

MILDRED

I think we should make plans for the weekend. Any suggestions?

CHARLES

Thought I might get a spot of shopping in. Damned good sport around here. Remember. Don't suppose you shoot down Mister er . . . boy?

PIERRE

Prefer to create rather than destroy. I would now one end of . . . from the other.

CHARLES

Ah . . . never mind. Old chap . . . you are French . . . quite understandable.

(BUNTING *shouts his throat loudly. MILDRED is surprised and him still at the door.*)

MILDRED

Yes, Bunting. Was there something else?

BUNTING

I was considering you might want me to take any . . . in the meantime.

MILDRED

What about?

BUNTING

The fire, Ma'am.

MILDRED

(*Advancing at the fire*) Yes, all right for the moment, Bunting. You could bring more logs in later.

BUNTING

I meant the fire in the kitchen, Ma'am.

MILDRED

We haven't got a fire in the kitchen.

BUNTING

We have now, Ma'am.

MILDRED

What!

It's just a small one, Ma'am . . . at present . . . on the stove. Although the dinner is starting to look somewhat over cooked.

DOROTHY

(*shrieking*) The food!

MILDRED

Don't just stand there. Help!

BUNTING

As you can see, I'm *knocking away at the dining room.*

. . . I just know. I'm going to go wrong today

CHARLES

Don't worry, old girl. Sure everything will turn out ship shape. Extraordinary chap you've got there. Was going to borrow him for the shoot but got second thoughts now . . . damned liability.

ELIZABETH

I wonder if I might be allowed to accompany you, Colonel? I've always wanted to try my hand, but Daddy says it's far too dangerous for a girl.

CHARLES

Quite welcome, my dear. No danger if you know what you're up to. Make an early start, eh . . . reveille at O-six hundred.

ELIZABETH

You can't possibly mean six o'clock in the morning!

CHARLES

Course I do . . . early bird and all that sort of business. You'll need stout shoes and old clothes.

ELIZABETH

Oh, how ghastly. I don't have anything like that.

MILDRED

I'm sure Dorothy will be able to lend you something.

ELIZABETH

(*smiling*) Yes, I'm sure she will. I hope no one's going to see me.

CHARLES

If they do we'll just have to shoot 'em. Dead men don't tell tales. Fancy a stroll now, before dinner . . . see the ground?

*Survey*

PIERRE

If you're sure, I'll go. What about the others?

MILDRED

Are you sure?

PIERRE

Do not concern yourself for me. I will be very 'appy 'ere.

CHARLES

(*standing*) Come on, Mildred, can't force the chap. (*Reluctantly*) Suppose we'd better see if Margaret wants to come with us.

MILDRED

Very well. We shall be long, Pierre. Help yourself to a drink.

(*ELIZABETH, MILDRED, and CHARLES exit to the hall. PIERRE waits until they have exited, moves to the sideboard, and pours himself a drink. He then stands looking at the paintings with a self-satisfied grin on his face. DOROTHY enters from the dining room.*)

DOROTHY

There is everyone?

PIERRE

They are taking a walk. 'Ave you enjoyed the dinner?

DOROTHY

Yes. It's not quite the same as it was, but nobody will notice the difference. Just a leaf out of your book.

PIERRE

(*puzzled*) I 'ave no book.

DOROTHY

No, but you were admiring your paintings.

PIERRE

I was admiring them, yes, but they are not mine. Such finesse. I wish I 'ad a talent to paint so well.

DOROTHY

I think you're far too modest. The work of a famous French painter you said, when you sold them to my aunt.

PIERRE

But of course. One day they will be worth many times the price that your aunt paid.

DOROTHY

(*coolly*) I'm sure the originals will. Such a pity that these are forgeries.

PIERRE

(*shocked*) What are you saying! You were with your aunt when she purchased them . . . we 'ad them valued by another gallery.

DOROTHY

But then you replaced the originals with your forgeries. You knew my aunt was ignorant about art . . . she'd never know the difference.

PIERRE

Dorothy, never 'ave I 'eard such a cock and cow story! Elizabeth can vouch for me . . . many times 'ave I dealt with 'er father.

DOROTHY

I don't care tuppence for how you've swindled Elizabeth or her father. Do you think I'm a fool, Pierre? I may not know about art but I do have a very good eye for detail.

PIERRE

You are making a very big mistake, Dorothy. I swear to you that these are originals.

DOROTHY

(*moving to the phone*) In that case, you won't mind if I call the police.

(DOROTHY picks up the phone.)

PIERRE

But you are wasting your time! You will make yourself look very foolish, Dorothy. Your aunt will never forgive you.

DOROTHY

I'll just have to risk that.