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California Suite

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

by Neil Simon

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



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For Mildred

CALIFORNIA SUITE *was first presented on June 10, 1976, by Emanuel Azenberg and Robert Fryer at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre, New York City, with the following cast:*

VISITOR from NEW YORK

HANNAH WARREN	Tammy Grimes
WILLIAM WARREN	George Grizzard

VISITOR from PHILADELPHIA

MARVIN MICHAELS	Jack Weston
BUNNY	Leslie Easterbrook
MILLIE MICHAELS	Barbara Barrie

VISITORS from LONDON

SIDNEY NICHOLS	George Grizzard
DIANA NICHOLS	Tammy Grimes

VISITORS from CHICAGO

MORT HOLLENDER	Jack Weston
BETH HOLLENDER	Barbara Barrie
STU FRANKLYN	George Grizzard
GERT FRANKLYN	Tammy Grimes

Directed by Gene Saks
Scenery by William Ritman
Lighting by Tharon Musser
Costumes by Jane Greenwood

CALIFORNIA SUITE is composed of four playlets whose action takes place in rooms 203 and 204 in the Beverly Hills Hotel.

ACT I

SCENE 1: Visitor from New York

About one in the afternoon on a sunny, warm day in late fall

SCENE 2: Visitor from Philadelphia

Eleven in the morning, mid-December

ACT II

SCENE 1: Visitors from London

About five in the afternoon, early April

SCENE 2: About two o'clock in the morning

SCENE 3: Visitors from Chicago

Four in the afternoon, Sunday July Fourth

Act One

A decorative flourish consisting of two symmetrical, curved lines that meet at the center, resembling a stylized scroll or a pair of wings.

SCENE ONE: *Visitor from New York*

Suite 203-4: a bedroom with an adjoining living room, and a bathroom off the bedroom. The decor is brightly colored and cheerful. Elegant reproductions of Van Gogh and Renoir hang on the walls. There are large color TV sets in both rooms, and a fireplace in the living room.

It is about one in the afternoon on a sunny, warm day in late fall. HANNAH WARREN is standing at the window, arms folded, a cigarette in one hand, staring pensively out. She is in her early forties, an intelligent and sophisticated woman. She is wearing a tailored woolen suit, too warm for California, just right for New York—where she has just come from. Her packed suitcases are on the bed in the other room, ready for departure. The telephone rings.

HANNAH (*Into the phone*) Yes? . . . Where are you? . . . Come on up. Room 203. (*She hangs up, takes another drag on her cigarette, then crushes it nervously into the ashtray. She picks up the phone again*) Room service, please. (*She waits tensely. Then, into the phone*) Hello? . . . This is Mrs. Warren in Suite 203 . . . I would like one tea with lemon and one double Scotch on the rocks . . . (*The phone in the bedroom rings*) Yes—203. Thank you. (*She hangs up. The other phone rings again. She goes into the bedroom, sits on the bed and answers the phone*) Yes? . . . Yes, it is . . . Hello? . . . Yes, Bob . . . Well, I was hoping to leave today. I have tickets on the three o'clock flight, but I don't think I'm

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going to make it . . . It can't be too soon for me . . . This entire city smells like an overripe cantaloupe . . . How is New York? . . . It is? . . . Snow—how wonderful! . . . No, no. The sun is shining, about eighty degrees, on Thanksgiving . . . truly disgusting. *(There is a knock on the living room door. She yells out)* Come in. It's open. *(Back into the phone, a little lower-voiced)* No, nothing's settled yet. But I'm not worried. *(The living room door opens. WILLIAM WARREN enters. He is about forty-five, quite attractive, well tanned and trim. He wears brush-denim slacks, an open sport shirt, a cashmere V-neck sweater and tan sneakers. He closes the door and inspects the room as she continues on the phone)* No, he just got here . . . I don't want to bring a lawyer into it yet. We'll see how this goes . . . When have you known me to be intimidated? *(She laughs)* Well, that doesn't count . . . Yes, I remember it in detail . . . You're wasting a perfectly good erotic conversation with my ex-husband in the other room and the operator probably listening . . . Yes, I will . . . As soon as he leaves . . . I do too . . . Bye. *(She hangs up and sits there a moment. She takes a pencil and jots down a note on the pad on the table next to the bed. She is not in any great hurry to greet her visitor. She gets up, gives herself another check in the mirror and goes to the doorway of the living room. He turns and they look at each other)* Sorry. I was on the phone. It's snowing in New York. We're going to have a white Thanksgiving. Don't you love it? *(She sits. He is still standing. He smiles)* Is that wonderful, warm smile for me?

