

wasn't going to meet you. You know, you're much shorter than I expected.

MARY. (*Not bitchy.*) Of course, I don't have any shoes on.

TIFFANY. (*Crosses R. to below desk chair.*) It's just that Bob always makes you sound so overpowering. I expected somebody with a husky voice who said 'darling' a lot. Harlequin glasses, big jangling bracelets, black velvet treader pants.

MARY. But I do have a bracelet that jangles. I just don't wear it to bed.

TIFFANY. (*Sits chair L. of desk.*) No, I can tell what you're like just by looking at you. I think you're nice.

MARY. Oh, dear.

TIFFANY. What's the matter?

MARY. It's so early. And you want to be frank and disarming.

TIFFANY. But what's wrong with that?

MARY. (*Crosses U. C. then toward bedroom, quickly and apologetically.*) Oh, nothing, nothing at all. It's just my low metabolism. I don't grasp things this early in the day. I mean, I hear voices, all right, but I can't pick out the verbs. (*Exits to bedroom.*)

TIFFANY. (*Taking a dried apricot from the bowl.*) You probably don't eat right. My grandmother is like that.

MARY. (*Re-entering and rummaging through her purse.*) Oh, no. It's not possible! The way I feel and I don't even have a cigarette. (*Crosses D. and puts purse on R. end of sofa table.*)

TIFFANY. (*Rises, crosses above C. chair to Mary.*) Look, I wouldn't bother you, but Bob will be back and then I'll never get a chance to ask you.

MARY. (*Looks in the cigarette box on the sofa table.*) Ask me? Ask me what? (*Looks on mantel for cigarette. From now on Mary is making an abstracted effort to listen to Tiffany but what she is really doing is making a methodical and increasingly desperate effort to find a cigarette somewhere around the apartment.*)

TIFFANY. I guess I should warn you that I'm a very practical kind of person. (*Mary crosses D. L. of sofa.*) People tease me about it all the time. (*Crosses D. C. below C. chair.*) Last Christmas, when I went to Palm Beach, everybody thought I was crazy because I took along my sun lamp, except it rained

every day and I was the only one who came back with a tan. MARY. Yes, but what did you want to ask me? (*Looks in box on C. table.*)

TIFFANY. I'm getting to that. Daddy always said that before you move into a house, you should consult the former tenant.

MARY. Oh. (*Crosses U. C. looks in Chinese vase on U. R. C. bookcase, then looks in box on low bookcase.*)

TIFFANY. The person who's been living there will know where the storm windows are and whether there's a leak in the basement. Why should you spend six months finding out for yourself?

MARY. (*At low bookcase, too foggy to understand.*) They don't have storm windows in this building. (*Crosses to desk.*)

TIFFANY. I'm not talking about the apartment. I'm talking about Bob.

MARY. (*At desk.*) You want to know if Bob has a leak in the basement? (*Looks in box on desk. Last resort.*) Excuse me—you don't have a cigarette on you, do you?

TIFFANY. I'm sorry. I don't smoke. It's not that I worry about lung cancer, but it does stain your teeth.

MARY. (*Sits at desk.*) Well, I worry terribly about lung cancer. I also worry about shortness of breath and heart disease. But what really worries me right this minute is that I'm not going to find a cigarette. (*Begins looking in desk drawers.*)

TIFFANY. (*Rises, crosses R. and sits in chair L. of desk.*) Oh, I guess you never do find out. My cousin Harriet knew this boy for seven years. I mean she *thought* she knew him. But on the day they were married they took an overnight train to Chicago. And when they shut the door of their roomette, do you know the first thing he did?

MARY. No, and don't tell me.

TIFFANY. Well, he picked up a package of book matches, opened the cover, and started picking his teeth. Like this. (*Demonstrates picking her teeth with lid of book matches. Key turns in hall door and Bob enters, the Sunday papers under his arm. He stops, startled and then embarrassed to find the two girls together.*) Hi.

BOB. (*Pulling himself together with an effort and crosses D. R. C.*) Well. This is cozy. (*Then rattled again, quick to over-*

explain.) Tiffany, I should have explained to you last night that you'd find Mary here. (*Stopping to listen to himself.*) Of course, I didn't *know* last night. (*Now really confused, looking at Mary.*) I suppose you've introduced yourselves.

TIFFANY. (*Rises, kisses Bob on the cheek and exits into the kitchen. Mary rises.*) Oh yes, of course!

BOB. Good morning, Mary.

MARY. Good morning, Bob. Did you have to go without your overcoat?

BOB. At the time I thought so.

MARY. I made up your bed because I expected— (*Bob takes off his jacket.*) What did you do?

BOB. Walk, mostly. (*Looks for cigarette on low bookcase then crosses U. C. and hangs up jacket. Tiffany enters with wheat germ, crosses D. L. and feeds goldfish.*)

MARY. Don't tell me you're out of cigarettes too?

BOB. (*Patting his pockets. But they're empty, takes sweater from rack and puts it on.*) Yes, but you'll find some in the desk drawer.

MARY. No, I looked.

BOB. Well, did you try behind the—

MARY. (*Crosses U. R. C.*) Yes, and I tried the liquor cabinet and the stamp drawer. (*Tiffany picks up coat from the ottoman, crosses below sofa to U. C.*) And the last refuge of all—the Chinese vase—

BOB. (*Starting his own search, crosses D. L. looks in cigarette box on D. L. bookcase.*) Don't tell me I'm going to have to go trudging back out in that snow!

TIFFANY. (*U. C. below steps.*) Just for a cigarette? Would you like some breakfast? There's some orange-flavored yogurt.

