

CAREER

MAURY

Sharon.

SAM

You let me talk to her and I'll get Kensington to a performance!

MAURY

(Laughs)

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold."

SAM

I want that part, Maury. And tonight's my chance to get it.

MAURY

(Looks at him for a long moment)

Okay.

SAM

Thanks, Maury.

(As the lights fade, the rumble of an El train can be heard in the distance, becoming increasingly louder. The lights come up again on another section of the stage, showing a cold-water flat. The El structure and part of the street can be seen through the window. The room is obviously shabby: the paint on the walls is dirty and peeling, the furniture—a table, two chairs, a bed and a screen—is quite dilapidated. A girl is lying on the bed and has covered her head with a pillow against the roar of the approaching train. After the train has passed the window and the sound fades, the girl removes the pillow. We now see that

CAREER

Sam's
it is BARBARA. She turns and tries to put her arm around the nonexistent person next to her in the bed. She suddenly becomes aware that there is no one there. She sits up, frightened. We hear the sound of a door being shut.)

BARBARA

Sam, is that you?

SAM

Yeah.

BARBARA

Good gravy! Eight-thirty! I'll be late for work.

SAM

It's not morning, honey. It's eight-thirty P.M.

BARBARA

Oh, thank God! (Why aren't you at the theatre?)

SAM

It's Monday, the night off.

BARBARA

(It's all coming back. I lay down to take a nap. (Puts her arms around his neck and kisses him) It's true about beauty sleep. You're much more beautiful than the last time I saw you.)

CAREER

SAM

~~I thought you were so fat and ugly and I was so fat and ugly~~
~~regretfully~~
I'm not really what you call beautiful. Examine my features individually and they're not good. But all together—(Blows a kiss) I'm damned attractive.

BARBARA

(Interpreting)

You're certainly in a good mood.

(Sighs)

SAM

I've got great news, marvelous news.

BARBARA

I'll get you a glass for that milk. (~~Sees waiter for a~~

~~glass and says: I men, waiter?)~~ What's the news?

SAM

You know Robert Kensington, the producer?

BARBARA

I've heard you talk about him.

SAM

Maury Novak knows his daughter. We're going to get her to get Kensington to come down to an Actors' Rostrum performance.

CAREER

BARBARA

~~get his hand pointed~~
I thought maybe the news was more tangible. (Unwraps sandwich) I saved your sandwich.
(She hands it to him.)

SAM

(Opening sandwich)

Aren't you going to have any?

BARBARA

I ate by myself earlier.

SAM

I'm sorry. (~~Waits a minute and says: I'm sorry~~) The damned newspapers get thicker every day. I spent so much time at Kensington's and making the rounds I didn't get a full quota until after eight o'clock.

BARBARA

~~(Says to waiter: I'm sorry)~~
Poor baby, what a boring job. Interviewing people about what page of the newspaper they read. You know, Sam, maybe you ought to get a job in a restaurant—as a waiter, maybe.

SAM

A waiter! I couldn't work at the Actors' Rostrum.

BARBARA

(Sighs)

At least waiters always eat.

CAREER

SAM

Maybe the Sunshine Sandwich Shops need another spy.

BARBARA

(*Building will never open now*)

Don't look down on my job. I don't. I just thank God there's a little imperfection in the world. If the waitresses didn't short-change people once in a while and the chefs didn't try and sneak a drink on the job occasionally, there'd be no reason for the Sunshine Sandwich Shops to hire people to report them for it. And we wouldn't even eat as good as we do.

SAM

(*Comment*)

When I get my break you can walk into any Sunshine Sandwich Shop in New York City with a cap that says "Spy" on it, for all I care.

BARBARA

Sam, I've got good news.

SAM

What?

BARBARA

(*It's a moment, it's a good night, it's a bed*)

I'll show you.

SAM

(*Building*)

Building the suspense, eh?

CAREER

BARBARA

Guess who's in town?

SAM

(*Comment*)

Margorie and Allan Burke.

BARBARA

How did you guess?

SAM

They're the only people we know from Lansing who ever come to town.

BARBARA

Some sort of annual—

SAM

—Annual wholesalers' convention.

BARBARA

They want to take us to Peacock Alley. You could wear your blue suit. Allan'll probably wear a tux, you know what a peacock he is himself.

SAM

Oh, swell. Maybe he'll get a few drinks in him like he did the last time and lean over to me some time in the evening and impose on our friendship with, "How've you really been doing, boy?"

Barbara, don't you see what's important? Maury isn't just an actor, he's a director. And he gave me this part. And Sharon Kensington—

SAM

But on our anniversary?

BARBARA

Our anniversary?

SAM

Two and a half years.

BARBARA

Two and a half years.

SAM

Of course it's not a real anniversary, but we've been out so seldom—not since the last time Marjorie and Allan were here.

BARBARA

We can't, Barbara. Maury—

SAM

Maury! What about Allan Burke? He was your best friend in Lansing.

BARBARA

We're not in Lansing now!

SAM

36

Well, if friendship doesn't mean anything to you, Sam. Law-son, does it mean anything to you that I'd like to have a little fun for a change?

BARBARA

Fun? Do you think it's fun for me to see Allan Burke throw away on one evening as much as it costs us to live for two weeks?

SAM

He's able to!

BARBARA

Do you think it's fun for me to see he's able to?

SAM

Don't be envious, Sam. You're never envious. Don't be now.

BARBARA

Last time he was here he offered me a job if we'd come back to Lansing. This time he'll try and slip me some money under the table.

SAM

Then you should take it! ~~He's~~ didn't mean that. I just mean money is money.

BARBARA

You think it's fun to see Marjorie dressed up to the ears and you in the same thing—that white formal—you wore when they were here last time?

SAM

37

CAREER

BARBARA

That's my lookout.

SAM

It's my lookout, too. I'm your husband.

BARBARA

Then do something about it.

~~They get to work on the door.~~

MAURY

(Off)

Sam! Sam Lawson!

SAM

(To BARBARA)

They're here. Maury and the girl. Please let's not fight, Barbara.

SHARON

(Off)

Hey, let us in. We want to fight too!

MAURY

(Off)

Shut up!

SAM

(To BARBARA)

Let's just try and have a good time.

(BARBARA looks at him for a moment, then turns and goes behind the screen.)

38

MAURY

(Off)

Sam!!

(SAM goes quickly to the door and opens it. MAURY stands here with SHARON KENSINGTON. She is wrapped in a long white fur piece. SHARON is a striking young woman with a perpetually manic personality. She has had quite a lot to drink and is trying valiantly to do as she has been told and behave herself.)

SAM

Hello.

MAURY

(As they enter)

Hello, Sam. Sam, this is Sharon Kensington. (SHARON kisses SAM on the mouth) Sharon!

SHARON

Well, you said he was your friend.

(SAM is a bit taken aback. She smiles enigmatically and moves down into the room, examining the apartment.)

MAURY

Sorry if we're late, but I didn't know there were so many bars between Sharon's place and here.

SAM

That's okay. (Turns to SHARON) May I take you—
(He indicates her fur piece.)

39