

WHEELING PARK DISTRICT

THEATER TROUPE

MAY 1979 - OCTOBER 1980

VALERIE CLARKE

MARTY BERMAN

BARB LAHAY

LEONA KESSEL

JERRY FOOTE

JEANNE PIERINI

BOB TORGERSON

MARYLO POWERS

JOHN CASCIOTTI

KAREN TALSKY

JACK JACKSON

MARIAN FOOTE

BENCH → STAGE LEFT PLATFORM

PLUG IN MICROPHONE - STAGE LEFT  
(NUN) - RULER

INTRO. - JEANNIE

GLASSES

#1 - DANCER -

JEAN

CANE - STAGE RIGHT

HAT - STAGE LEFT

BUS STOP SIGN IN

#2

HOOKED ON NICE

JACK It hasn't always been easy. Once I was rotten. I looked rotten. I thought rotten.. I could tell by the way people stared away from me that they were thinking "there goes a rotten person". So I made a decision to convert. I studied to be nice. At first it was pure affectation. Outside I did favors, lent money, smiled a lot. But inside I stayed rotten. But give niceness an inch and it takes a mile. Niceness ran amok inside of me. I became a Saint! When I came into a room people's eyes teared. I got dependent on it. I got nicer and nicer! Even when it wasn't required, I was nice. Guys wouldn't talk sex in front of me. Girls began to think of me as a friend. I gave my analyst guilt feelings. I tried to cut down but I had lost the power of choice. I was hooked on nice! Not that I'm complaining, mind you.

#3

TAN/BLK  
XMAS GIFT - HAT - STAGE LEFT

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

VAL I want to return this Christmas present my husband gave me. It's the wrong color...It's the wrong size. It's the wrong present. And you know something else...He's the wrong husband!

#4

PINK HAT

TALK TOO MUCH

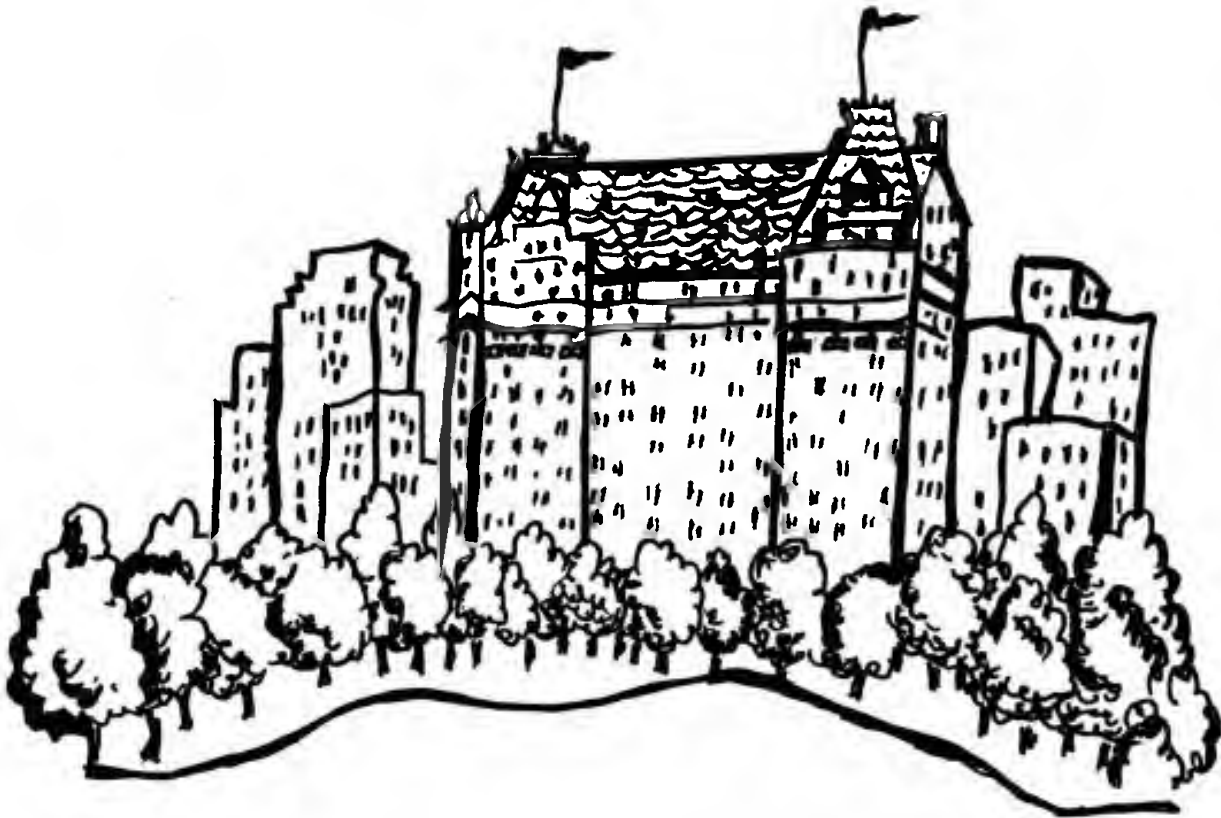
LEONA I talk too much. I'm quite bright, so it's interesting, but nevertheless, I talk too much. You see, already I'm saying more than I should. Men hate it for a woman to blurt out, "I'm bright." They think she's really saying, "I'm brighter than you are". As a matter of fact, that is what I'm saying. I'm brighter than even the brightest men I know. That's why it's a mistake to talk too much. Men fall behind and feel challenged and grow hostile. So when I'm very much attracted to a man I make it a point to talk more slowly than I would to one of my woman friends. And because I guide him along gently from insight to insight he ends up being terribly impressed with his own brilliance. And with mine for being able to keep up with him. And he tells me I'm the first woman he's ever met who's as interesting as one of his boy friends. That's love.

The Rest of The

PLAY IS AVAILABLE

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WHEELING PARK DISTRICT THEATER TROUPE  
PRESENTS



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TICKET DESIGN.....Gloria LaHay

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Barbara LaHay  
Gloria LaHay

PROGRAM.....Gloria LaHay  
Maryann Chapman  
Barbara LaHay

SET CONSTRUCTION....Ken Pierini  
Jean Pierini  
Valerie Clark  
John Casciotti  
Tom Laurie  
Dennis Roland  
Ron Dettman

HOUSE CREW.....Maryann Chapman  
Barbara LaHay  
Jean Pierini  
Jeanne Loh

COSTUMES.....Ken Pierini  
Jean Pierini  
Pat Monahan

FLYER DESIGN.....Maryann Chapman

MAKE-UP.....Fred Robinson  
Valerie Clark

HAIR STYLIST....Carolyn Durr

AD SALES.....Barbara LaHay

PROPS.....Ken Pierini  
Jean Pierini

TICKET SALES....Maryann Chapman  
Barbara LaHay  
Gloria LaHay

LIGHTING.....Ron Dettman

PLAY SELECTION..George Pshogios  
Jean Pierini  
Valerie Clark

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Gloria LaHay  
Ken Pierini  
George Pshogios

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INTERMISSION-----15 minutes

ACT II

Visitor From Hollywood

Place: Suite 719 at the Plaza Hotel  
Time: About three in the afternoon  
on a warm, spring day

INTERMISSION-----15 minutes

ACT III

Visitor From Forest Hills

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Time: Three o'clock on a warm  
Saturday afternoon in spring

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THE CAST OF "PLAZA SUITE"  
In Order Of Appearance

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BELLHOP

KEN PIERINI--Ken is the oil that keeps the theater machine running smoothly. A mechanic by day, he's by nature good with machines. Unfortunately, Ken is so important behind the scenes, that time allows him to pursue only small parts. We look forward to the day when this multi-talented man will be allowed to pursue larger roles.

KAREN NASH

JUDI POWERS--This bouncy, bubbly person has displayed a tremendous amount of energy, while creating this character. Judi's talents are many, from being a choreographer and gymnast; to chorus and dancing in different productions. Aside from being a wife and a mother of two, acting is her second love. We hope to be seeing more of her in the future.

SAM NASH

LARRY FISCHER--Larry comes to the Wheeling Theater Troupe from the Deerfield Stagers. He has performed there frequently, playing parts in George Washington Slept Here, Don't Drink The Water, Hot L Baltimore and Auntie Mame. Although acting is Larry's favorite free time activity, participation in team sports runs a close second. He also sings and plays guitar.

WAITER AND  
ROY HUBLEY

JOHN CASCIOTTI--One of the original members of The Wheeling Theater Troupe, John has previously performed various roles in Hold Me, and recently portrayed the character, Prof. Meanfellow, in Star Trip our childrens production. John is currently studying voice, and along with theater, enjoys music and sports. Following his performance in Plaza Suite, John will be seen in the Best Off Broadway Players production of Music Man. We wish him much success.

JEAN MC CORMACK

CECILIA ENGLEMAN--A delightful newcomer to our group, She has taken on the challenging role of the secretary and has displayed her unique acting abilites. Cecilia has previously performed in The Mouse That Roared; and, put forth great effort in making Star Trip a success. We look forward to seeing more of this talented person in future productions.

WAITER AND  
BORDEN EISLER

FRED ROBINSON--Although this is Fred's acting debut, his rapid-fire delivery and commanding voice will surely grace our stage again. In his other life he becomes as quiet as a church-mouse, while he enjoys his hobbies painting and flying. Fred someday hopes to design an aircraft that will bring him great fortune. We wish him 'Good Luck'.

JESSE KIPLINGER

KURT BLOOM--Excitement is what Kurt has brought to the stage at Chevy Chase. Playing across from his equally talented wife; Kurt helps to provide a truly enjoyable evening. A newcomer to our group, he is no newcomer to theater as evidenced by his superior performance in this production. With newcomers like this, our group can't help but have continued success

MURIEL TATE

DEBBIE BLOOM--This talented lady has previously performed with the Village Players of Libertyville, in their production of California Suite. Her unlimited enthusiasm and creative abilities have made Debbie an asset to our group. Being recently married, she is enjoying a busy, happy and interesting life.

NORMA HUBLEY

JAN DICOSOLA--Act III's Norma Hubley requires a versatile and extremely talented person. And, fortunately for us, Jan fills the bill. Her twelve years of community theater experience has proved invaluable to us, in this endeavor. We look for much help and guidance from this multi-talented woman in future productions.

MIMSEY HUBLEY

FRANCINE RUBIN--Traveling around the world is one of Fran's hobbies, but she has stopped off long enough to come to Chevy Chase to endow us with her acting abilities. Her previous credits include the role of Alice Russell in Lizzie Borden of Fall River; and, Senator Philamena Foghorn in Star Trip. For this production, Fran has also taken on the challenging role of assistant director, displaying a great degree of determination and energy.

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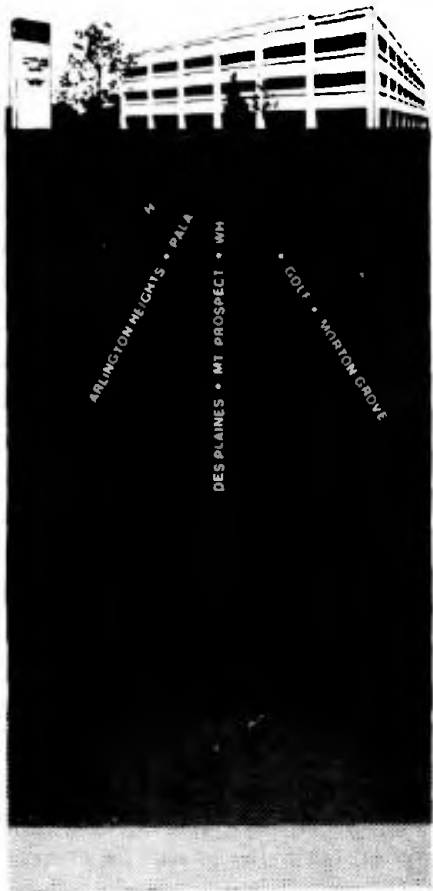
LIGHTING DESIGNER

RON DETTMAN--This talented man has turned on more stage stars in his lengthy career than Lawrence Olivier, unfortunately he's on the other side of the curtains. He's not only able to shed light on our subjects, in reality he can also ring our chimes! Ron works as an engineer for Illinois Bell and someday soon, we hope he'll be an important asset on the other side of the curtain.

SET DESIGNER

KEN PIERINI--This important member of our group certainly deserves special recognition, as he has performed well above and beyond the call of duty. Besides designing the sets, Ken helped in their construction. He was also in charge of obtaining all props used in this production; and, took charge of costumes, make-up, etc. All this, and he acts too! Our thanks to a very talented man.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

NEIL SIMON was born in the Bronx, N.Y., on July 4, 1927. He attended New York University and the University of Denver. His first theatrical work was sketches for camp shows at Tamiment, Pa., in collaboration with his brother Danny. He became a T.V. writer, supplying a good deal of material to Sid Caesar and Phil Silvers. On Broadway, Simon contributed sketches to *Catch A Star* (1955) and *New Faces of 1956*. His first Broadway play was *Come Blow Your Horn* (1961), followed by the book for the musical *Little Me* (1962). His comedy *Barefoot In The Park* (1963) was selected as a Best Play of its season, as was *The Odd Couple* (1965). Neither of these had closed when *Sweet Charity*, a musical for which Simon wrote the book, came along in early 1966; and none of the three had closed when Simon's *The Star-Spangled Girl* opened the following season in December, 1966--so that Simon had four hit shows running at one time on Broadway during the season of 1966-67. When the last of the four closed the following summer, Simon's hits had played a total of 3,367 performances over a period of four theater seasons.

Neil Simon upholds a great tradition: he writes sure-fire comedies for the big audiences everywhere in the United States--our national Broadway. His insights are conventional-- they match the audiences preconceptions-- and his comedy technique is firmly set in the theatrical line of which he is the one steadily producing heir. His writing covers the structure of his slight plots with a bright patina of canny wisecracks which invariably produce the expected laughs, although one can hardly remember them shortly after they have exploded. The formula is a pillar of show business.



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The uniqueness of Community Theater lies in its dependence upon the particular community in which it has its roots, and in which it conducts theatrical activity by involving as much of the community as possible. The essential consideration is the necessary involvement of the Community itself in the well being and continuation of the group as a recognized enterprise in which the citizens take pride and to which they may look for theatrical entertainment of a better than average kind.

The production of a play is the end result of many people's efforts to create a cultural experience for the population of Wheeling.

Membership to the Wheeling Theater Troupe is open to all residents of Wheeling. Those interested in joining should call Heritage Park, 537-2222 for further information.

Everyone is encouraged to get involved whether you've had previous stage experience or just the desire. Join us! Get involved!



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*John, Merry and David*

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MORE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCENES

---

DIRECTOR---JUDY SAWYER---This multi-faceted lady has been involved in every aspect of the theater since 1956, when she starred in My Sister Eileen, and worked as set designer and technical director. Since that auspicious beginning she has graced the stage in numerous starring roles, running the gamut from dramatic leads in Medea, to leading roles in four Neil Simon plays. You may have also seen this lady on television or heard her voice over the radio, because as a member of AFTRA and the Screen Actors Guild, she has performed in over 200 radio/tv/film commercials. The future? Well it wouldn't surprise any of us, and it would fulfill Judy's ambition, if one day you turned on As The World Turns, or General Hospital, and a new character was being played by Judy Sawyer.

