

THE OLD MAN beating on something with a metal tool, and a continuing stream of pseudo-obscenities.)

THE OLD MAN. You grappen fratten hosickin' fizzlewuzzin ... ! *(Another explosion.)* Cushlamochree! Cotton dampers! I'll be a summering bishop! *(Continue under RALPH's speech.)* You minceable basket! Domino bits! Dog mad clanky, frablegribbin, malaforpin' ...

RALPH. What happened next was a matter of family controversy for years.

(From the dark living room, a crash of glass. THE OLD MAN is suddenly silent. Now we hear him scrambling up the steps. The basement door bursts open.)

THE OLD MAN. What was that! What happened?

(He looks around the kitchen, then moves to the living room. Lights in the bedroom fade to black and RALPH exits as lights come up in the living room. MOTHER stands near the window holding the watering can. The leg lamp lies in pieces on the floor, along with a house plant.)

THE OLD MAN *(cont'd)*. What happened? What broke?

MOTHER. I ... I don't know what happened. I was watering my plants and I ... I broke your lamp.

(THE OLD MAN crosses to her and kneels down, cradling the lamp in his arms. MOTHER reaches tentatively for it.)

THE OLD MAN. Don't you touch it! You were always jealous of my lamp!

MOTHER. Jealous! Of a cheap and tasteless ...

THE OLD MAN *(hissing)*. Jealous! Jealous because I won!

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MOTHER. That's ridiculous! (*Now she is angry.*) Jealous? Jealous of what? That is the ugliest lamp I've ever seen in my entire life! I've hated it ever since it came into this house!

RALPH (*enters down the stairs, unseen by the others, and moves into the living room*). Now it was out.

THE OLD MAN (*his rage barely contained*). Get the glue.

MOTHER (*seems almost triumphant. She carefully enunciates each word*). We're. Out. Of. Glue.

THE OLD MAN (*a surprised and enraged roar, then a pronouncement through clenched teeth*). You used up all the glue on purpose!

(RALPHIE comes down the stairs to the landing. THE OLD MAN picks up the shards and scraps of his lamp and exits the living room, through the kitchen, followed by RALPH, unseen. RANDY emerges from the back hall, trailing laundry, watching him go. THE OLD MAN goes out the door to the backyard, bathed in the blue light of evening. There is a full moon now, which adds atmosphere to THE OLD MAN's melancholy march. The lights in the house fade to black and MOTHER, RALPHIE and RANDY exit. THE OLD MAN trudges out of sight, behind the fence and the shed.)

RALPH (*comes through the gate and moves DR as a light comes up at the R proscenium*). With as much dignity as he could muster, The Old Man gathered up the shattered remains of his major award and retreated to his workshop in the garage. There he found an ancient can of iron glue—the kind garage mechanics use for gaskets and repairing exploded locomotives. He spent the next several hours painfully, hopelessly trying to rebuild the net-stockinged, life-size symbol of his greatest victory.