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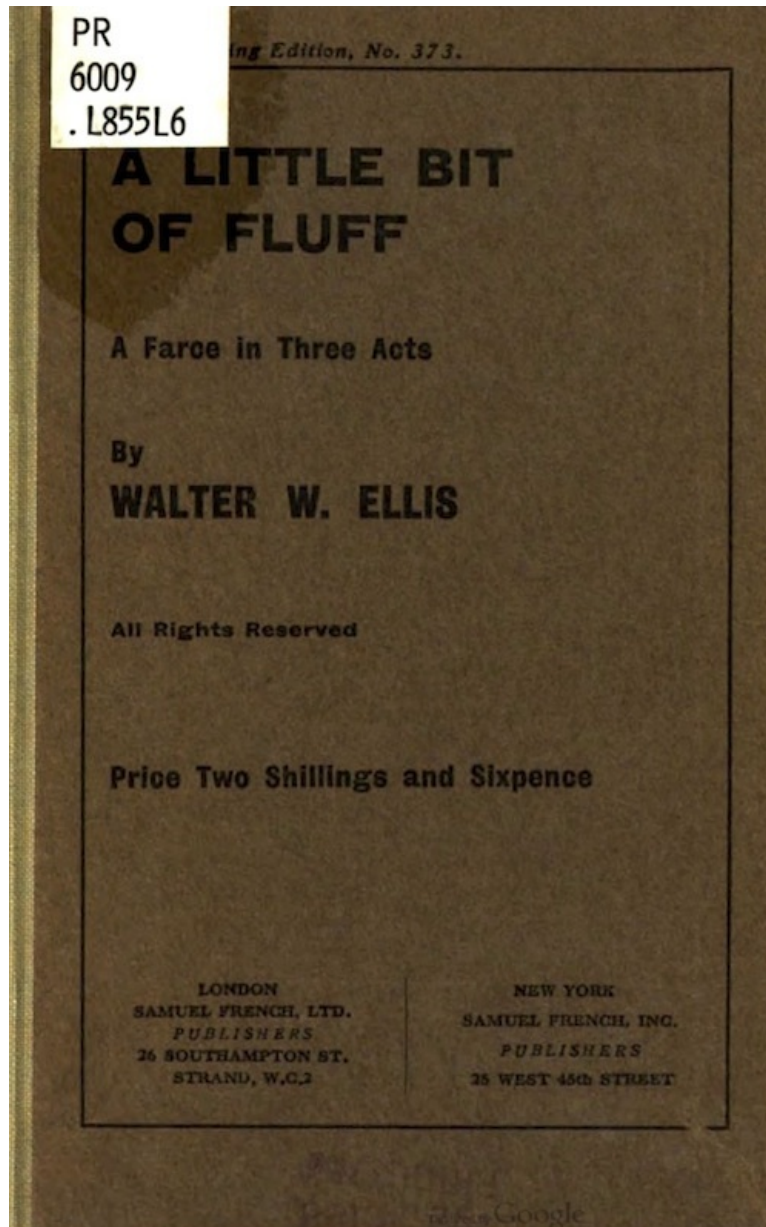
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A LITTLE BIT OF FLUFF: A FARCE IN THREE ACTS ***



A LITTLE BIT OF FLUFF
Characters

Act I

Act II

Act III

Transcriber's Note

A LITTLE BIT OF FLUFF

A Farce in Three Acts

BY

WALTER W. ELLIS

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A LITTLE BIT OF FLUFF

CHARACTERS

JOHN AYERS	<i>(pronounced "Airs")</i> .
BERTRAM TULLY	<i>His friend.</i>
NIXON TRIPPETT	<i>Inspector of Claims for the Motor 'Bus Company.</i>
DR. BIGLAND	<i>Also for the Motor 'Bus Company.</i>
PAMELA	<i>Mrs. John Ayers.</i>
MAMIE SCOTT	<i>From the Five Hundred Club.</i>
AUNT HANNAH	<i>Mr. Tully's Aunt.</i>
URSULA	<i>Mr. Tully's Maid.</i>
CHALMERS	<i>Mrs. Ayers' Maid.</i>

ACT I

SCENE.—*John Ayers' Flat in Bayswater, No. 13 St. Mark's Mansions.*

Two weeks elapse.



ACT II

SCENE.—*The same.*



ACT III

SCENE.—*Mr. Tully's Flat—next door—No. 14 St. Mark's Mansions.*

A LITTLE BIT OF FLUFF

Produced at The Criterion Theatre, London, October 27, 1915, with the following cast of Characters:—

JOHN AYERS	<i>Mr. George Desmond.</i>
BERTRAM TULLY	<i>Mr. Ernest Thesiger.</i>
NIXON TRIPPETT	<i>Mr. Stanley Lathbury.</i>
DR. BIGLAND	<i>Mr. Alfred Drayton.</i>
PAMELA AYERS	<i>Miss Marjorie Maxwell.</i>
MAMIE SCOTT	<i>Miss Ruby Miller.</i>
AUNT HANNAH	<i>Miss Lilian Talbot.</i>
URSULA	<i>Miss Violet Gould.</i>
CHALMERS	<i>Miss Dulcie Greatwich.</i>

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A LITTLE BIT OF FLUFF

ACT I

SCENE.—JOHN AYERS' Flat in Bayswater.

The scene represents a room in the well-to-do flat of MR. JOHN AYERS, in the district of Bayswater. A door to the R. leads into the bedroom and another door L. leads to the hall and street. There are two French windows at the back with balconies beyond. A fireplace R. above door. Mirror on mantelpiece. Easy chair R. Table up R.C. above door, with a pot of marguerites upon it—a writing-desk up L.C. with telephone. A fancy table down L. with papers on it. A [plan of the scene](#) will be found at the end of the Play. Telegraph boy's Knock and Ring heard off L. CHALMERS, a maid, enters at L. with one telegram on salver and crossing, meets PAMELA C. who has entered by door R. PAMELA is a smart woman of thirty-five, handsome and beautifully gowned.

PAMELA. What is it, Chalmers? (*Seeing telegram.*) Oh!

CHALMERS. Telegram, madam.

PAMELA. Thank you. (*Opens and reads—gives vent to a sigh of satisfaction.*) Hah! (*She thinks.*)

(*Exit CHALMERS L. Telegraph boy's knock and ring again off L. CHALMERS enters with second telegram.*)

What's that?

CHALMERS (*still holding salver*). Another one, madam.

PAMELA. Oh! (*Reads again.*) Yes—all right.

(*CHALMERS is going.*)

Oh—a—Chalmers—I'm expecting three more—

CHALMERS. Telegrams, madam?

PAMELA. Y—es. Bring them to me directly they arrive.

CHALMERS. Very good, madam.

(*Exits L.*)

(*PAMELA glances again at telegrams, and then going up, places them carefully on table R.C. Door slam is heard off L. PAMELA surveys the room quickly and noticing her hat on table down L. crosses over and conceals it with papers, runs up to window L.C. and withdraws behind the window curtains. JOHN AYERS enters door L. He looks very smart in evening dress with coat and crush hat. He yawns and gazes sleepily around. Then crosses to arm-chair humming a tune and taking off coat, which he places over back of arm-chair, goes to mantelpiece over fireplace and looks in mirror.*)

JOHN. What a face!

(*Pulls himself together, takes vase from mantelpiece, places against his forehead and exits down R., slams the door after him. PAMELA comes from hiding-place and*

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listens at door R., then picks up JOHN'S coat, comes C. and searches the inside pocket, takes out letters, but finds nothing incriminating, puts them back again. She pulls the sleeves of the coat out and sniffs twice, and along whole length of sleeve, then pulls necklace out of side pocket.)

PAMELA. Oh! Oh!

(She replaces necklace and puts coat on back of chair left of table R. Coming to door R. she taps loudly on it.)

JOHN *(heard off, irritably)*. What is it?

(PAMELA repeats the knocking, then crosses to C.)

(JOHN is obviously changing his clothes and enters just with morning trousers and braces showing.)

What is it? What the devil—? *(Surprised.)* Oh! it's you, Pam. I didn't know you were home. Haven't you been to Folkestone?

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PAMELA. Of course I have. Mother wasn't well, so we came back yesterday.

JOHN. Yesterday? Oh! Oh! oh! *(Strolls off R. to get his waistcoat and jacket. Heard off.)* Did you sleep at a—at mother's last night?

(PAMELA does not answer, but is apparently annoyed.)

(Re-enter JOHN buttoning waistcoat.)

I say, I suppose you slept at your mother's last night.

PAMELA *(grimly)*. Where did *you* sleep?

JOHN. Where did I sleep?

PAMELA. I'm *asking* you.

JOHN. What a funny question to ask anyone! I slept at home—in there—of course . . . obviously . . . naturally.

PAMELA. Whenever you adopt that innocent attitude I always know you are telling me a wilful lie.

JOHN. I couldn't tell you a lie if I tried. Do you remember that phrenologist we went to at Eastbourne? He told me I had an enormous bump of veracity.

PAMELA. This is nothing to do with phrenology. Am I to believe that you slept at home last night?

JOHN *(guiltily)*. Y—yes, of course. Why?

PAMELA. I slept at home, too. Strange we didn't meet.

JOHN. Yes, that *is* funny.

PAMELA. I locked that bedroom door from half-past eleven last night until nine o'clock this morning.

JOHN. Well, if you lock the bedroom door, how can you possibly expect me to sleep at home? Absurd! *(Getting into jacket.)* No, I'll tell you the whole facts of the case, Pam. We went to the—er—opera last night.

PAMELA. We?

JOHN. Yes. My friend Tully and I. Tully had some tickets given him.

PAMELA. And you came home together?

JOHN. Y-yes. And—er—I slept at Tully's.

PAMELA. What opera did you go to?

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JOHN *(broad gestures)*. The—a—a—the—a—that's rather a silly question. No one ever goes to an opera and remembers anything about the performance.

PAMELA. But the name of the opera?

JOHN. Oh!—o-h! The name! *(With assumed confidence.)* You mean what the opera was called?

PAMELA. Exactly.

JOHN. The—er—the title?

PAMELA. Yes.

JOHN. Well—er—you know the—the opera where the girl comes on with a sewing machine—no, you know what I mean—a spinning wheel; two long plaits—Marguerite—Faust, that's it!

PAMELA. Faust?

JOHN. Yes, Faust—with the devil in it.

(Business of putting fingers to forehead.)

PAMELA. And so you both went to see Faust?

JOHN. After that we came home. (*Crosses to L. laughing*). I remember making a joke to Tully—

PAMELA. Never mind the joke.

JOHN. Well, it was just then that I missed my latchkey.

PAMELA. You missed your latchkey?

JOHN. And it was rather late to rouse Chalmers, so Tully offered me a shakedown at his place, and I stayed there.

PAMELA. There's a good deal of *Tully* about it. But if you lost your latch-key, how did you get in just now?

JOHN (*smiling*). Oh, I found the key afterwards.

PAMELA. Well, give it to me.

(JOHN *hesitates*.)

Give it to me, please. (JOHN *obeys*. *She goes up to fireplace*.) While I pay the rent of the flat—

JOHN. Oh, don't say that. It isn't cricket, Pam, to throw the rent up in my face. After all, it was you who made me give up my office in the city.

PAMELA. For the simple reason you were making—

JOHN. I was making a profit of five pounds a week!

PAMELA. And it was costing me another fifteen pounds to keep the office open. (*Coming down to JOHN*.) Now look here. I have enough for both, so long as you do not work in the City.

JOHN. Well, I can't grub along on five pounds a week like some people.

PAMELA. Must I remind you that I have been allowing you forty pounds a month?

JOHN. No, excuse me, dear; it was agreed between us that my allowance should be fifteen pounds only.

(*Telegraph knock and ring off L.*)

PAMELA. I'm quite aware it was agreed. But you keep borrowing on account. Even now you are two years ahead with your money.

JOHN (*faintly*). As much as that?

PAMELA. Two years!

JOHN. How time flies! But I shall pay it back.

PAMELA. But let us keep to the point.

(CHALMERS *enters with three telegrams on salver*.)

About last night—

JOHN. For me?

CHALMERS. No, sir, for the mistress.

PAMELA. Oh—er—Chalmers (*reading telegrams*). Will you just knock at the flat next door and ask if Mr.—Tully is at home, and if so, will he kindly look in here for a moment?

CHALMERS (*going*). Very good, madam.

JOHN. Chalmers, Chalmers. (*Beckoning CHALMERS to stop. To PAMELA*.) You dare not do such a thing!

PAMELA (*to CHALMERS*). Do as I tell you, Chalmers.

(*Exit CHALMERS*.)

JOHN (*as CHALMERS is going off*). Chalmers—Cha—Cha—(*Turns to PAMELA*.) You are not going to show me up before my friends?

PAMELA. There will be no showing up, John, if what you say is true. (*Moves up to table R.C.*.)

JOHN. No, no, of course not. (*Moves to telephone*.)

PAMELA. Besides, I don't suppose your friend Tully would give you away. Men are such cunning brutes.

JOHN (*with a burst which he checks instantly*). Aha!

(PAMELA *looks round, then goes on reading telegrams. At back, whispering into telephone*.)

Give me Regent 346, Regent 346—

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PAMELA (*without turning*). It's no use your 'phoning Mr. Tully. I should be bound to hear what you said.

JOHN (*innocently*). I was only trying to get him to come up, dear.

PAMELA. Chalmers is quite capable of taking a message.

JOHN (*rising and crossing to PAMELA*). Hang it all, Pam, don't you believe what I've told you.

PAMELA (*turning sharply to JOHN.*) *Not—one—word!*

JOHN. Why not?

PAMELA. This morning I sent a reply-paid wire to your friends at Kew.

JOHN. Harry Crombeley?

PAMELA. Yes—asking if you stopped there last night. This is his reply. (*Hands wire.*) Read it. Read it out please.

JOHN (*takes wire gingerly. Reads.*) "Yes, John stayed here last night." (*Aside.*) Silly owl!

PAMELA. Well?

JOHN. Dear old Harry! I expect he thought you would be worrying about me. He's very thoughtful is Harry. (*Gives wire back.*)

PAMELA. Wait! I also sent a wire to your friend Blakiston at Kensington asking the same question. His reply—(*handing second wire to JOHN.*)

(JOHN *amazed.*)

—read it—read *that* out, please.

JOHN (*takes wire—reads.*) "Yes, John stayed here last night." (*Pauses.*) Well now, I can tell how this happened. (*Gives back wire.*)

PAMELA. Wait! Don't commit yourself. I sent three other wires to Mr. Marshall, Gus Stanhope and Drayling. They all reply that you stayed with *them*. Read for yourself! (*Hands wires to JOHN, which he does not take.*)

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JOHN. I can explain it all, dear! You see they were probably all together, and they thought they would put a spoof up on dear old John. They're all jolly good friends.

PAMELA. Yes—they must all be very very good friends, or else they must have a shocking opinion of your habits.

JOHN. I can explain everything.

PAMELA. I believe you could explain the Tower of London away, but you can't have slept in six different beds in one night, unless you were a sleepwalker.

JOHN. I still maintain that I slept last night at Tully's.

PAMELA. We shall see. (*Places telegrams on table R.C.*)

(*Enter CHALMERS.*)

CHALMERS. Mr. Tully, madam.

(*Holds door open until TULLY is on, then exits, closing the door. TULLY is rather a spare man—with drooping moustache and rather sanctimonious and miserable-looking. He enters and stands just above the small table down L., nervously twisting his hands.*)

JOHN (*on TULLY'S entrance JOHN makes a dive for TULLY*). I say, Tully—didn't I—

PAMELA (*catches JOHN by right arm and pulls him down R., advances to TULLY.*) How do you do, Mr. Tully? (*Shakes hands.*)

TULLY. How d'ye do, Mrs. Ayers? Morning, John!

JOHN. Morning, Tully.

PAMELA. Good morning?

JOHN. Ah, you see he wasn't up when I left this morning, lazy beggar!

PAMELA (*centre—to TULLY*). I have to apologize, Mr. Tully, for bringing you out—

TULLY. Oh, not at all.

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PAMELA. But we—er—John and I are in a little difficulty, and if you could see your way to answer a few questions, it would be doing us a great favour, and it might save both of us lifelong misery.

JOHN. My wife won't believe that I—

PAMELA (*to JOHN*). Will you be quiet! You're breaking down the one slender thread that holds our married life together—I want Mr. Tully's version of last night without your assistance. (*Turning to TULLY.*) Now, may I ask, did you have anyone staying with you last night at the flat?

TULLY (*shaking his head*). N—o—not to my knowledge.

(JOHN *is pointing to himself frantically.*)

PAMELA. No one stayed at your place at all?

TULLY (*seeing* JOHN). Oh—er—(*with a gulp*)—John stayed there!

(PAMELA *turns quickly, almost catches* JOHN *pointing to himself. JOHN makes a dive for book on table R.C., and turns pages over quickly.*)

PAMELA (*turns again to* TULLY). But just now you said no one stayed there.

TULLY. We—we never count John as anybody.

JOHN (*rubs hands with glee*). No, dear, I'm nobody.

PAMELA (*gives* JOHN *a freezing look—then again to* TULLY). Now would you mind telling me how you passed the evening?

TULLY. Last night? (*Looking at* JOHN.)

PAMELA. Last night.

TULLY. Well, we—er—let me think. We—er—yes—

(JOHN *points to window.*)

—we went out.

PAMELA. And where did you go, might I ask?

(JOHN *is gesticulating with one hand on his chest and openmouthed as in opera.*)

TULLY (*failing to interpret* JOHN'S *signals*). It's rather difficult to remember off-hand —one night is so very much like another.

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PAMELA. Try to think.

(JOHN *still gesticulating and openmouthed.*)

TULLY. I think we must have been in a boat on the Serpentine.

(PAMELA *turns quickly. JOHN goes up to table R.C. and smells marguerites. TULLY very embarrassed.*)

JOHN. These are very beautiful flowers, dear. Did these come from *Covent Garden*?

PAMELA. Please don't interrupt.

TULLY. Oh, now I remember—it's about *last* night you want to know?

PAMELA. Last night!

TULLY. Oh, last night we went to Covent—to—to—to the opera.

(JOHN *nods and smiles at* TULLY.)

John had tickets given to him.

JOHN (*annoyed*). No, no—those tickets were given me to give to you. They were a present from Mr. Baxter.

TULLY. Oh, I didn't quite understand. I must write and thank Mr. Baster.

JOHN. Baxter! Baxter!!

TULLY. Baxter—Baxter—

PAMELA. Who *is* Mr. Baxter?

JOHN. Don't you know, dear?

PAMELA. Do you?

JOHN. Of course—he's Mr. Baster—Baxter.

PAMELA (*to* TULLY). And did you enjoy the opera?

TULLY. Not very much. I really prefer the singing down at our chapel.

PAMELA. What opera was it?

TULLY. I don't think I noticed.

PAMELA. Didn't notice!

JOHN. Of course not, dear—no decent person ever does—it's bad form.

PAMELA. Silence! (*To* TULLY.) Haven't you any idea of the name of the opera?

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TULLY. Not for the moment—er—er—

(JOHN *points to pot of marguerites.*)

I—er—Daisy—Daisy Daydreams?

PAMELA. I can't say I have ever heard of an opera of the name of Daisy Daydreams.

(JOHN *is now holding a plait made from his handkerchief to the back of his head.*)

TULLY (*watching* JOHN). Was it something to do with—er—something hanging from the back of the head?

PAMELA. And you can't remember the name of the opera?

TULLY. Not for the moment.

(JOHN *points to marguerites again.*)

Are—you—sure—it wasn't Daisy—or Daisies—or Marguerite—er—

(JOHN *nods his head.*)

Marguerite!—er—er—*Faust*, of course!

JOHN. Yes, dear, *Faust*, of course!

(PAMELA *turns quickly to* JOHN.)

JOHN (*just as quickly turns his back*). Now are you satisfied?

PAMELA. And after you left the opera? (*To* TULLY.)

TULLY. We came home.

