

- SOREL.** I'd have sworn you were a diplomatist.
- WALTER.** No. I am among hundreds of proud conservatives recently swept into Parliament. The General Election was historic, don't you agree?
- SOREL.** I was unaware there *was* an election, what with rehearsals and fittings and first night. But you won, darling – how lovely for you!
- WALTER.** I will put this country back on the right track.
- SOREL.** (*uninterested*) And not a moment too soon. Now why don't you pour us both a cocktail and sit by me?
- WALTER.** Brandy?
- (**WALTER** picks up the bottle that **EDWARD** tampered with, looks at it, then puts it down, picks up another and pours two drinks. During this, **SOREL** digs into the chocolates ravenously, making rapturous sounds of pleasure. She searches among the wrappers, but having eaten all of them, she tosses the box aside, disappointed.)
- WALTER.** I can hardly believe I am alone in a room with the ravishing Sorel Bennett.
- SOREL.** That's frightfully kind of you, dear. Do go on.
- WALTER.** What do you mean, go on?
- SOREL.** I should like very much to wallow in compliments. Use your best butter.
- WALTER.** The moment when Daphne slammed the door on her husband, then poured herself a cocktail and laughed gaily will be scorched in my memory forever.
- SOREL.** It is most certainly scorched in *my* memory, given that a variation of it is in every last play that Edward has written for me.
- WALTER.** (*He hands her the drink, and sits.*) Your Daphne was enchanting, my dear – absolutely enchanting. As was your Beryl, and your Ariadne, and your –
- SOREL.** (*interrupting, demurely*) What about my Sorel?
- WALTER.** I have never chanced upon a woman with such extraordinary gifts.

- SOREL.** Imagine – travelling the world, meeting strangers in far-off lands.
- (**WALTER** tries to interrupt.)
- It would be exhilarating to accompany a diplomatist, (*He tries to interrupt.*)
- providing no end of occasions to wear exotic hats. What type of hats do you wear when you travel, Walter?
- (*He tries to interrupt.*)
- Not pith helmets, I hope – they're rather silly.
- WALTER.** I beg you to recall that I am a parliamentarian. When I'm not in London, I am at home in Kent.
- SOREL.** Kent, you say? (*cooly*) Oh, dear. (*moves in closer, and leans against WALTER*) You must think me quite daft.
- WALTER.** (*a beat, then, swooning*) Do I hear soft music playing, or is it your aura?
- SOREL.** It must certainly be my aura, as Edward has smashed all our gramophone records to bits, apart from one dreary waltz which skips prophetically.
- WALTER.** You deserve more than an Edward Bennett.
- SOREL.** Which is precisely why I invited you, brave warrior. Will you protect me from his evil clutches?
- WALTER.** Delicate flower! You musn't be trampled by his corrupt ways. I shall provide a clear path to guide you.
- SOREL.** A path whither, darling?
- WALTER.** The straight and narrow path to righteousness.
- SOREL.** I am certainly willing to have a go at it – for the week-end, at least.
- WALTER.** (*knowingly*) You portray women who are jaded with sophistication. A touch of their brittle bearing has stolen into your own behavior. But I see the tender blossom beneath, and I shall unearth it.
- SOREL.** Walter, I am not certain that you have me entirely right, much as I appreciate the horticultural metaphors.
- WALTER.** My dear, I know you better than you know yourself.