

(A)

MRS. ENDICOTT  
Rickey  
DAVE

ACT I WHO KILLED AUNT CAROLINE? 15

Rickey. But not for long now—just one more year and then—college. (*Finds coin; rises*) Here it is.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Taking it*) Thanks, dear.

Rickey. Don't tell me Una paid for her lesson?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Taking purse from desk and dropping in coin*) Yes.

Rickey. (*Dynamically*) Ahhh! We eat again!

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Smiling*) You don't look as though you were starving. (*Examines change in purse.*)

Rickey. Oh, I'm not—I'm not hungry at all. It's my tapeworm—he's ravenous!

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Returns purse to desk; crosses to door R.*) I'll start supper now. What would your tapeworm like for supper?

Rickey. A nice big juicy steak with onions.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Shaking head*) Sorry, but he'll have to settle for wieners.

Rickey. Dogs—*again*? Gosh, Mom—we've had 'em so much lately my stomach's beginning to bark.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. As long as it barks instead of growls—you haven't any worries.

Rickey. Mom—I've been thinking—we're really pretty broke, aren't we?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Pleasantly*) Did that require much thinking?

Rickey. What I mean is—we don't have much of anything except Agnes' pay at the library, do we?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. We have what I earn giving piano lessons.

Rickey. Yeah—fifty cents when you get it. Mom, I've been thinking—don't you think it's awful foolish my planning on college—what I ought to do is get a job?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Moving toward him*) Rickey! Don't talk like that. Why, I'd never forgive myself if you didn't get a college education. It was almost

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the last thing I promised your father before he died—that you'd study medicine.

Rickey. I know—and there's nothing I'd like better—but like you said just now—it takes a heck of a lot of education—college, medical school, internship—it'll be ten years before I even start earning money.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. We'll manage.

Rickey. But how?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Let me worry about that.

Rickey. That's just what I'm going to stop doing. You've been worrying about this family too long as it is. Why doesn't Aunt Caroline lend a hand?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Coldly*) We can manage without her.

Rickey. But why should we? Why should we struggle along when she's got all that dough? You know what I heard? Aunt Caroline's the richest woman in town.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. That has nothing to do with us.

Rickey. Nothing to do with us? Dad's only sister?

Who's going to inherit everything when she dies?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. I don't know and I don't care.

Rickey. But Mom—why shouldn't we? Dad should have had a share of that money. It was his father's.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. His father chose to leave the entire estate to Caroline.

Rickey. Why?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Impatiently*) I don't know—and I don't wish to discuss it. Your Aunt Caroline has chosen to ignore us. We had best ignore her.

Rickey. The old Scrooge!

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Rickey! Please—she is your father's sister and I won't have you speaking disrespectfully of her.

Rickey. Okay, only she—

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Sharply*) Enough, Rickey! Let's forget Aunt Caroline. You'll go to college, never

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fear—without asking any favors of her. (*DOORBELL rings*) See who's at the door.

RICCY. (*Goes into hall c. to l. and re-enters with DAVID THOMPSON*) It's Dave!

DAVE. (*A pleasant young fellow in his 20s*) Hello, Mrs. Endicott!

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Come in, David. This is rather a strange time of day to be seeing you.

DAVE. Guess it is. I happened to have an assignment in the neighborhood; thought I'd stop in to say "hello."

RICCY. Well, now you've said "hello"—goodbye!

DAVE. (*Taking a playful swing at him*) Smart guy, huh?

RICCY. What was the assignment?

DAVE. A missing girl over on Rome Street.

RICCY. Missing girl, huh? Kidnapping?

DAVE. No, not as good a story as that—little Italian girl—guess she ran away from home.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Poor thing—those foreigners don't have much of a home life. Are you going to write it up for the paper?

DAVE. Guess I'll give it a stick or so—not much room these days for any news beside the war. Agnes isn't home?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Surprised*) Why, no, David—she's never here this early.

DAVE. That's what I thought. If you don't mind, Mrs. Endicott, I'd like to speak to you about some-thing—

RICCY. Of course not, Dave—go right ahead—

DAVE. (*Meaningly*) Alone!

RICCY. Okay, I can take a hint, if it's not too broad.

But I can guess what it's all about, though—(*Minimally*) "Mrs. Endicott, I have long admired your lovely daughter Agnes and have come to ask you for her hand!"

