

(There is a silence; PLAYERS slowly look toward BILLY.)

BILLY. Oh, is that *me*?

GERRY. I thought you *knew* your *lines*, Billy?!

BILLY. I do! I just forgot where I'm supposed to say them.

POLLY. *(Stands up.)* I can't stand it! He's doing this on purpose! I know he is!

GERRY. Polly, sit down! Billy, pay attention to the cues! Take it back a line, and start again!

VIOLET. Whose line *is* it?

AGGIE. Polly's.

GERRY. *(Just realizing.)* Aggie! *Why* are you still onstage?

AGGIE. If I stay in the *wings*, I can't *hear* them!

GERRY. If you heard them, why didn't you throw Billy his line?!

AGGIE. Because you said not to throw them any lines unless they asked for them! I thought he was just pausing before speaking.

GERRY. All right, all right. Aggie, get the hell off stage!

(AGGIE will turn and exit, during:)

Everybody get back into positions. We'll take it from the top!

SMITTY. *(Offstage.)* Do *we* have to?!

GERRY. YES!

SMITTY. *(Offstage.)* You don't have to yell.

GERRY. That's what *you* think! *(Enforcing a calmness on her voice.)* Now - shall we begin once again - ?

(All PLAYERS mumble assent.)

Good. Take it from the top. Violet, go ahead.

VIOLET. *(Composes herself; then:)* "Ah, Lord Dudley, you give the most charming parties in the whole of England!"

HENRY. "You are too kind, Diana. A pity Sir Percival could not be here."