SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

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SF PERUSALS

Will You Still Love Me In The Morning?

A farce

Brian Clemens
and
Dennis Spooner

Samuel French - London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood



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CHARACTERS

Jeremy Winthrop
Celia Winthrop
Sara Ward
Humphrey Jessel
Syd Clancy*
Thelma Jessel
Peregrine Ward
Plus 1 Male Voice (off-stage)

The action of the play takes place in the main interior of the Winthrops' country cottage.

ACT I
A Saturday afternoon

ACT II
Evening, the same day

*Syd Clancy may be played by a woman but references to Mrs Clancy and "the missis" will need to be changed.

ACT I

The main interior of the Winthrops' country cottage. Late afternoon on a Saturday

It is olde-worlde and elegant enough. L *is the front door. Upstage and extreme* R *and facing us are french doors leading to the garden and the country beyond. A short flight of stairs leads up to a landing. Off this landing, and directly facing us are doors leading to two bedrooms—one* R *the other* L. *In the space between is a door to the bathroom*

On the lower floor there is, extreme R *and downstage, a door off to the kitchen. Nearby, a cellar door. (Note: If this cellar door can be partially screened or obstructed by some architectural or furnishing feature, that would be beneficial for subsequent staging)*

There is a dining table, chairs, a sideboard, a large, deep sofa, a couple of easy chairs, together with other normal everyday furnishings

When the CURTAIN *rises, the house is empty—the french doors and any windows are closed and locked. Outside it is a pleasant, balmy summer day*

A pause—then we hear a taxi drive up—stop—a pause—then, as we hear the taxi drive away again, a key goes into the lock

The front door opens and Jeremy Winthrop enters carrying Celia Winthrop across the threshold. Jeremy is a diffident, albeit attractive, young man of about thirty. Celia is an attractive young woman of about twenty-five. She apparently has more "steel" in her than Jeremy—but, come the crunch, can become just as panicked. They are newly-weds and very much in love. Jeremy, carrying Celia, gets to the foot of the stairs

Celia No, Jeremy, the threshold ends here.
Jeremy But, darling . . .
Celia Jeremy, not *now* . . .
Jeremy You've been saying that for a week.
Celia Put me down. Please, darling.

He does—then tries to kiss her—she evades him

Jeremy, our cases.

He regards her

You've left them outside.

He regards her

It might rain, Jeremy.

Jeremy Oh, very well . . . But you stay right where you are . . .

Jeremy crosses to the front door, brings in two cases, crosses to quickly open a side cupboard, puts them away

Celia But we haven't unpacked them yet!
Jeremy Nothing I need in there, except pyjamas . . . and I won't be needing *them* . . . (*He moves in on her again*)
Celia You forgot to replace the key.

As he embraces her . . .

You know if Mrs Clancy comes here and there's no key, she'll turn right round and go home.
Jeremy Let her.
Celia But then that will mean I'll have to do all the cleaning . . . and then I'll be too tired and have no time to do *anything else.*
Jeremy (*hesitating*) Good point! (*He hurries over to open the front door, replaces the key, closes the door and returns—predatory—towards Celia*)
Celia Jeremy, you're so impetuous.
Jeremy Impetuous!? We've been married a week, and I still haven't.
Celia That hasn't exactly been my fault, has it! It was *supposed* to be a *honeymoon* hotel!
Jeremy We both went through the brochure together. And you must admit, the hotel looked very nice.
Celia I'm sure it will be. When they finish building it . . .
Jeremy And move it a bit nearer the sea. God, it *was* awful, wasn't it darling?
Celia It reminded me of Colditz, and I don't think I shall ever forget the food.
Jeremy Oh, come on, that wasn't so bad.
Celia That thing they served us on the first day?! Staring at me . . . *all* its eyes—and so many legs!
Jeremy Tentacles. Squid have tentacles.
Celia Mine had *legs.* I'm sure it was a centipede.
Jeremy Rest of the food wasn't so bad though. I mean, it wasn't exactly *uneatable.*

She gives him a look

Only on Wednesday.

She gives him a look

Oh, all right . . . *and* Friday. Lucky enough I had the wit to cancel our booking.

She gives him a look

All right, I admit it was *your* idea—but *I* had to face up to that big, brutish Spaniard . . . I'm *sure* he used to be a bull-fighter—the way he held his pen.
Celia (*introspectively*) I'll never forget it. Never.

