

HONEY. (*Admonishing.*) Dear...!

MARTHA. Yeah! (*To Nick.*) Thanks, sweetheart.

GEORGE. (*To them all.*) I didn't want to talk about him at all ... I would have been perfectly happy not to discuss the whole subject ... I never want to talk about it.

MARTHA. Yes you do.

GEORGE. When we're alone, maybe.

MARTHA. We're alone!

GEORGE. Uh ... no, Love ... we've got guests.

MARTHA. (*With a covetous look at Nick.*) We sure have.

HONEY. Could I have a little brandy? I think I'd like a little brandy.

NICK. Do you think you should?

HONEY. Oh yes ... yes, dear.

GEORGE. (*Moving to the bar again.*) Sure! Fill 'er up!

NICK. Honey, I don't think you ...

HONEY. (*Petulance creeping in.*) It will steady me, *dear*. I feel a little unsteady.

GEORGE. Hell, you can't walk steady on half a bottle ... got to do it right.

HONEY. Yes. (*To Martha.*) I love brandy ... I really do.

MARTHA. (*Somewhat abstracted.*) Good for you.

NICK. (*Giving up.*) Well, if you think it's a good idea ...

HONEY. (*Really testy.*) I know what's best for me, dear.

NICK. (*Not even pleasant.*) Yes ... I'm sure you do.

HONEY. (*George hands her a brandy.*) Oh, goodie! Thank you. (*To Nick.*) Of course I do, dear.

MARTHA. You two men have it out while we were gone? George tell you his side of things? He bring you to tears, hunh?

NICK. Well ... no ...

GEORGE. No, what we did, actually, was ... we sort of danced around.

MARTHA. Oh, yeah? Cute!

HONEY. Oh, I love dancing.

NICK. He didn't mean that, Honey.

HONEY. Well, I didn't think he did! Two grown men dancing ... heavens!

MARTHA. You mean he didn't start in on how he would have amounted to something if it hadn't been for Daddy? How his high moral sense wouldn't even let him *try* to better himself? No?

NICK. (*Qualified.*) No ...

MARTHA. And he didn't run on about how he tried to publish a

goddamn book, and Daddy wouldn't let him.

NICK. A book? No.

GEORGE. Please, Martha ...

NICK. (*Egging her on.*) A book? What book?

GEORGE. (*Pleading.*) Please. Just a book.

MARTHA. (*Mock incredulity.*) Just a book!

GEORGE. Please, Martha!

MARTHA. (*Almost disappointed.*) Well, I guess you didn't get the whole sad story. What's the matter with you, George? You given up?

GEORGE. (*Calm ... serious.*) No ... no. It's just I've got to figure out some new way to fight you, Martha. Guerrilla tactics, maybe ... internal subversion ... I don't know. Something.

MARTHA. Well, you figure it out, and you let me know when you do.

GEORGE. (*Cheery.*) All right, Love.

HONEY. Why don't we dance? I'd love some dancing.

NICK. Honey ...

HONEY. I would! I'd love some dancing.

NICK. Honey ...

HONEY. I *want* some! I want some dancing!

GEORGE. All right...! For heaven's sake ... we'll have some dancing.

HONEY. (*All sweetness again. To Martha:*) Oh, I'm so glad ... I just love dancing. Don't you?

MARTHA. (*With a glance at Nick.*) Yeah ... yeah, that's not a bad idea.

NICK. (*Genuinely nervous.*) Gee.

GEORGE. Gee.

HONEY. I dance like the wind.

MARTHA. (*Without comment.*) Yeah?

GEORGE. (*Picking a record.*) Martha had her daguerreotype in the paper once ... oh 'bout twenty-five years ago ... Seems she took second prize in one o' them seven-day dancin' contest things ... biceps all bulging, holding up her partner.

MARTHA. Will you put a record on and shut up?

GEORGE. Certainly, Love. (*To all.*) How are we going to work this? Mixed doubles?

MARTHA. Well, you certainly don't think I'm going to dance with *you*, do you?

GEORGE. (*Considers it.*) Nooooooo ... not with him around ... that's for sure. And not with twinkle-toes here, either.

HONEY. I'll dance with anyone ... I'll dance by myself.
 NICK. Honey ...
 HONEY. I dance like the wind.
 GEORGE. All right, kiddies ... choose up and hit the sack. *(Music starts ... Second movement, Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.)*
 HONEY. *(Up, dancing by herself.)* De, de de da da, da-da de, da da-da de da ... wonderful...!
 NICK. Honey ...
 MARTHA. All right, George ... cut that out!
 HONEY. Dum, de de da da, da-da de, dum, de da da da ... Wheeeee...!
 MARTHA. Cut it out, George!
 GEORGE. *(Pretending not to hear.)* What, Martha? What?
 NICK. Honey ...
 MARTHA. *(As George turns up the volume.)* CUT IT OUT, GEORGE!
 GEORGE. WHAT?
 MARTHA. *(Gets up, moves quickly, threateningly, to George.)* All right, you son of a bitch ...
 GEORGE. *(Record off, at once. Quietly.)* What did you say, Love?
 MARTHA. You son of a ...
 HONEY. *(In an arrested posture.)* You stopped! Why did you stop?
 NICK. Honey ...
 HONEY. *(To Nick, snapping.)* Stop that!
 GEORGE. I thought it was fitting, Martha.
 MARTHA. Oh you did, hunh?
 HONEY. You're always at me when I'm having a good time.
 NICK. *(Trying to remain civil.)* I'm sorry, Honey.
 HONEY. Just ... leave me alone!
 GEORGE. Well, why don't you choose, Martha? *(Moves away from the phonograph ... leaves it to Martha.)* Martha's going to run things ... the little lady's going to lead the band.
 HONEY. I like to dance and you don't want me to.
 NICK. I like you to dance.
 HONEY. Just ... leave me alone. *(She sits ... takes a drink.)*
 GEORGE. Martha's going to put on some rhythm she understands ... *Sacre du Printemps*, maybe. *(Moves ... sits by Honey.)* Hi, sexy.
 HONEY. *(A little giggle-scream.)* Oooooohhhhhh!
 GEORGE. *(Laughs mockingly.)* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Choose it, Martha ... do your stuff!
 MARTHA. *(Concentrating on the machine.)* You're damn right!