

"The Way You Look At It" was presented at the Queen's Theatre on July 27, 1926

The Way You Look At It

"The Way You Look At It" was presented at the Queen's Theatre under the management of Mr. J. B. Fagan on July 27, 1926, with the following cast

TONY JARDINE	TOM NESBITT
MEARS	REGINALD SMITH
JILL RENDON	MARTITA HUNT
BOBBY RENDON	LESLIE HOWARD
SIBYL RISLEY	ISABEL JEANS
JOAN MERROW	EDNA BEST
FIRST WAITER	ALAN WEBB
SECOND WAITER	EDMUND GORDON
A FLOWER - SELLER	VERONICA TURLEIGH

The play produced by J. B. FAGAN.

CHARACTERS

(In order of their appearance.)

TONY JARDINE

MEARS

JILL RENDON

BOBBY RENDON

SIBYL RISLEY

JOAN MERROW

A WAITER

A FLOWER SELLER

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SCENES

ACT I. 14 Bachelor Flat.

ACT II: SCENE I. *A Garden.*

 SCENE II. *A Restaurant in Paris.*

 SCENE III. *Same as Act I.*

ACT III. *Same as Act I.*

Synopsis

ACT I

SCENE: *The living room of a very luxurious Bachelor Flat in Mayfair. There are two doors - one to the outer world and another - up two steps - to the bedroom. The room is extremely modern, in good taste, and in the height of comfort. It is about 7p.m.*

TONY JARDINE *is sprawling on the sofa - reading the Tatler and smoking. He yawns, then flings the Tatler on to the ground, and gets up and has a look round the room. He whistles as he does this. He goes back to the sofa.*

TONY: Oh! Lord! (*He shouts.*) Bobby! I say, Bobby! [*The door bell rings.* Oh, damn! Someone's coming. (*He shouts again.*) Bobby!

[MEARS *comes in.* MEARS *is a very respectable gentleman.*

MEARS: Mr. Rendon is in his bath, sir.

TONY: Oh! well, he's taking the devil of a long time over it.

MEARS: Yes, Sir.

TONY: And that's someone - at the door - isn't it?

MEARS: Yes, Sir.

TONY: And I particularly wanted to see him alone.

MEARS: Quite so - sir.

[*The bell rings again. I'll go and see, sir.*

TONY: I suppose you must.

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[MEARS goes to the door. TONY picks up the Tatler and puts it on the table. .Is he does so he looks at the room and shakes his head. MEARS comes in again followed by JILL RENDON - who is not quite young and dressed as if she lived in the country.

JILL: Please tell Mr. Rendon I'm here.

MEARS: Yes, Madame.

JILL: My name is Rendon - Miss Rendon - and I'm his sister.

MEARS: Yes, miss. (MEARS goes out, to bedroom.)

TONY: Jill!

JILL: Tony! Thank God it's you - I'm so frightened of butlers.

TONY: So am I.

JILL: But Bobby - with a butler. What does it mean?

[TONY shakes his head.

What luck finding you here! I'm so glad.

TONY: I didn't know you were in London.

JILL: I'm not. (She laughs.) I'm passing through. [TONY laughs.

That's right - laugh at me - I know I'm only a country bumpkin - worse luck - passing through is about the nearest I ever do get to London. And I loathe the country, too. But then - I'm a typical vicar's daughter. You're different.

TONY: Me?

JILL: Yes. You were always a Squire's son.

TONY: What a horrid thought!

JILL: Yes. But you are.

TONY: It sounds rather disreputable.

JILL: That's where you're different.

TONY: Oh, am I?

JILL: Yes. Well, I was passing through - (crossing to couch) and so I thought I'd drop in and see Bobby. (She looks round.)

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TONY: I've come to see him, too.

JILL: But I say - this is very swagger - isn't it? What's up? I mean - these are very different from the old rooms, aren't they?

TONY: Yes.

JILL (*sits on couch*): You aren't saying much, are you?

TONY: No.

JILL: Well, then?

TONY: I said - I'd come to see him, too.

JILL: Then you haven't seen him lately?

TONY: No.

JILL: Why not?

TONY (*crosses to JILL*): Not for nearly two months now.

JILL: That's not an answer.

TONY (*sits in chair by couch*): Oh - well.

JILL: What's wrong?

TONY: Nothing.

JILL: Tony, whose flat is this?

TONY: I don't know.

JILL: You don't know?

TONY: No.

JILL: Ho. Well, it's not Bobby's anyway. Is it?

TONY: No.

JILL: Well, I mean, he hasn't got any money, has he? None of us have for that matter.

TONY: No.

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JILL (*rises*): So it's not his - and that butler. (*She shivers.*) 'Ugh! (*She walks round by desk and examines curtains.*) It's very grand, isn't it?

TONY: Yes.

JILL: And very expensive.

TONY: Yes.

JILL: And very (*She stops in front of a nude picture.*) And look at that. Or rather - don't look at it. I'm shocked at least - I hope I'm shocked. I wonder whose it is.

TONY: So do I.

JILL: It's all very odd. How long has he been in it?

TONY: Oh, about a month or so, I believe.

JILL: Oh!

TONY: Why?

JILL: You believe?

TONY: Yes.

JILL: I was just thinking.

TONY: What?

JILL: Oh, only that he wrote and told me about eight weeks ago that he was thinking of moving to this address.

TONY: Well?

JILL: And that you haven't seen him since then.

TONY: That's true.

JILL: You've no idea who owns this?

TONY: No.

JILL: We could ring and ask the butler, couldn't we?

TONY: No.

JILL: Why not?

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TONY (rises): 'Cos we're afraid of him.

JILL: I've a good mind to.

TONY: Bobby will tell you in a minute.

JILL (*looks at TONY*): Yes, I suppose so.

TONY: Of course - he's been lent it - or something.

JILL: Or something. (*She thinks.*) Yes, I suppose so.

TONY: Why "Yes" like that?

JILL: Well (*crosses to couch*), it's very lucky for him. (*She sighs.*) I'm glad.

TONY: So am I.

JILL (*sits*): But all the same, my dear Tony, I may live in the country and be a cousin and all that - but Bobby - and this (*she pauses*) - and three pounds a week.

TONY: Oh! He'll tell you in a minute.

JILL: Yes, but

TONY (*shakes his head*): Don't ask me.

JILL: But I am asking you.

TONY: Well, it's no good. Because I don't know.

JILL: And what did you two quarrel about?

TONY (*sits*): We didn't quarrel.

JILL: Oh! I thought you did.

TONY: I didn't say so.

JILL: Then you looked it.

TONY: Well

JILL: Yes.

TONY: We didn't quite see eye to eye.

JILL: About what?

TONY: Oh, I don't know. Things.

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JILL: H'm.

TONY: Jill - it was nothing - but we'd always been such pals.

JILL: Since you were children.

TONY: Yes.

JILL: A good excuse for quarrelling.

TONY: And then Bobby's so young.

JILL: I know.

TONY: Only a kid - and he's got a good job, as jobs go nowadays - anyway, to start with - and he was getting on fine.

JILL: Yes.

TONY: And then he went and got in with a lot of -

JILL: Yes?

TONY: Oh, I don't know. Extravagant sort of people, much too expensive for him, anyway - men and women, mostly women - they took him up - he was such fun and oh! he got staying out late at night so that he couldn't do his job properly, and I lectured him and he didn't take it in the right way.

JILL: He didn't like it?

TONY: No. And then one day - we had the devil of a bust up - all over nothing - really.

JILL: Oh!

TONY: Yes. The day he chucked up the job.

JILL: He did that?

TONY: Yes.

JILL: He hasn't told us yet.

TONY: No?

JILL: No.

TONY: He said it wasn't good enough.

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JILL: I see.

TONY: And he was always about with one woman.

JILL: Who?

TONY: Does it matter?

JILL: I suppose not.

TONY: And I didn't like it.

JILL: Oh! Did you know her?

TONY: No - I just didn't like her.

JILL: What sort?

TONY: Oh! Smart and all that - and we had a row and he told me to go to the devil for criticising his friends - and he said I was jealous - I suppose I was. Anyway, I walked out of his room.

JILL (*smiles*): And slammed the door?

TONY (*laughs*): I'm afraid so. Silly, wasn't it?

JILL: Yes - but human.

TONY: And the next time I went back - they told me he had left, and they gave me this address

[MEARS *enters with some cocktails.*

and I've been meaning to come ever since - and it was only this evening

MEARS: Mr. Rendon says, Miss - that he will be about a quarter of an hour - and will you have a cocktail while you're waiting?

JILL: No, thank you.

[MEARS *crosses to table with cocktails.*

TONY: I Say, Jill?

JILL: Yes, Tony?

TONY (*to MEARS*): All right. Tell him Miss Rendon will go and come back later.

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JILL: But –

TONY: That will do.

MEARS: Yes, sir. *(He goes out to bedroom.)*

TONY: I'm sorry, Jill, but let me see him first - will you?

JILL: Why? What is it?

TONY: Oh, it's all right. I don't know, Jill - I have a sort of feeling he wants to see me first - that's all.

JILL: Tony?

TONY: I may be wrong. But it's awfully like Bobby. You know he was always like that. He'd sort of wait till he could see us one at a time.

JILL: But -!

TONY: Oh, there's nothing to be frightened of - really, Jill.

JILL: I'm not frightened - why should I be?

TONY: Of course not.

JILL: I'm only curious.

TONY *(rises)*: Oh, I know it's all right, there's nothing to fuss about - he's been lent this flat - that's all. But let me have a talk with him first - will you? *(Turns to JILL.)* Can't you go away - any excuse will do, and come back later. I'll tell him you're coming back.

JILL: What do you want to say to him first?

TONY: Really, Jill, don't fuss - it's all right, I know. But I want to get my row over first. And anyway, I can't stay I'm dining out.

JILL *(rises)*: You're not a very good liar - are you, Tony?

TONY: Liar?

JILL *(crosses to TONY)*: Yes, my dear, but never mind. I don't want to - but I'll do what you ask - but I shall only be away ten minutes, though. Tony, find out the truth, will you? Although I said I wasn't - I am a little scared.

TONY: Of course I will.

JILL: Yes. I know Bobby's all right.

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TONY (*goes to door*): Yes, Bobby's all right. He's only young.

JILL (*moves round to top of couch*): Only young? (*Picks up fur.*) But I'm rather frightened of youth. Ten minutes and good - bye, Tony. (*She goes out.*)

[TONY *holds the door open for her. He goes back to the sofa whistling.* BOBBY *comes in. He is young and good - looking. He is only half-dressed - with a dressing - gown on.*

BOBBY: Hello, Tony - you old - (*He stops and looks round the room.*) Has she gone?

TONY: Hello, old man. (*He holds out his hand.*)

BOBBY (*rushes over to him and takes it*): I was just waiting until she'd gone - Didn't you hear the extra splashing?

TONY: No.

BOBBY: Well, then - it must have been drowned by my singing. I took the high C just as I took the plug out. (*He hits him on the back.*) You old ass! I am glad to see you. But I'm glad, too, that she's gone. I wanted to talk to you first.

TONY (*sits on couch*): Somehow I thought as much.

BOBBY: Oh, did you? Well, you're right this time. You know I'm devoted to her and all that - but let's have a drink.

TONY: She's coming back, though.

BOBBY: Oh!

TONY: Yes, in ten minutes.

BOBBY: Then it must be a short, sharp one. (*He goes and shakes the shaker, and pours them out.*) It's good to see you, Tony. What have you been up to all this time? (*He gives him one.*) Here.

TONY: Thanks. (*He takes it.*) I was going to ask you that.

BOBBY (*takes a cocktail*): Me? Oh! Me. I've been here - there - and everywhere. Upstairs and downstairs and in - Oh! Everywhere. (*He laughs.*) Gosh, it's good to see you. Come on, ask away. Anything you like.

TONY: Well

BOBBY (*crosses and sits in chair by couch*): I've been having the hell of a time. It's been Heaven.

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TONY: Grand.

BOBBY: Yes, really Tony, I've been learning how to live you know - the latest way as shown in the Tatler - at the most expensive places - with the most exclusive people. Think of me doing it - it's simply priceless, isn't it? It's marvellous - it's divine - it's (*He looks at TONY and bursts out laughing.*) It's almost too true to be good, isn't it? Honestly, Tony, old man, you'd never have thought in the old days, would you? that I'd develop into the real thing - and do all the wrong things at the right moment just to show how smart I am - and look

TONY: Bobby!

BOBBY: Oh! Don't stop me - I'm in a good vein. Look at all this - isn't it grand? sn't it splendid? Isn't it all just exactly as it should be?

TONY (*dryly*): You think so?

BOBBY: Of course I think so. (*He drains his cocktail.*) Long may it last, say I.

TONY: Which means?

BOBBY: Exactly nothing.

TONY (*clears his throat*): Bobby, you know I'm fond of you.

BOBBY: Oh, my God! You aren't going to lecture me again, are you?

TONY: Well

BOBBY: You were - come on. You might as well own up to it - you were, weren't you?

TONY: I was.

BOBBY: There now. It's perfectly extraordinary how observant I am. You know I think I must have second sight or something - because whenever anybody clears their throat and says "Bobby, you know how fond I am of you" - I know it's coming.

TONY: Sorry.

BOBBY: You old fool, Tony, forget it - but we had a damn good row over it once, didn't we?

