



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Characters:

Joyce Green
Larry Green
Mr. Green
Mrs. Green

Scene: the living room of the Green home. As the scene opens, Mrs. Green is talking on the telephone.

MRS. GREEN: Oh, hello, Mabel . . . Why yes, it was nice . . . oh, Tuesday . . . let me look at my appointment book and see . . . Hold on.

(Mrs. Green puts down the phone. At that moment, Joyce enters and Mrs. Green motions her to be quiet. She picks up the phone again.)

MRS. GREEN: Oh, I'm really sorry, Mabel. Bob and I would love to come for dinner but Bob's company is having a dinner meeting, and we both have to attend. You know that I'd much rather be with you than at a dull thing like that. Oh, certainly, we'll be glad to make it another time . . . Yes, and you say hello to Frank for me. Goodbye. (*She puts down the phone and turns to Joyce.*) It's that awful woman again.

JOYCE: For goodness sake, Mother, why can't you be honest with people?

MRS. GREEN: But it's only a little white lie. It won't hurt anybody.

JOYCE: That isn't what you and Dad have always told us. You've always been at us about being honest and fair in everything. What about you?

MRS. GREEN: But, Joyce, this is different. We've tried to raise you the right way. Just remember, we're older than you are.

JOYCE: Is that why Dad had to go to the Internal Revenue Service today?

MRS. GREEN: (*angrily*) Joyce, stop talking like that! He didn't do anything so terrible.

JOYCE: Nothing terrible! What do you call lying on his income tax return? What do you call putting things on it that weren't so? You mean that isn't lying?

MRS. GREEN: Joyce, how do you know about that? You're making those things up.

JOYCE: Oh, Mother, stop trying to treat me like an infant. There isn't too much going on around here that's a secret.

MRS. GREEN: Be quiet! I told you that your father didn't do anything so wrong. (*The front door slams shut.*) If that's your father, don't you say a word. Do you hear?

JOYCE: (*sulking*) I hear.

(In walks Larry. He drops his books loudly on a table.)

MRS. GREEN: What's wrong with you? Put your books where they belong. How many times have I told you that?

LARRY: (*annoyed*) All right.
(He puts books on a shelf nearby.)

JOYCE: Something's really bugging you, Larry. Did she turn you down?

LARRY: Mind your own business.

JOYCE: (*sarcastically*) Oh, excuse me for living. Aren't we all happy people today!

(She walks to a sofa and sits down to read a school book.)

MRS. GREEN: O.K. Larry. Joyce has jumped at me already

and I'm waiting for your father to come in so I can hear what happened to him. So you might as well go ahead and tell me your problems.

LARRY: Nothing's happened.

MRS. GREEN: What do you mean nothing's happened! Something's bothering you.

LARRY: Oh, it's Mr. Hanson.

MRS. GREEN: Your science teacher?

LARRY: No, social studies.

MRS. GREEN: So what happened?

LARRY: He's stupid. That's all—he's just stupid.

MRS. GREEN: That doesn't answer my question.

LARRY: He started a real hassle because of my term paper.

MRS. GREEN: Don't make it a mystery. What about your term paper?

LARRY: It was nothing! He just made a big deal out of it. All I did was copy part of somebody else's paper that was turned in last year.

JOYCE: No wonder he's got it in for you.

LARRY: (*to Joyce*) Shut up! (*turning to his mother*) I didn't do anything wrong. I changed some of it and put in my own ideas.

JOYCE: But that was still like cheating, or lying.

MRS. GREEN: Listen to Miss Virtue. First she attacks me for lying. Now she's attacking you.

JOYCE: What a family!

MRS. GREEN: You keep quiet, Joyce. That's enough from you today. (*Just then the front door slams shut.*) For goodness sake, don't say anything to upset your father. I

know he's going to be in a bad mood. Just pretend nothing's happened.

(Mr. Green enters without greeting anyone and slumps heavily into an armchair.)

MRS. GREEN: (to her husband) Hello, Bob. Joyce and Larry are home.

MR. GREEN: (angrily) I see. I have eyes. I'm not blind.

MRS. GREEN: (trying to soften him) Of course you're not, Bob. I was just thinking how nice it is to have all of us home early today. Maybe we can go out to dinner. It would be a nice change.

