

CORIE + Paul

CORIE
calling

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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.

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ACT I BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

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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!

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 poo-fla-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 pail? 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