

SCHRANK

ACT I

WEST SIDE STORY

37

Instantly, they shift positions so they are mixed up: no segregation. Silence; then in comes SCHRANK. Doc comes in, brought by the tinkle of the little shop doorbell. During the following, the GANGS are absolutely silent and motionless, unless otherwise indicated.)

Doc: (*Unhappily*) Good-evening, Lt. Schrank. I and Tony was just closing up.

SCHRANK: (*Lifting a pack of cigarettes*) Mind?

Doc: I have no mind. I am the village idiot.

SCHRANK: (*Lighting it*) I always make it a rule to smoke in the can. And what else is a room with half-breeds in it, eh, Riff? (*BERNARDO'S move is checked by RIFF. SCHRANK, pleasantly:*) Clear out, Spics. Sure; it's a free country and I ain't got the right. But it's a country with laws: and I can find the right. I got the badge, you got the skin. It's tough all over. Beat it! (*A second. Then RIFF nods once to BERNARDO who nods to his GANG. Slowly, they file out. BERNARDO starts to whistle "My Country 'Tis of Thee" as he exits proudly. His GANG joins in, finishing a sardonic jazz lick off-stage.*)
SCHRANK: (*pleasant.*) From their angle, sure. Say, where's the rumble gonna be? Ah, look: I know regular Americans don't rub with the gold-teeth otherwise. The river? The Park? (*Silence.*) I'm for *yóu*. I want this beat cleaned up and you can do it for me. I'll even lend a hand if it gets rough. Where you gonna rumble? The playground? Sweeney's lot? (*Angered by the silence.*) Ya think I'm a lousy stool pigeon? I wanna help ya get rid of them! Come on! Where's it gonna be? . . . Get smart, you stupid hoodlums! I oughta fine ya for litterin' the streets. You oughta be taken down the station house and have your skulls mashed to a pulp! You and the tin horn immigrant scum you come from! How's your old man's DT's, A-rab? How's the action on your mother's mattress, Action? (*ACTION lunges for him but is tripped up by RIFF. SCHRANK crouches low, ready for him. Quiet now:*)

Let him go, buddy boy, just let him go. (ACTION starts to his feet but DIESEL holds him.) One of these days there won't be nobody to hold you. (RIFF deliberately starts for the door, followed by the OTHERS, except TONY. As they go:) I'll find out where ya gonna rumble. But be sure to finish each other off. Because if you don't I will! (RIFF has stayed at the door until the OTHERS have passed through. Now he just looks at SCHRANK and cockily saunters out. Silence. SCHRANK looks at DOC.) Well, you try keepin' hoodlums in line and see what it does to you. (Exits.)

Doc: It wouldn't give me a mouth like his.

TONY: Forget him. From here on in, everything goes my way. (Starts to clean up, turn out lights.)

Doc: You think it'll really be a fair fight?

TONY: Yeah.

Doc: What have you been taking tonight?

TONY: A trip to the moon. And I'll tell you a secret. It isn't a man that's up there, Doc. It's a girl, a lady. (Opens the door.) Well, buenas noches, senior.

Doc: Buenas noches?! So that's why you made it a fair fight. (TONY smiles.) . . . Tony . . . things aren't tough enough?

TONY: Tough? Doc, I'm in love!

Doc: How do you know?

TONY: Because . . . there isn't any other way I could feel.

Doc: And you're not frightened?

TONY: Should I be? (Opens door, exits.)

Doc: Why? I'm frightened enough for both of you. (Turns out the last light.)