

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE

**A PLAY IN THREE ACTS DRAMATIZED
BY JAMES FULLER FROM THE
SCREENPLAY BY STEWART STERN,
ADAPTATION BY IRVING SHULMAN,
FROM A STORY BY NICHOLAS RAY.**

 **THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY**

A Brilliant Book

SUGGESTED THE THEME AND PROVIDED
THE TITLE FOR THIS PLAY . . .

DR. ROBERT LINDNER was a prominent Baltimore psychoanalyst and author. His first book, *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE*, is an exciting, tragically human story of a young delinquent and the sources of his problems. Dr. Lindner's astute appraisal of the respective roles of society and the individual, together with his use of hypnoanalysis, have made this book a classic in the study of emotional problems.

For a further insight into the problems raised in this play we recommend the original book to you. It is published in a hardcover edition by Grune and Stratton, and in a paperback edition by Grove Press, and may be purchased from your local bookstore.

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

ISBN 10: 0-87129-278-5
ISBN 13: 978-0-87129-278-0



9 780871 292780 >

Rebel Without a Cause

Code: R-12



printed on recycled paper

A Play in Three Acts

**REBEL WITHOUT
A CAUSE**

**Dramatized by
JAMES FULLER**

**Based upon the motion picture
“Rebel Without a Cause”**



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

© The Dramatic Publishing Company

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed anytime it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 129., Woodstock, Illinois 60098

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication, and reading are reserved. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

©MCMLVIII by
WARNER BROS., PICTURES, INC.
Copyright renewed ©MCMLXXXVI

Based upon the motion picture “Rebel Without A Cause,”
produced and copyrighted 1955 by Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc.,
screenplay by Stewart Stern, adaptation by Irving Shulman,
from a story by Nicholas Ray, starring
James Dean and Natalie Wood

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE)

ISBN 0-87129-278-5

Rebel without a Cause

A Play in Three Acts

FOR THIRTEEN MEN, TEN WOMEN AND EXTRAS*

CHARACTERS

A MAN.....	<i>a passer-by</i>
BUZZ GUNDERSON.....	<i>a "wheel" in school</i>
JIM STARK.....	<i>a new boy in school</i>
OFFICER MULLEN.....	<i>a police sergeant</i>
JUDY BROWN.....	<i>the girl Jim likes</i>
PLATO.....	<i>Jim's new friend</i>
MRS. DAVIS.....	<i>a friend to Plato</i>
RAY.....	<i>a juvenile officer</i>
MR. STARK } MRS. STARK }	<i>Jim's parents</i>
GRANDMA.....	<i>Mr. Stark's mother</i>
BELLE.....	<i>Judy's younger sister</i>
MISS HANNINGTON.....	<i>a high school teacher</i>
CRUNCH } GOON } MOOSE } HELEN } MILLIE }	<i>the gang</i>
LECTURER.....	<i>at planetarium</i>
MR. BROWN } MRS. BROWN }	<i>Judy's parents</i>
OFFICER ONE	
OFFICER TWO	
EXTRAS, if desired....	<i>STUDENTS, POLICE OFFICERS, CROWD, where indicated</i>

*Several of these roles may be played by the same actors. See Notes on Characters and Costumes.

PLACE: *Any fair-sized American city.*

TIME: *The present.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *Evening, and the following day.*

ACT TWO: *Evening of the same day.*

ACT THREE: *Still later the same evening.*

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

BUZZ: He is about eighteen, and combines an attractive nature with a desperate need to prove himself the most fearless and strongest man in his world. He is liked, feared and admired by the gang. He wears levis or blue jeans, a dark solid-color sport shirt, a leather jacket and boots.

JIM: Jim is seventeen and wears glasses part of the time. He is trying to please his parents and at the same time fighting a desperate battle to avoid being like them. When he isn't fighting this battle he is a warm, friendly person. In the first scene he wears a suit, and his necktie is loose. Later in Act One he wears a shirt and tie, slacks, and a jacket of a very distinctive cut and color. He wears these same clothes for the remainder of the play.

