

STAN

rear, uncovered table up onto the table. He talks during the above. When he has finished that, he sits at one of the covered dining tables, empties the paper cup, which contains money, onto the table and starts to count it. I'm gonna quit. I'm gonna get out of show business. I haven't heard from *The Guiding Light*. I never did hear from Colgate. I mean who needs sitting around waiting? I am spending my entire life waiting. Waiting at the Equity office, waiting at some agents office, waiting in endless hotel corridors to hand some guy who can't spell Mercurio a picture of me wearing an idiot grin. For what? I'm getting too old to waste my time standing around in a towel smiling and waiting.

It's a rotten business. "Charlie, can you sing? Charlie, can you dance? Charlie, you're too young. Charlie, you're too tall. You're perfect for the part, Charlie, but we're actually looking for a genuine heroin addict. Maybe, Charlie. Later, Charlie. Charlie, where were you last week—we needed you." Here, Goddamit, I was here!

(*Quieter. This is probably the first time he starts counting his tips.*) I dunno why I wanted to be an actor in the first place. I've thought about it. Not a lot. Some. I like the applause, the approval. But then why should I want your approval? I mean, we've barely met. The only thing I can think of is that it goes way, way back into my childhood. Perhaps when I was a little, tiny baby and I cried, my mother didn't pick me up. They say those things are very important. It's a frightening thought. Like fairies at our christening. "And on his eighteenth birthday, Charlie shall prick his finger on a spinning wheel and be an actor." Zap! Or maybe I want my father to approve when I'm rich and famous. But then, my father doesn't approve of any actors.

he doesn't like any of them. So maybe I don't want his approval; maybe I'm rebelling. Or maybe I'm secretly planning to fail to prove him right. Or suc-

← END

ceed to prove him wrong. Or it may have something to do with my father; it may be Mamma. Or both! (*Beat.*) I think I wanna be an actor 'cos I like to act, but it's a mystery. I guess just a mystery. Doris likes mysteries. Agatha Christie. The biggest problems she has, other than Steve, the kidney creep, is that she's read all the Agatha Christies. All eighty. Some of them twice. I've read one or two. They're okay. I don't need 'em. I am my mystery.

HE LIGHTS THE CANDLES

CHARLIE Becomes a
 CUSTOMER - HANDING PAPER,
 Drinking coffee

CHARLIE #2