

VISITOR FROM FOREST HILLS

Neil Simon

Characters:

Norma Hubley
Roy Hubley
Borden Eisler
Mimsey Hubley

SCENE: A suite at the Plaza Hotel on the seventh floor, overlooking Central Park. The set is divided into two rooms. The room at stage right is the living room. It is a well-appointed room, tastefully furnished, with an entrance door at the extreme right and windows that look out over the park. A door leads into the bedroom, which has a large double bed, etc., and a door that leads to the bathroom. The room also contains a large closet.

It is three o'clock on a warm Saturday afternoon in spring.

The living room is bedecked with vases and baskets of flowers. In the bedroom one opened valise containing a young woman's street clothes rests on the floor. A very large box, which had held a wedding dress, rests on the luggage rack, and a man's suit lies on the bed. A fur wrap and gloves are thrown over the back of the sofa. Telegrams of congratulation and newspapers are strewn about. The suite today is being used more or less as a dressing room, since a wedding is about to occur downstairs in one of the reception rooms.

As the lights come up, NORMA HUBLEY is at the phone in the bedroom, impatiently tapping the receiver. She is dressed in a formal cocktail dress and a large hat, looking her very best, as any woman would want to on her daughter's wedding day. But she is extremely nervous and harassed, and with good cause—as we'll soon find out.

NORMA: [On the phone] Hello? . . . Hello, operator? . . . Can I have the Blue Room, please . . . The Blue Room . . . Is there a Pink Room? . . . I want the Hubley-Eisler wedding . . . The Green Room, that's it. Thank you . . . Could you please hurry, operator, it's an emergency . . . [She looks over at the bathroom nervously. She paces back and forth] Hello? . . . Who's this? . . . Mr. Eisler . . . It's Norma Hubley . . . No, everything's fine . . . Yes, we're coming right down . . . [She is smiling and trying to act as pleasant and as calm as possible] Yes, you're right, it certainly is the big day . . . Mr. Eisler, is my husband there? . . . Would you, please? . . . Oh! Well, I'd like to wish you the very best of luck, too . . . Borden's a wonderful boy . . . Well, they're both wonderful kids . . . No, no. She's as calm as a cu-

cumber . . . That's the younger generation, I guess . . . Yes, everything seems to be going along beautifully . . . Absolutely beautifully . . . Oh, thank you. [Her husband has obviously just come on the other end, because the expression on her face changes violently and she screams a rasping whisper filled with doom. Sitting on the bed] Roy? You'd better get up here right away, we're in big trouble . . . Don't ask questions, just get up here . . . I hope you're not drunk because I can't handle this alone . . . Don't say anything. Just smile and walk leisurely out the door . . . and then get the hell up here as fast as you can. [She hangs up, putting the phone back on the night table. She crosses to the bathroom and then puts her head up against the door. Aloud through the bathroom door] All right, Minsey, your father's on his way up. Now, I want you to come out of that bathroom and get married. [There is no answer] Do you hear me? . . . I've had enough of this nonsense . . . Unlock that door! [That's about the end of her authority. She wits and almost pleads] Minsey, darling, please come downstairs and get married, you know your father's temper . . . I know what you're going through now, sweetheart, you're just nervous . . . Everyone goes through that on their wedding day . . . It's going to be all right, darling. You love Borden and he loves you. You're both going to have a wonderful future. So please come out of the bathroom! [She listens; there is no answer] Minsey, if you don't care about your life, think about mine. Your father'll kill me. [The front doorbell rings. NORMA looks off nervously and moves to the other side of the bed] Oh, God, he's here! . . . Minsey! Minsey, please, spare me this . . . If you want, I'll have it annulled next week, but please come out and get married! [There is no answer from the bathroom but the front doorbell rings impatiently] All right, I'm letting your father in. And heaven help the three of us!

[She crosses through the bedroom into the living room. She crosses to the door and opens it as ROY HUBLEY bursts into the room. ROY is dressed in striped trousers, black tail coat, the works. He looks elegant but he's not too happy in this attire. He is a volatile, explosive man equipped to handle the rigors of the competitive business world, but a nervous, frightened man when it comes to the business of marrying off his only daughter]

ROY: Why are you standing here? There are sixty-eight people down there drinking my liquor. If there's gonna be a wedding, let's have a wed-

ding. Come on! *[He starts back out the door but sees that NORMA is not going anywhere. She sits on the sofa. He comes back in] . . . Didn't you hear what I said? There's another couple waiting to use the Green Room. Come on, let's go!*

[He makes a start out again]

NORMA: *[Very calm]* Roy, could you sit down a minute? I want to talk to you about something.

