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FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS

A Comedy in Three Acts

by

TERENCE RATTIGAN

SAMUEL  FRENCH

LONDON

NEW YORK SYDNEY TORONTO HOLLYWOOD

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FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS

Produced at the Criterion Theatre, Piccadilly Circus, London, on November 6th, 1936, with the following cast of characters:

(In the order of their appearance)

KENNETH LAKE	*Trevor Howard.*
BRIAN CURTIS	*Guy Middleton.*
HON. ALAN HOWARD	*Rex Harrison.*
MARIANNE	*Yvonne Andre.*
MONSIEUR MAINGOT	*Percy Walsh.*
LIEUT.-COMMANDER ROGERS	*Roland Culver.*
DIANA LAKE	*Kay Hammond.*
KIT NEILAN	*Robert Flemyng.*
JACQUELINE MAINGOT	*Jessica Tandy.*
LORD HEYBROOK	*Gerald Campion.*

The Play produced by HAROLD FRENCH.

The action passes in the living-room at "Miramar," a villa in a small seaside town in the South of France.

ACT I

A morning in July.

ACT II

SCENE 1.—Two weeks later. Early afternoon.
SCENE 2.—Six hours later.

ACT III

SCENE 1.—A few hours later.
SCENE 2.—Next morning.

FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS

ACT I

SCENE.—*The living-room at "Miramar," a villa in a small seaside town in the South of France.*

TIME.—*July 1st, about 9 a.m.*

The room is adequately furnished. There is a large oak table in the C. *surrounded by five small chairs. At the front of the table is a long upholstered bench to seat three. There are two upholstered armchairs, one down* L. *and one down* R. *At the back in the alcove is a large bookcase containing French dictionaries, phrase-books, etc., and other "works." In front of the bookcase is a settee in keeping with the other furniture. The wallpaper is sea-green spaced with a medallion of a deeper green. The room appears to have been lived in, though bright and well kept. There are two electric candle-brackets of the Louis XV period, with pink shades, on each side of the bookcase alcove.*

The table is laid for breakfast, with an enormous coffee-pot in the middle and a quantity of rolls.

As the CURTAIN *rises* KENNETH *is* R.C. *making signals. He is about twenty; good-looking in a vacuous way. He walks up towards the window* R., *then back, and then down to seat* 6, *which is below the table* C. *He sits. A phrase-book and dictionary lie open before him.*

There is the sound of someone heavily descending the stairs. The door up L. *opens and* BRIAN *comes in. He is older than* KENNETH, *about twenty-three or twenty-four, large, thick-set and red-faced. He wears an incredibly dirty pair of grey flannel trousers, a battered brown tweed coat, and a white sweater.*

BRIAN. Morning, Babe.

(KENNETH *doesn't look up.* BRIAN *comes down to the table, chair* 2, *picks up a letter and opens it.*)

KENNETH (*looking musingly ahead*). She has ideas above her station.

BRIAN. What's that?

KENNETH. How would you say that in French?

Brian. What?

Kenneth. She has ideas above her station.

Brian. She has ideas above her station. She has ideas—— (*He stuffs his letter in his pocket and goes to the door down* L., *calling.*) Marianne.

Voice (*from the kitchen*). Oui, monsieur?

Brian (*with an appalling accent*). Deux œufs, s'il vous plaît.

Voice (*off*). Bien, monsieur.

Brian. Avec un petit peu de jambon.

Voice (*off*). Oui, monsieur. Des œufs brouillés, n'est-ce pas?

Brian. Brouillés? Ah, oui, brouillés. (*He closes the door, returns to chair* 2 *and puts sugar in his cup.*) I'm getting pretty hot at this stuff, don't you think? You know, nowadays it's quite an effort for me to go back to English.

Kenneth. If you're so hot you'd better tell me how to say she has ideas above her station.

Brian (*taking his cup to* C. *of the table*). Oh, yes, I forgot. It's fairly easy, old boy. Elle a des idées au-dessus de sa gare.

Kenneth. You can't do it like that. You can't say au-dessus de sa gare. It isn't that sort of station.

Brian. Well, don't *ask* me.

Kenneth. I thought you were so hot at French.

Brian (*pouring out coffee*). Well, as a matter of fact, that wasn't strictly the truth. Now if a Frenchman asked me where the pen of his aunt was, the chances are I could give him a pretty snappy come-back, and tell him it was in the pocket of the gardener.

Kenneth. Yes, but that doesn't help me much.

Brian. Sorry, old boy.

Kenneth. I suppose I'd better just do it literally. Maingot'll throw a fit.

