

Little Theatre of Owatonna
Audition Application Form for *The Sunshine Boys*
Spring 2026
Jeffrey Jackson, Director

PLAY SYNOPSIS

The Sunshine Boys is a classic comedy play written by Neil Simon. It premiered on Broadway in 1972 and was later adapted into a successful film in 1975 starring Walter Matthau and George Burns. The play revolves around the relationship between two aging comedians who were once a famous comedy duo known as "The Sunshine Boys".

The story follows Willie Clark and Al Lewis, who were once a highly successful vaudeville comedy team. However, after over 40 years of performing together, their partnership ended acrimoniously. Some dozen years later, a young theatrical agent, who is also Willie's nephew, tries to bring the two older men together for a comedy TV special. Despite their animosity towards each other, they reluctantly agree to reunite for one last performance.

The humor in the play stems from the contrasting personalities of the two characters. Willie Clark is cantankerous, irritable, and resistant to change, while Al Lewis is more easygoing and resigned to their past. Their rehearsals as they re-stage their classic comedy sketch are fraught with tension and bickering, leading to hilarious situations as they struggle to recapture their former chemistry.

The Sunshine Boys explores themes of friendship, aging, and the passage of time. It offers a poignant reflection on the complexities of relationships and the challenges of reconciling the past with the present. Despite the comedic tone, the play also touches on deeper emotions and the inevitable changes that come with growing old.

NAME (as you wish it to appear in the program)

AGE _____ **GENDER** _____ **PREFERRED PRONOUNS** _____

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

HEIGHT: _____ **WEIGHT** _____ **HAIR COLOR** _____ **EYE COLOR** _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER(S) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

What social media platforms are you on?

ROLES IN THIS PLAY:

- **WILLIE CLARK** mid-to late 70s, a cranky, crotchety former vaudeville performer
- **AL LEWIS:** mid-to late 70s, former partner of Willie Clark, gentler and quieter than Willie
- **BEN SILVERMAN:** early to mid-30s. the nephew of Willie Clark and sometime agent for Lewis and Clark comedy team
- **PHIL** (Voice only); Age not specified
- **EDDIE:** TV Assistant. Age not specified
- **Patient in the doctor sketch:** Never identified by name but described as a “thin, frail man in a hat and a business suit.” Age not specified
- **BURLESQUE NURSE:** A stereotypical dumb blonde actress who plays the role of the nurse in the revival of the Sunshine Boys’ doctor sketch. Described in the script as “a tall, voluptuous and over-stacked blonde in a tight dress.” Mid-20s to early 30s
- **REGISTERED NURSE:** Age not specified. Woman

PART or PARTS YOU ARE AUDITIONING FOR:

1st choice _____

2nd choice _____

3rd choice _____

Will you accept another role? _____

THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE:

LIST THE PLAYS (including musicals) in which you have had a role, the ROLE you played in that production, the DATE(S) of the production, and the theatre COMPANY.

[E.g., “Little Nell the Orphan Girl” (a melodrama in three acts), played Trelawney Tillinghast (the hero). Belton High School Theatre Department, November 1972]

If you need additional space, please attach a separate sheet of paper or your performance resume.

Scene Two

(The following Monday. A few minutes before eleven.)

(The stage is empty. Suddenly the bathroom door opens and WILLIE emerges. He is still wearing his slippers and the same pajamas, but instead of his bathrobe, he has made a concession to the occasion. He is wearing a double-breasted blue suit jacket, buttoned, and he is putting a handkerchief in his pocket. He looks in the mirror, brushes back his hair. He shuffles over to the window and looks out. There is a knock on the door. WILLIE turns and stares at it. He doesn't move. There is another knock and then we hear BEN's voice.)

BEN'S VOICE. Uncle Willie. It's Ben.

WILLIE. Ben? Is that you?

BEN'S VOICE. Yes. Open up.

(WILLIE starts to door, then stops.)

WILLIE. ...You're alone or he's with you?

BEN. I'm alone.

WILLIE. *(Nods.)* Wait a minute. *(The latch is locked again and again he has trouble getting it open.)* Wait a minute.

BEN. Slide it, don't push it.

WILLIE. Wait a minute. I'll push it.

BEN. *DON'T PUSH IT! SLIDE IT!*

WILLIE. Wait a minute. *(He gets it open and opens door, BEN walks in.)* You're supposed to slide it.

BEN. I rushed like crazy. I didn't want him getting here before me. Did he call or anything?

WILLIE. Where's the *Variety*?

BEN. (*Taking off his coat.*) It's Monday, not Wednesday...
Didn't you know it was Monday?

WILLIE. I remembered but I forgot.

BEN. What are you wearing? What is that? You look half-dressed.

WILLIE. Why, for him I should get *all* dressed?

BEN. Are you alright? Are you nervous or anything?

WILLIE. Why should *I* be nervous? *He* should be nervous.
I don't get nervous.

BEN. Good.

WILLIE. Listen, I changed my mind. I'm not doing it.

BEN. *What?*

WILLIE. Don't get so upset. Everything is the same as before
except I'm not doing it.

BEN. When did you decide this?

WILLIE. I decided it when you asked me.

BEN. No, you didn't. You told me you *would* do it.

WILLIE. Well, it was a bad decision. This time I made a
good one.

BEN. Well, I'm sorry, you have to do it. I've already told
C.B.S. that you would be rehearsing this week and
more important, that man is on his way over here now
and I'm not going to tell him that you called it off.

WILLIE. We'll leave him a note outside the door.

BEN. We're not leaving any notes... That's why I came here
this morning, I was afraid you would try something
like this... I'm going to stay until I think you're both
acting like civilized human beings...and then when
you're ready to rehearse, I'm going to leave you alone.
Is that understood?

WILLIE. I'm sick. I woke up sick today.

BEN. No, you're not.

WILLIE. What are you, a doctor? You're an agent. I'm telling
you I'm sick.

BEN. What's wrong?

WILLIE. I think I got hepatitis.

BEN. You don't even know what hepatitis is.

WILLIE. If you got it, what's the difference?

BEN. There's nothing wrong with you except a good case of the nerves. You're not backing out, Willie. I don't care what kind of excuse you make, you're going to go through with this. You promised me you would give it at least one day.

WILLIE. I'll pick another day.

BEN. TODAY! You're going to meet with him and rehearse with him TODAY. Now *stop* and just behave yourself.

WILLIE. What do you mean, behave yourself? Who do you think you're talking to, Susan and Jackie?

BEN. *Amanda* and Jackie! ...Michael! I wish I were. I can reason with them... And now I'm getting chest pains on Monday.

WILLIE. Anyway, he's late. He's purposely coming late to aggravate me.

BEN. (*Looking out window.*) He's not late. It's two minutes after eleven.

WILLIE. So what is he, early? He's *late*!

BEN. You're *looking* to start trouble, I can tell.

WILLIE. I was up and dressed at eight o'clock, don't tell me.

BEN. Why didn't you shave?

WILLIE. Get me the Shick commercial, I'll shave. (*He looks in mirror.*) I really think I got hepatitis. Look how green I look.

BEN. You don't get green from hepatitis. You get yellow.

WILLIE. Maybe I got a very bad case.

BEN. (*Looks at his watch.*) Now you got me nervous. I wonder if I should call him? Maybe he's sick.

WILLIE. (*Glares at him.*) You believe *he's* sick, but me you won't believe...why don't you become *his* nephew?

(*Suddenly there is a knock on the door. WILLIE freezes and stares at it.*)

BEN. That's him. You want me to get it?

WILLIE. Get what? I didn't hear anything.

BEN. *(Starts towards door.)* Alright, now take it easy...
Please just behave yourself and give this a chance.
Promise me you'll give it a chance.

WILLIE. *(Starts for kitchen.)* I'll give it every possible chance
in the world... But it's not gonna work.

BEN. Where are you going?

WILLIE. To make tea. I feel like some hot tea.

*(He crosses into kitchen and closes curtain.
He starts to fill up kettle with water.)*

BEN. *(Panicky.)* Now?? Now??

(BEN looks at him exasperated, a knock on the door again and BEN crosses to it and opens it. AL LEWIS stands there. He is also about seventy years old and is dressed in his best blue suit, hat, scarf, and carries a walking stick. He was probably quite a gay blade in his day but time has slowed him down somewhat... Our first impression is that he is soft-spoken and pleasant...and a little nervous.)

Mr. Lewis, how do you do, I'm Ben Silverman.

(BEN, nervous, extends hand.)

AL. How are you. Hello. It's nice to see you.

(His eyes dart around looking for WILLIE. He doesn't see him yet.)

How do you do? ...Hello... Hello... How are you?

BEN. We met before, a long time ago. My father took me backstage, I forget the theater... It must have been fifteen, twenty years ago.

AL. I remember... Certainly... It was backstage... Maybe fifteen, twenty years ago... I forget the theater.

BEN. That's right.

AL. Sure, I remember.

(He has walked into the room and shoots a glance towards the kitchen, WILLIE doesn't look up from his tea-making.)

BEN. Please sit down. Uncle Willie's making some tea.

AL. Thank you very much. *(He sits on the edge of the table.)*

BEN. *(Trying hard to make conversation.)* Er...did you have any trouble getting in from Jersey?

AL. My daughter drove me in. She has a car.

BEN. Oh. That's nice.

AL. A 1972 Chrysler... Black...

BEN. Yes, the Chrysler's a wonderful car.

AL. The big one... The Imperial.

BEN. I know. I drove it.

AL. My daughter's car?

BEN. No. The big Chrysler Imperial... I rented one in California.

AL. *(Nods.)* No, she owns.

BEN. I understand... Do you come into New York often?

AL. Today's the first time in two years.

BEN. Really? Well, how did you find it?

AL. My daughter drove.

BEN. No, I mean, do you find the city different in the two years since you've been here?

AL. It's not my New York.

BEN. No, I suppose it's not.

(He shoots a glance towards the kitchen... WILLIE still hasn't looked in.)

Hey, listen, I'm really very excited about all this... Well, for that matter, everyone in the industry is.

AL. *(Nods, noncommittally.)* Well, we'll see. *(He looks around the room, scrutinizing it.)*

BEN. *(He calls out towards kitchen.)* Uncle Willie, how we doing? *(No answer... Embarrassed, to AL.)* I guess it's

not boiling yet... Oh, listen, I'd like to arrange to have a car pick you up and take you home after you're through rehearsing.

AL. My daughter's going to pick me up.

BEN. Oh, I see... What time did you say? Four? Five?

AL. She's going to call me every hour.

BEN. Right...

(Suddenly WILLIE sticks his head out of kitchen, but looks at BEN and not at AL.)

WILLIE. One tea or two teas.

BEN. Oh, here he is. Well, Uncle Willie, I guess it's been a long time since you two -

WILLIE. One tea or two teas?

BEN. Oh. Er, nothing for me, thanks. I'm just about leaving... Mr. Lewis? Some tea?

AL. *(Doesn't look towards WILLIE.)* Tea would be nice, thank you.

BEN. *(To WILLIE.)* Just the one, Uncle Willie.

WILLIE. You're sure? I got two tea balls. I could dunk again.

BEN. *(Looks at watch.)* No, I've got to get back to the office. Honestly.

WILLIE. *(Nods.)* Mm hmm. One tea.

(On his way back in, he darts a look at LEWIS, then goes back into kitchen. He pulls curtain shut.)

BEN. *(To LEWIS.)* Well, er...do you have any questions you want to ask about the show? About the studio or rehearsals or the air date? Is there anything on your mind that I could help you with?

AL. Like what?

BEN. Like er, the studio? Or rehearsals? Or air date? Things like that?

AL. ...You got the props?

BEN. Which props are those?

AL. The props. For the Doctor sketch. You gotta have props.

BEN. Oh, props. Certainly. What do you need? I'll tell them.
(*Takes out pad, writes.*)

AL. You need a desk. A telephone. A pointer. A blackboard.
A piece of white chalk, a piece of red chalk... A skeleton,
not too tall, a stethoscope, a thermometer, an "ahh"
stick...

BEN. What's an ah stick?

AL. To put in your mouth to say "ahh."

BEN. Oh. Right, an "ahh" stick.

AL. A look stick, a bottle of pills -

BEN. A look stick? What's a look stick?

AL. A stick to look in the ears. With cotton on the end...

BEN. Right. A look stick.

AL. A bottle of pills. Big ones, like for a horse.

BEN. (*Makes circle with his two fingers.*) About this big?

AL. That's for a pony. (*Makes circle using fingers on both hands.*) For a horse is like this... Some bandages,
cotton, an eye chart -

BEN. Wait a minute, you're going too fast.

AL. (*Slowly.*) A-desk...a-telephone...a-pointer...

BEN. No, I got all that...after the cotton and eye chart.

AL. A man's suit. Size forty. Like the one I'm wearing.

BEN. Also in blue?

AL. What do I need two blue suits? Get me a brown.

BEN. A brown suit... Is that all?

AL. That's all.

WILLIE. (*In kitchen, without looking in.*) A piece of liver.

AL. That's all plus a piece of liver.

BEN. What kind of liver?

AL. Regular calf's liver. From the butcher...

BEN. Like how much? A pound?

AL. A little laugh is a pound. A big laugh is two pounds...
Three pounds with a lot of blood'll bring the house
down.

BEN. Is that it?

AL. That's it. And a blonde.

BEN. You mean a woman?

AL. You know a blonde nurse that's a man? ...Big! As big as you can find. With a big chest, a forty, a forty-five...and a nice bottom...

BEN. You mean a sexy girl with a full, round, rear end?

AL. (*Spreads hand apart.*) About like this... (*Makes smaller behind with hands.*) This is too small... (*Makes bigger one.*) And this is too big. (*Goes back to original one.*) Like this is perfect...

BEN. I know what you mean.

AL. If you can bring me pictures, I'll pick out one.

BEN. There's a million girls like that around.

AL. The one we had was the best... I would call her but she's maybe fifty-five, sixty.

BEN. No, no. I'll get a girl... Anything else?

AL. Not for me.

BEN. Uncle Willie?

WILLIE. (*From kitchen.*) I wasn't listening.

