

ACT I

SCENE 2

TIME: *Saturday afternoon (about 4:15 p.m.).*

ON RISE: *Though it is still light outside the stage is completely blacked-out for Sam is now using the room as his photographic darkroom, i.e. the black-out arrangement is over both windows, both doors are closed, lights off in hall and bedroom (drapes closed in bedroom), etc. So we can see nothing. For several seconds we only hear Sam and Susy. He is working at his bench and she is moving, easily, between table and sink (rattle plates, silver, etc.) as she clears the table.*

NOTE: *Most of Sam's photo equipment is packed up at foot of stairs, ready to go.*

After a few seconds, Susy speaks:

START

SUSY. Hear about the murder?

SAM. Just two seconds . . . (*A pause, then light in Sam's enlarger goes on for exactly two seconds.*) . . . what murder?

SUSY. They found a body this morning—somewhere near here.

SAM. Who told you?

SUSY. On the radio. I only heard the end of it. A woman from Scarsdale—or somewhere.

SAM. You making this up?

SUSY. Why should I? (*Sam switches on amber safe light and lamp on bench [at lamp itself].*)

SAM. It's a ploy to make me stay home.

SUSY. It is not.

SAM. Okay windows. (*As they talk Sam develops the enlargement and Susy moves around the room undoing the black-out [it is dull and rainy outside], then crosses to bedroom door to switch on the room lights. [See later.] You'd rather I didn't go?*)

SUSY. Serious.

SAM. Of course.

SUSY. Well, no. I mean yes I always want you to stay home. But not because somebody's been murdered . . . because of me. Need the ceiling lights?

SAM. Yes please, it's a bit gloomy. (*By bedroom door, Susy*

switches on ceiling lights and also switches off Sam's bench lamp.)

That one I need.

SUSY. Sorry. *(She switches on his bench lamp from door.)*

SAM. Now—quick check. Phone number for Police Emergency?

SUSY. Oh—just dial zero and say you're blind.

SAM. Operators get busy and don't answer.

SUSY. Oh! That urgent! So that murder *does* worry you.

SAM. This one you *must* know. Four four zero . . . one two three four. *(As Susy gets sugar lumps, takes out four and lays them in a row by phone.)*

SUSY. Wait till I get the sugar lumps. Four four owe . . . one two three four. It's these easy ones that fool me . . . so it's four—not four owe four not owe four four but four four owe one two three four?

SAM. Then ask for the Sixth Precinct. *(Sam has hung up his enlargement to dry and now starts to finish packing his photo equipment and preparing to leave.)*

SUSY. Sixth Precinct. Four plus two, okay. *(Rapidly.)* Doctor's office 924-6381. Want the Chinese laundry?

SAM. Now—my bus leaves at five and they return from . . . where?

SUSY. Asbury Park.

SAM. At . . . ?

SUSY. Er . . . every hour on the hour.

SAM. *(Rapidly.)* I'll phone you as soon as I get there and again when I'm leaving. Oh—and if that doll woman phones just say I still haven't found it.

SUSY. Okay.

SAM. And try and get her phone number.

SUSY. Maybe Gloria's seen the doll.

SAM. No she hasn't. I asked her mother. But let Gloria look around for it while she's down here. It must be *somewhere*.

SUSY. That child isn't coming here today.

SAM. Just to do your shopping. Grocery list and five dollars by the phone.

SUSY. No Gloria! *(Susy knocks a pepper shaker [or something] onto the floor with an impatient wave of her hand. She waits as though hoping that Sam will pick it up but he doesn't.)* Okay then where is it?

SAM. Not listening?

END