

THE FIRST JOANNA

A Play in Three Acts by

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THE FIRST JOANNA

Characters in the Play

Act 1

The second Stephen Deveron
Mrs. Collins who "obliges" at Chateau Deveron
The second Joanna Deveron, Stephen's wife
Halley van Druyten
Jocelyn Cuming, Stephen's second cousin
Miss Editha Deveron } Stephen's twin great-aunts
Miss Viola Deveron } aged 86
Jackson, the chauffeur

Act 2

Scene 1

The first Stephen Deveron, aged 22
Sir Bertram Tavener, Governor of a Women's Jail
Lady Caroline Tavener, his wife
Miss Beatrice Tavener, his sister
Captain Jules Smith, aged 29
Joanna Millay, the first Joanna, aged 17

Scene 2

Joanna, aged 42
Augusta Deveron, aged 20
Philip Deveron, aged 14
Editha Deveron } aged
Viola Deveron } 10
Stephen, aged 47
Major Jules Smith, aged 54

} Children of Stephen
and Joanna

Scene 3

Stephen, aged 69
Joanna, aged 64

Act 3

The second Stephen
The second Joanna
Miss Editha Deveron
Miss Viola Deveron
Jocelyn Cuming
Halley van Druyten
Mrs. Mattie van Druyten, Halley's mother
Mrs. Swinnerton
Colonel Swinnerton
Mrs. Collins.

Note The two Stephens can be played by the same man. The two Joannas should, however, be as unlike as possible - the first Joanna tall, well-built and fair, the second small dark and intense.

The Scenes

All the Scenes except Scene 1 of Act 2 are set at Chateau Deveron, a vineyard in South Australia.

Act 1 The verandah of the Old House at Chateau Deveron

The time January of 1939

Act 2

Scene 1 The drawingroom of the residence of Sir
Bertram Tavener, Governor of a Women's Jail
in Tasmania.

The time Autumn of 1837

Scene 2 The livingroom at Chateau Deveron

The time Autumn of 1862

Scene 3 The livingroom at Chateau Deveron

The time October 1885

Act 3 The livingroom at Chateau Deveron

The time The evening of the same day as Act 1

Act 1

The Scene is the verandah at the Old House, Chateau Deveron, the time, just after eight on a burning morning in January, 1939.

The verandah is half sheltered by a thick screen of passion vines and extends about halfway back on the stage to a waist-high balustrade of wooden spalls, broken about two-thirds of the way along to the right by a shallow flight of steps which lead down into the garden. Left and right of the stage are the walls of the house from which doors open right down-stage on to the rest of the house. The edge of the stage is the other wall.

Below the verandah can be seen a well-grown garden with, on the right, a huge jacaranda in full bloom. Beyond to the right can be seen hills covered with vines and to the left rounded hills bright with the gold of sun-dried grass. Below the hills is the river, shaded by willows.

The sky is already intense blue and the hills shimmer in the heat; the verandah looks cool and inviting by contrast and a lovely light shines through the translucent passion vines.

In the shade of the passion vines, a breakfast table is set. There is a bowl of fruit in the centre of it, a coffee jug and cups, also a teapot and milk jug close to Stephen's place. There are three places set, one each side of the table and one facing the audience.

Brightly coloured steamer chairs, a couple of them folded up against the balustrade, are grouped down the other end of the verandah.

When the curtain rises, Stephen is sitting at breakfast. He has a newspaper propped in front of him and is making steady inroads on a grapefruit. Mrs. Collins, a large shapeless woman with greying bobbed hair in a short sleeved printed cotton dress covered by a black apron edged with cretomme, artificial silk stockings and down-at-heel shoes, enters from the house left. She carries a plate of bacon and egg in one hand and a small honey jar in the other. Mrs. Collins does not work at Chateau Deveron - she obliges.

Mrs. Collins: I've only done you one egg. It's a bit hot for bacon and eggs this morning. You can have more if you want it.

Stephen: Thanks, Colley. But probably one will do. It's going to be hot.

Mrs. Collins: A real stinker, if you ask me. Pity, with all these foreigners coming to dinner.

Stephen: No honey?

Mrs. Collins: Here it is.

Stephen: Thanks. They're not foreigners, Colley. You can't call Mr. van Druyten a foreigner. They're just Americans and English people who live in the south of France, when they're not travelling.

Mrs. Collins: Seems a funny kind of life to me - but there, I suppose things are different when you can afford it. From what Mr. van Whosit says, I reckon they get bored to death.

Stephen: You're very perspicacious this morning, Colley.

Mrs. Collins: Well sing out if you want anything. I'd better get on with the job - dinner for twelve in this heat's no joke. (She goes off left as she speaks).

(Stephen goes on with his breakfast, pouring himself tea and turning over his newspaper. Joanna enters from the house; she is dressed in shirt, slacks and sandals. Stephen rises immediately, goes round table and pulls out opposite chair for her. She drops wearily into it).

Stephen: Morning, Joanna. Happy birthday, darling. (He bends to kiss her, but she turns her head so that his kiss lands somewhere near her ear).

Joanna: It's too hot for kissing.

Stephen: Yes, it's going to be warm.

- Joanna: Going to be! It's ninety-two already - and that Kitchen - oh, god, that kitchen.
- Stephen: There's no need for you to go into it. Mrs. Collins can cope - it's what she's there for.
- Joanna (heavily elaborate): You may remember we have dinner guests -
- Stephen: Oh, yes - the rest of the van Druyten gang.
- Joanna: And if you imagine I'm going to let Mrs. van Druyten and the Swinnertons sit down to the kind of dinner Mrs. Collins produces, you're mistaken. And why the defective memory - are you being funny, or do you really keep forgetting why they're coming?
- Stephen: I try deliberately to forget them as much and as often as possible.
- Joanna: They are my closest friends - and you liked them well enough at Juan les Pins.
- Stephen: In Juan les Pins, they were possible; that was their milieu - this isn't. van Druyten's Riviera flavour is too strong for here.
- Joanna: I was engaged to Halley van Druyten when I met you.
- Stephen: And I was engaged to my cousin Jocelyn; I'd been engaged to her for two years before I left Australia. Then we met, we looked, we loved - and bing, we got married. All very fomantic!
- Joanna (flinging herself up from the table and going over to the verandah rail which she hammers with her fist as she speaks): Oh, very, very romantic. Bing! Yes, that describes it perfectly - the snapping of a trap.
- Stephen (turning the pages of his newspaper): You sound almost as though you meant that.
- Joanna (coming back and standing behind her chair looking down at him): I do mean it. I'm not joking, Stephen. I'm telling you this simply and coolly - I hate you.
- Stephen (looking up with a chuckle): You didn't hate me eight - seven - no (he looks at his wrist watch) six hours ago -
- Joanna (slowly and heavily): No, that's what makes it so damnable -
- Stephen: Sit down and have your breakfast. What you need is food.

Joanna: Food! (Her voice rises) Food! The very sight of it revolts me.

Stephen (sharply): Joanna, do you feel alright?

Joanna (ready to scream with rage): Of course, I feel alright. I am alright. This is definitely not the prelude to the patter of little feet. It's the heat, the blistering, enervating, soul-destroying heat -

Stephen (raising his voice): Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Deveron wants her tomato juice.

(Mrs. Collins enters from house carrying tray with glass of tomato juice).

Mrs. Collins: I was just bringing it. I was just waiting for you to get over your bit of a barney first. Good morning, Missus. Many happy returns of your birthday.

Joanna: Thank you, Mrs. Collins.

Stephen: Colley, what made you marry Jim?

Mrs. Collins: Are you being funny, Mr. Stephen?

Stephen: No, it's not I. Mrs. Deveron is feeling analytical and introspective this morning and I thought a brief resumé of your experience might help her.

Mrs. Collins (piling up Stephen's used dishes): Experience! That's what I didn't have. . . (She meditates for a moment) Well, what do you think people mostly marry for. (She takes up dishes and goes over to exit left) Mind you, I don't hold with any loose ways - but I do think they ought to arrange for some kind of a try-out first. (She disappears left)

Stephen: Companionate marriage - and in our kitchen, too.

Joanna (trying not to laugh and not succeeding): Toast, please.

Stephen (putting bread in electric toaster on table): Nothing like food for that Noel Coward feeling.

Joanna: I'm not going to laugh with you till we've had this thing out. There hasn't been a chance to talk all the week with Halley here and you know you've been evading me every time we have been alone. This is our last opportunity - now before Halley gets up.

Stephen: Halley up or in bed - it makes no difference. As far as I'm concerned, the matter is closed.

Joanna: That's because you're getting your own way. It's not closed as far as I'm concerned.

Stephen: Until you get your own way, I suppose.

Joanna: Is there one real reason why we can't live in Adelaide - you could superintend the vineyard just as well from there as here. God knows that would be dull and boring enough but anything would be better than this morgue of a place, with nothing to do and no one to talk to, day in, day out.

Stephen: There's the house to look after, if you'd only take some interest in it, instead of sitting round waiting to be entertained all the time. And as for ~~no~~ one to talk to - you've been politely insolent to everyone who has come near the place. You've only yourself to blame - I don't know what you've done to me to make me talk like this. But give the place a chance, darling; you've only been here a few weeks -

Joanna: Ten weeks - and they might have been a century. I suppose there are still places where people are happy and gay and live like civilised beings. As far as I'm concerned, they might be on another planet.

Stephen: All the arguing in the world will make no difference, Joanna, and I wish you'd understand. This is my home, this vineyard is my work - nothing either of us can say will alter those facts.

Joanna (eagerly): But it needn't be your home - it needn't be your work. You know the Cumings would jump at the chance to buy you out; Jocelyn would give her eyes to manage the place.

Stephen (sarcastically): And what would I do?

Joanna: We could have the loveliest time, Stephen. There are heavenly places we could live even without going to Europe - Magnetic Island or somewhere like that in the winter and down south in the summer, Tasmania perhaps. There'd be heaps to do - and we could afford it.

Stephen: Yes, we could afford it. It always comes down to that, doesn't it? To live without working, that seems to be the one idea.

Joanna: Well, there's no need for you to work.

Stephen: Listen, Joanna - my great-grandfather brought these vines out from Spain -

Joanna: Oh, I know, I know - I hear it a dozen times a week. He nurtured them like babies and planted them with his own hands and your great-grandmother, the great, the glorious Joanna, the first Joanna - (She stops suddenly and then speaks in a small voice). Is that why you married me, because my name's Joanna?

- Stephen: That's what made me look at you first. I heard Halley call you and I had to look at any woman named Joanna, and then I looked, and it was you. And now we're here in this house as they were - Stephen and Joanna again.
- Joanna: You're a sentimental thing, Stephen. I can't be anything like her.
- Stephen: I can't remember her much. I was only five when she died. She was a gaunt old lady then - very still, very quiet, with great, tired dark eyes that missed nothing. She rarely talked, but when she did, everyone listened. It wasn't that she was domineering or insistent, but I can remember how authoritative her voice was and, child as I was, I sensed the love and reverence that were wrapped round her like a cloak.
- Joanna: Yes, I don't doubt you gave her a great build-up between you. You still do, though she's been in her grave for thirty years. Oh, scrap it all, Stephen - all this deliberate glorification can't give you a history -
- Stephen: No, I suppose not. Happy uneventful lives - birth and marriage and death - they don't make history. But they make roots, Joanna.
- Joanna: Roots? My father's people have lived for eight hundred years in the same spot -
- Stephen: And the van Druytens have made the same kind of jewellery since Noah. Alright, have it your own way - I have no roots, no background and no history. But this is my home and my work and I will not sell it. I will not live in Adelaide and work the vineyard from there. And last, but not least, I will not go big-game fishing with the van Druytens.
- Joanna: You won't even alter your mind about that, even knowing how much I want you to come. You would enjoy it, Stephen; the fishing will be terribly exciting - and the van Druytens are marvellous hosts.
- Stephen: What I think about the van Druytens had better not be said.
- Joanna: You've no need to say it - you've been downright rude to Halley the whole week.
- Stephen: I haven't been rude to him; he's right enough in his own way, I suppose - but anyone who'd trail a newly married woman half way round the world deserves all that's coming to him.
- Joanna: You're jealous.
- Stephen: No, just mildly annoyed.

Joanna: I'm going with them.

Stephen: So you have said repeatedly for the last week.

Joanna: Stephen, you're so different here, like granite.

Stephen: If you go, you do so against my express wish. I trust I make myself clear.

Joanna: Quite. And since we're on the subject, I have every intention of going with the van Druytens tonight. And if you don't come with me, Stephen, I may not come back.

Stephen: Is that a threat?

Joanna (passionately): You think I don't mean that - but I do, I do, I do -

(Jocelyn enters along the garden path and up the steps; she is just in time to hear Joanna's last words. Jocelyn is about thirty and dressed in a simple linen dress, smart, but suitable, white hat and low-heeled white shoes)

Jocelyn:(as she comes up the steps): Is this a private fight, or may I join in?

Stephen (shortly): Good morning, Jocelyn. (Joanna does not speak, but sits moodily at the table).

