

(HENNESEY looks at the others for help. There is none forthcoming. He gets up and slips into his pants. He puts on his shirt and begins to button it. He steps down front away from the group, putting his tie on. He suddenly begins to sob.)

Lights out on the barracks.

Light up on EUGENE in limbo.)

EUGENE. (to audience) . . . I felt real lousy about Hennessee . . . The next weekend I went to Rowena's again . . . She didn't even remember me . . . She acted like I was a stranger . . . I tell her about Hennessee doing it with another guy and maybe getting five years in jail and she says, "Well, I haven't got too much sympathy for their kind, sweetheart. They're just taking the bread out of the mouths of my babies" . . . I'm never going to pay for it again . . . It just cheapens the whole idea of sex . . . (The sets begin to change into the U.S.O.) . . . I was determined to meet the perfect girl. I knew just what she would be like . . . She's going to be pretty but not too beautiful. When they're too beautiful, they love them first and you second . . . And she'll be athletic. Someone I could hit fly balls to and she'd catch all of them. She'll love to go to the movies and read books and see plays and we'd never run out of conversation . . . She's out there, I know it. Right now the girl I'm going to fall in love with is living in New York or Boston or Philadelphia—walking around the streets, not even knowing I'm alive. It's crazy. (Light up on U.S.O. DAISY dancing with a soldier.) — There she is and here I am. The both of us just waiting around to meet. Why doesn't she just yell out, "Eugene! I'm here! Come and get me" . . . (The dance ends. Soldier goes off. DAISY crosses to EUGENE.)

DAISY. Hello.

EUGENE. (turns) Hi. (He looks to audience then back to DAISY.)

Daisy #1

Start

DAISY. Would you care to dance?

EUGENE. Me? Oh. Well, I don't dance very well.

DAISY. I bet you do.

EUGENE. No. I swear. I never dance.

DAISY. Then why did you come to a dance?

EUGENE. That's a logical question. Because I like to talk. And I was hoping I'd meet someone I felt like talking to.

DAISY. We could talk while we dance.

EUGENE. It's hard for me because I'm always counting when I dance. Whatever you said, I would answer, "one two, one two."

DAISY. (*laughs*) Well, I'll only ask you mathematical questions. (*EUGENE laughs as well.*) I'll bet you didn't know how to march before you got into the army.

EUGENE. No, I didn't.

DAISY. Well, if you could learn to march, you can learn to dance.

EUGENE. Yeah, except if I didn't learn to march, I'd be doing push-ups till I was eighty-three.

DAISY. I'm not that strict. But if it makes you that uncomfortable I won't intrude on your privacy. It was very nice meeting you. Goodbye. (*She starts to walk away. She gets a few steps when EUGENE calls out.*)

EUGENE. Okay!

DAISY. Okay what?

EUGENE. One two, one two.

DAISY. Are you sure?

EUGENE. Positive.

DAISY. Good. (*She crosses to him, then stands in front of him and raises her left arm up and right arm in position to hold his wrist.*)

EUGENE. All I have to do is step into place, right?

DAISY. Right. (*He tucks his cap in his belt and then steps into place, taking her hand and her waist and he*

Daisy #1
could

starts to dance. It's not Fred Astaire but it's not too awkward.) You're doing fine. Except your lips are moving.

EUGENE. If my lips don't move, my feet don't move.

DAISY. Well, try talking instead of counting.

EUGENE. Okay . . . Let's see . . . My name is Gene. *(softly)* One two, one two . . . Sorry.

DAISY. It's okay. We're making headway. Just plain Gene?

EUGENE. If you want the long version, it's Eugene Morris Jerome. What's yours?

DAISY. Daisy!

EUGENE. Daisy? That's funny because Daisy's my favorite character in literature.

DAISY. Daisy Miller or Daisy Buchanan?

EUGENE. Buchanan. *The Great Gatsby* is one of the all-time great books. Actually I never read *Daisy Miller*. Is it good?

DAISY. It's wonderful. Although I preferred *The Great Gatsby*. New York must have been thrilling in the twenties.

EUGENE. It was, it was . . . That's where I'm from . . . Well, I only saw a little of it from my baby carriage, but it's still a terrific city . . . What else?

DAISY. What else what?

EUGENE. What other books have you read? I mean, you don't just read books with Daisy in the title, do you?

DAISY. No. I like books with Anna in the title too. *Anna Karenina* . . . *Anna Christie*. That was a play by O'Neill.

EUGENE. *Eugene* O'Neill. Playwrights named Eugene are usually my favorite . . . Listen, can we sit down? I've stepped on your toes three times so far and you haven't said a word. You deserve a rest. *(They sit.)* I can't believe I'm having a conversation like this in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Daisy #1
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DAISY. You don't like Biloxi?

EUGENE. Oh, it's not a bad town . . . It's alright . . . it's okay . . . I hate it!

DAISY. I'm not that fond of it myself. Actually I'm from Gulfport. We all are.

EUGENE. Gulfport? No kidding? I know a girl from Gulfport.

DAISY. Really? Who is she? Maybe I know her.

EUGENE. Oh no . . . I doubt it. She's in the clothing business . . . Do you go to school there?

DAISY. (*nods*) Mm hmm. St. Mary's. It's Catholic. An all girls' school. I really have to move on. We're supposed to mingle. If we're with anyone more than ten minutes the Sisters get very nervous.

EUGENE. We haven't used up ten minutes yet . . . Please! I really like talking to you.

DAISY. Well . . . just a few minutes.

EUGENE. Would you like a coke or something?

DAISY. It's way on the other side of the room. You could use up at least a minute and a half getting it.

EUGENE. You're right. Let the next guy get you a coke . . . Listen, I know this is going to sound a little prejudiced, but I didn't think there were any girls in the South like you . . . I mean so easy to talk to.

DAISY. Oh, there are, believe me. Anyway, I'm not really from the South. I was raised in Chicago. My father used to work on a newspaper there. Then he got a job in New Orleans on the *Examiner* as City Editor, but he took six months off first to write a book.

EUGENE. Your father's a writer? That's incredible because that's what I want to be. Listen, not to get off the subject, but would it offend you very much if I told you that I thought you were extremely pretty?

DAISY. No. Why should it? I like it when boys think I'm pretty.

Daisy #1
con'd

stop