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Dramatic Publishing



Cheaper by the Dozen

DRAMATIZED BY CHRISTOPHER
SERGEL, FROM THE BOOK BY
FRANK B. GILBRETH, JR., AND
ERNESTINE GILBRETH CAREY

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

★ ★ ★ ★ *Our highest
recommendation*

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

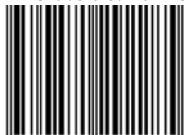
From the Book by **FRANK B. GILBRETH, JR.,** and
ERNESTINE GILBRETH CAREY

This fresh, founded-on-fact comedy is a “once in a lifetime” opportunity. The humor is genuine and delightful, and the story has meaning and importance. This play is especially easy to cast and produce. With its outstanding reputation, you are likely to experience the overwhelming public reaction that demands the posting of the “Held Over” sign, and “Standing Room Only.”

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Cheaper by the Dozen



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FRANK B. GILBRETH, JR.
AND
ERNESTINE GILBRETH CAREY'S

Cheaper by the Dozen

DRAMATIZED BY
CHRISTOPHER SERGEL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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Cheaper by the Dozen

A Comedy in Three Acts

FOR NINE MEN AND SEVEN WOMEN

CHARACTERS

MR. GILBRETH	<i>Dad</i>
MRS. GILBRETH	<i>Mother</i>
ERNESTINE	}
FRANK	
JACKIE	
DAN	
BILL	
FRED	
ANNE	
LILLIAN	}
MARTHA	
MRS. FITZGERALD	<i>the housekeeper</i>
DR. BURTON	<i>the family doctor</i>
JOE SCALES	<i>a cheerleader</i>
MISS BRILL	<i>a teacher</i>
LARRY	<i>someone "special"</i>

PLACE: *The living-room of the Gilbreth home, Montclair, New Jersey.*

TIME: *The twenties.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I: *Scene 1:* The Gilbreth living-room. A day in Autumn.

Scene 2: The same. Two weeks later.

ACT II: The same. A few weeks later.

ACT III: The same. A day in Spring.

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

THE GILBRETH CHILDREN: The children range in age from seventeen on downward. Anne is the oldest; then come Ernestine, Martha, Frank, Bill, Lillian, Fred, Dan, and Jackie. The actual ages of the children can be left to the discretion of the director, depending on the availability of casting material. For the effective use of stage business it is suggested that the children's sizes be graduated from the tallest on down in height to Jackie, the shortest. If it is desired to use costumes of the 1920's, the boys may wear knickers, shirts, sweaters, and long stockings. The girls dress conservatively in simple jumper dresses, middy blouses, and skirts, with long cotton stockings. Anne, in her gradual emancipation from this conservative type of dress, changes to silk stockings. As the play progresses she wears more colorful and grown-up clothes.

DAD: Dad is tall, and no longer slim. He carries himself with the self-assurance of a successful man who is proud of his wife, proud of his family, and proud of his business accomplishments.

MOTHER: Mother is a gracious, attractive woman. She is also a psychologist. In her own way, she is often able to get even better results with her large family than Dad, but she is not a disciplinarian. However, she never threatens, shouts, or becomes excited. She dresses neatly in the prevailing clothes of the period.

MRS. FITZGERALD: She is a buxom, kindly woman, and completely devoted to the family. Sometimes her patience is tried by the goings-on in the large household. She wears a house dress and apron.

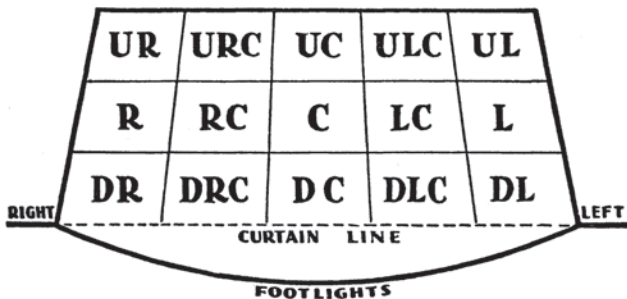
DR. BURTON: Dr. Burton, the family doctor, is a plain, outspoken man. He wears a dark suit and carries a small black bag.

JOE SCALES: Joe is Anne's age, a very short, cocky chap. He wears a bright, horizontally striped sweater or blazer, loud pants, a bow tie, and pork-pie hat.

MISS BRILL: She is thin and sallow, with angular features, and wears the type of glasses that pinch together on the bridge of her nose. She wears a tailored suit. Miss Brill has no love for the children, and they have none for her.

