

Side 4 - Marjorie, Sylvia, Beau, Dierdre, Clarke

~~But if Marjorie's...in the stables...then it seems to me you should be the one suspicious of her. When Clarke's not home, he tells me he's at work. What excuse does Marjorie give you?~~

~~MARJORIE. I don't.~~

~~SYLVIA. What?~~

~~MARJORIE. I don't need to give an excuse, Sylvie. He's never home either.~~

~~SYLVIA. He's never...~~

A knock at the door. All look out.

DIERDRE. *(From off, with doubtless hope and unrelenting romanticism.)* Beau?!

They all look at the door.

Beau! It's me, darling! Please open the door!

A small beat.

BEAU. Damn.

Beau drinks. Dierdre knocks more.

DIERDRE. *(From off.)* Beau, I have the most wonderful news! Are you there?

SYLVIA. Who's that?!

BEAU. That will be Dierdre.

MARJORIE. Who?

BEAU. Dierdre. My lover.

SYLVIA. *(Floored.)* Your lover?! Then who am I?

MARJORIE. *(Nearly giddy from the scandal.)* Who indeed?

BEAU. You are my sister-in-law and we share one night a year together.

SYLVIA. What?!

MARJORIE. *(Ever the detective.)* I knew you had a lover! I knew it.

BEAU. I'm so glad you're pleased, dear.

CLARKE. My my, Beau, this does come as a bit of a shock. I didn't know you had it in you.

MARJORIE. You speak of it as though it's something to be proud of Clarke!

CLARKE. No, no. I'm just surprised, that's all.

SYLVIA. Well that makes two of us!

MARJORIE. I'm surprised too. So really, it's three.

DIERDRE. (*Still at the door.*) I have a *surprise* for you!

MARJORIE. Oh goody. A theme!

DIERDRE. (*Still at the door.*) I can hardly wait another moment!
Please open the door!

SYLVIA. (*Imitating.*) Yes, "*please.*"

Beau deliberately takes his wedding ring back off, then opens the door. Wind blows, birds chirp. Dierdre, a sweet young optimist, enters with more bags than she can comfortably carry. As they talk, Beau helps her with her bags, hat, etc.

DIERDRE. Beau, I had to see you! Oooh, what a lovely robe!

BEAU. Thank you, darling.

DIERDRE. (*Delighted.*) I didn't expect a costume! I've got my kimono in one of these bags. We can play "all aboard the Orient Express" later.

BEAU. Brilliant.

DIERDRE. (*Breathing in the day.*) I'm so glad to be here! Without you leading the way, I got a bit lost on the walk from the train! Oh! I love this cottage!

BEAU. As do I.

DIERDRE. It always feels a bit naughty.

She kisses him naughtily.

Your secretary told me you'd be here.

SYLVIA. You told your secretary?!

DIERDRE. (*Suddenly noticing everyone.*) Oh! Hello, everyone. I didn't expect a party. Will there be games?

MARJORIE. Seems we're in the middle of one.

DIERDRE. (*Genuine.*) What a lovely negligee.

SYLVIA. Thank you.

Sylvia pointedly gets a cigarette from another unlikely spot.

BEAU. Dierdre, allow me to introduce you. This is my brother, Clarke.

DIERDRE. (*Honored.*) Pleased to meet you.

BEAU. My wife, Marjorie.

DIERDRE. (*Shocked.*) Your wife?! But...

Marjorie reveals her belly to Dierdre.

MARJORIE. How do you do?

DIERDRE. (*Audibly gasping at the belly.*) Beau!

BEAU. And my sister-in-law, Sylvia.

SYLVIA. Your sister-in-law? That's how you introduce me? (*To Dierdre—dramatically blowing smoke.*) Hello, dear. I am Beau's lover!

CLARKE and MARJORIE. (*Applauding Sylvia's presentation.*) Brava!

DIERDRE. (*Thoroughly confused and a bit blinded by the smoke.*) Sorry?

BEAU. (*To Dierdre.*) Don't worry, darling, it's just one night per year.

DIERDRE. What?

SYLVIA. Just? Just! I'll tell you, in that one night, we make love more fervently than all the lovers in the world put together.

CLARKE. (*Sharing a moment with Marjorie.*) That's a bit difficult to prove, Sylvie, don't you think?

DIERDRE. It is.

SYLVIA. Beau, what is the meaning of this...this...girl?

DIERDRE. (*Figuring it all out.*) Oh! Is *this* the game?

BEAU. Afraid so.

DIERDRE. Oh! How do I play?

BEAU. Darling, you came to tell me something urgent, did you not?

DIERDRE. Oh! I did, yes. But, now, in light of present company, perhaps...

MARJORIE. Oh please, Dierdre, we're family. Don't let us spoil your plans.

DIERDRE. Right. Well—I...

She absolutely would continue, if it weren't for Clarke's enthusiasm.

CLARKE. Out with it, dear.

DIERDRE. Well—I...

CLARKE. You'll feel so much better once it's out.

DIERDRE. Well—I...

CLARKE. I know I do!

SYLVIA. Will you let the girl speak?

MARJORIE. Touchy, Sylvie.

SYLVIA. Go on, Dierdre, what have you come to tell us?

DIERDRE. Oh! Yes, well, I wanted to say, I've got my divorce finalized. The papers came this morning. So—Beau, we're free to marry!

MARJORIE and CLARKE. Divorce?! SYLVIA. Marry?!

CLARKE. *(On the heels of the above.)* Oh really, Beau. What a scandal!

MARJORIE. *(On the word "scandal.")* You've attached yourself to a divorcée? Beau, I'm shocked.

SYLVIA. *(On the word "divorcée.")* Are you marrying this girl?

BEAU. *(Silencing them.)* Just a moment all of you.

A British moment.

Dierdre darling, would you like a cup of tea?

DIERDRE. Am I staying?

MARJORIE. Yes, please do, stay. We were raised Anglican.

CLARKE. We've never chatted with a divorcée.

DIERDRE. It's only been two hours.

CLARKE and MARJORIE. Good enough.

DIERDRE. *(Happily settled.)* Right!

BEAU. Tea then?

DIERDRE. *(Ever cheerful.)* Mmm-hmm.

BEAU. Lovely.

Beau exits to get more tea. Marjorie, Clarke, and Dierdre make themselves comfortable.