X stop

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(*DAVE throws folded newspaper at RICCY, who ducks and exits l. DAVE recovers paper.*)

Mrs. ENDICOTT. You mustn't mind Riccy. He's a born tease. (*Crosses and sits on sofa.*)

DAVE. (*Crossing to Windsor chair down r.*) I don't mind him. Funny part is, though—he did kind of hit the nail on the head.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Then it is about Agnes, David?

DAVE. (*Sitting*) Yes.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Pause. Quietly*) What?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Yes.

DAVE. Well, I don't know if Agnes told you or not, Mrs. Endicott, but a week ago I asked her to marry me.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Surprised*) You did? Why, no—she never mentioned it.

DAVE. I didn't think she did, from things she's said since. Anyway, she refused.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Refused? Agnes did? But that's impossible. I know how well she likes you.

DAVE. I always thought so too. I know I haven't got much money—reporter on a small town newspaper. But I have got prospects, and they're good.

Mrs. ENDICOTT—a reporter, if he amounts to anything, can go far—copy desk, city editor, special features, foreign correspondent—There's swell money in those jobs, Mrs. Endicott, and I'm headed for 'em.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. I'm sure you are, David.

DAVE. 'Course, right now I'm only earning twenty-two fifty a week—but that's enough for two to live on, I think—don't you?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. It can be done—with a careful budget.

DAVE. That's what I told Agnes, but she says no. What I was wondering, Mrs. Endicott, is if you'd speak to her for me—make her see that we could get along all right married?

Y stop

(B)

MRS. ENDICOTT  
CAROLINE

AGNES  
MISS MABBITT

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MISS ENDICOTT. I'm not nearly finished, and won't be for some time.

CAROLINE. Insistence, eh? Just one more item for me to bring before the Board.

LOUISE. *(To Riccy as he re-enters c.)* Oh, Richard, would you mind showing me your microscope again?

RICCY. I'd be glad to. *(They exit l.)*

CAROLINE. *(Pointing with cane)* What's in there? AGNES. Richard's laboratory. It used to be—Father's office.

CAROLINE. Humph! *(To Miss Mabbitt)* Quit hovering, Meena. You make me nervous.

MISS MABBITT. I'm sorry, Miss Caroline.

CAROLINE. Fetch me that chair. *(Points to desk chair.)*

AGNES. But wouldn't you rather sit over there where it's more comfortable?

CAROLINE. No. Can't abide stuffed furniture. It ruins your posture. Besides, it might have bugs. *(Miss Mabbitt brings desk chair down)* Put it here. *(Indicates directly stage c., facing the audience.)* Miss Mabbitt places chair. CAROLINE sits erectly. Now you sit back there, out of the way—if you can find a chair that isn't filled with moths. I don't want any of them carried home.

MISS MABBITT. Yes, Miss Caroline. *(Sits in arm-chair l. of arch.)*

CAROLINE. Agnes, sit over here where I can see you. *(Points to chair down r.)*

AGNES. *(Quietly)* Of course, Aunt Caroline!

CAROLINE. Must say, I never thought I'd ever enter this house, and I don't intend staying any longer than necessary. Where's your mother?

AGNES. As a matter of fact, she went over to see you.

CAROLINE. To see me?

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AGNES. Yes. After she phoned—and—and was disconnected, she thought she'd better walk over.

CAROLINE. Humph! I'll teach her to stay where she belongs. What did she phone me for?

AGNES. *(Pause)* I don't know.

CAROLINE. You're lying. You do so know, and I'll wager it was money.

AGNES. *(Flaring)* And if it were—haven't we a right to it?

CAROLINE. *(Smugly, with triumph in her voice)* So—it was money? Thought she'd wheedle me out of some, I suppose?

AGNES. After all, Aunt Caroline—it was as much Father's as yours—

CAROLINE. Oh, it was, was it? Did you hear that, Meena? *(Sharply)* I said, Meena, did you hear that?

MISS MABBITT. Yes, Miss Caroline.

CAROLINE. *(With derision)* As much your father's as it is mine! I suppose you don't know he was cut off without a cent?

AGNES. Yes, I know that. I know grandfather was against his marriage—but, now that they're both dead, I don't see why you have to continue the quarrel.

CAROLINE. She isn't dead—the one who caused it all.

AGNES. Do you mean—Mother?

CAROLINE. Who else?

MRS. ENDICOTT. *(Enters c. from l., speaking as she comes in)* She wouldn't see me. The maid said she wasn't at home—

AGNES. *(Going to her)* Mother, Aunt Caroline is here.

