

# Rest Assured

By Donald Payton

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**REST ASSURED**  
**By Donald Payton**

**CAST OF CHARATERS**

*(6 MEN, 7 WOMEN; EXTRAS: 2 MEN, 1 WOMAN, IF DESIRED)*

**MR. MORLOCK** .....A blustery man of about 50, graying just a little. He's vice-president of Brubaker and Brubaker; self-centered, expects the world. He's nervous, excitable, easily upset, and it's easy to see he's about to crack under the nervous strain. Wears a business suit in the first act, later changes into a bright red nightshirt. *(356 lines)*

**MRS. MORLOCK** .....Middle-aged, attractive woman. Worries and troubles have put some gray in her hair and some lines in her brow. She's very sensible, understanding and sympathetic, a wonderful mother. *(153 lines)*

**MARY** .....Oldest daughter. Very pretty, charming, neat, and immaculate in every respect. She's sweet, vivacious, "an ideal daughter." She's very close to her mother, but still thinks for herself. *(70 lines)*

**JESSICA** .....Teen daughter. She's a bundle of action and energy and aspires to be a champion wrestler. She's witty, quick, and says just about anything that comes to her mind. *(76 lines)*

**MILDRED** .....Morlocks' maid. She's 30 or so, deadpan and expressionless, always bored and disgruntled, has a habit of telling everyone off. Mildred walks in long, jerky strides. *(53 lines)*

**LUIGI LANCONI** .....Joe's papa. Shabbily dressed, gray-haired Italian. He has a pitiful look which suggests he's had more than his share of hard knocks in life. He's very timid, usually easygoing. A baker by trade. Not well-educated, but has a heart of gold. A beat-up little old hat is always parked atop his head. *(150 lines)* **Note:** *Luigi speaks with an*

*REST ASSURED*

*Italian accent; however, the accent is not mandatory and could easily be changed to suit your production needs.*

**JOE LANCONI**.....Mary's fiancé. A senior in college. Gets along splendidly with everyone in the Morlock family, except Mr. Morlock. Joe is handsome, cordial, well-mannered, and very sensible. (30 lines)

**MARTHA** .....A very pleasant girl dressed in either a wedding gown or beautiful dress of your choice. (21 lines)

**LUCIFER**.....From "Down Below." The rounder-upper of lost souls, always carries a pitchfork. Lucifer is arrogant, cocky, and walks with a swagger. He wears a hideous devil's costume (red suit, pointed tail, horns, black goatee, monocle). Just before his entrance, blow a large puff of smoke into the hat. As he says his first line, remove the hat with a grand gesture. (41 lines)

**MISS AKERS** .....Mr. Morlock's secretary, thirty-something. Dresses simply with a plain hairstyle. She has a mind of her own, uses it, and most of the time does just as she pleases. (42 lines)

**GEORGE PLEW** .....Forty-something attorney with horn-rimmed glasses. He's small, shriveled, meek, and easily swayed. (54 lines)

**MRS. SCHMALTZ**.....Dressed in an outlandish green formal with saddle shoes. Overloaded with cheap jewelry; chews gum throughout the play. (13 lines)

**DR. BROWN** .....The family physician, wears glasses. (39 lines)

**EXTRAS:**

**MR. BLACK**.....The nervous, twitchy mortician. (12 lines)

**JAKE**.....British news-carrier; sixty-something; poorly dressed. (2 lines)

**MRS. FRINCK**.....Laundress of German descent. Poorly dressed.  
(1 line)

*NOTE: All characters and situations depicted herein are purely imaginary. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is a coincidence. All accents are optional.*

### STAGE PROPERTIES

Two floor lamps  
Occasional chairs  
Lounge chair  
Magazine rack  
Sofa  
Telephone stand, with telephone  
Straight chair

### HAND PROPERTIES

#### ACT ONE, SCENE 1

MILDRED - - Two special delivery letters  
MISS AKERS - - Pad, pen and pencil  
GEORGE - - Several feet of ticker tape  
JESSICA - - Book  
MILDRED - - Vase of flowers  
MR. MORLOCK - - Sheet of paper, in pocket

#### ACT ONE, SCENE 2

DR. BROWN - - Black physician's bag  
JESSICA - - Book, blanket, small hammer (in drawer of table)  
DR. BROWN - - Bottle of pills (in coat pocket)  
MRS. MORLOCK - - Glass of water (off left)  
MR. MORLOCK - - Blanket (same blanket Jessica brings on)  
MRS. MORLOCK - - Pills (from Dr. Brown's bottle.)  
MR. MORLOCK - - Cushion (on sofa)  
LUCIFER - - Pitchfork, tape measure

#### ACT TWO, SCENE 1

LUCIFER - - Esquire Magazine  
LUIGI - - Newspapers (on sofa)  
LUCIFER - - Pitchfork  
MILDRED - - Duster  
MR. BLACK - - Papers, in pockets

**ACT TWO, SCENE 2**

MR. MORLOCK - - Newspapers

LUIGI - - Handkerchief

JAKE - - Bundle of newspapers

LUCIFER - - Pitchfork

MRS. MORLOCK - - Suitcase

MAN WHO LOOKS LIKE LUCIFER - - Long-handled mop, covered with a sack

**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

ACT ONE, SCENE 1: An evening in the present.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2: An hour later.

ACT TWO, SCENE 1: The next day.

ACT TWO, SCENE 1: A few days later.

**SETTING:** The living room of the wealthy Morlocks.

**DESCRIPTION OF STAGE SET**

There are four entrances into the Morlock's living room. A hall upper-right leads to the front door; stairs, center, lead upstairs; a door left-center leads into the study; and the remainder of the house is reached through the door left. A sofa is left-center with an easy chair down right, backed by floor lamp and magazine rack. A small table with telephone is down left and a chair is beside it. A couple of pictures and paintings are on the wall, with one hanging against the hall backdrop. Other furniture and decorations may be added as desired.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

**AT RISE:**

*JESSICA MORLOCK is sitting on the floor doing exercises and push-ups. Jessica is a bundle of action and energy and aspires to be a champion wrestler. She is attired in jeans.*

**JESSICA:** *(Counting push-ups, laboriously.)* Five . . . six . . . seven . . . *(Doorbell is ringing incessantly as MILDRED, the deadpan, expressionless maid enters left. MILDRED is about thirty or so, always bored and disgruntled and one imagines that the only exciting thing that ever happened to her was maybe falling out of a tree at a young age. MILDRED takes very long strides when she walks.)*

**MILDRED:** *(As she crosses from left to right.)* All right . . . all right. Hold your horses. If it isn't the phone ringing, it's the door, if it isn't the door, it's something else. *(Offstage, at the door.)* Well, what do you want?

**JESSICA:** *(Still counting push-ups.)* Ten . . . eleven.

**MILDRED:** *(Coming back on stage.)* Special delivery letter for Mr. Morlock.

**JESSICA:** *(Panting.)* Thirteen. *(Phone rings.)* Phone, Mildred.

**MILDRED:** *(Glares at JESSICA, then answers phone in monotone.)* Hello, Morlock residence, Mildred speaking. *(Pause.)* How do I know what he's doing? All I do is work here. *(Another pause.)* All right, I'll call him. *(Turns, looks left center.)* Mr. Morlock. *(Quickly into phone again.)* He ain't here. *(Slams down receiver.)*

*As she turns away, phone rings again.*

**JESSICA:** Phone, Mildred.

**MILDRED:** *(Into phone, disgustedly.)* Whadaya mean I didn't give him enough time? *(Turns, calls again.)* Mr. Morlock. *(Shouting.)* Mr. Morlock!

*Doorbell rings.*

**JESSICA:** *(Without looking up.)* Doorbell, Mildred. *(MILDRED lays phone on table, takes long strides to the door again. JESSICA rolls over onto her back, kicks into the air. The door to the study bursts open and MR. MORLOCK charges in, followed by his attorney, GEORGE PLEW, and his secretary, MISS AKERS. Mr. Morlock is a blustery, self-centered man. He rules his family the same as he rules everyone around him . . . with an iron fist. He's also nervous, excitable, easily upset, and completely stressed out. Both men are wearing business suits. MISS AKERS, MR. MORLOCK's secretary, is simply dressed with a plain hairdo. However, she's got a mind of her own and uses it most of the time.)*

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(As they enter, shouting.)* We've been robbed, swindled. There hasn't been such a swindle since they bought Manhattan Island for \$24.

**MILDRED:** *(Entering again, dryly.)* Special delivery for you, Mr. Morlock. *(She gives them to him.)* And you are wanted on the phone. *(Exits left.)*

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Raving.)* Fifty-one thousand dollars.

**MISS AKERS:** Fifty-two thousand, eight hundred and forty-five dollars and eighty-three cents. *(MR. MORLOCK glares at her.)* Well, I was only being exact, Mr. Morlock.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Growling.)* If you can't be exact without making matters worse,

REST ASSURED

*(Barking.)* don't be exact.

MISS AKERS: But that's what it says in the books.

MR. MORLOCK: I don't care if it says it in neon lights atop the Empire State Building, it's fifty-one thousand dollars. *(He crosses to phone, gruffly.)* Hello. *(Suddenly mild.)* I mean hello, Mr. Brubaker, yes, Mr. Brubaker. We had a little misfortune, yes. We went just a little too heavy on those stocks, Mr. Brubaker. We'll have it back by the end of the week.

MISS AKERS: *(Sarcastically.)* Ha.

MR. MORLOCK: *(To MISS AKERS, pointing right.)* You're fired. *(Mildly again.)* No, Mr. Brubaker, I wasn't talking to you. I know I can't fire you and wouldn't if I could, Mr. Brubaker. I'm talking to my secretary, whom I'm quite certain is not only insane, but the poorest excuse for a secretary I have ever seen. *(Business again.)* Yes, Mr. Brubaker. We'll see you at the office in the morning. Yes, Mr. Brubaker. *(He hangs up.)* Mr. Brubaker is a little upset.

GEORGE: But we couldn't help it, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: True, George. We'll make it back. We'll make back every penny and thousands more. I'm not vice-president for nothing.

MISS AKERS: *(Sitting, wisely.)* I'll say not. Not unless you call one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars a year nothing.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Glaring.)* Seventy-five thousand dollars. That's on the books.

MISS AKERS: Plus one hundred thousand that's not on the books.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Walking around.)* Take a letter, Miss Akers.

MISS AKERS: *(Winks at GEORGE, who grins broadly.)* I thought you said I was fired.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Gruffly.)* I said take a letter!

MISS AKERS: *(Prepares to take a letter.)* Yes, Mr. Morlock.

JESSICA: *(Pushing herself up.)* Hello, Dad.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Casually.)* Good evening, Jessica.

JESSICA: Do you know what I'm doing, Dad? I'm training for gym.

MR. MORLOCK: For who?

JESSICA: It isn't a who, it's a what. *(Flat on her stomach, again doing push-ups.)* Do you know what I'm going to be, Dad? I'm going to be a female wrestler. *(She pushes herself up and then drops with a thud to the floor.)*

MR. MORLOCK: Get the latest quotations, George.

