

A(4) Garry and Liz

**GARRY** (*moving right of the settee*) Well, darling, tell me all about everything.

**LIZ** I saw the play.

**GARRY** (*sitting at the right end of the settee*) Oh, was it good?

**LIZ** Yes, very. We shall have to change it a bit but Vallion's quite willing to let us do what we like. But I don't want to go on about it now until I've mulled it over a little more. I'm seeing Morris after lunch.

**GARRY** I've told him I can't open until November. I must have a holiday after Africa. So there's lots of time.

**LIZ** Now I want to talk to you about something else.

**GARRY** I don't like that tone at all. What's on your mind?

**LIZ** You. Your general behaviour.

**GARRY** Really, Liz! What have I done now?

**LIZ** Don't you think it's time you started to relax?

**GARRY** I don't know what you're talking about.

**LIZ** Who was that poor little creature I saw here this morning in evening dress?

**GARRY** She'd lost her latch-key.

**LIZ** They often do.

**GARRY** Now listen to me, Liz...

**LIZ** You're over forty, you know.

**GARRY** Only just.

**LIZ** And in my humble opinion, all this casual scampering about is rather undignified.

**GARRY** Casual scampering about, indeed! You have a genius for putting things unpleasantly.

**LIZ** Don't misunderstand me, I'm not taking a moral view, I gave that up as hopeless years ago. No, I'm merely basing my little homily on reason, dignity, position and, let's face it, age.

**GARRY** Perhaps you'd like me to live in a bath-chair.

**LIZ** It would certainly have its compensations.

**GARRY** It's all very fine for you to come roaring back from Paris where you've been up to God knows what, and start to bully me...

**LIZ** I'm not bullying you.

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**GARRY** Yes, you are. You're sitting smug as be damned on an awful little cloud and blowing down on me.

**LIZ** Don't bluster.

**GARRY** Who went away and left me a prey to everybody in the first place? Answer me that!

**LIZ** I did, thank God.

**GARRY** Well then.

**LIZ** Would you have liked me to have stayed?

**GARRY** Certainly not, you drove me mad.

**LIZ** Well, stop shilly-shallying about then and pay attention.

**GARRY** This, to date, is the most irritating morning of my life.

**LIZ** I can remember better ones.

**GARRY** Where were we?

**LIZ** Be good, there's a darling - I mean it.

**GARRY** Mean what?

**LIZ** Exactly this. You have reached a moment in life when a little restraint would be becoming. You are no longer a debonair, irresponsible juvenile. You're an eminent man advancing, with every sign of reluctance, into middle age.

**GARRY** May God forgive you, dear, for I never shall.

**LIZ** Never mind about that. Listen. We all know about your irresistible fascination. We've watched it going on monotonously for twenty years.

**GARRY** I met you for the first time exactly eleven years ago next August and you were wearing a very silly hat. You still are! (*He laughs.*)

**LIZ** (*hitting his knee*) Will you be serious! Your behaviour naturally affects all of us. Morris, Henry, Monica and me. You're responsible for us and we're responsible for you. **GARRY** makes a face. You never lose an opportunity of lecturing us and wagging your finger in our faces when we happen to do something you don't approve of.

**GARRY** And am I right or am I not? Answer me that!

**LIZ** Oh, you're fine when dealing with other people's problems but when it comes to your own you're not so hot.

**GARRY** Of all the base ingratitude!

**LIZ** I think the time has come for you to look very carefully at yourself and see how much you really need all this buccaneering.

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**GARRY** Buccaneering! What have you been reading?

**LIZ** I personally don't believe it's nearly as necessary to you as you think it is. Just try not to be so devastatingly charming to people for a little. Think what fun it would be to be unattractive for a minute or two. Why, you might take to it like a duck to water and anyhow it would be a wonderful change.

**GARRY** (*laughing*) Liz, darling, you really are very sweet.

**LIZ** (*crossly*) Oh dear, I might just as well have been talking Chinese.

**GARRY** (*moving close*) Don't be cross, Liz dear. I do see what you mean, really I do.

**LIZ** That's rather sudden, isn't it? After your belligerence of a few moments ago?

**GARRY** (*coaxingly*) Surely I may be allowed a little change of mood?

**LIZ** You're acting again.

**GARRY** You've said some very cruel things to me. I'm upset.

**LIZ** If only you were.

**GARRY** Seriously though, I admit I'm a trifle feckless every now and then, but I don't do any harm to anybody.

**LIZ** You do harm to yourself and to the few, the very few who really mind about you.

**GARRY** (*moving to the right end of the settee*) I suppose you've been discussing all this with Monica and Morris and Henry.

**LIZ** I haven't yet, but I will unless I see some signs of improvement.

**GARRY** Blackmail, hey?

**LIZ** You know how you hate it when we all make a concerted pounce.

**GARRY** The thing that astonishes me in life is people's arrogance...

**LIZ** Well, you're a fine one to talk about arrogance.

**GARRY** (*cutting in*) It's fantastic. Look at you all. Gossiping in corners - whispering behind your fans - telling me what to do and what not to do. It's downright sauce, that's what it is. And what happens if I relax my loving hold on any of you for one minute? Disaster! I happen to play a three months' season in New York. Henry immediately gets pneumonia, goes to Biarritz to recover, meets Joanna and marries her! I go away for a brief holiday at San Tropez and when I come back what do I find?

**LIZ** Now we're not going to have that all over again.

**GARRY** (*cutting in*) You and Morris between you have bought the dullest Hungarian play ever written and put it into rehearsal with Phoebe Lucas in the leading part...

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**LIZ** She gave a very good performance.

**GARRY** (*cutting in*) Phoebe Lucas! Playing a glamorous courtesan with about as much sex appeal as a haddock. (*He rises and moves to right of the settee.*) And how long did that little number last?

**TOGETHER:**

**LIZ** One week!

**GARRY** One week! And that was only because the press said it was lascivious.

**LIZ** Isn't all this a little beside the point?

**GARRY** Certainly not. Twenty years ago, Henry put all his money into *The Lost Cavalier*. Who played it for eighteen months to capacity with extra matinees? I did. Who started his whole career as a producer in that play? Morris! Who...

**LIZ** I wish you'd stop asking questions and answering them yourself, it's making me giddy.