

ascot, and a Tyrolean hat. CORIE turns and is startled to find him in the room.)

VELASCO I beg your pardon. (He sweeps off his hat) I hope I'm not disturbing you. I don't usually do this sort of thing but I find myself in a rather embarrassing position and I could use your help. (He discreetly catches his breath) My name is Velasco . . . Victor Velasco.

CORIE (Nervously) Oh, yes . . . You live in the attic.

VELASCO Yes. That's right . . . Have we met?

CORIE (Very nervously) No, not yet.

VELASCO Oh. Well, you see, I want to use your bedroom.

CORIE My bedroom?

VELASCO Yes. You see, I can't get into my apartment and I wanted to use your window. I'll just crawl out along the ledge.

CORIE Oh, did you lose your key?

VELASCO No. I have my key. I lost my money. I'm four months behind in the rent.

CORIE Oh! . . . Gee, that's too bad. I mean it's right in the middle of winter . . .

VELASCO You'll learn, as time goes by in this middle-income prison camp, that we have a rat fink for a landlord . . . (He looks about the room) You don't have any hot coffee, do you? I'd be glad to pay you for it.

CORIE No. We just moved in.

VELASCO Really? (He looks about the barren room) What are you, a folksinger?

CORIE No. A wife . . . They didn't deliver our furniture yet.

VELASCO (Moves toward CORIE) You know, of course, that you're unbearably pretty. What's your name?

CORIE Corie . . . Mrs. Corie Bratter.

VELASCO (Takes it in stride) You're still unbearably pretty. I may fall in love with you by seven o'clock. (Catching sight of the hole in the skylight) I see the rat fink left the hole in the skylight.

CORIE Yes, I just noticed that. (She crosses right, and looks up at the hole) But he'll fix it, won't he?

VELASCO I wouldn't count on it. My bathtub's been running since 1949 . . . (He moves toward CORIE) Does your husband work during the day?

CORIE Yes . . . Why? . . .

VELASCO It's just that I'm home during the day, and I like to find out what my odds are . . . (He scrutinizes CORIE) Am I making you nervous?

CORIE (Moving away) Very nervous.

VELASCO (Highly pleased) Good. Once a month, I try to make pretty young girls nervous just to keep my ego from going out. But, I'll save you a lot of anguish . . . I'm fifty-six years old and a thoroughly nice fellow.

CORIE Except I heard you were fifty-eight years old. And if you're knocking off two years, I'm nervous all over again.

VELASCO Not only pretty but bright. (He sits down on the paint can) I wish I were ten years older.

CORIE Older?

VELASCO Yes. Dirty old men seem to get away with a lot more. I'm still at the awkward stage . . . How long are you married?

CORIE Six days . . .

START

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Collected Plays
of Neil Simon

VELASCO/
CORIE

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BAREFOOT IN
THE PARK

VELASCO In love? . . .

CORIE Very much . . .

VELASCO Damn . . .

CORIE What's wrong?

VELASCO Under my present state of financial duress, I was hoping to be invited down soon for a free meal. But, with newlyweds I could starve to death.

CORIE Oh. Well, we'd love to have you for dinner, as soon as we get set up.

VELASCO (Gets up, and stepping over the suitcase, moves to CORIE) I hate generalizations. When?

CORIE When? . . . Well, Friday? Is that all right?

VELASCO Perfect. I'll be famished. I hadn't planned on eating Thursday.

CORIE Oh, no . . . wait! On Friday night my mo— (She thinks it over) Yeah. Friday night will be fine.

VELASCO It's a date. I'll bring the wine. You can pay me for it when I get here . . . (He moves to the stairs) Which reminds me. You're invited to my cocktail party tonight. Ten o'clock . . . You do drink, don't you?

CORIE Yes, of course.

VELASCO Good. Bring liquor. (He crosses to CORIE and takes her hand) I'll see you tonight at ten.

CORIE (Shivering) If I don't freeze to death first.

VELASCO Oh, you don't know about the plumbing, do you? Everything in this museum works backward. (Crosses to the radiator on the wall) For instance, there's a little knob up there that says, "Important—Turn right" . . . So you turn left.

(He tries to reach it but can't)

CORIE Oh, can you give me a little boost? . . .

VELASCO With the greatest of physical pleasure. One, two, three . . . up . . . (He puts his arms around her, and lifts her to the radiator) Okay? . . .

CORIE (Attempting to turn the knob) I can't quite reach . . .

PAUL (Comes out of the bedroom with an affidavit in his hand and his coat up over his head. He crosses to the head of the stairs) Hey, Corie, when are they going to get here with—

(He stops as he sees CORIE in VELASCO's arms. VELASCO looks at him, stunned, while CORIE remains motionless in the air)

VELASCO (Puts CORIE down) I thought you said he works during the day.

CORIE Oh, Paul! This is Mr. Velasco. He was just showing me how to work the radiator.

VELASCO (Extending his hand) Victor Velasco! I'm your upstairs neighbor. I'm fifty-eight years old and a thoroughly nice fellow.

PAUL (Lowers his coat, and shakes hands weakly) Hello . . .

CORIE Mr. Velasco was just telling me that all the plumbing works backwards.

VELASCO That's right. An important thing to remember is, you have to flush "up." (He demonstrates) With that choice bit of information, I'll make my departure. (He crosses up onto the bedroom landing) Don't forget. Tonight at ten.

PAUL (Looks at CORIE) What's tonight at ten?

CORIE (Moves to the bottom of the stairs) Oh, thanks, but I don't think so. We're expecting our furniture any minute . . . Maybe some other time.