ROY: *[She must be mad]* You want to talk now? You had twenty-one years to talk while she was growing up. I'll talk to you when they're in Bermuda. Can we please have a wedding?

NORMA: We can't have a wedding until you and I have a talk.

ROY: Are you crazy? While you and I are talking here, there are four musicians playing downstairs for seventy dollars an hour. I'll talk to you later when we're dancing. Come on, get Mimsey and let's go.

[He starts out again]

NORMA: That's what I want to talk to you about.

ROY: *[Comes back]* Mimsey?

NORMA: Sit down. You're not going to like this.

ROY: Is she sick?

NORMA: She's not sick . . . exactly.

ROY: What do you mean, she's not sick exactly? Either she's sick or she's not sick. Is she sick?

NORMA: She's not sick.

ROY: Then let's have a wedding! *[He crosses into the bedroom]* Mimsey, there's two hundred dollars' worth of cocktail frankfurters getting cold downstairs . . . *[He looks around the empty room]* Mimsey? *[He crosses back to the living room to the side of the sofa. He looks at NORMA] . . . Where's Mimsey?*

NORMA: Promise you're not going to blame me.

ROY: Blame you for what? What did you do?

NORMA: I didn't do anything. But I don't want to get blamed for it.

ROY: What's going on here? Are you going to tell me where Mimsey is?

NORMA: Are you going to take an oath you're not going to blame me?

ROY: I take it! I take it! NOW WHERE THE HELL IS SHE?

NORMA: . . . She's locked herself in the bathroom. She's not coming out and she's not getting married.

[Roy looks at NORMA incredulously. Then, because it must be an inside joke, he smiles at her. There is even the faint glint of a chuckle]

ROY: *[Softly]* . . . No kidding, where is she?

NORMA: *[Turns away]* He doesn't believe me. I'll kill myself.

[Roy turns and storms into the bedroom. He crosses to the bathroom and knocks on the door. Then he tries it. It's locked. He tries again. He bangs on the door with his fist]

ROY: Mimsey? . . . Mimsey? . . . MIMSEY? *[There is no reply. Grinding himself, he crosses back through the bedroom into the living room to the sofa. He glares at NORMA] . . . All right, what did you say to her?*

NORMA: *[Jumping up and moving away]* I knew it! I knew you'd blame me. You took an oath. God'll punish you.

ROY: I'm not blaming you. I just want to know what stupid thing you said to her that made her do this.

NORMA: I didn't say a word. I was putting on my lipstick, she was in the bathroom, I heard the door go click, it was locked, my whole life was over, what do you want from me?

ROY: And you didn't say a word?

NORMA: Nothing.

ROY: *[Ominously moving toward her as NORMA backs away]* I see. In other words, you're trying to tell me that a normal, healthy, intelligent twenty-one-year-old college graduate, who has driven me crazy the last eighteen months with wedding lists, floral arrangements and choices of assorted hors d'oeuvres, has suddenly decided to spend this, the most important day of her life, locked in the Plaza Hotel john?

NORMA: *[Making her stand at the mantel]* Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

ROY: *[Vicious]* YOU MUSTA SAID SOMETHING!

[*He storms into the bedroom, NORMA goes after him*]

NORMA: Roy . . . What are you going to do?

ROY: [*Stopping below the bed*] First I'm getting the college graduate out of the bathroom! Then we're gonna have a wedding and then you and I are gonna have a big talk! [*He crosses to the bathroom door and pounds on it*] Minsey! This is your father. I want you and your four hundred-dollar wedding dress out of there in five seconds!

NORMA: [*Standing at the side of the bed*] Don't threaten her. She'll never come out if you threaten her.

ROY: [*To NORMA*] I got sixty-eight guests, nine waiters, four musicians and a boy with a wedding license waiting downstairs. This is no time to be diplomatic. [*Bangs on the door*] Minsey! . . . Are you coming out or do we have the wedding in the bathroom?

NORMA: Will you lower your voice! Everyone will hear us.

ROY: [*To NORMA*] How long you think we can keep this a secret? As soon as that boy says "I do" and there's no one standing next to him, they're going to suspect something. [*He bangs on the door*] You can't stay in there forever, Minsey. We only have the room until six o'clock . . . You hear me?

[*There is still no reply from the bathroom*]

NORMA: Roy, will you please try to control yourself.

ROY: [*With great display of patience, moves to the foot of the bed and sits*] All right, I'll stay here and control myself. You go downstairs and marry the short, skinny kid. [*Exploding*] What's the matter with you? Don't you realize what's happening?

