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October 6, 1948

Mrs. Jane Speed
137 W. 103 Street
New York 25, New York

Dear Mrs. Speed:

We are pleased to inform you
that your submitted manuscript, "Farewell
to Birdie McKeesler", will be presented on
FAMILY THEATER on Thursday night, October 14,
1948 over MBS at 10:00 P.M., New York time.

Very truly yours,


David R. Young,
Director

DRY:mg

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aired
10/14/48
MBS
10PM

FAREWELL TO BIRDIE McKEESTER

by
Jane Speed

ANNCR:

Birdie McKeester had been day-dreaming behind the reception desk at Tyler, Flint, Standish and O'Rourke for nearly a year when Mr. Tyler made an amazing discovery. It all came about because Mr. Tyler's secretary was at home with a severe case of prickly heat. And so shaken was Mr. Tyler by his discovery that he felt obliged to call an immediate meeting of the partners.

TYLER:

Gentlemen. (CLEAR THROAT) I wonder if you are aware that the firm of Tyler, Flint, Standish and O'Rourke - a firm noted for its thoroughgoing efficiency down to the smallest detail - has in its employ a young woman who can type only twenty-two and one-half words per minute.

FLINT:

No!

O'ROURKE:

Incredible!

STANDISH:

Are you sure?

TYLER:

Beyond the shadow of a doubt. I have here on my desk a letter which I gave her to type two hours ago. Two hours, mind you. She just brought it in...(ACCUSINGLY) and with three erasures.

FLINT:

I just can't believe it.

STANDISH:

It doesn't seem possible.

O'ROURKE:

But who is she?

TYLER: The young woman I refer to occupies the reception desk in our outer office. A Miss...Miss...McKeester. Yes, that's it. Birdie McKeester.

FLINT: McKeester?

O'ROURKE: McKeester?

STANDISH: McKeester....

TYLER: The name means nothing to you?

FLINT: Absolutely nothing.

O'ROURKE: First time I ever heard it.

STANDISH: I once knew a Millicent McKeester in Wapekaneta, Ohio, but -

TYLER: Come, come, now, gentlemen. Certainly one of you knows this Miss McKeester...because one of you must have hired her.

FLINT: Not I.

STANDISH: Nor I.

TYLER: Well, O'Rourke?

O'ROURKE: (HURT) You know me better than that. I wouldn't hire even an Irish lass who could type only twenty-two and a half words a minute.

TYLER: Hmmm. Strange.

FLINT: Tyler....

TYLER: Yes?

FLINT: You don't suppose she could have been planted here... as a subversive element?

TYLER: Oh, I hardly think...

FLINT: I know it seems far-fetched. Still - one can't be too careful. And it's just the sort of trick Flavin,

Hepplewaite, Pringle and McGrew would pull.

TYLER: (DOUBTFULLY) Yes...

STANDISH: I have it! Why don't we ask the young lady, herself?
She ought to know who hired her.

TYLER: A splendid idea, Standish. There's nothing like going
to the source.

MUSIC: UP BRIEFLY, THEN OUT FOR...

BIRDIE: (SWEETLY) You wanted to see me, Mr. Tyler?

TYLER: That's right, Miss...Miss...

BIRDIE: McKeester. Birdie McKeester, after my Aunt Birdie on
my mother's side.

TYLER: Uh - yes. Now, Miss McKeester, there are a few questions
I should like to ask you.

BIRDIE: Well, you just go right ahead, Mr. Tyler. I shall be
glad to help you out in any way I can.

TYLER: (CLEARS THROAT) First of all, Miss McKeester, how long
have you been working here?

BIRDIE: It'll be a year next month. That's the longest I've
ever worked anywhere.

TYLER: I have no doubt of it. Now...do you recall who it was
who hired you?

BIRDIE: Well...nobody hired me...in the proper sense of the
word.

TYLER: Oh, but surely...

BIRDIE: Well...you see...it all came about because of my girl
friend, Mercedes McNulty...

TYLER: McNulty? That name sounds familiar...

