

ANNOUNCER

Once again we bring you the romance of Helen Trent. Who sets out to prove for herself what so many women long to prove. That because a woman is thirty-five or more, romance in life need not be over. That romance can live at thirty-five, ...and after.

(The "HELEN TRENT" theme is played)

MISS HANNIGAN

Oh, merciful God, I hope so.

(Lt. Ward knocks at the door. Hannigan responds to door knock then turns off radio)

Yeah.

OFFICER WARD

(Entering room from door)

Good afternoon, Miss Hannigan is it?

MISS HANNIGAN

Yeah.

OFFICER WARD

I'm Lt. Ward, 17th Precinct. We found your runaway.

(Calling out the door)

You!

OPRHANS

Annie! Annie!

MISS HANNIGAN

(Seductively)

Oh, thank you, so much Officer. Children, children, guess what?

ORPHANS

What?

MISS HANNIGAN

(Too nice to believe)

There's hot cocoa and ginger snaps for you in the Recreation room.

ORPHANS

What recreation room?

MISS HANNIGAN

Shoo-shoo-shoo! Shoo!

(ANNIE tries to run off with all the ORPHANS, but HANNIGAN grabs her)

MISS HANNIGAN

Thanks so much, Officer.

OFFICER WARD

She was in one of them Hoovervilles down by the docks. Had a mangy mutt with her, but he got away.

MISS HANNIGAN

Oh, poor punkin, out in the freezin' cold with just that thin sweater. I hope you didn't catch influenza. Thanks so much, Officer.

OFFICER WARD

(He can't wait to get out)

All in the line of duty.

(To ANNIE)

And you. Don't let me ever hear that you run away again. From this nice lady.

ANNIE

She's not...

(HANNIGAN closed ANNIE'S mouth with hand)

LT. WARD

Good Afternoon.

MISS HANNIGAN

Good afternoon, Officer.

(WARD exits. HANNIGAN hurls ANNIE down to the ground)

Now, I'm gonna have your head and the next time you walk out that door it'll be 1953. Well, are you glad to be back? Huh?

ANNIE

(tough)

Yes, Miss Hannigan.

MISS HANNIGAN

Liar! What's the one thing I always taught you: Never tell a lie.
Well, what's the one thing I always taught you?

ANNIE

(tough)

Never tell a lie, Miss Hannigan.

MISS HANNIGAN

(Pacing, crazily)

For what you done I could get fired. Have the Board of Orphans stickin' their nose in here. Well, you'll pay for it. I promise.

(There is a knock at the door. HANNIGAN crosses to door and turns back to ANNIE and talks to her as though she were a dog)

Stay!

(Opening door)

GRACE

(Entering)

Good afternoon, Miss Hannigan?

MISS HANNIGAN

Yeah?

GRACE

(Extends HER hand)

Oh, good. I'm Grace Farrell

MISS HANNIGAN

(looks at HER hand)

So?

GRACE

...and the New York City Board of Orphans suggested that...

MISS HANNIGAN

(Panics)

Wait! Hold it!! I can explain everything!!! It wasn't my fault. It was Annie, you see, who got into Bundles' laundry bag and ...

GRACE

Miss Hannigan, I...

MISS HANNIGAN

... and, sure, I know I should of called Mr. Donatelli instead of the cops, but I ...

GRACE

Miss Hannigan, I'm sorry, but I haven't the slightest idea what you're talking about.

MISS HANNIGAN

Wait a minute, hold it, sister, I get it.

(Referring to Grace's briefcase)

If it's beauty products you're peddling, I don't need any. Get out.

GRACE

Miss Hannigan, I am not "peddling" anything. I'm private secretary to Oliver Warbucks.

MISS HANNIGAN

(interrupting)

Oliver Warbucks? *THE* Oliver Warbucks?

GRACE

THE Oliver Warbucks.

MISS HANNIGAN

(Crosses upstage of GRACE and offers her a seat)

Love the hat!

(Sitting)

I read in Winchell's column that Oliver Warbucks is the world's richest unmarried man.

