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as long as there is one single iota of corruption left in our society that's worth protesting about. (*Sophie makes a move to interrupt.*) But Miss Rauschmeyer, unless you smile at that talented lunatic in there and say "Thank you for your little Budapest sausages" . . . one of the great organs of free press will disappear from the American scene . . . (*There is a pause as he waits for her reaction.*)

SOPHIE. . . . Ah don't think we've been properly introduced.

ANDY. My name is Hobart, Andrew Hobart. (*Drops magazine on table.*)

Start SOPHIE. (*Goes R. to Andy.*) How do you do. I'm Sophie Rauschmeyer. (*Shakes hands.*) Mr. Hobart, ah appreciate the fact that you want to preserve the dignity of our nation. As ah told yew before, ah had the privilege of representing the United States in the Tokyo Olympics.

ANDY. I think that's wonderful! How did you do?

SOPHIE. Well . . . ah came in fifth. Not only was ah beaten by the U. S. S. R. and Poland, but ah also trailed behind Turkey and Egypt.

ANDY. I didn't know they swam in Egypt.

SOPHIE. Then you can imagine how ah felt representing the greatest nation on earth, coming in six seconds behind a little fat girl who was raised in the desert. (*Goes L. a few steps.*) Since the day ah disgraced them, ah have not been back to my home in Hunnicut.

ANDY. Hunnicut seems to disgrace quite easily.

SOPHIE. (*Comes back to the c. table.*) You don't know Hunnicut. In our schools we sing all four stanzas of the *Star-Spangled Banner*.

ANDY. I thought there were only three.

SOPHIE. Our principal wrote a new one. Since mah black day in Tokyo ah have made a new life for mahself. One that ah don't wish to jeopardize. (*Andy goes u. of c. table and goes to desk where he sits. Sophie follows him.*) Ah have found a nice job teachin' children to swim at the Y. W. C. A. . . . (*Andy starts licking envelopes and seals them.*) It doesn't pay much, but it keeps me wet . . . My parents, bless 'em, come up to see me twice a year from Hunnicut . . . (*He nods and licks envelope.*) But most important, ah have met, fallen in love with and intend to marry—First Lieutenant Burt Fenneman of the United States

Marines. (*She grabs an envelope from Andy, licks it and puts it down on the desk.*)

ANDY. I'm delighted you're going to marry a Marine. I hope you live happily ever after in the halls of Montezuma.

SOPHIE. Except he's not gonna marry me if he finds that wax moppin', cat drownin' lunatic in mah house.

ANDY. There's a very simple solution. (*Rises.*) I'll save your marriage and you'll save my magazine.

SOPHIE. How?

ANDY. (*Goes to c. table and picks up copy of Fallout.*) I promise to keep Norman away from you as much as possible. If when you see him in the hall or on the stairs you'll just smile at him. One hello from you will keep him happy for a long time. It'll keep us all happy. Will you do it?

SOPHIE. No!

ANDY. Will you do it for me?

SOPHIE. No!

ANDY. Will you do it for America?

SOPHIE. Well, if you put it that way.

ANDY. And will you please read this tonight?

SOPHIE. (*Goes u.*) All right, but you better keep him away from me.

ANDY. (*Follows.*) I promise you he'll never bother you again. (*Norman reappears with the mop.*)

NORMAN. (*Big smile.*) All finished. And the cat is fine. I gave her artificial respiration. (*He shows how with his two index fingers. Takes the mop to the kitchen.*)

SOPHIE. (*Looks at Andy, then back to Norman as he comes back into the room and goes to tape recorder.*) Thank you.

NORMAN. (*Moved.*) Andy . . . she said "Thank you."

ANDY. I heard.

SOPHIE. Now if you'll excuse me . . . (*She starts for the door.*)

NORMAN. Norman. Say my name . . . Norman. (*Sophie looks at Andy.*)

ANDY. (*Shrugs.*) It's one little word. Norman.

SOPHIE. (*Reluctantly.*) Norman.

NORMAN. (*Holds the mike from the tape recorder.*) Would you say it in here? I'd like to have it to keep.

SOPHIE. (*Glares at Andy, who looks at her for a little under-*

standing. She sighs. Norman turns the machine on and she says into microphone.) Norman.

NORMAN. (*Turns machine off.*) Oh, that was wonderful. Thank you, Sophie.

SOPHIE. (*Turns and starts out. To Andy.*) Ah've kept mah promise. Live up to yours. (*She exits. The instant she's gone, Norman rushes over to the window and opens it, then rushes back to tape recorder.*) **Stop**

ANDY. All right, Norman, I've just made that girl a promise. As long as you behave decently and normally and act like a sensible hum . . . What are you doing?

NORMAN. I want the world to hear it. From her own lips. (*Shouts out window.*) Norman loves Sophie and someday Sophie will love . . . (*He turns machine on.*)

SOPHIE'S VOICE. Norman!

ANDY. (*Afraid Sophie will hear.*) Turn that thing off!

NORMAN. (*Stops machine. Rewinds. Shouts out window again.*) Tell 'em again, Sophie! Who's the one who drives you out of your mind? (*He turns machine on.*)

SOPHIE'S VOICE. Norman! (*Sophie bursts into the room.*)

SOPHIE. (*Screams. Goes to pole table.*) Ah heard that. He is using mah voice in vain. That's against the law. Make him stop.

ANDY. (*Runs after her.*) He was just kidding around. He won't do it again.

NORMAN. I was just kidding around. I won't do it again.

SOPHIE. Stop embarrassin' me in front of mah neighbors. And that's the last time ah'm warnin' yew. (*Points her finger at him. Sees her fingernails.*) Look at that. Now mah nails are beginnin' to crack. (*She exits. Norman turns back to the tape recorder.*)

ANDY. (*Closes door.*) If you turn that machine on again, you'll be recording your own death.

NORMAN. I'll play it very low. She'll never hear me. (*To machine.*) Whisper it, Sophie. Tell me and nobody else. Who do you love? (*He turns machine on, lowering volume.*)

SOPHIE'S VOICE. (*Whispering.*) Norman! (*Norman falls to his knees as . . .*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS