

ACT TWO SCENE TWO

Setting: The Past. Saturday Evening, April 1, 1960. Mag's House, Canyon Bluffs, USA.

LIGHTS AND CURTAIN UP. Spencer is seated on a stool CENTER STAGE, having changed into a black turtleneck, holding bongos and wearing his googly-eye glasses.

Ray and Delilah are seated on the couch, watching - Ray uncomfortable, Delilah intrigued. Margaret sits in a chair watching and Mags is seated on the floor below Spencer, looking up at him admiringly.

Zoey and Billy enter STAGE RIGHT from the kitchen as Spencer slaps the bongos and Zoey stops immediately when she sees Spencer.

ZOEY

Oh good grief!

SPENCER

I call this poem... The riddle of the sands of time. (He clear his throat) The sands of time... fall. Down... down a throat of glass, nourishing the unending thirst of memory. But down, to us, is up for Australians. And to Australians, our up is down. So if there is no up, no down... what stops the sands from falling up? NOBODY KNOWS! Except... *the penguins*. I always knew there was something suspicious about them. Thank you.

He stands and takes a bow. Billy, Delilah and Margaret clap politely, Mags claps excitedly, Ray gives about two halfhearted, but loud, claps and Zoey just crosses her arms.

RAY

Well, that was... educational. You see kids, it's always good to expand your horizons and be open minded.

MAGS

I thought it was swell.

Delilah notices Zoey.

(CONTINUED)

DELILAH

Zoey! I didn't see you come in!  
We're sorry you missed dinner, but  
it's okay. Ima explained that you  
have very strict dietary  
requirements during your religious  
fast.

ZOEY

Right... my fast.

RAY

You know, I don't know how someone  
could live without carbohydrates,  
proteins and sugars without being  
thinner than a stick.

DELILAH

Well, obviously with fresh greens.  
I bet Zoey eats lots of salads.

MAGS

Hey, didn't you have a cookie  
earlier?

ZOEY

Um...

MARGARET

Oh she did, but there are special  
exceptions for cookies!

RAY

I buy that. Every religion should  
makes an exception for Delilah's  
cookies. It's almost a sin not to  
eat one.

Delilah playfully pushes her husband.

DELILAH

Oh, stop!

RAY

What? It's true! They're the  
perfect cookie. (A beat.) Oh! And  
Billy, next time, you need to ask  
your mother and I before you go to  
Georgie Pitman's house for dinner  
instead of just asking Great Aunt  
Ima if it's okay.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I did?

Margaret winks at Billy and nods.

BILLY

That's right! I did! And oh man, it was SO yummy! We had roast beef and potatoes and carrots and Jell-O Salad. I left before they made me eat the Jell-O salad, though, cuz I hate that stuff and his mom always makes it. Yuck!

ZOEY

(through her teeth, singsong)  
Billy... Don't overdo it.

RAY

Well, like I said... just ask first next time, please.

BILLY

Yes, father. I'm sorry. May I be excused to go to my room?

DELILAH

Yes, you may.

BILLY

Thanks, mom!

Billy turns to Zoey and whispers to her:

BILLY

I'm going to go put the you-know-what away.

Zoey nods and Billy starts heading to the stairs.

RAY

Wait, Billy! Before you go, we should take a family photo while we're all together.

BILLY

Aww...

Ray goes to get his camera from the bookshelf and hands it to Spencer.

RAY  
You know how to use one of these,  
son?

SPENCER  
Just point and shoot, right?

RAY  
It's a Kodak, not a Smith and  
Wesson.

He pats Spencer on the back as the family lines up.

RAY  
All right. Positions everyone,  
around Ima!

Everyone gets lined up.

DELILAH  
Zoey, are you joining us?

ZOEY  
I really shouldn't.

DELILAH  
Nonsense, you're family. Come stand  
by Margaret. Billy, stay still.

Zoey goes and joins them.

SPENCER  
Ready? Everyone say "Kerouac."

ALL  
KEROUAC!

Spencer snaps the photo.

SPENCER  
All right, there we go!

He hands the camera back to Ray, who takes it back to the  
bookshelf.

RAY  
Thank you, Spencer.

BILLY  
Spencer, do you want to see my  
metal racecar collection?

SPENCER

Sure thing, little man. Race you there!

Billy and Spencer race offstage via the stairs.

ZOEY

Spencer, we-

MARGARET

(cutting her off)

Now, Delilah, I insist on helping you with the dishes.

DELILAH

Don't be silly, Ima. I'll take care of it.

MARGARET

No, I *insist*. And besides, we can put another batch of cookies in the oven.

DELILAH

We've made three batches already today!

MARGARET

Well, I'm not going to be here much longer and I want more for the road!

Delilah thinks for a moment and Margaret puts on a puppy dog face.

DELILAH

*Ohhhhh soy sauce!* All right, Ima. I can't say no to that face. Let's go.

ZOEY

Uh, Great Aunt Ima! Can I just talk...

Zoey groans. Just as they exit, there is a knock at the door. And then a series of rapid knocks.

RAY

I've got it.

Ray starts toward the door, but BETSY (younger) bursts in, in her dress.

(CONTINUED)

RAY  
I guess I don't have it.

BETSY  
Mags, I'm having a crisis!

Betsy ignores Spencer and runs over to Mags.

BETSY  
It started pouring rain and my  
makeup is ruined! My date is going  
to think I look just the worst!

RAY  
What are you talking about, Betsy?  
It's barely sprinkling out there  
and you're drier than a bone.

MAGS  
Let me look.

She scrutinizes Betsy's face.

MAGS  
You look fine.

BETSY  
It's not fine! It's smeared and  
smuged and I can see it! And if I  
can see it, then HE'LL see it! And  
if he can see it, then he'll think  
that I'm a selfish brat who doesn't  
care about my looks.

RAY  
Oh, it wouldn't be your looks that  
raise the alarm.

MAGS  
DAD!

Ray chuckles to himself and nearby Zoey smiles despite her  
disappointment.

MAGS  
All right, come on up. We'll touch  
it up. Just a little powder and  
you'll be fine.

BETSY  
I knew you wouldn't let me down!

Mags and Betsy start heading to the stairs and Betsy stops  
and turns to Ray.

BETSY

Oh, would it be okay if my date picks me up here instead of at my house?

RAY

It wouldn't make sense for him to drive to your house if you're not there, would it?

BETSY

Well, I sort of told Stanley I lived here. Your house is so much nicer than ours.

RAY

Oh, I see. Stanley who?

BETSY

Stanley Bartlett.

RAY

The son of that guy on the tacky real estate billboards?

BETSY

They're not tacky. They're artistic and eye-catching!

MAGS

(through her teeth)

It'll be fine if he picks you up here! Let's just go fix you.

Mags hurries Betsy offstage. Ray shakes his head.

RAY

I feel bad for that Stanley kid.

Ray goes back to the couch to settle in and notices Zoey.

RAY

Sorry, Zoey, I didn't realize you were still here.

Zoey shrugs.

ZOEY

Once again, I find myself struggling to keep up with everyone.