LARRY: Larry is also Anne's age, a nice-looking, clean-cut boy. On his first appearance in Act Two he wears slacks and a sweater. Later in the same act he changes to his best suit. He again wears the slacks and sweater in Act Three.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS

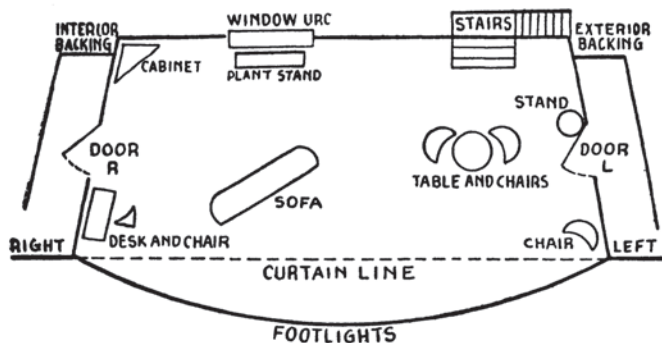


STAGE POSITIONS

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 mean *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.

STAGE CHART



PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Sofa, pillows on sofa, round table and two comfortable chairs, vase on round table, large easy chair, umbrella stand, plants in plant stand, desk and chair, drapes on window, telephone on desk, tall corner cabinet or whatnot, rugs, lamps, pictures, various knickknacks, Anne's package in desk drawer containing piece of flimsy underwear and silk stockings (Act One), checkers and checkerboard (Act One), Dad's cane in umbrella stand (Act One).

DAD: Three large packages, stop-watch, five jackknives, four small manicure sets, watch, papers, large sheet of paper (cross-section graph).

MARTHA: Book.

ANNE: Manicure set, handkerchief, paper.

DAN: Dog.

BILL: Umbrella, sandwich.

MISS BRILL: Papers, pencil, pad.

FRANK: Thick manuscript.

ERNESTINE: Large floppy hat.

LILLIAN: Large lollipop.

LARRY: Nail-studded piece of board.

Love's Old Sweet Song

From Heart Songs, world
syndicate company, 1909

Just a song at twi-light, when the lights are low; And the flick-ring

p CANTANDO

SEMPRE PED. PED.

Detailed description: This system contains the first five measures of the piece. It features a vocal line in the upper treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The piano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction 'CANTANDO'. Pedal markings 'SEMPRE PED.' and 'PED.' are placed below the bass staff.

sha-dows soft-ly come and go. Tho' the heart be wea-ry, sad the day and

f

mf

PED. PED.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 6 through 11. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'sha-dows soft-ly come and go. Tho' the heart be wea-ry, sad the day and'. The piano part features a forte (*f*) dynamic in the vocal line and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic in the piano accompaniment. Pedal markings 'PED.' are present under the bass staff.

long, Still to us at twi - light comes love's old song, Comes love's...old sweet... song.

rit.

rit.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 12 through 16, ending with a double bar line. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics 'long, Still to us at twi - light comes love's old song, Comes love's...old sweet... song.'. The piano part includes a ritardando (*rit.*) marking in both the vocal and piano staves.

ACT ONE

The houselights fade out. Music is heard playing softly. It is "Love's Old Sweet Song." The curtain has not yet risen. A dim spotlight opens up at D R stage, revealing a girl and boy standing in front of the curtain. If possible, only their heads and shoulders are visible in the spotlight. They are listening intently to the music. When they speak, it is in a quiet, reminiscing way.]

ERNESTINE. Can you hear the music, Frank? I think it's coming from down the street.

FRANK. I thought I heard something else.

ERNESTINE. Songs like that make you remember.

FRANK. I thought I heard a whistle—like Dad used to whistle assembly call.

ERNESTINE [*smiling at him*]. How could you hear that? [*A distinctive whistle is heard from off L stage.*]

FRANK. There! [*Glances at ERNESTINE, but she shakes her head. He feels he must be mistaken, and half shrugs it away with a smile.*] Funny how a sound stays with you.

ERNESTINE. It's Dad that stays with you.

FRANK [*with affection*]. Because he had enough gall to be divided in three parts. Mother said the day the United States entered the First World War, Dad telegraphed President Wilson—"Arriving Washington seven P.M. If you don't know how to use me, I'll tell you how."

ERNESTINE [*defensively*]. He showed them how to save time assembling machine guns.

