

5

# JOHN JOANNA

*Guess Who's Coming To Dinner*

29

JOHN. Joanna almost had me believe there wouldn't be any problem. She said, "My dad? My dad is a lifelong fighting liberal who loathes race prejudice and has fought against every form of discrimination. My parents will welcome you with open arms."

*(JOANNA enters from the front door.)*

JOANNA. Hello! . . . I'm home! . . . *(Heads out to the terrace.)* What happened without me? Judy sends her love, says she wants to fly to Geneva with you and Mom for the wedding. Daddy, don't give me that face. What time's dinner?

MATT. Tillie's planning six o'clock.

JOANNA. Can we say seven?

MATT. Take that up with Tillie. I welcome the extra hour.

JOANNA. When you come to Geneva you should do a story on John and his research. You said you want to get back to writing more.

MATT. There's certainly a story to tell here but I don't know I'm the one to tell it. I need to talk with your mother. If you'll excuse me, Dr. Prentice.

*(MATT exits to CHRISTINA's office.)*

JOANNA. Judy said of course I ended up with a doctor because I never went out hunting for one. *(Beat.)* I have no idea how your conversation went.

JOHN. I believe your father would happily support the idea of a mixed couple featured on the front page of his newspaper. But when the idea appears in the flesh in his home and that flesh wants to marry his daughter, your father pulls out his editing knife.

JOANNA. Well imagine if this were a hundred years ago.

JOHN. Your father would've rounded up his friends and went looking for rope.

JOANNA. A hundred years ago I would've been considered his property, forced to get his approval to marry.

JOHN. And I would've been on the auction block. . . . I'm sorry. But we do want his blessing . . . How about we begin climbing your mountain of photo albums?

JOANNA. Haven't you had your fill of the Draytons today?

JOHN. I want to see how you looked winning the California spelling bee.

JOANNA. I proudly wore pigtails.

JOHN. What was your final word?

JOANNA. "Synecdoche." S-y-n-e-c-d-o-c-h-e. "Synecdoche."

JOHN. Like how the whole of the Drayton family is part of you.

JOANNA. And vice versa. *(Beat)* Are you worried me being home is changing my mind? Is that what's wrong? Are you scared I'll discover here I don't want to marry you?

JOHN. Not at all—

JOANNA. John, I can tell you're worried . . . Then I'll leave with you tonight. That will give your heart, your mind peace. We'll fly to New York together and I'll go with you tomorrow to Geneva. It's settled.

JOHN. But you've got things to do . . . You said there were all sorts of things—

JOANNA. My passport's in order. I'll pack what I pack, whatever I need I'll get over there. What's wrong? Are *you* having second thoughts?

JOHN. No—not about us . . .

JOANNA. You know once I make up my mind I only see ahead.

JOHN. I need to speak with your father.

JOANNA. You just did . . . What else is there to say?

*(The doorbell rings.)*

~~JOANNA. *(Sitting on the sofa, still)*~~

~~*(JOANNA answers the door. MONSIGNOR RYAN enters.)*~~

MONSIGNOR RYAN. Joey! Look at you! Something's happened . . . You left here a "Joey" and come home a "Joanna."

JOANNA. Monsignor Ryan . . . How good to see you!

MONSIGNOR RYAN. Your father left me a message at the club about a problem at home. Nothing serious I hope.

JOANNA. Monsignor Ryan, this is John Prentice. Dr. John Walter Prentice.

MONSIGNOR RYAN. Dr. Prentice . . . Oh! Now I see . . . You're the problem.

JOHN. Yes, sir. How do you do?

JOANNA. We met in Hawaii and the two of us are going to be married!