And the Fullness Thereof

By Annabelle Irwin

© Copyright 1963, Pioneer Drama Service, Inc.

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that a royalty must be paid for every performance, whether or not admission is charged. All inquiries regarding rights should be addressed to Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., PO Box 4267, Englewood, CO 80155.

All rights to this play—including but not limited to amateur, professional, radio broadcast, television, motion picture, public reading and translation into foreign languages—are controlled by Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., without whose permission no performance, reading or presentation of any kind in whole or in part may be given.

These rights are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and of all countries covered by the Universal Copyright Convention or with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, including Canada, Mexico, Australia and all nations of the United Kingdom.

COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.

On all programs, printing and advertising, the following information must appear:

1. The full name of the play
2. The full name of the playwright(s)
3. The following notice: “Produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., Englewood, Colorado”
CHARACTERS

ELLY .......... An unmarried daughter, living with Mother
MARGE............. The married daughter, living next door
MOTHER......................... A lady of 77 years
ELVIRA NELSON............ An income tax investigator

SETTING

A living room. A fireplace dominates the left with a
comfortable couch extending at a right angle from it. DL
is a telephone stand and chair. UL a large buffet covers
the back wall. The right of the stage is dominated by a
large square table in matching design to the buffet. A
door, the front door, is seen at center back. Windows fill
the side right and back right. It is the home of a "well-
fixed" middle class family.

TIME

The Present

(AS THE CURTAIN RISES, ELLY IS TALKING ON THE TELEPHONE,
DL. WHILE SHE TALKS, MOTHER MAKES SEVERAL TRIPS INTO THE
ROOM FROM THE KITCHEN WITH PLATES OF COOKIES AND FINALLY
AN ELECTRIC PERCOLATOR. SHE PLUGS IN THE COFFEE POT WHERE
IT CONTINUES TO PERK THROUGHOUT THE ACTION.)

ELLY: (ON PHONE) I know, Marge. But what can we do? Oh,
it's not that I'm ashamed. After all, it happens to
a lot of people. (PAUSE) I know. Nervous? A
little. Aren't you? But I'd feel better if you'd
just run over if you could? Just a few minutes. I
suppose Bill will be busy at the office all morning?
(PAUSE) Yes. Sure would help if he could be here,
though. Well, all right then. Yes. I'll do the
best I can. Hurry over. Bye. (TURNING TO MOTHER)
Marge is going to run over for a few minutes. Soon
as she finishes her dishes.

MOTHER: (SHE IS NOW RUMMAGING IN THE BUFFET, BRINGING OUT
FILES, PAPERS, ACCOUNT BOOKS.) That's right thought-
full of her, but she really didn't have to bother. It's not a major crisis, you know.

ELLY: But you know me, Mother. I'm no help when it comes to arithmetic and bookkeeping. Bill's the one that should be here. Can you find everything?

MOTHER: Oh, I think so. I've kept every record for the last 50 years in this old buffet.

ELLY: (LAUGHING) I hope he won't have to go back that far! (SUDDENLY SERIOUS) Or will he? (ALARMED) Oh, Mother!

MOTHER: (CONSOLINGLY) I don't suspect so. Takes a lot of numbers to fill up 50 years of livin'. I don't imagine he'd relish going back over 50 years with me. Not that I'd mind. (ARCHLY) Packed in some pretty good times in those last 50 years.

ELLY: (THOUGHTFULLY) Mother? Are you sure that everything's a....a.....well....above board?

MOTHER: (MIFFED AT THE INSINUATION) Above board? Why, Elly!

ELLY: I didn't mean it just that way. I just mean...it's possible, you know, that you could have made a mistake.

MOTHER: Elly, I've kept books for years. From the time your father and I started that first little grocery store on Blossom Street. I was never off more'n a penny. And if I was, I worked until I found it. No, Elly, there's no mistake in my bookkeeping.

ELLY: Times have changed, Mother. There's a new law every-time you turn around. Maybe there's something you've missed. Something you didn't even know about. It's possible. Some new regulation. You know, ignorance of the law is no excuse.

MOTHER: Don't fret so, Elly. There's nothing wrong, believe me. I've never cheated a soul out of a penny to my knowledge, so I wouldn't be about to start now, would I?
ELLY: Of course not. I'm just jittery about having him come here. And that letter--sounded like a police summons.

MOTHER: Just a form letter, Elly. He probably says the same thing to all his clients.

ELLY: Sounded awfully high-handed to me.

MOTHER: It'll turn out all right, Elly dear. I've nothing to hide.

ELLY: (SEEING THE CAKES AND SANDWICHES FOR THE FIRST TIME) What's all this? Sandwiches, cakes?

