SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt - an appetiser, if you will - from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

Take it for a whirl and see if it tickles your fancy!

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

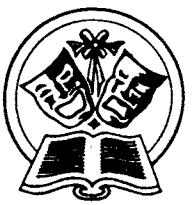
SF PERUSALS

BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

A Comedy

by

NEIL SIMON

SAMUEL  FRENCH

LONDON

NEW YORK TORONTO SYDNEY HOLLYWOOD

© 1964 BY ELLEN ENTERPRISES, INC

1. *This play is fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the United States of America and all countries of the Berne and Universal Copyright Conventions.*

2. *All rights, including Stage, Motion Picture, Radio, Television, Public Reading and Translation into Foreign Languages, are strictly reserved.*

3. **No part of this publication may lawfully be reproduced in ANY form or by any means—photocopying, typescript, recording (including video-recording), manuscript, electronic, mechanical, or otherwise—or be transmitted or stored in a retrieval system, without prior permission.**

4. Rights of Performance by Amateurs are controlled by SAMUEL FRENCH LTD, 52 FITZROY STREET, LONDON W1T 5JR, and they, or their authorized agents, issue licences to amateurs to give performances of this play on payment of a fee. **It is an infringement of the Copyright to give any performance or public reading of the play before the fee has been paid and the licence issued.**

5. Licences are issued subject to the understanding that it shall be made clear in all advertising matter that the audience will witness an amateur performance; that the names of the authors of the plays shall be included on all announcements and on all programmes; and that the integrity of the author's work will be preserved.

The Royalty Fee indicated below is subject to contract and subject to variation at the sole discretion of Samuel French Ltd.

Basic fee for each and every performance by amateurs Code M in the British Isles

In Theatres and Halls seating Four Hundred or more the fee will be subject to negotiation.

In Territories Overseas the fee quoted above may not apply. A fee will be quoted on application to our local authorized agent, or if there is no such agent, on application to Samuel French Ltd, London.

ISBN 0 573 01551 1

BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

Produced by Bernard Delfont and Arthur Lewis by arrangement with Saint Subber and in association with Frank Coven at the Piccadilly Theatre, London, on the 24th November, 1965, with the following cast of characters—

(*in the order of their appearance*)

CORRIE BRATTER	*Marlo Thomas*
TELEPHONE MAN	*John Brandon*
DELIVERY MAN	*Maurice Podbrey*
PAUL BRATTER	*Daniel Massey*
MRS BANKS	*Mildred Natwick*
VICTOR VELASCO	*Kurt Kasznar*

Directed by Richard Benjamin
Original production directed by Mike Nichols
Scenery by Olive Smith

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action of the play passes in the Bratters' apartment on East 48th Street, New York

ACT I

A late afternoon in February

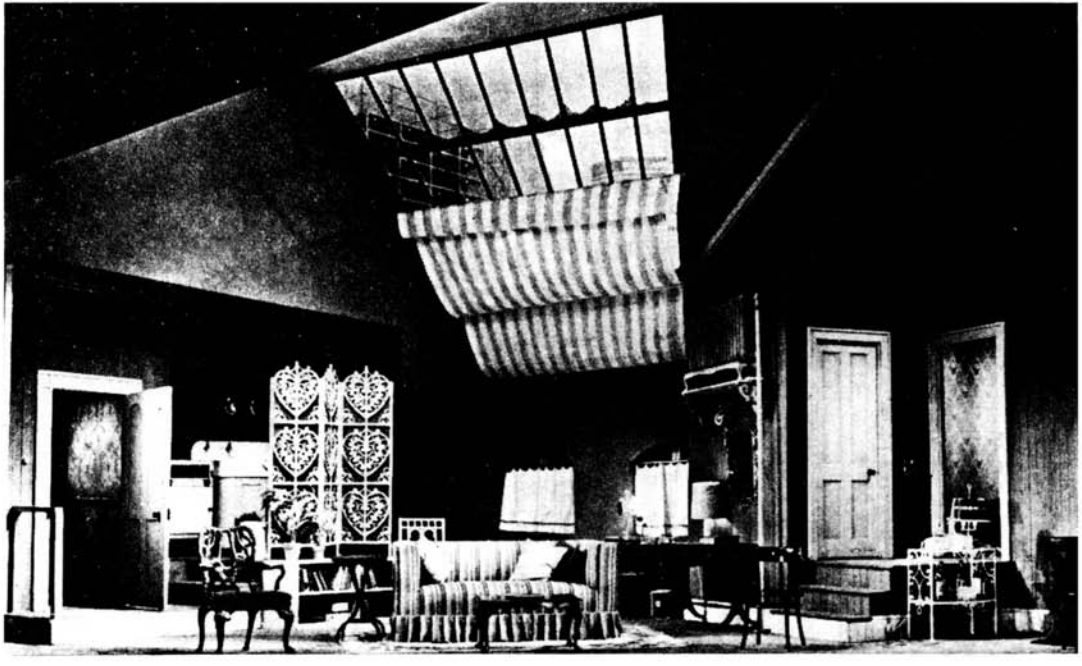
ACT II

SCENE 1 About 7 p.m., four days later
SCENE 2 About 2 a.m. the same night

ACT III

The following afternoon

Time—the present



BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

PART ONE

SCENE—*The Bratters' apartment on East 48th Street, New York. A late afternoon in February.*

It is a large one-room apartment on the top floor of an old brownstone in the East Forties off Third Avenue. There is a large skylight which pours the bright February sunshine glaringly into the room. Through the skylight can be seen the roofs and windows of brownstones across the street and the framework of a large building under construction. Crests of clinging snow are to be seen in two windows up C *and up* LC, *under the skylight. The main entrance is* R, *a step below the level of the apartment itself. Four steps* L *lead up to a raised area from which two doors open, the upstage door leading to a bathroom and the door* L *to the bedroom. Although not much of the bedroom is to be seen, we will soon learn that it is not really a bedroom, but a dressing-room, about six feet by four feet. The bathroom has no bath, just a shower, a wash-basin and a toilet. On another raised section up* R *is the kitchen. It is not really a kitchen, but is just an old gas stove, an older refrigerator, and a chipped sink that stands nakedly between them. Up* L *of this area is another raised area on which stand a steamer trunk and three suit-cases. The room is barren. A ladder, with a couple of empty paint cans covered by a drip cloth, stand forlornly down* C. *The room has just been freshly painted. Not carefully, maybe not professionally, but painted. There is a small combustion stove down* L, *below the platform, an open cupboard or recess down* R, *and some bookshelves up* C. *Completing the furnishings of the room are a railing that runs downstage of the entrance wall and a radiator that sits high on the wall up* L. *There is an unshaded light fitting on the wall down* L. *For all the room's drabness and coldness there is great promise here. Someone with taste, imagination and personality can make this that perfect love nest we all dream about.*

When the CURTAIN *rises, the room is empty. It is about 5.30 p.m. and cold. A key is inserted in the front door* R. *The door opens and* CORRIE BRATTER *enters. She is lovely, young and full of hope for the future. She crosses to* C, *looks around and sighs as though the world were just beginning. For her, it is. She wears slacks and a yellow top, under a large, shaggy, white fur coat. She carries a bouquet of flowers. After rapturously examining the room, she picks up the small paint can, goes to the sink, fills the can with water and puts in the flowers, throwing the wrapping on the floor. A first bit of colour in the room. As she crosses and puts the can of flowers on the stove down* L, *the door bell buzzes. She crosses to the front door, buzzes back, then opens the door.*

CORRIE (*shouting*) Hello?

TELEPHONE MAN (*off in the distance, at the bottom of the stairs; shouting*) Bratter?

CORRIE (*yelling*) Yes. Up here. Top floor. (*She goes to the suitcases, opens one of them, takes out a magnum of champagne and puts it in the refrigerator*)

TELEPHONE MAN (*nearer; shouting*) Hello?

(CORRIE *rushes to the hall door*)

CORRIE (*shouting*) Up here. You have another floor to go. (*She returns to the suitcase, takes out three small logs, takes them* L *and drops them to the floor beside the stove*)

(*The* TELEPHONE MAN *appears at the hall door. He is a tall, heavy-set man in his mid-thirties, in a tartan wool jacket and a baseball cap. He is breathing very, very hard and is carrying a black leather bag with his repair kit, and a notebook*)

MAN. Tel—— (*He tries to catch his breath*) Telephone Company.

CORRIE. Oh, the phone. Good. Come on in.

MAN (*stepping into the room*) That's quite a—(*breath, breath*) quite a climb.

CORRIE. Yes, it's five flights. If you don't count the front stoop.

MAN. I *counted* the front stoop. (*Breath, breath. He refers to his notebook*) Paul Bratter—right?

CORRIE. *Mrs* Paul Bratter. (*She removes her coat*)

MAN (*checking in his book*) Princess phone?

CORRIE. The little one? That lights up? In beige?

MAN. The little one. (*Breath, breath*) That lights up. (*Breath, breath*) In beige. (*Breath, breath. He swallows hard*)

CORRIE. Would you like a glass of water?

MAN (*sucking for air and nodding*) Please.

CORRIE (*moving to the sink*) I'd offer you soda or a beer but we don't have anything yet.

MAN. A glass of water's fine.

CORRIE (*suddenly embarrassed*) Except I don't have a glass, either.

MAN. Oh.

CORRIE. Nothing's arrived yet. You could put your head under and just schlurp.

MAN. No, I'm okay. Just a little out of shape. (*He climbs stiffly up the step out of the well, groans with pain, then looks around*) Where do you want the phone?

CORRIE (*looking around*) The phone? Let me see. Gee, I don't know. Do you have any ideas?

MAN. Well, it depends what you're gonna do with the room. You gonna have furniture in here?

CORRIE. Yes, it's on its way up.

MAN (*looking towards the stairs*) *Heavy* furniture?

CORRIE. I'll tell you what. (*She points to the telephone junction box*

on the wall down L) Just put it over there and give me a long extension cord. If I can't find a place, I'll just hang it out of the window.

MAN. Fair enough. (*He crosses to the junction box, coughing and in pain*) Whoo!

CORRIE. Say, I'm awfully sorry about the stairs. (*She drags one of the suitcases towards the bedroom door*)

(*The* MAN *goes on to his knees, opens his bag, takes out a telephone and connects it*)

MAN. You're really gonna live up here, heh? I mean, every day?

CORRIE. Every day.

MAN. You don't mind it?

CORRIE (*stopping on the stairs* L) Mind it? I love this apartment. (*She moves to the bedroom door*) Well, it *does* discourage people.

(CORRIE *exits to the bedroom with the suitcase*)

MAN. What people?

(CORRIE *enters from the bedroom and crosses to the other suitcases*)

CORRIE. Mothers, friends, relatives, mothers. I mean—no one justs 'pops' in on you when they have to climb five flights.

MAN. You're a newlywed, right?

CORRIE. Six days. What gave me away?

MAN. I watch *What's My Line* a lot.

(*The door bell buzzes*)

CORRIE. Oh, I hope that's the furniture. (*She goes to the hall door*)

MAN. I don't want to see this.

(CORRIE *presses the buzzer*)

CORRIE (*yelling down the stairs*) Helloooo! Bloomingdale's?

DELIVERY MAN (*off in the distance, at the bottom of the stairs; calling*) Lord and Taylor.

CORRIE. Lord and Taylor? (*She shrugs, collects the empty suitcase and puts it in the cupboard down* R) Probably another wedding gift. From my mother. She sends me wedding gifts twice a day.

MAN. I hope it's an electric heater. (*He blows on his hands*)

(CORRIE, *worried, feels the steam pipe down* R)

CORRIE. Really? Is it cold in here?

MAN. I can't grip the screwdriver. Maybe the steam is off.

CORRIE (*crossing to* L) Maybe that's it. (*She reaches up and tests the radiator*)

MAN. Just turn it on. It'll come right up.

CORRIE. It *is* on. It's just not coming up.

MAN. Oh. Well, that's these old brownstones for you. (*He zips up his jacket*)

CORRIE. I prefer it this way. It's a medical fact, you know, that steam is very bad for you.

MAN. Yeah? In February?

(*The* DELIVERY MAN *enters from the hall, carrying three packages. He is in his early sixties and from the way he is breathing, it seems the end is very near. He gasps for air*)

CORRIE (*crossing to the Delivery Man*) Oh, hi. Just put it down—anywhere.

(*The* DELIVERY MAN *puts the packages on the floor, panting. He wants to talk, but cannot. He extends his hand to the Telephone Man for a bit of compassion*)

MAN. I know. I know.

CORRIE. I'm awfully sorry about the stairs.

(*The* DELIVERY MAN *takes out a pad and pencil and holds them out limply towards Corrie*)

What's this?

MAN. I think he wants you to sign it.

CORRIE. Oh, yes. (*She quickly signs and returns the pad and pencil to the Delivery Man*) Wait, just a minute. (*She collects her handbag and takes out some change*) Here, you go . . . (*She puts some coins into the Delivery Man's hand*)

(*The* DELIVERY MAN *nods weakly and turns to go*)

Will you be all right?

(*The* DELIVERY MAN, *for the first time, gets out some words*)

DELIVERY MAN. Argh, argh.

(*The* DELIVERY MAN *exits to the hall, closing the door behind him*)

CORRIE. It's a shame, isn't it? Giving such hard work to an old man. (*She takes two of the packages and puts them with the suitcase up* R)

MAN. He's probably only twenty-five. They age fast on this route. (*He lifts the telephone receiver and dials. Into the telephone*) Hello—Ed? . . . Yeah . . . On—er—'Eldorado five-eight-one-nine-one'. Give me a straight check. (*He replaces the receiver*)

CORRIE (*crossing to the Man*) Is that my number? Eldorado five-eight-one-nine-one?