Brian. That doesn't bother you, does it? (*He picks up his cup and puts it at his place, chair* 2.)

Kenneth. You're not going into the diplomatic. He doesn't really get worked up about you.

Brian (*going to the table up* R. *and taking a banana*). Well, I don't know about that. The whole of his beard came off yesterday when I was having my lesson. (*He returns to chair* 2 *and starts to eat the banana.*)

Kenneth. No, but he doesn't really mind. It's absolute physical agony to him when I do something wrong. He knows as well as I do that I haven't got one chance in a thousand of getting in.

Brian (*cheerfully*). Don't say that, old boy, you're breaking my heart.

Kenneth (*gloomily*). Yes, but it's true. (*He returns to the study of his book.*)

Brian (*sitting*). As a matter of fact, Alan told me you had a pretty good chance.

KENNETH (*looking up, pleased*). Did he really ?

(BRIAN *nods.*)

BRIAN. He ought to know, oughtn't he ? Isn't he Maingot's red-hot tip for the diplomatic stakes ?

KENNETH. If he was keener about getting in he'd walk it. He will, anyway, I should think.

BRIAN. I think I'll make a book on the result this year. I'll lay evens on Alan—a class colt with a nice free action. Will win if he can get the distance.

KENNETH. What about me ?

BRIAN. I'll lay you threes about yourself.

KENNETH. Threes ? More like twenties.

BRIAN. Oh, I don't know. Nice-looking colt—good stayer. Bit of a dog from the starting-gate, perhaps. Say seven to two, then.

(ALAN *enters through the door up* L. *He is about twenty-three, dark and saturnine. He wears carefully creased grey flannel trousers and a German "sport jacket."*)

Morning, Alan. We were just talking about you.

ALAN. Good morning, Brian. Good morning, Babe. (*He goes to his place at the head of the table, chair* 1, *and deposits "The Times."*) Not one blood-stained letter. (*He speaks slowly and rather pedantically.*) What were you saying about me ? (*He takes his cup round to* L. *end of the table, pours himself out milk and coffee and then moves back to chair* 1.)

BRIAN. I'm making a book on the diplomatic stakes. I'm laying evens about you.

ALAN. That's not very generous.

BRIAN. Hell, you're the favourite.

ALAN. What about the startling rumours that the favourite may be scratched ?

KENNETH (*looking up quickly*). Why, have they accepted your novel ?

ALAN. Do I look as if they'd accepted my novel ?

BRIAN. I don't know how you do look when they accept your novels.

ALAN (*patting* BRIAN *on the shoulder and sitting chair* 1). I hope, my dear Brian, that one day you'll have a chance of finding out.

KENNETH. Well, what's this talk about your scratching ?

ALAN. Perhaps just to give you a better chance, ducky.

BRIAN. You're not serious about it though, old boy ?

ALAN. Probably not.

KENNETH. But you must be mad, Alan. I mean even if you do want to write you could still do it in the diplomatic. Honestly, it seems quite crazy——

Alan. You're giving a tolerably good imitation of my father. (*To* Brian.) Pass the sugar.

Brian (*passing the cream*). What does His Excellency have to say about the idea, by the way?

Alan. Sugar, half-wit.

(Brian *passes the sugar.*)

His Excellency says that he doesn't mind me choosing my own career a bit, provided always it's the one he's chosen for me.

Brian. Broad-minded, eh?

Alan. That's right. Always sees two sides to every question —his own, which is the right one, and anyone else's, which is the wrong one.

Kenneth. But seriously, Alan, you can't really be thinking——

Alan. Oh, stop it, child, for God's sake. I didn't say I was going to scratch.

Kenneth. You said you were thinking of it.

Alan. Well, you know that I'm always thinking of it. I very rarely think of anything else. But I won't do it, so don't worry your dear little head about it.

(Kenneth *sulkily returns to his work.* Marianne, *the maid, enters down* L. *with a plate of scrambled eggs and places them in front of* Brian.)

Brian. Ah, mes œufs, as I live.

Marianne (*between chairs* 2 *and* 3—*to* Brian). Monsieur le Commandant, va-t-il aussi prendre des œufs avec son petit déjeuner, monsieur?

Brian. Oh, well—er—she's talking to you, old boy.

Alan. Je ne sais rien des habitudes de Monsieur le Commandant, Marianne.

Marianne. Bien, monsieur. (*She turns to go, then stops.*) Alors voulez-vous lui demander s'il les veut, monsieur, lorsqu'il descend?

Alan. Bien.

Marianne. Bien, monsieur.

(*She exits down* L.)

Brian. What did she want?

Alan. She wanted to know if the Commander took eggs with his breakfast.

Brian. I meant to ask you. Did you see him when he arrived last night?

Alan. Yes, I went to the station with Maingot to meet him.

Brian. What's he like?

Alan. Very naval commander.

Brian. Yes, old boy, but what's that?

Alan. You know. Carries with him the salty tang of the sea wherever he goes.

BRIAN. Pity he's carried it here. Paucot-sur-Mer could do without any more salty tang than it's got already. Has he a rolling gait?

ALAN. He was sober when he arrived.

BRIAN. No, old boy, drunk or sober, all sailors have a rolling gait.

(MONSIEUR MAINGOT *comes in hurriedly through the door up* L., *carrying a cup of coffee. He is about sixty, with a ferocious face and a dark beard. All three rise.*)

MAINGOT (*shaking hands all round*). Bonjour! Bonjour! Bonjour! (*He sits down at the head of the table, chair* 5, *and puts his cup down.*) Mon Dieu, que je suis en retard ce matin! (*He opens a letter and reads.*)

(*The others have sat down again.*)

BRIAN (*speaking in a whisper to* ALAN). What's he like, though, really?

ALAN (*also in a whisper*). Pretty hellish, I thought.

BRIAN. Po-faced, I suppose?

MAINGOT (*roaring into his letter*). Français! Voulez-vous parler français, messieurs, s'il vous plaît.

(*There is a pause.*)

(*Looking up from his letter.*) Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, po-faced?

ALAN. Nous disions que Monsieur le Commandant avait une figure de vase de nuit, monsieur.

MAINGOT. Ah, ce n'est pas vrai.

ALAN. Nous exaggérons un peu.

MAINGOT. Je crois bien.

(MAINGOT *grunts and returns to his letter.*)

(KENNETH *surreptitiously pushes his notebook towards* ALAN, *pointing at a certain sentence.* ALAN *reads it and shakes his head violently.* KENNETH *looks pleadingly at him.* ALAN *considers, and is about to speak when* MAINGOT *looks up.*)

Dites-moi, est-ce-que vous connaissez un Lord Heybrook?

ALAN. Non, monsieur.

MAINGOT (*looking at the letter*). Il voudrait venir le quinze juillet.

ALAN (*to* BRIAN). Do you know him?

BRIAN. Lord Heybrook? No, old boy. (*Confidentially.*) As a matter of fact, I knew a peer once, but he died. What about Lord Heybrook, anyway?

ALAN. He's coming here on the fifteenth.

MAINGOT (*roaring*). Français, messieurs—français!

(*There is a pause.* MAINGOT *takes up "Le Matin" and begins to read.* KENNETH *again pushes his notebook towards* ALAN *and* ALAN *again is about to speak.*)

(*Reading his paper.*) Ah! Ce Hitler! (*Throwing the paper on the floor.*) Quel phénomène!

(Alan *closes his mouth and* Kenneth *pulls his notebook back quickly.*)

(*To* Brian.) Ah, Monsieur Curtis, vous étiez saôul au casino hier soir, n'est-ce pas?

Brian (*puzzled*). Saôul?

Alan. Drunk.

Brian. Oh, non, monsieur. Pas ça. Un peu huilé, peut-être.

(Commander Rogers *comes in up* L. *He is about thirty-five, dark, small, very neat, rather solemn. All get up.*)

Maingot. Ah! Bonjour, Monsieur le Commandant, et comment allez vous? J'espère que vous avez bien dormi? Ah, pardon! (*He introduces the others.*) Monsieur Curtis—Monsieur le Commandant Rogers. Monsieur Lake—Monsieur le Commandant Rogers—Monsieur Howard vous connaissez déjà.

(Brian *and* Kenneth *shake hands.* Alan *nods and smiles.*)

Alan. Bonjour.

Rogers. Yes, we met last night. (*Indicating chair* 3.) Shall I sit here?

(Kenneth *goes on to the veranda.* Maingot *picks up his paper from the floor.*)

Alan. That's Kit Neilan's place, as a matter of fact. I think this is your place. (*He shows a place next to* Maingot.)

Maingot. Ah! Pardon, Monsieur le Commandant. Voilà votre place. (*He shows him chair* 4.) Asseyez-vous donc et soyez à votre aise. (*He sits.*)

(Brian *and* Alan *reseat themselves.*)

Rogers. Thanks. (*He sits.*)

Alan. I've been told to ask you if you like eggs with your breakfast.