*GEORGE exits left center.*

MR. MORLOCK: And take a letter, Miss Akers, to Huff and Huff at Varnes Building, New York.

JESSICA: *(Crushed.)* Aren't you interested in my ambitions, Dad?

MR. MORLOCK: Dear Mr. Huff.

JESSICA: I might call myself "Jumpin' Jessica," that's 'cause I can really jump. *(She hops up, bounces onto the sofa, bounces across it, and then hops onto the floor again.)*

MR. MORLOCK: Maybe we should move back into the study, Miss Akers.

MISS AKERS: Yes, Mr. Morlock.

GEORGE: *(Opening study door and sticking head out.)* Here's the closing quotations, Mr. Morlock. *(Holds out several feet of ticker tape.)*

MR. MORLOCK: *(Grabbing it.)* Allied Gas down a fraction. Vander Groth and Company

down an eighth. Twentieth Century Steel down a fourth. (*Wailing.*) Holy smokes, we're ruined. (*Louder.*) Ruined. (*He follows GEORGE and MISS AKERS into the study and bangs the door shut behind him.*)

JESSICA: (*Sits on sofa, chin in hands, sadly.*) That's why a kid like me should be pitied. (*She sniffs.*) If I saw myself in a movie, I'd bawl my eyes out. Friendless, hungry for love, facing a cold, cruel world with nothing but money. (*She sighs, rises.*) It's rough. (*Phone rings. She continues to stare sadly into space.*) Phone, Mildred. I'm a kid just starved for love, attention. (*Dramatically.*) "The story of Jessica Morlock." She was a good kid - - Jessica - - but she was hungry her entire droll, uneventful life. Hungry for attention. Her father was vice-president of Brubaker and Brubaker, concerned only with making money and her poor mother was lonely, heart-broken, she, too, craving the love of - - (*Dramatically.*) - - money-mad Morlock who was once a dear husband and father and companion. Jessica, poor kid, lived a drab existence, trotting from her mansion in the country to her mansion in the city. All the time wishing for youthful companionship . . . especially with boys.

MILDRED: (*Entering.*) Is that the doorbell or the phone? Twenty-four hours a day those things ring. If I ever have a house of my own, I ain't gonna have no bells of no kind. Just peace and quiet. (*Doorbell rings.*) That's the doorbell now. (*Crosses right.*) If it's not one, it's the other. (*Stopping, turning.*) Come to think of it, I don't even think I'll have a door. (*Exiting.*) I get tired just opening and closing it, opening and closing it.

JESSICA: (*Sadly.*) If someone wants me, which they never do, I'll be upstairs drinking rat poison. (*She exits upstairs.*)

MILDRED: (*At door.*) Well, what do you want?

LUIGI: (*At front door.*) I'ma come to talka for Joe.

MILDRED: You can't come in. Mr. Morlock does not allow bums in the house. Not even my boyfriend, Luther. (*But LUIGI pushes in, appearing in the hall. NOTE: The Italian accent is optional.*)

LUIGI: (*Pushing in, removing his beat-up little old hat.*) But I'ma notta bum. I'ma Luigi Lanconi, and I'm a come to talka for Joe. Could I pleasa speaka mebbe to Mr. Morlock?

MILDRED: (*Growling.*) Mr. Morlock's busy. Mr. Morlock's always busy. If days lasted thirty hours, he'd still be busy. Whadaya got on your mind?

LUIGI: I'm a come to talka for Joe. I'm a come to tella Mr. Morlock that my Joe's ina love with hissa daughter Mary, and hissa daughter Mary, she's ina love with my Joe.

MILDRED: Oh, so you're Joe's father?

LUIGI: (*Proudly.*) I'ma leetle Joe's papa. Only he's a notta leetle no more. He's a grown man, and I'ma come here to talka for Joe. I'ma gon' say, "Mr. Morlock, I'ma Luigi Lanconi, papa ofa Joe, and it woulda makea usa botha happy ifa my son and youra daughter coulda be wed."

MILDRED: Well, you can't see him right now. Like I said, he's busy.

LUIGI: Then I'lla justa wait. (*He sits.*) I'lla wait till I can hava nicea longa talk.

MILDRED: (*Shrugging.*) Suit yourself. Mr. Morlock's in there with his lawyer, Mr. Plew, and his secretary and when that bunch gets together, they don't take time off for anybody.

LUIGI: (*As she heads to study door.*) Jussa tell I'ma here. (*When she exits, he rises, talks to an imaginary MR. MORLOCK.*)

LUIGI: "Mr. Morlock, sir, I'ma Luigi Lanconi, and I'ma come to talka for Joe. I'ma come



REST ASSURED

here to talka for him 'cause he'll makea you a prouda son-in-law. My Joe, he'sa gonna makea something someday. Gonna makea mebbe president. Wholea country willa look at my Joe anda says there goesa Joe Lanconi and hissa wifea, Mary.

*JESSICA comes down the stairs, unnoticed by LUIGI. She's carrying a book.*

**LUIGI:** *(Rambling on.)* "They'lla makea finest couple in America - my Joe anda youra Mary."

**JESSICA:** Hi.

**LUIGI:** *(Startled, jumping.)* Excusa me. I thought I wasa just talk to myself.

**JESSICA:** *(Crossing to sofa and sitting.)* That's all right. Don't worry about me. Go right on.

**LUIGI:** I'ma just rehearse my speech I'ma gon' give to Mr. Morlock. I'ma gon' tell him my Joe woulda like to marry hissa Mary.

**JESSICA:** *(Bouncing up.)* Oh, so you're Joe's papa? *(She grabs his hand, pumps it.)* I'm Jessica Morlock, Mary's sister.

**LUIGI:** I'ma glad to know you.

**JESSICA:** Just anything you wanta know about Mary, ask me. We've been sisters ever since I was born. And you know how sisters are.

**LUIGI:** I'ma come to speak to your papa.

**JESSICA:** *(Sitting again.)* Joe's a swell guy. But Dad doesn't like him, and that's all there is to it. *(Lays book on arm of chair.)* He doesn't like him because he isn't rich. *(She bounces up, starts bending over touching toes.)* He won't let her marry anyone who isn't loaded with money. And I've got the same thing facing me.

**LUIGI:** But my Joe, he'sa nicea boy.

**JESSICA:** Dad doesn't think anyone's nice unless he has a bankroll a mile long. I hate to see the creep he'll present me with. He'll come home some night and say, "Jessica, here's your future husband. You two will be married as soon as he regains consciousness." I won't ever get a chance to marry for better or worse - it'll be for stocks or bonds.

**LUIGI:** Thatsa bad. And he won'ta give his permish for a wedding? *(JESSICA shakes her head negatively.)* That's terrible. My Joe, he'lla be dissapoint.

**JESSICA:** Mary, too. But if Mary doesn't get him, that'll still give me a chance. *(She gazes into space, sighs.)*

**LUIGI:** My Joe, he'sa sensible younga fellow.

**JESSICA:** Yeah, and he's good looking too. *(Sighs again.)* But Dad won't say yes, I'll tell you that right now. He never agrees with the rest of us. In fact, he never even pays us any attention. None of us. Not even Mom. All he thinks about is money. You ever know anyone like that? *(LUIGI shakes head no.)* The foundation of Dad's world is long and green. Listen, he hardly knows I exist. He doesn't even know what grade I'm in.

**LUIGI:** Anda whata grade are you in?

**JESSICA:** *(Sitting, thinking.)* Come to think of it, I don't know, either. But I don't worry about school. I'll probably have a complete mental collapse in a year or two anyway, so what's the difference? *(She flexes her muscle, looks at it, then hops up, excitedly, pointing to it.)* Lookie there, wouldja?

**LUIGI:** What at?

**JESSICA:** At my muscle. See it? I've been developing that for weeks. I've done everything but feed it milk. I'm gonna be a wrestler. Dad's gonna drop dead when it finally dawns on him.

**LUIGI:** *(Sitting.)* Thena mebbe he'lla give his permish, huh?

**JESSICA:** I doubt it. *(Bending over sideways and touching ankles.)* He could drop dead twice and still not let us marry anything but money. He pets the stuff and fondles it like a cat.

**LUIGI:** Thatsa bad.

**JESSICA:** *(Bouncing over to him.)* Did you ever have a husband that didn't even know you existed? *(He shakes his head no.)* No, I guess not. Anyway, that's what Mom has. Dad doesn't pay any attention to her or the rest of us. We're just pieces of furniture as far as he's concerned.

**LUIGI:** Thatsa terrible.

**JESSICA:** You think so? Oh, he speaks to us now and then. When I had the measles, he came in and asked me how I was feeling. When I fell out of a tree on my head, he looked in the door twice - or was it once, I distinctly saw him twice, but if I remember right, it was both at the same time. I hadn't recovered fully from the fall on my head. *(MILDRED enters, LUIGI rises, hat still in hand.)*

**MILDRED:** I saw him.

**LUIGI:** Then pleasa could I mebbe see him?

**MILDRED:** *(Sharply.)* He ain't seein' nobody.

**JESSICA:** When will Mom be home, Mildred?

**MILDRED:** I don't know. Don't have any idea. All I do is work here.

**LUIGI:** Whena can I see him?

**MILDRED:** Didn't you hear me say all I do is work here? You don't see me goin' round askin' questions, questions, questions. I told him you were here. He grunted.

**LUIGI:** *(Sadly.)* Thatsa bad.

**JESSICA:** That's good. Most people he doesn't even grunt for.

**LUIGI:** Tella me, Mildred, what do you think abouta two people gettin' married?

**MILDRED:** *(Fearfully.)* Oh, no you don't. I've seen guys like you. I answer one of them leading questions, and then boom, you start tryin' to hold my hand. Oh no. *(As she starts backing left.)* All I do is work here. *(She scurries out the door.)*

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Throwing open door and charging out, followed by GEORGE and MISS AKERS, raging.)* Even South Dakota Central is down a point. So's Consolidated Canneries, Inc. *(Louder.)* So's Midwest Borsh. We'll probably lose even more than fifty-one thousand dollars. We'll probably lose our shirts.

**GEORGE:** Then you're in the wrong business, Mr. Morlock.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Whirling, snapping.)* I'm what?

**GEORGE:** *(Quickly.)* What I mean is that if you lose your shirt, you should . . . uh . . . be in retail clothing. *(He chuckles hopefully.)*

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Glaring.)* That isn't funny, George. We've reached a crisis. The future of Brubaker and Brubaker hinges on our next move. Whether we go up or down depends on us. We're abreast of the pendulum, George, and you stand around making jokes. *(Barking in his face.)* Jokes.

**MISS AKERS:** Don't lose your temper, too, Mr. Morlock. It's enough that you've lost fifty-two thousand, eight hundred and forty-five dollars in one day.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Shouting.)* Fifty-one thousand. And don't argue.

**MISS AKERS:** On paper, it's fifty-two thousand, eight hundred and forty-five.

REST ASSURED

MR. MORLOCK: (*Pointing to door right.*) You're fired. Out the door.

MISS AKERS: And fifty cents.

LUIGI: (*Stepping forward, meekly.*) Excusa me, please, I'ma Luigi Lanconi, and I'ma come to talka for Joe.

