

## NEW YORKER IN TONDO

(Marcelino Agana, Jr.)

SCENE: The parlor of the Mendoza house in Tondo. Front door is at right. Curtained window is at left. Left side of stage is occupied by a rattan set –sofa and two chairs flanking a table. On the right side of the stage, a cabinet radio stands against a back wall. Open door-way in center, background, leads into the rest of the house.

MRS. M: (As she walks toward the door) –Visitors, always visitors. Nothing but visitors all day long. *Naku*, I'm beginning to feel like a society matron.

(She opens door. Tony steps in, carrying a bouquet. Tony is 26, dressed to kill, and is the suave type. Right now, however, he is feeling a trifle nervous. He starts slightly on seeing Mrs. Mendoza.)

MRS. M : Tony! I thought you were in the provinces.

TONY : (Startling) –But is that you, Aling Atang?

MRS. M : ( Laughing) --- Of course. It's I, foolish boy. Who did you think it was ...Carmen Rosales?

TONY : You ...you don't look like Aling Atang.

MRS. M : (shyly touching her boyish bob) – I had my hair cut. Do I look so horrible?

TONY : Oh, no, no ... you look just wonderful, Aling Atang. For a moment I thought you were your own daughter. I thought you were Kikay.

MRS. M : (Playfully slapping his cheek) --- Oh, you are as *palikero* as ever, Tony. But come in, come in. (She moves toward the furniture and Tony follows.) Here, sit down, Tony. How is your mother?

TONY : (As he sits down, still holding the bouquet) --- Oh, poor mother is terribly homesick for Tondo, Aling Atang. She wants to come back here at once.

MRS. M : (Standing beside his chair, putting on an apron) – How long have you been away?

TONY : Only three months

MR. M : Only three months! Three months is too long for a Tondo native to be away from Tondo. *Ay*, my *kumare*, how bored she must be out there!

TONY : Well, Aling Atang, you know how it is with us engineers. We must go where our jobs call us. But as soon as I have finished with that bridge in

Bulacan, mother and I are coming back here to Tondo.

MRS. M : Yes, you must bring her back as soon as possible. We miss her whenever we play *panguingue*.

TONY : (Laughing) --- That is what she misses most of all.

MRS. M : Now I understand how she feels! Your mother could never, never become a provinciana, Tony. Once a Tondo girl, always a Tondo girl, I always say. (She pauses, struck by a thought). But I wonder if that's true after all. Look at my Kikay; she was over there in America for a whole year, and she says that she never, never felt homesick at all!

TONY : (Beginning to look nervous again) --- When ... when did she, Kikay, arrive, Aling Atang?

MRS. M : Last Monday.

TONY : I didn't know she had come back from New York until I read about it in the newspapers.

MRS. M : (Plaintively) --- That girl arrived only last Monday and look at what has happened to me! When she first saw me, she was furious; she said that I need a complete overhauling. She dragged me off to a beauty shop, and look, look what she had done to me! My hair is cut, my eyebrows are shaved, my nails are manicured, and whenever I go to market, I must use lipstick and rouge! All my *kumares* are laughing at me. People must think I have become a ... loose woman! And at my age, too! But what can I do. You know how impossible it is to argue with Kikay. And she says that I must learn how to look and act like an Americana because I have a daughter who has been to America. *Dios mio*, do I look like an American?

TONY : (Too worried to pay much attention) --- You look just wonderful, Aling Atang. And ... and where is she now?

MRS. M : (who's rather engrossed in her own troubles too) --- Who?

TONY : Kikay? Is she at home?

MRS. M : (Snorting) --- Of course she is at home. She'd still sleeping!

TONY : (Glancing at his watch) ---Still sleeping!

MRS. M : She says that in New York people do not wake up before twelve o'clock noon.

TONY : (Glancing at his watch once more) --- It's only ten o'clock now.

MRS. M : Besides, she has been very, very busy. *Uy*, the life of that girl since she came home! Welcome parties here and welcome parties there and visitors all day long. That girl has been spinning around like a top!

TONY : (Rising disconsolately) --- Well, will you just tell her I called ... to welcome her home. Oh, and will you please give her these flowers?