BEN. Well, if either of you think of anything, just call me. (*Looks at watch again.*) Eleven fifteen, I've got to go. (*He gets up.*) Uncle Willie, I'm going. (*He crosses to LEWIS and extends hand.*) Mr. Lewis, I can't express to you enough how happy I am and speaking for the millions of young people in this country who never had the opportunity of seeing Lewis and Clark work, I just want to say "thank you." To both of you. (*Calls out.*) To both of you, Uncle Willie.

AL. (*Nods in his seat.*) I hope they won't be disappointed.

BEN. Oh, they won't.

AL. I know they won't. I'm just saying it.

BEN. (*Crosses to kitchen.*) Goodbye, Uncle Willie. I'm going.

WILLIE. I'll show you the elevator.

BEN. I *know* where it is... I'll call you tonight... I just want to say that this is a very happy moment for me. To see

you both together again, reunited... The two kings of comedy... *(Big smile.)* I'm sure it must be *very exciting* for the both of you, isn't it?

(No answer. They both just stare at him.)

Well, it looks like we're off to a great start. I'll call you later... Goodbye.

(He leaves and closes door. They are alone. WILLIE carries two teas to dining table, where the sugar jar is. He pours himself a teaspoonful of sugar... Without looking in AL's direction, he asks him.)

WILLIE. Sugar?

AL. *(Doesn't turn.)* If you got.

WILLIE. *(Nods.)* I got sugar.

(He bangs sugar down in front of AL, crosses with tea to his leather chair and sits... and then the two drink tea...silently and interminably. They blow, they sip, they blow, they sip, and they sit. Finally:)

...You like a cracker?

AL. *(Sips.)* What kind of cracker?

WILLIE. Graham, chocolate, coconut, whatever you want.

AL. Maybe just a plain cracker.

WILLIE. I don't have plain crackers. I got graham, chocolate and coconut.

AL. Alright, a graham cracker.

WILLIE. *(Without turning, points into kitchen.)* They're in the kitchen, in the closet.

(AL looks over at him, a little surprised at his uncordiality. He nods in acknowledgement.)

AL. Maybe later.

(They both sip their tea.)

WILLIE. *(Long pause.)* I was sorry to hear about Lillian.

AL. Thank you.

WILLIE. She was a nice woman. I always liked Lillian.

AL. Thank you.

WILLIE. ...And how about you?

AL. Thank God, knock wood – (*Raps knuckles on his cane.*)
– perfect.

WILLIE. I heard different. I heard your blood didn't circulate.

AL. Not true. My blood circulates... I'm not saying *everywhere*, but it circulates.

WILLIE. Is that why you use the cane?

AL. It's not a cane. It's a walking stick... Maybe once in a great while it's a cane...

WILLIE. I've been lucky, thank God... I'm in the pink.

AL. I was looking. For a minute I thought you were having a flush.

WILLIE. (*Sips his tea.*) You know Sol Burton died?

AL. Go on... Who's Sol Burton?

WILLIE. You don't remember Sol Burton?

AL. (*Thinks.*) ...Oh, yes. The manager from the Belasco.

WILLIE. That was Sol Bernstein.

AL. Not Sol Bernstein. Sol *Burton* was the manager from the Belasco.

WILLIE. Sol *Bernstein* was the manager from the Belasco and it wasn't the Belasco, it was the Morosco.

AL. Sid *Weinstein* was the manager from the Morosco. Sol *Burton* was the manager from the Belasco. Sol *Bernstein* I don't know *who* the hell was.

WILLIE. How can you remember anything if your blood doesn't circulate?

AL. It circulates in my *head*. It doesn't circulate in my *feet*.
(*He stomps his foot on the floor a few times.*)

WILLIE. Is anything coming down?

AL. Wait a minute. Wasn't Sid Weinstein the songwriter?

WILLIE. NO, for crise sakes! That's SOL BURTON!

AL. Who wrote "Lady, lady, be my baby"?

WILLIE. That's what I'm telling you! Sol Burton, the lousy songwriter.

AL. Oh, *that* Sol Burton... He died?

WILLIE. Last week.

AL. Where?

WILLIE. (*Points.*) In *Variety*.

AL. Sure, now I remember... And how is Sol Bernstein?

WILLIE. I didn't read anything.

AL. Good. I always liked Sol Bernstein.

(*They quietly sip their tea. AL looks around the room.*)

Sooo...this is where you live now?

WILLIE. Didn't I always live here?

AL. (*Looks again.*) Not in here. You lived in the big suite.

WILLIE. This *is* the big suite... Now it's five small suites...

(*AL nods, understanding.*)

AL. (*Looks around.*) That's what they do today... Anything to squeeze a dollar... What do they charge now for a small suite?

WILLIE. The same as they used to charge for the big suite.

(*AL nods, understanding.*)

AL. I have a very nice room with my daughter in New Jersey... I have my own bathroom, they don't bother me, I don't bother them.

WILLIE. What is it, in the country?

AL. Certainly it's in the country. Where do you think New Jersey is, in the city?

WILLIE. (*Shrugs.*) New Jersey is what I see from the bench on Riverside Drive... What have they got, a private house?

AL. Certainly it's a private house. It's some big place. Three quarters of an acre... They got their own trees, their own bushes, a nice little swimming pool for the kids

they blow up in the summertime... A big swing in the back, a little dog house, a rock garden -

WILLIE. A what?

AL. A rock garden.

WILLIE. What do you mean, a rock garden? You mean for rocks?

AL. You never saw a rock garden?

WILLIE. And I'm not that anxious.

AL. It's beautiful. A Chinaman made it... Someday you'll take a bus and you'll come out and I'll show you.

WILLIE. I should drive all the way out to New Jersey on a bus to see a rock garden?

AL. You don't even know what I'm talking about. You have to live in the country to appreciate it. I never thought it was possible I could be so happy in the country.

WILLIE. You don't mind it's so quiet?

AL. (*Looks at him.*) They got noise in New Jersey... But it's a quiet noise... Birds...drizzling... Not like here with the buses and trucks and screaming and yelling...

WILLIE. Well, it's different for you. You like the country better because you're retired. You can sit on a porch, look at a tree, watch a bush growing...you're still not active like me. You got a different temperament, you're a slow person.

AL. I'm a slow person?

WILLIE. You're here fifteen minutes, you still got a whole cup of tea. I'm finished already.

AL. That's right. You're finished and I'm still enjoying it. That was always the difference with us.

WILLIE. You're wrong. I can get up and make a *second* cup of tea and enjoy it twice as much as you... I like a busy life. That's why I love the city. I gotta be near a phone. I never know when a picture's gonna come up, a musical, a commercial...

AL. When did you do a picture?

WILLIE. They're negotiating.

AL. When did you do a musical?

WILLIE. They're talking.

AL. When did you do a commercial?

WILLIE. All the time. I did one last week.

AL. For what?

WILLIE. For er...for the...what's it, the potato chips.

AL. What potato chips?

WILLIE. The big one. The crispy potato chips... Er...you know.

AL. What do I know? I don't eat potato chips.

WILLIE. Well, what's the difference what the name is.

AL. They hire you to sell potato chips and you can't remember the name?

WILLIE. Did you remember Sol Burton?

AL. *(Shrugs.)* I'm not selling Sol Burton.

