

Side 1

HARRIET (Voice/over) Pinky Whitehead has not changed. Pinky Whitehead will never change. My mother is always saying Pinky Whitehead's problem is his mother. Does his mother hate him? If I had him, I'd hate him.

Miss Elson enters and all the children rise.

MISS ELSON Good morning . . .

The children sit and Miss Elson continues talking but cannot be heard above Harriet's writing:

HARRIET (Voice/over) I'll tell you one thing. I don't want to live like Miss Elson. The other day I saw her in the grocery store and she bought one small can of tuna, a diet cola, and a pack of cigarettes. Not even one tomato. She must have a terrible life

MISS ELSON ...That said...I'm eager to tell you that this semester begins The Gregory School's 'Keep Clean Campaign'. That means we're all going to make a special Gregory effort to keep the school halls and classrooms free of messy candy wrappers and all that chewed out gum disposed of under every convenient desk. It will not do! Sixth grade is an important time in your life and I'm sure no one wants an untidy school to stain their memory...

Marion waves her hand frantically

MISS ELSON Yes, Marion.

MARION Miss Elson, couldn't we form litter police patrols to make sure everybody is obeying the cleanliness laws?

MISS ELSON Good suggestion, Marion. We need more thinkers like you! But let's first see how the campaign progresses, shall we? And now, people, we'll have the election for class reporter, who as you know has the honor to write and edit the sixth grade page for the Gregory School News! The floor is now officially open for nominations...

~~SPORT I nominate Harriet Welsh.~~

~~JANIE (Yells) I second it!~~

Side 2

The school bell rings and the students stand in groups of their friends to exit.

JANIE Our day will come... Just wait...

SPORT Forget it... Hey Harriet, whyncha come over this afternoon...

The three friends leave school for the street.

HARRIET After my spy route maybe...

SPORT Gee, Janie's working in her lab, you two are always working...

JANIE I can't stop now. I'm developing a formula to blow up my enemies...

HARRIET Oooohhh....

JANIE I'm serious, Harriet... This time they're really after me.

SPORT Who?

JANIE My mother, my father, my brother, my grandfather. .My mother says since I'm going to blow up the world I have to go to dancing school and learn manners...

SPORT *(With a shrug)* Grown-ups.

JANIE This time they could take it all away. My laboratory, equipment, my Bunsen burner.

HARRIET What would you do?

Sport and Janie walk Harriet to her door.

JANIE Leave of course, run away somewhere where chemists are appreciated.

SPORT You mean like a drug store?

JANIE &
HARRIET

SPORT!

HARRIET

What is this about dancing school?

JANIE

Just wait, buddy, they're gonna get you too. I heard my mother talking to your mother. Whoever heard of Pasteur going to dancing school? Or Madame Curie, or Einstein?

HARRIET

Whether they know it or not, I'm not going.

JANIE

They will never get us.

The three friends shake hands, all together. Sport and Janie exit, shouting:

SPORT & JANIE Never!

START

SCENE THREE

HARRIET

(Racing inside, shouting) Hello Cook! Hello Cookie!

A piece of cake has been set out on the kitchen table. Cook enters in time to collide with Harriet.

COOK

(Shouting) You're more like a missile than a little girl! *(exits)*

HARRIET

(Still shouting) Hi Cooky! Bye Cooky! Time for my cake and milk! Time for my cake and milk! Ole Golly!

Harriet sits down and opens her notebook. She writes:

HARRIET

(voice over) I always do carry on a lot.

Cook enters with a glass of milk for Harriet and a cup of coffee for herself.

COOK

What're you always writing in that dad blamed book for?

HARRIET

Because I'm a spy. I'm a good spy too. I've never been caught.

Side 3, con't.

COOK How long you been a spy?

HARRIET Since I could write. Ole Golly told me if I was going to be a writer I better write everything down. So I'm a spy that writes everything down.

COOK (*Unconvinced*) Hmmm. Some spy. I don't know about that Nurse of yours, that 'Ole Golly.'

HARRIET I know all about you.

COOK Like fun you do.

HARRIET I do too. I know you live with your sister in Brooklyn and that she might get married and you wish you had a car and you have a son that's no good and drinks.

COOK What do you do child, listen at doors? I think that's very bad manners...

HARRIET Ole Golly doesn't. Ole Golly says find out everything you can 'cause life is hard even if you how a lot.

COOK I don't know. Like I said, I don't how about that Ole Golly and that 'boyfriend' of hers...

HARRIET Boyfriend! What do you mean boyfriend?

COOK I don't know...

END

Ole golly enters.

OLE GOLLY What is it you don't know? Any inquiries you have, ought to be directly addressed to me, don't you agree?

COOK (*Standing abruptly*) Can I get you your tea now, Miss Golly?

OLE COLLY That would be most kind of you. (*Takes out a book*) Good afternoon, Harriet. (*Ole golly starts to read.*)

SCENE FIVE

Harriet stops at the Dei Santi grocery.

HARRIET (Flipping through her notebook) First assignment... (She reads) The Dei Santis, big family, pretty noisy assignment...

Lights come on in the Dei Santi Grocery and the store rocks with noise and activity. Harriet sneaks up, to stare through a window. On the opposite side of the store are two more open windows through which fly various objects, symbols of the turmoil inside.

MAMA No! Nothing! Niente! Never! Accident! Mio Figlio, he take the truck, he die! Oooh! Violenza!

The sounds of crockery breaking.

BRUNO Oh, Mama...

MAMA Don't you Mama, mia Que Miseria, No. No. No. No. No! O Dio! Miseria in Milano!

A rolled up newspaper flies out the window, followed by a few plates.

PAPA Look how you treat your Mama, you no good bum!

A salami flies out the window, followed by more broken crockery, a string of sausages and a bucket.

FABIO Wassa matta? I just wanna borrow the truck.

MAMA No! Accident! You'll have an accident, my little son... Grief and heart ache! Diom Mio!

Mama walks outside the store, wrings her hands dramatically then pops back inside.

BRUNO Papa, let him borrow... let him have fun he's only 18...

FABIO Yeah, I'm only 18.

A boot flies out the window.

Side 5

~~OLE GOLLY~~ No, I don't.

Mother and Father stick their heads in to be kissed good-night.

MOTHER Good night darling.

FATHER Good night sweetheart.

HARRIET Are you going to a big party tonight?

MOTHER A big tiresome party with foreign diplomats and movie stars. I'll tell you all about it tomorrow... Sleep well, Harriet darling... Bye, Miss Golly. (*Mother and Father exit.*)

HARRIET But at least if you lived alone, nobody could send you to dancing school.

OLE GOLLY "Solitude the safeguard of mediocrity, is to genius the stern friend."

HARRIET I said you wouldn't have to go to any damn dancing school!

A brief steely silence.

OLE GOLLY What is all this about dancing school? And since when have you judged any education profane?

HARRIET I don't want to be poor and I don't want to be alone and spies don't go to dancing school!

OLE GOLLY Oh, but they do.

HARRIET They do not!

OLE GOLLY Harriet, have you ever thought about how spies are trained? Remember that movie we saw about Mata Hari one night on television? (*A screen behind shows a clip of Greta Garbo as Mata Hari.*) Where did she operate? She went to parties, right? And remember the scene with the General or whatever he was? She was dancing,

Side 5, cont.

right? Now, how are you ever going to be a spy if you don't know how to dance?

HARRIET But will I have to wear those silly dresses? Couldn't I wear my spy clothes?

OLE GOLLY Of course not. If you wear your spy clothes everybody knows you're a spy. So you have to look like everybody else. Then you'll get by and nobody'll suspect you.

Harriet gets into bed and reaches for her notebook.

HARRIET Maybe that's true. But I'd still feel sorry for you if you didn't have any human friends only maybe 25 cats to keep you company.

Ole Golly kisses Harriet goodnight.

OLE GOLLY "This above all, to thine own self be true. And it must follow as the night the day. Thou canst not then be false to any man."

HARRIET Sometimes I wish you would just speak English.

OLE GOLLY That is Elizabethan English, Harriet. "When that April with his shoures soote/ The droghte of March perced to the roote." And that's Chaucer. F.Y.I. There are as many ways to live as there are people on earth. Go to sleep now Harriet. *(She turns off the light.)*

HARRIET Ole Golly, is it true you have a boyfriend?

OLE GOLLY Yes.

HARRIET YES!

Ole Golly exits. Harriet tries to write by flashlight. Then in a quick motion throws down her flashlight and opens her curtains and writes by city light, and moonlight.

HARRIET *(Writing/voice-over)* This is incredible! Cook gave me a good clue. Ole Golly has a boyfriend! When does she see him?

Side 6

Cook starts making her way, carefully back down the steps.

OLE GOLLY Do come in, Mr. Waldenstein

MR. W. Why thank you, Miss Golly, so very nice of you to invite me to dine with you.

Harriet races downstairs pushing past Cook.

HARRIET Ole Golly!

MR. W. And this must be your charming ward.

OLE GOLLY Harriet, this is Mr. George Waldenstein. Mr. Waldenstein this is Miss Harriet M. Welsch. Please sit now. I'll have dinner ready in a minute.

Cook shambles downstairs.

COOK What's this, Miss Golly. A strange man in my kitchen. This ain't regular.

OLE GOLLY Please do not concern yourself Cook. I shall prepare a simple dinner... *(Ole golly puts on an apron.)*

COOK Not in my kitchen, it ain't regular at all...

OLE GOLLY Now wouldn't you like an evening to catch up on your magazines. You always complain there's never enough hours in the day to read the National Enquirer. Just sit down and give your palpitating heart relief.

COOK I'll sit down all right. And make sure everything's done regular. And no mistake...

Ole Golly quickly prepares dinner.

MR. W. I think we have a friend in common, Harriet.

HARRIET Who's that?

Side 6, cont.

MR. W. Little Joe Curry.

HARRIET The delivery boy at the Dei Santi's?

COOK That Curry boy's no good. He always breaks the eggs. That's all I got to say...

HARRIET He certainly eats a lot.

MR. W. Yes, I imagine he would. He is a growing boy. He says that he has seen you many times on his delivery trips.

HARRIET Anyplace else?

MR. W. He sees you walking home from school.

COOK That girl does not walk. She zooms like a rocket, straight into me half the time not caring one dime for the circumstances of my own poor health no sir...

MR. W. Little Joe Curry is an enigma to me. He has no other ambition than to be a delivery boy. After all, to me this makes very little sense.

OLE GOLLY That is because you have had another life, Mr. Waldenstein.

MR. W. Yes, I had a big business once Harriet. Once long ago I had a very big business. I was a jeweler. I made a lot of money and I was the most miserable man alive.

COOK Ha! Get off it!

MR. W. I saw that life was so much dust in my hands, always dust nothing more... and so I became a delivery boy. That's what I am now, Harriet, a hard working delivery boy. From the moment I made that decision life was sweet again.

~~OLE GOLLY sets plates of food in front of everyone.~~

~~OLE GOLLY It must have taken a lot of courage... (Pause) George.~~

Side 7

~~everybody look like that when they have lost something? I don't mean like losing a flashlight. I mean do people look like that when they have lost? I will never forget that face as long as I live.~~

Lights up on Mrs. Plumber's house. Harriet climbs into the dumb-waiter and pulls herself up as the saxophone music fades and transforms into something somber, funeral and classical.

Lights up on Mrs. Plumber in bed.

START MRS. PLUMBER Impossible... impossible.

She falls back upon her pillows, drained and calls weakly.

MRS. PLUMBER Nadine! Nadine!

NADINE Yes, ma'am...

MRS. PLUMBER It can't be, it can't beeee...

NADINE *(Comforting)* Doctor's orders, ma'am...

MRS. PLUMBER Confined to this bed.. .for...the...rest...of...my life...

Harriet moves back to get more writing room.

HARRIET *(Voice/over)* Is Ole Golly right? Is it terrible to get what you want? Mrs. Plumber wanted to stay in bed, after all...I want to be a writer and I'll be finked if I'll be unhappy when I am. Some people just don't think things out.

MRS. PLUMBER *(Shrieking)* What was that!? In there!

Mrs. Plumber points Nadine in the direction of the dumb-waiter.

MRS. PLUMBER *(Still screaming)* There's something in there! I heard it scratching, like a mouse! A RAT!

Nadine firmly opens the dumb-waiter door exposing a horrified Harriet.

NADINE Get out of there, you!

SPORT (With a look over to Harriet) I don't know why we don't just do the Trojan War like Marion Hawthorne said first. I would a whole lot rather be a soldier than some carrots and peas.

MISS ELSON Welsch...

HARRIET I think Sport's absolutely right.

Marion glares at Harriet.

MISS ELSON Whitehead?

Out of Miss Elson's sight, Sport throws a pencil at Pinky.

PINKY (Standing sadly, speaking sadly.) I agree with Harriet and Simon.

MISS ELSON Now that's three for the Trojan horse, and the majority for Christmas dinner. I think you've selected an original and charming idea.

Miss Berry enters.

MISS ELSON Aah...Miss Berry, just in time. Children, you all know Miss Berry.

The children rise.

CLASS Good morning Miss Berry.

MISS BERRY Good morning dancers. Did I hear you decide on a whole Christmas Dinner? That is lovely. It's tart and sweet at the same time! I can already feel the juices flowing, the sap rising. Quickly, let's free the room of all chairs and other obstacles and to work. Toutsuite!

The children pull their chairs away and pile their books along the wall. Except Harriet, who keeps her notebook with her.

MISS BERRY Let's start with vegetables, shall we? Vegetables...

START

Side 8, cont.

Sport sprints for the door and Miss Elson blocks his way.

MISS BERRY (To Pinky) You will make a wonderful stalk of celery.

PINKY What?

MISS BERRY (To Harriet) And you are an onion!

HARRIET No, I refuse. I absolutely REFUSE to be an onion.

There is a frozen silence in class.

MISS BERRY Oh dear...

MISS ELSON Harriet, that's ridiculous. An onion is a beautiful thing. Have you ever really looked at an onion?

HARRIET I will not do it!

MISS ELSON Harriet, that's enough. We won't have any more of this impudence. You ARE an onion.

HARRIET I am not! I won't do it! I quit!

Harriet's classmates stifle giggles and snickers.

SPORT (Pulls on Harriet's sleeve) You can't quit, this is sixth grade.

MISS ELSON Please continue Miss Berry.

MISS BERRY Yes, now. I think it would be nice to take each thing from its inception to the time it arrives on the table. We must have some more vegetables. You, there. (To Janie) You're squash. And you (To Beth-Ellen) are a pea. You two (To Marion and Rachel) can be gravy.

Harriet, Sport and Janie burst into laughter.

MISS BERRY I don't see what's funny. We have to have gravy. You (To Boy with Purple Socks) are cranberries and (To Sport) you are the turkey!

Side 8, Con't.
again

SPORT I don't believe this.

MISS ELSON Simon, shhh ... I won't tell you again.

MISS BERRY Now, all you vegetables, listen to me. I want you to feel... to the very best of your endeavor. I want you to feel that one morning you woke up as one of these vegetables, nestling in the earth, warm in the heat and power and magic of growth, or striving tall above the ground, pushing through, bit by bit in the miracle of birth, waiting for that glorious moment when you will be...

HARRIET Eaten!

MISS BERRY *(Ignoring, Harriet, the other children's laughter, everything)* ...once and for all, your essential and beautiful self, full grown and radiant.

Miss Berry freezes in a dramatically radiant posture. The children are silently awed, and Miss Elson coughs to attract Miss Berry's attention.

MISS BERRY Oh yes...we must start with the tenderest moment of these little vegetables.. .the moment of conception.

Miss Elson turns away, embarrassed.

MISS BERRY This story must start with a farmer.

SPORT Hey! I want to be the farmer!

MISS BERRY Oh, but dear boy, one of the taller girls will be the farmer. A farmer must be taller than the vegetables ... Vegetables are very short. When the farmer comes in on this lovely morning, the ground is freshly broken, open and yielding, waiting to receive. He enters and you will all be piled in a corner like seed waiting to be planted. You will just lie there like this. *(Miss Berry demonstrates, falling in a heap.)*

MISS ELSON *(fed up)* Miss Berry I think they've got the position. *(Crisply)* All right children, we want to see you start improvising your dances now. Miss Berry will see what you've done next dance class. Thank you Miss Berry.

END