MRS. M : (Taking the flowers) --- But surely, you're not going yet, Tony. Why, you and she grew up together! Sit right down again, Tony. I will go and wake her up.

TONY : Oh, please don't bother, Aling Atang. I can come back some other time.

MRS. M : (Moving away) --- You wait right there, Tony. She'll be simply delighted to see her old childhood friend. And she'll want to thank you in person for these flowers. How beautiful they are, Tony.... How expensive they must be!

TONY : (Sitting down again) --- Oh, they're nothing at all, Aling Atang.

MRS. M : (Pausing, already at center doorway) --- Oh, Tony ...

TONY : Yes, Aling Atang?

MRS. M : You mustn't call me "Aling Atang."

TONY : Why not?

MRS. M : Kikay doesn't like it. She says I must tell people to call me Mrs. Mendoza. She says it's a more civilized form of address. So ... and especially in front of Kikay.... You must call me Mrs. Mendoza.

TONY : Yes, Aling ... I, mean yes, Mrs. Mendoza.

MRS. M : (Turning to go) --- Well, wait just a minute and I will call Kikay.

TONY : (To himself as he sits down) --- Hah!

MRS. M : (Turning around again) ---- Oh, and Tony ...

TONY : (Jumping up again) --- Yes, Aling ... I mean yes, Mrs. Mendoza.

MRS. M : You must not call Kikay, "Kikay."

TONY : (Blankly) --- and what shall I call her?

MRS. M : You must call her Francesca.

TONY : Francisca?

MRS. M : Not Francisca ... Fran...CES...ca.

TONY : But why Francesca?

MRS. M : She says that in New York, every body calls her Fran-CES-ca. That is how all those Americans in New York pronounce her name. And all she wants everybody here to pronounce it in the same way. She says it sounds so “chi-chi”, so Italian. Do you know that many people in New York thought she was an Italian...an Italian from California? So be sure and remember; do not call her Kikay, she hates that name ... call her Fran-CES-ca.

TONY : (Limpily, sitting down again) --- yes, Mrs. Mendoza.

MRS. M : (Turning to go again) – Now wait right here while I call Fran-CES-ca. (Somebody knocks at the front door. She turns around again.) Aie, Dios mio!

TONY : (Jumping up once again) – Never mind, Mrs. Mendoza, I’ll answer it.  
(He goes to open the door.)

MRS. M : (As she exists) --- Just tell them to wait, Tony.

(Tony opens door and Totoy steps in. Totoy is the same age as Tony and is more clearly a Tondo sheik. The one word that could possibly describe his attire is “spooting”. Both boys extend their arms out wide on beholding each other.)

TOTOY : Tony!

TONY : Totoy! (They pound each other’s bellies.)

TOTO : You old son of your father!

TONY : You big carabao, you!

TOTOY : *Mayroon ba tayo diyan?*

TONY : You ask me that ... and you look like a walking goldmine! How many depots have you been looting, huh?

TOTOY : *Hoy, hoy*, more slowly there ... It’s you the police are out looking for.

TONY : Impossible! I’m a reformed character!

TOTOY : (Arms around each other’s shoulders, they march across the room) ---  
Make way for the Tondo boys ... Bang! Bang!

TONY : (Pushing Totoy away and producing a package of cigarettes) Good to see you, old pal ... here, have a smoke.

TOTOY : (Taking a cigarette) – I thought you were in Bulacan, partner.

TONY : I am. I just came to say hello to Kikay.

TOTOY : (As they light cigarette) --- Tony, I’ve been hearing the most frightful things about that girl.

TONY : (Sinking into a chair) --- So have I.

TOTOY : (Sitting down too) --- People are saying that she has gone crazy.

TONY : No, she has only gone New York.

TOTOY : What was she doing in New York?

TONY : Oh, studying. Hair culture and beauty science. She got a diploma.

TOTOY : *Uy*, imagine that! Our dear old Kikay!

TONY : Pardon me, but she's not Kikay anymore ... she is Fran-CES-ca.

TOTOY : Fran-CES-ca?

TONY : Miss Tondo has become Miss New York. Our dear old Kikay is now an American.