Maingot. Oui, monsieur, mais voulez-vous parler français, s'il vous plaît.

Rogers (*smiling apologetically*). I'm afraid I don't speak your lingo at all, you know.

Maingot. Lingo? Ah oui, langue. C'est ça, mais il faut essayer. You—must—try.

Rogers (*turning to* Maingot, *then to* Alan). Oui—Non.

Alan. What?

Maingot. Pardon!

Rogers. Oui, je ne—want any eggs.

Alan. Right, I'll tell Marianne. (*He gets up and goes into the kitchen down* L.)

MAINGOT (*to* ROGERS). Il faut dire : Je ne veux pas d'œufs pour mon petit déjeuner.

(ROGERS *smiles vaguely.* MAINGOT *laughs.*)

Ça viendra, ça viendra.

(ALAN *returns and sits in chair* 1.)

BRIAN. I say, sir. Did you have a good crossing ?

ROGERS. Pretty bad, as a matter of fact. Still, that didn't worry me.

BRIAN. You're a good sailor ?

(ALAN *laughs.*)

Oh, of course, you would be. I mean you are, aren't you ? Damn silly, old boy !

MAINGOT. Eh bien. Par qui vais-je commencer ?

KENNETH (*from the veranda*). Moi, monsieur.

MAINGOT. *Par* moi. (*Rising.*) Alors, allons dans le jardin. (*He crosses to the window* R., *bows and says :*) Messieurs !

(*They all rise.* ALAN *and* ROGERS *sit again after* MAINGOT *has gone. He is followed by* KENNETH. BRIAN *stays up by the window* R.)

ALAN. Poor Babe. He's going to be slaughtered.

ROGERS (*helping himself to breakfast*). Really ? Why ?

ALAN (*shaking his head sadly*). Elle a des idées au-dessus de sa gare.

ROGERS. What does that mean ?

ALAN. It doesn't mean she has ideas above her station.

ROGERS. The Professor is pretty strict, I suppose.

ALAN. Where work is concerned he's a sadist.

ROGERS. I'm glad to hear it. I want to learn as much French as I can, and I'm starting from scratch, you know.

BRIAN. Are you learning it for any special reason, sir ?

ROGERS. Yes. Interpretership exam. in seven months' time.

ALAN. If you stay here for seven months, you'll either be dead or a Frenchman.

ROGERS. How long have you been here ?

ALAN. On and off for a year, but then I have a way of preserving my nationality. I wear a special charm. (*He indicates his German coat.*)

ROGERS. Are you very pro-German, then ?

BRIAN (*speaking from the steps up* R.). He only wears that coat to annoy Maingot.

ROGERS. Oh, I see. What do you wear in Germany ?

ALAN. A beret usually. Sabots are too uncomfortable.

(ROGERS *laughs politely. There is a pause, broken suddenly by a roar coming from the garden.*)

MAINGOT (*off*). Ah, ça c'est formidable! Qu'est-ce que vous me fichez là donc? "Elle a des idées au-dessus de sa gare." Idiot! Idiot! Idiot!

(ALAN *rises and goes up to join* BRIAN *at the window. The noise subsides.* ALAN *shakes his head.*)

ALAN (*returning to chair* 1 *and sitting*). Poor Babe. But he had it coming to him.

BRIAN (*coming down to behind chair* 2). The Babe was having the horrors this morning before you came down. He said he hadn't one chance in a thousand of getting in.

ALAN. He hasn't.

ROGERS. Of getting in what?

ALAN. The diplomatic.

ROGERS. Oh, I suppose you're all budding diplomats?

BRIAN. All except me. I'm learning French for—er—commercial reasons.

ALAN. He's learnt a lot already. He can say "How much?" in French, and you know how valuable that phrase is in the world of—er—commerce.

BRIAN (*laughing heartily*). Yes, old boy, and that's not all. I can say "Five francs? Do you think I'm made of money?"

ALAN (*laughing too*). "Cinq francs? Crois-tu que je sois construit d'argent?"

(*They both suddenly become aware that* ROGERS *isn't laughing. They stop and there is rather an awkward pause.* BRIAN *goes to the armchair down* R. *and sits.*)

BRIAN (*signalling*). Pie-faced.

ROGERS (*with a wooden face*). Who else is staying here at the moment?

ALAN. There's only Kit Neilan, I think, that you haven't met.

ROGERS. Oh! Is he going into the diplomatic too?

ALAN. Yes. (*To* BRIAN.) By the way, Brian, what odds did you lay against Kit in your book?

BRIAN. I didn't, but I should think five to two against would about meet the case.

