

START**MOTHER
O.M**

MOTHER. Are you all right?

THE OLD MAN. Fine. I'm fine. Outta breath. (*Lifts foot.*)

They got one of my shoes. (*Sure enough, he is wearing only one shoe.*)

MOTHER (*accepts it calmly. Many things more valuable have been lost to the Bumpus hounds.*) Oh, that's too bad. I liked those shoes.

THE OLD MAN. Yeah, well ... (*He accepts it, too, still ...*) one's not much good by itself. Say, you know, maybe we could go out for dinner tonight. Whaddya say?

MOTHER (*pointing to a pot on the stove.*) Oh! I've already started dinner!

THE OLD MAN. What is it? (*She starts to speak. He stops her.*) No. Never mind. (*MOTHER puts the galoshes on a piece of newspaper spread on the table.*)

MOTHER. Any good mail?

THE OLD MAN (*going through the envelopes.*) Bill, bill, bill. (*The bills he tosses onto the table.*) BB gun ad, BB gun ad, BB gun ad ... (*He passes these to MOTHER rapid fire and she drops them into the grocery sack on the floor.*) I wonder how we got on their mailing list? (*MOTHER shrugs. He thinks a moment, passes her the surviving shoe. She drops it into the sack. He continues reading envelopes and passing them to her.*) BB gun, BB gun, BB gun. What's this? (*The last envelope in his hand is an odd size and color. He holds it up for MOTHER to see.*)

MOTHER. Open it.

THE OLD MAN (*opens the envelope, takes a moment to read the single sheet of paper within, then, jumping up and down with excitement.*) Ha ha! I knew it! I knew it! I won! I won!

MOTHER. Knew what? Won what? What did you win! What? What?

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THE OLD MAN (*reading*). "You have won a major award in our fifty thousand dollar 'Great Heroes from the World of Sports' contest. It will arrive by special messenger delivered to your address. You are a winner. Congratulations!" (*He sweeps MOTHER up and dances her around the kitchen.*) A major award! I won a major award! I won a major award! Come on! Let's tell everybody! (*He exits quickly, MOTHER follows. Lights come up in backyard. RALPH enters wearing a uniform jacket and carrying a clipboard.*)

RALPH. Word got around. That evening, The Old Man's cronies came over to sit around the kitchen table, guzzle beer and tell dirty stories. It was a victory gala of the purest sort. (*He goes through the gate and climbs the back steps to the kitchen.*) By Saturday afternoon, real estate agents and car salesmen were calling to offer congratulations; already the mail contained suggestions for highly rewarding investments in real estate, gold mines, stocks and bonds ... and BB guns.

(*He crosses from the kitchen to the living room. Lights cross fade: down in the kitchen, up in the living room. THE OLD MAN, MOTHER and RALPHIE stand around a large wooden crate. They do not acknowledge RALPH's presence. Stenciled on the crate in big letters: FRAGILE.*)

RALPH. That night, just before bedtime, a delivery truck stopped in front of the house to unload a large box. (*RALPH has become the delivery man. He moves to stand near the door.*) You Parker?

THE OLD MAN (*barely able to contain his excitement*). Yeah ... yeah ...

RALPH. Sign here.

THE OLD MAN (*taking clipboard*). Have any trouble with those dogs out there?