TOTOY : Kikay, an American? Don't make me laugh! Why, I knew that girl when she was still selling rice cakes! (Stands up and imitates a girl puto vendor) --- *Puto kayo diyan ... bili na kayo ng puto.*

TONY : (Laughing) – Remember when we pushed her into the canal?

TOTOY : She chased us all around the streets.

TONY : *Naku*, how that girl could fight!

TOTOY : (Fondly) --- Dear old Kikay!

(Knocking at the door. Totoy goes to open it. Enter Nena. Nena is a very well possessed young lady of 24. )

NENA : Why, it's Totoy!

TOTOY : (Opening his arms) --- Nena, my own!

NENA : (Brushing him aside as she walks into the room) – and Tony too! What's all this? A Canto boy Reunion?

TOTOY : (Following behind her) – We have come to greet the lady from New York.

NENA : So have I. Is she at home?

TONY : Aling Atang is trying to wake her up.

NENA : To wake her up! Is she still dreaming?

MRS. M : (Appearing in the center doorway) – No, she’s awake already. She’s changing. Good morning, Nena. Good morning, Totoy.

(Totoy and Nena are staring speechless. Mrs. Mendoza is carrying a vase in which she has arranged Tony’s flowers. She self-consciously walks into the room and sets the vase on the table amidst the silence broken only by Totoy’s helpless wolf whistle.)

MRS. M : (Having set the vase on the table) –Well, Totoy? Well, Nena? I said good morning. Why are you staring at me like that?

NENA : Is ... is that you Aling Atang?

TOTOY : Good God, It is Aling Atang! (He collapses into a chair)

TONY : Totoy, Aling Atang now prefers to be called Mrs. Mendoza.

MRS. M : Oh, Tony ... you know it is not I but Kikay who prefers it. She was delighted with these flowers, Tony. She thanks you very much. Nena, if you don’t stop gaping at me, I’ll pinch you!

NENA : (Laughing) – How you used to pinch and pinch me, Aling Atang, when I was a little girl.

MRS. M : You were a very naughty girl, always fighting with Kikay. You were all very naughty children. (She points at Totoy) – This one, especially, always sneaking into our backyard to steal mangoes from our mango tree.

TOTOY : Do you still have the mango tree?

MRS. M : Yes, it’s still out there in our backyard.

TOTOY : (Jumping up) – Come on, Nena...let’s steal their mangoes!

MRS.M : Ah-ah, you just try! I still run as fast as ever. See if I don’t catch you again and pull your pants off!

TOTOY : (Gripping his pants) – ah, but I wear suspenders now, Mrs. Mendoza.

MRS. M : Oh, you rascal! Come with me to the kitchen.

TOTOY : Why? To pull my pants off?

MRS. M : No, idiot! I want you to help me carry something.

NENA : Aling Atang, don’t prepare anything for us. We’re not visitors. And we’re not hungry.

MRS. M : It’s only orange juice, Nena. I was preparing some for Kikay. She takes nothing else in the morning. She says that in New York nobody eats breakfast. Come along, Totoy.

(Exits Mrs. Mendoza and Totoy. Left alone, Nena and Tony are silent for a moment. Tony seated; Nena stands behind the sofa.)

NENA : Well, Tony?

TONY : You shouldn't have come today, Nena.

NENA : Oh, why not?

TONY : I haven't talked to Kikay yet.

NENA : You haven't talked to Kikay yet..! I thought you were going to come here and tell her everything last night.

TONY : I lost my nerve. I didn't come last night.

NENA : Oh, Tony, Tony!

TONY : (Irritated, imitating her tone) – Oh, Tony, Tony! Use your head, Nena. Whoever heard of a man breaking off his engagement with a girl! It's not usual! And ... my God ...it's not easy!

NENA : (Belligerently) – Are you in love with Kikay or with me?

TONY : Of course I'm in love with you. I'm engaged to you.

NENA : (Bitterly) –Yes...and you were engaged to Kikay, too!

TONY : But that was a year ago!

NENA : (Flaring up) – Oh, you wolf! (She flounces away, furious)

TONY : (Jumping up and following her) – Nena, Nena, you know I love you, only you!

NENA : (Whirling around to face him) – How could you have the nerve to propose to me when you were still engaged to Kikay?

TONY : I wish I had never told you. This is what I get for being honest!

