

Side 6 Paul, Billie

BROCK. Let me like introduce you and you take it from there.

PAUL. Good.

BROCK. (*Rises, crosses a step U.C., gestures derisively to DEVERY. Shouts up stairs.*) Billie!!

BILLIE'S VOICE. What?

BROCK. Come on down here a minute! (*To PAUL.*) She's a hell of a good kid. You'll like 'er. (*BILLIE comes out onto landing, brushing hair. She wears a resplendent negligee, which reveals and explains much. Almost anyone could succeed in it. PAUL rises.*)

BILLIE. (*A tone of complaint.*) I'm gettin' dressed. (*Stops as she sees PAUL.*)

BROCK. It's all right. It's all right. He's a friend of the family. (*BILLIE hesitates.*) Come on, I'm tellin' you!! (*BILLIE drops brush on ottoman, comes down.*) Honey, this is Paul Verrall.

BILLIE. Yes, I know.

BROCK. (*Propels her toward PAUL.*) He wants to talk to you.

BILLIE. What about?

BROCK. You'll find out. Sit down. (*HE seats her.*) Come on up a minute, willya, Ed?

DEVERY. Sure.

BROCK. Bring the stuff. (*BROCK looks at PAUL, cheers him on with a fisted gesture of confidence. DEVERY picks up brief-case, follows BROCK out of room. A long pause. BILLIE is seemingly disinterested and unconcerned. PAUL is wondering how to begin. He cannot imagine. Finally:*)

PAUL. Your—friend Mr. Brock has an idea he'd like us to spend a little time together. You and me, that is.

BILLIE. (*Without looking at him.*) You don't say.

PAUL. Yes.

BILLIE. (*Turning to PAUL.*) What're you? Some kind of a gigolo?

PAUL. (*Smiling.*) Not exactly.

BILLIE. (*Unsmiling.*) What's the idea?

PAUL. Nothing special. (*PAUL sits at opposite end of sofa.*) He just wants me to put you wise to a few things. Show you the ropes. Answer any questions.

BILLIE. I got no questions.

PAUL. I'll give you some.

BILLIE. (*Bored.*) Thanks.

PAUL. . . . might be fun for you, in a way. There's a lot to see down here. I'd be glad to show you around.

BILLIE. (*Looking at him.*) You know this Supreme Court?

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PAUL. Yes.

BILLIE. I'd like to take that in.

PAUL. Sure. We're on, then?

BILLIE. (*Suspiciously.*) How do you mean?

PAUL. The arrangement.

BILLIE. I don't mind. I got nothin' much to do.

PAUL. Good.

BILLIE. (*Looking up at BROCK's door.*) What's he payin' you?

PAUL. Two hundred.

BILLIE. You're a sucker. You could of got more. He's got plenty.

PAUL. I'd have done it for nothing. (*BILLIE throws him a look of rare disbelief, makes the sound of a mirthless, mocking laugh.*)

BILLIE. Hah!

PAUL. (*Protesting.*) I would.

BILLIE. Why?

PAUL. This isn't work. I like it.

BILLIE. He thinks I'm too stupid, huh?

PAUL. Why, no ———

BILLIE. He's right. I'm stupid and I like it.

PAUL. You do?

BILLIE. Sure. I'm happy. I got everything I want. Two mink coats. Everything. If there's sump'n I want, I ask. And if he *don't* come across, I don't come across. (*PAUL is startled.*) If you know what I mean.

PAUL. (*Replying swiftly.*) Yes, I do.

BILLIE. (*Practically.*) So as long as I know how to get what I want, that's all I wanna know.

PAUL. As long as you know what you want.

BILLIE. Sure. (*A pause.*) What?

PAUL. As long as you know what you want.

BILLIE. (*Annoyed.*) . . . you tryin' to mix me up?

PAUL. No.

BILLIE. (*Rising, crossing R. to chair L. of table.*) I tell you what I *would* like.

PAUL. Yes?

BILLIE. (*Back of chair L. of table.*) I'd like to learn how to talk good.

PAUL. All right.

BILLIE. (*Turning to him.*) Is it hard to learn?

PAUL. I don't think so.

BILLIE. What do I have to do?

PAUL. Well, I might give you a few books to start with. Then, if you don't mind, I'll correct you now and then.

BILLIE. (*Crossing back to sofa.*) Go ahead.

PAUL. When I know, that is. I don't—talk so good myself.

BILLIE. You'll do.

PAUL. Fine. (*We sense that she is warming to him.*)

BILLIE. (*Sitting.*) I never say "ain't." Did you notice that? Never.

PAUL. I do.

BILLIE. Well, I'll correct *you*, then.

PAUL. Do that.

BILLIE. Since I was very small I never say it. We had this teacher. She used to slug you if you did it.

PAUL. Did what?

BILLIE. Said "ain't."

PAUL. Oh.

BILLIE. So I got outa the habit.

PAUL. You think it was worth the slugging?

BILLIE. Well, not hard.

PAUL. It's the principle of the thing. There's too much slugging. I don't believe in it.

BILLIE. (*Aping his seriousness.*) All right, I don't believe in it, either.

PAUL. Good.

BILLIE. (*Sofily, leaning toward him with a smile.*) I learn pretty fast, don't I?

PAUL. (*Smiling.*) You're great, Miss Dawn.

BILLIE. (*Correcting him.*) Billie.

PAUL. Billie. (*A tiny pause.*) Sort of an odd name, isn't it?

BILLIE. (*Surprised.*) What're you talkin'? Half the kids I know are named it. Anyway, it's not my real name.

PAUL. What is?

BILLIE. (*Has to think a moment before she can answer.*) My God! —Emma.

PAUL. What's the matter?

BILLIE. Do I look to you like an Emma?

PAUL. No. You don't look like a Billie, either.

BILLIE. So what do I look like?

PAUL. To me?

BILLIE. Yuh, to you.

PAUL. You look like a little angel. (*A pause.*)

BILLIE. Lemme ask you—(*Looks at BROCK'S door, then leans to-*

ward PAUL.) Are you one of these *talkers*, or would you be inna-
rested in a little *action*?

PAUL. (*Amazed.*) Huh?

BILLIE. I got a yen for you right off.

PAUL. Do you get many?

BILLIE. Now and then.

PAUL. What do you do about them?

BILLIE. (*Invitingly.*) Stick around. You'll find out.

PAUL. All right, I will.

BILLIE. And if you want a tip, I'll tell you. Sweet talk me. I like it. Like that angel line. (PAUL *looks upstairs, rises.*) Don't worry about *him*. He don't see a thing. He's too dizzy from bein' a big man.

PAUL. (*Crossing L. to back of sofa.*) This is going to be a little different than I thought.

BILLIE. (*Leaning back.*) You mind?

PAUL. (*Hands on back of sofa, bends to her. His tie hangs down.*) No.

BILLIE. (*Playing with his tie.*) It's only fair. We'll educate each other. (PAUL *straightens up, walks R. around sofa. BILLIE sits up, faces him.*)

PAUL. (*Weakly attempting to get on safer ground.*) Now, about those books.

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BILLIE. Yes?

PAUL. I'll get them for you tomorrow. I'll look around my place, too. If there's anything interesting, I'll drop it by later.

BILLIE. All right.

PAUL. We can figure out time every day the day before.

BILLIE. (*Beckons to HIM. HE bends over, but not far enough. SHE hooks her finger into his breast pocket, draws him closer.*) Or the night!

PAUL. Sure. (BROCK and DEVERY *appear. PAUL and BILLIE separate quickly. BROCK wears a foulard lounging jacket.*)

BROCK. Well. You two gonna get together?

PAUL. (*Looking at BILLIE.*) I think we're all set.

BROCK. Great! Great! (DEVERY *picks up his hat.*)

PAUL. (*Starting out.*) Well, if you'll excuse me —

BROCK. Have a drink.

PAUL. No, thanks.

DEVERY. (*Leaving.*) See you tomorrow, Harry.

BROCK. Right.

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