

B – Kate

KELLER. You don't sleep, that's why. She's wearing out more bedroom slippers than shoes.

KATE. I had a terrible night. *(She stops moving.)* I never had a night like that.

CHRIS. *(Looks at Keller.)* What was it, Mom? Did you dream?

KATE. More, more than a dream.

CHRIS. *(Hesitantly.)* About Larry?

KATE. I was fast asleep, and... *(Raising her arm over the audience.)* Remember the way he used to fly low past the house when he was in training? When we used to see his face in the cockpit going by? That's the way I saw him. Only high up. Way, way up, where the clouds are. He was so real I could reach out and touch him. And suddenly he started to fall. And crying, crying to me... "Mom, Mom!" I could hear him like he was in the room. "Mom!"...it was his voice! If I could touch him I knew I could stop him, if I could only... *(Breaks off, allowing her outstretched hand to fall.)* I woke up and it was so funny... The wind...it was like the roaring of his engine. I came out here...I must've still been half asleep. I could hear that roaring like he was going by. The tree snapped right in front of me...and I like...came awake. *(She is looking at tree. She suddenly realizes something, turns with a reprimanding finger shaking slightly at Keller.)* See? We should never have planted that tree. I said so in the first place: It was too soon to plant a tree for him.

CHRIS. *(Alarmed.)* Too soon!

KATE. *(Angering.)* We rushed into it. Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him. I said not to plant it yet. *(To Keller.)* I told you to...!

CHRIS. Mother, Mother! *(She looks into his face.)* The wind blew it down. What significance has that got? What are you talking about? Mother, please... Don't go through it all again, will you? It's no good, it doesn't accomplish anything. I've been thinking, y'know?—maybe we ought to put our minds to forgetting him?

KATE. That's the third time you've said that this week.

CHRIS. Because it's not right; we never took up our lives again. We're like at a railroad station waiting for a train that never comes in.

KATE. *(Presses top of her head.)* Get me an aspirin, heh?

CHRIS. Sure, and let's break out of this, heh, Mom? I thought the four of us might go out to dinner a couple of nights, maybe go dancing out at the shore.

KATE. Fine. *(To Keller.)* We can do it tonight.

KELLER. Swell with me!

CHRIS. Sure, let's have some fun. *(To Mother.)* You'll start with this aspirin. *(He goes up and into house with new spirit. Her smile vanishes.)*

KATE. *(With an accusing undertone.)* Why did he invite her here?

KELLER. Why does that bother you?

KATE. She's been in New York three and a half years, why all of a sudden...?

KELLER. Well, maybe...maybe he just wanted to see her...

KATE. Nobody comes seven hundred miles "just to see."

KELLER. What do you mean? He lived next door to the girl all his life, why shouldn't he want to see her again? *(Kate looks at him critically.)* Don't look at me like that, he didn't tell me any more than he told you.

KATE. *(A warning and a question.)* He's not going to marry her.

KELLER. How do you know he's even thinking of it?

KATE. It's got that about it.

KELLER. *(Sharply watching her reaction.)* Well? So what?

KATE. *(Alarmed.)* What's going on here, Joe?

KELLER. Now listen, kid...

KATE. *(Avoiding contact with him.)* She's not his girl, Joe; she knows she's not.

KELLER. You can't read her mind.

KATE. Then why is she still single? New York is full of men, why isn't she married? *(Pause.)* Probably a hundred people told her she's foolish, but she's waited.

KELLER. How do you know why she waited?

KATE. She knows what I know, that's why. She's faithful as a rock. In my worst moments, I think of her waiting, and I know again that I'm right.

KELLER. Look, it's a nice day. What are we arguing for?