

Time: Present day

Sumer; breakfast time Friday morning:

Lights up:

Breakfast time: A warm summer morning: The stage is divided into 4 areas. Stage centre is the open plan lounge of 26 Waverley Lane, Surrey. There is a sofa slightly right of Centre: in front of it a small coffee table with a small carrier bag with toys poking out of it and some more dolls and toys ready to be packed along side. The base of a staircase rises at the back centre wall that splits and sweeps both to the right and left behind the back wall flats. Stage left of the stairs there is an under stair cupboard/storeroom with a door that opens into it. To the left of the door is an archway through to the other part of the house, this will be the quick escape route for the actors who will need to move downstage. Downstage left, on the fourth wall (The audience) is imagined a mirror. There is a small table and telephone on it to the right of the foot of the stairs. Downstage Left is the front door and frame set at a slight angle so that the audience can see the outside of the door when the door is opened inwards, and the outside of the house when the door is closed. Down Stage Right is a deckchair for the garden. Down stage left will become the space that is the cupboard under the stairs and will be lit with red or spot light. They will bring on props etc with them at the director's discretion. Melissa, dressed in night gown and dressing robe, is sitting on the deck chair in the garden with a sun hat on and is drinking a cup of tea and holding its saucer. There is a writing pad and pen on the floor to the side of the deck chair. George, also in a dressing gown, is standing over her also holding tea cup and saucer. They are in a heated silent conversation. Up stage right is the exit door to the kitchen and the rest of the house. To the right of this is a small upright hall chair. Miss Marble appears carrying an empty carrier bag. She is a matter-of-fact, smartly dressed woman in a twin piece and pearls ready to leave. She comes from upstairs and she places the remaining toys in the bag, she then returns upstairs to collect a collection of overnight suitcases and bags and crosses the room towards the front door. The telephone on the hall table rings. The distraction is unwelcome but she turns to answer it anyway placing her bags on the floor. During the last silent heated exchange of words, George sweeps his hand with the cup in an exaggerated flourish in front of him spilling its contents, as this happens George hears the phone ringing and exits stage right as if to answer it. As George exits Miss Marble answers the telephone)

MISS MARBLE *Good Morning, the Model... That is to say this is the (Slower) Model residence, Miss Marble speaking, how may I help you?...Ah Señor Lopez ... sí, (She is flirting with him as she obviously has a crush on him) buenos días... sí ...Hola... sí ...sí sí that would be me...Gracias... oh how kind...Is it?... Oh thank you Señor, only I tried night school for a year but Spanish wasn't really my forte... in English? Yes please, that would be much better thank you ...I see...aha... yes, and you have told her to come here for the key first?... We're Number... yes, the one with the red door and brass knob... right next door to your house. (She laughs) We're number 26...Yes, 26 Waverley Lane, Farnham but of course you already know that, silly me...um?... No that's quite alright I have the key safe in my special place... What's her name?... Oh, One moment*

please *(she reaches for a pen and paper by the phone)* Sorry about that her name is?... Lolita...Lolita Sanchez... your sister in-law, I see.... and she'll be your new housekeeper? How lovely...Sorry?... She speaks very little English? ... Ah well, there you are you see, she doesn't really need to speak much of that around here. Most of them in this house don't know how to speak it themselves half the time... What? ... Oh it doesn't matter; just my little joke *(Now realizing that George is not coming back, Melissa stands up and walks off right to find him taking with her the cup and saucer)*

MELISSA *(Calling off)* George! Who is it?

MISS MARBLE ... And she'll be arriving when? ... Today?... No, no, sometime today will be fine I'll leave a note... *(Writing on the note pad)* Well when you call her, just tell her to pop in here for the key ...How nice ... *(She is flattered at what he has just said to her)* Ah Gracias... Sí, sí... Si; Good bye then, Oh, and Mr. Lopez...adiós *(Enter George S.R Marble is now putting the phone back)*

MELISSA *(Off)* George?

GEORGE *(Talking as he enters)* Oh it's alright darling it's being...been dealt with. Ah Marble; what luck! I was just saying to Melissa... *(He sees the bags on the floor)* I say, you off somewhere?

