

PENNY & SAM

a romance by

H.G. Brown

710 SE Adams Court
Port St. Lucie, FL 34894
917-710-3034
howardgbrown1244@gmail.com

Copyright © 2020

CHARACTERS: SAM is 25, about 5'8" tall, walks with a limp in his left leg and his left hand is stiffened in a claw. He has muscular dystrophy.

PENNY is 20 and around 5' tall. She has mild Down Syndrome, and would today be considered "high functioning."

SETTING: A residential garage on an alley in Willow Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. The garage has been modified into a room, with a table and two chairs, a cot and a wood-burning stove.

A small alcove with a curtain contains a toilet and sink. A door is in the stage right wall. A window is in the back wall.

A few boxes in the room hold SAM's possessions. Trousers, shirts, a jacket and winter coat are on the cot. A small table radio sits on one of the boxes. SAM has lived in this converted room for nearly ten years.

TIME: Today is moving day, a mild October afternoon in 1956.

AT RISE: Enter PENNY, bursting through the door.

PENNY (breathless)

Sam! Oh! I was afraid. Afraid you be gone... before I could say goodbye.

SAM

Joe's comin' to pick me up in about an hour. Give me a lift in his pickup truck. Soon as he finishes at the yard.

PENNY

Still gonna work there, at the lumber yard?

SAM

Oh, sure. It's a good job, why would I leave?

PENNY

Yeah, why would you? I was afraid I wouldn't be here. In time to say goodbye.

SAM

You're in time, Penny, but I don't like goodbyes. I'm not leaving town. The rooming house isn't far away.

PENNY

I'll be far away! The place I'm going is in Aurora. That's pretty far.

SAM

Just a train ride, that's all. Maybe an hour on the "Roarin' Elgin. I'll come out and see you.

PENNY

Oh, will you?

SAM

Sure thing. I think the train's still running. There is talk of shutting down the line.

PENNY

They better not. I miss you already.
(looking around the room, smiling)
Sam's Garage.

SAM

Not any more. Grandma Gorki dies and the world turns upside down. That's what happens.

PENNY

Aunt Madge says they're gonna tear down the garage and build a new one.

SAM

That's right. Big enough for two cars, a Hudson and a little Nash Rambler. Hey, maybe Croft and Jones will get some of the business. They're

SAM (cont.)

gonna need lumber for the new garage. Your Aunt Madge could be puttin' money in my pocket, how about that!

(SAM busies himself sorting clothes.)

PENNY

You been here a long time, Sam.

SAM

Ten years. Maybe it's for the best. Time to move on. You too, huh?

PENNY

Yeah. Me too. I'm gonna to miss you, Sam.

SAM

You're a sweet girl, Penny. Anyone ever tell you that?

PENNY

Oh, sure. Lot's of people. They think I'm real sweet at the A&P.

SAM

(more a statement than a question)
You're gonna miss that job, aren't you.

PENNY

Yeah. It was only a half-day job, 'cause I had to take care of grandma. But they liked me there, Mr. Goody, Jill and Tony and all the others. I'm gonna miss them, and the customers. Most of them, anyway.

SAM

They'll miss you, too.

PENNY

You gonna miss me, Sam?

SAM

You know I will. How long we been friends now?

PENNY

Forever.

SAM (laughing)

It only *seems* that long. Gosh, you were just ten years old when I moved in. Look at you now! A young woman!

PENNY

You should know! You had plenty of cake and ice cream at my last birthday. And you took me to the movies.

SAM

Twenty years old and all set to go off on your own.

PENNY

No. Aunt Madge is stickin' me in that asylum out in Aurora. She says I can work there, like I did for grandma and earn my keep -- doing work I know how to do.

SAM

Yeah. Yeah, that's what I heard.

PENNY

You did?

SAM

Your Aunt Madge talking over the fence to Mrs. Elkin, next door. Only I don't think she used the word "asylum."

PENNY

That's what it is. I heard her whisper it to my cousins. "Don't worry girls, she's not staying with us. She going to an asylum." That's where they stick people like me, the mentally sick people.

SAM

You are *not* mentally sick.

PENNY

I know that! Even if I was, it isn't something people can catch, like the measles.

SAM

Or polio. Remember the epidemic a couple years ago?

PENNY

Yeah. That was scary.

SAM

All the pools closed. Summertime and the kids staying indoors -

PENNY

It was awful.

SAM

People looked at me funny, cause I'm lame from muscular dystrophy. Like I had polio, and they could catch it from me.

PENNY

That's how my fancy cousins look at me, like I've got a disease.

SAM

That's how it is with us. We look different, and people naturally wonder, until they get to know us.

PENNY

Well, Madge knows me. A lot of good that does.

SAM

She doesn't know you like I do. She doesn't know how smart you are. She should ask at the A&P.

PENNY

All she knows is I can't stay here. And I can't stay with her and Uncle Albert and those damn cousins.

SAM

Penny!

PENNY

(more statement than question)
Didn't know I could swear, did you.

SAM

Did you learn that at the A&P?

PENNY

No worse than the lumber yard, I bet.

SAM

You could be right about that.

PENNY

I'm gonna miss you. I'm gonna miss working at the A&P and bringing home a paycheck for grandma. I'm gonna miss getting grandma ready before I go to work, and bringing home the bag of groceries when I'm done. I'll miss seeing you when you come home from the lumber yard. And after supper listening to the radio while you smoke your pipe and we have coffee... in Sam's Garage.

SAM

You were just sixteen the first time you stuck your head in here. I was listening to "Sargent Preston of the Yukon."

PENNY

Grandma said "Don't you pester that young man." Then when I turned sixteen she stopped saying it.

SAM

You never pestered me. And you always went back in the house at nine o'clock on the dot - week nights and Saturdays.

(pause)

Sixteen. That's how young I was when Chuck brought me here to live.

(pause)

No, you were never a pest. Just the opposite!

PENNY

I wanted to stay later.

(pause)

I wanted to hear the next program.

SAM

They are going, going gone. All the programs are going over to television.

PENNY

I think that's awful.

SAM

I bet they have television at the... you know... where you're going. That's something to look forward to.

PENNY

Yeah. Howdy Doody every afternoon. I miss the radio shows. I miss grandma and my good job and I'm gonna miss you. Too many things are changing.

SAM

I'm lucky. I still have my job, my friends, and I'll come out to visit you whenever I can. Tell you the truth, I don't like the rooming house where I'm going. I can't smoke my pipe and I can't play the radio after ten o'clock at night.

PENNY

That's terrible!

SAM

That's house rules. Oh, I don't mind the pipe so much. I can always catch a smoke outside. But I like to lay back and listen to "Music Till Dawn" - classical music - and I'd put the sound down low, so it wouldn't get too rowdy. Sometimes the music would be gentle and quiet. Then I'd fall asleep till I woke up early in the morning, between five-thirty and six. Like I had a clock inside me. Just like that.

PENNY

Music till dawn.

SAM

Jay Andres is the host. He plays the music, talks about what he's going to play. People call in, ask him to play a favorite piece.

