

EDNA & MEL

ACT ONE
SCENE 2

Late afternoon, a few days later.

At rise, the room is in a shambles. Chairs are overturned, drawers are pulled open, its contents scattered on the floor, the bookcase has been cleared of half of its shelves and articles of clothing are strewn about the room. It is obvious what has happened. EDNA is on the phone. She is shaking.

EDNA. (Sobbing.) . . . Edison . . . Mrs. Edna Edison . . . I've just been robbed . . . I just walked in, they took everything . . . Edison . . . I just walked in, I found the door open . . . they must have just left . . . 385 East 88th Street . . . Two minutes sooner, I could have been killed . . . Apartment 14A . . . I don't know yet. Television, the record player, books, clothing . . . They took lots of clothing. My dresses, my coats, all my husband's suits . . . There's not a thing left in his closet. I haven't checked the drawers yet . . . Would you, please? Send somebody right away . . . I'm all alone. My husband isn't home from work yet . . . Mrs. Edna Edison. I could have been killed. Thank you. (She hangs up . . . she turns and looks at the room. She crosses and lifts a chair up and sets it right. Then she crosses to bureau and starts to look through drawers. As she discovers new things are missing, she sobs louder . . .) . . . Alright . . . Calm down . . . A drink . . . I have to have a drink . . . (She rushes into kitchen . . . she gets a glass, a few cubes of ice from refrigerator, then rushes back out into the living room. She rushes to the bar and looks. There are no bottles.) . . . The liquor's gone. They took the liquor . . . (She puts glasses down. Sobs.) . . . Valium . . . I want a Valium . . . (She gets up and rushes down the small corridor and disappears into

the bedroom . . . We hear noises as she must be looking through ransacked medicine chests. A few moments' silence. EDNA has probably fallen on to the bed, sobbing, for all we know. The front door opens with a key and MEL enters. He carries his suit jacket and the NEW YORK POST in his arm. His shirt sleeves are rolled up and he looks hot. He closes the door and hangs his jacket in closet. He doesn't seem to even notice the room, consumed with his own thoughts. He crosses to chair and falls into it exhausted, his head back and sighs . . . His eyes open, then he looks at the room, for almost the first time. He looks around the room, bewildered. From inside: EDNA'S VOICE.) Mel? . . . Is that you, Mel? (Mel is still looking at the room, puzzled. EDNA appears cautiously from the bedroom. She comes in, holding vase by the thin end and looks at MEL.)

~~SCENE~~ THURSDAYS

MEL. . . . Didn't Mildred come in to clean today?
EDNA. (Puts vase down.) Not today . . . Mondays and Thursdays.
MEL. What happened here? . . . Why is this place such a mess?
EDNA. . . . We've been robbed . . . (MEL looks at her in a state of shock . . . he slowly rises and then looks at the room, in a new perspective.)
MEL. . . . What do you mean, robbed?
EDNA. (Starts to cry.) Robbed! Robbed! What does robbed mean? They come in, they take things out! They robbed us!!!
MEL. (He keeps turning, looking at the room in disbelief . . . not knowing where to look first.) . . . I don't understand . . . What do you mean, someone just walked in and robbed us?
EDNA. What do you think? . . . They called up and made an appointment? We've been robbed!
MEL. Alright, calm down. Take it easy, Edna. I'm just asking a simple question. What happened? What did they get?

EDNA. I don't know yet. I was out shopping. I was gone five minutes. I came back, I found it like this.

MEL. You couldn't have been gone five minutes. Look at this place.

EDNA. *Five minutes*, that's all I was gone.

MEL. Five minutes, heh? Then we'd better call the F.B.I. because every crook in New York must have been in here.

EDNA. Then that's who was here because I was only gone five minutes.

MEL. When you came back into the building did you notice anyone suspicious looking?

EDNA. *Everyone* in this building is suspicious looking.

MEL. You didn't see anybody carrying any bundles or packages?

EDNA. I didn't notice.

MEL. What do you mean, you didn't notice?

EDNA. I didn't notice. You think I look for people leaving the building with my television set?

MEL. They took the television? (*He starts for bedroom, then stops.*) A *brand new* color television?

EDNA. They're not looking for 1948 Philco's. It was here. They took it. I can't get a breath out.

MEL. Alright, sit there. I'll get a drink.

EDNA. I don't want a drink.

MEL. A little scotch. It'll calm you down.

EDNA. It won't calm me down because there's no scotch. They took the scotch too.

MEL. *All* the scotch?

EDNA. *All* the scotch.

MEL. The Chivas Regal too?

EDNA. No, they're going to take the cheap scotch and leave the Chivas Regal. They took it all, they cleaned us out.

