

Elyot
&
Sibyl

Elyot Are you going to understand me, and manage me?

Sibyl I'm going to try to understand you.

Elyot Run me without my knowing it?

Sibyl (*withdrawing slightly*) I think you're being a little unkind.

Elyot No, I don't mean to be. I was only wondering.

Sibyl Well?

Elyot I was wondering what was going on inside your mind, what your plans are really?

Sibyl (*turning to him*) Plans; oh, Elli!

Elyot Apart from loving me and all that, you must have plans.

Sibyl I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about.

Elyot Perhaps it's subconscious then, age-old instincts working away deep down, mincing up little bits of experience for future use, watching me carefully like a little sharp-eyed, blonde kitten.

Sibyl How can you be so horrid.

Elyot I said kitten, not cat.

Sibyl Kittens grow into cats.

Elyot Let that be a warning to you. (*He looks out front*)

Sibyl (*moving to him and slipping her arm through his again*) What's the matter, darling, are you hungry?

Elyot Not a bit.

Sibyl You're very strange all of a sudden, and rather cruel. Just because I'm feminine. It doesn't mean that I'm crafty and calculating.

Elyot I didn't say you were either of those things.

Sibyl (*breaking L*) I hate these half-masculine women who go banging about.

Elyot I hate anybody who goes banging about.

Sibyl I should think you needed a little quiet womanliness after Amanda.

Elyot (*moving away R*) Why will you keep on talking about her?

Sibyl It's natural enough, isn't it?

Elyot (*sitting on the balustrade*) What do you want to find out?

Sibyl Why did you really let her divorce you?

Elyot She divorced me for cruelty, and flagrant infidelity. I spent a whole weekend at Brighton with a lady called Vera Williams. She had the nastiest looking hair brush I have ever seen.

Sibyl Misplaced chivalry, I call it. Why didn't you divorce her?

Elyot It would not have been the action of a gentleman, whatever that may mean.

Sibyl I think she got off very lightly.

Elyot (*rising*) Once and for all will you stop talking about her.

Sibyl Yes, Elli dear.

Elyot (*facing out front*) I don't wish to see her again or hear her name mentioned.

Sibyl (*facing out front*) Very well, darling.

Elyot Is that understood?

Sibyl Yes, darling. (*She pauses*) Where did you spend your honeymoon?

Elyot St Moritz. Be quiet.

Sibyl I hate St Moritz.

Elyot So do I, bitterly.

Sibyl I thought what Elyot said was funny.

Victor Well, all I can say is, you must have a very warped sense of humour.

Sibyl That's better than having none at all.

Victor I fail to see what humour there is in incessant trivial flippancy.

Sibyl You couldn't be flippant if you tried until you were blue in the face.

Victor I shouldn't dream of trying.

~~Amanda and Elyot pick up their cups~~

Sibyl It must be very sad not to be able to see any fun in anything.

~~Amanda looks at Elyot. He winks at her again, and she smiles. They hold their cups in mid-air, then put them down again~~

Victor Fun! I should like you to tell me what fun there is in—

Sibyl I pity you, I really do. I've been pitying you ever since we left for Paris.

Victor I'm sure it's very nice of you, but quite unnecessary.

Sibyl And I pity you more than ever now.

~~Amanda and Elyot settle down to eating their breakfast~~

Victor Why now particularly?

Sibyl If you don't see why, I'm certainly not going to tell you.

Victor I see no reason for you to try to pick a quarrel with me. I've tried my best to be pleasant to you, and comfort you.

Sibyl You weren't very comforting when I lost my trunk.

~~Elyot passes jam to Amanda~~

Victor I have little patience with people who go about losing luggage.

Sibyl I don't go about losing luggage. It's the first time I've lost anything in my life.

Victor I find that hard to believe.

Sibyl Anyhow, if you'd tipped the porter enough, everything would have been all right. Small economics never pay; it's absolutely no use—

Victor (*banging his hand on the table and rising*) Oh, for God's sake, be quiet!

Sibyl (*rising*) How dare you speak to me like that!

~~Amanda and Elyot lean on the table and watch~~

Victor Because you've been irritating me for days.

Sibyl (*outraged*) Oh!

Victor You're one of the most completely idiotic women I've ever met.

Sibyl And you're certainly the rudest man I've ever met!

Victor Well then, we're quits, aren't we?

Sibyl (*shrilly*) One thing, you'll get your deserts all right.

Victor What do you mean by that?

Sibyl You know perfectly well what I mean. And it'll serve you right for being weak-minded enough to allow that woman—(*she points to Amanda*)—to get round you so easily.

