

MILLIE. I'm set!

HAL. GO! Go—go—go! (He slaps her fanny and she starts running for the gate to alley. He dashes to the porch corner, grabs the porch post and easily jumps the fence dropping in the alley just ahead of Millie who has just gone through the gate. Hal races off ahead of her and she follows yelling after him.)

MILLIE. Hey, that's no fair! (Hal and Millie are gone.)

FLO. (Rises.) Alan!

ALAN. (Crosses to L. of c. chair in yard.) Yes?

FLO. (Crosses to c.) How did a boy like him get into college?

ALAN. On a football scholarship.

FLO. Oh.

ALAN. He made a spectacular record in a little high school down in Arkansas.

FLO. But a fraternity! Don't those boys have more . . . breeding?

ALAN. Maybe, but fraternities like to pledge big athletes—for the publicity. And Hal could have been All-American —

MRS. POTTS. (Delighted.) All-American!

ALAN. —if he'd only studied. (Puts L. foot on stump.) But I know what you're thinking, Mrs. Owens.

FLO. How did the other boys feel about him? Was he popular?

ALAN. They didn't like him, Mrs. Owens. They were pretty rough on him. (Takes foot down.) When he came around, every man on that campus seemed to bristle. When I first met him I couldn't stand the way he bragged and swaggered and posed all over the place, and then I found out he's done most of the things he says he's done. He's a fabulous character!

FLO. Do you like him now, Alan?

ALAN. Yes. Hal's really a nice guy, believe it or not. We shared the same room till he flunked out. He told me some of the things he was up against as a kid. It was pretty typical.

FLO. Is he wild?

ALAN. Oh . . . not really. He just . . . Mrs. Owens, if you'd like to withdraw your invitation, I'm sure —

MRS. POTTS. No —

FLO. Oh, no, Alan—not if you . . . Does he drink?

ALAN. A little. (Trying to minimize. He crosses to L. of Flo.)

Mrs. Owens, Hal pays attention to me. I'll see he behaves.

FLO. I wouldn't want anything to happen to Millie.

MADGE. Mom, Millie can take care of herself.

START

FLO. Maybe you're right. Come on, Helen. (As she and Mrs. Potts go off.) Oh, dear, why can't things be simple? (Mrs. Potts exits into kitchen—Flo follows her. Alan crosses to corner of porch.)

ALAN. Madge, I'm sorry I have to go back to school this fall. It's Dad's idea.

MADGE. (Crosses to L. of stump.) I'm sure of that.

ALAN. (Crosses to below c. chair.) What? Wasn't Dad nice last night while I was out fixing the drinks?

MADGE. Oh, yes, he's always very nice to me—very polite. He explained how sorry he was you had to go away.

ALAN. Are you sorry?

MADGE. Of course. (Sits on stump.) There'll be lots of pretty girls at college.

ALAN. (Sits on c. chair.) Honestly, Madge, my entire four years I never found a girl I liked.

MADGE. I don't believe that.

ALAN. It's true. They're all so affected, if you wanted a date with them you had to call them a month in advance.

MADGE. Really?

ALAN. Madge, it's sort of hard for me to say this, but I honestly never believed that a girl like you could care for me.

MADGE. (Touched.) Alan . . .

ALAN. I . . . I hope you do care for me, Madge. (He kisses her. Hal enters D. R., stops when he sees them and puts L. foot on step.)

HAL. Hey, Seymour . . . (Madge and Alan break apart abruptly. She crosses to shed. He turns to Hal.)

ALAN. What's the matter, Hal? Can't you stand to see anyone else kiss a pretty girl?

HAL. What the hell, Seymour . . .

ALAN. Hal, will you watch your language!

MADGE. Alan! It's all right.

HAL. I'm sorry. (Beckons Alan to him.)

ALAN. (Crossing to him.) What's the trouble? (Madge walks away to U. L. lawn, sensing that Hal wants to talk privately.)

HAL. Look, Seymour, I . . . I never been on a picnic.

ALAN. Not even when you were a kid?

HAL. No.

ALAN. Why, that's impossible! Everybody's been on a picnic.

END