MISS MARBLE I told you yesterday when...

GEORGE ... And so soon? I have yet to finish breakfast. Really Marble you are a one for sneaking out without setting up for luncheon.

MISS MARBLE It is only 8.00 am Mr Mo-del! The breakfast things are still on the table in the conservatory in readiness for your consumption as per every morning.

GEORGE And rather scrumptious it is too.

MISS MARBLE Tea is in the pot...

GEORGE ...Of which I have sampled but a moment ago and I thank you

MISS MARBLE Suit Three is at the cleaners, the bathroom floor has been steamed, your trousers are pressed and today's shirt and tie have been ironed and hung ready in your new walk -in wardrobe.

GEORGE Efficient as ever Miss Marble.

MISS MARBLE And now, if it's all the same to you, I am about to enjoy the rest of the day off.

MELISSA *(Melissa enters stage right with a half eaten piece of toast in her hand she has collected on her way)*
George you really must stop ... Oh? What's this? Eloping are we?
(She gives out a loud snort/ hearty giggling laugh. Noticing it was inappropriate she finishes her toast)

MISS MARBLE If I were madam, rest assured it would not be with this... I mean your husband.

GEORGE I say.

MISS MARBLE I am visiting the orphanage today.

MELISSA Really? And there's us assuming that along with most adults you dislike children intensely.

MISS MARBLE I shall ignore that profound attempt at humour madam.

GEORGE I'm impressed Marble, that you recognise any form of humour at all

MISS MARBLE I shall depart shortly. It is their annual reunion dinner.

MELISSA I see.

GEORGE Marvellous! *(Miss Marble scowls at George)* I mean, ah ...

MELISSA *(Pretending she is unaware)* Oh is that today? *(She half sits on the arm of the Sofa)*

MISS MARBLE And I shall be away all night.

MELISSA Right.

GEORGE Splendid! *(Miss Marble scowls again at George)* Sorry. *(George sits on the sofa)*

MISS MARBLE You may recall I always have the whole day and evening off for the reunion dinner.

MELISSA Of course I'd... clean forgotten. *(She clearly hasn't)*

MISS MARBLE It's not as if I ask for much is it?

MELISSA No...

MISS MARBLE ...Very little

MELISSA Yes...

MISS MARBLE ...I never have.

GEORGE Well you do...

MELISSA ...George...

MISS MARBLE ... Admittedly you allow me to attend my kite flying group most Sunday Afternoons, weather permitting

GEORGE *(Briefly standing) Mary Poppins eh? (This little joke does not amuse Marble He attempts to sing the phrase and gestures for Marble to dance with him. She declines and George grabs Melissa in Tango dance stance and for a few notes or so moves her around full circle) Let's go fly a kite, up to the highest...Height... let's go fly a kite and...*

MELISSA *(Melissa now scowling at George and throws him off) Enough! (He quickly sits)*

MISS MARBLE I also attend the Farnham Laurel and Hardy appreciation society on Saturday afternoons;

MELISSA Yes of course and we are aware...

MISS MARBLE ... My death-mask photo collection club on Tuesday mornings...

MELISSA ...Really I...

MISS MARBLE ... And my "feminist in dark times" focus group on Thursdays in the WI hall. That's all.

MELISSA Really, Miss Marble I was only having a little titter

MISS MARBLE Honestly Mrs Model...Mo-Dell, any one would think I'm not allowed a social life.

GEORGE Well you do...

MELISSA Be quiet!

MISS MARBLE And! That I was surplus to requirement around here...

GEORGE ...Actually...

MELISSA ...George!

GEORGE Yes?

MISS MARBLE But as you both know, that is simply not true, is it? A titter indeed. You know I don't titter Mrs...

MELISSA ...Alright, alright...I was just attempting to inject an oasis of light humour *(Now looking at George)* into our ocean of bleakness that's all. What you do in your spare time is fine by me; both of us, isn't that right? George?