PENNY

You never told me about that program.

SAM

It comes on way late, Penny, you would already be asleep. I don't listen all the time. I just tune it in when I have trouble getting to sleep.

PENNY

I have trouble too, sometimes. I really enjoyed coming down here, listening to a show with you.

SAM

(apologizing)

I'm sorry. I'd make some coffee, but everything's packed.

PENNY

That's okay. You know, grandma thought we were foolin' around down here.

SAM

No! Go on!

PENNY

(giggling)

She did! I told her no, but she just smiled.

SAM

Yeah, she would. What a gal.

PENNY

I mean! Imagine!

SAM

Well, sure. After all, you are a pretty woman.

PENNY

Oh, Sam! You're just teasin' me.

SAM

No, I'm *saying* that, because you are.
Some day you'll meet a nice fellow.

PENNY

Oh sure, Prince Charming. Me cooped up in an asylum, cleaning, doing the laundry, washing dishes - I had a good job at the A&P, and if I worked full-time I could have *advanced*. That's what they told me.

(Pause. SAM looks at her; she looks away.)

I'm not saying it was *all* nice. Some of the help - the come-and-go help - they'd stare at me and poke fun. They were careful not to do that in front of Mr. Goody, 'cause he wouldn't stand for that.

SAM

I wouldn't either. It's just plain mean. People like that never amount to much. I use to get that when I was a kid, mostly because I couldn't play sports and I was a little slow at school.

(He lifts an empty box to the cot.)

Hey, give me a hand with this, huh? I want to pack my clothes in this box. I ought to have a suitcase, but I don't.

(They get the box on the cot and start folding and packing the clothes.)

PENNY

Do you mean it, Sam? That I'm pretty?

SAM

Sure you are.

PENNY

You mean pretty for a mongoloid person.

SAM

That's not what I said and that's not what I mean. You're like the song:

(singing)

"Five-foot two, eyes of blue,
Oh what those two eyes could do!
Has anybody seen my gal?"

PENNY

I'm more like five-foot nothing. Tall for my type.

SAM

And if I had a good leg I'd ask you to dance. We are what we are. And in my eyes you are a pretty woman. You think I'd take a girl to the movies who wasn't pretty?

PENNY

I am *really* gonna miss you. You always say such nice things.

(pause)

I don't think it was "Sargent Preston."

SAM

What? Oh, when you first... ? No? Maybe it was "The Shadow." Or "The Green Hornet." All gone now.

PENNY

Grandma liked the soaps in the morning, and Robert Q. Lewis. I was at work by then.

SAM

Sargent Preston of The Yukon - "On, King! On, you huskies!" I always wanted to see The Yukon. My brother said we could go there for a visit. Once we settled in California we'd go up there, just to look around, you know? That was before Korea. We had plans.

(pause, looks at his watch)

Joe should be here, soon.

PENNY

Aunt Madge, too. Then it's really good-bye.

SAM

That's why I don't like good-bye, so we won't say it. We'll say "see you in a couple weeks, maybe a month at most" We're going away, but we're making plans to meet again. Maybe take in a movie.

PENNY

Okay. I like that.

SAM

Right, so here's the plan. Two weeks from now I'll come out to Aurora. It will have to be on a Sunday because Saturday is a busy day at the yard.

PENNY

Sure. Just like the A&P.

SAM

I'll check the schedule for an early train. I have to make sure there is an evening train, so I can get back. I'm sure there is, but I can't miss the evening train. Got to be back at work Monday morning.

PENNY

Yes. What if I have to work on Sunday?

SAM

Well... they have to give you some time off.

PENNY

The kind of work they want me to do goes on every day.

SAM

We need to find out about that. I'll write to you and you write back to me.

PENNY

Like pen pals!

SAM

That's right. You can tell me when you have to work and if you can get Sundays off and--

PENNY

Can I send you a postcard or should it be a letter?

SAM

Well... There is more room in a letter. About all you can say on a postcard is "okay for Sunday."

PENNY

If Sundays are okay, that should be enough. If not, I'll have to explain. That might be hard to do. Where should I send the letter - or card?

SAM

Send it to me.

PENNY

Well, yeah, to you, but where is that? You won't be here.

SAM

To the rooming house - no! To Croft and Jones Lumber and Construction. Address it to me, in care of them.

PENNY

To Sam... in care of... the lumber yard?

SAM

Croft and Jones, yes. Wait, here's a card.

(He fumbles for his wallet; it falls to the floor. PENNY picks it up.)

There's a card inside. Three or four. Business cards.

(She takes a card from his wallet and hands the wallet back to him. He returns it to his pants pocket. She looks at the card.)

See. That's the address of the yard. That's how to get in touch with me.

PENNY

This is the lumber yard.

SAM

That's right. Mail comes there every day.

PENNY

Okay.

SAM

Just send a postcard to me at that address. On the back of the card put the address of the... place.. where you will be staying.

PENNY

Yes. The asylum.

SAM

When I get the card with the address - the return address - I can write to you about when I can come out for a visit.

PENNY

And I can write to you about time off on Sunday - Oh! What if they only give me time off once a month?

SAM

Then that day I'll come out to visit, on that once-a-month day.

PENNY

Oh! What if they only allow family to visit?

SAM

Yeah... what if... That could be a problem.

PENNY

They could be strict about that.

SAM

What I'll do is I'll write a letter to the head doctor. I'll write a very polite letter:

SAM (cont.)

"Please, I would like to visit Miss Penelope Wise, a friend of mine, who lives and works at your..." Something like that.

PENNY

At your asylum.

SAM

I'll make sure it is a nice letter, very respectful. Stuff like that makes a good impression. They'll like it, believe me.

PENNY

What if they don't?

SAM

They will, don't worry. I'll ask Joe to go over the letter.

PENNY

But what if they don't?

SAM

Penny...

PENNY

What if they don't? I'll be stuck there - without you! Not seeing you! Maybe they'll hide your letters from me, maybe even burn them. What if they won't let me write to you -!

SAM

Penny! It's not the end of the world!

PENNY

It is! Don't shout at me! Don't!

SAM

(taking her by the shoulders)
Look at me. Look at me, Penny. I'm not going to let that happen. It's going to be all right.

PENNY

Sam, I'm scared.

SAM

I know.

PENNY

I didn't used to be scared. Not at school. The teachers were nice. And the other kids, most of them... And I wasn't scared when I started work at the A&P. But ever since grandma died...

SAM

It's been tough on you.

PENNY

Tough on you, too, huh?

SAM

I'm sort of used to it. I mean, things changing. Nothing stays the same.

PENNY

Instead of seeing you every day, we're gonna be pen pals. That's a big change. I'll write to you every day.

SAM (laughing)

Ouch! You'll get writers cramp.

PENNY

Postcards, silly! But I'll write you a letter every week.

SAM

That's more like it. I'll write you, too. Every week.

PENNY

I'll need lots of stamps. What does a letter cost?

SAM

Three cents, I think. A postcard is two cents.

