

DOLLY Come along, Mr Nagg. It's nice and quiet here and we've ever so much more room. Let's just run through that scene once more.

NOAH No, no, really, I do think I ought to go and find my wife.

IMA Oh, Father! Don't be a spoilsport. When Mother wants you, she'll find you quickly enough.

NOAH That's what I'm afraid of. It is always safer to find her first.

DOLLY Now, you know, all this rehearsal is very good for Ima. She's got all the makings of a really good actress.

NOAH I'd like to do anything to help, but I really do think I ought to find Mrs Nagg - I've got a feeling about it.

DOLLY Well, we won't keep you long. Now, come, take your positions.

NOAH I've got a very strong feeling about it!

DOLLY. Ima! Remember, you are upstage. I am sitting on the rustic bench, and Mr Nagg—

NOAH Yes, Miss White.

DOLLY Do please pay attention!

NOAH Yes, Miss White.

DOLLY You are here--behind me. Now, Mr Nagg, let me see how well you can make love—

NOAH (*Miserably*). Oh--really--don't you think we could dispense with that part of it?

DOLLY Certainly not!

NOAH Is it really necessary?

DOLLY Of course! Come along now, don't be bashful

IMA I wouldn't mention the word bash around Father, Miss White.

DOLLY Very well. Now, you know how they do it on the stage. You come up behind me, clasp me round the waist, take my hand in yours and breathe passionate adoration down the back of my neck. Go on--do that.

NOAH All of it?

DOLLY Every little bit.

NOAH The neck part as well?

DOLLY That's most important.

(NOAH exhales loudly and blows unromantically into the back of DOLLY's neck.)

DOLLY Now you know your first line, it starts: "Fear not, beloved, here is your lover, brave and wild."

NOAH *(Hesitates)*. Oh, yes, I'm supposed to be wild--you couldn't make it mild, could you?

DOLLY No. I could not

NOAH One can but do one's best. *(clears his throat long and uncomfortably. He then recites the following, very badly)* Fear not--beloved--here is thy lover brave and—

DOLLY Harness your passion Mr Nagg, release the wild stallion of emotion that lies within

NOAH Stallion, yes... *(neighs like a horse, then, becoming emboldened)*, Fear not, beloved, here is thy lover, brave and *(as if a roar)* wild.

DOLLY *(With dramatic romanticism)*. And can I always trust in you?

NOAH *(Breathing heavily)* Always--even unto the end. You and your child shall be my only care.

DOLLY My hero!

NOAH My love!

DOLLY And no one will ever know?

NOAH No one will ever know.

ARABELLA *(Roaring)* Liar! *(She throws a silver Coffeepot.)*

(IMA screams)

(SFX: Footsteps running on gravel, panting, performed by NOAH and DOLLY.)

ARABELLA *(Enraged)* Noah! Come back here right now you adulterers!

(MUSIC: Hurry/chase music, up and in background until cue to stop.)

(ARABELLA starts running on gravel)

IMA (Screaming) Jack! Jack!

GAY Now what's the matter?

IMA Mother's suddenly gone mad!

GAY Ye gods, it's all my fault! (Shouting.) Hey, you, wait a minute!

(**GAY** starts running.)

STELLA What's the matter?

IMA Mother's going to murder poor old Father!

STELLA Good heavens!

(**STELLA** starts running.)

SALLY What is it?

IMA They've all gone mad!

DOC Where's Jack?

IMA Running up the road. I'm going to join them.

(**IMA** starts running.)

DOC Well, I suppose I can do this just as well without him. I wonder which end of the dynamite you light? This must be it.

(SFX: Lighting a fuse.)

Now for the big blow out. Into the summer house you go

(SFX: Door opens, dynamite thrown in, door closes.)

DOC What's the matter?

IMA I don't know, but you'd better come along.

(**IMA** takes **DOC** by the hand and they begin to run. The chase is continued)

NOAH The summerhouse. I'll hide in here! (**NOAH** enters door)

DOLLY. Mr Nagg! Mr Nagg!

GAY Have you seen him, Miss White? Noah, where are you? Arabella! Put down that coffeepot!

STELLA Mother! Stop! Father? Where are you?

IMA Don't come out Pa, Mother's got the coffeepot!

ARABELLA Noah Nagg! You come here this instant.

(SFX: *A cacophony of sound.*)

GAY Quiet! Everyone! Will you listen?

(MUSIC: *Hurry/Chase music stops.*)

(SFX: *Fuse continues burning*)

[*Visual gag: The sound effect of a fuse is made with a sparkler which is then put into the whiskey decanter with 'real whiskey' which 'explodes' creating an explosion in the radio station as well as in the 'story'*]

(SFX: *Explosion and glass breaking.*)

ANNOUNCER As the dust settles, we find Noah, now barely clad, emerging from the rubble of the summer house. The explosion has roused the curiosity of neighbours and a crowd has started to form. It has also caught the attention of the men in blue...

