

MOTHER. I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me, dear. It is a little late.

CORIE. (*Moves towards MOTHER.*) Mother, you're not going home. It's the shank of the evening.

MOTHER. I know, but I've got a ten o'clock dentist appointment . . . at nine o'clock . . . and it's been a very long evening . . . What I mean is it's late, but I've had a wonderful time . . . I don't know what I'm saying.

CORIE. But, Mother—

MOTHER. Darling, I'll call you in the morning. Good night, Paul . . . Good night, Mr. Velasco . . .

VELASCO. (*Putting down brandy, crosses to CORIE.*) Good night, Paul . . . Good night, Corie . . .

CORIE. Mr. Velasco, you're not going too?

VELASCO. (*Taking beret and scarf from CORIE and putting them on.*) Of course. I'm driving Mrs. Banks home. MOTHER. (*Moves away in shock.*) Oh, no! (*Recovers herself and turns back.*) I mean, oh, no, it's too late.

VELASCO. (*To MOTHER.*) Too late for what?

MOTHER. The buses. They stop running at two. How will you get home?

VELASCO. Why worry about it now? I'll meet that problem in New Jersey.

(*VELASCO moves to the door and CORIE in great jubilation flings herself over the back of the couch.*)

MOTHER. But it's such a long trip . . . (*Crosses to CORIE.*) Corie, isn't it a long trip?

CORIE. Not really. It's only about thirty minutes.

MOTHER. But it's such an inconvenience. Really, Mr. Velasco, it's very sweet of you but—

VELASCO. Victor!

MOTHER. What?

VELASCO. If we're going to spend the rest of the evening together, it must be Victor.

MOTHER. Oh!

VELASCO. And I insist the arrangement be reciprocal. What is it?

MOTHER. What is what?

CORIE. Your name, Mother. (*To VELASCO.*) It's Ethel.

MOTHER. Oh, that's right. Ethel. My name is Ethel.

VELASCO. That's better . . . Now . . . are we ready . . . Ethel?

MOTHER. Well . . . if you insist, Walter.

VELASCO. Victor! It's Victor.

MOTHER. Yes, Victor!

VELASCO. Good night, Paul . . . *Shama shama*, Corie.

CORIE. *Shama shama!*

VELASCO. (*Moves to door.*) If you don't hear from us in a week, we'll be at the Nacional Hotel in Mexico City . . . Room 7031 . . . Let's go, Ethel! (*And he goes out the door. The MOTHER turns to CORIE and looks for help.*)

MOTHER. (*Frightened, grabs CORIE's arm.*) What does he mean by that?

CORIE. I don't know but I'm dying to find out. Will you call me in the morning?

MOTHER. Yes . . . about six o'clock! (*And in a panic, she exits.*)

CORIE. (*Takes a beat, closes the door, smiles and turns to PAUL.*) Well . . . how about that, Mr. "This is going to be a fiasco tonight"? . . . He's taking her all the way out to New Jersey . . . at two o'clock in the morning . . . That's what I call "The Complete Gentleman."

(*PAUL looks at her with disdain, rises and staggers up the stairs into the bedroom.*) He hasn't even given a thought about how he's going to get home . . . Maybe he'll sleep over . . . Hey, Paul, do you think . . . ? No, not my mother . . . (*jumps up onto couch.*) Then again anything can happen with the Sheikh of Budapest . . . Boy, what a night . . . Hey! I got a plan. Let's take the bottle of scotch downstairs, ring all the bells and yell "Police" . . . Just to see who comes out of whose apartment . . . (*There is no answer from the bedroom.*) Paul? . . . What's the matter, darling . . . ? Don't you feel well?

PAUL. (*Comes out of the bedroom, down the stairs, crossing to the closet. He is taking his coat off and is*



angry.) What a rotten thing to do . . . To your own mother.

CORIE. What?

PAUL. Do you have any idea how she felt just now? Do you know kind of a night this was for her?