PENNY

That's... ten cents a week, plus three cents... I better save my pennies. Penny Wise, that's me.

SAM

A penny saved is a penny earned.

PENNY

Will you save me, Sam? Will you save a Penny?

(pause)

SAM

You mean get you out of that.. asylum? I'm going to try. I am.

PENNY

I'm just going there to work, not because I'm a lunatic. I'm not a lunatic. Madge is just putting me there because there's no place else for me to go.

SAM

Yeah. Penny, I... Gee... I don't know...

PENNY

What?

SAM

Nothing. Just a thought.

PENNY

A penny for your thought!

SAM

Yeah! Right! Penny for my thought.

PENNY

Well...?

SAM

Before I decided to take a room - in the rooming house - Joe offered me a place. It isn't much. A small house in Maywood: just a couple rooms - living room, kitchen, bedroom, bath, not much more than that.

PENNY

A house?

SAM

Across First Avenue from Proviso High School. You can see the big practice field across the way, and the Field House. You can actually see the guys practicing - football, baseball - even walk to the games.

PENNY

Does it have a front porch?

SAM

A small one, yeah. A back porch too, and a small yard.

PENNY

Sam! If Joe offered, why didn't you take it?

SAM

I don't know. Lot's of reasons. A house is a big responsibility. I'm just a single guy. I wasn't sure I could afford the rent. Sure, Joe would go easy on that, I know, and I could catch a ride to work with him. He lives nearby in Maywood with his family. That's just it. You see, he got the house for his son, Robert.

PENNY

Robert doesn't like the house?

SAM

No, you see... Robert, didn't come back. He and Chuck both went to Korea, and they didn't come back. They were pals in high school. They played on the same teams - junior varsity, varsity. They were very good. They enlisted together, right out of high school. A couple years in and the war came.

PENNY

They didn't come back?

SAM

We got telegrams: "We regret to inform you.."

SAM (cont.)

Words... something like that. So, I know what the house meant to Joe, the house being for Bobby and his girl... It didn't seem right to take it. But now... I'm not so sure.

PENNY

What do you mean?

SAM

I could tell Joe I decided to take it after all. It wouldn't be for me; it would be for you.

PENNY

Me!?

SAM

Why not? Oh, maybe not right away. I'd have to fix it up a little. It needs a little fixing...

PENNY

Sam, I could never afford it...

SAM

Like I said, Joe will go easy on the rent. We can work that out. I'm sure we can. You probably will have to go that hospital -

PENNY

The asylum -

SAM

Just for now. For a little while, maybe till you're twenty-one.

PENNY

That long?

SAM

Only a year at most, maybe not that long.

PENNY

About eight months!

SAM

See? What I tell you? Time enough to fix it up.

PENNY

What about you. Where you gonna stay? You can't afford to rent a room and the house, too.

SAM

Well... Okay, forget the room! I'll tell the old lady I decided not to take it. Boy, will she be steamed. I was gonna pay her a month in advance today, when I moved in.

PENNY

Are you sure Joe will let you take the house? Is it still available?

SAM

Joe said if I change my mind about it, just let him know. Joe Croft is a man of his word.

PENNY

Joe Croft?

(she fishes the card from her pocket)

Joseph Croft. He owns the lumber yard?

SAM

Sure. Joe and Spencer Jones are partners. Spence wanted to name the business Salt & Pepper Lumber, 'cause Spence is white and Joe is black. Joe said it would be more business-like to call it Croft & Jones Lumber Company. Joe figured his being a Negro might hurt business in Willow Park. No colored in Willow Park, at least not home owners or businesses, as far as I know. Except the lumber yard. See, Joe lives in Maywood, Willow Park being all white. Crazy, I know, but that's City Hall. Once, the mayor and some other fine citizens tried to get Joe to sell his share of the business to a white guy, but he told them to go to hell. He and Spence would move the yard - lock, stock and barrel - to Maywood. Spence backed him up. Said him and Joe would run their business, and the mayor and his cronies could pretend they run the town.

PENNY

Wish I could stand up to Aunt Madge like that!

SAM

I say you can. Listen, you didn't sign any papers, did you ?

PENNY

Papers?

SAM

You know, agreeing to place yourself in the... in the asylum.

PENNY

No, no papers. Oh! She said when we got there I would have to sign some kind of agreement.

SAM

Some kind of agreement?

PENNY

Yeah, so I could work there and get to stay, and they would pay me so much a month.

SAM

But you haven't signed anything yet.

PENNY

Not yet. Madge said I would have to sign the agreement, and not to make trouble but just sign my name.

SAM

Yeah, I'll bet. I'm surprised she didn't have you sign before you got there.

PENNY

I have to sign in front of the man who runs the asylum, the doctor. I said "what if I don't sign." Madge said, "Just don't make trouble. You need a place to stay."

SAM

(stating a fact)

She's taking you there today, isn't she.

PENNY

Picking me up in her car this afternoon.

SAM

Anyone else coming along with her?

PENNY

No, Uncle Al would be at his office; the girls will be at home, I guess. Madge would never bring them out to the asylum.

SAM

We have to move fast if we're gonna stop her.

PENNY

I can refuse to sign. When I get there, I won't sign anything.

SAM

I think they'll use that as proof you aren't competent, something like that. Not proof - because you are competent - but an excuse.

PENNY

Then Madge will put me away for good. I might as well sign

SAM

Not without knowing *what* you are signing. They'll just shove the papers in front of you and say "sign this," and then you're stuck with it.

PENNY

That's what I'm afraid of. If I tell them I can only stay for maybe a year... Uh-uh. That's not what Madge has in mind for me.

SAM

You're not getting in the car with Madge. That means goodbye, and I don't like goodbyes.

PENNY

What am I gonna do? Run away? Hide?

SAM

Your going to move into Joe's house. Today.

(Pause, PENNY just stares at him.)

SAM

Today, Penny.

PENNY

Joe is gonna be surprised.

SAM

He sure is. Just let me handle it.

PENNY

I don't think so.

SAM

What do you mean? You don't... what do you mean?

PENNY

Let you handle it. I can do that. I have money in the bank, here in town. I can pay him rent, and I'll get a job.

SAM

At the A&P.

PENNY

There has got to be one in Maywood. Mr. Goody will give me a good report.

SAM

A referral.

PENNY

That's right. You didn't know I have money in the the Willow Park bank, did you?

SAM

No. I didn't.

PENNY

I have been scrimping and saving since I was sixteen. I gave my pay to grandma, but she always gave back most of it. She told me to save it till the end of the month. Then we would go to the bank. We did that every month.

SAM

For all these years?

PENNY

Four whole years. I have over three hundred dollars. I just kept putting it in. I never touched it.

SAM

I've been working nearly ten years. I only managed to put away a thousand.

PENNY

Well, you had expenses.

SAM

Just room and board to grandma. Not much to stay here, in the garage, but I did kick in for breakfast and supper. Then I had carfare, lunches...

PENNY

It adds up.

