

AN ART CRAFT PLAY

*Nathaniel White* <sup>123</sup> — *Ronald*

*Washington Never  
Slept Here*

A MYSTERY-COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

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By

LE ROMA GRETH

*Ronald*



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Order From

ART CRAFT PLAY CO.

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

# Washington Never Slept Here

*A Mystery-Comedy in Three Acts*

By

LE ROMA GRETH

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Made in U. S. A.

WASHINGTON NEVER SLEPT HERE

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**ART CRAFT PLAY CO.**

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

(5 men — 10 women)

(Also two very small male roles and extras as tourists and admiring boys)

**LYNDON MATHEWS:** A curator for Washington's Headquarters Museum, he is a sensible man — until he sees a ghost. He then becomes rather nervous and inclined to outbursts of temper. About forty-five, he may have grey at the temples. His matching shirt and pants are khaki-colored, very neatly starched and pressed with creases sharp enough to cut one's finger. He also wears horrid, bright pajamas, slippers and a "loud" robe.

**GLADYS MATHEWS:** His wife is just as sensible and she hasn't seen a ghost. She is sure of herself and competent. For Act I she wears first a housecoat, later changing to a pretty summer cotton, which she also wears in Act II. Act III finds her in a fresh cotton. She too is in her forties with hair slightly greyed.

**RODNEY MATHEWS:** The boy of the family, about eighteen or nineteen is rather confused about girls, the future, and everything else. He is, however, a nice boy and quite good-looking. He wears the same set of casual summer clothing for Acts I and II, changing to a fresh shirt for Act III.

**BECKY MATHEWS:** About fifteen, she is attractive and interested in things girls her age like — mostly

boys. She wears a nice summer outfit for Acts I and II, changing to a different one for Act III.

**JENNIE MATHEWS:** The kid sister, is an obnoxious twelve. She loves to eat and seems always to be doing just that. Her curiosity and energy are boundless. She is the poopy-tail, dungaree-type. For the end of Act II she needs pajamas and a robe.

**BUGS RAFFERTY:** Becky's best friend is the same age as Becky and shares the same interests. She is attractive but manages to hide that pretty well with a definite nasal twang in her voice and a slouching posture with shoulders sagging and stomach out. Her outfit is nice, bright and casual with a change of dress for Act III.

**MARY, THE MAID:** She is an unhappy character of uncertain years. Her English isn't of the best, her hair is untidy. She is constantly complaining—to herself if there's nobody else about to listen. She wears cotton stockings, worn-out shoes, a faded housedress covered with a huge, dirty apron.

**JACK FISHER:** A handsome, personable young man of about twenty-five, he is just the type that everybody dreams of marrying. He grins easily and never has a harsh word for anybody. Throughout the play he wears khaki-colored shirt and pants, starched and pressed like Mr. Mathews'.

**NANCY TALBOT:** "The-girl-next-door" type who went to school with Rodney, she is obviously very much in love with him. She is out of school now and her clothing is very nice and a little older than those worn by Becky and Bugs. Smart summer outfit for Acts I and II, with a fresh dress for Act III.

**MISS LILIBET:** You never see Miss Lilibet without her notebook and pencil for she is a budding author—or thinks she is. About fifty, with greying hair, she wears too much make-up, and her version of the latest Greenwich Village costume. This consists of black tights, a long-sleeved black sweater or blouse, and a bright-colored skirt. A tan or other flat hat is on her head. To decorate the Christmas tree she wears all sorts of beads, bracelets, and long, dangling earrings. The few times she doesn't have her notebook and pencil in her hand it is in a *huge* shoulder bag she always has with her.

49-44  
**NATHANJEL W. WHITE:** A VIP from Washington, he is an elderly, distinguished-looking man with white hair and a commanding manner. He wears a conservative business suit, tie, etc. throughout the play.

**HYACINTH WHITE:** His wife is an elegant, white-haired lady. She wears an expensive summer outfit in good taste, complete with gloves, hat, etc. In Act II she changes to a housecoat which she also wears in Act III. The housecoat should be very full-skirted and button up to the neck; floor length, if possible.

**MISS SNYDER:** A nervous, dowdy woman wearing a faded summer dress, rather worn shoes, and clutching a thin, old purse. Grey wisps of hair show under the small hat pulled over her head.

**MISS EWELL:** Producer of PEOPLE IN THE NEWS television program, she is a brisk young woman with a commanding manner and a rather loud voice. Her hair is done in the very latest style. She wears a chic suit or tailored outfit.

**THE GHOST:** He should be made up to look as really

weird and ghostly as possible. His face and neck are covered with the palest grease paint and powder. His hair is sprayed or powdered white or silver. He wears white shirt, white pants, white gloves and white stockings on his feet, no shoes. He has little action, mostly he just sits and stares at nothing.

JOE and DICK: Newspapermen dressed casually.

TOURISTS: (any number desired) wearing summer clothing, carrying cameras, etc.

BOYS: (five or more) who follow Becky and Bugs about. They are very adoring in their manner.

## HAND PROPERTIES

### ACT I

MARY: Bucket, mop, dust cloth, untidy heap of bed clothing, two folded sheets, broom.

JENNIE: Fresh fruit in pockets, old evening gown with full skirt and tie belt.

BECKY: Football helmet, football, fishing pole.

MISS SNYDER: Five dollar bill.

MISS LILIBET: Notebook and pencil, change.

JACK FISHER: Wristwatch.

BUGS: Football helmet.

TOURISTS: Change.

### ACT II

JENNIE: Sandwich and small pie, old sheet.

GLADYS: Paper bag for souvenir.

MISS LILIBET: Flashlight.

LYNDON: Pillow, blanket, sheet.

BECKY: Old sheet.

BUGS: Old sheet.

(Press camera, candle and vase on counter)

### ACT III

LYNDON: Ice cap for head, or old towel supposedly wrapped around ice cubes.

JENNIE: Bananas.

GHOST: Piece of metal pipe for weapon.

MISS LILIBET: Glass of water.

