*) W — What do you mean?

ANGELA. About the play.

DAVID. Oh, the play... Well, that's what I wanted to tell you... I don't think I can do it.

ANGELA. Oh, why?

DAVID. There are so many words.

ANGELA. (*Steps down; sits and puts on shoes.*) Oh, no! You just have two short scenes, and the love scene with me has very little dialogue.

DAVID. I know... it's mostly kissing.

ANGELA. Yes, well — Is that so hard?

DAVID. No, that's okay... I'm a good kisser.

ANGELA. Well — then— I don't understand.

DAVID. ... Gee, Miss Marlowe ... I don't think I can do it by Friday night. So I thought I'd tell you now, so you can get someone else.

ANGELA. (*interrupting*) Don... (*She smiles at him warmly, using all her charms; dabs perfume stopper behind ears and on her cleavage.*) Don, darling... (*Sits on settee; motions him to join her.*) ... Sit here....

(*He timidly sits next to her, clutching his beer bottle.*)

ANGELA. Dear Don... (*Takes his hand in hers.*) Are you in love?

DAVID. You mean right now?...

ANGELA. Yes.

DAVID. (*staring in her eyes*) I think so...

ANGELA. What is Jeff trying to say in that scene? That he loves me.... Is that so hard?

DAVID. I guess not.

ANGELA. Then say it.

DAVID. What?

ANGELA. Say, "I love you."

DAVID. (*hesitantly; embarrassed*) I love you...

ANGELA. (*caressing his cheek*) ... Again ...

DAVID. (*meaning it*) I... I love you.

ANGELA. I believe you! Now if you can express that emotion more deeply, more fully...

DAVID. How? ... How????

ANGELA. (*putting arm around him*) There's only one real way to express love.... Everything else is superficial ... shallow.

DAVID. Yeah!

ANGELA. Poetry.

DAVID. What?

ANGELA. The language of love.

DAVID. You mean poems? Like Rudyard Kipling?

ANGELA. Yes! I had to say this poem in a play once, and I was in love, so I never forgot it... (*She rises, and recites, fervently.*) "If I were queen of pleasure — And you were king of pain — We'd hunt down love together — Pluck out his flying feather... — And teach his feet a measure... — And find his mouth a rein... (*She pauses.*)"

DAVID. I...I...

ANGELA. If I were queen of pleasure — And you were king of pain..." You do feel it, don't you?

DAVID. (*fervently*) I do. I do.

ANGELA. (*pulling DAVID to his knees*) But that's not the only way to express love.

DAVID. Of course not.

ANGELA. I know what you're thinking ... something more turbulent, more violent, more exciting.

DAVID. Yeah, yeah....

ANGELA. "I cried for madder music and for stronger wine — But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire.. — Then falls thy shadow, Cynara... — The night is thine. (*She hugs him.*) — And I am desolate and sick of an old passion. — Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire.... (*Pushes him away. He falls to floor.*) — I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my fashion.."

DAVID. (*breathless*) That's wonderful.

ANGELA. I knew it. I knew that you would love poetry as I do..... *le mot juste, le mot grande*.... You're a dear, dear, sensitive boy. You'll be marvelous in the play.... (*sharply*) You will do it, won't you?

DAVID. I will! I will!

ANGELA. Good.... (*She turns away, and starts adjusting her hair.*) Now, I simply must be getting home.

DAVID. Home? Now?

ANGELA. Yes, I'm frightfully tired. And you must be too, it's quite late.

DAVID. No, I'm not tired. You're sure you want me to go home? Can't we rehearse?

ANGELA. Tomorrow.

DAVID. Tomorrow?

ANGELA. *(leading him to door)* Yes, tomorrow. Till then, darling, good night.... "Good night, good night, parting is such sweet sorrow, that I will say good night till it be morrow."

(He is out; she sighs in relief, turns towards dressing table.. He bursts in.)

DAVID. "Though I've beaten you and flayed you.... — By the living God that made you.... — You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din"....