MISS AKERS: Don't get upset, Mr. Morlock. You'll start having pains again.

MR. MORLOCK: Heaven forbid. Not those pains. Not those horrible, excruciating pains.

MISS AKERS: You must relax, Mr. Morlock. Take things easy.

MR. MORLOCK: You're right, Miss Akers. (*Calmly.*) Thank you. I will. (*She leads him to sofa, he drops onto it.*) Now, where were we?

MISS AKERS: We'd just lost fifty-two thousand, eight hundred and forty-five dollars.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Barking.*) George.

GEORGE: (*Stepping forward.*) Yes sir!

MR. MORLOCK: George, the stocks we choose for tomorrow must win. They must pay off. We're in that business. Now, what looks the best to you?

GEORGE: (*Glaring at MISS AKERS.*) Right off hand, Mr. Morlock, I'd say Miss Akers looks the best to me.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Shouting.*) I mean stocks.

GEORGE: (*Jumping.*) I'm sorry, Mr. Morlock. I guess I was thinking about something else.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Hopping up.*) You'll either think about this or you'll be thinking about a new job. One or the other. (*He starts pacing the floor.*) You're my adviser. My assistant. My attorney. You take charge on all legal matters. And what have you ever done? Nothing.

GEORGE: That's because you haven't been caught yet, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Racing again.*) You're fired. You're both fired. I'm sick and tired of you both. I've employed a couple of comedians. I could do better by myself. I - (*He stops, grabs side.*) I'm having sharp pains. (*Louder.*) Ugh, pains.

MISS AKERS: Don't shout, Mr. Morlock. (*Helping him to a chair.*) We'll help you to a chair.

GEORGE: (*As they help him down.*) Just relax and take things easy. Mr. Morlock. (*MISS AKERS rubs MR. MORLOCK's forehead as he groans.*)

LUIGI: (*Bending over MR. MORLOCK, timidly.*) Excusa please, I'ma come to talka for Joe.

MR. MORLOCK: (*His eyes closed.*) We'll look over Jones and Company. And maybe Smith and Smith.

GEORGE: They should be sure things, P. U. - - I mean Phillip Ulysses - - I mean Mr. Morlock.

LUIGI: Mabbe could I speaka to you for just a second?

MR. MORLOCK: (*Pushing himself up.*) We've got to do better tomorrow. And the next day.

MISS AKERS: Yes, Mr. Morlock.

GEORGE: You're right, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Heading toward study, with GEORGE and MISS AKERS following.*) We've got to get back to work.

MISS AKERS: If you don't take things a little easier, you'll die, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Turning.*) I'm too busy to die. Don't have time for such nonsense. I'm a responsible man in a responsible position.

LUIGI: (*Following them.*) Pleasa Mr. Morlock, I'ma come to talka for Joe.

I - - *(But the door to the study is slammed in his face as the others exit.)*

JESSICA: I'm afraid this isn't a very good time to speak to Dad, Mr. Luigi. I think he's sorta upset.

LUIGI: Maybe I shoulda wait till he cools off, huh?

JESSICA: Might be a good idea. You can go out to the garden and wait a while if you want. I'll show you around the place.

LUIGI: Isa good idea. *(As they start left.)* Your father is a busy man.

JESSICA: You can say that again. And it's like this eight days a week. *(They exit left.)*

*MRS. MORLOCK enters right, comes down stage removing her hat, laying her purse in the chair. She's middle-aged and it's easy to see that she once was very pretty - and she's still attractive. But worries and troubles have put some gray in her hair and some lines in her brow. MRS. MORLOCK is very sensible, understanding, and sympathetic, a wonderful mother, and her life is now centered around her two children.*

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Calling, as she enters through the hall.)* Mildred.

MILDRED: *(Entering left, with vase of flowers she places on table down left.)* You callin' me, Mrs. Morlock?

MRS. MORLOCK: Are the children home?

MILDRED: Jessica was right here a minute ago. Mary and Joe ain't back yet.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Smiling.)* And don't say "ain't," Mildred.

MILDRED: Well, they ain't. If I said anything else, I'd be tellin' a lie. *(She arranges the flowers as MRS. MORLOCK moves to sofa, sits.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: Is Mr. Morlock home?

MILDRED: *(Pointing to study.)* He's in there with Mr. Plew and Miss Akers, and he's been rantin' and ravin' for the past hour.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Wearily.)* As usual. *(MR. MORLOCK comes charging in from study. As he does, MILDRED ducks out left.)*

MR. MORLOCK: *(As he enters, raving.)* I've got an idiot for an assistant. An idiot for an adviser. An idiot for an attorney. It's beyond me how one man can have so many idiots.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Rising, hopefully.)* Hello, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Curtly.)* Good evening, Hazel. *(In the same breath.)* He's bungled again. *(Paces back and forth.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Pleadingly.)* Must you work every night, Phillip? Can't you put it off until morning?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Sharply.)* I'm going to the club in the morning. The only relaxation I get is when I'm playing golf.

MRS. MORLOCK: I was hoping we could go to the country tomorrow.

MR. MORLOCK: But I've already called the club and our tee time is set. *(Pause)* We can find someone to drive you to the country.

MRS. MORLOCK: No, Phillip, forget I mentioned it.

*MR. MORLOCK takes a piece of paper from his pocket and studies it. MRS. MORLOCK crosses to the flowers and absently shuffles them around. MR. MORLOCK mumbles.*

MRS. MORLOCK: I wish you had a little more time for your family, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Mumbling.)* Uh-huh.

REST ASSURED

MRS. MORLOCK: We were happy when we had that little house out on the edge of town. You used to have a little garden, and we'd measure the beans each morning to see how much they grew from the night before. We were happy, even though we didn't have enough money to pay our bills. *(After a pause.)* Phillip?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Grunting.)* Huh?

MRS. MORLOCK: Do you remember when we were married?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Looking up for first time.)* Aren't we still? *(He sits.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Crossing to him.)* I mean the day.

MR. MORLOCK: I remember it very well.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Brightening.)* You do?

MR. MORLOCK: I certainly do. The best man picked my pocket before I could get out of the house. There and then, I swore I'd never get married again.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Sitting on arm of chair, her hand on his shoulder.)* Why don't we go on a second honeymoon, Phillip?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Looking up, blankly.)* What in the world for?

MRS. MORLOCK: For us. For you. For me. We haven't really been together in years. Things aren't at all like they used to be. Why don't we take a trip together?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Casually.)* Well, I guess we could.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Brightening again.)* Do you mean it, Phillip?

MR. MORLOCK: Sure. If it suits George, it suits me. But of course, he might not want to go.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Standing, arms akimbo, astonished.)* George?

MR. MORLOCK: Well, we can't go without George. I wouldn't think of leaving everything in his hands.

MRS. MORLOCK: But I meant just the two of us.

MR. MORLOCK: Don't be ridiculous.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Sniffing into handkerchief.)* I'm sorry, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: Of course, that doesn't keep you from taking a trip. You can go anywhere you want. Bermuda . . . England . . . France. Take Jessica, Mary, even Mildred. I don't care. *(She sniffs, shakes head negatively. He rises.)* No? Did you shake your head no? *(Shrugs shoulders.)* Women. I can't understand 'em. *(Starts toward study.)* Midwestern Electric . . . closed even. *(Calling.)* Oh, George. *(And he goes into study, closing door.)*

*MRS. MORLOCK sits in chair, sniffing, until she hears MARY and JOE talking off right. Then she quickly brushes the tears from her eyes, forces a smile, and turns to MARY and JOE as they enter. MARY is a pretty girl, neat and immaculate in every respect. She's sweet, vivacious, and makes us realize that JOE LANCONI is a lucky guy. He's good looking, cordial, well-mannered, and very sensible, as well as a senior in college.*

MARY: *(Entering with JOE.)* Hi, Mom.

MRS. MORLOCK: Hello, dear. *(MARY plants a kiss on her cheek.)* How are you, Joe?

JOE: Just fine, Mrs. Morlock.

MARY: Have you been crying, Mom?

MRS. MORLOCK: Crying? Why, of course not.

MARY: Now, Mom, you never could fool me and you know it. *(Leading her mother to the sofa.)* Now, sit here and tell me what happened.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(As they sit.)* It's nothing, dear, really.

MARY: It's Father, isn't it?

MRS. MORLOCK: We merely had a discussion, that's all.

MARY: It wasn't about me and Joe, was it?

MRS. MORLOCK: No, dear.

MARY: Has he said anymore about - - about - - (*Looking up at JOE.*) us getting married?

MRS. MORLOCK: No, he hasn't. Not since you talked to him the other day.

JOE: (*Hopefully.*) You think he might change his mind?

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Sadly.*) I doubt it, Joe. He hasn't changed anything for ten years. (*Stares front.*) That was when he made his big change. His love went from his family to money and more money. It's been there ever since.

JOE: (*Anxiously.*) Maybe if I talked to him again, but I've tried everything. I even went to him on bended knee. People would have thought I was proposin' to him instead of Mary.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Rising, determined.*) Well, all I've got to say is that it's time we had a showdown. There's no sense in your father taking such a selfish, ridiculous attitude. (*Goes to door of study, bangs on it.*) Phillip.

JOE: Do you think I'd better hide?

MRS. MORLOCK: You stay right where you are.

JOE: (*Swallowing hard.*) Yes, ma'am.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Banging louder.*) Phillip. Phillip Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Off-stage.*) All right. All right. Don't knock down the house. (*Opens door, sticks head out, growls.*) Well, what is it?

MRS. MORLOCK: We would like to speak to you for a few minutes if you will be so kind as to crawl out of your hole. (*He saunters out.*)

GEORGE: (*Sticking head out door.*) Can I be of any assistance?

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Banging door shut.*) No.

MARY: Hello, Dad.

JOE: Hello, Mr. Morlock. (*JESSICA and LUIGI enter left, unnoticed.*)

MR. MORLOCK: (*Coldly, snorting.*) Oh, you two. (*With finality.*) The answer is still no. (*He turns to go back into study, but finds MRS. MORLOCK standing in the door with her arms folded.*) Hazel, you're standing in my way. (*She doesn't budge.*) Please stand aside, I have business in there.

MRS. MORLOCK: You have business out here, too. Important business. It concerns two young people who intend to get married, and it would be much easier for all concerned if you'd give your permission.

MR. MORLOCK: I've told you how I feel on the matter. I've told everyone in the house how I feel. If a reporter were here, I'd tell him, too. This is my house. I'm the head of my house. I will not give my permission for a marriage that has absolutely no foundation or reason for being. So please stand aside, Hazel, and let me return to my work.

MARY: But it does have a reason for being, Dad. A very good reason.

JOE: (*Stepping forward.*) Sir, I love your daughter.

MARY: (*Her eyes shining.*) Joe, that is so wonderful!

MR. MORLOCK: Young man, you may not be aware of it, but a marriage can be based on only one thing - money.

MRS. MORLOCK: We were happy for a long time without it, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: Nonsense. We just thought we were happy. We were just a couple of idiotic kids, that's all.

REST ASSURED

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Stunned.)* Phillip.

