

Jacqueline (*dazed*) I see.

Bernard So you musn't change your plans, darling. You give your mother a nice weekend to keep her going for a while and Robert and I can have a good old-fashioned bachelor time together. It's all organized.

Jacqueline So it appears.

Bernard (*looking at his watch again*) You must hurry. She's going to start worrying what's happened to you.

Bernard tries to give her the car keys and urge her towards the door. She shows no sign of moving

I'll, er . . . I'll get the car out for you.

Bernard gives her a worried look and hurries off out of the front door

Jacqueline stands in a daze. The phone rings. She answers it

Jacqueline Robert! Robert, where are you—at the station? (*She looks towards the front door to check that Bernard has gone*) Robert, he's just told me you were coming! I'm just about to leave for mother's! . . . Yes! I've arranged to go to her for the weekend! But I didn't know you were coming, my darling—I've only just found out! Why didn't you call me? . . . Well they do have phones in Hong Kong. . . . Oh lord, my angel, I don't know what I can do. How long will you be? It's a two minute taxi ride. . . . Yes, yes. . . . Well leave it with me, I'll try and think of something. . . . I love you too, my precious. Don't worry—I'm not going to miss the chance of a whole weekend with you. Get here as soon as you can. (*She puts the receiver down. She paces frantically. She taps a number on the phone*) Mother? It's me. . . . No, I know I haven't left yet, Mother, but you see I'm—I'm not feeling very well. . . . No, I think it's a touch of flu. . . . Well, I was so looking forward to coming, my dear, but I really don't think I'm up to it. Why don't we make it next weekend? . . . Yes, I'm sure I'll be better by then. I'm so sorry to disappoint you, but I promise I'll get over next weekend. 'Bye, Mother. (*She replaces the phone*)

Bernard enters

Bernard (*picking up her case*) The car's outside, darling. I'll—

Jacqueline That was Mother on the phone.

Bernard Your mother?

Jacqueline She's got the flu.

Bernard What?

Jacqueline She's not well. So I've put it off till next week.

Bernard (*stunned*) Next week?

Jacqueline Yes. Isn't that nice? So I can see Robert after all.

Bernard B-b-but you can't . . . ! You . . . I . . . we . . .

Jacqueline It's all right, darling, I won't get in the way of your bachelor reminiscences.

Bernard You must go and look after her! An old lady with the flu like that.

Jacqueline Oh, she's got Sophie next door looking after her. She practically ordered me not to come.

Bernard But—but . . .

Jacqueline It's fine—I can look after *you* both now. We'll have a lovely time. (*She picks up the phone*) I'll just ring that agency to tell them we'll be one more.

Bernard No, no—don't call them!

Jacqueline But they'll want to know we're three now.

Bernard They know already. I mean, I—I told them we would supply the food, so it doesn't matter how many there are.

Jacqueline You were going to give Robert frozen cannelloni?

Bernard No, I was going to nip into the village and get something special, but—

Jacqueline Fine—we can do that now. No problem.

Bernard No . . . yes . . . Oh dear, I . . . (*He wanders about distraught*)

Jacqueline What's the matter?

Bernard Nothing, nothing. I'm delighted. It's—it's just . . .

Jacqueline Is there something you haven't told me?

Bernard No, of course not. I've just got to get used to the different plan, that's all.

Jacqueline Well, why don't you take my case back upstairs for me, while I get things ready in the kitchen for the girl?

Bernard (*dazed*) Yes . . . right . . . (*He picks up the suitcase, and goes to the stairs. He stops at the bottom*) Are you sure your mother doesn't need you?

Jacqueline Quite sure.

Bernard Oh God . . .

Jacqueline What?

Bernard Oh good. (*He turns back to the stairs*)

Jacqueline (*in the kitchen doorway*) By the way, Robert just phoned too. He's on his way.

Bernard stumbles on the bottom stair

Bernard (*grinning at her feebly*) Oh, good, (*He turns away*) Oh, God.

Bernard goes on up the stairs

Jacqueline watches him until he is out of sight, then goes to the mirror and preens herself. The doorbell rings. She hurries to the front door and opens it

Robert enters with a suitcase, wearing a hat

Robert Darling!

Jacqueline Darling!

He takes off his hat and puts down his case

Robert Thank God, you're still here.

Jacqueline Wild horses wouldn't move me. (*She goes to kiss him*)

Robert (*stopping her with his hat between them*) Where's Bernard?

Jacqueline Upstairs.

Robert Where's your mother?

Jacqueline In bed with flu.

Robert Where are you tonight?

Jacqueline In bed with you.

Robert My angel!

They go to kiss again. He stops

This is crazy, you know.

Jacqueline He invited you, not me.

Robert We'll have to be so careful.

Jacqueline I'll find a way. Oh, I'm so glad I found out you were coming.

Robert You were the only reason I did!

Finally he embraces her, the hat between them. A door closes upstairs

Jacqueline He's coming!

He picks up his suitcase again. She puts his slightly battered hat on his head and pushes him back out of the front door. He appears to be just entering

Bernard comes down the stairs

Robert Hallo!

Bernard You're here!

Jacqueline Just.

Robert Only just. *(He takes his hat off. He shakes hands)* How are you?

Bernard Terrific! How was Hong Kong?

Robert Terrific! It's er . . . it's so good to see you both. Thank you for having me . . . inviting me at such short notice.

Bernard Oh, we see so little of you.

Jacqueline Far too little.

Robert Well, that's nice. *(He looks round)* Lovely house.

Bernard Of course, you haven't seen it yet.

Robert No.

Bernard Quite small, but ideal for weekends. Less than two hours from Paris. Jacqueline did it all.

Robert *(to her)* So attractive.

Bernard She has such an eye.

Robert A beautiful eye.

Bernard Have you decided where he's sleeping, darling?

Jacqueline Um . . . more or less.

Bernard *(indicating guest bedroom 1)* You see you could either have that room . . . *(more enthusiastically indicating bedroom 2)* or this room.

Robert Er . . .

Robert sees Jacqueline signalling behind Bernard's back at bedroom 1

Well then, that room.

Bernard *(dismayed)* Oh, are you sure? This room's—

Robert *(taking his case)* Yes, that'll be fine.

Bernard Right. It's the cow-shed!

Robert What?

Bernard This was an old farm building once, you see, before we converted it. This was the main barn. We're upstairs in the loft—where the hay-