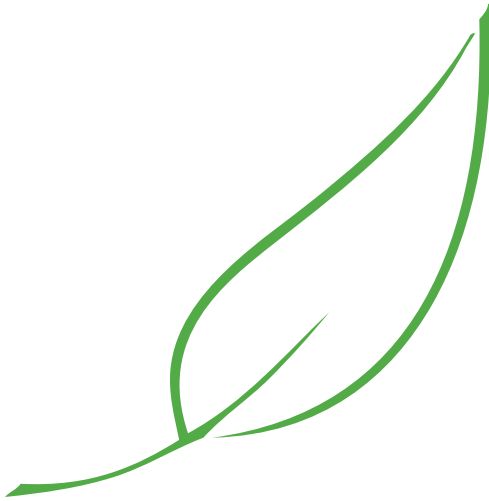


Going Places

By Donald Payton



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GOING PLACES

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GOING PLACES

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SYNOPSIS: There's one time a year when the entire family is happy and that's vacation time and it's vacation time for the Maxwells. Mr. Maxwell thinks they're heading to the mountains for two weeks of fishing; Lucas Maxwell wants to see the Cubs play at Wrigley; Courtney wants to dine with the stars in Hollywood; and Caroline wants to visit her grandparents. But Mrs. Maxwell, remembering how dead tired they were after last year's summer vacation, decides that they will vacation at home! Making matters worse, Mrs. Maxwell talks Mr. Maxwell into painting the house, both sets of hypercritical grandparents unexpectedly drop in and Mr. Maxwell's boss finds out he's still in town and buries him with work. If you're up for the challenge, the Maxwells recommend vacationing at home; if not, indulge in a glorious summer vacation anywhere but home!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 males, 7 females)

LUCAS MAXWELL (m)	Maxwell's thirteen year-old son filled with vim, vigor and vitality. <i>(177 lines)</i>
HERCULES NELSON (m)	Lucas' best friend. He often wears clothes that are too large for him. <i>(25 lines)</i>
COURTNEY MAXWELL (f)	Maxwell's cute and very active fifteen year-old daughter. <i>(155 lines)</i>
ELIZABETH SMITH (f)	Courtney's best friend. <i>(39 lines)</i>
CAROLINE MAXWELL (f)	Maxwell's charming seventeen year-old daughter. Could be called the ideal daughter. <i>(64 lines)</i>

BY DONALD PAYTON

- MR. JOHN MAXWELL (m) Head of the house, or at least he thinks so. Middle-aged with graying hair. Wears a business suit at first, then paint smeared overalls, then pajamas and bathrobe. Make-up: Suntan base, face lightly lined. (271 lines)
- MRS. JANET MAXWELL (f) Head of the house, or at least she thinks so. Middle-aged. She is a good mother, good housekeeper, and most of the time has good ideas. But they are not so hot this time. She dresses casually. Make-up: Medium base, touch of gray in hair, face lightly lined. (238 lines)
- MRS. ALICE BROWN (f) Mrs. Maxwell's mother. About sixty with graying hair. She may wear anything appropriate for her age. Make-up: Medium base, face lined. (38 lines)
- MR. WILLIAM BROWN (m) Mrs. Maxwell's father. About sixty-five. Gray hair and mustache—or even beard or goatee, if desired. Wears a business suit. Make-up: Medium base, face lined. (28 lines)
- GRANDFATHER HENRY MAXWELL (m) Mr. Maxwell's father. About seventy. Costume and make-up similar to that of Mr. Brown, business suit is a different color. (23 lines)

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GRANDMOTHER MARTHA MAXWELL (f) Mr. Maxwell's mother.

Aged sixty or sixty-five. Hair is graying. Costume and make-up similar to that of Mrs. Brown. (18 lines)

AUNT MARY (f) Mrs. Maxwell's aunt and Mrs. Brown's sister. About fifty or fifty-five. Dresses casually. Make-up: Medium base, gray hair, face lined. (38 lines)

MR. HINCKLEY (m) A little man with mustache, horn-rimmed glasses, and a little round hat. He is a very flighty, nervous chap, and to hear him tell it, he's not long for this world. Wears a business suit. Make-up: Suntan base, features highlighted. (52 lines)

NOTE: All characters in this play are purely fictional. Any resemblance to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental.

OFF STAGE SOUNDS

Ring of telephone
Ring of doorbell
Crash in basement

PLACE

The living room of the Maxwell home. The same set is used for all three acts.

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SETTING

The action takes place in the living room of the Maxwell home. There are three exits. The opening in the wall right leads onto the front porch. The opening left leads into the dining room and kitchen. There is a large arch in the wall, center-back. The rest of the house is reached through the arch to the left, and the basement is reached through the arch to the right. A window with shade and curtain is in the wall right, up from the door. The sofa is left-center and an easy chair with foot stool is right-center. Down-right is an occasional chair, backed by a floor lamp, with a magazine rack or end table beside it. Another easy chair is in the corner of the room, up-right. A console radio or a small table with a radio on it is on the wall right of the arch. A bookcase is on the wall left of the arch. An easy chair is against the wall left, up from the door. Down-left is a desk with chair. A telephone is on the desk. Other furniture, pictures, and decorations may be added if desired.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

- SCENE 1: An afternoon in late August, 1948.
SCENE 2: A few days later.

ACT TWO

- SCENE 1: A few days after the end of Act One.

ACT THREE

- SCENE 1: An hour after the conclusion of Act Two.
SCENE 2: A week later, early in the morning.

HAND PROPERTIES

ACT ONE

- COURTNEY—Book.
- CAROLINE—Nail polish.
- MRS. MAXWELL—Bedspread.
- LUCAS—Catcher's mask; ball cap; ball glove; box full of nails, toys, etc.; shoebox.
- MR. MAXWELL—Newspaper.
- MR. BROWN—Suitcases.
- GRANDMOTHER MAXWELL—Suitcase.
- GRANDFATHER MAXWELL—Suitcase.

ACT TWO

- MR. MAXWELL—Bucket of paint, handkerchief.
- CAROLINE—Sack of groceries.
- HERCULES—Fish stringer and pole.
- MR. HINCKLEY—Brief case containing contract; handkerchief; fountain pen.

ACT THREE

- LUCAS and HERCULES—Rubber bands and paper wads.
- MR. MAXWELL—Alarm clock, watch.
- MRS. MAXWELL—Newspaper.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: COURTNEY MAXWELL, *is sitting in the chair, down-right, reading a book. CAROLINE, her elder sister, is sitting on the sofa, applying nail polish. Neither is speaking—each one is absorbed in her own business. MRS. MAXWELL, mother, enters center, followed by AUNT MARY.*

AUNT MARY: *(As they enter.)* And I said to Frank, “Frank, this is the last vacation we’ll take. The very last one. Just look at you...and then look at me. Why you don’t even have the color of a mushroom.” And he’s been sitting ever since we got back, just sitting. The minute we got home, he hit the sofa and he didn’t even budge from there that whole night. *(They cross toward left.)* He couldn’t even get off the sofa. *(They exit left.)*

COURTNEY continues reading, CAROLINE continues applying nail polish. All is silent until AUNT MARY’S voice is heard off-left.

AUNT MARY: I just never saw anything like it. Frank was feeling better **before** vacation. *(They enter left, MRS. MAXWELL carries a bedspread.)* They don’t have vacations to take your mind off your work...they have work to get your mind off your vacation. *(They move up-center and exit.)*

COURTNEY turns a page in her book, CAROLINE doesn’t look up. Soon, AUNT MARY’S voice is heard off-center.

AUNT MARY: *(Off-stage.)* Frank has been limping to work every morning. Literally, limping to work. He tosses and turns in his sleep. He has nightmares...of his vacation! *(They enter center.)* Just about the time he gets back to normal it will be vacation time again, Janet, and then we’ll do it all over again. *(Mrs. Maxwell crosses stage and goes out left with AUNT MARY following her out.)* Every time I think of our vacation I cringe. *(They exit.)*

The phone rings.

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CAROLINE: *(Rising, goes to phone.)* No, this is Caroline. Yes, she's here. *(To COURTNEY.)* Telephone, Courtney. *(No reaction. She repeat, louder.)* Courtney!

COURTNEY: *(Looking up, blankly.)* Huh?

CAROLINE: It's Elizabeth. *(Walks back to sofa.)*

COURTNEY: *(Rises, not taking her eyes off of the book, crosses, automatically goes to the phone.)* Hi, Elizabeth. Reading book. It's called "Tall Hearts Fall Far." Oh yes, Elizabeth. When did you get back? How was your vacation Elizabeth? Oh geez. *(Puts hands over phone, to CAROLINE.)* Elizabeth just got back from her vacation. *(Into phone again.)* Was it romantical, Elizabeth? *(Eyes wide, shouting.)* Hollywood? Oh, Elizabeth. I don't know where we'll go on our vacation. They haven't completely made up his mind. But I think we'll go west, too. This is Father's last day of work before vacation. His very last day. Why don't you come over and tell me all about your trip? We'll probably be packing like mad, but I can squeeze you in between trips to the suitcase. Okay, I'll see you then. *(She hangs up, rises, thinks.)* We could go by the Grand Canyon, then on up through California and Hollywood. *(Crosses right.)* I definitely think we should go to Hollywood. *(She sits, resumes her reading.)*

LUCAS enters left. He is wearing either overalls or dungarees.

LUCAS: Do you realize what time it is? Do you? Only one hour and Pop gets his vacation. *(He sits on sofa.)*

CAROLINE: *(Dryly.)* You haven't been doing anything all summer.

LUCAS: Who says I haven't? I worked in the garden.

CAROLINE: For about fifteen minutes, and you made sure you wouldn't hoe any more. You cut down all the onions.

LUCAS: Well, if I had it my way, I couldn't help it. They looked like weeds to me.

CAROLINE: And you pulled out all the carrots and chopped down the spinach.

LUCAS: If I hadn't, the rabbits woulda got everything anyway. I ain't gonna work my head off for a blasted rabbit.

CAROLINE: You won't even clean out the garage for Mom.

LUCAS: (*Hopping up.*) Do you realize that by cuttin' down the carrots and spinach. I killed three birds with one stone. (*Holds up finger.*) Bird number one: We don't have to spend grueling hours working in torrid heat. Bird number two: (*Another finger.*) I keep rabbits from living at our expense, and— (*Holding up another finger.*) Bird number three—

COURTNEY: (*Breaking in, looking up disgustedly.*) Lucas, out, I'm trying to read.

LUCAS: (*Pointing.*) Look at her, would you. You talk about me, look at her.

COURTNEY: Please don't point, Lucas. Emily Post frowns on pointing.

LUCAS: You talk about me workin', what about you?

COURTNEY: Little boys are supposed to work.

LUCAS: What about girls?

COURTNEY: I have other things to go.

LUCAS: Maybe so, but that doesn't include sittin' around like a piece of furniture. The only difference between you and the bookcase is that the bookcase is standing and you ain't.

COURTNEY: (*Correcting him.*) I'm not, Lucas.

LUCAS: I'm glad you admit it. You've had your nose stuck in a blasted book all summer.

COURTNEY: It's people who read that get places in this world, Lucas. It's a wonderful way to learn.

LUCAS: I don't see how you can learn reading that trash.

COURTNEY: It isn't trash.

LUCAS: (*Grabbing the book.*) It's worse than anything I found in the garage. (*Looks at title.*) "Tall Hearts Fall Far." Holy smokes. (*Reads from book.*) "Gilbert grabbed her in his arms. He looked into her eyes. Her eyes were swimming. His eyes were swimming. He looked around the room. The room was swimming." (*He looks up.*) Sounds like the YMCA.

COURTNEY: (*Reaches for the book.*) Lucas Maxwell, give me that book.

LUCAS: (*Turning his back, walking around room, reading.*) "Then Gilbert knew. He knew he was intoxicated by her rich beauty, her rich love, her rich golden curls, her rich father." Holy smokes! "Gilbert turned away from her slowly. He looked at the wall. But

he couldn't stand what he saw—it was a picture of her father. He faced Madeline again, he looked at her, he opened his mouth, he started to say something, but he couldn't. He couldn't. Nothing would come out." Why wouldn't it come out?

COURTNEY: Lucas.

LUCAS: "Then he realized why nothing would come out. His tongue was caught in his false teeth." (*He turns, looks at COURTNEY.*) Where in the world did you get this? I've read better stuff on a DDT bottle.

COURTNEY: (*Angrily.*) For the last time, give me that book.

LUCAS: No wonder the females of today are such frustrated creatures. (*Handing her the book.*) I'd get frustrated, too, if I read that junk.

COURTNEY: Where's my place? (*Flips pages, looking through book.*)

LUCAS: (*Walking away from her.*) If you read that thing, I'd say your place was in an institution.

CAROLINE: Lucas, you'd better finish cleaning the garage.

LUCAS: And you'd better help Mom so we can get out of here real early in the morning.

CAROLINE: We've been working all day.

LUCAS: (*Laughing sarcastically.*) Ha!

CAROLINE: Extra hard.

LUCAS: (*More emphatic.*) Ha! Ha!

COURTNEY: Lucas, get to work.

LUCAS: If you'd help Mom, we could pull out real early in the morning—for Chicago.

COURTNEY: Chicago?

LUCAS: We're goin' to see the Cubs.

COURTNEY: (*Emphatically.*) We aren't going to Chicago—we're going West.

LUCAS: (*Just as emphatically.*) We're going to Chicago and see the Cubs play the Pirates.

COURTNEY: (*With finality, glaring at Lucas.*) We're going to the Grand Canyon and Hollywood.

LUCAS: (*Defiantly.*) Says who? We're gonna watch a ball game, then we're goin' to the mountains to fish.

CAROLINE: Fish?

LUCAS: Fish! We ain't gonna waste a perfectly good vacation starin' at a gigantic hole in the ground.

COURTNEY: Elizabeth went to Hollywood and if the Smiths can go, so can we.

CAROLINE: I'll bet we go to Grandma Brown's.

LUCAS: (*Sitting, with finality.*) We went there last year. We're goin' to Chicago.

COURTNEY: (*Approaching him.*) I am not going to Chicago.

LUCAS: (*Throwing foot over arm of chair.*) Then sit at home and read "Tall Hearts Fall Far." I'll go to the ball park and eat hot dogs and peanuts and watch a little baseball. If I had it my way, yes.

AUNT MARY and MRS. MAXWELL enter left.

AUNT MARY: (*As they enter.*) And you know that Frank has one of the strongest constitutions in the world. Yet that vacation left him completely exhausted.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*To LUCAS.*) Did you finish the garage, dear?

LUCAS: Not yet, but I got a good start.

CAROLINE: Such as what?

LUCAS: Such as opening the garage door, that's what.

COURTNEY: Lucas Maxwell, is that all you've done this afternoon?

LUCAS: Well good grief, I had to let it air out.

MRS. MAXWELL: Lucas, finish the garage.

LUCAS: (*Rising.*) Okay. (*Rolling up sleeves.*) I'll show you what a worker I am. That I can really get things done. That I'm practically a man. (*Sitting.*) Well, I'm off to the garage.

CAROLINE: Well?

LUCAS: Do you realize that in less than one hour Pop's gonna be home rarin' to go. Only one hour and our work's all done for two weeks. (*Rising.*) When Pop gets home, let me know. I probably won't be in before then. (*He exits left.*)

COURTNEY: Elizabeth's home, Mother. They went to Hollywood. She saw—[*Insert name of popular movie actor.*]

AUNT MARY: Your mother said to tell you she had loads of tomatoes, Janet. And worlds of peaches. (*She sits, as does MRS. MAXWELL.*) Your mother's looking well. So's your father but he's starting to get a little grouchy. But that's the way with

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men. I was telling Frank that Lucas was a lot grouchier than last year, and he agreed.

COURTNEY: Don't we have an uncle or something between here and Hollywood?

MRS. MAXWELL: I think your father's Uncle Reginald lives in western Colorado somewhere.

AUNT MARY: Your mother's going to can pickles tomorrow.

CAROLINE: Are they looking for us, Aunt Mary?

AUNT MARY: They're expecting you for a day or two.

COURTNEY: Then you'd better write them, Mother, because we don't have time to go there and Hollywood, too.

CAROLINE: Father will not want to go to Hollywood.

COURTNEY: Mr. Smith did. And I'm just dying to see—*[Insert name of movie actor.]*

CAROLINE: We heard you the first time.

LUCAS: *(Stepping in left.)* Is Pop home yet?

MRS. MAXWELL: No, Lucas. Get back to work.

