

California Suite

**CALIFORNIA SUITE** is composed of four playlets whose action takes place in rooms 203 and 204 in the Beverly Hills Hotel.

**ACT I**

SCENE I:

Visitor from New York

About one in the afternoon on a sunny, warm day in late fall

SCENE 2:

Visitor from Philadelphia

Eleven in the morning, mid-December

**ACT II**

SCENE I:

Visitors from London

About five in the afternoon, early April

SCENE 2:

About two o'clock in the morning

SCENE 3:

Visitors from Chicago

Four in the afternoon, Sunday July Fourth

# Act One

SCENE ONE: *Visitor from New York*

*Suite 203-4: a bedroom with an adjoining living room, and a bathroom off the bedroom. The decor is brightly colored and cheerful. Elegant reproductions of Van Gogh and Renoir hang on the walls. There are large color TV sets in both rooms, and a fireplace in the living room.*

*It is about one in the afternoon on a sunny, warm day in late fall. HANNAH WARREN is standing at the window, arms folded, a cigarette in one hand, staring pensively out. She is in her early forties, an intelligent and sophisticated woman. She is wearing a tailored woolen suit, too warm for California, just right for New York-where she has just come from. Her packed suitcases are on the bed in the other room, ready for departure. The telephone rings.*

HANNAH (*Into the phone*) Yes?.. Where are you?

. . . Come on up. Room 203- (*She hangs up, takes another drag on her cigarette, then crushes it nervously into the ashtray. She picks up the phone again*) Room service, please. (*She waits tensely. Then, into the phone*) Hello? . . . This is Mrs. Warren in Suite 203 . . . I would like one tea with lemon and one double Scotch on the rocks. . . (*The phone in the bedroom rings*) Yes-203. Thank you. (*She hangs up. The other phone rings again. She goes into the bedroom, sits on the bed and answers the phone*) Yes? . . . Yes, it is . . . Hello? . . . Yes, Bob . . . Well, I was hoping to leave today. I have tickets on the three o'clock flight, but I don't think I'm going to make it . . . It can't be too soon for me . . . This entire city smells like an overripe cantaloupe. . . How is New York? . . . It is? . . . Snow - how wonderful! . . . No, no. The sun is shining, about eighty degrees, on Thanksgiving. . . truly disgusting. (*There is a knock on the living room door. She yells out*) Come in. It's open. (*Back into the phone, a little lower-voiced*) No, nothing's settled yet. But I'm not worried. (*The living room door opens. WILLIAM WARREN enters. He is about forty-five, quite attractive, well tanned and trim. He wears brush-denim slacks, an open sport shirt, a cashmere V-neck sweater and tan sneakers. He closes the door and inspects the room as she continues on the phone*) No, he just got here. . . I don't want to bring a lawyer into it yet. We'll see how this goes . . . When have you known me to be intimidated? (*She laughs*) Well, that doesn't count. . . Yes, I remember it in detail. . . You're wasting a perfectly good erotic conversation with my ex-husband in the other room and the operator probably listening . . . Yes, I will . . . As soon as he leaves. . . I do too . . . Bye. (*She hangs up and sits there a moment. She takes a pencil and jots down a note on the pad on the table next to the bed. She is not in any great hurry to greet her visitor. She gets up, gives herself another check in the mirror and goes to the doorway of the living room. He turns and they look at each other*) Sorry. I was on the phone. It's snowing in New York. We're going to have a white Thanksgiving. Don't you love it? (*She sits. He is still standing. He smiles*) Is. that wonderful, warm smile for me?

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BILLY You still have trouble saying a simple "Hello."

HANNAH Oh, I *am* sorry. You always did get a big thrill out of the "little" things in life. . . Hello, Bill.

BILLY (*With generous warmth*) Hello, Hannah.

HANNAH My God, look at you. You've turned into a young boy again.

BILLY Have I?

HANNAH Haven't you noticed? You look like the sweetest young fourteen-year-old boy. You're not spending your summers at camp; are you?

BILLY Just three weeks in July. How are you?

HANNAH Well, at this moment, nonplussed.

BILLY Still the only one I know who can use "non-plussed" in regular conversation.

HANNAH Don't be ridiculous, darling, I talk that way at breakfast. . . Turn around, let me look at you.

BILLY Shouldn't we kiss or shake hands or some thing?

HANNAH Let's save it for when you leave. . . I love your California clothes.

BILLY They're Bloomingdale's, in New York.

HANNAH The best place for California clothes. You look so . . . I don't know-what's the word I'm looking for?

BILLY Happy?

HANNAH Casual. It's so hard to tell out here-are you dressed up now, or is that sporty?

BILLY I didn't think a tie was necessary for a reunion.

HANNAH Is that what this is? When I walked in, I thought we were going to play tennis.

BILLY Well, you look fit enough for it.

HANNAH Fit? You think I look fit? What an awful shit you are. I look gorgeous.

BILLY Yes, you do, Hannah. You look lovely.

HANNAH No, no. *You* look lovely. *I* look gorgeous.

BILLY Well, I lost about ten pounds.

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HANNAH Listen to what I'm telling you, you're *ravishing*. I love the way you're wearing your hair now. Where do you go, that boy who does Barbra Streisand?

BILLY You like it, you can have my Thursday appointment with him. . . If you're interested, I'm feeling *very* well, thank you

HANNAH Well, of course you are. Look at that tan. Well, it's the life out here, isn't it? You have an office outdoors somewhere?

BILLY No, just a desk near the window. . . Hey, Hannah, if we're going to banter like this, give me a little time. It's been nine years, I'm rusty.

HANNAH You'll pick it right up again, it's like French. You see, that's what I would miss if I left New York. The bantering.

BILLY San Francisco's only an hour-away. We go up there and banter in emergencies.

HANNAH Do you really?

BILLY W Quid I lie to you?

HANNAH I never liked San Francisco. I was always afraid I'd fall out of bed and roll down one of those hills.

BILLY Not you, Hannah. You roll *up* hills.

HANNAH Oh, good. You're bantering. The flight out. wasn't a total loss. . . Aren't you going to sit down, Bill? Or do they call you Billy out here? Yes, they do. Jenny told me. Everybody calls you Billy.

BILLY (*Shrugs*) That's me. Billy.

HANNAH It's adorable. A forty-five-year-old Billy. Standing there in his cute little sneakers and sweater. Please, sit down, Billy, I'm beginning to feel like your math teacher.

BILLY I promised myself driving over here I would be pleasant. I am now being pleasant.

HANNAH You drive everywhere, do you?

BILLY Everywhere.

HANNAH Even to your car?

BILLY Would you mind if I called down for something to drink?

HANNAH It's done.

BILLY I don't drink double Scotches on the rocks any more. I gave up hard liquor.