

Russell, Nick, Peggy

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NICK

I've heard you mention him.

RUSSELL

Yes well I may now mention him to the New York police.

NICK

I thought you didn't believe in name-dropping, Dad.

RUSSELL

I normally don't, Nick. I think name-dropping is vulgar and humiliating. But there are times in life when we are forced to do it. And I hope that if Kingman Baxter's wife were in difficulty here in Buffalo, he'd feel free to drop mine.

NICK

Oh Dad. I don't know ... calling the police ...

RUSSELL

Have you got a better suggestion?

NICK

Maybe we should wait a little longer.

RUSSELL

Wait? Just wait?

NICK

You're always saying haste makes waste.

RUSSELL

You're suggesting I simply sit and wait? While your lovely mother could be in serious difficulty?.

(PEGGY comes in through the screen door, also in summer clothes.)

PEGGY

What's going on?

RUSSELL

I'm extremely worried about your mother.

NICK

She's not in her hotel room.

RUSSELL

And it's virtually midnight!

PEGGY

Oh.

START

RUSSELL

Oh? Is that all you can say, sweetheart? Just "oh".

PEGGY

She's probably out on the town with that friend of hers from Farmington.

RUSSELL

"Out on the town"? At this late hour?

NICK

New York is the city that never sleeps, Dad.

RUSSELL

Well, I'm sorry. New York may not sleep, but I myself would very much like to.

PEGGY

Or maybe she's not out, Dad. Maybe she met her friend for dinner, and they had a drink, and split a bottle of wine, and maybe she forgot to check with the hotel desk when she came in. So now she's tucked into bed and dead to the world.

NICK

"Dead to the world?" Jesus, Peggy.

RUSSELL

That's an unfortunate way of putting it, Peggins.

PEGGY

It's just an expression.

NICK

The hotel sent someone up to bang on her door.

RUSSELL

And there was no answer.

PEGGY

Maybe she's sleeping on her good ear.

RUSSELL

What?

PEGGY

I'll bet that's it, Dad. She couldn't hear the knocking because she had her bad ear up.

NICK

She does it a lot, Dad. Purposely. Sleeps with her bad ear up.

RUSSELL

I know how your mother sleeps, Nick.

NICK

Remember when I had whooping cough? She said it was the only way she could get any sleep at all.

PEGGY

Maybe you should get some sleep yourself, Dad.

RUSSELL

Sleep? I couldn't possibly. I'm too wound up.

PEGGY

Take one of Mother's sleeping pills.

RUSSELL

Now that's a thought.

NICK

Does Mother use sleeping pills?

RUSSELL

Oh yes. And I know right where she keeps them.

PEGGY

So take one and go to bed, Dad.

RUSSELL

All right. I'll at least make the effort..

(kissing them)

Good night, you two.

(heading off, then turning)

But tomorrow morning, if there's still no word from your mother, I plan to jump on the Empire State Express and head straight for New York.

NICK

A train? You'd better fly, Dad.

RUSSELL

Fly? You think I should fly?

PEGGY

It's much quicker these days, Dad.

RUSSELL

All right, I'll take an airplane. Which requires a second sleeping pill.
(HE goes)

NICK

(to PEGGY)

He wanted to bring the police in on it.

STOP

Claire, Nick

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Couldn't you have gotten that in Buffalo?

CLAIRE

Not on your life, Nicky. You get much better choices in New York. And when I finally decide, and send in the measurements, they'll make a slip cover which will fit beautifully.. Unlike the work of poor old Mrs. Finnegan down on Chippewa Street who can no longer read measurements.

NICK

What's wrong with the material that's already there?

CLAIRE

This? Take a look some time. It's all hopelessly worn and ratty, what with kids and dogs, and mildew over the winter.

NICK

Maybe it's time to get a new couch.

CLAIRE

Nonsense, Nicky. Why buy new furniture when old things are better looking and last longer? For example, this couch originally came from your grandmother's house in Cornish, New Hampshire. All it needs is a little sprucing up.