Jeremy Anyway, here we are, back in our own little home a week earlier than expected. You can't possibly be shy here.
Celia I wasn't shy! But I do object when I whisper something in your ear and the man in the next room replies.
Jeremy Yes, the walls were a bit thin. Oh, but darling, we still have a whole week of honeymoon left . . . and no-one knows we're back . . .
Celia Exactly. So there's no need to rush, is there?
Jeremy Rush? Who's rushing?
Celia You are. Like a . . . a bull in a china shop.
Jeremy You don't look much like a china shop to me, darling.
Celia I *feel* like a china shop. I feel . . . fragile. I haven't fully recovered from last night yet.
Jeremy You shouldn't have moved—I kept telling you that spiders, no matter how gigantic they are, rarely attack unless provoked.
Celia You kept telling me from the top of the wardrobe.
Jeremy Well, it was your scream—it panicked me. Anway, I thought you were awfully brave, darling . . . taking my slipper to it . . . and I *was* just getting down from the wardrobe to help . . . I mean, if it hadn't collapsed under me . . . !
Celia I still shudder to think about it.
Jeremy (*embracing her*) It's all over—behind us now. We're home and what do newly-weds do in the privacy of their own home?
Celia They sit down.

She does. He moves towards her

Jeremy—darling—I understand your frustration. But . . .

He leaps on her—and kisses her—she pulls free

But I am not going to start my honeymoon on a *sofa*!
Jeremy Then come to bed.
Celia I intend to.
Jeremy Ah!
Celia After we have had a civilized *English* meal . . .
Jeremy (*interjecting*) I'm prepared to risk it on an empty stomach.
Celia But not on *my* empty stomach.

He advances on her again—but she abruptly gets up and leaves him embracing the sofa!

Later, darling—later.

Celia exits into the kitchen. Jeremy haplessly follows her

A pause—then we hear a taxi drive up and stop

A slight pause, then we hear a key turn in the lock, the door opens and Sara Ward enters. She is an attractive woman of about thirty-five to forty. A woman who for years has denied her sexuality and assumed an attitude of "properness"—but she is on the brink of breaking out! Nevertheless, as she fully enters the area, there is an air of trepidation about her. During this, we

hear the taxi drive away again. As it does so, panic overcomes Sara, she starts to change her mind, and turns to run out again, but is confronted by . . .

Humphrey Jessel, a handsome, extrovert man—about forty-five—charming, the kind who has great experience and a "way with women". He carries two small overnight cases, a bottle of champagne, a box of chocolates and a package

Humphrey Hey, where do you think you're going?
Sara Humphrey, I'm sorry, but I don't think I can go through with it.
Humphrey Nonsense.
Sara I'm frightened.
Humphrey Of course you are. And I understand.
Sara You do?
Humphrey I do. And that's why Humphrey is here—to calm you. (*He kisses her*)
Sara Humphrey, you are not calming me.

He kisses her again

I didn't like the way that taxi driver looked at us. As though he knew we were not married . . .
Humphrey But we are.
Sara But not to each other. He gave me a very searching look. I'm sure he knew.
Humphrey Perhaps I gave the game away when I kissed you.
Sara *Peregrine* kisses me sometimes.
Humphrey Like this?

He kisses her again. Then she pushes him away—looking quite "fluttery"

Sara The key.
Humphrey Eh?
Sara The key. (*She flourishes it*) We promised Jeremy Winthrop we'd replace the key—just in case his cleaning lady dropped by.
Humphrey Winthrop is on honeymoon until next weekend—why *would* his cleaning lady drop by?
Sara I don't know, but she might. And it was the only thing Winthrop was adamant about, "Use the place as your own, but please replace the key."
Humphrey Very well.

He moves to briefly exit out of the front door—then reappears and closes the front door behind him

Well. Alone at last.
Sara This will be the first time I've ever been unfaithful to Peregrine.
Humphrey That's encouraging.

She reacts

You've accepted you *are* going to be unfaithful. Sara . . .
Sara And what about Thelma?

