

CORNELIUS. (*Puts his head out of the Left door of wardrobe and gradually comes out into the room, leaving door open.*) Hsst!

BARNABY. (*Pokes his head out—Right side.*) Maybe she wants us to go, Cornelius?

CORNELIUS. Certainly I won't go. Mrs. Molloy would stretch a minute.

BARNABY. What are we going to do when Mr. Vandergelder goes, Cornelius?

CORNELIUS. Well—I don't know yet. I like Mrs. Molloy a lot. I wouldn't like her to think badly of me. I think I'll buy a hat. We can walk home to Yonkers, even if it takes us all night. I wonder how much hats cost. Barnaby, give me all the money you've got. (*As he leans over to take the money, he sneezes.*)

(*BOTH return to their hiding places in alarm; then emerge again, CORNELIUS leaving Left door open again.*)

My, all those perfumes in that cupboard tickle my nose! (*CORNELIUS is facing wardrobe.*) But I like it in there—It's a woman's world, and very different.

BARNABY. I like it where I am, too; only I'd like it better if I had a pillow.

CORNELIUS. (*Taking coat from wardrobe*) Here, take one of these coats. I'll roll it up for you so it won't get mussed. Ladies don't like to have their coats mussed.

BARNABY. That's fine. Now I can just lie here and hear Mr. Vandergelder talk.

CORNELIUS. (*Goes slowly above table toward cheval mirror, repeating MRS. MOLLOY'S line dreamily.*) This summer we'll be wearing ribbons down our back—

BARNABY. Can I take my shoes off, Cornelius?

CORNELIUS. (*Does not reply. He comes to the foot-lights and addresses the audience.*) Isn't the world full of wonderful things? There we sit cooped up in Yonkers years and years and all the time wonderful people like Mrs. Molloy are walking around in New York and we don't know them at all. (*He brings Left chair forward*

*and sits.*) I don't know whether—from where you're sitting—you can see—well, for instance, the way (*He points to the edge of his right eye.*) her eye and forehead and cheek come together, up here. Can you? And the kind of fireworks that shoot out of her eyes all the time. (*Rises.*) I tell you right now; a fine woman is the greatest work of God. You can talk all you like about Niagara Falls and the Pyramids; they aren't in it at all. Of course, up there at Yonkers they came into the store all the time, and bought this and that, and I said, "Yes, ma'am" and "That'll be seventy-five cents, ma'am"; and I watched them. But today I've talked to one, equal to equal, equal to equal, and to the finest one that ever existed in my opinion. (*Steps forward.*) They're so different from men! Why, everything that they say and do is so different that you feel like laughing all the time. (*He laughs.*) Golly, they're different from men. (*Right knee on chair.*) And they're awfully mysterious too. You never can be really sure what's going on in their heads. They have a kind of wall around them all the time—of pride, and a sort of play-acting; I bet you could know a woman a hundred years without ever being really sure whether she liked you or not. (*Sits facing workroom—then turns.*) This minute I'm in danger. I'm in danger of losing my job and my future and everything that people think is important; but I don't care. Even if I have to dig ditches for the rest of my life, I'll be a ditch-digger who once had a wonderful day. (*He puts chair back and goes Right of table.*) Barnaby!

BARNABY. Oh, you woke me up! (*Puts head out.*)

CORNELIUS. (*Kneels.*) Barnaby, we can't go back to Yonkers yet and you know why?

BARNABY. Why not?

CORNELIUS. We've had a good meal. We've had an adventure. We've been in danger of getting arrested. There's only one more thing we've got to do before we go back to be successes in Yonkers.

BARNABY. Cornelius! You're never going to kiss Mrs. Molloy!