JACK FISHER: Gun.



THE PLACE: A room where souvenirs are sold in Washington's Headquarters, somewhere in New Jersey.

THE TIME:

- Act I — An early morning in summer. The Present.
- Act II — That evening.
- Act III — The next morning.

ACT I

(The curtain opens to reveal the room where souvenirs are sold in Washington's Headquarters, somewhere in New Jersey. From this room, also, is where the tourists start when they go through the historic old building. It is actually a rather bare room with plainly colored walls and no pictures unless you happen to have a portrait of Washington handy. A window in the Right wall looks out upon green trees and, we may imagine, reconstructed Continental soldiers' huts and a graveyard of Revolutionary War vintage. There are three entrances to the room. A door, Right, leads outside. A door Up Left is the entrance to the rooms where Washington had his headquarters. A door at Left leads to the living quarters of the Mathews family. Up Right Center is an alcove. This is simply made by having a plain interior flat set back from the rest of the wall. An old wooden armchair, battered and beaten in appearance, is enshrined in this alcove. Black or fawn-colored drapes close the alcove from view if desired and can be opened or closed. At the Left of the stage are two tables which form a fairly long counter. On this counter are the telephone and a small lamp which is used as a night light. A small stand loaded with postcards is also on the counter as are many small novelties and souvenirs. A tray containing a number of unbreakable objects sits very near the Left end of the counter. Above the counter, almost in the Center of the stage is a long wooden bench with back and arms. At Right is a smallish table containing ink, pens, and blotters. Chairs are grouped about the table. Other occasional wooden chairs are in the room.

(The curtain opens on a dark stage. After a second a blue spotlight in the alcove comes up to reveal the Ghost seated there in the chair. He sits quietly, staring at nothing

at Center stage. A blue light comes up at the window gradually brightening until the outline of furniture in the room is barely visible. The door, Right, is jerked open abruptly and Mary, the maid, carrying a bucket, mop, and dust cloth, stomps onto the stage.)

MARY. (*Muttering to herself; very disgruntled.*) Work . . . Work . . . Work! Get up at four in the morning to clean this place before the dumb tourists start trooping through. Everyone of them with dirty shoes! I get so sick and tired of cleaning . . . (*Stooping at the table with dust cloth.*) Look at that dirt! Wouldn't think it's been done in a month — and I cleaned everything real good just yesterday. (*Sweeping the mop around in large circles.*) Dirty floor, dirty counter, dirty table . . . (*She has moved Up Right and suddenly sees the Ghost.*) What're you doing in here? We don't open until nine o'clock! How'd you get in? Besides, you ain't supposed to sit in that chair! Nobody's supposed to sit in that chair! That's George Washington's chair. He set in it when he was a boy. It even got his initials carved on it. That's valuable, that chair is! Now you just get out of here until it's time to open. (*Continuing her way Up Left.*) Boy, we get all kinds — we do! Tourists wear the craziest get-ups. Well, gotta get started. Work . . . Work . . . Work!

(*She exits Up Left, slamming the door. The Ghost has remained calmly seated, not looking at her. Lyndon's voice is heard off Left.*)

LYNDON. Mary! Mary, is that you? I want to talk to you! (*He enters at Left.*) Boy, it sure is dark this morning . . . Mary, the place has to be cleaned extra good today because — (*Lyndon stops as he sees the Ghost, and stares, open-mouthed. He tries to speak, pointing at the Ghost.*)

LYNDON. Uh—uh—uh— (*Turning wildly.*) Gladys! Gladys! It's a — (*He stops suddenly just as he is about to dash off Left.*) It can't be! There is no such thing! (*Turning to look at alcove again.*) But it sure looks like —

(*He dashes off Left where he is heard wildly yelling for Gladys. She asks him what an earth is the matter. He's excited and yelling about ghosts. Gladys is trying to calm him. Meanwhile, on stage the lights fade into darkness and in the blackout the Ghost exits. Stage lights come on, brighter than before. Throughout the opening scene they keep brightening until they are up full. The blue spot in the alcove appears only when the ghost is there. Lyndon and Gladys enter at Left.*)

GLADYS. (*Exasperated.*) Lyndon Mathews, I wish you'd tell me what you're talking about!

LYNDON. I'm trying to! It was a ghost! Sitting in George Washington's chair! See? (*He has dashed to Center where he points Up Right, then his arm slowly drops as he sees that the chair is empty.*)

GLADYS. (*With him at Center with arms folded.*) I don't see anything.

LYNDON. But —

GLADYS. Lyndon, you know how you are until you've had a cup of coffee in the morning. (*Taking his arm and pulling him Left.*) Come, let's get coffee.

LYNDON. I don't want any coffee! I tell you there was something sitting in George Washington's chair.

GLADYS. (*As Lyndon breaks away and goes Up Right to inspect the alcove.*) Maybe it was George Washington. After all, it's his chair.

LYNDON. (*Caustically spooking around the alcove.*) Are you trying to be funny? Besides, the chair doesn't belong to George Washington any more. (*Grandly, with an arm and finger raised.*) It is now the property of the United States Government!

GLADYS. (*Leaning casually against the counter, Left.*)

Then maybe it was Uncle Sam sitting there. Come, dear. You need some coffee.

LYNDON. (*Making sure nobody is hidden in the drapes.*)

If this isn't the strangest thing . . . Nothing like this has ever happened before in all the time I've been working for the Department of the Interior.

GLADYS. I think you've been reading too much dusty old history.

LYNDON. (*Indignantly.*) History isn't dusty or old.

GLADYS. That's not what Mary says when she cleans those books about George Washington you keep dragging home.

LYNDON. (*Coming out of alcove.*) If I'm custodian and curator of Washington's Headquarters here I have to know the history of the place, don't I?

GLADYS. Yes, dear, of course . . . But couldn't it keep until later in the day? (*Yawning and stretching.*) Dragging me out of bed at this hour of the morning to hunt for ghosts!