NORMA: [*Moving to him*] Yes. I realize what's happening. Our daughter is nervous, frightened and scared to death.

ROY: Of what? OF WHAT? She's been screaming for two years if he doesn't ask her to marry him, she'll throw herself off the Gugenheim Museum . . . What is she scared of?

NORMA: I don't know. Maybe she's had second thoughts about the whole thing.

ROY: [*Getting up and moving to the bathroom door*] Second thoughts? This is no time to be having second thoughts. It's costing me eight

thousand dollars for the first thoughts. [*He bangs on the door*] Minsey, open this door.

NORMA: Is that all you care about? What it's costing you? Aren't you concerned about your daughter's happiness?

ROY: [*Moving back to her below the bed*] Yes! Yes, I'm concerned about my daughter's happiness. I'm also concerned about that boy waiting downstairs. A decent, respectable, intelligent young man . . . who I hope one day is going to teach that daughter of mine to grow up.

NORMA: You haven't the faintest idea of what's going through her mind right now.

ROY: Do you?

NORMA: It could be anything. I don't know, maybe she thinks she's not good enough for him.

ROY: [*Looks at her incredulously*] . . . Why? What is he? Some kind of Greek god? He's a plain kid, nothing . . . That's ridiculous. [*Moves back to the door and bangs on it*] Minsey! Minsey, open this door. [*He turns to NORMA*] Maybe she's not in there.

NORMA: She's in there. [*Clutches her chest and sits on the side of the bed*] Oh, God, I think I'm having a heart attack.

ROY: [*Listening at the door*] I don't hear a peep out of her. Is there a window in there? Maybe she tried something crazy.

NORMA: [*Turning to him*] That's right. Tell a woman who's having a heart attack that her daughter jumped out the window.

ROY: Take a look through the keyhole. I want to make sure she's in there.

NORMA: She's in there, I tell you. Look at this, my hand keeps bouncing off my chest.

[*It does*]

ROY: Are you gonna look in there and see if she's all right or am I gonna call the house detective?

NORMA: [*Getting up and moving below the bed*] Why don't you look?

ROY: Maybe she's taking a bath.

NORMA: Two minutes before her own wedding?

ROY: [*Crossing to her*] What wedding? She just called it off.

NORMA: Wouldn't I have heard the water running?

ROY: [*Making a swipe at her hat*] With that hat you couldn't hear Niagara Falls! . . . Are you going to look to see what your daughter's doing in the bathroom or do I ask a stranger?

NORMA: [*Crossing to the door*] I'll look! I'll look! I'll look! [*Reluctantly she gets down on one knee and looks through the keyhole with one eye*] Oh, my God!

ROY: What's the matter?

NORMA: [*To him*] I ripped my stockings.

[*Getting up and examining her stockings*]

ROY: Is she in there?

NORMA: She's in there! She's in there! [*Hobbling to the far side of the bed and sitting down on the edge*] Where am I going to get another pair of stockings now? How am I going to go to the wedding with torn stockings?

ROY: [*Crossing to the bathroom*] If she doesn't show up, who's going to look at you? [*He kneels at the door and looks through the keyhole*] There she is. Sitting there and crying.

NORMA: I told you she was in there . . . The only one in my family to have a daughter married in the Plaza and I have torn stockings.

ROY: [*He is on his knees, his eye to the keyhole*] Minsey, I can see you . . . Do you hear me? . . . Don't turn away from me when I'm talking to you.

NORMA: Maybe I could run across to Bergdorf's. They have nice stockings.

[*Crosses to her purse on the bureau in the bedroom and looks through it*]

ROY: [*Still through the keyhole*] Do you want me to break down the door, Minsey, is that what you want? Because that's what I'm doing if you're not out of there in five seconds . . . Stop crying on your dress. Use the towel!

NORMA: [*Crossing to Roy at the door*] I don't have any money. Give me four dollars, I'll be back in ten minutes.

ROY: [*Gets up and moves below the bed*] In ten minutes she'll be a married woman, because I've had enough of this nonsense. [*Yells in*] All

right, Minsey, stand in the shower because I'm breaking down the door.

NORMA: [*Getting in front of the door*] Roy, don't get crazy.

ROY: [*Preparing himself for a run at the door*] Get out of my way.

NORMA: Roy, she'll come out. Just talk nicely to her.

ROY: [*Waving her away*] We already had nice talking. Now we're gonna have door breaking. [*Through the door*] All right, Minsey, I'm coming in!

NORMA: No, Roy, don't! Don't!

[*She gets out of the way as Roy hurts his body, led by his shoulder, with full force against the door. It doesn't budge. He stays against the door silently a second; he doesn't react. Then he says calmly and softly*]

ROY: Get a doctor.

