

① MATT & SALLY

manic type I'm going to need the whole schmeer here to help me the woods the willows the vines the moonlight the band there's a band that plays tonight over in the park the trees the berries the breeze the sounds water and crickets frogs dogs the light the bees ... *(Pauses. With a slight hill accent.)* Frogs, dogs ... *(To stage manager in sound booth.)* Could we have a dog? I'd like a dog. *(He listens a second. Nothing. Then a furious, yapping, tiny terrier is heard.)* Fellas! Fellas! A dog! *(Beat. Then a low, distant woof-woof-woof that continues until Sally's entrance. Matt listens a beat, pleased.)*

Oh, yeah. Old man Barnette kicked out Blackie and called in the kids, and about now the entire family is sitting down to supper. Even Blackie, out by the smokehouse. But a car pulled off the road about a mile downstream, and someone got out. And at this hour it begins to be difficult to see, the chickens have started to go to bed, and noises carry up the river as though there was someone there in the barnyard. And Blackie wants to let everybody know the Barnette farm is well guarded. *(Beat. Then back to run-on narration.)*

Working all night did you know that bees work worker bees work around the clock never stop collecting nectar or pollen whatever a bee collects of course their life expectancy is twenty days or in a bee's case twenty days and twenty nights or possibly expectancy is wrong in the case of a bee who knows what a bee expects but whatever time there is in a life is a lifetime and I imagine after twenty days and ...

SALLY. *(Off, yelling.)* Matt? *(Matt is silent. He almost holds his breath.)* Matt? *(The houselights begin to dim. The sunset and reflection from the river begin to appear; we hear the sound of the river and birds.)* Matt?

MATT. *(Softly, to the audience.)* This is a waltz, remember. One-two-three, one-two-three.

SALLY. *(Off.)* Are you in that boathouse? I'm not going to come down there if you're not there 'cause that place gives me the creeps after dark. Are you down there?

MATT. No.

SALLY. *(Coming closer.)* I swear, Matt Friedman, what in the devil do you think you're doing down here? *(Coming through the*

tall weeds and willow.) Oh, my — everything is soaking wet here. Buddy said he chased you off with a shotgun. I thought, good, we're maybe rid of you. I saw your car parked up there, I could not believe my eyes! *(She enters.)* Not even you! And there you sit. Wiping your glasses. *(Sally Talley is thirty-one. Light, thin, quite attractive, but in no way glamorous or glamorized. Straightforward, rather tired, and just now quite angry. In this state she has a pronounced Ozark accent, but when she concentrates on what she is saying, the accent becomes much less pronounced.)*

MATT. The better to see you with, my dear.

SALLY. Don't even begin with me, Matt, I'm in no mood.

MATT. Were you hiding behind the window curtains when I was out in the yard talking to your brother? You like to hide from me so much.

SALLY. I got home five minutes ago. You know what time I get off work. Rachel and Ida dropped me out front, we could hear Buddy cussin' all the way out to the road.

MATT. You talk to your Aunt Charlotte? How did you know I'd be here?

SALLY. I was inside that house exactly thirty seconds. I walked in the door, Momma and Buddy lit in on me like I was ten years old, screaming about the communist traitor infidel I'd let in the house. Buddy said he run you off with a shotgun.

MATT. He had a large two-barreled weapon, yes, with apertures about like so.

SALLY. If they knew you were still on the place, they'd have Cliff on you.

MATT. You want the sheriff, all you have to do is keep yelling. Your sister-in-law called him. He's probably at your house right now.

SALLY. *(Near whisper.)* Whatever possessed you to come down here and get into a fight with my brother? You know I can't stand livin' there as it is.

MATT. Sally, one of us had better go for a walk and cool off. Both of us can't be angry.

SALLY. What better happen is you better march right back up there to your car and head back to St. Louis.

MATT. No, see, the way they build those things now they

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require gasoline to really get them running good. Especially Plymouths.

SALLY. Matt Friedman, you did not run out of gas.

MATT. You want to go try it? See if you can get it to catch?

SALLY. Oh, if that isn't just ... typical.

MATT. That's what saves it, I think. I was just thinking that that was typical.

SALLY. That car is gonna kill me. I mean, I'm a strong person, but that car is gonna do it. Not one time has that car gone from one place to another place without breaking down.

MATT. Sally, you don't deprecate a man's car. A man's car reflects his pride in himself and his status in society. Casigate my car, you castigate me.

SALLY. Well, good. And you may be full of hot air on most things, but you are right about that. That — that — haybaler! — is a good reflection of you.

MATT. Boy, you get angry; you really are a mountain daughter, aren't you? Where's the still? I was looking for the still you said was down here.

SALLY. Matt, I'm exhausted. I've been up since five. I was at the hospital at six-thirty. I don't want to argue. The still was right there. They busted it up — broke it up.

MATT. Your dad get raided by Cluffy?

SALLY. Cluffy wasn't sheriff then, McConklin was sheriff. Him and Dad were half-partners in the still. They broke it up to sell for scrap after the repeal. Matt —

MATT. They were runnin' liquor, were they?

SALLY. Is the only thing keeping you here a gallon of gas for your car? 'Cause we have a can in the pump house.

MATT. Better wait till it gets a little darker if you're gonna start stealing Buddy's gas.

SALLY. You've alienated Buddy. You've almost paralyzed Olive.

MATT. (*Snapping his fingers.*) Olive! Olive! I could not think of your sister-in-law's darn name! I'm thinking pickled herring, I'm thinking caviar, I'm thinking boiled egg. I knew she was on a relish tray.

SALLY. Why are you always bargin' in places?

MATT. No, ma'am. I wrote you how many times I'd be down

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today.

SALLY. You barge into a person's home, you barge into where they work!

MATT. I telephoned your house here. I had a nice Missouri telephone chat with your Aunt Charlotte.

SALLY. Aunt Louie would invite the devil into the parlor for hot cocoa.

MATT. Actually, I came here to talk to your father. That's the way I've been told these things are done in the South.

SALLY. You're not in the South. You're in the Midwest.

MATT. Sally, I've been all over the country, and there is New York City, isolated neighborhoods in Boston, and believe me, the rest is all the South.

SALLY. Would you please just tell me what happened up there so I'll know how to handle them?

MATT. Sally, I know I told you we'd have the whole weekend, and I've been looking forward to it just as much as you have, but there was —

SALLY. You are the most conceited, blind, deaf —

MATT. — just no way out of it. I have to go back tonight. We have a hearing on the iceman and his horse, there was no way —

SALLY. On what?

MATT. You know, I wrote you, the iceman, with a horse and wagon. We had him consecrated as a church and that worked for two years, till they caught on, but —

SALLY. I don't have any idea what you are talking about.

MATT. (*Going on.*) — churches don't pay taxes. We had him ordained. They didn't like it. So we set up a trust fund in the name of Daisy; now they want a hearing on that, because horses can't hold trusts. It was just sprung on us. I have to be back in St. Louis tomorrow.

SALLY. Would you just tell me what happened up there?

MATT. It was crazy to come down here, only I promised you, but we have to work fast here tonight.

SALLY. What was Buddy so mad about?

MATT. Did you hear me? I've only got tonight; I have to get back.

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