TONY: Yes.

BOBBY: But that's all over now. Friends again?

TONY: Yes.

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BOBBY: And no more lectures?

TONY: I don't know.

BOBBY: What do you mean - you don't know!

TONY: There's Jill.

BOBBY: What's Jill got to do with it?

TONY: Only she'll be back in a few minutes.

BOBBY: And what if she is?

TONY: She wants to know.

BOBBY: And in the Lord's name - what does she want to know?

TONY: All this.

BOBBY: All this! Oh, Tony! Is she very shocked at me living in the lap of luxury? And do you remember how we used to live at home? Economising at all costs! Eking out the last farthing - always putting by for the rainy day. And it always rains in England.

[TONY *laughs*.

That's better. Cheer up! All this, well - what is all this? It's damn nice anyway - isn't it?

TONY: Er - !

BOBBY: Well, isn't it? Tell me the truth, Tony, wouldn't you like it?

TONY: Er - yes.

BOBBY: I wonder if you would - really - I don't believe you'd quite know what to make of it all, would you?

TONY: No.

BOBBY: You'd always use the wrong tap in the bathroom.

TONY: Yes.

BOBBY: Well, come and live here, too, and try.

TONY: Why, Bobby?

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BOBBY: Oh, no. It's not mine exactly. I've only been lent it.

TONY: I said so.

BOBBY: But I daresay I'll buy it one day.

TONY: Buy it?

BOBBY: Yes. Aren't I lucky?

TONY (*gloomily*): Er - yes. But

BOBBY: Do you know, Tony, that by the way you said that - I should have thought that the aunt you revered was dead - and you couldn't find a top hat in time for the funeral.

TONY: But how do you live here?

BOBBY: Live here! Like a prince.

TONY: But you've got no money.

BOBBY: Money! Who wants money - anyway, I'm a very "well spent" youth.

TONY: But

BOBBY: Oh! Don't go on like that. Like all good Americans, "I'm mortified" at the way you go on. Besides, who said I hadn't got money? I've got heaps and heaps and heaps of it - I've got so much of it that on rainy days when I can't get out and spend it - I throw a little out of the window - just to see what it feels like.

TONY: Bobby!

BOBBY: Haven't you ever burnt a bank note? (*In great surprise.*) No. Never? Oh! You should, Tony, it makes one feel unscrupulous. It's a wonderful feeling.

TONY: Oh!

BOBBY: Oh, don't look so shocked, Tony. Of course, I don't really - I'm only pulling your leg. I've more than I can spend, anyway.

TONY: Really?

BOBBY: Yes, really. Don't look so solemn. Don't you trust me?

TONY: Of course I do.

BOBBY: I'm glad, old man. I've got a new job, that's all.

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TONY: Oh, Bobby, I'm glad.

BOBBY (*crosses to table*): I thought you would be - it's a damn fine one, too. (*He takes another cocktail.*) Here's to it.

TONY: I really am glad, Bobby. You see -

BOBBY: Yes?

TONY: I thought

BOBBY (*turning to TONY*): I think it might be rather interesting to hear exactly what you did think.

TONY: Oh! Does it matter?

BOBBY: Yes, it matters a good deal - if we're to be friends. And oh, Tony, I want you as my friend. Really I do.

TONY: You know we are.

BOBBY: Yes, I suppose so.

TONY: Suppose so?

BOBBY: And what do you think?

TONY: I say, old man.

BOBBY: No, seriously. I want to know.

TONY: Must I?

BOBBY: I'm afraid so. You see, Tony - I want to know what you think of me - or what you might - Oh! all sorts of things. If we're to be real friends we must be honest.

TONY: Well, then

BOBBY: Wait a minute. I expect I'll need another drink. Don't start - until I've got one. (*He takes one.*) Want another?

TONY: No.

BOBBY: Then go ahead.

TONY: You see first of all, your job.

BOBBY: The rotten one I chucked or the new one?

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TONY: The one you chucked.

BOBBY: Not much good, was it? Three pounds a week. Rather different to this. Oh! The monotony of it. You know monotony is doing all the beastly things one can think of - very slowly - all the time. It was dreadful.

TONY: I know. But I was frightened for you all the same.

BOBBY: Why?

TONY: When you chucked it - you didn't seem serious about it or anything somehow.

BOBBY (*thinking it over*): Serious?

TONY: Yes. Life is serious, you know.

BOBBY: Oh, Tony! I don't think it is. I think you're quite wrong there. God! If I took it seriously.

TONY: Well?

BOBBY: Oh, no! It's much too much fun for that.

TONY: And then I didn't see you.

BOBBY: Well, - (*crosses to TONY*) - whose fault was that?

TONY: Mine, I know.

BOBBY (*sits*): Nonsense.

TONY: Oh, yes it was. I was jealous.

BOBBY: Oh, rot.

TONY: No, I was. Forgive me.

BOBBY: My dear old fellow!

TONY: But it was my fault - I dunno. I'd got angry and then my pride wouldn't let me come and see you - then when I did - you'd left - and I came here, I didn't know about the new job. I only knew you'd got a lot of expensive women friends and no money - at least, that I knew of, and then I came here and found all this - this

BOBBY (*quietly*): Yes - this what?

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TONY: This luxury.

BOBBY: Is there anything wrong in luxury - if you can afford it?

TONY: I didn't think about that.

BOBBY: No. But - you did think - ?

TONY: I'm not used to smart things - or people.

BOBBY: Isn't it a lark, though?

TONY: . I suppose so. But I got frightened.

BOBBY: But why frightened? Even if -

TONY: But thank God - it's not true, anyway.

BOBBY (*looks at him*): Poor old Tony! (*He sighs.*)

TONY: I'm only an old fool.

BOBBY: Perhaps.

TONY: Oh, I know it.

BOBBY: And if it had been true?

TONY: But it's not.

BOBBY: But if it had been?

TONY: Oh! Well, then (*He shrugs his shoulders.*)

BOBBY: Go on - tell me.

TONY: Oh! I'd have done something - found out another job somewhere. Got you out of whatever mess you were in somehow.

BOBBY: But if I hadn't wanted to be "got out?"

TONY: But you would.

BOBBY (*smiles sadly*): And you would help me.

TONY: Of course I would have.

BOBBY: And not have lectured me?

TONY (*smiles*): Oh, well!

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BOBBY: You're a good friend, Tony.

TONY: I'm not. I don't know why you aren't kicking me out of the room - for even thinking all this about you - I'm glad it's all right.

BOBBY: Of course it is.

TONY: Jill will be glad, too.

BOBBY: Oh! My God! (*Rises and puts glass on table.*) What on earth has it got to do with Jill - whatever I do?

TONY: But she's fond of you.

BOBBY: There you go again. Oh, Lord! Fond of me.

TONY: Well, she is - isn't she? She's your sister.

BOBBY: Fond of me? Sister? This fond business is terrible. It gives people such a passion for meddling.

TONY: But Jill's your sister.

BOBBY: You're beginning to lecture me again and I can't bear it. One more word of advice and I'll yell for help.

TONY: Sorry. By the way

BOBBY: Yes?

TONY: What is the new job?

BOBBY: Oh, yes! What is it?

TONY: A pretty fat one?

BOBBY: Rather.

TONY: I like your dressing gown.

BOBBY: It's marvellous, isn't it?

TONY: Yes.

BOBBY: The latest in Gent's Bathing Wraps. Couldn't have managed that on three pounds a week, could I?

TONY: No.

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BOBBY: It's wonderful not to have to think. Oh, that reminds me. *(He rings the bell.)* Sorry, Tony, I forgot. A few domestic details. Have another drink? TONY: No, thanks.

BOBBY: I think I will. *(He takes one.)*

TONY: You've had two already.

BOBBY: No, only three. Oh! Well - one more. *(He drinks.)*

[MEARS *comes in.*

What is it, Mears?

MEARS: You rang, sir.

BOBBY: Oh, yes. So I did - my memory must be going.

TONY: It's the cocktails.

BOBBY: They're so good, though. Mears makes better cocktails than anyone alive. Don't you, Mears?

[MEARS *bows. They're so*

MEARS: Yes, Sir.

BOBBY: Oh, yes, Mears, as I was saying - or was going to say. *(He laughs.)* Tony, you old fool. What was I going to say?

TONY: I don't know.

BOBBY: Oh, yes. Ring up the Embassy and tell them to keep the usual table for two and order dinner - They know what I like.

MEARS: Yes, Sir.

BOBBY: And send out and get some orchids - you know, the mottled kind - that look as if they'd got measles.

MEARS: Yes, Sir. *(He begins to go.)*

BOBBY: Oh, and Mears - have you got any money?

MEARS: Yes, Sir.

BOBBY: Then pay for them.

MEARS: Yes, Sir.

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BOBBY: And give me the change.

MEARS: Yes, Sir. *(He goes out.)*

BOBBY: I wonder if Mears has ever said anything else except "Yes, sir" all his life - I'll have it carved on his tombstone.

TONY: Orchids?

BOBBY: Ooh! Yes. Expensive ones. Ssh! For a woman.

TONY: Oh!

BOBBY: A beautiful one.

TONY: Gosh.

[BOBBY picks up the Tatler and turns the pages.]

BOBBY: Yes, indeed, gosh - look. *(He reads.)* "The beautiful Mrs. Risley - and as rich as she's beautiful" And that's saying something. *(Crossing to TONY.)*

[TONY nods.]

What do you know about that?

TONY: I say.

BOBBY: And you would, too *(crosses back to table)*, if you were me. Not bad, is it?

TONY: I should say not.

BOBBY *(laughs)*: Aren't I a clever lad?

TONY *(laughs)*: Is that part of the new job?

BOBBY *(laughs)*: Yes.

TONY: What?!

BOBBY: Yes. It's good, isn't it?

TONY: What!!!

BOBBY: I say, Tony. Don't be an ass.

TONY *(rises)*: Bobby! What do you mean?

BOBBY *(still laughing)*: It's rather funny, isn't it? Tony, don't be angry with me.

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TONY: I'm not being angry with you. Tell me the truth, though.

BOBBY: But I am telling you.

TONY: What's this flat got to do with it?

BOBBY: Everything.

TONY: Good God!

BOBBY: Good God, yes, and she's been very good to me, too.

TONY: Pull yourself together, Bobby - you don't mean what you're saying.

BOBBY: Of course I do. She's my new job - I'm her Secretary.

TONY: You young cad! BOBBY (*winces*): Cad?

TONY: You cad.

BOBBY: But I don't see why.

TONY (*in disgust*): A new job!

BOBBY: Well, it is one.

TONY: Then I was right.

BOBBY: Right? Yes, I suppose you are in a way.

TONY: In a way!

BOBBY: But you look at it from quite the wrong angle.

TONY: Do I?

BOBBY: Yes, you do. Oh, don't lecture me, Tony - I know you think I'm awful. But I'm not really. Look here, old man.

[TONY *turns away*.

Don't turn away from me. Your friendship means a lot to me. But do look at it from my point of view. After all, I'm young - Why the hell should I have to go and work at a damned office all day long? It's a dreadful thing to do. It stifles one - it kills everything there is in one - and for a wretched salary, too, and no prospects. Why should I do that - when I can live a really happy life - like I'm doing now - with the most wonderful woman in the world - and not worry?

TONY: Bobby, it's all wrong. You know it is.

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BOBBY: Wrong? I don't think so. I don't see why. Honestly - tell me why it's wrong?

TONY: Oh!

BOBBY: Goon. Tell me why?

TONY: 'cos it is.

BOBBY: But that's not a reason. And I can't find one. She's divine - and we're terribly happy and I adore her. She happens to be rich - that's all - if I had the money I'd do the same for her.

TONY: Bobby, look here - I can't agree. I'm not made like that. But one day -

BOBBY: One day! But, Tony, it's now that I'm thinking of. It's no good, old man. Be nice to me. I've thought it all out. I'm sorry you don't like it - I'd be miserable if this made any difference between us. Try and be friends with me - in spite of what I'm doing. Because I'm so happy. Really I am. Do try. Because I want to give you a good time, too.

TONY: Me?

BOBBY: Yes. Why not?

TONY: On her money?

BOBBY (*laughs*): I wish you wouldn't put it like that.

TONY: Well, it is - isn't it?

BOBBY: Yes. But it sounds so awful like that.

TONY: It is awful. Where is your pride?

BOBBY: Oh, don't!

TONY: What can I do?

BOBBY: Nothing, my dear Tony, nothing. (*He yawns.*) But remember this is 1926 and not 1890.

TONY: You young blackguard.

BOBBY: It's my chance to get on - and I'm taking it. It's a very pleasant chance. After all I'm only doing what has been done all through the ages. A hundred years ago it was very chic - and it's coming into fashion again. Besides, look at all the young men who marry rich old women; I'm not as bad as that, at least, I don't have to pretend as much.

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[The door bell rings.]

That's Jill. Open the door, Tony, and let her in. If we've got to tell her, let's have it out now.

TONY: Bobby!

BOBBY: No, Tony, don't make a fuss. It's so stupid. I've made up my mind - you can't do anything.

[TONY goes and opens the door. JILL comes in.]

JILL: Well?

[BOBBY doesn't say anything.]

Bobby darling! *(She comes into the room.)*

BOBBY: Hello, Jill.

JILL: I'm so glad to see you, dear old boy.