ACT ONE

BILLY You still have trouble saying a simple "Hello."

HANNAH Oh, I *am* sorry. You always did get a big thrill out of the "little" things in life . . . Hello, Bill.

BILLY (*With generous warmth*) Hello, Hannah.

HANNAH My God, look at you. You've turned into a young boy again.

BILLY Have I?

HANNAH Haven't you noticed? You look like the sweetest young fourteen-year-old boy. You're not spending your summers at camp, are you?

BILLY Just three weeks in July. How are you?

HANNAH Well, at this moment, nonplussed.

BILLY Still the only one I know who can use "nonplussed" in regular conversation.

HANNAH Don't be ridiculous, darling, I talk that way at breakfast . . . Turn around, let me look at you.

BILLY Shouldn't we kiss or shake hands or something?

HANNAH Let's save it for when you leave . . . I love your California clothes.

BILLY They're Bloomingdale's, in New York.

HANNAH The best place for California clothes. You look so . . . I don't know—what's the word I'm looking for?

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BILLY Happy?

HANNAH Casual. It's so hard to tell out here—are you dressed up now, or is that sporty?

BILLY I didn't think a tie was necessary for a reunion.

HANNAH Is that what this is? When I walked in, I thought we were going to play tennis.

BILLY Well, you look fit enough for it.

HANNAH Fit? You think I look fit? What an awful shit you are. I look gorgeous.

BILLY Yes, you do, Hannah. You look lovely.

HANNAH No, no. *You* look lovely. *I* look gorgeous.

BILLY Well, I lost about ten pounds.

HANNAH Listen to what I'm telling you, you're *ravishing*. I love the way you're wearing your hair now. Where do you go, that boy who does Barbra Streisand?

BILLY You like it, you can have my Thursday appointment with him . . . If you're interested, I'm feeling *very* well, thank you.

HANNAH Well, of course you are. Look at that tan. Well, it's the life out here, isn't it? You have an office outdoors somewhere?

BILLY No, just a desk near the window . . . Hey, Hannah, if we're going to banter like this, give me a little time. It's been nine years, I'm rusty.

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HANNAH You'll pick it right up again, it's like French. You see, that's what I would miss if I left New York. The bantering.

BILLY San Francisco's only an hour away. We go up there and banter in emergencies.

HANNAH Do you really?

BILLY Would I lie to you?

HANNAH I never liked San Francisco. I was always afraid I'd fall out of bed and roll down one of those hills.

BILLY Not you, Hannah. You roll *up* hills.

HANNAH Oh, good. You're bantering. The flight out wasn't a total loss . . . Aren't you going to sit down, Bill? Or do they call you Billy out here? Yes, they do. Jenny told me. Everybody calls you Billy.

BILLY (*Sbrugs*) That's me. Billy.

HANNAH It's adorable. A forty-five-year-old Billy. Standing there in his cute little sneakers and sweater. Please, sit down, Billy, I'm beginning to feel like your math teacher.

BILLY I promised myself driving over here I would be pleasant. I am now being pleasant.

HANNAH You drive everywhere, do you?

BILLY Everywhere.

HANNAH Even to your car?

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BILLY Would you mind if I called down for something to drink?

HANNAH It's done.

BILLY I don't drink double Scotches on the rocks any more. I gave up hard liquor.

HANNAH Oh? What would you like?

BILLY A cup of tea with lemon.

HANNAH It's done . . . No hard liquor? At all?

BILLY Not even wine. I'm big on apple juice.

HANNAH Cigarettes?

BILLY Gave them up.

HANNAH Don't you miss the coughing and the hacking in the morning?

BILLY It woke the dogs up. I have dogs now.