BOB. Oh, no, no. Lord, no! (*Tiffany hangs up coat. Crosses R. below desk, looks in the wastebasket.*) Tiffany, be a lamb and fold up these sheets. There may be some under the— (*Tiffany takes pillow and comforter into closet and returns to U. C. below steps watching Mary and Bob as they dig.*)

MARY. (*Above low bookcase.*) See! If you hadn't dumped every single ashtray last night I could have found some medium sized butts. (*Mary circles C. chair on hands and knees looking under it and the table C. She ends up at the U. C. bookcase.*)

BOB. (*Circles above desk to below chair C.*) We must remain calm. It is statistically impossible that in this whole big apartment there isn't one single—just ask yourself. Where would you go if you were a cigarette? (*From beneath the cushion of the C. chair he brings up a battered half-package.*) Look! Success! (*Below chair C. Mary crosses D. R. of chair C.*)

MARY. (*As though cooing over a new baby.*) There! Did you ever see anything so pretty in your life? (*Bob digging for matches to light Mary's cigarette. Tiffany crosses D. C., left of Bob.*)

TIFFANY. But they're all squashed! (*Mary and Bob simply turn to stare at Tiffany, simultaneously and incredulously. Tiffany crosses L. to below sofa and half folds the sheet. Then they turn their attention to the serious business of getting the cigarettes lighted, after which they exhale. Forgetting themselves, they speak in unison.*)

MARY and BOB. Mmmm—that's *real* coffee! (*Becoming aware of what they have just done, they are a little embarrassed and pause awkwardly.*)

TIFFANY. (*Looking up.*) Coffee? What's that about coffee?

BOB. (*Firmer.*) Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

TIFFANY. It must be something. (*Sits sofa. Tiffany is obviously waiting for an explanation. Bob crosses R. of sofa, launches into it lamely.*)

BOB. We once heard this announcer on television. (*Mary sits chair C.*) It was late at night and I suppose the poor joker was confused from having to talk about so many products all day. Anyway, he started to do a cigarette commercial. He sucked in and smiled and said "Mmmm—that's *real* coffee." (*Tiffany does not react.*) You see, it *wasn't* worth going into. (*Determined to be brisk and cheerful.*) All of which reminds me that I haven't had any coffee. (*Crosses to kitchen door.*) I think I'd better start some up. (*Bob goes into the kitchen almost too quickly, closing the door. There is a slight pause as Tiffany looks at Mary.*)

TIFFANY. How long does it take to have little private jokes?

MARY. What?

TIFFANY. Never mind. (*Rises and begins to fold sheet.*) I must stop asking questions for which there are no answers.

(Stops folding and looks reflectively at the sheet.) This sheet isn't even mussed. (Looks at sofa.) Nobody slept on this sofa last night.

MARY. No. Bob was going to, but—

TIFFANY. He changed his mind.

MARY. (Not wanting to go into what really happened.) That couch is a little short for him. Anyway, he decided that—

TIFFANY. He'd rather sleep with you. (Finishes folding. *Mary's mouth drops open, but not for long.*)

MARY. You mean—for old times' sake? No, indeed. Bob went—well, as a matter of fact, I don't know where he went. But he certainly wasn't here. As you will discover when you ask him.

TIFFANY. I won't ask him.

MARY. (Looking at her.) Because you don't believe me.

TIFFANY. No, I don't. (Starts u. c.—*Mary stops her.*)

MARY. Tiffany, when you get a little older, you'll learn not to invent problems. All you have to do is wait, and real ones turn up.

TIFFANY. (Crosses u. c. and puts sheet in closet.) In a way—I think I'm just as glad it happened.

MARY. You are.

TIFFANY. (Re-enters and crosses d. r. of *Mary.*) Bob's attitude toward you has always been a little mysterious. I'm hoping this may clear the air.

MARY. Your theory is that he's a little bit homesick and a trip back to the old place may cure him?

TIFFANY. All right, yes. That's what I think. (Sits on stage edge of desk. Bob returns briskly from kitchen, carrying a tray with coffee cups and an electric coffee-maker on it. He crosses to bar table and puts it on the left side.)

MARY. (Rises, crosses r. of chair c. to u. r. c. Both girls are staring at him.) Bob. I'm afraid our little secret is out.

BOB. (Casually, unraveling electric cord.) What little secret?

MARY. (Crosses u. c. on platform.) No, Bob, please. Tiffany knows. And she's being very understanding.

BOB. (Glancing at *Mary* but kneeling to put the cord into light socket.) Would you care to be plainer? I'm simply not up to riddles this morning.

MARY. (Leaning over the rail.) Certainly. I'm trying to tell you that Tiffany is glad we slept together last night. She thinks it will clear the air.

BOB. (Hearing it, and instantly up.) What did you say? What? (Crosses u. c. on step—r. of *Mary.*)

MARY. (Blithely.) I really must get dressed. (*Mary goes off to bedroom, closing door behind her.*)

BOB. (Crossing to Tiffany l. of desk.) Did I hear her correctly?

TIFFANY. (Offering him the bowl of apricots.) Bob, whatever you do—please don't apologize.

BOB. (Waving the bowl away and circling below the desk.) You're damn right I won't apologize!

TIFFANY. (Rises above l. edge of desk.) All right, but are you going to snap at me?

BOB. (Behind the desk.) Wait a minute. You accept this as a fact—and you're not even disturbed?

TIFFANY. Should I be?

BOB. (Sitting in the desk chair.) Well, I can think of six reasons why you ought to be. And you can't even think of one?

TIFFANY. It isn't like it was somebody new. (*She sits in Bob's lap.*) It isn't even like you planned it. You're put back into an old situation, and you fall into an old pattern.

BOB. I see.

TIFFANY. Anybody will tell you that the force of habit is stronger than—than love, even.

BOB. And in spite of the fact that I shack up with my ex-wife, you're willing to marry me?

TIFFANY. Certainly.

BOB. (Pushes Tiffany away and rises.) My God, haven't you got any principles, any ethics?

TIFFANY. (Aroused, finally.) How did my principles ever get into this? What have I done?

BOB. (Turning away and rubbing his forehead violently. Sits again and begins looking through the desk drawers.) I've got to take some aspirin. I've got to clear my head.

TIFFANY. What's the matter?

BOB. You've heard of a lost weekend. Well, this has been a found weekend and it's worse.