O'ROURKE: Of course. I hired her myself two years ago. Excellent girl. Averaged well over a hundred words per minute.

BIRDIE: And as true a friend as you'd find anywhere.

TYLER: Yes, I'm sure of that. But how -

BIRDIE: Well...just a year ago next month Mercedes' grandmother died up in Poughkeepsie. And Mercedes asked me if I'd sit in for her while she was gone. She said there was nothing to it. All I'd have to do was say...good morning, Mr. Tyler, good morning, Mr. Flint, good morning, Mr. Standish, good morning, Mr. O'Rourke... and answer the phone a few times.

TYLER: That simple, eh?

BIRDIE: Yes, sir. And that's just the way it's been, too. Until this morning, that is. You know it was a real surprise to me when you handed me that letter to type.

TYLER: Yes, it must have been.

BIRDIE: Oh, but now don't you apologize, Mr. Tyler. Like I said, I'm just glad to help out. I want you to feel free to call on me any time you like.

TYLER: Uh - thank you. But - if you don't mind my asking - just what became of Miss McNulty?

BIRDIE: Oh...that. Well, it was at the funeral...oh, and it was a grand funeral, gentlemen. Mercedes wrote me about it. Flowers all over the place and not a dry eye in the house.

TYLER: Yes, yes, but -

BIRDIE: Well, it was at the funeral that she met this young man. (DRAMATIC) It was love at first sight, gentlemen. So...after a decent interval out of respect to her grandmother, rest her soul...they were married.

TYLER: And you just - stayed on?

BIRDIE: Well, I thought it was only right. After all, I'd promised Mercedes I'd sit in for till she came back, hadn't I?

TYLER: Well...yes, but -

BIRDIE: And I haven't minded it one little bit, really I haven't. So you needn't trouble yourself over that.

TYLER: I see. Uh - thank you, Miss McKeester. I think - that will be all...for now.

BIRDIE: Yes, sir.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS, THEN STOP, DOOR OPEN

BIRDIE: (OFF SLIGHTLY) And it's been a real pleasure talking to all you gentlemen.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSE

TYLER: (AFTER PAUSE) She will, of course, have to be dismissed.

FLINT: Naturally.

O'ROURKE: Oh, of course.

STANDISH: (SIGH) I suppose she must.

FLINT: You know, though, Tyler...as receptionist she isn't called upon to do much typing. What I mean is... she was here nearly a year before the occasion arose...

TYLER: Ah, but it did arise, didn't it?

FLINT: Well, yes...

TYLER: There you are then. (PAUSE) Ohhh...drat it all, it - it's the principle of the thing, can't you see that? We've spent years building a reputation for a high standard of efficiency among our employees. Miss McKeester...simply does not measure up.

STANISH: Yes, I guess you're right at that. Twenty-two words a minute! If wind of that ever got around...

TYLER: Please...let's not even think about it.

O'ROURKE: Well, that's that then. You'll - tell her, I suppose?

TYLER: If

O'ROURKE: I just thought - well - you brought the matter up in the first place...and you are the senior partner.

TYLER: I fail to see what that has to do with it.

FLINT: But who is going to tell her then?

TYLER: Well, I had thought I'd turn the matter over to whichever one of you hired her. However, now...um... yes...it does pose a problem.

STANISH: I suppose we could flip for it.

FLINT: Wait a minute. O'Rourke was the one who hired Miss McWalty...so indirectly, at least, he's responsible for...

TYLER: Exactly.

O'ROURKE: But I -

TYLER: Nonsense. You're the logical one, O'Rourke. You may speak to Miss McKeester in the morning.

MUSIC: UP FULL, THEN OUT FOR...

SOUND: VERY SLOW ONE-FINGER TYPING

O'ROURKE: Uh - good morning, Miss McKeester.

SOUND: TYPING STOP

BIRDIE: Oh, Mr. O'Rourke! You were so quiet I didn't even hear you come in. And you're early, aren't you?