MARY: *(Pleadingly.)* Please, Father.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Arms folded.)* No. I won't stand for it. You'll find someone who can support you, Mary. You're crazy if you think I'm going to let you marry a pauper.

LUIGI, *unable to control himself any longer, bounces forward angrily.*

LUIGI: *(Throwing chest out.)* My Joe isa notta pauper.

JOE: *(Astonished.)* Dad.

MARY: Mr. Lanconi.

LUIGI: I havva been stand here with Jessica and havva heard whatta was said.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Surveying him with pleasure.)* So you're Joe's dad.

LUIGI: I'ma Joe's papa. Yes, I hear you no wanna Joe to marry youra daughter. So I camea here to talka for Joe.

JOE: Please, Dad, this is no concern of yours.

LUIGI: *(Holding up hand.)* Isa concern of mine. Whena youra Mama die, she givea the lasta request. "Luigi," she say, "Luigi, you takea good care of the boys." So I take gooda care. I try to raisea the boys right. *(To MR. MORLOCK.)* Now, my boy, he wanta marry your daughter. And I'ma come to talka for Joe.

MR. MORLOCK: I'll bet you came to talk for him. Wouldn't that just suit you fine. What's your occupation, Mr. Lanconi?

LUIGI: *(Proudly.)* I'm a baker.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Astonished.)* A baker? Well, maccheroni alla carbonara, ain't that just dandy. *(He laughs.)* I can see it now. Mary Morlock, daughter of Phillip Morlock, vice-president of Brubaker and Brubaker, joined in holy wedlock with Joe Lanconi, son of Luigi Lanconi, a baker. *(He throws his head back, laughing.)* And the society pages would have a blast - - the reception featured classic breads, including Italian, with its airy center and light crispy crust, Tuscan, with its soft, moist, chewy center and thick, dark crust, and French. That's the funniest thing I've ever heard. *(MR. MORLOCK laughs.)*

LUIGI: *(Getting his dander up.)* Isa no laughing matter, isa serious thing.

MR. MORLOCK: From your standpoint it is. From mine, it's ridiculous - no, hilarious. *(More laughter.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: Phillip, please.

MR. MORLOCK: And don't, "Phillip, please," me, Hazel. *(He walks around the room laughing and holding his side.)* This is the first good laugh I've had in years. *(Seriously.)* It's the stupidest thing I ever heard of. I'd be the laughing stock of my club. Of the whole town.

LUIGI: When I marry Martha - -

JOE: *(Breaking in.)* Please, Dad.

LUIGI: And don'ta you starta the pleasea stuff, either. I'ma youra papa, and I'ma come here to talka for you.

JOE: But you can't talk without losing your temper, Dad.

LUIGI: Anda what if I do? I'ma knock his block off, that's all. Isa nothing lost there. As I'm a start to say, when Martha anda me got married, we didn't havva cent. Not even the job. Buta we get married anyhow. Anda we were happy. Then I getta joba at the bakery. Thena we were really happy. *(He sighs.)* Two yearsa later, we had our firsta son. We give him common American name - - Angelo. Next a year, we hava

leettle Joe. Now he's a man. A finea fellow. He no smokea, no cussa, no takea the drink.

**MR. MORLOCK:** Look old man, you might just as well give up and go peddle your papers somewhere else.

**LUIGI:** *(Crosses to him.)* I'm olda man mebbe, but I'ma not peddle papers. I'ma baker, and if I hada my oven here, I'da choppa youra head off anda stuff it in a cannoli.

**MR. MORLOCK:** A true Italian.

**JOE:** *(Putting his hand on his shoulder.)* Dad, you'd better go home.

**LUIGI:** *(Pushing his hand off.)* I'ma no go home. I'ma lose my temper. *(To MR. MORLOCK.)* I'fa my shirt had sleeves, I'da rolla them up.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Glaring at him.)* And just whom do you think you'd fight?

**LUIGI:** I'da fight you, you bigga - - bigga schmoe. *(JOE starts toward him.)* Anda standa back, son. *(MARY puts restraining hand on JOE's arm.)* Before I gotta Martha, I hadda seven fights, including her papa twice. And he wassa bigger than you - botha times.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** *(As MR. MORLOCK starts rolling up his sleeves.)* Phillip, for goodness sakes.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Glaring at LUIGI.)* The Godfather here started it.

**JESSICA:** *(Excitedly.)* I'll referee.

*The two of them strike pugilistic poses, and LUIGI starts bouncing around him as if sparring for an opening.*

**LUIGI:** I'ma gonna knock his block off for Joe anda Mary.

*They both start bouncing around each other. MR. MORLOCK swings a wide haymaker at LUIGI's head. But he ducks. He swings again. LUIGI again ducks, laughs, and they bounce around again. LUIGI swings a haymaker at MR. MORLOCK, who ducks, sidesteps, and jabs LUIGI over the heart. The little fellow staggers back a couple steps, grabs his heart. He crosses to sofa, leans on it, holds heart, coughs. MR. MORLOCK stands by, fist doubled, ready to let him have it again. JESSICA makes a "T" for time with her hands.*

**MR. MORLOCK:** What's wrong? Can't take it? Need some thugs to help you?

**LUIGI:** I'ma all right, it's just - - just - - *(Coughs a couple of times.)*

**JOE:** *(Disgustedly.)* You'd better come along home, Dad. You're too old to be acting like a little kid.

**LUIGI:** *(Still panting.)* I'ma not too old, and I'ma not acting like a little kid. *(He coughs again, straightens up, doubles fists again.)* I'ma gonna knock his block off. *(Clasps hands over his heart again.)*

**MARY:** Is he all right?

**JOE:** *(Going to him.)* He will be when he gets home.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** *(To her husband.)* I'd be ashamed.

**MR. MORLOCK:** I didn't do anything. He started it. If I wasn't any tougher than that, I wouldn't go around starting fights.

*LUIGI starts at MR. MORLOCK again. JOE grabs him, holds him.*



REST ASSURED

JOE: Dad, come along home.

LUIGI: I canna still knock his block off. *(Coughs, holds heart again.)*

JOE: *(Sternly.)* Dad. *(LUIGI turns, looks up at him pitifully.)* Can you make it home okay, Dad?

LUIGI: *(Panting.)* I canna make it home okay. *(Coughs again, takes two steps toward hall, stops.)*

JOE: We're going to take you to see the doctor, Dad.

LUIGI: I'ma not going to seea the doc.

MARY: Joe, is it - - is it - *(She stops.)*

JOE: *(Softly.)* It's his heart.

MARY: Oh golly.

LUIGI: I'ma not going to see the doc.

MARY: I'm going with you, Joe.

MR. MORLOCK: *(With finality.)* You're staying right here, Mary.

MARY: Mother, I'm going with Joe. Luigi may need us.

MRS. MORLOCK: All right, Mary.

JOE: Come along, Dad. *(LUIGI looks around helplessly, clasping his heart as JOE leads him through the hall and out, followed by MARY.)*

MR. MORLOCK: *(Exploding.)* It's an outrage, that's what it is. An outrage. When a daughter won't even mind her father, it's time steps were taken. And I'll take steps.

MRS. MORLOCK: You'll do nothing of the kind, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: I certainly will. If that girl ever sees that - - that - - Joe fellow again, it'll be over my dead body.

JESSICA: *(Gazing into space.)* The little fellow inspired me, he did. "Jessica," he said, "Jessica, you can't have anything in this world unless you work and strive for it." *(Inspired.)* I'm startin' now to work and strive. I'm gonna go up to my room and take a wrestlin' lesson right now. *(Going upstairs.)* He inspired me.

MR. MORLOCK: A lot he knows about having anything in this world. He doesn't have a thing. Not one thing. I should have bodily kicked him out of the house.

MRS. MORLOCK: You talked real mean to him and then beat him up.

MR. MORLOCK: I did nothing of the kind. He couldn't take it. He knew I packed a mean punch. He's no sicker than I am, either. He thought if he dropped in his tracks I'd say yes . . . sure . . . carry away my daughter . . . help yourself to my possessions . . . here's my checkbook. I'm wise to his kind.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Arms akimbo.)* You're wise to the world, aren't you?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Stretching out on the sofa.)* The trouble with you, Hazel, is that you take everything too seriously. You should be more like me.

MRS. MORLOCK: Just what this world needs. Do you have to insult everyone? A lot you care. A lot you care about anything. Poor little old fellow. Did you see that pained expression on his face?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Dryly.)* He was probably born with it. *(He rises.)* I see cases like him every day. They come into the office with things from gold mines to inventions and each one has an act just a little different. But I'm proud to say I'm intelligent enough to separate the wheat from the chaff. And that - - *(He points right.)* was the plainest case of chaff I've ever seen. *(Stops suddenly, wide-eyed.)* Pains. I'm getting pains again.

MRS. MORLOCK: I'm surprised that a super-human specimen like you would be susceptible to pains.

- MR. MORLOCK: (*Pacing back and forth, hand on head.*) It's all this excitement. Horrible creatures like that shouldn't be allowed to run loose in the world.
- MRS. MORLOCK: He's a nice little old man.
- MR. MORLOCK: (*Exploding.*) Nice?
- MRS. MORLOCK: And he has a nice son. Joe will graduate from college with honors this spring.
- MR. MORLOCK: If he comes around here again, he'll have the honor of being kicked right out of the house, he will. (*He's really loud now.*)
- MRS. MORLOCK: (*Pleadingly.*) Please try to be a little more sensible and understanding. (*Sadly.*) You used to be kind-hearted and sweet.
- MR. MORLOCK: (*Letting his hands bang to his sides.*) Here we go again. I've given you money. A social position. Security. Fine friends. Everything. But that isn't enough. I'd say I've been quite a success not only as a man, but as a husband and father, too. Yessir!
- MRS. MORLOCK: Fifteen years ago, I might have agreed with you. But no more. You're the most egotistical man I've ever met. And the most heartless, and cold, and cruel, too. I've finally decided to do something tomorrow that I should have done years ago. I'm leaving.
- MR. MORLOCK: (*Stretching out on the sofa.*) Oh, you've decided to take the trip, huh?
- MRS. MORLOCK: And I'm not coming back.
- MR. MORLOCK: And just who do you think you're trying to fool?
- MRS. MORLOCK: (*With finality.*) I'm leaving in the morning, Phillip.
- MR. MORLOCK: And let me remind you that 90% of the women in this country would love to change places with you right now. They'd like to have a husband like me. Yessir. (*She turns, goes upstairs and out.*) The trouble with me is that I'm underappreciated. (*Rising.*) Me . . . vice-president of Brubaker and Brubaker. (*Grabs stomach.*) I'm having pains. (*Louder.*) Pains. (*Walks back and forth across stage holding stomach.*)
- MISS AKERS: (*Sticking head out study door.*) About ready to finish the letters, Mr. Morlock?
- MR. MORLOCK: Just as soon as I finish having pains.
- MISS AKERS: Yes, Mr. Morlock. I'd suggest you lie down on the sofa, Mr. Morlock.
- MR. MORLOCK: (*Sharply.*) You aren't being paid to make suggestions, Miss Akers. Please return to your work.
- MISS AKERS: I'm sorry, Mr. Morlock. (*Goes back into study, closing door.*)
- MR. MORLOCK: Everyone's always making suggestions. They should take more and give less. Especially with a vice-president around. (*Painfully.*) Oh. (*Grabs stomach again, walks around in this position as MILDRED walks in left, stops, watches him.*) I'm having pains.
- MILDRED: I'd suggest you get some sleep once in awhile, Mr. Morlock.
- MR. MORLOCK: (*Glaring.*) Oh, you would?
- MILDRED: Yes, sir! All you do is work, work, work, and groan, groan, groan even up into the night.
- MR. MORLOCK: I can't sleep. You know that. I couldn't go to sleep if I had to. (*He sits on sofa.*) I've got insomnia. I try to count sheep. No good. I count horses. Still no good.
- MILDRED: You might try counting your money, Mr. Morlock. I've heard if people count money long enough they either go to sleep or crazy - - provided they ain't one of 'em

already.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Glaring.*) Mildred, are you editorializing?

