

DAILY Actor

THE DINING ROOM by A.R. Gurney

GRANDFATHER: Everyone wants to go away. Me? I went away twice. Took two vacations in my life. First vacation, took a week from work to marry your grandmother. Went to Hot Springs, Virginia. Bought this table. Second vacation: Europe. 1928. Again with your grandmother. Hated the place. Knew I would. Miserable meals. Took a trunkload of shredded wheat along. Came back when it ran out. Back to this table *(Pause)* They're all leaving us, Dora. Scattering like birds. We're small potatoes these days. This one wants to go to one of those fancy New England boarding schools. He wants to play ice hockey indoors with that crowd Long Island and Philadelphia. He'll come home talking with marbles in his mouth. We won't understand a word, Dora.

And we won't see much of him, Dora. He'll go visiting in New York and Baltimore. He'll drink liquor in the afternoon and get mixed up with women who wear lipstick and trousers and whose only thought is the next dance. And he wants me to pay for it all. Am I right?

Finish your greens. They're good for your lower intestine. *(Finally, with a sigh, to Nick)* No. You go. You've got to go. I'll send you to Saint Whoozie's and Betsy to Miss Whatsie's and young Andy to whatever-it's-called. And Mary can go to Europe this summer, and Tony can have a car, and it's all fine and dandy. *(He gets slowly to his feet. Nick gets up too)* Go on. Enjoy yourselves, all of you. Leave town, travel, see the world. It's bound to happen. And you know who's going to be sitting in that chair. Some Irish fella, some Jewish gentleman is going to be sitting right at this table. Saying the same this to his grandson. And your grandson will be back at the plow! *(Starts out the door, stops, turns)* And come to think of it, that won't be a bad thing, either. Will it, Dora?