

SIDE 1

PAUL
CORIE

PAUL. (*Moves to CORIE.*) Oh, Corie, honey, I'm sorry. (*Puts his arms around her.*) I guess I'm pretty excited. You want me to be rich and famous, don't you?

CORIE. During the day. At night I want you to be here and sexy.

PAUL. I will. Just as soon as "Birnbaum versus Gump" is over . . . I'll tell you what. Tomorrow night is your night. We'll do whatever you want.

CORIE. Something wild, insane and crazy?

PAUL. I promise.

CORIE. (*Eyes wide open.*) Like what?

PAUL. Well ... I'll come home early and we'll wallpaper each other.

CORIE. Oh, Paul, how wonderful . . . Can't we do it tonight?

PAUL. No, we can't do it tonight, because tonight I've got to work. (*Rises, and looks around.*) Except where do I sit?

CORIE. The furniture will be here by five. They promised.

PAUL. (*Dropping affidavits into case, looks at his watch.*) Five? ... It's five-thirty. (*Crosses to bedroom stairs.*) What do we do, sleep in Bloomingdale's tonight?

CORIE. They'll be here, Paul. They're probably stuck in traffic.

PAUL. (*Crossing up to bedroom.*) And what about tonight? I've got a case in court tomorrow. Maybe we should check into a hotel? (*Looks into bedroom.*)

CORIE. (*Rises and moves towards PAUL.*) We just checked out of a hotel. I don't care if the furniture doesn't come. I'm sleeping in my apartment tonight.

PAUL. Where? Where? (*Looks into bathroom, closes door, and starts to come back down the steps.*) There's only room for one in the bathtub. (*He suddenly turns, goes back up steps and opens door to the bathroom.*) Where's the bathtub?

CORIE. (*Hesitantly.*) There is no bathtub.

PAUL. No bathtub?

CORIE. There's a shower . . .

PAUL. How am I going to take a bath?

CORIE. You won't take a bath. You'll take a shower.

PAUL. I don't like showers. I like baths. Corie how am I going to take a bath?

CORIE. You'll lie down in the shower and hang your feet over the sink. . . . I'm sorry there's no bathtub Paul.

PAUL. (*Closes door, and crosses down into room.*) Hmmmmmm ... Boy, of all the nights . . . (*He suddenly shivers.*) It's freezing in here. (*He rubs his hands.*) Isn't there any heat?

CORIE. Of course there's heat. We have a radiator.

PAUL. (*Gets up on steps and feels radiator.*) The radiator's the coldest thing in the room.

CORIE. It's probably the boiler. It's probably off in the whole building.

PAUL. *(Putting on gloves.)* No, it was warm coming up the stairs. *(Goes out door into hall.)* See. . . It's nice and warm out here.

CORIE. Maybe it's because the apartment is empty.

PAUL. The hall is empty too but it's warm out here.

CORIE. *(Moves to the stove.)* It'll be all right once I get a fire going.

PAUL. *(Goes to phone.)* A fire? You'd have to keep the flame going night and day . . . I'll call the landlord.

CORIE. *(Putting log into stove.)* He's not home.

PAUL. Where is he?

CORIE. In Florida! ... There's a handy man that comes Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

PAUL. You mean we freeze on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays?

CORIE. He'll be here in the morning.

PAUL. *(Moving R.)* And what'll we do tonight? I've got a case in court in the morning.

CORIE. *(Moves to PAUL.)* Will you stop saying it like you always have a case in court in the morning. This is your first one.

PAUL. Well, what'll we do?

CORIE. The furniture will be here. In the meantime I can light the stove and you can sit over the fire with your law books and a shawl like Abraham Lincoln. *(Crosses to the Franklin Stove and gets matches from the top of the stove.)*

PAUL. Is that supposed to be funny? *(Begins to investigate small windows.)*

CORIE. No. It was supposed to be nasty. It just came out funny. *(She strikes match and attempts to light the log in stove. PAUL tries the windows.)* What are you doing? *(Gives up attempting to light log.)*

PAUL. I'm checking to see if the windows are closed.

CORIE: They're closed. I looked.

PAUL. Then why is it windy in here?

CORIE. *(Moves R. to PAUL.)* I don't feel a draft.

PAUL. *(Moves away from windows.)* I didn't say draft. I said wind . . . There's a brisk, northeasterly wind blowing in this room.

CORIE. You don't have to get sarcastic.

PAUL. *(Moving up into the kitchen area.)* I'm not getting sarcastic, I'm getting chapped lips. *(Looking up, he glimpses the hole in the skylight.)*

CORIE. How could there be wind in a closed room?

PAUL. How's this for an answer? There's a hole in the skylight. *(He points up.)*

SIDE 2

MOTHER
CORIE
PAUL

MOTHER. Oh, my.