LYNDON. (*Snapping his fingers and coming Center.*) That's right. We don't usually get up this early! Maybe he's been here all the time and we just never saw him before.

GLADYS. Who?

LYNDON. The ghost.

GLADYS. (*Straightening.*) Oh, really, Lyn! (*Mary enters Up Left Center still muttering to herself.*)

MARY. If I could get up just one day and not have all this work to do, I'd be the happiest critter in the world. It's always "Mary this" and "Mary that"! Sometimes a body just can't stand it no more.

LYNDON. (*Hurrying up to her.*) Mary, did you see a ghost?

MARY. Huh?

GLADYS. Lyndon! Do you want her to think you're crazy?

LYNDON. (*Following her down to Center.*) Mary, have you seen a ghost in here?

MARY. (*Turning to face him.*) Are you makin' fun of me, Mr. Mathews?

GLADYS. (*Moving in to them a few steps.*) Never mind, Mary. Mr. Mathews was only teasing. He has a great sense of humor.

LYNDON. (*Turning away and moving Right.*) Ha ha.

MARY. I dusted and mopped George Washington's house.

GLADYS. So soon? Are you sure you did it thoroughly?

MARY. Sure!

GLADYS. Mary. . . .

MARY. Well — good enough, anyhow.

LYNDON. Did you change the bedding?

MARY. (*Looking from one to the other.*) Huh? What is this — a hotel? Nobody's going to sleep in that bed! It's just for tourists to look at.

GLADYS. Mr. Mathews just wants to make sure his ghosts have clean sheets to use.

LYNDON. Now cut that out, Gladys! Mary, everything's got to be extra clean. I want fresh bedding and new quilts put out. Be sure you polish George Washington's boots too. Mr. Nathaniel W. White is coming today!

MARY. Who's he?

LYNDON. (*Appalled; moving in to her again.*) Who's he? Who's he! Mary, he's just the top man in charge of National Historical Parks, that's all! He's on an inspection tour and he's going to stop here at Washington's Headquarters. Everything has got to be just right. That means —

MARY. I know. "Mary, do this" and "Mary, do that"! Work . . . Work . . . Work . . .  
(*Mary exits Up Center Left.*)

GLADYS. (*Moving Left and yawning again.*) Well, if everything has to be just right for Mr. White today, I'd better get dressed. And get some coffee made.

LYNDON. (*Sulkily.*) I don't need coffee. I wish you'd stop treating me like a child!

GLADYS. (*Turning to face him, a bit angry.*) Then why don't you stop acting like a child? A ghost indeed! And on the day Mr. White's making his inspection!

(*Gladys exits at Left. Lyndon has his back to the alcove. He says, "But, Gladys —" She's gone, so he shrugs, then thoughtfully rubs a finger along his chin. Quickly he whirls to the alcove. Nothing. He turns his back to it again, then whirls once more. As he does it a third time Rodney, Becky, and Jennie enter at Left and stand grouped there, watching him.*)

RODNEY. Is that some new kind of a game, Pop?

LYNDON. (*Stopping in the middle of what he's doing with a self-conscious laugh.*) Oh, no! I was just . . . That is, I was . . .

RODNEY. (*Coming to slouch on bench.*) What's Mom all steamed up about?

BECKY. (*Leaning on counter.*) Yeah, Pop. What's going on around here this morning? You look as if you've seen a ghost.

LYNDON. (*Impressed.*) I do? Do I really, Becky?

JENNIE. Aw, he always looks a little peculiar.

LYNDON. (*Hurt.*) Jennifer!

JENNIE. (*Crossing Right to sit at table.*) You do, Pop. You've been reading so much about George Washington you're even starting to look like him.

LYNDON. (*Assuming a stern, dignified position at Center.*) You think so? George Washington was an intelligent, dignified gentleman.

JENNIE. That's right. (*Considering.*) I guess you aren't much like George Washington after all, Pop.

RODNEY. (*As Lyndon deflates.*) What were you and Mom hollaring about?

LYNDON. Your mother is a very practical, sensible woman. She doesn't believe in ghosts.

BECKY. Who does?

LYNDON. (*Hesitantly as he sits beside Rodney on the bench.*) Well, nobody but — When you see one with your own eyes it's a little different.

JENNIE. Did you see a ghost, Pop?

LYNDON. I saw something — sitting in George Washington's chair. (*They all stare at the chair.*) It was sort of blue and ghostie-looking.

JENNIE. (*Rising and rushing up to alcove.*) I don't see anything.

LYNDON. It's not there now.

JENNIE. (*Turning.*) You know what, Pop?

LYNDON. What?

JENNIE. (*Coming down a few steps.*) I think you've flipped.

LYNDON. Now see here, Jennie —

BECKY. Are you going to tell Mr. White about it when he comes?

LYNDON. (*Rising.*) That's right! Nathaniel W. White! I keep forgetting that he's due today. It's this ghost — has me upset.

BECKY. You need some coffee.

LYNDON. (*Pacing Down Left, then turning to them.*)

I do not need coffee. Now listen. First, we're not to mention this ghost to Mr. White. I don't think the Department of the Interior approves of ghosts occupying Washington's Headquarters. After all, only authorized persons are supposed to remain on the premises. Secondly, I expect you children to act with perfect decorum and dignity during the visit.

JENNIE. (*Going Down Right to sit on table with her feet on a chair.*) I don't even know what that means so how can I act that way?

LYNDON. Just behave yourself, Jennie.

JENNIE. For how long?

LYNDON. Well, if he brings Mrs. White along, they might even stay overnight. And all day tomorrow to look at our accounts.

JENNIE. Boy, that's going to be a strain.

