

I'LL BE HOME
FOR CHRISTMAS

EDITH
CLARK

CHUCK. But Clarice is a virgin. And as I understand it, a virgin can't be . . . can't use. . . .

EDITH. (*Cutting in.*) She is not a virgin.

CHUCK. How do you know?

EDITH. The doctor told me. He thought I should know.

CHUCK. (*Frowns and thinks.*) Well, that doesn't necessarily mean. . . . She's an active girl . . . sports. . . . (*Edith just stares him down.*) Well, it doesn't necessarily mean anything. Did you talk to her about it?

EDITH. No.

CHUCK. Did *he* talk to her about it?

EDITH. No.

CHUCK. Holy Christ, I hope it wasn't that Teddy.

EDITH. You see, it's impossible to discuss this with you without your getting emotional.

CHUCK. (*Accusing.*) I said I never wanted them left alone in the house. . . .

EDITH. Teddy drives a car.

CHUCK. They shouldn't let kids that age drive.

EDITH. Now calm down. Stop living in the olden days. At least now you may see the point of my wanting her . . . prepared.

CHUCK. (*Angry.*) It is your job to prepare her up here . . . (*He points to his head.*) with a little less emphasis on the technical aspects of screwing.

EDITH. That's a charming word . . . I have tried to prepare her up here, but I am not going to be an ostrich about it.

CHUCK. Going through this . . . it's like inviting her to. . . . (*He doesn't go on.*)

EDITH. Her own body is inviting her. Her instincts are inviting her. Or did you want her to be a virgin when she married?

CHUCK. It is not what I want her to be, but what she wants to be. Has she asked for your help in this department?

EDITH. No, but she may be embarrassed.

CHUCK. Thank God for that. I should think you'd be embarrassed to mention it to her at this point.

EDITH. Didn't you talk to Donny about contraceptives when he went away to college?

CHUCK. Yes.

EDITH. Then why can't I discuss this with Clarice?

CHUCK. There is nothing wrong with discussing it. That is **not**

what you suggested. Anyway, talking to Donny was another thing. It's a boy's . . . a man's responsibility. He should be prepared to handle it.

EDITH. And suppose he isn't?

CHUCK. Edith, I may not want to discuss a man's sexual attitudes with Clarice, but I don't mind discussing them with you. If a boy is out on a date with a girl, and suddenly the whole thing becomes . . . passionate . . . he does not like to hear from the girl . . . no matter how modern he is, no matter how many books on the subject he's read . . . "Go ahead, honey. It's all right. I'm prepared." If she said that, I'll tell you what goes through his head at that moment . . . "Does this mean she does this with all the boys? . . . Does it mean she took me for granted? . . . Does it mean if I hadn't made a pass, she would have thought me a shmo?"

EDITH. What is your solution?

CHUCK. The man makes the arrangements . . . at least the first time.

EDITH. You mean they stop while he goes hunting for a corner drugstore?

CHUCK. Well. . . .

EDITH. Or does he just happen to have one . . . or an economy-size dozen, in his pocket? In which case, what does the girl think?

CHUCK. It's different. I can't explain why. But there's a nicety in it someplace. . . .

EDITH. And what happens if they can't find a drugstore open . . . as we couldn't, if you'll remember . . . and the moment is possibly lost. You weren't prepared.

CHUCK. I was.

EDITH. We drove all over the damn countryside looking for a drugstore that was open.

CHUCK. I had something in my wallet. Only by the time we got to the point, I loved you so much . . . I didn't want you to think I was the kind of guy who carried them around in his pocket . . . just in case.

EDITH. Well, that's very touching. Nowadays I think the girl would think you were a fink not to be prepared, after getting her all worked up.

CHUCK. I would think the girl might be flattered. To me, there is something sordid, at that moment, that beautiful moment, for the

guy to go fishing in his wallet for some scruffy little paper packet he'd had hidden there for weeks.

EDITH. It would be a hell of a lot better than the ludicrous sight of you trying to keep me interested and at the same time driving around the countryside looking for an all-night drugstore . . . and not finding one. And you had something with you all the time!

CHUCK. I shouldn't have told you.

EDITH. Did you think I'd be shocked that you were prepared? My God, all girls don't have bashful fathers like you . . . I had a bashful mother who advised me to save my first kiss for the man I married. . . . But not my father. He'd wised me up on what to expect . . . in very explicit terms.

CHUCK. I'm sorry if I disappointed your expectations.

EDITH. I don't know what your idea was, trying to appear so innocent that night. I knew there were other girls before me . . . that little romantic episode with that girl in London during the war. . . .

CHUCK. The idea was the way I felt about you! Were you consulting with your father during those early days of our marriage? "What do I do now, Dad? I'm involved with an amateur who's still fumbling along by his instincts."

EDITH. Don't knock my dad! He opened my eyes to a great deal about life and love and the nature of man. With Mother's "disorders" he had a woman on the side. And he told me about it quite frankly . . . about the needs of a man, et cetera. . . . He thought I should know this. . . . And I'm damned glad he told me.

CHUCK. (*After a long moment of thinking this out.*) You sound as though his teaching you this . . . this matter of man's nature . . . woman on the side . . . infidelity . . . had stood you in good stead.

EDITH. Well, we're not discussing that.

CHUCK. I am. . . . That's the goddamndest thing I've ever heard. Do you think I haven't been faithful to you?

EDITH. It's not worth discussing. It's not important.

CHUCK. Not important?

EDITH. It's only important *not* to discuss it . . . I think.

CHUCK. You have assumed bravely, stoically, armed with your daddy's sweeping wisdom about these matters, that I have been unfaithful to you?