

## ACT I

### Scene I

*(A shop. JACKIE stands in tigh, holding a book. PHILIP at the counter, reading a book. There is someone in the corner of the room, reading a newspaper.)*

**JACKIE.** Can you, excuse me, I was wondering, I need someone to look at this. I'm not sure what it is. It's quite old, and my understanding is that it could be, you know, someone told me that it was maybe worth a lot of money. I don't actually, I mean, it's mine, it is mine, but I don't know a lot about it.

*(Ignoring her, PHILIP picks his nose.)*

So they said that you could maybe look at it, that you have some expertise in this area and that actually you're really knowledgeable and you would be the person to ask.

*(beat)*

It's stamps.

*(she opens the book, to show him)*

I know a lot of people collect stamps, I never did, but I know that it is a popular hobby with some people. Not just nerds, either, normal — Oh. Sorry. Sorry.

*(beat)*

It's mine to sell, though. I mean, I do own it. It's been in our family for a long time, there's some, in there, eighteen-something. Which, I have no idea if they're real, I guess they could be fake. With my luck they probably are fake, but I'm trying not to, I'm trying, actually, to be positive, although I actually don't judge myself for

being negative more or less most of the time. Not that I'm defending negativity. And it's not like I think the stamps are fake either. I don't think they are. They're real. No question. At all. That's so... Anyway.

—(She *sinks*. A *beat*.)

PHILIP: Why do you think that?

JACKIE: What? Oh. Sorry. Sorry! What?

PHILIP: You said you don't think the stamps are fakes, but you also admit that you don't know anything about stamps. So what makes you think your stamps are authentic?

JACKIE: I don't, uh —

PHILIP: Does this look like Antiques Roadshow to you? Do you want to be on television?

JACKIE: No, no, of course, I —

PHILIP: Do I know you?

JACKIE: No. But they —

PHILIP: They, they who?

JACKIE: Who?

PHILIP: Yes, "who?"

JACKIE: Well, you know, people —

PHILIP: People, what people?

JACKIE: (*Flustered*) I talked to this person, this person, in this store —

PHILIP: You talked to a person in a store?

JACKIE: Yes, who said —

PHILIP: But you don't know who this person is?

JACKIE: Yes! I mean, I don't know his name.

PHILIP: Ah, that person!

(*The newspaper shifts. In the corner, DENNIS appears from behind the paper. He watches.*)

JACKIE: Okay. Could you —

PHILIP: Could I what? I'm working here. Do I know you?

JACKIE: This guy, in this store —

PHILIP: What store?

JACKIE: It was, I was there buying something else. And they were also, it was also a stamp store, and...

PHILIP: A stamp store.

JACKIE: Yes, it was for stamps and things like comic books, and, and Yugi-oh cards...

PHILIP: Is that what you were buying? Yugi-oh cards?

JACKIE: No. I was buying... a comic book.

(*She fades, depressed now.*)

PHILIP: Ah.

JACKIE: He's always, really, pretty nice to me. He said to call you.

PHILIP: The nice person in the Yugi-oh store said he would not look at your stamps, is that what he said?

JACKIE: He said —

PHILIP: It doesn't matter what he said. I will not look at your stamps, either.

JACKIE: Okay. Sure, okay.

(*beat*)

I mean, I just —

PHILIP: Thank you.

(*A beat.*)

JACKIE: (*a small flare of anger*) Okay, fine. That's fine. I don't. You know, these things are worth a lot. They are like, a treasure, they're like — you know, I'm just telling you. Okay?

PHILIP: If you know what they're worth, then why are you asking me?

JACKIE: Because I... need help.

(*She stands there for a moment, suddenly fighting back tears. PHILIP stares at her. She takes back her book.*)

DENNIS: I'll look at it.

JACKIE: Oh. Can you?

PHILIP: No, actually, he can't. He doesn't work here.



DENNIS. She needs somebody to look at it, Philip. What's the big deal?

PHILIP. The "big deal" maybe would be the fact that you are utterly unqualified.

DENNIS. Then why don't you look at it? You're not doing anything.

PHILIP. In fact I am doing something.

DENNIS. What?

PHILIP. I don't have to justify my actions to you.

DENNIS. "Justify your actions," stop being such an asshole and look at her stamps!

PHILIP. Listen. I tolerate you. I tolerate you. But if you think that means you have rights here -

JACKIE. It's okay, I can -

DENNIS. He's not doing anything, he'll look at it, just look at it!

PHILIP. Fine!

(beat)

I'll look at it.

(*He gestures to her. Perplexed, she takes the album to the desk and sets it down. She reads. He continues to read his book. He turns a page. She watches him, more and more anxious and annoyed.*)

JACKIE. Are you going to...

PHILIP. I said I would look at it. You need to leave it.

JACKIE. You want me to -

PHILIP. My fee is two percent of the net worth, or two thousand dollars.

JACKIE. You want two thousand dollars just to look at it?

PHILIP. I am looking at it now. Looking is for free. Using thirty-seven years of experience and expertise to evaluate the specific worth of your property costs two thousand dollars.

JACKIE. I didn't, I didn't, um - I don't have two thousand dollars.

PHILIP. Well, that's a problem then, isn't it?

(*DENNIS stands, goes to the counter.*)

DENNIS. Philip, you know, you can be a real jerk. I will look at it.

PHILIP. That would be very useful to her if you actually knew anything.

DENNIS. I know plenty.

JACKIE. I just need to know, to, I just, because if it is worth something, then if I sold it -

DENNIS. Totally, I get it. People do this all the time. He's supposed to do it, but he's a little, don't worry about him. I'll look at it for you.

(*He starts to page through it.*)

PHILIP. This is not in any way a professional evaluation.

DENNIS. Relax, would you? You're not going to help her, what's the big deal?

JACKIE. How much, uh -

DENNIS. Nothing. This is free.

JACKIE. Great!

PHILIP. I cannot vouch for this man. He knows next to nothing.

DENNIS. Wow, look at this. Where'd you get this?

JACKIE. My mom had it. It's been in our family.

DENNIS. She's got an inverted Jenny, Phil. It's a little bit of a mess, the colors are compromised, unfortunately, by what looks like water damage, see this line here? That's not good. But it's a significant stamp.

JACKIE. Is it worth anything, even with the...

DENNIS. Hard to say. Maybe three thousand?

JACKIE. Dollars? Three thousand -

PHILIP. (*sneering*) An inverted Jenny. There are so many forgeries floating around out there people are starting to use them to mail in their absentee ballots. Besides which how would you know the difference? Tell me what the difference is. You can't because you don't know.