PAMELA. What induced John to sleep at your place, seeing your door is next to ours?

(JOHN *signalling key in door and then lost.*)

TULLY. Oh, he couldn't find his keyhole.

(PAMELA *turns quickly round to* JOHN.)

JOHN. No, no, dear! We simply went to the opera and saw Daisy—*Faust*, I mean—came out—had a drink—I told Tully I couldn't find my *key*—I suppose he thought I said *key-hole*—he offered me a shake-down and I stayed there. And I think such a clear explanation ought to satisfy anyone.

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PAMELA (*doubtfully*). Yes, I suppose so.

JOHN (*going to fireplace*). Then everything is quite in order? (*Very satisfied.*)

(TULLY *sighs.*)

PAMELA (*doubtfully*). Y—y—es, y—y—es, except (*picking up* JOHN'S *coat with left hand*) could either of you explain this?

JOHN (*coming down to* PAMELA). That's my coat!

PAMELA. No (*taking necklace from pocket with right hand and holding it up*) *this!*

(*Pause—JOHN and TULLY both amazed.*)

TULLY. Oh, that's nothing to do with *me*.

JOHN. What is it, dear? What is it?

PAMELA. A pearl necklace. (*turning to* TULLY) I suppose *you* don't wear pearl necklaces, do you, Mr. Tully?

TULLY. No, no!

JOHN. I can tell you all about that, dear. I saw that in a shop window and I picked it up very cheaply. I'm sure it's a bargain.

PAMELA. And who was it intended for, may I ask?

JOHN. Who should I buy pearl necklaces for?

PAMELA. For me—for me, I suppose. (*Boiling with rage and throwing coat up to settee C.*)

JOHN. Of course—naturally. Ask Tully!

(TULLY *goes to chair by telephone L.C., stands perfectly still, unnerved—JOHN below table R.C. stands blinking and looking into space.*)

PAMELA (*goes to table down L., uncovers her hat, picks it up—goes towards door R. As she passes JOHN*). Oh! (*Goes to door R., opens door.*) Oh! (*Exits door R. Bangs door after her.*)

TULLY (*flopping into chair he is standing by*). Oh! I'm all of a tremble!

JOHN (*crosses up to settee—puts coat on settee—then up to* TULLY). You're a boiled-headed owl!

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TULLY. If you had told me yesterday that you could lie like that I should never have believed you.

JOHN (*coming down R.*). You did your share very well.

TULLY. What's going to happen now?

JOHN. She'll probably pack up and go home to her mother's.

TULLY (*rising and crossing to JOHN*). John, where *did* you go last night?

JOHN. I took a little friend out to dinner and then we went on to the Palace, and after that we had supper at the Five Hundred Club. We watched them dancing and had a dance or two ourselves, but it's perfectly absurd if a man can't have a little innocent enjoyment and a couple of dances with a little bit of fluff without all this absurd fuss.

TULLY. But the hour?

JOHN. At the Club we kept it up a bit late, that's all. We had breakfast at Jimmy Dawson's flat and cooked bacon and eggs.

TULLY. Won't you promise never to do such a thing again?

JOHN (*crossing to L.*). I'll promise never to poach an egg in an opera hat again. I can't possibly live without some relaxation now and then.

TULLY. But must you really go out and about with little bits of flu—flu—fluff?

JOHN. Most certainly if I want to. What have you got to say to that?

TULLY. Oh, dear, dear, dear!

JOHN. Everything would have been all right only you were so infernally stupid about the opera. I'm sure "Marguerite and plaits" was perfectly clear. If you had only said "Faust" without any hesitation everything would have been all right.

TULLY. But it's so risky. They play a different opera every night at Covent Garden.

JOHN. I know they do. I wonder what they *did* play? Where's the newspaper? (*Looking round for paper—seeing paper on table R. below door—crosses over—gets paper.*) Here it is. (*Crosses to TULLY.*) Now if my luck's in they played "Faust" (*both look at paper together*) last night—here we are—theatres—last night—Covent Garden—Pictures!! (*JOHN tears the paper in two—gives half to TULLY.*) Here, tear that up (*handing other half*) and this bit too—get rid of it somehow.

(*TULLY tears paper in pieces and puts bits in handkerchief pocket.*)

(*JOHN crosses to door R.*)

TULLY. How do you think you will get out of this?

JOHN (*crossing C.*). Quite easily. Tact and diplomacy. (*Offering his head to TULLY.*) Feel that bump—they say I have a bigger bump of tact than Lloyd George.

TULLY (*feeling head*). Oh, I say—

(*Both stand to attention as PAMELA re-enters R., wearing a hat and carrying a small suitcase—the pearl necklace is also in her hand. She crosses over to door R., not looking at either of the men and dabbing her face with a handkerchief as if crying. She stops as JOHN speaks.*)

JOHN. Pam—Pam—

PAMELA (*coming down to table L. and placing suitcase on table*). I am going home to mother's. You'll hear from her later, and probably the solicitors.

JOHN. Well, Pam. I think you're awfully silly, and after I've bought you a pearl necklace too.

PAMELA. I doubt very much if the necklace *was* intended for me.

JOHN. Oh, Tully, did you hear that? The only woman in the world I have ever loved! (*Sinking into chair left of table R.C.*)

TULLY (*who has been standing watching very nervously by table with telephone L.C.: crosses to PAMELA*). I don't think you ought to say such things, Mrs. Ayers. (*PAMELA shrugs shoulders and turns back on him. He crosses to JOHN.*) Do leave us for a few moments, John—I—

JOHN (*rising*). But, Tully, I—

TULLY. I'll put it all right.

JOHN. But, Tully. I—

(*JOHN is persuaded to go off R. by TULLY. JOHN exits muttering—TULLY shuts door.*)

TULLY (*crossing to PAMELA*). One moment, Mrs. Ayers. You know I feel somehow that I am to blame for all this. I don't want to pose as a hyper-religious man, but every one says I'm very good, and I wouldn't deceive you for the world. I'm sure that necklace was intended for you.

PAMELA (*opening suitcase*). Well, in any case, I value my feelings at something more than a—a—a one-and-elevenpenny pearl necklace. (*Drops necklace into case*)

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and shuts it.)

TULLY. Really I think you are doing John an injustice. I don't think you quite understand his little ways.

PAMELA. I understand as much as is fit for me to understand.

TULLY. No, really, I know John doesn't behave in a conventional manner as a rule, but he is quite harmless.

PAMELA (*raging—up to TULLY—then crossing down R.*). Harmless! Harmless! A man who can sleep in six different beds in one night—harmless! (*Throwing arms up on last "harmless."*)

TULLY. Six! Impossible! It would be a record.

PAMELA (*up to table R.C., picks up bundle of telegrams—hands them to TULLY*). Read for yourself.

TULLY. "John stayed here, Kew." (*Reading.*) "John stayed here, Bloomsbury." "John stayed, Barnes." Kensington—Bloomsbury to Kew—Kew to Kensington—Kensington to Barnes. It couldn't be done in the time! Oh, I can quite understand this. It's all John's friends—all anxious to shield him from the fury of his wife.

PAMELA (*angrily*). I beg your pardon!

(*Snatches telegrams from TULLY.*)

TULLY. I mean all anxious to shield him from your displeasure. John has such a host of good friends. There isn't one who wouldn't lay down his life for him. Why, John's one of the best in the world.

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PAMELA (*crossing to L. by table down L.*). I am quite a broad-minded woman, Mr. Tully. I don't expect men to be angels. But there's a limit to everything.

TULLY (*crossing to PAMELA*). I quite agree with you in that, Mrs. Ayers, but as a broad-minded woman you must see that a man like John wants a little relaxation, and there's really no harm if he does go out to dinner occasionally with—what was it he called them?—little pieces—no, little bits of fluff.

PAMELA (*madly*). What? What??? (*TULLY recoils—PAMELA follows him up to C.*). You expect *me* to sit at home while my husband goes out with little—bits—of—fluff!!!

TULLY (*pulls out handkerchief with pieces of paper*). Well—you know—it's a term—a joke—(*Tries to conceal pieces of paper with his feet.*)

PAMELA. I'm surprised, Mr. Tully, that your mission teaching should have put such ideas into your head—(*crossing to table picking up case*) as little bits of—fluff!—Good day!

(*Exit PAMELA down L., banging door behind her. The front door is then heard to slam.*)

TULLY *stands looking into space for a time—then proceeds to pick up torn paper.*)

JOHN (*cautiously peeping in door R.*). What are you doing?

TULLY. Sweeping up "Covent Garden."

JOHN (*crossing to R.C.*). Has she gone?

TULLY. Y-y-es. I'm so sorry, John.

JOHN (*crosses to TULLY*). That's all through your meddling in things that don't concern you.

TULLY. Did you really sleep in six different beds?

JOHN. Oh, don't be silly.

TULLY. Is there any chance of her returning?

JOHN. Of course she'll come back! She does this sort of thing about every fortnight.

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TULLY. Do you sleep out as often as that?

JOHN. No! She does it with the idea that I shall go and fetch her back.

TULLY. Well, why don't you?

JOHN. Because once I do that my authority will be gone. She'll treat me like a child, and leave home two or three times a day. Things have never gone so badly as this before.

TULLY. I think the pearl necklace did it, don't you?

JOHN (*suddenly aroused*). Hah, the necklace! Where is it? Where is it? Have you got it?

TULLY. No, no. Why should I have it?

JOHN. Then where is it? Where is it? The necklace! (*Looks about wildly for the necklace.*) Look for it! Don't stand there like an anæmic camel! Look for it!

TULLY (*jumping about in a silly fashion*). Where? Where?

JOHN. Everywhere—all over the place. Perhaps it's on the floor—look for it. (*Both look about for the necklace.*) Ah, it may be under the table. (*They both dive under the*

table from opposite ends—their heads collide—they both come up holding their heads in pain.) Can't you see where you are going?

TULLY. I can only see stars.

JOHN. Your head's like iron. But where's the necklace? (*Moving arm-chair from right of table R.C. to below table about 3 feet.*) That's the question.

TULLY. I've got it!

JOHN. Where?

TULLY. No—not the necklace—I've got an idea.

JOHN. Oh—

TULLY. I expect Mrs. Ayers took it. You practically gave it to her, didn't you?

JOHN (*aghast*). You think she took it?

TULLY. Yes, I remember now—while I was talking to her just now I saw her drop it into her bag.

JOHN. Are you sure? (*Crossing to L.*)

TULLY. It doesn't matter—you can get it back from her.

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JOHN (*still looking about for necklace*). She'll never part with it—she loves jewellery.

TULLY. Well, you can easily buy another. (*Putting hand in pocket.*) I'll lend you the one-and-elevenpence.

JOHN. One-and-elevenpence! One-and-elevenpence! Do you know *that necklace is worth five hundred pounds!*!

TULLY. Five hundred pounds!!

JOHN. Yes. It was lent to little Mamie Scott by the Rajah of Changpoor. She took a fancy to the necklace, and he lent it to her to wear just for the evening. There was a big crush as we came out of the club last night, and Mamie asked me to put the necklace in my pocket for safety's sake, as the clasp was broken, which I did, of course. Apparently we both forgot all about it. She'll be in an awful stew. She promised faithfully to return the necklace to the Rajah to-day.

TULLY. Oh, dear, dear, dear!

JOHN. Oh, damn, damn, damn! What can I do? What can I say? What will Mamie think of me.

(*TULLY is twiddling the chair R.C. about.*)

Oh, don't fiddle about with that chair!

TULLY (*stops footling*). Is there no way of getting it back from Mrs. Ayers.

JOHN. I tell you she'll never part with it, and she may not be home for several days, possibly a week. In the meantime the Rajah will be clamouring for his pearls . . . I shall be branded as a—well, there's no telling what it may lead to. Great Heavens! What a hole to be in!

(*Crossing to chair L. down stage.*)

TULLY. Couldn't you tell Miss Fluffie Scott you've lost it and buy her another.

JOHN. Didn't you hear me say that necklace cost five hundred pounds?

TULLY (*twirling chair round on one leg*). Yes, that is awkward.

JOHN. Oh, do put that chair down! (*Advancing to TULLY.*)

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TULLY (*sits C.*). Couldn't you borrow the money?

JOHN (*crossing, sits down L.*). Don't be a fool.

TULLY. It's easy enough. I had a letter from someone only this morning, offering to lend me any sum from £10 to £10,000, without any security. He enclosed his photograph. Such a nice, kind, honest open face.

JOHN. You innocent lamb! Well, I suppose if I can't give it back I shall have to find the money.

TULLY. You will? Oh, it is a fix! (*Biting his nails.*)

JOHN (*rises, goes up to TULLY*). I say, Tully, I suppose you don't happen to have five hundred that you don't want.

TULLY. Not that I don't want.

JOHN. Poor old Tully! You never seem to have any money. I don't know what you live on. Are you sure you get enough to eat?

TULLY. You know, John, if I had the money I couldn't refuse you. You do know that, don't you, John?

JOHN (*patting TULLY on back*). Of course I do, dear old Tully! Dear old Tully! (*Comes down L.*)

TULLY (*rising*). Why do you always call me by my surname, when I call you John. I

do wish you'd call me Bertram. Do you know when anyone calls me Bertram, I feel *I could do any mortal thing in the world for them!*

JOHN. Well, you get me out of this hole and I'll call you Bertram till I bust. (*Sits down L.*)

TULLY. Will you? I think I know where you could get the money. (*Comes down to JOHN.*)

JOHN (*rising suddenly*). Where? Where?

TULLY. Sit down! (JOHN *sits*.) Keep calm! Dick Turner thinks the world of you. . . .

JOHN. Yes, I know, but he hasn't much money.

TULLY. I know, I know. But he was in a 'bus accident last Friday and he's claiming £500 compensation from the Motor 'Bus company.

JOHN. He'll never get it.

TULLY. Oh, I think he will. In fact it's nearly settled. And if you approach him in the matter, I feel sure he would lend you the £500.

[Pg 23]

JOHN. But *I* was in that 'bus with him coming from Kew.

TULLY. That's right—coming from Kew.

JOHN. And if Dick Turner could get five hundred, I'm positive I could.

TULLY. Well, I'm sure he's going to get it.

JOHN. But there was scarcely any damage done. I didn't receive a scratch, neither did Dick Turner. I was thrown forward on top of a fat old woman sitting opposite.

TULLY. Still you can't always tell at the time of the accident—injuries sometimes develop afterwards.

(*Business of drawing patterns on carpet with foot.*)

JOHN (*rises and crosses slowly R.*). Yes, of course, especially after you've seen your solicitor.

TULLY. Er—I—

JOHN. Don't talk to me—my brain's working.

TULLY. You know, John, in all cases of 'bus accidents the 'Bus Companies have to pay out according to what the doctors think.

JOHN. The question is to *make* the doctors think. Why should Dick Turner get five hundred, and I get nothing?

TULLY. I suppose he was really injured.

JOHN. Don't talk, don't talk! I've got the most wonderful brain. (*Hand to forehead.*)

TULLY. Have you?

JOHN. Yes. Feel that bump!

TULLY (*obeys*). Oh!—did you get that under the table?

JOHN. No, silly ass, it's a natural bump. (*Excited.*) It's all so simple. It's wonderful how I get myself out of every difficulty. Now, will you run down to the doctor's for me! (*Going up to telephone.*) The last block of flats, you know?

TULLY. Doctor Green?

JOHN (*looking through Telephone Book for number*). Yes! That's it. Ask him to call at once.

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TULLY. John! You're not going to pretend to the doctor that you are ill?

JOHN. Now don't ask any questions.

TULLY. Oh no, John! (*Working fingers along back of arm-chair.*) I couldn't do a thing like that. It's not fair—it's not honest. (*Protests in action against the suggestion until JOHN says "BERTRAM," when a broad smile comes across his face.*)

JOHN (*rising and crossing to TULLY—pleadingly*). Bertram! (*Affectionately.*) Bertram!!!

TULLY (*giggles affectedly*). Oh! John! (*Crossing to door L.*) Oh! John! (*Giggles.*) Oh! John! (*Giggles till off door L. Quick exit.*)

JOHN (*goes to telephone. At 'phone*). Give me Regent one—four—three—six quickly, Miss, please. . . . Yes. . . . Hullo! hullo! are you the Motor Omnibus Company? . . . Yes, yes. Mrs. John Ayers speaking! (*Adopting a feminine voice.*) Mrs. John Ayers. . . . Yes . . . my husband was in that terrible 'bus accident you had last Friday coming from Kew. Yes . . . my *husband!* And he's very ill indeed. Yes . . . eh? (*Dropping into his own voice.*) Oh! speak up! I can't hear a damned word you're saying. (*Hand over 'phone for a second—then resuming in feminine voice.*) Oh! He didn't notice it at the time. He has witnesses to prove everything. Eh? I can't hear. . . . Oh, you'll send your inspector round to look into it . . . eh? You'll send your inspector round to look into it. Oh, very good, but don't send him immediately as the patient is asleep. Eh? . . . yes, in about half an hour's time . . . we're quite close to your depot . . . we're quite close to your depot . . . number 13 St. Mark's Mansions. Yes—very well—thank you—Good-

bye! (*Puts up receiver. He looks round and takes off jacket. CHALMERS enters L.*)
What is it? What is it?

CHALMERS. A lady to see you, sir. (*She smiles.*)

JOHN. To see me! What are you laughing at?

CHALMERS (*pulls herself together*). Miss Scott, I think she said.

[Pg 25]

JOHN. Good Lord! Oh—I'm busy—dressing for breakfast—not at home. (*Crossing to door R.*)

(*CHALMERS is going.*)

Wait! I'd better see her. (*Opens door with right hand—holding it open.*) Show her in here.

CHALMERS (*in doubt*). In there, sir? (*Pointing to door R.*)

JOHN (*pointing back into room with left hand*). No. Here! Here! (*Exit down R.*)

(*Exit CHALMERS door L.*)

(*CHALMERS shows in MAMIE SCOTT. She is a girl about 27, petite but pretty, dressed with many furbelows and other fluffy things. She looks around, as she enters, with a swagger air, sees CHALMERS smiling, freezes her with a look. CHALMERS straightens herself and goes off door L. with nose in air. MAMIE looks round room humming or singing a tune, places parasol on settee at back, and comes down C. Enter JOHN, undoing collar and tie.*)

MAMIE. Hullo, Jack!

JOHN. Hullo, you dear little thing! (*In a playful temper.*) But you mustn't come here—really.

MAMIE. Why not? I thought you said the cat was away at Folkestone?

JOHN. And please don't call my wife a cat.

(*Exit JOHN into room R.*)

MAMIE (*with an elaborate curtsy*). Oh, I beg the cat's pardon. (*Sweeping round room she sees photograph on table L.C.*). Say Jack, whose picture's this?

JOHN (*spoken off*). Which one?

MAMIE. This one, here, by the telephone!

JOHN (*spoken off*). Oh, that is my wife.

MAMIE. Your wife? Some girl! She's not the sort of first wife I'd pick out if I was going to be your second.

JOHN (*spoken off*). Why not?

MAMIE. Looks too darned healthy—I'd have to wait too long for you.

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(*Enter JOHN door R.*)

JOHN. She's come home unexpectedly.

MAMIE (*jumps in terror, and makes a dive for vanity bag she has placed on table L.C.*) Jack!

JOHN. Oh, it's all right. She's out just now.

MAMIE. Phew! You *did* give me a fright!

JOHN. But it's true—she *is* home, all the same.

(*Exit into room R.*)

MAMIE. Well, come out here and talk to me. I won't keep you long.

JOHN (*spoken off*). I can't—I'm only half dressed.

MAMIE. Well, I'll come in there. (*Crossing to door R.*)

JOHN. No, no, this is a bedroom.

MAMIE. I'm not afraid of bedrooms!

JOHN (*spoken off*). Give me a minute—just a minute!

MAMIE. Come out as you are. I'm not particular.

JOHN (*spoken off*). I won't be two ticks.

MAMIE (*loudly*). Right-o! (*Sits in arm-chair down R.C. and commences to powder her face.*) I say, Jack! Do you know that you didn't give me back the necklace last night!

