

MOTHER Oh, that's right. Ethel. My name is Ethel.

VELASCO That's better . . . Now . . . are we ready . . . Ethel?

MOTHER Well . . . if you insist, Walter.

VELASCO Victor! It's Victor.

MOTHER Yes. Victor!

VELASCO Good night, Paul . . . Shama shama, Corie.

CORIE Shama shama!

VELASCO (*Moves to the door*) If you don't hear from us in a week, we'll be at the Nacional Hotel in Mexico City . . . Room seven-oh-three! . . . Let's go, Ethel! (*And he goes out the door. MOTHER turns to CORIE and looks for help*)

MOTHER (*Frightened, she grabs CORIE's arm*) What does he mean by that?

CORIE I don't know, but I'm dying to find out. Will you call me in the morning?

MOTHER Yes . . . about six o'clock!
(*And in a panic, she exits*)

CORIE (*Takes a beat, closes the door, smiles, and turns to PAUL*) Well . . . how about *that*, Mr. "This is going to be a fiasco tonight"? . . . He's taking her all the way out to New Jersey . . . at two o'clock in the morning . . . That's what I call "The Complete Gentleman" . . . (*PAUL looks at her with disdain, rises and staggers up the stairs into the bedroom*) He hasn't even given a thought about how he's going to get home . . . Maybe he'll sleep over . . . Hey, Paul, do you think . . . ? No, not my mother . . . (*She jumps up onto the couch*) Then again anything can happen with Rupert of Henzau . . . Boy, what a night . . . Hey! I got a plan. Let's

take the bottle of Scotch downstairs, ring all the bells and yell "Police" . . . Just to see who comes out of whose apartment . . . (*There is no answer from the bedroom*) . . . Paul? . . . What's the matter, darling? . . . Don't you feel well?

PAUL (*Comes out of the bedroom, down the stairs, and crosses to the closet. He is taking his coat off and is angry*) What a rotten thing to do . . . To your own mother.

CORIE What?

PAUL Do you have any idea how she felt just now? Do you know what kind of a night this was for her?

CORIE (*Impishly*) It's not over yet.

PAUL You didn't see her sitting here two minutes ago. You were upstairs with that Hungarian Duncan Hines . . . Well, she was miserable. Her face was longer than that trip we took tonight.
(*He hangs up his coat in the closet*)

CORIE She never said a thing to me.

PAUL (*Takes out a hanger and puts his jacket on it*) She's too good a sport. She went the whole cockeyed way . . . Boy, oh boy . . . dragging a woman like that all the way out to the middle of the harbor for a bowl of sheep dip.
(*He hangs his jacket up and crosses to the dictionary on the side table under the radiator. He takes his tie off and folds it neatly*)

CORIE (*Follows him to the table*) It was Greek bean soup. And at least *she* tasted it. She didn't jab at it with her knife, throwing cute little epigrams like, "Ho, ho, ho . . . I think there's someone in there."

PAUL (*Puts the tie between pages of the dictionary*) That's right. That's right. At least I was honest about it.

PAUL
CORIE

START

173

BAREFOOT IN
THE PARK

72

lected Plays
Neil Simon

You ate two bowls because you were showing off for Al Capone at the next table.

(PAUL searches for his wallet unsuccessfully)

CORIE What are you so angry about, Paul?

PAUL (Crossing to the closet) I just told you. I felt terrible for your mother.

(He gets the wallet out of his jacket pocket)

CORIE (Following after him to the front of the couch) Why? Where is she at this very minute? Alone with probably the most attractive man she's ever met. Don't tell me *that* doesn't beat hell out of hair curlers and the "Late Late Show."

PAUL (Crossing onto bedroom landing) Oh, I can just hear it now. What sparkling conversation. He's probably telling her about a chicken cacciatore he once cooked for the High Lama of Tibet and she's sitting there showing pink pills in her mouth.

CORIE (Taking her coat from the couch and putting it on the armchair at right) You never can tell what people talk about when they're alone.

PAUL I don't understand how you can be so unconcerned about this.

(He goes into the bedroom)

CORIE (Moving to the stairs) Unconcerned . . . I'm plenty concerned. Do you think I'm going to get one wink of sleep until that phone rings tomorrow? I'm scared to death for my mother. But I'm grateful there's finally the opportunity for something to be scared about . . . (She moves right, then turns back) What I'm really concerned about is *you!*

PAUL (Bursts out of the bedroom, nearly slamming through the door) Me? Me?

