

**BIG JULE**

I tell you I don't want to go to no prayer meeting.

**HARRY**

Big Jule, you give your marker, and if you welch—it will cause me no little embarrassment. I am sure you do not wish to cause me embarrassment?

*(THEY both walk to stage L. and stop)*

**BIG JULE**

But if it ever gets back to. Chicago that I went to a prayer meeting, no decent person will talk to me.

*(THEY exit L.1 – THREE CRAP SHOOTERS enter from R.1 and cross to stage L. ADELAIDE enters from L.1 reading a newspaper – she looks around obviously looking for Nathan. She stops stage L. NATHAN enters R.1. ADELAIDE sees him and drops the newspaper and purposely bumps into NATHAN – CRAP SHOOTER picks up newspaper as THEY exit L.1)*

**NATHAN**

Adelaide!

**ADELAIDE**

*(Lady Windermere)*

Oh! What a coincidence!

**NATHAN**

Adelaide, did Nicely explain to you about tonight? I hope you ain't sore about it?

*(Tries to embrace her – SHE pulls away to C.)*

**ADELAIDE**

Please! Let us not have a vulgar scene. After all, we are civilized people—we do not have to conduct ourselves like a slob.

**NATHAN**

Adelaide! What is this? You are my doll.

**ADELAIDE**

Your doll! Please, if that weren't so amusing one could laugh at it.

**NATHAN**

Sweetheart! Baby! How can you carry on like this over one lousy elopement?

Adelaide, please!

**ADELAIDE**

It's no use, Nathan. I have succeeded in your not being able to upset me no more. I have got you completely out of my —

*(Sneezes. Then throws herself into Nathan's arms, weeping)*



(ADELAIDE)

Oh, Nathan!

NATHAN

Adelaide, baby! Don't ever do that to me again! I can't stand it. We'll get married. We'll have a home, a little white house with a green fence—just like the Whitney colors.

ADELAIDE

*(Through her tears)*

Nathan, we got to do it soon. I had another letter from my mother today asking a lot of questions. And she put in a letter for you, too.

*(Hands it to him)*

NATHAN

A letter for me? From your mother? Well—

*(Opens it and reads)*

—“Dear Son Nathan: This is my first letter to you, although you have now been married to my daughter for twelve years. But I feel like I know you from Adelaide's letters, and in my mind's eye I can see you as you go down to work every morning at seven. What a responsibility it must be, to be the assistant manager of an A. & P.”

*(He breaks off)*

I'm not even the manager?

*(Looks at Adelaide)*

ADELAIDE

I was going to promote you for Christmas.

NATHAN

*(Back to the letter)*

—“I know how hard you have to work to take care of your family—Adelaide and the five children and the one that's on the way.”

*(Looks at Adelaide)*

ADELAIDE

Mother wanted me to visit her, so I had to tell her that.

NATHAN

*(Righteous indignation)*

Don't she know I can't have six kids on what they pay me at the A. & P.?

*(Reads quickly to himself, then slows up as he reads it aloud)*

**(NATHAN)**

—“I am very proud to have you as a son-in-law. You are a good man and I know you will always take care of Adelaide.” I feel like a heel.

**ADELAIDE**

Look, Nathan darling, we can still make everything all right. Look—it’s not even midnight yet. Five minutes to twelve—let’s elope right now.

**NATHAN**

Okay, Adelaide.

*(Embrace. BENNY and NICELY enter from R.1. NATHAN sees them)*

No, I can’t.

**ADELAIDE**

Why not?

*(BENNY and NICELY are crossing at this moment)*

**BENNY**

Come on, Nathan—we’ll be late.

**NICELY**

Come on!

*(THEY exit L.1)*

**ADELAIDE**

*(In measured tones)*

Nathan, *why* can’t we elope now?

**NATHAN**

Because—well, I got to go to a prayer meeting.

**ADELAIDE**

*(This one really hits her)*

Nathan. This is the biggest lie you ever told me.

**NATHAN**

But I promise you it’s true.

**LIGHT CUE**

*(ADELAIDE takes letter from Nathan, tears letter up – throws it on floor, crosses D.R.  
NATHAN kneels, picks up pieces of torn letter)*