Humphrey (*stopping his advance*) Thelma! What about Thelma!?
Sara She's your wife.
Humphrey Oh . . . hang, Thelma!
Sara Humphrey, please don't talk like that—you know perfectly well she's my very best friend. What if she found out?
Humphrey Darling, she isn't going to find out. Nor is Peregrine.
Sara But what if they did?
Humphrey Look—Thelma is in Bristol visiting her mother—and thinks *I* am in Munich on business. Peregrine *is* on business in Paris—and thinks *you* are in Exeter . . . It's that simple.
Sara Humphrey——
Humphrey (*interjecting*) Don't you think we should unpack . . . ? Then a quiet drink . . . a chat . . . ? The last thing I want to do is rush you . . . but . . . the sooner we *really* get . . . used to each other?
Sara (*after hesitating*) Very well.

They go up the stairs—then Humphrey hesitates

Humphrey Which room's it to be?
Sara We . . . ll. *Peregrine* always votes Conservative.
Humphrey Right. Or rather—*left*!

Humphrey leads the way and they exit into the left-hand bedroom

Almost immediately, Celia and Jeremy enter from the kitchen

Jeremy But I'm quite prepared to settle for sardines, biscuits and chocolate sauce!
Celia Well I'm not! A civilized meal is what I said, Jeremy, and a civilized meal we shall have. There's just time for me to go to the grocer's, and you to go to the farm shop.
Jeremy Celia . . .
Celia (*fighting him off*) The sooner we're there, the sooner we'll be back . . . (*meaningfully*) . . . and the sooner we're back . . . !
Jeremy Right. Farm shop. Right.

Celia and Jeremy exit through the front door

Almost immediately, Sara enters from the bedroom—pursued by Humphrey

Sara It's no good, Humphrey, I just cannot unpack my more intimate garments while you are standing there *ogling*!
Humphrey I was not ogling.
Sara You were—ogling. *And* ooing and ahhing.
Humphrey I was not ooing and ahhing.
Sara Unless you suffer from asthma, you were ooing and ahhing.
Humphrey But hang it all, I'm going to see your more intimate garments eventually.
Sara *You are most certainly not!* (*A pause*) We shall draw the curtains.
Humphrey Ahh!
Sara You're doing it again.
Humphrey I've done something much worse than that.

Sara What?

Humphrey *Ogling* your intimate garments. (*He produces the package*) For you. And, as you will see . . . for me too.

Sara is intrigued—she undoes the package—and produces stockings and suspenders

Sara Humphrey!

Humphrey Darling.

Sara Stockings and suspenders! I couldn't possibly wear them.

Humphrey Oh, but you must.

Sara I couldn't. I couldn't. But if I *do*—you must promise me you'll never tell Peregrine.

Humphrey I wasn't planning to.

Sara I'm afraid poor Peregrine wouldn't understand. You see, he doesn't realize that women can be as . . . as passionate as men! I suppose that's why I'm attracted to you. *You* know.

Humphrey I do. I do.

Sara I know. But Peregrine now . . . Do you know that once—a long time ago . . . I sent for a "Sex Kitten Play Suit".

Humphrey Get away!?

Sara I did. A "Sex Kitten Play Suit" in gold lamé. Mind you, it was very shoddily made—I found it had all sorts of holes in the most extraordinary places. Anyway, I put it on one night . . . and then *loomed* over Peregrine . . . and swung my tail at him. It had a tail you see . . . in mock mink. *Anyway*—no more than three swings and he opened his eyes, and got all sort of glazed-looking . . . transfixed with shock. I slipped away and put on my winceyette pyjamas again and from that day to this, he's never mentioned it . . . Thank goodness.

Humphrey Why "thank goodness"?

Sara Well, it would be so awful if anyone knew that one had such a lustful streak . . . especially one's own husband!

Humphrey Now *I* know. Mind you, I've always suspected.

Sara Really?

Humphrey Still waters run deep—fires down below, that sort of thing. How about that drink now?

Sara I'm not much of a drinker—especially at this time of the day . . . but don't let me stop you. If you feel you need one . . .

Humphrey (*quickly—his virility in question*) Me, no. Definitely no. So . . . what shall we do then . . . eh? Eh?

Sara Well. I *am* feeling more relaxed . . .

Humphrey And time we got to know each other a bit better, eh? Eh!?

Sara There *is* an irresistible quality about you.

Humphrey Irresistible, eh? Eh!? Shall we go? (*He starts to lead her up the stairs again*) A Sex Kitten Play Suit? Pity you didn't bring it with you.

Sara I didn't say I hadn't. Did I?

Humphrey (*can't believe his luck*) With all sorts of holes in extraordinary places?

Sara No, of course not. I had them invisibly mended.

They exit into the bedroom. A pause—then suddenly the bedroom door opens again—Sara emerges, with Humphrey in pursuit

Humphrey What did I do? What did I do?
Sara Nothing. I just want to make myself pretty for you, that's all. (*She opens the bathroom door*)
Humphrey But you look terrific as it is.
Sara I'll only be fifteen minutes or so.
Humphrey Fifteen minutes!?
Sara Half an hour at the most. Now you just relax and think nice thoughts.

She exits into the bathroom. Almost immediately we hear Sara scream, and she comes rushing out of the bathroom again

Humphrey Darling . . . ?
Sara There's a dead man in the bath!
Humphrey What?!
Sara Lying in the bath—face up—he looks horrible . . .

Syd Clancy enters from the bathroom. He is about fifty, wears workmen's overalls and, as we shall see, he likes a little tipple—frequently. He is never drunk—but never actually completely sober either

That's him—that's the dead man!
Syd Oh, you did give me a start!
Sara *I* gave *you* a start!
Humphrey What the devil were you doing lying in the bath?
Syd Looking up the tap, of course.
Humphrey Looking up the . . . ?! Who are you, what are you doing here?
Syd I'm Syd. Syd Clancy. My missis does the cleaning here . . . and I've just been fixing a new tap washer. I didn't expect there to be anyone else here.

He is staring at them—and now Humphrey quickly clears his throat

Humphrey Er . . . we're friends of the Winthrops.
Syd Oh. Well I'll be out of your way soon as I've put the water back on . . . (*He takes out a flask, swigs from it—then becomes aware of them staring at him, and explains*) Gave me a proper turn you did—brought on my nerves. (*He starts down the stairs*) Won't disturb you again—bathroom's all yours.

Syd goes down the stairs—and exits into the cellar

Sara (*a rising panic*) Humphrey——!?
Humphrey (*interjecting*) This doesn't change anything.
Sara But he's seen us.
Humphrey Exactly, so what have we got to gain by running away now? Besides, you heard him, he'll be gone in a couple of minutes . . .
Sara But——
Humphrey And if I'm any judge the man's half-cut—probably won't remember us anyway.
Sara (*regarding him, then capitulating*) Oh, Humphrey, I feel so safe with you.

Humphrey Shouldn't rely on that.
Sara Naughty. I'll be quick as I can.

Sara exits into the bathroom

Humphrey remains a moment on the landing

Humphrey I'll go out for a stroll.

Sara half opens the door to peer out

Sara What?
Humphrey Just going out for a stroll.
Sara Right.

Sara exits into the bathroom

Humphrey *May* help to relax me.

The bathroom door opens, Sara looks out again

Sara What? I couldn't hear you.
Humphrey Yes. They knew how to build these old houses . . . (*He raps the door with his knuckles*) Soundproof . . . once the door is shut . . . ! (*He likes the thought*) Yes . . . *yes*!
Sara Humphrey, I'm not sure you *are* thinking nice thoughts.
Humphrey I am. I will.

Sara exits into the bathroom

(*Starting down the stairs*) Nice thoughts now, Humphrey. Nice thoughts . . . If you see any birds or bees look the other way.

He exits through the french doors into the garden; leaving the door open behind him

Almost immediately, we hear the key in the lock—the front door opens and Thelma Jessel enters. She is about thirty-five–forty, a bright, extrovert woman—well aware of her own sexuality and prepared to do something about it. Often! She has a mink carelessly tossed across her shoulders, and exudes self-confidence. She enters the area, tosses the coat aside, then surveys the area—she sees the chocolate box and takes one

Thelma Mmm . . . Chocolate creams . . . Oh, do come on, Peregrine!

Peregrine Ward enters, carrying two small overnight cases. He is about forty–forty-five, not unattractive if you could separate him from his discreet, matching waistcoat, City-type suit, plastered down haircut and clerical air. There is a furtive, wary air about him

Note: During the ensuing scene we may see Humphrey from time to time—as he prowls the garden beyond the french doors. He will remain unaware of Thelma and Peregrine, and they of him

Peregrine I was just checking that we *are* alone here.

Thelma Of course we're alone. You know very well that the Winthrops don't return from honeymoon until *next* weekend. Why do we have to go through all this cloak and dagger stuff . . . ?