O'ROURKE: Well...the fact is, Birdie...Miss McKeester...I wondered if I could have a word with you.

BIRDIE: Why, I can't think of anything I'd enjoy more.

O'ROURKE: (HOPEFULLY) Of course, if you're too busy...

BIRDIE: Oh, goodness, no! To tell you the honest truth, there's many a day when I'm hard put to keep myself occupied till it's time to go home.

O'ROURKE: Oh.

BIRDIE: If you don't mind my saying so, Mr. O'Rourke, you're looking very fit this morning. That's a new tie, isn't it?

O'ROURKE: Why, yes...yes, it is. You like it?

BIRDIE: Indeed I do. There's a color that really does you justice.

O'ROURKE: My wife gave it to me for our anniversary.

BIRDIE: Did she now? Well, you're a lucky man. It's a sign of true love when a wife picks out a tie that looks well on her husband.

O'ROURKE: It is?

BIRDIE: (SOLENNLY) A sure sign.

O'ROURKE: Well, I'll have to tell Margaret that.

BIRDIE: Don't tell me your wife's name is Margaret?

O'ROURKE: Why, yes -

BIRDIE: Why, that was my own dear mother's name, rest her soul. From County Cork she was.

O'ROURKE: Is that a fact? My father came from Cork. That was a good many years ago, of course.

BIRDIE: You don't mean it!

O'ROURKE: Oh, yes, indeed. Jamie O'Rourke from County Cork they used to call him.

BIRDIE: Well, there's no denying it's a small world. Oh, my goodness, look at the time. Here I've been going on like the chatterbox I am and I haven't even got this mail sorted. But never mind, Mr. O'Rourke, you can stop by later and tell me what you wanted to say.

MUSIC: UP BRIEFLY, THEN OUT FOR...

SOUND: DOOR CLOSE

TYLER: (JOVIALY) 'Morning, Standish.

STANDISH: Good morning.

TYLER: 'Morning, O'Rourke.

O'ROURKE: (GLUMLY) Good morning.

TYLER: Well, what's the matter with you? Out on the wrong side of bed? Oh - say, you'd better get the employment agency on the phone first thing about a replacement for Miss McKeester.

O'ROURKE: Tyler...

TYLER: Yes?

O'ROURKE: I - I haven't exactly told Miss McKeester yet that she's leaving us.

TYLER: What!

O'ROURKE: The fact of the matter is, Tyler, I think this may take a little more time than we had thought.

TYLER: More time? What do you mean? What's so difficult about telling an employee that her services are no longer required? Done every day.

O'ROURKE: I know. And it sounds easy when you say it, but -

TYLER: I'm disappointed in you, O'Rourke. I'm afraid I have no choice but to turn the entire matter over to Standish.

STANDISH: Who - ~~was~~

TYLER: Precisely. I'm depending on you to speak to Miss McKeester in the morning.

MUSIC: UP FULL, THEN OUT FOR...

SOUND: ONE-FINGER TYPING

STANDISH: Good morning, Miss McKeester.

SOUND: TYPING STOP

BIRDIE: Why, good morning, Mr. Standish. How are you today?

STANDISH: What? Oh, fine, fine...just fine.

BIRDIE: Well, I'm glad to hear that.

STANDISH: Miss McKeester. Are you - are you quite happy working for us?

BIRDIE: (TOUCHED) Why, Mr. Standish, how thoughtful of you to ask. But don't you ever worry. I wouldn't dream of working anywhere but here.

STANDISH: You - wouldn't?

BIRDIE: Why, bless you, no. I'd be an ungrateful fool if I did,

after all the kindness you gentlemen have showed me. Stopping by to talk to me in the morning the way you do, taking such an interest. I declare, I've never seen the likes of it.

STANDISH: Yes...well...

BIRDIE: Oh, Mr. Standish, something fell out of your pocket.

STANDISH: What? Oh. Oh, dear, I forgot all about that. Young Jackie asked me to mail it. It's some box tops he's sending in for an Atomic Decoding Ring or some such thing. You know how boys are.

