

**MRS. BRADMAN.** George, dear, it's getting terribly late, we really must go home. You have to get up so early in the morning.

**DR. BRADMAN.** You see? The moment I begin to talk about anything that really interests me, my wife interrupts me.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** You know I'm right, darling – it's past eleven.

**DR. BRADMAN.** (*Moves to CHARLES center.*) I'll do a little reading up on the whole business; just for the fun of it.

**CHARLES.** You must have a drink before you go.

**DR. BRADMAN.** No, really, thank you. Violet's quite right, I'm afraid. I have got to get up abominably early tomorrow. I have a patient being operated on in Canterbury.

(**MRS. BRADMAN** goes to **RUTH**, below the sofa.  
**RUTH** rises.)

**MRS. BRADMAN.** It has been a thrilling evening. I shall never forget it. It was sweet of you to include us.

**DR. BRADMAN.** Goodnight, Mrs. Condomine. Thank you so much.

**CHARLES.** You're sure about the drink?

**DR. BRADMAN.** Quite sure, thanks.

**RUTH.** We'll let you know if we find any poltergeists whirling about.

**DR. BRADMAN.** I should never forgive you if you didn't.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** Come along, darling.

(*The BRADMANS exeunt, followed by CHARLES.*)

(*RUTH crosses to the piano, leans over ELVIRA and gets a cigarette and lights it, then crosses back to the fireplace as CHARLES comes back into the room.*)

**RUTH.** Well, darling?

**CHARLES.** (*Left end of the sofa. Absently.*) Well?

**RUTH.** Would you say the evening had been profitable?

**CHARLES.** Yes – I suppose so.

**RUTH.** I must say it was extremely funny at moments.

**CHARLES.** Yes – it certainly was.

**RUTH.** What's the matter?

**CHARLES.** The matter?

**RUTH.** Yes. You seem old, somehow. Do you feel quite well?

**CHARLES.** Perfectly. I think I'll have a drink. Do you want one?

**RUTH.** No, thank you, dear.

**CHARLES.** (*Moving to the drinks table and pouring out a whisky and soda.*) It's rather chilly in this room.

**RUTH.** Come over by the fire.

**CHARLES.** I don't think I'll make any notes tonight. I'll start fresh in the morning.

(**CHARLES** turns, the glass in his hand. He sees **ELVIRA** and drops the glass on the floor.)

My God!

**RUTH.** Charles!

**ELVIRA.** That was very clumsy, Charles dear.

**CHARLES.** Elvira! – then it's true – it was you!

**ELVIRA.** Of course it was.

**RUTH.** (*Starts to go to CHARLES.*) Charles – darling Charles – what are you talking about?

**CHARLES.** (*To ELVIRA.*) Are you a ghost?

**ELVIRA.** (*Crossing below the sofa to the fire.*) I suppose I must be. It's all very confusing.

**RUTH.** (*Moving to right of CHARLES and becoming agitated.*) Charles – what do you keep looking over there for? Look at me. What's happened?

**CHARLES.** Don't you see?

**RUTH.** See what?

**CHARLES.** Elvira.

**RUTH.** (*Staring at him incredulously.*) Elvira!!

**CHARLES.** (*With an effort at social grace.*) Yes. Elvira dear, this is Ruth. Ruth, this is Elvira.

(*RUTH tries to take his arm. CHARLES retreats downstage left.*)

**RUTH.** (*With forced calmness.*) Come and sit down, darling.

**CHARLES.** Do you mean to say you can't see her?

**RUTH.** Listen, Charles – you just sit down quietly by the fire and I'll mix you another drink. Don't worry about the mess on the carpet, Edith can clean it up in the morning.