(*The* MAN *nods*)

It has a nice sound, hasn't it?

MAN (*why fool with a romantic*) Yeah, it's a beautiful number.

(*The telephone rings*)

(*He lifts the receiver. Into the telephone; disguising his voice*) Hello? . . . (*He chuckles over his joke*) Good work, Mr Bell, you've done it again. (*He replaces the receiver*) Well, you've got your phone. As my mother would say, may your first call be from the Sweepstakes.

CORRIE. My very own phone. Gives you a sense of power, doesn't it? Can I make a call yet?

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

CORRIE. Who can I call? (*She lifts the receiver*) I know. (*She dials and listens*)

MAN. Oh, by the way, my name is Harry Pepper. And if you ever have any trouble with this phone, please, do me a favour, *don't* ask for Harry Pepper.

(CORRIE *replaces the receiver, a look of disappointment on her face*)

What's the matter—bad news?

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

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

(*The door bell buzzes.* CORRIE *rushes to the hall door and opens it*)

CORRIE. Oh, please, let that be the furniture and not Paul, so Paul can see the apartment with furniture. (*She buzzes and then yells down the stairs*) Yes?

PAUL (*off in the distance, at the bottom of the stairs; calling*) It's me.

CORRIE (*unhappily*) Oh, hi, Paul. (*She turns into the room*) Well, I guess he sees the apartment without the furniture. (*She takes the remaining package and places it with the others up* R)

MAN (*rising and gathering up his tools, etc.*) How long d'ya say you were married?

CORRIE. Six days.

MAN. He won't notice the place is empty until June. (*He picks up his bag and crosses to the hall door*) Well, Eldorado five-eight-one-nine-one—have a nice marriage. And may you soon have many extensions. (*He looks at the climb down he has to make and moans*) Ooohh.

(*The* MAN *exits to the hall.* CORRIE *quickly starts to prepare the room for Paul's initial entrance. She gathers up the drip cloth and throws it into the cupboard down* R)

PAUL (*off; nearer*) Corrie? Where are you?

(CORRIE *rushes to the hall door*)

CORRIE (*yelling*) Up here, hon—top floor.

(*The telephone rings*)

Oh, my goodness. The phone. (*She rushes to the telephone and lifts*

the receiver. Into the telephone) Hello? . . . Yes? . . . Oh, yes, he is—I mean, he's on his way up . . . Can you hold on for two more floors? (*She puts down the receiver and yells*) Paul. Hurry up, darling.

PAUL (*off; calling*) Okay. Okay.

CORRIE (*into the telephone*) Hello . . . He'll be with you in one more flight . . . Thank you . . . (*She puts down the receiver and continues to get the apartment ready. She closes the bedroom and bathroom doors, then collects the wrapping from the flowers and the newspaper from the top of the gas stove and stuffs them into the nearest hiding place, the refrigerator. She surveys her apartment, and satisfied with what she sees, she goes to the hall door and yells*) Now, honey, don't expect too much. The furniture didn't get here yet and the paint didn't come out exactly right, but I think it's going to be beautiful. (*She pauses and listens*) Paul? Paul, are you all right?

PAUL (*off*) I'm coming. I'm coming.

(CORRIE *goes to the receiver and picks it up*)

CORRIE (*into the telephone*) He's coming. He's coming. (*She puts the receiver down*)

(PAUL BRATTER *enters from the hall. He falls in through the doorway and hangs on to the rail. He is aged twenty-six, but breathes and dresses like fifty-six. He carries a heavy suitcase and an attache case and all the dignity he can bear. He drops the attache case on to the floor*)

(*She crosses to Paul*) Hi, sweetheart. (*She smothers Paul with kisses*)

(PAUL *fights for air*)

Oh, Paul, darling.

(PAUL *sucks for oxygen*)

Well? (*She steps back*) Say something.

(PAUL, *breathing with great difficulty, looks back down the stairs*)

PAUL. It's six flights. Did you know it's six flights?

CORRIE. It isn't. It's five.

(PAUL *staggers up the step into the room and collapses on to the suitcase*)

PAUL. What about that big thing hanging outside the building?

CORRIE. That's not a flight. It's a stoop.

PAUL. It may *look* like a stoop, but it climbs like a flight. (*Breath, breath*)

CORRIE. Is that *all* you have to say?

PAUL (*gasping*) I didn't think I'd get that much out. (*He breathes heavily and removes his hat and gloves*) It didn't seem like six flights when I first saw the apartment. (*He puts his hat and gloves on the floor beside the suitcase*) Why is that?

CORRIE. You didn't see the apartment. Don't you remember, the woman wasn't home. You saw the third floor apartment.

PAUL. Then that's why.

CORRIE. You don't like it. You really don't like it.

PAUL. I *do* like it. (*He squints around*) I'm just waiting for my eyes to clear first.

CORRIE. I expected you to walk in here and say, 'Wow!' (*She takes his hand*)

PAUL. I will. (*He takes a deep breath*) Okay. (*He looks around. Without enthusiasm*) Wow.

CORRIE. Oh, Paul. (*She throws herself on to Paul's knee*) It'll be beautiful, I promise you. You just came home too soon. (*She nuzzles him*)

PAUL. You know, I missed you.

CORRIE. Did you really?

PAUL. Right in the middle of the Monday morning conference I began to feel sexy.

CORRIE. That's marvellous.

(*They kiss*)

Oh, boy. Let's take a cab back to the *Plaza*. We still have an hour before check-out time.

PAUL. We can't. We took a towel and two ashtrays. We're hot. (*He kisses her*)

CORRIE. My gosh, you still love me.

PAUL. After six days at the *Plaza*? What's the trick?

CORRIE (*rising and moving* LC) But that was a honeymoon. Now we're on a regular schedule. I thought you'd come home tonight, and we'd shake hands and start the marriage. (*She extends her hand to him*)

PAUL (*rising and moving to her*) How do you do?

(*They shake hands, then* CORRIE *throws herself into Paul's arms and kisses him*)

CORRIE. My turn to say 'Wow!' For a lawyer, you're some good kisser.

PAUL (*with hidden import*) For a kisser, I'm some good lawyer.

CORRIE. What does that mean? Something's happened? Something wonderful? Well, for Pete's sake, what?

PAUL. It's not positive yet. The office is supposed to call and let me know in five minutes.

CORRIE (*remembering*) Oh! They called!

PAUL. What?

CORRIE. I mean—they're calling.

PAUL. When?

CORRIE. Now. They're on the phone now.

PAUL (*looking around*) Where . . . ?

CORRIE (*pointing to the telephone*) There.

PAUL (*rushing to the telephone*) Why didn't you tell me? (*He picks up the receiver*)

CORRIE. I forgot. You kissed me and got me all crazy.