AUNT MARY: I've never seen anyone worn out as Frank. He's not worth a thing. Doesn't even have the energy to turn off the lights. I told him this was definitely his last vacation, and he didn't even have the strength to argue.

LUCAS: Do you remember Clifford, Mom?

AUNT MARY: That's just exactly what a vacation does to a man, Janet.

LUCAS: Does anybody remember Clifford?

AUNT MARY: And Mrs. Pierce says her husband is the same way. But Mr. Pierce never was too industrious.

LUCAS: Surely some of you remember Clifford, the cat we used to have.

COURTNEY: What about Clifford, Lucas?

LUCAS: I found him out in the garage—deader than a mackerel.

COURTNEY: *(Terrified.)* You didn't!

LUCAS: *(Enjoying his story.)* I did. And I got a handful of hair to prove it. Found him wedged in between some cannin' jars and Pop's tool chest. I can bring in the remains if you wanta see him.

CAROLINE: Lucas, we are not interested in dead cats.

LUCAS: No tellin' what else I'll find in the garage. May find some treasure or something. May even find another dead cat. I like to

clean out garages. May even go into the garage cleanin' business some day. Has a good future in it. There'll always be dead cats.

CAROLINE: (*Sharply.*) Lucas!

LUCAS: (*Starting left.*) Okay, I'm goin'. (*He stops at door.*) Pop's gonna be off and headin' for his vacation in fifty minutes. Be sure and call me when he gets in. Sure am glad I found Clifford. Been wonderin' what happened to that cat. (*He exits left.*)

AUNT MARY: Guess I better be getting back to the fort, too. Frank's gonna come limpin' home from work soon, and if I'm not there he'll sulk all night. Been that way ever since we got back from our vacation.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Following her to door, right.*) Must you leave, Aunt Mary?

AUNT MARY: Stayed too long the way it is.

COURTNEY: Hollywood isn't so far.

CAROLINE: We'll let Father decide what he wants to do. After all, it's his vacation.

COURTNEY: Why wouldn't father want to go to Hollywood? I know he'd like to see (*Insert name of movie actor.*)

AUNT MARY: (*At door.*) Just take my advice, Janet, and don't go too far and don't stay too long. If I don't see you before you leave, drop me a postcard. (*She exits.*)

CAROLINE: Personally, I think we should all go to Grandmother's. Father can fish all he wants to there.

COURTNEY: He can fish any day of the year.

LUCAS: (*Entering left.*) Was that Pop that just came in? (*He has on a catcher's mask, a beat-up ball cap, and is carrying an old ball glove.*)

COURTNEY: No Lucas, that was Aunt Mary that just went out. (*She curls up once more with the book.*)

LUCAS: Pop'll be home in forty-eight minutes. He'll be home and rarin' to go. We're gonna fish and watch the Cubs. I'm gonna pitch for the Cubs some day. I've really got a fastball. Pop says so, too.

CAROLINE: (*Changing the subject.*) I thought you were cleaning out the garage.

LUCAS: I am.

CAROLINE: Then what are you doing with that thing on your face?

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LUCAS: (*Removing mask.*) It's my old catcher's mask I found in the garage. Found this cap and my old glove, too. (*Dumps them all on the floor.*) Found a lot of stuff out in the garage. Found two dead beetles. Think I'll take out my spyglass and look for fingerprints in case I find a body. (*To COURTNEY.*) Are you still reading that stupid book?

MRS. MAXWELL: Lucas, please hurry and finish before your father gets home.

LUCAS: Okay. (*Sitting.*) That's pretty excitin' business. I'm really good at uncoverin' things. Uncovered a thousand-legged worm awhile ago. (*Rising.*) Well, I'm getting back to my post. Tell Pop where I am. (*He exits left.*)

CAROLINE: Shall I start dinner, Mother?

MRS. MAXWELL: In a few minutes, dear. I think we'll just have cold cuts and potato salad. Don't want to get sick the day before our vacation.

COURTNEY: (*Laying book in lap, gazing into space.*) I can just see myself walking down Hollywood Boulevard.

MRS. MAXWELL: Dear, I do wish you'd stop dreaming of Hollywood. It's more than doubtful that your father will want to drive to Hollywood. Anyway, that's a mighty long way.

COURTNEY: Elizabeth's father made the trip. It wasn't too far for him.

MRS. MAXWELL: Mr. Smith and your father are two different people. Please try to think of something else.

ELIZABETH SMITH enters right. She is usually very full of life and very talkative, but today seems rather quiet, and looks very worn out from her vacation.

ELIZABETH: (*Stepping in room, leaning against wall.*) Hello, everybody.

COURTNEY: (*Bouncing up, excitedly, as CAROLINE and MRS. MAXWELL greet ELIZABETH.*) Hi, Elizabeth, hi. How was your vacation?

ELIZABETH: It was wonderful, absolutely wonderful. We went completely through the West. (*Comes over and drops in chair.*) And boy, am I tired.

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CAROLINE: Shall I put the eggs on to boil, Mother?

MRS. MAXWELL: Yes dear. We better get started. *(They exit left.)*

COURTNEY: Tell me all about *[Insert name.]* Elizabeth. Did you get his autograph? *(Sits on davenport.)*

ELIZABETH: Golly no, there was such a mob. I even had to jump up in the air to get a look at him.

COURTNEY: We're going to Hollywood, too.

ELIZABETH: I did so much jumping that I think I'll go out for the track team.

COURTNEY: I think we'll leave early in the morning.

ELIZABETH: I never saw such a mob. People were pushing and shouting and shoving.

LUCAS: *(Entering left, stopping inside door.)* Guess what I found in the garage?

ELIZABETH: Two girls fainted.

LUCAS: Nope, I didn't find no fainted girls, but I might any time. Found practically everything else.

COURTNEY: I don't know which dress I should wear in Hollywood.

LUCAS: Found a mouse nest with three mice in it. Found it between a Woman's Home Companion and a Saturday Evening Post.

COURTNEY: We're not interested in mice. *(Turns.)* I think I'll wear white.

LUCAS: Guess what I found in a Police Gazette?

COURTNEY: Lucas, discuss it elsewhere.

LUCAS: Did you know that Pop's gonna be home for his vacation in less than forty-five minutes. Did you know that?

COURTNEY: We're aware of it, Lucas.

LUCAS: *(Sitting.)* We're going to Chicago, and then to the mountains.

COURTNEY: Lucas, we're going to Hollywood.

LUCAS: We're going to Chicago and see the Cubs. *(He rises.)* Well, I'm off to the garage. Do you realize that if I fell out of the loft I'd break my neck?

COURTNEY: Lucas, stop giving us ideas.

LUCAS: *(Starting left.)* I'll clean like mad till Pop gets here. Well, I'm off to the garage. *(As he exits left.)*

COURTNEY: You don't say.

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ELIZABETH: We did so much driving that all I can see is cars going. *(She jerks her left thumb.)* this way and *(Jerks her right thumb.)* thata way.

COURTNEY: *(Walking around room, thinking.)* I could wear light blue. *(ELIZABETH sits with chin in hands, staring into space.)* Do you think *[Insert name.]* would notice yellow? I definitely like yellow. Which reminds me. I think we'll come back through Yellowstone Park. We'll go by Carlsbad Caverns on the way, then by the Grand Canyon, the Petrified Forest, and then to Hollywood. *(Stares at ELIZABETH.)* What's wrong with you, Elizabeth? You look ill.

ELIZABETH: *(Listlessly.)* I feel ill.

COURTNEY: *(Off again.)* Then we'll come down through Denver.

The phone rings again.

COURTNEY: Of course, we can't stay long in Denver because of the time we spent in California.

ELIZABETH: You know what I think, Courtney? I think I had too much vacation.

COURTNEY: *(Thinking.)* From there, I don't know where we'll go.

ELIZABETH: In fact, I know I had too much vacation.

COURTNEY: We'll fly through Nebraska. *[If you are producing this play in Nebraska, feel free to change "state" to Oklahoma.]*

ELIZABETH: You won't miss much.

Phone rings again.

ELIZABETH: I may die tonight. I hear a ringing in my ears.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Entering left.)* Courtney, I do wish you'd pay attention to the phone. *(She lifts receiver.)* Yes...Aunt Mary. He what? *(To the room in general.)* Frank came right home from work and went to bed. He was piled up when Aunt Mary got home. Says he's having cold chills. *(Into the phone again.)* If you need us for anything, Aunt Mary, just whistle. *(She hangs up.)*

COURTNEY: If we have to stop in Nebraska, we'll stay at the Burke Hotel in Omaha. It's definitely recommended.