GANG: The members of the gang are all in their teens. The boys wear suede coats or leather jackets, tight levi pants or blue jeans, sport shirts, and boots. The girls wear dark skirts, plain boyish blouses, and suit jackets, cardigans or leather jackets. The clothing of the gang is not uniform, but the air they assume is uniform—swaggering, self-conscious, tyrannical.

OFFICER MULLEN: He can be any age, and has learned to take his job in its stride. He is not cynical, just practical. He is in his shirt sleeves throughout, and wears dark trousers, a white shirt, and a dark tie.

JUDY: Judy is sixteen and quite attractive, for which she compensates by being sullen and indifferent. She wears a good-looking dress, high heels, and a little too much make-up on her first appearance. Later she changes to simple school clothes, which she wears for the rest of the play. She carries a sweater during the scene of the chicken-run in Act Two.

PLATO: He is fifteen, a dark, rather handsome lad, but lonely-looking. He is small for his age. He wears slacks and a sport shirt upon his first appearance. Later he may add a jacket or sport coat.

MRS. DAVIS: She is a middle-aged, dignified colored lady. She wears a plain dress and hat.

RAY: Ray is fairly young, a soft-spoken, sympathetic juvenile officer. He wears a plain suit, and a hat at times.

MOTHER [Mrs. Stark]: She is middle-aged, a chic but rather hard-faced woman. She is well-dressed in party clothes upon her first appearance. Later in Act One she appears in a housecoat. In Act Two she first appears in a simple dress. Later she changes to an attractive housecoat and nightgown. In Act Three she wears a dress and a light coat.

FATHER [Mr. Stark]: He is a middle-aged man who has tried to please his family by being loving and generous, not because of real strength but rather because he is so terribly afraid of being rejected and unloved if he ever tries to assert himself. His family treats him half contemptuously. He may wear a tux in his first scene. Later in the act he changes to a business suit. During Act Two he takes off his suit coat and dons a woman's apron. He wears his suit again in Act Three, and a hat.

GRANDMA: She is small, in her sixties, chic and bright-eyed, and determined to stay young. She, too, wears party clothes in Act One, later changing to a simple house dress, her hair up in curlers.

MISS HANNINGTON: She is a schoolteacher in her early thirties, with no illusions about the present generation of school children. She wears a simple dress or suit and a hat.

LECTURER: This part should be played by a person with a good speaking voice. The manner is quiet but forceful, indicating a genuine feeling for the work.

BELLE: Belle is fourteen, and uncomplicated as yet. She wears school clothes.

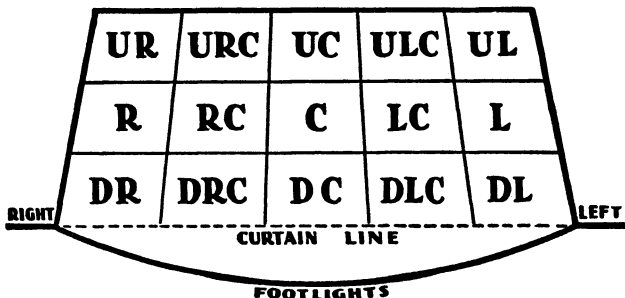
MR. BROWN: Mr. Brown is in his early forties, a pleasant but unimaginative man who is baffled because Judy is now grown up and he doesn't quite know how to treat her. He means well but lacks understanding. He wears a business suit.

MRS. BROWN: She is about the same age as her husband, comfortable, warm-hearted and a good mother, but she, too, lacks the ability to get close to Judy. She wears a simple house dress.

EXTRAS: The Police Officers wear uniforms. The extra students wear school clothes, while spectators, if used in Act Three, wear everyday clothes.