MRS. ENDICOTT. Here? *(Comes down to Caroline)* Caroline.

CAROLINE. Yes, I'm here, Eleanor. Why did you phone me?

MRS. ENDICOTT. *(Handing Agnes her hat and*

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COAT) If you wanted to know, why did you hang up?  
CAROLINE. I did not hang up. We were—disconnected, weren't we, Meena? You were there—weren't we disconnected?

MISS MABBITT. (After some hesitation) Yes, Miss Caroline.

MRS. ENDICOTT. How do you do, Miss Mabbitt?  
MISS MABBITT. (Meekly) How'd do?

CAROLINE. Why did you phone me?

AGNES. (Hating but her mother's wraps in the hall) Mother, it's no use—let's drop the whole subject.

MRS. ENDICOTT. No, Caroline, we need money.

CAROLINE. So I understand.

MRS. ENDICOTT. It isn't for myself I'm asking—it's for Agnes here and Riccy—Richard's children, your brother's children.

CAROLINE. Humpf! Got themselves into trouble and now you come crawling to me.

MRS. ENDICOTT. (Quietly but firmly) Agnes has a chance for marriage—a very fine young man—but he can't support us all. Riccy has to complete his college education.

CAROLINE. Why?

MRS. ENDICOTT. Because it was your brother's dying wish.

CAROLINE. Humpf! Aren't there enough pill-peddlers in this world?

MRS. ENDICOTT. As I understand it, your father's will left everything to you as long as you live. But, upon your death—

CAROLINE. So now you've got me dead, have you?  
MRS. ENDICOTT. (Ignoring her) Upon your death it was to pass not to Richard, even if he were alive, but to his children.

CAROLINE. All full of information, I see. Been doing a lot of prying, haven't you?

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MRS. ENDICOTT. When your father died the lawyers told us that much.

CAROLINE. Did they tell you that it was only in case I haven't any heirs of my own?

MRS. ENDICOTT. No, they didn't—but, of course, you've never married—so you haven't.

CAROLINE. Just lovely for you, isn't it? I remained a spinster so that you could inherit a fortune worth half a million.

AGNES. (Aghast) Half a million?

CAROLINE. Eyes open, huh? Now you want me to give it to you so you can get a husband. Something I never had.

MRS. ENDICOTT. That was of your own choosing, Caroline.

CAROLINE. Oh, no, it wasn't—I sacrificed my life to my father when you stole his only son.

MRS. ENDICOTT. That's not true, Caroline.

CAROLINE. You stole him by your soft, simpering ways and ruined my father's life. No, Eleanor, I wouldn't help you if you were starving in the gutter.

AGNES. Aunt Caroline!

MRS. ENDICOTT. (Quietly) I know you wouldn't, Caroline. I don't ask you to. All I ask you to do is help Richard's children. I won't take a cent; I won't use a cent—I'll live on my earnings from the piano.

CAROLINE. Don't make me laugh.

MRS. ENDICOTT. After all, it will be theirs some day. Why can't you give them a little of it now when it will do the most good?

CAROLINE. It'll be theirs some day? That's what you think?

MRS. ENDICOTT. You know it's true. There's no way you can get out of it.

CAROLINE. (Smugly) In good you think so.

MRS. ENDICOTT. (Worried) Isn't it?

CAROLINE. Eleanor, I suggest you call in your

X  
STP

© CICELEY  
LT. CLAYTON

ACT TWO

THE PLACE: The same, but the room has been straightened. Tea-wagon and all remnants of the fatal tea party have been removed. Desk chair back at desk, etc.

THE TIME: Two days later—Friday morning

AT RISE: The stage is empty, then LIEUTENANT CLAYTON enters from laboratory. He carries several large medicine bottles which he places on occasional table. The TELEPHONE rings.

CLAYTON. (Answering phone. He is an intelligent young man about thirty years old.) Hello— This is the Endicott residence— No, no one's here right now. They're all at the funeral.— Who's calling, please?— This is Lieutenant Clayton of the Police Department. No—no charges have been made—yet! (Hangs up. Returns to table. Opens one of the bottles and sniffs its contents.)

CICELEY. (Enters on skates c. from L.) Oh, hello!

CLAYTON. What is it—a steam roller?

CICELEY. I didn't know anyone was here.

CLAYTON. We're even. I didn't know any of the Endicotts weren't at the funeral.