HANNAH Isn't divorce wonderful? . . . What about candy? Please don't tell me you've given up Snickers?

BILLY (*Sbrugs*) Sorry.

HANNAH That *is* crushing news. You *have* changed, Billy. You've gone clean on me.

BILLY Mind *and* body. That doesn't offend you, does it?

HANNAH May they both live to be a thousand. I don't

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mean this to seem facetious, but how *do* you take care of yourself?

BILLY I watch my diet, I've cut out meat, and you *do* mean to be facetious. You're dying to make a little fun of me. I don't mind. I have an hour to kill . . . Would you believe I run five miles every morning?

HANNAH After what?

BILLY The newspaper. I have lazy dogs . . . Shall I keep going? I swim twenty laps every night when I come home from the studio. Eight sets of tennis every weekend. I sleep well. I haven't had a pill in three and a half years. I take vitamins and I eat natural, unprocessed health foods.

HANNAH Ah, aha! Health foods! At last, something in common.

BILLY Don't tell me you've given up P. J. Clarke's chili burgers?

HANNAH No, but I have them on whole wheat now . . . I'm enjoying this conversation. Tell me more about yourself. Jenny tells me you've taken up the banjo.

BILLY The guitar. Classical *and* country.

HANNAH Remarkable. And in New York you couldn't tune in Channel Five . . . More, more!

BILLY I climb.

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HANNAH I beg your pardon?

BILLY I climb. I climbed a ten-thousand-foot mountain in the Sierra Nevada last summer.

HANNAH Well, that's no big deal. I climb that three times a week visiting my analyst.

BILLY And no analyst.

HANNAH Yes, I heard that. I'll accept the mountain climbing and, in a stretch, even the guitar. But no analyst? You ask too much, Billy. Why did you quit?

BILLY I went sane.

HANNAH Sane! How exciting. You mean you go out into the world every day all by yourself? (*He smiles, nods*) Don't you ever get depressed?

BILLY Yes.

HANNAH When?

BILLY Now.

HANNAH I'm so glad the sun hasn't dried up your brain completely . . . Tell me more news.

BILLY I moved.

HANNAH Oh, yes. You're not in Hardy Canyon any more.

BILLY Laurel. Laurel Canyon.

HANNAH Laurel, Hardy, what the hell? And where are you now?

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BILLY Beverly Hills—a block north of Sunset Boulevard.

HANNAH What style house?

BILLY Very comfortable.

HANNAH Well, I'm sure it is. But what style is it?

BILLY Well, from the outside it looks like a small French farmhouse.

HANNAH A small French farmhouse. Just one block north of Sunset Boulevard. Sounds rugged . . . I passed something coming in from the airport. I thought it was a Moroccan villa—turned out to be a Texaco station.

BILLY We're a colorful community.

HANNAH I love it from the air.

BILLY And how is life over the subway?

HANNAH Fine. I still live in our old apartment. But you would hate it now.

BILLY What did you do to it?

HANNAH Not a thing.

BILLY And I heard you went in for an operation.

HANNAH A hysterectomy. I was out the same day. . . . And I believe you had prostate trouble.

BILLY Small world, isn't it?

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HANNAH Well, our past sins have a way of catching up with us . . . What else can I tell you about me?

BILLY Jenny fills me in with everything.

HANNAH Oh, I'm sure.

BILLY I understand you have a new boyfriend.

HANNAH A boyfriend? God forbid. I'm forty-two years old—I have a lover.

BILLY Also a writer.

HANNAH A newspaperman on the *Washington Post*.

BILLY Really? Not one of those two who—

HANNAH No.

BILLY Right.

HANNAH He's fifty-four. He has a heart condition, asthma and leans towards alcoholism. He also has the second-best mind I've met in this country since Adlai Stevenson . . . And what's with you, mate-wise?

BILLY Mate-wise? Mate-wise I am seeing a very nice girl.

HANNAH Are you? And where are you seeing her to?

BILLY (*Annoyed*) Oh, come on, Hannah.

HANNAH What did I say? Have I offended you?

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BILLY Can we cut the cute chitchat? I think we've got other things to talk about.

HANNAH I'm sorry. I *have* offended you.

BILLY My God, it's been a long time since I've been involved in smart-ass conversation.

HANNAH I beg *your* pardon, but *you* were the one who said things like "I hear you have a boyfriend" and "I'm seeing a very nice girl." I am *not* the one with the Bobbsey Twin haircut and the Peter Pan phraseology.

BILLY I can see you've really come to hunt bear, haven't you?

HANNAH Hunt bear? Did I actually hear you say "hunt bear"? Is that the kind of nifty conversation you have around those Sierra Nevada campfires?

BILLY Forget the tea. Maybe I *will* have a double Scotch.

HANNAH It's ordered. You're safe either way.

BILLY Can we talk about Jenny?

HANNAH What's your rush? She's only seventeen. She's got her whole life ahead of her. If I'm going to turn my daughter over to you—which I am not—at least I'd like to know what you're like.

BILLY Jenny is *our* daughter! *Ours!*

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HANNAH Maybe. We'll see. They've been very slow with the blood test. (*They glare at each other a moment. She suddenly smiles*) So you live in a French farmhouse off Sunset Boulevard. Do you have a pool?

BILLY Christ!

HANNAH Come on, Billy, talk to me. I wrote down seventy-four questions to ask—don't make me look for the list. Do you have a pool? . . . Well, naturally you've got a pool. You've got a tan, so you've got a pool . . . Is it kidney shaped? . . . Liver? . . . Possibly gall bladder?

BILLY Pancreas, actually. The head surgeon at Cedars of Lebanon put it in. You're terrific. You haven't spent fifteen days of your life out here, but you know exactly how we all live, don't you? Too bad you're going back so soon. You're gonna miss the way we spend our holidays. Wouldn't it *thrill* you to see a pink-painted Christmas tree on my lawn . . . or a three-flavored Baskin-Robbins snowman wearing alligator shoes . . . with a loudspeaker on the roof playing Sonny and Cher singing "Silent Night"?

HANNAH When you've seen it once, the thrill is gone.

BILLY Where's that drink?

HANNAH What kind of a car do you have?

BILLY You're really serious, aren't you?

HANNAH I am *dead* serious. If I'm to leave my pre-

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cious baby with you, I want to know what kind of a car I'm leaving her in.

BILLY A brown Mercedes—450 SEL.

HANNAH You have no class. You never had any class. A red *Pinto* in Beverly Hills would be class . . . Can I throw a few more questions at you?

BILLY Questions? I thought they were spears.

HANNAH What happened to your cute little wife? I don't mean *me*, I mean the cute one *after* me. Divorced her, too, didn't you?

BILLY She was on the road a lot; I like to stay home. The first three years weren't too bad.

HANNAH Oh, that's right, she was a singer, wasn't she? Somebody sent me one of her albums for Christmas, as a gag. They were right . . . I gagged.

BILLY Really? She was number three on the charts, won two Grammys last year. I thought she was good.

HANNAH Pity you didn't take up the guitar sooner, you could have still been with her . . . And tell me about the one you're seeing now. What does she do?

BILLY She's an actress. Quite good. She was married before. Has a little boy, eleven years old.

HANNAH And is marriage contemplated? . . . Am I being too nosy?

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BILLY Not for a *Newsweek* editor . . . Yes. Marriage is contemplated. It is being discussed; it is being considered. Strange as it seems, I like being married.

HANNAH Right. And will there be room for all of you in the little French farmhouse, or will you have to move to an Italian *palazzo* on Wilshire Boulevard?

BILLY What the hell are you so bitter about? You used to be bright and witty. Now you're just snide and sarcastic.

HANNAH It comes with age. When you don't have a fast ball any more, you go to change-ups and sliders.

BILLY Oh, please. Spare me your sports metaphors. You never knew a bunt from a double. The only reason you went to the games is because you thought you looked butch . . . Are you through with your interrogation?

HANNAH I'm still interested in this new girl.

BILLY Her name is Betsy LaSorda. Her father used to be a damned good director. She can catch a trout and she can beat me at tennis. I think she's peachy. What else?

HANNAH Well, I know you've been bouncing around a lot, Billy. Do you really care for her, or do you have someone who gets you a break on marriage licenses?

