

FATHER

Oh, not at all...for either of us, really...so much to clean up...things would be oh so out of place then...and you know Mother...

YOUNG MAN

Well, I don't really...

FATHER

Oh yes...you've just come in.

(beat)

Not yet anyways...she so hates it when things are out of place...everything as it should be...

(beat)

...and she *should be* downstairs...downstairs here...but she's isn't.

Awkward. YOUNG MAN is very much at home.

YOUNG MAN

Well, I suppose it would save time...shock...time if I waited to tell you...why...why I'm here...until...

Beat.

FATHER

(finishing the thought)

Ah, yes, for Mother! But she's upstairs-

YOUNG MAN

Sleeping...

FATHER

Yes...well not so much sleeping as resting...

YOUNG MAN

She has pains.

FATHER

Yes. Yes, terrible pains.

(beat)

But no need to be bothered about that, yes? No need to bother you with it.

YOUNG MAN

It's no bother. I think it could be important to know when the time comes.

FATHER

What time comes?

YOUNG MAN

When the time comes that I tell you why I'm here...why I belong here.

FATHER

Oh.

(beat)

Well, do you? Belong here?

YOUNG MAN

Yes, I do.

(hesitantly)

I'm supposed to be here.

(then with strength)

I do belong.

FATHER

(beat, to himself)

One always wants to belong...

(beat)

But still, that's a surprise to me, I haven't heard a word about you. Perhaps Mother invited you?

(beat)

Maybe she told me...but we're no spring chickens...as I told you. And if we'd met I would have remembered you. But if you're supposed to be here then I assume that you must know our Dear John...and that's why you're here.

(nothing)

Oh well. Doesn't make much difference, I guess, who's here or not here. It will all be better tomorrow. Everything will be better tomorrow, and Mother's screaming will go away...oh, it's so awful...fills the ears with a certain dread. I do hope that in the 'supposed to be here' and 'do belong here' of it all you'll be prepared for when it happens.

(beat)

Can I mix you a drink perhaps? Something delightful and refreshing for the waiting?

YOUNG MAN

I'll have a bourbon...or anything similarly dark.

FATHER

Dark liquors have never really suited me, but Mother keeps some...uh...what did you say your name was?

YOUNG MAN

I'm sorry, I didn't.

FATHER

Ah...

(beat as he gets drinks)

Ah yes, well...we'll get into it, won't we...

(beat)

You've come from a long way?

YOUNG MAN

A very long way...but not far.

FATHER

A long way, yet not far...from the ends of the earth, yet right around the corner, eh?

(pause)

Doesn't make much sense, does it?

YOUNG MAN

I'm sure it will.

FATHER

Make sense?

YOUNG MAN

Yes.

FATHER

That's rather an enigma, isn't it? That strikes me as rather a contradiction, doesn't it?

YOUNG MAN

I don't know...

FATHER

You don't know if it's an enigma? Well, it is, of course.

YOUNG MAN

I don't know if it strikes you that. Way.

FATHER

Oh, of course...can't read my thoughts, huh? Can't hear the things I'm thinking to myself.

YOUNG MAN

That would be odd, wouldn't it?

FATHER

Or rather wonderful; maybe; to know what everyone is thinking...what everyone wants...never wonder.

(Beat)

Can you?

YOUNG MAN

Can I what?

FATHER

Read my thoughts...the things I'm thinking to myself?

YOUNG MAN

No, of course not...