(She stares at him, stunned.... He exits.)

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 6

Late that night. Kitchen of Kolowitz home. MOTHER, in bathrobe, is standing at stove. FATHER, seated R. of table in pajamas, having tea, reading newspaper.

MOTHER. (*Crosses R. above table, circles it.*) Why don't you go to sleep, Morris? You got a day's work tomorrow.

FATHER. I'll wait.

MOTHER. (*Crosses L. below.*) I don't need your help to wait. Go to sleep.

FATHER. I'll wait.

MOTHER. (*At L. of table.*) You'll catch a cold sitting like that. At least put something on.

FATHER. Put on what? You're wearing my bathrobe.

MOTHER. Why? You want the bathrobe?

FATHER. No, I don't want the bathrobe. I never wear the bathrobe.

MOTHER. (*crossing S.R.*) It's almost three o'clock. Something must have happened to him.

FATHER. Nothing happened. Go to sleep.

MOTHER. (*pause*) Why don't you ever wear the bathrobe? It's your bathrobe. I bought it for you.

FATHER. Because you always wear it.... Anyway I'm not cold.

MOTHER. Go to sleep. It's bad for your hernia! (*Crosses D.R. and D.S. of table to L.*)

FATHER. It's not bad for my hernia. When I'm sitting, my hernia is sitting.

MOTHER. (*at L. of L. chair*) You should get an operation.

FATHER. Not now. It's three o'clock in the morning.

MOTHER. (*pause*) You want more tea?

FATHER. No.

MOTHER. (*Crosses to stove.*) I'll make you more tea.

FATHER. I don't want tea.

MOTHER. Then put on your pants.

FATHER. Emma, please leave me alone. Go to sleep.

MOTHER. How can I go to sleep? Three o'clock and he's not home. What could have happened?

FATHER. Please, Emma, you're making me crazy, and you're making yourself crazy. Go to sleep.

MOTHER. (*Rising, crosses L.*) Call up somebody.

FATHER. (*rising, putting paper on table*) Who? You want me to call the police?

MOTHER. (*crossing to L. of table*) No, I don't want to get mixed up with the police. Call up Harry.

FATHER. (*rising*) Harry? Why should I call up Harry?

MOTHER. He's your brother, why shouldn't you call him up?

FATHER. But why should I call him up, in the middle of the night? What could he do?

MOTHER. Harry is a business man. He has a good lawyer. He'll know what to do.

FATHER. Emma, make me some tea. (*Sits.*)

MOTHER. (*She crosses to stove.*) You didn't want tea.

FATHER. Now I want.

MOTHER. Why won't you call up Harry?

FATHER. Emma, please. At three o'clock, I don't call my brother for advice about my son.

MOTHER. (*Crosses R. to behind him, her hands on his shoulders.*) I'm worried, Morris. I don't know what to think. what should we do?

FATHER. (*gently*) All right, Emma. It's all right. You'll see. He's all right.

DAVID. (*Enters, falsely casual.*) Hi. (*Crosses to U.S. of table.*) What are you doing up so late?

MOTHER. You hear him, Morris? (*Rises, crosses L. below table.*) What are we doing up so late, he asks. What are we doing up so late? (*with heavy sarcasm*) It was too hot to sleep, so we got up to play a game of dominos. (*Sits, L.*)

FATHER. (*rising to S.R. of DAVID*) Mama was worried about you, David.

MOTHER. (*Rises. D.L. few steps, then to U.L. of table.*) I was worried? And you weren't? Papa was so worried he wanted to call Uncle Harry. Where were you?

DAVID. There was nothing to worry about. I was okay.

MOTHER. Why didn't you call us to let us know *what*?

DAVID. I did call, Ma. I spoke to you and told you that I'd be late.

MOTHER. (*Crosses D.R. below table.*) You called yesterday and said you'd be home late. Three o'clock isn't late. Three o'clock is tomorrow!

DAVID. (*Crosses to D.L. of table.*) I went to night school,

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