Jocelyn: This really doesn't seem the right moment to say 'Many happy returns', does it? (She pauses, but neither of them answer. She turns deliberately to Stephen) You drew off some of the '29 Burgundy yesterday, Stephen? What did you think of it?

(Stephen tries to sound interested and enthusiastic)

Stephen: Very good - a sound Deveron vintage. I'd like your opinion of it.

Jocelyn: I'll come across to the cellars with you when you go. Have you tasted it, Joanna?

Joanna: I'm afraid my palate is not educated to these wines.

Stephen: That was meant for a nasty crack, Jocelyn.

Jocelyn: I should think your opinion would be worth having, Joanna - if you were interested.

Joanna: It's obvious that I'm not. But you are, aren't you, Jocelyn - in everything Stephen does. It's a pity you didn't marry him.

Jocelyn: For once, Joanna, I agree with you.

Stephen: Joanna, have you taken leave of your senses. You may have background and history and all the rest of it, but by heavens, you've got no manners. And if that lazy slug of a van Druyten is coming to the cellars with me this morning, he'd better be dragged out of bed pronto. I'm going in five minutes. (Raising his voice) Mrs. Collins, call Mr. van Druyten, will you - tell him I'm going in a minute or so.

Joanna (raising her voice too): And the world will stand still if he's two minutes late.

Mrs. Collins (entering left and crossing verandah to door right as she speaks): I asked him before if he'd like some breakfast and he said, "God, breakfast!" so I come to the conclusion he didn't. Good morning, Miss Jocelyn. How's your mother this morning.

Jocelyn: A little better, but feeling the heat a bit.

Mrs. Collins: She always did feel the heat, even as a little thing. Tell her I'm sorry she's poorly.

Jocelyn: I will, thank you, Colley.

Mrs. Collins: Well, I suppose I'd better go and wake Mr. van Whosit. I hope you're going to keep him out of the way today, Mr. Stephen - we'll have our work cut out with all this crowd coming tonight. (She goes off right).

Stephen: Had we better have lunch over with the Aunts, do you think, Joanna?

Joanna: Oh, please yourself.

Stephen: I will, thank you. (His whole manner alters) My great-aunts are coming over to see you this morning, Joanna - to bring you a birthday gift. You will forget all you feel about me and the Deverons. They are doing you what is to them the greatest possible honour - whatever you think about their gift, you will remember that, and that they are very old, and treat them with courtesy and gratitude.

Joanna (quietly): You really think that was necessary, Stephen.

Jocelyn (before Stephen has a chance to answer): Stephen has some grounds for warning you, you must admit, Joanna.

(In the awkward pause that follows, Halley van Druyten enters right. He is in his early thirties, dressed a little too well. His accent is South Car'lina overlaid with Riviera Oxford)

Halley: Have I been keeping you waiting, Stephen, old man. Good morning, Joanna; very many happy returns, my dear. Ah, Miss Jocelyn - you're an early visitor today.

Joanna: } Thank you, Halley dear -
Stephen: } As soon as you're ready -
Jocelyn: } Not so early -

(They all stop abruptly. Halley sits down in the third place at the table and pours himself some coffee).

Halley(looking from one to another): Do I, or do I not, detect a faint iciness in the atmosphere? Should I run gaily on with inconsequent conversation till the tension eases, or should I wait expectantly and sympathetically for someone to enlighten me?

Joanna (relaxing a little): You are a fool, Halley.

Stephen: While you're having your breakfast, Halley, I'll run over to the home farm. There are a couple of things I should see to over there. Are you coming, Jocelyn?

Jocelyn: Not to the farm, Stephen. Anyway, I wanted to pick up a couple of books - if I may, Joanna. I have an urge to re-read Jane Austen. They're on the top shelf in the office - do you mind?

Joanna: Are they? Help yourself - you probably know more about the books here than I do.

Jocelyn: I'll follow you, Stephen -

Halley: Please wait for me, Miss Jocelyn. I'm always afraid I'll get lost among these vines - they are such complete twins, all of them.

Stephen: I'll look in on my way back from the farm and see if you're ready. (He crosses behind Joanna and puts his hand on her shoulder for a moment; she almost imperceptibly moves away. Stephen picks up his sun helmet and goes off down the steps. At the same time, Jocelyn goes off right. Halley goes on with his breakfast. He does not speak until Stephen is right out of sight).

Halley: The lord and master throwing his weight about, Joanna?

Joanna: I was being piggish, Halley - but I am unhappy and Stephen just doesn't seem to realise that I'm a person, not just an appendage to Chateau Deveron and the Deveron family.

Halley: You're not being fair to him, my sweet.

Joanna: And now you side with him. The way men hang together!

Halley: I don't want you to make a mess of things, and you will if you don't be a little more than just to him.

Joanna: Don't preach at me, Halley. I can't stand it.

Halley: That's your trouble, my lass. You try to sidestep everything unpleasant. You've married Stephen and now you're up against a real man, which is something you've never struck before. You can't turn a man like Stephen into a time-spender, you know. That's what we've been doing all our lives, time-spending. You've got a chance now to snap out of it -

Joanna: Oh, Halley, we're not as rotten as you make us sound.

Halley: It's a matter of standards.

Joanna: What gets me is this calm assumption that the Deverons and what they've done and the wretched vineyard stand for something.

Halley: I'm not certain that they don't - only I can't think what.

Joanna: Oh, respectability and honest toil and a kind of suburbia - terribly worthy, but oh, so dull, so dull. Stephen talks about roots - roots! - they don't go more than two inches into their sun-baked soil.

Halley: Give them a chance; they've only been here a hundred years, more or less -

Joanna: That's what's so incomprehensible to me. The whole place should be alive, brimming over with vitality and youth - but it isn't; it's set and middle-aged, with a spotless youth behind it and nothing but stodginess ahead.

Halley: Don't blame it for failing to live up to your expectations - that's why you're finding it boring.

Joanna: It isn't only the place - it's Stephen himself. In France he was so different, he seemed so worthwhile. But here - he's settled, impersonal, somehow like a machine that just goes on doing the same thing day after day, world without end - oh, I can't explain. I can't even fight with him - it's hopeless, like trying to cut a path in quicksand.

Halley: Why don't you cut your loss then, Joanna - now, before there are complications - children and so on.

(Joanna walks away and stands looking across the hills for a moment before she answers. She speaks without turning).

Joanna: There's the biggest complication of all, Halley. I'm in love with him. (She turns quickly) I'm sorry to say it so baldly, to you of all people.

Halley: Well - there never was that complication between us, was there? We were and are good friends - getting married seemed the natural logical thing to do.

Joanna (following her own train of thought): It would have been better if I'd had to do something hard - I could have whipped up quite a bit of the good old pioneer spirit. But this house is complete - it has been complete for generations; the whole place is finished. It was conceived in respectability and born without pain.

Halley: How do you know?

Joanna: The whole place shrieks it. If it had any history, you may be sure it would be trumpeted. They are history-conscious, background-conscious, every last one of them.

Halley: You know, I'd never suspected you worried about those things.

Joanna: One didn't need to at home and in France. The very stones were steeped in history; every turn in the road, every town and village, the trees themselves -

Halley: You wouldn't have liked pioneering, you know. No electricity no refrigerator in the kitchen - and you'd have had to do Stephen's washing -

Joanna: I wouldn't have minded that, if it had meant something. But here, nothing means anything. It's just existing, not living. And I don't think I can stand it. That's why I'm coming with you people tonight - it's a last throw, Halley. I've got, somehow, to sting Stephen into knowing I'm a person to be considered, whose happiness must be provided for

Halley: And if it fails?

Joanna: I'm not thinking beyond tonight. It just mustn't fail - that's all.

Halley: Have you packed?

Joanna: Yes. Stephen's things as well. One of the vineyard vans will take the trunks down to the ship this afternoon. We can take the light luggage in the car tonight. I'm sorry it will be such a hot drive for your mother and the others out from Adelaide this afternoon, but it should be a lovely drive back - it's full moon tonight.

Halley: Mother won't mind the heat - you know her capacity for enjoying everything.

(Jocelyn enters right. She has two or three leatherbound volumes of a small standard edition in her hand)

Joanna: Did you find your Jane Austen?

Jocelyn: I knew exactly where they were. I've been dipping into them and making up my mind which ones I'd read first.

Joanna: I think I've only read Pride and Prejudice.

Jocelyn: Have you really? We read them all at school.

Joanna: I'm afraid you'd think my education very unconventional.

Jocelyn: Perhaps. Ours was certainly conventional enough. Stephen and I shared a governess till he was nine; then he went to school in Adelaide and I went on with the governess for years before I went to boarding school.

Halley: Quite an old-fashioned feudal arrangement you've got here - all your homes on the one property.

Jocelyn: It must have been feudal when our great grandmother was alive - she ruled the whole outfit in no uncertain manner. Even now the old aunts submit everything they do to the test of whether or not their mother would have approved.

Halley: She must have been an old tartar.

Jocelyn: I can't remember her much - but I think she was very gentle really. Her power was of the spirit -

Joanna: She's been dead long enough for legend to have got going.

Halley: I must see if I can get your great-aunts to talk about her tonight.

Jocelyn: You can pump them this morning. They are coming across to see Joanna -

Joanna: I wondered what you were waiting for.

Jocelyn: I wish you'd be friends with me, Joanna.

Joanna: You know why we're not, Jocelyn.

Halley: If you girls are going to fight, I'll retire.

Joanna: We're not. Jocelyn can't help being herself; she's part of the Deveron set-up. It's I who am the misfit; but you can't make me conform to the Deveron pattern. I'm an individual, not someone else's echo. Stephen's my husband, why shouldn't I try and make him over to my pattern?

Jocelyn: Because your pattern's worthless. It may do for men like Halley - he was born to it, but not for Stephen.

Halley: I hide my diminished head.

Jocelyn (smiling): Nothing would diminish your head.

Joanna: You're got such an exalted idea of Stephen -

Jocelyn: Listen, Joanna - get out of your head any idea that I'm jealous. I don't love Stephen, not the way you do - but to me he's the most worthwhile person on earth. If we had married, we would have had identical interests in every ~~way~~. Stephen has it in him to amount to something - we have a tradition of service to the community in our family -

Joanna (derisively): Tradition!

Jocelyn: You don't need a family tree starred with crusaders and kings' mistresses to acquire tradition. You can get it just as well by adhering to an ideal of work and achievement. The Deverons have lived here over a hundred years. The soil itself is part of our physical bodies - our roots go deep into it.

Halley: Atta-girl.

Jocelyn (laughing ruefully): There's something in the air this morning; I certainly didn't mean to say all this - I've scarcely even thought of it before. But, Joanna - don't go. It will make Stephen obstinate -

Joanna: Two can play at that game.

Jocelyn: You're both so pig-headed. Oh, Halley, why didn't you interrupt and stop me from interfering -

Halley: You know, I've just been thinking how much I'd like to teach you to play. How would you like to have three or four hundred pounds of marlin on the end of a ridiculously thin line -

Jocelyn (slyly): Five thirty-two - at Barnagui last season.

Halley: My god - and I've been talking big fish all week.

Jocelyn: I enjoyed it.

Halley: I'll guarantee you did. I'd have the greatest pleasure in spanking you.

Jocelyn: I've said so much I may as well finish. Joanna, if you go I'm afraid you'll come to a deadlock. You're both so stiff-necked - If you use Stephen's love for you to change his way of life, and I'm afraid you could, he'll despise himself all the rest of his life. He'll know he's let himself down.

Joanna: Your perspective's distorted. You see all this as so terrifically important. I want Stephen to amount to something as much as you do, but I can't see this as the only means. If there were even one real reason -

(Enter Mrs. Collins left, with tray)

Mrs. Collins: If you've finished with them breakfast things, I'll take them away. The old ladies have just left the New House - I seen them through the kitchen window. They'll be here in two shakes of a dead lamb's tail -

(As she speaks, she clears the table, piling the dishes on the tray. When she has collected the dishes, folded the cloth etc., she goes off left with tray).

Halley: There's something regal in the way the old ladies visit.

Joanna: They're eighty-six. I'll want to be regal if I ever touch that mark.

Jocelyn: You're fond of them, Joanna?

Joanna: They're the pick of the Deverons.

Halley: I don't know, Joanna - I don't know -

Jocelyn: You've wasted your opportunities - you're leaving tonight.

Halley: Not till ten o'clock. I can work rapidly when necessary.

Jocelyn: Work? Do you know what it means?

Halley: I used to work. For nearly five years I went to the office practically every day. But I was such a flaming nuisance, they made me a director and turned me loose.

Jocelyn: I can well believe it.

(While they are speaking, the sound of a car is heard. It stops and almost immediately the two old ladies are seen walking along the garden path. They are very much alike and dressed in dresses of the same type but different in color, with high lace collars. Their hats are wide and Viola's is trimmed with flowers. Editha's is plain. They mount the steps with difficulty, waving aside Halley's proffered help. When they can be seen, it is apparent that Viola has suffered an accident that has distorted one side of her face; she is obviously eccentric and a little soft)

Editha: Good morning, Joanna dear.

Viola: Yes, good morning, Joanna dear.

Joanna: Good morning, Aunt Editha. (She kisses her). Goodmorning, Aunt Viola. (She kisses her and settles her in the steamer chair which Halley has brought from the other end of the verandah).

Jocelyn: Good morning, darlings. (She brings forward another chair for Editha).

Viola: That nice young man's still here, Editha. What's his name?

- Halley: Halley van Druyten, Miss Deveron.
- Viola: van Druyten, Editha. He sounds Dutch.
- Halley: American for the last three hundred years, Miss Deveron.
- Editha: He says he's American, Viola.
- Viola: Oh, I'm sorry about that. I don't hold with Americans.
- Editha: You mustn't be rude, Viola. He can hear you.
- Viola: Oh, dear, I hope he's not offended.
- Halley: Not a bit, Miss Deveron. I don't hold with Americans myself much.
- Joanna: You shouldn't have come out in all this heat, Aunt Editha.
- Editha: We wanted to give you your birthday gift, my dear. We are so excited at giving it to you - you won't deny two old women their pleasure.
- Joanna: You're very sweet to me.
- Editha: You're Stephen's wife.
- Viola (for no apparent reason): The sun, the glorious sun! I love to feel it on my back, wrapping me round like a blanket.
- Joanna: It's too much like a blanket for me.
- Editha: You'll get used to it after a while. One does, you know.
- Joanna: I doubt if I'll have a chance to.
- Editha: Oh, yes, you will; it will be hot now for two months or so.
- Joanna: I'm afraid I won't be here to enjoy it.
- Editha: Stephen said something about your going away, but I thought he was joking. It would be most ill-advised for you to go at present, Joanna, with the vintage coming on. You will be needed here.
- Joanna: You are all most kind arranging my life for me.
- Editha: We wouldn't interfere, my dear - but we wouldn't like to see Stephen's wife fail in her duty.
- Joanna: My duty!
- Editha: But there, I shouldn't lecture you on your birthday, should I? Jocelyn, call Jackson, please dear.

Jocelyn (leans over balustrade and calls out): Jackson, bring in the body.

Jackson (off stage): Coming, Miss.

(The two old ladies sit very straight in their chairs. The whole thing is to them an important ceremony. Jocelyn too shows that she thinks it important. Only Halley looks faintly quizzical. Joanna, strung up and tense, lounges against the table as Jackson appears along the garden path. He is dressed in the trousers and leggings of a chauffeur, but wears no coat over his open-necked shirt. He balances on his head the first Joanna's chair. It is a low-seated old-fashioned lady's chair of good lines, but covered in a depressing hand-worked greyish tapestry, the colours of which have long since faded. He comes up the steps and places the chair in the centre of the stage).

Jackson (breaking a pregnant silence): There you are, Miss Deveron.

Editha: Thank you, Jackson.

Viola: Yes, thank you, Jackson.

(Jackson touches the place where his cap ought to be to Jocelyn and then goes off the way he came).

Editha (reverently): Our dear mother's chair; no one else has ever sat on it.

Viola: She slapped us if we climbed on it. It was the only time she ever slapped us.

Editha (gently): Not quite the only time, Viola; we must be truthful.

Viola: Yes, we must be truthful. But she did slap us, Editha. At least (proudly) she slapped me.

Editha: There was always a reason. Mother was nothing if not just.

Viola: Yes, always just. But she liked Philip best, Editha.

Editha (explanatorially to Joanna): Philip was the only brother who lived. He was Stephen's grandfather. Not at all like our father.

Halley: One hears so much about your mother, it's almost possible to forget you had a father.

Viola: We had a father. Indeed, we had a father.

Editha: Mr. van Druyten is joking, Viola.

Viola: Are you? Then I suppose I should laugh. (She laughs)

(Stephen enters rapidly from the garden)

- Stephen: I saw the car - How are you, Auntie? (He kisses them both)
- Editha: You've been running in the sun, Stephen. Really dear!
- Viola: You were in a hurry to see your aunties, weren't you dear? (She seems nearer normal when she speaks to Stephen). He always ran to his aunties even when he was a tiny little boy.
- Joanna: Cupboard love probably.
- Stephen (looking at the chair): I thought I might get back before they gave it to you.
- Joanna: You're too late. The presentation has taken place.
- Editha (hearing the exchange although she is not meant to): Indeed no. Viola and I have talked over what I was to say to you, Joanna, and I haven't said any of it yet.
- Viola: Say it, Editha - just the way you said it all to me yesterday. (Confidentially) It's a lovely speech.
- Editha (ceremoniously): It is our very great pleasure to give you on this, your first birthday as Stephen's wife, our most treasured possession, Joanna. We felt that now there is another Joanna here in the Old House, it was only fitting that the chair should be here too. That wasn't what I said yesterday, Viola - I'm afraid I've forgotten what I said then. "Joanna's chair" Father always used to call it and we've always called it that too - although, of course we would never have thought of calling mother "Joanna". Now it will be the second Joanna's chair. Mother loved it - she really was a little jealous about it, wasn't she, Viola?
- Viola: Yes, a little bit jealous, Editha.
- Editha: I hope it will be as good a friend to you, Joanna.
- Joanna (obviously nonplussed): Thank you very much indeed. It is charming and generous of you to give me something you value so much.
- Viola (interrupting her; getting up and going over to the chair which she touches with loving fingers): It's such a pretty chair - I would like it to have been mine. See the tapestry - Mother worked it herself. It was very beautiful when it was new. These flowers along the top - Mother sewed them with the hair of the little brother and sisters who died. One of them had red hair - see, the colour is still bright.

Halley(coming to the rescue of Joanna who is on the point of hysteria):
There were more of you then.

Editha: Oh, yes, quite a lot of us. There was Augusta first; she married Ernest Cuming and they were Jocelyn's grandparents, of course. Then there was George - but he died of teething. And then Philip and Martha after him. Then Viola and me - although of course I'm really an hour older than Viola. The last of us all was Michael. He and Martha died of whooping cough. Michael was such a lovely little boy. We can remember him, can't we, Viola?

Viola: Yes, a lovely little boy; we can remember him.

Editha: There were two other little sisters, but neither of them lived more than a few hours. We knew they'd die because they had violet eyes. Their graves are all there beside Father and Mother in the graveyard over the hill.

Joanna: Nine of you - and only four lived. Oh, poor Joanna!

Editha: There is no need to pity her. She was ninety-five when she died - and she was a happy woman -

Joanna: I wonder.

Stephen: You must show Joanna where the chair used to stand, Aunt Editha - she will want it to stand in exactly the same place, won't you, Joanna?

Joanna (dryly): It would be a pity to alter anything. I'm sorry I won't be supplying the nine children.

Viola (cooly): One shouldn't mention children, Joanna - not with gentlemen present.

Halley: I believe you still think it's the stork, Miss Viola.

Viola: He's funny, Editha. I like him.

Editha: Don't forget he's American, Viola.

Viola (stubbornly): Yes, but I still like him.

Joanna (trying rather belatedly to be adequate): Thank you very much indeed for my birthday gift - I do appreciate it tremendously. Now, wouldn't you like a cool drink - Mrs. Collins will have some lemon squash on the ice, I know.

Stephen: Hadn't we better go into the house - it's getting definitely hot out here. Come along, Aunt Vi - we'll go into the sittingroom where it's cool and Jackson can bring the car round to the other door for you.

(He takes Viola by one arm and Editha by the other and pilots them into the house right. Joanna picks up their stray impedimenta and follows them in. Halley remains, resuming his lounging attitude in a chair as soon as the old ladies have disappeared. Jocelyn slips down from the balustrade where she has been sitting and comes across to the table for a cigarette. Halley gets up and lights it for her)

Halley: You're a dark horse, Jocelyn.

Jocelyn: Not a dark horse - just a horse you didn't notice. Your eyes have been rather full of Joanna, you know.

Halley: They haven't really. Joanna and I were just on the point of realising it wouldn't do - at least I felt we were - when Stephen appeared on the scene. It's only since I've been here this week that I've realised what a great kid Joanna is.

Jocelyn: Why are you taking her away with you then?

Halley: That's Mother's idea - she's very fond of Joanna, always has been. We've known her since she was all eyes and plaits, you know. Mother used to look after her - her father was simply hopeless and her mother died when she was born.

Jocelyn: What a queer life you've led - you and Joanna, living that holiday kind of existence when you should have been at school.

Halley: It didn't seem queer to us - just normal. Anyway that kind of thing is ended from all the portents.

Jocelyn: You really think this war scare will come to something?

Halley: Don't you?

Jocelyn: We're a long way from it here.

Halley: Not so far when a plane can get here in a week. You are remote - but that's a quality in yourselves. I think you'd retain that probably even if you were living in the middle of the European mess.

Jocelyn: Did Joanna feel the general unrest? Was she afraid of what was going to happen? Is that why she married Stephen?

Halley: Mightn't it have been just because she fell for him? It is possible, you know.

Jocelyn: She might have come from a different planet. I'm worried, Halley - they're heading straight for trouble and anything I can do will only make things worse.

Halley: How about doing nothing? You could, if you had sufficient self-control.

Jocelyn: Oh, that's nasty.

Halley: I don't mean to be nasty. You Deverons are overwhelming - you probably don't realise how much so. Joanna has always been an individual in a community of individualists; your strong family sense is an intolerable weight. Give her time, Jocelyn - give her time.

Jocelyn: Time! when you and your mother are taking her away with you tonight.

Halley: In any case, cease to interfere, my lass. Let Stephen fight his own battles; if he's worth his salt, there will be no need for you or anyone else to help him as far as Joanna is concerned. You're all so damned matter-of-fact - and she's a romantic.

Jocelyn: The way you men deceive yourselves. Joanna romantic! You make me laugh. She's the toughest girl I've ever struck.

Halley: I've known Joanna for ten years; you've known her for ten weeks. There are depths in her nature she doesn't even suspect - I guess she's really a fine person, Jocelyn.

(As he speaks, he wanders over to the chair and is about to sit down on it. Jocelyn springs forward to stop him).

Halley (dryly): I'm sorry. I forgot the legend. "Joanna's chair".

Jocelyn (shrugging her shoulders): I suppose we do sound feeble to you. All the same, I do feel our way of life is so much saner, so much solidier than yours - oh, what's the good of trying to talk to you; our words have different meanings

Halley: You're all so damnably sure of yourselves and your rightness, you Deverons. Doesn't it ever frighten you? I'm beginning to feel like Joanna. I'd like to shake the whole darn outfit to its foundations - just for once; it would do you good. (He takes down and laughs at his own intensity). It would do me good anyway.

(Joanna enters right)

Joanna: Are you two arguing? Jocelyn, your aunts want to say good-bye to you - they'll see you at lunch and again at dinner, but that doesn't matter - they want to say goodbye to you.

Jocelyn (going off right as she speaks): Where are they? In the sittingroom.

Joanna: Yes. (She comes over and looks at the chair for a

minute, then turns to Halley with a sudden gesture of hopelessness and exasperation). You see, Halley. (She touches the back of the chair where Viola touched it). The hair of the little ones that died - oh, god. And they think this is going to be my life, year after year after year, world without end.

Halley: Steady on, my sweet.

Joanna: I'm finished, Halley - utterly finished. You saw the way they came and stuck round, Stephen and Jocelyn, watching, watching everything I do and say. Why should I guard every word? What would it matter if I did say something natural to the two old grotesques - they are so wrapped up in their own self-sufficiency they'd never have noticed. That's why Stephen and Jocelyn were here - to cover up my gaucheries.

Halley: It's important to them too, Joanna, don't forget that.

Joanna: Is it likely? As for this moth-eaten antique - it is to stand on the left-hand side of the fireplace. Everything I do, everything I say, even the placing of my furniture is dictated by a woman dead before I was born. I will not stand it. I'm a person, not the echo of a stuffy old early Victorian.

(Stephen enters as she is speaking).

Stephen: Never mind the dramatics, Joanna. Halley, my aunts would like to say goodbye to you - you have quite won their hearts.

Joanna: What a triumph for you, Halley.

Halley: I must try the same technique on something younger. (He gets up languidly and goes off right as he speaks).

Stephen: Joanna, what's the matter with you?

Stephen: With me! Why must it always be me? Never you or the
Joanna: rest of the Deverons.

Stephen: Oh, don't start that again. Why couldn't you be at least decently grateful to my aunts - they couldn't help but feel your coldness.

Joanna: What did I have to feel grateful ~~to~~? Look at that chair - look at it. A filthy old thing full of dust and moths - why should I be grateful? I will not have it in the house - this is my home and I will not have it cluttered up with prehistoric rubbish.

Stephen: Please stop being childish. The chair is a very good one of its kind - and it will stand exactly where it

used to stand as long as my aunts live. Are you coming to see them to the car?

Joanna: No.

Stephen: Alright.

(He goes off right in a rage. Joanna stands looking down at the chair. She is tense with anger. Suddenly she whirls round, picks up a light steamer chair and raising it above her head, brings it down with a thwack on Joanna's chair. The steamer chair collapses, but Joanna's chair is unhurt. Joanna flings the pieces of steamer chair away and literally dances with rage. Then she scrabbles with her fingers at the seat of the chair as though to rip the tapestry off. It loosens in her fingers; she digs her hands down at the back of the seat as though to tear the tapestry right off, then her expression changes and she slowly pulls out first one, then another and then a third small leathercovered book. One of them has a metal clasp. She opens one of the others and after reading a page or so, sinks down on the chair with the three books in her hands. She turns another page or two, then Halley enters right).