BILLY God, I can just hear the quips flying when you and the second-best mind since Adlai Stevenson get

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together. Sitting there freezing under a blanket at the Washington Redskin game playing anagrams with the names of all the Polish players . . . I'll tell you something, Hannah: For one of the brightest women in America, you bore the hell out of me. Your mind clicks off bric-a-bracs so goddamn fast, it never has a chance to let an honest emotion or thought ever get through.

HANNAH And you're so *filled* with honest emotions, you fall in love every time someone sings a ballad. You're worse than a hopeless romantic, you're a *hopeful* one. You're the kind of a man who would end the world's famine problem by having them all eat out . . . preferably at a good Chinese restaurant!

BILLY (*Gets up, starts towards the door, stops*) What do you want to do about Jenny?

HANNAH Who?

BILLY Do you want to discuss this problem sensibly and sincerely, or do you want to challenge me to the *New York Times* crossword puzzle for her?

HANNAH Oh, stop pouting. You may dress like a child, but you don't have to act like one.

BILLY Would you mind terribly if I said "Up yours" and left?

HANNAH What have you done to her, Billy? She's changed. She used to come back to New York after the summers here taller and anxious to see her friends . . . Now she meditates and eats alfalfa.

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BILLY She just turned seventeen. Something was bound to happen to her.

HANNAH You have no legal rights to her, of course. You understand that.

BILLY Certainly.

HANNAH Then tell her to come home with me.

BILLY I did. She would like to try it with me for a year. She's not happy in New York, Hannah.

HANNAH *Nobody's* happy in New York. But they're *alive*.

BILLY I can't fight you. If you want to take her, then take her. But I think you'd be making a mistake.

HANNAH She still has another year of high school left.

BILLY Believe it or not, they have good schools here. I can show you some, if you like.

HANNAH Oh, that should be fun. Something like the Universal Studio tour?

BILLY What a snob you are.

HANNAH Thank God there's a few of us left.

BILLY What is there so beautiful about your life that makes it so important to put down everyone else's? Forty square blocks bounded by Lincoln Center on the west and Cinema II on the east is not the center of the goddamn universe. I grant you it's an excit-

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ing, vibrant, stimulating, fabulous city, but it is not Mecca . . . It just smells like it.

HANNAH The hell with New York! Or Boston or Washington or Philadelphia. I don't care *where* Jenny lives, but *how*. She's an intelligent girl with a good mind. Let it grow and prosper. But what the hell is she going to learn in a community that has valet parking just to pick up four bagels and the *Hollywood Reporter*?

BILLY I've been to Martha's Vineyard in July, Hannah. Heaven protect me from another intellectual Cape Cod summer . . . The political élite queuing up in old beach sandals to see Bogart pictures, standing there eating ice cream cones and reading the *New Republic*.

HANNAH Neat, wasn't it?

BILLY No. Your political friends never impressed me . . . I remember one hot Sunday afternoon in Hyanisport when our ambassador to some war-torn Middle Eastern country was in a state of despair because he couldn't get the hang of throwing a Frisbee. My God, the absurdity . . . I went to a charity luncheon in East Hampton to raise money for the California grape pickers. There was this teeming mob of women who must have spent a total of twelve thousand dollars on new Gucci pants in order to raise two thousand dollars for the grape pickers . . . Why the hell didn't they just mail them the pants?

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HANNAH You were terrific when you used to write like that. . . . I didn't see the last picture you wrote, but they tell me it grossed very well in backward areas.

BILLY Jesus, was I anything like you before?

HANNAH I couldn't hold a candle to you.

BILLY No wonder no one spoke to me here for the first two years.

HANNAH Lucky you.

BILLY Look, I don't want to interrupt your train of venom, but could we get back to Jenny?

HANNAH Jenny. Yes, what a good idea.

BILLY If you respect her as a person, respect her right to make a free choice.

HANNAH You get her for the summers, that's enough. If the judge had seen your life-style, you'd be lucky to get her Labor Day afternoon.

BILLY Funny how we haven't discussed *your* life-style, isn't it?