NOTE: If you wish to use fewer men, two actors can handle five of the male parts: The Man, Officer Mullen, and Officer Number One can be handled by one actor, and Mr. Brown and Officer Number Two by another. Several of the female roles may also be played by one actress: Mrs. Brown and the Lecturer can be played by one person, and Miss Hannington and Grandma by another actress.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Police Station: bench; desk (or table) and chair; two straight chairs; on desk, pad and pencil, telephone, papers and forms. Dining-room in Jim's home: table and four chairs; table set for four for breakfast, with glass of milk in front of Jim's place, orange juice and coffee only for Mother; morning mail; morning paper. Planetarium: several rows of straight chairs (folding type); small podium; knife for one of gang to toss to Jim. Dining-room in Judy's home: table set for four for dinner (including glasses of tomato juice). Another room in Jim's home: couch; small end table with lamp and alarm clock; easy chair; Jim's shoes under couch, his jacket over back of easy chair; piece of paper and pencil in drawer of end table. Old blanket U R C (Act Three); stretcher and blanket offstage (Act Three).

BUZZ: Match, knife, hamburger.

MAN: Several packages (one containing a wind-up toy), pack of cigarettes.

JUDY: Schoolbooks, hamburger.

MOTHER: Brown paper bag supposedly containing a lunch, handkerchief.

RAY: Pen, cigarettes and matches, portable microphone.

FATHER: Three cigars, two plates of eggs, wallet with two dollar bills.

GRANDMA: Plate of toast.

PLATO: Length of tire chain, handkerchief, gun.*

BELLE: Pitcher of milk, dish (supposedly a soufflé).

MRS. BROWN: Two covered vegetable dishes.

JIM: Flashlight lantern, rouge (in pocket) to smear on his shirt to simulate blood (end of Act One).

CRUNCH: Flashlight.

GOON: Flashlight, length of tire chain.*

MOOSE: Flashlight.

OFFICER ONE and OFFICER TWO: Guns.

STUDENTS: Some may carry schoolbooks.

* See Production Notes at back of playbook.

ACT ONE

[The play is staged against a curtain backdrop in three playing areas located at the right side of the stage, in the center, and at the left side of the stage. Ideally, the space stage technique should be used, which consists of lighting, with spotlights only, the playing areas actually in use and leaving the rest of the stage in darkness. However, the play can be staged with great effectiveness with the whole stage lit at all times except between scenes. In the main, furniture and properties are a few chairs and tables. They are representational in nature and not important to the action of the play.]

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is evening. The C area is lit. The rest of the stage is in darkness. After a moment, whistling is heard offstage L. The whistling moves toward the stage, and as the figure approaches the light, we see a MAN walking briskly and cheerfully, carrying some packages. As he approaches the left end of the lighted area, BUZZ steps into the extreme edge of the up right portion of the lighted area and speaks in a friendly, cool voice.]*

BUZZ. That was pretty what you were whistling. Whistle some more. *[MAN stops nervously, whistles a nervous phrase, and tries to make a joke of a situation which he doesn't understand. BUZZ interrupts suddenly.]* You got a cigarette?

[While this goes on, figures begin to crowd in from D R stage, gathering in a semi-circle around BUZZ and the MAN. They are boys and girls, all quite young. The boys wear suede coats or leather jackets, black levi pants, boots, and sport shirts. The girls wear dark skirts, plain boyish blouses, and suit jackets, cardigans, or leather jackets. Their clothing is

not uniform. It is the air they assume which is uniform—swaggering, self-conscious, tyrannical.]

MAN [*replying to BUZZ*]. Oh, I think so. [*Fumbles in his pocket, finds a pack of cigarettes, brings it out, and drops it in his nervousness. The figures wait while he picks it up and offers one to BUZZ, holding them out.*] Filter tips.

BUZZ [*smiling, encouragingly*]. You smoke it. Smoke it, Dad. [*MAN looks around the group, halfway starts to offer cigarettes to other people in group, who are now slowly closing about him. BUZZ continues pleasantly but at same time menacingly.*] Go ahead, Dad, smoke it—like I told you. [*Lights a match and holds it for MAN.*] I'll light it for you, Dad. [*As MAN leans forward, BUZZ suddenly hits him. MAN grunts, drops packages, and turns to run as figures close around him. BUZZ continues to hit the now almost invisible MAN, who shrieks and breaks away, is caught, struck again, breaks away, and runs out D L, closely pursued by everyone on stage. During this, not a word is spoken or a cry made by others.*]