Halley: We got them off. One feels that a red carpet and a band are really necessary.

Joanna (taking no notice of what he says): Halley, I've found her diaries - here in the back of the chair.

Halley (a little uncomfortably): You'd better give them back, hadn't you?

Joanna (fiercely): To whom? The chair is mine, isn't it? Listen to this - it's the last entry she ever made. Listen, Halley -

'Today they brought me my great grandson. He is a straight sturdy child with a look about him of Stephen. They put him into my arms and his strong hands closed round my fingers and at last, I am content. I shall write no more in these diaries of mine, but will wait for the completeness of death. I still wonder if there be a heaven, if Stephen waits for me somewhere, but I cannot imagine anything more heavenly than this home of mine, with our quiet vines about it, nor anything more lovely than the moonlit hills dropping down to the Onkaparinga'

Halley: How old was she then?

Joanna: She must have been about ninety - Stephen was five when she died. I wonder if he is like the old Stephen. (She goes on turning back pages as she speaks half to herself).

- Halley: She sounds as though she might have been a poet.
(Joanna does not answer; she is reading an entry avidly. Stephen enters at door right, but does not come right on to verandah.)
- Stephen: Are you coming across now, Halley. (Looks at his watch) Good heavens, the morning is half gone already.
- Halley: I'll have to get a hat. (He goes off right and Stephen follows him in. Jocelyn enters right. She has the Jane Austen books in her hand)
- Jocelyn: I'll go across with Halley and Stephen. You'd better come over to the New House for lunch, Joanna -
- Joanna (not having heard a word, looks up from the diary): Jocelyn, did you know that Editha pinched Viola's fiancee and that Viola threw herself into the river and that's why she's crooked and queer - did you know?
- Jocelyn: Of course, I did - but one doesn't talk about things like that. Aunt Editha has repaid with her devotion a thousand times over. She has never left Aunt Vi since the day it happened.
- Joanna: The only interesting thing about them - and you don't talk about it.
- Jocelyn: Who told you - how did you find out?
- Joanna: It's all here - in Joanna's diary.
- Jocelyn: Where did you find that? It isn't yours, Joanna - give it to me - you have no right to it.
- Joanna (holding the little books close to her): Oh, no, they're mine. Joanna left them there in the chair for me to find. No one's ever touched the chair before - they were meant for me.
- (Stephen and Halley enter right, their hats in their hands).
- Jocelyn: Stephen, Joanna has found great-grandmother's diaries - they were tucked down the back of the chair.
- Stephen (a little uncertainly): I suppose I had better take them back to the Aunts.
- Joanna: But I'm not going to give them up - they're mine. I'm Joanna.
- Stephen (brusquely): You are quite impossible today, Joanna. I'll tell the Aunts you've found them and see what they say. Come along, you two. (He starts off down the steps with Jocelyn. Halley follows) You had better come over to the New House for lunch, Joanna.

Joanna (calling after them); I don't think I will. I'm going
to spend the day with the first Joanna.

(She sits down on the chair again and tries to open the book with
the clasp. It is stuck fast. She goes at last over to the table
and takes up a pair of scissors and with difficulty pries the clasp
open. Then she sits down again and opens the book at the beginning.
After a moment, she looks up dazedly, then reads aloud from the book)

Joanna: 'Today I was whipped. They will never do that to me
again. I will rather kill myself'

Oh, - Joanna - Joanna -

(As she speaks, the curtain falls)

End of Act I

Act 2

Scene 1

The year 1837.

The drawingroom of the house of the Governor of a women's jail in Tasmania. (This can be a small scene, using only the half stage).

In the centre back is a fireplace with blazing log fire. The mantelpiece is of marble with an ornate overmantel; a french clock of good design stands in the centre and there are lustre ornaments either end. There is a cottage piano to the right of the fireplace and some distance away from it. To the left downstage is a french window, uncurtained although it is dark outside. One of the windows stands slightly open. There is a door upstage in the right wall.

Lady Caroline sits to the left of the fireplace. A tall beaded screen shades her face from the heat of the fire. In front of her is a low coffee table with heavy silver coffee service on it. She is pouring coffee.

Sir Bertram Tavener stands with his back to the fire. He is a small round man with a hearty red face and a large laugh. To the left is seated Miss Beatrice Tavener, the Governor's not-so-young sister, who is trying her wiles on Stephen Deveron who stands beside her chair. Stephen is tall and wears a very serious air. His whiskers curl youthfully down in front of each ear, but his mouth is shaven. He is twentytwo.

Talking to the Governor is Captain Jules Smith. He is a gross man in his late twenties, dressed in English military uniform. His eyes even while he is talking to the Governor rarely leave the serving maid, Joanna. Joanna is dressed in blue and white striped galatea - the women convict's uniform, over which she wears a large white apron with frills over the shoulders. She has a plain white cap over her soft bright hair which is drawn to a knot at the nape of her neck. She is tall and slim and just seventeen.

During the first part of the dialogue Joanna stands a little to the back of Lady Caroline and carries the coffee as it is poured, first to Beatrice, then to Stephen whose eyes also follow her as she moves. Lady Caroline takes her time over the pouring pausing to take her part in the conversation. This must be timed so that Joanna naturally takes Smith's coffee to him at the right moment.

Smith: You think then, Sir Bertram, that the new settlement is doomed to failure.

Sir Bertram: I reserve my judgment, Captain, I reserve my judgment. From what I know of Colonel Light, the work will be done with care - but without vision, without vision.

Lady Caroline: Sir Bertram comes from the same county and if anyone can speak with knowledge of the man, I venture to say Sir Bertram can.

Stephen (diffidently): With respect, Sir Bertram - my father has known Colonel Light for many years; it was his confidence in the Colonel that encouraged him to let me come out here to the Colony.

Beatrice: I think you're so brave, Mr. Deveron - to come all this way to start your vineyard. But then gentlemen are so venturesome, aren't they?

Stephen: I didn't feel so venturesome the day I left Plymouth, I can assure you, Miss Beatrice.

Sir Bertram: You have made up your mind that that is what you intend to do, Mr. Deveron.

Stephen: I have brought my vines with me, Sir bertram, and equipped myself with all the knowledge I could gather. For the last two years I have lived in Spain where, in my opinion, they make the best wine in the world. The climate on the mainland is, I understand, similar to that of Spain and Italy and I shall, of course, take the utmost care in selecting my land. Aspect and the nature of the soil greatly influence the quality of wine.

Smith: Couldn't stand this fiddling, faddling business myself, if you'll pardon the expression, Lady Caroline. Not that I haven't a palate for a good wine myself - none better! But it seems a queer way for a gentleman to spend his life - growing vines - (He crosses and seats himself in a chair to the right well downstage, so that his back is practically to the audience).

Stephen (shortly): Every man to his taste, Captain Smith.

Lady Caroline (before there can be any unpleasantness): And in a few short hours you'll be started on the last stage of your adventure, Mr. Deveron. The "Emma" leaves on the tide tonight?

Stephen: Yes, Lady Caroline. I have ^{very} much enjoyed these few days ashore - I will not soon forget your kindness to me. If I may do so, I will take my leave as soon as the moon rises. It is full tide at twelve tonight.

Beatrice: You'll find it very different on the mainland, won't he, Caroline - none of the comforts of life that we have here.

Stephen: I do not expect comfort, Miss Beatrice.

(Joanna carries Smith's coffee to him. She stands on his left with her back to the audience. He takes the cup from the salver and Joanna stands holding the salver with sugar on it).

Smith: Two lumps.

(Joanna takes tongs and lifts one lump into his cup. As she takes up

the second lump, his hand, unseen by the other players but in full view of the audience, slides up her thigh and he pinches her behind. Immediately, with the salver, Joanna flips his coffee, so that it streams all over him. He springs up in a rage. The coffee cup and saucer and the bowl of sugar from the salver fall to the floor).

Smith: You clumsy wench. That is the second time -

Joanna: Yes, it is the second time.

Lady Caroline: Joanna, how dare you! I apologise, Captain Smith - such carelessness will be punished.

Smith (spluttering with rage): A good whipping is what she needs and a whipping is what she'll get -

Sir Bertram: I'm sure it was an accident. Joanna will apologise -

Smith: It is the second time it has happened. It was not an accident; she did it on purpose.

Sir Bertram: Did you, Joanna?

Joanna (scornfully): It was not an accident.

Beatrice (to Stephen): The ungrateful hussy - after all we have done for her. We have even let her sit with us at our sewing

Lady Caroline (overcome): You dreadful, dreadful girl. That such a thing should happen in my drawingroom! I think I'm going to faint. Beattie -

Beatrice (springing up): Smelling salts, Caroline. (She produces them from her bag and waves them under Caroline's nose). Don't let yourself become so agitated, Caroline. (To Smith) She is so sensitive.

Sir Bertram: Why did you do it, Joanna? (Joanna stands stubbornly silent) I will have to punish you, Joanna - you know that.

Smith: A good sound whipping is all these cattle understand.

Joanna (passionately): You'll not whip me again. I'll kill myself first -

Lady Caroline: I cannot - indeed I cannot witness such disgusting scenes - excuse me please. Come, Beatrice dear, this is no place for you. (She sweeps out right. Beatrice, with a sad look in Stephen's direction gathers up Lady Caroline's bag and follows her off right).

Sir Bertram: Now that the ladies have gone, perhaps we can get some sense out of you, Joanna. Why did you do it?

Joanna: Ask the soldier.

Sir Bertram: Impudence won't help you, woman. Answer my question.

(Joanna stands sullenly glowering at him)

Stephen (a little timidly): Perhaps Captain Smith will explain - now that the ladies have gone -

Smith: Me explain! What do you mean, sir?

Sir Bertram: I'm afraid there is no explanation, Mr. Deveron, but Joanna's evil temper - we know it well, unfortunately. After all Lady Caroline's kindness to you, Joanna - Go and get your dustpan and clear up this mess. In the morning, you will be whipped.

(Joanna goes off right, still defiant)

Stephen: I still think perhaps Captain Smith could explain - I cannot think that the girl was deliberately clumsy - I have found her particularly pleasant and obliging while I have been here.

Sir Bertram (without waiting for Smith's reaction): I fear you waste your sympathy, Mr. Deveron. We are used to Joanna's sudden fits of passion and sullenness. A pity! My wife and sister have taken quite a fancy to her.

Smith: One can do nothing with the scum.

Stephen: They are still men and women, Captain -

Smith: Convicted felons, Mr. Deveron. Your sympathy betrays your youth. I'll warrant this maid is no better than the others.

Stephen: She looks so young.

Sir Bertram: She's turned seventeen - been here nearly four years.

Stephen (horrified): And for what crime did our Government transport a child of thirteen?

Sir Bertram: As bad as it could be, just about. Attempted murder - she tried to shoot her benefactor, a relative who'd given her home and refuge when her parents died. No, Mr. Deveron, I'm afraid you waste both your interest and your sympathy. Joanna Millay's punishment is well deserved, hard as it is.

Smith (laughing): Too goodlooking to be a murderess, eh, Mr. Deveron?

Stephen: But - thirteen!

Sir Bertram: You'll learn as you get older, Mr. Deveron. Captain, I fear your coat is damned uncomfortably wet.

Smith: Most uncomfortable -

Sir Bertram: I'll get you a coat to wear while my man removes that stain. Will you come with me - if Mr. Deveron will excuse us - Have a cigar to comfort you for a few minutes, Mr. Deveron. But don't smoke in here if you value her ladyship's good opinion of you.

Stephen (taking cigar from Sir Bertram): I'll smoke in the garden. I wouldn't care to risk Lady Caroline's displeasure.

Sir Bertram: We shall not leave you alone for long. After you, Captain Smith.

(He opens door right and he and Smith go out. Stephen examines the cigar carefully as though he is not quite sure of it. Then he puts it into an inside pocket as he goes out through the french window. The stage is empty for a moment, then Joanna enters right with dustpan, brush and cloth. She goes over and, kneeling commences to pick up the pieces of cup etc.; she sobs convulsively every now and then. Outside the window Stephen can be seen watching her. After a minute or so, she sits back on her heels and the things fall from her hands. She gets up and going over to the mantelpiece, runs her hands lovingly over the clock and then the vases. Then she goes to the piano and her hands travel over it too. Stephen comes to the window and speaks softly).

Stephen: You like them?

Joanna (speaking automatically as though she has not really realised anyone has spoken to her): I love them.

Stephen: Why are you touching them?

Joanna: I must say goodbye to them.

Stephen: You meant it then - that you will kill yourself. (He comes right into the room. Joanna turns abruptly and sees him).

Joanna (simply): I meant it. (Then with sudden passion) Yes, I meant it. I do not want to die - I do not want to, but they shall not whip me again.

Stephen (gently): How will you do it? It is not easy to kill oneself.

Joanna: The garden runs down to the sea. I will swim out and out and out. The sea at least is clean -

Stephen: You're too lovely and too young to die, Joanna.