MILDRED: Oh no, sir. All I do is work here. (*She goes upstairs and out.*)

MR. MORLOCK: If a person can't sleep, he can't sleep. I've got too much on my mind.

Too many pains. Too many people trying to tell me what to do. (*Stretches out on sofa.*) And a lot of sympathy I get, too. No consolation. No kind words from my family. All I get from them is bills and more bills. (*Yawning.*) I've made a success of myself and of them. I've given them everything they could ask for. But what do I get in return? Nothing. No wonder I can't relax. Can't eat what I want. (*Yawns.*) Can't sleep. (*He yawns again. Stretches and turns with his back to the audience and snores peacefully. The phone rings. He doesn't stir. It rings persistently until MISS AKERS sticks her head out of the door of the study.*)

MISS AKERS: (*Calling.*) Phone, Mildred. (*She closes door and goes back in. She opens door again as phone continues ringing. She comes downstage, followed by GEORGE.*) Shall I answer the phone, Mr. Morlock?

GEORGE: (*As his boss emits a long snore.*) I do believe he's asleep. And without pouring a bottle of sleeping tablets down him, too. By George, this is an oddity.

MISS AKERS: (*Into phone.*) Hello. Oh, yes, Mary. This is Miss Akers. Your mother isn't down here just now. Shall I call her? (*Pause.*) Yes, I'll give her a message.

MRS. MORLOCK comes downstairs.

MISS AKERS: Who? Luigi Lanconi? (*MR. MORLOCK groans, pushes himself up drowsily, peers out through drooping lids.*) Yes, Mary, I'll tell her.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Fearfully.*) What is it, Miss Akers?

MISS AKERS: (*Hanging up.*) Somebody by the name of Luigi Lanconi. Mary said he collapsed on the way to the hospital and died before they could get him there.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Astonished.*) Oh, no. (*She goes silently to chair, drops into it.*) The poor little fellow.

MISS AKERS: A friend of the family?

MRS. MORLOCK: It was Joe's father. Mary's fiancé.

MR. MORLOCK: (*Rising.*) He is not Mary's fiancé. If he is, it's over my dead body.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Tearfully.*) How could you, Phillip? How could you be so mean?

MR. MORLOCK: Can I help it if he had a bad heart. Great jumpin' horses, I'm no doctor. All I could have given him was an aspirin.

MRS. MORLOCK: You killed him just the same as if you'd taken a gun and shot him in cold blood.

MR. MORLOCK: For cryin' out loud. (*Groaning.*) I'm having pains again. (*Hands on stomach.*)

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Following him around room.*) I'd have pains too if I were you. (*To MISS AKERS.*) That's all for tonight, Miss Akers and George. You may go home.

MR. MORLOCK: Says who? We've still got work to do. Loads of work.

GEORGE: You're sleepy, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: I'm vice-president of Brubaker and Brubaker, and we have work to do.

MISS AKERS: Yes, Mr. Morlock.

GEORGE: Yes, Mr. Morlock. (*And MISS AKERS and GEORGE go to the study.*)

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Shaking head sadly.*) The hardest working man I've ever known. Poor Luigi.

**MR. MORLOCK:** There's plenty of people like him in the world anyway. If you ask me, he's better off dead.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** *(Astonished.)* Phillip. *(She turns, goes upstairs and out.)*

*As she exits, LUIGI comes in through the hall in a white night shirt, the beat-up little hat still parked atop his head. He leans against the wall and watches MR. MORLOCK.*

**MR. MORLOCK:** It's not my fault he died. Holy smokes, what do they think I am? *(Importantly.)* A man has to hold out for his own rights in this world. If you start anything, keep it up. Don't turn back. Always push forward.

**LUIGI:** That'sa why I'ma come back to talka for Joe.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Jumping.)* Luigi, they said you were - - were *(Swallowing hard.)* - - dead.

**LUIGI:** That'sa right. I'm as dead asa doornail.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Terrified.)* No. No, it can't be. *(He keeps sofa between him and LUIGI.)*

**LUIGI:** I'ma wake up in a strangea place and they say, "Luigi, you'rea dead." I'ma not dead, I say. Then they show me the report. Ata ninea thirty Luigi Lanconi, he'sa dropa dead. Isa depart from the world. Isa gonna visit wifea Martha. Then they ask if I havea the lasta request. Onea thing, I say. Pleasea, youra majesty, I woulda justa like to stay with a certain man until he gives hissa permission for a wedding.

**MR. MORLOCK:** No. It can't be. It's a trick.

**LUIGI:** Thena comes a special message. Luigi Lanconi request granted, best of luck on your mission. Then I finda myself here to talka for Joe.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Calling, fearfully.)* Hazel. *(Louder.)* Hazel.

**LUIGI:** Will notta do any good to calla for Hazel. I havea the permish to talk to you. That's all. Hazel won't even be able to see me. Nobody willa be able to see me but you.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Staring out front.)* No, it can't be. Things like this just don't happen. Spirits don't really come back from the dead and haunt people.

**LUIGI:** Luigi is notta haunta nobody. Luigi is justa gon stay here until you say sure Joe canna marry youra daughter and youra daughter can marry mya Joe.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Pacing around the room.)* This is an outrage. *(He unbuttons collar another notch, comes over to LUIGI.)* If you think I'm going to stand around and be haunted by a two-bit ghost, you're crazy. Soft in the head. If you don't leave real quiet and peaceful, then I'm afraid I'm gonna have to throw you out of the house.

**LUIGI:** *(Arms folded.)* I'ma gon' stay right here till you givea your permish for the wedding.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Pointing right, forcefully.)* I request you to leave. *(LUIGI doesn't budge.)* As owner of this house, I demand you remove yourself from these premises. *(Still no reaction.)* At once. *(Shaking finger toward right.)* Out the door. *(Coming over to LUIGI.)* Look, Luigi, I'm asking you in a nice way to go home and stop playing games. I'm in no mood to play games. You can't fool me into thinking you're a ghost. You look just as alive as you ever did, and if you don't go, I'll sue. *(LUIGI sits on sofa.)* Oh, for heaven's sakes. *(He paces back and forth in front of the sofa, finally comes over, arms akimbo, barking.)* This is just some trick, that's what it is. You aren't dead. Things like this don't happen. You and Mary and Joe are just playing tricks, that's what you're doing. *(He calls.)* George. *(Bellowing.)* George.

REST ASSURED

GEORGE and MISS AKERS enter from the study.

MR. MORLOCK: George, I want to start a lawsuit against this man for one million dollars.

GEORGE: *(Blinking.)* What man?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Pointing, shouting.)* The one sitting right there.

MISS AKERS: Mr. Morlock, you promised your doctor - -

MR. MORLOCK: *(Trying to keep calm.)* I am merely saying we are going to press charges against that man sitting right there.

MISS AKERS: Yes, Mr. Morlock, that's what we thought you said.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Disgruntled.)* We'll sue him like no one's ever been sued before.

MISS AKERS: *(Stepping forward, demurely.)* Excuse me, Mr. Morlock, but where is he sitting?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Pointing, exasperated.)* Right there.

GEORGE: *(Pointing to sofa.)* There? *(MR. MORLOCK nods affirmatively.)* Mr. Morlock, no one is sitting on the sofa.

MR. MORLOCK: You're crazy. You're both crazy. Besides that, you're fired. Completely fired. *(Pointing right.)* Out the door. And take him with you. *(To LUIGI.)* I'm going to count to three, Luigi, and if you aren't out of here by then, I'll sue. *(He turns back, puts hands over eyes, orally counts to three, turns, finds LUIGI still sitting there.)* Four? *(No reaction.)* Five?

MISS AKERS: Maybe he can't count. Few ghosts can.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Disgustedly.)* This is terrible. An outrage, and I'm vice-president of Brubaker and Brubaker. *(Points to himself.)* Me? Haunted.

GEORGE: *(Crossing to his boss.)* Come, P. U. - - I mean Phillip Ulysses, I'll put you to bed.

MR. MORLOCK: What's the use, I couldn't sleep. I'll never sleep again.

LUIGI: *(Stretching out on sofa.)* Go on, l'lla jus' turn in down here and see you in the morning.

MR. MORLOCK: I'm bewitched.

GEORGE: Come, Mr. Morlock.

MISS AKERS: I'll entertain your little ghost friend while you're gone. *(She sits on sofa. He lays his head in her lap, sticks feet over arm of sofa and sighs ecstatically.)*

MR. MORLOCK: *(Barking.)* Miss Akers, I won't allow my secretary to flirt with strange ghosts.

MISS AKERS: Oh, I'm not your secretary anymore, remember? You fired me.

MR. MORLOCK: Well, I just hired you again. And please move. He has his head in your lap.

MISS AKERS: He does? How sweet.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Arms akimbo.)* I warned you, Miss Akers. I'm not responsible for anything that happens.

MISS AKERS: Oh, I'm not worried about a perfectly innocent little old ghost. It's when they're alive that I worry.

GEORGE: *(Thrusting him center.)* Come along, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: *(As they go toward stairs.)* Unhand me, George.

LUIGI: *(Sighing, smiling, closing eyes.)* Ahhhh, mortal life was never like this. *(Curtain.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

**SCENE:**

*The same.*

**TIME:**

*An hour later.*

**AT RISE:**

*MRS. MORLOCK enters through the hall with DR. BROWN, the family physician. He is middle-aged and carries a black bag. MRS. MORLOCK wears a robe.*

**DR. BROWN:** *(Speaking as they enter.)* What in the world's happened, Hazel?

**MRS. MORLOCK:** It's Phillip, Dr. Brown. He imagines he sees things.

**DR. BROWN:** I figured as much.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** *(As they cross left.)* He's in his study. *(They stop at door.)* Hear him?

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Shouting from in study.)* I tell you, it's an outrage. I demand you leave at once. Out of my sight. *(He throws open the door, bursts into the room followed by LUIGI.)* It's preposterous, that's what it is. Ridiculous. *(Louder.)* Stupid. *(Louder.)* Abominable. *(Pointing right again.)* Out the door. *(MR. MORLOCK is dressed in bathrobe and slippers.)*

**DR. BROWN:** *(Staring at him.)* For heaven's sake.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** He's been going on like this for two hours. We tried to get him to sleep but it was just no use.

