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Dramatic Publishing





A THREE-ACT COMEDY

The Family Nobody Wanted

BASED UPON THE BOOK BY
HELEN GRIGSBY DOSS

MADE INTO A PLAY BY
CHRISTOPHER SERGEL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(THE FAMILY NOBODY WANTED)

ISBN -1-58342-119-X

The Family Nobody Wanted

A Comedy in Three Acts

FOR SEVEN MEN AND TEN WOMEN

CHARACTERS

REVEREND CARL DOSS.....	<i>Father</i>
MRS. HELEN DOSS.....	<i>Mother</i>
DONNY DOSS.....	<i>their eldest son</i>
NAN JOHNSON.....	<i>Donny's girl friend</i>
MR. JOHNSON.....	<i>Nan's father</i>
MRS. JOHNSON.....	<i>Nan's mother</i>
MISS REILLY.....	<i>a newspaper reporter</i>
BILL THOMAS.....	<i>a newspaper photographer</i>
MRS. PARKINSON.....	<i>an important member of the church</i>
MRS. ALLEN } MRS. HARDY }	<i>church members</i>
DIANE } LAURA } RITA } TIMMY } TED } ALEX }	<i>six young members of the Doss family</i>

PLACE: *The living room of the Doss home.*

TIME: *The present.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *Late afternoon in early summer.*

ACT TWO: *Early afternoon at the end of that summer.*

ACT THREE: *Evening, the beginning of winter.*

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

IMPORTANT. The young people adopted by the Reverend Doss and his wife came to them as small children, and have been raised as a part of this fine and in many ways typical American family. There is *absolutely nothing*, of course, in their manners, habits, the way they talk, dress, or eat to indicate that some of them have an ancestry which includes such peoples as Hawaiian, Burmese, Korean, Indian, Filipino, Mexican and Chinese. The whole point of this play and of the life being led by the actual Doss family is that people are more alike than they are different. These young people, raised in this home, think and act in exactly the same fashion as do the children of the most typical American family you know. They dress in the same fashion, and their mannerisms are the same. The only indication of their ancestry is in their slightly browner color, and in the case of those with Oriental ancestry, there should be an indication about the eyes. It is important, however, not to overemphasize these characteristics. This make-up should not be overdone.

DONNY DOSS: He is an athletic and very good-looking boy of eighteen. His ancestry is entirely Nordic, and if possible, he should be blond. He's both cheerful and exuberant, yet with this, quite sensitive, kind, and loyal. He first appears in a loud bathrobe, shifts to other clothes as indicated, and in the third act is dressed up for the party, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and tie.

REVEREND CARL DOSS: A young and rather handsome minister whose wit and good humor overlie a deep dedication to his faith. He is slow to worry and takes the greatest pleasure in both his work and his family. He wears conservative clothes throughout. (Important: Neither Reverend Doss nor his wife,

she does more good than all the others who are also on the Church Board, which she is proud to head. She wears conservative clothes throughout.

MISS REILLY: This attractive young career girl is a newspaper reporter. She wears a suit, her hair is rather severe, and she may even have on horn-rimmed glasses.

BILL THOMAS: He is a cheerful newspaper photographer, always eager for some opportunity to exploit. He wears a rather loud sport coat over a sport shirt, with contrasting slacks.

MRS. ALLEN *and* MRS. HARDY: These are two young married women who are both friends of the Dosses and who attend their church. Mrs. Hardy should be a little plump, if possible. They both wear casual clothes.

DIANE DOSS: A young teen-ager, as are all the Doss children except Donny, who is older. Diane's ancestry is basically Hawaiian. She is a little older than her sisters, though since they are all adopted, they can all be close to the same age. Diane wears the casual clothes worn by most high school girls, except in the third act when she is dressed up for the party.

LAURA DOSS: She is a very sweet girl whose ancestry contains both Chinese and Welsh. She wears the casual clothes of a girl just starting high school, except for the third act, when she puts on a pretty party dress. Laura may be the youngest of the Doss girls.

RITA DOSS: This young lady comes from one of our first families—the American Indian. She is very enthusiastic about whatever she does, and prefers running to walking. She dresses in the same general way as her sisters.

