

## Clybourne Park Act I Scene

KARL. However:

JIM. (*Quietly.*) Karl, don't.

KARL. (*Very slowly.*) I *don't* imagine that ... this particular family are *entirely* aware of *why* they've found such an agreeable price for the property. Don't suppose they know *that* aspect of it, do they? And let's say someone was to *inform* them of those facts. Let's say *that* was to happen.

RUSS. (*Chuckles dangerously.*) Really don't know when to quit, do ya?

KARL. Because I think that might be an interesting conversation to have.

FRANCINE. (*To Bev.*) So I'll be seeing you on Mon —

RUSS. (*Maintaining control.*) Well, Karl? You go ahead and do what you think is right, but I'll tell you one thing. What you're going to do right now is —

KARL. (*Overlapping.*) Well, I have a responsibility to the community as a whole. I can't afford to —

RUSS. (*Continuous.*) — you're going to take yourself right through that door and out of this house.

KARL. (*Overlapping, continuous.*) — simply pursue my own selfish interests.

RUSS. (*Maintaining calm.*) Man, what a son of a bitch.

BEV. Russ, *don't*.

RUSS. (*To Karl.*) If you honestly think I give a rat's ass about the goddamn —

JIM. (*Overlapping.*) Okay. Okay.

RUSS. (*Continuous.*) — what, ya mean the *community* where every time I go for a haircut, where they all sit and stare like the goddamn grim reaper walked in the barber shop door? *That* community?

KARL. (*Overlapping.*) My wife is two weeks away from giving birth to a *child*.

RUSS. (*Continuous.*) Where, Bev stops at Gelman's for a quart of milk and they look at her like she's got the goddamn plague? That the community I'm supposed to be looking out for?

KARL. A community with *soon-to-be children*.

JIM. The Apostle Matthew —

RUSS. (*To Jim.*) Oh no no no. *I'm* talking now.

BEV. *(To Francine and Albert.)* I am ashamed of every one of us.

BETSY. *(Tugging at Karl's sleeve.)* Kaaaaaah?

KARL. Betsy, wait in the car.

RUSS. Well, you go right ahead and you tell those folks whatever you want, Karl. And while you're at it why don't you tell 'em about everything *the community* did for my son. I mean *Jesus Christ*, Murray Gelman even goes and hires a goddamn *retarded* kid, but *my boy*? Sorry. No work for you, bub.

JIM. People were frightened, Russ.

RUSS. *(Contemptuous.)* Ahh, of *what*? He was gonna *snap*? Gonna go and kill another bunch of people? Send him off to defend the goddamn country, he does like he's *told* only to find out the kinda sons of bitches he's defending?

BEV *(Forthright.)* He did not do the things they claimed he did. He would never —

RUSS. *Ah, Jesus, of course he did, Bev! He confessed to what he did!* Sit around all day with your head in the sand, it doesn't change the facts of what he *did*.

BEV. Not to innocent people in that country. And not to women or children. I mean, maybe he lost his temper in a —

RUSS. *Ah, for Christ's sake. What do you think happens in a goddamn war?* They told him to *secure the territory*, not go knocking on doors asking *permission*. And if he was man enough to admit what he did, maybe you oughta have the decency to do the same damn thing.

BEV. *(Turning to Francine for support.)* You remember. Francine remembers what he was like. *(Russ makes a sound of disgust and goes to the footlocker. Under the following he unlocks and opens the lid.)* How he loved to read and think. That's just the kind of boy he was, wasn't it?

FRANCINE. Yes ma'am.

BEV. *(To Francine.)* And the drawings? The most realistic drawings. I think a lot of people didn't realize —

KARL. Bev, it was never my intention to stir up —

BEV Ohhh, no, I think maybe it was.

KARL. *(Continuous.)* — such acrimonious feelings, but there is a situation, which —

BEV. Well, maybe if you had known my son a little better. If anyone had taken the time, the way that Francine took the time —

*(Russ has produced an envelope from the footlocker. He steps forward, removing a letter on yellow legal paper.)*

RUSS. Here you go, Karl. Let's all read a little something, shall we?

