

SOREL. Eric, I feel that somehow, this meat-packing Joan of Arc is not suited to my particular gifts.

EDWARD. And I wished so to see you go up in flames.

SOREL. You couldn't care less about my career. You are cruel, Edward, cruel and heartless! Soothe me, Eric.
(*She flings herself into ERIC's arms, and puts her legs up on WALTER.*)

(*JACK opens the front door, as BRIDGET enters from the kitchen.*)

JACK. Miss Victoria Van Roth is arrived from London.

(*VICTORIA doesn't enter. JACK peeks outside. He whistles, with two fingers in his mouth. VICTORIA makes a grand entrance, wearing a sleeveless sarong, one large earring and an extremely long scarf. She stops and poses.*)

VICTORIA. Sorel, darling!

(*SOREL rushes to VICTORIA, and they kiss on both cheeks.*)

SOREL. Victoria! What an agreeable surprise! I understood you were performing this week-end.

VICTORIA. I abandoned my recital at the Van Laban Dance Studio mid-step so that I might hasten to Cookham to console you.

(*VICTORIA rushes to EDWARD, and SOREL returns to the sofa.*)

Edward, you are a beast. How dare you abuse this queen to whom you are wed?

EDWARD. (*indicates SOREL sitting between the two men*) She seems to have recovered admirably.

VICTORIA. Merely a façade to disguise her pain. Sorel, you must see one of my psychoanalysts.

ERIC. You have more than one psychoanalyst? That is bourgeois indulgence.

VICTORIA. I have two, who offer contrasting diagnoses of my mental condition.

SOREL. I should very much like to meet both of these psychoanalysts to learn which one offers guidance that corresponds most directly to my intentions.

EDWARD. Rest easy, Victoria. Sorel is in the firm, manly hands of Mr. Walter Pearce, staunch defender of morality.

VICTORIA. (*glaring suspiciously at ERIC and WALTER*) Which one of you is Walter Pearce?

(*Hesitatingly, WALTER raises his hand.*)

VICTORIA. Morality is hypocrisy in a Sunday suit. I will not allow any such posture to encumber the journey I am taking into the recesses of my psyche.

EDWARD. Bon voyage.

WALTER. England needs you to put your nose to the grindstone, Miss Van Roth.

VICTORIA. What is this "grindstone?" In my dance - nay, in all my artistic pursuits - I use every sinew and corpuscle to receive and to communicate - which includes my nose!

(*She breathes in and out heavily, flaring her nostrils wildly.*)

JACK. I once knew a bloke who could lick his own elbow.

SOREL. (*just noticing*) Victoria, you seem to have lost an earring.

VICTORIA. I have not. (*indicating her blue stone earring*) I wear one Lapis Lazuli. And I shave only one underarm.

(*VICTORIA puts her hands behind her head. One underarm is shaved clean, and there is shock of hair in the other.*)

SOREL. I must say, that's quite *outré*.

WALTER. It's disgusting.

EDWARD. At ease, Victoria.

(*VICTORIA puts her arms down.*)

ERIC. Who is this Van Laban?

VICTORIA. Rudolph is a god. His dance techniques demand penetrating personal exploration.