CORIE. (*Impishly.*) It's not over yet.

PAUL. You didn't see her sitting here two minutes ago. You were upstairs with that Hungarian Duncan Hines . . . Well, she was miserable. Her face was longer than that trip we took tonight. (*Hangs up coat in closet.*)

CORIE. She never said a thing to me.

PAUL. (*Takes out hanger and puts jacket on it.*) She's too good a sport. She went the whole cock-eyed way . . . Boy, oh boy . . . dragging a woman like that all the way out to the middle of the harbor for a bowl of sheep dip. (*Hangs jacket up and crosses to dictionary on side table under radiator. Takes the off and folds it neatly.*)

CORIE. (*Follows him to table.*) It was Greek bean soup. And at least *she* tasted it. She didn't jab at it with her knife throwing cute little epigrams like, "Ho, ho, ho . . . I think there's someone in there."

PAUL. (*Puts the between pages of dictionary.*) That's right. That's right. At least I was honest about it. You ate two bowls because you were showing off for Al Capone at the next table. (*PAUL searches for wallet unsuccessfully.*)

CORIE. What are you so angry about, Paul?

PAUL. (*Crossing to closet.*) I just told you. I felt terrible for your mother. (*Gets wallet out of jacket pocket.*)

CORIE. (*Following after him to the front of couch.*)

Why? Where is she at this very minute? Alone with probably the most attractive man she's ever met. Don't tell me *that* doesn't beat hell out of hair curlers and the Late Show.

PAUL. (*Crossing up onto bedroom landing.*) Oh, I can just hear it now. What sparkling conversation. He's probably telling her about a chicken cacciatore he once cooked for the High Lama of Tibet and she's sitting there showing pink pills in her mouth.

CORIE. (*Taking coat from couch and putting it on armchair r.*) You never can tell what people talk about when they're alone.

PAUL. I don't understand how you can be so unconcerned about this. (*Goes into bedroom.*)

CORIE. (*Moving to stairs.*) Unconcerned . . . I'm plenty concerned. Do you think I'm going to get one wink of sleep until that phone rings tomorrow? I'm scared to death for my mother. But I'm grateful there's finally the opportunity for something to be scared about . . . (*Moves r., then turns back.*) What I'm really concerned about is you!

PAUL. (*Bursts out of bedroom, nearly slamming through door.*) Me? Me?

CORIE. I'm beginning to wonder if you're capable of having a good time.

PAUL. Why? Because I like to wear my gloves in the winter?

CORIE. No. Because there isn't the least bit of adventure in you. Do you know what you are? You're a watcher. There are Watchers in this world and there are Do-ers. And the Watchers sit around watching the Do-ers do. Well, tonight you watched and I did.

PAUL. (*Moves down stairs to CORIE.*) Yeah . . . Well, it was harder to watch what you did than it was for you to do what I was watching. (*Crosses back up stairs to landing.*)

CORIE. You won't let your hair down for a minute. You couldn't even relax for one night. Boy, Paul, sometimes you act like a . . . a . . . (*Gets shoes from under couch.*)

PAUL. (*Stopping on landing.*) What . . . ? A stuffed shirt?

CORIE. (*Drops shoes on couch.*) I didn't say that. PAUL. That's what you're implying.

CORIE. (*Moves to r. armchair and begins to take off jewelry.*) That's what you're anticipating. I didn't say you're a stuffed shirt. But you are extremely proper and dignified.



PAUL. I'm proper and dignified? (*Moves to CORIE.*) When . . . ? When was I proper and dignified?

CORIE. (*Turns to PAUL.*) All right. The other night. At Delfino's . . . You were drunk, right?

PAUL. Right. I was stoned.

CORIE. There you are. I didn't know it until you told me in the morning. (*Un-zips and takes off dress.*) You're a funny kind of drunk. You just sat there looking unhappy and watching your coat.

