

~~crosses to Victor) My dear Victor, my dear Jacqueline, I am  
exceedingly happy.  
Ethel (rising) Oh, darlings! (She kisses Jacky)~~

~~(HENRY goes to Ethel. There is a babble of talk and general  
congratulations. NICHOLAS takes a glass of gin to Mrs Puffin and  
goes to the fireplace.)  
ANNIE enters up C and stands to one side)~~

~~ANNIE (announcing) Mr Roger Vincent.~~

~~(ROGER VINCENT enters up C. He is a good-looking young man  
with a pleasant smile)~~

~~SERPHEN. Ah, hullo.~~

~~(ROGER moves down C. At the same time Mrs PUFFIN raises her  
glass to her lips and sees him)~~

~~Mrs PUFFIN (rising) My Gawd, it's him!~~

~~JACKY moves slowly towards Roger and offers him her hand as~~

~~the CURTAIN falls~~

Speaker  
ROGER

## ACT III

SCENE—The same. Three days later. Evening.  
When the CURTAIN rises, it is about seven-thirty. The room is lit  
by the table-lamps and the glow of the fire. JACKY and ROGER, in  
evening dress, are locked in an embrace C, on the same spot as they were  
at the end of the previous Act. There is a long kiss.

JACKY. Darling, it's been a lifetime.

ROGER. Longer than that. Four hours.

JACKY. Two lifetimes, then.

(There is another kiss, but after a moment, a door bangs upstairs.)

ROGER breaks away down L.)

ROGER. Father, mother, sister, brother? I got down early

JACKY. They are all upstairs dressing. I got down early

especially.

ROGER. I got here early especially.

JACKY. And now, Mr Vincent, may I offer you a cocktail?

(She moves to the table up L.)

ROGER (moving to L of Jacky) Certainly, Miss Fordyce.

(JACKY pours two cocktails from a shaker)

You grow lovelier every day, and today you look like tomorrow.

JACKY (handing him a drink) Thank you, darling, and where

did you hear that?

ROGER. Well, I got it from some T.V. programme, but give

me time, and I'll think up some good ones, too.

JACKY. I'm sure you will. (She raises her glass) To . . . ?

ROGER (raising his glass) Us.

(They drink)

(He crosses to the coffee-table) Look, Jacky, I feel like a heel.

JACKY. So do I.

ROGER. If Victor weren't such a darn nice guy—you see, I

like him. I wish I didn't. (He puts his glass on the coffee-table)

JACKY (crossing to L of Roger) I wish I weren't so awfully fond

of him. Oh, Roger, I never believed in love at first sight?

ROGER. Neither did I. (He takes Jacky's glass, puts it on the

coffee-table, kisses her, then jerks his head upwards) Do they know?

JACKY (in a small voice) No.

ROGER. I felt terrible yesterday when Victor invited me to

lunch and I found you with him. (He crosses to the fireplace)

JACKY. So did I. (She moves to the easy chair LC) Oh, Roger,

I'm a terrible coward. Mrs Puffin, Mrs Puffin, why didn't you

dream some more? (She sinks into the easy chair LC)

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ROGER. I wish I had had time to really meet that old girl. But she was busted out so soon after I first arrived that I didn't have a chance.

JACKY. Poor Mrs Puffin hardly had time to finish her gin.

ROGER (*sitting on the left arm of Jacky's chair*) I'd buy her a dozen cases if she'd only dream a happy ending about us. Can't she do it to order?

JACKY. No, it just happens.

ROGER. But, listen, honey, she said you would be swept off your feet by someone from over the water.

JACKY. And I have been. (*She turns and nestles in his arms*)

ROGER. I haven't reached earth yet. But she also said the wedding wouldn't take place. But it is taking place. Hell! Why is Victor such a nice guy? Why can't I hate him?

JACKY. Because he is Victor—and nice. I can't hurt him. Roger, he loves me. If Victor weren't so . . . Oh, Roger, try to understand. If the wedding was in six months' time, it would be different.

ROGER. Listen, couldn't I speak to Victor?

JACKY. No, Roger, you couldn't.

ROGER. But as he's such a nice guy he'd understand.

JACKY. Would father, or Mr Parker? Father's set on the partnership, he needs it. Fordyce and Son aren't too flourishing. If there is no wedding, there will be a scandal. And with Mr Parker—a scandal—no partnership.

(*Roger kisses her*)

ROGER (*sighing*) We need a miracle to help us. The amazing thing about miracles is, they sometimes happen. That's not original, either.

JACKY. I know, but it's very comforting. (*She rises and crosses to the coffee-table. In a small voice*) Roger, talk about something else. Anything. I think I'm going to cry.

ROGER (*rising and moving about the easy chair*) Jacky darling, what have I done?

JACKY. Please! Please talk about something else.

ROGER. Hell, I can't think of a darn thing. Oh, Jacky, I love you.

JACKY (*sitting on the coffee-table and sniffing*) You're a great help. That will make me worse.

ROGER. Oh, gee! Why was I invited tonight?

JACKY. You can thank Nicky for that. He told mother you were a good bridge player.

ROGER. If your mother gets me for a bridge partner, this romance is really on the rocks.

JACKY. And after all, you are the American Representative of Parker and Son.

ROGER (*moving and kneeling beside Jacky*) Couldn't we just slip off somewhere?

JACKY. No, darling, not a chance. Darling Roger.

ROGER. Darling Jacky.

(*They kiss briefly*)

JACKY (*picking up her glass*) Cheers! Nicky mixed these.

(*The front door bell rings*)

I expect that's Victor and his father.

ROGER (*rising*) Then make mine a double. (*He picks up his glass and crosses to the table up L.*)

JACKY (*rising and moving down R.*) Darling! The lights!

(*Roger hastily switches on the wall-brackets then returns to the table up L.*)

PAMELA and VICTOR enter up C.)

PAMELA. Hullo, Roger, I never heard you arrive.

ROGER. Hullo, Pam. Have a drink?

VICTOR. Good evening, Roger.

ROGER. Hullo, Victor. How are you? (*He pours the drinks*)

VICTOR. Fine, thanks. (*He goes to Jacky and kisses her chastely*)

Hullo, darling.

JACKY. Hullo, Victor. Where is your father?

VICTOR. He has been delayed, but he will only be a few

minutes late. He asked me to make his apologies; he is usually

so punctual. I am, too.

JACKY. I know. Even my habit of being late doesn't alter

you, darling.

(*PAMELA moves to the table up L, picks up two drinks and gives one*

*to Victor. ROGER refills his own and Jacky's glasses*)

PAMELA. You see, Victor, if you would only be late, Jacky

would be on time.

VICTOR. Oh, I couldn't do that.

JACKY. I'll have to try and change my ways.

VICTOR. Oh, don't do that. I don't mind waiting. Really.

JACKY (*with a look at Roger*) You are very sweet, Victor.

(*ROGER crosses and hands Jacky her drink*)

ROGER (*raising his glass*) Well, cheers!

JACKY } (*together*) Cheers!

VICTOR } (*together*) Cheers!

PAMELA } (*together*) Cheers!

(*They drink*)

VICTOR. Have you seen the wedding presents, Roger?

ROGER. No—I—er—haven't.