

Edmonds Stories
a play in seven scenes

by

Nora Douglass

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EDMONDS STORIES, a play in seven scenes, is made up of stories about the Medin family, Swedish immigrants struggling to survive and thrive in turn-of-the-century Edmonds, a mill town on the northwest coast of Washington state. The play, loosely based on family stories, takes place over a span of four years from 1900 to 1904. Jonas Medin is a hopeless dreamer. Johanna is a mother caught between wanting her children to get ahead and realizing that she may have to lose them to a foreign culture in order for them to do so. Their stories of high hopes and unfulfilled dreams, of tenacity and tiny triumphs are the stories of many settlers in the new land and reflect much about life in the west at the turn of the century.

Jonas, a poor dirt farmer has come to America, like so many, to escape the hardships of the old land as well as to embrace the golden opportunities of the new. And like many, his prospects have turned out to be less glorious than he had imagined. But while Jonas enthusiastically embraces all that is new and American, Johanna resists with equal energy and vehemence. Their four daughters, Anna, Astrid, Hyldi and Emma, caught between the crippling fears of their mother and the fantastic dreams of their father, each must struggle in their own way to reconcile the impossible conflicts between the old and new values, between their parents' pasts and their own futures.

Johanna's actions throughout the play reflect the ongoing conflict between defending the old and embracing the new. She wants desperately to protect her children from the hardships she suffered as an impoverished immigrant her first years in America, and though she may know it is not possible to keep them from the outside world, she also finds it difficult to let them go. Johanna is a woman of fierce pride with an uncompromising sense of justice. These qualities, which have given her the strength to survive her first difficult years in the Northwest wilderness, now turn against her, as pride and past injustices are tenaciously held onto to the injury of herself, her family, and those around her.

America's bright promises of freedom, justice and prosperity for all which enables its immigrants to break ancient ties and endure frightening and unknown hardships in order to come to its shores often collide with the realities of life in the new land. EDMONDS STORIES is a play about one family's struggle to realize their American Dream, and it is about sometimes falling short. It is about generations and the costs of assimilation to a culture and to a people. It is about the price of the dream.

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Synopsis:

Scene One: The porch of the Medin home. An afternoon in summer, 1900.

Scene Two: The kitchen, parlor and porch. A few days later. Afternoon.

Scene Three: The Medin home and a nearby beach. A late October night, the same year.

Scene Four: The porch and kitchen. A spring afternoon, 1902.

Scene Five: The Kitchen, parlor and porch. Several weeks later. Late night.

Scene Six: The same. Three months later. A Sunday afternoon.

Scene Seven: The same. Late Fall, two years later. A cold November day.

Edmonds Stories

Characters: JOHANNA MEDIN, the mother. From Småland, a province in rural Sweden; forties. A woman of fierce pride and uncompromising justice.

JONAS MEDIN, the father. Also from Småland; also in his forties. He enthusiastically embraces all that is new and American.

ANNA, fifteen.

ASTRID, thirteen.

HYLDI, eleven.

EMMA, eight.

Their children. All born in America; all caught between old and new worlds, between the fantastic dreams of their father and the crippling fears of their mother.

OLINA, a neighbor; also from Sweden. An exuberant woman in her forties; a tavern owner.

MR. JOE JACKSON, an itinerant photographer.

MRS. BERLIN, a prospective employer.

MR. NETTLES, a company man.

Time: Summer, 1900 - Fall, 1904

The Scene: Action takes place in the Medin home in Edmonds, Washington, and on a nearby beach. Of the grand, yet un-finished Victorian house, we see the kitchen, parlor and front porch. The feeling is of a house at war with itself. The magnificent promise of the architectural scheme, seen in porch gingerbread and carved molding is countered by the impoverished utility of the kitchen, a fiercely tidy room of scrubbed pine and printed sacking. There is a large table with benches, a stove and a sink with a brokayen pump. Doorways, Center and Up Left, lead to the parlor and to a back porch and summer kitchen. A grand central staircase leads from the sparsely furnished parlor to second story bedrooms. One of the few pieces of furniture in the parlor, used more often as a workshop and throughway than as a sitting room, is an elaborate, unfinished china cupboard. The beach can be represented very simply using an area downstage of the house.

A note: Several of the characters speak Swedish in this play. Translations appear in brackets [/] next to those words or lines. The English translations may in many cases be substituted, but it is important to understand and convey JOHANNA's reluctance and at times refusal to speak English.

Scene One

At Rise:

The play begins, as each scene will begin, with a tableau, staged under a pool of low monochromatic light to give the effect of a sepia photograph from the turn of the last century. ANNA, ASTRID, HYLDI and EMMA, dressed in their Sunday best, sit side by side on the porch of the Medin home gazing out into the afternoon sun. There is a beat and then the light of a bright summer afternoon washes out the "photograph" and Scene One begins. It is an afternoon in early summer, 1900. The girls are watching MR. JOE JACKSON, downstage in the yard, set up a bellows camera. In the kitchen, before a tiny mirror, JOHANNA fusses with a tattered, once fancy straw hat. There is a beat and then JONAS, struggling with an uncooperative shirt collar, comes downstairs and bounds out onto the porch.

JONAS

Are we ready? Where's Mamma?

EMMA

She's putting on her hat.

HYLDI

You know she won't go anywhere without her hat, Papa.

JONAS

This is a photograph, not an outing! Just one moment, Mr. Joe Jackson...
(calling into the house).

Johanna! Kom nu!... [*Come, now!*].

ANNA

I wish she would at least get herself a new one.

HYLDI

She never will.

ANNA

I know.

JONAS

Leave that tattered thing! The picture will loOkay better without it!

JOHANNA

(from within)

If you want me in your photograph, you will take me decent.

JONAS

Johanna, we keep Mr. Joe Jackson waiting!

(JONAS goes into the house. ASTRID takes this opportunity to leave the porch and address MR. JOE JACKSON, who is under his dark cloth focusing the camera).

ANNA

(whispering; to call her back)

Astrid!...

ASTRID

(to MR. JOE JACKSON)

Why are you standing under that cloth?

(She plants herself in front of the camera and peers into the lens).

Is that so you can laugh at us?

(MR. JOE JACKSON, his view suddenly obscured, comes out from beneath the dark cloth).

MR. JOE JACKSON

I beg your pardon?

ASTRID

I said, why are you standing under that cloth?

MR. JOE JACKSON

I need darkness to focus the camera.

ASTRID

Oh.

HYLDI

Anna, isn't that the man who took your picture at school?

ANNA

Is it??...Oh! It is!

ASTRID

Can I take a picture?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Well...yes, I suppose...

(ASTRID gets under the dark cloth and peers through the lens).

ASTRID

(from beneath the cloth)
Hey, Emma! Smile!

(EMMA stands and poses for the camera).

HYLDI

That man took a picture of Anna all by herself.

EMMA

At school?

HYLDI

After school! First, he took her class, and then he asked Anna if she wanted her picture taken all by herself!

ANNA

Not only me.

EMMA

Can I see?

HYLDI

She doesn't have it. She never picked it up.

EMMA

Why?

HYLDI

And have Mamma find out she let him take it?

ANNA

Oh, honestly Hyldi! He wanted forty cents for it.

HYLDI

Do you think he's handsome?

ANNA

Hyldi...

EMMA
He's old.

HYLDI
My friend Lena thinks he's handsome.

EMMA
I think he's coming over here.

ANNA
Oh, no!...

MR. JOE JACKSON
(approaching the porch).
Hello, Miss Medin.

ANNA
Hello.

MR. JOE JACKSON
You never came to pick up your portrait.

ANNA
Didn't I?...I guess I must have forgotten.

MR. JOE JACKSON
It came out very nicely.

(JONAS reappears on the porch).

HYLDI
Is she coming?

JONAS
Uff, your Mamma!...

ASTRID
Smile, Papa!...

MR. JOE JACKSON
Mr. Medin, perhaps we could get one of your girls.

JONAS
Ja, ja. That is good. Kom flickor. [*Come on, girls*].

(MR. JOE JACKSON returns to his camera and retrieves a loaded plate carriage from a leather case which he will insert into the camera).

ASTRID

What's that?

MR. JOE JACKSON

The plate. This is what the photograph will be etched on.

ASTRID

How?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Well, inside this carriage is a glass plate that's coated with chemicals that are light sensitive.
(he starts to return to his work).

ASTRID

Oh. What?

MR. JOE JACKSON

I beg your pardon?

ASTRID

What chemicals? Exactly.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Well, there's guncotton in alcohol, ether, silver nitrate – Are you really interested in this?

JONAS

Astrid, come!...

(ASTRID runs back onto the porch. JOHANNA starts to come out of the house).

JONAS

Å Nej! *[No]*. Don't come Johanna! We take the girls.

JOHANNA

Det är bra, Jonas Medin! *[That is fine with me]*. I got better things to do, than to make a fool of myself in tin.

(She starts back into the house).

JONAS

Nej! *[No!]* Mr. Joe Jackson, we take the whole family. Come, Johanna...Come.

(JONAS opens the screen door and ushers JOHANNA out onto the porch).

HYLDI

You loOkay nice, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Å, huamej! [*Oh, Go on...*]

JONAS

Johanna, you will stand here, next to me. Now, we can smile, but we must stand absolutt still.

JOHANNA

Nej! [*No*]. Du, Jonas!

JONAS

Jo! [*Yes*]. Everyone smiles now for time, isn't that right, Mr. Joe Jackson?

MR. JOE JACKSON

That's right, Mr. Medin. It'll take just a few seconds.

JONAS

And this is no tin-type, du Johanna! Mr. Joe Jackson uses his finest glass plates on us. Isn't that right, Mr. Joe Jackson?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Yes, indeed, Mr. Medin.

JONAS

Yes, indeed, du Johanna. All the latest, has Mr. Joe Jackson. He goes to Alaska! Now, come, Johanna. You don't want Katrina to see you loOkay so sour. Sixteen years in this land, Mr. Joe Jackson! All our children born here.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Are we ready, Mr. Medin?

JONAS

Yes, Mr. Joe Jackson. All ready.

(again, MR. JOE JACKSON is about to take the photo).

One moment, Mr. Joe Jackson. Is the whole porch in the picture?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Why no, Mr. Medin. Just part of the one side, where you are standing.

JONAS

Johanna, perhaps we should have the whole porch in the picture.

JOHANNA

Nej du, Jonas!... [*No, Jonas!...*].

JONAS

So they can see how well we have done! Katrina, och dem. [*and them*].

(to MR. JOE JACKSON)

Katrina, she is my Johanna's baby sister. She was not so sure of our wisdom to come to this land, Mr. Joe Jackson. Just loOkay at this fine work. Yes, I think we should have the whole porch.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Very well, Mr. Medin.

(As the adjustments are being made, JONAS worries his family into the perfect pose once more).

JOHANNA

(sotto voce)

Aj, Jonas! Why must they see this house??

JONAS

Because it is a fine house!

JOHANNA

A tax house.

JONAS

Our fine house, du Johanna!

JOHANNA

For one dollar and taxes, we move into someone else's house.

JONAS

We should be grateful.

JOHANNA

A house some other big dreamer lost in the panic.

(MR. JOE JACKSON comes out from under the focusing cloth).

MR. JOE JACKSON

(too cheerfully).

I'm ready, Mr. Medin!

JONAS

Ja, visst! [*Yes, of course!*].

MR. JOE JACKSON

Now, I'm going to count to ten. Is everyone set?

JONAS

All right! Now, everyone, Smile!!

(Only EMMA smiles. The rest of the family wears the loOkay of terrified seriousness that is so often seen in photos of this period. MR. JOE JACKSON removes the black metal carriage that covers the plate and holds it above his head as he counts. The actors in the portrait freeze, and lights fade to the light of the photographs, a mono-chromatic wash resembling an old sepia print as the scene ends. We hear music; a woman sings an ancient Swedish folk song. The pose is held for a few seconds and then blacked out. Lights come up on a projection showing the actors recreating the same pose seen in a real architectural setting, followed by a series of archival photographs of other late Victorian families, Americans of all ethnicities echoing the same image: the same formal poses on broad front porches, the same rigid formations, the same frightened gazes and unsmiling faces, and the same solid family unity in direct confrontation with the camera. The music ends with a second slide of the Medin family. There is a beat, and this slide cross-fades to the monochromatic wash of the actors in tableau for the beginning Scene Two).

Scene Two

The Scene: The kitchen, parlor and front porch of the Medin home. Today, the parlor is graced with borrowed furniture: a tea table with three matching chairs.

Time: A sunny afternoon, a few days later.

At Rise: JOHANNA and HYLDI are at work in the kitchen. There is a beat, the bright light of summer washes out the tableau, and the scene begins. Last-minute preparations are being

made for company. JOHANNA commutes between stove and table ironing a cloth. HYLDI polishes a silver sugar bowl.

JOHANNA

Du, Hyldi, nu måste du skynda dig lite grand. [*You must hurry a bit*].

HYLDI

Yes, Mamma.

(ANNA, wearing her white muslin graduation dress enters).

ANNA

Mamma, speak English...

JOHANNA

Hua mig!... [*Oh, mercy*].

ANNA

Mamma, please. You have to practice.

JOHANNA

Ja! [*Yes*]. "How do you do? Yes, I am. Please to have another cake".

ANNA

Mamma, this is serious.

JOHANNA

Ja, ja. "Serious".

(During the following ANNA helps JOHANNA put the cloth on the parlor table, and then follows her back to the kitchen).

ANNA

I don't know why you won't speak English. You understand it.

JOHANNA

När hon har kommit... [*When she is come...*]

ANNA

Mamma!...

JOHANNA

When she is come, shall I speak English.

ANNA

Well, I don't want to have to do all the talking again, like last time at school.

JOHANNA

Ja, ja. Så, kom. Tiden går. [*So, come. Time goes.*]

ANNA

It's "Time flies", Mamma.

JOHANNA

"Flies"? As birds fly??

ANNA

Yes.

JOHANNA

(laughs)
All right then, like the birds.

(EMMA and ASTRID enter from upstairs. ASTRID is trying to braid EMMA's hair).

EMMA

Mamma!...

ASTRID

Emma!...Come back here! I haven't finished yet.

EMMA

Owww! Let go!

ASTRID

Emma!...

EMMA

Why can't Anna do my hair like she always does?

ASTRID

Because I'm doing it.

EMMA

I don't want you.

ASTRID

And I will be from now on, so get used to it.

EMMA

Is Astrid going to do my hair from now on, Mamma?

JOHANNA

(to EMMA; though crossing away to stove).
Ja visst. [*Of course*].

EMMA

She's too rough.

ASTRID

That's just too bad.

EMMA

Why are you so mean?

ASTRID

Why are you such a baby?

EMMA

I am not a baby!

ASTRID

Baby, Baby, Baby...

JOHANNA

Vad är det för något?? Tysta nu! [*What's all this fuss?? Quiet now!*]

ASTRID

All right, let it loOkay like a rat's nest. I don't care.

JOHANNA

(a warning).
Astrid...

ASTRID

Yes, Mamma. Come here, you little underground thing. Let me finish your hair.

(ASTRID and EMMA head for the porch. ANNA follows).

ANNA

Do you want to know what I'm going to buy first?

ASTRID

No.

ANNA

You know that sweet little blue hat in Mrs. Juergen's window? The one with the feathers? I'm going to buy that. Cash.

ASTRID

I thought we were going to buy Mamma a sewing machine.

ANNA

Well, this is after the sewing machine, of course. And then I'm going to buy a nice piece of wool to go with it. A skirt and jacket from the same cloth.

ASTRID

So Mamma can have more work to do to sew it for you.

ANNA

No. I'm going to sew it myself. And then, all new petticoats.

HYLDI

(coming out onto the porch)

Can I have your old ones?

ANNA

I want to be new from inside to out.

ASTRID

I'd never buy clothes.

ANNA

And presents. I'm going to buy presents for everybody, even though it's not even Christmas.

EMMA

What are you going to buy me?

ASTRID

(to EMMA)

Hold Still! She hasn't even got the job yet.

HYLDI

She will.

EMMA

She will.

HYLDI
You know what I heard about Mrs. Berlin?

EMMA
What?

ASTRID
Emma!...

HYLDI
She's a Catholic.

EMMA
What's that?

HYLDI
They don't believe in God or baby Jesus.

EMMA
They don't?!?

HYLDI
Uh huh.

ASTRID
They do too.

HYLDI
They don't either.

ASTRID
They're Christians. Just like us.

HYLDI
They are not! They meet on Sundays like we do, but they're not decent.

ANNA
Oh, honestly Hyldi!

HYLDI
They all dress up in red, and smOkaye opium, or something. And they dance around, and ring little bells to call to the devil.

ASTRID

Oh, Hyldi, they do not!...

EMMA

And Mamma's letting her come into this house?!?

HYLDI

And Anna wants to work for her!

