

MRS. ETHEL CHAUVENET & MYRTLE MAE & VETA & ELWOOD

Side #1

MYRTLE: *(enters right)* Mother – Mrs. Chauvenet – she's asking for you. *(turning – speaking in oh so sweet tone to someone in hall.)* Here's Mother, Mrs. Chauvenet. Here she is. *(Enter MRS. CHAUVENET. She rushes over to Veta,)*

MRS. CHAUVENET: Veta Louise Simmons! I thought you were dead. *(Gets to her and takes hold of her.)*

VETA: *(Rushing to her. They kiss.)* Aunt Ethel! *(motioning to MYRTLE to come forward and meet the great lady.)* Oh, no – I'm very much alive – thank you –

MRS. CHAUVENET: - and this full-grown girl is your daughter – I've known you since you were a baby.

MYRTLE: I know.

MRS. CHAUVENET: What's your name, dear?

VETA: *(proudly)* This is Myrtle – Aunt Ethel. Myrtle Mae – for the two sisters of her father. He's dead. That's what confused you.

MRS. CHAUVENET: Where's Elwood?

VETA: *(with a nervous glance at MYRTLE MAE)* He couldn't be here, Aunt Ethel – now let me get you some tea. *(crosses to right of table right)*

MRS. CHAUVENET: Elwood isn't here?

VETA: No –

MRS. CHAUVENET: Oh, shame on him. That was the main reason I came. *(takes off scarf – puts it on chair Left of table)* I want to see Elwood.

VETA: Come – there are loads of people anxious to speak to you.

MRS. CHAUVENET: Do you realize, Veta, it's been years since I've seen Elwood?

VETA: No – where does the time go?

MRS. CHAUVENET: But I don't understand it. I was saying to Mr. Chauvenet only the other night – what on earth do you suppose happened to Elwood Dowd? He never comes to the club to dance any more. I haven't seen him at a horse show in years. Does Elwood see anybody these days?

VETA: *(And MYRTLE, with a glance at each other.)* Oh, yes – Aunt Ethel. Elwood sees somebody.

MYRTLE: Oh, yes.

MRS. CHAUVENET: (*To MYRTLE*) Your Uncle Elwood, child, is one of my favorite people. (*VETA rises and crosses around chair right of the table.*) Always has been.

VETA: Yes, I remember.

MRS. CHAUVENET: Is Elwood happy, Veta?

VETA: Elwood's very happy, Aunt Ethel. You don't need to worry about Elwood – (*looks through doorway. She is anxious to get the subject on to something else.*) Why, there's Mrs. Frank Cummings – just came in. Don't you want to speak to her?

MRS. CHAUVENET: (*crosses above chair to peer out right*) My – but she looks ghastly! Hasn't she failed though?

VETA: If you think she looks badly – you should see him!

MRS. CHAUVENET: Is that so? I must have them over. (*Looks again*) She looks frightful. I thought she was dead.

VETA: Oh, no.

MRS. CHAUVENET: Now, what about tea, Veta?

VETA: Certainly – (*starts forward to lead the way*) If you will forgive me, I will precede you – (*ELWOOD enters. MRS. CHAUVENET turns back to pick up her scarf from the chair and sees him.*)

MRS. CHAUVENET: (*rushing forward*) Elwood! Elwood Dowd! Bless your heart.

ELWOOD: (*coming forward and bowing as he takes her hand*) Aunt Ethel! What a pleasure to come in and find a beautiful woman waiting for me!

MRS. CHAUVENET: (*looking at him fondly*) Elwood – you haven't changed.

VETA: (*moves forward quickly, takes hold of her*) Come along, Aunt Ethel – you mustn't miss the party.

MYRTLE: There's punch if you don't like tea.

MRS. CHAUVENET: But I do like tea. Stop pulling at me, you two. Elwood what night next week can you come to dinner?

ELWOOD: Any night. Any night at all, Aunt Ethel – I would be delighted.

VETA: Elwood, there's some mail for you today. I took it up to your room.

ELWOOD: Did you Veta? That was nice of you. Aunt Ethel – I want you to meet Harvey. As you can see he's a pooka. *(turns toward air beside him)* Harvey, you heard me speak of Mrs. Chauvenet? We always called her Aunt Ethel. She is one of my oldest and dearest friends. *(Inclines head toward space and goes "hmmm!" and then listens as though not hearing first time. Nods as though having heard someone next to him speak.)* Yes – yes – that's right. She's the one. This is the one. *(To MRS. CHAUVENET)* He says he would have known you anywhere. *(then as a confused, bewildered look comes over MRS. CHAUVENET'S face and she looks to left and right of ELWOOD and cranes her neck to see behind him – ELWOOD not seeing her expression, crosses her towards VETA and MYRTLE MAE.)* You both look lovely. *(Turns to the air next to him.)* Come on in with me, Harvey – we must say hello to all of our friends – *(Bows to MRS. CHAUVENET)* I be your pardon, Aunt Ethel. If you'll excuse me for one moment – *(puts his hand gently on her arm, trying to turn her)*

MRS. CHAUVENET: What?

ELWOOD: You are standing in his way – *(she gives a little – her eyes wide on him)* Come along, Harvey. *(He watches the invisible HARVEY cross to door, then stops him.)* Uh – uh! *(ELWOOD goes over to door. He turns and pantomimes as he arranges the tie and brushes off the head of the invisible HARVEY. Then he does the same thing to his own tie. They are ALL watching him, MRS. CHAUVENET in horrified fascination. The heads of VETA and MYRTLE, bowed in agony.)* Go right on in, Harvey. I'll join you in a minute. *(He pantomimes as if slapping him on the back, and ushers him out. Then turns and comes back to MRS. CHAUVENET.)* Aunt Ethel, I can see you are disturbed about Harvey. Please don't be. He stares like that at everybody. It's his way. But he liked you. I could tell. He liked you very much. *(Pats her arm reassuringly, smiles at her, then calmly and confidently goes on out right. After his exit – MRS. CHAUVENET, MYRTLE, and VETA are silent. Finally VETA, with a resigned tone – clears her throat.)*

VETA: *(Looking at MRS. CHAUVENET.)* Some tea – perhaps - ?

MRS. CHAUVENET: Why, I – not right now – I - well – I think I'll be running along. *(Crosses back of table.)*

MYRTLE: But –

VETA: *(putting a hand over hers to quiet her.)* I'm so sorry. –

MRS. CHAUVENET: I'll – I'll be talking to you soon. Goodbye – goodbye – *(SHE exits quickly out left.)*

MYRTLE: Oh, God – *(starts to run for doorway.)* Oh, my God!