

constantly changing his mind. Finally, in desperation, he jumps over the balcony and disappears from sight. An explosion of snow rises up visibly—he must have landed in a snow bank.

The alarm continues its scream. The oak door suddenly swings open. A man enters. He switches on the lights. He is dressed in a rich silk robe, silk pajamas and monogrammed velvet slippers. He reaches behind the shelf and turns off a switch. The alarm stops.

This is JOE BENJAMIN. In his late fifties, he gives an impression of great strength of character. He glances around the room quickly, giving a fast look behind the drapes. Then he goes over to the French door and notices it is open.

Two more people rush in through the oak door in their night clothes. They are BEN BENJAMIN and SARAH BENJAMIN, a pair of twenty-four-year-old twins, or as close as we can approximate. The brother and sister have red hair of the same shade; their I.Q. is 100—between them.

BEN What is it, Dad? What happened?

JOE I don't know.

SARAH What happened, Dad? What is it?

JOE I said I don't know.

SARAH We heard the alarm go off.

BEN Did you hear the alarm go off, Dad?

JOE Certainly I heard it go off. That's why I'm down here. (To SARAH) Close your bathrobe.

(SARAH can never keep her robe tied. She closes it)

SARAH My God, it was really the alarm.

BEN (Points) The French door is open. Look!

SARAH It's open, Dad. The French door. Look!

JOE I can see it's open. Stop repeating everything. (The telephone rings)

BEN It's the phone, Dad.

SARAH Dad, it's the phone. (It rings again)

JOE I can hear it. Close your bathrobe. Ben, answer the phone.

SARAH Answer the phone, Ben.

JOE I'm going to look outside.

SARAH Suppose someone's out there?

JOE That's why I'm looking. That's the whole point of it. Close your robe. (The phone rings again) Answer that.

(JOE goes out to the portico, and BEN picks up the phone)

BEN (Into the phone) Hello? . . . Yes?

SARAH Who is it?

BEN The burglar alarm company.

SARAH Daddy, it's the burglar alarm company.

BEN (Into the phone) Yes, we just heard it.

SARAH Ben said we just heard it.

JOE (From out on the portico, yells) Close your bathrobe!

BEN (Into the phone) We found the living-room French door open. My father's checking now.

SARAH What do they think?

BEN (Into the phone) What do you think?

JOE (*Coming back into the room*) I think someone tried to break in.

BEN (*Into the phone*) My father thinks someone tried to break in.

JOE I found footprints in the snow.

BEN (*Into the phone*) He found footprints in the snow.

SARAH My God, footprints in the snow.

JOE Close your robe, you want to catch cold? Go to bed. Look at you shivering.

SARAH I'm not cold. I'm scared. My God, someone tried to break in.

JOE Stop using God's name in vain.

SARAH It's not in vain. I'm really scared.

BEN (*Into the phone*) One second, please. (*To JOE*) They want to know if they should send somebody.

JOE No one got into the house.

BEN How can you tell?

JOE There's snow outside. There would be footprints on the rug.

SARAH There *are* footprints. (*Points*) Right there!

JOE *Those are mine!* Wasn't I just in the snow?

BEN Suppose he wore galoshes and left them outside?

JOE What kind of a robber wears galoshes? No one got in. Tell them never mind. Everything's all right. I'm going to look around again.

(*He goes back out on the portico*)

BEN (*Into the phone*) Hello? No one got in . . . Never mind, please. Everything's all right. My father's going to look around again . . . Thank you. We will. (*He hangs up*) Close your bathrobe.

JOE (*Comes back in*) Someone was here. He dropped these outside.

(*He holds up a pair of steel-rimmed glasses*)

BEN Eyeglasses!

SARAH Look, Daddy, it's a pair of eyeglasses!

JOE *Didn't I just find them?* I can see they're eyeglasses. Well, whoever dropped them won't get far without them. They're a half-inch thick—I can't see two feet through them.

SARAH A half-blind burglar, my God, it gives me the creeps.

(*She shivers*)

JOE I'm not going to tell you about God's name or your bathrobe again . . . I wouldn't be surprised if he broke both his legs. There are no footprints going down the stairs, so he must have jumped off the balcony.

BEN Jumped off the balcony? Forty feet? He'd break both his legs.

SARAH Oh God, a crippled blind burglar . . .

BEN Why don't we call the police? A crippled blind burglar shouldn't be too hard to find.

JOE First of all, he isn't a burglar because he didn't steal anything. And second of all, I don't want any police around here with your mother in the house. You know how frightened she is.