

Snowed Under

A holiday farce
by David Jacklin
(writing as Alan Smithee)

Based on a screenplay by
F. Hugh Herbert and Brown Holmes
for the movie
“Snowed Under”
Released by Warner Brothers, 1936

FINAL

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The Characters

ALAN TANNER, a playwright, about 40

(Alan wears slacks, a shirt with a sleeveless sweater and a tie and deck shoes or similar. He wears a coat and toe rubbers when he enters)

ALICE MERRIWEATHER, Alan's first wife, about 35

(Alice dresses conservatively, in tweed skirt and jacket, with hair pulled back; she enters with a coat, hat, gloves and galoshes; at the end, she appears in a very sultry, very tasteful peignoir.)

DAISY LOWELL, Alan's second wife, about 30

(Daisy dresses flamboyantly, with furs and shimmery material. Her underwear is satin or silk.)

PAT LAYTON, a young woman interested in Alan, about 21

(Pat is a rich co-ed in a fashionable but juvenile skirt and top, with a coat and hat to match. The peignoir she wears later is drop-dead sexy.)

HERMAN ROWE, about 30, deputy sheriff

(Herman wears work pants, a belt, a plaid shirt and hunting hat and a heavy coat and boots.)

ARTHUR LAYTON, Broadway Producer, about 55 to 60

(Arthur wears a bowler hat, an expensive lamb's-wool collared coat and a dark three-piece suit.)

MACKENZIE MCBRIDE, a young lawyer about 25

(Mac wears pleated trousers, a sports coat, tie but no vest, with a black overcoat and saddle shoes with toe-rubbers.)

MRS. CANTERBURY, Alan's housekeeper, about 60

(Mrs. C wears a well-worn housedress with an apron, light shoes; she has a practical coat, a scarf tied 'round her head, mittens and heavy boots for her exit and last scene entrance.)

SHERIFF ECKER (Harvey), about 60

(The Sheriff wears a hunting cap, a heavy coat with boots and work pants showing)

The Setting

A country cabin in Connecticut, near Bridgeport

The Time

Act One

Christmas Eve, 1935. Late afternoon, then evening.

Act Two

Immediately following Act One, then Christmas morning

SNOWED UNDER
A farce in 2 acts
ACT ONE
Scene One

A well-appointed cabin in Connecticut, probably near water, or more accurately, as we can see deep snow outside the windows, near ice. The main entrance is USL, with a large multi-lite window DS of it. There is a fire-place CR. There is a platform US with two steps up and three doors US – all lead to bedrooms. Above the fire-place R is a door leading to the kitchen; below it is a curtained arch leading to a study extreme DR. There should be a sofa in front of the fire-place, a couple of comfortable arm-chairs, a 1930s style radio and a writing desk. There is a large swivel chair near the windows, turned with its back toward us at the top. We assume that the washroom is unseen, off the kitchen. In all, the whole has a very nice Currier And Ives feel.

(MRS. CANTERBURY enters, moving around the stage, tidying things. She switches on the radio and fiddles with knobs while it warms up. As the sound comes in, she exits to the kitchen, listening.)

RADIO VOICE: *(This is a Louella Parsons-style radio gossip show.)* And finally, dear listeners, all of Broadway is asking: where is Alan Tanner? Just two weeks before the opening of Tanners' sensational new play, the Broadway maestro has disappeared. This reporter has it on good authority that the moody Tanner stormed out of a rehearsal for the third act of his new comedy and into the snow – and has not been seen since! A little birdie told this reporter that Tanner's touch of genius has been floundering with this play – it was, in fact, the *third* third act that Tanner presented that caused the blowup!

All of Broadway has been anxiously asking whether Tanner's new play, Road's End, will provide a spark in a Broadway season which up to now has been woefully lacking in a legitimate hit but now the question is "will Road's End be the end of the road for Alan Tanner?" Merry Christmas, everybody, and stay tuned to find out!

(Some swing music begins on the radio. A telephone begins to ring in the study and, eventually, MRS. CANTERBURY enters from the kitchen, switches off the radio and answers it.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: Hello?

(The main door opens and ALAN enters, carrying a suitcase and a typewriter case)

Now, listen, you! Who do you think you're talking to? I've never heard such –

ALAN: Wait, Liza! I know who that is! *(He takes the phone from her.)* Arthur! Well, it had to be you – talking to a lady like that. *(He listens for a moment.)* I'm not coming back until I've finished. I have left the city – I have left the country. If you chase me up here, I will leave the planet. *(He listens again.)* Tomorrow, you will have, on your desk, a brand new, crisp, clean third act. I promise. *(He listens again.)* I know I've promised before, but this time, I don't have my fingers crossed. Or anything else. *(He listens again.)* I cannot work in New York. There is too much noise, too many people, too many distractions. No, not all of them wear skirts. All right, I admit a good number of them wear skirts. Arthur, you can threaten me with all the tortures you like. Tomorrow. Christmas. Christmas morning! The more you talk the less work I get done. *(He pulls the phone away from his ear and looks shocked. Holds the phone back to his face.)* Merry Christmas to you, too.

(He hangs up the phone and picks up the suitcase, which he has put down. The phone rings. He puts down the suitcase, picks up the phone.)

Christmas morning!

(He slams the phone down, then picks up the suitcase again, along with the typewriter case, crossing to the desk. He puts the typewriter case on the desk and the suitcase on the platform edge.)

Hello, Liza. Thank you for opening the place up for me.

MRS. CANTERBURY: I figured you'd be coming up again sooner or later. Nice to see somebody in the old place again.

ALAN: I thought, if I drove up here for even one night, I could crash through the wall . . .

MRS. CANTERBURY: . . . crash through the wall . . . !

ALAN: Of my writer's block. I just can't seem to get any work done.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Mmph. If Luke used that excuse in the barn, the work'd just keep piling up, anyway! Ha-ha! That your producer on the phone?

ALAN: Mm-hmm.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Pretty rude fella, isn't he?

ALAN: I really can't blame him. I've given him three third acts and not one of them good enough to rehearse. I need some peace and quiet.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Hmph. I doubt you'll get it.

ALAN: Why?

(MRS. CANTERBURY, on her way to the kitchen, jerks her thumb in the direction of the large swivel chair.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: She looked cold, so I let her in. *(She exits to the kitchen.)*

ALAN: What?

(The chair swivels and we see PAT LAYTON in it, first her legs, then the rest of her. She is young and very attractive.)

PAT: Merry Christmas, darling.

ALAN: What are you doing here?

PAT: Not happy to see me?

ALAN: Well, of course, I . . . that's not the point. What are you doing? How did you know I'd be here?

PAT: When I heard you'd stormed out of rehearsal, I knew you'd end up here, so I hopped in the car.

ALAN: Don't you have classes?

PAT: Christmas vacation. I'm going to spend it with you – and continue my education.

(The phone begins to ring again.)

ALAN: I'm a very bad education for college-girls. How did you know I'd end up here? Am I that predictable?

PAT: Daddy tracked you here with one phone call. All he did was blow a dime.

ALAN: And if he tracks *you* here, he'll blow a gasket.

PAT: *(Moving toward him.)* But, I *am* here, so we might as well take advantage.

ALAN: I am *not* taking advantage . . . of anything! You shouldn't be here.

PAT: Aren't you going to answer the phone?

ALAN: No! I'm not here – I mean, you're not here – I mean, you can't be here!

PAT: Alan, don't be mean. I knew you were upset and I wanted to come up here and

calm you down.

ALAN: Hah!

PAT: *(She pushes him down on the sofa and sits on his lap, kissing him in between words.)* You *(chin)* just *(neck)* need *(other side of neck)* to relax *(nose)* a little. *(She kisses him on the mouth.)*

ALAN: *(When she lets him go.)* Yet, somehow, that didn't relax me.

PAT: Give it time.

ALAN: I don't have time. I've got a play to finish. Pat, you're a sweet kid but . . .

PAT: Don't you want your Christmas present?

ALAN: What is it?

PAT: *(Smiles coyly.)* Guess.

(MRS. CANTERBURY enters from the kitchen and crosses to the phone, which continues to ring.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: *(Seeing PAT on ALAN.)* Hummph! That man's chickens are all going to come home to roost, one day.

PAT: Go on. Guess.

ALAN: That kind of guesswork can get a guy into trouble.

PAT: With who?

ALAN: With whom. And with your father – *whom* is on the other end of that phone. Liza! Don't . . . !

(MRS. CANTERBURY reaches the phone and picks it up.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: Hello?

ALAN: . . . answer that.

PAT: Maybe it's not him.

(MRS. CANTERBURY takes the phone with her and crosses to ALAN. It has a long cord.)

ALAN: Maybe it's Santa, asking what present I want for Christmas.

PAT: Tell him it's already here.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Mister Layton.

PAT: Oh, it *is* him! Hi, Daddy!

(ALAN panics, but MRS. CANTERBURY has the mouth piece covered with her hand.)

ALAN: Sssh! *(He takes the phone.)* Thank you, Liza. Hello, Arthur. Thanks for calling back. I was afraid I wouldn't get to talk to you some more. Yes, I know – act three. I've been applying all my little grey cells. I have some ideas. Very definite ideas.

PAT: *(Whispering in his ear.)* So, do I.

MRS. CANTERBURY: *(Exiting to the kitchen.)* I'll bet you do.

ALAN: But, I doubt we can use them on stage.

(PAT chuckles and snuggles up to ALAN.)

Yes, I know when we open, Arthur. It's been in all the papers. Is it really next week? Well, I'll have to do something about that right away. I know. Why don't I go somewhere without distractions, without phone calls, where I can be quiet and work?

PAT: *(Whispering in his ear.)* I'm not sure *I* can be quiet. I'm kind of loud.

ALAN: *(To PAT.)* Quiet! *(To phone.)* I mean, "quiet", as in "peace and quiet" . . .

PAT: . . . or fun and games . . .

ALAN: . . . or something. All right! Good-bye, darling!

(He hangs up the phone, then picks it up again, quickly.)

Arthur!

(He hangs up again.)

PAT: I'm glad that "Good-bye, darling" wasn't for me.

ALAN: But it was. Good-bye, darling!

PAT: But, I just got here!

ALAN: And you're just going.

(He picks her up in his arms and carries her to the door.)

PAT: What are you doing?

ALAN: Removing distractions.

PAT: Is that all I am – a distraction?

ALAN: With a capital “DIS”.

PAT: Don't you want me to stay?

ALAN: Yes – but, no! I mean, you're going, right now.

PAT: But wait! *(She struggles in his arms.)* Put me down! *(He does so.)* Now, look, darling, I packed something very special to wear for you. Come on into the bedroom and let me show you.

(She starts to pull him by both hands to the SR bedroom. He forces himself away.)

ALAN: Oh, no! That's got me divorced twice already.

PAT: But, you're not married now.

ALAN: And, I'm going to stay that way. You are far too tempting. *(He picks her up again and carries her to the door.)* Ciao!

(ALAN carries her out through the door and puts her down.)

PAT: You wouldn't have turned me out in the snow, last summer .

ALAN: There wasn't any snow, last summer. And you were just a silly little junior whose father was interested in one of my plays and I was trying to be pleasant.

PAT: And now?

ALAN: And, now you're a serious senior – and not so little. *(He points at the snow.)* Look out there! That is the winter of our discontent. Scram, my love. Scoot. I've got a lot of work to do. Go on!

PAT: All right, you win. Good-bye! *(She throws her arms around him and kisses him.)* I

hope your third act's a flop!

(PAT exits; ALAN closes the door and strides across the room. PAT's lipstick is smeared on his lips. He picks up the phone to return it to the study.)

ALAN: Liza! Liza!

MRS. CANTERBURY: *(Entering.)* Where's the little . . . lady?

ALAN: I sent her home, with visions of sugar-plums dancing in her head.

MRS. CANTERBURY: I didn't think you had the will-power.

ALAN: Oh, I've got will-power. It's won't-power I lack. She's a sweet kid with a big crush for some reason. She ought to be out at a tobogganing party or on a sleigh ride or something. It's Christmas Eve, for heaven's sake.

MRS. CANTERBURY: For heaven's sake – exactly. I've got a roast on for your supper and Luke sent you a half jug of apple jack to warm up your Christmas. Do you want a glass?

ALAN: No, thanks. That stuff's nearly as distracting as a gorgeous *(insert colour of PAT's hair.)*

MR. CANTERBURY: Oh, it can't hurt. In fact, it sometimes helps Luke no end! *(With a chuckle.)*

ALAN: Nice to know. Now, listen. I'm going into the study to work. If any more gorgeous *(insert plural of colour of PAT's hair.)* come knocking on my door — let them freeze!

MRS. CANTERBURY: It'll be my pleasure. Mister Tanner, one day, all your little chickens are going to come home to roost – and then what are you going to do? *(She starts to leave.)* You might get more work done if you were wearing less lipstick.

(She exits to the kitchen. Alan wipes his face, then goes into the study, opens the typewriter and sets it up. He sits at the desk and places a sheet of paper in the typewriter. He sits, thinks for a long moment, then begins to type, faster and faster. Lights fade. Suggested scene change music: Baby, It's Cold Outside.)

END OF SCENE ONE

ACT ONE
Scene Two

(ALAN works at his typewriter. It is now night. ALAN's suitcase has been removed. Many crumpled sheets of paper surround him. He types, stops, looks at what he has typed, gets up and paces, comes back. He picks up a crumpled sheet and smooths it, reads what is on it, seems to like it, then suddenly crumples it back up again and throws it down. He sits at the typewriter again and thinks, then types with renewed energy. MRS. CANTERBURY enters from the kitchen, in her coat, scarf and gloves.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: Mister Tanner, your roast's done and turned down and I've set the oven for forty minutes. Potatoes and turnips there, too. Now, you'd better have your supper while it's hot.

ALAN: Liza, you're a weather-beaten angel.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Oh, Mister Tanner, you're all wore out. Ever since your second wife divorced you, you've been living like a hermit, trying to write your plays with one hand and keep house with the other.

ALAN: Maybe I should change hands.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Maybe you should find yourself a good woman and stick to her.

ALAN: Well, Liza, if you weren't married . . .

MRS. CANTERBURY: Oh, go 'long, Mister Tanner. You had one good woman – your first wife. Luke says this divorcin's like the fever used to be – seems like it runs through a whole neighbourhood.

ALAN: Well, you thank Luke for his wisdom. Oh, say, you want me to take you home?

MRS. CANTERBURY: No, I guess I'd better go by myself or Luke might be divorcin' me. Ha-ha!

ALAN: He-he-he-he! Goodnight.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Say, don't you want me to put a broom to this floor before I go?

ALAN: Oh, no! Don't touch that. There may be a third act in there, somewhere.

MRS. CANTERBURY: All right. Goodnight, Mister Tanner.

ALAN: Goodnight.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Be sure and have your supper. Good-bye!

(She exits through the kitchen.)

ALAN: *(Already concentrating on his typing.)* Mmm-hmm.

(ALAN continues typing. He stops and thinks a moment, then hunts around on the floor until he finds a particular crumpled paper, smooths it and reads it over. He compares it with the one in his typewriter, pulls the sheet out of the typewriter, crumples it and inserts the piece he found on the floor. He goes back to typing, then hears a car drive up and looks toward the door. A knock is heard. He leaves the study and walks cautiously toward the door.)