- BECKY. Oh, Jennie, this is important to Pop. We can behave ourselves. We're not that bad.
- JENNIE. Sure. I was only kidding. But—suppose things wouldn't go right? What then?
- LYNDON. I could lose my job.  
(*Mary enters Up Left with a large wad of bed clothing.*)
- MARY. Day after day . . . Week after week . . . Polish George Washington's boots . . . Change the bedclothes . . . Put wood in the fireplace . . . Hang up herbs in the kitchen . . . Shine the pewter . . . Clean the hand hooked rugs . . . And dust and polish and shine . . .  
(*Mary exits at Left.*)
- BECKY. (*Looking after her.*) Boy, Mary's in a mood today.
- LYNDON. Mary's always in a mood. (*Wandering to alcove.*) There must be some explanation for what I saw.
- RODNEY. Are you still on that ghost kick, Pop?
- LYNDON. Perhaps the way the light falls here in the alcove in early morning . . . That must be it! Some sort of light reflection and coming in out of the dark hallway as I did I thought it was— (*Laughs a little.*) Silly, isn't it? (*Moving down.*) Guess I will go see if your mother has some coffee made.
- RODNEY. Before you do, Pop—I was over at Henderson's Garage yesterday and he's got a '50 Chevy convertible that—
- LYNDON. I thought we went all over that last week.
- RODNEY. That was a '49 Dodge last week. This is a better buy. It's only—
- LYNDON. Whatever it is, I can't afford it, Rod. Not with four years of college for you to think about.
- RODNEY. But I could—
- LYNDON. I don't want to talk about it! Not this morning anyway. What with Mr. White's visit and ghosts—Oh, I need that coffee!  
(*Lyndon exits at Left.*)

- JENNIE. Say! If Mom's got coffee, she's got breakfast too.
- BECKY. Don't you think of anything except your stomach?
- JENNIE. (*Jumping up.*) That's better than thinking about cars and boys the way you two do!  
(*Jennie exits at Left.*)
- BECKY. (*Moving around counter.*) That kid! If she doesn't do something dumb while Mr. White's here I'll be very much surprised.
- RODNEY. Yeah. What do you think about Pop's ghost?
- BECKY. As he said—a light reflection.
- RODNEY. Sure, only—
- BECKY. Only what?
- RODNEY. Well, Pop's usually pretty level-headed. I never knew of him imagining stuff before. And if any place would have ghosts, this place ought to!
- BECKY. (*Sitting on bench beside him.*) Oh, for corn's sake!
- RODNEY. (*Seriously.*) I mean it! (*Rising and moving to the window at Right.*) An old graveyard for Continental soldiers right outside! It gives me the creeps sometimes. (*Indicating door Up Left.*) And the museum itself—all the empty furniture sitting around just waiting for a ghost.
- BECKY. You're as bad as Pop. I've walked around the Headquarters plenty—all by myself too—and I never saw or heard anything.
- RODNEY. Well, I didn't either. But sometimes I like to think of all those soldiers who camped around here that winter. I can almost hear them calling—  
(*Offstage Right, Bugs Rafferty is heard yelling in her nasal voice, "Becky! Oh, Becky!"*)
- RODNEY. (*Groaning.*) The enemy's coming!
- BECKY. It's Bugs!
- RODNEY. That's what I mean.  
(*Bugs enters at Right.*)

BUGS. Hi! Everybody bright-eyed and bushy-tailed this morning?

BECKY. Hi, Bugs!

RODNEY. (*Taking a step forward.*) I think I'll go eat.

BUGS. (*Stepping in front of him.*) Gee, you don't have to rush away on my account.

RODNEY. (*Trying to get around her, but she steps in front of him again.*) Oh, I wouldn't want to butt in. I'm sure you girls must have lots to talk about.

BUGS. But you're so — intelligent. I love to hear you talk, Rod! Don't you, Becky?

BECKY. Speak for yourself.

BUGS. Did you see that convertible Henderson's Garage has?

RODNEY. (*Unhappily.*) Yeah.

BUGS. (*Edging in front of him all the time as he tries to sneak around her.*) Why don't you buy it? I think a car makes a college man just the very most!

BECKY. He's not a college man yet, so stop drooling, Bugs.

BUGS. Well, he is almost. He starts in September.

RODNEY. (*Still trying to get to the left.*) I'm hungry.

BUGS. You are? Is that a subtle way of asking me down to the corner for a coke and burger?

RODNEY. (*Suddenly making a dash and eluding her.*) No! It's a blunt way of saying I'm going in for breakfast.

BUGS. (*Sighing and flopping down at table.*) That's how I always affect boys. They get blunt and go the other way.

BECKY. I know how you feel, Bugs. But don't waste your time on Rodney. He's a goon.

BUGS. You're just saying that 'cause he's your brother.

RODNEY. (*At left; turning to them.*) You want to know what's wrong with you two?

BECKY. No!

BUGS. That's no attitude, Becky. I'd love to know

what's wrong with me. Wallflowers are fine — on walls. But so who's interested in walls?

BECKY. You don't know anything about girls, Rod!

How could you tell us what's wrong?

RODNEY. Who says I don't know anything about girls?

BECKY. Nancy Talbot.

RODNEY. Why bring her up?

BECKY. She likes you.

RODNEY. Well, I don't like her. Same thing's wrong with her that's wrong with you two.

BUGS. Okay, I'll bite. What's wrong with us?

RODNEY. (*Moving in a few steps.*) You're dull. Just plain dull. That's why boys don't like you. And I know what I'm talking about 'cause I'm a boy. You two bore me. Nancy Talbot bores me too.

(*Rodney turns left to go but Bugs rises and dashes to him, grabbing his arm.*)

BUGS. Hold it a minute, fellow! You're not going to make a crack like that and then blow.

BECKY. (*Rising angrily.*) Rodney Mathews! I'm going to tell Dad that you're insulting us!

RODNEY. I'm not insulting you! I'm just telling you the truth.

BUGS. I don't think Becky's dull.

RODNEY. Well, I think she is. If you were a guy, how would you like to date her for an evening?

BUGS. Well . . .

BECKY. (*Arms folded, turning her back to them.*) Of all the insulting conversations —!

RODNEY. Bugs, if you two didn't talk about boys what would you have to do?

BUGS. Well, we'd — Unmmm. . . I guess we'd —

RODNEY. See what I mean? You're dull. You're not interested in anything but boys. So boys aren't interested in you. Don't get me wrong. I like girls. Some of them are okay. But you two and Nancy Talbot —!