SAM

...new work shoes, winter clothes, summer clothes... A thousand dollars and pocket money. That's all I've got.

PENNY

A thousand dollars is a lot of money.

SAM

In the bank, saving for that rainy day.

PENNY

Same bank as me?

SAM

Sure, the only bank in town.

PENNY

I never seen you there.

SAM

You and your grandma went once a month - when?
Saturday mornings?

PENNY

Every month on Saturday. Mr. Goody let me work an
afternoon shift once a month so I could make my
deposit.

SAM

(stating a fact)

He's proud of you, isn't he.

PENNY

He said I set a good example.

SAM

That you do. I used to hit the bank every Friday
after work. Mainly to cash my pay check. I keep
meaning to add to that thousand, but I seem to
need more money these days. Doesn't seem to go as
far, and I always want to keep ten or twenty in
mypoocket. Guess I'll have to stop eating at those
fancy restaurants.

PENNY

Oh stop it! Fancy restaurants! You do not!

SAM

Every Saturday night! I put on my tuxedo and
head out to a fancy restaurant for a steak dinner
- maybe lobster.

PENNY

I see you down here in Sam's Garage Saturday
nights, so don't tell me stories. You eat at
Albright's or the diner, like most people.

PENNY (cont.)

Or the Friday night fish fry at the Triangle Building. You even took me there once, last year.

SAM

And you had a good time, didn't you?

PENNY

I did. You should have asked me again.

SAM

Yeah, I should have. I wanted to, but -

PENNY

Maybe you were embarrassed. To be seen with me

SAM

No. What gives you that idea?

PENNY

'cause of the way I am. And your friends kind of avoided us.

SAM

To hell with them! And look at *me*, a real prize, huh? Left hand like a claw and I walk like a goon. It was me they avoided. Anyway, I don't have any friends at that place; I just eat there now and then.

PENNY

I still enjoyed it.

SAM

Cheap Friday night fish fry...

PENNY

Just being out with you.

(Pause, then stating a fact.)

We make a real pair, don't we.

SAM

Maybe we do, at that.

PENNY

We have never even danced, you and me.

SAM

I don't exactly glide across the floor.

PENNY

Neither do I.

(Pause. SAM holds out his arms. PENNY goes to him. He puts his left arm behind her back; takes her left hand in his right.)

SAM

This is backwards. I should have your right hand in my left, but...

PENNY

I don't mind. Not at all.

SAM

Maybe if I put on the radio. Find some music. We could pretend dance. Sway to the music.

PENNY

I like this. I like the way you hold me.

(She puts her head on his chest.)

SAM

(singing, very slow)
Five-foot two, eyes of blue,
Oh what those two eyes can do.
Has anybody seen my gal?

(She looks up at him; they kiss.)

PENNY

Sam...

SAM

I been wanting to do that for a long time.

PENNY

Oh, me too. Again...

(They kiss.)

SAM

I guess now I have to marry you.

PENNY

You do?

SAM

Sure. People kiss; people get married.

PENNY

Oh sure, in books maybe. Romance stories and such. Never happens in the movies. At least not the ones you took me to.

SAM

I only took you to westerns. I figured they were safe. Only the horse gets kissed.

PENNY

I wanted you to take me to something romantic.

SAM

Popcorn in the dark isn't romantic?

PENNY

Oh, you know what I mean.

SAM

I'm not a romantic kinda guy. You know, I never asked a girl to anything, till I asked you to a couple movies, and to the fish fry. You could say you are my first and only girl friend. The first girl I could call a real friend.

PENNY

That's just... that's just so sad.

SAM

Now I'm sorry I told you. I don't want your pity.

PENNY

Well, you don't have it, so don't worry about that! I don't pity you, I feel sorry for the girls who never got to know what a swell guy you are.

SAM

Oh, sure, sure.

PENNY

You are! You make your own way; you've got a life. You got a lot to offer, Sam.

SAM

What have I got? Make a list. I'll tack it to my door, when I get one.

PENNY

You make me so mad! Like when you shouted at me.

SAM

When did I do that?

PENNY

When I got all hot about - I forget what!
Something about the asylum - Your letters!
How they were gonna burn them! How I was gonna lose you!

(pause)

And you shouted at me.

SAM

I guess I did raise my voice.

PENNY

I guess you did.

SAM

I'm sorry about that.

PENNY

First fight we ever had.

SAM

Not much of a fight.

PENNY

Now this.

(pause)

Kiss and make up?

(Pause. They kiss, then embrace.)

SAM

Say, this could get to be a habit with us.

PENNY

Oh, Sam. What are we gonna do?

(He holds her at arms length.)

SAM

First thing first. You tell Madge you changed your mind; you are not going to the asylum.

PENNY

Okay. Right. Tell Madge. Easier said than done.

SAM

Just tell her, then it's done.

PENNY

Oh boy. You don't know Madge.

SAM

I think I do. She's used to getting her own way. She didn't when you were a kid. She wanted to put you away back then, but grandma said no. Now she figures to get her way.

PENNY

That's right. But that was grandma. Nobody messed with her.

SAM

Nobody's gonna mess with you, either. That includes Madge.

PENNY

Madge. Oh boy...

SAM

Second thing... You following me?

PENNY

Where? Yes! Yes I am.

SAM

Second thing, we tell Joe I am taking him up on the house, and that you will be staying there.

PENNY

Right. We tell Joe. Is there a third thing?

SAM

A third...? No, I think that does it.

PENNY

I'm glad, 'cause that's all I can manage right now, I'm so nervous.

SAM

I'm kinda nervous myself -

PENNY

Oh! Except I'll tell Joe I have money in the bank and I can pay rent - if it's not too much.

SAM

You be sure to tell him that. He'll be impressed.

PENNY

And I'll get another A&P job. I'll ask Mr. Goody, and he'll call the manager in the Maywood store and I'll start in right away.

SAM

Just as soon as we get married.

PENNY

Right. Wait a minute. What did you say?

SAM

As soon as we get married. You don't have to start work right away ---

PENNY

Sam--

SAM

But we will have to get married.

PENNY

Are you proposing that you and me - that we -
get married?

SAM

I don't think we can live under the same roof
unless we do. It won't be so bad.

PENNY

Well, that's good to know!

SAM

You like me; I like you. We get along pretty
good. Why? Is there someone else?

PENNY

You know there isn't! All the guys look at me
sideways.

SAM

Well, I don't! I look at you straight on and
I like what I see!

PENNY

What? What do you see?

SAM

What do I..? I see you, of course!

PENNY

Take me out of pity?

SAM

No! Never!

PENNY

I don't want your pity!

SAM

Like you said to me, you haven't got it!

PENNY

We're fighting again!

(He grabs her and they kiss.)

PENNY

Do you love me, Sam?

SAM

I wouldn't know love if it stared me in the face.

PENNY

It's staring you in the face right now.

SAM

And I've been staring at you across grandma's kitchen table for a couple years, now. Not that you ever noticed.

PENNY

I know you like me. I know we are really close friends.