BIRDIE: You have a son? I didn't know that.

STANDISH: Oh, my yes. I have three.

BIRDIE: Well, isn't that grand? (PAUSE) You - wouldn't happen to have a picture of them, would you?

STANDISH: Well...as a matter of fact, I do have a couple of snapshots -

BIRDIE: Oh, would you mind letting me see them?

STANDISH: Why, no - not at all. They're right in my wallet here. There. That one was taken at camp last summer and this is out in front of our house.

BIRDIE: Ahhh...what fine, husky lads they are. And every one the spittin' image of his father.

STANDISH: You - think they take after me?

BIRDIE: You can ask that! Why, I'd know them anywhere for years.

STANDISH: (DELIGHTED) Really? Funny thing is most people think that Ronnie especially - he's the one in the middle

here - favors his mother's side of the family.

BIRDIE: Well, of course, I don't know your wife, but there's no mistaking the set of that chin. And about the eyes that young man is his father all over again.

STANDISH: Well, now, that's interesting. Yes, indeed, that is interesting. Of course, I don't like to get into any arguments with my in-laws, but the fact is, I have always been of the private opinion that -

SOUND: DOOR OPEN AND CLOSE ON LAST SPEECH

TYLER: (ICILLY) I hope I'm not interrupting anything.

BIRDIE: Oh, good morning, Mr. Tyler.

TYLER: Good morning, Miss McKeester. Well, Standish?

STANDISH: Uh...I - that is - I was just about to go into my office.

BIRDIE: Wait a minute, Mr. Standish. You forgot your pictures.

MUSIC: UP BRIEFLY, THEN OUT FOR...

TYLER: I wonder if you realize, Standish, the spectacle you were making of yourself when I walked in the door. Snapshots all over the place and you leaning across Miss McKeester's desk like a...a silly, goggle-eyed boy of sixteen.

STANDISH: Was it - really that bad?

TYLER: Worse. Much worse. And on top of that, Miss McKeester has still not been informed of her dismissal.

STANDISH: I know, I know...

TYLER: What in the devil is happening to this firm? We've hired and fired hundreds of people since we started in business. And now - faced with the simple, clear-cut

task of discharging a highly inefficient young woman,
you and O'Rourke.....Flint!

FLINT: Yes?

TYLER: (WITH ELABORATE SARCASM) Do you think that you could
face the formidable Miss McKeester and tell her in plain,
unmistakable English that she is fired?

FLINT: Well, I - I don't see why not...

TYLER: All right. I want you to speak to Miss McKeester in
the morning. And this time I want results!

MUSIC: UP FULL, THEN OUT FOR...

SOUND: ONE-FINGER TYPING, THEN STOP AS DOOR OPENS AND CLOSSES
FIRMLY

BIRDIE: Why, Mr. Flint! I declare I never did see such
gentlemen for getting down to the office at the crack
of dawn, so to speak. It's no wonder you've made a
success of things...

FLINT: (CUTTING IN) Miss McKeester - I shall be brief.

BIRDIE: By all means do, if it pleases you.

FLINT: You understand I speak not for myself alone but for
the entire firm of Tyler, Flint, Standish and O'Rourke.

BIRDIE: That must be a dreadful big responsibility.

FLINT: Uh - yes. We want you to know, Miss McKeester, that
we - all of us, that is...Tyler, Standish and O'Rourke
as well as myself - we are not unappreciative of the
fact that you have been with us for nearly a year.
And - although your association with this firm did
come about somewhat by accident - we assume that you

have served us to the best of your ability. How-

BIRDIE: Please, Mr. Flint, don't go on.

FLINT: I beg your pardon?

BIRDIE: If it's a raise you're after giving me, I can't let you do it.

FLINT: But, Miss McKeester, I - that is - please - you don't understand -

BIRDIE: I understand that you're the dearest, kindest gentlemen in all the world. And it's exactly because of that that I wouldn't feel right about letting you pay me any more money. I get along very nicely on what I make now and I'm making every cent of what I'm worth - maybe more. Nobody knows that better than I.