PAUL (*into the telephone*) Frank? . . . Yeah . . . Listen, what did . . . ? Oh, very funny . . . (*He looks at Corrie*) 'For a lawyer, I'm some good kisser' . . . Come on, come, tell me . . . Well? . . . (*He gives a big grin*)

(CORRIE, *feeling left out, sneaks over to Paul and tries to tickle him*)

You're kidding? . . . The whole thing? . . . Oh, Frank, baby, I love you . . . What do you mean—'nervous'? . . . I passed the bar, didn't I? . . . Yes, I'll go over everything tonight . . .

(CORRIE *reacts to 'tonight' and moves slowly to the step-ladder*)

I'll meet you in *Schraffts* at eight o'clock in the morning. We'll go over the briefs . . . Hey, what kind of a tie do I wear? . . . I don't know. I thought maybe something flowing like Oliver Wendell Holmes' . . . Right. (*He replaces the receiver*)

(CORRIE *climbs the step-ladder*)

(*He moves to Corrie, bubbling with joy*) Did you hear? Did you hear?

CORRIE. What about tonight?

PAUL. I've got to be in court tomorrow morning. I've got my first case.

CORRIE. What about tonight?

PAUL. I'll have to go over the briefs. Marshall has to be in Washington tomorrow and he wants me to take over—with Frank—but it's really my case. (*He hugs Corrie*) Oh, Corrie, baby, I'm going to be a lawyer.

CORRIE. That's wonderful. I just thought we were going to spend the night together.

PAUL. We'll spend tomorrow night together. (*He moves* R *and opens his attache case*) I hope I brought those affidavits. (*He takes some documents from the case*)

CORRIE. *I* bought a black nightgown. (*She moves to the suitcase up* R)

(PAUL *looks through his documents; his mind has now turned completely legal*)

PAUL. Marshall had everything laid out when I was at the office. It looks simple enough. A furrier is suing a woman for non-payment of bills.

CORRIE (*taking a black nightdress from the suitcase*) I was going to cook you spaghetti with the white clam sauce—in a bikini.

PAUL. We're representing the furrier. He made four specially tailored coats for this woman on Park Avenue. Now she doesn't want the coats.

(CORRIE *takes off her top, slips her arms through the nightdress straps and drapes it over her*)

CORRIE. Then I found this great thing on Eighth Street. It's a crossword puzzle with dirty words.

PAUL. But the furrier can't get rid of the coats. She's only four foot eight. He'd have to sell them to a rich little girl.

CORRIE. Then I was going to put on a record and do an authentic Cambodian fertility dance.

PAUL. The only trouble is, he didn't have a signed contract.

(CORRIE *begins her 'fertility dance' and ends up collapsing on the bottom step of the ladder*)

What are you doing?

CORRIE. I'm trying to get you all hot and bothered and you're summing up for the jury. The whole marriage is over.

PAUL (*moving to Corrie*) Oh, Corrie, honey, I'm sorry. (*He puts his arms around her*) I guess I'm pretty excited. You want me to be rich and famous, don't you?

CORRIE. 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.

CORRIE. Something wild, insane and crazy?

PAUL. I promise.

CORRIE (*her eyes wide open*) Like what?

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

CORRIE. 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. (*He looks around*) Except where do I sit?

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

(PAUL *replaces the documents in his case and looks at his watch*)

PAUL. Five? It's five-thirty. (*He crosses to the stairs* L) What do we do—sleep in Bloomingdale's tonight?

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

PAUL (*moving to the bedroom door*) And what about tonight? I've got a case in court tomorrow. Maybe we should check into an hotel. (*He looks into the bedroom*)

CORRIE (*moving* L) We just checked *out* of an hotel. I don't care if the furniture *doesn't* come. I'm sleeping in my apartment *tonight.*

PAUL. Where? Where? (*He looks into the bathroom, closes the door and turns to come down the stairs*) There's only room for one in the bath tub. (*He suddenly turns, opens the bathroom door and looks into the bathroom*) Where's the bath tub?

CORRIE (*hesitantly*) There is no bath tub.

PAUL. No bath tub?

CORRIE. There's a shower.

PAUL. How am I going to take a bath?

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

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

CORRIE. You'll lie down in the shower and hang your feet over the sink. I'm sorry there's no bath tub, Paul.

PAUL (*closing the bathroom door and crossing to* C) Hmmmmm! Boy, of all the nights . . . (*He suddenly shivers*) It's freezing in here. (*He rubs his hands*) Isn't there any heat?

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

(PAUL *crosses to* LC, *reaches up and feels the radiator*)

PAUL. The *radiator's* the coldest thing in the room.

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

(PAUL *crosses to* R, *picks up his gloves and puts them on*)

PAUL. No, it was warm coming up the stairs. (*He goes into the hall for a moment*) See—it's nice and warm out here.

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

PAUL. The *hall* is empty, too, but it's warm out there.

CORRIE (*moving to the stove* L) It'll be all right once I get a fire going.

PAUL. A fire? You'll have to keep the flame going night and day. (*He crosses towards the telephone*) I'll call the landlord.

CORRIE (*putting a log into the stove*) He's not at home.

PAUL. Where is he?

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

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

CORRIE. He'll be here in the morning.

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

CORRIE (*crossing 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?

CORRIE. 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. (*She crosses to the stove and picks up a box of matches*)

PAUL (*moving up* C) Is that supposed to be funny? (*He investigates the windows*)

CORRIE. No, it was supposed to be nasty. It just came out funny. (*She strikes a match and attempts to light the log in the stove*)

(PAUL *tries the windows*)

What are you doing? (*She gives up attempting to light the log*)

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

CORRIE. They're closed. I looked.

PAUL. Then why is it windy in here?

CORRIE (*crossing to Paul*) I don't feel a draught.

PAUL (*moving down* C) I didn't say 'draught'. I said 'wind'. There's a brisk, north-easterly wind blowing in this room.

CORRIE. You don't have to get sarcastic.

PAUL (*moving up* R) I'm not getting sarcastic, I'm getting chapped lips. (*He looks up and sees a hole in the skylight*)

CORRIE. 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*)

(CORRIE *looks up, sees the hole and is obviously embarrassed by it*)

CORRIE. Gee, I didn't see that before. Did you?

PAUL (*moving to the ladder*) I didn't see the *apartment* before.

CORRIE (*moving* R *and collecting her coat; defensively*) All right, Paul, don't get upset. I'm sure it'll be fixed. We could plug it up with something for tonight.

PAUL (*going up the ladder*) How? How? That's twenty feet high. You'd have to fly over in a plane and *drop* something in.

CORRIE (*putting her coat on the rail*) It's only for one night. And it's not that cold.

PAUL. In February? Do you know what it's like at three o'clock in the morning? In February? Ice-cold freezing.

CORRIE. It's not going to be freezing. I called the weather bureau. It's going to be cloudy with a light s—— (*She catches herself and looks up*)

PAUL. What?