Who is it?

ALICE: *(OFF)* It's Alice. Remember me?

ALAN: Alice?

(ALAN opens the door. ALICE stands outside on the step with a suitcase. ALAN steps through the door to the step and embraces ALICE, kissing her. It's a LONG kiss.)

Oh, now I remember you!

ALICE: Let me go. *(ALAN kisses her again – another long kiss.)* Ooh, you swine.

ALAN: Fine talk after two years. Let's go into the bedroom and not talk for a week.

ALICE: Now, if you've got ideas in your head, you're crazy. I'm here on business.

ALAN: This kind of business?

(He kisses her again – equally long. We hear a car horn.)

ALICE: Oh! My taxi!

ALAN: I'll take care of it.

ALICE: I'll need him to take me back for the last train.

ALAN: I wouldn't think of it. Go on inside.

(ALICE comes in. ALAN goes off to pay the cab. ALICE goes to the fire to warm herself. After a moment, ALAN comes back into the cabin. He stops as he is about to close the door.)

ALAN: *(Calling OFF.)* What? No. Yes, but I'm going to drive her down to the train. She's my . . . secretary, came up here to do a little work. Well, she is! And Merry Christmas to you, too.

(ALAN goes back into the cabin, picking up ALICE's suitcase on the way. We hear the car drive away.)

(ALICE watches ALAN, smiling to herself and warming her hands at the fireplace. ALAN puts the suitcase down and moves behind her, putting his hands on her shoulders and kissing her neck.)

ALAN: Ooh! It's marvellous to see you again.

ALICE: I can tell. *(ALAN puts his arms around her waist.)* Now, now, listen, Alan! I meant that about business. I came to borrow some money.

ALAN: Well, *that* took the edge off. *(He lets go of her.)* Sit down. Let's talk about it.

(They sit on the couch. He pulls her feet up onto his lap, takes her galoshes off and warms her feet.)

How much do you need?

ALICE: Six hundred dollars? *(He looks surprised.)* Don't look like that. It's for back rent on my shop.

ALAN: If I had it, I'd give it to you, but I don't. I have a hundred and sixty three. It's all yours.

ALICE: I'm afraid that won't help. Oh, that's all right. Forget it. You see, I read in the paper that you had a play in rehearsal with Arthur Layton and I thought . . .

ALAN: I've already spent the advance, and what's more, I've only got two acts, when I need three.

ALICE: *(Giggling.)* You always did finish early, didn't you?

ALAN: Thank you. *(He pulls her closer and begins kissing her neck.)* Forget the play; let's just stay here all winter.

(She smiles as he kisses her, then, as his hand rests on her leg, pushes him away, gently.)

Oh, come on, Alice.

(She moves her legs from his lap and sits up.)

Six hundred dollars? That's why you came?

ALICE: Have you got a better reason?

ALAN: *(He smiles knowingly.)* What's in the suitcase?

ALICE: Now, my mother warned me about that look. I just thought I might have to stay the night.

ALAN: Oh, yes?

ALICE: At Liza's.

ALAN: Let's not talk about Liza. Let's talk about us.

ALICE: Now, Alan, be serious. Tell me about your third act: what's wrong with it?

ALAN: Oh, everything's wrong with it. I can't even figure out what time of year it takes place. I've gone from winter to spring to summer.

ALICE: Well, when does the third act take place now?

ALAN: Right after the second intermission.

ALICE: Very clever!

ALAN: Here! *(He gets up and gets papers from the study, handing them to her.)* Here are the first two acts. Read them, let me know what you think and then we'll talk about the third act.

ALICE: All right, but you have to leave the room. I don't want you hanging over my shoulder to see if I laugh. I know you of old.

ALAN: But, I've got to stare at your face and see whether you like it or not.

ALICE: No!

ALAN: You're no fun. Do you want a drink? Some apple jack?

ALICE: What's that?

ALAN: Apple cider. Hard apple cider. Very hard apple cider. They make it around here.

ALICE: Maybe after I've read this.

ALAN: How about some dinner?

ALICE: Yes! How about some dinner?

ALAN: How about roast beef, potatoes and turnip?

ALICE: Alan, have you learned to cook?

ALAN: No, Liza's been here. I'll fix you a plate. Oh, let me tell you about the play. There's this guy who leaves his wife for another woman . . .

ALICE: Oh, it's an autobiography!

ALAN: No, it's nothing like us, dear. This fellow's a lawyer. Then he decides . . .

ALICE: *(She sticks her fingers in her ears.)* La, la, la, la! Don't tell me!

ALAN: Yes, but the twist is, in end, you see, even though he loves his wife, they don't get back together.

ALICE: Why ever not?

ALAN: He decides he hates women and he spends the rest of his life alone.

ALICE: That should have them rolling in the aisles. Where's that dinner?

ALAN: It's coming.

(He goes to kiss her again and she presents her cheek. ALAN goes to the kitchen to prepare the dinner. ALICE sits and reads.)

ALICE: Oh, Alan?

ALAN: *(OFF.)* Yes?

ALICE: Are you still paying that — I'll say "lady" — that you married after I divorced you three hundred dollars a month in alimony?

ALAN: *(OFF.)* Well, yes and no. I'm owing her three hundred a month. And, I'm months behind.

ALICE: Oh, you poor darling. You do need a third act.

ALAN: *(OFF.)* Desperately!

ALICE: How *is* dear Daisy?

ALAN: *(OFF.)* Oh, she's "resting between roles". Which means partying as hard as my

lack of alimony payments will allow.

ALICE: No part for her in your latest opus?

ALAN: *(OFF.)* No, just fifty percent of my royalties – says the judge.

ALICE: Daisy do well, don't she?

ALAN: *(OFF.)* Daisy do.

(There is a knock at the door. ALICE continues to read, then realizes ALAN isn't answering the door. Another knock.)

ALICE: Alan?

(Another knock.)

Someone's knocking!

ALAN: *(Coming into the living room.)* Quiet!

ALICE: Quiet?

ALAN: That's not the milkman knocking! Creditors. Shush!

ALICE: Shush, nothing. This isn't one of your plays. You're not going to hide *me* in the closet.

(She pushes him gently aside, crosses to the door and opens it.)

Yes?

HERMAN: *(Entering.)* Oh, Missus Tanner! How are you? Merry Christmas!

ALICE: Herman! The milkman! Merry Christmas! How are you?

HERMAN: *(Shaking hands with her)* Fine! Only, I ain't the milkman any longer, though, Missus Tanner.

(He looks sideways at ALAN, somewhat anxiously.)

Merry Christmas, Mister Tanner.

(He crosses over to ALAN.)

ALAN: Hello, Herman.

HERMAN: Yeah. I'm a deputy sheriff, now, Missus Tanner.

ALAN: Sheriff? That's a very unwelcome word in this house.

HERMAN: Yeah, I don't like it, either. I mean, because I gotta serve you with this warrant.

(He hands ALAN some official looking documents.)

ALICE: Warrant? What for?

HERMAN: I sure hate to do it, Mister Tanner.

ALAN: Daisy Lowell. Twelve hundred dollars back alimony. Hmm. Daisy's been reading the paper, too. Twelve hundred? I didn't think I was *that* far behind.

HERMAN: I heard the judge set the bail at five thousand dollars! I sure don't want to take you to jail, Mister Tanner.

ALICE: Jail? Oh, but that's impossible. Alan's got to finish his play.

HERMAN: I'm sorry, but I ain't the judge.

ALICE: Perhaps Mister Tanner could call him.

HERMAN: On Christmas Eve! He's already pretty sore at you for yelling "Christmas morning" and hanging up on him when he called.

ALAN: Hanging up? Oh! That was him?

ALICE: Herman, maybe you can call him.

HERMAN: Missus Tanner, you don't just go around calling up judges on Christmas Eve.

ALICE: Well, where is the judge, now?

HERMAN: Oh, he'd be home, now. Just up the road there, a half-mile or so. *(He looks out the window.)* Yeah, you can see his porch light from here, but he'd be too drunk to concentrate by now, anyway.

ALICE: Well, what should we do?

HERMAN: Can I bring her lawyer in?

ALICE: Daisy's lawyer?

HERMAN: He's just out there in the car.

ALAN: What's *his* state of sobriety?

HERMAN: Oh, he's sober as a judge.

ALAN: Then, by all means, bring him in.

ALICE: And, you've got to stop calling me Missus Tanner. I haven't had that honour for years. And, with that lawyer being there, well, you'd better call me Miss, uh, Miss, uh . . .

ALAN: Merriweather.

ALICE: Miss Merriweather. My maiden name. Can you remember that?

HERMAN: Oh, sure! I'll call you Miss Merriweather. I'll try to remember, Missus Tanner. Miss Merriweather. Miss Merriweather. Yeah, I can remember that all right, Missus Tanner. Miss Merriweather. Yeah, I can remember it.

(HERMAN exits, stopping to crack a walnut on a piece of furniture on his way.)

ALAN: Well, so ends Alan Tanner. Daisy's going to land me in a country jail!

ALICE: Dear Daisy! But, Herman wouldn't do that.

ALAN: The question is "what will Daisy do?"

ALICE: We'll get this play finished, no matter what "Daisy do". Now – you get four glasses and that apple jack. Quick!

ALAN: Oh, why bother?

ALICE: Go on!

(She pushes him into the kitchen. ALICE goes to the window and looks out. We hear a loud pop from the kitchen.)

Oh! Alan! Alan!

(She runs toward the kitchen, frightened. ALAN comes out with a jug of apple jack and a corkscrew with a cork on it)

ALAN: What's the matter? You look like a frightened rabbit.

ALICE: I . . . I thought I heard a shot.

ALAN: Oh, you thought I kept a gun in the icebox for just such an emergency?

ALICE: Yes. I hoped you'd blown your silly head off.

ALAN: And could that still mean so much to you . . . Miss Merriweather?

ALICE: Oh, go jump in the lake.

ALAN: Can't. Frozen over. You know, when I saw that frightened little face of yours just now, it brought a surge of blood to my . . . heart. When I think of the things that I have done to you . . .

ALICE: Yes, you fantastic fool. You threw me over for a gold-digging . . .

ALAN: Yes, I know, I know. And I even married her. I regret both. We both regret both.

(Someone knocks on the door.)

ALICE: You think so? When you're behind bars, I'm coming to throw peanuts at you, you conceited gorilla.

(He tries to kiss her but she avoids him, goes to the door and opens it. HERMAN and MCBRIDE enter.)

HERMAN: This is the lawyer, Miss, uh . . .

ALICE: Merriweather.

HERMAN: Merriweather? Right. She's Mister Tanner's, uh . . .

ALICE: Secretary.

HERMAN: Sexatary, right.

ALICE: How do you do? You're Mister . . . ?

MCBRIDE: McBride. I'm happy to know you.

ALICE: Won't you come in and sit down? You know, a funny thing but I know a lawyer by the name of McBride.

MCBRIDE: Levinsky, Coolidge and McBride?

ALICE: Yes!

MCBRIDE: Well, that's my dad.

ALICE: Isn't that wonderful? He's my father's lawyer.

MCBRIDE: Uhm . . . Merriweather. I don't seem to remember the name.

ALAN: Well, the whole Merriweather family is getting on in years now. They don't get out much.

(ALICE sticks her tongue out at ALAN.)

HERMAN: Oh, ain't that too bad?

ALICE: Allow me. *(Introducing ALAN.)* Mister McBride, your victim.

(The men shake hands.)

MCBRIDE: How do you do?

ALAN: If I told you I was glad to see you, you'd know I was lying, wouldn't you?

MCBRIDE: Ha, ha! Yes!

ALAN: Some apple jack?

MCBRIDE: I don't know. What is it?

ALAN: Apple juice.

HERMAN: Sort of.

MCBRIDE: Thanks!

ALICE: Oh, yes. Do sit down. Be comfortable. There.

(She hands him a glass of apple jack.)

Uh, soda?

MCBRIDE: No, thanks. I find soda too strong for me.

ALICE: Good! Soda, Herman?

HERMAN: No, thanks, Miss, uh . . .

ALICE: That's fine. No soda.

HERMAN: . . . Merriweather.

ALICE: Well, uh, here's luck!

ALAN: Luck!

(They touch glasses and drink.)

MCBRIDE: Oh, that's unusual apple juice. What kind of apples is it made from?

ALAN: Windfall. One gust of wind and you'll fall over. Cheers!

(ALAN and ALICE drink again, so the others are forced to finish their drinks.)

MCBRIDE: I want you to know, Mister Tanner, that the warrant was issued only at the insistence of my client. Levinsky, Coolidge and McBride have no desire to . . .

ALICE: Have some more, Mister McBride. *(She pours him another glass.)* We know you don't want to put Mister Tanner in the hoosegow. Herman doesn't. No one does.

ALAN: Daisy do.

ALICE: Well, that's just silly. The only way for Daisy to get her alimony is for to Alan finish his play.

ALAN: It opens next week.

ALICE: And, then Daisy can get her money.

MCBRIDE: What if the play's a flop?

ALAN: Drink up, Mister McBride.

(MCBRIDE swallows his second glass of apple jack.)

ALICE: It's sure to be a hit. Why, this is Alan Tanner, the Broadway maestro!

HERMAN: How long does it take to finish a play?

(HERMAN is constantly cracking walnuts in his fists.)

ALICE: Well, we could finish it by tomorrow, if we worked all night.

HERMAN: No. The sheriff said I had to find Mister Tanner and bring him in tonight.

MCBRIDE: The law is the law.

ALAN: Taught you that in law school, did they?

MCBRIDE: *(Innocently.)* Yes.

ALICE: But, if we can get the play done, there's no need for arrests, are there?

ALAN: Is there.

ALICE: Is there what? And, anyway . . .

(She glances out the window and pours more apple jack for MCBRIDE.)

. . . neither the sheriff or the judge can be angry if we're all snowed in, can they?

MCBRIDE: Snowed in?

ALAN: Look there! You can't even see the judge's porch light. We'll be snowed in soon.

MCBRIDE: Snowed in? *(He looks out the window and knocks back his apple jack.)*

ALAN: Snowed under! *(Alan knocks back his apple jack.)*

MCBRIDE: *(Already feeling the apple jack.)* Well, it's okay with me. How about you, Deputy? It's your party.

HERMAN: *(Eating walnuts and drinking apple jack.)* I don't know. I got my duties to perform. Besides, where would we sleep?

ALICE: Oh, there are two spare bedrooms right there. It'll all be very cozy, won't it? The only thing is – I'm afraid that's all the apple jack Mister Tanner has. Have some more, Mister McBride.

MCBRIDE: Oh, well, I . . .

(ALICE fills MCBRIDE's glass again.)

HERMAN: I got a full gallon of three-year old apple jack in the car. Fella give it to me for proving he was innocent of boot-legging.

ALICE: Well, it's perfect then. While you two are tucked up in there, Mister Tanner and I'll finish the play. Then everybody'll be satisfied. If you'll excuse me, I'll just go and arrange your rooms.

(ALICE runs up to the bedrooms and goes into the SL one.)