PRODUCER---DEBBIE CARLSON---Debbie is Recreation Co-Ordinator for the Wheeling Park District. Her tasks as producer range from setting up play and rehearsal dates, organizing funds, solving problems, locking and unlocking doors. Debbie's other talents include sports and dancing which she also teaches at the Park District. Giving endless hours to many park programs, she is responsible for all those behind the scenes tasks.

CO-PRODUCER---LISA ANDERSON---Lisa is co-ordinator at the Wheeling Park District, for the adult and senior recreation programs. She is always available, and willing to lend a helping hand wherever needed.

---

MARYANN CHAPMAN--Maryann is a newcomer to our group, having recently moved to this area from California. Lucky for us!! For this production, she took on the challenging role of public relations chairperson--seeing to all those details concerning tickets, ad sales, mailing lists, programs, etc. Maryann has spent many hours and late nights to help make this production a success. It is our opinion that San Francisco's loss is our gain.

VALERIE CLARK--For this production, Valerie opted to work behind the scenes on set construction. Previously she has played a variety of roles for the Wheeling Theater Troupe--starting with Hold Me, and next playing the role of 'Carlotta' in Lizzie Borden (complete with Italian accent). Valerie also co-produced Star Trip, the first production for children by this group.

BARBARA LAHAY--One of the original members of the theater troupe, she is as dedicated as they come. Barbara performed several roles in our production of Hold Me; and, in Lizzie Borden, she portrayed the role of 'Bridget Sullivan'. For this production, Barbara gave her all to the P.R. committee--selling tickets, working on the program, and doing a tremendous job on ad sales.

GLORIA LAHAY--No job is left undone behind-the-scenes when this talented person is around. For the two previous productions, Hold Me and Lizzie Borden, and the current Plaza Suite, Gloria has done set construction, stage crew, P.R., program layout etc. She is also a Board member and the editor of the theater troupe newsletter. Gloria's talent for the written word is greatly appreciated by the entire group.

JEAN PIERINI--Talent abounds in the Pierini family! Jean made her acting debut as the 'dancer' in Hold Me, and followed that up with the leading role in Lizzie Borden displaying her tremendous acting abilities. Jean also put forth a great deal of energy in making Star Trip a success. For this production, Jean teamed up with husband, Ken, designing and building sets.

---THANK YOU TO SPECIAL PEOPLE FOR SPECIAL FAVORS---

PROP DONATIONS:

Judy Sawyer  
Kurt and Debbie Bloom  
Ron Dettman  
Pat Monaghan

Ken and Jean Pierini  
Art and Barb LaHay  
Cecilia Engleman  
Jan Dicosola

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Chuck Mihalek--CMI STUDIOS  
271 E. Dundee Road  
Wheeling, Illinois

FURNITURE:

Judy Sawyer  
Chevy Chase Country Club

SET DESIGN:

Ken Pierini

SET DECORATING:

Ken Pierini  
Jean Pierini  
Valerie Clark

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The production of a play requires many people working in different directions with a common goal--to unite all efforts, all energies and all talents producing the end result..... The production fo "The Chalk Garden" by Enid Bagnold.

Behind the Scenes

TICKET DESIGN

Gloria LaHay

P.R.

Pat Monaghan  
Gloria LaHay  
Bernie Powers

PROGRAM

Pat Monaghan  
Gloria LaHay

SET CONSTRUCTION

Ken Pierini  
Gloria LaHay

MAKE-UP

Pat Monaghan  
Jodi Berger

AD SALES

Pat Monaghan  
Bernie Powers

PROPS

Gloria LaHay

LIGHTING

Tom Monaghan  
Fred Robinson

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Lisa Anderson  
Entire Cast

Many thanks to all who have given of their time and talents to make "The Chalk Garden" a successful undertaking.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Enid Bagnold. 1889- English novelist and playwright, born Rochester, Kent, England. She was a nurse in a military hospital in WWI. In 1920 she married Sir Roderick Jones, head of Reuters news agency. Bagnold's works combine wit, charm, sophistication and wisdom. Her best known novel is National Velvet (1935), the story of a teenage girl who wins a horse in a raffle and rides it to victory in the famed Grand National Race. Bagnold's other works include the novels, Serena Blandish (1924) and The Loved and the Envied (1951), and the plays The Chalk Garden (1955) and The Chinese Prime Minister (1964), Also, her autobiography (1969)

She spent her early childhood in Jamaica. At age 12 she returned to England and went to Prior's Field School, run by the mother of Aldous Huxley. Author of "A Diary without Dates", "Dear Judas" and the play "Centre" was produced in New York in 1952.

**PLAYS**

Lottie Dundass  
National Velvet  
Poor Judas  
Gertie

**POETRY**

Sailing Ships

**TRANSLATION**

Alexander of Asis  
(Princesse Marthe Bibesco)

**PROSE**

A Diary Without Dates  
The Happy Foreigner  
Serena Blandish: or the  
Difficulty of Getting Married  
Alice, and Thomas and Jane  
National Velvet  
The Squire  
The Loved and Envied  
The Girls' Journey

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THE CAST OF THE CHALK GARDEN

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

MADRIGAL

JUDY SAWYER -- A veteran of 25 years in Community theater production, Judy has also had 15 years professional experience, appearing in over 200 television films and videotape commercials. Her latest credits include, Diana in "California Suite" in Libertyville and director of the Wheeling Theater Troupe's last production "Plaza Suite". Her experience and professional background have been an asset to our troupe as she portrays the demanding part of Madrigal in this performance.

MAITLAND

DAN COUGHLIN -- Dan is making his debut in theater in the role of Maitland. As you will see he has been hiding his talent from us as he portrays the long suffering butler in a realistic way.

2nd APPLICANT

JODI BERGER -- A new member to our troupe, Jodi, a student at Buffalo Grove High School, has had past experience in school plays and acting class productions. Her hobbies include, horseback riding, dancing, reading, swimming and singing. We will look forward to seeing more of her in our upcoming plays.

3rd APPLICANT

PAT MONAGHAN -- Pat's experience goes back to her high school days and has continued through present time. Her most recent parts were Abby Borden in "Lizzie Borden of Fall River: and the Martian in Star Trip I. Her roles have shown a wide variation of character from an old woman to a martian. Pat combines her hobby of acting with her jobs of Mother, Secretary and student. Her goal is to not waste time but to fill each day with meaningful activity.

LAURAL

LISA VINARSKY -- Lisa, for her years has had more experience than many adults. Her past roles in "Li'l Abner" and "Sweet Harmony" and many musical and variety shows at school added to drama school productions, has helped her not only to obtain a leading role in "The Chalk Garden" but in becoming a candidate in the role of an orphan in the upcoming motion picture "Annie". Her goal to become an actress seems attainable as she portrays the spoiled child laural in this production.

MRS. ST. MAUGHAM

JAN DI COSOLA -- Jan has to her credit a vast experience in acting including 12 years of Off Broadway Theaters and has appeared in Community Theater groups in productions of "Sam Yankees", "Woman Overboard" "Applause", "Music Man", "Funny Girl", "Don't Drink the Water", "Enter Laughing", "Diary of Ann Frank" and our troupe's last production "Plaza Suite".

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....And for there continuing suport, the merchents who have purchased ad space - The Wheeling Park District Employee and of course the audience.



PROGRAM COVER DESIGNED BY LISA ANDERSON

MRS. ST. MAUGHAM  
(Cont.)

Jan combines her many talents and vast experience to portray the role of Mrs. St. Maugham as she strives for her goal to "grow old gracefully".

NURSE

BARBARA LA HAY-- Barbara is one of the original members of the Wheeling Theater Troupe and has played in "Hold Me" and "Lizzie Borden". She is also one of the backbones behind the scenes as an all around help on all committees. Without her unselfish service to the theater troupe our past productions could not have been accomplished. Her part as the Nurse gives us an insight to her wonderful sense of humor and acting abilities.

OLIVIA

JUDI POWERS-- Judi brings with her, to the theater troupe. her past experience in many high school and college performances. Her most recent role was in our last production "Plaza Suite". Judi loves dancing as a hobby although she spends most of her time raising her two children. Her portrayal of "Olivia", the shy quite mother of Laurel, who has become independent, is played with great skill.

THE JUDGE

FRED ROBINSON-- The role of the Judge is a first in acting for Fred, although he has been a help behind the scenes in previous productions. His talents have been hidden backstage until this production, but can easily be seen in his strong portrayal of the Judge who has become weary of his duties.

---

A special thank you to the two people who have combined the above talents in order to put it all together.

---

DIRECTOR

MARTY BERMAN -- We have been fortunate to have Marty give of his time and talents to this production. Marty has been continually involved with the theater from 1972-1978. in N.Y. and has continually appeared in plays in the Wheeling area since 1979. He has also spent countless hours as stage hand, light and sound operator, props, transporting scenery and all phases of theater production. His varied experience in all areas of production has made him an able and understanding Director. I'm sure you will find his first attempt at directing has been a complete success. Many thanks to Marty for his ideas, encouragement and time.

ASSISTANT  
DIRECTOR

GLORIA LA HAY -- Gloria has been an indispensable part of "The Wheeling Theater Troupe" since its beginning in Feb. 1979. She has been the major backbone of all productions in her duties of stage manager, P.R. chairman, set design, props, programs, tickets, flyers, as well as board member. It is people like Gloria who through their untireless efforts has kept the theater troupe in existence and entertained our community for the past 1½ years. There is no way she can be thanked for her time and effort in this production as well as all of our past efforts. We hope Gloria will continue helping us in future productions.

THE CHALK GARDEN

STORY OF THE PLAY

A woman applies as a governess to a household of position in the country in England. She is interviewed by her employer, an old, over-powering, once-beautiful ex-hostess of London society. She is engaged (without references) to look after the granddaughter, whose mother has married again, and who leads her grandmother by the nose and exploits her caprices and her leaning towards Freudian explanations. The grandmother gardens-feverishly and ignorantly-as an escape from old age. The manservant is a classless, ageless man, unhandy with life but with a "passion for the Right." He in turn is exploited by the grandmother and the granddaughter. Over the premises, unseen and chained by a stroke upstairs, there broods the evil influence and faded

grandeur of the butler who has known all the magnificence of his employer's life in London.

The Applicant-the "governess" has done a life sentence for murder and has only recently come out of prison. This fact swells like a mushroom cloud all through the play, and the cloud develops flames within it when the judge who once sentenced her comes to lunch.

TIME: The Present

PLACE: A room in a manor house

ACT ONE  
A day in June

ACT TWO  
Two months later.

ACT THREE  
Twenty minutes later.

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A WORD ABOUT THE WHEELING THEATER TROUPE

As the title states, this is a "community Effort". Without the sincere desires and determination of the people in the group to learn, create, meet new friends and have fun; "The Wheeling Theater Troupe" would not be existence. The group is young and growing.

The uniqueness of Community Theater lies in its dependence upon the particular community in which it has its roots, and in which it conducts theatrical activity by involving as much of the community as possible. The essential consideration is the necessary involvement of the Community itself in the well being and continuation of the group as a recognized enterprise in which the citizens take pride and to which they may look for theatrical entertainment of a better than average kind.

The production of a play is the end result of many people's efforts to create a cultural experience for the population of Wheeling.

Membership to the Wheeling Theater Troupe is open to all residents of Wheeling and nearby communities. Those interested in joining should call Heritage Park, at 537-2722 for further information.

Everyone is encouraged to get involved wether you've had previous stage experience or just the desire. Join us! Get involved!

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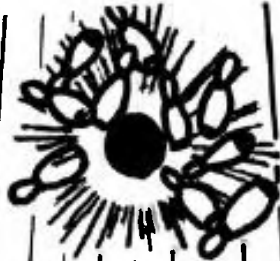
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At rise, there are chairs placed as though for a meeting or an interview. On one of them sits Miss Madrigal. Maitland ushers the Little Lady, the Second Applicant, in from the hall door.

Second Applicant. Lovely, blowy weather . . .

Laurel [entering from Maitland's door]. Are you too here for the interview?

Second Applicant. I am applying for the post.

Laurel. My grandmother had a hundred and seven answers. [Silence.] I mean to her advertisement.

Second Applicant [rising, propitiatory]. You are the young lady—who requires a companion? [Her hand steals out.]

Laurel. I never shake hands. It's so animal. [Little Lady sinks back.] So one of you has come to look after me? We were expecting four applicants—the ones my grandmother selected from the letters. And now there are only two to choose from. [To Little Lady.] What are your qualifications?

Second Applicant [anxious, leaning forward]. Froebel trained. Long ago. But Froebel trained. And patience.

Laurel. Would you have patience with me?

Second Applicant. I am so fond of young people.

Laurel. I set fire to things. I am not allowed alone, except in the garden.

Second Applicant [flustered]. Such lovely weather for the garden. [Carrying on bravely.] The advertisement said "with handicraft." I am clever with my fingers. I am fond of making pretty things. [Coy.] Now—can you make a lampshade?

Laurel. All the lampshades here are made already.

Second Applicant. Will you tell me, dear, of what does the family consist?

*Laurel.* Of my grandmother. Of me. And Maitland. And the terrible old man upstairs. And his hospital nurse.

*Second Applicant [horrified].* Your grandfather?

*Laurel.* Mr. Pinkbell was always the butler. Now he has a stroke.

*Second Applicant.* Who was that then?

*Laurel.* That was Maitland. He wears a grocer's coat. Mr. Pinkbell, of course, used to wear a black one and have a footman.

*Second Applicant.* But is there no one else?

*Laurel.* Oh, we are rich! If we have only one servant, it is part of my grandmother's newest theory about life. She says true devotion is only to be got when a man is worked to death and has no rival.

*Second Applicant.* But have you no mother?

*Laurel.* My mother married again. She married for love. It has given me an adolescent repugnance to her. My case is practically in Freud. My grandmother will explain it to you.

*Second Applicant.* And where is your father?

*Laurel.* My father shot himself when I was twelve. I was in the room. [Turning immediately to *Madrigal.*] And what are your qualifications?

*Madrigal [turning a frosty eye on her].* I prefer to wait for your grandmother.

*Laurel [interested in this answer].* Are you Scotch?

*Madrigal.* I was born in Barbados.

*Laurel.* Where do you live?

*Madrigal.* In my room.

*Laurel.* I am fond of painting. Can you paint?

*Madrigal.* What I cannot do is wait much longer.

*Laurel.* Oh, she'll come! Grandloo will come! She is working in the garden. She's a great gardener, but nothing grows for her.

[Enter *Maitland.*]

*Maitland.* And what are you doing wearing Madame's necklaces! Off with them. [While removing necklaces and putting them in his pocket.] You've been upstairs and I thought I left you happy in the garden. Out you go! I've got a bonfire laid at the top there. You shall light it when I get a minute. [Maitland goes off with her into the garden.]

*Second Applicant.* Do you think it's all true?

*Madrigal.* I should think it unlikely.

[The *Third Applicant*, the *Grand Lady*, sails in from the hall as *Maitland* comes back from the garden.]

*Maitland.* Who let you in?

*Third Applicant.* The front door stood wide open—so humane.

*Maitland.* Have you a letter?

*Third Applicant.* I wouldn't have come, dear, if I hadn't a letter. [Waves it at him.] Are you the butler?

*Maitland.* I am the manservant.

*Third Applicant.* A world of difference! In my days it was thought common to wear a white coat. A relic of our occupation in India.

