

*Roma comes out of her kitchen, secretly holding a small piece of food. Seeing that the garden is empty, she is about to pop it into her mouth when:*

*Michael backs out from behind the shed*

*Roma quickly puts the food into the swing-lid bin*

Roma How's it coming?

Michael Well, it's going.

Roma Well done, Brown Owl. *(She takes the wine bottles out of the carton and puts them on the table)*

*Michael re-arranges them regimentally and during the following puts the carton under the table*

Michael Did you have a word?

Roma Umm, not yet—I mean, what do I say?

Michael You say—excuse me, is this yours?

Roma Yes, but suggesting they've thrown a walking frame over the fence. People don't do that sort of thing.

Michael People don't throw pork chops out of the bedroom window.

Roma Unfair Mickey and you know it.

Michael *(advancing on her)* Do they . . .! Do they . . .?

Roma You know perfectly well I had a reason!

Michael And so—might—they—

*He suddenly pounces at her in an attempt to tickle her. Roma takes up the walking frame to defend herself*

Michael Yes or no—yes or no?

Roma Unfair, unfair. *(She giggles)*

*There is the feeling that, as before they are going through the motions of having fun, rather than actually having it*

*David comes out of the french windows. He hears the sounds from next door and peeps through the spyhole*

*He watches Roma and Michael fighting over his mother's walking frame*

*David reacts, puzzled, takes another look and then goes back inside*

Michael Yes or no? Admit—admit . . .

Roma Yes, yes, yes all right, all right Mister Nasty you win.

Michael Prize. *(He purses his lips)*

Roma Oh, honestly.

*Roma puts down the frame and pertly kisses him on the lips. He takes her in his arms and dances with her*

Michael D'you know—I'm really looking forward to this evening. What's the time? Twenty five past. Another half an hour and this place will be bursting.

Roma *(beaming)* Yes.

Michael We're going to have a lot of fun, really let our hair down.

Roma (*with a bright idea*) I know, let's have a drink.

Michael Now?

Roma Yes.

Michael Before people arrive?

Roma Yes.

Michael You mean a drink drink?

Roma Yes.

Michael All right, we'll have a drink. (*He opens a bottle and pours two rather small measures of white wine*)

*Roma practices dancing, using the walking frame as a partner, during the following*

Roma The thing is of course, I should lead. Later on—when we dance—being the man.

Michael You will be wearing your hat, won't you?

Roma Oh yes. That's my favourite bit, the hat.

Michael Because the thing about Fred Astaire, surely, was the top hat.

Roma I don't think he wore it all the time though. Any more than Ginger Rogers wore rubber gloves and a pinny.

Michael What I mean is—as long as we're ready for inspection when they arrive.

Roma (*gaily*) If they arrive . . .

Michael Ro.

Roma Sorry.

Michael All right, a few people have cancelled. It's unfortunate but it's not going to spoil our evening. Is it?

Roma No of course it isn't.

*She takes a glass from him*

Thank you darling.

Michael Cheers.

Roma (*toasting the house*) Happy happy home. Mmm—lovely.

*They kiss briefly*

Michael (*immediately*) We haven't done the ashtrays.

Roma I was just about to.

Michael Do we really think that three out here is enough? You know what they're like, some of these people . . .

Roma We did say three. Three out here, three inside.

Michael As long as we keep an eye on them. Anything *al fresco* and people flick—willy-nilly.

*Michael goes behind the shed*

*Roma sneaks another small shot of wine*

*She goes into the kitchen as:*

*David and Jennifer come out of the french windows*

Jennifer Where?