BEV. What are you — ?

RUSS. *(Reading.) Dear Mom and Dad.*

BEV. *Stop it!!!*

RUSS. *(Reading.) I know you'll probably blame yourselves —*

BEV. *(Standing, losing it completely.) Russ, stop it stop it stop stop stop it!!!!*

JIM. Russ. Don't.

KARL. *(To Russ.)* I think you're unstable, Russ. I really do.

BEV. *(Turning back to Jim.) You see what this is like? You see? (To Russ.) Well, I refuse to live this way any longer! (She goes into the bathroom and slams the door behind her.)*

RUSS. *(Starting over, calmly.) Dear Mom and Dad.*

JIM. Russ?

RUSS. *I know you'll probably blame yourselves for what I've done —*

JIM. Need you to calm down.

RUSS. And *you* can go fuck yourself.

KARL. Well, *that* is over the line, mister. That is not language I will tolerate in front of my wife.

RUSS. *(Beat, then.)* She's *deaf* Karl!! Completely — *(Waving to Betsy, fake-jolly.)* Hello, Betsy! Go fuck yourself! *(Betsy smiles, waves back.)* So here's what I'll do for you, Karl: make ya ten copies of this you can hand 'em out at Rotary. Or better yet. Put it in the newsletter. Rotary news: kid comes back from Korea, goes upstairs and wraps an extension cord around his neck. Talk *that* over at the lunch buffet next week.

BETSY. *(Barely audible.)* Kaahhh?

RUSS. And Francine walking in at nine in the morning to find him there. You be my guest, Karl. You go ahead and tell those people what kind of house they're moving into and see if *that* stops 'em, because I'll tell you what, I don't care if a hundred Ubangi tribesmen with a bone through the nose overrun this goddamn place, 'cause I'm *through with all of you*, ya motherfucking sons of bitches. *Every one* of you. *(All stand in silence. We can hear Bev crying from behind the bathroom door. Russ slowly folds the letter. Finally.)*

JIM. Maybe we should bow our heads for a second.

RUSS. (*Advancing on him.*) Well, maybe I should punch you in the face. (*Russ moves toward Jim, who, in backing away, inadvertently tumbles backward over a box, toppling a floor lamp as he goes.*)

ALBERT	KARL	BETSY	FRANCINE.
Whoa whoa	Easy now. Easy	Kaahh!!	What in God's name
Whoa whoa	does it....	Waaahhh	is wrong with
<i>Whoa!!</i>	Careful--	happnee!?	With you people?
	Betsy go!		<i>(to Albert)</i>
	<i>Betsy?</i>		Stay out of-
			Don't. Just stay out of—

*(Betsy runs out the front door.)*

ALBERT. (*Puts his hand on Russ's shoulder.*) Hang on. Let's be civilized, now.

RUSS. (*Whirling on Albert.*) Ohoho, don't you touch *me*.

ALBERT. Whoa whoa whoa.

RUSS. Putting your hands on me? No *sir*. Not in *my* house you don't.

JIM. (*Gritting his teeth as he copes with his hernia.*) I'm all right.

FRANCINE. (*To Albert.*) What the hell d'you think *you're* doing?

ALBERT. Who're you talking to?

FRANCINE. Who do you *think*.?

KARL. (*To Russ, as he helps Jim to his feet.*) Very manly, Russ Threatening a *minister*.

ALBERT. (*To Francine.*) Why're you talking to me like th — ?

KARL. (*To Russ.*) Very *masculine*. (*Karl and Jim exit out the front door.*)

FRANCINE. (*Privately to Albert*) I think they're *all* a buncha idiots. And who's the biggest idiot of all to let yourself get dragged into the middle of it? Whatcha gonna be now, the big *peacemaker* come to save the day? (*Karl sticks his head back in.*)

KARL. (*Through the open door.*) You're mentally unstable, Russ!

FRANCINE. (*To Albert.*) Let 'em knock each other's *brains* out, for all / care. I'm done working for these people two days from now, and you never worked for 'em at *all*, so what the hell do you care *what* they do? And now I am going to the goddamn car!