WILLIE. Listen, I don't want to argue with you.

AL. I didn't come from New Jersey to argue.

(They sit quietly for a few seconds, AL sips his tea, WILLIE looks at his empty cup.)

WILLIE. *(Finally.)* Sooo...what do you think? ...You want to do the Doctor sketch?

AL. *(Thinks.)* Well, listen, it's very good money... It's only a few days' work, I can be back in New Jersey. If you feel you'd like to do it, then my feeling is I'm agreeable.

WILLIE. And my feeling they told you.

AL. What?

WILLIE. They didn't tell you? My feeling is I'm against it.

AL. You're against it?

WILLIE. Right. But I'll do it if you want to.

AL. I don't want to do it if you're against it. If you're against it, don't do it.

WILLIE. What do you care if I'm against it as long as we're doing it? I just want you to know *why* I'm doing it.

AL. Don't do me any favors.

WILLIE. Who's doing you a favor? I'm doing my nephew a favor. It'd be good for him in the business if we do it.

AL. You're sure?

WILLIE. Certainly I'm sure. It's a big break for a kid like that to get big stars like us.

AL. That's different. In that case, I'm against it too but I'll do it.

WILLIE. (*Nods.*) As long as we understand each other.

AL. And I want to be sure you know I'm not doing it for the money. The money goes to my grandchildren.

WILLIE. The whole thing?

AL. The whole thing. But not now. Only if I die. If I don't die, it'll be for my old age.

WILLIE. The same with me.

AL. You don't have grandchildren.

WILLIE. My *nephew's* children. Sidney and Marvin.

AL. (*Nods.*) Very good.

WILLIE. Okay... So, you wanna rehearse?

AL. You're not against rehearsing?

WILLIE. Why should I be against rehearsing? I'm only against doing the show. Rehearsing is important.

AL. Alright, let's rehearse. Why don't we move the furniture and we'll make the set.

(They both get up and start to move the furniture around. First each one takes a single chair and moves it in a certain position. Then they both take a table and jointly move it away. Then they each take the chairs the other one moved before, and move it into a different place. Every time one moves something somewhere, the other moves it in a different spot... Finally WILLIE becomes aware that they are getting nowhere.)

WILLIE. Wait a minute, wait a minute. What the hell are we doing here?

AL. I'm fixing up the set, I don't know what you're doing.

WILLIE. You're fixing up the set?

AL. That's right.

WILLIE. You're fixing up the set for the Doctor sketch?

(AL looks at him for a long time without saying a word. It suddenly becomes clear to him.)

AL. Ohh, the Doctor sketch?

(He then starts to pick up a chair and move it into another position. WILLIE does the same with another chair. They both move table... and then they repeat what they did before. Every time one moves a chair, the other one moves the same chair to a different position. WILLIE stops and looks again.)

WILLIE. Wait a minute! Wait a minute! We're doing the same Goddamn thing. Are you fixing up for the Doctor sketch or are you redecorating my apartment?

AL. I'm fixing up for the Doctor sketch. If you'd leave what I'm doing alone, we'd be finished.

WILLIE. We'd be finished but we'd be wrong.

AL. Not for the Doctor sketch. I know what I'm doing. I did this sketch for forty-three years.

WILLIE. And where was I all that time, taking a smoke? Who did you think did it with you for forty-three years? That was *me*, Mister.

AL. Don't call me Mister, you know my name. I never liked it when you called me Mister.

WILLIE. It's not a dirty word.

AL. It is when you say it.

WILLIE. Forgive me, *sir*.

AL. Let's please, for Pete's sakes, fix up for the Doctor sketch.

WILLIE. You think *you* know how to do it? You fix it up.

AL. It'll be my pleasure.

(WILLIE stands aside and watches with arms folded as AL proceeds to move table and chairs and stools until he arranges it exactly the way he wants it. Then he stands back and folds his arms the same way.)

There! *That's* the Doctor sketch!

WILLIE. *(Smiles arrogantly.)* ...For how much money?

AL. I don't want to bet you.

WILLIE. You're afraid to lose?

AL. I'm afraid to *win*. You don't even have enough to buy a box of plain crackers.

WILLIE. Don't be so afraid you're gonna win because you're gonna lose! That's not the Doctor sketch. That's the gypsy chiropractor sketch.

AL. You're positive?

WILLIE. I'm *more* than positive. I'm *sure*.

AL. Alright...show me the Doctor sketch.

WILLIE. *(Looks at him confidently, then crosses to a chair, picks it up and moves it to the left about four inches, if that much. Then he folds his arms over his chest.)*
There, *that's* the Doctor sketch!

AL. *(Looks at him.)* You know what you are, Willie? You're a lalapalooza.

WILLIE. *(Nods.)* If I'm a lalapalooza, you're a mister.

AL. ...Let's please rehearse the sketch.

WILLIE. Alright, go outside, I'm in the office.

AL. You gonna do the part with the nurse first?

WILLIE. You see a nurse here? How can I rehearse with a nurse that's not here?

AL. I'm just asking a question. I'm not allowed to ask questions?

WILLIE. Ask whatever you want. But try to make them intelligent questions.

AL. I beg your pardon. I usually ask the kind of question to the kind of person I'm talking to... You get my drift?

WILLIE. I get it, Mister.

AL. Alright. Let's skip over the nurse. We'll start from where I come in.

WILLIE. Alright, from where you come in. First go out.

AL. *(Takes a few steps towards the door, stops and turns.)* Alright, I'm outside. *(Pantomimes with fist, knocking on door.)* Knock knock knock! I was looking for the doctor.

WILLIE. Wait a minute. You're not outside.

AL. Certainly I'm outside.

WILLIE. If you were outside, you couldn't see me, could you?

AL. No.

WILLIE. Can you see me?

AL. Yes.

WILLIE. So you're not outside. Go *all* the way outside. What the hell kind of a rehearsal is this?

AL. It's a rehearsing rehearsal. Can't you make believe I'm all the way out in the hall?

WILLIE. I could also make believe you were still in New Jersey, but you're not. You're here. Let's have a professional rehearsal, for crise sakes. We ain't got a nurse but we got a door. Let's use what we got.

AL. *(Sighs deeply.)* Listen, we're not gonna stop for every little thing, are we? I don't know how many years I got left, I don't wanna spend it rehearsing.

WILLIE. We're not gonna stop for the little things. We're gonna stop for the big things... The door is a big thing.

AL. Alright, I'll go through the door, I'll come in and then we'll run through the sketch once or twice and that'll be it for today. Alright?

WILLIE. Right... Unless another big thing comes up.

AL. *(Glares at him.)* Alright, I'm going out. I'll be right back in. *(He crosses to door, opens it, stops and turns.)* If I'm outside and my daughter calls, tell her to pick me up in an hour. *(He goes out and closes the door behind him.)*

WILLIE. (*Mumbles half to himself.*) She can pick you up now for all I care. (*He puts his hands behind his back, clasps them and paces back and forth. He calls out.*) Alright! Knock knock knock!

AL. (*From outside.*) Knock knock knock!

WILLIE. (*Screams.*) Don't say it, for God's sakes, *do it!* (*To himself.*) ...He probably went *crazy* in the country.