TIFFANY. I'll get some water. (*Exits into the kitchen. Bob now brings out one by one about a dozen bottles of pills, etc., of varying sizes including aspirin.*)

BOB. I feel in my bones that this is going to be one little peach of a day. I've got to take something to clear my head or I'm going to goof. I'm going to make some crucial mistake. (*Tiffany enters with glass of water.*) And where the hell is Oscar?

TIFFANY. (*Hands Bob the glass.*) On Sunday, what do you want with Oscar?

BOB. (*Taking the glass and two aspirins.*) There!

TIFFANY. Also take two of those large vitamins. (*A step toward c. looking at the bedroom door.*)

BOB. Why? (*He opens a bottle and takes out three capsules.*)

TIFFANY. Alcohol works directly on the bloodstream. (*He swallows one.*) If you drink too much it lowers the white count, which is one reason why—

BOB. (*With another one in his mouth.*) No, no—don't give me the details. (*Downs a third.*) Now I've taken three. There. I can feel my white blood count going up already.

TIFFANY. (*Suddenly noticing the bottle and picking it up.*)

Bob. You didn't take these?

BOB. You told me to.

TIFFANY. You idiot! These aren't vitamins.

BOB. What are they?

TIFFANY. Sleeping pills. (*Bob snatches the bottle from her and looks at it.*)

BOB. (*To heaven in despair.*) Oh, great. Great!

TIFFANY. Do you feel peculiar?

BOB. Not yet.

TIFFANY. (*Goes into the storage closet.*) Well, you will. We'd better get something.

BOB. (*Crosses above desk with bottle to below c. chair.*) It's not going to kill me. You have to take a whole bottle—a hundred and twenty, or something. (*Doorbell. Tiffany starts to answer it.*) That'll be Oscar. (*He starts to sit c.*)

TIFFANY. (*On her way to door.*) Don't sit down. (*Bob jumps up.*) I think you're supposed to keep walking around.

BOB. You're thinking of concussion. (*He flops in chair c.*)

TIFFANY. (*Letting door wait—then she opens the door. Dirk appears.*) Oh—come in! You're Dirk Winston, aren't you?

DIRK. Yes. And you're—?

TIFFANY. I'm Tiffany Richards. (*Pulling Dirk into the room.*) And we've got a problem. Bob has taken some sleeping pills.

DIRK. (*Crosses D. C.—R. of Bob.*) Bob has!

BOB. Tiffany, please! Don't turn this into a melodrama. (*To Dirk.*) I just—

TIFFANY. (*To Dirk, pointing to coffee-maker.*) Do you think you could get him some coffee? I'll go to the drugstore and see if I can get some benzedrine or dexamil— (*She gets her coat from the rack.*)

BOB. They won't give you that without a prescription.

TIFFANY. (*Slipping on her coat.*) They'll give me something, don't you worry. I'd call a doctor, but they want to ask you a lot of crazy questions, like are you depressed. (*To Dirk.*) You'll watch out for him, won't you?

DIRK. Like a mother. Now, don't worry. (*Tiffany rushes out the front door. Dirk takes the bottle from Bob and crosses below c. chair to Bob's left.*) Why did you do it?

BOB. Because my life has suddenly become ashes. I didn't know which way to turn.

DIRK. Come off it. How many did you take?

BOB. Three. (*Rises and takes back the bottle.*) Look, I got the bottles mixed up. I thought I was taking vitamins. Any more questions? (*Crosses to desk.*)

DIRK. (*Crosses U. C., looks at bedroom door, takes off coat and hangs it over the railing.*) Yeah. Where's Mary?

BOB. (*Puts pill bottle on desk—crossly.*) Well, the last time I saw her, she was in pajamas, so I think we may safely suppose she's dressing.

DIRK. (*Crosses to below bookcase U. R. C.*) What the hell are you so irritable about?

BOB. (*Crosses below c. chair to bar table.*) Because I had a rotten night! I drank too much, slept too little—

DIRK. You're not fooling anybody. You're mad as a hornet because I'm here to get Mary.

BOB. Why should I be mad? I'm delighted!

DIRK. You *sound* delighted.

BOB. Never mind my inflections. I just haven't had your training.

DIRK. You know, there's something very mysterious about your feeling for Mary. It's like gas. You can't get it up and you can't get it down.

BOB. (*The thought registers with Bob but he doesn't blanch.*) There's a touch of the poet in you. (*Crosses L. and leans against mantel. Mary enters from the bedroom, dressed, and looking just splendid.*)

MARY. (*Very cheery, seeing Dirk.*) Good morning!

DIRK. Good morning. You just getting up?

MARY. Oh, I've been up for an hour. In fact, I've already had a heart-to-heart talk with Miss Richards.

BOB. (*Crosses to bar table.*) I've got to have some coffee.

MARY. (*Crosses D. C.—sweetly.*) And would you bring me some, please? And a Danish that's—

BOB. (*Mechanically, swerving from the coffee-maker toward the kitchen.*) —cut down the middle, and no butter. I'll get it. (*Exits into kitchen, closes door.*)

DIRK. (*Crosses to bar table.*) I woke up this morning thinking, what a nice thing just happened to me. And it was you.

MARY. (*Sits chair c. and lights cigarette.*) You're very sweet. And not like a movie actor at all.

DIRK. (*Pouring her a cup of coffee.*) Sure I am. Movie actors are just ordinary, mixed-up people—with agents.

MARY. I should think it would be fun to be Dirk Winston. (*Dirk crosses D. C. to L. of Mary and gives her the cup of coffee.*)

DIRK. It is. There are all kinds of advantages. I can go into any restaurant at all and the headwaiter will automatically bring me a large peppermill. Doctors don't get peppermills—or lawyers. Not only that, but the headwaiter stands right there until I use it. I don't want him to feel a failure, so I grind away. With the result that I've had too much pepper on everything for twenty years. I love the way you smile. (*Sits on the R. arm of the sofa.*)

MARY. (*Nervous, but meaning every word of it.*) Dirk, I want

you to know that I will never forget last evening. You couldn't possibly know what you did for me.

DIRK. Yes, but what have I done for you lately?

MARY. I'm not joking. I'm terribly pleased—and gratified.

DIRK. (*Urgently.*) Gratified, hell! I don't want you to be gratified. I want you to be interested. I want you to say it would cause you a real pang if you thought you weren't going to see me again.

MARY. Oh, Dirk, it would—it does.

DIRK. I got a call from the studio at eight o'clock. They insist that I fly to New Orleans this morning for some personal appearance stuff. That picture of mine is opening there Thursday.

MARY. In New Orleans?

DIRK. (*Nodding.*) The picture is called "King of the Mardi Gras." That's how the great minds in publicity operate—the Mayor meets me at the airport and hands me a praline or some damn thing. There's nothing I can do about it. It's in my contract. Anyway, here's the point. Why don't you come along?

MARY. But, Dirk! I'm a working girl.

DIRK. Surely they could carry on without you for one week. Never underestimate the power of the Ladies' Home Journal.

MARY. But you just don't *do* that—!

DIRK. Sure you do. You call up and say that you've just had a recurrence of an old football injury. We could have a lot of fun. We could get to know each other.

MARY. But Dirk, I don't go off on trips with movie stars—I read about people like that in *The Journal American* and I'm scandalized!

DIRK. Come on. Be rash. Fly now, pay later. (*Bob returns with an empty paper carton. Crosses D. C. between Dirk and Mary.*)

BOB. Dirk, we seem to be all out of everything. Could I ask you to go down to the bakery and get a half-dozen Danish? It's for Mary.

MARY. Oh, let's have toast—anything.

BOB. No, there's nothing out there. I'd go myself, but I'm feeling so groggy. (*Crosses U. L. C. and puts carton on bar table.*)

DIRK. (*Rising and looking at his watch.*) I don't *have* all that time—(*And looking at Mary.*)

BOB. It's right in the building. Go left after you get out of the elevator. (*Crosses L. and collapses in chair U. L.*)

DIRK. Well, I started life as a messenger boy.

MARY. Oh, don't bother.

DIRK. That's all right. I have to see if they've got my luggage in the lobby anyway. (*With a curious glance at Bob, then at Mary.*) Mary—think about it— (*He goes.*)

MARY. I don't know who ate them, but there was a whole bagful last night.

BOB. (*Rises and crosses to R. of Mary.*) I stuffed them in the wastebasket.

MARY. You what?

BOB. I wanted to get him out of here so I could talk to you.

MARY. (*Starting for door as though to stop Dirk.*) If that isn't the dumbest thing! Why should he have to—?

BOB. (*Grabbing her and spinning her around above low book-case.*) It won't hurt him a bit. You know—I'd like to shake you until your teeth rattled.

MARY. Oh, come on! In your whole life you never even shook a bottle of magnesia.

BOB. (*Crosses D. R. below desk to behind it.*) Why, why, why would you tell Tiffany that we slept together last night?

MARY. (*Crosses to L. of desk—honestly.*) Look, Bob, whether you believe it or not, I said nothing to give Tiffany that impression.

BOB. (*This rocks him a little.*) Then why did she—?

MARY. (*Crosses D. C. below C. chair then to U. R. C.*) I don't know. Some people have such a talent for making the best of a bad situation that they go around creating bad situations so they can make the best of them.

BOB. (*Trying to think.*) She didn't seem upset at all.

MARY. Upset? I got the impression she was delighted.

BOB. I know. I don't understand it. (*Crossing D. between desk and chair L. of desk.*) I don't understand anything. (*He sinks into chair L. of desk.*) Mary, I'm so miserable.

MARY. Why?

BOB. You should know why. Look. In all the months we've been separated, have you been happier?

MARY. (*Crosses above Bob to desk—reflectively.*) No.

BOB. Have you—ever thought we might get back together again?

MARY. (*Trying to hide the emotion she feels.*) It crossed my mind. (*Sits in desk chair.*)

BOB. (*After a breath.*) Would you consider it?

MARY. (*Struggling to control the relief and joy that want to come into her voice.*) Bob, do you know what you're saying? Do you mean it?

BOB. (*Surprisingly making no move toward her.*) I do mean it. (*Thinking, and even turning away.*) I've been behaving like a damn adolescent—refusing to face the simple facts.

MARY. (*A little taken aback.*) What simple facts?

BOB. Look at the whole thing in sequence. (*Counting the items on his fingers, logically.*) A—I wanted a divorce from you because—well, it boils down to something as simple as I didn't think you understood me. Okay. (*Next finger.*) B—the minute we got divorced, I discovered what I should have known in the first place—that I'm the kind of man who has to be married.

MARY. (*Hurt now, but keeping a level tone.*) Is that what you discovered?

BOB. (*Going on with his explanation as though he were addressing a committee, completely unaware of the effect on Mary.*) Absolutely. This business of going from flower to flower never did appeal to me. I hate to live alone. I hate to sleep alone. I keep finding myself, at four o'clock in the morning, sitting in the bathroom reading old magazines. So—I decided to get married again. That's C. In the circumstances, it seemed the logical thing to do.

MARY. (*Taking his tone.*) I'd say so—yes.

BOB. But wait a minute. Now I discover that Tiffany really believes that I would actually sleep with one woman on the very eve of marrying another. By this time she should know me better than that. It isn't in my character. I'm really too square. But the point remains. *She* doesn't understand me, either.

MARY. (*Bob doesn't notice the acid that begins to creep into her voice.*) Okay, we've had A, B, and C. What about D?

BOB. (*Rises, crosses L. to below sofa—innocent, and eager to*

go on explaining.) Well, I ask myself—am I walking with my eyes wide open into another case of incompatibility? In five years will there be another divorce? I don't think I could face it. (*He sinks on the sofa yawning.*)

MARY. (*Casually, still playing along, though we can hear what's going on inside her.*) No, and there would be more alimony, too.