SAM

I would never hurt you.

PENNY

But we aren't *in* love, are we?

SAM

Maybe not, but it doesn't matter. People get married for all kinds of reasons, some good, some not so good.

PENNY

And we've got good reasons.

SAM

Yeah, we do. We will marry for life, for yours and mine. We will get married so you don't have to be stuck in a place where you don't belong.

PENNY

And what about you?

SAM (smiling)

I'm getting married so I'll have you to come home to - you and a cob pipe and slippers.

PENNY

Well, that's a start.

SAM

A good one, too. I've seen guys and gals I knew from high school - high school sweethearts - full of love and romance. They get married right out of school, practically. A couple years later, he's gone or she's run-off - maybe there's a kid or two in the picture - and the romance is over. Real love was never there.

PENNY

We're better than that.

SAM

We are. We start off liking each other. We get along real good, and we know things will be tough for us, but we're already good friends. We'll make it through the tough times; we'll work things out together.

PENNY

Yes. We can do that. But Sam...

SAM

What?

PENNY

It's okay if I start off loving you, isn't it? Not that I'm *in love* with you, 'cause I'm probably not. It's just that I love you. I mean there's so much about you that I love.

(SAM thinks about this for a moment.)

SAM

Well... sure. Okay. I feel the same about you.

PENNY

Oh, I'm glad. I'm so relieved.

SAM

Gee, I wish I had a ring to give you.

PENNY

A ring?

SAM

An engagement ring. To make it official.

PENNY

It *is* official, as far as I'm concerned.

SAM

I want Madge to know. I definitely want Madge to know, and Joe and the guys at work -

PENNY

And I'd like Mr. Goody and the A&P to know, too.

SAM

They will. They all will. Where we gonna get a ring?

(He starts looking through his boxes.)

PENNY

How about a class ring? Just for now. I always wanted a class ring.

SAM

I never got one. I couldn't afford one.

PENNY

Or a pin of some kind?

SAM

A pin... A pin or ribbon! My brothers Purple Heart.

(He rifles through a box; finds a presentation box.)

SAM (cont.)

I know it's here. I wouldn't lose that. Ah!

(He holds up the Purple Heart ribbon.)

It was awarded to Chuck, post- post-
posthumously. That's after he died. They sent it
to me, 'cause I'm his sole surviving family.

(He pins it on her, with difficulty.)

It's just for now, Penny, to show I'm
serious.

(She touches it, tenderly.)

PENNY

I know you are. I know.

SAM

It's just for now, until I get a ring. Chuck
would understand. He'd be glad for us.

PENNY

How soon do you think we can do this? Get married?

SAM

We have to get a license

PENNY

Yeah, that's right.

SAM

We have to go to the court house for that.
And I think we have to get a blood test.

PENNY

A blood test.

SAM

To make sure we aren't cousins or something -
close relations.

PENNY

Maybe they won't like my blood. Maybe my blood will say I could pass-on... What I am. Oh, Sam! Maybe they won't let us get married!

SAM

Yes, they will. You have a job; you have a bank account; you can read and write and do arithmetic and you're over eighteen. We can ask Reverend Berger to go with us to city hall to get licensed.

PENNY

Do you think he would do that?

SAM

I'm sure he would. Haven't we been going to church for two years, now? Off-and-on, sure, but most Sundays.

PENNY

I wish we had gone to church more often.

SAM

We went Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving...

PENNY

We should have gone more often. It's so close. Just down the end of the block. We should have gone more often.

SAM

I don't have a Sunday suit.

PENNY

Oh, don't give me that! You always look fine.

SAM

I felt out of place.

PENNY

Reverend and Mrs Berger were always glad to see us. They even took us to Madison Street, to see the parade for the boy who came home from Korea. Remember?

PENNY

(She realizes she has touched a nerve.)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to remind you...

(She touches the Purple Heart.)

SAM

(smiling, he strokes her hair)
He had red hair and freckles. He had been a prisoner of war, and he sat on the back seat of the big convertible, up on the trunk. He waved and everybody cheered. I remember. I'll never forget.

(She looks up at him, then puts her head on his chest.)

We'll talk to Reverend and Mrs. Berger.
We'll ask him to marry us, once we get the license.

PENNY

Oh Sam! I'd really like that. It would make everything kosher.

SAM (laughs)

Kosher! Yeah, it would make everything kosher.

PENNY

That's what Mr. Goody would say. Can we invite Mr. Goody?

SAM

We'll invite everyone we know from the A&P and the lumber yard. We'll fill the church.

PENNY

When, Sam? When?

SAM

That's what we've got to work out. We'll get you into Joe's house today. Gee, I hope he's got the electric on, and the water.

PENNY

What about you? Where are you gonna stay?

SAM

I guess I'll have to stay at the rooming house after all.

PENNY

Oh, Sam -

SAM

For a month, maybe only a couple of weeks, till we get married. Oh gee! Reverend Berger was just here!

PENNY

When? Where?

SAM

Here, about a half hour before you got here. If only I had known! I woulda said, "Hang on Rev, Penny's due any minute and I'm gonna pop the question."

PENNY

You would not have said any such thing! "Rev?" I don't think so.

SAM

Well, something like that, but more respectful.

PENNY

Why was he here?

SAM

He knew about grandma Gorki dying. She was buried from a different church, sure, but the news was all over the neighborhood.

PENNY

Yeah. People knew her for years. Way before I came along.

SAM

He heard the house was up for sale, and that we have to move out.

PENNY

He came to say good-bye?

SAM

Yeah.

PENNY

You don't like good-byes.

SAM

Anyway, he said if there is anything he can do to help, just ask. So I'm gonna ask.

PENNY

To help us get the license?

SAM

To come with us to the court house. To take us there in his car and vouch for us, that we are honest and respectable - very competent people.

PENNY

Yes, we are.

SAM

Right after we tell Marge - after you tell Marge - that you are not going to go anywhere with her. We are going to walk down the block to our church and tell Reverend Berger we want to get married. And ask him will he help us.

PENNY

Tell him we are serious.

SAM

Sure we are. Serious.

PENNY

And we do not enter into this lightly.

SAM

Hey, that's good.

PENNY

It's something the minister says, before we take the vows. I *have* looked into it.

SAM

Plan on getting married someday?

PENNY

If I meet the right guy.

SAM

I may not be the *right* guy, but I am the lucky one.

PENNY

The words are so beautiful, Sam. I read them in a book I got from the library. I read them over and over. *Weddings Around The World* - the different ways people get married in different countries.

SAM

I didn't know you have a library card.

PENNY

There's lots you don't know about me. Lot's I don't know about you, too.

SAM

I guess we're gonna find out. Fill in the details.

PENNY

Mm-hmm. Kinda scary, huh?

SAM

Kinda. It's like an adventure.

PENNY

And we're goin' on it together. And you won't leave me, and I won't leave you. Always there, in sickness and in health. Till death do us part.

SAM

Boy, you really know the wedding words.

PENNY

I do, but I never thought I would ever get to say them. I mean, for real.

