

*and embraces him.*) I'm sorry, Sam. (SAM nods his head, looks at his papers. KAREN moves around the sofa.) We're some lousy couple, aren't we? . . . Aren't we?

SAM. (*Doesn't look up.*) Mmm.

KAREN. Mmm what? (*Sitting on the arm of the sofa.*)

SAM. (*Looks up.*) Mmm, yes, we're some lousy couple.

KAREN. (*Without malice.*) That's what I said. First thing we agreed on today.

SAM. Look, Karen, I really don't mean to be rude but I *must* work on these estimates tonight. You understand.

KAREN. Sure, I understand.

SAM. I explained to you that Sid and Walter suddenly came down with the flu—

KAREN. It's all right, Sam. You're excused . . . (*She wanders aimlessly about the room. Catching sight of herself in the mirror over the chest, she examines her figure and then decides to do some exercises, which she quickly gives up. She sits on the arm of the sofa next to SAM.*) Do you have any good estimates for me to read?

SAM. Isn't there anything to read in the bedroom?

KAREN. (*Shrugs.*) "Check-out time is three o'clock." That's all I could find . . . Don't worry about me. I'll find something to do.

(SAM goes back to his papers. KAREN puts her arms around his shoulders and rocks him playfully from side to side, much to SAM's displeasure. Suddenly she releases him, goes to the front door, opens it and goes out into the hall.)

SAM. What are you doing?

KAREN. (*Coming back into room.*) Looking for the waiter.

SAM. Call him up.

KAREN. I thought I'd look in the hall first. Gives me something to do. (*She goes back out into the hall.*) Nope, don't see him. (*Comes back in and closes door.*) In five minutes I'll call. See? I'll alternate them.

SAM. Karen, please.

KAREN. (*Crosses to him and takes his arm.*) Oh, come on. Forget your crummy old papers and take me to a dirty movie. (*Tries to pull him out of sofa.*) Come on, Sam. Let's go.

SAM. Stop it, Karen.

KAREN. You know what's playing on Sixth Avenue? "Cat House Confidential" and "Ursula the Slut." I passed it in the cab, I swear on my mother's life.

SAM. Don't be ridiculous.

KAREN. (*Kneeling by sofa.*) Are you afraid we'll be recognized? We'll buy beards in the Five and Ten.

SAM. If you want to go, go yourself. (*Trying to concentrate on papers.*)

KAREN. What happens if I get picked up?

SAM. Call me and I won't wait up for you.

KAREN. (*Hugging him.*) Oh, good, you've got your sense of humor back. All right, just take a walk with me. A ten-minute walk and I'll leave you alone.

SAM. Maybe later. We'll see.

KAREN. (*Getting up and pacing.*) No movies . . . no walk. (*She sits on top of the chest of drawers and picks up "What to Do in New York" magazine and skims through it. There is a silence. Finally:*) Feel like going back to the house and watching the paint dry? (*SAM, at the end of his patience, gets up with papers and moves into the bedroom.*) I'm just trying to think of something we can do together.

(*The DOORBELL rings.*)

SAM. (*Pacing in bedroom.*) Shall I get it or is that something you'd like for us to do together?

KAREN. Listen, I'll even take nastiness. It's not much but it's a start.

(*KAREN crosses to door and opens it. It's the WAITER with the food on a roller table. He is a middle-aged Puerto Rican.*)

WAITER. Good evening.

KAREN. (*Smiles.*) Hello.

WAITER. (*He rolls the table in.*) Would you like the table near the window?

KAREN. (*Moves towards bedroom.*) Sam, would you like the table near the window?

SAM. (*Disinterested.*) It doesn't make any difference.

KAREN. (*Sweetly, to WAITER.*) It doesn't make any difference.

WAITER. (*Leaving the table up near the windows.*) Shall I leave it here?

KAREN. Sam, should he leave it there?

SAM. (*Throwing contract on bed and moving to doorway.*) Here, there, anywhere, it doesn't make any difference.

KAREN. (*Shrugs, smiles at WAITER.*) Here, there, anywhere. It doesn't make any difference.

WAITER. (*Takes chair from desk and puts it to the right of the table.*) Yes, m'am. (*He gets armchair from right of sofa and brings it to the table.*)

SAM. (*To WAITER.*) You don't have to set up the chairs.