**LUIGI:** *(Sitting on arm of chair.)* I'ma gonna stay right here till you givea your consent.

**MR. MORLOCK:** It's blackmail, that's what it is.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** Evidently, he thinks he's being blackmailed.

**DR. BROWN:** *(Meditating.)* Hmmmm. *(MR. MORLOCK is pacing the floor again, his hands behind his back. DR. BROWN crosses to him.)* Which walls have the little animals been crawling out of, Phillip?

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Disgustedly.)* I'm not seeing little animals. Just one big one, and he crawled in that hole in the wall over there with a door on it. *(He points right.)* And you can't see him. I'm the only one that can. It's one heck of a situation, but that's the way it is.

**DR. BROWN:** Let me see your tongue, Phillip.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Sighing, despondently.)* Here we go again. *(He crosses to the doctor, sticks out his tongue.)*

**DR. BROWN:** Take your shirt off.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(With finality.)* I'm not going to take off my shirt.

**LUIGI:** Go ahead like he says anda takea your shirt off.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Barking.)* And who do you think you are, orderin' me around?

**DR. BROWN:** I'm your doctor, Phillip.

**LUIGI:** Go ahead. He'sa your doc.

**MR. MORLOCK:** Why don't you drop dead?

**MRS. MORLOCK:** *(Astonished.)* What a terrible way to talk to Dr. Brown.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Shouting.)* I'm not talking to Dr. Brown. *(Lets hands bang to sides.)*

REST ASSURED

Oh, for heaven sakes. (*Walks around again, then crosses to DR. BROWN.*) Look Doc, did you ever hear of Luigi Lanconi?

**DR. BROWN:** (*Thinking.*) Luigi Lanconi. Oh sure, he was the little fellow they brought down to the hospital tonight.

**MR. MORLOCK:** You're right. For once in your life you're right. Well, (*He points to LUIGI.*) that's him right there. That's who I've been talking to.

**DR. BROWN:** Hazel, I'd better have a talk with you. (*They retreat a couple of steps away.*) Do you see anyone? I mean besides us? (*She shakes her head negatively.*) Anyway, this Luigi fellow was quite dead when they got him to the hospital tonight.

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Shouting.*) Of course he was dead.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** Phillip, don't shout.

**MR. MORLOCK:** That's what I've been trying to tell you. And he's still dead. (*Louder.*) Stone dead. And he's sitting right there. Only you can't see him. Just me and I'm so mad I could die..

**LUIGI:** That could be arranged.

**MR. MORLOCK:** Why, what are you going to do, hit me over the head with a baguette?.

*DR. BROWN and MRS. MORLOCK exchange glances and they retreat a few more steps away.*

**DR. BROWN:** How long has he been this way?

**MRS. MORLOCK:** For two or three hours. We tried to get him to sleep, but it was just no use. He said this little imaginary ghost kept pulling the covers off him.

**DR. BROWN:** Hmmmm.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** Finally he wound up in the study. We thought maybe he'd go to sleep in there, but he just sat in there and talked and shouted.

**MR. MORLOCK:** It's bad enough being haunted by a regular ghost. But I have to get one with flour for brains.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** It must be his conscience, Doctor. He and Luigi had sort of a run-in tonight. It was over Mary and Joe getting married. Well, they argued and scuffled, and Luigi had a rather bad spell with his heart.

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Crossing to LUIGI.*) You're a moron. An idiot. You're worse dead than alive.

**DR. BROWN:** That might be. (*Sizing him up.*) Something certainly happened somewhere along the line. (*To MRS. MORLOCK.*) Is he rational? What's two plus two, Phillip?

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Crossing over to them.*) You think I'm crazy, don't you? That's what you think. (*Sticking his chin in his face.*) Well, I'm not crazy. Two plus two's four. Four plus four's eight. Eight times eight is sixty-four. Columbus sailed the ocean blue in fourteen hundred ninety-two.

**MRS. MORLOCK:** Phillip.

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Rambling on.*) The average weight of a squirrel is one and a half pounds . . . an elephant's heart weighs about 25 pounds - - provided, of course, he's reached full-grown elephanthood and isn't from any of the smaller elephant strains . . . and alfalfa was first introduced in Italy in the first century, A.D. (*Pauses, then cries.*) It-al-lillyyy.

**DR. BROWN:** That's fine, Phillip.

**MR. MORLOCK:** Topeka is the capitol of Kansas. Lincoln is the capitol of Nebraska.

Little Rock is the capitol of - - of - - *(To LUIGI.)* What's Little Rock the capitol of?

LUIGI: California.

MR. MORLOCK: California. I guess that proves I'm not crazy.

DR. BROWN: Yes, Phillip. *(To MRS. MORLOCK.)* I'll take him into the study and give him an examination.

MR. MORLOCK: I'm not going to be examined in front of him.

LUIGI: I'lla hide my eyes.

MR. MORLOCK: No more privacy than a goldfish. Look, Dr. Brown, there's no need for an examination. I'm perfectly fine. It's just that - - that idiot can't die like a normal person. As soon as he gives up the ghost, everything will be fine.

DR. BROWN: *(Opening study door.)* Yes, Phillip. *(MR. MORLOCK and LUIGI go into study, followed by DR. BROWN.)*

MR. MORLOCK: *(To LUIGI.)* Nosy. *(They exit.)*

*MARY comes down the stairs wearing a robe.*

MARY: How is he, Mom?

MRS. MORLOCK: Dr. Brown is examining him in the study. I've never seen anything like it in my life.

MARY: Me neither.

*JESSICA bounces down the stairs in bright pajamas, sits on landing. Still carrying her book.*

MARY: Poor little old Luigi. Joe's gonna take it mighty hard, Mom. He was a wonderful father.

JESSICA: He inspired me, that's what he did.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Surprised.)* Jessica, what in the world are you doing up?

JESSICA: *(Sighing.)* I just couldn't sleep. *(Coming down stage.)* I'm gonna be the world champion female wrestler, I am, just for him.

MARY: Jessica, for heaven's sake.

JESSICA: Well, I am. And I've got my book right here. I'm starting on page one.

MARY: But not at one o'clock in the morning, dear. Now go back to bed.

JESSICA: I might wake Miss Akers. I'd probably give her an airplane spin or kangaroo kick or half-Nelson right there in bed. Poor girl'd never know what hit her.

MARY: *(To her mother, questioning.)* Miss Akers?

MRS. MORLOCK: She and George are staying here tonight just in case we need anything.

*GEORGE comes sleepily down the stairs, hair disheveled, shirt unbuttoned and out of his trousers, shoes untied.*

GEORGE: *(Blinking.)* Everything okay? *(Yawns.)*

MARY: Father's in the study with Dr. Brown.

GEORGE: What about . . . about . . . Luigi?

MRS. MORLOCK: Apparently he's in there, too.

*GEORGE yawns, leans on chair, sleepily.*



JESSICA: (*Bouncing over to him.*) George. (*He jumps.*) Do you believe in ghosts?

GEORGE: Of course not. Not up until tonight, anyway. (*Yawns, scratches head sleepily.*)

MARY: (*Arms around her mother.*) You should try to get some sleep; you've been up all night.

MRS. MORLOCK: I'm alright dear. (*Hand on head.*) However, I think I will take an aspirin. (*She crosses left, with MARY.*)

MARY: (*As they cross left and exit.*) I'll go with you.

GEORGE: Poor Morlock. Poor, poor Philip Ulysses Morlock.

JESSICA: (*Standing, reading.*) How to knock a man out. (*She looks up.*) This is good stuff to know whether I ever wrestle professionally or not. "Step #1: Always keep a small hammer or mallet hidden so it will be handy." (*She snaps her fingers, trots over to table down left, opens drawer and pulls out hammer. GEORGE is now leaning on arm of chair, dozing. She crosses up to him, still reading.*) The one spot to hit a man when wanting to knock him out is right behind the ear. A blow here, properly placed, is equal to a fifty pound weight dropped on his head. (*Throws book in chair.*) Oh, George.

GEORGE: (*Drowsily.*) Huh?

JESSICA: If you could help a girl get a start in life, you would, wouldn't you?

GEORGE: (*Mumbling sleepily.*) Uh huh.

JESSICA: (*With gusto.*) Good. (*She rubs hands together, clutches hammer, gets ready to "lower the boom."*) Every young person needs someone to give him his first big start. Now let's see. (*She gets up in chair, holds hammer behind his ear.*)

GEORGE: Uh huh.

JESSICA: (*Draws hammer back.*) About an inch to the left. That's it. (*She draws hammer back with upstage hand, leans over, waves hammer menacingly, taps him behind ear with finger of other hand, and he falls forward over arm of chair. JESSICA bounces off excitedly, looks at finger.*) Hey, that's okay. I'm really strong. Man alive. (*She brushes off hands as MISS AKERS comes downstairs, attired now in housecoat.*)

MISS AKERS: What in the world happened to him?

JESSICA: I just lowered the boom on him, Miss Akers. I'm really loaded.

MISS AKERS: (*Crossing to him.*) For heaven's sakes.

DR. BROWN: (*Sticking head out of study door.*) Someone get a blanket. He's going to spend the night in the study.

JESSICA: I'll get one. I got muscles. (*Flexes muscles.*) I'm loaded. (*Goes upstairs and out.*)

MISS AKERS: George. (*Pushes him.*) George, wake up. (*He looks up sleepily, scratches head.*) How's Mr. Morlock, Doctor?

DR. BROWN: Can't find anything wrong with him but the usual. He's dissipated, worn out, chest pains, high blood pressure, ulcers, dyspepsia, palpitation of the heart, arthritis, rheumatism and hardening of the arteries. But nothing out of the ordinary.

GEORGE: Poor P.U., poor, poor P.U.

DR. BROWN: If we can just get him to rest. Perhaps tomorrow he'll be his old natural self again.

MISS AKERS: (*Sighing.*) Even that's bad enough.

GEORGE: Miss Akers, that is no way to talk about poor Mr. Morlock when he isn't able

to defend himself.

MISS AKERS: Ever see him when he was?

JESSICA: (*Bouncing downstairs.*) Here's a blanket, Dr. Brown. (*She hands it to him.*)

DR. BROWN: (*Taking blanket.*) Thank you, Jessica. (*Goes into the study.*)

*MRS. MORLOCK and MARY enter left.*

MRS. MORLOCK: (*As they enter.*) Any word?

MISS AKERS: Mr. Morlock's going to spend the night in the study.

JESSICA: I went up and got a blanket.

MARY: Did he find out what was wrong?

GEORGE: Nothing but the usual.

MRS. MORLOCK: I've never seen anything like it.

GEORGE: I have. Once. My Great Uncle Rodney. Just before he died, he saw all kinds of little people. People with horns and tails and pitchforks and horrible little faces and shapes.

MARY: How ghastly.

JESSICA: Maybe he'd been readin' the funnies.

*DR. BROWN opens door, steps out.*

MRS. MORLOCK: Yes, doctor?

DR. BROWN: I gave him a sedative and he was quiet when I left. (*Sets bottle of pills on table down left.*) I'll leave a few in case he gets restless during the night.

