

ning out into the alley. Susy remains still for a moment as though thinking hard: "What else must I do?" She goes to the table, finds the knife, knocks it on the floor, goes down on knees and finds it. She moves around for a moment as though wondering where to put it. Then she goes to the washing machine, opens it and hides the knife underneath the washing. As she closes the washer door . . .

CURTAIN

END ACT II—SCENE 1

ACT II

SCENE 2

TIME: A few minutes later.

ALTERATIONS TO SET: None.

ON RISE: As before the room is lit only by the lamp on Sam's bench. Susy sits at the kitchen table . . . waiting and listening. The vase of flowers is in front of her, and a box of matches. She is smoking a cigarette.

Susy stubs out cigarette, then suddenly she becomes very alert. She turns as though listening to a noise from the back door. We have heard nothing from that direction but she has. The door handle turns quietly as someone tries it. Then there is a quiet knock. Susy does not move nor answer. Then we hear Mike's voice calling quietly:

MIKE. (*Off.*) Susy. (*She does not reply. He calls louder and more urgently.*) Susy . . . there's something I must tell you. It's important. (*She does not move. Then we hear something being fitted in between the door and the lock and after some patient rattling the door opens and Mike enters. He returns a piece of celluloid to his pocket. He then closes the door [locked] and comes down the stairs. He is very angry. Susy does not rise.*)

SUSY. (*Calmly.*) Hello Mike . . . I was expecting you . . . did you get into the studio all right?

MIKE. As it happens—I did . . . no thanks to you. I don't know

whether you've ever been there or not—but there is no desk. (*Mike throws the bunch of three keys onto the floor.*)

SUSY. And no doll? (*Mike stares at Susy for several seconds.*)

MIKE. (*Quietly.*) How long have you known?

SUSY. About what?

MIKE. Me.

SUSY. (*As though to a friend.*) Now that's much better, Mike. Isn't it? Now we can talk like sensible people.

MIKE. (*Quietly.*) Where is it? (*A pause.*)

SUSY. You'll have to buy it.

MIKE. (*After a pause.*) Go on then—how much?

SUSY. Not money. I'll trade you—truth for truth. Let's start with Sam and Mrs. Roat—true or false?

MIKE. Do you know where it is? (*No reply.*) I can't trade if you don't know.

SUSY. I know.

MIKE. Here?

SUSY. How about Sam?

MIKE. If I tell you—can I have it right now?

SUSY. (*After a pause.*) In a few minutes—you could—yes.

MIKE. Then it is here.

SUSY. Well?

MIKE. Sam didn't kill that woman. He first met her at the airport just like he told you.

SUSY. So you aren't a policeman . . . nor is Sgt. Carlino.

MIKE. No.

SUSY. Have you ever met Sam?

MIKE. No. Is it in the safe?

SUSY. Who was she?

MIKE. I can't tell you that.

SUSY. Did you kill her?

MIKE. No.

SUSY. (*Quickly.*) Did Mr. Roat?

MIKE. (*After a pause.*) You don't have to know that either . . . in the safe?

SUSY. Yes . . . it's in the safe.

MIKE. The key?

SUSY. It's already unlocked.

MIKE. Thank you, Susy. (*Mike goes to the phone and dials a number. As he waits excitedly and then speaks, Susy remains per-*

factly still and tries to hear the other end. Mike, into phone.) It's here . . . yes . . . yes! Now! May be your only chance. (Note: this phone call is Mike telling Carino to kill Roat as planned. See later. Mike hangs up and goes to safe. Susy waits until he reaches it and tries the handle of the safe. [It is locked.] Then she makes a dive for the phone and dials O.)

SUSY. (Very quickly into phone.) This is 27B. Grogan Street . . . (But before she has said the word "Grogan" Mike has crossed quickly to phone and wrenched the cord out of the floor socket.)

MIKE. That was just stupid—wasn't it? (Susy doesn't answer. Mike, angrily.) The key please! You said I could have it.

SUSY. (Rises and backs away from him.) I've hidden it. Very carefully. It's somewhere in this apartment.

MIKE. (Following her.) I'm not going to search for it. You're going to give it to me now.

SUSY. Then you'll have to make me give it to you. (A pause. Mike's voice is cold as he does all he can to scare her.)

MIKE. Don't think I couldn't.

SUSY. Then you'll have to hurt me very much . . . and I'm not so sure you can do that. (He moves very slowly towards her.)

MIKE. Then you don't know me very well.

SUSY. I think I do.

MIKE. You don't know me at all—do you?

SUSY. You can know some people very well—in a short time . . . you might be able to hurt me a little. But that won't be enough . . . (There is a sudden and violent revving-up of a car from the alley outside. Then we hear a man shout and the sound of a trash can being knocked violently against the alley wall. Then the car rears off. Mike turns his full attention to this and for a few moments ignores Susy. A short pause as Mike's attention switches from what has just happened outside to Susy.)

MIKE. (Gently as though giving in.) Perhaps you're right . . . maybe I just couldn't hurt you enough. (A pause.) But suppose there was a man who could . . . (He watches her reaction. For the first time she begins to look frightened.) . . . and suppose he was waiting right outside here . . . where he has been waiting all day . . . just for this. (A pause.) All I have to do is walk out of here and he'll come in.

