

one or two normal couples in the building but at this rent, *we're* not one of them.

**CORIE.** Well, you've got to pay for all this color and charm.

**PAUL.** Well, if you figure it that way, we're getting a bargain... (*Starts to go up stairs, turns back.*) Oh, yes. I forgot. Mr. Velasco. Victor Velasco. He lives in Apartment 6A.

**CORIE.** Where's 6A? (*PAUL points straight up.*) On the roof?

**PAUL.** Attic... It's an attic. (*Crosses up onto bedroom landing.*) He also skis and climbs mountains. He's 58 years old and he's known as "The Bluebeard of 48th St."

**CORIE.** (*Moves to stairs.*) What does that mean?

**PAUL.** (*Turns back to CORIE.*) Well, it either means that he's a practicing girl attacker or else he's an old man with a blue beard. (*Moves to bedroom.*) I'll say this, Corie. It's not going to be a dull two years.

**CORIE.** Where are you going?

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**CORIE** turns  
m.)

**VELASCO.** I beg your pardon. (*Sweeps off his hat.*) I hope I'm not disturbing you. I don't usually do this sort of thing

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but I find myself in a rather embarrassing position and I could use your help. (*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! ...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... (*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? (*Looks about the barren room.*) What are you, a folk singer?

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

**VELASCO.** (*Moves towards 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. (*Crosses right, looking 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... (*Moves towards 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... (*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 56 years old and a thoroughly nice fellow.

CORIE. Except I heard you were 58 years old. And if you're knocking off two years, I'm nervous all over again.

VELASCO. Not only pretty but bright. (*Sits down on 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—

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 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— (*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... (*Moves to 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. (*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 raised radiator on the wall.*) For instance, there's a little knob up there that says, "Important—Turn right" ...So you turn left. (*Tries to reach it but can't.*)

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

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

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

PAUL. (*Comes out of the bedroom with affidavit in hand and his coat up over his head. Crosses to 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 58 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. (*Crosses up onto bedroom landing.*) Don't forget. Tonight at ten.

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

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

**PAUL.** What's tonight at ten?

**VELASCO.** I'll arrange it all for you in the morning. I'm also a brilliant decorator. (*Pats PAUL on shoulders.*) I insist you come.

**CORIE.** Well, it's really very nice of you.

**VELASCO.** (*Crossing to bedroom door.*) I told you. I'm a very nice person. *A ce soir.*

(*Exits into bedroom.*)

**PAUL.** (*To CORIE.*) What's tonight at ten—? (*Suddenly realizes.*) Where's he going? (*Crosses to bedroom.*)

**CORIE.** (*Yelling after VELASCO.*) Don't forget Friday—

**PAUL.** (*To CORIE.*) What's he doing in the bedroom? ...What about Friday? (*Goes into bedroom.*)

**CORIE.** (*Rushes to phone and dials.*) He's coming to dinner. (*Into phone.*) Hello, Operator?

**PAUL.** (*Comes out of bedroom.*) That nut went out the window. (*Looks back into bedroom.*)

**CORIE.** I'm calling West Orange, New Jersey.

**PAUL.** (*Crosses down stairs to CORIE.*) Corie, did you hear what I said? There's an old nut out on our ledge.

**CORIE.** (*Into phone.*) 201-765-3422.

**PAUL.** Who are you calling?

**CORIE.** My mother. On Friday night, she's going to have dinner with that old nut. (*VELASCO appears on the skylight, and carefully makes his way across. Into phone.*)

Hello, Jessie... Will you please tell my mother to call me just as soon as she gets in!

(*PAUL turns and sees VELASCO. VELASCO cheerfully waves and continues on his way.*)

(*Curtain.*)

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