

REST ASSURED

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

Adapted by Ken Mann

Based on the Full Length Play by Donald Payton

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REST ASSURED – ONE ACT

By Donald Payton

CAST OF CHARATERS

(6 MEN, 6 WOMEN)

MR. MORLOCKA 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. *(181 lines)*

MRS. MORLOCKMiddle-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. *(65 lines)*

MARYOldest 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. *(33 lines)*

JESSICATeen 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. *(32 lines)*

MILDREDMorlock's 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. *(30 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. (84 lines) *Note: Luigi speaks with an 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. (17 lines)

MARTHA LANCONI....A very pleasant woman dressed in either a wedding gown or beautiful dress of your choice. (16 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. (20 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. (25 lines)

GEORGE PLEW.....Forty-something attorney with horn-rimmed glasses. He’s small, shriveled, meek, and easily swayed. (27 lines)

DR. BROWNThe family physician, wears glasses. (15 lines)

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

SCENE 1

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

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

SCENE 3

LUCIFER - - Esquire magazine

LUIGI - - Newspapers (on sofa)

LUCIFER - - Pitchfork

MILDRED - - Duster

SCENE 4

MR. MORLOCK - - Newspapers

LUIGI - - Handkerchief

LUCIFER - - Pitchfork

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE 1: An evening in the 1950s.

SCENE 2: An hour later.

SCENE 3: The next day.

SCENE 4: 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.

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 rings 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: *(Picks up 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 the phone on the 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, *(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!

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

MR. MORLOCK: *(Casually.)* Hello, Jessica.

JESSICA: *(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 Flatiron 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.

They exit to the study.

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.

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'ma come to talka for Joe. I'ma 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 l'lla justa wait. (*He sits.*) l'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 l'ma here.

When she exits, LUIGI rises, paces, and pretends to talk to MR. MORLOCK.

LUIGI: "Mr. Morlock, sir, l'ma Luigi Lanconi, and l'ma come to talka for Joe. l'ma come here to talka for him 'cause he'll makea you a prouda son-in-law.

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: l'ma just rehearse my speech l'ma gon' give to Mr. Morlock. l'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.*) l'm Jessica Morlock, Mary's sister.

LUIGI: l'ma glad to know you.

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.

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.

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?

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, l'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 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: (*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: (*Offstage.*) 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.

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 boy." So I take gooda care. I try to raisea the boy 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? 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.)*

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.

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.)* Ifa 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 schmo. *(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 timeout 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. JOE and LUIGI exit front door with MARY.

MRS. MORLOCK: *(Pleadingly.)* Please try to be a little more sensible and understanding. *(Sadly.)* You used to be kind-hearted and sweet. *(MRS. MORLOCK exits.)*

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. *(MILDRED exits upstairs.)*

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 MR. MORLOCK 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: 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: Thatsa 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 wifeya 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.

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.

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.*) 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: *(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.

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.

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