AL. (*From outside.*) You ready?

WILLIE. (*Yells.*) I'm ready. Knock knock knock.

(*AL knocks three times on the door.*)

...Come in.

(*We see and hear the doorknob jiggle but it doesn't open... This is repeated.*)

Alright, come in alright.

AL. (*From outside.*) It doesn't open...it's stuck.

WILLIE. (*Wearily.*) Alright, wait a minute. (*He shuffles over to the door and puts hand on knob and pulls. It doesn't open.*) ...Wait a minute. (*He tries again, to no avail.*)

AL. (*From outside.*) What's the matter?

WILLIE. Wait a minute. (*He pulls harder, to no avail.*)

AL. Is it locked?

WILLIE. It's not locked. Wait a minute. (*He tries again, it doesn't open.*) It's locked. You better get somebody. Call the boy downstairs. Sandy. Tell him it's locked.

AL. (*From outside.*) Let me try it again.

WILLIE. What are you wasting time? Call the boy. Tell him it's locked.

(*AL tries it again turning it in the other direction and the door opens. They stand there face to face.*)

AL. I fixed it.

WILLIE. (*Glares at him.*) You didn't fix it. You just don't know how to open a door.

AL. ...Did my daughter call?

WILLIE. You know I think you went crazy in the country.

AL. You want to stand here and insult me or do you wanna rehearse the sketch?

WILLIE. I would like to do *both* but we ain't got the time...
Let's forget the door. Stand in here and say "knock knock knock."

AL. (*Comes in and closes the door. Sarcastically.*) I hope I can get *out* again.

WILLIE. I hope so too... (*He places hands behind back and paces.*) Alright, "Knock knock knock."

AL. (*Pantomimes with fist.*) Knock knock knock.

WILLIE. (*Sing-song.*) Enter!

AL. (*Stops, looks at him.*) What do you mean "Enter"? (*He does it in same sing-song way.*) What happened to "Come-in"?

WILLIE. It's the same thing, isn't it? Enter or come-in.
What's the difference, as long as you're in.

AL. The difference is we've done this sketch 12,000 times and you've always said "Come-in" and suddenly today it's "Enter." Why today, after all these years do you suddenly change it to "Enter"?

WILLIE. (*Shrugs.*) I'm trying to freshen up the act.

AL. Who asked you to freshen up the act? They asked for the Doctor sketch, didn't they? The Doctor sketch starts with "Come-in," not "Enter." You wanna freshen up something, put some flowers in here.

WILLIE. It's a new generation today. This is not 1934, you know.

AL. No kidding? I didn't get today's paper.

WILLIE. What's bad about "Enter" instead of "Come-in"?

AL. Because it's different. You know why we've been doing it the same way for forty-three years? Because it's good.

WILLIE. And you know why we don't do it anymore?
Because we've been doing it the same way for forty-three years.

AL. So, if we're not doing it anymore, why are we changing it?

WILLIE. Can I make a comment, nothing personal? I think you've been sitting on a New Jersey porch too long.

AL. What does that mean?

WILLIE. That means I think you've been sitting on a New Jersey porch too long. From my window, I see everything that goes on in the world. I see old people, I see young people, nice people, bad people, I see holdups, drug addicts, ambulances, car crashes, jumpers from buildings, I see everything. You see a lawn mower and a milkman.

AL. (*Looks at him long.*) And that's why you want to say "Enter" instead of "Come-in"?

WILLIE. Are you listening to me?

AL. (*Looks around.*) Why, there's someone else in the room?

WILLIE. You don't know the first thing that's going on today?

AL. Alright, what's going on today?

WILLIE. Did you ever hear the expression, that's where it is? Well, this is where it is and that's where I am.

AL. I see... Did you ever hear the expression, "You don't know what the hell you're talking about"? It comes right in front of the *other* expression, "You *never* knew what the hell you were talking about."

WILLIE. I wasn't the one who retired. You know why you retired? Because you were tired. You were getting old-fashioned. I was still new-fashioned and I'll *always* be.

AL. I see. That's why you're in such demand. That's why you're such a "hot" property today. That's why you do movies you don't do, that's why you're in musicals you're not in, and that's why you make commercials you don't make because you can't even remember them to *make* them.

WILLIE. You know what I *do* remember? I remember what a pain in the ass you are to work with, that's what I remember.

AL. That's right. And when you worked with this pain in the ass, you lived in a *five* room suite. Now you live in a *one* room suite... And you're still wearing the same Goddamn pajamas you wore in the five room suite.

WILLIE. I don't have to take this crap from you.

AL. You're lucky you're getting it. No one else wants to give it to you.

WILLIE. I don't want to argue with you. After you say "Knock knock knock" I'm saying "Enter" and if you don't like it, you don't have to come in.

AL. You can't say nothing without my permission. I own fifty per cent of this act.

WILLIE. Then say *your* fifty per cent. I'm saying "Enter" in my fifty per cent.

AL. If you say "Enter" after "Knock knock knock" ...I'm coming in alright. But not alone. I'm bringing a lawyer with me.

WILLIE. Where? From New Jersey? You're lucky if a *cow* comes with you.

AL. Against *you* in court, I could *win* with a cow. (*He enunciates each point by poking WILLIE in the chest.*)

WILLIE. (*Slaps his hand away.*) The *finger*?? You're starting with the finger again?

(*He runs into kitchen, comes out brandishing a knife.*)

AL. I'll tell you the truth now. I didn't retire. I *escaped*.

WILLIE. (*Wielding knife.*) The next time you give me the finger, say goodbye to the finger.

AL. (*Hiding behind chair.*) Listen, I got a terrific idea. Instead of working together again, let's never work together again. You're crazy.

WILLIE. I'm crazy, heh? I'M CRAZY!!

AL. Keep saying it until you believe it.

WILLIE. I may be crazy, but you're *senile*! You know what that is?

AL. I'm not giving you any straight lines.

WILLIE. Crazy is when you got a couple of parts that go wrong. Senile is when you went the hell out of business. That's you, Mister.

(The phone rings. AL moves towards phone.)

Get away from that phone.

(He drives knife into table. AL backs away in shock.)

(Picks up phone.) Hello?

AL. Is that my daughter?

WILLIE. Hello. How are you?

AL. Is that my daughter? Is that her?

WILLIE. *(To AL.)* Will you shut up? Will you be quiet? Can't you see I'm talking? Don't you see me on the phone with a person? For God's sakes, behave like a human being for five seconds, will you? ...WILL YOU BEHAVE FOR FIVE SECONDS LIKE A HUMAN BEING??? *(Into phone.)* Hello? ...Yes... Just a minute. *(To AL.)* It's your daughter.

(He sits, opens up Variety.)

AL. *(Takes the phone, turns his back to WILLIE, speaks low.)* Hello... Hello, sweetheart... No... No... I can't talk now... I said I can't talk now... Because he's a crazy bedbug, that's why.

WILLIE. *(Jumps up.)* Mister is no good but bedbug is alright?? *(Yells into phone.)* Your father is sick! Come and get your sick father!!

