

CALIFORNIA SUITE

BILLY

Hello, Hannah.

HANNAH

My God, look at you.

BILLY

Well, should we kiss or shake hands or something?

HANNAH

Let's save it for when you leave. 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?

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 anymore. I gave up hard liquor.

HANNAH

Oh? What would you like?

BILLY

A cup of tea with lemon.

HANNAH

It's done... No hard liquor? At all?

BILLY

Not even wine.

HANNAH

Cigarettes?

BILLY

Gave them up.

HANNAH

You *have* changed, Billy. You've gone clean on me.

BILLY

Mind and body. That doesn't offend you, does it?

HANNAH

Yes. You're not in Hardy Canyon any more.

BILLY

Laurel. Laurel Canyon.

HANNAH

Laurel, Hardy, what the hell? And where are you now?

BILLY

Beverly Hills... a block north of Sunset Boulevard.

HANNAH

What style house?

BILLY

Very comfortable.

HANNAH

Well, I'm sure it is. But what style is it?

BILLY

Well, from the outside it looks like a small French Farmhouse.

HANNAH

A small French farmhouse. Just one block north of Sunset Boulevard. Sounds rugged... I passed something coming in from the airport. I thought it was a Moroccan villa- turned out to be a Texaco station.

BILLY

We're a very colorful community.

HANNAH

What else can I tell you about me?

BILLY

Jenny fills me in with everything.

HANNAH

Oh, I'm sure.

BILLY

I understand you have a new boyfriend.

HANNAH

A boyfriend? God forbid. I'm forty-two years old... I have a lover. And what's with you, mate-wise?

BILLY

Mate-wise? Mate-wise I am seeing a very nice girl.

HANNAH

Are you? And where are you seeing her to?

BILLY

Forget the tea. Maybe I will have a double Scotch.

HANNAH

It's ordered. You're safe either way.

BILLY

Can we talk about Jenny?

HANNAH

What's your rush? She's only 15. She's got her whole life ahead of her. If I'm going to turn my daughter

over to you... which I am not... at least I'd like to know what you're like.

BILLY

Jenny is our daughter! Ours!

HANNAH

Maybe. We'll see. They've been very slow with the blood test. So you live in a French farmhouse off Sunset Boulevard. Do you have a pool?

BILLY

Christ!!

HANNAH

Come on, Billy, talk to me. I wrote down seventy-four questions to ask... don't make me look for the list.

HANNAH (CONT)

Do you have a pool? Well, naturally you've got a pool. Is it kidney shaped?... Liver?... Possibly gall bladder?

BILLY

Pancreas, actually.

HANNAH

What kind of car do you have?

BILLY

You're really serious, aren't you?

HANNAH

I am dead serious. If I'm to leave my precious baby with you, I want to know what kind of a car I'm leaving her in.

BILLY

A brown Mercedes... 450SEL.

HANNAH

You have no class. You never had any class. A red Pinto in Beverly Hills would be class. What have you done to her, Billy? She's changed. She used to come back to New York after the summers here taller and anxious to see her friends... Now she meditates and eats alfalfa.

BILLY

She just turned 15. Something was bound to happen to her.

HANNAH

You have no legal rights to her, of course. You understand that.

BILLY

Certainly.

HANNAH

Then tell her to come home with me.

BILLY

I did. She would like to try it with me for a year. She's not happy in New York, Hannah.

HANNAH

Nobody's happy in New York. But they're alive.

BILLY

I can't fight with you. If you want to take her, then take her. But I think you'd be making a mistake.

HANNAH

She still has another year of high school left.

BILLY

Believe it or not, they have good schools here. I can show you some, if you like.

HANNAH

Oh, that should be fun. Something like the Universal Studio tour.

BILLY

What a snob you are.

HANNAH

Thank God there's a few of us left.

BILLY

If you respect her as a person, respect her right to make a free choice.

HANNAH

You get her for the summers, that's enough. If the judge had seen your life-style, you'd be lucky to get her Labor Day afternoon.

BILLY

Funny how we haven't discussed your lifestyle, isn't it?

HANNAH

I don't have a lifestyle. I have a life.

BILLY

Would you like to know what Jenny has to say about you?