HANNAH I don't have a life-style. I have a life.

BILLY The hell you do. The only time you're alive is Tuesday mornings when the magazine hits the stands . . . You're a voyeur in newsprint, snooping on everyone else's life-style and editing out the healthy aspects of the human condition because, for

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a dollar a copy, who the hell wants to read about happiness?

HANNAH Sometimes I actually miss you. You wouldn't consider coming back East and entering into a *ménage à trois*?

BILLY Would you like to know what Jenny has to say about you?

HANNAH She's told me. She thinks I'm a son-of-a-bitch. She also thinks I'm a *funny* son-of-a-bitch. She loves me but she doesn't like me. She's afraid of me. She's intimidated by me. She respects me but wouldn't want to become like me. We have a normal mother and daughter relationship.

BILLY She told me she feels stifled—that the only time she can really breathe freely is when she's out here.

HANNAH I have a wonderful nose and throat man on East Eighty-fourth Street.

BILLY How the hell can you be so flippant when it comes to your own daughter's well-being?

HANNAH And how the hell can you be so *pompous* not to recognize a very healthy rebellious attitude in an adolescent? If she *didn't* complain, I would probably send her to an expensive shrink. Since she's with *me* ten months of the year, it's only natural *you're* the one she's going to miss . . . I think by and large she and I have managed quite well but it's obvious, like

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all young girls, she needs a father image. I don't mind. If it's only July and August, it might as well be you.

BILLY This is Thanksgiving and she came out *without* your permission.

HANNAH She never had a very good head for dates.

BILLY What would you do if I just kept her here with me?

HANNAH Don't be ridiculous.

BILLY But what would you do, Hannah?

HANNAH I would find the very best lawyer I could in California . . . and have him beat the shit out of you.

BILLY Would you drag it through the courts if I said I'm keeping her for six months?

HANNAH I will call my friend, the Attorney General of the United States, if she is not on that three o'clock plane.

BILLY (*Sits back and smiles at her*) Why didn't you ever run for office, Hannah? I always thought you'd make a helluva Governor.

HANNAH Because I don't think a democratic system really works. Offer me a monarchy and we'll talk. (*Looks at her watch*) It's one fifteen. Will you call Jenny or shall I?

BILLY No.

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HANNAH No what?

BILLY No, *sir!*

HANNAH If you'll tell me how to get to your little French farmhouse, I'll pick her up myself.

BILLY How much time do you spend with her? Do you ever have breakfast with her? How many nights does she eat dinner alone? Do you think she's really happy with that twenty-dollar bill you give her every time you go off to Washington for the weekend? The girl is growing up lonely, Hannah, and if you tell me she's got a cat and a canary, I'll belt you right in the choppers.

HANNAH She has two dogs, a Dominican cook and twelve different girls who sleep over every time I'm away. Despite her Gothic reports, she is not living the life of Jane Eyre.

BILLY The truth, Hannah . . . You know if we leave it up to Jenny, you don't stand a chance in hell of getting her on that plane. Right?

HANNAH Certainly. Why else would the ninny run away? . . . Who said we don't have problems? She is seventeen years old, and when we go at each other, she needs another shoulder to cry on . . . But I'll be goddamned if I'm giving up a daughter for a cashmere shoulder three thousand miles away.

BILLY My God, you're really afraid . . . This is an

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event. I think it's the first time I've ever actually seen you nervous.

HANNAH Wrong. I was nervous on our wedding night . . . Unfortunately, it was *after* we had sex.

BILLY Please. No cheap shots. It's not like you. I mean, we may have had a very narrow chance for happiness, but sex was never a stumbling block.

HANNAH Neither was it an architectural marvel . . . Oh, I'm not blaming *you*. Actually you were very skillful in bed. You could ravage me for hours without ever mussing the sheets. But the moment it was over, you would heave a deep sigh and tell me your plans for the future . . . The sex was stimulating but the plans were so freaking boring.

BILLY Boring? And I have made love to women with the television on before, but *never* watching Eric Sevareid.

HANNAH Sometimes we need our private fantasies to help us get to the top of Magic Mountain.

BILLY You know something, Hannah? . . . I don't like you any more.