AL. *(Turns to him.)* Don't you see me on the phone with a person? Will you please be quiet, for God's sakes! *(Back into phone.)* Listen, I want you to pick me up now... I don't want to discuss it, pick me up now. In front of the hotel. Don't park too close, it's filthy here... I *know* what I promised. Don't argue with me. I'm putting on my coat, I'll wait in the street, I'll probably get mugged... Alright, just a minute. *(He hands phone to WILLIE.)* She'd like to talk to you for a second.

WILLIE. Who is it?

AL. (*Glares at him.*) Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt... What do you mean, who is it? Didn't you just say "it's your daughter"?

WILLIE. I know it's your daughter. I forgot her name.

AL. Doris.

WILLIE. What does she want?

AL. (*Yells.*) Am I Doris? She'll tell you.

WILLIE. (*Takes phone.*) Hello? ...Hello, dear, this is Willie Clark... Unpleasantness? There was no unpleasantness... There was stupidity maybe but no unpleasantness...

AL. Tell her I'm getting into my coat. (*He is putting coat on.*) Tell her I got one sleeve on.

WILLIE. (*Into phone.*) I was hoping it would work out too... I bent over backwards and forwards. He didn't even bend sideways...

AL. I got the other sleeve on... Tell her I'm up to my hat and then I'm out the door.

WILLIE. It's a question of one word, darling. Enter! ...Enter, that's all it comes down to.

AL. (*Puts his hat on.*) The hat is on. I'm bundled up, tell her.

WILLIE. (*Into phone.*) Yes... Yes, I will... I'll tell him myself. I promise... Goodbye, Dorothy. (*He hangs up.*) I told her we'll give it one more chance.

AL. Not if you say enter. "Come-in" I'll stay, "Enter," I go.

WILLIE. Ask me "Knock knock knock."

AL. Don't fool around with me. I got enough pains in my neck. Are you going to say "Come-in"?

WILLIE. Ask me "Knock knock knock"!

AL. I know you, you bastard!

WILLIE. ASK ME "KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK"!

AL. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

WILLIE. (*Grinding it in.*) EN-TERRR!

AL. BEDBUG!!! CRAZY BEDBUG!!! (*Running out.*)

WILLIE. (*Big smile.*) ENNN-TERRRRR!

(*The curtain starts down.*)

AL. (*Heading for the door.*) LUNATIC BASTARD!!

WILLIE. ENNN-TERRRR!

(*Curtain.*)

VOICE. Bring in the curtains. Let's run it from the top with the voice over.

EDDIE. (*Calls up.*) Let's have the curtains.

(*The curtains come in.*)

VOICE. Voice over!

X ANNOUNCER. ...The golden age of comedy reached its zenith during a fabulous and glorious era known as Vaudeville... Fanny Brice, W.C. Fields, Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, Will Rogers and a host of other greats fill its Hall of Fame... There are two other names that belong on this list, but they can never be listed separately... They are more than a team... They are two comic shining lights that beam as one... For Lewis without Clark is like laughter without joy... We are privileged to present tonight, in their first public performance in over eleven years, for half a century known as the "Sunshine Boys," Mr. Al Lewis and Mr. Willie Clark, in their beloved scene... "The Doctor Will See You Now."

YOUNG
FACES

(*The curtain rises and the set is fully lit. The frail MAN in the hat is sitting on the chair as WILLIE, the doctor, dressed in a floor-length white doctor's jacket, a mirror attached to his head and a stethoscope around his neck is looking into the MAN's mouth, holding his tongue down with an "ahh" stick.*)

WILLIE. Open wider and say "Ahh."

MAN. Ahhh.

WILLIE. Wider.

MAN. Ahhh!

WILLIE. (*Moves with his back to audience.*) A little wider.

MAN. Ahhh!

WILLIE. (*Steps away.*) Your throat is alright but you're gonna have some trouble with your stomach.

MAN. How come?

WILLIE. You just swallowed the stick.

(The MAN feels his stomach.)

MAN. Is that bad?

WILLIE. It's terrible. I only got two left.

MAN. What about getting the stick out?

WILLIE. What am I, a tree surgeon? ...Alright, for another ten dollars, I'll take it out.

MAN. That's robbery.

WILLIE. Then forget it. Keep the stick.

MAN. No, no. I'll pay. Take the stick out.

WILLIE. Come back tomorrow. On Thursdays I do woodwork.

(MAN gets up, crosses to door. The MAN exits...)

(Calls out.) Oh, Nurse! Nursey!

(The NURSE enters. She is a tall, voluptuous and over-stacked blonde in a tight dress.)

NURSE. Did you want me, Doctor?

WILLIE. *(He looks at her, knowingly.)* Why do you think I hired you? ...What's your name again?

NURSE. Miss MacKintosh. You know, like the apples.

WILLIE. *(Nods.)* The name I forgot, the apples I remembered... Look in my appointment book, see who's next?

NURSE. It's a Mr. Kornheiser.

WILLIE. Maybe you're wrong. Look in the book. It's better that way.

(She crosses to desk and bends way over as she looks through the appointment book. Her firm, round rear end faces us and WILLIE. WILLIE shakes his head from side to side in wonderful contemplation.)

NURSE. *(Still down.)* No, I was right.

WILLIE. So was I.

NURSE. (*Straightens up and turns around.*) It's Mr. Kornheiser.

WILLIE. Are you sure? Spell it.

NURSE. (*Turns, bends and gives us the same wonderful view again.*) K-o-r-n-h-e-i-s-e-r! (*She turns and straightens up.*)

WILLIE. (*Nods.*) ...What's the first name?

NURSE. (*Turns, bends.*) Walter.

WILLIE. Stay down for the middle name.

NURSE. (*Remains down.*) Benjamin.

WILLIE. Don't move and give me the whole thing.

NURSE. (*Still rear end up, reading.*) Walter Benjamin Kornsheiser. (*She turns and straightens up.*)

WILLIE. Oh, boy. From now on I only want to see patients with long names.

NURSE. Is there anything else you want?

WILLIE. Yeah. Call a carpenter and have him make my desk lower.

(*The NURSE walks sexily right up to WILLIE and stands with her chest practically on his, breathing and heaving, then pouts her mouth and says:*)

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

WILLIE. (*Wipes brow.*) Whew, it's hot in here. Did you turn the steam on?

NURSE. (*Sexily.*) No, Doctor.

WILLIE. In that case, take a five dollar raise... Send in the next patient before *I'm* the next patient.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor. (*She coughs.*) Excuse me, I think I have a chest cold.

WILLIE. Looks more like an epidemic to me.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor. (*She wriggles her way to the door.*) Is there anything else you can think of?

WILLIE. I can *think* of it but I'm not so sure I can *do* it.

NURSE. Well, if I *can* help you, Doctor, that's what the nurse is for. (*She exits and closes door with an enticing look.*)

WILLIE. I'm glad I didn't go to law school.

(*Then we hear three knocks on the door.*
"Knock knock knock.")

...Aha. That must be my next patient. (*Calls out.*) Come in!

(*The door starts to open.*)

– and enter!

(*AL steps in and glares angrily at WILLIE.*
He is in a business suit and carries a cheap
attaché case.)

AL. I'm looking for the doctor.

WILLIE. Are you sick?

AL. Are *you* the doctor?

WILLIE. Yes.

