

MOTHER . . . Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Armandariz, and Mr. Calhoun . . . (She sags in defeat) They carried us up . . .

CORIE Just some drinks, dinner, and coffee . . . That's all . . .

MOTHER And then they put us down. On the rugs . . . Oh, he doesn't have beds . . . just thick rugs, and then I fell asleep . . .

CORIE Paul was right. He was right about so many things . . .

MOTHER And then when I woke up, Victor was gone. But I was there . . . in his bathrobe. (She pounds the couch with her fist) I swear that's the truth, Corie.

CORIE (Turns to MOTHER) You don't have to swear, Mother.

MOTHER But I want you to believe me. I've told you everything.

CORIE Then where are your clothes?

MOTHER That I can't tell you.

CORIE Why not?

MOTHER Because you won't believe me.

CORIE I'll believe you.

MOTHER You won't.

CORIE I will. Where are your clothes?

MOTHER I don't know.

CORIE I don't believe you.
(She gets up and moves toward MOTHER)

MOTHER Didn't I say you wouldn't believe me? I just

don't know where they are . . . (She gets up and moves to the right) Oh, Corie, I've never been so humiliated in all my life . . .

CORIE Don't blame yourself . . . It's all my fault. I did it. I did this to you.
(She leans on the bar, holding her head)

MOTHER And I had horrible nightmares. I dreamt my fingers were falling off because I couldn't make a fist. (She paces and catches sight of herself in the mirror) Oh, God! I look like someone they woke up in the middle of the night on the *Andrea Doria!*
(She breaks into hysterical laughter, and then there is a pounding on the door)

VELASCO'S VOICE Hello. Anyone home? . . .

MOTHER (Terror-stricken) It's him . . . (She rushes to CORIE) Corie, don't let him in. I can't face him now . . . not in his bathrobe.
(There is another pounding at the door)

VELASCO'S VOICE Somebody, please!

CORIE (Moving past MOTHER) All right, Mother. I'll handle this. Go in the bedroom . . .

MOTHER (Moving to the stairs) Tell him I'm not here. Tell him anything.
(The door opens and VELASCO steps in. He is now supporting himself with a cane and his foot is covered by a thick white stocking. As VELASCO enters, CORIE sinks into the armchair at right of the couch)

VELASCO (Hobbling up the step and moving to the couch) I'm sorry but I need some aspirins desperately. (He catches sight of MOTHER who is furtively trying to escape up the stairs to the bedroom) Hello, Ethel.

MOTHER (Caught, she stops and tries to cover her embarrassment) Oh, hello, Victor . . . Mr. Victor . . . Mr. Velasco.

VELASCO /
MOTHER

201

BAREFOOT IN
THE PARK

START

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Collected Plays
Neil Simon

VELASCO (To CORIE) Did you hear what happened to us last night? (To MOTHER) Did you tell her what happened to us last night?

MOTHER (Horried) Why . . . ? What happened to us last night? (She composes herself) Oh, you mean what happened to us last night. (With great nonchalance, moving down the stairs) Yes . . . Yes . . . I told her.

VELASCO (At the couch) Did you know my big toe is broken?

MOTHER (Smiles) Yes . . . (She catches herself) I mean no . . . Isn't that terrible?

VELASCO I'll have to wear a slipper for the next month . . . Only I can't find my slippers . . . (He sees them on MOTHER'S feet) Oh, there they are . . .

MOTHER (Looks down at her feet, as if surprised) Oh, yes . . . There's your slippers.

VELASCO (Sitting on the sofa and putting his foot up on the coffee table) It took me forty minutes to walk up the stairs . . . I'll have to hire someone to pull me up the ladder. (To CORIE) Corie, could I please have about three hundred aspirins?

(CORIE crosses to the stairs)

MOTHER (Appealing to CORIE) A broken toe . . . Isn't that awful!

(CORIE ignores her and goes into the bathroom)

VELASCO That's not the worst of it. I just had a complete examination. Guess what else I have?

MOTHER What?

VELASCO An ulcer! From all the rich food . . . I have to take little pink pills like you.

MOTHER Oh, dear . . .