MRS. MAXWELL: Uncle Frank is worn out from his vacation. Not good for one thing.

ELIZABETH: Father had too much vacation, too. He hasn't said a word to Mother or me since we got home. He just sits and stares into space. Just mutters to himself about how much driving he did. He won't even turn from the hall into the bathroom without sticking out his left hand.

MRS. MAXWELL: Uncle Frank had a fever, too.

ELIZABETH: The other day when he was staring into space, Mother said to him, "Fred, isn't there something we can do for you?" and he looked straight ahead and said, "Check my oil, kid, and clean off the windshield."

MRS. MAXWELL: And Aunt Mary said the Pierces were both worn out, too.

ELIZABETH: And Mother's just as bad. She heard so many car horns that now she thinks every noise is a horn. The other morning when the alarm went off she said, "Pull over and let the man by, Fred." And Father sat up and hollered "Watch me out run him, Helen," And he fell out of bed.

COURTNEY: I think I'll go pack my suitcase right now.

LUCAS: (*Stepping inside door, left, a shoebox in hands.*) Is Pop home yet?

MRS. MAXWELL: No Lucas.

LUCAS: Guess what I got in this box?

COURTNEY: If I pack my suitcase now, I'll be all ready to start out early in the morning. I think we should set the alarm for three, Mother.

LUCAS: Somebody guess what I got in the box.

ELIZABETH yawns a couple of times, curls up on the sofa, tries desperately to keep her eyes open, blinks sleepily.

COURTNEY: Do you want to help me pack my things, Elizabeth?

LUCAS: You give up? I got Clifford in here.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Astonished, sharply.*) Lucas, get that dead cat out of the house.

LUCAS: I'm gonna give him a high class funeral. Nothing's too good for Clifford.

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COURTNEY: Lucas, out of here and take that smelly cat with you.

LUCAS: Does anybody want to view the remains?

COURTNEY: *(As they ignore him.)* You wanta help me pack my things, Elizabeth? *(No answer.)* Elizabeth? *(She comes over, looks down at ELIZABETH.)* I think she's asleep. *(ELIZABETH snores softly.)* I know she's asleep. Imagine that.

LUCAS: No respect for the dead. I may be an undertaker some day.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Coming over.)* She's worn out, completely.

LUCAS: I think it definitely has a future. Well, I'll get back to the mortuary. When Pop gets home, whistle. He may want to pay his last respects. *(He exits left.)*

COURTNEY: I guess I'll just let her sleep while I pack my things. *(She starts center.)* I'll be upstairs, Mother. *(She exits.)* I'm going to take my bathing suit, too. We'll probably go swimming in the ocean.

CAROLINE: *(Entering left.)* The eggs are boiling, Mother.

MRS. MAXWELL: All right, dear. I'll be in as soon as they're done and we'll make potato salad.

CAROLINE: *(Looking down at ELIZABETH.)* What's wrong with Elizabeth?

MRS. MAXWELL: She's completely worn out from her vacation. Everybody's worn out. Uncle Frank is practically out cold.

CAROLINE: She certainly looks done in. I still think we should go to Grandmother's, Mother. They'll definitely be looking for us.

MRS. MAXWELL: I don't know, dear. *(As she sits.)* I just don't know. I'm exhausted thinking about vacation.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Entering right.)* Then don't look now, Janet, because it started ten minutes ago.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Rising happily.)* John!

CAROLINE: *(Excitedly.)* Father!

MR. MAXWELL: *(Embracing MRS. MAXWELL and whirling her around and around.)* This is it, Janet, this is it. Vacation is here!

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Laughing.)* Put me down, John, good heavens.

CAROLINE: I'll get back to the potato salad because with Father home this early we might leave tonight. And Grandmother will be looking for us right off. *(She exits left.)*

MR. MAXWELL: *(Walking around the room, happily.)* Two whole weeks off and the boss sent me home thirty minutes early. Two

whole weeks. It's a great life, Janet, especially around vacation time. Yessir! Do you know what the boss said to me, Janet, do you? He said, "John"—that's what he always calls me—"John, when you get out on the lake and the shadows are falling and the bass are hitting and your spinner's sinking and a five pound beauty hits it, pull extra hard for me, John, pull extra hard for me. And when you're cookin' it— *(He wrinkles up his nose, takes a deep breath, falls back in a chair.)* When you're cookin' it and the aroma's all around like the mosquitoes, and the potatoes are sizzlin' and frogs are croakin', think of me, John. Think of me croakin' in this hot, stuffy office." And then he let me go, Janet. *(He sticks legs straight out, settles down in the chair.)* Thirty minutes early.

MRS. MAXWELL: Aunt Mary was over.

MR. MAXWELL: Two whole weeks to do anything I please.

MRS. MAXWELL: She said Uncle Frank isn't a fit man to live with since they got back from their vacation.

MR. MAXWELL: Can't wait to try out my new spinner.

LUCAS: *(Enters left with a large box, holds it in front of his face as he enters.)* Just wait'll you see what else I found in the garage. *(He stops.)* Do you realize that in thirty some odd minutes Pop's gonna be home for his vacation?

MRS. MAXWELL: Your father's already home, Lucas.

LUCAS: *(Excitedly.)* He is! *(Dropping box.)* Whattaya know about that? *(The box drops on floor with contents—balls, nuts, toys, and a little of everything—flying out.)*

MR. MAXWELL: What in the world are you doing, Lucas?

LUCAS: I'm cleanin' out the garage.

MR. MAXWELL: That's great, son, but who's going to clean out the living room?

LUCAS: This garage cleanin' business is really a lucrative field. May go into that kind of business some day. You got the evening paper, Pop? *(MR. MAXWELL takes paper from his coat pocket.)* I'll see what the Cubs did. *(He sits.)*

MRS. MAXWELL: And the Smiths are simply worn out. Mr. Smith won't speak to his family and just take a look at Elizabeth. *(ELIZABETH snores again.)* Just take a look at her, John. *(MR. MAXWELL goes over, peers down at her.)* Well?

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MR. MAXWELL: (*Looking up.*) Well?

MRS. MAXWELL: What do you think?

MR. MAXWELL: I think she'll swallow a fly if she doesn't close her mouth.

MRS. MAXWELL: Don't you see anything?

MR. MAXWELL: Am I supposed to?

MRS. MAXWELL: You certainly should.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Bending over ELIZABETH again.*) She has a spot on one tonsil.

MRS. MAXWELL: You should be able to see that she's completely worn out, John. She's definitely had too much vacation. The Pierces are the same way.

LUCAS: The Cubs won today.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*To LUCAS.*) Surprise, surprise. (*To MR. MAXWELL.*) Everybody we know, John, has come back either worn out or mad.

LUCAS: Dad, I said—

MRS. MAXWELL: Even Aunt Mary was grouchy. She tried not to show it but I could definitely tell.

LUCAS: Dad—

MR. MAXWELL: We'll take the best vacation we've ever had.

LUCAS: Dad, the Cubs—

MR. MAXWELL: (*Reaching a decision.*) I'll throw my things together, Janet, and we'll leave as soon as possible.

MRS. MAXWELL: Lucas, to the garage. Your father and I have something to discuss.

MR. MAXWELL: We do?

MRS. MAXWELL glares at MR. MAXWELL.

MR. MAXWELL: Yes, we do.

LUCAS: (*Rising.*) Okay, if it's the trip to Chicago you're gonna discuss, that suits me. I'm all ready to go. I've packed my glove and ball. (*Crossing left.*) Well, I'll get back to the garage. May find another dead specimen. (*He exits.*)

MR. MAXWELL: (*Staring up-center.*) I'll get my fishing things and we'll head to the mountains. We can stop in and see my folks on the way and—

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Breaking in.*) John. (*He stops, turns.*) What about my folks?

MR. MAXWELL: We were there last year, Janet.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Irritably.*) For one day, John, one day.

MR. MAXWELL: Well, I hate to wear out our welcome.

MRS. MAXWELL: You didn't open your mouth the entire day.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Coming down-stage.*) I had hay fever, Janet.

MRS. MAXWELL: You were pouting because we went to my folks.