ANNA

Mrs. Berlin isn't Catholic, anyway. She's Episcopalian.

EMMA

What's that?

ASTRID

(menacingly)

Oh, Emma! That's even worse!!

EMMA

It is??...

ANNA

Astrid...

ASTRID

Do you want to know why I think she's really coming?

HYLDI

Why?

ASTRID

You know how Mrs. Berlin likes to eat...

ANNA

That's not a very nice thing to say.

ASTRID

Hyldi, do you remember when Anna called Mrs. Berlin a big fat cow?

HYLDI

Uh huh.

ANNA

I never said that!

ASTRID

You said she was a big fat cow, and you didn't know how anyone so fat could go on living.

ANNA

I didn't!...

HYLDI

And the best part was that Kate Berlin was standing right behind you when you said it.

ASTRID

And now she wants a job from her!

ANNA

(starts into the house)

Will you just hush? If I did, it was a long time ago.

ASTRID

That sounds like a confession to me!

ANNA

(enters the kitchen)

Oh! I wish Mrs. Johnson would get here.

JOHANNA

We have, ju [*yes*], plates and cups?

ANNA

Oh, Mamma, they're not fine at all.

JOHANNA

They hold food, vad?

ANNA

Oh, Mamma.

JOHANNA

I don't like all this borrowing.

ANNA

Mrs. Johnson is bringing us bone china.

JOHANNA

You and Olina! Fat as criminals...

ANNA

What?

JOHANNA

You are fat together. Like the criminals.

HYLDI

She means, "thick as thieves".

JOHANNA

Sometimes I do wonder: Are you my child, or are you Olina's?

ANNA

Mamma, what does it matter? We want it to loOkay nice.

JOHANNA

Ja, ja, "nice".

ANNA

Mamma, how do I loOkay?

JOHANNA

As you should.

ANNA

But do you think I loOkay nice? Pretty, I mean?

JOHANNA

You loOkay as you should loOkay.

HYLDI

Mamma, we need sugar for the sugar bowl.

EMMA

I am not a changeling.

ASTRID

Papa found you under a rock out in the woods, and he felt sorry for you, so he brought you home.

HYLDI

Thank you, Mamma.

(EMMA runs into the kitchen. ASTRID follows. As she passes the parlor, she sees HYLDI, a sugar cube in her mouth, about to eat a second one).

ASTRID

She's counted them.

(HYLDI looks miserable and replaces the second cube.
JOHANNA tends to her cakes).

EMMA

Mamma, Astrid says...Lingon Skala, my favorite! Can I have one?

ANNA

After our guest leaves.

EMMA

You're not Mamma. Mamma, can I have one?

JOHANNA

(practicing)
After the guest.
(to ANNA)
And, English!

EMMA

Why can't I have one now? You said one was for me.

HYLDI

Mamma said, after our guest leaves.

EMMA

But what if she eats them all?

ANNA

She won't.

HYLDI

She won't.

EMMA

She might.

ANNA

She won't. She's a lady.

HYLDI

Yes. She's a lady.

ASTRID

Yes. She's an Episcopalian.

JOHANNA

Du...

(JOHANNA hands silverware to ASTRID; gestures toward parlor. ASTRID reluctantly goes).

EMMA

But if you offer them to her, what's to keep her from eating them all? I would.

ANNA

Well, she won't. I told you, she's a lady. Anyway, you have to wait.

EMMA

But why?

ANNA

Emma...

EMMA

Just tell me why.

ANNA

Well, what if we did give you yours now? Then we'd have to give Hyldi hers, and Astrid hers. You see?

EMMA

No.

ANNA

Well, how would that loOkay? A nearly empty plate for a guest.

EMMA

But you only want her to have one...

ANNA

Yes, but...

(HYLDI starts out into the parlor with the napkins. ANNA intercepts her).

ANNA

Here, I'll take those.
(She escapes into the parlor).

EMMA

Mamma, can I have one if I give Hyldi a bite?

Nej, du lilla...*[No, little one]*. JOHANNA

...AND Astrid?? EMMA

Emma... JOHANNA

Why? Why can't I have one? EMMA

Tysta nu. *[Hush now]*. JOHANNA

(Focus shifts to the parlor as JOHANNA works).

ASTRID
I don't know why we're going to all this trouble. You know you have the job, if you really want it.

ANNA
What do you mean by that?

ASTRID
Do you really want to work as a chamber maid to fat Mrs. Berlin?

ANNA
Mother's helper.

ASTRID
Same thing.

ANNA
I think you're just jealous.

ASTRID
Of your little immigrant job? Not in a hundred years.

ANNA
I bet if you had a chance to get out and earn some money, you'd like it well enough.

ASTRID
I'm never going to work like that.

ANNA

You don't know.

ASTRID

I'm going to work in a store. Or get a job in a bank like Miss Shinn.

ANNA

You want to be like funny old Miss Shinn?

ASTRID

No. But I'm going to get a job like hers. And when I do, I'm going to save up enough money to get my own room somewhere.

ANNA

You can't do that. Not without being married.

ASTRID

Why not? Miss Shinn lives by herself. And she's not married.

ANNA

Well, Miss Shinn has no family in town. You do.

HYLDI

(entering the parlor)

You know what I heard?

ANNA and ASTRID

What?

HYLDI

Miss Shinn isn't really a Miss. She's a Mrs.

ASTRID

What??

ANNA

No!

ASTRID

Who told you that?

HYLDI

Papa.

ANNA

Papa told you that?

HYLDI

Uh huh. He said she's supposed to be married to Mr. Peabody.

ANNA

Miss Shinn and old Mr. Peabody??

HYLDI

Papa said they knew each other before. She was his housekeeper, or something, down in Auburn.

ASTRID

I don't believe it.

ANNA

Some people do say she's crazy.

ASTRID

She isn't crazy.

HYLDI

Papa says, that's because she's got red hair. And you know what else? Once, he tried to sell Mr. Johnson some land that really belonged to the railroad.

ASTRID

I can't believe Papa told you this.

HYLDI

Well, I heard him say it, so it's the same thing.

ASTRID

When?

HYLDI

The other night when I went to Olina's tavern to pick up the team.

ANNA

Papa said all this while you were just standing there?

HYLDI

I was outside the door.

JOHANNA

Kom nu! Vi har inte tid til denne prat! [*Come now! We have no time for idle chat.*]

ANNA

I wonder why they wanted to keep it a secret?

ASTRID

I sure wouldn't want to tell anyone I was married to old Grandpa Peabody.

ANNA

Well, who'd want to marry crazy old Miss Shinn?

HYLDI

Papa says, She's "VERY LOYAL".

(HYLDI goes to the kitchen).

ANNA

I wish she wouldn't always be so cross.

ASTRID

She's cross because she has to work so hard.

ANNA

Everything's done.

ASTRID

I'm never going to work like that.

ANNA

(entering kitchen)

Mamma, we just have to wait for Mrs. Johnson to bring the china cups.

(There is a procession into the parlor as JOHANNA carries the plate of cakes to the table).

ANNA

See, Mamma? Isn't it nice?

JOHANNA

"Nice".

ANNA

Oh, Mamma. It's going to be all right.

JOHANNA

Ja.

ANNA

Now Emma, after you meet Mrs. Berlin, you go back into the kitchen with Astrid and Hyldi, all right?

EMMA

I want to eat with you. Can't I eat with you?

ANNA

No. Not today.

ASTRID

We have to sit and watch them.

EMMA

We have to watch them eat??

ANNA

No. You'll be in the kitchen with Astrid and Hyldi.

EMMA

Mamma, how come we have to sit and watch them eat?

ASTRID

Because, *käre barn* [*dear children*], we don't have enough fine china dishes with which to impress fine, rich Mrs. Berlin.

JOHANNA

Det räcker nog, Astrid. [*That will do, Astrid*].

ASTRID

Well, I don't know why we have to starve just to impress her.

JOHANNA

English now. This is Anna's day. You shall not spoil it with your sour apples.

ASTRID

It's grapes, Mamma.

JOHANNA

You shall not spoil it.

(OLINA, an exuberant woman of forty, rushes in through the kitchen door with a basket).

OLINA

Hallo! Hallo, Johanna!?

(tip-toes to the parlor doorway and peeks in).

Am I come too late?

ANNA

Oh, Mrs. Johnson, just in time!

OLINA

Today, Lars wants to talk! I come as soon as I could, du. Oh! My table and chairs loOkay so fine in this room! And Lars? He didn't even know they were gone, du! I think we could have taken the chair he was sitting in! And you, my beautiful Anna! Let me loOkay at you.

JOHANNA

Olina! Hun blir kry nög. [*Already, she is too proud*].

OLINA

Your Mamma. She is so old country. You are beautiful. And I think you should know it. Are you excited? But of course you are!

ANNA

Are those the cups?

OLINA

Å ja da! [*Of course!*]

(She takes out three china cups).

Tre fine kopp. [*Three fine cups*]. And Johanna, loOkay. Från Fru Nillsson. [*From Mrs. Nilsson*].

(She takes out a china tea pot; hands it to JOHANNA).

JOHANNA

Du! Den är så fin! [*Oh! It is so fine!*]

OLINA

Ja da. [*Yes, indeed*].

JOHANNA

It is too fine, du.

(She hands the teapot back to OLINA).

OLINA

Fru Nillsson is proud to have you use this. Where's the harm in pretending just a little bit?

ASTRID

I thought Mrs. Nilsson was mad at you for what you said about her cow.

ANNA

Astrid!...

OLINA

Å, Ja da! [*Oh, Yes*]. Furious with me! This is for you. Her Ingebjørg went to work for Lawyer Bakkmann's wife last year, don't you know. Well, we did it, ja? If this does not impress your fine lady...And no one shall be the wiser.

JOHANNA

Du, Olina!...

OLINA

Oh, and the skala! They loOkay especially fine today!

JOHANNA

Vär så god. [*Please have one*].
(She offers OLINA a cake).

EMMA

But!!...

ANNA

Emma!...

OLINA

Å, nej, du... [*Oh, no thank you*].

JOHANNA

Jo. Är du snill. [*Yes, please*].

OLINA

(taking a cake)
Väl...[*Well*]...Okayay!

EMMA

It's not fair.

OLINA

Du! If there is one compliment I give your Mrs. Berlin most freely; she truly appreciates fine baking.

JOHANNA

Olina...

HYLDI

Here she comes!

EMMA

Let me see!...

ANNA

Anna, yes. Won't you come in, Mrs. Berlin?

MRS. BERLIN

Thank you.

ANNA

Mrs. Berlin, I'd like you to meet my mother, Mrs. Medin. Mother, this is Mrs. Berlin...

(MRS. BERLIN extends her hand. JOHANNA nods).

MRS. BERLIN

How do you do, Mrs. Medin.

JOHANNA

God dag. [*Good day*].

ANNA

And these are my sisters, Astrid, Hyldi, and Emma. I'd like to introduce Mrs. Berlin.

(HYLDI and EMMA curtsy).

MRS. BERLIN

Charming. Hello. Isn't that sweet. Always so shy...

ANNA

Well!...Won't you sit down. We've made some tea. Excuse me for just a moment. I'll get it.

(HYLDI and ASTRID follow ANNA to the kitchen.
EMMA hangs by her mother. MRS. BERLIN and
JOHANNA sit).

ASTRID

Emma! Come into the kitchen.

MRS. BERLIN

You know Mrs. Medin, I feel I know you already. I was at Mrs. Chesterfield's Christmas ball, of course, and she told me you were responsible for all of the pastries. They were so delicious. And so when Mrs. Adams told me about your daughter, Well, I simply couldn't think of anyone more perfect for the job.

(In response, JOHANNA offers her a cake).

EMMA

(entering the kitchen)

When is she going to leave?

MRS. BERLIN

(taking two cakes from the plate)

Thank you. They loOkay lovely.

ANNA

She's not going to say a word...

EMMA

She toOkay two!...

ANNA

It's going to be just like that day at school.

ASTRID

Poor Mamma.

EMMA

Astrid! She toOkay two!...Anna!...

ANNA

Poor Mamma? What about poor me??

ASTRID

(handing ANNA the tea pot).

Just get out there.

EMMA

(calling after her)

Don't let her eat them all!

(Tea is poured. MRS. BERLIN adds generous amounts of both cream and sugar. JOHANNA drinks hers black. EMMA, HYLDI and ASTRID, watch the scene from the kitchen doorway).

MRS. BERLIN

Mrs. Medin, they're simply delicious.

EMMA

It isn't fair.

MRS. BERLIN

I don't know when I've had a more delightful afternoon tea.

I'm hungry.

EMMA

Do you want a piece of bread?

ASTRID

No.

EMMA

(MRS. BERLIN takes a third cake. EMMA drags a bench from the kitchen table to the doorway and climbs up for a better look).

Emma! What are you doing??

ASTRID

She's already eaten somebody's. You said she wouldn't eat them all!

EMMA

(joining EMMA on the bench)

HYLDI

Let me see.

(climbing onto the bench)

ASTRID

You can have mine.

MRS. BERLIN

Now, perhaps we should get to the matter about which I've come. Your daughter's - Hannah's - employment.

JOHANNA

Anna. Ja. [*Yes*].

MRS. BERLIN

Now, I'm offering two dollars and fifty cents per week, and two meals for six days.

ANNA

That sounds wonderful, doesn't it Mamma?

MRS. BERLIN

You don't mind...

(She reaches for another cake)

EMMA

There's only one left!

JOHANNA

Fru Nilsson says you offer four dollar, fifty.

MRS. BERLIN

But, of course your daughter doesn't come to me with any experience.

JOHANNA

Anna is a good worker. I do not say this about all my children. She will earn her money.

MRS. BERLIN

I'm sure she will, but to begin, I think two dollars...

JOHANNA

And fifty.

MRS. BERLIN

...is a very generous offer.

(MRS. BERLIN starts to reach for the last cake. EMMA lets out a loud cry, and dives off the bench into the plate).

EMMA

NOOOOOO!

(Keeping her intense gaze fixed on MRS. BERLIN, EMMA hungrily stuffs the cake into her mouth, and swallows it whole).

ANNA

Emma!!...

MRS. BERLIN

Oh, my goodness!...

ANNA

Mrs. Berlin, are you all right?

(During the following, JOHANNA escorts EMMA into the kitchen).

MRS. BERLIN

I'm fine. I'm fine. Now, please, sit down.

ANNA

I'm so sorry...

Is she a nervous child?

MRS. BERLIN

No. Well – I don't know.

ANNA

(In the kitchen, JOHANNA, her back to the audience, stands facing her waiting, motionless children. A long moment passes).

Close your eyes.

JOHANNA

(EMMA, HYLDI and ASTRID close their eyes, waiting for punishment. JOHANNA goes to the hutch and takes a tin box from one of the drawers. She brings it to the table, opens it, takes three coins from a handkerchief, and then carefully re-wraps the coins and returns the tin to its hiding place. She hands each a coin).

Gå til [*Go to*] Herr Schumacher's.

JOHANNA(continued).

What do you want us to buy?

ASTRID

Vad som helst. [*What you will*].
(the girls don't move).
Whatever you wish.

JOHANNA

Anything? We can buy anything we want? Emma too?
(JOHANNA nods).
Emma, come on! We can buy anything we want!

HYLDI

(HYLDI and EMMA run out).

Gå nu, Astrid. [*Go, now, Astrid*].

JOHANNA

I don't need this, Mamma.

ASTRID

Jo. [*Yes*]. Take it.

JOHANNA

But, Mamma...
ASTRID

Gå nu. [*Go on now*].
JOHANNA

Tusen tack, Mamma! [*Thank you, Mamma!*].
(ASTRID runs out).
ASTRID

(calling after her)
English! Remember where you are!
JOHANNA

(to ANNA)
Now don't take on so. I'm sure we can work something out.
MRS. BERLIN

(returning to the parlor)
Thank you, no, Mrs. Berlin.
JOHANNA

I beg your pardon?...
MRS. BERLIN

We shall decline your offer in two dollar fifty.
JOHANNA

Now, I was just telling Hanna that I'm perfectly willing to forget this little incident.
(to ANNA).
You may begin Saturday. How is that?
MRS. BERLIN

Oh, Mrs. Berlin!...
ANNA

(firmly).
Thank you, no.
JOHANNA

MRS. BERLIN

I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I don't understand. Two dollars and fifty cents is a very respectable wage for a young girl just starting out. But I am willing to make it three dollars since she does seem so very bidable.

ANNA

Three dollars! Oh, Mamma, say yes!

JOHANNA

Good day, Mrs. Berlin. These chairs and this fine table is borrowed to us.

ANNA

Mamma!...

JOHANNA

And these fine cups. They must be sent back to their homes.

MRS. BERLIN

(to ANNA)

I was under the impression you needed this job.

ANNA

I'm sorry...

(She escorts MRS. BERLIN to the door).