MOTHER: I thought he might be hungry.

ELLY: A tax investigator hungry? You bet your life they're hungry! Vultures! That's what they are. Spying around, scaring law abiding citizens out of a day's work. Forcing themselves upon your hospitality. Where's all that about the sanctity of the home?

MOTHER: Don't carry on, Elly. He'll probably be a little bashful, insignificant man. Probably dreads comin' as much as we dread havin' him. A little coffee and a bite to eat'll take the edge off the morning.

ELLY: You might have something there. If you can't beat 'em, feed 'em.

MOTHER: Never saw a man you couldn't win over by givin' him something to fill his gullet.

ELLY: Say stomach, Mother. "Gullet" sounds so...so earthy.

(MARGE ENTERS WITHOUT KNOCKING)

MARGE: Hi, everybody. Morning, Mommy. You're looking chipper this morning.

MOTHER: Feelin' chipper, Margie girl.

MARGE: (SEEING THE ACCOUNT BOOKS AND FILES) I see you're all ready for the tax invasion.
ELLY: (BRISTLING) Marge, that's not very funny! Mother has not been charged with tax evasion!

MARGE: I was just punning. Tax invasion---tax evasion.

ELLY: (TESTILY) We got it, dear sister. You don't have to explain your humor.

MARGE: Boy! Is everybody cagey today! Elly, you look like a criminal being led to the guillotine.

ELLY: Oh, be serious, Marge.

MARGE: Good gracious! Does it take all this?

MOTHER: You never know. The letter just said the investigator was to be here at ten to confer with me on my income tax return.

ELLY: Confer! It sounds harmless enough. (ASIDE TO MARGE) What's the penalty for false income tax returns?

MARGE: (LIGHTLY) I don't know. Boiled in hot oil, I suppose, or ten years at hard labor. Maybe just making you explain your own return is punishment enough.

MOTHER: Oh, go on with you two! And quit fussin' around. It's nothing to get excited about. A man is just coming to talk about my income tax. That's all. Maybe he likes the way I fill mine out.

ELLY: Or the way you sign your name on the check.

MARGE: But seriously, Elly. I've heard they have to investigate so many forms, and maybe he just pulled Mommy's out of the pile. (SPIES THE CAKES AND SANDWICHES) Well, you're really going to entertain him. Coffee and sandwiches...(THE PHONE RINGS)

ELLY: (GRABBING THE PHONE) I'll get it. (ON PHONE) Hello? Oh, it's you, Bill. Nooo. He's not here yet. Yes...yes...You'll be at the office all morning then. Yes, I understand. Yes. Don't let her sign anything. I got it. We'll call when we need you. And keep your fingers crossed. Thanks. Bye. (TURNS TO THE OTHER TWO) Just Bill. Checking in.
He says if we get into any trouble, to be sure and call him at the office. And, Mother, you're not to sign anything until he's looked it over.

MOTHER: Bill's as bad as you two. Now, girls, there's nothing to stew about. There's nothing wrong with my income tax report, and there's nothing wrong with my bookkeeping.

ELLY: I think I hear a car. (PEEKS THROUGH THE CURTAINS) It's stopping.

MARGE: Don't get flustered now, Mom.

MOTHER: Flustered? Who's flustered? If you two could see yourselves...

ELLY: (NERVOUSLY) You answer the door, Mother. Marge. Come over here by me. By the phone. We may have to use it.

MARGE: I feel as if I'm going on stage with the first night jitters. Stage all set? Ready? Curtain!

ELLY: It may be curtains for all of us if Mother's income tax doesn't hold up. This is serious, Marge. I don't know why you're kidding about it all the time.

MARGE: Kidding or not... here he comes.

(FOOTSTEPS ARE HEARD COMING UP TO THE DOOR)

ELLY: Oh, I wish it were over! (DOORBELL RINGS) Answer it, Mother.

(THE DAUGHTERS ASSUME STILTED POSES OF EXPECTANCY. MOTHER CROSSES TO THE DOOR)

MOTHER: Why... a... a... hello.

ELVIRA: (STEPPING IN) Mrs. Henry Groves? (BRUSQUELY)

MOTHER. Yes.

ELVIRA: I'm Elvira Nelson from the Internal Revenue Office. You received our letter, you know.
MOTHER: (A BIT TAKEN BACK) Oooh, Well, do come in. I guess we were expecting you.

ELVIRA: I suppose you thought I'd be a man. They usually are---

MOTHER: Yes, we really were.

ELVIRA: I'm used to it. However, I feel that taxes concern women just as much as they do men nowadays.

MOTHER: Here, girl. I'll take your coat. These are my daughters; Elly--she lives with me here. And Marge, Mrs. Bill Fenter. She lives just next door.

