

MOTHER. It couldn't have been all your fault.

CORIE. No . . . ? *No?* Because of me you're running around without your clothes and Paul is out there on the streets with a cold looking for a place to sleep. Whose fault is that?

MOTHER. Yours! . . . But do you want to know something that may shock you . . . ? I still love you.

CORIE. You do . . . ?

MOTHER. Yes, and Paul loves you too.

CORIE. And I love him. . . . Only I don't know what he wants. I don't know how to make him happy. . . . Oh, Mom, what am I going to do?

MOTHER. That's the first time you've asked my advice since you were ten. *(Gets up and moves to CORIE.)* It's very simple. You've just got to give up a little of you for him. Don't make everything a game. Just late at night in that little room upstairs. But take care of him. And make him feel important. And if you can do that, you'll have a happy and wonderful marriage. . . . Like two out of every ten couples. . . . But you'll be one of the two, baby. . . . *(Gently strokes CORIE's hair.)* Now get your coat and go on out after him. . . . I've got a date. *(Crosses to coffee table and picks up handbag.)* Aunt Harriet isn't going to believe a word of this. . . . *(Flourishing her bathrobe, moves to the door and opens it.)* I wish I had my Polaroid camera. . . . *(Pauses and blows CORIE a kiss and exits.)*

(CORIE thinks a moment, wipes her eyes, and then rushes to the closet for her coat. Without stopping to put it on, she rushes to the door and opens it. As the door opens, PAUL is revealed at the doorway. He greets CORIE with a loud sneeze. His clothes are disheveled, his overcoat is gone, and he is obviously drunk, but he still is carrying his suitcase.)

CORIE. Paul . . . | Paul, are you all right . . . ?

PAUL. *(Very carefully crossing to the coffee table.)*

Fine. . . Fine, thank you. . . . *(He giggles.)*

CORIE. *(Moves to him.)* I was just going out to look for you.

PAUL. *(Puts suitcase on floor and starts to take out clothes.)* Oh . . . ? Where were you going to look . . . ?

CORIE. I don't know. I was just going to look.

PAUL. *(Confidentially.)* Oh! . . . Well, you'll never find me. *(Throws a handful of clothes into the closet. He is apparently amused by some secret joke.)*

CORIE. Paul, I've got so much to say to you, darling.

PAUL. *(Taking more clothes out of suitcase.)* So have I, Corie. . . . I got all the way downstairs and suddenly it hit me. I saw everything clearly for the first time. *(Moves u. l. to above couch.)* I said to myself this is crazy. . . . Crazy . . . ! It's all wrong for me to run like this. . . . *(Turns to CORIE.)* And there's only one right thing to do, Corie.

CORIE. *(Moving to him.)* Really, Paul . . . ? What . . . ?

PAUL. *(Jubilantly.)* You get out! *(Breaks into hysterical laughter.)*

CORIE. What . . . ?

PAUL. Why should I get out? I'm paying a hundred twenty-five a month. . . . *(Looks about apartment.)* for this. . . . You get out. *(Stuffs clothes into dictionary.)*

CORIE. But I don't want to get out!

PAUL. *(Crossing back to suitcase and getting another handful of clothes.)* I'm afraid you'll have to. . . . The lease is in my name. . . . *(Moves to stairs.)* I'll give you ten minutes to pack your goulash.

CORIE. *(Moves to him.)* Paul, your coat! . . . Where is your coat?

PAUL. *(Draws himself up in indignation.)* Coat . . . ? I don't need a coat. . . . It's only two degrees. . . .

(Starts to go up stairs, slips and falls.)

CORIE. *(Rushes to him.)* Paul, are you all right . . . ?

PAUL. *(Struggling up.)* You're dawdling, Corie. . . . I want you out of here in exactly ten minutes. . . .

CORIE. (*Holding him.*) Paul, you're ice cold. . . . You're freezing. . . . What have you been doing?

PAUL. (*Pulls away from her, moves to chair.*) What do you think I've been doing? (*Puts his foot up on seat.*) I've been walking barefoot in the goddam park.

CORIE. (*Pulls up his pants leg, revealing his stockingless foot.*) Where's your socks. . . . ? Are you crazy?

PAUL. No. . . . No. . . . But guess what I am.

CORIE. (*Looks at him.*) You're drunk!

PAUL. (*In great triumph, moves R.*) Ah. . . . ! You finally noticed!

CORIE. Lousy, stinkin' drunk!

PAUL. Ah, gee. . . . Thanks. . . .

CORIE. (*Moves to him and feels his forehead*) You're burning up with fever.

PAUL. How about that?

CORIE. You'll get pneumonia!

PAUL. If that's what you want, that's what I'll get.

CORIE. (*Leads him to couch.*) I want you to get those shoes off. . . . They're soaking wet. . . . (*Pushes him down onto couch.*)

PAUL. I can't. . . . My feet have swelled. . . .

CORIE. (*Pulling his shoes off.*) I never should have let you out of here. I knew you had a cold. (*Puts shoes on side table.*)

PAUL. (*Getting up and moving to doorway.*) Hey! Hey, Corie. . . . Let's do that thing you said before.

. . . Let's wake up the police and see if all the rooms come out of the crazy neighbors. . . . (*Opens door and shouts into hall.*) All right, everybody up. . . .

CORIE. (*Runs to him and pulls him back into room.*) Will you shut up and get into bed? (*As she struggles with him, she tickles him, and PAUL falls to the floor above couch.* CORIE closes the door behind her.) Get into bed. . . .

PAUL. You get in first.

CORIE. You're sick.

PAUL. Not that sick. . . . (*He lunges for her and she backs away against the door.*)

CORIE. Stop it, Paul. . . .

PAUL. Come on, Corie. Let's break my fever. . . . (*Grabs her.*)

CORIE. I said stop it! (*Struggling to get away.*) I mean it, damn you. . . . Stop it! (*Gives him an elbow in the stomach and dodges away through the kitchen.*)

PAUL. Gee, you're pretty when you're mean and rotten.

CORIE. Keep away from me, Paul. . . . (*PAUL moves towards her.*) I'm warning you. . . . I'll scream. (*CORIE keeps couch between her and PAUL.*)

PAUL. (*Stops.*) Shh. . . . ! There's snow on the roof. We'll have an avalanche!

CORIE. (*Dodging behind chair.*) You shouldn't be walking around like this. You've got a fever. . . .

PAUL. (*Moving to chair.*) Stand still! The both of you!

CORIE. (*Running up stairs to bathroom.*) No, Paul. . . . ! I don't like you when you're like this. (*Barricading herself in bathroom.*)

PAUL. (*Chasing her and pounding on door.*) Open this door!

CORIE. (*From bathroom.*) I can't. . . . I'm scared.

PAUL. Of me. . . . ?

CORIE. Yes. . . .

PAUL. Why. . . . ?

CORIE. Because it's not you any more. . . . I want the old Paul back.

PAUL. That fuddy duddy?

CORIE. He's not a fuddy duddy. He's dependable and he's strong and he takes care of me and tells me how much I can spend and protects me from people like you. . . . (*PAUL suddenly arrives at a brainstorm and with great glee sneaks off into the bedroom.*) And I just want him to know how much I love him. . . . And that I'm going to make everything here exactly the way he wants it. . . . I'm going to fix the hole in the skylight. . . . and the leak in the closet. . . . And I'm go-

ing to put in a bathtub and if he wants I'll even carry him up the stairs every night . . . Because I want him to know how much I love him. . . . (Slowly and cautiously opening door.) Can you hear me, darling . . . ? Paul? . . . (Paul appears on the skylight. He is crawling, drunkenly, along the ledge. Corie, having gotten no answer, comes out of the bathroom and goes into the bedroom searching for Paul.) Paul, are you all right? (Comes out of bedroom and crosses towards front door. When she is beneath him, Paul taps on the skylight and stands up. Corie, looking up, sees him and screams.) Paul! . . . You idiot. . . . Come down. . . . You'll kill yourself.

PAUL. (Teetering on ledge, yelling through skylight.) I want to be a nut like everyone else in this building.

CORIE. (Up on her knees on couch, yelling back.) No! No, Paul. . . . I don't want you to be a nut. I want you to come down.

PAUL. I'll come down when you've said it again. . . . Loud and clear.

CORIE. What . . . ? Anything, Paul. . . . Anything! Paul. "My husband . . ."

CORIE. "My husband . . ."

PAUL. "Paul Bratter . . ."

CORIE. "Paul Bratter . . ."

PAUL. " . . . rising young attorney . . . " (Nearly falls off ledge.)

CORIE. (Screaming in fright.) " . . . rising young attorney . . . "

PAUL. " . . . is a lousy stinkin' drunk . . . "

CORIE. " . . . is a lousy stinkin' drunk. . . . And I love him.

PAUL. And I love you, Corie. Even when I didn't like you, I loved you.

CORIE. (Crossing to Paul.) Then please, darling. . . . Please, come down.

PAUL. I . . . I can't. . . . Not now.

CORIE. Why not?

PAUL. I'm going to be sick. . . . (Looking around as if to find a place to be sick.)

CORIE. Oh, no!

PAUL. Oh, yes!

CORIE. (Paces back and forth.) Paul. . . . Paul. . . . Don't move! I'll come out and get you.

PAUL. (Holding on desperately.) Would you do that, Corie? Because I'm getting panicky!

CORIE. Yes. . . . Yes, darling, I'm coming. . . . (Runs off into bedroom.)

PAUL. Corie. . . . Corie. . . . Corie. (Dashing out of bedroom and down stairs.)

What, Paul. . . . ? What?

PAUL. Don't leave me. . . . Corie. You'll be all right, darling. Just hold on tight.

PAUL. How . . . ? What should I do?

CORIE. (Ponders.) What should he do . . . ? (To Paul.) Sing, Paul!

PAUL. Sing . . . ?

CORIE. Sing. . . . Keep singing as loud as you can until I come out there. Promise me you'll keep singing, Paul. . . .

PAUL. Yes, yes. . . . I promise. . . . I'll keep singing. . . .

CORIE. (Moving to stairs.) But don't stop until I come out. . . . I love you, darling. . . . Keep singing, Paul.

PAUL. (Keep singing!) (Runs off into bedroom.)

PAUL. (Calling after her in desperation.) Corie, Corie, what song should I sing? . . . Oh, God. . . . (Pulls himself together.) "Shama shama . . ."

CURTAIN