FLINT: Well, I - I don't quite know what to say -

BIRDIE: You just thank the rest of the gentlemen for their kind thoughts but tell them I couldn't accept a raise.

FLINT: That will certainly come as a great surprise to them.

BIRDIE: Well, now, I'm sure they'll see my way of it if you'll just explain. Mr. Flint - would you turn this way a bit?

FLINT: What? Oh.

BIRDIE: There - just what I thought. The bottom button on your coat is hanging on by only a thread.

FLINT: Oh - so it is. I hadn't noticed.

BIRDIE: You'll lose it sure before the day is out if it isn't fixed.

FLINT: Yes, I'll have to stop by the tailor's.

BIRDIE: Why, you'll do no such thing. I have a needle and thread right here in my purse.

FLINT: Now, that isn't necessary, Miss McKeester, really -

BIRDIE: Oh, I can have it fixed in less time than it takes to argue about it. Stand a little closer here, will you now?

FLINT: Well...all right.

BIRDIE: There - that's fine.

FLINT: I guess this is what comes of being a bachelor, eh?

BIRDIE: You - a bachelor? Well, now, that's hard to believe. It seems to me that some nice woman would've set her cap long ago for a fine looking man like yourself.

FLINT: Well, I - I was engaged at one time. Her name was Caroline. (SIGH) But she decided in favor of someone else.

BIRDIE: No! Why, the dear lady must have lost hold of her senses.

FLINT: Oh, she seemed very sure of herself. (RELUCTANLY) He was a rather dashing chap - a furniture salesman.

BIRDIE: A poor choice, if you ask me. And I'll bet she regrets it to this day.

FLINT: Well, I don't know about that...

BIRDIE: There you are. That button won't be coming loose for a good long while.

FLINT: Oh, thank you. Thank you very much.

BIRDIE: It was no trouble at all.

FLINT: You know...it's odd that the subject of Caroline should

come up. It just happens, you see, that she was left a widow three years ago. And it has occurred to me recently that it might not be out of order for me to - well - call on her, at any rate.

BIRDIE: Why, I don't think you should have a doubt in the world.

FLINT: After all, we were friends at one time, as I said. And we're both older...and wiser now, so I daresay we could let bygones be bygones.

BIRDIE: Of course you could. Why, it's a cryin' shame to let the poor, dear lady sit there all alone...

FLINT: Well, she's not exactly alone. She has three children...

BIRDIE: Ah, but it's not the same. It's not the same thing at all, and you know very well it isn't.

FLINT: You - you think I should get in touch with her then?

BIRDIE: Why, it's the only decent, friendly thing to do.

FLINT: You're right. By George, you're right. I'm goint out and call her this very minute. Why - who knows - I might even have lunch with her.

MUSIC: UP FULL, THEN OUT FOR...

TYLER: Miss Johnson! Hasn't Flint come in yet?

MISS J: No, Mr. Tyler.

TYLER: Have you tried to reach him again?

MISS J: We've been calling his home all day, sir, but there's no answer.

TYLER: (UNDER HIS BREATH) The ooward! (ALoud) What time is it, Miss Johnson?

MISS J: A quarter of five, Mr. Tyler.

TYLER: Is Miss McKeester still at her desk?

MISS J: Yes, sir. She doesn't leave until five, sir.

TYLER: Very well. Send her into my office. (HALF TO HIMSELF)
I'll settle this thing once and for all!

MUSIC: UP FULL, THEN CHANGE TO DINNER MUSIC, HOLD UNDER NEXT
SCENE

BIRDIE: It was so sweet of you, Mr. Tyler, to ask me out to
dinner.

TYLER: Not at all. I - uh - I think it's usually easier to
talk in a congenial atmosphere.

BIRDIE: Oh, it is. There's nothing like a good meal to loosen
up the tongue.

TYLER: Uh - Miss McKeester. I have always been of the opinion
that when something had to be said, it was better to
come right out and say it and not beat around the bush.

