

Howard

Ethel

Paul

Charlotte

ETHEL. We have a matinee, you know. You should be in costume.

CHARLOTTE. THANK YOU, MOTHER!

(CHARLOTTE exits. ETHEL is now alone in the room, holding the bottle of whiskey.)

ETHEL. ... Now why does she want Irish Coffee?

(ETHEL walks to the coffee pot, picks it up, and POURS ALL THE REMAINING WHISKEY FROM THE BOTTLE—MOST OF A BOTTLE'S WORTH—INTO THE COFFEE POT, WHICH FILLS THE POT TO THE BRIM. The coffee pot is glass, so we can see that the combination of coffee and whiskey still looks like coffee.)

ETHEL. I suppose they're having guests at the intermission. Now in my day, we served strawberries and champagne. Puh. It's only called civilization. Why bother? (She puts down the coffee pot—and sees the performance schedule on the callboard and reads from it.) "Schedule of Performances... Matinee—Cyrano?" I thought it was *Private Lives*. (At this moment, there's a knock on the door; ETHEL, of course, doesn't hear it.) Good thing I saw this. They'd think I was round the bend.

(As ETHEL potters across the room, HOWARD comes in from the street, carrying a program. He sees ETHEL, who has her back to him, and approaches her.)

HOWARD. Hello? (ETHEL doesn't hear him.) ... Hello?

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... (*He walks around her.*) ... Hi.

ETHEL. Ah! You startled me.

HOWARD. Oh, sorry. I'm a friend of Roz. You must be Roz's grandmother. She talks a lot about you.

ETHEL. Young man, I cannot hear a word you're saying.

HOWARD. I'M A FRIEND OF ROZ!

ETHEL. Well, how nice to meet you.

HOWARD. SHE LEFT ME A NOTE AT THE HOTEL!  
IT'S VERY EXCITING, ISN'T IT?!

ETHEL. What's exciting?

HOWARD. About Frank Capra.

ETHEL. What?

HOWARD. FRANK CAPRA!

ETHEL. Oh. How nice.

(*CHARLOTTE and PAUL rush in from the door at the top of the stairs. PAUL is carrying George's shirt.*)

CHARLOTTE. How could you lose him?

PAUL. I'm sorry! I left him in the hall to turn on the shower—!

CHARLOTTE. MOTHER, HAVE YOU SEEN GEORGE?!

ETHEL. You took him up the stairs.

CHARLOTTE. SINCE THEN! ... Oh, God.

PAUL. Look, I'll try backstage again. You check downstairs.

CHARLOTTE. Right.

(*PAUL exits and CHARLOTTE hurries down the stairs—and sees HOWARD for the first time.*)

HOWARD. ... Hi. I'm back.

CHARLOTTE. (*Hustling him to the door.*) Look, I'm sorry, but we're busy now. We have a show in twenty minutes.

HOWARD. I know. I bought a program.

CHARLOTTE. ... Oh, all right! (*She snatches the program from him, takes a pen from his pocket and signs the program.*) "Best wishes, Charlotte Hay." How's that?

HOWARD. I-I-I don't think you understand—

CHARLOTTE. No, I don't think *you* understand. We're very busy now, so good-bye! (*And she pushes HOWARD out the door and slams it.*) These people! They walk right in as if they own the place.

ETHEL. You didn't have to be rude to him.

CHARLOTTE. Mother, stay out of this.

(*CHARLOTTE is heading off.*)

ETHEL. I used to know a man named Capra. I wonder if he's related...?

(*CHARLOTTE stops cold.*)

CHARLOTTE. ....Capra?

ETHEL. What?

CHARLOTTE. CAPRA?!

ETHEL. What about him?

CHARLOTTE. WHY DID YOU SAY CAPRA?!

ETHEL. I didn't say it. He said it. He introduced himself Frank Capra. It sounds extremely familiar...

CHARLOTTE. (*It sinks in and she clutches her breast.*)... Oh my God! (*Shaking ETHEL.*) MOTHER, WHY DIDN'T YOU

TELL ME?! (She rushes out the street door.) Wait a second!  
Please! Wait!

ETHEL. (As she heads backstage:) It's like living in an  
asylum on the guard's day off.

*end* → (ETHEL exits; then CHARLOTTE reappears, leading a be-  
wildered, reluctant HOWARD into the room.)

CHARLOTTE. I am *so sorry*. I could just beat myself with  
a stick! Please, come in.

HOWARD. ... You're sure? I could wait outside. It's a nice  
day, which is pretty much what I predicted.

CHARLOTTE. Oh no no no no! Oh, God. You must think  
I'm completely mad.

HOWARD. Mmmno.

CHARLOTTE. My mother should have said something.  
The older lady who was standing here. I'm afraid she's just a  
teensy bit hard of hearing.

HOWARD. "Grandma."

CHARLOTTE. Hm?

HOWARD. Maybe I should call her "Grandma." Heh heh.  
Or "Granny."

(HOWARD chuckles about this.)

CHARLOTTE. ... Why not?! Granny it is! So. Perhaps we  
should start over. (Extending her hand, with enormous charm.)  
I'm Charlotte Hay.

HOWARD. Hi—

CHARLOTTE. Now before you say another word, I just  
want to tell you what a *huge fan* I am of your work.