HANNAH It's okay. I'm not always fond of me either . . . What are we going to do, Billy? I want my daughter back. You're the only one who can help me.

BILLY (*Looks at her*) You're being sincere now, aren't you? . . . What a shame. You do it so seldom, when it finally comes I'm *still* waiting for the zingers.

ACT ONE

HANNAH Billy . . . what do you look forward to?

BILLY (*He looks behind him*) Where did *that* non-sequitur come from?

HANNAH You know me. My mind is always on "express." I'd really like to know. You're forty-five years old, you've been married twice, had a child, a half a dozen houses, a promising journalistic career and some questionable but undeniably commercial successes . . . I'd like to know what it is you look forward to.

BILLY (*Pauses*) Saturdays . . . I love Saturdays.

HANNAH For a simple-minded bastard, sometimes you sure are smart . . . You know what I look forward to?

BILLY What?

HANNAH Christ, it's hard for me to say it . . . Are you going to laugh?

BILLY Only if it's not funny. What do you look forward to?

HANNAH I look forward to a granddaughter . . . I think I screwed up the first time.

BILLY (*Good-naturedly*) No one can phrase sentiment like you.

HANNAH Are you going to help me?

BILLY By sending Jenny home? She'd be back in two weeks.

CALIFORNIA SUITE

HANNAH Not if I put heavy weights on her feet . . .
Offer me a suggestion, goddamn it, for old times'
sake.

BILLY You know my suggestion.

HANNAH I only have one more year with her. In Sep-
tember she'll go to college. In four years she'll come
out a revolutionary or a nun . . . or even worse, like
you or me.

BILLY A little bit of both wouldn't be so bad.

HANNAH Do you like your mother?

BILLY She's dead.

HANNAH Don't quibble. Did you like her?

BILLY For a neurotic woman, she wasn't too bad.

HANNAH I don't like mine much. Can you imagine
being a pain in the ass for seventy-eight years? I felt
something was wrong even when I was in the
womb. I never felt comfortable. I think I was hang-
ing too low . . . We shouldn't have had Jenny. People
like you and me are too selfish . . . I don't want her
to grow up hating me and I don't want her growing
up here, because I'm liable to hate her . . . Maybe
you and I should have stayed together and we could
have let *Jenny* go. What do you think?

BILLY I changed my mind. I think I like you again.

HANNAH He's not going to live very long, you know.

ACT ONE

BILLY Who isn't?

HANNAH My *Washington Post* friend. He had open heart surgery that was a total waste of time.

BILLY I'm sorry to hear that.

HANNAH Me, too . . . The man could really make me laugh.

BILLY Sounded like it was pretty good.

HANNAH Oh, well, you win some, you lose some.

BILLY (*With admiration*) Talk about resiliency . . .

HANNAH For a smart lady in a man's world, I'm not doing too bad.

BILLY No, you're not . . . Would it comfort you any to meet my actress friend? Just to know that Jenny hasn't fallen into wicked hands?

HANNAH I'm shaky enough right now—I don't have to meet someone with smoother skin than me . . . Thanks a lot.

BILLY For what?

HANNAH You're supposed to say, "She doesn't have smoother skin than you."

BILLY Sorry, she does. It's only in good conversation she comes in second place.

HANNAH The truth . . . Is being in love better now?

BILLY Yes.

CALIFORNIA SUITE

HANNAH Why?

BILLY Because it's now.

HANNAH I don't like the way this meeting is going. I think I'm losing ground. Why don't we go to New York and finish it?

BILLY You can have it both ways, you know.

HANNAH What does that mean?

BILLY Take your summer vacation this winter. Come out here, I'll find you a nice place at the beach. This way we can both see Jenny.

HANNAH Two months? Out *here*? . . . I would get constipation of the mind.

BILLY You're afraid.

HANNAH Of what?

BILLY That you might like it. You're afraid you might like *anything*. Happiness is so banal, isn't it?

HANNAH No. Just that statement . . . Let's keep things the way they are, Billy. God only meant us to have nine years together. He knew what He was doing.

BILLY Well, then we haven't settled anything, have we?