BOBBY: How nice of you. *(He kisses her politely.)* You've seen Tony?

JILL: Yes. *(Pause.)* Well?

TONY: Oh, I'm going home.

BOBBY *(takes a cigarette from box on table)*: I'm sorry you feel like that about it.

JILL: What is the matter with you two?

BOBBY: Tony's upset - because I'm leading my own life.

TONY: If you like to put it that way. It makes me sick, that's all.

JILL: Tony!

TONY: I don't care if he is your brother - he's my friend and I won't stay here and let him ruin his life.

BOBBY: I'm not ruining it. It's my own life, anyway, isn't it? I have a right to do what I like with it - even to ruin it, if I want to, haven't I? Anyway, I don't expect any interference from my friends.

JILL: What do you mean?

BOBBY: Tony calls himself my friend; but that doesn't give him the right to poke his nose into my affairs. Anyway, I shan't put up with it.

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TONY: All right, I'm going.

BOBBY: Yes do.

JILL: Shut up, Tony. (Moves towards BOBBY.) Go on, Bobby.

BOBBY (like a sulky boy): Well, it's my own life. JILL: Certainly.

BOBBY: And at the moment it means living in this perfectly charming flat - which has been lent me by a perfectly charming woman. I can't see any reason why I shouldn't - can you, Jill?

JILL: Bobby - I

BOBBY: Tony thinks there's something terribly wrong about it, but I can't see it - can you?

JILL: I'm not sure

BOBBY: I'm very sorry if you don't like it ; but I might as well be frank - I mean to go on doing it. Chiefly because I'm very happy.

TONY: You see, Jill - he's hopeless. We've got to -

JILL (*crosses to TONY*): Tony, you're only on each other's nerves. I think you'd better go - I want to talk to Bobby alone.

TONY: All right. I'll go. Good - bye, Jill. (*Moves towards door and turns.*) Bobby, I'm sorry - can't we?

BOBBY: Oh, for the Lord's sake get out.

TONY: All right. (*He goes out.*)

BOBBY (*crosses to couch*): Silly old fool. God! Why he wants to come and interfere. It's nothing to do with him.

JILL: He's - he's your friend.

BOBBY: Thank the Lord you didn't say he was fond of me.

JILL: Why?

BOBBY (*Sits*): Oh, nothing. Come on, Jill - out with it. Am I so very awful?

JILL: It depends.

BOBBY: On what?

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JILL: You see I don't know what has happened.

BOBBY: Nothing has happened really.

JILL: Oh! (*She pauses.*) What did you mean, then? Simply that some woman is paying for all this?

BOBBY: Roughly.

JILL: And what do you do - in return?

BOBBY: Jill - I

JILL: Exactly - and she pays.

BOBBY: It sounds awful, I know. But it isn't, really.

JILL: No?

BOBBY: She doesn't pay for everything - I've been very lucky just lately.

JILL: Lucky?

BOBBY: Yes. Gambling and one thing and another.

JILL: Gambling?

BOBBY: Yes. Awfully lucky.

JILL: Bobby, my dear - (*goes to him and sits*) - you're my brother - and I love you - I suppose I'm an awful old frump to you. But I hate to see you like this.

BOBBY: Do you think I'm such a rotter, then?

JILL: I don't know about a rotter; but I hate to think of you doing such - such unworthy things. You see you've been brought up - to a certain standard - and you ought to live up to it. A standard of decency - in which there are certain things one does - and other things one does not do.. And this seems rather low - it lets down your class - all that we stand for decent clean living - it seems so despicable.

BOBBY: I'm sorry, Jill, but it doesn't seem despicable to me. It only seems rather sensible. I think you're only saying the things - you've been brought up to think - rather stale old cliches.

JILL: Please, Bobby, listen.

BOBBY: Jill dear, I am. But what's the good?

JILL: Listen! One day - you'll fall in love.

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BOBBY: How do you know that I'm not now?

JILL: I know you're not. If this was love - you couldn't accept such a position. Your pride would revolt - you couldn't.

BOBBY: What a funny thing pride is supposed to be.

JILL: Why?

BOBBY: It seems to stand in the way so much.

JILL: Oh, Bobby, those are only words. Indeed, pride is something rather fine - something rather courageous and challenging - You'll understand one day.

BOBBY: When I'm a little older? *(He laughs.)* Poor old Jill!

JILL: But one fine day you'll fall in love.

BOBBY: Me in love! *(He shakes his head.)*

JILL: Why not?

BOBBY: I'm not built that way.

JILL: Oh, yes you are - and what then?

BOBBY: No, Jill - you're quite wrong there.

JILL: And when you do fall in love - what will the girl think of all of this?

BOBBY: I should worry. It will never happen.

JILL: Won't it? And what will people say?

BOBBY: People?

JILL: Yes. They talk, you know.

BOBBY: Oh, rot! Everybody always talks about "people" as if they were a hostile race of busybodies. Why should they say anything - they won't know?

JILL: Of course they'll know.

BOBBY: Not unless you and Tony tell them.

JILL *(rises)*: Don't be absurd.

BOBBY: I'm sorry, Jill, I didn't mean that. *(Rises and crosses to her.)* Of course you wouldn't. I didn't mean to hurt you. I didn't mean you even to know about all this, as I

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knew it would upset you. But I got stung by Tony's attitude. I knew you'd think it awful for a man to live on a woman - and yet it's always happening. It's so easy - Oh! I know there's no excuse to you. But it doesn't seem wrong to me. It's just happened - that's all. You criticise other people for doing it, but when you find yourself doing it, it's different somehow.

JILL: Poor Bobby!

BOBBY: Oh! Don't sympathise. It makes me feel awful. But I'm glad I've told you now - I know I'm a pig to do it the way I did. I was angry. But I'm glad you know. It's more honest somehow - more above board, even if you do think me a rotter. I may be - I don't know. But I don't feel one. And if one feels very happy surely there can't be much wrong in it.

JILL (*turns*): Oh, Bobby!

BOBBY: I don't think I can bear any more - I'm a real coward about scenes. Goodbye - (*goes to door*) - I must go and dress - and you - you'll miss your train unless you look out.

[JILL *crosses to door*.

Give them all my love. Tell them I'm well, and will be down soon. (*Moving out.*)
And, Jill

[JILL *Stops*.

don't tell them - unless you must. You see, I - just say I've got a job - I don't want to hurt them.

[*She kisses him and goes out. He sees her out.*

Oh! God! (*Then he looks round and finds the remains of a cocktail and drinks it. He goes out.*)

[MEARS *comes in and turns on both lamps and clears up the room. He has the orchids, which he puts on the writing - table. The door bell rings. MEARS opens it - SIBYL RISLEY comes in - in evening dress with a cloak on.*

SIBYL: Is Mr. Rendon as late as usual?

MEARS: Yes, Madame.

SIBYL: All right. Tell him not to be too long. (*She takes out a cigarette and smokes it elaborately.*) I'm not very good at waiting. You'd better go and help him.

MEARS: Yes, Madame. (*He goes out.*)

[SIBYL *picks up the Tatler and idly looks through it. She pauses at her own picture.*

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SIBYL: "The beautiful Mrs. Risley" (*She shouts out.*) Bobby, the beautiful Mrs. Risley is here and is waiting for you.

BOBBY (*off*): Right. I'm just coming.

SIBYL: She doesn't wait long - not for anyone. (*Puts Tatler on table.*)

[BOBBY *jumps down the steps and rushes into the room. He is now fully dressed.*

BOBBY: Sibyl!

SIBYL: You're late.

BOBBY: Couldn't help it - I -

SIBYL (*laughs*): The usual lie?

BOBBY: No. A new one.

SIBYL: Kiss me first.

BOBBY: Darling. (*He kisses her.*)

SIBYL: Well, then?

BOBBY: The lie?

SIBYL: Yes.

BOBBY: My sister.

SIBYL: Oho! That's an old one.

BOBBY: No. Really.

SIBYL: Then I forgive you - as long as it was only a sister.

BOBBY: Yes. (*Gets orchids from writing - table.*) Honest Injun - a bore, too.

SIBYL: Why? What's the matter?

BOBBY: Oh, nothing.

SIBYL (*looks at him*): Really? [He nods.

BOBBY: No nothing - only -

SIBYL: Only?

BOBBY: Only - you're so understanding. (*Gives her flowers.*) I love you.

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SIBYL: And I - you - Bobby. *(They kiss.)* Have you got a pin?

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I

SCENE: - A garden. The background is a Yew Hedge on a little crazy pavement platform. In front there is a low stone balustrade. Two very comfortable garden chairs are placed - in this corner of the garden. There are some roses growing near by. A wicker table is between the chairs.

JOAN MERROW is lying on one of the chairs pretending to be asleep - she sees BOBBY coming and so she goes on being asleep. BOBBY comes in - He sees she is asleep and so he is going to tip - toe out again - But he alters his mind and comes back. He picks a rose - and pulls the petals off and drops them one by one on to JOAN'S face.

JOAN: Don't.

[BOBBY goes on doing it.

Please don't - can't you see - I'm asleep?

BOBBY *(smiles)*: And isn't it a shame to wake you.

JOAN: Yes. Go away.

BOBBY: Can't.

JOAN: Oh! Do go away.

BOBBY *(shakes his head)*: I couldn't do that.

JOAN: Why not?

BOBBY: I should only do it to oblige you.

JOAN: Well?

BOBBY: I don't like obliging people - it's such a horrid word.

JOAN: I'm not listening.

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BOBBY: Sorry.

JOAN: Don't mention it.

BOBBY: Somehow I thought you were.

JOAN: No.

BOBBY: Oh! Well.

JOAN: Go away.

BOBBY: Yes. *(He sits down, then sighs twice.)*

JOAN: Must YOU?

BOBBY: Yes. I always sigh when I've got it.

JOAN: Got what?

BOBBY: I thought you were asleep.

JOAN: I am.

BOBBY: I knew there was some sort of a noise.

JOAN: What do you mean?

BOBBY: I expect it was the bees.

JOAN: You brute.

BOBBY *(happily)*: Of course I am. Isn't it funny how it flatters one to be thought a brute?

JOAN: Not content with waking me up

BOBBY: You weren't asleep.

JOAN: Yes, I was.

BOBBY: Of course not. You were only pretending.

JOAN *(indignantly)*: Really!

BOBBY: I saw you.

JOAN: Oh! Fudge.

BOBBY *(nods)*: I'm cleverer than you think.

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JOAN: As I said - not content with waking me up

BOBBY: Liar!

JOAN: Perhaps. Why not? To escape you.

BOBBY: Oh!

JOAN (*smiles*): And then you insult me.

BOBBY: Never.

JOAN: By saying I snore.

BOBBY: I never did.

JOAN: What did you mean then by talking about bees?

BOBBY: Oh! Nothing just bees. Just a hot afternoon.

JOAN: As if that wasn't bad enough

BOBBY: Dreadful.

JOAN: But what is worse - you look as if I was trying to flirt with you.

BOBBY: Aren't you?

JOAN: If only murder was fashionable!

BOBBY: Because I said you weren't asleep.

JOAN: If I say I was asleep - I was - it's a very hot afternoon - and there's nothing else to do.

BOBBY: What about me?

JOAN: You're a horrid little boy.

BOBBY: Is that all?

JOAN: And anyway - you aren't anything to do.

BOBBY: Are you quite sure?

JOAN: Yes. And now I'm thoroughly awake, which is awful - as it's Sunday, and there's nothing until tea. So I suppose I'll have to talk to you. Not that I want to. And it's all your fault.

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BOBBY: Good. I meant it to be.

JOAN: Oh! Shut up. You're very irritating - if I'd known you were like this - I'd never have come and stayed with your mother and father for a week - end.

BOBBY: They're pretty dull, aren't they?

JOAN: But I'm talking about you.

BOBBY: Oh! do let's. I love talking about myself.

JOAN: You're dreadful.

BOBBY: Go on - that's lovely.

JOAN: You're stupid - and lazy.

BOBBY: Yes.

JOAN: And egotistical.

BOBBY: That's a good fault.

JOAN: You think so.

BOBBY: I've found it works well. (*He laughs.*) I'm awfully nice, though.

JOAN: Are you?

BOBBY: Don't you think so?

JOAN: Hum!

BOBBY: Oh! I am really. Now tell me some of the nice things.

JOAN: Certainly not.

BOBBY: Oh! Do. Now that you've finished the nasty.

JOAN: I haven't finished - you're

BOBBY (puts his fingers in his ears): I'm not listening. Not until you tell me the nice things.

JOAN: Are there any?

BOBBY: Oh! Lots.

JOAN: Then I haven't noticed them.

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BOBBY: Haven't you?

JOAN: NO.

BOBBY (*wearily*): Oh, dear. Then I suppose I shall have to tell you. (*Crosses and sits on stool by JOAN. He smiles.*) I'm not bad to look at - you know. (*He laughs suddenly.*) That's good, isn't it? But you know it's true.

JOAN: What a man!

BOBBY: I don't like telling lies.

JOAN: Well?

BOBBY: Oh! Yes. And I'm clean in the house.

JOAN: I'll give you that.

BOBBY: And I dance like an angel.

JOAN: So do lots of awful people.

BOBBY: I say, Joan.

JOAN: And who said you could call me Joan?

BOBBY: I did.

JOAN: YOU?!

BOBBY: Yes. I said it just now. I thought you'd like it.