KAREN. (*To WAITER.*) You don't have to set up the chairs.

WAITER. Yes, m'am. (*He starts to put armchair back.*)

SAM. All right, leave them, you've done it already.

KAREN. Yes, why don't you just leave the chairs? They're all set up.

(*WAITER puts the chair back at table.*)

SAM. Can I have the bill, please?

WAITER. Yes, sir. (*Takes bill and pencil to SAM.*)

KAREN. (*She looks at tray of hors d'oeuvres on table. Sweetly.*) Oh, look at all the anchovies.

SAM. (*Signing bill.*) Didn't you tell them you didn't want anchovies?

WAITER. (*To KAREN.*) You didn't want anchovies?

KAREN. (*Doesn't want more trouble.*) No, no. I asked for anchovies. I'm a very big fan of anchovies.

SAM. (*Hands bill to WAITER.*) That'll be all, thank you.

KAREN. Yes, that'll be all, thank you.

WAITER. And thank you. (*Crosses to door.*)

KAREN. (*Looks at table.*) Wait a minute. The champagne. Where's the champagne?

WAITER. No champagne? (*Looks at check.*) You're right. They forgot the champagne.

KAREN. But the anchovies they remembered.

SAM. (*Returning to bedroom.*) I can't drink anything now, I've got work to do. What do you need a whole bottle of champagne for?

KAREN. It's our anniversary. (*To WAITER.*) It's our anniversary.

WAITER. Oh, congratulations.

KAREN. (*Sitting on arm of chair at table.*) Thank you. We're married twenty-three or twenty-four years today or tomorrow.

WAITER. Then you want the champagne?

KAREN. With two grown children in college.

WAITER. Oh? That's wonderful.

KAREN. (*Shrugs.*) You think so? He's flunking out and she's majoring in dirty clothes.

SAM. (*Greatly irritated, moves back to living room.*) He's not flunking out. Why do you say he's flunking out? (*Controls himself. To WAITER.*) That'll be all, thank you.

WAITER. If you don't want the champagne, I'll cross it off the bill.

SAM. She doesn't want the champagne. Cross it off the bill. (*Crosses back to bedroom.*)

KAREN. (*To WAITER.*) I want the champagne. Don't cross it off the bill. (*For SAM's benefit.*) Bring me a bottle and one glass.

WAITER. Yes, m'am.

SAM. (*From bedroom.*) That'll be all, thank you.

KAREN. Yes, that'll be all, thank you.

WAITER. (*Opening door.*) When you want me to take the table, just ring.

KAREN. (*Moving to WAITER.*) Yes, I'll ring when I want you to take the table.

WAITER. Thank you . . . And again, congratulations. (*He exits.*)

(*SAM crosses to table, takes cover off a dish.*)

KAREN. (*At mantel.*) Did you hear that, Sam? We're being congratulated on being married to each other.

SAM. (*Disgusted, slams cover back on dish.*) I asked for lean roast beef. That is not lean roast beef. (*Moves to sofa and sits, taking contract from coffee table.*)

KAREN. (*Contemplatively.*) You know how many people we know who are still married as long as us? One other couple. The Shelly's . . . The most boring people I ever met.

SAM. (*Cannot contain himself any more.*) Why do you talk to the waiter like that?

KAREN. Like what? (*Sits at table and begins to serve herself.*)

SAM. Like you've known him for twenty years. You just met him. He walked in here two minutes ago with fatty roast beef. It's none of his business how our son is doing in school.

KAREN. I was just having a conversation. I get lonely, I like to talk to people.

SAM. He's a waiter. Talk to him about food.

KAREN. I did something wrong again. I'm sorry, Sam. When he brings the champagne I'll hide behind the drapes.

SAM. You don't have to hide. Just don't tell him our personal problems, that's all.

KAREN. What should I do, lie?

SAM. Certainly, lie. Everybody else does. Tell them you have a beautiful and devoted daughter. Tell them you have a brilliant son who's on the Dean's list. Tell them you're only forty-two years old.

KAREN. There's no point to it. In two years I'll be fifty. Who's going to like me better if I'm only forty-two?

SAM. You don't have to revel in it like it's some kind of an accomplishment.

KAREN. I'm not insane about getting older. It happens to everyone. It's happened to you. You're fifty-one years old.