ALAN. I don't know. The odds must have lengthened considerably these last few weeks.

BRIAN. Why? Oh, you mean Diana. I say old boy, I hadn't thought of that. You don't think there's a chance of a well-fancied colt being withdrawn before the big contest?

ALAN. No. She won't marry him. That is, not until she's exhausted other possibilities. (*He rises and fetches a book from the bookcase up* C.)

ROGERS. Er—who is this girl?

BRIAN. Diana? She's Babe's—Kenneth Lake's sister. She's staying here.

ROGERS. Oh! is she learning French too?

BRIAN. No. She just stops us from learning it. No, she's staying here because her people live in India and she's got nowhere else to go.

ROGERS. Pretty dull for her here, I should think.

ALAN (*returning to his seat*). That girl wouldn't find it dull on a desert island.

BRIAN. Unless it *was* deserted.

ALAN. True. But one feels somehow it wouldn't be deserted long if she were on it.

ROGERS. What do you mean by that?

ALAN. I've no idea. She's a nice girl. You'll love her.

(BRIAN *hides a smile.*)

At least, it won't be her fault if you don't.

ROGERS (*politely*). I don't quite follow you, I'm afraid.

ALAN. I'm sorry, sir. I was forgetting you're of an age to take care of yourself.

ROGERS (*testily*). There's no need to call me sir, you know.

(ALAN *raises his eyebrows.*)

What you're implying is that this girl is—er—rather fast.

ALAN. I'm not implying it. I'm saying it. That girl is the fastest worker you're ever likely to see.

ROGERS. Oh! (*He goes back to his food.*)

BRIAN (*conciliatorily*). What he means is that she's just naturally full of joie de vivre and all that. She's all right really. She just likes company.

ALAN (*under his breath*). A battalion, you mean.

ROGERS. You sound embittered.

ALAN. Embittered? Oh, no. Oh, dear me, no. (*He breaks a roll open rather violently.*) Both Brian and I, for reasons that I won't go into now, are immune. Only I thought it just as well to let you know before you met her that Diana Lake, though a dear girl in many ways, is a little unreliable in her emotional life.

ROGERS. You mean she isn't in love with this chap Kit What's-his-name who wants to marry her.

ALAN. The only reason I have for supposing she isn't is that she says that she is. But that's good enough for me.

(BRIAN *jumps up from the armchair down* R., *crosses to the bookcase* C. *and takes a book.*)

BRIAN. Well, Maingot's simple French Phrases are calling me.

ROGERS (*evidently glad to change the subject*). Maingot's phrase-book. He's given me that to do too.

BRIAN. Good. Then very soon now you will be able to walk

into a chemist's and say in faultless French, "Please, sir, I wish a toothpaste with a slightly stronger scent."

ROGERS. Oh, really?

ALAN. Then think how nice it'll be if you're in a railway carriage and you're able to inform a fellow traveller that the guard has just waved a red flag to signify that the locomotive has run off the line.

ROGERS. Sounds a bit out of date, I must say.

BRIAN. Maingot's grandfather wrote it, I believe.

(*The telephone rings.* BRIAN *turns round.*)

Do you know, I have a nasty feeling that's Chi-Chi.

ROGERS. Who's Chi-Chi?

BRIAN. That's not her real name.

(MAINGOT'S *voice is heard from the garden.*)

MAINGOT (*off*). Monsieur Howard.

ALAN (*calling*). Oui, monsieur?

MAINGOT (*off*). Voulez-vous repondre au telephone, s'il vous plaît?

ALAN. Bien, monsieur. (*He rises.*)

MAINGOT. Merci.

(ALAN *crosses below the table to the 'phone, and takes off the receiver.*)

ALAN. Hullo . . . Bien. Attendez. (*He holds out the receiver to* BRIAN.)

BRIAN. Me? Hell!

(BRIAN *comes and takes the receiver, giving a piece of buttered bread and a book to* ALAN. ALAN *returns to chair* 1.)

Hullo . . . Ah, hullo, Chi-Chi. Comment ça va? Comment-allez-vous? Quoi? Quoi? Wait a moment, Chi-Chi. (*He lowers the receiver.*) Take it for me, old boy. I can't hear a word the girl's saying.

(ALAN *comes and takes it.* BRIAN *goes to above chair* 3.)

ALAN. Hullo . . . Oui, il ne comprend pas . . . Bien. Je le lui demanderai. (*To* BRIAN.) Can you see her to-night at the Casino? She wants you to meet her sister.

BRIAN. Ask her if it's the same one I met on Tuesday.