Peregrine We can't be too careful, Thelma.

Thelma But I do think it was excessive to dismiss the taxi three minutes after we got into it . . . and make us walk half a mile.

Peregrine I didn't like the way the driver looked at us.

Thelma You probably aroused his suspicions by refusing to tell him where we were actually going. Taxi drivers tend to deal in firm destinations.

Peregrine Inconclusive.

Thelma What?

Peregrine In a court of law, his evidence would be regarded as a personal judgement and therefore (*a glint of triumph*) . . . inadmissible.

Thelma Perhaps I shouldn't have kissed you as passionately as I did.

Peregrine (*brightening*) Yes, you did, didn't you? (*Reprovingly*) Have to watch that, Thelma.

Thelma But not here, surely . . . ? Not with the door firmly closed . . . ? (*She closes the door firmly behind her—then moves to kiss Peregrine*)

Peregrine (*eventually breaking free*) As a solicitor I am well aware of these things.

Thelma (*another kiss*) I'm sure.

Peregrine That taxi driver could not *swear* he saw us enter here together—and I of course would totally deny it.

Thelma Yes. (*A thought*) But wouldn't that be perjury?

Peregrine Also be bloody good sense, wouldn't it? I mean, you don't want to hurt Humphrey, do you? And I most certainly do not want to hurt Sara.

Thelma Darling, they're both miles away from here.

Peregrine (*grinning*) Yes.

Thelma (*regarding him*) I think that's why I'm so attracted to you . . .

Peregrine Sara's lack of proximity?

Thelma Your naughty boy quality . . . it's . . . refreshing somehow . . .

Peregrine I intend to be even naughtier.

This time, more relaxed. He kisses her—they sink on to the sofa—he strokes her skirt-clad thigh

My God!

Thelma What's wrong?

Peregrine Suspenders. I feel suspenders . . . and where there are suspenders, there are stockings . . . !

Thelma Excite you, do they?

Peregrine Excite me!? Oh, my darling, I can confess to *you* . . . if there's anything that really brings out the deep, lascivious passions within me, it's——

Thelma (*interjecting*) Doesn't Sara wear them for you?

Peregrine Sara!? (*He laughs*) *Sara.* I wouldn't know how to ask her. *Sara*!? I sometimes think that if I hadn't married her, she might have entered a nunnery.

Carried away, he embraces Thelma, and they sink on to the sofa—and out of sight of the landing

The bathroom door opens—Sara emerges, wearing a robe, but then, thinking herself alone, her fantasies overtake her normal, natural reticence. She pulls the robe aside to reveal stockings and suspenders, et al*—does a small, brief bumps and grinds routine—then, ready for action, exits into the bedroom*

Peregrine abruptly breaks the embrace and stands up

I don't intend rushing anything.

Thelma Oh . . .

Peregrine No, we have a whole, blissful weekend ahead of us . . . so why rush? Now, then, what about a drink? (*He picks up Humphrey's champagne*)

Thelma But that belongs to Winthrop.

Peregrine You were there when he made his magnanimous offer . . . "Use the place as your own" . . .

Thelma I rather think he meant *you* and Sara—or *me* and Humphrey . . .

Peregrine Probably. Anyway, Humphrey must have given him this . . .

Thelma Oh?

Peregrine Yes, it's that favourite rare vintage of his. And, as Humphrey and I are partners, it virtually belongs to me too . . .

Thelma And so does his wife . . . for a while anyway.

Peregrine (*looking at her*) Yes. Funny, I don't feel any twinge of conscience at all.

Thelma Not even where Sara's concerned?

Peregrine Well, perhaps just a tiny bit. You know—stockings and suspenders sort of sums it up—the fact I can't ask her. I had a dream once—particularly vivid . . . Sara entered the bedroom wearing some kind of cat suit . . . very tight . . . and obviously very old because it was full of holes. As I recall, she waggled her tail at me . . . provocatively . . .

Thelma And then?

Peregrine I woke up and found Sara beside me—wearing the same old winceyette. Ah . . . not like you and Humphrey, eh?

Thelma What do you know about me and Humphrey?

Peregrine More than you think.

Thelma Oh? (*She sits up, regards him*) You mean he talks about . . . us?

Peregrine Doesn't have to. I *know*. Those times when he comes into the office . . . a spring in his step . . . *smiling. I know.*

Thelma Know what?