CICELEY. Mom wouldn't let me go. Said it would be too morbid. What's morbid mean?

CLAYTON. Unpleasant, I suppose.

CICELEY. I always get hoops in my stomach when I see anything unpleasant. Do you?

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CLAYTON. I used to—but I'm kind of used to things like that now.

CICELEY. Anyway, I got to stay home from school. What are you—a cop?

CLAYTON. In a way—

CICELEY. Then why don't you wear a uniform and a club?

CLAYTON. I'm a member of the Homicide Squad—that's a fancy name for detective.

CICELEY. What's a homicide squad?

CLAYTON. We investigate homicides—murders.

CICELEY. Well, what are you doing at our house?

CLAYTON. Oh, when someone dies suddenly we check up on things—like medicine bottles. (Indicates those on table.)

CICELEY. Gee, did you take those out of Riccy's laboratory? He won't like it.

CLAYTON. I guess your brother Riccy knows a lot about medicines and things, eh?

CICELEY. He knows everything—he's almost as good as a doctor— Why, once when my face broke out he gave me some stuff to put on and cured it right away.

CLAYTON. What kind of stuff was it?

CICELEY. Sort of a white powder—arsenic I think he called it.

CLAYTON. Arsenic, eh?

CICELEY. Uh-huh. He knows everything to do when you're sick. He studies those big medicine books of Dad's.

CLAYTON. How 'bout the rest of your family? Do they know all about medicines too?

CICELEY. Huh-uh. Nobody ever goes in there but Riccy. He got awful mad once when I went in—and Mom said I shouldn't ever go back—if I did she'd lick me, so I didn't and she hasn't.

CLAYTON. It's a good idea. A doctor's office is no place for little girls—or big ones either.

(D)  
**BERYL**  
**MRS. ENDICOTT**

ACT THREE

THE PLACE: *The same. It is dark outside the window and the lamps are lit.*

THE TIME: *That night.*

AT RISE: *After the house lights go out, but before the Curtain rises, NEWSBOYS are heard shouting their extras off.*

Voices. Extra! Extra! All about the murder! Extra! Extra! Caroline Endicott slain! Read all about it! Paper!

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Curtain rises on this shouting, disclosing her alone on sofa listening to the cries as she scribbles with a pencil on a magazine. After a moment Beryl enters c. from l.*) Did you buy one? Beryl. (*Pausing*) No, I didn't want to leave the porch—all the people out there staring. You'd think they'd never seen a house before.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. They used to be our friends, our neighbors—and now they stare at us as though we were animals—(*Scribbles.*)

Beryl. Mother, you're doodling again—!

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Throwing magazine and pencil aside*) I'm so nervous—I don't know what to think.

Beryl. You should've heard the people outside. No doubt in their minds. They even tried to grab me. I guess they wanted to know what the sister of a murderess felt like.

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Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Sharply*) Beryl! Don't say that. Agnes is no more a murderess than you are—(*She stares at her strangely for a moment.*)

Beryl. But, Mom—she confessed of her own free will; and I saw her myself put the arsenic in the sugar.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. You *must* be wrong, Beryl. She wouldn't hve done it in front of you.

Beryl. She didn't know I was looking—she thought I was peeling potatoes.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Just what did Agnes do?

Beryl. She was fixing the tea wagon. Then she went out and came back with some white stuff in a cup. She raised the lid of the good sugar bowl and dumped it in—then she stirred it. It was just before Aunt Caroline came.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. You're positive? (*Beryl nods with emphasis*) Why didn't you say something at the time?

Beryl. (*Struggs*) I just thought she was adding more sugar. (*TELEPHONE rings*) Should I?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. No, I'll answer it. (*Goes to the phone*) Hello—Yes, Doctor Hartley?—Why, yes—Cissy's sleeping quite calmly now—*What?*—The analysis showed that? (*Relieved*) Thank God! Thank God! And thank you, Doctor Hartley. (*She hangs up.*)

Beryl. What is it?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Doctor Hartley made an analysis of the contents of Cissy's stomach—absolutely no trace of poison!

Beryl. Then what's made her so sick?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Fright, and an overdose of castor oil.

Beryl. You mean she wasn't hurt at all when she ate that sugar?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. No. We all took it for granted she was—filled her full of physic—and taking no

ⓔ LOUISE CLAYTON

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worry to hear that—perhaps you'd like one now to quiet your nerves? (*Offers her pack.*)

BERYL. Don't mind if I do. (*Takes cigarette from pack awkwardly, showing only too plainly she has never smoked before. She taps it nervously on her hand, then puts it in her mouth, wryly.*)

DAN. (*Having taken out pack of matches*) A match?