(*JOHN enters and creeps off again.*)

(*A little louder.*) I say, Jacko! do—you—know—you didn't give—me—back that necklace—last night? (*The words slightly smothered by using powder puff on mouth.*)

(*Enter JOHN in dressing-gown.*)

JOHN. I say, Mamie, that hat does suit you! You look awfully sweet!

MAMIE. You go on, Jack. You're the champion long-distance kidder in the universe.

JOHN (*crossing to left of MAMIE*). But I mean it. It suits you awfully.

MAMIE. Oh, awfully! (*Mockingly.*) Do you know you didn't give me back the necklace last night—you know—the pearl necklace? [Pg 27]

JOHN (*hesitating*). No, er—I know I didn't. We both forgot all about it, didn't we?

MAMIE (*laughing*). We did. (*Both laugh amusedly, thinking it a great joke.*)

JOHN. I left it in my coat, and I left the coat at the club.

MAMIE (*rising—alarmed*). Jack. It isn't lost?

JOHN (*pressing her gently into chair*). Sit down. Sit down and don't worry. It can't be lost. If it is, I'll buy you another, that's all.

MAMIE. Five—hundred—pounds!

JOHN. Yes. I can't forget that! But it's a mere flea-bite to me.

MAMIE. Jack, you don't understand, the Rajah looks on it as an heirloom—he wouldn't part with it for the world—that's why I wanted to wear it—it was such a cute idea. But I promised faithfully to return it to the Rajah to-day.

JOHN. Can't you make some excuse?

MAMIE. How can I? Have you been to the Club?

JOHN. No, I can't possibly go down there for a day or two—for a particular reason.

MAMIE. Oh, I *do* hope it isn't lost. Can't you 'phone?

JOHN. Oh, yes. I *did* 'phone, but the club 'phone seems to be out of order.

MAMIE. That's torn it! What *will* the Rajah think of me!

JOHN. Now don't worry. If you'll only wait everything will be all right. In any case if it is lost, I'll buy you another exactly like it. I can't say more, can I?

MAMIE. You really mean that?

JOHN. Of course I do—I never break my word. I'm even going to get some money to-day—out of accidents—I mean, in case of accidents. Now, listen! I'm awfully glad you've called. My wife's left me!

MAMIE (*rising and throwing arms round JOHN'S neck*). Jack—darling!

JOHN (*gently but firmly disengaging her arms*). Yes, but only for a little while—and I want you to do me a favour. [Pg 28]

MAMIE. Of course I will, Jack.

JOHN. I'm expecting a man here presently to examine me.

MAMIE. To examine you?

JOHN. Yes, I'm very ill, you know—I was in a 'bus accident the other day, and—er—things have been getting worse.

MAMIE. Poor old Jack! I *am* sorry. (*Pulling his face to her with hand under his chin.*) But you don't look ill.

JOHN (*turning face again to front*). No, I'm one of those who bear up to the last! Now, listen, when this man calls I want you to pretend that I'm bad. Of course I *am* bad, but while he's here I am sure to be a little worse. Mrs. Ayers—that is me—has been speaking to him on the 'phone and naturally when he comes he'll expect to see me—that is—Mrs. Ayers—I—I see, you don't understand.

MAMIE (*very sympathetically*). Jack, dear, you haven't injured your head, have you?

JOHN. No, it's quite all right. Nothing to do, but—er—don't say you're my wife. Just pat me on the head now and then and moan "Poor John"—you understand? . . .

MAMIE. Yes, I understand. "Poor John." But say, this is spooof, you're not really ill, Jack, are you?

JOHN. Of course not—oh, yes, I am—but don't worry, I'm going to get better. Just "poor John!" Lay it on thick!

MAMIE. I see—"Poor John." (*Crosses up to mantelpiece, removes hat and tidies her hair at glass.*)

(*TULLY enters hurriedly, sees MAMIE, makes a bolt for door L. JOHN catches him by coat and pulls him back.*)

TULLY. It's all right, John—(*as he enters*).

JOHN (*to MAMIE*). Excuse me a moment.

TULLY (*to JOHN*). Doctor Green was out, but they'll send him round directly he [Pg 29]

comes back. He's out on a case—about a poor little woman—a poor little woman— (*whispers in JOHN'S ear*) who . . . (*then aloud*) both—both doing well.

JOHN. Well, that's more than we can say. Now I must go and finish dressing, or rather undressing. (*Sees MAMIE.*) Oh, let me introduce you to little Mamie Scott.

TULLY (*alarmed*). Is she—is she—fast!

JOHN. Fast?

TULLY. Is she a hussy?

JOHN. You'll like her immensely, come on.

TULLY (*in terror*). No, no! I couldn't. I've never spoken to anyone like that in my life.

JOHN (*taking hold of TULLY*). Don't be a fool.

TULLY. Oh, no, no! What would they think of me down at the Mission—besides I wouldn't know what to say to her.

JOHN. Why not?

TULLY. I've never met a fluff.

JOHN. You do get hold of the most extraordinary expressions. (*Calling to MAMIE.*) Mamie! Let me introduce you to a very old chum of mine. Mr. Bertram Tully—Miss Mamie Scott.

(JOHN *crosses to door R.* MAMIE *crosses over to TULLY.*)

MAMIE (*taking TULLY'S hand*). Oh, what a beautiful boy! (*Pulls a long face.*)

JOHN. Talk to him, Mamie. He has a wonderful flow of conversation. I shan't be long.

(*Exit JOHN door R.*)

(MAMIE *beckons TULLY with head and eyes—and edges down to arm-chair R. Sits.*

TULLY, *very nervous, edges down to chair L. Sits.*)

TULLY (*playing with bottoms of his trouser legs and trying to make conversation*). Do you ever go—er—go—go— No! (*Tries again.*) Would you like to—to—to— No! (*Has another try.*) It's—it's wonderful how the fine weather lasts!

MAMIE (*very amused all the time*). Ripping, isn't it?

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TULLY. Yes, isn't it?

MAMIE. Are you married?

TULLY. No, I regret to say.

MAMIE. A bit of luck in store for some one.

TULLY. Oh, thank you!

MAMIE. I expect you have a gay old time.

TULLY (*twiddling his fingers down his leg*). No, not so very gay. . . .

MAMIE. I know—you're a fly-by-night.

TULLY. No, I assure you all my people are most respectable.

MAMIE. Well then, you're a dark horse.

TULLY (*mystified*). A dark—horse?

MAMIE. You know, one of those outsiders who comes up with a rush on the rails at the last minute, and wins by a short head. Do you get me?

TULLY. I don't quite understand what you mean.

MAMIE. I mean you *can* go the pace when you like. (*She raises her dress and picks a piece of fluff from the hem—blows it into space.*)

TULLY. No, I don't go. . . . (*Sees MAMIE exposing a deal of leg—he is very embarrassed—wipes his forehead with handkerchief.*) No, I don't go at all! (*Rising, and backing away from her.*)

MAMIE. What do you do to amuse yourself?

TULLY. I go to chapel on Wednesdays and Saturdays (*doing a sort of Skating Act with legs and twisting backwards and forwards*) and I attend the Mission on Tuesdays and Fridays. (*Again down to her and seeing leg, stumbles backwards and wiping forehead with handkerchief keeps up this business, doing a sort of skating waltz.*)

MAMIE. Did they teach you that ragtime down at the Mission? (*Jumping up.*) I like your drunken step—I must get hold of that! (*Catches TULLY and forces him round the room as if dancing a ragtime—MAMIE sings and dances as well.*)

TULLY (*breaks away from MAMIE and rushes to door R. and knocking on door—feverishly*). John! John!

JOHN (*spoken off*). What is it? What is it?

TULLY. I'm being tempted!

JOHN (*spoken off*). Well, stick it! Don't be a fool!

(TULLY *rushes up to window R. then down again to arm-chair. MAMIE follows him up and down on L. side of table. She motions to him with her eyes, coyly, to sit in arm-chair, he succumbs. Sits gingerly on front of chair. MAMIE sits on arm of chair and puts right arm round his neck. TULLY snatches it away nervously.*)

MAMIE. Now tell me, what's this Mission for?

TULLY. It's for the poor people. (*Sees MAMIE'S exposed ankle—turns away nervously.*) We give them musical evenings to keep them out of the public-houses. I play the flute.

MAMIE. You do what?

TULLY. I play the flute.

MAMIE. Oh, help!

TULLY. Oh, they like it!

(*Bell heard outside door L.*)

MAMIE (*starting*). I wonder what that is? (*Goes to door R. calling to JOHN.*) Jack! Jack! There's a ring at the bell—do you think it can be the cat?

TULLY (*rising and going up C.*). A cat wouldn't ring the bell surely.

(*Enter JOHN dressed in pyjamas and dressing-gown, from door R.*)

JOHN. She couldn't possibly be here yet awhile whatever happened.

(*Enter CHALMERS L. with card on salver—and crosses to JOHN.*)

And please don't call my wife a cat!

MAMIE. I'm sorry. (*Sits in arm-chair.*)

JOHN (*reading card*). Good! Show him in at once. (*To CHALMERS.*)

(*Exit CHALMERS door L.*)

It's Mr. Nixon Trippett!

MAMIE. Mr. How Much?

JOHN. Mr. Nixon Trippett—the Inspector from the Motor 'Bus Company—the man I told you about who's going to examine me. Sit down, and ask him to wait. Say I shan't be long.

TULLY (*perplexed*). What have we got to do?

JOHN. Mamie will tell you all about it.

(*Exit JOHN R.*)

MAMIE. Now, listen here, Bertie Brighteyes.

TULLY. Oh, stop it! (*Down C.*)

MAMIE. All we've got to do is to keep on saying "Poor John!"

TULLY. Poor John!

MAMIE. I'm to pretend I'm John's wife.

TULLY. Poor John!

MAMIE (*rising*). What do you mean?

(NIXON TRIPPETT *enters, shown on by CHALMERS. He is a very ugly man of forty, dressed in frock coat and wearing spectacles. He is almost shabby genteel. CHALMERS retires—TULLY nervously retreats from MAMIE and seeing TRIPPETT advances with uncertainty.*)

TULLY (*to TRIPPETT*). Poor John! I mean Mr. Ayers won't be a minute. Will you take a seat. (*Brings chair down from table L.C. and places it C. in a line with arm-chair R. and small chair L.*)

TRIPPETT (*places hat on table L.C. and coming down to chair C.*). Thank you, sir. (*All sit. MAMIE in arm-chair. TRIPPETT chair C. TULLY chair L.*) Thank you, sir. (*Removes gloves.*)

(*JOHN groans loudly off R.*)

(*All rise slowly and simultaneously with eyes fixed on door R., then sit again.*)

(*JOHN groans again very loudly. All rise. MAMIE gets behind arm-chair. TRIPPETT drags*

chair up to table L.C. keeping eyes on door R. all the time. TULLY stands by chair L. gazing at door R.)

(JOHN *enters groaning from door R.; he is in pyjamas, with a blanket wrapped round him. MAMIE assists him into arm-chair, JOHN groaning all the time.*)

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TRIPPETT (*advancing timidly to JOHN*). Er—Mr. Ayers—are you the injured person?

JOHN. Oh—oh—oh oh!! (*Groans.*)

TRIPPETT (*again advancing cautiously*). Might I ask if you are the injured person?

JOHN. Don't I look like it. Do you think I'm doing this to be funny?

MAMIE (*patting JOHN'S head*). P-o-or John!

TULLY. Poor John!

TRIPPETT (*glares at TULLY—then over to him*). Do you think it would be advisable for me to call another day?

JOHN. No, it's all right, I can stick it.

MAMIE. He's awfully brave, you know.

TRIPPETT. You ought to have kept in bed. (*Going to table R.C.*) It would have been better if I hadn't let you know I was coming. (*Places gloves on table.*)

JOHN. Oh no, it wouldn't.

MAMIE. Poor John!

TULLY. Poor John!

TRIPPETT (*gazes first at MAMIE and then at TULLY*). Well now, may I ask a few questions that will help me to make out my report? (*Pulls notebook and pencil out and looks round for something to write on.*)

JOHN. Yes, ask as many as you like. (*To TULLY.*) Bring that table over for Mr. Stickson Triplets.

TRIPPETT. *Not* Stickson Triplets! *Nixon Trippett!*

(*TULLY brings small table from down L. and places it on left of arm-chair. TRIPPETT brings chair from left of table R.C. and places it on left of small table.*)

JOHN. I beg your pardon.

(*TULLY moves round to back of arm-chair on left of MAMIE.*)

TRIPPETT (*sits and preparing to write in notebook*). Now then, Mr.—*John* Ayers, isn't it?

JOHN. Yes, John Ayers.

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(*TRIPPETT writes.*)

Oh, my back! Oh!

MAMIE. Poor John!

TULLY. Poor John!

TRIPPETT (*looks at TULLY, then writing again*). Tell me, Mr. Ayers, are you married?

JOHN. Of course! (*Absent-mindedly taking TULLY'S hand in mistake for MAMIE'S and places it by his face. Realizing his mistake he throws it away calling him a "silly ass" and then taking MAMIE'S hand.*) Yes, of course!

TRIPPETT. Any—family?

MAMIE. Yes.

JOHN. No!!

TRIPPETT (*writing in book*). Yes *and* no. What is your height?

JOHN. Four feet four and a bit.

TRIPPETT. Age?

JOHN. Forty-two.

TRIPPETT. Chest measurement?

JOHN. Forty-two, too.

TRIPPETT. Ever been vaccinated?

JOHN. Well, my godfather was Mr. Tully and my godmother was—

TRIPPETT. I said vaccinated—

JOHN. Oh, I beg—

TULLY. Oh no, he never catches anything!

TRIPPETT (*writing again*). Now, Mr. Ayers, you say you were travelling in one of the company's 'buses when this accident took place.

JOHN. Of course I was—last Friday—coming from Kew. Oh! (*Groans.*)

MAMIE. Poor John!

TULLY. Poor John!

JOHN (*to MAMIE*). I'm afraid you won't have me with you much longer, darling!

MAMIE. A-a-h! O-w-h! (*Cries aloud.*)

TULLY (*leaning over and looking into TRIPPETT'S face*). It's hard to see him struck down like this!

(*TRIPPETT rises slightly annoyed. TULLY retreats to window R., then out of window and in by window L., starts back when he sees TRIPPETT still watching and pointing at him with his pencil.*)

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TRIPPETT (*resuming*). Could you tell me who was inside the 'bus, or describe the people in any way?

JOHN. There was a Mr. Richard Turner—

TRIPPETT (*breaking in*). Yes, we have acknowledged *his* claim. A cheque for five hundred was sent him this morning.

JOHN (*jumping up and leaning over to TRIPPETT*). What!!! (*Recovering himself and sitting again.*) Oh, it's only a spasm, that's all, oh, I *am* bad!

TRIPPETT. Could you describe anyone else who was in the 'bus?

JOHN. There were two soldiers in khaki and a *very fat old woman*.

(*TRIPPETT writes. TULLY sidles round to back of arm-chair again.*)

TRIPPETT. Did these people make any statement or pass any remark?

JOHN. When the collision occurred some one said it was like being out at the front.

TRIPPETT. The stout lady said that.

(*MAMIE turns away smiling. TULLY shows surprise and disgust.*)

JOHN. No, Mr. Trippett. The soldier!

MAMIE. Poor John!

TULLY (*who is now on left of TRIPPETT—pats TRIPPETT'S head*). Poor John!

TRIPPETT (*turns on TULLY very annoyed, then back to JOHN*). Now may I ask—why didn't you report this at the time?

JOHN. How could I? I was too stunned, I suppose.

TRIPPETT. I quite appreciate what you say, Mr. Ayers, but it's one of our rules that you should have lodged your complaint at the time the accident occurred.

JOHN. I suppose if a man was killed stone dead, he ought to leave his name and address.

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TRIPPETT. If he knew where he was going. But in this case the situation is rather difficult. The Mr. Turner you mentioned just now informed us that he was the only passenger injured in the accident and the other occupants of the 'bus rather bear out his statement.

JOHN. How does he know? He couldn't see my back!

TRIPPETT. You see, you have no witnesses. (*Shrugs.*)

JOHN. No witnesses indeed! Oh yes, I have. Don't you run away with any idea like that. My friend Tully here was sitting next to me in the 'bus the whole of the time!

(*TULLY almost collapses.*)

TRIPPETT. Oh, indeed—indeed!

TULLY (*quickly and very agitated—down to L. of TRIPPETT*). But I make no claim! Indeed I don't. No. I make no claim! I make no claim at all!

TRIPPETT. I don't think I have your name and address?

TULLY. Mr. Bertram Josiah Tully. (*Very important.*) Number 14 Saint Mark's Mansions.

TRIPPETT (*writing—then to TULLY*). And you yourself were not injured?

TULLY. Not at present—I mean, not a scratch!

MAMIE. Poor John!

TULLY. Poor John!

TRIPPETT (*looks at JOHN*). How do you account for that, if he was sitting next to you, Mr. Ayers?

JOHN. When the collision came I fell forward on the two soldiers—they had been in training for months and were as hard as nails, and naturally I sprained my back, while Mr. Tully here shot forward right on top of *the fat old woman!*

TRIPPETT. And not hurt?

JOHN. She was *enormously fat!*

TRIPPETT (*to TULLY, who is now up again behind arm-chair*). And did *you* pass any comment at the time?

JOHN. No, but the woman did!

TULLY. I think I said, "Oh, dear, dear, (*pause*) dear!"

JOHN. Of course I shall have to take proceedings against your company if it costs me every penny my wife's got. I mean, that I've got!

TRIPPETT. I don't think that will be necessary, Mr. Ayers, our company is a very generous one, and although we cannot acknowledge any legal obligation we like to treat our passengers as fairly as we can—

JOHN. I'm sure you do.

TRIPPETT. We like to make friends—

JOHN. You have a friendly face, Mr. Trippett.

TRIPPETT. We want to see you riding in our 'buses again.

JOHN. Mind you, I like your 'buses.

TULLY. They're such a pretty colour.

(MAMIE *digs* TULLY *in ribs*.)

TRIPPETT. And if this matter could be settled at once, I'm sure you would be most satisfied.

JOHN. I'm sure I should.

TRIPPETT. Now speaking without prejudice, what sum of money do you fancy would compensate you?

JOHN (*to MAMIE*). What do you think, dear?

(TULLY *signalling five hundred on fingers*.)

You see, there'll be all the doctor's expenses, a terrible loss of time and money—probably funeral expenses—

MAMIE. Ah—a—a—h. (*Sobs*.)

TULLY. Ah—a—a—h. (*Sobs*.)

MAMIE (*sobs*). I can't bear it!

JOHN (*to TRIPPETT*). Suppose we say five hundred—without prejudice, as you say.

TRIPPETT (*raises his eyebrows*). I'm afraid that's quite out of the question. Do you realize what five hundred means? I'm afraid we couldn't entertain anything like that. But I'll tell you what I *will* do. If you like to settle the matter off-hand now and give me your signature. I'll pay down at once, the sum of—(*taking note from pocket and presenting it to JOHN*)—five pounds.

JOHN. Don't be absurd!

TRIPPETT. A five-pound Bank of England note, Mr. Ayers; you could go away for a nice little holiday on a five-pun' note.

JOHN (*rises, anger rising*). Really I think you've come here to insult me.

TRIPPETT. Certainly not, Mr. Ayers—and without prejudice I think you would be well advised to accept my offer.

JOHN (*up to TRIPPETT*). And without prejudice I think you're a silly ass! (*TRIPPETT rises*.)

MAMIE (*comforting JOHN*). Don't upset yourself, John.

JOHN. Why doesn't he offer me a bag of nuts or a balloon!!