Peregrine Well . . . *you* know.

Thelma A spring in his step sounds like new shoes . . . and as for that silly grin of his, it's a permanent fixture.

Peregrine No, no, I mean that "special look" that tells me . . .

Thelma Tells you what?

Peregrine That you and he have recently. *You* know!

During this exchange, we see Humphrey go past the french windows, grinning, a skip in his step!

Thelma Oh. (*She understands now*) Oh. (*She ponders it*) Really?
Peregrine Yes.
Thelma You can definitely tell?
Peregrine Absolutely.
Thelma Oh. (*She ponders it*) Can you tell exactly when?
Peregrine Not to the exact minute, no!
Thelma But you *can* tell?
Peregrine Yes!
Thelma It really shows?
Peregrine Yes, it really shows! Now can we please drop the subject!
Thelma Perry darling, you're jealous.
Peregrine Envious. For a couple who have been married as long as you have, the frequency sometimes seems slightly indecent!
Thelma (*placating*) *Perry*. You may have been wrong occasionally, you know.
Peregrine Eh?
Thelma At least a *few* of the times it might have been new shoes.
Peregrine (*grim*) Not last Thursday it wasn't. He was like a Cheshire cat . . .
Thelma Oh, Perry, let's not think about it any more . . . (*A sudden thought*) Last Thursday!?
Peregrine Yes.
Thelma But I didn't see Humphrey last Thursday—or the night before.
Peregrine What?
Thelma Don't you remember, I went to Bristol to set up my alibi for this weekend!?
Peregrine Did you?
Thelma You *know* I did. It was your idea. So, if last Thursday, Humphrey looked as though he'd recently . . . then the question is—where—when—and with whom?! The spring in his step doesn't ever hint at an identity, does it?
Peregrine Now let's not jump to conclusions. I may have been quite wrong. It could *easily* have been new shoes.
Thelma *And the smile?*
Peregrine Well . . . I . . . I may have told him a joke!
Thelma Peregrine, I am being serious!
Peregrine (*defensive*) I know some jokes. I know . . . well . . . I know at least five. One is quite funny—involving as it does, a one-legged Irishman, a deaf dog and——
Thelma (*interjecting*) Peregrine!
Peregrine (*quickly*) Anyway, come to think of it, I'm not at all sure it *was* last Thursday. No, it could easily have been the Thursday before. Or the *Tuesday* even. Yes, that's it. I obviously made a mistake.
Thelma You? You're such a stickler for detail—you never make mistakes.
Peregrine I'm beginning to think I have.
Thelma What?

Peregrine I thought the object of coming here was to spend some precious time together ... but you insist on wasting it discussing Humphrey's possible indiscretions.
Thelma Well, I *am* interested ... after all, I am his wife ...
Peregrine No!

She reacts

This weekend you are no longer Humphrey's wife—you are my woman.
Thelma Perry! What a thrilling thing to say. And you looked all sort of "cave-man" when you said it.
Peregrine Darling.

They kiss and embrace—then Thelma breaks for a moment

Thelma Anyway, it probably *was* new shoes.

They embrace again. Then part—a bit breathless

Peregrine Now—shall we have that drink?
Thelma Later. When we have something to celebrate.

They both look up the stairs—then Peregrine moves to pick up the suitcases and now notices the open french doors

Peregrine Typical Winthrop. (*He starts to close and lock the french doors*) Goes away on honeymoon, carefully locks the front door, and leaves his french windows wide open.
Thelma (*wickedly*) He probably had his mind on other things.
Peregrine Yes. Yes.

Picking up the suitcases, they now ascend the stairs, then stop before the two bedroom doors

Thelma Any particular choice?
Peregrine I always vote Conservative.

Thelma and Peregrine enter the right-hand bedroom

*As the door closes—Humphrey appears at the french doors and tries them—they are locked. He raps on them, shouts "Sara" (*mouths *it because we cannot hear him). Finally, resigned to the fact they are locked, he exits in the direction of the front door*

As soon as Humphrey goes—so the right bedroom door opens—and Peregrine plunges out, flourishing the key. Thelma appears at the door after him

Thelma Peregrine, leave it until later.
Peregrine No, no, Winthrop was quite adamant about it ... "Use the place as your own ... but make sure you put the key back." (*He sprints down the stairs, opens the front door, leans out to replace the key, returns, closes the door and runs back up the stairs*) From hereon, I'm all yours, darling.

