

(Begin after David exits)

SIDNEY: Say, Iris, what did Mavis say about Fred's new promotion, the Folk River Dam thing? Y'know, I think maybe that solid old brother-in-law of mine might just be the man to -- **(he turns and sees the dress)** Well, get you!

IRIS: I look pretty all right in this--huh, Sid?

SIDNEY: Sure, if you like the type. I like you in other things better.

IRIS: I know. I'm --going out tonight, Sidney.

SIDNEY: *(His mind elsewhere)* Yeah? Where? Sure, sure, maybe I'll just call old Fred. *(catching himself)* Where, honey?

IRIS: I talked to Lucille Terry today. She's having a cocktail party.

SIDNEY: *Lucille Terry!*? Where in the name of God did she pop up from?

IRIS: Well, you know, just like that people suddenly call each other up. So just like that she called me up about this party she's having.

SIDNEY: Great. *(crosses to the phone)*

IRIS: Lucy didn't call me, Sid. I called her.

SIDNEY: How about that? You know something, Iris? Since we came out for Wally, almost a third of our advertisers have cancelled ads.

IRIS: *(At the moment she couldn't care less.)* Oh, really...

SIDNEY: (starts to dial then hangs up) Fix me a drink, why doncha, honey? *(She hears but doesn't oblige. He picks up the receiver, depressing the button to prevent connection. Hypothetical pitch with forced heartiness:)* Hello, Fred? Just a social call. HOW'RE YOU AND HOW'S MAVIS AND HOW'D YOU LIKE TO BAIL OUT A FAILING WEEKLY?? Aw, I'm sorry, honey, but I just don't feel like a party tonight. Tell Lucy we love her but no.

IRIS: I wasn't asking you to come with me, Sidney.

SIDNEY: Oh?

IRIS: That's sort of the point. I--I am going alone. *(They are both quiet, neither looking at the other; the awkwardness shouts.)*

SIDNEY: Well, hell--Great. You should do things alone sometimes. Everybody should. What are we acting so funny about it for?

IRIS: Because we know it isn't just a party. It's the fact that I want to go. That I called Lucy. I'm sorry, Sid.

SIDNEY: Who's going to be at this party, Iris?

IRIS: How do I know who's going to be there? Lucy's friends.

SIDNEY: The "would-be" set, as I recall it.

IRIS: Some of her friends are pretty successful.

SIDNEY: *Like Ben Asch?* *(She wheels and they exchange a violent conversation without words)*

IRIS: *(getting into her shoes)* Look, Sid, let's make an agreement based on the recognition of reality. The reality being: the big thaw has set in with us and we don't know what that means yet. So until we do--well--let's not ask each other a whole lot of slimy questions.

SIDNEY: I'll ask all the slimy questions I want! Listen, Iris, have you been seeing this clown?

IRIS: Only once -- after the time I told you.

SIDNEY: Once is all it takes.

IRIS: He thinks he can help me.

SIDNEY: Do what?

IRIS: Break in, that's what!

SIDNEY: Then why didn't he see *us*?

IRIS: I don't know, Sidney, I guess he was under the impression that I was a big girl now.

SIDNEY: I'll bet!

IRIS: Ben knows some extremely influential people. People who *do* things they mean to do.

SIDNEY: Where?

IRIS: In the theatre and in politics too! Especially in politics. People who do not take on a newspaper they cannot even afford and practically throw it away on a hopeless campaign. And for what? For Wally? If even half of what they say about Wally is true--

SIDNEY: Oh? And just what do "they" say? (*He waits knowing there is nothing she can say*)

IRIS: (*stubbornly*) Well, I don't know about any of this, but Lucy says they own Wally --

SIDNEY: Right the first time, Iris! You don't know.

IRIS: Sidney, this is not Walden Pond. These people are sharks.

SIDNEY: (*With deliberate finality; father knows best.*) Look, Iris, I'll make a deal with you: you let me fight City Hall and I'll stay out of Shubert Alley.

IRIS: (*She's had it*) All right, Sidney. (***She starts out.***)

SIDNEY: And stop ducking the main point. What is this glorious doer Ben Asch going to do for you?

IRIS: As a matter of fact he's already got me some work.

SIDNEY: Oh? What show?

IRIS: It isn't exactly a show--but it *is* acting. Sort of ...It's a TV commercial...

SIDNEY: (*laughing*) Oh, Iris, Iris.

IRIS: (*hotly, flinging bag down on couch*) Oh, aren't we better than everybody, Sidney Brustein! Well, I have news: it beats hell out of slinging hash while I wait for "pure art" to come along!

SIDNEY: Iris--

IRIS: And studying with every has-been actor who's teaching now because he can't work anymore!

SIDNEY: From the has-beens to the would-be's, I'll admit there's a progression there! Iris, it's not just what you're getting into--it's *how*. How can it be after five years of life with me that you don't know better than this?

IRIS: (*exploding, near tears*) I have learned *a lot* after five years of life with you, Sidney Brustein! When I met you I thought Kant was a stilted way of saying cannot. I thought Puccini was a kind of spaghetti. I thought the louder an actor yelled and fell on the floor the greater he was. But you taught me to look deeper and harder. At everything. From Japanese painting to acting. Including Sidney, my *own* acting. Thanks to you, I now know something I wouldn't have without you. The fact--the *fact* that I am probably the world's *lousiest* actress...So, there it is, the trouble with looking at ourselves honestly, Sidney, is that we come up with the truth. And, baby, the truth is a bitch!

SIDNEY: Iris, Iris, just listen--

IRIS: All I know is that, from now on, I just want something to happen in my life. I don't much care *what*. Just something.

SIDNEY: I just want you to know that--whatever happens--you've been one of the few things in my life that made me happy.

IRIS: Oh, Sid, "happy." Whoever started that anyhow? What little bastard was it? Teaching little kids there was such a thing. (*She exits. Sidney goes back inside.*)