

Then, this morning, when I told him that Liciana hadn't come home last night—

SUSY. Who? . . . *Who*—who didn't come home last night?

ROAT. Liciana—my wife. But she frequently comes to Manhattan and then decides to stay with friends. She usually phones to say where she is but so far we haven't . . . heard anything. (*The phone rings. Mike starts towards it but Roat holds up his hand and then points to Susy [i.e. "let her take it"]. But Susy is in a daze and doesn't seem to hear the phone. Mike looks back at Roat and sbrugs. Roat nods.*)

MIKE. Shall I get it, Susy? (*She does not reply so he picks it up. Mike, into phone:*) Hello . . . one moment. Susy—it's Sergeant Carlino—he wants to speak to you . . . Susy?

SUSY. (*Still dazed.*) Hmm? . . . What does he want?

ROAT. I must go now, Mrs. Hendrix. (*He starts up the stairs.*)

MIKE. (*Into phone.*) Hello . . . can I take a message? . . . No, I'll take it. Hang on a moment—his son is here now . . . Mr. Roat! Don't go—he wants to speak to you.

ROAT. Who?

MIKE. The police . . .

ROAT. (*Alarmed.*) No! . . . (*In a whisper.*) Say I've gone. (*Goes to door.*)

MIKE. But it's about your wife . . . (*Susy reacts.*)

ROAT. What? (*He closes door and starts down the stair.*)

MIKE. And your father is at the police station. (*Roat takes phone from Mike.*)

ROAT. Hello . . . speaking . . . that's right . . . no, she didn't but . . . (*A long pause.*) is she hurt? . . . (*Angrily.*) No, tell me now! (*Roat listens for several seconds. Then he seems to go into a kind of trance. Susy senses that something is wrong and stands still trying to listen to other end of phone. Finally Roat drops the phone on the table [without hanging up] and runs out of the apartment.*)

MIKE. (*Shouting after him.*) Mr. Roat . . . Mr. Roat! (*Roat exits, leaving hall door open and runs out by the street door. We see him run past the window. Meanwhile Mike hangs up the phone and goes upstairs to close the hall door.*)

SUSY. Mike! Don't go!

MIKE. Of course not. He left the door open. (*As he closes door and comes downstairs he says lightly:*) Well—that's some family,

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the Roats! The old man just walked into Carlino's office . . . and it seems that Mrs. Roat has been in some kind of accident . . .

SUSY. (*Quietly.*) She's dead.

MIKE. What?

SUSY. (*Slowly.*) She was murdered just outside here last night.

MIKE. (*Amazed.*) You knew that? . . . All the time he was here?

SUSY. I only realized when he spoke on the phone just now. The Sergeant must have told him. It was on the radio. I think they even mentioned her name only I wasn't listening properly. Mike—could you phone the bus station at Asbury Park . . . and ask them to get Sam to phone me immediately.

MIKE. Sure I will . . . but look—you're not worrying about anything that old man is going to say? He's obviously nuts!

SUSY. But there's something you don't know, Mike . . . Sam *did* bring a child's doll back from Canada . . . (*A pause. She is trying to remember. Mike waits for her to continue.*)

MIKE. But it can't be the same one.

SUSY. Exactly like the one he described just now. I was trying to help him unpack and I must have knocked it off the bed because it played a few notes. So I picked it up and said, "Ah, surprise!" or something like that. I thought it was a present for me. But Sam said— (*Trying to remember.*) he said—no, it was for a little girl who was in a hospital . . . some woman he'd met at the airport in Montreal had asked him to bring it here for her . . . someone . . . someone he said he'd never met before . . . (*Her voice trails away as she realizes that Sam must have been lying.*)

MIKE. (*Coaxing her gently.*) And so—Sam took it to the hospital . . . ?

SUSY. No—this woman . . . it must have been Mrs. Roat! She came here late that night to pick it up but—but Sam couldn't find it . . . it must still be here somewhere. (*Becoming hysterical.*) And that Italian woman who didn't turn up last night . . . Liciana. That was Mrs. Roat too! (*Susy rushes into bedroom, feels on dresser, knocking over some bottles.*)

MIKE. Now just take it easy, Susy. Suppose Sam *did* know her, that's not so serious . . .

SUSY. (*Comes out of bedroom.*) Mike—can you see a photograph of Sam and me—it should be on the dresser? It's a wedding photograph in a leather frame— (*Mike peers through doorway.*)

MIKE. Not on the dresser . . . (Suddenly.) Oh, that's what the old man was carrying when he left the house . . .

SUSY. (Slowly, overlapping.) He's taken a photograph of Sam to the police . . .

MIKE. (Going to phone.) Then let's phone Carlino and tell him.

SUSY. No! We mustn't say anything to the police. The Sergeant mentioned a doll when he was on the phone, don't you remember? And all those questions about where Sam was last night—and about the murdered woman—the police must think he . . . they must think he killed her! (Mike is already standing on stool—he flicks the blinds loudly as though looking out of window.)

MIKE. Susy!

SUSY. What is it?

MIKE. (Quietly.) There's a police car just down the street . . . (A long pause—he turns and watches her.) They're watching this house.

END

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CURTAIN

END ACT I—SCENE 3