BUGS. Okay, so maybe you have a point.

BECKY. (*Whirling.*) Bugs! You traitor!  
BUGS. We ought to at least be open-minded, Becky.

What can we do about it, Super Mind?

RODNEY. Be more interesting.

BUGS. How?

RODNEY. Live exciting lives!

BECKY. (*Coming down to form a triangle with them.*)

Oh, sure! This museum is such an exciting place!

It gives us plenty of chance to live exciting lives.

Phooey! Nothing ever happens here!

RODNEY. Make things happen. Meet interesting people!

(*Mary enters at Left with some neatly folded sheets.*)

MARY. I never get done. I work all day and I never

get done. In and out. Up and down. And I never

get done. Now they want the pavement swept!

(*Mary exits Up Center Left.*)

BECKY. Interesting people. Like Mary?

RODNEY. Maybe she is interesting. Did you ever talk

to her to find out? No! You never want to talk to

anybody except boys.

BUGS. Okay. We'll talk to Mary next time she comes

through. Anything else, Brain Child?

RODNEY. Develop interesting hobbies.

BECKY. Bird watching maybe? Or ghost chasing?

RODNEY. No. Football. Learn all about it. That's

something boys go for. Or maybe fishing.

BECKY. Football!

BUGS. Fishing!

(*Mary comes in muttering to herself and carrying a broom. Ignoring them as usual, she exits at Right.*)

RODNEY. Why not? Have you ever really tried any-

thing like that?

BECKY. (*Turning away.*) No.

RODNEY. You might even discover you like something

besides boys. You could give it a try anyway.

(*Rodney exits at Left.*)

BECKY. (*Going to table Right to flop down in chair.*)

Of all the lame-brain ideas! I don't see why you en-  
courage him, Bugs.

BUGS. He's a boy, isn't he? I'd encourage any boy.

BECKY. Well, I'm not that desperate!

BUGS. (*Coming to her.*) Sure you are if you'll admit it.

You're just as dateless as I am.

BECKY. Well . . . even if it's true there isn't anything

we can do about it! Boys just don't like us.

BUGS. I don't see why not. We're reasonably nice look-

ing, we have clothes, we're not what you could call

stupid — Becky, do you suppose we really are dull?

BECKY. (*Reluctantly.*) I guess it wouldn't hurt to find

out a little about football and fishing.

BUGS. Sure, and we can talk to some interesting people.

(*Mary enters at Right.*)

MARY. Every day is just like the other one. First you

sweep, and then you mop, and then you dust . . .

BECKY. (*Rising.*) Mary!

MARY. (*Starting and pausing above table.*) Huh?

BUGS. (*Going to her with determination.*) We want

to talk to you!

MARY. (*Backing away; they flank her, firmly take her*

*arms, and march to Center with her between them.*)

Y-You do?

BECKY. You interest us.

MARY. I didn't have nothin' to do with it!

BECKY. Huh?

BUGS. Tell us your life history!

MARY. (*Frightened; trying to get away.*) I ain't ad-

mittin' nothin'!

BUGS. You were horn, weren't you?

MARY. That's a leading question.

BUGS. Yeah, now if I could only figure out where it's

leading.

BECKY. Tell us about your friends!

MARY. No! I know what you're thinkin'. I don't know

anything about that ghost. I didn't see nothin'! I

ain't talked to nobody! That's my story! And I'm stickin' to it!

(*Mary breaks away from them and exits quickly Up Left Center. The girls stare after her.*)

BECKY. What do you think of that?

BUGS. (*Moving up to look after her.*) She is rather interesting at that. (*Turning.*) Becky, do you think she's crazy?

BECKY. (*Musing.*) She mentioned the ghost.

BUGS. What ghost?

BECKY. The ghost Dad thought he saw in here this morning.

BUGS. (*Looking over her shoulder then rushing down to get close to Becky.*) G-G-G-Ghost?

BECKY. She acted scared too.

(*Jennie enters at Left.*)

JENNIE. Boy, what a feed! Mom made pancakes, Becky! With lots of butter and syrup.

BUGS. Ah, the little one with the big appetite! Some grocer's going to make a fortune out of you.

JENNIE. If you were just leaving, you needn't stay on my account.

BUGS. I just came.

JENNIE. (*Shrugging and moving Right to sit at table.*)

Well, we can't be lucky all the time.

BECKY. Jennie, Mary was acting awfully strange.

JENNIE. That's no news.

BECKY. She said she didn't know anything about the ghost.

JENNIE. So who does?

BECKY. But the way she said it made me think she does know something about it!

JENNIE. Boy, that's logical.

(*Nancy Talbot enters at Right.*)

NANCY. Yoo hoo! Anybody home?

BECKY. (*Crossing in front of Bugs to the Right a few steps.*) Oh . . . Good morning, Nancy.

NANCY. Hello there!

BUGS. (*Sitting on bench.*) Hi, Nance.

NANCY. (*Hopefully.*) Rodney around?

BECKY. He's eating.

NANCY. Oh. (*Lamely.*) I was just wondering if he was around.

BECKY. We're going to be pretty busy today. It's the height of the tourist season, you know. My Mother was wondering if you'd help out behind the counter. Just for a couple of hours around lunch time.

NANCY. Love to.

BUGS. Nancy, let me ask you something. You know anything about fishing?

NANCY. (*Wide-eyed; crossing in front of Becky to the Right side of the bench.*) Uh uh.

BUGS. Football?

NANCY. Uh uh.

BUGS. Met any interesting people lately?

NANCY. Uh uh. (*Turning.*) Have you eaten breakfast, Becky?

BECKY. No.

NANCY. (*Again hopefully.*) If you want, I'll go along in with you.

BECKY. Oh. Sure. Come on. You too, Bugs.

(*Bugs rises and they move Left to exit. Nancy exits Left. Bugs puts a hand on Becky's arm and holds her back for a moment.*)

BUGS. Say, you know something? She is kinda dull, isn't she?