FRANK. But you couldn't tell where Dad's scientific management ended and his family life began. [*Smiles.*] Even buttoning his vest from bottom to top to save four seconds.

ERNESTINE [*with pride*]. But he could walk into the Zeiss

works in Germany or the Pierce Arrow plant in this country and announce he'd speed up production one-fourth—and then do it.

FRANK [*imitating Dad, speaking decisively*]. "And what works in the factory will work in the home!" [ERNESTINE *smiles*. *After a pause*.] I guess with so many of us, it was scientific management or bedlam.

ERNESTINE. Even with a dozen, I don't think Dad was satisfied. I remember him looking us over, and then saying to Mother: [*Imitates him, shaking her head*]. "Only twelve. But never mind, Lillie, you did the best you could."

FRANK. Remember when Mother came home from a trip and asked him if everything had run smoothly? He told her: "Only had trouble with that one over there—[*Points*].—but a good spanking brought him into line." Mother had to say: "That's not one of ours, dear. He belongs next door."

ERNESTINE [*smiling*]. I remember. [*Pause, as she listens*]. The music coming from down the street. We used to sing that song.

FRANK [*nodding*]. Three-part harmony.

ERNESTINE. The whole family rolling along in the Pierce Arrow, singing "Love's Old Sweet Song." Dad'd lean back against the seat and cock his hat on the side of his head. Mother would snuggle up against him as if she were cold. I remember her turning around once between songs and saying: "Right now is the happiest time in the world."

FRANK [*quietly, remembering*]. Maybe it was.

ERNESTINE [*haltingly, as she thinks it*]. Maybe that's the time in a family—when you're all together—before anything's happened to any one of you.

FRANK [*repeating thoughtfully*]. "Right now is the happiest time in the world." Remember when she said it again?

ERNESTINE [*nodding*]. Dad with his bad heart—leaving to lecture at the World Management Conference in Europe. He was about to go, and he whistled assembly call. We came running and we were all together. It was the last time. Dad

was trying to hug us all, and then Mother said it. [*There is a momentary pause as they both remember. The music grows fainter and soon fades out entirely.*]

FRANK. When I think of Dad, I don't think of that. [*With increasing warmth and force as he speaks.*] I think of him color-chalking our fingers and the typewriter keys so even the babies were learning the touch-system, or taking movies of us washing dishes so he could analyze them and eliminate waste motions.

ERNESTINE [*nodding*]. Painting diagrams on the wall to show the solar system—or the difference between meters and yards. Tapping out messages in Morse code—telling those that understood where candy was hidden.

FRANK. And how he hated distractions. Remember how he used to shout at those two noisy canaries?

ERNESTINE [*nodding*]. The one he named, "Shut up," and the other, "You heard me." [*The curtain begins to rise, and the spotlight starts to fade.*]

FRANK. But the way I remember Dad best—he'd come bounding up the front steps with his arms full, and he'd be busting to try out some new idea. He'd come roaring into the living-room, take out his stop-watch, and whistle assembly call. That meant—come running.

[*The curtain is up. The living-room of the Gilbreth home is large, comfortable, with a well-lived-in appearance, and furnished in the style of the period. The door to the outside is L, while a door R leads to the dining-room and kitchen. In the rear wall, U L C, three steps lead to a landing, and then a flight of stairs turns left and continues on up to the second floor of the house. There is a large draped window in the rear wall, U R C. In front of it is a large stand for potted plants. Below the door R are a desk and chair. On the desk is a telephone. At an angle at R C is a sofa, while at L C stage are a round table and two comfortable chairs. There is another large easy chair D L. Above the door L is a stand for*

umbrellas. A tall corner cabinet or whatnot is in the U R corner of the room. Rugs, lamps, pictures, and knickknacks complete the setting. DAD has come through the door L with his arms loaded with three large packages. He sets these in the chair D L and takes a stop-watch out of his vest pocket. He crosses to C stage, gives a loud, distinctive whistle, and clicks the stop-watch. He doesn't look up from the watch as young people come from all directions. ANNE and MARTHA hurry in R. BILL and LILLIAN come tearing down the stairs. The window U R C is thrown open and FRED scrambles in. JACKIE dashes down the stairs tucking in his shirt as he comes. DAN rushes in L and slams the door on a dog that has been barking after him. He opens the door again to shout, "Go on home," to the dog, and then hurries across to the others.]