(CORRIE *turns away*)

What? A light what?

CORRIE. Snow.

PAUL (*coming down the ladder*) *Snow!* It's going to snow tonight? In here?

CORRIE. They're wrong as often as they're right.

PAUL. I'm going to be shovelling snow in my own living-room.

CORRIE. It's a little hole.

PAUL. With that wind it could blow six-foot drifts in the bathroom. Honestly, Corrie, I don't see how you can be so calm about all this.

CORRIE. Well, what is it you want me to do?

PAUL. Go to pieces, like me. It's only natural.

CORRIE (*moving to Paul and putting her arms around him*) I've got a better idea. I'll keep you warm. And there's no charge for electricity. (*She kisses him*)

PAUL. I can see I haven't got much of a law career ahead of me.

CORRIE. Good. I hope we starve. And they find us up here dead in each other's arms.

PAUL. 'Frozen skinny lovers found on Forty-Eighth Street.'

(*They kiss*)

CORRIE. Are we in love again?

PAUL. We're in love again.

(*They kiss. A long passionate embrace. The door bell buzzes*)

CORRIE (*breaking away*) The bed. I hope it's the bed. (*She moves* R, *buzzes back, then opens the door and yells*) Hellooooo! Bloomingdale's?

MOTHER (*in the distance, at the bottom of the stairs; calling*) Surprise!

CORRIE (*turning to Paul*) Oh, God!

PAUL. What's wrong?

CORRIE. Please, let it be a woman delivering the furniture.

PAUL. A woman?

MOTHER (*off; calling*) Corrie?

CORRIE. But it's my mother.

PAUL. Your mother? Now?

CORRIE (*removing the nightdress and donning her top*) She couldn't wait. Just one more day.

PAUL. Corrie, you've got to get rid of her. I've got a case in court tomorrow.

CORRIE. It's ugly in here without furniture, isn't it? She's just going to hate it, won't she?

MOTHER (*off; calling*) Corrie? Where are you?

CORRIE (*yelling*) Up here, Mom. Top floor.

PAUL (*picking up his case and putting it in the corner up* L) How am I going to work tonight?

CORRIE. She'll think this is the way we're going to live. Like gypsies in an empty store.

PAUL (*putting the nightdress into the suitcase*) Maybe I ought to sleep in the office.

CORRIE. She'll freeze to death. She'll sit there in her fur coat and freeze to death.

PAUL. I don't get you, Corrie. Five minutes ago this was the Garden of Eden. Now it's suddenly Cannery Row.

CORRIE. She doesn't understand, Paul. She has a different set of values. She's practical. She's not young like us.

PAUL (*picking up the suitcase*) Well, I'm twenty-six and cold as hell. (*He crosses and puts the suitcase into the bedroom*)

MOTHER (*off, nearer; calling*) Corrie?

CORRIE (*yelling*) One more flight, Mother. Paul, promise me one thing. Don't tell her about the rent. If she asks, tell her you're not quite sure yet.

PAUL. Not sure what my rent is? I *have* to know what my rent is, I'm a college graduate.

CORRIE. Can't you lie a little? For me? You don't have to tell her it's a hundred and twenty-five.

PAUL. All right. How much is it?

CORRIE. Sixty?

PAUL. What?

CORRIE. Sixty-five?

PAUL. Corrie . . .

CORRIE. Seventy-five, all right? Seventy-five dollars and sixty-three cents a month. Including gas and electricity. She'll believe that, won't she?

PAUL. *Anyone* would believe that. It's the hundred and twenty-five that's hard to swallow.

CORRIE. She's taking a long time. I hope she's all right.

PAUL. I can't lie about the stairs. She's going to figure out it's six floors all by herself.

CORRIE. Shh, shh, she's here.

PAUL. Just promise *me* one thing. Don't let her stay too long because I've got a——

CORRIE } (*together*)—case in court in the morning.
PAUL }

CORRIE. I know, I know. (*She turns to the door*) Mother!

(MRS BANKS, *Corrie's mother, enters from the hall and grabs the rail to keep from falling. She is in her late forties and is pretty, but has not bothered to look after herself these past few years. She could use a permanent wave and a whole new wardrobe*)

PAUL (*rushing to support Mother*) Hello, Mom.

(MOTHER *struggles for air*)

MOTHER. Oh! Oh! I can't breathe.

CORRIE. Take it easy, Mom.

MOTHER. I can't catch my breath.

PAUL. You should have rested.

MOTHER. I did. But there were always more stairs.

CORRIE. Paul, help her.

PAUL. Come on, Mom. Watch the step. (*He leads her up the step into the room*)

MOTHER. More stairs?

(CORRIE *and* PAUL *lead* MOTHER *towards Paul's suitcase*)

CORRIE. You want some water?

MOTHER. Later. I can't swallow yet.

PAUL. Here, sit down.

(MOTHER *sits on the suitcase*)

MOTHER. Oh, my!

CORRIE. 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*)

CORRIE. 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 . . .

CORRIE. 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.

CORRIE. 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 . . .

CORRIE (*interrupting*) No, we're not, are we, Paul?

(PAUL *glares at Corrie*)

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.

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

MOTHER (*rising and looking around*) Don't worry. I've got a marvellous imagination . . . (*She breaks off*)

CORRIE. Well . . . ?

MOTHER (*stunned*) Oh, Corrie—it's—beautiful.

CORRIE. You hate it.

MOTHER (*moving towards the window*) No, no. It's a charming apartment. (*She trips over the step up* C) I love it.

CORRIE (*rushing to her*) You can't really tell like this.

MOTHER. I'm crazy about it.

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

MOTHER (*moving to Paul*) I love it. Paul, didn't I say I loved it? (*She takes Paul's hand*)

PAUL. She said she loved it.

MOTHER. I knew I said it.

CORRIE. 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.

CORRIE. I told you she hated it.

MOTHER (*crossing towards the bedroom door*) Corrie, 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.

CORRIE. There's a bedroom.

MOTHER. Where?

PAUL. One flight up.

CORRIE. It's four little steps. (*She crosses and goes up the steps to the bedroom door*) See. One—two—three—four.

MOTHER (*to Paul*) Oh. Split level. (*She joins Corrie at the bedroom door*) And where's the bedroom? Through there?

CORRIE. 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 (*looking into the bedroom*) That's a wonderful idea. And you can just put a bed in there.

CORRIE. That's right.

MOTHER. How?

(PAUL *rises and moves to the bedroom door*)

CORRIE. It'll fit. I measured the room.

MOTHER. A double bed?

CORRIE. No, an oversized single.

MOTHER. Oh, they're nice. And where will Paul sleep?

CORRIE. With me.

PAUL. In an oversized single?

MOTHER. I'm sure you'll be comfortable.

CORRIE. I'm positive.

(PAUL *moves* C *and glumly surveys the room*)

MOTHER. It's a wonderful idea. Very clever.

