

the first time he gets out some words. They are . . . "Argh, argh." He exits. Closes door behind him.) It's a shame, isn't it? Giving such hard work to an old man. (Takes two of the packages and places them Upstage with the remaining suitcases.)

MAN. He's probably only 25. They age fast on this route. (He dials. Into phone.) Hello, Ed? Yeah . . . On . . . er . . . Eldorado 5-8191 . . . Give me a straight check.

CORIE. (Moving to TELEPHONE MAN.) Is that my number? Eldorado 5-8191? (MAN nods.) It has a nice sound, hasn't it?

MAN. (Why fool with a romantic.) Yeah, it's a beautiful number. (The PHONE rings, He answers it—disguising his voice.) Hello? . . . (Chuckles over his joke.) Good work, Mr. Bell, you've done it again. (He hangs up, turns to CORIE.) Well, you've got your phone. As my mother would say, may your first call be from the Sweepstakes.

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

MAN. (Putting cover back on junction box.) Your bill started two minutes ago.

CORIE. Who can I call? . . . I know. (She starts to dial.)

MAN. Oh, by the way. My name is Harry Pepper. And if you ever have any trouble with this phone, please, do me a favor, don't ask for Harry Pepper. (CORIE hangs up, a look of disappointment on her face.) What's the matter, bad news?

CORIE. (Like a telephone operator.) It is going to be cloudy tonight with a light snow.

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

(The DOORBELL buzzes. CORIE puts down the phone, and rushes to the door.)

CORIE. Oh, please, let that be the furniture and not

Paul so Paul can see the apartment with furniture. (She buzzes, opens door and yells downstairs.) Yes?

VOICE FROM BELOW. It's me!

CORIE. (Unhappily.) Oh, hi, Paul. (She turns into room.) Well, I guess he sees the apartment without the furniture. (Takes remaining package and places it with others on landing under the windows.)

MAN. (Gathering up his tools.) How long d'ja say you were married?

CORIE. Six days.

MAN. He won't notice the place is empty until June. (He crosses to door.) Well, Eldorado 5-8191. . . . Have a nice marriage . . . (Turns back into room.) And may you soon have many extensions. (He turns and looks at the climb down he has to make and moans.) Ooohh! (He is gone.)

(CORIE quickly starts to prepare the room for PAUL'S initial entrance. She gathers up the canvas drop cloth and throws it into the closet.)

PAUL'S VOICE. Corie? . . . Where are you?

CORIE. (Rushes back to door and yells down.) Up here, hon . . . Top floor . . . (The PHONE rings.) Oh, my goodness. The phone. (She rushes to it and answers it.) 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 receiver and yells.) Paul. Hurry up, darling!

PAUL'S VOICE. Okay. Okay.

CORIE. (Into phone.) Hello. He'll be with you in one more flight. Thank you. (She puts phone on floor and continues to get the apartment ready. Rushing up the stairs she closes the bedroom and the bathroom doors. Surveying the room, she sees the wrapping from the flowers on the floor of the kitchen and the wadded-up newspapers on top of the stove. Quickly gathering them up, she stuffs them into the nearest hiding place, the refrigerator. Then dashing into the hall and closing the

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door behind her, she re-enters to make one more survey of her apartment. Satisfied with what she sees, she turns back to the open door, and yells down.) 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 . . . Paul? . . . Paul, are you all right?

PAUL'S VOICE. I'm coming. I'm coming.

CORIE. (Into phone.) He's coming. He's coming. (She puts down phone and looks at door. PAUL falls in through doorway and hangs on the rail at the entrance of the apartment. PAUL is 26 but breathes and dresses like 56. He carries a heavy suitcase and an attaché case and all the dignity he can bear. He drops the attaché case at the railing.) Hi, sweetheart. (She smothers him with kisses but all he can do is fight for air.) Oh, Paul, darling. (He sucks for oxygen.) Well? (She steps back.) Say something.

PAUL. (Breathing with great difficulty, looks back down the stairs.) It's six flights . . . Did you know it's six flights?

CORIE. It isn't. It's five.

PAUL. (Staggers up the step into the room, and collapses on the suitcase.) What about that big thing hanging outside the building?

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

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

CORIE. Is that all you have to say?

