

*(FONSIA steps tentatively toward WELLER.)*

FONSIA. I came here to Bentley because they're supposed to have constant care.

WELLER. What's wrong with you – if you don't mind my asking?

FONSIA. Oh, my... word, no, I don't mind. I've got chronic diabetes.

WELLER. Diabetes mellitus?

FONSIA. Is there something wrong with you? I mean, are you sick?

WELLER. Oh my, I should say so. I have one of the most advanced cases of old age in the history of medical science. The mortality rate's incredible.

FONSIA. I just thought there might be something you were getting treatment for.

WELLER. No. You don't need anything special to qualify for Bentley. *(FONSIA looks at her watch.)*

FONSIA. Have you ever lived at the Presbyterian Home?

WELLER. No.

FONSIA. *(wistfully)* That's the place I really wanted to go to.

WELLER. Why didn't you?

FONSIA. Well, they have a rather unusual financial set-up.

WELLER. What's that?

FONSIA. You have to give them all your money.

WELLER. That's the place. That's the goddamn place. That's the place where you have to give them all your money.

*(WELLER gets up and paces the small area around the card table. He has a slight limp, but uses the cane he constantly has in his hand more as a prop than an actual aid to walking.)*

The Presbyterian Home... Christ, what a racket. Think of all the poor bastards out there right now, thinking they're working for themselves, when really they're working for the Presbyterian Home.

FONSIA. They don't have to go there.

WELLER. Oh. Hell no. They don't have to go there. They don't have to go anywhere if they don't want to...

*(WELLER sits back down at the table.)*

That's a damn lie. You do have to go somewhere. If you live long enough, sooner or later you end up in one of these places.

*(WELLER turns back to his game of solitaire.)*

FONSIA. I guess you're right.

*(FONSIA sits on the glider.)*

Course, if you were rich enough...

WELLER. Don't be deluded by money, either. I've seen some very wealthy people in old age homes. Loneliness—it's as simple as that.

FONSIA. That's why I wanted to go to the Presbyterian Home. I have friends over there I've known all my life.

WELLER. Then why didn't you give them all your money?

FONSIA. I couldn't bring myself to do that.

WELLER. Who the hell could? It's unreasonable to expect a person to turn over everything they have. I don't care how nice the place is. You're entitled to some personal property. Even the welfare department lets you keep twenty-five-hundred dollars.

FONSIA. You might be right. I'm sure they have their side of it, too. It's just a matter of opinion, I guess.

WELLER. It's not a matter of opinion. A fact is a fact.

*(WELLER looks at FONSIA, much nicer now.)*

Do you play cards?

FONSIA. Oh, it's been years since I've played cards. I used to love to play... I could sit up playing rummy or pinochle till two o'clock in the morning. If my mother'd ever known I was doing that, she'd a killed me. We were raised "old school" Presbyterian, you know. And we considered card playing a sin.

WELLER. The only sin in card playing is drawing to an inside straight. And even that's not a sin if you fill it.

*(He laughs to himself.)*

FONSIA. That's poker you're talking about, isn't it?

WELLER. What? Oh, the inside straight. Yes, that's poker.

*(Stymied again at solitaire, WELLER gathers up the cards.)*

FONSIA. I never did see much sense to that. For one thing, I could never keep straight what beats what.

*(WELLER shuffles the cards.)*

WELLER. Did you ever play gin?

FONSIA. Is gin and rummy the same? Seems to me they called it gin rummy.

WELLER. It's the same principle. I keep score on what's known as the Hollywood basis. Here, sit down over here and I'll show you.

*(WELLER gets up and slides his chair to the other side of the table for FONSIA. She moves to it.)*

*(WELLER now moves to get another chair for himself, and any scrap of paper he can find in the bookcase for a score pad.)*

Just let me get another chair...and something to keep score on...and we'll be all set.

*(FONSIA waits standing by her chair. WELLER returns to the table with the other chair and a score pad.)*

There. *(extending his hand)* By the way, I'm Weller Martin.

FONSIA. I'm Fonsia Dorsey.

WELLER. Pleased to meet you, Fonsia.

*(FONSIA sits down, as does WELLER.)*

Now, the first thing we do... I think you're going to enjoy this...is deal the cards...ten for me and eleven for you. *(He deals.)* One, one. Two, two. Three, three.