SUSY. (Raising her voice.) Anything he does you'll be doing yourself. You'll never forget that.

MIKE. I won't be here. (A pause.) Have it your way then. (He goes up the stairs.)

SUSY. (Shouting angrily.) Go on then get out! You're worse than he is! (Mike opens hall door and then turns.)

MIKE. (Desperately.) But WHY? . . . How's Sam going to feel when he comes back here and finds you . . . ?

SUSY. (Shouting violently.) I won't give it to you! Get out! (Mike looks down at her for a long moment. Then he closes the door quietly and comes down the stairs.)

MIKE. (Quietly.) Okay, Susy—you win. (Susy doesn't understand this and shouts violently again.)

SUSY. Get out!—If you come near me . . . I (Mike halts and says quietly.)

MIKE. It's all over, Susy. You can keep your damned doll. I guess you've earned it anyway . . . and you needn't be afraid of Mr. Roat any longer. Mr. Roat is dead.

SUSY. (After a pause.) Are you still lying?

MIKE. No more lies. I can't tell you much—who I am or who Carino is . . . and we never knew who Mr. Roat was anyway. We only met him last night—but no more lying.

SUSY. You've killed him? (As Mike talks he crosses, picks up phone from floor and returns it to table. During Mike's next speech, just for a moment, we can see a faint flicker of light under the hall door, i.e., as though someone has just entered the hall and struck a match.)

MIKE. When Roat was in here doing his old man act—Carino and I flipped a coin and he won. I can't tell you why we had to kill Roat but we did. Then the three of us agreed that—when I'd gotten the doll—Carino would bring his car round to the back alley and pick up Roat and me. So as Mr. Roat walked round into the alley just now . . . a '58 Pontiac through the back of the head. SUSY. You better go, Mike.

MIKE. How much are you going to tell about us?

SUSY. Will you leave Sam and me alone—always?

MIKE. That's a promise—we'll never meet again.

SUSY. Then I won't give you away.

MIKE. What about Sam?

SUSY. He'll do as I ask him. You see, I am grateful. It's rather like thanking someone for not pushing you under a bus—but you could have hurt me and you didn't.

ACT II

SCENE 3

MIKE. Goodbye, Susy. (He turns to go.)

SUSY. What will you do now?

MIKE. Run. I owe money to a Shylock and his boys are looking for me. That's why I had to do this. I'll just run and run—won't be the first time.

SUSY. There's a—it's not much but there's still that twenty-dollar bill at the back of the freezer—if that would help.

MIKE. We already took it—but thanks just the same. (Susy puts out her hand.)

SUSY. Goodbye then. (As Mike takes her hand she puts her other hand up as though to feel his face, but he takes it gently with his other hand and pulls it down.)

MIKE. (Quietly.) Uh—uh . . . no see—no tell. (He turns and as he goes quietly up the stairs.)

SUSY. Good luck. (He opens the door. As he turns in the doorway to take one last look at Susy, he suddenly stiffens and falls down the whole flight of stairs, clutching at the railing. Susy calls, terrified.) Mike! (Roat enters and closes the hall door [i.e., locked]. He wears gloves. He wipes his knife and puts it away. He carries his zip bag. As he comes slowly down the stairs he says, quite mildly.) ROAT. Well Susy—now all the children have gone to bed—we can talk.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II—SCENE 2

(Author's Note: If preferred, Scene 3 may continue immediately, without a curtain. In this case Roat simply drags Mike into bedroom and action continues as described in Scene 3.)

TIME: A minute later.

ALTERATIONS TO SET: None.

ON RISE: We can just see Mike's legs disappearing into the bedroom as Roat drags his body in there. Susy is standing D. C. After a few moments Susy cautiously feels her way round the settee towards the stairway but just as she reaches for the railing Roat comes silently out of the bedroom and bars her way. She recoils and works her way backwards to where she was before. Roat goes up stairs and fixes a chain and padlock to door handle and railing.

ROAT. I'm going to lock us in, Susy . . . so . . . the dog it was that died! Of course I knew they'd try and kill me the moment we had the doll. But when Carlino walked up to his car just now he saw it start up—all by itself—and drive straight at him. I couldn't resist switching on the light just to catch his expression . . . I don't think I've ever seen anyone look quite so surprised! So it's in the safe, is it? (No reply from Susy. He comes down stairs.) Take your time. At best Sam will just be arriving at St. Vincent's Hospital. You see, when his bus arrived at Asbury Park he was given a phone message which said you had had a slight accident and by the time they've kept him waiting around there I'll have finished. So will you give it to me now—please.

SUSY. I won't give it to you.

ROAT. I won't give it to you. I won't give it to you . . . you remind me of someone else who talked like that . . . only she said "I don't know where it is . . . I don't know—I don't know . . ." over and over again. (Then from his zip bag he takes out a very lightweight chiffon scarf and turns and watches her.) I've heard people say that before—only she was more stubborn . . . I don't know—I don't know. (He flings the scarf into the air so it almost floats over her head. She recoils from it violently and as the scarf tangles in her fingers she backs away from it as though someone had banded her a snake. Finally it falls to the floor. He watches all this as though it was some kind of experiment. Quietly.) Do you