

David, Myra, Judith

HAY FEVER

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(She slaps his face hard, and he seizes her in his arms and kisses her.)

DAVID. *(between kisses)* You're – perfectly – sweet.

MYRA. *(giving in)* David!

DAVID. You must say it's an entrancing amusement.

(He kisses her again.)

(JUDITH appears at the top of the stairs and sees them. They break away, he still keeping hold of her hand.)

JUDITH. *(coming down center)* Forgive me for interrupting.

DAVID. Are there any chocolates in the house?

JUDITH. No, David.

DAVID. I should like a chocolate more than anything in the world, at the moment.

JUDITH. This is a very unpleasant situation, David.

DAVID. *(agreeably)* Horrible!

JUDITH. We'd better talk it all over.

MYRA. *(making a movement)* I shall do nothing of the sort!

JUDITH. Please – please don't be difficult.

DAVID. I apologize, Judith.

JUDITH. Don't apologize – I quite understand.

MYRA. Please let go of my hand, David; I should like to go to bed.

(She pulls her hand away.)

JUDITH. I should stay if I were you – it would be more dignified.

DAVID. *(moves a step towards JUDITH)* There isn't any real necessity for a scene.

JUDITH. I don't want a scene, I just want to straighten things out.

DAVID. Very well – go ahead.

JUDITH. June has always been an unlucky month for me.

MYRA. Look here, Judith – I'd like to explain one thing –

JUDITH. (*austere*) I don't wish to hear any explanation or excuses – they're so cheapening. This was bound to happen sooner or later – it always does, to everybody. The only thing is to keep calm.

DAVID. I am – perfectly.

JUDITH. (*sharply*) There is such a thing as being too calm.

DAVID. Sorry, dear.

JUDITH. Life has dealt me another blow, but I don't mind.

DAVID. What did you say?

JUDITH. (*crossly*) I said life had dealt me another blow, but I didn't mind

DAVID. Rubbish!

JUDITH. (*gently*) You're probably irritable, dear, because you're in the wrong. It's quite usual.

DAVID. Now, Judith –

JUDITH. Ssshhh! Let me speak – it is my right.

MYRA. I don't see why.

JUDITH. (*surprised*) I am the injured party, am I not!

MYRA. Injured?

JUDITH. (*firmly*) Yes. extremely injured.

DAVID. (*contemptuously*) Injured!

JUDITH. Your attitude, David, is nothing short of deplorable.

DAVID. It's all nonsense – sheer, unbridled nonsense!

JUDITH. No, David, you can't evade the real issues as calmly as that. I've known for a long time – I've realized subconsciously for years that you've stopped caring for me in "that way."

DAVID. (*irritably*) What do you mean – "that way?"

JUDITH. (*with a wave of the hand*) Just that way... It's rather tragic, but quite inevitable. I'm growing old now – men don't grow old like women, as you'll find to your cost, Myra, in a year or two. David has retained his youth astonishingly, perhaps because he has had fewer responsibilities and cares than I –

MYRA. This is all ridiculous hysteria.

DAVID. (*goes to MYRA*) No, Myra – Judith is right. What are we to do?

MYRA. (*furious*) Do? Nothing!

JUDITH. (*ignoring her*) Do you love her truly, David?

DAVID. (*looks MYRA up and down as if to make sure*) Madly!

MYRA. (*astounded*) David!

DAVID. (*intensely*) You thought just now that I was joking. Couldn't you see that all my flippancy was only a mask, hiding my real emotions – crushing them down desperately – ?

MYRA. (*scared*) But, David, I –

JUDITH. I knew it! The time has come for the dividing of the ways.

MYRA. What on earth do you mean?

JUDITH. I mean that I am not the sort of woman to hold a man against his will.

MYRA. You're both making a mountain out of a molehill. David doesn't love me madly, and I don't love him. It's –

JUDITH. Ssshhh! – you *do* love him. I can see it in your eye – in your every gesture. David, I give you to her – freely and without rancour. We must all be good friends, always.

DAVID. Judith, do you mean this?

JUDITH. (*with a melting look*) You know I do.

DAVID. How can we ever repay you?

JUDITH. Just by being happy. (*sits on sofa*) I may leave this house later on – I have a feeling that its associations may become painful, specially in the autumn –

MYRA. Look here, Judith –

JUDITH. (*shouting her down*) October is such a mournful month in England. I think I shall probably go abroad – perhaps a *pension* somewhere in Italy, with cypresses in the garden. I've always loved cypresses, they are such sad, weary trees.