JOAN: Like it!

BOBBY: Mayn't I?

JOAN: Of course not.

BOBBY: Why?

JOAN: I don't let just any young man - call me by my Christian name.

BOBBY: But I'm not just any young man.

JOAN: No?

BOBBY: No. I'm your -

JOAN: My what?

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BOBBY: Yes - (*He laughs.*) We're going to be friends.

JOAN: I don't know.

BOBBY: Of course we are.

JOAN: Are we?

BOBBY: Rather!

JOAN: Even so

BOBBY: Well - it's so difficult to say. I say, Miss Merrow when it's much easier to say - Joan, you poor old fool.

JOAN: That's merely rude.

BOBBY: So I'm rude, too?

JOAN: Oh! It's too hot.

BOBBY: It's divine - isn't it?

JOAN: Lovely.

BOBBY: I adore the hot weather. But I never stop grumbling at it - and the more I grumble - the more I sweat. And when I sweat - I swear.

JOAN: Well, don't start now.

BOBBY: And then I have to go and have a cold bath to keep me cool - and the effort makes me hot again. But I adore it. (*He sighs and rises.*) God certainly knew what He was doing when He invented the summer.

[JOAN *nods.*

Though it's a pity He forgets sometimes.

JOAN: Yes.

BOBBY: Isn't it funny we should meet this week - end of all week - ends?

JOAN: What's peculiar about this one?

BOBBY: Oh! I don't know - Just

JOAN: You're mad.

BOBBY: No. It's just, it's a lovely one.

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JOAN: A lovely one?

BOBBY: A glorious day - and I'd like to shout.

JOAN: Why don't you, then?

BOBBY: Because if I shouted - someone might come and -

JOAN: And?

BOBBY: And I don't want them to.

JOAN: No?

BOBBY: No. (*Sits.*) I want to be alone with you.

JOAN: And do you make love to every girl you meet?

BOBBY: Yes - no - this is not making love.

JOAN: Oh!

BOBBY: No.

JOAN: Then what is it?

BOBBY: I was only telling the truth.

JOAN: The truth!

BOBBY: Yes. I want to be alone with you.

JOAN: But we've only just met.

BOBBY: Perhaps that's it.

JOAN: Thank you.

BOBBY: Oh! I don't mean that. I'm only being funny. As if it mattered when we'd met. I've known you for -

JOAN: Since yesterday afternoon.

BOBBY: No. For ever. Eternity. Oh! God! What a lovely word!

JOAN: Being poetic.

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BOBBY: Don't spoil it. Just breathe it gently. Eternity. For ever. You and me - the eternal lovers - In every Dynasty. In every age - us two. Wandering on the - (*He stops and looks at her.*) What's the matter?

JOAN (*snores*): I'm going to sleep again.

BOBBY: You eat too much lunch.

JOAN: Pig!

BOBBY: No. It's you that's the pig. Wouldn't it be wonderful, though?

JOAN (*yawns*): No.

BOBBY: Oh! Yes, it would. I'd make you think it was, anyway.

JOAN: You couldn't.

BOBBY: Of course I could.

JOAN: No.

BOBBY: Why not?

JOAN: You've got no money.

BOBBY: Does that matter?

JOAN: Very much.

BOBBY: Now what could we want money for? I give it up. It's beyond me.

JOAN: I'm afraid so.

BOBBY: Are necessities so – er? I mean, do silk stockings and scent and bath - salts cost an awful lot?

JOAN (*laughs*): Lots and lots and lots.

BOBBY (*frowns*): Then I've got lots.

JOAN: Have you?

BOBBY: Yes.

JOAN: How did you get it?

BOBBY: Yes.

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JOAN: What do you mean - yes?

BOBBY: I meant yes. How did I get it? Oh! Lord, I haven't got any, really.

JOAN: You see.

BOBBY: But I'll get some.

JOAN: How?

BOBBY: You haven't noticed.

JOAN: What?

BOBBY: That I'm brilliantly clever.

JOAN: Are you?

BOBBY: Yes.

JOAN: That's splendid - although I -

BOBBY: YOU?

JOAN: Though I've never noticed that brilliantly clever people like you - ever do much good.

BOBBY: Yes. It's difficult - isn't it?

JOAN: You see. You don't need to be brilliant to lead a decent life.

BOBBY: A decent life. (*He thinks about this.*)

JOAN: No. You only need common sense.

BOBBY: I haven't got much of that. It's so dull.

JOAN: Yes. But so reliable.

BOBBY: I'll go and learn some.

JOAN: Where?

BOBBY: I suppose they teach it at the night schools.

JOAN: You mean - more likely night clubs.

BOBBY: Oh! No. I'm sick of them. (*Rises.*) Give me the open spaces - the broad highway - give me

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JOAN: I'll give you a lot of things - if you go on like that.

BOBBY: Don't you like it?

JOAN: I'm not much impressed.

BOBBY: I thought I was being wonderful.

JOAN: And am I supposed to agree with you?

BOBBY: It's the usual thing.

JOAN: Well, I don't. Hi! Give me a Goldflake - or are you too grand?

BOBBY (*sits on stool*): I'm very grand - but I'll give you one.

JOAN: Thanks, and a light. (*The lighter doesn't light.*) I said a light.

[BOBBY *gives her a match.*

BOBBY: I wish I could always give you cigarettes.

JOAN: Oh! Bobby.

BOBBY: I beg your pardon - Mr. Rendon to you. I'm very particular.

JOAN: Caught!

BOBBY: It was grand - wasn't it, Joan?

JOAN: Yes, Bobby.

BOBBY: D'you know, Joan, you're beautiful.

JOAN: Am I, Bobby?

BOBBY: The loveliest thing in all the world.

JOAN sighs.

I'm glad you sighed like that.

JOAN: Why?

BOBBY: It registered you liked me saying that.

JOAN: Did it?

BOBBY: Yes.

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JOAN: Well, I did like it.

BOBBY: I know. Didn't you feel it - when we first met?

JOAN: What?

BOBBY: Oh, don't say you didn't.

JOAN: But what?

BOBBY: A sort of - oh, you know - (*Suddenly*) - And you were there for always._

JOAN: For always?

BOBBY: Yes. For always - and even then - life wouldn't be long enough.

JOAN: Life?

BOBBY: Yes. It's lovely living - isn't it?

JOAN: You're such a child.

BOBBY: I don't care what I am - but it is lovely. What do you think it's all about?

JOAN: I really don't know.

BOBBY: Oh, do try.

JOAN: I haven't got time to think.

BOBBY: What a pity.

JOAN: Why?

BOBBY: One always has to have this talk with people.

JOAN: Has one?

BOBBY: Yes. You don't know them until

JOAN: Oh!

BOBBY (*rises*): God! What an ass I am!

JOAN: Only just found that out?

BOBBY: Only just beginning to. I am a fool. (*Turns to JOAN.*) Joan!

JOAN: And what have you done now?

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BOBBY: It's not now. It was then.

JOAN: Oh?

BOBBY: I don't know - but one does such terribly stupid things - in one's life. Without meaning to.

JOAN: What sort of things?

BOBBY: Silly things. Things that don't mean anything at the time - and then

JOAN: And then?

BOBBY: They seem to matter so much.

[JILL'S *voice off shouts* "Bobby!" Oh! Lord. We're sunk. I say!

JOAN: Yes?

BOBBY: In case we don't get another chance to talk this week - end - let's meet in London.

JOAN: Ye - es.

BOBBY: No. Say it properly - let's meet lots. It means so much to me.

[JILL'S *voice again*: "Bobby!" Say it, Joan!

JOAN (*gently*): Yes.

BOBBY: There's such lots to say. Isn't there? So much time to make up for - will you?

JOAN (*nods*): If you like.

BOBBY: That's splendid. You don't hate me, do you?

JOAN: No, I don't hate you.

BOBBY: You like me - a little?

JOAN: A little.

BOBBY: No more?

JOAN: 'Um.

BOBBY: A little more?

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[JOAN *nods*.

You see - I love you.

[JILL'S *voice again*: "Where are you, Bobby?" Here we are.

[JILL *comes in with a tennis racquet in her hand*.

JILL: Oh! There you are - why didn't you shout? (*She looks at them both. Back of chair.*)

BOBBY: I did - just now.

JILL: Well - I didn't hear you.

BOBBY: Don't be tactless.

JOAN: You do talk nonsense, Bobby.

JILL (*with relief*): Yes, doesn't he?

BOBBY: Do I? But this isn't nonsense and Jill definitely is tactless.

JILL: Rot. Anyway. You're wanted. They want a fourth.

BOBBY: What about you - then?

JILL: Oh! I've played myself silly.

BOBBY (*smiles*): Dear Jill!

JILL: Run along.

BOBBY: Oh! Hell! (*Crosses up.*) And it's Sunday - oh! Hell! Sunday!

JILL: Like a good boy. (*Crosses and sits.*)

BOBBY: I hate being a good boy for a whole week - end - it's so demoralising on Monday. (*He goes off:*)

JILL: What have you two been doing?

JOAN: He's been talking rot while I've dozed.

JILL: He hated going to play tennis - didn't he?

JOAN: Why did you make him?

JILL: It's so good for him. Doing things he doesn't want to.

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JOAN: IS it?

JILL: Of course it is.

JOAN: I think it's bad luck on him - he works hard all the week, too - I suppose.

JILL (*slowly*): Yes.

JOAN: So at least he should do as he likes when he comes home.

JILL: Do you like him?

JOAN: Me?

JILL: Yes.

JOAN (*considering*): Like him? Yes. I suppose so. I think he's very nice.

JILL: I'm so glad.

JOAN: I can't quite make him out.

JILL: Why not?

JOAN: It's too hot, though, now.

JILL: Yes.

JOAN: But I daresay I shall one day. [*The lights fade out.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II

SCENE: A restaurant in Paris. At the back there is a French blind falling in loops. A table set for dinner and two chairs. An orchestra plays on and off throughout the scene.

The WAITERS are putting the last touches to the table. The orchestra is playing the latest tune. SIBYL RISLEY comes in full evening dress with a cloak on.

SIBYL: Mr. Rendon has not come yet?

WAITER: No, Madame.

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SIBYL: Very well.

WAITER: Madame will order? *(He holds the menu.)*

SIBYL: No. I'll wait. *(She lights a cigarette.)*

WAITER: Yes, Madame. A cocktail?

SIBYL: Two Martinis.

WAITER: Bien, Madame.

[Second WAITER goes out. SIBYL smokes in silence - then she crushes out her cigarette impatiently. The orchestra goes on playing. SIBYL sighs. BOBBY comes in - with a rush. He is dressed in a dinner jacket.

BOBBY: I'm so sorry.

SIBYL: At last.

[WAITER takes his hat.

BOBBY crosses and sits.

[WAITER takes coat and hat.

(Petulantly.) Bobby - I do think you might have the decency to be here first - and not to keep me waiting alone like this.

BOBBY *(crosses to chair by table)*: Sorry, darling.

SIBYL: Sorry? Is that all?

BOBBY: What more do you want me to say?

SIBYL: Also - you might have fetched me.

BOBBY: I couldn't.

SIBYL: Couldn't.

BOBBY: No. That's why I telephoned.

SIBYL: Oh! Well. *(She shrugs her shoulders.)*

BOBBY: I'm sorry, Sibyl. Honest to God I am. But really I couldn't help it - it wasn't my fault - as it is - I was late and it seemed simpler to meet here.

SIBYL: And to keep me waiting.

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BOBBY: It's your fault.

SIBYL: Mine!

BOBBY: Yes. You shouldn't be so punctual. It's not done.

SIBYL: What were you doing?

BOBBY: Playing Bridge.

SIBYL: Bridge?

BOBBY: Yes. The last rubber - oh! Lord - one of the endless ones.

SIBYL: Thank God - you weren't gambling?

BOBBY: No.

SIBYL: You promised you wouldn't again.

BOBBY: But I wasn't.

SIBYL: Well, I hope not.

BOBBY: Oh! Sibyl. I do wish you wouldn't go on at me like that.

SIBYL: Am I going on at you?

BOBBY: You know you are.

SIBYL: Forgive me, Bobby. I didn't mean to. I was bad tempered.

BOBBY: Oh! It's all right. But I don't deserve it.

SIBYL (*amused*): Don't you?

BOBBY: No. At least I don't think so.

SIBYL: I'm not so sure about that. But I won't do it again - I was upset. I hate having to wait here alone - It looks so

BOBBY: Yes. And I'm always doing it.

SIBYL: And it's not only that.

BOBBY: What is it, then?

[The second WAITER comes in with the cocktails. He hands them.

Thank God - Well? What is it?

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SIBYL: Ssh! In a minute.

BOBBY: Oh!

[The first WAITER gives them each a menu.

Come on - dinner. What would you like? - I'd like a -

SIBYL: I'm not very hungry.

BOBBY: Aren't you? What a shame. Let me see.

SIBYL: I'll have some caviare.

WAITER (*Writing*): Yes, Madame.

BOBBY: I wish I could get used to it - all right - I'd better try.

SIBYL: If you don't like it - we'll

BOBBY: Don't be silly. I'll eat it if it kills me. It's so chic - Let's have Petite Marmite.

SIBYL: That'll do.

WAITER: Bien, monsieur.

BOBBY: And then - I say, waiter. What's that?