NORMA: [*Standing below the door*] I knew it. I knew it.

ROY: [*Drawing back from the door*] Don't tell me I knew it, just get a doctor [*Through the door*] I'm not coming in, Minsey, because my arm is broken.

NORMA: Let me see it. Can you move your fingers?

[*Moves to him and examines his fingers*]

ROY: [*Through the door*] Are you happy now? Your mother has torn stockings and your father has a broken arm. How much longer is this gonna go on?

NORMA: [*Moving Roy's fingers*] It's not broken, you can move your fingers. Give me four dollars with your other hand, I have to get stockings.

[*She starts to go into his pockets. He slaps her hands away*]

ROY: Are you crazy moving a broken arm?

NORMA: Two dollars, I'll get a cheap pair.

ROY: [*As though she were a lunatic*] I'm not carrying any cash today. Rented, everything is rented.

NORMA: I can't rent stockings. Don't you even have a charge plate?

[Starts to go through his pockets again]

ROY: [Slaps her hands away. Then pointing dramatically] Wait in the Green Room! You're no use to me here, go wait in the Green Room!

NORMA: With torn stockings?

ROY: Stand behind the rented potted plant. [Takes her by the arm and leads her below the bed. Confidentially] They're going to call from downstairs any second asking where the bride is. And I'm the one who's going to have to speak to them. Mel Mel Mel [The phone rings. Pushing her toward the phone] That's them. You speak to them!

NORMA: What happened to me me me?

[The phone rings again]

ROY: [Moving to the bathroom door] Answer it. Answer it.

[The phone rings again]

NORMA: [Moving to the phone] What am I going to say to them?

ROY: I don't know. Maybe something'll come to you as you're talking.

NORMA: [Picks the phone up] Hello? . . . Oh, Mr. Eisler . . . Yes, it certainly is the big moment.

[She forces a merry laugh]

ROY: Stall 'em. Stall 'em. Just keep stalling him. Whatever you do, stall 'em!

[Turns to the door]

NORMA: [On the phone] Yes, we'll be down in two minutes.

[Hangs up]

ROY: [Turns back to her] Are you crazy? What did you say that for? I told you to stall him.

NORMA: I stalled him. You got two minutes. What do you want from me?

ROY: [Shakes his arm at her] You always panic. The minute there's a little crisis, you always go to pieces and panic.

NORMA: [Shaking her arm back at him] Don't wave your broken arm at me. Why don't you use it to get your daughter out of the bathroom?

ROY: [Very angry, kneeling to her on the bed] I could say something to you now.

NORMA: [Confronting him, kneels in turn on the bed] Then why don't you say it?

ROY: Because it would lead to a fight. And I don't want to spoil this day for you. [He gets up and crosses back to the bathroom door] Minsey, this is your father speaking . . . I think you know I'm not a violent man. I can be stern and strict, but I have never once been violent. Except when I'm angry. And I am really angry now, Minsey. You can ask your mother.

[Moves away so NORMA can get to the door]

NORMA: [Crossing to the bathroom door] Minsey, this is your mother speaking. It's true, darling, your father is very angry.

ROY: [Moving back to the door] This is your father again, Minsey. If you have a problem you want to discuss, unlock the door and we'll discuss it. I'm not going to ask you this again, Minsey. I've reached the end of my patience. I'm gonna count to three . . . and by God, I'm warning you, young lady, by the time I've reached three . . . this door better be open! [Moving away to below the bed] All right—One! . . . Two! . . . THREE! [There is no reply or movement from behind the door. ROY helplessly sinks down on the foot of the bed] . . . Where did we fail her?

NORMA: [Crosses to the far side of the bed, consoling him as she goes, and sits on the edge] We didn't fail her.

ROY: They're playing "Here Comes the Bride" downstairs and she's bar-ricaded in a toilet—we must have failed her.

NORMA: [Sighs] All right, if it makes you any happier, we failed her.

ROY: You work and you dream and you hope and you save your whole life for this day, and in one click of a door, suddenly everything crumbles. Why? What's the answer?

NORMA: It's not your fault, Roy. Stop blaming yourself.

ROY: I'm not blaming myself. I know I've done my best.

NORMA: [Turning and looks at him] What does that mean?

ROY: It means we're not perfect. We make mistakes, we're only human. I've done my best and we failed her.

NORMA: Meaning I didn't do my best?

ROY: [Turning to her] I didn't say that. I don't know what your best is. Only you know what your best is. Did you do your best?

NORMA: Yes, I did my best.

ROY: And I did my best.