NENA : Honest! You call yourself honest? Getting me to fall in love with you when you still belonged to Kikay?

TONY : I ... I thought I didn't belong to Kikay anymore. It was only a secret engagement anyway. I proposed to her just before she left for America and she said we must keep our engagement a secret until she came back. But when she had been there a couple of months, she stopped answering my letters. So I considered myself a free man again.

NENA : (Sarcastically) – And you proposed to me.

TONY : (Miserably) – Yes ...

NENA : And then asked me to keep our engagement a secret!

TONY : Because right afterwards, I found out that Kikay was coming back.

NENA : Well, I'm tired of being secretly engaged to you! What fun is it being engaged if you can't tell everybody!

TONY : Just give me a chance to talk to Kikay and explain everything to her. Then you and I will announce our engagement.

NENA : Well, you better hurry. I'm getting impatient.

TONY : The trouble is, how can I talk with Kikay now?

NENA : Why not?

TONY : Well you are here, and Totoy is here. You don't expect me to jilt Kikay in front of everybody, do you?

NENA : You want me and Totoy to clear out?

TONY : No...just give me a chance to be alone with Kikay for a moment.

NENA : I'll take care of Totoy.

TONY : That's good.

NENA : Just leave it to me.

(Totoy appears in the doorway with tray on his head; glasses and a pitcher are on a tray.)

TOTOY : (Sailing in) – *Puto kayo diyan, bili na kayo ng puto...!*

(Mrs. Mendoza appears in the doorway, carrying a plate of sandwiches.)

MRS. M : Listen everybody...here comes Kikay...but she prefers to be called Fran-CES-ca.

(She moves away from the doorway and Kikay appears. Kikay is garbed in a trailing gown trimmed with fur at the neck and hemline. From one hand she dangles a large silk handkerchief which she keeps waving about as she walks and talks. In the other hand, she carries a very long cigarette holder with an unlighted cigarette affixed. Kikay's manner and appearance are ...to use a Hollywood expression ..."chi-chi mad.")

KIKAY : (Having paused a long moment in the doorway, hands uplifted in surprise and delight) – Oh, hello, hello... you darling, darling people! (She glides into the



room. Everybody else is too astonished to move) Nena, my dear...but how cute you've become! (She kisses Nena) And Tony, my little pal of the valley...how are you? (She gives her hand to Tony) and Totoy...my, how ravishing you look. (She walks all around the apprehensive Totoy) goodness, you look like a Tondo super-production in Technicolor! But sit down everybody...do sit down and let me look at you. (Her three visitors sit down. She sees the tray with the glasses and pitcher on the table and throws her hands up in amused horror.) Oh, mumsy, mumsy!

MRS. M : What's the matter now?

KIKAY : How many times must I tell you, mumsy dearest, never, never serve fruit juice in water glasses!

MRS. M : I couldn't find those tall glasses you brought home.

KIKAY : (Approaching and kissing her mother) – Oh, my poor li'l mumsy...she is so clumsy, no? But never mind, dearest; don't break your heart about it. Here sit down.

MRS. M : No, I must be going to the market.

KIKAY : Oh, mumsy, don't forget my celery. (to her visitors) – I can't live without celery. I'm like a rabbit...munch, munch all day.

MRS. M : Well, if you people will excuse me...Tony, remember me to your mother. (She moves away)

KIKAY : (Gesturing make up) – and remember, mumsy...a little bloom on the lips, a little bloom on the cheeks.

MRS. M : Oh, Kikay, do I have to?

KIKAY : Again, mumsy?

MRS. M : (Already in the center doorway) – Do I have to paint this old face of mine, Fran-CES-ca?

KIKAY : (Breaking into laughter and turning towards the others) – But how dreadfully she puts it! Oh, mumsy, mumsy...what am I going to do with you?

MRS. M : (As she exits) – I give up!

KIKAY : (Still laughing) – Poor mumsy, she's quite a problem. (She waves her cigarette) Oh, does anybody have a light?

(Totoy jumps up and gives her a light.)

KIKAY : *Merci.*

TOTOY : Huh?

KIKAY : I said *merci*. That means thank you... in French.