(SFX: *Police siren in distance, crowd noise, police whistle. "Nothing to see here"...etc.*)

(MUSIC: *Outro "Yes, Sir! That's My Baby".*)

Commercial #2 Mrs Kerwood's Pussy

ANNOUNCER: While we take a short break, let's hear from our sponsors

(MUSIC: *Commercial theme (domestic bliss) up and under in background.*)

MALE 1 Accidents will happen!

(SFX: *Vegetables being chopped.*)

Every good wife knows that when her hardworking husband arrives home, what will brighten his day is a hot meal on the table and a clean house. But when life gets a bit messy, you may need a helping hand

FEMALE 3 Ouch. Oh dear! I seem to have cut my finger chopping carrots. Luckily, I just finished cleaning with C Farmer and Son's Tea Tree Oil. Its' antibacterial properties, derived from natural sources makes it great for cleaning countertops and cleaning knees – or fingers! A

natural clean for any little accident that may happen! It will get you out of the nastiest of scrapes!

(SFX: *Doorbell.*)

FEMALE 3 Oh, that will be my husband! Good evening dear, how was your day? Why, what on earth has happened to you?

MALE 2 On my way home, I was trying to grab Mrs Kerwood's pussy

FEMALE 3 Oh!

MALE 2 It was stuck in a tree, you see

FEMALE 3 Well, at least you didn't have to get on your hands and knees, you might have ruined your good suit.

MALE 2 Very true. And in return for grabbing her pussy, I'm covered in scratches from the ungrateful feline

(SFX: *Cat hissing.*)

FEMALE 3 Oh, you poor man. Next time, you should try patting it first and waiting for it to purr. Never fear, I have C Farmer and Sons Tea Tree Oil here and I'll have you cleaned up in a jiffy!

MALE 2 C Farmer and Son's Tea Tree Oil – cleans up every situation!

FEMALE 3 It's great for any little accident that may happen!

(SFX: *Baby crying.*)

MALE 2 Oh dear, not again!

FEMALE 3 Don't worry dear, I have my C Farmer and Son's Tea Tree Oil! Because, accidents will happen!

ACT THREE

(*MUSIC: "Yes, Sir! That's My Baby" reprise up and under following*)

ANNOUNCER: We arrive back inside with our exhausted players. A policeman has arrived to investigate the allegation of murder most foul and discovered an exploded summerhouse but no body. What of the baby? Did it still slumber in the summerhouse? We shall discover soon enough...

(SFX: *Lifting telephone receiver and dialling.*)

SALLY Thank heaven you've come to the phone. Listen, Willie, you must win. Tell the other man and perhaps he'll let you. Things are in an awful state here. Jack, Doctor Knott and your Father are all under arrest, and your Mother is going mad, I think...What, dear?...Oh, the baby? Oh, he's all right, I smuggled him up to my room and he's sleeping through it all. No, he hasn't cried once, but we must get him away soon. If they find him here, we're finished, so please win, Willie, for our baby's sake.

(SFX: *Replacing telephone receiver.*)

ARABELLA Lies, treachery and deceitfulness, that's what it is - nothing but lies.

STELLA Sally!

SALLY Yes, ma'am?

STELLA Come here.

SALLY Yes, ma'am.

STELLA You've been behaving very strangely all day.

SALLY Me?

ARABELLA But so has everyone else! The poor girl's probably caught the family complaint.

STELLA And she's the only one here who isn't family! (*Coldly*) And I don't see how you can possibly describe Father's weakness as a family complaint.

ARABELLA (*Angrily*). That will do. An unfaithful husband is bad enough without an impertinent daughter thrown in. Oh, the wretch! You wait until I lay my hands on that actress. (*She sobs.*)

STELLA (*Impatiently*) Oh, for heaven's sake, don't start blubbing again. It's all your fault Jack and I have quarrelled. You've caused enough misery to others, now you're getting some of your own medicine.

SALLY Please, ma'am, can I get you something?

ARABELLA Yes, get that husband of mine - I'll deal with him--the deceitful hypocrite. (*She sobs.*)

SALLY Please, Mrs Gay, don't you think she ought to see a doctor?

STELLA Doctor? What for?

ARABELLA No more varnish!

SALLY He might give her a sleeping draught.

STELLA What use is a sleeping draught?

SALLY Well, ma'am, she's making so much noise, she might wake...(*She stops suddenly, realizing she has made a blunder.*)

STELLA Who might she wake?