MR. MAXWELL: I told you I had hay fever.

MRS. MAXWELL: You did plenty of talking after we left. You called my father names I'd never heard before. I don't understand it. They'd love for us to come.

MR. MAXWELL: Your father goes out to the barn and spends the whole day with the cows. He'd rather talk to his cows than his son-in-law.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Turning, picking up the paper, sitting.*) I imagine he finds the cows more sociable.

MR. MAXWELL: When he does talk all he talks about is himself. The only pronoun he knows is I.

MRS. MAXWELL: You won't admit it but Father has his good points.

MR. MAXWELL: It's a shame they're on top of his head.

MRS. MAXWELL: I think we should go see them tomorrow.

MR. MAXWELL: I think we should go to the mountains and relax for two weeks. (*He starts walking around room.*)

MRS. MAXWELL: Aunt Mary said Mother had loads of ripe tomatoes and peaches. I think she's going to can pickles tomorrow.

MR. MAXWELL: Won't your father look awfully funny in a can?

MRS. MAXWELL: We always have loads of good things to eat at Mother's.

MR. MAXWELL: We can eat the fish I'm gonna catch. Probably catch the limit the first day.

COURTNEY: (*Entering center.*) I've got my suitcase packed.

MR. MAXWELL: We'll leave in the morning.

COURTNEY: (*Excitedly.*) For Hollywood, Father, Hollywood.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Blinking.*) Hollywood?

MRS. MAXWELL: Courtney has her heart set on going to Hollywood, John.

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COURTNEY: (*Words pouring out.*) There will be wonderful scenery along the way, Father. There's the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, and I figure we could spend a day there, and then—

MR. MAXWELL: (*Trying to break in, but COURTNEY goes right on talking without interruption.*) Courtney!

COURTNEY: Go on to the Grand Canyon and spend some time there and look at all the sights and then move on to the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest and then Death Valley and —

MR. MAXWELL: (*Again trying to break in, but she goes right on.*) Courtney!

COURTNEY: (*Continuing.*) And then on to Hollywood, Father, and there we would see all the actors and actresses and studios and beaches and swimming pools and cars and —

MR. MAXWELL: (*Shouting above her.*) Courtney, we are not going to Hollywood.

COURTNEY: But Father, Mr. Smith went to Hollywood with his entire family.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Still rather loudly.*) I don't care if Mr. Smith went to - to the Cumberland Gap with Daniel Boone. We are not going to Hollywood.

COURTNEY: (*Sadly.*) You don't want to drive through Nebraska, Father?

MR. MAXWELL: (*Emphatically.*) We are not going to Hollywood, Courtney.

COURTNEY: But what will I do?

MR. MAXWELL: You will do what the rest of us do.

COURTNEY: (*Sitting morosely.*) Fish? You've got to be kidding me. Elizabeth rubbed shoulders with— [*Insert name movie actor.*]

MR. MAXWELL: (*Loudly.*) I don't care if she held hands with Donald Duck.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, not so grouchy. As impossible as you are now, I hate to think what you'll be like when you get back.

MR. MAXWELL: I'll be in a wonderful mood, Janet. I'm going to take it easy and relax.

MRS. MAXWELL: That's the same thing you said last year. And remember when we got home you couldn't say a decent word for two weeks.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Sitting, sticking his legs straight out.*) But this year's going to be different, Janet.

MRS. MAXWELL: And I've heard that before, too.

COURTNEY: Well, if we aren't going to Hollywood, I'm going up to my room. Don't call me to eat, Mother. I'm through with food. (*Shuffles up-center.*) I'm through with everything. I may just curl up and die. (*Exit center.*)

MRS. MAXWELL: The children were worn out last year, too, John. Remember how we had to carry Lucas from the car into the house? And they were in no condition to start school the next Monday.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Hands locked behind head.*) I'll take my new fly-rod. Anxious to try out that new fly. Oughta really snag the bass.

MRS. MAXWELL: And Courtney just sat and stared into space. (*She goes over to chair with paper in it, takes paper, sits, still talking.*) Didn't have a speck of life in her.

MR. MAXWELL: Now, Janet! (*Rising.*) I'll hit the river at sun-up...bass oughta really be striking.

MRS. MAXWELL: Aunt Mary's the same after her vacation. She's nothing but a shell. Just a shell. And Uncle Frank. And the Pierces. They're all shells. (*She absent-mindedly unfolds paper, looks at headlines.*)

MR. MAXWELL: They'll get over it. (*Walking around room.*) We'll eat every meal on the river.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Sitting up suddenly, staring wide-eyed at paper.*) Good grief!

MR. MAXWELL: Nothing like a meal cooked on the river with plenty of fish and corn and fried potatoes.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Louder.*) Good grief. Listen to this, John. (*Reading.*) Mr. J. M. Saunders of 403 Maple, collapsed following his vacation and is now in Westport Hospital. He collapsed while unloading his gun after returning home from his vacation. The gun discharged upon hitting the floor and shot off the top of his minnow trap. (*Looking up.*) That's terrible.

MR. MAXWELL: It certainly is. Good minnow traps come high these days.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, you missed the point completely. The point is that another person has come back from his vacation

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completely defeated. And listen to this, (*Reads again.*) Fred Reagan of 918 Charles returned home from his vacation today in an ambulance. While exploring the wilds along Wilson River he fell over a forty foot bluff, hit the ground, broke two legs, an arm, several ribs, fractured his pelvis and completely demolished his new twenty-one jewel watch.

MR. MAXWELL: Goodness!

MRS. MAXWELL: That's deplorable. (*Horried.*)

MR. MAXWELL: It certainly is. He'll miss that watch.

MRS. MAXWELL: There's absolutely nothing as dangerous as a vacation.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Sitting again, sticking feet straight out.*) There's nothing like sitting around an open fire at night. Nothing but fresh air—and rippling water—and crickets.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Rising.*) No telling what would happen to us if we went on our vacation. Anything could happen. Snake bites. Bulls.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Closing his eyes, sinking down in chair.*) And then sleep. Good peaceful sleep on the river.

MRS. MAXWELL: I think we would be better off to spend this vacation right here at home.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Rambling on.*) Or boating. (*To MRS. MAXWELL.*) Remember how I used to sing to you before we were married, Janet? I'd paddle the canoe and sing to you for hours at a time. I sounded pretty good on the river, too. (*He rises.*) Remember, Janet?

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Thinking, hand on chin.*) The more I think of it, John, the better it sounds.

MR. MAXWELL: Is that right? Never knew my singing had that kind of an effect on you. (*Singing in a deep, dramatic voice.*) Down the river of golden dreams...drifting along.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Breaking in.*) John.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Continuing.*) Drifting along, singing a song, of love.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, I've definitely made up my mind. We're going to spend this vacation at home.

MR. MAXWELL: YES, Janet. (*Continues singing.*) Drifting along...singing a song of – (*He stops.*) At home?

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MRS. MAXWELL: Yes, John. I've made up my mind. We won't be like the others. We're using our heads and staying at home.

MR. MAXWELL: But I wanted to enjoy this vacation, Janet. Not stand back and watch it get mutilated.

MRS. MAXWELL: If we stay here you'll get lots of rest and relaxation. And so will the children. You'll be ready for work and they'll be ready for school and we'll show all the neighbors, John.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Sinking sadly in chair.*) I'd rather show'em a largemouth bass.

MRS. MAXWELL: And we'll get a perfect start on the coming year. There's no place like home to spend a vacation. I'll go tell the children right now what we decided.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Astonished.*) We decided?

MRS. MAXWELL: Yes John. (*As she exits.*) I'll tell them just what we decided. (*She exits center.*)

MR. MAXWELL: (*Half rising.*) But Janet. (*He falls back into the chair.*) Oh no! I've been looking forward to this vacation all year. I've bought complete new tackle. A new fly rod. Hip-boots. (*Wailing.*) Oh no. She's my wife. My own wife. How could she do this to me? How could she?

ELIZABETH: (*Shaking her head, raising up on one elbow, looking at MR. MAXWELL through drooping eyelids.*) Hello, Mr. Maxwell.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Drearily.*) Hello, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: Do you feel bad too, Mr. Maxwell?

MR. MAXWELL: (*Slumping in chair.*) I feel terrible.

ELIZABETH: I don't think there's anything as ghastly as a vacation.