BOB. (*Rises u. c. to below L. of chair c.*) Oh! More alimony, more scenes, more confusion! The thing is, you and I may be incompatible, but we know all about it now. I think we should get married again. It would be the sensible, reasonable thing to do. Don't you? (*He doesn't have to wait too long for his answer.*)

MARY. (*Rises to L. of desk.*) You clunk. You block of wood. You're dumb—you're obtuse—you're—. Do you know something? I was so much in love with you that when you left I thought I'd die. That's right—big, healthy, well-adjusted Mary—I thought I might just possibly die! I used to sleep with the light on because in the beginning I'd wake up in the dark and forget where I was—and I'd reach out for you. Do you know if I saw a man ahead of me in the subway who walked like you or had shoulders like you, I used to feel faint, really faint. And you have the gall to stand there and talk to me about the sensible reasons why I should come back to you. You and your damn stinking ABC's! (*Starts u. c. for the bedroom.*)

BOB. (*Crosses below sofa to L. of sofa—with his head blown off.*) Wait a minute—just because I try to be rational doesn't mean I don't feel anything—

MARY. (*She stops u. c.*) Well, we won't really know until after the autopsy. (*In a step.*) Let me give you a little piece of advice. I think you should go right ahead and marry Tiffany. It would be more than a marriage. It would be a merger. You should be as happy as two IBM machines clicking away together! (*Crosses u. c. on platform.*)

BOB. (*Trying to salvage his dignity.*) So you're not coming back.

MARY. That's right. *A*—I don't want to, *B*—I don't want to, *C*—I don't want to! (*Starts into the bedroom. Oscar has let himself in, Dirk not having closed the door altogether.*)

OSCAR. What don't you want to do?

MARY. Oh, hello, Oscar— (*Stops in the bedroom doorway, all passion spent.*)

OSCAR. (*Closing the door—to Bob.*) I got your message. I'm shocked to see you looking so well.

BOB. (*L. of sofa.*) What do you mean?

OSCAR. (*Takes off coat and hat, hangs them up.*) The answering service said it was absolutely urgent that I get over here this morning. *Urgent* was underlined three times.

BOB. Oh. (*An embarrassed glance in Mary's direction.*)

OSCAR. (*Crosses D. c. and sits R. end of sofa.*) I presumed that you were at death's door—waiting for me to draw up your will.

BOB. Of course not. It was really nothing that important. Actually it was really something minor. I mean, it could have—

MARY. (*Whirling on Bob, exasperated.*) Oh, stop it! Why don't you tell him why you called him up this morning and asked him to come over? (*Crosses D. c. to R. of Oscar—to Oscar.*) He thought he'd come back and find nobody here but me—and he'd be left alone with me. But think of it—you're too late! The damage has been done. (*She takes her cup from table c. and crosses with it to bar table.*)

BOB. (*Outraged, blowing.*) That's right! Listen to her! She knows my mind so much better than I do.

MARY. (*Pouring Oscar a cup of coffee—firmly.*) Oscar. When you go back over his accounts, you may deduct the amount he pays me in alimony. I don't want it. I never wanted it. I'm working now, and I don't need it.

BOB. (*Angrily.*) Oh, don't be noble, there's no necessity!

MARY. Oh, but there is! (*Crosses D. c. to R. of sofa and gives cup to Oscar. To Oscar.*) Do you realize that if this poor soul had to go on paying alimony to me, he could never divorce Tiffany? (*Crosses u. c. on platform.*) Oscar, I sat at home and waited nine long months for him to call. Well, I'm not sitting home any longer. (*Heading for the bedroom.*) Now I'm going to pack. (*Mary off, slamming door behind her.*)

OSCAR. Congratulations. You seem to have solved everything.

BOB. (*Crosses D. L.—in despair.*) Oh, Oscar, you don't know what you're talking about! Even my problems have problems!

(Uncontrollably, he yawns right in Oscar's face, then plunges on without pausing, in the same overwrought way.) What am I going to do? I can't marry Tiffany. She pushes in the bottoms of chocolates! (*Sits on the ottoman.*)

OSCAR. I never thought you would marry Tiffany.

BOB. Stop sounding like an owl and tell me what to do!

OSCAR. Get Mary back.

BOB. That's the conclusion I came to. But how?

OSCAR. Ask her.

BOB. Ask her? Last night I pleaded with her. Today I tried to be reasonable!

OSCAR. (*Quietly.*) So that's what she's so mad about?

BOB. Yeah! And can you explain to me why *that* should make a woman mad?

OSCAR. Not in the time we have at our disposal. But I can tell you you'd be better off giving her one idiotic reason.

BOB. What do you mean?

OSCAR. Tell her you want her back so you can bite her shoulders.

BOB. You try and tell her something. (*Rises.*) Do you know that she's actually convinced I never noticed she was pretty? What does she think—I just arrived in from Mars? (*Yawns.*) I've got two eyes. (*Sits sofa L. of Oscar.*) Hell, she always was pretty. When I first saw her with that pale hair and that pale face I thought she looked like a lovely piece of white porcelain.

OSCAR. Did you tell her?

BOB. Are you crazy? She would have said "White porcelain—you mean like the kitchen sink?"

OSCAR. Come on, now, you exaggerate.

BOB. Exaggerate? You don't know the half of it. She thinks I'm made of cast iron. She thinks I've never felt even a pang. Like I was some sort of vegetable. Do you know why I put that stinking phone in the bedroom? Because after we broke up I thought she might call me in the middle of the night some night and I wanted to be sure that I'd hear it. And before she gets out of here this afternoon I'm going to tell her about that phone. (*Rises.*) She's going to hear a few plain truths. She's not going to call me a block of wood. (*Circles L. end of sofa to U. C. on steps.*) She's not going to— (*He is stopped on*

*the first step by the return of Tiffany, who hurries in by the main door with a small package.)*

TIFFANY. Darling, how do you feel now? Are you all right? Hello, Mr. Nelson. I don't know what this is but he said it would help. (*Gives him a small box wrapped in blue paper.*)

BOB. (*Crosses D. C., L. of chair and opens box.*) Thank you, darling. It was sweet of you to dash out and get things. (*Tiffany crosses above chair c. to desk for a glass of water. Oscar sits on the ottoman.*)

TIFFANY. (*Gives glass to Bob below chair c. Sensing it.*) Bob—you have something to tell me. You've had something to tell me ever since you came in this morning.