*Maitland [following her as she wanders round the room].* Will you sit down, please?

*Third Applicant.* In those days, in the Hill Stations, I was thought to have extraordinary charm. [To applicants.] Good morning. How do you do. [To *Maitland.*] Is this a house where there are gentlemen?

*Maitland [stiffly].* I am not to give information.

*Third Applicant.* But you have only to nod. [At the table.] Gardening gloves . . . nicotine for wood lice . . . is your lady going up in the world or coming down? One has to be so careful.

*Maitland [outraged].* Mrs. St. Maugham has a house in Belgrave Square!

*Third Applicant.* But you are left in the country, I suppose, when she goes up for the season?

*Maitland.* Madame is past the seasons. Take a chair, please.

*Third Applicant.* Not that I am applying for the post, you know . . . not really . . .

*Second Applicant.* Not applying?

*Third Applicant.* I came to have a peep . . . So nostalgic . . .

*Maitland.* But you're not going!

*Third Applicant.* I could not think of staying in a house where there is not even a nephew! [She exits. *Maitland* follows her out.]

*Second Applicant [as Maitland enters from the hall. To him].* For the interview . . . when the interview . . . ought we to be together?

*Maitland.* One of you ladies can wait in the drawing room. It's dust-sheeted, but there's a chair.

*Second Applicant [rising and going toward the door with*

some speed]. One must be fair! Let it be me. This lady was before me. [To Madrigal.] When you're ready, you just call, dear! [Exit.]

Madrigal. She's a little light-fingered.

Maitland. That one?

Madrigal. No more than a box of matches or the Tailor.

Maitland. Do you know her?

Madrigal. No. But I've met those hands before. Many times.

Maitland. Met those hands? [Looks through window.] There she goes!

Madrigal [as to herself]. They were none of them solid applicants.

Maitland. But they wrote to Madam!

Madrigal. It's how they spend their days. They answer advertisements.

Maitland. Not meaning to take the job!

Madrigal. They are always in two minds. It makes a change for them. . . . [At her own words she goes a bit off the track.] . . . and then too she has a garden.

Maitland. It's you who have two minds, it seems! [Eyeing her anxiously.] Don't you be flitting! If there's nobody here—after all the advertising—who do you think's going to get the brunt! [Exits with chairs.]

Madrigal [as to herself]. I cannot hope to be acceptable—at the first undertaking.

Maitland [returning]. You don't need to worry! Madame's up a tree! Today's the deadline. She's got her daughter coming. A shy lady. A nice one. Oh, there's wheels within wheels. If you ask me . . . Madame's afraid she'll take the child.

Madrigal. The child's outlandish!

Maitland. Only what Madame makes her. I can explain her! Nurse and Nanny I bin to her!

Madrigal. In a house like this—would I be suitable?

Maitland. She'll take you! Madame loves the unusual! [Madrigal reacts.] It's a middle-class failing—she says—to run away from the unusual!

Voice [from the garden]. Maitland! [Coming nearer.] Maitland! Maitland!

Maitland. Madam!

Voice [just outside the French window, in the garden]. Are my teeth on the table? [Maitland goes to the table.] My bottom teeth . . .

Maitland [searching]. There's nothing.

[Enter Mrs. St. Maugham pulling wheelbasket with her back to the audience.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Then I must have left them in the greenhouse.

Maitland. Here! Wait, Madame . . . here they are—wrapped in a handkerchief! [Crosses and gives them to her.]

Mrs. St. Maugham [turns]. Good morning.

Maitland [crosses downstage, says over his shoulder]. There's a dentist taken the empty house by the church. He might make you comfortable!

Mrs. St. Maugham [coming downstage]. I've tried all the dentists. You can't fit false teeth to a woman of character. As one gets older and older, the appearance becomes such a bore. [Displeased—to Maitland.] But I expected five applicants!

Maitland. Four came. Three have gone.

Mrs. St. Maugham. And one wrote me such a good letter! Gone!

Maitland. But I've kept this one.

Mrs. St. Maugham [crossing the room toward Miss Madrigal, who rises and respectfully stands. She picks up a bunch of letters from her writing table on the way. To Madrigal.] Shall we sit? [Over her shoulder.] You can go, Maitland. [Maitland exits. With a sudden and alarming change of manner—putting on the old charm as she sits down.] Now what questions do total strangers put to one another?

Madrigal [re-seated. Colorlessly]. The name is Madrigal. [Mrs. St. Maugham selects the "Madrigal" letter from the bunch she holds. Keeps it out and puts the others down.] I am the daughter of the late Ronald Bentham Madrigal, Rajpootnah Hussars, Indian Army. He was the son of General Bentham Madrigal—the Honorable East India Company.

Mrs. St. Maugham [gaily]. No, no! That you can't be! The Honorable East India Company was dissolved in 1860! I'm an expert! My great-grandfather was Tarr Bethune, Governor of Madras, tried for corruption in 1859, and found guilty!

Madrigal [calmly]. My grandfather had my father at the age of seventy-five.

Mrs. St. Maugham [admitting the point]. That might make it possible. What experience have you?

- La* *Madrigal*. I have small private means. I have not taken such a post before.
- Sec* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. Why do you apply to me?
- La* *Madrigal*. The advertisement attracts me. I have been somewhat alone.
- Sec* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. You will be able, I suppose, to give me references?
- La* *Madrigal* [coldly]. That will be difficult.
- Sec* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. What?
- La* *Madrigal*. In fact, impossible.  
[The door stands open, and a hospital Nurse, in full uniform, stands in the doorway.]
- Sec* *Nurse* [stiff, reproachful]. We've been ringing, Mrs. St. Maugham.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. I heard nothing!
- Sec* *Nurse*. Our breakfast tray was late again.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. One can't have everything!
- Sec* *Nurse*. Mr. Pinkbell says one should have a great deal more.  
[She exits, flouncing.]
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. One of his cross mornings . . . Ask me questions, Miss Madrigal.
- Ma* *Madrigal*. Does one have a room to oneself?
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham* [eyes still closed]. Life without a room to oneself is a barbarity. Luncheon here with me and my granddaughter. Your evening meal served in your room on a tray . . .
- Ma* *Maitland* [who, a few words before, has made an appearance in the garden to wheel away the wheelbasket, now stands at the open window]. That can't be done!
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham* [opening her eyes; speaking automatically, without turning]. Ma'am.
- Ma* *Maitland* [as automatically]. Ma'am.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham* [now turning]. And why can't it?
- Ma* *Maitland*. Because I shall be busy serving at Madame's table.  
[Phone rings offstage.]
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. I hear the telephone [Maitland exits].  
Now—now—Miss Madrigal! We are so continuously interrupted . . .
- Sec* *Madrigal* [whose mind is only on the telephone]. I should tell you—in case you should ask me to—I don't answer the telephone.
- Ma* *Mrs. St. Maugham* [immediately interested]. For what reason?
- La* *Madrigal*. I prefer not to. [As though realizing by Mrs. St.

- Ma* *Maugham's attitude that more explanation is needed.*  
It disturbs me to join two worlds.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. Which . . . ?
- Ma* *Madrigal* [with a small wave of her hand]. The outside . . . and the inside one.
- La* [Re-enter Maitland.]
- Ma* *Maitland*. They want you to open the village Summer Festival.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. Are they holding on?
- Ma* *Maitland*. They are.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. Ask them what attendance they can insure? Last time I opened something there was nobody there.
- Ma* *Maitland* [deadpan]. Madame is so unpopular.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. How do you know?
- Ma* *Maitland* [as before]. I hear it on all sides.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. They tell you that when I send you down for the post. Give me my engagement book.  
[Pointing to book on the secretary.]
- Ma* *Maitland*. That's last year's.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. It does just as well. Give it to me all the same. The dates are not so different. [As he goes for it, turning to Miss Madrigal.] Have you lived in a village, Miss Madrigal?
- Ma* [Maitland passes the book to her.]
- La* *Madrigal* [mumbling]. No, Mrs. St. Maugham . . .
- Ma* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. All the graces of life here go unvalued. In a village one is down to the bones of things. When I was at my height—though I lived here—I never knew them! They were waiting for my old age like wolves, it seems! Tell them I won't open it. [Exit Maitland.]
- La* Ah . . . where were we? My advertisement asks for handicraft. What handicraft do you suggest?
- Ma* *Madrigal*. I have ornamented a chapel.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. With your needle?
- Ma* *Madrigal*. With my brush. I have painted a twining plant on the altar candles.
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham* [immediately interested]. But as the candles burnt down the painting must have melted away!
- Ma* *Madrigal*. That was the beauty of it. Is this a quiet house?
- La* *Mrs. St. Maugham*. Absolutely.
- Ma* [Wild screams are heard far up the garden. Maitland bursts through door, rushes through room and out of the French window.]

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die . . . [Turning her head round.] I put salt on it to turn the flame blue. Blocks of it.  
Mrs. St. Maugham. Who told you to put salt on it?  
Laurel. The old bastard, Mr. Pinkbell.  
Mrs. St. Maugham. Not now, my darling. Superlatives only between ourselves!  
Laurel [turning round and walking toward them]. Where are the others?  
Mrs. St. Maugham. This is Miss Madrigal!  
Laurel. [She walks over to Miss Madrigal, pretending to come to.] Have you settled everything? Do you understand all about me?  
Madrigal. Not yet.  
Laurel. Oh, can't we have the interview together? Shall I go and fetch the book that explains me?  
Mrs. St. Maugham. Not so fast. Externalize! Externalize my darling! [Maitland crosses from the garden to kitchen.] She has quaint self-delusions. You mustn't mind them . . .  
Laurel. . . . but you mustn't cross them!  
Madrigal. Are you an only child?  
Laurel. I am Delilah's daughter!  
Mrs. St. Maugham. Words leap and change color in her mouth like fishes! Laurel is a novel one reads out loud! I too at her age . . .  
Laurel. Wit often skips a generation!  
Mrs. St. Maugham. She is my parchment sheet on which I write! I hope she will remember my life and times! There seems no one else to do it . . .  
Laurel. I am your little immortality!  
Mrs. St. Maugham. You will note—how light my finger lies upon her! The child's a flower. She grows in liberty!  
Madrigal. Weeds grow as easily.  
Mrs. St. Maugham. As I was saying . . .  
Laurel. . . . before the interruption.  
Mrs. St. Maugham. Freedom is Captain here! Calm is its Lieutenant!  
[Enter Nurse hurriedly.]  
Nurse. The madonna lilies have blown over!  
Mrs. St. Maugham [at once in a passion. Rising]. Oh—great heavens! Maitland! He was to order the bamboos and he forgot them! Are they all down?  
Nurse [with triumph]. All. And not for want of warnings!  
[Exits.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Oh my lilies! My lilies! One waits a year for them! . . . [Exiting fast into the garden. Enter Maitland.]  
Maitland. What was that I heard?  
Laurel. The calm of Grandloo.  
Maitland. But what's happened?  
Madrigal. There's been an accident in the garden.  
Maitland [to Laurel, denouncingly]. Fire!  
Laurel. Wind. You didn't stake the lilies!  
Maitland [frantic, rushing to the window to look out]. Oh, are they down! The nurse told me and I forgot! How the old bastard will be crowing!  
Madrigal [primly]. Stake in May.  
Maitland [turning on her fiercely]. They weren't full grown in May!  
Madrigal. They should have been.  
Maitland [more fiercely]. Is that a criticism?  
Madrigal [quietly]. So you are the gardener here as well?  
Maitland [excited, pacing about]. I'm everything! I'm the kingpin and the pivot and the manservant and the maid-servant and the go-between [Turning on Laurel] and the fire-extinguisher!  
Laurel. Prisoner Six Five Seven Four!  
Maitland [jumping to attention]. Sir!  
Laurel. Carry your bed-area and about turn! Through the corridor second door on the left and into your cell! March!  
Maitland. I'm all to pieces. I can't play it.  
Laurel [to Madrigal, in tragic tones]. He was five long years in prison, Miss Madrigal.  
Madrigal [politely]. Was it your first conviction?  
Maitland [sententious]. Conviction! It was for my ideals! I was a Conscientious Objector.  
Madrigal [prim]. And didn't you find it trying?  
Maitland. "Trying!" Five years! Five long years! Given one chance to live and five years taken from it! An ant among a thousand ants—and taking orders from ants! Madrigal. If it upsets you better not recall it.  
Maitland. Not recall it! It's stamped on my skin and at the back of my eyes! It's in my legs when I walk up and down! In my heart that sticks with fright when she gets angry!  
Madrigal [sententious]. But since you felt you had Right on your side!



*Maitland.* Right on my side! That didn't uphold me! I went in there because I wouldn't take a life, but before I came out I would have killed a warder!

*Madrigal* [platitudinously]. All acts became possible.

*Maitland.* What can you know of life?

*Madrigal.* True, it's been sheltered.

*Laurel* [picking up the remaining full glass of *crème de menthe*]. All our lives are sheltered.

*Maitland.* Don't do that! She'll be furious!

*Laurel* [tossing it down her throat]. Not with me. I'm not responsible.

*Maitland* [to *Madrigal*]. You'll be witness, Miss, I didn't touch it! I have to be on the ready for injustice in life.

*Laurel.* From me? From your little Laurel? How touchy you are!

*Maitland.* I have soft ground and hard ground to my feelings. You should mind where you step!

*Laurel.* I am a victim and you ought to love me.

*Maitland* [angrily]. I do love you—like the poor mother who ought by rights and reasons to take a stick to you.

*Laurel.* What do you expect of me! A child that's been forsaken by its mother!

*Maitland.* That's as may be! That's as those think it to be! I was found in a field but I don't make a fuss about it! [Exits sharply.]

*Laurel* [soapily]. Poor Maitland likes the Right even when the Right is wrong.

*Madrigal* [platitudinously]. He has your interests at heart.

*Laurel* [with interest]. Are you a hospital nurse?

*Madrigal.* Why do you ask?

*Laurel.* You have that unmeaning way of saying things.

*Madrigal* [after a second's pause and with a little formal manner of adapting herself]. Now that we are alone together am I to call you Laurel?

*Laurel.* It's my name.

*Madrigal.* And what are you interested in—Laurel? I mean—apart from yourself?

*Laurel.* What I don't like—is to be questioned.

*Madrigal.* I agree with you.

*Laurel.* But I don't like to be agreed with just in case I might argue! And I don't like to be read aloud to unless I suggest it! But if read aloud to—I don't like emphasis! And every morning I don't like "Good morning" said! I can see for myself what sort of a day it is!

*Madrigal.* You sound as if you had lady-companions before. How did you get rid of them?

*Laurel.* I tell Pinkbell.

*Madrigal.* He tells your grandmother. My mind goes more slowly than yours.

*Laurel.* But it was going that way. You see she loves to advertise! She loves what comes of it. It's like dredging in the sea, she says—so much comes up in the net!

*Madrigal.* I—for instance.

*Laurel.* Why not?

*Madrigal.* Doesn't she take a chance—that way?

*Laurel.* No, she says you get more out of life by *hap-hazard*. By the way, if you want to get on with my grandmother—you must notice her eccentricity.

*Madrigal.* She is fond of that?

*Laurel.* She adores it! The tales I let her tell me when I am in the mood!

*Madrigal.* Does she love you?

*Laurel.* She would like to! [Confidentially.] She thinks she does! . . . But I am only her remorse.

*Madrigal.* You try your foot upon the ice, don't you?

