

## *Fourth Decade 1960-1969*

### **Harvey – Mary Chase, from Act I, Scene I with cuts (1968-69)**

*(The library of the old Dowd family mansion... The phone rings. Myrtle answers it.)*

MYRTLE: Mrs. Simmons? Mrs. Simmons is my mother, but she has guests this afternoon *(listens, then changes to a respectful tone)*. Oh! Wait just a minute *(whispers loudly toward off stage)* Psst—Mother! *(She motions several times before Veta enters, humming “I’m Called Little Buttercup.”)*

VETA: Yes, dear?

MYRTLE: It’s the Society editor of the Evening News Bee. *(Veta smooths her hair before taking the phone and speaking in a very dignified voice.)*

VETA: This is Veta Dowd Simmons. Yes, it’s a concert and tea for the members of the Founding Families’ Friday Forum started by my mother, you know, the late Marcella Penney Dowd—pioneer leader, she came here by ox-team as a child. *(listens)* Myrtle, how many would you say are here?

MYRTLE: Seventy-five. But tell her a hundred.

VETA: Seventy-five. Miss Tewksbury is the soloist.

MYRTLE: Hurry up. Miss Tewksbury is finished with her solo.

VETA: *(in phone)* And thank you. *(hangs up)* Myrtle, you must be nice to Mrs. Chauvenet. She has a grandson about your age.

MYRTLE: But what difference will that make...with Uncle Elwood?

VETA: Myrtle Mae! We agreed not to talk about that this afternoon. The point of this party is to get you to meet the parents of the most eligible young men in town.

MYRTLE: Why? We can’t have anyone here in the evening, and that’s when men come to see girls they’re courting, in the evening. The only reason we can have this party this afternoon is that Uncle Elwood is playing pinochle at the Fourth Avenue Firehouse.

VETA: But you’ve got to meet someone, Myrtle. That’s all there is to it.

MYRTLE: If I do, they say, “There’s Myrtle Mae Simmons. Her uncle is Elwood P. Dowd, the biggest screwball in town—Elwood P. Dowd, and his pal— ...Damn Uncle Elwood. And Damn Harvey!

VETA: ... You said that name! You promised you wouldn't say that name, and you said it. And you're being unkind. Even if people do call him peculiar, he's still my brother.

MRYTLE: Why can't we live like normal people?

VETA: Must I remind you again, Elwood's not living with us—we are living with him.

MRYTLE: Why did Grandmother have to leave all her property to Uncle Elwood?

VETA: Well, I suppose it was because she died in his arms. People are sentimental about things like that.

MYRTLE: You always say that, and it doesn't make any sense. She didn't make out her will *after* she died, did she?

VETA: Miss Tewkesbury's voice is fading.

MYRTLE: But not fast enough. ... (*Veta pushes Myrtle off toward the parlor, as they exit Elwood enters with the invisible Harvey. He holds the door for him and motions him a chair. The phone rings.*)

ELWOOD: (*To Harvey*) Excuse me a moment. Make yourself comfortable. (*In phone*) Hello. No, you've got the wrong number. But how are you anyway? This is Elwood P. Dowd speaking. (*Listens*) I'll do? Why, thank you dear. And what is your name, dear? (*To Harvey*) It's a Miss Elsie Greenawalt. (*In phone*) And how are you today, Miss Greenawalt? (*Listens*) Yes, that does sound like an offer too good to pass up. (*To Harvey*) Harvey, I can get the Ladies Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, and the Open Road for Boys for just pennies a day. (*In phone*) It sounds good, Miss Greenawalt. (*Listens to Harvey, who has clearly interrupted, and then speaks into the phone*) And Harvey says it sounds good to him, too. Yes, two subscriptions, please. Mail everything to this address—343 Temple Drive. And I do hope I'll have the pleasure of meeting you face to face someday. (*Listens, and then to Harvey*) So she says she'd like to meet me. (*In phone*) When? (*Listens*) When would you like to meet me? Why not right now? My sister seems to be having a few friends in, and we would consider it an honor if you would join us. The same address as the magazine subscriptions. I hope to see you in a few minutes. Goodbye, my dear. (*Hangs up*) She's coming right over... (*Veta and Myrtle re-enter.*)...

ELWOOD: (*Takes her hand and bows*) My dear Veta. What a pleasure to come home to find a beautiful woman waiting for me.

VETA: Oh, dear! Elwood...

ELWOOD: ... Veta dear, you remember Harvey.... he's a Pooka (*Smiles conspiratorially to Harvey*)... Now come along Harvey. I beg your pardon Veta, dear. (*He puts his hand gently on her arm.*)

VETA: What?

ELWOOD: You are standing in his way. *(She moves and he exits)*

MYRTLE: .... *(Looks toward parlor)* Oh God. Oh, my God! Uncle Elwood's introducing Harvey to everybody. I'm never going to be able to face those people again. I wish I were dead.

VETA: Myrtle Mae!

MYRTLE: People get run over by trucks every day. Why can't something like that happen to Uncle Elwood? ... Oh, God. Now he's talking to Reverend Halsey!

VETA: Is Harvey with him?

MYRTLE: How can I tell? How can anyone tell except Uncle Elwood?

VETA: *(Calls out)* Oh Elwood, could I see you a moment? I promise you—your uncle Elwood has disgraced us for the last time in this house. I'm going to do something I've never done before.

MYRTLE: You're no match for Uncle Elwood.

VETA: ... Elwood, I need to talk to you, it's very important... *(As Veta's back is turned toward Myrtle, Elwood suddenly appears behind her, startling her.)*

ELWOOD: Of course, Sister. ...I'm right here.

SCENE