BOB. (*Evasive.*) What? No, I didn't—I don't. (*Sits chair c. Oscar is looking at the fish.*)

TIFFANY. (*Pulls chair L. of desk to R. of Bob and sits.*) You think you're inscrutable. You're the most scrutable man I ever met. Now, tell me—sleepy or no. You know, if you repress things, eventually you become devious—tell me!

BOB. Tiffany! Oscar is going to think you've taken an overdose of something.

TIFFANY. Don't worry about Oscar. He hasn't been surprised by anything since Truman was elected President. Tell me!

BOB. (*Trying to avoid a showdown, scarcely knowing his own mind and not up to a decision anyway.*) Tiffany—honey—please—

TIFFANY. (*Crisply.*) All right, I'll tell you. You've discovered that you're still in love with Mary. (*Oscar turns in.*)

BOB. (*Shocked.*) Did I say anything whatsoever to lead you to think that?

TIFFANY. Of course not. (*Rises, crosses U. C., takes off coat and hangs it up.*) And you never would. You'd be much too embarrassed. You'd think it was adolescent and in rather bad taste. Instead, you were going to tell me all the reasons why it would be a mistake for me to marry you. (*Crosses D. C., L. of Bob. Bob is trying to shake his head "no," but she goes confidently on. To Oscar.*) I figured it all out while I was going to the drugstore.

BOB. (*Groaning and blinking his eyes.*) No, no—not today!



OSCAR. What *are* the reasons? I'm interested even if Bob isn't.

TIFFANY. (*Crosses to below c. of sofa—systematically and incontrovertibly.*) Well, one, he's thirteen years older than I am. That may not seem important now, but in ten years the gap will seem even wider. Then, two— (*She is just as thorough and efficient in her reasoning as Bob was with Mary.*) —he's a divorced man, which makes him a bad risk to start with. A girl of my age really deserves better than that. Finally, he's not a rich man, never will be a rich man, and he could never provide the Dior originals and the sable stoles that a girl of my upbringing would naturally expect. (*She has given a good imitation of Bob, without sounding unlike herself.*)

BOB. (*Rises, crosses to R. end of sofa.*) Nonsense! I never would have brought up that part about the money. It never occurred to me.

TIFFANY. (*Slowly, pointedly, only a shade regretfully.*) But all the rest of it—*did* occur to you? (*Crosses to fireplace.*)

BOB. (*Terribly embarrassed, and really fighting off sleep now.*) Oh, Lord, I don't mind that I'm a bastard. What hurts is that I seem to be such an *inept* bastard. (*Crosses to above chair c., leans on it and yawns in spite of himself.*) Tiffany, what can I say that—? (*At this moment Dirk returns by the main door, a bag of buns in his hand.*)

DIRK. I've got the buns.

OSCAR. Congratulations!

DIRK. (*Noticing that although Bob is standing up, supporting himself with the back of a chair, his eyes are closed.*) I thought only horses could sleep standing up.

OSCAR. (*Rises, crosses below sofa to L. of Bob.*) Bob is exceptional. We shall not see his like again. (*Mary enters from the bedroom with her suitcase and coat.*) What is the matter with you? (*Bob shakes his head.*)

BOB. I should have cards printed; I took three sleeping pills by accident. (*Oscar crosses to window and opens it. Bob sits in chair R. of c. chair, puts his feet on c. chair and goes to sleep.*)

TIFFANY. (*At fireplace.*) Freud says there are no accidents. I think he wanted to pass out.

MARY. (*Crosses to Dirk above sofa table.*) He was anticipat-

ing the popular demand. Dirk, I'll bet if I said I was coming to New Orleans with you—you'd go right into shock. (*Oscar crosses to above chair c.*)

DIRK. What do you want to bet? Mary, are you . . . coming?

MARY. (*Picks up buns from R. end of sofa table, crosses D. C. and sits R. end of sofa, nervously.*) I have half a mind to. I used to be superior to this kind of thing. But any minute now I'll be too old.

DIRK. (*Above sofa table.*) That's right, you'll be seventy and you'll have nothing to repent.

OSCAR. May I come too? She might need a lawyer.

TIFFANY. (*Steps D. to above ottoman.*) But you wouldn't go and leave Bob like that!

MARY. (*Starts to eat a bun.*) We could cover him with a sheet.

TIFFANY. How can you be so unfeeling?

MARY. My dear, he has you. And when he wakes up he has all those dried apricots.

TIFFANY. But he doesn't have me. Not any more. We had an intelligent talk and I'm leaving.

MARY. That's my boy.

OSCAR. I wish he could hear this. I suggest you toss a coin. The loser takes Bob. (*He pokes Bob and crosses above Bob to L. of desk.*)

BOB. What, what? (*Rises, crosses to bar table, pours a cup of coffee and swills it down.*) There's something important going on. I've got to stay awake.

DIRK. (*Crosses D.—L. of sofa and sits L. of Mary on sofa.*) Honey, you know this plane is being met by a gaggle of city officials. That means you have to decide right now. We have to leave in ten minutes.

MARY. Yes, I realize that . . . !

OSCAR. (*Crosses to R. of sofa.*) You understand that once you get on that plane you can't change your mind and get off at 125th Street. Now I think we should thrash this out.

TIFFANY. (*Sits on the ottoman.*) Yes, that's what I think.

MARY. Sure, why don't we call in David Susskind and have a panel discussion? (*Bob crosses D. L. of sofa and falls asleep on the magazine rack.*) Oh, Oscar, I don't mean to be short with you but if I want to go with Dirk why shouldn't I?

TIFFANY. Well, for one thing, when a conservative person like you decides to embark on an indiscretion, you should practice up on little things before you fly off with a movie actor. You don't start at the top.

OSCAR. You see what she means. There's a hierarchy of skills.

