

### Scene Three

*(The time is evening several days later. The doors are shut. The windows are also shut. The curtains are open.)*

*(Light Cue No. 01. Act II, Scene Three.)*

*(When the curtain rises, MRS. BRADMAN is sitting in the armchair. RUTH is standing by the window drumming on the pane with her fingers.)*

*Short*  
**MRS. BRADMAN.** Does it show any signs of clearing?

**RUTH.** No, it's still pouring.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** I do sympathize with you, really I do. It's really been quite a chapter of accidents, hasn't it?

**RUTH.** It certainly has.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** That happens sometimes, you know. Everything seems to go wrong at once. Exactly as though there were some evil forces at work.

*(RUTH comes down to the gramophone.)*

I remember once when George and I went away for a fortnight's holiday, not long after we were married, we were dogged by bad luck from beginning to end. The weather was vile – George sprained his ankle – I caught a cold and had to stay in bed for two days – and to crown everything the lamp fell over in the sitting room and set fire to the treatise George had written on hyperplasia of the abdominal glands.

**RUTH.** *(Absently.)* How dreadful!

*(She wanders upstage a little.)*

**MRS. BRADMAN.** He had to write it all over again, every single word.

**RUTH.** You're sure you wouldn't like a cocktail or some sherry or anything?

**MRS. BRADMAN.** No, thank you – really not. George will be down in a minute and we've got to go like lightning. We

were supposed to be at the Wilmots' at seven and it's nearly that now.

**RUTH.** *(Coming away from the window.)* I think I'll have a little sherry. I feel I need it.

*(She moves upstage right to the drinks table and pours out sherry.)*

**MRS. BRADMAN.** Don't worry about your husband's arm, Mrs. Condomine. I'm sure it's only a sprain.

**RUTH.** It's not his arm I'm worried about.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** And I'm sure Edith will be up and about again in a few days.

**RUTH.** My cook gave notice this morning.

*(She comes down to the fireplace.)*

**MRS. BRADMAN.** Well, really! Servants are awful, aren't they? Not a shred of gratitude. At the first sign of trouble they run out on you – like rats leaving a sinking ship.

**RUTH.** I can't feel that your simile was entirely fortunate, Mrs. Bradman.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** *(Flustered.)* Oh, I didn't mean that, really I didn't!

*(DR. BRADMAN comes in.)*

**DR. BRADMAN.** *(Above the sofa.)* Nothing to worry about, Mrs. Condomine – it's only a slight strain.

**RUTH.** I'm so relieved.

**DR. BRADMAN.** He made a good deal of fuss when I examined it. Men are much worse patients than women, you know – particularly highly-strung men like your husband.

**RUTH.** Is he highly-strung, do you think?

**DR. BRADMAN.** Yes. As a matter of fact I wanted to talk to you about that. I'm afraid he's been overworking lately.

**RUTH.** *(Frowning.)* Overworking?

**DR. BRADMAN.** He's in rather a nervous condition – nothing serious, you understand –

**RUTH.** What makes you think so?

**DR. BRADMAN.** I know the symptoms. Of course the shock of his fall might have something to do with it, but I certainly should advise a complete rest for a couple of weeks.

**RUTH.** You mean he ought to go away?

**DR. BRADMAN.** I do. In cases like that a change of atmosphere can work wonders.

**RUTH.** What symptoms did you notice?

**DR. BRADMAN.** Oh, nothing to be unduly alarmed about – a certain air of strain – an inability to focus his eyes on the person he is talking to – a few rather marked irrelevancies in his conversation.

**RUTH.** I see. Can you remember any specific example?

**DR. BRADMAN.** Oh, he suddenly shouted, 'What are you doing in the bathroom?' and then a little later, while I was writing him a prescription, he suddenly said, 'For God's sake behave yourself!'

**MRS. BRADMAN.** How extraordinary.

**RUTH.** (*Nervously.*) He often goes on like that. Particularly when he's immersed in writing a book.

**DR. BRADMAN.** Oh, I am not in the least perturbed about it really – but I do think a rest and a change would be a good idea.

**RUTH.** Thank you so much, Doctor. Would you like some sherry?

**DR. BRADMAN.** No, thank you. We really must be off.

**RUTH.** How is poor Edith?

**DR. BRADMAN.** She'll be all right in a few days. She's still recovering from the concussion.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** It's funny, isn't it, that both your housemaid and your husband should fall down on the same day, isn't it?

**RUTH.** Yes, if that sort of thing amuses you.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** (*Giggling nervously.*) Of course I didn't mean it like that, Mrs. Condomine.

**DR. BRADMAN.** Come along, my dear. You're talking too much as usual.

**MRS. BRADMAN.** You are horrid, George.

(*MRS. BRADMAN rises and crosses to RUTH right center below the sofa. Both BRADMANs move up to the door.*)

Goodbye, Mrs. Condomine.

**RUTH.** (*Shaking hands.*) Goodbye.

**DR. BRADMAN.** (*Also shaking hands.*) I'll pop in and have a look at both patients some time tomorrow morning.

**RUTH.** Thank you so much.

stop

(*Light Cue No. 02. Act II, Scene Three.*)

(*CHARLES comes in and to above the table center. His left arm is in a sling. ELVIRA follows him in and crosses above the sofa to the fire and then across the front to left center. RUTH is at the mantelpiece.*)

**DR. BRADMAN.** Well – how does it feel?

**CHARLES.** All right.

**DR. BRADMAN.** It's only a slight sprain, you know.

**CHARLES.** Is this damned sling really essential?

**DR. BRADMAN.** It's a wise precaution. It will prevent you using your left hand except when it's really necessary.

**CHARLES.** I had intended to drive into Folkestone this evening.

**DR. BRADMAN.** It would be much better if you didn't.

**CHARLES.** It's extremely inconvenient.

**RUTH.** You can easily wait and go tomorrow, Charles.

**ELVIRA.** I can't stand another of those dreary evenings at home, Charles. It'll drive me dotty. And I haven't seen a movie for seven years.

**CHARLES.** (*Crossing below MRS. BRADMAN to the right of ELVIRA.*) Let me be the first to congratulate you.

**DR. BRADMAN.** (*Kindly.*) What's that, old man?