TRIPPETT (*getting gloves from table R.C.*). I'm sorry you look at things in that light, Mr. Ayers. (*TULLY during this speech gets TRIPPETT'S hat and holds it perched high up on his right hand, with his other hand he holds the door L. open.*) All I can do is to hand in my report. (*Going left.*) The company's doctor will come and examine you, and the matter will be out of my hands. (*Knocks into TULLY, sees hat, takes it, bows to TULLY, goes to door L., turns.*) I wish you good-day, sir, (*to JOHN*) and I hope you'll soon get better.

(*Exit L. TRIPPETT, followed by TULLY.*)

JOHN. I don't think I shall—£5 for a broken back!

TULLY (*rushing on from door L.*). It's all right, John—Mrs. Ayers has come back.

JOHN. What!!

MAMIE. Your wife, Jack! Hide me!

JOHN (*MAMIE tries to get under table R.C. JOHN pulls her back*). No, that way! Hide

her, Tully. (TULLY *wandering aimlessly about*. JOHN *pushes him up to window* R.C. MAMIE *gathers up hat, etc., and goes window* R.C. TULLY *gets MAMIE'S parasol from settee and JOHN pushes him out of window*.) Quick behind those curtains and take those things away. (*Throwing MAMIE'S gloves after TULLY*.)

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(JOHN *gets into easy chair quickly, with blanket still round him—groans*.)

(*Enter PAMELA door L.*)

PAMELA (*seeing JOHN, alarmed*). John! John! I didn't expect to find you like this.

JOHN. And I didn't expect to see you back *quite* so soon.

PAMELA. I've come to say I'm sorry. Mother has seen that necklace you gave me—(*placing her bag on table down* C.)—and she says it's worth five hundred pounds—

JOHN. Mother knows!

PAMELA. But it *is* valuable.

JOHN. Of course it is. Instead of spending my money on riotous living I've been spending it on you.

PAMELA. How good of you! But do tell me, what has happened?

JOHN. Don't be alarmed. You know I was in a 'bus accident the other day?

PAMELA. You were not hurt.

JOHN. Things have developed since. I think they are going to compensate me.

PAMELA (*joyfully*). Then, you are not really ill? (*Goes down below table*.)

JOHN (*rising*). That depends—I am going into that bedroom (*pointing* R.), and I'm not coming out until that 'bus company gives me five hundred pounds, not if I've got to lie there for a month!

PAMELA. Oh, don't say that, John!

JOHN. I know what I'm doing—I'll teach them to offer me a balloon—I mean a five-pound nut—no, not nut—note. Now please go and get the bed ready. (*Leading PAMELA to door* R.)

PAMELA. But John—?

JOHN. Do go—to oblige me—I'm expecting the doctor here at any minute. (*Pushes PAMELA off door* R.)

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(JOHN *signals to TULLY, who drags MAMIE out by the hand—they come down a few steps*.)

Quick—quick as you can—

(PAMELA *re-enters*. TULLY and MAMIE *get behind curtains again quickly*.)

PAMELA. But, John, it may be weeks and weeks before these people pay out the money—

JOHN (*holding blanket high up to obscure PAMELA'S view of the room*). Now, do please, do as I ask you, if the doctor finds me out of bed, it'll ruin me.

PAMELA (*going back into room* R.). Oh, very well!

(*Exit PAMELA*.)

(JOHN *signals and TULLY drags MAMIE across to door* L.)

JOHN. Go on! Hurry up! Hurry up!

(*They are nearly across to door when PAMELA re-enters*.)

PAMELA (*enters*). But, John, it's just occurred to me—

(TULLY and MAMIE *turn and PAMELA faces them*. JOHN *falls over blanket down* R. TULLY *still holds MAMIE'S hand, in his other hand he has MAMIE'S parasol*.)

JOHN. Oh—er—I don't think you have met before.

PAMELA (*slowly*). I—don't—think—we—have.

JOHN. Let me introduce you. This is my wife (*pointing to PAMELA*), and this is (*pointing to MAMIE*)—this is—this is Mrs. Tully!

TULLY (*drops MAMIE'S hand—thunderstruck*). What!!

PAMELA (*doubtfully*). Mrs.—Tully?

JOHN. Yes, he was married *secretly* a week ago.

TULLY (*boiling with rage*). Oh—I say!!

(MAMIE *turns her ring round to look like wedding ring and holds hand up*

conspicuously.)

JOHN. I'm sorry to let the cat out of the bag, old man, but it can't be helped!

TULLY (*rushes across stage in front of table and arm-chair, with MAMIE'S sunshade raised in a threatening manner*). John! John!

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JOHN (*kneeling to TULLY—pleadingly*). *Bertram! Bertram!!*

TULLY (*TULLY'S face relaxes and develops into a broad smile*). Oh, John! John!! (*Giggles.*)

(PAMELA and MAMIE shake hands c.)

CURTAIN.

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ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I.*

(*Two weeks have elapsed since the events in the preceding Act. For alteration of furniture, see notes at end of play.*)

(JOHN AYERS and TULLY are seated at a small table down c. JOHN in arm-chair on right of table. TULLY in small chair left of table. They are playing cards. JOHN is dressed in pyjamas with blanket round him as in Act I. TULLY wears a lounge suit and slippers.)

(*As the curtain rises JOHN is shuffling the cards and dealing for nap.*)

(PAMELA enters from bedroom R. and then adjusts her hat, looking in mirror by fireplace. She wears the pearl necklace.)

(JOHN deals.)

PAMELA. I must say I think it is very good of you, Mr. Tully.

TULLY. Beg pardon, Mrs. Ayers.

PAMELA. I say it's very good of you to come and sit with John as you do.

TULLY. Oh, not at all, Mrs. Ayers. It's a pleasure. John's one of the best, in the world.

JOHN (*quickly*). No, that's not your card. (*Picking up one of TULLY'S cards and looking at it.*) Oh, yes it is. (*Putting card down again.*)

TULLY. But he's a dirty cheat.

JOHN. Heaven helps those who help themselves.

TULLY. No, John, we're here to help others.

JOHN. Then what are the others here for?

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TULLY. To help the others, I suppose.

JOHN (*calling to hand*). Well, I'll go two.

TULLY. Now, Mrs. Ayers, didn't we stipulate that there were to be no two's? (*To JOHN.*) At two-handed nap you can't call less than three surely.

(*They both argue loudly.*)

PAMELA (*looking round*). Now don't quarrel, there's good children.

JOHN. Tully's a bad loser.

TULLY. I'm not. You're a bad player. How can we possibly call two's—it's no game at all.

JOHN. Well, I go—*three!*

TULLY. Very good, I pass three.

(*They play the hand. PAMELA strolls down, putting on gloves, and watches game.*)

JOHN. Play to that. I'll give you "two's." That's one. (*Plays again.*)

TULLY. Trump! Aha!

JOHN. I'm not afraid of that.

TULLY. You won't get this. (*Plays card.*)

JOHN. Thank you. (*Leads again.*)

TULLY (*takes the trick*). That's another one up against you. (*Leads again.*)

JOHN (*takes the trick*). Got it! Got it! Got it!

(PAMELA *comes down to top of table.*)

TULLY. Nothing could touch a hand like that.

JOHN (*teasing TULLY*). You *get* the cards, Tully, but you don't know how to *play* them.

PAMELA. Oh, I think Mr. Tully plays a very excellent game.

(*They start dealing.*)

Now just a moment.

JOHN. Where are you going?

PAMELA. I just want to run round and see how mother is. I'll leave John in your care, Mr. Tully.

TULLY. Certainly, Mrs. Ayers.

PAMELA (*to TULLY*). Would you mind answering the door?

JOHN. Answering the door? Of course he will. What's he here for?

PAMELA. We sent the maids away a week ago, they talk so.

JOHN. Cook said she knew positively there was nothing the matter with me at all.

PAMELA. So I've given them a holiday.

TULLY. Much the wisest thing to do.

PAMELA (*to TULLY*). If the inspector or the doctor from the 'bus company calls, just ask him in and say I shall not be long. And you, John—

JOHN. Oh, I shall get into bed like a flash of lightning.

PAMELA. I don't suppose they'll come.

JOHN (*looking at PAMELA*). Do you think it's wise to wear that necklace on these dark nights. You might have it stolen.

PAMELA (*smiling and displaying necklace*). Ah! I've been waiting for you to notice it.

JOHN. Well, it's running a risk. I should leave it at home if I were you.

PAMELA. Does it look valuable to *you*?

JOHN. Of course it does.

PAMELA. Well, it isn't—this is only imitation.

TULLY. Oh, it looks just the same to me.

PAMELA. Mother had the real one copied for thirty shillings, she was so afraid I should lose it.

TULLY. That's very thoughtful.

JOHN. Mother *does* know.

PAMELA (*posing*). But it *looks* genuine, doesn't it?

JOHN. It looks jolly good. (*Artfully.*) What have you done with the *real* one?

PAMELA. Ah! that's telling! I'm never going to part with that as long as I live. (*Crossing to door L.*) Shall I give your love to mother?

JOHN. No!

PAMELA. John!

JOHN. I mean yes.

(*Exit PAMELA.*)

Yes, if you like. (*To TULLY.*) That's the fourteenth love I've sent to mother this week.

(*Door slams off L.*)

(*TULLY shuffles cards.*)

I don't mind telling you, Tully, I'm more than sick of this business. I've been shut up now for nearly a fortnight.

TULLY. But the doctor from the 'bus company ought to have called on you long ago.

JOHN. He did call—last Friday week, and I happened to be out. Just my luck. Pam saw him and made some excuse, and he said he'd call again. But he hasn't been near the place since.

(*TULLY deals the cards for nap.*)

TULLY. Their idea is of course to tire you out.

JOHN. And we've *got* to be careful. Did you read about Dick Turner?

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TULLY. He got his five hundred pounds out of them, didn't he?

JOHN. Yes. But do you know the latest? They're going to have him up for fraud.

TULLY. Oh, dear! dear! dear! What does *Mrs. Ayers* say about it?

JOHN. The Turner case has rather upset her. She's terribly afraid of the law. If you mention the word she has a panic.

TULLY. So you see, good people are the happiest after all.

JOHN. But they don't always look it. (*Looks at TULLY with a grin.*) Let me see now, it's my call, isn't it?

TULLY. No, John, you called last time.

JOHN. So I did. You're quite right.

TULLY (*jubilant*). I'm going nap!

JOHN. You're—going—nap?

TULLY. Yes!

JOHN (*rising*). Hark! It's the doctor—the doctor from the 'bus company. (*Flings off blanket and rushes to door R., groaning as if in pain.*)

TULLY (*runs to window*). There's nobody there. Desist! (*Comes down to door L.*) Desist!

(JOHN *stops groaning.*)

There's nobody at the door—not a sign of anyone.

JOHN. Really, are you sure? (*Coming to table C.*)

TULLY. Quite sure.

JOHN (*mixing cards up all together*). All right! Deal again. Deal again. (*Sits.*)

TULLY (*comes to table—looks with disgust at cards, gathers them up and sits*). It's a very funny thing, John, but every time I call nap you imagine you hear the doctor coming. Coincidence, I suppose. (*Gives a big sigh.*)

JOHN. What's the matter with you, Tully? Have you ever been in love?

TULLY (*looks and smiles*). I was nearly caught once.

JOHN. Oh, what was her name?

TULLY. Agnes. (*Sorrowfully.*) She made a vow that if she ever met a really good man she would love him though he be as ugly as sin.

JOHN. And she loved you?

TULLY. Devotedly.

JOHN. Why didn't you marry the girl?

TULLY. She was so expensive.

JOHN. They all are. I don't believe woman *was* the rib of man I believe she was the expendix—I mean the appendix—no use to anybody.

TULLY. That's what makes me so timid. I'm so afraid that one of these days some woman will get me into a corner and make me do something thoughtless. (*Cards dealt.*)

JOHN. I shouldn't worry about that if I were you. Let me see, it's my call, isn't it?

TULLY. Yes.

JOHN. Well, I pass!

TULLY. You pass? Well—I—I—you can't hear the doctor coming, can you?

JOHN. N—o.

TULLY. Well, I'm going—nap!!

JOHN. What again?

TULLY. You haven't given me a chance yet!

JOHN (*rises*). I have an idea.

TULLY. No, no, play this hand first; I've called nap.

JOHN (*searches on table L.C.*). No, it's not there.

TULLY. What are you looking for?

JOHN. The—real necklace!

TULLY. She wouldn't leave it about like that.

JOHN. You don't know—she might.

(*Postman's double knock heard off L.*)

(*Rushing for bedroom door.*) The doctor! The doctor! (*The blanket is left in arm-chair.*)

TULLY. It isn't—it isn't the doctor. It's the postman. It's the postman. I know his

knock.

(JOHN goes out of door L., returns with a letter and reads it C.)

JOHN (*speaking off*). Yes! You're right. There's a letter in the box. (*Enters.*)

TULLY. I told you it was only the postman. Do come and play this nap out. I've got such beautiful cards!

JOHN. Hang your nap—this is serious. It's from little Mamie Scott.

TULLY. Mamie Scott? Who's she?

JOHN. You know—your wife!

TULLY. Oh, don't start that again, *please!* (*Rises.*)

JOHN (*reading from letter*). "The Rajah declines to wait any longer for his necklace and threatens to place the matter in the hands of the police."

TULLY. Oh, dear! dear! dear!

JOHN. You'd better go and tell her the necklace is having its clasp repaired and is coming back from the jeweller's to-morrow.

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TULLY. Is it?

JOHN. Oh, do have a little common sense. I think I know where to find her. Put on your hat and go round to the Five Hundred Club.

TULLY. Is that a ladies' club?

JOHN. No—er—mixed.

TULLY. No, I couldn't do that—really.

JOHN. Why not?

TULLY. I never believed in mixed schools or mixed bathing, and I'm certainly not going to a mixed club at my time of life.

JOHN. All you've got to do is to ask for Miss Mamie Scott.

TULLY. No, no. I've never been to such a place as the Five Hundred Club in my life.

JOHN. Take your Cheque Book with you. They'll make you very welcome.

TULLY. A great deal too welcome, I expect. No, I couldn't do it. Why don't *you go?*

JOHN. How can I? I'm ill in bed. It's a hundred to one if I put my foot on the doorstep I should run into the arms of the doctor, Pamela and the whole 'bus company. Ruin, divorce and fraud await me on the doorstep.

TULLY. Well, I'm not going.

JOHN. Don't forget you're in this as well as me; if that necklace is lost you're a party to it.

TULLY. Oh, don't say that.

JOHN. You've acknowledged that little woman as your wife. She's not the sort to be played with.

TULLY. Oh, don't talk like that.

JOHN. But I do talk like that.

TULLY. Here—take my key—step over the balcony—(*pointing to window L.C.*)—get through my window and go out through my flat and come back the same way.

JOHN. Along the balcony and through your flat! They wouldn't see me then. I could do it in twenty minutes in a taxi, couldn't I?

TULLY. Easily!

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JOHN. Top-hole—that's splendid!

(*Exit door R.*)

TULLY. There isn't a soul at home—the maid's out. (*At card-table—calling.*) I say, you'll play this nap out when you come back?

JOHN (*spoken off*). What say?

TULLY. You'll play this nap out when you come *back?*

JOHN (*spoken off*). Oh yes!

TULLY. I'll leave the cards just as they are.

JOHN (*spoken off*). Right-o!

TULLY. I won't look at your hand.

JOHN (*off*). All right!

TULLY. Do you know this is the fourth nap I've been done out of?

JOHN (*off*). Bad luck!

TULLY. How long will you be?

JOHN (*off*). About twenty minutes, I should say.

TULLY. Somehow I don't quite like being left here alone.

JOHN (*off*). Why not?

TULLY. I have a presentiment of impending disaster.

JOHN (*off*). Say it again!

TULLY (*shouting*). I have an impediment of presenting disaster.

(JOHN *enters in overcoat, muffler and hat. N.B.—He completes his change after next exit.*)

JOHN. You do get hold of the most absurd expressions! Now, all we've got to do is to keep Mamie quiet until we get this money and then everything will be O.K. (*Crossing up to window, L.C.*). I'll be as quick as I can. Which way do I go?

(*Both by open window up L.C.*)

TULLY. Just step over the balcony.

(*Exit JOHN through window.*)

The second window to the right. (*Calling after JOHN.*) Mind the geraniums, just step over them and don't be seen.

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JOHN (*heard off*). They'll take me for a creeper, won't they?

(TULLY *stands out on balcony watching JOHN.*)

(PAMELA *rushes in dramatically, closing the door after her.*)

PAMELA. John! John! The doctor—the doctor. (*Rushes across and opens door R., calling off.*) John! The doctor from the Motor 'Bus Company is coming—John. (*Back to C., moves card-table to L.*) John, John! Where are you!

(TULLY *comes down from window.*)

Oh, Mr. Tully, where's John?

TULLY. I couldn't say at the moment.

PAMELA. John! Is he in the house?

(TULLY *opening and shutting his mouth, but saying nothing.*)

Oh, please don't stand there yawning!

TULLY. I'm not yawning. I'm trying to say something.

PAMELA. Where—is—John?

TULLY (*with a gulp*). He's out.

PAMELA. Out! Impossible! Are you sure?

TULLY. Q—q—quite sure.

PAMELA. Where has he gone?

TULLY. He's gone to—five hundred clubs—

PAMELA (*turning down L.*). Great Heavens! And we've waited for this day!

TULLY. We? We've waited for this day?

PAMELA (*dashes to door L. Stands with her back to it*). Mr. Tully, you and I are the only people in this house.

TULLY (*alarmed and going down R.*) Oh, don't say that—don't say that?

PAMELA. We cannot miss this opportunity!

TULLY. Opportunity? Can't we? Oh, don't say that! Don't say that! (*Moving away in apprehension.*)

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PAMELA. But I do say it. (*Crossing C.*) And you can't have an atom of pluck unless you do as I ask.

TULLY. Really, this is most embarrassing.

PAMELA (*madly*). I want you to get into pyjamas as quickly as you can. (*Removes her hat and putting it on table L.C.*)

TULLY. Get into pyjamas! I've never been asked to do such a thing in my life! (*Trembling all over.*) Not for all the gold in the Bank of England, Mrs. Ayers.

PAMELA (*coming C.*). Yes, yes, *please*. For my sake! dear Mr. Tully (*Then up to window L.*)

TULLY. Not for any woman breathing. Your endearments are wasted on me. Oh, I knew this would happen one day. I knew some woman would get me into a corner.

PAMELA. I only want you to take John's place.

TULLY. Hoh! Hoh!

PAMELA. Please—please—(*advancing to TULLY*)—just for a little time while John is out.

TULLY. But it's right against my principles.

PAMELA. It's our only chance. (*Crosses to arm-chair, kneels on front of it, looking up at TULLY, who is behind it, and pleading.*) He may be back here at any moment. You'll have to do this for me really, Mr. Tully.

TULLY. I'll never do it unless you use force—and a woman can't force a man to get into pyjamas. It isn't legal! (*Dashes up to window R. PAMELA follows him.*) If you come any nearer I'll shriek from the window!

(*Bell heard off L.*)

PAMELA (*up to window L. quickly—looks out—then back again*). There *is* the doctor! I knew it! Now what on earth are we going to do

TULLY. The doctor??

PAMELA. Yes, the doctor!

TULLY. The doctor?? (*Sits in arm-chair.*) Oh—the doctor! Why *didn't* you make your meaning clear just now?

PAMELA. What did you think I meant?

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(*TULLY very embarrassed.*)

What did you think I meant? (*Coming down to TULLY.*)

TULLY. Well, what you said.

(*Bell heard off L.*)

PAMELA. That man is out there on the doorstep now, and—and there's no John. A doctor and no patient! And we swore he was unable to leave his bed.

TULLY. Oh, dear, dear, dear!

(*Bell heard off L.—Both listen.*)

(*Rising.*) Perhaps if we keep quite quiet he'll go away.

PAMELA. No, he knows we *must* be in the house. Mr. Tully, this doctor has never even seen John—doesn't know him from Adam.

TULLY. I won't impersonate Adam!

PAMELA. Would it be asking too much of you to let him think that you—are—my husband?

TULLY. Well, if you put it like that, and you think I could, I'll do my best.

PAMELA. Very well, go and get into bed.

TULLY. Oh no, I couldn't get into bed. I can't bear people to see me in bed. What about the chair? The inspector saw John when he was sitting up. Why couldn't he see me in the chair?

(*Bell heard off.*)

PAMELA. Oh, very well. Be as quick as you can. I'll keep the doctor talking. (*Crossing to door L.*) Groan—groan when you're ready. Get into John's pyjamas. (*At door.*) I'd do the same for you!

(*PAMELA runs off L.*)

TULLY. Oh! O-oh!

(*TULLY runs off R.*)

(*TULLY re-enters with pyjamas, puts them on back of arm-chair, looks round room, hops up to window L., draws curtains, hops along to window R., draws curtains—goes to Standard lamp above door L., switches off light—then over to arm-chair—he puts on pyjama jacket over clothes, picks up pyjama trousers, holds them against himself—then looks towards doors R. and L., as if some one might be looking through keyholes, goes to fireplace and brings small firescreen to down to R. of arm-chair—puts on trousers, jumps himself into them, fastens them up, takes screen back to fireplace, comes back to arm-chair, wraps blanket round him, lies back in arm-chair and groans loudly. PAMELA enters and crosses to TULLY.*)

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PAMELA. I've told him you're not awake. Pretend to be asleep. (*Switches on lights and exit L. Re-enters almost immediately holding door open.*) Oh, come in, doctor. (*Then crossing to TULLY.*)

(DR. BIGLAND *enters, hat and bag in hand. He is a fairly corpulent man of fifty, and blunt in manner—places hat and bag on small table down L.*)

This is our patient, doctor. (*Gets to back of arm-chair.*)

DOCTOR. Ahem! Wouldn't he be better in bed?

PAMELA. That is what I try to impress on him, but he says he feels the pain less sitting up. And you can't persuade him; his mind seems thoroughly unhinged since the accident.

(DOCTOR *crosses over to TULLY, puts head to TULLY'S heart. TULLY makes a face.*)

DOCTOR *raises his head, almost catching TULLY making a face.*)

A pity to wake him, don't you think?

(DOCTOR *still examining TULLY.*)

This is the best sleep he's had for weeks.

(JOHN *is entering by window L., seeing DOCTOR he retires immediately.*)

DOCTOR (*having finished his examination, crosses C.*) I understood he was quite a small man.

(TULLY *slides down in chair, trying to make himself look smaller—a very conspicuous movement.*)

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PAMELA. Yes, he *was*. But he seems to have grown considerably since the accident.

(DOCTOR *goes to TULLY, feels his pulse.*)

Oh, don't wake him, please doctor.

DOCTOR. Oh, I shan't wake him. Don't worry!

(TULLY *snores loudly.*)

(*To PAMELA.*) Any throat trouble.

PAMELA. No—I—er—he hasn't complained of any.

DOCTOR. Keeps you awake at night a good deal, I dare say? (*Going L.*)

PAMELA. Oh! yes. He—does.

DOCTOR. By the way, has Mr. Trippett, the inspector of claims for our company—has he been here to-day?

PAMELA. No—no, doctor—not to my knowledge.

DOCTOR. I was wondering, that's all. He said he would meet me here to discuss the case.

(TULLY *shows nervousness.*)

PAMELA. No, I don't think he's called.

DOCTOR. Ah, probably he'll come later. This matter has been hanging on too long, you know. It ought to have been settled up days ago.

PAMELA. Yes, I quite—quite agree.

DOCTOR (*takes out watch*). Well, I have another call to pay—close by here. I'll look back a little later on. Perhaps he'll be awake then.

PAMELA. Thank you, doctor. (*Crosses to door L., holds door open.*)

DOCTOR (*picks up hat and follows her*). Allow me. (*Is going off.*)

(TULLY *rises in chair and stares after him.*)

Oh, I'm forgetting my bag (*Turning he almost catches TULLY looking, TULLY collapses immediately.*)

PAMELA. The weather keeps warm—doe-doe-doesn't it—d-d-doctor?

DOCTOR (*picking up bag*). It d-d-does—indeed.

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(*Exit DOCTOR L., followed by PAMELA.*)

(JOHN *enters at window L., comes down quickly, places hat on table L.C., comes to TULLY. TULLY starts up.*)

JOHN. Who told you to do this?

TULLY. That's the doctor from the 'Bus Company.

JOHN. And those are my new pyjamas. (*Throwing coat and scarf on to settee at*

back.)

TULLY. I know—I know—er—

(Enter PAMELA.)

PAMELA. Oh, there you are, John!

JOHN (*angrily*). Who, who is responsible for this absurd jumble? (*Pointing to TULLY.*) And who does the doctor think *that* is?

PAMELA. Why *you!* *You*, of course. There was no one else here when the doctor came, and *some one* had to be ill in bed.

JOHN. But not in a—*chair!* I know this game backwards. If you can get five hundred in bed, you can't get fifty in a chair. (*To TULLY.*) You've mucked up the whole show!

TULLY. I'm quite sure *I* didn't want to do it. (*Turns his back on JOHN.*)

JOHN (*holding forth*). And it's not very flattering to me if he goes out and about and becomes known as John Ayers.

TULLY. I simply did it to oblige your wife.

JOHN. If you are in the habit of getting into those things simply to oblige ladies, you'll soon find yourself in the Divorce Court.

TULLY. Don't be cruel. (*Going R.*)

PAMELA. It's no use arguing. The doctor has only gone a little way, and he'll be back here at any minute.

JOHN (*to PAMELA*). Surely you could have kept the doctor waiting a little while, or made some excuse?

PAMELA. What possible excuse could I make? Last time he called I said you were in your bath.

JOHN. But that was last Friday week; surely another bath wouldn't be out of place by now!

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(TULLY *begins to remove trousers of pyjamas.*)

PAMELA (*alarmed*). Mr. Tully—please—please not in my presence!

JOHN. For Heaven's sake be decent—be decent!

TULLY (*goes up to fireplace, gets behind screen and refastens strings of pyjamas*). I've had enough of this.

JOHN (*back to C.*). Can't you see the awful situation we're in? If Trippett calls he'll demand to see *me*; if the doctor comes he'll expect to see *Tully*—and if they both come together—Heaven help us!

PAMELA. Hush—Sh! (*Hurries up to window L.*)

(JOHN and TULLY *start back in fear.*)

JOHN. What is it? What is it?

PAMELA (*coming down*). Ah! It's nothing!

JOHN. Well, don't do it, Pam. It unnerves me.

TULLY (*coming down R.*). I'd give anything to be out of this.

JOHN. Of course you would. Always thinking of yourself.

(TULLY *stoops and pulls down leg of pyjamas.*)

And don't stretch those pyjamas!

TULLY. I don't enjoy the best of health. I shan't be a nuisance to you much longer.

JOHN. Why talk like that—you know you will.

(TULLY *goes up to window R.*)

PAMELA. I can't say that *I* am enjoying the situation.

JOHN. Well, don't lose your heads.

PAMELA. Well, what are we going to do?

JOHN (*hand to forehead*). Already I have the whole scheme laid out here. It's perfectly simple. This is absolutely an inspiration. Tully—Tully—must—cut—off—his—moustache!

TULLY (*crossing to JOHN*). No—I'm ready to oblige to a certain extent—but I'm not going to be messed about!

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JOHN. It's absolutely necessary. I've always been clean-shaven, and it's the first thing that is noticed in a man. (*To PAMELA.*) Now get me a pair of scissors—quickly. (*Pushing TULLY into arm-chair R.*)

(PAMELA gets scissors from table L.C. and takes them to JOHN. She stands in front of TULLY. JOHN cuts off TULLY'S moustache.)

TULLY. I protest. I'm not going to be chopped about.

JOHN (*over* TULLY). If you only keep still you won't know anything about it. Now, don't move or I shall hurt you.

TULLY. I protest—I pro—gurr! gurr!

PAMELA (*holding* TULLY *down in arm-chair*). Oh, don't choke him, John!

JOHN. I wouldn't do anything in the world against his wishes. Keep still. Bertram!

(*Moustache is cut off. JOHN goes down R. PAMELA goes down L. TULLY sits up in chair.*)

I don't know why you are making all this fuss. There's practically nothing of it when you come to gather it up. There! I've never seen you look so handsome. (*Placing moustache in waistcoat pocket.*)

PAMELA. Really, I think it suits you, Mr. Tully.

TULLY. But don't you see, the doctor's already seen me *with* a moustache.

JOHN. Oh, lor!

TULLY. And this is my flute night down at the Mission. (*Bell heard off L.*)

PAMELA. It's the doctor back again, I expect.

(*Runs up to window L., looks off.*)

JOHN (*pulling* TULLY *out of chair.*) Go on, get into bed. (*Leads TULLY to door R.*)

TULLY. You don't think he'll operate on me? Do you?

(*Exit TULLY door R.*)

PAMELA. John, it's a woman.

JOHN (*advancing*) A woman!

PAMELA. It's Mrs. Tully—

JOHN (*back quickly to door R., puts back against it*). Mrs. Tully!!!

PAMELA (*comes down C.*) Whatever is she coming here for?

JOHN. She knows I'm an invalid and can't leave the house, and I suppose she imagines that her husband is here. Now, you had better not be seen. Go across quickly into the dining-room (*crossing to* PAMELA) and shut yourself in.

PAMELA. I want to know exactly why Mrs. Tully has called here.

JOHN. There's no time to discuss anything. Will you please go and hide in the dining-room?

PAMELA. And leave you alone with that woman? Most certainly not!

JOHN. Then perhaps *you* will be good enough to explain to Mrs. Tully why *her* husband is in *your* bedroom!

PAMELA. No, no! Why can't you explain it.

JOHN. Not in your presence.

PAMELA. Couldn't Mr. Tully explain if we send his wife in to him?

JOHN. Good heavens, no! He'd go mad!

PAMELA. Why should he?

JOHN. Well—er—he's only recently been married, and he's not in his own flat or in his own bed. Hang it, he's not in his own pyjamas!

PAMELA. Well, I'm going to ask him. (*To door R.*)

JOHN. Do please listen to reason, Pam.

PAMELA (*knocking on door and calling to* TULLY). Mr. Tully, are you in bed?

TULLY (*heard off*). Yes!

PAMELA. Your wife has called.

TULLY (*heard off—a long moan of agony*). Oh-h-h-h!

PAMELA. I say your wife has called. We are sending her in to you.

TULLY. Oh-o-h-h-h!

PAMELA. Will you kindly explain everything to her?

(*Glass and crockery crash off R.*)

(PAMELA staggers back from door. JOHN backs up a little rather frightened.)

JOHN. That's done it!

(TULLY *dashes into room—makes a dive for door* L. JOHN *catches him and swings him into chair* L.C. TULLY *has blanket round his shoulders and head. He half sits, half lies, in chair in a collapsed condition.*)

TULLY. Let me go—let me go!

JOHN (*across to* PAMELA). I told you what would happen.

PAMELA. Shall I go and fetch mother?

JOHN. Fetch mother! Good heavens, no! Give the poor devil a chance. Have you got any smelling salts?

PAMELA. Scent spray—

JOHN. Yes, that'll do.

(PAMELA *gets scent spray from mantelpiece and gives it to* JOHN. JOHN *squirts scent into* TULLY'S face. TULLY *sneezes loudly.*)

PAMELA. It's the most extraordinary thing I've ever experienced—to see a man so afraid of his wife.

JOHN. Ah, some of us don't show it like he does.

(*Bell heard off* L.)

His marriage was a mistake from the first. (*To* PAMELA.) Will you go into the dining-room now, and I'll see Mrs. Tully here in the presence of her husband and explain everything.

PAMELA. If Mr. Tully will promise to remain in the room.

JOHN. Yes! Yes!

TULLY. No! No!

JOHN (*threatening* TULLY *with spray*). Yes—yes! (TULLY *cowers into blanket.*) (*To* PAMELA.) Now go along as quickly as you can. (*Places spray table* R.C.)

PAMELA (*crossing to door* L.). But understand I shall expect to hear Mr. Tully's voice the whole time.

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JOHN (*crossing* L.). You shall—you shall. He shan't leave the room. And when he's not talking I'll get him to sing.

(*Exit* PAMELA *briskly* L.)

(*Turning to* TULLY.) Go and let Mamie in as quickly as you can—show her in here—then stand by that door and don't let anyone else in on any account—and *sing*—just through the key-hole. It'll keep Mrs. Ayers quiet.

TULLY (*crossing to door* L.). You won't leave me alone with Miss Fluffie Scott again, will you?

JOHN. I'll get rid of her as soon as ever I can. Go and let her in quickly.

(TULLY *runs out of door* L.)

(JOHN *holds the door open looking off—a moment and* MAMIE *hurries in.*)

Come along, Mamie.

(JOHN *shuts door, forgetting all about* TULLY, *and catches* TULLY'S arm *in the door.* TULLY *gives a yell of pain, wagging his hurt fingers.*)

Oh, sorry old man, I forgot!

(TULLY *shuts door.*)

Now don't leave that door whatever you do—and sing—sing! (JOHN *goes to* MAMIE, *who is* C.)

(TULLY *stands close to door* L. *and sings "The Rosary."*)

MAMIE (*anxiously*). Jack, Jack! Did you get my letter?

JOHN. Your letter? What letter?

MAMIE (*seeing* TULLY, *who is singing loudly*). What's that?

JOHN. It's all right. He's not listening.

MAMIE. I wrote you about the necklace.

JOHN. But I sent you word last week that the necklace was in the hands of the jeweller.

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MAMIE. I know. I told the Rajah that, and he won't believe me. He's simply furious. Where is the jeweller's? Let me take it back to him whether it's damaged or not. Do!

JOHN. But there isn't time. I'm expecting my wife at any moment, and you must get away from here.

MAMIE. But I dare not go home without it. (*Throwing her arms round JOHN'S neck.*) Darling, do please!

(TULLY *embarrassed, sings louder than ever.*)

JOHN (*to TULLY*). Oh, dry up, dry up! (*To MAMIE.*) Well, now I'll tell you the truth—the jeweller sent the necklace back yesterday, and I've given it to my wife to take care of.

MAMIE (*joyfully*). Then you've got it! You've got it!

TULLY (*runs towards JOHN*). You've got it? You never told me!

JOHN (*to TULLY, sharply*). Watch that door!

(TULLY *resumes singing "The Rosary."*)

(*To MAMIE.*) Yes, Mrs. Ayers is wearing it.

MAMIE. Oh, I *am* pleased. But why didn't she give it to Mr. Tully, if she thinks I'm his wife?

JOHN. Ah, that's the point—that's the trouble. (*Nodding his head towards TULLY.*) There are some people in this world you can't trust.

MAMIE. I could tell you a few things about Mr. Tully. Ask him if he knows a girl called Agnes—she teaches him ragtime down at the Mission.

(TULLY *sings louder.*)

JOHN (*to TULLY*). Oh, dry up! Will you dry up!!!

(TULLY *drops on "all fours" and stops singing.*)

MAMIE (*looking at TULLY*). What's he doing there? Saying his prayers?

JOHN. He must keep to that door in case Mrs. Ayers comes back.

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(TULLY *has stopped singing and is trying hard not to listen.*)

MAMIE. Well, give me the necklace, and I'll be off at once.

JOHN. I'll send it on to you to-morrow.

MAMIE. No, I dare not go home without it.

JOHN. But how can I give it to you? Mrs. Ayers is wearing it round her neck.

MAMIE. Can't I wait till she returns?

JOHN. No, no! She doesn't know you're here. And you must leave at once before she comes back.

(PAMELA *knocks loudly outside door. TULLY jumps up. MAMIE and JOHN start—all silent.*)

PAMELA (*off*). I can't hear Mr. Tully's voice!

JOHN (*to TULLY*). Sing! sing!

(TULLY *resumes singing: "I hear you calling me."*)

MAMIE. That *is* Mrs. Ayers—now you can give me the necklace.

JOHN (*back to MAMIE*). That's impossible. I don't want her to know you're here.

MAMIE (*raising her voice*). But it doesn't matter if she thinks I am Mrs. Tully!

TULLY. (*crosses to JOHN*). I object to that being shouted broadcast.

JOHN (*to TULLY*). You keep quiet! (*To MAMIE.*) You see, he objects—and don't be so unfeeling. We're expecting the doctor here at any minute, I'm as ill as I can be, and Tully may be operated on at any moment.

(*Grimaces from TULLY.*)

MAMIE. I don't care who's operated on. I'm not going home without that necklace. (*Almost in tears.*)

JOHN. Can't you see the trouble we're in?

MAMIE. There'll be worse trouble when the Rajah arrives.

JOHN. Good heavens! You haven't told the Rajah about me?

MAMIE. What else could I do? And I had to give him your address.

JOHN. Oh, Tully, Tully, she's given the Rajah my address!

MAMIE (*bursting into tears*). What else could I do? Boo—boo— It's not my fault,

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and why should I be blamed for it. Boo, boo, boo! (*Sitting in arm-chair R.*)

JOHN (*down to MAMIE*). There, don't cry, don't cry.

(*TULLY bursts into tears.*)

What's the matter with you?

TULLY. I can't bear to see a woman cry.

(*MAMIE shrieks and yells and kicks up her feet.*)

JOHN. Hold her feet down! (*Sits on MAMIE'S feet.*) (*To TULLY.*) *Don't leave that door!*

(*TULLY peeps out of door L. and crosses to JOHN.*)

TULLY. John! The doctor's arrived!

JOHN (*still sitting on MAMIE'S feet*). Say—say you're having a bath; you won't be long.

TULLY (*speaking through keyhole*). I'm in my bath! I shan't be long!!!

JOHN. You're not shouting the odds at a race meeting!

TULLY. I'm in my bath—I shan't be long—splash—splash—(*moves up and down, as if covering himself with water*) splash. (*TULLY uses blanket like a towel, drying his back, up and down, exaggerated movements.*) I'm drying—I'm dying—

JOHN. Oh! Good heavens, this is awful. (*Rises, looks at MAMIE.*) She's fainting, she's fainting, what shall we do?

TULLY. Put a key down her back!

JOHN. Well, give me a key. (*TULLY rushes to door L.*) No! Not that one, idiot! We may want that! (*TULLY takes long strides over to door R.*)

JOHN. You'll split those pyjamas!

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(*TULLY gives JOHN key from door R.*)

Is this the proper thing to do? (*Drops key behind MAMIE on to arm-chair—as if down her back.*)

JOHN. Ah! she's coming round. No more tears! No more tears, little girl!

MAMIE (*rises and puts arm on JOHN'S shoulder*). No, no more tears, no more tears! (*Turning R. she sees TULLY—and screams at sight of him—turns to JOHN.*)

JOHN (*leading MAMIE off into room R.*). There, dear, no more tears, you come along into this room and you shall have the necklace, I promise you—

MAMIE. You really mean that, Jack—

JOHN. Of course I mean it—now come along.

(*Exit MAMIE and JOHN room R.*)

TULLY. Oh, Mrs. Ayers! (*Going C. and singing:*) "Oh dry those tears, oh calm those fears."

JOHN (*entering quickly and trying to lock door R.*). The key—where's the key?

TULLY. You put it down Fluffie's back!

(*PAMELA rushes on from door L.*)

PAMELA. The doctor says he can't wait much longer.

(*Exit PAMELA quickly.*)

JOHN (*crosses to TULLY*). I suppose you realize that something's got to be done. This girl demands the necklace—the police have been informed, and the Rajah is rampant. The 'Bus Company claim me as a patient, and my married happiness rocks in the balance.

TULLY. Oh, don't talk like that.

JOHN. Go on, get into that chair. (*Pushing TULLY to arm-chair R.*)

TULLY. Haven't I done enough for one day?

JOHN. At this very moment you can wreck my life, and you're going to take advantage of it. Bertram! Bertram!

(*Presses TULLY down into arm-chair R.*)

What did I do with those pieces of your moustache?

TULLY. You put them in your pocket.

