

Scene 2

The middle of June. Mid-morning. The screen door is back in place. Norman sits studying the classified ads.

NORMAN. Here's one. Listen. "Driver wanted for occasional chauffeuring and errands. Five days a week. Pay negotiable." Sound about right? *(Reading to himself.)* "Experience required." Well, I guess I've had experience. I've driven enough cars, God knows. *(Calling offstage.)* How many cars would you say I've had? *(Talking to himself.)* Twenty probably. If you don't count the [Nash]. Twenty cars and one [Nash]. Sounds like experience to me. *(Calling.)* I think I'll give these people a call. Huh?

No answer.

(Then, to himself.) There's no number. How do you like that? For God's sake. It's so typical. They want a man for a job and yet they don't list the number. Well, I hope those errands weren't too crucial. Good God!

There is a knock on the door.

NORMAN. Someone's at the door!

ETHEL. It's me, you poop! Open up!

He opens the door. Ethel enters with two small buckets.

NORMAN. What were you doing out there?

ETHEL. I was picking berries. There are oodles and oodles of little tiny strawberries along the old town road. Look.

NORMAN. Ah. Very impressive.

ETHEL. Unfortunately there are also oodles and oodles of mosquitoes. Worse this year than ever.

NORMAN. Really. I hadn't noticed them.

ETHEL. You've barely gone outside. What on earth you're doing in here on a day like today is beyond me.

NORMAN. Oh. Well. I've been quite busy. I've been looking through yesterday's paper for gainful employment.

ETHEL. Here we go again.

She exits to the kitchen. Norman doesn't notice.

NORMAN. Excellent prospects, I think. Chauffeurs, yard work. The Dairy Divine wants an ice cream dipper. I think I could do something like that, don't you? Oh.

He turns. She's not there. She returns.

Oh. There you are. What do you think?

ETHEL. I think this business of looking in the classified ads is about the silliest nonsense I've ever heard. What are you going to do if you call up and someone says, "Come on over and start tomorrow?"

NORMAN. Go on over and start tomorrow.

ETHEL. Oh for the love of God. Whatever is the matter with you? Why don't you take a bucket and go pick us another quart of strawberries? I'll fix us up a scrumptious shortcake for lunch.

NORMAN. You want *me* to pick strawberries?

ETHEL. Yes. Do I have to put an ad in the paper?

NORMAN. I'm not sure I know how to pick strawberries.

ETHEL. There's really nothing to it, Norman. You bend over, and you pick them.

NORMAN. Bend over? Whatever for? Where are they?

ETHEL. They're on the ground, where they belong.

NORMAN. But you've already filled the buckets.

ETHEL. Don't move.

She exits. A motorboat is heard offstage.

NORMAN. Here comes what's-his-name. He'll be bringing the paper, you know. I wouldn't want to miss any career opportunities just because I'm out looking for strawberries.

ETHEL. *(Carrying in an empty bucket.)* I'll pay you, Norman. It could be the beginning of something big. You may become a major strawberry picker.

NORMAN. Not if I have to be bending over all the time. I think you're trying to kill me.

ETHEL. I've thought about it.

NORMAN. You needn't bother. I'm on borrowed time as it is.

ETHEL. Would you please take your cheery personality and get out of here?

NORMAN. Maybe I could lie down to pick the berries.

ETHEL. Would you go on?

NORMAN. Where did you say these strawberries were? Other than on the ground I mean?

ETHEL. On the old town road. Just up from the meadow.