

boyhood— (Bernard crosses slowly to above Willy.) There's something I don't understand about it. His friend after that Ebbets Field game. In the age of seven, when nothing good ever happened to him.

BERNARD. (Puts cigarette in ashtray.) He never trained himself for anything. (Crosses above L. of Willy.)

WILLY. But he did. He did. After high school he took so many correspondence courses. Radio mechanics; television. God knows what else. He didn't make a mark. (Touches his forehead.)

BERNARD. (Crosses slowly to R. C., takes off his glasses.) Willy, do you want to talk candidly?

WILLY. (Rises, crosses, faces Bernard.) I regard you as a very brilliant man, Bernard, I value your advice.

BERNARD. (Moves D. R. past Willy, holding up glasses, looking at them.) Oh, the hell with the advice, Willy! I couldn't advise you. There's just one thing I've always wanted to ask you. When he was supposed to graduate, and the math teacher flunked him...

WILLY. Oh, that son of a bitch ruined his life!

BERNARD. (A step.) Willy, all he had to do was go to summer school and make up that subject.

WILLY. That's right, that's right...

BERNARD. Did you tell him not to go to summer school?

WILLY. Me? I ordered him to go!

BERNARD. Then why wouldn't he go?

WILLY. (Crosses U.) Why? Why! Bernard, that question has been trailing me like a ghost for the last fifteen years. He flunked the subject, and laid down and died like a hammer hit him!

BERNARD. (Crosses U. to him.) Take it easy, kid...

WILLY. Let me talk to you, I got nobody to talk to. Bernard... Bernard, was it my fault? Y'see?—it keeps going around in my mind, maybe I did something to him. I got nothing to give him, you see.

BERNARD. (Not wanting to talk about it; patting Willy.) Don't take it so hard.

WILLY. Why did he lay down? What is the story there?—you were his friend?

BERNARD. Willy... I remember, it was June... and our grades came out. And he'd flunked math.

WILLY. ... That son of a bitch...

BERNARD. No, Biff was ready to enroll in summer school.

WILLY. (Incredible.) He was?

BERNARD. He wasn't beaten by it at all. But then... Willy, he disappeared from the block for almost a month. And I got the idea that—Did he go up to New England to see you? (Willy stares in silence.) Willy?

WILLY. (Now with the strong edge of resentment against Bernard.) Yeah, he came to Boston. What about it?

BERNARD/
WILLY

START →

END

BERNARD. (*Crosses to Willy.*) Well, just that when he came back... I'll never forget this... it always mystifies me. Because I'd thought so well of Biff, even though he'd always taken advantage of me. I loved him, Willy, y'know? And he came back after that month and took his sneakers—remember those sneakers with "University of Virginia" printed on them? He was so proud of those, wore them every day. And he took them down in the cellar... and *burned them up* in the furnace. We had a fist fight; it lasted at least half an hour. Just the two of us, punching each other down the cellar... and crying right through it. ...I've often thought of how strange it was that I knew right then that he'd given up his life. ...What happened in Boston, Willy?

WILLY. (*Awkwardly.*) Nothing. ...What do you mean? What happened? What's that got to do with anything?

BERNARD. Well, don't get sore...

WILLY. What are you trying to do, blame it on me? If a boy lays down is that my fault?

BERNARD. Now, Willy, don't get...

WILLY. Well, don't... don't talk to me that way! What does that mean—"What happened?"

(*Charley enters from U. R. in vest, light-blue shirt, untied bow tie.*)

CHARLEY. (*Crosses to table, picks up bag.*) Hey, you're going to miss that train. (*Unwraps a bottle of bourbon. Crosses above table, puts bag on chair, of table. Opens bag, wraps bottle in pajamas. Puts in bag. Zips shut.*)

BERNARD. Yeah, I'm going. (*Sees bottle.*) Thanks, Pop. (*Puts on glasses. Picks up his rackets and hat, puts on hat.*) Goodbye, Willy, and don't worry about it. You know, "First you don't succeed..."

WILLY. Yes, I believe in that.

BERNARD. (*Crossing to Willy.*) But sometimes, Willy, it's better for a man just to walk away.

WILLY. Walk away?

BERNARD. That's right.

WILLY. But if you can't walk away?