HANNAH

She's told me. She thinks I'm a son-of-a-bitch. She also thinks I'm a funny son-of-a-bitch. She loves me but she doesn't like me. She's afraid of me. She's intimidated by me. She respects me but wouldn't want to become like me. We have a normal mother and daughter relationship.

BILLY

She told me she feels stifled... that the only time she can breathe freely is when she's out here.

HANNAH

I have a wonderful nose and throat man on East Eighty-fourth Street.

BILLY

What would you do if I just kept her here with me?

HANNAH

Don't be ridiculous.



BILLY

But what would you do, Hannah?

HANNAH

I would find the very best lawyer I could in California... and have him beat the shit out of you.

BILLY

Would you drag it through the courts if I said I'm keeping her for six months?

HANNAH

If you'll tell me how to get to your little French farmhouse, I'll pick her up myself.

BILLY

How much time do you spend with her? Do you ever have breakfast with her? How many nights does she eat dinner alone? Do you think she's really happy with that 20 dollar bill you give her every time you go off to Washington for the weekend? The girl is growing up lonely, Hannah.

HANNAH

She has two dogs, a Dominican cook and twelve different girls who sleep over every time I'm away.

BILLY

The truth, Hannah... You know if we leave it up to Jenny, you don't stand a chance in hell of getting her on that plane. Right?

HANNAH

Certainly. Why else would the ninny run away?... Who said we don't have problems. She is seventeen years old, and when we go at each other, she needs another shoulder to cry on... But I'll be goddamned if I'm giving up a daughter for a cashmere shoulder three thousand miles away.

BILLY

My God, you're really afraid... This is an event! I think it's the first time I've ever actually seen you nervous.

HANNAH

Wrong. I was nervous on our wedding night... Unfortunately, it was after we had sex.

BILLY

You know something, Hannah?... I don't like you any more.

HANNAH

It's okay. I'm not always fond of me either... What are we going to do, Billy? I want my daughter back. You're the only one who can help me.

BILLY

You're being sincere now, aren't you?... What a shame. You do it so seldom, that when it finally comes, I'm still waiting for the zingers.

HANNAH

Are you going to help me?

BILLY

By sending Jenny home? She'd be back in two weeks.

You want me to get her up here? She's downstairs in the car with her bags packed. She's willing to abide by any decision we both make.

HANNAH

Oh, what a cunning bastard you are. If we say she goes back to New York, she'll think I coerced you. And if we say stay here, she'll think I didn't even put up a fight for her.

BILLY

Do you think she has that devious a mind?

MEL

Certainly. She's my daughter. I don't suppose you'd consider spending two months back East?

BILLY

Only if everyone there leaves. You want me to make it easy for you, Hannah? Ok. I'll throw in my vote. Whatever you say goes. And I'll tell Jenny we both made the decision.

HANNAH

Which is your car? They're all Mercedes. What are you looking at me like that for?

BILLY

It's not often I've seen you looking so vulnerable.

HANNAH

Well, take a picture of it. You won't see it again... Keep her.

BILLY

What?

HANNAH

I said, keep her... six months, not a year. And I pick the school. And whoever I pick, they have to send three references. Christ, what am I doing?

BILLY

Stay the weekend, Hannah. Talk it over with Jenny. You don't have to decide because you've got a plane ticket.

HANNAH

Jesus, you never thought I would say yes, did you? You know, I don't think you're prepared to take on your own daughter. Watching her swim for eight weeks at the beach is not the same as being a parent. Don't look now, Billy, but you just lost...

BILLY

If you think I'm scared, you're damned right.

HANNAH

I love it. Oh, God I love it. Wait'll you see how she eats in the winter. You'll be dead broke by Christmas.

BILLY

I think you're doing a terrific thing, Hannah.

HANNAH

So do I.

BILLY

And if for any reason, I feel things aren't working out, I'll send her back to you.

HANNAH

The hell you will. You're a father now, Billy.

BILLY

I suppose you want to see her before you leave.

HANNAH

Well, you suppose wrong. I've seen her. I'll call her when I get to New York.

BILLY

Goodbye, Hannah... It was good seeing you again.

HANNAH

I suddenly feel like an artist selling a painting he doesn't want to part with.

BILLY

I'll frame it and keep it in a good light.

HANNAH

Do that... And take care of Jenny, too.