[*There is a moment of stillness on the empty stage, then we see a boy wandering into the light from U R. This is JIM, a good-looking boy of seventeen. He is wearing a suit. His tie is loose and his hands are in his trouser pockets. He is strolling about, whistling the same air that was being whistled earlier by the man with the packages. He gives an impression of cheerful indolence. When he sees the packages, he stops, looks at them curiously for a moment, stirs one with his foot casually, and finally bends over and picks up from one of the packages that has fallen open, a large wind-up animal. He gives a few twists to the key and cheerfully sends it on its way. As he watches the mechanical toy in amused fashion, we suddenly hear the sound of a police siren, close, loud, and getting closer. The lights go out.*]

[*When the lights come up, they reveal the area L, where the furniture consists of a bench, slightly upstage in the L area, facing the audience. A small table or desk is to the left, facing right. A police OFFICER in shirt sleeves is sitting behind the desk. JIM is standing up in front of the desk. Seated on the bench are JUDY, PLATO, and MRS. DAVIS. JUDY is a sixteen-year-old girl, attractive, but with a bitter, sullen expression. She is all dressed up. JOHN PLATO CRAWFORD, about fifteen, is wearing slacks and a sport shirt. He is cold and shivers slightly. MRS. DAVIS is a colored woman. RAY, a sympathetic juvenile officer, is standing at the upstage side of the desk, speaking to the OFFICER.*]

RAY. What's this one here for?

OFFICER. Headquarters sent him down.

RAY. Mixed up in that beating on Twelfth Street?

OFFICER. Picked up on suspicion. They had him on the carpet for an hour down at headquarters. He's clear.

RAY. Why didn't they send him home?

OFFICER. He tried to run away from the arresting squad.

RAY. I see. Well, I'll talk to him when I get through with these other two. [*Addresses JIM.*] Would you mind waiting for me, son? I want to talk to you before I send you home.

OFFICER. You want to leave him around here—leave him over there. [*Gestures toward bench. JIM shrugs, turns away, and crosses over to bench, where he sits down.*]

RAY [*returning papers he holds to desk and picking up another set, crossing to JUDY*]. Will you come with me, please?

JUDY [*looking up*]. Me?

RAY. Yes. [*Without a word, JUDY stands, preparing to follow him. They disappear into darkness, toward C. The C area spot comes on. The L area may be dimmed slightly and the characters remain inactive. We see two chairs in the C area. RAY indicates that one is for JUDY and moves it slightly. She sits down, in chair to the left, and he takes other chair.*]
You're Judy, aren't you?

JUDY [*talking almost to herself*]. He hates me.

RAY. What?

JUDY [*to RAY this time*]. He hates me. [*Turns away from him.*]

RAY. What makes you think he hates you, Judy?

JUDY. I don't think. I know. He looks at me like I was the ugliest thing in the world. He doesn't like my friends—he doesn't like anything about me. He calls me, he calls . . . [*Starts to cry, burying her head in her hands on back of chair.*]

RAY [*after brief pause*]. He makes you feel pretty unhappy?

JUDY [*crying*]. He calls me a dirty tramp—my own father!

RAY. Do you think your father means that?

JUDY [*turning to face him*]. Yes! . . . I don't know! I mean, maybe he doesn't mean it but he acts like he does. We're all together and we're going to celebrate Easter and catch a double bill. Big deal. So I put on my new dress and I came out and he—

RAY. That one?

JUDY. Yes. He started yelling for a handkerchief—screaming. He grabbed my face, and he rubbed all my lipstick off. He rubbed till I thought I wouldn't have any lips left. And all the time yelling at me—that thing—the thing I told you he called me. Then I ran out of the house.

RAY. Is that why you were wandering around at one o'clock in the morning?

JUDY. I was just taking a walk. I called the kids but everybody was out, and I couldn't find them. I hate my life! I just hate it!

RAY. You weren't looking for company, were you?

JUDY. No.

RAY. Did you stop to talk to anyone, Judy? [*JUDY is silent.*]
Do you enjoy that?