*Laurel.* I find you wonderfully odd. Why do you come here?

*Madrigal.* I have to do something with my life . . .

*Laurel.* What life have you been used to?

*Madrigal* [softly]. Regularity. Punctuality. Early rising . . .

*Laurel.* It sounds like a prison!

*Madrigal.* . . . and what are you used to?

*Laurel.* Doing what I like. Have you been told why I am peculiar?

*Madrigal.* Something was said about it.

*Laurel.* If you come here we'll talk for hours and hours about it! And why I hate my mother!

*Madrigal.* I too hated my mother. I should say it was my stepmother.

*Laurel.* Oh, that's just an ordinary hatred! Mine is more special.

*Madrigal.* The dangerous thing about hate is that it seems so reasonable.

*Laurel* [unnoticing]. Maitland won't let me say so but my mother is Jezebel! She is so overloaded with sex that it sparkles! She is golden and striped—like something in the jungle!

*Madrigal.* You sound proud of her. Does she never come here?

*Laurel.* To see me? Never! She's too busy with love! Just now she's in Arabia with her paramour!

*Madrigal.* With her . . . ?

*Laurel.* If you pin me down he is my stepfather! Have you read *Hamlet*? It tipped my mind and turned me against my mother.

*Madrigal.* Does she know you feel discarded?

*Laurel.* I don't. I left her! [Pause.] The night before she married—she forgot to say good night to me . . . Do you think that sounds a little thing?

*Madrigal* [passionately]. Oh, no! It lights up everything.

*Laurel* [looking at her]. Are you talking of you? Or of me?

*Madrigal* [her hand on her breast]. When one feels strongly—it is always of me!

*Laurel* [pause]. If you are not a spy sent by my mother, I shall enjoy you! Do you know about crime? Maitland and I share a crime library. Bit by bit we are collecting the Notable Crime Series.

*Madrigal* [looking at her—low]. Don't you like detective stories better?

*Laurel.* No, we like real murder! The trials. We act the parts!

*Madrigal* [picking up her gloves]. Which . . . trials have you got?

*Laurel.* So far—only Mrs. Maybrick, Lizzie Borden, Dr. Crippen. But Maitland likes the murderesses better. He's half in love with them. Oh—if you come here . . .

*Madrigal.* Here! . . .

*Laurel.* —couldn't we act them together? [Gets no answer.] Maitland is so slow I make him read the prisoner. Why does the prisoner have so little to say? [Waits] . . . do you think? [Pause—no answer.] What a habit you have—haven't you—of not answering.

*Madrigal* [whose eyes have been fastened high up in the air, now lets them travel down to look at Laurel. Low, with difficulty]. I made an answer.

*Laurel.* Only to yourself, I think.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [seen outside waving the armful of broken lilies at Pinkbell's window—shouting up to him]. All gone! . . . ALL! . . . [As she appears.] Oh—when things are killed in my garden it upsets me—[A little breathless, coming into the room]—as when I read in the newspapers that my friends die!

*Laurel.* I should have thought as one got older one found death more natural.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [beginning to sort out the lilies on the table]. Natural! It's as though the gods went rook-shooting when one was walking confident in the park of the world! and there are pangs and shots, and one may be for me! Natural!

*Madrigal* [involuntarily]. That is why a garden is a good lesson. . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* What?

*Madrigal* [looking through window at garden. Low]. . . . so much dies in it. And so often.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* It's not a lesson I look for! Take Miss Madrigal into the garden, Laurel.

*Madrigal.* No, I think I must be going.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* I want you to see the garden.

*Madrigal* [nervous]. I'll write . . . I'll let you know . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* There is nothing to know yet!

*Madrigal.* I'd better not waste your time.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [pressing her toward the garden]. And that great bag . . . [Takes the bag forcibly from her, puts it on a table near window.] No one will touch it here.

*Madrigal.* But I'd like to see the garden.

[Laurel and Madrigal exit, but Laurel darts back. Mrs. St. Maugham tries two lilies in vase for height.]

*Laurel* [conspiratorially, alone on garden window threshold]. Grandloo . . . psst! . . . what do you think?

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* I never allow myself to think. I have another method. [Carries empty vase toward Maitland's door.]

*Laurel.* But . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* While you are in the garden, listen to her. She knows her subject.

*Laurel.* But shall you take her?

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Certainly not! But before she goes I want her opinion on the garden. [Takes vase and vanishes through Maitland's door. Laurel exits. Olivia enters through main doorway. One is just aware that she is pregnant. She wears light traveling clothes, as from the East.]

*Maitland* [just offstage]. . . . didn't you telephone?

*Olivia.* I thought it better just to come. [Turning.] How is my mother?



*Maitland.* She has health of . . . [*Grasping for the unexplainable in Madame's health!*] . . . something in Nature!

*Olivia.* And my daughter?

*Maitland.* They're as thick as thieves, Madame.

*Olivia.* Could you look for my mother—

*Maitland.* Madame was here . . . [*He exits, and Madrigal enters from the garden and gets her bag from the chair.*]

*Olivia.* Who are you?

*Madrigal.* It makes no difference. [*Walking toward door, stopping, turning back.*] Perhaps I should tell you . . . the field is free for you . . .

*Olivia.* To see the child?

*Madrigal.* You have to see the grandmother first!

*Olivia.* Yes.

*Madrigal.* Looking at you I wouldn't come here if there is other post open to you.

*Olivia.* Why?

*Madrigal.* Because the child will make hay of you!

*Olivia.* She has made hay of me!

*Madrigal.* Are you the mother?

*Olivia.* Yes . . . Is she out there?

*Madrigal.* Yes.

*Olivia.* Please . . . go out—keep her there!

*Madrigal.* But I am a stranger.

*Olivia.* I know but sometimes one speaks the truth to a stranger. I'm not supposed to see her. First I must see my mother. Please, go out—please!

[*Madrigal exits.*]

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [*offstage*]. *Olivia!* [*Enters, carrying case, which she quickly puts down. To Maitland who has followed her into the room.*] *Maitland* . . . light a bonfire! [*He rushes off into the garden.*] *Olivia!* So soon! But you're safe—that's all that matters!

*Olivia.* Mother!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Oh—let me look at you. How brown you are! You look like an Arab. How is the desert, darling? I can almost see the sand in your hair.

*Olivia.* Mother—how's the child?

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Ask for me—ask for me, *Olivia!*

*Olivia.* I do, I would, but you ran in like a girl, and not a day older!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Oh, let me tell you before we talk—

*Olivia.* —before we quarrel!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* No—not this time. I was going to say

—that I've missed you. If I'd known you were coming I'd have driven up to see you. Whatever—and in your condition—made you rush down here without a word!

*Olivia.* I flew. I got here this morning.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Like one of those crickets that leap from a distance and fall at one's feet! How did you do it?

*Olivia.* By breakfasting in Baghdad and dining in Kuffra and taking a taxi in England. We're on a Course. I wrote. Two months at Aldershot.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [*with great distaste*]. Aldershot! Oh—who would have thought you would have taken on that look—so quickly—of the Colonel's Lady! What was it they called it—Reveille! [*Sarcastic.*] How are the bugles at dawn, *Olivia?*

*Olivia.* We don't live in a camp.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* I feel sure you said you did!

*Olivia.* Never mind the camp. I want to talk to you.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* But why down here the very second you arrive—and without warning!

*Olivia.* I've come about Laurel . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Did you wear that scarf—on purpose to annoy me! What you wear is a language to me!

*Olivia* [*indignant*]. Oh—that's an old battle—and an old method!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* When I've told you—in letter after letter.

*Olivia.* It's time I saw for myself, Mother!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* . . . and risk the mending of her? Oh—do you think only of yourself, *Olivia!*

*Olivia.* Not of myself.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* That is how it has always been. To ask is to be refused! I have asked you *not* to come—but you *come!* I have asked you to warn me—but you ignore it! [*Turning on her.*] How can you wear beige with your skin that color!

*Olivia.* Does it never become possible to talk as one grown woman to another!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* The gap's lessening! After fifty I haven't grown much wiser! [*Warming to the indignity*] . . . but at least I know what the world has to have. Though one cannot pass anything on! When I count my ambitions and what you have made of them!

*Olivia.* I did what you wanted!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* But how you resisted me! I was burning

for you to cut ice in the world—yet you had to be driven out to gaiety! I had to beat you into beauty! You had to be lit—as one lights a lantern! Decked—like a may tree!

*Olivia.* Can't we be three minutes together . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Even your wedding dress you wore like wrapping paper! Plain, shy, obstinate, silent. But I did what a mother should do. I married you . . .

*Olivia.* But you won't meet the man I married—the man I love!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Love can be had any day! Success is far harder.

*Olivia.* You say that off the top of your head—where you wore your tiara!

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [*turning in surprise*]. So you have found a tongue to speak with!

*Olivia.* I have found many things—and learned others. Things come late to me. I have been warmed and praised and made to speak . . . But you won't give up the image of me! Coltish—inert, dropping the china—picking up the pieces . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* It was I who picked up the pieces, Olivia.

*Olivia.* I know. But I'm without her.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You are going to have another child!

*Olivia.* This child's the Unknown! Laurel's my daughter!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* . . . who came to me! Who ran to me—as an asylum from her mother!

*Olivia.* Oh—you find such words to change things! You talk as if I were a light woman.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* No, you are *not* light! You have never been a light woman! You are a dark, a mute woman. If there was lightness in you it was I who lent it to you!

*Olivia.* Mother! Of a thousand thousand rows between you and me—and this not, I know, the last one—*be* on my side! Oh—for once *be* on my side! Help me . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* To what?

*Olivia.* Help me to find her! Help me to take her back!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Take her back! What, now? Just now! When I have such a companion for her! A woman too of the highest character! Of vast experience! I have put myself out endlessly to find her!

*Olivia.* She can help you to prepare her. When I come back for her . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You mean before the baby's born? That will be an odd moment—won't it—to come for her!

*Olivia* [*passionately*]. *No! It's why I want her!* Before I love the baby! I can't sleep! I can't rest. I seem to myself to have abandoned her!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* To her own grandmother! I am not a baby-farmer or a headmistress or the matron of an orphanage . . .

*Olivia.* But she'll be a woman! And I'll never have known her!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* It suited you when you first married that I should have her. Laurel came to me of her own free will and I have turned my old age into a nursery for her.

*Olivia.* And God has given you a second chance to be a mother!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Olivia! . . . There's no one who puts me in a passion like you do!

*Olivia.* And no one who knows you so well. [*Turning away.*] And knows today is hopeless.

[*Madrigal enters. Through her first two speeches she is moving across the room toward the door and her whole intention is obviously to leave.*]

*Madrigal* [*menacing—accusing—pulling on a glove*]. *Mrs. St. Maugham—there must be some mistake! This is a chalk garden! Who has tried to grow rhododendrons in a chalk garden?*

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Rhododendrons? We put them in last autumn. But they're unhappy!

*Madrigal.* They are dying. They are in pure lime. Not so much as a little leaf-mold! There is no evidence of palliation.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Wait . . . wait . . . Where are you going?

*Madrigal.* They could have had compost! But the compost-heap is stone-cold! *Nothing in the world has been done for them!*

[*A teensy scream is heard from the garden.*]

*Olivia* [*to Madrigal*]. Is that Laurel? She's screaming. What's the matter!

*Madrigal.* There is nothing the matter. She is dancing round the bonfire with the manservant. [*Pulling on her last glove.*]

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [*quickly to Olivia*]. I should have told you—this is Miss Madrigal. [*As Madrigal moves off.*]

Not so fast! I want to ask you . . . the bergamot . . . and the gunnera . . .

*Madrigal [looking at door].* . . . won't thrive on chalk.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* There's an east slope I can grow nothing on.

*Madrigal.* . . . the soil can't give what it has not got. [*Turning at door as Mrs. St. Maugham still pores over the catalogue.*]

*Olivia [to Miss Madrigal].* Don't go! The wind blows from the sea here and growing things need protection!

*Madrigal [low].* . . . and the lilies have rust . . . there is a black spot on the roses . . . and the child is screaming in the garden.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* The roses! What would you have done for them! Pinkbell ordered . . . and I sprayed them!

*Madrigal [turning, magnificent, contemptuous].* With what, I wonder! You had better have prayed for them! [*Takes off gloves. They measure each other for a moment. Then very quiet and meaningful.*] If you will accept me . . . I will take this situation, Mrs. St. Maugham. [*Olivia quietly exits.*] You have been very badly advised—I think—by Mr. Pinkbell.

*Curtain*

## act 2

*A month or two later (to fit in with the flowers suitable to the garden—as mentioned in the text).*

*About mid-morning.*

*On the right, under the window which looks out on the Village Green, is a table which will be laid (at first) for four people. At another, center, table sits Laurel in a fresh clean frock, suitable for a girl of sixteen. She is painting a flower which is stuck in a vase in front of her, and is using an old mahogany paint box with the lid propped open. There is a saucer to mix paints in, a tumbler of water, brushes, blotting paper, etc. She seems absorbed in her work, looks from the flower to her painting, occasionally licks a brush (they are water colors).*

*Enter Maitland carrying a tray. On it are silver spoons and forks and a few wine glasses with stems, a rag, and a bottle of turpentine. As he talks he sets down the tray on a chair near the table he is going to lay, and uses the rag and the turpentine to rub a spot on the polished wood of the table's surface.*

*Maitland.* All alone? Whose idea is that?  
*Laurel [who does not look up].* The Boss's.

*Maitland.* Not even burning the curtains?

*Laurel [with dignity].* I am painting a flower.

*Maitland [rubbing the table].* Occupational therapy?

*Laurel.* What was yours? Picking oakum?

*Maitland [pausing and looking at her a moment].* Who would think you were weak in the head? You've given up screaming.

*Laurel.* My madness is older. It's too old for screaming.

*Maitland.* Why do you sham mad—dearest?

*Laurel [in surprise].* "Dearest"?

*Maitland.* Only in a sad sort of way—I have no dearest.

*Laurel.* You shouldn't be sorry for yourself. It unmans you.

La Maitland. It's better than being vain and in love with the glory of one's misfortune! But I'll say this for you! The Boss is fixing you!

Se La Laurel. I'm her business and her vocation.

Se La Maitland. Oh—who could imagine that a maiden lady could know so much about life.

La Laurel. She's no maiden lady! She might be anyone! Might she be a love child?

Se La Maitland. That's enough now!

La Laurel. How prudish you are! Look how she came to us—with nothing! A lady from a shipwreck! Her brush is new and her dresses. No photographs! No belongings! Oh—she's cut off her golden past like a fish's tail! She's had a life of passion!

Se La Maitland. What words you use!

La Laurel. Does she get any letters? Do you spy on her?

Se La Maitland. Who?

La Laurel. Our Duke's daughter, our hired companion!

Se La Maitland. If you are talking of Miss Madrigal she never gets a letter.

La Laurel. Don't you get a hint or a sound or sigh out of her?

Se La Maitland. No. Do you?

La Laurel. With me she's on guard. I can't surprise or ambush her. She watches me.

La Maitland. Whatever she does you're the better for it.

La Laurel. Mr. Pinkbell doesn't think so.

La Maitland. Poison he is—but influential.

La Laurel. If you ask me rows are coming!

La Maitland. I don't ask you. You're too set up with yourself and pleased as a peacock to be the bone of contention.