SAM. (*Nods his head in exasperation.*) That's the difference between us. I don't accept it. I don't have to accept being fifty-one. (*Getting up and moving to her.*) I don't accept getting older.

KAREN. Good luck to you. You'll be the youngest one in the cemetery.

SAM. We can't even have a normal discussion any more. (*He stalks into the bedroom, closes the door, and stretches out on the bed.*)

KAREN. Accept being fifty-one and I'll have a normal discussion. (*Stops as SAM closes door.*) Aren't you going to have your dinner? (*Gets up and examines the plate of meat. Holds up a piece to the bedroom door and calls to SAM.*) Sam, I found some very lean roast beef. (*She nibbles on a piece.*) Come inside and see how thin I'm getting. (*The DOORBELL rings.*) Hey, come on. The champagne is here. (*She opens door to bedroom and calls in.*) If you don't come out, I'll tell the waiter you wear dentures. (*She crosses and opens the front door. JEAN McCORMACK stands there. She is Sam's secretary. She is a trim, attractive woman about 28. She is neatly dressed, bright, cheerful and smilingly efficient.*) Oh! Hello, Miss McCormack.

JEAN. Hello, Mrs. Nash. I hope I'm not disturbing you.

KAREN. No, no, not at all. Mr. Nash and I were just sitting around, joking. Come in. (*Still holding roast beef in her hand.*)

JEAN. Thank you. (*She enters room, closing the door behind her.*) I hate to barge in this way but I have some papers that need Mr. Nash's signature immediately.

KAREN. Certainly. (*Calls out.*) Sam. It's Miss McCormack. (*To JEAN.*) It is Miss McCormack now, isn't it?

JEAN. (*Taking several contracts out of briefcase.*) It was Mrs. Colby last year. This year it's Miss McCormack again.

KAREN. (*Sitting on arm of sofa.*) Oh. You're lucky you can remember. I've been married so long if I got divorced, I'd have to make up a maiden name . . . Have you had your dinner yet? (*Indicates roast beef in her hand.*)

JEAN. (*Laying out contracts on coffee table front of sofa.*) I don't have dinner, thank you.

KAREN. No dinner? Ever?

JEAN. (*Getting glasses and pen from purse on console table behind sofa.*) I have a large breakfast, a moderate lunch and a snack before going to bed. On this job I've worked late so often, I had to readjust my eating routine. Now I'm used to it.

(*SAM gets up from bed and moves into living room.*)

KAREN. Oh. Well, I can understand that. I miss a lot of dinners with Mr. Nash too.

SAM. Oh, hello. You got them, huh? (*Sits on sofa and examines contract.*)

JEAN. Just came in. All ready for signature.

KAREN. (*To JEAN.*) How about some black coffee? Or would that fill you up?

JEAN. Black coffee would be fine, thank you.

KAREN. One black coffee coming up. Sam, would you like some black coffee?

SAM. No.

KAREN. That's no black coffee and one black coffee.

(*KAREN crosses to table, SAM is looking over the contracts. MISS MCCORMACK sits next to him. KAREN pours coffee.*)

SAM. Why is there an adjustment on this figure?

JEAN. (*Looks at it.*) There was a clerical omission on the Cincinnati tabulations. It didn't show up on the 1400

but I rechecked it with my own files and made the correction. (*Points on respective pages of contract.*) So that item 17B should read three hundred and twenty-five thousand and disregard the figure on 17A.

KAREN. Cream and sugar?

JEAN. No, thank you.

SAM. But this should have been caught on the IBM.

JEAN. It should have but it wasn't. Obviously it wasn't fed properly.

KAREN. No cream and no sugar or no cream and yes, sugar?

JEAN. No cream and *no* sugar.

KAREN. So it's yes, no cream and no sugar.

SAM. Did you call this to Purcell's attention?

KAREN. (*Handing cup to JEAN.*) Would you like some pastry or cookies? I could call down. They have beautiful pastry and cookies here.

JEAN. This is fine, thank you. (*To SAM.*) Mr. Purcell says this happened once before this month. He can't pin it down un'til he rechecks the whole 66 file.

KAREN. (*Leaning on console table behind sofa.*) You're sure? A sandwich? A Welsh rarebit?