(tenderly brushes his hair out of his eyes)

As do we all, now and then.

NICK

Yeah well, I'm off.

(starts out again)

CLAIRE

Hold it, Nick. I've got a small bone to pick with you.

NICK

I'll be late, Mom.

CLAIRE

Oh phooey. You're your own boss these days.

NICK

All the more reason to be on time.

CLAIRE

After work last week, did you play men's doubles over at the McKinley's?

NICK

I did. Yes. Brewster and I took on Mr. Reed and Howard Baldwin.

START :

CLAIRE
That's what I heard.

NICK
I hope you also heard we beat them two out of three sets. Which made them thoroughly pissed off.

CLAIRE
I'm not nuts about that expression, Nicky.

NICK
Well they were.

CLAIRE
Maybe they were upset because you were rude.

NICK
Who told you that?

CLAIRE
A little bird told me that.

NICK
Oh yeah? Mr. Baldwin told you that.

CLAIRE
Wrong! Mrs. McKinley told me that. She happened to be watching the game.

NICK
I hope she noticed I returned Baldwin's first serve with a beautiful backhand cross-court which he promptly called out.

CLAIRE
She didn't go into details, Nick.

NICK
The details were that Baldwin was cheating.

CLAIRE
Nick! What a thing to say! I don't believe it and I don't want to hear it again.

NICK
So long then.
(starts out again)

CLAIRE
Mrs. McKinley DID say, Nicky, that you seemed in a bad mood even when you first walked onto the court.

Nick + Betsy

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START

NICK

Shit, Betsy. This was supposed to be the night.

BETSY

They decided to watch TV.

NICK

TV? You've actually got TV now? Out here in the country?

BETSY

My father says TV is fast becoming a major window on our democracy.

NICK

Yeah, right. With Milton Berle?

BETSY

No seriously. They're in there right now, glued to it, watching a special program on the House Un-American Activities Committee..

NICK

You mean the Army Mc Carthy stuff?

BETSY

Correct. The whole thing is on TV. And the whole country can see it happening.

NICK

(starting toward the light)

Yeah? Well, then at least we should take a look.

BETSY

Hold it, Nick. First, I have to ask you something.

NICK

Shoot.

BETSY

What did you say was the date of the big football weekend this fall??

NICK

Williams versus Amherst? October 28th.

BETSY

Damn.

NICK

Why?

BETSY

I have to cancel.

No!

NICK

Have to. Family stuff.

BETSY

What is this? A double whammy?

NICK

I don't know what you mean?.

BETSY

First this, then the football weekend. It feels very much like you're putting the kibosh on our sex life.

NICK

Now, now.

BETSY

I've made big plans for that weekend. After the game, our fraternity is organizing a joint sea-breeze party with the Alpha Deltas. And we've already signed up the New Black Eagles from Boston to play Dixieland till the 1 A.M. curfew.

NICK

I love them! I love Dixieland!

BETSY

That I know. Moreover

NICK

Moreover what??

BETSY

As you damn well know, I made a pre-paid reservation at the Elwell Pines Motor Court for BOTH the Friday and Saturday nights of that weekend. I'll have my car by then so I can pick you up at Bennington and we can come and go just as we please.

NICK

I'm very, very sorry, Nicky.

BETSY

STOP

And I've even located the ideal car. I planned to pick you up in a nifty, 1941, maroon DeSoto convertible, with fluid drive, which I've located in a used car lot out in Kenmore!

NICK

Oh that would have been wonderful, Nick!

BETSY

Claire & Russell

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START:

CLAIRE

(raising her glass to him)

Bravo! ... Is Nick joining us?

RUSSELL

We can always hope.

CLAIRE

He's been so grumpy lately. Ever since he quit house-painting.

RUSSELL

I suppose because of that damn car.

CLAIRE

I gave him a check, you know.

RUSSELL

Bad idea.

CLAIRE

It was my own money, Russell.

RUSSELL

Even if it is enough—which it isn't—I told him I wouldn't pay for the insurance.

CLAIRE

Oh Russell.

RUSSELL

The problem is that now he'll be sitting around for the rest of the summer.

CLAIRE

Not at all, Russell. He's already rounded up several other jobs. He's cutting the Harris's grass. He's redoing the lines and putting calcium chloride on the McKinley's clay court. He's raking the algae and dead fish off the beach in front of several houses. All for a price.

RUSSELL

That's enterprising. I'll say that.

CLAIRE

Did you ever find out what caused the trouble with Chuck?

RUSSELL

Let sleeping dogs lie. And speaking of dogs, maybe he'll join us after he takes Betsy's dog back.

CLAIRE

That dog adores him. It follows him everywhere.

RUSSELL

And poops on our lawn. All of which reminds me of Betsy.

CLAIRE

Oh honestly...

RUSSELL

She makes me feel ancient and obsolete.

CLAIRE

(Ironically)

I wonder why?

(THEY look out)

Aaaaanyway, another lovely sunset.

RUSSELL

They get better and better as we drift into August.

CLAIRE

Maybe they're designed to be remembered during our long Buffalo winters.

RUSSELL

(raising his glass to her)

Well said, dear.

CLAIRE

Thank you... And do I hear Nicky?

RUSSELL

(looking off)

You do indeed.

(calling)

We're on the terrace, Nick!

(to CLAIRE)

I miss Peggy, don't you?

CLAIRE

Her postcards seemed very enthusiastic. And did I tell you? The Armstrongs ran into her group in Sienna. They said she was having a fine old time.

RUSSELL

Nothing is more redemptive than a change of scene.

CLAIRE

Maybe so. But I like Marco.

STOP

Peggy + Russell

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How do you know that? PEGGY

He's invited you up there for a long weekend. RUSSELL

That doesn't always mean love, Dad. PEGGY

Has he told you he loves you? RUSSELL

On occasion. PEGGY

You're not sure he loves you now? RUSSELL

I'm going up there to find out. PEGGY

Do you love him? RUSSELL

I thought I did. Over there. As you say, a change of scene can cause a change of mind. PEGGY

That's exactly the point. RUSSELL

START:

I have to say he's more ... well, you'd probably like him a lot, Dad. PEGGY

Sounds that way. RUSSELL

And I have to say that in some ways he's more fun than Marco. PEGGY

Of course. Because you and he come from the same kind of background. Which leads to similar senses of humor. RUSSELL

Is that true? PEGGY

It can be. RUSSELL

PEGGY

Also he's ...

RUSSELL

He's what?

PEGGY

Looser about things than Marco.

RUSSELL

What things?

PEGGY

Lots of things. Maybe it's because he's got a lot of money.

RUSSELL

He's rich?

PEGGY

Very.

RUSSELL

All this sounds very Philadelphia.

PEGGY

Does it?

RUSSELL

Well, sweetheart. I can safely say that your trip abroad was what the French might call a *succes fou*.

PEGGY

You think so?

RUSSELL

Of course. You'll be sitting pretty at Vassar this fall with two strapping youths constantly on the telephone, vying passionately for your hand.

(starts off)

PEGGY

Dad

RUSSELL

(stopping)

What, dear?

PEGGY

There's a slight problem.

RUSSELL

And what's that, dear?

I think I'm pregnant, Dad. PEGGY
(on the edge of tears)

No. RUSSELL

I think I may be.. PEGGY
(possibly crying)

By which one? RUSSELL

Oh good Lord, not by Marco! He's too much the gentleman in that department. PEGGY
(now crying)

You're pregnant by Princeton. RUSSELL

I could be. PEGGY

Have you been to a doctor? RUSSELL

Not yet. PEGGY

Have you told your mother? RUSSELL

I haven't had the chance. PEGGY

Have you told Marco? RUSSELL

Oh no! He'd explode. PEGGY

How about this rascal from Philadelphia? RUSSELL

That's why I'm going up. To tell him. PEGGY

STOP:

~~==~~
~~If he's a gentleman, he'll ...~~

~~RUSSELL~~