

SHIRLEY (*angrily as MUM tugs at her hair*) Let go of my hair!

MUM What are you hiding your ears for? Let's see your ears.

SHIRLEY No!

MUM Why not?

SHIRLEY They're ugly! Ugly!

MUM (*grinning away*) Let's see, then! (*Wrenching away SHIRLEY'S hand and looking*) My God, you're right, aren't you? (*Glancing round at KAREN*) Have you ever seen ears like that before? (*Looking again*) They're enormous! Must take you about a week to wash 'em. Here, come and have a look at these ears. She's got bruiser's ears! And they're all mottled. (*As SHIRLEY manages to free her hand and go to TOM*) God, I don't think I've ever seen such an ugly sight. They quite turned my stomach over.

SHIRLEY (*gritting her teeth*) Shut her up, Tom, please!

MUM (*sitting on sofa*) Why, are you ashamed of them?

SHIRLEY Yes, I am.

MUM So you should be.

SHIRLEY I think they're horrible.

MUM (*changing her position*) They're revolting.

SHIRLEY (*intently as she crosses to below piano*) All right, revolting. I agree with you.

KAREN Wave good-bye, Tom. She's found her weak spot.

TOM Not this time. I'm marrying her, Mum.

MUM But have you seen her ears?

TOM There's nothing wrong with her ears.

MUM They're repulsive. (*To SHIRLEY*) Aren't they repulsive?

SHIRLEY Yes!

MUM You see, she keeps agreeing with me.

TOM (*crossing to SHIRLEY*) Because she's got a thing about them. Well, I'm sorry, but I've got an aversion to anything repulsive. I can't help it, it's part of my nature. Makes me cringe, Shirley, makes me creep all over, I feel affronted. You'll have to leave.

TOM If she leaves, I leave.

MUM What, with those ears? You could live with those ears?

TERRY (*crossing to C*) Pack it in, Mum. She can't help it, can she?

TOM (*angrily*) But there's nothing wrong with her ears!

KAREN Shirley thinks there is, and that's what Terry's getting at.

TERRY (*to R. of sofa*) It's too easy to knock at something that people are sensitive about, no matter how stupid it might be.

MUM That was very poignantly said, Terry. Very poignantly said. You should have been a poet, darling.

(*TERRY moves away R.*)  
(*Gazing at SHIRLEY with interest and speaking conversationally*) Tell me, dear, do they let in much of a draught?

TOM (*grimly*) You'd like Shirley and me to clear off now, is that it, Mum?

MUM (*gaily, as she picks up her champagne and rises*) I'd like to get on with the party, my precious, when you've done with your moaning and groaning.

(*MUM walks upstage. KAREN rises. TERRY collects his glass from the cocktail cabinet and joins KAREN. SHIRLEY comes down to L. of sofa. TOM takes up a position above the sofa.*)  
Don't forget, this is supposed to be my day. (*In her singing voice of remembrance*) When I have all my little children round me, and we remember with respect our dear old dad who was lovely. (*Turning*) I expect he's listening in. (*Looking up*) Are you watching us, Dad? Are you here? If you're here, give us a sign.

KAREN Careful, we might have the house down on top of us.

TOM That could be just normal routine with our houses. No, do something useful, Dad: get the gunvor to turn her into a pillar of salt.

MUM (*ignoring TOM*) I bet he's smiling—thinking to himself: 'They haven't changed, have they? There's Mum standing out from all that deceit like a twinkling halo; yet still loving, always loving. Ah! And who is that new face I see? It must be a girl friend of Tommy's. Strange what men find attractive. Like clothopper's ears.'

(*KAREN sits in armchair R. and TERRY sits on the left arm.*)

SHIRLEY sits D.L.)

TOM (*warningly*) You're at it again, Mum. One more word and I'll—

MUM (*remonstrating*) It's not me, it's Dad. I'm just telling you