

MEG. What?

*Babe gets up and goes to her suitcase. She opens it and removes the envelope containing the photographs.*

BABE. Here. Take a look.

MEG. (*Taking the envelope.*) What is it?

BABE. It's some evidence Zackery's collected against me. Looks like my goose is cooked.

*Meg opens the envelope and looks at the photographs.*

MEG. My God, it's—it's you and...is *that* Willie Jay?

BABE. Yeh.

MEG. Well, he certainly *has* grown. You were right about that. My, oh, my.

BABE. Please don't tell Lenny. She'd hate me.

MEG. I won't. I won't tell Lenny.

*Putting the pictures back into the envelope.*

What are you gonna do?

BABE. What can I do?

*There is a knock on the door. Babe grabs the envelope and hides it.*

MEG. Who is it?

BARNETTE'S VOICE. It's Barnette Lloyd.

MEG. Oh. Come on in, Barnette.

*Barnette enters. His eyes are ablaze with excitement.*

→ BARNETTE. (*As he paces around the room.*) Well; good morning! (*Shaking Meg's hand.*) Good morning, Miss Magrath. (*Touching Babe on the shoulder.*) Becky. (*Moving away.*) What I meant to say is... how are you doing this morning?

MEG. Ah—fine. Fine.

BARNETTE. Good. Good. I—I just had time to drop by for a minute.

MEG. Oh.

BARNETTE. So, ah, how's your Granddad doing?

MEG. Well, not very, ah—ah, he's in this coma.

*She breaks up laughing.*

BARNETTE. I see... I see. *(To Babe.)* Actually, the primary reason I came by was to pick up that envelope. I left it here last night in all the confusion.

*Pause.*

You, ah, still do have it?

*Babe hands him the envelope.*

Yes. *(Taking the envelope.)* That's the one. I'm sure it'll be much better off in my office safe.

*He puts the envelope into his coat pocket.*

MEG. I'm sure it will.

BARNETTE. Beg your pardon?

BABE. It's all right. I showed her the pictures.

BARNETTE. Ah; I see.

MEG. So what's going to happen now, Barnette? What are those pictures gonna mean?

BARNETTE. *(After pacing a moment.)* Hmmmm. May I speak frankly and openly?

BABE. Uh huh.

MEG. Please do—

BARNETTE. Well, I tell you now, at first glance, I admit those pictures had me considerably perturbed and upset. Perturbed to the point that I spent most of last night going over certain suspect papers and reports that had fallen into my hands—rather recklessly.

BABE. What papers do you mean?

BARNETTE. Papers that, pending word from three varied and unbiased experts, could prove graft, fraud, forgery, as well as a history of unethical behavior.

MEG. You mean about Zackery?

BARNETTE. Exactly. You see, I now intend to make this matter just as sticky and gritty for one Z. Botrelle as it is for us. Why, with the amount of scandal I'll dig up, Botrelle will be forced to settle this affair on our own terms!

MEG. Oh, Babe! Did you hear that?!

BABE. Yes! Oh, yes! So you've won it! You've won your life-long vendetta!

BARNETTE. Well...well, now of course it's problematic in that, well, in that we won't be able to expose him openly in the courts. That was the original game plan.

BABE. But why not? Why?

BARNETTE. Well, it's only that if, well, if a jury were to—to get, say, a glance at these, ah, photographs, well...well possibly...

BABE. We could be sunk.

BARNETTE. In a sense. But! On the other hand, if a newspaper were to get ahold of our little item, Mr. Zackery Botrelle could find himself boiling in some awfully hot water. So what I'm looking for very simply, is—a deal.

BABE. A deal?

MEG. Thank you, Barnette. It's a sunny day, Babe. (*Realizing she is in the way.*) Ooh, where's that broken shoe?

*She grabs her boots and runs upstairs.*

BABE. So, you're having to give up your vendetta?

BARNETTE. Well, in a way. For the time. It, ah, seems to me you shouldn't always let your life be ruled by such things as, ah, personal vendettas. (*Looking at Babe with meaning.*) Other things can be important.

BABE. I don't know, I don't exactly know. How 'bout Willie Jay? Will he be all right?

BARNETTE. Yes, it's all been taken care of. He'll be leaving incognito on the midnight bus—heading north.

BABE. North.

BARNETTE. I'm sorry, it seemed the only...way.

*Barnette moves to her—She moves away.*

BABE. Look, you'd better be getting on back to your work.

BARNETTE. (*Awkwardly.*) Right—'cause I—I've got those important calls out. (*Full of hope for her.*) They'll be pouring in directly. (*He starts to leave, then says to her with love.*) We'll talk.