La Laurel. She says he's the devil in charge. He's ordered rhododendrons. It took a lorry to deliver them.

La Maitland. What's that got to do with it?

La Laurel. The Boss reversed the labels. She sent them back again.

La Maitland. Whew . . . I'm for Miss Madrigal! I've no mercy on him!

La Laurel. Poor Mr. Pinkbell!

La Maitland. A man's no better when he's dying.

La Laurel. What's in the bottle?

La Maitland. Turps. Turpentine.

La Laurel. Give it to me.

Se La Maitland. How did she take our having a visitor to lunch?

La Laurel. I was to wear this clean frock. Otherwise nothing.

[Looking at it disdainfully.] Straight as an envelope. It looks so adolescent . . . and with a judge coming!

La Maitland. How do I call him?

La Laurel. A judge is called m'lord.

La Maitland. Oh—I wish I could see it!

La Laurel. What?

La Maitland. Him in his robes and his great wig and all that happens!

La Laurel. How you dote on justice!

La Maitland. It's the machinery and the magnificence! It's the grandness!

[Mrs. St. Maugham enters.]

La Mrs. St. Maugham. Heavens, Maitland! Is this a morning for daydreams! . . . [Glancing round in fever of preparation.] The green-handled ivory knives . . . !

La Maitland. Locked away.

La Mrs. St. Maugham. And the key of the safe! It's years since I've seen it! We used to have celery with the Stilton . . . and the Bristol finger bowls . . . and those glasses for the brandy.

La Maitland. They broke.

La Mrs. St. Maugham. There was a gold cigar box that played a tune—that King Edward gave me . . .

La Laurel. Is it gold? I used to keep a mouse in it!

La Mrs. St. Maugham [frantic]. Go and get it!

La Laurel. I can't remember where I put it . . . But isn't the man coming—old?

La Mrs. St. Maugham. Puppy?

La Laurel. The Judge?

La Mrs. St. Maugham. That's what I called him! [Hears noise of bat and ball and rushes to window.] Oh! Are they playing out there with the hard ball again? Can you identify them?

La Maitland. The one with the bat is the fishmonger's son.

La Mrs. St. Maugham. You'll see! Before long! Every summer the boys with their cricket! Every summer a broken window! [Crosses back into room.] We shall want sherry before luncheon. Bring the sweet as well as the dry. [Looking down at the table he has now laid.] Shouldn't there be two wine glasses to each person!

La Maitland. But there's only one wine!

La Mrs. St. Maugham. Put two. I forget the reason. Oh—and the spoons outside the knives, Maitland!

La Maitland [desperately]. You said the opposite the last time!



Mrs. St. Maugham. Never! [*A doubt enters her mind.*] Someone must know! I shall ask Pinkbell.

Laurel. Pinkbell is sulking.

Mrs. St. Maugham. Why?

Laurel. He is full of jealous rage about his Enemy.

Mrs. St. Maugham. What again! And where is she now?

Laurel. She is urging on the agapanthus lilies.

Mrs. St. Maugham. She is what?

Laurel. She is using diluted cow urine. One in seven.

Mrs. St. Maugham [*eager*]. Oh I must go and see at once and watch how that is done. [*Exits.*]

Laurel. Keep behind the escallonia hedge . . . the nurse is watching! [*To Maitland.*] Prisoner six five seven four!

Maitland. Sir!

Laurel. Do you know whose paint box this is?

Maitland. Yours.

Laurel. No. Come here and look at it. [*He moves to her.*] She lent it to me. The Boss. [*Pointing inside the propped-open lid, where she has been rubbing.*] Can you see where the letters are that are burnt in the wood there? Look—under the black mark. Under the smear of paint. It is C. D. . . .

Maitland. And W. It is C. D. W.

Laurel. Take the turpentine! I don't want her to see it. [*Madrigal enters from the garden. They straighten up.*]

Laurel. Oh! Grandloo has just this minute gone to look for you!

Madrigal. I caught sight of her but I thought it best that we should not be seen together.

Laurel. She's head over heels with excitement about our guest. Does one still mind—when one is old—what men think?

Madrigal. One never knows when one is old for certain.

Laurel. She calls him Puppy. I think she was once his mistress.

Madrigal. Do you know that?

Laurel [*casual*]. No.

Madrigal. Then why do you say it?

Laurel. Why does one say things? It's more fun!

Madrigal. If you pretend—and it's believed—where are you?

Laurel [*smiling*]. Where am I?

Maitland. Floating away. The only hold we have on this world is the truth. Oh, to think I'm to feed him. A man who's got so much power!

Laurel. We can talk to him of murder. We've never had a judge here before.

Madrigal. A judge? Is the visitor that's coming a judge?

Maitland. He's here for the Courts. He's on circuit.

Madrigal. What's his name?

Maitland. It's in the newspapers. But the old bastard's got them. They are carried up to him. But I have read them on the doorstep.

Madrigal. Laurel and I will sit at a separate table for luncheon.

Maitland. Not two tables! Not with a guest! Oh—that can't be managed!

Madrigal [*swiftly changing her manner to one of treacherous interest*]. You can manage anything! Tell us what surprise you've arranged for us. What are we going to eat?

Maitland [*instantly taken in*]. Fortnum's have sent the cold cooked chickens. I have carved them. I have ornamented them with mint leaves. There is a salad and salad dressing.

Madrigal. Out of a bottle?

Maitland. Mrs. St. Maugham doesn't believe so.

Madrigal. The bottled is so much better—but one must never say so!

Maitland. Oh, when I have something to do, something to create, everything is clear again.

Madrigal. You look ten years younger.

Maitland [*at the door about to go*]. Oh—if we had guests oftener! The sense of rising to something! [*Exits.*]

Laurel. How you twist him round your finger! [*With a certain suspicious hostility.*] Why do we sit separately from the guest, you and I?

Madrigal. It used to be done at luncheon—in the best houses.

Laurel. Had you a life in them? [*No answer.*] Had you? [*Sharp.*] Who is C. D. W.?

Madrigal [*taken aback, silent. Then*]. My married sister.

Laurel. I thought you had been born unrelated.

Madrigal. Did you?

Laurel. And now you have a sister.

Madrigal. Yes.

Laurel. Suppose you were to drop down dead. To whom should we write?

Madrigal. I shall not drop down dead. [*House telephone rings.*]

Laurel [*picks it up*]. Pinkbell! In a rage! [*Listening a second,*

then holding phone at arm's length as though it had bitten her. Rubs her ear.) He has asked for you! He has practically stung me! Aren't you afraid to speak to him? [Offering phone to Miss Madrigal.]

*Madrigal* [accepting receiver]. Mr. Pinkbell? [Listens.] Yes. It is I, Miss Madrigal. [Listens. *Maitland* enters.] Ah—but on that I disagree. [Waits.] The rhododendrons—I sent them back again. [Listens.] I reversed the labels! And if I could I would reverse everything! And I may yet—we shall see! No, I'm afraid on that you are wrong, Mr. Pinkbell. Your facts are wrong—also your deductions! Yes, and alas it is the wrong time of year to plant them. And the wrong soil. [Listens.] Not at all. Don't blame yourself. Amateur gardeners very often make that mistake. [Hangs up.]

*Maitland*. Blame himself!

*Madrigal*. He made use of sarcasm.

*Maitland* [breathless]. My God, you shall have two tables! You shall have three if you like! And the breast off both the chickens!

*Laurel*. Now there'll be ructions! [Nurse enters and crosses to garden as others watch in silence.]

*Maitland*. And with the Judge coming! In the newspapers they say it'll be a long trial. Why, Miss! Haven't you read it?

*Madrigal* [to *Maitland*]. Are all the glasses polished? [Holding up a glass to the light.]

*Maitland* [eager, unheeding]. D'you think—in Lewes prison . . .

*Madrigal* [gently]. There's a cloud on this one. Time is getting on!

*Maitland* [taking glass from her and holding it]. . . . this murderer, that's lying in his cell . . .

*Madrigal* [change of voice]. No man is a murderer until he is tried!

*Maitland* . . . when he first sees the Judge . . .

*Madrigal*. Why do you think only of the Judge? It's the jury they work on.

*Maitland*. But it seems when you read about such trials, that it must be the Judge.

*Madrigal* [fiercely]. Read more and you'll see it's neither. But fate.

*Maitland*. How can that be?

*Madrigal*. Because, when it starts, there's no free will any more.

*Maitland* [earnestly]. But they work, don't they, to get at the truth?

*Madrigal*. Truth doesn't ring true in a court of law.

*Maitland*. What rings true then?

*Madrigal* [to herself, trancelike]. The likelihood. The probability. They work to make things hang together. [Moving.] What the prisoner listens to there is not his life. It is the shape and shadow of it. With the accidents of truth taken out of it.

[*Maitland* exits.]

*Laurel*. So you've been to a trial?

*Madrigal* [unmoving, dead voice]. I did not say I hadn't.

*Laurel* [same tone]. Why did you not say—when you know what store we lay by it!

*Madrigal* [same tone]. It may be I think you lay too much store by it.

*Laurel* [relaxing her tone and asking as though an ordinary light question]. How did you get in!

*Madrigal* [turning, airy, disguising]. It's surprisingly easy.

*Laurel*. Was it a trial for murder?

*Madrigal*. It would have to be to satisfy you.

*Laurel*. Was it a trial for murder?

*Madrigal*. Have you finished that flower?

*Laurel* [*Laurel* doodles on a scrap of paper and continues till she breaks off to describe her home]. As much as I can. I get tired of it.

*Madrigal*. Shall we read?

*Laurel*. I don't want to read. In my house—at home—there were so many things to do!

*Madrigal*. What was it like?

*Laurel*. My home?

*Madrigal*. Yes.

*Laurel* [lost in thought a moment. Suddenly tipping it out hard]. There was a stream—and a Chinese bridge—and yew trees cut like horses—and a bell on the weather-vane, and a—[sudden small break of pain] little wood . . . called mine . . .

*Madrigal*. Who called it that?

*Laurel*. She did. My mother. And when it was raining we made an army of her cream pots and a battlefield of her dressing table . . . I used to thread her rings on safety pins . . .

*Madrigal.* Why do you sign your name a thousand times?

*Laurel.* I'm looking for which is me.

*Madrigal.* Tomorrow I will light that candle in the green glass candlestick and you can try to paint that.

*Laurel.* Paint the flame?

*Madrigal.* Yes.

*Laurel.* I am tired of fire too, Boss.

*Madrigal.* Let's have a game!

*Laurel [jumping up—eyes gay].* All right. A guessing game!

*Madrigal [steadily].* Very well. Do you know one?

*Laurel [fast].* Maitland and I play one called . . . *The Sky's the Limit!*

*Madrigal.* How do you begin?

*Laurel [sitting down opposite her].* We ask three questions each but if you don't answer one, I get a fourth.

*Madrigal.* What do we guess about?

*Laurel.* Let's guess about each other. *[Full stop.]* We are both mysterious.

*Madrigal [sententious].* The human heart is mysterious. Has it got to be the truth?

*Laurel.* One can lie. But I get better and better at spotting lies. It's so dull playing with Maitland. He's so innocent.

*[Miss Madrigal folds her hands on the table and waits.]*

Now! First question . . . Are you a maiden lady?

*Madrigal [after a moment's reflection].* I can't answer that.

*Laurel.* Why?

*Madrigal.* Because you throw the emphasis so oddly.

*Laurel.* Right. You don't answer! So now I have an extra question: Are you living under an assumed name?

*Madrigal.* No.

*Laurel.* Careful! I'm getting my lie-detector working. Do you take things here at their face value?

*Madrigal.* No.

*Laurel.* Splendid! You're getting the ideal!

*Madrigal [warningly].* This is to be your fourth question.

*Laurel.* Yes. Yes indeed. I must think. . . . I must be careful.

*[Leaning across the table and shooting her question hard at Miss Madrigal.]* What is the full name of your married sister?

*Madrigal [staring a brief second at her].* Clarissa Dalrymple Westerham.

*Laurel [still leaning forward].* Is Dalrymple Westerham a double name?

*Madrigal [leaning back].* You've had your questions.

*Laurel [also sitting back again].* Yes, I have. Now yours. You've only three—unless I pass one.

*Madrigal.* Was your famous affair in Hyde Park on the night of your mother's marriage?

*Laurel [steadily].* About that time.

*Madrigal.* What was the charge by the police?

*Laurel [wary].* The police didn't come into it.

*Madrigal [airily].* Did someone follow you? And try to kiss you?

*Laurel [off her guard].* Kiss me! It was a case of criminal assault!

*Madrigal [following that up].* How do you know that—if there wasn't a charge by the police?

*Laurel [pausing a second. On a different tone].* That's one too many questions! Now for the deduction!

*Madrigal.* You didn't tell me there was a deduction.

*Laurel.* I forgot. It's the whole point. Mine's ready.

*Madrigal.* What do you deduce?

*Laurel [taking a breath—then fast, as though she might be stopped].* . . . That you've changed so much you must have been something quite different. When you came here you were like a rusty hinge that wanted oiling. You spoke to yourself out loud without knowing it. You had been alone. You may have been a missionary in Central Africa. You may have escaped from a private asylum. But as a maiden lady you are an imposter. You have had a sex life of fire and brimstone. *[Changing her tone slightly—slower and more penetrating.]* About your assumed name I am not so sure . . . But you have no married sister.

*Madrigal [lightly].* You take my breath away.

*Laurel [as lightly].* Good at it, aren't I?

*Madrigal.* Yes, for a mind under a cloud.

*Laurel.* Now for your deduction!

*Madrigal [rising].* Mine must keep.

*Laurel.* But it's the game! Where are you going?

*Madrigal [pleasantly].* To my room. To be sure I have left no clues unlocked.

*Laurel.* To your past life?

*Madrigal [exiting, smiling].* Yes. You have given me so much warning.

*[Laurel stands a moment looking after her. Looks around room. Then, as she looks through the crack of the opened door, she takes the silver handbell and rings it*

rather gently—as she would not want her grandmother to hear.]

Maitland [opening door, carrying a small tray with a clean glass and some salt cellars]. Was it you! You're not supposed to ring it. [Is about to go again.]

Laurel. Maitland!

Maitland. I'm busy now! . . . [Going, but unable to go.] . . . Now what is it?

Laurel [conspiratorial—across to him]. The Boss! We played the game!

Maitland [immediately caught]. You didn't dare! You never! What did you ask her?

Laurel. Nothing. And everything. No game would uncover her! But Maitland—she knows about life!

Maitland. What sort of knowledge?

Laurel. Something—intense. Something too dreadful. Something cut in stone over her mind—to warn you when you walk in.

Maitland [wistful]. I too had something dreadful happen to me.

Laurel. But hers is more dreadful! That's why she has no weakness. Her eyes see through me! I'm a mouse to her.

Maitland [tenderly]. Are you afraid—poor dearest? Let Maitland speak to her.

Laurel [lighting up]. You! Oh you tell her—How they brought me . . .

Maitland. Don't talk of it!

Laurel. So small, such a little thing. How I cried . . . [Same acting tone.] They should have called a doctor.

Maitland. It's what I said they should! I argued it! Madame's got her ways! I've got mine! Oh—she would have got the moon for you! But she wasn't the one who put up with you—who fetched and carried—who read to you—You had the right to the best in the world! A lady's child! . . .

Laurel. "The Colonel's lady."

Maitland [instantly furious]. Not that again. I forbid you!