TOTOY : (As he sits down) – *Merci!*

(Kikay poses herself on the arm of the sofa where Nena is sitting and sipping orange juice. The two boys, also sipping juice and munching sandwiches, occupying the two chairs)

NENA : Tell us about New York.

KIKAY : (Fervently) – Ah, New York, New York!

TONY : How long did you stay there?

KIKAY : (In a trance) – 10 months, 4 days, 7 hours and 21 minutes!

TOTOY : (Aside to the others) – and she's still there ... in her dreams!

KIKAY : (With emotion choking her voice) – Yes, I feel as if I were still there, as though I had never left it, as though I had lived there all my life. But I look around me (She bitterly looks around her at the three gaping visitors) and I realize that no, no I'm not there. I'm not in New York... I'm here, here!

KIKAY : (She rises abruptly and goes to window where she stands looking out) I'm home, they tell me. Home! But which is home for me? This cannot be home because my heart aches with home sickness. I feel myself to be an exile...yes, a spiritual exile. My spirit aches for its true home across the sea. Ah, New York! My own dear New York! (She is silent a moment, looking across the horizon, her arms cross over her breast. Her visitors glanced uneasily at each other.)

NENA : (To others) – I don't think we ought to be here at all, boys.

TONY : Yes, we shouldn't disturb her.

NENA : (With a languishing gesture) – And leave her alone with her memories.

TONY : (Glancing at the entranced Kikay) – Is that the girl we used to go swimming with in the mud paddies?

TOTOY : (Crossing his arms over his chest) – Ah, New York! My own dear New York!

KIKAY : (Whirling around, enraptured) – Listen...oh listen! Now, in New York, it's springtime...it's spring in New York! The daisies are just appearing in Central Park and out in Staten Island the grass is green again. (With a little fond laugh) Oh, we have a funny custom in New York...an old, old and very dear custom. When spring comes around each year, we New Yorkers, we make a sort of pilgrimage to an old tree growing down by the Battery. Oh, it's an old tree. It's been growing there ever since New York was New York. And we New Yorkers, we call it "Our Tree". Every spring we go down to say hello to it and to watch its first green leaves coming out. In a way, that tree is our symbol for New York...undying immortal, forever growing and forever green! (She laughs and

makes an apologetic gesture) But please, please forgive me! Here I am going sentimental and just mooning away over things you have no idea about. No, you can't understand this emotion I feel for our dear old tree over there in New York.

NENA : Oh, but I do, I understand perfectly! I feel that way too about "our" tree.

KIKAY : (Blankly) – About what tree?

NENA : Our mango tree, Kikay. Have you forgotten about it? Why you and I used to go climbing up there every day and gorging ourselves on green mangoes. How our stomachs ached afterwards! And then these bad boys would come and start shaking the branches until we fell down!

TOTOY : Aling Atang once caught me climbing that tree and she grabbed my pants and off they came!

NENA : And Kikay and me, we were rolling on the ground, simply hysterical with laughter. And Totoy, you kept shouting, "Give me back my pants! Give me back my pants!"

(They were all shaking with laughter except Kikay who is staring blankly at this.)

KIKAY : But wait a minute, wait a minute...what is this tree you're talking about?

NENA : Our mango tree, Kikay. The mango tree out there in your back yard.

KIKAY : (Flatly) – Oh that tree...

TONY : What's the matter, Kikay? Don't you feel the same emotion for that tree as you do for the one in New York?

KIKAY : (Tartly) – Of course not! They...they're completely different! I don't feel any emotion for this silly old mango tree. It doesn't awaken any memories for me at all!

NENA : (Rising) – Well it does...for me. And such happy, happy memories! I really must run out to the backyard and say hello to it. (Imitating Kikay's tone and manner) You know, Kikay, over here in Tondo, we have a funny custom...an old, old and very dear custom. We make a sort of pilgrimage to a silly old mango tree growing in a backyard. And for us here in Tondo, that tree is "our" tree. In a way, it is a symbol...

KIKAY : (Interrupting) – don't be silly, Nena.

TONY : Look who's talking.

KIKAY : (In amused despair) – Oh, you people can't understand at all!

TONY : Of course not. We've never been to New York.