Victor
&
Sibyl

Sibyl
&
Amanda

Act III

47

~~Amanda (brightly) Well, what's happened?~~

~~Victor (sullenly) Nothing's happened.~~

~~Amanda You ought to be ashamed to admit it.~~

~~Sibyl Where's Elyot?~~

~~Victor In there.~~

~~Amanda What's he doing?~~

~~Victor (turning angrily away) How do I know what he's doing? (He moves up to the piano and sits on the chair, facing up stage)~~

~~Amanda (moving C) If you were half the man I thought you were, he'd be bandaging himself.~~

~~Sibyl (crossing to R C; with defiance) Elyot's just as strong as Victor.~~

~~Amanda (turning) I should like it proved.~~

~~Sibyl There's no need to be so vindictive.~~

~~Amanda (arms folded) You were abusing Elyot like a pickpocket to me a little while ago, now you are standing up for him.~~

~~Sibyl I'm beginning to suspect that he wasn't quite so much to blame as I thought.~~

~~Amanda Oh really?~~

~~Sibyl You certainly have a very unpleasant temper.~~

~~Amanda It's a little difficult to keep up with your rapid changes of front, but you're young and inexperienced, so I forgive you freely.~~

~~Sibyl (heatedly) Seeing the depths of degradation to which age and experience have brought you, I'm glad I'm as I am!~~

~~Amanda (with great grandeur) That was exceedingly rude. I think you'd better go away somewhere. (She waves her hand vaguely, and moves up to the piano. She stands leaning against it, R of Victor)~~

~~Sibyl After all, Elyot is my husband.~~

~~Amanda Take him with you, by all means.~~

~~Sibyl If you're not very careful, I will! (She goes over to Elyot's door and bangs on it) Elyot—Elyot—~~

~~Elyot (inside) What is it?~~

~~Sibyl Let me in. Please, please let me in; I want to speak to you!~~

~~Amanda Heaven preserve me from nice women!~~

~~Sibyl Your own reputation ought to do that.~~

~~Amanda (irritably) Oh, go to hell!~~

~~Elyot opens the door, and Sibyl disappears inside~~

~~(looking at Victor) Victor.~~

~~Victor (without turning) What?~~

~~Amanda (sadly) Nothing. (She goes behind the settee, R. She looks at Victor, feebly pushes at the settee and grunts)~~

~~Victor turns, sees her, rises and comes down to help~~

~~Victor Where does it go?~~

~~Amanda Over there.~~

~~Victor takes the upstage end of the settee and swings it almost parallel with the footlights~~

Elyot It might have been worse. (*Moving up R, putting on his jacket*)

Victor I'm glad you think so.

Elyot (his back to Victor) I do wish you'd stop about being so glad about everything.

Victor What do you intend to do? (*He moves up to the waist of the piano*)

That's what I want to know. What do you intend to do? (*He raps the piano three times*)

Elyot I don't know, I don't care.

Victor I suppose you realize that you've broken that poor little woman's heart?

Elyot Which poor little woman?

Victor Sibyl, of course.

Elyot Oh, come now, not as bad as that. She'll get over it, and forget all about me.

Victor I sincerely hope so . . . for her sake.

Elyot Amanda will forget all about me, too. (*He crosses to L*) Everybody will forget all about me. I might just as well lie down and die in fearful pain and suffering, nobody would care.

Victor Don't talk such rot.

Elyot You must forgive me for taking rather a gloomy view of everything, but the fact is, I suddenly feel slightly depressed.

Victor (crossing to Elyot) I intend to divorce Amanda, naming you as co-respondent.

Elyot (picking up Victor's jacket) Very well.

Victor And Sibyl will divorce you for Amanda. It would be foolish of either of you to attempt any defence.

Elyot Quite.

Victor And the sooner you marry Amanda again, the better.

Elyot I'm not going to marry Amanda.

Victor What?

Elyot (holding out Victor's jacket) She's a vile-tempered, wicked woman.

Victor (turning his back to Elyot and putting one arm in the jacket) You should have thought of that before.

Elyot I did think of it before.

Victor (firmly) You've got to marry her.

Elyot I'd rather marry a ravaging leopard.

Victor (turning to him angrily and snatching his jacket) Now look here. I'm sick of all this shilly-shallying. You're getting off a good deal more lightly than you deserve; you can consider yourself damned lucky I didn't shoot you.

Elyot (with sudden vehemence) Well, if you had a spark of manliness in you, you would have shot me. You're all fuss and fume, one of these cotton wool Englishmen. I despise you. (*He crosses up R*)

Victor (through clenched teeth) You despise me?