CORIE. It's not that high, Mother.

MOTHER. I know, dear. It's not bad really . What is it, nine flights?

PAUL. Five. We don't count the stoop.

MOTHER. I didn't think I'd make it . . If I'd known the people on the third floor I'd have gone to visit them ...

(PAUL sits on the bottom step of the ladder.)

CORIE. This is a pleasant surprise, Mother.

MOTHER. Well, I really had no intention of coming up, but I had a luncheon in Westchester and I thought, since it's on my way home, I might as well drop in for a few minutes ...

CORIE. On your way home to New Jersey?

MOTHER. Yes. I just came over the Whitestone Bridge and down the Major Deegan Highway and now I'll cut across town and on to the Henry Hudson Parkway and up to the George Washington Bridge. It's no extra trouble.

PAUL. Sounds easy enough.

MOTHER. Yes . . .

CORIE. We were going to ask you over on Friday.

MOTHER. Friday. Good. I'll be here Friday ... I'm not going to stay now, I know you both must be busy.

PAUL. Well, as a matter of fact—

CORIE. *(Stopping him.)* No, we're not, are we, Paul? *(He kills her with a glance.)*

MOTHER. Besides, Aunt Harriet is ringing the bell for me in ten minutes . . . Just one good look around, that's all. I'm not sure I'm coming back.

CORIE. I wish you could have come an hour later. After the furniture arrived.

MOTHER. *(Gets up, looks and stops cold.)* Don't worry. I've got a marvelous imagination.

CORIE. Well . . . ?

MOTHER. *(Stunned.)* Oh, Corie ... it's ... beautiful.

CORIE. You hate it . . .

MOTHER. *(Moves up towards windows.)* No, no. It's a charming apartment. *(Trips over platform.)* I love it.

CORIE. *(Rushes to her.)* You can't really tell like this.

MOTHER. I'm crazy about it.

CORIE. It's not your kind of apartment. I knew you wouldn't like it.

MOTHER. *(Moves down to PAUL.)* I love it ... Paul, didn't I say I loved it? *(Takes his hand.)*

PAUL. She said she loved it.

MOTHER. I knew I said it.

CORIE. (*To MOTHER.*) Do you really, Mother? I mean are you absolutely crazy in love with it?

MOTHER. Oh, yes. It's very cute . . . And there's so much you can do with it.

CORIE. I told you she hated it.

MOTHER. (*Moves towards bedroom landing.*) Corie, you don't give a person a chance. At least let me see the whole apartment.

PAUL. . . . This is the whole apartment.

MOTHER. (*Cheerfully.*) It's a nice, large room.

CORIE. There's a bedroom.

MOTHER. Where?

PAUL. One flight up.

CORIE. It's four little steps. (*Goes up steps to bedroom door.*) See. One-two-three-four.

MOTHER. (*To PAUL.*) Oh. Split level. (*Climbs steps.*) And where's the bedroom? Through there?

CORIE. No. In there. That's the bedroom . . . It's really just a dressing room but I'm going to use it as a bedroom.

MOTHER. (*At bedroom door.*) That's a wonderful idea. And you can just put a bed in there.

CORIE. That's right.

MOTHER. How?

SIDE 3

VELASCO
CORIE

VELASCO. I beg your pardon. (*Sweeps off his hat.*) I hope I'm not disturbing you. I don't usually do this sort of thing but I find myself in a rather embarrassing position and I could use your help. (*Discreetly catches his breath.*) My name is Velasco ... Victor Velasco.

CORIE. (*Nervously.*) Oh, yes ... You live in the attic.

VELASCO. Yes. That's right ... Have we met?

CORIE. (*Very nervously.*) No! ... No, not yet.

VELASCO. Oh. Well, you see, I want to use your bedroom.

CORIE. My bedroom?

VELASCO. Yes. You see, I can't get into my apartment and I wanted to use your window. I'll just crawl out along the ledge.

CORIE. Oh, did you lose your key?

VELASCO. No. I have my key. I lost my money. I'm four months behind in the rent.

CORIE. Oh! ... Gee, that's too bad. I mean it's right in the middle of winter ...

VELASCO. You'll learn, as time goes by in this middle income prison camp, that we have a rat fink for a landlord ... (*Looks about the room.*) You don't have any hot coffee, do you? I'd be glad to pay you for it.

CORIE. No. We just moved in.

VELASCO. Really? (*Looks about the barren room.*) What are you, a folk singer?

CORIE. No. A wife ... They didn't deliver our furniture yet.

VELASCO. (*Moves towards CORIE.*) You know, of course, that you're unbearably pretty. What's your name?

CORIE. Corie ... Mrs. Corie Bratter.