MRS. BERLIN

(to ANNA)

You may come see me next week.

JOHANNA

(topping her)

Good day to you, Mrs. Berlin.

(MRS. BERLIN leaves. JOHANNA sits back down at the table, and with determined relish and ceremony, pours herself another cup of tea. She adds several lumps of sugar, and empties the cream pitcher into her cup).

ANNA

Mamma?

JOHANNA

En kopp te? [*A cup of tea?*]

ANNA

I want to go see her Saturday, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Ja. *[Yes]*. Perhaps you must. Saturday. Now, come and have a cup of tea.

(Mother and daughter study each other as the lights fade on the scene).

Scene Three

The Scene: The scene begins in the Medin home and moves, in the course of the action, to a nearby beach.

Time: Late Night. Fall. 1900.

At Rise: Preparations are being made for a night of clamming on the beach. There is an air of excitement as JOHANNA, OLINA and ANNA gather together buckets, baskets, camp stools and lap robes. ASTRID sprints down the stairs followed by HYLDI and EMMA. They wear sweaters and caps. EMMA's night-gown hangs below her skirt.

ASTRID

Emma! You still have your nightgown on!

EMMA

Well, you wouldn't wait for me...

ASTRID

All right. Come on...

OLINA

A fine night for clamming, vad flickor? *[Don't you think?]*

ASTRID

Everybody will be there.

OLINA

And that Anna could come!

JOHANNA

Ja da. *[Yes]*.

ASTRID

(to ANNA, referring to her hat and traveling cape).
You're not going to work in that, are you??

(JOHANNA hands ANNA a work shawl; she reluctantly gives up her traveling cape).

OLINA

(to ANNA)
And how is she treating you, all right?

ANNA

Oh yes. I have my own room. And Kate, her daughter, is very sweet to me...

ASTRID

Come on!...

HYLDI

We have to wait for Mamma to put on her hat.

(They wait for JOHANNA to put on her hat).

EMMA

Mamma, why do you always wear that old hat?

JOHANNA

Don't you like my hat?

ANNA

Oh, honestly, Mamma, it's practically in tatters!

OLINA

I remember a hat very much like that one perched on your head the day I met you. And how many years ago was that, du Johanna?

ANNA

I don't understand why you won't get yourself a new one. I've seen you spying in Mrs. Jeurgen's windows.

JOHANNA

Nej du! [*Nonsense*]. This hat serves me well enough.

OLINA

For cleaning clams on the beach at night, Ja.

Come on...Come on!...

ASTRID

(ASTRID runs out Right. The others gather up their bundles and follow).

I get to carry a lantern.

EMMA

You do not.

HYLDI

Mamma said.

EMMA

But I'm older...

HYLDI

(Lights fade on the house and in the darkness, we hear the call of a sea gull. Other beach sounds mix with foreign voices and the calls of excited children. Soon, English voices join the foreign ones and words become discernible).

Emma!...Come back here with that bucket!

ANNA'S VOICE

Astrid's got another one!...

EMMA'S VOICE

Emma!...

ANNA'S VOICE

Wait for us...

HYLDI'S VOICE

(Lights come up on OLINA and JOHANNA, Down Left. They sit on camp stools, a lantern beside them, cleaning and sorting clams. OLINA cores an apple. Music from a concertina is heard).

OLINA

(referring to the music)
Carl Ek?

JOHANNA
 Ja. [*Yes*].

OLINA
 Pretty moon.

JOHANNA
 Ja da. [*It is*].

OLINA
 (gazing out toward the water).
 So many out tonight! Best tide of the season, du. BoOkay says lowest tide of the year.

JOHANNA
 Ja så? [*Is that so?*]

OLINA
 Du, your Chinamens are here...

JOHANNA
 Å ja. [*Oh, yes*]. From Japan, du.
 (She waves to her friends).

OLINA
 Japanska? [*Japanese?*]

JOHANNA
 Farmers. From Haller Lake.

OLINA
 Å ja.

JOHANNA
 (a beat).
 I was into Herr Berlin's.
 (she points out toward the water).
 Hon, [*She*], Akiko Yamanuchi was there also this day, to buy rice and salt. She showed him her money, du. He saw how much she had, and told her five cent more.

OLINA
 Nej! [*No!*]

JOHANNA

Jo. [*Yes*]. At first she don't understand. She pushes her money toward him on the counter, expecting that he will take what he needs and give the rest back. He only repeats the amount: Two dollar, ten cent.

OLINA

And of course, no credit.

JOHANNA

Nej. Not for Japansk farmer.

OLINA

Not for me when I first come. Yankee thief.

JOHANNA

And so I see this. I take a coin from my purse-ten cent. I walk to the counter and drop it beside her skirts...

OLINA

Du!...

JOHANNA

Ja. Then I stoop down, pick up the coin, and place it-snap-on the counter. And then, I say-in my best English, du, to match his Yankee scorn-I say, "Oh! Missus Yamanuchi, I do believe this ten cent was dropped by you just now."

OLINA

Bless you, Johanna! You didn't!

JOHANNA

My best English, du. And so there is two dollar and fifteen cent on the counter.

OLINA

He has to return five cent!

JOHANNA

He had named his price.

OLINA

You are clever, du Johanna! And that he must give her five cent, too. And Herr Berlin, was he very angry?

JOHANNA

(laughs)

He sputtered like a fish cake being dropped into hot bouillon – And now my Anna works for her.

OLINA

Fru Berlin offers a good wage for one so young.

JOHANNA

And how will she be made to pay for it?

OLINA

We all had to go through it, du, Johanna.

JOHANNA

It is not right.

OLINA

And it is so.

(a beat).

Where is Jonas? We expected him.

JOHANNA

Ja. [*Yes*].

OLINA

He was not at my tavern, Johanna. He had not been there tonight. I loOkayed in as I left.

JOHANNA

Thank you for that, Olina.

OLINA

Du, han Lars says they want to finish the skid before the heavy rain comes. He must have volunteered to take on extra work down at the mill.

(We hear voices, off).

ANNA'S VOICE

Emma! Hyldi! – Come back here!

(HYLDI and EMMA run up out of the darkness carrying fist-fulls of clams).

HYLDI

Mamma, loOkay!

JOHANNA

Å jadå! [*Oh, yes indeed*]. Some of these will go to market.

EMMA

And Astrid's been digging for gooey ducks!

Oj! [*Oh my!*] LoOkay at all those!

OLINA

And I got these.

HYLDI

(ANNA enters carrying buckets and a lantern).

(to EMMA and HYLDI)
They're to go into the buckets so they can get clean.

ANNA

(EMMA and HYLDI loOkay into one of the buckets).

Oooh, loOkay at that one...LoOkay at its neck.

EMMA

Don't touch it!

HYLDI

It's so ugly...

EMMA

(ASTRID runs in with a bucket).

Here, Mamma.
(she starts out).

ASTRID

And who's going to stay and help us clean them now?

JOHANNA

Hyldi!...
(she continues out).

ASTRID

Astrid!...

JOHANNA

I'm so much better at digging them.

ASTRID

You can go back out after you help us catch up a little bit.

JOHANNA

It's all right, Mamma. I'll stay.

HYLDI

Everybody can help a little.

JOHANNA

Yes, Mamma.

ASTRID

(They settle into work for a bit).

Mamma, can I go with them to market tomorrow?

EMMA

No.

ASTRID

Anna said it was all right.

EMMA

Anna?!?...

ASTRID

I said, "maybe".

ANNA

Maybe means Yes.

EMMA

Maybe means No.

ASTRID

Mamma??

EMMA

(EMMA and ASTRID loOkay to JOHANNA for vindication).

Ja. We'll see.

JOHANNA

(whispering, to ASTRID)
That means yes.

EMMA

ASTRID

(mouthing the words, to EMMA)

That means No!

(They settle into work. A long moment passes. HYLDI has been studying her mother).

HYLDI

I don't care what they say, Mamma. I like your hat.

(JOHANNA and OLINA laugh. JOHANNA primps and poses like a fine lady).

JOHANNA

Jag tacker dig! [*And I thank you!*].

HYLDI

It came from the old country, you know.

ASTRID

Yes, Hyldi, we know.

HYLDI

She had two hats in the old country.

JOHANNA

Ja. I had two hats...

HYLDI

One was an everyday hat. And the other was a fancy Easter bonnet. But she only brought one hat with her. And guess which one it was?

ASTRID

Hyldi, everybody in the entire world knows this story!

HYLDI

Olina might not. Do you?

OLINA

I remember the day your Mamma arrived.

EMMA

You knew Mamma then?

OLINA

The very first person she spOkaye to here; isn't that so, Johanna?

JOHANNA

Ja. [*Yes*].

OLINA

That same hat. A little finer in those days...

JOHANNA

Ja...

HYLDI

I know what it loOkayed like. Long silk ribbons and flowers all around.

(to OLINA).

She bought it because of Papa.

ANNA

And because Aunt Katrina encouraged her.

JOHANNA

Ja. She said, "Jonas Medin..."

HYLDI

"Jonas Medin fancied you." And then you went to town with all your money and bought that hat.

ANNA

And you gave your ordinary day straw to Aunt Katrina when you sailed.

HYLDI

Yes. Everyone said, "Leave this, leave that. You are going to America! You will not need these things..." And so you left them...

JOHANNA

I left them.

ASTRID

(whispering)

Hey, Emma! Come on, you can carry the lantern...

EMMA

Okayay!

(EMMA and ASTRID start out).

JOHANNA
 Hej!...Ja, gå [*Hey!...OKAY, go*].

(EMMA and ASTRID run out).

HYLDI
 (To OLINA)
 So you saw Mamma's hat when it was new?

OLINA
 Tja [*Well*]. Vel, not so old as now.

JOHANNA
 Of course it didn't hold up over the long voyage. I loOkayed like a great ragged peacock...

OLINA
 Johanna, du!...

JOHANNA
 Olina met me on the Edmonds dock. Waited with me until your Papa come. Fed me.

OLINA
 Against your will! I was returning from market with the fleet, du, Hyldi, and as the boat sailed toward the slip, I saw a tall, straight-backed woman standing alone on the dock. Watching. Waiting. It was a cloudy dusk, but a little sun came through.

JOHANNA
 It rained, du!

OLINA
 Nej du, Johanna...a little sun...

JOHANNA
 Rain, du! I should remember!...

OLINA
 Bright Sun, in shafts, through the clouds.

JOHANNA
 (to HYLDI)
 Buckets of rain. All day long.

OLINA
 A beautiful Fall dusk. I remember that day well...

JOHANNA

Du, Olina...

OLINA

Can I tell my story?? Ja så. *[All right, then]*. Your Mamma. She loOkayed cold, barn *[little ones]*, as if she had been standing there a long time...

ANNA

Where was Papa?

JOHANNA

He had said he would meet the fleet.

OLINA

Several people got off the boat ahead of me, and some of them tried to speak to your Mamma, but she answered none of their inquiries.

HYLDI

What about Papa?

JOHANNA

The letter said, "Den första Okaytober". *[The first of October]*.

OLINA

I am not going to feel sorry for you Johanna! Jack Tines, who owned the dock store, said he tried all day to coax you into the warm for a cup of coffee and something to eat.

JOHANNA

I had no money.

OLINA

And charity could not be tolerated, vad Johanna! I approach you, like all the rest, and, as with them, were you prepared to turn me away.

JOHANNA

Då talte du til mig på Svenska. *[Then you spOkaye to me in Swedish]*.

HYLDI

How did you know Mamma came from Sweden?

OLINA

Of course, it was that I recognized that mule-headed determination, which is our national character!

JOHANNA

Du, Olina!...

HYLDI

Really??

OLINA

Tja [*Well*]...perhaps it was the weave of her skirt. Your Mamma and I come from the same province, don't you know.

(EMMA runs in carrying a bucket, followed by ASTRID with a crude shovel fashioned from a cedar shake).

ASTRID

Did you see what Papa made?? So we can dig for the deeper ones.

JOHANNA

Your Papa is come?

EMMA

We're going to have the best ones for market.

JOHANNA

Where is your Papa??

ASTRID

He's coming.

EMMA

With Mr. Joe Jackson.
(confidentially)

And he's not drunk, Mamma. I can tell.

OLINA

Who?

ASTRID

Mr. Joe Jackson.

HYLDI

He made our picture...

EMMA

He's going to Alaska. Come on, Hyldi. Let's go meet them!

(EMMA and HYLDI run out).

ASTRID

Anna thinks he's handsome!
(she runs out).

ANNA

(following her out).
Astrid!...

OLINA

You see, you needn't have worried about Jonas. It was as I said, he must have volunteered for more work.

JOHANNA

Jo [*Yes*] – Always the one to volunteer.

OLINA

Du?...

JOHANNA

If I saw that this foolishness got him anywhere.

OLINA

Du, Johanna...

JOHANNA

He wants so badly to please them. But he is still the lowest man on the crew. He is still that fool Swede. And now that Emma is in school, it is I who must bring him his lunch. I have to perform like a trained dog with my English before he lets me go.

OLINA

He is only having a bit of fun, du. He is making a fuss over you, Johanna.

JOHANNA

He thinks he charms the men. But he doesn't. They are embarrassed. And so am I.

OLINA

Du, Johanna. Han Jonas – Sometimes he drinks too much. Maybe he does not make it home with all of his pay – But his gifts to you. That fine cupboard he makes for you now.

JOHANNA

A china cupboard.

OLINA

All that work to make it beautiful.

JOHANNA

The fence is down, so Katya runs loose. The pump is brOkayen, and the roof leaks over the girls' beds. Jonas has no time to mend these things. He builds me a china cupboard!
I got no china, du.

OLINA

Well, at least Jonas is alive. Han, Lars –
(she laughs).

JOHANNA

Olina!...

OLINA

Barely du! Asleep in his chair from after supper until I wake him to go to bed! Ack, he works hard. And he loves me in his way.

(ASTRID and EMMA enter followed by HYLDI, ANNA
and then JONAS and MR. JOE JACKSON).

ASTRID

Mr. Joe Jackson says maybe I get to take a picture tonight! I'm going to be his "Assistant"!

HYLDI

Mr. Joe Jackson can make it daylight.

ASTRID

(holds up a small tin; reads)
"Blitz-Pulver flashlight compound." See? He shoots it out of a pistol.

JOHANNA

What?!...

ASTRID

I'm going to help.

EMMA

You're not going to shoot me.

JOHANNA

She shall not shoot anyone!

ASTRID

Mamma, it's for a picture.

MR. JOE JACKSON

It's perfectly safe, Mrs. Medin.

ASTRID

Yes, Mamma. It's perfectly safe.

JONAS

God Kväll, du Johanna! [*Good Evening*].
(he kisses her).

OLINA

Hallo, Jonas Medin.

JONAS

Olina, God Kväll! [*Good evening*].

OLINA

And who is your friend, Jonas Medin?

JONAS

Ah! Mr. Joe Jackson, may I present Mrs. Johnson.

OLINA

(offering her hand)
Please, call me Olina.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Olina.

JONAS

Du, I find Mr. Joe Jackson stumbling about in the dark, howling at the moon!

JOHANNA

Du, Jonas!...

JONAS

All right, he says he makes photographs. Photographs. Of the dark, du!

MR. JOE JACKSON

I am experimenting, Medin...

JONAS

(expansive)
Mr. Professional tin typist thinks he can capture the dark of a black night. I am no fotograf [*photographer*], but I do know enough not to waste my expensive plates trying to photograph the black of night. I have never seen a photograph of the black of night. Have you? – No. Of course

you have not. Because it is the black of night. What is there to see? But try to explain this to Mr. Joe Jackson! Mr. Professional fotograf!...

MR. JOE JACKSON

(laughing)
Honestly, Medin...

OLINA

Sluta nu, Jonas! Stackars karl! [*Go easy on the poor man*].

JONAS

Ack! Mr. Joe Jackson is my friend! And I will stand by him.

MR. JOE JACKSON

That is good of you, Medin.

JONAS

Mr. Joe Jackson goes to Alaska! He says it is to take more pictures, but I think it is as with all the others-he goes for gold! Mr. Joe Jackson stays at the hotel to wait for his outfit, but I say to him, my Johanna is a much better coOkay. You must stay with us...

(Everyone is shocked; they loOkay from JONAS to JOHANNA and back again).

JONAS (continued).

And already my Anna is smitten by him. He toOkay her image at school, don't you know.

ANNA

Papa!...

(JONAS beams at his new friend. The music changes to a faster dance).

JONAS

Johanna, come dance with me.

JOHANNA

Å Nej, du [*Oh no...*].

JONAS

Come, du!

OLINA

Johanna, go. You have worked hard enough for a bit.

JONAS

Mr. Joe Jackson, you take Anna.

MR. JOE JACKSON

No, I really don't...

JONAS

(to ANNA)

Gå, du! [*Go*]. I bring your Mamma.