(*Becky glares at her, then exits Left. Bugs follows. Jennie pulls fruit from her pockets—as much fruit in each pocket as can be squeezed in, lays the pile on the table, Right, one by one and greedily begins to eat. The door Right opens and Miss Snyder enters.*)

MISS SNYDER. Pardon me . . .

JENNIE. Wee oonie git.

MISS SNYDER. (*Coming in a few steps.*) What did you say?

JENNIE. (*Swallowing.*) We're not open yet. Nine

o'clock. I'm awfully sorry but you'll have to come back later.

MISS SNYDER. (*Hesitantly.*) Oh, that's all right, young lady. My name's Snyder—Miss Snyder. And you're—?

JENNIE. (*Rising.*) Jenifer Mathews.

MISS SNYDER. The Curator's daughter?

JENNIE. Yes. How did you know?

MISS SNYDER. (*Crossing to Center.*) Oh, I met Mr. Mathews yesterday when I toured through the Headquarters. My? He certainly knows a lot about George Washington, doesn't he?

JENNIE. He knows more about George Washington than most of us want to know.

MISS SNYDER. (*Turning to her.*) I thought maybe you could help me—

JENNIE. I'm awfully sorry but at nine o'clock my father will be glad to—

MISS SNYDER. Oh, no need to bother him, my dear. You look like an intelligent girl. I'm sure you can help me.

JENNIE. (*Beaming.*) I can try.

MISS SNYDER. You see, I'm a school teacher—at a boys' private school.

JENNIE. All boys? That must be terrible.

MISS SNYDER. Wait a few years and you won't think boys are so bad. (*Coming in to her at Right.*) We're putting on a play, my dear. About George Washington. I need a dress for the boy who's going to play Mrs. Washington.

JENNIE. A boy's going to play Martha Washington?

MISS SNYDER. It's a boys' school, remember? Anyway, I thought maybe you could find a costume around here for me. You must have old things stored away. Of course my boys are rather large. The costume would have to fit a big boy.

JENNIE. How big?

MISS SNYDER. About the size of your father. Per-

haps you could get your father to try it on to make sure it fits.

JENNIE. Well, I don't know...

MISS SNYDER. (*Taking money from her bag.*) Here's five dollars for your trouble. I'll add another five to it when I get the costume.

JENNIE. Ten dollars!

MISS SNYDER. I'm sure you can use ten dollars.

JENNIE. (*Taking the money.*) Can I! If I give it to my brother to help buy his convertible, he'll let me ride in it!

MISS SNYDER. Well, don't forget now—a nice costume and make sure it fits your father. (*Slowly.*) If it's a good fit, I might even give you an extra ten. About eleven o'clock this morning might be a good time to try it on him.

(*Miss Snyder exits quickly at Right.*)

JENNIE. (*Starting after her a few steps.*) About eleven—But why—? (*Pauses and strugs.*) Oh, boy! Maybe twenty bucks!

(*She grabs her fruit then, dashing Left, bumps into Gladys as that lady enters at Left.*)

GLADYS. Jennie!

JENNIE. Oops! You almost made fruit salad out of my stuff!

GLADYS. Where are you going?

JENNIE. Just around. I'm busy.

GLADYS. Jennie, don't you dare do anything you shouldn't. This visit from Nathaniel W. White is very important.

JENNIE. (*Squirming.*) I know, Mom. I'll be okay. (*Jennie exits at Left. Mary enters Up Left.*)

GLADYS. (*Moving up behind counter Left to fix things on counter.*) Oh, Mary—is everything cleaned? It's almost nine o'clock.

MARY. (*Sullenly.*) Yes, Ma'am. George Washington could step into that place right now and find it liveable.

GLADYS. Good. That's the illusion we want to give the

tourists. That he just stepped out for a few minutes and will be right back.

MARY. It's been a long few minutes since he stepped out of that house.

GLADYS. I know. *(Suddenly snapping her fingers.)* I nearly forgot! We ought to make more hand-dipped candles, Mary. They're —

MARY. *(Coming down in front of counter.)* I want to go home.

GLADYS. What?

MARY. I want to go home. I don't want to be here today!

GLADYS. But, Mary! This is a very important day. Nathaniel W. White and his wife are coming. My husband told you who he is. It means a lot to us to have everything go just right and have everybody working hard around the place . . .

MARY. I don't want to be here today!  
*(Mary hurries Right and exits.)*

GLADYS. *(Staring after her.)* Well, for goodness sakes!  
*(Jack Fisher enters at Right as Mary breezes past.)*

JACK. Mary — *(She doesn't answer, just elbows through.)* Hi, Mrs. Mathews! Say . . . What's wrong with Mary?

GLADYS. I don't know, Jack. I never saw anyone act so strangely.

JACK. *(Coming Center.)* Maybe she's upset about Mr. White's visit.

GLADYS. I guess that must be it.

JACK. I'm not happy about it myself. I always did hate to have somebody looking over my shoulder while I work. Makes me feel like a bug under a microscope.

GLADYS. *(Laughing.)* What an idea! *(Goes Up Right and pulls the drapes across the alcove.)* Be sure you do a good job today.

JACK. *(Saluting snappily.)* Yes, Ma'am!

GLADYS. And just at the end of the tour, swish back

these drapes and give them a glimpse of the only piece of furniture that has survived from George Washington's boyhood home.

JACK. *(Going up to her.)* I'll be very dramatic about it. GLADYS. I'm sure you will. Anybody on the grounds yet?

JACK. Yes. Quite a few for so early. Even that — What's her name? — that strange old lady who's always taking notes about everything?

GLADYS. *(Moving down behind counter again to continue her work.)* Oh, you mean Miss Libbet? She says she's going to write a book about George Washington's stay here.

JACK. *(Moving Down Center.)* She just might do it someday.

GLADYS. That'll be the day.

*(Lyndon enters at Left.)*

LYNDON. *(Rubbing his hands together.)* Good morning, Jack. All set to go?