ALAN: Gentlemen! Put your feet up; make yourself at home.

MCBRIDE: *(Feeling the jack a lot now.)* Uh, thanks. *(He removes his coat.)*

HERMAN: The apple jack I got in the car is a lot better than this. *(He removes his coat.)*

ALAN: It is, huh? *(He hangs the coats up.)*

HERMAN: Yeah.

(ALICE comes out of the SL bedroom, opens the C one, turns on a light and looks in.)

ALICE: Oh, this is a lovely room for you, Herman.

HERMAN: Thank you, Miss . . .

ALICE: Merriweather.

(MCBRIDE and HERMAN take off their coats.)

HERMAN: Yeah, Merriweather.

(ALICE opens the SR bedroom door and steps in, turning on the light, then stopping in surprise.)

ALICE: Oh! Well, what in the world? *(Stepping back out of the bedroom.)* Oh, Alan!
Alan!

(ALAN runs to the bedroom.)

ALAN: What's the matter?

ALICE: I found something in your bed.

ALAN: In my bed? What?

(ALICE marches into the bedroom and comes out, pulling PAT, clad in some filmy nightwear.)

Huh?

PAT: Hello, darling! What's all the excitement?

ALAN: What are you doing there?

PAT: The roads were too bad for me to drive back today, so I parked in town and snuck back in while you were working. *(Indicating ALICE.)* Now, who's *that*?

ALAN: Don't complicate things. I'll have enough trouble explaining *you* to *her*. Alice, you know this little half-wit here . . .

PAT: Layton is the name. Pat Layton.

(She stands in the group, quite oblivious to her attire.)

ALICE: That's never Arthur Layton's little girl?

ALAN: I'm afraid it is.

PAT: What do you mean, "it"? Do I look like an "it" to you?

HERMAN: Nope. Definitely not.

(MCBRIDE pours another glass of apple jack.)

ALAN: She came here this morning, but I sent her away. I swear I did.

ALICE: Oh, really? Then, what's she doing here, now?

ALAN: She's just a fool kid, you know.

PAT: I'll tell her if you won't. I'm in love with him, and I came up here to be with him and I'm not a bit ashamed of it, even if you are, Alan Tanner.

ALICE: Well! Isn't that interesting?

ALAN: Yes, it . . . would you . . . Alice! . . . get your things and . . . ?

PAT: First tell me something. Who is she?

ALAN: That's my wife.

PAT: Your wife!

ALAN: But it doesn't count. She's just my first wife.

ALICE: Oh!

(Alice walks away in disgust.)

HERMAN: It's like fishin'. If you throw them back, they don't count.

ALAN: Now . . . her . . . you . . . Alice, please, where's your sense of humour?

ALICE: It went WHOOSH! up the chimney when I walked in that bedroom door!

ALAN: Darling, that child doesn't mean anything to me. Why, last summer she was just a skinny little kid.

MCBRIDE: They grow fast around here.

HERMAN: Yep. Fresh milk and country air.

ALAN: Don't interrupt!

(A knock at the door.)

ALICE: More company! Let's have a party! *(ALICE opens the door)* Come on in!

(DAISY enters from the snowstorm.)

DAISY: You gonna let me sit out there in the car all night? Fine way to treat a lady!

ALICE: Dear Daisy!

HERMAN: Say! *(He sniffs at DAISY.)* Have you been nipping at my apple jack?

DAISY: Aw, so sue me! *(Taking in the group, including PAT's déshabillé.)* Well, if it's not too personal a question, what goes on here?

ALAN: Nothing. At least, not the work I came up here to do.

DAISY: Never mind work. Get your coat on, Tanner. You're jail-house bound. Hic!

(DAISY looks a little sick and sways.)

Excuse me. I think I need to find some horizontal.

(DAISY heads for the SL bedroom.)

MCBRIDE: Where are you going, Missus Tanner?

DAISY: Do I have to tell my lawyer everything? *(she stops and turns around)* And a fine lawyer you are. Not only do you let me sit out there and freeze to death in that deputy's old rattle-trap but you don't even collect my alimony for me. Wait until I tell Coolidge, Levinsky and your old man that! Fine lawyer you are!

(DAISY turns to ALAN.)

And you! What is this, Old Home Week? A convention of all your wives? That oughta in'erest the judge. You keep an eye on him, deputy. *(She turns and bumps into PAT.)* Well, who are you?

PAT: Alan, who is this woman?

ALICE: Oh, it's just another one of Alan's wives.

HERMAN: But, he threw her back, too.

ALICE: Splash!

PAT: Another one? I don't believe it.

DAISY: Oh, you don't, huh? Well, you just come along with us to the jail where I'm taking him for not paying me my back alimony. *(She stops to focus on PAT's attire.)* But you'd better put your mittens on, first. Baby, it's cold outside.

(DAISY goes into the C bedroom and closes the door. PAT goes back into the SR bedroom, throws a peignoir over herself and comes back in to join them.)

ALAN: I need a drink.

ALICE: We all do.

HERMAN: Don't mind if I do!

(They all head over to the jug of apple jack.)

I'd like to have you try some of the apple jack I got in my car – if there's any left.

PAT: *(She leans against ALAN.)* Darling, what did that woman mean about jail?

ALAN: Do we have to go through all that again?

ALICE: *(Steps between and leads her to MCBRIDE.)* She's having him arrested for failure to pay twelve hundred dollars back alimony. This is her lawyer, Mister McBride.

MCBRIDE: *(Flustered by PAT's attire and a little drunk.)* I'm very . . . I'm hap – very meet-y to hap you – meet.

(Pat and McBride, rather inanely, shake hands. There seems to be some kind of connection.)

ALAN: And, this gentleman represents the law: Mister Rowe.

PAT: Wait a minute! Aren't you the guy who delivered milk to our cottage last year?

HERMAN: No, I'd have remembered *you*. But I'm in the law enforcement business now. Mister Merriweather, I'll have to take you to jail.

ALICE: Tanner.

HERMAN: Who?

ALICE: Mister Tanner.

HERMAN: Right, Mister Tanniweather.

PAT: Now, just a minute. Mister McBride, I'm going to end this farce right now. I'll pay the twelve hundred dollars.

ALAN: No, Pat, you'd . . .

ALICE: . . . you'd have to produce five thousand dollars for his bail or he goes to jail tonight. Which sounds like a fine idea.

PAT: Five thousand? All right, I'll call my father.

(She heads for the phone.)

ALAN & ALICE: No!

PAT: No?

ALAN & ALICE: No!

ALAN: You don't want him coming and finding you here . . . like that.

PAT: Like this?

ALICE: Like those!

PAT: All right. I'll cable my mother. She's in Cairo.

(DAISY comes out of the bedroom.)

DAISY: Cairo? I played that town once. Coal-miners! *(She shudders.)* The language! But, they loved me! They loved little Daisy. I thought I'd never get out of Illinois alive.

PAT: Cairo, Egypt! She'll cable me the money.

ALAN: Oh, no, Pat. I couldn't think of . . .

PAT: Don't be Victorian. We love each other. Isn't that enough?

ALICE: Isn't that sweet? Alan, are you really in love with this infant?

PAT: *(Hands on hips and puffing up her chest in indignation.)* Infant!

HERMAN: Nope. Nope. Not sayin' a word.

DAISY: You're gonna marry Miss Snooty, here, Alan? Oh, don't do it. She's got a mean eye. Even if she is ready to lend you the dough, she's got a mean eye.

ALAN: Herman, take me to jail! Anything to get out of this madhouse.

PAT: Alan!

(ALAN runs into the kitchen, passing DAISY.)

DAISY: Hi! Remember me, Mister Tanner? *(DAISY leans drunkenly on the furniture.)* Listen, baby, he goes to jail and there's nothing you can do about it.

(PAT passes her.)

PAT: Miss Layton to you!

(PAT goes into the SR bedroom.)

DAISY: Miss Layton? You missed dressin', if you ask me! Hah! I crack me up. Stand still, Alice. You're spinning the room.

(PAT re-enters with a suitcase, still in her negligee but with her boots on.)

PAT: Hmmph!

(PAT exits through the door into the night.)

DAISY: Ooh! Get her!

(DAISY crosses to HERMAN, who is pouring a glass of apple jack)

She's gonna get frost-bit, if she's not careful. Oh, thank you, Harper! *(She takes his glass)* Bottom's up! As we might say to Miss Layton. *(She knocks back the apple jack.)*

MCBRIDE: Missus Tanner, don't you think you've had enough?

DAISY: Kuh-why-et! Who are you to tell me when I've had enough?

(We hear the sound of a car revving, gears grind and then the car roars off in snow. A moment later, there is a tremendous crash of metal, glass and wood.)

HERMAN: What was that?

(ALAN comes out of the bedroom.)

ALAN: Hey! Car over the bridge!

(ALAN, MCBRIDE and HERMAN run to the door.)

HERMAN: My car!

(All three run OFF; the following dialogue is from OFF)

ALAN: Pat! Pat!

MCBRIDE: Is she badly hurt?

ALAN: I don't know. Everything's on top of her.

MCBRIDE: Move that suitcase. *(There is the sound of a big splash.)* Careful.

ALAN: Let's get her out of there. Up!

MCBRIDE: All right!

(ALAN enters, carrying a limp PAT in his arms. MCBRIDE and HERMAN follow him in.)

HERMAN: Mister McBride!

MCBRIDE: What?

HERMAN: Look at my car. Now, we'll never get him to jail.

MCBRIDE: Of course not. That's why she did it. She's quite a girl.

HERMAN: Love must be a funny thing.

(He runs OFF again and returns after a moment with another jug of

apple jack.)

(Meanwhile, ALAN places an unconscious PAT on the sofa. DAISY and ALICE look on.)

ALAN: There! Pat! Are you hurt?

(HERMAN runs over to the sofa, in front of DAISY.)

HERMAN: Excuse me. *(He puts the jug down beside the other and turns to PAT.)* Let me take a look at her. I'm a pretty good doctor.

DAISY: Pretty good horse doctor.

HERMAN: What's the matter with that? I went to Agricultural College. I'm practical' a vet'inarian. *(He feels PAT's limbs and pumps her legs up and down)* No broken fetlock. We won't have to shoot her.

ALICE: That's a relief. I'd better get her some water.

(She exits to the kitchen. ALAN follows her. HERMAN goes to the end of the sofa and probes PAT's neck.)

HERMAN: Her wither's not broken. *(He twists her head from side to side.)* Neither is her neck.

DAISY: That's too bad.

(In manipulating PAT's head, HERMAN has covered her mouth and nose with his hand.)

MCBRIDE: Give her air.

HERMAN: Huh?

MCBRIDE: Give her air!

HERMAN: Oh!

(He runs to the door and opens it, fanning it back and forth to let the frigid air in.)

That enough?

(He closes the door and runs back.)

Give me that apple jack. What she wants is a good drink. *(He holds the jug to his*

ear and shakes it. To DAISY.) Say, you've drunk about a pint of this.

DAISY: 'Smatter, Harper? Stingy?

(DAISY holds a glass while HERMAN pours. When HERMAN finishes pouring, DAISY makes to drink the liquor. He grabs the glass from her.)

HERMAN: No! *(Holding the glass to PAT's lips)* Here you are, little filly. *(PAT drinks some.)*
Atta girl.

(He starts to take away the glass but PAT grabs it and drinks.)

DAISY: Hah! I told you she wasn't hurt.

(PAT sits up.)

PAT: I am, too!

HERMAN: Why'd you take *my* car? Say, have you got insurance?

PAT: Alan! Alan!

(ALAN comes from the kitchen, followed by ALICE.)

ALAN: What is it? What's the matter? Is she badly hurt?

DAISY: Naw, the whole thing was a fake. She skittered that car across the bridge just so we couldn't take him to jail!

MCBRIDE: Missus Tanner, don't jump to conclusions.

DAISY: Look, Harper. You and McBride go out and push that car off the bridge.

HERMAN: *You* and McBride go out and push that car off the bridge. It weighs two tons. And stop calling me Harper. Call me Herman.

DAISY: I wouldn't call my dog Herman. Now look, *Herman*, you get your car running. I'm not staying in this house tonight. *(She glares at Alice.)* Not with *that* woman.

MCBRIDE: Missus Tanner, be reasonable. Miss Merriweather is just Mister Tanner's secretary.

DAISY: Secretary! Is that what she told you?

MCBRIDE: They're collaborating on his play.

DAISY: Col-la-bor-a-ting! Heh! How do you spell it?

HERMAN: C-L-col – how *do* you spell that?

(He sees that DAISY is walking away with his apple jack jug.)

Hey!

(He runs after her and retrieves the jug. DAISY goes into the study.)

I want at least one drink out of my own jug.

ALAN: Pat, that was awfully foolish. You could have killed yourself! Or caught your death of cold, dressed like that.

ALICE: Who knows what might have gotten frost-bitten?

PAT: Love is all that matters. I'd do anything for you.

ALICE: Aw-w-w! Will you excuse me? I'm going to go throw up. And will you two smooch very quietly while I endeavour to finish the second act?

ALAN: Third act.

(ALICE smiles tightly at him and heads into the study.)

MCBRIDE: Are you sure you're all right, Miss Layton?

PAT: Yes. Don't butt in, Mac. I want Alan to help me.

(ALICE reaches the study and stops when she sees DAISY on the phone inside.)

DAISY: Now, don't rush me, Sheriff Ecker. Don't rush me! I came up here for my Alan-moany, see, and what do I find? Wait'll you hear! The place is knee-deep in his former wives! Knee-deep! You know, the funniest thing. I . . . Sheriff Ecker . . . I think I . . . who am I speakin' from? Well, never you mind! You come here right away, see, you . . . yeah, on Christmas Eve . . . yeah . . .

(She falls asleep at the telephone. Meanwhile, ALAN is helping PAT to walk on a sprained ankle.)

PAT: It hurts!

ALAN: There we are. Everything's going to be all right, but be careful. That's the girl.

(ALICE walks over to them.)

ALICE: I hate to interrupt baby's first steps, but the second Missus Tanner has just passed out in the study.

HERMAN: I told you this was good apple jack. Forty proof.

MCBRIDE: That stuff's alcoholic? Goodness! Hey! Isn't it illegal to make liquor like that?

HERMAN: Oh, didn't you hear? Prohibition's over.

ALICE: Now, Mister McBride, if you and you (*pointing to HERMAN*) will sleep in that centre bedroom and could you both try to get Daisy into the other one?

MCBRIDE: Oh, no! Deputy, this is your problem. It was your apple jack that got her drink . . . drunk.

HERMAN: Is she out completely?

ALICE: Completely.

HERMAN: Can't say a word?

ALICE: Not a word.

HERMAN: That's hard to believe. Excuse me.

(He steps past PAT, ALAN and ALICE toward the study.)

ALICE: (*To PAT.*) You can share the room with her.

PAT: What? You expect me to sleep in the same bed with that woman?

ALICE: Mm-hm. People have shared beds with Daisy before. Haven't they, Alan?

ALAN: Not as often as you'd think. I slept on the couch a lot.

PAT: Well, if it's all the same to you, I'll sleep right here on *this* couch.