(Slight pause .George's phone has buzzed with an incoming message and he is distracted as he checks it. He tries to conceal his delight in it and then deletes the text)

MELISSA George?

GEORGE Umm? Oh yes, *(Placing the phone back in his dressing gown pocket)*

MELISSA We would never encroach on your...

MISS MARBLE ...Special times

MELISSA Indeed, how ever often they occur, not really- if we can help it.

GEORGE In fact Melissa and I rather like you going out.

MELISSA Anyway; I was just enquiring as to your whereabouts this evening that's all.

MISS MARBLE I shall be dining out and it will finish late so...

MELISSA ...And you'll be out *all* night?

MISS MARBLE I believe I just said. I have taken adequate lodgings in a convenient hostelry nearby.

GEORGE Fantastic!

MELISSA What he means is, enjoy yourself Marble, moreover, neither George nor I will be here either; is that not correct George?

MISS MARBLE Well then, if I may, I'd like to continue, I shall see you tomorrow. *(She picks up one of her cases and exits through front door S.L)*

GEORGE *(George now stands)* No hurry- Missing you already... *(He is sarcastically waving his hand with his elbow joined at the hip. She is gone and he turns and speaks to Melissa)* Really?

MELISSA Umm?

GEORGE Honestly! Why do you ...?

MELISSA What? *(Melissa turns to exit stage right and George follows her off)*

GEORGE *(Off)* Speaking to us like that.

MELISSA *(Off)* Oh George.

GEORGE *(Melissa enters stage right into the garden followed by George. She collects up her pad and pen and sits on the deck chair starting to write)* All this time off!

MELISSA We agreed.

GEORGE She is taking the proverbial.

MELISSA She is invaluable...To me...

GEORGE I don't see why we just can't get rid?

MELISSA Oh George, she came with the house, you know that.

GEORGE And how.

MELISSA We promised the Cuthberts we'd take her on when we bought the place. She was the main proviso for the sale.

GEORGE That's as maybe, but the old man Cuthbert's dead, in fact both of them are. There is nothing obligatory now what so ever.

MELISSA We promised and my word is my bond.

GEORGE She has out frowned her sell by date... and that means...

MELISSA ...And that means George I have been able to get on with my work from home, without getting bogged down in domesticity. Freelance journalistic creativity requires uninterrupted thinking.

GEORGE What ever...

MELISSA ... And besides, it doesn't matter tonight does it? No one is going to be here *(Melissa's pen is starting to play up so she rises and they both exit Right into the house)*

GEORGE *(Off)* Suppose.

MELISSA *(Talking as they enter)* And it's not as if we have anyone else in the offing is it? *(They both enter into the room Melissa picks up a pen from the phone table at the back and tries it out on her pad)*

GEORGE Well... no...

MELISSA George?

GEORGE Um?

MELISSA You have!

GEORGE Me?

MELISSA I can tell; you've gotten someone in mind.

(He develops a slight involuntary twitch)

GEORGE No.

MELISSA You have.

GEORGE No.

MELISSA Well an idea at least.

GEORGE No, I haven't.

MELISSA Don't lie to me George Mo-dell.

GEORGE I am not lying.

MELISSA You're doing it again. I can tell by your...that... twitch thing you do.

GEORGE My what?

MELISSA You positively convulse when you're guilty. Like a vomiting cat. That's why we're always losing at cards when the Redmans come, it's a right give away.

GEORGE I do not have a twitch.

MELISSA *(Melissa raises her eyebrows towards him as he obviously does have a twitch. Miss Marble enters from the front door to retrieve another bag. She smiles nervously at the Models and there is silence as the Models watch her crossing the room until she closes the door again)*

GEORGE I was just thinking we could do better.

MELISSA Better?

GEORGE I mean, whenever this one gets the hump...

MELISSA ... Yes bu...

GEORGE ...And she does; quite often.

MELISSA I'll admit she can be ...delicate...

GEORGE Delicate? How many times has she been on strike this year already eh?

MELISSA I don't know. Maybe...

GEORGE Four! Four times she's let us...You down.

MELISSA Four?

GEORGE Four! And how many more times is it going to happen before you; we do anything about it?

