

Jackie & Richard

HAY FEVER

37

RICHARD. A strange young man! (*moving up to window, looking after them*)

JACKIE. Very rude, I think.

RICHARD. (*turning back into the room*) Have you ever met him before?

JACKIE. No; I don't know any of them except Mr. Bliss – he's a wonderful person.

RICHARD. (*puts his coat and hat on chair up left center*) I wonder if he knows you're here.

JACKIE. Perhaps that funny woman who opened the door will tell him.

RICHARD. Yes, allow me.

(*RICHARD takes JACKIE's coat and puts it on chair with his.*)

It was fortunate that we met at the station.

JACKIE. I'm frightfully glad. I should have been terrified arriving all by myself.

RICHARD. (*Looks out of window again. Slight pause.*) I do hope the weather will keep good over Sunday – the country round here is delightful.

JACKIE. Yes.

(*another pause*)

RICHARD. There's nowhere like England in the spring and summer.

JACKIE. No, there isn't, is there!

(*another pause*)

RICHARD. There's a sort of *quality* you find in no other countries.

(*Another pause, in which JACKIE moves over to sofa and sits.*)

JACKIE. Have you travelled a lot?

RICHARD. (*modestly*) A good deal.

JACKIE. How lovely!

(*RICHARD comes down and sits on form below piano.*)

(There is a pause.)

RICHARD. Spain is very beautiful.

JACKIE. Yes, I've always heard Spain was awfully nice.

(pause)

RICHARD. Except for the bull-fights. No one who ever really loved horses could enjoy a bullfight.

JACKIE. Nor anyone who loved bulls either.

RICHARD. Exactly.

(pause)

JACKIE. Italy's awfully nice, isn't it?

RICHARD. Oh, yes, charming.

JACKIE. I've always wanted to go to Italy.

(pause)

RICHARD. Rome is a beautiful city.

JACKIE. Yes, I've always heard Rome was lovely.

RICHARD. And Naples and Capri – Capri's enchanting.

JACKIE. It must be.

(pause)

RICHARD. Have you ever been abroad at all?

JACKIE. Oh, yes; I went to Dieppe once – we had a house there for the summer.

RICHARD. *(kindly)* Dear little place, Dieppe.

JACKIE. Yes, it was lovely.

(JUDITH comes downstairs, followed by SANDY, with his arms full of cushions. Sits down on form and puts on her goloshes beside RICHARD, who rises. Then exits into garden without looking at RICHARD or JACKIE. SANDY picks up cushions and her gloves from table and goes out after her.)

JACKIE. Well!

(pause, and sitting again)

RICHARD. *Russia* used to be a wonderful country before the war.

JACKIE. It must have been... Was that her?

RICHARD. Who?

JACKIE. Judith Bliss.

RICHARD. Yes, I expect it was.

JACKIE. (*nearly crying*) I wish I'd never come.

RICHARD. You mustn't worry. They're a very Bohemian family, I believe.

JACKIE. I wonder if Mr. Bliss knows I'm here.

RICHARD. I wonder.

JACKIE. Couldn't we ring a bell, or anything?

RICHARD. Yes, perhaps we'd better.

(*Rises and crosses to door down left. He finds bell and presses it.*)

JACKIE. I don't suppose it rings.

RICHARD. (*comes to left corner of sofa*) You mustn't be depressed.

JACKIE. I feel horrid.

RICHARD. It's always a little embarrassing coming to a strange house for the first time. You'll like Sorel – she's charming.

JACKIE. (*desperately*) I wonder where she is.

RICHARD. (*consolingly*) I expect tea will be here soon.

JACKIE. Do you think they *have* tea?

RICHARD. (*alarmed*) Oh, yes – they must.

JACKIE. Oh, well, we'd better go on waiting, then.

RICHARD. (*takes cigarette case out of his pocket*) Do you mind if I smoke?

JACKIE. Not a bit.

RICHARD. Will you?

JACKIE. No, thank you.

RICHARD. (*sitting down on left end of sofa*) I got this case in Japan. It's pretty, isn't it?

JACKIE. *(takes case, turns it over and hands it back)* Awfully pretty.

(They lapse into hopeless silence.)

(Enter SOREL downstairs – comes to left center.)

SOREL. Oh, Richard, I'm awfully sorry! I didn't know you were here.

(They shake hands.)

RICHARD. We've been here a good while.

SOREL. How awful! Please forgive me. I was upstairs.

(JACKIE bolts up under their hands and stands in front of RICHARD.)

RICHARD. This is Miss Coryton.

SOREL. Oh!

JACKIE. How do you do?

SOREL. Have you come to see father?

(RICHARD lights his cigarette.)

JACKIE. Yes.

SOREL. He's in his study. *(moves away to center)* You'd better go up.

(JACKIE looks hopelessly at RICHARD, then goes to SOREL and clutches her arm.)

JACKIE. I don't know the way.

SOREL. *(irritably)* Oh, well – I'll take you. Come on! Wait a minute, Richard. *(She takes her to the bottom of the stairs.)* It's along that passage and the third door on the right.

JACKIE. Oh, thank you. *(She goes upstairs despondently.)*

SOREL. *(Coming down again – to RICHARD)* The poor girl looks half-witted.

RICHARD. She's shy, I think.

SOREL. I hope father will find her a comfort. *(sits on right end of sofa)*

RICHARD. Tell me one thing, Sorel, did your father and mother know I was coming? *(sits beside her)*