SAM

I'll say them, too. For real.

PENNY

Yeah. Maybe.

SAM

What is it, Penny?

PENNY

It's just that... I heard that sometimes they don't let people like me get married.

SAM

Where did you hear that?

PENNY

Oh, you know... around...

SAM

Around the corner? Around the block?

PENNY

Around the house. I heard Madge once, telling grandma I had no real future; I'd never get married; they would never allow it...

SAM

Madge again! She had no business saying that.

PENNY

I was fifteen, sixteen, out of school - before I got the A&P job. She was talking, trying to get grandma to put me in a place for retarded people.

SAM

You heard her say that?

PENNY

I was in my room. I heard them talking. You shoulda heard grandma tell her off.

SAM

I wish I had!

PENNY

"She's your sister's only child. She's a big help to me. Now you get out of here with your talk." Madge walked out and slammed the door.

SAM

Grandma meant every word. You were a big help to her.

PENNY

But what if Madge is right? What if they won't let me get married?

SAM

She's not right. And who is this "they" she throws around? "They!" Who's that supposed to be?

PENNY

I don't know. The marriage license people, judges, doctors...

SAM

Reverend Berger will stick up for you, for both of us. Your boss -

PENNY

Mr. Goody.

SAM

He'll stick up for you. Lot's of people will. But you've got to stick up for yourself. Will you do that?

(pause)

Penny?

PENNY

Stick up for myself. I don't think I ever have. I guess I never had to... stick up for myself. I always just did what I was told; went where I was told to go...

SAM

How did you get your job at the A&P? You had to talk them into hiring you. You had to say something.

PENNY

Grandma and I would go shopping there, a couple times a week. I got to know what stuff went where on the shelves, and which aisles. I would bag the groceries for grandma. One day Mr. Goody asked me would I like to work at the store, and get paid for it.

SAM

Well, there you go. I always wondered how you got that job.

PENNY

I have a hunch grandma put him up to it. It's just part time. I don't get paid much.

SAM

You can work full-time now, if you want.

PENNY

That's right, I can.

SAM

Bring in more money.

PENNY

That would help us a lot.

SAM

It sure would.

PENNY

But it's a far ride from that house in Maywood to the A&P where I worked.

SAM

We will find a store in Maywood -- on Madison Street or Fifth Avenue - someplace close you can walk to.

PENNY

Doesn't have to be an A&P. Maybe Kroger's.

SAM

We'll find something. You'll see. Could be a whole, new line of work.

PENNY

I'm used to the grocery business. I know my way around a grocery store - especially a super-market. I need to see Mr. Goody about that.

SAM

We have a lot of bases to cover.

PENNY

We should make a list.

SAM

We can do that after. Let's concentrate on getting married.

PENNY (smiling)

Okay. I don't mind.

SAM

When Madge gets here we tell her flat out: you're not going any place with her. All bets are off.

PENNY

Right.

SAM

And we are getting married.

PENNY

She's gonna faint dead away.

SAM

I don't think she's the type.

PENNY

You're right. She'll probably laugh in our faces.

SAM

If she does, don't get angry. Don't swear at her or curse her out or -

PENNY

Oh, I wouldn't do that. After all, she is my aunt.

SAM

We will say, "Now if you will excuse us, we have to see our pastor."

PENNY

She'll either laugh at us or yell and scream. I don't know which.

SAM

Of course, we can't actually leave until Joe gets here, and I tell him our plan. To take the house, and for you to move in today.

(looking at his watch)

What time is Madge due?

PENNY

Any time now. Around five she said.

SAM

Joe should be here around the same time. Maybe we should get you settled in the house first, then see Reverend Berger.

PENNY

When? Tomorrow? After church on Sunday?

SAM

It means getting you here from Maywood-- I'll have to catch a bus, pick you up, then bus back here -

PENNY

That's a lot of bussing.

SAM

Well, I don't have a car, and cabs are too expensive. Joe's a great boss, but I can't keep hitting him for rides.

PENNY

He's gonna be surprised enough about my staying in the house. He might not like it.

SAM

I'm more worried about you. Being all alone in that house. I don't even know what there is in the way of furniture.

PENNY

I'll be all right, Sam.

SAM

I'll leave you the radio. So you won't feel so alone.

PENNY

Is there a washing machine?

SAM

A what? A washing machine?

PENNY

Like grandma has in the basement.

SAM

A washing machine.

PENNY

That's important.

SAM

I... I don't know.

PENNY

You don't know if there is a washing machine at the house?

SAM

I never asked. I suppose there is.

PENNY

What are we gonna do if there isn't? I use to wash clothes every week.

SAM

Yeah, I know.

PENNY

Hang them out to dry in the yard, even in winter.

SAM

Sure, I remember...

PENNY

I washed plenty of your stuff, too.

SAM

Well, plenty - I don't have much.

PENNY

I washed plenty

SAM

I paid grandma for that, in my room-and-board.

PENNY

What are we gonna do if there is no washing machine?

SAM

I don't know... Use the tub?

PENNY

We need to wash and rinse and wring out -

SAM

I'll ask Joe does the house have a washing machine. It must have. He meant the house for Bobby. It must have indoor plumbing and heat and electricity -

PENNY

And a washing machine and a big sink.

SAM

In the basement, sure. If it has a basement.

PENNY

This is gonna be hard. If I have to wash by hand.

SAM

You won't. Anyway, I'll help you. I wonder what it would cost, a washing machine? Maybe a couple hundred dollars.

PENNY

A couple hundred... I have over three hundred in the bank.

SAM

No you don't. Not when I have a thousand just sitting there. We can afford a couple hundred. Maybe even one of those new combination jobs. Washer and dryer.

PENNY

Really?

SAM

No more hanging clothes in the winter.

PENNY

I don't mind it much. Cold clothes dry too. Just takes longer.

SAM

If the house doesn't come with a washing machine, we're gonna get one. I promise.

PENNY

I love you.

SAM

Worth it, just to hear you say that.

PENNY

You could say it, too. I don't mind.

SAM

I love you; I admit it.

PENNY

Let's go see Reverend Berger right now.

SAM

Wait till Madge gets here. You've got tell her.
I'll be right here to back you up.

PENNY

Okay.

SAM

And Joe, to tell him we want to accept his
offer and rent the house.

PENNY

Yes!

SAM

Then we'll talk to Reverend Berger. Have you
got your stuff packed?

PENNY

All I've got is in a couple suitcases, with
my clothes, a picture of grandma when she was
young, and a picture of my mother. She was a
pretty lady.

SAM

She was. You showed me her picture.

PENNY

When?

SAM

Your last birthday. You showed me.

PENNY

Oh, that's right.

SAM

Very pretty. Just like you.

PENNY

You don't have a picture of your mother, do you?

SAM

I was only four or five when she died. I can't even remember her face. Then Chuck and I went to the orphanage in Maywood. Mostly I remember that.

PENNY

You can look at my mother's picture all you want.

SAM

We'll get a picture of our own. A wedding picture.