PAUL. I was watching your coat because I saw someone else watching my coat . . . Look, if you want, I'll get drunk for you sometime. I'll show you a slob, make your hair stand on end. (*Unbutton's shirt.*)

CORIE. (*Puts dress on chair.*) It isn't necessary.

PAUL. (*Starts to go, turns back.*) Do you know . . . Do you know, in P. J. Clarke's last New Year's Eve, I punched an old woman? . . . Don't tell me about drunks. (*Starts to go.*)

CORIE. (*Taking down hair.*) All right, Paul.

PAUL. (*Turns back and moves above couch.*) When else? When else was I proper and dignified?

CORIE. Always. You're always dressed right, you always look right, you always say the right things. You're very close to being perfect.

PAUL. (*Hurt to the quick.*) That's . . . that's a rotten thing to say.

CORIE. (*Moves up to PAUL.*) I have never seen you without a jacket. I always feel like such a slob compared to you. Before we were married I was sure you slept with a tie.

PAUL. No, no. Just for very formal sleeps.

CORIE. You can't even walk into a candy store and ask the lady for a Tootsie Roll. (*Playing the scene out, she moves D. R. of couch.*) You've got to walk up to the counter and point at it and say, "I'll have that thing in the brown and white wrapper."

PAUL. (*Moving to bedroom door.*) That's ridiculous.

CORIE. And you're not. That's just the trouble. (*Crosses to foot of stairs.*) Like Thursday night. You wouldn't

walk barefoot with me in Washington Square Park. Why not?

PAUL. (*To head of stairs.*) Very simple answer. It was seventeen degrees.

CORIE. (*Back to chair and continues taking down hair.*) Exactly. That's very sensible and logical. Except it isn't any fun.

PAUL. (*Down stairs to couch.*) You know, maybe I am too proper and dignified for you. Maybe you would have been happier with someone a little more colorful and flamboyant . . . like the Geek! (*Starts back to bedroom.*)

CORIE. Well, he'd be a lot more laughs than a stuffed shirt.

PAUL. (*Turns back on landing.*) Oh, oh . . . I thought you said I wasn't.

CORIE. Well, you are now.

PAUL. (*Reflectively.*) I'm not going to listen to this . . . I'm not going to listen . . . (*Starts for bedroom.*) I've got a case in court in the morning.

CORIE. (*Moves L.*) Where are you going?

PAUL. To sleep.

CORIE. Now? How can you sleep now?

PAUL. (*Steps up on bed and turns back, leaning on door jamb.*) I'm going to close my eyes and count knicks. Good night!

CORIE. You can't go to sleep now. We're having a fight.

PAUL. You have the fight. When you're through, turn off the lights. (*Turns back into bedroom.*)

CORIE. Ooh, that gets me insane. You can even control your emotions.

PAUL. (*Storms out to head of stairs.*) Look, I'm just as upset as you are . . . (*Controls himself.*) But when I get hungry I eat. And when I get tired I sleep. You eat and sleep too. Don't deny it, I've seen you . . .

CORIE. (*Moves R. with a grand gesture.*) Not in the middle of a crisis.

PAUL. What crisis? We're just yelling a little.



CORIE. You don't consider this a crisis? Our whole marriage hangs in the balance.

PAUL. (*Sits on steps.*) It does? When did that happen? CORIE. Just now. It's suddenly very clear that you and I have absolutely *nothing* in common.

PAUL. Why. Because I won't walk barefoot in the park in winter? You haven't got a case, Corie. Adultery, yes. Cold feet, no.

CORIE. (*Seething.*) Don't oversimplify this, I'm angry. Can't you see that?

PAUL. (*Brings his hands to his eyes and peers at her through imaginary binoculars. Then looks at his watch.*) Corie, it's two-fifteen. If I can fall asleep in about half-an-hour, I can get about five hours' sleep. I'll call you from court tomorrow and we can fight over the phone. (*Gets up and moves to bedroom.*)

CORIE. You will *not* go to sleep. You will stay here and fight to save our marriage.