ALL [*as they line up at an angle in front of sofa*]. I'm first, after you! That's doesn't count! Out of my way! You're in my place! What is it, Dad? Don't push me! Hello, Dad! [FRANK turns to ERNESTINE, D R, where they are still standing.]

FRANK. Didn't you hear Dad whistle?

ERNESTINE. I wasn't sure.

FRANK. Come on. We're late. [*The spotlight goes out as they cross to the others and squeeze into their positions in line. The CHILDREN quiet down, and straighten the line. Starting with the smallest, who is farthest downstage, the line builds in height to the tallest at the other end of the line, upstage. Through all this, DAD hasn't raised his eyes from the stop-watch. The moment FRANK and ERNESTINE are in place, DAD clicks the watch and his head snaps up.*]

DAD. Fourteen seconds.

FRANK [*cheerfully*]. That's pretty good. [DAD glares at him.]

FRED. Only eight seconds off the record.

DAD. Where's your mother?

ANNE. Upstairs with the babies.

DAD [*gruffly, moving in front of table L C*]. I had so many children because I thought anything your mother and I teamed up on was certain to be a success. Now I'm not so sure. [*Whirls abruptly.*] Let me see your fingernails.

LILLIAN. What, Daddy?

DAD. Fingernails! [*All hands are thrust forward with fingers outstretched. JACKIE winces at sight of his own nails, jerks them back, and starts buffing them against his trousers. DAD moves down line like a hard-to-please general making an inspection.*] Not very clean—need trimmings—looks like you've been biting them. [*As he reaches JACKIE.*] Jackie! [*JACKIE holds out his hands reluctantly. DAD shakes his head mournfully at the sight.*] Look at those nails! [*JACKIE bows his head over his nails, inspecting them at a range of two inches.*] What do you think of them? [*JACKIE shakes his head mournfully in echo of his father. DAD brightens and reaches into one of his bulging pockets.*] What you need is a jackknife to keep your nails clean. [*Hands jackknife to JACKIE.*]

JACKIE [*wide-eyed*]. Gosh, Dad!

DAD [*smiling, passing them out*]. All you boys need jackknives — [*To GIRLS.*]—and I've some little manicure sets for the girls. Here—here's yours. [*Pulls a small manicure set from pocket.*]

CHILDREN [*clustering around him, as he empties his pockets*]. Thank you, Dad. Golly, thanks! Look at mine! A real stag handle! There's scissors—and a file. What a beauty! Thanks, Dad—thanks!

DAD [*sternly*]. I'll inspect your nails again. [*Picks up packages he left in chair, looking about speculatively.*] Now where can I put these?

DAN. What's in those boxes?

LILLIAN. Is it something for us in those boxes?

DAD [*pretending not to understand*]. These boxes?

BILL. Come on and tell us.

DAD. It's something special—something interesting, and educational—but a lot of fun, too. [*Starts for stairs.*] I'll tell you about it tomorrow—or maybe the day after.

JACKIE. *Daddy!*

LILLIAN. Please! [*CHILDREN cluster about him at foot of stairs.*]

DAD. Next week sometime.

MARTHA. Tell us now.

ERNESTINE. You're going to anyway.

ANNE. You know you are.

DAD [*with a scowl*]. Since you insist. [*Comes to sofa as they troop after him, and sets packages down.*] These are two Victrolas and some records! [*He looks expectantly from face to face. Their expressions show definite disappointment.*]

FRED. But we have a Victrola.

DAD. Downstairs.

ANNE. Well? . . .

DAD. These Victrolas are for the upstairs bathrooms. One for the boys' bathroom. One for the girls' bathroom.

ERNESTINE [*in dismay*]. The bathrooms!

DAD [*trying to whip up enthusiasm*]. I'll bet we'll be the only family in town with a Victrola in every bath.

FRANK [*dolefully*]. That wouldn't surprise me.

DAD. I've been thinking about the time you waste in the bathroom. At first I thought it was unavoidable delay.

ANNE [*shaking her head*]. Here we go——

DAD [*happily*]. Then I thought of these Victrolas. [*Determined.*] You're going to play them every morning while taking baths, brushing teeth, washing faces——

ANNE. Why?

DAD. Does there have to be a "why" for everything?

ERNESTINE [*patiently*]. There doesn't have to be, but with you there always is.

ANNE. When you start talking about Victrolas, dance music

isn't the first thing that pops into our minds. [DAD looks at them. ALL shake their heads. ANNE is right.]

DAD [with generous frankness]. I admit it's not dance music.

ANNE [ruefully]. We might start thinking about dances.