PENNY

It's almost like we are strangers. We have known each other so long, but there is still so much to know.

SAM

We have time to fill in the gaps. Don't worry.

PENNY

I'm not worried.

SAM

I am, about your being in that house alone. I don't like leaving you there, even for a week.

PENNY

I'll be okay. I don't mind. Well, I do, just a little. You think it will only take a week?

SAM

Till we get married? I'm hoping, but you never know. I wish Madge would get here. Joe, too. We've got a lot to do, and I want to get cracking.

PENNY

"Madge, we're gonna get married."
How's that sound?

SAM

Like you mean business.

PENNY

I certainly do.

SAM

I wish I had a telephone so I could call Joe.

PENNY

Let him know about the house?

SAM

Yeah, let him know ahead of time, before he gets here.

(looks at his watch)

He must have left work by now.

PENNY

Grandma's phone was disconnected. We had a party line. Mrs. Elkin next door was on it. You could ask her if you could use the phone.

SAM

No, I better stay here. Madge or Joe might show up while I'm out.

PENNY

Yeah, I wouldn't want that. I wouldn't know what to do. Madge might just drag me to the car. Me kicking and screaming "Lemme go! Lemme Go! I'm getting married!" All the neighbors coming out - how awful!

SAM

That's some imagination you've got.

PENNY

I'm not imagining. She could do that. She's bigger than me; almost bigger than you - and she might have help.

SAM

Uncle Albert?

PENNY

Uh-huh.

SAM

Didn't you say he'd be at work?

PENNY

Did I? Anyway, it's Madge who's gonna drive me out there, to that place. Want's to see me settled in, she says. Like it's gonna be real cozy.

SAM

Don't worry, we will wait for her together. She won't try any rough stuff while I'm here.

PENNY

Joe will be here, too, right.

SAM

Yeah, but Joe can't be involved. He just has to step back from that.

PENNY

He can't stop Madge?

SAM

A Negro and a white woman? South or North that's not going to happen. He can't get involved.

PENNY

But you can.

SAM

You bet I can. She's not taking you for any ride, don't worry.

PENNY

Okay. Oh! And we're gonna need an iron.

SAM

A what?

PENNY

An iron. So I can iron shirts and clothes; and we need an ironing board. It doesn't have to be a stand-up, fold-up ironing board. One that stands on a table will be fine.

SAM

Okay. Yeah.

PENNY

It's going to be fun shopping with you. You have so much to learn about keeping house.

SAM

You can teach me all about it.

PENNY

I will, and it won't cost much, I promise.

SAM

Penny pincher!

PENNY (laughing)

That'll be your job, Sam! Pinch me, I must be dreaming.

SAM

You're just happy, that's all

PENNY

I am. I really am. You, too?

SAM (smiling)

Me too.

PENNY

Do you play checkers?

SAM

Checkers? Sure. Everybody plays checkers.

PENNY

I never played. Grandma didn't have a board, and she was never interested in getting one.

SAM

Checker board's cheap enough, and you can use anything for pieces - bottle caps, anything.

PENNY

Good. You can teach me to play. And in the evening, after supper - after the dishes - we can listen to the radio and play checkers.

SAM

It's a simple game, Penny; easy to learn.

PENNY

Even the simple things take time and patience.

(Pause.)

SAM

I guess they do at that.

(Pause.)

PENNY

Will we have children?

(Pause.)

SAM

I don't know.

PENNY

Have you thought about it?

SAM

I don't think I have. Not that I can remember.

PENNY

Children happen, when people get married.

SAM

Sometimes even when they don't.

PENNY

Not funny, Sam.

SAM

Penny, I think that is something we should decide later. After we have settled in. After we're sure... about us.

PENNY

I'm sure about us. What about you? Planning to give it a try - married life? If it doesn't suit you, just move on?

SAM

It's not like that!

PENNY

I hope not, 'cause it's not like that for me, Sam. It's for keeps.

(Pause.)

SAM

Till death do us part.

PENNY

Yes.

SAM

That's how I want it. That's how it's gonna be. It's just that kids is serious business. I don't mean marriage isn't. It is, but it's different with kids. If something happens to us... See, doctors tell me I can't expect to live a long time. Not with the dystrophy; I shouldn't plan on living too long.

PENNY

It's the same for people like me.

SAM

Yeah. So that's what were up against. I don't want our kid of ending up in an orphanage.

PENNY

You and your brother didn't do so bad.

SAM

That's true, I give you that. Maybe it wasn't so tough after all. I got nothing to compare it with.

(pause)

SAM (cont.)

But what's worse is maybe I could pass-on what I've got to my kid - our kid. It's something in my genes, they said. I kinda laughed at that. I thought they meant my pants - you know, my blue jeans. What if I just change my jeans; what if I don't wear them at all, I said? That made them laugh, the doctors; then they set me straight. It was something inside me. Something you can't cut out.

PENNY

They say I'm that way, too. Our kid could be just like me, but I like me, I'm happy being me. I really am; even more now that I've got you.

SAM

You got me, all right. Hook, line and sinker.

PENNY

They call me lucky; I'm a light case. It can be a lot worse, and I worry about that. There's a chance I could pass it on, too.

SAM

It's like coming to bat with two strikes against us.

PENNY

Maybe that's why they won't let us get married. Because we might have kids. They could be born like us, and we can't take care of them. That's what they'll say.

SAM

What do *you* say?

PENNY

I say we can.

SAM

So do I.

PENNY

But -

SAM

No "buts" about it.

PENNY

Even if it's crippled like us.

SAM

We aren't crippled! Do you feel crippled?
I don't. We were born different, that's all.
I got a bum left hand; I walk with a limp.
Some stuff I can't do; I can do the stuff that
matters. So can you.

(pause)

I asked you before if you will stand up for
yourself. I can't do it for you. You have to do
that for yourself. We can help each other, but we
have to help ourselves first.

PENNY

I understand. I will, Sam, I will stand up for
myself. You'll see, when Madge gets here.

SAM

I'll back you up. You tell her how things are,
and I'll back you up. Kind of like a relief
pitcher.

PENNY

Baseball again.

SAM

Kind of like that.

PENNY

When my arm gets sore you step in?

SAM

I don't think it will come to that.

PENNY

You really like baseball.

SAM

I used to take the "L" uptown, catch a Cubs game. I had more time then. Too busy now.

PENNY

Six days a week, like me. Only I work half days. Not anymore, though. I want a full-time job.

SAM

That's the ticket. You'll get one, too. You'll see.

PENNY

Like you at the lumber yard. Oh, here. I won't be needing this.

(she hands him the business card)

We won't be pen pals. We're gonna be husband and wife.

SAM

That's right, but you better hang on to the card.

PENNY

Why?

SAM

In case you have to call me. Like if you have to work late or there's an emergency.

PENNY

That's good. And when I get a job I can give you a card so you can call me. But only if you have to. Bosses don't like it if you take advantage.

SAM

Oh, I know. You don't want to do that. Especially when you start a new job.