JACK. Whenever you give the word.

LYNDON. *(Straightening chairs behind counter and furtively looking about.)* Be sure everything goes smoothly today! Mr. —

JACK. I know. Mr. White's visit. Please don't worry so, Mr. Mathews. We've all been working like dogs for a whole week to get ready for his visit. It'll go all right.

GLADYS. *(Pushing him into chair behind counter.)* Yes, calm down, Lyndon! You're getting yourself into a nervous state with all your worrying! Even seeing things.

JACK. Seeing things?

GLADYS. Ghosts.

JACK. *(Laughing.)* You're kidding!

*(Miss Libbet enters at Right.)*

MISS LIBBET. Good morning! Good morning! Good morning! What a glorious day to commune with the past! It was on just such a morning that our beloved

George Washington walked across those fields, knee deep in daisies . . .

JACK. (*Sitting on bench.*) Beg your pardon, Miss Lilibet. But he was probably knee deep in snow. It was wintertime when he was here, you know.

MISS LILIBET. (*Pansing at Right Center to make a note.*) Oh, so it was! How silly of me. I just get carried away with it all! But he must have been some place in the summertime. I can just picture him on such a day! Knee deep in daisies!

(*Rodney enters at Left, closely followed by Nancy.*)

RODNEY. I tell you I'm busy this morning, Nancy! I've got to see a man about a car.

NANCY. I'll go with you.

RODNEY. No!

NANCY. (*Grabbing his arm and holding it.*) You're just being coy!

RODNEY. Lemme go!

NANCY. I never saw a college man who was so shy!

RODNEY. I'm not shy!

NANCY. Besides, I just love to look at cars.

RODNEY. I tell you, Nancy, I'm just too busy—

(*They have crossed Right by this time and exit there.*)

MISS LILIBET. (*Beaming; she's been taking all this in.*) Ah, young love! I must put a pair of young lovers in my book. Aren't they sweet?

GLADYS. Well . . . You know, I have the strangest feeling that Rodney isn't too anxious to date Nancy Talbot.

LYNDON. Now, whatever gave you that idea?

MISS LILIBET. (*Moving up to bench.*) When are we taking the first tour, Mr. Fisher?

JACK. (*Glancing at his wristwatch and rising.*) In just about two minutes.

MISS LILIBET. (*Hurrying to the counter.*) Then I'll get my ticket. It's a quarter, isn't it?

GLADYS. (*Taking her money at counter.*) Why, Miss

Lilibet, are you going through again? You must have taken this tour at least thirty times!

MISS LILIBET. Thirty-five. But I need to know my subject thoroughly if I'm going to write about it, Mrs. Mathews. Did I tell you any of the old ghost legends about the place I uncovered in my research?

LYNDON. (*Sitting up.*) What?

JACK. (*Who has moved Right by this time and is speaking out the door.*) Right this way, folks! Tour through Washington's Headquarters starts in one minute!

(*A number of tourists enter at Right. They go to the counter at Left where Gladys takes their money. Miss Lilibet moves below counter; Jack goes Up Center. Abruptly the door Left opens and Bugs and Becky dash on stage. They each wear a football helmet and Becky carries a football.*)

BUGS. Tackle!

(*They rush to Center where they make a show of heaving the football with all sorts of feints and scurrying about. The tourists stare.*)

LYNDON. (*Rising.*) Becky! Bugs Rafferty, what are you doing?

(*Becky and Bugs rush Right and exit.*)

JACK. Looked to me as if they were playing football.

LYNDON. Football! Becky's never played football in her life! Why does she have to start now?

GLADYS. Oh, you know the phrases these young people go through.

LYNDON. Now, don't start with the child psychology! Gladys, she can't—

GLADYS. All right, Lyn. I'll tell her to have a more quiet phase today. You take care of these people.

(*Gladys crosses and exits Right after the girls, Lyndon takes her place taking the tourists' money.*)

WOMAN TOURIST. (*Looking at counter.*) Oh, what cute souvenirs!

MISS LILIBET. (*Below counter, Down Left.*) Yes,

aren't they? You know what you should get, Mr. Mathews? Souvenirs in the shape of a ghost . . . to represent the ghost of that Continental soldier who's supposed to haunt this valley —

LYNDON. Please, Miss Libbet!

JACK. (*Moving slightly to the Left.*) Right this way, folks! Tour beginning! (*They crowd around him; Miss Libbet joins the group.*) Washington made his headquarters here during the terrible winter of 1779-1780. The Revolution was at its lowest ebb. Many of you probably think of Valley Forge as our worst period. However, by '79-'80 spirits were lower, the Revolution had dragged on until nearly everybody was sick of it —

(*Jack is still talking as he and the tourists exit Up Left. Jennie enters at Left.*)

JENNIE. Hey, Pop!

LYNDON. Yes, Jennie?

JENNIE. You know that old trunk of clothes in the basement? May I have something out of it?

LYNDON. Certainly. The stuff in there is no good to anybody.

JENNIE. (*Turning to go.*) Okay.

LYNDON. Jennie, what are you doing?

JENNIE. Nothing.

LYNDON. You must be doing something. Please Jennie — for your poor old father — don't get into mischief.

JENNIE. I'm not. I'm working — earning money.

LYNDON. Oh. Well, that's good. Your sister's been playing football.

JENNIE. Becky?

LYNDON. What do you mean — Becky? Of course Becky! That's who your sister is, isn't she?

JENNIE. I know. But I didn't know she played football.

LYNDON. (*Shouting.*) Everybody does everything because Mr. Nathaniel W. White's coming today!

JENNIE. Now calm down, Pop.

LYNDON. (*Shouting.*) I am calm!

JENNIE. What time's he coming?

LYNDON. About eleven.

JENNIE. Eleven! Why, that's what time she told me to — That's a coincidence.

LYNDON. What?

JENNIE. Never mind. I'd better do it earlier.

LYNDON. Do what earlier? Jennie!