JUDY. No. I don't even know why I do it.

RAY. Do you think you can get back at your dad that way? [*As JUDY hesitates.*] I mean, sometimes if we can't get as close

to somebody as we'd like, we have to try making them jealous—so they'll have to pay attention. Did you ever think of that?

JUDY [*bitterly*]. I'll never get close to *anybody*.

RAY. Some kids stomped a man on Twelfth Street, Judy.

JUDY. You know where they picked me up! *Twelfth Street!*
I wasn't even *near* there!

RAY. Would you like to go home if we can arrange it? [JUDY *doesn't answer*.] Your parents haven't been notified. You wouldn't give the matron your phone number. Will you tell me, Judy? We'll see if your dad will come and get you. [JUDY *looks up hopefully*.] Unless you don't want to go home. . . . [Pauses a moment, but JUDY *doesn't answer*.] Would you rather stay here?

JUDY [*quietly*]. Lexington 0-5549.

RAY [*rising*]. You go back in the other room and wait on the bench. I'll phone. [JUDY *rises abruptly and walks back to L area, where she resumes her seat on bench. At same time, lights come up in this area to former brightness. RAY leaves C area to make his phone call. He goes out U C as lights C dim. A siren is heard in distance. JIM, sitting on bench as JUDY enters, opens his mouth and starts to imitate it, a long, forlorn wail. PLATO smiles faintly at JIM. MRS. DAVIS just looks. JUDY ignores him*.]

OFFICER [*looking up*]. Hey! [JIM *continues*. OFFICER *shouts*.]
Hey! That's enough static out of you.

JIM [*brashly*]. Want me to imitate a stupid cop?

OFFICER. Cut it out now. I'm warning you.

JIM [*pretending meekness*]. Yes, ma'am. [PLATO *pulls up his shirt collar and puts his arms across his chest as if cold*.]

MRS. DAVIS. You shiverin', John? You cold? [PLATO *shakes his head, JIM notices him*.]

JIM. Want my coat? [PLATO *looks up at JIM. JIM continues*.]
You want my coat? It's warm. [PLATO *wants it but shakes his head "no"*.]

[RAY enters from U C and comes into L area.]

RAY [to JUDY]. Your mother will be down in a few minutes, Judy.

JUDY. What?

RAY. Your mother will be down in a few minutes.

JUDY [startled and not understanding]. My mother?

RAY [to OFFICER, moving upstage of desk]. She's being called for. [JUDY rises. JIM whistles at her softly but audibly.]

JUDY. You said you'd call my father.

RAY. Your father wasn't home. He was out looking for you.

JUDY. I'll hear about that!

RAY. Isn't it what you wanted, Judy?

JUDY [with sudden intensity]. I don't know. I don't know what I want. [Stops, glances around in an embarrassed fashion, and then continues.] Is there somewhere I can wait—alone?

RAY. Certainly. Wait in the office—back there. [Gestures off D L. JUDY starts D L quickly.] Good-by, Judy. Take it easy. [JUDY goes out D L. RAY turns and speaks to PLATO.] John Crawford.

MRS. DAVIS. Yes, sir.

RAY. Come with me, John. [PLATO rises and follows RAY into C area, as lights come up there, and dim in L area. MRS. DAVIS follows. JIM is alone on bench. He closes his eyes, throws his head back, and gives another siren wail. OFFICER ignores it. RAY and PLATO, with MRS. DAVIS following, have entered C area. PLATO sits in chair, facing downstage. MRS. DAVIS seats herself in chair that was occupied by Judy. RAY stands a little to the right and slightly downstage of PLATO. After they have seated themselves, RAY speaks.] Do you know why you shot those puppies, John? [Silence.] Is that what they call you or do you have a nickname?

PLATO [murmuring]. Plato.

MRS. DAVIS [giving PLATO's arm a little tug]. Talk to the man nice now, you hear? He's goin' to help you.

PLATO. Nobody can help me.

RAY. Can you tell me why you killed the puppies, Plato?