TIMMY DOSS: He is a man of many hobbies which strike him as a much more sensible occupation than worrying over the opposite sex. He may be the youngest of the Doss boys, and wears the casual clothes of a boy in the early years of high school. However, he dresses up for the third act.

TED DOSS: Ted's ancestry contains both Filipino and Spanish. He is a very good-hearted boy, generous almost to a fault. When he is hurt, he tries to hide it. His clothes are typical

described below, shows the *slightest* sign of self-consciousness about their adopted children. Their special sort of family is a special sort of joy, and that's all there is to it.)

MRS. HELEN DOSS: She is the attractive young wife, more concerned than her husband with the practical problems of their large family. Her temperament is more volatile than her husband's, though she, too, is a very happy person. Her party dress for Act Three should be a little older than those worn by the young people.

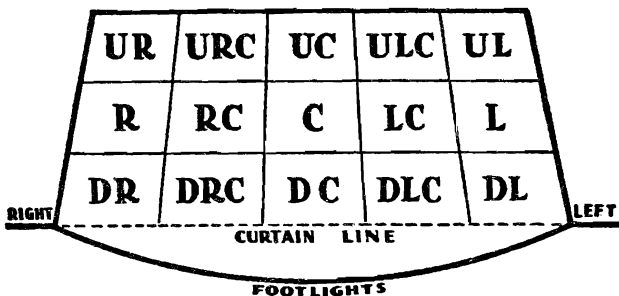
NAN JOHNSON: While Nan comes from a very wealthy home, she hasn't been spoiled in the least. She is a beautiful girl of seventeen, whose natural tendency is to "handle" a situation rather than to try to smash it. Her clothes in the first and second acts, while not showy, are obviously more expensive than those worn by the Doss young people. In the third act, she can wear a stunning, though not extreme, party dress.

MR. JOHNSON: Nan's father is a rather complex character. While still rather young, he was so successful as an oil wild-catter in Texas, he has already retired. He is greatly concerned, of course, for his only child's future happiness. A certain amount of racial prejudice was drummed into him in his youth. However, he is completely honest, and the disparity between the prejudice he was taught, and what he sees for himself of other peoples, troubles him very much. He wears very good and conservative suits throughout.

MRS. JOHNSON: She is a warm and well-educated woman whose main concern is for the happiness of her daughter, Nan, and her husband. She is a little on the nervous side, yet even so, quite good-natured. She wears older clothes than the young people, wearing an attractive suit in Act Two and an attractive dress in Act Three.

MRS. PARKINSON: She is businesslike almost to a fault. She speaks rapidly and firmly, a woman who clearly knows her mind. She is a fighter for what she believes, and while she is **something of a nuisance** at times, as Reverend Doss points out,

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

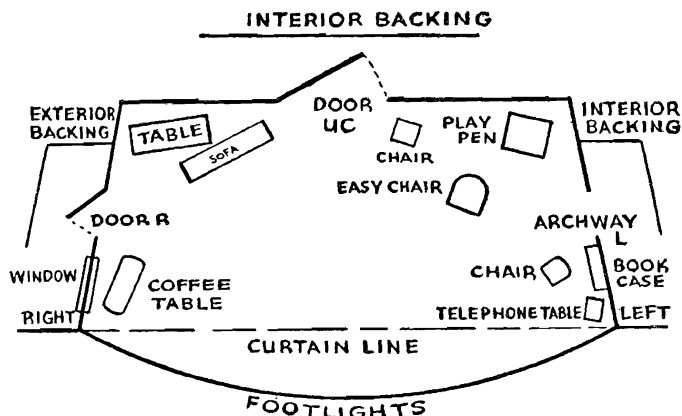
Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: 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.

casual high school wear, though of course, he is properly dressed for the party in Act Three.

ALEX DOSS: He is an energetic boy whose passion at the moment is the family vegetable garden. His ancestry is part Burmese and part Korean. His clothes are about the same as those of his other brothers, except Donny, who dresses a little older than they do.

STAGE CHART



PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Coffee table, folding table, sofa, several straight chairs, playpen, bulletin board containing pictures drawn by children, easy chair, telephone table with telephone on it, bookcase, Bible on bookcase. *Act One:* Stuffed animals, blocks, toys, Donny's belt, all in playpen. *Act Two:* Coffee service on table, can of salmon in playpen. *Act Three:* Pile of mail on coffee table. **NOTE:** Additional furnishings and incidentals, such as lamps and draperies, may be added to complete the setting.

