

Simon + Myra

32

HAY FEVER

MYRA. It's heavenly here — after London! The heat was terrible when I left. You look awfully well, Judith. Rasticating obviously agrees with you.

JUDITH. I'm glad you think so. Personally I feel that a nervous breakdown is imminent.

MYRA. My dear, how ghastly! What's the matter?

JUDITH. Nothing's the matter yet, Myra, but I have presentiments.

(Crosses in front of MYRA and takes SANDY's hand. She begins to go upstairs, followed by SANDY. Then she turns.)

Come upstairs, Sandy, and I'll show you your room. I'll send Simon down to you. He's shaving, I think, but you won't mind that will you?

(She goes off. MYRA makes a slight grimace after her, then she help herself to a cigarette and wanders to piano.)

(SIMON comes downstairs very fast, putting on his coat. He has apparently finished his toilet.)

SIMON. *(runs over to MYRA)* Myra, this is marvelous! *(He tries to kiss her.)*

MYRA. *(pushing him away)* No, Simon, dear; it's too hot.

SIMON. You look beautifully cool.

MYRA. I'm more than cool, really, but it's not climatic coolness I've been mentally chilled to the marrow by Judith's attitude.

SIMON. Why, what did she say!

MYRA. Nothing very much. She was bouncing about on the sofa with a hearty young thing in flannels, and seemed to resent my appearance rather.

SIMON. You mustn't take any notice of mother.

MYRA. I'll try not to, but it's difficult.

SIMON. She adores you, really.

MYRA. I'm sure she does.

SIMON. She's annoyed today because father and Sorel have been asking people down without telling her.

MYRA. Poor dear! I quite see why.

SIMON. You look enchanting!

MYRA. Thank you, Simon.

SIMON. Are you pleased to see me!

MYRA. Of course. That's why I came.

SIMON. (*shouts*) Darling!

MYRA. Sssh! Don't shout.

SIMON. (*moving away to center*) I feel most colossally temperaments – I should like to kiss you and kiss you and kiss you and break everything in the house and then jump into the river.

MYRA. Dear Simon!

SIMON. (*He takes her hand and studies her.*) You're everything I want you to be – absolutely everything! Marvellous clothes, marvellous looks, marvellous brain – oh, God, it's terrible! (*drop her hand and moves left*)

MYRA. I dined with Charlie Templeton last night.

SIMON. Well, you're a devil! You only did it to annoy me. He's far too plump, and he can't do anything but dither about the Embassy in badly cut trousers. You loathe him really; you know you do – you're too intelligent not to. You couldn't like him and me at the same time – it's impossible!

MYRA. Don't be so conceited.

SIMON. (*running to her and clasping her in his arms*) Darling – I adore you!

MYRA. That's right.

SIMON. (*releasing her*) But you're callous – that's what it is, callous! You don't care a damn. You don't love me a bit, do you?

MYRA. Love's a very big word, Simon.

SIMON. It isn't – it's tiny. What are we to do?

MYRA. What do you mean?

SIMON. We can't go on like this.

MYRA. I'm not going on like anything. (*crosses over and sits in chair down left*)

SIMON. Yes, you are; you're going on like Medusa, and there are awful snakes popping their heads out at me from under your hat – I shall be turned to stone in a minute, and then you'll be sorry.

MYRA. (*laughing*) You're very sweet, and I'm *very* fond of you.

SIMON. (*crosses over to her and takes her hand*) Tell me what you've been doing – everything.

MYRA. Nothing.

SIMON. What did you do after you'd dined with Charlie Templeton?

MYRA. Supped with Charlie Templeton.

SIMON. Well! (*throws her hand down and goes to right corner of sofa and sits on arm*) I don't mind a bit. I hope you ate a lot and enjoyed yourself – there!

MYRA. Generous boy! Come and kiss me.

SIMON. You're only playing up to me now; you don't really want to a bit.

MYRA. I'm aching for it.

SIMON. (*runs to her and kisses her violently*) I love you!

MYRA. This week-end's going to be strenuous.

SIMON. (*moves away to center*) Hell upon earth – fifteen million people in the house. We'll get up at seven and rush away down the river.

MYRA. No, we won't.

SIMON. Well, don't let either of us agree to anything we say – we'll both be difficult. (*flings himself on sofa with his feet up on left end*) I love being difficult.

MYRA. You certainly do.

SIMON. But I'm in the most lovely mood now. Just seeing you makes me feel grand –

MYRA. Is your father here?

SIMON. Yes; he's working on a new novel.

MYRA. He writes brilliantly.

SIMON. Doesn't he? He drinks too much tea, though.

MYRA. It can't do him much harm, surely?

SIMON. It tans the stomach.

MYRA. Who is Sandy Tyrell?

SIMON. Never heard of him.

MYRA. He's here, with Judith.

SIMON. Oh, *that* poor thing with hot hands! We'll ignore him.

MYRA. I thought he looked rather nice.

SIMON. You must be mad! He looked disgusting.

MYRA. *(laughing)* Idiot!

SIMON. Smooth my hair with your soft white hands.

MYRA. *(rises and goes to right end of sofa – ruffling it)* It's got glue on it.

SIMON. *(catching her hand and kissing it)* You smell heavenly! What is it?

MYRA. Borgia of Rosine.

SIMON. How appropriate!

~~*(He tries to pull her down and kiss her.)*~~

~~MYRA. *(breaking away)* You're too demonstrative today, Simon.~~

~~*(The front door bell rings.)*~~

~~SIMON. Damn, damn! It's those drearies. *(takes his feet off sofa)*~~

~~*(CLARA enters and crosses to door right, opens it and lets it fall back in RICHARD's face, and starts to return to door left, but stops as he speaks RICHARD GREATHAM and JACKIE CORYTON come in. There is, by this time, a good deal of luggage on the step. RICHARD is iron-grey and tall; JACKIE is small and shingled, with an ingenuous manner which will lose its charm as she grows older.)*~~

~~RICHARD. Is this Mrs. Bliss' house!~~