NORMA: Then we both did our best.

ROY: So it's not our fault.

NORMA: That's what I said before.

[They turn away from each other. Then:]

ROY: [Softly] Unless one of us didn't do our best.

NORMA: [Jumping up and moving away] I don't want to discuss it any more.

ROY: All right, then what are we going to do?

NORMA: I'm having a heart attack, you come up with something.

ROY: How? All right, I'll go down and tell them.

[Gets up and moves to the bedroom door]

NORMA: [Moving to the door in front of him] Tell them? Tell them what?

[As they move into the living room, she stops him above the sofa]

ROY: I don't know. Those people down there deserve some kind of an explanation. They got all dressed up, didn't they?

NORMA: What are you going to say? You're going to tell them that my daughter is not going to marry their son and that she's locked herself in the bathroom?

ROY: What do you want me to do, start off with two good jokes? They're going to find out some time, aren't they?

NORMA: [With great determination] I'll tell you what you're going to do. If she's not out of there in five minutes, we're going to go out the back door and move to Seattle, Washington! . . . You don't think I'll be able to show my face in this city again, do you? [Roy ponders this for a moment, then reassures her with a pat on the arm. Slowly he turns and moves into the bedroom. Suddenly, he loses control and lets his anger get the best of him. He grabs up the chair from the dresser, and brandishing it above his head, he dashes for the bathroom door, not even detouring around the bed but rather crossing right over it. NORMA screams and chases after him] ROY!

[At the bathroom door, Roy manages to stop himself in time from smashing the chair against the door, trembling with frustration and anger. Finally, exhausted, he puts the chair down below the door and straddles it, sitting leaning on the back. NORMA sinks into the bedroom armchair]

ROY: . . . Would you believe it, last night I cried. Oh, yes. I turned my head into the pillow and lay there in the dark, crying, because today I was losing my little girl. Some stranger was coming and taking my little Mimsey away from me . . . so I turned my back to you—and cried . . . Wait! You hear what goes on tonight!

NORMA: [Lost in her own misery] I should have invited your cousin Lillie. [Gestures to the heavens] She wished this on me, I know it. [Suddenly Roy begins to chuckle. NORMA looks at him. He chuckles louder, although there is clearly no joy in his laughter] Do you find something funny about this?

ROY: Yes, I find something funny about this. I find it funny that I hired a photographer for three hundred dollars. I find it hysterical that the wedding pictures are going to be you and me in front of a locked bathroom! [Gets up and puts the chair aside] All right, I'm through sitting around waiting for that door to open.

[He crosses to the bedroom window and tries to open it]

NORMA: [Following after him] What are you doing?

ROY: What do you think I'm doing?

[Finding it impossible to open it, he crosses to the living room and opens a window there. The curtains begin to blow in the breeze]

NORMA: [Crosses after him] If you're jumping, I'm going with you. You're not leaving me here alone.

ROY: [Looking out the window] I'm gonna crawl out along that ledge and get in through the bathroom window.

[He starts to climb out the window]

NORMA: Are you crazy? It's seven stories up. You'll kill yourself.

[She grabs hold of him]

ROY: It's four steps, that's all. It's no problem, I'm telling you. Now will you let go of me?

NORMA: [Struggling to keep him from getting out the window] Roy, no! Don't do this. We'll leave her in the bathroom. Let the hotel worry about her. Don't go out on the ledge.

[In desperation, she grabs hold of one of the tails of his coat]

ROY: [Half out the window, trying to get out as she holds onto his coat] You're gonna rip my coat. Let go or you're gonna rip my coat. [As he tries to pull away from her, his coat rips completely up the back, right up to the collar. He stops and slowly comes back into the room. NORMA has frozen in misery by the bedroom door after letting go of the coat. ROY draws himself up with great dignity and control. He slowly turns and moves into the bedroom, stopping by the bed. With great patience, he calls toward the bathroom] Hey, you in there . . . Are you happy now? Your mother's got torn stockings and your father's got a rented ripped coat. Some wedding it's gonna be. [Exploding, he crosses back to the open window in the living room] Get out of my way!

NORMA: [Puts hand to her head] I'm getting dizzy. I think I'm going to pass out.

ROY: [Getting her out of the way] . . . You can pass out after the wedding . . . [He goes out the window and onto the ledge] Call room service. I want a double Scotch the minute I get back.

