

Henry, Shirley, Karen

it's me. Trouble is, if I get the urge I just can't stop my—
my idiosyncrasy.

SHIRLEY (*understandingly*) Must be very difficult.

HENRY (*casually*) Those things I put on, would you let me wash them for you?

SHIRLEY Oh, I couldn't let you do that.

HENRY (*insistent*) But I'd like to.

SHIRLEY No, no. I wouldn't hear of it.

HENRY (*after a short silence*) You've got some lovely clothes, Shirley. You got good taste.

SHIRLEY Thank you.

HENRY I like your slip. Come from Marks and Spencer, didn't it?

I got quite a few Marks and Spencer's.

SHIRLEY (*surprised*) You collect them, do you?

HENRY I've no other vices.

(KAREN enters carrying a tin of nuts.)

(Politely, as he rises and crosses upstage.) Can I help you, Karen?

KAREN (crossing D.R. and filling the cabinet saucer with nuts) You just go back under your stone.

(HENRY wanders up to the piano.)

SHIRLEY I wasn't really expecting to see you again tonight, Karen.

KAREN (kneeling by the coffee table and filling the saucer with nuts) I know, and that's what she was hoping for. With me out of the way, she'd have worked on Terry until she'd got him pleading for mercy and screaming not to be sent to Canada. (Grimly.) Well, I've waited too long. We're going. We're going.

SHIRLEY But I don't know why your husband didn't walk out and take you with him.

KAREN (*crossing to the piano*) Terry's got his reasons.

SHIRLEY I'm sure I wouldn't have gone to the restaurant, let alone come back here afterwards.

KAREN You're not used to her little ways.

SHIRLEY Why haven't you got out before now?

KAREN (*dropping the empty tin into the wastepaper basket*) Terry thought he ought to stay.

SHIRLEY Why?

KAREN (*not wanting to get involved*) He felt he owed it to Mum.

ACT TWO

The same, three hours later.

When the curtain rises SHIRLEY is sitting on the sofa. There are flowers in the vase on the table above the sofa. On the coffee table are a small evening bag and a saucer. A second saucer is on top of the cabinet and a third on top of the piano. Six champagne glasses line the top of the cocktail cabinet.

SHIRLEY glances round as HENRY enters with two more vases filled with flowers. Kicking the door shut, he gives SHIRLEY an embarrassed smile as he crosses to place a vase on top of the cabinet D.R.

HENRY (*quietly, apologetically*) I won't be half a tick, and then I'll get out of your way.

SHIRLEY (*kindly*) Please don't go because of me.

HENRY (*surprised*) You sure?

SHIRLEY Of course I'm sure.

(HENRY places the second vase on top of the piano.)

HENRY I didn't think you'd want to be in the same room as me after what occurred.

SHIRLEY Well, we've all got our idiosyncrasies, haven't we? Is that the right word?

HENRY (*smiling as he crosses to L. of sofa*) It's a very nice word, Shirley. And it's very kind of you to think of it like that.

SHIRLEY I must have given you quite a turn coming in on you like I did.

(SHIRLEY makes room for HENRY and he joins her on the sofa.)

HENRY You're right there, Shirley. (*Sheepishly*) Well, I mean, you can't help feeling a bit guilty being found with someone else's clothes on.

SHIRLEY I'm sure you can't. I apologise.

HENRY Good lord, it's not you who should be apologising, Shirley.