DONNY: Suit on hanger, with paper wrapper still on it; several ties, including a blue one; mop and bucket; class ring.

LAURA: Small package wrapped in brown paper, bucket and brush, tablecloth.

RITA: Highly polished shoes (Donny's), bucket, stack of plates on a tray, bowl of popcorn.

MISS REILLY: Small brief case, pen and notebook in brief case, can with bright label.

BILL: Camera, equipment bag and tripod, batch of flash bulbs in carton, more photo equipment, flash gun.

TIMMY: Pan with lid on it, supposedly containing spark plugs; piece of cloth; small stand-up ladder; folding chairs; two gift-wrapped packages; tray with stack of small plates on it; bowl of popcorn.

MR. DOSS: Jar of preserve, two trays of fruit, large tray of party snacks.

DIANE: Donny's suit coat, bucket and brush, tray of silverware, tray of glasses, pitchers of milk and water.

ALEX: Odds and ends of costumes, feather headdress, box, cardboard box containing some gaily wrapped packages, bowl of popcorn.

TED: Towel, folding chairs.

MRS. PARKINSON: Folder containing large newspaper clipping, a smaller clipping and a very small clipping.

MRS. DOSS: Apron (Act Two), large serving dish, cake on a platter.

NAN: Ring on finger (Act Two).

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THIS PLAY

LIFE magazine, THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, and THE READER'S DIGEST have all described with affection and approval the actual family about which this play is concerned. There has been a ninety-minute television spectacular (starring Nannette Fabray and Lew Ayres) devoted to the earlier aspects of this family's life. In the play you have here, you will find the family concerned with typical teen-age problems, some of them quite hilarious. Yet, all through the play, you'll experience warmth and great human understanding. While much of the play is fictional, a part of it is true—part of it actually happened. We recommend it to you as offering an opportunity to do a play that is different, delightful, and utterly worthwhile.

The Editors.

ACT ONE

SCENE: *The living room of the Doss home. In the corner D R, there is a small straight chair, with a coffee table near by. Behind the table there is a window. In the wall R is the front door, which leads to the exterior. In the U R corner is a table which can be unfolded to accommodate a number of people for dinner when necessary. There is a sofa running diagonally from R to near the door U C. This doorway U C leads to the kitchen. Just to the left of the doorway is a straight chair, and to the left of this chair, at U R C or U R, is a playpen with toys piled in it. On the wall behind the playpen is a bulletin board which contains pictures done by children of various ages. Downstage of the playpen is an easy chair. In the wall L is an archway leading to the staircase (which need not show) and the rest of the house. Downstage of this archway, at D L, are a straight chair and a telephone table. A bookcase near this telephone table would be appropriate. The furniture is simple, and while the room is tidy, it shows decided signs of family life.]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is a summer afternoon. The stage is deserted. Then DONNY, an attractive boy of eighteen—if possible, blond, blue-eyed and athletic—enters on the stairway L (or if there is no stairway, comes through the door L). He is wearing a bright bathrobe and slippers, and he is in a hurry. The moment he is into the room, he stops, turns back, and calls in the direction from which he has come.]*

DONNY [*calling back off L*]. Stay out of there—all of you. [*In a reasoning tone.*] Have a little respect. [*Hurries on out door U C and then re-enters immediately, carrying a suit on a hanger, with the dry cleaner wrapper still about it.*]

[*As he starts L, DIANE, a young teen-ager, beautifully tan, wearing blue jeans, comes hurrying in L.*]

DONNY [*stopping short at L C, anxiously*]. Did you find my belt?

DIANE [*from L*]. Not yet.

DONNY [*worried*]. It's somewhere. It's got to be somewhere.

DIANE [*hopefully, crossing to in front of him*]. Dad has some suspenders. How about—[*Hitches up her jeans with her hands, and waits eagerly for DONNY's reaction.*]

DONNY [*horried*]. Suspenders! *Who* wears suspenders?

DIANE [*still hopeful*]. I saw something about the Secretary of State—

DONNY [*putting his upstage hand on her shoulder for a moment*]. Let's leave it this way—Dad *needs* his suspenders.

DIANE [*now with utter determination, turning and crossing to archway L*]. I'll find your belt all right. Don't worry, Donny—I'll find it.

DONNY [*gratefully*]. Thanks, Diane. [*Acknowledging her quality.*] You hear a lot of terrible things about sisters—but you're not so bad. [*Conceding.*] I mean, for a sister.

DIANE [*almost overwhelmed with pleasure at the compliment*]. Gosh, Donny—

DONNY [*to business again*]. Did Laura get back yet from the post office?

DIANE. Any minute, now.

DONNY [*concerned*]. That package should've got here a week ago. [*Faintly indignant.*] I sent Sears and Roebuck an extra quarter—so it'd come "special handling." [*Turns his head slightly to hear better off L and then shouts off L.*] Stay out of that bathroom! [*Back to DIANE.*] Waiting like this—I don't call *this* "special handling."

[*TIMMY, another young teen-ager, comes in L, his hands and arms with grease on them.*]

TIMMY [*pausing on way to door U C*]. I just wanted to get the grease off my hands.

DONNY. Can't you read, Timmy? I've had a sign on that door for three weeks—"Attention. Bathroom reserved, four to five p.m. Friday the 27th. Signed, Donald Doss."

TIMMY. All right—I'm going to the kitchen. [*Goes out U C.*]

DONNY [*looking after him, considering*]. All that grease—I wonder if he's been fooling around with the car.

DIANE [*doubting this, shaking her head*]. He knows you have to use it.

DONNY [*agreeing with her*]. Sure——[*Reminding.*] You'll keep looking? [*DIANE nods. DONNY starts L again.*] If that package hasn't come today, I think the family should consider switching our business to Montgomery Ward. [*DONNY goes on off L. DIANE turns and looks about for some place to begin searching again. Suddenly she sees the playpen and crosses to it. She starts throwing out toward C stage fuzzy animals, blocks and toys as she searches through it.*]

DIANE [*with her head down in the playpen as she searches, speaking to herself*]. It's got to be somewhere. [*From off U C, MRS. DOSS calls.*]

MRS. DOSS [*from off U C*]. Rita? Laura?

DIANE [*continuing her search*]. No—it's me.

[*MRS. DOSS enters U C. She is an attractive woman in her early thirties. She wears a simple cotton dress.*]

MRS. DOSS [*pausing just inside the door U C, and calling off U C*]. Take a brush to it, Timmy. Try a scouring pad. [*Turns back into the room, noticing DIANE tossing things out of the playpen.*] Let's keep the living room tidy, Diane.

DIANE. I'm looking for Donny's belt.

MRS. DOSS [*straightening a pillow on the sofa*]. Someone's coming for an interview.

DIANE [*stopping her search and looking up*]. Interview?

MRS. DOSS. Yes.

DIANE. Another interview?

MRS. DOSS. Be sure to put everything back in the playpen.

DIANE [*resuming search*]. Who is it *this* time—*Reader's Digest*?

MRS. DOSS [*continuing to straighten up*]. No.

DIANE. *Newsweek? Time? Life?*

MRS. DOSS [*offhand*]. No, no.

DIANE [*exclaiming sharply, as she plunges her hand into the playpen*]. *Look!*

MRS. DOSS. No, it isn't *Look*.

DIANE [*dragging a twisted belt from the playpen and straightening up*]. I mean—what that *monster* did to Donny's belt!

MRS. DOSS. Heavens!

DIANE. It makes you wonder.

MRS. DOSS. Little Gregory just gets hold of things.

DIANE [*bewildered, outraged*]. How does a kid with four little teeth chew up a piece of genu-ine cowhide?

MRS. DOSS. Just remember to put everything back.

DIANE [*nodding, worried, as she tries to smooth out the belt*]. Donny better keep his coat buttoned.

[*ALEX enters R. He is a young boy, and at this moment, he's filthy.*]

ALEX [*from near the door*]. Hey, Mom—I dug a trench!

MRS. DOSS [*in front of the sofa*]. That face! I want you to wash up right now.

DIANE. Not the bathroom.

ALEX. I know. It's reserved.

MRS. DOSS. Join Timmy in the kitchen. And use paper towels.