[And he disappears from view as he moves across the ledge. NORMA runs into the bedroom and catches a glimpse of him as he passes the bedroom window, but then he disappears once more]

NORMA: [Bemoaning her fate] . . . He'll kill himself. He'll fall and kill himself, that's the way my luck's been going all day. [She staggers away from the window and leans on the bureau] I'm not going to look. I'll just wait until I hear a scream [The telephone rings and NORMA screams in fright] Agghh! . . . I thought it was him . . . [She crosses to the phone by the bed. The telephone rings again] Oh, God, what am I going to say? [She picks it up] Hello? . . . Oh, Mr. Eisler. Yes, we're coming . . . My husband's getting Minsey now . . . We'll be right down. Have some more hors d'oeuvres . . . Oh, thank you. It certainly is the happiest day of my life. [She hangs up] No, I'm going to tell him I've got a husband dangling over Fifty-ninth Street. [As she crosses back to the opened window, a sudden torrent of rain begins to fall. As she gets to the window and sees it] I knew it! I knew it! It had to happen . . . [She gets closer to the window and tries to look out] Are you all right, Roy? . . . Roy? [There's no answer] He's not all right, he fell. [She staggers into the bedroom] He fell, he fell, he fell . . . He's dead, I know it. [She collapses onto the armchair] He's laying there in a puddle in front of Trader Vic's . . . I'm passing out. This time I'm really passing out! [And she passes out on the chair, legs and arms spread-eagled. The doorbell rings; she jumps right up] I'm coming! I'm coming! Help me, whoever you are, help me! [She rushes through the bedroom into the living room and to the front door] Oh, please, somebody, help me, please!

[She opens the front door and ROY stands there dripping wet, fuming, exhausted and with clothes disheveled and his hair mussed]

ROY: [Staggering into the room and weakly leaning on the mantelpiece. It takes a moment for him to catch his breath. NORMA, concerned, follows him] She locked the window, too. I had to climb in through a strange bedroom. There may be a lawsuit.

[He weakly changes back into the bedroom, followed by NORMA, who grabs his coat tails in an effort to stop him. The rain outside stops]

NORMA: [Stopping him below the bed] Don't yell at her. Don't get her more upset.

ROY: [Turning back to her] Don't get her upset? I'm hanging seven stories from a gargoye in a pouring rain and you want me to worry about her? . . . You know what she's doing in there? She's playing with her false eyelashes. [Moves to the bathroom door] I'm out there fighting for my life with pigeons and she's playing with eyelashes . . . [Crossing back to NORMA] . . . I already made up my mind. The minute I get my hands on her, I'm gonna kill her. [Moves back to the door] Once I show them the wedding bills, no jury on earth would convict me . . . And if by some miracle she survives, let there be no talk of weddings . . . She can go into a convent. [Slowly moving back to NORMA below the bed] . . . Let her become a librarian with thick glasses and a pencil in her hair, I'm not paying for any more canceled weddings . . . [Working himself up into a frenzy, he rushes to the table by the armchair and grabs up some newspapers] Now get her out of there or I start to burn these newspapers and smoke her out.

[NORMA stops him, soothes him, and manages to get him calmed down. She gently seats him on the foot of the bed]

NORMA: [Really frightened] I'll get her out! I'll get her out! [She crosses to the door and knocks] Minsey! Minsey, please! [She knocks harder and harder] Minsey, you want to destroy a family? You want a scandal? You want a story in the *Daily News*? . . . Is that what you want? Is it? . . . Open this door! Open it! [She bangs very hard, then stops and turns to ROY] . . . Promise you won't get hysterical.

ROY: What did you do?

[Turns wearily to her]

NORMA: I broke my diamond ring.

ROY: [Letting the papers fall from his hand] Your good diamond ring?

NORMA: How many do I have?

ROY: [Yells through the door] Hey, you with the false eyelashes! [Getting up and moving to the door] . . . You want to see a broken diamond ring? You want to see eighteen hundred dollars' worth of crushed baguettes? . . . [He grabs NORMA's hand and holds it to the keyhole] Here! Here! This is a worthless family heirloom [Kicks the door]—and

this is a diamond bathroom door! [Controlling himself. To NORMA] Do you know what I'm going to do now? Do you have any idea? [NORMA puts her hand to her mouth, afraid to hear. ROY moves away from the door to the far side of the bed] I'm going to wash my hands of the entire Eisler-Hubley wedding. You can take all the Eislers and all the hors d'oeuvres and go to Central Park and have an eight-thousand-dollar picnic . . . [Stops and turns back to NORMA] I'm going down to the Oak Room with my broken arm, with my drenched rented ripped suit—and I'm gonna get blind! . . . I don't mean drunk, I mean totally blind . . . [Erupting with great vehemence] because I don't want to see you or your crazy daughter again, if I live to be a thousand.