ELVIRA: How do you do. (PICKING UP BRIEFCASE BUSINESSLIKE) Now---where do you want me to work, Mrs. Groves?

MOTHER: Why don't you just sit there on the couch. I thought maybe you'd like a cup of coffee before we begin?

ELVIRA: (SURPRISED) Well...I...I didn't really expect that. But I could sure use a cup. I've had a long drive.

MOTHER: You didn't drive up from the city this morning, did you?

ELVIRA: (ACCEPTING THE COFFEE) Oh, yes.

MOTHER: And I'll bet you didn't eat any breakfast either. (PASSING HER THE PLATE OF SANDWICHES) Here, have a sandwich. They're small.

ELVIRA: I hardly had time for breakfast. Oh, these do look delicious. (TAKING A SANDWICH AND MUNCHING IT HUNGRILY)

MOTHER: All that way on an empty stomach!

ELVIRA: My schedule doesn't allow me much time for breakfast when I'm out on the road. My, this does hit the spot.
MOTHER: You modern girls! No breakfast. Breakfast's the most important meal of the day. My mother used to cook us children the biggest breakfasts you ever saw; fried potatoes, bacon and eggs, toast and jam and...

(THE DAUGHTERS SHAKE THEIR HEADS IN DISAPPROVAL AT MOTHER)

ELVIRA: I guess breakfasts have degenerated along with a few other good old fashioned virtues like honesty and fair play. But then if everyone were honest, I'd be out of a job.

MOTHER: Here. Try a cookie. (PASSING HER THE COOKIES)

ELVIRA: (HESITATINGLY) Well, just one. (TAking A BITE) Ummmm. What kind are these?

MOTHER: Just oatmeal cookies.

ELVIRA: They taste like the kind my mother used to bake for our dinner pails. What do you put in them? I haven't tasted anything like this for years.

MOTHER: Just the usual. Flour, oatmeal, and butter. Butter, dear. That's what gives them the flavor. None of that oley stuff. It's a real easy recipe.

ELVIRA: But the texture. They just melt in your mouth. (TAking ANOTHER COOKIE)

MOTHER: I can give you the recipe, if you want to try them. I've got it right here. (CROSSES TO THE BUFFET) You know, the secret is in the way you blend the sugar and butter. You have to blend them together with a fork and let it stand. To sort of have them get used to each other before you dump the rest in. I call it getting compatible. Then you take a country fresh egg.... ( THE PHONE RINGS. MARGE ANSWERS IT, BUT MOTHER CONTINUES READING OFF THE RECIPE ALL DURING THE PHONE CONVERSATION)

MARGE: (ON PHONE) Hello. Oh, Bill. Yes (LOOKING SIGNIFICANTLY AT ELVIRA) No, No, not yet. No. Mom

End of Script Sample.
Hand Properties:
- Electric Coffee Pot
- Plate of Cookies and Sandwiches
- Assorted File Cases
- Account Books
- Brief Case
- Official looking Folders
- Horn-rimmed Glasses

Stage Properties:
- Modern Dining Room
  - table and 3 chairs.
- Matching Buffet
- Sectional Couch
- Tea Table
- Telephone Table
- Matching Chair
- Telephone
- Occasional chairs
- Lamps
- Matching Drapes for
  - picture window R
  - and windows at
    - UL and DL

Stage Setting:

© Copyright 1963, Pioneer Drama Service, Inc.

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that a royalty must be paid for every performance, whether or not admission is charged. All inquiries regarding rights should be addressed to Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., PO Box 4267, Englewood, CO 80155.

All rights to this play—including but not limited to amateur, professional, radio broadcast, television, motion picture, public reading and translation into foreign languages—are controlled by Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., without whose permission no performance, reading or presentation of any kind in whole or in part may be given.

These rights are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and of all countries covered by the Universal Copyright Convention or with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, including Canada, Mexico, Australia and all nations of the United Kingdom.

COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.

On all programs, printing and advertising, the following information must appear:

1. The full name of the play
2. The full name of the playwright(s)
3. The following notice: “Produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., Englewood, Colorado”
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

We encourage you to read the entire script before making your final decision.

You may order a paper preview copy or gain instant access to the complete script online through our E-view program. We invite you to learn more and create an account at www.pioneerdrama.com/E-view.

Thank you for your interest in our plays and musicals. If you’d like advice on other plays or musicals to read, our customer service representatives are happy to assist you when you call 800.333.7262 during normal business hours.

www.pioneerdrama.com
800.333.7262
Outside of North America 303.779.4035
Fax 303.779.4315
PO Box 4267
Englewood, CO 80155-4267

We’re here to help!