ALICE: You can drape yourself on the chandelier for all I care. You might want to change your clothes, first, though.

ALAN: She can't. Her suitcase went into the river when I pulled her out of the car.

PAT: My clothes!

ALAN: I grabbed the suitcase and tossed it behind me. It went into the river.

ALICE: I'll bet that broke your heart. But, before you two get cozy, Alan, you and I are going to sit up and finish this play.

MCBRIDE: Goodnight, Miss Layton.

PAT: What? Yeah, yeah. Goodnight, Mac.

(MCBRIDE shrugs and goes into the Centre bedroom.)

ALAN: It's a pity I'm not writing a tragedy. I'm certainly in the mood.

(HERMAN reaches the study and looks at DAISY who is sleeping with the phone to her ear.)

HERMAN: Ha, ha. I'd have never believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. Ha, ha! She's out colder than a mackerel!

DAISY: So you come to the car right away, Sheriff Ecker, 'cause I'm not staying in this house. It's knee-deep in wives and women.

HERMAN: She's out cold, but she goes on and on and on. Come on, Daisy!

(He hangs up the phone and pulls her up to her feet.)

DAISY: Huh?

HERMAN: You're going sleepy-bye!

DAISY: What?

HERMAN: Come on!

(He lifts her over his shoulder, his hand falling on her posterior.)

DAISY: What? Hey, watch that hand there, Harper!

HERMAN: I'm sorry! And, it's Herman!

DAISY: You put me down! Where are you taking me? I . . . !

HERMAN: I'm taking you to bed and you're gonna . . .

(She grabs the door frame and won't let go.)

DAISY: You're not getting me in no bedroom! You big . . ! You let me down. I'm getting out of this house! I am not staying here with that woman – that Miss Merriweather! Merry weather for chiselling! No wonder he can't pay me my alimony!

HERMAN: Now, you quit that kind of talk. That lady's a friend of mine.

DAISY: I don't doubt it! You used to be a milkman!

HERMAN: Let go of that door. I'm gonna take you to bed!

DAISY: What do you think I am?

HERMAN: *(Prying her hands from the door frame.)* That was settled a long time ago.

DAISY: I'm a lady! You can't just drag a lady into no bedroom! At least bring the apple jack!

(HERMAN carries DAISY into the SL bedroom.)

(From OFF.) You let me down! Aw, you dirty old milkman, you!

HERMAN: *(From OFF.)* Ups-a-daisy! *(We hear the sound of a person bouncing on a bed.)* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

DAISY: *(OFF. DAISY screams loudly)* AAAAAHHH! I'll never stay in this house! AAAAAHHH!

(HERMAN comes out of the bedroom and shuts the door. He opens the door cautiously and looks in.)

AAAAAAHHHH!

HERMAN: *(Closing the door quickly.)* Well, I guess that's Daisy settled for the night.

ALAN: Well done, Deputy.

HERMAN: Aw, that's all right. I used to wrestle on the high school team. Goodnight.

(He starts into the SL bedroom.)

DAISY: *(OFF.)* AAAAHHH!

(HERMAN slams the door . . .)

HERMAN: *(In a small, tight voice.)* Wrong room!

(. . . and goes into the C one.)

(PAT lies down on the sofa and pulls a throw over herself.)

(In the study, ALICE sits down to type, while ALAN thinks.)

ALAN: Alice! I think I have it. After Gregory has the argument with his wife, he starts to leave the room, but doesn't quite make it, because the telephone rings, and it's Phyllis on the phone. That stops him, you see.

ALICE: And that gives Cecil time to get back from the railway station. I think you've got that outline licked.

ALAN: And what's more, I think it'll work.

ALICE: You sit right down here and write it out. I'm going to get some coffee.

ALAN: Alice! You know you're the only woman in the world for me . . .

ALICE: Along with little Daisy and little Pat and . . .

ALAN: Daisy was a mistake and I told you about Pat. She doesn't mean a thing.

ALICE: "Love is all that matters"? "I'd do anything for you"?

ALAN: She said that, not me.

ALICE: And you swear you never did anything that would encourage her to climb into your bed?

ALAN: What, never? Well . . .

ALAN/ALICE: Hardly ever.

ALAN: She's a kid. I can't help it if she has a crush. That's nothing.

ALICE: All right, Bluebeard. You start typing. I'm going to make the coffee.

ALAN: Right.

(ALICE crosses toward the kitchen. ALAN types. ALICE stops when she sees Pat sleeping on the sofa, then continues into the kitchen.)

(MCBRIDE enters in his coat and undershirt. He stops at the sofa and pulls the throw up over PAT, tucking it behind her. She wakes.)

PAT: Hey! What's the idea?

MCBRIDE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you.

PAT: I'll bet you didn't. Just watch the hands, Mac.

MCBRIDE: I was just covering you up.

PAT: Oh, a night watchman, eh?

MCBRIDE: Look, Miss Layton. Pat. I don't want you to think me a prude, but I'm sure if your father were here, he wouldn't like the idea of your rushing around the country, skidding cars off bridges and calling on men that have been repeatedly married and dressing as you are . . .

PAT: Alan threw all my clothes into the river when he pulled me out of the car.

MCBRIDE: I know, but still . . .

PAT: Listen, Mac, if you don't like the way I'm dressed, you can . . .

MCBRIDE: Oh, no! I like it a lot.

PAT: What?

MCBRIDE: I mean . . . I think they're . . . I mean, I think you're . . . but, I think you should . . .

PAT: Listen, Mac, I don't care what you think. I love Alan. And, I don't care how many times he's been married. They didn't understand him. I do. He needs me.

MCBRIDE: Why, you sweet little idiot!

(He suddenly leans forward and kisses her. ALICE enters with coffee on a tray from the kitchen, stops when she sees them.)

ALICE: Well, hello.

(MCBRIDE straightens up with lipstick on his mouth.)

PAT: Whoo! This is as bad as a high-school dance.

MCBRIDE: Oh, hello. How's the play coming?

ALICE: Fine, thanks. You two getting to know each other?

MCBRIDE: Oh, I just came for a glass of water. I have an awful headache.

ALICE: Well, getting the circulation going is a good cure.

PAT: Don't stand there looking stupid. Wipe that lipstick off your face and go to bed.

MCBRIDE: Oh? Yes! *(He wipes at his mouth.)* Well, goodnight . . . Miss Layton. *(He starts to kiss her, then shakes her hand.)* Goodnight, Miss . . .

ALICE: Merriweather.

MCBRIDE: . . . Merriweather. Right.

(He goes up the C bedroom and exits. PAT crosses to ALICE.)

PAT: I want to talk to you.

ALICE: Yes? What is it?

PAT: I don't want you to misunderstand my . . . well, my reasons for being here.

ALICE: I don't give a hoot why you're here. I came up to work on a play. So, why don't you go back to bed and let me go back to work?

(ALICE goes into the study. PAT follows. ALAN types.)

Here's the coffee, Alan.

ALAN: *(Typing.)* Thanks, dear.

PAT: Darling, send her away. She doesn't understand you. I'll help you finish your play.

ALAN: Please, Pat, you're a sweet kid, but you mustn't go on like this.

ALICE: Tell me, am I interrupting something?

ALAN: Don't be ridiculous. Now, let me concentrate.

ALICE: Maybe if she sat on your lap, you could get some inspiration.

ALAN: Oh! *(He hits several keys at once, un-jams them and continues typing.)*

PAT: No wonder you divorced her. What a frightful temper.

ALAN: I didn't divorce her. She divorced me.

PAT: *(To ALICE.)* Changed your mind now, have you?

ALICE: Won't you please go away and leave him alone?

PAT: I will not be ordered by you. You're just trying to keep us apart. You don't understand him – you never did! Alan is a man who . . .

ALICE: He's a child, my dear, in many ways. He needs mothering and guiding and a good firm hand to get him out of the jams he gets himself into.

PAT: Hmmph! When I'm married to him, he won't get into jams!

ALICE: Ha! When I was married to him, it was jam for breakfast, jam for lunch and jam for dinner.

ALAN: I am sitting right here! Stop arguing! All I ask for is a little peace and quiet!

ALICE: Oh? You got it!

(She picks up the coffee and leaves.)

ALAN: And that goes for you, too! Get out! Scat!

(PAT follows ALICE toward the kitchen. ALAN tries to work.)

PAT: Are you still in love with Alan?

ALICE: After what I went through with him for four years?

PAT: If you love him, why did you divorce him?

ALICE: I never said I love him.

PAT: Well, I did and I do!

(PAT and ALICE go into the kitchen. HERMAN enters from the Centre bedroom and stands US listening.)

ALICE: *(OFF.)* Well, then, you can have him.

PAT: *(OFF.)* Thank you. You're not ready to help him, like I am.

ALICE: *(OFF.)* Help him? He takes hand-raising!

PAT: *(OFF.)* Well, like you said, he's really a child.

ALICE: *(OFF.)* Oh, but don't tell him so.

(ALICE, without the coffee, and PAT re-enter, still arguing.)

PAT: Now, you run along and I'll take care of him.

ALICE: I meant you can have him after tonight and welcome to him. Maybe you're soul-mates, I wouldn't know about that, but, right now, all he needs is black coffee and lots of quiet, so he can finish that third act.

PAT: All he needs is someone around to understand him and love him . . .

(ALAN from the study, yells.)

ALAN: For the love of Pete, will you be quiet!

ALICE: Now do you see what I went through with him for four years?

PAT: That doesn't frighten me. I'm going to help him.

ALICE: There's nothing you can do to help. *(ALAN roars.)* Now, you see, he's all upset.

(HERMAN shakes his head and goes into the SL bedroom.)

PAT: Well, it's nothing I did.

ALICE: May I make a suggestion?

PAT: Oh, I welcome *your* suggestions!

(ALICE and PAT work their way back into the study.)

ALICE: Get some clothes on and go home to your daddy!

PAT: Why don't you stop being so darned old-fashioned!

ALICE: I'm just saying you need to . . .

PAT: Don't you tell me what to do!

ALAN: How in blazes do you expect me to work with the two of you in each other's hair?

ALICE: I don't know. *(She indicates her ears.)* Cotton batting?

PAT: Well, I said I love you and she said she didn't!

ALICE: I said nothing of the kind.

PAT: Oh, liar!

ALICE: Liar?

DAISY: | *(OFF.)* Hey, what's the big idea? Nuts? Get out of this bed!

PAT: | Pants on fire!

ALICE: | At least I'm wearing some!

HERMAN: *(OFF.)* Don't scream! Don't scream! Don't scream!

(He backs out of DAISY's room. The others stare toward him.)

(Same voice.) Wrong room!

(He runs into the Centre bedroom. DAISY comes out of her bedroom in her camisole and step-ins and heads for the study.)

ALAN: Will you leave me be? Why don't you two go get Daisy and you three can have a free-for-all?

(DAISY comes into the study.)

DAISY: Daisy's here! How do you expect anyone to sleep in this house with women screaming and strange men in your bed shelling nuts?

ALICE: What? What did you say?

ALAN: Oh, what do you want?

DAISY: My alimony! You get to work and finish that play! Come on, type!

ALAN: I suppose *you* want to help me with it?

DAISY: Why not? I can do as much as these dumb-bells can.

ALICE: Oh!

PAT: Alan Tanner, I will not be insulted by your wife – by any of your wives!

ALAN: You be quiet!

PAT: I have just as much right to be . . .
| . . . here as they have.
|

ALICE: |You have no rights . . . !

PAT: | Well, hooo! You divorced him! You both did!

ALICE: | . . . whatsoever in this case!

DAISY: Oh! Don't come crying! Traipsing around like a French | wh—

PAT: | Who're you insulting?

ALAN: Nobody's insulting you | for heaven's sake! Be quiet!

PAT: | She'd better | watch her mouth!

DAISY: | Listen, I can get mad, too!

ALICE: Ooh, the gold-digger's going to get mad!

(The argument grows unintelligible. While the women argue, Alan picks up his coat, papers and hat and sneaks to the living room..)

DAISY: Oh! Look! He's gone!

(The women run out after him and catch Alan at the door.)

DAISY: | Alan Tanner, where do you think you're going?

PAT: | Alan, stop! You come back here!

ALICE: | Alan, come back!

(ALAN has his hand on the door and is about to open it, when there is a loud knock.)

MAN'S VOICE: Open up, there!

(The knocking becomes a pounding.)

Open up! Come on!

ALICE: Now, who's that?

ALAN: How should I know?

DAISY: Well, it ain't the milkman, 'cause he's shelling nuts in my bed.

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ALICE: Why do you keep saying that?

PAT: What do we do?

MAN'S VOICE: Open up, you people!

(DAISY runs up to the Centre bedroom and pounds on the door.)

DAISY: Levinsky! Coolidge! McBride! Sheriff! Sheriff!

(HERMAN comes out of the C bedroom, followed by MCBRIDE. Both are in their underwear. HERMAN carries his revolver.)

HERMAN: What's going on?

DAISY: The door! The door!

MCBRIDE: *(Seeing HERMAN's gun.)* Put that gun away!

HERMAN: Oh, that's all right. It ain't loaded.

(The pounding on the door continues.)

MAN'S VOICE: Come on! Open up, there!

PAT: Alan! What do we do?

ALAN: Well, we hide you, for starters. Quick! In here!

(He opens up the closet door and shoves her inside.)

PAT: Alan! It's dark!

ALICE: *(In a baby voice.)* And, she's afraid of the dark.

ALAN: You, too. Quick!

ALICE: Me? Why? Oh, no! You're not putting me in any —

(He shoves ALICE into the closet after PAT and slams the door.)

(From the closet.) — closet . . . !

MAN'S VOICE: Come on! Wake up in there!

(DAISY, MCBRIDE and HERMAN come Centre, huddled together.)

ALAN calmly opens the door.)

Well, it took you long enough!

(He steps inside the door. It's ARTHUR LAYTON, in boots, fur coat, ear muffs and bowler hat. He has a cigar in his teeth.)

ALAN: Arthur!

LAYTON: Alan.

DAISY: Arthur!

LAYTON: Daisy?

(He takes in the spectacle.)

What on earth is going on here?

ALAN: Nothing.

DAISY: Nothing.

MCBRIDE: Nothing.

HERMAN: Not a thing.

LAYTON: Nothing?

(There is a commotion from the closet and the door flies open. ALICE and PAT sprawl out; PAT stumbles into ALAN's arms.)

Pat?

PAT: Daddy!

LAYTON: Alan!

ALAN: Awkward.

(Lights to black. Suggested intermission transition music: Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow.)

END OF ACT ONE

**SNOWED UNDER
ACT TWO
Scene One**

(Scene as before; the action picks up immediately after Act One.)

(PAT is in ALAN's arms, DAISY is between MCBRIDE and HERMAN, ALICE has just come out of the closet [literally, not figuratively] and LAYTON stands at the doorway.)

LAYTON: Alan, there'd better be a good explanation for this!

ALAN: There is. *(Pause.)*

LAYTON: Well?

ALAN: I'm still thinking. Arthur, it's not what it looks like.

LAYTON: It looks like my little girl is being clutched by a twice-divorced playwright while wearing not nearly enough to keep out the cold!