MR. MAXWELL: I think you're right. Elizabeth. (*He rises.*) Especially a vacation at home. (*He starts walking wildly around the room.*) No place like home to spend a vacation, she said. That's what she said. And she's my wife. My own wife. And she's been my wife for twenty years. There's no justice. Remember that, Elizabeth. There's no justice. Whatever you do there's no justice. I never did anything to deserve this. I'm a decent fellow and I've lived an upstanding life. There just isn't any justice. (*He stops in front of chair.*) It's terrible. Terrible. That's what it is, terrible. (*And he falls into the chair.*)

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ELIZABETH: (*Jumping up.*) Mr. Maxwell! (*No answer, she repeats, louder.*) Mr. Maxwell! (*She starts left.*) Courtney! Come quick. I think your father just died.

MR. MAXWELL flings his arms over arm of chair, as there is a quick CURTAIN.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE: *MR. MAXWELL is snoozing on the sofa. MRS. MAXWELL is sitting in a chair. COURTNEY is on the phone, talking as usual to ELIZABETH.*

COURTNEY: (*Talking as the curtain rises.*) There's nothing to do, Elizabeth. Absolutely nothing. It's the most dismal vacation I've ever had. I've even stopped writing in my diary.

CAROLINE: (*Entering left.*) The pressure is still at fifteen, Mother.

COURTNEY: We're spending this vacation at home. The whole thing. Now I know how a shut-up canary feels. Or a goldfish, swimming around the same glass bowl day after day.

CAROLINE: The beans should be completely pressured in a few minutes, Mother.

MRS. MAXWELL: I'll get to them in a minute, dear.

COURTNEY: Mother's canning beans. Father's sleeping. I'm twiddling my thumbs. It's absolutely dreadful. Caged like a wild beast.

CAROLINE: Where's Lucas?

MRS. MAXWELL: I've been wondering that myself.

COURTNEY: Nothing to do—just sit here and watch myself shrivel up like a pretzel.

LUCAS MAXWELL enters, wearing the same garb he wore in the first act.

LUCAS: (*Entering right.*) Good grief.

MRS. MAXWELL: Is something wrong, dear?

LUCAS: Everything. This is a lousy vacation. I'd just as well be at Alcatraz.

MRS. MAXWELL: Lucas, you're too young to understand it, I know, but we're using our heads.

LUCAS: For what we've been doin' we don't even need heads. Just sit around and look at one another. I'm a growin' boy. I need activity, excitement, noise, baseball.

COURTNEY: *(Still rambling on the phone.)* There's got to be something we could do, Elizabeth. I can't stand to read another book. I finished "Tall Hearts Fall Far." I've been reading magazines all day. Did you ever know that blondes should wear dark brown and dark blue and well-tailored clothes for daytime, with simple, sleek things for evening?

LUCAS: *(Sitting, chin in hands.)* Right now, we would-a been at the ballgame, watching the Cubs play the Cardinals, grabbin' another hotdog. *(He sits in chair, down-right.)*

AUNT MARY: *(Sticking her head in right.)* Anybody home?

LUCAS: *(Sarcastically.)* We're all home. Home sweet home.

MRS. MAXWELL: Aunt Mary, come right in. *(AUNT MARY come in.)*

COURTNEY: They should wear their hair sleek and definitely not in curls. And they should stay away from pink and blue.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(To LUCAS.)* Get up dear, and let Aunt Mary sit there. *(To AUNT MARY.)* John's sprawled all over the sofa. *(To LUCAS again.)* Lucas, up.

LUCAS: The way I figure it, I got about seventy more years to live in this world and I'm spending two of the most important weeks of my seventy years stuck in this boring house. *(He rises.)*

COURTNEY: Brunettes, Elizabeth? They should wear sandy shades and soft dusty pink.

CAROLINE: Excuse me, Aunt Mary, I need to check the beans. *(She exits left.)*

AUNT MARY: You cannin' beans, Janet?

MRS. MAXWELL: We put up a few today.

COURTNEY: Red heads can wear dusty pink, too. And apricot. I definitely like apricot.

AUNT MARY: *(As they sit.)* I'm glad to hear that you're spending this vacation at home, Janet, wise move.

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COURTNEY: It said for a red head not to wear sheer black over a flesh colored foundation. In fact, no black at all.

LUCAS: Mom, can't we even go down to the river for a few days?

MRS. MAXWELL: Lucas, we won't discuss it any more. We are not going to the river! We are resting.

LUCAS: We are bored. Uhhh!

MRS. MAXWELL: Really, Lucas! (*Ignoring him.*) How's Frank, Aunt Mary?

AUNT MARY: Oh, he's getting along. You know these things take time. Incidentally, I saw Mrs. Rogers today. She definitely isn't pleased with her new daughter-in-law. (*Leaning forward.*) She's an only daughter and some say that's worse than an only son.

MRS. MAXWELL: Yes, I know.

AUNT MARY: She can't boil an egg, Janet, I know that for a fact. He'll want to eat at his mother's and that'll cause troubles. Lands yes.

COURTNEY: In-betweens should wear bright, exciting colors. And their hair should be soft and feminine.

AUNT MARY: (*Leaning toward MRS. MAXWELL, in a low voice.*) And did you hear about the Kings? Mrs. Nell told Mrs. Moffat that Mr. and Mrs. King are moving.

LUCAS: (*Going up-center.*) I might pick up the ball game on the radio.

MRS. MAXWELL: Don't turn it up loud, Lucas. Your father's sleeping. (*He turns radio on. Sticks head against loud-speaker.*)

AUNT MARY: And Mrs. Smith. Poor Mrs. Smith. But that's her husband's mother's fault. And his father had something to do with it, too.

COURTNEY: We could surely find something to do, Elizabeth. We might go into the dress designing business. I think I'd be good at that. I've got to do something. This vacation is boring me to death.

LUCAS: I think I'm getting it. I hear something. Sounds kinda like the "Green Hornet," though. (*He looks at his mother.*) Must be Pop snorin'. (*Puts his ear on the loud speaker and then up again.*) Yep, that's what it is.

CAROLINE: (*Entering left.*) It's time to hear Julia Long, Girl Mortician. Lucas, what are you doing?

LUCAS: I'm listnin' to the ballgame.

CAROLINE: I've got to hear Julia Long, Girl Mortician.

LUCAS: I don't care if you hafta hear Myrtle Jones, Girl Helicopter, I'm gonna listen to the ballgame.

CAROLINE: You can't even get the ballgame.

LUCAS: I can too. Somebody just hit a home run. Either that or I blew a tube. *(Shakes radio.)* I guess I blew a tube.

CAROLINE: Can't you put on a spare?

LUCAS: Good grief, you don't change a tube like a car tire. Females are so stupid. *(Starts left.)* I'll go get my tool chest and fix the radio.

MRS. MAXWELL: You'll what?

LUCAS: Get my tool chest and fix the radio. I've had manual training.

MRS. MAXWELL: Lucas, you'll do nothing of the sort.

LUCAS: *(Going on out left.)* Then I guess there's nothing to do but go upstairs and die an early death.

COURTNEY: What did you say, Elizabeth? *(She continues to nod and talk in pantomime to ELIZABETH.)*

AUNT MARY: Yes, I sure was glad to hear you were spending this vacation at home. Mighty wise move.

MRS. MAXWELL: I told John that we'd spend an easy, simple vacation right here at home. The children will be ready for school and we'll have a jump on the coming year. *(Mr. Maxwell turns.)*

AUNT MARY: I think you're to be congratulated, Janet. You're showing good common sense.

CAROLINE: *(Going out left.)* I'll get back to the beans.

MRS. MAXWELL: We saved money, too. Maybe now we can get some work done on this house.

AUNT MARY: You mean that paint job and new deck?

MRS. MAXWELL: That's a start, Aunt Mary.

AUNT MARY: Why don't you have John work on it during his vacation?

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Suddenly reaching a decision.)* That's a great idea. *(MR. MAXWELL stirs, turns over onto his back, and with his hands pushes himself up and glares at them in this position.)*

AUNT MARY: Frank built me a complete built-in bookcase. But some men are naturally good around the house.

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MRS. MAXWELL: I know he could do the painting.

AUNT MARY: Frank can do anything around the house.

MRS. MAXWELL: And he should have it done by the time his vacation's over—that is if he works every day. (*MR. MAXWELL clears throat.*) John, are you awake?

MR. MAXWELL: (*Barking.*) Awake?