CORIE I'm beginning to wonder if you're capable of *having* a good time.

PAUL Why? Because I like to wear my gloves in the winter?

CORIE No. Because there isn't the least bit of adventure in you. Do you know what you are? You're a Watcher. There are Watchers in this world and there are Do-ers. And the Watchers sit around watching the Do-ers do. Well, tonight you watched and I did.

PAUL (Moves down the stairs to CORIE) Yeah . . . Well, it was harder to watch what you did than it was for you to *do* what I was watching.

(He goes back up the stairs to the landing)

CORIE You won't let your hair down for a minute? You couldn't even relax for one night. Boy, Paul, sometimes you act like a . . . a . . .

(She gets her shoes from under the couch)

PAUL (Stopping on the landing) What . . . ? A stuffed shirt?

CORIE (Drops the shoes on the couch) I didn't say that.

PAUL That's what you're implying.

CORIE (Moves to the right armchair and begins to take off her jewelry) That's what you're anticipating. I didn't say you're a stuffed shirt. But you are extremely proper and dignified.

PAUL I'm proper and dignified? (He moves to CORIE) When . . . ? When was I proper and dignified?

CORIE (Turns to PAUL) All right. The other night. At Delfino's . . . You were drunk, right?

PAUL Right. I was stoned.

CORIE There you are. I didn't know it until you told me in the morning. *(She unzips her dress and takes it off)* You're a funny kind of drunk. You just sat there looking unhappy and watching your coat.

PAUL I was watching my coat because I saw someone else watching my coat . . . Look, if you want, I'll get drunk for you sometime. I'll show you a slob, make your hair stand on end.

(He unbuttons his shirt)

CORIE *(Puts her dress on the chair)* It isn't necessary.

PAUL *(Starts to go, turns back)* Do you know . . . Do you know, in P. J. Clarke's last New Year's Eve, I punched an old woman . . . Don't tell me about drunks.

(He starts to go)

CORIE *(Taking down her hair)* All right, Paul.

PAUL *(Turns back and moves to behind the couch)* When else? When else was I proper and dignified?

CORIE Always. You're always dressed right, you always look right, you always say the right things. You're very close to being perfect.

PAUL *(Hurt to the quick)* That's . . . that's a rotten thing to say.

CORIE *(Moves to PAUL)* I have never seen you without a jacket. I always feel like such a slob compared to you. Before we were married I was sure you slept with a tie.

PAUL No, no. Just for very formal sleeps.

CORIE You can't even walk into a candy store and ask the lady for a Tootsie Roll. *(Playing the scene out, she moves down to right side of the couch)* You've got to walk up to the counter and point at it and say, "I'll have that thing in the brown and white wrapper."

PAUL *(Moving to the bedroom door)* That's ridiculous.

CORIE And you're not. That's just the trouble. *(She crosses to the foot of the stairs)* Like Thursday night. You wouldn't walk barefoot with me in Washington Square Park. Why not?

PAUL *(Moving to the head of the stairs)* Very simple answer. It was seventeen degrees.

CORIE *(Moves back to the chair and continues taking down her hair)* Exactly. That's very sensible and logical. Except it isn't any fun.

BAREFOOT IN
THE PARK

PAUL *(Moves down the stairs to the couch)* You know maybe I am too proper and dignified for you. Maybe you would have been happier with someone a little more colorful and flamboyant . . . like the Geek!

(He starts back to the bedroom)

CORIE Well, he'd be a lot more laughs than a stuffed shirt.

PAUL *(Turns back on the landing)* Oh, oh . . . I thought you said I wasn't.

CORIE Well, you are now.

PAUL *(Reflectively)* I'm not going to listen to this . . . I'm not going to listen . . . *(He starts for the bedroom)* I've got a case in court in the morning.

CORIE *(Moves left)* Where are you going?

PAUL To sleep.

CORIE Now? How can you sleep now?

PAUL *(Steps up on the bed and turns back, leaning on the door jamb)* I'm going to close my eyes and count knichis. Good night!

CORIE You can't go to sleep now. We're having a fight.

PAUL You have the fight. When you're through, turn off the lights.

(He turns back into the bedroom)

END