[He turns and rushes from the bedroom, through the living room to the front door. As he tries to open it, NORMA catches up to him, grabs his tail coat and pulls him back into the room]

NORMA: That's right. Run out on me. Run out on your daughter. Run out on everybody just when they need you.

ROY: You don't need me. You need a rhinoceros with a blowtorch—because no one else can get into that bathroom.

NORMA: [With rising emotion] I'll tell you who can get into that bathroom. Someone with love and understanding. Someone who cares about that poor kid who's going through some terrible decision now and needs help. Help that only you can give her and that I can give her. That's who can get into that bathroom now.

[ROY looks at her solemnly . . . Then he crosses past her, hesitates and looks back at her, and then goes into the bedroom and to the bathroom door. NORMA follows him back in. He turns and looks at NORMA again. Then he knocks gently on the door and speaks softly and with some tenderness]

ROY: Minsey! . . . This is Daddy . . . Is something wrong, dear? . . . [He looks back at NORMA, who nods encouragement, happy about his new turn in character. Then he turns back to the door] . . . I want to help you, darling. Mother and I both do. But how can we help you if you won't talk to us? Minsey can you hear me?

[There is no answer. He looks back at NORMA]

NORMA: [*At the far side of the bed*] Maybe she's too choked up to talk.

ROY: [*Through the door*] Mimsey, if you can hear me, knock twice for yes, once for no. [*There are two knocks on the door. They look at each other encouragingly*] Good. Good . . . Now, Mimsey, we want to ask you a very, very important question. Do you want to marry Borden or don't you?

[*They wait anxiously for the answer. We hear one knock, a pause, then another knock*]

NORMA: [*Happily*] She said yes.

ROY: [*Despondently*] She said no.

[*Moves away from the door to the front of the bed*]

NORMA: It was two knocks. Two knocks is yes. She wants to marry him.

ROY: It wasn't a double knock "yes." It was two single "no" knocks. She doesn't want to marry him.

NORMA: Don't tell me she doesn't want to marry him. I heard her distinctly knock "yes." She went [*Knocks twice on the foot of the bed*] "Yes, I want to marry him."

ROY: It wasn't [*Knocks twice on the foot of the bed*] . . . It was [*Knocks once on the foot of the bed*] . . . and then another [*Knocks once more on the foot of the bed*] . . . That's "no," twice, she's not marrying him.

[*Sinks down on the side of the bed*]

NORMA: [*Crossing to the door*] Ask her again. [*Into the door*] Mimsey, what did you say? Yes or no? [*They listen. We hear two distinct loud knocks. NORMA turns to ROY*] . . . All right? There it is in plain English . . . You never could talk to your own daughter.

[*Moves away from the door*]

ROY: [*Getting up wearily and moving to the door*] Mimsey, this is not a good way to have a conversation. You're gonna hurt your knuckles . . . Won't you come out and talk to us? . . . Mimsey?

NORMA: [*Leads ROY gently to the foot of the bed*] Don't you understand, it's probably something she can't discuss with her father. There are times a daughter wants to be alone with her mother. [*Sits ROY down on the foot of the bed, and crosses back to the door*] Mimsey, do you want me to come in there and talk to you, just the two of us, sweetheart? Tell me, darling, is that what you want? [*There is no reply. A strip of toilet paper appears from under the bathroom door. ROY notices it, pushes NORMA aside, bends down, picks it up and reads it*] What? What does it say? [*ROY solemnly hands it to her. NORMA reads it aloud*] "I would rather talk to Daddy."

[*NORMA is crushed. He looks at her sympathetically. We hear the bathroom door unlock. ROY doesn't quite know what to say to NORMA. He gives her a quick hug*]

ROY: I—I'll try not to be too long.

[*He opens the door and goes in, closing it behind him, quietly. NORMA, still with the strip of paper in her hand, walks slowly and sadly to the foot of the bed and sits. She looks glumly down at the paper*]

NORMA: [*Aloud*] . . . "I would rather talk to Daddy" . . . Did she have to write it on this kind of paper? [*She wads up the paper*] . . . Well—maybe I didn't do my best . . . I thought we had such a good relationship . . . Friends. Everyone thought we were friends, not mother and daughter . . . I tried to do everything right . . . I tried to teach her that there could be more than just love between a mother and daughter . . . There can be trust and respect and friendship and understanding . . . [*Getting angry, she turns and yells toward the closed door*] Just because I don't speak to my mother doesn't mean we can't be different!

[*She wipes her eyes with the paper. The bathroom door opens. A solemn ROY steps out, and the door closes and locks behind him. He deliberately buttons his coat and crosses to the bedroom phone, wordlessly. NORMA has not taken her eyes off him. The pause seems interminable*]

ROY: [*Into the phone*] The Green Room, please . . . Mr. Borden Eisler. Thank you.