PAUL. (*In doorway.*) If our marriage hinges on breathing fish balls and poofa-poo pie, it's not worth saving . . . I am now going to crawl into our tiny, little, single bed. If you care to join me, we will be sleeping from left to right tonight. (*Into bedroom and slams door.*)

CORIE. You won't discuss it . . . You're afraid to discuss it . . . I married a coward . . . ! (*Takes shoe from couch and throws it at bedroom door.*)

PAUL. (*Opens door.*) Corie, would you bring in a pair? The closet's dripping.

CORIE. Ohh, I hate you! I hate you! I really, really hate you!

PAUL. (*Storms to head of stairs.*) Corie, there is one thing I learned in court. Be careful when you're tired and angry. You might say something you will soon regret. I-am-now-tired-and-angry.

CORIE. And a coward.

PAUL. (*Comes down stairs to her at R. of couch.*) And I will now say something I will soon regret . . . Okay, Corie, maybe you're right. Maybe we have nothing in common. Maybe we rushed into this marriage a little too

fast. Maybe Love isn't enough. Maybe two people should have to take more than a blood test. Maybe they should be checked for common sense, understanding and emotional maturity.

CORIE. (*That hurt.*) All right . . . Why don't you get it passed in the Supreme Court? Only those couples bearing a letter from their psychiatrists proving they're well adjusted will be permitted to be married.

PAUL. You're impossible.

CORIE. You're unbearable.

PAUL. You belong in a nursery school.

CORIE. It's a lot more fun than the Home for the Fuddy Duddies.

PAUL. (*Reaches out his hand to her.*) All right, Corie, let's not get—

CORIE. Don't you touch me . . . Don't you touch me . . . (*PAUL very deliberately reaches out and touches her. CORIE screams hysterically and runs across the room away from him. Hysterically.*) I don't want you near me. Ever again.

PAUL. (*Moves toward her.*) Now wait a minute, Corie— CORIE. No. (*Turns away from him.*) I can't look at you. I can't even be in the same room with you now.

PAUL. Why?

CORIE. I just can't, that's all. Not when you feel this way.

PAUL. When I feel what way?

CORIE. The way you feel about me.

PAUL. Corie, you're hysterical.

CORIE. (*Even more hysterically.*) I am not hysterical. I know exactly what I'm saying. It's no good between us, Paul. It never will be again.

PAUL. (*Throwing up his hands and sinking to the couch.*) Holy cow.

CORIE. I'm sorry, I— (*She fights back tears.*) I don't want to cry.

PAUL. Oh, for pete's sakes, cry. Go ahead and cry.

CORIE. (*Height of fury.*) Don't you tell me when to



cry. I'll cry when I want to cry. And I'm not going to have my cry until you're out of this apartment.

PAUL. What do you mean, out of this apartment?

CORIE. Well, you certainly don't think we're going to live here together, do you? After tonight?

PAUL. Are you serious?

CORIE. Of course I'm serious. *I want a divorce!*

PAUL. (*Shocked, he jumps up.*) A divorce? What?

CORIE. (*Pulls herself together, and with great calm, begins to go up stairs.*) I'm sorry, Paul, I can't discuss it any more. Good night.

PAUL. Where are you going?

CORIE. To bed. (*Turns back to PAUL.*)

PAUL. You can't. Not now.

CORIE. You did before.

PAUL. That was in the middle of a fight. This is in the middle of a divorce.

CORIE. I can't talk to you when you're hysterical. Good night. (*Goes into bedroom.*)

PAUL. Will you come here . . . ? (*CORIE comes out on landing.*) I want to know why you want a divorce.

CORIE. I told you why. Because you and I have absolutely nothing in common.

PAUL. What about those six days at the Plaza?

CORIE. (*Sagely.*) Six days does not a week make.

PAUL. (*Taken aback.*) What does *that* mean?

CORIE. I don't know what it means. I just want a divorce.

PAUL. You know, I think you really mean it.

CORIE. I do!

