

Harry & Mel

Edna. Alright, Mel . . . I'm sorry if I upset you. (She turns and goes off into the bedroom. He turns, crosses to the door and opens it. Harry stands there, carrying an attache case.)

HARRY. Hello, Mel . . . Alright if I come in?

MEL. (Surprised.) Sure, Harry, sure. I didn't know you were in New York.

HARRY. (Speaks softly.) I had some business and besides, I wanted to talk to you. How you feeling? Alright?

MEL. Don't be so solemn, Harry. It's not a hospital room. I'm alright. (Harry enters, Mel closes door.)

HARRY. I brought you some apples from the country. (He opens attache case.) Wait'll you taste these. (Takes out apples from case.) You always loved apples, I remember . . . Are you allowed to eat them now?

MEL. Apples don't affect the mind, Harry. They're not going to drive me crazy. Thank you. That's very nice of you.

HARRY. Is Edna here?

MEL. Yeah, she's in the tub. She's not feeling very well.

HARRY. It's alright. She doesn't want to see me. I understand.

MEL. It's not that, Harry. She's very tired.

HARRY. The woman doesn't like me. It's alright. The whole world can't love you . . . I feel badly that it's my brother's wife, but that's what makes horse racing. I'm only staying two minutes. I wanted to deliver this in person and then I'll go.

MEL. You came eight miles to bring me six apples? Harry, that's very sweet but it wasn't necessary.

HARRY. Not the apples, Mel. I have something a little more substantial than apples. (Reaches in pocket and takes out a check.) Here. This is for you and Edna . . . The apples are separate. (Mel takes the check and looks at it.)

MEL. What's this?

HARRY. It's a check. It's the money. Go buy yourself

a summer camp. (Good naturedly.) Go. July and August take care of six hundred running noses. Have a good time. (He gets up to go.)

MEL. Harry, this is twenty-five thousand dollars.

HARRY. Your sisters and I contributed equally, fifty-fifty. I'm telling them about it tomorrow.

MEL. I don't understand.

HARRY. I don't understand myself. Why would anyone want to run a summer camp? But if that gives you pleasure, then this gives me pleasure . . .

MEL. When did Edna ask you for this?

HARRY. What's the difference? It's over. Everybody got a little excited. Everyone was trying to do the right thing. Take the money, buy your crazy camp.

MEL. Harry!

HARRY. Yes?

MEL. In the first place . . . thank you. In the second place, I can't take it.

HARRY. Don't start in with me. It took me six weeks to decide to give it to you.

MEL. I can't explain it to you, Harry. But I just can't take the money.

HARRY. Why don't you let me do this for you? Why won't you let me have the satisfaction of making you happy?

MEL. You already have, by offering it. Now make me happier by tearing it up. They see this much money in this neighborhood, you'll never make it to your car.

HARRY. You let everyone else do things for you? You let everyone else take care of you. Edna, Pearl, Pauline, Jessie. Everybody but me, your brother. Why am I always excluded from the family?

MEL. They're three middle-aged widows, they're looking for someone to take care of. I made them a present, I got sick. What do you want from me, Harry?

HARRY. I had to work when I was thirteen years old. I didn't have time to be the favorite.

MEL. Harry, let's not go into that again. You want to

be the favorite, I give it to you. I'll call the girls up tonight and tell them from now on, you're the favorite.

HARRY. I'm not blaming you! I'm not blaming you. It's only natural. If there are two brothers in the family and one is out working all day, the one who stays home is the favorite.

MEL. Harry, I don't want to seem impolite. But Edna's not feeling well, we have no water and all our food is defrosting. I'm really not in the mood to discuss why you're not the favorite.

HARRY. I lived in that house for thirty-one years, not once did anyone ever sing me "Happy Birthday."

MEL. (*Exasperated.*) Not true, Harry. You always had a birthday party. You always had a big cake. . . .

HARRY. I had parties, I had cakes, no one ever sang "Happy Birthday."

MEL. Alright, this year I'm going to hire a big chorus, Harry, and we're going to sing you "Happy Birthday."

HARRY. Eleven years old I was wearing long pants. Fourteen I had a little mustache. . . . At the movies I had to bring my birth certificate, they wanted to charge me adult prices. . . .

MEL. I know, Harry. You grew up very fast.

HARRY. Did you ever see Pearl's family album? There are no pictures of me as a boy. I skipped right over it. Thousands of pictures of you on bicycles, on ponies, in barber chairs. . . . one picture of me in a 1938 Buick. I looked like Herbert Hoover.

MEL. I'm sorry, Harry.

HARRY. I'm going to tell you something now, Mel. I never told this to anybody. I don't think you've got a brain for business. I don't think you know how to handle money. I don't think you can handle emotional problems. I think you're a child. A baby. A spoiled infant. . . . And as God is my judge, many's the night I lay in bed envying you. . . . Isn't that something? For a man in my position to envy a man in your position? . . . Is that something? What I have, you'll never have. . . . But what you've

got, I'd like to have just once. . . . Just for an hour to see what it feels like to be the favorite.

MEL. What if I gave you a big kiss right on the mouth? HARRY. You kiss me, I'll break every bone in your body. . . . I'll call you. Listen, forget what I said. I changed my mind. I don't want to be the favorite. Not if I have to be kissed by Jessie and Pauline.

MEL. Try it, you might like it.

HARRY. I tried it, I didn't like it. . . . What if I lent you twelve thousand. You start a small camp. Five boys, two girls.

MEL. How about a little kiss on the cheek?

HARRY. You're not better yet. I don't care what your doctor says, you're not better yet. (*He exits, closing door behind him.*)

MEL. Edna. . . . EDNA! (*She comes out, in bathrobe.*)

EDNA. What is it, Mel? What is it?

MEL. (*He paces angrily, trying to find the right words as she stands there waiting.*) . . . You asked Harry? You asked my family for twenty-five thousand dollars for a summer camp?

EDNA. I didn't ask. . . . They offered the money for a doctor. . . . I told them. I didn't need it for a doctor. . . . I needed it for a camp. . . .

MEL. Don't you see how humiliating it is for me to ask my family for money? Don't you see that?

EDNA. You didn't ask them. You weren't the one who was humiliated. *I was!* I was the one who sat here in front of the Spanish Inquisition. You were out taking a nice *tranquilized walk in the park.*

MEL. Tranquilized? Tranquilized? . . . I was sedated, Edna, not tranquilized. SEDATED!

EDNA. I don't care if you were petrified! I was the one who was humiliated. . . . Next time you be humiliated and I'll be sedated!

MEL. (*Really loud.*) You realize you're talking to a