

START

ROSEMARY. You can't go off without me. Not after tonight. *That's sense.*

HOWARD. (*A little nervous.*) Honey, be reasonable.

ROSEMARY. Take me with you.

HOWARD. What'd people say?

ROSEMARY. (*Almost vicious.*) To *hell* with what people'd say!

HOWARD. (*Shocked—looks around to see if this is overheard.*) Honey!

ROSEMARY. What'd people say if I thumbed my nose at them? What'd people say if I walked down the street and showed 'em my pink panties? What do I care what people say?

HOWARD. (*Crosses D. to R. of stump.*) Honey, you're not yourself tonight.

ROSEMARY. Yes I am. I'm more myself than I ever was. Take me with you, Howard. If you don't, I don't know what I'll do with myself. I mean it.

HOWARD. (*Crosses to her, leans over her.*) Now look, Honey, you better go upstairs and get some sleep. You gotta start school in the morning. We'll talk all this over Saturday.

ROSEMARY. (*Grabs his arms.*) Maybe you won't be back Saturday. Maybe you won't be back ever again.

HOWARD. (*Pulling away a step.*) Rosemary, you know better than that.

ROSEMARY. (*Front.*) Then what's the next thing in store for me? To be nice to the next man, then the next . . . till there's no one left to care whether I'm nice to him or not. Till I'm ready for the grave and don't have anyone to take me there.

HOWARD. (*Crosses L. to C. ridge.*) Now, Rosemary!

ROSEMARY. (*Looking him in the eyes.*) You can't let that happen to me, Howard.

HOWARD. I don't understand. When we first started going together, you were the best sport I ever saw, always good for a laugh.

ROSEMARY. I can't laugh any more.

HOWARD. (*Starts u. s.*) We'll talk it over Saturday.

ROSEMARY. We'll talk it over now.

HOWARD. (*Stops, crosses D., sits on stump. Squirming.*) Well . . . Honey . . . I . . .

ROSEMARY. (*Looking at him.*) You said you were gonna marry me, Howard. You said when I got back from my vacation, you'd be waitin' with the preacher.

HOWARD. Honey, I've had an awful busy summer and . . .

ROSEMARY. Where's the preacher, Howard? Where is he?

HOWARD. Rosemary, I'm 42 years old. A person forms certain ways of livin', then one day it's too late to change.

ROSEMARY. (*Rises, crosses to c.*) I'm no spring chicken either. Maybe I'm a little older than you think I am. I've formed my ways, too. But they can be changed. (*Turns, crosses R. to steps.*) They gotta be changed. It's no good livin' like this, in rented rooms, meetin' a bunch of old maids for supper every night, then comin' back home alone.

HOWARD. (*Rises, crosses to c.*) I know how it is, Rosemary. My life's no bed of roses either.

ROSEMARY. (*Turning to him.*) Then why don't you do something about it?

HOWARD. I figure . . . there's some bad things about every life.

ROSEMARY. There's too much bad about mine. Each year, I keep tellin' myself, is the last. Something'll happen. Then nothing ever does . . . except I get a little crazier all the time.

HOWARD. (*Hopelessly.*) Well . . .

ROSEMARY. A well's a hole in the ground, Howard.

HOWARD. I wasn't tryin' to be funny, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY. All this time you just been leadin' me on.

HOWARD. (*Vehement.*) Rosemary, that's not so! I've not been trying to lead you on.

ROSEMARY. I'd like to know what else you call it.

HOWARD. Well . . . can't we talk about it Saturday? I'm dead tired and I got a busy week ahead, and . . .

ROSEMARY. (*Runs to him, embraces him desperately.*) You gotta marry me, Howard.

HOWARD. (*Tortured.*) Well . . . I can't marry you now.

ROSEMARY. (*Looking at him.*) You can be over here in the morning.

HOWARD. Sometimes you're unreasonable.

ROSEMARY. You gotta marry me.

END

HOWARD. What'll you do about your job?

ROSEMARY. (*Encouraged.*) Alvah Jackson can take my place till they get someone new from the agency.

HOWARD. I'll have to pay Fred Jenkins to take care of the store for a few days.