CORRIE. Thank you.

MOTHER. Except you can't get to the closet.

CORRIE. Yes, you can.

MOTHER. Without climbing over the bed?

CORRIE. No, you *have* to climb over the bed.

MOTHER. That's a good idea.

(CORRIE *moves to the ladder and climbs up it*)

CORRIE. Everything's just temporary. As they say in *McCall's*, it won't really take shape until the bride's own personality becomes more clearly defined.

MOTHER. I think it's *you* right now. (*She turns to the other door*) What's in here? (*She opens the door and looks in*) The bathroom. (*She closes the door*) No bath tub. You really have quite a lot here, for one room. (*She moves* LC) And where's the kitchen? (*She sees*

the stove and refrigerator, stops in horror and then crosses towards them) Whoo, there it is. Very cosy. I suppose you'll eat out a lot the first year.

CORRIE. We're never eating out. It's big enough to make spaghetti and things.

MOTHER. What 'things'?

CORRIE. It's a dish I make, called 'Things'. Honestly, Mother, we won't starve.

MOTHER. I know, dear. (*She stands under the skylight*) It's chilly in here. Do you feel a draught?

PAUL (*looking up*) Uh, stand over here, Mom.

(MOTHER *moves down* RC)

CORRIE. What you need is a drink. Paul, why don't you run down and get some Scotch?

PAUL. Now?

MOTHER (*crossing towards the stove* L) Oh, not for me, I'm leaving in a few minutes.

PAUL. Oh. She's leaving in a few minutes.

CORRIE. She can stay for one drink.

(PAUL *quietly argues with* CORRIE *at the ladder*)

MOTHER. There's so much you can do in here. Lots of wall space. What colour are you going to paint it?

CORRIE. It's painted.

MOTHER. Very attractive.

PAUL (*looking at his watch*) Wow! Nearly six.

MOTHER. I've got to go.

CORRIE. Not until you have a drink. (*To Paul*) Will you get the Scotch.

(PAUL *continues to argue with* CORRIE)

MOTHER. All right. I'll stay for just one drink.

PAUL (*crossing to the hall door*) Good. I'll get the Scotch.

MOTHER. Button up, dear. It's cold.

PAUL. I've noticed that.

CORRIE. And get some cheese.

(PAUL *exits to the hall*)

MOTHER (*calling*) Paul!

(PAUL *enters from the hall*)

(*She extends her arms*) I just want to give my fella a kiss. And wish him luck.

(PAUL *crosses to Mother*)

(*She kisses Paul*) Your new home is absolutely beautiful. It's a perfect little apartment.

PAUL. Oh—thanks, Mom.

MOTHER. Then you *do* like it?

PAUL. Like it? (*He looks at Corrie then crosses to the hall door*) Where else can you find anything like this—for seventy-five dollars sixty-three a month?

(PAUL *exits to the hall.* CORRIE *climbs down the ladder and looks for some sign of approval from Mother*)

CORRIE. Well?

MOTHER (*moving to Corrie*) Oh, Corrie, I'm so excited for you.

(*They embrace*)

CORRIE. It's not exactly what you pictured, is it, Mother?

MOTHER. Well, it is *unusual*—like you. (*She crosses to* R) I remember when you were a little girl you said you wanted to live on the moon. (*She moves to* R *of Corrie*) I thought you were joking. What about Paul? Is he happy with all this?

CORRIE. He's happy with me. I think it's the same thing. Why?

MOTHER. I worry about you two. You're so impulsive. You jump into life. Paul is like me. He looks first. (*She sits on the suitcase*)

CORRIE. He doesn't look. He stares. That's the trouble with both of you. (*She moves the large paint can, puts it* L *of Mother and sits on it*) Oh, Mother, you don't know how I dreaded your coming up here. I was sure you'd think I was completely out of my mind.

MOTHER. Why should you think that, dear?

CORRIE. Well, it's the first thing I've ever done on my own. Without your help.

MOTHER. If you wanted it, I'm sure you would have asked for it—but you didn't. And I understand.

CORRIE. I hope you do, Mother. It's something I just had to do all by myself.

MOTHER. Corrie, you mustn't think I'm hurt. I'm not hurt.

CORRIE. I'm so glad.

MOTHER. You mustn't think I'm hurt. I don't get hurt over things like that.

CORRIE. I didn't think you would.

MOTHER. *Other* things hurt me, but not that.

CORRIE. Good. Hey, let's open my presents and see what I've got. And you try to act surprised. (*She rises, collects the three packages from up* R, *resumes her seat on the paint can and puts the packages on the floor beside her*)

MOTHER. You won't let me buy you anything. Oh, they're just a few little things.

CORRIE (*vigorously shaking the smallest package*) What's in here? It sounds expensive.

MOTHER. Well, *now* I think it's a broken clock.

(CORRIE *opens the package and drops the wrappings, etc. on to the floor*)

CORRIE. I'll bet you cleaned out Saks' Gift Department. I think I'm a regular stop on the delivery route now. (*She takes a broken clock from the package, replaces it, puts the package aside and opens the largest package*)

MOTHER. Aunt Harriet was with me when I picked it out. (*She laughs*) She thinks I'm over here every day now.

CORRIE. You know you're welcome, Mother.

MOTHER. I said, 'Why, Harriet? Just because I'm alone now,' I said. 'I'm not afraid to live alone. In some ways it's better to live alone,' I said.

(CORRIE *examines a blanket from the package, then puts it aside and opens the final package.* MOTHER *picks up a piece of tissue paper and smooths it out on her lap*)

But you can't tell her that. She thinks a woman living alone, way out in New Jersey, is the worst thing in the world. 'It's not,' I told her. 'It's not the *worst* thing.'

(CORRIE *takes the dismantled parts of a coffee-pot from the package*)

CORRIE. Hey, does this come with directions?

MOTHER. If I knew about this kitchen, it would have come with hot coffee. (*She laughs*)

(CORRIE *picks up the package with the clock and rises*)

CORRIE. Mother, you're an absolute angel. But you've got to stop buying things for me. It's getting embarrassing. (*She puts the clock on the refrigerator and the coffee-pot on the sink*) If you keep it up I'm going to open a discount house.

MOTHER. It's my pleasure, Corrie. (*She collects up the discarded wrappings*) It's a mother's greatest joy to be able to buy gifts for her daughter when she gets married. You'll see some day. I just hope your child doesn't deprive *you* of that pleasure.

CORRIE. I'm not depriving you, Mother. (*She puts the blanket with the suitcase up* C)

MOTHER. I didn't say you were.

CORRIE (*moving to* R *of Mother*) Yes, you did.

MOTHER. Then why are you?

CORRIE. Because I think you should spend the money on yourself, that's why.

MOTHER. Myself? What does a woman like me need? Living all alone. Way out in New Jersey. (*She rises, crosses and puts the wrappings outside the hall door*)

CORRIE (*moving to* L *of Mother*) It's only been six days. And you're only five minutes from the city.