VELASCO. (*Takes it in stride.*) You're still unbearably pretty. I may fall in love with you by seven o'clock. (*Catching sight of the hole in the skylight.*) I see the rat fink left the hole in the skylight.

CORIE. Yes, I just noticed that. (*Crosses R., looking up at the hole.*) But he'll fix it, won't he?

VELASCO. I wouldn't count on it. My bathtub's been running since 1949 ... (*Moves towards CORIE.*) Does your husband work during the day?

CORIE. Yes ... Why ... ?

VELASCO. It's just that I'm home during the day, and I like to find out what my odds are ... (*Scrutinizes CORIE.*) Am I making you nervous?

CORIE. (*Moving away.*) Very nervous.

VELASCO. (*Highly pleased.*) Good. Once a month, I try to make pretty young girls

nervous just to keep my ego from going out. But I'll save you a lot of anguish . . . I'm 56 years old and a thoroughly nice fellow.

CORIE. Except, I heard you were 58 years old. And if you're knocking off two years, I'm nervous all over again.

VELASCO. Not only pretty but bright. *(Sits down on paint can.)* I wish I were ten years older.

CORIE. Older?

VELASCO. Yes. Dirty old men seem to get away with a lot more. I'm still at the awkward stage . . . How long are you married?

CORIE. Six days

VELASCO. In love--?

CORIE. Very much.

VELASCO. Damn . . .

CORIE. What's wrong ?

VELASCO. Under my present state of financial duress I was hoping to be invited down soon for a free meal. But with newlyweds, I could starve to death.

CORIE. Oh! Well, we'd love to have you for dinner, as soon as we get set up.

VELASCO. *(Gets up, and stepping over suitcase, moves to CORIE.)* I hate generalizations. When?

SIDE 4

CORIE
PAUL
MOTHER
VELASCO

CORIE. Well, are we ready to go out to dinner?

MOTHER. *(Nervously.)* You mean we're going out?

CORIE. We had a fire in our stove.

MOTHER. What happened?

PAUL. Nothing. We just turned it on.

CORIE. Mother, are you hungry?

MOTHER. Not terribly ... no.

CORIE. Paul, you're the host. Suggest someplace.

PAUL. Well ... er ... how about Marty's on 47th St.?

CORIE. Marty's? That barn? You get a cow and a baked potato. What kind of a suggestion was that?

PAUL. I'm sorry. I didn't know it was a trick question.

CORIE. Tonight has to be something special. Mr. Velasco, you must know someplace different and unusual ...

VELASCO. *(Leaning against end table.)* Unusual? Yes, I know a very unusual place. It's the best food in New York. But I'm somewhat hesitant to suggest ...

CORIE. Oh, please. *(To MOTHER.)* What do you say, Mother? Do you feel adventurous?

MOTHER. You know me, one of the fellows.

CORIE. *(To VELASCO.)* There you are. We place the evening in your hands.

VELASCO. A delightful proposition ... For dinner, we go to the Four Winds.

PAUL. Oh! The Chinese Restaurant? On Fifty-third Street?

VELASCO. No ... The Albanian restaurant on Staten Island.

MOTHER. *(Holds stomach.)* Staten Island?

CORIE. Doesn't it sound wild, Mother?

MOTHER. Yes ... wild.

CORIE. I love it already. *(As she sweeps past PAUL, on her way to bedroom, she punches him on the shoulder.)*

VELASCO. *(Sitting next to MOTHER.)* Don't expect anything lavish in the way of decor. But Uzu will take care of the atmosphere.

MOTHER. Who's Uzu?

VELASCO. It's a Greek liquor ... Deceptively powerful. I'll only allow you one.

MOTHER. Oh ... thank you.

CORIE. *(Coming out of bedroom with coat and purse.)* It sounds perfect ... Let's go.

PAUL. It'll be murder getting a cab now.

VELASCO. I'll worry about the transportation. All you have to do is pick up the check.

CORIE. *(Above couch.)* Mother has her car.

VELASCO. *(Rises, to PAUL.)* You see? My job is done. Mrs. Banks ... *(Holds up her coat.)*

(PAUL crosses to closet and gets overcoat.)

MOTHER. *(Putting on coat.)* Mr. Velasco, don't you wear a coat?

VELASCO. Only in the winter.

MOTHER. It's thirty-five.

VELASCO. *(Taking beret out of pocket.)* For 25 I wear a coat ... For 35 ... *(Puts beret on. Crosses to door taking scarf out of pocket with a great flair. PAUL watches with great distaste and then crosses into bedroom. Opens door.)* Ready? ... **My group stay close to me. If anyone gets lost, we'll meet at the United States Embassy.** *(Flings scarf about his neck and exits.)*

(MOTHER desperately clutches CORIE's arm, but CORIE manages to push her out the door.)

CORIE. *(Turning back for PAUL.)* What are you looking for?

