

**BEN.** This radiator is ice cold. Look, Uncle Willie, I'm not going to let you live here anymore. You've got to let me find you another place... I've been asking you for seven years now. You're going to get sick.

**WILLIE.** *(Still looking at Variety.)* Tom Jones is gonna get a hundred thousand dollars a week in Las Vegas. When Lewis and I were headlining at the Palace, the *Palace* didn't cost a hundred thousand dollars.

**BEN.** That was forty years ago. And forty years ago this hotel was twenty years old. They should tear it down. They take advantage of all you people in here because they know you don't want to move.

*(WILLIE crosses to table and looks in shopping bag.)*

**WILLIE.** No cigars?

**BEN.** *(Making notes on his memo pad.)* You're not supposed to have cigars.

**WILLIE.** Where's the cigars?

**BEN.** You know the doctor told you you're not supposed to smoke cigars anymore. I didn't bring any.

**WILLIE.** Gimmie the cigars.

**BEN.** What cigars? I just said I don't have them. Will you forget the cigars?

**WILLIE.** Where are they, in the bag?

**BEN.** On the bottom. I just brought three. It's the last time I'm doing it.

**WILLIE.** *(Takes out a bag with three cigars.)* How's your family? The children alright? *(Removes one cigar.)*

**BEN.** Suddenly you're interested in my family? It's not gonna work, Uncle Willie. I'm not bringing you anymore cigars.

**WILLIE.** I just want to know how the children are.

**BEN.** The children are fine. They're wonderful, thank you.

**WILLIE.** Good. Next time bring the big cigars.

*(He puts two cigars in his breast pocket of bathrobe and the other one in his mouth. He crosses into kitchen looking for a light.)*

**BEN.** You don't even know their names. What are the names of my children?

**WILLIE.** Millie and Sidney.

**BEN.** Amanda and Michael.

**WILLIE.** You didn't like Millie and Sidney?

**BEN.** I was *never* going to name them Millie and Sidney. You forgot so you made something up. You forget everything. I'll bet you didn't drink the milk from last week. I'll bet it's still in the refrigerator. *(Crosses quickly and looks in.)* There's the milk from last week.

**WILLIE.** *(Comes out of kitchen, still looking for a light.)* Do they know who I am?

**BEN.** *(Looking through refrigerator.)* Who?

**WILLIE.** Amanda and Sidney.

**BEN.** Amanda and Michael. That you were a big star in vaudeville? They're three years old, Uncle Willie, you think they remember vaudeville? *I never saw vaudeville...* This refrigerator won't last another two days.

**WILLIE.** Did you tell them six times on the *Ed Sullivan show*? *(He sits, tries cigarette lighter. It's broken.)*

**BEN.** They never heard of Ed Sullivan. Uncle Willie, they're three years old. They don't follow show business. *(Comes back into living room, sees WILLIE with cigar in mouth.)* What are you doing? You're not going to smoke that now. You promised me you'd only smoke one after dinner.

**WILLIE.** Am I smoking it? Do you see smoke coming from the cigar?

**BEN.** But you've got it in your mouth.

**WILLIE.** I'm rehearsing... After dinner I'll do the show.

**BEN.** *(Crossing back into kitchen.)* I'm in the most aggravating business in the whole world and I never

get aggravated until I come here. (*He opens cupboards and looks in.*)

**WILLIE.** (*Looking around.*) ...So don't come. I got Social Security.

**BEN.** You think that's funny? I don't think that's funny, Uncle Willie.

**WILLIE.** (*Turns pages.*) If you had a sense of humor, you'd think it was funny.

**BEN.** (*Angrily, through gritted teeth.*) I have a *terrific* sense of humor.

**WILLIE.** Like your father, he laughed once in 1932.

**BEN.** I can't talk to you.

**WILLIE.** Why, they're funny today? Tell me who you think is funny today and I'll show you where he's not funny.

**BEN.** Let's not get into that, huh? I've got to get back to the office. Just promise me you'll have a decent lunch today.

**WILLIE.** If I were to tell a joke and got a laugh from you, I'd throw it out.

**BEN.** How can I laugh when I see you like this, Uncle Willie? You sit in your pajamas all day in a freezing apartment watching soap operas on a thirty-five dollar television set that doesn't have a horizontal hold. The picture just keeps rolling from top to bottom, pretty soon your eyes are gonna roll around your head... You never eat anything, you never go out because you don't know how to work the lock on the door... Remember when you locked yourself in the bathroom overnight... It's a lucky thing you keep bread in there, you would have starved... And you wonder why I worry.

**WILLIE.** ...Calvin Coolidge, that's your kind of humor.

**BEN.** Look, Uncle Willie, promise me you'll eat decently.

**WILLIE.** I'll eat decently. I'll wear a blue suit, a white shirt and black shoes.

**BEN.** And if you're waiting for a laugh, you're not going to get one from me.