

MILDRED
(*controlling her anger*) But there's no need to bring it in here. Put a log on the fire and leave the rest by the side.

BUNTING
I only brought the one, Ma'am. It was rather heavy.

MILDRED
(*sighing*) Really, Bunting, I don't know why I bother!

BUNTING
I didn't realise you did, Ma'am.

(MILDRED *scowls* at BUNTING *who remains impassive.*)

MILDRED
Just put the log on the fire, Bunting.

BUNTING
Very good, Ma'am.

(BUNTING *throws the log casually onto the fire without moving*. MILDRED *glares* at him.)

Will there be anything else, Ma'am?

MILDRED
I expect that the guests will be arriving shortly. I suggest that you station yourself by the front door so they don't have to wait for ten minutes.

BUNTING
By the front door, Ma'am. As you like.

(BUNTING *turns and moves slowly to the hall door.*)

MILDRED
And we'll be wanting sherry when they've all arrived.

BUNTING
Sherry, Ma'am. As you like. (*Turning at the door.*) Will that be the best sherry, Ma'am, or the cooking?

MILDRED
(*standing*) Really, Bunting, the best of course!

BUNTING
I only ask, Ma'am, because there is very little of the best left. Half a bottle.

MILDRED
What! But we only recently re-stocked!

BUNTING
You must have drunk it, Ma'am.

MILDRED
What! What did you say, Bunting?

BUNTING
I said you must have drunk it, Ma'am.

MILDRED
(*angry*) Now look here, Bunting . . . I think it's time you were reminded of your position in this house!

BUNTING
I know my position, Ma'am. I'm in the lounge at the present time.

MILDRED
Bunting, will you please stop answering back!

BUNTING
I'll try to curb my naturally exuberant nature, Ma'am. Will that be all?

MILDRED
Yes it will. Re-order more sherry next week.

BUNTING
Very good, Ma'am . . . as you like.

(BUNTING *exits slowly to the hall, turning left as he exits*. *He leaves the door open.*)

MILDRED
Door, Bunting.

(MILDRED *receives no response, sighs heavily and sits* as DOROTHY *enters from the dining room.*)

I think you're right about Bunting. He's becoming insufferable.

DOROTHY
I found him trying to chop logs in the kitchen. I ask you . . . with all that food around!

(MILDRED *looks* at DOROTHY *anxiously.*)