PENNY

What time is it? Madge should be here.

SAM

(checks his watch)

Yeah. It's getting to be that time. Joe, too.

PENNY (pacing)

Madge this is Sam. You know Sam? I mean, you know Sam. He's lived here for years now -

SAM

Penny?

PENNY (pacing)

Well, guess what? We're getting married!

(pause)

How's that?

SAM

No way to sugarcoat it, is there?

PENNY

Well, it's sugar to *my* ears! I could say, "Dear Auntie Madge, I have wonderful news for you. Sam and I have decided to get married - with your blessing, of course."

SAM

(thinking it over)

No... No... First way's better. Just give it to her straight.

PENNY

I think so too. Either way she's either gonna laugh out loud and say we are crazy or just faint dead away.

SAM

My money's on the laugh.

PENNY

Mine too.

SAM

I'll be there to back you up. I'll say, "Madge, Penny is over eighteen - going on twenty-one -and I'm twenty-five and have a good, steady job.

PENNY

And I'm gonna get one.

SAM

That's right. And we have a place to stay, don't we, Joe?

PENNY

Joe?

SAM

That's in case Joe is here at the same time. Otherwise I'll just tell her you have a place to stay -

PENNY

A nice house -

SAM

That's right, and I'm moving in just as soon as we get married.

PENNY

That sounds good to me.

SAM

Me too.

(checks his watch)

I wish Joe would get here. We've got things to do - see Reverend Berger, get you to the house... You know, I was thinking... If Joe shows up, we should just pile in the pickup and take off. Forget Madge.

PENNY

I don't think so. That wouldn't be right.

SAM

No. I guess it wouldn't.

PENNY

She's made these plans for me. I have to face her; tell her they aren't my plans. Those are *her* plans. She just wants to put me somewhere so she can forget about me.

SAM

So she can sell the house. Kinda funny...

PENNY

What?

SAM

Grandma Gorki didn't leave you anything?

PENNY

Well... I don't think so. Madge is her only daughter. My mom died so many years ago...

SAM

You and grandma went to the bank once a month?

PENNY

Once a month on a Saturday morning.

SAM

Did grandma have an account there, too?

PENNY

Yes. She kept her book there, her bank book, for safe keeping. I keep mine there, too.

SAM

For safe keeping.

PENNY

Yes. Don't you?

SAM

No. I keep my pass book in a shoe box with my birth certificate and social security card - stuff like that.

PENNY

Grandma said Mr. Andrews -

SAM

I know him! He's the manager at the bank.

PENNY

Grandma said if I ever had any trouble -

PENNY (cont.)

after she was gone - if I had any trouble I should see Mr. Andrews.

SAM

Mr. Andrews.

PENNY

I remember him so well. Once grandma and I sat down by his desk, and she said, "Mr. Andrews, this is my granddaughter, Penelope." He smiled and said he was glad to meet me.

SAM

Okay. Then what?

PENNY

Oh, then grandma said to remember his name. If I had any trouble or needed anything, tell Mr. Andrews. He would look after my money till I was twenty-one.

SAM

Your money? Three hundred dollars? Have you seen him since Grandma died?

PENNY

Yes! He was at the funeral. Didn't you see him?

SAM

That's right. I did. I just never put two and two together.

PENNY

Didn't come up with four, huh?

SAM

No, I sure didn't.

PENNY

He asked me to come to the bank; he had something for me.

SAM

Did you go? Did you see him?

PENNY

Sam, the funeral was just last week.
No, I didn't.

SAM

Penny, I have a hunch grandma left you money.
Mr. Andrews is holding it in trust for you.

PENNY

He is?

SAM

I don't know for sure, but I've got a hunch.
Your grandma left Madge the house, but I'll
bet she left some money for you with the bank,
with Mr. Andrews. Does Madge know anything about
this?

PENNY

I don't know what Madge knows. She just seems
real eager to get me in that asylum.

SAM

No kidding! And once you're there she'll make you
sign a paper giving her custody of you *and* your
money.

PENNY

She said it was going to be an agreement. To work
for room and board and wages. And I have to sign
the agreement in front of the doctor. Just an
agreement.

SAM

I don't like this. I think it's like I said, and
if you refuse, the doctor is there to say you're
- I don't know what - to say you're unstable or
something. They can make up anything.

PENNY

They'll put me away.

SAM

That's what I'm afraid of.

PENNY

Well...! I won't let her do that. I won't let *them* do that.

SAM

We sure won't. I'll tell her myself. Penny is not going to any asylum. She's not signing anything without Mr. Andrews being there - and maybe a lawyer, too.

PENNY

Do you know a lawyer?

SAM

Don't worry. Joe does.

PENNY

We can get Mr. Goody, too.!

SAM

Right. Mr. Goody.

PENNY

You tell her, Sam!

SAM

You bet I will! Boy, this whole thing makes my blood boil.

PENNY

It surely does. So, I think I better tell her.

SAM

You?

PENNY

Yes. I have to stand up for myself. I have to be calm, but firm. Like Mr. Goody says, the customer is always right.

SAM

Yeah. I get that at the lumber yard too.

PENNY

Madge is not the customer, but still -

SAM

Calm and firm.

PENNY

Yes!

SAM

Measure twice; cut once.

PENNY

It's important when you're dealing with the public.

SAM

You learned a lot at the A&P.

PENNY

Just common sense. But, yes, I learned a lot.

SAM

Okay then. First we tell Madge.

PENNY

"Sorry, but I'm not going anywhere with you today. Sam and I are getting married."

SAM

And then..

PENNY

Tell Joe you want the house.

SAM

WE want the house. Mostly for you, till we get married.

PENNY

And that will be soon. Tell him that.

SAM

And then...

PENNY

Reverend Berger! He's gonna help us get a license so we can get married.

PENNY (cont.)

I hope we can make it before his supper time,
I'd hate to intrude.

SAM

You and me both. So, we just pile our stuff in
Joe's pickup and get you moved into the house.
Then I have to get over to the rooming house -

PENNY

Poor Joe! All this driving, here and there.
Oh! I want to see Mr. Andrews at the bank
Saturday morning.

SAM

You can do that. Maybe we could put off seeing
Reverend Berger tonight.

PENNY

We can see him Sunday. After church.

SAM

Oh? We're going to church on Sunday?

PENNY

That's right.

SAM

I guess we are. We'll have to take a bus to
get there.

PENNY

I like riding the bus.

SAM

Where have you been all my life?

PENNY

Here, Sam. Right before your eyes.

(They kiss.)

(Off Stage: VOICE of MADGE)

MADGE

Penny? Penny, where are you?! We have to go now!

PENNY

I'm here, Madge! I'm right here!

(She strides to the door; SAM limps
after her. She flings open the door.)

Madge, this is Sam. We are getting married.
Tell her, Sam.

SAM

That's right. We are getting married.
Nice to see you, Madge. And... Goodbye.

(PENNY smiles at SAM; he couldn't be
happier.)

CURTAIN

END OF PLAY

for Alice G.