[*He waits*]

NORMA: [*Getting up from the bed*] . . . I'm gonna have to guess, is that it? . . . It's so bad you can't even tell me . . . Words can't form in your mouth, it's so horrible, right? . . . Come on, I'm a strong person, Roy. Tell me quickly, I'll get over it . . .

ROY: [*Into the phone*] Borden? Mr. Hubley . . . Can you come up to 719? . . . Yes, now . . . [*He hangs up and gestures for NORMA to follow him. He crosses into the living room and down to the ottoman where he sits. NORMA follows and stands waiting behind him. Finally*] She wanted to talk to me because she couldn't bear to say it to both of us at the same time . . . The reason she's locked herself in the bathroom . . . is she's afraid.

NORMA: Afraid? What is she afraid of? That Borden doesn't love her?

ROY: Not that Borden doesn't love her.

NORMA: That she doesn't love Borden?

ROY: Not that she doesn't love Borden.

NORMA: Then what is she afraid of?

ROY: . . . She's afraid of what they're going to become.

NORMA: I don't understand.

ROY: Think about it.

NORMA: [*Crossing above the sofa*] What's there to think about? What are they going to become? They love each other, they'll get married, they'll have children, they'll grow older, they'll become like us [*Comes the dawn. Steps by the side of the sofa and turns back to roy*]-I never thought about that.

ROY: Makes you stop and think, doesn't it?

NORMA: I don't think we're so bad, do you? . . . All right, so we yell and scream a little. So we fight and curse and aggravate each other. So you blame me for being a lousy mother and I accuse you of being a rotten husband. It doesn't mean we're not happy . . . does it? . . . [*Her voice rising*] Well? . . . Does it? . . .

ROY: [*Looks at her*] . . . She wants something better. [*The doorbell rings. He crosses to open the door. NORMA follows*] Hello, Borden.

BORDEN: [*Stepping into the room*] Hi.

NORMA: Hello, darling.

ROY: [*Gravely*] Borden, you're an intelligent young man, I'm not going to beat around the bush. We have a serious problem on our hands.

BORDEN: How so?

ROY: Mimsey—is worried. Worried about your future together. About the whole institution of marriage. We've tried to allay her fears, but obviously we haven't been a very good example. It seems you're the only one who can communicate with her. She's locked herself in the bathroom and is not coming out . . . It's up to you now.

[*Without a word, BORDEN crosses below the sofa and up to the bedroom, through the bedroom below the bed and right up to the bathroom door. He knocks*]

BORDEN: Mimsey? . . . This is Borden . . . Cool it! [*Then he turns and crosses back to the living room. Crossing above the sofa, he passes the Hubleys, and without looking at them, says*] See you downstairs!

[*He exits without showing any more emotion. The Hubleys stare after him as he closes the door. But then the bathroom door opens and NORMA and ROY slowly turn to it as MIMSEY, a beautiful bride, in a formal wedding gown, with veil, comes out*]

MIMSEY: I'm ready now!

[*NORMA turns and moves into the bedroom toward her. ROY follows slowly, shaking his head in amazement*]

ROY: Now you're ready? Now you come out?

NORMA: [*Admiring MIMSEY*] Roy, please . . .

ROY: [*Getting angry, leans toward her over the bed*] I break every bone in my body and you come out for "Cool it"?

NORMA: [*Pushing MIMSEY toward roy*] You're beautiful, darling. Walk with your father, I want to look at both of you.

ROY: [*Fuming. As she takes his arm, to NORMA*] That's how he communicates? That's the brilliant understanding between two people? "Cool it"?

NORMA: [*Gathering up MIMSEY's train as they move toward the living room*] Roy, don't start in.

ROY: What kind of a person is that to let your daughter marry?

[*They stop above the sofa. MIMSEY takes her bridal bouquet from the table behind the sofa, while NORMA puts on her wrap and takes her gloves from the back of the sofa*]

NORMA: Roy, don't aggravate me. I'm warning you, don't spoil this day for me.

ROY: Kids today don't care. Not like they did in my day.

NORMA: Walk. Will you walk? In five minutes he'll marry one of the flower girls. Will you walk—

[*MIMSEY takes ROY by the arm and they move to the door, as NORMA follows*]

ROY: [*Turning back to NORMA*] Crazy. I must be out of my mind, a boy like that. [*Opens the door*] She was better off in the bathroom. You hear me? Better off in the bathroom . . . [*They are out the door . . .*]

CURTAIN