ALEX [*defensively*]. I couldn't help it. You get dirty digging a trench. [*With pardonable pride.*] I dug it two feet deep!

MRS. DOSS. What for?

ALEX. Father said we've got to cut down on the food bills. He said we've got to grow some of our own food.

MRS. DOSS. Yes, but—

ALEX. I'm gonna plant radishes. [*Happily.*] And popcorn!

DIANE [*putting in*]. You don't need a two-foot trench for radishes.

ALEX. Maybe *you* don't.

MRS. DOSS [*cutting in*]. We're having company.

ALEX. Who?

MRS. DOSS. A lady from a newspaper.

ALEX. Again? [*As MRS. DOSS nods, he starts brushing off his clothes, which results in a cascade of dirt and pebbles to the floor.*] Why do we keep getting people like that?

DIANE. Oh, help!

MRS. DOSS. Not in here, Alex.

ALEX [*stopping*]. Will she be taking pictures?

MRS. DOSS. I don't think so.

DIANE [*sarcastically*]. He wants a picture of himself—for the whole world to see.

[MR. DOSS, *a rather handsome man in his middle thirties, comes in U C.*]

ALEX. All I asked—[*It seems so unfair.*] We always have to keep cleaning up for some interview. Other fellows don't have to clean up for interviews.

MR. DOSS [*cheerfully supporting ALEX, and crossing to beside him*]. It's a big nuisance. [*Affectionately.*] How's the garden coming, son?

ALEX [*delighted at his support*]. You'll see, Dad. We're going to save so much money on radishes—not to mention popcorn. [*Happily visualizing.*] Pretty soon we'll be sitting around here eating popcorn—everyone—all the popcorn they want.

MR. DOSS [*enthusiastically*]. Son—that's wonderful!

ALEX. The only thing we'll have to buy is a little salt. [*Thriftyly.*] And we can use margarine.

MR. DOSS [*laughing and patting his head*]. That's the spirit. [*MR. DOSS is startled as he looks at the dirt that has come off ALEX's head onto his hand. Smiling, he tries, without being obvious, to dust his hands.*]

ALEX [*noticing instantly and starting toward C*]. I was just going to wash. [*As MR. DOSS starts to speak.*] I know—the bathroom's reserved. [*Veers toward door U C.*]

MRS. DOSS [*calling after ALEX*]. You'll have to take a whole bath later.

ALEX [*contemptuously, from doorway U C*]. Anyone can take a bath. [*Importantly.*] I'm trying to cut down on the food bills. [*ALEX goes out U C. DIANE pauses in the midst of putting things in the playpen.*]

DIANE [*slightly puzzled*]. Why do we get people taking pictures of our family—and things like that?

MR. DOSS [*joshing her*]. Because we're such a nice family—that's why. [*Sits in easy chair U L.*]

MRS. DOSS [*also smiling*]. Especially if you'll get all that back in the playpen.

DIANE [*diverted, noticing the fuzzy animal in her hand*]. It's funny about little Gregory—he never chews up any of *his* things.

MR. DOSS [*a little startled as he realizes that this is true*]. You know—you're right.

DIANE [*tossing in the animal*]. I shudder to think when he gets out of that playpen. [*From off R LAURA's voice is heard calling excitedly.*]

LAURA [*off R*]. It came! It got here! [*MR. and MRS. DOSS are a little bewildered, but DIANE lets out a pent-up sigh.*]

DIANE. What a relief! [*As they look at her, she explains.*] It got here.

[*LAURA, another attractive young teen-ager, hurries in R. Like the others, she is beautifully tan. She wears a skirt and blouse, and carries a small package.*]

LAURA [*almost out of breath, delighted to be carrying the package, stopping in front of MRS. DOSS*]. The postmaster had it ready. [*Repeats what she was told.*] He said now this package got here, he might take off a few days and go fishing.

DIANE [*crossing to archway and calling off*]. Hey, Donny!

MRS. DOSS. What is it?

LAURA [*gesturing with the package, indignantly*]. It took about *three weeks!*

DIANE [*with a hint of eagerness*]. I'll take it up if you want.

LAURA [*nonsense*]. Never mind. I'll do it.

MRS. DOSS. Something for his date tonight?

LAURA [*correcting, as she nods*]. His *dinner* date.

