



Arts Engagement
and Education

JAY

“Don’t do it Arty...Leave him alone, Uncle Louie.”

From *Lost in Yonkers*

By Neil Simon https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Simon

Gender: Male/Male Presenting

Style: Contemporary Dramatic

Age Range: 15-17 years old

Link to Buy Script www.amazon.com

Plot Summary

Its 1942 in the Bronx and Evelyn Kurnitz has just passed away following a lengthy illness. Her husband, Eddie Kurnitz, needs to take a job as a traveling salesman to pay off the medical bills. He decides to ask his stern and straight-talking mother, (from whom he is slightly estranged) if his two early-teen sons, Jay and Arty can live with her and their Aunt Bella Kurnitz in Yonkers. She reluctantly agrees after a threat by Bella. Despite their Grandma owning and operating a candy store, Jay and Arty don't like their new living situation as they're afraid of their Grandma. They also find it difficult to relate to their crazy Aunt Bella, whose slow mental state and short attention span comes across as a childlike demeanor. There is also Bella and Eddie’s brother Louie Kurnitz, a henchman for some gangsters.

Jay and Arty have a mission to make money fast so that they can help their father and move back in together, which may entail stealing \$15,000 their grandma has hidden somewhere.

Bella's mission is to find a way to tell the family that she wants to get married to Johnny, her equally slow movie theater usher boyfriend. The two could also use \$5,000 of her mother's money to open their dream restaurant.

Louie's mission is to survive the next couple of days.

Before this Moment

Frustrated with the way his grandmother treats him and wanting to make more money, Jay tells Arty that he wants to leave with Uncle Louie (who is leaving that night). He believes that Uncle Louie is his ticket out. He says that maybe Uncle Louie can teach him a few things.

Uncle Louie enters and a desperate Jay starts to beg and plead with him saying that he won't ask any questions about what he does, he just wants to go with him. Uncle Louie continuously declines. When Jay mentions that he will even carry his black satchel, Uncle Louie gets irritated by his curiosity.

Once Artie intervenes, Jay tells him to stay out of it but Uncle Louie sort of pokes fun at him and tells him to pick up the bag.

Monologue

Don't do it Arty. . . Leave him alone, Uncle Louie. You want that bag open, do it yourself. Maybe you don't rob banks or grocery stores or little old women. You're worse than that. You're a bully. You pick on a couple of kids. Your own nephews. You make fun of my father because he cried and was afraid of Grandma. Well, everyone in Yonkers is afraid of Grandma. . . And let me tell you something about my father. At least he's doing something in this war. He's sick and he's tired but he's out there selling iron to make ships and tanks and cannons. And I'm proud of him. What are you doing? Hiding in your mother's apartment and scaring little kids and acting like Humphrey Bogart. Well, you're no Humphrey Bogart. . . And I'll tell you something else-No. that's all.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgl0UKJr8g>