ALICE: Oh, well, then it is what it looks like. *(She steps behind LAYTON and closes the door.)*

ALAN: You're not helping.

ALICE: Didn't intend to.

LAYTON: I want to know why my little girl is standing here in her . . . whatever that is.

ALAN: It's very simple. You see, I . . . no, she . . . or rather, she and I . . . no! I mean . . .

ALICE: Your daughter came up here to sleep with my husband.

ALAN: You're still not helping.

ALICE: Still didn't intend to.

ALAN: And, I'm not your husband.

LAYTON: But, she's still my daughter! *(He starts to take off his coat.)* Why, I oughta . . .

DAISY: *(Soothing him, she presses close.)* Now, Arthur, remember your blood-pressure.

LAYTON: *(Seeing her under-dressed state.)* How's that gonna help my blood pressure? Pat, I want to know . . .

PAT: Daddy, I'm single and over twenty-one. Stop being such a Victorian.

LAYTON: I *am* a Victorian!

ALAN: It's all perfectly innocent. Pat came up here to continue her education, but I sent her away, so she backed in when I wasn't looking and my wife found something in my bed and there they were — she was.

LAYTON: *(Indicating DAISY.)* This wife?

ALAN: No. *(Indicating ALICE.)* That wife.

ALICE: I'm not your wife.

DAISY: Neither am I!

LAYTON: And, that's your definition of innocent, is it? Pat, get dressed, for heaven's sake.

PAT: I can't get dressed.

LAYTON: Why not?

ALICE: Alan threw all of her clothes into the river.

LAYTON: *(Beat. Starting to take off his coat, again.)* Why, I oughta . . . !

DAISY: While saving her from the crashed car out there. The one blocking the bridge?

LAYTON: I wondered about that. Had to tippy-toe over top of it to get in here.

DAISY: I'd like to have seen that!

LAYTON: *(To ALICE.)* Well, I know why you're here. *(To DAISY.)* But, why are you here?

DAISY: Alimony.

LAYTON: What, again? Alan!

ALAN: Nice ear-muffs you've got. You weren't cold, were you?

LAYTON: *(Pulling them off.)* No. They're just to drown out the thunderous howls for a certain third act.

ALAN: I haven't got a certain third act. I haven't got *any* third act.

LAYTON: Alan, I've got a cast and crew waiting for it!

ALAN: If the place weren't a madhouse, I'd have it by now. That's why I came up here.

HERMAN: Yeah, he was working real hard until all this happened.

LAYTON: And, who are you?

HERMAN: *(Drawing himself up in under-clothed dignity.)* I am the deputy sheriff.

(LAYTON eyes him bleakly, then looks at MCBRIDE.)

LAYTON: And, you?

MCBRIDE: *(A little drunk.)* I am Missus Lawyer's tanner. Tanner's lawyer.

LAYTON: *(Indicating ALICE.)* That one?

MCBRIDE: No. *(Indicating DAISY.)* That one.

DAISY: Did you ever feel like you weren't here?

LAYTON: Believe me, Daisy, we know you're here.

DAISY: Well, I should hope so or I'm going back to Nebraska.

LAYTON: Now, look, Alan, I need a third act.

ALAN: And, I would love to write you a third act, but I can't with all of this foolishness.

LAYTON: What foolishness?

ALAN: *(Indicating LAYTON.)* This! *(Indicating DAISY.)* And that! *(Indicating HERMAN and MCBRIDE.)* And these! *(Indicating PAT, accidentally pointing at her breasts.)* And those! All this yelling and running around! It's Christmas Eve. Whatever happened to Silent Night?

DAISY: It went out with the Black Bottom.

(DAISY and Pat begin to dance a free-form Black Bottom)

DAISY/PAT: *(Singing.)* Black bottom, a new twister,
Sure got 'em, oh sister!

ALAN/LAYTON: Will you stop that!

DAISY/PAT: *(In small voices.)* Doot-doot-doot-de-doot-de-doot-de-doot-do!

ALICE: Arthur, maybe you were wrong about Alan's third act. Maybe Cyril Logan just wasn't enough of a stage director to make it play.

LAYTON: Nobody's enough of a stage director to make those . . . trashy climaxes Alan turned in play.

ALAN: Trashy climaxes!

LAYTON: Well, it ain't Shakespeare. It ain't even Tanner.

ALAN: If everyone would just leave me alone, I could finish your lousy third act!

LAYTON: I've got three lousy third acts already. Give me a good one!

ALICE: You'll have it by morning, Arthur. Christmas present!

ALAN: Alice and I have completed the outline and I'm ready to start in on it.

LAYTON: *(To ALICE.)* That right? *(ALICE nods.)* Alice, you're a wonder.

ALAN: *She's* a wonder?

(ALICE, behind ALAN, signals LAYTON to be quiet.)

LAYTON: I persuaded her to come up here to help you finish your opus.

ALAN: Oh, you did? *(To ALICE.)* Borrow money, huh? How much is he paying you?

ALICE: Alan!

LAYTON: Hey!

ALAN: Does a playwright of my experience need an amateur's help to write a play?

ALICE: After some of the stinkers you've written lately? Yes!

ALAN: Yeah?

LAYTON: Yeah!

ALICE: I told you it was a crazy idea, Arthur — *(She looks at ALAN.)* — but I guess I'm just not crazy anymore.

LAYTON: Well, things were much better when we were all crazy — crazy together. Alan was the leading playwright on Broadway and I was the leading producer and you, well, you must have been the height of something because, ever since you divorced

him, Alan's plays have been flops.

ALICE: Well, *I* didn't break it up.

LAYTON: No, he broke it up and broke himself at the same time. If he fails this time, he's absolutely through.

ALAN: I'm standing right here!

ALICE: The truth is, Alan, you blew up after two marvellous acts.

LAYTON: . . . and we're blowing up with him. Or maybe without him. All I want is . . .

ALAN: Everybody wants something! You want a third act – Herman wants to arrest me – McBride wants to sue me – my wives are only here for the money!

ALICE: There's a judge in Reno that says I'm not your wife.

DAISY: And the same one says the same thing about me!

ALAN: Everybody wants something from me!

(He stomps into the study and, using a marker, makes three signs that say "Do not disturb.", "DO NOT DISTURB!" and "DITTO!!!". He uses tape to stick them up on the study archway, then tries to work at his typewriter.)

PAT: I don't want anything from him!

DAISY: Hah! Dressed like that? We know what you want.

PAT: I came here to help him!

DAISY: Fat lot of help you'd be!

ALICE: Have you ever written a play before?

PAT: No.

DAISY: Have you ever even acted in a play before?

PAT: No!

ALICE/DAISY: So what can you do for him?

HERMAN: *(From the sofa, drinking and cracking walnuts.)* Ha! Don't answer that!

LAYTON: Hey, that's my daughter! *(He starts to take off his coat.)* Why, I oughta . . .

PAT: Relax, Pop! Alan can dictate and I can type for him.

ALICE: Alan does his own typing.

DAISY: All he needs is the right type for inspiration.

ALICE: And we know what type inspires him, don't we, dear Daisy?

DAISY: At least it only took me *one* year to figure out how big a mistake I made!

LAYTON: Please, stop the petty arguments. It's like worrying over a manicure on the way to the guillotine. And it'll be the guillotine for me if we don't open in a week with something that will make back some of the money I've sunk into this show.

DAISY: What about the money I've got owing me!

ALICE: What about Alan's play?

PAT: What about me!

MCBRIDE: | Now, calm down, everybody!
|

HERMAN: | Hey! Hey! Let's calm down!
|

DAISY: | *(To ALICE.)* It's your fault.

ALICE: It's not my fault. *(To PAT.)* It's your fault!

PAT: My fault? How is it my fault? It's *your* fault!

(ALAN gives up, takes his hat and coat and exits through the door.)

ALICE: My fault!

DAISY: Well, it's not my fault.

HERMAN: We shouldn't lay fault.

MCBRIDE: It's nobody's fault!

LAYTON: It's got to be somebody's fault!

DAISY: Alan, who's fault is it?

(The women and LAYTON go to the study, calling "Alan! Alan!". They all stop when they realize that ALAN has gone.)

Well, would you look at that?

ALICE: He's gone.

LAYTON: My third act's gone!

PAT: My Alan's gone!

DAISY: My alimony's gone! Levinsky! Coolidge! McBride! Sheriff! Sheriff!

(She grabs HERMAN and MCBRIDE.)

My alimony's gone! Come on, hurry up!

MCBRIDE: Hurry up and what?

DAISY: After him! Chase him! Arrest him! *(She indicates HERMAN's gun.)* Shoot him!

HERMAN: Oh, that ain't loaded.

DAISY: Well, load it! Do something!

HERMAN: We'd better humour her. She's liable to scream.

MCBRIDE: What time is it?

DAISY: It's . . . *(she looks at her wrist, but doesn't have a watch.)* Oh, never mind, go on!

MCBRIDE: I don't want to go anyplace.

DAISY: Listen, lawyer! It's your job to get me my alimony. Well, my alimony's just gone out into the snow. Now, mush!

HERMAN: *(Getting on his coat and galoshes.)* Aw, what'd he go and do that for! That settles it. I'll never trust anybody again as long as I live. *(He beckons to MCBRIDE.)* Come on! We gotta get our man. *(He goes out the door.)*

MCBRIDE: *(Stopping at the door.)* That's the Northwest Mounted Police! And he's *your* man, Mister Rowe. Not mine.

HERMAN: *(OFF.)* Oh, Mister Tanner!

DAISY: Go on. Get him!

(DAISY pushes MCBRIDE out after HERMAN and closes the door.)

ALICE: Well, I guess they'll handle it.

DAISY: Yeah, let the fixer fix it.

HERMAN: *(OFF.)* Oh, Mister Tanner! Mister Tanner!

(ALICE goes into the study and looks at the page in the typewriter. PAT and DAISY come up behind her.)

PAT: Well, Miss Merriweather-Tanner. What are you going to do now?

ALICE: Me?

PAT: It was you he got angry with and now he'll probably get pneumonia.

DAISY: Hah! He'd better get all the fresh air he can while the getting's good.

LAYTON: Now, look, Pat. You come with me. I'm having a little fatherly talk with you.

PAT: Daddy!

(He starts to pull PAT toward the kitchen, but HERMAN stumbles back into the cabin, frozen and snow covered. He stumbles over to the couch and collapses.)

HERMAN: Apple! Apple! Apple!

(MCBRIDE runs in from outside.)

ALICE: What's the matter?

DAISY: Where's Alan?

PAT: Where's Alan?

ALICE: What happened?

DAISY: Did you find him?

PAT: What have you done with him?

ALICE: Tell us!

HERMAN: Somebody hit me with a snowdrift when I wasn't looking. Apple . . .

MCBRIDE: *(Chaffing HERMAN's wrists.)* Deputy! Deputy! He fell off the bridge into the snowbank – buried him!

ALICE: Are you cold?

HERMAN: Certainly, I'm cold! Did you ever hear of steam-heated snow?

DAISY: Oh, go back and get Alan! *(She runs to the door and flings it open.)* Alimony! I mean, Alan! *(She shivers.)* Oh, Daisy, you ain't dressed to be out there! *(She slams the door and looks at herself.)* In fact, there's only a couple of things you *are* dressed to be doing.

(She runs into the SL bedroom and closes the door.)

HERMAN: Apple jack! Give me some apple jack!

(ALICE gives HERMAN some apple jack.)

ALICE: You didn't find Alan?

MCBRIDE: No sign of him. Not even tracks.

PAT: My baby!

LAYTON: My third act!

HERMAN: My prisoner!

ALICE: He's *not* your prisoner – and he'll *get* you your third act – and he's *nobody's* baby!

HERMAN: Say, throw another penguin on the fire, will you? It's cold.

ALICE: You need to get under the covers. I'll take you to bed.

HERMAN: Miss Merriweather! You're a divorced woman! I used to deliver your milk!

ALICE: Mr. McBride, you'd better do it.

MCBRIDE: All right. Come along, Frozen Beauty.

(He helps HERMAN to his feet.)

HERMAN: Hey, you'd better bring the apple jack. I might need reviving.

(MCBRIDE picks up one of the jugs and helps HERMAN toward the bedroom.)

MCBRIDE: Goodnight, Missus Tanner. Mister Layton. Good night, Miss Layton. I hope to see more of you later.

LAYTON: More of her? *(He looks at PAT's peignoir. He starts to take off his coat.)* Why, I oughta . . .

PAT: Goodnight, Mac. I'm sure we'll see more of each other.

LAYTON: Oh, boy. When your mother hears about this . . . she'll marry me again just so she can divorce me again.

(MCBRIDE and HERMAN reach the C bedroom as DAISY comes out of the SL bedroom, dressed in her outer clothes again.)

DAISY: Hey, icicle! *(Indicating the jug.)* Where are you taking the party juice?

MCBRIDE: There's more in the other jug.

(MCBRIDE and HERMAN exit.)

DAISY: This is the screwiest Christmas Eve I ever saw. Screwy, but fun! *(She comes down to join LAYTON, PAT and ALICE. To LAYTON.)* Hey, Pop-sicle! How's the party going?

LAYTON: Party? What kind of party is this? Jugs of liquor flying around; people running and yelling; women with half their clothes off . . .

DAISY: Sounds like a great party to me.

LAYTON: Hummph!

ALICE: Oh, now, Arthur, you didn't used to be so stuffy. I can remember a certain New Year's Eve that involved a fountain and three chorus girls.

LAYTON: Hey, that's my daughter standing there!

PAT: Yeah! *(She starts to pull off her peignoir)* Why, I oughta . . . !

LAYTON: *(Stopping her.)* Pat!

PAT: Pop, it's 1935 – Come on, daddy, get that swing!

(DAISY and PAT lean in together.)

DAISY/PAT: *(Singing.)* Get that swing! Get that swing! Come on, daddy, get that swing!
Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo!

PAT: Goodnight, Daddy. *(She kisses him on the cheek and heads for the SL bedroom.)*
Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo! *(She exits.)*

LAYTON: What do they teach 'em at these colleges?

DAISY: They teach 'em to swing the hep-cat jive, daddy! *(She kisses him on the cheek and heads for the SL bedroom.)* Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo! *(She exits.)*

LAYTON: Your turn?

ALICE: Don't look at me. I'm not hep. But, if Alan left the outline in the study, I'm going in there and try to write a third act for you. *(She heads for the study.)* Doo-ah!
Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo! *(She goes into the study.)*

(ALICE looks at the papers in the typewriter and on the desk. She sits down, takes the outline out of the typewriter, puts in a new sheet of paper and begins to type.)

(LAYTON is alone in the living room. He listens to ALICE type for a moment, then decides to go to bed. He turns off lights, leaving the room lit by the fireplace and light from the window. He starts for the SR bedroom, then stops and goes back to study arch, listening to ALICE type again. He takes the sign saying "Do not disturb" down and starts back to the bedroom, when he sees the apple jack jug. He picks it up, holds it to his ear and shakes it.)

LAYTON: Hmmph!

(He looks around, then pours himself a generous glass of the apple jack. He tastes it and nods, then heads toward the bedroom.)

And, anyway, it was *four* chorus girls.