DIRK. Just a minute. What makes you all so certain that I'm just a movie star on the make and that Mary is another pick-up?

TIFFANY. Well, you use a cigarette holder . . . and here her very own husband wants her back.

MARY. He is no longer my very own husband.

TIFFANY. But he was and . . .

OSCAR. May I take this one? Remember you and Bob chose each other. Now you'd tell me that you chose Bob in spite of his faults. I'd tell you that you chose him because of his faults. What is missing in him is probably necessary for what is missing in you. Let us not to the marriage of true impediments admit minds. *(He backs c. a step observing Mary.)*

DIRK. Am I hearing right? Are you suggesting that these two people stay together for mutual therapy? I haven't heard anything so dumb since my press agent told me he was getting married because it made it easier to register at the Plaza. *(Oscar crosses U. R.—R. of chair c.)*

TIFFANY. Under what circumstances are you in favor of marriage?

DIRK. What do you mean, in favor? *(Rises and crosses R. of sofa to U. c.)* Marriage isn't something that has to be supported like low-cost housing or the bill of rights. It's something that happens like a sneeze . . . like lightning. Mary, I'll ask you once more. Will you take a chance? Will you come? *(He is R. of steps.)*

OSCAR. Why should she take a chance? *(Crosses D. to below R. of chair c.)* You still yearn after Bob. I know you do. *(Oscar's stress on the word 'Bob' has penetrated the fog, like an alarm bell. Bob comes to slightly and looks around.)*

MARY. Are we going to be naive about this? *(Rises to R. of sofa.)* Asking me whether I yearn after Bob is about as sensible as asking a reformed alcoholic whether he ever thinks about bourbon! What difference does it make? I'm on the wagon for good and sufficient reasons. And I feel a lot better.

Dirk, I am going with you. *(Picks up her handbag from sofa table and crosses U. c., L. of Dirk.)*

BOB. *(Crosses U. c., L. of Mary.)* Where are you going? *(To Oscar.)* Where is she going?

DIRK. She is going to New Orleans with me.

BOB. *(Crosses between Mary and Dirk below c. of steps.)*

Nonsense. I wouldn't let her go as far as the mailbox with you.

DIRK. Look, Van Winkle, you have nothing whatever to say about it.

BOB. That's what you think. *(Fighting hard for consciousness—crosses U. on platform.)* I have something very important to say—and—I've been trying to say it since six o'clock this morning. *(He teeters a bit, tries to get a grip on himself.)* Now everybody listen—*(With them all attentive, his mind starts to go blank again. He leans against the frame of the closet door and slowly slides to the floor. He is asleep again. Oscar crosses U. to R. of chair c. Tiffany rises to above sofa.)*

MARY. *(Worried now.)* Maybe we should call a doctor. *(Crosses R. of Dirk toward Oscar.)* I don't like his color.

DIRK. I don't like his color. I didn't like it yesterday. Come on Mary, let's leave Wynken, Blynken and Nod. *(He crosses U. c. on platform stepping over Bob, opens the front door and picks up Mary's suitcase and his coat from the railing.)*

MARY. But what if he's really—?

BOB. *(With a supreme effort he rises.)* Wait a minute, now. It's coming to me. *(Crosses to Tiffany.)* Mary . . . *(Sees his mistake and crosses to L. of Mary.)*

MARY. *(Going to Bob and extending her hand.)* I don't know whether you can hear me, but—goodbye, Bob.

BOB. *(Focusing on Dirk.)* You are one of the chief causes of why I am so confused. *(Puts his arm around Mary—the effect now is to make Bob sound high.)* Don't you ever kiss my wife again.

MARY. Bob—you're making a fool of yourself—

BOB. *(Turning on Mary and pushing her toward the window seat.)* You shut up. *(Back to Dirk.)* You leave her alone. She can't cope with a lounge lizard like you. She's got more goodness in her whole body than you've got in your little finger! *(He looks dazedly at Oscar. Oscar shakes his head.)*

MARY. (*Moving toward door.*) All right, Dirk—the poor soul doesn't know what he's talking about— (*Dirk exits with suitcase and Mary is following him when:*)

BOB. (*Summoning a burst of energy.*) Oh, don't I? I'm talking about you—you dumb little idiot—and you're not going anywhere with anybody! (*He grabs Mary around the waist and propels her into the storage closet. The others exclaim almost simultaneously.*)

MARY. Bob!

DIRK. (*Re-entering. He has dropped the suitcase in the hall.*) Are you out of your—? (*But Bob has quickly shut the door, and locked it with a key. He turns to the others, fiercely.*)

BOB. (*Crosses off platform to below kitchen door.*) I haven't slept in nine months and I'm sick of it!

DIRK. (*Following Bob.*) Hand me that key. If you were in good condition, I could take it from you.

BOB. That is an absolutely true statement. (*He walks to the window and calmly drops the key out of it.*)

DIRK. What did you do that for?

BOB. I was going to swallow it, but it was too big. (*He collapses on the window seat, leans out for some air and almost over-balances. Oscar grabs his feet to keep Bob from falling out. Tiffany screams.*)

MARY. (*Off.*) Let me out of here this minute!

DIRK. (*Going to the closet door, calling through.*) Mary, can you hear? That lunatic has thrown the key out into the snow! (*Big groan from Mary, off.*) What are we going to do?

OSCAR. (*At bookcase u. c.*) Oh, the snow will melt in a day or two.

TIFFANY. In the movies, they just break the door down.

DIRK. In the movies the door is pieced together by the prop men so all you have to do is blow on it!

MARY. (*Off.*) Dirk! Dirk! Are you still there?

DIRK. (*Exasperated.*) Sure, I'm still here!

MARY. (*Off.*) Well, you shouldn't be! Go this minute!

DIRK. No!

MARY. (*Off.*) Please, Dirk! Those people will be waiting. The studio will be furious.

DIRK. Let them be furious! (*Crosses to L. end of desk. Bob*

*crosses above chair c. to D. L.*) I'll call them up. (*Remembers.*) Oh, Lord, I can't even get them now! If I don't show up all the columns will say I was drunk or being held somewhere on a morals charge. (*Turning on Bob.*)

MARY. (*Off, urgently.*) Dirk!

