

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?

Act II, Scene 1

David (*indicating over the fence*) There.

Jennifer Well?

David Well did you or didn't you?

Jennifer No.

David Jen . . .

Jennifer Oh all right, yes I did.

David Why?

Jennifer I don't know why. Yes I do—because she drives me crazy.

David Great.

Jennifer No it isn't, it's pathetic.

Mrs Hinson appears in the french windows

Mrs Hinson I say, David, I can't get my television on.

David What d'you mean, can't get it on?

Mrs Hinson I switch it on and nothing happens.

Jennifer (*beaming*) You can watch *our* television.

Mrs Hinson I can't go *now*.

David What d'you mean, you can't go now?

Mrs Hinson If I go now I shall miss my programme and I'm sure not even you would wish that on me, Jennifer.

David What programme?

Mrs Hinson My quiz programme. It's the All Area Golden Final. God alone knows I don't get many pleasures since your poor dear father . . .

David What time does it start?

Mrs Hinson Half past.

Jennifer moves away, knowing the outcome

David Okay, fine, watch your programme and then we're going straight home, okay? Straight home.

David looks at Jennifer who regards him stonily

Mrs Hinson Yes all right, Son. (*She gives him a brief peck. Instantly*) If you can get it started.

David goes in through the french windows

Jennifer sits in the deckchair and reaches for her handbag

Mrs Hinson That's right, dear—you have a nice read of your credit cards while I assist my David.

Mrs Hinson goes inside

Jennifer takes out a cigarette and lights it as:

Roma comes out of the kitchen with three ashtrays which she distributes as:

Michael backs out from behind the shed

Roma In fact I think we should make it a rule.

Michael Rule?

Roma Girls, stroke boys, lead—in the dancing.