They exit into the bedroom—the door shuts

Immediately we hear the key go into the lock, the front door opens and Humphrey enters. He closes the door, walks forward, remembers the key in his hand, turns to open the door again, replaces the key, closes the door and then starts up the stairs. He rushes up to the left-hand bedroom, then stops dead—composes himself at a convenient mirror—THAT smile appears—and then, a spring in his step, he heads back to the bedroom door. He raps on it. No answer. He raps again—pause—then he tries the door—it is unlocked—he opens it—stares off-stage and . . .

Humphrey (*breathlessly*) Oh my! Oh my darling . . . !

He rushes in, closing the door behind him

Syd enters from the cellar door. He moves across the area to the front door. In his hand he carries a very strange piece of piping/plumbing

Syd (*scathingly*) Made in Albania! Typical!

Syd exits through the front door

The right-hand bedroom door opens and Thelma appears, now wearing a robe. She moves to enter the bathroom but at this moment Peregrine appears behind her

Thelma I'll only be about ten minutes.
Peregrine There's no need to rush. Take twelve if you want to.

Thelma turns and exits into the bathroom

Peregrine remains a moment

No rush. No rush!

He turns and dashes back into the bedroom, closing the door

Immediately the left-hand door opens and Humphrey enters, wearing a robe. He rushes down to pick up the champagne bottle, then runs up the stairs again—and as he exits back into the left-hand bedroom . . .

We hear the key go into the lock, the door opens and Jeremy and Celia enter, each carrying various groceries. He closes the door (having left the key outside as before)—then takes groceries from Celia, puts them down, then sweeps her up into his arms and starts to carry her up the stairs

Celia Darling, no—I've told you before . . . Darling! Jeremy! No! (*She wriggles out of his arms*) Darling, I'm hungry. I really am.
Jeremy So am I.
Celia For *food*. (*She taps his nose*) Control yourself . . .

She starts down the stairs again, Jeremy pursuing her. She picks up the groceries

First of all, we will have that quiet, civilized meal.
Jeremy And second!?

Celia Second—we will do the washing-up.
Jeremy Third then!?
Celia I'm going to want to take a bath . . .
Jeremy I'm not even placed!
Celia (*lovingly*) Darling, I do love you very, very much . . . and I want you too . . . but there is really no need to rush, is there?
Jeremy Isn't there?
Celia Of course there isn't. Nobody knows we're home a week early. So there'll be no interruptions, not even a phone call . . . just you and I in our own little love-nest . . .
Jeremy And not a Jessel or Ward in sight, thank goodness.
Celia Yes. (*Suddenly suspicious*) What do you mean?
Jeremy Oh. Nothing, darling.
Celia Jeremy, what-do-you-mean?
Jeremy Well, must confess, as we approached the front door I had the tiniest trepidation.
Celia Trepidation?
Jeremy You know we've just landed the plum of legally representing the Morals and Clean Living Group . . . ?
Celia Yes, you told me, but what does that have to do with——?
Jeremy (*interjecting*) How would you like to start married life as the Mrs Winthrop of Jessel, Ward and Winthrop?
Celia Jeremy—you've been promoted!?
Jeremy No, but the Morals and Clean Living Group is enormous—bigger than the Church Commission . . . properties all over the place . . . Jessel and Ward won't be able to handle it alone. They'll have to take on a new partner—perhaps even open a new office—it's going to take a great deal of organizing.
Celia Jeremy, you're the most wonderful organizer! The church fête, the end of season cricket match . . .
Jeremy Child's play compared with this. No, *this* will require an organizing genius . . . and they've been looking in my direction.
Celia Oh, Jeremy.
Jeremy That's why I invited them down.
Celia Fine. (*Then*) Invited who down?
Jeremy The Wards and the Jessels. I told them at the wedding——
Celia (*interjecting*) You told them what?!
Jeremy I just happened to mention that . . . if either . . . or both of them fancied a day or two in the country while we were away . . . they could use the place as their own . . .
Celia You mean we could have come back to a full house?
Jeremy But we weren't *supposed* to come back.
Celia That's beside the point. I could have walked in here and found four house guests . . .
Jeremy No, darling—two *employers*. Under an obligation to me . . . anyway it didn't happen . . . and we *are* alone . . . (*He regards her*)
Celia (*considering then liking it*) The Mrs Winthrop of Jessel, Ward and Winthrop . . . ?