PAUL. *(Comes out of bedroom.)* My gloves ...

CORIE. *(With disdain.)* You don't need gloves. It's only thirty-five. *(She sweeps out.)*

PAUL. That's right. I forgot. *(Mimicking VELASCO, he flings his scarf around his neck as he crosses to the door.)* **We're having a heat wave.** *(He turns off the LIGHTS and slams the door shut.)*

SIDE 5

CORIE

TELEPHONE
MAN

CORIE. *(Moving to TELEPHONE MAN.)* Is that my number? Eldorado 5-8191? *(MAN nods.)* It has a nice sound, hasn't it?

MAN. *(Why fool with a romantic.)* Yeah, it's a beautiful number. *(The PHONE rings, He answers it-disguising his voice.)* Hello? ... *(Chuckles over his joke.)* Good work, Mr. Bell, you've done it again. *(He hangs up, turns to CORIE.)* Well, you've got your phone. As my mother would say, may your first call be from the Sweepstakes.

CORIE. *(Takes phone.)* My very own phone ... Gives you a sense of power, doesn't it? Can I make a call yet?

MAN. *(Putting cover back on junction box.)* Your bill started two minutes ago.

CORIE. Who can I call? ... I know. *(She starts to dial.)*

MAN. Oh, by the way. My name is Harry Pepper. And if you ever have any trouble with this phone, please, do me a favor, don't ask for Harry Pepper. *(CORIE hangs up, a look of disappointment on her face.)* What's the matter, bad news?

CORIE. *(Like a telephone operator.)* It is going to be cloudy tonight with a light snow.

MAN. *(He looks up at skylight.)* And just think, you'll be the first one in the city to see it fall.

(The DOORBELL buzzes. CORIE puts down the phone, and rushes to the door.)

CORIE. Oh, please, let that be the furniture and not Paul so Paul can see the apartment with furniture. *(She buzzes, opens door and yells downstairs.)* Yes?

VOICE FROM BELOW. It's me!

CORIE. *(Unhappily.)* Oh, hi, Paul. *(She turns into room.)* Well, I guess he sees the apartment without the furniture. *(Takes remaining package and places it with others on landing under the windows.)*

MAN. *(Gathering up his tools.)* How long d'ja say you were married?

CORIE. Six days.

MAN. He won't notice the place is empty until June. *(He crosses to door.)* Well, Eldorado 5-8191 ... Have a nice marriage ... *(Turns back into room.)* And may you soon have many extensions.

SIDE 6

CORIE
MOTHER

CORIE. Mother, the whole world has just opened up to you. Why don't you travel? You've got the time, the luggage. All you need are the shots.

MOTHER. (*Sits on suitcase.*) Travel! ... You think it's so easy for a woman of my age to travel alone?

CORIE. You'll meet people.

MOTHER. I read a story in the Times. A middle-aged woman travelling alone fell off the deck of a ship. They never discovered it until they got to France.

CORIE. (*Moves L. and turns back to MOTHER.*) I promise you, Mother, if you fell off a ship, someone would know about it.

MOTHER. I thought I might get myself a job.

CORIE. (*Straws in the wind.*) Hey, that's a great idea. (*Sits on paint can.*)

MOTHER. (*Shrugs, defeated.*) What would I do?

CORIE. I don't know what you would do. What would you like to do?

MOTHER. (*Considers.*) I'd like to be a grandmother. I think that would be nice.

CORIE. A grandmother?? . . . What's your rush? You know, underneath that Army uniform, you're still a young, vital woman . . . Do you know what I think you really need?

MOTHER. Yes, and I don't want to hear it. (*Gets up and moves away.*)

CORIE. (*Goes to her.*) Because you're afraid to hear the truth.

MOTHER. It's not the truth I'm afraid to hear. It's the word you're going to use.

CORIE. You're damn right I'm going to use that word ... It's love!

MOTHER. Oh ... Thank you.

CORIE. A week ago I didn't know what it meant. And then I checked into the Plaza Hotel. For six wonderful days ... And do you know what happened to me there?

MOTHER. I promised myself I wouldn't ask.

CORIE. I found love ... spiritual, emotional and physical love. And I don't think anyone on earth should be without it.

MOTHER. I'm not. I have you.

CORIE. I don't mean that kind of love. (*Moves to ladder and leans against it.*) I'm talking about late at night in ...

MOTHER. (*Quickly.*) I know what you're talking about.

CORIE. Don't you even want to discuss it?

MOTHER. Not with you in the room.

CORIE. Well, what are you going to do about it?

MOTHER. I'm going back to New Jersey and give myself a Toni Home Permanent. Corie, sweetheart, I appreciate your concern, but I'm very happy the way I am.

CORIE. I'll be the judge of who's happy. *(They embrace.)*