

Ray (Skeeter - Cait)

Holdin' you back.

Act II,  
Sc. 8

CHARLIE

My pop.

GEORGE BURNS

My sympathies.

(SOUND of orchestra. BURNS and GORILLA exit, and enter unseen stage area. Huge laugh on their entrance.)

SKEETER

Probably the worst mistake of his career.

CAIT

And what became of Parks & Lake?

SKEETER

They gave up when they couldn't book the act any more. And some years later, when Mae West was a big star, Daddy B shows up in her dressing room with a bunch of his buddies.

DADDY B

"There she is, fellas! That's the woman that wanted to marry my son!"

SKEETER

Miss West spins around and says

MAE WEST

"Yeah, and you didn't think I was good enough for him."

SKEETER

Papa met Mama. And Mama and Papa's star was on the rise 'till Mama got pregnant with Ray, and then of course she got the TB, and it looked like it was all over then.

Scene 8  
(continuous)

CAIT

(reads) "We now take great pleasure in presenting Master Ray Parks. He comes from a long line of famous vaudevillians. He has been on the road since he was six weeks old. With such a start in life, this young man should eventually go on to closing, top billing... time will tell." This is depressing.

SKEETER

*Skeeter*

Mama always said he could have been another Mickey Rooney.

RAY

Mickey Rooney. Mickey Rooney was a putz.

SKEETER

Ray had the looks, had the talent.

RAY

Wha'd'ya wanna tell Cait those things for. Christ' sake, why don't you tell her about *my* book.

SKEETER

He was part of the act for the first few years. He'd run out and pull some guy's pants down or something, then run off again.

RAY

I was the writer...wrote a book about my first tour of duty in the Philippines. The best time of my life.

SKEETER

Mama and Papa had him coming out to take bows since he was old enough to walk.

RAY

Your Grandmother lost the goddamn manuscript!

SKEETER

But he was impossible. He'd come home from the base, stink-o. Get Mama so down.

RAY

Thought I was home for good in 1939, but ten minutes with that old bat, and I says *No Way*.

SKEETER

Apparently everyone thought he was just adorable.

RAY

You don't know what it was like, Skeeter! Dank little hotel rooms. Sleeping in Mama's suitcase.

SKEETER

Still, I don't think I would have minded, you know. Mama and Papa when they were young.

RAY

Ten minutes with that bitch, that was it! I signed back up. Three more years. Smartest thing I ever did, too.

Though I had a bullet part my hair twice, walked away from Normandy, saw my girl get blown to bits in an air raid over London. And stopped believing in God the day we got to Buchenwald.

*end*

SKEETER

Mama'd say sometimes she thought Ray was sorry the war ever ended.

MARY

He never forgave me, Skeeter. Not sure I ever forgave myself.

SKEETER

My mother. That was the thing. I loved my brother very much, but he could be downright cruel to Mama.

MARY

Why, you're not going to leave without speaking to your mother?

CHARLIE

No. I'm going to take her back to the city with me to keep my wife from being homesick.

MARY

Wife! When did you get married?

CHARLIE

Tomorrow morning at ten o'clock.

MARY

You don't mean Carrie White?

CHARLIE

No.

MARY

Minnie Green?

CHARLIE

No.

MARY

Kitty Black?

CHARLIE

She isn't a colored girl.

MARY

Well, what's her name?