(On reaching the SR bedroom, he slaps the "Do not disturb" sign up on the door, opens it and enters.)

Merry Christmas, everybody.

(He closes the door. ALICE continues to type.)

(There is quiet, except for the typing, for a long moment, then the C bedroom door opens and MCBRIDE comes quietly into the living room, closing the bedroom door behind him. He listens to ALICE

type for a bit, then tip-toes over to the sofa. He leans softly over.)

MCBRIDE: Pat? Pat? Are you awake?

(He realizes that she is not there, so he opens the kitchen door and looks in, sees that it is empty, closes the door, then quietly looks into the study, sees ALICE and realizes that PAT must be in a bedroom. He tip-toes up to the bedrooms, looks them over and decides to try the SR room. He taps softly on the door.)

Pat? Pat?

(He opens the door, steps in and closes it softly.)

(After a moment, the SL bedroom door opens and PAT comes out. She hears ALICE typing and tip-toes down to look into the study, then up to the kitchen. She opens the door, sees that it is empty, closes the door, then goes to the C bedroom door and taps softly.)

PAT: Mac? Mac? Are you awake?

(She taps again.)

Mac?

(She opens the C bedroom door and steps in, closing the door softly behind her.)

(As she closes the door, the SR bedroom door opens and MCBRIDE comes out, wide eyed, and pulls the door shut. He stands with his back to the door, panting and holding a hand over his heart.)

MCBRIDE: *(Softly, but intensely.)* Wrong room!

(He tip-toes to the C door and starts to go in, then turns and goes into the SL bedroom. He closes the door.)

(As MCBRIDE closes the SL bedroom door, the SR bedroom door opens and LAYTON, in his underwear, looks out, looking left and right, then steps back in, closing the door.)

(As LAYTON closes the SR bedroom door, ALICE leaves the desk and looks out through the study arch, looks left and right, then goes back to her typing.)

(The C bedroom door opens and PAT comes out, wide eyed and

pulls the door shut. She stands with her back to the door, panting and holding a hand over her heart.)

PAT: *(Softly, but intensely.)* Wrong room!

(She looks left and right, decides she made a mistake and that MCBRIDE must be in the SR bedroom. She goes to it, enters and closes the door.)

(HERMAN opens the C door and looks out, looks left and right, then goes back in and closes the door.)

DAISY: *(OFF.)* AAAAH!

LAYTON: *(OFF.)* AAAAH!

PAT: *(OFF.)* AAAAH!

MCBRIDE: *(OFF.)* AAAAH!

(The SR and SL bedrooms open and PAT and MCBRIDE run out.)

PAT/MCBRIDE: Wrong room!

(They bump into each other C.)

MCBRIDE: Pat!

PAT: Mac!

(They look at each other for a moment, then embrace and kiss.)

(DAISY comes out of the SL bedroom door; LAYTON comes out of the SR. DAISY is, once again, in her underwear, for sleeping.)

LAYTON: *(Seeing them.)* Pat!

DAISY: *(Seeing them.)* Levinsky!

(HERMAN opens the C bedroom door to see what's happening.)

PAT: Daddy!

MCBRIDE: Missus Tanner!

PAT/MCBRIDE: AAAH!

(MCBRIDE runs into the C bedroom door; PAT runs into the SL bedroom door.)

HERMAN: *(Nodding.)* Missus Tanner. Mister Layton.

(He goes back in and closes the C bedroom door.)

LAYTON: *(Seeing DAISY's attire.)* Missus Tanner.

DAISY: *(Seeing LAYTON'S attire.)* Well, hello, Mister Layton!

LAYTON: *(Coughing nervously.)* Ahem!

(LAYTON goes back into the SR bedroom and closes the door.)

DAISY: Oh, what a tangled web we weave! Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo-ah! Doo!

(DAISY goes back into the SL bedroom and closes the door.)

(ALICE leaves the desk and looks out through the study arch, looks left and right, then goes back to her typing.)

(LAYTON comes out of the SR bedroom door, looks left and right, then tip-toes to the SL bedroom door, hesitates for a moment, then shakes his head and comes down to the study arch. He takes the sign that says "DO NOT DISTURB!", goes back to the bedrooms, sticking the sign onto the C door. He crosses back to the sofa, gets the throw off the back, goes back to the C door and snuggles down at its foot, back against the door, covering himself with the throw.)

LAYTON: Come to think of it, it was *five* chorus girls. *(He closes his eyes, goes to sleep.)*

(ALICE types. The lights fade as a clock strikes midnight. Suggested scene change music: It Came Upon A Midnight Clear.)

END OF SCENE ONE

**SNOWED UNDER
ACT TWO
Scene Two**

(The set as before. It is the next morning – Christmas morning, in fact. Bright sun streams through the window. The fire is out.)

(ALICE has fallen asleep in her chair in front of the typewriter, with mounds of crumpled sheets of paper around her. LAYTON sleeps, awkwardly against the doorway C.)

(The telephone starts to ring and she wakes slowly, realizing where she is. LAYTON is also wakened by the phone and slowly unkinks his body. During the phone call, he stands, gets his bearings, opens the C bedroom door, checks that MCBRIDE is still in there and goes to the window to look out.)

ALICE: Mm-mm-mm. *(waking)* Oh! *(She reaches for the typewriter automatically.)* I must have dozed off for a few seconds. *(The phone rings again.)* Oh! *(she picks up the receiver)* Hello? *(She listens.)* No, this is Missus Tanner. Or it was Missus Tanner. I don't know who I am right now. *(Listens.)* Well, no, you see, Sheriff, we're snowed in. Nothing moving around here. *(Listens.)* Oh, no, it's quite a party. Apple jack, women and song. *(Listens.)* Well, Herman's here, but I don't like to disturb him. He's sleeping with my husband's wife's lawyer. *(She pulls the phone away from her ear.)* Well, there's no need for that language! *(She slams the phone down.)* I probably shouldn't have done that.

(LAYTON staggers to the study arch and looks in.)

Arthur, you look ghastly.

LAYTON: I had a dream that I was in a frozen world and dozens of lawyers were chasing my daughter around in her lingerie. And then . . .

ALICE: And then?

LAYTON: And then I woke up and it was all true.

ALICE: Did you look out, yet?

LAYTON: I looked out.

ALICE: What's it like out there?

LAYTON: I don't know. It's all covered with snow. How's the play?

ALICE: Oh, the play. It's — *(She pulls the page out of the typewriter and reads it quickly. Surprised:)* — finished!

LAYTON: Great! I knew I could depend on you. When did Alan get back?

ALICE: He didn't. *I* wrote this — based on the outline we made.

LAYTON: Well, I suppose it's still by Tanner.

ALICE: Uh-uh. Merriweather.

LAYTON: Say, kid, you and Alan are . . .

ALICE: . . . divorced, so let's leave it at that.

LAYTON: Oh, now, you're not fooling me one bit, Alice. It wasn't me batting my baby-blues at you that got you to come up to Connecticut, in weather like this, to help him write a play. He doesn't deserve you.

ALICE: Well, he doesn't have me. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go freshen up.

LAYTON: Well, give me that script first. I'll phone it in to my secretary in New York.

ALICE: Oh, no! Alan has to approve it first.

LAYTON: I've got a cast to rehearse!

ALICE: And, I've got a husband to . . . *(She stops.)* You get this when Alan approves it.

(She gathers up the manuscript pages and goes toward the living room. As she reaches the archway, she turns to LAYTON.)

Oh, and Merry Christmas.

LAYTON: Merry Christmas?

ALICE: It's Christmas morning, Arthur. Ho, ho, ho!

(She goes into the SR bedroom. LAYTON picks up the telephone.)

LAYTON: Operator! Long distance. New York City. What? Yeah, yeah, Merry Christmas. Now get me New York City!

(He sits in the swivel chair and turns upstage. PAT, still in her peignoir, comes out of the kitchen with a tray with coffee and cups on it. She carries it to the sofa and puts it on the coffee table in

front. She sits and pours a cup of coffee. As she starts to sip it, she sees the apple jack jug, thinks a moment, then pours a splash into her coffee. She sips it and seems satisfied with the result.

MCBRIDE, hung-over but dressed, enters from the C bedroom.)

PAT: Merry Christmas, Mac.

MCBRIDE: What? Oh! Yes. Merry Christmas.

(PAT pours coffee for MCBRIDE.)

PAT: You'll need this.

MCBRIDE: Thanks. *(He takes the cup, sits on the sofa near her and sips.)* Chilly in here.

PAT: Fire's out.

MCBRIDE: That's fine coffee, Miss Layton. I'll bet you can cook.

PAT: I can. You should taste my dumplings.

(MCBRIDE does a spit take.)

Too hot?

MCBRIDE: I love dumplings.

PAT: Do you really?

MCBRIDE: Mm-hmm. *(She looks at him wide-eyed.)* Maybe I should get something going. *(PAT starts to smile.)* I mean, heat the place up . . . *(PAT's smile widens.)* . . . with a fire . . . in the fireplace.

(PAT's smile disappears. He goes to the fireplace and lays a fire. HERMAN comes out of the bedroom, dressed.)

HERMAN: 'Morning, everybody.

MCBRIDE: 'Morning, Herman.

PAT: Fine hours you keep for a former milkman.

(HERMAN pours himself some coffee.)

MCBRIDE: If you don't find Tanner pretty soon, you'll be right back on your milk route.

HERMAN: Aw, now what'd you want to remind me of that for? On Christmas and everything.

PAT: Herman, please don't tell the authorities about Alan.

HERMAN: What do you mean, "tell the authorities"? I *am* the authorities! Sheesh!

(He heads for the door, putting on coat and galoshes.)

PAT: Where are you going?

HERMAN: Tell you when I come back.

MCBRIDE: You'll never get very far in this snow.

(DAISY comes out of her bedroom, with a cloth wrapped around her head. She leans on the walls for support, holding her head.)

DAISY: Ooo!

(Herman finishes putting on his things and stops to crack a walnut with a bang, near DAISY.)

OH! Harper!

HERMAN: Herman! *(She looks at him crossly.)* Don't scream! No scream!

(He opens the door, finds three feet of snow blocking it and leaps over, running off into the snow. DAISY closes the door.)

PAT: Oh, dear. I hate to think of Alan all alone out in that snow.

MCBRIDE: Now, Pat. Don't worry. I'll tell you what. Let's try to dig a path to the bridge.

(DAISY comes down to join them.)

DAISY: Good morning, children.

PAT: What do you mean "children"?

DAISY: Mentally speaking. Now, look here, Levinsky, if you're going to drag her out to shovel snow, she'd better put her galoshes on.

MCBRIDE: McBride.

DAISY: McBride? Ha. *(To PAT.)* What's for breakfast, baby?

PAT: Oh, do you concede that I'm the mistress of this house?

DAISY: Nah, I just thought that you were the cook.

(She pours coffee for herself.)

PAT: Oh? I bet you can't cook anything.

DAISY: I can certainly burn you. Hah! Kid, I was roasting sides of beef over a gas jet in the hall when you weren't nothing but a worried look in your mommy's eye.

(She pours some apple jack into her coffee.)

PAT: Old age doesn't seem to have given you any respectability.

DAISY: Respecta— no. I'm just a farmer's daughter from Nebraska trying to get along.

MCBRIDE: On the three hundred a month we try to collect from Alan.

PAT: I still don't see why he should pay you three hundred a month. You were only married to him a year.

DAISY: You'll never know until you've been married to him for a year.

PAT: What's the matter with being married to Mister Tanner?

DAISY: There's nothing the matter with being married to Mister Tanner. It's just that Mister Tanner's been married to before and he never quite lets you forget that. Got so I called him Ben Bolt. *(She sings.)* "Oh, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?"

PAT: I don't believe it.

DAISY: Oh, you don't, huh? Well, Daisy's tellin' ya and Daisy knows.

PAT: Well, Mister Tanner's ex-choices in ex-wives bore me. Come on, Mac, let's shovel snow. I'll bet you Alan's got some clothes I could wear.

DAISY: That's right. You go stand in a nice deep snowdrift. Good for exactly what ails you. Hah!

(PAT and MCBRIDE go into the SR bedroom. DAISY drinks her coffee. MCBRIDE unintentionally slams the door as he exits and DAISY shudders and holds her head.)

OHH!

(ALICE comes out of the SR bedroom, pushing MCBRIDE.)

ALICE: Wrong room.

(She motions him to go outside and he meekly does. ALICE sees DAISY at the sofa and joins her, putting the manuscript down.)

DAISY: Well, season's greetings, fellow ex-wife. Merry Christmas.

ALICE: What's merry about it? Alan's lost out in the snow and I don't know *where* I am.

DAISY: You know, Alice, if you hadn't winged off to Reno like a carrier pigeon, he'd have come back to you.

ALICE: I don't think I'd have taken him back.

DAISY: Aw, don't kid Daisy. You still love him.

ALICE: Do you?

DAISY: *(She thinks for a moment.)* Nah. I was fond of him and he's great fun, but love? Daisy don't carry a torch like you do.

ALICE: Daisy don't?

DAISY: Daisy don't.

ALICE: Well, not wishing to change the subject, would you do me a favour?

DAISY: As long as it doesn't involve my Alan-moany.

ALICE: Would you read what I've done to that third act and tell me what you think of it?

DAISY: Love to. I still got an in'erest in that, you know. Purely box office, but an in'erest.

(PAT comes out of the SR bedroom, dressed in a sweater, pants and work socks belonging to ALAN. She goes to the door, puts on one of Alan's jackets and pulls on his boots – all far too big for her, of course. She looks at ALICE and DAISY and lifts her chin proudly and goes out the door. DAISY and ALICE laugh.)

I wouldn't have missed that for three months back alimony! *(She picks up the manuscript and reads the last page.)* "Gregory walks to the door, turns and says, 'You know I can't live without you.' THE END." Corny, but okay. Well, I'll go get dressed before I read this, while the kiddies play outside. Where's Arthur?

(From the study, LAYTON yells into the phone:)

LAYTON: I don't care what she says she wants; she can't have it! We've got a contract! I'll sue her down to her last pair of panties!

ALICE: He's negotiating.

DAISY: Negotiating? Is that what you call it?

ALICE: I'll see what there is for breakfast. Knowing Alan, probably baking soda and salt.

(ALICE goes into the kitchen and closes the door; DAISY goes into the SL bedroom and closes the door.)

(ALAN and HERMAN enter from the front door, now cleared of its snow. ALAN has only his sport jacket on and carries a sheaf of multi-coloured and -sized paper.)

ALAN: Here we are.

HERMAN: Mister Tanner, you go in there, it'll start all over. Why don't you let me arrest you?

ALAN: Let me type up this manuscript and give it to Arthur Layton, then I'll be happy to go to Botany Bay.

HERMAN: Oh, no, it'd just be the county jail.

ALAN: How'd you know where to find me, Herman?

HERMAN: I thought if I was a playwright, where would I go, and I went there, and there you were.

ALAN: That's pretty smart of you. Do you realize that most plays, today, are written by men of your intellectual prowess?

HERMAN: Is that so?

ALAN: That's what's wrong with most plays, today. Listen, I'm sorry I had to run out on you but you know how it is, women running around, telling you what to do and nobody giving you any credit for being able to think.