SALLY (*Hesitating*) The neighbours, ma'am.

STELLA No doubt they are all awake and gossiping about us. You're puzzling me, Sally. It seems to me that you're concealing something.

SALLY (*Taken aback.*) Who, ma'am? Me--ma'am? Oh no, ma'am!

ARABELLA (*Bursting forth afresh.*) This will all come out in the papers, and what a fool I shall look! I shall never be able to go home and face *my* neighbours.

STELLA I'm very sorry, Mother, but you've only yourself to blame.

ARABELLA Myself to blame? I like that. Even if my husband does bring a baby into the house, there's no reason why he should murder it in cold blood.

STELLA (*Aside*) I'm ready to murder someone

SALLY Oh! I cannot bear this! I cannot! (*Sally starts to sob.*)

(SFX: *Door opens, and slams shut.*)

STELLA (*Irritably*). What is the matter with the girl?

ARABELLA Oh, don't be hard on her. No doubt she's gone to fetch my smelling bottle. She can see I'm terribly upset. She's got more sympathy for me than you have.

STELLA Well, you shouldn't give way so.

ARABELLA You gave way, when you thought it was Jack's baby.

STELLA That's different.

ARABELLA Oh, I would like to know how.

STELLA Well, Jack and I married for love.

ARABELLA Oh? And why did I marry your father, please?

STELLA Because you were too mean to buy a hot water bottle.

ARABELLA Oh! How can you say such a thing?

STELLA And you call him a murderer on the first little excuse that turns up.

ARABELLA Little excuse? Do you call that horrible baby a little excuse?

STELLA How do you know Father is a murderer?

ARABELLA We both know the baby was in the summer house, and your father blew up the summer house to get rid of the baby!

STELLA You only suppose that. The police searched the ruins but found no trace of the body.

ARABELLA It might have been blown clean through the roof, and not come back to earth yet. Anything may have happened! Oh--(*Sobbing*)--I, the wife of a child murderer! (*Switching tack abruptly*) Why doesn't that girl bring my smelling bottle?

(SFX: *Running and panting.*)

SALLY (*Breathless with fright.*) Where is it? Where is it?

STELLA Good gracious. Sally, don't make such a fuss. I expect it's where you last left it.

SALLY It isn't. It's gone.

ARABELLA I'll tell you where it is.

SALLY Where? Tell me where?

ARABELLA It's tucked away in my suitcase.

SALLY (*Screaming.*) Oh, my poor darling! (*She screams again, runs away sobbing.*)

ARABELLA She's very fond of me that girl. She called me her poor darling. That's more than you do!

STELLA The girl's hysterical.

ARABELLA Is it any wonder why, with your father behaving as he has? It's a miracle she isn't afraid to stay here. Murders going on all round her. They'll hang him, that's what they'll do, and I'll never get a chance to tell him what I think of him.

STELLA (*Grimly.*) I'm not worrying what they'll do to your husband. What I'd like to know is, what am I to say to mine? (*She begins to cry.*) I've treated him disgracefully

ARABELLA He's a poor sort of man if he can't stand that!

STELLA I'm not asking you for your opinion.

ARABELLA To think that I should hear such words from my own daughter

STELLA It's the truth. As soon as you arrived you started trying to pick holes in Jack. You were full of hints and insinuations, and all the time your own husband was fooling you under your very nose.

ARABELLA Oh! Stop! I feel faint. I can't stand any more

STELLA (*Suddenly repentant.*) Oh, Mother, I'm sorry.

ARABELLA The world is spinning round and round.

STELLA Oh, why doesn't that fool of a girl bring the smelling bottle? (*Calling off*) Sally--where are you?

SALLY (*Frantic*) It wasn't there! It wasn't there!

STELLA What have you done to that suitcase?

SALLY It was locked, so I cut it open.

STELLA You cut it open? Why didn't you ask for the key?

SALLY I couldn't wait. Oh, what shall I do? Where shall I find it?

STELLA Go and look for it, you stupid girl. I suppose, if the truth is known, Willie has it.

SALLY (*Taken aback.*) Willie?

STELLA He had it in his hands before he went to the fight. He said to me he would only have to give his opponent one sniff at it, and he'd be knocked out for good.

SALLY (*Wildly.*) Willie said that? Are you sure?

STELLA I heard him. Besides, what has it got to do with you?

SALLY (*Distractedly.*) I want it! I want it!

STELLA Oh nonsense, girl! Run out and get another. Ring at Smith's side door, he'll soon give you one.

SALLY Oh, I can't stand this. I can't! I can't! (*She rushes off weeping wildly.*)

ARABELLA (*Reviving slightly and moaning.*) Oh, where is my smelling bottle?