BIRDIE: You must have looked into my mind, Mr. Tyler, for I was
thinking that very thing, myself.

TYLER: You were?

BIRDIE: Yes, sir. And you're right. I can't put it off any
longer. Oh, I've been trying to tell you or one of the
other gentlemen for over a week now. But you've all
been so good to me, heaping kindness upon kindness...
I just couldn't find the heart to do it.

TYLER: I - I'm afraid I don't quite follow you.

BIRDIE: Well, like you said, Mr. Tyler, no good can come of
beating around the bush, so I'll come right out with

it. (PAUSE) The bare fact of the matter is...I'll have to be leaving you soon.

TYLER:

(~~SHAKES~~) What?

BIRDIE:

I hope you won't think too harshly of me. It isn't that I'm ungrateful or dissatisfied. It's just that Tim - he's my young man - Tim has been after me to marry him for three months now, and I finally set the date for a week from next Thursday.

TYLER:

I - just - can't - believe it.

BIRDIE:

I know, sir. I was afraid you'd take it pretty hard. But don't you worry now. I'm sure things'll all work out for the best.

MUSIC:

UP FULL, THEN OUT FOR...

TYLER:

I think you gentlemen will be interested to know that after this week, Miss McKeester will no longer be with us.

STANISH:

(PART AMAZEMENT, PART DISAPPOINTMENT) Ahhh!

FLINT:

You told her?

O'ROURKE:

If you - if you don't mind my asking, Tyler, just how did you finally break it to her?

TYLER:

Firmness of purpose, naturally. Keep your goal in sight and let nothing stop you. (PAUSE) However, I admit that my task was made somewhat easier by the fact that Miss McKeester is planning to be married shortly.

O'ROURKE:

Well, what do you know?

STANISH:

Isn't that nice?

FLINT: I hope he's good enough for her.

TYLER: Yes. Well, that brings me to my reason for calling this meeting. In view of the fact that Miss McKeester will have been with us for...nearly a year...I thought perhaps it would be - appropriate - for us to present her with a parting gift.....s sert of nest egg, so to speak.

FLINT: By all means.

STANDISH: Oh, quite.

O'ROURKE: Count me in.

TYLER: Very well, then. That's agreed. Now, as to the amount. It occurred to me that a suitable sum might be (CLEARS THROAT) one thousand dollars?

MUSIC: UP FULL, THEN OUT FOR...

BIRDIE: A thousand dollars! Oh, wait till Tim hears about this. Why, he'll want to come up and shake the hand of every one of you.

TYLER: Well, we just hope you'll be - very happy.

STANDISH: Indeed we do.

O'ROURKE: We all wish you the best.

FLINT: That goes for me and Caroline, too.

BIRDIE: Oh, you're so good to me I think I'm going to cry.

TYLER: Now, now...

O'ROURKE: None of that, now...

STANDISH: Here - here's my handkerchief.

BIRDIE: Thank you. (PAUSE) Well, anyhow, gentlemen, you'll be glad to know your kindness isn't going to go unrewarded.

I've got a piece of good news for you that I've been saving till the last.

O'ROURKE: Well, out with it.

STANDISH: By all means...

FLINT: Yes, let's hear it.

BIRDIE: Well, I talked to my sister, Peggy last week and it's all settled. She's agreed to take my place with you after I've left.

LARGE PAUSE

BIRDIE: Did you gentlemen - hear what I said?

~~O'ROURKE:~~ Oh, yes...yes. I guess we were all a little overwhelmed.

TYLER: Your - sister, you say?

BIRDIE: That's right. My sister, Peggy. She hasn't quite my knack for typing and such office matters as that, but she's as sweet and honest as the day is long and I know you're going to love her.

TYLER: Really...Miss McKeester...you shouldn't have...

BIRDIE: Oh, now, that's all right, Mr. Tyler, and don't you bother thanking me. After all, I felt it was the least I could do.

MUSIC: UP FULL TO FINISH

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