(*She takes him by the arm.*)

**CHARLES.** (*Breaking away.*) But you must be able to see her – she's there – look – right in front of you – there!

**RUTH.** Are you mad! What's happened to you?

**CHARLES.** You can't see her?

**RUTH.** If this is a joke, dear, it's gone quite far enough. Sit down, for God's sake, and don't be idiotic.

**CHARLES.** (*Clutching his head.*) What am I to do! What the hell am I to do!

**ELVIRA.** I think you might at least be a little more pleased to see me. After all, you conjured me up.

**CHARLES.** I didn't do any such thing.

**ELVIRA.** Nonsense; of course you did. That awful child with the cold came and told me you wanted to see me urgently.

**CHARLES.** It was all a mistake, a horrible mistake.

**RUTH.** Stop talking like that, Charles. As I told you before the joke's gone far enough.

**CHARLES.** I've gone mad, that's what it is, I've just gone raving mad.

**RUTH.** (*Pouring out some brandy and bringing it to CHARLES below the piano.*) Here – drink this.

**CHARLES.** (*Mechanically – taking it.*) This is appalling!

**RUTH.** Relax.

**CHARLES.** How can I relax? I shall never be able to relax again as long as I live.

**RUTH.** Drink some brandy.

**CHARLES.** (*Drinking it at a gulp.*) There! Now are you satisfied?

**RUTH.** Now sit down.

**CHARLES.** Why are you so anxious for me to sit down? What good will that do?

**RUTH.** I want you to relax. You can't relax standing up.

**ELVIRA.** African natives can. They can stand on one leg for hours.

**CHARLES.** I don't happen to be an African native.

**RUTH.** You don't happen to be a *what*?

**CHARLES.** (*Savagely.*) An African native!

**RUTH.** What's that got to do with it?

**CHARLES.** It doesn't matter, Ruth; really it doesn't matter.

(**CHARLES** sits in the armchair. **RUTH** moves above him.)

We'll say no more about it. See, I've sat down.

**RUTH.** Would you like some more brandy?

**CHARLES.** Yes, please.

(**RUTH** goes up to the drinks table with the glass.)

**ELVIRA.** Very unwise. You always had a weak head.

**CHARLES.** I could drink you under the table.

**RUTH.** There's no need to be aggressive, Charles. I'm doing my best to help you.

**CHARLES.** I'm sorry.

**RUTH.** (*Coming to CHARLES with the brandy.*) Here, drink this; and then we'll go to bed.

**ELVIRA.** Get rid of her, Charles; then we can talk in peace.

**CHARLES.** That's a thoroughly immoral suggestion. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

**RUTH.** What is there immoral in that?

**CHARLES.** I wasn't talking to you.

**RUTH.** Who were you talking to, then?

**CHARLES.** Elvira, of course.

**RUTH.** To hell with Elvira!

**ELVIRA.** There now - she's getting cross.

**CHARLES.** I don't blame her.

**RUTH.** What don't you blame her for?

**CHARLES.** (*Rising and backing downstage left a pace.*) Oh, God!

**RUTH.** Now, look here, Charles. I gather you've got some sort of plan behind all this. I'm not quite a fool. I suspected you when we were doing that idiotic séance.

**CHARLES.** Don't be so silly. What plan could I have?

**RUTH.** I don't know. It's probably something to do with the characters in your book - how they, or one of them, would react to a certain situation. I refuse to be used as a guinea pig unless I'm warned beforehand what it's all about.

**CHARLES.** (*Moving a couple of paces towards RUTH.*) Elvira is here, Ruth - she's standing a few yards away from you.

**RUTH.** (*Sarcastically.*) Yes, dear, I can see her distinctly - under the piano with a zebra!

**CHARLES.** But Ruth -

**RUTH.** I am not going to stay here arguing any longer.

**ELVIRA.** Hurray!

**CHARLES.** Shut up!

**RUTH.** (*Incensed.*) How dare you speak to me like that?

**CHARLES.** Listen, Ruth. Please listen -

**RUTH.** I will not listen to any more of this nonsense. I am going up to bed now; I'll leave you to turn out the lights. I shan't be asleep. I'm too upset. So you can come in and say goodnight to me if you feel like it.

**ELVIRA.** That's big of her, I must say.

**CHARLES.** Be quiet. You're behaving like a guttersnipe.