

Judith + Sandy

HAY FEVER

27

(SANDY, crossing to JUDITH and shaking hands:)

SANDY. I say, it's perfectly ripping of you to let me come down.

JUDITH. Are you alone?

SANDY. (*surprised*) Yes.

JUDITH. I mean, didn't you meet anyone at the station?

SANDY. I motored down; my car's outside. Would you like me to meet anybody?

JUDITH. Oh, no, I must introduce you. This is my daughter Sorel, and my son Simon.

(SANDY moves to SOREL and offers his hand, which she ignores:)

SANDY. How do you do?

SOREL. (*coldly*) I'm extremely well, thank you, and I hope you are.

(*brushes past him and exits upstairs*)

SIMON. So do I. (*does the same*)

(SANDY looks shattered.)

(JUDITH crosses in front of SANDY and glares after SIMON and SOREL.)

JUDITH. You must forgive me for having rather peculiar children. Have you got a bag or anything?

SANDY. Yes; it's in the car.

JUDITH. We'd better leave it there for the moment, as Clara has to get the tea. We'll find you a room afterwards.

SANDY. I've been looking forward to this most awfully.

JUDITH. It is nice, isn't it? (*moves to window*) You can see as far as Marlow on a clear day, so they tell me.

SANDY. (*goes up to her*) I meant I've been looking forward to seeing you.

JUDITH. How perfectly sweet of you! (*crosses to sofa and sits left corner*) Would you like a drink?

SANDY. No, thanks. I'm in training.

JUDITH. (*motioning him to sit beside her*) How lovely! What for?

SANDY. I'm boxing again in a couple of weeks.

JUDITH. I must come to your first night.

SANDY. (*sits on sofa*) You look simply splendid.

JUDITH. I'm so glad. You know, you mustn't mind if Simon and Sorel insult you a little – they've been very bad-tempered lately.

SANDY. It's awfully funny you having a grown-up son and daughter at all. I can hardly believe it.

JUDITH. (*quickly*) I was married very young.

SANDY. I don't wonder. You know, it's frightfully queer the way I've been planning to know you for ages, and I never did until last week.

JUDITH. I liked you from the first, really, because you're such a nice shape.

SANDY. (*slightly embarrassed*) Oh, I see...

JUDITH. Small hips and lovely broad shoulders – I wish Simon had smaller hips. (*slight pause*) Do you think you could teach him to box?

SANDY. Rather – if he likes!

JUDITH. That's just the trouble – I'm afraid he won't like. He's so dreadfully un – that sort of thing. You must use your influence subtly. I'm sure David would be pleased.

SANDY. Who's David?

JUDITH. My husband.

SANDY. (*surprised*) Oh!

JUDITH. Why do you say "Oh" like that? Didn't you know I had a husband?

SANDY. I thought he was dead.

JUDITH. No, he's not dead; he's upstairs. (*pointing to stairs*)

SANDY. You're quite different from what you were the other day.

JUDITH. It's this garden hat. I'll take it off. (*She does so and puts it on table behind sofa.*) There! I've been pruning the calceolarias.

SANDY. (*puzzled*) Oh? –

JUDITH. I love my garden, you know – it's so peaceful and quaint. I spend long days dreaming away in it – you know how one dreams.

SANDY. Oh, yes.

JUDITH. (*warming up*) I always longed to leave the brittle glamour of cities and theatres and find rest in some old world nook. That's why we came to Cookham.

SANDY. Awfully nice place, Cookham.

JUDITH. (*slight pause*) Have you ever seen me on the stage?

SANDY. Rather!

JUDITH. Oh, what in?

SANDY. That thing when you pretended to cheat at cards to save your husband's good name.

JUDITH. Oh, "The Bold Deceiver." That play was never quite right.

SANDY. You were absolutely wonderful. That was when I first fell in love with you.

JUDITH. (*delighted*) Was it, really?

SANDY. Yes; you were so frightfully pathetic and brave.

JUDITH. (*basking*) Was I?

SANDY. Rather!

(*There is a pause.*)

JUDITH. Well, go on...

SANDY. (*flustered*) I feel such a fool, telling you what I think, as though it mattered.

JUDITH. Of course it matters – to me, anyhow.

SANDY. Does it – honestly?

JUDITH. Certainly.

SANDY. It seems too good to be true – sitting here and talking as though we were old friends.

JUDITH. We *are* old friends – we probably met in another life. Reincarnation, you know – fascinating!

SANDY. You do say ripping things.

JUDITH. Do I? Give me a cigarette.

(He takes cigarette from box on table and gives it to her.)

And let's put our feet up.

(She puts her feet up behind SANDY, and he lights her cigarette.)

SANDY. All right.

(They settle themselves comfortably at opposite ends of the sofa, smoking.)

JUDITH. Can you punt?

SANDY. Yes – a bit.

JUDITH. You must teach Simon – he always gets the pole stuck.

SANDY. I'd rather teach you.

JUDITH. You're so gallant and chivalrous – much more like an American than an Englishman.

SANDY. I should like to go on saying nice things to you forever.

JUDITH. *(giving him her hand)* Sandy!

(There comes a loud ring at the bell.)

There now!

(Takes her feet off sofa.)

SANDY. Is anyone else coming to stay!

JUDITH. Anyone else! You don't know – you just don't know.

(CLARA enters and crosses over to door right, opens it and lets it fall back in MYRA's face, then exits, left.)

SANDY. You said it would be quite quiet, with nobody at all.

JUDITH. I was wrong. It's going to be very noisy, with herds of angry people stamping about. Give me my hat.

(He gives her her hat, which she puts on.)