MOTHER. Who can get through that traffic in five minutes?

CORRIE. Then why don't you move into New York?

MOTHER. Where? Where would I live?

CORRIE. Mother, I don't care where you live. The point is, you've got to start living for yourself now.

(MOTHER *crosses to* C)

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

CORRIE. 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.

CORRIE (*crossing to* L *and turning*) I promise you, Mother, if *you* fell off a ship, *someone* would know about it.

MOTHER. I thought I might get myself a job.

CORRIE (*straws in the wind*) Hey, that's a great idea. (*She sits on the paint can*)

MOTHER (*shrugging; defeated*) What would I do?

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

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

CORRIE. 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. (*She rises and moves* R)

CORRIE (*rising and moving to* L *of Mother*) 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.

CORRIE. You're darn right. I'm going to use that word. It's love.

MOTHER. Oh. Thank you.

CORRIE. 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.

CORRIE. 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.

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

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

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

MOTHER. Not with *you* in the room.

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

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

CORRIE. I'll be the judge of who's happy.

(*They embrace. The hall door flies open.*

PAUL *staggers in from the hall, carrying a bottle of whisky. He closes the door behind him and wearily leans his head against it, utterly exhausted*)

MOTHER. Oh, Paul, you shouldn't have run—just for me.

(*The door bell buzzes, Aunt Harriet's special buzz*)

Ooh, and there's Harriet. I've got to go. (*She collects her handbag*)

CORRIE. Some visit.

MOTHER. Just a sneak preview. I'll see you on Friday for the World Première. Good-bye, Paul. I'm so sorry. (*To Corrie*) Good-bye, love. I'll see you on Friday.

(PAUL *opens the hall door*)

Thank you. (*She glances out at the stairs*) Geronimo!

(MOTHER *exits to the hall.* PAUL *closes the door and, breathing hard, puts the bottle on the floor at the foot of the ladder. He then moves* L, *turns and glares at Corrie*)

CORRIE. What is it? The stairs?

(PAUL *shakes his head*)

The hole?

(PAUL *shakes his head*)

The bath tub?

(PAUL *shakes his head*)

Something new?

(PAUL *nods*)

Well, what?

PAUL (*leaning against the wall up* L) Guess.

CORRIE. Paul, I can't guess. Tell me.

PAUL. Oh, come on, Corrie. Take a wild stab at it. Try something like, 'All the neighbours are crazy.'

CORRIE. *Are* all the neighbours crazy?

PAUL (*a pitchman's revelation*) I just had an interesting talk with the man down in the liquor store. Do you know we have some of the greatest weirdos in the country right here, in this house?

CORRIE. Really? Like who? (*She picks up the bottle of whisky and puts it on the kitchen platform*)

PAUL (*gathering his strength and pacing* R) Well, like to start with, in apartment one-C are the Boscos—Mr and Mrs J. Bosco.

CORRIE (*moving to the ladder*) Who are they?

PAUL (*pacing* L) Mr and Mrs J. Bosco are a lovely young couple who just happen to be of the same sex and no one knows which

one that is. (*He moves up* C) In apartment three-C live Mr and Mrs Gonzales.

CORRIE. So?

PAUL (*crossing to* R) I'm not through. Mr and Mrs Gonzales, Mr and Mrs Armandariz and Mr Calhoun—(*he turns to Corrie*) who must be the umpire. (*He crosses to* LC. *Very secretively*) No one knows who lives in apartment four-D. No one has come in or gone out in three years except every morning there are nine empty cans of tuna fish outside the door.

CORRIE. No kidding? Who do you think lives there?

PAUL. Well, it sounds like a big cat with a can opener. (*He collects his attache case*) Now there *are* one or two normal couples in the building but at this rent, *we're* not one of them.

CORRIE. Well, you've got to pay for all this colour and charm.

PAUL. Well, if you figure it that way, we're getting a bargain. (*He moves towards the bedroom door, then turns*) Oh, yes, I forgot. Mr Velasco. Victor Velasco. He lives in apartment six-A.

CORRIE. Where's six-A?

(PAUL *points straight up*)

On the roof?

PAUL. Attic. It's an attic. (*He moves to the bedroom door*) He also skis and climbs mountains. He's fifty-eight years old and he's known as 'The Bluebeard of Forty-eighth Street'.

CORRIE (*moving towards Paul*) What does that mean?

PAUL. Well, it either means that he's a practising girl attacker or else he's an old man with a blue beard. I'll say this, Corrie. It's not going to be a dull two years.

CORRIE. Where are you going?

PAUL. I'm going to stand in the bedroom and work. I've got to pay for all this colour and charm. If anything comes up, like the furniture or the heat, let me know. Just let me know.

(PAUL *bows, exits into the bedroom and slams the door behind him.* CORRIE, *after a moment of thought, folds the ladder and puts it against the wall* L)

CORRIE (*calling*) Can't I come in and watch you? (*She pauses*) Hey, Paul, I'm lonesome——

(*There is a knock at the hall door*)

—and scared.

(VICTOR VELASCO, *aged fifty-eight and not breathing very hard, enters from the hall. It is not that he is in such good shape, he just does not think about getting tired. There are too many other things to do in the world. He wears no top coat, just a sports jacket, an ascot, and a Tyrolean hat.* CORRIE *turns and is startled to find him in the room*)

VELASCO. I beg your pardon. (*He 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. (*He discreetly catches his breath*) My name is Velasco—Victor Velasco.

CORRIE (*nervously*) Oh, yes. You live in the attic.

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

CORRIE (*very nervously*) No. No, not yet.

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

CORRIE. 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.

CORRIE. Oh, did you lose your key?

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

CORRIE. 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. (*He looks around*) You don't have any hot coffee, do you? I'd be glad to pay you for it.

CORRIE. No. We just moved in.

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

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

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

CORRIE. Corrie—*Mrs* Corrie Bratter.

VELASCO (*taking it in his stride*) You're still unbearably pretty. I may fall in love with you by seven o'clock. (*He looks up at the skylight*) I see the rat fink left the hole in the skylight.

CORRIE. Yes, I just noticed that. (*She crosses to* R) But he'll fix it, won't he?

VELASCO. I wouldn't count on it. My bath tub's been running since nineteen forty-nine. (*He moves towards Corrie*) Does your husband work during the day?

CORRIE. Yes. Why?

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

CORRIE (*moving down* R) 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 fifty-six years old and a thoroughly nice fellow.

CORRIE. Except I heard you were fifty-eight years old. And if you're knocking off two years, I'm nervous all over again.

VELASCO. Not only pretty but bright. (*He sits on the paint can*) I wish I were ten years older.

CORRIE. Older?

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

CORRIE. Six days.

VELASCO. In love?

CORRIE. Very much.

VELASCO. Damn!

CORRIE. 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.

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

VELASCO (*rising and crossing to Corrie*) I hate generalizations. When?

CORRIE. When? Well, Friday? Is that all right?

VELASCO. Perfect. I'll be famished. I hadn't planned on eating Thursday.

CORRIE. Oh, no. Wait! On Friday night my mo—— (*She thinks it over*) Yeah, Friday night will be fine.

VELASCO. It's a date. I'll bring the wine. You can pay me for it when I get here. (*He crosses to* L *and turns*) Which reminds me. You're invited to my cocktail party tonight. Ten o'clock. You do drink, don't you?

CORRIE. Yes, of course.

VELASCO. Good. Bring liquor. (*He crosses to Corrie and takes her hand*) I'll see you tonight at ten.

CORRIE (*shivering*) If I don't freeze to death first.

VELASCO. Oh, you don't know about the plumbing, do you? Everything in this museum works backward. (*He crosses to the raised radiator on the wall*) For instance, there's a little knob up there that says 'Important—turn right'. So you turn left. (*He stretches up but cannot reach the knob*)

CORRIE (*crossing to Velasco*) Oh, can you give me a little boost?

VELASCO. With the greatest of physical pleasure. (*He puts his arms around Corrie and lifts her to the radiator*) One, two, three—up. Okay?

CORRIE (*attempting to turn the knob*) I can't quite reach . . .

(PAUL *enters from the bedroom. He has his coat up over his head and has a document in his hand*)

PAUL (*moving to the head of the stairs*) Hey, Corrie, when are they going to get here with . . . ? (*He stops as he sees Corrie in Velasco's arms*)

(VELASCO *looks at Paul, stunned, while* CORRIE *remains motionless in the air*)

VELASCO (*lowering Corrie to the ground*) I thought you said he works during the day.

CORRIE. Oh, Paul. This is Mr Velasco. He was just showing me how to work the radiator.

VELASCO (*extending his hand*) Victor Velasco. I'm your upstairs neighbour. I'm fifty-eight years old and a thoroughly nice fellow.

(PAUL *lowers his coat and weakly shakes hands with Velasco*)

PAUL. Hello.

CORRIE. Mr Velasco was just telling me that all the plumbing works backwards.

VELASCO. That's right. An important thing to remember is, you have to flush 'up'. (*He demonstrates*) With that choice bit of information, I'll make my departure. (*He crosses to the bedroom door*) Don't forget. Tonight at ten.

PAUL (*looking at Corrie*) What's tonight at ten?

CORRIE (*to Velasco*) Oh, thanks, but I don't think so. We're expecting our furniture any minute. Maybe some other time.

PAUL. What's tonight at ten?

VELASCO. I'll arrange it all for you in the morning. I'm also a brilliant decorator. (*He pats Paul on the shoulder*) I insist you come.

CORRIE. Well, it's really very nice of you.

VELASCO. I told you. I'm a very nice person. *A ce soir.*

(VELASCO *exits to the bedroom*)

PAUL (*to Corrie*) What's tonight at ten? (*He suddenly realizes*) Where's he going? (*He goes to the bedroom door*)

CORRIE (*yelling after Velasco*) Don't forget Friday.

PAUL (*to Corrie*) What's he doing in the bedroom? What about Friday?

(PAUL *exits to the bedroom.* CORRIE *moves to the telephone, lifts the receiver and dials*)

CORRIE (*calling to Paul*) He's coming to dinner. (*Into the telephone*) Hello, Operator? . . .

(PAUL *enters from the bedroom*)

PAUL. That nut went out the window.

CORRIE (*into the telephone*) I'm calling West Orange, New Jersey . . .

PAUL (*moving to Corrie*) Corrie, did you hear what I said? There's an old nut out on our ledge.

CORRIE (*into the telephone*) . . . two-o-one-seven-six-five-three-four-two-two . . .

PAUL. Who are you calling?

CORRIE (*to Paul*) My Mother. On Friday night, she's going to have dinner with that old nut.

(VELASCO *appears on the skylight and carefully makes his way across*)

(*Into the telephone*) Hello, Jessie . . . Will you please tell my mother to call me just as soon as she gets in . . .

PAUL *turns and sees* VELASCO *who cheerfully waves and continues on his way as—*

the CURTAIN *falls*

ACT II

SCENE 1

SCENE—*The same. About 7 p.m., four days later.*

The apartment is no longer an empty room. It is now a home. It is almost completely furnished. The room, although a pot-pourri of various periods, styles and prices, is extremely tasteful and comfortable. No ultra-modern, clinical interior for Corrie. Each piece was selected with loving care. Since Corrie's greatest aim in life is to spend as much time as possible alone with Paul, she has designed the room to suit this purpose. A wrought-iron sofa, upholstered in a bright striped fabric, is C. *The sofa is flanked by two old-fashioned, unmatched armchairs; one with a romantically carved wooden back, the other a bentwood chair with a black leather seat. A low, dark, wooden coffee-table, with carved legs, is below the sofa, and* R *of the sofa is a small, round, bentwood occasional table, covered in a green felt. Under the windows, a light-wood, Spanish-looking table serves as a desk, and in front of it is a bamboo, straight-back chair. A large, woven-wicker basket functions as the waste-paper basket. A dark side-table, with lyre-shaped legs, fills the wall* LC, *and below the bedroom landing an open, cane-side table serves as a bar and telephone stand. A bureau stands* R *of the windows. The kitchen area is now partially hidden by a four-fold bamboo screen that has been backed by fabric, and potted plants have been placed in front of the screen. Upright bentwood chairs stand down* R *and down* L. *The open cupboard* R *has been covered by a curtain, the small windows by café curtains, and the skylight by a large, striped Austrian curtain. Books now fill the shelves up* R *and pictures and ornaments etc. have been tastefully arranged on the walls. The bedroom landing has now been graced with a bentwood washstand, complete with jug and basin, now filled with a plant. In the bathroom a shower curtain and towels have been hung and the bedroom now boasts a bed. For lighting, the wall fixture* L *now has a shade and there are table-lamps* LC *and on the bar. The switch is below the hall door.*

When the CURTAIN *rises, the room is empty and in darkness except for a crack of light under the hall door and faint moonlight from the skylight. Suddenly the hall door opens and* CORRIE *rushes in, carrying a pastry box and a bag containing two bottles. She switches on the lights, puts the packages and her handbag on the coffee-table, removes her coat and hangs it in the cupboard* R. *She wears a cocktail dress for the festivities planned for the evening and she sings as she hurries to get everything ready. She is breathing heavily but she is getting accustomed to the stairs. She goes to the coffee-table and takes a bottle of gin and a bottle of vermouth from the bag. The door bell buzzes.* CORRIE *puts down the bottles, moves* R, *buzzes back and opens the door.*

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and enjoy other theatre-related larks, do follow us on our spangley social media channels.



Samuel French London



SamuelFrenchLtd

SF **PERUSALS**