(ANNIE positions herself behind HANNIGAN, sitting on the floor, able to make eye-contact with GRACE)

neir nose

GRACE

(All business)

I wouldn't know, I don't read Mr. Winchell. Miss Hannigan, Mr. Warbucks has decided to invite an orphan to spend the Christmas holidays at his home.

MISS HANNIGAN

An orphan?

GRACE

Yes, an orphan.

MISS HANNIGAN

You sure he wouldn't rather have a lady? I got two weeks comin'.

(A long look from GRACE)

It's a joke. What sort of orphan did you have in mind?

GRACE

Well, she should be friendly.

(Unseen by Hannigan, ANNIE waves to GRACE)

And intelligent.

ANNIE

Mississippi.

Capital M-I-double S-I-double S-I-double-P-I

Mississippi.

GRACE

And cheerful.

(ANNIE laughs a big laugh)

MISS HANNIGAN

(To ANNIE)

You shut up. And how old?

GRACE

Oh, age doesn't really matter. Say, eight or nine.

(ANNIE gestures upward to indicate that SHE wants GRACE to say a higher age)

Ten.

(ANNIE gestures still higher)

(GRACE)

Eleven.

(ANNIE gestures to GRACE to stop and then points to her own hair)

Yes, eleven would be perfect. And oh, I almost forgot, Mr. Warbucks prefers red-headed children.

(ANNIE stands up, directly behind HANNIGAN)

MISS HANNIGAN

Eleven. A red-head. No, I'm afraid we don't have any orphans like that around here.

GRACE

What about this child right here?

(BOTH looking at ANNIE)

MISS HANNIGAN

(Grabbing ANNIE)

Annie? Oh, no, you wouldn't want her...

(Struggling for an excuse)

She's ... she's a drunk ... and a liar! A drunk and a liar.

(ANNIE struggles to get out from behind HANNIGAN)

GRACE

Yes. I'm sure she's a drunk and a liar. Annie. Come here. Annie, would you like to spend the next two weeks at Mr. Warbucks' house?

ANNIE

I would love to. I would REALLY love to.

MISS HANNIGAN

Hold it.

(Blows whistle. ORPHANS run on and stand looking at GRACE)

Now you can have any orphan in the Orphanage, but not Annie.

GRACE

Why?

MISS HANNIGAN

I just told you.

GRACE

(Deadly)

I assume, Miss Hannigan, that it has something to do with all that business about the laundry bag and the police. Perhaps I should call Mr. Donatelli at the Board of Orphans and...

(MISS HANNIGAN laughs)

GRACE

(Holding out an official-looking document)

Sign it.

MISS HANNIGAN

I'll sign it. I'm an easy gal to get along with.
If it's Annie you want, it's Annie you get.

GRACE

(sing-songy)

It's Annie I want.

MISS HANNIGAN

(Sing-songy as SHE signs the paper)

It's Annie you get.

ANNIE

Oh, boy!

GRACE

So, if you'll get her coat, I'll take her along right now.

MISS HANNIGAN

(Almost like a bratty little kid)

Coat? She don't have no coat.

GRACE

All right. Then we'll buy her one.

ANNIE

Oh, boy!

GRACE

We'll go to Bergdorf's and get you a warm winter coat.

ANNIE

(sing-song-y)

I'm getting a coat.

ORPHANS

(together, bratty)

She's getting a coat!

GRACE

Come along, dear. Mr. Warbucks' limousine is waiting outside.

(Crosses to door)

ANNIE

Oh boy, I can hardly believe it.

MISS HANNIGAN

SHE can hardly believe it?

10 — *Little Girls Reprise**(Miss Hannigan)*

ANNIE

Hey kids, I'm getting out for Christmas. I'll write to ya.

ORPHANS

'bye, Annie!

ANNIE

'bye, kids.

MISS HANNIGAN

'bye, Annie.

GRACE

(Sincerely)

Good afternoon, Miss Hannigan.

(Meaning it)

And season's greetings.

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Board of