ALAN (*into the 'phone*). Il voudrait savoir s'il a déjà rencontré votre sœur. . . . Bon. (*To* BRIAN.) She says it's a different one.

BRIAN. Tell her it's O.K. I'll be there.

ALAN (*into the 'phone*). Il dit qu'il sera enchanté. . . . Oui. Au revoir. (*He hangs up the receiver and comes to* L. *of chair* 5.)

BRIAN. I told that damn woman not to ring up here.

(MAINGOT *enters through the window and comes to up* R.C.)

MAINGOT. Alors ; qui est ce qui vient de telephoner ?

BRIAN (*apologetically*). C'était quelqu'un pour moi, monsieur.

MAINGOT. Pour vous ?

BRIAN. Oui, une fille que je connais dans la ville.

MAINGOT. Une fille ! (*He bursts into a stentorian roar of laughter and goes back into the garden.*) Une fille qu'il connaît ! Ho ! Ho !

BRIAN. Now what's bitten him ?

ALAN. A fille doesn't mean a girl, Brian.

BRIAN. It says so in my dictionary. What does it mean, then ?

ALAN. A tart.

BRIAN. Oh ! (*He considers a second.*) Well, I hate to have to say it, old boy, but having a strict regard for the truth, that's a fairly neat little description of Chi-Chi. See you two at lunch-time.

(*He goes out through the doors up* L.)

ALAN. There in a nutshell you have the reason for Brian's immunity to the charms of Diana Lake.

ROGERS (*icily*). Really ?

ALAN (*easily*). Yes. (*He crosses to the table up* R., *takes a cigarette and lights it.*) This place is going to be rather a change for you after your boat, isn't it ?

ROGERS (*stung*). You mean my ship, don't you ?

ALAN. Oh, is there a difference ?

ROGERS. There is.

ALAN. Of course. (*Coming to chair* 2.) It's a grave social error to say boat for ship, isn't it ? Like mentioning a lady's name before the royal toast or talking about Harrow College. (*He goes and sits in chair* 1.)

ROGERS. Yes, that would be very wrong.

(DIANA LAKE *comes in from the garden. She is in a bathing-wrap which she wears open, disclosing a bathing-dress underneath. She is about twenty, very lovely.*)

DIANA. Good morning. (*She stops at the sight of* ROGERS *and decorously pulls her wrap more closely about her.*)

(ROGERS *and* ALAN *get up.*)

ALAN. Good morning, Diana. I don't think you've met Commander Rogers.

DIANA (*coming to above chair* 3). How-do-you-do ?

ROGERS. How-do-you-do ?

(*They shake hands.*)

DIANA (*to* ROGERS). I didn't know you'd—you must have arrived last night, I suppose.

ALAN (*sitting*). Don't you remember ? You asked me what train he was coming by.

DIANA. Do sit down, Commander Rogers.

(*He sits.*)

How are you this morning, Alan?

Alan. Oh, very well, thank you. I'll bet you didn't go in the water.

Diana. Yes, I did.

Alan. Right in?

Diana. Yes, right in. Ask Kit.

Alan (*really surprised*). Kit! You don't mean to say that you got Kit to go bathing with you?

Diana. Yes, I did. He's fetching my towel. I left it behind.

Alan. God! You women.

Diana. What?

Alan. Without the slightest qualm and just to gratify a passing whim, you force a high-souled young man to shatter one of his most sacred principles.

Rogers. What principle is that, if I might ask?

Diana (*emphatically, standing by chair* 2). Never, under any circumstances, to do anything hearty. (*She goes up* c., *leaves her sunglasses on the bookshelf and returns to chair* 2.)

Rogers (*challengingly*). Personally, I rather like an early morning dip. (*He lights a cigarette.*)

(Alan *exchanges glances with* Diana.)

Alan (*as if the words burnt his mouth*). An—early—morning—dip?

Rogers. Certainly. That's hearty, I suppose.

Alan. Well——

Diana. I quite agree with you, Commander Rogers. I don't think there's anything nicer than a swim before breakfast. Ash-tray? (*She hands one to* Rogers *from the table up* r.)

Alan. You'd like anything that gave you a chance to come down to breakfast in a bathing-dress.

Diana. Does it shock you, Alan?

Alan. Unutterably.

Diana. I'll go and dress, then. (*She moves towards the door up* l.)

Alan. No. There's no point in that. You've made one successful entrance. Don't spoil it by making another.

Rogers. I don't think I quite understand you.

Alan. Diana does, don't you, angel?

(Diana *takes an apple from the table up* r.)

