

CHILDREN**MOLLY***(Awaking from a dream and crying out)*

Mama! Mama! Mommy!

PEPPER*(Sitting up)*

Shut up!

DUFFY

Can't anybody get any sleep around here?

MOLLY

Mama. Mommy.

PEPPER

I said, shut your trap, Molly.

*(PEPPER shoves MOLLY to the floor, downstage center)***JULY**

Ahh, stop shovin' the poor kid. She ain't doin' nuthin' to you.

PEPPER

She's keepin' me awake, ain't she?

JULY

No, you're keeping *us* awake —

PEPPER

I am not!

JULY

You are too!

(PEPPER and JULY fight)

JULY

Ah, ya think you're Jack Dempsey, do ya?

PEPPER

And you're lookin' for a knuckle sandwich.

TESSIE

(Whining)

Oh my goodness, oh my goodness they're fightin' and I won't get no sleep all night. Oh, my goodness, oh my goodness.

(ANNIE, who is 11, runs in with a bucket. SHE has been up cleaning. She breaks up the fight)

ANNIE

Pipe down, all of ya. Go back to sleep.

MOLLY

(Rubbing her eyes...still half asleep)

Mama, mommy.

ANNIE

(To MOLLY)

It's all right, Molly. Annie's here.

MOLLY

It was my Mama, Annie. We was ridin' on the ferry boat. And she was holdin' me up to see all the big ships. And then she was walkin' away, wavin'. And I couldn't find her no more. Any place.

(ANNIE holds a hanky for MOLLY)

ANNIE

Blow.

(Molly blows her nose loudly)

It was only a dream, honey. Now, you gotta go back to sleep. It's after three o'clock.

MOLLY

Annie ... read me your note.

ANNIE

My note? Again?

MOLLY

PLEASE.

ANNIE

Sure, Molly.

PEPPER

Here it comes again. Aargh!

ANNIE

(ANNIE takes a crumpled note from her pocket, unfolds it and reads it to MOLLY)

"Please take good care of our little darling. Her name is Annie.."

DUFFY

(Mockingly; she has heard this note read a thousand times before)

"She was born on October 28th. We will be back to get her soon."

PEPPER

(Mockingly)

"We have left half of a silver locket around her neck and kept the other half ...

(KATE and DUFFY Join PEPPER)

PEPPER, DUFFY & KATE

... so that when we come back for her you will know that she's our baby."

(They all laugh)

TESSIE

Oh my goodness, now they're laughing.

ANNIE

(To the OTHERS)

All right. Do you wanna sleep with your teeth inside your mouth or out!

(ANNIE lovingly folds her note and puts it back in her pocket)

MOLLY

Gee, I dream about havin' a mother and father again. But you're lucky. You really got 'em.