



Barefoot in the Park

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Characters Discussed

Corie Bratter, a newlywed, married only six days at the beginning of the play. She is young, pretty, and full of enthusiasm for the future. Impulsive and fun-loving, she considers herself a doer, not a watcher. Her impetuosity is not shared, at first, by her mother or husband, and they are aghast when she cheers the crazy antics of Victor, a neighbor. Corie eventually learns to appreciate dependability and quiet strength.

Paul Bratter, Corie's husband, a twenty-six-year-old attorney in his first job. Both his dress and his outlook are very conservative. Extremely proper and dignified, he always knows the right thing to say. He is levelheaded and practical, and he keeps his emotions in check, perhaps too much so. After Corie accuses him of lacking playfulness, he shows her that he, too, is capable of walking barefoot in the park.

Ethel Banks, Corie's mother. She is in her late forties. Although she is still pretty, she has fallen out of step with the fashions. She lives alone in West Orange, New Jersey. Consciously or unconsciously, she has adopted a narrow image of herself as someone with a sensitive stomach, a bad back, and no need for romance. It takes a wild evening out with Victor for Ethel to rediscover her carefree and spontaneous self.

Victor Velasco, the Bratters' upstairs neighbor. Fifty-eight years old, he is a colorful character. Although capable of looking positively natty in a double-breasted pinstriped suit, he also wears Japanese kimonos and berets. He is vain, flamboyant, and without shame when it comes to letting someone else pick up a tab. Married three times, he is a terrific flirt. He is also a gourmet cook; Paul refers to him as the "Hungarian Duncan Hines." There are signs that Victor is beginning to slow down. After an exhilarating evening of his own creation, he suffers a broken toe and an upset stomach.

Harry Pepper, a telephone repairman. He witnesses, to his mortification, a fight between Corie and Paul.

Sources for Further Study

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