DIANE [*bursting out*]. It's a *white* shirt.

MR. DOSS [*both startled and amused*]. A white shirt!

LAURA. You know they carry "good" quality and "better"?
[MR. and MRS. DOSS *nod blankly*. She continues with great *pride*.] This is "*best*"!

DIANE. And that isn't all.

LAURA. I'll tell them. [*Takes a breath, then, importantly.*]
French cuffs!

MR. DOSS [*keeping back his amusement*]. Donny in French cuffs!

LAURA [*somewhat indignant*]. Why not?

MRS. DOSS. For one thing, he'll need cuff links.

DIANE. He's got cuff links.

LAURA [*proudly*]. He made them.

MR. DOSS [*recalling, smiling*]. Now I know why there was all that messing about with the soldering iron.

LAURA [*starting L*]. They're beautiful. Like *real* cuff links.

DIANE [*nodding*]. Timmy got hold of some aluminum paint.
It's very good for cuff links.

MR. DOSS [*gravely*]. I'll have to try some.

LAURA [*barely able to suppress her happy excitement*]. Wait'll you see. [*She goes on off L. DIANE crosses to U L and quickly tosses a toy into the playpen.*]

DIANE. There. [*Turns and hurries out L, calling.*] Don't open it yet. [MR. and MRS. DOSS *turn toward each other—ready to burst out laughing.*]

MRS. DOSS [*crossing to D R C*]. You'd think the entire family was going on this date.

MR. DOSS. Donny's so concerned, I'm beginning to get nervous myself.

MRS. DOSS. He's got his sisters in a first-class uproar. And even Timmy—getting out the aluminum paint. [*Crosses to behind chair U L, locating a few toys missed by DIANE and putting them in the playpen.*]

MR. DOSS. The girl's name is Jennifer. Do they call her Jennifer?

MRS. DOSS [*shaking her head*]. Nan. It's a nice name.

MR. DOSS [*faintly concerned*]. I didn't get to talk to her. Did you like her?

MRS. DOSS [*definitely*]. Very much. She's sweet, attractive, and not spoiled in the least.

MR. DOSS [*lightly*]. I suppose, under the circumstances, that's an accomplishment.

MRS. DOSS. When she came by this morning, Teddy noticed one of the tires on her car was low, and he changed it. Well, she didn't just thank Teddy—she asked him to come up for a swim in her pool.

MR. DOSS. But he was too shy. [*Excusing him.*] That mansion would scare anyone.

MRS. DOSS [*laughing*]. As far as I know, he's up there now.

MR. DOSS [*surprised*]. Good for Teddy. [*Mildly curious.*] I hear a certain amount of speculation about the Johnson family. . . . Why would a wealthy Texas family move up to a little place like this?

MRS. DOSS [*amused by it, crossing back to D R C*]. From the gossip at the supermarket, they're still living Texas style.

MR. DOSS [*affectionately*]. You don't mind being the poor minister's wife? You wouldn't rather I'd gone into the oil business?

MRS. DOSS [*smiling and squeezing his arm*]. The children are messy enough without your being in the oil business.

MR. DOSS [*considering*]. I wonder if I should have some sort of talk with Donny. [*Smiles.*] After all, when a boy orders a best-quality white shirt—

MRS. DOSS. If you do, tell him to remember about the bread and butter plates.

MR. DOSS. Remember what about them?

MRS. DOSS. That you're supposed to *use* them. [*A sudden new concern.*] And finger bowls! I haven't explained. What if they put a finger bowl in front of Donny?

MR. DOSS. Well?

MRS. DOSS [*concerned*]. What would he do?

MR. DOSS [*humorously*]. Offhand, I'd say it depends on how thirsty he is.

MRS. DOSS [*relaxing again, laughing*]. You're impossible. [*Without much hope.*] You wouldn't care to give the newspaperwoman a little of this wit and charm?

MR. DOSS [*lightly*]. I have to save it all for Sunday.

MRS. DOSS [*an accusation*]. You're ducking out again?

MR. DOSS [*with a certain uneasiness, defensively*]. I thought I'd pay Mrs. Parkinson a visit.

MRS. DOSS. Mrs. Parkinson!

MR. DOSS. She's not well. Maybe I can cheer her up.