KIKAY : (Earnestly) -- That's it exactly! Until you've been to New York, you can't, can't understand ever. Oh, believe me...not to have lived in New York is not to have lived at all! That tree of ours over there... it doesn't stand for kid stuff and childish foolishness. It stands for higher and finer things; for a more vivacious, a more streamlined, and a more daring way of life!

KIKAY : It stands for Freedom and for the Manhattan skyline and for the Copacabana and for Coney Island in summer and for Grant's Tomb on Riverside Drive and for Tuesday nights at Eddie Condons with Wild Bill Davidson working on that trumpet of his and for Saturday nights at Madison Square Garden with the crowds spilling all over the side walk and for the nickel ferry ride to Staten Island and for the St. Patrick's Day Parade down Fifth Avenue and for all (She stops, overcome with her memories) Oh, it's impossible to make you see!

TONY : I still prefer a tree that grows in Tondo.

TOTOY : I second the motion

NENA : So do I.

KIKAY : (Tolerantly, very much the woman of the world) – Oh you funny, funny children!

NENA : I really must go and say hello to our tree. You don't mind, Kikay, do you?

KIKAY : (Laughing) – Of course not, child. Do go.

NENA : Totoy, will you come with me?

TOTOY : (Fervently, as he rises) – To the ends of the earth!

NENA : (In the Kikay manner) – No darling...just out to our dear little backyard.

TOTOY : (Acting up too) – Oh , the backyard of Tondo, the barong-barongs of Maypaho, the streets of Sibakong...

NENA : (In the center doorway) – Listen, idiot, are you coming with me or not?

TOTOY : (Following her) – Anywhere, dream girl, anywhere at all!

(Exits Nena and Totoy)

KIKAY : (Sitting down on the sofa) – Apparently, our Totoy still has a most terrific crush on Nena. (Tony is silent) Do wake up, Tony... what are you looking so miserable about?

(Tony rises from his chair and sits down beside Kikay on the sofa. He is nervous and cannot speak. Kikay smilingly gazes at him.)

TONY : (Finally gathering courage) – Kikay...I don't know just how to begin.

KIKAY : Just call me Francesca... a good beginning.

TONY : There is something I must tell you...something very important.

KIKAY : Oh, Tony, can't we just forget all about it?

TONY : Forget?

KIKAY : That's the New York way, Tony. Forget. Nothing must ever be so serious, nothing must drag on too long. Tonight, give all your heart. Tomorrow forget. And when you meet again, smile, shake hands...just good sports.

TONY : What are you talking about?

KIKAY : Tony, I was only a child at that time.

TONY : When?

KIKAY : When you and I got engaged. I've changed so much since then, Tony.

TONY : That was only a year ago.

KIKAY : To me, it seems a century. So much has happened to me. I've become a completely different person in just one year. After all, what's a year, what's a person? Just relative terms. More can happen to you in just one year in New York than in all a lifetime spent anywhere else. Do you know...I feel as if I've always lived in New York. In spirit, I am and have always been a native of Manhattan. When I first arrived there, I felt I had come home at last. It's my real home. Oh, listen, last summer it was really hot...one of the hottest summers we ever had. I'd go riding on one of those double-decker buses just to cool off, and all those people from Kalamazoo and Peoria and other places like that would be wandering around the streets...sightseeing, you know...and there I would be on top of this bus looking down at them and feeling very amused at the way they gaped at the sky-scrapers and the way they gaped at the shop windows; but I'd be feeling very proud too, because it was my city they were admiring, and I'd feel rather sorry for them living out in the sticks...

TONY : Listen, I don't want to talk about New York...I want to talk about our engagement.

KIKAY : And that's what we cannot do. Tony...not anymore.

TONY : Why not?

KIKAY : Tony, you got engaged to a girl named Kikay. Well, that girl doesn't exist anymore...she's dead. The person you see before me is Francesca. Don't you see, Tony, I'm a stranger to you...we don't speak the same language...and I feel so much, much older than you. I'm a woman of the world, you are only a boy. I hate to hurt you, Tony...but surely you see that there can between us would be stark miscegenation! Imagine a New Yorker marrying a Tondo boy!

TONY : (Blazing) – Now look here...

KIKAY : (Very tolerantly) – I’m sorry if I’ve hurt you, Tony but I wanted you to realize how ridiculous it would be to think that I could still be engaged to you.

