

~~DIERDRE. (An enormous realization.) Oh.~~

~~MARJORIE. What?~~

~~*Dierdre suddenly puts out her cigarette and nervously begins to pace.*~~

BEAU. My dear, are you quite alright?

DIERDRE. No, no I'm afraid I'm not at all alright.

*Dierdre begins to cry.*

MARJORIE. Oh dear!

CLARKE. Are you unwell?

BEAU. Dierdre, darling, what's the matter?

DIERDRE. Well, that's just it. I haven't got round to telling you about Richard!

BEAU. What about him?

DIERDRE. I was so excited about the papers, and being free to marry you—the man I know in my heart of hearts I was truly meant to marry—that I forgot to mention Richard.

BEAU. Heart of hearts, yes, yes, what do you want to say?

DIERDRE. It's too awful.

*Sylvia enters with a plate of crumpets and jam.*

CLARKE. It's the anticipation that makes it awful. Reality is never quite as glum.

SYLVIA. Here you are, Marjorie, wouldn't want you to starve...

MARJORIE. Oooo! Yummy! Thank you Sylvie!

*Marjorie begins to eat ravenously. Dierdre lets out a sob.*

SYLVIA. What's this? My lover's lover is crying? What's the matter, darling? Did you find another woman in the broom closet?

*Dierdre lets out another slightly bigger sob.*

Or is your sister-in-law carrying your husband's baby?

*Dierdre lets out the biggest sob of all.*

BEAU. This may come as a shock to you, Sylvia, but this particular moment is not about you. (*Tenderly to Dierdre.*) There, there, dear.

SYLVIA. (*To herself.*) It's amazing how twenty minutes can completely change how one feels about a person.

CLARKE. (*To Dierdre.*) Go on, dear, you can tell us.

BEAU. Please, Petunia—whatever it is, we'll deal with it.

SYLVIA. Petunia? Petunia?! Is that what you call her?!

MARJORIE. That is rather gauche Beau, darling, seeing as you've always called me Daisy.

SYLVIA. What, do you just go round naming ladies after flowers?

*She throws the tulip on the ground in protest.*

Here I was thinking Tulip was so romantic.

BEAU. I told you—what we had was not a romance.

MARJORIE. (*Referring to the crumpets.*) These are delicious, Sylvie. Did you make them?

SYLVIA. (*Irate.*) I did. And I am never giving you the recipe!

*Sylvia takes a drink.*

*Dierdre blows her nose loudly in a hanky Clarke has provided.*

DIERDRE. (*Handing the hanky back to Clarke.*) Thanks.

CLARKE. Keep it.

*Dierdre wails with renewed spirit.*

MARJORIE. Alright then, darling Petunia, what is so upsetting?

BEAU. Yes, darling, please tell us.

MARJORIE. Be honest.

DIERDRE. It's Richard.

SYLVIA. Who's Richard?

CLARKE, BEAU, and MARJORIE. Her husband.

DIERDRE. (*Through tears.*) Ex-husband.

*Note: Throughout, whenever Dierdre (or later Richard) inserts an "ex-husband" as a correction, it is to be treated quite slightly. Almost as if it hasn't been inserted at all.*

BEAU. Darling, what about Richard?

DIERDRE. He...he...he's going to kill you.

*It has built to this moment and now...silence. Then, suddenly, Beau leading the way, they all begin to laugh. The tension of the morning has finally found its release.*

*Their laughter grows until they're nearly crying. A true moment of familial connection.*

*While they're laughing, Dierdre tries several tactics to interrupt them, it is not until her last line that she is finally heard and their laughter is cut off.*

*(Over their growing laughter.)* Stop it! Stop it, the lot of you! Why are you laughing? It's not funny! This is serious. He's quite large, you know. He has guns! Richard is a dangerous man. There's nothing funny about this! *He's killed all my other lovers!*

*The laughter stops dead.*

BEAU. What's that, darling?

DIERDRE. Richard. *(Rather sheepishly.)* He's killed all my other lovers.

SYLVIA. How many damn lovers do you people keep? Is nothing sacred?

DIERDRE. *(A quote she's heard.)* "One's love is only sacred, if one has had the good fortune of actually discovering one's truest and intended love."

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*All look at Dierdre.*

SYLVIA. You're full of surprises, aren't you?

DIERDRE. Oh dear! Please don't tell.

MARJORIE. Tell whom?

DIERDRE. The police or something. I wouldn't want him to get into trouble.

CLARKE. For killing people!?!?

DIERDRE. Mmm. It's my fault really. I'm the one having the affairs.

SYLVIA. You're taking the blame for your husband's...

DIERDRE. Ex-husband's...

SYLVIA. ...Ex-husband's murders?

BEAU. Dierdre, darling. Are you saying your husband, Richard, is a murderer?

DIERDRE. Ex-husband, truly, and well, I don't like to put it that way. "Murderer" has such *negative connotations*, doesn't it? But—um—yes, well—yes—he's—he's got a *nasty temper*.