JEAN. No, I'm really quite happy, thank you. (*Takes saccharine from purse and puts it in coffee.*)

SAM. Well, I'm just going to have to go over this whole thing tonight with Howard. If we give Henderson any room for doubt, we can blow our entire presentation.

JEAN. (*Sips coffee.*) I told him there was a possibility of this so he made plans to stay in town tonight.

SAM. Damn! Of all nights to have this happen. (*Putting down contract.*) What time is it now?

JEAN. (*Looks at watch.*) Ten past five.

KAREN. (*Looking over JEAN's shoulder.*) Ten past five.

SAM. All right, you tell Howard I'll meet him in the office between six-fifteen and six-thirty. Tell him I want to see every one of last year's 1400 forms.

KAREN. (*Moving around sofa to SAM.*) You're going to the office? Tonight?

SAM. It can't be helped, Karen. (JEAN puts coffee cup down.) We're having that same damned trouble with the computer again.

KAREN. I could go with you. Maybe all it needs is a little dusting.

SAM. Something in that office sure as hell needs dusting. (Getting up and moving to bedroom. JEAN gathers up the contracts and moves to put them in briefcase at the console table.) All right, Miss McCormack, why don't you hop in a cab now and get started on these figures with Howard? I just want to clean up and I'll meet you in about twenty minutes.

JEAN. Yes, sir.

SAM. I hope I'm not ruining any plans you had for tonight?

JEAN. When I saw the figures this morning, I expected it. (Closes case. SAM takes bottle of pills from attaché case and crosses to bathroom.) Mrs. Nash, thank you very much for the coffee.

KAREN. You really should eat something. You'll faint right over the IBM machine.

JEAN. (Opening front door.) I'll be all right.

KAREN. (Moving to her above sofa.) It's a pity you can't stay two more minutes. I just ordered champagne. Can I tell her why, Sam?

SAM. (Returns from bathroom, having taken pills. Throws pills back into case.) What's that? (Drinks from glass on dresser. Takes jacket from back of chair and puts it on.)

KAREN. Well, I'm not supposed to go around blurting these things out but it's our twenty third anniversary . . .

JEAN. Oh? I didn't know. Congratulations.

KAREN. (To JEAN, but for SAM's benefit.) Thank you . . . Yes, life has been very good to me. I have a beautiful and devoted daughter, a brilliant son who's on the Dean's list, I'm forty-two years old, what more can I ask?

SAM. (Moving into living room.) Karen, Miss McCormack has to get back to the office. (SAM goes back into

bedroom, takes hair brushes from overnight bag and brushes hair in front of closet mirror.)

KAREN. Oh, I'm sorry. (To JEAN.) Don't let him work you too late.

JEAN. It's all right. I'm used to it now. Best wishes again, Mrs. Nash.

KAREN. (As JEAN starts out.) Thanks, dear. And see that he buys me a nice gift.

JEAN. (Smiles.) I definitely will. (Closes door.)

KAREN. (To SAM.) What a sweet girl. That's a very sweet girl, Sam.

SAM. Karen, listen, I'm very sorry about tonight. It just can't be helped. (Puts brushes back.)

KAREN. That's a sweet, young, skinny girl.

SAM. (Takes a cordless electric razor from attaché case and crosses to bathroom.) The thing is, if I leave now maybe I can still get back in time for us to have a late dinner.

KAREN. (Enters bedroom and sits in armchair.) Oh, don't worry about me, Sam. (SAM begins to shave.) I understand. I just feel badly for you. You could have really relaxed tonight and instead you'll be cooped up in that stuffy office until all hours working over some boring contracts with your smooth shaven face.

SAM. (Still shaving, moves into bedroom.) Well, I can't very well walk through the lobby of the Plaza Hotel with a stubbly chin. (Returns to bathroom.)

KAREN. They wouldn't let you into the elevator. Don't forget your Jade East.

SAM'S VOICE. My what?

KAREN. Your sexy cologne. The doorman will never get you a cab if you don't smell nice.

SAM. (Enters bedroom. Looks at KAREN for a moment and then shuts razor off.) What are you doing, Karen?

KAREN. Oh, I'm just joking. Can't you tell when I'm kidding around any more, Sam?

SAM. No, I can't. (Crosses around bed and puts razor back in case.)