TONY : (Leaping up) – I’m not going to sit here and be insulted.

KIKAY : Hush, Tony, hush! Don’t shout, don’t lose your temper...it’s so uncivilized. People in New York don’t lose their temper. Not people of the *haute monde* anyway!

TONY : (Shouting) – What do you want me to do...smile and say thank you for slapping my face?

KIKAY : Yes, Tony, be a sport. Let’s smile and shake hands and be just friends, huh? Be brave, Tony...forget: that’s the New York way. Find another girl. There are other “goils” in the “esters”, as they say in Brooklyn. You’ll find somebody else...someone more proper for you.

TONY : (Waving his fist) – If you weren’t a woman, I’d...I’d...

KIKAY : Hold it, Tony...you must never, never hit a woman.

NENA : What’s all this?

KIKAY : Nothing...nothing at all.

TOTOY : What were you two quarrelling about?

KIKAY : We were not quarrelling. Tony and I just decided to be good friends and nothing more.

NENA : Tony, is this true?

TONY : (Shouting) –Yes!

NENA : Oh good! Now we can tell them!

KIKAY : Tell us what?

TOTOY : What’s going on here, eh?

NENA : (Taking Tony’s hand) –Tony and I are engaged.

KIKAY : (Rising) – Engaged!

TOTOY : (At the same time) – Engaged!

NENA : Yes! We’ve been secretly engaged for a month.

KIKAY : A month! (Fiercely, to Tony) – Why, you...you...

TONY : (Backing off) – I did try to tell you, Kikay...I was trying to tell you...

KIKAY : You unspeakable cad!

NENA : Hey, careful there...you're speaking to my fiancé.

KIKAY : He's not your fiancé!

NENA : Oh no? And why not, ha?

KIKAY : Because he was still engaged to me when he got engaged to you!

NENA : Well, he's not engaged to you anymore, you just said so yourself.

KIKAY : Ah, but I didn't know about all this. This treacherous business! Oh, the shame of it! Getting engaged to you when he was still engaged to me! Do I look like the kind of girl who'd let a man jilt her? (Moving towards Tony) Oh, you horrible, horrible monster!

TONY : (Backing off some more) – Now remember Kikay...it's uncivilized to lose one's temper. People in New York don't lose their temper. Not people of the *haute monde* anyway!

KIKAY : I've never felt so humiliated in all my life! You beast! I'll teach you to humiliate me!

NENA : (Blocking her way) – I told you to leave him alone. He's my fiancé.

KIKAY : And I tell you he's not! He's engaged to me until I release him ...and I haven't released him yet.

NENA : You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You're just being a dog in the manger!

KIKAY : You ought to be ashamed of yourself...stealing my man behind my back!

NENA : (Exploding) – WHAT! What did you say?

TONY : (Keeping a safe distance) – Totoy, pull them apart!

KIKAY : (To Totoy, as he approaches) – You keep out of this or I'll knock your head off!

TOTOY : *Naku, lumabas din and pagka Tondo!*

NENA : Shameless hussy!

KIKAY : Man-eater!

(They grapple and stagger. Tony and Totoy rush forward to separate them and finally succeeded but not before Kikay has socked Nena. Nena, infuriated, breaks away from

Tony...who's dragging her away. and pounces on Kikay...whom Totoy is holding. Tony came running but is too late to prevent Nena from socking Kikay. Kikay sags down in Totoy's arms. Tony pulls Nena away.)

TONY : (Furious) – How dare you sock her?

NENA : What? She hit me first!

TONY : Look what you've done to her!

( Totoy has dropped the knocked-out Kikay on a chair.)

NENA : Are you trying to defend her? You never defended me!

TONY : SHUT UP!

NENA : I hate you! I hate you!

TONY : Shut up or I'll bash your mouth off!

TOTOY : (Deserting the reviving Kikay) – Hey, don't you talk to Nena that way.

TONY : You keep out of this!

NENA : He's more of a gentleman than you are, he defends me!

TOTOY : (To Tony) – You take your hands off her!

TONY : I told you to keep out of this!

(Totoy socks Tony. Tony drops to the floor.)

NENA : (Running to Totoy) – Oh Totoy, you've saved my life.