MR. JOE JACKSON

I don't...dance.

JONAS

Everybody dances!...

ANNA

(loOkays to MR. JOE JACKSON)

It's all right, Papa.

(MR. JOE JACKSON retreats to the safety of his camera.
ASTRID follows).

HYLDI

I'll dance with you, Anna.

EMMA

What about me?

(ANNA and HYLDI open their circle for EMMA and the
three go off).

JONAS

Johanna?

JOHANNA

Oh, Jonas...

ASTRID

(whispering; to MR. JOE JACKSON)

Are you going to take one now? With the flash pistol?? Can I help?

(JONAS sits beside JOHANNA. ASTRID helps MR. JOE
JACKSON set up his camera).

JONAS

Do you remember, Johanna? Midsommarafton. That summer before I left for Amerika. Your father got drunk early that evening and fell asleep, so you were free for the night. I told you you were beautiful, and on this night you believed me, and so you were.

JOHANNA

Jonas...

(JONAS dances, trying to coax JOHANNA to join him).

JONAS

And we danced to Ole Jarvik's fiddle on the wooden floor of Grondahl's barn. There was enough space between the floor boards and the earth under, that every one of our steps echoed. You knew that I wanted to come to Amerika, and I asked you that night to meet me there. And that night-that night that you were beautiful, and that we danced and echoed as one-that night you said, Yes. You said, Yes, I will meet you in the new land and we will make a life together. Come Johanna. Come dance with me tonight.

JOHANNA

(softeninng)

I will break my ankle on these rocks.

JONAS

Down further there is sand.

JOHANNA

Oh, Jonas...

JONAS

Come, we will make the sand echo! Beautiful Johanna. Come, Johanna!

(JONAS holds out his hand. After a moment, a new, softer JOHANNA takes it, and they start to dance. JOHANNA smiles and then laughs).

ASTRID

(to MR. JOE JACKSON)

Now?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Now.

(ASTRID presses the shutter bulb. We hear a loud bang and a great flash lights up the whole stage as the picture is taken. The spell has been brOkayen. Embarrassed, JOHANNA stops dancing. She gathers together her defenses and returns to her work place; JONAS follows).

JONAS

Johanna...Kom nu. [*come*].

JOHANNA

It was foolish.

JONAS

Come. You are beautiful tonight, Johanna.

(he holds out his hand to her; she holds fast).

She does not believe me. She will not dance. I want to dance! Who will dance with me?? Olina!

OLINA

All right, I'll dance with you, Jonas.

JONAS

Olina! Olina is beautiful tonight and she will dance with me!

(to JOHANNA).

Kära? [*Dearest?*]

JOHANNA

Ja, gå. [*Yes, go*]. Beautiful Olina.

(JONAS gallantly takes OLINA out on his arm to dance.
JOHANNA watches after them, then turns to ASTRID).

JOHANNA

Ack du, Astrid! How did you get so wet? Kom hit. [*Come here*]. You shall catch your death.

(JOHANNA takes off her shawl and puts it roughly around
ASTRID. MR. JOE JACKSON packs up his equipment).

ASTRID

It's all right, Mamma, I'm not cold.

JOHANNA

You and your Papa. How will you be able to go to market with Anna tomorrow if you are taken cold?

ASTRID

I won't Mamma. I feel fine.

JOHANNA

You are chilled to the bone.

ASTRID

Oh, Mamma...

JOHANNA

And your hair! What can we do with this hair? Shall we cut it off?

ASTRID

I wish I could.

JOHANNA

(softening)
Ack du min Astrid...

ASTRID

Aren't you proud of all the clams we got, Mamma? Especially the diggers-Papa and I got most of them. Well, Anna and Hyldi helped. They started the holes – Did you see the shovels Papa made? See, he carved them so you can dig real deep. Aren't they wonderful?

JOHANNA

Jo, du. [*Yes*].

ASTRID

So they'd start digging with the shovels, and then Papa and I-see we'd be down on our knees by the hole all ready-we'd start digging with our hands as soon as the water started coming into the hole. And none of them got away, Mamma. Sometimes my whole shoulder would go in, and I would have to put my face down on the sand. But I never let go. Not once.

JOHANNA

Du, Astrid. Min lilla poyke. [*My boy-child*].

ASTRID

I wish I was a boy.

JOHANNA

Kom hit. [*Come here*]. Let me see what I can do with your hair.

(EMMA, followed by HYLDI with a bucket, runs in).

EMMA

There are some big logs floating near the shore, and kids are playing on them!

HYLDI

Here, Mamma.
(She sets down the bucket).

ASTRID

Really?...

EMMA

Come on, Hyldi!...
(They start out).

JOHANNA

I don't want you in the water, lilla du.

EMMA

They're really near the shore, and Papa said we could. Hyldi, come on!

HYLDI

(to Emma)
I'm cold. I think I'll stay here.

EMMA

Well, I'm going out there.
(EMMA runs out).

JOHANNA

Emma!...

ASTRID

I'll watch her!

(ASTRID runs out. HYLDI watches after her; hesitates).

JOHANNA

(to HYLDI)
Gå du. [Go on].

(HYLDI starts out, leaving JOHANNA and MR. JOE JACKSON in uneasy company).

MR. JOE JACKSON

(after a time).
Mrs. Medin, I appreciate you opening up your home to me – I mean, well, as you know I was planning to stay at the hotel until my outfit is complete. I met Jonas, uh, Mr. Medin – your husband, today at the mill. I've been photographing the camps, you see. And he insisted that I come home with him...

JOHANNA

You are welcome, Mr. Joe Jackson.

(HYLDI stops, hesitates before exiting, and returns during the following).

MR. JOE JACKSON

Your husband wouldn't accept any money.

JOHANNA

No.

(JOHANNA regards her middle daughter for a moment and then hands her a knife to work. MR. JOE JACKSON is a bit unnerved by HYLDI's presence but is determined to continue his conversation with JOHANNA).

MR. JOE JACKSON

That's most generous, Mrs. Medin, but – Well, what I mean is, as I said, I was prepared to stay...

JOHANNA

Jonas has invited you as his guest. We are honored to have you.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Three weeks is a long time, Mrs. Medin.

(MR. JOE JACKSON takes money from his billfold).

JOHANNA

It is my husband's decision.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Yes, of course. Your husband is most generous.

(He hands her the money. She takes it).

JOHANNA

Yes. He is.

(JOHANNA discreetly puts the money away. MR. JOE JACKSON feels HYLDI's eyes boring into him).

MR. JOE JACKSON

(finally, to HYLDI)
What are those buckets filled with?

HYLDI

Cornmeal and sea water.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Oh.

HYLDI

For the clams. They eat it instead of sand.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Oh.

HYLDI

And it cleans out their stomachs so they won't be full of sand when you eat them.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Oh. I see.

HYLDI

(she peers at him)

Where did you say you were from?

MR. JOE JACKSON

New York.

HYLDI

Oh.

MR. JOE JACKSON

(after another awkward silence)

What are you going to do with all these clams?

HYLDI

We take the best ones to market. All of these, and these steamers here, and most of these. We keep them alive in the salt water and seaweed. And then tomorrow, Anna and Astrid will take them to market with the fleet. I'm going to ask if I can go with them, because otherwise I have to help with the canning.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Oh.

HYLDI

These big horse clams we usually can. These we fry.

(She pulls a limp cleaned clam from one of the buckets)

They're good. You'll probably get some for breakfast.

MR. JOE JACKSON

(loOkaying skeptically at the clam)

I'm loOkaying forward to it.

(We hear a faint commotion. The music stops abruptly. Shouts can be heard in several languages. EMMA runs in).

EMMA

A china baby fell into the water and they can't find him! Papa went in!

HYLDI

He did??

(HYLDI and EMMA run out. JOHANNA and MR. JOE JACKSON loOkay out toward the water).

MR. JOE JACKSON

Perhaps I should go see.

JOHANNA

Ja tack – Thank you.

(MR. JOE JACKSON exits. We hear cheers and after a moment, OLINA enters).

OLINA

Let me have one of those blankets, du.

(JOHANNA hands her OLINA the two blankets they've been sitting on).

OLINA (continued).

Only one. Save the other for Jonas.

JOHANNA

Is everyone all right?

OLINA

Ja da. *[Yes]*. Astrid went in too...

JOHANNA

Vad?? *[What??]*

(OLINA exits. EMMA and HYLDI return).

EMMA

He found him!

HYLDI

Papa brought him in! And Astrid helped.

(ASTRID enters with ANNA and MR. JOE JACKSON.
She wears MR. JOE JACKSON's coat).

EMMA

She went in too!

JOHANNA

Astrid!...

ASTRID

I just kind of went in accidently.

JOHANNA

Ack du, min Astrid... [*Oh, Astrid...*].

ASTRID

We were playing on that big log that juts into the water...

EMMA

We saw a baby seal...

ASTRID

The China baby fell into the water, and...

EMMA

He was with his brother, but...

HYLDI

Emma, Astrid's telling Mamma.

EMMA

I'm just helping in case she forgets something.

ASTRID

He slipped off the end of the log, and everyone rushed down to the edge of the water, the Indianer and the Chinamens...

EMMA

And Mr. Lundkvist...

ASTRID

And Mr. Lundkvist. But nobody would go in.

HYLDI

Nobody could understand each other.

EMMA

Hyldi!...

HYLDI

You did it...

ASTRID

But as soon as Papa saw what happened, he ran right down to the water, and went in.

EMMA

He was dancing on the beach, and he went right in.

HYLDI

Yeah. Papa saved him. He's a hero.

(JONAS and OLINA enter).

EMMA

Papa's a hero!

OLINA

Here he is. Here's your hero.

JONAS

I am a hero, Johanna. Kiss me.

JOHANNA

Ack, du Jonas! Alltid måste du vara hjälte. [*Oh, Jonas, why must you always be the hero?*]

(JOHANNA wraps JONAS in a blanket).

JONAS

Say that in American. You are in America, Johanna!

JOHANNA

Och så [*And*] Astrid! How could you let her go in??

JONAS

Kiss me, du Johanna.

(He tries to kiss her. She pushes him away).

Dance with me. Come, Johanna, my love. Come dance with me.

JOHANNA

Du är full! [*You are drunk*].

JONAS

I have had a taste, but I am not drunk, Johanna. I want to dance with you.

JOHANNA

Nej, Jonas...

JONAS

You are my wife, and I want to dance with you!

JOHANNA

No! Now, leave me alone!

(There is an awkward moment of silence).

Anna, go and fetch the team, the Japans-folk och, if they need, and take everyone home. Olina and I will stay and pack up; you can come back for us.

JONAS

I can fetch the team.

JOHANNA

Jonas, you are wet. You will catch your death...

JONAS

I am the Papa. I can fetch the team!

JOHANNA

Anna can go. And Mr. Joe Jackson can go with her, if it needs a man.

JONAS

I am the Papa. And it is my team. And I shall be back for you and Olina. Come everyone! Astrid and I will tell you how we found him.

(They start out. JOHANNA stops ANNA and MR. JOE JACKSON).

JOHANNA

Watch out for him, vad?

JONAS

Do you stay to clack with the women, or are you coming with me, Mr. Joe Jackson?

(MR. JOE JACKSON and ANNA exit. A beat. JOHANNA and OLINA begin to pack up).

OLINA

It is good han Jonas is such a strong swimmer. And Astrid, as fearless as her father. It was good to see everyone gather around.

JOHANNA

(a beat)

And tomorrow, on the boat, how will it be?

OLINA

Du?...

JOHANNA

We will nod silently. And then we will pretend we do not know each other.

OLINA

Du, Johanna...

JOHANNA

Hun, Mrs. Yamanuchi...

OLINA

(She laughs at the memory of the jOkaye)

That he must return five cent!...

JOHANNA

(after a moment)

The next week, I see Missus Yamanuchi again. It is Saturday morning, and many people are coming to market. She approaches me, and there are ladies from the church there. She tries to press a coin into my hand. And I do not take it. I pretend not to notice. Those ladies from the church. Anna wants so badly to belong. And I would not see her.

(beat)

Tonight, I try to speak to henne [*her*], Missus Yamanuchi. Tonight, it is she who will not see me.

OLINA

Johanna...

JOHANNA

Please. Do not advise me, Olina.

OLINA

Du, Johanna. I know that we would not be friends in the old country. I am not the kind of woman you could associate with in Småland. Your Papa was a landowner. My Papa worked for the likes of you.

JOHANNA

My Papa owned a pile of rocks.

OLINA

I became a maid in a public house as a way out. That would never have been an answer for you. And in the old country, Johanna, you would have been very careful never to know me. I know that.

JOHANNA

Olina, du...

OLINA

But is it not a wondrous thing, du, Johanna? In Småland, I worked as a bar-maid in a tavern. And here, I am the owner of one! And we, Johanna, we can be friends in this new land.

(beat).

You have a good heart, Johanna...

JOHANNA

It grows cold...

OLINA

You have a good heart, but you won't let anyone see it. Jonas. And your children...

JOHANNA

Shall we finish packing?

OLINA

Your girls, Johanna...

JOHANNA

Kom, they'll be back soon.

(JOHANNA resumes packing. After an uneasy moment OLINA joins her. Lights slowly fade on the beach and come up on the house as JONAS enters, carrying a sleeping EMMA. ANNA, with HYLDI in tow, follows him up the stairs to bed. ASTRID, full of the night's excitement, sits on the porch steps. JONAS returns and joins ASTRID. There is a long silence).

JONAS

What did I do? I ask you. What did I do??.

ASTRID

I don't know, Papa.

JONAS

I don't either. I brought her here, that's what I did. That was my great sin. I made her leave her home – And her precious father who beat her. And she probably told you I lost a bit of money...

ASTRID

She didn't tell me anything, Papa.

JONAS

One mistake. One little mistake. Ack, things were hard for your Mamma when she first come. But she toOkay that hardness, and she swallowed it whole, and it formed a rock in her heart and a shell around her. Uff, your Mamma. She is a thorny woman. Who can please her?

ASTRID

I don't know, Papa.

JONAS

Who can please her?? Tell me. I cannot.

ASTRID

I don't know. I can't either.

JONAS

I was a third born son. The piece of land that was to be left to me was no bigger this front yard. The rockiest, most miserable corner of my father's miserable lot. While he still lived, I could lease the land, but the strings attached to that piece of dirt would have chOkayed the life out of me. Och min Far [*And my father*], he planned to live forever. And then comes your Mamma, who is strong and willing, and who has an inheritance if she will marry. When the droughts begin, I ask her. Come to Amerika, I say. We will start a new life. I will buy my own piece of land. And not just a patch of dry dirt either. A farm, in the United States of Amerika, where everything is green, and everything grows bigger than ever before imaginable. I don't need a corner of my father's field of rocks. Or his sermons either. And so I toOkay your Mamma's money, her dowry, and I set out for glorious Amerika to find our farm.

ASTRID

What happened?

JONAS

(a beat)

Your Mamma never believed. She agreed to the trip because she wanted out. But it's not true that I never loved your mother. Despite what she may have told you.

ASTRID

She hasn't told me anything, Papa.

JONAS

In Sweden, in Småland, when it was all dreams, I loved her. Summers in Småland, Astrid, when the chores are light and the days long, there are hours of daylight to go walking in the fields. The midnight sun casts a warm glow around everything. And I would tell her that she was pretty. And if I managed to convince her, why then for a few moments she would be. The lines would soften in her face, and she would gaze into my eyes wanting to believe. And she would become beautiful, du Astrid. And I would see that there was another Johanna behind the difficult girl I was bargaining with for a helpmeet and a dowry. And I thought, if only I can get her away from this life, from this land of rocks where nothing grows, from the brutality of her father – If I could just get her away, I could make the world safe enough for the soft Johanna, the beautiful Johanna, to come out and stay with me. It's not true, listen, that I never loved your Mamma.

ASTRID

She hasn't told me anything.

(JONAS and ASTRID fall silent).

JONAS

Nåväl! [*Well!*] I best go fetch her.
(He starts out).

ASTRID

Papa?...

JONAS

Ja, barn. [*Yes, little one*].

ASTRID

Papa, Mr. Joe Jackson said he would teach me how to take pictures.

JONAS

That is good!

ASTRID

But Mrs. Rudolph has been talking to Mamma about needing a girl. Papa, if I have to go work for Mrs. Rudolph, I might not be here when Mr. Joe Jackson has time to teach me about pictures. So, I've been thinking. If Mamma could send Hyldi to Mrs. Rudolph, I could stay here and help Mamma with the laundry.

JONAS

I talk to your Mamma.

Oh Papa, thank you.

ASTRID

Now, the ladies await.

JONAS

I'm coming too.

ASTRID

It's late...Ja, come.

JONAS

(They exit as lights fade on the scene).

End of Act I.

ACT IIScene Four

The Scene: The parlor has been transformed into JONAS' workshop. Saw horses, tools, and unfinished projects including an elaborate china cupboard obscure the pieces of mis-matched furniture.

Time: Early spring. 1902. Near dusk.

At Rise: EMMA and HYLDI, in make-shift costumes of rope-belted blankets and laurel wreaths, sit at one end of the porch. MR. JOE JACKSON's camera equipment is set up at the other. ASTRID is posing her sisters for a photograph (ala the popular Victorian "tableau vivant").

ASTRID

Now, Hyldi you sit there, and pretend you're braiding Emma's hair.

EMMA

Why can't I take this off?

ASTRID

Emma! You have to sit still.

EMMA

It's hot. And stinky.

HYLDI

Who are we supposed to be anyway?

ASTRID

You're Persephone. And Emma, you're the muse of poetry.

EMMA

What??

ASTRID

(getting under the focusing cloth)

Now, are we ready?

(EMMA and HYLDI loOkay up and smile).

ASTRID (continued).

No!

EMMA

What?

ASTRID

You're not supposed to loOkay up.

EMMA

I thought you wanted to take our picture.

ASTRID

I do, but I don't want you to loOkay at the camera.

EMMA

Why not?

ASTRID

Hyldi, you loOkay at Emma, and Emma you gaze with FORLORN SADNESS out toward the road.

EMMA

What??

ASTRID

Wistfully...you know.

EMMA

But why?

ASTRID

I want it to loOkay like you don't know I'm here.

EMMA

But I do know you're here.

ASTRID

Just pretend.

EMMA

I can't.

HYLDI

Why can't we just loOkay at the camera like we're supposed to?

ASTRID

I want it to loOkay natural.

EMMA
With us dressed up like this?

ASTRID
Will you just do it??

HYLDI
How can you take a picture so late? The sun's almost down.

ASTRID
That's what I've been waiting for.

HYLDI
Why? You won't be able to see us.

ASTRID
(She crosses to them with a magazine).
LoOkay at this picture...Isn't that pretty?

EMMA
I guess.

ASTRID
That picture won twenty-five dollars.

EMMA
Twenty-five dollars? Really?

HYLDI
But you can't see their faces.

ASTRID
And loOkay who toOkay it. MRS. Etta James. It's a photo contest.

EMMA
You want to enter a photo contest?

ASTRID
Maybe. Now, come on. The sun's going to be gone.

HYLDI
I thought you wanted it to be dark.

ASTRID
Will you just cooperate?

(EMMA and HYLDI return to their pose. ASTRID fusses and then returns to her place behind the camera).

HYLDI

I wish you'd make up your mind. Does Mr. Joe Jackson know you're doing this?

EMMA

He's going back up to the camps next week, you know.

ASTRID

I'm going with him.

HYLDI

Astrid, did you ask Mr. Joe Jackson if you could use his camera?

ASTRID

He gave me the plates cause they were chipped. And I mixed the chemicals myself.

HYLDI

Oh, Astrid, we're going to get in trouble.

EMMA

Mr. Joe Jackson asked you to go with him??

ASTRID

Harley Oates got a job at the mill, so he's going to need a new assistant.

HYLDI

Mamma will never let you go, even if Mr. Joe Jackson did ask you.

ASTRID

Maybe I'll go anyway.

(ASTRID inserts the plate into the camera).

HYLDI

You'd go without asking??

ASTRID

Emma, you have to sit still. Now, are you ready? I'm going to count to ten.

HYLDI

Just like Mr. Joe Jackson.

EMMA

Here they come!

ASTRID

Emma!...

EMMA

Hurry up and take it. I want to go meet them.

HYLDI

I wonder where Mamma is.

ASTRID

Hyldi!...

EMMA

Oh, that reminds me. Mamma said to tell you that she won't be home in time to make supper tonight.

HYLDI

What?

EMMA

Mrs. Battle is worse. You're to get supper tonight for Papa and Mr. Joe Jackson. She'll be home at six.

ASTRID

Why didn't you tell us?

EMMA

I forgot.

HYLDI

Oh, Astrid, what are we going to do?!?

ASTRID

We'll fix dinner. In just a minute. Now, hold still. I'm going to start counting.

(ASTRID starts to count. HYLDI breaks the pose).

ASTRID

Hyldi!

HYLDI

If Papa's coming home, it's almost six now!

ASTRID

Wait, just let me take this.

HYLDI

We're already in trouble with Mamma.

ASTRID

Hyldi!, come back here!...

(HYLDI runs into the house).

EMMA

Can I get out of this now?

ASTRID

Yes.

(Defeated, she begins to put away the camera).

HYLDI

(returning to the porch).

Astrid, what are we going to fix?? She's going to come home all tired and out of sorts from old Mrs. Battle, and we'll be in trouble again.

ASTRID

We'll find something.

EMMA

Mamma said there was chip beef in the larder for gravy and biscuits.

ASTRID

Emma! Why didn't you say anything?

EMMA

I just did.

ASTRID

Hyldi, why don't you go in and start the biscuits.

HYLDI

Oh, I wish Anna was here...

ASTRID

Well, she's not. I'll be in as soon as I get this put away.

HYLDI

Hurry!

(She runs back into the house).

EMMA

It loOkays like they're in a pretty good mood. Papa's holding Mr. Joe Jackson up for a change.

(EMMA exits porch. JONAS and MR. JOE JACKSON enter singing. ASTRID tries to hide the camera).

MR. JOE JACKSON

"De camp town ladies sing dis song/do dah"...

JONAS

Do dah?!?...

MR. JOE JACKSON

"Do dah"...De camp town race track nine miles long/Oh, do dah day...

JONAS

(to himself)

Do dah...

MR. JOE JACKSON

I have grown attached to this place, Medin.

JONAS

It is fine country, Mr. Joe Jackson.

MR. JOE JACKSON

I'm thinking of staying on a bit.

JONAS

For my Anna, maybe? Du, Mr. Joe Jackson, I must do my duty as the Papa and ask you what your intentions are.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Medin, her heart is elsewhere...

JONAS

No!...Where? Here, shall we ask my Astrid. She knows her sister's heart.

ASTRID

Hej, Papa...

MR. JOE JACKSON

Medin...

JONAS

Du Astrid, reassure Mr. Joe Jackson here, of Anna's love. Where is your Mamma? Hallo??
Hallo?? Johanna?

(JONAS enters the house. ASTRID and JOE JACKSON stare at each other. In the kitchen, HYLDI is scurrying, but making little real progress toward supper. JONAS enters).

EMMA

Hej, Papa!

JONAS

Hej min vänn! [*Hello, little one*]. Where is your mamma?

HYLDI

Old Mrs. Battle is worse.

JONAS

Ja, så. [*I see*].

HYLDI

(starting to cry)
I'm sorry your supper is late, Papa.

JONAS

Vad är det nu då? [*What's this now?*] When does your Mamma come?

HYLDI

Six o'clock.

JONAS

All right, I shall help.

HYLDI

Oh, Papa, you don't have to...

JONAS

What is it we make?

EMMA

Biscuits and gravy.

JONAS

Biscuits and gravy, my specialty!

HYLDI

It's really all right, Papa. We'll manage.

JONAS

Är du inte kLOkay? [*Are you kidding?*] For two years, was I "CoOkayie" in them woods du Hyldi!

HYLDI

I know, Papa but...

JONAS

Biscuits and gravy four nights out of the week, du lille. All right, where is the flour?

(EMMA fetches the flour. On the porch, ASTRID has finished her packing and is about to enter the house. She hangs about the doorway).

ASTRID

Harley Oates got on down at the mill.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Yes.

ASTRID

Does that mean you're loOkaying for somebody else to go up to the woods as your assistant?

MR. JOE JACKSON

I can usually get one of the men from the camps to help me for a day or so.

HYLDI

Oh, Papa. LoOkay at your hands.

JONAS

Å, ja. (he goes to the sink and tries to get water from the pump. Gets frustrated; hits it). Fan, alltså! [damn it].

EMMA

It's still brOkayen, Papa.

JONAS

Å, ja.

HYLDI

(pouring water from a pitcher into a bowl).
Here you are, Papa.

JONAS

Tack, tack. [*Thank you*].

HYLDI

But it's really O.K. if you want to wait on the porch with Mr. Joe Jackson...

JONAS

Nej då! [*No!*]
(HYLDI hands him a towel).
Tack. [*Thank you.*]

(The preparation continues as focus returns to the porch).

ASTRID

Couldn't you find someone else to take up with you?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Most of the boys around here would just be more trouble than they're worth.

ASTRID

What about me?...I could do it.

MR. JOE JACKSON

No, it's impossible.

ASTRID

I know how to do everything. And you're always saying how much more careful I am than Harley Oates.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Yes, but...Well, I couldn't be responsible for you. I mean...Well...No, it's out of the question.

ASTRID

Will you at least think about it?

JONAS

Du, Emma. Bring me your Mamma's big mixing bowl.

EMMA

Yes, Papa.
(She brings a bowl to the table).

There is none bigger? JONAS

There's this one. EMMA

Big! Big! JONAS

Papa, we can get supper. HYLDI

How about this? EMMA

Ja! Bring it here. Bring it here. JONAS

(EMMA brings JONAS a large mixing bowl).

That's Mamma's special bowl. HYLDI

Now, Emma, run and get more wood. We need a hot fire. JONAS

Yes, Papa. EMMA

(JONAS takes the bowl, and recklessly fills it with flour, sending puffs of white dust in every direction).

Papa, aren't you going to measure it? HYLDI

You think I don't know biscuits and gravy?... JONAS

Oh, Papa... HYLDI

I know biscuits and gravy!! JONAS

HYLDI

Papa, we're making biscuits for six people, not sixty.

JONAS

They keep, vad? Your Mamma is not the only fine coOkay in this house, vad? [what?]. We will show her.

(ASTRID and MR. JOE JACKSON enter the kitchen).

ASTRID

Papa, what are you doing??

JONAS

So, is Mr. Joe Jackson encouraged?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Honestly, Medin. What are you doing??

JONAS

I was "CoOkayie", don't you know, Mr. Joe Jackson, for them in the camps.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Until they busted you down to grease monkey on the skids for poisoning too many of the men, eh Medin?

JONAS

Never was I grease monkey! Who tell you this? I was CoOkayie. The best they ever have in these God-forgotten woods. Every man-Jack tell me this.

MR. JOE JACKSON

As you say, Medin.

JONAS

I do say. Milk now.

(EMMA hands him the pail and HYLDI a cup to measure with. He dumps it out of the pail and into the bowl spilling much of it).

MR. JOE JACKSON

Whoa there, Medin!...

HYLDI

Oh, Papa!...

JONAS

Too much. We need more flour.

Papa...
 ASTRID
 That's all we have, Papa.
 EMMA
 Mmm.
 JONAS
 What are you going to do now, Papa?
 HYLDI
 Yes, what are you going to do now, "CoOkayie"?
 MR. JOE JACKSON
 Do we have buckwheat?
 JONAS
 Papa, why don't you just go out onto the porch. We'll call you.
 ASTRID
 Just loOkay at this mess! What will Mamma say?..
 HYLDI
 I think perhaps I'll have my supper down at the tavern tonight, Medin.
 MR. JOE JACKSON
 Don't listen to this picture parlor tin typist. Bring me some eggs. We make panekaker
[pancakes].
 JONAS
 But Papa...
 HYLDI
 Eggs!
 JONAS
 Yes, Papa.
 HYLDI
 Panakaker, my specialty! You just go on, Mr. Joe Jackson. I am a Papa. I have responsibilities.
 You have no responsibilities.
 (He drops an egg).
 Fan, alltså! *[the Devil take us]*.

MR. JOE JACKSON

Yes, I see, Medin.

JONAS

You have no responsibilities, Mr. Joe Jackson. But I tell you, you miss a meal.

MR. JOE JACKSON

(playfully throws a little flour at JONAS)

Pancakes, your specialty!

(JONAS retaliates, and a small-scale flour fight breaks out. ASTRID joins in, then EMMA. HYLDI stands horrified at the mess. JOHANNA enters. She stares at her kitchen and flour-covered family).

JOHANNA

Jonas Medin!

JONAS

I help the girls with supper.

ASTRID

It was my fault, Mamma. We were late in starting supper...

JONAS

Hur nu här, du Johanna... [*Now, listen, Johanna...*].

JOHANNA

Hylidi, Katya is over at the school again.

HYLDI

Yes, Mamma.

JOHANNA

And take Emma with you.

HYLDI

Yes, Mamma.

(EMMA and HYLDI leave).

JOHANNA

Leave me now. All of you.

JONAS

Kära... [*Dearest...*].

JOHANNA

Everyone. Out of my kitchen. Alle i hopa! [*everybody!*]

(ASTRID loOkays at her mother. There is a momentary stand-off and then a defiant ASTRID begins to clean up the mess. After a moment, JOHANNA takes off her coat and joins her. The two work together as the lights fade on the scene. We hear music and there is series of projections. Like those at the end of Scene One in Act I, these are sepia prints from the turn of the century; but unlike those formal portraits, these include more personal scenes of domestic life: earnest, if sometimes naive, and humorous attempts at artistic expression; more informal poses; more candid and closer shots; experiments with light and shadow. These are ASTRID's photographs. The two photographs that begin the series are from the scene we have just witnessed:

- EMMA & HYLDI, dressed in rope-belted blankets with wreaths made of laurel leaves wrapped around their heads, gaze wistfully off in the dreamy light of dusk (ala the popular Victorian "tableau vivant").
- EMMA, in the same belted blanket, loOkays directly at the camera, a little more annoyed and impatient and less wistful and dreamy.
- A series of outdoor shots of the Medin home and environs: laundry hanging out to dry; women in shadows working at washboards and in gardens, etc.
- There are two final projections which show JONAS and JOHANNA, in a real architectural setting, hard at work in their respective domains. It is evening and JONAS works in the parlor with his wood; JOHANNA is in the kitchen scrubbing. is a beat and then the sepia tableau lights come up on the actors recreating the same poses. There is a beat, lights shift to the lights of the scene, and Scene Five begins.

Scene Five

Time: Late night. Several weeks later.

At Rise: Two small lamps burn in the house. JONAS, pipe clenched between his teeth, works by the light of one in his parlor workshop; he feverishly planes an already smooth board. JOHANNA scrubs in her kitchen. The two, though separated and alone with their own thoughts and tasks, share a common rhythm and tension. Each find moments steal

glances at each other as they work. After a moment, EMMA, barefooted and wearing a night gown, comes quietly down the stairs, slips past her father, and goes out onto the porch. After a moment, she is soon followed by HYLDI.

HYLDI

Emma!...We shouldn't be down here!

EMMA

I can't sleep.

HYLDI

I wish Anna were here...Emma, what are you doing?

(EMMA goes to one of the porch steps, lifts a loose board and retrieves an apple).

EMMA

I put some apples here under this step.

HYLDI

At least keep your voice down...

EMMA

You want one?

(They eat apples. In the kitchen, JOHANNA finishes her scrubbing; everything's spotless; there's a moment of indecision about what to do next).

EMMA

Do you think she'll ever come home?

HYLDI

You musn't think that she won't!

EMMA

But what do you think?

(JOHANNA glances into the parlor. She picks up her mending basket, puts out the lamp in the kitchen and joins JONAS in the parlor).

JOHANNA

No need to have two lamps going.

JONAS
It's late Johanna....It might not be tonight.

JOHANNA
Ryder's message said tonight?

JONAS
Ja. [*Yes*].

(They return to their work).

EMMA
It's so hot.

HYLDI
Let's go back upstairs...

EMMA
I know...

HYLDI
...before we get caught.

EMMA
Let's see how long we can be quiet. Whoever can sit here longest without saying anything wins.

HYLDI
Oh, Okayay. Not saying anything?

EMMA
Not saying anything. Ready?

HYLDI
What if I have to cough?

EMMA
Hyldi!...Ready?

HYLDI
I think we should go back to bed.

EMMA
Okayay, now, One, two, three, Go!...

(They are silent for a few seconds).

Emma?...
HYLDI

Hyldi, you didn't even try.
EMMA

HYLDI
This is a stupid game....What if Astrid's gone forever?

EMMA
She won't be.

HYLDI
What if she is?? (a beat). I never thought she'd really do it.

(EMMA sits beside her sister. We hear the voices of MR. ` JOE JACKSON and ASTRID as they enter).

MR. JOE JACKSON
Now, let me do the talking. I'll explain it to your mother. I'll tell her it was my fault.

ASTRID
I'll tell her what happened.

MR. JOE JACKSON
Now, please, it'll be better this way.

EMMA
Astrid!...

(JONAS and JOHANNA come out to the porch. The adults stand on one side; EMMA and HYLDI protectively stand by their sister on the other. There is a long silence).

JONAS
She is safe then.

ASTRID
I'm fine, Papa.

JONAS
Your mamma was worried.