Joanna: They tell me I'm seventeen -

Stephen: They tell you - don't you know?

Joanna: The first thing I remember is the snap of the wind in

the rigging and the convict women singing as they worked. I do not remember what went before.

Stephen: You do not remember why you were sent out here?

Joanna: I know what they have told me. But I remember nothing - nothing at all.

Stephen: Why are you so stubborn? If you had told Sir Bertram, he would have believed you. Captain Smith touched you didn't he?

Joanna (contemptuously): His hands are never still.

Stephen: Then why didn't you say so? Sir Bertram and Lady Caroline have been kind to you, haven't they?

Joanna: Yes, I suppose so - kind, as one is kind to a clever animal. They cannot help it - but convicts are made of different dust.

Stephen: You do not speak, nor think, as convicts do, Joanna. I wonder what kind of a home you came from -

Joanna: That I cannot tell - but I know there's a book in Greek in Sir Bertram's study and I can read it.

Stephen: And there is no memory, no inkling, of what went before.

Joanna: There is something so hideous there, I can't bear to think -

Stephen: I wish there was something I could do to help you.

Joanna: There is nothing anyone can do. No one can set me free. This is what I was born for - they tell me that every day-

Stephen: I will speak again to Sir Bertram. But I'm afraid there won't be much opportunity. I am leaving Hobart on the tide tonight. (He has a sudden thought) I am leaving Hobart - tonight. Joanna, how brave are you?

Joanna (simply): Brave enough to swim out to sea until the sea takes me.

Stephen: You can get out of these grounds by the sea -

Joanna: Round the point - yes. I would have gone before but for my clothes - I could not go a yard in them without being taken -

Stephen (eagerly and quickly): You know my room - I shall drop some clothes from my window - a suit and a greatcoat. Tie them into a bundle on your head. Then leave your own clothes as though you had indeed swum out to sea. Swim round the point, put on the clothes, then watch for me

and when I leave the house, follow me to the ship. If I am alone come close so that you follow me on board. I will take passage for you as my man. You will need to cut your hair off - Can you do that?

Joanna: Yes - yes - I can do it.

Stephen: Away with you then; before they come back. I will leave the house at ten o'clock. You must be round the point before then -

(Joanna goes down on her knees again and sweeps the broken china into the pan with desperate energy. She stands up as Stephen finishes speaking so that she looks at him directly as she speaks).

Stephen: And when I leave the house, you will follow me -

Joanna (speaking solemnly, as though making a vow): I will follow you.

(They stand looking at each other as the curtain falls)

Act 2

Scene 2

The year 1862

The livingroom at Chateau Deveron.

It is a spacious well-proportioned room with french windows left and right back which open on to the verandah of the first Act. In this and the next scene, the screen of passion vines is absent, and the jacaranda tree and other shrubs in the garden are younger. The vineyard and the hills are the same.

Between the windows is a large chiffoniere of good design. There is a table covered with a velvet cloth of deep red up left between the french window and the wall. Below the table is a door to the kitchen. A door upstage right leads to the rest of the house. In the right wall is the fireplace of well-whitened stone with iron fire-dogs and polished brass fire irons. There is a fire burning. In front of the fire up stage is a winged armchair with red cushions that match the tablecloth. Down stage, with its back half to the audience is Joanna's chair. There are rugs on the floor and before the fireplace, and the whole room has an air of comfort and well being.

When the curtain rises, Joanna is seated in her own chair sewing. She has not changed much in the twentyfive years; her hair is still bright and though her expression is more set, her face is serene. Her clothes are fashionable and of good quality and she wears them with an air.

On the hearthrug in front of her are the twins, Editha and Viola. They are ten years old and are dressed exactly alike in Kate Green-away frocks and high buttoned boots. Augusta who is nearly twenty sits downstage left; she is working a tapestry chair seat with the seriousness that befits a young lady sewing for her future home. At the table is Philip who is fourteen. He is reading, standing on one foot with the other knee resting on a chair.

Joanna: Stop reading now, Philip, the light is almost gone. You had better close the windows and draw the curtains; there is a chill in the air. And then light the lamps, please.

Philip: Do I have to light the lamps again, Mother. It always seems to be my turn.

Joanna: Gentlemen always do little acts of courtesy for their womenfolk, Philip. Besides, it is not convenient for me to light lamps at the moment; Augusta is busy with her sewing and the twins are much too young to light lamps. So I am afraid it is your turn, my son.

Philip: You never ask Father to light lamps - and he is a gentleman. You do everything for him.

- Joanna: He is the head of the house, Philip.
- Augusta: And a member of Parliament, don't forget. Do you think the Conservatives will elect him leader, Mother - do you really think they will?
- Joanna: How should I know, my child. But I do know they couldn't choose a better leader, nor a straighter finer gentleman than your father.
- Augusta: I wonder if I'll say that about Ernest when I've been married to him for twenty-five years.
- Joanna: I hope you will - I think you will, Augusta. Ernest has the makings of a fine man; I am well content with your future husband, and I know your father is too.
- Editha: Mother, do you think Father will catch the bushranger?
- Joanna: Do I think? - Do I know? Have you children no other words in your vocabulary? Your father is not pursuing the bushranger himself, Editha - he is just helping to direct the operations by which they hope to catch the evil man.
- Editha: Is he an evil man, Mother?
- Joanna: No, my dear, I'm not sure that he is; rather call him unfortunate.
- Augusta: Wasn't he a convict - and escaped?
- Joanna: Yes. (More to herself) Perhaps not even unfortunate. Even to be hunted is better than to be in prison.
- Viola: I think my father will catch the bushranger.
- Editha: I'm going to tell him about the soldiers passing this afternoon.
- Viola: No, I am. I saw them first.
- Editha: But bags I to tell him; I said it first. Can't I tell him, Mother? (They go on bickering quietly).
- Philip: The men were saying there is treachery among the soldiers, Mother. They say Sullivan would never have escaped last Thursday if someone hadn't tipped him off.
- Joanna: "Tipped him off" - warned him, please Philip. I cannot believe that any of the soldiers would be base enough to warn him.
- Augusta: Still, it's most peculiar that he went when he did - just in the very nick of time -

Philip: "Nick of time" Isn't that just as bad as "tipped him off", Mother, and you don't correct Augusta.

Joanna: Augusta is grown up, Philip, and she may choose her own way of speaking. Anyway, I think "nick of time" would be found in the dictionary.

Philip: I always have to be the one to say the wrong thing.

Joanna: I remember saying something about windows and lamps, Philip.

(Philip slowly and reluctantly draws the curtains over the closed windows and the room darkens for a moment lit only by firelight. Then he lights the two lamps which stand on the chiffoniere and Augusta sets one on the table and lifts the other to the mantelpiece so that its light falls on Joanna. She goes over herself and sits beside the table).

Joanna: It's time for bed, my chickens.

Viola: Oh, but Mother, my father isn't home yet.

Joanna: He will come in and kiss you goodnight when he comes. Go at once, children. I will come in a moment and tuck you in.

Editha: Can't we come back here and say our prayers in the warm, Mother?

Joanna: You'll put it off till the last moment, won't you, Editha?

Editha: What will I put off till the last moment, Mother?

Joanna: Doing what you're told. Now run along immediately, the two of you - and Editha, undo Viola's dress for her, please. No more tantrums like we had last night.

Editha: Yes, Mother.

Viola: Come on quickly, Editha, and I'll tell you a lovely story as we get undressed. (As she speaks they go hand in hand towards the door right).

Joanna: Say goodnight to your sister and brother.

Editha: } Goodnight, Augusta. Goodnight, Philip
Viola: }

Augusta: Viola and her stories! Goodnight, chickabids.

Joanna: Philip, your sisters said goodnight to you.

Philip (engrossed once more in his book): Oh, goodnight.

(The twins go off right)

Augusta: Michael would have been five today.

Joanna (calmly): I don't think I want to think about Michael, Augusta.

Augusta: I'm sorry, Mother - I didn't mean to be tactless.

Philip: I wish I did have a brother. Then he could take on the vineyard and I could be a doctor.

Joanna: Since you have no brother, there is no more to be said about it. In three years' time, your father will take you to Spain and France and Italy and you will learn there, as he did himself, the secrets of an old and honorable craft.

Augusta: And what is more, you'll have a wonderful time. It seems to me that sons have all the luck.

(As she speaks, Stephen enters left. He wears his greatcoat and carries his hat. He is noticeably older, with greying hair and an air of seriousness and realisation of responsibility).

Stephen: I know some daughters ^{who} ~~show~~ fare quite well.

Augusta (holding up her face to be kissed): And some of them are quite grateful.

Stephen: Ah, my dear. (He crosses and kisses Joanna tenderly. Augusta takes his hat and coat from him and takes them through the door right, returning in a moment without them. She sits down and takes up her sewing again).

Joanna: You are tired, Stephen?

Stephen: No, not tired. A little troubled perhaps.

Joanna: Your meetings were successful?

Stephen: I have no complaints.

Joanna: You were elected leader? (Stephen nods with pride) Oh, my dear, I am so proud of you.

Stephen: It means added responsibility, Joanna.

Joanna: You will not fail them.

Philip: Does that mean you will have to go to England, Father.

Stephen: Not necessarily, my son.

Augusta: Oh, what fun! Now Mother will be able to queen it over all the ladies in the Colony.

- Stephen: She does that already, by nature.
- Joanna: You must not flatter me, Stephen. I am already a very prideful woman.
- Philip: I bet prideful's not in the dictionary.
- Augusta: You have had your supper, Father?
- Stephen: Yes, thank you, my dear. I dined at the Hotel while the horses were being changed. The publican told me the Regiment is camping down the river for the next few days.
- Joanna: The twins saw the soldiers this afternoon - they are saving the news for you.
- Stephen: I'll be most impressed. Their new commandant had lunched at the Hotel. He is a Major Smith.
- Joanna (her hand going up to her throat): Smith. You said Smith?
- Stephen: There are many Smiths in the English army, my dear.
- Joanna: Yes - yes - of course.
- Stephen: In any case, he will have forgotten us.
- Joanna: You think it is he?
- Stephen: The information I've been getting fits him. But we shall know tomorrow. I've sent a message for him to call and see me - I have instructions for him from the Committee.
- Philip: Is something the matter, Mother?
- Joanna: I think you had better go to bed now, Philip.
- Philip: Bed! It isn't even eight o'clock.
- Stephen: Your mother said bed, Philip.
- Philip (gathering up his books): Yes, Father.
- Joanna: You may read till nine o'clock, Philip.
- Philip: Thank you, Mother. Goodnight. (He comes across and hugs her boyishly, then goes off right with the books under his arm).
- Joanna: I promised the twins you would say goodnight to them, Stephen. It is time they were asleep.

Stephen: I'll go at once. Heigh-ho (he stretches his arms wearily) an evening beside the fire will suit me well.

Joanna: Hurry then, my dear. Augusta and I are waiting to hear your news.

(Stephen goes off right. Augusta takes up her embroidery again, but Joanna is restless and preoccupied. She puts her sewing into her workbasket, then stands looking down at the fire, her foot tapping the brass fender rail. As she stands there, heavy footsteps are heard coming across the verandah, then someone taps at the window with a riding crop).

Augusta: Who could it be at this time of night?

Joanna (who has already guessed, turning to face the window): See who it is.

Augusta: It might be Sullivan.

Joanna: Nevertheless, open the window, Augusta.

(Augusta pulls aside the curtain and Major Smith is seen outside. She opens the window).

Smith: I seem to have come to the window; couldn't find the door. It's - er - confoundedly dark tonight. Major Smith, at your service, Madam. Mr. Deveron sent word he wished to see me.

(Augusta looks uncertainly towards her mother)

Joanna: Please come in, Major Smith. I am Mrs. Deveron.

(Smith comes into the room. He has grown from a gross young man to a large fleshy man with bloated dissipated face. He is almost bald and his uniform is untidy and badly kept. He has run to seed).

Smith: Thank you, ma'am. (He bows to her and looks expectantly towards Augusta. It is evident he does not recognise Joanna).

Joanna: My daughter Augusta.

Smith: A pleasure, Miss Augusta.

Joanna: Be seated, Major Smith. My husband is saying goodnight to our younger daughters; he will not keep you waiting long.

Smith (laughing boisterously - it is evident he has been drinking): He need not hurry on my account. It isn't often I get a chance to talk to ladies in this wilderness.

Joanna: It doesn't seem like wilderness to us, Major Smith, not now. We have seen it grow from virgin bush.

Smith: I've been in Europe for five years - there is a contrast.

Augusta: You were in the Crimea, Major Smith?

Smith: Right through the campaign, Miss Augusta.

Augusta: I'd like to hear about it - first hand.

Smith: Talk of battles is not for pretty ears like yours, my dear young lady. There are things I could tell you I'd warrant you'd rather hear. What's that you're so busy with - or is it one of those fal-lals a man mustn't ask about?

Augusta (primly): It is for a chair seat. I am making a set of them for my own home.

Smith (ponderously flirtatious): Ah, ha. You know with a little encouragement, I'd cut him out.

Augusta (who can't resist it): I doubt if you could.

Smith: I'd have a damn good try.

Joanna (interposing hastily): Will you take a glass of wine, Major Smith?

Smith: Thank you, madam.

Joanna: Augusta - the madeira.

Augusta: Yes, mother. (Goes to chifffoniere, pours wine from decanter and takes it to Smith).

Joanna: You are camping down the river, I understand?

Smith: About a mile downstream from the crossing place; there is a loop in the river there.

Joanna: Yes, I know the place; a good spot. There'll be plenty of feed for your horses and the current there is not dangerous.

Smith: Yes, a good spot. And sooner or later, Sullivan must come down that way from the hills. Your very good health, Mrs. Deveron. Miss Augusta, to your lovely eyes. (He tosses off the wine at a gulp).

Joanna: You are satisfied that Sullivan must come that way, Major.

Smith: His food will give out soon, and his last confederate vent when Brady was killed last week. There are so few places he can get provisions. Yes, I think we've got Mr. Sullivan this time.

- Joanna: He still has plenty of gold - and gold can unlock many doors.
- Smith: You have less gold here than your neighbours in Victoria. The bushranger trouble is acute there, acute.
- Joanna: Gold seems to me a mixed blessing.
- Smith: A firm hand at the top, that's what is needed; the miners give no trouble then. Gold is a great asset to any community.
- Joanna: We shall not grow rich so quickly perhaps - but I prefer a community that tills the earth to one that mines it.
- Smith: You know, Mrs. Deveron, I can't help feeling I've met you somewhere before.
- (Enter Stephen right).
- Joanna: Major Smith, Stephen.
- Smith: At your service, Mr. Deveron. I was just telling your wife that I have a feeling I've met her before. What part of England do you come from, Mrs. Deveron?
- Joanna (her hand going to her throat): I have been in South Australia over twenty years, Major Smith -
- Stephen (interrupting her): What part do you come from, Major?
- Smith: Oh, I'm a Geordie.
- Stephen: Yorkshire, eh? You've lost your accent entirely. My wife's from Cornwall.
- Smith: From Cornwall - one would never guess it. Most Cornish I've met are dark.
- Joanna (a little hastily): Augusta, my dear, we will excuse you if you wish to finish your letters. The post goes out early in the morning -
- Augusta (showing her surprise a little): Yes, Mother. Goodnight Major Smith. (She thrusts her embroidery into her workbasket and goes off right as Smith speaks).
- Smith: Eh, leaving us so soon? Goodnight, Miss Deveron. I hope I may have the pleasure of meeting you again before long. We'll be camped down on the river for a week or so I expect.
- Augusta: Goodnight. (Exit).

- Joanna: My daughter is very busily engaged preparing for her marriage.
- Smith: And who's the lucky dog to capture all that beauty?
(Joanna and Stephen both show they resent his familiarity)
- Joanna: Augusta is to marry Mr. Ernest Cuming.
- Smith (laughing slyly): Cuming, eh! Trust you vigneron - annexing the largest vineyard in the Colony.
- Stephen (stiffly): The Cumings have other sons to provide for beside Ernest.
- Smith: No offence intended, Mr. Deveron. Deveron! The name's been teasing me ever since I heard it.
- Stephen: Be seated, Major Smith. (They all sit - Joanna in her own chair, Stephen in the winged armchair and Smith in the chair Augusta had occupied). I had a long discussion in Adelaide with the Superintendent of Police and your second-in-command, Lieutenant Walters, concerning the failure of the last effort to trap Sullivan. Sullivan's going at the very moment he did was too coincidental. Of that we are convinced.
- Smith: You think he was warned?
- Stephen: We know he was warned. We have evidence that a message in code was passed on to him - just one word that meant nothing to the men who passed it on. But Sullivan knew what it meant - and within five minutes, he was gone.
- Smith: You have traced the message back to its source?
- Stephen: Not quite. But we have grave suspicions, Major Smith, very grave suspicions.
- Smith: If it is one of my men, I'll find him if it's the last thing I do.
- Stephen: The plan was known to only three men beside yourself - Sergeant Whitaker of the police, Lieutenant Walters and myself. I would stake my life on the integrity of Whitaker and Walters - and I know I divulged the plan to no one. The feeling is, Major Smith, that you know only too well where to look for the traitor.
- Smith: Sir, are you insinuating that I, a Major in Her Majesty's army, am guilty of treachery.
- Stephen: The evidence is not conclusive.
- Smith: You'll withdraw that insinuation, sir.

Stephen: No, Major Smith, I'll not withdraw it. I have given you fair warning, it rests with you to remove the suspicion. The landlord at the hotel where we had hoped to trap Sullivan insists that Sullivan left behind him a small packet, that the packet contained gold dust - and that that packet was handed to you. There is no record, Major Smith, of any such packet having been handed over to the proper authorities. The landlord is known to be untrustworthy, but his story is circumstantial and we are inclined to believe it. What have you to say about that?

Smith (contemptuously): You think a man like Roberts, the landlord, would have handed over a packet of gold dust?

Stephen: He says he was afraid to keep it - that it might bring him under suspicion of having aided Sullivan. His story is that you asked if Sullivan had left anything behind; and that you seemed to expect the parcel. Was there any such parcel, Major Smith?

Smith: You evidently prefer to believe the word of a common publican. I do not feel called upon even to contradict such an accusation, Mr. Deveron.

Stephen: Very well, Major Smith. I felt it my duty to warn you. Our evidence is, as I have said, inconclusive, but you have said nothing to refute it. I represent in this Colony's Parliament the people of this district who have been plundered and terrorised by Sullivan and I warn you that I feel it my duty to report to parliament my suspicions concerning you and your activities. Should Sullivan escape again, Major Smith, you will have to account for it. I think for your own sake, it would be as well if Sullivan did not escape again.

Smith: I do my duty as an office and a gentleman. But for your wife's presence, sir, you would not have said what you have and gone scotfree -

Joanna: My husband does not shelter behind me, Major Smith.

Stephen: The matter is in your own hands. I have your instructions from the Committee - I have memorised them so that they need not be written down until I give them to you.

Smith: You take all precautions!

Stephen: They are your safeguard as well as ours. I will write your instructions down and hand them to you in a few minutes. Excuse me, Joanna. (He turns and walks out right quickly).

Smith (turning abruptly and looking at Joanna with recognition dawning in his eyes): Joanna! Joanna - I remember now. No wonder his name teased me. Deveron, the young sprig who sailed on the tide that night! And you - the convict girl who drowned herself.

Joanna: You may remember too your own part in that.

Smith (coming closer and looking at her with gloating amusement):
Joanna Millay, the would-be murderess. I wonder if that is the name on your marriage-lines. (Joanna looks away)
So that's it! There aren't any marriage-lines. God, and now he threatens me - and prates of duty, loyalty, responsibility.

Joanna: You can't touch Stephen. He is good - honourable -

Smith: A member of Parliament - the next Premier. With an escaped convict for wife - or should I say for mistress. And I can't touch him! (He laughs softly). You know this is the richest thing that's happened to me for years.

Joanna: Don't think you can bribe Stephen - he'll do his duty, no matter what it costs him.

Smith: You think that! You think he'll give up his position, his prestige. I think he'd rather have his friend, Major Smith, retired, living here with him, sharing the plenty of his home. It'd suit me too - no more debts and money-lenders - no more taking bribes from bush-rangers - oh, yes, I can admit it now, because it's all finished. And anyway, I'm safe here, where we're all in it together.

Joanna: You are counting without Stephen, Major Smith.

Smith: The righteous Mr. Deveron. I don't quite know the sentence for helping a prisoner to escape - in fact, after twenty-five years he might be able to buy a pardon for you; but there would be regrettable publicity - I would see there was. No high parliamentary honours for Mr. Deveron and no wealthy marriage for pretty little Augusta.

Joanna: What do you want?

Smith: Money - and ease. Your husband could give me a partnership; I would, of course, not interfere with his management of the vineyard. He could, in fact, do all the work. I would be content with - oh, say, half the profits.

Joanna: Your restraint astonishes me.

Smith: You know, Joanna, even in convict garb you were a most attractive woman - you stir my blood even now. Your daughter is very like you - she would make a dear little wife for a soldier home from the wars. Yes, I might even marry Augusta - though her mother has never been churched. (He is getting intoxicated with the possibilities of the situation).

Joanna: A man of the world like you, Major Smith - you'd be wasted on a girl like Augusta.

Smith (laughing complacently): You should have thought of that twenty-five years ago - you need not have drowned yourself then.

Joanna: I was an inexperienced child then. One learns.

Smith: You ruined two uniforms, you minx. You know, Joanna, I think you're still a minx.

Joanna: I've grown up now - I can appreciate a man.

Smith: I believe you could (Joanna is watching his pistol in its holster. He comes over and places his hands on her arms). What about a kiss to go on with - I'll warrant you were free enough with them in your convict days. I've waited long enough - (He draws her into his arms and tries to kiss her; she evades his lips and her hand closes over the pistol which she draws out of its holster).

Joanna: I'll do whatever you like - but you cannot have Augusta -

Smith (fatuously): I believe you're jealous. No, you're not going to bribe me - Augusta and her father's money -

(Joanna breaks away from him and raises the revolver)

Smith: Put that down, you fool - it's loaded.

Joanna: That's what I hoped.

(She fires. Smith stands with a look of astonishment on his face, then crumples up and falls forward. Stephen runs on right).

Stephen: Joanna - Joanna -

Joanna: Stop Augusta - don't let her come in.

Stephen (at door right calls out): It's alright, Augusta. The pistol went off by accident -

Augusta (outside): Is Mother alright, Father?

Joanna (pulling herself together and speaking naturally): Quite alright, darling. Go back to bed -

Stephen (closing door and coming into room where he stands looking down at Smith): What happened, Joanna?

Joanna (suddenly at point of collapse): I remember, Stephen - I remember what happened - the other time. He came into my bed - I waited till he slept, then crawled out

and got his own gun. I shot him as he came into the passage. I remember - how the blood covered his face - and the noise of his roars of pain - - The judge had a red face, too -

Stephen(coming across to her): What did Smith do, Joanna? (He slips his arm round her and gently takes the gun from her hand)

(For a minute Joanna looks at him dazedly, then speaks as one coming out of a trance)

Joanna: He knew me, Stephen - he threatened you and Augusta - he wanted to live here - to marry Augusta - oh, he was bad, loathsome - He would have ruined you, Stephen -

Stephen: Did he attack you, Joanna? How did you get his revolver?

Joanna: He tried to kiss me - but it wasn't that, Stephen - don't you understand - he would have blackmailed you for the rest of your life. He was lawless - he admitted working with Sullivan - - Oh, Stephen, what are we to do?

Stephen (bitterly): Why need he have died here, the traitorous scum?

Joanna: His horse is outside. We could put him on it, turn the horse loose. The - the body would not fall off for a little -

Stephen: I could take him down to the river, let him fall off the horse there - fire his gun once then throw it into the river after him - the soldiers would hear it, but they are a mile away. It would be a while before he was found - It's desperate. Shall we risk it?

Joanna: We must, Stephen - the children -

Stephen: It will be on your conscience forever -

Joanna: Fear has been my familiar for so long, Stephen. Do you think this will be worse?

Stephen: Can you help me - he is a heavy man -

Joanna: I would have spared you this if I could - but there was no ~~time~~ - time, my darling. (She visibly gathers herself together for the dreadful business of lifting the body) Stephen, take your own revolver and fire two shots from it. There must be enough shots to account for the empty chambers in his revolver - and someone may have heard the first shot - (She shudders). Forgive me -

Stephen: We are one flesh, Joanna - (They bend one each side of Smith and start to lift him as The Curtain Falls)

Act 2

Scene 3

The same scene as Scene 2. A night in October, 1885.
The room has not altered much. There is a fire burning and a heavy rug covers the spot where Smith's body lay. Stephen, white of hair and evidently very ill, sits in the winged armchair drawn close to the fireplace. A rug covers his knees and he is in dressinggown with a shawl wrapped round his shoulders.

Stephen (calling in a weak voice): Joanna. (Then more querulous-
ly) Joanna -

(Joanna enters quickly from kitchen left. She wears a black frock, modishly made, with large cameo brooch, heavy gold chain etc.. Her greying hair is covered by a small lace cap).

Joanna: Yes, Stephen?

Stephen: That log looks as though it might fall.

(Joanna comes over to fireplace and pushes log back with poker. In crossing the room she walks carefully round the spot where Smith lay)

Joanna: There; I think that's quite safe, dear. But I'll move it right back so that you needn't worry about it.

Stephen: I'm like a bad-tempered child, aren't I?

Joanna: Not really. I've never had to mother you as most women seem to mother their husbands. You've always been very much the man of this house - and I've been well content to follow where you led.

Stephen: Joanna, you always walk round the stain.

Joanna: Yes, I do, don't I? Weak of me, because I've never felt that killing him was wrong. We've been justified, Stephen - we've kept the children safe. (She gets up from the fireplace and goes over to the window where she pulls the curtain aside and looks out at the night. It is bright moonlight. When she leaves the window, she does not draw the curtain).

Stephen: What sort of a night is it?

Joanna: Bright moonlight. The river has dropped over a foot today; now that the rain has stopped, they should be able to cross in the morning.

Stephen: Tiresome old man, aren't I - to get sick with everyone away -

Joanna: Nothing would have induced the twins to go if they'd thought of being flood-bound. Still- they were so

anxious to go to young Ernest's birthday party. Do you feel old enough to have a grandson of twenty-one? I'm sure I don't. But there, I'm not going to talk to you any more; it will make you too tired. Put your head back and try to sleep. I'll turn the lamp down. (She does so).

Stephen: I don't want to sleep, Joanna, I want to talk. Can you remember the last time we were alone together for two whole days - it must have been before Augusta was born. Sit down where I can see you -

(Joanna seats herself on her own chair. Stephen looks at her for a moment in silence).

Joanna: Well?

Stephen: You haven't altered much.

Joanna: You are absurd, Stephen. I am sixty-four years old.

Stephen: You've stopped worrying about the children lately. I know - your face has been serene.

Joanna: I've ceased to think of them as children perhaps. But no - I feel that there is no need to worry about them any longer. Editha seems at last to have battled through to some kind of peace.

Stephen: You've never worried much about Viola.

Joanna: No - sweet little Viola, wrapped in her armour of fantasy; one does not need to worry about her. But my fiery, turbulent Editha -

Stephen: You've always loved her best, and never shown it -

Joanna: One cannot get inside Editha, unless she lets one in - - (There is a little silence). We were lucky, Stephen - We could answer their questions so truthfully. We had seen him leave here on his horse; we had heard the three shots - one seemed closer than the other two. Yes, we were lucky - but Fate owed us something -

Stephen: I wish you had faith, Joanna -

Joanna: I wish I had too - but there it is, I haven't, Stephen. It seems to me that faith is a gift. But, my dear, you must rest -

Stephen: No, my dear. There may not be many more chances of talking, Joanna -

Joanna (sharply): Don't even think that.

Stephen: Why not? We both know that it's coming - When it does come, I know it will be just as though I had opened a door and gone into another room; someday you will open the same door and come into that same room, and find me waiting. Will you think of death like that?

Joanna: I'll try. (She goes over to the window again). Yet - do you think heaven could be more lovely than our moonlit hills dropping down to the Onka paringa?

(There is a long silence)

Stephen: The room is getting chilly.

Joanna (coming back to the fire): It is a very cold night.

Stephen (sharply): Frosty?

Joanna (soothing him): I don't think there will be frost.

Stephen: Look at the thermometer - have a good look at the sky -

Joanna: Very well.

(She goes off left. While she is gone, Stephen tries to turn round in his chair and look out of the uncurtained window. He is too weak and falls back in his chair, coughing. Joanna comes on left).

Joanna: It's low.

Stephen: How low?

Joanna: Stephen, you must not get excited. No matter how low it is there is no one to light the fires. I do not want to leave you.

Stephen: How low, Joanna?

Joanna: Under forty. And not a cloud in the sky.

Stephen: You must light the fires, Joanna. There is no one else.

Joanna: I will not leave you, Stephen.

Stephen: All the vines - our children's heritage, Joanna. A frost in October!

Joanna: It will only be one season's vintage, Stephen - I cannot leave you -

Stephen: One more bad season, Joanna - you know what it will mean. You know where to find the tins - they will not be too heavy -

Joanna: Yes, my dear - I know where everything is. You must not

excite yourself so - I will hurry. (As she is speaking, she goes through door left coming back with heavy coat and muffler which she puts on). There is your draught beside you - drink it at once if you feel another spasm of coughing coming on. Don't attempt to move, Stephen - I'll be as quick as I can.

(Stephen lies back wearily on the pillows now that the excitement of making her go is over. She leans over him and kisses his forehead tenderly. He speaks without opening his eyes).

Stephen: My darling, darling wife.

Joanna:(moving towards door left): Be good while I'm away -

Stephen (opening his eyes and smiling at her with a touch of his old debonair manner): If I'm gone when you return, I shall be just through the door -

Joanna (speaking as simply as she did in the beginning): I will follow you.

(She goes off left. Stephen stays quiet for a moment; then he tries once more to turn and look through the window and brings on a spasm of coughing. His hand gropes for the draught, but the effort of reaching for it is beyond him. He leans back exhausted. After a moment, his head falls forward and one of his hands slides off his lap and hangs limply down the side of the chair)

The Curtain Falls Slowly

ACT 3

The evening of the second Joanna's birthday.
The scene the same as Scenes 2 and 3 of Act 2. The heavy velvet curtains have been replaced by bright chintz which also covers the cushions of the winged armchair and a large couch which is placed well downstage to the left. There are a couple of standard lamps, and on the table are branched candlebra in which the candles are lighted but burning down. The table is covered with a lace cloth and there are used wine glasses etc. on it. Joanna's chair is in its proper place. The french windows are open and show the chairs etc. of the verandah of the first Act. There are bowls of beautiful flowers about the room.

When the curtain rises, Mrs. Collins, wearing a floral silk dress and high-heeled shoes is removing the used glasses etc. from the table and singing to herself as she works. She leaves a silver dish of salted nuts on the table and moves a great bowl of colorful fruit on to the chiffoniere. She leaves the candles still burning.

Mrs. Collins (singing): Oh, Danny boy, ta - ta - ta - ta ta
It seems to me I've finished just in time,
For here they come, oh, yes, oh here, they
come - -
Ta - ta- ta- ta -
Oh, Danny boy, I love you so.

(She goes off left carrying the last of the glasses etc. as voices are heard and then Mrs. van Druyten comes up the steps on to the verandah and into the room. She is a well-preserved woman in her sixties with elaborately dressed white hair. She wears a very smart dinner gown. She is closely followed by Jocelyn to whom she is talking).

Mrs. van Druyten: You'd like the Marquis (She pronounces it "Markee")
He's a dear boy and he'd absolutely love a place like this.
If he'd had any capital, he'd have bought that place in
Spain - just as well he didn't, of course, because the
Reds - or the other side, whichever side it was he wasn't
on, just overran the place.

Jocelyn: It breaks my heart to think of all the destruction of
growing things. Killing trees almost seems worse to me
than killing people. Trees as so vulnerable.

Mrs. van Druyten: Oh, well, they grow again. In a few years,
things cover the scars - Look at France } (Stephen enters
from the garden). Don't you think so, Stephen - don't
you think nature's just wonderful the way things grow
over shell holes and so on -

Stephen: The best thing is not to have shell holes -

Mrs. van Druyten: I was telling your cousin about a friend of mine -

a Spanish marquis - you know, one of the old-fashioned Spanish grandees. But not a bit like an aristocrat - absolutely loves planting things and watching them grow.

Stephen: I can appreciate that - the love of growing things is fortunately not entirely the prerogative of peasants.

Mrs. van Druyten: Oh, dear, I've dropped a brick, haven't I? (She laughs ruefully, but comfortably)

Stephen (laughing with her): I've met you before, remember.

(Viola and Editha enter, one each side of Halley. They are giggling delightedly and Halley looks like a man who has just told a good joke)

Mrs. van Druyten: I hope you haven't been corrupting the Miss Deverons' morals, Halley. You know, he's a dreadful boy, that boy of mine.

Halley: Now Mother, don't spoil our innocent fun. I've always been wild about twins. How many generations is it they skip?

Jocelyn: Only one, generally. There weren't any in the last generation, so probably they've skipped right out.

Viola (seating herself as Halley gets a chair for her): I wish I'd met someone like you sixty years ago. I like you.

Halley: The feeling is mutual. Where will you sit, Miss Editha?

(Editha seats herself on the couch just as Mrs. Swinnerton enters with Joanna. Mrs. Swinnerton is a thin, tall English woman with a dinner gown not quite as smart as Mrs. van Druyten's, but worn with an air. Joanna wears a very distinctive frock, very feminine. She has wide bracelets on either wrist).

Mrs. Swinnerton: Well, it's a long time since I enjoyed anything so much. I'd never imagined wine-making was such an interesting art. I've always avoided knowing what happened - so much safer on the whole, don't you think?

Stephen: You should be here at the vintage, even at the risk of disillusionment, Mrs. Swinnerton - then it really is interesting - it's so full of vitality after these quiet months of waiting.

Editha: Yes. I'll miss the vintage when I die.

Viola (anxiously): You're not feeling like dying, Editha, are you?

Editha: No, not particularly.

Viola: Then don't talk about it - it embarrasses the young people.

(Mrs. Swinnerton goes over towards Joanna's chair).

Joanna: Oh, please, no - you can't sit in that chair. That's Joanna's chair - the first Joanna's. Now it's mine. (She crosses and seats herself in it).

Jocelyn: Have we lost Colonel Swinnerton?

Mrs. Swinnerton: No; he's lost - in admiration of the garden. He has a passion for English gardens - understandable, I suppose, poor Gregory, since he's spent most of his life out of England. You'll probably find him in the herb border, picking leaves and smelling them.

Jocelyn: What a pity he hasn't a garden of his own.

Mrs. Swinnerton: I suppose we'll have to settle down soon. The children can't stay at school much longer. If you only knew how I hate the prospect of domesticity!

Joanna: I can sympathise.

Stephen: Joanna will join you when you pull out that stop, Mrs. Swinnerton.

Mrs. Swinnerton: Joanna's been a wanderer too long to settle down easily.

Stephen (easily): She only needs a bit of practice.

Joanna: I don't think I'm going to have it.

Mrs. van Druyten: She'll be a different girl when she comes back from New Zealand.

Joanna: Stephen still insists that I'm not going, don't you, Stephen?

Stephen: We won't re-open the subject before our guests, Joanna.

Joanna: You're very like your great grandfather -

Mrs. Swinnerton: You speak almost as though you knew the old gentleman -

Joanna: I've been reading Joanna's diaries - Ah, here's Colonel Swinnerton. (Colonel Swinnerton wanders in, his hands in his pockets) Have you been dreaming in the garden?

Col. Swinnerton: That jacaranda tree gets me - all that intense blue in the moonlight. Beautiful, you know. I don't suppose it'd grow at home - you've got a lovely place here, Joanna -

Joanna: You're seeing it at its best.

Stephen (quietly to Joanna): Everyone sees beauty here but you.
(They gaze at one another).

Joanna: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Stephen: Or the heart.

Mrs. van Druyten: What's this about the first Joanna. You know, I'm intrigued about her.

Col. Swinnerton: She must have been a wonderful woman. Miss Degeron was telling me she not only planned this house and garden, but helped lay out the vineyard. Quite an achievement, when you remember how unimportant most women of her generation were.

Joanna: She was a wonderful woman - she nearly reconciles me to being a Deveron.

Mrs. Swinnerton: They're frightfully difficult to live up to though, aren't they - these wonderful women.

Editha: She didn't need living up to - oh, no, not at all. Mother never imposed her personality on any of us -

Joanna: You didn't know, did you, Aunt Editha, that you were her favorite. She called you "my fiery, turbulent Editha". She talked about you to her husband the night he died - she wrote it all down, every word of it. He died in that chair you're sitting in, Halley.

Halley (rising hastily): Here, I say.

Joanna: There's no need to feel spooky. He was a darling. He just fell asleep in his chair while Joanna was out lighting the smudge fires - it was a frosty night and there was no one else to do it.

Editha: Yes, we were away the night Father died. We've never forgiven ourselves, have we, Viola?

Viola: Mother told us not ^{to} be weakly sentimental about that, Editha.

Editha: Yes, so she did.

Mrs. van Druyten: And you two stayed on with her right to the end of her life. It's beautiful, really it is, beautiful.

Editha: There was nothing else for us to do - spinsters, you know.

Viola: You needn't have been a spinster, Editha. There was Archie Blakeley - He was my beau first - then he fell

in love with Editha -

Jocelyn: Don't wake up old pains, Aunt Vi.

Editha: It isn't a pain now, dear. We met him years after, didn't we, Viola.

Viola: Yes, we met him. Most unromantic. He'd grown - you know.

Halley (mock shocked) : Not fat in the stomach?

Viola: No, across the back. So much worse!

Jocelyn (to Halley): Stop pulling their legs, you unprincipled horror.

Halley: You're jealous. You'll never be as charming as your great-aunts.

Jocelyn: I don't waste my ammunition.

Halley: Have you any to waste?

Viola: Was there anything in Mother's diary about me, Joanna?

Jocelyn: I'm sure Joanna will give you the diaries so that you can read them yourself, Aunt Viola.

Joanna (ignoring Jocelyn): There was lots about all of you, Aunt Viola. I remember in one place she said of you, "sweet Viola wrapped in her armour of fantasy"

Viola: I was always making up stories - they were an armour.

Stephen: Joanna will give you the diaries to read. We mustn't bore our guests, Aunt Vi.

Joanna: You Deverons - you cover up, suppress everything that's interesting about yourselves. There's enough in those diaries of Joanna's to make a dozen books - but "we mustn't bore our guests".

Stephen: Joanna!

Joanna: No, I won't be hushed, Stephen. It's not only you Deverons, but it seems to me it's all Australians. You pride yourselves on your impeccable middle-class respectability, you ignore everything that might disturb it. It just doesn't exist - not as far as you're concerned, anyhow. Why, when her husband was threatened with blackmail, here in this very room, Joanna shot the blackmailer. See (she pulls the rug aside) here's the stain.

- Editha: Augusta would never let us talk about that.
- Jocelyn: That's absurd, Joanna. She couldn't have murdered anyone.
- Joanna: She executed summary justice - that's how she thought of it. And she was right - she was right. He could have wrecked the splendid career Stephen had built up - he could have plunged the whole family into shame. Joanna carried the burden of it on her conscience to the end of her life - she felt it was her way of repaying all that Stephen had done for her.
- Stephen: But blackmail!
- Joanna: It was what this man knew about Joanna herself. You see, she'd been a convict, and Stephen had helped her escape. They weren't even married!
- Stephen: For God's sake, Joanna.
- Joanna: But there's nothing to be ashamed of. They were big, vital people - they lived. The things they did are the things that colour life - they weren't saints, but they saw the things to do and had the strength to do them. Joanna was a wonderful person - terrible things happened to her, but nothing, nothing got her down. She's something to admire, something to brag about - not because she lived to ninety-five and died in the odour of sanctity, but because she rose above injustice and horror and turned them into strength. You should take your skeletons out of their cupboards - you should rattle your manacles (she raises her hands above her head and rattles her bracelets) - you should clothe them with their own romance, and turn them into history.
- (There is a silence following her outburst. Into the silence, Viola speaks thrillingly).
- Viola: Editha, just think of that - for eighty-six years, we've been bastards.
- Halley (gently): You're still yourselves, Miss Viola.
- Viola (turning to him); It isn't that. There are so many things respectable people can't do - think how much more thrilling life could have been if we'd known.
- Mrs. van Druyten: Stephen, I think Joanna's right.
- Editha: Then it wasn't true - that our grandfather was a Professor of Greek.
- Joanna: Yes, that was true - although for years she didn't

remember anything at all about herself before she came to Tasmania. Her father died when she was only eleven and she went to live with an old cousin of his. It was the cousin - a terrible, beastly old man who used her hideously - who let her be transported. For years, she didn't remember any of it - it's all explainable psychologically why she subconsciously blotted out all the horror and terror. Years after, she wrote in her diary, "I could not remember that I had any childhood. Memory began mistily with the snapping of wind in the ship's rigging and stars so bright and close that I might have put out my hand and touched them". I will give you the diaries, Aunt Editha. You must read it all yourself.

Halley (softly to his mother): Mother, it's almost ten.

Mrs. van Druyten: Oh, not already, Halley. Surely our lovely evening hadn't gone already.

Mrs. Swinnerton: We daren't be later than midnight. They'll be furious if we hold them up again. We did at Colombo. Two minutes later and they'd have sailed without us.

Jocelyn (they are all obviously trying to get back to normalcy): Are you going to change, Mrs. Swinnerton?

Mrs. Swinnerton: I think I will. What about you, Mattie?

Mrs. van Druyten: Yes. I don't fancy driving sixty miles in this.

Joanna: I'm quite ready. I'm not going to change.

Editha (suddenly): I think we'll go home now, Joanna. Viola is looking tired. Will you bring the diaries over in the morning - we would like to read them, wouldn't we, Viola?

(She and Viola rise as they speak and commence to shake hands with everyone)

Viola: Yes, we would like to read them. But they're Joanna's, of course.

Editha: We just want a loan of them, Joanna. We've got to get used to a lot of new ideas - and that's not easy at eighty-six.

Viola: I like new ideas.

Halley (as they come to him): I'll take you down to the car. Don'tt run away, Jocelyn, I want to talk to you.

Editha (coming last of all to Joanna): Goodnight, darling Joanna. (Kisses her).

Joanna: It's goodbye, Aunt Editha.

Editha (serenely): Oh, no - we'll see you in the morning.

Viola: Yes, we'll see you in the morning, darling Joanna.
(Joanna kisses her)

(They go out through the window and down the steps accompanied by Halley and Stephen. At the same time, Jocelyn and Mrs. Swinnerton go off right together).

Joanna: It's no good arguing with them when they're in that mood. Have I embarrassed you all very much?

Col. Swinnerton: It seems to me, my lady, you've sown a spot of wind - don't growl if you reap whirlwinds.

Joanna: Even a whirlwind is better than the dead calm there's been here for the last ten weeks.

Mrs. van Druyten: Dead calm! With you about in your present mood.

(Halley comes back through window)

Halley: Stephen's taken them home; he'll be back in a few minutes. You'd better step on it, Mother.

(As he speaks Jocelyn comes back right).

Jocelyn: I've got instructions to send Colonel Swinnerton to put his things back in their case, and shoo Mrs. van Druyten along.

Col. Swinnerton: Yes, I'm afraid we've cut it pretty fine. Excuse me, Joanna. (He goes off right).

Joanna: Come on, darling, I'll help you. (She and Mrs. van Druyten go off right).

Jocelyn: I hate a party after it's over.

Halley: Don't hedge and be social. Are you coming?

Jocelyn: Don't be silly. I can't just drop my responsibilities here and go away for months.

Halley: Do you personally have to nurse your mother? You know you don't. She said herself this afternoon she'd be glad to have you go. You're scared.

Jocelyn: Scared! Of you?

Halley: No - of yourself. You're not Joanna's great-granddaughter for nothing. You've got all her capacity for living and adventure.

- Jocelyn: And you see yourself as "living and adventure".
- Halley: No; just as a challenge - as yet. But I'm going to be both - or die trying.
- Jocelyn: You know, I can't hate Joanna as much as I'd like to for what she did tonight.
- Halley: Why should you? She's going to do what you couldn't - turn Stephen from a prig into a man - Anyway, don't try and change the subject.
- Jocelyn: I'll think about it -
- Halley: You'll do nothing of the kind. You'll promise faithfully to get the train tomorrow night and meet us in Melbourne the day after. **You will, Jocelyn?**
- Jocelyn: Let's be sensible, Halley. (Halley slides his arms round her and turns her to face him directly).
- Halley: Why?
- Jocelyn: You're really quite ridiculous.
- Halley: Oh, snap out of it, Jocelyn. Look me straight in the eye and tell me you're not three-quarters in love with me, and I'll believe you - and leave you alone. I'm serious, Jocelyn -
- Jocelyn: Twenty-four hours ago you'd never even noticed me.
- Halley: What the hell difference does that make. Well, what about it?
- Jocelyn: I'm not promising anything - (Halley kisses her well and truly)
- Halley: That will do till the day after tomorrow.
- Jocelyn: Oh, Halley - leave me some shreds of dignity.
- Halley: Do you really want dignity? (Joanna enters right)
- Jocelyn (capitulating suddenly): No, I don't think I do.
- Joanna (bleakly): Isn't Stephen back?
- Halley: Not yet. Joanna, Jocelyn's coming.
- Joanna (absently): That will make it just dnady.
- Jocelyn: I'll see if I can help anyone (She goes off so hurriedly that it looks like flight, which it is).
- Joanna: Don't fool, Halley - she's really sweet and you're a

new experience.

Halley: I'm going to marry her, Joanna - I hope.

Joanna: I'll be glad about that sometime, Halley. Just at present
- (She drops her face into her hands and begins to cry)
Everybody's happy -

Halley: Hey, hold up, Joanna. You did what you wanted to - you
rocked the Deverons -

Joanna (still sniffing): I'd forgotten about that, Halley -
really I had. I felt somehow as though I had to make them
see her as she really was - all vitality and fire and
poetry - not the stuffed Victorian they make her out to
be. She was marvellous, Halley - and I'd be proud of
being a Deveron - proud - if they'd only let me be -

Halley: Here comes Stephen. I'm going to take the bags down to
the car. (He goes off right as Stephen comes in through
the window).

Stephen: Where's everybody? Aren't they ready yet? They'll
have to speed the whole way.

Joanna: We're all ready. Halley is taking the bags down to the
car now.

Stephen: He need not bother to take yours. You're not going.

Joanna: That heavy stuff is quite ridiculous, Stephen.

Stephen: I suppose you're feeling very proud of what you did
tonight. I presume it didn't dawn on you, in your passion
for sensation, that you were speaking of their mother.

Joanna: But they didn't mind, Stephen - truly they didn't mind.
They were as thrilled as I've been all day. You only
feel they should have minded @ but their perspective is
truer than yours.

Stephen: They're so old, reality doesn't touch them.

Joanna: But all that about Joanna was reality - it's the picture
of her you've made for yourselves that is the sham. The
reality is so much finer -

Stephen: It's my family you've been exposing -

Joanna: My family by marriage.

Stephen: You've opened my eyes, Joanna - I knew you were spoiled
and wilful, but I never suspected before that you would be
so insensitive and deliberately cruel.

Joanna: Well, if you feel like that, there's no more to be said. (There is a little silence. When she speaks again, it is with diffidence)† Stephen - I sent your luggage down to the ship this afternoon - with mine.

Stephen (blazing with anger): You did what? Are you mad?

Joanna: I thought when the time came, you would realise how much you really liked them - and come.

Stephen: Liking or disliking them doesn't enter into it. They live their life on a different pattern from ours. I will arrange for our luggage to be sent back from Melbourne if it can't be got off tonight.

Joanna: You can leave mine where it is.

Stephen: You are not going, Joanna.

Joanna: How are you going to stop me?

Stephen: By force, if necessary. My great-grandmother shot a man who interfered with her way of life - do you think I'll allow a wilful self-indulgent girl to interfere with mine.

Joanna: I'm afraid you're not frightening me.

(Mrs. van Druyten and Jocelyn, followed by Halley, come in right. Mrs. van Druyten and Halley have changed into day clothes).

Stephen: I said by force, Joanna. And I mean it.

Mrs. van Druyten: We'll have to be ungraciously short with our goodbyes, Stephen. You're sure you won't even now, alter your mind. There's nothing so exciting as making up one's mind at the last moment, you know.

Stephen (endeavouring to be friendly): It's work that keeps me here, not inclination.

Mrs. van Druyten: Oh, well - you're ready, Joanna dear, aren't you? It's been a lovely time, Stephen. We will come back, you know, on our way home. I'll look forward to visiting you when it's not quite so incredibly hot.

(The Swinnertons enter right, Mrs. Swinnerton in day clothes, the Colonel still in his dinner suit, with his hands in his pockets).

Halley: Stephen knows we can't stay to say really polite thank-yous.

Jocelyn: Let me carry these down to the car for you. (Takes Mrs. Swinnerton's small overnight bag from her and

goes over to the window, followed by Mrs. van Druyten and Halley).

Colonel: Really not coming, Deveron?

Stephen: Really not coming. (He moves over beside Joanna and slips his arm round her so that he holds her firmly as she stands a little in front of him).

Mrs. Swinnerton: It's been delightful, Stephen -

Halley (from verandah): For Pete's sake, step on it.

Mrs. Swinnerton (as she goes out through window); I do hate being hurried -

Colonel (as he goes out): Two minutes, Joanna -

Joanna: Alright. (They all go down steps, Jocelyn lingering to the last and watching Stephen and Joanna till Halley peremptorily turns her and guides her down the steps in front of him).

Stephen: If we go down to the car, will you promise not to try any funny business, like hopping into the car at the last moment?

Joanna: No - I won't promise anything.

Stephen: Very well, we won't go. (He releases her and she moves into the centre of the room and stands there for a moment)

Joanna: Stephen, I know what I did tonight is unforgivable - I knew it while I was doing it - but - won't you forgive me - and let me go.

Stephen: No.

(Joanna stands looking at him for a moment, then turns to go out the window. Immediately Stephen puts out his hand and catches her arm).

Joanna (desperately): Stephen, don't you understand - I can't stay here now.

Stephen: There's no can't about it.

(Colonel Swinnerton runs up the steps)

Colonel: Joanna - hurry!

Stephen: Joanna's not coming, Colonel.

Joanna (furiously holding up her arm that Stephen is grasping); Swinney, make him let me go -

Stephen: No.

Swinnerton: I say - I don't know that you can do that kind of thing, old chap.

Stephen: Why not? Would you like to stop me? Joanna's my wife,

(A furious tooting on the horn is heard).

Stephen: You'd better hurry, Colonel, or they'll go without you.

Colonel: Sorry - seems shabby to leave you, Joanna - but, well, goodbye. (He turns and goes down steps).

Stephen (calling out as he goes): My goodbyes and regrets to the others, Colonel.

(He and Joanna stand there listening as the sound of the car starting is heard. Above it can be heard "Goodbyes" shouted by the others. As soon as the noise dies away, Stephen releases Joanna's arm. She stands there and after a few minutes moves over to the window and looks out at the hills).

Stephen: Look well at the hills, Joanna - they are our children's heritage and our children's children.

Joanna: I suppose in time one will get to hate them less - "the moonlit hills dropping down to the Onkapinga".

(They stand in silence for another moment, then Joanna starts to sob, her hands over her face. Stephen starts to come toward her, his arms held out, but changes his mind, sticks his hands in his pockets and stands watching her. Suddenly, she turns and with a half-sob cries "Stephen" and runs into his arms which are ready for her as

THE CURTAIN FALLS