JOHN. Ah, so I did. (*JOHN picks up hat and is going to window.*)

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TULLY (*in arm-chair and drawing blanket round him*). You're not going to leave me in this awful predicament?

JOHN. I shall be back immediately. I have a brilliant idea, that will clear up everything. Now, don't forget you are John Ayers.

TULLY. I'm John Ayers??

JOHN (*over to door L.*). You can come in. (*Back to TULLY.*) Moan a little, and for heaven's sake try and look intelligent.

(JOHN *goes off through windows left*. TULLY *makes faces, as if intelligent*. PAMELA *enters L., followed by DOCTOR.*)

PAMELA (*crossing to TULLY*). Ah, here he is, doctor.

DOCTOR (*putting hat and bag on table L.C.*). Is he awake?

PAMELA. Are you awake, dear?

TULLY. No! (PAMELA *slaps his head*)—er—yes—yes.

DOCTOR. Still sitting up, and after a bath too; it's not wise.

PAMELA. We can't keep him in bed; he's so full of spirits.

DOCTOR. Yes, yes, I quite understand. Now, don't distress yourself, my dear lady. (*Gets chair from R. of table L.C. and places it on left of arm-chair.*) You have your own medical man attending, of course.

PAMELA. Oh yes, doctor, of *course*. (*Imitating doctor's accent.*) But I don't think he understands the case, although he thinks it very serious.

(DOCTOR *sits in chair. Loud knocks heard off L.*)

DOCTOR. I think that must be Mr. Trippett.

(TULLY *starts up—frightened.*)

PAMELA (*going to door L.*). Excuse me a moment.

(*Exit PAMELA door L.*)

(DOCTOR *watches her off*. TULLY *quickly rises and hides behind arm-chair*. DOCTOR *turns round to examine TULLY, finds the chair empty, looks dumbfounded, scratches his head, pushes blanket down, which has been left on chair, turns left, looks under his own chair, then looks up L*. TULLY *gets quickly back into arm-chair again and pulls blanket round him—feigns sleep*. DOCTOR *turns again to arm-chair, sees TULLY, can't believe his eyes, pinches himself, lifts TULLY'S arm*. TULLY *drops it*. DOCTOR *lifts TULLY'S arm again*. TULLY *holds it up this time and moves fingers.*)

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DOCTOR. Now then, young man, I want you to tell me exactly where you feel this pain. We don't want you to remain an invalid all your life, although I dare say a little compensation will act as a wonderful restorative.

(PAMELA *enters holding door open.*)

JOHN (*peeping round door*). Say it's Mr. Tully. (JOHN *is wearing a moustache.*)

PAMELA (*announcing*). Er—Mr. Tully.

TULLY (*rising*). Yes!

PAMELA. It's Mr. Tully.

(JOHN *enters.*)

(DOCTOR *turns and looks at JOHN*. TULLY *walks on knees round arm-chair and then sits covering himself with blanket.*)

JOHN (*posing as TULLY*). May I come in? How d'ye do, Mrs. Ayers? So pleased to see you. And how is the patient to-day?

PAMELA. Not much better, I'm afraid.

JOHN. Oh no, he's worse—a lot worse. I can see that. (*Going behind TULLY.*) Poor old John!

TULLY. Poor John!

JOHN. I don't think we shall have him with us much longer.

(TULLY *sits up.*)

(*Softly.*) Bertram.

(TULLY *falls back.*)

DOCTOR. I don't think it's wise to dishearten the patient like that.

PAMELA (*to JOHN*). This is the doctor from the Motor 'Bus Company.

JOHN. Oh, how d'ye do? (DOCTOR *turns to JOHN*.) I'm a very old friend of Mr. Ayers, and I'm very sorry to see him struck down like this. (TULLY *falls R. half off chair*. JOHN *pulls him back again*.) It's a very serious matter.

DOCTOR. Yes. The Company wish me to convey their deep sympathies.

JOHN. Deep sympathies aren't much good. I'm afraid it will cost them something more than that.

DOCTOR. Oh! He'll be up and about in a few days.

JOHN. Oh no he won't.

DOCTOR. Oh yes he will!

JOHN. Oh no he won't!

DOCTOR. Oh yes he will!

JOHN. Oh no he won't! *I can promise you that. Can't you see the man has been terribly knocked about?* (*Aside to TULLY*.) Groan!

(TULLY *groans long and loudly*.)

DOCTOR. Now, tell me, Mrs. Ayers, is he thirsty at all?

PAMELA. No, doctor.

DOCTOR. No, no, he wouldn't be.

JOHN. But the pain in his back is simply terrible. He raves! (*Aside to TULLY*.) Rave!

(TULLY *raves, pulls hair up on end, imagines he sees something, tries to catch it, and continues any mad business*. DOCTOR *follows his movements closely and seriously*.)

DOCTOR (*to PAMELA*). Does he have any pains in the head?

PAMELA. N-no—doctor.

DOCTOR. No, no, he wouldn't have.

JOHN. But his mind's affected.

DOCTOR. Is he—is he sleepy at all?

PAMELA. No, not as a rule, doctor.

DOCTOR. No, no.

JOHN. No, no, he wouldn't be. (*Imitating DOCTOR*.)

DOCTOR. How dare you, sir? (*Turns away in a rage*.) Of course a good deal of this may proceed from a previous debilitated state.

PAMELA. Debilitated?

DOCTOR. I understand the patient has led rather a—well—if I may be allowed to say so—rather a gay life?

(TULLY *rises annoyed*.)

JOHN. Oh no, you're quite wrong. (*Pointing to TULLY*.) No one can ever say that John Ayers went the pace. I've known John ever since I was born and I can safely say he's a living saint, isn't he, Mrs. Ayers?

PAMELA (*with a gulp*). Er—yes—yes, of course.

JOHN. If anyone knocks about at all, you might accuse me. I'm known everywhere as Tully the Rake.

(TULLY *sits up in protest*.)

(*Aside*.) Bertram!

(TULLY *falls back in chair*.)

DOCTOR. There's just one more question, Mrs. Ayers. Does he have any cold sweats?

JOHN. Yes, he lives entirely on soda-water.

DOCTOR. I said, sir, does he have any *cold sweats*?

JOHN. Oh, I beg your pardon, I thought you said Schweppes.

DOCTOR. Schweppes!!

PAMELA (*crossing to R. of arm-chair*). Yes, he perspires a good deal.

JOHN (*aside to TULLY*). Perspire!

(TULLY *perspires—wipes head—then wrings handkerchief out*.)

DOCTOR. Perspires. That's quite natural. (*To TULLY.*) Now then, will you tell me exactly where you feel this pain in the back?

JOHN (*getting between DOCTOR and TULLY*). Just up between the ribs.

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(DOCTOR *digs JOHN in back.*)

Oh, that's the very place!

DOCTOR. Will you *let the patient* tell me?

JOHN. But he doesn't know as well as I do.

TULLY (*pointing to JOHN*). Mr. Ayers—er—Mr. Tully, this gentleman knows all about it.

DOCTOR. Mr. Tully, Mr. Tully! Where have I heard that name before? Ah, *you* were in the 'bus accident with him, I believe? (*To JOHN.*)

JOHN. No, that was my brother.

DOCTOR. Your brother? And he escaped unhurt?

JOHN. Er—yes. He fell on top of a fat old woman who was sitting opposite.

DOCTOR. Yes, that poor lady had three ribs broken. (*Rises.*) Still, that concerns your brother. (*Sarcastically. JOHN and TULLY exchange looks. DOCTOR takes chair up to R. of table L.C., opens bag.*) I can't quite understand all this, you know—according to Mr. Trippett's report, the patient was a much smaller man. (*Takes out stethoscope from bag, wiping it with his handkerchief and coming down L.*)

JOHN (*over to DOCTOR*). Surely, you're not going to measure him, doctor? Hang it all, he's not dead yet.

DOCTOR. No, I simply wish to examine him, that's all. (*Turning to JOHN.*) Although I have taken the measure of many people in my time.

(JOHN *turns away and up stage.*)

Now, Mrs. Ayers, will you kindly loosen the patient's things a little—just in front.

(TULLY *drags his pyjama jacket tightly round him, very much alarmed. PAMELA looks at JOHN in despair.*)

JOHN (*down to TULLY*). Perhaps *I* can assist.

DOCTOR. I shall feel much obliged, sir, if you will not interfere. (*DOCTOR goes over to table down L., keeps his back towards the others.*)

PAMELA. Couldn't you examine him better in bed, doctor?

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DOCTOR. Undoubtedly!

(MAMIE *enters from door R. JOHN sees her and pushes her back.*)

JOHN. No, I can't let him go into bed. I don't advise it. (*Shutting door R.*)

TULLY. And I'm not going to strip.

(*Bell heard off L.*)

PAMELA (*up to window L., looks off*). It's Mr. Trippett!

DOCTOR. Mr. Trippett, good! He's just in time!

JOHN (*to TULLY*). Good! He's just in time. That *is* lucky. I *am* glad!

DOCTOR. He promised to meet me here. (*Takes out watch.*)

JOHN (*crosses to DOCTOR*). Isn't it Motor 'Bus etiquette for you to discuss the case with Mr. Trippett in private?

DOCTOR. No, I don't think that's at all necessary.

(*Goes up to table L.C., puts stethoscope in bag.*)

JOHN. I'm sure both Mr. and Mrs. Ayers would like you to consult before anything is said or done in the matter. The dining-room is at your service.

PAMELA (*crossing to and opening door L.*). Yes—yes—of course.

DOCTOR. Well, if you particularly wish it, I'll see Mr. Trippett.

PAMELA. This way, doctor.

DOCTOR. I thank you, madam, I thank you.

(DOCTOR *exits, followed by PAMELA. JOHN places chair L.C. under table. TULLY jumps up.*)

TULLY. I've had enough of this! I'm going mad!

JOHN. Bertram! Bertram!

TULLY. Bertram be damned! (*Holds his mouth instantly.*)

JOHN (*crosses to TULLY*). I think you're very ungrateful. Just as everything's going so splendidly.

TULLY. Splendidly! Is it? Do you think Mr. Trippett and the doctor are going to swallow this tale. I've lost my reputation and I've lost my moustache!

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(*PAMELA rushes in and closes door.*)

PAMELA. Mr. Trippett would like to see you now. He's in rather a hurry. What will you do?

JOHN. That's all right. Send Trippett in here in two seconds and keep the doctor in there and keep calm.

(*PAMELA exits L.*)

TULLY. Everything's going splendidly. Everything's going splendidly. (*Taking wild leaps into the air.*)

JOHN (*to TULLY*). Go on, get behind that screen.

(*Gets into chair and draws blanket round him.*)

TULLY (*going up to fireplace*). If ever I get out of this I'll leave the neighbourhood. (*Kneels behind screen in fireplace.*)

JOHN. Don't talk like that.

MAMIE (*rushes on from door R.*). Jack, I can't wait any longer. Where's the necklace?

JOHN (*rises and crosses to MAMIE*). It's all right, only wait.

MAMIE. My darling, what *have* you been doing?

JOHN. What?

MAMIE. That dreadful moustache.

JOHN. Oh, they've been putting me under glass. (*Pushes MAMIE off down R.*)

(*TULLY groans.*)

Don't you groan. I'm the patient now!

(*Sits in arm-chair again. PAMELA rushes in to C. TULLY peeps round from screen.*)

PAMELA. John, the doctor says he must examine you before discussing the case with Mr. Trippett.

JOHN (*rising*). Good heavens! Can't they make up their minds? They must be a couple of weathercocks. All right—send the doctor in—wait till you hear Tully groan.

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PAMELA. Mr. Tully will be in the chair?

JOHN. Yes, yes. We're quite prepared. Wait till he groans, that's all.

(*PAMELA exits L.*)

(*To TULLY.*) Go on, get into that chair. (*Arranging blanket.*) The doctor's coming in.

(*TULLY comes down to arm-chair. PAMELA rushes in.*)

PAMELA (*breathlessly*). John, Mr. Trippett and the doctor are both coming in together!

JOHN. Both together!

(*JOHN and TULLY both rush for arm-chair.*)

Wait, I know. Say there's an escape of gas.

PAMELA. Electric light! Look!

TULLY. Say the lease of the flat is up!

JOHN (*pushing TULLY into chair*). Don't be a fool. Say I'm dead!

(*Door-bell heard off L.*)

PAMELA (*up to window*). John, there's a coloured man at the door!

JOHN. A coloured man! Good heavens, it's the Rajah!

(*TULLY rushes up to windows R.C. with blankets on arm.*)

PAMELA. The Rajah?

JOHN. Yes! Tell him I'm buried and won't be back for a week!

(MAMIE *enters door R.*)

PAMELA. But who *is* the Rajah?

JOHN. Just a friend of mine.

MAMIE. Excuse me, he's a friend of *mine*.

PAMELA. Yours!

MAMIE. Yes, a friend of mine, and I *must* have that necklace. Will you kindly give it to me, Mrs. Ayers?

PAMELA. This necklace—how dare you—it's mine.

(MAMIE and PAMELA *both quarrel violently about it and argue madly till fall of curtain. TULLY goes to MAMIE at the same time as JOHN goes to PAMELA. They both throw the men off. TULLY has taken blanket from arm-chair. JOHN is going to door L.*)

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TULLY. Not that way, John! Not that way!

(JOHN and TULLY *meet centre, TULLY throws blanket over both of them and they crawl out of window L. DOCTOR and TRIPPETT enter together talking. DOCTOR sees the two men crawling off, he draws TRIPPETT'S attention, and they both look on aghast.*)

CURTAIN.

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ACT III

SCENE.—A room in TULLY'S flat. Lights out to open. A similar room in construction in every way to scene in Act I excepting that it is furnished differently. Two French windows at back opening on to balcony, door R. leading to hall and street. Door L. leading to bedroom. It is twilight as the curtain rises. A letter and telegram lie unopened on table about L.C. and a settee is placed well in view below door L. *A plan of the scene will be found at the end of the play.* URSULA, TULLY'S maid, enters R., switches on lights—switch above door R. Lights go up.)

URSULA (*in sombre tones*). You can come h'in.

(*Enter AUNT HANNAH. She is very tall and stout, old-fashioned, but a lady.*)

AUNT HANNAH (*entering*). Thank you, thank you, (*goes to chair R. of table L.C.*) thank you. (*Sits.*) Oh, dear me, I am glad to sit down. Phew! I only left the hospital this morning.

URSULA (*standing C.*). You don't say.

AUNT HANNAH. Yes. I was in a terrible 'bus accident about three weeks ago, and I had three of my ribs broken.

URSULA. You don't say.

AUNT HANNAH. It was my first experience of a motor 'bus too. They're most dangerous things. Aren't you afraid of them?

URSULA. I ain't afraid of nothink.

AUNT HANNAH. Dear me, what courage! What courage!

URSULA (*crossing to L. of table L.C.*). Take anything?

AUNT HANNAH. N-o, no thank you. I've had my *tea*. And so my nephew's out?

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URSULA. Been h'out since lunch.

AUNT HANNAH. Didn't he say he expected me?

URSULA. About three weeks ago he mentioned your name, but not since.

AUNT HANNAH. Yes, that was when I came up from Exeter. I was coming on to see him then when I was injured in the 'bus, and they took me straight away to the hospital.

URSULA. You don't say!

AUNT HANNAH (*tapping walking-stick on floor*). But I *do* say. But I sent him a telegram saying I was coming to-day.

URSULA (*pointing to table*). Telegram.

AUNT HANNAH. Oh yes. Oh yes! Unopened?

URSULA. Come h'after the master left.

AUNT HANNAH. Oh dear! What a pity! But he'll be home shortly, I suppose, or

doesn't he keep good respectable hours?

URSULA. Nothing to find fault with.

AUNT HANNAH. Has he any—er—lady friends?

URSULA. H'only one—h'Ag—er—ness.

AUNT HANNAH. I hope she's a good girl.

(Noise off. PAMELA, MAMIE, JOHN and TULLY continuing argument loudly off R. as at end of Act II.)

Oh, what's that?

URSULA. People next door, I suppose.

(Noise ceases.)

AUNT HANNAH *(opening her cloak)*. Dear me! It's close!

URSULA. Removing your things?

AUNT HANNAH. Yes, I should like to. *(Rising.)*

URSULA *(goes to door L., opens door and holds door open)*. Bedroom this way.

AUNT HANNAH *(crossing to door)*. How very convenient. And I find every one in London so very kind and polite.

URSULA *(closing door almost on AUNT HANNAH)*. In there!!

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(Noise off again.)

AUNT HANNAH. Thank you. Thank you!

(Exit AUNT HANNAH door L.)

URSULA *(closes door, crosses up R.)*. 'Orrible neighbours—'orrible neighbours!

(Exit URSULA door R. TULLY appears in pyjamas, peeping through curtains R. of C. he steals into room and runs down to chair L.C., looks round room. JOHN crawls on through window R. of C. with blanket over him, following TULLY on.)

TULLY. Home at last. Home at last!

JOHN. It's all right! *(Throws blanket on chair at back.)* I've made a barricade with the geranium pots. Nobody could get over without making a *terrible* smash. We should be sure to hear them.

TULLY. Good, then we're safe for the moment. *(Groans loudly.)*

JOHN. Don't make a scene! Don't make a scene!

(Going up to window. AUNT HANNAH enters and seeing TULLY in pyjamas she gives a scream and goes off door L. quickly. JOHN and TULLY both start and look round the room.)

JOHN *(to TULLY)*. Don't do it! Don't do it!

TULLY. I distinctly heard a woman's voice.

JOHN *(approaches window gingerly)*. 'sh! Don't make a noise. I'm listening for the flower-pots to fall.

TULLY. What will happen if Mr. Trippett and the doctor come in and find us gone?

JOHN. They dare not enter while the two women are arguing, perhaps fighting. I'm only thinking what a little cat Mamie was to come out just when everything was going so splendidly.

TULLY. Whatever induced you to run after a girl like that?

JOHN. Is there anybody in this flat?

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TULLY. Only the maid.

JOHN. Well, send her out.

TULLY. She's just *been* out.

JOHN. Never mind—send her out fifty times if it'll only help us.

(TULLY groans.)

Don't give way! Don't give way! I've got an idea. I'm going to cut the electric wires of the whole block of flats. I think I know where they run. Now you go and get her out of the house. Don't lose a moment. Please go, Bertram!

(TULLY groans and exits door R.)

(Calling after him.) It isn't often I ask you to do anything!

(JOHN *thinks. He has a brilliant idea. Takes out his penknife and goes to wall at back, feels along wall.*)

No, that's not it. (*Looks at wall below door L.*) Ah, that looks more like it. Yes. (*Plunges his knife into wall, a jet of soda water comes out through rubber tube fixed in flat below door, the spout of a soda syphon is pushed in other end of rubber tube outside, and at the cue*) Got it! Got it! (*The water is squirted through.*) Oh, damn, confound!

(JOHN *immediately places his hand over tube and with his handkerchief stops the flow of water. Syphon is removed and placed on floor ready for next squirt of water.*)

TULLY. Help! Help! Help! (*Heard off.*)

(TULLY *dashes on door R. and slamming door holds on to handle as if besieged.*)

JOHN. What's up? What's the matter with you?

TULLY (*trembling all over*). The maid doesn't recognize me without a moustache. She thinks I'm a burglar—and she's chasing me with a poker.

JOHN. Chasing you?

TULLY. Yes, and if this woman gets in, she'll brain us both. Come and help, for heaven's sake!

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JOHN. I can't let go here.

TULLY. Why not?

JOHN. I thought if I could cut the main electric cable and put out the lights next door, that the doctor and Trippett would be compelled to leave the flat—

TULLY. Good! Go on, cut the cable.

JOHN. I have tried, I have tried! And I've cut the water-pipe instead. It'll flood the place.

TULLY (*still holding onto door*). Oh, I'd do anything to get out of this.

JOHN. For heaven's sake don't be so selfish, just when everything's going so splendidly! (*Still holding on to water-pipe.*)

(AUNT HANNAH *opens door L. and just enters—sees JOHN and TULLY and with a cry exits hurriedly. JOHN and TULLY both turn on each other.*)

JOHN. Don't do it! *Don't do it!*

TULLY. I didn't do anything. If you shout like that I shall have a fit in a moment.