HERMAN: I know how it is, Mister Tanner. I got common sense.

ALAN: They certainly chose the right man when they picked you for sheriff.

HERMAN: Deputy sheriff.

ALAN: Yeah. So, how's everything here this morning?

HERMAN: Oh, fine, fine. Only everybody's madder at everybody else.

ALAN: Yeah? Well, I guess I'd better get started.

(HERMAN picks up ALAN's pile of manuscript papers.)

HERMAN: Is this the third act?

ALAN: Yeah.

HERMAN: It's all finished?

ALAN: I hope so.

HERMAN: *(He reads the last page.)* "Gregory walks to the door, turns and says: 'You cannot trust these women.' THE END." Lot of truth in that.

ALAN: You think so?

(HERMAN nods sagely. LAYTON yells into the phone:)

LAYTON: I don't care if it is Christmas Day! You get hold of Cyril Logan and the publicist and you get something worked up to cover this! "Playwright has nervous breakdown trying to please temperamental star! Notorious actress impossible to work with! Alan Tanner seeking treatment in country retreat." *(He listens.)* Who cares whether it's true or not? Not the newspapers. I'll be back later today.

(LAYTON hangs up the phone and comes from the study.)

Oh, hi, Alan. I smell bacon. Do you smell bacon?

ALAN: Arthur, the play . . .

LAYTON: Yeah, yeah, Alice showed me. Good job. I'll read it later. I smell bacon.

ALAN: Alice showed you the script?

LAYTON: Yeah, it's right there on the table, in fact.

(He goes to the kitchen, pausing at the door.)

Oh, by the way, your "other woman" just quit.

(He exits.)

HERMAN; 'Scuse me, Mister Tanner. I smell bacon, too.

(He goes into the kitchen. ALAN reads ALICE's script. After a few moments, ALICE enters. She sees ALAN and stops.)

ALICE: Oh!

ALAN: Hello.

ALICE: Alan Tanner! Where have you been? What's the idea?

ALAN: I had to leave if I was going to get any work done at all.

ALICE: You're soaking wet. Where have you been all night?

ALAN: The old boat house. It's cold in there.

ALICE: What you need is to get those wet clothes off.

ALAN: I know.

ALICE: I'm going to put you to bed and give you a mustard foot-bath and put a hot brick up your back.

ALAN: Darling, I don't want a mustard foot-bath and I don't want a hot brick anyplace. And I can't go to bed because I've got a lot of work to do. I've got to type all those hand-written pages.

ALICE: Oh, just let me fix some . . .

ALAN: There's a judge in Reno says we're not married anymore, remember? Now, scoot and let me work.

ALICE: You won't let me do what I want, you're going to catch your death of cold . . . and who told you you could read that?

ALAN: Why? Shouldn't I have?

ALICE: What did you mean by running away last night?

ALAN: I didn't. I just went some place where I could finish the play in peace.

ALICE: Oh! So you finished it, too?

ALAN: That's right. *(Still looking at ALICE's script.)* This isn't so bad. I mean, it's pretty good.

ALICE: Oh? Is it?

ALAN: Well, the love scene sounds like a pillow fight in an old maid's home. Ha-ha!

ALICE: Oh, does it?

ALAN: Yeah, and the finish – you must have been drunk, my sweet. Were you?

(She grabs the manuscript and runs out of reach. He follows her.)

Hey! Wait! Come here! Give me that!

(Alice throws the manuscript on the fire, grabbing the poker and shoving it further in.)

Here! Don't do that!

(Alan grabs the manuscript from out of the fire.)

I want to read it!

ALICE: That's not a Tanner; that's a Merriweather and I'll burn it if I want to!

ALAN: Why would you want to?

ALAN: You can't just run in and out of the house without telling anyone and leave me here all alone to finish that play and then come back all wet and say it's no good.

ALAN: I didn't say that!

ALICE: Oh, yes, you did! After everything I've done for you! Now give me that!

(Alan pulls his hand off the manuscript quickly, dropping it.)

ALAN: OW! I burned my hand!

ALICE: Oh! Oh, I'm so sorry. Can I get something?

ALAN: No, never mind. I just wanted to see how mad you really were.

ALICE: Oh, you faker! I hate you! I hate everything about you!

(She is emphasizing her words by waving the poker up and down. Alan puts his arms around her.)

ALAN: Now, I'm going to kiss you . . .

ALICE: There's that look again! Don't you dare! I never want to . . .

(She accidentally wallops him on the head with the poker.)

ALAN AND ALICE: OH!

(ALAN slowly topples over backward and falls flat.)

ALICE: Oh! I've killed him. He's dead. Uhhnn . . .

(ALICE faints, falling onto ALAN.)

(DAISY comes out of the SL bedroom and sees the two of them.)

DAISY: Oh! Murder! Aahhh . . .

(She faints. PAT enters from outside, sees the three of them.)

PAT: Who yelled murder? *(Sees DAISY.)* Oh? *(Sees ALICE and ALAN.)* Oh? Ohhh . . .

(She faints onto DAISY. HERMAN comes in from the kitchen, gun in hand, and sees the scene.)

HERMAN: I told Mister Tanner if he came into this house, it would start all over again.

(MRS. CANTERBURY comes in with MCBRIDE behind her.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: Well, I swan. Chickens roosting everywhere!

(LAYTON comes in from the kitchen.)

MCBRIDE: | Pat! Pat!

LAYTON: | Pat! Pat!

(They both rush to PAT and bend over her.)

Hey, that's my girl!

MCBRIDE: No, that's *my* girl!

BOTH: Why, I oughta . . .

(They both start to peel off their coats but DAISY suddenly sits up, rolling PAT down to her lap. HERMAN has gone to ALICE and is rubbing her wrists. MRS. CANTERBURY goes over to them.)

DAISY: Wow! Did anybody get the number of the cab that hit me? *(She looks down at PAT's head in her lap.)* Well, *that's* a first.

MCBRIDE: Pat! Wake up!

(He lifts her off DAISY and tries to revive her.)

LAYTON: Now, Daisy, take it easy. Let me help you.

DAISY: Thank you, Arthur. *(She leans on him unnecessarily as he helps her up.)*

(MCBRIDE is loosening PAT's clothing as she starts to revive.)

PAT: *(Placing her hand on MCBRIDE's.)* I've only got the one layer, Mac.

(MCBRIDE, flustered, helps her to her feet.)

MCBRIDE: I . . . well . . . I . . . tea! I'll make tea! That's good for fainting.

(He exits to the kitchen.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: *(Shaking ALAN gently.)* | Mister Tanner. Mister Tanner.

HERMAN: *(Shaking ALICE gently.)* | Missus Tanner. Missus Tanner.

ALAN: *(Arousing suddenly.)* I'm almost through. Just a few more lines and I'm finished.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Well, when you're finished, you'd better drink this cup of coffee. *(She pours him some coffee.)*

ALAN: All right. *(He realizes ALICE is beside him, out cold.)* Alice!

HERMAN: Merry Christmas, Missus Canterbury.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Land sakes! Herman, what in the world are you letting go on in this house?

HERMAN: Me?

MRS. CANTERBURY: You're the law around here. Take her legs. Let's get her up onto the sofa.

HERMAN: Okay. 'Scuse me, Mister Tanner. I wanna grab your wife's legs.

ALAN: She's not my wife.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Well, you ought to know. Now, get out of the way.

(MRS. CANTERBURY and HERMAN lift ALICE up onto the sofa.)

LAYTON: *(Looking at ALAN's head.)* That's a nice bump. What happened to you?

ALAN: She hit me! I was just going to kiss her and she hit me with a hot brick!

LAYTON: And, then she fainted? Well, well. Why did you faint, Pat?

PAT: I thought my Alan was gone!

LAYTON: What about you, Daisy?

DAISY: I thought my alimony was gone.

ALAN: Oh, for the love of . . . ! I need some air!

(ALAN goes out the front door, slamming it behind him. There is a clatter and an exclamation from MCBRIDE in the kitchen.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: I'll get the tea before that boy burns the house down.

(MRS. CANTERBURY exits to the kitchen. Everyone gathers around ALICE, on the sofa, who is still out cold. HERMAN tries to pour some apple jack into her mouth, but there is no response. DAISY is on the other side, supporting ALICE's head.)

HERMAN: She don't want it.

DAISY: Give it to me.

(HERMAN gives DAISY the glass and she drinks it down.)

HERMAN: Hey, that was for Missus Tanner!

DAISY: So who am I? Missus Chopped Liver?

HERMAN: Yeah, but she fainted.

DAISY: I fainted, too!

(ALICE comes to with a start.)

ALICE: Oh, Alan! Alan! Alan!

(DAISY and HERMAN support her as she sits up.)

Is he hurt? Is he dead?

HERMAN: Naw! He's just got a big bump on his head. You must have hit him with the whole fireplace.

ALICE: Where is he?

HERMAN: He's out cold – I mean, out in the cold – I mean, out getting some air.

DAISY: What happened, Alice?

ALICE: Well, I don't really know.

DAISY: Neither do I, but wouldn't I loved to have seen it!

HERMAN: Aw, now, Daisy.

(ALAN comes back in and sits on the sofa beside ALICE.)

ALAN: Alice! You poor kid.

(ALICE rubs his head.)

ALICE: Alan, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to hit you. I was just waving the poker and . . .

DAISY: . . . and his head got in the way.

HERMAN: Mister Tanner, I can't let anything to happen to you. You promised to let me take you to jail.

ALICE: Oh, Herman. Why don't you leave Mister Tanner alone?

HERMAN: You gotta remember: *(He holds up a finger.)* This is the long arm of the law.

ALICE: And you've got to remember: it's impolite to point.

DAISY: I think I'd like to get some of that tea. Come along, Arthur, Herman.

(DAISY points at ALICE and ALAN behind her hand.)

HERMAN: Yeah, sure. Gonna let me take you to jail?

ALAN: Sure, I will.

HERMAN: That's fine.

*(HERMAN, with the jug, LAYTON and DAISY go to the kitchen.
ALAN puts his arms around ALICE.)*

ALICE: Ohhh, there's that look, again!

(ALAN and ALICE kiss. PAT crosses to them.)

PAT: Mister Tanner! I want to ask you some questions.

(ALAN and ALICE break their clinch.)

ALAN: Who? Wha . . . ? Well, I think we'd better go outside. Alice isn't feeling too well.

PAT: She seems to be feeling all the way down to her toes. I want to talk to you both.

ALICE: Please do, Pat.

PAT: Alan, I want to know what this woman is to you.

ALICE: Ooh! For the first time in my life, I'm the other woman. Oh, goodie!

ALAN: Uh, well, this woman is practically indispensable to me.

PAT: Is that all?

ALAN: Well, no, she's . . . well, not anymore, but . . .

PAT: That's all I want to know.

(PAT rushes to the kitchen.)

ALAN: Sweet kid, isn't she?

ALICE: Sure. Sure, she is. They're all sweet kids.

ALAN: What do you mean?

ALICE: I mean, you talk too much.

ALAN: Now, look, Alice . . .

*(ALICE kisses him. PAT rushes out of the kitchen, followed by
MCBRIDE.)*

MCBRIDE: Pat! What's the matter? Pat! What happened?

(PAT runs into the study.)

Pat! *(He sees ALAN.)* Tanner! I'd like a word with you.

ALAN: *(Breaking from the kiss.)* Well, what's stopping you?

MCBRIDE: I want to know what happened to Pat.

ALAN: I don't know what happened to her.

ALICE: She saw Alan kissing me, so she washed her hands of him and walked out. Poof!

MCBRIDE: Poof? Just like that?

ALICE: Well, little girls fall in love with interesting old men and little girls get hurt – but they get over it. Anyway, that's the theory.

ALAN: Oh, we're going to have a theory about this, are we?

ALICE: How old was I when I fell in love with you? But, you see? I got over it.

ALAN: Oh, Alice . . .

MCBRIDE: Do you mean it? She's finished with him?

ALICE: Yes. So why don't you go and tell her – tell her she's far too good for Alan. Tell her I'm a snake in the grass. Tell her that you adore her. Oh, tell her anything.

MCBRIDE: I know what to tell her.

(MCBRIDE goes into the study. PAT is standing with her back to him as he enters. Silently, she turns, as if listening to him. Slowly, over the next couple of scenes, PAT ends up sitting on MCBRIDE's lap in the swivel chair, with the chair turned upstage. This should happen as unobtrusively as possible.)

ALICE: Now, where were we?

ALAN: Right about here.

(ALAN and ALICE are in each other's arms. They are about to kiss. DAISY bursts in from the kitchen, followed by HERMAN.)

DAISY: We're saved! The Northwest Mounted Police are coming.

ALAN: Who's coming?

DAISY: The snow-plough is coming up the road, followed by a taxi. We can get out.

ALAN: Well, thank heaven. The third act will see the light at last.

(LAYTON comes out of the kitchen.)

ALICE: Oh, but we have two third acts. Which do we use?

LAYTON: I don't want two third acts! I've already had three third acts. I want one third act – good!

DAISY: Good! I'll get you both of them.

(She goes to the fireplace and starts to sort out the two scattered manuscripts. Giving up, she just puts them both together into one.)

ALAN: We'll use my third act, of course.

ALICE: Without even reading mine?

ALAN: If he's got a Tanner third act, he doesn't need a Merriweather.

ALICE: You . . . !

LAYTON: Well, I haven't read either, yet.

ALAN: I have. Her's is sweet; mine is sharp. I don't need Alice's help to write a play.

ALICE: You horse's a . . .

(DAISY comes back with the manuscripts. They are a hodge-podge of different kinds of paper. ALICE sits on the sofa in a pout.)

DAISY: As I figured, they're all mixed up. Here! *(Giving them to LAYTON.)*

LAYTON: What, that? Looks like something the meat was wrapped in.

ALICE: I'm sure that's all it's good for.

LAYTON: Come on, Alan. We'll have to rush back to New York and get this into rehearsal.

DAISY: He's not rushing anyplace until I get my alimony.

LAYTON: Oh, she can't hold us, Alan. We'll jump in that taxi and . . .

HERMAN: *(At the window.)* That ain't no taxi! That's the sheriff's car! I got to get out of

here.

DAISY: Oh, don't get excited, Herman. He's not after you.

ALAN: No, he's after me.

HERMAN: Oh, no, Mister Tanner. *I'm* after you. *He's* after *me!* I got to arrest you, right away.

ALAN: It's too late, now.

ALICE: That's right. I already told him you were here.

(They all look at her.)

Oh, right. I forgot. The sheriff called.

ALAN: But, we've got a third act, now, so in a week or so, Daisy can get her alimony.

ALICE: I bet you said that about the last three.

HERMAN: I can see myself right back on that milk-wagon.

(There is a pounding on the door.)

SHERIFF: *(OFF.)* Open up, in there!

HERMAN: *(Miming a horse's reins.)* Giddy-up, Dobbin!

ALAN: We'd better hide you. In the closet. Come on.

ALICE: That worked so well the last time.

(More pounding on the door.)

SHERIFF: *(OFF.)* Open up!

HERMAN: This is awful good of you, Mister Tanner.

ALAN: In you go.

(He puts HERMAN in the closet and closes the door.)