Laurel. Mr. Pinkbell says "Judy O'Grady."

Maitland. I'll have none of it! Out with the devil in you! For shame! And just when I was talking nicely to you!

Laurel. But I've told you . . .

Maitland. Not me you won't tell. That's got no mother! If your mother's black as soot you don't say so to me, girl!

Laurel. I shall scream.

Maitland. Scream away! Now we've got the Boss to get after you! Oh, the relief of it! [He marches off in a dudgeon to door left.]

Laurel [pleading, following him]. No! No—be nice to me! How tough you get—suddenly!

Maitland [turning at door]. It comes over me. The Right comes up in me. Like when they tried to make a soldier of me. All of a sudden I see how things should be!

[Enter Mrs. St. Maugham from garden carrying a great sheaf of Michaelmas daisies.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Maitland, cut the stems three inches shorter. Put them in the blue Italian vase and three aspirin at the bottom . . . [The door right opens and Miss Madrigal appears. Maitland remains standing with the flowers in his arms.] Oh. Oh, indeed! [With a rapid gesture, patting both ears and shaking them as though she had sea water in them—crossing to Miss Madrigal.] My ears are filled with poison! What has the nurse been telling me! The poor old man upstairs is crying with rage!

Madrigal [calmly]. I corrected him. [She comes into the room and closes the door after her.]

Mr. St. Maugham. But for forty years Pinkbell has never been corrected! He is the butler who was the standard of all London!

Madrigal. Let him take his standard from the garden! I corrected his ignorance of details, dates, fundamentals, application of manure. I spoke—not of his spoons and forks—but of his shallow knowledge of the laws of growth. You can leave the room, Maitland.

Mrs. St. Maugham. That should have been said by me! But—go, Maitland! [Maitland exits hurriedly. Mrs. St. Maugham is severe, majestic.] Now—now, Miss Madrigal—this is a crisis!

Madrigal [equally severe, majestic]. Yes. Now you have to make your decision.

Mrs. St. Maugham [taken aback]. I! I have!

Madrigal. Now you have to choose between us. [A moment's silence. Then, taking a step toward Mrs. St. Maugham—with low ferocious accusation.] Is Mr. Pinkbell to let the moment pass when one should layer the clematis? When the gladioli should be lifted? [Advancing another step, menacingly.] Has anyone planted the winter aconites? And the pelargoniums? Who has taken cut-



ting? [Pause. With mounting indignation.] And the red tobacco seed and the zinnias and the seeds of the white cosmos for next year? Do you wish—like an amateur—to buy them!

Mrs. St. Maugham [recoiling a step—in a faltering voice]. I—always have—bought them.

Madrigal [at the height of her passion]. If that is how you wish to live I am no party to it! It is not possible for me to hold communication with minds brought up on bedding plants—bought at the greengrocer's—dying in shallow boxes! [A large gesture at the garden.] Out there every corner is crying aloud! [Turning to door right. Over her shoulder.] Must I be dumb when you and I approach together the time of year when all next summer must stand or fall by us! [Opening door.] Have you time—before death—to throw away season after season? [Exits on a sweep: door does not quite close.]

Mrs. St. Maugham [sinking onto nearest chair]. What have I let in here out of an advertisement!

Madrigal [the door opens again]. The East Wind! [Exits. Door now fully closed.]

Laurel [aghast]. Oh—we shall lose her, Grandloo! Don't sit there! Go after her! Oh think what she knows about the garden!

Mrs. St. Maugham. I am thinking!

Laurel. Oh—she will go if she says she will! [Leaning suddenly over her grandmother.] You don't want to lose her?

Mrs. St. Maugham [sitting upright, galvanized at the thought]. For nothing on earth! I'd sooner strangle Pinkbell! But how is it to be done?

Laurel. With a cord.

Mrs. St. Maugham. How is the reconciliation to be done? And with a guest at luncheon! [Rises and stands in thought.]

Laurel. Weave her in—as you say you used to do. Go after her! Promise her the earth . . . Promise her the garden!

Mrs. St. Maugham. The garden . . . ? [Going to the door, pausing with her hand on the handle, a quick glance upward to the ceiling.] But . . . what shall I say to him?

Laurel [also a glance upward]. You are not afraid of him!

Mrs. St. Maugham [low]. I have always . . . always been afraid of Pinkbell. [Exits. Maitland enters.]

Laurel. If we are to keep the Boss we must fight for her!

Maitland. Fight for her! Have you upset her?

Laurel. I haven't. Not I! She and I understand each other. [Doorbell is heard.] There's the bell.

Maitland. The Judge! [Exits leaving door open. In a few moments the Judge enters, in a light overcoat, followed by Maitland.]

Laurel [radiantly]. Oh—the Judge! Oh—we're all expecting you!

Judge [smiling]. All?

Laurel. I am. And Maitland.

Maitland [nervous]. Pssst!

Laurel. Take his coat. [Maitland jumps to it.] And my companion, Miss Madrigal. And my grandmother.

Judge. So you're the grandchild?

Laurel. Maitland, bring the sherry! [He exits, she calls after him.] The dry and the sweet—remember!

[Maitland exits.]

Judge. Not for me! I never drink at midday.

Laurel. But my grandmother was telling me this morning you used to glory in your palate!

Judge. We change as we grow older. As you'll find, little girl! [Looking at her.] But she isn't a little girl!

Laurel. I am sixteen. But backward.

Judge. Bless my soul! What am I to make of that!

Laurel. Nothing. It's too long a story.

Judge. Then you are Olivia's daughter? Shy Olivia.

Laurel [finger on lips]. Hush. We don't speak of her.

Judge. She is living, I hope, my dear child?

Laurel. In sin, Judge. Oh . . . [Enter Mrs. St. Maugham.]

Mrs. St. Maugham [coming in on a swirl]. So you've met her.

The little girl of my little girl. No grandmother today.

But Puppy . . . [going up to him, laying her hands on his arms] . . . after twenty years! . . . No longer young!

Judge. What do you expect when you measure me by that unsuitable nickname! Am I late? I lost my confounded way.

Mrs. St. Maugham. But you don't drive yourself!

[Maitland reenters with sherry on tray.]

Judge. I do. I'm so poor. And much too old to be poor.

[Suddenly, snatching his handkerchief.] Oh . . . forgive me . . . [Is about to sneeze.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Have you a cold?

Judge. We won't pin it down! A trifle. An allergy. They were threshing in the cornfields. [Sneezes. Puts on a large

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pair of dark sun spectacles.] I can stand London dust—but not the country!

Laurel. But now we can't see you!

Judge. You will! Twenty minutes will cheat my old nose that we are back at the Old Bailey.

[Exit Maitland, and from now on he brings in the cold dishes and places them on the sideboard.]

Mrs. St. Maugham [helping herself to the sherry]. Before we talk of the past . . . how do you find the present?

Judge. Too busy. Too busy. One hasn't time to think one's getting nearer to God.

Laurel [to her grandmother. Anxious.] Have you made it right with her?

Mrs. St. Maugham [to Laurel]. Speak louder. Never whisper. [Offers Judge sherry. He refuses. To Judge.] My Laurel has a companion. A charming woman. Able—but passionate. At war, just now, with Pinkbell.

Laurel [still anxious]. Grandloo . . .

Mrs. St. Maugham. The door was closed, Sweet. One is not at one's best through mahogany. But I heard no sound of packing.

Judge. Pinkbell . . . What it brings back! What incorruptible ritual! How I remember—after the summer glare of Piccadilly—the young man that I was crossing your hall . . . like a pawn across a chessboard.

Mrs. St. Maugham [low, aside]. Had you better go and look for her?

Judge. . . . and how after the first and second footman . . . one arrived at last at Pinkbell. He stood at the foot of the stairs! The apprehension one had of his sour displeasure . . .

Maitland [under his breath—to Laurel]. Not him—he's not meaning! [Lifting his chin slightly at the ceiling.]

Judge. His severity, his corklike dryness—later on, when I had to rebuke the public eye, I remembered Pinkbell! My demeanor on the bench is Pinkbell's.

Maitland [ready to burst—drawing himself up and letting out the words like an explosion]. Everything—now—is at your service—Madame! On the sideboard!

Mrs. St. Maugham. Simply. Simply. Times have changed, Maitland! [Door opens.] Ah here she is! Our Miss Madrigal! [To Miss Madrigal who sweeps in, wrapt in an enigmatic mantle of silence, the temporary dressing gown of her anger and offense.] Let me introduce you!

How you have relieved me! [Judge rises but Madrigal sweeps by with a slight bow and arrives near her own table. To Judge—covering up.] My right hand. My green hand. The mistress of my garden. [Slightly aside.] She has a specialty for the anonymous! [Louder.] Some sherry—Miss Madrigal?

Madrigal [has reached the smaller table and stands behind her chair with her hands on the back of it, her eyes lowered]. No, thank you.

Mrs. St. Maugham. Then—shall we all sit down? [Judge follows her to the table. As she seats herself, glances across as though she had noticed the other table for the first time.] But why this segregation?

Laurel [promptly]. The Boss's orders. [She and Miss Madrigal sit.]

Judge [seating himself. To Laurel]. Are you below the salt? Or are we?

Laurel. Miss Madrigal means this to be the schoolroom.

Mrs. St. Maugham. She is so witty!—Now you can start, Maitland. You can give us your cold chicken. [To Judge.] I don't entertain any more. The fight's over. Even the table is laid with fragments of forgotten ritual.

Judge. Faith is handed down that way.

Mrs. St. Maugham. When Pinkbell is dead we shall not know why we use two glasses for one bottle.

Maitland. And what about the wine, Ma'am?

Laurel. The Judge doesn't drink.

Mrs. St. Maugham. And I have such a bottle of Chablis on the ice for you!

Judge. Alcohol in the middle of the day disperses the old brains I try to keep together.

Laurel [leaning across]. But aren't we to have any!

Mrs. St. Maugham. If we get flushed, Laurel, and too much at our ease . . .

Laurel. I think that will be nice . . .

Mrs. St. Maugham. The reverse, alas, is the truth. But bring it, Maitland. Bring the bottle . . . [Exit Maitland. To Miss Madrigal.] . . . and after lunch shall we show the Judge our roses? [To Judge.] Miss Madrigal has soil-magic! [Leaning over again to Miss Madrigal.] Things grow for you—during the night.

Laurel [as Madrigal doesn't answer]. You mustn't talk to us. We're invisible.

Judge. But you have ears?

Laurel [nodding]. We overhear.

Mrs. St. Maugham. You'll overhear the flavor of the past. Life was full of great rules then. And we high women were terrible. Would you have youth back, Puppy?

Judge. No. For a man youth isn't the triumph.

Mrs. St. Maugham. I'd have it back if I could—even life's reverses! Wouldn't you, Miss Madrigal?

Madrigal [high and sharp]. You have spilled the salt, Laurel.

Mrs. St. Maugham. I was asking . . . do you think grief tastes more sharply than pleasure on the palate?

Madrigal [startled]. I beg your pardon . . .

Mrs. St. Maugham. You can do better than that, Miss Madrigal!

Madrigal. I have not the give and take [into her plate] of ordinary conversation.

[Enter Maitland, carrying a bottle.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Show it to me, Maitland. [He shows it to her.] Now open it.

[He takes it to the sideboard.]

Judge [looking round as Maitland draws the cork]. In that case . . . after luncheon you'll have to let me close my eyes!

Mrs. St. Maugham. What—sleep in the daytime!

Judge. That shocks you? In my job old age is part of the trappings!

Mrs. St. Maugham. One gets old—all the same.

Judge. Judges don't age. Time decorates them. You should come and hear me! Learned and crumpled like a rose leaf of knowledge I snuffle and mumble. I sham deaf. I move into court with the red glory of a dried saint carried in festival . . .

Laurel [to Maitland]. Maitland . . . psst . . . this is what you missed!

Judge. What?

Laurel. Maitland and I want to know.

Mrs. St. Maugham [warningly]. And—Miss Madrigal? Talk is a partaking. Not a usurping.

Laurel. But it's Maitland who collects the Notable Trial Series!

Judge. Maitland?

Maitland [shamed]. Maitland is myself, m'lord.

Laurel. We want to know—then . . . in plainer language—how you will enter court tomorrow!

Judge. In ermine. In scarlet. With a full-bottomed wig.

Magnificent! Seeing me now as I am—[Taking off his sun glasses.] You wouldn't know me!

[A wine glass falls, broken, to the ground.]

Madrigal. Oh!

Mrs. St. Maugham. What's the matter?

Laurel. She broke the glass.

Madrigal. My hand knocked it.

Mrs. St. Maugham. Maitland will get you another. Another glass, please, Maitland.

Maitland. There are no more on the sideboard.

Mrs. St. Maugham. There are plenty in the pantry.

Laurel. Oh—don't make him leave the room while the Judge is talking.

Mrs. St. Maugham. I forgot! [To Judge.] Maitland has been in prison, Puppy.

Judge [to Maitland]. Have you indeed?

Maitland. Five years, m'lord.

Judge [blandly]. I hope not too unpleasant?

Maitland. It's given me a fascination and a horror, m'lord, if you can understand. A little stage-struck.

Judge. Dear me, I hope that's not the usual effect. It's supposed to be a deterrent.

Maitland [waving the bottle a little wildly]. Yes and no. Yes and no. It's hard to explain.

Mrs. St. Maugham. Don't try. Take my second glass and give some wine to Miss Madrigal.

Laurel. When she had one she wasn't offered any.

Maitland. She doesn't drink, Madam.

Mrs. St. Maugham. One's palate is reborn every morning! Fill the glass!

Madrigal. I am not used to wine . . .

Mrs. St. Maugham. One must dissemble!

Madrigal. . . . but today I will have some.

[Maitland pours for Miss Madrigal.]

Mrs. St. Maugham [meaningfully]. It helps one to hold up one's end—at a table.

Laurel [holding out her glass]. And mine! Fill mine! Oh, Judge—go on!

Judge. With what?

Laurel. With tomorrow.

[Maitland stops to pick small bits of broken glass and to do so leaves bottle on Madrigal's table. From then on Madrigal fills her own glass from time to time.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Heavens, Laurel! Talk is a thorough-

bred! One does not say "go on"—as if it were a donkey!

*Judge.* First I am driven to church to pray.

*Laurel.* To pray?

*Judge.* I pray against bias. And against vanity.

*Madrigal* [low]. And—for charity?

*Judge* [smiling]. That's outside my job. [To *Madrigal*.] I am sorry . . . I have forgotten how they call you?

*Madrigal.* The name is *Madrigal*.

*Judge.* I ignore the heart, Miss *Madrigal*, and satisfy justice. [Then to *Mrs. St. Maugham*.] Every little line on my face is written by law, not life.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Oh—to be bound up again, *Puppy*, as you are! To be involved . . . to be back in the hurly-burly . . .

*Judge.* My life's not the hurly-burly! That's for the counsell! I'm the old creature with the memory! I have to remember the things they said they said—but didn't. I have to decide according to dry facts—when appealed to in a passion.

*Laurel.* But tomorrow, *Judge!* Tomorrow!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Stop badgering the *Judge*, *Laurel!*

*Judge* [indulgently]. No! Let her be! On to the law courts! At the gate my trumpeters knock three times. Then blow for my admittance. In a little room behind the court I change my great wig for a small one.

*Laurel* [breathless]. Then . . . ?