PAUL. (Gasping.) I didn't think I'd get that much out. (He breathes heavily.) It didn't seem like six flights when I first saw the apartment. (Breath.) Why is that?

CORIE. 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.

CORIE. (Crossing above PAUL.) 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.

CORIE. I expected you to walk in here and say, "Wow." (Takes his hand.)

PAUL. I will. (He takes a deep breath.) Okay. (He looks around, then says without enthusiasm.) "Wow."

CORIE. Oh, Paul. (She throws herself onto PAUL'S knee.) It'll be beautiful, I promise you. You just came home too soon. (Nuzzles PAUL.)

PAUL. You know I missed you.

CORIE. Did you really?

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

CORIE. That's marvelous. (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 ash trays. We're hot. (He kisses her.)

CORIE. My gosh, you still love me.

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

CORIE. (Gets up and moves away.) 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. (Rises.) "How do you do . . . ?"

(They shake hands. Then CORIE throws herself into his arms and kisses him.)

CORIE. 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.

CORIE. What does that mean? . . . Something's happened? . . . Something wonderful? . . . Well, for pete's sakes, what?

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

CORIE. (Then she remembers.) Oh! They called!

PAUL. What—?

CORIE. I mean they're calling.

PAUL. When—?

CORIE. Now— They're on the phone now.

PAUL. (*Looking around.*) Where—?

CORIE. (*Points to phone.*) There—

PAUL. (*Rushes to phone.*) Why didn't you tell me?

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

PAUL. (*Into phone.*) Frank? . . . Yeah! . . . Listen, what did— Oh, very funny. (*Looks to CORIE.*) "For a lawyer, I'm some good kisser" . . . Come on, come, tell me . . . Well? . . . (*A big grin. CORIE feeling left out, sneaks over 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. (*CORIE reacts to "tonight" and slowly moves to the 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 stands up. He is bubbling with joy. CORIE has now climbed up the ladder.*) Did you hear? . . . Did you hear? (*Moves up ladder to CORIE.*)

CORIE. What about tonight?

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

CORIE. 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 CORIE.*) Oh, Corie, baby, I'm going to be a lawyer.

CORIE. That's wonderful . . . I just thought we were going to spend tonight together.

PAUL. We'll spend tomorrow night together. (*Crosses to railing and gets attaché case.*) I hope I brought those affidavits.

CORIE. I brought a black nightgown. (*She crosses up to small suitcase.*)

PAUL. (*Looking through affidavits from case; his mind has now turned completely legal.*) 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.

CORIE. (*Taking nightgown out of 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.

CORIE. (*Takes off blouse, and slipping her arms through the nightgown straps, she drapes it over her.*) 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.

CORIE. 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 . . . (*CORIE begins her "fertility dance" and ends up collapsing on the bottom step of the ladder.*) What are you doing?

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

PAUL. (*Moves to CORIE.*) Oh, Corie, honey, I'm sorry. (*Puts his arms around her.*) I guess I'm pretty excited. You want me to be rich and famous, don't you?

CORIE. 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.

CORIE. Something wild, insane and crazy?

PAUL. I promise.

CORIE. (*Eyes wide open.*) Like what?

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

CORIE. 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. (*Rises, and looks around.*) Except where do I sit?

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

PAUL. (*Dropping affidavits into case, looks at his watch.*) Five? . . . It's five-thirty. (*Crosses to bedroom stairs.*) What do we do, sleep in Bloomingdale's tonight?

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

PAUL. (*Crossing up to bedroom.*) And what about tonight? I've got a case in court tomorrow. Maybe we should check into a hotel? (*Looks into bedroom.*)

CORIE. (*Rises and moves towards PAUL.*) We just checked out of a hotel. I don't care if the furniture doesn't come. I'm sleeping in my apartment tonight.

PAUL. Where? Where? (*Looks into bathroom, closes door, and starts to come back down the steps.*) There's only room for one in the bathtub. (*He suddenly turns, goes back up steps and opens door to the bathroom.*) Where's the bathtub?

CORIE. (*Hesitantly.*) There is no bathtub.

PAUL. No bathtub?

CORIE. There's a shower . . .

PAUL. How am I going to take a bath?

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

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

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

PAUL. (*Closes door, and crosses down into room.*) Hummm . . . Boy, of all the nights . . . (*He suddenly shivers.*) It's freezing in here. (*He rubs his hands.*) Isn't there any heat?

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

PAUL. (*Gets up on steps and feels radiator.*) The radiator's the coldest thing in the room.

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

PAUL. (*Putting on gloves.*) No, it was warm coming up the stairs. (*Goes out door into hall.*) See. . . . It's nice and warm out here.

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

PAUL. The hall is empty too but it's warm out here.

CORIE. (*Moves to the stove.*) It'll be all right once I get a fire going.

PAUL. (*Goes to phone.*) A fire? You'd have to keep the flame going night and day . . . I'll call the landlord.

CORIE. (*Putting log into stove.*) He's not home.

PAUL. Where is he?

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

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

CORIE. He'll be here in the morning.

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

CORIE. (*Moves 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?

CORIE. 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. (*Crosses to the Franklin Stove and gets matches from the top of the stove.*)

PAUL. Is that supposed to be funny? (*Begins to investigate small windows.*)

CORIE. No. It was supposed to be nasty. It just came out funny. (*She strikes match and attempts to light the log in stove.*) PAUL tries the windows. What are you doing? (*Goes up attempting to light log.*)

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

CORIE. They're closed. I looked.

PAUL. Then why is it windy in here?

CORIE. (*Moves R. to PAUL.*) I don't feel a draft.

PAUL. (*Moves away from windows.*) I didn't say draft.

I said wind . . . There's a brisk, northeasterly wind blowing in this room.

CORIE. You don't have to get sarcastic.

PAUL. (*Moving up into the kitchen area.*) I'm not

getting sarcastic, I'm getting chapped lips. (*Looking up,*

he glimpses the hole in the skylight.)

CORIE. How could there be wind in a closed room?

CORIE. How could there be an answer? There's a hole in the

PAUL. (*How's this for an answer?*)

skylight. (*He points up.*)

CORIE. (*She looks up, sees it and is obviously embarrassed by it.*) Gee, I didn't see that before. Did you?

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

before.

CORIE. (*Defensively.* *Crosses to the railing and gets*

her coat.) All right, Paul, don't get upset. I'm sure it'll

be fixed. We could plug it up with something for tonight.

PAUL. (*Gets up on ladder.*) How? How? That's twenty

feet high. You'd have to fly over in a plane and drop

something in.

CORIE. (*Putting on coat.*) 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.

CORIE. 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? (*CORIE turns away.*) What? . . . A light

what?

CORIE. Snow!

PAUL. (*Coming down ladder.*) Snow? . . . It's going

to snow tonight? . . . In here?

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

PAUL. I'm going to be shoveling snow in my own living

room.

CORIE. It's a little hole.

PAUL. With that wind it could blow six-foot drifts in

the bathroom. Honestly, Corie, I don't see how you can

be so calm about all this.

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

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

CORIE. (*Goes to him and puts her arms around him.*)

I've got a better idea. I'll keep you warm . . . And

there's no charge for electricity . . . (*Kisses him.*)

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

ahead of me.

CORIE. Good. I hope we starve. And they find us up

here dead in each other's arms.

PAUL. "Frozen skinny lovers found on 48th Street."

(*They kiss.*)

CORIE. Are we in love again?

PAUL. We're in love again. (*They kiss again, a long*

passionate embrace.)

(*The DOORBELL buzzes.*)

CORIE. (*Breaking away.*) The bed. I hope it's the bed.

(*She buzzes back, and then opens door and yells down.*)

Helllooooo! Bloomingdale's?

FEMALE VOICE. (*From below.*) Surprise!

CORIE. (*Turns to PAUL.*) Oh, God.

PAUL. What's wrong?

CORIE. Please, let it be a woman delivering the furni-

ture.

PAUL. A woman?

VOICE. Corie?

CORIE. But it's my mother.

PAUL. Your mother? Now?

CORIE. (*Taking nightgown off and slipping into blouse.*)

She couldn't wait. Just one more day.

PAUL. (*Puts affidavits back into case.*) Corie, you've

got to get rid of her. I've got a case in court tomorrow.

CORIE. It's ugly in here without furniture, isn't it? She's

just going to hate it, won't she?

END