HANNAH Well, we've settled that I'm not coming out here for two months. It was worth coming out here just to settle that. That only leaves Jenny to deal with.

ACT ONE

BILLY Shall I get her up here? She's downstairs in the car with her bags packed . . . She's willing to abide by any decision we both make.

HANNAH Oh, what a cunning bastard you are. If we say she goes back to New York, she'll think I coerced you. And if we say stay here, she'll think I didn't even put up a fight for her.

BILLY Do you think she has that devious a mind?

HANNAH Certainly. *She's my daughter* . . . I don't suppose *you'd* consider spending two months back East?

BILLY Only if everyone there leaves . . . You want me to make it easy for you, Hannah? I'll throw in my vote. Whatever you say goes. And I'll tell Jenny we *both* made the decision.

HANNAH (*Really perplexed*) Jesus, no wonder there are so many used car salesmen out here. How much time do I have? I was never very good with deadlines.

BILLY As much time as you want.

HANNAH (*Goes over to the window and looks out, trying to see if she can see his car*) Which is your car? They're all Mercedes. (*She turns; he is staring at her*) What are you looking at me like that for?

BILLY It's not often I've seen you looking so vulnerable.

CALIFORNIA SUITE

HANNAH Well, take a picture of it. You won't see it again . . . Keep her.

BILLY What?

HANNAH I said, keep her—six months, not a year. And *I* pick the school. And whoever I pick, they have to send me three references . . . Christ, what am I doing?

BILLY Stay the weekend, Hannah. Talk it over with Jenny. You don't have to decide because you've got a plane ticket.

HANNAH I'm a fighter, Billy. If I stay the weekend, I not only take Jenny with me, but I'll take your new girlfriend back, too.

BILLY Hannah, don't let me bully you into this. Why can't the three of us talk it out? Let me get Jenny up here.

HANNAH *No*, goddamn it! If I have to give her up to get her back, then let's do it.

BILLY You mean it? You'll let her stay?

HANNAH You think you're in for a picnic? Wait'll you try shopping for clothes with her.

BILLY Can you take a compliment? You're not the Hannah I left nine years ago.

HANNAH And I'm missing the ovaries to prove it . . .

ACT ONE

BILLY Well, guess who's nonplussed now?

HANNAH Jesus, you never thought I would say yes, did you? You know, I don't think you're prepared to take on your own daughter. Watching her swim for eight weeks at the beach is not the same as being a parent . . . Don't look now, Billy, but you just lost your sun tan.

BILLY If you think I'm scared, you're damned right.

HANNAH I love it. Oh, God I love it. Wait'll you see how she eats in the winter. You'll be dead broke by Christmas.

BILLY I think you're doing a terrific thing, Hannah.

HANNAH So do I.

BILLY And if for any reason, I feel things aren't working out, I'll send her back to you.

HANNAH The hell you will. You're a Father now, Billy.

BILLY I suppose you want to see her before you leave.

HANNAH Well, you suppose wrong. I've seen her. I'll call her when I get to New York.

BILLY What should I tell her?

HANNAH Tell her I hope she'll be very happy and that I'm selling her record collection.

CALIFORNIA SUITE

BILLY (*He starts towards the door*) You know, we couldn't have been too bad together. We produced a hell of a girl.

HANNAH You got that a little wrong . . . I think the two of you produced a hell of a mother.

BILLY Maybe you're right . . . Can we shake hands now? I'm about to leave.

HANNAH Sure. Why not? What more can I lose? (*They shake hands. He holds on to hers*) Serve her plenty of broccoli and lima beans.

BILLY She likes them?

HANNAH *Hates* them. But from now on, what do I care?

BILLY Goodbye, Hannah . . . It was good seeing you again.

HANNAH (*On the point of tears*) I suddenly feel like an artist selling a painting he doesn't want to part with.

BILLY (*Gently*) I'll frame it and keep it in a good light.

HANNAH Do that . . . And take care of Jenny, too. (*BILLY looks at her, puts his hands on her shoulders, and kisses her on the cheek. He wants to say something else, then changes his mind, opens the door quickly and leaves. She stands there a moment, then moves back to the window and looks down. Then she goes to the phone and picks up the*

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