

MR. MacAFEE

...What's that? You dare to say 'puberty' in front of your own father? Not to mention Mussolini? Doris...we've failed as parents!

(HE falls into MRS. MacAFEE'S arms)

I never asked for much from my children. Just respect. A little respect. That's all I asked for. Respect. But did I get respect? I did not get respect. I got no respect.

RANDOLPH

I respect you, Pa.

MR. MacAFEE

(Snarling)

I don't want your respect! You're a child. What good is respect from a child! Doris, take me upstairs, I'm not a well man...

(As THEY start up)

...Certain words I didn't want to hear in this house. Puberty was the first...and Mussolini was the second...

(As THEY disappear)

And respect was the third...

ALBERT

(Still on phone. Aloud)

...Now look here, Mr. Lewis, no three-cent reporter can bulldoze me! I happen to be Albert J. Peterson and you can print that in whatever cheap paper you happen to represent!

(Pause)

It's not a paper, it's a magazine.

(Another pause)

And it's not Mr. Lewis...

(Softly)

It's Mr. Luce.

(Then with a wail as HE hangs up)

...Rosie, I need you!

MRS. PETERSON

(From head of stairs as ALBERT starts to door)

Sonnyboy! Where are you going?

ALBERT

Nowheres, Mamma. Just out. It's stuffy in here so I thought...

(Bravely)

...To look for Rosie, Mamma! I love her and I want her back!

MRS. PETERSON

Is that all? I thought it was something serious. By all means, sonny, find your Lady of Spain and bring her back here.

(SHE crosses into kitchen)

And by the way, dear, when you get back be sure to stop in the kitchen, take my head out of the oven, and turn off the gas...

START!

(SHE has turned on gas, now gets down on HER knees and calmly sticks HER head in the oven)

ALBERT

(Crossing over and pulling HER out)

Mamma!

MRS. PETERSON

(Stopping to turn off gas)

It's a strange house. I don't want to run up a bill.

ALBERT

Mamma, I've had enough of this! If you really loved me, you'd help me find Rosie before it's too late. Don't you realize what's happened? That poor girl's gone out to make up for all the years she wasted on me. Who knows what low dive she's in at this very moment.

MRS. PETERSON

Oh, sonny, you're right! I'll help you find her. Only maybe I better give you the message from Conrad first...

ALBERT

What message?

MRS. PETERSON

Nothing to worry about, darling. He just says he's going out tonight and he doesn't think he'll get back on time to kiss Kim tomorrow...

ALBERT

Mamma, why didn't you tell me this before!

MRS. PETERSON

I tried to, darling sweetheart, but you kept bringing up a certain party from South of the Border.

ALBERT

(Shouting upstairs)

I don't know what's the matter with him! He knows how much this means to me! Conrad! Conrad!

CONRAD'S VOICE

Take it easy! I'm coming...

(And CONRAD, dressed in tight jeans, leather jacket and boots, starts downstairs)

...And before you start hollering, Albert, I just want you to know I made up my mind! I'm tired of getting up at nine every morning, having people watch me when I eat, and letting kids poke me in the eye. I wanna have some fun! Go out! Meet a couple of young chicks! Don't you understand, Albert. I am tense!

END!