*Judge* [histrionic for her amusement]. Then—garbed and toffed with medieval meanings, obscured by ritual, carrying the gloves of justice and the cap of death—on a hollow knock—I go in.

*Laurel.* . . . and the prisoner . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [warning finger, smiling]. The judge deserves a halt! One cannot just ask the next question! Applaud . . . enlarge the arena . . .

*Laurel.* But I want to ask a question!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Not yet! I am trying to weave in . . . Oh whoever invented *two* tables! Can't one *join* them?

*Judge.* Not across fifty years. Not the Past and the Present! *Laurel* [fuming with impatience]. But can I ask the *Judge* . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Ask then! And don't leave our friend out of everything!

*Laurel.* I don't know how to include her—when I want to ask my own question!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Ask Miss *Madrigal* . . .

*Laurel.* But it's the *Judge* I'm asking! *Judge*—aren't you going to try a murderer tomorrow!

*Judge.* That is *not* a subject for discussion.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You see! You see how stiff he can be! You see the resemblancel

*Judge.* To whom?

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [delighted]. To *Pinkbell!*

*Laurel.* But here, today, you are *alone* with us! No one will quote you! [Pleadingly.] And we are mad on murder!

*Judge.* Murder is a sordid thing.

*Laurel.* Oh—you don't think so! Murder cracks open the lives of people you don't know—like cracking open a walnut! Murder is a crisis! *What* must have gone before to make it so! Isn't it true that to you, *Judge*, everything is told for the first time?

*Judge.* In principle.

*Laurel.* But Miss *Madrigal* says that the *Judge* isn't even interested! That he sleeps.

*Madrigal.* I said he *seemed* to sleep.

*Judge.* With one eye open. Like a tiger.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [to *Madrigal*]. Have you been to a trial, then?

*Laurel.* She has. She told me.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You defeat my purpose! Let her answer.

*Judge* [to *Madrigal*, politely]. Have you heard me on the bench, Miss *Madrigal*?

*Madrigal.* When I spoke to *Laurel* of judges it was in a general sense. [Pause.] But I heard you give a judgment.

*Judge.* I hope it was a good one. [No answer.] I trust it was one of my better days.

*Madrigal.* I think, if I remember, that I would not have come to your conclusion.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [to *Judge*]. Miss *Madrigal* has such answers to life! [To *Madrigal*, in quite a different tone]. But that was a strange one.

*Judge.* Well, a judge does not always get to the bottom of a case.

*Madrigal.* No. It takes the pity of God to get to the bottom of things.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* That's enough!

*Madrigal* [overriding]. You must forgive me. You insisted. [Holding up her glass with a smile.] It has removed the inhibitions.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Bring the coffee on!



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Laurel [to Judge]. When it's a murderer—what do you feel?  
Mrs. St. Maugham. What should he feel, Laurel! Judges are  
prisoners by the million!

Laurel [overriding]. But you've got to say, haven't you,  
whether the man's to live or die? Do you suffer?

Madrigal. Nobody will suffer. They all go into a dream  
together!

Laurel [turning]. Even the prisoner?

Madrigal. The prisoner thinks he is at the judgment seat of  
justice. A place where all motives are taken into ac-  
count.

Laurel. And isn't it?

Madrigal. No.

[Mrs. St. Maugham rings.]

Laurel. But Judge, while he listens—if the truth is quite  
different—does he never cry out?

Judge. He may write notes to his counsel.

Laurel. Miss Madrigal says that when all has gone against  
him . . .

Madrigal [wildly]. I am quoted enough! . . .

Laurel. . . . that after the verdict—when he is asked "Have  
you anything to say?" . . .

Madrigal. The prisoner is punch-drunk! And says nothing.

Judge. Not always. Some have said remarkable things. There  
comes to my mind a woman. . . . Have you the trial,  
Maitland, of Connie Dolly Wallis?

Laurel. Of whom? [Laurel seizes flap of Maitland's pocket.]

Maitland [stammering, disengaging himself]. I . . . I haven't  
all the volumes, m'lord. I haven't that one.

Judge. It was not one of my successes. But you should read it  
for what the woman said when she stood before me. It  
was just before I sentenced her. [Tilting his head back,  
looking at the ceiling, fingering his chin thoughtfully  
with his fingers.] Fine eyes, she had. I think I should  
remember them. A tall woman with a face like an  
eagle. "What I have been listening to in court," she said,  
"is not my life. It is the shape and shadow of my life.  
With the accidents of truth taken out of it."

Laurel. What was she tried for, Judge?

Judge. Murder.

Madrigal. I remember the case. [Looking at the Judge.] A  
liar! A pathological imaginer! [Going high.] A girl who  
lied! And lied! And when she told the truth it didn't  
save her!

[Judge rises—leaning forward]. Have you been to many  
trials?

Madrigal. One trial. One. But it isn't the duplication—that  
makes the impression! It's the first time . . . the first  
time . . .

[Tosses cricket ball.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Quick, Maitland! It's the fishmonger's  
boy! . . . the fishmonger's boy . . . [Racing to the front  
door ahead of Maitland.] Catch him! [They exit. Judge  
and Madrigal are left facing each other from the tables.  
Laurel stands looking from one to the other.]

Laurel [to Judge]. Did they hang her? [Judge rises and looks  
at Madrigal.] Did they hang her?

. Curtain comes down as she speaks.

act 3

Twenty minutes after luncheon.

The two tables have been cleared. The Judge is alone, seated deep in thought. Offstage at the sound of a door closing he leans his head back and covers his face with a large handkerchief. Beside him are a small tray, glass and carafe.

Laurel enters from door right.

Madrigal is seen about to enter from garden, but seeing Laurel she draws back. Throughout this scene, until her entry she is seen sporadically (at director's discretion), partly masked by a shrub. She is anxious and waiting obviously for the Judge to be free and alone. It is not the intention that she overhear.

Laurel [whisper]. Judge . . . Judge . . . wake up . . . [The Judge mumbles behind his handkerchief.] If you have your teeth out I will turn my back.

Judge [whipping off his handkerchief]. My teeth are my own, thank God!

Laurel. What have you been thinking of—under that handkerchief?

Judge. I am an old man—trying to sleep, Laurel.

Laurel [urgent]. What did she do?

Judge. Who?

Laurel. In that case you were speaking of.

Judge. In my days young girls didn't pester old judges about murder.

Laurel. You are old-fashioned.

Judge. You will be old-fashioned one day. It's more shocking than getting old.

Laurel. Who died—that they should arrest her?

Judge. Her step-sister.

Laurel [scating herself on stool at his feet]. How was it done? And why? Was it jealousy?

Judge [struggling to his feet and moving away]. If you are going to sit down I am going to stand up.

Laurel [swiveling round and following him with her eyes]. Was she hanged?

Judge. Who? What are you saying?

Laurel. I was asking you about the case you were mentioning.

Judge [shortly]. She was reprieved. There was a doubt.

Laurel. Yours?

Judge [as shortly]. Not mine. Enough has been said, I think.

Laurel. Where do they go—all your murderers—when they don't go to the gallows?

Judge. One doesn't—mercifully—know.

Laurel. Do you remember them?

Judge. In some strange way they are catalogued. As I get older they don't always come to hand.

Laurel. But one would know them by their peculiar habits . . .

Judge. Perhaps. Some mark might lie upon them.

Laurel. If they took their country walks—for instance—back and forth—up and down—wearing out the carpet—in their bedroom—

Judge. What?

Laurel. —with a habit—like a sailor's—of walking in a confined space—might it be that Judge?

[Enter Mrs. St. Maugham softly so as not to disturb the Judge. She sees Laurel.]

Mrs. St. Maugham. Laurel! He was to sleep, child! And now you have disturbed him.

Laurel. I think he was disturbed already! [Exits.]

Mrs. St. Maugham [murmuring as she crosses the room]. My original! . . . so elegant and gentle . . . [Taking her spectacle case from the wall bracket.] What do you think of her?

Judge. I am not fond of young girls.

Mrs. St. Maugham. You are not? You used to be! It was unfortunate about her companion, but your fault, Puppy, for not drinking the wine at luncheon!

Judge. How did you discover her?

Mrs. St. Maugham. I advertised. I took a chance and was justified. Miss Madrigal came to me like rain from heaven.

Judge. With references?

Mrs. St. Maugham. I never listen to what one woman says of another. References are a want of faith in one's own judgment! Finish your sleep, Puppy! Since you must have it. [Exit. Enter Madrigal.]

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*Madrigal.* I am sorry to disturb you . . .*Judge.* On the contrary.*Madrigal.* . . . of course you think . . . this is not where I ought to be. There would be no difficulty . . . I have private means. . . . But it's an understandable job . . . so fitted to me . . . [*Suddenly.*] Do you believe in God? I thought God had given it to me! [*As his eyes are fixed on her. After a pause, desperately.*] Why don't you say something!*Judge.* I had hoped you would be gone by now. I must say—the coincidences at luncheon in retrospect are distasteful!*Madrigal.* So now what will you do?*Judge.* I am an old man, Miss Madrigal, and very learned. I don't know.*Madrigal [ironically].* Judge—I can't wait seven hours . . . twice! You sent me to see my maker on a Tuesday—but that was altered. I have done what they call "time." It was a lifetime. I don't know what you can do to me! What can you do to me?*Judge.* I do not presume to judge you twice.*Madrigal.* Oh, you would come to the same conclusion! Cleverer minds than mine could not convince you! But I learned in nine days that innocence is not enough. There's nothing to gain by talking! You came here by accident . . .*Judge.* I wish I hadn't.*Madrigal.* What can it be to you?*Judge.* Embarrassment. [*Angry.*] And now you have planted me with human perplexity . . . and ethical perplexity. It's most unpleasant!*Madrigal.* I could have slipped away . . .*Judge.* There are worse solutions! Don't you think you might have chosen anything but this! . . . old friends . . . and a child to consider.*Madrigal.* It's the child I'm considering! She needs me. When I came here I thought I had met myself again! But I can't stay here to be a sad piece of news—a curiosity! If I stay—will you tell them who I am?*Judge.* Connie Dolly Wallis—what the devil am I to do with you?*Madrigal.* The name is Madrigal.*Judge.* Of course you had to take a name.*Madrigal.* It's more than a name to me.*Judge.* What I mean goes deeper. Crime, Miss Madrigal, is a flaw in the character.*Madrigal.* I come of a stock—who in some insensate way—cannot accept defeat! My father was cashiered. And after forty years of appeals—reinstated. My grandfather died upright, on his feet. He said God wouldn't give a fallen general houseroom. For fifteen years, and alone, I have hammered out what I am! I did not know I was as dogged as any of them!*Judge.* But even conceding . . .*Madrigal.* You need concede nothing to solitude! It is a teacher!*Judge.* You were a girl of considerable feeling if I remember.*Madrigal.* Not now. I am burnt out, white—like the moon, lunar!*Judge.* Are you not—if I may gently say so—somewhat a stranger to life?*Madrigal.* The girl I was! She was the stranger!*Judge.* You have greatly changed.*Madrigal.* At our last meeting I died. It alters the appearance.*Judge.* Dear me. Oh deary me . . . As if there were not quite enough—this week ahead of me.*Madrigal.* You would have been going. Why not leave?*Judge.* Because I belong to a guild of men—who feel responsibility. And a deep distaste for situations.*Madrigal.* What shall you do?*Judge.* Don't badger me! [*Suddenly.*] What's the matter?*Madrigal [putting her hand over her eyes].* It is that . . . after being so long unknown . . . it makes my head swim to be known . . .[*Olivia enters.*]*Olivia.* Judge! I remember you! You used to be so kind to me when I was little! What was that odd name Mother had for you? *Puppy*? I used to wonder at it.*Judge.* You were a silent little girl.*Olivia.* Yes, I was silent. I have come rather suddenly to fetch my daughter . . .*Madrigal.* To fetch her!*Olivia.* Oh—we met before—do you remember—*Judge [quickly interrupting].* I have to go—can my car be of use, Miss Madrigal? [*Low.*] It would be simple.*Olivia [breaking in].* Oh, don't go—don't go! I'm so glad you are here! It's so lucky.*Judge.* Lucky?



*Olivia.* For me. For with you here I shall put things better.  
*Judge* [takes out his watch and looks at it]. I ought to go. I am not good out of my setting.  
*Olivia.* Surely you are not afraid of life?  
*Judge.* On the contrary—the law has made me nervous of life.  
*Olivia.* No, Judge! Please stay! It's the influence of a stranger. With a third person in the room my mother hears reason better.  
*Mrs. St. Maugham* [cutapulting into the room]. Don't count on it, Olivia! [Forestalling.] I got your letter!  
*Olivia.* But you don't read them. You never did! We've had our orders. We leave tonight for Cyprus.  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Cyprus! Whoever heard of it! It flashed in history and is gone forever! Disraeli—Bismarck—I can't remember! See what comes of marrying an army officer!  
 [Laurel makes her entry from the garden, stands in the archway, silent.]  
*Olivia.* Laurell  
*Laurel.* Have you come alone?  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* We have a guest! No drama!  
*Laurel.* You haven't been in four years.  
*Olivia* [glance at mother]. But now I have come for you! Oh—as I drove down here—all the hedges and the telegraph posts were saying—Laurel . . .  
*Laurel.* Are you going to have a baby?  
*Olivia.* Yes.  
*Laurel.* So there's no room for me!  
*Olivia.* There's room! There's always been room! A heart isn't a house—with a room for each person! I can't wait any longer! Come just as you are . . .  
*Madrigal.* I can pack her things!  
*Laurel.* What are you up to, Boss!  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You are so kind! But there's no need for packing!  
*Laurel.* Did you speak without thinking?  
*Madrigal.* No.  
*Laurel.* But I've told you what she is! I've told you . . .  
*Madrigal.* And do you think I have believed you?  
*Olivia.* There's a seat taken on the plane tonight . . .  
*Laurel.* And fly with you? Have you thought of the risk?  
*Olivia.* On the plane? One doesn't think of that.  
*Laurel.* The risk that—if you take me—I might murder my

stepsister!  
*Judge.* Are you mad?  
*Laurel.* They say so.  
*Madrigal.* Don't give her the triumph of your attention.  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Laurel always uses wild words instead of weeping! Give her time to recover! [To Olivia.] I knew—when you came in like that—we should have trouble with her!  
*Madrigal.* You have missed your effect, Laurel. The moment is passing. Would you care to let it go?  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Now what are you saying!  
*Madrigal.* . . . and your mother is waiting!  
*Laurel.* The sky's the limit, Boss! The sky's the limit!  
*Madrigal.* No time for games.  
*Laurel.* I mean—no limit! I can say anything!  
*Judge.* I would not.  
*Laurel.* Shall I go on?  
*Judge.* No.  
*Laurel.* Shall I?  
*Madrigal.* If you want your scene—take it.  
*Laurel.* How calm you are!  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Miss Madrigal has the calm of a woman in a million!  
*Laurel.* She has the calm of a woman who has been a long time . . . alone.  
*Madrigal.* So we are in for it?  
*Laurel.* No. It can be played on the edge still.  
*Madrigal.* An edge is sharp! One must come down one side or the other . . .  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You see . . . they are always at some amusing invention. They're inseparable. What game, my poppet?  
*Laurel.* A game that two can play.  
 [Enter Maitland.]  
*Laurel.* Maitland! Look! It's my mother!  
*Maitland.* I know it's your mother.  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Must the whole house be gathered!  
*Maitland.* I came for the coffee tray.  
*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Oh, no, you didn't! You came for curiosity!  
*Laurel.* Maitland! Wait, Maitland! How did you know?  
*Maitland.* She has been before . . .  
*Laurel.* How deep you are! I did not know that . . .  
*Maitland.* But I am loyal to Madame. [Goes off fast.]



