

Elyot I'm glad we didn't go out tonight. (*He sits, putting the bottle on the table*)

Amanda Or last night.

Elyot Or the night before.

Amanda There's no reason to, really, when we're cosy here.

Elyot Exactly.

Amanda It's nice, isn't it?

Elyot Strangely peaceful. It's an awfully bad reflection on our characters. We ought to be absolutely tortured with conscience.

Amanda We are, every now and then.

Elyot Not nearly enough.

Amanda We sent Victor and Sibyl a nice note from wherever it was, what more can they want?

Elyot You're even more ruthless than I am.

Amanda I don't believe in crying over my bridge before I've eaten it.

Elyot Very sensible. (*He drinks*)

Amanda Personally I feel grateful for a miraculous escape. I know now that I should never have been happy with Victor. I was a fool ever to consider it.

Elyot You did a little more than consider it.

Amanda Well, you can't talk.

Elyot I wonder whether they met each other, or whether they've been suffering alone.

Amanda Oh dear, don't let's go on about it, it really does make one feel rather awful.

Elyot I suppose one or other or both of them will turn up here eventually.

Amanda Bound to; it won't be very nice, will it?

Elyot (*Cheerfully*) Perfectly horrible.

Amanda (*delighted, like a child*) Do you realize that we're living in sin?

Elyot Not according to the Catholics, Catholics don't recognize divorce.

Amanda Yes, dear, but we're not Catholics.

Elyot Never mind, it's nice to think they'd sort of back us up. We were married in the eyes of Heaven, and we still are.

Amanda We may be all right in the eyes of Heaven, but we look like being in the hell of a mess socially.

Elyot Who cares?

Amanda Are we going to marry again, after Victor and Sibyl divorce us?

Elyot I suppose so. What do you think?

Amanda I feel rather scared of marriage really.

Elyot It is a frowsy business.

Amanda I believe it was just the fact of our being married, and clamped together publicly, that wrecked us before.

Elyot That, and not knowing how to manage each other.

Amanda Do you think we know how to manage each other now?

Elyot This week's been very successful. We've hardly used Solomon Isaacs at all.

Amanda Solomon Isaacs is so long, let's shorten it to Sollocks.

Elyot All right.

ACT II

Amanda's flat in Paris. A few days later. About ten o'clock in the evening

The flat is charmingly furnished. The principal features being a grand piano up R C, and a large, comfortable settee down C, with a table and two chairs behind it. In the corner up L, under a china cabinet, stands another smaller settee. There is a radiogram down L. The window is in the corner up R. Down R is a door leading to Elyot's room. Down L is a door leading to Amanda's room. Double doors up C lead out into the hall. There is a small tub chair L C

When the CURTAIN rises Amanda, R, and Elyot, L, are seated opposite one another at the table. They have finished dinner and are dallying over coffee and liqueurs. Amanda wears pyjamas, and Elyot a comfortable dressing-gown

Amanda I'm glad we let Louise go. I am afraid she is going to have a cold.

Elyot Going to have a cold; she's been grunting and snorting all the evening like a whole herd of bison.

Amanda (*thoughtfully*) Bison never sound right to me somehow. I have a feeling it ought to be bisons, a flock of bisons.

Elyot You might say a covey of bisons, or even a school of bisons.

Amanda Yes, lovely. The Royal London School of Bisons. Do you think Louise is happy at home?

Elyot No, profoundly miserable.

Amanda Family beastly to her?

Elyot (*with conviction*) Absolutely vile. Knock her about dreadfully I expect, make her eat the most disgusting food, and pull her fringe.

Amanda (*laughing*) Oh, poor Louise.

Elyot Well, you know what the French are.

Amanda Oh yes, indeed. I know what the Hungarians are, too.

Elyot What are they?

Amanda Very wistful. It's all those Pretzles, I shouldn't wonder. Have you ever crossed the Sahara on a camel?

Elyot Frequently. When I was a boy we used to do it all the time. My grandmother had a lovely seat on a camel.

Amanda There's no doubt about it, foreign travel's the thing.

Elyot (*rising and picking up the brandy bottle from the trolley*) Would you like some brandy?

Amanda Just a little.

Elyot takes out the cork, gives Amanda a slight look, pours some brandy into her glass, then some into his own

Amanda Darling, you do look awfully sweet in your little dressing-gown.

Elyot Yes, it's pretty ravishing, isn't it?

Amanda Do you mind if I come round and kiss you?

Elyot A pleasure, Lady Agatha.

Amanda rises, crosses to Elyot and kisses him. She stands behind his chair with her R hand on his shoulder and his L hand in hers

Amanda What fools we were to subject ourselves to five years' unnecessary suffering.