DIRK. (*Going to closet door.*) I am going, honey. I don't see what else to do. I'll call you tonight and we'll set up something. (*To Oscar.*) I depend on you as the only sane member of the group to get her out of there.

BOB. (*L. of sofa.*) Well, it's been grand seeing you. Do come again.

DIRK. (*To Tiffany and Oscar, ignoring Bob.*) Goodbye. Where's my damn book? (*He sees it and starts D. C.*)

BOB. (*Picks up Dirk's manuscript and crosses below chair c.*) What are you talking about? You offered this book to me. You can't take it back.

DIRK. You said it stank.

BOB. I did not. I said it wasn't punctuated. I'll punctuate it. (*Crosses to window and puts manuscript on window seat.*)

OSCAR. (*To Dirk.*) You'd better let him keep it or he'll throw it out in the snow.

DIRK. And I left Hollywood and came to New York because I wanted to be among intelligent people! (*Crosses u. c. on platform.*) You know, I made three pictures for Cecil B. DeMille and he once said to me: "If you want to get hold of a woman, don't talk to her—get hold of her—pick her up and carry her away." I thought to myself: "This man is a jerk." (*With a glance toward heaven.*) Cecil, forgive me. (*He exits. Oscar crosses to alcove and gets telephone book.*)

BOB. (*Forces himself to snap to. Goes to closet door.*) Mary! Mary! (*Knocks.*)

TIFFANY. (*L. of steps.*) You don't suppose she's fallen asleep?

BOB. No, I suppose she's too mad to talk.

OSCAR. (*At desk opening phone book to the "L's".*) Why don't you try calling a locksmith. (*Bob crosses to desk.*) Just start with the A's— (*Tiffany crosses u. c., gets coat from rack.*)

TIFFANY. (*Crosses R. c. to L. of Bob.*) I'd stay if there was anything I could do.

BOB. (*Blinking.*) Oh—Tiffany.

TIFFANY. (*Holds out her hand.*) Goodbye.

BOB. Goodbye. (*They shake hands. He helps her on with her coat.*) Tiffany, you really are a very sweet girl.

TIFFANY. Yes. I am. (*Crosses to Oscar D. R.*) Goodbye, Mr. Nelson.

OSCAR. Goodbye, my dear. If you're ever looking for a job, I have a large law office and could always use a girl like you.

TIFFANY. Thank you. (*Bob dials. Tiffany crosses U. c. on platform.*)

OSCAR. (*Follows to U. L. of desk.*) You're not too upset, are you?

TIFFANY. Oh, I'll be upset tomorrow, when the novocaine wears off. But even tomorrow I think I'm going to feel it's just as well.

OSCAR. Why?

TIFFANY. I was attracted to Bob in the first place because he wasn't attracted to me. That intrigued me. I don't want to sound conceited but when you're twenty-one and you're sort of pretty and very rich, you get used to men falling in love with you. But now I ask myself—is it enough that a man is *not* attracted to you? Goodbye. (*She goes. Oscar crosses U. c., gets coat and hat, crosses R. c., replaces chair L. of desk and sits in it.*)

BOB. (*On the telephone.*) Is this the locksmith? I've got a woman locked in here. Certainly I know the woman. Could you come right over? I know it's Sunday. Okay, so it's extra. 91 East 71st Street. (*To Oscar.*) He'll be right over.

OSCAR. (*Rises, crosses c. below c. chair.*) Good. Then I may safely take my departure.

BOB. (*Rises, crosses to Oscar D. c.—terror.*) Oscar—you wouldn't leave me alone with her?

OSCAR. You'll have the locksmith,

BOB. What will I say?

OSCAR. As little as possible. (*He starts out.*)

BOB. (*Clutching Oscar by the arms.*) Please stay.

OSCAR. No, my dear boy. This dismal scene you needs must act alone. (*He shakes him off and crosses U. c. on platform.*)

BOB. (*Crosses U. L. c. below bar table.*) Do you think she'll take the next plane after him?

OSCAR. Well, there are other rooms, other keys.

BOB. (*Reeling a little, but steadying himself.*) You're a big help.

OSCAR. All my clients tell me that. I'll call you tomorrow. (*Oscar goes. Bob, left alone, goes nervously to the closet door.*)

BOB. Mary? Mary, please answer me. (*He kneels down and calls through the keyhole.*) The locksmith is coming— (*The closet door opens unexpectedly and Mary appears. She crosses sofa to L. end of sofa.*) How did you get the door open?

MARY. My keys.

BOB. (*Rises.*) You mean you could have . . . ?

MARY. Yes. I could have.

BOB. (*Crosses D. c., L. of chair c.—nodding vaguely.*) I know I behaved like a slob . . . doing this.

MARY. Like a slob.

BOB. I made a spectacle of myself.

MARY. You certainly did. It was the silliest thing I ever saw. And do you know what? I was so proud.

BOB. (*Crosses to B. of sofa.*) Mary! My sweet beautiful darling, I always thought you were beautiful. I thought you were as beautiful as—a piece of white porcelain.

MARY. White porcelain? You mean like— (*She catches herself.*) Oh, that's very sweet. (*He crosses to her and takes her in his arms, one knee on the sofa, her head on his shoulder.*) I missed your shoulder more than anything.

BOB. A hundred times I would have crawled on my hands and knees to Philadelphia, but I was afraid—Mary, come home.

MARY. I'm home. (*They kiss. Bob goes slack and begins to sink slowly back on the sofa.*)

BOB. Oh, Mary, what am I going to do?

MARY. (*Sitting next to him.*) Why, what's the matter, darling?

BOB. I'm falling asleep again.

MARY. (*She lifts his legs onto her lap.*) That's all right.

BOB. Yeah. But how will we get those colored lights going?

MARY. We'll manage. (*She starts to take off his shoes and, smiling, Bob falls asleep as:*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS