

SUSY. Mike—stop him . . . I don't know who he is . . . (Roat starts up stairs.)  
MIKE. You just hold it! Who are you? (Mike pretends to be pushed over so that he falls down the stairs.)

ROAT. Don't touch me! Don't you dare touch me! I've found it! I've found it in the House of Sin! (Roat exits, running. Mike gets up from floor.)

MIKE. Now wait a minute! Come back here! (Offstage we hear Roat shouting, L.)

ROAT. Taxi! . . . Taxi!

SUSY. Mike?

MIKE. What happened?

SUSY. (Scared to death.) I don't know . . . he just barged in and went into the bedroom. I heard a lot of noise and then . . .

MIKE. And then he emptied your dresser all over the floor . . .

I'll call the police.

SUSY. (Thinking hard.) The number is . . . 440-1234. . . . Mike, what will I do if he comes back? (He crosses to the phone, takes out his little notebook and is referring to the telephone number of the phone booth outside.)

MIKE. 440-1234. (As he dials the number from his notebook.) Don't worry, Susy. I'll take a later flight to Phoenix. I'll stay here 'til Sam gets back. Okay?

SUSY. (With great relief as she sinks onto settee.) Oh, yes! Thank you.

## CURTAIN

## END OF ACT I—SCENE 2

## ACT I

## SCENE 3

TIME: Twenty minutes later.  
ALTERATIONS TO SET: Tall door is closed. Venetian blinds are nearly closed downward slant.

ON RISE: Carlino enters from bedroom, notebook in hand. He is now dressed as a city police detective and wears

raincoat (his hat is on the safe). He is followed by Susy and Mike. Mike is acting as though he is already irritated by Carlino and there is friction between them throughout this scene.

(Author's Note: During this scene Mike and Carlino occasionally throw each other a glance, but they do not need to overdo this. They have played this con-game together many times with women who are not blind and they tend to behave as though Susy can see. The only exception to this is that Carlino does wipe off a few fingerprints from last night and, being clumsy by nature, he makes more noise than is necessary and Susy notices this once or twice and looks a little puzzled. Carlino has a leather glove on his left hand [which he wears during rest of play] and a handkerchief in his right hand.)

MIKE. (Annoyed, entering from bedroom.) But I've got to fly to Phoenix tonight.

CARLINO. Well, maybe that little girl will be able to identify him. Just write your address down here, will you? (Mike takes Carlino's notebook and writes.) How many apartments are there in this house—Mrs. Hendrix?

SUSY. Only two, this one and the one upstairs.

CARLINO. (To Mike, as he wipes off some fingerprints.) You say he was waving something in his hand, Mr. Talman?

MIKE. (Still writing in notebook.) Yes, it looked like a thin leather book . . . here's my address. (Mike gives notebook back to Carlino. In doing this he points to both sides of the page and Carlino nods. Carlino goes to window and signals with the Venetian blinds, saying to Susy:)

CARLINO. Excuse me, Mrs. Hendrix, it's a little dark in here . . . this your permanent address, Mr. Talman?

MIKE. Yes it is. (Susy goes to light switch by bedroom and feels the top switch, finding it is in the "on" position she looks puzzled.)

CARLINO. (Picks up hat and goes upstairs.) Well I won't bother you any more . . . and don't worry, Mrs. Hendrix—if your husband does find anything missing he'll let me know, I'm sure.

SUSY. Yes, he will. And thank you for coming so quickly.  
CARLINO. You're entirely welcome. (The phone rings. Mike



waves to Carlino to go and he exits, closing door. Susy is near to the phone and picks it up.)

SUSY. Hello . . . yes . . . just a moment please. (Calling.)

Sergeant Carlino!

MIKE. I'll get him. (Calling.) Sergeant! You're wanted on the phone. (Carlino enters, runs down the stairs and takes phone from Susy.)

CARLINO. Sorry, Mrs. Hendrix. This is going to be one of those days. (Into phone.) Carlino . . . yes, Lieutenant. (Surprised.) You mean he just walked in? (A pause.) A doll? (A long pause. Mike Susy, who has reacted on the word "doll," is listening hard. Mike and Carlino notice this and glance at each other.) . . . Have you told him yet? . . . Give me a few minutes. (A pause.) Sure, I understand. (Carlino hangs up. A pause.)

SUSY. Did they find that old man?

CARLINO. Mrs. Hendrix, maybe I should mention one thing while I'm here. I didn't want to alarm you but a woman was found just outside here this morning . . .

SUSY. Yes, I know.

CARLINO. (Surprised.) You say—you knew her?

SUSY. Oh no. I just heard about it on the radio.

CARLINO. Oh, I see . . . your husband didn't know her by any chance?

SUSY. (Surprised.) No.

MIKE. (Amused.) Of course he didn't.

CARLINO. I'm sorry, Mr. Talman, but we've been told to make inquiries . . . did you hear anything peculiar last night? . . .

Mrs. Hendrix?

SUSY. (Turning.) No we didn't . . . but we were out most of the evening.

CARLINO. Oh I see—and you and Mr. Hendrix were together all evening—I suppose?

SUSY. No. I went to a movie for about an hour while he was working at his studio.

CARLINO. Was anyone else with him?

MIKE. Hey? What is this?

SUSY. No . . . he was supposed to have photographed someone

but she never . . .

MIKE. (To Carlino, angrily.) Are you questioning Mrs. Hendrix for any particular reason?

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CARLINO. I'm not questioning her, Mr. Talman.

MIKE. Then why are you taking notes?

SUSY. Mike! . . .

CARLINO. I am not taking notes . . . I was only checking to see . . .

MIKE. What?

CARLINO. If there was anything else I did want to ask . . .

MIKE. Well if there is I suggest you wait till Mr. Hendrix returns home.

CARLINO. Now look—I am allowed to talk, aren't I?

MIKE. Talk, yes. But Mrs. Hendrix doesn't have to answer any questions if she doesn't want to and if they didn't teach you that at police school read the Constitution.

CARLINO. Okay, then—no more questions. (Carlino goes up-stairs. He turns at door—determined to have a last dig at Mike.)

MIKE. Have they found that old man yet?

CARLINO. (With mock respect.) Mr. Talman, you're not a lawyer by any chance?

MIKE. No—I'm not but . . .

CARLINO. (With a mocking laugh.) No—I didn't think you were! (He exits quickly and closes door. We hear him go down hall and street door slam.)

MIKE. Well a fat lot of help he was! . . . That old man could be in New Jersey by now . . .

SUSY. (Interrupting.) Mike—is this room very dirty?

MIKE. No . . . why?

SUSY. That Sergeant kept dusting everything . . . didn't you notice?

MIKE. No—did he?

SUSY. All around the refrigerator—and in that corner . . . (Points to safe. The doorbell rings. Susy starts towards it.)

MIKE. I'll get it. He's probably thought of some more silly questions. (Mike goes upstairs and opens door. Roat is standing outside. He is now playing the part of Harry Roat Junior, a benched square of about forty and quite humorless. He wears a well-cut business suit and eyeglasses [rimless]. Seeing Susy he removes his hat, revealing a middle-aged haircut [or is it a wig?]. He appears out of breath and in a hurry.)

ROAT. Good afternoon, Mr. . . . Hunt?

MIKE. No . . . Mr. and Mrs. Hendrix live here.

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ROAT. *Hendrix?* I beg your pardon. *(Refers to slip of paper in his hand.)* But this is 27B Grogan Street?

MIKE. Yes, but . . .

ROAT. My name is Roat. Harry Roat, Junior. May I ask if an elderly gentleman dropped by today?

MIKE. Well! I don't know if he "dropped by" exactly, he . . .

ROAT. Mr. Hendrix—if I may come in for a moment . . . you see, that was my father.

SUSY. Yes—come in please.

ROAT. Thank you. *(Roat enters but remains at top of stairs. On his way down, Mike turns to Roat.)*

MIKE. *(Quietly.)* Mr. Roat . . . Mrs. Hendrix is blind.

ROAT. Oh . . . I understand, thank you. *(Roat comes down the stairs. Then, as he approaches Susy she suddenly recoils. This is an instinctive movement of fear and both men notice it and glance at each other.)*

SUSY. Mike!

MIKE. *(Going to her.)* Yes? . . . You all right?

SUSY. Yes, I'm sorry . . . *(Still apprehensive.)* Mr. Roat?

ROAT. I'm so very sorry this happened, Mrs. Hendrix. I do hope my father wasn't rude in any way?

MIKE. Well, now—he opened all the drawers in the bedroom. Was that rude, do you think? *(Roat seems to treat this rather lightly.)*

ROAT. Oh my goodness! But let me reassure you—this is not as serious a matter as you may think, Mr. Hendrix.

MIKE. My name is *Talman*—I'm a friend of Mr. Hendrix.

ROAT. Mr. Talman—my father may appear a little—erratic at times but I assure you he would never . . .

MIKE. *(Overlapping.)* Harm anyone?

ROAT. Certainly not.

MIKE. But he just told Mrs. Hendrix that if . . . *(Mike breaks off as Gloria suddenly enters at hall door, without knocking. She is carrying a large grocery bag.)*

SUSY. Gloria!

GLORIA. It's only your groceries. I'll come back later.

SUSY. Leave them now if you like. *(Susy moves towards the stairs, bumping into Roat. Gloria doesn't answer but looks from one man to the other with considerable interest. Mike turns his back to her so that she can't see his face. Roat however turns around and looks straight at her deliberately. She then exits.)*

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ROAT. *(To Mike.)* What did my father say?

MIKE. That if somebody didn't leave some woman alone—he would kill him!

ROAT. *(More interested than shocked.)* Did he mention the name Sam Hunt?

SUSY. Yes! I think that's what he said . . .

ROAT. Ah! Then I can explain all this quite easily. You see my father came here because he thinks your husband is a photographer named Sam Hunt.

SUSY. Well—as you see—my husband is a photographer but we can clear all this up right away. Mike—there's a picture of Sam and me on the dresser—a wedding photograph. *(As Mike reaches bedroom door.)*

ROAT. I'm afraid that won't help me very much . . . *(Mike turns in doorway.)* You see I have never seen this man.

MIKE. Well just who is he, anyway?

ROAT. About three years ago my wife was on vacation in Montreal and while she was there—my father tells me—she and this man became . . . acquainted.

MIKE. So your wife meets some guy three years ago—and now your father threatens to kill him! For what?

ROAT. My father alleges that they have been seeing each other—from time to time—ever since. *(A pause.)* And now if you'll excuse me, Mrs. Hendrix—I must find my father. *(He moves to stairs.)*

MIKE. *(Puzzled.)* Mr. Roat, before you go—there's one thing I don't quite understand . . . how did you get here? *(A pause.)*

Did you follow your father here today?

ROAT. Er—in a way—yes I did. *(Impatient to leave he opens hall door.)*

MIKE. But . . .

SUSY. Then! . . . *(Puzzled.)* Then you were waiting outside? All the time he was in here? *(No reply.)* Why didn't you stop him?

ROAT. I er—I didn't follow him here exactly . . .

MIKE. Then how exactly did you know this address? *(A long pause.)*

ROAT. I was hoping not to have to tell you this . . .

SUSY. *(Quickly.)* Please tell us!

ROAT. *(Slowly.)* I believe my father followed my wife to this

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apartment. (A pause. Susy does not believe—more angry than hurt.)

SUSY. When? (As he talks he comes down the stairs and, step by step, nearer and nearer to Susy.)

ROAT. Last Sunday my father had invited us to dinner at his club. My wife arrived late and said she couldn't stay because she had to call on a friend who was flying to Montreal the next day and she had to give him something. Then my father became very testy and wanted to know his name and what it was she had to give him and she finally became annoyed and said "Well, if you must know—it's that doll of mine—that you broke!" (Slight pause.) Then she

got up and walked out . . .

SUSY. A doll—did you say? (Roat catches Mike's eye but speaks on as if it was of no importance.)

ROAT. Yes, it was a musical doll. (A pause. Susy just can't believe it yet, i.e. more curious than hurt.)

SUSY. Was it . . . ?

ROAT. Yes?

SUSY. You say Mrs. Roat was going to give a doll to—a friend—who was going to Canada?

ROAT. Yes.

SUSY. Last . . . Monday?

ROAT. (Quietly, he is now close to Susy.) That's right.

SUSY. Why did she have to do that?

ROAT. Because this doll wasn't just a toy. It had been specially made for her in Montreal. It played a little tune that was a favorite of hers. (Whistles tune.) So her friend said he would take it back to the makers and have it fixed. And then bring it back to her. . . . The moment my wife walked out on us that night my father said to me "It's that doll Sam Hunt gave her." Then he followed her. The next morning I found this note under my door—(He makes a signal with the Venetian blind. Susy reacts to this slightly. Then, while pretending to read from a slip of paper he rustles it so she can hear.) It just says—(Reading.) "Dear Harry—Sam Hunt lives at 27B Grogan Street in Greenwich Village—Dad." (A pause. Susy now believes and looks as though she has been hit in the stomach. As she moves back her chair her hand nearly knocks over the flower vase [or whatever]. The two men keep glancing from window to the phone as if they expect it to ring any moment.)

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Then, this morning, when I told him that Licia had'n't come home last night—

SUSY. Who? . . . Who—who didn't come home last night?

ROAT. Licia—my wife. But she frequently comes to Manhattan and then decides to stay with friends. She usually phones to say where she is but so far we haven't . . . heard anything. (The phone rings. Mike starts towards it but Roat holds up his hand and then points to Susy [i.e. "let her take it"]. But Susy is in a daze and doesn't seem to hear the phone. Mike looks back at Roat and shrugs. Roat nods.)

MIKE. Shall I get it, Susy? (She does not reply so he picks it up.

Mike, into phone.) Hello . . . one moment. Susy—it's Sergeant Carlini—he wants to speak to you . . . Susy?

SUSY. (Still dazed.) Hmm . . . What does he want?

ROAT. I must go now, Mrs. Hendrix. (He starts up the stairs.)

MIKE. (Into phone.) Hello . . . can I take a message? . . . No, I'll take it. Hang on a moment—his son is here now . . . Mr. Roat! Don't go—he wants to speak to you.

ROAT. Who?

MIKE. The police . . .

ROAT. (Alarmed.) No! . . . (In a whisper.) Say I've gone.

(Goes to door.)

MIKE. But it's about your wife . . . (Susy reacts.)

ROAT. What? (He closes door and starts down the stair.)

MIKE. And your father is at the police station. (Roat takes phone from Mike.)

ROAT. Hello . . . speaking . . . that's right . . . no, she didn't but . . . (A long pause.) is she hurt? . . . (Angrily.) No, tell me now! (Roat listens for several seconds. Then he seems to go into a kind of trance. Susy senses that something is wrong and stands still trying to listen to other end of phone. Finally Roat drops the phone on the table [without hanging up] and runs out of the apartment.)

MIKE. (Shouting after him.) Mr. Roat . . . Mr. Roat! (Roat exits, leaving hall door open and runs out by the street door. We see him run past the window. Meanwhile Mike bangs up the phone and goes upstairs to close the hall door.)

SUSY. Mike! Don't go!

MIKE. Of course not. He left the door open. (As he closes door and comes downstairs he says lightly:) Well—that's some family,

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the Roat! The old man just walked into Carlino's office . . . and it seems that Mrs. Roat has been in some kind of accident . . .

SUSY. (*Quietly.*) She's dead.

MIKE. What?

SUSY. (*Slowly.*) She was murdered just outside here last night.

MIKE. (*Astounded.*) You knew that? . . . All the time he was here? SUSY. I only realized when he spoke on the phone just now. The Sergeant must have told him. It was on the radio. I think they even mentioned her name only I wasn't listening properly. Mike—could you phone the bus station at Asbury Park . . . and ask them to get Sam to phone me immediately.

MIKE. Sure I will . . . but look—you're not worrying about anything that old man is going to say? He's obviously nuts!

SUSY. But there's something you don't know, Mike . . . Sam did bring a child's doll back from Canada . . . (*A pause. She is trying to remember. Mike waits for her to continue.*)

MIKE. But it can't be the same one.

SUSY. Exactly like the one he described just now. I was trying to help him unpack and I must have knocked it off the bed because it played a few notes. So I picked it up and said, "Ah, surprise!" or something like that. I thought it was a present for me. But Sam said—(*Trying to remember.*) he said—no, it was for a little girl who was in a hospital . . . some woman he'd met at the airport in Montreal had asked him to bring it here for her . . . someone . . . someone he said he'd never met before . . . (*Her voice trails away as she realizes that Sam must have been lying.*)

MIKE. (*Coaxing her gently.*) And so—Sam took it to the hospital . . . ?

SUSY. No—this woman . . . it must have been Mrs. Roat! She came here late that night to pick it up but—Sam couldn't find it . . . it must still be here somewhere. (*Becoming hysterical.*) And that Italian woman who didn't turn up last night . . . Licia. That was Mrs. Roat too! (*Susy rushes into bedroom, feels on dresser, knocking over some bottles.*)

MIKE. Now just take it easy, Susy. Suppose Sam did know her, that's not so serious . . .

SUSY. (*Comes out of bedroom.*) Mike—can you see a photograph of Sam and me—it should be on the dresser? It's a wedding photograph in a leather frame—(*Mike peers through doorway.*)

MIKE. Not on the dresser . . . (*Suddenly.*) Oh, that's what the old man was carrying when he left the house . . .

SUSY. (*Slowly, overlapping.*) He's taken a photograph of Sam to the police . . .

MIKE. (*Going to phone.*) Then let's phone Carlino and tell him. SUSY. No! We mustn't say anything to the police. The Sergeant mentioned a doll when he was on the phone, don't you remember? And all those questions about where Sam was last night—and about the murdered woman—the police must think he . . . they must think he killed her! (*Mike is already standing on stool—he flicks the blinds loudly as though looking out of window.*)

MIKE. Susy!

SUSY. What is it?

MIKE. (*Quietly.*) There's a police car just down the street . . . (*A long pause—he turns and watches her.*) They're watching this house.

# CURTAIN

END ACT I—SCENE 3