WAITER: That, Monsieur, is a filet de sole - stuffed with aubergine.

BOBBY: A French menu is agony to me.

SIBYL: Why?

BOBBY: Because I pretend to be very clever. But I don't really understand a darned word.

SIBYL: Then I'll do it.

BOBBY: Yes, do. (*He throws his down in disgust.*)

SIBYL: Waiter! We'll have some baby lamb and asparagus.

BOBBY: Ripping, and then coffee and brandy. You know that good brandy! And some champagne.

WAITER: Bien, Monsieur. (*He goes out.*)

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BOBBY: Do you mind if I smoke? Thank God that's over. What have you been doing all day?

SIBYL (*drinks her cocktail*): Clothes and clothes and then

BOBBY: And then less clothes.

SIBYL: You're right. And they are divine this year. It makes it so difficult.

BOBBY: Why?

SIBYL: Because I can't make up my mind which to have.

BOBBY: You know, you women - are wonderful.

SIBYL: We are - but why?

BOBBY: If I was a woman - and I went to a dress show - I'd order them all whether I could pay for them or not. I just couldn't resist it.

SIBYL: Silly.

BOBBY: I'm not silly.

SIBYL: Yes, you are - because at heart - every woman is careful.

BOBBY: I don't believe that.

SIBYL: Nevertheless it's true. At least - she likes to think she's careful - so that when she does break out she can really enjoy the guilty feeling.

BOBBY: And you've got that guilty feeling to - day?

SIBYL: Thoroughly - I bought everything I could lay my hands on.

[A FLOWER SELLER *comes through with flowers.*

BOBBY: Here! (*To FLOWER GIRL.*) For you, Sibyl. Here! (*He buys a bunch and tips her.*)

FLOWER GIRL.: Thank you, Monsieur. (*FLOWER GIRL goes out.*)

BOBBY: For you, Sibyl.

SIBYL: Thank you, my dear. It's sweet of you.

BOBBY: Wasn't she pretty?

SIBYL: Oh! Bobby. Don't spoil it.

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BOBBY: But -

SIBYL: You'll learn one day.

BOBBY (*pouts*): What?

SIBYL: One pretty woman at a time, my dear - (*she smiles*) or there's trouble.

BOBBY: Oh!

SIBYL: Cheer up!

BOBBY: Go on about the clothes.

SIBYL: They don't interest you.

BOBBY: They do.

[*The first WAITER brings rolls and butter, etc. They're divine.*

SIBYL: It was only slightly spoiled by the fact that that cat Hilda Bournemouth was doing exactly the same thing.

BOBBY: Rotten!

SIBYL: Wasn't it? But I got even.

BOBBY: How?

SIBYL: I ordered all the best models - and she daren't do the same. Look at her figure.

[*The second WAITER brings caviare.*

BOBBY: You've always hated her.

SIBYL: Yes - and yet I admire her. You see she's a thoroughly nice woman - and that surely is wholly admirable.

BOBBY: I wonder. (*To the WAITER.*) Not too much.

SIBYL: Of course it is. (*She eats.*) Oh! It's the lovely grey kind. Besides, she says and does nothing, better than any other woman I know.

BOBBY (*eats*): It's no good, I think it's filthy. (*He puts down his fork.*) She's not a bad sort really.

SIBYL: Who says so?

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BOBBY: She does mostly.

SIBYL: Exactly - I have yet to meet the woman who wasn't perfectly charming about herself.

BOBBY: They all are.

SIBYL: But what I should like to know

BOBBY: Ah!

SIBYL: Is - how does she do it?

BOBBY: What?

SIBYL: She hasn't got a bean either, and it's not as if -

[The WAITER *takes the plates away.*

I believe

BOBBY: You'd believe anything of anybody.

SIBYL: And why not?

BOBBY: Oh! Well!

SIBYL: They aren't very charitable to me - are they?

BOBBY: I don't know.

SIBYL: Look at what they say about us.

BOBBY: I know - But -!

SIBYL: We've asked for it. Is that it?

BOBBY: I suppose so.

SIBYL: Well - I don't care - do you?

BOBBY: I saw Humphrey this afternoon.

SIBYL: Oh!

BOBBY: Yes.

SIBYL: Still using that ghastly language.

BOBBY: It's what's made him famous.

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[SIBYL *laughs*. The WAITER *brings the soup*.

SIBYL: Was Florence with him?

BOBBY: I expect she's about somewhere. She generally is.

SIBYL: Yes. She's an awful woman.

BOBBY: Is she?

SIBYL: Yes. Everybody says so.

BOBBY: Give a dog a bad name

SIBYL: It applies equally to the other sex

BOBBY: You don't like her?

SIBYL: Like her? (*She laughs*.) Of course not - she's always in the Tatler.

BOBBY: Is that why you hate her?

SIBYL: Oh, dear, no.

BOBBY: How does she do it?

SIBYL: Easy enough. They get in by the skin of their titles.

BOBBY: And what about him?

SIBYL: He's always there, too - as - "and friend."

BOBBY: She's all right, really.

SIBYL: She means well. But, oh! so little. Are you enjoying Paris?

BOBBY: 'Umph!

SIBYL (*amused*): D'you know I believe you're getting blase.

BOBBY: Oh! Rot!

SIBYL: What is it, then? BOBBY: What?

[*The WAITER goes out*.

SIBYL: Why did you change the conversation - when I asked if you minded?

BOBBY: Minded?

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SIBYL: Yes. Minded what people said.

BOBBY: Did I change the conversation?

SIBYL: You said you'd seen Humphrey.

BOBBY: Well, so I had.

SIBYL: What made you think of him?

BOBBY: Oh! Nothing.

SIBYL: Has he said anything?

BOBBY: Oh! Sibyl. What does it matter?

SIBYL: He has, then.

BOBBY: No. No, of course not.

SIBYL: At the risk of being tiresome - Oh! my dear, don't look bored already. We've got to talk sometime. Haven't we? We might as well now.

BOBBY: Must we?

SIBYL: Yes - we must. It's easier if you face things.

BOBBY: Oh! Why, Sibyl? Why?

SIBYL: You've been different - just lately.

BOBBY: I don't think so.

SIBYL: Oh! My dear.

BOBBY: I don't feel any different.

SIBYL (looks at him): No?

BOBBY: In what way?

SIBYL: It's something very subtle, my dear. Something almost indefinable - the molehill that turns into a mountain.

BOBBY: I don't know anything.

SIBYL: You may not know it - Bobby. But it's there. You're changing. Perhaps it's only that you're growing up.

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BOBBY: God forbid!

SIBYL (*laughs*): Is anything worrying you?

BOBBY: Of course not.

SIBYL: Money?

BOBBY: Please, Sibyl!

SIBYL: Why not?

BOBBY: Oh! Lord, no!

SIBYL: There's something. Did the week - end at home upset you?

BOBBY (*frowns suddenly*): No. You do love going into things, don't you?

SIBYL: I don't really, Bobby. But nowadays when we meet - you don't quite look me straight in the face.

BOBBY (*in distress*): Sibyl dear!

SIBYL: It's true, Bobby, and it worries me. You see, it happened to me once before in my life - with my husband just before we separated - You know I loved him very much. But he didn't care for me, and I knew it. It's a thing that every woman - who isn't quite certain of the man she loves - dreads. And I'm not quite certain of you, Bobby.

BOBBY (*earnestly*): Sibyl!

SIBYL: I hope I'm wrong - I hope I'm wrong.

BOBBY: You are.

[The WAITER brings the lamb and champagne, and moves the plates during the next sentences.]

SIBYL: I saw those awful Crandals to - day.

BOBBY (*gloomily*): Oh!

SIBYL: Yes. (*Brightly.*) You know - she was my worst friend, and she married my best enemy - and I'm so afraid that one day they will have children who will grow up and look upon me as a bore. It would be so humiliating.

BOBBY: Dreadful.

SIBYL: She's always cutting me.

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BOBBY: That's good for you.

SIBYL: But sometimes she forgets and comes and speaks to me.

BOBBY: Terrible.

SIBYL: Yes - she does it in fits and starts - I think it's the fits that start it.

BOBBY: Americans are like that.

SIBYL: She hates Jane.

BOBBY: Who's Jane?

SIBYL: Oh, you know. If there is one thing an American dislikes in Europe it is another American.

BOBBY (*he drinks*): That's good.

SIBYL: I'm glad. Don't you think my hairdresser has done his work well to - day?

BOBBY (*looks*): Oh! Very.

SIBYL: That's very polite of you, Bobby. But hardly spontaneous.

BOBBY: Sorry. I wasn't thinking.

SIBYL (*quietly*): I know. Not long ago - you would have noticed every little detail.

BOBBY: I'm tired to - night.

SIBYL: Where shall we go afterwards?

BOBBY: Must we?

SIBYL: Not go out in Paris? What's the matter?

BOBBY: Oh! Anywhere then.

SIBYL: That new place?

BOBBY: If you want to.

SIBYL: You don't sound very enthusiastic - it's very chic, at least one sees all the people that one has avoided for years.

BOBBY: All right.

SIBYL: You know how to get there?

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BOBBY: Yes. If we can get a taxi.

SIBYL: You don't seem very keen.

[The WAITER clears away and brings the coffee and brandy.]

BOBBY (*drinks*): Oh! They're all the same - these places.

SIBYL: They are rather - but still, what else is there?

BOBBY: That's it. There's nothing else.

SIBYL: You have got it badly.

BOBBY: I'm all right, if only you'd leave me alone.

SIBYL (*gently*): I'm sorry.

BOBBY: I didn't mean that. That'll do, Waiter.

WAITER: Yes, Monsieur. (*He goes.*)

SIBYL: My dear!

BOBBY: Sibyl. There is something the matter.

SIBYL: I thought so.

BOBBY: Only God knows what it is.

SIBYL (*quietly*): All!

[The orchestra starts to get louder.]

BOBBY: I wish I did - I'm all nerves just now - upset. Everything is wrong - and I don't know what it is. It's awful.

SIBYL: My poor boy.

BOBBY: Oh! Don't sympathise - that will only make it worse.

SIBYL: I see.

BOBBY: Oh! No, you don't. You can't - or you wouldn't. No, it's me, I think. I can't stand all this. It's got on my nerves. I hate this life - It's all stale - It's unreal. It doesn't mean a thing - if only it meant something.

SIBYL: And me?

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BOBBY: You?

SIBYL: Yes. Me. Don't I mean something?

BOBBY: YOU! (*He laughs bitterly.*) Yes, you mean a lot.

SIBYL: Bobby dear.

BOBBY: I think I am going mad. It's killing me - this place. I must get away. Everything about it is awful. Listen to that band.

[The orchestra is playing its loudest.

It's driving us all mad, that sort of thing. It beats into one's brain - and every beat kills one a little more - Listen to it - It gets one.

SIBYL: Bobby! Bobby! You worry me.

BOBBY (*drinks the champagne*): Worry you! Ha! (*He laughs. He drinks again.*) There, that's better. A little more courage to go on with the game of life! Living. Eating. Drinking. Dancing. It's a good game - isn't it? If only one could sleep.

SIBYL (*feels his forehead*): Bobby, is there anything the matter with you?

BOBBY: Not even drunk. I wish I was.

SIBYL: What then?

BOBBY: Merely disillusioned. The edge is off everything. Everything I liked best has gone. God, how it's gone! And there's nothing left - nothing.

SIBYL: I think we had better go.

BOBBY: Yes, come on. Let's go. Waiter! Waiter!

[The WAITER comes running.

L'Addition!

WAITER: Oui, Monsieur.

BOBBY: Quick! WAITER: Bien, Monsieur.

BOBBY: Here! Let's go. And keep the change.

WAITER: Thank you, Monsieur.

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BOBBY: Thank Madame.

SIBYL: Bobby dear! Whatever is the matter?

BOBBY: I'll get a taxi.

[He goes out. Pause - then SIBYL goes out slowly.]

CURTAIN

SCENE III

SCENE: The same as Act I. - 1 month later than Scene II. The door bell rings.

MEARS enters and walks slowly across the stage and opens the door. JOAN comes in.

JOAN: Is Mr. Rendon in?

MEARS: I'll go and see, Miss. *(Closing door.)*

JOAN: Don't you know?

MEARS *(raising his eyebrows)*: Yes, Miss. But -

JOAN: Then he is in - why didn't you say so?

MEARS: I -

JOAN: I suppose you have instructions not to give him away.

MEARS: Yes - Miss.

JOAN: You do it very well.

MEARS: Yes, Miss.

JOAN: It must be rather fun to be a good butler. Isn't it?

MEARS: Er -

JOAN *(turns and smiles at him)*: I said a good butler.

MEARS: Yes, Miss.

JOAN: Well. Isn't it?

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MEARS: Yes, Miss. Thank you, Miss.

JOAN: Not at all. It's a very nice flat - isn't it?

MEARS: Yes - Miss.

JOAN: Have you been here long?

MEARS: No, Miss.

JOAN: You can say "No" as well as "Yes" then?

MEARS: Yes - Miss.

JOAN: I'm so glad - I hate people always agreeing with me and I seem to be doing all the talking. And so Mr. Rendon is in?

MEARS: Yes, Miss.

JOAN: Then - I'll see him. Tell him, please, that Miss Mellow is here and would like to

BOBBY (*Off*): Who is that?

JOAN: Me.

[*Enter* BOBBY.]