AL. I'm not *that* sick.

WILLIE. ...What's your name, please?

AL. Kornheiser. Walter Benjamin Kornheiser. You want me to spell it?

WILLIE. Never mind. I got a better speller than you... (*Takes tongue depressor from pocket.*) Sit down and open your mouth, please.

AL. There's nothing wrong with my mouth.

WILLIE. Then just sit down.

AL. There's nothing wrong with that either.

WILLIE. Then what are you doing here?

AL. I came to examine you.

WILLIE. I think you got everything backwards.

AL. It's possible. I dressed in a hurry this morning.

WILLIE. You mean you came here for me to examine *you*.

AL. No, I came here for me to examine *you*. I'm a Tax Collector.

Scene Two

(Willie's hotel room. Two weeks later.)

(It is late afternoon. WILLIE is in his favorite pajamas in bed propped up on the pillows, his head hanging down, asleep. The television is droning away, another daytime serial. A REGISTERED NURSE in uniform, a sweater draped over her shoulders and glasses hanging on a chain is sitting in chair watching the television. She is eating from a big box of chocolates. Two very large vases of flowers are on the bureau. WILLIE's head bobs a few times, then opens his eyes.)*

WILLIE. ...What time is it?

NURSE. *(Turns off TV, glances at watch.)* Ten to one.

WILLIE. Ten to one? ...Who are you?

NURSE. Don't give me that. You know who I am.

WILLIE. You're the same nurse from yesterday?

NURSE. I'm the same nurse from everyday for two weeks now. Don't play your games with me.

WILLIE. I can't even chew a piece of bread, who's gonna play games? ...Why'd you turn off the television?

NURSE. It's either watching that or watching you sleep, either one ain't too interesting.

WILLIE. I'm sorry. I'll try to sleep more entertaining... What's today, Tuesday?

NURSE. Wednesday. *(She bites into a piece.)*

WILLIE. How could this be Wednesday? I went to sleep on Monday.

NURSE. Haven't we already seen Mike Douglas twice this week?

* A license to produce *The Sunshine Boys* does not include a performance license for any third-party or copyrighted recordings. Licensees should create their own. For further information, please see the Music and Third Party Materials Use Note on page iii.

WILLIE. Once.

NURSE. Twice.

WILLIE. (*Reluctantly.*) Awright, twice... I don't even remember. I was alright yesterday?

NURSE. We are doing very well.

WILLIE. We are? When did *you* get sick?

NURSE. (*Deadly serious, no smile.*) That's funny. That is really funny, Mr. Clark. Soon as I get home tonight I'm gonna bust out laughing.

WILLIE. You keep eating my candy like that you're gonna bust out a lot sooner.

NURSE. Well, *you* can't eat it and there's no sense throwing it out. I'm just storing up energy for the winter.

WILLIE. Maybe you'll find time in between the nougat and the peppermint to take my pulse.

NURSE. I took it. It's a little better today.

WILLIE. When did you take my pulse?

NURSE. When you were sleeping.

WILLIE. *Everybody's* pulse is good when they're sleeping. You take a pulse when a person is up. Thirty dollars a day, she takes a sleeping pulse... I'll tell you the truth, I don't think you know what you're doing...and I'm not a prejudiced person.

NURSE. Well, I am. I don't like sick people who tell registered nurses how to do their job. You want your tea now?

WILLIE. I don't want to interrupt your candy.

NURSE. And don't get fresh with me. You can get fresh with your nephew but you can't get fresh with me. Maybe *he* has to take it but I'm not a blood relative.

WILLIE. That's for sure.

NURSE. That's even funnier than the other one... My *whole* evening's gonna be taken up tonight with nothing but laughing.

WILLIE. I don't even eat candy. Finish the whole box. When you're through, I hope you eat the flowers too.

NURSE. You know why I don't get angry at anything you say to me?

WILLIE. I give up. Why?

NURSE. Because I have a good sense of humor. I am *known* for my good sense of humor. That's why I can take anything you say to me.

WILLIE. If you nurse as good as your sense of humor, I won't make it to Thursday... Who called?

NURSE. No one.

WILLIE. I thought I heard the phone.

NURSE. (*Gets up.*) No one called. (*She crosses and puffs up his pillow.*) Did you have a nice nap?

WILLIE. It was a nap, nothing special... Don't puff up the pillows, please. (*He swats her hands away.*) It takes me a day and a night to get them the way I like them and then you puff them up.

NURSE. Oh, woke up a little grouchy, didn't we?

WILLIE. Stop making yourself a partner all the time. I woke up grouchy. Don't make the bed, please. I'm still sleeping in it. Don't make up a bed with a person in it.

NURSE. Can't stand to have people do things for you, can you? If you just want someone to sit here and watch you, you're better off getting a dog, Mr. Clark. I'll suggest that to your nephew.

WILLIE. Am I complaining? I'm only asking for two things. Don't take my pulse when I'm sleeping and don't make my bed when I'm in it. Do it the other way around and then we're in business.

NURSE. It doesn't bother me to do nothing as long as I'm getting paid for it. (*She sits.*)

WILLIE. ...I'm hungry.

NURSE. You want your junket?

WILLIE. Forget it. I'm not hungry. (*She reads.*) ...Tell me something, how old is a woman like you?

NURSE. That is none of your business.

WILLIE. I'm not asking for business.

NURSE. I am fifty-four years young.

WILLIE. Is that so? ...You're married?

NURSE. My husband passed away four years ago.

WILLIE. Oh... You were the nurse?

NURSE. No, I was not the nurse... You could use some sleep and I could use some quiet. (*Gets up.*)

WILLIE. You know something? For a fifty-four year old registered widow, you're an attractive woman.

(*Tries to pat her. She swings at him.*)

NURSE. And don't try that with me!

WILLIE. Who's trying anything?

NURSE. You are. You're getting fresh in a way I don't like.

WILLIE. What are you worried about? I can't even put on my slippers by myself.

NURSE. I'm not worried about your slippers. And don't play on my sympathy. I don't have any and I ain't expecting any coming in in the near future.

WILLIE. ...Listen, how about a nice, alcohol rub?

NURSE. I just gave you one.

WILLIE. No, I'll give *you* one.

NURSE. I know you just say things like that to agitate me. You like to agitate people, don't you? Well, I am not an agitable person.

WILLIE. You're right. I think I'd be better off with the dog.

NURSE. How did your poor wife stand a man like you?

WILLIE. Who told you about my poor wife?

NURSE. Your poor nephew... Did you ever think of getting married again? (*Takes his pulse.*)

WILLIE. What is this, a proposal?

NURSE. (*Laughs.*) Not from me... I am *not* thinking of getting married again... Besides, you're just not my type.

WILLIE. Why? It's a question of religion?

NURSE. It's a question of age. You'd wear me out in no time.

WILLIE. You think I can't support you? I've got Medicare.

NURSE. You never stop, do you?

WILLIE. When I stop, I won't be here.

NURSE. Well, that's where you're gonna be unless you learn to slow up a little.

WILLIE. Slow up? I moved two inches in three weeks, she tells me slow up.

NURSE. I mean if you're considering getting well again, you have to stop worrying about telephone calls and messages and especially when you're going back to work.

