

*(WELLER shuffles the cards.)*

You know, I've been thinking more and more lately about my father. Now there was a man who never settled for checker-playing in the park. After he retired, he still went to the office every morning until the day he died at the age of eighty-three. Of course, he owned his own company so he could do that. Thank God he had better luck with his business partners than I did.

FONSIA. Did you have bad luck?

WELLER. *(dealing)* One, one. Two, two. Three, three. Four, four. Five, five. Six, six. Seven, seven. Eight, eight. Nine, nine. Ten, ten. Eleven.

*(During the deal, a choir begins singing in the next room.)*

What the hell are they doing in there now?

*(They pick up their cards.)*

WELLER. I don't understand all this "entertainment."

FONSIA. That's a group of singers from the Grace Avenue Methodist Church choir. Some of them sang professionally.

*(They begin to play.)*

WELLER. I don't mean who is singing. I'm talking about this constant need to entertain us. Sometimes I get the idea that they feel like if they don't have a choir up there, or if they don't have a goddamn magician up there doing tricks or something, then we're all going to drop dead right in front of their eyes. En masse. Then they're going to feel guilty as all hell, because deep down, they know that the Grace Avenue Methodist Church choir could've kept us alive—at least for another night.

FONSIA. I thought the magician was pretty good.

WELLER. He poured milk all over the floor.

FONSIA. He made it disappear. I know it was a trick. But when he poured it in the newspaper it did disappear.

WELLER. It went all over the floor. I was in the front row, I saw it.

FONSIA. Well...you couldn't see it from three or four rows back.

WELLER. That's why magicians like to play old age homes. Half the audience is shaking so goddamn bad they can't focus, and the other half's asleep. *(beat)* I'd better pay attention to what I'm doing here.

FONSIA. They have dance lessons every Monday night after dinner.

WELLER. Yeah, that's great too, isn't it? Dance lessons in a place where half the people can't even get out of a chair.

FONSIA. I used to love to dance. *(beat)* Did you ever dance?

WELLER. Of course I did. At one time I was known as a very fine dancer, as a matter of fact.

FONSIA. They play one song that I just love.

WELLER. I hope it's not the same one they play all the time. It must be the only song they have. I get so sick of hearing it I close the door.

*(FONSIA draws a card from the stack.)*

FONSIA. But there's one part that's just so beautiful.

WELLER. Give me big band music. Now that's something you can dance to.

FONSIA. Oh, I love that too. Maybe—

*(FONSIA discards.)*

WELLER. You'd never catch me in there. Not with that bunch of amateurs. Shuffling around...

*(WELLER draws a card and deliberates intensely over his discard.)*

WELLER. Now what are you looking for?...

