

## SIDE: JANET & FARRANT

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Has Doctor Görtler gone out, 'cos Mr. Ormund wants him?

ORMUND (*above the chair L. of the table*). I want to apologize to him.

SALLY (*R.C., sulkily*). He must have gone out. He's off in the morning.

ORMUND. Going? What for?

SALLY (*defiantly*). Because I asked him to go.

SAM. Nay, Sally, you didn't.

SALLY. Well, you wouldn't. You shuffled out of it. (*She turns to go.*)

ORMUND (*with authority*). Just a minute, Mrs. Pratt. Did you really ask Doctor Görtler to leave this inn?

SALLY (*defiantly, coming to C. above the table*). I did. And I'm not sorry. He's made everybody feel uncomfortable. I heard you complaining and shouting at him yourself, Mr. Ormund.

ORMUND (*ruefully*). Yes, God help me!

SALLY. So I think I did right.

ORMUND. No, you did wrong.

SALLY. Why did I?

ORMUND. Because he's a stranger, a foreigner, who's had to leave his own country. Even if he says things we don't understand, even if he makes us feel uncomfortable at times, we ought to be courteous. God knows I haven't been. But I was hoping you were being considerate to him. My fault probably. I could kick myself.

SAM. Why, Mr. Ormund, I can't see it matters much.

ORMUND (*broadly*). It does, Sam, it does. All over this rotten world now, they're slamming doors in the faces of good men. But we've still a door or two open here. We can't bang one of them in the face of this man, who's done none of us any harm. (*He glances at the door up L.*) He can't have gone far. I'm going to tell him I'm sorry and ashamed.

(*He goes out hastily up L. SAM looks after him dubiously, then at SALLY.*)

SAM. You shouldn't ha' done it, Sally.

SALLY. Why not? We've got our living to earn—and work hard enough to earn it—and we're the best judge of our own business. It's all right Mr. Ormund talking so grand now. (*She shuts the door up L.*) And how much whisky has he had?

SAM (*apologetically*). I know. But he's far from being nasty-drunk, so I can't interfere. Only one as could is his wife, and it beats me she doesn't.

SALLY (*lowering her voice*). Happen she's given him up as a bad job.

(*She does not say any more because JANET enters up R.C. and comes down R.C. There is a slight, awkward pause.*)

Did you enjoy your supper all right, Mrs. Ormund?

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JANET (*who has a strained look*). Yes, thank you.

SALLY (*motioning SAM out*). You won't be wanting anything else to-night?

JANET. No, thank you. (*She sits in the chair R. of the table.*)

SAM (*rather awkwardly, as he moves up*). Mr. Ormund's just gone out.

(*JANET nods. As SAM is going out R.C., FARRANT appears. SAM steps aside for him, then exits.*)

SALLY. You won't be wanting anything else, will you, Mr. Farrant?

FARRANT (*crossing to the chair at the desk L.*). No, thank you.

SALLY. What about to-morrow? Will you be going out all day again?

FARRANT (*hastily, as he sits*). I don't know yet. I haven't made any plans.

(*They all say "Good-night," and SALLY goes out up R.C. JANET and FARRANT are left silent, not looking at each other. The sense of strain is definitely felt. At last JANET can endure it no longer.*)

JANET. Mr. Farrant.

FARRANT (*rather startled*). Yes?

JANET. This afternoon you walked just behind me for several hours. We've just sat through the whole of supper without exchanging a word. I'm sorry, but I can't stand any more of it. If you're going to sit in here, then I'll either go out or up to my room.

FARRANT (*rising and moving up towards the door R.C.*). Please don't trouble. I'll go.

JANET (*watching him—with a touch of irony*). Thank you.

(*He stops above the table and stands awkwardly, looking doubtfully at her, and not moving.*)

Yes?

FARRANT ( *jerkily*). Would you mind—telling me—how long you're staying up here?

JANET. I really don't see why I should. (*Pause.*) Why do you ask?

FARRANT. Because if you're not leaving, then I must leave.

JANET (*rising*). I didn't realize you disliked me as much as that.

FARRANT (*moving to L. of the chair L. of the table*). I don't dislike you. It isn't that. I'd better clear out in the morning.

JANET. But you've no right to talk as if I'm driving you out.