PAUL. You mean, every time we have a little fight, you're going to want a divorce?

CORIE. (*Reassuring.*) There isn't going to be any more little fights. This is it, Paul! This is the end. Good night. (*Goes into bedroom and closes door behind her.*)

PAUL. Corie, do you mean to say—? (*He yells.*) Will you come down here!

CORIE. (*Yells from bedroom.*) Why?

PAUL. (*Screams back.*) Because I don't want to yek.

(*The door opens and CORIE comes out. She stands at the top of the stairs. He points to his feet.*) All the way.

CORIE. (*Seeing, comes all the way down and stands where he pointed.*) Afraid the crazy neighbors will hear us?

PAUL. You're serious.

CORIE. Dead serious.

PAUL. You mean the whole thing? With signing papers and going to court, shaking hands, goodbye, finished, forever, divorced?

CORIE. (*Nodding in agreement.*) That's what I mean . . . .

PAUL. I see . . . . Well . . . . I guess there's nothing left to be said.

CORIE. I guess not.

PAUL. Right . . . . Well, er . . . . Good night, Corie. (*And he goes up stairs.*)

CORIE. Where are you going?

PAUL. (*Turns back on landing.*) To bed.

CORIE. Don't you want to talk about it?

PAUL. At two-thirty in the morning?

CORIE. I can't sleep until this thing is settled. (*Moves to couch.*)

PAUL. Well, it may take three months. Why don't you at least take a nap?

CORIE. You don't have to get snippy.

PAUL. Well, damnit, I'm sorry, but when I plan vacations I'm happy and when I plan divorces I'm snippy. (*Crosses to bookcase and grabs attaché case.*) All right, you want to plan this thing, let's plan it. (*Storms to coffee table and sweeps everything there onto floor with his hand.*) You want a quick divorce or a slow painful one?

CORIE. (*Horrtified.*) I'm going to bed. (*Goes up stairs.*)

PAUL. (*Shouts.*) You stay here or you get no divorce from me.

CORIE. (*Stops on landing.*) You can try acting civilized.

PAUL. (*Putting down attaché case.*) Okay, I'll be civilized. But charm you're not going to get. (*Pushes chair towards her.*) Now sit down! . . . . Because there's



a lot of legal and technical details to go through. (*Opening attaché case.*)

CORIE. Can't you do all that? I don't know anything about legal things.

PAUL. (*Wheels on her and in a great gesture points an accusing finger at her.*) Ah, haa . . . Now I'm the Do-er and you're the Watcher! (*Relentlessly.*) Right, Corie? Heh? Right? Right? Isn't that right, Corie?

CORIE. (*With utmost disdain.*) So this is what you're really like!

PAUL. (*Grimacing like the monster he is.*) Yes . . . Yes . . .

CORIE. (*Determined she's doing the right thing. She comes down stairs, and sits, first carefully moving the chair away from PAUL.*) All right, what do I have to do?

PAUL. First of all, what grounds? (*Sitting on couch.*)

CORIE. (*Not looking at PAUL.*) Grounds?

PAUL. (*Taking legal pad and pencil out of case.*) That's right. Grounds. What is your reason for divorcing me. And remember, my failure to appreciate knicks will only hold up in a Russian court.

CORIE. You're a scream, Paul. Why weren't you funny when we were happy?

PAUL. Okay . . . How about incompatible?

CORIE. Fine. Are you through with me?

PAUL. Not yet. What about the financial settlement?

CORIE. I don't want a thing.

PAUL. Oh, but you're entitled to it. Alimony, property? Supposing I just pay your rent. Seventy-five, sixty-three a month, isn't it?

CORIE. Ha ha—

PAUL. And you can have the furniture and the wedding gifts. I'd just like to keep my clothes.

CORIE. (*Shocked, she turns to PAUL.*) I hardly expected bitterness from you.

PAUL. I'm not bitter. That's a statement of fact. You're always wearing my pajamas and slippers.

CORIE. Only after you go to work.