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Apologizing.*) He's always grouchy when he's woken.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Barking again.*) Asleep? (*Sitting up.*) How do you expect me to sleep with—

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Breaking in.*) He never sleeps soundly during the day.

MR. MAXWELL: Especially when there's —

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Again breaking in.*) Why don't you take a shower, John?

AUNT MARY: (*Rising.*) Don't mind me, John. I've got to get going.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Sarcastically.*) So soon, Aunt Mary?

AUNT MARY: (*As she starts right, MRS. MAXWELL following.*) Just stopped over to see how you were getting along. (*As they exit right.*) Yes, Janet, I definitely think you made a wise choice by staying at home.

MR. MAXWELL: Wise choice, huh.

COURTNEY: (*Still talking over phone. She is now leaning over desk chair.*) I agree with you, Elizabeth. We could definitely design dresses. And since we aren't going on a vacation, father will surely let me have a new dress. (*She turns, sees he's awake.*) He's asleep now.

LUCAS: (*Entering left with shoebox.*) Guess what? (*No answer.*) He's here. Hercules Nelson, thank goodness. C'mon in Herc.

HERCULES NELSON, enters left, he's wearing a baseball cap.

HERCULES: (*Entering.*) Hey, everybody. Hey, Mr. Maxwell. Hey, Courtney. (*No answer.*) What's wrong with your old man, Lucas?

LUCAS: He's on vacation.

HERCULES: Oh.

LUCAS: Right now he probably thinks he's in the Rockies. Or out on a lake. He had his heart set on it. Mom said we was gonna use

our heads and stay at home. Personally, I'd rather use my tonsils and go to the ballgame and yell for the Cubs.

COURTNEY: Why don't you come over, Elizabeth, and we'll start right to work, Elizabeth. (*As she hangs up.*) I'll see you, Elizabeth. (*To LUCAS.*) That was Elizabeth.

LUCAS: (*Raising eyebrows, Sarcastically.*) No!

COURTNEY: (*Glaring at Hercules.*) At least she's civilized. You're not supposed to wear hats in the house, Hercules. (*He takes it off. His hair is disheveled and tousled.*) On second thought, put it back on. (*She turns and goes out center.*)

LUCAS: Don't let her worry you, Hercules. I think she's losing her mind. (*Turning to his father.*) We're getting ready to bury Clifford. Do you want to view the remains, Pop? (*No answer.*) We're gonna give him a high class funeral. Nothin's too good for Clifford. May even give him a tombstone.

HERCULES: Here lies the corpse of Cliff the cat, he went to the garage and that was that.

LUCAS: That's good, Herc. We may be writin' for commercials one of these days. (*Sticks box under MR. MAXWELL'S nose.*) You wanna view the remains, Pop?

MR. MAXWELL: (*Rising, exploding.*) Lucas, get that dead cat out of the house.

LUCAS: We thought you might lead the singing.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Barking.*) Lucas.

LUCAS: Okay, we're goin'. I guess I can lead the singing. (*As they exit left.*) Nothin's too good for Cliff. (*LUCAS and HERCULES exit.*)

MR. MAXWELL, hands behind back, paces the floor. MRS. MAXWELL comes in right.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*As she enters.*) Did you sleep, John? (*No answer.*) John? (*She stops*) John, stop pouting. You've pouted ever since your vacation started. (*Still no answer.*) You'll thank me for it later, John. You'll be happy we stayed home. (*She sits, he continues to walk.*) John, there's no use sulking. You've sulked continuously for two days. I never saw anyone as grouchy as you. (*She rises, starts following him around.*) You glared at me, John.

GOING PLACES

Think what Aunt Mary will say. Do you know that she likes to gossip, John?

MR. MAXWELL: You're kidding, Janet. Aunt Mary, gossip? It's my vacation, I was trying to sleep, and this, this female foghorn aunt of yours, I always thought your mother was bad, but she doesn't hold a candle to (*Points right.*) her.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, Mother doesn't talk.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Pacing floor again.*) I got five minutes of sleep. Five minutes. And do you want to know what I was dreaming about for five minutes? Your mother and your father. I never had such a nightmare.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Astonished.*) John.

MR. MAXWELL: I dreamed they were coming here, Janet, here. What a horrible dream! And it was all so real. There they stood in the door, as big as life. (*Points right.*) Right in the doorway.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, control yourself.

MR. MAXWELL: It wouldn't be so bad if your father could talk about anything besides himself and the army! You'd think it was still 1942!

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Disgustedly, sitting.*) You're just like a little child. You stand there, shout about my parents and they're three hundred miles away.

MR. MAXWELL: I can still hear what he said when he stuck his head in the door. "Surprise, John, surprise. Bet you never dreamed we'd come."

MRS. MAXWELL: Why don't you go take your shower, John. It'll cool you down. Then why don't you make plans to go down to the river tonight, John, and then come back and paint the house.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Exploding.*) Paint the house?

MRS. MAXWELL: Yes, John. And work needs to be done in the basement.

MR. MAXWELL: I'll hire it done. This is my vacation.

MRS. MAXWELL: There's no use wasting money.

MR. MAXWELL: I thought we were going to take things easy.

MRS. MAXWELL: After we paint the house.

He turns, sulks toward center, he's almost at door when doorbell rings right. He stops. It rings again. He goes over to the windows, peers out.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Wailing.)* Oh no.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Startled.)* Who is it, John?

MR. MAXWELL: It's the army!

MRS. MAXWELL: Who?

MR. MAXWELL: It's your mother and your father. *(He starts walking wildly around the room.)*

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Astonished.)* Mother and Father?

MR. MAXWELL: We aren't home. We're in Australia, or Micronesia, anywhere. *(Doorbell rings again.)*

MRS. MAXWELL: Let them in, John.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Starting left.)* We aren't home.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Sharply.)* John!

He stops, turns, moves to door, right, opens it sadly, and admits MR. and MRS. BROWN. They enter, with MR. BROWN carrying a suitcase in each hand.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(As they enter.)* Mother!

MRS. BROWN: Janet! *(MRS. MAXWELL runs to her and they embrace.)*

MR. BROWN: Surprise, John, surprise. *(He drops suitcase and starts shaking JOHN'S hand.)* You're looking good, darned good. Bet you'd never dreamed we'd be coming. *(As he pounds him on the back.)* How'd you feel?

MR. MAXWELL coughs, practically doubles up.

COURTNEY: *(Entering center.)* Grandma! *(She runs to her, embraces and kisses her.)* And Grandpa! *(She runs, kisses him.)*

CAROLINE: *(Entering left.)* Grandma! Grandpa! *(She, too, runs to them. All the women are talking loudly and happily.)*

MRS. BROWN: Where's Lucas?

CAROLINE: He's out burying a cat.

MR. BROWN: Can't wait to see that young fellow.

GOING PLACES

MRS. MAXWELL: Take their bags, John. (*MR. MAXWELL glares at her, finally turns, takes suitcases, starts up-center.*)

MR. BROWN: Since you couldn't come see us, John, we decided to come see you—for a couple weeks.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Standing, back to audience, drops suitcases.*) Two weeks?

MRS. BROWN: Isn't it wonderful, Janet?

MRS. MAXWELL: It certainly is, Mother. Would you like to freshen up?

COURTNEY: I'll show you to your room.

MR. BROWN: I can take those suitcases, John.

CAROLINE: I'll carry one. (*She takes one, MR. BROWN the other, and they exit center behind MRS. BROWN and COURTNEY, all chattering noisily.*)

MR. MAXWELL: (*Walking around room, hands deep in pockets.*) Two weeks, he said, two weeks.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Disgustedly*) John, good grief.

MR. MAXWELL: And did you hear that, Janet? "Surprise, surprise," he said. "Bet you never dreamed we'd come." We're in for a siege now. A two week siege. (*He collapses on sofa.*) And remember the last time he was here? His snoring woke the whole house. No, his snoring woke the whole block. Heck, his snoring could bring Clifford back from the dead.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, he'll hear you.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Rising, pacing floor again.*) Well, I've got to listen to him all night. He can listen to me now. And remember when the rest of us had just fallen to sleep, he got up and went for a drive with the milkman.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, please.

MR. MAXWELL: But that wasn't so bad. The terrible part was when he bought two suitcases full of garbage from the garbage collector so he could feed his goats.