MELISSA Well...

GEORGE ... I mean for heaven's sake, don't I get a say in any of the domestic decisions in this house?

MELISSA In a word George.

GEORGE Well I thin...

MELISSA ... But now you come to mention it, what exactly were you thinking?

GEORGE Ah well you see, I've had a notion.

MELISSA *(Sitting on sofa)* Will it cost us money?

GEORGE I thought I might ring the D.S.A; the local one.

MELISSA After last time?

GEORGE And ask them to send us a temporary house keeper, on a trial at least.

MELISSA Temporary? A trial? *(The pen does not work as she writes. She puts the pad and pen down on the arm of the sofa)*

GEORGE When she's off on one of her paddies...or a holiday. That's it! Let's give her a holiday... A long one *(Miss Marble enters again to collect another bag, the talking stops again. Miss Marble is a little unnerved by this awkward silence again and they both stop to watch her. George and Melissa silently give a little wave as she collects her bag and walks out again. She is closely followed by*

George who opens the door for her) Hurry back soon. (He closes the door behind her as she leaves)

MELISSA The domestic service agency; I see.

GEORGE Yes.

MELISSA *The*, domestic agency?

GEORGE What?

MELISSA The one that employs Miss Boobs with a view R us! Well is it?

GEORGE Who?

MELISSA Oh George. I was not born yesterday, really; just what do you think the chances of me allowing the agency to send that oversized cleavage to work here are? Eh? *(Melissa rises and moves to the phone table and picks up another pen there. She does not notice the note and returns to the sofa)*

GEORGE Slim?

MELISSA Oh Good you are finally grasping this.

GEORGE Couldn't I give them a quick call, just to enquire? *(Melissa testing the pen on the pad)*

MELISSA *(Looking up at him)*...Are you really as stupid as you look?

GEORGE Possibly.

MELISSA The answer is no George, No! Especially as I haven't dispatched our current in-house one yet.

GEORGE In house? That's my point; she's never *in* house!

(Melissa's phone in her dressing gown pocket pings with a message: she takes a look at it gives an excited grin. She is aware that George is looking at her with curiosity and immediately thrusts the device into her pocket)

MELISSA Honestly George, you must think I'm a cocktail short of a party. If you think I'm going to let that plasticised, glitter chested zumba queen under this roof, you are very much mistaken and that is the end of it: By the way darling, I take it you *are* still going to your conference later; back late tomorrow yes?

(At the same time as the next few lines we see Meg enter Stage Right into the garden. She is wearing a very short skirt low cut blouse and is dressed to impress the boys. She creeps with head low across the garden and she walks over to the

deckchair and sits on it. She opens her little clutch bag checks her face in a compact, reapplies some red lipstick and sprays perfume at her ample cleavage She takes out a mobile phone and takes a snap shot of her cleavage and sends it)

GEORGE Yes, and by the same token you are going to keep your mother company tonight?

MELISSA Oh George you do catch on. So there's going to be no one at home this evening now that our Miss Marble is off on her little soirée is that clear George? No one at all.

GEORGE Yes dear, quite clear dear.

MELISSA Don't look like that darling, you'll have a ball, doing lots of men things with...men.

GEORGE I can think of nothing better - For god's sake, I'm an accounts manager Melissa

MELISSA Your point?

GEORGE Oh Melissa! An evening with a lot of cretinous industry contemporaries

MELISSA Your colleagues

GEORGE And that slovenly shit of an MD at Tin Tin confectionary

MELISSA Your friend...

GEORGE ...And you know full well the thrill I get from the selling of individually wrapped cereal bars to bearded, brainless, single celled amoebas. *(Meg now exits right)*

MELISSA Everyone else.

(George's phone pings from his dressing gown pocket as the message comes through. He takes it out and is excited by what he is looking at)

MELISSA Something good?

GEORGE *(Immediately thrusting the device into his pocket)* No, No, just a reminder from work.

MELISSA Don't complain George, You know how you thrive on the excitement: Right my bag will not pack itself *(She turns humming a little happy tune to herself as she exits up stairs and George follows her.)*

GEORGE But darling what about... Marble?