Diana (*sweetly*). Has another publisher refused your novel, Alan? (*She crosses to the armchair down* r. *and sits.*)

(Alan, *momentarily disconcerted, can find nothing to say. There is a pause.*

Enter Kit *through the French windows. He is about twenty-two, fair and good looking. He wears a dressing-gown over his bathing-dress, and carries two towels over his arm.*)

KIT (*sullenly*). Morning. (*He comes to above chair* 3.)

ALAN (*in gentle reproof*). Well, well, well.

KIT (*shamefacedly*). Well, why not?

(ALAN *shakes his head sadly.*)

ALAN. I don't think you've met Commander Rogers.

KIT (*shaking hands*). How-do-you-do? I heard you were coming. (*He sits in chair* 3.)

ALAN. Did Diana go in the water?

KIT. No.

DIANA. Kit, you dirty liar.

KIT. I've done enough for you already this morning. I'm not going to perjure myself as well. I had hoped you wouldn't be here, Alan, to witness my shame.

ALAN. You of all people an early morning dipper.

KIT (*shuddering*). Don't put it like that. You make it sound worse than it is. Say a nine-o'clock bather. (*He picks up the coffee-pot.*) Oh, hell, this coffee's cold. (*Calling.*) Marianne!

ALAN. Mere toying with words can't hide the truth. Do you know, I think that girl could make you go for a bicycle tour in the Pyrenees if she set her mind to it.

KIT. She could, you know, Alan, that's the awful thing.

(*There is a slight pause.*)

ROGERS. I once went for a bicycle tour in the Pyrenees.

ALAN. Really?

(JACQUELINE *comes out of the kitchen. She is about twenty-five or twenty-six, not unattractive, but nothing in looks to compare with* DIANA. *She wears an apron, and has a handkerchief tied over her hair.*)

JACQUELINE. Marianne's upstairs. Do you want anything? (*She speaks with only the barest trace of accent.*)

KIT. Hello, Jack.

ALAN. Good morning, darling.

JACQUELINE (*going to* ROGERS). How-do-you-do, Commander Rogers. I'm so glad you could come to us.

ROGERS (*rising and shaking hands*). Er—how-do-you-do?

JACQUELINE. I hope you've found everything you want.

ROGERS. Yes, thank you.

JACQUELINE (*coming round below the table and starting to clear some of the plates*). Did Marianne ask you if you wanted eggs for breakfast?

ROGERS. I don't want any, thanks.

JACQUELINE. I see. Well, don't worry about asking for anything you need. By the way, do you drink beer at meals or do you prefer wine? (*She is now between chairs* 1 *and* 2.)

ROGERS (*sitting*). Beer, please. Nothing like a can of beer.

Alan. No, I suppose there isn't.

Jacqueline (*above chair* 2, *to* Kit). What were you shouting about, by the way?

Kit. Jack, darling, the coffee's cold.

Jacqueline. Of course it's cold. You're half an hour late for breakfast.

Kit. Yes, but——

Jacqueline. You can't have any more, because Marianne's doing the rooms.

Kit (*rising*). I thought perhaps, Jack, darling, knowing how much you love me, you might be an angel and do something about it.

Jacqueline. Certainly not.

(Kit *sits.*)

It's against all the rules of the house. Besides, you'd better go and get dressed. I'm giving you a lesson in five minutes.

Kit. In the near future, when I am Minister of Foreign Affairs, this incident will play a large part in my decision to declare war on France.

Jacqueline (*grabbing the coffee-pot*). Ooh! This is the last time I'm going to do this for you.

(Jacqueline *exits into the kitchen.*)

Kit (*to* Diana). You see what a superb diplomat I should make.

Alan. Rather the Palmerston tradition, wasn't it?

Rogers. Was that Maingot's daughter?

Kit. Yes. Her name's Jacqueline.

Rogers. Jacqueline? (*Brightly.*) I see. That's why you call her Jack.

Kit (*looking at him distastefully*). Yes, that's why we call her Jack.

Rogers. She speaks English very well.

Kit. She's been in England half her life. I believe she's going to be an English school-marm. You'll like her. She's amusing. (*He continues to dry himself.*) Hell! I still feel wet.

(Diana *rises, goes to chair* 2 *and sits.*)

Diana. You've got such lovely hair, darling. That's why it takes so long to dry.

Kit (*to* Alan). You know, Alan, this is a nice girl.

Alan (*tilting his chair back and gazing at* Diana). Yes, she's nice. She's good, too.

(Diana *is drying* Kit's *hair, burying his head in the towel.* Rogers *gets up.*)

Rogers. Well, I must go upstairs. I want to get my room shipshape.