VELASCO You know something, Ethel . . . I don't think I'm as young as I think I am.

MOTHER Why do you say that?

VELASCO Isn't it obvious? Last night I couldn't carry you up the stairs. I can't eat rich foods any more . . . (Very confidentially) . . . and I dye my hair.

MOTHER (Moves to the couch) Oh . . . Well, it looks very nice.

VELASCO Thank you . . . So are you . . .

MOTHER (Sitting next to VELASCO) Oh . . . Thank you.

VELASCO I mean it, Ethel. You're a very unusual woman.

MOTHER Unusual? . . . In what way?

VELASCO (Reflectively) It's funny, but I can hardly feel my big toe at all now.

MOTHER (Insistent) Unusual in what way?

VELASCO Well, I took a look at you last night . . . I took a long, close look at you . . . Do you know what you are, Ethel?

MOTHER (Ready for the compliment) What?

VELASCO A good sport.

MOTHER Oh . . . A good sport.

VELASCO To have gone through all you did last night. The trip to Staten Island, the strange food, the drinks, being carried up to my apartment like that. And you didn't say one word about it.

MOTHER Well, I didn't have much chance to . . . I did a lot of fainting.

VELASCO Yes . . . As a matter of fact, we both did . . . If you remember . . .

(Remembering, he begins to laugh)

MOTHER Yes . . . (She joins in. It is a warm, hearty laugh)

shared by two friends. After the laugh gradually dies out, there is a moment of awkward silence and then with an attempt at renewed gaiety, MOTHER says) Mr. Velasco . . . Where are my clothes?

VELASCO Your clothes . . . ? Oh, yes . . . (He takes a piece of paper out of his pocket) Here.
(He gives it to her)

MOTHER I'm sure I wore more than that.

VELASCO It's a cleaning ticket. They're sending them up at six o'clock.

MOTHER (Taking the ticket) Oh, they're at the cleaner's . . . (After a moment's hesitation) When did I take them off?

VELASCO You didn't . . . You were drenched and out cold. Gonzales took them off.

MOTHER (Shocked) Mr. Gonzales??

VELASCO Not Mister! . . . Doctor Gonzales!

MOTHER (Relieved) Doctor . . . Oh, Doctor Gonzales . . . Well, I suppose that's all right. How convenient to have an M.D. in the building.

VELASCO (Laughing) He's not an M.D. He's a Doctor of Philosophy.

MOTHER (Joins in the laughter with great abandon) Oh, no . . .

(CORIE comes out of the bathroom with aspirin and a glass of water, and watches them laughing with bewilderment)

END

CORIE (Goes behind the couch) Here's the aspirins.

VELASCO Thank you, but I'm feeling better now.

MOTHER I'll take them.

(Takes an aspirin and a sip of water)

VELASCO (Gets up and hobbles to the door) I have to go.
I'm supposed to soak my foot every hour . . .

MOTHER Oh, dear . . . Is there anything I can do?

VELASCO (Turns back) Yes . . . Yes, there is . . . Would you like to have dinner with me tonight?

MOTHER (Surprised) Me?

VELASCO (Nods) If you don't mind eating plain food.

MOTHER I love plain food.

VELASCO Good . . . I'll call the New York Hospital for a reservation . . . (He opens the door) Pick me up in a few minutes . . . We'll have a glass of buttermilk before we go.
(He exits)

MOTHER (After a moment, she turns to CORIE on the stairs and giggles. Takes the grapes from the coffee table) You know what? . . . I'll bet I'm the first woman ever asked to dinner wearing a size forty-eight bathrobe.

CORIE (Lost in her own problem) Mother, can I talk to you for a minute?

MOTHER (Puts down the bunch of grapes, gets up, and moves right) I just realized. I slept without a board . . . For the first time in years I slept without a board.

CORIE Mother, will you listen . . .

MOTHER (Turns to CORIE) You don't suppose Uzu is a Greek miracle drug, do you?
(She flips a grape back and forth and pops it into her mouth like a knichi)

CORIE Mother, before you go, there's something we've got to talk about.

MOTHER (Moving to CORIE) Oh, Corie, how sweet . . . You're worried about me.

CORIE I am not worried about you.