

Michael They've had to go down and see her parents in Crawley or somewhere.

Roma Reigate.

Michael Sure he said Crawley.

Roma No, Reigate. I remember Gilly saying her parents live in Reigate.

*The Hinson doorbell rings*

*(Lowering her voice)* Have you mentioned it to next door by the way?

Michael I did knock. No answer.

Roma Actually—*(tiptoeing to look)* she's in the garden.

Michael Have a word then.

Roma I'd rather you did it, Mike. It's about time you introduced yourself to her anyway. *(She enunciates carefully)* Mrs Hinson.

Michael Roma. Simple—communication.

Roma I remember the last time I tried to communicate.

Michael All the more reason to plant the flag. *(He gets on with taking down the rotary line)*

Roma goes to the fence and tries to look over but it is too high for her

*Roma exits into the kitchen as:*

*David comes out of the Hinson french windows. He is in his early forties. He is big, heavily-built, ambling and seemingly placid. He wears good cashmere and a good watch, carries a mobile telephone. He stands for a moment, watching his mother pegging out her washing*

David *(moving over to her)* Hello Mum.

Mrs Hinson *(jumping)* What you do that for?

David Why don't you answer the door?

Mrs Hinson Creeping up on your own mother like that.

David You don't answer the door.

Mrs Hinson You've got a key, haven't you?

David Just as well—don't I get a kiss?

*Mrs Hinson tilts her head and he kisses her brow. Kissing does not come easy in this family and she pushes him away indicating her handbag which she has put on the bamboo table*

Mrs Hinson Pass me my bag, will you?

*David gives her the handbag as she lowers herself into the chair*

*Creeping up on me like that, you've brought on one of my heads. (She almost snatches the bag from him and delves into it for her pills as:)*

*Roma enters with a pair of aluminium kitchen steps which she sets up near the fence and climbs on them. She is about to call to Mrs Hinson when;*

David I'll fetch you some water. *(He puts down the mobile phone)*

*David exits into the kitchen*

*On seeing him, Roma ducks down out of sight and gets off the steps*



Roma (in a lowered voice) There's someone with her.

Michael I'll do it, softie.

Roma No, honestly, Mike, there's someone with her. If you do speak, I wonder if it might be an idea to say something about the washing?

Roma exits with the steps as:

David enters with a glass of water which he gives to his mother

David I see you've been polishing the step again.

Michael exits

Mrs Hinson You're not saying there's anything wrong with polishing my step, are you?

David Apart from the fact I nearly broke my neck.

She swallows down a pill, making much of it as:

I don't like you cleaning the step. I don't like seeing you on your hands and knees, I never have.

Mrs Hinson You don't see me on my hands and knees, you're never here.

David (wandering across to look through the shed window) Yeah, I know I'm very naughty and I've been meaning to come over but the fact of the matter is I met this fella who said how would you like to be the new James Bond so I said yeah, okay I'll give it a whirl and the next thing you know they're flying me off to Miami for a screen test with the ten most beautiful women in the world. Hang about, I said—how can they be the ten most beautiful women in the world—my mother isn't here.

Mrs Hinson Why can't you ever give a straight answer to a straight question?

David More interesting if you make it up as you go along—I mean, look at Dad's shed.

Mrs Hinson You don't half talk rubbish at times.

David No, truth is—I've been up to my eyes.

Mrs Hinson Oh yes? (Her mouth tightens, prune-like)

David Anyway, nice to see you making use of the garden.

Mrs Hinson It's one of the few pleasures I've got left since your poor dear father passed away.

The mobile telephone rings

Mrs Hinson (immediately/imperiously) Phone!

David (on the phone) Hello? . . . Oh, hello Keith, what's the problem? . . .

Uh-huh . . . Uh-huh . . . (He cups the phone; to Mrs Hinson) One of my managers . . .

David absently goes into the shed as he listens and closes the door after him

Mrs Hinson gives a cynical little jerk of the head and takes up the "TV Times" to read as:

Michael enters and takes the collapsed rotary line behind the shed. There is some banging about and subdued cursing. Then he reappears, sucking his finger as: