

the room, she takes the small paint can, fills it with water, and puts in the flowers, throwing the wrapping on the floor. The first bit of color in the room. As she crosses to put the "vase" on top of the Franklin stove, the doorbell buzzes. She puts the flowers down, crosses to the door, buzzes back, and then opens the door and shouts down:

CORIE Hello?

(From the depths, possibly from the bottom of the earth we hear a voice shout up)

VOICE Bratter?

CORIE (Yelling back) Yes. Up here! . . . Top floor!  
(She crosses to the suitcases, opens the medium-sized one and takes out a large bottle of champagne which she puts into the refrigerator)

VOICE (From below, this time a little closer) Hello?

CORIE (Rushes to the door again and shouts down) Up here! You have another floor to go.

(Crossing back to the open suitcase she takes out three small logs and carries them to the Franklin stove. As she drops them in front of the stove, the owner of the voice appears at the door: a tall, heavy-set man in his mid-thirties, in a plaid wool jacket and baseball cap. He is breathing very, very hard)

START

TELEPHONE MAN Tel—(He tries to catch his breath)—  
Telephone Company.

CORIE Oh, the phone. Good. Come on in.  
(He steps in, carrying a black leather repair kit)

TELEPHONE MAN That's quite a—(Gasp, gasp)—quite a climb.

CORIE Yes, it's five flights. If you don't count the front stoop.

TELEPHONE MAN I counted the front stoop. (Gasp, gasp . . . he looks at his notebook) Paul Bratter, right?

CORIE Mrs. Paul Bratter.

TELEPHONE MAN (Still checking the book) Princess phone?

CORIE The little one? That lights up? In beige?

TELEPHONE MAN The little one . . . (Gasp, gasp) That lights up . . . (Gasp, gasp) In beige . . . (Gasp, gasp. He swallows hard)

CORIE Would you like a glass of water?

TELEPHONE MAN (Sucking for air, nods) Please!

CORIE (Crosses to the sink) I'd offer you soda or a beer but we don't have anything yet.

TELEPHONE MAN A glass of water's fine.

CORIE (Suddenly embarrassed) Except I don't have a glass either.

TELEPHONE MAN Oh!

CORIE Nothing's arrived yet . . . You could put your head under and just schlurp.

TELEPHONE MAN No, I'm okay. Just a little out of shape.  
(As he climbs stiffly up the step out of the well, he groans with pain. After looking about) Where do you want the phone?

CORIE (Looks around) The phone . . . Let me see . . . Gee, I don't know. Do you have any ideas?

TELEPHONE MAN Well, it depends what you're gonna do with the room. You gonna have furniture in here?

CORIE Yes, it's on its way up.

TELEPHONE MAN (He looks back at the stairs) Heavy furniture?

CORIE I'll tell you what. (She points to the telephone junction box on the wall left of the stairs) Just put it

CORIE /  
PHONE  
MAN

over there and give me a long extension cord. If I can't find a place, I'll just hang it out the window.

TELEPHONE MAN Fair enough. *(He crosses to the junction box, coughing and in pain)* Whoo!

CORIE Say, I'm awfully sorry about the stairs.  
*(Taking the large suitcase, she starts to drag it into the bedroom)*

TELEPHONE MAN *(On his knees; he opens his tool box)*  
You're really gonna live up here, heh? . . . I mean, every day?

CORIE Every day.

TELEPHONE MAN You don't mind it?

CORIE *(Stopping on the stairs)* Mind it? . . . I love this apartment . . . besides *(she continues into the bedroom.)* it does discourage people.

TELEPHONE MAN What people?

CORIE *(Comes out of the bedroom and starts for the other suitcases)* Mothers, friends, relatives, mothers. I mean no one just pops in on you when they have to climb five flights.

TELEPHONE MAN You're a newlywed, right?

CORIE Six days. What gave me away?

TELEPHONE MAN I watch "What's My Line" a lot.  
*(The doorbell buzzes)*

CORIE Oh! I hope that's the furniture.

TELEPHONE MAN I don't want to see this.

CORIE *(Presses the buzzer and yells down the stairs)*  
Hellooooo! Bloomingdale's?  
*(From below, a voice)*

VOICE Lord and Taylor.

CORIE Lord and Taylor? *(Shrugs and takes the now empty suitcase and puts it into the closet)* Probably another wedding gift . . . From my mother. She sends me wedding gifts twice a day . . .

TELEPHONE MAN I hope it's an electric heater.  
*(He blows on his hands)*

CORIE *(Worried, she feels the steam pipe next to the closet)*  
Really? Is it cold in here?

TELEPHONE MAN I can't grip the screwdriver. Maybe the steam is off.

CORIE Maybe that's it.  
*(She gets up on the stairs and tests the radiator)*

TELEPHONE MAN Just turn it on. It'll come right up.

CORIE It is on. It's just not coming up.

TELEPHONE MAN Oh! . . . Well, that's these old brown-stones for you.  
*(He zips up his jacket)*

CORIE I prefer it this way. It's a medical fact, you know, that steam heat is very bad for you.

TELEPHONE MAN Yeah? In February?

*(Suddenly the DELIVERY MAN appears in the door, carrying three packages. He is in his early sixties and from the way he is breathing, it seems the end is very near. He gasps for air)*

CORIE *(Crossing to him)* Oh, hi . . . Just put it down . . . anywhere.  
*(The DELIVERY MAN puts the packages down, panting. He wants to talk but can't. He extends his hand to the TELEPHONE MAN for a bit of compassion)*