

The door closes with a bang. Robert sighs hopelessly

Bernard Right. Who are you?

Suzette Me?

Bernard Yes, you!

Robert It's her!

Bernard Who?

Robert You know who.

Bernard I haven't the faintest idea who.

Robert You don't know who?

Bernard Why do you think I was going bananas there? Trying to keep warm?

Robert I didn't know what . . . You mean that isn't her?

Suzette Who?

Bernard Of course it isn't her.

Suzette Who?

Robert Then if *that* isn't her—

Suzette Who?

Robert —who is it?

Bernard That's what I want to know! Who are you?

Suzette I'm his girl-friend.

Bernard (*to Robert*) Is this true?

Robert No, no.

Suzette Yes!

Robert No! That's what I told her to say because I thought she was you-know-who.

Suzette Who?

Robert But if she isn't, who is?

Suzette *Who?*

Bernard Oh, be quiet, you!

Suzette Oo, how rude!

Bernard (*patiently*) Now, slowly and simply, who are you and what are you doing here?

Suzette (*to Robert*) Can I tell him?

Robert Yes, yes—tell him.

Suzette For real?

Robert Please.

Suzette I'm Suzette—from the agency.

Bernard The agency?

Suzette The cook. From the agency. You should know. You booked me.

Bernard (*collapsing*) Oh my God!

Robert You cooked a book—booked a cook?

Bernard Yes. For dinner tonight.

Robert And that's her?

Suzette That's me.

Robert (*collapsing beside Bernard*) Oh my God!

They are practically weeping in each other's arms

Jacqueline enters, and stares

Jacqueline Has she worn you both out already?

They pull themselves together

By the way, the cook from the agency hasn't arrived yet.

Suzette Ah, well, yes—

Bernard (*leaping up*) Yes! Er . . . yes, it's true she hasn't, has she?

Suzette Yes, you see, I—

Bernard Was looking out for her, but you haven't seen her, have you?

Suzette (*indicating Robert*) The point is, he—

Bernard Hasn't seen a sign of her either—have you?

Robert Not a sign, no.

Suzette I don't understand—

Bernard Where she can have got to—no, neither can I.

Suzette (*to Robert*) Look, will you tell them I'm—

Robert Longing to help out if she doesn't get here. I'm sure Jacqueline will appreciate that.

Suzette (*exasperated*) The point is—

Robert That you're never happier than in the kitchen. She'd be delighted for you to help—wouldn't you, Jacqueline?

Jacqueline (*bemused*) Overwhelmed.

Suzette But what am I supposed to do—

Bernard When the cook arrives? Well, we'll sort that out when she comes. If she comes. (*Looking at his watch*) It's high time she came.

Suzette (*infuriated*) I've had enough of this—

Bernard Prattle about cooks—I agree. Very boring.

Robert Very tedious.

Bernard So let's have no more talk about it.

Robert Topic finished.

Bernard Banished from the conversation! Understand, Suzette?

Suzette (*stunned into submission*) If you say so.

Bernard (*turning to Jacqueline*) Good, that's sorted that out.

Jacqueline (*bemused*) Flogged it to death, I'd say. By the way—Suzette . . .

Suzette Yes?

Jacqueline The cook's name is Suzette too. How odd.

Bernard Suzanne.

Jacqueline What?

Bernard The cook's name is Suzanne . . .

Suzette I'm Suzette!

Bernard She's Suzette.

Jacqueline How do you know the cook's name?

Bernard Well, I . . .

Jacqueline I took the phone call. They told me the cook's name and I told you.

Bernard They told me yesterday when I cooked the b——booked the cook.

Jacqueline I see. Funny, I thought they said Suzette.

Suzette That's right, Suzette's—