MR. JOE JACKSON
It was my fault, Medin...

ASTRID

He didn't know anything about it. I hid in his wagon until it was too late to turn back...

MR. JOE JACKSON

I sent a message with George Ryder...

JONAS

Ja.

MR. JOE JACKSON

We came back as soon as it was practical.

JONAS

I'm sorry your trip was cut short. Astrid...?

JOHANNA

Emma, Hyldi, to bed now.

HYLDI

Yes, Mamma.

(EMMA and HYLDI go into the house, but linger on the stairs).

JONAS

Nu, Astrid. Do you have something to say to Mr. Joe Jackson?

ASTRID

No.

JONAS

Astrid!...

ASTRID

I told you what happened.

JONAS

Mr. Joe Jackson awaits your words of apology.

MR. JOE JACKSON

It's all right, Medin.

JONAS

My Astrid will apologize.

MR. JOE JACKSON

We had quite a long talk on the way home...

ASTRID

Why can't everybody just leave me alone??

(She runs into the house).

JOHANNA

(finally)

Have you eaten?

MR. JOE JACKSON

We had a bite about noon.

JOHANNA

We will make sandwiches.

(to HYLDI and EMMA as she exits to the kitchen).

I said, to bed, lille.

(HYLDI and EMMA disappear up the stairs. JOHANNA gathers up the lighted lamp in the parlor and carries it into the kitchen. A miserable ASTRID sits at the kitchen table. JOHANNA exits to the summer kitchen).

JONAS

I must ask forgiveness then for my daughter, Mr. Joe Jackson.

MR. JOE JACKSON

That's really not necessary, Medin. It was a disappointing trip all around.

JONAS

Shall I help you unload, Mr. Joe Jackson?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Thank you, Medin. Might as well do it tonight.

(They start off).

Medin...Another boat leaves for the Skagway in a couple of weeks. I've been thinking Medin, maybe it's time I be moving on.

JONAS

I see.

(JONAS and MR. JOE JACKSON exit. In the kitchen, JOHANNA returns with cheese, bread and a small pitcher of milk).

ASTRID
I'm not hungry, Mamma.

JOHANNA
And when did you eat last?

(JOHANNA places a plate of bread and cheese before ASTRID).

ASTRID
Oh, Mamma...

JOHANNA
Do you want milk?

ASTRID
No, Mamma....

(JOHANNA pours her a glass of milk. ASTRID eats hungrily; JOHANNA studies her wayward daughter).

JOHANNA
Is it good? Is it enough?

ASTRID
Mamma, I'm sorry I didn't tell you, but I was afraid you wouldn't let me go....If I had asked you, would you have let me?

JOHANNA
Nej då! [*Of course not!*]

ASTRID
Mamma, Mr. Joe Jackson needed an assistant!

JOHANNA
Mrs. Jenkins was visiting the foreman's wife.

ASTRID
I know.

JOHANNA
She saw you in the wagon with Mr. Joe Jackson.

ASTRID

Everybody's been treating me like I did the most horrible thing. Even Mr. Joe Jackson. I only went up there to help him.

JOHANNA

Och hun, Anna. [*And Anna*]. Did you think about your sister when you ran off into the woods with Mr. Joe Jackson?...

ASTRID

What does Anna have to do with this? Mamma, sometimes you don't make any sense at all.

JOHANNA

You think Mrs. Berlin will not hear? And Mrs. Chesterfield, Mrs. Adams, the ladies from the church...

ASTRID

Mamma, you hate those old snobs.

JOHANNA

Astrid!

ASTRID

You take in their laundry; you do their sewing and mending! You bake for their parties for pennies. And then when they get too old and sick from eating all those rich pastries you take care of them. Why do you care what they think?

JOHANNA

I have to continue to take in their laundry. To bake for their parties. To keep this family together.

ASTRID

But Mamma, I could help. Harley Oats was younger than I am now when he started going up into the woods.

JOHANNA

That is a very different matter.

ASTRID

Because Harley Oates is a boy??

JOHANNA

My poor Astrid...min lilla pojka [*boy child*]...

(JOHANNA reaches out for ASTRID; she pulls away).

ASTRID

I didn't even get to take one picture!...As soon as we got into camp he turned me over to old Mrs. Potter and went off to the woods by himself.

JOHANNA

It was good of her to take you in.

ASTRID

I had to work in the mess kitchen!

JOHANNA

And how did you expect to be fed?

ASTRID

He seemed so glad to get rid of me.

JOHANNA

Astrid, you are not a little girl anymore.

ASTRID

I thought I'd at least be able to take one picture.

JOHANNA

Du, Astrid...

ASTRID

He said I was the best assistant he ever had. I don't understand why I couldn't help, if I was already up there.

JOHANNA

You are nearly grown...

ASTRID

Someday, I'm going to take better pictures than he does. He'll see. And he'll be sorry he didn't let me go with him.

JOHANNA

Such big dreams, du Astrid. Just like your Papa. Such big dreams.

ASTRID

I'm going to take pictures of people doing things; not like Mr. Joe Jackson. Not just dull pictures of dumb old lumberjacks, standing on the spring boards with pipes in their mouths, their axes by their sides. Fat old men posed in front of their donkey engines...

JOHANNA

You are not a man who can do as he pleases, du Astrid.

ASTRID

My pictures are going to show steam coming out of the donkey engines. And the axes swinging...Mamma, I'm going to find people really working.

JOHANNA

There will not be that chance for you.

ASTRID

I'll make it happen.

JOHANNA

You are a still a Swede. Your Mamma and Papa "just off the boat" to them.

ASTRID

Then I'll go to the city.

JOHANNA

To Seattle?

ASTRID

Find out what people do there.

JOHANNA

You don't know anyone in Seattle...

ASTRID

But I will. I'll be out, and I'll see someone doing something. Or I'll just see somebody in a shop, and I'll go up and ask them if I can take their picture.

JOHANNA

To walk the streets of the city? Like a man? No, my daughter, that you shall not do!

ASTRID

Mamma, aren't you happy that I want to do something?

JOHANNA

I left them, du Astrid. My warm clothes, my sturdy boots. I brought only my fine and frivolous things to this land.

ASTRID

I know.

JOHANNA

I was going to be a fine lady in this new land, du Astrid.

ASTRID

I know this story, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Ja. As does the whole town. That washer-woman who put on airs. You are not so unlike me, du Astrid. But they will have their say, listen. [*little one*].

ASTRID

No. I'm going to where I can be free. And I'm going to fly there, Mamma! I'm going to soar!

JOHANNA

Astrid, you must apologize to Mr. Joe Jackson.

ASTRID

Like the birds, Mamma!

JOHANNA

You must talk to him.

ASTRID

And Mamma, you're going to be so proud of me!!

JOHANNA

To Mr. Joe Jackson. You must apologize.

ASTRID

He lectured me all the way home....I told him I was sorry.

JOHANNA

So your Papa can hear.

ASTRID

Why can't you be happy for me, Mamma?...

JOHANNA

For your Papa...

ASTRID

So I can be happy?

JOHANNA

Astrid, you must do this.

ASTRID

It's too humiliating.

JOHANNA

Take these to your Papa and Mr. Joe Jackson.

(JOHANNA hands ASTRID two plates of sandwiches).

ASTRID

Mamma, no...

JOHANNA

Go on.

ASTRID

I can't Mamma! Please don't make me!

JOHANNA

I have only a few rules in this house, Astrid Margareta....And one is to show respect to your Papa.

ASTRID

Mamma...

JOHANNA

Mr. Joe Jackson is your Papa's friend.

ASTRID

Please, Mamma, don't make me go back out there.

JOHANNA

The little bird is called to earth. Gå nu. [*Go now*].

(JOHANNA holds the plates out to ASTRID. She finally takes them as the lights slowly fade on the scene).

Scene Six

The Scene: The kitchen, parlor and front porch of the Medin house.

Time: A Sunday afternoon, three months later.

At Rise: HYLDI is at the kitchen table peeling potatoes. ASTRID enters through the back door with a bucket of water which she places in the dry sink under the spout of the brokayen pump.

ASTRID

What time did Mamma say Anna was coming?

HYLDI

Around three. Mamma sent Mr. Joe Jackson to fetch her.

ASTRID

Oh.

HYLDI

Why don't you like Mr. Joe Jackson?

ASTRID

I never said I didn't like him. Where's Emma?

HYLDI

I don't know.

ASTRID

The chickens are loose again.

HYLDI

I didn't do it.

ASTRID

I never say you did!

(she paces while HYLDI works).

He should have gone to Alaska when he said he was going to.

HYLDI

He's leaving tomorrow.

ASTRID

I know that!

HYLDI

You used to like him. He taught you all those things about making pictures.

ASTRID

So.

HYLDI

You learned a lot from him.

ASTRID

(peering into HYLDI's pan)

You know, you don't have to do such a good job, Hyldi.

HYLDI

You're not supposed to leave any peel.

ASTRID

You're not leaving any potato. We'll never get finished at this rate.

HYLDI

Well, we would if you would help more.

ASTRID

Every time I peel one and put it in the pan, you fish it out again and re-do it.

HYLDI

You're not supposed...

ASTRID

"...to leave any peel". Well, if you don't like the way I do it, you can just do them all yourself. We won't eat until tomorrow, but they'll all be perfect. Perfectly bald, and round, and the size of marbles.

HYLDI

You sure are in a crabby mood.

ASTRID

Well, you always have to be so perfect about everything.

HYLDI

Maybe you like getting in trouble all the time. I don't.

ASTRID

She's so unreasonable. It's getting worse and worse. Especially since Anna left.

HYLDI

Especially since you followed Mr. Joe Jackson up into the woods.

ASTRID

She's so unreasonable.

HYLDI

But you just make it worse Why do you always have to argue with her? Just do it. It's a lot easier.

ASTRID

No. Not when she's being unreasonable.

HYLDI

Just like Papa.

ASTRID

Well, you sound just like her. Always nagging me about something. Always reminding me that I'm not perfect. Well, I know I'm not perfect!

HYLDI

I was only trying to help.

ASTRID

Forget it. Just go back to your perfect potatoes. I don't know why she hates me.

HYLDI

She doesn't hate you.

ASTRID

She doesn't want me.

HYLDI

Oh, Astrid...

ASTRID

She wants another Anna. Perfect Anna. Well I'm not Anna. I could never be her even if I wanted to. She's going to push me too far one of these days...

HYLDI

Stop talking like that. You'll make something happen.

ASTRID

Anna hardly ever gets to come here. And when she does come, all she does is moon around talking about the Berlins – What she's going to do with the Berlins. What fine people the Berlins are...

HYLDI

You know what my friend Lena told me?

ASTRID

Oh, Hyldi, not another one of your stories...

HYLDI

My friend Lena says she's going to church with them.

ASTRID

That's impossible.

HYLDI

My friend Lena has a friend who is Episcopal, and Lena says, that she says, that she's seen her there.

ASTRID

She sits with us every Sunday.

HYLDI

The Episcopalians have two services. Lena told me. Anna goes to the early one with them, and then comes over here and goes with us.

ASTRID

Really? With the Berlins?

HYLDI

In their same pew. The front row.

(They hear footsteps on the back porch).

That must be Mamma.

ASTRID

Don't tell her about Anna and the front row, all right?

HYLDI

All right. Why?

(JOHANNA enters, followed by EMMA).

JOHANNA

(to ASTRID)

Du, hun Katya heads for the schoolhouse. Will you ask her to come home?

ASTRID

Mamma, she's a cow. You don't ask a cow to come home.

JOHANNA

Så är du snäll. [*Please*]. (to EMMA) Now go on. I'm listening.

(ASTRID lingers by the door to the summer kitchen).

EMMA

Well, the Indianer came up to the door like they always do, and asked for food, like they always do.

JOHANNA

And?

EMMA

And, so I gave them some bread like you always do. And I gave them the boots that were sitting by the door.

JOHANNA

Those boots of Mr. Joe Jackson?

EMMA

I think so. I mean, yes.

JOHANNA

Uff...

EMMA

I didn't know they were Mr. Joe Jackson's boots, Mamma. I thought they were the lumbermen's from last summer. Mamma, I just did what you did.

JOHANNA

Ja, ja.

EMMA

They gave me this.

(She holds up a small, hand-woven basket).

I think it's pretty.

JOHANNA

Pretty. Ja.

EMMA

Mamma, you weren't here...

JOHANNA

Ja, ja. I know.

(to HYLDI)

Your Papa is not come?

HYLDI

No, Mamma.

EMMA

Mamma, what are we going to do about Mr. Joe Jackson's boots?

ASTRID

He's leaving tomorrow, you know.

EMMA

I know.

HYLDI

He had those boots 'specially made.

EMMA

Is Papa going to be mad?

ASTRID

(menacingly)
Oooh, Emma!

JOHANNA

Uff, your Papa. He will laugh. And he will say, "Come, Mr. Joe Jackson, I buy you another pair!"

(We hear footsteps on the front porch).

EMMA

Here comes somebody!
(She runs out).

ASTRID

Anna's coming to the front door?

HYLDI

She's a guest here now.
(She follows EMMA).

ASTRID

She still lives here!

JOHANNA

(to ASTRID)
Hun Katya waits. And we need some more wood, du.

ASTRID

Yes, Mamma.

(ASTRID exits through the summer kitchen. EMMA and HYLDI reach the front door as JONAS enters. He carries several pine boards).

EMMA

It's Papa!

JONAS

Hallo, liten! Hej du, Hyldi.

HYLDI

Hi, Papa.

JONAS

Where is your Mamma? I have something for her...Johanna? Du? Johanna!

(JONAS enters the kitchen with his boards. He nearly knocks a pot off the stove).

JOHANNA

Pass på, du Jonas! [*Watch out, Jonas*].

JONAS

LoOkay at this, du Johanna. Just pine, but loOkay at how clear. No knots. Not a split. Not a blister. Now, can I finish the shelves. I'll do it today. What time is supper? – Johanna, are you listening to me? You haven't even loOkayed at them.

JOHANNA

Do you know what day this is?

JONAS

What's the matter? I come bearing gifts!

JOHANNA

And making messes.

JONAS

I thought you'd be pleased. You've been wanting me to do it.

JOHANNA

Pleased as juice.

(ASTRID comes up behind him with an armload of wood. JONAS is blocking her path to the woodbox).

ASTRID

It's punch, Mamma. Move please, Papa. Thank you, Papa.

JOHANNA

Ack du Jonas, how could you??

JONAS

What? What did I do??

JOHANNA

We were to eat in the front room when Anna come to visit.

JONAS

And, I said I'd clean it up.

JOHANNA

It's today. She'll be here any time.

JONAS

(a beat)

Well, why didn't anyone tell me?!?

JOHANNA

Du, Jonas!

JONAS

What? So I made a little mistake. Can't a man make a little mistake around here? All right, fine. Fine!

(JONAS storms out through the parlor to the front porch. He is still carrying his boards. He sits on the steps and stewes for a moment, then gets up and returns to the kitchen).

JONAS (continued).

I'll be at Olina's. And I'm taking the team!

(he slams the boards on the table and waits for a response).

Did you hear what I said?

JOHANNA

(without turning).

And you are taking the team.

(JOHANNA resumes her chores. After another moment, JONAS covetously gathers up his boards and stalks out, slamming the door behind him).

ASTRID

Mr. Joe Jackson to Okay the team to fetch Anna.

JOHANNA

He's not going anywhere. It's Sunday.

ASTRID

Mamma, can I go read my boOkay?

JOHANNA

Ja, gå. [*Yes, go*].

(ASTRID grabs a boOkay and runs out to the front porch. JONAS, who has stormed off the porch, returns and sits back down on the steps. He pulls out his pipe and stews).

JONAS

It's Sunday.

ASTIRD

Mr. Joe Jackson toOkay the team, anyway.

JONAS

I am the Papa in this house, but you would not know it. One mistake, du Astrid. So many years ago.

(HYLDI and EMMA run in).

EMMA

They're coming! They're coming!

HYLDI

They just rounded the corner at Johnson's. Anna is sitting right next to him on the buck board.

(ASTRID gets up and starts into the house).

EMMA

Astrid, they're coming!

ASTRID

I heard you.

EMMA

Aren't you going to meet them?

ASTRID

They'll be here. Besides, I don't want to get stuck putting the team away again.

EMMA

What's wrong with her?

HYLDI

Are you going to meet them, Papa?

JONAS

Ja, visst! [*Of course!*]

(They exit. ASTRID returns to the kitchen, and plops down at the kitchen table. JOHANNA tends to her Sunday dinner).

ASTRID

They're here.

JOHANNA

And your Papa has done nothing to clear the parlor.

ASTRID

We can eat in here, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Ja visst. [*All right*]. Kom, get a new cloth.

ASTRID

What's wrong with this one? It's Anna, Mamma. Not some guest.