STELLA It's all right, Mother, dear. Sally has gone out to get a new one.

ARABELLA Stella, dear, don't desert me. I'm very upset.

STELLA (*Soothingly.*) Yes, Mother, I know. You'd better go and lie down. I'll let you know as soon as any news comes through of the prisoners.

ARABELLA Those terrible police can't leave us in suspense all night, can they?

STELLA I hope not. I'll ring up the police station and try to find out something. (*She sighs.*) My poor Jack.

ARABELLA (*Sighing.*) My poor, foolish Noah.

STELLA Don't worry, Mother. As soon as Sally returns with the smelling bottle, I'll send it in to you.

ARABELLA Stella?

STELLA Yes, Mother?

ARABELLA I - I wouldn't have minded so much about the baby, if it hadn't been the image of its' father.

IMA Hello, Stella, I say you do look worried. Where is everybody?

STELLA Where have you been all these hours? I haven't seen you since the explosion.

IMA I was scared stiff. Where's Jack?

STELLA In prison.

IMA And Father?

STELLA He's in prison, too.

IMA Prison? What on earth for?

STELLA *(Suddenly breaking down.)* Murder.

IMA Murder? Who have they been murdering?

STELLA Jack hasn't murdered anyone. It's Father. He blew up his baby in the summer house.

IMA His baby?

STELLA Yes! Mother found out it was Father's. We all thought it was Jack's at first. When Father saw he was found out, he blew up the summer house with dynamite and the baby with it.

IMA Good heavens! Then who - who on earth does that other baby belong to?

(Pause.)

STELLA Other baby? What other baby?

IMA The one I found in Sally's room.

STELLA The one you found in Sally's room? When did you find a baby in Sally's room?

IMA About an hour ago. I was upstairs practising my recitation when I heard a baby crying. I went to Sally's room, and there it was, lying on the bed and squealing like blazes. The sound was so annoying -

STELLA Ima, are you joking?

IMA Of course I'm not joking. I suppose I should not have said anything about it, for Jack's sake. It was you talking about the other baby being blown up that made me mention it.

STELLA For Jack's sake?

IMA Well, I suppose he's its father. He's the only married man in this house.

ARABELLA A ha! You shall thank me yet Stella. I will call the lawyers at once.

STELLA What a fool I've been. What a mercy I found out in time! My husband shall find a pretty bunch of trouble waiting for him when he comes out of prison. If he ever does come out!

IMA But it's all right now.

STELLA All right, is it? No wonder that wretch of a servant has been behaving strangely all day. She's upset because her master, nay her lover, has been arrested.

IMA Well, I shouldn't let the baby worry you, Stella.

STELLA Why not?

IMA I've got rid of it.

STELLA What?

IMA I thought it would cause a lot of trouble if I left it there, so I took it down the back stairs.

STELLA Yes

IMA Well, just at the corner of the street, outside a public house, I saw a taxi standing.

STELLA Yes

IMA --so I just slipped the baby through the taxi window, left it on the seat, and ran.

STELLA (*Laughs crazily*). You left it in the taxi? (*She laughs*) Now I understand why Sally was so upset. Oh, what a beautiful revenge. Beautiful. What a funny child you are, Ima.

IMA Well, it seemed the best thing to do, and it was spoiling my practice with its awful howling.

STELLA If it hadn't been for you I might never have known the truth about Jack.

IMA Where are you going Stella?

STELLA I'm going to have a long talk with Mother.

IMA (*Reciting, very badly*.) "Two things greater than all things are - " Willie! You look truly frightening. Oh no, you've lost the fight!

WILLIE Don't you believe it. (*He pulls out a wad of notes.*) I've won!

IMA Won? But look at yourself! What's happened to the other man?

WILLIE He's still asleep. Now, where's Sally?

IMA Sally? What do you want Sally for?

WILLIE Never you mind. You'll know in good time. Buzz along and find Sally, there's a good girl.

IMA But she isn't here, Willie.

WILLIE Well, I can see that. I expect she's up in her room. She's got a little bit of business to attend to. Pop up and tell her I want her.

IMA She isn't in her room, Willie. She's gone.

WILLIE (*Aghast.*) Gone? What do you mean by "gone"? How can she be gone?

IMA Well, I think she's afraid of what Stella will say to her.

WILLIE What about?

IMA Jack.

WILLIE (*Scowling.*) Jack?

IMA Yes. Stella knows all about it. Jack and Sally are lovers, and there's going to be a fearful row.

WILLIE You're quite right--there *is* going to be a fearful row!

(*SFX: A drawer opens.*)

IMA Why have you got that revolver Willie?