Elyot Yes, utterly. You're nothing but a rampaging gas bag!

He goes off into his room and slams the door. Victor, speechless with fury, puts on his jacket and crosses to the settee, R. Amanda and Sibyl enter

~~stand? I don't care. I don't mind if they bark, and roll about like
hoops.~~

Elyot takes some more brandy

Elyot (after a slight pause) Did you see much of Peter Burden after our divorce?

Amanda Yes, I did, quite a lot.

Elyot (coming down L) I suppose you let him kiss you a good deal more then.

Amanda Mind your own business.

Elyot You must have had a riotous time.

Amanda doesn't answer

No restraint at all—very enjoyable—you never had much anyhow. (He moves up L)

Amanda You're quite insufferable; I expect it's because you're drunk.

Elyot (stopping and turning) I'm not in the least drunk.

Amanda You always had a weak head.

Elyot (coming to the L end of the settee) I think I mentioned once before that I have only had three minute liqueur glasses of brandy the whole evening long. A child of two couldn't get drunk on that.

Amanda On the contrary, a child of two could get violently drunk on only one glass of brandy.

Elyot Very interesting. How about a child of four, and a child of six, and a child of nine?

Amanda (turning her head away) Don't be stupid.

Elyot (witheringly) We might get up a splendid little debate about that, you know. Intemperate Tots.

Amanda Not very funny, dear; you'd better have some more brandy.

Elyot Very good idea, I will. (He pours out another glass)

Amanda Ridiculous ass.

Elyot I beg your pardon?

Amanda I said ridiculous ass!

Elyot (with great dignity) Thank you very much indeed. (He drinks the brandy and turns up stage and stands in the waist of the piano looking at a magazine)

Amanda rises, crosses to the radiogram and changes the record for a particularly noisy one. She returns to the settee and sits

You'd better turn that off, I think. It's very late and it will annoy the people upstairs.

Amanda There aren't any people upstairs. It's a photographer's studio.

Elyot There are people downstairs, I suppose?

Amanda They're away in Tunis.

Elyot This is no time of the year for Tunis. (He crosses to the radiogram and turns it off, walks back to the piano and continues to look at his magazine)

Amanda (icily) Turn it on again, please.

Elyot I'll do no such thing.

Elyot
+
Amanda

Amanda
&
Victor

Amanda (*rising and moving L*) To hell with Elyot.

Victor (*rising*) Mandy!

Amanda I forbid you to mention his name again. I'm sick of the sound of it. You must be raving mad. Here we are on the first night of our honeymoon, with the moon coming up, and the music playing, and all you can do is to talk about my first husband. It's downright sacrilegious. (*She turns away*)

Victor Don't be angry.

Amanda Well, it's very annoying.

Victor (*pulling her round*) Will you forgive me?

Amanda Yes. (*She kisses him*) Only don't do it again.

Victor I promise.

Amanda (*taking his arm*) You'd better go and dress now, you haven't bathed yet.

She leads Victor up stage

Victor Where shall we dine, downstairs here, or at the Casino?

Amanda (*L of the window*) The Casino is more fun, I think.

Victor We can play *boule* afterwards.

Amanda (*leaning against the window*) No, we can't, dear.

Victor Don't you like dear old *boule*?

Amanda No, I hate dear old *boule*. We'll play a nice game of *chemin de fer*.

Victor (*R of the window; apprehensively*) Not at the big table?

Amanda Maybe at the biggest table.

Victor You're not a terrible gambler, are you?

Amanda Inveterate. Chance rules my life.

Victor What nonsense.

Amanda How can you say it's nonsense. It was chance meeting you. It was chance falling in love; it's chance that we're here, particularly after your driving. Everything that happens is chance.

Victor You know I feel rather scared of you at close quarters.

Amanda That promises to be very embarrassing.

Victor You're somehow different now, wilder than I thought you were, more strained.

Amanda Wilder! Oh Victor, I've never felt less wild in my life. (*She crosses to the chair by the tubs*) A little strained, I grant you, but that's the newly married atmosphere; you can't expect anything else. (*She sits*) Honeymooning is a very overrated amusement.

Victor (*crossing to her*) You say that because you had a ghastly experience before.

Amanda There you go again.

Victor (*moving behind her*) It couldn't fail to embitter you a little.

Amanda The honeymoon wasn't such a ghastly experience really; it was afterwards that was so awful.

Victor (*kissing her head*) I intend to make you forget it all entirely.

Amanda You won't succeed by making constant references to it.

~~Victor (*breaking to L e*) I wish I knew you better.~~

~~Amanda It's just as well you don't. The "woman"—in italics—should~~