

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

I do know. I have to admit, last night was even a bit too much for me.

MYRA:

I don't know how you do it, Carl. Every time they create another catastrophe you just... Well?... You just... I don't know how you do it.

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

Myra? You might want to think back to when you were a kid. Remember all the times you pulled things and got into trouble and your parents had to deal with it and put you back on track?

MYRA:

(Overly innocent)

Who me? Not me! I was a perfect angel!

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

(Playfully)

Uh huh! I think the problem your having here is that instead of it being a misbehaving child, it's your Father. The roles are out of whack, but the principle's the same.

MYRA:

Maybe so. All I know is that I'm beginning to crumble under the strain of it all and I sure could use a little time off.

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

Now, that's a great idea!

MYRA:

What?

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

A vacation! We need to take a really nice vacation. Just you and me. All by ourselves.

MYRA melts in her chair with a look of ecstasy on her face.

MYRA:

(Sighs)

What a wonderful idea. That sounds great! Of course, the house might not be standing when we get home, but I'm ready! I'm more than ready.

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

Me too. Let's talk about it and make definite plans when I get home tonight. Whadaya say?

MYRA:

Sounds like just what the Doctor ordered. You just single-handedly put my whole day straight.

But then, you're so good at that.

Thank you, sweetheart.

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

(Playfully)

Hey! I know my job. And, if I do say so myself, I think I'm pretty good at it.

MYRA:

(Smiling wide.)

You most certainly are.

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

OK, then! See ya tonight, when I get home.

MYRA:

I love you, Carl Guthrie!

CARL: (O/S VOICE)

Love ya back, Sweetheart! Bye!

MYRA hangs up the phone, smiling.

MYRA:

(To herself.)

What would I do without that man?

(MORE)

SO THERE WAS THIS RAT - 53.

MYRA: (CONT'D)

(Sighs sweetly)

**BLACKOUT.**

**END SCENE**

**ACT II - SCENE 3 - THE MOVIE THEATRE**

*Scene: Center Stage, Front.  
There are four chairs together,  
facing the audience, creating the  
appearance of row seating at the  
movie theatre. VIRGIL and DAVE  
are seated in the center two.  
They look out toward the audience  
as though they are looking at the  
movie screen. The STAGE is dark  
and there is a SPOTLIGHT on  
VIRGIL and DAVE, giving the  
impression that they are in a  
darkened theater.*

VIRGIL:

What did you say the name of this movie was again?

DAVE:

Peter in Paradise

VIRGIL:

I don't remember hearing about this one.

DAVE:

Me neither.

DAVE pulls out a folded piece of newspaper from his inside jacket pocket.

It got four stars. Look here.

Shows VIRGIL the paper.

VIRGIL:

(Chuckling)

Put your glasses on, my friend, those are not four stars, those are four X's.

DAVE pulls out his glasses and puts them on to examine the paper.

DAVE:

Oh!

(Chuckling)

Well, whadaya know? Oh well!

Their facial expressions are each very different, but they study the scene in a wide-eyed surprised kind of way. VIRGIL suddenly tilts his head to the side as if he's is trying to see from a different angle.

VIRGIL:

Can you do that?

DAVE:

That's gotta be trick photography.

VIRGIL:

What's the plot?

I don't see a plot...

...Is there a plot?

DAVE:

Not so far as I can see.

VIRGIL:

(Staring at the screen)

I think the husband's gonna catch her with the pool boy. What do you think?

DAVE:

It telegraphs.

VIRGIL:

Wait! Who's this guy?

DAVE:

That must be Peter.

VIRGIL:

(Wide-eyed)

I'll say!!

VIRGIL suddenly opens his mouth wide with surprise.

Oh Yeah! That's Peter, alright.

DAVE:

I think we're comin' up on the end.

VIRGIL:

Yup!

STAGE LIGHTS up.

SPOTLIGHT out, signifying that the movie is over and the house lights have come up. VIRGIL and DAVE just sit there for a moment critiquing the film.

DAVE:

(Mocking a critic)

The dialog was lacking, but they made up for it in the action scenes.

VIRGIL:

(Playfully pious)

I thought the cinematography was mediocre, but I loved the special effects. I don't understand why they didn't go the whole route and film it in Panavision.

DAVE:

(Chuckling)

The plot was thin, but I enjoyed the direction.

VIRGIL:

Which direction. The Pool Boy's or the Husband's?

VIRGIL and DAVE begin to laugh.

DAVE:

I can't wait for the sequel.

VIRGIL:

You think they'll call it, "Son of Peter in Paradise?"

DAVE:

Could be! Has a good ring to it.

They laugh.

Hey! By the way, did you see that thing in the paper the other day about that guy who jumped off the Morgan Building, downtown?

VIRGIL:

No! What happened?

DAVE:

When I read it I thought of you right away!

