

Jay
Pg. 7-8

ACT I

Scene One

(Scene: Yonkers, New York...1942.)

(An apartment that sits just above "Kurnitz's Kandy Store"... It consists of a living room, dining room, a small kitchen, one bathroom, and two bedrooms. The entrance door leads from downstairs directly to the candy store.)

(At rise: About 6:30 in the evening on a hot, sultry day in August. It's still quite light outside. A fan blows in the living room.)

(Two young BOYS are in the living room. One, ARTHUR KURNITZ, about thirteen and a half, sits on an old armchair, looking apprehensive. He is wearing an old woolen suit, his only one, with knickered pants, a shirt, tie, long socks, and brown shoes.)

(The other boy is his brother, JAY KURNITZ, not quite sixteen. He sits on the sofa, in a suit as well, but with long pants, shirt, tie, and shiny black shoes. He looks more sullen and angry than apprehensive.)

(ARTY keeps wiping his sweaty brow with his handkerchief.)

JAY. I hate coming here, don't you?

ARTY. *(In front of fan.)* It's hot. I'm so hot.

JAY. I'd hate coming here if I was cool. Pop doesn't even like to come and it's his own mother... I was so afraid of her when I was a kid. She'd come out of that door with

a limp and a cane and looked like she was going to kill you. When I was five, I drew a picture of her and called it "Frankenstein's Grandma."

ARTY. Did she ever see it?

JAY. If she did, you'd be an only child today. Pop said she could swing her cane so fast, she could have been one of the greatest golfers in the world.

ARTY. All I remember was, I hated kissing her. It felt like putting your lips on a wrinkled ice cube.

JAY. Yeah, she's cold all right. She was the only one at Mom's funeral who didn't cry... I wonder what Pop's talking to her so long for.

ARTY. Because she's deaf in one ear, isn't she?

JAY. Yeah... Did you ever notice there's something wrong with *everyone* on Pop's side of the family? Mom used to tell me that.

ARTY. She didn't tell me. Like who?

JAY. Like all of them. Like Aunt Bella... She's a little – (*Points to his head.*) – you know – closed for repairs.

ARTY. I don't care. I like her. Nicer than "hot house" Grandma.

JAY. I didn't say she wasn't nice. But she's got marbles rolling around up there... Mom said she got that way because when she was a kid, Grandma kept hitting her in the head every time she did something stupid... which only made her stupider.

ARTY. (*Lays on the floor, in front of the sofa.*) She wasn't stupid at making great ice cream sodas.

JAY. Hooray! Wonderful! She's thirty-five years old and she can make ice cream sodas. They don't give you a high school diploma for getting the cherry on top of the whipped cream.

ARTY. She went to high school?

JAY. A little. She missed the first year because she couldn't find it.