PLATO. No, sir. I just went next door to look at them like I always do. They were nursing on their mother, and I did it. I guess I'm just no good.

RAY. What do you think's going to happen, you do things like that?

PLATO. I don't know. End up in the electric chair?

RAY. Where did you get the gun?

PLATO. In my mother's drawer.

MRS. DAVIS. She keeps it to protect herself, sir. She scared without a man in the house.

RAY. Where's your mother tonight, Plato?

PLATO. Away.

MRS. DAVIS [*shaking her head*]. Seems like she's always goin'. She got a sister in Chicago and she went for the holiday. She say her sister's all the family she has.

RAY. Where's your father? [*PLATO is silent, his head lowered.*]

MRS. DAVIS. They not together, sir. We don't see him a long time now.

RAY. Do you hear from him, son? [*Continues to MRS. DAVIS as PLATO doesn't respond.*] You know if the boy ever talked to a psychiatrist?

PLATO [*smiling a bit, looking up*]. Head-shrinker?

MRS. DAVIS [*laughing*]. Oh, Mrs. Crawford don't believe in them!

RAY. Well, maybe she better start.

PLATO. Don't want anything to do with one of them nut doctors.

RAY. Why not?

PLATO. I don't believe in them.

RAY [*to MRS. DAVIS*]. I want to talk to this boy's mother when she returns.

MRS. DAVIS. She'll be back Tuesday, for sure.

RAY. The owner of the dog isn't going to press charges. You can take Plato home, providing his mother comes in to see me when she gets back.

MRS. DAVIS [*rising*]. I'll certainly do that. You can depend on me, sir. [*To PLATO.*] You come along with me now, but thank this gentleman, you hear?

PLATO [*rising*]. Thank you very much, sir. I'm sorry.

RAY. That's all right, son. We all have crazy impulses. What you've got to remember is the difference between people who are in trouble and people who are getting along all right is just that the people who are getting along all right don't give in. [*Escorts PLATO and MRS. DAVIS to area L, as lights brighten here and dim in C area. This occurs during his speech. Now he addresses seated OFFICER.*] This boy is free to go. [*Marks paper he has been carrying and returns it to desk.*]

[*As PLATO and MRS. DAVIS go out D L, JIM's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stark (MOTHER and FATHER) and Mr. Stark's mother (GRANDMA), enter D L. JIM, on the bench, ignores them, humming "The Ride of the Valkyries" to himself.*]

MOTHER [*offstage D L*]. Jim! [*JIM looks up suddenly, scared. Then he smiles mysteriously and jumps to his feet. MOTHER, FATHER, and GRANDMA are framed in entrance, frozen. They are all well dressed in party clothes. MOTHER is a very chic but rather hard-faced woman. FATHER is a man always unsure of himself. GRANDMA is the smallest, also very chic and very bright-eyed. RAY has paused by upstage side of desk again.*]

JIM [*facing them*]. Happy Easter.

MOTHER [*as she, FATHER, and GRANDMA move toward him*]. Where were you tonight? They called us at the club, and I got the fright of my life! [*Silence.*]

FATHER. Where were you tonight, Jimbo? [*JIM says nothing. FATHER laughs uncomfortably.*]

JIM [*nodding toward RAY*]. Ask him.

FATHER [*to RAY*]. Was he drinking? I don't see what's so bad about taking a little drink.

RAY. You don't?

FATHER. No. I definitely don't. I did the sa—

RAY. He's a minor, Mr. Stark, and he hasn't been drinking. He was picked up on suspicion at the scene of a stomping.

FATHER. A what?

RAY. A gang of teen-agers beat up a man.

FATHER. Why?

RAY. For the fun of it.

FATHER. Was Jim involved?

RAY. He was at the scene just after it happened. We had to be sure. It's serious.

MOTHER. What do you mean, "serious"?

RAY. The man's in the hospital. He's in bad condition.

FATHER. But Jim hasn't done anything. You said so.

RAY. That's right.

FATHER. After all, a little drink isn't much. I cut pretty loose in my day, too.

MOTHER [*needling him*]. Really, Frank? When was that?