MEL. (*Gnashing his teeth.*) Sons of bitches. (*He runs to terrace door, opens it, steps out on terrace and yells out.*) *Sons of bitches! (He closes door and comes back*

in.) All in five minutes, heh? They must have been gorillas to lift all that in five minutes.

EDNA. Leave me alone.

MEL. (*Gnashing teeth again.*) Sons of bitches.

EDNA. Stop swearing, the police will be here any minute. I just called them.

MEL. You called the police?

EDNA. Didn't I just say that?

MEL. Did you tell them we were robbed?

EDNA. Why else would I call them? I'm not friendly with the police. What kind of questions are you asking me? What's wrong with you?

MEL. Alright, calm down because you're hysterical.

EDNA. I am not hysterical.

MEL. You're hysterical.

EDNA. You're *making* me hysterical. Don't you understand, my house has just been robbed.

MEL. What am I, a boarder? My house has been robbed too. My color television and my Chivas Regal is missing the same as yours.

EDNA. You didn't walk in and find it. *I* did.

MEL. What's the difference who found it? There's still nothing to drink and nothing to watch.

EDNA. Don't yell at me. I'm just as upset as you are.

MEL. I'm sorry. I'm excited, too. I don't mean to yell at you. (*Starts for bedroom.*) Let me get you a Valium, it'll calm you down.

EDNA. I don't want a Valium.

MEL. Take one. You'll feel better.

EDNA. I'm not taking a Valium.

MEL. Why are you so stubborn?

EDNA. I'm not stubborn. We don't have any. They took the Valiums.

MEL. (*Stops.*) They took the Valiums?

EDNA. The whole medicine chest. Valiums, secondals, aspirin, shaving cream, tooth paste, razor blades. They left your tooth brush. You want to go in and brush your teeth, you can still do it.

MEL. (*Smiles, disbelieving.*) I don't believe you. I don't believe you! (*Mel looks at her, then storms off and disappears into bedroom . . . Edna gets up and picks up a book from the floor. From the far recesses of the bathroom we hear Mel scream: Offstage.*) DIRTY BASTARDS!!! (*Edna is holding book upside down and shaking it, hoping some concealed item will fall out. It doesn't.* MEL storms back into living room.) I hope they die. I hope the car they stole to get away in hits a tree and turns over and burns up and they all die!

EDNA. You read about it every day. And when it happens to you, you can't believe it.

MEL. A television I can understand. Liquor I can understand. But shaving cream? Hair spray? How much are they going to get for roll of dental floss?

EDNA. They must have been desperate. They took everything they could carry. (*Shakes book one last time.*) They even found my kitchen money.

MEL. What kitchen money?

EDNA. I kept my kitchen money in here. Eighty-five dollars.

MEL. In cash? Why do you keep cash in a book?

EDNA. So no one will find it! Where else am I gonna keep it?

MEL. In a jar. In the sugar. Some place they're not going to look.

EDNA. They looked in the medicine chest, you think they're not going to look in the sugar?

MEL. *Nobody looks in sugar!*

EDNA. Nobody steals dental floss and mouth wash. Only sick people. Only that's who live in the world today. SICK, SICK, SICK PEOPLE! (*She sits, wrung out emotionally. Mel crosses to her, puts his arm on her shoulder, comforting her.*)

MEL. . . . It's alright. It's alright, Edna . . . As long as you weren't hurt, that's the important thing. (*He looks through papers on table.*)

EDNA. Can you imagine if I walked in and found them here? What would I have done, Mel?

MEL. You were very lucky, Edna. Very lucky.

EDNA. But what would I have done.

MEL. What's the difference? You didn't walk in and find them.

EDNA. But supposing I did? What would I have done? MEL. You'd say, 'Excuse me, close the door and come back later. What would you do, sit and watch? Why do you ask me such questions? It didn't happen, did it?

EDNA. It almost happened. If I walked in here five minutes sooner.

MEL. (*Walking away from her.*) You couldn't have been gone only five minutes . . . It took the Seven Sinitini Brothers two days to move everything in, three junkies aren't gonna move it all out in five minutes.

EDNA. Seven minutes, eight minutes, what's the difference?

MEL. (*Opens the door, looks at the lock.*) The lock isn't broken, it's not jimmied. I don't even know how they got in here.

EDNA. Maybe they found my key in the street.

MEL. (*Closes door. Looks at her.*) What do you mean, found your key? Don't you have your key?

EDNA. No, I lost it. I thought it was somewhere in the house, maybe I lost it in the street.

MEL. If you didn't have your key, how were you going to get back in the house when you went shopping?

EDNA. I left the door open.

MEL. You-left-the-door-open???

EDNA. I didn't have a key, how was I going to get back in the house?

MEL. So you left the door open? In a city with the highest crime rate in the history of the world, you left the door open?

EDNA. What was I going to do? Take the furniture with me? I was only gone five minutes. How did they know I was going to leave the door open?