ALAN. And above board?

ROGERS (*turning savagely on* ALAN). Yes, and above board. Any objection?

ALAN (*airily*). No, no objection at all. Make it as above board as you like.

ROGERS (*bowing stiffly*). Thank you. I'm most grateful.

(ROGERS *exits up* L.)

ALAN (*pensively*). Do you know, I don't think he likes me.

KIT (*uncovering his head*). Who does? I'm the only one who can stand you and then only in small doses.

DIANA (*covering* KIT'S *head again*). Kenneth adores you, anyway. He's quite silly the way he tries to imitate you.

ALAN. Your brother shows remarkable acumen sometimes.

DIANA. And then, of course, I adore you too. You know that.

(KIT *uncovers his head and takes her hands.*)

KIT. Hey! I'm not going to have you adoring anybody except me. Do you understand? (*He kisses her.*)

DIANA. Darling, you're not jealous of Alan, are you?

KIT. I'm jealous of anyone you even look at.

DIANA. All right, then in future I won't look at anyone except you.

KIT. That's a promise.

DIANA. That's a promise.

(ALAN, *still leaning back in his chair, whistles a tune softly.*)

(*Feeling* KIT'S *hands.*) Darling, you are cold.

KIT. Yes, I know. (*He rises, pushes his chair in, then takes* DIANA *by her hands and pulls her up.*) I think I'll go and dress and not wait for the coffee. You've probably given me pneumonia. But I don't mind. You could tear me up in little pieces and trample on them, and I'd still love you.

DIANA. Sweet little thing. Take these things upstairs, darling, will you? (*She gives him the towels.*)

(KIT *exits up* L. DIANA *smiles at* ALAN.)

ALAN. That's no reason why you should, you know. (*He rises to above chair* 2.)

DIANA (*above chair* 3). Should what?

ALAN. Tear him up in little pieces and trample on them.

(DIANA *crosses below* ALAN, *flicking his coat-lapel, then to the window up* R.)

So you're not going to look at anyone except Kit?

(DIANA *doesn't answer.* ALAN *walks over to the window. He puts his arm round her waist and his cheek against hers.*)

(*After a pause.*) This doesn't mean I'm falling for you.

DIANA (*gently*). Doesn't it, Alan ?

ALAN. No, it doesn't. (*He comes to the table, puts his cigarette in the ashtray and then moves down to the armchair* R.)

DIANA. I am disappointed.

ALAN. What do you think of the Commander ?

DIANA. I think he's quite nice.

ALAN (*gently*). Yes, I want to tell you, it's no good starting anything with him. (*He sits in the armchair.*)

DIANA. Don't be silly, Alan.

ALAN. It really isn't any good, darling, because you see I've warned him against you.

DIANA. You warned him ? (*Coming to* ALAN.) What did you say ?

ALAN. I told him what you are.

DIANA (*quietly*). What's that ?

ALAN. Don't you know ?

DIANA (*sitting* L. *of* ALAN, *on the floor*). Alan, much as I like you, there *are* times when I could cheerfully strangle you.

ALAN. Is this one of them, darling ?

DIANA. Yes, ducky, it is.

ALAN. Good, that's just what I hoped.

DIANA. This is rather a new rôle for you, isn't it, playing wet nurse to the Navy ?

ALAN. You don't think it suits me ?

DIANA. No, darling, I'm afraid I don't. What are you doing it for ?

ALAN. It's not because I'm fond of the Commander. As a matter of fact, it would rather amuse me to see you play Hell with him. But I do like Kit, that's why. So no hanky-panky with the Navy or——

DIANA. Or what ?

ALAN. Or I shall have to be rather beastly to you, darling, and you know how you wouldn't like that.

DIANA. You don't understand me at all, Alan.

ALAN. I understand every little bit of you, Diana, through and through. That's why we get along so well together.

DIANA (*tearfully*). I ought to hate you.

ALAN (*patting her arm*). Well, go on trying, darling, and you may succeed. I've got to go and finish some stuff for Maingot. See you at lunch-time.

(*He rises and crosses to the door up* L. DIANA *rises to chair* 1.)

DIANA. Alan.

ALAN (*turning at the door*). Yes ?

DIANA. What do you mean by hanky-panky ?

ALAN. *I* should tell *you.*

(ALAN *exits up* L. DIANA *kicks petulantly at the chair.* JACQUELINE *enters from the kitchen with the coffee-pot. She comes to above chair* 5 *and puts it at* L. *end of the table.*)

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