

VISITOR FROM MAMARONECK

BELHOP (+ KAREN)

ACT I

(SCENE: A suite at the Plaza Hotel. The seventh floor overlooking the 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 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.)

(TIME: About four in the afternoon, mid-December.)

(AT RISE: The door of the suite opens and a BELHOP enters and switches on the lights in the living room. He carries one small overnight bag. KAREN NASH enters behind him. She wears a six-year-old mink coat which could use a bit of restyling, and a pair of galoshes. Underneath she wears an expensive suit which unfortunately looked better on the model in Bendel's than it does on KAREN. KAREN is forty-eight years old, and she makes no bones about it. C'est la vie. She is a pleasant affable woman who has let weight and age take their natural course. A mink hat is plopped down on her head. She carries a box from Bendel's with her afternoon's purchases, and a small bouquet of flowers. The BOY closes a half-open window in the living room, and puts the bag on the luggage tray, KAREN looks around the living room,

crosses to bedroom and puts her packages down on a chair. The BOY goes to bathroom and turns light on in there, KAREN follows the BOY to the bathroom. The BOY comes out of the bathroom, crosses living room, opens door to leave, and hesitates in the doorway.)

BELLHOP. Everything all right, m'am?

KAREN. Wait a minute, I want to make sure this is the right room. *(She crosses back into the living room.)* I know this is Suite 719, but was it always 719?

BELLHOP. Yes, m'am. 719.

KAREN. No, you don't understand. I know sometimes hotels change the numbers around and this could have been 723 or 715. And it's very important I get 719.

(She returns to bedroom for flowers.)

BELLHOP. I'm here two years, it's always been 719.

KAREN. Because you know about 826 at the Savoy-Plaza?

BELLHOP. No, m'am.

KAREN. *(Unwrapping flowers at table behind the sofa in living room.)* Oh, well, they had a famous murder in 826. Then the next year there was a fire and the year after that a husband and a wife committed suicide. Then no one wanted 826. So they turned it into a linen closet. It's a fact, there is no more 826 at the Savoy-Plaza.

BELLHOP. There's no more Savoy-Plaza either. They tore it down two years ago.

KAREN. *(Looks at him incredulously, then goes to look out window.)* Oh, my God, look at that. There's no Savoy-Plaza... What's that monstrosity?

BELLHOP. It's the new General Motors building.

KAREN. *(Still looking out window.)* Shows you how often I get into the city. Well, listen, that's what they're doing today. If it's old and it's beautiful, it's not there in the morning...

BELLHOP. *(Indicating other windows.)* Well, you still have a nice view from here.

KAREN. *(Crosses to other windows and looks out.)* Mmm, for how long? I guarantee you Central Park comes down in five years.

BELLHOP. You think so?

KAREN. *(Starts to put flowers in vase on sofa table.)* I know so. Five years from now you'll look out this window and you'll see one little tree and the world's largest A & P.

BELLHOP. I don't think I'll be working here five years from now.

KAREN. You mean the rumor is true?

BELLHOP. What rumor?

KAREN. That the Plaza is coming down too!

BELLHOP. This Plaza?

KAREN. *(Puts vase on chest between the windows.)* I don't want to worry you or anything. It's just a rumor. No one knows for sure... But it's definitely coming down.

BELLHOP. I didn't hear that.

KAREN. *(Crossing to bedroom, takes bag from luggage rack and puts it on dresser in front of bedroom window.)* Well, I'm sure they want to keep it quiet from the staff. The story is that they're going to tear down the Plaza and put up a fifty-two-story luxury hotel.

BELLHOP. Why? This is a luxury hotel.

KAREN. Yeah, but it's an old luxury hotel. Today it has to be new. Old is no good any more. *(Picks up phone on chest in living room.)* Well, all I really care about is tonight.

BELLHOP. Yes, m'am. Is there anything else?

KAREN. Oh, wait a minute. *(She puts down phone, runs to bedroom for her purse, and looks for change.)* Don't tell me I don't have any change.

BELLHOP. That's all right, m'am.

KAREN. *(Crossing back into living room.)* It's not all right. This is your living. *(Takes out a dollar bill.)* Here you are.

BELLHOP. *(Taking it.)* Thank you very much.

KAREN. I'll be very honest with you. I don't usually give dollar tips. But it's my anniversary. So I can be a sport.

BELLHOP. *(Hand on door. Held really like to go.)* Oh, well, congratulations.

KAREN. Thank you, dear. Twenty-four years ago tonight I spent my honeymoon in this room. This is 719, isn't it?

BELLHOP. Yes, m'am. 719.

KAREN. I bet you weren't even born twenty-four years ago, right?

BELLHOP. No, I was born...

KAREN. You know what I was? I was twenty-five. You know what that makes me today? ...Some old lady.

BELLHOP. Well, you certainly don't look like an old lady. *(Smiles.)* Well...have a pleasant stay, m'am...and happy anniversary.

(He starts out door.)

KAREN. Thank you, dear...and take my advice. Don't rush... but look around for another job.

(The BOY nods and exits. KAREN crosses to the bedroom, and looks at herself in the full length mirror on the closet door. Takes off hat and puts it on the dresser.)

You are definitely some old lady.

(She crosses to phone on night table next to bed, takes it and sits on bed, still wearing her mink coat.)

Room service, please.

(She groans as she bends over to take off galoshes.)