BERYL. Thanks, Dan. (*DAN gives her a light. She draws hard.*)

DAN. Got it?

BERYL. Yes, thanks. (*Brows puff of smoke; starts to cough; rushes out c. 10 R.*)

CLAYTON. Come, let's cut the comedy. We all know that pocketbook isn't hers. What else is in it?

AGNES. (*Having examined handkerchief*) This has an embroidered "M."

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Having returned lipstick and cigarettes to pocketbook, pulls out an old letter*) Let's see what this is.

CLAYTON. Who's it addressed to?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Miss Louise Maclain, The Knolls Hotel—

CLAYTON. (*Going to Mrs. ENDICOTT and taking the letter*) So it's hers, huh—Who's it from?

(*DOORBELL rings.*)

AGNES. I'll go. (*Exits c. to L.*)

CLAYTON. I'll take charge of this. (*Takes pocket-book, putting letter inside.*)

(*BERYL re-enters, looking very white.*)

AGNES. (*Re-enters, followed by LOUISE MAC-LAIN*) Come in, please. We were just talking about you.

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LOUISE. Were you? How nice! I see you've a handkerchief just like mine.

CLAYTON. Are you Louise Maclain?

LOUISE. Why, yes.

CLAYTON. Come in. We're waiting for you.

LOUISE. Oh, you found my handbag. I was so afraid I'd lost it. Thank you so much. (*Approaches CLAYTON to take it.*)

CLAYTON. Just a minute—

LOUISE. Yes?

CLAYTON. How did this pocketbook get here?

LOUISE. I really don't know.

CLAYTON. (*Pointing to DAN*) And what was he doing with it?

LOUISE. Hello, Dan!

DAN. Hello!

CLAYTON. And why did she— (*Indicating BERYL*) claim it was hers?

LOUISE. Why, Beryl—did you, dear?

BERYL. I guess I was mistaken.

LOUISE. Anyway, I'm glad that it's found. May I have it?

CLAYTON. Not so fast! You're not going to get out of it that easy. You were here Wednesday evening, weren't you—?

LOUISE. Yes—

CLAYTON. You were here when Miss Caroline was poisoned, weren't you?

LOUISE. I was here when she was taken ill, yes.

CLAYTON. And you left this pocketbook here that night—didn't you?

LOUISE. (*Pause*) Perhaps—

CLAYTON. And you sent Dan over for it this morning?

LOUISE. Yes, but why all the mystery?

CLAYTON. The mystery is why he stole in the office door and was trying to get away with it without being seen.

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LOUISE. (*News to her*) Did you do that, Dan?  
DAN. Yes. I found it and bumped into a bottle going out.

LOUISE. But why?

DAN. Well, you said—I mean that—I don't know.

CLAYTON. Isn't it a fact, Miss MacLain, there was something in this pocketbook you didn't want us to know about?

LOUISE. Certainly not.

CLAYTON. (*Handing it to her*) Okay, then—suppose you open it and show us what's inside.

LOUISE. There's nothing inside— (*Opens it; glances in*) Lipstick, some hairpins, a powder-puff—an old letter.

CLAYTON. An old letter—and just what is that old letter?

LOUISE. (*Closing handbag with a snap*) Really, I don't think I have to go through this questioning. I left my pocketbook here quite by accident. You have no right to question me as to its contents. I did send Dan for it this morning—but I assumed that he would ask for it at the front door.

CLAYTON. Why not before—if you left it Wednesday—

LOUISE. (*Nervously*) I—I didn't want to disturb the Endicotts. I knew they were busy—with the funeral arrangements and all—

AGNES. I'm sure, Lieutenant, Miss MacLain knows absolutely nothing about what happened here Wednesday evening. She came on an entirely different matter. She didn't even know Aunt Caroline was coming—until she arrived.

CLAYTON. (*To Louise*) Did you know Caroline Endicott?

LOUISE. Certainly—in a business way. She was head of the Board of Education.

CLAYTON. Had no quarrel with her?

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LOUISE. Of course not!

(*Others register surprise at this mis-statement.*)

CLAYTON. (*Pause*) Did you drink tea that evening?

LOUISE. Did I? (*Considers for a moment*) Yes.

CLAYTON. Do you take sugar in your tea?

LOUISE. (*Shaking head*) No, I never use it.

CLAYTON. There! That proves it—

DAVE. Proves what?

CLAYTON. That the poison was in the sugar bowl. There were only four cups of tea drank, and, of the four, only Caroline took sugar. And, of the four, only Caroline died.

DAVE. But what a chance anyone was taking—putting arsenic in a sugar bowl! It could have wiped out all of us.

CLAYTON. Whoever did it knew only Caroline took sugar.

AGNES. But none of us could have known that. She never had tea here before.

BERRY. Anyway, Miss Mabbitt fixed hers.

CLAYTON. And we know she wouldn't kill the goose that laid the golden egg. No, there must have been someone else around that tea table—someone who made sure what went into those tea cups—someone—

(*Suddenly to Louise*) Who served you your tea?

LOUISE. Richard. I mean— (*Breaks off suddenly, realising the implication.*)

CLAYTON. Richard, always Richard—did he offer you sugar?

LOUISE. No. He knows I never use it. We've had tea together before.

CLAYTON. That proves it—Richard's the one—and I let him get away! (*Goes to phone.*)

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Rising*) No-o-o!

(F)

MRS. ENDICOTT  
UNA  
CICELY (REPS UNA)

12 WHO KILLED AUNT CAROLINE? ACT I

~~telephone on desk. Against the right wall, downstage, is a fireplace; in it an iron grate filled with glowing coals. At right-angles to the fireplace is a comfortable sofa. Behind this sofa is a long library table, on which is a lamp. Below the fireplace, its back slightly to the audience, is a Windsor armchair. Sash curtains and over-drapes at the window, pictures on the wall, a rug on the floor will add to the appearance of the room and give it the necessary "lived-in" appearance. A coat rack with mirror beyond arch in hall.~~

~~THE TIME: About four o'clock in the afternoon of a day in early fall.~~

~~AR RISE: Before the Curtain goes up the piano is heard. Someone is playing a simple little piece very badly. As it rises, Mrs. ENDICOTT and UNA are revealed seated on the bench at the piano. Mrs. ENDICOTT is giving UNA a lesson. UNA plays wretchedly, and after a moment gets her fingers tangled.~~

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Rapping her fingers with a pencil*) No, Una, the third finger—the third finger—  
UNA. (*A whining brat of about ten*) You said last time I should use my pinkie—  
Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Patently*) No, dear—the third finger— See, I'll mark it for you— (*Makes pencil marks on music.*)  
UNA. Gee, Miz Endicott, you're gettin' my music all marked up—  
Mrs. ENDICOTT. That's to remind you when you're practicing— just how much do you practice, Una?  
UNA. Oh, all the time, Miz Endicott. Pa says I'm drivin' him nuts, and Ma says that ain't no drive—it's just a short putt.

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Mrs. ENDICOTT. All right, Una. Shall we try again? *One-two-three-four— One-two-three-four—* (*Una plays a few measures, then breaks down again in a great discord.* Mrs. ENDICOTT's face looks pained) Start again, Una—  
UNA. (*Starts again, but breaks down almost immediately*) Gee, Miz Endicott, I guess I'm just about impossible.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Everybody plays uncertainly at first, dear.

UNA. The trouble with me is—I got music in my soul, but my fingers don't wanna co-operate.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Rising*) Well, suppose we hold this piece over again until Friday—

UNA. (*Peevishly*) You mean you ain't gonna give me "Dance of the Water Lilies" today like you promised?

Mrs. ENDICOTT. I said you would have it if you played this without a mistake. (*Hands her music.*)

UNA. Well, I only made one or two mistakes, Miz Endicott, and I wanna learn "Dance of the Water Lilies" on account of it's my Ma's favorite piece.

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Then that should make you want to learn this one quickly so we can get on to "Dance of the Water Lilies"—after all, it's a second-grade piece.

UNA. (*Pounding keys in anger*) Gosh darn it, any way!

Mrs. ENDICOTT. (*Reproving her*) Now, Una—temper, temper!

UNA. (*Truculently*) I won't learn any piece! I won't, I won't! I'll quit taking piano lessons, that's what I'll do—I'll give up my career. (*Pounds discord.*)

Mrs. ENDICOTT. Una! Stop that! You'll ruin the piano.

UNA. That old thing—you couldn't ruin it if you hadda. At our house we've got a real Steinway.