WILLIE. I'm an actor, I have to act. It's my profession.

NURSE. Your profession right now is being a sick person. And if you're gonna act anywhere, it's gonna be from a sick bed.

WILLIE. Maybe I can get a job on *Marcus Welby*.

NURSE. You can turn everything I say into a vaudeville routine if you want, but I'm gonna give you a piece of advice, Mr. Clark...

WILLIE. What?

NURSE. The world is full of sick people. And there just ain't enough doctors or nurses to go around to take care of all these sick people. And all the doctors and all the nurses can do just so much, Mr. Clark, but God, in His Infinite Wisdom has said He will help those who help themselves.

WILLIE. (*Looks at her.*) So? What's the advice?

NURSE. *Stop bugging me!!*

WILLIE. Alright, I'll stop bugging you... I don't know what the hell it means.

NURSE. That's better. Now you're my type again.

(*The door bell rings. The NURSE crosses.*)

WILLIE. Here comes today's candy.

(*She opens door. BEN enters with packages.*)

BEN. Hello. How is he?

NURSE. Fine. I think we're gonna get married.

BEN. Hey, Uncle Willie, you look terrific.

WILLIE. You got my *Variety*?

BEN. (*Crosses, gives him Variety.*) I also got about two hundred get well telegrams from just about every star in show business. Lucille Ball, Milton Berle, Bob Hope, the Mayor. It'll take you nine months just to answer them.

WILLIE. What about a commercial? Did you hear from Alka-Seltzer?

BEN. We have plenty of time to talk about that... Miss O'Neill, did you have your lunch yet?

NURSE. Not yet.

WILLIE. She just finished two pounds of appetizers.

BEN. Why don't you go out, take an hour or so. I'll be here for a while.

NURSE. Thank you. I could use some fresh air. (*Gets her coat. To WILLIE.*) Now when I'm gone, I don't want you getting all agitated again, you hear?

WILLIE. I hear, I hear. Stop bugging me.

NURSE. And don't get up to go to the bathroom. Use the you-know-what.

WILLIE. (*Without looking up from his Variety.*) And if not, I'll do it you-know-where.

BEN. (*Pulling up a chair next to bed.*) Never mind, she's a very good nurse.

WILLIE. (*Looks in paper.*) Oh, boy, Bernie Eisenstein died.

BEN. Who?

WILLIE. Bernie Eisenstein... Remember the dance team, Ramona and Rodriguez? ...Bernie Eisenstein was Rodriguez... He would have been seventy-eight in August.

BEN. (*Sighs.*) Uncle Willie, could you put down *Variety* for a second?

WILLIE. (*Still reading.*) Did you bring a cigar?

BEN. ...Uncle Willie, you realize you've had a heart attack, don't you? ...You've been getting away with it for years, the cigars, the corned beef sandwiches, the tension, the temper tantrums, you can't do it anymore, Willie... Your heart's just not going to take it.

WILLIE. This is the good news you rushed up with? ...For this we could have skipped a Wednesday.

BEN. ...I talked to the doctor this morning... And I'm going to have to be very frank and honest with you, Willie... you've got to retire... I mean give it up... Show business is out...

WILLIE. ...Until when?

BEN. Until *ever*! ...Your blood pressure is abnormally high, your heart is weak, if you tried to work again you would kill yourself.

WILLIE. ...Alright, let me think it over.

BEN. *Think what over?* There's nothing to think over. You can't work anymore, there's no decision to be made. Can't you understand that?

WILLIE. You decide for Ben Silverman, I'll decide for Willie Clark.

BEN. No, *I* decide for Willie Clark. I am your closest and *only* living relative and I am responsible for your welfare... You can't live here anymore, Willie. Not alone... And I can't afford to keep this nurse on permanently. Right now she's making more than I am. Anyway she already gave me her notice. She's leaving Monday. She's going to Buffalo to work for a very wealthy family.

WILLIE. Maybe she'll take me. I always did well in Buffalo.

BEN. Come on, Willie, face the facts. We have to do something and we have to do it quickly.

WILLIE. I can't think about it today... I'm tired, I'm going to take a nap. (*He closes his eyes and drops his head to the side on the pillow.*)

BEN. You want to hear my suggestion?

WILLIE. I'm napping. Don't you see my eyes closed?

BEN. I'd like you to move in with me and Helen and the kids. We have the small spare room in the back, I think you would be very comfortable... Uncle Willie, did you hear what I said?

WILLIE. What's the second suggestion?

BEN. What's the matter with the first?

WILLIE. It's not as good as the second.

BEN. I haven't made any yet.

WILLIE. It's still better than the first. Forget it.

BEN. Why?

WILLIE. I don't like your kids. They're noisy. The little one hit me in the head with a baseball bat.

BEN. And I've also seen you talk to them for hours on end about vaudeville and had the time of your life. Right?

WILLIE. If I stopped talking, they would hit me with the bat... No offense, but I'm not living with your children. If you get rid of them, then we'll talk...

BEN. I know the reason you won't come... Because Al Lewis lives with his family and you're just trying to prove some stupid point about being independent.

WILLIE. ...What's the second suggestion?

BEN. (*A long sigh.*) Alright... Now don't jump when I say this because it's not as bad as it sounds.

WILLIE. Say it.

BEN. There's the Actors' Home in New Brunswick...

WILLIE. It's as bad as it sounds.

BEN. You're wrong. I drove out there last Sunday and they showed me around the whole place. I couldn't believe how beautiful it was.

WILLIE. You went out there? You didn't have the decency to wait until I turned down living with you first?

BEN. I just went out to investigate, that's all. No commitments.

WILLIE. The Old Actors' Home, the first booking you got me in ten years.

BEN. It's on a lake, it's got twenty-five acres of beautiful grounds, it's an old converted mansion with a big porch...

WILLIE. I knew it. You got me on a porch in New Jersey. He put you up to this, didn't he?

BEN. You don't have to sit on the porch. There's a million activities there. They put on shows every Friday and Saturday night... I mean it's all old actors, what could be better for you?

WILLIE. ...Why New Jersey? ...I hate New Jersey... I'm sorry they ever finished the George Washington Bridge.

BEN. I couldn't get over how many old actors were there that I knew and remembered. I thought they were all dead.

WILLIE. Some recommendation. A house in the swamps with forgotten people.

BEN. They're not forgotten... They're well taken care of... Uncle Willie, I promise you, if you spend one day there that you're not happy you can come back and move in with me.

WILLIE. That's my choice... New Jersey or the baseball bat.

BEN. Alright, I feel a lot better about everything.

WILLIE. And what about you?

BEN. What do you mean what about me?

WILLIE. (*Pause...looks away.*) ...I won't see you no more?

BEN. Certainly you'll see me. As often as I can... Did you think I wouldn't come to visit you, Uncle Willie?

WILLIE. Well, you know...people don't go out to New Jersey unless they have to.

BEN. Uncle Willie, I'll be there every week. *With the Variety*. I'll even bring Helen and the kids.

WILLIE. *Don't bring the kids!* Why do you think I'm going to the home for?

BEN. You know, this is the first moment since I've known you, that you've treated me like a nephew and not an agent. It's like a whole new relationship.