

Titanic didn't ram the iceberg but they went down with the ship.

CRANE. I'll have to think that one over.

(*DOORBELL rings.*)

KATE. (*With a look toward the kitchen.*) Any bets on Jenny answering? Give you two to one—three to one—five to one—

CRANE. Jenny!

JENNY. (*Offstage.*) I'm washing.

KATE. Herself or the dishes?

CRANE. (*Goes to front door.*) This is all part of rustic country charm.

KATE. Oh, for the vulgarity of a simple little suite on Sutton Place.

(*CRANE opens the door and VERNON is there. He wears a suit jacket over his vest and he tips his hat as usual.*)

VERNON. I'm back.

KATE. (*As she sits on desk chair.*) He must be getting overtime.

CRANE. Come in, Mr. Cookley, or may I call you Verne?

VERNON. (*As he comes into the room and CRANE closes the door.*) Don't see why not, it's my name.

CRANE. Coffee?

VERNON. Never touch it after breakfast.

KATE. I'm that way about whiskey.

CRANE. (*As she moves above sofa.*) We're dying to know Verne; tell us about the body.

JENNY. (*Enters from kitchen, drying her hands on a towel.*) Oh, you answered it.

CRANE. Thank you anyway.

VERNON. (*Tips his hat.*) Evenin', Jenny. Evenin', Miss Bixley.

KATE. (*Being real folksy.*) Pull up a chair and set a spell.

VERNON. (*Sits in chair center.*) That's right friendly of you.

KATE. It works.

VERNON. I might as well tell all of you at once. Where's Mr. Hammond?

CRANE. In Chicago—oooooooooh, that Mr. Hammond.

He's—

KATE. Upstairs.

CRANE. Taking a shower.

VERNON. T'ain't Saturday night.

CRANE. He loves the water.

JENNY. In the war he was a frog! (*She returns to the kitchen.*)

CRANE. (*After VERNON looks at her for an explanation.*) She's confused it with the fairy tale about the frog who turned into a prince. Charming little thing. (*Sits on the sofa.*) Now about the body—who was he?

VERNON. Well, after we got him back to Doc Parsons, he come to. Says his name is Philip Smith. Seemed he'd been hit on the head—

CRANE. With a blunt instrument—

VERNON. Say, you're right clever. How'd you know that?

CRANE. I always read my own books.

VERNON. It's the truth. He don't know who did it or how he got in there. Doc is bandagin' him up now. Then I'm going to take him down to the jail.

KATE. Birchville has a jail?

VERNON. It's my bathroom. We put bars on the window. Of course, I could keep an eye on him better if the jail was right in the house.

KATE. How quaint—an out-jail.

CRANE. Where was he hit?

VERNON. On the head.

CRANE. I mean where? Inside the house? Because if he was, what was he doing here?

VERNON. That's a very good question. I gotta ask him that sometime. (*Rises and moves toward CRANE.*) Well, I can't stay no longer. Gotta get back to Doc's, but

I wanted you to know what happened. (*Moves toward front door, but turns back.*) Say, I better have a look around before I go. You know, make sure everything is as straight as a row of corn. Want to check the closets and upstairs and all.

CRANE. (*Crosses to his Right.*) How thoughtful of you. Go right ahead.

KATE. (*Rises.*) Crane!

CRANE. Yes.

VERNON. Sure wish I could find them diamonds somewhere.

CRANE. (*To KATE.*) What? (*KATE moves up to VERNON'S left and gestures frantically up the stairs. CRANE looks blank. KATE makes a gesture of turning on something.*) What are you doing?

KATE. Shi! (*Then she makes a gesture of water coming down over her. CRANE still looks blank and KATE gives up.*)

CRANE. (*Gets an idea.*) How many words? (*KATE holds up four fingers.*) Four. (*KATE nods, then repeats the turning gesture.*) Round? (*KATE shakes her head.*) Turn? (*KATE nods.*) Turn on something. Turn on—the— (*KATE makes water splashing gesture again.*) Rain—water— (*KATE starts washing and dancing around.*) Shower! (*KATE collapses. CRANE notices VERNON who has been fascinated. She laughs gaily.*) Games! Every night after dinner we play games. Vernon, if you'll excuse me a minute, I'll check on Mr. Hammond. (*As she goes upstairs.*) Don't want to give him a heart attack in the shower.

VERNON. (*To KATE.*) I'm good at games, too. What's this? (*He holds his left index finger straight up behind his head and puts his nose between his right index and second finger and winks his right eye.*)

KATE. Sailor on forty-second street?

VERNON. Pontiac makin' a right turn.

KATE. Say, that's good.

JENNY. (*Enters.*) I'm most near finished now. I'll be gettin' along soon.

KATE. Don't forget the coffee cups.

JENNY. (*As she collects two cups from sofa table and one from chair table.*) If only people would have coffee at the table like they oughta. I'll be back for breakfast. What you both like?

KATE. (*Moves to above sofa.*) Just orange juice and coffee.

JENNY. And?

KATE. That's all.

JENNY. Hardly any use comin' at all.

VERNON. I always have a good hunk of meat in the mornin'. Sunday it's pork chops and sometimes a piecea pie.

KATE. (*Almost ill.*) Just juice and coffee.

CRANE. (*Comes to foot of stairs.*) You can come up now, Verne. Mr. Hammond's still in the shower, but you can check the other rooms.

VERNON. I'll feel better knowin' no one else is here. I called the police in Boston and they said there's already a private detective somewhere according to what they hear and they said some stool pigeon—is that right, Mrs. Hammond?

CRANE. Perfect.

VERNON. Some stool pigeon told them the fence is here, too.

CRANE. (*Indicating the stairs.*) Shall we? I don't want to run down the water supply.

VERNON. (*Passing CRANE.*) Oh, by the by, after I check up here, I'll put that Philip Smith in jail and then I'll come back. I wanna see Mr. Hammond. Want to be sure he can protect you case anything happens. He oughta be through his shower by then, no matter how dirty he is. (*He goes upstairs.*)

CRANE. (*Crosses to KATE quickly. Sotto voce.*) Kate—phone Lillian and tell her I want to borrow— (*Sees JENNY standing there interested.*) that thing for a few minutes.

KATE. Roger.

CRANE. Over and out. (*She runs upstairs.*)