MR. GREEN: Change! You'll be lucky to get any change. Those people have no consideration for anybody. They have no feelings.

MRS. GREEN: You're right, Bob.

MR. GREEN: Can you imagine! I have to pay \$380 more on my taxes, plus interest! The nerve of them.

LARRY: \$380. Wow!

MR. GREEN: You'd think I was a big-time crook trying to cheat the government out of a million bucks!

MRS. GREEN: You're right, dear. But I thought you had receipts and cancelled checks to prove everything.

MR. GREEN: (a little angered at her) Who keeps all those things? Anyway, maybe I did put a few extra things in there. So what? The government's got plenty of money. If I can outsmart them, what's wrong with that?

JOYCE: A few extra things! What if everybody had your attitude? The country would be in big trouble then.

MR. GREEN: Why don't you mind your own business. Nobody asked for your opinion.

MRS. GREEN: Bob, let's talk about it later. Relax and I'll make you a cup of coffee or a drink.

(Father picks up a newspaper close by. Joyce gets up from the sofa and walks to a table, carrying her school book. She sits at the table and begins her homework. Larry turns on the TV. The telephone rings.)

LARRY: (quickly starts to move toward the phone) I'll get it.

MRS. GREEN: Sit down! I'm closer. (She picks up phone.) Hello . . . Mr. Who? . . . Mr. Hanson . . . Oh, yes . . . Larry's teacher. (Larry seems very uncomfortable and tries to look busy watching TV.) . . . No, I'm sorry, my husband isn't here now . . . can I help you? . . . Yes . . . Yes . . . You mean it's so serious that you want us to come to school? What? Fail! . . . Yes . . . I'll tell him as soon as he comes in. I'm sorry about this . . . Yes. Goodbye, Mr. Hanson.

MR. GREEN: What was that all about?

MRS. GREEN: (lightly) Oh, nothing important. I'll take care of it.

MR. GREEN: But he wanted me. And what was that about failing?

LARRY: Dad, it really wasn't a big deal. I just used somebody else's term paper. But I changed some of the ideas. Mr. Hanson got all upset over a little thing like that and wants to fail me for the course this semester. It's stupid, Dad, just plain stupid.

MR. GREEN: A little thing. And you call that stupid! You were dishonest, Larry. You signed your name to somebody else's work.

JOYCE: Like father, like son.

MRS. GREEN: Stop it, Joyce. Bob, calm down. Remember your ulcer.

LARRY: Oh come on, Dad, take it easy. It's not so bad. Everybody does it.

MR. GREEN: (getting angrier) Don't tell me about every-

body else. What you did was cheating. And from *you*, my own son, of all people. You know your mother and I have raised you differently.

JOYCE: (mumbling bitterly) You sure did!

LARRY: But, Dad—

MRS. GREEN: Don't "But, Dad" me. You deserve to fail! If you think I'm going to apologize for you, you're wrong. You deserve whatever punishment he gives you—even if he does fail you!

MRS. GREEN: Bob, calm down. Maybe it isn't as bad as it sounds. After all—

LARRY: But, Dad, if you go up and talk with him, he said he'd give me a chance to do another paper.

MR. GREEN: No! A cheat has to face what he deserves. Lying is no way for you to go through school.

JOYCE: Cheating! Lying! Larry's only done the same kinds of things you did on the income tax return.

MRS. GREEN: Joyce, don't talk to your father that way!

JOYCE: (getting angrier) I know what I'm saying. (to Mr. Green) How can you accuse Larry of being a liar and a cheat? Why expect more of Larry than you expect of yourself?

MRS. GREEN: (trying to stop her) Joyce!

MR. GREEN: Listen here, young lady. I've been patient with you long enough. You don't know what you're talking about. So shut up!

JOYCE: No, I won't shut up! You can't let it end here. You have to go to school. What Larry did—is it any worse than your cheating on the income tax? (to Mrs. Green) And is it any worse than the lies you tell Mabel and other people?

MRS. GREEN: Joyce, I'm trying to understand you. But we see things as adults. You're only a child.

MR. GREEN: Your mother's right. When you're older you'll understand. Adults have to do things that children shouldn't do. Life is like that. You'll find out.

MRS. GREEN: You see what we mean, don't you, Joyce?

JOYCE: —