JOHANNA

And Mr. Joe Jackson-his last meal with us-and it's Sunday. Come, help me now. And then set the table. Why aren't you out there to put away the team?

ASTRID

Hyldi's there. And Papa. Why do I always have to be the one to do all the work?

JOHANNA

You like taking care of the animals.

ASTRID

As you like taking care of old Mrs. Battle.

JOHANNA

You are sour today.

ASTRID

(a beat).
Mamma, do you love Papa?

JOHANNA

Oh, not that cloth, du Astrid! We're having guests.

ASTRID

Anna lives here!

(ANNA and MR. JOE JACKSON led by EMMA and HYLDI enter and approach the porch. EMMA runs into the kitchen, followed by HYLDI. ANNA stays in the parlor fussing with one of her presents. JONAS and MR. JOE JACKSON settle on the porch to smOkaye).

EMMA

She's here! She's here! And she brought presents!

HYLDI

LoOkay Astrid. LoOkay what she brought me.
(She wears a fancy embroidered apron).

EMMA

Mamma, see? It's a doll. And loOkay; she's awake on this side, but you turn her over, and she's asleep.

JOHANNA

Oh, ja. [*Oh yes, I see*].

EMMA

See, Astrid?

HYLDI

Go into the parlor, Astrid. Anna has something for you.

ASTRID

For me?

EMMA

Come on, Astrid!

HYLDI

I'll finish the table for you.

(ASTRID enters the parlor).

ANNA

This is for you.

ASTRID
You didn't have to get me anything.

ANNA
I know. Open it.

EMMA
I know what it is.

ANNA
Emma...

EMMA
It's a camera.

ANNA
Emma!...

ASTRID
Oh, Anna, you can't afford this.

ANNA
It's from Papa and Mr. Joe Jackson, too.

EMMA
And me!

ANNA
And Emma. We all chipped in.

EMMA
It's for your birthday, only it's early 'cause Mr. Joe Jackson is leaving tomorrow.

ASTRID
Thank you, Emma.
(she runs out onto the porch).
Oh, Papa!... Thank you, Papa!

JONAS
That's a new kind of camera. There are a hundred pictures inside that box.

ASTRID
Inside here, already?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Instead of glass plates; they're recorded on special paper.

ASTRID

Paper??

MR. JOE JACKSON

One continuous piece. You take a picture, and then pull up this wire to advance the roll. And when you come to the end of the roll, you send the entire camera back to Rochester, New York, and Mr. George Eastman will develop it, make prints, and then send the pictures back to you, along with your camera loaded with another hundred pictures.

JONAS

What do you think of that, listen? Pretty Swell, ja?

ASTRID

But I know how to develop your glass plates. Couldn't I learn to develop this new paper too?

MR. JOE JACKSON

Well now, I was just thinking about that...

(MR. JOE JACKSON pulls a small book from his coat, and hands it to ASTRID).

ASTRID

THE NEW CHEMISTRY OF PHOTOGRAPHY. Oh, Mr. Joe Jackson!

MR. JOE JACKSON

George has come up with something new. Celluoid. Pretty soon you'll be able to load it yourself, in daylight!

JONAS

We live in a wondrous time, do we not?

ASTRID

Is it all ready to go?

MR. JOE JACKSON

All ready.

(ASTRID aims the camera at JONAS and MR. JOE JACKSON. JONAS takes the cue and puts his arm affectionately around his friend and smiles).

JONAS

"Famous Klondike photographer Mr. Joe Jackson, wishes a fond farewell to friends in the states, June the sixteenth, Nineteen-hundred and two".

(ASTRID takes the picture).

ASTRID

Now, I want to take everybody's picture!

(She runs into the kitchen).

Anna! I'm going to take everybody's picture. LoOkay, Mamma. I have my own camera now!

(to ANNA)

Have you given Mamma her gift yet?

ANNA

I was waiting for you.

ASTRID

Come on, Mamma...

(She ushers JOHANNA into the parlor).

JOHANNA

Anna gives you this?

ASTRID

And Mr. Joe Jackson, and Papa...

(JOHANNA loOkays with consternation to JONAS and MR. JOE JACKSON who stand in the doorway watching the scene).

ASTRID

Anna has something for you.

(ANNA holds out the box to JOHANNA).

JOHANNA

Å, Nej du... [*No, now...*]. What is it?

ANNA

It's a present. For you, Mamma.

JOHANNA

It was bad enough that you should buy for all your sisters...

ANNA

Come, Mamma. Open it.

EMMA and HYLDI

Open it!

(JOHANNA unties the strings of the box. She pulls out a pretty straw hat).

JOHANNA

Ack, du Anna...

HYLDI

It's beautiful, Mamma! Try it on.

EMMA

Try it on!

ASTRID

Put it on, Mamma. And then come out onto the porch. I'm going to take your picture.

JOHANNA

You should not have spent your hard-earned money on this.

EMMA

Don't you like it, Mamma?

JOHANNA

It is beautiful. Can't you take it back?

ANNA

It's for you, Mamma. I want you to have it.

JOHANNA

It's very pretty.

ANNA

I thought it would be practical, too. I know you like to be practical. There were fancier ones, but I thought this loOkayed like you.

ASTRID

Now, everybody out onto the porch! Come on, Mamma...

(Everyone but JOHANNA and ANNA exits. ASTRID poses her family on the porch. In the house, JOHANNA carefully puts on her new hat and studies herself in the mirror).

ANNA

It loOkays nice on you, Mamma.

(JOHANNA turns and loOkays hopefully toward ANNA).

Like any fine lady in town.

(JOHANNA hesitates; loOkays at herself once more, and then takes off the hat and returns it to its box).

ANNA (continued).

Mamma?

(JOHANNA retrieves her old hat. MR. JOE JACKSON starts to leave the porch).

EMMA

Mr. Joe Jackson should be in this picture.

JONAS

Yes. Come, Mr. Joe Jackson.

(ANNA returns to the porch, followed by JOHANNA, wearing her old hat. She stands by HYLDI, who stands by EMMA. The two stand between their parents).

ASTRID

Mamma!...

ANNA

Astrid, don't...

ASTRID

All right; Mamma, you need to move over a bit; you're out of the picture.

(The picture is taken. JOHANNA returns immediately to the house, takes off her hat, and puts on her apron. ANNA, HYLDI and EMMA follow her in).

ANNA

I have some news, Mamma. The Berlins have asked me to accompany them to Zenith this summer. I'm going with them on their holiday, Mamma. Isn't that good news?

JOHANNA

(to HYLDI and EMMA)

Isn't there work to be done to finish the supper?

HYLDI

Yes, Mamma. Come on, Emma.

(HYLDI and EMMA exit).

ANNA

You don't approve.

JOHANNA

I have not said that.

ANNA

I thought you'd be happy for me.

JOHANNA

You are her Mamma's maid servant.

ANNA

They have asked me to accompany them for the summer, Mamma. I'll be Kate's companion.

JOHANNA

But her servant.

ANNA

Kate is kind to me. She likes my company. And Mrs. Berlin encourages it. What's wrong with that?

JOHANNA

You forget your place.

ANNA

Mamma, this is Edmonds, Washington. A modern town, in modern America. They're nice to me.

JOHANNA

Just like your Papa. Always playing up to them. And for what? For any kind word, or scrap of praise. LoOkay at your suit.

ANNA

Don't you think it loOkays nice on me?

JOHANNA

Where did it come from?

ANNA

Kate gave it to me.

JOHANNA

Miss Berlin?

ANNA

It didn't quite fit, but I tailored it. Don't you think I did a good job? Mamma, I thought this is what you wanted for us. To do well. To get ahead. You treat me as though I have brought you shame. I work hard for Mrs. Berlin-for you, Mamma. So she will think well of me - of you.

(ASTRID has entered the parlor from the porch. She holds out the new hat).

ASTRID

Mamma, it's a gift.

JOHANNA

(finally)
It's too fine, du.

(She puts the hat back into it's box and ties up the strings).

ANNA

It's all right, Astrid.

ASTRID

It's not all right. She's been planning this for a long time, Mamma. She even asked me to sneak into town one day to loOkay at it. She wanted to make sure you would like it.

ANNA

Astrid, please...

ASTRID

I got in trouble that day I came into town. But I thought it was worth it because it was going to be such a grand surprise. You were going to be so pleased.

JOHANNA

It is not you who should buy me these things.

ANNA

You won't buy them for yourself.

ASTRID

It's Papa, isn't it? Papa should have bought you the hat.

ANNA

Astrid...

ASTRID

Well, he didn't. Anna did. Why can't you just accept that? Why does it always have to come back to Papa?

ANNA

Astrid, please...

ASTRID

I doubt Papa would ever think to bring you a silly hat. I know I wouldn't. But Anna cares about such things. She bought you that hat because she saw that you admired it in Mrs. Juergen's window. And she knew you would never buy it for yourself...

JOHANNA

Det är nog, Astrid. [*That's enough, Astrid*].

ASTRID

But Papa brings you other things. The clock, and the china cupboard. But they're always the wrong things, at the wrong times. You never see how hard he tries to please you. It's all we want, Mamma. To please you. But we never can. No matter what we do. You always find a crack.

ANNA

Astrid...

ASTRID

Well, I give up.
(She starts out).

ANNA

Astrid, where are you going?

ASTRID

I don't know.

(ASTRID runs out of the house and off the porch).

ANNA

Mamma, say something! Astrid. Astrid?! – Mamma? Aren't you going to call her back? Astrid!! Mamma, call her back!

JONAS' VOICE

(off)
Astrid? Astrid, where are you going?? Astrid!...

Mamma?
ANNA

Mrs. Peabody has found her a job.
JOHANNA

Astrid told you that?
ANNA

Olina.
JOHANNA

And you're really going to let her go like that?
ANNA

I let you go.
JOHANNA

I don't understand you, Mamma.
ANNA

No.
JOHANNA

(JONAS enters with ASTRID in tow).

JONAS
Mr. Joe Jackson makes his apologies. He has an early boat in the morning and still some packing to do.

ASTRID
I'm going with him.

(ASTRID struggles to be free from JONAS. He holds her firm).

JONAS
What is this, Johanna? My Astrid says you do not want her in your home any longer.

JOHANNA
I do not send her away.

JONAS
Tell her you want her to stay.

JOHANNA

If she is not happy here...

JONAS

Tell her you want her to stay!

ASTRID

It's all right, Papa. Just let me go...

JONAS

Johanna don't bring her into our quarrelShe has done you no harm. Tell her!

JOHANNA

You are the precious Papa. You tell her.

JONAS

She is not waiting to hear from me, Johanna.

JOHANNA

You are the Papa.

JONAS

I am the Papa when it suits you. I am the Papa on Sundays when you need someone to sit next to in the pew for public show. I am the Papa when your children need a name to point to. I can boast that I am the Papa out there, but here, in this house. What am I to you, Johanna? – You never needed me, Johanna. You never believed in me.

JOHANNA

You lost everything. Our farm. Our home.

JONAS

Oh, Johanna! Why could you never believe in me??

JOHANNA

My home.

JONAS

You have a home, Johanna. LoOkay! LoOkay at the house you live in! LoOkay at this woodwork. Cherry. Mahogany. Someday this will be a showplace!

JOHANNA

Everything so fine and fancy, but nothing finished and nothing in working order.

JONAS

Finer than we could have hoped for.

JOHANNA

We hoped for a farm on the Hood Canal. We HAD a farm on the Hood Canal. Three hundred acres. Good soil. I got the letter still.

JONAS

Johanna...

JOHANNA

And you lost it.

JONAS

Yes! Johanna, can't you forget the past for a moment?

JOHANNA

I left them. My warm clothes, my sturdy boots. A hat that suited me...

JONAS

You never let us talk about it.

JOHANNA

All right. Talk! Talk!! What is there to say? You toOkay me from my home. My family.

JONAS

You left a father who beat you.

JOHANNA

I left everything!

JONAS

You weren't forced to come with me, Johanna. You chose me. There was a time you were full of hope too.

JOHANNA

You toOkay that hope, and you squandered it in a game of cards.

JONAS

A fixed game, du Johanna.

JOHANNA

It is lost to us even so.

JONAS

A fixed game, Johanna! There is no justice here to one who knows no English.

JOHANNA

And so you learned their English. Their rules.

JONAS

Yes! To get by. To make a life for us.

JOHANNA

And Mr. Golden America, where is your justice now? You are still the lowest man on the crew. You are still that fool Swede.

ASTRID

Mamma...

JOHANNA

No! I can't tell you!

ASTRID

Mamma...

JOHANNA

Any of you. I can't make this life any easier for you. Ask your father. This was his idea. This is his golden America.

JONAS

Did you ever love me, Johanna? Johanna, I'm asking you. Was there ever a time you loved me?
(beat. JOHANNA is silent).

So be it, Johanna. But please, don't swallow your children in your hatred of me and this life.

JOHANNA

Du, Jonas...

JONAS

Talk to them. Tell them, Johanna. Tell your children.

JOHANNA

Jonas...

JONAS

Don't worry, I will still fill you pew on Sundays.

(JONAS exits through the front door).

JOHANNA

Jonas!...

(He is gone. There is a long silence).

Astrid... JOHANNA (continued).

Yes, Mamma. ASTRID

Olina tells me Mrs. Peabody has arranged for you to work for her Mrs. Curtis in Seattle. JOHANNA

Yes. ASTRID

I want to tell you, Astrid...She is a lady. She will expect politeness. And obedience. JOHANNA

Yes, Mamma. ASTRID

You must work hard, and control your temper. JOHANNA

Mamma... ASTRID

You don't want to bring shame to your family. JOHANNA

Mamma!?... ASTRID

Yes. JOHANNA

It's just that I can't stay here anymore, Mamma. ASTRID

No. JOHANNA

Good bye, Mamma. ASTRID

(ASTRID leaves. A long moment passes).

JOHANNA

(to ANNA)

Find your Papa and Mr. Joe Jackson and feed them some supper.

ANNA

Yes, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Astrid won't be leaving until tomorrow.

ANNA

I'll find her.

EMMA

Mamma?...

JOHANNA

Go with Anna, liten. [*Little one*].

ANNA

Come on, Emma...

(EMMA goes out with ANNA. HYLDI moves out of the shadows. JOHANNA holds her tattered hat).

JOHANNA

Even when it was new, the fine ladies sneered. That country woman putting on airs. But I had to wear something. That first winter, Hyldi, I cut up all my fine skirts for quilts to keep us warm. Only a shack it was, with a dirt floor.

HYLDI

Yes, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Squatters, we were, or anyway, no better.

(HYLDI approaches her mother and puts her arms around her).

JOHANNA (continued).

The ribbons are gone now. But in its way it has grown to suit me. I know who I am in this hat, Hyldi.

(beat).

I don't know how to give this up, liten.

(The lights slowly fade).

(There is a music transition, and then we see a second short series of ASTRID's photographs in projections, beginning with the two she toOkay during the previous scene. These photos, taken with the Eastman box camera are round images. The photos are:

- JONAS, EMMA, and MR. JOE JACKSON on the porch; JONAS smiling, his arm around a surprised MR. JOE JACKSON; EMMA in the center, glad to be in the picture.
- The MEDIN FAMILY, sans ASTRID, with MR. JOE JACKSON; JONAS and JOHANNA, EMMA and HYLDI between them, gaze off in opposite directions.
- A "close-up" of JONAS' china cupboard.
- JONAS' workshop in early evening light. Sun from a window falls in rays across the unfinished china cupboard.

The music ends and the last picture lingers for a moment and then slowly fades out).

Scene Seven

The Scene: The Medin home. There is a pile of men's clothes, clean and neatly folded, on the kitchen table. In the parlor, JONAS' projects have been pushed aside and a make-shift sitting room has been set up. The china cupboard remains, yet unfinished.

Time: Late Fall. Two years later.

At Rise: HYLDI, EMMA and ANNA sit on the front porch. JOHANNA cleans a pair of men's muddy boots with a wire brush at the kitchen table. All are in their Sunday best. HYLDI wears ASTRID's Scene One dress and EMMA is in HYLDI's.

ANNA

She's in there scrubbing his boots.

HYLDI

That's all she's been doing.

EMMA

For three days. Scrubbing his boots. Darning his socks. Cleaning and mending all his things. The clothes they brought him home in, even.

HYLDI

So they're decent to give away.

I wish Astrid were here.

EMMA

(There is a long silence).

Here comes somebody up the hill.

HYLDI

Do you think it's the company man?

EMMA

He's wearing a suit, but loOkay at those short pants, and the boots.

HYLDI

I'll go tell Mamma.

ANNA

It's Carl Nettles!

EMMA

Papa's friend?

HYLDI

(ANNA enters the kitchen).

He's coming up the hill, Mamma. Mamma? Did you hear what I said?

ANNA

Ja. Jag hörde. [*Yes. I heard*].

JOHANNA

(A young man, CARL NETTLES, approaches the porch. He carries a sheaf of papers).

Hi, Carl.

EMMA

He's here, Mamma. Aren't you going to take off your apron?

ANNA

(JOHANNA enters the parlor. She does not take off her apron. ANNA exits to porch).

MR. NETTLES

I'm here to see Mrs. Medin. Official business of the Buchner...

We know why you're here.

HYLDI

(ANNA comes out onto the porch).

Won't you come in, Mr. Nettles?

ANNA

Thankyou.

MR. NETTLES

Mother, you know Mr. Nettles.

ANNA

(JOHANNA nods her head in greeting).

Please, sit down.
(They all sit).

MR. NETTLES

First of all, Mrs. Medin, on behalf of Buchner and Company, let me extend my most sincere condolences – Does she speak English?

JOHANNA

Yes. I understand.

MR. NETTLES

Fine, fine. That's fine. Now, Mrs. Medin, as you know, the Buchner company wants to provide Mr. Medin's legitimate heirs, that is, Mr. Medin's legal wife and legitimate children, with a proper pension.

JOHANNA

Ja.

(OLINA enters the kitchen. She carries a cake. She hears the voices in the parlor, and cautiously approaches the doorway to listen).

MR. NETTLES

Yes. Well, there is a matter of the certificate of marriage...

JOHANNA

What is this?

MR. NETTLES

I need to see your certificate of marriage to...

OLINA

(entering the parlor).
What??

MR. NETTLES

Just routine, you understand.

OLINA

Hello, Carl.

MR. NETTLES

Mrs. Johnson.

OLINA

Du! Olina.

MR. NETTLES

Now, if I could see your certificate of marriage...

OLINA

Carl, surely you have known Johanna long enough...

MR. NETTLES

It's just a formality, Mrs. Johnson.

OLINA

Olina. Please.

MR. NETTLES

Olina. Now, Mrs. Medin, if I may just see your papers...

OLINA

Carl...

MR. NETTLES

I'm sorry, Mrs. Medin. But I must ask to see your papers. It's just a formality you understand. To establish...as a guarantee...What I mean, Mrs. Medin, is that I have this paperwork. I need to complete these forms to put the pension in effect. I have these papers, see...
(He holds them out, helplessly).

OLINA

Under "married" and "children", put "Yes"!

MR. NETTLES

Olina, please. Mrs. Medin, have you a certificate of marriage? – Mrs. Medin?

JOHANNA

Nej.

MR. NETTLES

What was that? No? Well, any other papers that would establish you as his...

JOHANNA

Nej. No.

MR. NETTLES

Mrs. Medin, we really do want to honor your request for a widow's pension, but if...

OLINA

Just what is it you are trying to say, Mr. Nettles??

MR. NETTLES

Olina, please...

OLINA

Mrs. Johnson to you, Mr. Buchner Company-man!

MR. NETTLES

Please, I'm trying to...

OLINA

I know what you are trying to do.

MR. NETTLES

I just need to confirm...

OLINA

Of course they were married!

MR. NETTLES

Yes, of course. But I need some verification...

OLINA

These are her children!

MR. NETTLES

Yes, but...

OLINA

Mrs. Medin has said that she does not have the paper, Mr. Nettles.

(Speaking to the children now).

And that is because she and Mr. Medin were married in the old country.

MR. NETTLES

Well, a document from there-Sweden is it?-will be fine, I'm sure – Uh, have you such a document, Mrs. Medin?

JOHANNA

No.

OLINA

I'm sure you have something like that, Johanna.

JOHANNA

No. I'm sorry.

OLINA

From the old country, Johanna. In Swedish. På Svenska, du! Han läser inte Svenska! [*In Swedish. He doesn't read Swedish!*].

JOHANNA

I got no papers.

OLINA

Johanna!

MR. NETTLES

I see. Well...

OLINA

Forget your foolish pride for one day, du Johanna!...

MR. NETTLES

I'm sorry, Mrs. Medin. If you do find any papers that can establish your claim, we'd be happy to loOkay at them. I'm sure you understand...

OLINA

No, Mr. Company-man, she does not understand.

JOHANNA

Olina, please...

OLINA

(to JOHANNA)

If you will not defend yourself...

(to MR. NETTLES).

She is the wife of Jonas Medin, who you put to death in your muddy sewer. And these are her children! She will have your miserable pension.

MR. NETTLES

I'm truly sorry.

OLINA

Not good enough, Mr. Nettles.

JOHANNA

Du, Olina. Vär så snäll... [*Please*].

OLINA

How dare you question her place in front of these children! I was at that wedding. At Michealmas it was. The Sunday service. '78, du Johanna? Or was it '79? I remember it was unseasonably warm. Your Mamma was beautiful.

JOHANNA

Du – Olina...

MR. NETTLES

Are you saying you were a witness, Mrs. Johnson?

OLINA

(seizes the idea)

A witness, yes!

MR. NETTLES

Well, I suppose a witness...

OLINA

Of course! I'd be happy to sign. I'm glad we could work this out, Carl.

MR. NETTLES

Yes.

OLINA

(signing the papers)

I was sure you didn't want to cheat Mrs. Medin and her children out of their rightful due.

MR. NETTLES

No. Of course not.

OLINA

There you are, Mr. Nettles. And here, don't forget your papers. I'll see you to the door.

MR. NETTLES

It shouldn't have been Medin. He was a good man, Mrs. Medin. Always with the jOkayes and such. Always one to help out. It shouldn't have been him....I'm real sorry, Ma'am.

(OLINA escorts MR. NETTLES out).

EMMA

I didn't know you knew Mrs. Johnson in Sweden, Mamma...Were you and Papa married there? You never talk about it, Mamma.

ANNA

(to EMMA and HYLDI)

Don't you two have something you could be doing?

HYLDI

Yes. Come on, Emma.

(HYLDI and EMMA exit. OLINA returns. She studies JOHANNA).

OLINA

What if I had not come? Would you have let it go? - The money that is due to you as his widow; as the mother of his children? Everything must always be so difficult for you, du, Johanna. Why? Isn't losing Jonas in this horrible way enough suffering for you? You must lose his pension too?- the only way he has now of supporting you. All to protect your foolish, old-world pride.

JOHANNA

I was always the sour one, the nay-sayer. I know you all liked him. His friendly ways.

ANNA

Mamma...

JOHANNA

He learned their language, their customs to please them. But they laughed at him behind his back. Jonas Medin, the rock farmer, the easy mark. "Jonas Medin will do it." "Let Medin do it." Any distasteful job. Any job too low for the Americans. "That fool Medin will do it."

ANNA

Mamma, why can't you just...

JOHANNA

He volunteered, your father.

OLINA

What??

JOHANNA

They knew it was dangerous. Because of the rain-the mud. They had asked one of the younger men. Johnny Beck, who had no wife, no children. Your father volunteered to take his place. He insisted they let him go down.

ANNA

Why?

JOHANNA

I told him not to go in. He was sick. He wasn't strong. But he went in anyway. And then, doing his own job wasn't enough. He had to impress them. He had to take on another man's job. A younger man. With no wife and family.

OLINA

He was a good man, Johanna.

JOHANNA

With his family to support. With his knowledge of the dangers. To show off for his fine American friends.

OLINA

Because he could no longer show off for you?? – You mean to exact fairness from the world, Johanna, but it is your children who pay. Astrid, at the funeral. Anna had to choose between comforting her, and standing by you. That's not a fair choice, Johanna.

JOHANNA

You do not know – Barkeeper.

OLINA

(stung)

I am finished Johanna. Jonas is gone. Sweet, stupid Jonas, who loved you and made one horrible mistake.

(She waits for a response).

Good bye, Johanna.

(OLINA exits. JOHANNA follows her out, but cannot call her back. She stays on the porch and sits. ANNA begins to look through her father's tool chest. We hear the voices of HYLDI and EMMA off, in the summer kitchen).

HYLDI'S VOICE

Honestly, Emma! How much more work is it to match up the seams? Just loOkay at this.

EMMA'S VOICE

Oh, Hyldi...

(HYLDI and EMMA enter carrying laundry baskets).

HYLDI

Don't "Oh, Hyldi" me! One simple task. I asked you to hang out the laundry.

EMMA

And I did.

HYLDI

But loOkay at it! It's ruined! I'm going to have to wash it all over again.

EMMA

Hyldi...

HYLDI

LoOkay, how much more work is it, to take these seams,
(she demonstrates)

Like this, line them up, smooth them out, like this, and then hang them up?

EMMA

Lots.

HYLDI

And then, when you take them off the line, all you have to do is fold them, like this. See how simple that is? We'll never catch up if you don't learn.

EMMA

We'll never catch up because you're so particular.

HYLDI

People walk by, and they see things hung up like that, and they'll think we're not decent.

EMMA

Hyldi, they can't even see it from the street.

HYLDI

They can too.

EMMA

When they come snooping around in our back yard.

HYLDI

When they make deliveries.

EMMA

We never have deliveries.

HYLDI

Well, we might. Or somebody might get lost. And if they did they'd see.

EMMA

Hyldi, it's just laundry!

HYLDI

You're going to ruin everything.

EMMA

Why are you making such a big fuss about this?

HYLDI

Because if you don't do it right, you'll get sent away, like Astrid!!

(They are both shocked, and stop for a moment).

EMMA

Oh, Hyldi...

HYLDI

I miss Astrid. And Papa.

EMMA

I know. Do you really want to wash all this over again?

HYLDI

It'd make it easier.

EMMA

All right.

(EMMA and HYLDI gather up the laundry and exit with their baskets. JOHANNA crosses to JONAS' unfinished china cupboard. ANNA has been sifting through the contents of a small carved wooden box).

JOHANNA

He never finished anything.

ANNA

He finished this.

JOHANNA

Where did you find that?

ANNA

It was here in Papa's tool chest. It's full of pictures and Astrid's things.

JOHANNA

(after a time).

My first Christmas here; his gift to me. It rained. We lived in a shack near the tide flats and the roof leaked. Olina came, and her Lars. And we huddled around a smOkayy fire and ate clam chowder and corn bread. Such a mean meal; I was embarrassed. But Olina and Lars did not seem to be. And your Papa – We sat in mud, du. Water poured from leaks in the roof, and we ate black smOkaye with our chowder. He didn't seem to even notice. May I see? It's only boxwood, but...

ANNA

It's beautiful, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Ja. *[Yes]*.

ANNA

Mamma, Mr. Nettles...When he asked you...

JOHANNA

(after a time)

It wasn't a grand wedding feast. My Papa was sour. He did not approve. My Mamma had died that before spring. There was no sun that day. It was dark and cold. Only your Papa glowed with any light. His face shaved close, and scrubbed pink, it shone.

ANNA

But when Mr. Nettles asked you...

JOHANNA

He toOkay all the papers with him when he sailed. To get more land, he said. A married man in America can get half again as much. All the papers were together.

ANNA

It was lost when Papa lost the farm?

JOHANNA

The deed to our farm, our marriage paper, my letters to him that year we were apart. They were all together.

(She opens the box and finds a few photographs among the rocks, buttons and other souvenirs of childhood).

The report cards Astrid said was lost.

(She lets go a small laugh).

ANNA

Mamma...

JOHANNA

How long can you stay?

ANNA

Until Sunday.

JOHANNA

She is generous.

ANNA

Yes.

(This hangs in the air for a few moments. ASTRID has entered and approached the front porch. HYLDI and EMMA see her as they round the house from the side yard).

HYLDI

Astrid! Emma, it's Astrid!...

EMMA

Come on in! They'll be so surprised!

(JOHANNA starts for her kitchen as EMMA charges up the steps).

ASTRID

Emma, wait!

EMMA

What?

ASTRID

Just tell her I'm here, all right? I'll wait out here.

EMMA

All right. Mamma! Astrid's here...

HYLDI

I've missed you so much...

EMMA

Did you hear what I said, Mamma?

ASTRID

Thanks for coming to tell me.

JOHANNA

Ja.

(Unsure, JOHANNA remains in the kitchen doorway).

HYLDI

Mamma sent me.

ASTRID

(to HYLDI)
Mamma?...

EMMA

(to JOHANNA)
Mamma?...

ANNA

Mamma, Astrid should have been with us.

JOHANNA

Ja. She should have been.

(HYLDI has entered the parlor and stands by EMMA).

ANNA

Mamma, She's here now. Will you come out and greet her?

(JOHANNA turns and looks at her children; hesitates in the doorway, then turns away. ANNA leads EMMA onto the porch. HYLDI stays attentive to her mother).

JOHANNA

Gå nu, Hyldi. [*Go now, Hyldi*]

(HYLDI follows ANNA and EMMA out onto the porch. ASTRID is sitting on the steps, waiting. ASTRID and ANNA embrace).

ANNA

I wanted to see you...

ASTRID

I know.

(They sit. JOHANNA lingers in the parlor. There is a moment of awkward silence between the sisters).

ANNA

How are you?

ASTRID

Fine! My land lady is very sweet. She calls us "her girls"...

EMMA

It must be nice to take pictures all day.

ASTRID

(beat)

Oh, Emma. I work all day in a darkroom with six other girls printing Mr. Curtis's pictures.

HYLDI

Oh, Astrid, your hands! Your beautiful hands...

ASTRID

The chemicals...

HYLDI

They're so rough and cracked...

EMMA

Astrid, they're all yellow...

ASTRID

We never know when the orders are going to come in. Some days it's twelve hours at a stretch with our hands in the trays. I might as well be working at the fish cannery.

(There is a long silence. JOHANNA comes to the doorway).

EMMA

Come out, Mamma.

(After a moment, JOHANNA turns to go).

ASTRID

Please.

JOHANNA

I don't have any fine words for you.

ASTRID

Mamma, you don't have to say anything. You don't have to do anything. Just come out.

ANNA

Please, Mamma. We just want to be together, for the short time we have.

ASTRID

Please, Mamma.

(JOHANNA hesitates, then makes a hasty retreat to her kitchen. The girls huddle together on the porch. ASTRID breaks away and returns to the house).

ASTRID

I'm leaving now Mamma.

JOHANNA

Ja så. Farväl, då. [*farewell*].

ASTRID

Mamma, don't say "farväl." Say, "I'll see you."

JOHANNA

Farewell to you, my dearest daughter.

ASTRID

Mamma, why can't we just be a family??

JOHANNA

You know you are welcome to live in this house.

ASTRID

Mamma, I live in Seattle now. I have a job there.

JOHANNA

And you are happy?

ASTRID

I have to stay there, Mamma.

JOHANNA

Ja.

(goes to her hutch and returns with a small jar).

Take this for your hands. Rub it in good. Every night before you go to bed. And then wrap them in soft rags. You got any?

(JOHANNA retrieves some carefully folded white flannel rags from her hutch storehouse and hands them to ASTRID. A beat).

JOHANNA (continued)..

Det var det. [*That is it, then*].

ASTRID

(She gives her mother a quick embrace)

Goodbye Mamma. Hyldi...

HYLDI

Goodbye Astrid.

(ASTRID hugs HYLDI; runs out onto the porch. She hugs EMMA and ANNA goodbye).

ASTRID

Goodbye Emma...

ANNA

I'll come see you. I'll walk you to the gate.

(ASTRID and ANNA start out. A beat).

EMMA

(standing alone on the porch).
What about me?!?

(They stop, return to the porch and gather up EMMA. HYLDI comes out of the house, though she stays on the porch. JOHANNA witnesses the scene from inside the house).

ANNA

I'll take you with me to visit her. Maybe when school gets out. You and Hyldi.

Mamma, too?

EMMA

Sure. Mamma, too...

ASTRID

(HYLDI starts to follow, then stops).

Astrid, can I help you print your pictures when I come visit you?

EMMA

We'll see.

ASTRID

That means yes!

EMMA

(automatically)
That means – We'll see.

ASTRID

(They exit. JOHANNA sits at the kitchen table. HYLDI approaches her mother; puts her arms around her).

Min lilla stadeare. [*My poor Hyldi*]. Go with them. Go with your sisters.

JOHANNA

It's all right, Mamma. I want to stay here with you.

HYLDI

No. Go on, now. You can still catch them up.

JOHANNA

It's "Catch up with them," Mamma.

HYLDI

Gå, nu! [*Go, now*].

JOHANNA

You don't want me here, Mamma?

HYLDI

(a beat)
No – I don't want you here.

JOHANNA

(JOHANNA turns away from HYLDI; she picks up JONAS' carved box for mooring).

HYLDI

Mamma? Yes, Mamma.

(HYLDI starts out. JOHANNA, still clutching the box, stands by the table, having regained at least the outline of her stoic posture. As the lights begin to fade, HYLDI stops on the porch. She looks off toward the road, then back toward the kitchen. Unsure, she finally sits on the steps of the porch. The lights shift into the sepia light of the photographs. Music is heard, and then the lights slowly fade on the scene).

End of Play.