BOBBY (*coming in*): Who's me? Oh! You! I say, what luck! All right, Mears. You can go!

MEARS: Yes, Sir. (*He goes out.*)

JOAN: I was passing and I thought I'd like to come in and see for myself.

BOBBY: I am glad. Have some tea?

JOAN: No, thanks - I can't stop.

BOBBY: Oh! Do. What a shame. Why not?

JOAN: I've got other and better things to do.

BOBBY: How dreadful for you!

JOAN (*looks round*): They certainly are nice rooms.

BOBBY: Let's talk about you.

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JOAN (*moves round table*): No. I want to look.

BOBBY: They aren't mine.

JOAN (*crossing*): Oh!

BOBBY: No - only lent me.

JOAN (*turns to BOBBY*): Very lucky for you.

BOBBY: Isn't it? Come and sit down.

JOAN (*moving round to back of writing - table*): I haven't got time.

BOBBY: Where are you going as you're so smart?

JOAN: Wouldn't you like to know?

BOBBY: It doesn't interest me.

JOAN: No?

BOBBY: No. Who was it that you were dancing with the other night at the Berkeley?

JOAN: No one in particular.

BOBBY: It looked as if it was - by the way you looked up at him.

JOAN: Not that old thing. He's an old stick in the mud. But he's rich - His name is Curling - Colonel Curling. Oh! my God, he's rich.

BOBBY: He'd have to be.

JOAN: Funny, aren't you?

BOBBY: Why did you go out with him?

JOAN: Are you jealous?

BOBBY: Of that sort of man? Good Lord, no.

JOAN: I believe you are.

BOBBY: I'm not.

JOAN: Anyway, who gave you the right to criticise me, I should like to know?

BOBBY: No one. But I just thought I'd ask.

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JOAN: I don't ask you questions.

BOBBY: No.

JOAN: It wouldn't be any good, either. You'd only tell me a

BOBBY: I wouldn't. (*He kneels on the sofa.*) Try.

JOAN: I don't think I will.

BOBBY: How soon are we going out together again?

JOAN: I don't know.

BOBBY: Soon?

JOAN: I suppose so. Oh! I don't know.

BOBBY: Why not?

JOAN: What's the good?

BOBBY (*startled*): Why, Joan?

JOAN: Oh! Nothing.

BOBBY: Be nice to me, Joan.

JOAN: I am nice to you, Bobby - only

BOBBY: Only?

JOAN: Doesn't "only" explain it all?

BOBBY: Sit down for a minute or two. Will you?

JOAN: No. I didn't mean to. (*She sits at the writing table.*) There. I'm very obedient, aren't I?

BOBBY (*;*): *Sits on the arm of the sofa* Now take your hat off.

JOAN: Why?

BOBBY: I want to see what it would feel like if this were your home, too.

JOAN (*takes it off*): Oh! Don't be so - silly.

BOBBY: Is it Silly? Your hair's all untidy. Let me do it.

JOAN: Don't you dare touch it - (*She opens her bag. She starts arranging it.*)

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BOBBY: If I had some money

JOAN: Yes. Look, is that better?

BOBBY (*nods*): Would you marry me?

JOAN (*she puts away her looking - glass, and shakes her head*) No, Bobby - No.

BOBBY: Oh! Yes, you would, Joan. That's what's so awful. Does it really make that much difference?

JOAN: If I was quite honest I should say yes.

BOBBY: But are you - quite honest?

JOAN: I must be.

BOBBY: Joan, darling - I love you. Will you marry me now? Listen to me.

JOAN: I am listening.

BOBBY: I'll get a decent job - I mean something real. And we'll be poor - but happy - and we'll scrape along somehow. Do say yes. You know it would be wonderful - and I love you so much. Do say you do, too.

JOAN (*shakes her head*): No, Bobby.

BOBBY: I know we've only known each other a few weeks, five weeks to - morrow. But what does that matter? We've had such fun since - and we know each other awfully well, considering, don't we? And you do like me a little? Love me a little? Don't you? You do, Joan.

JOAN: No, Bobby. I don't.

BOBBY: Then you won't marry me?

JOAN: No, Bobby.

BOBBY: No?

JOAN: NO.

BOBBY (*turns away*): I didn't expect that somehow.

JOAN: I don't love you.

BOBBY (*turns to her*): You do, Joan. You know you do. Why won't you let yourself? You aren't really afraid of being poor, are you?

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JOAN: It's not that.

BOBBY: Then what is it? Don't you really love me?

JOAN: I don't know, sometimes I think I do. And then oh! It's so difficult - I could never marry you.

BOBBY: Never?

JOAN: I don't think so.

BOBBY: Why?

JOAN: Why? Oh! Bobby, don't make it more difficult. Can't you just leave it at that? I can't say I don't love you. Perhaps I do. Does it matter very much?

BOBBY: Yes. Very much.

JOAN: I'm sorry. But I do know I could never

BOBBY: Tell me. Why not?

JOAN: Don't, Bobby. I don't want to tell you. What's the good? Let's just go on as we are.

BOBBY: I can't.

JOAN: Please, Bobby.

BOBBY: Is it something that you've done - or something that I've?

JOAN: Bobby! Please!

BOBBY: I must know. What is it?

JOAN (*slowly*): I could never marry anyone I didn't respect - I know it sounds silly - but

BOBBY: Respect! What do you mean?

JOAN (*rises*): Bobby, don't look like that.

BOBBY (*rises*): What do you mean?

JOAN: There are too many stories. Oh! I didn't want to listen to them. I don't altogether believe them - But - Bobby. Bobby, can't you say something?

BOBBY: What of it?

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JOAN (*miserably*): People talk too much - most of it is untrue, I know. Can't you say something? Anything. Oh! my dear!

BOBBY (*quietly*): You make me ashamed.

JOAN: Bobby, dear. (*Crosses to him.*) Let's forget about it - Don't let's think of it again.

BOBBY: No - Joan - you've got to listen - they're true, these things they say - true - and I suppose I'm a rotter. I was mad. I don't think I realised what I was doing. Not that that's any excuse, I know. And lately - I've got callous or something, and I've been too lazy. I've just drifted. Too lazy to get out. I hadn't got the guts. I'm ashamed - Joanterribly ashamed.

JOAN: Poor Bobby,

BOBBY: But I love you, Joan. Won't you give me the chance?

JOAN: Oh! my dear!

BOBBY: Give me the chance - and all this shall go - go at once - and I'll work for you and you'll see I'll do something fine. If you will forgive the past. I've got an idea now. I'll be worthy of you, Joan. Will you?

JOAN: I don't know. (*Turns away.*)

BOBBY: Don't you care enough for that?

JOAN: I do care. But I don't think I'm strong enough,

Bobby. It would take two to build up a new life. I'm not strong enough.

BOBBY: You mean - you don't love me enough?

[*The door bell rings. She doesn't answer.*]

JOAN: I must go.

BOBBY: Wait a minute. I'll go and see what it is. (*He goes and opens the door.*)

[*JOAN crosses the room. SIBYL comes in.*]

SIBYL (*as she comes in*): Hello, Bobby! Haven't seen you for quite an age. What's up? Visitors?

BOBBY: Yes, Sibyl. Come in. Won't you?

SIBYL: Of course I'll come in. I want some tea. (*She comes in.*) Oh! Introduce us - won't you?

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BOBBY: Mrs. Risley. Miss Merrow - you don't know each other, do you?

SIBYL: No. (*Crosses to JOAN.*) But I'm delighted to. (*She holds out her hand.*)

JOAN: How do you do, Mrs. Risley?

[They shake hands.

I've always heard so much about you.

SIBYL: How charming of you.

JOAN: Not at all. (*Crosses to the writing - table for her hat.*) I must go, Bobby.
Good - bye. (*At the door.*) Don't bother (*And she goes out and shuts the door.*)

SIBYL: How very abrupt! (*She laughs.*) I don't think she liked me very much, did she? Don't look so shocked, Bobby.

BOBBY: She'd got to go.

SIBYL: Yes - of course. Very rude - though.

BOBBY: I'm sure she didn't mean to be.

SIBYL: Really? I wonder. Young girls are so funny, aren't they? - but what does it matter? (*She powders her nose.*) You might have told me before I faced the Dragoness - that my nose was shining - (*She laughs.*) Why haven't I seen you for the last three days?

BOBBY: I've been trying to work.

SIBYL: Work? You? You're crazy! (*Laughs.*)

BOBBY: I think I am.

SIBYL: Oh! By the way! (*Sits by table.*) What are you doing to - night?

BOBBY: Doing to - night?

SIBYL: Yes.

BOBBY: Nothing.

SIBYL: Then shall we go out together? I couldn't get you on the telephone and so I've come round to see. Well?

[He doesn't answer.

Are you coming out to - night?

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BOBBY: No.

SIBYL: My dear boy! (*Lights a cigarette.*)

BOBBY: I said no.

SIBYL: I heard you. (*She pauses.*) What's the matter?

BOBBY: It's no good.

SIBYL (*smiles bitterly*): No good?

BOBBY: I can't go on.

SIBYL: What exactly do you mean by you can't go on?

BOBBY: I can't.

SIBYL: And why not?

BOBBY: Don't you see?

SIBYL: I see nothing - and I'm afraid you will have to explain - very carefully - you see, I'm not very intelligent.

BOBBY: Help me, Sibyl.

SIBYL: Help you? Don't make me laugh!

BOBBY: Can't you see?

SIBYL: No.

BOBBY: I love Joan. (*Turns to SIBYL.*)

SIBYL: What? (*Rises.*) That girl?

BOBBY: Yes, Sibyl. I love that girl, as you call her. Love her with everything that there is in me. Heart - body - soul - everything - love her. The real thing. It's the one thing in my life. I know you think I'm a cad - I expect I am. But I can't help that now. And I've got to tell you. I've been meaning to for some time now. But I've been afraid to. Yes, I've sunk as low as that, afraid to tell you. It's pretty, that, isn't it? But you've got to know now. And what has happened - can't you see, Sibyl? Can't you see? Look what you've done for me. Done for me. That's good. I asked her to marry me - and what? (*He gets a little hysterical.*) And what did she say to me? That she loved me - Oh! Yes. But that she wouldn't marry me. I'm not fit for her. That's what you've done for me. (*He laughs, turns away.*) The woman I love won't look at me. Because of this - because of us - because of you - (*Goes to window.*) It's ruined

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everything. (To SIBYL.) And I hate you for it! I hate you! (Turns away.) I can't - I can't - I -

[SIBYL has been holding her cigarette but not smoking it. She puts it out. She arranges her fur and walks straight out of the room. BOBBY is left in despair.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: Three weeks later than Act II. The scene is the same as flat I, only everything has been sold, and the room looks empty and forlorn. The sofas, chairs, lamps have gone - even the carpet has been sold. There is a packing case in the centre of the stage which people can sit on.

JILL RENDON is kneeling on the floor, packing a large suit case. MEARS is standing by her handing her things.

MEARS: It's all very sad, Miss.

JILL (*preoccupied*): Yes, very.

MEARS: I'm sure I was very upset.

JILL: Yes.

MEARS: So sudden, too.

JILL: Yes. Give me those pyjamas.

MEARS: Yes, Miss. (*Gives them to her.*)

JILL: I think we shall be able to get everything in now.

MEARS: Yes, Miss.

JILL: It's extraordinary what one can do - isn't it?

MEARS: Yes, Miss.

JILL: I didn't think we could. But now, especially if you will help me

MEARS: Certainly, Miss - anything I can do.

JILL (*looks at him*): Later on by sitting on it.

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MEARS: And he takes it so well, too.

JILL: Naturally.

MEARS: Of course, Miss.

JILL: Give me that dressing - gown.

[He hands it.

MEARS: He was always so nice to servants.

JILL: I'm sure.

MEARS: That counts, you know.

JILL: Oh! Yes, yes, yes, yes.

MEARS: I'm sorry, Miss.

JILL: Don't you see, Mears, that we've got to get all this done and cleared up - and the quicker the better - We've got to have everything out by to - night.

MEARS: It's practically all done, Miss.

JILL: Yes, I know - but still - Oh! and you can stay on till to - morrow.

MEARS: I know, Miss - Mr. Rendon gave me my money - it's very generous of him, I'm sure.

JILL: Oh! He's always been that.

MEARS: I was very upset when I heard he'd lost all his money - as it were - all in one go. Very upset.

JILL: That was nice of you, Mears.

MEARS: So much so, Miss - that I'd have liked to have stayed - but of course

JILL: Naturally.

MEARS (*mournfully*): One has to go.

JILL: Yes. Is that all, now?

MEARS: I think so, Miss.

JILL: Then we can put this on to a taxi and get it taken round to Mr. Jardine's rooms right away - then that will be done.

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MEARS: Very good, Miss.

JILL: Oh! By the way, Mr. Jardine hasn't been round this evening?

MEARS: No, Miss. But he rang up to say that he would be round later on.

JILL: Oh! Good!

MEARS: Yes, Miss.

JILL: He's been splendid. Such a friend.

MEARS: I'm sure, Miss.

JILL: Any other messages?

MEARS: No, Miss.

JILL: That's all, then. (*She tidies her hair.*)

MEARS: Yes, Miss. (*Moves towards door.*) Oh! I was forgetting - Mrs. Risley rang up again, Miss.

JILL (*shortly*): Oh!

