

Does Corie's Mother Like This Apartment?

[Corie's mother, Mrs. Banks, staggers in the door, bouncing off it and coming to rest paralyzed against the railing. While she is regaining her breath, Corie brings her a glass of water and leads her to a suitcase so that she can sit.]

MOTHER: I really had no intention of coming up, but I had a luncheon in Westchester and I thought, since it's on my way home, I might as well drop in for a few minutes...

CORIE: On your way to New Jersey?

MOTHER: Yes. I came over the Whitestone Bridge and down the Major Deegan Highway and now I'll cut across town and onto the Henry Hudson Parkway and up to the George Washington Bridge. It's no extra trouble.

[Corie tells her they want her to come visit them on Friday after the furniture is there. Mrs. Banks makes light of the lack of furniture and stands up with the intention of praising the apartment. However, its bleakness stops her cold and all she can do is force out a lie through gritted teeth.]

MOTHER: (*Stunned*) Oh, Corie...it's...beautiful.

CORIE: You hate it...

MOTHER: (*Moves up toward windows*) No, no...It's a charming apartment. (*Trips over platform*) I love it.

CORIE: (*Rushes to her*) You can't really tell like this.

MOTHER: I'm crazy about it. I love it...

CORIE: Do you really, Mother? I mean, are you absolutely crazy in love with it?

MOTHER: Oh, yes. It's very cute...(*Choking on her words*) And there is so much you can do with it.

CORIE: I told you she hated it.

MOTHER: (*Moves toward the bedroom landing*) Corie, you don't give a person a chance. At least let me see the whole apartment.

PAUL: This is the whole apartment

[Mrs. Banks asks to see the bedroom, and Corie shows her a tiny room at one side of the apartment. Her mother's spirit fails, but she tried to keep a smile on her face as Corie explains how she is going to use it.]

MOTHER: (*At bedroom door*) That's a wonderful idea. And you can just put a bed in there.

CORIE: That's right.

MOTHER: How?

[Corie explains that an oversize single will fit in the room, and Mrs. Banks is appalled at the thought of Paul and Corie sleeping in such cramped conditions. Still she tries not to show her despair.]

MOTHER: It's a wonderful idea. Very clever...

CORIE: Thank you.

MOTHER: Except you can't get to the closet.

CORIE: Yes you can

MOTHER: Without climbing over the bed?

CORIE: No, you have to climb over the bed.

MOTHER: That's a good idea.

CORIE: (*Leaves the bedroom, crosses to ladder and climbs up*) Everything is just temporary. As they say in *McCall's*, it won't really take shape until the bride's own personality becomes more clearly defined.

Copyright © 1963 by Neil Simon. Reprinted by permission of William Morris Agency, Inc. on behalf of the author.
GED as Project, Volume 3, Language Arts, Reading Inquiry Project 2