Lights down end of scene one

Act One Scene two:

A few minutes later

(Lights up: Meg Moffitt enters from S.R. She stealthily creeps across the stage looking for George.)

MEG Hello? George? It's me! *(In a singing tone)* Where are you? Come out; come out where ever you are. *(She looks at her watch. She is obviously much too early for her rendezvous with George so she takes a seat on the sofa and takes out her mobile phone and starts to text George. Melissa comes running down the stairs with her hand bag and hurriedly exits S.R. At hearing Melissa enter Meg ducks down onto the floor and is still there when George comes down the stairs calling after Melissa)*

GEORGE Well? What do you say? I still think you should consider it

MELISSA *(Off)* This discussion is over!

GEORGE *(Running to the kitchen door)* Oh come on you know full well... *(Then does a double take and realizes what he has just seen on the floor in front of the sofa he glances at his watch and grimaces)* Oh good lord: What in heavens are you doing here? Down there? I mean oh my god! Melissa is *(whispering and pointing)* through there!

MEG Has she gone? *(George takes a look. Melissa enters and sits on the deck chair with a magazine and also a pad and pen)*

GEORGE Yes, for now, into the garden, but...

MEG ...You said she wouldn't be here

GEORGE I said she wouldn't be here by eight o'clock

MEG It is eight o'clock

GEORGE Eight O'clock this evening Meg! This evening!

MEG *(Immediately jumps up from the floor and runs to George with open arms and hugs him passionately kissing his face several times in quick succession. George pushes off her advances)* Oh Georgey, Georgey, I'm sorry I just couldn't wait any longer...

GEORGE Meg! *(George grabs her arm and moves Meg slightly more central)* Come away from the window!

MEG Well? Is it on? Are we on?

GEORGE What? *(He is very nervous and twitchy and is constantly on the look out for Melissa)*

MEG Our little arrangement?

GEORGE Arrangement?

MEG You know...What we'd planned

GEORGE My God Meg I haven't had my breakfast yet.

MEG You haven't changed your mind?

GEORGE No! Only we agreed it was to be later - much later

MEG I couldn't wait George; Oh Georgey I'm so excited I think I'm going to burst open! Right here *(She thrusts her bosom up to full size)*

GEORGE Oh Lordy! Please don't do that, not here - well not yet anyway. Oh why have you come so... *(He gives her a wanton look and looks out to the garden again, Melissa turns a page and then takes up a notepad and pen and scribbles something down on the pad she has read in the magazine) early?*

MEG I know, and I'm sorry, but...

GEORGE ...You should have sent me a text

MEG I Did! Didn't you like it?

GEORGE That was you?

MEG Who else? Didn't you like it?

GEORGE Yes but...

MEG *(She beams a smile at him)* ... And I started to send another, but then you and...Oh George! *(She kisses him and they clutch each other in a loving embrace again)*

(As George and Meg kiss, Greg enters the garden. He is wearing a vest, jeans and gardening boots. His gardening gloves are tucked into his belt and hang down over a buttock. He sees Melissa and creeps up behind her and taps her shoulder she

immediately puts her writing down and jumps up and embraces him with a kiss, as this happens George and Meg break apart)

GEORGE Alright, alright, but my wife's ... She could come in any second

GREG Someone's keen

MELISSA Mildly aroused, that's all

GREG All clear?

MELISSA He's in the house somewhere. I take it we are... still on for tonight?

MEG I don't care George; why don't we just come right out with it and tell her...

GREG ... Still on? Of course we're still on if you are, if you have the...
(He rubs his thumb and forefinger together at her) you know what. You do have the necessaries?

GEORGE Tell her? We will not! That would not end well. We'll just have to wait until she goes off to her mothers

MELISSA Absolutely! That is the one thing you don't have to worry about. We just have to wait for George to go off to his conference

MEG Oh George...

GEORGE ...Oh Meg

GREG Oh Melissa

MELISSA Oh Greg *(The two couples simultaneously embrace)*