MEARS: Exactly, Miss.

JILL: How long ago?

MEARS: About twenty minutes before you came, Miss.

JILL: Did she say anything?

MEARS: No, Miss. She just rang up and asked if Mr. Rendon would speak to her - and I said he was engaged - as he told me, and she rang off again. She left no message.

JILL (*laughs*): She wouldn't.

MEARS: No, Miss.

JILL: We can get this out of the way. You might get a taxi, will you? Is Mr. Rendon still sleeping?

MEARS: I think so, Miss.

JILL: We'll leave him, I can take this round. You stay here.

MEARS: I'll get a taxi, Miss.

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JILL: Good.

[MEARS goes out to get the taxi. He leaves the door open.

JILL starts whistling and finishing up the packing. Then she tries to do the box up - and it won't do.

Damn the thing! (She tries sitting on it and that doesn't do, either.) Oh! Hell! It's no good, Mears, it won't do. Why are boxes so damnable? (As she says this she gets off the box and kneels down and opens it again - with her back to the door - and starts to rearrange the things she has packed.)

[SIBYL RISLEY walks slowly into the room. As usual she is beautifully dressed. She gives a quick look round the room - and notices everything. She looks vaguely surprised at the change - but takes the situation in at a glance. She sees JILL kneeling packing and whistling.

SIBYL: Do you mind if I come in?

JILL (*surprised*): Oh

SIBYL: Shall I be in the way?

[JILL says nothing. SIBYL is rather amused.

How do you do?

JILL (*stammering*): I'm very well, thank you. (*She gets up.*)

SIBYL: I'm sure - you look it.

JILL: I beg your pardon.

SIBYL: Not at all - it's a wonderful thing - health - I mean, isn't it?

JILL: Yes. But

[MEARS comes in, shutting the front door.

SIBYL: Oh! Mears - (*at door*) - please tell Mr. Rendon that I am here and ask him if he will make it convenient to see me (*She looks at JILL*) - alone for a few minutes. I shall not keep him long.

MEARS: Yes, Madame. (*He goes out to bedroom.*)

SIBYL: I suppose you are Bobby's sister - aren't you?

JILL: Yes.

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SIBYL: My name's Risley. Sibyl Risley.

JILL: Yes. I know.

SIBYL: Oh! You do. I wondered.

JILL: Yes.

SIBYL: Do you mind if I smoke?

JILL: Not at all.

SIBYL: Have one? *(She opens her case and offers her a cigarette. She does this rather elaborately.)*

JILL: No, thank you.

SIBYL: You don't smoke?

JILL *(rather flustered)*: No. Yes - I mean.

SIBYL *(amused. Crosses to packing case and sits)*: I see - you mean - you don't particularly want to smoke one of mine?

JILL: Really!

SIBYL: Yes - that was rather beastly of me, wasn't it? I'm sorry. *(Sits.)*

JILL: You? Sorry?

SIBYL *(calmly. Lighting cigarette)*: How you hate me!

JILL: I don't. I don't know you.

SIBYL: My dear - that's just it. I find I only hate the people I don't know - I've so often been very disappointed when I've met them and found that it wasn't worth while using such a strong emotion.

JILL: I -

SIBYL: Of course, you must hate me. I should if I were you - and that's why I want to talk to you.

JILL: To me?

SIBYL: And why not?

JILL: Oh!. Well

SIBYL: You see - you happen - not to believe that - I'm sorry.

JILL: Why should you be?

SIBYL: I see your point. You're quite right. Why should I be? It is rather curious, isn't it? And yet I am.

JILL: Oh! Well - if you say so.

SIBYL: Certainly I say so. And believe me I don't bother to tell lies - the truth is generally much more entertaining - You see in judging me, Miss Rendon, you forget - one thing -

JILL: And that is - ?

SIBYL: That we both have something in common.

JILL: Oh! Really?

SIBYL: Yes. We both love Bobby.

JILL (*startled*): Love Bobby?

SIBYL: Yes. Why are you so surprised? You don't believe me?

JILL: I don't know what to say.

SIBYL (*shrugs her shoulders*): Why should you? It's quite natural. Think a minute. You didn't imagine that all this was just a pleasant little game for my amusement - or did you? If so, it was a very expensive kind of game. Just a rich woman's caprice - a mere whim to pass away an idle hour or two - is that what you thought? (*Rises.*) Perhaps you didn't realise that I had a point of view - that I meant something - that I'm flesh and blood - alive - with feelings - with emotions, capable of strong emotions - capable of love, real love. By that I mean - something strong and fine. But what does it matter? Of course, you thought everything beastly about me that you could. Why not? I should have done the same if I'd been you. I wonder why it is that women who understand each other so well - should wilfully put a wrong meaning on each other's motives. But it doesn't matter what you thought - I'm not doing this to make you like me - not at all - I don't care whether you do or don't - that is not the point. (*She moves towards JILL.*) The point is, I did love Bobby - I do still love Bobby. I love him very much - and that is why I am here. If I didn't love him I wouldn't have come here - You know I'm not a very humble woman - I haven't had to be - I love him and that's enough. Thank God there is no pride in my kind of love, and so I've come. I want to help him.

JILL: You?

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SIBYL: Yes, me. Is that so strange?

JILL: But you can't.

SIBYL: Why not?

JILL: You - of all people.

SIBYL: Is it such a dreadful thing to be in love?

JILL: No.

SIBYL: Are we human beings supposed to go through life curbing our passions?

JILL: Really - I -!

SIBYL: I don't think it would be very good for one - do you? Just for propriety's sake! (*She laughs.*) And who and what is propriety? Surely one is meant to live - and to live is to love. (*Crosses to JILL.*) Oh! My dear Miss Rendon - don't look so shocked. What I'm telling you is true - although it may be news to you. (*She laughs.*) The truth is very lamentable, isn't it? And what is this law that a man may keep a woman - but a woman is not allowed to keep the man she loves?

JILL: I think you're dreadful.

SIBYL (*shrugs her shoulders*): I am what I am. I'm sorry you dislike me. I'm very human. But even though you hate me - please tell me how I can best help him.

JILL: I see.

SIBYL: Well?

JILL: I think you had better ask him yourself.

SIBYL: If he will see me. I haven't seen him for three weeks, you know. And now! (*She looks at the empty flat. Moves towards packing case.*) You won't help me?

JILL: What do you want me to say?

SIBYL: What you think.

[BOBBY *comes in quietly and listens.*

JILL: I think you can best help him by never seeing him again.

[SIBYL *bites her lip.*

BOBBY (sternly): Jill!

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JILL (*weakly*): Bobby!

BOBBY (*bottom of steps*): How dare you say that, when you know perfectly well how damnably well Sibyl has behaved to me.

JILL: She asked me what I thought.

BOBBY: My God! And this is my fault. (*Towards SIBYL.*) Sibyl, I'm sorry - this is what I've done to you for all your kindness.

SIBYL: Please!

BOBBY (*to JILL*): Do you mind leaving us?

JILL: Bobby. I'll go.

BOBBY: Oh, it's all right, Jill. You mean well. There's a good girl. It's all my fault. Go up to my room, will you, and wait there. Tony will be here soon. And then we'll all go home together.

[JILL *turns to go.*

SIBYL (*holds out her hand. Crossing up to JILL*): Good - bye, Miss Rendon.

JILL: Oh!

SIBYL: Shall we forget it all? (*They shake hands.*)

[JILL *goes out.*

BOBBY: I'm sorry, Sibyl - I mean that Jill was rude.

SIBYL (*turning*): Was she?

BOBBY: Of course she was.

SIBYL: I don't think so.

BOBBY: You don't?

SIBYL: No. I think she was justified - besides -

BOBBY: What?

SIBYL: I think she was perfectly right.

BOBBY: Right?

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SIBYL: If I was your sister. Yes, but anyway, I am seeing you again. How are you, by the way?

BOBBY: I'm all right.

SIBYL: Tell me everything - I want to know - and above all - what does this mean?

BOBBY: It's all gone.

SIBYL: I see. But why?

BOBBY: I've sold it.

SIBYL: Sold It?

BOBBY: Yes.

SIBYL.: Isn't that rather a pity?

BOBBY: I don't think so.

SIBYL: Well. It was yours to do what you liked with - after all.

BOBBY: Oh! I'll tell you all about that in a minute - you see - I'm giving the flat up.

SIBYL: Yes?

BOBBY: I've got to - of course I can't afford it now.

SIBYL: I see. *(She takes out her cigarette case.)* Have one? *(She takes one herself.)*

BOBBY: No, thanks.

SIBYL: They're the ones you like. *(Towards BOBBY.)* BOBBY: No, thanks.

[SIBYL *looks at him.*

I've given up smoking.

SIBYL *(incredulously)*: Given up smoking?

BOBBY: Yes.

SIBYL: Aren't you giving up everything at once?

BOBBY *(laughs)*: Perhaps I am.

SIBYL: But you - smoking!

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BOBBY: I've got to. You see - I've got to be different - everything has changed anyway. I'd got to come down to earth sometime. Hadn't I?

SIBYL: Ye - es. But smoking! The brandy gone, too?

BOBBY: Yes. Wasn't it good, though?

SIBYL: Poor Bobby.

BOBBY: Not poor Bobby at all.

SIBYL: I'm sorry. What are you going to do?

BOBBY: Do? I've got a job.

SIBYL: Oh!

BOBBY: Yes. A splendid one.

SIBYL: I'm so glad.

BOBBY: It's rather dull - at the moment. But one can't have everything - can one?

SIBYL (*politely*): What is it?

BOBBY: You know. One and one make two. Two and three make - whatever they do make. - All on an office stool.

SIBYL: Oh!

BOBBY: And my trousers are getting suitably shiny.

[SIBYL *laughs*.

Just an office in the City.

SIBYL: Just an office in the City. You?

BOBBY: Yes. Quite good pay - for a start.

SIBYL: My dear Bobby.

BOBBY: But you see - things are now going to be very different. But don't let's talk about me - I'm dull. What about you?

SIBYL: Me?

BOBBY: Sibyl - I'm awfully glad to see you.

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SIBYL: Are you?

BOBBY: Yes. I am really.

SIBYL: I wonder.

BOBBY: Honestly - I've wanted to awfully - but it was so difficult.

SIBYL: Why?

BOBBY: Can't you guess?

SIBYL: No.

BOBBY: Can't you?

SIBYL: I've given up guessing about anything.

BOBBY: You see - I'd behaved like a cad to you - I felt awful. Honestly I did - and I was ashamed of myself. I know it was cowardly. But I just felt I couldn't.

SIBYL (looks at him): You felt you couldn't?

BOBBY: Yes.

SIBYL: And what did I feel?

BOBBY: I know.

SIBYL: You know?

BOBBY: Yes.

SIBYL: I wonder if you ever even thought.

BOBBY: Of course - I thought about it a lot.

SIBYL: You did? (*She laughs.*)

BOBBY: Yes. Really.

SIBYL: Bobby. Has it ever struck you - that there are other people in the world - besides yourself?

BOBBY (*surprised*): Of course - what do you mean?

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SIBYL (*smokes through this speech*): I mean, Bobby - Is it possible - that one can go through life - taking whatever pleases one and then discarding - when one is a little bored - isn't there something more than self? Or is that all there is to you?

BOBBY: I know. It looks awful of me.

SIBYL: Awful of you! Is that quite adequate?

BOBBY: Sibyl, you don't understand what's been going on inside me.

SIBYL (a little scathingly): My poor boy!

BOBBY: Don't despise me.

SIBYL: I'm not. God knows I don't want to come here and slake a scene - it would only make you hate me - and I don't want that. Besides, it wouldn't do any good. But I do want to know - what it is that I have done to make you change so much - I think I have a right to know that - when I gave you everything.

BOBBY (*quietly*): Sibyl - please!

SIBYL: Or have I given you too much? Is that it? One can, you know - and has this - that I have given so gladly made you turn on me - made you hate me?

BOBBY: Sibyl, I (*Kicks trunk.*)

SIBYL: It is the unforgivable thing? The burden of gratitude. Is it too heavy to bear, and so you hate me because you feel that you ought to be grateful to me?

BOBBY: Sibyl - what is the good?

SIBYL: But I want to know - I implore you to tell me. So that I may not make the same mistake again - Oh! no - not that - but one should know. You see. Loved you very deeply. I gave you - as I thought - the very best that was in myself. It was unconventional, I knew. But what of that?

BOBBY: That didn't matter.

SIBYL: What does it matter - what the world thinks? If (*crosses to BOBBY*) - I had been free - it would have all been plain sailing - and we'd have been married. Wouldn't we? Or didn't you ever think of me like that?

BOBBY: Sibyl - it's no good.

SIBYL: But there it was - I wasn't free - and so we couldn't be married - but if

BOBBY (*imploringly*): Sibyl dear

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SIBYL: And then one day you told me you hated me. I was stunned - I could get no answer to my letters - to my messages - everything was blank - you had left me - and I had got to face life alone - I wonder if you know what that is to a woman - left by the man she loves - to someone like me - so dependent on the man I love. It is terrible, Bobby. Trying to guess - trying to explain - trying to think - lying awake at night - all night - and watching for the to - morrow one hasn't even the power to prevent. Bobby, say it's not true - that you are coming back to me - (*moves to BOBBY*) - and I'll be so happy. Oh! So very happy!

