

George / Joe (Keller)

MOTHER. He looks terrible.

KELLER. That's what I said, you look terrible, George. (They laugh.) I wear the pants and she bears me with the belt.

GEORGE. I saw your factory on the news from the station. It looks like General Motors.

KELLER. I wish it was mine.

GEORGE. Sit down. (Takes cigar out of his pocket.) So you finally went to see your father, I hear?

GEORGE. Yes, this morning. What kind of stuff do you make now? KELLER. Oh, little of everything. Pressure cookers, an assembly for washing machines. Got a nice, flexible plant now. So how'd you and Dad? Feel all right?

GEORGE. (Searching KELLER, he speaks indistinctly.) No, he's not well, Joe.

KELLER. (Lighting his cigar.) Not his heart again, is it?

GEORGE. It's everything, Joe. It's his soul.

KELLER. (Blowing out smoke.) Uh huh—

CHRIS. How about seeing what they did with your house?

KELLER. Leave him be.

GEORGE. (To CHRIS, indicating KELLER.) I'd like to talk to him. KELLER. Sure, he just got here. That's the way they do, George. A little man makes a mistake and they hang him by the thumbs; the big ones become ambassadors. I wish you'd-a told me you were going to see Dad.

GEORGE. (Studying him.) I didn't know you were interested.

KELLER. In a way, I am. I would like him to know, George, that as far as I'm concerned, any time he wants, he's got a place with me. I would like him to know that.

GEORGE. He hates your guts, Joe. Don't you know that?

KELLER. I imagined it. But that can change, too.

GEORGE. He's like that now. He'd like to take every man who made money in the war and put him up against a wall.

CHRIS. He'll need a lot of bullets.

GEORGE. And he'd better not get any.

KELLER. That's a sad thing to hear.

GEORGE. (With bitterness dominant.) Why? What'd you expect him to think of you?

KELLER. (The force of his nature rising, but under control.) I'm sad to see he hasn't changed. As long as I know him, twenty-five

years, the man never learned how to take the blame. You know that, George.

GEORGE. (He does.) Well, I . . .

KELLER. But you do know it. Because the way you come in here you don't look like you remember it. I mean like in 1937 when we had the shop on Flood Street. And he damn near blew us all up with that heater he left burning for two days without water. He wouldn't admit that was his fault, either. I had to fire a mechanic to save his face. You remember that.

GEORGE. Yes, but . . .

KELLER. I'm just mentioning it, George. Because this is just another one of a lot of things. Like when he gave Frank that money to invest in oil stock.

GEORGE. (Distressed.) I know that, I . . .

KELLER. (Driving in, but restrained.) But it's good to remember those things, kid. The way he cursed Frank because the stock went down. Was that Frank's fault? To listen to him Frank was a swindler. And all the man did was give him a bad tip.

GEORGE. (Gets up, moves away.) I know those things . . .

KELLER. Then remember them, remember them. (ANN comes out of house.) There are certain men in the world who rather see everybody hung before they'll take blame. You understand me, George? (They stand facing each other, GEORGE trying to judge him.)

ANN. (Coming downstairs.) The cab's on its way. Would you like to wash?

MOTHER. (With the thrust of hope.) Why must he go? Make the midnight, George.

KELLER. Sure, you'll have dinner with us!

ANN. How about it? Why not? We're eating at the lake, we could have a swell time.

GEORGE. (Long pause, as he looks at ANN, CHRIS, KELLER, then back to her.) All right.

MOTHER. Now you're talking.

CHRIS. I've got a shirt that'll go right with that suit.

MOTHER. Size fifteen and a half, right, George?

GEORGE. Is Lydia . . .? I mean—Frank and Lydia coming?

MOTHER. I'll get you a date that'll make her look like a . . . (She starts upstage.)

GEORGE. (Laughs.) No, I don't want a date.

CHRIS. I know somebody just for you! Charlotte Tanner! (He starts for the house.)

Handwritten notes:
 I'll get you a date that'll make her look like a . . .
 I'll get you a date that'll make her look like a . . .
 I'll get you a date that'll make her look like a . . .

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Large handwritten scribble at the bottom of the page:
 (1937) shop (Flood Street)