

TOM. We got money put by.

MRS. FRYER. How much?

TOM. Enough to get married on.

MRS. FRYER. Don't take much to get married on. Do ya have enough to stay married on?

TOM. You let us get married, we'll find out.

(TOM laughs as GRACE enters.)

GRACE. Are you still eatin', Tommy?

TOM. It's good.

GRACE *(takes the plate)*. You're going to get fat.

MRS. FRYER *(takes the plate back)*. Gotta keep up his strength. He works hard for his money.

GRACE. Don't start, Ma.

MRS. FRYER. I didn't say nothin'. It's your father who hit the roof over it.

GRACE. He didn't hit the roof.

MRS. FRYER. You shoulda seen the man's face, Tom, when he found out Grace wasn't workin' no more. Most girls would give their eyeteeth for a job like that—good money, easy work, nice-lookin' fellas around the plant—

TOM. You didn't tell me about them, Grace.

GRACE. Wasn't that many of 'em. Hardly seemed worth the mention.

MRS. FRYER. And she leaves it all behind. For reasons unknown. I'm tired of it up there, she says. Are you tired of the paycheck, I says? Who needs a paycheck, she says. I got me a boyfriend to take me out Saturdays.

TOM. She said that?

GRACE. Oh you know I didn't. And for your information I got a job. I start at the bank on Monday.

GRACE!
TOM!
MRS. FRYER

MRS. FRYER. Oh yeah, the bank! And what's it pay?

GRACE. Enough.

MRS. FRYER. Enough. Always enough. You know what that means, Tom. It don't come close to what it pays up at the radium plant.

GRACE. It's office work.

MRS. FRYER. Office work! Well, I guess that means you'll be spendin' more money on clothes, then. *(She takes TOM's empty plate and leaves.)*

TOM. Boy, she is really steamed at you.

GRACE. I don't see what difference it makes so long as I'm workin' somewheres.

TOM. Don't make no difference to me. I just thought ya liked it up there. *(He looks at her.)*

GRACE *(avoiding his gaze)*. Sure I liked it. I worked there four years.

TOM. So? I been deliverin' mail almost eight years. I plan to keep on deliverin' mail another twenty or thirty years. *(Tapping on the table.)* If I'm lucky. Nothin' like steady work and a good pension to help ya sleep at night.

GRACE. I don't have a pension, and I sleep just fine.

TOM. I bet you do. *(She swats at him and he grabs her.)*

TOM. So how come ya quit, Grace?

GRACE. Lots of girls are quittin'. Work is slow. Besides, since Irene left, it's just not as much fun. And wouldn't ya rather have a girlfriend who works in a bank?

TOM. Not as much as I'd like to have a wife who don't work anywhere.

GRACE. Close yer eyes. I gotta surprise for ya.

TOM *(hoping for a kiss)*. Yeah? Want for me to pull the shades?

GRACE. Not that kinda surprise. Close yer eyes. *(She retrieves two pieces of paper and puts them in front of him.)* Now look.

TOM. Wallpaper.

GRACE. For the baby's room.

TOM. Baby's room! Ya won't kiss me and you're talkin' about babies?

GRACE. There's gonna be babies eventually, Tommy.

TOM. Well, sure. But y'know, Grace, most girls—they get married before they decorate the nursery.

GRACE. Plan ahead for once. Pick one.

TOM. They're both the same.

GRACE. No they're not. This one has big flowers, and that one has little flowers. So pick one.

TOM. This some kinda test?

GRACE. No. It's just wallpaper.

TOM. It is some kinda test.

GRACE. Pick one, Tommy.

TOM. That one.

GRACE. Really?

TOM. The other one then.

GRACE. Which do you like, though?

TOM. They're both nice.

GRACE. This one is pretty, don't you think?

TOM. That one, then.

GRACE. But I want you to like it, too.

TOM. If you like it, I'll like it. Wallpaper is wallpaper.

GRACE. No it isn't. Ya gotta pick somethin' ya can stand to look at for twenty years.

TOM. Same way ya pick women?

GRACE. Keep it up, smarty pants. You won't never get that kiss.

TOM. Okay, this one. This one, hands down.

GRACE. I like it, too. A nice neutral yellow goes with either a boy or a girl. And until the baby comes, ya can use the room for other things.

TOM. Yeah? Like what?

GRACE. Like... A painting studio, maybe?

TOM. A painting studio maybe? Didn't you get enough of painting at work?

GRACE. Not the kind I wanted to do. Tommy. I used to paint watercolors at school...and ever since I went to work, I don't have no time. What with watchin' the kids, and helpin' Ma... Once we get married, I just want some time...just a little time to myself. So's I can do watercolors. Or oils maybe. Maybe portraits, in oil. I could paint yer picture if ya like.

TOM. Why not? Paint a big picture of me and we'll hang it in the outhouse. All our friends will come round just to use the can, so's they can look at it.

GRACE. Oh, the way you talk sometimes!

TOM. Aw, Grace. Ya wanna paint pictures. Paint pictures. I ain't gonina stop ya.

GRACE. You say that now, Tommy. But once we're married—you'll change your tune.

TOM. Sure. I'll be whistling Dixie.

GRACE. Wait'll you come home some night all wore out. Some Christmas maybe, when every customer on yer route's had three times the mail. And maybe some dog took after ya. And some old lady kept ya waitin' on her stoop, tellin' ya all about her grandchildren. And you wouldn't have the heart to tell her ya can't talk—I know you. So ya come home, all cranky and late besides. Hungry—wantin' yer dinner. And there I am, with