MARTHA [grimly]. What kind of records?

DAD [swallowing]. Very entertaining, and educational. [ALL look at him doubtfully. He bursts out.] Language lessons. French and German.

CHILDREN. Oh, no! Please!

DAD [his voice rising]. You don't have to listen to them consciously. Just play them, and finally they'll make an impression.

ANNE. Not every morning in the bathroom!

DAD [wheedling]. I spent a hundred and sixty dollars for this equipment.

BILL. It's not even unwrapped. Maybe you could get your money back, Daddy.

DAD [shouting]. I don't want my money back. And if those Victrolas aren't going from the minute you get up till you come down to breakfast, I'll know the reason why.

DAN. One reason—it's impossible to change records while you're in the bathtub.

DAD. A person can be in and out of the tub in the time it takes a record to play. That's why you're taught motion study.

MARTHA. You didn't teach anything about taking a bath.

DAD [beaming]. Ahh! [They asked for it.] I'll now demonstrate how to take a bath without waste motions—without dabbing here and then there and taking an hour. [CHILDREN groan.] Dan and Fred, bring over that little rug. [Indicates small throw rug near desk D R.] We'll pretend it's a bathtub.

ERNESTINE. You mean—right now?

DAD. I mean, at once. [DAN and FRED pick up rug and come toward sofa.] Put it there. [They place rug D C, where DAD indicates. DAD tosses a pillow from sofa on to rug, and carefully eases himself down on it.] I'm in the bathtub. [CHIL-

DREN crowd around him. DAD looks from face to face, as though daring anyone to dispute the fact.]

JACKIE [mollifying]. Yes, Daddy.

DAD. A little more hot water, Jackie. [JACKIE turns on an imaginary faucet, and then turns it back. DAD feels imaginary water.] Ahh, that's fine! [Looks at them.] I have a cake of soap in my right hand. Now, pay attention to this one simple, continuous motion. [Suits action to words.] From the top of the shoulder—down the top of the left arm, back up the bottom of the arm, and then down the left side. Got it? [CHILDREN nod.]

[Unobserved, MOTHER starts down the stairs.]

DAD. Shift soap. [Lifts imaginary soap. CHILDRENS' eyes follow, ALL heads turning in unison.] Same motion. Other side. [As he starts, MOTHER crosses to him.]

MOTHER [humorously]. Don't forget the back of your neck.

DAD [rising, delighted to see her]. Hello, Boss. I'm not forgetting a thing. [Steps over side of imaginary bathtub.]

MOTHER [smiling]. Glad you're home early. What's all the racket?

DAD. Fingernail inspection.

MOTHER [taking his hand affectionately]. How about yours? [Shakes her head as she looks at them and speaks, half joking, half serious.] Biting them again.

DAD [spinning her hand around with his]. Let's see yours. [Suddenly concerned.] I told you not to wash the dishes yourself.

MOTHER [knowing DAD doesn't realize all the problems of housework]. There's already too much for the cook to do.

DAD. I'll take care of that. Just a matter of saving motions. Dishes or bathing—it's all the same thing. [Turns to CHILDREN, in a lecturing tone.] Continuing—give a little attention to your feet and the back of your neck, and you'll be out of the tub before you can say "Bonjour." [Dismisses subject and them.] Now you know all about taking a bath. Put the

- rug back, and take the Victrolas upstairs. [*To MOTHER.*]
Now, Boss, I'll talk to the cook. [*Strides to door R.*]
- MOTHER [*following him*]. We'll both talk to her. [*Goes out R, after DAD. LILLIAN and JACKIE toss pillow on sofa and replace rug D R, while DAN, FRED, FRANK, and BILL start upstairs with packages.*]
- FRED [*to DAN*]. Grab on.
- FRANK. Which goes in which bathroom?
- BILL. We'll give the girls the French.
- MARTHA. I much prefer French.
- DAN. Jawohl!
- LILLIAN [*hurrying up after BOYS*]. Is "Jawohl" French or German?
- JACKIE [*following LILLIAN upstairs*]. I think it's Spanish.
[*DAN, FRED, FRANK, BILL, LILLIAN, and JACKIE are up the stairs and out.*]
- ANNE [*at C stage, in wonder*]. Dad has a system for everything.
- ERNESTINE [*smiling agreement*]. Even conjugating French and German verbs in the bathtub. [*Flops wearily on sofa.*]
- MARTHA [*thoughtfully, sitting in chair right of table L C*]. If he'd only think of a system for interesting a couple of boys I know at school.
- ERNESTINE. In what?
- MARTHA. In me.
- ANNE [*still standing at C stage*]. A person has to think of some things for herself. [*With meaning.*] I did.
- ERNESTINE. What do you mean?
- ANNE. I'm going to have it out with him.
- ERNESTINE. Have what out?
- ANNE. Somebody has to, and I'm the oldest.
- MARTHA. What are you going to do?
- ANNE [*determined*]. I'm going to stop dressing like a freak.
Aren't you tired of all the boys thinking you're a freak?
- ERNESTINE. Yes, but—
- MARTHA. Dad says—