MRS. MORLOCK: What do you think, Doctor?

DR. BROWN: Well, it's hard to say.

MRS. MORLOCK: Could - - could it be his - - mind?

DR. BROWN: We'll know more in the morning. I'll be over first thing. (*He crosses right, shaking head. MRS. MORLOCK follows him to hall.*) Goodnight, Mrs. Morlock.

MRS. MORLOCK: Goodnight, Dr. Brown.

GEORGE: This Uncle Rodney of mine I was talking about. Seems he'd always been sort of a scoundrel. Went around banging people's heads together, cussing and raising Cain. Well sir, he got sick and started seein' these little creatures and shouted like mad and kept shoutin' till the next day. Then all was quiet. Uncle Rodney was dead.

MRS. MORLOCK: You think maybe Phillip - - Phillip - -

MARY: (*Putting arm around her.*) Now, Mom. Everything's going to be all right. It's just his conscience. Poor little old Luigi. (*She sniffs.*) He was a wonderful little old fellow. Never harmed a soul in his whole life. (*Sadly.*) Joe said they'd probably have the funeral day after tomorrow. (*Trying to keep tears back.*) I . . . I think I'd better go up to bed. (*She goes upstairs and out.*)

GEORGE: If you need me, just holler, Mrs. Morlock. If he gets out of hand or rowdy or starts bustin' up the furniture, just yell.

MISS AKERS: (*To MRS. MORLOCK as she and GEORGE start center.*) You coming up?

MRS. MORLOCK: In just a minute. I'll stay down here for awhile. (*GEORGE and MISS AKERS go upstairs and out.*) You'd better go up to bed, too, Jessica.

JESSICA: In a minute, Mom. (*She climbs on sofa, sits on back of sofa with chin in*

REST ASSURED

*hands.*) Mom.

MRS. MORLOCK: What is it, dear?

JESSICA: Why did Luigi have to die?

MRS. MORLOCK: He's just like everyone else, dear.

JESSICA: But he isn't just like everyone else. He was the most wonderful little old fellow I'd ever met. He was good and kind. Not at all like Dad.

MRS. MORLOCK: Jessica, what a terrible thing to say.

JESSICA: Well, it's the truth.

MRS. MORLOCK: Whether it is or isn't, you shouldn't say it. Now march right up to bed.

JESSICA: *(Clambering down.)* What a phony world. I'm punished if I tell a lie and I'm punished if I tell the truth. *(She starts center, stops on landing of stairs when shouts start coming from the study.)*

MR. MORLOCK: *(Off stage.)* Stop. Don't. Cut it out. Get out.

MRS. MORLOCK: Oh dear.

*She runs to door, opens it, just as a very disheveled MR. MORLOCK comes charging out, followed by LUIGI. MR. MORLOCK is now wearing a very bright red nightshirt.*

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Arms akimbo, disgustedly.)* What in the world's the matter now?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Disgustedly.)* He kicked me out of bed.

LUIGI: I'mma notta kick you outta bed. I'mma never kicka nobody out of bed in my wholea life.

MRS. MORLOCK: Go back to bed, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: How can I go back to bed with that - - that - - *(Pointing.)* kangaroo in the house?

LUIGI: Luigi's notta kicka nobody. Anyway, you wuz onna my side.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Shouting.)* You didn't have a side.

JESSICA: Who's he talking to, Mother?

MRS. MORLOCK: Jessica, go to bed.

MR. MORLOCK: He pulled the covers off seventeen times.

LUIGI: Phooey.

MR. MORLOCK: Don't phooey me or - - or - - *(In his face.)* I'll pound your face in.

JESSICA: Mom, is Dad crazy?

LUIGI: You'lla pound my face in over my deada body.

MR. MORLOCK: If it's necessary, yes.

*They both strike a pugilistic pose. MR. MORLOCK is crouched low, his knees wide apart, glaring at LUIGI. Then he starts bouncing around him.*

JESSICA: Mom, I think Dad's lost his marbles.

MRS. MORLOCK: Phillip, go back to bed.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Raving again.)* How can I sleep when the Godfather keeps stealing my covers?

LUIGI: *(Arms folded, chin in air.)* I'lla leave if you'lla givea your permish for the wedding.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Crossing to him, glares in face.)* Drop dead.

LUIGI: *(Triumphantly.)* I'vea done dropped.

MRS. MORLOCK: We've got to get him to sleep. I'll get a glass of water and give him one of those sleeping pills. *(She gets the bottle of sleeping pills and goes out left.)*

JESSICA: *(As MRS. MORLOCK exits.)* I can put him to sleep, Mom. *(She gets her hammer, holds it behind her.)* Dad. *(Beckoning with her finger.)* Come here. *(He ventures a step or two toward her.)* Now, bend over. *(He does.)* A little more, now, that's it. *(She locates the right spot, draws hammer back and is about to let it fly when MRS. MORLOCK reenters left, with a glass of water.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: *(As she enters, astonished.)* Jessica! *(Jessica jumps.)* What in the world are you doing?

JESSICA: I was just going to put him to sleep like you said.

MRS. MORLOCK: Jessica, go to bed.

*LUIGI, unable to keep from taking advantage of MR. MORLOCK's crouched position, walks up behind him and boots him in the seat of his nightshirt. MR. MORLOCK topples over onto the floor.*

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Turning from center.)* Now Phillip, take - *(Stops when she see him.)*  
What in the world are you doing now?

MR. MORLOCK: *(Barking.)* I'm sitting on the floor, what do you think?

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Arms akimbo.)* What are you doing that for?

JESSICA: Maybe he's lookin' for his marbles.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Shouting.)* Jessica, go to bed.

JESSICA: Yes, Dad. *(She starts upstairs, turns.)* He's definitely lost 'em.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Louder.)* Jessica.

JESSICA: I'm goin'. *(And she exits.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: Get up and take a couple of these, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: *(As he rises.)* What are they?

MRS. MORLOCK: They're pills Dr. Brown left. They'll help you sleep.

MR. MORLOCK: I'll never get any sleep as long as birdbrain here keeps putting his best foot forward.

MRS. MORLOCK: Phillip, there is no one down here but us.

MR. MORLOCK: Try tellin' him that. He'll kick your teeth in.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Hands him a couple pills and the glass of water.)* Now take these and hurry up. *(MR. MORLOCK puts pills in mouth, gulps water, makes wry face, sets glass on table.)* Go to bed, Phillip.

MR. MORLOCK: I'll go in, but I won't sleep. Not with monkey-face around here. *(He and LUIGI go into study.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: For heaven's sake. *(She goes upstairs and out.)*

*Door to study bursts open, and MR. MORLOCK comes charging out, a blanket hanging over his shoulder.*

MR. MORLOCK: *(As he enters, raving.)* Then take the whole bed. See if I care. I'll sleep in here.

*He pounces on sofa, throws covers over him, wiggles and squirms and tries to get comfortable.*

MR. MORLOCK: *(Mumbling.)* Anything to get away from that lame-brain. Stupid ghosts like him shouldn't be allowed to run loose in the world. And I, of all people, shouldn't

REST ASSURED

have to put up with him.

**LUIGI:** (*Sticking head out door, meekly.*) Mr. Morlock - - sir?

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Wailing.*) Oh no. (*Pulls cover over his head, his bare feet now sticking out over the arm of sofa.*) Not again.

**LUIGI:** I don't want you to think I'ma try to makea you mad. I'ma not! I'ma jus' come in to talka for Joe. (*MR. MORLOCK squirms, turns over, buries head in corner of sofa.*) I'ma tell you what a nicea boy Joe is. (*Bending over back of sofa.*) Youa listenin', Mr. Morlock?

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Disgustedly.*) No, I'm asleep. (*He snores loudly and angrily.*)

**LUIGI:** My boy Joe, he'ssa finest younga man in America. He no smokea, no cussa, no takea the drink. (*He sits on sofa, beside MR. MORLOCK's feet.*) He'lla makea the wunnerful husband.

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Raising up, putting chin in hand and leaning on elbow, glaring at Luigi.*) Why don't you drop dead?

**LUIGI:** I'ma keepa tell you I'ma already dead and I'ma come back to talka for Joe. And I'ma gon' keep talk for Joe until you givva your permish for the wedding. (*He leans back on sofa, sighs, puts his hands behind his head.*)

*MR. MORLOCK disgustedly crawls out from under the blanket, then tries to pull it out from under LUIGI. He yanks a couple of times, doesn't budge him. He gets pillow or cushion from off sofa, plops it onto floor. LUIGI goes right on talking.*

**LUIGI:** My Joe's harda working younga fellow. And woulda worka forty times as hard if he hadda Mary. (*He sighs.*) Mary. Ahhh. Whatta beautiful younga girl. So sweet. Soa charming. Tella me, how did a fellow like you ever have a daughter likea her? Is a bigga puzzle.

*MR. MORLOCK stretches out on floor, lays head on pillow, groans.*

**LUIGI:** (*Rambling on.*) World isa full of bigga puzzles. Isa puzzle how you gotta wife like you got. Isa puzzle how phoneys like you ever tricka girls likea her in the firsta place. And in the second place, isa puzzle how a human being coulda turn out to be a completea nothing likea you did.

*MR. MORLOCK rises disgustedly, goes to pill bottle and takes two or three in a gulp. Then he crosses to sofa, again grabs blanket, and jerks like mad on it, all to no avail. MARY comes downstairs.*

**MARY:** Father, are you still awake?

**MR. MORLOCK:** How do you expect me to sleep when this moron keeps sitting on the covers?

**MARY:** Father, there's no one sitting on the blanket. (*She crosses to sofa, gets corner of blanket, pulls, LUIGI rises, she picks it up, and he immediately sits.*) Here's your blanket, Father.

**MR. MORLOCK:** (*Glaring at LUIGI as he sinks back on sofa.*) Billygoat.

**MARY:** Now please go to bed, Father.

**MR. MORLOCK:** I can't sleep. I'll never sleep again, either, not with him breathing down my neck.

MARY: For heaven's sakes. *(She gets pill bottle.)* Here, take one of these. *(He just stands there, glaring at LUIGI.)* Dr. Brown said for you to take one if you were restless. Now take one. *(He does.)* Now go on into the study, Father. Dr. Brown said these pills would put you right to sleep.

MR. MORLOCK: I don't care if old man Carter himself said it. *(And MARY opens study door. He goes in, followed by LUIGI. She closes door, goes out left.)*

*All is quiet. GEORGE comes tiptoeing downstairs, crosses silently to study door, listens. Everything sounds peaceful. He turns, tiptoes back to stairs, when MR. MORLOCK shouts.*

MR. MORLOCK: *(Wailing from off-stage.)* Oh no. *(Door bursts open and he charges out.)* No. Not that. I've had enough. I'm leaving. *(He gets his blanket, heads right.)*

GEORGE: Mr. Morlock. Mr. Morlock - - sir - - where are you going?

MR. MORLOCK: I'm going to a hotel. I can't stand anymore of that.

GEORGE: Anymore of what?