(*But she has already made her exit at Left. Gladys and Becky enter at Right.*)

GLADYS. I sent Bugs Rafferty home. And Becky's promised to stop playing football.

BECKY. (*Storming Left.*) Nobody wants me to be interesting! You want to keep me dull!

(*Becky exits at Left.*)

LYNDON. What's she talking about?

GLADYS. Some idea Rodney gave her. (*Moving Left.*) I'd better do the breakfast dishes before Mr. White comes. That kitchen's a mess what with everybody eating at different times.

LYNDON. Gladys . . .

GLADYS. (*Pausing near front of counter.*) Yes?

LYNDON. (*Glancing nervously at the alcove.*) Those drapes being closed make me nervous.

GLADYS. (*Starting Left again.*) I'll warm up the coffee.

LYNDON. I don't want coffee! I think I'll open the drapes.

GLADYS. (*Turning below counter.*) But we never have the drapes open! Jack always opens them with a flourish at the end of the tour to show the people George Washington's chair.

LYNDON. But suppose he'd open them with a flourish and that ghost would be sitting there! On the day of Nathaniel W. White's visit too! The Department of the Interior would never forgive me!

GLADYS. (*Disgusted.*) Oh, Lyndon! Are you back on that subject again?

LYNDON. I never really got off of it. What do you think?

GLADYS. I think you've been working too hard lately.

LYNDON. No! I mean about opening the drapes!

GLADYS. I think the whole thing's ridiculous! Suit yourself. I'm going to do the dishes.  
(*Gladys exits Left.*)

LYNDON. Gladys — (*Talking to himself.*) Even if it is just a light reflection of some sort that would be horrible for Jack to sweep open the drapes and — (*Moving Up Right to the alcove.*) I can just see those tourists' faces if they were to see the ghost! (*He pulls aside the drapes and the Ghost is sitting there with the blue spot upon him. Stage lights dim as long as drapes are open. Lyndon gives an involuntary yell, staring at the Ghost.*)

LYNDON. (*As the Ghost sits there quietly staring back at him.*) Oh, Oh-Oh! Gladys! (*Rushing to Center, then rushing back to the alcove again.*) Don't go 'way! Ghost — or whatever you are — just stay there! (*Sweeping drapes closed; stage lights up.*) I'll be right back! Gladys! Gladys!  
(*Lyndon exits at Left. As soon as he has gone, Jack Fisher enters Up Left followed by the tourists and Miss Lilbet.*)

JACK. (*Talking as he moves Up Right near alcove. Tourists group in front of the alcove.*) Washington's headquarters here in New Jersey was only thirty miles from the enemy lines on Manhattan and Staten Islands. The British, as you know, were strongly entrenched in New York until the close of the war. And now we come to something very fascinating and interesting. Something unusual and different from anything you have ever seen. It is indeed almost beyond belief that we have such a thing with us!  
(*Lyndon and Gladys enter at Left.*)

JACK. The only authentic piece of furniture from George Washington's boyhood home!

LYNDON. No! Jack! Wait!

(*But it is too late. With a flourish, Jack sweeps aside the drapes to reveal George Washington's chair. No ghost. Lyndon stops at Center stage and just stares. The tourists crowd around the alcove with exclamations of pleasure and interest. Gladys stands behind the counter at Left, arms folded, glaring at Lyndon. The door Left bursts open and Jennie rushes in, carrying an outrageous, voluminous evening gown of some sort with a tie belt.*)

JENNIE. Here, Pop! Try this on for me!

LYNDON. (*Dazed.*) What?

JENNIE. (*Going to him.*) Just for a second.

LYNDON. Have you taken leave of your senses? I wouldn't think of —  
(*Becky enters at Left with a fishing pole.*)

BECKY. I'm going to be interesting despite everybody and everything!

LYNDON. Rebecca! What on earth —? Jennie!  
(*Jennie holds the dress in front of him and ties it around his waist so that he appears to be wearing it.*)

JENNIE. Just for one second, Pop!  
(*Becky opens the door Right and casts — throwing the fishing line off stage Right. A howl is heard Off Right.*)

BECKY. I caught something!

LYNDON. (*Nearly beside himself; all this has been happening fast.*) Rebecca! Give me that pole! Now!  
(*Lyndon shoves Jennie aside; he is now wearing the dress — or rather it is tied on him. He grabs the pole and starts winding it in.*) Now I've had enough from you two! We'll put the pole away and — (*The line has been fastened to the seat of Nathaniel W. White's pants. That distinguished gentleman now appears at the door Right — literally being dragged in by the seat of his pants. Mrs. White follows him. Lyndon drops the fishing pole and rushes forward.*) I'm

terribly sorry, sir! Here, let me help you. *(Seeing Mr. White's face.)* Nathaniel W. White!

GLADYS. What!

BECKY. Oh-oh.

JENNIE. Oh-oh is right!

*(They turn and rush Left.)*

LYNDON. Come back here, you two! Mr. White, I'm — I can explain everything! We were just — Well, first thing this morning I saw a ghost and — Ohhhhh! *(Realizing explanation is impossible, Lyndon turns to rush Left too. The girls bump into each other trying to get out door Left.)*

WHITE. *(Shouting.)* Mathews!

LYNDON. *(Tripping over the skirt, he falls flat, then rises to his hands and knees.)* Yes, sir?

WHITE. Mathews, have you taken leave of your senses? What in the world are you doing here?

LYNDON. Me? Nothing at all, sir. I was just leaving.

MISS LILIBET. *(Taking notes like mad.)* How delightful! We never had a tour like this before!

*(Lyndon crawls Left on his hands and knees, very fast and heading for the exit. Mr. White can't resist the temptation. He takes careful aim with his foot and is about to plant a kick where it will do the most good. The tourists are grouped Up Right, watching everything with dismay. Gladys, shocked and horrified, has her hands in front of her face. Jennie and Becky are hunched together trying to get out the door Left. Mrs. White is bent over trying to take out the fish hook. They freeze in these positions, very abruptly, forming a tableau. This is held for a few moments after which there is a*

QUICK CURTAIN