

furniture. The room is carpeted and gay curtains hang at the windows. In addition to the table-lamps, the room is lit at night by an electric candle-lamp wall-bracket left of the French windows up centre, and small electric candle-lamps on the mantelpiece. One or two miniatures decorate the walls, and over the mantelpiece there is a fine picture depicting the idyllic scene of a Georgian house with columns, set in woodlands. The light switch and bell-push are in the wall below the fireplace. There is also a switch controlling the light in the alcove, right of the arch. Two wall vases, filled with flowers, decorate the side walls of the french windows up centre.)

(See the Ground Plan)

(When the curtain rises, it is a fine afternoon and all the French windows stand open. SIR HENRY ANGKATELL, K. C. B., a distinguished-looking, elderly man, is seated at the right end of the sofa, reading "The Times."

HENRIETTA ANGKATELL *is on the terrace outside the French windows up centre, standing at a tall sculptor's stand, modelling in clay. She is a handsome young woman of about thirty-three, dressed in good country tweeds and over them a painter's overall. She advances and retreats towards her creation once or twice then enters up centre and moves to the coffee table below the sofa. There is a smear of clay on her nose and she is frowning.)*

HENRIETTA. *(as she enters)* Damn and damn and damn!

SIR HENRY. *(looking up)* Not going well?

HENRIETTA. *(taking a cigarette from the box on the coffee table)*

What misery it is to be a sculptor.

SIR HENRY. It must be. I always thought you had to have models for this sort of thing

HENRIETTA. It's an abstract piece. I'm modelling, darling.

SIR HENRY. What - *(he points with distaste to the piece of modern sculpture on the pedestal right)* -like that?

HENRIETTA. *(crossing to the mantelpiece)* Anything interesting in *The Times*? *(She lights her cigarette with the table lighter on the mantelpiece.)*

SIR HENRY. Lots of people dead. *(He looks at HENRIETTA.)*
You've got clay on your nose.

HENRIETTA. What?

SIR HENRY. *Clay - on your nose.*

HENRIETTA. *(looking in the mirror on the mantelpiece; vaguely)*
Oh, so I have. *(She rubs her nose, then her forehead, turns and moves left centre)*

SIR HENRY. Now it's all over your face.

HENRIETTA. *(moving up centre; exasperated)* Does it matter, darling?

SIR HENRY. Evidently not.

(HENRIETTA goes on to the terrace up centre and resumes work. LADY ANGKATELL enters right. She is a very charming and aristocratic looking woman aged about sixty, completely vague, but with a lot of personality. She is apparently in the middle of a conversation.)

LADY ANGKATELL. *(crossing above the sofa to the fireplace)* Oh dear, oh dear! If it isn't one thing it's another. Did I leave a mole-trap in here? *(She picks up the mole-trap from the mantelpiece and eases centre)* Ah yes - there it is. The worst of moles is - you never know where they are going to pop up next. People are quite right when they say that nature in the mild is seldom raw. *(She crosses below the sofa to right.)* Don't you think I'm right, Henry?

SIR HENRY. I couldn't say, my dear, unless I know what you're talking about.

LADY ANGKATELL. I'm going to pursue them quite ruthlessly - I really am.
(Her voice dies away as she exits right.)

HENRIETTA. *(looking in through the French window up centre)*
What did Lucy say?

SIR HENRY. Nothing much. Just being Lucyish. I say, it's half past six.

HENRIETTA. I'll have to stop and clean myself up. They're all coming by car, I suppose? *(She drapes a damp cloth over her work.)*

SIR HENRY. All except Midge. She's coming by Green Line bus. Ought to be here by now.

HENRIETTA. Darling Midge. She is nice. Heaps nicer than any of us, don't you think? *(She pushes the stand out of sight right of the terrace.)*

SIR HENRY. I must have notice of that question.

HENRIETTA. *(moving centre; laughing)* Well, less eccentric, anyway. There's something very sane about Midge. *(She rubs her hands on her overall.)*

SIR HENRY. *(indignantly)* I'm perfectly sane, thank you.

HENRIETTA. *(removing her overall and looking at SIR HENRY)* Ye-es - perhaps you are. *(She puts her overall over the back of the armchair left centre.)*

SIR HENRY. *(smiling)* As sane as anyone can be that has to live with Lucy, bless her heart. *(He laughs.)*

(HENRIETTA laughs, crosses to the mantelpiece and puts her cigarette ash in the ashtray.)

(He puts his newspaper on the coffee table. Worried.) You know, Henrietta, I'm getting worried about Lucy.

HENRIETTA. Worried? "Why?"

SIR HENRY. Lucy doesn't realize there are certain things she can't do.

HENRIETTA. *(looking in the mirror)* I don't think I quite know what you mean. *(She pats her hair.)*

SIR HENRY. She's always got away with things. I don't suppose any other woman in the world could have flouted the traditions of Government House as she did. *(He takes his pipe from his pocket.)* Most governors' wives have to toe the line of convention. But not Lucy! Oh dear me, no! She played merry hell with precedence

at dinner parties - and that, my dear Henrietta, is the blackest of crimes.

(HENRIETTA turns.)

(He pats his pockets, feeling for his tobacco pouch.) She put deadly enemies next to each other. She ran riot over the colour question. And instead of setting everyone at loggerheads, I'm damned if she didn't get away with it.

(HENRIETTA picks up the tobacco jar from the mantelpiece, crosses and hands it to SIR HENRY.)

Oh, thank you. It's that trick of hers - always smiling at people and looking so sweet and helpless. Servants are the same - she gives them any amount of trouble and they simply adore her.

HENRIETTA. I know what you mean. *(She sits on the sofa at the left end.)* Things you wouldn't stand from anyone else, you feel they are quite all right if Lucy does them. What is it? Charm? Hypnotism?

SIR HENRY. *(filling his pipe)* I don't know. She's always been the same from a girl. But you know, Henrietta, it's growing on her. She doesn't seem to realize there *are* limits. I really believe Lucy would feel she could get away with *murder*.

HENRIETTA. *(rising and picking up the piece of clay from the carpet)* Darling Henry, you and Lucy are angels letting me make my messes here - treading clay into your carpet. *(She crosses and puts the piece of clay in the waste-paper basket down right.)* When I had that fire at my studio, I thought it was the end of everything - it was sweet of you to let me move in on you.