Elyot Perhaps it wasn't unnecessary, perhaps it mellowed and perfected us like beautiful ripe fruit. *(He kisses her L hand)*

Amanda *(crossing to R of the table)* When we were together, did you really think I was unfaithful to you?

Elyot Yes, practically every day.

Amanda I thought you were, too; often I used to torture myself with visions of your bouncing about on divans with awful widows. *(She stands behind her chair)*

Elyot Why widows?

Amanda I was thinking of Claire Lavenham really.

Elyot Oh Claire.

Amanda *(pushing her chair into the table; sharply)* What did you say "Oh Claire" like that for? It sounded far too careless to me.

Elyot *(wistfully)* What a lovely creature she was.

Amanda *(sitting on the R arm of the settee)* Lovely, lovely, lovely!

Elyot *(blowing her a kiss)* Darling!

Amanda Did you ever have an affair with her? Afterwards I mean?

Elyot Why do you want to know?

Amanda Curiosity, I suppose.

Elyot Dangerous.

Amanda Oh not now, not dangerous now. I wouldn't expect you to have been celibate during those five years, any more than I was.

Elyot *(stopping his glass half-way to his mouth; jumping)* What?

Amanda After all, Claire was undeniably attractive. A trifle over vivacious I always thought, but that was probably because she was fundamentally stupid.

Elyot What do you mean about not being celibate during those five years?

Amanda What do you think I mean?

Elyot *(rising)* Oh God! *(He looks down miserably)*

Amanda What's the matter?

Elyot *(moving up to the double doors)* You know perfectly well what's the matter.

Amanda *(gently)* You mustn't be unreasonable, I was only trying to stamp out the memory of you. I expect your affairs well out-numbered mine anyhow.

Elyot That is a little different. I'm a man. *(He crosses to the door down L)*

Amanda Excuse me a moment while I get a caraway biscuit and change my crinoline.

Elyot It doesn't suit women to be promiscuous.

Amanda It doesn't suit men for women to be promiscuous.

Elyot *(with sarcasm)* Very modern, dear; really your advanced views quite startle me. *(He moves up L)*

Amanda *(playing with the edge of a cushion, trying not to have a row)* Don't be cross, Elyot, I haven't been so dreadfully loose actually. Five years is a long time, and even if I did nip off with someone every now

and again, they were none of them very serious.

Elyot *(coming down L)* Oh, do stop it please—

Amanda *(rising)* Well, what about you?

Elyot Do you want me to tell you?

Amanda No, no, I don't—I take everything back—I don't.

Elyot *(moving in front of the settee, L end; viciously)* I was madly in love

with a woman in South Africa.

Amanda *(moving in front of the settee, R end)* Did she have a ring through

her nose?

Elyot Don't be revolting.

Amanda We're tormenting one another. Sit down, sweet, I'm scared.

Elyot *(slowly)* Very well. *(He sits down slowly at the L end of the settee)*

Amanda sits at the R end of the settee

Amanda We should have said Sollocks ages ago.

Elyot We're in love all right.

Amanda Don't say it so bitterly. Let's try to get the best out of it this time,

instead of the worst.

Elyot *(stretching his hand across)* Hand please.

Amanda *(clasping it)* Here.

Elyot *(leaning back)* More comfortable

Amanda *(leaning back)* Much more.

Elyot *(after a slight pause; very gayly)* Are you engaged for this dance?

Amanda Funnily enough I was, but my partner was suddenly taken ill.

Elyot *(rising and going to the radiogram)* It's this damned smallpox epidemic.

Amanda No, as a matter of fact it was kidney trouble.

Elyot You'll dance it with me I hope? *(He starts the music)*

Amanda *(rising and crossing to L C)* I shall be charmed.

Elyot *(as they dance)* Quite a good floor, isn't it? *(They cross below the*

settee to R C)

Amanda Yes, I think it needs a little Borax.

Elyot I love Borax. *(They move C below the settee)*

Amanda *(looking out towards the audience)* Is that the Grand Duchess

Olga lying under the piano?

Elyot Yes, her husband died a few weeks ago, you know, on his way back

from Pulborough. So sad.

Amanda *(as they move to R C)* What on earth was he doing in Pulborough?

Elyot *(moving above the table)* Nobody knows exactly, but there have been

the usual stories.

Amanda I see.

Elyot Delightful parties Lady Bundle always gives, doesn't she?

Amanda Entrancing. Such a dear old lady.

Elyot *(moving to R end of the table)* And so gay: did you notice her at

supper blowing all those shrimps through her ear trumpet?