BOBBY: I can't.

SIBYL: You mean - you don't love me?

BOBBY: I thought I did.

SIBYL (*slowly. Taking hands from BOBBY'S arms*): You mean - you never did really love me?

[BOBBY *looks down and says nothing.*

That is a very bitter thing for me to think back on. I think it would have been better if I had not known that.

BOBBY: I'm sorry - Sibyl, sorry.

SIBYL: Sorry! As if it were your fault! (*Crosses to window.*) It meant nothing to you - and it meant so much to me. (*She pauses a moment, looks out of window.*) And now? This other girl? What about that? It isn't serious, of course?

BOBBY: Yes.

SIBYL: I simply can't believe it.

BOBBY: But it's true.

SIBYL: Think, Bobby, think - you mustn't make a mistake again.

BOBBY: I shan't.

SIBYL: And are you going to be married?

BOBBY: I hope so.

SIBYL: On what?

BOBBY: We've got to wait, of course - but I don't mind - and I hope she won't either.

SIBYL: Have you asked her yet?

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BOBBY: Not exactly - but - well, I wanted to get straight first.

SIBYL: That explains this empty room, then?

BOBBY: Yes. That's what I wanted to tell you.

SIBYL (*shrugs her shoulders*): It's yours.

BOBBY: Yes. I've sold everything - and I've got the cheque there, Sibyl - please don't make it difficult for me - please take it - you see it isn't mine, really. You know that.

SIBYL (*laughs*): My dear boy! Don't be so silly!

BOBBY: Why?

SIBYL: I couldn't think of it. You don't know what you are saying.

BOBBY: I do.

SIBYL: Of course you don't - haven't you got any tact?

BOBBY: Tact?

SIBYL: Yes, tact - I gave you all these things because I loved you. I didn't give them to you to buy you. If I had been buying you it would have been a very different thing. I gave you these things - because it gave me pleasure to give them to you - and you pleasure to receive them. But now it seems that you didn't love me - that these things were the price of your love.

BOBBY: Sibyl - it's not true.

SIBYL: But my dear Bobby - you can't give me back my love or its equivalent in money - no - no. Keep your cheque. Go and buy yourself a wedding present with it. (*She laughs.*) Bobby, I don't mean that. But it helps me to be like that. Good - bye. I wish you good luck in the future - and the past has passed - so let us forget its bitterness. But only let us remember what fun we had together - good - bye, my dear, good - bye. (*She touches him lightly on the shoulder - and goes out.*)

[BOBBY *remains quite still, thinking. There is a pause during which he takes out a cigarette and then remembers and chucks it away in disgust. TONY comes in.*

TONY (*calls out*): Bobby, I say, Bobby!

BOBBY (*pulls himself together*): Hello - old man!

TONY: There's a taxi throbbing threepences outside.

BOBBY (*vaguely*): Oh! Really.

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TONY: It's not a riddle. Wake up. Is it yours?

BOBBY: Mine? - Why should it be? Oh, Lord! I don't know. (*He shouts.*) Jill - I say, Jill!

JILL: Yes? What is it? (*JILL comes on.*)

BOBBY (*to window*): Tony, there's a taxi throbbing threepences outside - is it yours?

JILL: Ours! Oh, God! (*She shouts.*) Mears - Mears!

[MEARS *enters.*

MEARS: Yes, Miss?

BOBBY & TONY (*together*): There's a taxi throbbing threepences outside - is it ours?

MEARS: It's not improbable, I certainly called one, Sir.

TONY: There now.

JILL: It's my fault. Has it been throbbing threepences all the time?

TONY: That is the way of taxis.

JILL: Well, you must all help me.

TONY: How?

JILL: By sitting on the box.

BOBBY: At once. Mears, do your duty.

MEARS (*solemnly*): Yes, Sir. (*He sits on the box.*) Q

TONY: Shut, Sesame!

JILL: There - that's grand - thank you, Mears. It shut at once.

BOBBY: Somehow I thought it would.

[TONY *and* MEARS *take the box out.*

JILL: Now we can all go.

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BOBBY: Be still more of a saint, Jill dear. Will you go on ahead with the box - will you? I've got a few last things to do. Mears will help you. Tony will stay and help me.

JILL: Right - oh! (*She goes.*)

TONY: What is it, Bobby?

BOBBY: I suppose I'm a fool, Tony. I want to take a last look - it's silly, isn't it? - silly sentiment.

TONY: Oh! I don't know.

BOBBY: I've just said good - bye to Sibyl.

TONY: Have you?

BOBBY: Yes. She was rather wonderful. God! I've been a beast.

TONY: Oh! I don't know.

BOBBY: Yes, I have. D'you remember what you said last time you came here - before all this?

TONY: Yes.

BOBBY: Well - you were right and I was wrong. And yet I'm sentimental about it all. But I'm glad it's over really. And everything's ahead of me. My way to make - and Tony - you've been wonderful to me - a real friend.

TONY: Nonsense.

BOBBY: It was you that got me right - and the job, too - and now

TONY: Everything in the garden's lovely.

BOBBY: If only

TONY: What?

[*The door bell rings.*]

BOBBY: Be a saint!

TONY: Righto! (*He goes to the door.*)

[*BOBBY sits on the packing case. TONY comes back followed by JOAN.*]

Look who's here! BOBBY: Joan!

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JOAN: Hello, Bobby! I've only come in for a minute really. I've got a surprise for you. Some really exciting news. (*She stops.*) But what have you done, Bobby? All your lovely things?

BOBBY: I've sold the lot.

TONY: He's sold the lot.

BOBBY: Shut up, you ass!

TONY: Right. I'll wait up there. (*He points at the bedroom.*) Shout when you're finished. (*He goes out.*)

JOAN: But what is the matter, Bobby?

BOBBY: I've got some news for you, too.

JOAN: What is it?

BOBBY: I'm so glad you've come - I wanted to tell you

JOAN: What?

BOBBY: How divine you look.

JOAN: Is that all?

BOBBY: No.

JOAN: Then what is it?

BOBBY: Why are you so divine?

JOAN: I don't know. I suppose it's because I'm happy.

BOBBY: Are you?

JOAN: Yes. Very.

BOBBY: And I am, too.

JOAN: Well?

BOBBY: It's grand, isn't it?

JOAN: Who's going to tell first?

BOBBY: Shall we toss up?

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JOAN: No. I'm going to choose.

BOBBY: Are you?

JOAN: Yes. I'm the most curious - so you tell first.

BOBBY: Then I'll have to wait to hear yours.

JOAN: That can't be helped - anyway, mine will keep - come on.

BOBBY: Well

JOAN: I'm listening.

BOBBY: Once upon a time

JOAN: Oh! It's like that, is it?

BOBBY: No - only how can anyone say anything while you're looking like that?

JOAN: Is anything wrong?

BOBBY: Of course not.

JOAN: Then don't be silly.

BOBBY: Is it silly to adore you?

JOAN: Of Course it is.

BOBBY: You're very doing - in

JOAN: I can't help that. Besides

BOBBY: Besides what?

JOAN: You get on with your story - then I'll be able to tell you mine - and mine is exciting.

BOBBY: Where shall I begin?

JOAN: Well, what have you done with all your lovely things?

BOBBY: He was right. I've sold the lot.

JOAN: Good Lord!

BOBBY: You see - I've got a job.

JOAN: You mean?

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BOBBY: Exactly.

JOAN (*whistles*): Phew!

BOBBY: And I'm damned glad, too.

JOAN (*indifferently*): Splendid.

BOBBY: Aren't you - Joan?

JOAN: What's it got to do with me?

BOBBY: Everything.

JOAN: I don't see it.

BOBBY: But still

JOAN: Why should I be glad?

BOBBY: Aren't you, though?

JOAN: Yes - but

BOBBY: But?

JOAN: I can't help being rather sorry.

BOBBY: Why?

JOAN: To see all your nice things go.

BOBBY: But of course I couldn't keep them.

JOAN: No?

BOBBY (*finally*): Of course not.

JOAN: No. I suppose not.

BOBBY: And now - I can start clear.

JOAN: That's nice, of course.

BOBBY: You said that as if it wasn't very.

JOAN: Don't be silly - It'll be very nice.

BOBBY: It's grand.

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JOAN (sighing): Well, good luck to you.

BOBBY: Thank you. And the job's not too bad either.

JOAN (*Not very interested*): Oh!

BOBBY: No. But I'll gradually work it up. You see, I've got something to work for.

JOAN (bored): Yes.

BOBBY: Joan dear!

JOAN: Yes?

BOBBY: Aren't you interested?

JOAN: Of course I am.

BOBBY: Because

JOAN (*suddenly*): But I must tell you my news now. You see

BOBBY: Because

JOAN: It's so exciting.

BOBBY: Be nice to me.

JOAN: I am always - aren't I? And anyway, I particularly wanted to tell you first.

BOBBY: You know - why I am doing all this?

JOAN: No. Why? Of course, the other was

BOBBY: Joan - you do know why?

JOAN: No. Really I don't - but I'm awfully glad you're happy about it.

BOBBY: It's because of you, Joan.

JOAN: Me?

BOBBY: Yes.

JOAN (*vaguely*): But why me?

BOBBY: You know I love you.

JOAN: But Bobby darling - No - you don't.

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BOBBY: I do.

JOAN: Oh! dear no. We decided you didn't a long time ago.

BOBBY: I do.

JOAN (*shaking her head*): Not really.

BOBBY: Really.

JOAN: Oh! no. That was only fun.

BOBBY: Fun!

JOAN: Yes, fun. You weren't serious.

BOBBY: Of course I was.

JOAN: My poor Bobby.

BOBBY: Don't say that.

JOAN (*laughingly*): Did'ums!

BOBBY (*enthusiastically*): And I've got my job - and soon we'll be able to afford a tiny flat - and if I work hard - in a couple of years' time

JOAN: Bobby dear – but

BOBBY: What?

JOAN: You don't mean this really seriously?

BOBBY: Don't you understand, dear? I'm trying to tell you. That I've done this for you.

JOAN (*startled*): Me?

BOBBY: Yes, you. I love you with all there is in me to love - you're the only thing in life that matters to me - Will you wait for me? It won't be long.

JOAN: But Mrs. Risley

BOBBY: Oh! Joan. I've told you. That's all over. Finished. Look! (*He looks round the flat.*) It's gone. Will you wait for me, dear? (*He looks at JOAN.*) Joan? What's the matter?

JOAN: I believe I'm crying.

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BOBBY: Joan dear! You mustn't.

JOAN: Mustn't I?

BOBBY: No, dear. Anyway, why?

JOAN: You see

BOBBY (*gently*): Yes?

JOAN: Oh! Bobby. I didn't believe in - in us seriously. I didn't think you meant

BOBBY (*not quite understanding*): Seriously?

JOAN: No. You see

BOBBY: I don't understand.

JOAN: Be patient, dear. I'm trying to tell you.

BOBBY: Yes. Yes.

JOAN: You remember the man you were jealous of me dancing with?

BOBBY: What's that got to do with it?

JOAN: You remember him?

BOBBY: Yes. Wasn't his name Curling?

JOAN: Yes. Well

BOBBY (*rather sternly*): Well?

JOAN: I'm going to marry him.

BOBBY: Marry him?

JOAN: Yes.

BOBBY: But you don't love him.

JOAN: Yes.

BOBBY: You don't.

JOAN: Yes. No. I don't know.

BOBBY: Of course you don't.

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JOAN: But I'm going to marry him.

BOBBY: And what about me?

JOAN: Bobby, dear. But we could never have got married - even if we loved each other.

BOBBY: Why not?

JOAN: We haven't got any money!

BOBBY: Money! As if that mattered!

JOAN: Oh! But it does.

BOBBY: Don't you love me?

JOAN: Bobby! Don't! You know it's no good.

BOBBY: Listen, Joan. Our whole happiness is at stake.

JOAN: I know.

BOBBY: Then listen! Wait a little - and then marry me.

JOAN: I can't.

BOBBY (*pleading hard*): It's only for a little while - we'll be able to soon - really, Joan. Dear, dear Joan! Listen to me. Really, beloved - think - I love you, Joan dear.

JOAN (*moves to fireplace*): No, I can't - No, really I can't It's too late. I've got to marry him, and I don't love you.

BOBBY: This man

JOAN: Yes?

BOBBY: He's rich, isn't he?

JOAN: Yes.

BOBBY: Do you mean to say that you're going to sell yourself to him?

JOAN (*shocked*): Bobby!

BOBBY: Yes. Sell yourself to him.

JOAN (*coming down to BOBBY*): That you, of all people, should say that to me!

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BOBBY: Me?

JOAN: Yes, you - when

BOBBY (*stops her. Looking at her*): I see. (*Turns away.*) So that's what you think of me, is it?

JOAN (*imploringly*): Bobby!

BOBBY (*bitterly*): Go and marry your rich man, and good luck to you. At least your love for him will be blessed by marriage.

JOAN: Bobby!

BOBBY (*sits on packing case*): Don't speak to me.

JOAN: You're very unjust!

BOBBY (*dazed*): Unjust?

JOAN: Yes. Good - bye. (*She goes to him.*) Good - bye, Bobby.

[*He doesn't say anything. JOAN kisses his forehead gently and goes out.*]

BOBBY: Me unjust - unjust! (*He buries his face in his hands.*) Oh! God!

CURTAIN

THE END