JOHN. Well, we don't want to stand here all night.

TULLY. Can you reach that key out of the other door?

JOHN. I've told you I can't let go here.

TULLY. If this woman gets in our lives won't be worth having.

JOHN. Whatever made you engage such a brute?

TULLY. I can't live here alone without protection.

JOHN. What's her name?

TULLY. Ursula!

JOHN. Ursula! Give her a month's notice.

TULLY. No, I don't want to lose her.

JOHN. Women—are—no—use—unless—they—are—mastered!

TULLY. I've always heard that it was best to avoid women who are mustard.

JOHN. Mastered—not mustard! And take off those pyjamas!

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TULLY. And I ought to be playing the flute to-night down at the Mission.

JOHN. Hang your mission! I'm trying to think what I can do here. Lend me your handkerchief—I'll plug it up with mine and then tie it up.

TULLY (*waving his handkerchief*). Catch! Catch!

JOHN. How can I catch from here?

(TULLY *runs across with handkerchief—his pyjama trousers round his ankles—gives handkerchief to JOHN—then sits chair C.*)

You'll split those pyjamas!

TULLY (*removing pyjamas*). This is the most awful afternoon I've ever had in my life. I shall never be the same man again.

JOHN (*ties up tube with handkerchief*). There, that'll hold, I think. Now, I'll go and cover your retreat. (*Crosses to R.*)

TULLY (*picking up telegram from table L.C.*). Oh! Here's a telegram! Telegrams always make me feel so nervous! (*Opens it and reads.*) It's from Aunt Hannah, she's coming up to-day. I've been expecting her for the last three weeks. I am the only relation she has, and in order to avoid the death-duties she's going to make a Deed of Gift to me amounting to several thousand pounds!

JOHN. Several thousand pounds! Now that *is* mean. Look at the trouble you've put me to. You might have lent me the money and so saved me a fortnight's illness.

TULLY (*rises*). Will you accept the £500 from me?

JOHN. I suppose I must.

TULLY. That *is* good of you!

JOHN. Not at all! You have such a winning way with you. One can't help doing as you wish.

TULLY (*smiles broadly*). That's taken a great load off my mind. The old lady is very generous. Directly she arrives we must both be very nice to her.

JOHN. Trust me for that. And I *can* be nice when I like.

TULLY. I know you can. But what about the 'Bus Company?

JOHN. Oh yes. I'll get you to go back and say I withdraw my claim.

TULLY. Yes. I'd love to do that. (*Picking up letter from table L.C.*)

JOHN. I'll buy Mamie a new necklace, and tell Pam the whole truth—that Mamie is not your wife, but your little bit of fluff named Agnes.

TULLY. No, I draw the line there, Mamie's *your* fluff. *You* must shoulder that responsibility.

JOHN. But you're a single man. It doesn't matter about you.

TULLY. Oh yes it does. I've got to think of my reputation down at the Mission.

JOHN. Oh, hang your mission!

TULLY. Oh, dear! (*Becomes very serious as he reads letter.*)

JOHN. What's up?

TULLY. It's a letter from the Motor 'Bus Company.

JOHN. Motor 'Bus Company?

TULLY. They're going to sue *me*.

JOHN. Sue *you*, what for?

TULLY. The fat woman who had three ribs broken says that I am liable—that my fall on her was premeditated and nothing to do with the accident. Oh, and listen to this. (*Reading.*) "Our representative will have much pleasure in calling upon you this evening at seven o'clock."

JOHN. It's gone seven now.

TULLY. They're sending some one here to-night?

JOHN. Yes, who will they send—either Trippett or the doctor. They are both in the neighbourhood.

TULLY. Then they may be here at any moment!

JOHN. But this is a simple matter now you've got the necessary money coming in.

TULLY. But which one will they send, because it depends on that who *you* are and who *I* am.

JOHN. Well, I'll get you to creep back and tell Pam that I withdraw my claim—then, if the doctor calls you must get back in time to see him, and if Trippett calls, I'll see Trippett.

TULLY. But that won't help *me* out—if they are going to sue me—possibly for hundreds—I'm not going to lend you this money unless I can see a clean sheet for myself—you got me into this mess, you must get me out of it! (*Sits c. and groans.*)

JOHN. You *are* ungrateful. After all I've *done* for you. Are you going to lend me the £500 or are you not?

TULLY. Certainly. But I didn't fall on top of this fat woman, and I'm not going to be made to pay. You had the fun, you ought to suffer.

(JOHN *crosses to L. and rings bell, alarmed.*)

What are you going to do?

JOHN. Do as you wish. I'm going to get you out of this trouble. I've rung for Ursula.

TULLY. Ursula!

(URSULA *enters R., holding poker at her side. TULLY bus. trying to hide his lip.*)

JOHN (*crosses to door R.*). Oh, er, good evening Ursula! (*In his best manner.*)

URSULA (*abruptly*). Evening!

JOHN. We want you to do us a favour, if you will?

URSULA. A favour?

JOHN. We want you to lend us some ladies' clothes—just for an hour or so.

URSULA. What sort of clothes?

JOHN. Oh, nothing—er—white—nothing under—underhand—just super clothes—and if you do this, your master will be very much obliged to you and he'll raise your wages.

(*Bus. TULLY aghast. JOHN motioning to him to keep quiet.*)

URSULA. I'll see—I'll see.

(*Exit URSULA door R.*)

TULLY (*rises and comes down C.*). John! What are you going to do?

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JOHN. I think you will acknowledge this *is* an inspiration. These 'bus people think they are going to corner us, I can see *their* move. But you and I are *far* too smart for them.

TULLY (*in doubt*). Are we?

JOHN. It has only just struck me, *but you are the living image of the fat old lady in the 'bus!*

TULLY (*offended*). Oh! John!

JOHN. Without the fat, of course. If you get into these clothes and pad yourself all round, no one will know the difference.

TULLY. No, I couldn't do that. It's illegal!

JOHN. I'm doing this to get *you* out of the pickle. I'm not doing it for my own sake, please bear that in mind.

TULLY. But what good will it do?

JOHN. If the doctor or Trippett calls here, I shall say that I am Tully, that is Tully's brother, that I have had an interview with the lady in the 'bus accident and she is strongly of opinion that the 'Bus Company is liable.

TULLY. But they'll dispute it at once.

JOHN. Naturally—then we are prepared. I shall just bring you into the room dressed as the lady, with nothing to do but to bear out my statement.

TULLY. No, I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it! (*Turns L.*)

JOHN. Bertram! I have an idea—an idea that wouldn't occur *to one man in a million*,

(*Enter URSULA, with bundle of clothes. Crosses to JOHN.*)

and you want to ignore it. Bertram! Bertram!

URSULA. Clothes! (*Gives clothes to JOHN and exits door R.*)

JOHN (*takes clothes*). Thank you, Ursula, thank you. (*Gives clothes to TULLY.*) The very thing—but you'll want a fearful lot of padding—you're so thin. (*He gathers up cushions from couch and arm-chair and pushes them into TULLY'S arms.*) Here we are, top-hole, beautiful padding!

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TULLY. But, John, what about a bodice. I must have a bodice!

JOHN. What do you want a bodice for?

TULLY. For all this part. (*Pointing to chest.*)

JOHN. I'll go and get a bodice off Ursula. Meanwhile you go into the bedroom and get into these clothes as quickly as you can. Shave your top lip clean. Don't forget the cushions. Arrange them—diplomatically—you know—come out and go in—and all that sort of thing, and I'll go and get the bodice.

(*JOHN exits door R.*)

TULLY. I don't know where a woman comes out and goes in!

(*Stands looking round hopelessly, then goes to door L., opens door and is about to enter bedroom. AUNT HANNAH screams off. TULLY shuts door quickly, rushes up to window L. Crash of falling flower-pots heard off R. TULLY drops clothes, etc., and rushes to door R. MAMIE enters windows R.C. breathless and excited.*)

MAMIE. Oh, there you are, Bertie! Where's Jack? Where is he?

TULLY (*coming C.*). Somewhere in the house.

MAMIE. Is there anyone else in the house besides Jack?

TULLY. Only the maid—and Bogie.

MAMIE. Bogie—who's Bogie?

TULLY. My little dog.

MAMIE. Do you know that Mrs. Ayers still thinks I am your wife.

TULLY (*wiggles and nods*). Yes, I'm so sorry.

MAMIE. What?

TULLY. I mean—delighted. (*Wiggles again.*)

MAMIE. Oh, don't wriggle! Things are far too serious for wriggling. You heard about the necklace that was lent to me by my friend the Rajah?

TULLY. Yes, I *have* heard about it.

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MAMIE. Then I want you, as my husband, to take the matter into your hands and tell Mrs. Ayers that unless the necklace is returned to me *at once*, you will take proceedings.

TULLY. Oh, I couldn't do that, I'll call John. (*Going to door R.*)

MAMIE (*pulling TULLY back*). No, don't call John. It's only natural if you are supposed to be my husband that you should help me in this matter. And if you don't, you'll get it in the neck right where the chicken got the axe. (*On the verge of tears, she crosses and sits C., searching in her handbag for letter.*) Just read this letter. It's from the Rajah—I've never had such things said to me in my life—boo—boo—boo! (*Crying.*)

TULLY (*patting back of chair*). Don't cry, child, don't cry.

MAMIE. Where did I put it? In my bag? No! (*Rising.*) I remember, I put it in my dress for safety.

TULLY. Oh! oh!

MAMIE. Would you mind unhooking my dress at the back, please.

TULLY (*very embarrassed*). Really I'm a single man!

MAMIE. Well, these are single hooks.

TULLY (*crosses to door R.*). I'll call John!

MAMIE. Please don't call John.

TULLY (*calling through door and whistling*). I must have some one in the room—Bogie! Bogie! Bogie!

MAMIE. Bertie! Bertram! Come here! (*BERTRAM going towards her.*) I want to show you something very important.

TULLY (*backing away from her*). I'll take your word for it!

MAMIE. It's the Rajah's letter. Just the top two hooks, please—as quickly as you can. (*Approaching TULLY with her shoulder towards him.*)

TULLY. Really, I don't understand. I'm quite a novice.

MAMIE (*annoyed*). You don't want me to *tear* the thing off?

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TULLY (*advancing timidly*). For heaven's sake, don't do that!

MAMIE. Well, pull your socks up, Bertie, and undo the top one.

(*TULLY pulls up his socks.*)

What *are* you doing?

TULLY. Pulling my socks up.

MAMIE (*sidling up to him*). Go on, the top one.

(*TULLY unfastens the top hook.*)

Ah, that's better. (*Trying to get letter from bodice.*) Now, the next one.

TULLY. No, no more.

MAMIE (*sweetly*). Now the next one.

TULLY (*shaking head decisively*). No more!

MAMIE. Do please, Bertie dear! Bertie darling! Bertie sweetheart!

TULLY (*smiles broadly and giggles*). Well, just this one. No more after that.

MAMIE. No, no more after that.

TULLY (*giggles*). They are nice little hooks. Shall I go any further?

MAMIE. No, not at present. (*Secures letter.*) I've got it. Just read that!

(*Crash of flower-pots off R.*)

It's the Rajah! (*Very frightened.*)

TULLY. No, more flower-pots. (*Going up to window R.*) More creepers! (*In a loud whisper.*) It's Mrs. Ayers!

MAMIE. I'll hide here and listen. Come and hide me, Bertie.

(MAMIE *crouches down at foot of table L.C. behind TULLY. PAMELA enters window R.*)

PAMELA (*coming down C.*). Oh—Mr. Tully—where is John?

TULLY. He's very busy with my maid.

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PAMELA. With your maid?

TULLY. Yes, he's trying to get some clothes off her.

PAMELA (*annoyed*). What?

TULLY. Trying to borrow some clothes I should say.

(JOHN *enters from door R., sees PAMELA and exits hurriedly, MAMIE tickles TULLY'S legs.*)

PAMELA. Well, someone must come at once. Mr. Trippett refuses to leave the flat until he has seen John, and the doctor is coming round to *your* door.

TULLY (*crossing to R. towards PAMELA*). But John is going to withdraw his claim against the Company, and I'm going to tell Mr. Trippett so.

PAMELA. Then please come at once.

(TULLY *and PAMELA go up.*)

MAMIE. Stop! Before you go, I'd like you to ask Mrs. Ayers to give me back my necklace. (*Below table L.C. standing.*)

PAMELA. I've already told you, Mrs. Tully, that this necklace does not belong to you. (*To TULLY.*) And please ask your wife to apologize. (*Goes down R.*)

TULLY (*crosses to MAMIE*). Miss Scott—Miss Fluff—(*bangs hand on table and adopts an authoritative tone*)—my wife—will you apologize?

MAMIE (*round sharply to TULLY*). Certainly not!

(TULLY *collapses in chair.*)

You know as well as I do that that necklace does *not* belong to Mrs. Ayers. Please ask her to return it to me.

TULLY (*crosses to PAMELA*). Mrs. Ayers, will you please return the necklace to Mrs. —er—Mrs. wife?

PAMELA. I shall do nothing in the matter until I've seen John.

TULLY (*crosses to MAMIE*). She will do nothing in the matter—

MAMIE (*pushing TULLY up stage*). Out of my way!

(TULLY *watching his opportunity, works up to window, picks up clothes and cushions and steals out by window R.*)

(MAMIE *crosses to PAMELA.*) Now, Mrs. Ayers, that necklace was lent to me and its real owner is waiting at the door of your flat. If I don't take it back to him at once you'll have the police on your track. Am I to take it back or not?

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(PAMELA *hesitates.*)

You refuse? You refuse?

PAMELA (*hands necklace to MAMIE*) Oh, very well, take it to him. (*Crosses to writing-desk up L.*) I don't want a vulgar scene over a paltry thirty-shilling necklace. (*Sits.*)

MAMIE. Thirty shillings! That shows how much *you* know, and also that this necklace cannot possibly be *your* property—I'm sorry you made such a mistake. (*Going up to window R.*) Thirty shillings—that's really good—I must tell the Rajah that! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

(*Exit MAMIE window R., laughing loudly.*)

PAMELA (*rushes to door L., opens it*). John! John!

(AUNT HANNAH *screams. PAMELA closes door, rushes across to door R. URSULA enters door R. holding poker in hand and looking very formidable, she advances in a threatening manner.*)

(PAMELA *starts with a little cry at sight of URSULA and backs up to window R. trembling with fear.*)

URSULA. What are you doing 'ere? What are you doing 'ere?

PAMELA. I beg your pardon, I was looking for my husband.

URSULA. Well, he's not 'ere. He's not 'ere! (*Loudly.*)

PAMELA. No, I'm sure he wouldn't be—

(Exit window R. calling: "John! John!")

(URSULA opens door R. and beckons.)

URSULA. It's all right. You can come in now, little man. All gone!

JOHN (entering). Thank you, Ursula, thank you! (JOHN is carrying a bodice.)

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(URSULA gives JOHN the glad eye and exits with a little backward kick of the leg. JOHN crosses to door L., opens it and throws bodice into bedroom.)

Here you are, it's the best she's got!

(AUNT HANNAH screams off.)

Eh? What's that, speak up, I can't hear. (Crossing to door R.)

(AUNT HANNAH enters, JOHN turns and bursts into laughter, mistaking AUNT HANNAH for TULLY in disguise.)

AUNT HANNAH. You dare not attack a woman even if you are a burglar! (With fear and anger.)

JOHN (roars with laughter). Excellent! Splendid! The very thing. I shouldn't have known you.

AUNT HANNAH (dignified). I want to leave this house.

JOHN (still laughing loudly). Ha! Ha! Ha! You are the living image of the fat old woman in the 'bus.

AUNT HANNAH. I am the lady who was in the 'bus, sir, and I know you—I know you now. You were the coward who, to save his own skin, so cruelly tried to crush me.

JOHN (laughing). Good! Good! If you only keep it up like that you'll be splendid.

AUNT HANNAH. I tell you, sir, I had three of my ribs broken.

JOHN (laughing). Ribs! You don't look as if you had any ribs. You are all, cushions! (Digging AUNT HANNAH in the ribs.) Ha! Ha! Ha!

AUNT HANNAH (screams). Oh! Oh! (Up to table.) Oh, my poor side—oh, my poor heart.

JOHN (imitating). Oh, my poor side, oh, my poor heart! Ha! Ha! Ha! Oh, don't make me laugh! You've got the funniest mug I've ever seen. And you do "go out" and "come in" a lot, more "come in" than "go out." (Rocks with laughter.)

AUNT HANNAH. I'm going to leave this house, sir, and if you attempt to stop me, I'll call for the police. (Tries to pass JOHN, he stops her.)

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JOHN. If you jump about like that, your clothes will fall off.

AUNT HANNAH. Ouch! Ouch! (Turns up stage.)

JOHN. Oh! You ought to see your back view! Ha! Ha!

AUNT HANNAH. How dare you! How dare you!

(Bell rings off R.)

JOHN (over to AUNT HANNAH). Hark, that may be our man. Pull yourself together.

AUNT HANNAH. Don't you touch me!

JOHN. Stop it, you idiot. Don't forget if that's the doctor, you're here to discuss the 'bus accident with me. Now, go into that bedroom, and don't come out till I call you!

AUNT HANNAH. I wish to leave this house.

JOHN (opens door L. and is pushing AUNT HANNAH off gradually). Come on, don't play the giddy ox. (Pushes her into bedroom.) Kennel! Kennel!

AUNT HANNAH. Don't you touch me! How dare you! Oh—o—o—oh!

(Exit.)

(JOHN bangs the door after her. URSULA enters door R.)

JOHN. What is it? What is it?

URSULA. Dr. Bigland to see the master.

JOHN. Dr. Bigland! Good! Show him in!

(Exit URSULA door R.)

JOHN. Who am I now? I know, I'm Tully. No, I'm not, I'm Tully's brother, Tully's twin brother. (Stands C., braces himself up and removes moustache.)

URSULA (*enters, announcing*). Dr. Bigland!

DOCTOR (*enters—URSULA exits*). Yes. I expected something of this kind.

JOHN (*reserves mock dignity*). I haven't the pleasure of your acquaintance.

DOCTOR. You are Mr. Tully.

JOHN. Tully is my name.

DOCTOR. Hadn't I the pleasure of meeting you a short while ago next door?

JOHN. No, that was my brother.

DOCTOR. Your brother? Good heavens! What a likeness!

JOHN. Yes, we're often mistaken for each other. If the true facts of the case were known I believe we were very nearly twins.

DOCTOR. Remarkable! I apologize.

JOHN. Not at all. But didn't my brother tell you it was my brother? I mean, didn't he tell you it was me?

DOCTOR. He said it was his brother who was in the motor 'bus accident.

JOHN. Quite correct.

DOCTOR. The object of my visit is in reference to that matter.

JOHN. Will you take a seat?

DOCTOR. I thank you. (*Sits by table L.C.*) Now, as regards yourself. At the time of the accident there was a lady in the 'bus who had three ribs broken, and we understand that this was caused by your fall on top of the lady.

JOHN. Yes, but I make no claim against the lady.

DOCTOR. No, but the lady wishes to make a claim against you.

JOHN. I don't think so. The lady herself is here, now, and quite ready to deny your allegations against me. (*Goes to door L.*)

(DOCTOR *rises, places hat on chair he has been sitting on and goes R.*)

You can come in!

(AUNT HANNAH *enters with timid little jerks.*)

(*Aside to AUNT HANNAH*). It's the doctor.

AUNT HANNAH (*tearfully*). Oh! O-h-h! It's Dr. Bigland. (*Crosses to doctor.*)

(JOHN *rubs hands with great satisfaction.*)

DOCTOR. Now, my dear lady, calm yourself; remember what I told you, you must keep calm.

JOHN. You see, the poor woman's nerves are shattered, and all through riding in your beastly 'buses. (*Signals to AUNT HANNAH to be quiet, to which she pays no heed.*)

DOCTOR (to AUNT HANNAH). You know this *gentleman* who was in the 'bus accident with you?