*LUIGI snores long and loud from study.*

MR. MORLOCK: *(Raving.)* That - - that horrible snoring. I take the sleeping pills and he sleeps. He's driving me mad. *(Another long snore.)* Hear it?

GEORGE: I don't hear a thing, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: You're deaf. Deaf as a peanut. Either that or you're going crazy. I hate to say it, George, but I think you've flipped your stack.

GEORGE: Yes, Mr. Morlock. *(He leads him to pill bottle.)*

MR. MORLOCK: *(As LUIGI snores again.)* I've never heard such noises.

GEORGE: *(Pouring out a pill.)* Here. Take a sleeping pill.

MR. MORLOCK: Darkest Africa never heard anything like that. *(He swallows another pill.)*

GEORGE: Now go to bed, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Throwing blanket on sofa.)* I'll sleep in here. I can't sleep in there. Sounds like he's blasting for lead.

GEORGE: Do try to rest, Mr. Morlock.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Dropping on sofa and peering over back as GEORGE moves center.)* Rest? I should live so long.

*GEORGE exits center. MR. MORLOCK fixes blanket, pillow, stretches out, facing audience, and prepares to sleep. LUIGI enters, eyes closed, his hands stretched out in front of him. He walks right, circles once, then crosses in front of sofa. MR. MORLOCK, seeing him for first time, sits bolt upright.*

MR. MORLOCK: Help! *(Jumps over back of sofa.)* Help! *(He keeps sofa between him and LUIGI. They both circle it. GEORGE appears at top of stairs.)*

GEORGE: *(Calling.)* Mr. Morlock, are you still awake?

MR. MORLOCK: Awake? I'm lucky to be alive.

GEORGE: *(Coming downstairs.)* What are you doing now?

REST ASSURED

MR. MORLOCK: (*Hopping onto the sofa.*) He's walking in his sleep, George. Get out of his way or he'll trample you. Hurry up. Get up here. He's stampeding.

MR. MORLOCK holds out his hand, pulls GEORGE onto the sofa, too.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*On stairs.*) What in the world are you two doing?

GEORGE: We're playing games. Luigi's stampeding.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Arms akimbo again.*) Phillip, for goodness - -

MR. MORLOCK: (*Breaking in.*) Stand right there, Hazel. Don't move.

GEORGE: Luigi's walking in his sleep.

MRS. MORLOCK: Thank heavens someone's getting some sleep around here.

LUIGI is still walking around room, his arms stretched out in front of him.

MR. MORLOCK: Quick, Hazel, run for shelter.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Moving down stage.*) For heaven's sakes.

MR. MORLOCK: And always look both ways before crossing. (*GEORGE climbs down.*)

MRS. MORLOCK: Phillip, get off the sofa. (*He jumps down.*)

MR. MORLOCK: (*As LUIGI goes back into study.*) He's gone. Nothing to be afraid of now. Unless he comes back. (*He runs to door, closes it.*)

MRS. MORLOCK: He's getting worse, George.

GEORGE: I know it, Mrs. Morlock. He's barely rational at all.

MR. MORLOCK: What gets me the most is that he's the one that's sleeping. And I'll never get any sleep.

GEORGE: We'll fix that. (*He sweeps sleeping pills off table, starts heading Mr. Morlock toward study.*)

MR. MORLOCK: Remind me to fire you first thing in the morning, George. (*George pushes him into the study and follows him in, closing door.*)

MARY: (*Entering left.*) Are you awake too, Mom?

MRS. MORLOCK: Yes, and I see you're still up.

MARY: I just couldn't sleep. I kept thinking of poor little old Luigi. And Joe. He was all Joe had. Now he's all alone.

MRS. MORLOCK: (*Sitting on sofa.*) Except for you, dear.

MARY: Dad will never give his permission. I don't believe there's another man like him in the whole wide world.

GEORGE: (*Entering.*) Well, I think he'll be quiet for awhile now.

MRS. MORLOCK: I hope so. I've never seen anything like this in my life.

GEORGE: And I've never seen a case like this before, except my Uncle Rodney. And he was a low-living scoundrel, filled with spit and vinegar. Ruled over everybody he knew. But when he kicked off, man alive, I never saw such celebrating. There were only five relatives at the funeral. The rest were out having the time of their lives. Well, guess I'll go back to bed. Whistle if I'm needed.

He starts upstairs just as MILDRED comes down. She has on a long nightgown and her hair is in curlers.

MILDRED: *(Coming downstairs.)* Never heard such goin's-on in my whole life.

MRS. MORLOCK: You can't sleep either, Mildred?

MILDRED: Sleep? Are you kiddin' . . . on a night like this? *(She starts left.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: You might look in and see if Mr. Morlock's asleep before you go back up, Mildred.

MILDRED: Yes, ma'am. *(She exits left.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: We'd better try to get some sleep, Mary.

*MR. MORLOCK comes out of the study. Throughout this sequence, MRS. MORLOCK and MARY do not hear MR. MORLOCK or LUIGI.*

MR. MORLOCK: Now he's awake. And he's even worse awake than asleep. *(He holds stomach, crosses room in a doubled position.)* I'm havin' terrible pains. *(Groaning.)* Ohhhh. I never had such pains. And I can't sleep. *(LUIGI comes to door, watches.)* I've tried everything. I've counted sheep like mad. Black sheep, white sheep, purple sheep, orange sheep. I'm going crazy counting sheep.

MARY: *(Ignoring him.)* If Dad had a breakdown, Mom, he might snap out of it.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Holding stomach, groaning louder.)* I'm sick in bed.

MRS. MORLOCK: He'll never break down, dear. He's become a hard, cruel man. The closest he'll ever come to a breakdown is the nervous kind, and he'd still say no to it.

MR. MORLOCK: You bet I would. *(Crossing to them.)* I'll have no daughter of mine marrying without my permission. *(Painfully.)* Ohhh. *(And he grabs stomach again.)*

MRS. MORLOCK: Mary, I've been thinking, why don't you and Joe go ahead.

MARY: Do you mean that?

MRS. MORLOCK: I certainly do.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Crossing again to them.)* Over my dead body you will.

MRS. MORLOCK: We'll make plans tomorrow.

MR. MORLOCK: Why, that's mutiny and there'll be no revolt in my house, no siree. There'll be no weddings and no elopings unless I say so - - *(“So” turns painful.)* - ohhhh. I'm the big wheel around here.

LUIGI: *(Coming down stage.)* Just because youra head is shaped like a windmill, you think you're a bigga wheel.

MR. MORLOCK: And you stay out of this. It's no concern of yours.

LUIGI: *(Arms folded.)* Isa concern of mine.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(As they go up the stairs.)* Mary, let's go, we'll start planning tomorrow, and we may have the wedding next week.

MR. MORLOCK: *(Following them.)* You won't get a cent, not a measly penny. I've been a good husband and an ideal father. *(On first step.)* Hazel. *(On second step.)* Mary. *(On third step.)* March right down here immediately. *(MARY and MRS. MORLOCK exit.)* I'm the head of this household. *(Painfully.)* Ohhh. *(Coming downstairs, again holding stomach.)* I'm really sick. *(Walks around room.)* If she gets married, it'll be over my dead body.

LUIGI: Which, I think, is justa what it'll be.

MR. MORLOCK: Pipe down.

LUIGI: In fact, you're dead and don't even know it.

MR. MORLOCK: The blazes I am. I may be havin' terrible pains, but I ain't dead yet.



REST ASSURED

**LUIGI:** *(Following him around.)* They didn't see you. Mrs. Morlock anda Mary didn't even know you were in here. You'rea likea I am. You'vea gone and kicked the bucket.

**MR. MORLOCK:** No, it can't be. I won't be a party to it.

**LUIGI:** You've hadda too many sleeping pills. Anda too many pains.

**MR. MORLOCK:** You're kidding. Pulling my leg, right? Everyone's always pulling my leg. *(Sticks out leg.)* Here, pull my leg. *(Starts to panic. He feels pulse, wide-eyed.)* No pulse. *(Hand over heart.)* No heartbeat. *(Eyes very wide.)* Holy smokes. *(Shouting.)* I'm dead. *(Louder.)* Dead. *(Calling.)* Hazel. Mary.

**LUIGI:** No need to calla for Hazel anda Mary. They can't see you. Nobody canna see you.

*LUCIFER swaggers through front door and down stage. He's the representative from "down below," and he's attired in knickers, bright t-shirt, red sash, a top hat, tennis shoes that are much too large for him. He's arrogant, cocky and walks with a swagger. LUCIFER carries a pitchfork.*

**LUCIFER:** *(Swaggering down stage.)* You Morlock?

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Excitedly.)* There, that proves I'm not dead. He spoke to me. *(Laughs.)* He spoke to me.

**LUCIFER:** Morlock, you're dead. You're as dead as a dead opossum.

**MR. MORLOCK:** No, I'm resting.

**LUCIFER:** Opossums don't rest, they play dead.

**MR. MORLOCK:** Then I'm playing dead.

**LUCIFER:** You're a resting opossum playing dead that actually died. I know a dead opossum when I see one, and you're a dead opossum.

**MR. MORLOCK:** Who are you?

**LUCIFER:** I'm Lucifer. You see, I'm from *(He points downward.)* down there. *(Sits, casually.)* My job is to round up all the lost souls.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Exploding.)* Lost souls? You can't mean me. I'm no lost soul.

**LUCIFER:** Morlock, your soul was so far gone we had to use radar to find it.

**MR. MORLOCK:** No, this can't be. I'm dreaming. That's it, I'm having a dream. A nightmare. You're just part of my dream.

*MILDRED enters left, never notices anyone.*

**MR. MORLOCK:** There's Mildred. She'll know I'm not dead.

**MILDRED:** *(Going to study. To herself.)* Always something to do. Never a peaceful moment.

**MR. MORLOCK:** Speak to me, Mildred.

**MILDRED:** Even got to go see if the old buzzard's asleep.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Exploding.)* Buzzard? *(Shouting.)* Mildred, you're fired.

*She goes into study, peers in, then starts screeching. She comes to door and screeches hysterically.*

**LUCIFER:** She's found you.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Staring out front.)* This is preposterous.

*The whole household comes thundering down the stairs, ad libbing "Mildred, what's happened?" etc.*

**MILDRED:** It's Mr. Morlock. He's dead. He's dead. Mr. Morlock's dead. *(And she topples over in a faint.)*

**MR. MORLOCK:** Hazel, there's been a mistake.

*Everyone charges in, then comes back out, scampering in every direction, mumbling or shouting.*

**MR. MORLOCK:** I couldn't be dead. *(To LUCIFER.)* How could I be dead?

**LUCIFER:** For one thing, too many sleeping pills. You were in such bad shape, you couldn't take it.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Sinking onto the sofa.)* It can't be. I won't be a party to it. I refuse to be dead.

**GEORGE:** I'll call the funeral home.

**MR. MORLOCK:** *(Standing bolt-up-right.)* The funeral home? *(LUCIFER takes a tape measure from his pocket, puts it around MR. MORLOCK'S head.)* What are you doing now?

**LUCIFER:** I'm measuring you for horns.

*He then turns MR. MORLOCK around and measures him for a tail, looks at tape to determine length as curtain closes. CURTAIN.*

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