VIRGIL:

No kiddin'! What happened?

DAVE:

Well? They found out later that it was a total accident. He didn't jump after all. He slipped and fell.

Seems he was up there on that roof with a construction crew, lookin' for a roof leak after that big rain storm.

VIRGIL:

Oh! So, the roof was slippery from the wet!

DAVE:

That's what they thought at first, but it turns out that there was a rat up there and the guy surprised it.

VIRGIL:

(Laughing)

GET OUT! A rat, you say? No wonder you thought of me!

DAVE:

Yup! The Rat squealed and the guy jumped backwards and... well... he sort of... ran out of roof.

VIRGIL:

Uh Oh! That could ruin your whole day!

So when's the funeral?

DAVE:

What?

VIRGIL:

The guy!... That fell off the roof!... When's the funeral?

DAVE:

Oh! No funeral. Turns out, he lived.

VIRGIL:

(Shocked)

No way! That building's gotta be at least ten stories.

DAVE:

That's right but wait 'til you hear this one. Seems he was wearing his raincoat and the minute he flew off the roof, he had the brains to spread out his coat... like wings! There's a really good updraft between all those buildings, you know?

VIRGIL:

(Laughing)

Now, that I would like to have seen!

DAVE:

Yeah, me too! Anyway, the guy takes off kinda... soaring, ya know? Only he didn't have much control over his direction, so he wound out crashin' right through a window in the building across the street. I think they said it was the sixth floor.

VIRGIL:

(Amazed)

And he lived?

DAVE:

Gives new meaning to the term "Hard Head", doesn't it? Although, by this time, he was really dazed... You can imagine.

VIRGIL:

Dazed?? I would think he would be unconscious!

DAVE:

Evidently not. Because he remembered this part when he was tellin' about it later.

Anyway... He flies through the window and, would you believe, he lands right on top of the Maintenance Man's cart, which was there because the Maintenance Man was in that office, cleanin'.

Well, of course, the cart is on wheels, and once again he takes off, right out the office and down the hall toward the stairway exit.

VIRGIL:

Don't tell me!

DAVE:

You got it! Nobody knows how he did it... Not even him, 'cause he's suffering from somethin' called "short term amnesia". Ya ever hear of that?

VIRGIL:

Doesn't that mean he doesn't forget everything... only what happened just now?

DAVE:

Yeah! Somethin' like that. Anyway, like I said, nobody knows how he managed it, but he stayed on that cart bouncin' all the way down six flights of stairs to the first floor.

Seems he shot out of the first floor stairway exit and finally stopped, right in front of the information desk.

There he was! Just layin' there among the brooms and cleaning fluid on that cart.

A poor dazed man with a rat on his head.

Funny thing, nobody knows how that rat managed to go with him, but that rat was just as dazed as he was.

They are both laughing out loud,  
now.

VIRGIL:

Hey! Can you imagine how that rat felt about the whole thing?

DAVE:

Yeah! Can't ya just picture it when he went home to his wife that night? His wife says, "Where the hell have you been? You're late!"

They laugh.

VIRGIL:

Wait! Wait! And the Rat says, "I'm not sure. All I know is, I went up on the roof, like you said I should, to look for some dinner to bring home, and the next thing I know, I'm takin' flight out over Main Street on the top of this guy's head, and we went crashin' through a window in the building across the street.

Suddenly, we're racing through the halls of the other building, and we slam into a door. The next thing I know, we're bouncin', and bouncin', and bouncin' down God only knows how many stairs, and when we finally stopped, all I could hear was all these people screamin' at me!

They kept yellin', "It's a rat!... It's a rat!"

The way I see it, I was the injured party here. What do they think they had to scream about?"

Now the two men are laughing,  
hysterically.

DAVE:

And ya know what the wife says?

DAVE starts gasping for air as he  
continues to laugh.

VIRGIL:

What?

DAVE:

You'll make up any story to get out of trouble for bein' late.

Although!... I gotta admit... This one ranks way up there as one of your finest.

They keep laughing and then they  
try to calm down.

VIRGIL:

(Catching his breath)

Oh God! That was a good one.

DAVE:

(Also catching his breath)

I knew that any story with a rat in it was a sure thing with you.

VIRGIL:

Yeah, well, that one got me OK!

Listen! We gotta get back, now.

I don't wanna pull her chain any more. She's not too happy with me today. Besides, I promised Carl.

DAVE:

I hear ya! Let's go.

Hey! You know what?

VIRGIL:

What?

DAVE:

Let's stop at the Bakery on the way home. I'd like to pick up a Cheesecake. Myra loves Cheesecake.

VIRGIL:

That's nice of ya, Dave. I think she's gonna like that.

DAVE:

It's the least I can do. I got a lot to make up for with her this week.

**BLACKOUT**

**END SCENE**