AUNT HANNAH. Yes, and I live in fear of him.

DOCTOR. That's quite all right. There's nothing to be frightened of. Now sit down, sit down and compose yourself.

(AUNT HANNAH *backs up to chair C., is about to sit on DOCTOR'S hat. DOCTOR rushes up and snatches hat away.*) Ah! (*Shouts.*) Not on my hat! (*Places hat on table down R.*)

(AUNT HANNAH *jumps up on DOCTOR'S shout, throws arms round JOHN'S neck. JOHN pushes her into chair C.*)

AUNT HANNAH. Oh dear, dear, dear! O-h-h!

DOCTOR. Now I understand you wish to thrash out this matter of the accident.

(*Taking notebook from pocket.*)

JOHN (*crosses to DOCTOR*). Yes, we are both desirous that it should be cleared up, aren't we?

AUNT HANNAH. Doctor, I am.

JOHN (*looks over DOCTOR'S shoulder and watches him writing*). Will you begin?

DOCTOR. No, I will not begin. I will hear what the lady has to say and make my report.

JOHN. Good! (*Signalling to AUNT HANNAH.*) Well—er—madam—the Doctor and I have been discussing the matter, and he is under the impression that you think that I

am to blame for the injury you have suffered. Now I want you to prove to him that such is not the case.

AUNT HANNAH. But it *is* the case.

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(JOHN *starts*.)

The Doctor is quite right!

(DOCTOR *makes notes*. JOHN *bus. shaking his head at AUNT HANNAH and signalling*.)

JOHN. I say, the Doctor thinks that I was to blame, and I want you to deny this scandalous accusation. (*Signals*.)

AUNT HANNAH. I can't deny it.

JOHN. But you don't understand.

AUNT HANNAH. I beg to state that I *do* understand.

(AUNT HANNAH *holds finger up*. JOHN *smacks her hand*.)

JOHN (*frowning and signalling*). Let me explain. A short while ago when you and I were discussing this matter, you agreed with me that the 'Bus Company and they alone were responsible for your injuries.

AUNT HANNAH. I did not agree with you in any way! It's a wicked falsehood.

DOCTOR. Exactly as I thought.

JOHN (*to AUNT HANNAH*). You silly fool! Oh, I beg your pardon—think—think—didn't you distinctly say you were going to sue the 'Bus Company?

(*Nodding "Yes" to AUNT HANNAH*.)

AUNT HANNAH (*rising and crossing to couch L.*). I don't remember discussing the matter with you at all, sir.

JOHN. Then the accident must have affected your memory. (*Aside to AUNT HANNAH*.) You half-witted idiot, you'll spoil everything.

AUNT HANNAH. And abuse will certainly not make me alter my decision.

DOCTOR (*crossing C.*). Now, my dear lady, you are firmly of the opinion that the injury you sustained was due to the premeditated action of this gentleman when riding on one of the Company's vehicles?

AUNT HANNAH. That is my case exactly.

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(DOCTOR *makes notes*, JOHN *frantic*.)

DOCTOR. Very well. And the amount of damages you claim?

AUNT HANNAH. I claim—(JOHN *threatens her with his fist*). I claim—I—

DOCTOR. I claim! I claim! What do you claim?

AUNT HANNAH. I claim— (JOHN *threatens her*.) Five hundred pounds!

DOCTOR. Five hundred pounds. (DOCTOR *writes in book*.)

(JOHN *in a fury is threatening to strike AUNT HANNAH*. DOCTOR *turns and catches him—they both bow*. DOCTOR *writes in book again*. JOHN *bangs back of couch*. AUNT HANNAH *starts with a shriek*. DOCTOR *starts also*.)

DOCTOR. Now, sir, are you prepared in any way to accept this liability?

JOHN (*right up to DOCTOR, furiously*). No—most certainly not!

DOCTOR (*closing book and crossing R.*) Then there's nothing more to be said.

JOHN (*crossing to DOCTOR*). Oh yes there is, I'm a little smarter than you imagine, and I can tell you something. That isn't a woman you've been talking to, that's a man!

(AUNT HANNAH *very indignant*. DOCTOR *laughs*.)

Oh, you can laugh, you can laugh, but I can *prove* it.

(AUNT HANNAH *screams, very nervous*.)

DOCTOR. You can do what, sir?

JOHN. Prove it!

DOCTOR. Not in my presence, you don't!

(DOCTOR *exits hurriedly*.)

(JOHN *rushes to door R. and with his back against it glares at AUNT HANNAH*.)

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AUNT HANNAH (*rising in terror*). Don't you look at me like that, sir. Don't you look at me like that!

JOHN. Take off those pads.

AUNT HANNAH. Pads!

JOHN. Take off those pads!

AUNT HANNAH. I don't wear pads.

JOHN (*advancing on AUNT HANNAH*). You cheat! You dirty little turncoat—to make a fool of me like that.

AUNT HANNAH (*jumping round table L.C. to R.*). Don't you touch me, sir. Don't you touch me!

JOHN. Take off those rags, or I'll thrash you! (*Grabs at her skirt, which he tears off, leaving AUNT HANNAH in a very pronounced petticoat. JOHN pushes AUNT HANNAH till she falls on to couch down L.*)

(*Enter PAMELA from window R.C.*)

PAMELA. John! John! I'm surprised at you—treating a woman like that.

(*Crosses to AUNT HANNAH, kneeling by her.*)

JOHN. A woman! (*Gazes into AUNT HANNAH'S face.*) Oh, good lor', it's a woman!

(*Sinks into chair R. of table L.C.*)

PAMELA. Yes, a woman. There, there, calm yourself, calm yourself. (*To JOHN.*) Mr. Tully told me you were trying to get clothes off someone!

JOHN. Where—is—TULLY?

PAMELA. I left him in our flat. He was telling Mr. Trippett that you withdraw your claim. John, she's fainted! (*Rises—looks round.*) Get some water, get some water, John. (*PAMELA goes up behind table L.C. looking for water.*)

JOHN. I haven't the faintest idea where to get water—I don't know this beastly flat—(*Suddenly thinks of water-spout.*) Ah! I know. Stand back. Pam—stand back!

(*Gets hold of tube water-spout. JOHN takes the plugged handkerchief from wall and the water-pipe squirts directly on to AUNT HANNAH'S face. JOHN plugs the pipe again and crosses to AUNT HANNAH, assisting her to rise. AUNT HANNAH, when water falls on her, screams and makes movement with arms as if swimming.*)

[Pg 95]

JOHN. Why, who are you?

AUNT HANNAH. I'm Mr. Tully's aunt.

JOHN. Mr. Tully's aunt!

AUNT HANNAH. Yes, I am Aunt Hannah!

JOHN. Aunt Hannah! Go and look after her, Pam.

(*PAMELA picks up AUNT HANNAH'S skirt and assists AUNT HANNAH off door L. AUNT HANNAH muttering until off.*)

(*Exit AUNT HANNAH and PAMELA down L.*)

JOHN (*dazed, and gazing at door*). Another five hundred gone.

TULLY (*off, window R.C.*). Everything's going splendidly! Everything's going splendidly!

(*TULLY enters windows R.C., comes right down C. and faces audience. He is dressed in woman's clothes which are much too big for him and is padded out with the cushions.*)

JOHN (*looks up—sees TULLY*). Take it away! Take it away! You're too late!

TULLY. Don't I look all right?

JOHN. All right? You look more like a goat than a woman!

TULLY. I thought I looked like a little bit of fluff. What's happened? (*Turns to JOHN.*)

JOHN. Do you realize that the stout—lady—in the 'bus accident was—your—*aunt!!!*

TULLY (*going up to JOHN*). The fat woman was Aunt Hannah? How do you know this? How do you know this?

JOHN. Because she is here now—in your bedroom.

TULLY. Really. You've seen her?

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(*JOHN nods.*)

Have you been very nice to the old lady?

JOHN. Nice! You should have seen what I did to her!

TULLY. Oh, it's not as bad as all that surely?

(*Enter PAMELA. TULLY picks up skirts and dashes off door R.*)

PAMELA (*laughing*). What's that?

JOHN (*crossing to PAMELA*). That's Tully; I think he's gone mad.

PAMELA (*crossing R.*). And so has Mrs. Tully. Do you know she swore the pearl necklace you gave me belonged to her?

JOHN. Did she really?

PAMELA. Yes. I can't help laughing. I gave it to her.

JOHN (*starting*). You gave her the necklace.

PAMELA (*laughing*). Yes. I certainly didn't want a scene with a woman like that.

(*JOHN goes mad with delight, dances down L.*)

JOHN. Ha! Ha! You gave it to her. You gave it to her. Then the Rajah's got it back again—the Rajah's got it back again.

PAMELA. Don't give way, John.

JOHN. Ha! Ha! I must give way. (*Still dancing.*)

PAMELA. But you don't know *what* I gave her. I didn't give her the *real* necklace. (*JOHN stops dancing.*) I was wearing the *imitation* one that cost thirty shillings.

JOHN (*his spirits down to zero*). You gave her the imitation one?

PAMELA. Yes.

JOHN. Are you sure?

PAMELA. Yes, I have the real one here. It has a crown on the clasp. (*Shows necklace.*) See! (*She realizes her mistake.*) John! John! I've—I've given her the *real* one—I remember now—I changed it at mother's. I *did* change it. John, I've given her the *real* necklace! (*Bursts into tears and sits R.C.*)

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JOHN (*dances all round the room with joy, then over to PAMELA*). There, there, dear, don't go mad. It can't be helped. We all make mistakes.

PAMELA. Something must be done. This will kill mother.

JOHN. We must chance that.

PAMELA (*starting up*). Couldn't Mr. Tully get the necklace back for me?

JOHN. No, impossible!

PAMELA. Impossible, why?

JOHN (*takes PAMELA'S arm confidentially*). I'll tell you a secret, Pam, Tully's a wrong 'un.

PAMELA. A wrong 'un?

JOHN. Yes, he's a dark horse. And I'll tell you something else. That isn't Mrs. Tully; that's Tully's little weakness. He calls her Agnes, and that's the type of man Mr. Tully is.

PAMELA (*with a knowing nod of the head*). I had my suspicions. Then perhaps there's time for me to catch her before she finds the Rajah. (*She rushes off windows R.C.*)

JOHN. Come back, Pam. Come back!

(*Exit PAMELA.*)

(*Enter AUNT HANNAH door L., without her hat.*)

AUNT HANNAH. Where is my nephew, sir? Where is my nephew?

JOHN. Ah, Aunt Hannah! He's afraid to meet you until you forgive me for all I've done. There's been a most absurd mistake caused by your likeness to Bertram. If you'll only let me explain.

AUNT HANNAH. Really, I don't think it matters. (*Looking at her wet clothes.*)

JOHN. But you've no idea what a wonderful likeness there is—except of course—you look the younger.

AUNT HANNAH. Oh, no, I don't. (*Coyly.*)

JOHN. Oh yes you do.

AUNT HANNAH. Oh, no, I don't!

JOHN. Then all is forgiven?

AUNT HANNAH. Why, of course!

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(TULLY runs on from door R., sees AUNT HANNAH.)

TULLY. Aunt Hannah! (*Over to her, kisses her.*)

AUNT HANNAH. Bertie, my boy, my boy!

(PAMELA enters from windows, R.C.)

PAMELA. John, it's too late; the Rajah's gone and taken the necklace with him!

JOHN. Thank heaven! And I'll save up *your* money and buy you another—and that's the truth!

PAMELA. But you always *do* tell me the truth, John.

JOHN. But in future I'm going to tell you better truth. And now we can go home in safety. (PAMELA and JOHN going up to window R.C.) Oh, Bertram, where are you going?

TULLY. I'm going to take Auntie down to the Mission.

JOHN. Then, good-night!!

(Exit PAMELA and JOHN window R.C.)

AUNT HANNAH. Bertie, I'll just go and put my bonnet on.

(Exit AUNT HANNAH door L.)

(MAMIE puts head round door R.)

MAMIE. Bertie!

TULLY. Oh!

MAMIE (*enters and over to TULLY*). I've got rid of the Rajah. Will you take me out to supper?

TULLY. Certainly not!

MAMIE. Don't be unkind.

TULLY. I couldn't dream of such a thing.

MAMIE. Oh, Bertie, why not?

TULLY. I've promised to take Auntie down to the Mission.

MAMIE. Tell Auntie you're going on a much nicer mission. You *will* come—say yes—Bertie! Bertie!

[Pg 99]

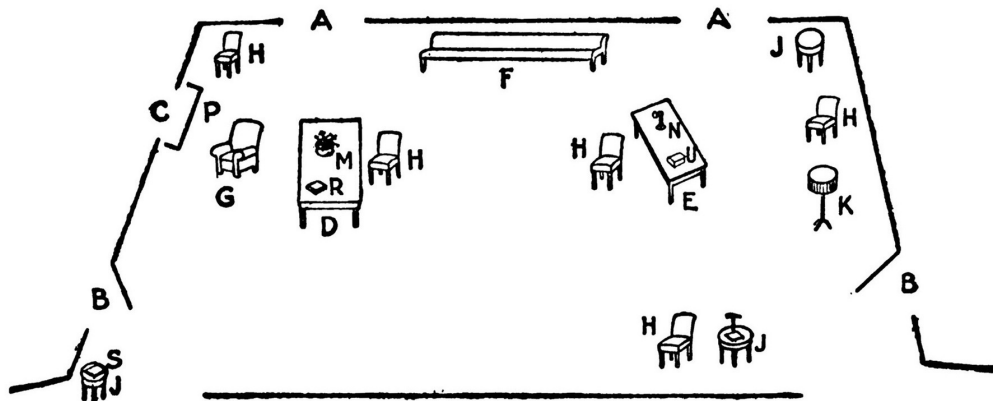
TULLY (*suddenly making up his mind to take the plunge*). Oh, Fluffie!!

(TULLY kisses MAMIE excitedly. He moves head quickly to and from MAMIE'S cheek, more like pecks than kisses. URSULA enters from door R. AUNT HANNAH from door L. PAMELA and JOHN from windows R.C. All enter simultaneously and seeing TULLY kissing MAMIE they exit simultaneously with varied exclamations and expressions.)

CURTAIN.

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ACT I



ACT I

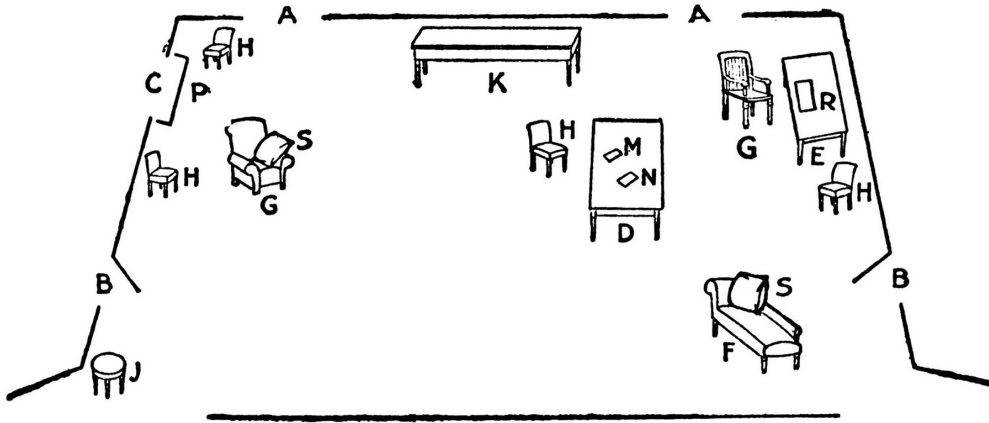
EXPLANATORY

A. French windows.	K. Standard lamp.
B. Door opening on and up.	M. Pot with Marguerites.
C. Fireplace.	N. Telephone.
D. Table.	P. Fender.
E. Writing-desk.	R. Book.
F. Settee.	S. Newspaper.
G. Arm-chair.	T. Magazines.
H. Small chair.	U. Telephone Directory.
J. Small table.	

ACT II

The small table (J.) down L. in Act I is moved to down C., the chair from in front of the writing-table is moved to the left side of the small table (now C.) and the arm-chair (G.) is moved to the right side of the small table (now C.). Otherwise the furniture is not altered.

ACT III



ACT III

EXPLANATORY

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. French windows. | J. Small table. |
| B. Door opening on and up. | K. Dinner-wagon or Sideboard. |
| C. Fireplace. | M. Telegram. |
| D. Table. | N. Letter. |
| E. Writing-desk. | P. Fender. |
| F. Couch. | R. Blotting-pad. |
| G. Arm-chair. | S. Cushions. |
| H. Small chair. | |

Transcriber's Note

This transcription is based on images digitized by Google from a copy made available by the University of Iowa. These images are posted at:

books.google.com/books?id=eelNAQAAMAAJ

In general, this transcription attempts to retain the formatting, punctuation and spelling of the source text. Some changes were made to correct for minor errors and inconsistencies, especially in formatting or punctuation. The following changes were made to the text:

- p. 5: Pamela. Must I remind you that—Changed "*Pamela*" to "PAMELA" for consistency.
- p. 10: JOHN (*rising and crossing to Pamela*). Hang it all—Changed "*Pamela*" to "PAMELA" for consistency.
- p. 18: "John stayed here, Kew." (*Reading*.) John stayed here, Bloomsbury.—Inserted opening quotation mark before "John" after "*(Reading)*".
- p. 24: (*Protests in action against the suggestion until John says "BERTRAM," when a broad smile comes across his face.*)—Changed "*John*" to "JOHN" for consistency.
- p. 30: MAMIE (*Very amused all the time*). Ripping, isn't it?—Changed "*Very*" to all lower case for consistency.
- p. 33: MAMIE *assists him into arm-chair*. JOHN *groaning all the time*.—Changed the period after "*arm-chair*" to a comma.
- p. 33: Now then, Mr—*John Ayers, isn't it?*—Inserted a period after "Mr" for consistency.
- p. 40: MAMIE (*turns her ring round to look like wedding ring and holds hand up conspicuously*).—For consistency, reformatted this line as a stage direction.
- p. 42: Two weeks have elapsed since the events—Inserted an opening parenthesis for consistency.
- p. 45: TULLY. No, John, you called last time—Inserted a period at the end of the sentence.
- p. 47: TULLY. You haven't give me a chance yet!—Changed "give" to "given".
- p. 50: (PAMELA *rushes in dramatically, closing the door after her*.) John! John! The doctor—the doctor.—For consistency and clarity, the stage direction part of this line has been formatted on a line separate from the dialogue, and the character title "PAMELA" has been inserted before "John! John!"
- p. 54: DOCTOR (*picks up hat and follows her*.) Allow *me*.—Moved the period after "*her*" to after the closing parenthesis for consistency.
- p. 58: why *her* husband is in *your* bedroom!"—Deleted quotation mark at end of sentence.
- p. 61: MAMIE. But I dare not go home without it. (*Throwing her arms round JOHN'S neck*), Darling, do please!—Changed the comma after "*neck*" to a period.
- p. 69: JOHN (*over to doctor*). Surely, you're not going to—Changed "*doctor*" to "DOCTOR" for consistency.
- p. 71: Do you think Mr Trippett—Inserted a period after "Mr" for consistency.
- p. 77: JOHN (*thinks. He has a brilliant idea. Takes out his penknife and goes to wall at back, feels along wall*).—For clarity and consistency, this section has been reformatted. The opening parentheses was moved to before "JOHN" and whole stage direction has been formatted as a direction separate from dialogue.
- p. 82: Thank you, Ursula, thank you—Inserted a period at the end of the sentence.
- p. 95: *makes movement with arms as if swimming*.—Added a closing parenthesis after "*swimming*".
- p. 96: Ha! Ha! I must give way (*still dancing*).—Inserted a period after "way" and capitalized "*still*".
- p. 101: The small table (J.) down L. in Act. I is moved to down C.—Deleted the period after "Act".

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