MRS. MAXWELL: Now John, you know that isn't so.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Coming over to her.*) Then why did his suitcase drip all the way home? I tracked watermelon from here to the depot. He had vegetables growing all over town.

MRS. MAXWELL: You know good and well that my father isn't half as bad as yours.

MR. MAXWELL: My father certainly wouldn't have come without calling.

MRS. MAXWELL: He wanted to surprise us.

MR. MAXWELL: You mean he wanted to make sure we wouldn't leave town.

MRS. MAXWELL: He's here, John, make him think he's welcome.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Turning away.)* I'm no hypocrite. He could have at least had the decency to call. He was too tight to make a long-distance call. The old tightwad. Snoring, conceited, tightwad. *(He walks wildly around the room.)* It'll be a two-week-long battle of the Marne. What's next? *(The doorbell rings.)*

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Peering out window.)* Uh oh.

MR. MAXWELL: Who is it?

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Trying not to laugh.)* The navy.

MR. MAXWELL: Who?

MRS. MAXWELL: Your mother and your father, John.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Going to the window as bell rings again.)* Are you sure?

MRS. MAXWELL: I'm sure, John. Their horse is tied to the lamppost.

MR. MAXWELL: My parents do not have any horses, Janet, and you know it.

MRS. MAXWELL: They could have at least called.

MR. MAXWELL: I'll let them in.

MRS. MAXWELL: *(Smiling.)* Of course we'll let them in, John. I'm glad they came. I think it's very nice, and it couldn't have worked out better. *(She opens door, smiling, cordially.)* Mr. Maxwell and Mrs. Maxwell.

GRANDMOTHER and GRANDFATHER MAXWELL enter, each carrying a suitcase. GRANDFATHER is wearing glasses, a hat, opposite in stature of MR. BROWN.

GRANDMOTHER M: *(As she and MRS. MAXWELL embrace.)* Bet you didn't dream we'd come.

MRS. MAXWELL: No we didn't—did you, John?

GOING PLACES

COURTNEY and CAROLINE enter center, run to their GRANDPARENTS. A meeting comparable to the first one ensues.

GRANDMOTHER M: We got your card yesterday that you couldn't come, Janet, and we thought this would be a perfect time to visit you.

MRS. MAXWELL: It certainly is, Mother Maxwell.

CAROLINE: May I take your things, Grandmother? *(She takes the suitcase she is carrying.)*

MRS. MAXWELL: Take it to your room, Caroline.

GRANDMOTHER M: Now you know we can sleep anywhere Janet. Even on the floor.

COURTNEY: We wouldn't think of it, Grandmother. *(To her GRANDFATHER.)* I'll take your suitcase, Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER M: *(Handing her the suitcase.)* My, but you girls are growing up. Just like weeds.

COURTNEY: *(To her GRANDMOTHER.)* You wanta freshen up a bit?

GRANDFATHER M: Good idea. I could stand a shower myself. *(As they start center.)* I'll be right back, John. We've got a lot of catching up to do. How are you feeling?

MR. MAXWELL: I—

GRANDFATHER M.: *(Breaking in.)* Had a little rheumatism myself, John. *(As he exits center behind GRANDMOTHER M, COURTNEY and CAROLINE.)* I'm not as young as I used to be.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Starts walking around room.)* Won't get a bit of rest. Not one bit. Just as well be stayin' in Grand Central Station.

MRS. MAXWELL: Now John.

MR. MAXWELL: I can tell I won't get a minute's peace. Not one minute.

MR. BROWN: *(Shouting from off-center.)* You old walrus. I was in here first.

GRANDFATHER M: *(Off-center.)* John told me I could take a shower.

MR. BROWN: He told me first.

GRANDFATHER M: The blazes he did.

MR. BROWN: The blazes he didn't.

MRS. MAXWELL: What in the world.

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MR. MAXWELL: *(Walking wildly around the room.)* There they go. It only took two minutes and forty-three seconds and they're off.

MR. BROWN: *(As he and GRANDFATHER M enter center. MR. BROWN is now in long underwear. GRANDFATHER M has long underwear on under his pants.)* John, I started to take a shower and he barged in.

GRANDFATHER M: Whattaya mean, barged in, you old goat?

MR. BROWN: *(Sticking out chin.)* Who are you callin' old?

GRANDFATHER M: If the shoe fits.

The phone rings.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Into phone.)* Hello.

GRANDFATHER M: I had as much right in there as you did.

MR. BROWN: The blazes you did.

GRANDFATHER M: The blazes I didn't.

MR. MAXWELL: *(Shouting.)* Who? *(Pause.)* What? *(The two old men put up their dukes, start circling each other.)* Yes, boss. *(Sadly.)* Yes, Mr. Mallory. You're right, Mr. Mallory. Always, Mr. Mallory. You're so right, Mr. Mallory. Goodbye, Mr. Mallory. *(He hangs up, stares sadly into space.)*

MR. BROWN: I'll push your tonsils down your throat.

GRANDFATHER M: *(Sticking out his chin.)* You and who else?

MR. BROWN: Me, myself, and I, that's who.

GRANDFATHER M: Gangin' up on me, huh? *(He draws back his fist.)*

MR. MAXWELL: *(Walking around room again.)* They can't do this to me. They just can't.

MRS. MAXWELL: What's the matter, John? What did Mr. Mallory say?

MR. MAXWELL: *(As the two old men continue their circling tactics.)* I'm a free citizen. I've got my rights.

MRS. MAXWELL: John, what in the world.

MR. BROWN: You're a heel.

GRANDFATHER M: Who's a heel?

MRS. MAXWELL: What did Mr. Mallory say?

MR. MAXWELL: He heard I was home, Janet, and now he wants me to work. He's sending over a man and I've got to sign a contract.

GOING PLACES

(*Shouting.*) A contract, Janet, and this is my vacation. (*Louder.*)
My vacation.

MRS. MAXWELL: Don't shout, John.

MR. MAXWELL: My vacation and I have to work. I'm a good husband. An honest man. (*Walking wildly around the room.*) No place like home to spend a vacation, she said. No place like home. We'll rest, John, and everything will be all right.

MR. BROWN: That did it, you old walrus. That did it.

GRANDFATHER M: Yeah? (*Puts fists in front of face, starts bobbing and weaving.*) I'm waitin'.

MR. MAXWELL: (*Stops.*) You're right, Janet, absolutely correct. (*As he sinks into a chair.*) There's no place like home to spend a vacation. (*Chin in hands.*) No place like home.

The old men start swinging wildly and tenaciously, as there is a fast
CURTAIN.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO, SCENE 1

AT RISE: COURTNEY is sitting sullenly on the sofa, staring into space. GRANDFATHER MAXWELL and MR. BROWN are sitting, one at the left and the other at the right side of the room. They have numerous bandages, scars, patches, etc., and they're glaring fiercely at one another. MR. BROWN has a hat stuck on top of the bandages on his head.

COURTNEY: (*Staring into space, sighs wearily.*) Uhhhhhhhhh.

MR. BROWN: (*Glaring.*) You old goat.

GRANDFATHER M: (*Glaring back.*) You old geezer.

COURTNEY: (*Bored.*) I've never had such a horrible vacation. Never. (*Sighs again.*) Ohhhhh.

MRS. MAXWELL: (*Off-center.*) So I said to John, I think it would be best if we spend this vacation at home. Everything will be calm and peaceful and we'll be rested and ready for the coming year.

GRANDMOTHER M: (*Also off-center.*) You're right, Janet, absolutely right. (*She, MRS. MAXWELL and MRS. BROWN enter from left.*) Smart thinking.

MRS. BROWN: And everything's getting so dangerous. Cars going ninety miles an hour in no time flat. You're just not safe on the highways anymore.

GRANDMOTHER M: I like that about the children being rested for school. Not enough parents think of that, Janet. All they think about is themselves. Gotta be out gallavantin' all over the world and the poor children taggin' after them like tired puppies. You're usin' your head, Janet. They'll be ready to hit the books on the first day of school.

MRS. MAXWELL: That's just what I thought. A good rest for the whole family is just what we need.

MRS. BROWN: Everybody's goin' so fast now that they're gonna have to stop awhile and let the world catch up with 'em.

MR. BROWN: You old possum.

GRANDFATHER M: You old polecat.

MRS. BROWN: (*disgustedly.*) William, for heaven's sake.

GRANDMOTHER M: Henry, are you still snappin' like a turtle?



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