

ERNIE: Ladies—will young Arthur Bartley turn off the hot-water tank? Or will he just stand there? Tune in next week for another exciting episode—

ARTHUR: Shut up! You know something, Ernie? You're getting on my nerves lately. Always making stupid cracks. You don't know how to just plain shut up. Sorry, but that's one of your faults. Maybe you don't even realize it.

ERNIE: I don't get it! Invite me over to talk about something serious—and when I get here—

ARTHUR: Sit down.

ERNIE: Nah, I think I'll go home and give your nerves a rest.

ARTHUR: I do want to talk to you.

ERNIE: Yeah?

ARTHUR: Remember what you said a couple of months ago—about that doctor?

ERNIE: What doctor?

ARTHUR: You know—the one for—girls.

ERNIE: Girls?

ARTHUR: Don't play stupid!

ERNIE: I'm not playing stupid. What doctor are you talking about?

ARTHUR: You said Clifford Truckston came to you when his girl was in—trouble.

ERNIE: Yeah—I remember.

ARTHUR: Well—I know somebody who has to get hold of that doctor.

ERNIE: Who?

ARTHUR: I can't say—I swore I wouldn't tell a soul.

ERNIE: I don't think you'd better tell me then.

ARTHUR: He's a real nice guy. He really is—A friend of the family, you know, kind of like a cousin—only he's *not* my cousin.

ERNIE: Where's he live?

ARTHUR: Hazel Park.

ERNIE: How come you never mentioned him before?

ARTHUR: I said, he's a friend of the family. I promised him and he's counting on me, Ernie. I told him all about you and—how you know everything.

ERNIE: Yeah?

ARTHUR: Yeah. I told him what a swell guy you are and—he said he'd like to meet you sometime.

ERNIE: Look, Art, I'd like to help this bird, but you don't want to get mixed up in it. I mean, hell, you could get thrown in jail so fast it'd make your teeth chatter. Abortion's a crime. It's murder!

ARTHUR: (*Grabs Ernie's left wrist and twists him around*) The hell it is! (*puts his arm around Ernie's neck*).

Always yakkin'. Always running off at the mouth. (*Pushing Ernie to his knees*)

ERNIE: Hey, let go, Art.

ARTHUR: Tell me!

ERNIE: Tell you what?

ARTHUR: The doctor! (*gets Ernie on his back, knees on his shoulders, puts his hands around Ernie's throat*).

Who is he? Where does he live?

ERNIE: You're choking me!

ARTHUR: You gonna tell?

ERNIE: Let go, you stupid sonofabitch!

ARTHUR: You're not stupid, are you Ernie! Know all the answers! Know everything! Just ask Ernie!

ERNIE: Art, you're hurting me!

ARTHUR: Tell me!

ERNIE: I can't; I was lying!

ARTHUR: (*Releases Ernie*) You were—you were lying? Why?

ERNIE: I dunno, Art. I just thought of saying it—and out it came.

ARTHUR: Yeah.

ERNIE: Don't be mad, Art. Maybe I got a big-shot complex or something. 'Cause I'm little and kinda short—

ARTHUR: Ernie, what am I going to do?

ERNIE: What're—you gonna do? I'll find out for you, Art. I swear to God may I be struck dead! Who's the girl? Never mind, you don't have to tell me. That was all true about Clifford Truckston—Only he didn't come to *me*, I just heard about it.

ARTHUR: Where, Ernie? *Where'd* you hear about it?

ERNIE: At the drugstore. You know that kid with the funny arm? Well, he knows 'cause the doctor is his uncle or something.

ARTHUR: You sure?

ERNIE: I'm not sure it's his uncle. But I can find out because that kid knows all about it.

ARTHUR: Don't tell anybody, Ernie. Swear!

ERNIE: Hell no, I won't swear. What you got a buddy for if you can't trust him?

ARTHUR: It's just—well, you're always talkin'. It could slip out.

ERNIE: Relax. How far along is she?

ARTHUR: I don't know exactly.

ERNIE: Art.

ARTHUR: Yeah?

ERNIE: I suppose you and Janet talked plenty about this.

ARTHUR: Of course we did. Ever since—we found out.

ERNIE: How's she feel about it?

ARTHUR: Just like me. She's going crazy!

ERNIE: I mean about the operation.

ARTHUR: Janet says she'll do whatever I want.

ERNIE: Sounds like she really loves you.

ARTHUR: Yeah. She does.

ERNIE: But you don't really love her, is that it?

ARTHUR: Sure I do.

ERNIE: Then why don't you get married? If you love each other?

ARTHUR: Listen, Ernie! You're the one's always talking about being realistic. Where'd we live? And what on?

ERNIE: Maybe you could move in with her dad/

ARTHUR: Nah! He's—he cries.

ERNIE: Maybe here then, with your folks.

ARTHUR: Are you out of your mind?

ERNIE: You act like your folks don't even know the facts of life.

ARTHUR: I'm not sure they do.

ERNIE: You got born, didn't you?

ARTHUR: Yeah, but—Ernie, can you picture my mom and my dad in bed together? Besides, we've thought about it. No matter where we lived—people would find out—and little kids would come and look at the house.

ERNIE: Art, I can stand around and be your stooge—Or I can be your friend and tell you what I really think. If it was me, I'd give up this abortion idea.

ARTHUR: How can we? I can't just go upstairs and tell 'em! My mom'd start to shake—when she gets upset she starts to breathe funny. And my old man just goes up in smoke! If I was to go up and just tell 'em something like this—the shock might kill 'em. Besides, Ernie, they trust me, and they're counting on me.

ERNIE: Look, I'm not trying to scare the hell out of you or anything, but—Well—like I said before—it's murder.

ARTHUR: Don't keep saying that. We didn't mean it to be a baby. It was just her and me—we didn't think—besides, it hasn't even got a heart or a name yet. It's not person, just trouble—trouble!

ERNIE: It's alive, isn't it? Listen, Art, these operations are dangerous. I mean, the doctors that do it aren't so hot sometimes. That's why they got kicked out of the profession, 'cause they weren't very ethical to start with.

ARTHUR: I don't want to talk about it! It'll turn out all right—it's got to!

ERNIE: Yeah? Say he uses a dirty knife or something and Janet got blood poisoning?

ARTHUR: Shut up!

ERNIE: Or slipped up some way and killed her, even?

ARTHUR: Will you shut up!

ERNIE: They'd blame it on you, Art; and then what'd you do? Tell 'em you did it 'cause you were scared of your old man? Scared your mother might faint or something? I think you'd better face it, Art. Maybe start off telling them you're going to get married, no matter what they say—then lead into the baby part—casually.

ARTHUR: What'll I do, Ernie? Just go up right now?

ERNIE: Sure.

ARTHUR: And just—just tell 'em!

ERNIE: Why not? You didn't kill anybody!

ARTHUR: I'm not even gonna stop to think about it!

ERNIE: Art! You're doing the right thing. You won't be sorry.