*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Loyalty! Loyalty died with Queen Victoria! Disregarded in my own house! Disregarded! I am talking to you, Olivia.

*Olivia.* Each time I came you promised you would tell her.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* I had my own reasons! You never would listen! You were never like other girls! The Judge will remember—though daughters forget everything—You remember, Puppy, how I tried with her?

*Judge.* I remember only the result. The shy and gentle daughter.

*Olivia.* Thank you, Judge. But I am not staying any longer! I want to go . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* . . . But you'll not take Laurel! I have a special knowledge of her! To me she is like a porcelain on a shelf—cracked in some marvelous way for the better!

*Olivia.* My mother uses words in her special fashion! For a phrase—she would make capital of anything!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Charming—for a mother to hear! And in front of an old friend! If—at a luncheon party—you want to have out the damage of a lifetime . . .

*Madrigal.* Let's have it!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* What!

*Madrigal.* I beg your pardon.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Were you objecting?

*Madrigal.* Yes. I think the wine has cut the caution.

[*The Judge motions Mrs. St. Maugham to stop.*]

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Don't gesture at me, Puppy!

*Judge.* Anything may precipitate . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* What?

*Madrigal.* Anything!

*Judge.* Will you come into another room—and I will advise you?

*Madrigal.* No. Your advice is foreseen! That I must leave here—but it is the *child* who must leave! Laurel must go, Mrs. St. Maugham, go with her mother.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You take a great liberty!

*Madrigal.* Yes, now I have a sense of liberty.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* That is not what I meant!

*Madrigal.* No, but it is what I mean!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* This girl of special soil! Transplant her?

*Madrigal.* You have not a green thumb, Mrs. St. Maugham, with a plant or a girl. This is a house where nothing good can be made of her!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* My house!

*Madrigal.* Your house! Why even your garden is demented! By the mercy of God you do not keep an animal!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* You are mad! You are a monster!

*Madrigal.* No, I am a woman who has lost touch with things. With indulgence. With excuses, with making merry over bad things. The light—and the shade—has been hammered out of me. I am as humorless as a missionary.

*Judge.* Why complicate life? The past is over.

*Madrigal.* If the past is useful, I shall not hesitate to use it.

What I have been has long been done with—[*To Laurel.*] What you are is yet to come. This is an end to your fancy life.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Stop the woman, Puppy! Stop her!

*Olivia.* But Miss Madrigal has something to say!

*Judge.* No, she hasn't.

*Madrigal.* Oh! I am not inexperienced. You must allow me a certain bias.

*Judge.* Have a care!

*Madrigal.* I am beyond caring!

*Laurel.* Boss, Boss, don't go too far!

*Madrigal.* Don't drive me to it! Who else can tell you that when your moment comes when truth might serve you—you will not make it sound.

*Laurel.* But everybody knows about me! They *know* what happened!

*Madrigal.* They know what you have told them! Shall we now deprive your grandmother of your famous seduction?

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* At what a moment!

*Olivia* [*turning to her mother*]. But is that what she said? Is that what you have believed?

*Madrigal.* Wait! Let the child tell you.

*Laurel.* You were not there!

*Madrigal.* I did not need to be there. The story can be read backwards! What newspaper did the cook take in, I wonder.

*Olivia.* A child of twelve!

*Madrigal.* An only child is never twelve! [*Crossing to Laurel.*] Do you cry?

*Laurel.* No.

*Madrigal.* I should cry.

*Laurel.* I am not near crying.

*Madrigal.* I should cry—with relief—that your mother

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wants you! You told me you were looking for which is you. Find the right one! [Pause.] Be careful! Even a mother can't wait forever.

Olivia. But why did she pretend? Why was it done?

Madrigal. Odd things are done for love.

[Laurel runs to door, halts and turns at door.]

Olivia [half crossing to her]. Give it up, Laurel! It isn't worth going on.

Laurel [to Madrigal]. Has it got to be the truth?

Madrigal [half smiling]. One can lie. . . . But truth is more interesting!

Laurel. . . . and you get better and better at spotting it! [Taking her mother's hand.] You win, Boss!

[They exit.]

Madrigal [calling after them through the open door]. Your blue linen dress is folded in the top drawer. Look for your yellow striped one . . .

Mrs. St. Maugham [gripping tooth and nail to the behavior of a hostess, mincingly forcing out the tin clatter of the words. To the Judge]. What a precipitation—of melodrama—your visit's fallen on! [Glancing at the door—flame beginning to run in her tone.] Blood is thicker than water I had thought but it appears not!

Judge. My dear—my dear old friend. . . .

Mrs. St. Maugham. If you were on your knees you wouldn't stop me! [Turning on Madrigal.] That was a black patch, Miss Madrigal! If there's a straw to be lit—you've set a match to it! What collusion behind my back! [To Judge.] You've been a witness to it!

Judge [edging to the door]. You would be better talking alone, I think . . .

Mrs. St. Maugham. Stay where you are, Puppy! Men are such cowards! In the name of discretion or a cool head or some such nonsense—they leave one in the lurch. . . .

Judge. So much better . . . better not say anything!

Mrs. St. Maugham. There's an undependability in high-minded men! They sit—objective! When they should be burning beside one! But—when things become personal . . . what would you say if your clerk put your wig on!

Judge [unhappily]. I should reflect at length, I expect, and decide on inaction.

Mrs. St. Maugham. So you would! [Turning.] But I've been robbed of my granddaughter!

## THE CHALK GARDEN

Madrigal [calmly]. If you face facts, Mrs. St. Maugham, you are tired of her.

Mrs. St. Maugham [faintly]. Be a man, Puppy! Put her out! Put her out in the street for me!

[The Judge makes an unhappy movement of recoil.]

Mrs. St. Maugham [with mounting passion]. The flaming impudence! The infamy! [Panting.] And I—lavish! Trusting . . . leaning . . . But I've been leaning on a demon! In your heart—every penny should have scalded you! I've been betrayed! Don't talk to me of wages! You'll see none of them!

Judge [to Madrigal]. Perhaps this is where I may be of some use?

Madrigal [smiling gently]. No, Judge. Not now. Fifteen years ago you might have been.

Mrs. St. Maugham [starting forward]. Do you dare to speak! What are these innuendoes?

Judge [low. To Madrigal]. Least said, soonest mended.

Mrs. St. Maugham. Hints—since lunch—have been flying like gnats from side to side of the room! [Getting to her feet.] Nobody tells me—in plain English—anything! Have you two met before then?

Madrigal [matter of fact]. I was once sentenced to death by the Judge here.

Mrs. St. Maugham [for a second silenced]. Ah.

Judge [simultaneously]. Ill-advised. Ill-advised.

Mrs. St. Maugham [with a retake of energy]. Oh! . . . If I were not seventy—this would revive me! To death! . . . But there you are!

Madrigal. Those who still live—have to be somewhere.

Mrs. St. Maugham. If it were true . . . it's outrageous. And if I start putting two and three together—Good heavens, how can you be living at all!

Judge. There was a doubt.

Mrs. St. Maugham. What I doubt is my senses! The thing's impossible! Either I don't believe it—or it's quite private! Besides if it were true it would be—most inconvenient! Oh . . . I would like the situation annulled! And the conversation put back . . .

Judge. To where?

Mrs. St. Maugham. To where it hadn't happened! And at the interview—how dared you—I let pass—so many excellent applicants in favor of you!

Madrigal [mildly]. No—really—it was not so.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [struck by another thought]. . . . and the references! The references I had . . . I am amazed! You must have forged them!

*Madrigal*. I gave you none.

*Mrs. St. Maugham*. Why?

*Madrigal* [simply]. I had none.

*Judge* [explaining mildly]. This lady came to you out of prison.

*Mrs. St. Maugham*. I would have thought a university. Oh—you have been most satisfactory I thought—but now—a light is thrown! I remember replies—which now I see to be insolences! I can smell backwards a dozen indiscretions! I'm growing more and more thunder-struck! Prison . . . !

*Madrigal*. But—

*Mrs. St. Maugham*. Don't speak to me, if you please! You who come out of God knows what ancient Publicity! Blazing—from heaven knows what lurid newspapers! A Headline! A felon! How can you lurch with me, Puppy, and know such things! Oh I'm dumbfounded! What's more, I've been defrauded! Go! Pack your bags! Pack your bags! Out of the house with you!

[Enter Maitland, on a light wind of impatience.]

*Maitland*. I can't wait. . . . I can't wait forever! [To Mrs. St. Maugham, who is practically collapsed.] Is she . . . who we think she is!

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [in a faint groan]. She is.

*Maitland* [turning radiantly to Madrigal]. Oh . . . Miss . . . Oh . . . Madame.

[Madrigal gives tiny bow.]

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [practically "out"—but terrible]. Heavens! What an anticlimax! What veneration! One would think the woman was an actress!

*Maitland*. When one is a humble man one can't express it. I think it is—to think—that after such a gale she is with us.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [feebly]. That's enough, Maitland.

*Maitland* [backing toward the door]. To have stood one's life before the judge here . . . if you'll pardon me, m'lord, even though you eat your lunch like other men—[Turning sharply as the door opens.] Here's the nurse! All in a dither . . .

*Nurse* [rushing in. Stopping short at sight of guests]. Mrs. St. Maugham . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [in a daze]. We have friends now. It can wait, Nurse.

*Nurse*. Mr. Pinkbell is dead.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [still dazed]. You can go, Nurse. I'll attend to it later. [Nurse, aghast, backs to the door.] I say we have friends, Nurse!

[Nurse exits in horrified flounce.]

*Judge*. But . . . good heavens . . . Pinkbell!

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [dazed]. He is in expert hands.

*Maitland*. But the poor old bastard . . . He has passed over!

*Mrs. St. Maugham*. Is that what she said?

*Maitland*. They've downed him—stiff as a rod. He hasn't tomorrow . . . [Struck by a worse thought.] He hasn't the rest of today!

*Mrs. St. Maugham*. Dead . . . and my past goes with him . . .

*Judge*. Dear me, dear me. I am shocked. First to know he is alive. Then to learn that he isn't.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [musing]. When I was a young woman he educated me . . . my manner with distinguished foreigners. . . . He saw to my Ascots. He bought my wine for me. Is there an afterlife, Puppy?

*Judge* [starting to go, gathering up his spectacle case, etc. Smiling]. I don't give judgments easily. But in this life you will miss him.

*Mrs. St. Maugham*. Alas, no. [Getting up, crossing room to him.] Shall you come again, Puppy? When the excitement of your week is over?

*Judge* [shaking his head]. Too much happens in this house—for an old man.

*Mrs. St. Maugham*. I am coming with you to your car. Everyone—accusing everyone—has been tiring. Stay with her, Maitland, I shan't be long. Keep an eye on her. [Exits past Judge.]

*Judge*. Good-bye, Miss Madrigal [Turns back from door]. After all . . . have you liked the life here?

*Madrigal*. It has a hollow quality which soothes me.

*Judge*. But what shall you do?

*Madrigal*. I shall continue to explore—the astonishment of living!

*Judge* [as he turns away—to himself]. No man's infallible. [He exits.]

*Maitland* [in eager excitement, directly the door is closed]. Can I come where you're going? I will serve you. We could throw our five and fifteen years away from us!

In the dustbin!

*Madrigal.* Not mine! Not my fifteen years! I value them! They made me.

*Maitland* [ecstatic]. Ah—that's the strength I hanker after! That's what I've been missing! I was born to worship the stars! But I've never known which stars . . . [spreads his arms wide] . . . when the whole heaven's full of them! [*Mrs. St. Maugham* comes in. On the same high note.] I wish to give my notice!

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [crossing the room]. Again! You choose such odd moments!

*Maitland.* I wish to accompany Miss *Madrigal*!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Where to?

*Maitland.* Where she's going.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Yet now you have it all your own way, *Maitland*.

*Maitland* [winching, glancing up at the ceiling]. Don't say that!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* I'll talk to you later . . . I must go up . . . [As she leaves, to herself.] . . . stiff as a rod . . . the poor old bastard . . . [Exits.]

*Madrigal* [instantly turning to *Maitland* and talking in clear articulated haste like someone leaving important messages they have hardly time to deliver] . . . thin out the seedlings—as I showed you . . . the lilac wants pruning . . . and the rock-rose and the pasque flower . . .

*Maitland* [trying to interrupt]. But . . .

*Madrigal* [rapidly, in desperate haste, glancing once at *Pinkbell's* door in fear of being interrupted]. . . tie in the wild grape! Cut the heads on the moss rose . . .

*Maitland.* But . . .

*Madrigal* [taking no notice]. . . the asphodel and the dew plant . . .

*Maitland.* But what's to become of my decision!

*Madrigal* [in irritated despair that he doesn't listen]. Oh—don't give notice so often! It's a fidgety habit!

[Enter *Olivia* and *Laurel*.]

*Maitland.* You look a proper daughter!

[Enter *Mrs. St. Maugham*.]

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Leave us, *Maitland*! [*He* exits.] Well, *Laurel* . . . now you have a mother! It's not so rare! Every kitten has one!

*Laurel* [looking from *Mrs. St. Maugham* to *Madrigal*]. *Grandloo* . . .

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [still rather sharp from several reasons . . . that she has been beaten in battle, also that *Madrigal* is in the room and she doesn't want *Laurel* near her]. Don't begin badly! Where are your gloves? [With a dryness that really is to cover the fact she may show emotion. Her hand up to ward her off.] No good-byes! I'm too old for them . . .

*Laurel.* *Grandloo* . . .

*Olivia.* Go to the car, darling.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Begin by obeying. [*Laurel* exits.] Well, *Olivia*. What are you going to do with her? Teach her the right things? After I've taught her the wrong ones?

*Olivia.* You're like an old Freethinker—who finds he has a son a clergyman!

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Is that so dreadful?

*Olivia.* No . . . but to you inscrutable. [Toward door, then turning.] Why did you want her?

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [caught off-guard]. Is it a crime to want to be remembered? [Dryly.] The Pharaohs built the Pyramids for that reason.

*Olivia* [at door, quietly]. The thoughts of a daughter are a kind of memorial.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* Is that an obituary?

*Olivia* [wryly]. Only to the past, Mother. [Exit *Olivia*.]

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [rushing energetically to window]. Leave her hair long! It gives her the choice later! [A pause; then louder.] Keep her bust high! [Then slowly back into room. To *Madrigal*.] What do women do—in my case?

*Madrigal* [looking back at her]. They garden.

*Mrs. St. Maugham.* But it seems I am not very good at that either! Are your things packed?

*Madrigal* [coldly]. I am a light-footed traveler.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [holding out the catalogue]. Before you go will you point out the white crinum? [She hands it to her. *Madrigal* takes it and looks down it. Watching her.] You, who have an impertinent answer to everything—is there an afterlife?

*Madrigal* [stooping over a table and marking the catalogue without looking up]. Certainly.

*Mrs. St. Maugham* [surprised]. You say—"certainly"?

*Madrigal* [leaving catalogue open on the table]. One does not sit alone for fifteen years without coming to conclusions.

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