

Side One

MRS. PETERSON. (*Entering stage right*) Yoohoo!

MRS. PETERSON is a Mamma in every sense of the word, dressed in a faded pink dress, a fabulous full-length beige mink coat and brown walkover shoes, shoving her way through a group of TRAVELERS.

Sonny!

ALBERT and MRS. PETERSON embrace. SHE staggers.

ALBERT. Mamma! What's the matter?

MRS. PETERSON. Don't worry about me, Sonny.
I'm just a little faint, from the subway ...

ALBERT. Mamma, I told you to take a taxi.

MRS. PETERSON. Taxi! What do I need with taxis? I'll leave the taxis for my successful son. A mother can ride crowded in a dirty subway full of foreign people wouldn't give you a seat if your life depended on it, but what's the difference; nowadays a mother is lower than dirt anyway! Here's the money I saved from not taking the taxi; buy some candy with it. (*Looks at ROSIE*) Who's she?

ALBERT. Mamma, you know Rose Alvarez from the office.

MRS. PETERSON. This is Rose Alvarez? Pretty little Rose Alvarez?
I can't believe it ... (*Then with an agonized shout*) ... Rose, what happened?
You had a sudden shock or something? (*Putting her arm around ROSIE*) ... Look at her, Sonny. How nice she looks. It's a wonder to me some older man doesn't snatch her up. A personable matron like that with brains and a few dollars. What a catch you'd be for a convalescent. Goodbye, Rose.

ALBERT. Mamma, what I wanted to discuss with you is sort of about Rose.
Maybe you'd better sit down.

MRS. PETERSON. Why? I know my Sonny. He loves his mamma.
He isn't going to say anything that would break her heart. Go ahead, dear.
(*Levelly*) ... What about Rose?

ALBERT. Well, it's about Lou, too.

MRS. PETERSON. (*As if struck, calling to heaven*) ... Lou. Where are you, Lou?
Struck down by a beverage I consumed faithfully for thirty-two years.
(*To ALBERT*) What about Lou?

ALBERT. Well, Mamma, Rose thinks, and I agree, that I should give up Almaelou.
(*MRS. PETERSON staggers*) What's the matter, Mamma?

MRS. PETERSON. Nothing's the matter. You killed me, that's all.
(*Looking up*) ... Lou, I'm coming. I'm on my way up.

ALBERT. You don't understand, Mamma. It's just that Rose thought ...
I mean I thought ... I mean ... (*Giving up*) Look, Mamma, here's some money.
Take a cab home. The subways are too crowded.

MRS. PETERSON. Nothing is too crowded for a mother. I'll take the I.R.T.
That's the worst subway. (*Alternative line for locales too far from New York:*
"I'll go during the rush hour. That's the worst time.")
Wait a moment, how many blocks is it after all?
Only a hundred and seven. I'll walk.

ALBERT. Mamma ...

MRS. PETERSON. (*Moving right to leave*) Enjoy yourself, son. Take care.
Wear your heavy coat. Be careful crossing the street. Keep your
money in your inside pocket. Wear your rubbers. And eat a hot lunch ...