FARRANT. No, I don't mean that, Mrs. Ormund.

JANET (*moving a step or two down, to be level with the downstage end of the table*). I'm not trying to be difficult. It's simply that I find these long silences intolerable.

FARRANT (*coming down to below the chair L. of the table*). I know they are. I feel just the same. And I do assure you—it's quite unusual for me. I'm often accused of talking too much. But—you see—last night I never slept at all—

JANET (*moving away R.*). Neither did I, for that matter. But that doesn't excuse us—

FARRANT. No, no, I know. But then, you see, all to-day when I was out, of course I felt fagged. (*He moves to below the table.*) You must have done too.

JANET. I did. And when I came back, I felt absolutely worn out. I couldn't possibly make any effort at supper. Still, I think you might have done—

FARRANT (*moving to below the chair R. of the table*). I tried, y'know, tried all the time. I kept—you know how one does—kept forming words—

JANET (*taking a step forward*). Yes, I did that too. But couldn't bring them out.

FARRANT. Exactly. And then when I came in here, the silence had gone on so long, it seemed—y'know—absolutely indestructible—

JANET. It was nearly. I had to take a hammer to it.

FARRANT (*moving a step nearer*). I'm glad you did, because I wanted to explain. You must think me a fool—

JANET (*quicker than before, taking another step towards him*). No. Of course I felt you disliked me, but then with not sleeping last night and being so tired to-day, you see—

FARRANT (*eagerly, very quickly*). Yes, well, probably I'm imagining I'm fitter than I am, y'know—

JANET (*she is quite close to him now*). You look rather nervously tired—

FARRANT (*looking at her, his hands behind him*). Perhaps we're both—y'know—not quite—our usual selves.

JANET. No.

(*Involuntarily she steps into his arms and he holds her to him. The clock chimes the quarter past a little softer than usual. They are down below the chair R. of the table. A tremendous inevitability rather than a sudden gust of passion is felt here. They remain in this embrace for a few moments. They only draw their faces away to speak.*)

FARRANT (*dazed*). I didn't know. . . . I didn't know.

(*There is a pause.*)

JANET (*whispering*). What shall we do?

(*He now does definitely hold her close. They are quite ecstatic. Then before they have time to separate, ORMUND has entered up L., clearly taking in the situation. JANET sees him and backs down*

R. a little. FARRANT turns L. and steps up to beside the chair R. of the table.)

ORMUND (*from just inside the door*). There may be a storm. And it's nearly Whit-Sunday—the Feast of Pentecost—the Day of the Spirit, they used to call it. And—curiously enough—they didn't mean motor spirit—quick-starting, anti-knock petrol. They didn't know about that. They didn't know anything. We know it all. Farrant knows it all and is passing on our knowledge to our lucky boys—

(*He breaks off and comes forward to above L. end of the table, looking at the other two, who are still dumb.*)

And now what?

(*They are silent.*)

Come on then—damn you!—talk, talk, let's hear all about it.

(*They are silent.*)

I suppose you arranged to meet here. No? Then if you've got as far as this in twenty-four hours, I ought to congratulate you. It's wonderful how everything's being speeded up.

(*There is another pause. ORMUND comes down to below L. end of the table and knocks the chair over. FARRANT moves up R.C. ORMUND looks at him.*)

Come on, Farrant. Good God, aren't you man enough to stand up for what you're doing?

FARRANT. Ormund—I wish I could explain—

ORMUND. I can do that.

JANET. No, Walter, please. We've got to try and understand what's happening—

ORMUND (*bitterly*). No difficulty about that. In one day, while the pair of you were pretending to dislike each other, you've suddenly decided you're in love—or in want of amusement—and couldn't even wait—

JANET (*with force, going up to FARRANT*). No, Walter, can't you see it's not like that?

ORMUND. How can I see what it's like?

FARRANT. Ormund, it's—simply—happened, that's all. Beyond that, we can't explain.

(*JANET is R. of the chair R. of the table; FARRANT is just above L. of her. ORMUND walks away up L.C., then turns in a quieter mood.*)

ORMUND. All right, all right. You're neither of you in any fit state to talk, and I know I'm in no fit state to listen. You've fallen in love. You don't know why. You can't help it. That it?