(Meanwhile, Kikay has run to Tony's side.)

KIKAY : (Kneeling beside Tony) – Tony, Tony ... open your eyes!

TONY : (Sitting up and brushing her hands away) – Oh, get away from here.

(Kikay rises and haughtily moves away. Tony continues to sit on the floor, in the attitude of Rodin's "Thinker".)

NENA : Totoy, take me away from here!

TOTOY : (Pointing to Tony) – Are you still engaged to him?

NENA : I hate him! I never want to see him again in my life!

TOTOY : Good! Come on, let's go.



(He takes her arm and propels her to the door.)

TONY : (As they pass him) – Hey!

NENA : (Pausing) – Don't you speak to me, you brute!

TONY : (Still sitting on the floor) – I wasn't talking to you.

TOTOY : Don't you speak to me either! You have insulted the woman I love!

NENA : (Beaming up at him) – Oh Totoy, why have you never told me?

TOTOY : (Shyly) – Well...now you know...

TONY : (Still on the floor) – Congratulations!

NENA : (Coldly) – Let's go darling...I don't like the smell around here.

(Exit Nena and Totoy. Tony rises and dusts himself. Kikay is on the floor on the other side of the room, her haughty back to him.)

TONY : Now you've ruined my life. I hope you're satisfied.

KIKAY : (Whirling around) – I... have ruined your life? You...have ruined mine!

TONY : (Advancing) – What you need is a good spanking.

KIKAY : (Retreating) - Don't you come near me, you...you Canto Boy!

TONY : (Stopping) - Don't worry; I wouldn't touch you with a ten foot pole.

KIKAY : And I wouldn't touch you with a 20-foot pole.

TONY : Just one year in New York and you forget your old friends!

KIKAY : Just one year that I'm in New York... and what do you do! But when we got engaged, you swore to be true, you promised to wait for me. And I believed you, I believed you! (She begins to weep) Oh, you're fickle, fickle!

TONY : What are you crying about? Be brave...forget...that's the New York way. Nothing must ever be too serious, nothing must ever drag on too long...

KIKAY : Oh Tony, I've been such a fool! I'm so sorry, Tony!

TONY : Well, I'm not! I'm glad I found out what kind of a person you are!

KIKAY : (Alarmed, approaching him) – Oh, Tony, you're wrong, you're wrong! I'm not that kind of a person at all!

TONY : Oh "person" is just a relative term, huh?

KIKAY : Yes, Tony...that was Francesca saying all those silly things. But Francesca exists no more, Tony. The girl standing before you is Kikay.

TONY : In that silly dress?

KIKAY : It's true, Tony. I'm Kikay...remember me? We used to go swimming together, when we were kids. I've come back, Tony.

TONY : If I were right, I was engaged to a girl named Kikay.

KIKAY : Yes, and you're still engaged to her, Tony.

TONY : Welcome home, Kikay! How was the trip?

KIKAY : Horrible! I couldn't wait to get back.

TONY : Liked it in New York?

KIKAY : Uh-uh. Give me Tondo anytime.

TONY : Why didn't you answer my letters?

KIKAY : (After just a wee pause) – Francesca wouldn't let me write, Tony.

TONY : That misty girl. I'm glad she's dead!

(Offstage Mrs. Mendoza is heard calling " Francesca, Francesca." Tony and Kikay listen, then burst into laughter.)

MRS. M : (Appearing in doorway) – Frances...Oh, Tony, are you still here? Francesca, don't be angry but I couldn't live without it!

TONY : (Moving towards the radio) – That was Francesca, Aling Atang, and Francesca is dead. The girl standing before you is Kikay.

MRS. M : (Dazed) – But Kikay is Francesca...

KIKAY : Oh no, Inay. I'm not Francesca...I'm Kikay.

MRS. M : (After gazing from on to the other, throwing her hands up.) – I GIVE UP!  
(Exits)

(Tony and Kikay burst into laughter. They have turned on the radio. It's playing "Again" or some such silly song.)

KIKAY : (Subsiding) – Sorry, darling. (She approaches him.) May I have this "jagging-jagging" with you, partner?

TONY : (Bowing) – Delighted, Madame. (They dance around the room as the CURTAIN FALLS.)