Jeremy But you're not Mrs Winthrop yet.
Celia I most certainly am.
Jeremy In name only. We still haven't.

He kisses her—this time she accepts a bit. They breathlessly break for a moment

Oh, Celia ...
Celia Oh, Jeremy ...

They kiss again then break

They *won't* turn up, will they?
Jeremy No, no, if they were coming, they'd be here by now ...

They kiss again—then Celia breaks it

Celia Food.
Jeremy (*kissing her*) Delicious.
Celia *Food.* (*She gently pushes him away*) Let's get on with it.
Jeremy I am. I am.
Celia Our meal, Jeremy. Anyway, I don't want to be just grabbed ... well, I do, but ...

Jeremy moves in again

(*Quickly*) ... softly, romantically ... *and definitely after dinner.*

She turns and moves back towards the kitchen. He follows her. They exit into the kitchen. As the door closes ...

The bathroom door opens—Thelma enters, a robe around her. She moves to the bedroom door, opens it, then, her back to the audience, opens her robe wide to "flash" herself at Peregrine (off-stage, within the room). We hear Peregrine's strangled cry of passion—then Thelma enters the bedroom and closes the door behind her

The second bedroom door opens—Sara emerges, hugging a robe around her. She comes down the stairs, a kind of cool detachment about her

Humphrey appears at the door, pulling on a robe as he hurries down after her

Humphrey Sara ... Darling?

Sara moves to open a cigarette box, selects and lights a cigarette. Humphrey, puzzled by her attitude, moves closer

Sara? Why are we down here?
Sara I wanted a cigarette.
Humphrey But I have some upstairs.
Sara I wanted a cigarette *down here.* I want to think ...
Humphrey But, Sara—
Sara (*putting up a hand, interjecting*) Please, Humphrey, I'm thinking.

He stares at her, as she paces the room a bit, then suddenly turns on him

I think you should be thinking too, Humphrey.
Humphrey Thinking? What about?

Sara What you said to me up there a few moments ago.
Humphrey *I* said?! (*He frowns*) I said I loved you.
Sara Oh, no, you said more than that—"I love you, Sara, I love you . . . tell me you love me."
Humphrey What's wrong with that?
Sara Everything.
Humphrey What?!
Sara "I love you, Sara." You don't love me, Humphrey.
Humphrey But of course I do——
Sara (*overriding*) Then obviously you will want to use the phone.
Humphrey Eh?
Sara You will want to call Thelma . . . and ask her for a divorce.
Humphrey Oh, now . . . steady on . . .
Sara But you said you *loved* me.
Humphrey Yes, but when I said I loved you . . . I didn't mean . . . What I meant was . . . (*Blurting*) I always say that!
Sara And do you always say . . . "Tell me you love me?"
Humphrey Well . . . well, I'm not the most original thinker.
Sara I couldn't possibly, Humphrey.
Humphrey Possibly what?
Sara Tell you that I loved you. It wouldn't be true . . . any more than your declaration of love for me.
Humphrey Sara . . . Darling . . .
Sara *I* love Peregrine. And, I suspect, in your own funny way, *you* love Thelma.
Humphrey Well, I . . . I'm very *fond* of her——
Sara (*interjecting*) Exactly. So this digression into talk of love is ridiculous. I also find it very off-putting.
Humphrey I'm sorry . . . I didn't know.
Sara Well, you know now.
Humphrey Would it help if I said I don't love you?
Sara That's better. Much better.
Humphrey How about a modicum of affection?
Sara That is perfectly acceptable . . . and quite practical for our purpose. Yes, under these circumstances, affection is not only acceptable, but desirable.
Humphrey (*brightening*) How do you feel about passion?
Sara I'm all for it. As long as it's lust—not love.
Humphrey I think I can manage that.
Sara Good. We are beginning to understand one another. You see, Humphrey, I didn't rush into this affair headlong.
Humphrey Really?
Sara Indeed no . . . I gave it a great deal of thought. I considered my deep and real feelings for Peregrine . . . then decided it would be good for him.
Humphrey What!?
Sara For our marriage. To dissipate the carnal desires that you and I have been building up over these past few months. To burst the bubble. Beautifully.

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