

THE ANNIVERSARY

always there, to be brought out when it's mocking-hour for little Tommy Tucker.

TERRY But Henry said he'd taken it. He admitted it all.
MUM (passing TERRY and going into the hall) Well, that's Henry, ain't it? Always after a little bit of limelight.

TERRY (following MUM) But I've been here all the time!
MUM (as she and TERRY climb the stairs) Where's your proof, son?

TOM That's one thing the others have never tried to do: push me out of sight, and then get me to crawl out backwards.

SHIRLEY It's this house, Tom.

TOM It can't bring out what's not there, Shirley.
SHIRLEY Then I must have done it for love. (Crossing to TOM and kneeling.) Look, Tom, what if we got you back on top again? How would that be?

TOM Can't see how.

SHIRLEY Must be some way.

TOM I'd have to stay there.

SHIRLEY Oh, I'd see you did, Tom; I'd see you did. You could always side with Terry over this police business.

TOM No. We're on Mum's side over that.
SHIRLEY Are we?

TOM Yer. Just think of all the extra work for me if Terry goes off to Canada. (He concentrates and then gives a little chuckle.) I've got it, I can get back on top.

SHIRLEY (eagerly) How?

TOM By us two spending the night in Mum's bed.
(SHIRLEY'S eagerness fades and there is silence.)

SHIRLEY Spend the night in her bed?

TOM Yer. What do you say?

SHIRLEY I don't think I'd enjoy it, Tom.

TOM (rising and crossing to above sofa) You see, Mum was right. Just thinking of yourself all the time.

SHIRLEY But I'd be no good, Tom.

TOM (turning) That don't matter, Shirley. It's enough just to be lying there, hearing Mum thumping away on the locked door and screaming through the keyhole. She'd know only

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me could have thought of it, you see. I'd get the full credit, not you.

SHIRLEY But it don't seem right to me.

TOM (Crossing to R. of sofa) Precisely, Shirley. Precisely. It can only work if it don't seem right. Believe me, the whole thing's got to be stinking rotten if it's going to have any effect on Mum.

SHIRLEY Can't we just pack our bags and go back to my place?
TOM (sitting) No, we can't.

SHIRLEY I know we couldn't have sex. I mean, my mum and dad, they're a bit old-fashioned: (Hopefully.) but there's always the park, dear.

TOM And what would the others think of me if I ran away now? I'd be finished in their eyes; a henpecked write-off. No, I can't leave; not until I'm back on top and Mum beaten. And I've got to be the one who beats her.

SHIRLEY (almost inaudibly) And if I won't?
TOM Well, that's that, ain't it? I mean, it shows we can't agree about nothing. No, this is a good test I've set you. If your love's worth more than a quick bunk-up behind the rhododendrons, you'll spend the night with me in Mum's room.

SHIRLEY Honest, Tom, you don't know what you're asking. I'd feel unclean.
TOM (rising and crossing to the french windows) You needn't; the sheets are changed once a week.

SHIRLEY That wasn't what I meant.
TOM (pointing a finger at her as he crosses above sofa towards SHIRLEY) You're off again, aren't you? Turning the conversation back on little Shirley. I'm not interested in what you mean. I'm not concerned. It's irrelevant. It's what I mean, what I feel, what I want. (Appealing to her.) In another instance, Shirley, it could be the other way round. But in this instance it's not. Everything has to be done with me in mind. Only in that way can I win, see? (Crossing to window R.) So make up your mind. What's it to be?

(HENRY and KAREN enter through french window. TERRY enters U.S. and SHIRLEY sits D.R.)
KAREN (quickly) Henry, you can't let your brother take the blame for what you did.

Tom
Shirley