

SCENE 4

Lights up on STAGE 1.

AGED RALPH

There was never any doubt. Jimmie loved that little girl more than life itself. She truly was his pride and joy.

Sometimes, I think he spent more energy trying to impress Anita than he did with anyone else ... well, maybe except for his father, but that's a story for a different time.

With the unfortunate death of the infant Rebecca, Anita truly was Jimmie's baby girl. His and Carrie's only child. His total responsibility. His truest love.

And if Jimmie Rodgers had anything to say about it, he was going to do whatever he could to make sure she was happy for the rest of her life.

Lights down on STAGE 1.

Lights up on STAGE 2.

JIMMIE is sitting in a wooden chair beside ANITA'S bed. The moon shines in through a window illuminating JIMMIE and ANITA. He looks serenely happy. She looks angelic. ANITA appears to be about six years old or so. She's wearing pigtails and has the bed covers pulled up under her chin. As she begins to stir, she rolls toward JIMMIE and rubs the sleep from her eyes with her tiny fists.

ANITA

Daddy?

JIMMIE

Yes baby girl, it's me.

(beat)

You should be sleeping.

ANITA

(groggily)

I was Daddy, but I think I woke up when I heard you and momma singing. So I guess I listened for a bit, but then I musta have fallen asleep again.

JIMMIE

(chuckling)

Well I'm glad you went back to sleep.

(beat)

Guess what? I have big news for you baby girl.

ANITA

(eyes wide open)

What's that Daddy?

JIMMIE

We're headin' out for a very exciting trip in the morning.

ANITA

(ANITA sits up in the bed rapidly, but rather clumsily)

Where Daddy? Where are we going? To the railroad yards? To see Papa Aaron? Where Daddy? Are we leaving here for good? I sure hope not. I like "Calina" Daddy.

JIMMIE

Whoa there girl.

(laughing)

That's too many questions too fast. And yes, I like Carolina too. But all we're doing is taking a short trip. Up to Tennessee.

ANITA smiles broadly.

JIMMIE

Your daddy's gonna go see a music man up there and find out if he wants me to make some records for him.

ANITA

You mean like the kind you play on the "Victry-Ola" Daddy?

JIMMIE

(smiling)

Exactly girl, just like that.

(beat)

Now get yourself back to sleep cause we're gonna be leaving bright and early in the morning.

ANITA

(Plops her head back down on her pillow and closes her eyes in a highly exaggerated fashion)

Yes Sir Daddy. I will. In fact, I'm almost asleep now.

(slowly ANITA peeks out of one eye)

Daddy?

JIMMIE

Yes Anita?

ANITA

(with a devilish grin)

I really think I could sleep better if maybe I was to hear a bedtime song. Yanno?

JIMMIE

Chuckling, JIMMIE leans over and kisses her on the forehead and sits back down, leaning back in the chair as he searches the ceiling for a song. As he finds the one he wants, JIMMIE smiles.

The music begins to play.

(singing)

MOON, MOON, I CAN SEE YOU SINKING LOW.
 YOU MAKE ME THINK OF A SWEETHEART,
 A LITTLE GIRL THAT I LOVE SO.
 AFTER I WONDER THE WHOLE NIGHT THROUGH,
 WONDERING IF YOU MISS ME TOO.

WHILE I'M BY MY OWN SOME, THINKING OF SOMEONE,
 ALWAYS THINKING OF YOU.
 MY CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL,
 YOU MAKE ME WANT TO BE HOME.
 MY CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL,
 YOU MAKE MY HEART FEEL SO WARM.

MAMA WONDERS WHY,
 I SIT AND CRY.
 WHEN I REALLY SHOULD LAUGH,
 AT YOUR PHOTOGRAPH.
 YOU'RE THE SWEETEST ANGEL IN THIS WORLD,
 AND I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE YOU,
 MY CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL.

MY CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL,
 YOU MAKE ME WANT TO BE HOME.
 MY CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL,
 YOU MAKE MY HEART FEEL SO WARM.

MAMA WONDERS WHY,
I SIT AND CRY.
WHEN I REALLY SHOULD LAUGH,
AT YOUR LITTLE OLD PHOTOGRAPH.
YOU'RE THE SWEETEST ANGEL IN THIS WORLD.
AND I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE YOU,
MY CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL.

I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE YOU,
MY CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL.

ANITA has dozed off to sleep once again. Jimmie stands up from the chair and smooths the covers over ANITA. He kisses her on the forehead.

Lights down on STAGE 2.