ANNE [*loudly*]. I don't care what he says.

MARTHA [*apprehensively, glancing R*]. He might hear you.

ANNE. He's going to, anyway. [*Thrusts out one leg.*] Cotton stockings! No wonder we never get asked anywhere. No boy would dare be seen with us. The way it looks, I'll be the only person to go through Montclair High without once being asked to a dance. [*Unhappily.*] Whenever the telephone rings, it's just some girl.

ERNESTINE. A boy called yesterday. [*They look to her in surprise. She continues lamely.*] He wanted my notes on the Second Punic War.

MARTHA. You'd think it would impress fellows—I mean, knowing things like the touch-system and the Morse code.

ERNESTINE. But it doesn't matter at all.

ANNE. I *had* to do something. [*Crosses quickly to desk and takes a package from drawer.*] I bought some things—up-to-date things like other girls wear. [*In a scared-but-glad tone, as she moves back to C stage.*] And they look absolutely snaky. [*ERNESTINE and MARTHA rise and move to her.*]

MARTHA [*as ANNE starts to open package, warningly*]. Careful—he might walk in any minute.

ANNE. Let him. I'm not a sneak.

ERNESTINE. What'd you get?

ANNE. Short underthings, and—[*Bravely.*]—silk stockings.

ERNESTINE [*catching her breath*]. Silk—stockings!

MARTHA. But when Dad . . . [*She is unable to finish.*]

ANNE. They're right in this package. [*Hugs package to her.*]

And I'm going to wear them, and I'm going to be asked to dances, and lots of boys will want to dance with me. [*Gulps.*] And I'll be a really popular girl.

ERNESTINE [*joining the dream*]. And if he lets you wear them, he'll have to let me wear them, too.

MARTHA. And me!

ERNESTINE. And we'll all be having dates, and going to dances.

MARTHA. And we can talk over our different boy-friends, and compare notes, and—[*The dream is beautiful.*] Golly!

ANNE [*looking lovingly at her package*]. Silk stockings!

ERNESTINE [*with look towards door R, sharply*]. Anne! It's Dad!

MARTHA. Hide it! Quick!

[ANNE *rushes over to hide the package in the desk drawer as DAD and MRS. FITZGERALD enter R, followed by MOTHER. DAD comes to C stage, followed by MRS. FITZGERALD and MOTHER. ERNESTINE and MARTHA move quickly toward D L.*]

MRS. FITZGERALD. More efficiency—that's all I hear.

DAD. If you'd just apply motion study——

MRS. FITZGERALD. Motion study is fine as long as it's somebody else's motions you're studying.

MOTHER [*placatingly*]. You'd better get along with dinner, Mrs. Fitzgerald. My husband told you he'd take care of it.

MRS. FITZGERALD [*grumbling, as she moves R*]. Lincoln freed the slaves. [*Turns.*] All but one. All but one. [*Goes out R.*]

DAD [*to MOTHER*]. We'll handle this the same way we would in a factory.

MOTHER. It isn't exactly the same.

DAD [*decisively*]. Exactly. And what works in the factory——

MOTHER [*smiling*]. Yes, dear.

[DAD *takes out his stop-watch and whistles assembly. FRANK, BILL, LILLIAN, FRED, JACKIE, and DAN come pouring back down the stairs. The line is formed exactly as before. DAD clicks the watch and his head snaps up.*]

DAD. Twelve seconds. [*The CHILDREN look from one to the other, pleased with the good time. DAD continues, meaning to sell the idea.*] I've a wonderful surprise for you! We're going to try a wonderful new idea!

ALL [*excitement from YOUNGER CHILDREN*]. Tell us! What is it? Is it fun, Daddy?

MARTHA [*with a faint trace of suspicion*]. What kind of idea?

DAD [*with gusto*]. We're going to set up a family council. Your