*After a few seconds, the key is heard turning in the lock of the front door. Door opens slowly, Danny pokes his head in, looks around surreptitiously.)*

DANNY. Okay, no one here. *(Waldo enters, cases place with eyes, crosses to table u. c. and deposits hat and cane.)* I don't know whether we ought to be doing this. If my old man knew --- *(Shutting door.)*

WALDO. *(Interrupts.)* Nonsense. I'm only taking what belongs

to me. *(He glances toward Mercury glass vase, starts to cross.)* DANNY. *(Pointing at records, stopping Waldo.)* Hey, why shouldn't I take a couple of those old Louis Armstrong's?

WALDO. (Crosses to mantel.) Why not, indeed? It's the obligation, nay, the sacred duty of a connoisseur to preserve them from the Philistines. The true collector knows no scruples. *(Danny crosses fast to records, kneels, picks up one. Waldo lifts vase gently from shelf. Mark stands above steps, sleeves rolled up, shirt open.)*

MARK. *(Crosses to L. sofa R.)* So I see. *(Waldo freezes, turns solwly toward Mark, holding vase carefully.)* You know what Dr. Sigmund Freud says about collectors?

WALDO. You know what Dr. Lydecker says about people who quote Freud?

MARK. *(Crosses to Danny, smiling.)* Save it for your public. Put 'em back, Danny.

DANNY. Aw, why don't you go find yourself a murderer*? (Puts record on phono. Mark starts across to bedroom.)*

WALDO. You seem very much at home, McPherson. *(With quiet*

*derision. Mark stops, Laura enters.)* Communing with the dead

all night? *(Starts to replace vase. Laura has entered from the kitchen. She stands quietly in alcove.)*

LAURA. Hello, Waldo. *(Waldo and Danny turn, see her standing there. Waldo stands rigid.)*

DANNY. *(Stunned.)* Holy cow!

LAURA. Waldo.

MARK. *(Amused, crosses step or two.)* What's the matter, Lydecker? You look as though you'd seen a ghost. *(Waldo's rigidity persists. He stares glassily ahead. Laura crosses R. back sofa.)* LAURA. Waldo--darling. It's all right. It's me, Laura. Here, dear,

sit down. *(Crosses to Waldo. Helps him sit.)*

MARK. *(Crosses to sofa.)* Come on, snap out of it, Lydecker. She's more alive than you are.

LAURA. Please, he's really ill. Get some brandy. Forgive me, darling. We should have prepared you. It was all a mistake It was Joyce here for the week end. I'd loaned her the apartment. You didn't really believe I was dead? *(Mark crosses to liquor cabinet, gets jigger of brandy, crosses back and hands it to Laura. Laura*

*helps Waldo drink.)*

MARK. Think I ought to call a doctor?

WALDO. No, it's not necessary. I'll be all right. I'll just lie down for a moment. *(Rising.)*

MARK. *(Crosses front sofa.)* Here, let me give you a hand*. (Helps Waldo to bedroom.)*

LAURA. Can I get you something?

WALDO. No-no thanks.

MARK. Can you make the steps all right?

WALDO. Yes, yes, of course*. (Mark and Waldo exit. Laura has followed them to below steps c., notices jigger in her hand and puts it on liquor cabinet. Danny is still standing by phono, staring.)* DANNY. (Crossing to liquor cabinet.) Gee, Laura-I-I-gee-

LAURA. Oh, please, not you too, Danny. It's me. I'm not a ghost. Honest. Come on, Danny. *(Crosses to Danny.)*

DANNY. I... don't be sore at me. I broke that Jelly Roll Morton. The Billy Cato one.

LAURA. Is that what's bothering you?

DANNY. I'm a heel. I was going to take it. And a couple of others, too.

LAURA. I'd have wanted you to have them.

DANNY. Thanks.

LAURA. What's the use of dying if you can't leave your things to the right people? *(Crosses away to C.)*

DANNY. *(Abashed. Crosses a step or two toward L.)* You don't know what it's been like these last few days, coming up here. . .

LAURA. Were you terribly upset?

DANNY. *(Crosses fast to Laura.)* What do you think?

LAURA. You're sweet. *(Kisses him lightly on cheek. He grabs her suddenly and pulls her toward him passionately. She tries to pull away.)* Danny! (*Breaks away to phonograph.)*

DANNY. *(Crosses one step to L.)* What did you expect?

LAURA. I don't know, it didn't even occur to me. I always thought of you as. . .

DANNY. *(Crosses to R. of chair L.)* Just a kid. I'm all right, I suppose, as long as I stick to music, but the minute I get human, I'm nothing but a kid.

LAURA*. (Crosses to chair, kneels on it.)* Danny. I'm sorry. I suppose it's my fault. I liked having you come up here. I enjoyed our talks. You have more feeling about music than anyone I know.

DANNY. You didn't know me very well. You never stopped

to think how I might be feeling about you.

LAURA. Oh, Danny, do you know how much older I am than you?

DANNY. I'm in love with you. I'm old enough for that. *(After a slight pause.)* Well, now you know.

LAURA. Yes, now I know, and I think it'd be better if you didn't come up here anymore. *(Turns away.)*

DANNY. Why not? Why? You can't just. . . *(Bessie enters with key. When she sees Laura, she screams.)*

LAURA. *(Crosses fast to Bessie.)* Don't be frightened, Bessie. It's me. *(Bessie backs to sofa. Mark enters, putting on his coat.)*

MARK. *(Crosses to below steps c.)* It's okay, Bessie. Don't worry. It's Miss Hunt.

BESSIE. It CAN'T be. *(Points to floor.)* I seen her. . . I seen her laying there . . .

DANNY*. (Crosses to c.)* She loaned her apartment to somebody else. *(Laura closing door.)*

MARK. *(Interrupting.)* O. K., Danny.

BESSIE. If I hadn't seen her laying there... right there on that rug.

LAURA. *(Closes door.)* It wasn't me you saw, Bessie.

BESSIE. But I seen you go up in flames in that crematorium.

LAURA. I know, Bessie, it isn't every day you witness a miracle, but you'll get used to it. You don't want me to starve, do you? I'm so hungry I could eat the grapes off your hat. *(Crosses to Bessie.)*

BESSIE. *(Taking Laura in her arms.)* Blessed Mary! I never thought I'd ever hear you say that again. *(She bursts into tears.)* Oh, dear, I'll have to call up Mrs. Farrow and tell her I can't take that job.

LAURA. So Mat Farrow's tried to get you, has she?

BESSIE. Called me up first thing Monday morning.

LAURA. How do you like that? My best friend grabbing my cook before I'm cold in my grave. *(Crosses C. to Mark.)*

BESSIE*. (Crosses to L.)* She sent a beautiful floral piece. White gladiolas. It was lovely.

LAURA. Come on. Let's make up our shopping list. There isn't a thing in the kitchen but a tired old kipper. *(Laura and Bessie exit arm in arm to kitchen. Mark crosses to phone, sits sofa, and is about to dial when he notices Danny who has eased over to the chair L. and is leaning against it.)*

MARK. Better beat it, kid. *(Dialing.)*

DANNY. *(Straightening up.)* Aw, what for?

MARK. Beat it!

DANNY. *(Crosses to chair R.)* Why should 1? I have as much right here as you do. *(Mark rises threateningly, Danny running to door.)* Crummy flatfoot. *(Exits, leaving door open.)*