ALICE: Seriously? Hiding in the closet's the best you've got? Some playwright! Even an amateur like me could come up with better.

ALAN: For instance?

ALICE: *(She takes the "DITTO!!!" sign off the study arch)* Well, even an amateur knows a bedroom's always more fun than a closet. *(She goes into the SL bedroom and closes the door, sticking up the sign as she does.)*

DAISY: I don't know. I've been in one or two pretty fun little closets.

LAYTON: Now, Alan, the sheriff doesn't have to know who you are. Don't admit anything.

DAISY: Well, the sheriff may not know, but Daisy do. My bloodhounds are going to dog Tanner all the way to the calaboose.

(More pounding on the door.)

SHERIFF: *(OFF.)* What's going on in there?

LAYTON: *(Suddenly intense, grabbing her around the waist from behind.)* Daisy!

DAISY: *(He startles her.)* Aah!

LAYTON: *(Wrapping his arms around her with passion and turning her.)* I need you!

DAISY: Right now?

LAYTON: Alan, I told you your "other woman" quit.

ALAN: Oh, right! Which other woman? They're hanging from the rafters.

LAYTON: The one in the show. Daisy, you're just the woman to play her.

DAISY: Now, don't kid me, Mister Layton!

LAYTON: No! You're perfect for it. She's a hard-boiled, low-down, no-good dame.

DAISY: *(Excited.)* Ooh, I could play the pants off her!

LAYTON: *(Slipping an arm around her waist.)* Sort of what I had in mind.

DAISY: Hey, watch that hand, mister. Well, maybe. *(She slides his hand back where it was.)* Arthur, you give me a contract and I'll give you Tanner, body and soul, and call off my dogs.

LAYTON: Dogs?

(The SHERIFF bursts through the front door.)

SHERIFF: I'm the sheriff! Nobody move!

DAISY: My dogs are barkin'!

LAYTON: You've got a contract, Daisy. *(She snuggles into his arm.)*

SHERIFF: Where's my deputy? There's something fishy around here.

DAISY: I don't smell anything, do you?

SHERIFF: I sent him up here yesterday to arrest a man by the name of Tanner and nobody's heard from him since. What have you done with him?

LAYTON: Remember: nobody admit nothin'.

SHERIFF: *(Coming up close to LAYTON.)* Are you Tanner?

(After a beat, LAYTON points accusingly at ALAN.)

Oh! You're Tanner!

ALAN: What happened to "nobody admit nothin'"?

LAYTON: It slipped out.

(The SHERIFF looks around suspiciously and sees the walnut shells HERMAN has dropped. He looks from the shells to them.)

SHERIFF: Walnuts!

DAISY: Same to you!

(The Sheriff draws his gun, goes to the SR bedroom door and opens it quickly. Nothing. He pulls down the sign and throws it in the room. He closes the door, goes to the centre door and opens it. Nothing. He pulls down the sign and throws it in the room. He closes the door, goes the SL bedroom door and opens it.)

ALICE: *(OFF.)* Wrong room! Can't you read the sign?

SHERIFF: You come out of there!

(ALICE comes out of the bedroom with her hands up. The SHERIFF throws the sign into the room, then follows the trail of walnuts over to the kitchen. He covers the door with his gun.)

All right! Come out with your hands up!

(MRS. CANTERBURY comes out of the kitchen with a tea tray. She slaps the SHERIFF's gun aside.)

MRS. CANTERBURY: Harvey, put that silly gun away. You know it's not loaded. Now, who wants some tea?

SHERIFF: *(Hysterically.)* Where's my deputy?

(From the closet, we hear a pounding. Unseen, HERMAN is cracking a walnut against the door.)

What's that, now?

ALAN: Mice?

SHERIFF: Ha!

(He opens the closet. HERMAN, looking the other way, looks out cautiously. He has a walnut in one hand, which he holds up against the SHERIFF's forehead and holds his other fist up to crack it.)

HERMAN: Has he gone? *(He starts to crack the nut, then sees the SHERIFF and stops.)*
Walnut? Mister Tanner, you'd best come along with me, at once, immediately.

SHERIFF: All right! Everybody's under arrest! Including the milkman!

MRS. CANTERBURY: Fiddlesticks. Harvey Ecker, you're not arresting anybody.

SHERIFF: Now, Liza, I've got to arrest Tanner. There's a warrant.

HERMAN: Aw, gee!

ALAN: That's all right, Herman. You did the best you could.

LAYTON: Say, you can't do this. He's a friend of mine and I've got connections!

SHERIFF: *(Holding out his badge.)* Do you see what I've got?

LAYTON: *(Backing away.)* I ain't got one of those!

ALAN: That's all right, Arthur. You've got the third act. That's the thing of value.

SHERIFF: Value, eh? I'll keep this.

(He grabs the manuscript.)

We've got an attachment on anything Tanner owns.

LAYTON: Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Only half of that is his.

(He grabs the script back and starts to sort it out.)

DAISY: I'm the little lady that put in that rap against Tanner. I withdraw the complaint.

SHERIFF: 'Tain't that easy, lady. It's got to be done legal, by your lawyer.

DAISY: Oh, well then, you come with me!

(DAISY leads the SHERIFF to the study and spins the chair revealing PAT on MCBRIDE's lap, in a deep kiss.)

Hey! Break! Break!

MCBRIDE: What do you want now?

DAISY: Time out! Tell this local defender of the law that we legally withdraw our attachment against Tanner.

MCBRIDE: We legally withdraw our attachment against Tanner. Now, excuse us. We've got to see a man.

(He grabs PAT by the hand and pulls her across to the door. They grab coats and boots on the way out and exit.)

DAISY: Satisfied?

SHERIFF: Well, it's hardly usual, but, I suppose . . .

DAISY: That's good, Sheriff, 'cause we're all alone in here and I'd hate to have to start screamin'.

SHERIFF: You what? *(DAISY leaves the study and goes back into the living room.)* Hey!

(The SHERIFF follows trying to figure out what just happened.)

ALICE: *(Crossing up to the bedroom.)* I don't want to discuss anything with you.

ALAN: Alice, please, now.

ALICE: You vain monkey! Telling him you didn't need my help.

ALAN: Oh, darling, I was just trying to take Arthur down a peg, that's all.

ALICE: You selfish oaf! After I sat up all night, slaving for you – you made fun of it.

ALAN: Alice, I adore you for having written it.

ALICE: Well, I hate myself for having written it!

(She goes into the SR bedroom.)

ALAN: Alice, wait!

(She slams the door in his face.)

Now, Alice, where's your sense of humour?

ALICE: *(OFF.)* It's gone, with everything else I ever liked about myself.

MRS. CANTERBURY: *(Who has been watching.)* That's the chicken you should be roosting with.

ALAN: I know that! *(He knocks on the door.)* Alice, we're just like our two third acts – you're too sweet and I'm too sharp, but if we put them together, they're great! What do you say we put ours together?

(The door opens a crack and she looks out.)

ALICE: *(Eyeing him.)* Put our *what* together?

ALAN: Wait. I've got something for you.

(He searches around in his coat pockets and produces a small gift, comes back and knocks on the door of the bedroom.)

Here. Open it.

ALICE: You got me a Christmas present?

ALAN: It's been wrapped up since that first Christmas after you threw it back at me.

ALICE: Threw it . . . ? *(She opens the package.)* It's my wedding ring.

ALAN: Merry Christmas?

LAYTON: Well, you came out here for nothing, sheriff. You'll have a hard drive back.

SHERIFF: Oh, don't worry. Herman'll run ahead and break the trail.

DAISY: You can't treat my friend like that!

HERMAN: Kuh-why-et! That's the boss!

(ALICE motions DAISY to her.)

ALICE: Psst, Daisy! Come here. *(DAISY crosses to her.)* See what Alan gave me? He wants to marry me! Again!

DAISY: Aw, that ain't nothing compared to what Arthur wants to do. Doo-ah-doo-ah-doo!

ALICE: But, what'll I do?

DAISY: Well, if you've got any sense, you'll tell him to go jump in the lake. But no woman that was in love ever had any sense, so you might as well open the door.

ALICE: Well . . . *(She looks at ALAN and closes the door again. ALAN is left outside.)*

(PAT and MCBRIDE come in through the front door in a tight clinch. Without quite breaking the clinch, they rush for the C bedroom, shedding coats and boots as they go. They brush past the group and enter the bedroom, slamming the door.)

LAYTON: Hey! That was my daughter!

DAISY: And that was my lawyer.

SHERIFF: What are they doing in there?

(All do a take to the SHERIFF.)

LAYTON: Whatever it is, it can't be legal. Sheriff, put a stop to it!

SHERIFF: Oh. Right. I'm the law!

MRS. CANTERBURY: Ha!

(The SHERIFF pounds on the C bedroom door.)

SHERIFF: Hey! Come on out of there!

PAT: *(OFF.)* Oh, we don't care for any, thank you. We're only here for a few days.

SHERIFF: Come on out or I'll break the door down.

ALAN: *(Stepping in front of it.)* Hey, that's my door!

SHERIFF: *(Pushing him aside.)* Out of the way. *(To bedroom.)* Now, do I break it down?

PAT: (OFF.) You don't want to come in here!

SHERIFF: Right! That's it! (He pushes his sleeves up.) Herman, break down the door.

HERMAN: I . . . what? . . . me?

DAISY: Kuh-why-et! That's the boss.

(HERMAN makes a big show of preparing to break the door down, then, just as he starts to run at the door, it opens and PAT's bare arm pushes MCBRIDE out. MCBRIDE is in his shirt, shorts and socks, with mussed hair and lipstick on his face.)

PAT: (OFF.) Show him, Mac.

(The door closes again. MCBRIDE holds up a piece of paper.)

LAYTON: What's that – a marriage license?

SHERIFF: That's a marriage license.

PAT: (OFF.) Yeah! And the judge was nearly sober.

LAYTON: You're married?

MCBRIDE: That's right, Pop – sir.

PAT: (OFF.) We're in love, Pop.

LAYTON: How can you be in love? You don't even know his first name.

PAT: (Sticks her head out.) Oh! That's right! Hey, Mac, what should I call you?

MCBRIDE: Oh, "Mac" will do nicely.

LAYTON; See! He won't even tell you his name.

MCBRIDE: I just did!

LAYTON: What do you mean, "you just did?" What is it?

MCBRIDE: "Mac". Or, at least, everybody calls me that. It's actually MacKenzie.

PAT: MacKenzie McBride. Pop, I'm the bride of MacKenzie McBride! Isn't that swell?

(She starts to pull him back into the bedroom.)

MCBRIDE: Oh, no! We're doing this right.

(He pulls her out into the room. She is in her peignoir once again.)

Missus McBride, that's a threshold!

(He picks her up and carries her into the bedroom.)

LAYTON: Hey! Where do you think you're going? That's my baby!

MCBRIDE: Mister Layton – Pop – you're baby's my baby, now.

LAYTON: Oh, you think so!

PAT: You'd better believe it, Pop! Merry Christmas!

(She closes the door.)

LAYTON: Why, I oughta . . .

DAISY: You oughta – but ya ain't gonna. *(She goes into the SL bedroom.)*

MRS. CANTERBURY: Harvey, you have any more business here?

SHERIFF: Well, I suppose not.

MRS. CANTERBURY: Good. Ever since Annie passed, you haven't eaten enough to keep a mouse alive. I've got a twenty-five pound turkey in the oven and Luke's got a new jug of three-year old apple jack ready to crack. Why don't you come on to our house for Christmas dinner?

SHERIFF: I'd admire to, Liza. Let's go. *(He offers his arm to MRS. CANTERBURY.)*
Herman, get your car fixed and I'll see you in the morning. *(They exit.)*

HERMAN: Yes, sir! What do you know? I ain't a milkman. Hee-hee!

LAYTON: Well, I guess I'd better get this script back to New York.

DAISY: *(Opening the SL bedroom door and poking her head out.)* Oh, no, you don't. In here, Arthur. Now.

LAYTON: Now?

DAISY: Right now. We've got a contract to negotiate.

LAYTON: Negotiate? *(She steps into full view, in her underclothes again.)* Oh, negotiate!

DAISY: Daisy's got one or two clauses to show you.

LAYTON: Daisy do?

DAISY: *(She smiles invitingly.)* Daisy do.

LAYTON: *(Stepping into the bedroom.)* Doo-ah, doo-ah, doo-ah, doo!

(They go into the bedroom and close the door.)

ALAN: *(Knocking on the SR bedroom door.)* Alice? Alice? Come on! Enough is enough!

(The door opens. ALICE steps out in a gorgeous peignoir outfit, her hair down. All trace of tweed is gone.)

Now, are you going to listen to reason or . . . oh!

ALICE: It's just a little Christmas present I brought up for you. *(She tugs playfully at the bow holding the peignoir on.)* Did you want to unwrap it now or later?

(ALAN steps into the room and the door closes. A moment later, ALICE's arm emerges and sticks up the sign "Do Not Disturb.")

HERMAN: Ha-ha! What do you know?

(The Centre bedroom door opens and PAT's arm emerges, sticking up the sign that reads "DO NOT DISTURB!")

Oh, my!

(The SL bedroom door opens and DAISY's arm emerges, sticking up the sign that reads "DITTO!!!")

Well, I'll be . . .

(HERMAN is left alone on the stage.)

Gee, it all worked out. It's a Christmas miracle! *(He realizes that he's left alone.)*
Oh, well. *(He whispers to the doors.)* Merry Christmas, everybody.

(He cracks a walnut and exits, closing the door.)

END OF PLAY

NOTE: In the interest of equity, as the women are in their respective skimpiers, each of the "bedroom" men should be in their underwear for the bows. After the bows, each of the three couples go back into their respective bedrooms. The doors close, then open again and female arms come out, each tacking up another sign. They read, from SR to SL, "Merry", "Christmas" and "Everybody".

NOTES ON MUSIC

Three snippets of song are indicated in the script, notated below. **Ben Bolt** and **Black Bottom** are clearly in the public domain. **Get That Swing** is an original piece, included here because Duke Ellington's **It Don't Mean A Thing** remains under copyright.

Ben Bolt

Traditional

Musical notation for 'Ben Bolt' in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of eight measures. The first measure has a '2' above it, and the second measure has a '3' above it. The lyrics are: 'Oh, don't you re-mem-ber Sweet Al-ice, Ben Bolt?'.

Black Bottom

1919 Perry Bradford/Gus Worsley

Musical notation for 'Black Bottom' in 2/4 time, key of D major. The melody consists of two lines of notation. The first line has five measures with lyrics: 'Black bot- tom! New twis- ter! Sure got 'em! Oh, sis- ter! Doot- doot doot de'. The second line has two measures with lyrics: 'doot de doot de doot doo!'. There is a '3' above the first measure of the second line.

Get That Swing

David Jacklin 2015

Musical notation for 'Get That Swing' in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of two lines of notation. The first line has six measures with lyrics: 'Get that swing! Get that swing! Come on, dad- dy, get that swing! Doo- ah, doo- ah,'. Each measure in the first line has a '3' above it. The second line has two measures with lyrics: 'doo- ah, doo!'. The first measure of the second line has a '3' above it.