MRS. DOSS. She doesn't want to be cheered up.

MR. DOSS. I know, but the Lord expects me to keep trying.

MRS. DOSS [*frankly*]. That's expecting quite a lot.

MR. DOSS [*in a cheerful, confiding whisper*]. Think what the Lord has to take from Mrs. Parkinson!

MRS. DOSS [*forgiving him*]. Carl, there *must* be a more pleasant way for you to avoid this interview.

MR. DOSS. There is—but I'd feel guilty if I ducked out and enjoyed myself.

MRS. DOSS [*crossing to D L*]. The reporter's name is Miss Reilly—and she was absolutely determined.

MR. DOSS. I know.

MRS. DOSS [*half apologizing*]. I tried *every* way to get out of it.

MR. DOSS [*reassuring*]. Of course—and there's no reason to fret.

MRS. DOSS [*explaining*]. She implied I was trying to avoid the interview because we wanted to keep the situation under

cover. [*Helplessly.*] After that, there wasn't anything I could say.

MR. DOSS. There's no need to say anything—and no reason to worry.

MRS. DOSS [*concerned*]. The younger children are getting so curious.

MR. DOSS [*quietly casual*]. Well, that's natural.

MRS. DOSS. Donny knows, of course. But these interviews keep forcing the thing at the others—and I don't want it forced that way. [*Determined.*] Next time some feature writer calls, I'll get out of it no matter *what* she says!

MR. DOSS [*laughing*]. Don't worry about our children. They've a pretty good idea. But the point is—they don't think anything about it. That's why they can't understand all this interest. [*Smiles.*] They've more important things on their minds.

MRS. DOSS. More important things?

MR. DOSS [*rising*]. Like the price of bubble gum—or their brother's epic date.

MRS. DOSS [*relaxing with a smile, agreeing*]. I suppose that's it.

MR. DOSS [*crossing to her and putting an arm around her affectionately*]. Has it occurred to you that this is a pretty nice community? Intelligent—good people. The school couldn't be better. [*With rising enthusiasm.*] And my congregation—

MRS. DOSS [*raising her hand*]. I'm convinced. [*Laughing.*] Take along a jar of preserve for Mrs. Parkinson.

[*RITA, another attractive young teen-ager in blue jeans, comes in from the kitchen door U.C. She is carrying two highly polished shoes—obviously for DONNY. There is a bit of shoe polish on her hands, and several streaks on her face.*]

RITA [*crossing to C and holding up the shoes, proudly*]. Look!

MRS. DOSS [*horrified*]. Rita!

RITA [*happily*]. It's waterproof, scuffproof, and—[*Wipes her face with the back of her hand, leaving another streak.*]—and indelible.

MR. DOSS. For Donny?

RITA [*nodding*]. And this stuff won't come off!

MRS. DOSS. Try getting it off. [*As RITA looks blank.*] Off your face, I mean.

RITA [*who cares*]. I can wash any time.

MRS. DOSS. Give Donny his shoes, and then give yourself a good scrubbing.

RITA. But——

MR. DOSS. If soap won't do it, try turpentine.

MRS. DOSS. I want you spotless.

RITA [*with sudden suspicion*]. Mother—we're *not* having some interview!

MRS. DOSS. Yes, and I want you presentable.

RITA [*muttering to herself as she hurries off L.*]. Why do we always have to——[*But she completes her exit before finishing the question.*]

MRS. DOSS [*concerned, as she looks after her*]. Always that question—"why?"

MR. DOSS [*chuckling as he looks after her*]. With all that war paint, our daughter looks like an Indian.

MRS. DOSS [*smiling*]. Carl—our daughter *is* an Indian. [*The bell rings at the front door R and they both look R.*]

MR. DOSS. The reporter?

MRS. DOSS. Who else would ring the bell? [*With an uneasy glance about the room.*] I meant to straighten up.

MR. DOSS. It wouldn't do to be seen the way we really are?

MRS. DOSS [*firmly*]. It wouldn't do at all.

MR. DOSS [*as he goes U C, in a whisper*]. Where'll I find the jar of preserve?

MRS. DOSS [*whispering back*]. Just inside the cellar steps—on the shelf. [*He smiles, waves, and goes out U C.* MRS. DOSS crosses and opens the door R.]