PAUL. Why?

CORIE. Because I like the way they sn—never mind, it's stupid. (*She begins to sob, gets up and crosses up steps to bedroom.*) I'll sign over your pajamas and slippers.

PAUL. If you'd like, you can visit them once a month.

CORIE. (*Turns back on landing.*) That's bitter!

PAUL. You're damned right it is.

CORIE. (*Beginning to really cry.*) You have no right to be bitter.

PAUL. Don't tell me when to be bitter.

CORIE. Things just didn't work out.

PAUL. They sure as hell didn't.

CORIE. You can't say we didn't try.

PAUL. Almost two whole weeks.

CORIE. It's better than finding out in two years.

PAUL. Or twenty.

CORIE. Or fifty.

PAUL. Lucky, aren't we?

CORIE. We're the luckiest people in the whole world.

PAUL. I thought you weren't going to cry.

CORIE. Well, I am! I'm going to have the biggest cry I ever had in my life. And I'm going to enjoy it. (*PAUL drops pencil and pad into case, and buries his head in pillow from the couch.*) Because I'm going to cry so loud, I'm going to keep you awake all night long. Good night, Paul . . . I mean, goodbye! (*She goes into bedroom and slams the door. We hear her crying in there. PAUL angrily slams his attaché case shut, gets up and moves towards stairs. At this moment, the bedroom door opens and CORIE throws out a blanket, sheet and pillow which land at PAUL's feet. Then she slams the door shut again. Again we hear crying from the bedroom. PAUL picks them up and glares at door.*)

PAUL. (*Mimicking CORIE.*) All night long. (*Seeing PAUL throws the bedding on the end table, and begins to try to make up the sofa with the sheet and blanket, all the while mumbling through the whole argument they have just had. As he puts the blanket over the sofa, he suddenly bursts out.*) Six days does not a week make.



(The PHONE rings. For a moment, PAUL attempts to ignore it, but as it keeps on ringing, he finally storms over to it and rips the cord from the wall. Then, still mumbling to himself, he crosses to the light switch near the door and shuts off the LIGHTS. MOON-LIGHT from the skylight falls onto the sofa. PAUL gets into his makeshift bed and finally settles down.) You work and work for a lousy six cents . . . (And then it begins to snow. Through the hole in the skylight it falls and down onto PAUL's exposed head. He feels it, and after a quick moment, he rises up on his knees and looks up at the hole. Soundlessly, he crumples into a heap.)

## CURTAIN

## ACT III

SCENE: The following day. About 5 P.M.

AT RISE: CORIE is at the couch picking up the towels she has put down on the floor and the arm of the couch to soak up the water left by the previous night's snow. She picks up the towels with great distaste and uses one to rub off the arm. She looks up at the hole in the skylight, rolls the couch Downstage so that it will not be under the skylight, and takes the towels up into the bathroom. As she disappears into the bathroom, the front door opens and PAUL comes in, collapsing over the railing. He looks haggard and drawn, not just from the stairs, but from a lack of sleep and peace of mind. Also he has a cold, and as he leans there, he wearily blows his nose. He carries his attaché case and a newspaper. The DOORBELL buzzes, and as he presses the downstairs buzzer, CORIE comes out of the bathroom. They silently look at one another and then they BOTH move, wordlessly crossing each other; PAUL going up the steps to the bedroom and CORIE crossing up to the kitchen. Just before he gets to the bedroom door, PAUL sneezes.

CORIE. (About to go behind the screen, coldly, without looking at him.) God bless him! (PAUL goes into the bedroom and slams the door. CORIE goes into the kitchen. She comes out with two plates, two knives and forks and a napkin. Crossing to the table under the radiator, she puts down a plate with a knife and fork. Then putting the other setting down on the end table, she moves it all the way to the other side of the room, D. R. She goes back into the kitchen and emerges with two glasses. One she places on the side table and as she crosses towards the other table, HARRY PEPPER, our old friend, the TELEPHONE