FATHER [*blowing up*]. Listen, *can't you wait till we get home?*

RAY [*holding up his hand*]. Whoa! Whoa! I know you're a little upset, but—

FATHER. Sorry.

RAY. What about you, Jim? Got anything to say for yourself?

[*JIM stops humming and shrugs.*] Not interested, huh? [*JIM shakes his head.*]

MOTHER. Can't you answer? What's the matter with you?

FATHER. He's in one of his moods.

MOTHER [*to FATHER*]. I was talking to *Jim*.

FATHER [*crossing to RAY*]. Let me explain. We just moved here, y'understand? The kid has no friends yet and—

JIM. Tell him why we moved here.

FATHER. Hold it, Jim.

JIM. You can't protect me.

FATHER [*to JIM*]. You mind if I *try*? You have to slam the door in my face? [*To RAY.*] I try to get to him. What happens? [*To JIM.*] Don't I give you everything you want? A bicycle—you get a bicycle. A car——

JIM. You buy me many things. [*A little mock bow.*] Thank you.

FATHER. Not just buy! You hear all this talk about not loving your kids enough. We give you love and affection, don't we? [*Silence. JIM is fighting his emotion.*] Then what is it? I can't even touch you any more but you pull away. I want to understand you. You must have reasons. [*JIM stares straight ahead, trying not to listen.*] Was it because we went to that party? [*Silence.*] You know what kind of drunken brawls those parties turn into. It's no place for kids.

MOTHER. A minute ago you said you didn't care if *he* drinks.

GRANDMA. He said a *little* drink.

JIM [*exploding*]. Let me alone! [*Moves down right in L area.*]

MOTHER. What?

JIM. Stop tearing me apart! You say one thing, and he says another, and then everybody changes back——

MOTHER. That's a fine way to talk!

GRANDMA [*smiling*]. Well, you know whom he takes after!

RAY [*moving to JIM*]. Come into the next room. [*Indicates area C where he has been talking to Judy and Plato. Then he turns to others.*] Excuse us a minute?

FATHER [*very overwrought*]. Sure. Sure. [*RAY and JIM go into the C area, as lights come up. FATHER, MOTHER, and GRANDMA, after looking around uncertainly, sit down on bench. Lights now dim slightly in this area.*]

JIM [*nodding backward toward other room*]. Someone should put poison in her epsom salts.

RAY. Grandma? [*No answer. JIM turns away from RAY.*]

JIM. Get lost.

RAY. Hang loose, boy. I'm warning you.

JIM. Wash up and go home.

RAY. Big tough character. You don't kid me, pal. How come you're not wearing your boots? [*Suddenly JIM flings himself at RAY, who deftly flips him past and drops him on floor. RAY continues.*] Too bad you didn't connect. You could have gone to Juvenile Hall. That's what you want, isn't it?

JIM [*rising*]. No.

RAY. Sure, it is. You want to bug us till we have to lock you up. Why?

JIM. Leave me alone.

RAY. No.

JIM. I don't know why——[*Sits in right chair.*]

RAY [*standing behind other chair*]. Go on—don't give me that. Someone giving you hard looks?

JIM. I just get so——[*Fights tears.*] Boy, sometimes the temperature goes way up.

RAY [*suddenly gentle*]. Okay. Okay. Let it out. [JIM starts crying, his face in his hands. There is a pause before RAY continues.] You feel like you want to blow your wheels right now?

JIM. All the time! I don't know what gets into me, but I keep looking for trouble and I always——You better lock me up. I'm going to smash somebody—I know it.

RAY. Hit something. [JIM smashes one fist against open palm of other hand. RAY watches, then sits in other chair.] That why you moved from the last town? 'Cause you were in trouble? [*A pause.*] You can talk about it if you want to—I know about it anyway. Routine check.

JIM. And they think they are protecting me by moving.

RAY. Were you trying to stay out of trouble when you ran from the squad car?

JIM. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

RAY. According to their report, you weren't very cooperative at headquarters.

JIM. I told them everything I knew.

RAY. They weren't satisfied.